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HIGHWAY STAR

As Recorded by Deep Purple

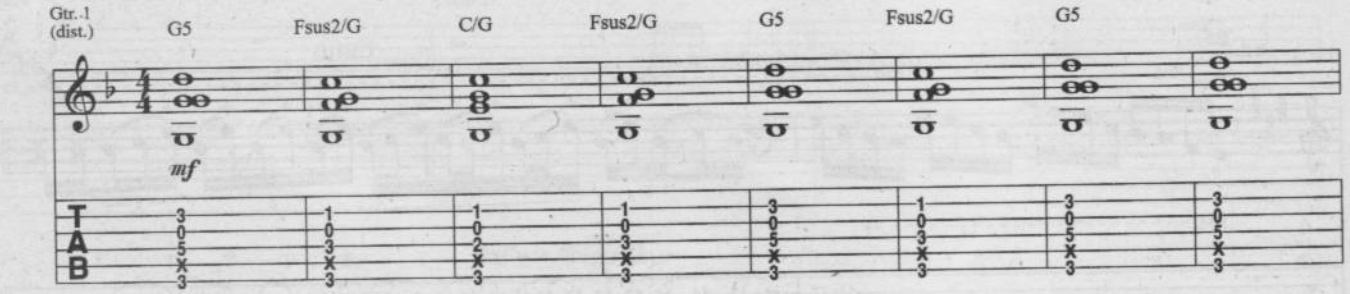
(From the Warner Bros. Recording MACHINE HEAD)

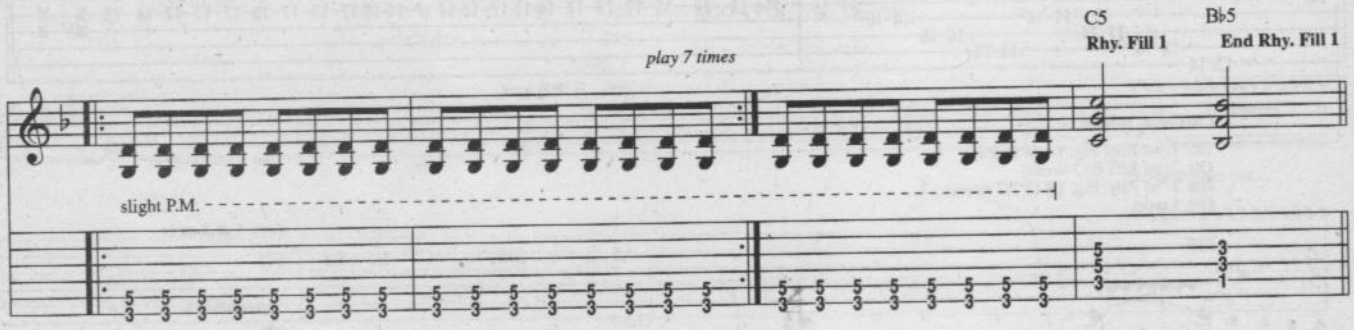
Transcribed by Jordan Baker

By Words and Music by Ritchie Blackmore, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover, Jon Lord and Ian Paice

