Rhythm Guitar ENCYCLOPEDIA

OVER 450 RHYTHMS

JODY FISHER

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There are two compact discs available for this book. Many of the examples in the book are performed on them. These CDs can make learning with this book easier and more enjoyable. You can use them to check your interpretations of the written rhythms and to make sure you are capturing the "feel" of each rhythm.

One of these symbols will appear next to most section headings. The number in the upper left hand corner indicates the disk number. The track numbers below the symbols correspond to the group of rhythms under that heading. In many cases, you will find additional examples in the book that are not included on the CD. These are in sections labeled "More..." and are provided for your further reference.

Disk 1, Track 1 will help you tune to the CD. Have fun!

About The Author

Jody Fisher has worked professionally in virtually all styles of music during his career, from straight ahead and contemporary jazz to rock and roll, country, pop and show tunes. In the field of education, he taught Guitar and Jazz Studies at the University of Redlands in Southern California for eight years and at the Idyllwild School of Music and the Arts (ISOMATA) for two years. An active performer in the Southern California area, he still maintains a private teaching practice, and is an associate director of the National Guitar Summer Workshop's California, Nashville and Connecticut campuses. Jody Fisher is also the author of *The Guitar Mode Encyclopedia*, *The Guitar Chord and Scale Finder*, *Jazz Guitar Christmas* and *The Complete Jazz Guitar Method*, all published by the National Guitar Workshop and Alfred.

Introduction

Most guitarists want to become great improvisers. The image of the wailing guitar player, lost in the moment, searching for the means to express him or herself is well known — almost stereotypical. The truth of the matter is that without great rhythmic backup the soloist has nothing to work with. To a large extent, the success of a solo has a lot to do with how the rhythm section and the lead player interact.

Originally, the guitar (in non-classical circles) was strictly a rhythm instrument. The pulse provided by the guitarist was the glue that held the rhythm section together. It was, and is, used to provide a harmonic and rhythmic background for vocals as well. With the advent of pickups and amplifiers, guitar players were able to step out front and solo just like the other members of the band. This provided a more balanced role for guitarists. Somehow, through the years, "rhythm playing" has taken a backseat to soloing. As a result, many guitarists today are not hip to the benefits of becoming a great rhythm player. This book is designed help remedy this.

This is a multipurpose book. There are several ways it can be helpful:

- First, it can be used as a reference source. You come home from the gig, embarrassed because you didn't know how to play an authentic Bossa Nova pattern, and look it up. Maybe you had to play some Reggae or a Viennese Waltz. Perhaps you are a jazz player who has limited rock rhythm chops, or a rocker who needs more funk ideas. Do you freelance, play in a wide variety of styles? Inside you will find everything from Afro-Cuban rhythms to the Bunny Hop!

- Second, if you are a songwriter, you should find plenty of material here to inspire new ideas and help you break out of your old rhythmic habits.

- Third, working your way through each page is a great way to practice reading rhythmic notation. If you are comfortable reading most of the rhythms here, you are probably ready to handle anything you find in the professional world.

- Fourth, arrangers will find these ideas helpful for coming up with new ways to treat old, worn-out material.

Becoming a knowledgeable rhythm guitarist will help you become a better improviser as well. You will become more musical in your approach and more in control of your ideas from a rhythmic perspective.

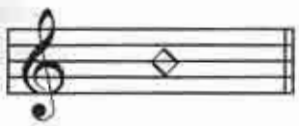
No book can say it all or list every example of every style. This book surveys many styles, but be assured that you could spend your life studying any one in depth. However you use this book, it is my hope that you will create good music and find self-expression.

Thanks to my family, Julie, Josh, Shauna and Tom, Jennifer, Mom, Dad, Jack and Yvonne Abels, Noah, Maggie, Jasper and all of my teachers and friends for having supported my musical endeavors through the years. Thanks to David Smolover and Nat Gunod for their friendship and for providing so many opportunities to further my career — I've learned a lot.

How to Use This Book

RHYTHMIC NOTATION

This book uses a system known as *rhythmic notation*. Actual pitches are not usually shown. The various symbols used show when to strum and sometimes how to accent.

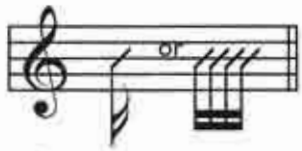

Strum and sustain chord for 4 beats.

Strum and sustain chord for 3 beats.

Strum and sustain chord for 2 beats.

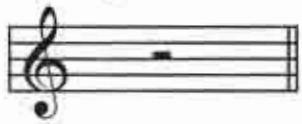
Strum and sustain chord for 1 beat.

Strum and sustain chord for ½ beat or 2 for 1.

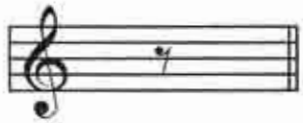


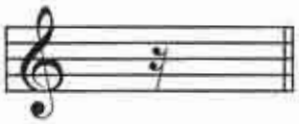
Strum and sustain chord for ¼ beat or 4 for 1.

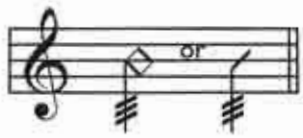
Rest for 4 beats.


Rest for 2 beats.

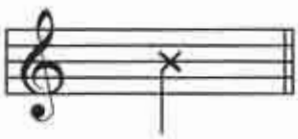
Rest for 1 beat.


Rest for ½ beat.


Rest for ¼ beat.

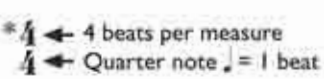


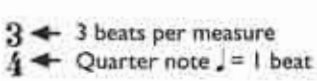
Roll: a rapid succession of down and up strokes for the duration shown.

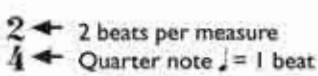

Choke: mute the strings with left hand. Strum producing a percussion sound.

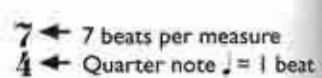
TIME SIGNATURES

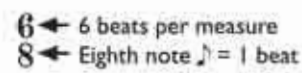
Time signatures tell us the basic feel of the song. They are not an indication of *tempo* (speed). The top number shows how many beats appear in each measure. This includes rests as well as notes. The bottom number shows what note value receives one beat.

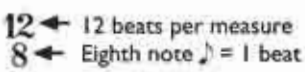

*4 ← 4 beats per measure
4 ← Quarter note ♩ = 1 beat

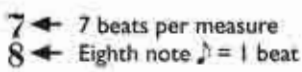

3 ← 3 beats per measure
4 ← Quarter note ♩ = 1 beat

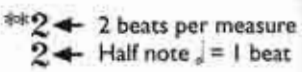

2 ← 2 beats per measure
4 ← Quarter note ♩ = 1 beat


7 ← 7 beats per measure
4 ← Quarter note ♩ = 1 beat


6 ← 6 beats per measure
8 ← Eighth note ♪ = 1 beat


12 ← 12 beats per measure
8 ← Eighth note ♪ = 1 beat


7 ← 7 beats per measure
8 ← Eighth note ♪ = 1 beat


**2 ← 2 beats per measure
2 ← Half note 𝅗𝅥 = 1 beat

* Also written as 𝐂, *common time.*

** Also written as 𝐂̵, *cut time.*

Tempo

All the examples in this book can be played at a variety of tempos. The tempos used on the CD available for this book are chosen for clarity. They do not necessarily reflect the "correct" tempos. Tempos will depend on context.

Downstrokes and Upstrokes

This is a *downstroke* sign: ⊓ This is an *upstroke* sign: ∨

Generally, downstrokes (moving the hand across the strings towards the floor) are used on the downbeats in a measure and upstrokes (moving the hand across the strings towards the ceiling) are use on the "ands" (&).

⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨ ⊓ ∨
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

In many instances, certain styles require the use of consecutive downstrokes to attain the correct feel. You will need to experiment, but this book does provide suggestions for each example. Although all but some of the folk examples include upstroke and downstroke indications, many of them can be played with the fingers. Experiment.

Accents

This is the accent sign used in this book: >

There are many different accent signs used in music notation. It would be a good idea to be aware of all of them.

Chords and Practice

In most of the examples in this book, only one chord is used. This will allow you to concentrate on learning the rhythms. Feel free to substitute any other chords. At first, count (or write) out the beats for the rhythm and practice it while counting out loud. Tapping your foot or using a metronome can be helpful. Then practice while counting silently. Finally, just play the rhythm without counting at all. Always remember that maintaining a steady beat, without speeding up or slowing down, is a musical skill you need to master. Once you have learned to feel the rhythm, it is time to apply it to the actual song you are working on.

Technique

Using a Pick

The strumming action should come from your wrist. Avoid using your forearm.

Fingerstyle:

A few examples use some fingerpicking patterns. The labels for the fingers of the right hand are:

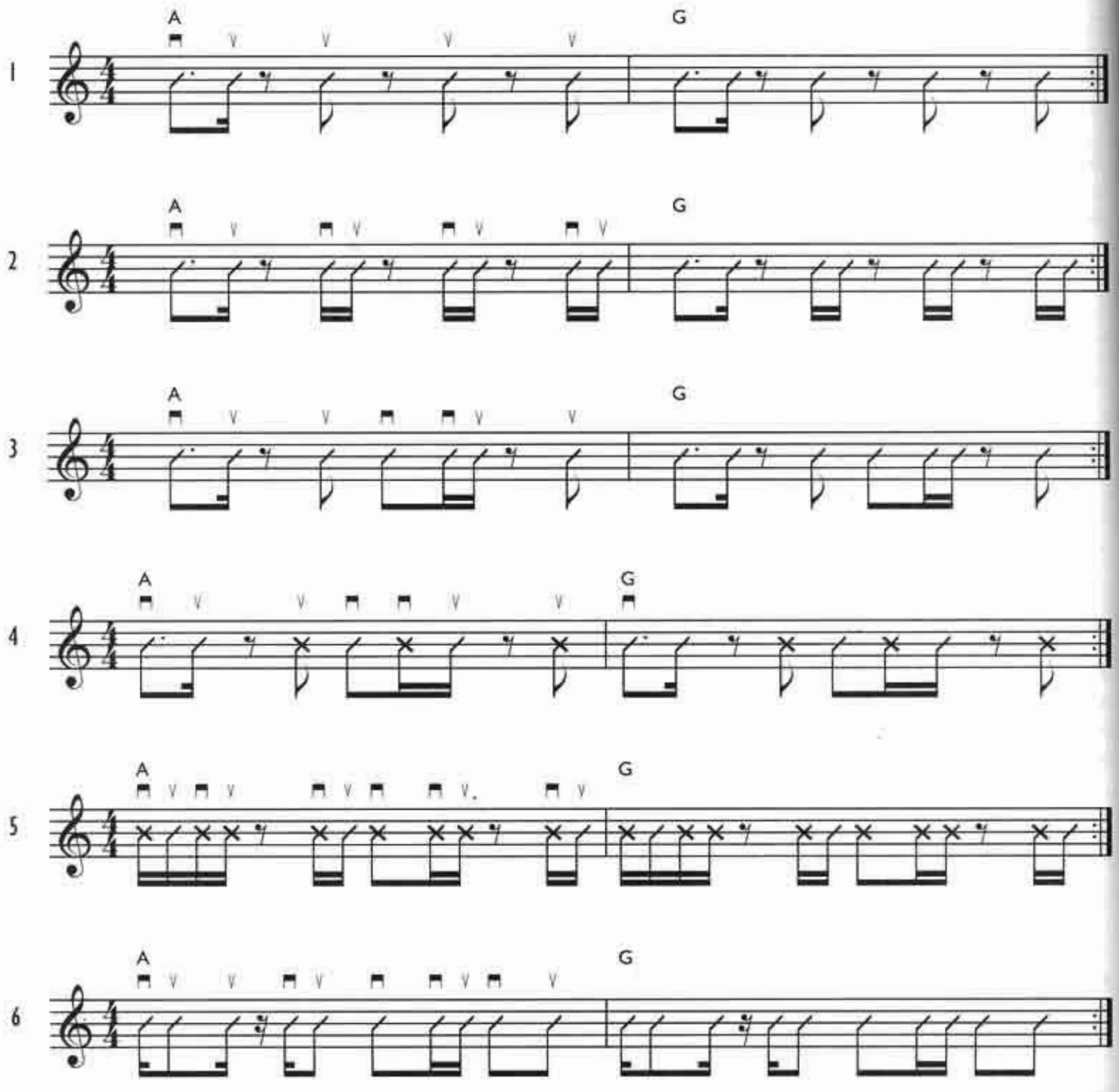
p = thumb
i = index finger
m = middle finger
a = ring finger
c = pinky

African

There are many different cultural groups in the region known as West Africa, each with their own distinctive music. The African rhythms shown in this book are derived from the Ashanti and Ewe peoples of Ghana. If you develop a taste for these rhythms, and want to learn more, you should find recorded music from this area of the world. It is available in the "World Music" sections of most record stores.

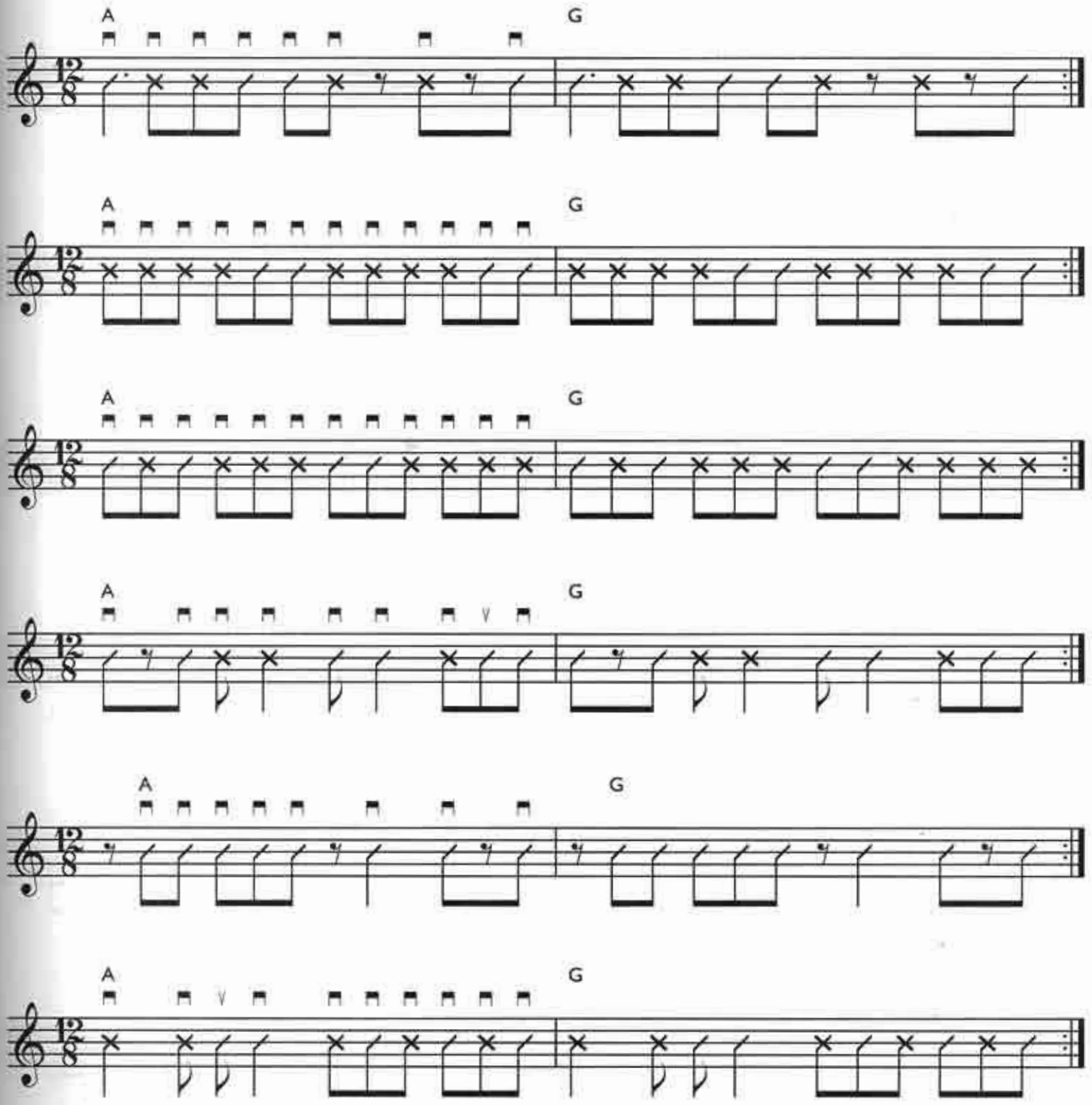
#1 Track 2

SIKYI—ASHANTI



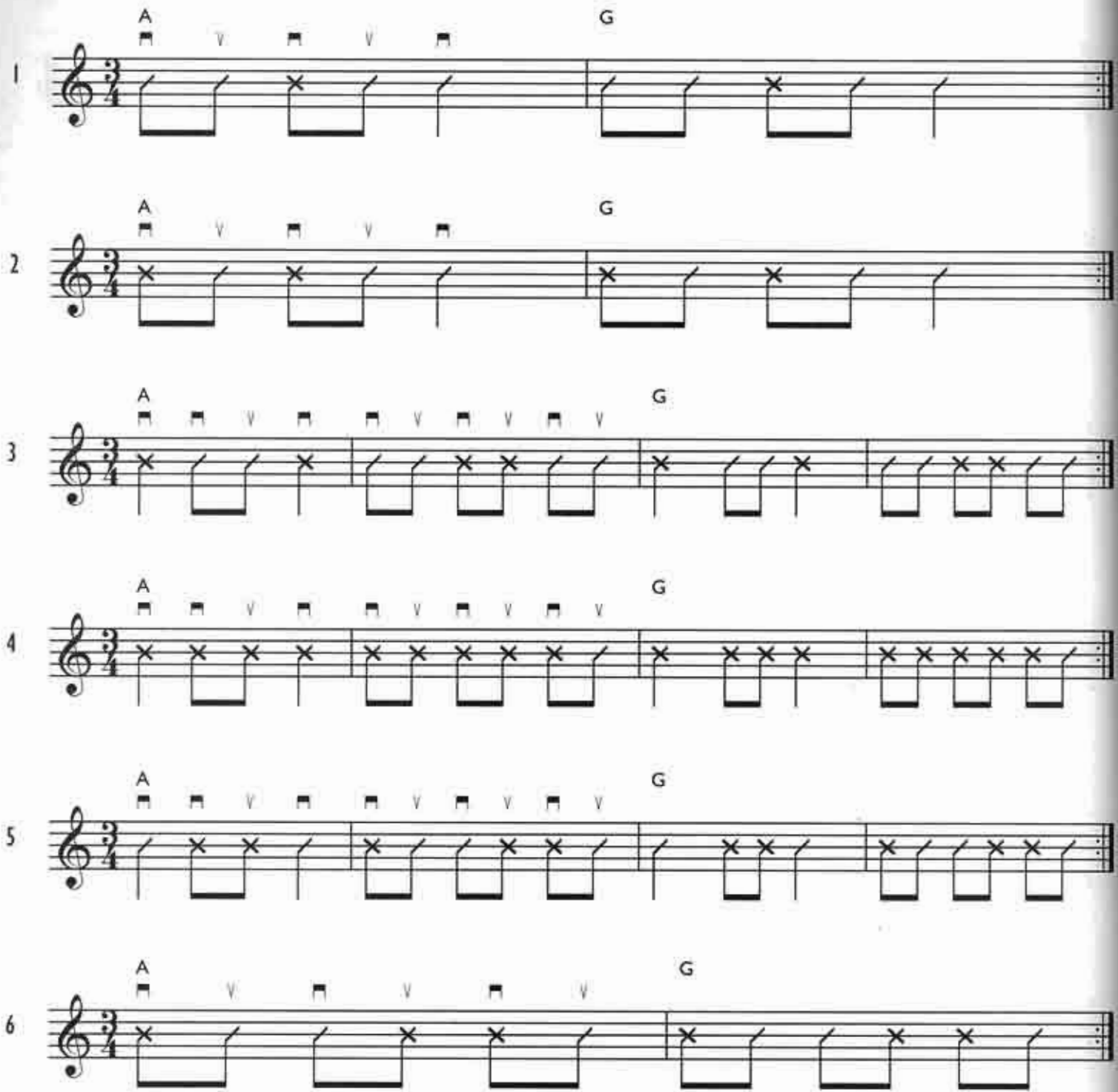
ADOWA—ASHANTI

#1
Track 3



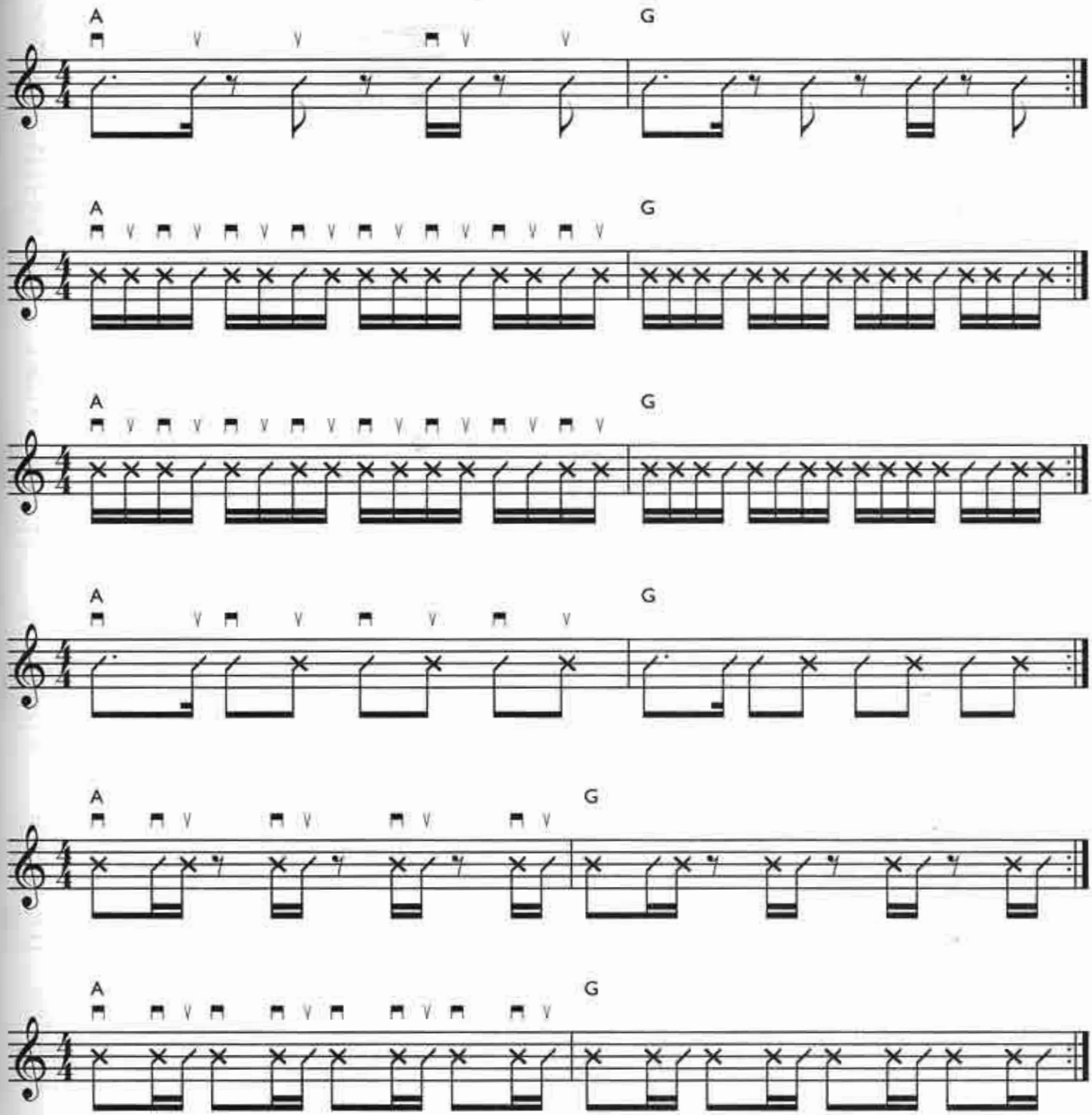
#1
Track 4

AKOM—ASHANTI



GAHU—EWE

#1
Track 5

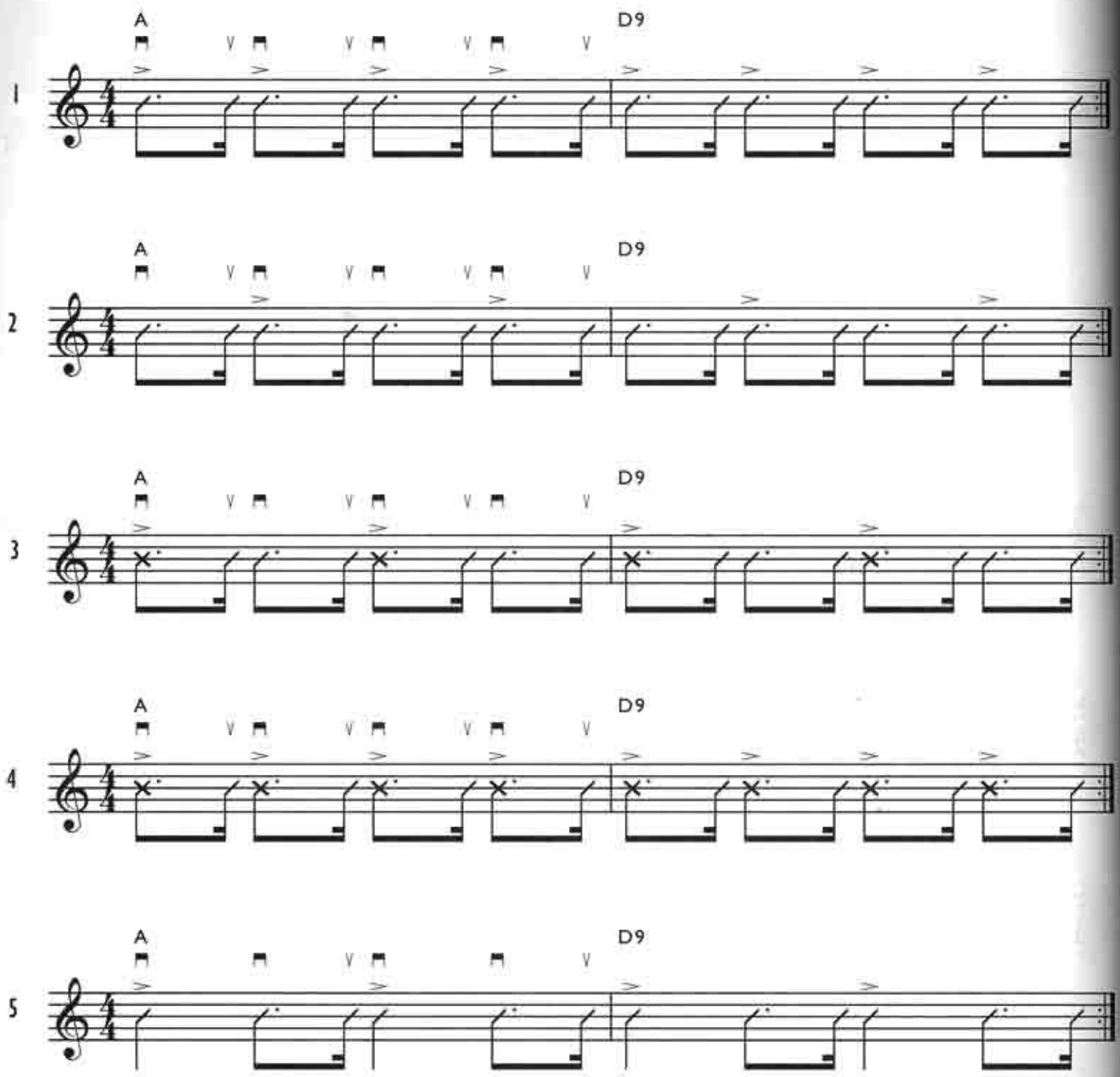


Blues

Although there are many styles of blues, there are three essential, basic feels. They are *shuffles*, *slow* (or "*down home*") and $\frac{12}{8}$ feels. In addition, there are "pinky patterns," which are rhythmic licks that all guitarists should know.

#1 Track 6

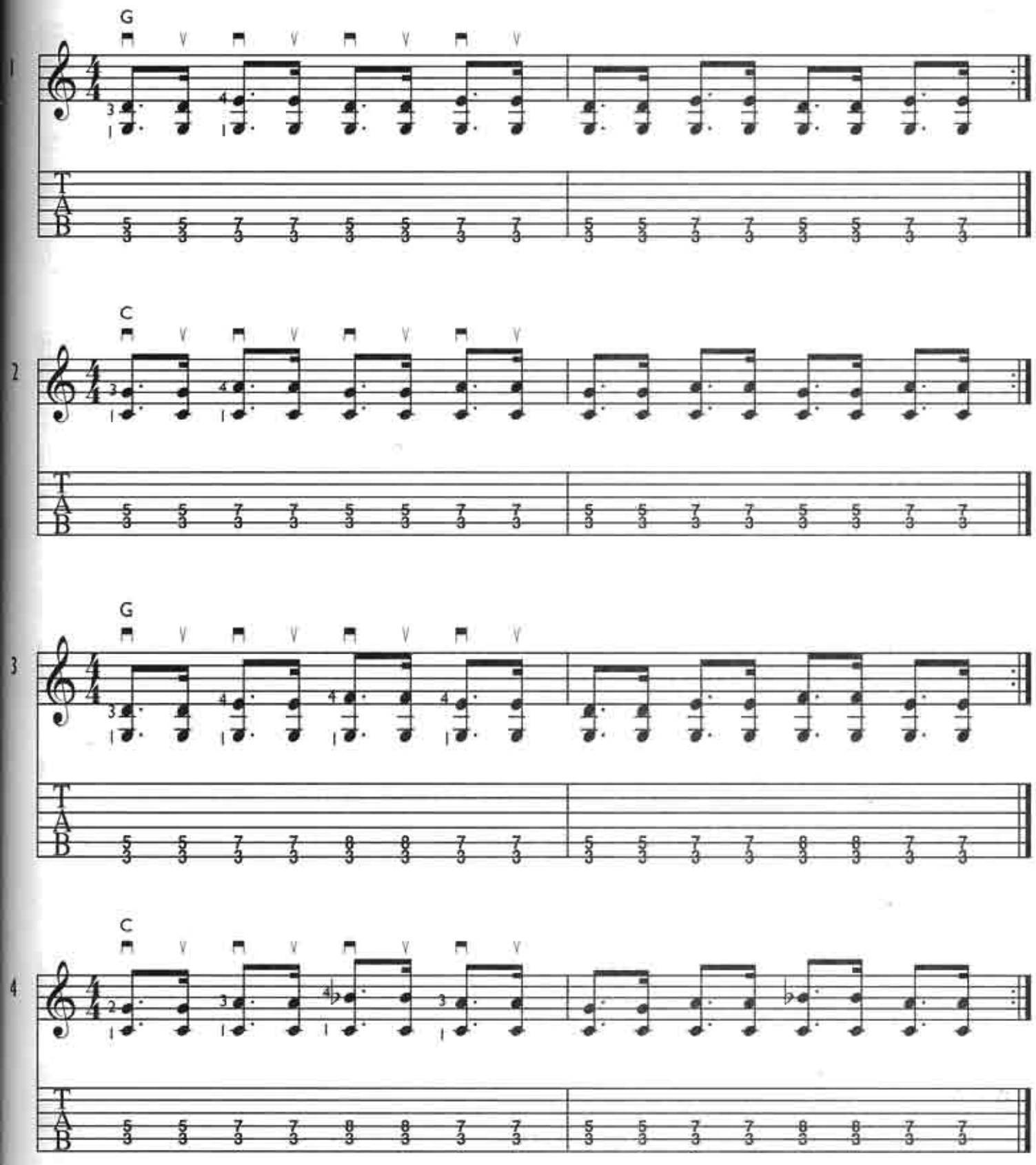
SHUFFLES



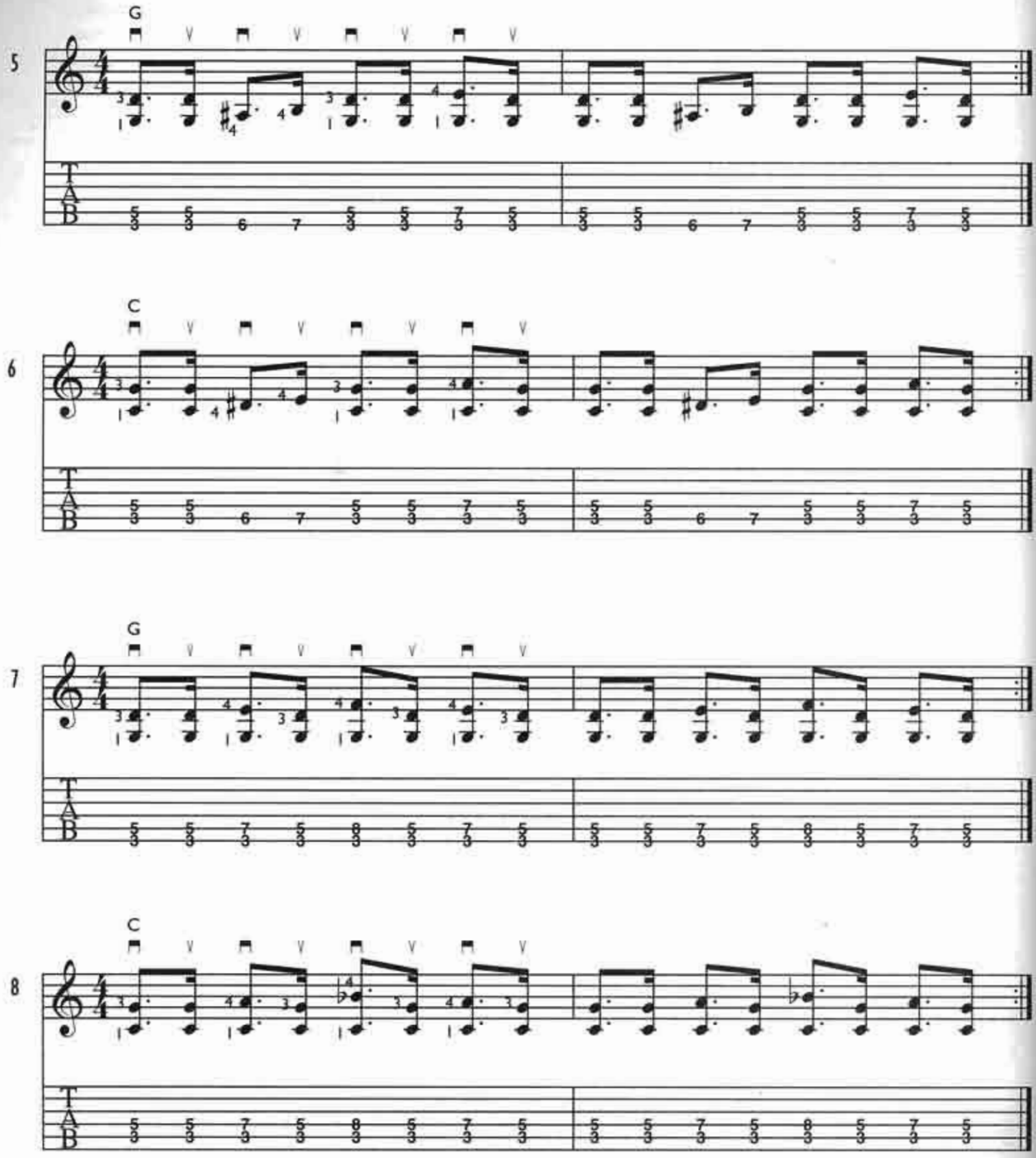
PINKY PATTERNS

#1 Track 7

This technique can be applied to any blues rhythm.

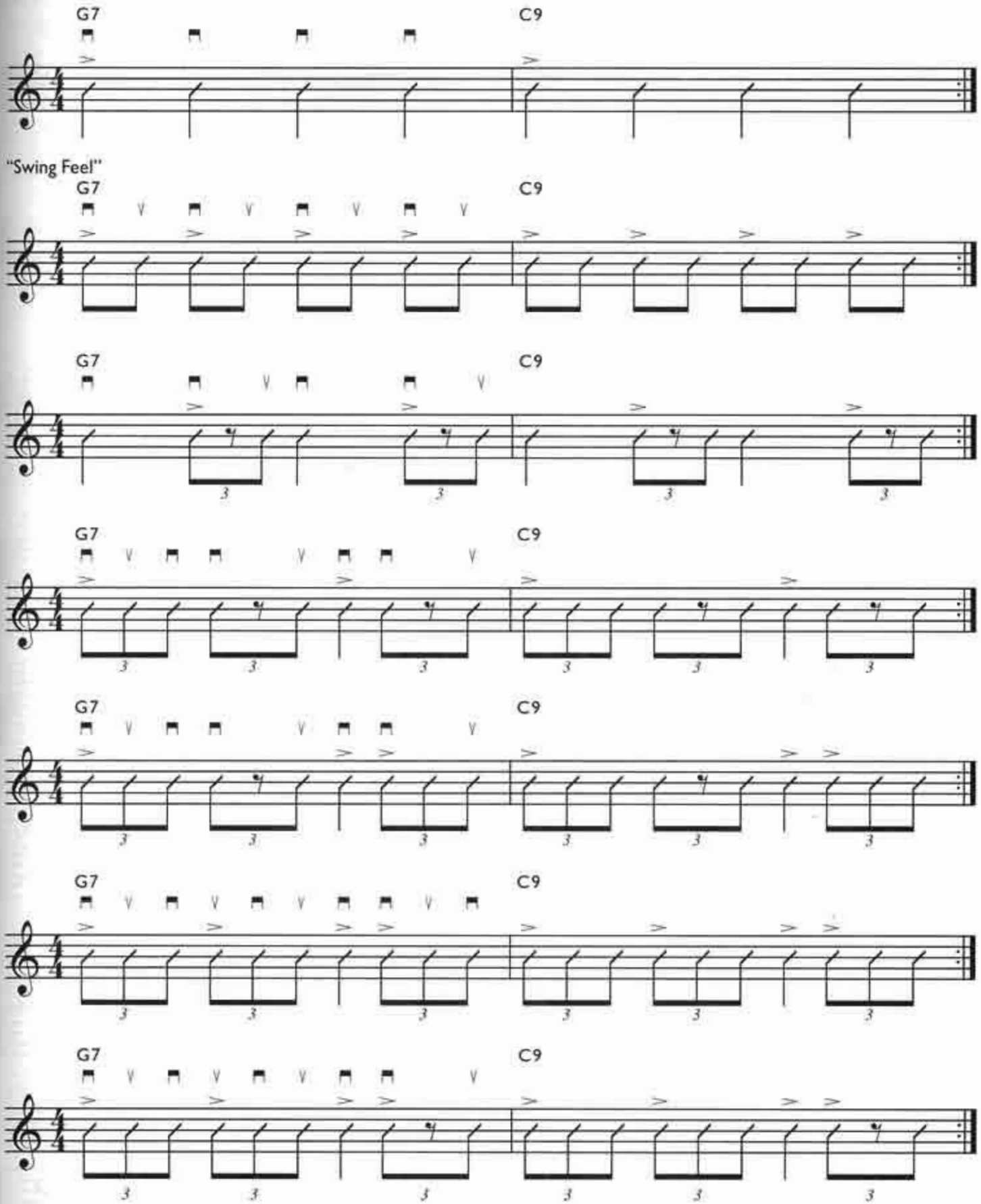


Blues Continued



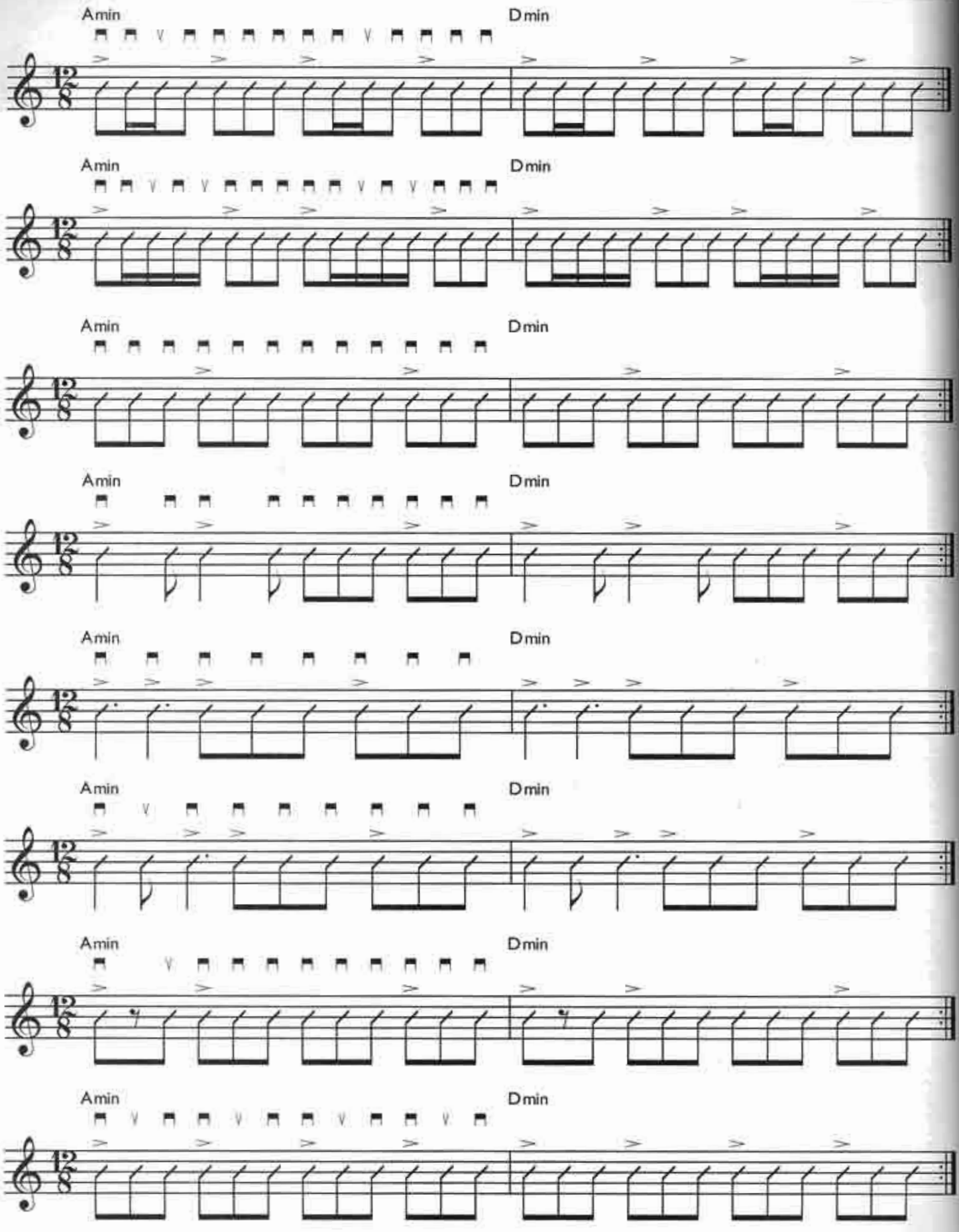
SLOW (DOWN HOME)

#1
Track 8



#1
Track 9

12/8 FEELS

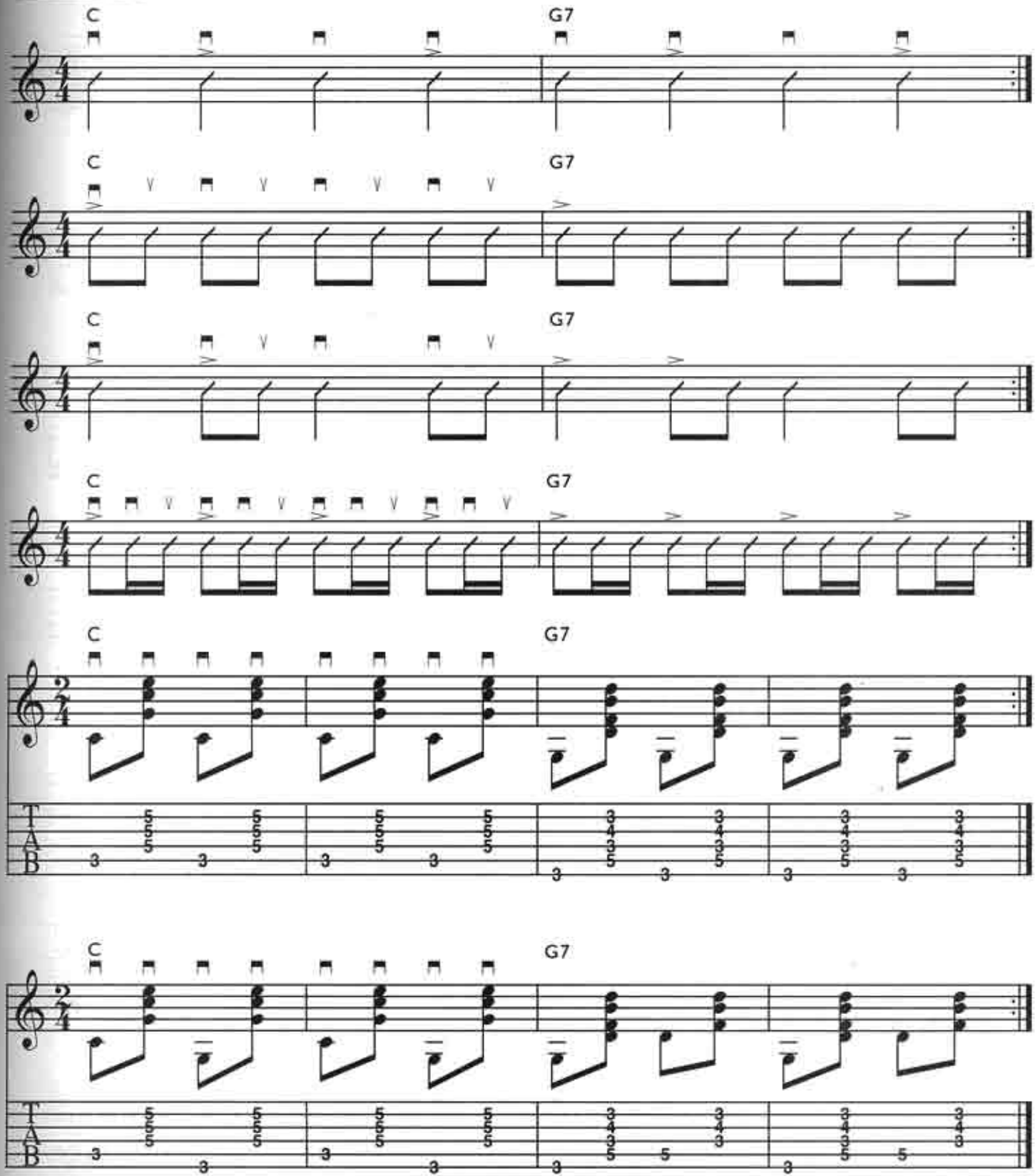


Country

From a strictly rhythmic standpoint, country styles have much in common with other "pop" styles. Many times the rhythmic patterns are "song specific," meaning that a particular rhythm part is integral to the song. If this is the case, you must learn that pattern. In most cases, however, more generic rhythm patterns will do just fine.

