Signature Licks

ERIC Johnson

A STEP-BY-STEP BREAKDOWN
OF HIS PLAYING TECHNIQUE
BY WOLF MARSHALL



Signature Licks

ERIC JOHNSON

A STEP-BY-STEP BREAKDOWN OF HIS PLAYING TECHNIQUE

BY WOLF MARSHALL

CONTENTS

2 INTRODUCTION

4 SOUND

5 SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

11 STYLES

23 SOLOS

44 SONGS

45 CLIFFS OF DOVER

56 ZAP

64 NOTATION LEGEND

Front cover photo by MAX CRACE
Back cover photo by PARK STREET
Interior photos including ERIC JOHNSON hand shots
by MARGOT REYES

ISBN 0-7935-0822-3

Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation

7777 West Bluemound Road P.O. Box 13819 Milwaukee, WI 53213

Copyright © 1992 by HAL LEONARD PUBLISHING CORPORATION
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

For all works contained herein:
Unauthorized copying, arranging, adapting, recording or public performances are infringement of copyright.
Infringers are liable under the law.

INTRODUCTION

Eric Johnson has been astonishing the guitar community for a decade now. His fans and admirers include the *creme de la creme*—Steve Morse, Allan Holdsworth, Larry Carlton and Jeff "Skunk" Baxter, to name just a few. Johnson is the consummate musician —a true fusion artist who tastefully balances everything from rock, blues and sophisticated pop to jazz and country – a full gamut of electric, acoustic and electronic music. To anyone who has experienced Eric's 1986 solo debut ***Tones*** (Reprise #9-25375) or his impressive follow-up record, ***Ah Via Musicom*** (Capitol #7-90517-2), this fact is self-evident.

Born August 17, 1954, in Austin, Texas, Johnson studied piano for six years before deciding to play the guitar at age 11. Young Eric moved through a number of influences in his early teens—The Ventures, Wes Montgomery, Jimi Hendrix and Django Reinhardt (all of whom surface in hybrid forms in Johnson's eclectic style)—and turned semi-pro at 15 when he joined the progressive rock group Mariani. By his late teens, Eric was the talk of the town, wowing local giants Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

In the mid '70s, Eric recorded with the Electromagnets (Austin's first significant fusion band), and attained a substantial regional following by the early '80s—a following expanded through session appearances with Christopher Cross, Cat Stevens and Carole King. Prior to recording ***Tones***, he made an auspicious outing on Steve Morse's 1985 ***Stand Up*** album as guest performer, co-writing, singing and soloing on the track "Distant Star." Also notable is his live version of "Cliffs Of Dover," captured in 1985's ***Austin City Limits*** show.

The following selected discography is well worth investigating.

Solo recordings: ***Tones***, Reprise; ***Ah Via Musicom***, Capitol/Cinema

Session recordings: Carole King, ***Pearls***, Capitol; ***One To One***, Atlantic; Cat Stevens, ***Back To Earth***, A&M; Christopher Cross, ***Christopher Cross***, Warner Bros.; Steve Morse Band, ***Stand Up***, Elektra; Rodney Crowell, ***Street Language***, Columbia; Mark Anthony Thompson, ***Mark Anthony Thompson***, Warner Bros.; Pressure, ***Pressure***, Recycled; Alessi, ***Long Time Friends***, Quest; Dan Del Santo, ***World Beat***, Pleasure; Mariani, ***Perpetuum Mobile***, Sonobeat; Electromagnets, ***Electromagnets***, EGM

Soundpages: "Cliffs Of Dover" (Live, 1985 concert), ***Austin City Limits***, Guitar Player (May 1986)

Anthologies: ***The Austin Collection***, Felicity; ***Guitar Speak***, I.R.S.

Films: Carole King, ***One To One*** (live concert movie, 1981); ***Austin City Limits*** (both 1985 and 1989 shows), PBS

Television: ***The Tonight Show*** (January 23, 1991), NBC

Soundtracks: ***The Chambered Nautilus***, PBS

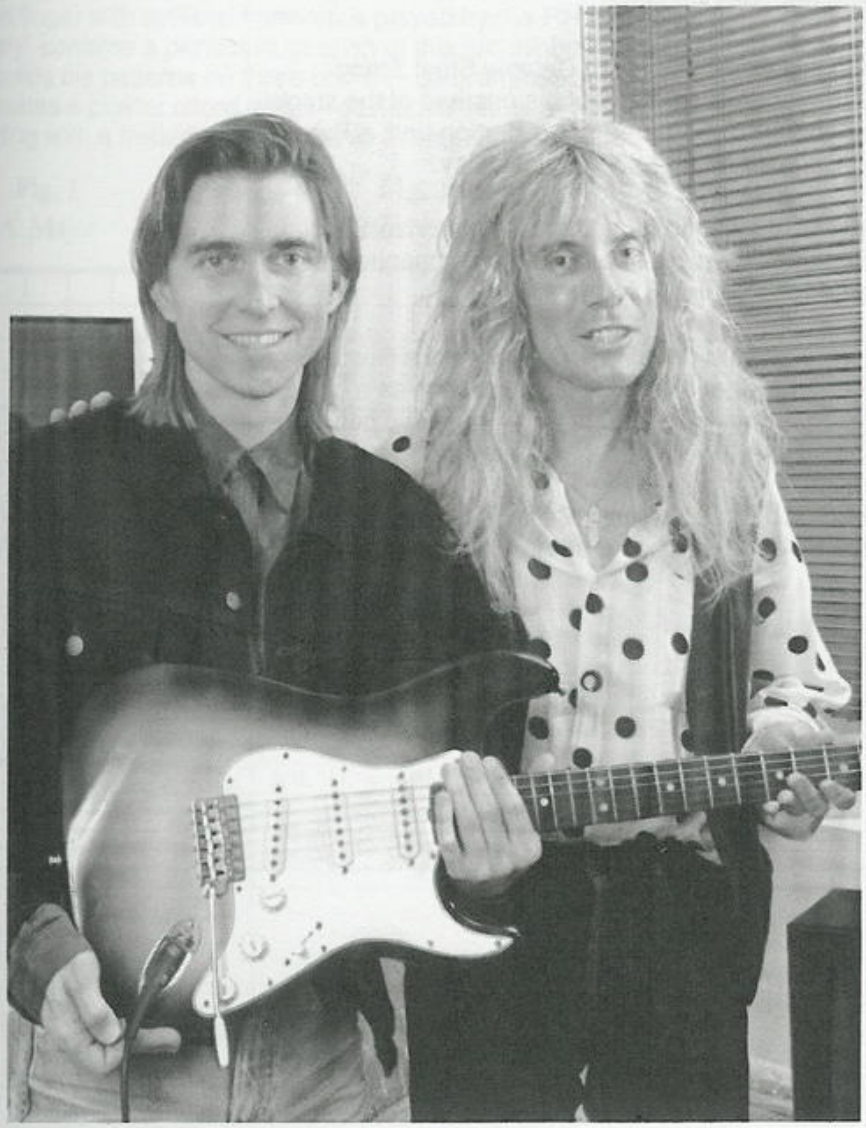
Also definitely a must...

Instructional Videos: ***Total Electric Guitar***, Eric Johnson, Hot Licks

Folios: ***Eric Johnson Guitar Transcriptions***, Recorded Versions, Hal Leonard Publishing

Articles: "Eric Johnson – The Ultimate Private Lesson," Guitar School (May 1991); "Leaps Of Faith," Guitar World (May 1991); "Eric Johnson: *Tones* - Music Appreciation," Guitar For The Practicing Musician (December 1988); "Mr. Guitar," Guitar For The Practicing Musician (January 1991)

Interviews: "An Underground Legend Surfaces," Guitar Player (May 1986); "The *Ah Via Musicom* Sessions," Guitar Player (March 1990)



Eric Johnson, Wolf Marshall

Capitol Tower
Hollywood, CA
February 1991

SOUND

Eric Johnson's sound is truly his signature - no one sounds quite like him. Along with his unique touch and conception on the instrument, his obsession with tone is legendary. He usually plays one of two stock Fender Stratocasters - a 1954 model (his main guitar) and a 1958 model. Both have maple necks / fretboards and the original single-coil pickups. The '54 is described by Eric as having a smoother, bassier bridge pickup tone and a trebly neck tone, while the '58 produces a brighter bridge tone and a bassier neck-position sound.

These are plugged into his unique tri-amp rig. Three amps with signal routing capabilities are used. The signal path is as follows: The guitar goes to a custom-made A/B switch. The A side is sent to his lead setup. The B side goes to a second A/B switch that chooses between two different rhythm setups. The first of these is for clean chording, utilizing two Fender Twin Reverbs (vintage black-face models) in stereo, with each amp driving two of the12" speakers in a single Marshall 4 x 12 cabinet. That signal goes through an effects loop switcher to an Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Memory Man (alternate chorus effect), and then to an Echoplex tape echo unit and a T.C. Electronics Stereo Chorus (main chorus effect) before seeing the Twin Reverbs.

The second system is for dirty rhythm. On this side Eric uses a Dumble Steel String Singer head to drive a Marshall 4 x 12 speaker box wired at 8 ohms (instead of the stock 16 ohms). The effects on this path are an Ibanez Tube Screamer distortion unit, a Fuzz Face fuzztone (shades of Jimi), an MXR Chorus and an MXR Digital Delay.

The lead setup employs a 50 or 100-watt Marshall head, or a Dumble Overdrive Special, into an 8-ohm Marshall 4 x 12 as well. Eric uses a Y-cord to plug into both channels of the Marshall head, which is turned up to 10.

The lead effects chain includes a Cry Baby wah-wah pedal, a T.C. Electronics Sustainer, a Fender spring-reverb unit, an Echoplex and a Chandler Tube Driver (acting as a clean preamp/boost). He sets both Echoplexes for about four repeats with the delays between 20 and 25 milliseconds.

Eric occasionally records with a Gibson ES-335 (on "Zap" and "Cliffs Of Dover," for instance). For acoustic guitars, he uses a Guild 12-string, a 6-string Martin and a Ramirez nylon-string.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

In addition to his authoritative command of standard guitar approaches, Eric Johnson incorporates several techniques not frequently found in rock music. As a basic introduction and summary of these exciting sonic options, the following SPECIAL TECHNIQUES chapter is offered.

HARP HARMONICS

Pioneered by players such as (country guitarist) Chet Atkins, and perfected in the music of Lenny Breau and Ted Greene, the technique of generating cascades of harp-like arpeggios from fretted chords produces a gorgeous sound. The basic concept involves playing octave artificial harmonics with the RH thumb and index finger - the thumb plucks the note while the index finger's tip simultaneously touches the harmonic. Take any chord form, and visualize the harmonic nodes 12 frets above the fretted pitches. If the chord were a garden variety A in the open first position (Fig.1), the octave-above harmonics would occur over (not between) the 12th and 14th frets (Fig.2). Use the chord shape as a guide and outline that shape in artificial harmonics (Fig.3). Using this principle and a variant of basic fingerpicking, Eric alternates notes played by the RH middle finger with artificial harmonics played by the RH thumb & index. The coda of "Victory" contains a perfect illustration of this technique at 5:53. In this excerpt, EX.1, Eric builds his patterns on three chords - diagrammed in the chord grids above the music. He creates a cluster chord effect - sustained scalar melodies - by ascending and descending with a fretted note/harmonic alternating sequence.

Fig. 1
A Major

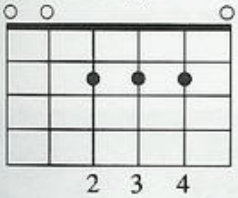
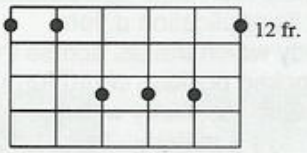
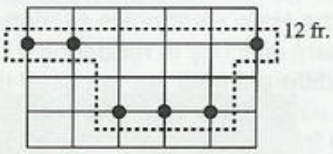


Fig. 2
Harmonics



Touch w/RH index finger and pluck w/RH thumb.

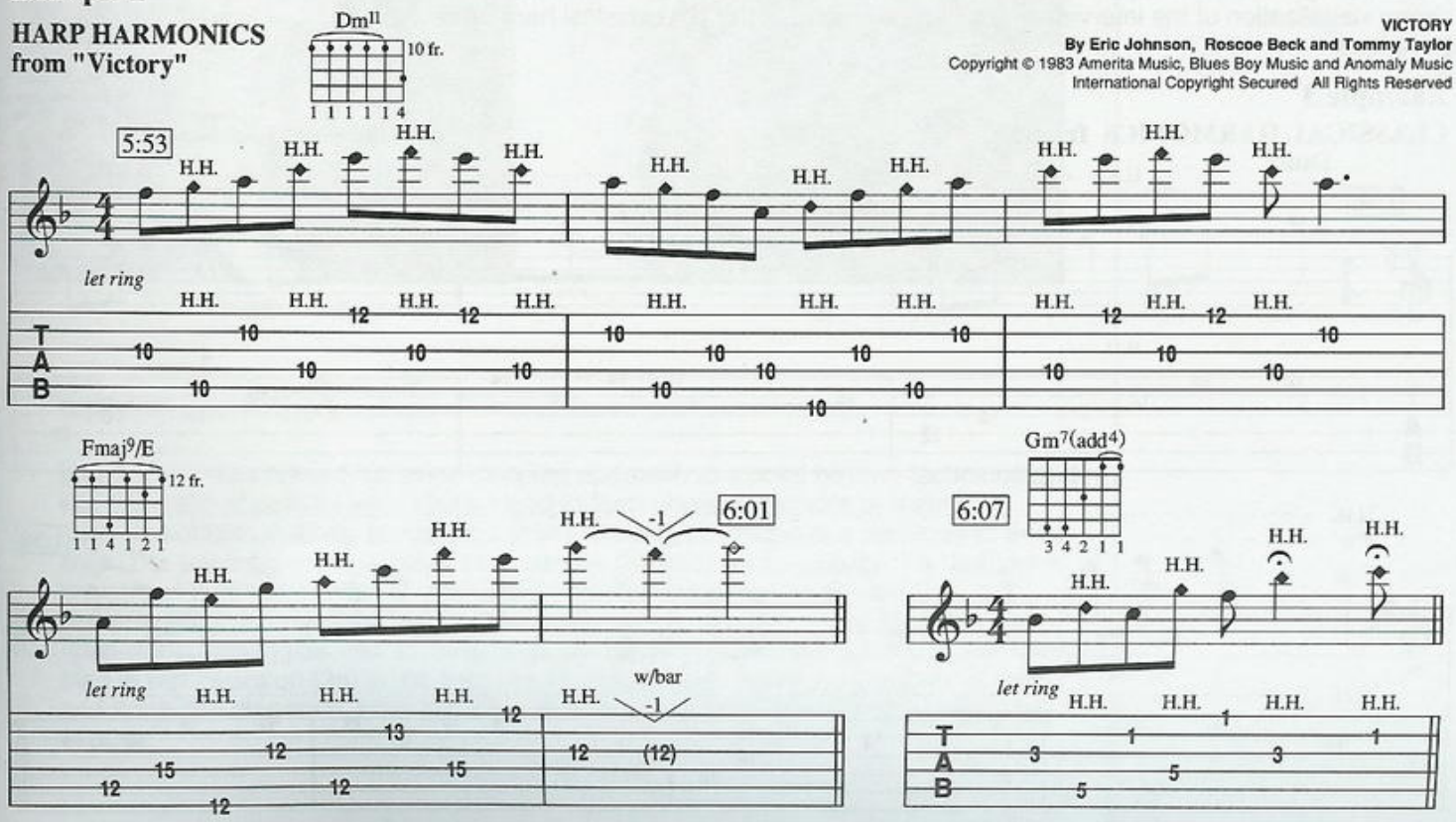
Fig. 3
Shape



Example 1

HARP HARMONICS from "Victory"

VICTORY
By Eric Johnson, Roscoe Beck and Tommy Taylor
Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music, Blues Boy Music and Anomaly Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



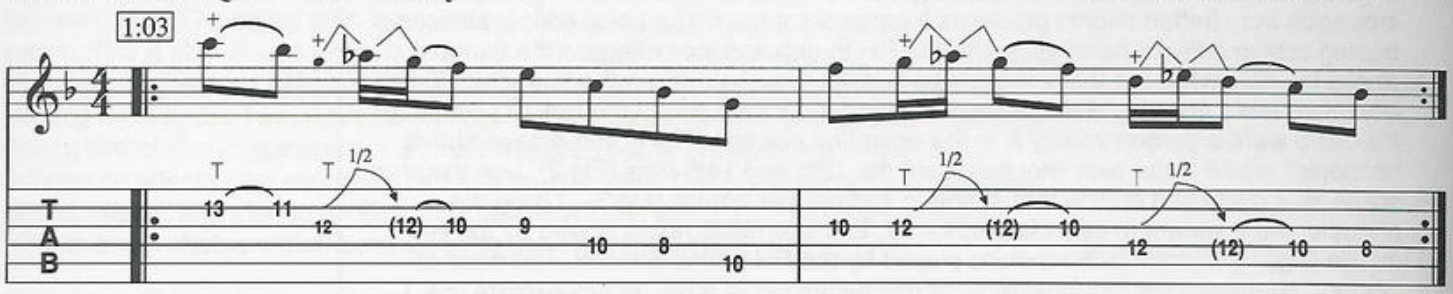
KOTO EFFECT

A singular Eric Johnsonism is his "Koto" technique. This produces an impression of the Far East by mimicking the sound of the Japanese Koto. Here, a RH finger (the middle finger when holding a pick or the index finger when not holding a pick) taps on the first pitch while it is simultaneously plucked with the the RH thumb close behind (within two frets' distance). This sounds the note with a thin, brittle attack. It is then pulled off to a lower pitch. The fretting hand provides either vibrato or string bending, which heightens the oriental impression with micro-tonality. EX.2, from "Victory" at 1:03, serves as a splendid example. In this case, Eric bends notes on the 3rd and 4th strings while tapping on above. The taps are pulled off to fretted lower pitches on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th strings right after the Koto effect is played.

Example 2

KOTO TECHNIQUE from "Victory"

VICTORY
By Eric Johnson, Roscoe Beck and Tommy Taylor
Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music, Blues Boy Music and Anomaly Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



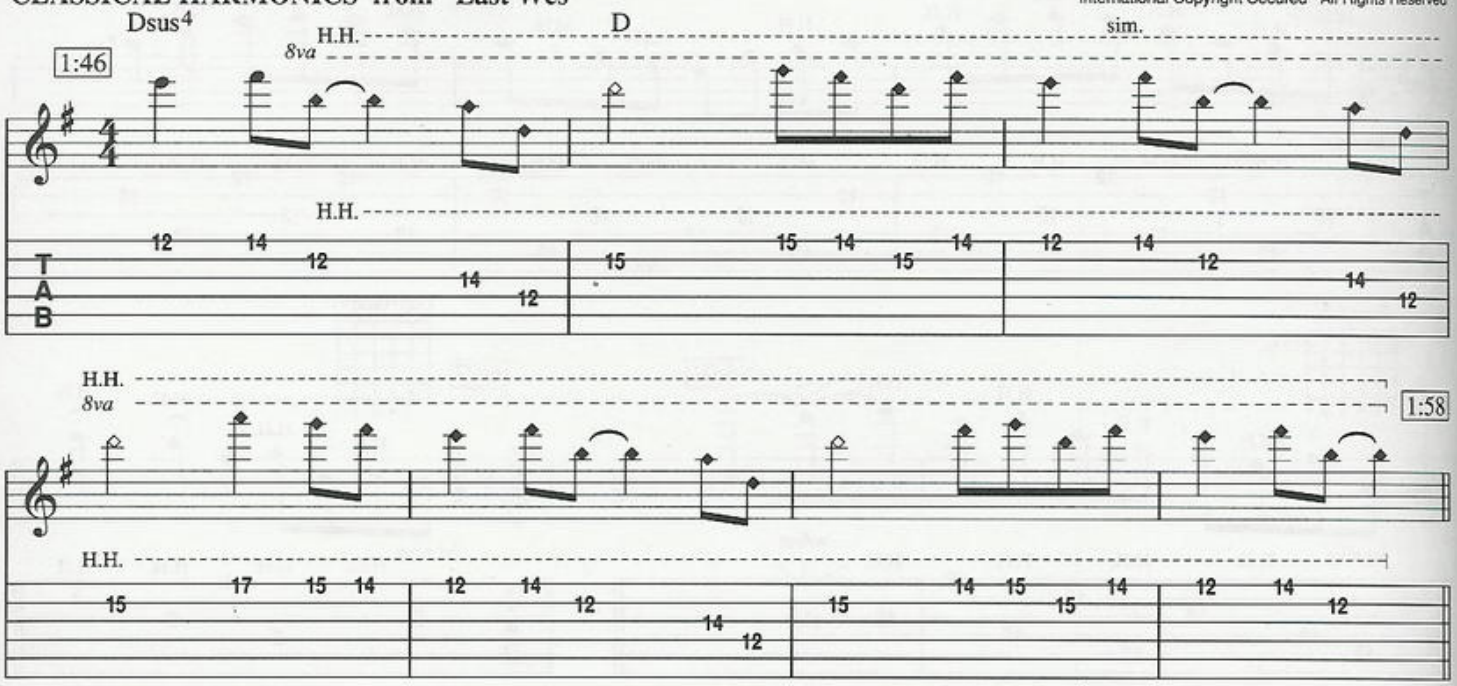
CLASSICAL HARMONICS

Classical harmonics (also known as "artificial harmonics" in classical guitar music) technique is used to create octave-above melodies from fretted pitches. The harmonic is played by touching the node (harmonic point on the string) with the RH index fingertip and plucking with the RH ring finger to sound the note. The basic technique is a variant of the approach discussed in the Harp Harmonics section, but its application differs slightly. Often the RH encounters difficulty in rendering a melody which travels across the strings and involves notes on different frets (as opposed to a locked position chord form). Try playing a simple two or three note lick on one string to develop familiarity with this approach. EX.3 is a passage from "East Wes" in which Eric plays a melody - from 1:46 to 1:58 - in octave harmonics. It is necessary to follow the shape of the line an octave (12 frets) higher - over the pickups of a Strat instead of the fingerboard. This requires strong visualization of the intervals and a firm command of the RH classical harmonics technique.

Example 3

CLASSICAL HARMONICS from "East Wes"

EAST WES
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



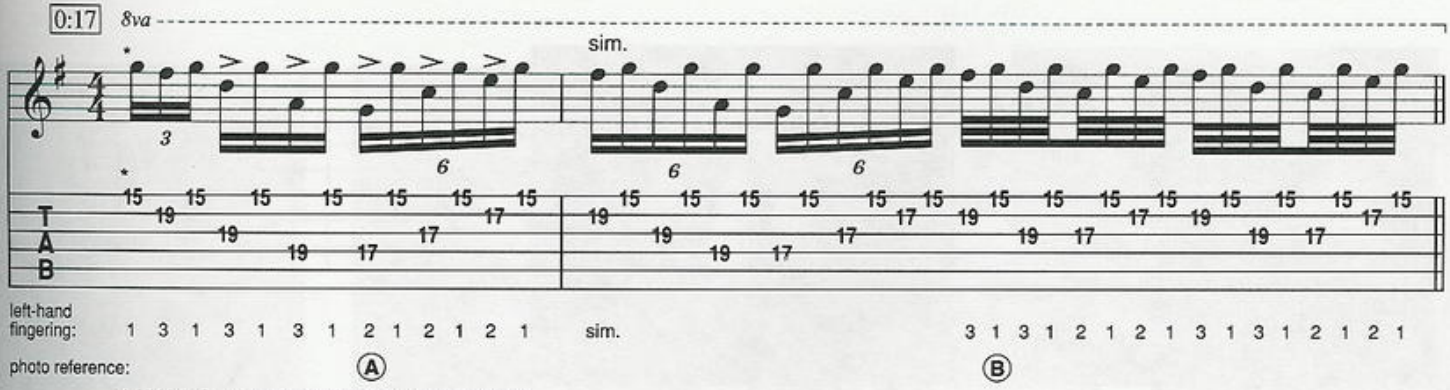
HYBRID PICKING

Eric relies heavily on hybrid picking in his bag of techniques. It appears in many forms and contexts - as a part of the riff in "Steve's Boogie," as a single-note pedal tone lick in the intro of "Cliffs Of Dover," as a lead/rhythm fingerpicking approach in the chordal opening section of "Zap"...You get the idea. The basic technique involves the use of the flat pick combined with one or more fingers of the pickhand. EX.4 illustrates Eric hybrid picking a pedal tone lick from the intro of "Cliffs Of Dover". Eric elaborates, "I use both the pick and middle finger for this line. The middle finger plucks the high G's while the pick plays the lower notes. I kind of think of it as a (Jeff) 'Beck thing' - you know how he used to play this stuff a lot" (plays Elmore James blues cliche with hybrid picking).

Example 4

HYBRID PICKING
from "Ciffs of Dover" Intro: 3rd Phrase

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



* All high G's played with right-hand middle finger.



4A



4B

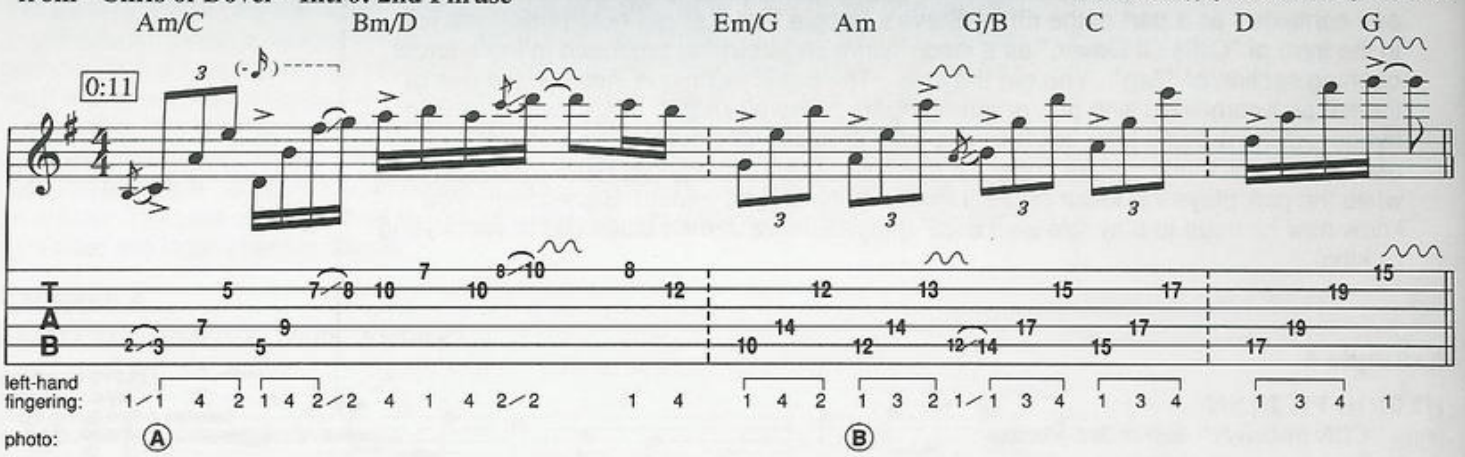
STRING-SKIPPING

Eric Johnson has refined his string-skipping approach to a point beyond technique and into the realm of pure musical ideas. Used to form unusual intervals or maintain evenness of tone in string groups, the string-skipping technique is a mainstay of Eric's style. The following two examples demonstrate the concept beautifully. The first, from the intro of "Cliffs Of Dover": 2nd phrase at 0:11, conveys the sort of violinistic brilliance to which Eric aspires. In this phrase, EX.5, he outlines a series of triads using open-voiced arpeggios. The LH fingerings are based on two shapes - Fig.4- a minor triad in first inversion (3rd in the bass) and a root-position minor triad, shown as Em/G and Am in the diagrams. Note the string skips between the 4th and 2nd strings in this excerpt.

Example 5

STRING SKIPPING
from "Cliffs of Dover" Intro: 2nd Phrase

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



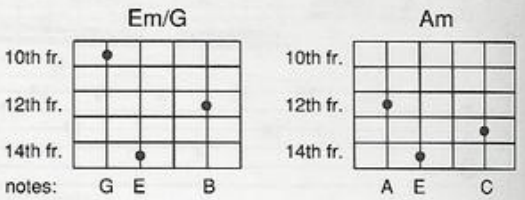


5A



5B

Fig. 4

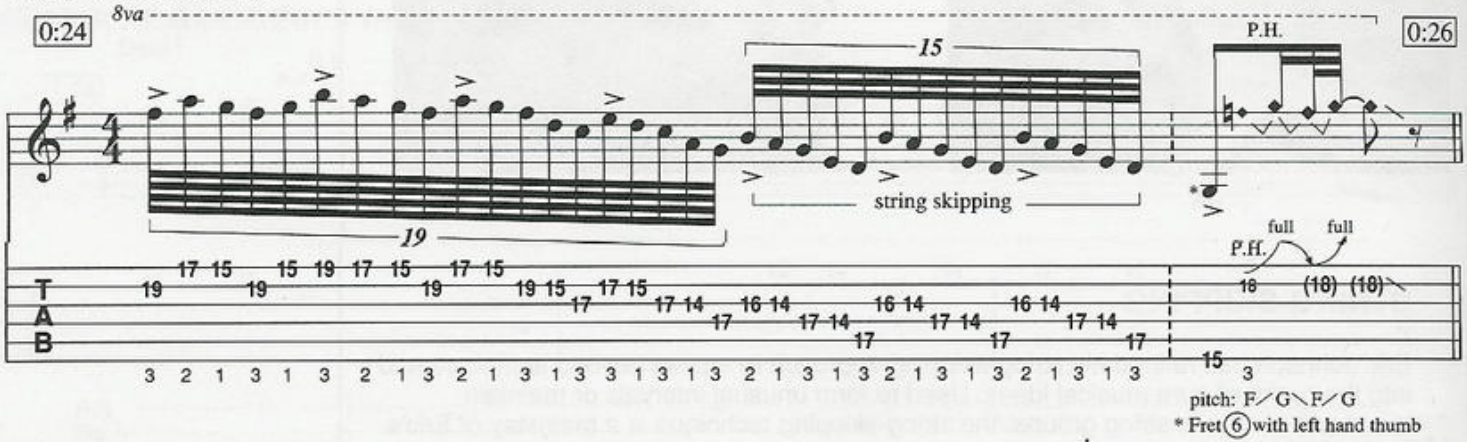


The second excerpt, EX.6, is an example of how Eric seamlessly incorporates string skipping into his single-note improvising. Here, the skipping takes place during a fast Em pentatonic ostinato at the end of his "Cliffs Of Dover" intro solo at 0:24. The skips are from the 5th to the 3rd string on beat two of the lick and on beat three from the 6th to the 2nd string.

Example 6

STRING SKIPPING
from "Cliffs of Dover"

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



POSITION CHANGING

Though virtually every guitarist exploits position changing on the fingerboard, few do it with the finesse and range that Eric exhibits. EX.7, from the beginning of his "Desert Rose" solo, is exemplary. The moves within this brief EJ passage require no less than 16 photos to portray the physical motion and progression of events! (See Fig.5) Eric puts it all together in this lick - a veritable catalog of Johnsonisms: pinky slides in bars 1 and 3 (Photos 7A, 7B and 7M), unusual string skips and fingerings within the F minor

pentatonic (F,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) and F minor hexatonic (F,G,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) scales, wide interval sounds in bars 2 and 3, perfect 4ths (Photos 7I and 7J) and stacked perfect 5ths (Photos 7K,7L and 7M).

Fig. 5


7A


7B


7C


7D


7E


7F


7G

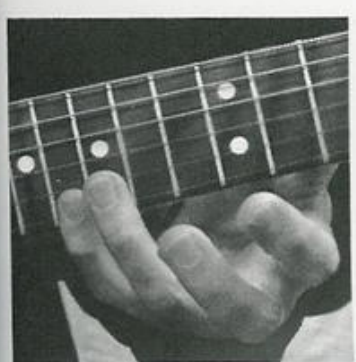

7H


7I


7J


7K


7L


7M


7N

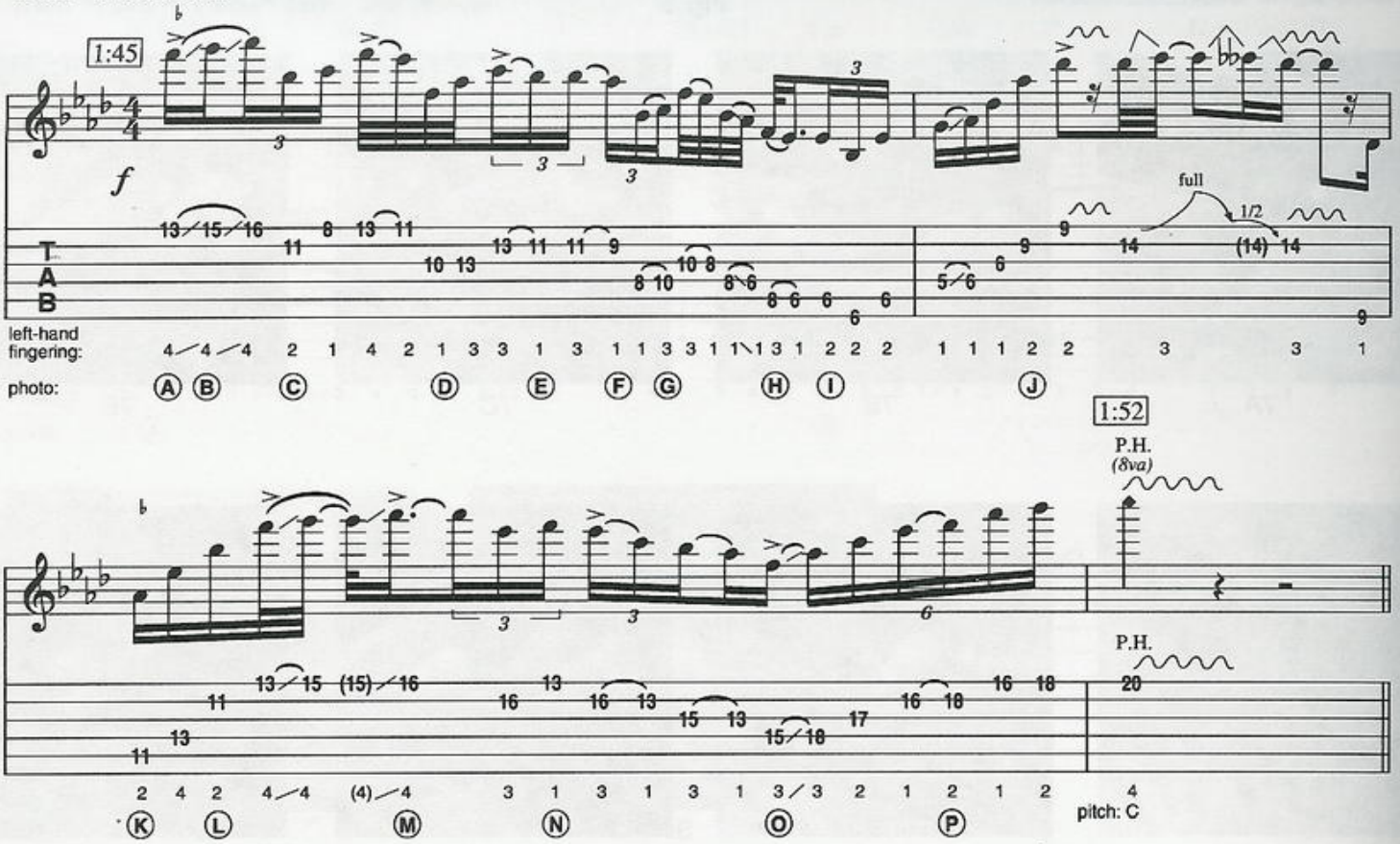

7O


7P

Example 7

POSITION CHANGING
from "Desert Rose"

DESERT ROSE
By Eric Johnson and Vince Mariani
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music and King's Chamber Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



Beyond the intricacies of Eric's special techniques, bear in mind his overall musical priority— tone. Deriving the most tone from the guitar, amp, effects and from the hands themselves is his obsession and passion, and shows in everything he plays.