Intro

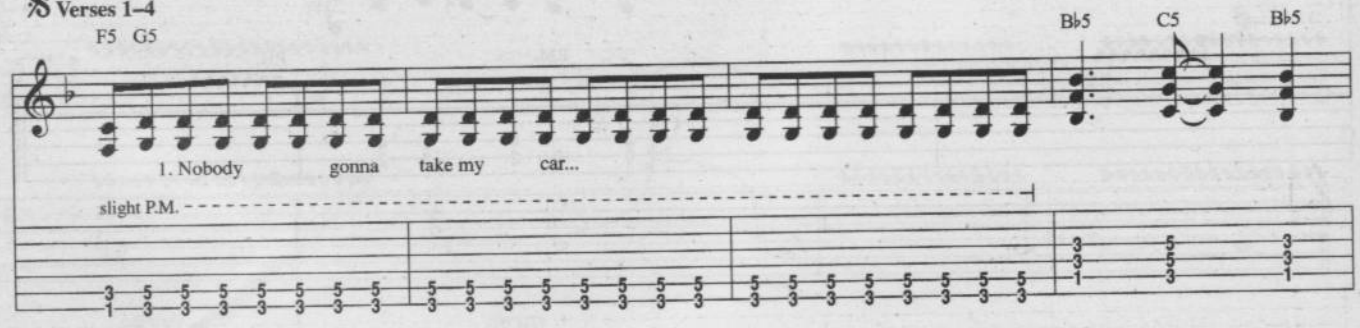
Fast Rock ♩ = 176

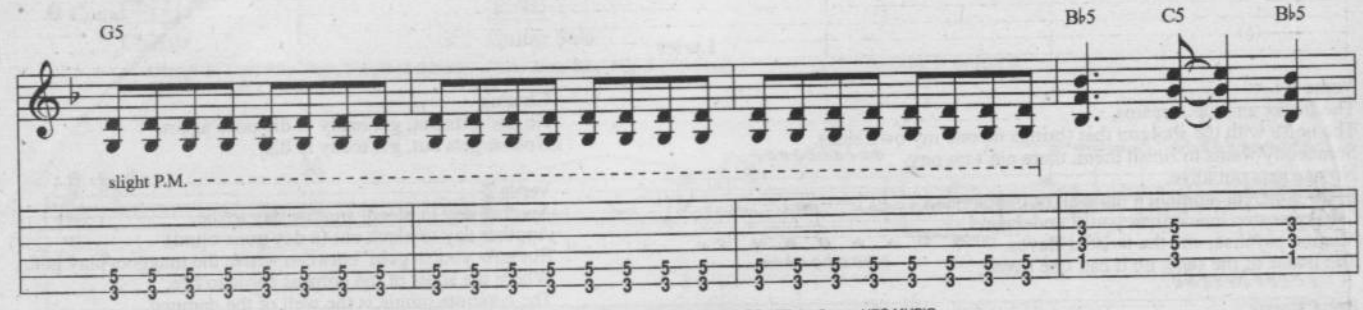




0:34, 1:16, 3:05, 5:05

𝄋 Verses 1–4





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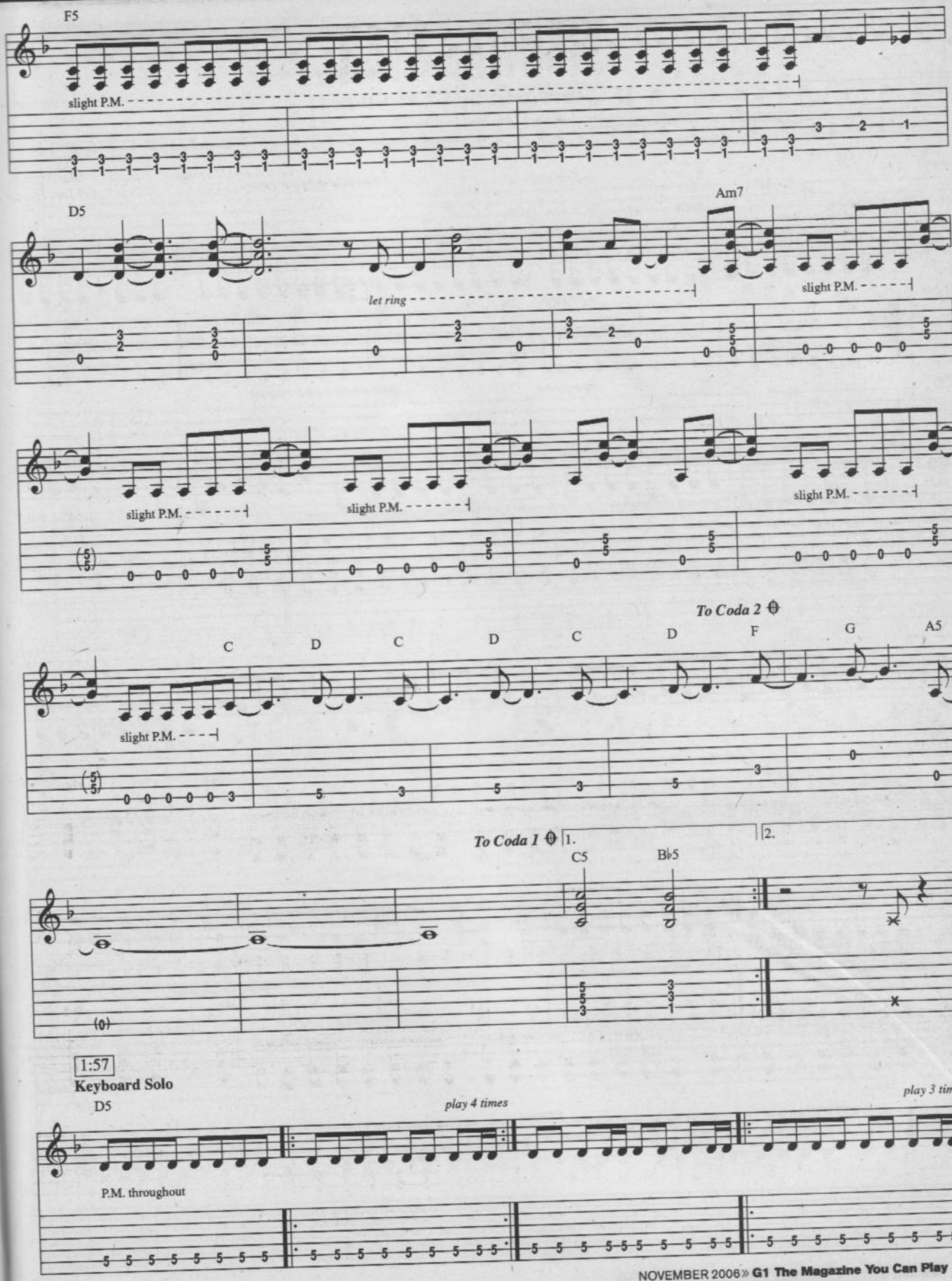
F5
slight P.M.
D5
Am7
let ring
slight P.M.
slight P.M.
slight P.M.
slight P.M.
To Coda 2
C
D
C
D
C
D
F
G
A5
slight P.M.
To Coda 1
1.
2.
C5
B♭5
1:57
Keyboard Solo
D5
play 4 times
play 3 times
P.M. throughout

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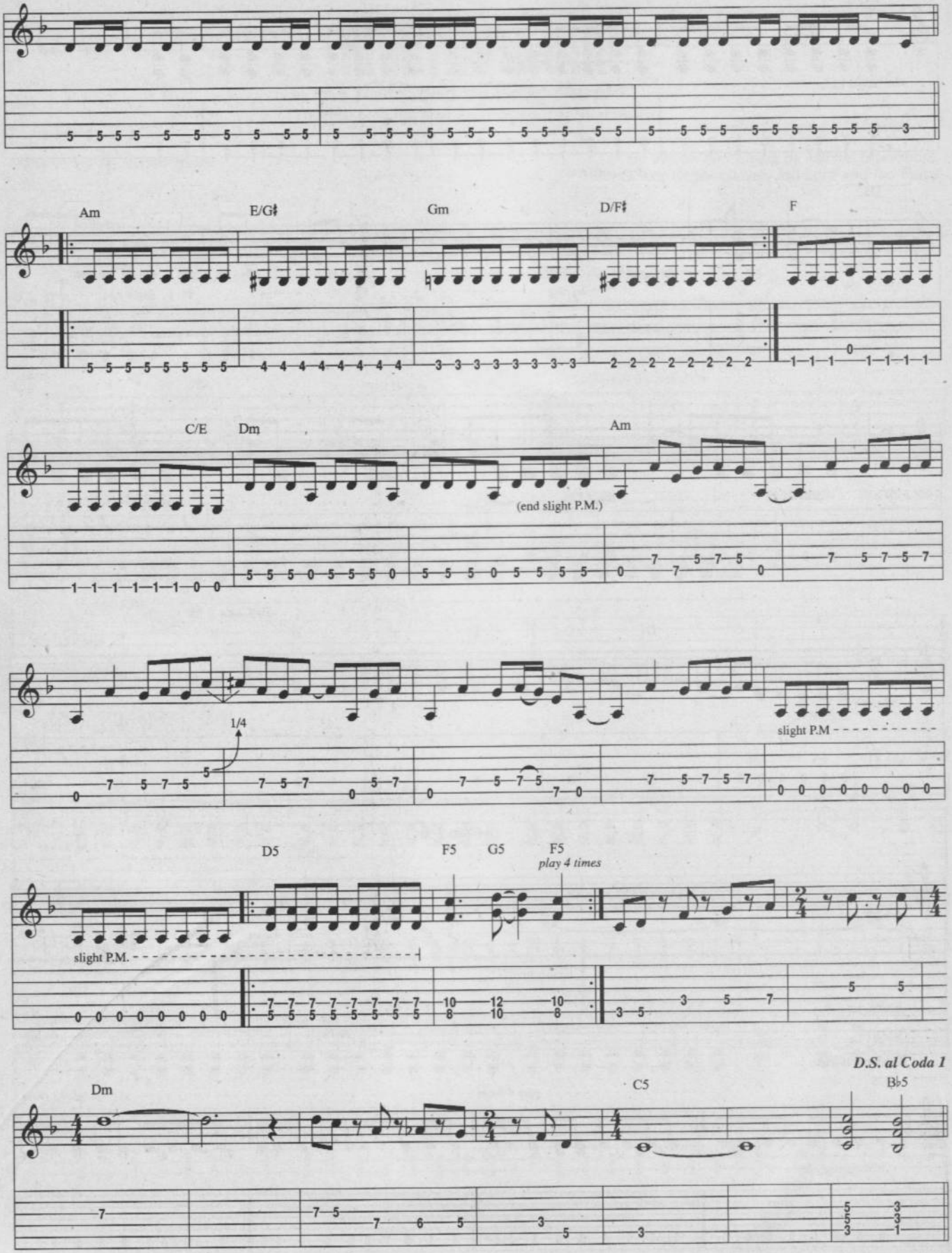

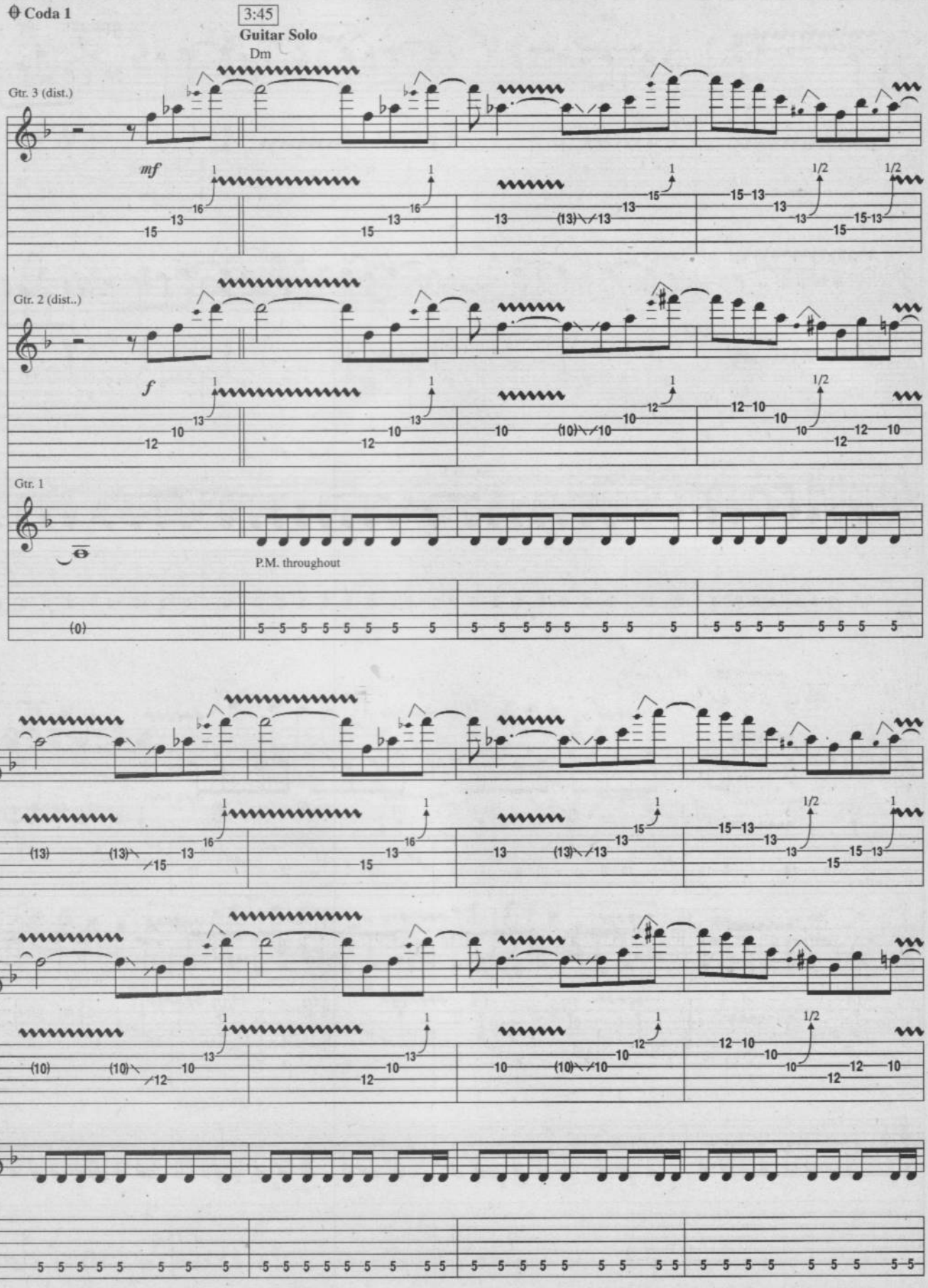
Coda 1
3:45
Guitar Solo
Dm
Gtr. 3 (dist.)
mf
Gtr. 2 (dist..)
f
Gtr. 1
P.M. throughout