COUNTRY

#1
Track 10

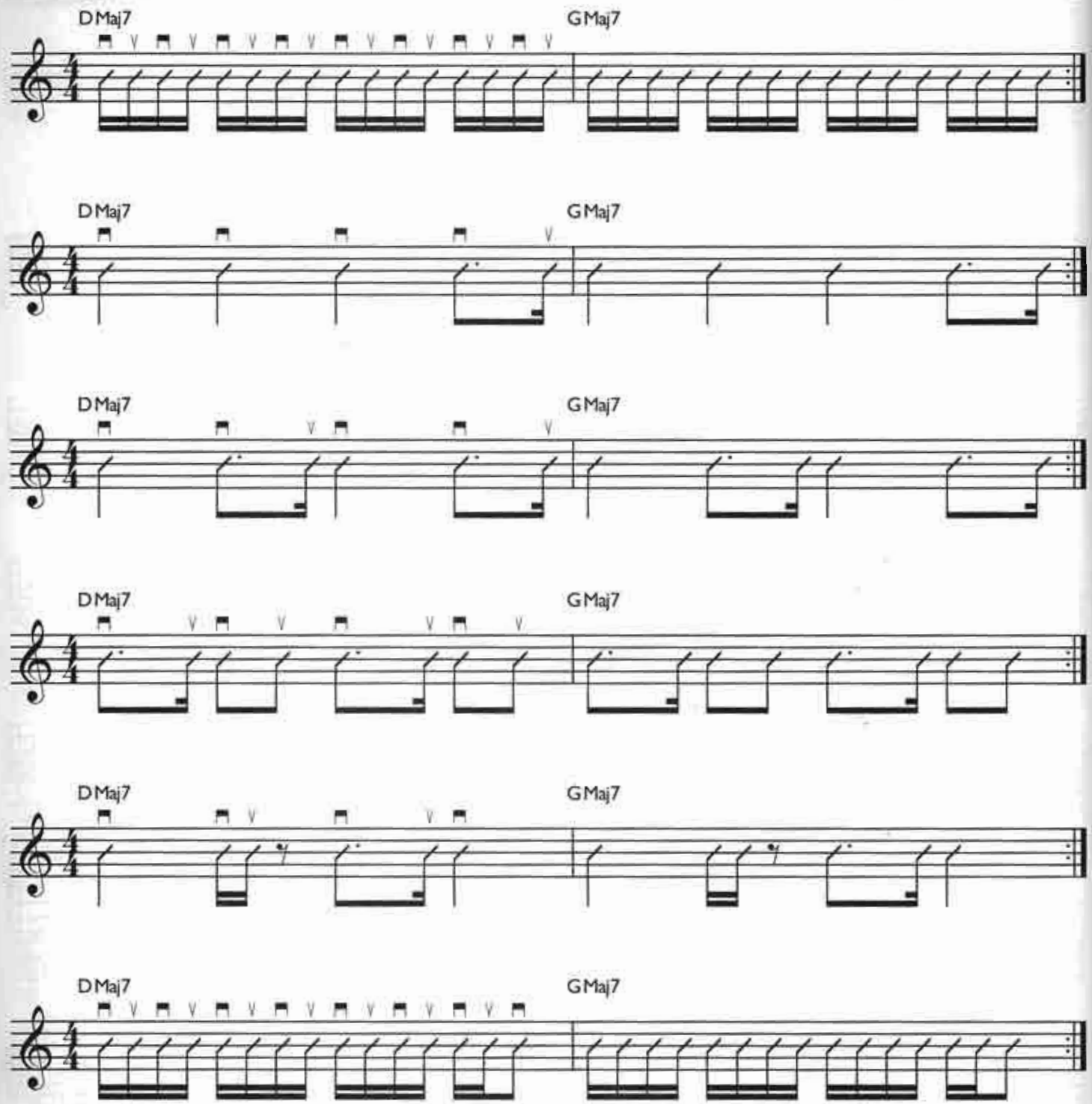


Disco

Disco has had an impact on all types of music. It's influence can be heard (and felt!) in funk, adult contemporary and jazz styles. Many common "request" tunes fall into this category. Here are some rhythmic patterns that achieve this feel.

#1
Track 11

DISCO

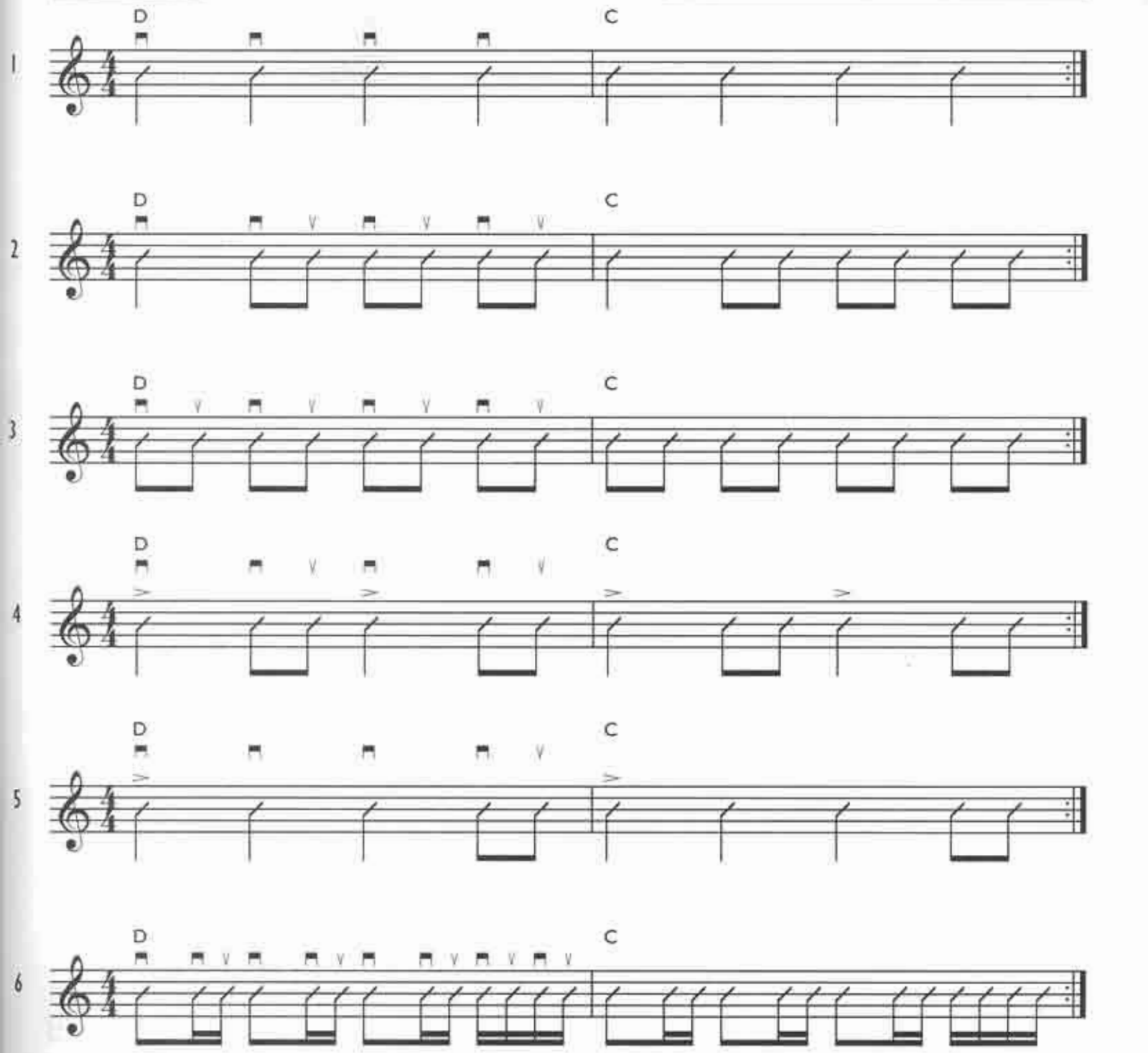


Folk

A lot of folk music depends on strumming or fingerstyle patterns for its rhythmic feel. The examples below are to be played with a pick. The examples on pp. 20-21 show some commonly used fingerstyle patterns. An extensive study of fingerstyle techniques is beyond the scope of this book. Check out Lou Manzi's *Beginning Fingerstyle Guitar* and *Fingerstyle Technique Builder* if you want to investigate further.

FOLK

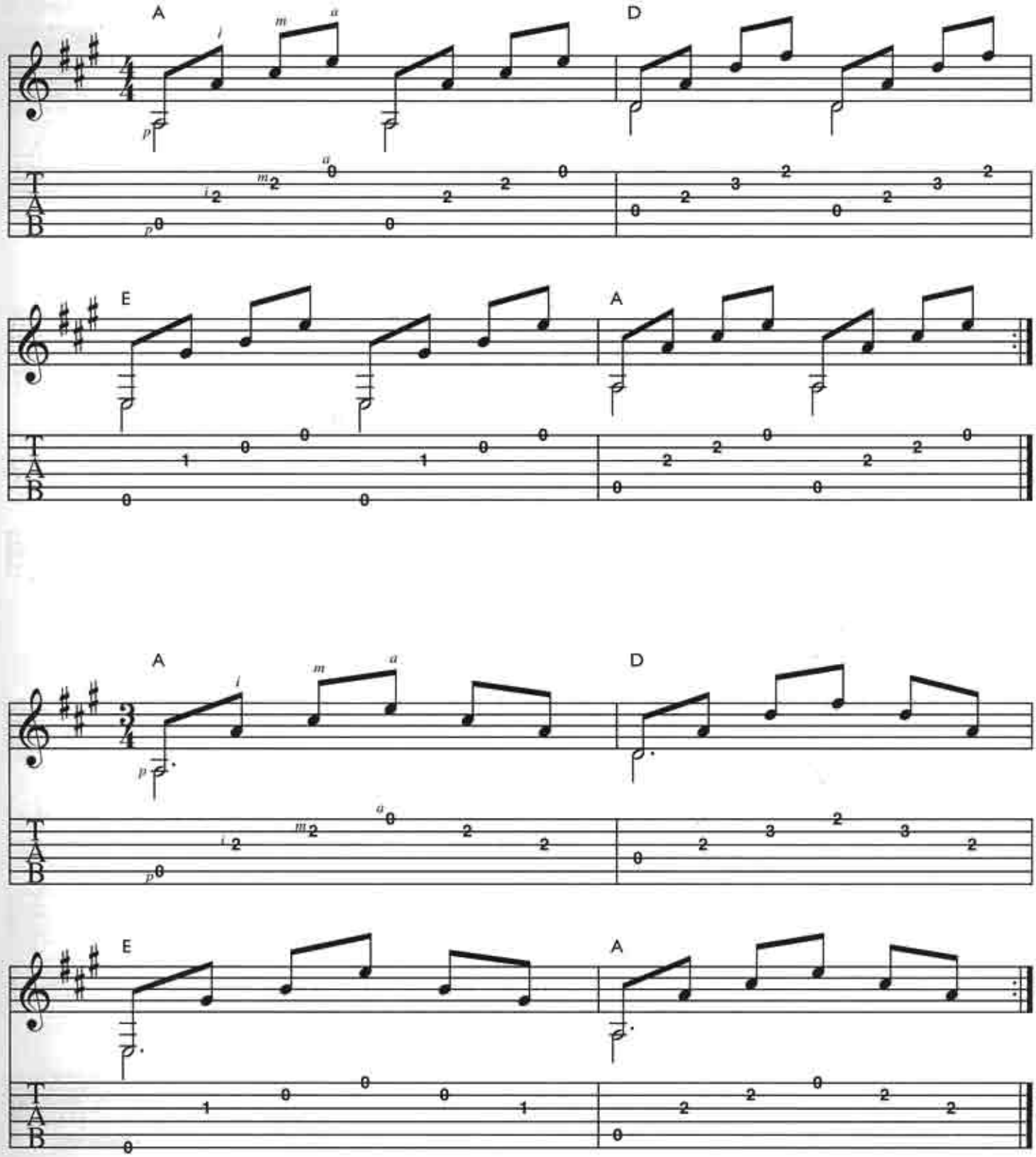
#1
Track 12

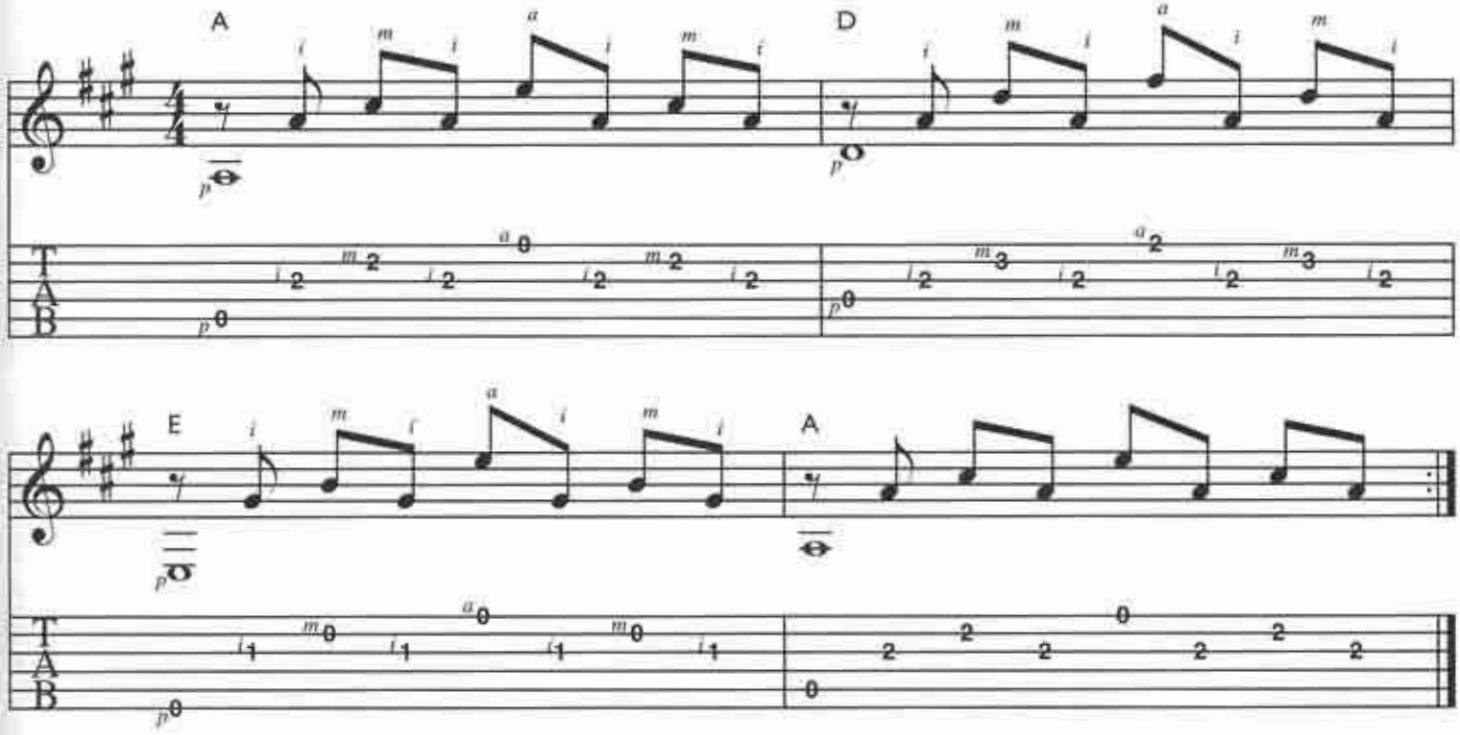


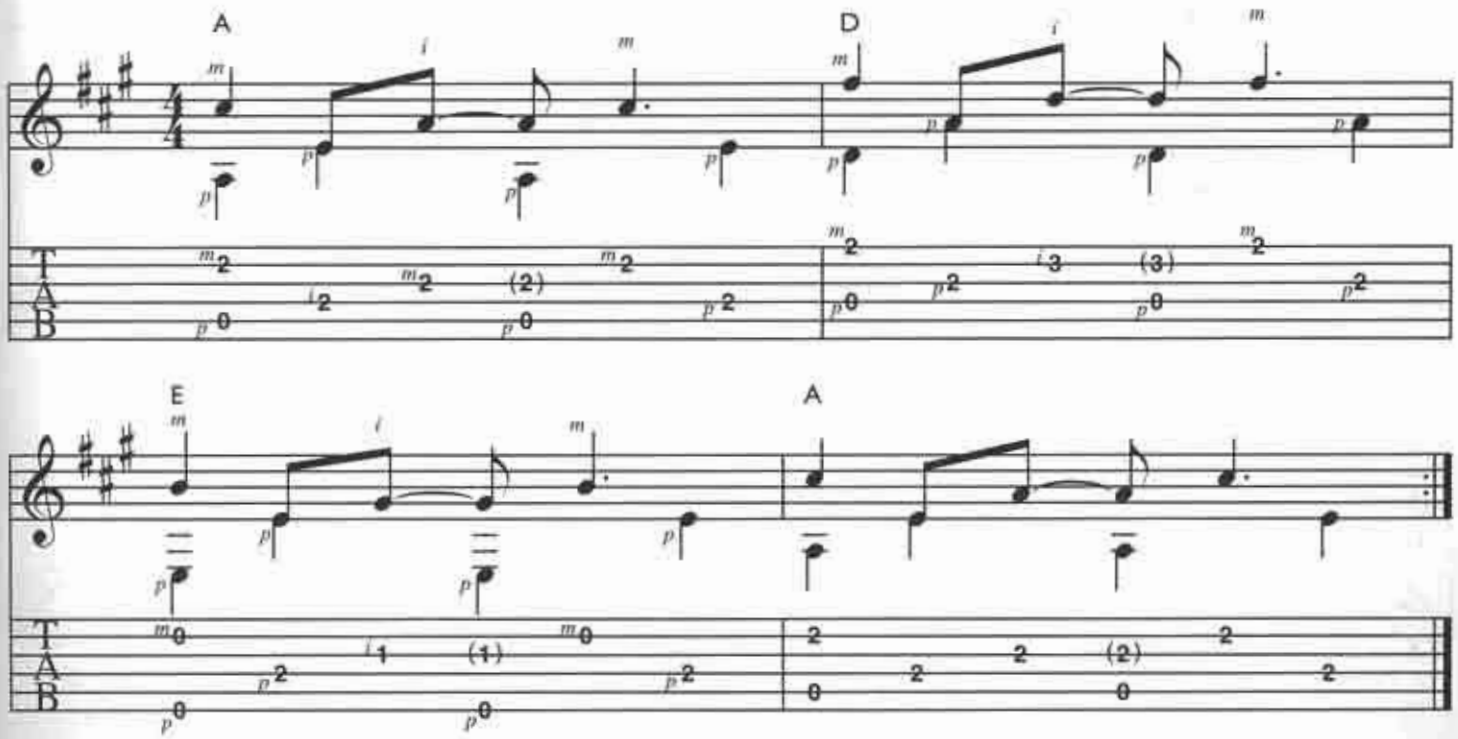
Folk Continued

#1
Track 13

FINGERSTYLE




3
A
D
E
A
T
A
B

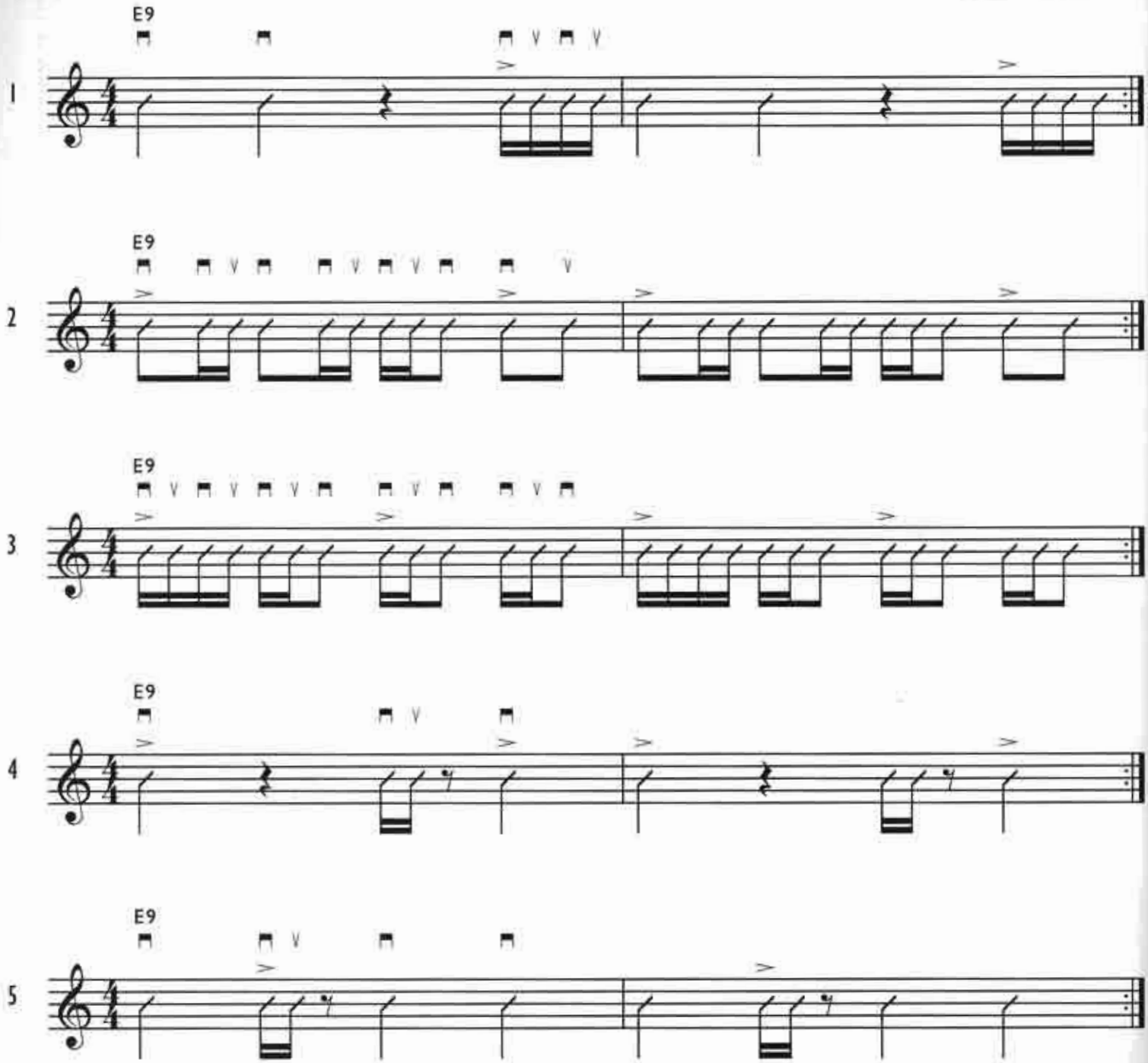

4
A
D
E
A
T
A
B

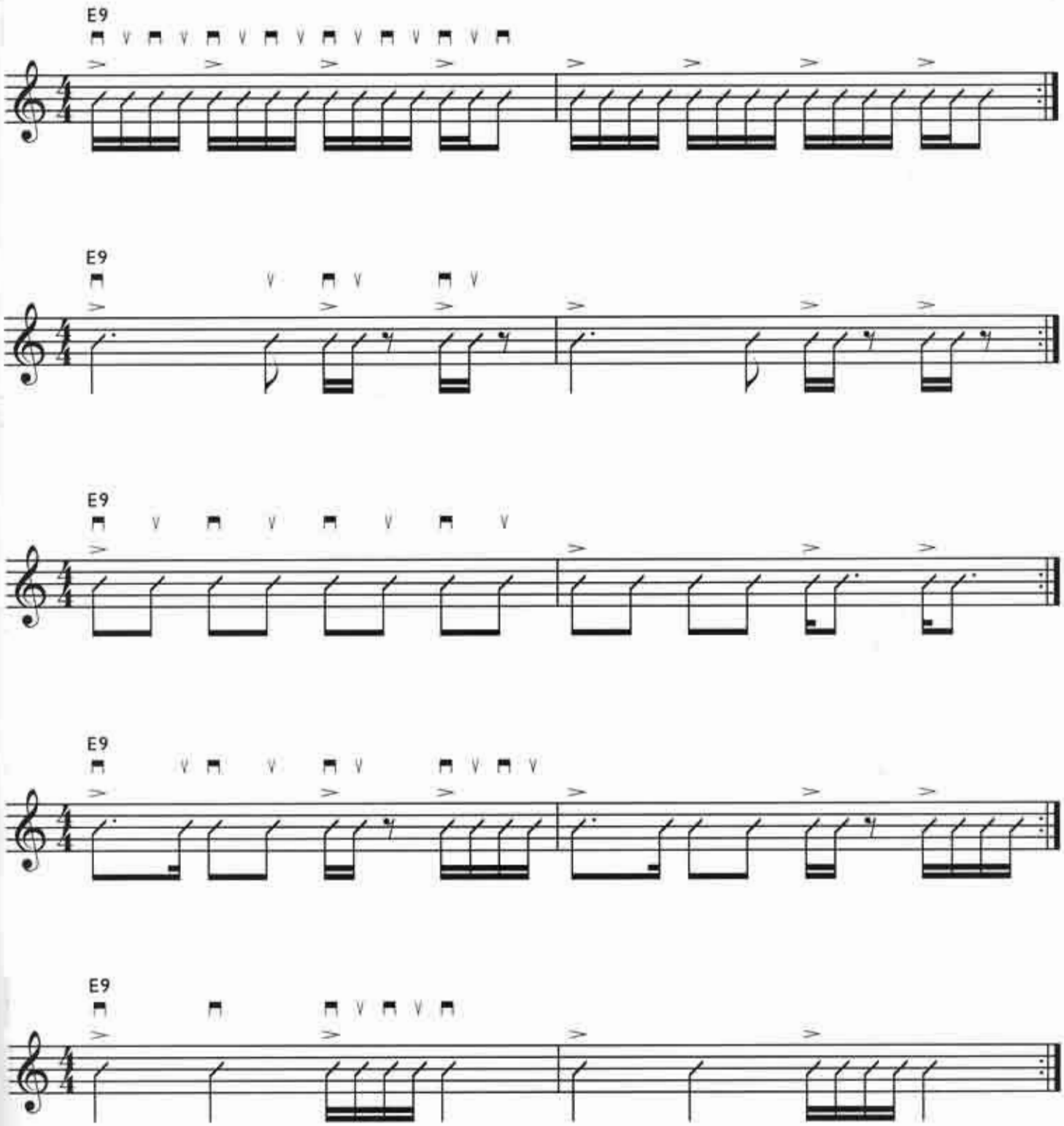
Funk

A funk rhythm is generally attained by establishing a steady sixteenth-note feel. Various subdivisions of the beat are either sounded of choked. Rests are often choked as well. Listen to recordings of James Brown, Tower of Power and Red Hot Chili Peppers for examples of outstanding funk feels.

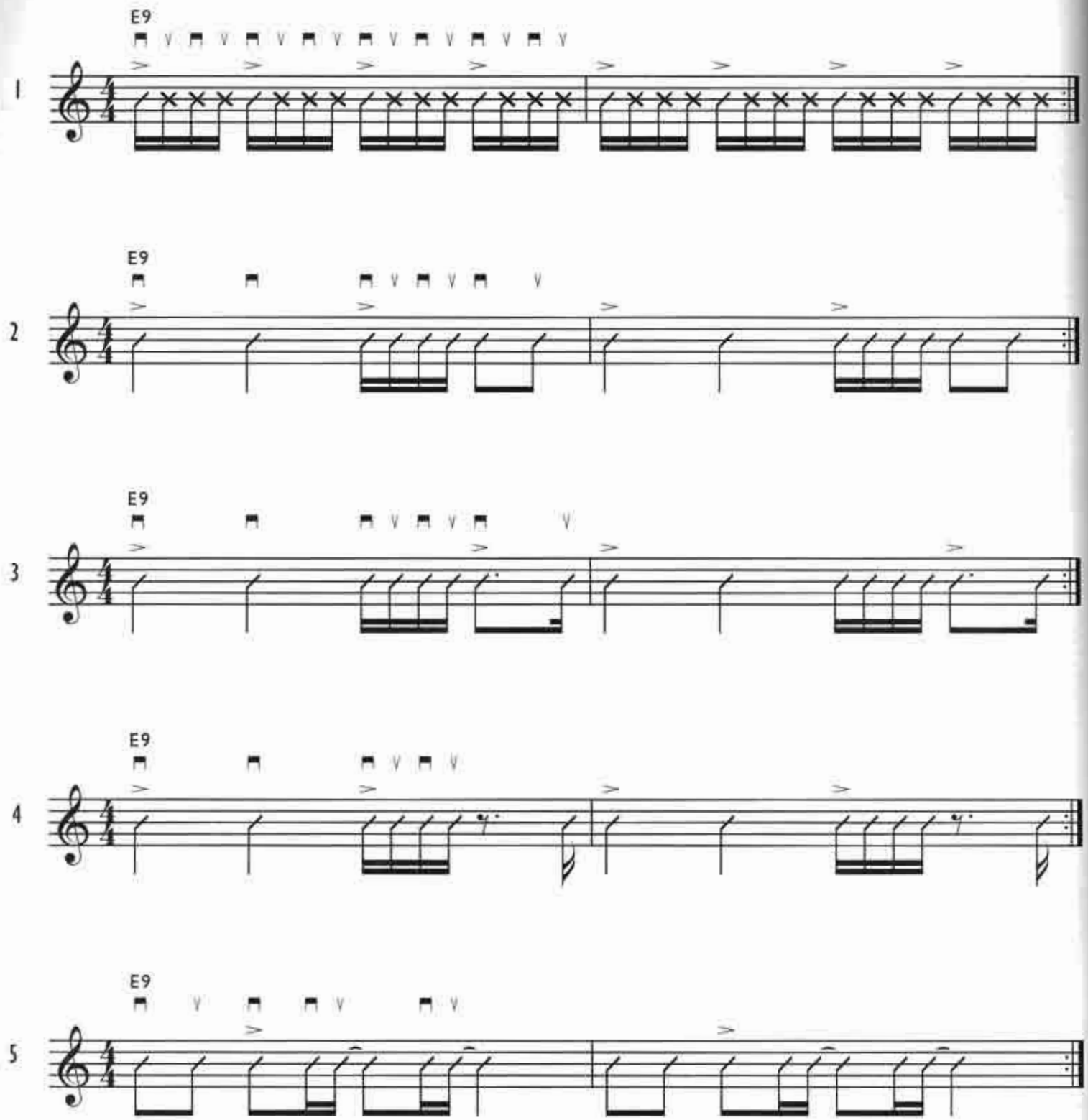
#1 Track 14

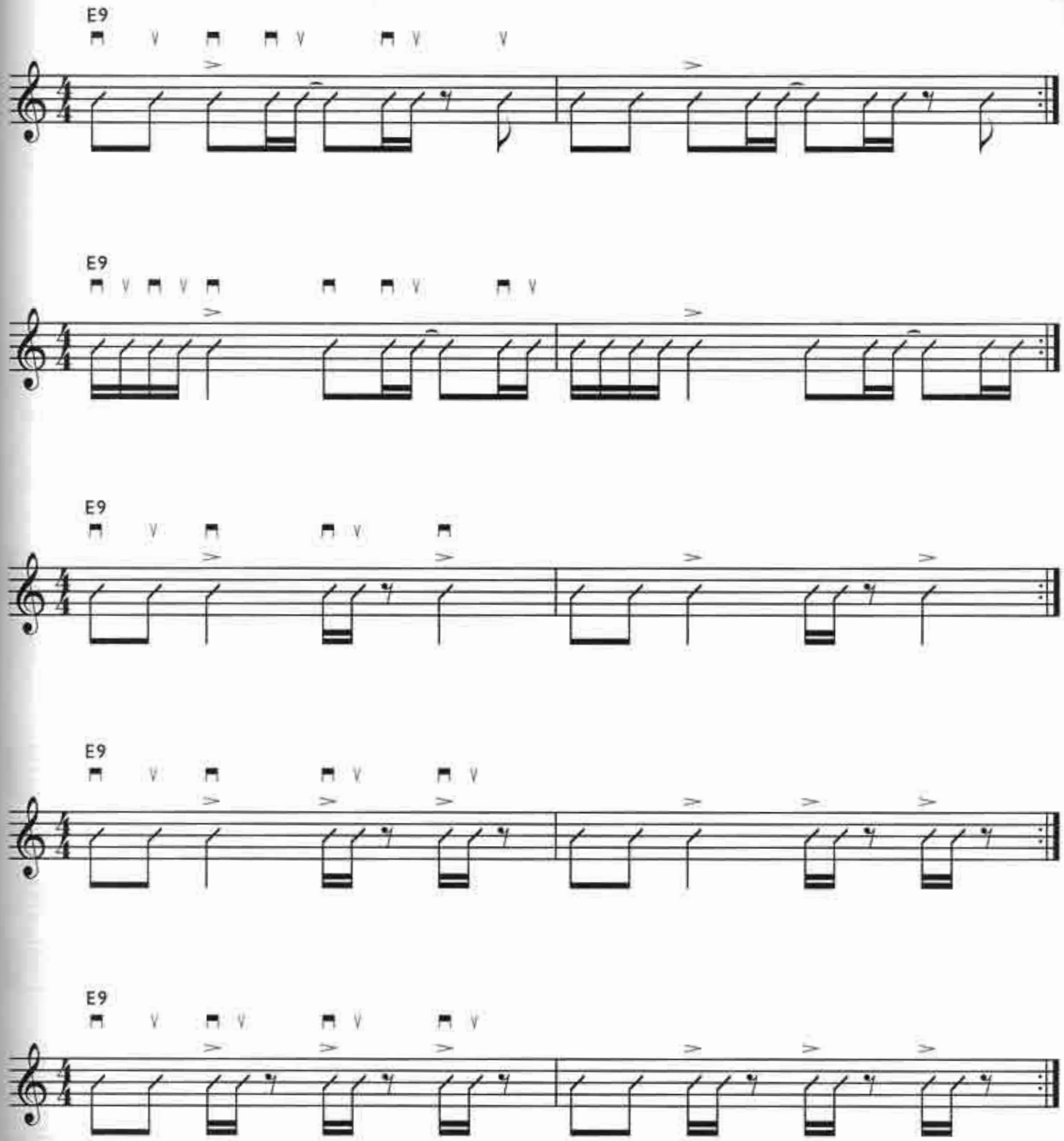
FUNK




E9
6
E9
7
E9
8
E9
9
E9
10

MORE FUNK




E9
6
E9
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E9
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E9
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E9
10

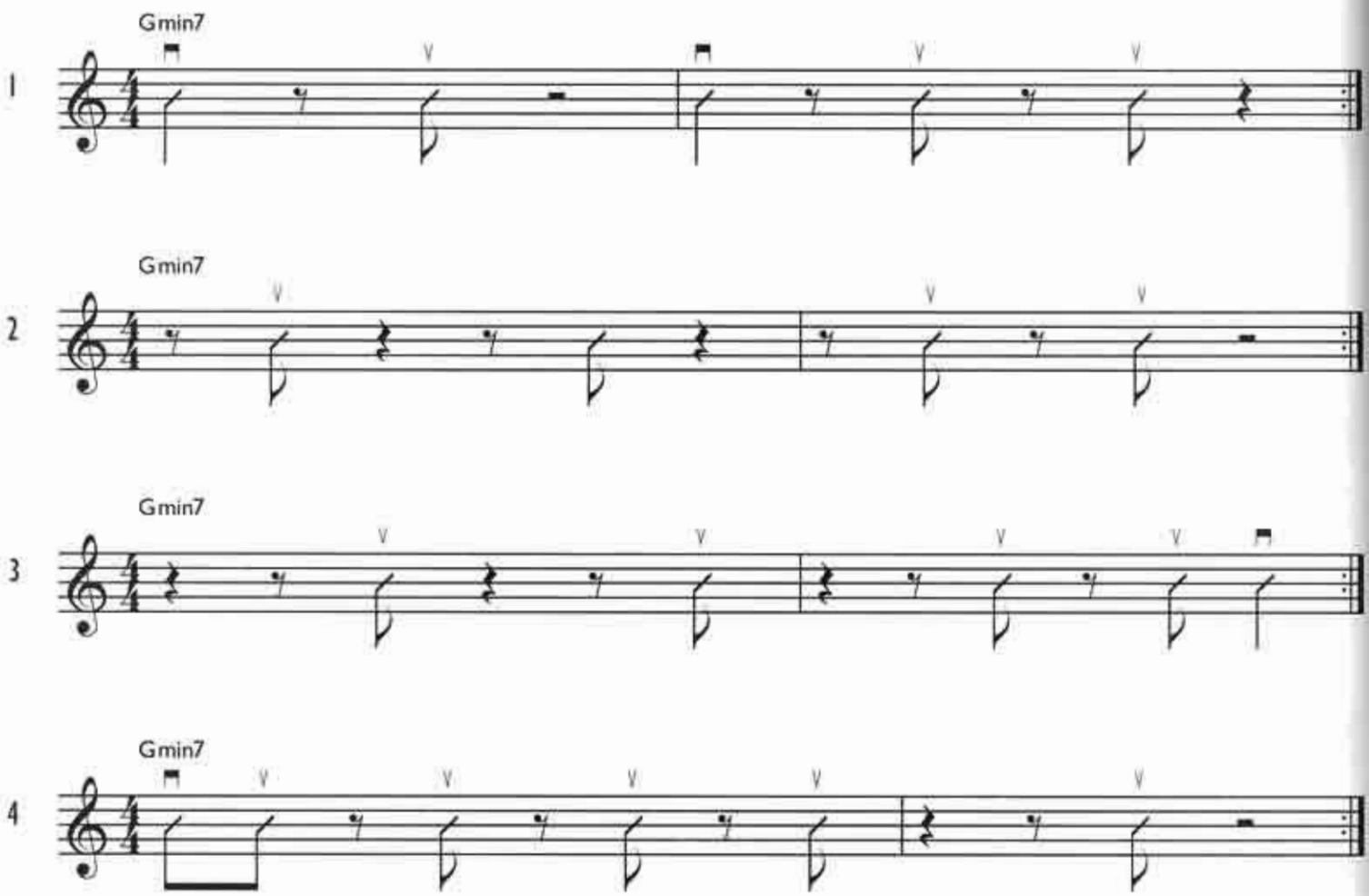
Jazz

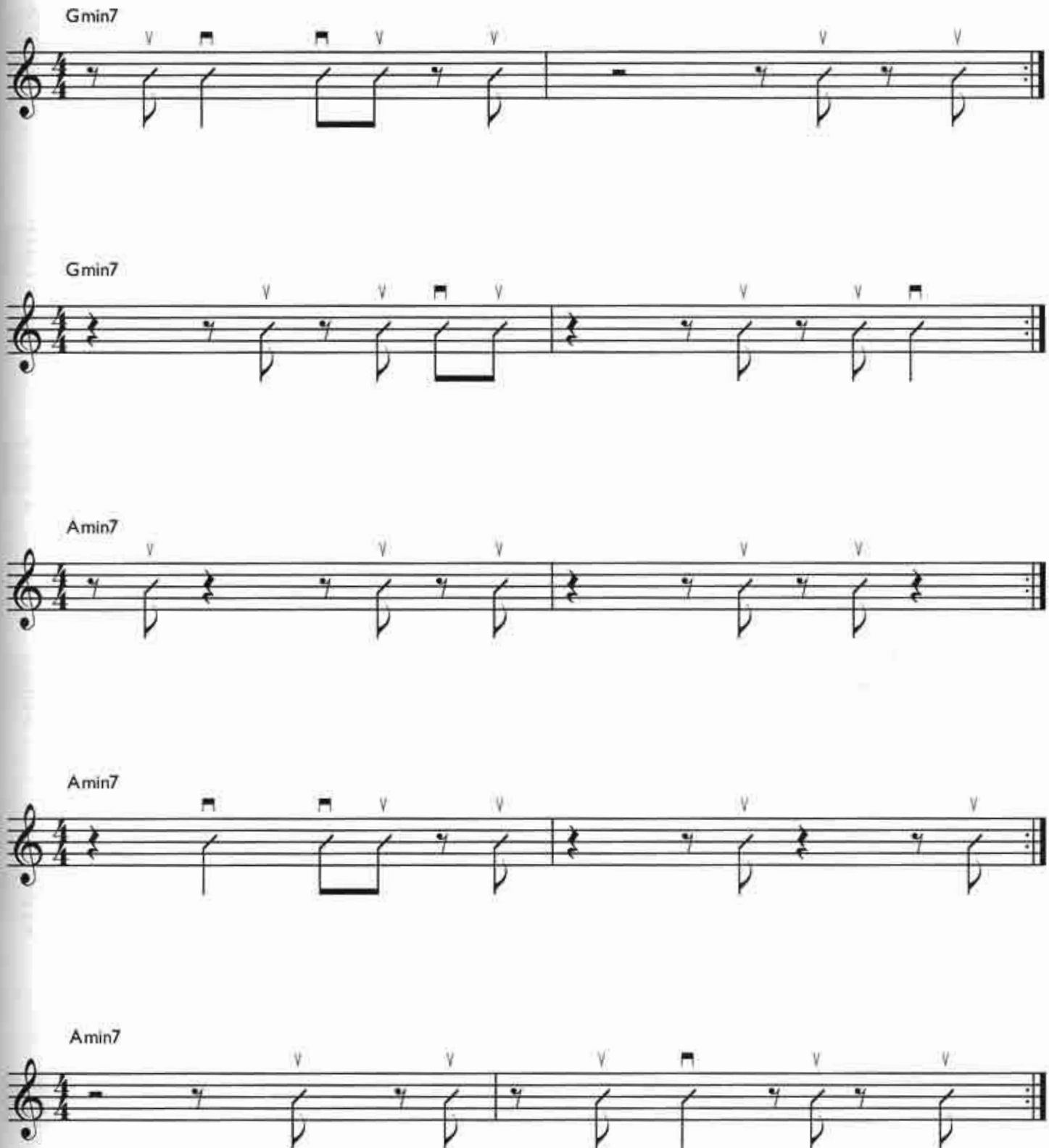
Early in the twentieth century, the swing feel was one of the first elements that separated jazz from other styles of music. Jazz-style syncopation was introduced and the first jazz, or swing eighths were heard. Even though they are written like *straight* eighth notes, they have a feel of three eighth note triplets with the first two tied.

Unlike rock, pop or country music, the rhythm in a swing feel is implied. The beat is often suggested by the guitarist. Predictable rhythm parts are considered to be trite, so the guitarist is left to accent various parts of each measure, usually with an element of surprise and with a spirit of improvisation. The best way to learn this feel is to listen to a lot of jazz guitarists. Listen to how they comp. Listening to a pianist's left hand is also a good source of comping ideas. Even though this feel is basically improvised, these examples will give you a good idea of what this is all about. Most of these examples are only two-bar phrases. The four-bar phrases will help you see how swing-feel comping might be developed over a longer phrase, combining some of the previous ideas.

