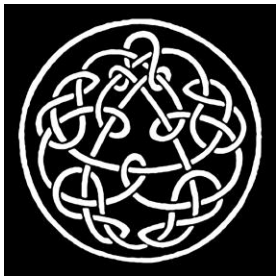

The Airport Exercise

Finally: an accurately notated version of this composition that many have been asking for since 2001. I hope availability of this score will be enough to discourage any and every one from learning this via paper.

My own advice: if this truly interests you, **learn it directly from another human being.**

If that is not possible, then these beautiful scratchings transcribed efficiently by **Gabe Riccio** (http://thegabrielconstruct.com) may or may not be useful.

As many know, I'm available for lessons, composition, scoring, collaboration, coaching and/or group presentations for anyone who is a) committed to working patiently over an extended period, b) liquid enough to contribute to my livelihood in exchange for a sliver of my sufficiently full schedule, c) ready to arrange meeting logistics with sufficient lead time.

To date, a number of strangers, bandmates, acquaintances Crafties and friends have expressed interest in this notation. But interest is not quite enough to make it into my always long and full TODO list. In the past, some have gone further offered to buy me lunch, which is also very nice. Now, I've invested in a basic notation.

About the Music

The Airport Exercise is partially inspired by a five note phrase borrowed from the climax of the classic *League of Crafty Guitarists* theme: "*the Driving Force*". It is designed to warm up and build individual stamina for each finger of the left hand equally with a balanced and musically engaging progression.

This has become a pillar for me within the extended Guitar Craft repertoire of themes, primaries, secondaries, extensions, variations and applied exercises. After playing this, my left-hand fingers each feel balanced, warm, strong, able and stretched.

My subjective take on why this works: each combination of two fingers (1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, 2-4, 3-4) passes through a natural series of ascending major and minor second intervals (and a few minor third stretches) in a way that is physically, emotionally, intellectually, rhythmically, harmonically, and (perhaps most importantly) *musically* engaging.

Playing this particular exercise puts me into a sort of active meditation that does not come when I practice some of the other things I'm currently working on (ear- training, speed, anchoring, tone, and arpeggiated-scales across three strings, improvisation, listening.)

A recorded version exists as part of *Steve Ball Sketch Box, CD1: Guitar Sketches*. That recording also features a Robert Fripp soundscape from our Vista sessions, Tony Levin on bowed and electric bass, and some improvised ascending cluster melodies to complement the backing tracks. And multiple videos can easily be found on YouTube, including a new one designed for learning and playing along.

Why is it called the Airport Exercise?

Two reasons: a) it's a great warm-up when you only have 15-30 minutes while 'waiting' to board a plane, b) I have played this in many airports all over the world over the past fifteen years.

Those who know me well, know that I love practicing in airports. While everyone else is 'waiting,' stressing, or bored, or finding ways to 'kill' time, I am secretly hoping the plane will be delayed so I can spend even more time with my guitar in a 'distraction free' environment: no meetings, phone calls, external demands, other than showing up on time.

I'll occasionally run into airport groupies who come sit nearby and listen to the Crafty veteran droning on his A string in the corner. I've also met a small number of LCG/SGC fans in airports who either recognize the Black Ovation and the stream of 16th notes, or who recognize the bony guy from Bumbershoot, Folklife, SAM, On the Boards, King Cat, Sit-n-Spin, Tractor, Firehouse, Mr. Spots, Borders, WICA or many years of work around the world with the League of Crafty Guitarists, Los Gauchos Alemanes, Electric Gauchos, the Seattle Guitar Circle, the Steve Ball Roadshow, or C3.

Dedicated to my dear sister, Katie who knows that in presenting this piece, "I'm so honored."