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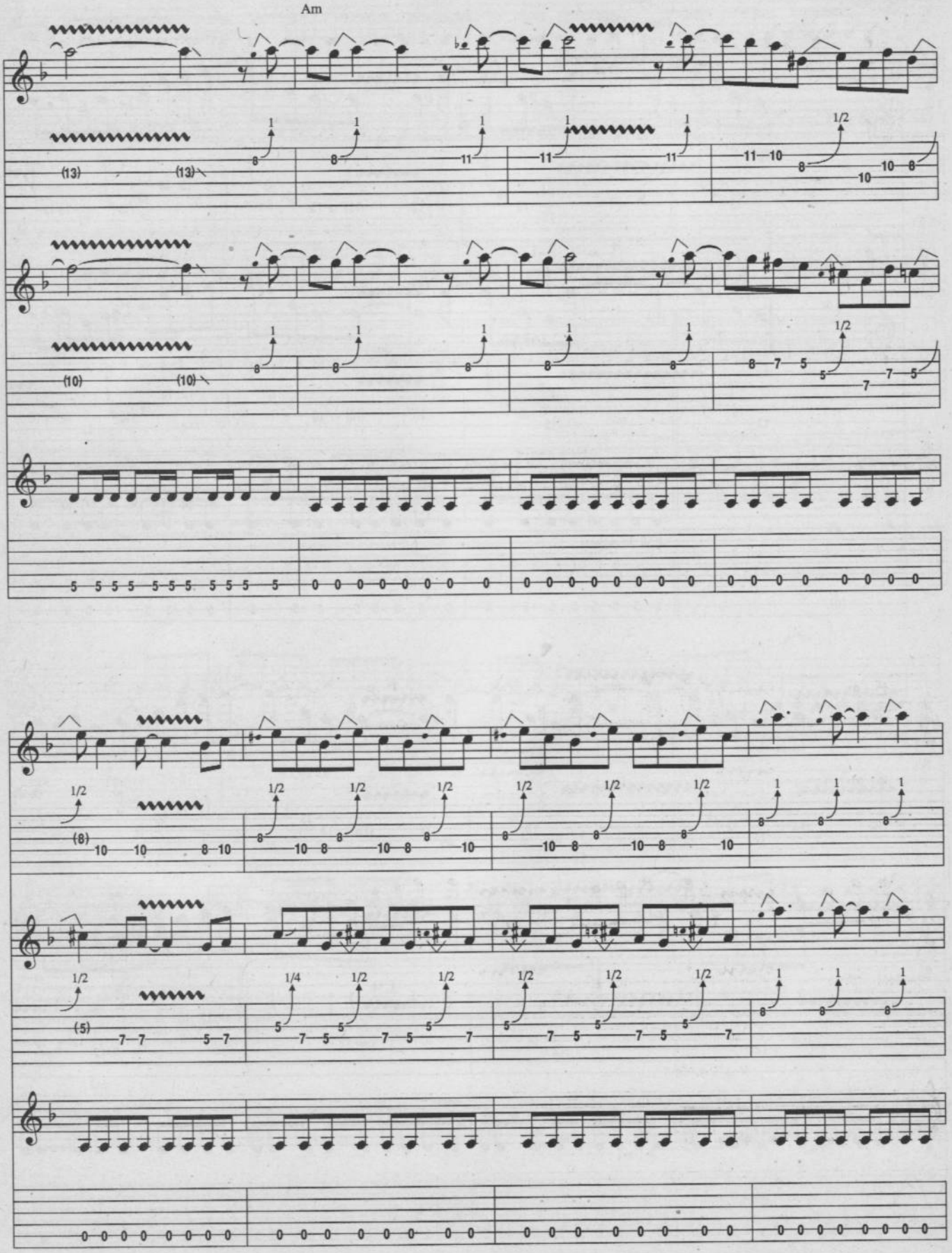
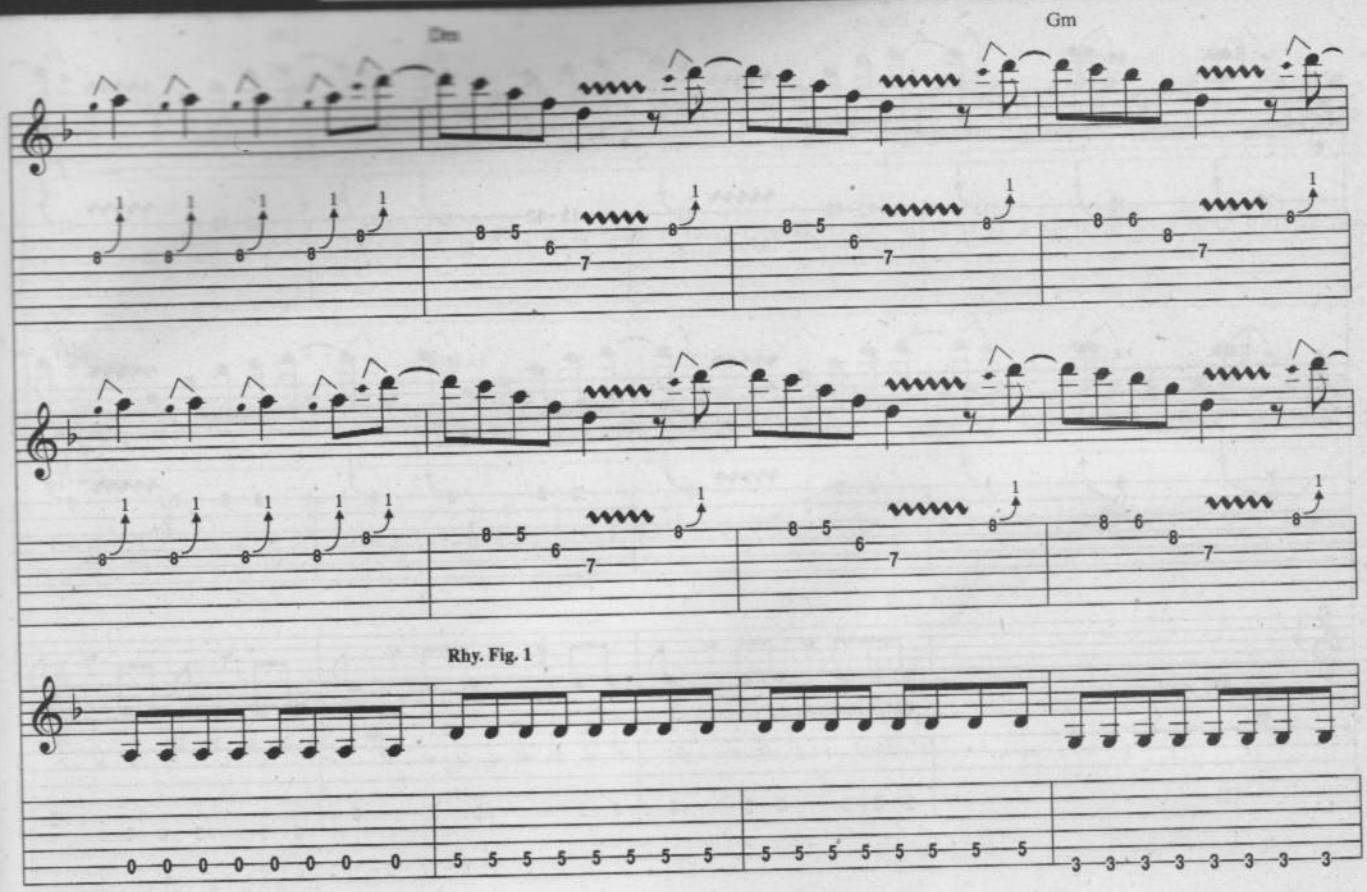
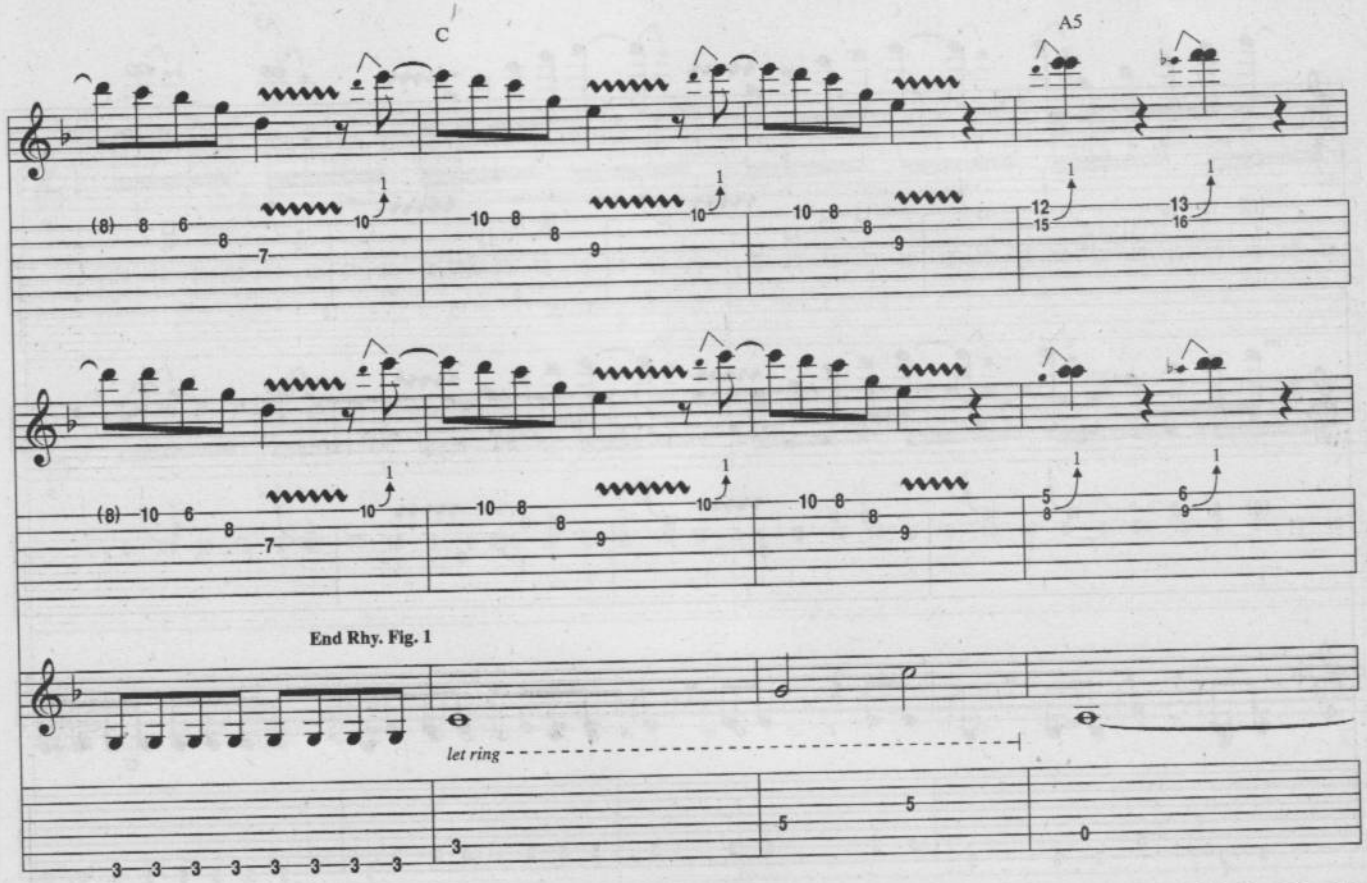