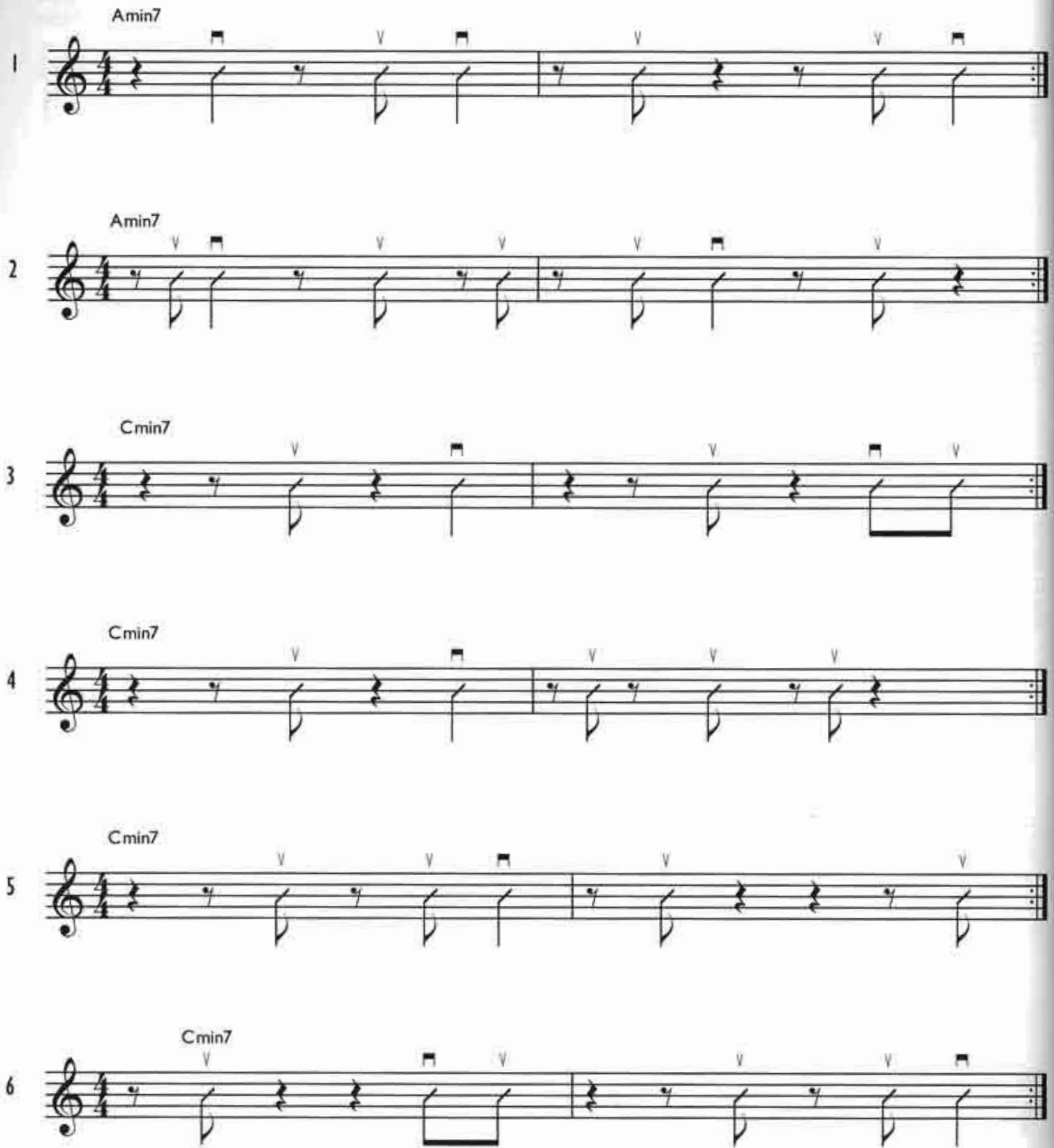
#1
Track 15

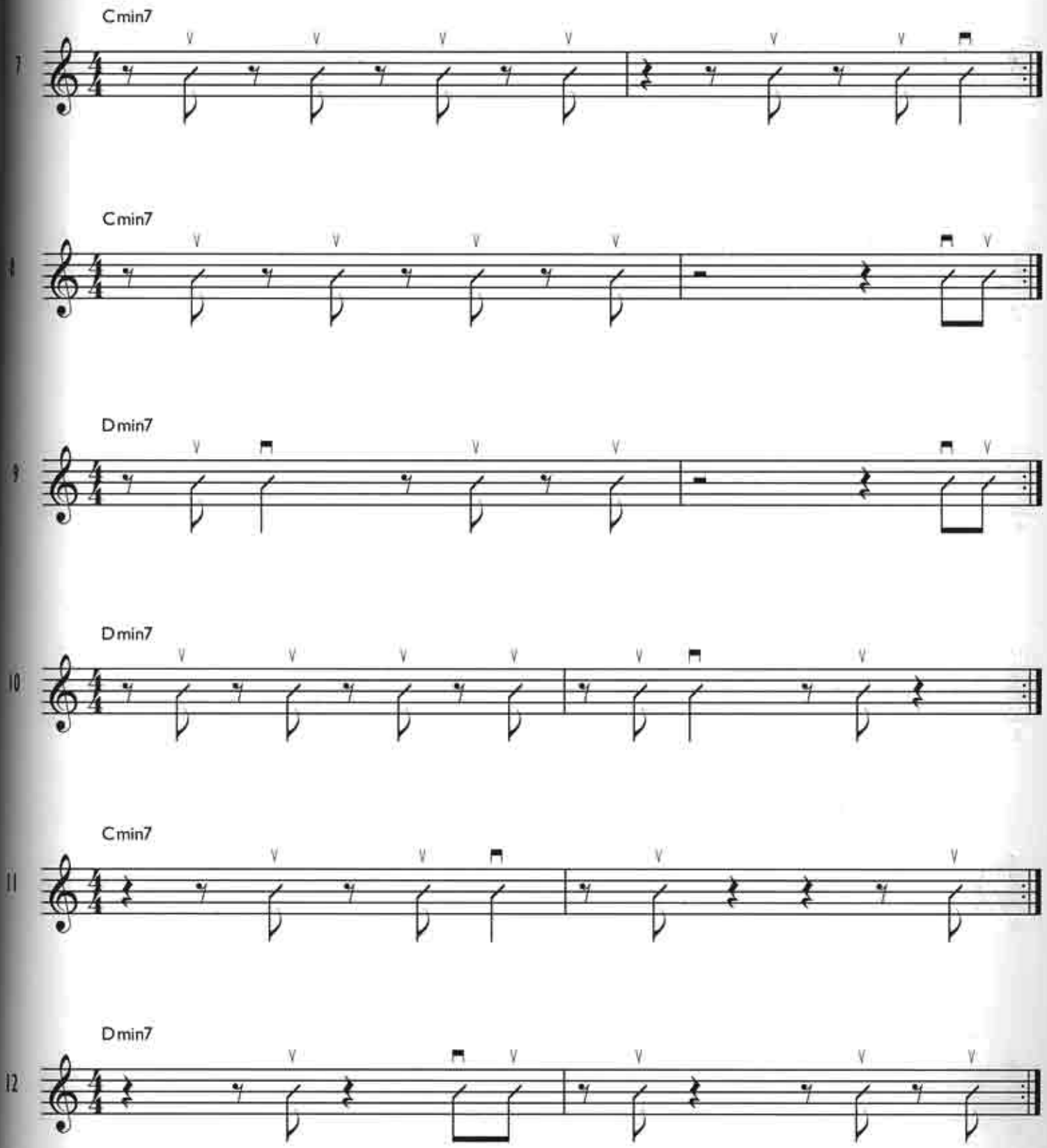
SWING




Gmin7
5
Gmin7
6
Amin7
7
Amin7
8
Amin7
9

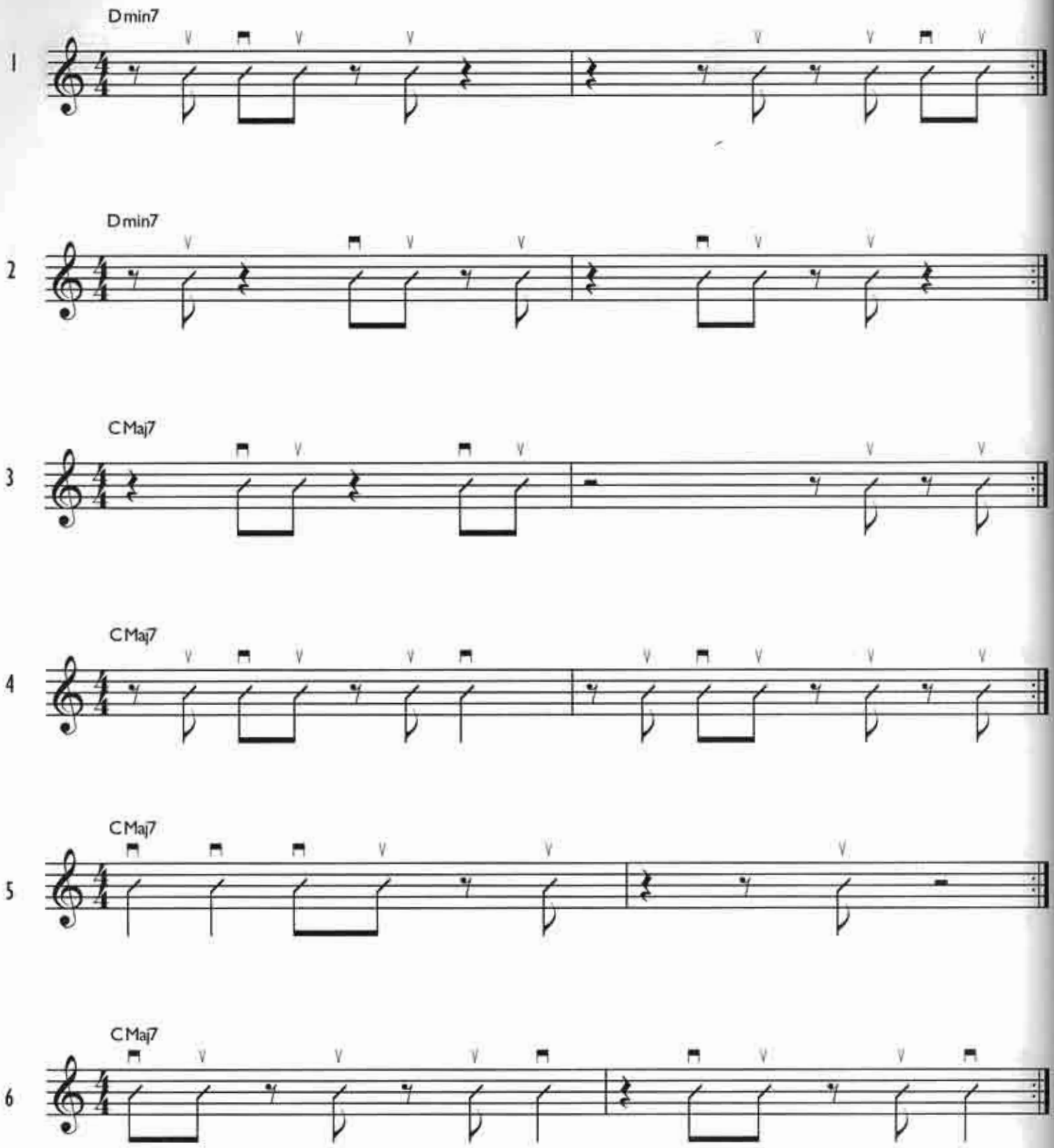
MORE SWING

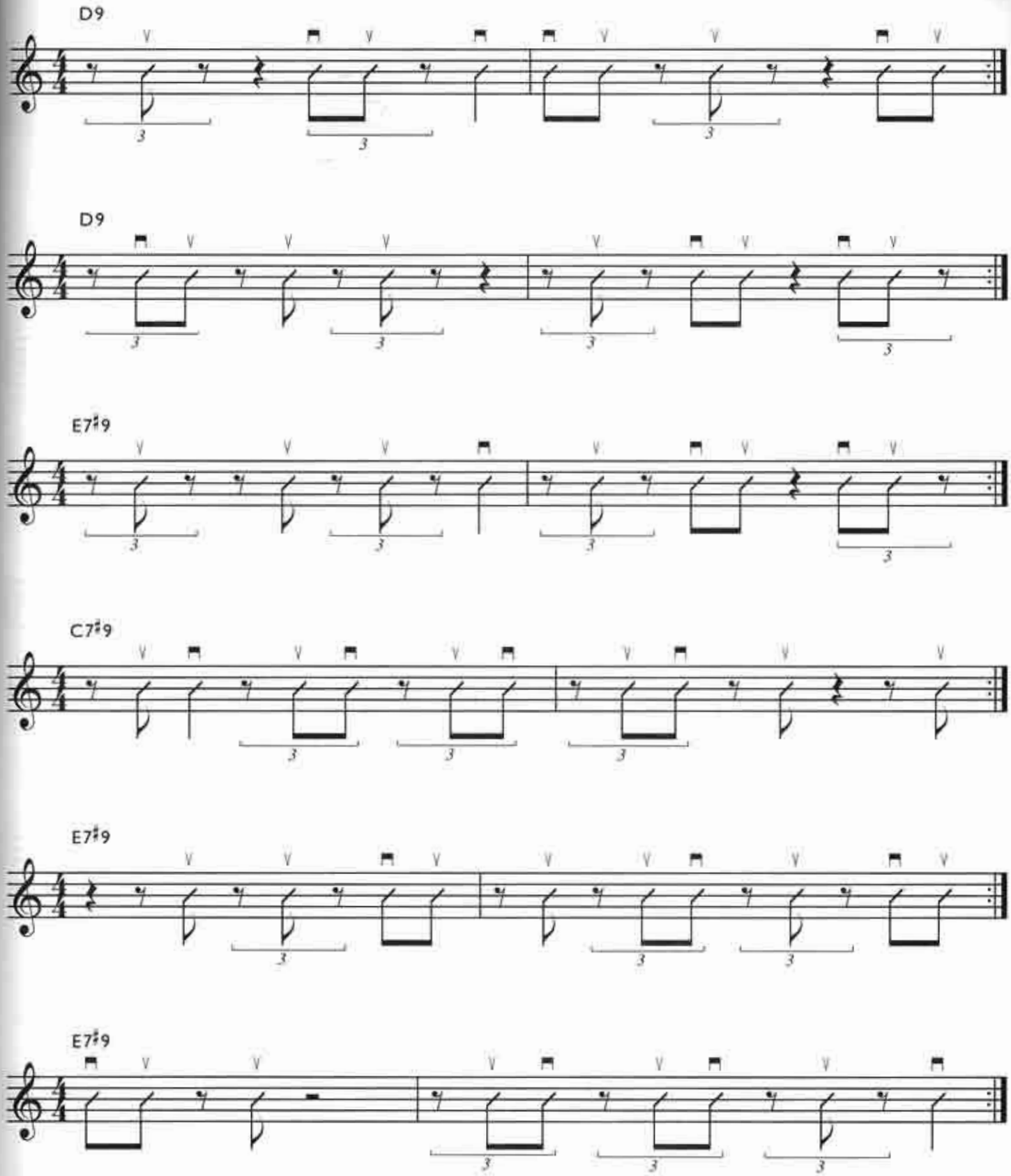



Cmin7
7
Cmin7
8
Dmin7
9
Dmin7
10
Cmin7
11
Dmin7
12

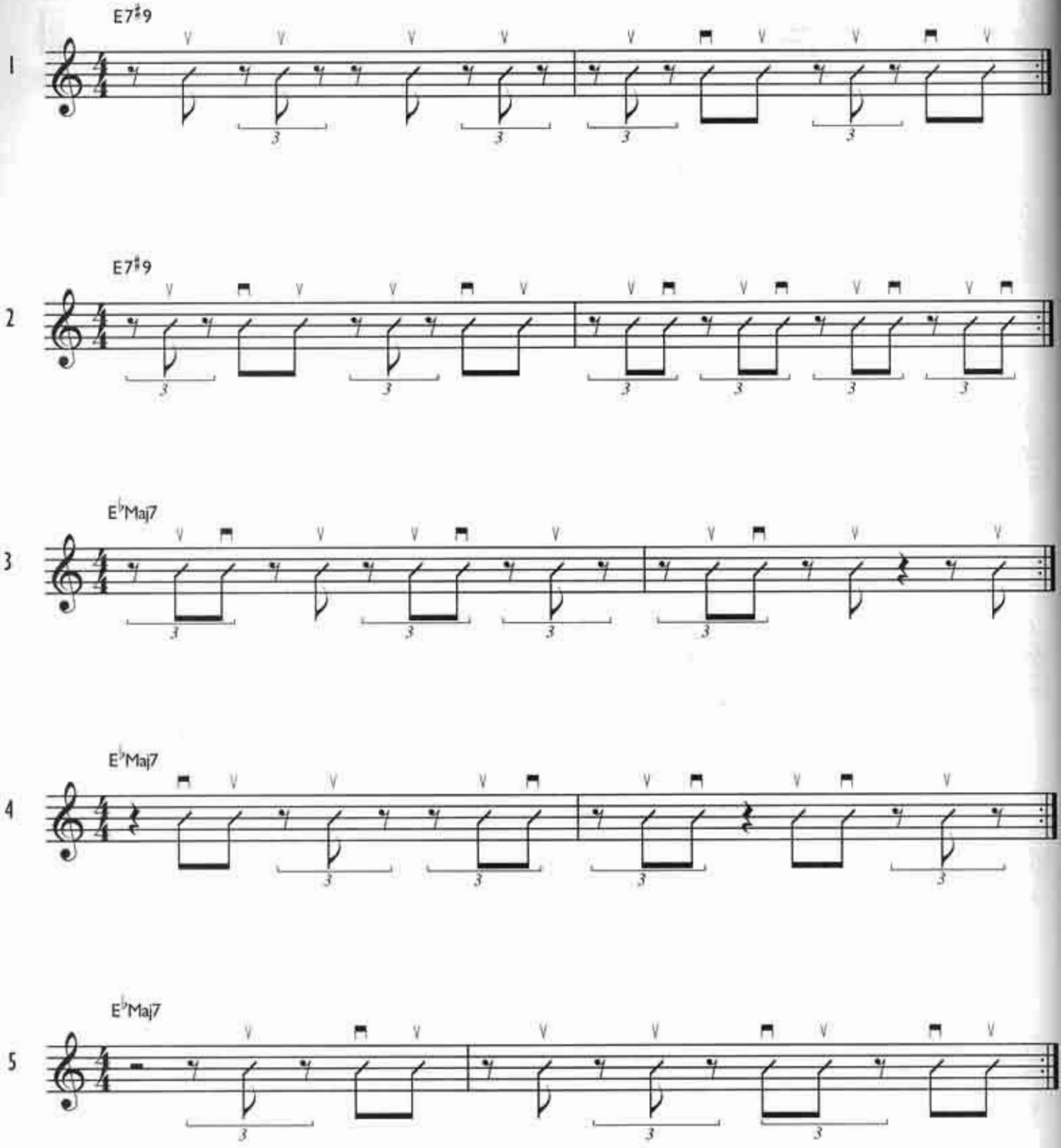
MORE SWING

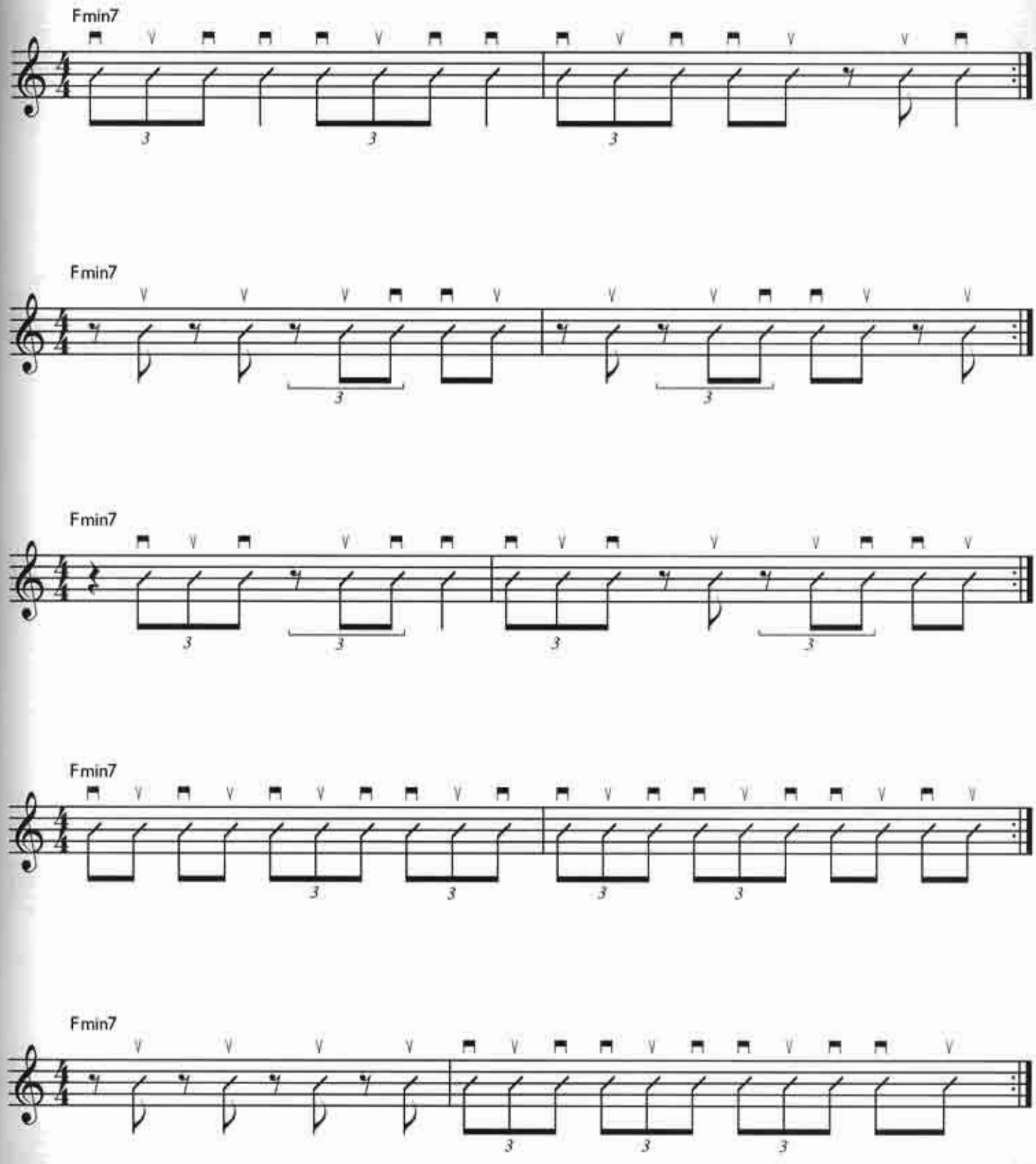
Remember to swing the eighths!




D9
D9
E7♯9
C7♯9
E7♯9
E7♯9

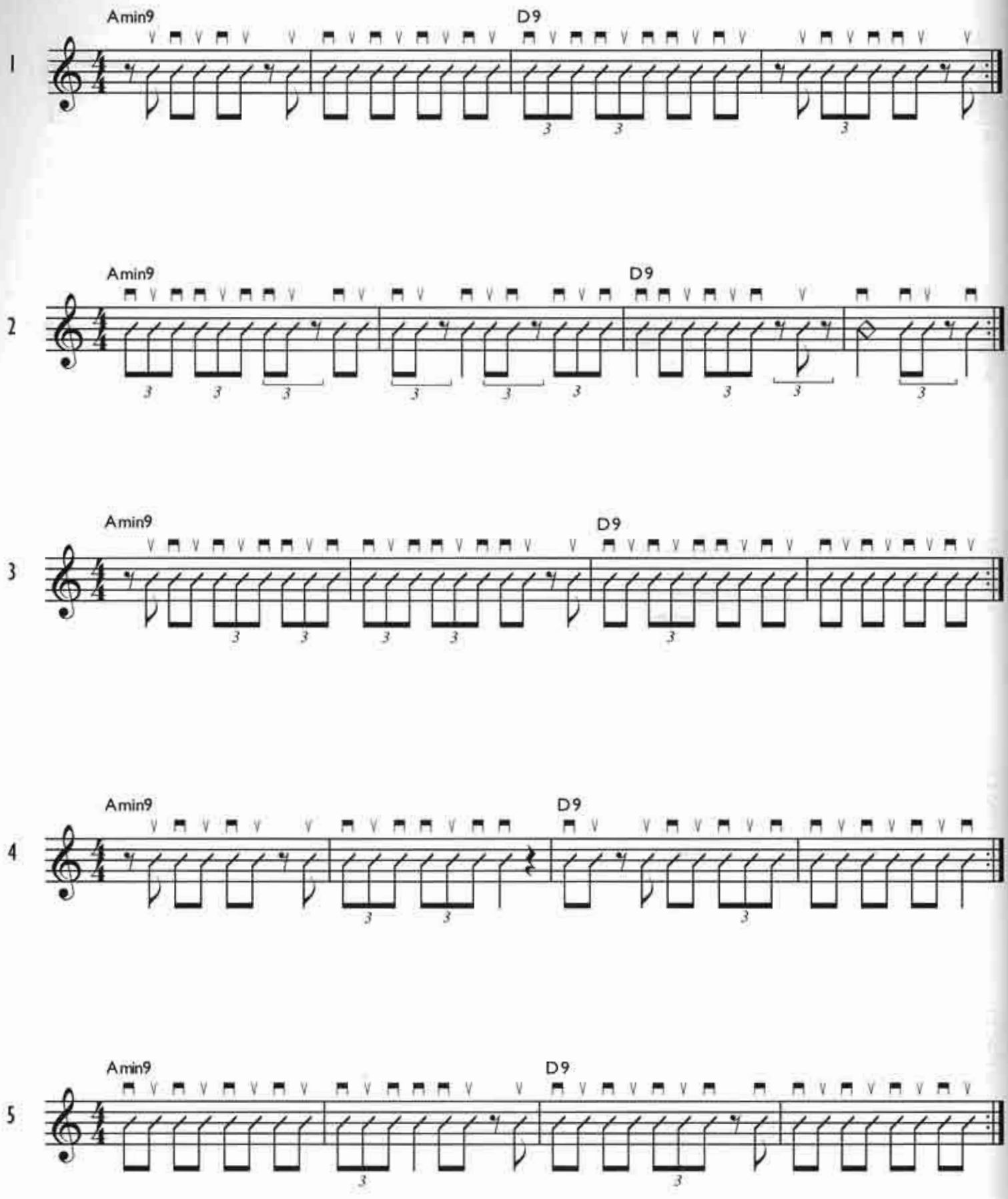
MORE SWING

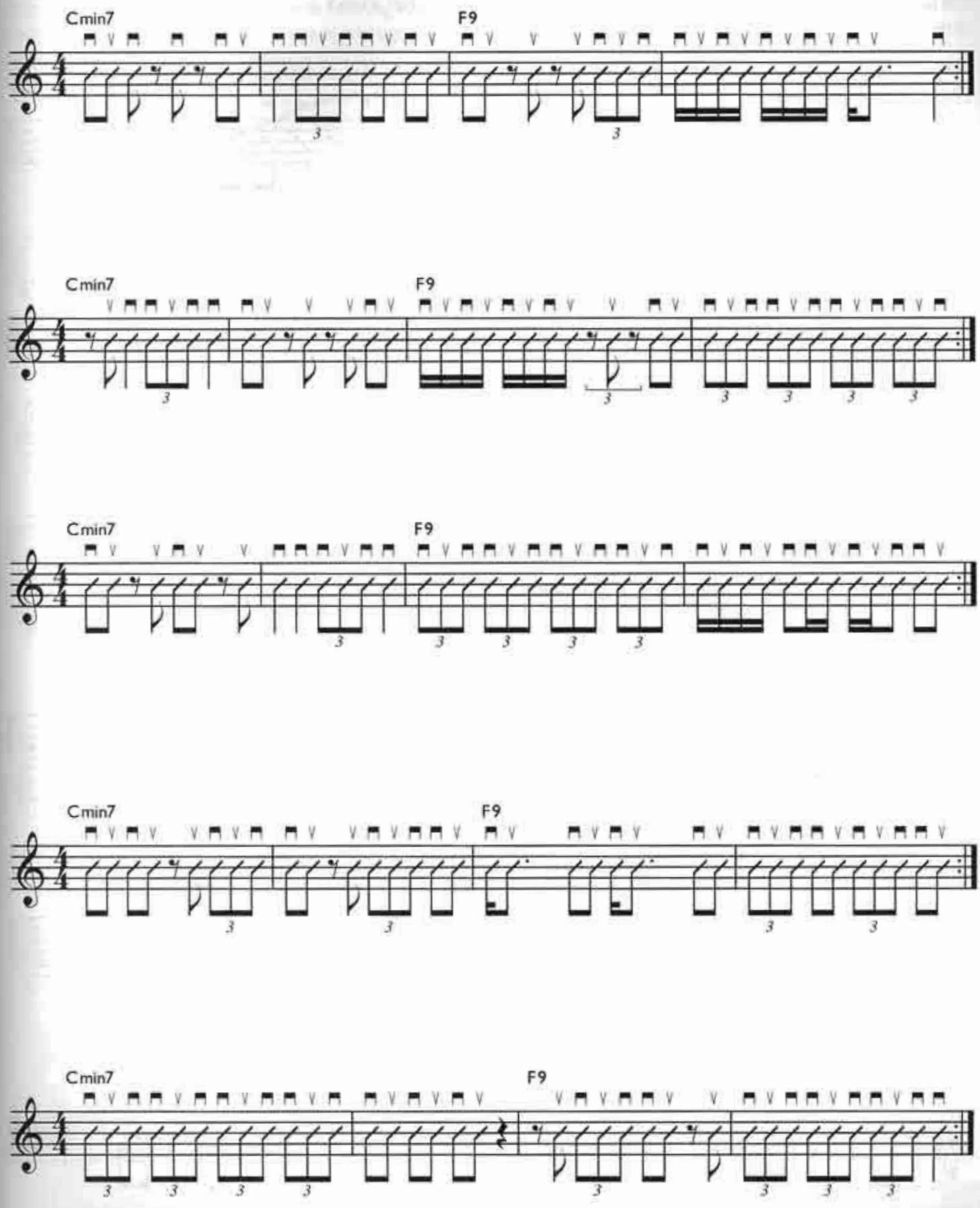



Fmin7
6
Fmin7
7
Fmin7
8
Fmin7
9
Fmin7
10

#1
Track 16

FOUR-BAR PHRASES

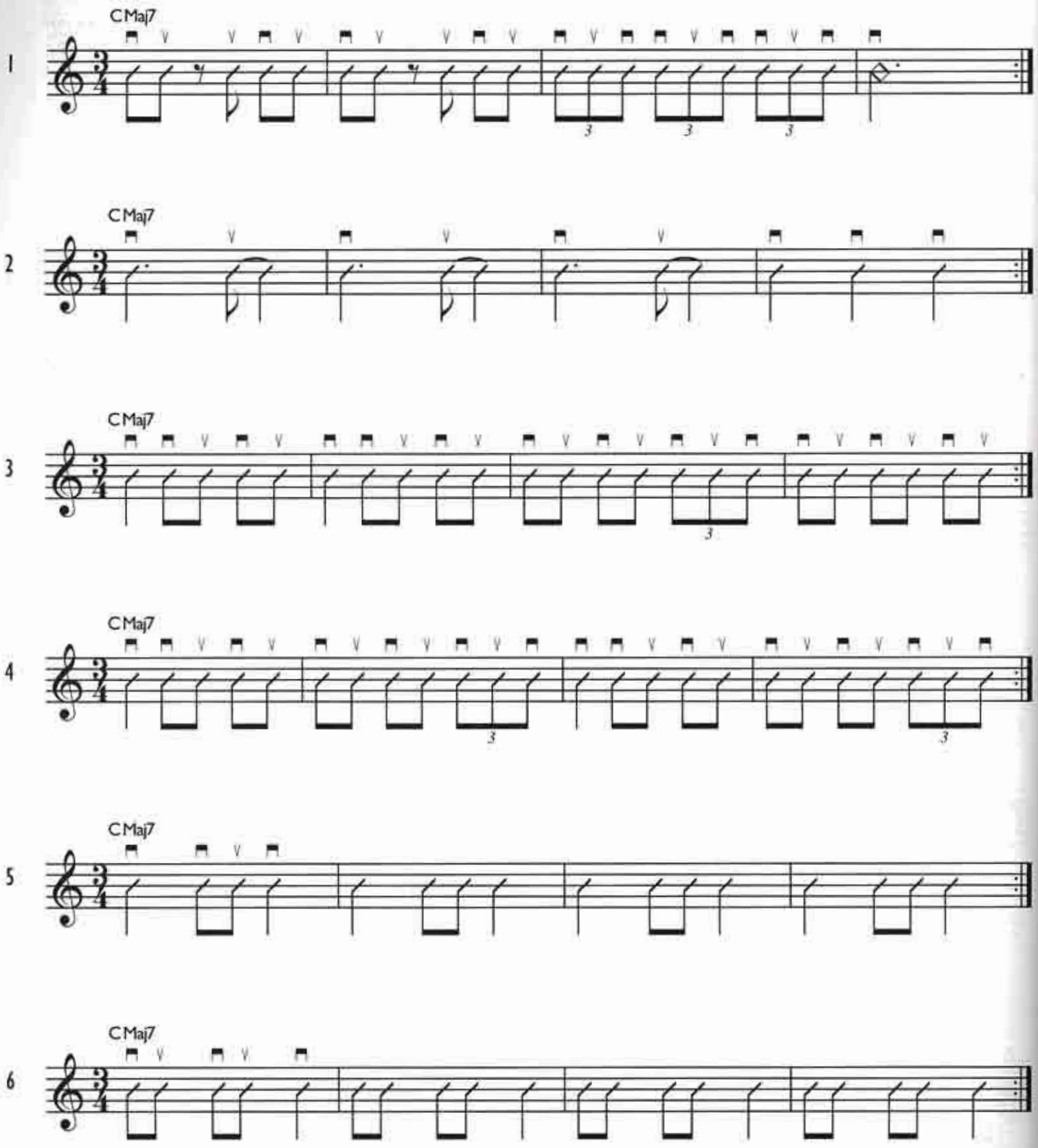



6
Cmin7
F9
7
Cmin7
F9
8
Cmin7
F9
9
Cmin7
F9
10
Cmin7
F9

#1
Track 17

JAZZWALTZ

The jazz waltz is the $\frac{3}{4}$ version of the swing feel. The same improvised feel is used. Most of all, avoid the "oomp pa pa" feel of the traditional waltz. Remember to swing all the eighths!

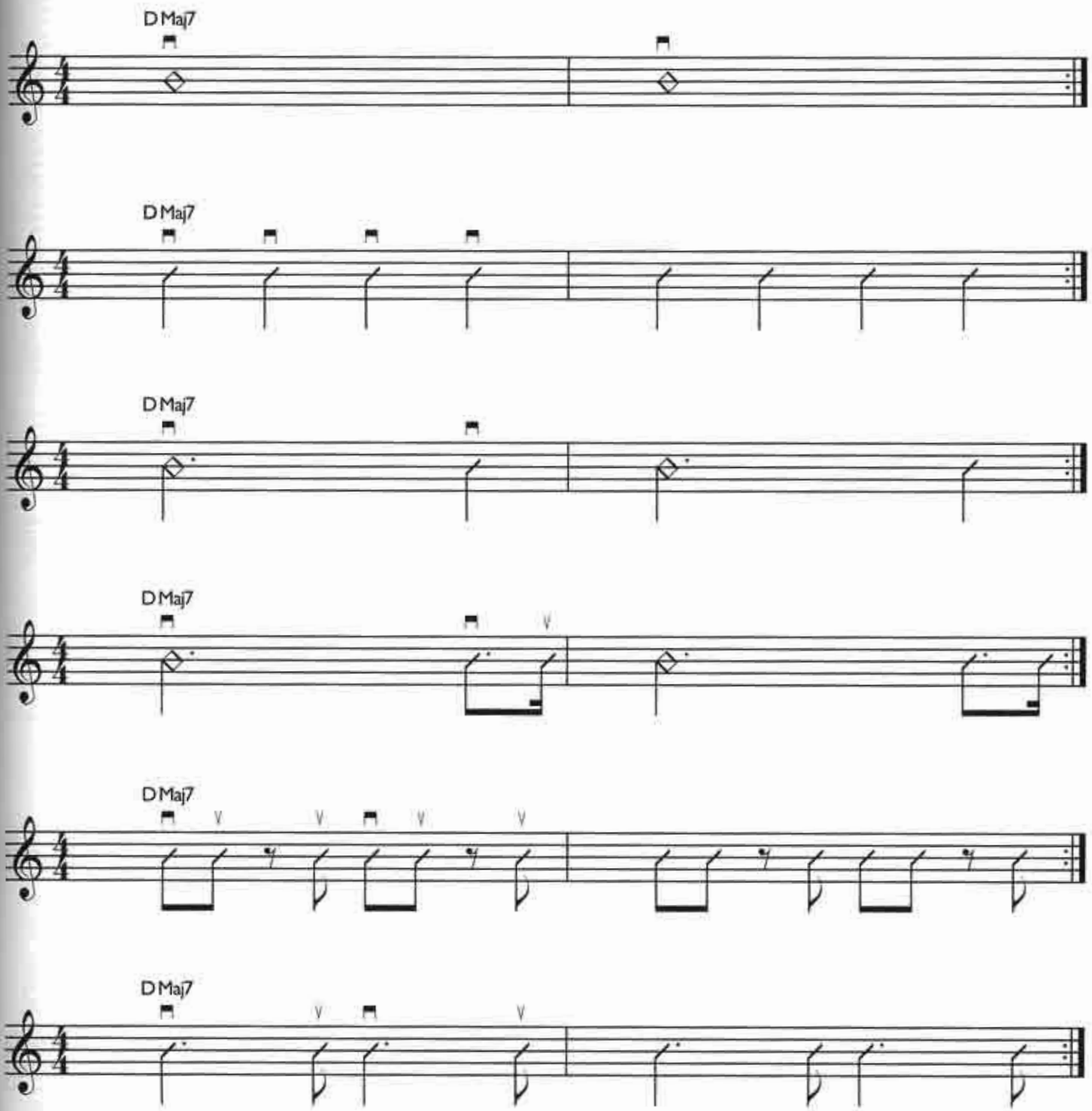


Ballads

Accompanying with a ballad feel requires listening very carefully to what is going on around you. When playing in a traditional jazz style, it is a generally a good idea to play only when there is a sustained note or a complete break in the melody.

BALLADS

#1
Track 18

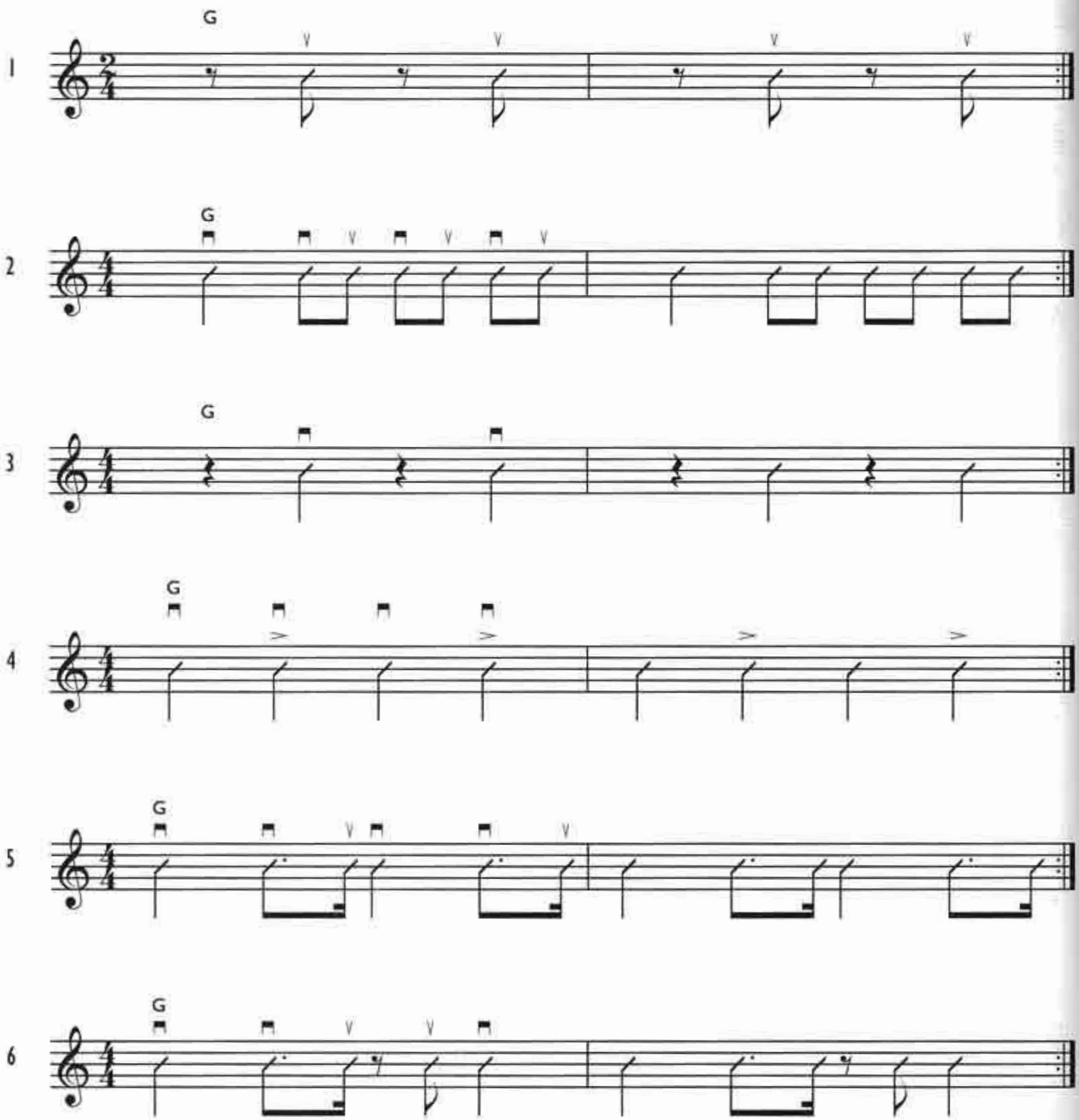


Dixie

Banjo is the traditional rhythm instrument for most Dixieland jazz groups. Try to capture a "banjo vibe" when playing these patterns.

#1
Track 19

DIXIE

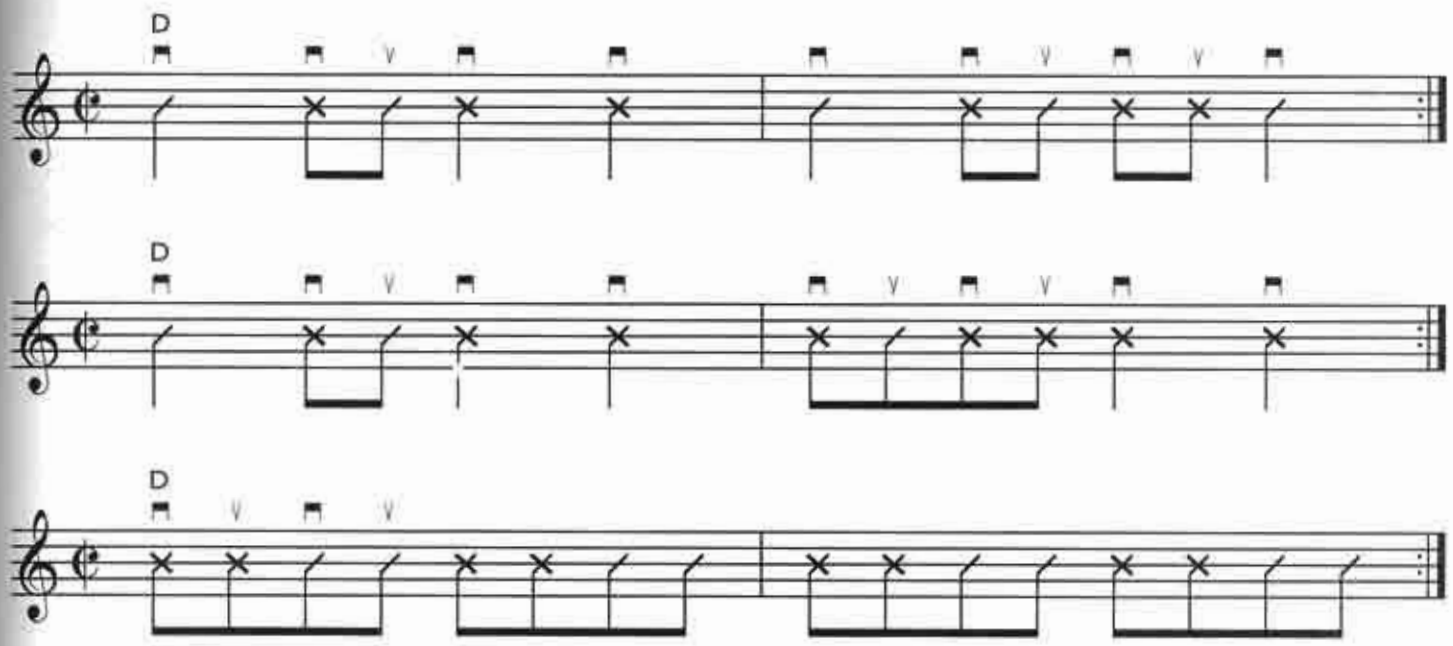


Latin

Guitarists need to have an arsenal of Latin rhythms. Whether you are playing casuals where Cha Chas, Tangos and Bossa Novas are frequently requested, or authentic Brazilian or Cuban music, most players find these rhythms fascinating. Quite a few examples are shown here. You should realize that the real nature of these rhythms are found when several instruments are interacting, each playing complimentary patterns. This is part of what creates the exciting and passionate feel of Latin music. The following examples are simply an introduction. You could spend many years studying the rhythms from this part of the world.

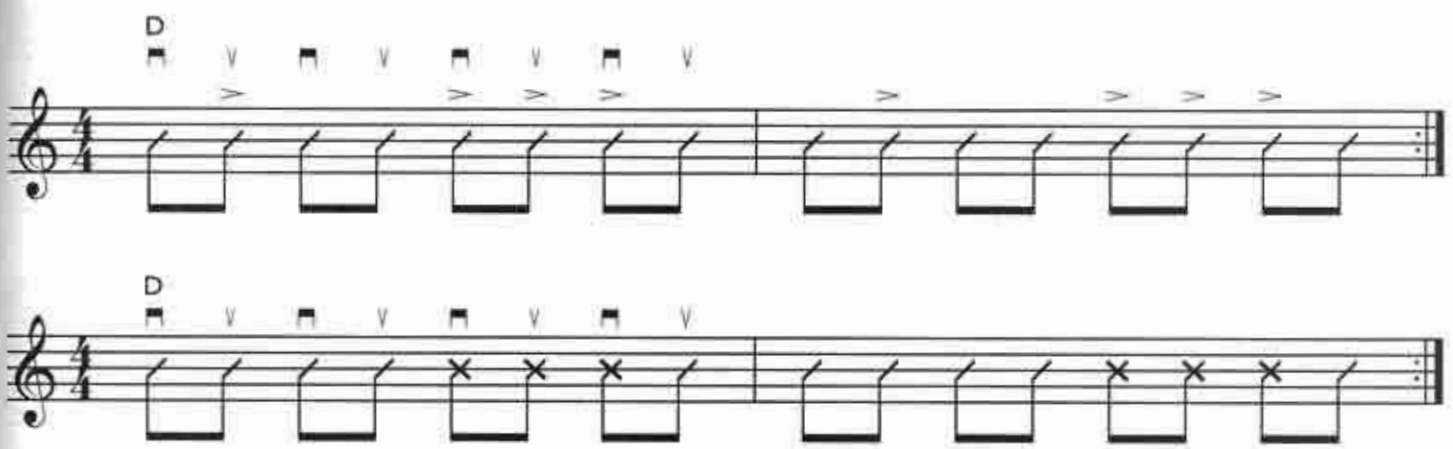
AFOXE—BRAZIL

#1 Track 20



AFRO-CUBAN

#1 Track 21

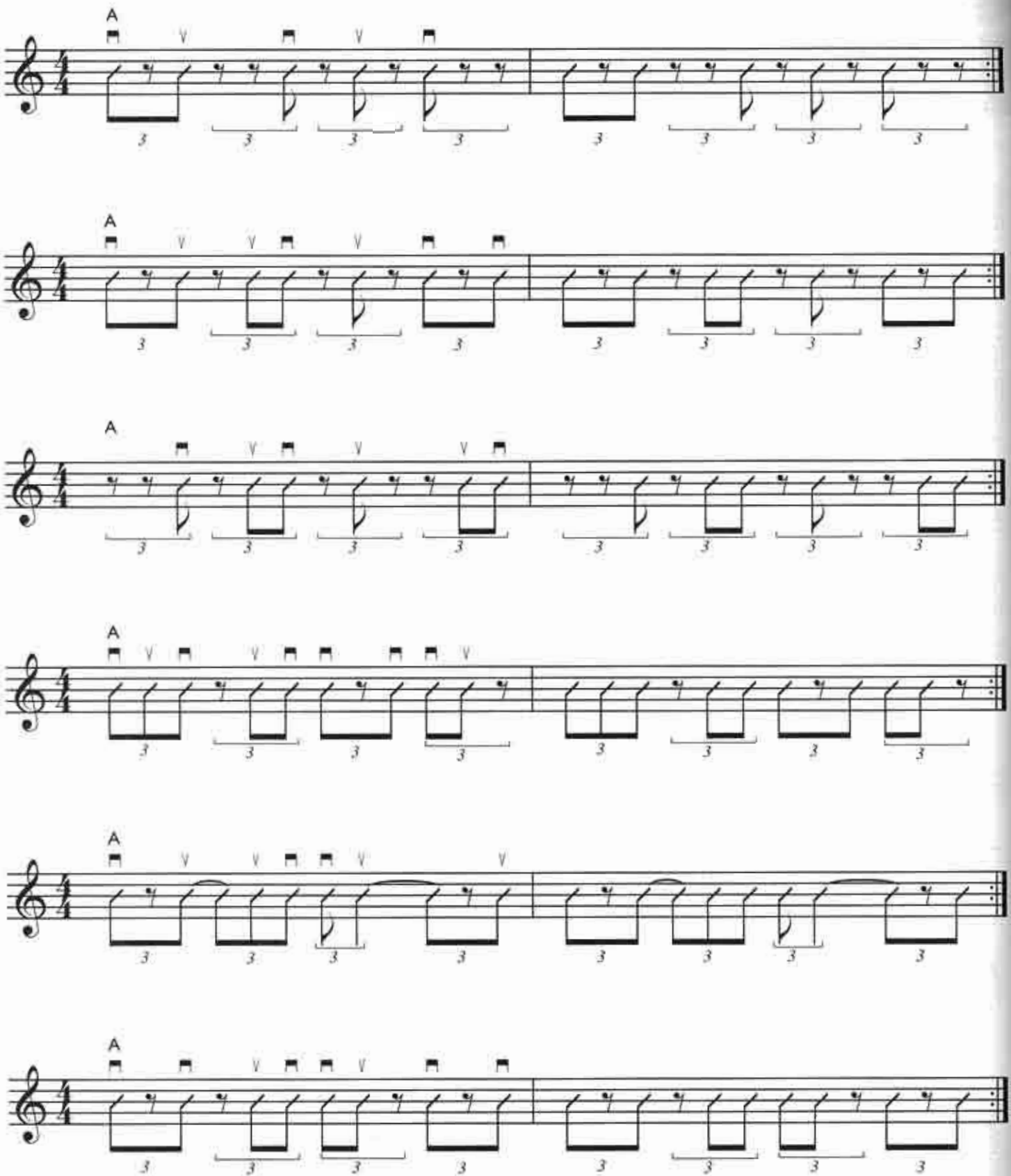


Latin Continued

#1
Track 22

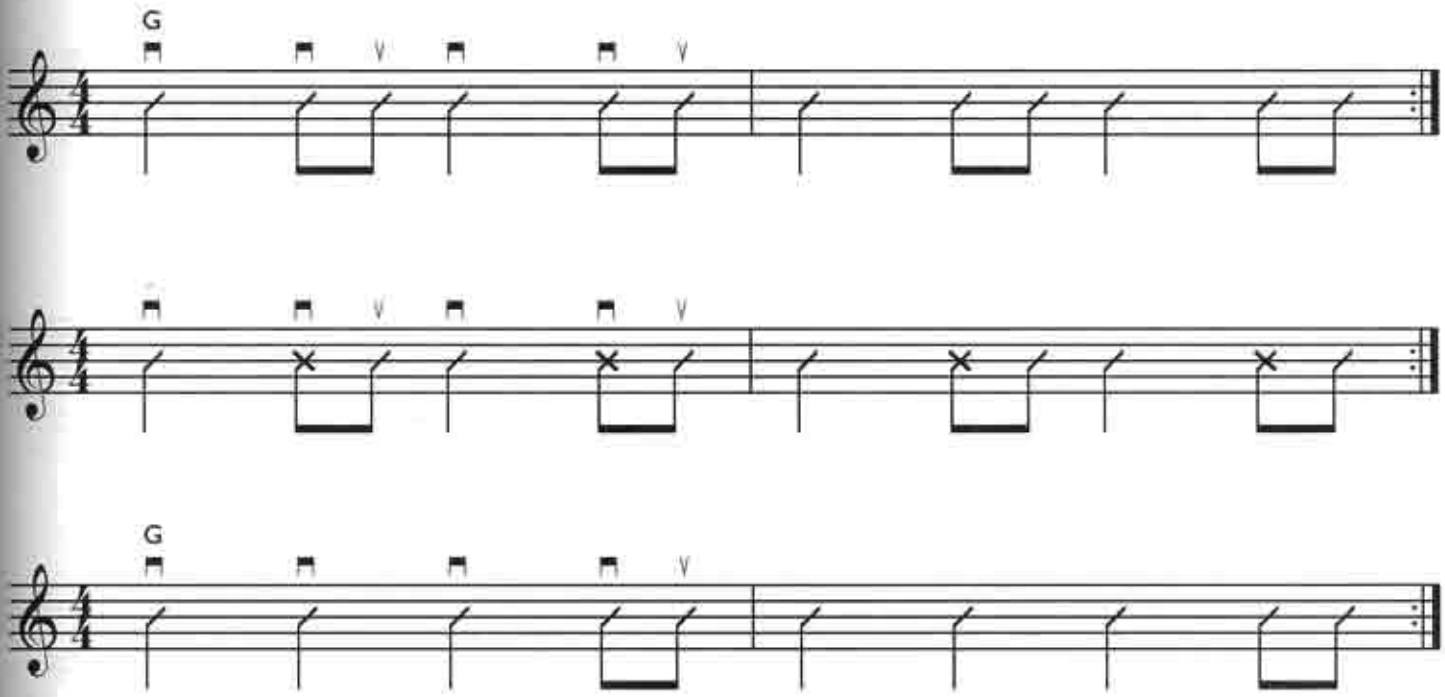
AFRO-CUBAN $\frac{6}{8}$

Afro-Cuban $\frac{6}{8}$ feels are often written in $\frac{4}{4}$. This produces a *6 against 4* feel which is common to this style.