Steve Ball | May 2015 | Seattle WA

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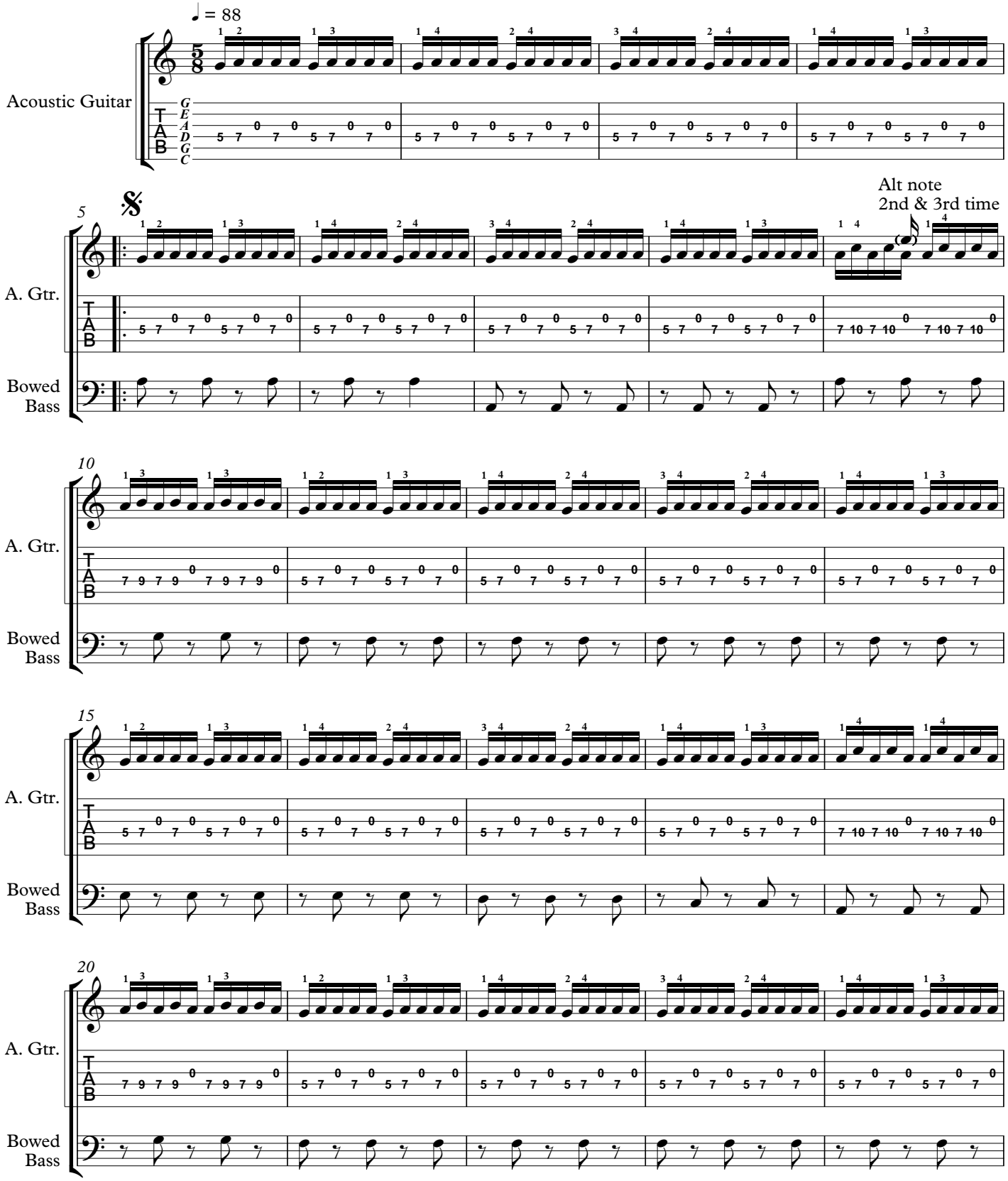
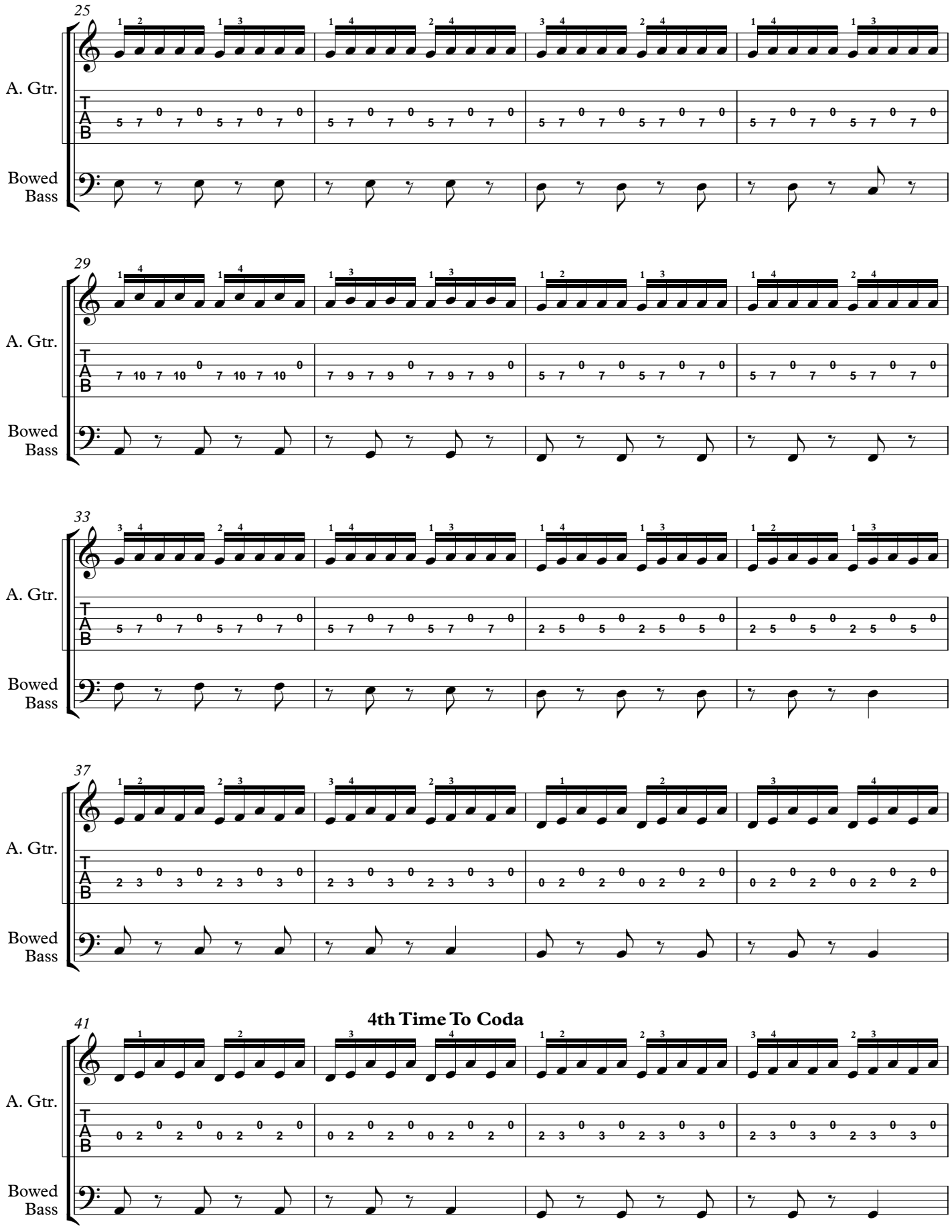