Dm
Gm
Rhy. Fig. 1


C
A5
End Rhy. Fig. 1
let ring

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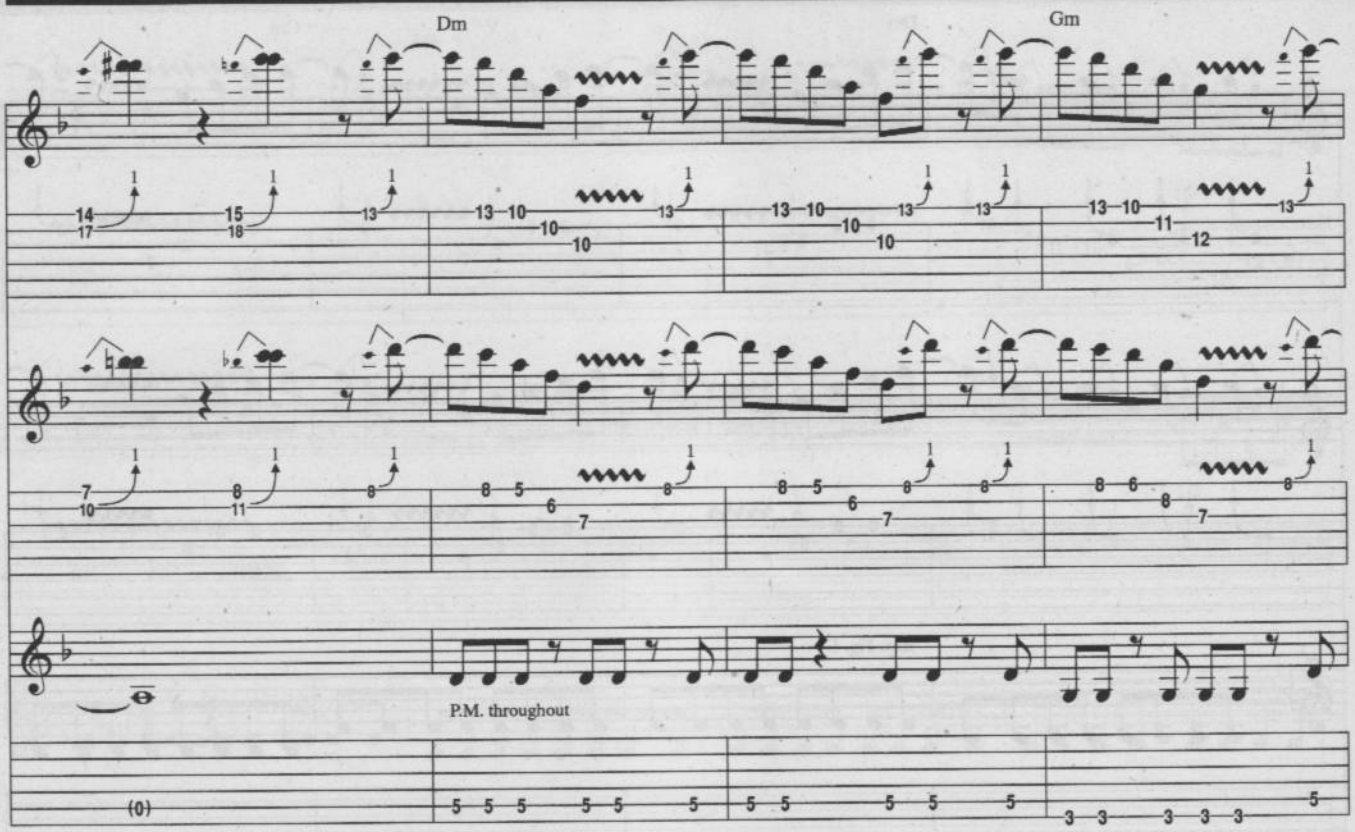