STYLES

INTRODUCTION

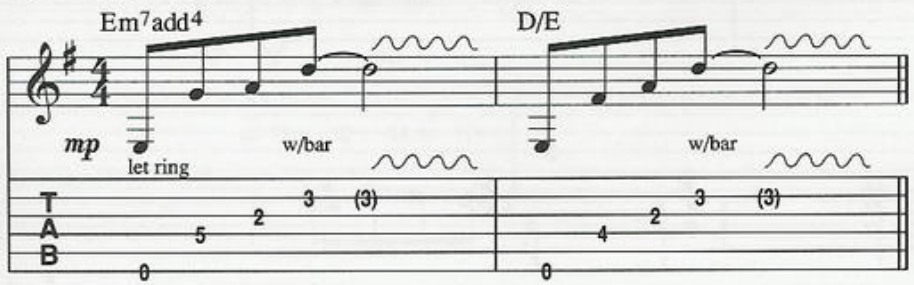
Eric Johnson's music is rich in diversity and fusion of styles. His playing seems to embrace practically every approach and tangent with equal expertise, finesse and confidence. The following section, ERIC JOHNSON STYLES, explores signature licks from four different pieces in varying styles, as an overview of his eclectic and well-studied musical personality. "East Wes" is a subtle but sophisticated modal jazz number while "Steve's Boogie" is a straight-ahead uptempo country swing outing. "Victory" sheds light on the Hendrix/R&B connection, and "Song For George" is an acoustic solo marrying rural blues and country styles.

EAST WES

"East Wes" finds Eric Johnson combining traditional and modern jazz elements to create a tender homage to the late great jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery. The intro ushers in the figure heard throughout the piece - in the head, behind the guitar solo and during the outro. It is composed of polychords: Em7add4 and D/E, which act as a vamp, setting up a haunting, suspended mood. These can also be thought of as Dsus4 and D Major over the E pedal point in the bass. Eric adds some light tremolo bar vibrato to gently shake the chords, giving them a shimmering, chorused quality.

Example 1
JAZZ STYLE
from "East Wes"

EAST WES
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



The first section of the head is pure Wes (1st 8 bars) - 0:15-0:33. Eric states the elegant theme in octaves. He achieves the same warm, rich tone Wes did by attacking these with the RH thumb and employing careful LH muting to block unwanted strings out of the 2-note octave shapes. See FIGURE 1: Forms 1 & 2.

Figure 1

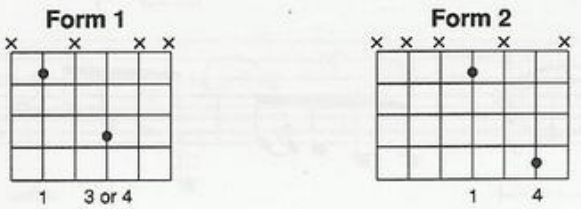
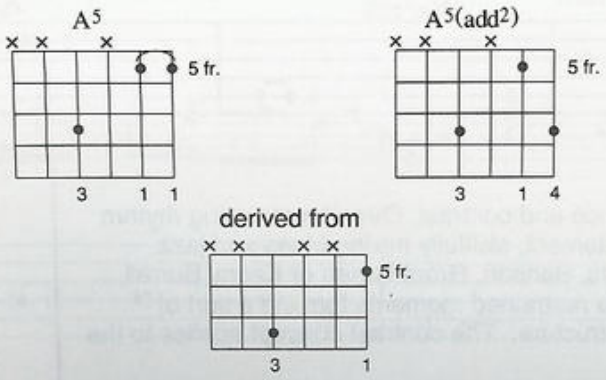


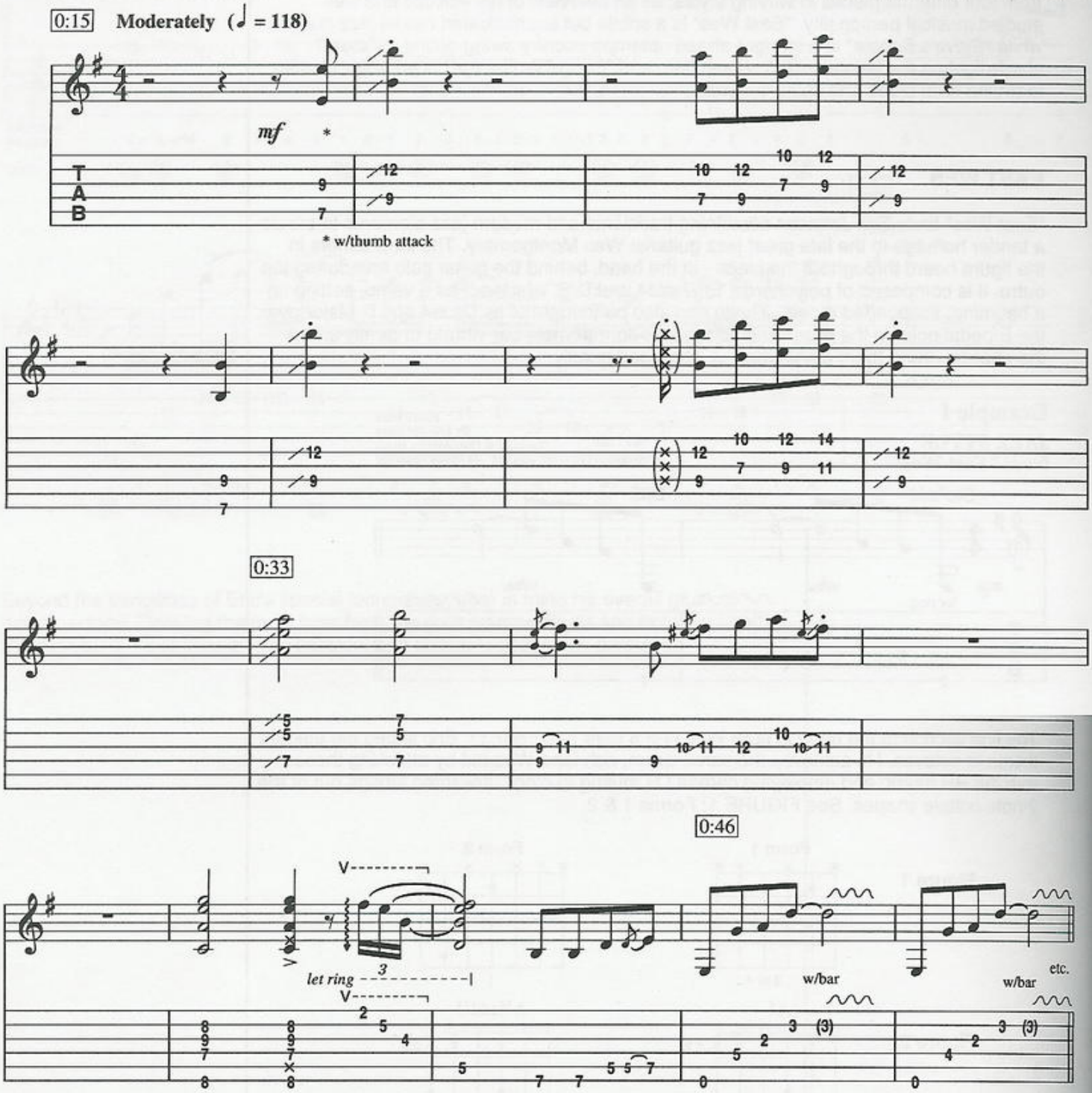
Figure 2



The second section, at 0:33, is reminiscent of Wes Montgomery's late-60's work on A&M or George Benson's mid-70's CTI offerings. Lush orchestration à la Don Sebesky accompanies the sparse modal chording and melody (derived basically from the E minor aeolian mode). Eric incorporates some Benson-ish 3-note voicings (elaborations of an alternate octave shape on the 4th and 1st strings - see FIGURE 2) as well as more sophisticated jazz harmonies (C6, D6/9) in his chord passages.

Example 2
HEAD - from "East Wes"

EAST WES
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



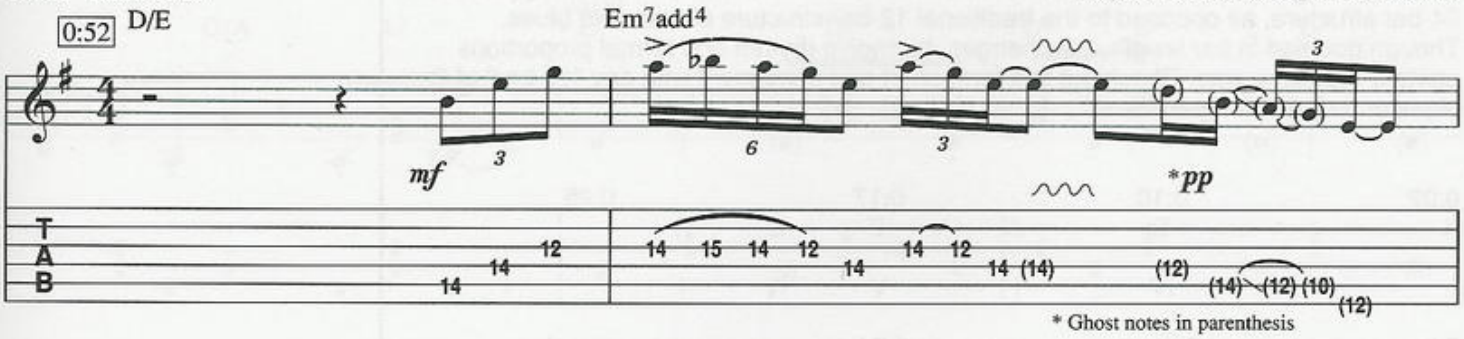
Eric's guitar solo (at 0:52) is a study in balance and contrast. Over the recurring rhythm figure in E minor, he creates a masterful statement, skillfully mixing blues and jazz ideas. The solo recalls the funky lines of Wes, Benson, Grant Green or Kenny Burrell, with its blend of crammed phrases and more restrained moments forming a sort of question and answer (motion and repose) structure. The contrast concept applies to the

melodic content as well. Eric draws from the Em pentatonic scale (E,G,A,B,D) and E blues scale (E,G,A,B♭,B,D), in addition to diatonic sounds in E minor (E,F#,G,A,B,C,D). Check out the use of dynamics in the opening lick. Its ghost notes and subtle accents, in conjunction with the elastic rhythmic flow of the phrase, impart a breathing quality to the passage. The slurred riff at 1:01 is a staple of the jazz/blues idiom, as is the aggressive rake-picked attack on beat 4 of that measure. Eric alludes to the underlying D-over-E tonality by consistently outlining a D major triad as a single note motif in bars 3, 4 and 7 of the excerpt.

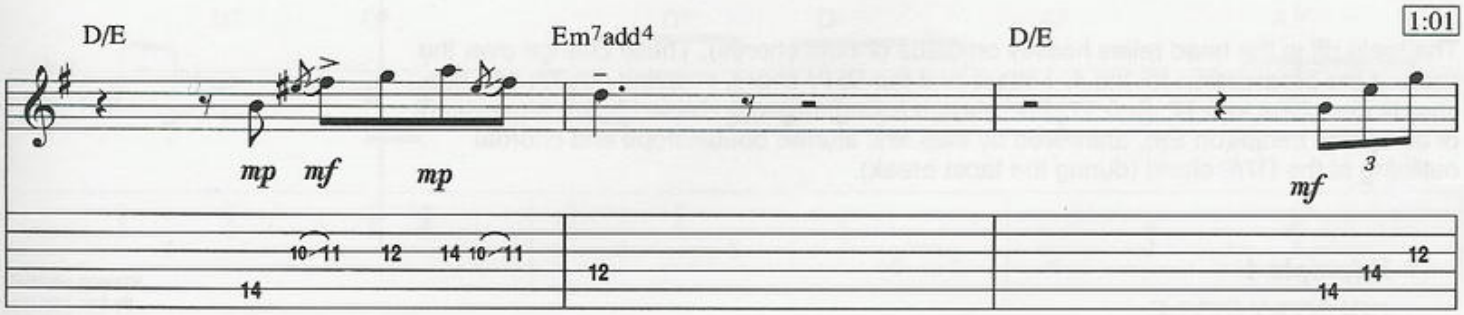
Example 3

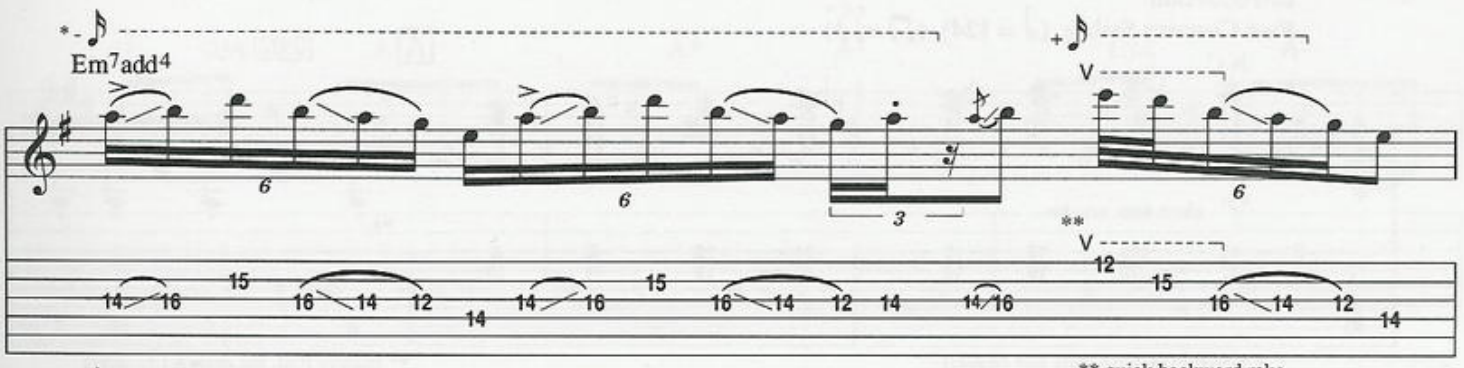
GUITAR SOLO
from "East Wes"

EAST WES
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



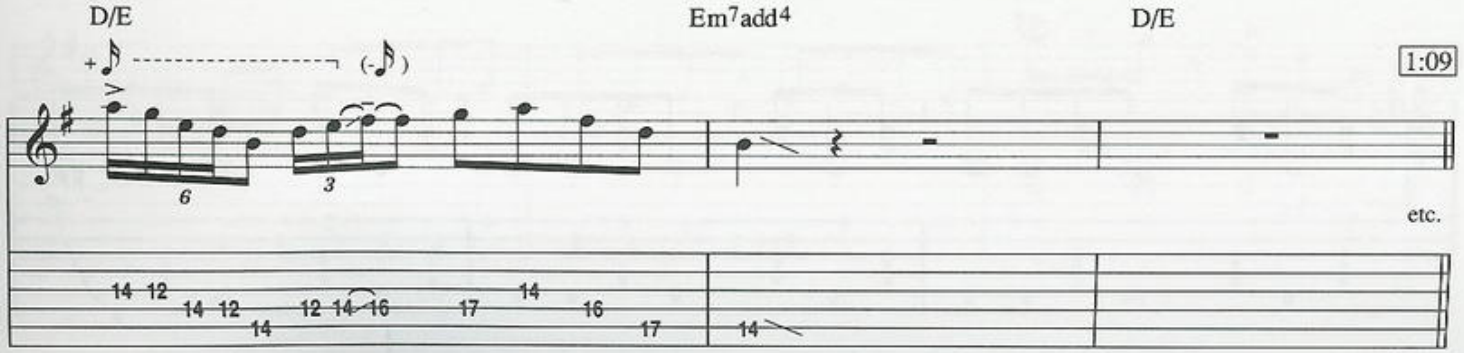
* Ghost notes in parenthesis





*(-) lay-back slightly

** quick backward rake



STEVE'S BOOGIE

"Steve's Boogie" reveals the influence of the country & western and western swing genres on Eric Johnson's style. It is absolutely authentic - distinguished by a twangy chicken-pickin' attack, crisp guitar tone and infectious rhythmic motion. The attack is the result of hybrid picking - a style similarly exploited by James Burton, Albert Lee, Ray Flacke and Jerry Reed (one of Eric's early heroes) - and RH muting. Eric held the pick between the thumb and index finger, using the other fingers to pluck double-stops above the bass notes, break up chords, or to play quasi-fingerpicked lines in tandem with the thumb (at 0:17, for instance). The tone is clean and cutting. Eric snagged a 1951 Telecaster for this one and colored its sound sparsely, using only reverb (from two black-face Fender Twin Reverb amps) and echo (via an Echoplex tape echo unit). The head of "Steve's Boogie" is essentially a blues form - modified in the written music to appear as a 24-bar structure, as opposed to the traditional 12-bar structure of standard blues. Though doubled in bar length, the changes, harmonic rhythm and formal proportions operate the same way. Check out this form chart and compare it with any "12-bar" of the blues or rock & roll repertoires.

0:02		0:10		0:17			0:25
A		D	A	E	D	A	
I		IV	I	V	IV	I	

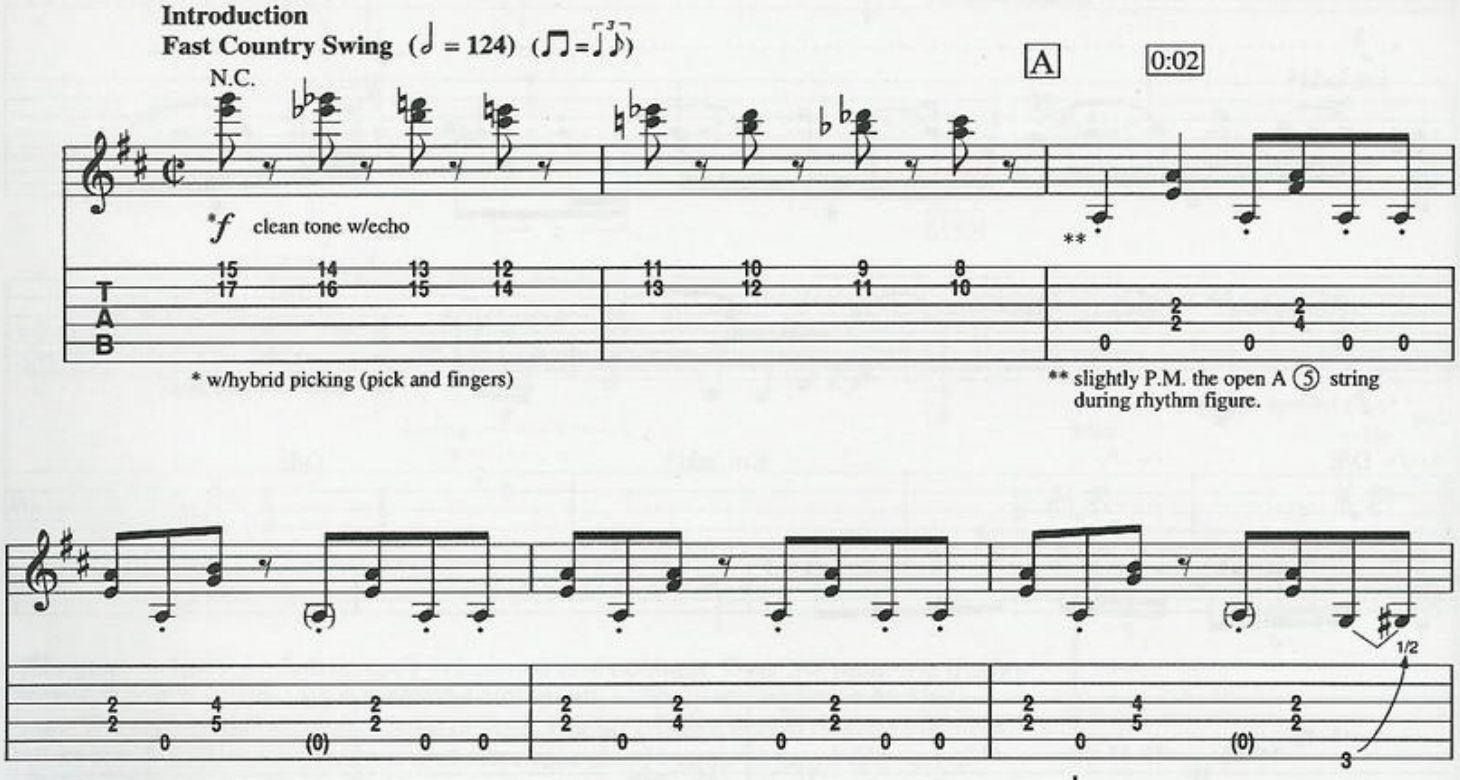
8 bars----------| 8 bars----------| 8 bars----------|

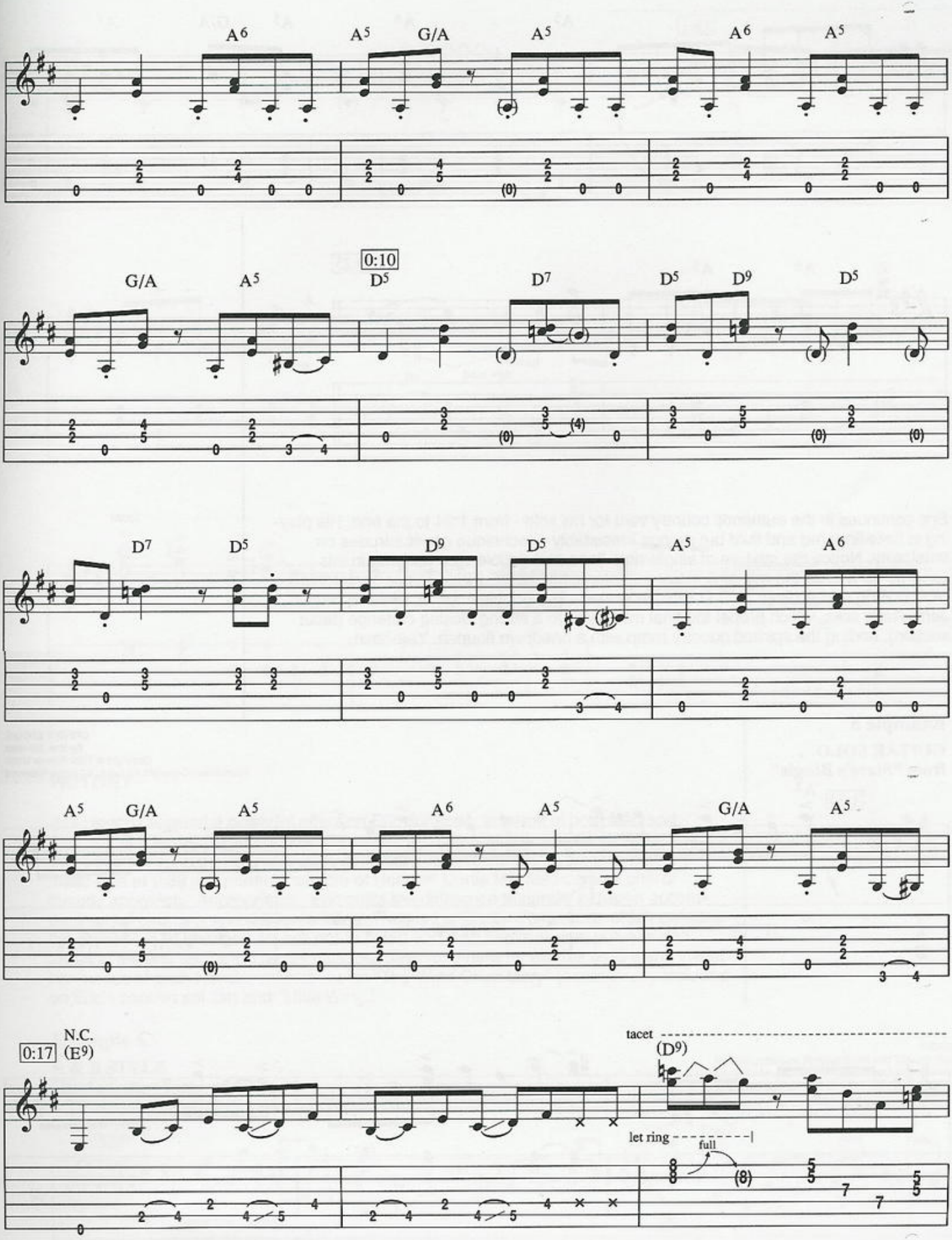
The main riff in the head relies heavily on diads (2-note chords). These change over the roots of the progression for the A: I chord and the D: IV chord, implying 6th,7th and 9th chords from 0:02 to 0:17. At 0:17, Eric plays a rolling, arpeggio-based figure reminiscent of bluegrass banjo (on E9), answered by bent and slurred doublestops and chordal outlining of the D7/9 chord (during the tacet break).

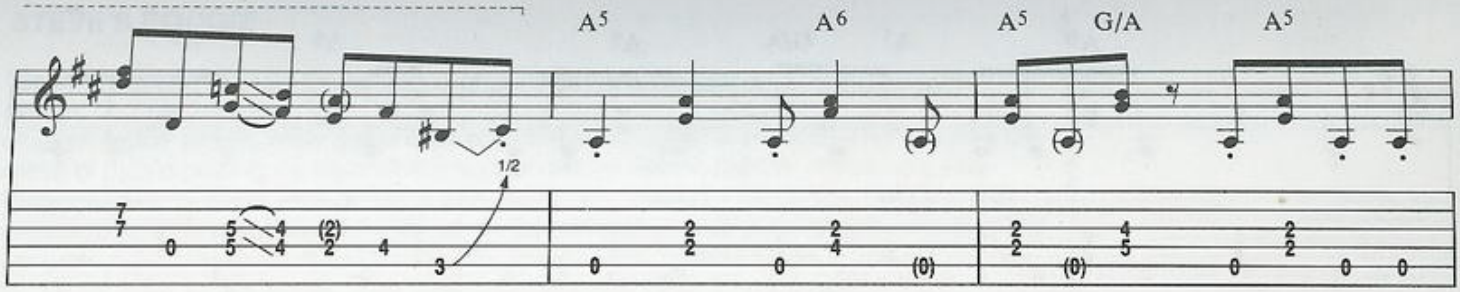
Example 4

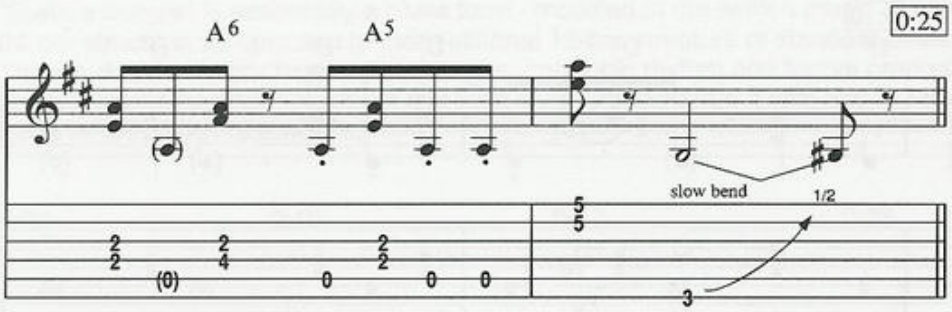
COUNTRY STYLE
from "Steve's Boogie"

STEVE'S BOOGIE
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved




A6
A5
G/A
A5
A6
A5
0:10
G/A
A5
D5
D7
D5
D9
D5
D7
D5
D9
D5
A5
A6
A5
G/A
A5
A6
A5
G/A
A5
0:17
N.C.
(E9)
tacet
(D9)
let ring
full



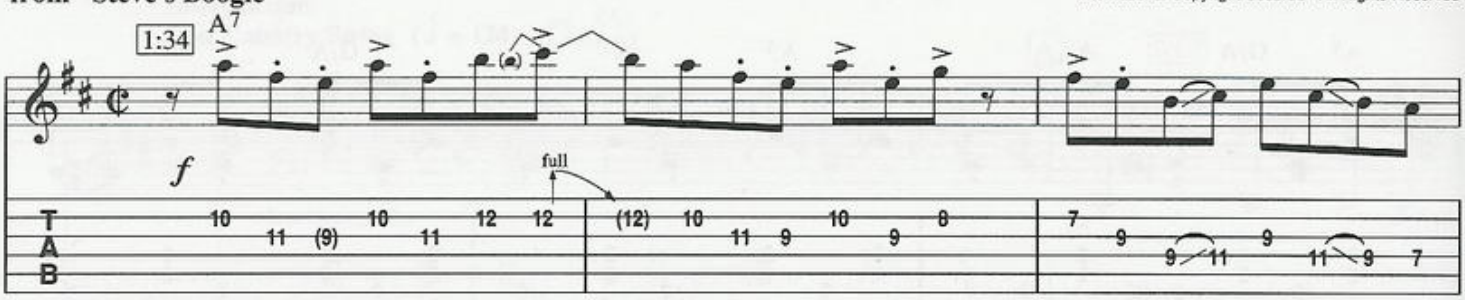


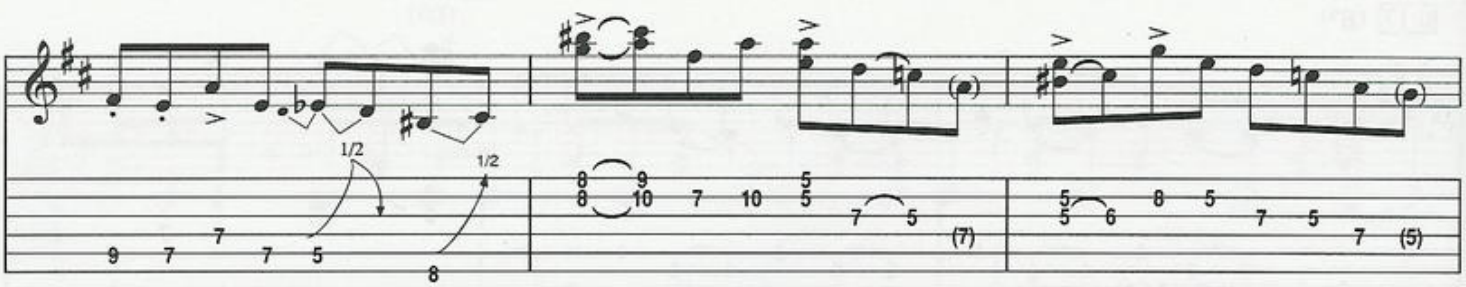
Eric continues in the authentic country vein for his solo - from 1:34 to the end. His playing is fleet-fingered and fluid but swings irresistably – technique never intrudes on musicality. Notice the mixture of single-note lines and double-stop textures in this excerpt, as well as the mix of A major pentatonic (A,B,C#,E,F#), A minor pentatonic (A,C,D,E,G) and A blues (A,C,D,E♭,E,G) scales. The doublestops at 1:41 are classic Jerry Reed licks, which propel the final measures to a strong closing cadence (tacet section), ending the spirited country romp with a hoedown flourish. Yee-haw!

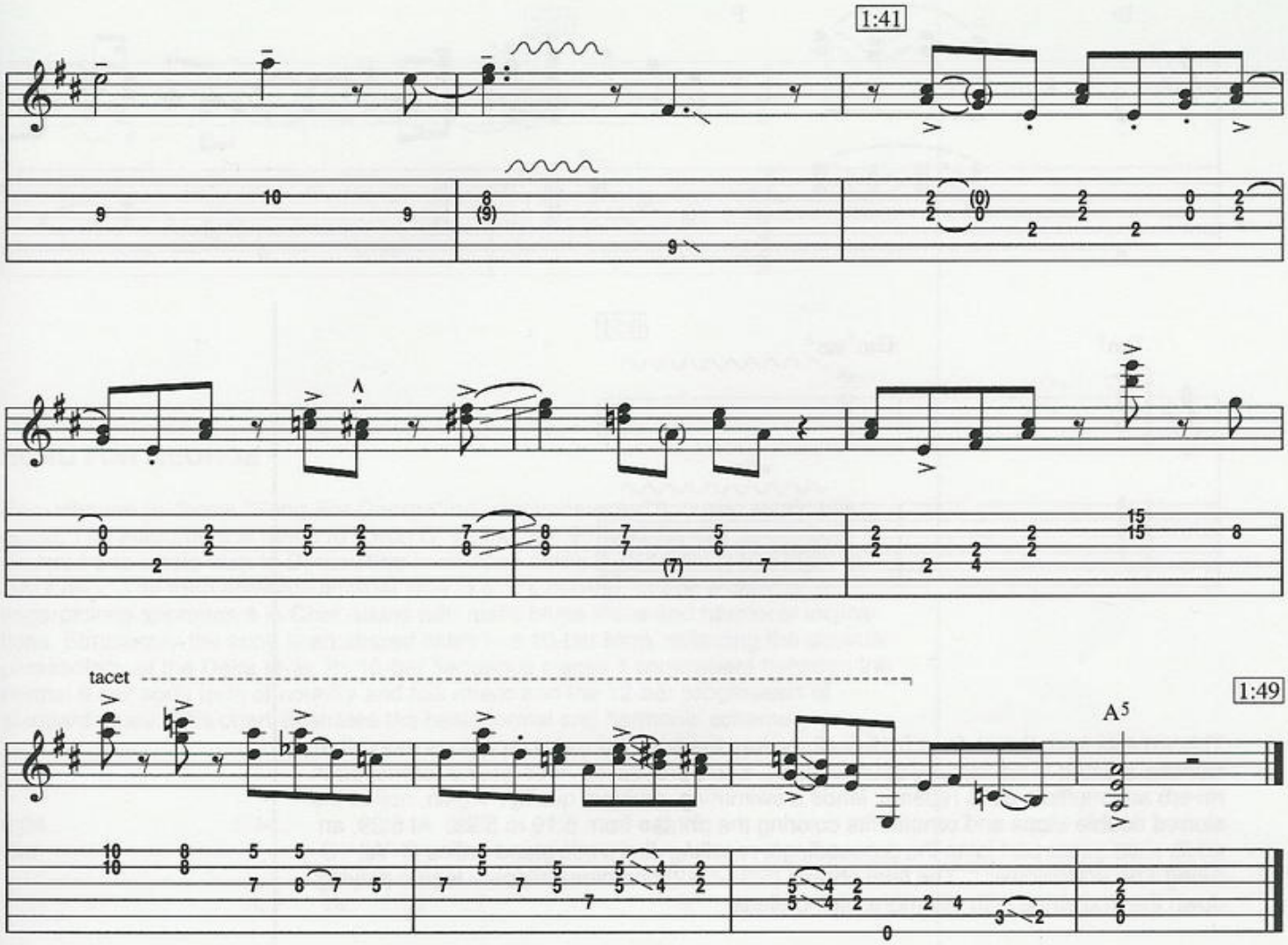
Example 5

GUITAR SOLO
from "Steve's Boogie"

STEVE'S BOOGIE
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved







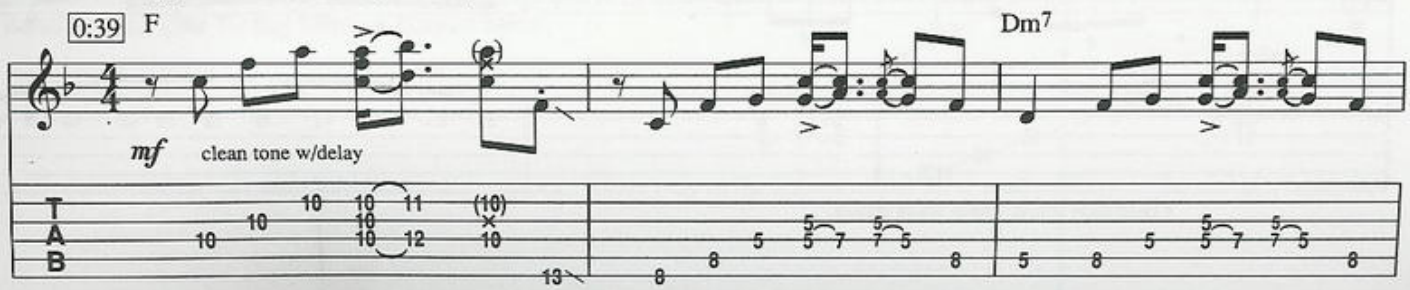
VICTORY

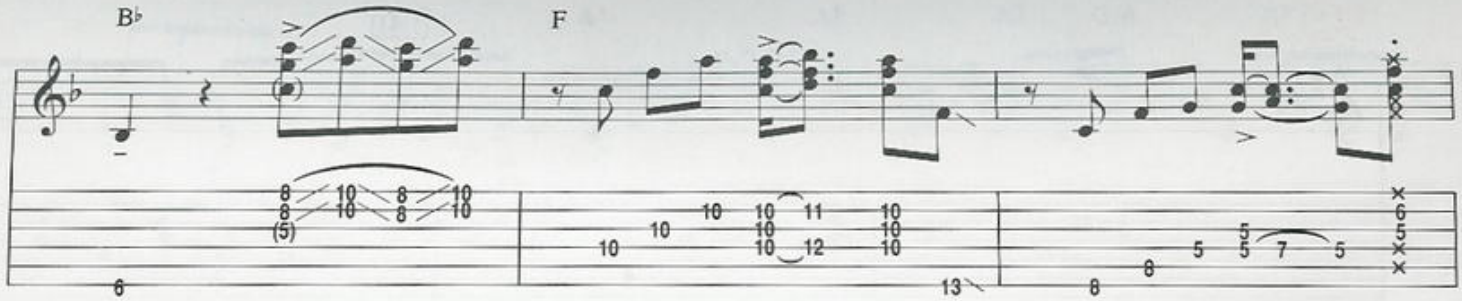
Jimi Hendrix exerted a powerful effect on Eric Johnson, in terms of both lead and rhythm guitar work. Regarding the latter, "Victory" captures the R&B/Rock flavor that Jimi popularized in the '60s and adds some new wrinkles to the style. The main thematic idea at 0:39 is a perfect example of Hendrix' Curtis Mayfield-derived chord/melody approach. Appropriately, Eric splits the difference texturally between accompanimental chording and obbligato filling. The part is filled with nuances which enhance the simple I-vi-IV changes. Check out the triad and diad hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides in the first six bars. The crystal-clear Strat tone here recalls the timbre and sweet harmonics of such Hendrix milestones as "The Wind Cries Mary" (occasionally included on Eric's concert set list) and "Little Wing."