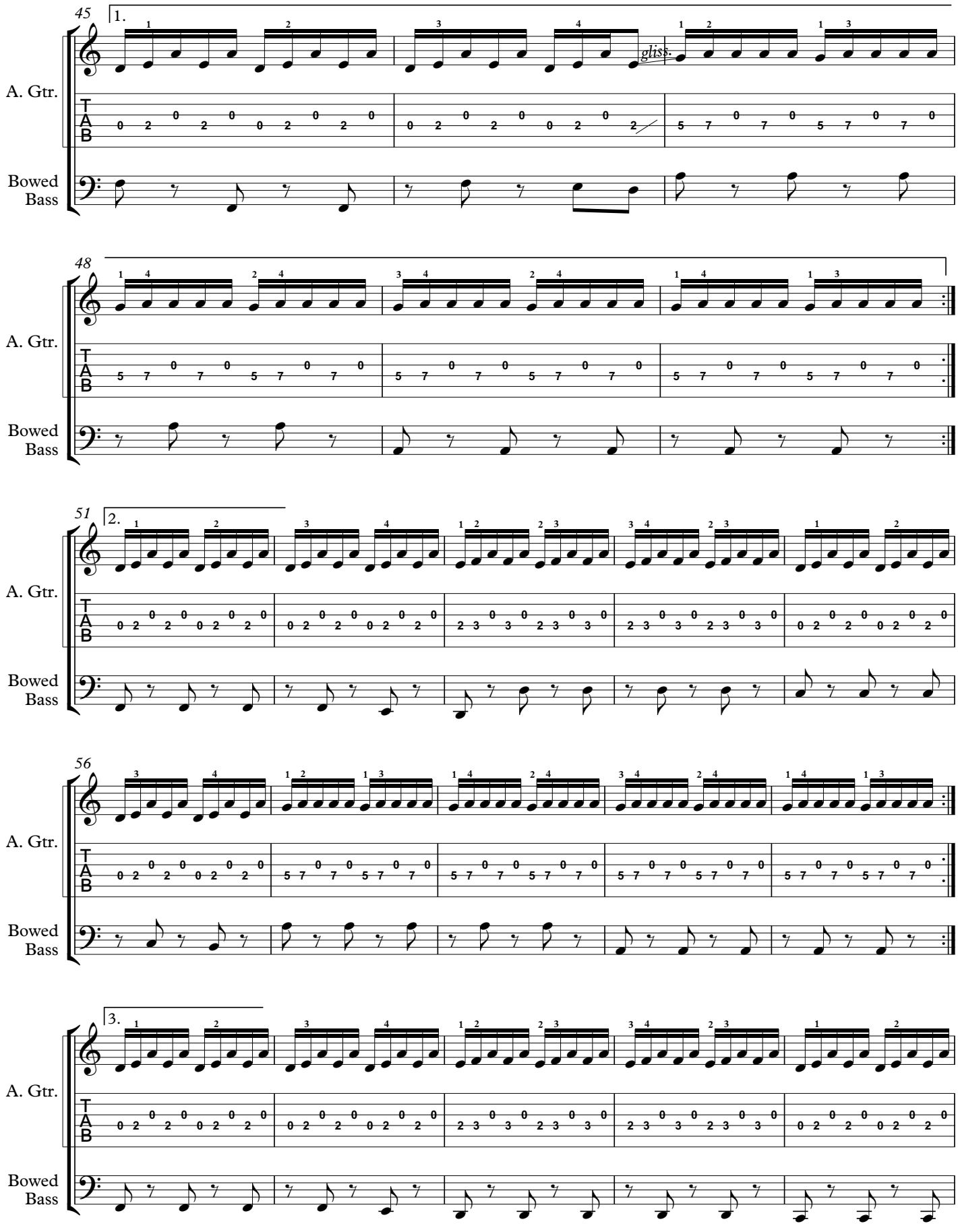
The Airport Exercise