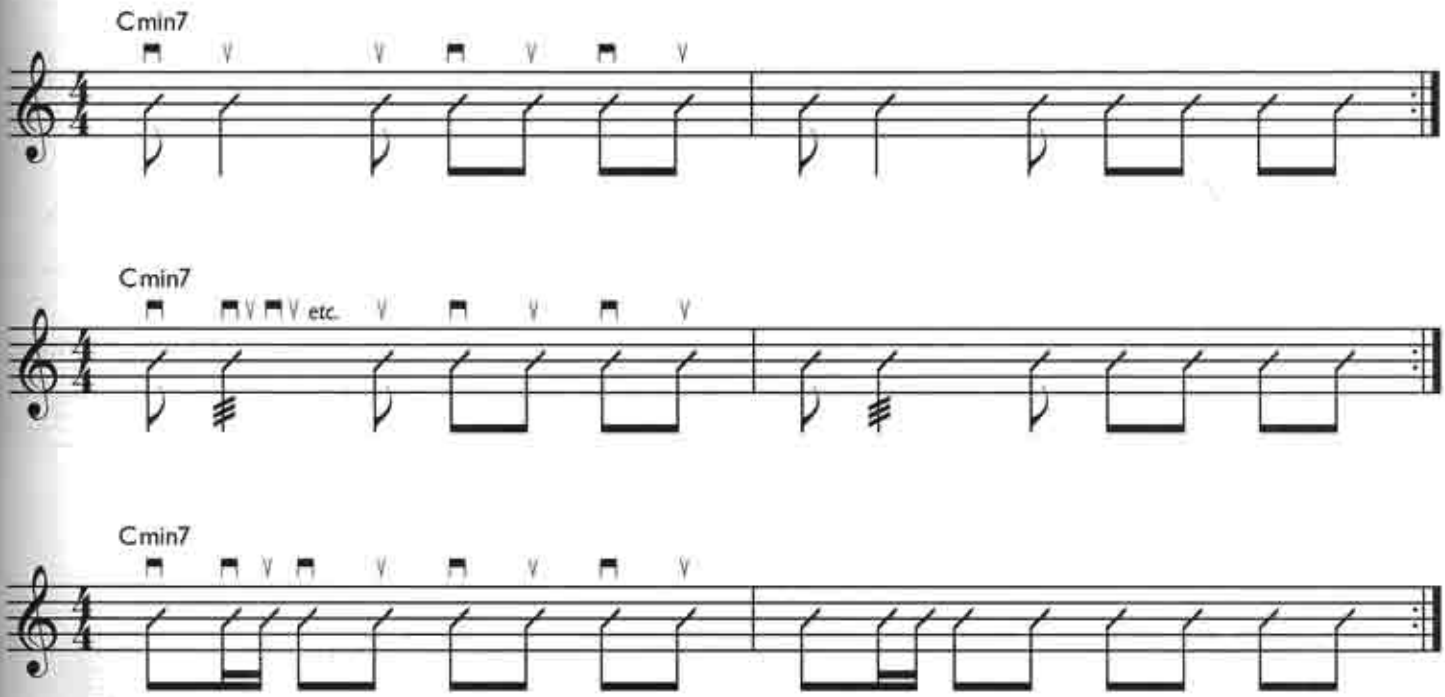
BAION — BRAZIL

#1 Track 23



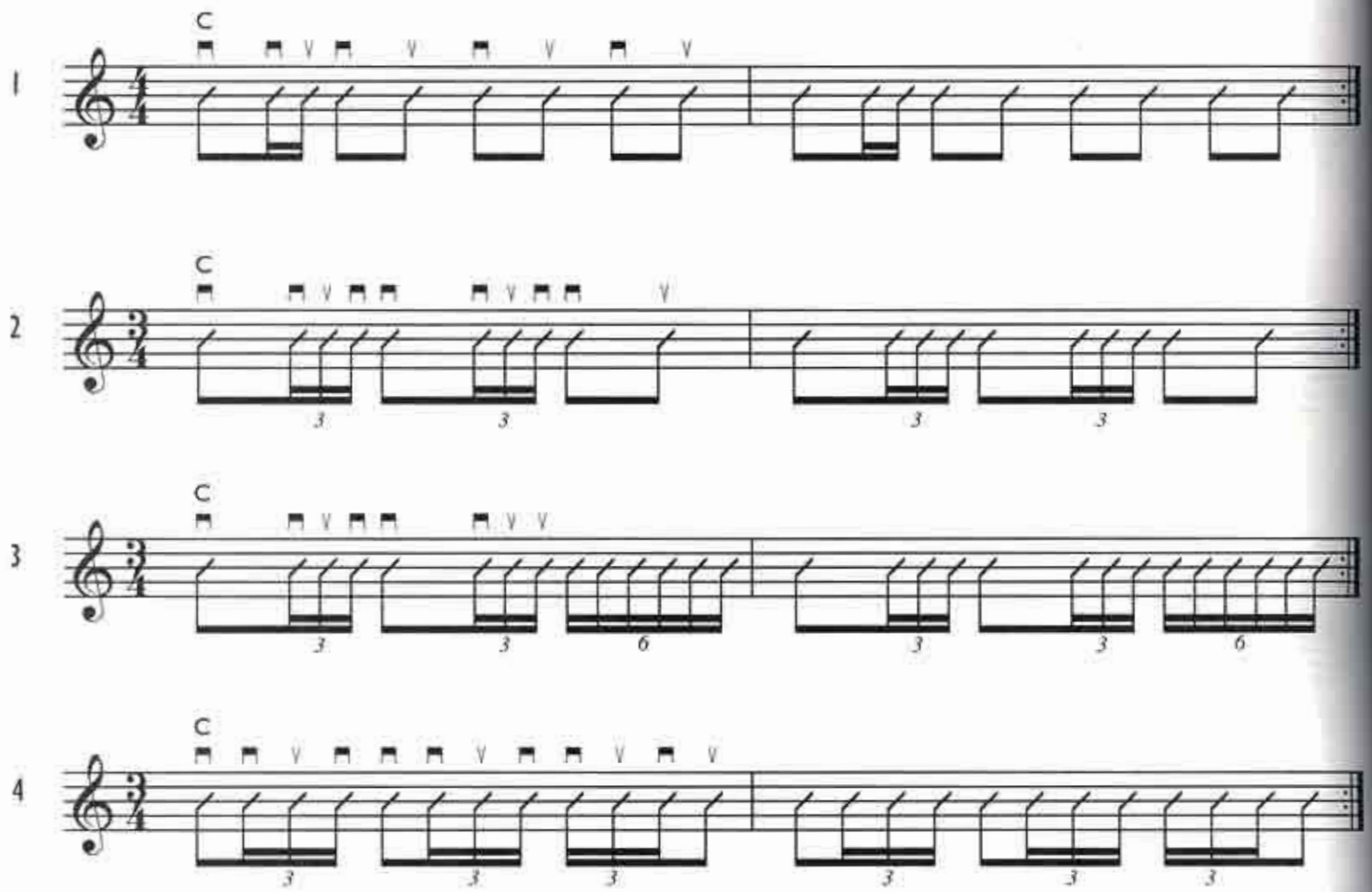
BEGUINE

#1 Track 24



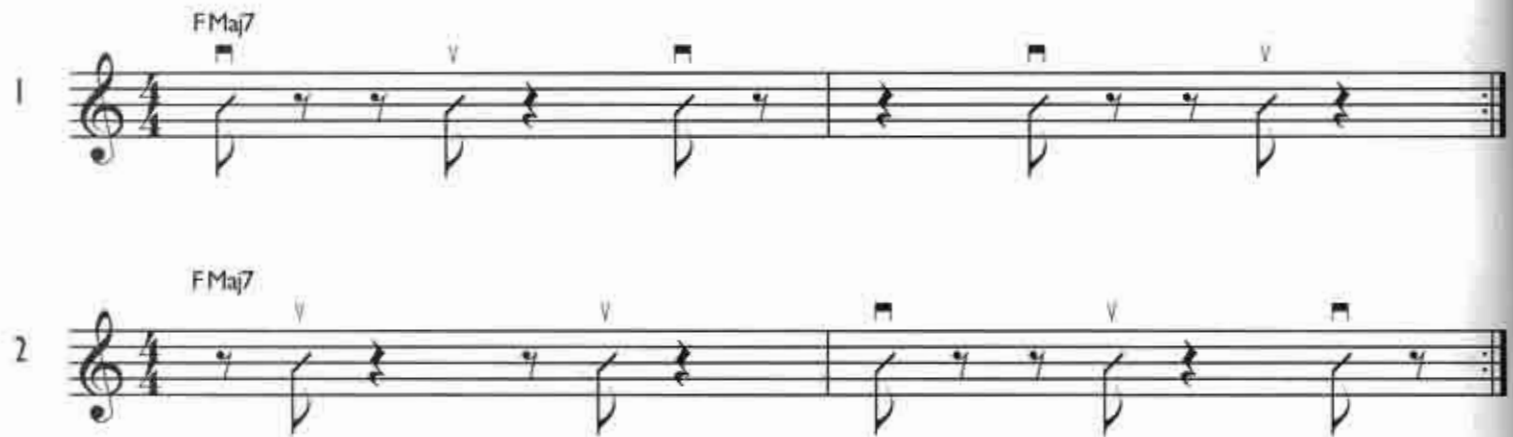
#1
Track 25

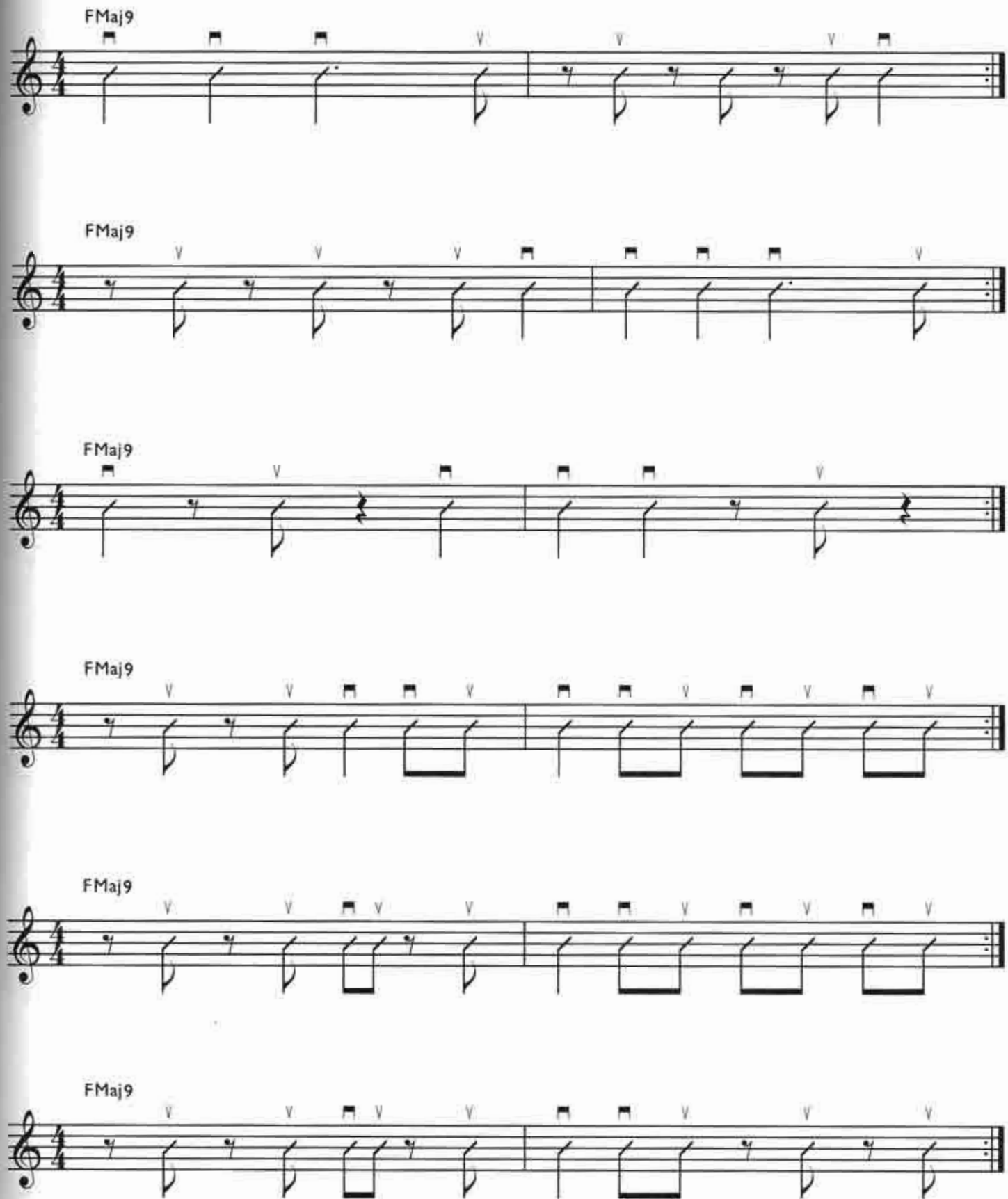
BOLERO



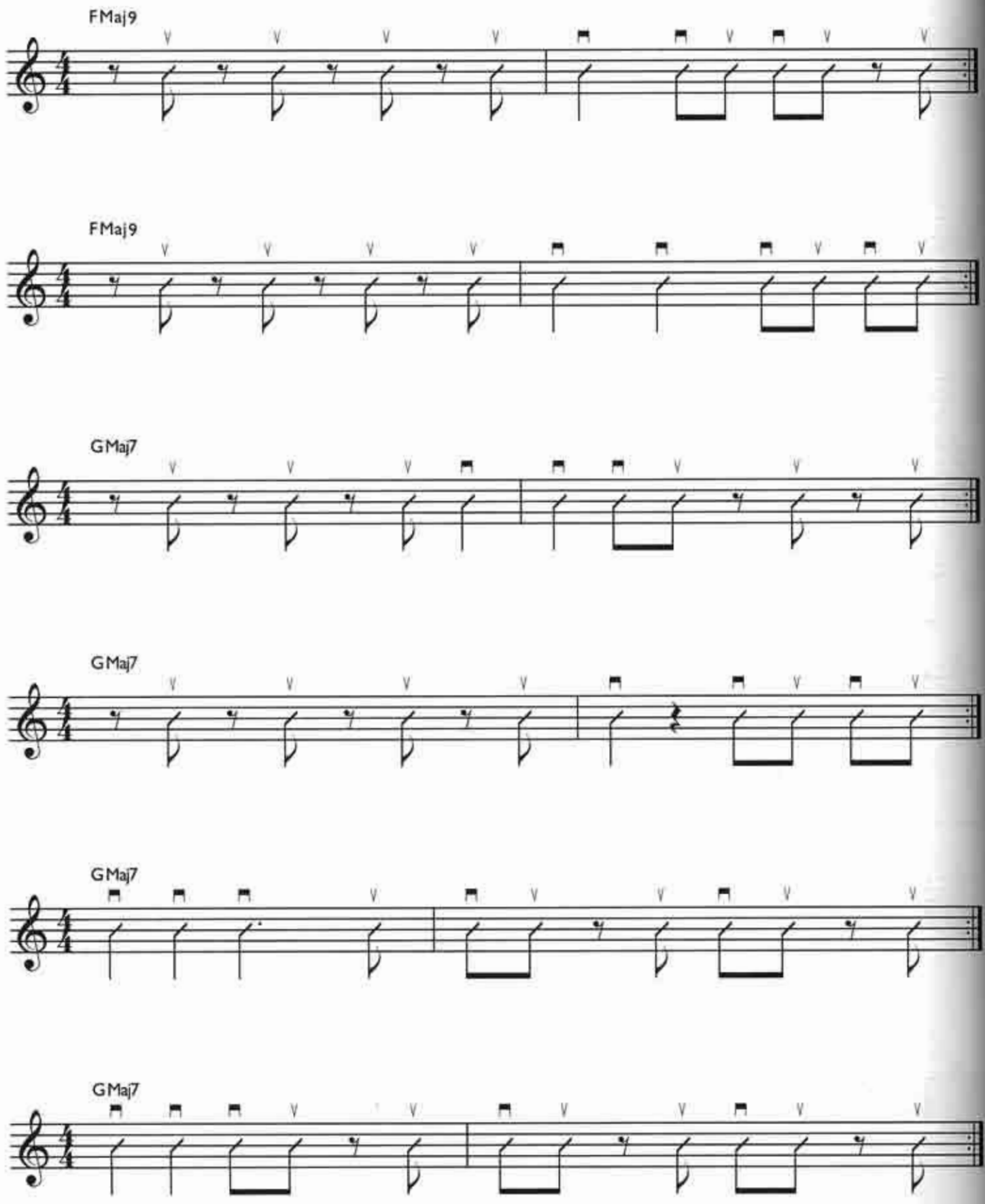
#1
Track 26

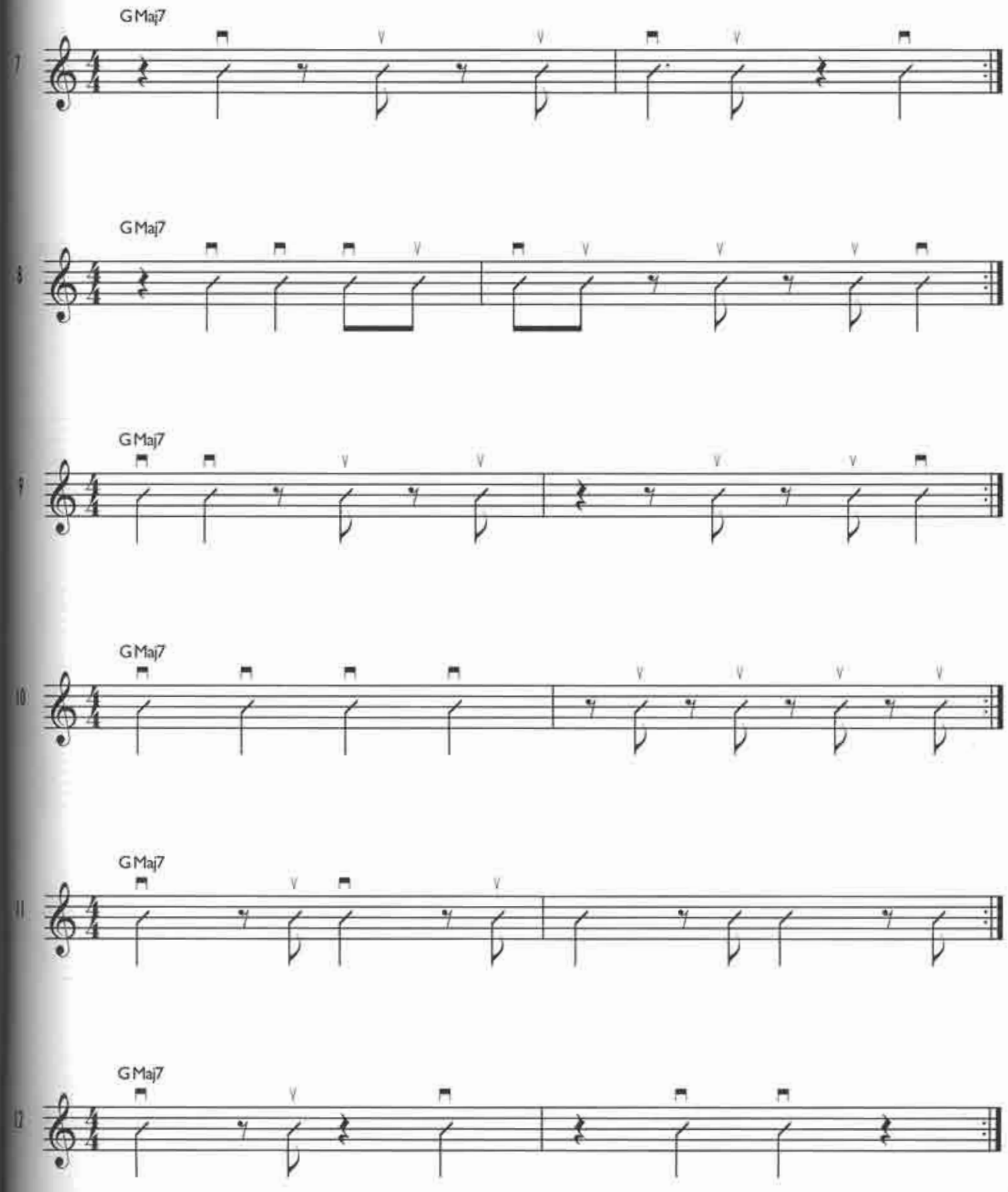
BOSSA NOVA–BRAZIL



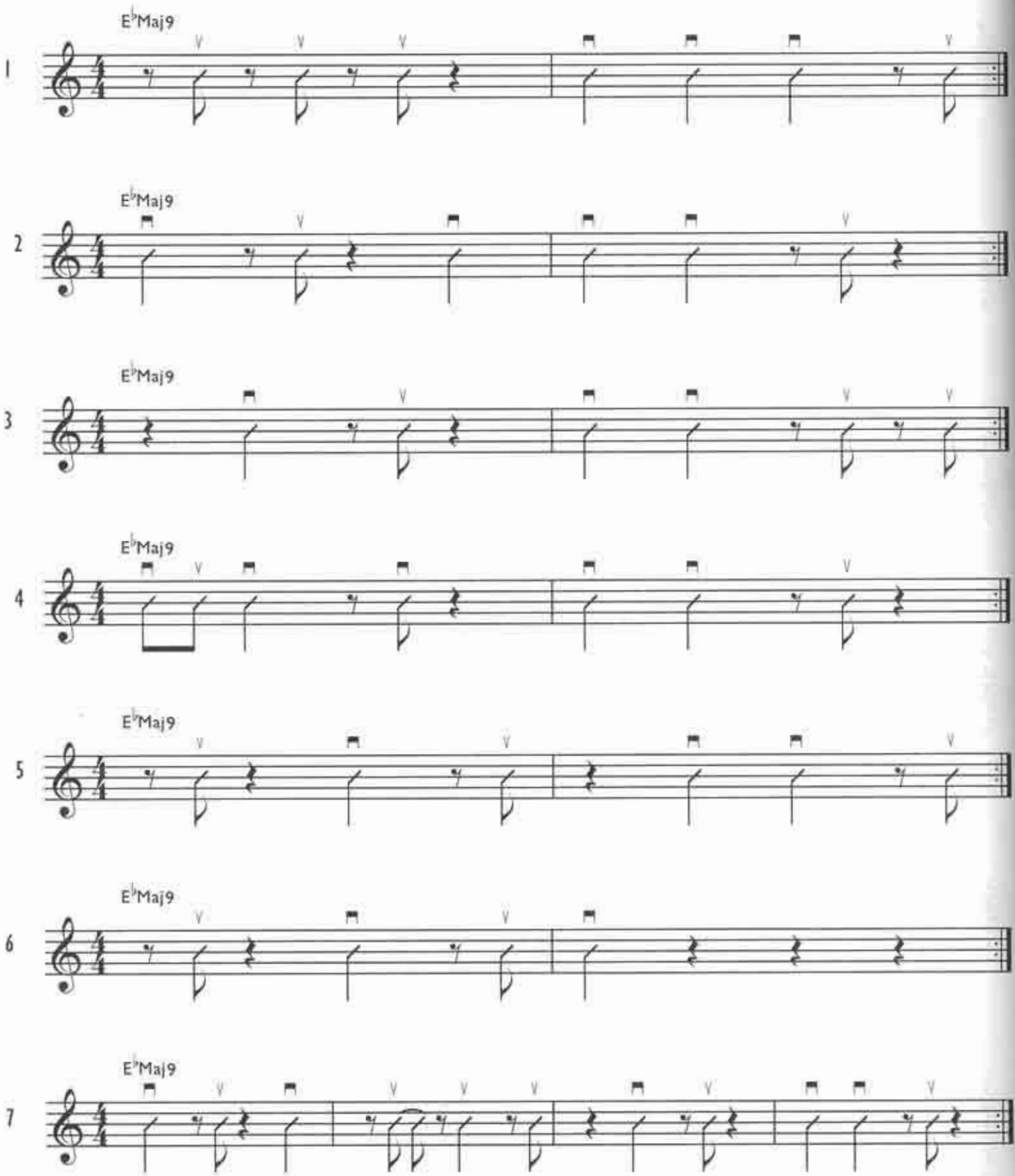

FMaj9
FMaj9
FMaj9
FMaj9
FMaj9
FMaj9

MORE BOSSA NOVA



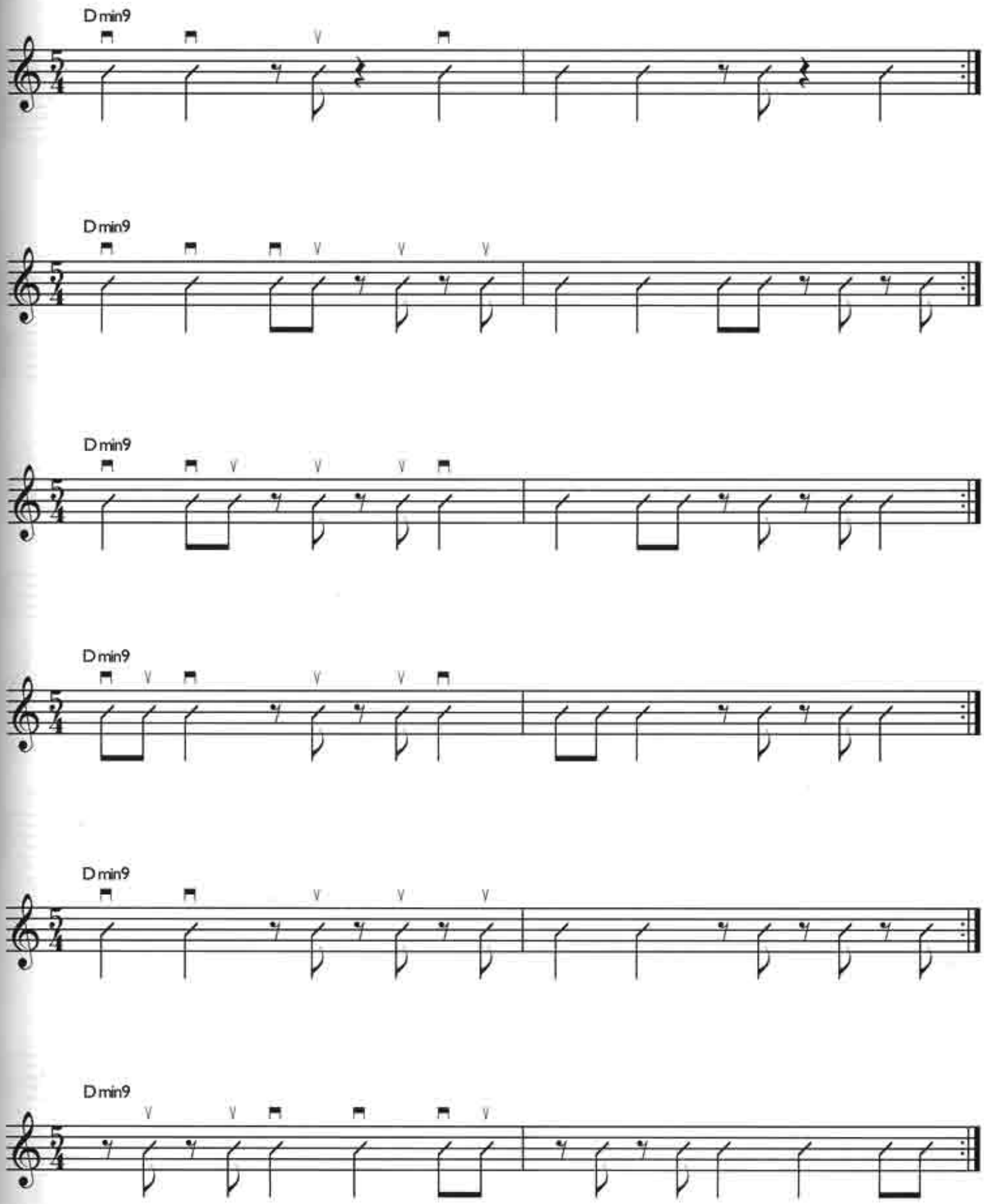

7
GMaj7
8
GMaj7
9
GMaj7
10
GMaj7
11
GMaj7
12
GMaj7

MORE BOSSA NOVA

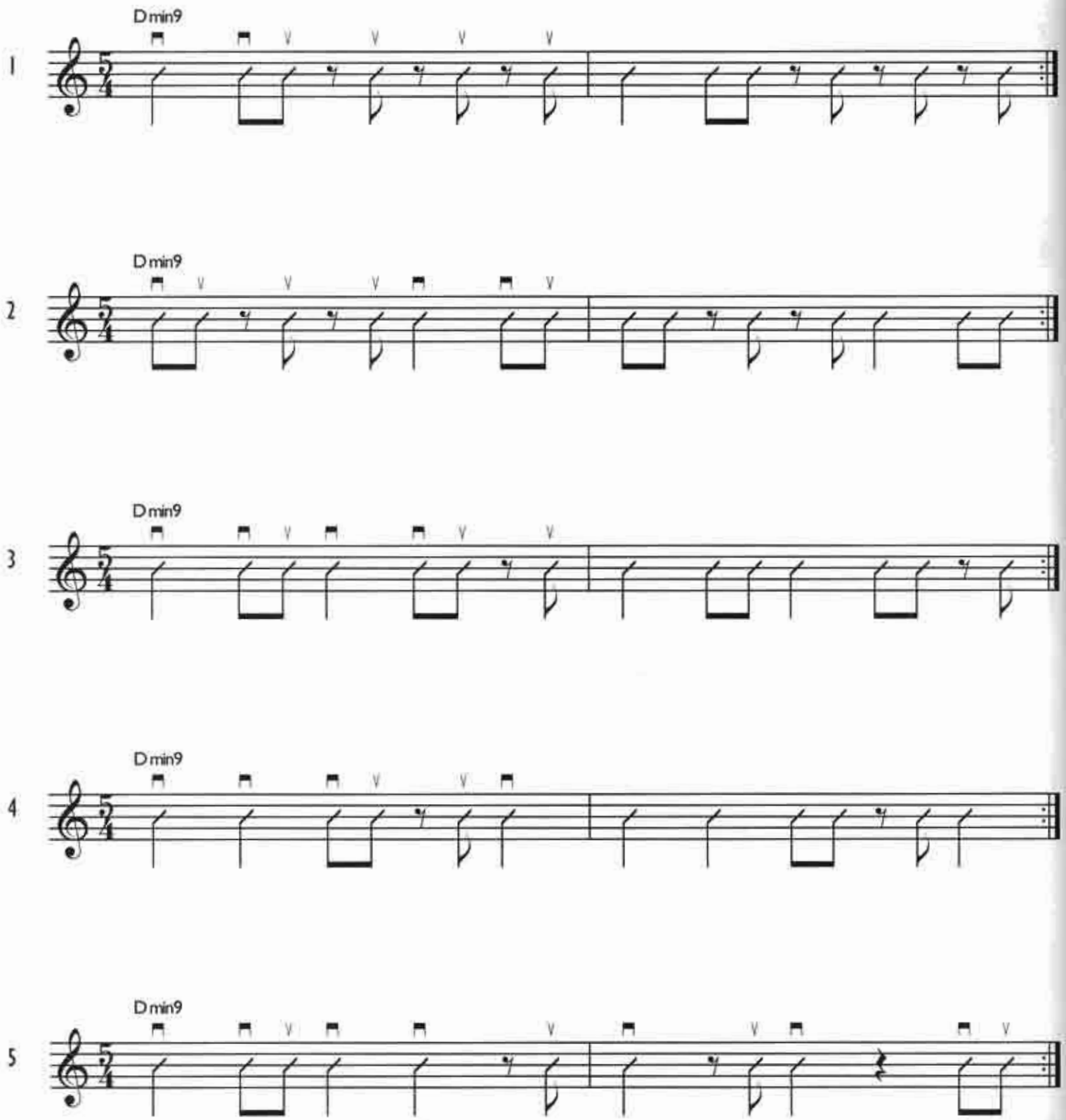


BOSSA NOVA 5/4

#1 Track 27

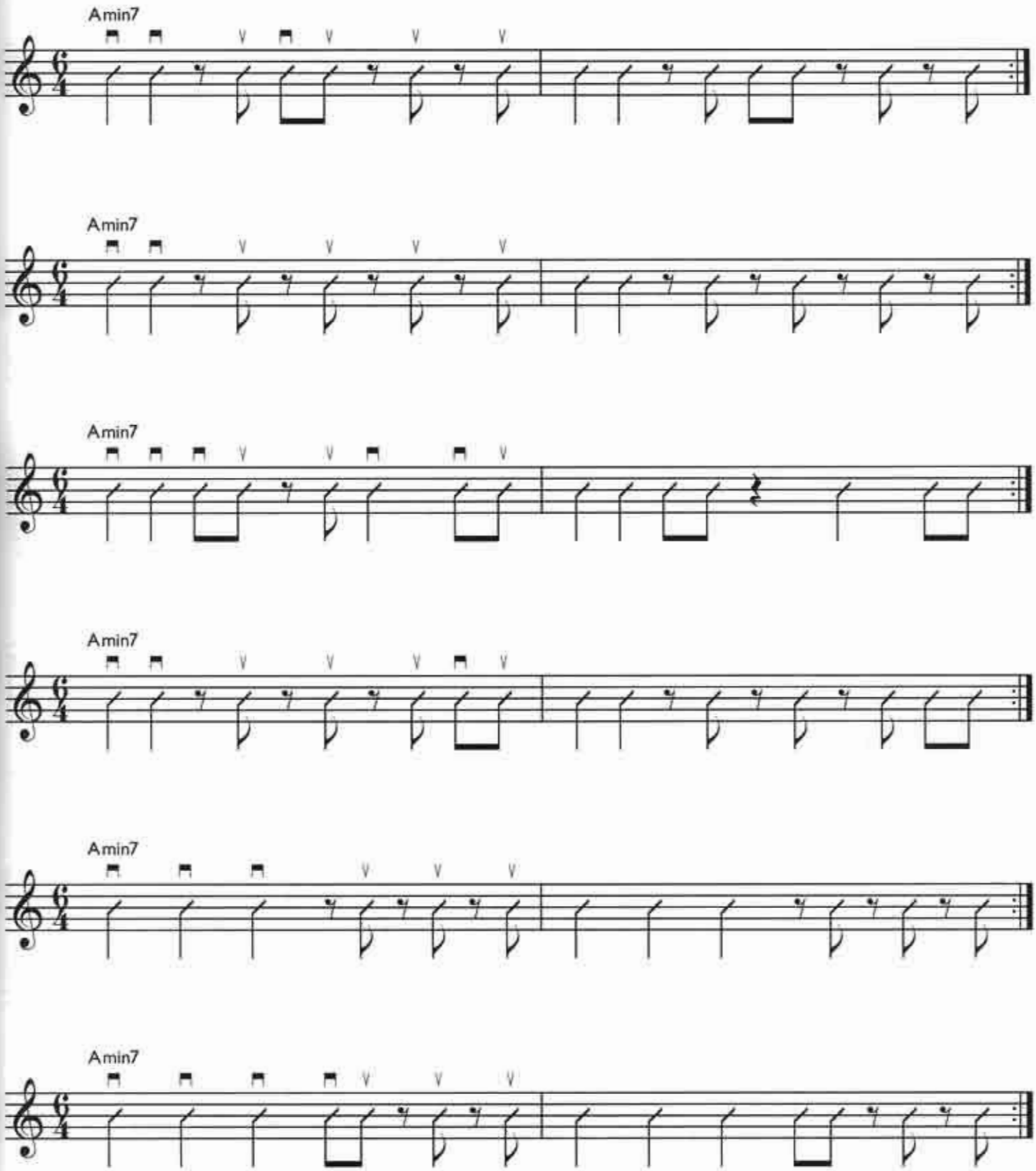


MORE BOSSA NOVA $\frac{5}{4}$



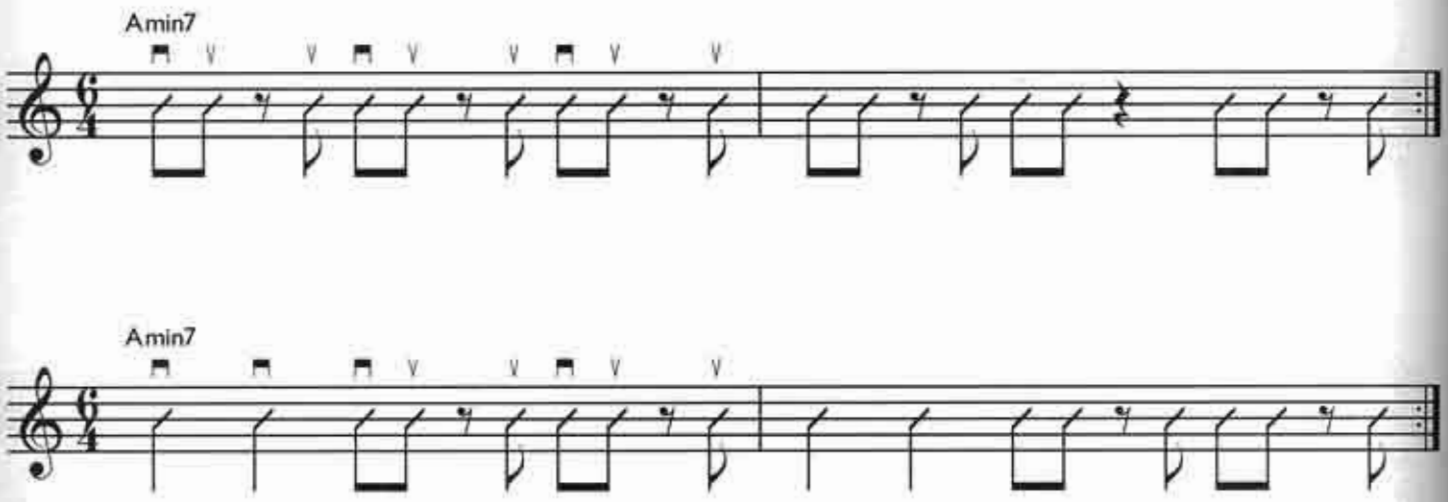
BOSSA NOVA $\frac{6}{4}$

#1 Track 28



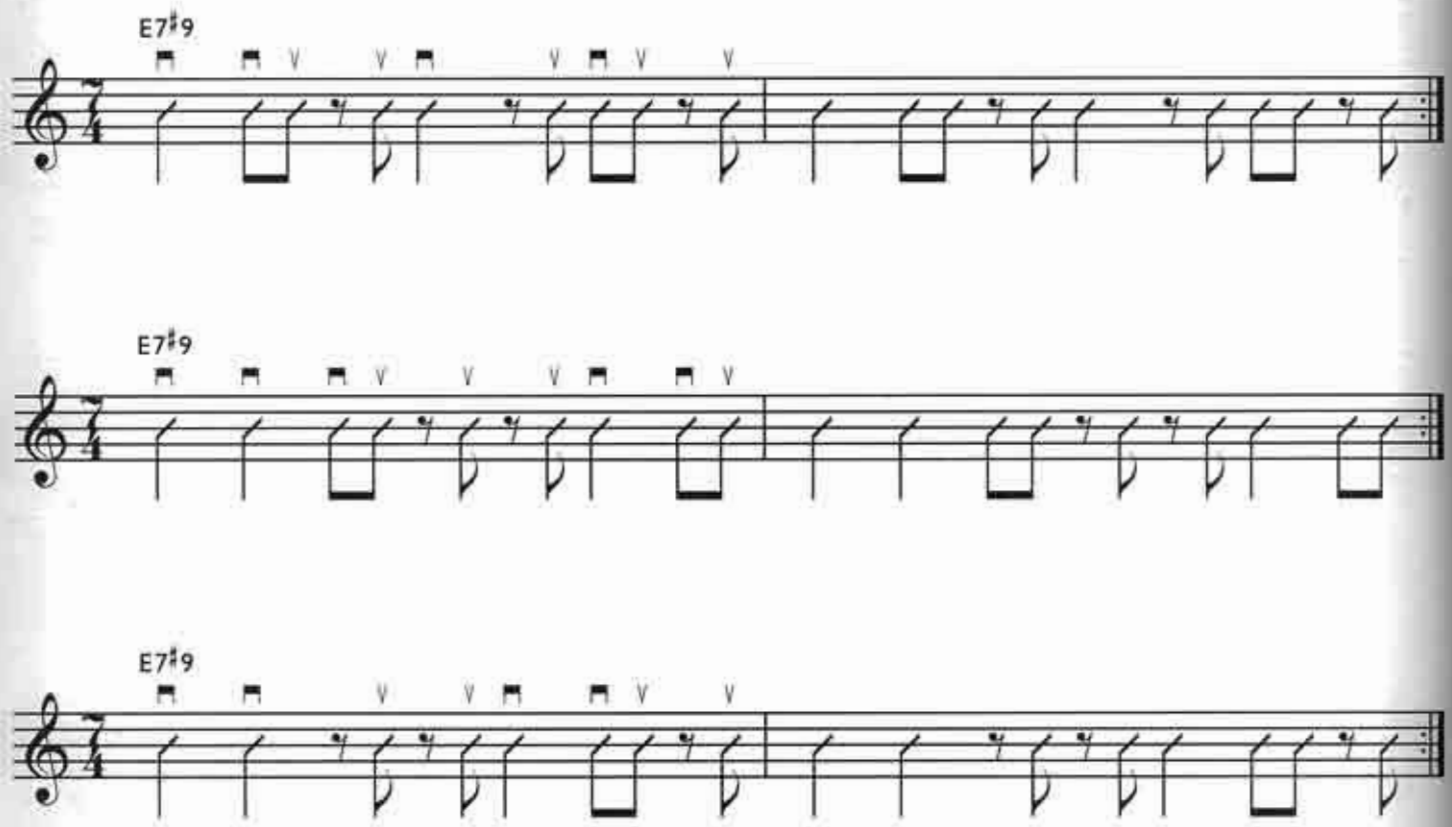
Latin Continued

MORE BOSSA NOVA $\frac{6}{4}$



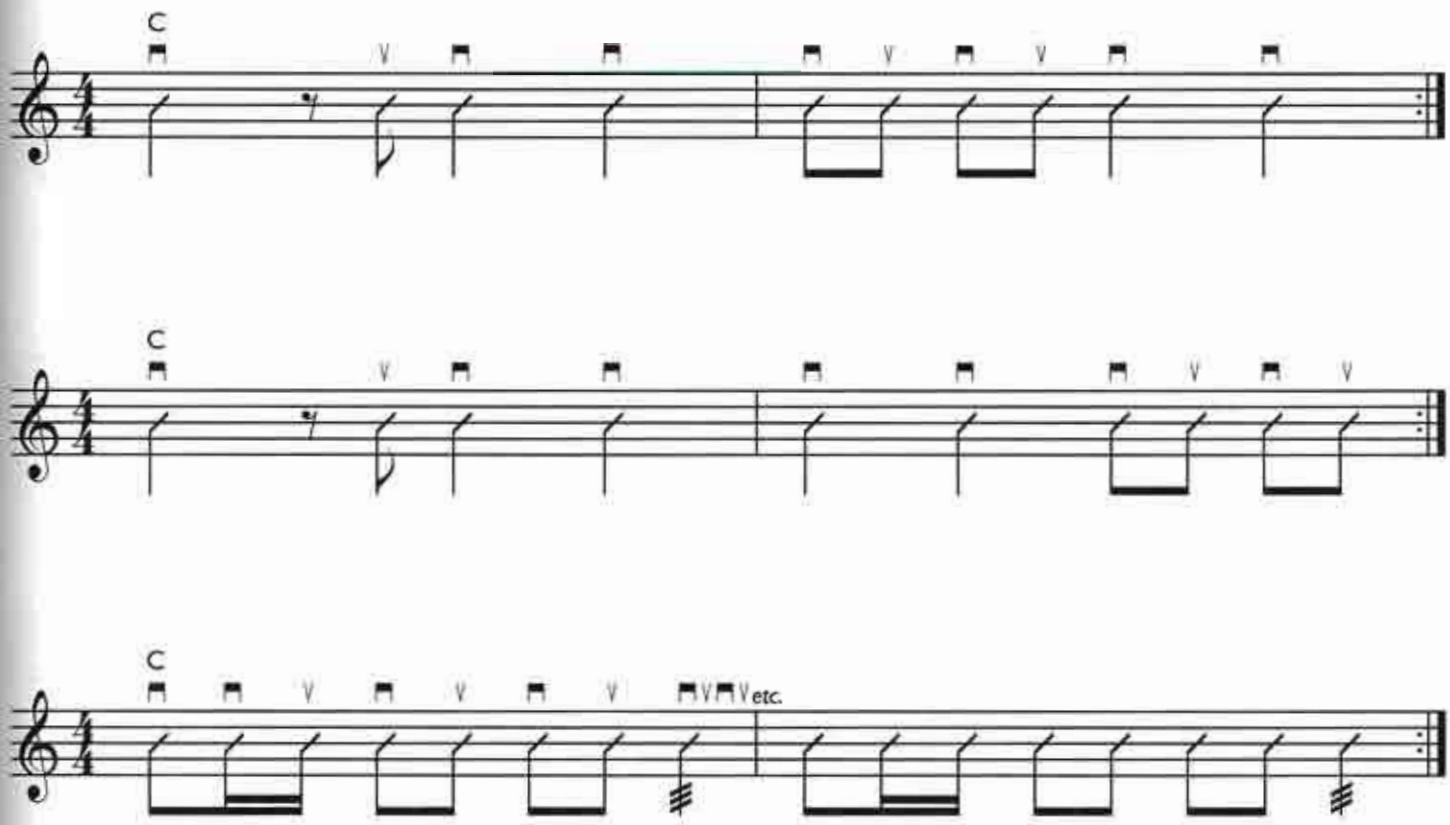
#1
Track 29

BOSSA NOVA $\frac{7}{4}$



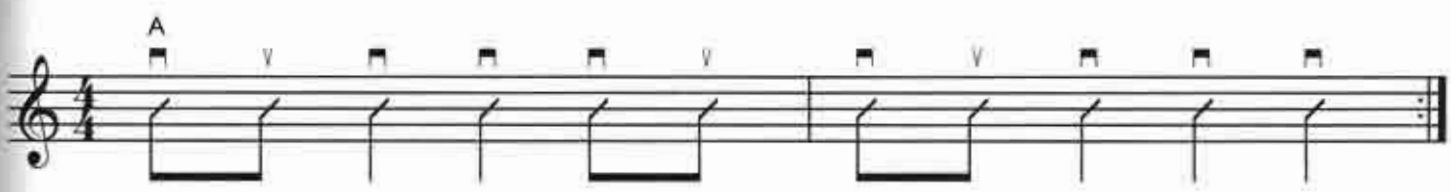
CALYPSO —TRINIDAD

#2 Track 1



CATARET — BRAZIL

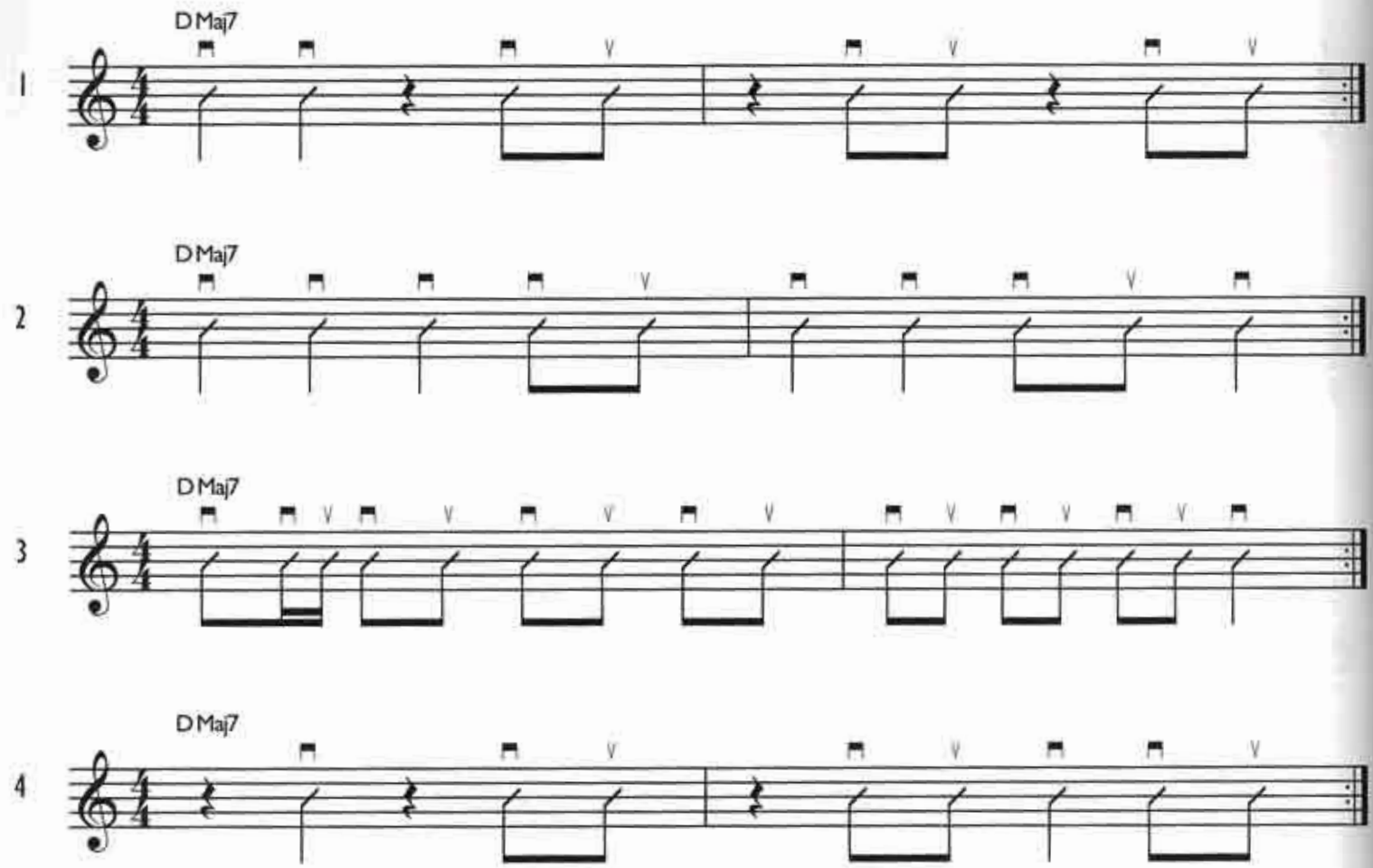
#2 Track 2



Latin Continued

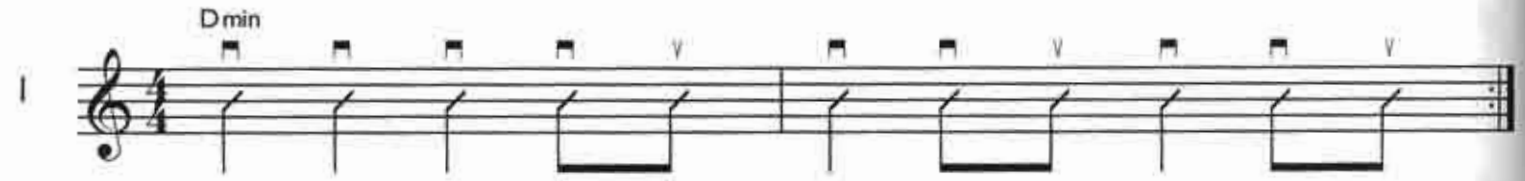
#2 Track 3

CHA CHA — CUBA



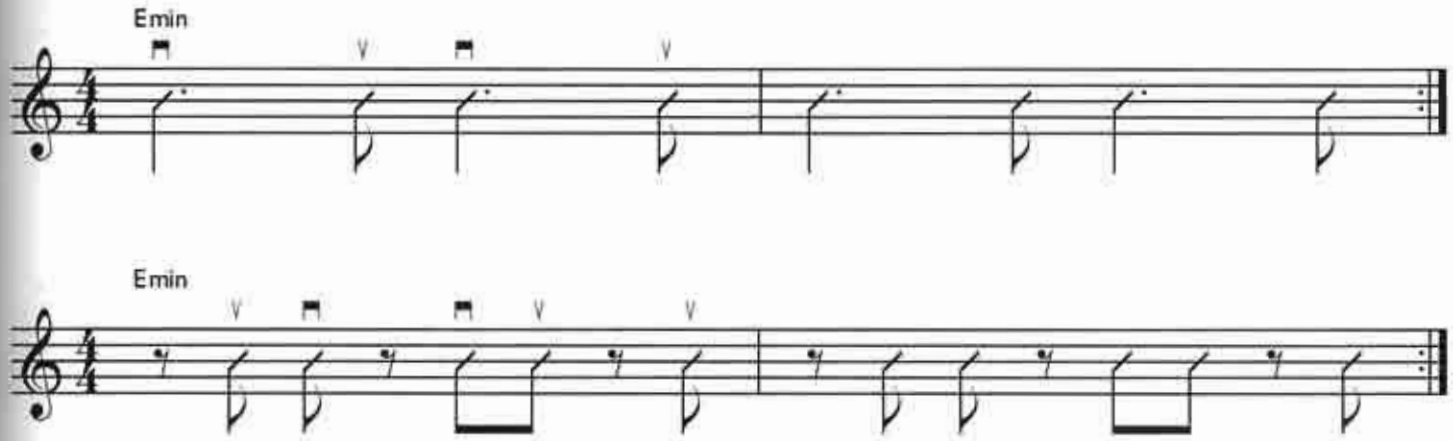
#2 Track 4

CHARANGA (PACHANGA)