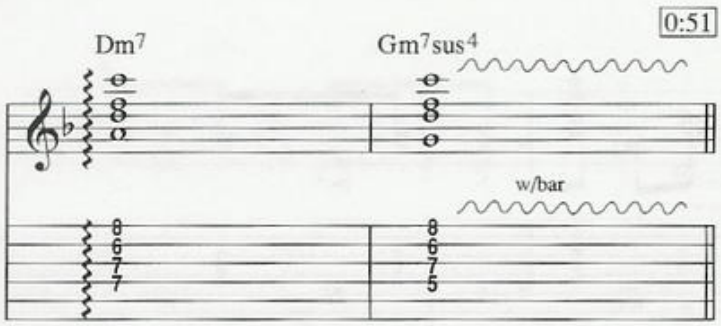
Example 6

R & B STYLE
Head - from "Victory"
Funky, Half-Time Feel (♩ = 156)

VICTORY
By Eric Johnson, Roscoe Beck and Tommy Taylor
Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music, Blues Boy Music and Anomaly Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved





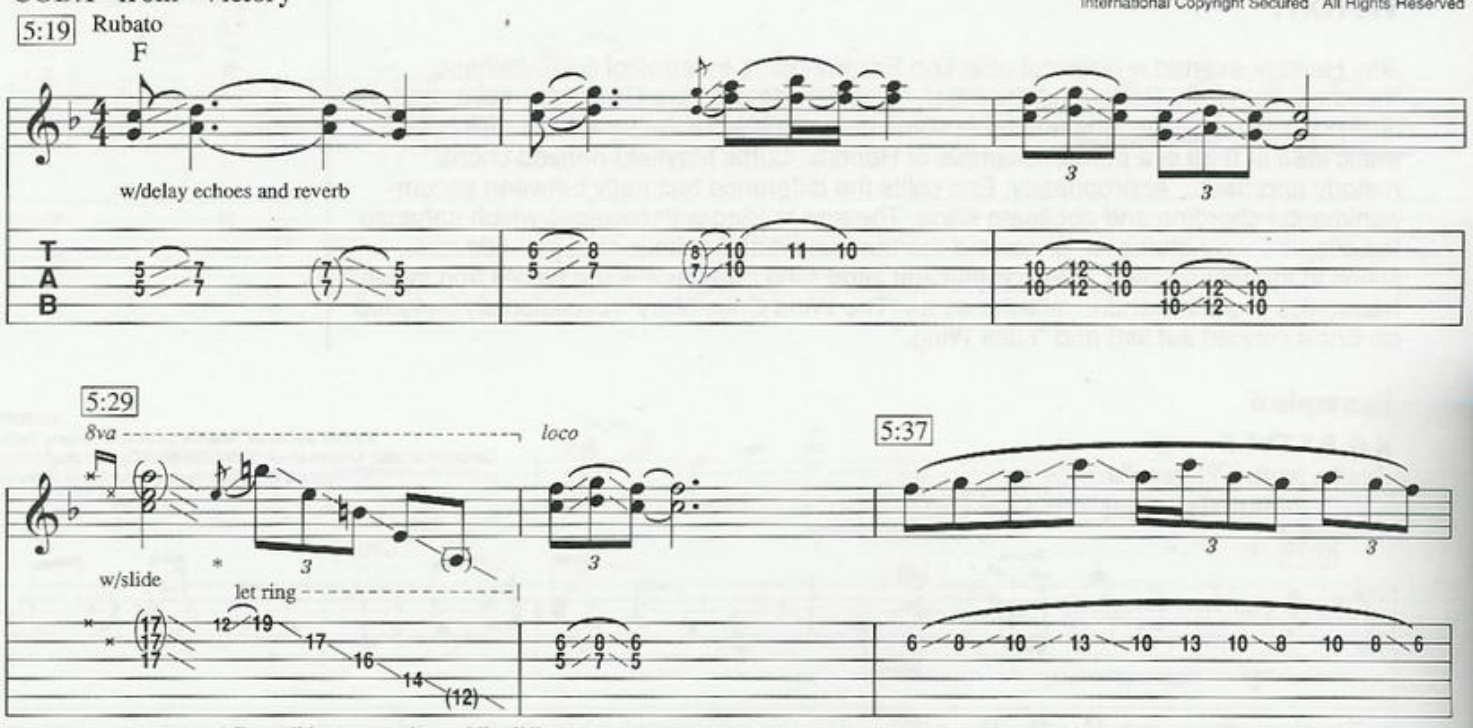


This excerpt from the coda at 5:19-5:42 evokes the sort of dreamy, spacious mood that Hendrix created in his famous soundscapes. Eric's processed "wet" sound, drenched in reverb and multiple echo repeats, lends a swimming, ambient quality. Again, notice the slurred double-stops and ornaments coloring the phrase from 5:19 to 5:29. At 5:29, an ad lib slide guitar part joins the proceedings, recalling Jimi's mic stand antics of "All Along The Watchtower." The final phrase (5:37-5:42) combines slippery legato playing down the 2nd string with still more sliding diads.

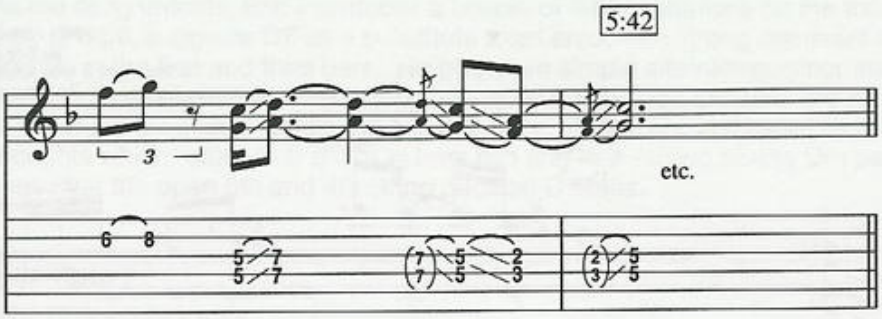
Example 7

CODA - from "Victory"

VICTORY
By Eric Johnson, Roscoe Beck and Tommy Taylor
Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music, Blues Boy Music and Anomaly Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



* Drag slide across strings while sliding.



SONG FOR GEORGE

Eric Johnson performs "Song For George" on unaccompanied acoustic steel-string guitar. The instrument is tuned to "Drop D" tuning: the 6th and 1st strings are both dropped one whole step to D, resulting in an open string layout from low to high, of DADGBD. The tune presents another side of Eric's playing, mixing a country fingerpicking approach à la Chet Atkins with rustic blues ideas and harmonic inclinations. Structurally the song is an altered blues in a 10-bar form, reflecting the unusual phraseology of the Delta style. Its 10-bar sequence places it somewhere between the normal 8-bar song form of country and folk music and the 12-bar progression of standard blues. This chart illustrates the basic formal and harmonic scheme.

0:04	0:14			0:20	0:25	0:29
Dm	F	G7	F	Dm	A	I
i	III	IV	III	i	V	

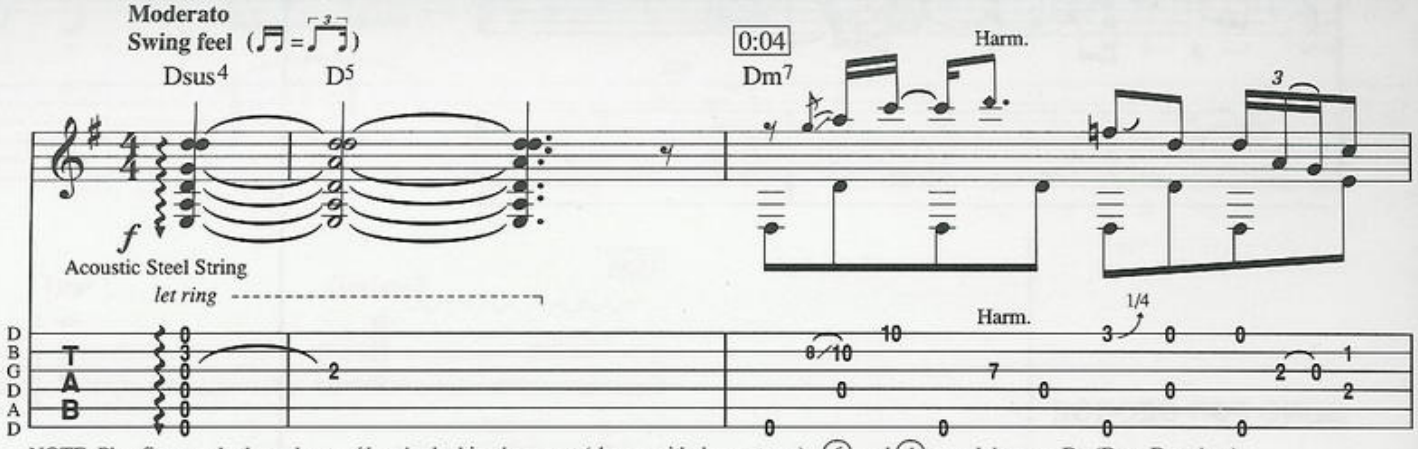
4 bars----------|2 bars----------|2 bars----------|2 bars----------|

The earthy main theme in D stated in the first 4 bars is a skillfully adapted blend of bluegrass, country and rural blues idioms. The underlying Dm pentatonic (D,F,G,A,C) modality and the reliance on i, III and IV chords provide the blues elements, while the alternating bass note/melody polyphony is a fixture of the Chet Atkins school of guitar playing. To master this sort of striding bass, it is often a good idea initially to separate the thumb's part from the fingers' plucking. Focus on the alternating bass line, fretting the entire chord but attacking only the downstemmed lower notes (generally alternating between the 6th and 4th strings) with the thumb until a feeling of independence is developed. Next, learn the upper melody and integrate it with the thumb part into the arrangement. Practice this one slowly with a steady rhythmic pulse and pay attention to the open harmonics, hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides and quarter-step bends - these are the subtleties that make the piece more than just notes. At 0:14, the second phrase moves through the changes of F-G7 and F/C before returning to the main theme in D at 0:20. Note the blend of chording and melody in this section. The phrase played at 0:25 combines slurred chromatic double-stops à la Jerry Reed with some tricky string-skipping (beats 4 and 1) on the A (V chord). The main theme and head section (the 10-bar form) is played twice.

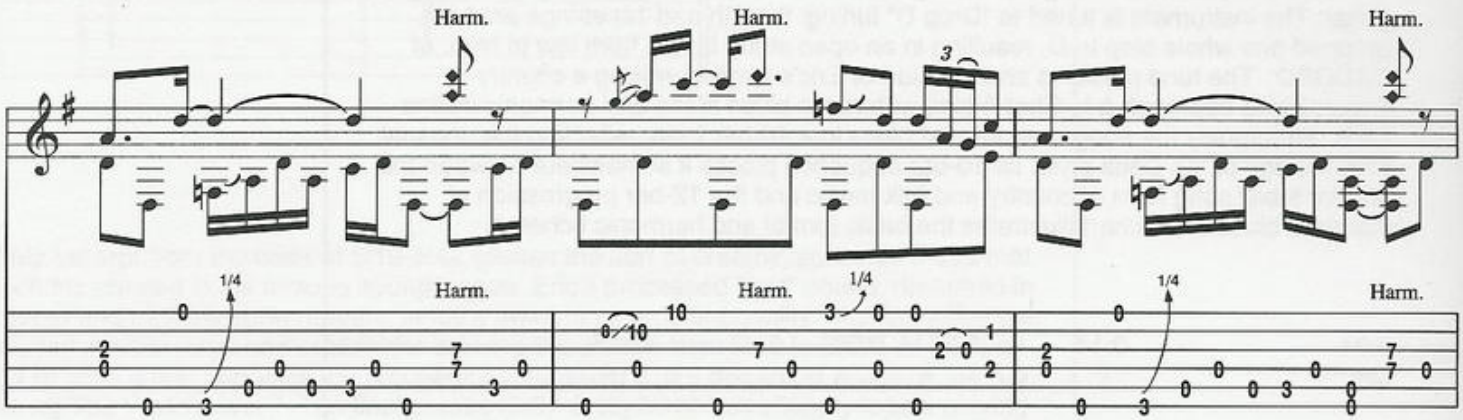
Example 8

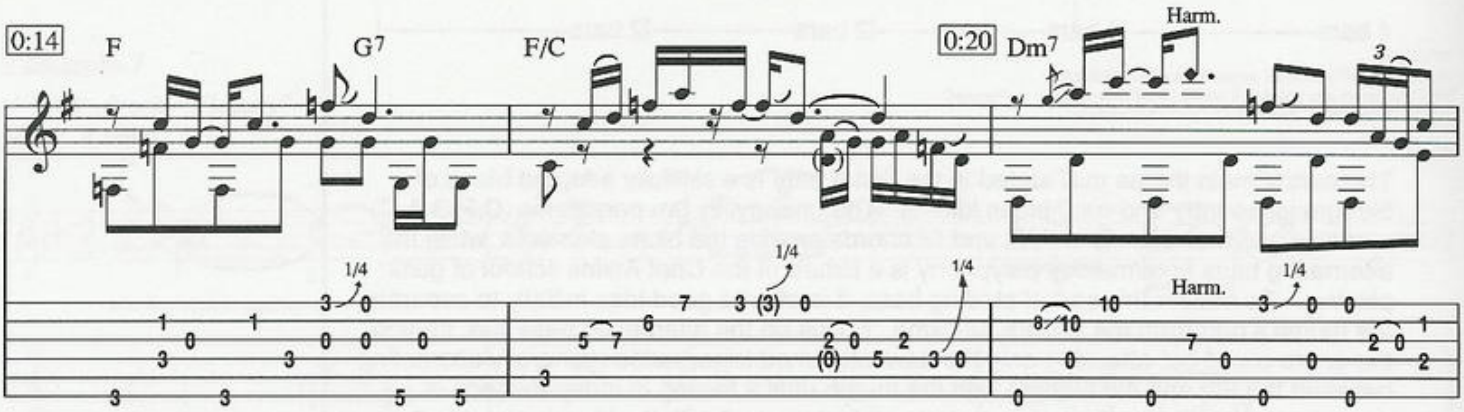
MAIN THEME AND HEAD
from "Song For George"

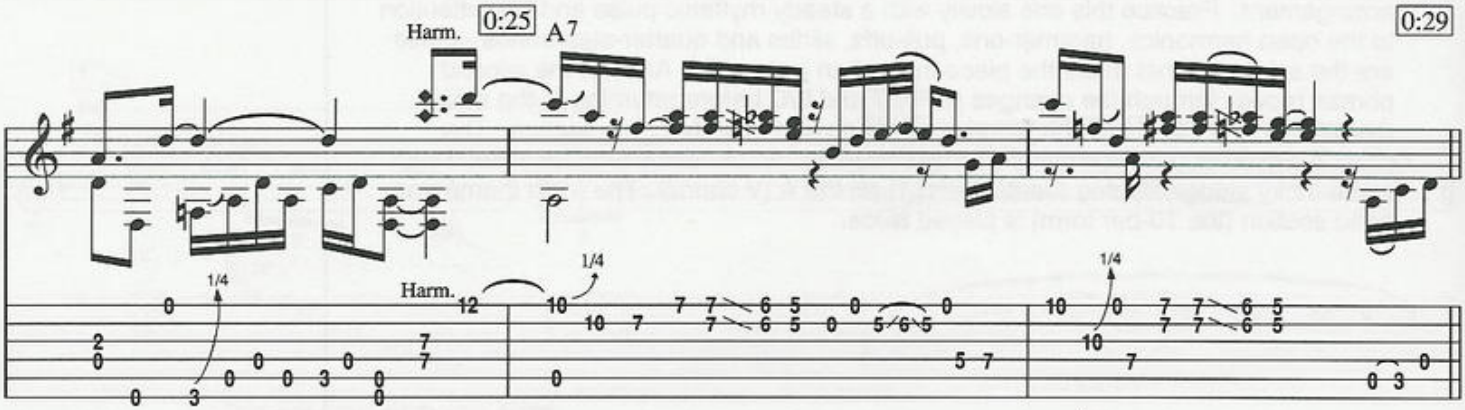
SONG FOR GEORGE
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



NOTE: Play fingerstyle throughout w/thumb plucking bass part (shown with down stems). (6) and (1) tuned down to D. (Drop D tuning.)





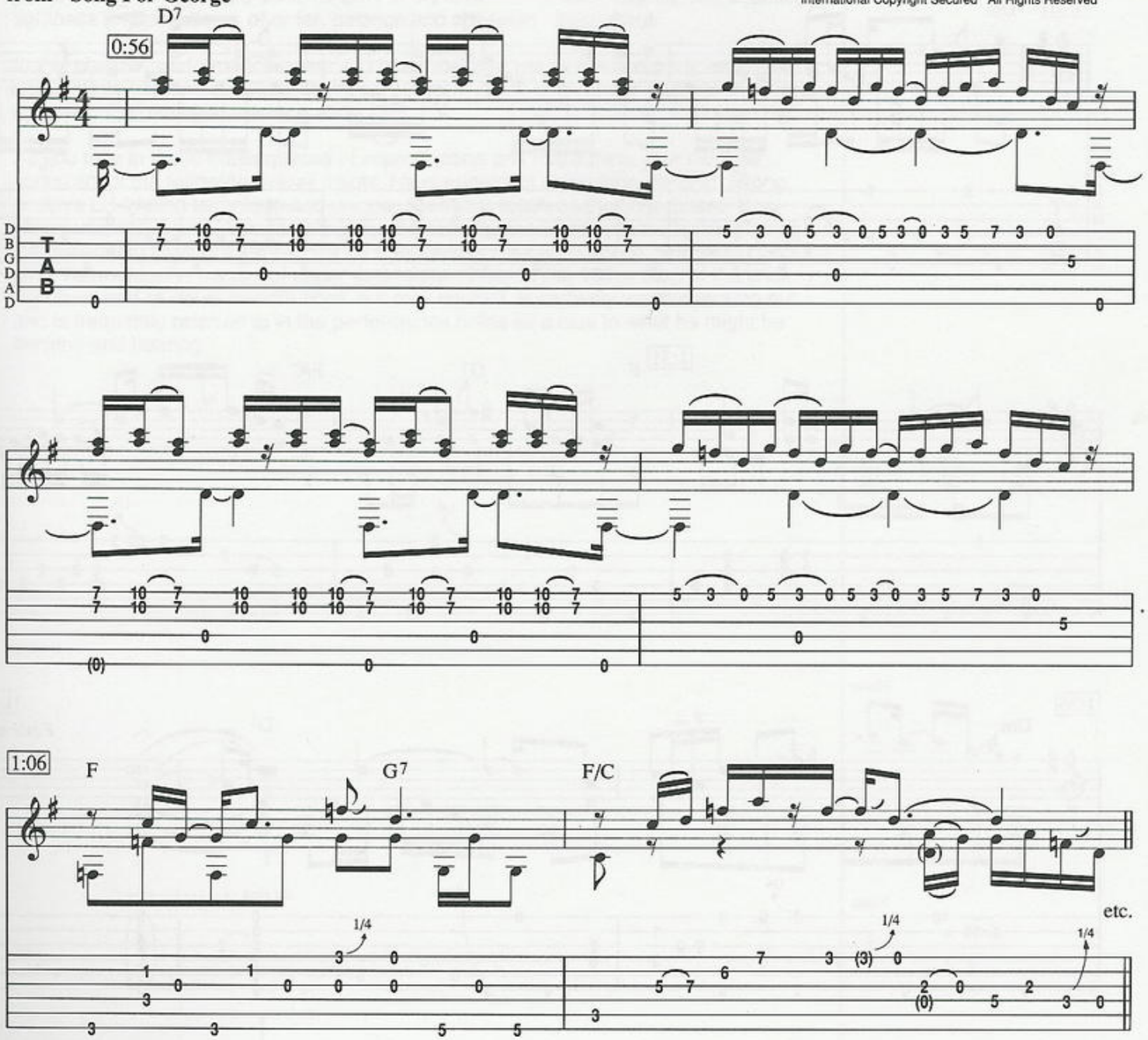


As the song unfolds, Eric introduces a couple of 4-bar variations on the theme. The first, at 0:56, suggests D7 as a substitute tonal area, with strong dominant seventh sounds in the first and third bars. He plays two simple alternating minor third diads (made into easily fingered two-string barres by the tuning), implying 3rd & 5th and 5th & 7th of the D7 chord. Notice the pull-offs here. These are answered by contrasting thoughts which return to D minor in bars two and four - using bluesy Dm pentatonic lines over the open 6th and 4th string pedaled D notes.

Example 9

FIRST VARIATION
from "Song For George"

SONG FOR GEORGE
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

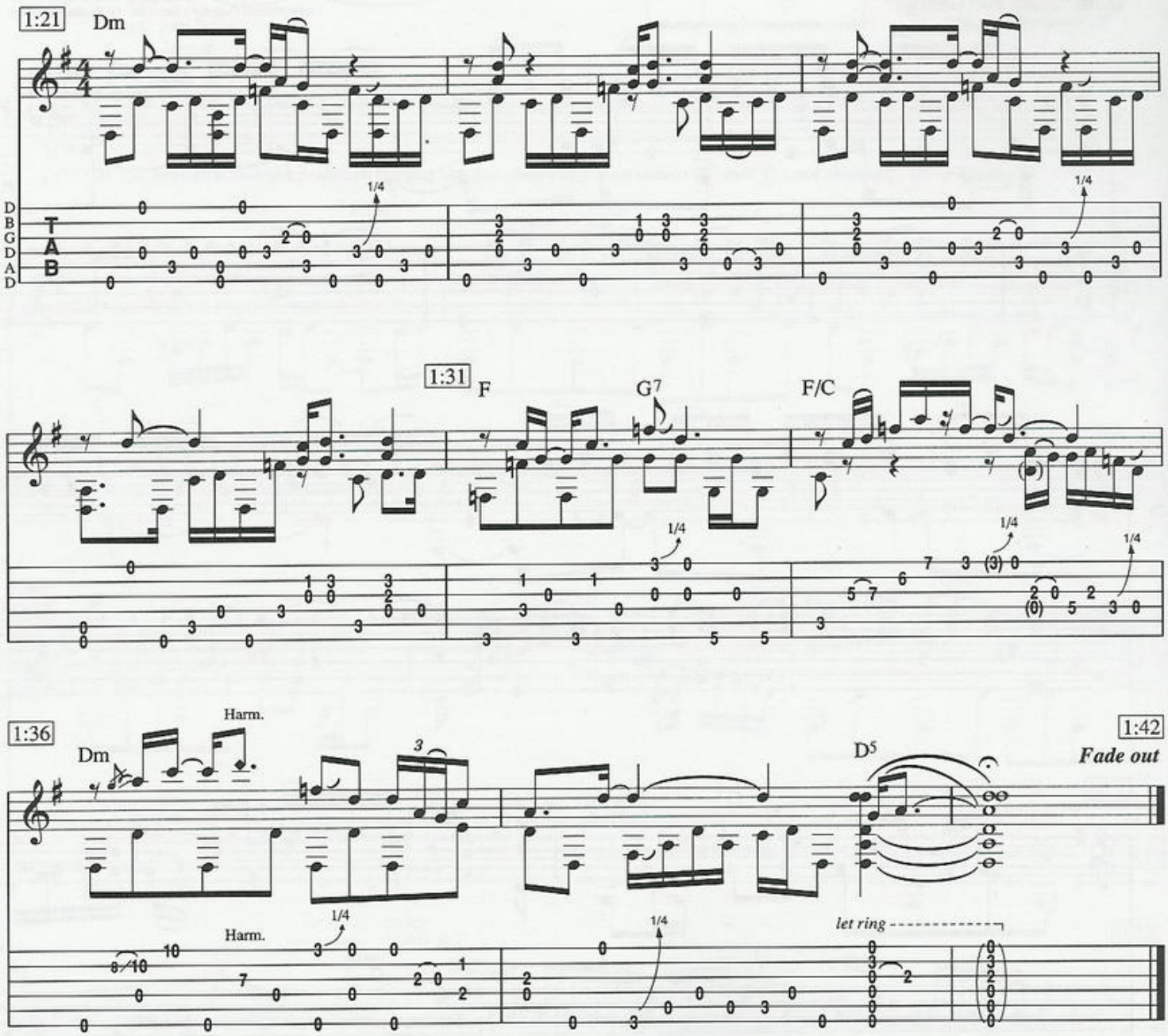


The second variation, at 1:21, is swampy and understated. This section remains firmly in open first position D minor pentatonic - characteristic of basic acoustic blues. Again, check out the nuances: pull-offs, hammer-ons and quarter-step bends. Eric reprises an abbreviated version of the head/main theme (4 bars as opposed to 6 bars) for the conclusion of the piece (1:31 to 1:42).

Example 10

SECOND VARIATION
from "Song For George"

SONG FOR GEORGE
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



SOLOS

Introduction

Eric Johnson is one of the most exciting guitar soloists around - as the flights of invention in this SOLOS chapter will prove. His ideas, flawless technique, uncommon fluidity and strong sense of musical identity never cease to amaze the listener. These qualities pervade every well-chosen melody, every warp-speed barrage of "million-note" lines, every gutsy blues and rock lick and every sophisticated jazz phrase. Truly eclectic, he pursues every imaginable sonic tangent in his improvising, while maintaining a feeling of tightness and direction - of order, balance and cohesion - throughout.

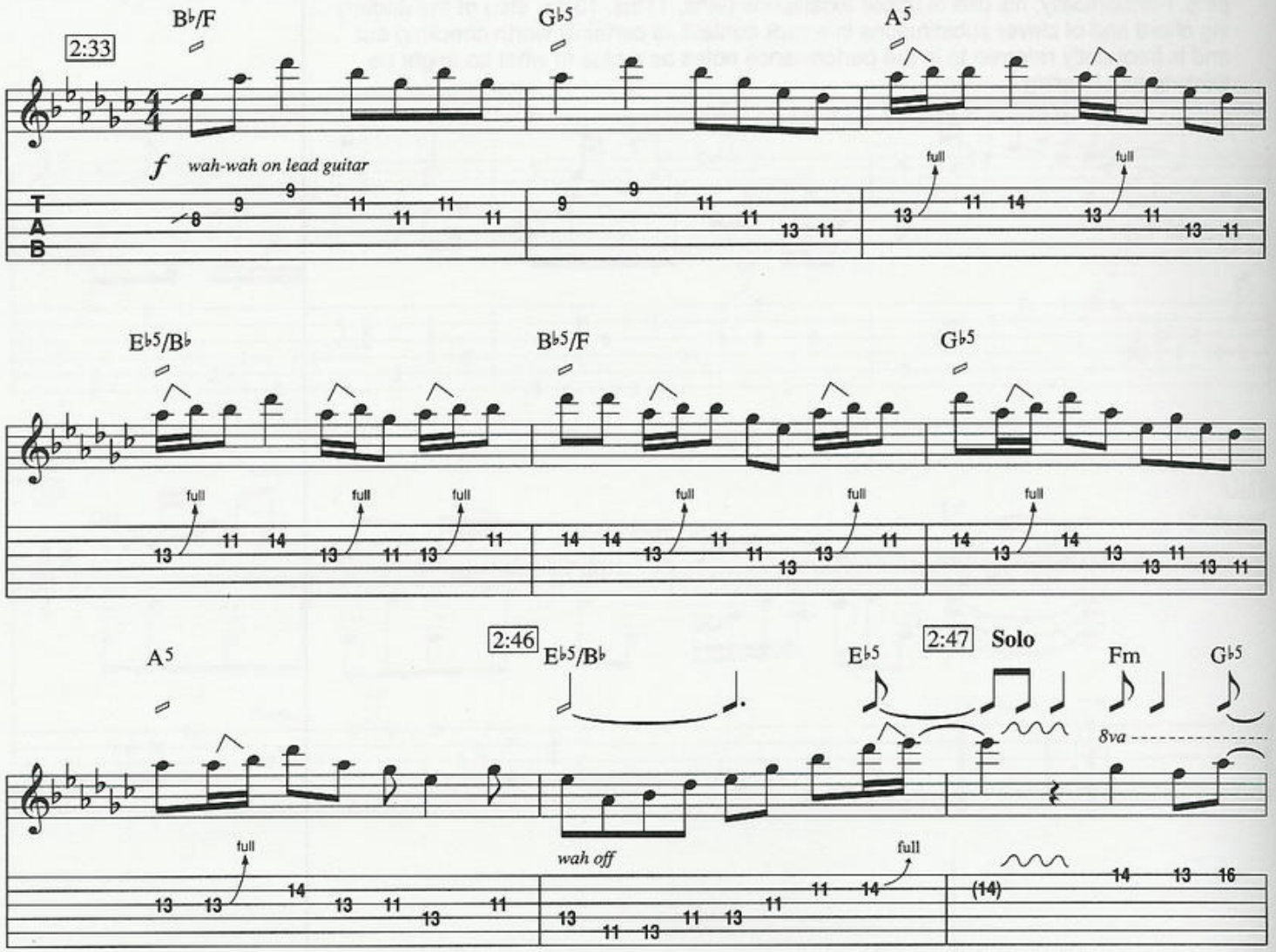
In this chapter, performance notes and basic melodic analysis accompany each solo. Scale/mode content, structure, technical considerations and various musical attributes unique to the particular lead are annotated.

As you take in these masterpieces of improvisation and make them your own, be cognizant of the following overall points: his evenness of string tone (timbre); strong, positive LH fretting technique and unique, seamless touch on the fingerboard; disciplined use of RH and LH muting to keep the soloing clean and precise; hybrid picking integrated into standard flat-picking style; effortless position changes; and string skipping. Harmonically, his use of upper extensions (9ths, 11ths, 13ths, etc.) of the underlying chord and of clever substitutions in a rock context, is certainly worth checking out and is frequently referred to in the performance notes as a clue to what he might be thinking and hearing.

SOULFUL TERRAIN

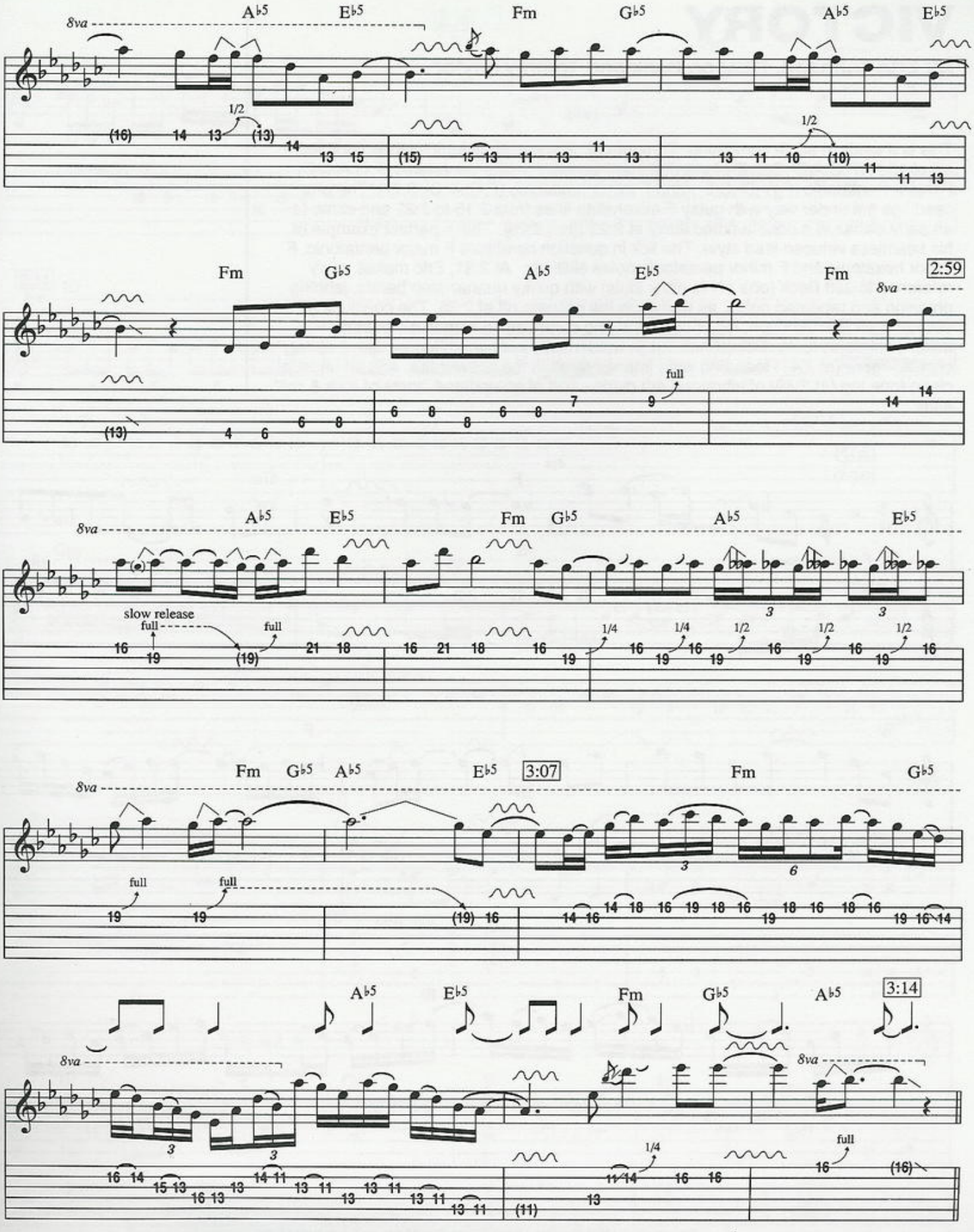
By Eric Johnson

The title says it all. Eric's solo is introduced by a brief (7-bar) wah-wah interlude. From 2:33 to 2:46, he rocks the pedal in time while playing blues-based, Hendrix-inspired riffs in E♭ minor pentatonic (E♭,G♭,A♭,B♭,D♭). The solo begins with a pickup line at 2:46, with the wah off. The solo is firmly rooted in E♭ minor, using E♭ minor pentatonic and hexatonic (E♭,F,G♭,A♭,B♭,D♭ - essentially a minor pentatonic scale with an added 9th) scales and the E♭ aeolian mode (E♭,F,G♭,A♭,B♭,C♭,D♭ - natural minor). The two tasteful, imitative ideas in the first four bars are answered by a simple pentatonic phrase with 4th interval jumps. The next phrase, at 2:59, exploits unison bends as well as another 4th jump from A♭ to D♭. The concluding passage at 3:07 is textbook Johnson, with its serpentine pentatonic patterns (there's just a hint of modalism in the C♭ of this section, though Eric thinks of these notes as merely being added to the underlying pentatonic scale as color tone options), brilliant execution and intervallic enlargements of the basic scale - demonstrated in the perfect 4ths on beats 2 and 3.