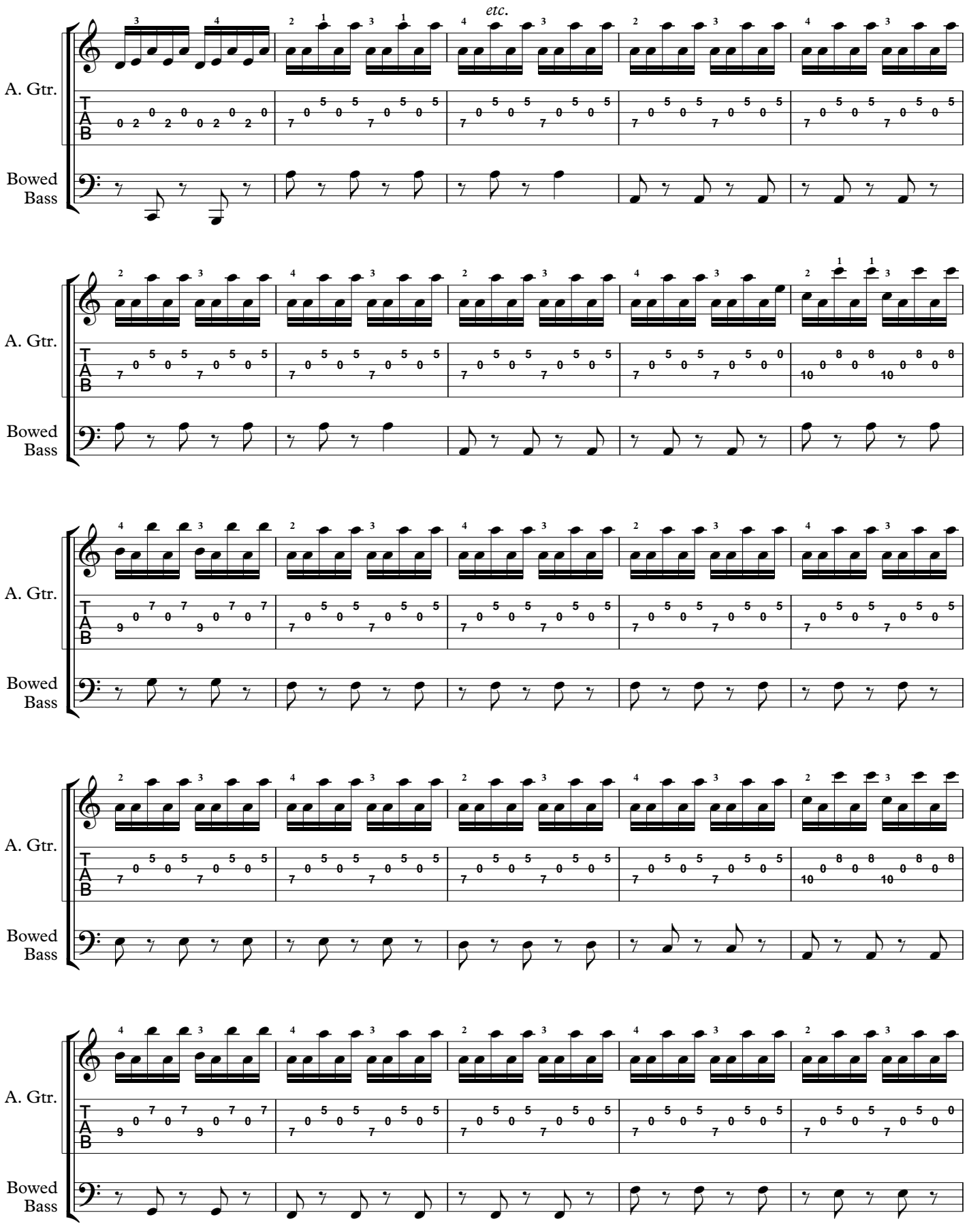
Steve Ball

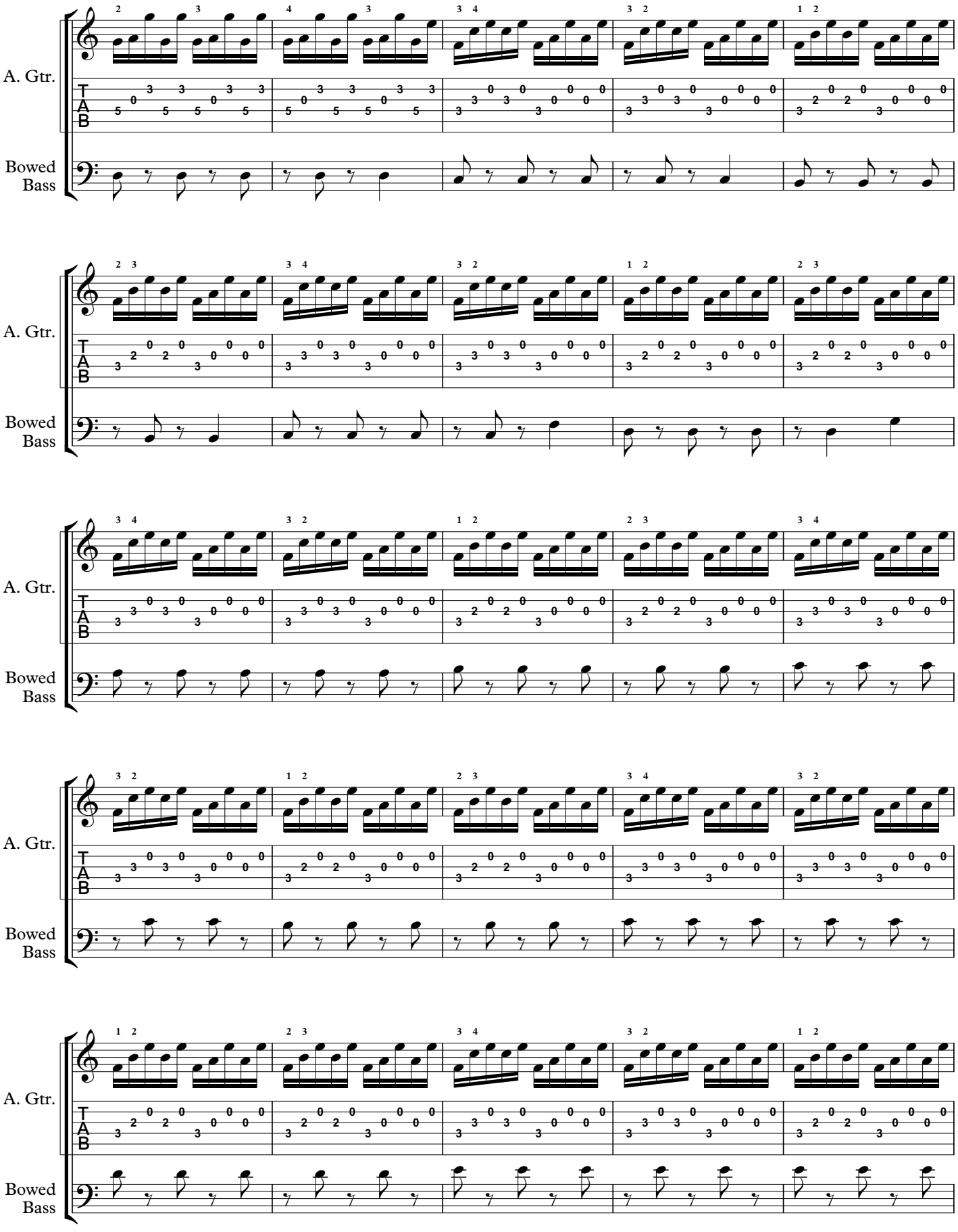


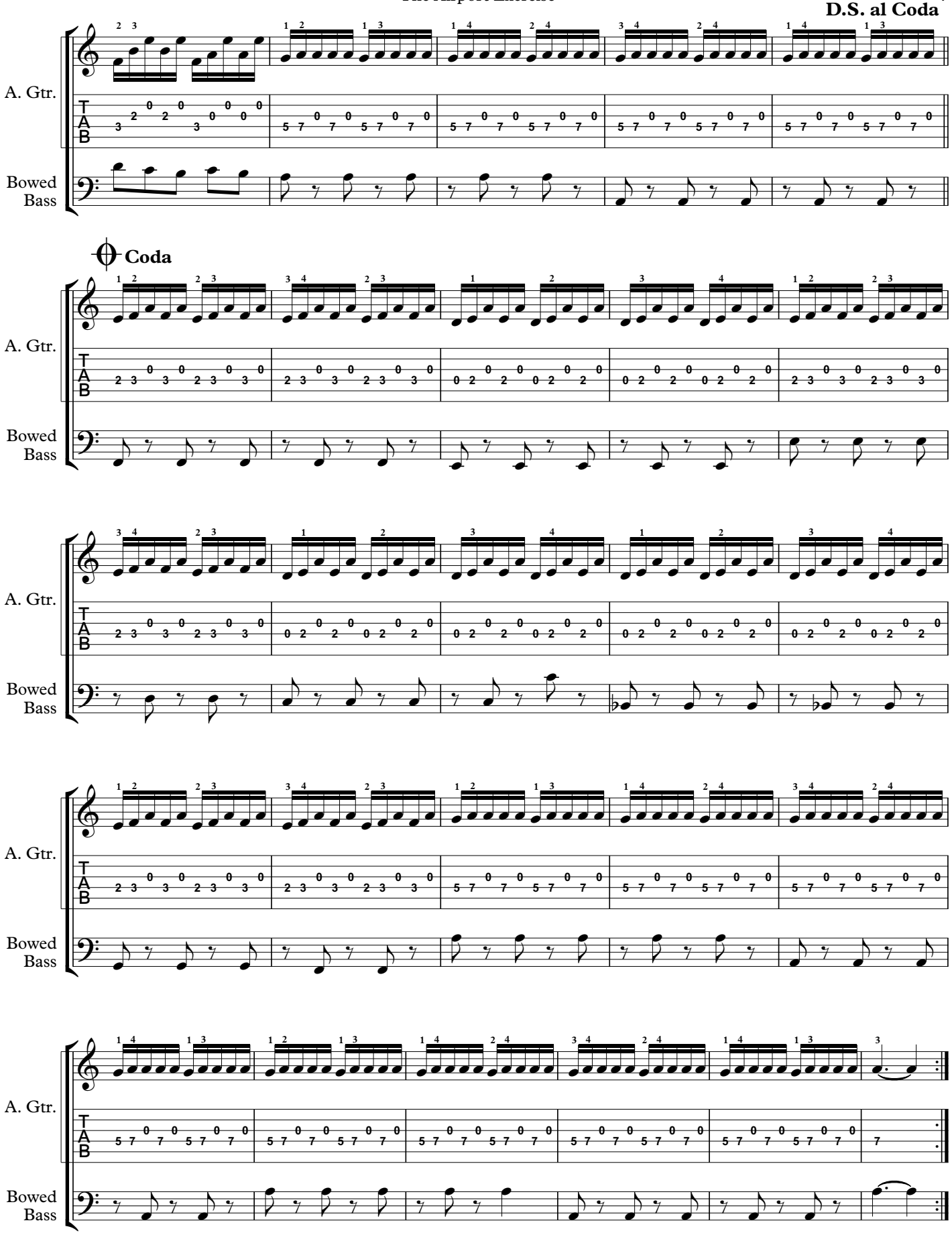
Transcribed by Gabriel Riccio (http://thegabrielconstruct.com)


25
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
29
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
33
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
37
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
4th Time To Coda
41
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass


45
1.
gliss.
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
48
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
51
2.
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
56
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
3.
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass


etc.
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass


A. Gtr.
T
A
B
Bowed Bass


D.S. al Coda
Coda
A. Gtr.
Bowed Bass