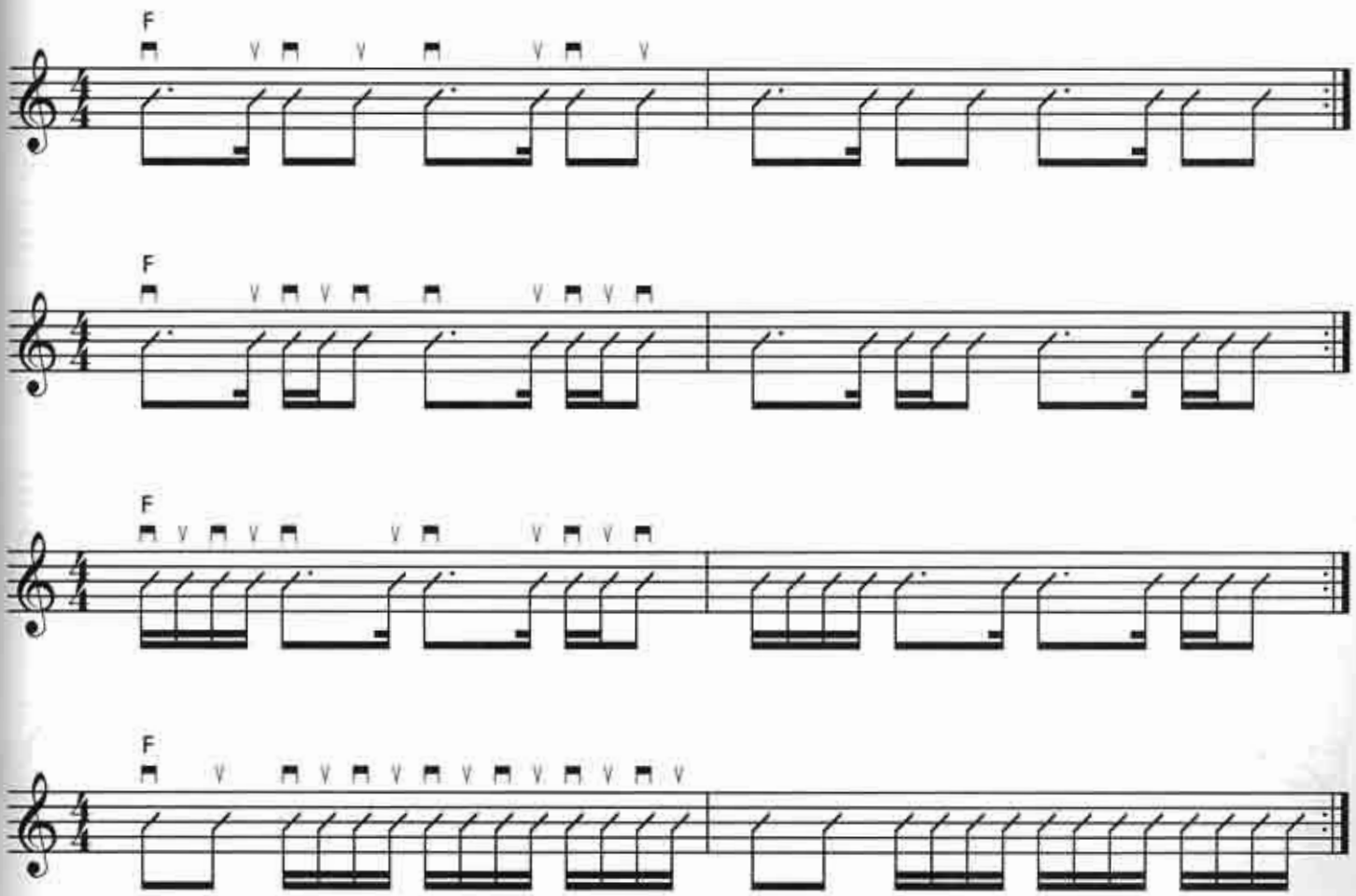
CHORO — RIO

#2 Track 5



COMPARSA — CUBA

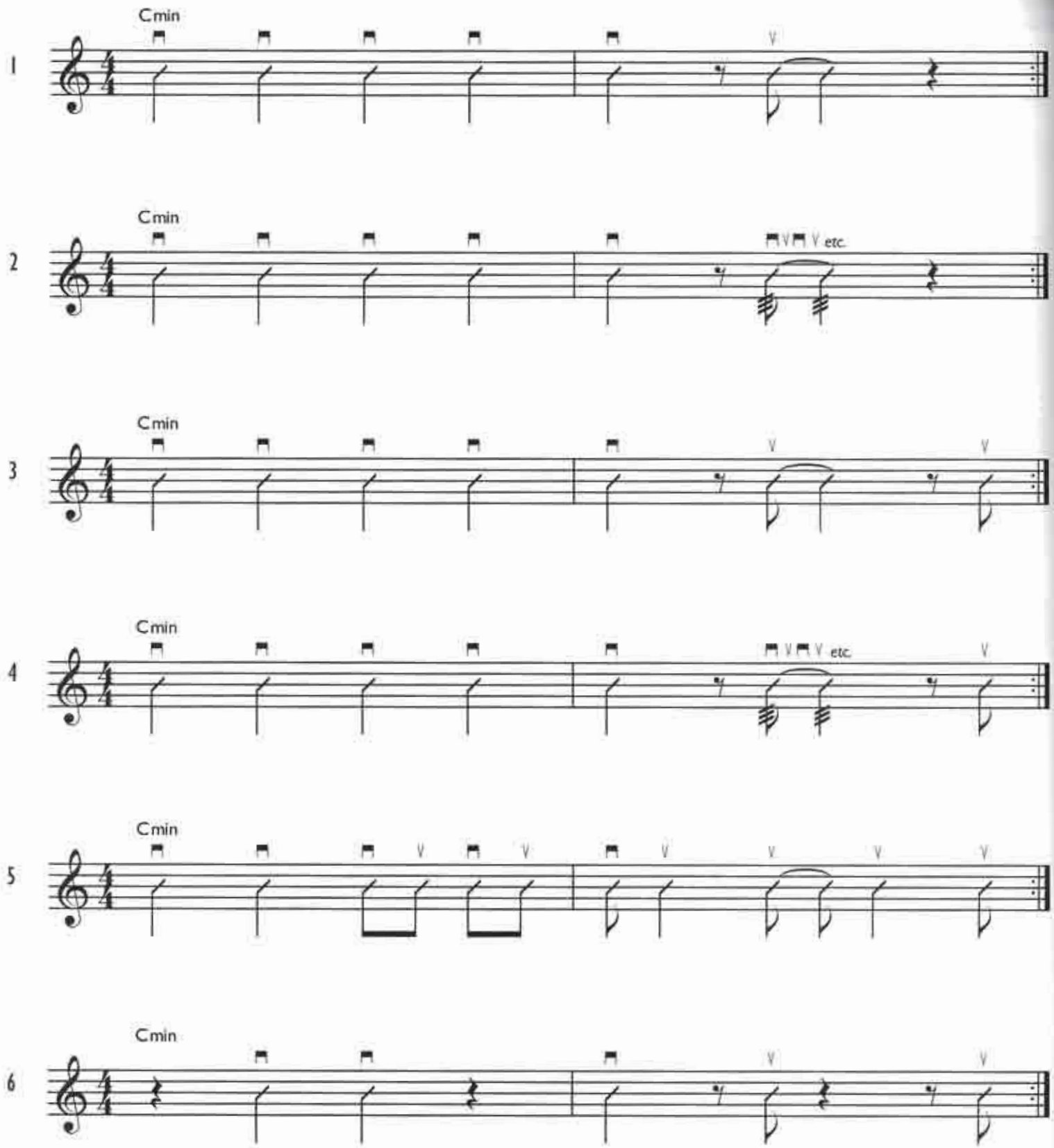
#2 Track 6

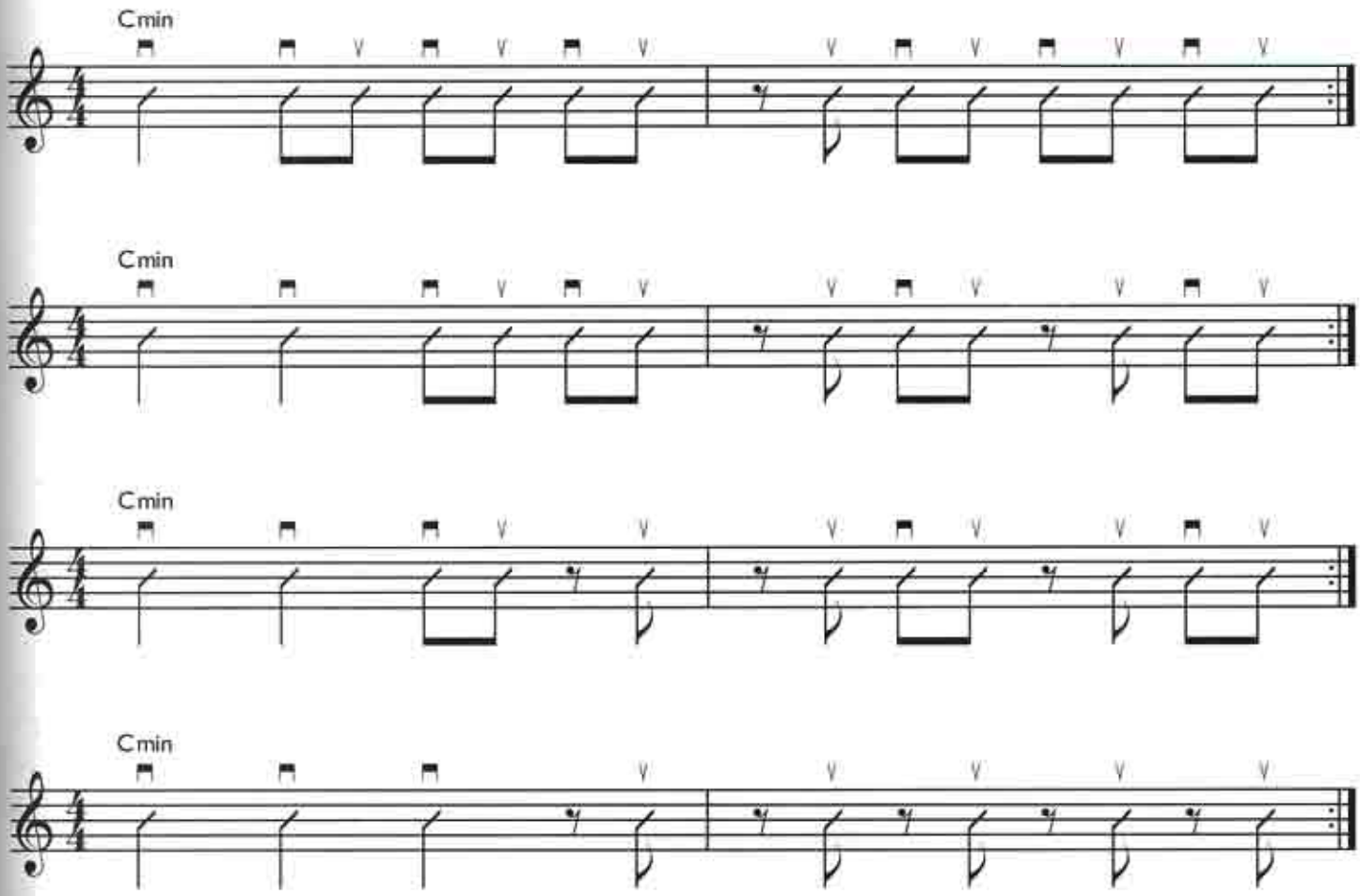


Latin Continued

#2
Track 7

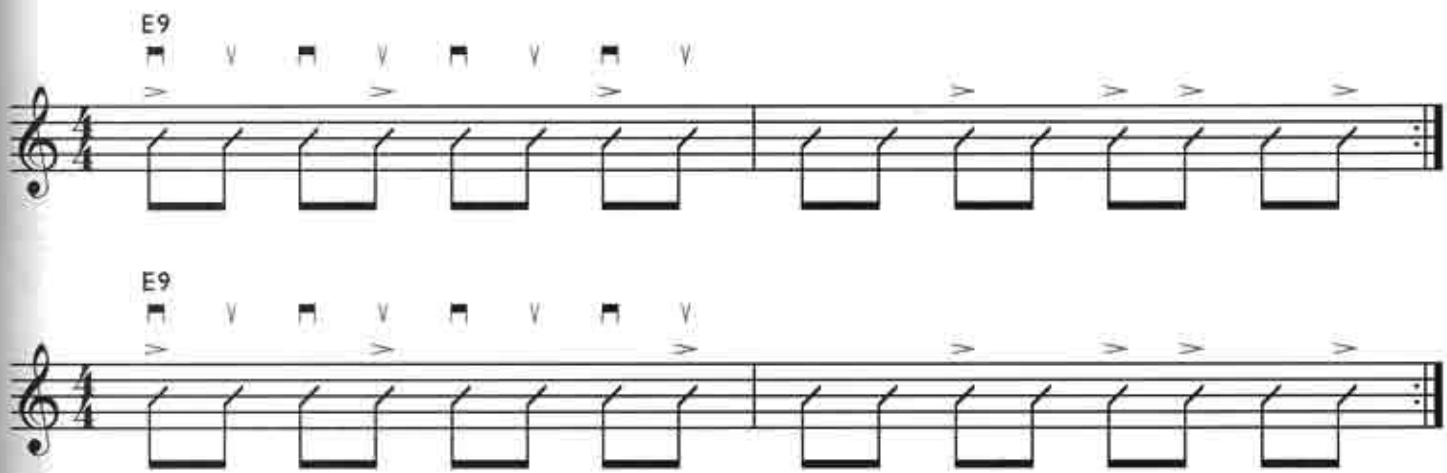
CONGA — CUBA





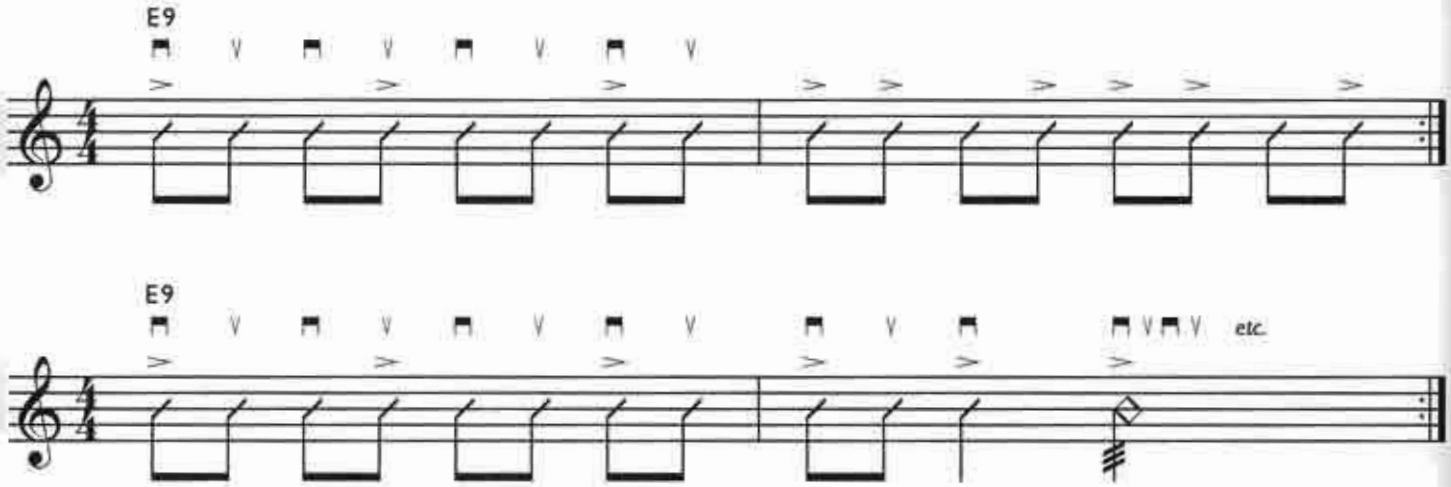
FREVO — BRAZIL

#2
Track 8



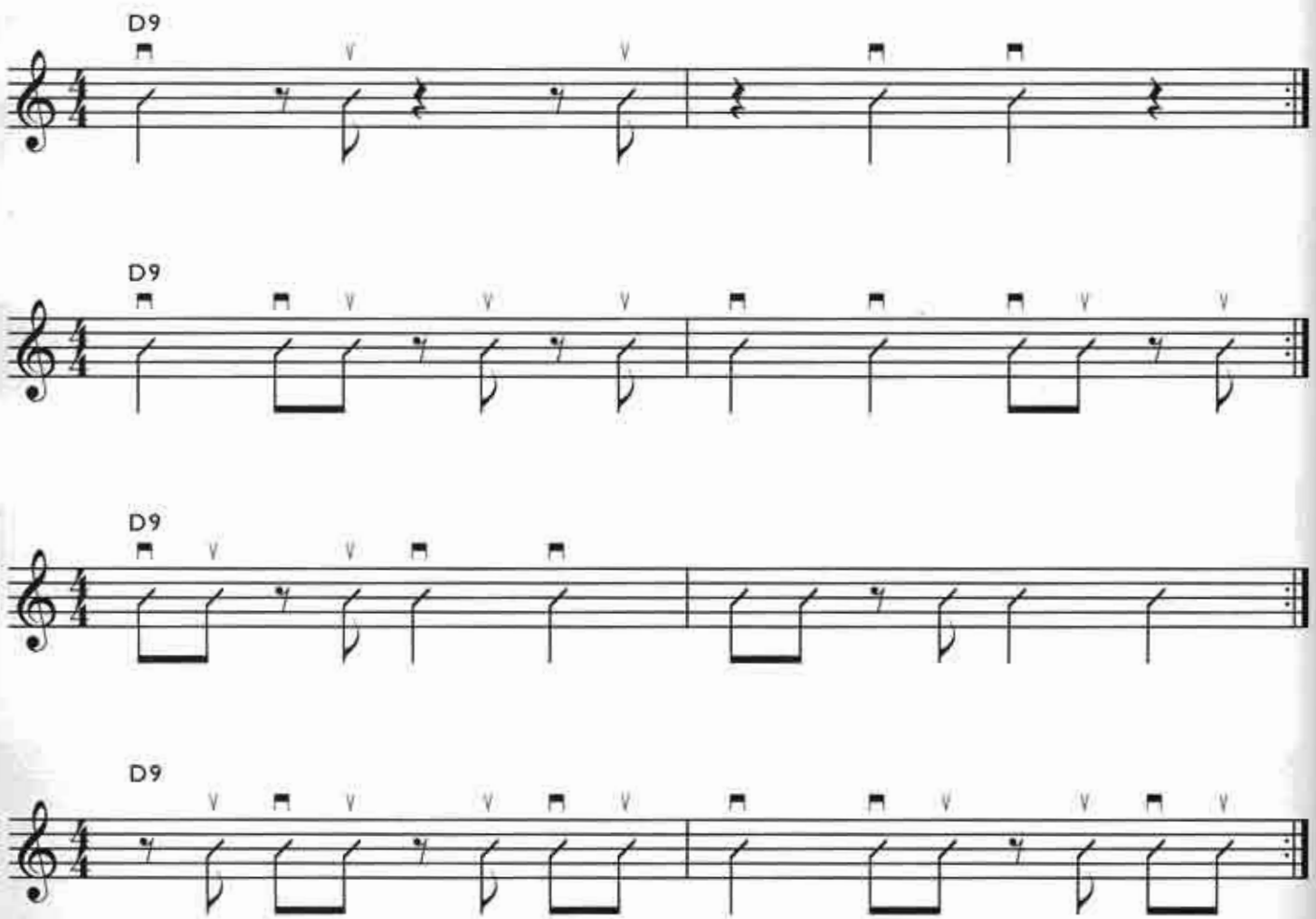
Latin Continued

MORE FREVO



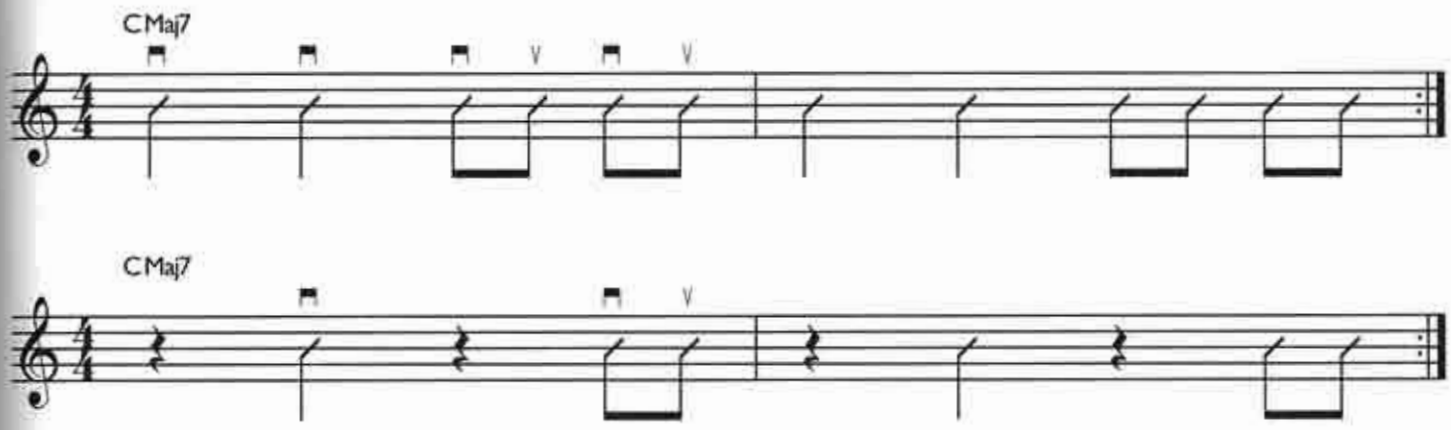
#2
Track 9

GUAGUANCO — CUBA



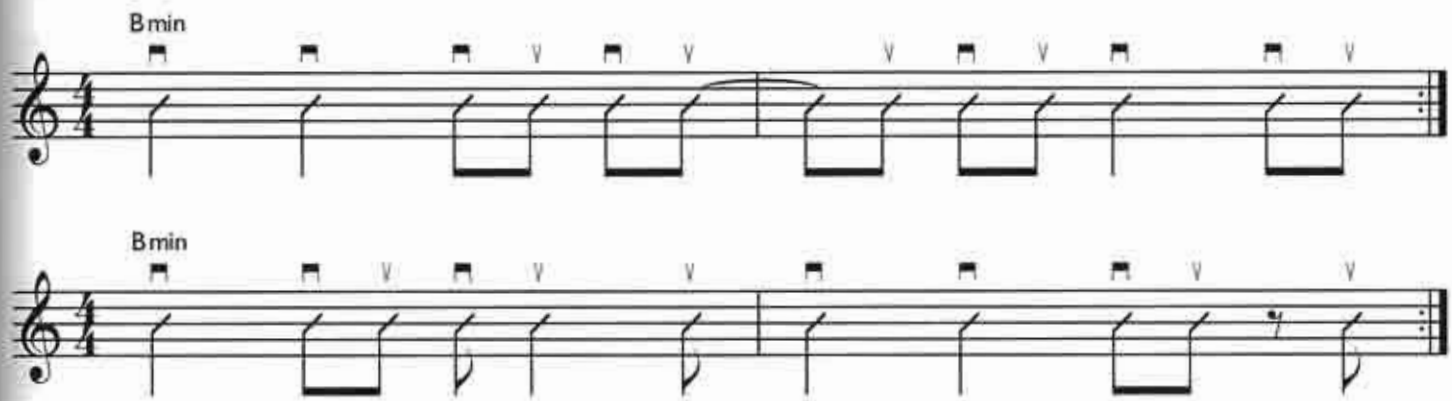
GUAJIRA — CUBA

#2 Track 10



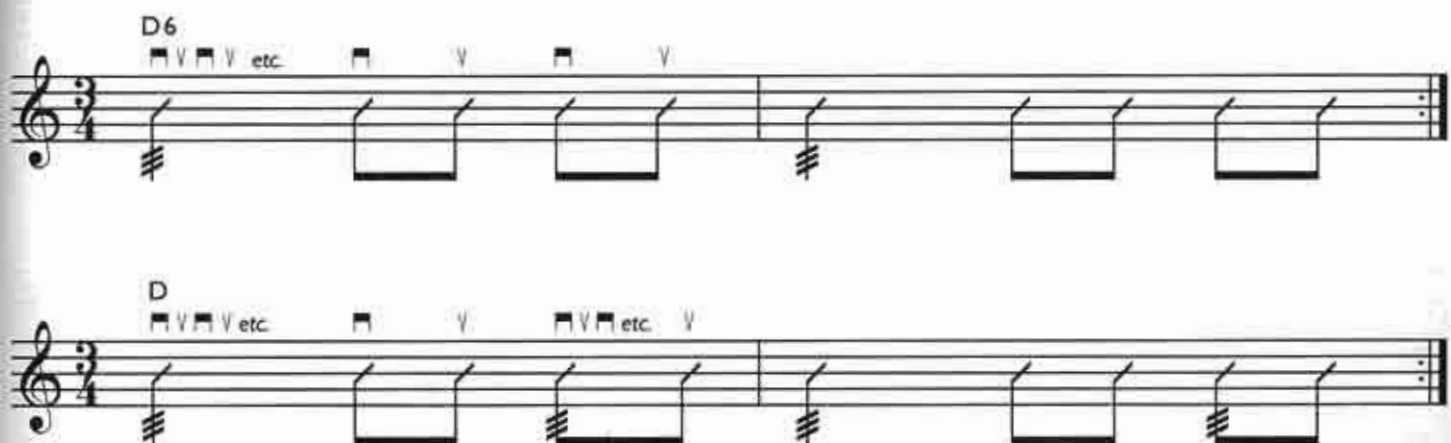
GUARACHA

#2 Track 11



JAROPA

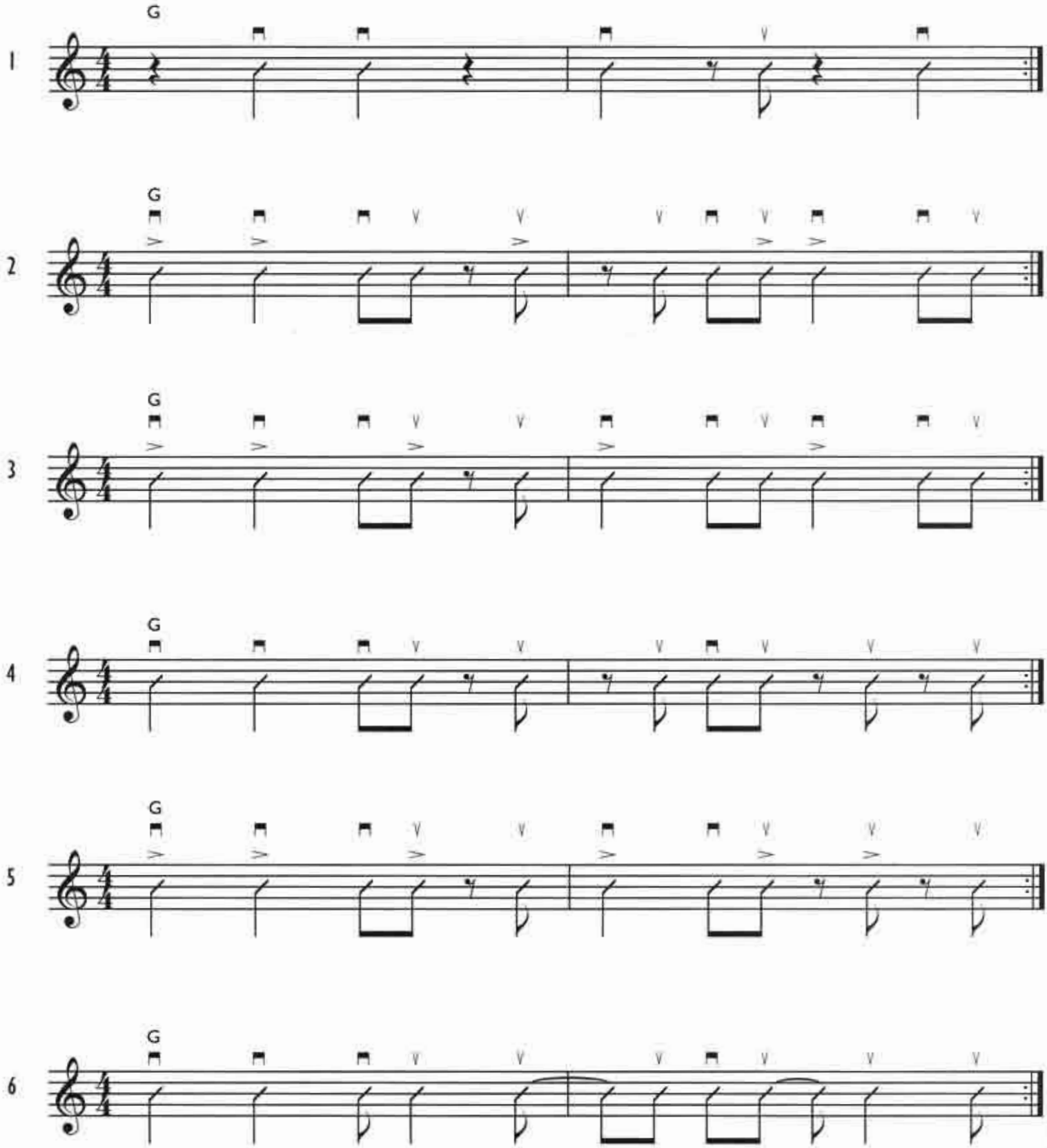
#2 Track 12

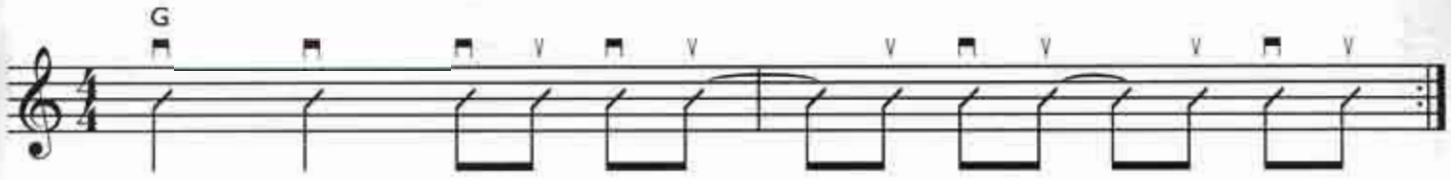


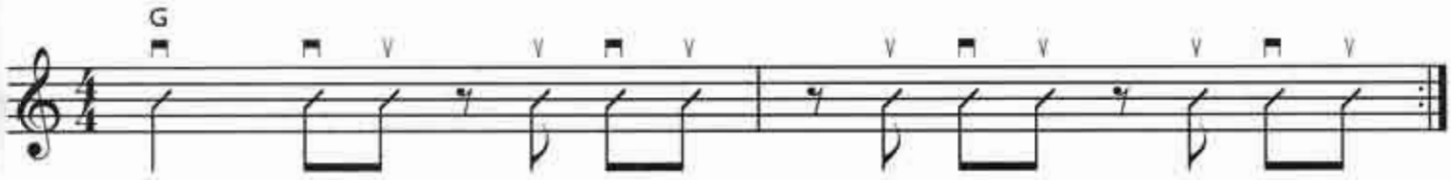
Latin Continued

#2
Track 13

MAMBO — CUBA

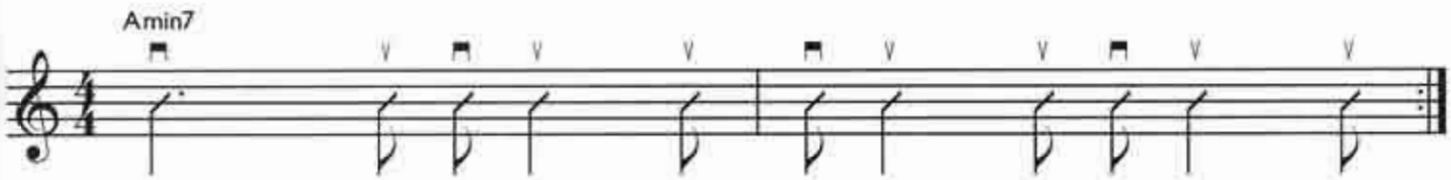


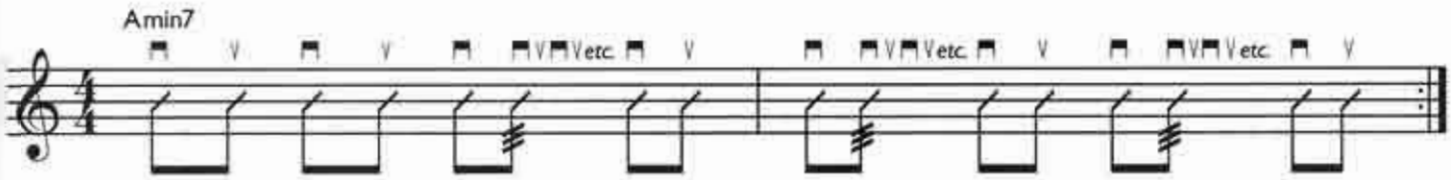


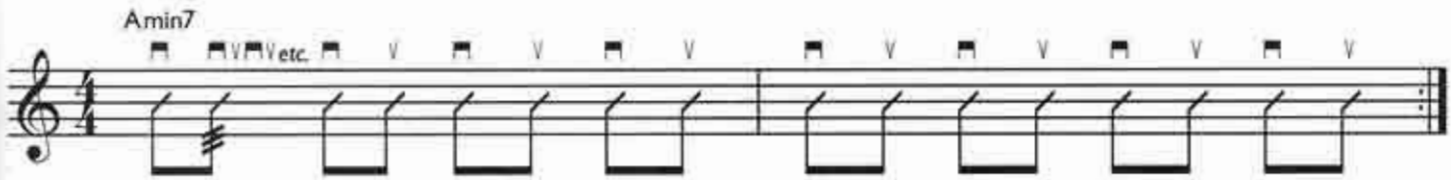


MARACATU — BRAZIL

#2 Track 14





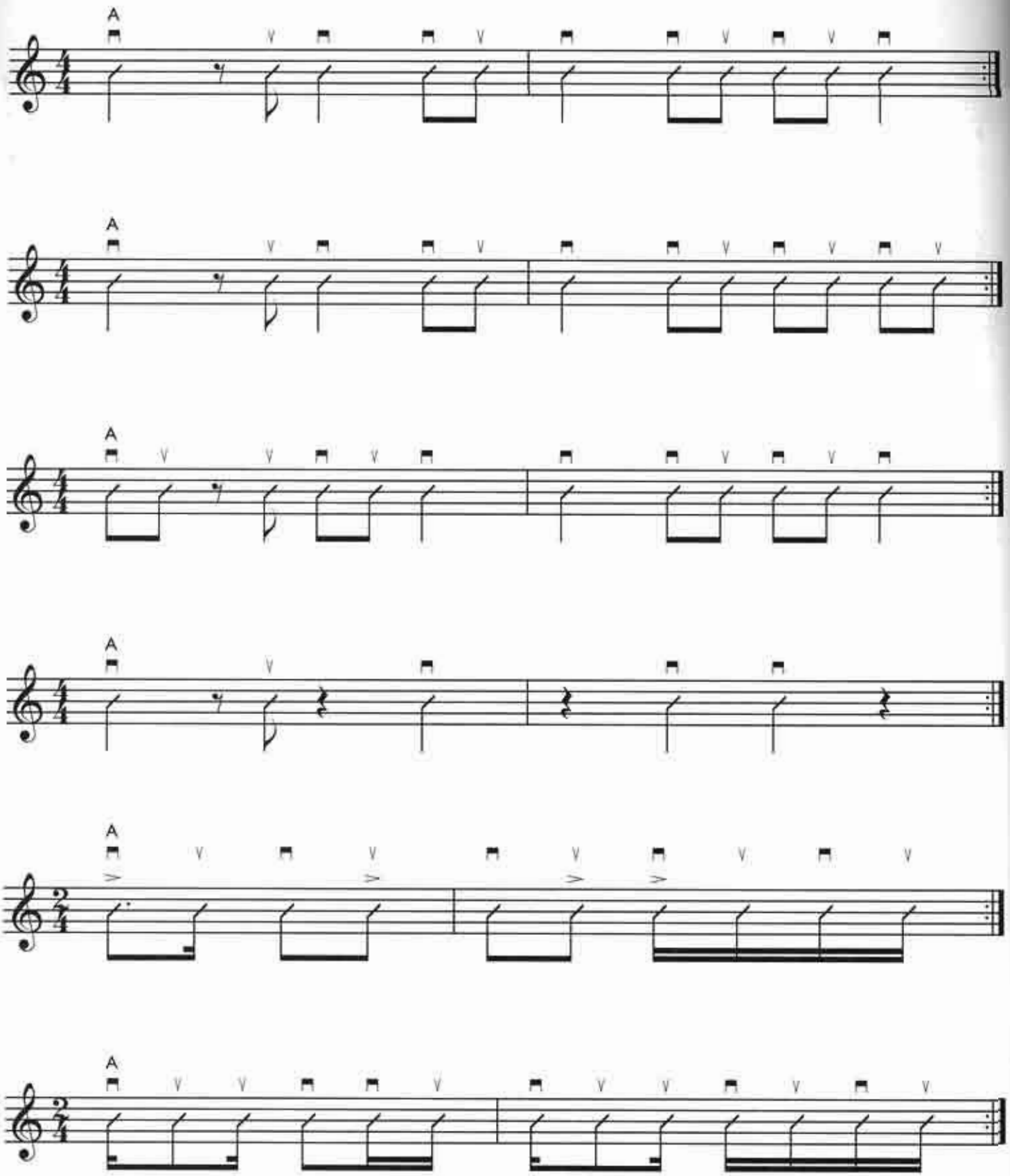


MARCHA — BRAZIL

#2 Track 15

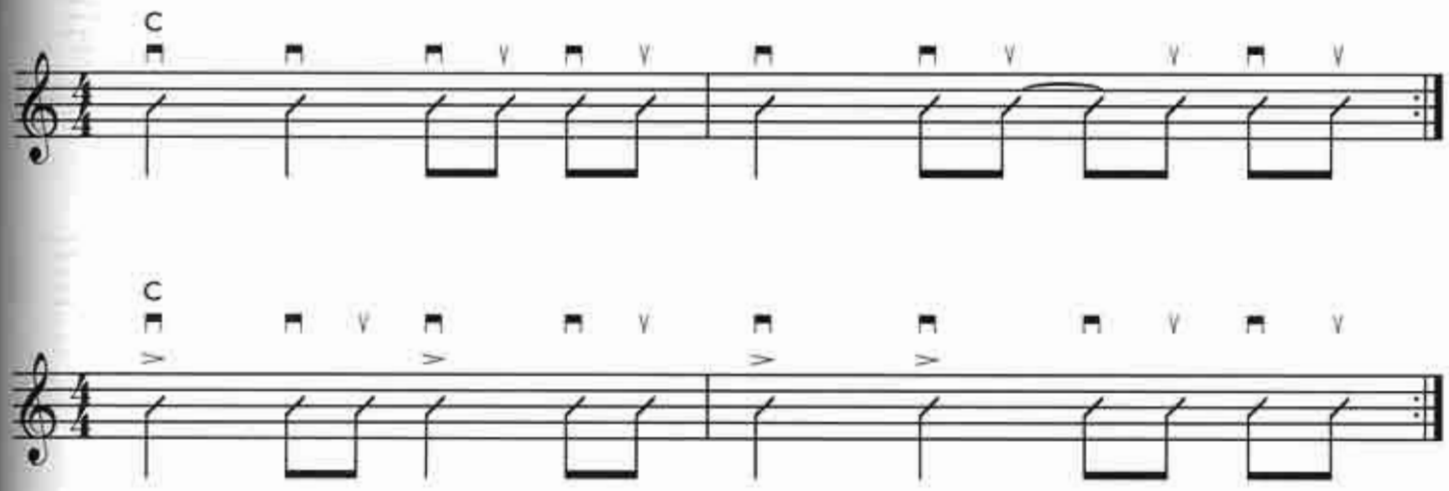
#2
Track 16

MERENGUE — HAITI



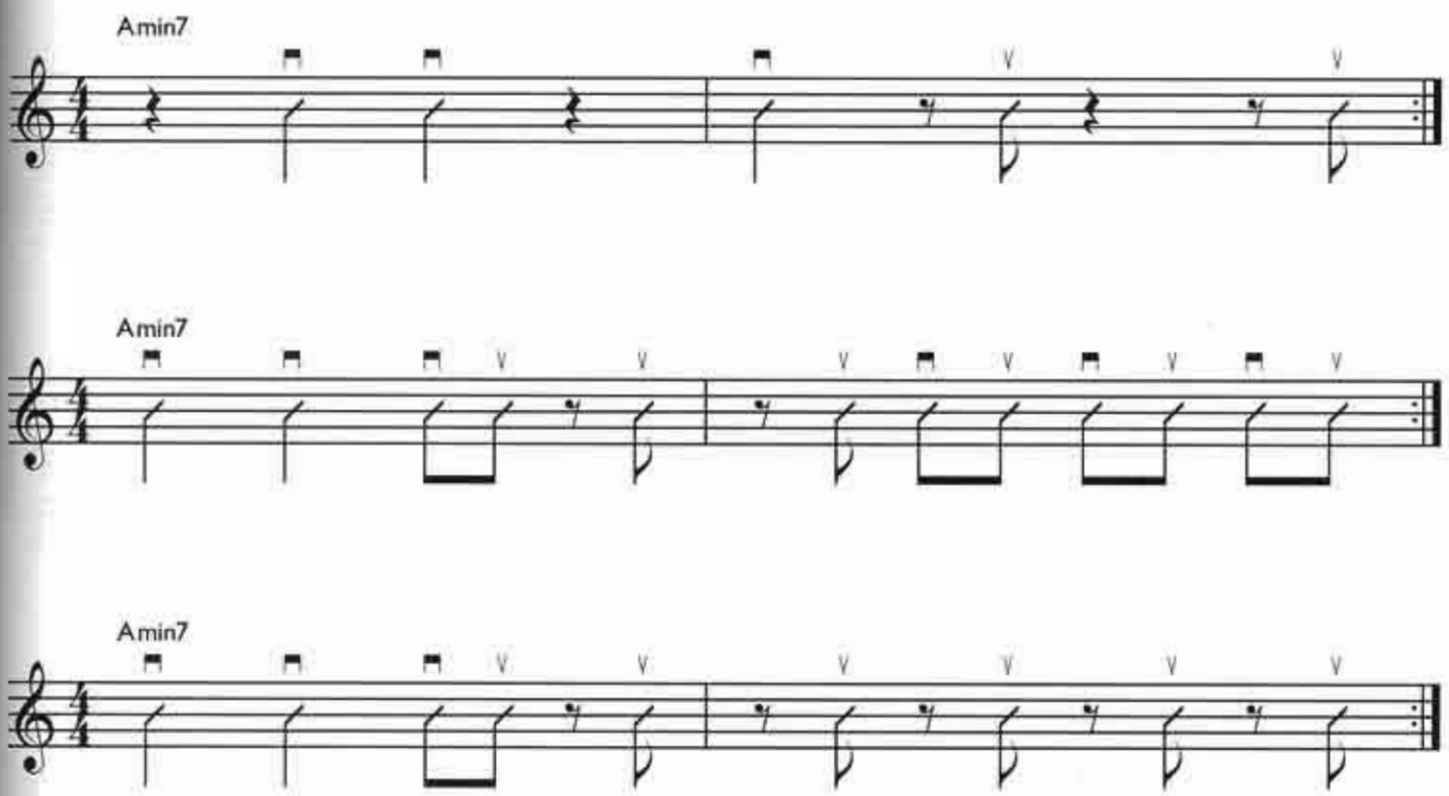
MONTUNO

#2 Track 17



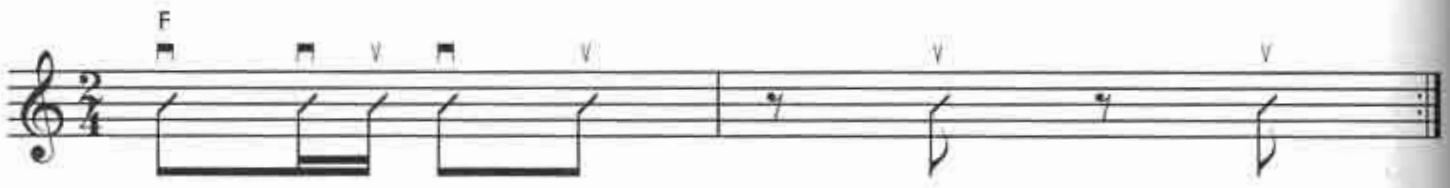
MOZAMBIQUE—CUBA

#2 Track 18



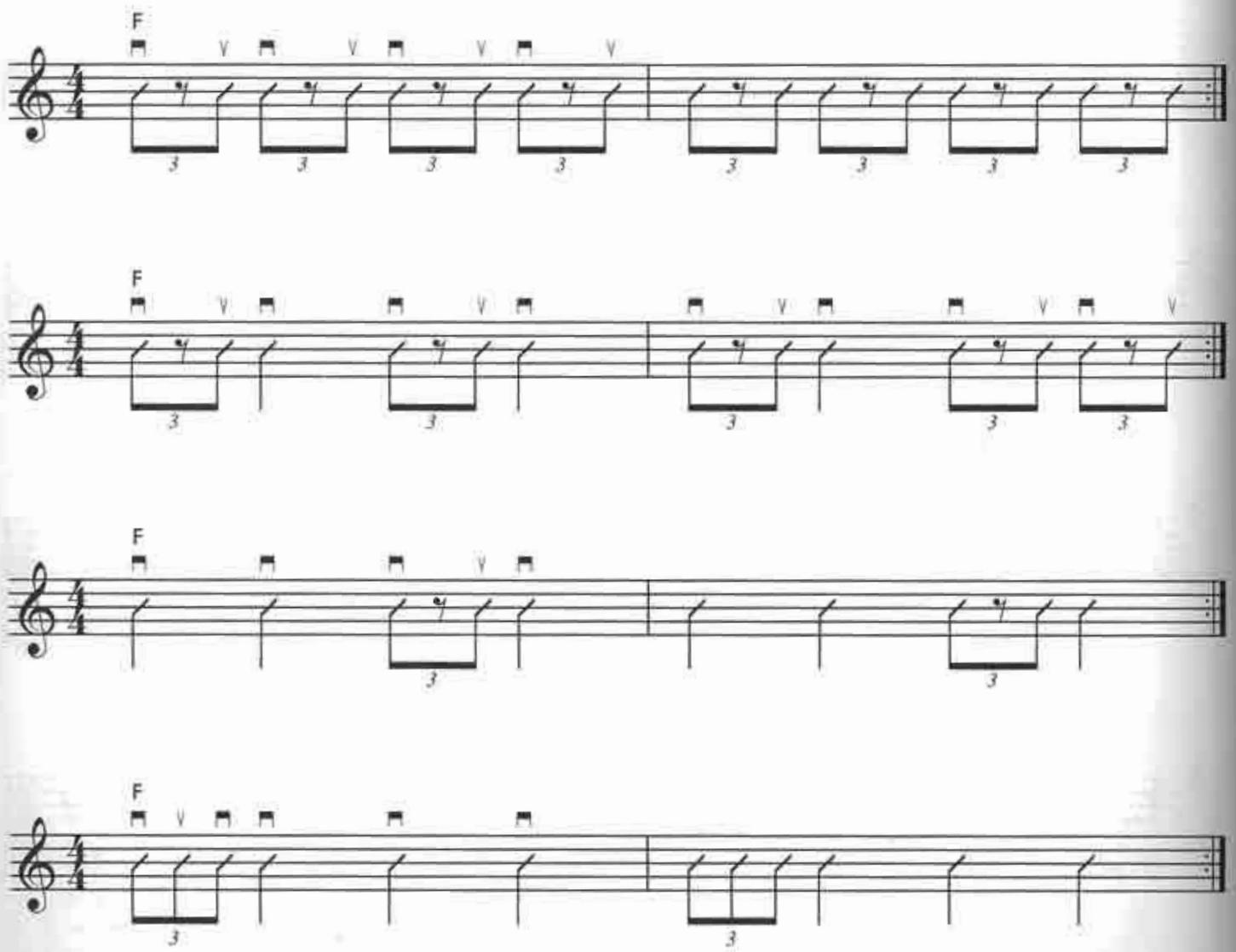
#2 Track 19

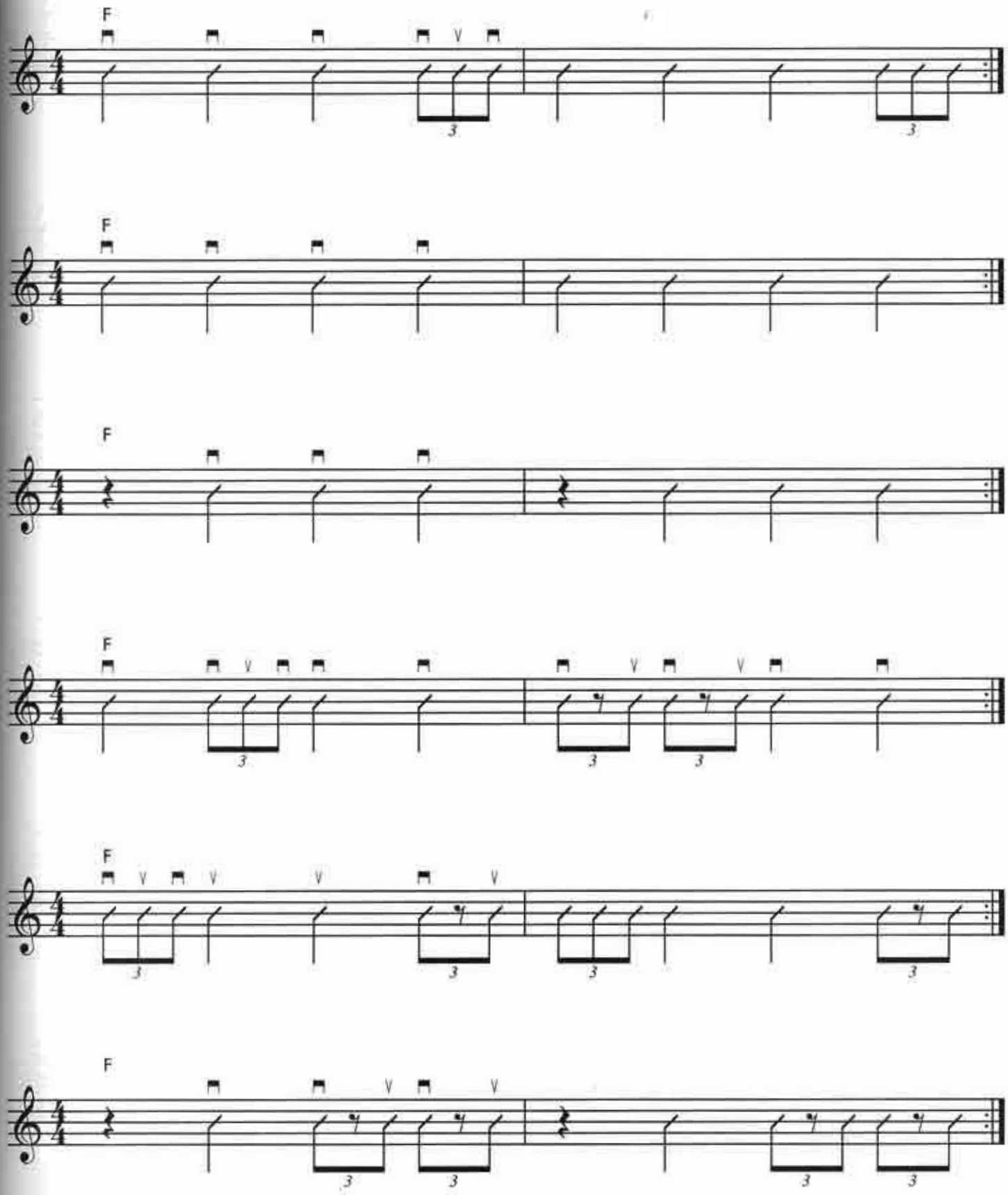
PASA DOBLE



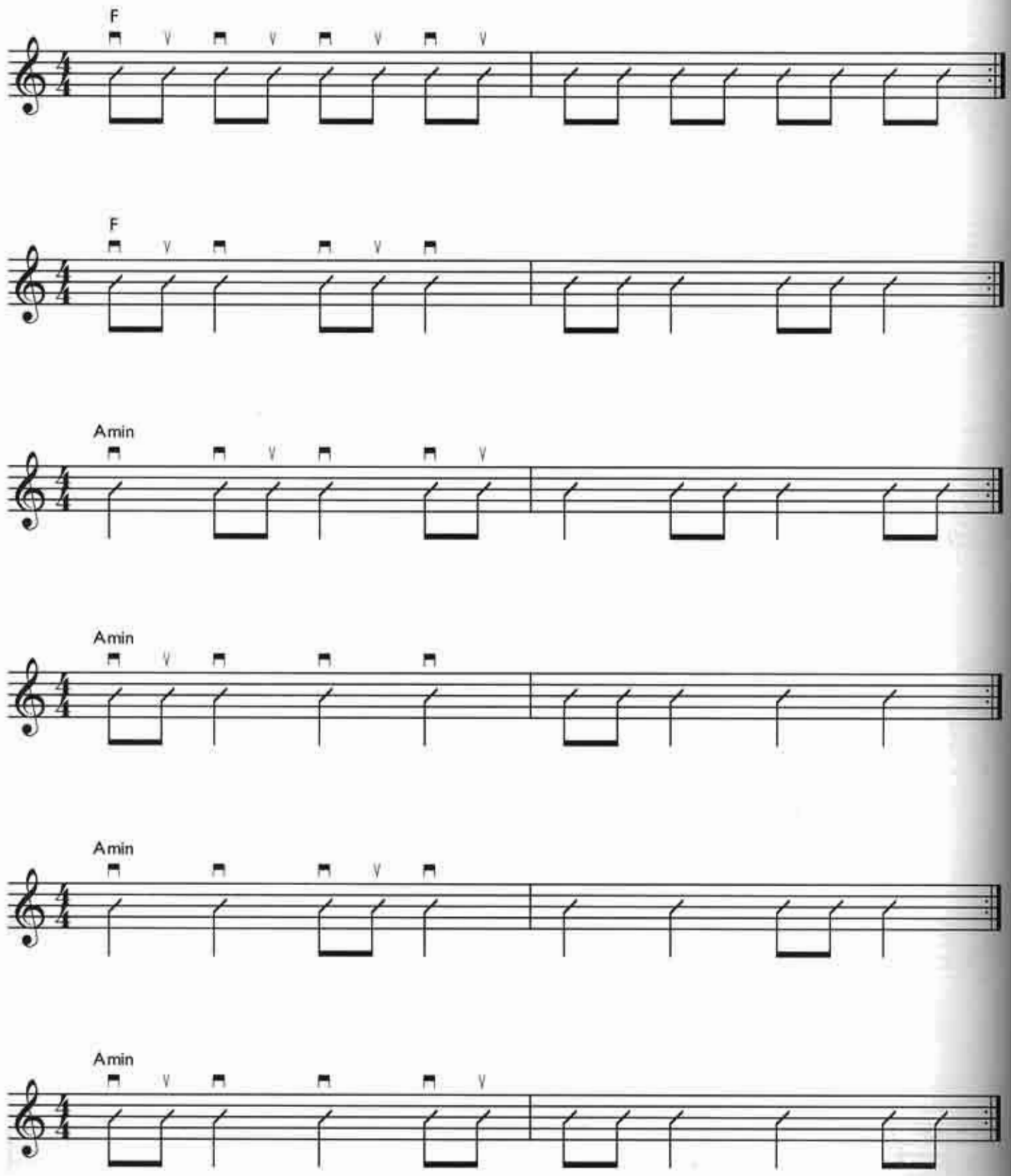
#2 Track 20

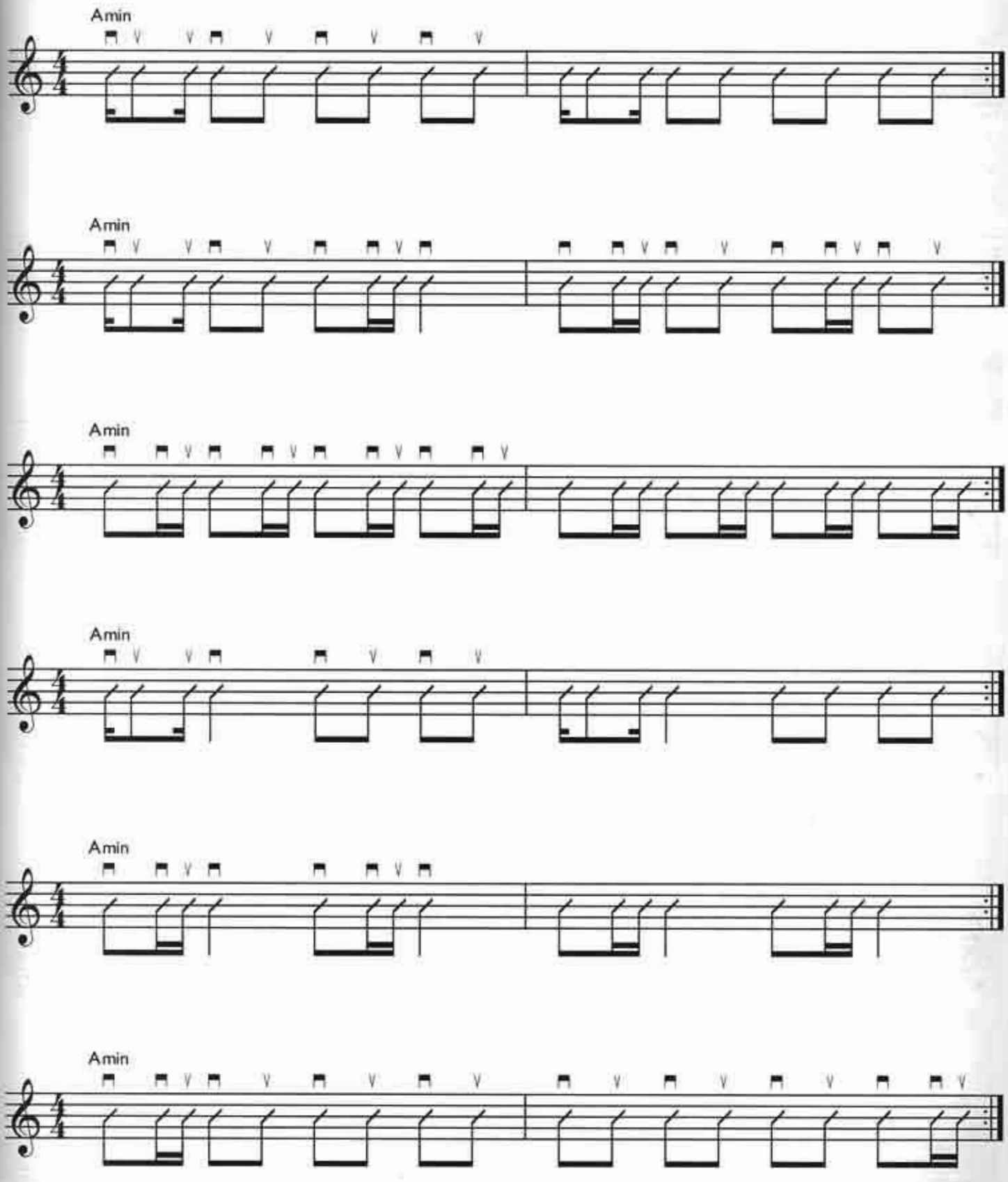
REGGAE — JAMAICA




F
F
F
F
F
F

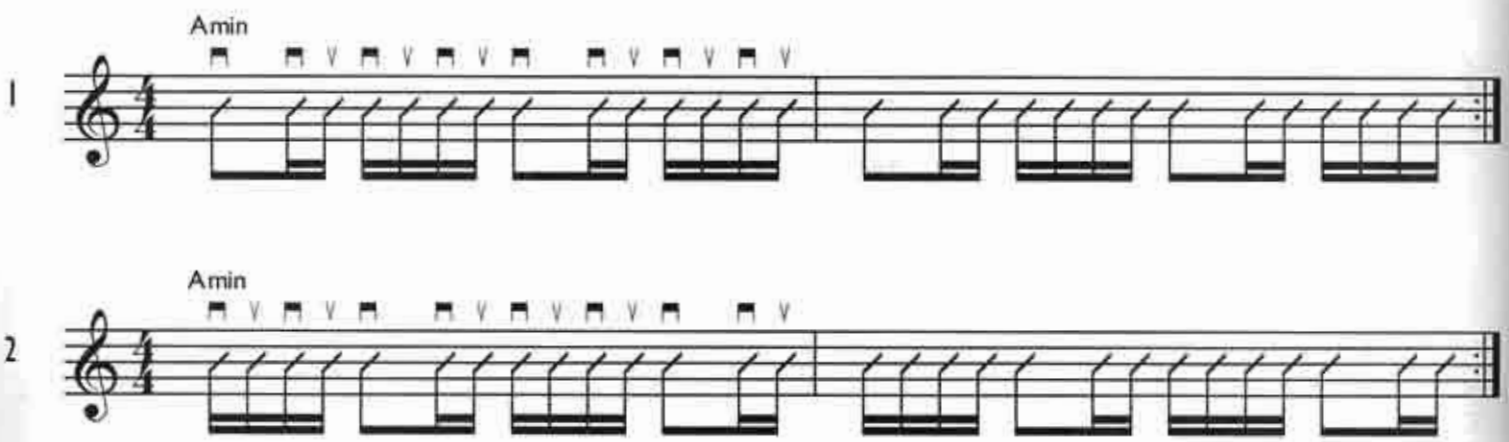
MORE REGGAE




Amin
7
Amin
8
Amin
9
Amin
10
Amin
11
Amin
12

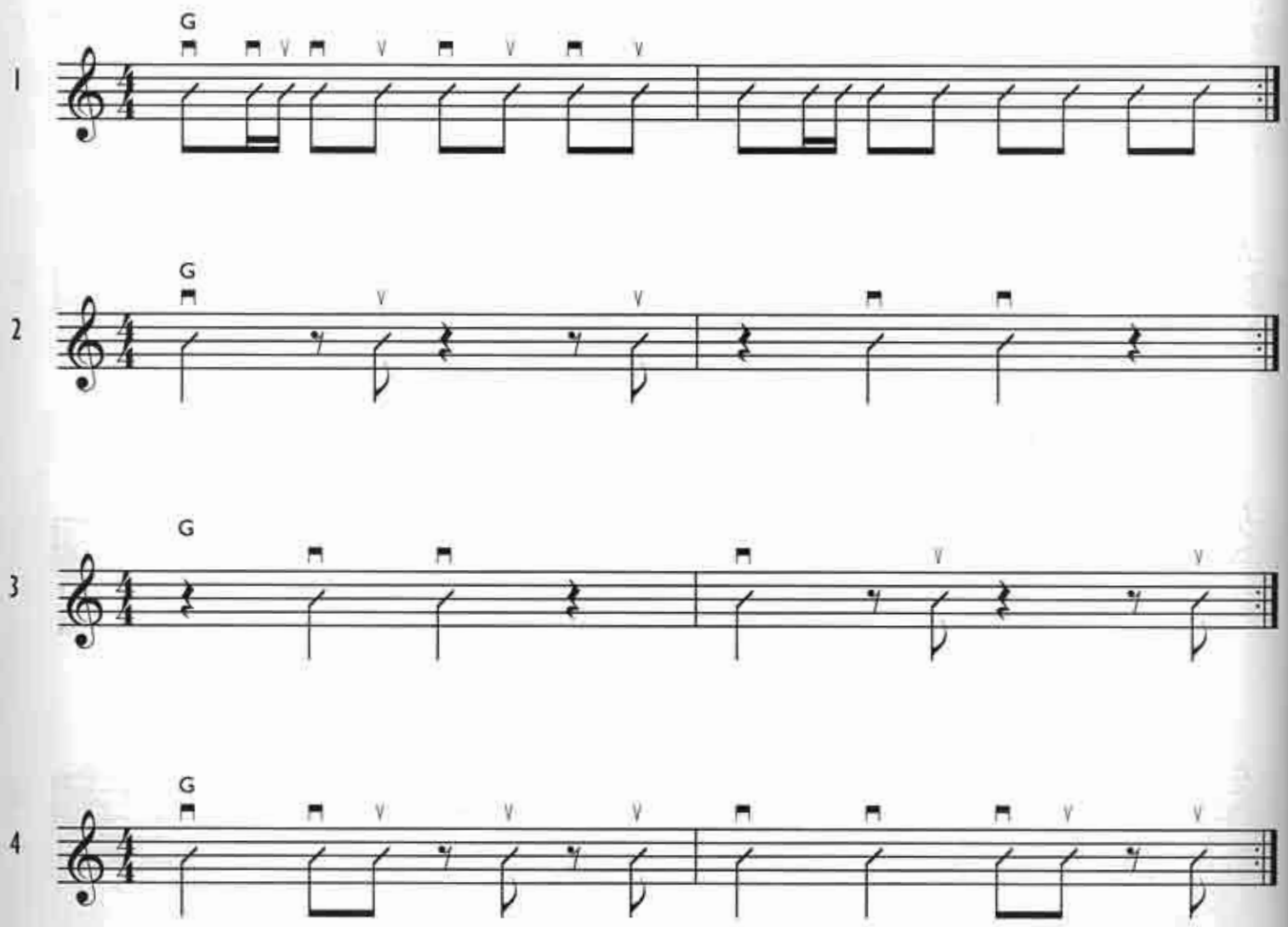
Latin Continued

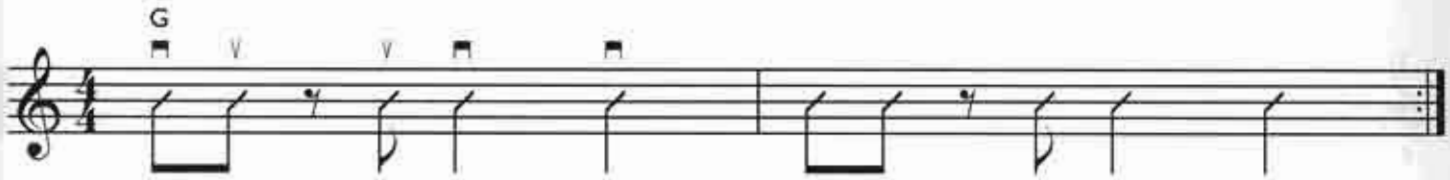
MORE REGGAE



#2
Track 21

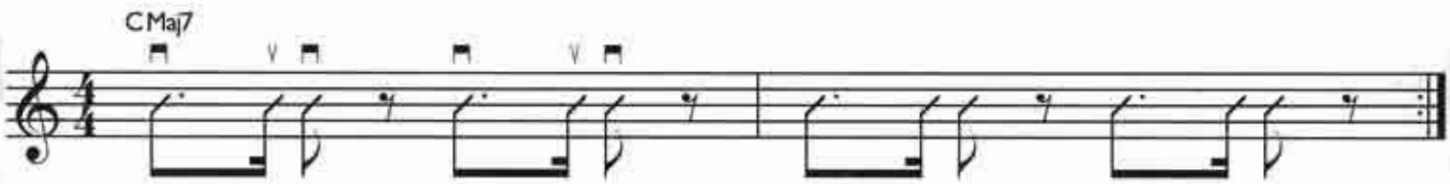
RHUMBA—CUBA