* Editor's note: Due to time limitations this excerpt does not appear on the audio.

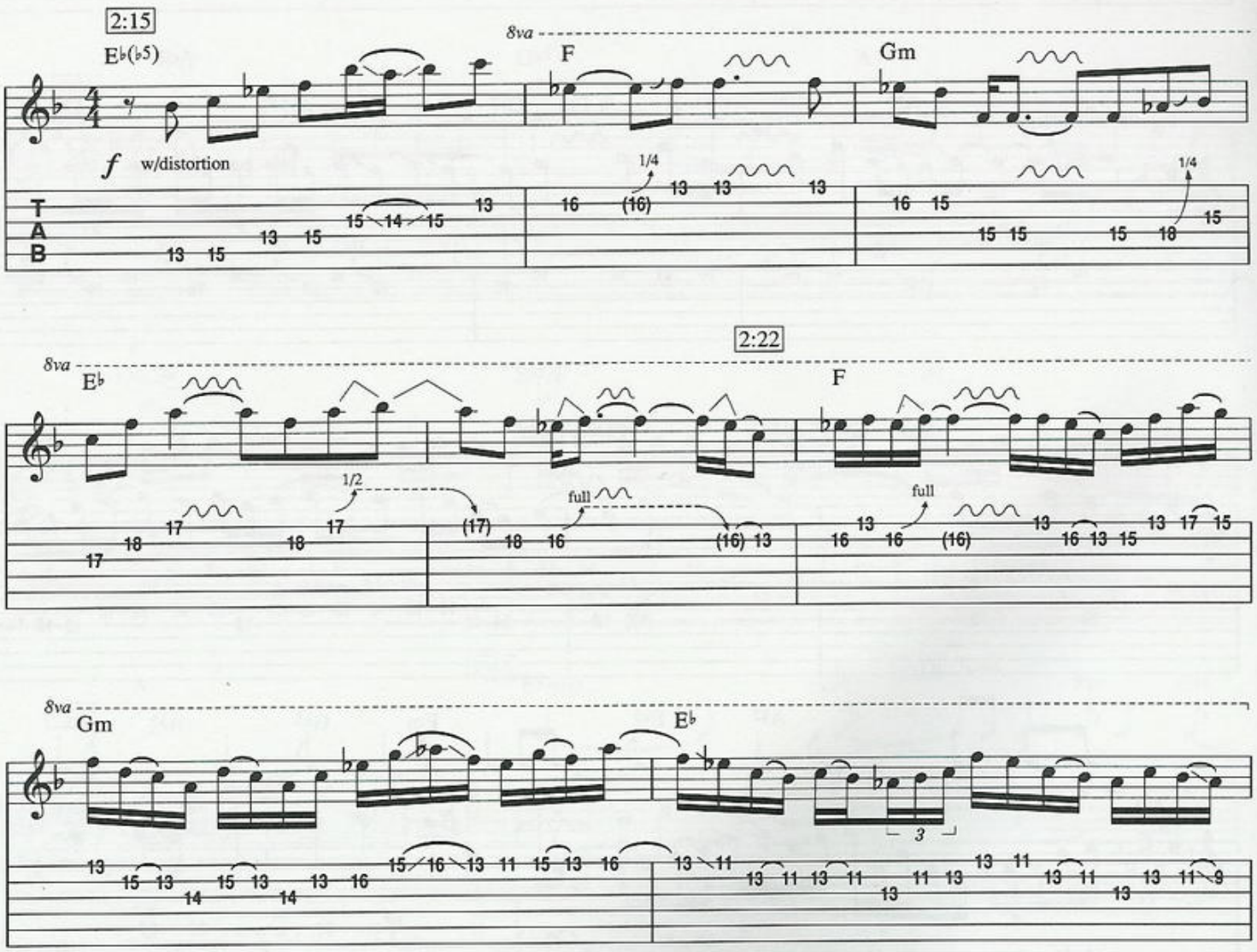
Copyright © 1984 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved


A♭5
E♭5
Fm
G♭5
A♭5
E♭5
8va
1/2
(16) 14 13 (13) 14 13 15
(15) 15 13 11 13 11 13
13 11 10 (10) 11 11 13
Fm
G♭5
A♭5
E♭5
Fm
2:59
8va
full
(13) 4 6 6 8
6 8 8 6 8 7 9
14 14
A♭5
E♭5
Fm
G♭5
A♭5
E♭5
8va
slow release
full
full
16 19 (19) 21 18
16 21 18 16 19
1/4 1/4 1/2 1/2 1/2
3 3
Fm
G♭5
A♭5
E♭5
3:07
Fm
G♭5
8va
full
full
19 19 (19) 16
14 16 14 18 16 19 18 16 19 18 16 18 16 19 16 14
3 6
A♭5
E♭5
Fm
G♭5
A♭5
3:14
8va
8va
16 14 15 13 16 13 13 14 11 13 11 13 13 11 13 11 13 11
(11) 13 11 14 1/4 16 16 16 full (16)
3 3

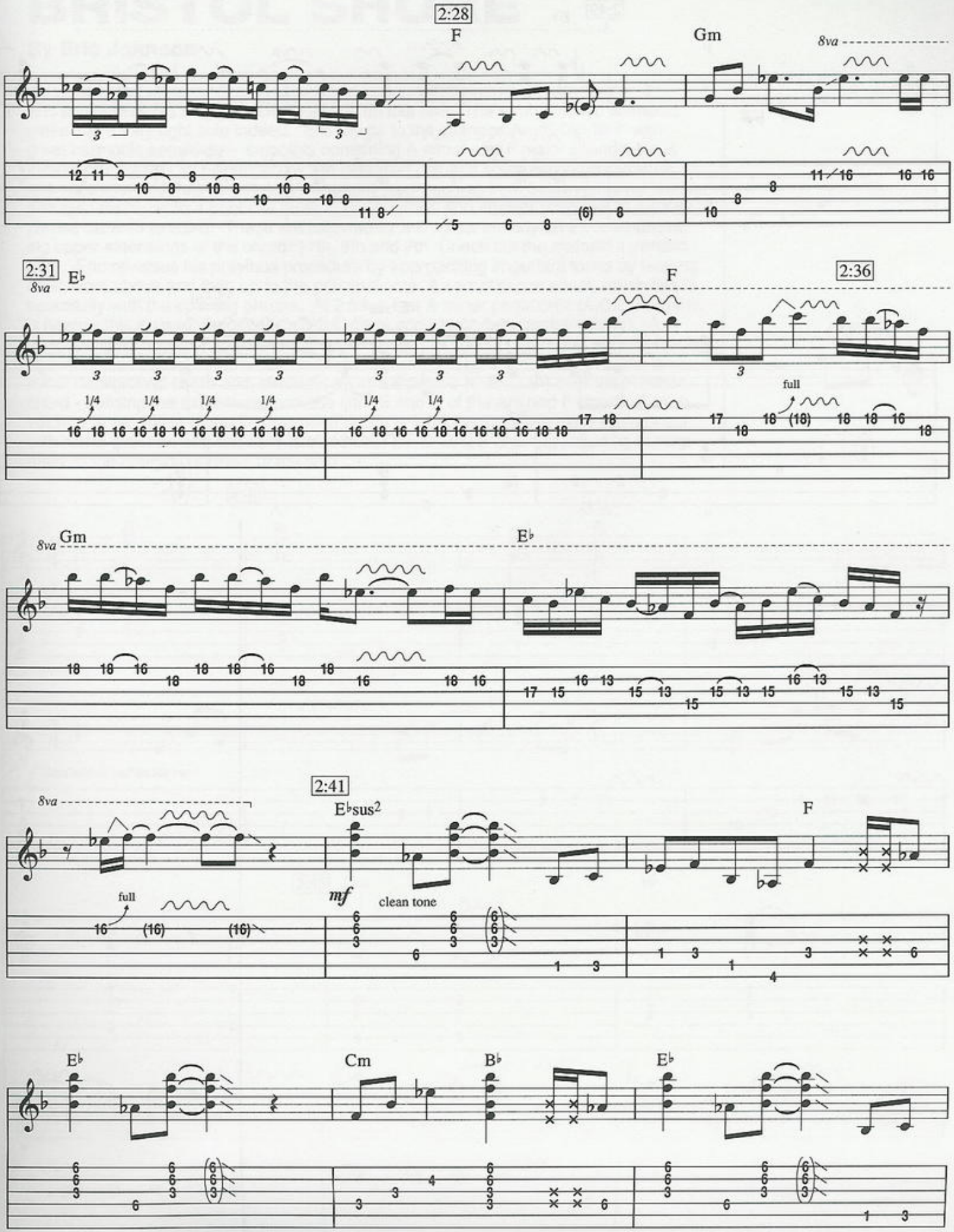
VICTORY

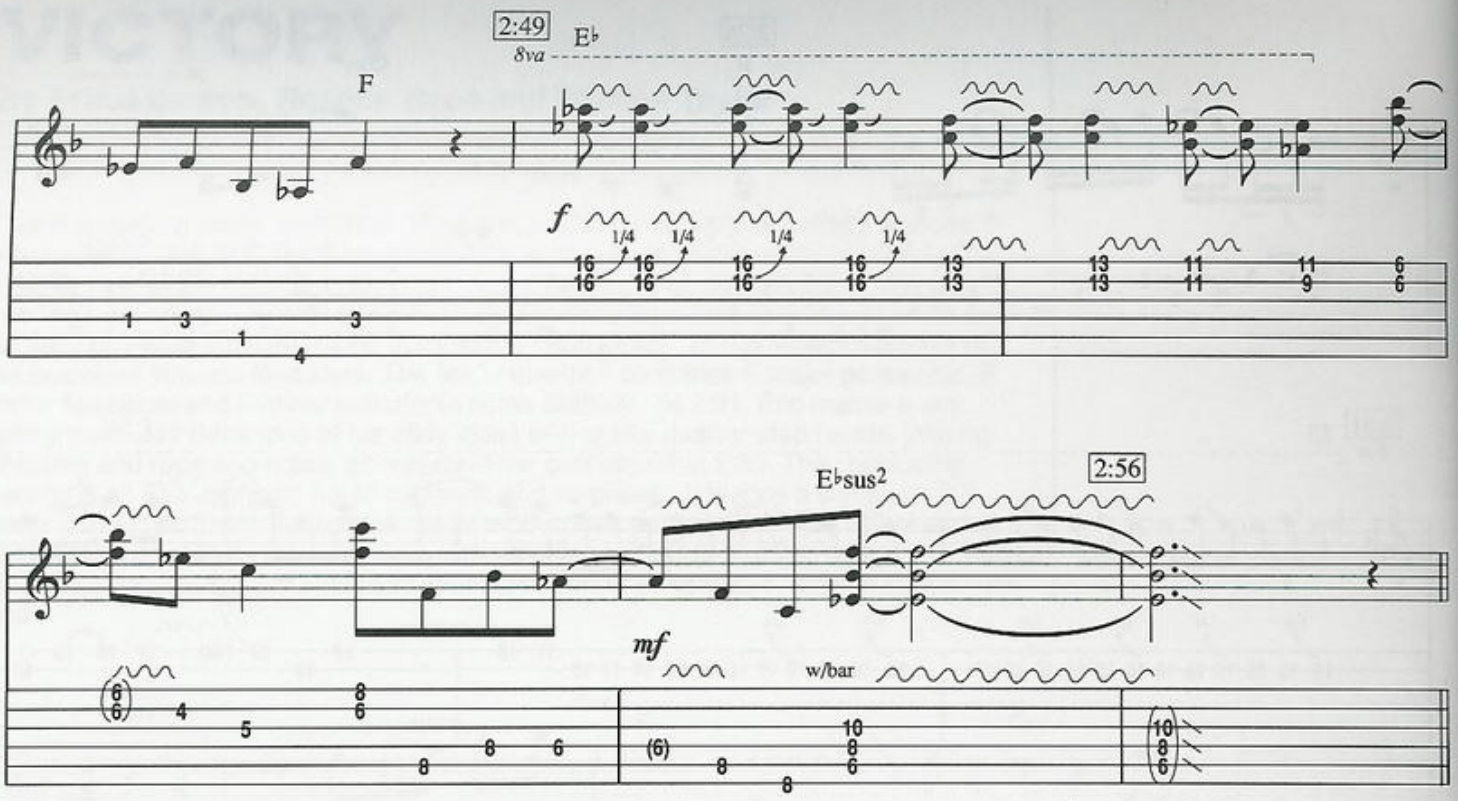
By Eric Johnson, Roscoe Beck and Tommy Taylor

This is a study in scale combining. Throughout, Eric mixes various melody sources: F mixolydian (F,G,A,B♭,C,D,E♭) for a dominant sound, F major pentatonic (F,G,A,C,D), F minor Pentatonic (F,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) and F minor hexatonic (F,G,A♭,B♭,C,E♭). The proceedings get under way with gutsy F mixolydian lines from 2:15 to 2:22 and come to an early climax in a double-timed flurry at 2:23 (thru 2:28). This a perfect example of his seamless virtuoso lead style. The lick in question combines F major pentatonic, F minor hexatonic and F minor pentatonic notes skillfully. At 2:31, Eric makes a wry reference to Jeff Beck (one of his early idols) with quirky quarter-step bends, jabbing phrasing and repeated notes, as well as in the ostinato riff at 2:36. The concluding section is all Eric Johnson, full of contrasts and surprises. It blends a signature F minor pentatonic fusion lick (check out its modernistic perfect 4th leaps) with a strong chordal figure (at 2:41) featuring wide interval skips in the answer fills, and an unusual clean-tone tag (at 2:49) of vibratoed 4th diads - sort of an updated "roots of rock & roll" affair.



Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music, Blues Boy Music and Anomaly Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

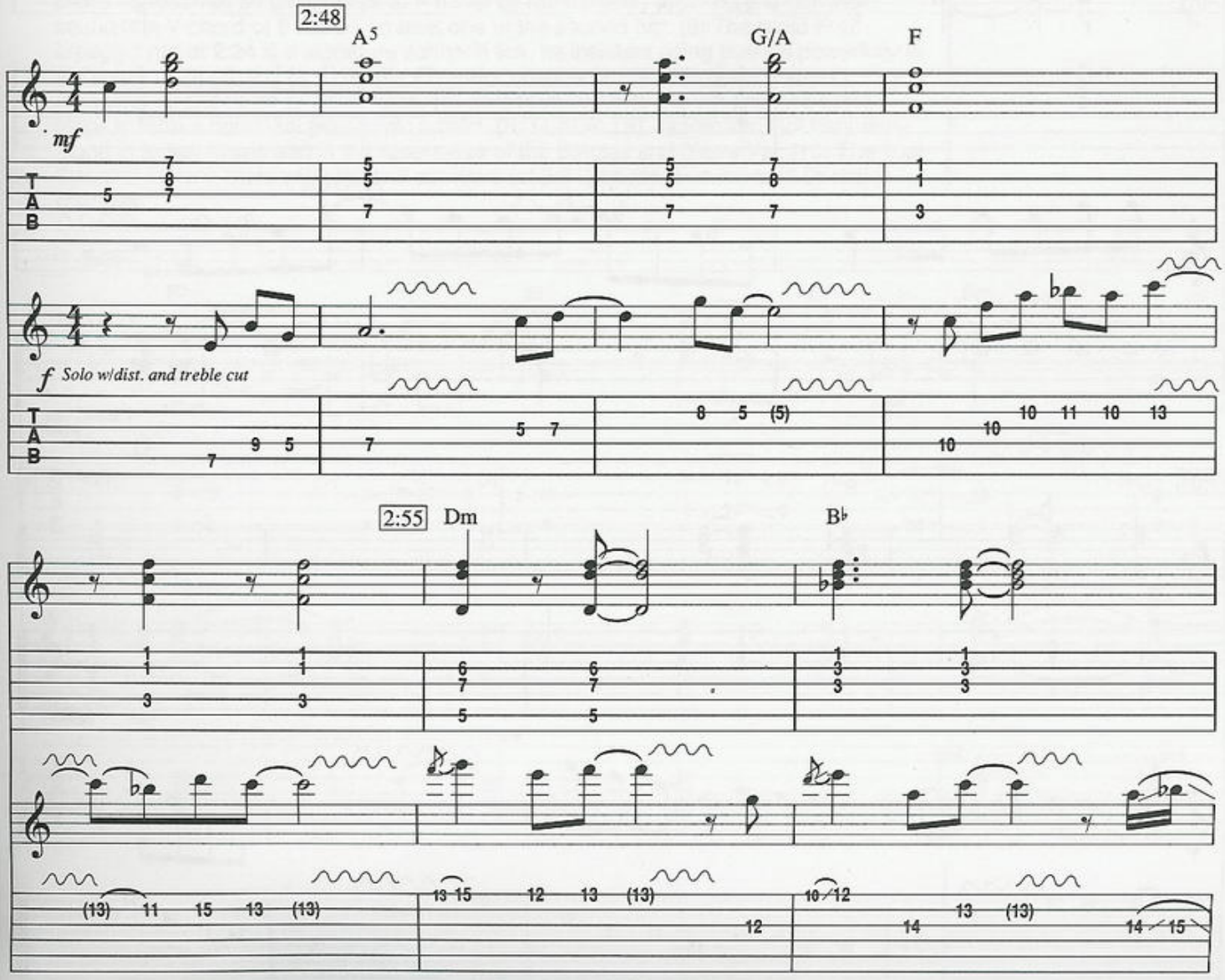

2:28
F
Gm
8va
2:31
8va
E♭
F
2:36
full
8va
Gm
E♭
8va
2:41
E♭sus2
F
full
mf
clean tone
E♭
Cm
B♭
E♭


2:49
E♭
8va
F
f
1/4
1/4
1/4
1/4
E♭sus2
2:56
mf
w/bar

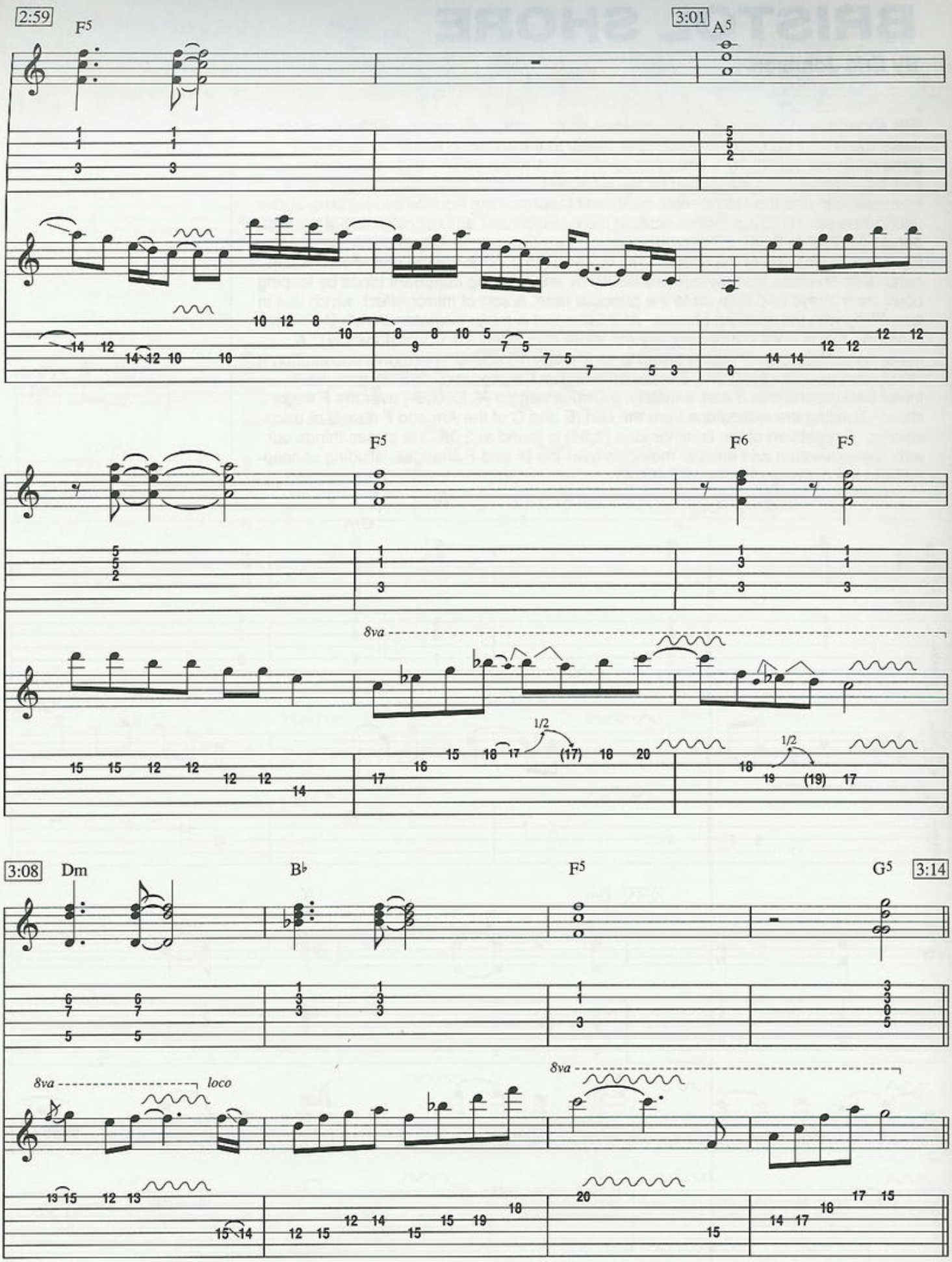
BRISTOL SHORE

By Eric Johnson

Eric showcases his singing, violin-like tone on this one. The strong motific elements make this a very tight solo indeed. Eric reacts to the changes Am-F-Dm-B♭-F with great harmonic sensitivity - smoothly combining A minor and F major sounds. He is thinking chordally - as evidenced by the balanced blend of scale and arpeggio lines, interval skips, and their target-note treatment (approaching from below, jumping above and then resolving to a principal note) in the question and answer melodies of the first phrase (at 2:48 to 2:54). These are followed by a D minor melody, at 2:55, emphasizing upper extensions of the chord: 11th, 9th and 7th. Check out the melodic inversion here. Eric reverses his previous procedure by approaching important tones by leaping down from above and then up to the principal note. A sort of mirror effect, which ties in beautifully with the opening phrase. At 2:59, a fast A minor pentatonic (A,C,D,E,G) lick is heard - this is used pandiatonically (or, more accurately, pan-pentatonically) : A minor pentatonic over F major, creating an F major 13 sound. Harmonic substitution is clearly demonstrated at 3:01. Eric outlines an Em7 arpeggio (E,G,B,D) over the A minor background chord and, similarly, a Cm7 arpeggio (C,E♭,G,B♭) over the F major chord - building the extensions from the fifth (E and C of the Am and F chord) of each voicing. A repetition of the D minor idea (2:55) is found at 3:08. He closes things out with some question and answer melodies over the B♭ and F changes, alluding conceptually to the opening phrases of the solo.



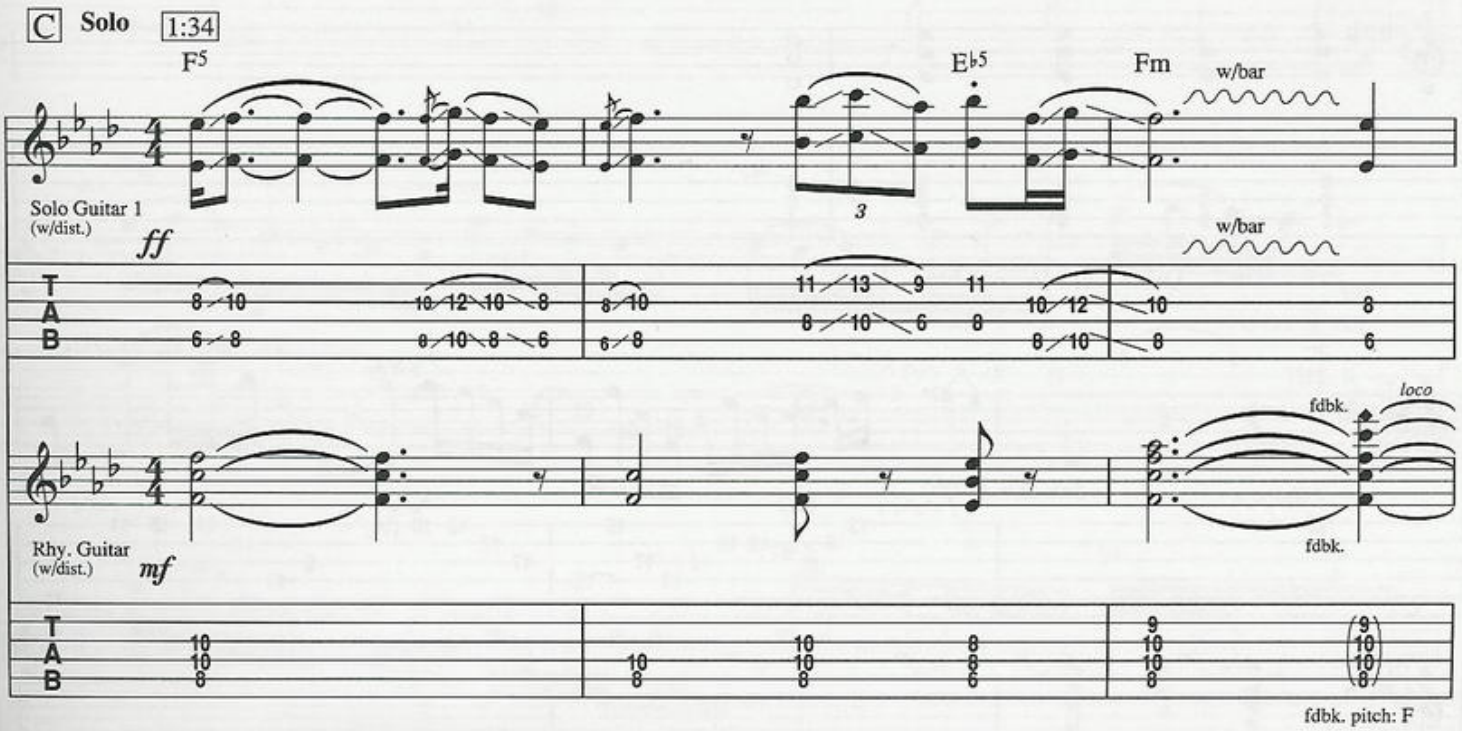
Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved


2:59
F5
3:01
A5
F5
F6
F5
8va
1/2
1/2
3:08
Dm
B♭
F5
G5
3:14
8va
loco
8va

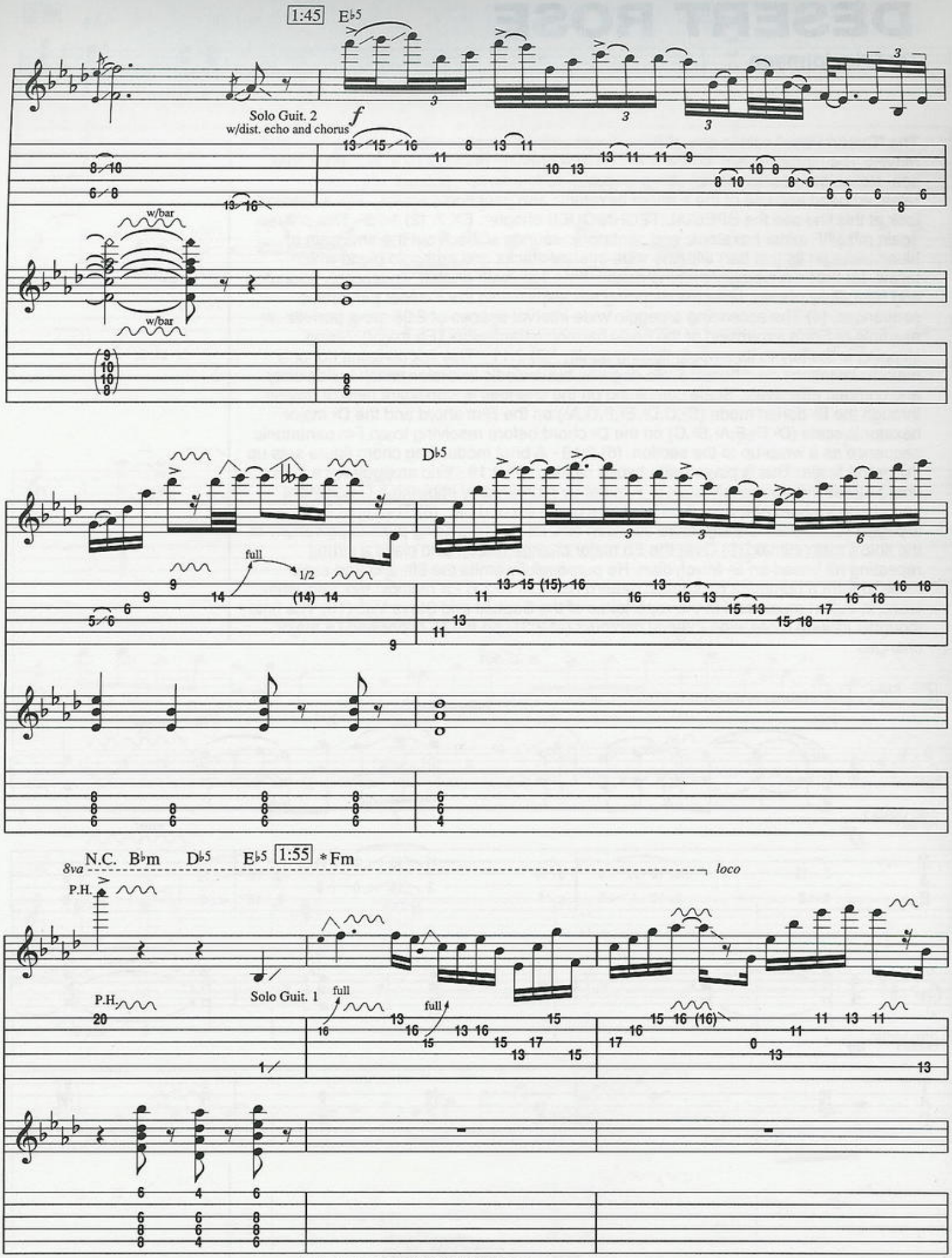
DESERT ROSE

By Eric Johnson

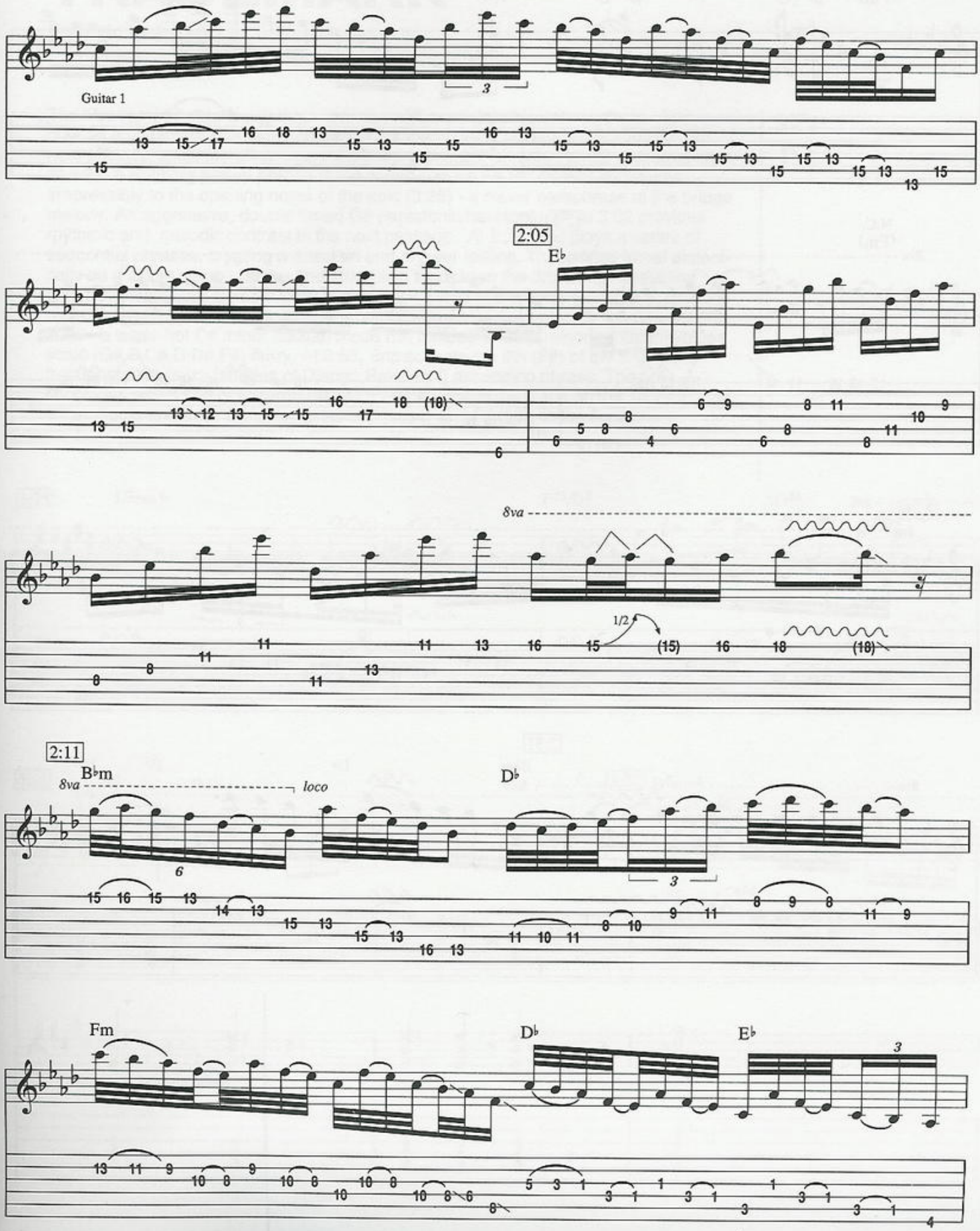
The "Desert Rose" solo is one of Eric's finest outings - replete with signature licks and moves. The highlights are noteworthy. (1) The opening phrase (1:45) is classic Johnson. Notice the position shifts, string-skipping, wide interval contours, chromatic released bend and use of the F minor hexatonic and pentatonic scales. For a detailed look at this line see the SPECIAL TECHNIQUES chapter: EX.7. (2) 1:55 - This phrase again mixes F minor hexatonic and pentatonic sounds . Check out the amalgam of blues ideas (in its first bar) with the wide-interval stacks and arpeggio blend which follow. (3) 2:01 - A typically burning double-time lick - well-crafted, impeccably executed and beautifully placed. Note the recurring 4th leaps within the F minor pentatonic sequences. (4) The ascending arpeggio/wide interval shapes at 2:05 are a perfect example of Eric's expansion of the basic harmonic framework (Eb major). String skipping is the key to its smooth flowing quality. (5) 2:11 - This lick contains not only melodic imitations on different scale degrees but melodic inversion which builds unity and contrast effectively. Scale combining on the changes is significant here. It travels through the B♭ dorian mode (B♭,C,D♭,E♭,F,G,A♭) on the B♭m chord and the D♭ major hexatonic scale (D♭,E♭,F,A♭,B♭,C) on the D♭ chord before resolving to an Fm pentatonic sequence as a wrap-up to the section. (6) 2:16 - A brief modulating chord figure sets up the grand finale. This is played with hybrid picking. (7) 2:19 - Eric arpeggiates a D♭6/9 chord . It resolves smoothly back to F minor by momentarily implying a C dominant sound (the V chord of F minor) on beat one of the second bar. (8) The rapid Fm7 arpeggio run at 2:24 is a signature Johnson lick. Its insistent rising pushes powerfully to the solo's main climax. (9) Over the Eb major change (2:26), Eric plays a strong repeating riff based on E♭ Mixolydian. He purposefully omits the 6th and 2nd scale steps to form a dominant pentatonic pattern (E♭,G,A♭,B♭,D♭) - a melodic tool frequently found in Indian music and in the repertoires of the Beatles and Steve Vai. (10) The final thoughts include more wide-interval contours (at 2:31) on the B♭ minor and D♭ major changes.