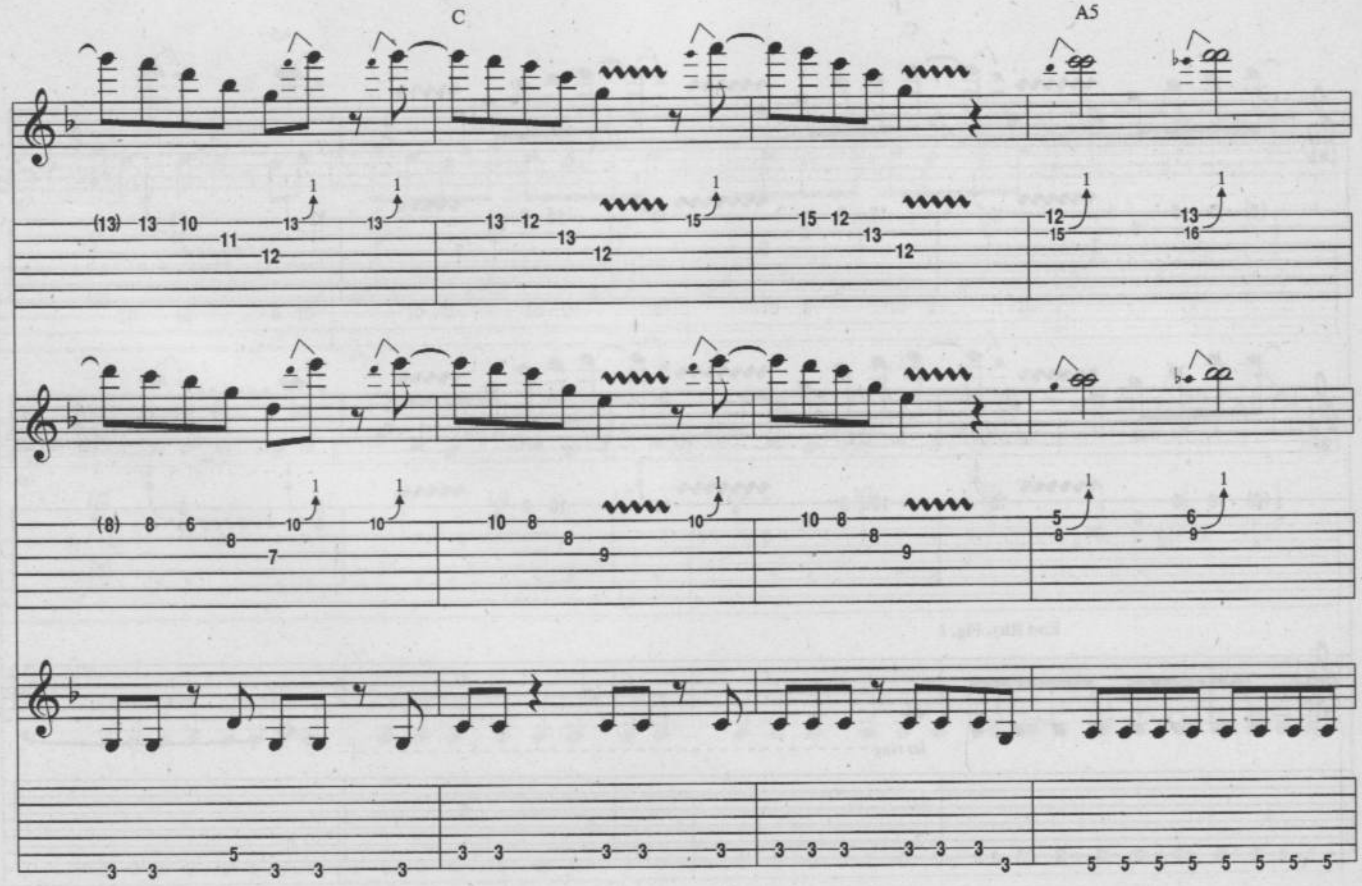

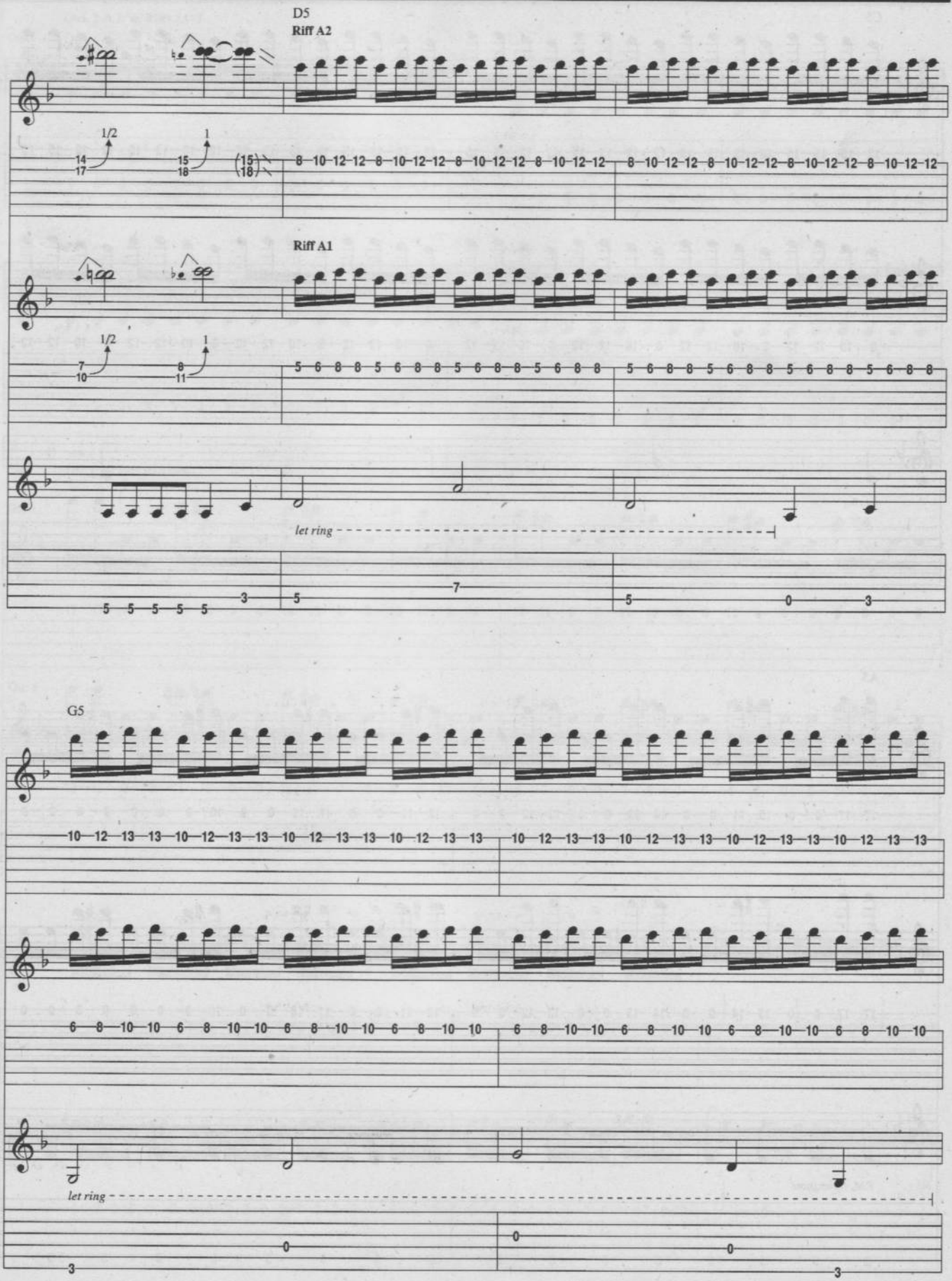
D5
Riff A2
1/2
1
14
17
15
18
(15)
(18)
8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12
8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12 8 10 12 12
Riff A1
1/2
1
7
10
8
11
5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8
5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8 5 6 8 8
let ring
5 5 5 5 5
3
5
7
5
0
3
G5
10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13
10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13 10 12 13 13
6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10
6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10 6 8 10 10
let ring
3
0
0
0
3