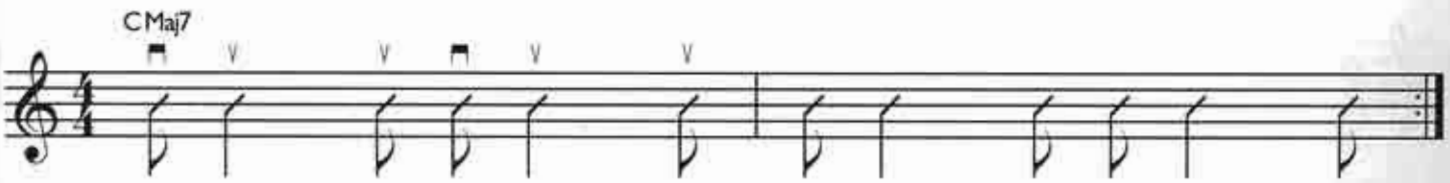




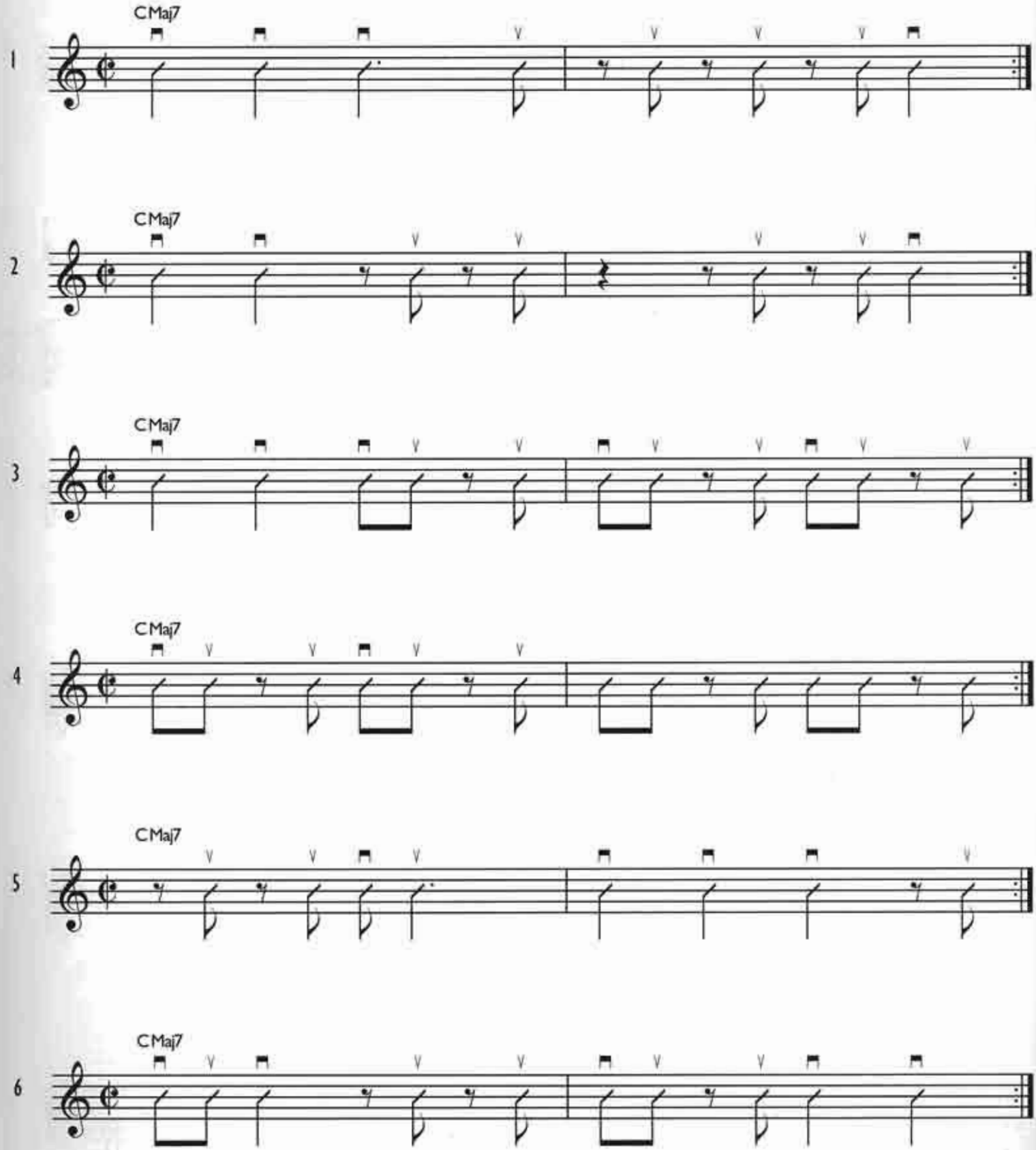
SAMBA—BRAZIL

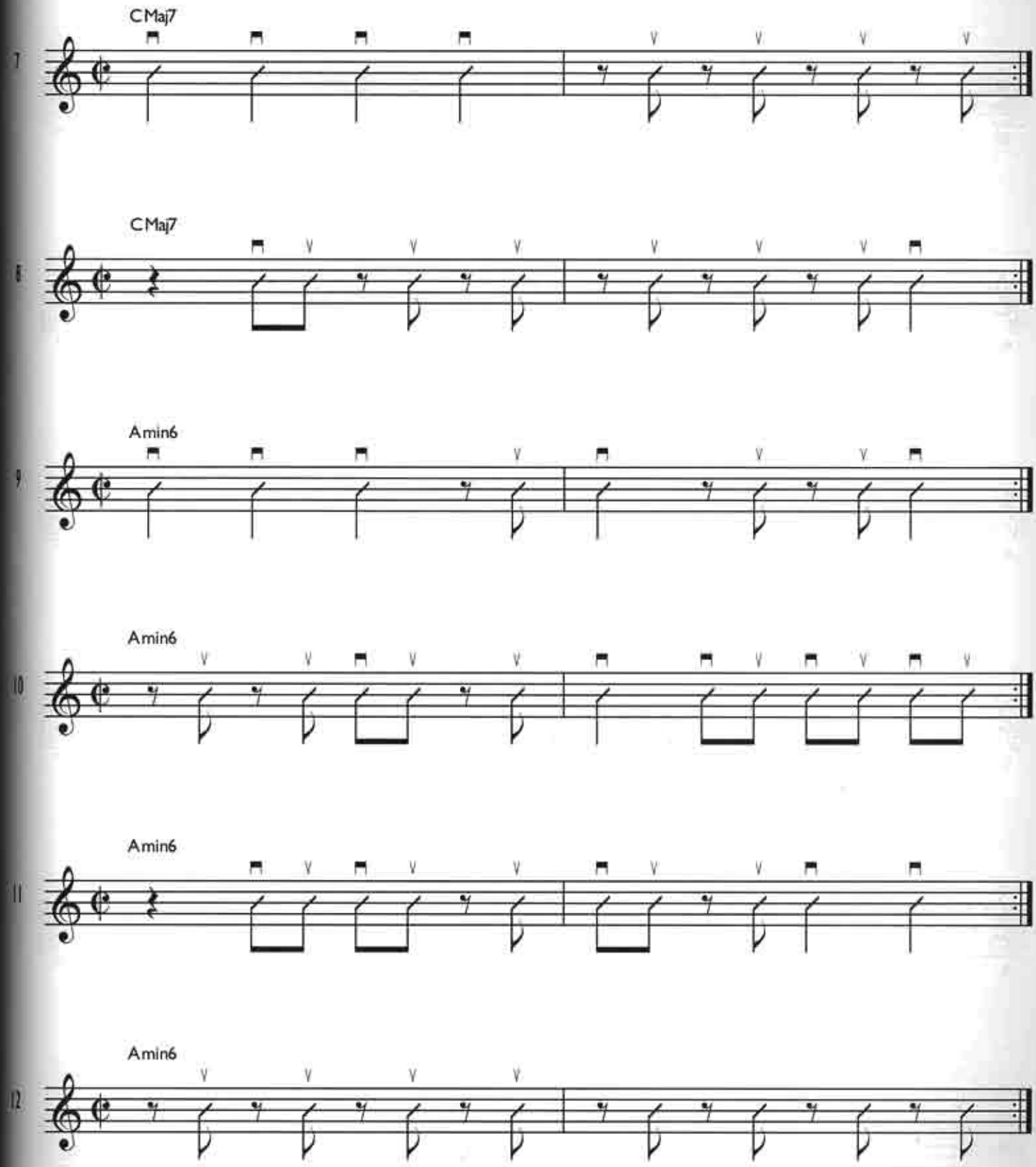
#2
Track 22



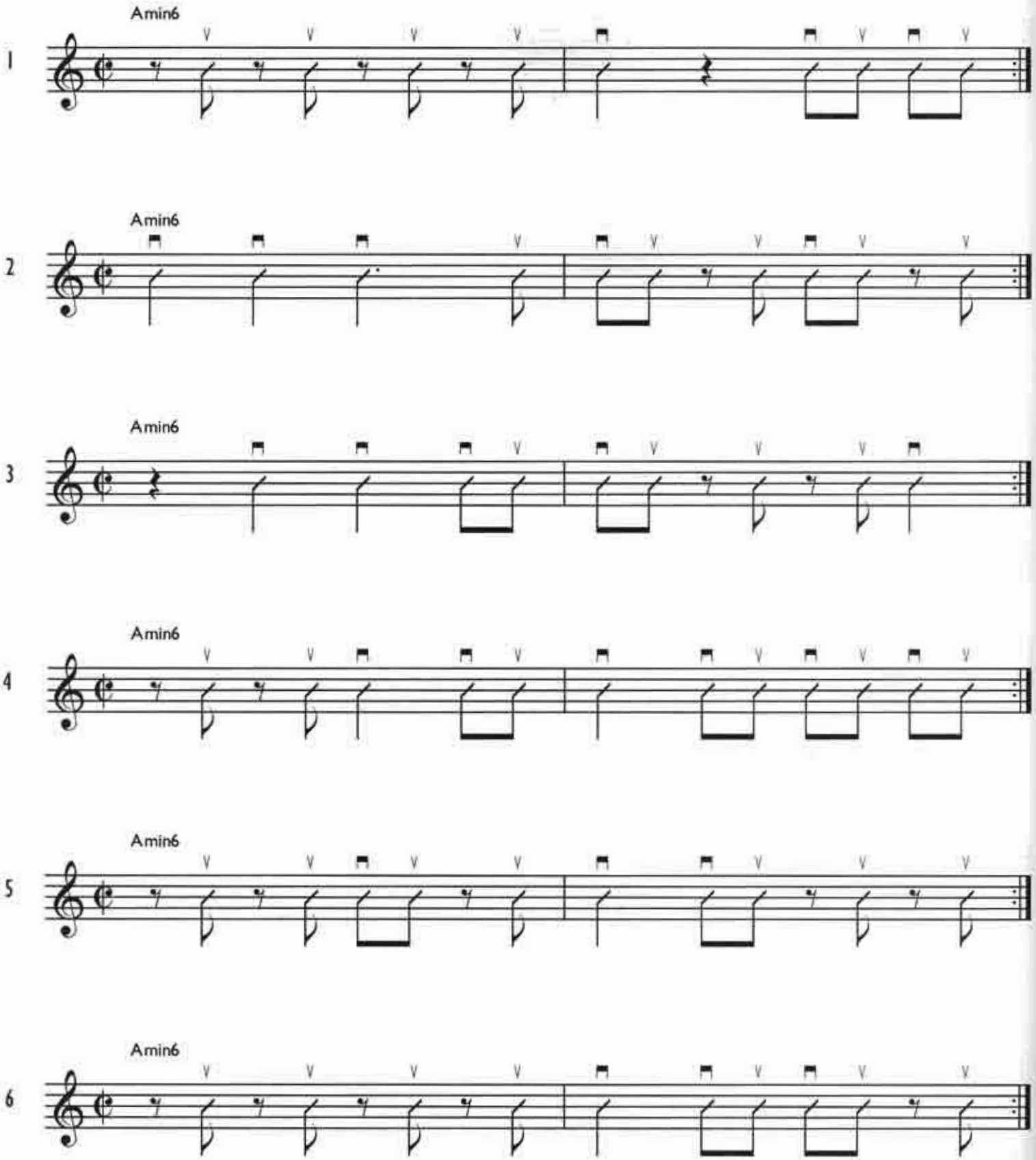


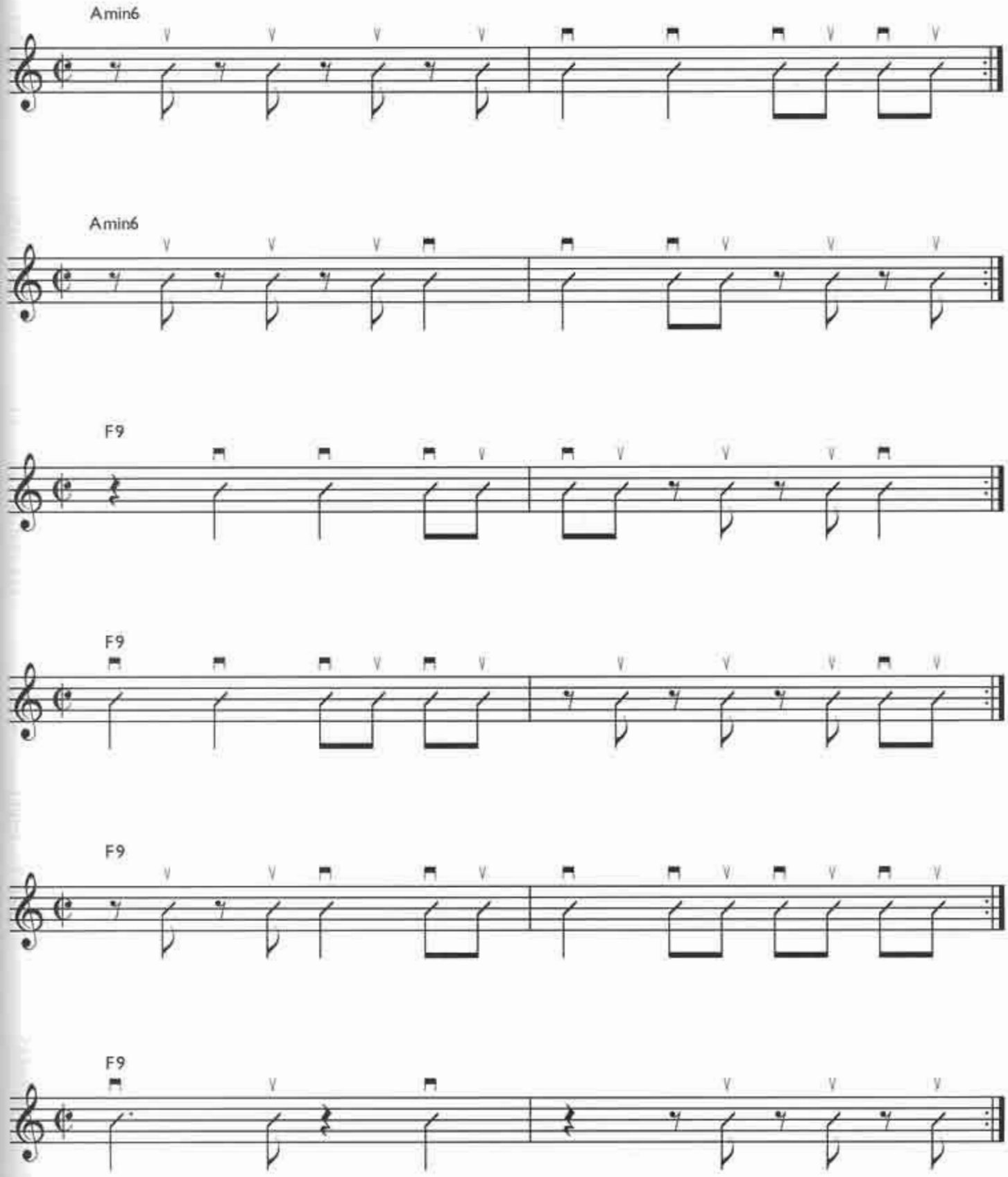
MORE SAMBA




7
CMaj7
8
CMaj7
9
Amin6
10
Amin6
11
Amin6
12
Amin6

MORE SAMBA

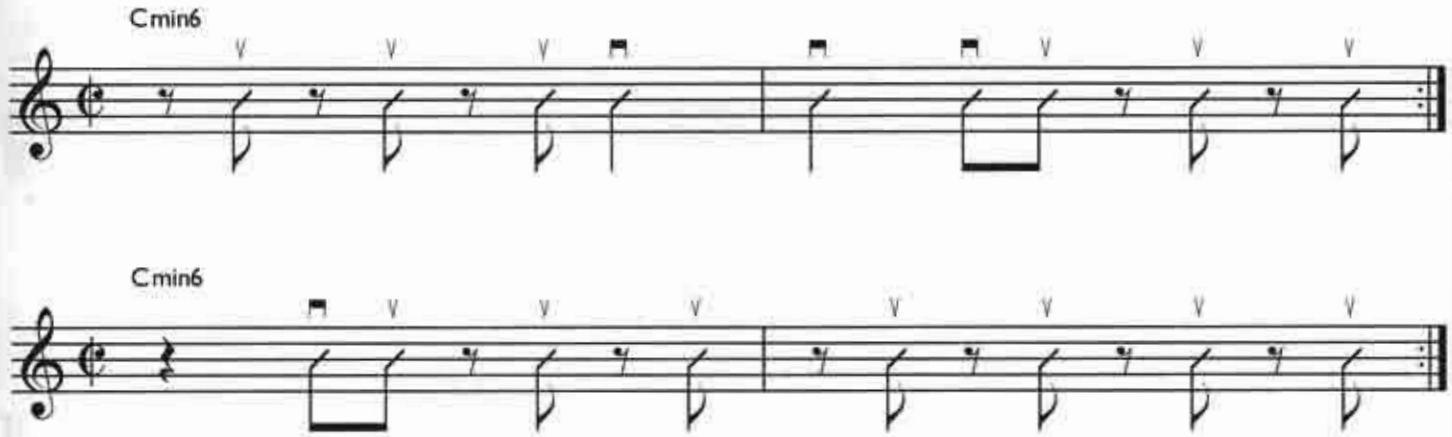



Amin6
Amin6
F9
F9
F9
F9

Latin Continued

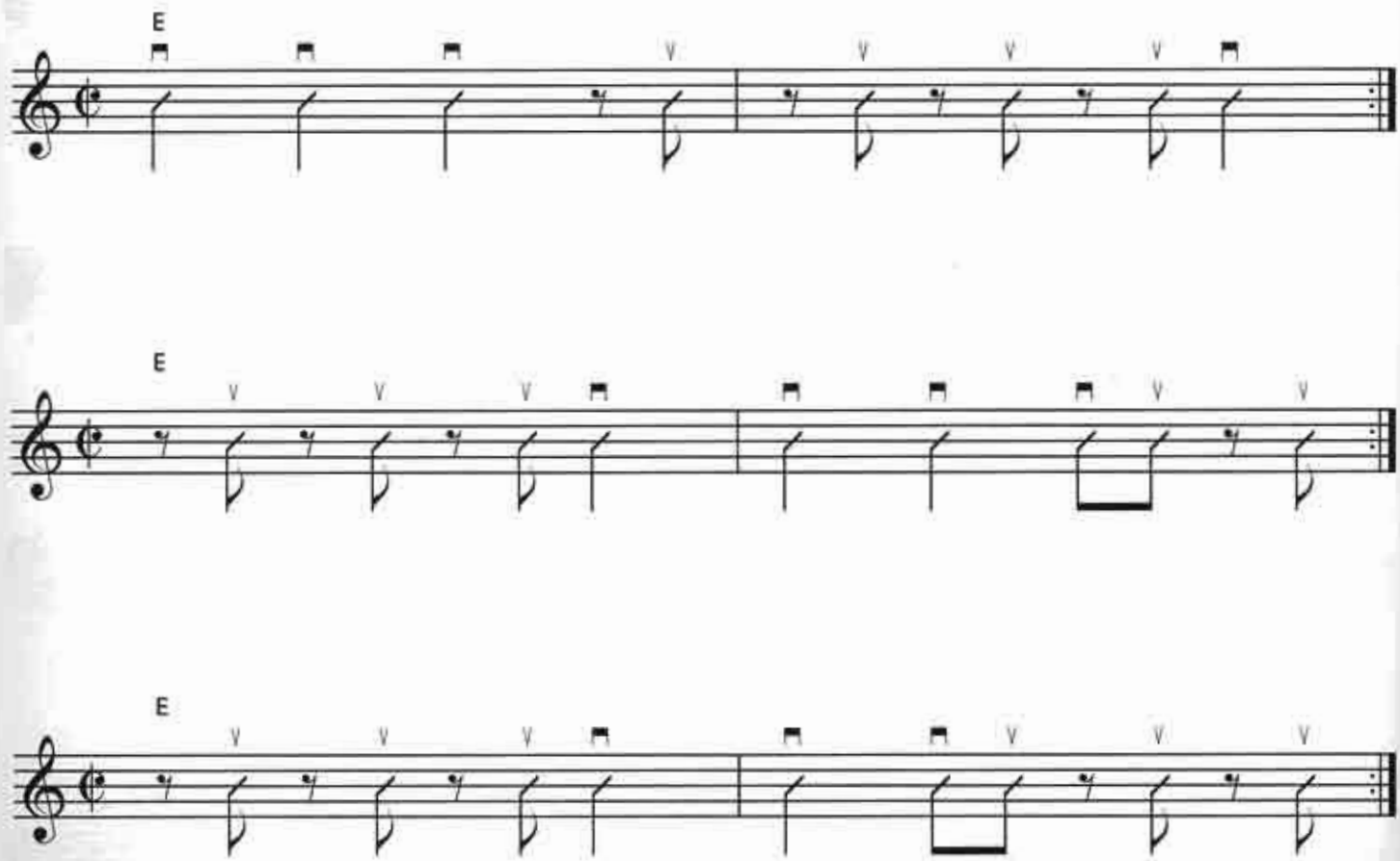
#2 Track 23

SAMBA CRUZADO—BRAZIL



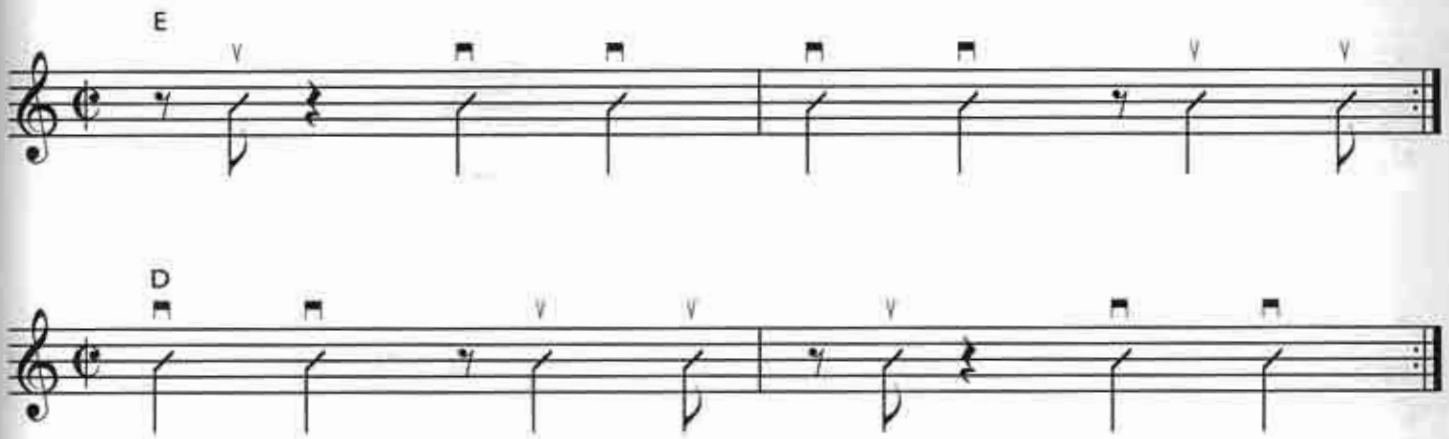
#2 Track 24

SAMBA MARCHA—BRAZIL



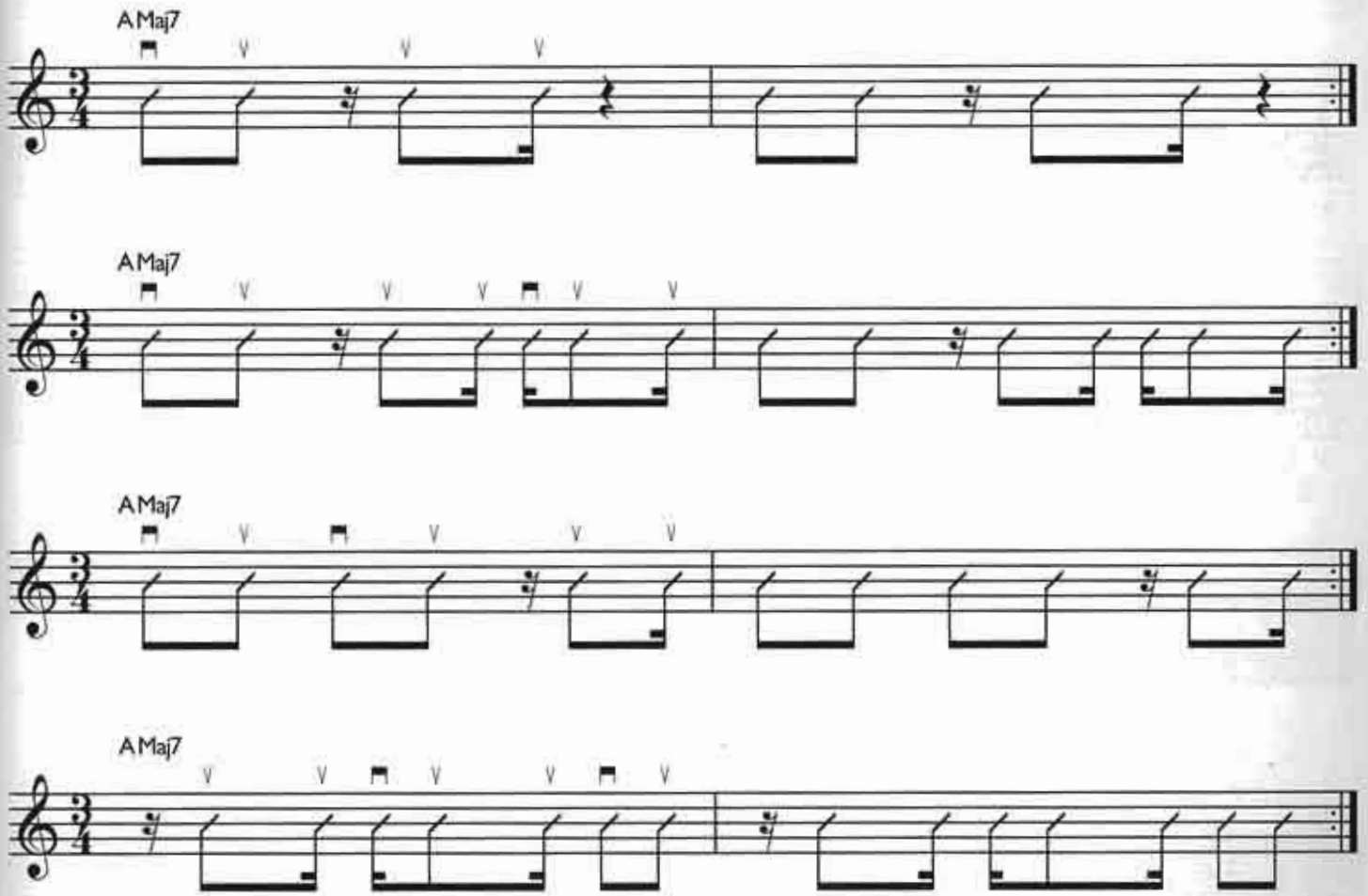
SAMBA DE PARTIDO ALTA—BRAZIL

#2 Track 25



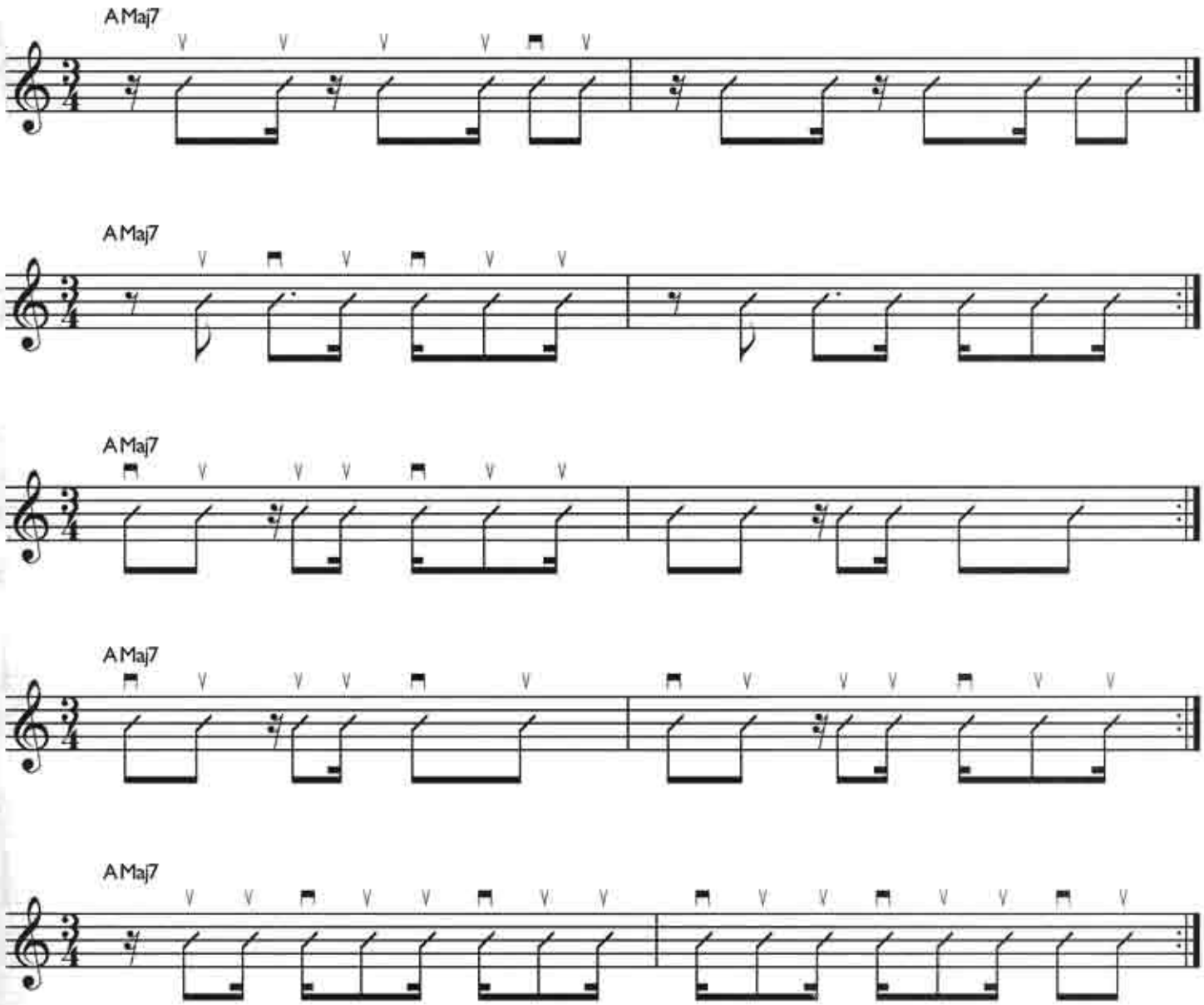
SAMBA $\frac{3}{4}$—BRAZIL

#2 Track 26



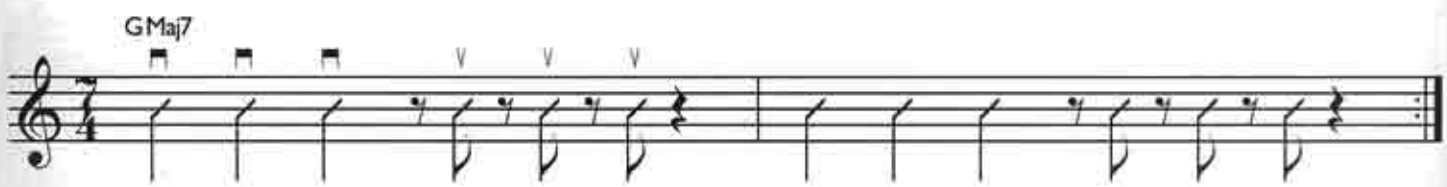
Latin Continued

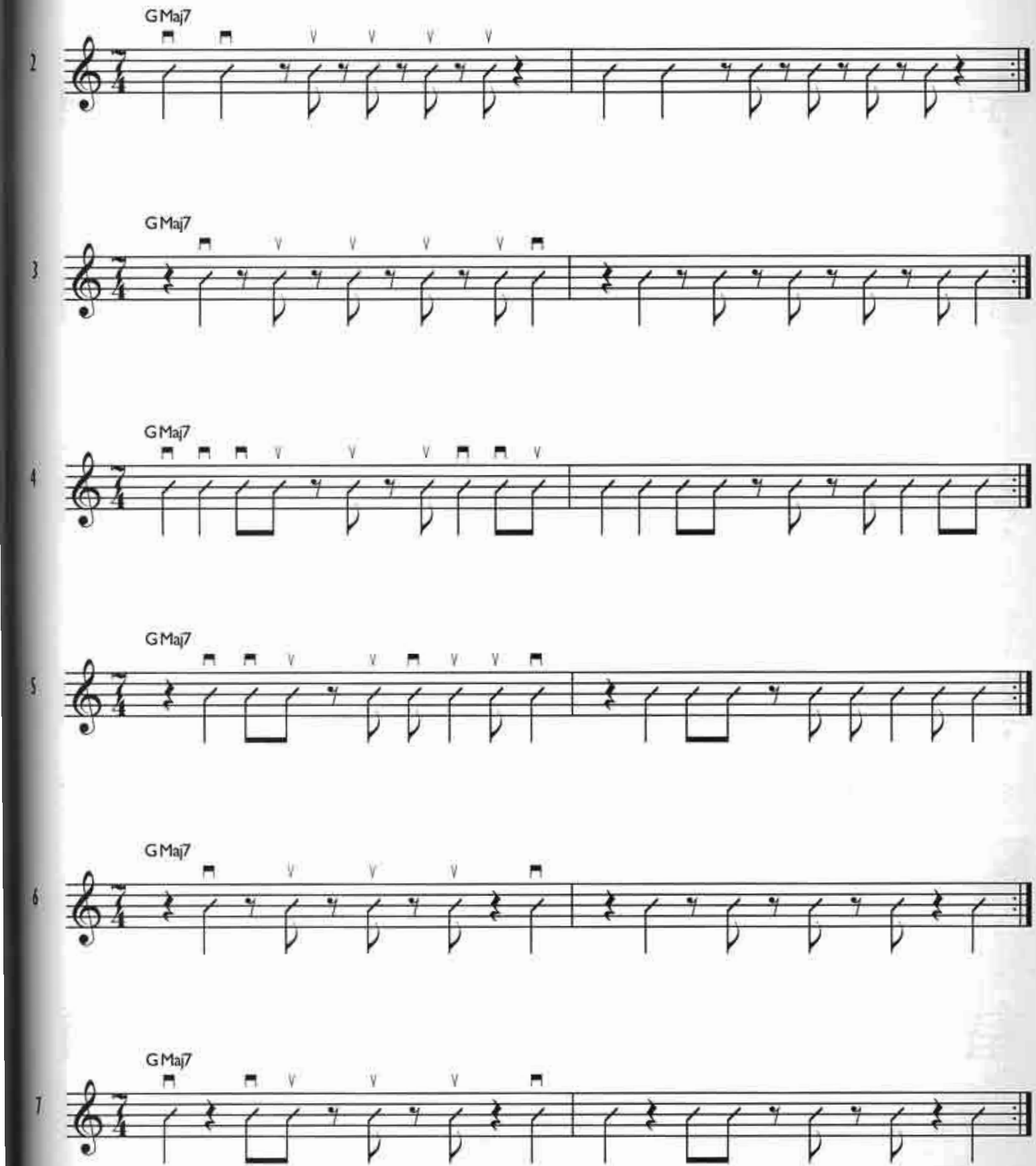
MORE $\frac{3}{4}$ SAMBA



#2
Track 27

SAMBA $\frac{7}{4}$ BRAZIL

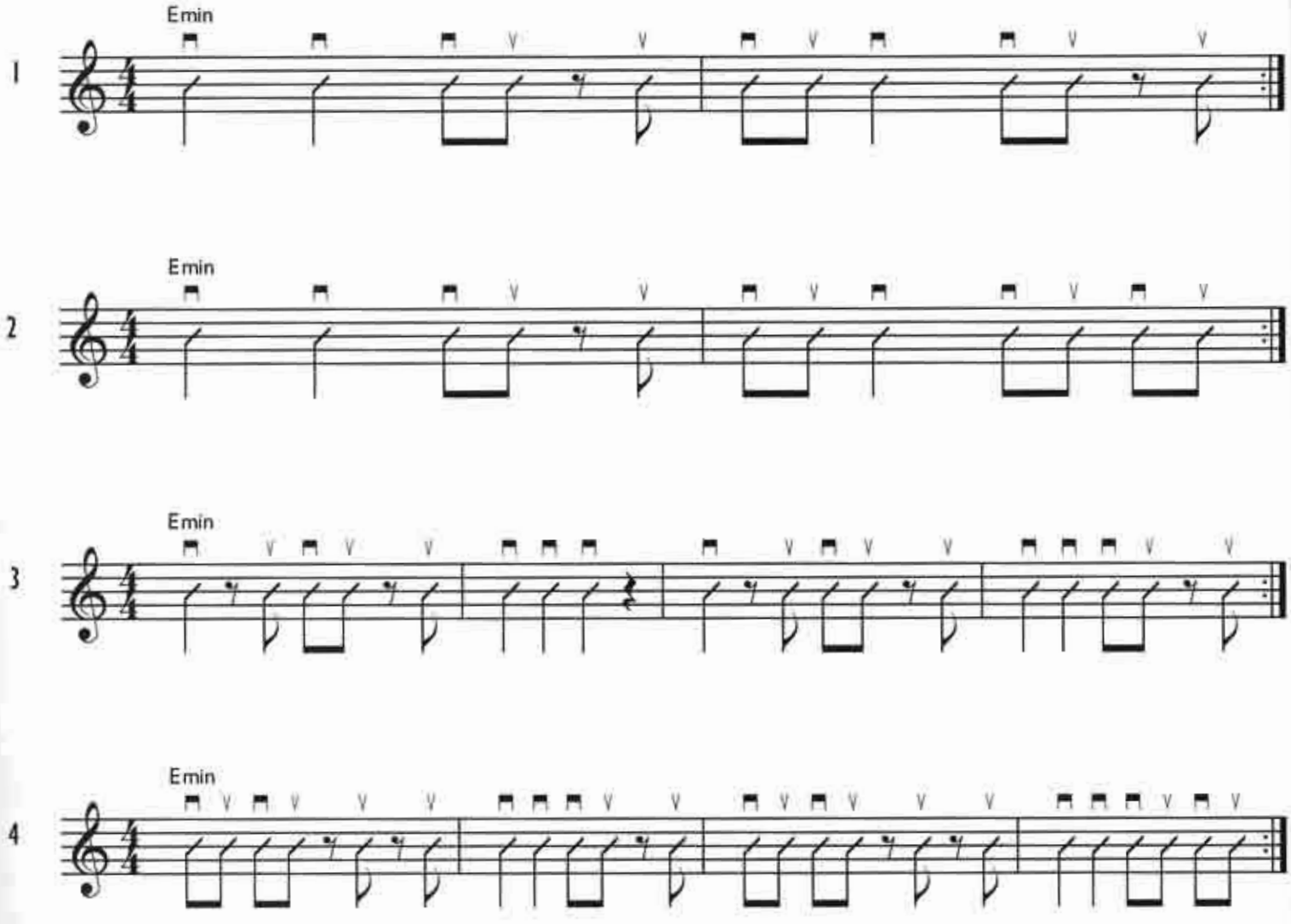



2
GMaj7
3
GMaj7
4
GMaj7
5
GMaj7
6
GMaj7
7
GMaj7

Latin Continued

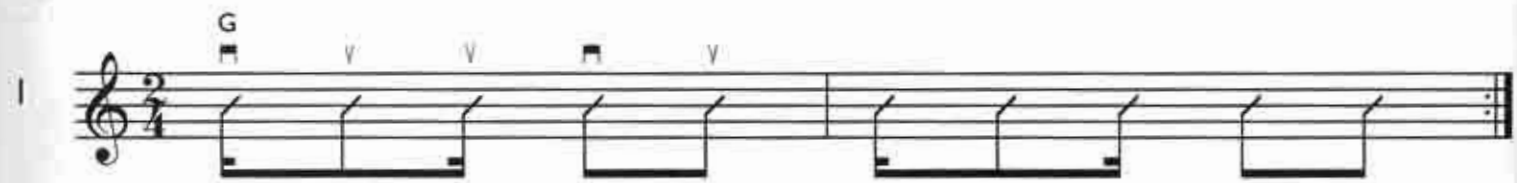
#2 Track 28

SONGO—CUBA



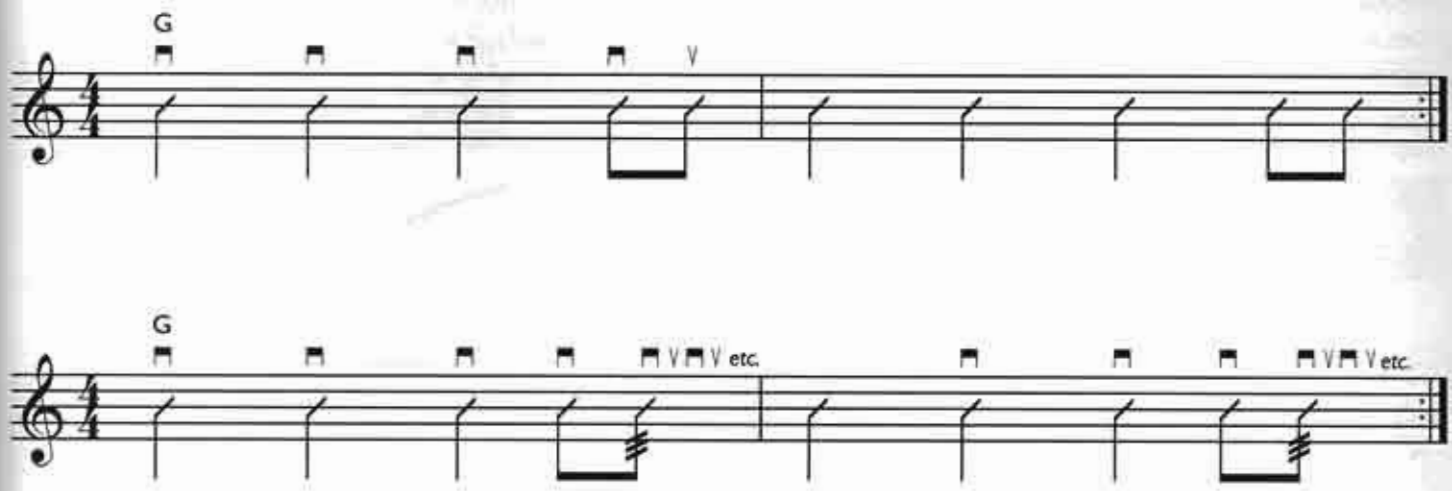
#2 Track 29

SPANISH TANGO



TANGO—ARGENTINA

#2
Track 30

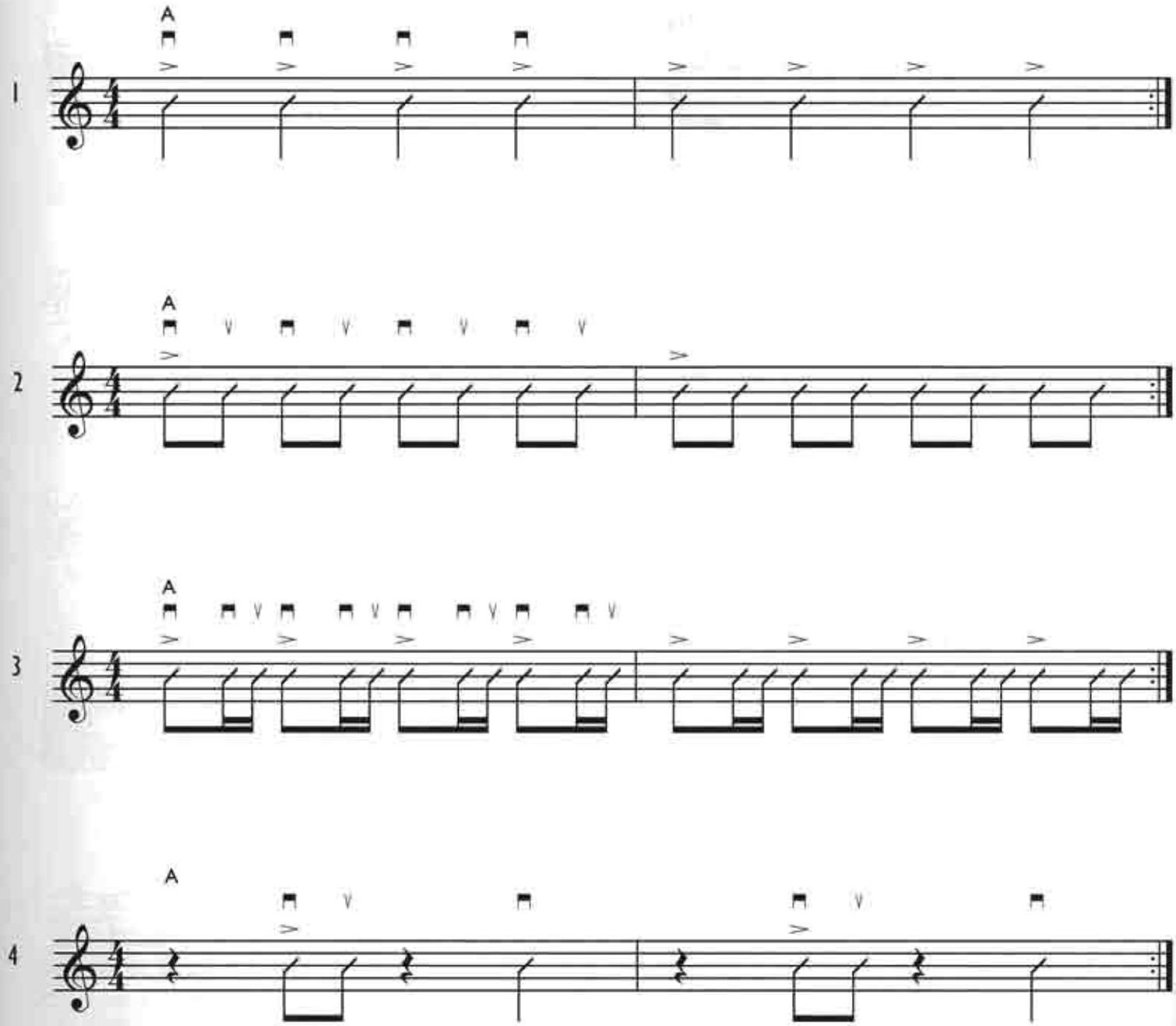


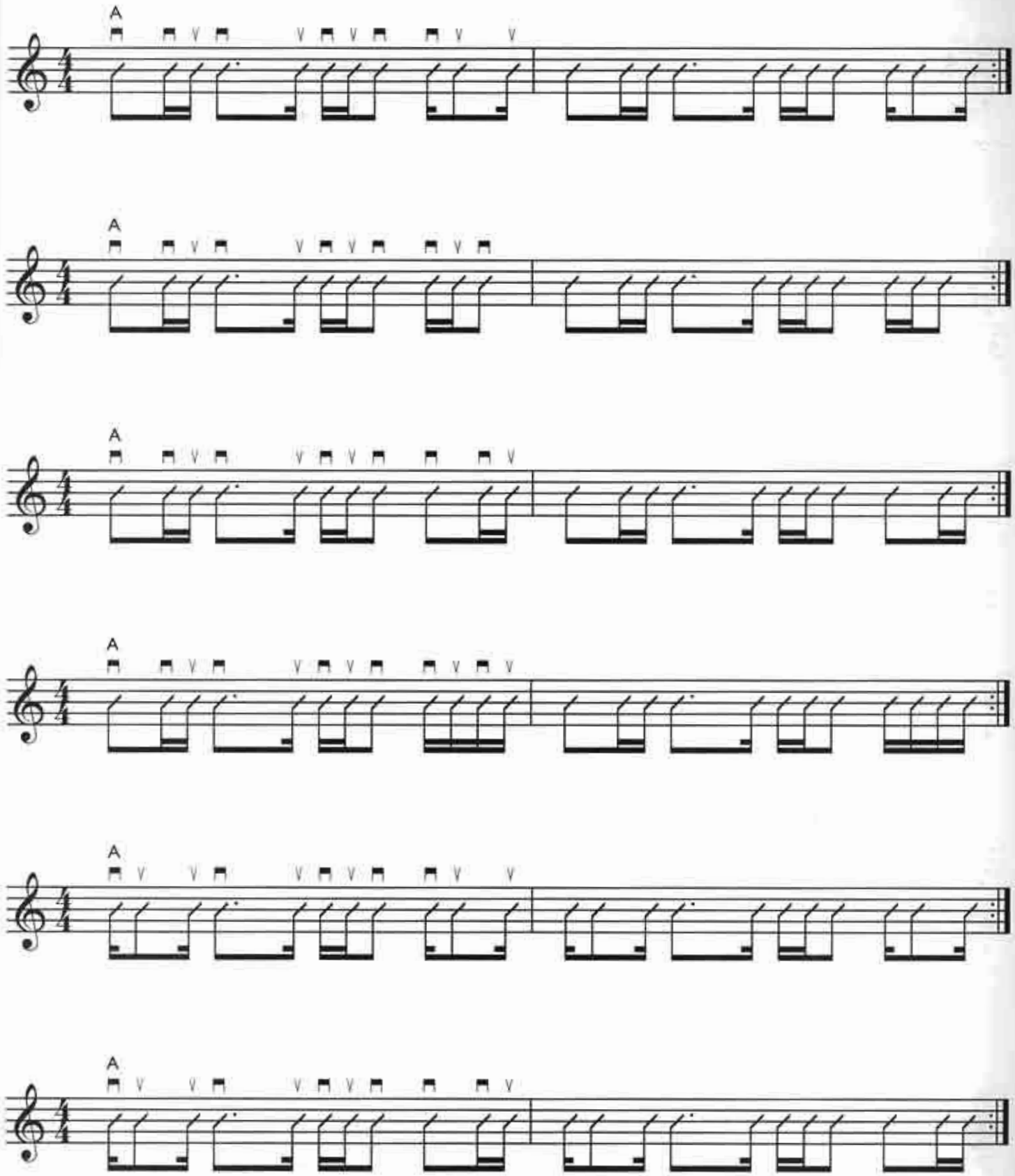
Rock/Pop

You don't have to go far to come up with new rhythmic ideas in a rock or pop vein—just turn on the radio or TV. The lines between styles are really starting to blur these days. Artists are combining feels from widely varied sources, so a rock or pop feel doesn't have to sound stereotypical anymore. These examples show some standard rock and pop feels and quite a few variations. Any of these rhythms might be used in any rock style. Experiment combining these with rhythms from some of the other chapters as well.