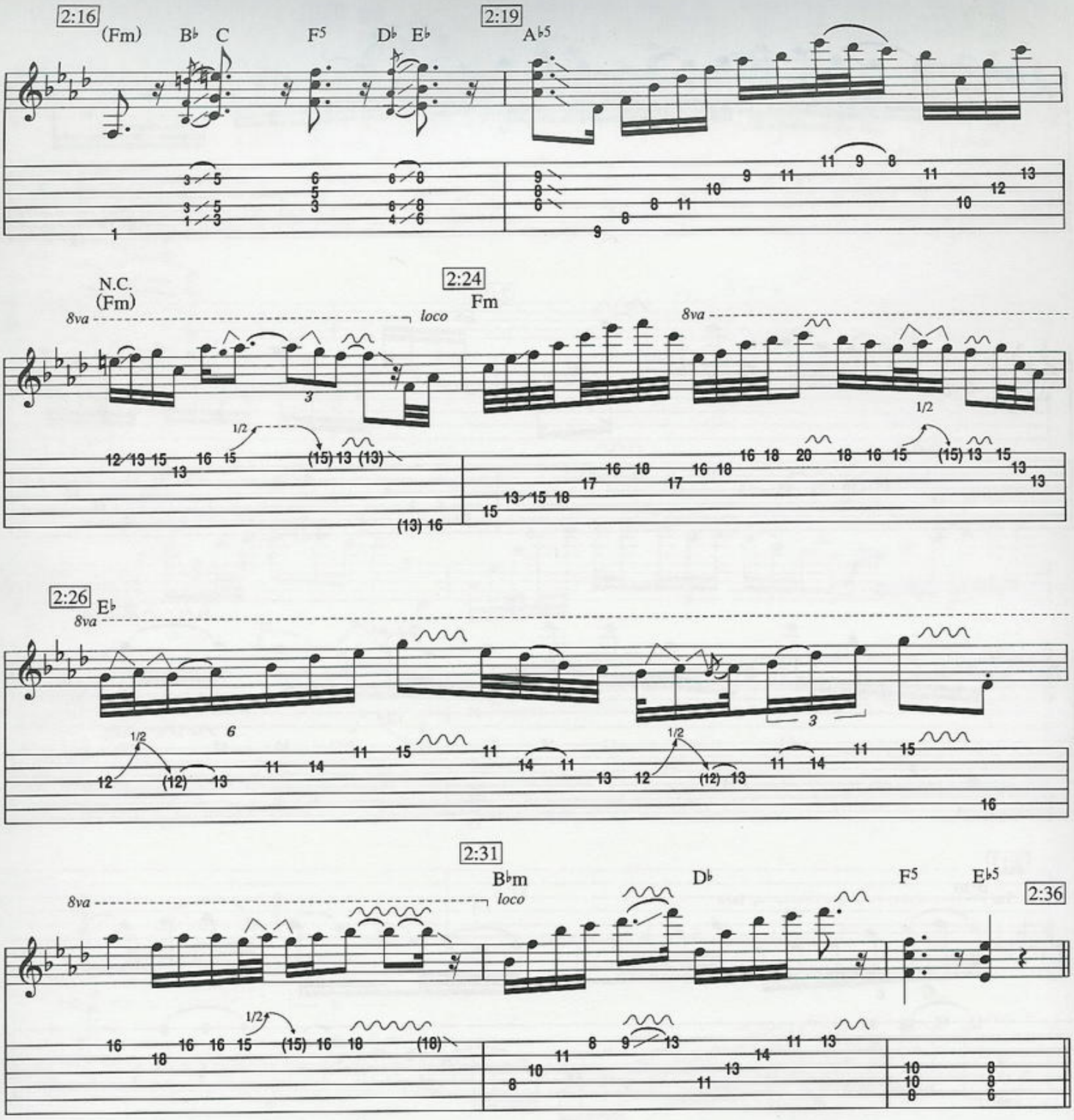


Copyright © 1983 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



* Harmonic progression inferred from bass.

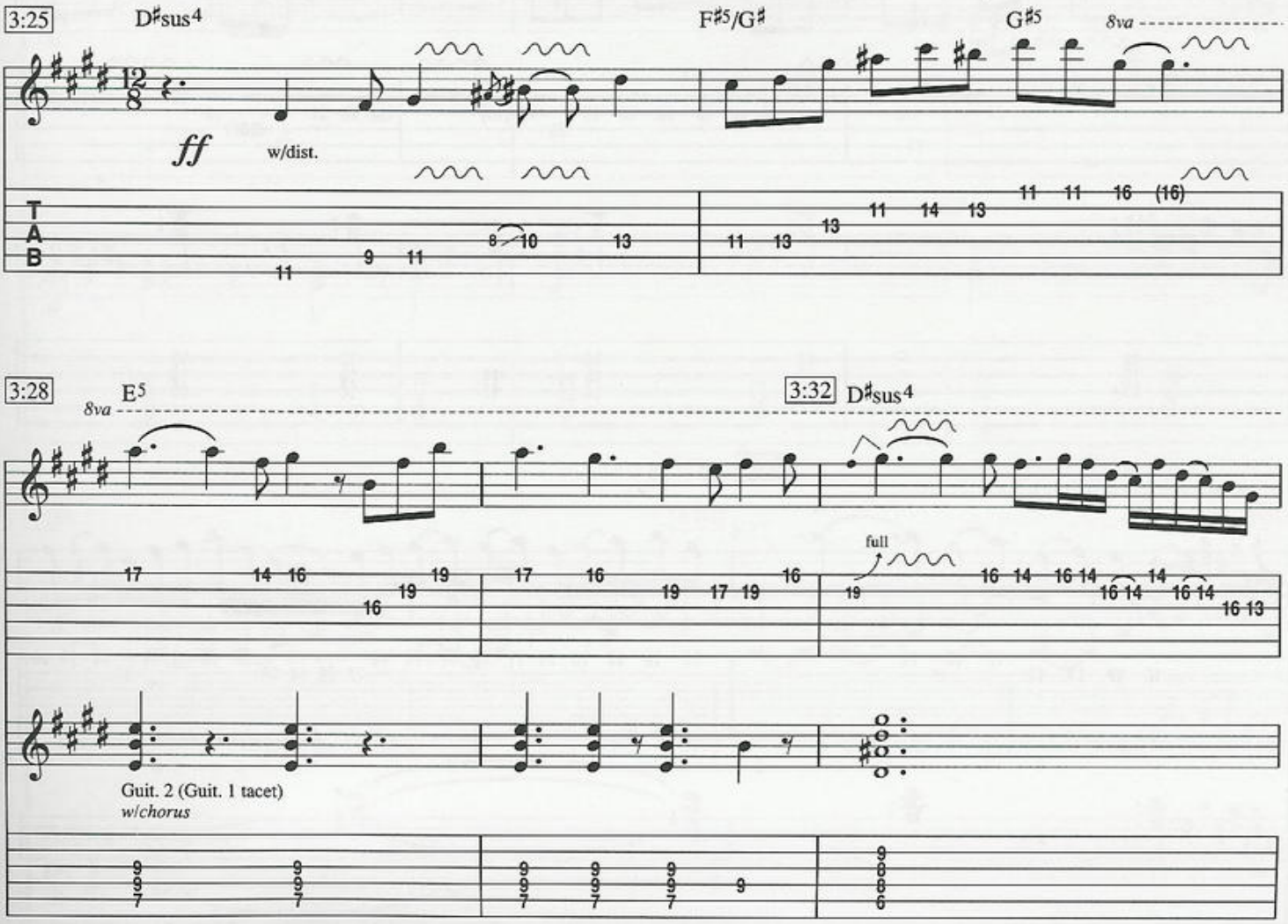

Guitar 1
2:05
E♭
8va
loco
2:11
B♭m
D♭
Fm
D♭
E♭


2:16
(Fm)
B♭
C
F5
D♭
E♭
2:19
A♭5
N.C.
(Fm)
8va
loco
2:24
Fm
8va
2:26
E♭
8va
2:31
B♭m
8va
loco
D♭
F5
E♭5
2:36

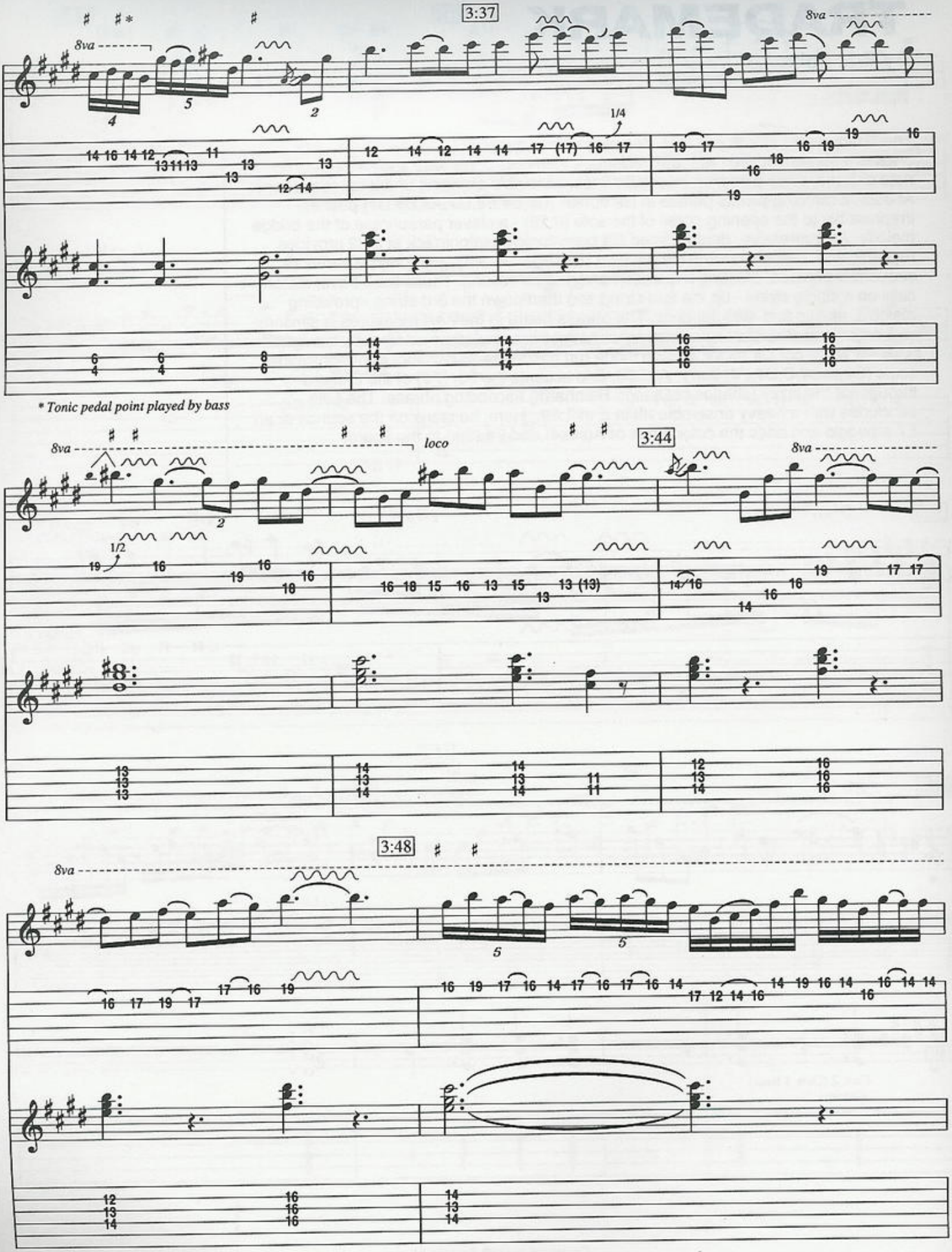
TRADEMARK

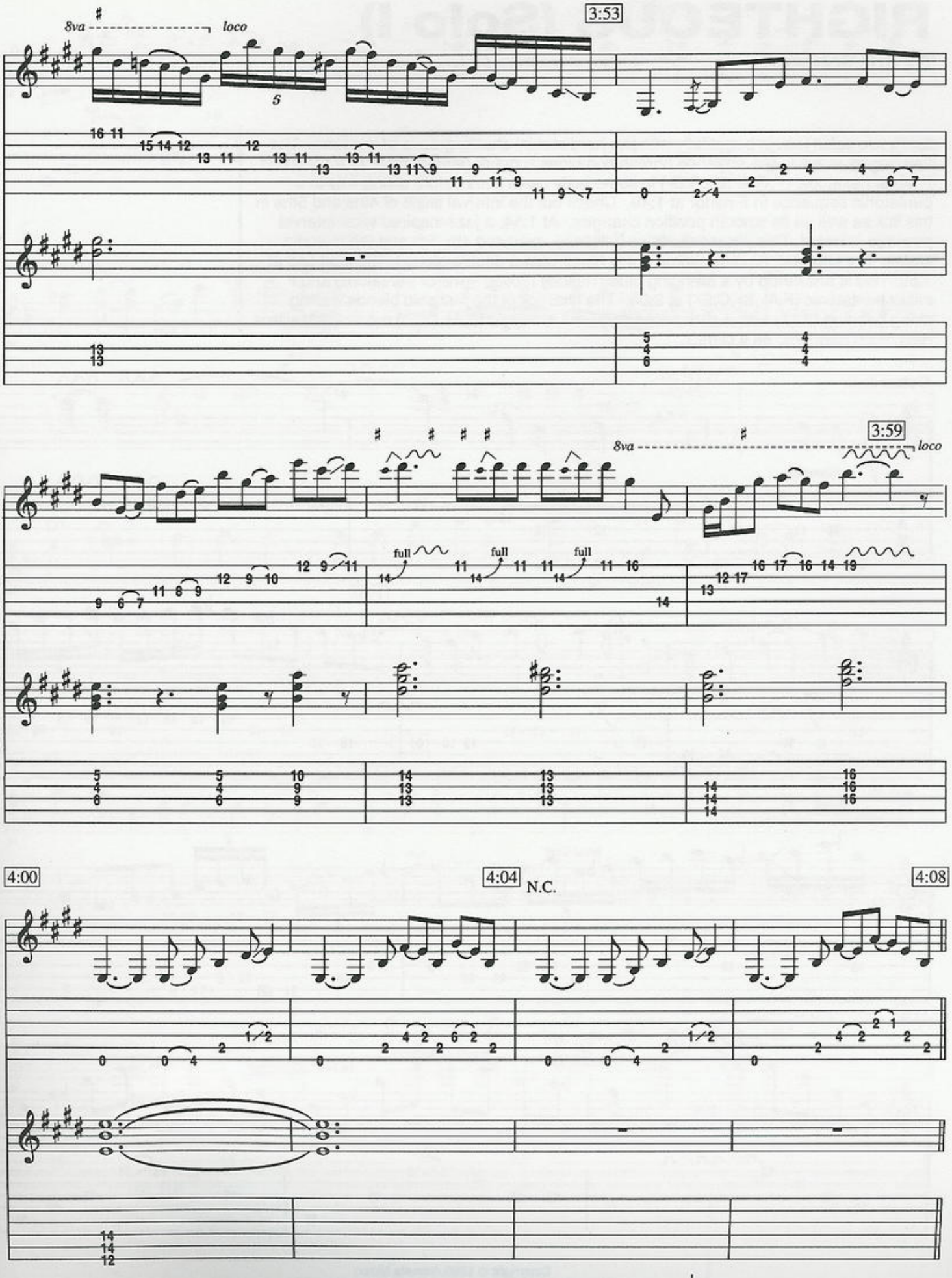
By Eric Johnson

The "Trademark" solo is just that - teeming with unmistakable Johnsonisms. Eric creates a statement filled with the trademark elements of his lead style – interesting note choices, scale blending, intervallic lines, inimitable phrasing and a gorgeous tone. At 3:25, a climbing pickup phrase in D# dorian (D#,E#,F#,G#,A#,B#,C#) pushes irrepressibly to the opening notes of the solo (3:25) - a clever paraphrase of the bridge melody. An aggressive, double-timed G# pentatonic/hexatonic lick at 3:32 provides rhythmic and melodic contrast in the next passage. At 3:37, Eric plays a series of sequential phrases, creating a question and answer feeling. These lines travel diatonically on a single string - up the 2nd string and then down the 3rd string - providing melodic, motific and textural unity. The phrase heard in the next measures is similarly well-organized. The ascending sequence at 3:44 is complemented by the passage at 3:48 – a white-hot C# minor aeolian mode run melded to a G# minor pentatonic/blues scale (G#,B,C#,D,D#,F#) flurry. At 3:53, Eric accents the 9th (F#) of the E chord throughout the jazzy (shades of Django Reinhardt) ascending phrase. The solo concludes with a heavy ensemble riff in E at 4:00. Here, he leans on the sounds of an E7 arpeggio and adds the color tones of A(sus4) and F# (9th) to the figure.



Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

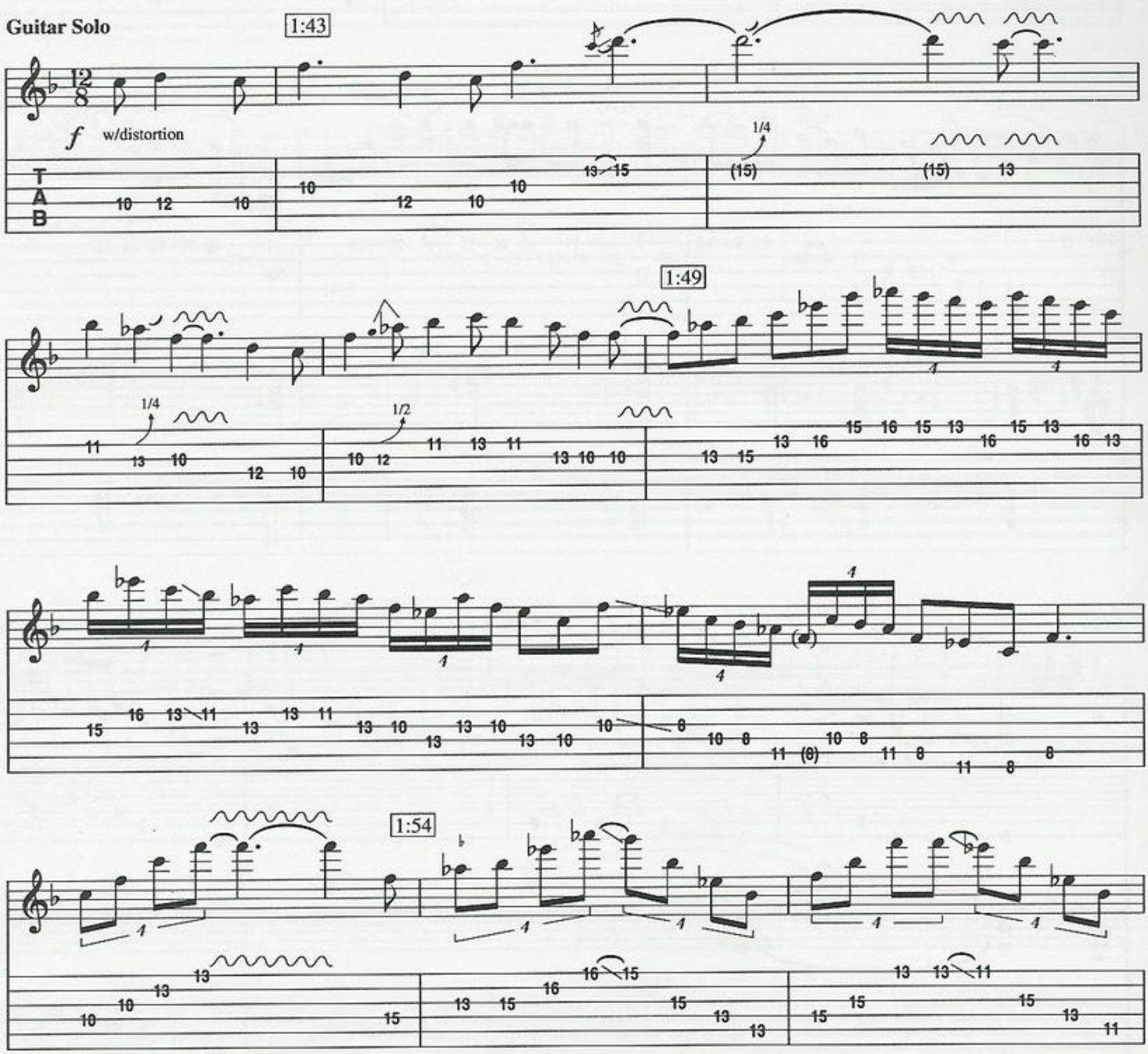

3:37
8va
3:44
loco
3:48
* Tonic pedal point played by bass


8va
loco
3:53
3:59
full
4:00
4:04
N.C.
4:08

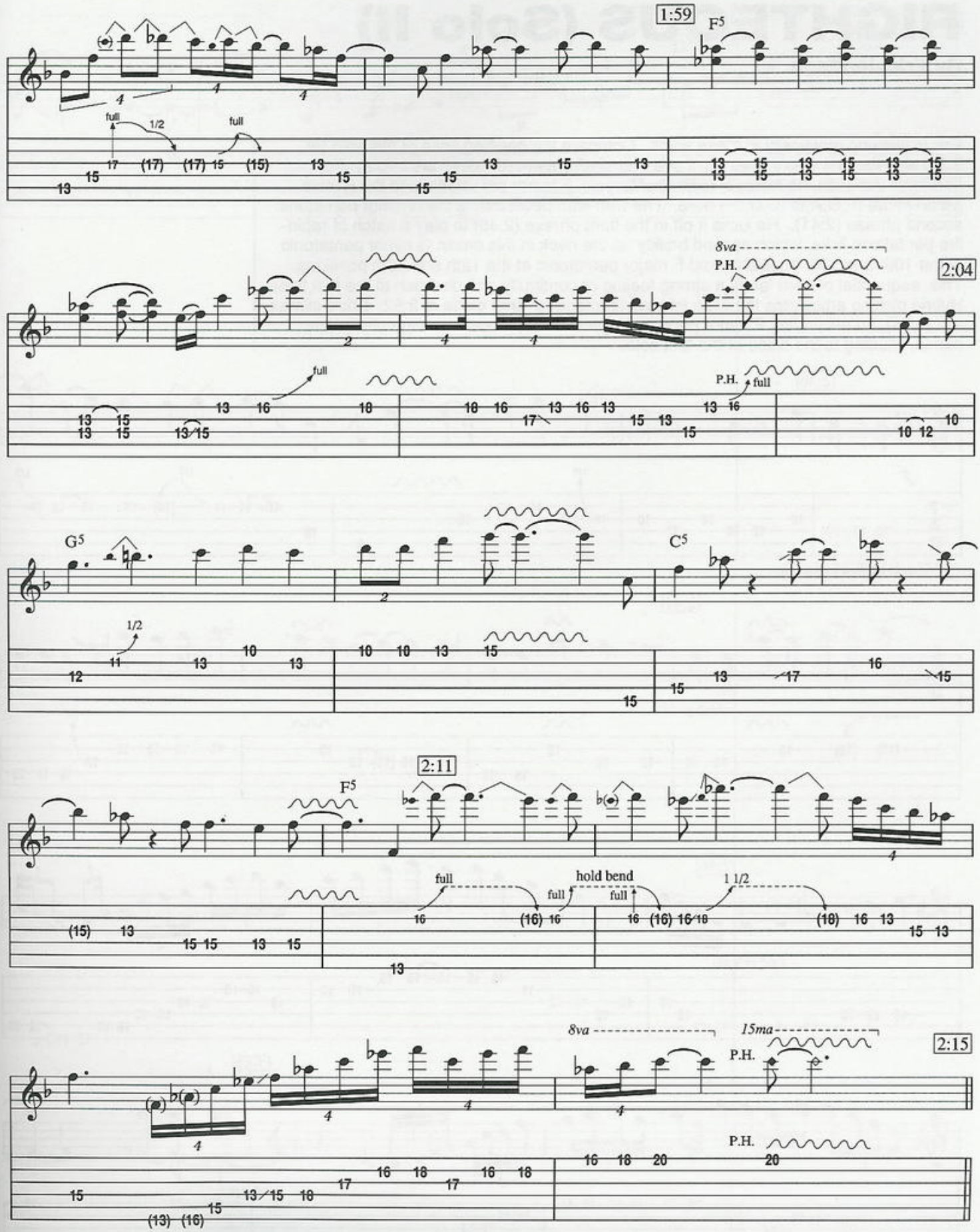
RIGHTEOUS (Solo I)

By Eric Johnson

Eric's two solos lock in beautifully with the hard rockin' shuffle groove of the tune. The first begins at 1:43. The entrance phrase combines F major pentatonic (F,G,A,C,D) and F minor hexatonic (F,G,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) in some tasty blues lines before giving way to a pentatonic sequence in F minor at 1:49. Check out the interval skips of 4ths and 5ths in this lick as well as its smooth position changes. At 1:54, a jazz-inspired wide-interval passage is heard. This phrase contains brilliantly executed 4th, 5th and 6th melodic jumps. For contrast, he plays some gutsy blues-based double-stops in the next line at 1:59. This is answered by a swinging blues melody mixing F major pentatonic and F minor pentatonic (F,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) at 2:04. The final lick of the first solo blends wailing string bending (2:11) with a slick ascending Fm7 arpeggio (F,A♭,C,E♭) run at 2:13, with a high pinch harmonic as a climax.



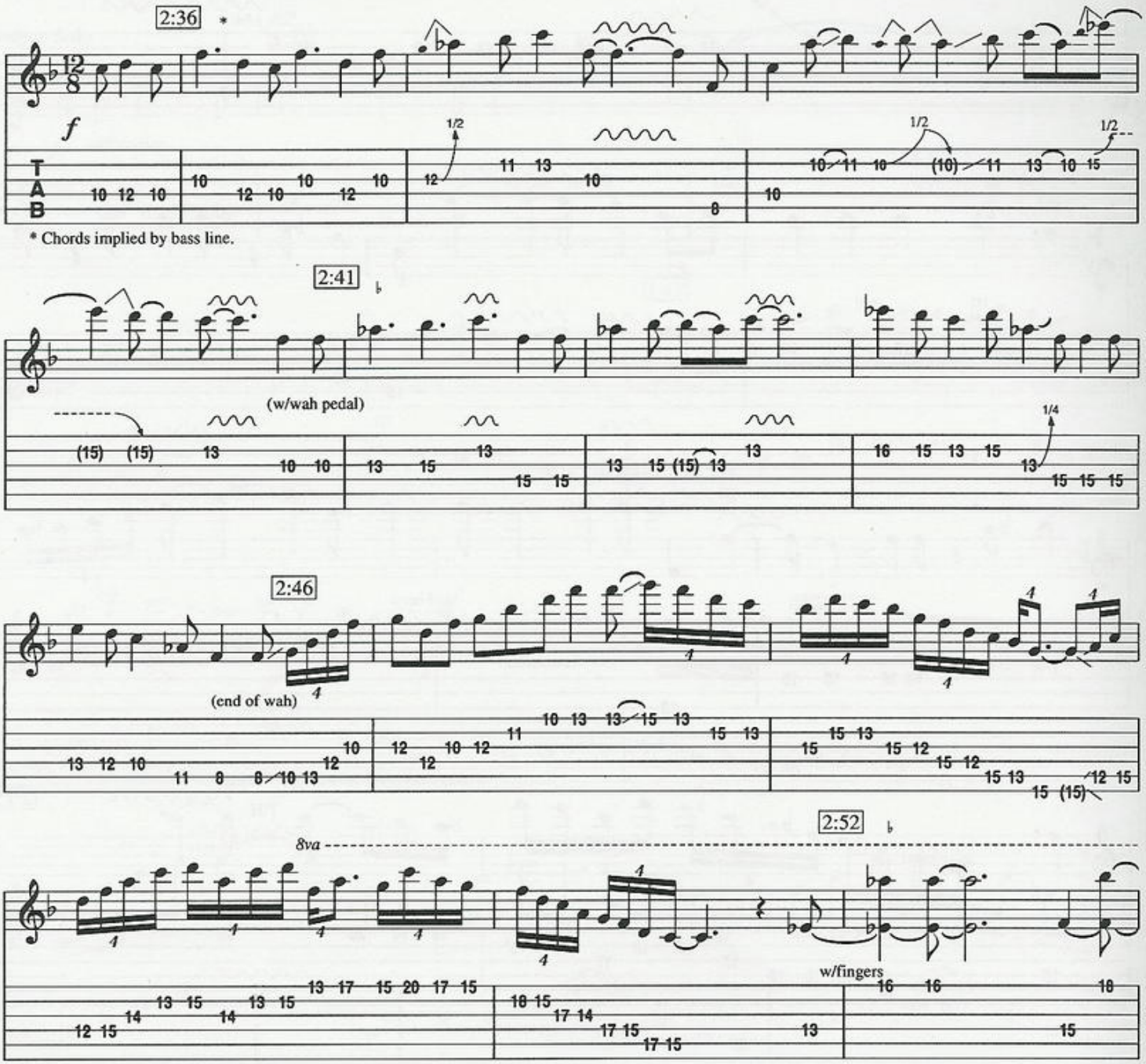
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved


1:59
F5
full
1/2
full
8va
P.H.
2:04
full
P.H.
full
G5
C5
1/2
2:11
F5
full
full
hold bend
full
1 1/2
8va
15ma
P.H.
2:15
P.H.

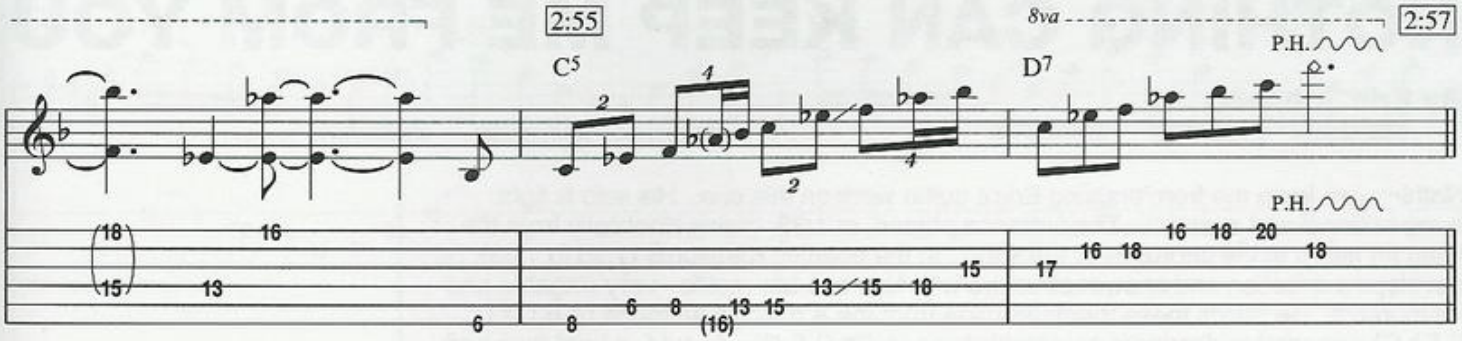
RIGHTEOUS (Solo II)

By Eric Johnson

Eric is thinking motifically in these solos. Compare the opening lines of this solo (at 2:36) with the first solo's, and you'll see that similar thematic ideas are in play. For harmonic variation, he mixes F major pentatonic, F minor pentatonic and the F mixolydian mode (F,G,A,B♭,C,D,E♭) here. The wah-wah pedal colors the F minor pentatonic second phrase (2:41). He kicks it off in the third phrase (2:46) to play a batch of rapid-fire pentatonic licks, which ascend briskly up the neck in this order: G minor pentatonic at the 10th and 13th positions, and F major pentatonic at the 12th and 15th positions. This sequential pattern lends a strong feeling of continuity and direction to the fast lines. Hybrid picking articulates the wide interval (compound 4ths) diads at 2:52. Eric's climax run (2:55), an ascending F minor pentatonic scale climb, lands on a high pinch harmonic, alluding to the close of the first solo.