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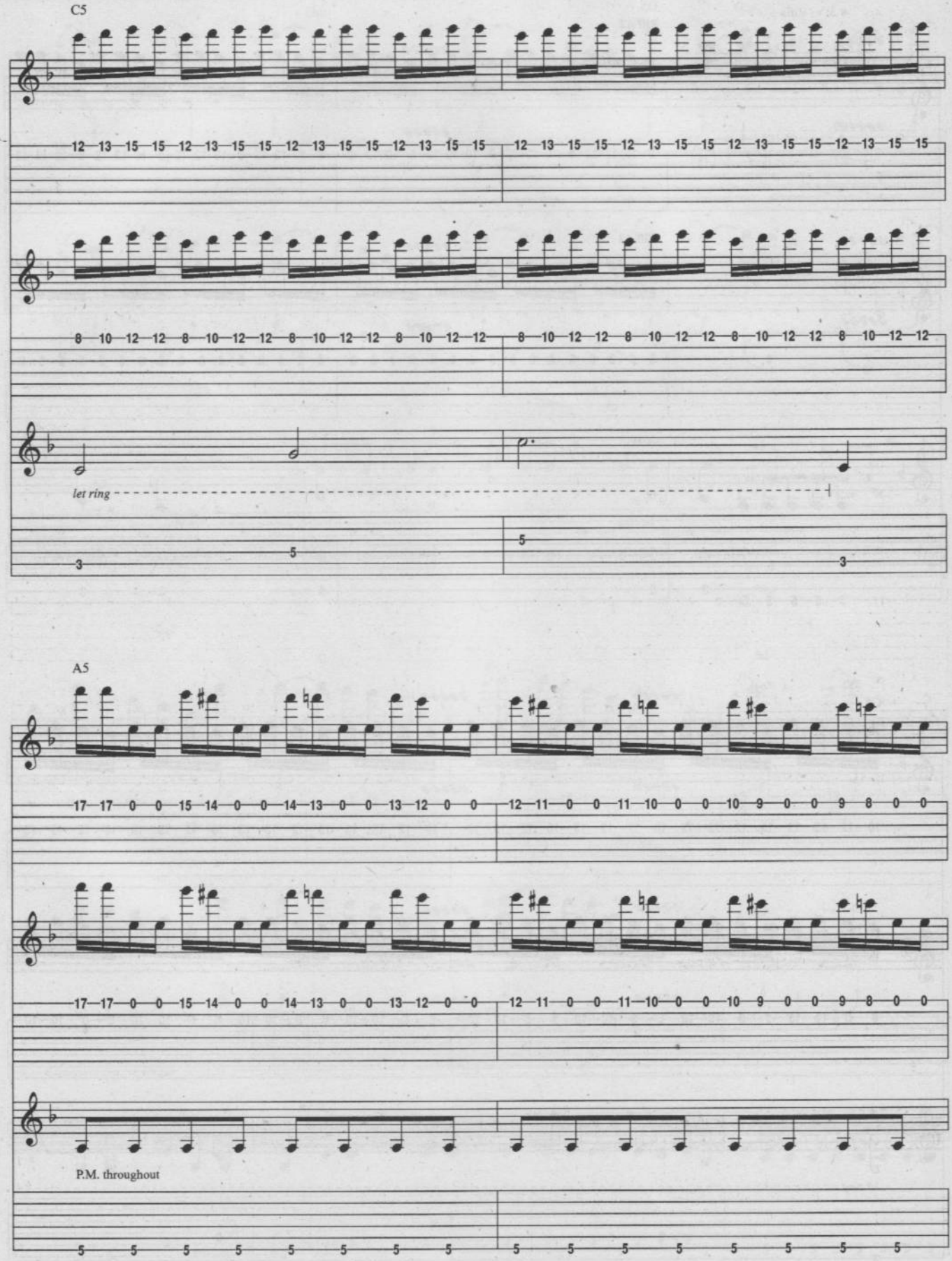
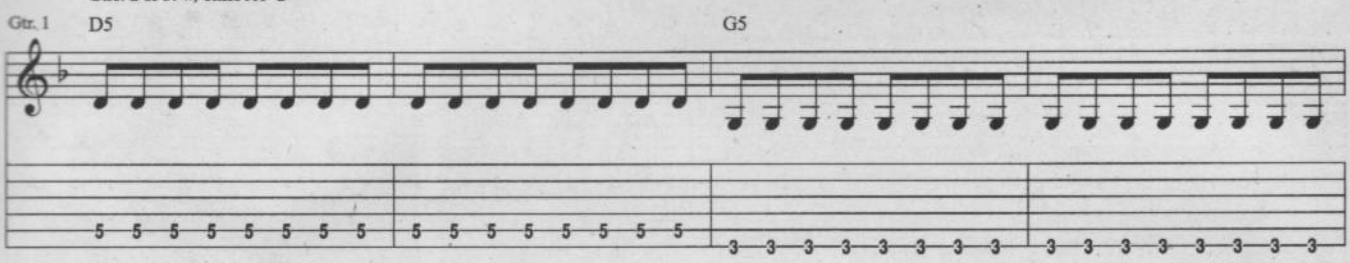
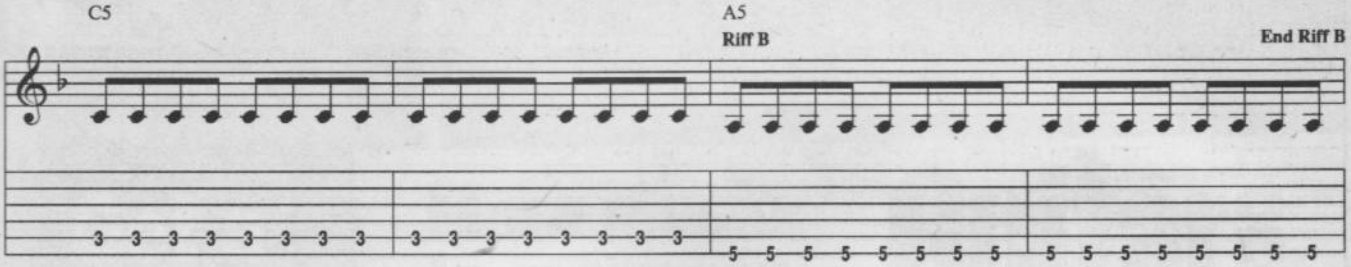