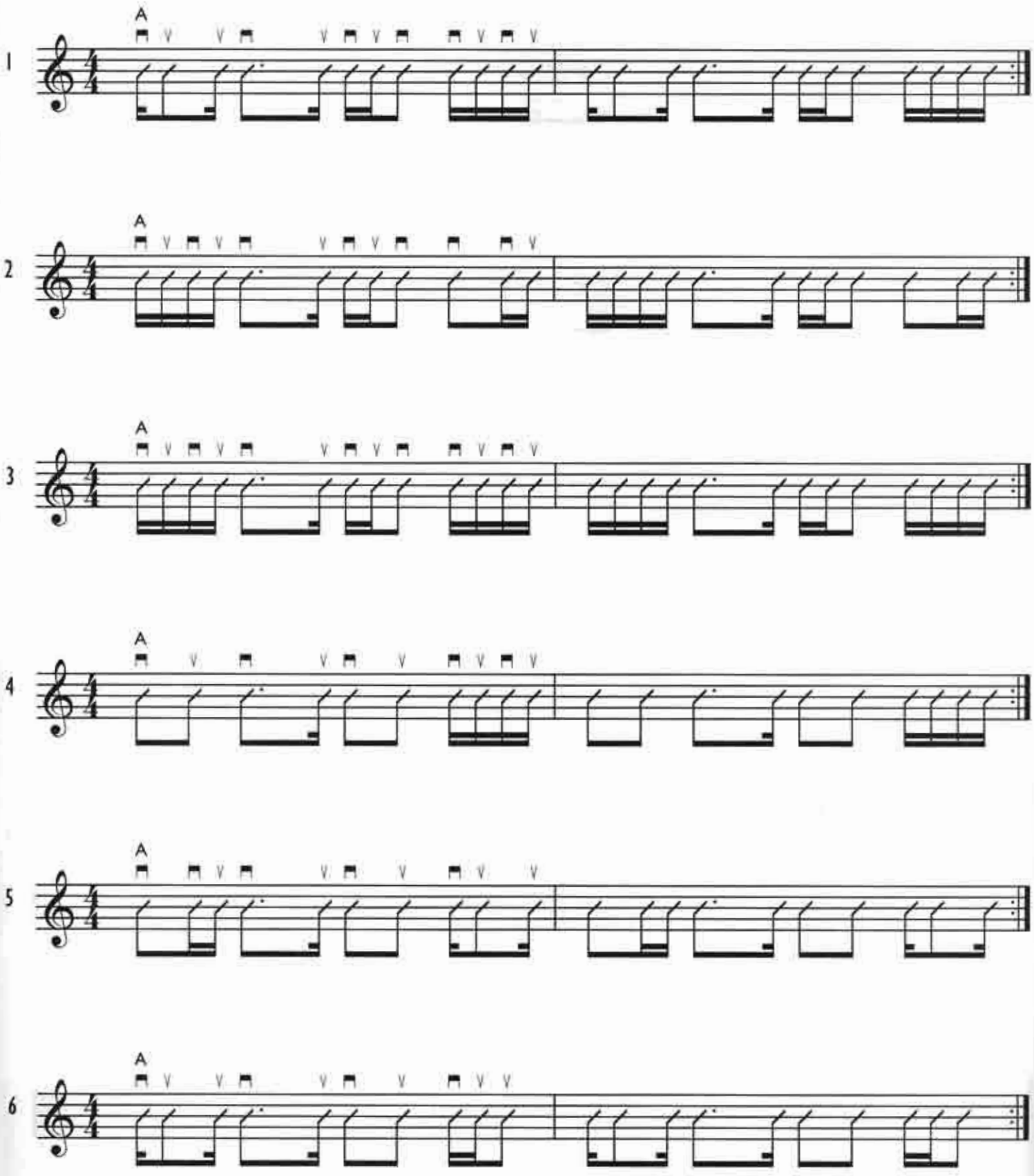
#2
Track 31

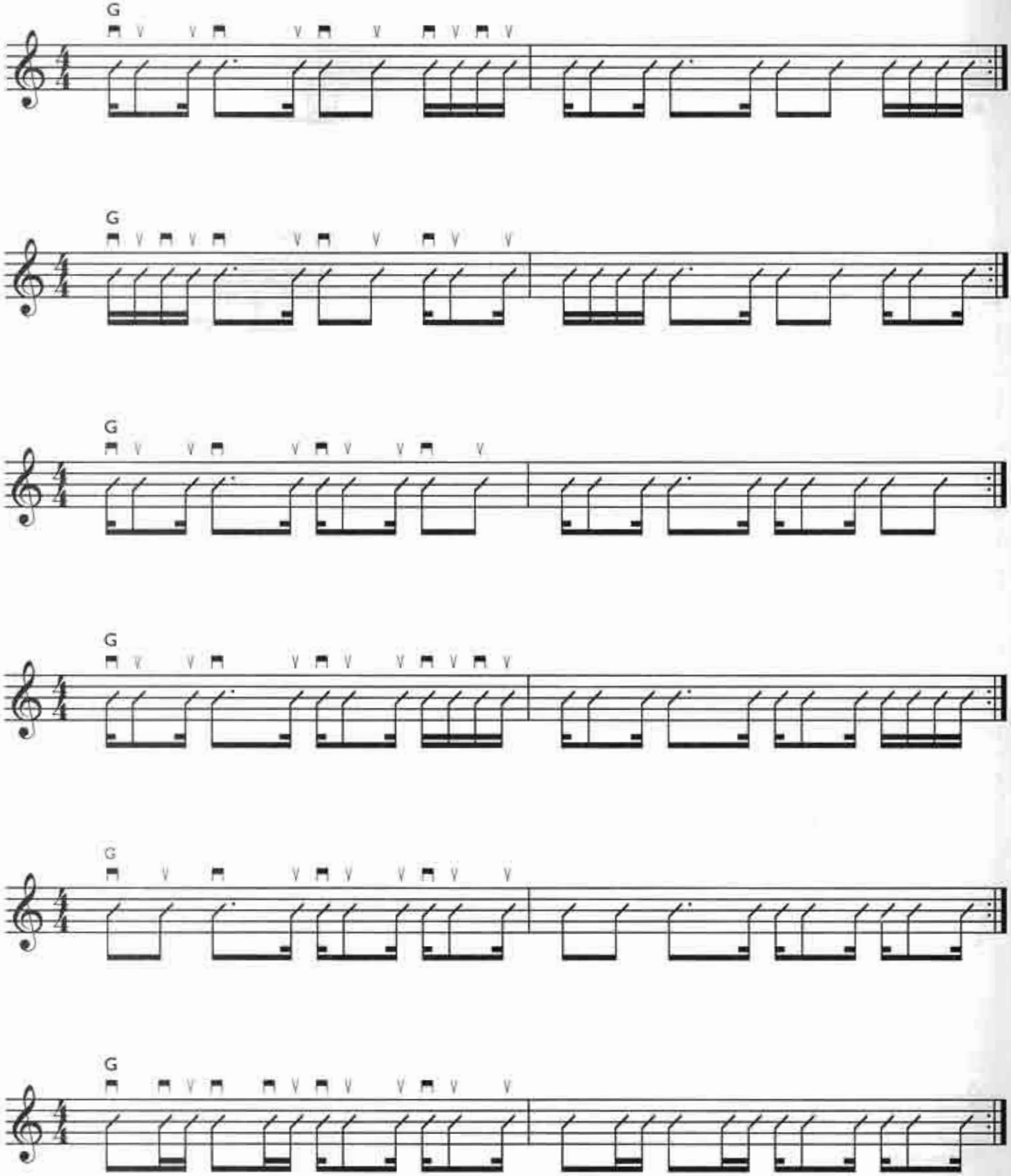
ROCK



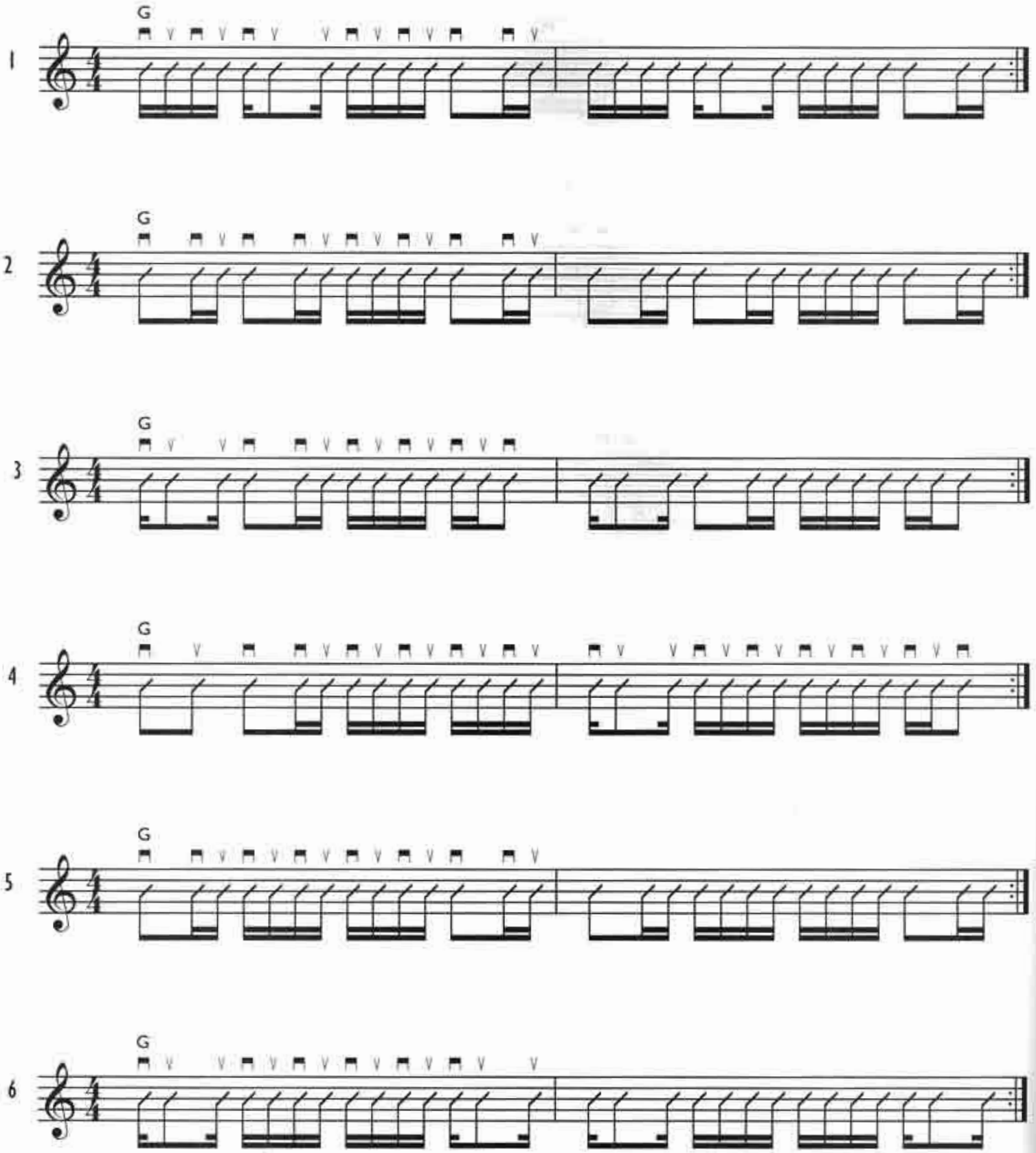

5
A
6
A
7
A
8
A
9
A
10
A

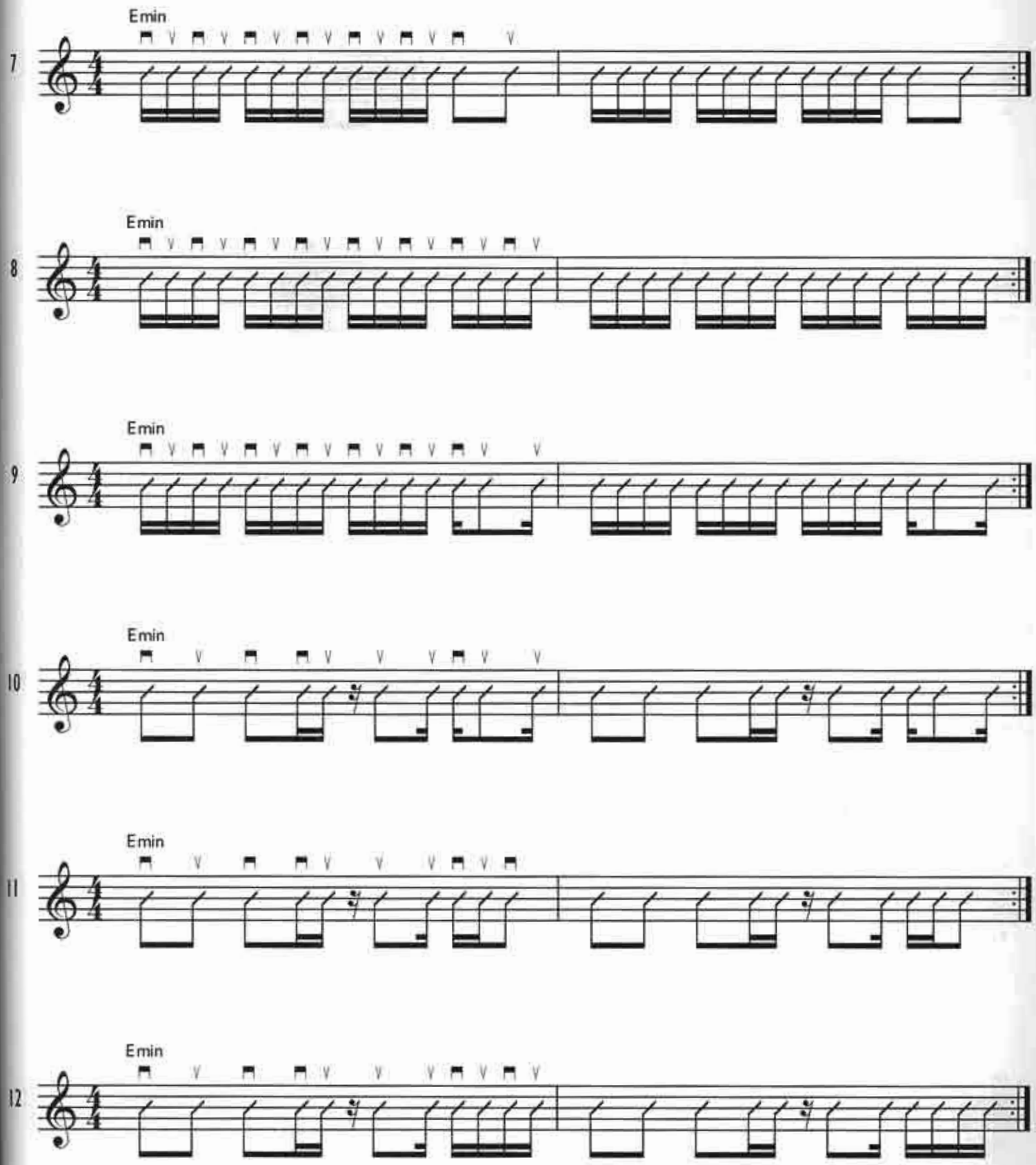
MORE ROCK



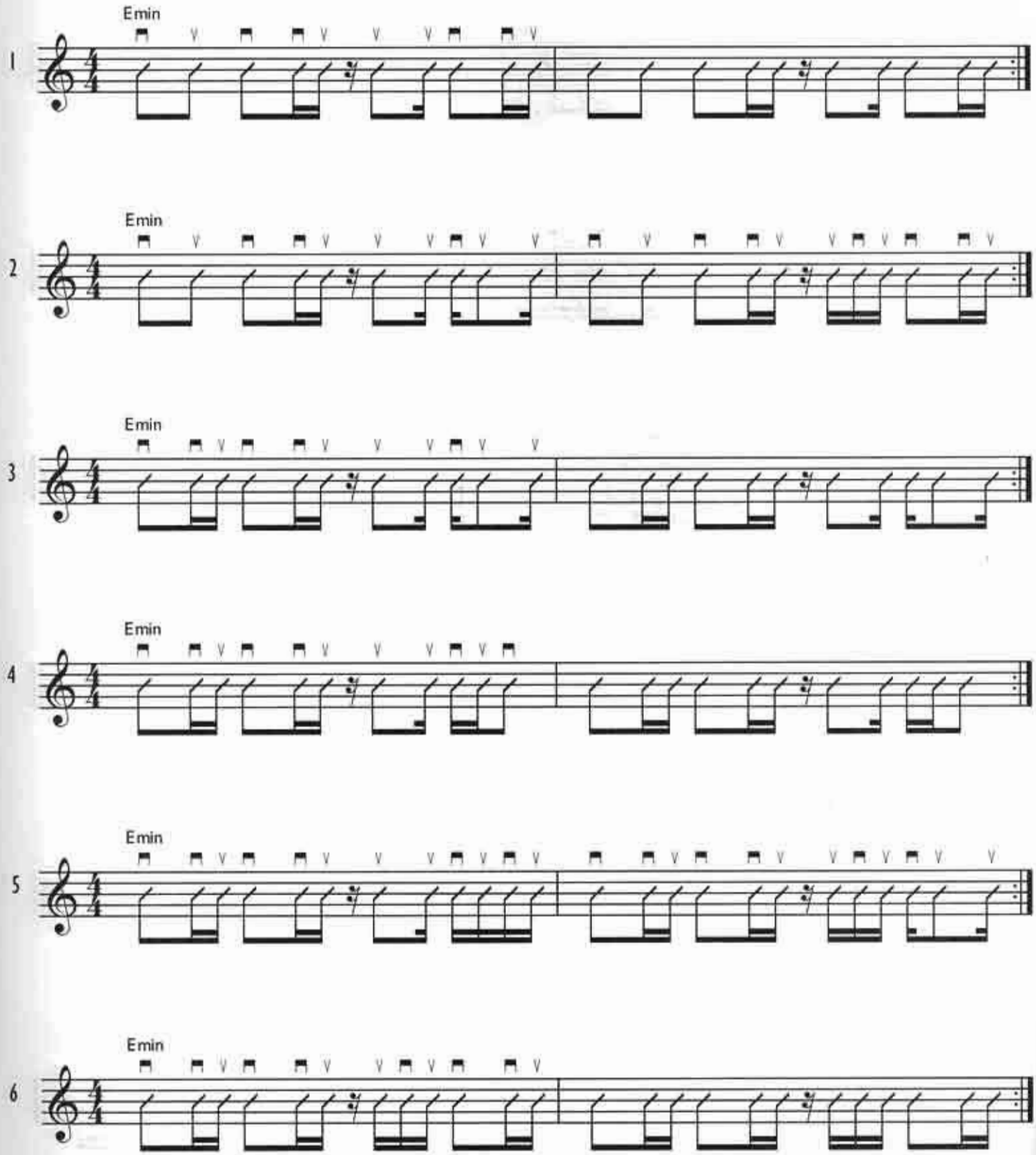

7
G
8
G
9
G
10
G
11
G
12
G

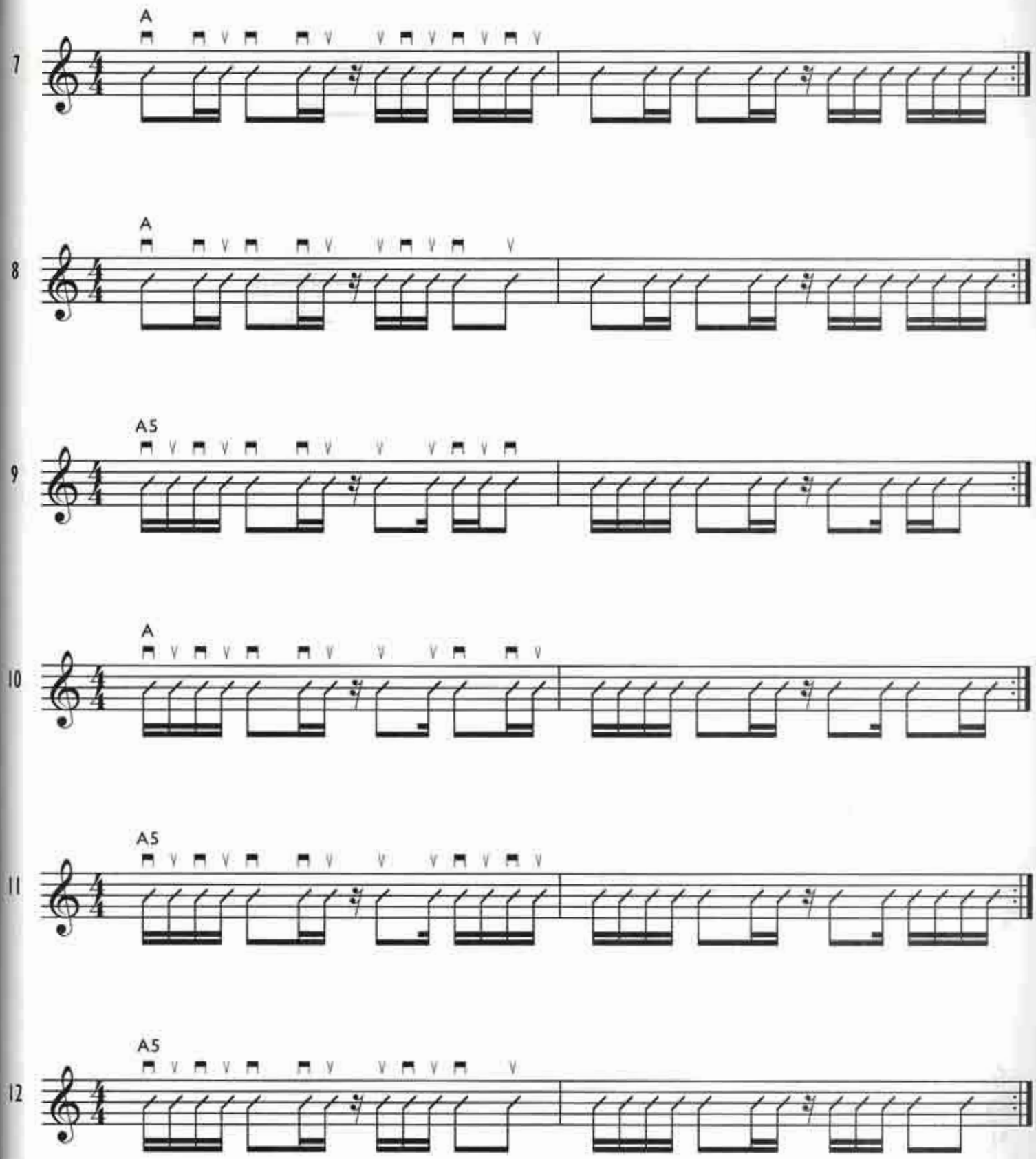
MORE ROCK



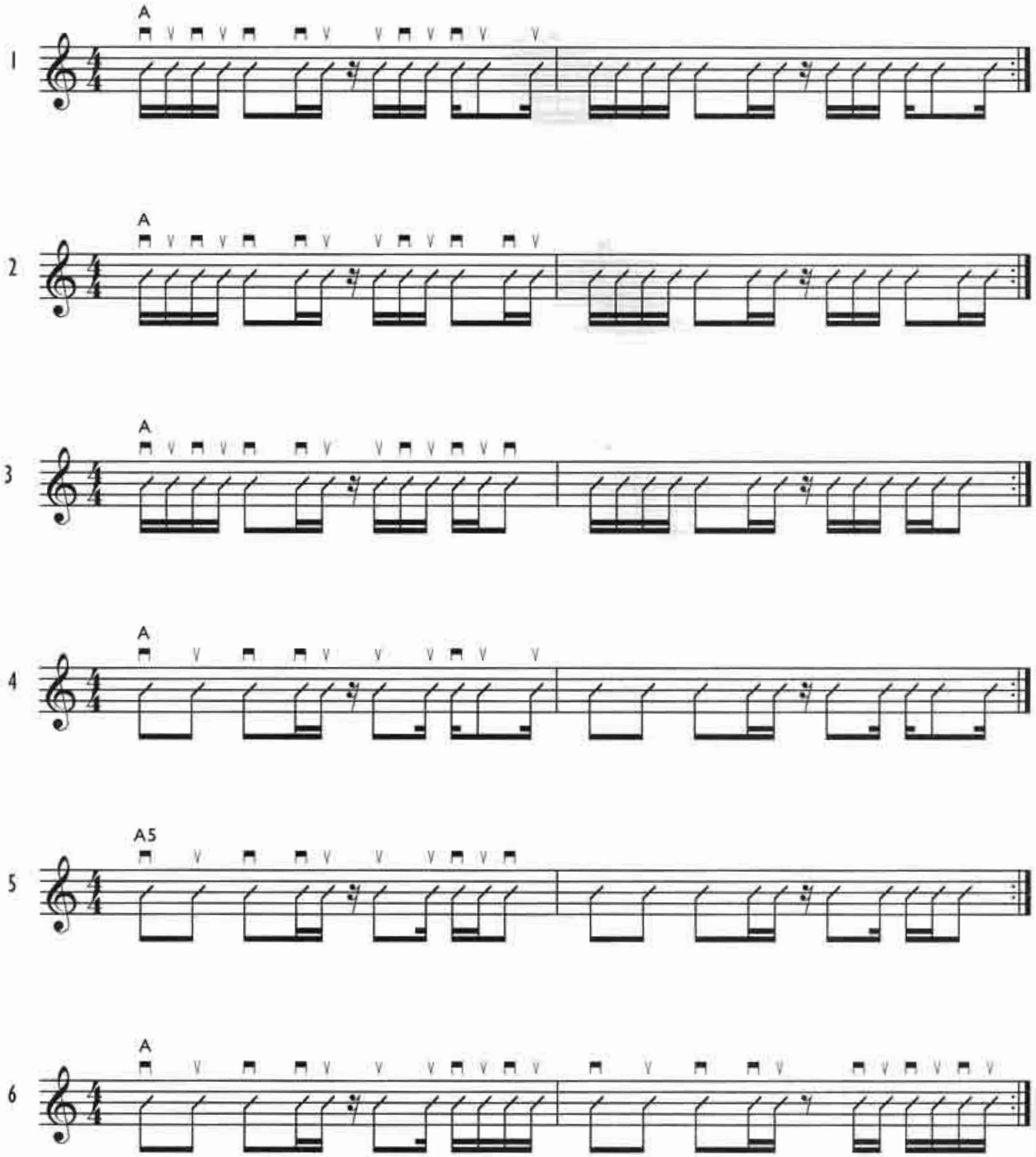

Emin
7
Emin
8
Emin
9
Emin
10
Emin
11
Emin
12

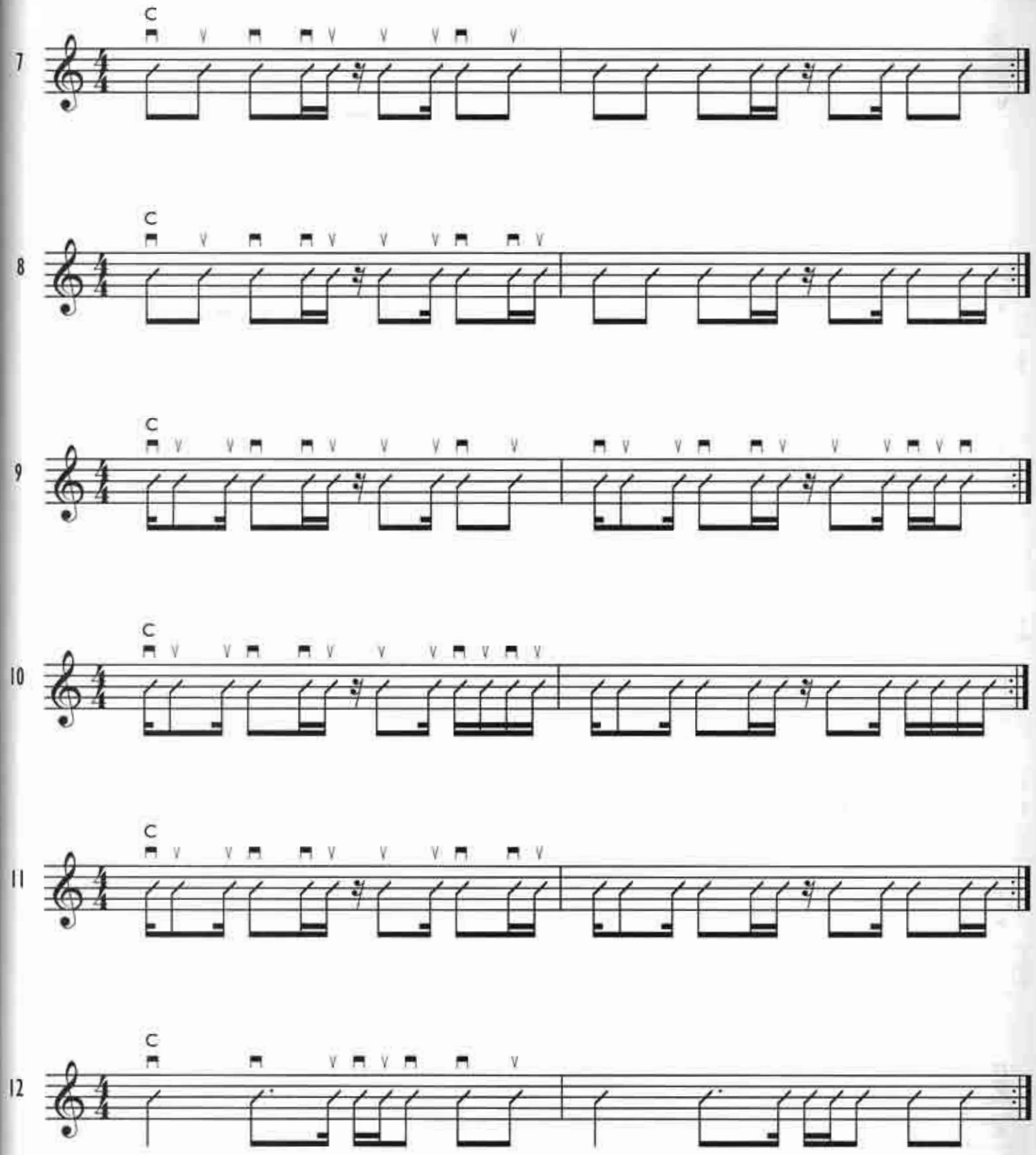
MORE ROCK



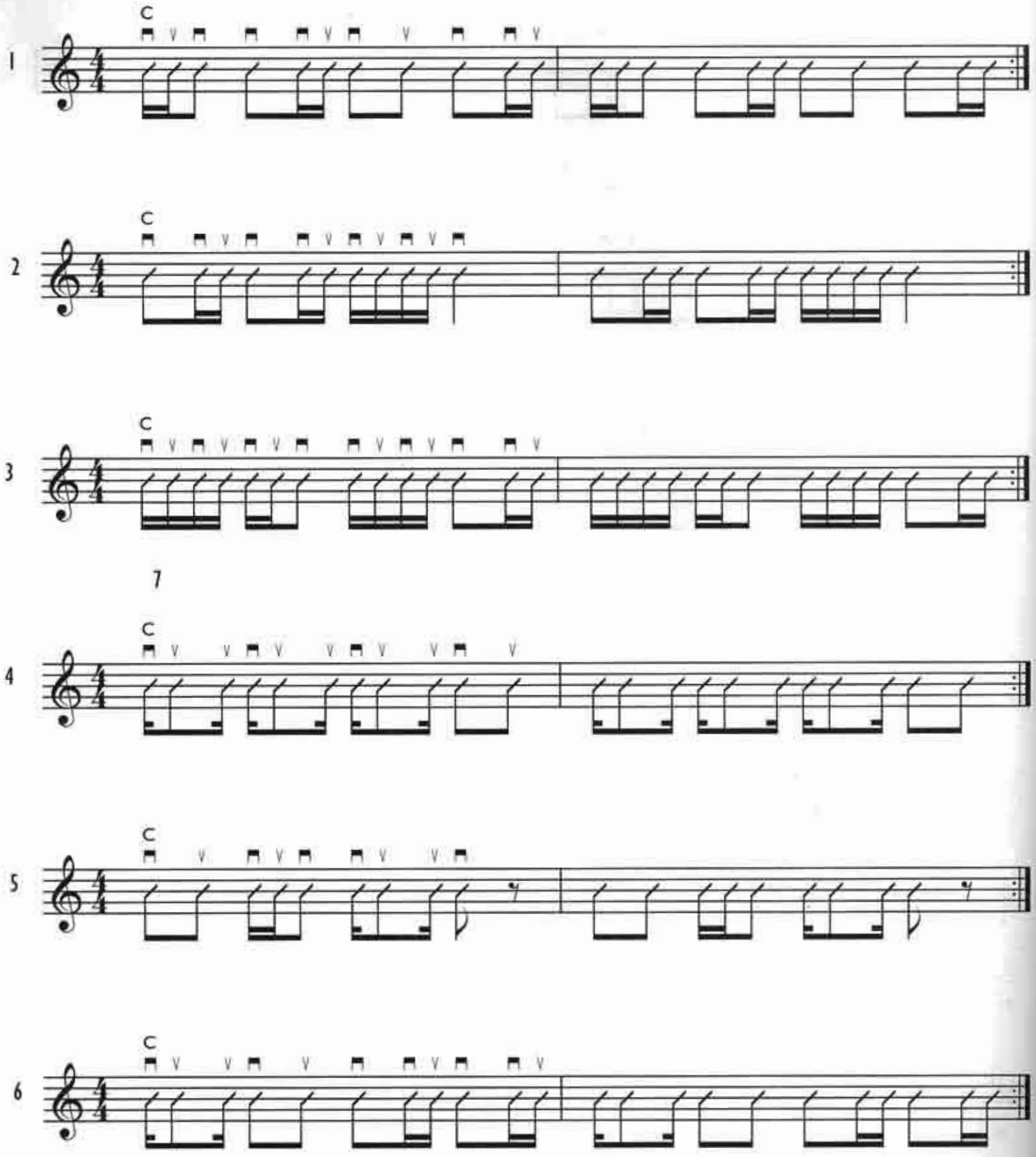

7
A
8
A
9
A5
10
A
11
A5
12
A5

MORE ROCK




7
C
8
C
9
C
10
C
11
C
12
C

MORE ROCK

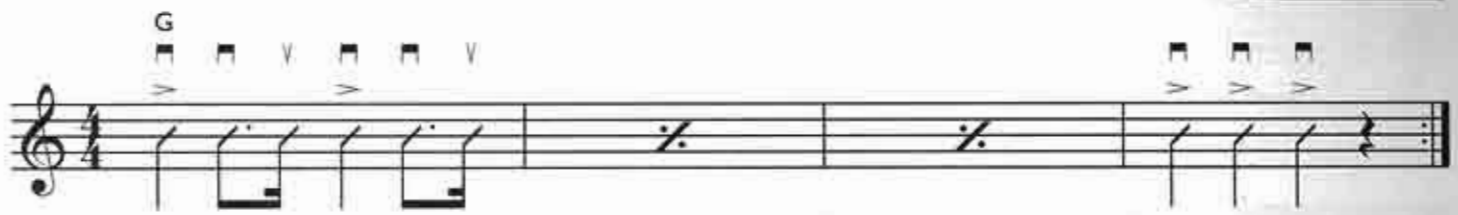


Miscellaneous

Here are some other rhythms that guitarists are sometimes expected to know. If you are playing casuals, club dates or private parties you should have a few ethnic and novelty rhythms up your sleeve. These examples should get you started. The "odd time" rhythms shown are only the tip of the iceberg. There are more approaches to this topic than can be included in this book. This is a fascinating area of music. For more examples of these feels listen to a wide variety of jazz, as well as the music of India and many of the African nations.

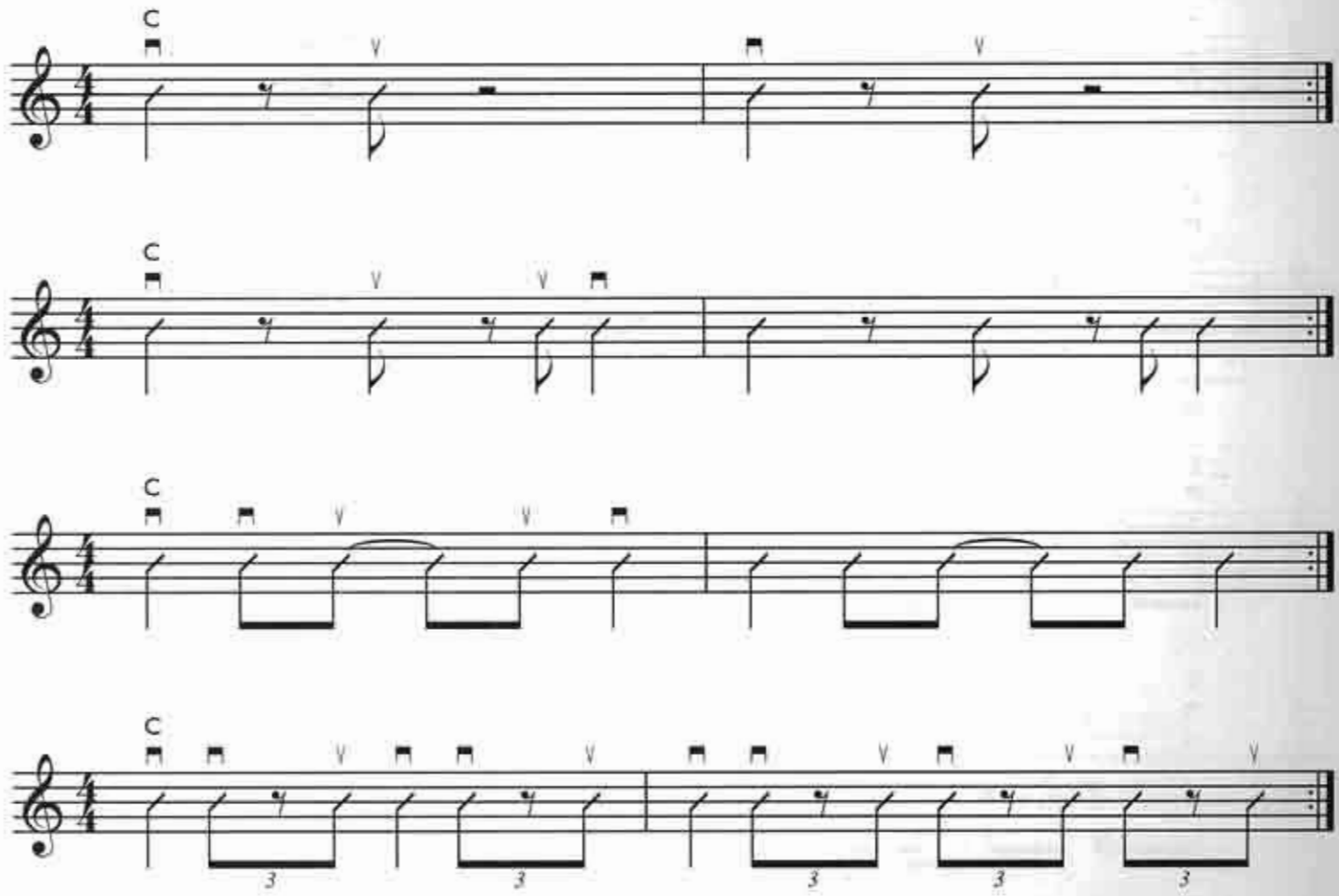
#2
Track 32

BUNNY HOP