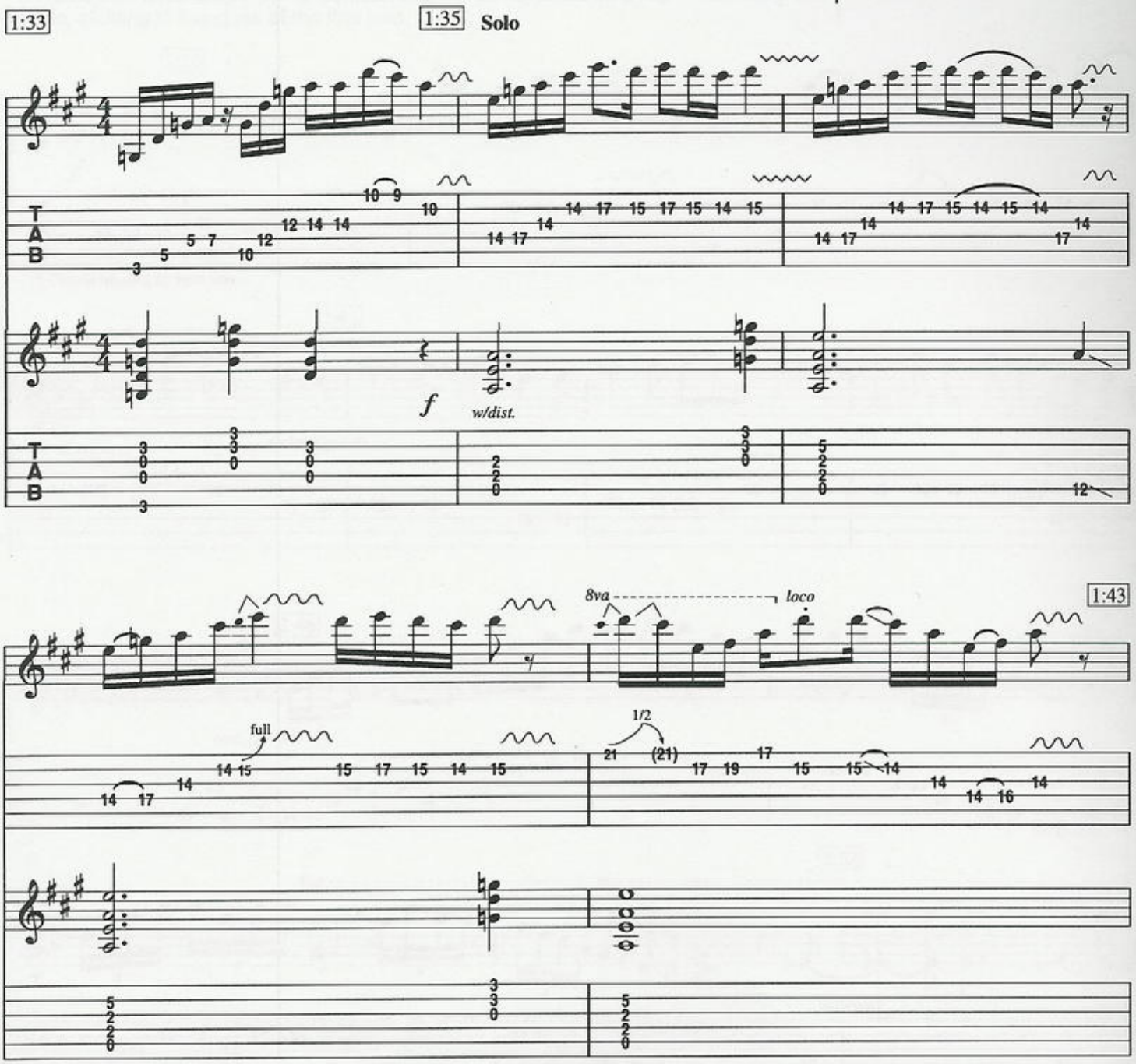
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved


2:55
C5
8va
2:57
D7
P.H.
P.H.

NOTHING CAN KEEP ME FROM YOU

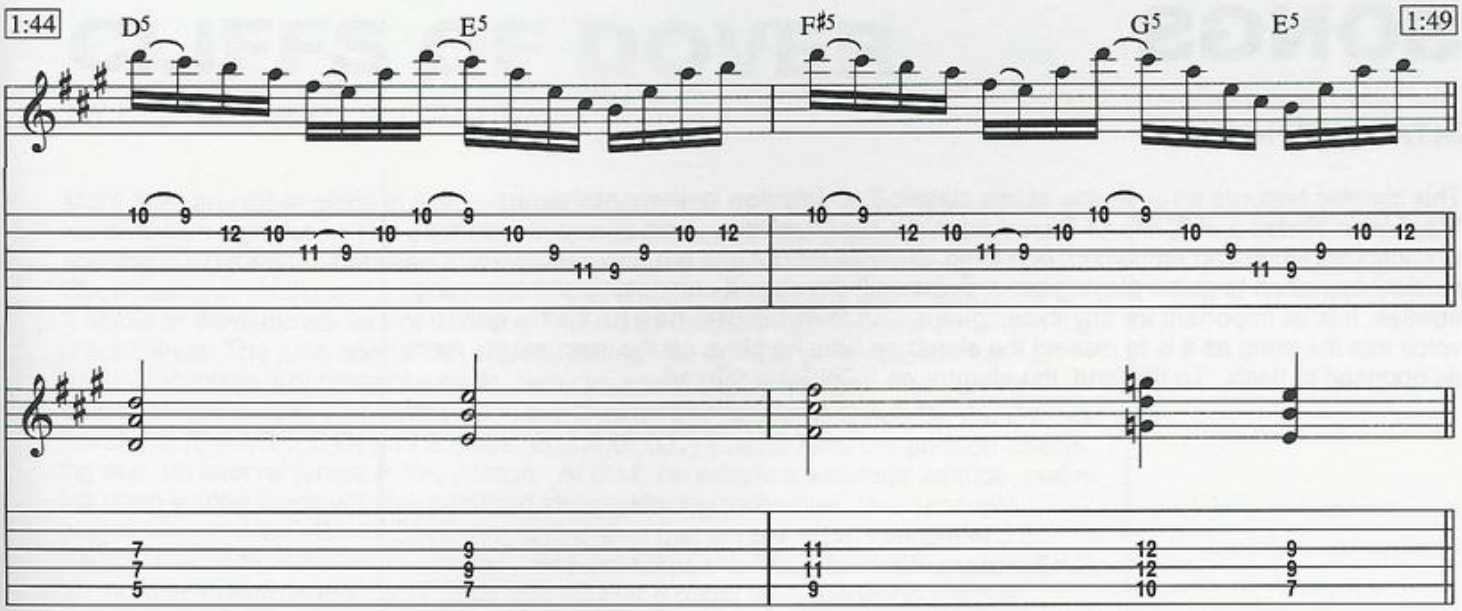
By Eric Johnson

Nothing can keep me from praising Eric's guitar work on this one. His solo is tight, compositional and succinct. The entrance phrase, at 1:33, grows kinetically from the main riff heard in the choruses of the song. In the opening measures (1:35 to 1:43), he develops a question and answer structure with four one-bar motifs - very singable and memorable. He builds these thematic ideas from the A mixolydian mode (A,B,C#,D, E,F#,G) arranged in dominant pentatonic form (A,C#,D,E,G). At 1:44, a brief (two bar) but flowing interlude combines triadic sounds (A major), scalar lines (essentially from D major) and wide interval arpeggios (perfect 4ths), providing a nice contrast to the more pre-composed melodies of the opening phrases.



Editor's note: Due to time limitations this excerpt does not appear on the audio.

Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved


1:44
D5
E5
F♯5
G5
E5
1:49

SONGS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter features an overview of two classic Eric Johnson instrumental songs - "Zap" from ***Tones*** and "Cliffs Of Dover" from ***Ah Via Musicom***. Both pieces are worthy of continued study and emulation, providing valuable insight into not only Eric's very musical approach to guitar playing but also his well-developed composing and arranging abilities. It is as important for any thinking musician to investigate how he fits his guitar voice into the song as it is to dissect the signature licks he plays on the instrument - form as opposed to flash. To this end, the chapter on SONGS is offered.

CLIFFS OF DOVER

By Eric Johnson

More than any other piece in Eric Johnson's repertoire, "Cliffs Of Dover" stands out as his definitive signature. The composition is well-structured and splendidly performed, splitting the difference between an instrumental song and an intense blowing vehicle. Showcasing of chops and improvisational cleverness never at any time disrupts the melodic or thematic content of the song, but rather tends to highlight and embellish the proceedings. The tune opens with a breathtaking free-time, unaccompanied intro at 0:01. Eric mixes a number of moods, textures and approaches here. The burning passage from 0:02 to 0:11 is based on the E minor pentatonic (E,G,A,B,D), the E minor hexatonic (E,F#,G,A,B,D) and E blues (E,G,A,B♭,B,D) scales. Note the position changing and 4th interval jumps in this phrase. At 0:12, he adopts a violinistic attitude, outlining open-voiced triads with his patented string-skipping technique. The harmonic progression of Am/C-Bm/D-Em/G-Am-G/B-C-D in this phrase is reminiscent of J.S. Bach's unaccompanied violin sonatas. See the SPECIAL TECHNIQUES chapter,EX.5, for more technical details. 0:17 finds Eric playing a pedal tone line using another signature technique - hybrid picking. (See SPECIAL TECHNIQUES, EX.4) The band enters at this point (0:22), joining Eric in midstream as he closes out the intro with a dazzling G major lick - using scalar, sequential and ostinato ideas, which announces the main riff as well as the new G major tonal center.



1A



1B



1C



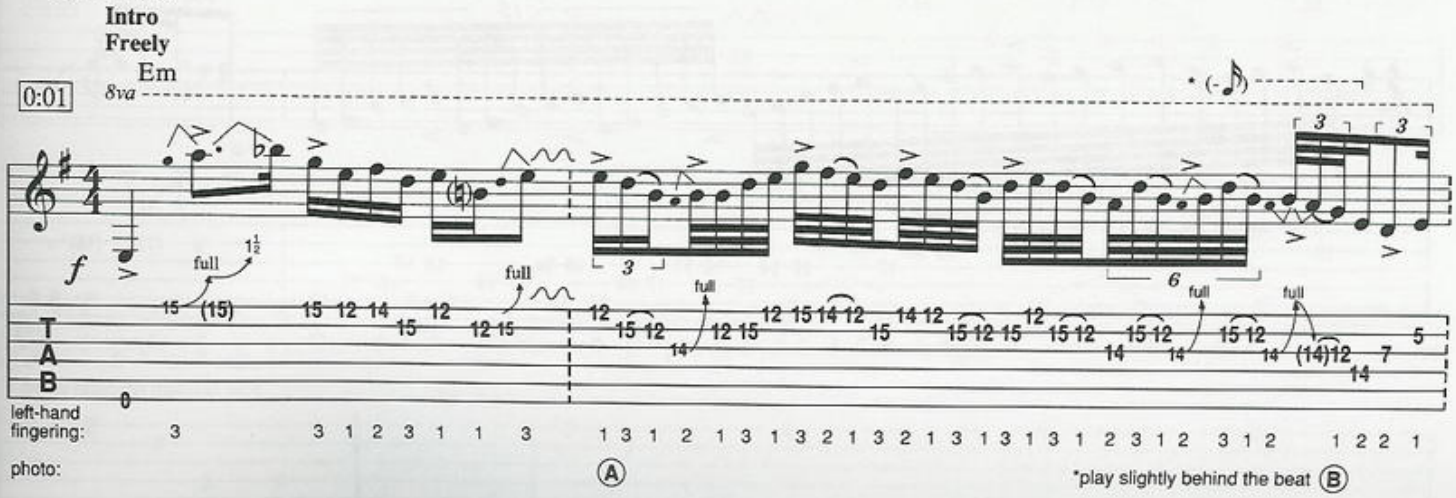
1D



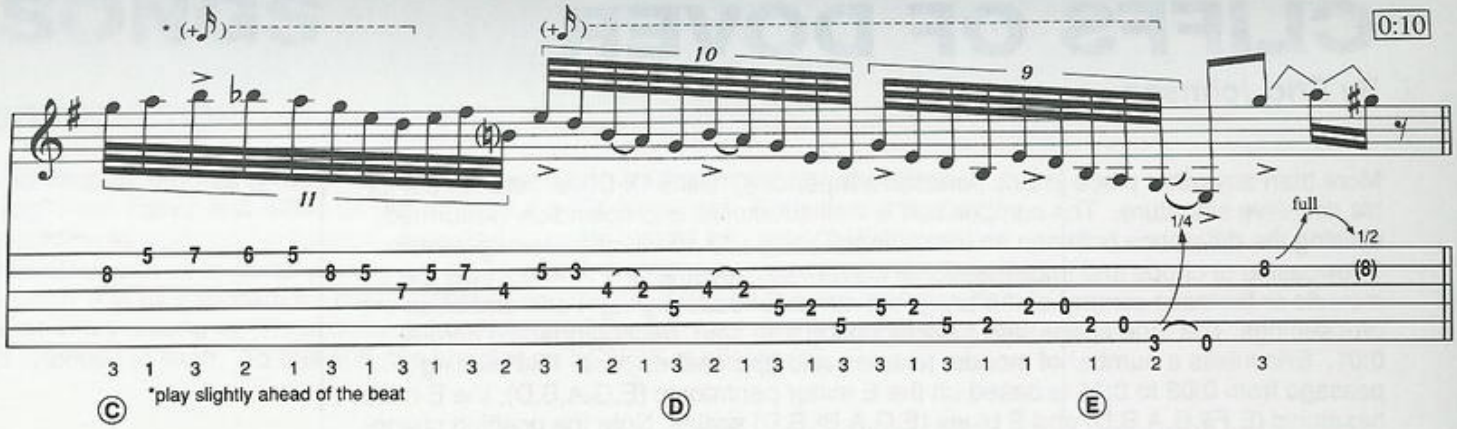
1E

Example 1 - CLIFFS OF DOVER INTRO

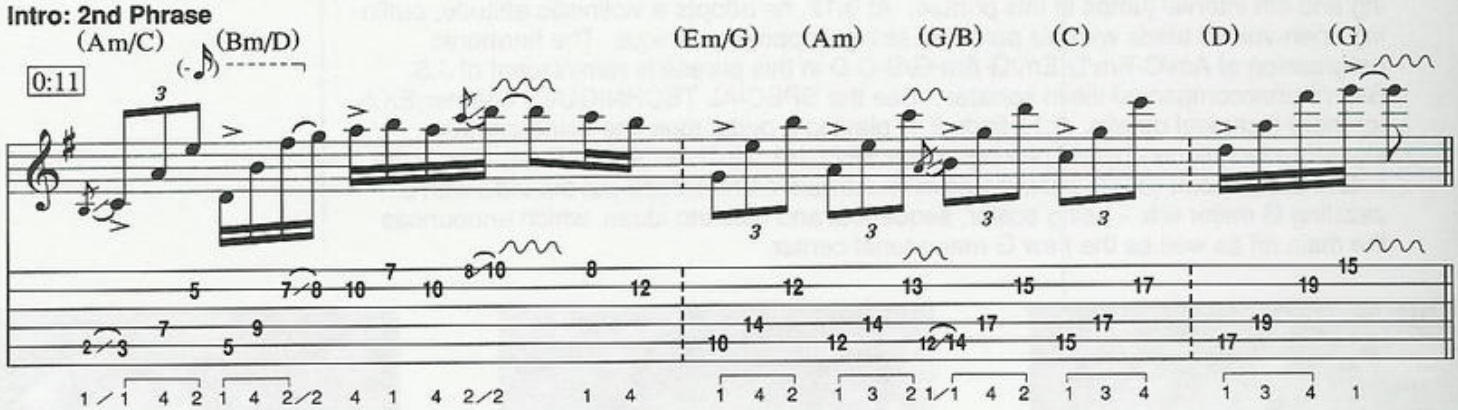
1st Phrase



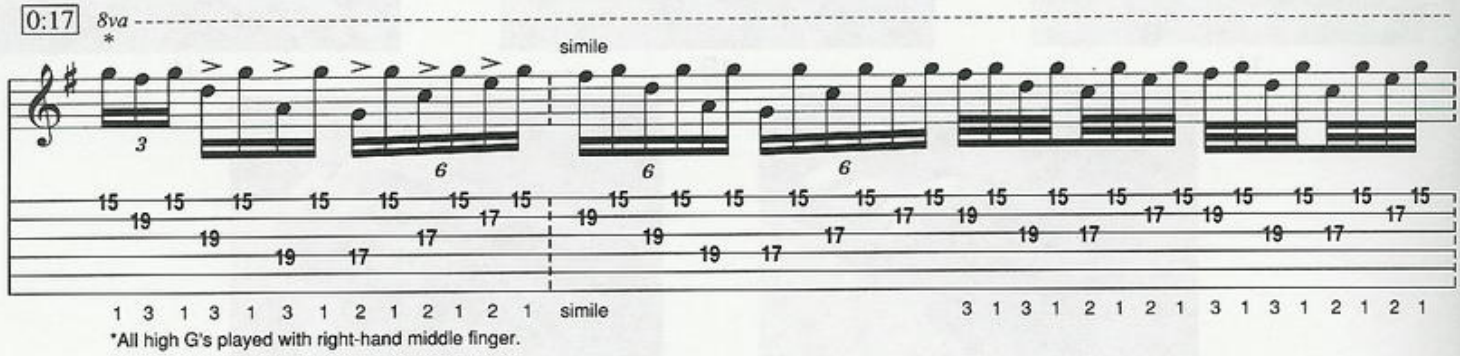
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

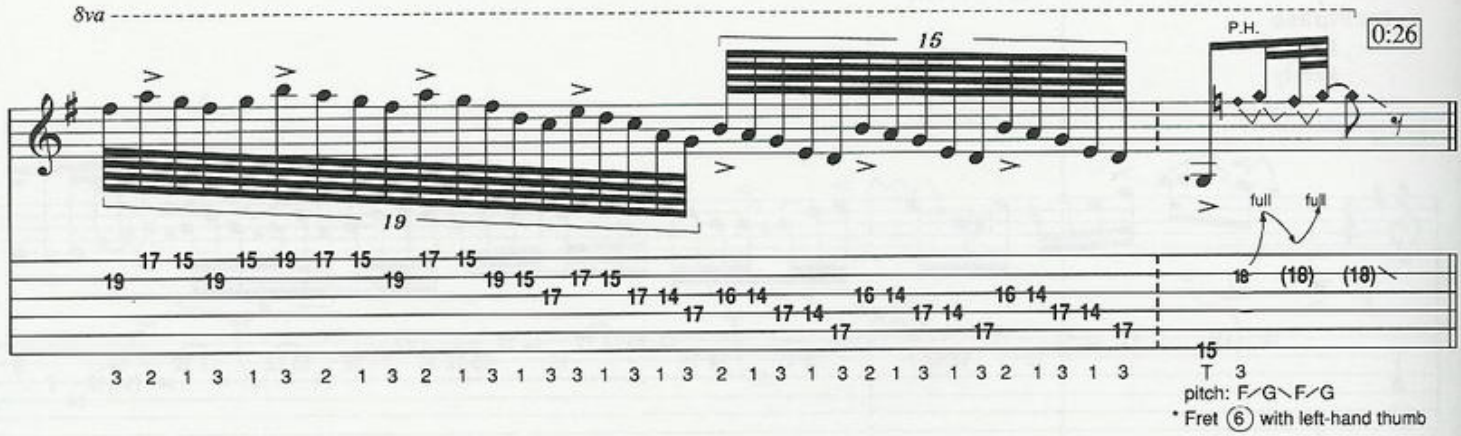


Intro: 2nd Phrase



Intro: 3rd Phrase

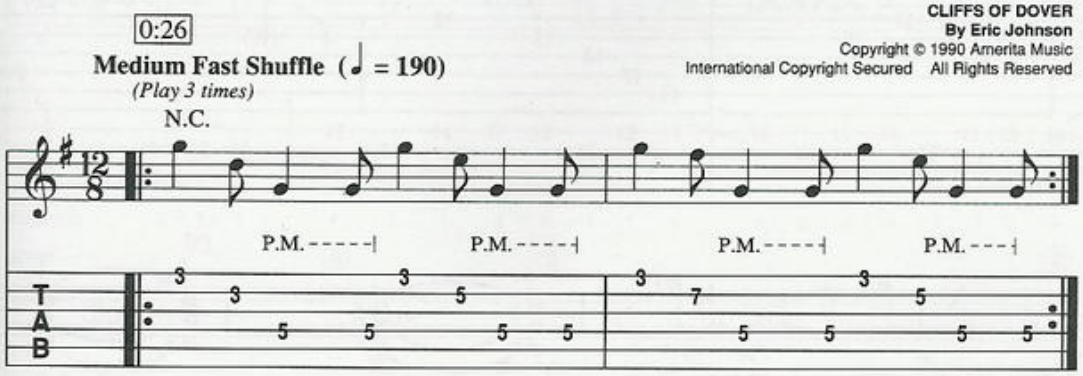




The main rhythm riff (0:26) is a tricky figure based on a four note pattern in G. Here, the pitches on the 2nd string imply the chord movement of G-G6-Gmaj7-G6 in single note form. The riff is made funky by careful RH muting and the swing of the shuffle groove.

Example 2
CLIFFS OF DOVER RIFF

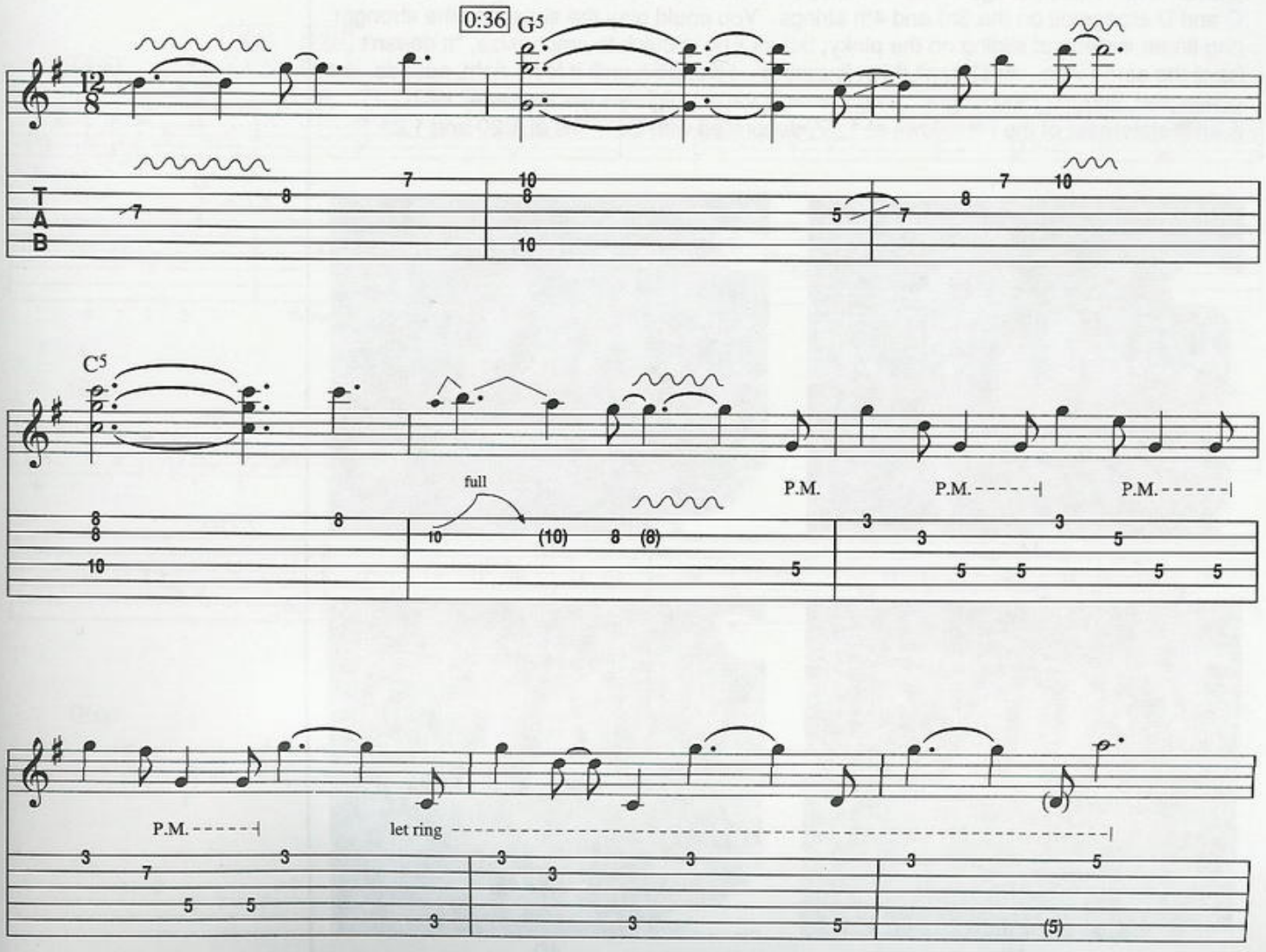
CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

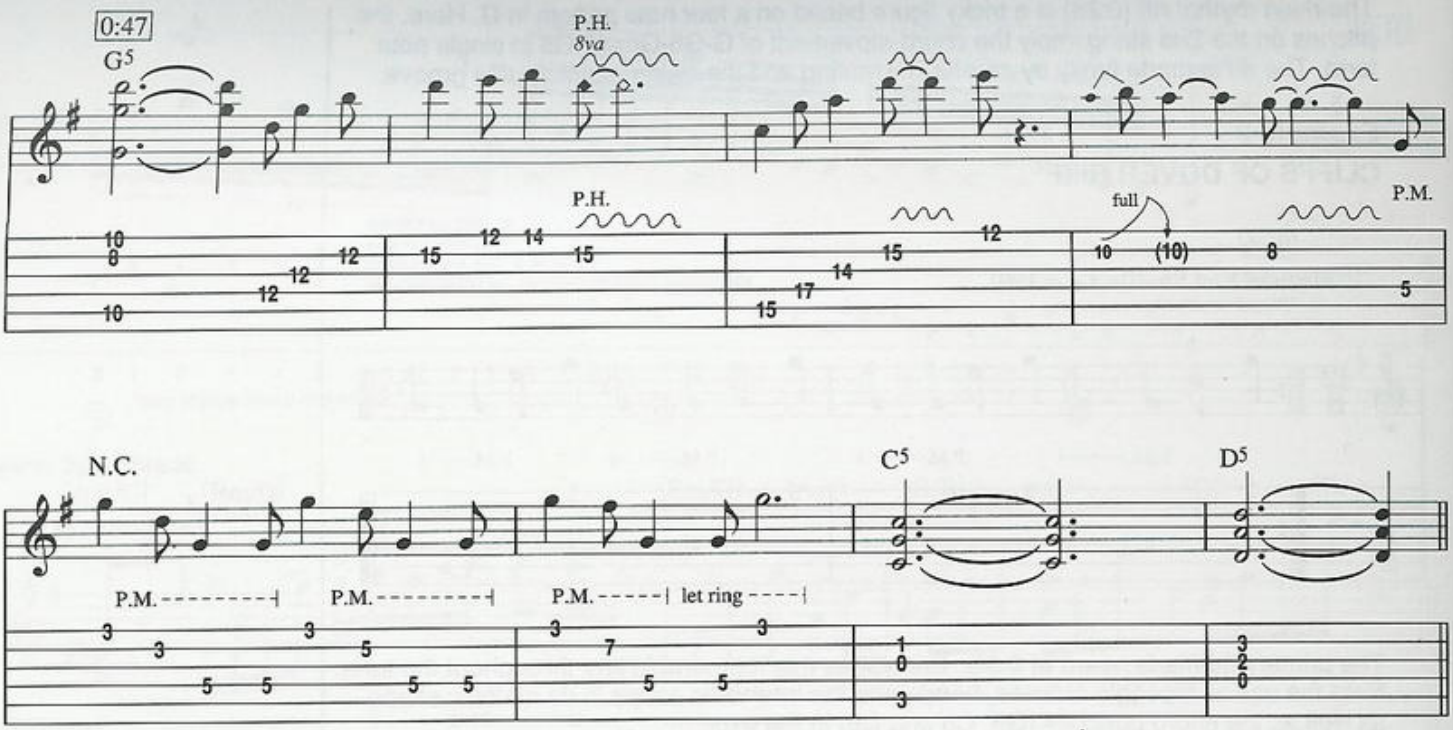


The primary theme is heard at 0:36. Eric varies this memorable line throughout the tune. Note the use of arpeggio outlines, bends and the intervallic jumps in its melodic shape, as well as the chord punches (G5, C5 and D5) in the excerpt.

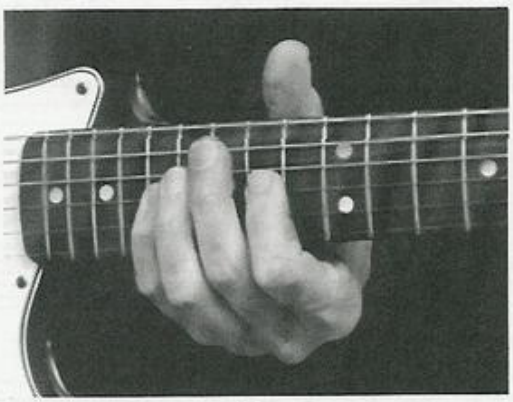
Example 3
CLIFFS OF DOVER MAIN THEME

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved





A contrasting second theme is introduced at 0:57. The fingering and articulation is critical here. This passage reveals Eric's penchant for pinky slides as he connects Am, G and D arpeggios on the 3rd and 4th strings. You could play the slurs with the stronger ring finger instead of sliding on the pinky, but as Eric is quick to emphasize, "It doesn't have the same vibe....but I don't think fingering – I just do it until it feels right, sounds connected, and the tone's right." The theme is varied slightly in its repeat at 1:07-1:17. A brief statement of the riff follows at 1:17, decorated with tasty fills at 1:20 and 1:24.



4A



4B



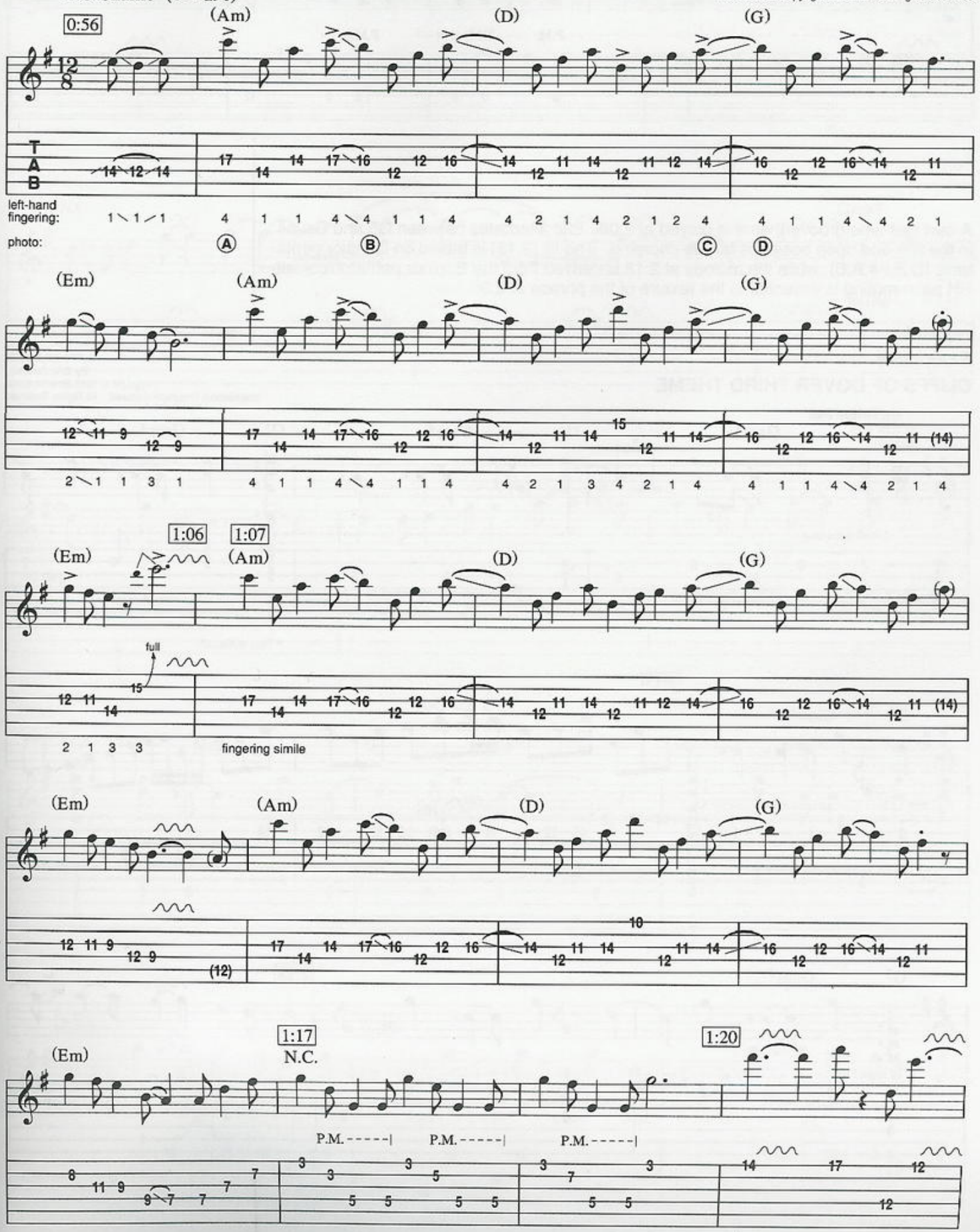
4C

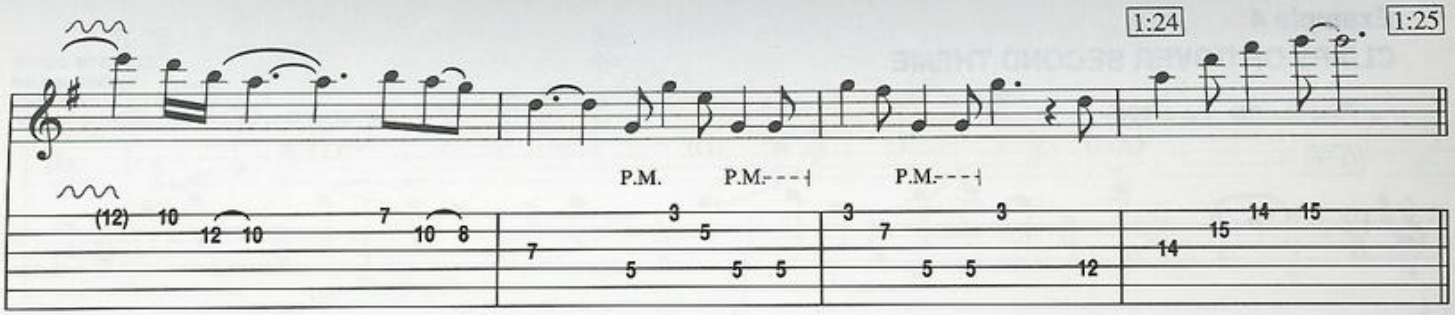


4D

Example 4
CLIFFS OF DOVER SECOND THEME

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

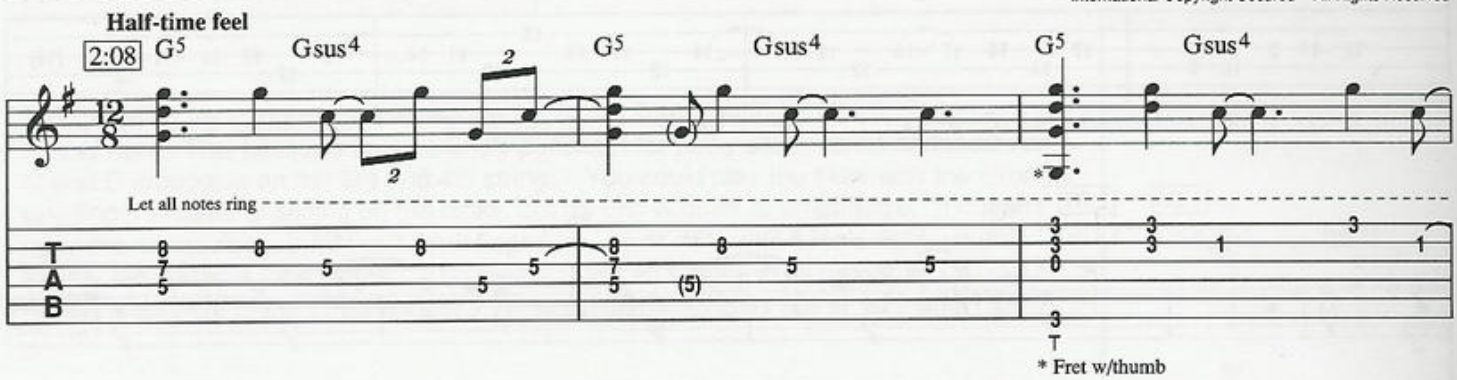


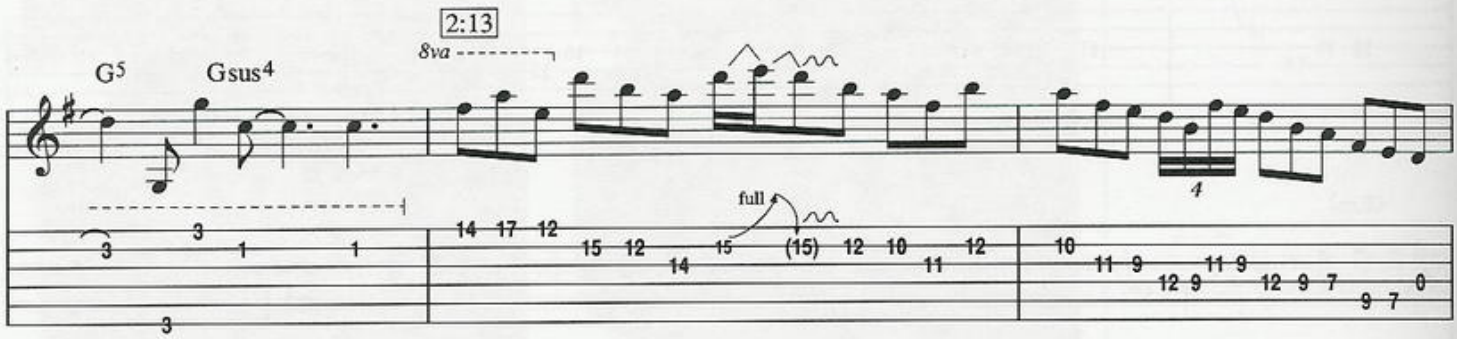


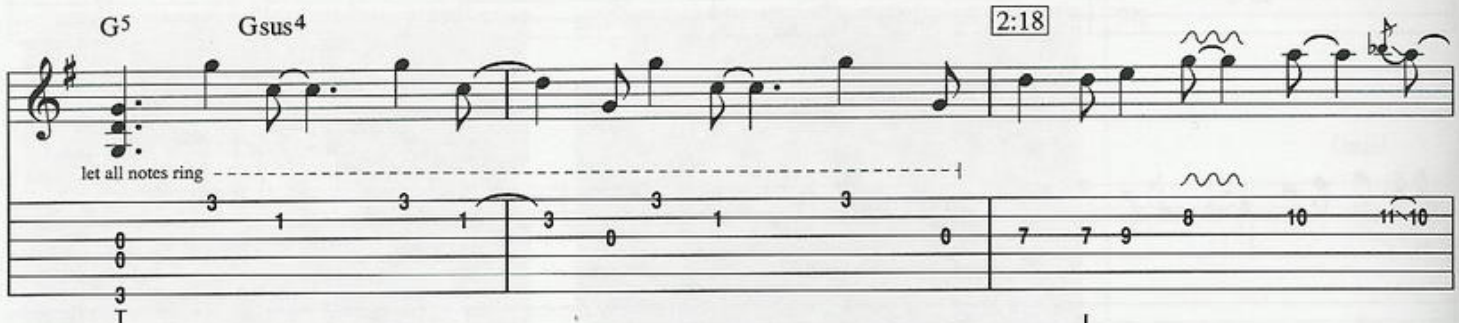
A new half-time groove/theme is played at 2:08. Eric alternates between G5 and Gsus4 in the fifth and open positions for the chording. The fill (2:13) is based on D major pentatonic (D,E,F#,A,B), while the melody at 2:18 is derived from the E minor pentatonic scale. RH palm-muting is essential to the texture of the phrase at 2:36.