Gtrs. 2 & 3: w/ Riffs A1–2

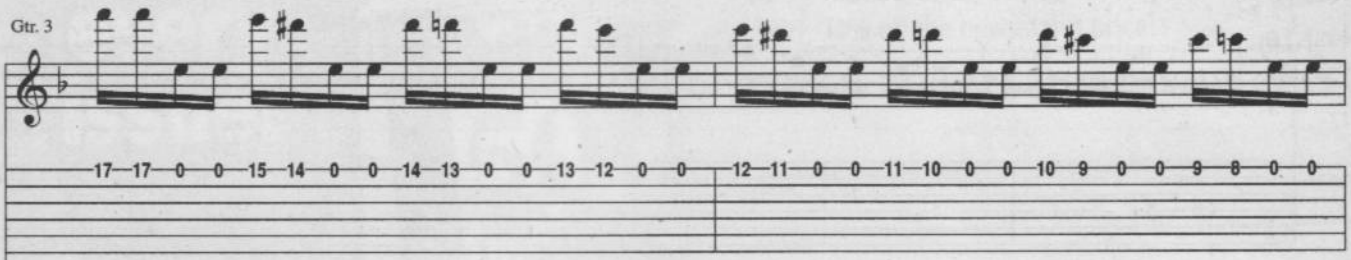
Gtr. 1



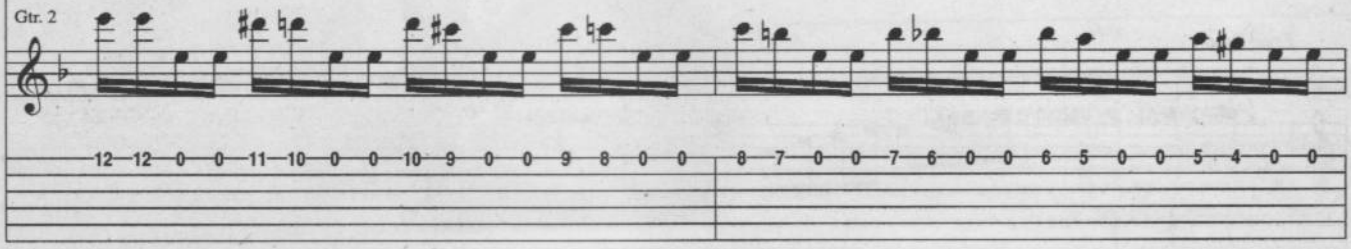


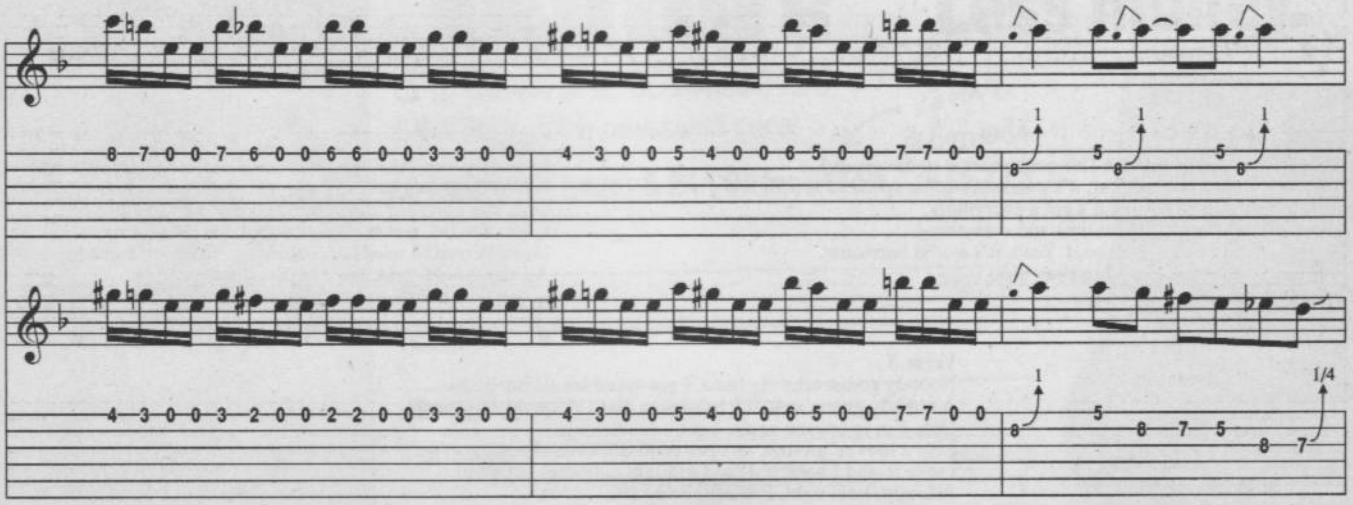
Gtr. 1: w/ Riff B (4 times)

Gtr. 3



Gtr. 2





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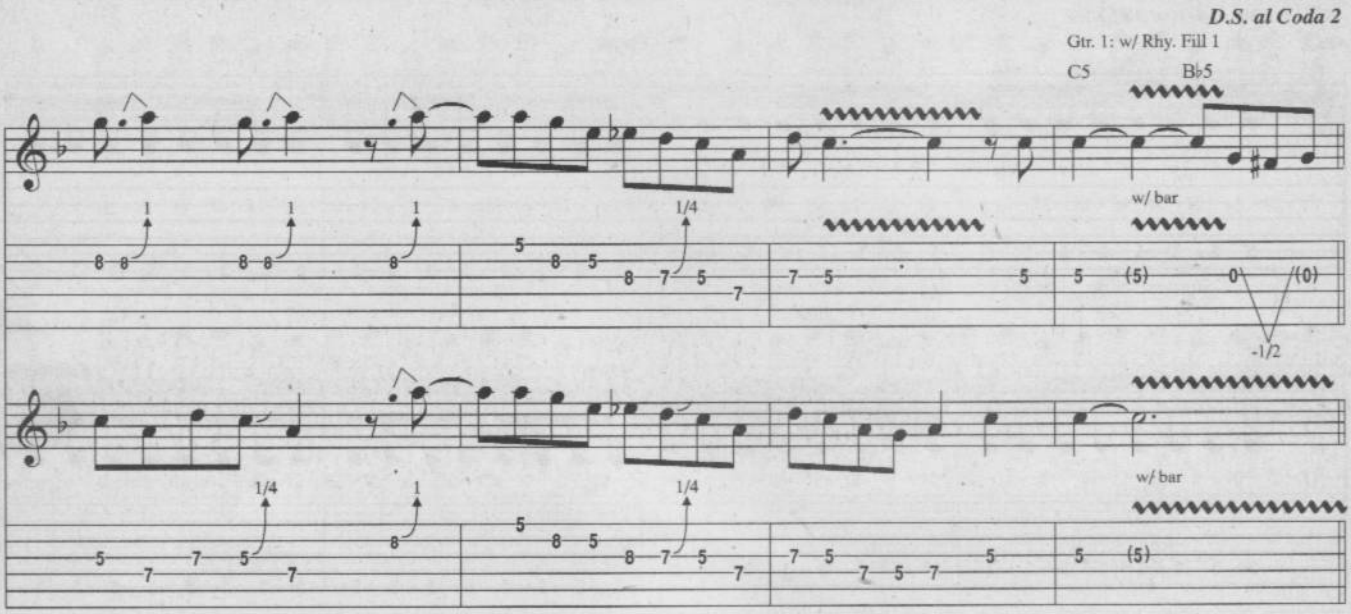
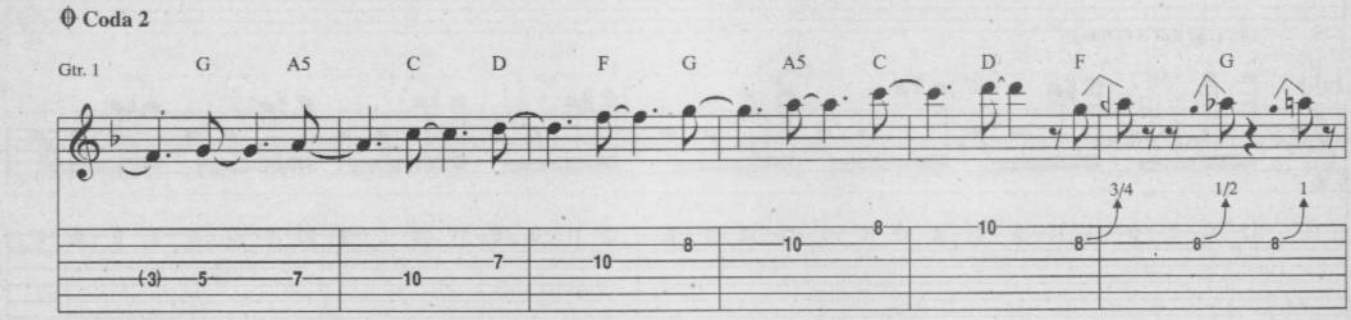
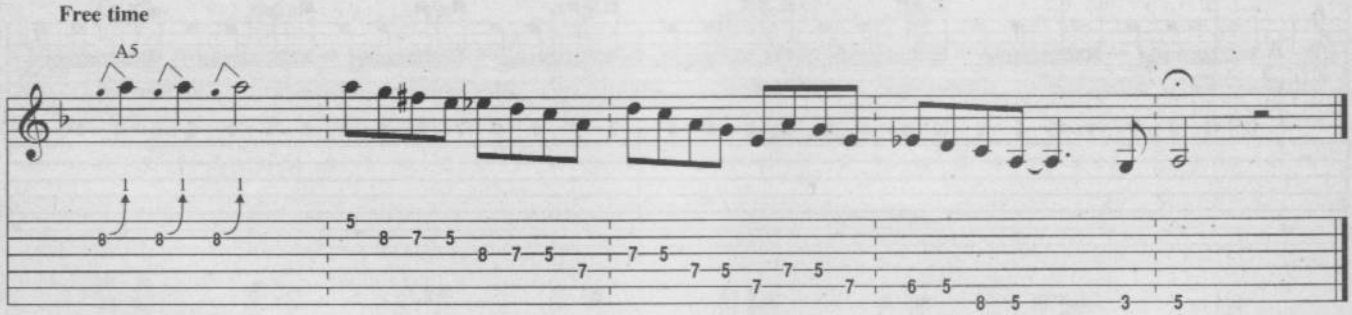