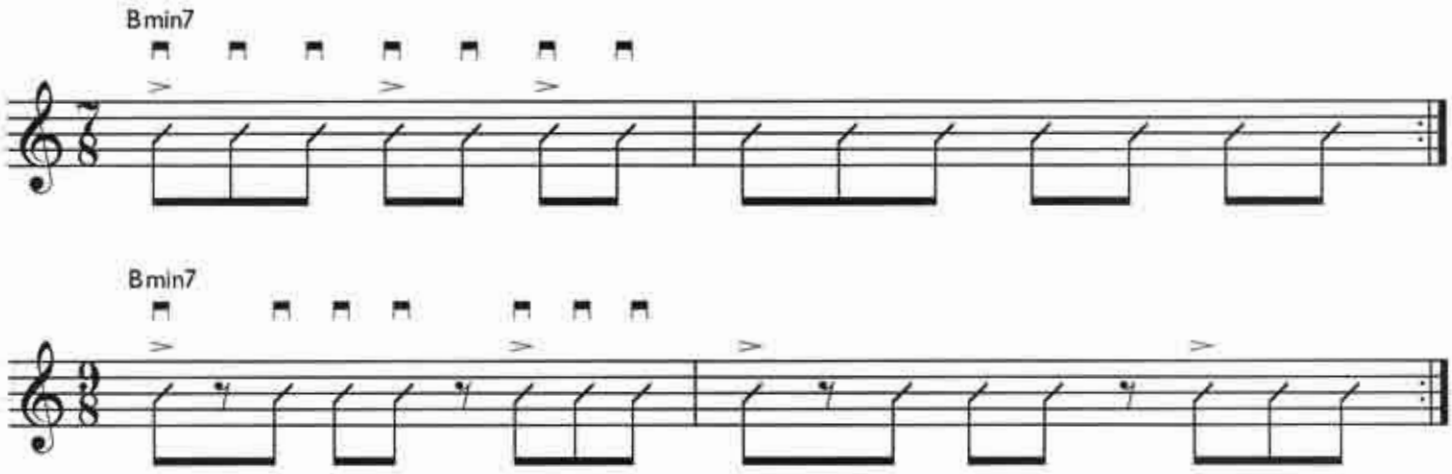
#2
Track 33

CHARLESTON



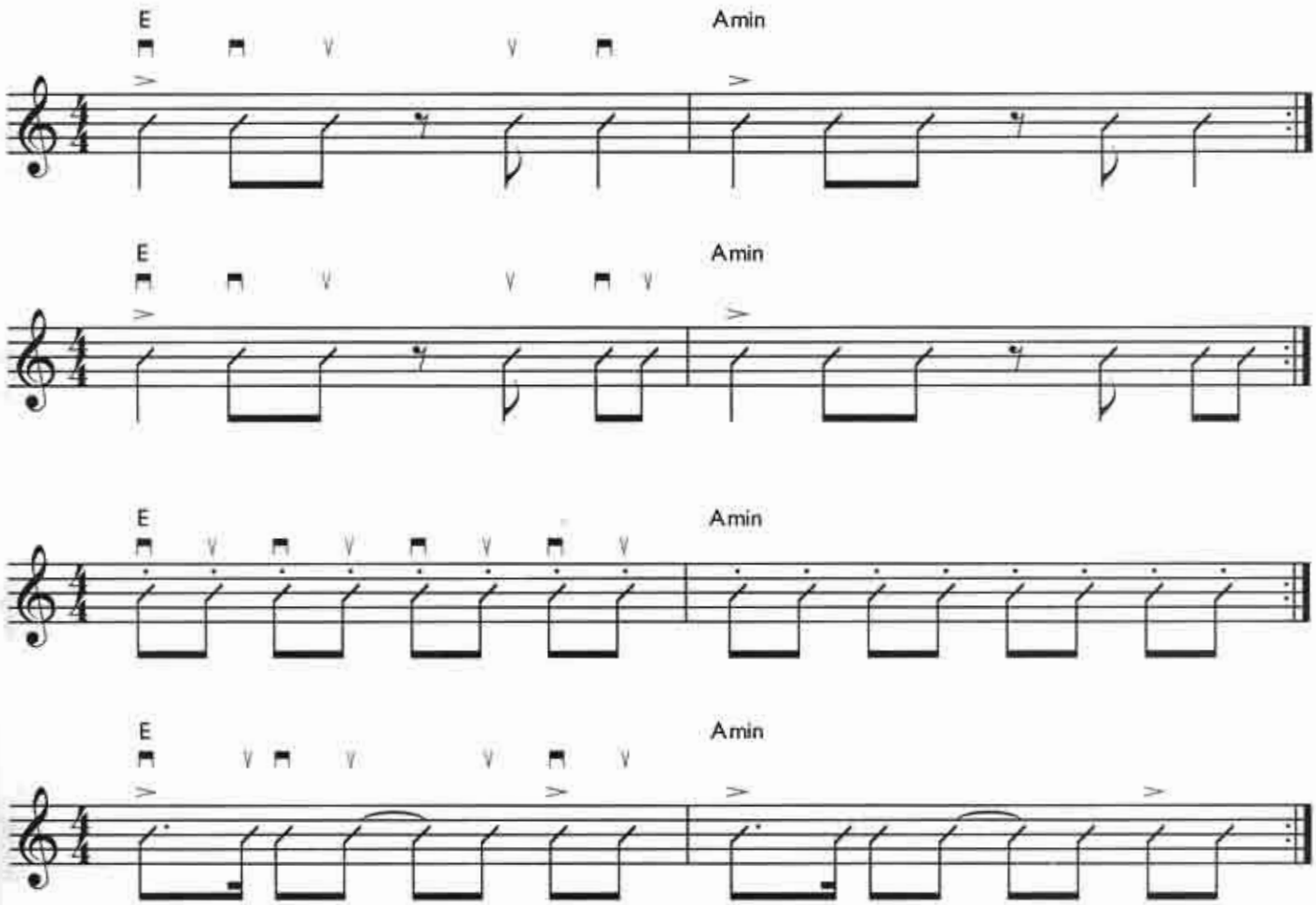
#2 Track 34

GREEK



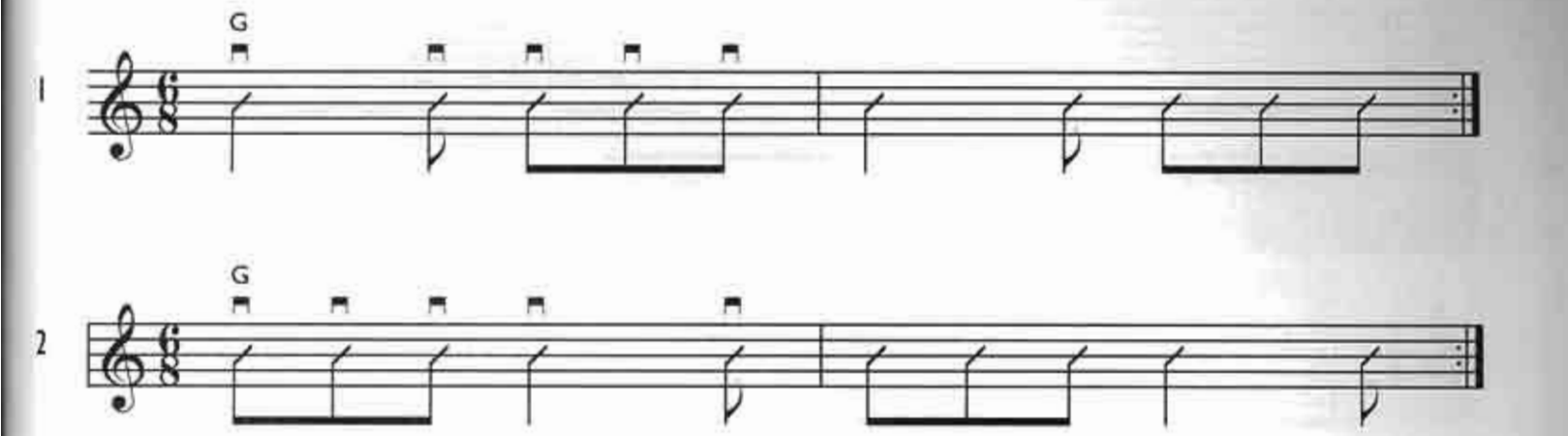
#2 Track 35

HORA



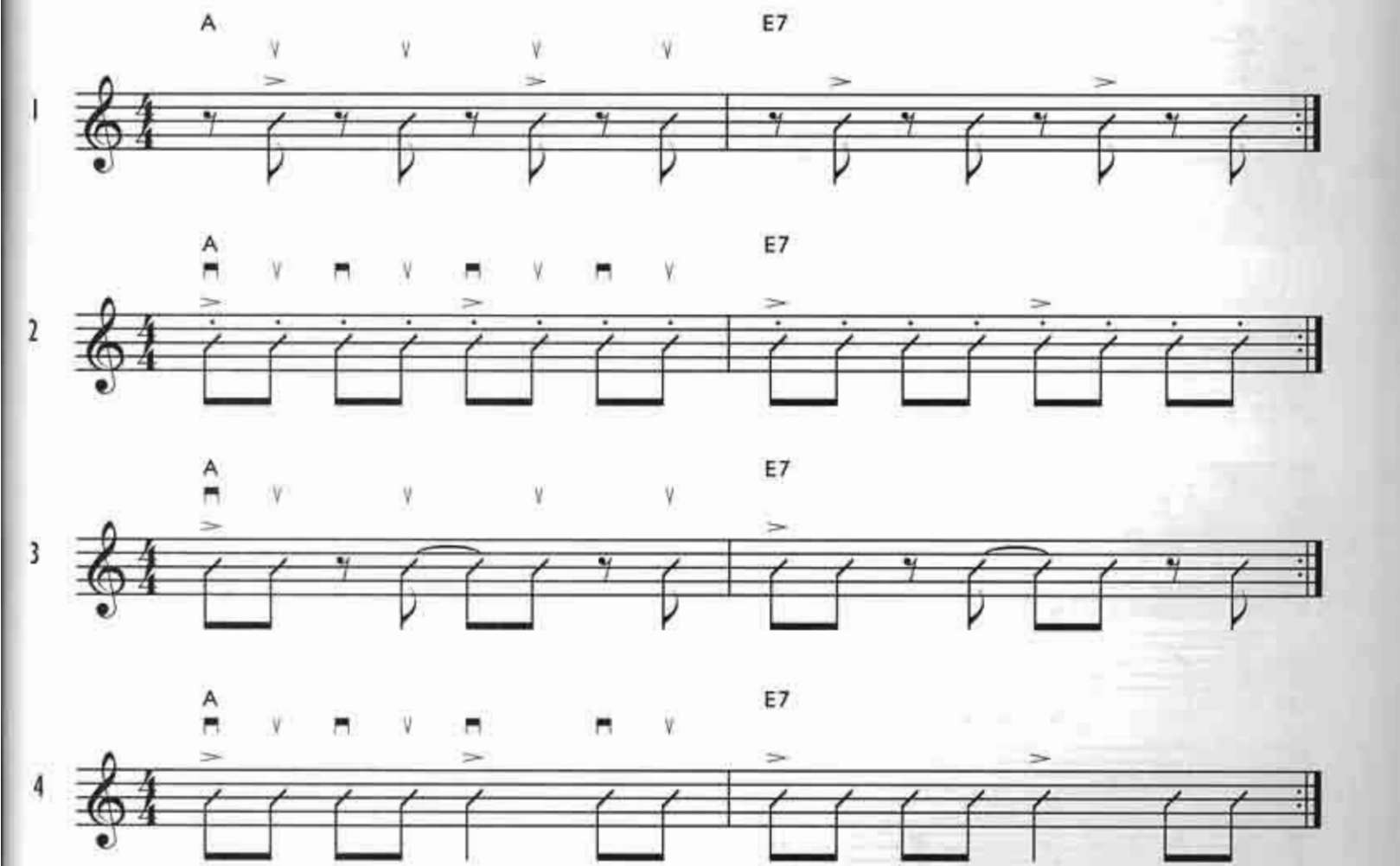
IRISH JIG

#2 Track 36



POLKA

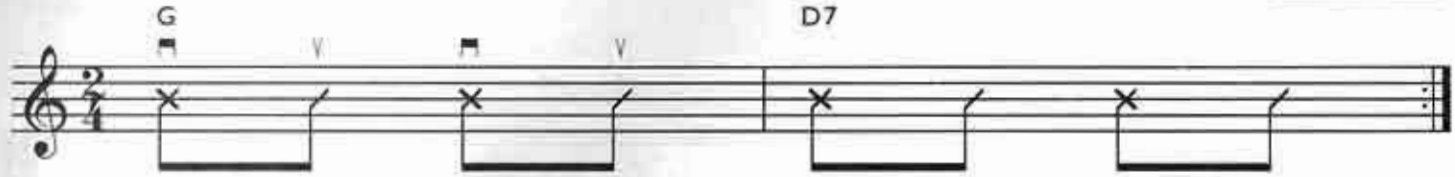
#2 Track 37



Miscellaneous Continued

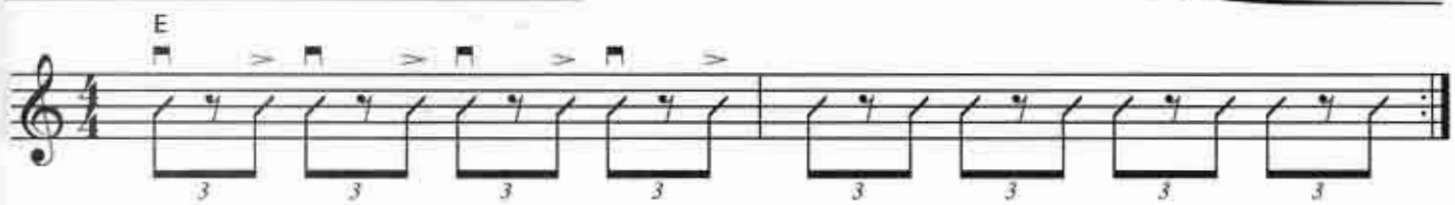
#2 Track 38

CAN-CAN



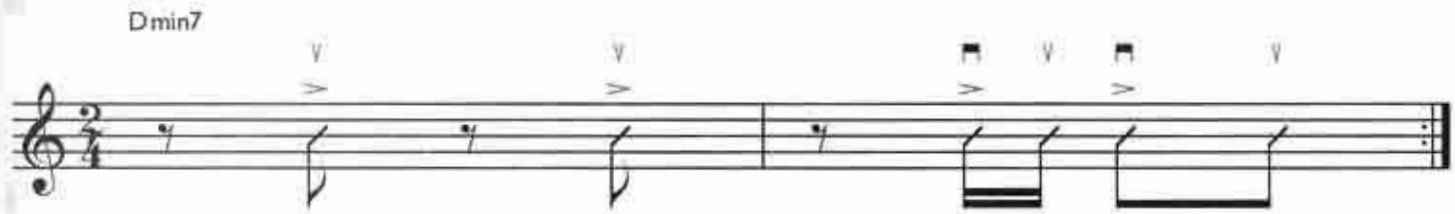
#2 Track 39

REEL



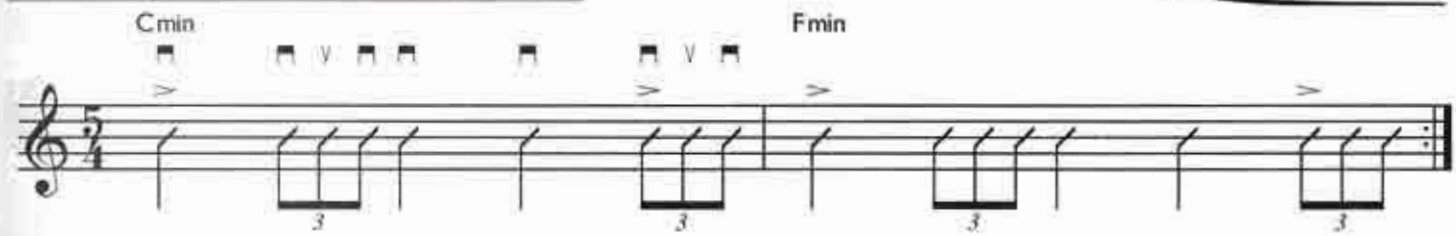
#2 Track 40

SHER



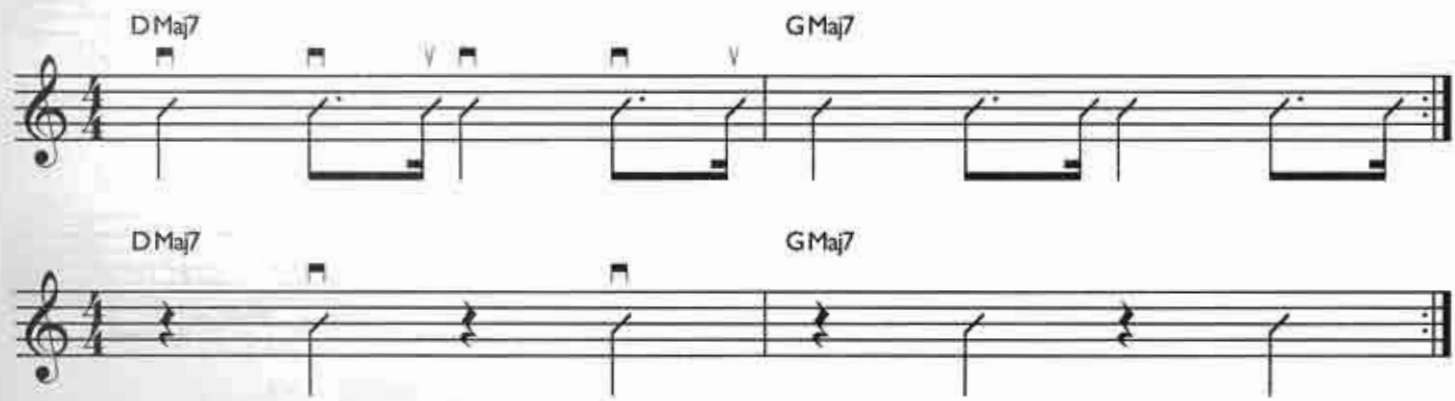
#2 Track 41

TURKISH



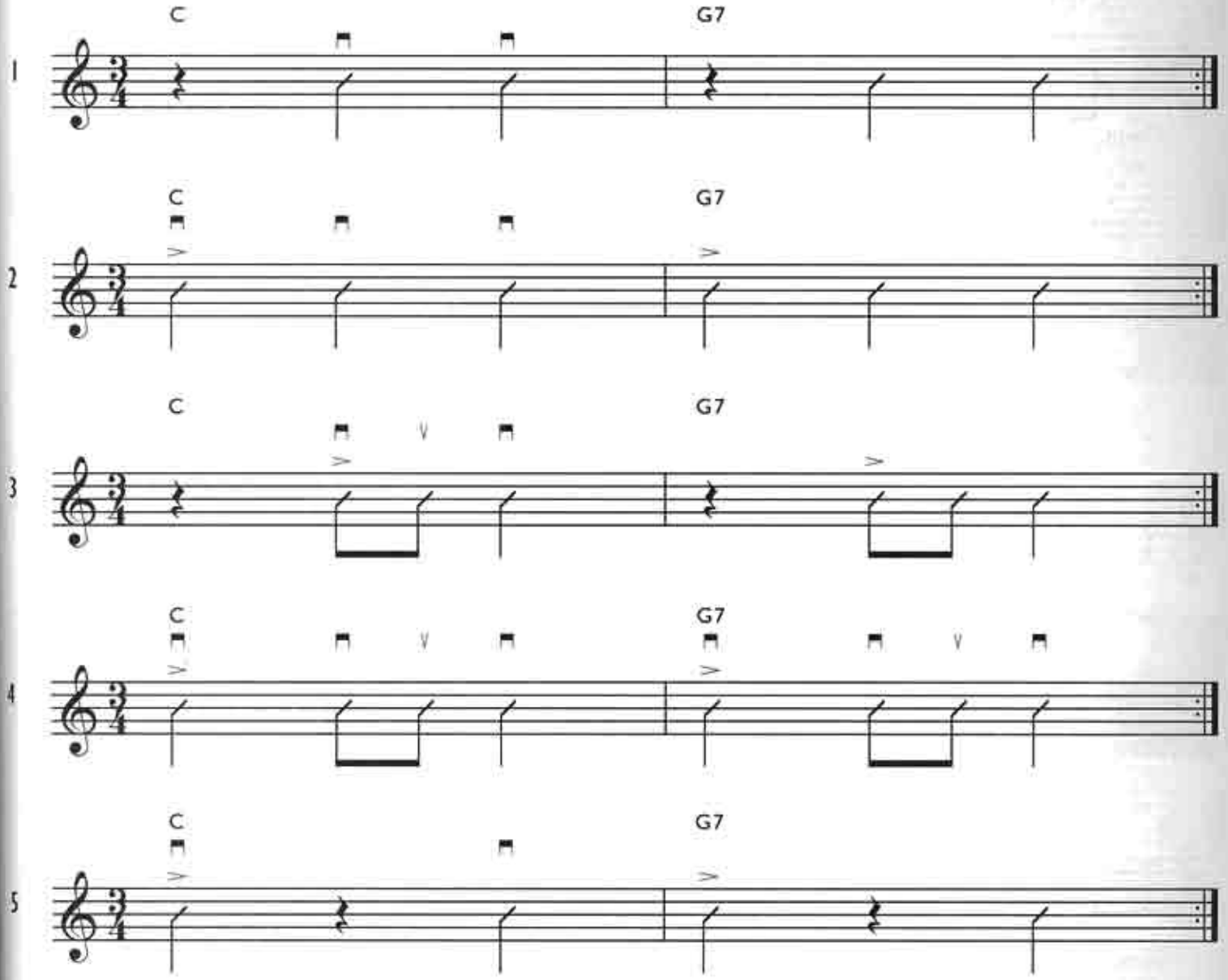
#2 Track 42

TWO STEP



STRAIGHTWALTZ

#2
Track 43



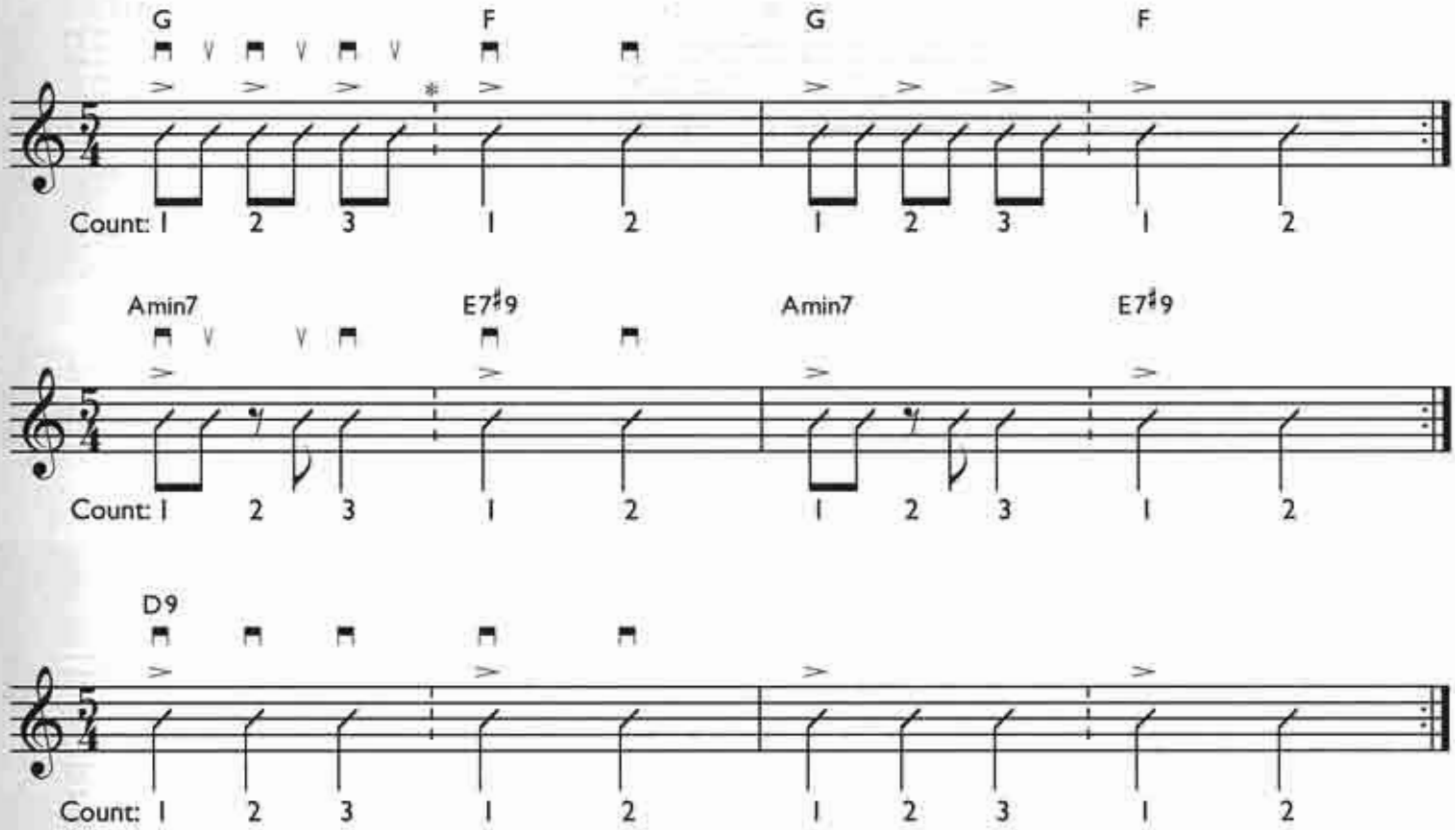
VIENNESEWALTZ

#2
Track 44

Miscellaneous Continued

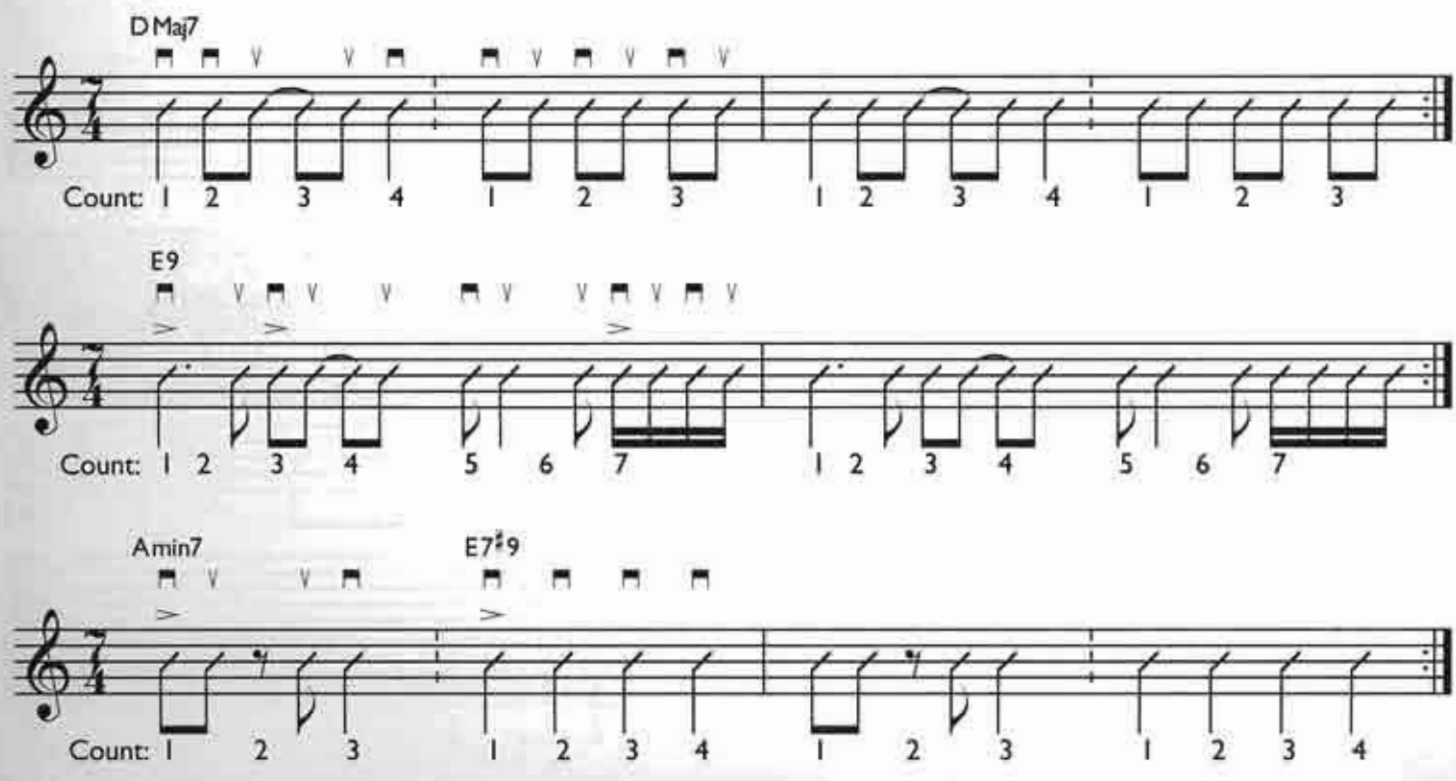
#2 Track 45

ODD TIME — 5/4



#2 Track 46

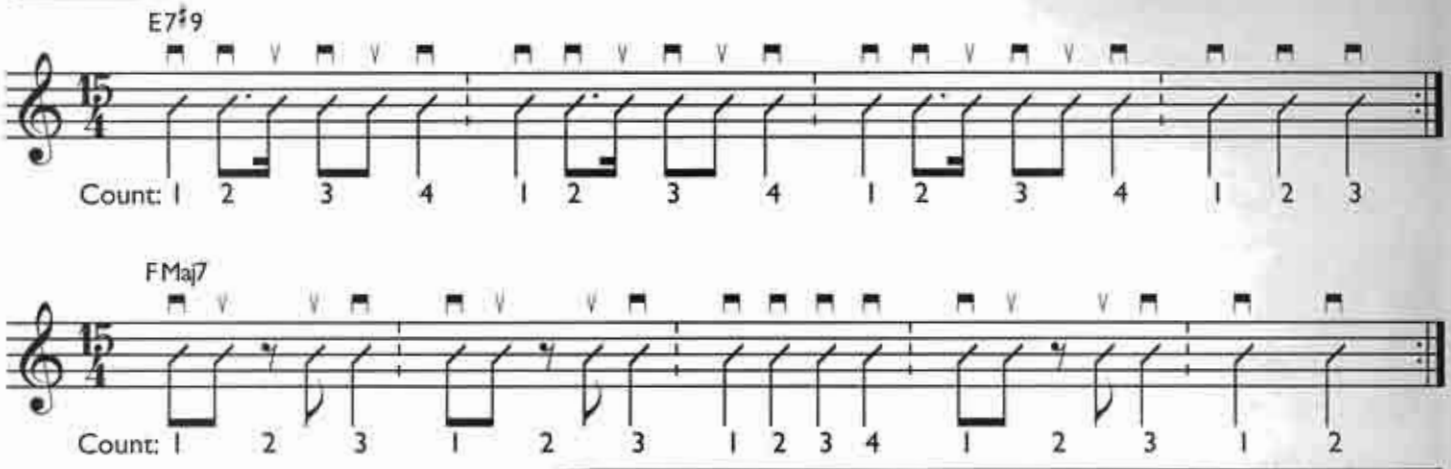
ODD TIME — 7/4



* Dotted bar lines are sometimes used to divide odd meters into combinations of recognizable divisions.

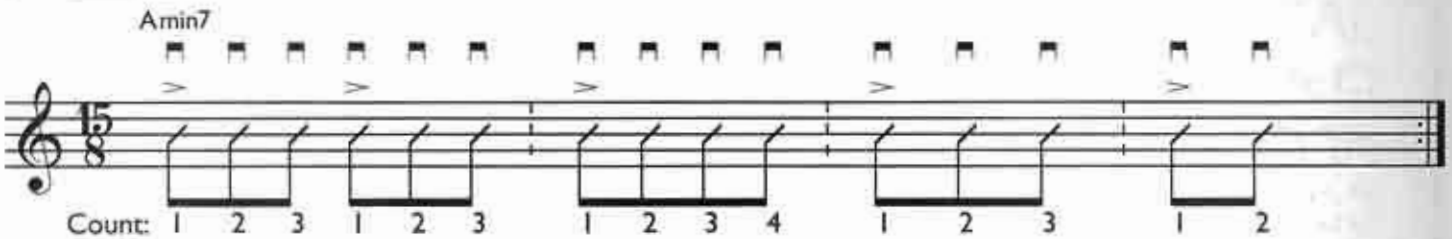
ODD TIME — 15/4

#2 Track 47



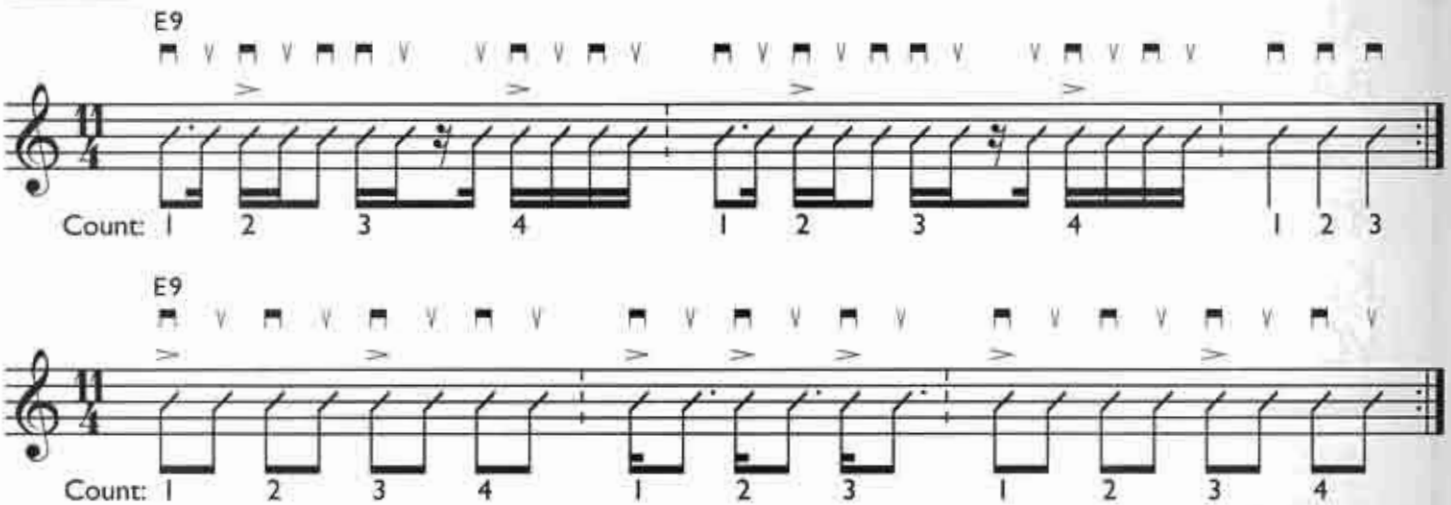
ODD TIME — 15/8

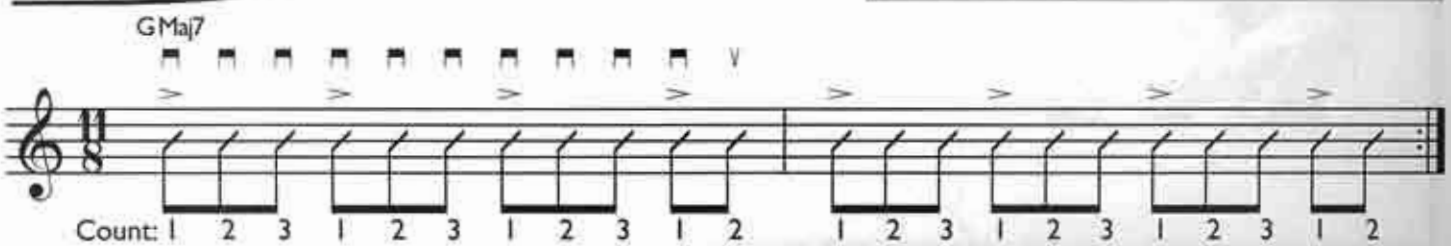
#2 Track 48



ODD TIME — 11/4

#2 Track 49



ODD TIME — 11/8

#2 Track 50