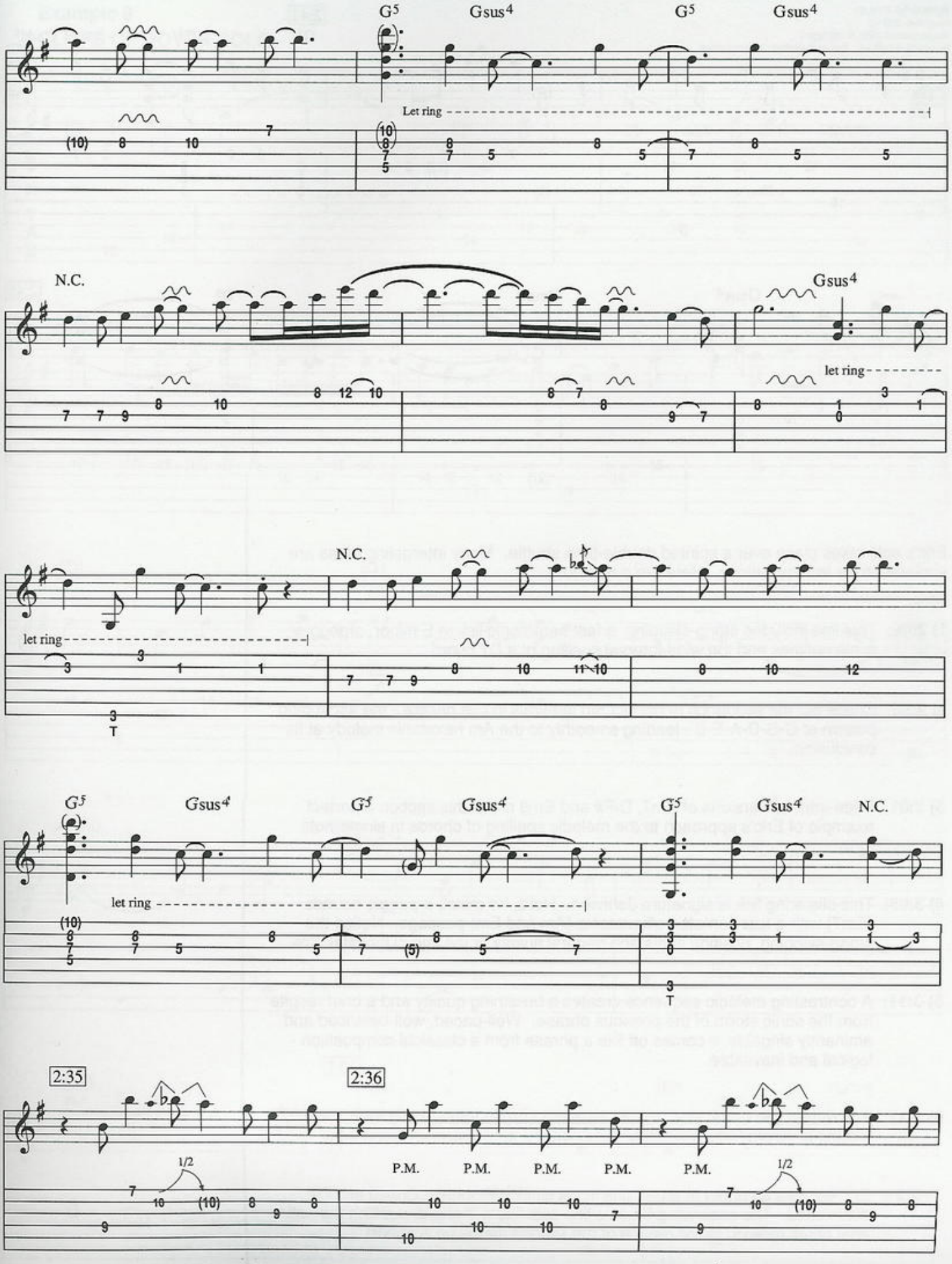
Example 5
CLIFFS OF DOVER THIRD THEME

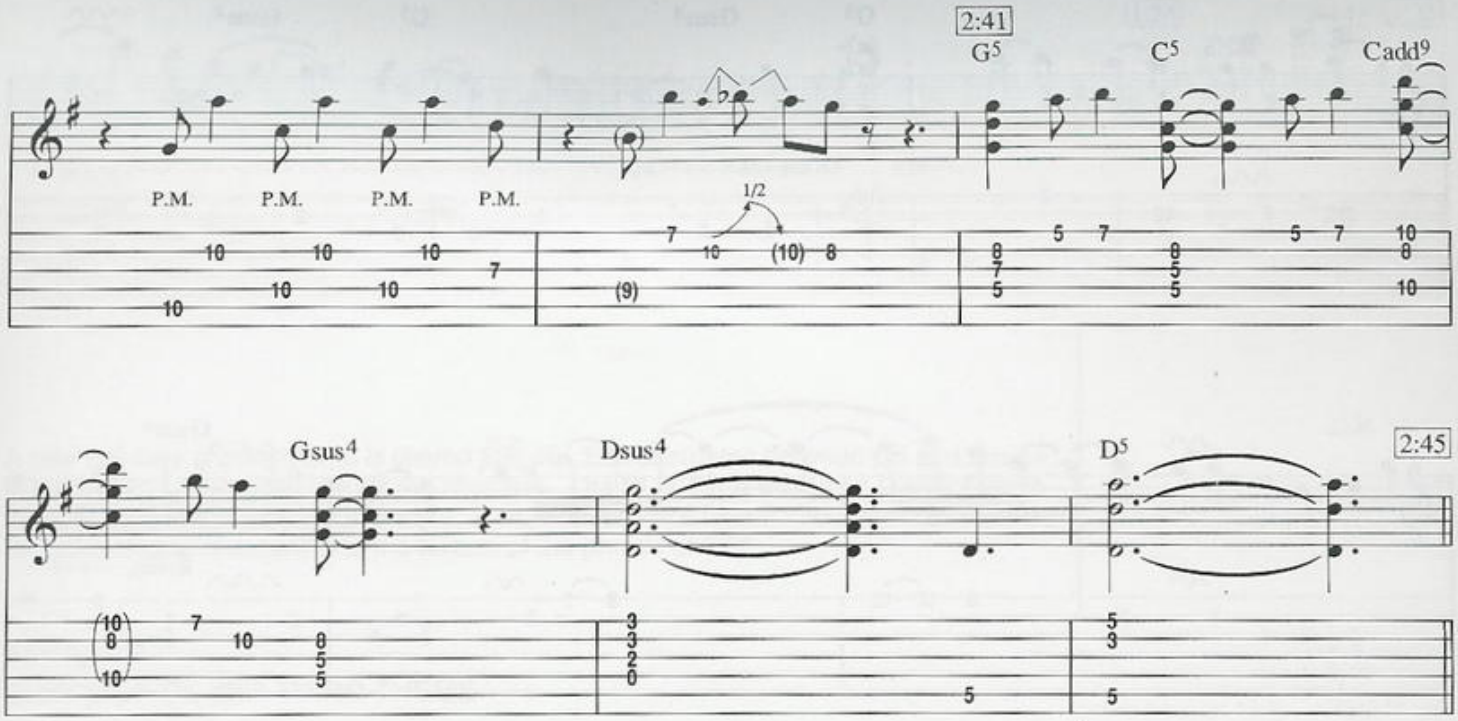
CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved








G5
Gsus4
G5
Gsus4
Let ring
N.C.
Gsus4
let ring
N.C.
let ring
T
G5
Gsus4
G5
Gsus4
G5
Gsus4
N.C.
let ring
T
2:35
2:36
1/2
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
P.M.
1/2



Eric's solo takes place over a spirited double-time shuffle. Many interesting ideas are explored in his improvisations. Here are a handful:

1) 2:46: This line includes string-skipping, a fast pentatonic lick in E minor, arpeggio/scale outlines and the wide-interval spelling of a D7 chord.

2) 2:56: Check out the sequence of perfect 5th intervals in this phrase - the ascending pattern of C-G-D-A-E-B - leading smoothly to the Am hexatonic melody at its conclusion.

3) 3:01: Wide-interval versions of Am7, D/F# and Em9 make this section a perfect example of Eric's approach to the melodic spelling of chords in single-note form.

4) 3:05: This blistering lick is signature Johnson. Here, he mixes arpeggio sounds (Em7) with a fast pentatonic/hexatonic (Am and Em) passage. Notice the string-skipping, position shifts and general fluidity of the line. Unmistakable.

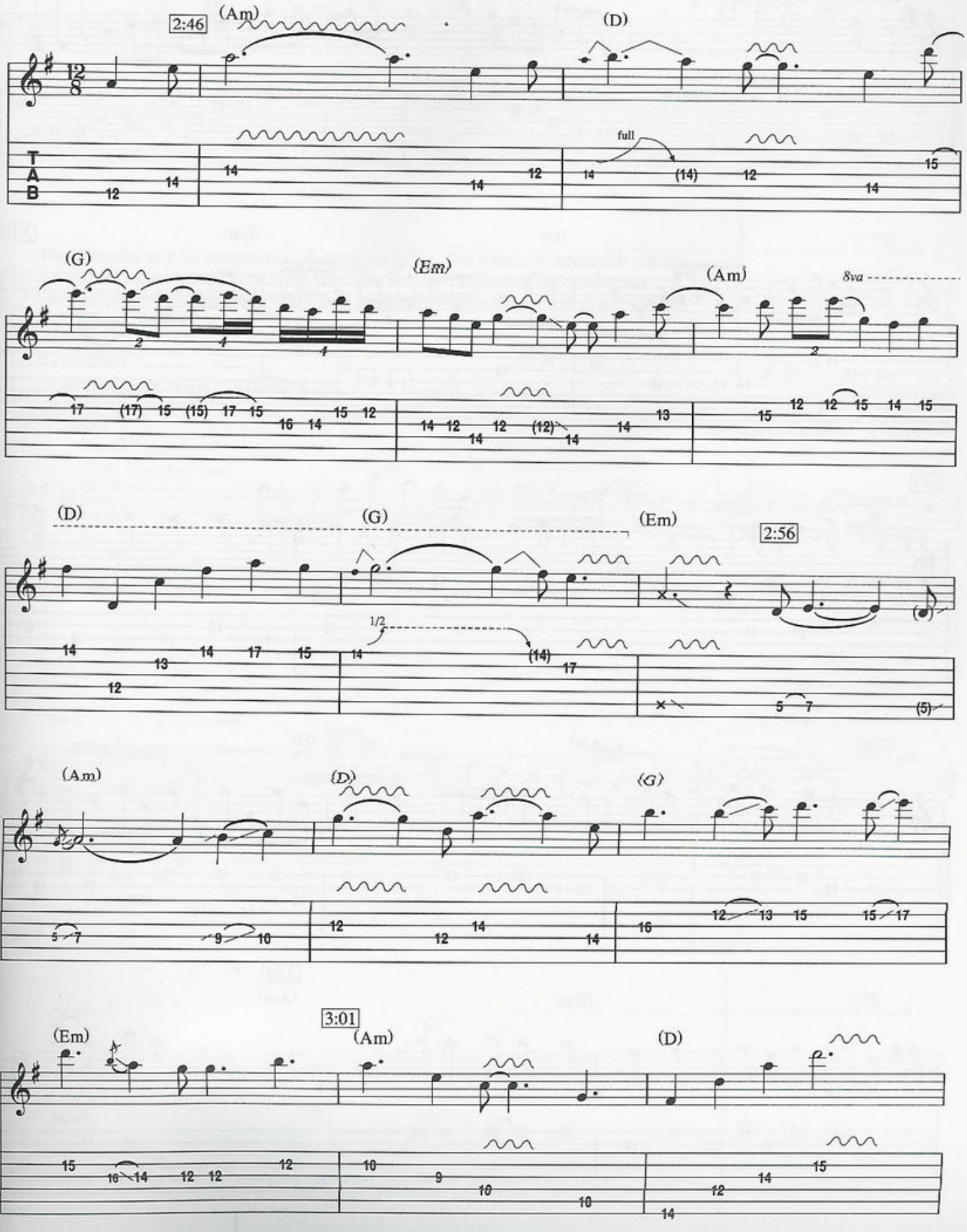
5) 3:11: A contrasting melodic sequence creates a breathing quality and a brief respite from the sonic storm of the previous phrase. Well-paced, well-balanced and eminently singable, it comes off like a phrase from a classical composition - logical and inevitable.

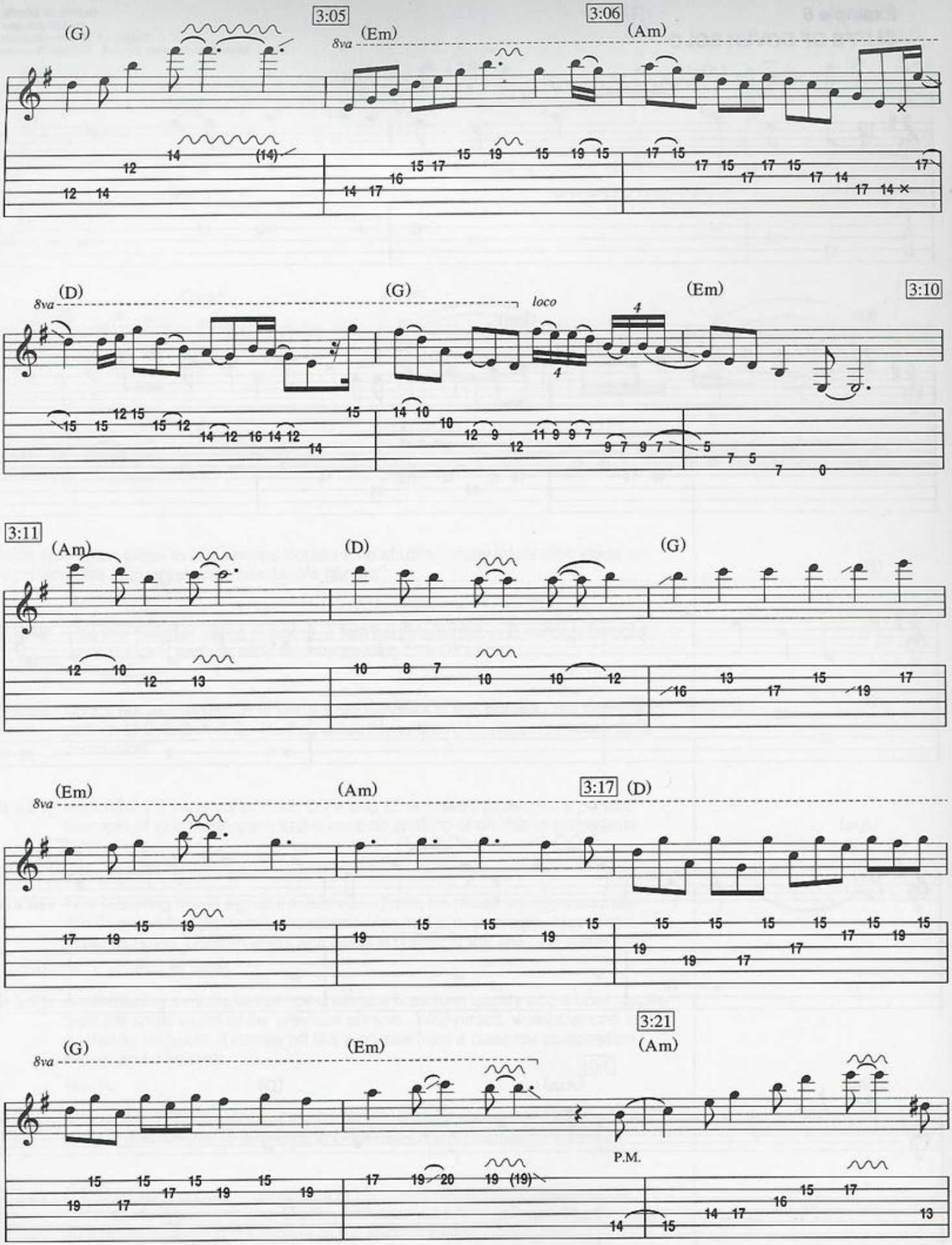
6) 3:17: Eric recaps the pedal tone phrase from the intro in abbreviated form. Hybrid picking is employed to generate the violinistic impression as in the intro.

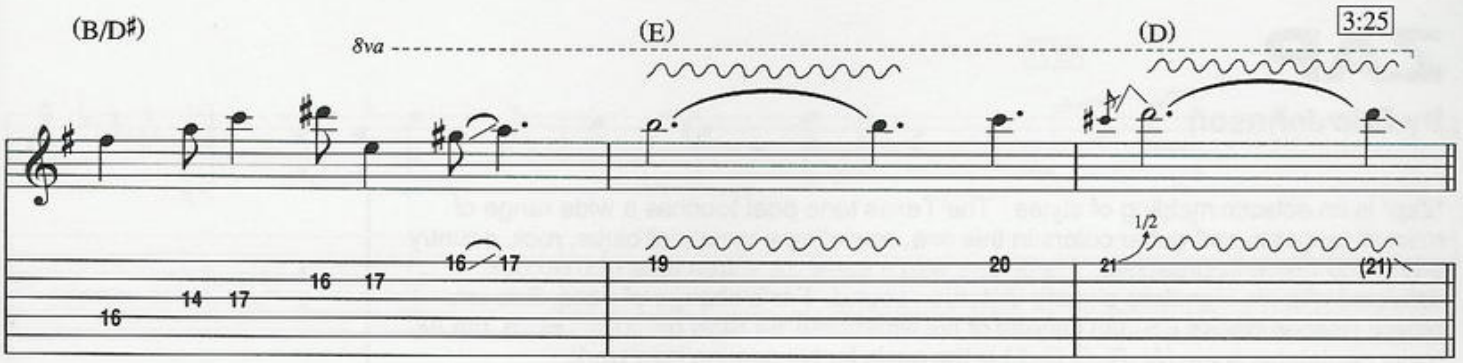
7) 3:21: Eric outlines a couple of arpeggios in his closing thoughts: Cmaj9 and D# diminished. The ascending E scale line acts like a V chord, pushing the solo's final notes forward to the reprise of the second theme (in A minor).

Example 6
CLIFFS OF DOVER SOLO

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



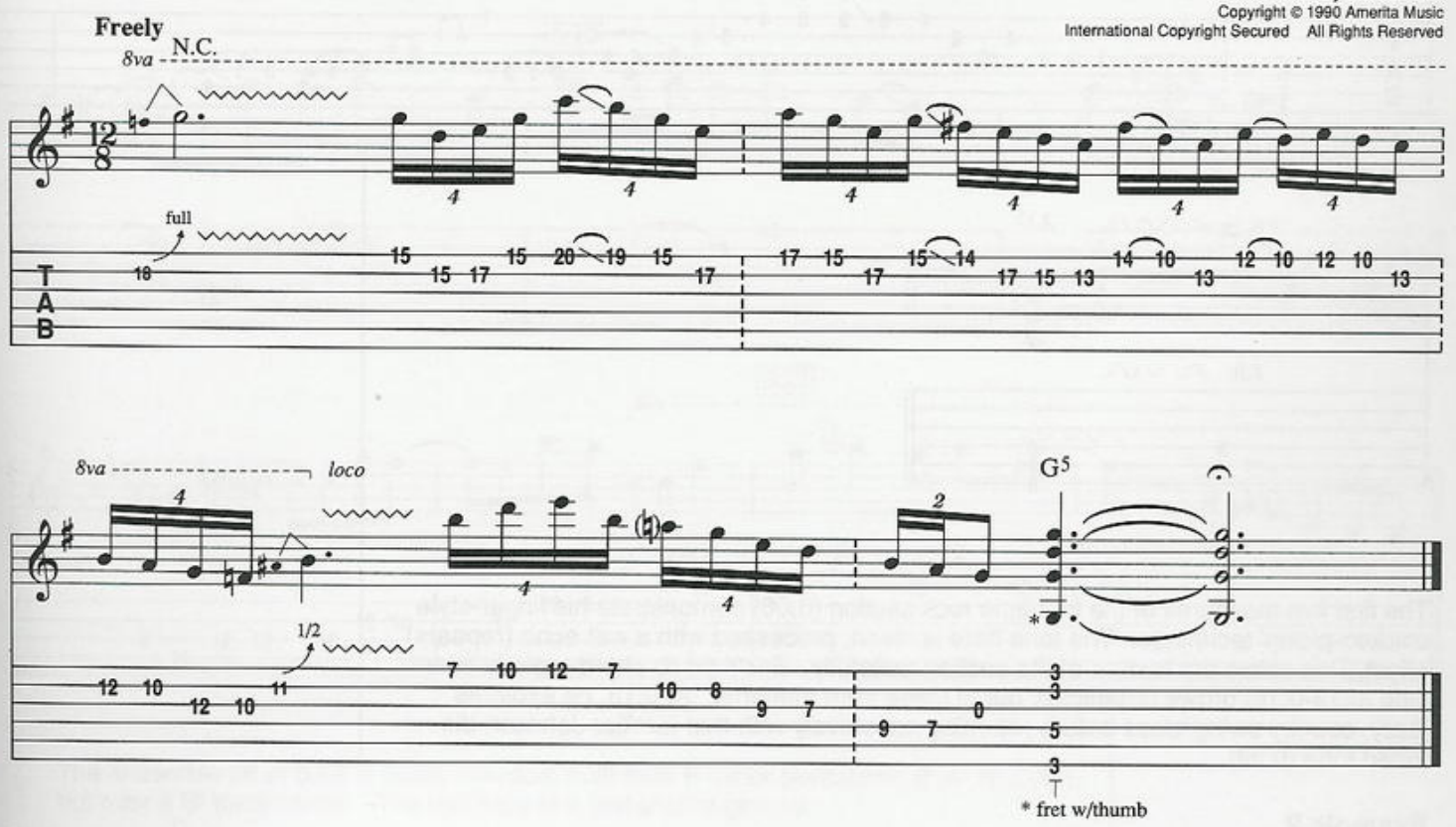

(G)
3:05
(Em)
8va
3:06
(Am)
(D)
8va
(G)
loco
(Em)
3:10
3:11
(Am)
(D)
(G)
(Em)
8va
(Am)
3:17
(D)
(G)
8va
(Em)
3:21
(Am)
P.M.



The cadenza at 3:54 rounds out the song perfectly. The free-time approach mirrors the intro in capsule form. The lines are based on the G major pentatonic scale (G,A,B,D,E) with tasty allusions to the G minor pentatonic scale (G,B♭,C,D,F) in the blue notes F and B♭.

Example 7
CLIFFS OF DOVER CADENZA

CLIFFS OF DOVER
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1990 Amerita Music
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



ZAP

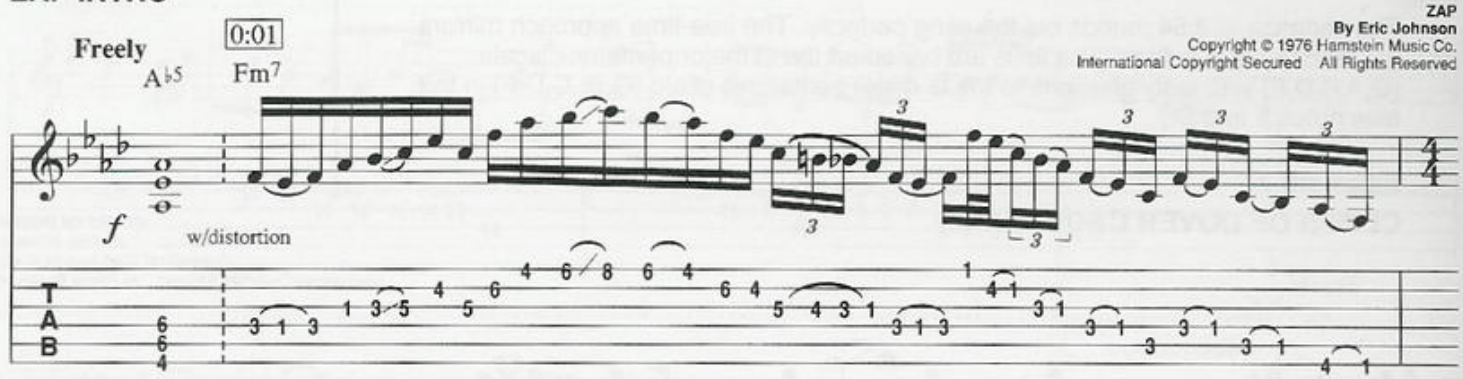
By Eric Johnson

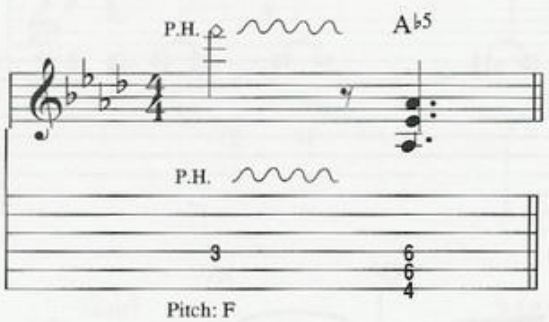
"Zap" is an eclectic melding of styles. The Texas tone poet touches a wide range of musical tangents and guitar colors in this one, revealing a variety of blues, rock, country swing and fusion approaches. He begins with a cadenza in free time (0:01-0:05), delivered with his signature singing distortion sound. For a change of pace, Eric employed Roscoe Beck's ES-335 instead of his workhorse '54 Strat on "Zap." Here, the A♭ major pentatonic scale (A♭,B♭,C,E♭,F) is the basis for his searing lead work.

Example 1

ZAP INTRO

ZAP
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1976 Hamstein Music Co.
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



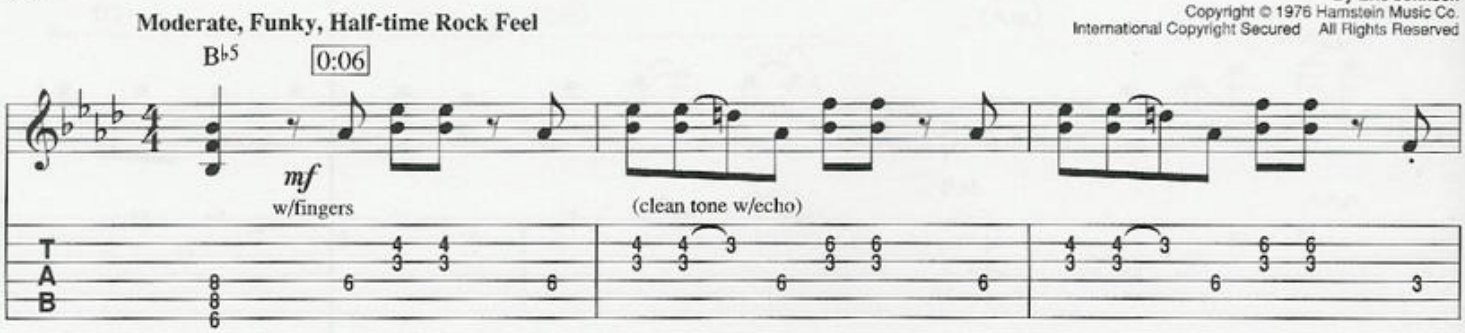


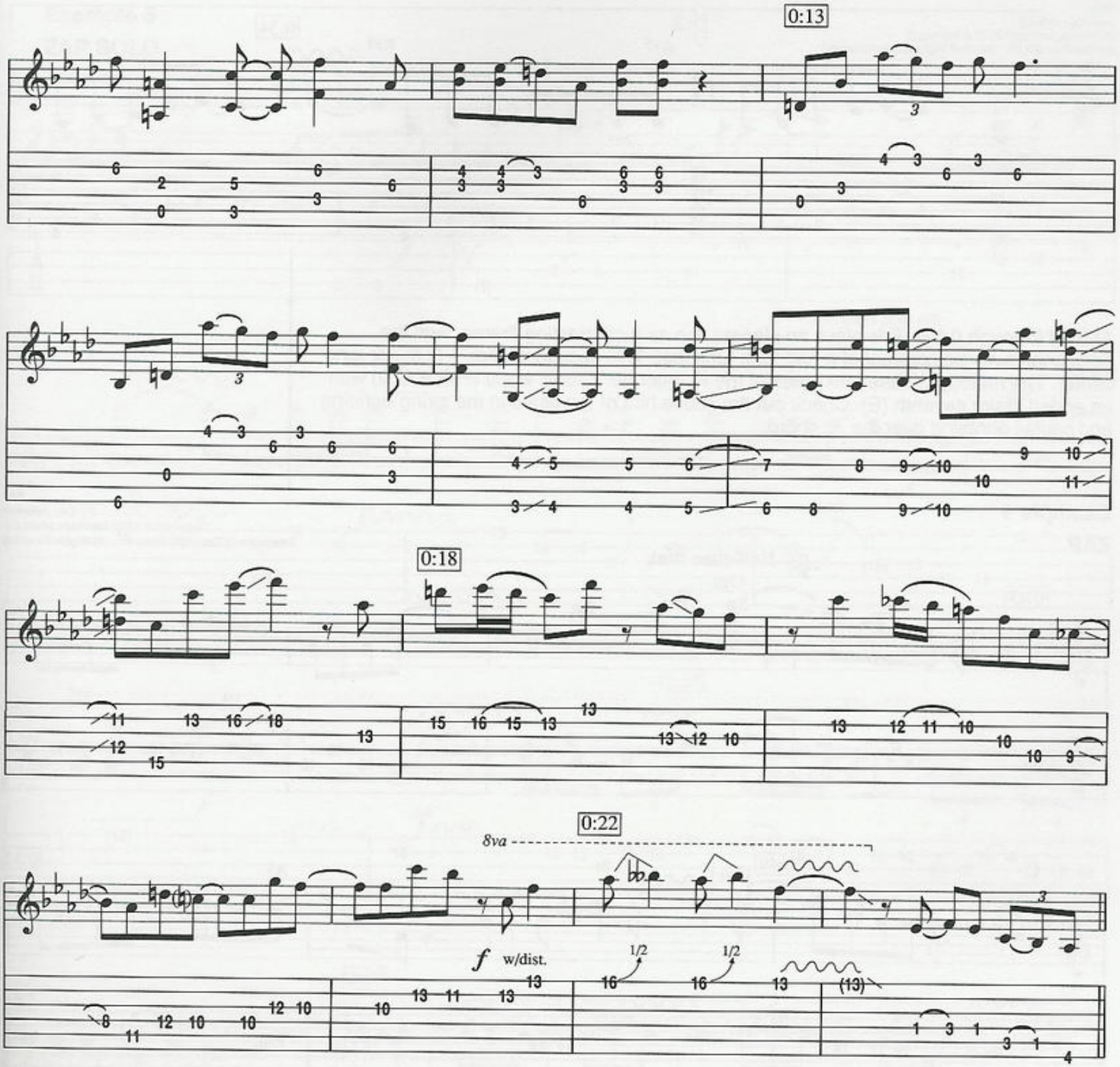
The first five measures of the half-time rock section (0:06) demonstrate his finger-style chicken-pickin' technique. The tone here is clean, processed with a wet echo (repeats) effect. This colors the texture of the section tastefully. Eric's ad lib chord-melody interlude (0:13-0:18) grows organically out of these intro thoughts. At 0:18, he explores jazzy, country swing ideas before returning assertively with that familiar Johnson distorted tone (0:22).