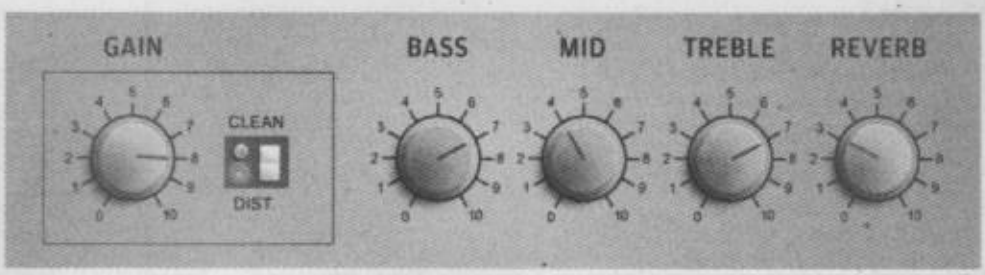
Lyrics

Verses 1 & 4
Nobody gonna take my car, I'm gonna race it to the ground.
A nobody gonna beat my car, it's gonna break the speed of sound.
Ooh, it's a killin' machine, it's got a everything.
Like a drivin' power, big fat tires and everything.
I love it, and I need it, I bleed it. Yeah, it's a wild hurricane.
All right, hold tight, I'm a highway star.

Verse 2
Nobody gonna take my girl, I'm gonna keep her to the end.
A nobody gonna have my girl, she stays close on every bend.
Ooh, she's a killin' machine, she's got a everything.
Like a movin' mouth, body control and everything.
I love her, and I need her, I seed her. Yeah, she turns me on.
All right, hold tight, I'm a highway star.

Verse 3
Nobody gonna take my head, I got speed inside my brain.
A nobody gonna steal my head now that I'm on the road again.
Ooh, I'm in heaven again, I got a everything.
Like a movin' ground, an open road and everything.
I love it, and I need it, I seed it. Eight cylinders, all mine.
All right, hold tight, I'm a highway star.

"Concrete Jungle" Black Label Society



KEY NOTES Zakk Wylde tunes his Les Paul down a whole step, both for the bone-crunching bottom afforded by the lower pitch and the wide vibrato facilitated by the slacker strings. Wylde opens things up with a talk-box-driven moan, choosing his notes from the F♯ hexatonic blues scale (F♯–A–B–B♯/C–C♯–E). The riffage—initially rather clean-toned—is all on low strings, single notes alternating with two-note power chords. Dig, however, how Wylde occasionally hits a jangling F♯5 chord, letting it ring through four bars of the primary guitar lines, and how he injects a C5(♯11) arpeggio (C–F♯–G) into the pre-chorus. It's touches like these that raise the song above a hundred other down-tuned compositions.

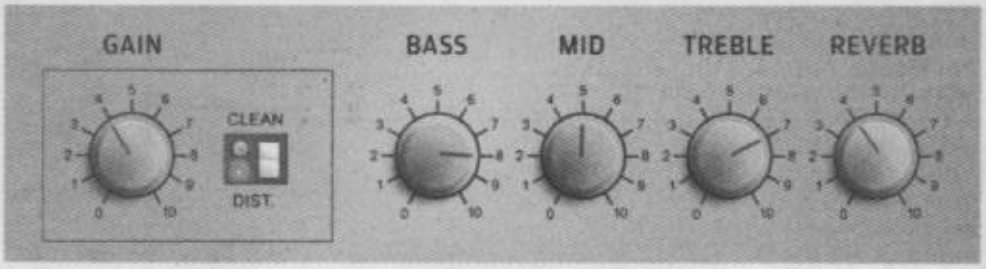
ALBUM
Shot to Hell
(Roadrunner)

Another important touch is the presumably premeditated solo. Almost every one of its eight bars presents a different idea: the first bar's long, bluesy bend and vibrato contrasts with the second bar's triplet-inflected angularity and the repetitive licks of the third and fourth bars. The palm-muted scale in bar five is F♯ pentatonic minor (F♯–A–B–C♯–E), while the fretboard tapping of the sixth bar gets its mosquito-in-the-ear charm from just three notes (B♯, C♯, and E). All this frenetic activity is answered with a single note on the first beat of measure seven, repeated with echo through the final two measures. Each of these nuggets could be easily expanded into an etude, for practicing purposes.

BIG PICTURE Talk boxes have been in guitarists' arsenals since the early '70s. They rout the guitar's signal to a PA horn driver connected to a length of plastic aquarium tubing that the player puts in his mouth. Changing the mouth shape alters the guitar's tone, as if the sound is coming from the guitarist's throat. Classic examples of talk-box tracks include Peter Frampton's "Do You Feel Like I Do?," Joe Walsh's "Rocky Mountain Way," and Steely Dan's "Haitian Divorce."

—DOUGLAS BALDWIN

"Highway Star" Deep Purple



KEY NOTES Use your thumb (wrapped around the neck) to fret the low G in the opening G5 chord, then switch to your 3rd finger to fret the subsequent low G notes. Play the palm-muted power chords (F5, G5, B♭5, C5, etc.) with continuous downstrums, then open up and relax a bit for the D5 section. On those Am7 accents, fret the G and C with any pair of fingers and use the sides of the same fingers to mute the higher strings. Be patient during the keyboard solo; begin by learning the continuous eighth-note accompaniment, and in your spare time study the full chords implied by the keyboard arpeggios. Advanced players could do well to transcribe the keyboard solo itself.

ALBUM
Machine Head
(Warner Bros.)

BIG PICTURE Along with the first few albums by Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, Deep Purple's *Machine Head* (and this track in particular) laid the ferric foundation of what we now call "metal." "Highway Star" stands out for its brilliantly arranged sections and baroque/classical borrowings, an early precursor to Iron Maiden, Yngwie Malmsteen, and Metallica. The harmonized guitar solo slithers with several of Ritchie Blackmore's signature "snake charmer" notes, specifically A♭, F♯, and the briefly-heard E♭ (which is bent up to an F). These are all non-diatonic notes to D minor, the underlying chord in the first section of his solo. Further enigma is generated via the two guitars playing in parallel minor 3rds, as if Gtr. 2 is in D minor and Gtr. 3 is in F minor. The hints of Baroque and Classical melodicism, first used in the keyboard solo, return with the Dm–Gm–C–A5 cadence and become a full-on barrage with the continuous 16th notes at 4:31. Learn the lower part (Riff A1, played by Gtr. 2) first, then get someone else to play the harmony. Impress your music teacher by pointing out that, in contrast to the parallel minor 3rds employed earlier, this part uses the more conventional *diatonic* 3rd above the primary melody. —DOUGLAS BALDWIN