Example 2

ZAP

ZAP
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1976 Hamstein Music Co.
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



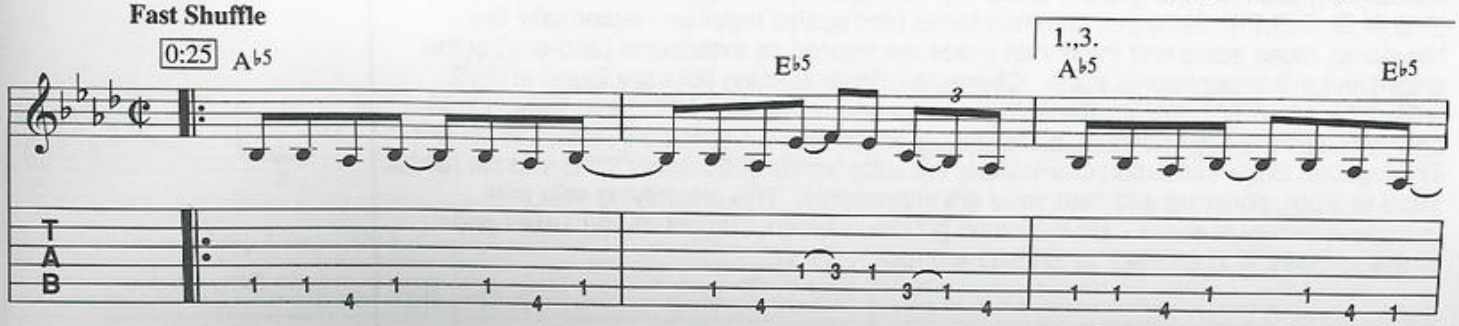


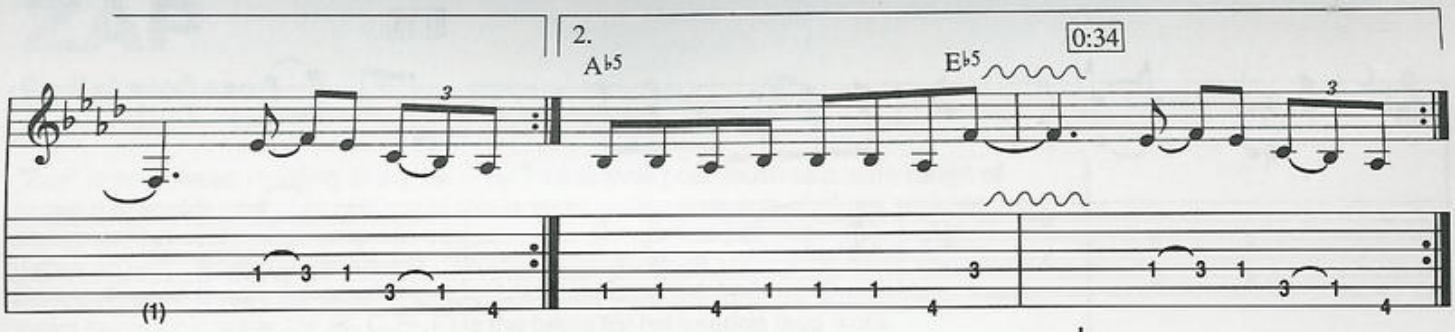
The ensemble riff at 0:25 is blues-oriented, built from F minor pentatonic (F,A♭,B♭,C,E♭), but over a B♭ tonal center. The feel here is a fast shuffle groove.

Example 3

ZAP RIFF

ZAP
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1976 Hamstein Music Co.
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved



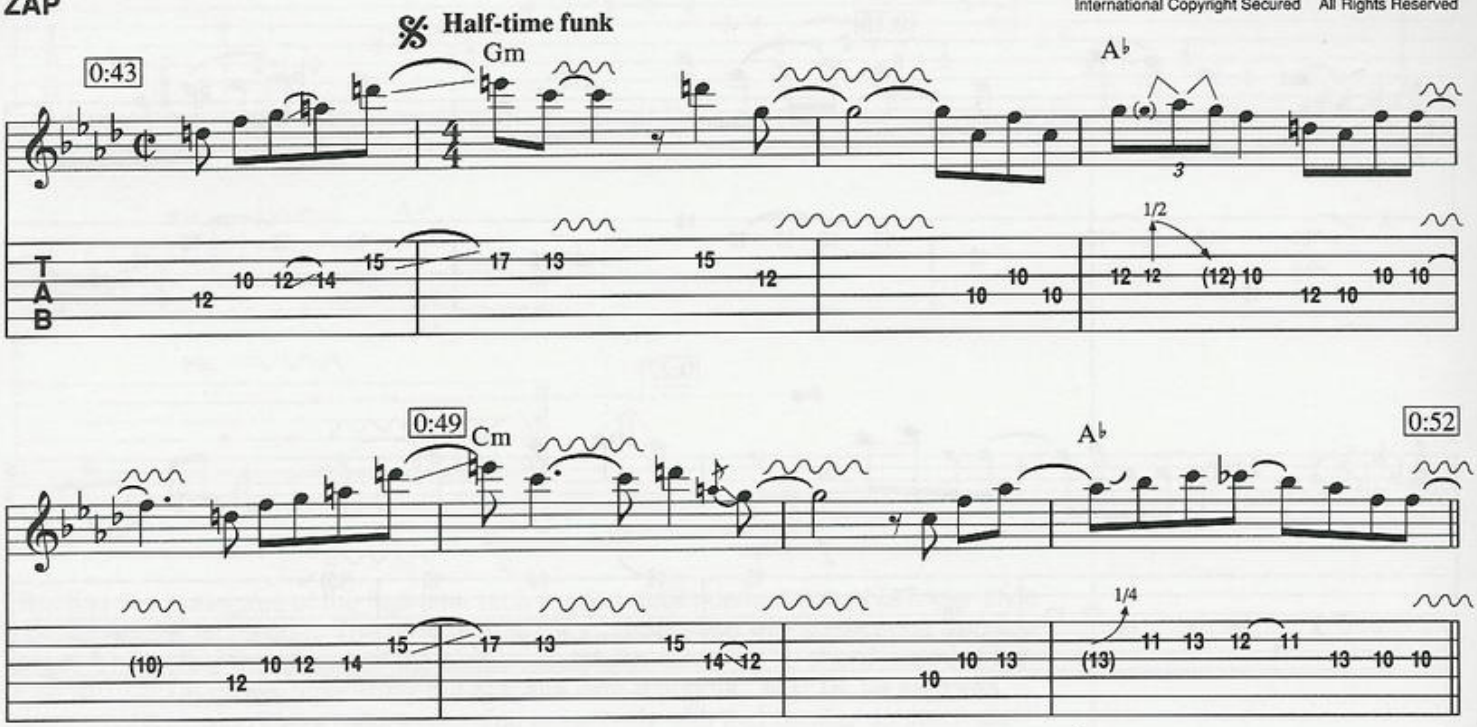


At 0:43 (through 0:52), Eric plays an elegant line as a contrasting theme, with the additional rhythmic contrast of a half-time funk feel. This section implies a G minor tonal center. The melody is based on notes of the F major pentatonic scale (F,G,A,C,D) with an added major seventh (E). Check out the subtle hint of the blues in the string bending and soulful phrasing over the A♭ chord.

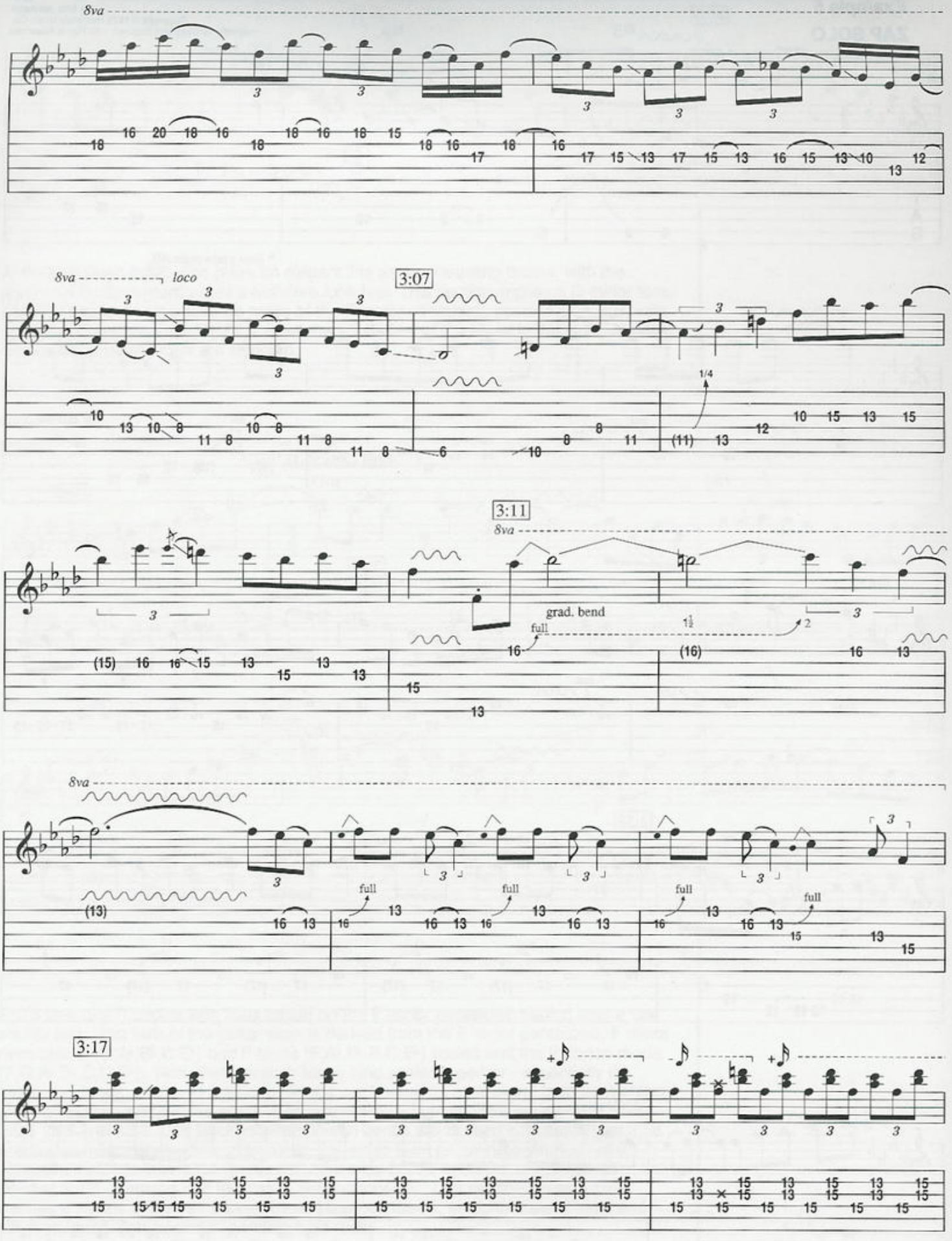
Example 4

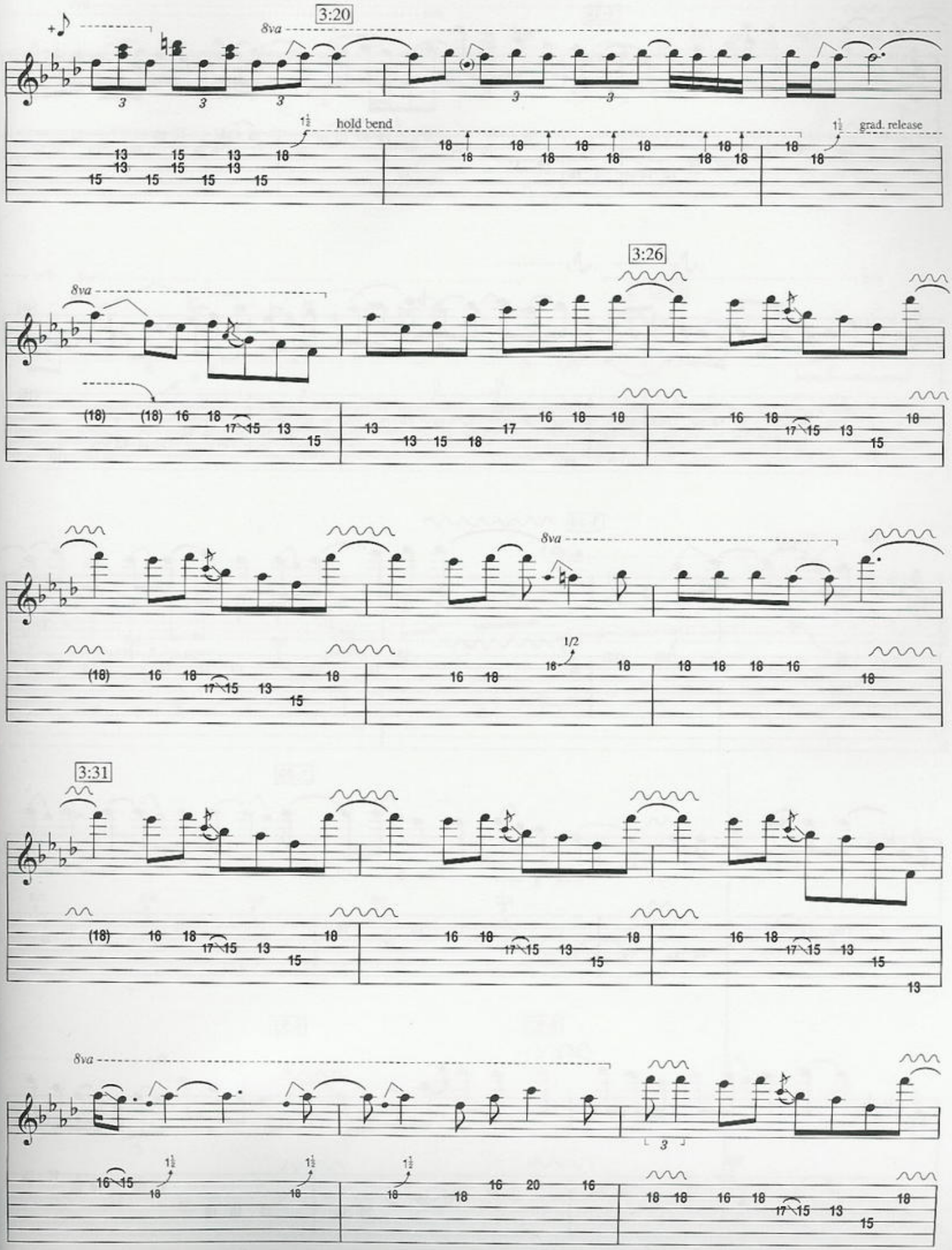
ZAP

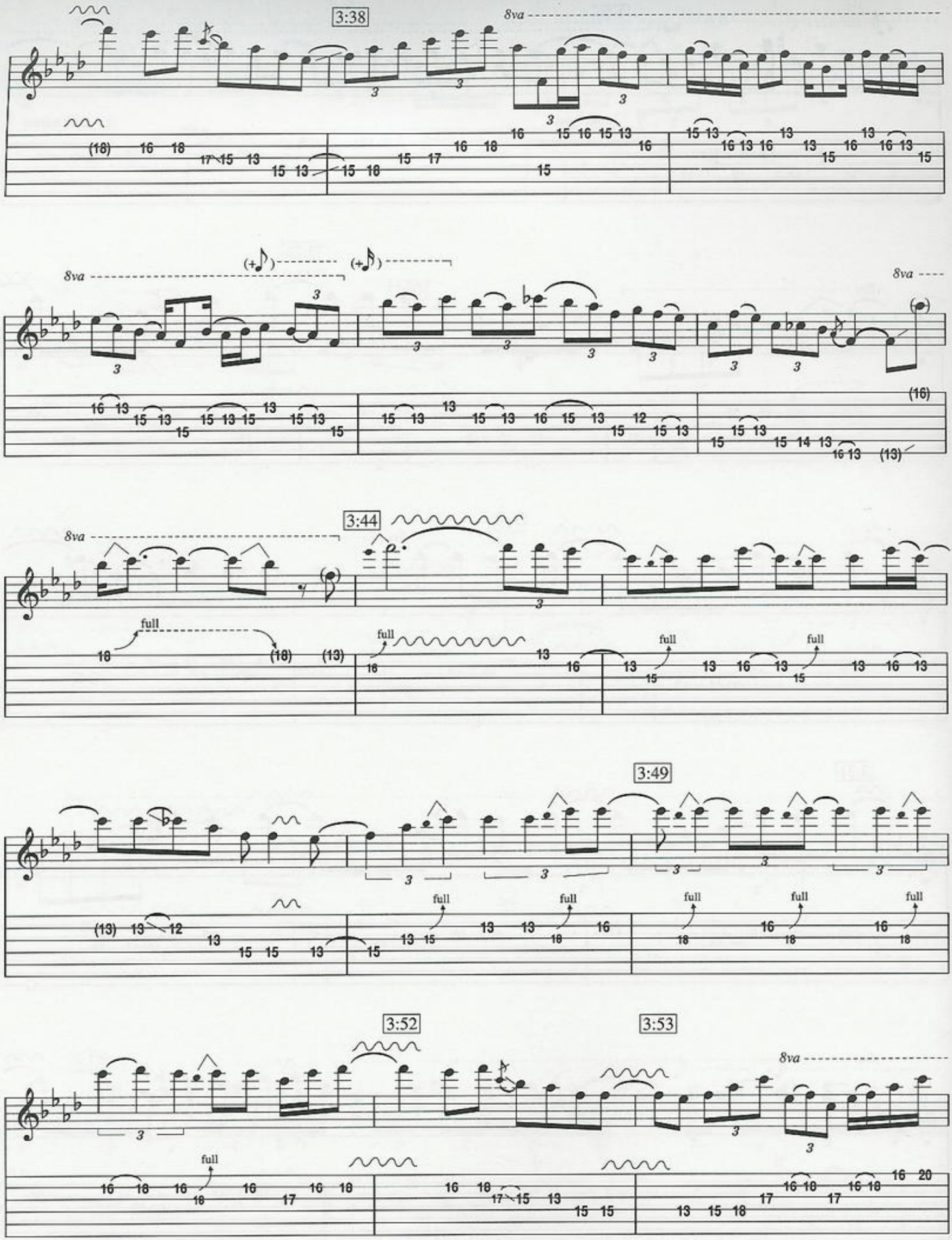
ZAP
By Eric Johnson
Copyright © 1976 Hamstein Music Co.
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved

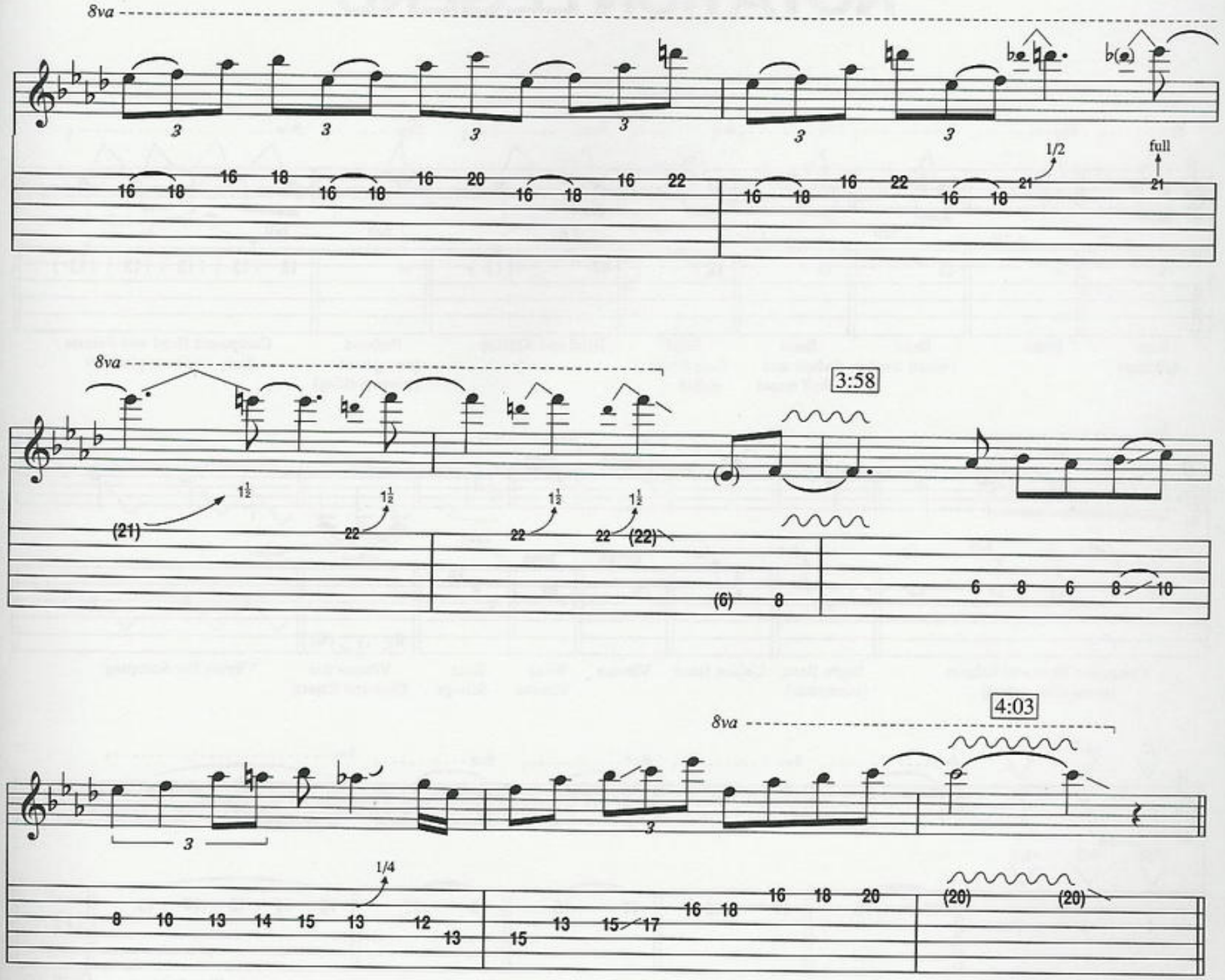


Eric's solo (2:47) begins with lines based on the F minor pentatonic played over a fast shuffle feel. The bulk of the guitar work is derived from the F minor pentatonic, F minor hexatonic (F,G,A♭,B♭,C,E♭) and F blues (F,A♭,B♭,B,C,E♭) scales and the F dorian mode (F,G,A♭,B♭,C,D,E♭). Note that common tones bind scales together - essentially the hexatonic, blues scale and the dorian mode are treated as extensions (add-ons) of the underlying minor pentatonic scale. Characteristically burning licks are found at 2:55, 3:01, 3:38 and 3:53. Jeff Beck-inspired unison bends are worked in beautifully at 2:58 and 3:49, while more traditional blues double stops form an ostinato interlude at 3:17. Throughout, Eric's intonation (particularly the wide bends at 2:53 and 3:11, and the held bend at 3:20), phrasing and technique are impeccable. This electrifying solo truly marries a variety of styles - sophisticated jazz/rock fusion, straight-ahead Texas and Chicago blues, and aggressive British hard rock.

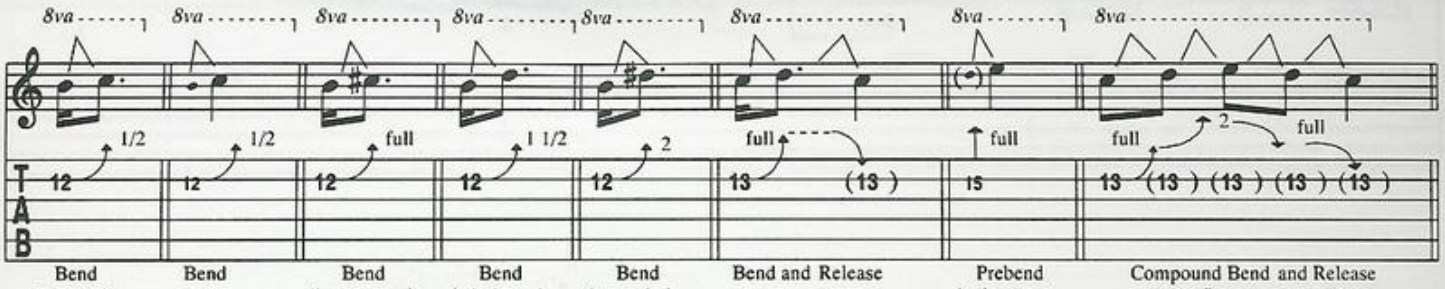

8va
8va
loco
3:07
1/4
3:11
8va
grad. bend
full
8va
full
3:17


3:20
8va
hold bend
grad. release
3:26
8va
8va
1/2
3:31
8va

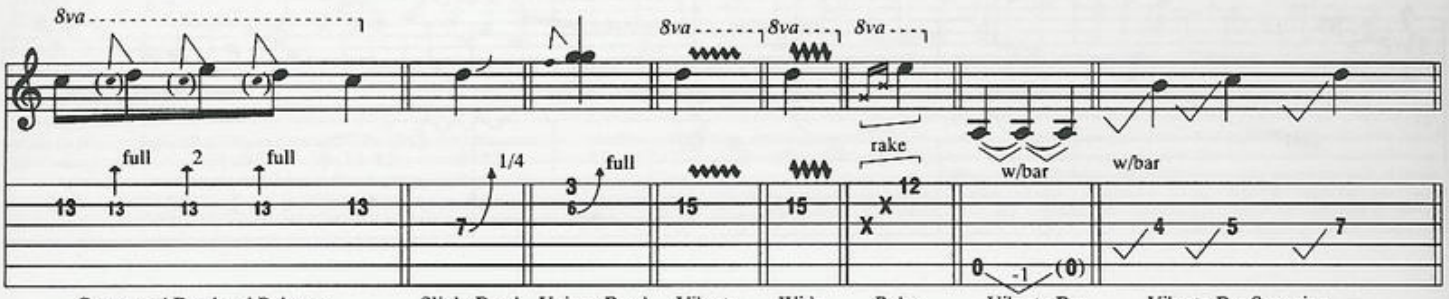

3:38
8va
3:44
3:49
3:52
3:53
full


8va
3
16 18 16 18 16 18 16 20 16 18 16 22
16 18 16 22 16 18 1/2 21 full 21
8va
3:58
(21) 1½ 22 1½ 22 1½ 22 (22)
(6) 8 6 8 6 8 10
8va
4:03
3
1/4
8 10 13 14 15 13 12 13
15 13 15 17 16 18 16 18 20
(20) (20)

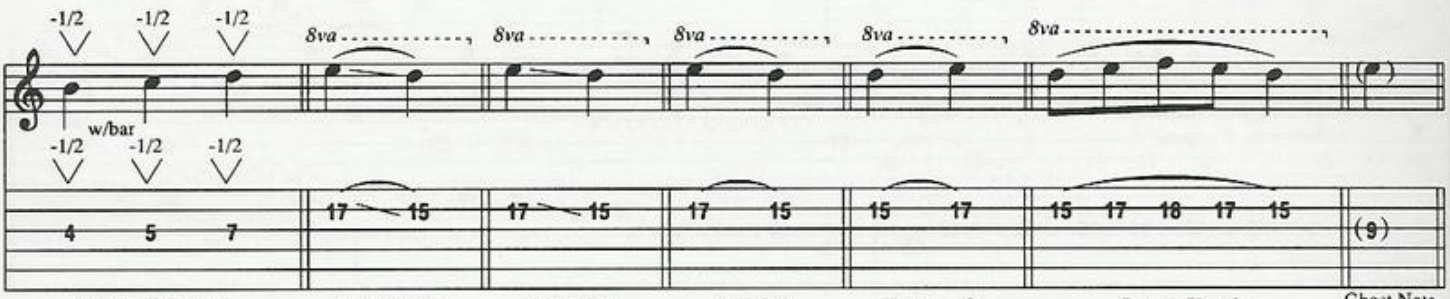
NOTATION LEGEND



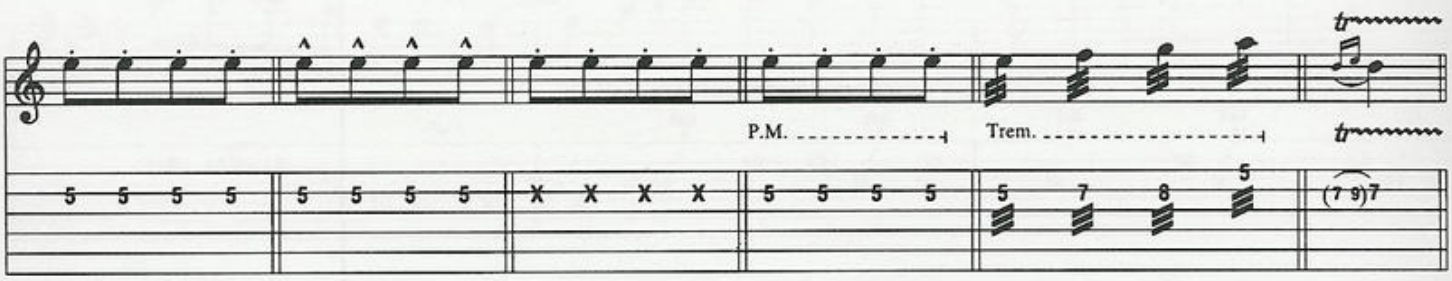
Bend (half step) | Bend | Bend (whole step) | Bend (whole and half steps) | Bend (two whole steps) | Bend and Release | Prebend (string bent before picking) | Compound Bend and Release (only first note plucked)



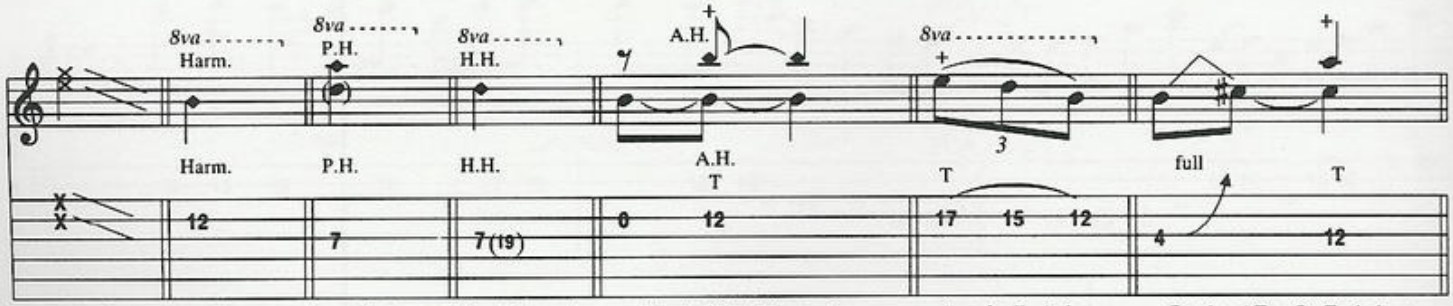
Compound Bend and Release (every note picked) | Slight Bend (microtone) | Unison Bend | Vibrato | Wide Vibrato | Rake Strings | Vibrato Bar Dive and Return | Vibrato Bar Scooping



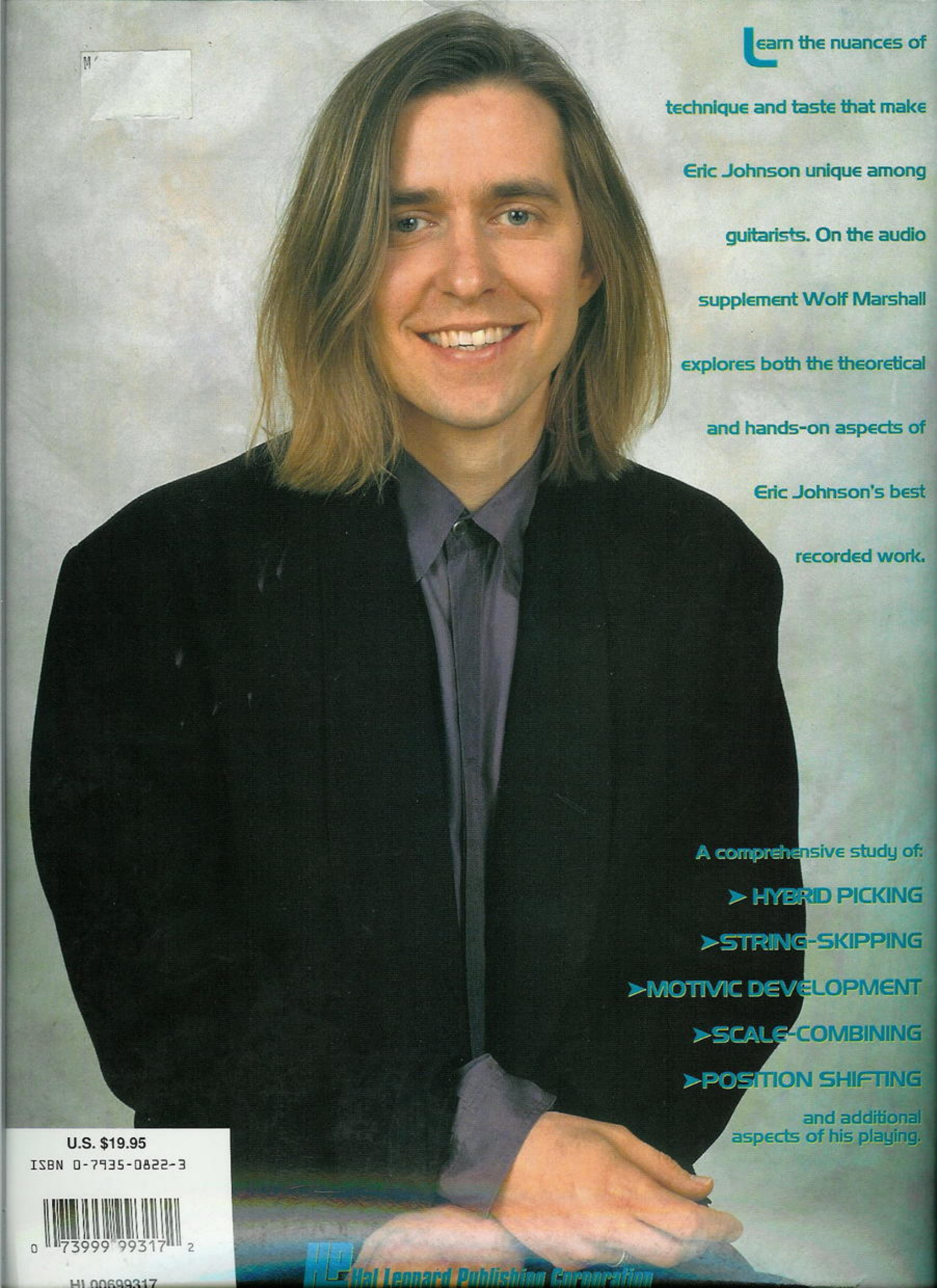
Vibrato Bar Dips | Legato Slide | Shift Slide | Pull-Off | Hammer-On | Legato Phrasing (first note picked only) | Ghost Note



Staccato Phrasing | Choppy Phrasing (extreme staccato) | Fret-Hand Muting (percussive tone) | Pick-Hand Muting | Tremolo Picking | Trill (fast hammer-on/ pull-off combination)



Pick Scrapes | Open Harmonic | Pinch Harmonic (with pick) (overtone of 5th generated) | Harp Harmonic | Tap Artificial Harmonic | Tap-On Technique | Bend and Tap-On Technique



Learn the nuances of technique and taste that make Eric Johnson unique among guitarists. On the audio supplement Wolf Marshall explores both the theoretical and hands-on aspects of Eric Johnson's best recorded work.

A comprehensive study of:

- HYBRID PICKING
- STRING-SKIPPING
- MOTIVIC DEVELOPMENT
- SCALE-COMBINING
- POSITION SHIFTING

and additional aspects of his playing.

U.S. $19.95
ISBN 0-7935-0822-3
0 73999 99317 2
HL 00699317
Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation