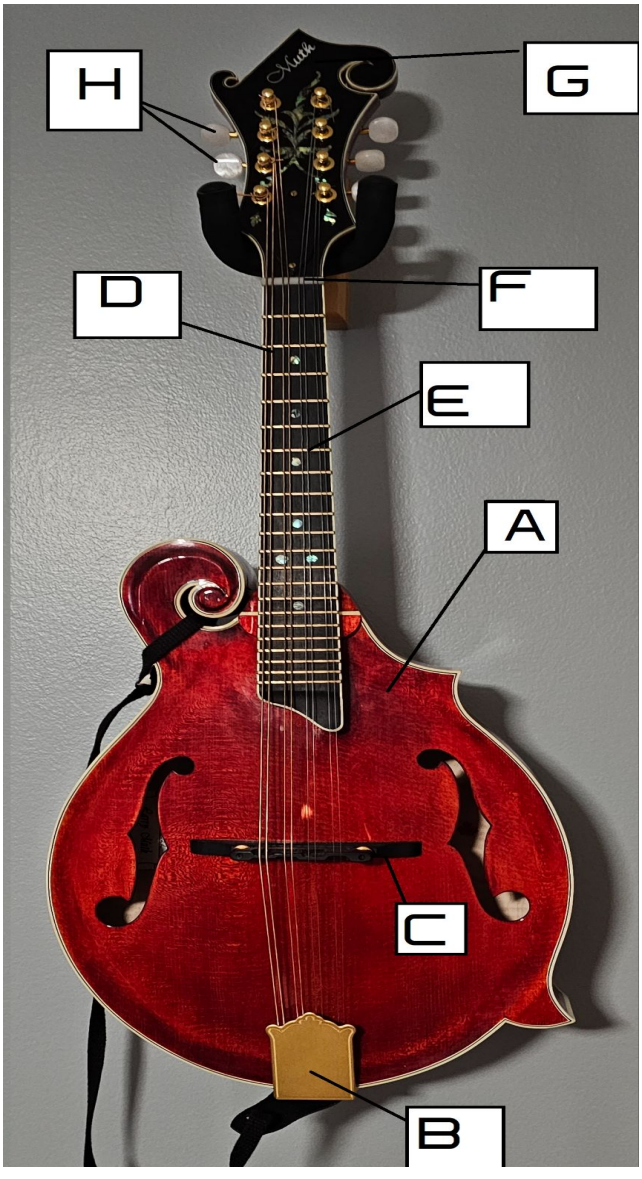
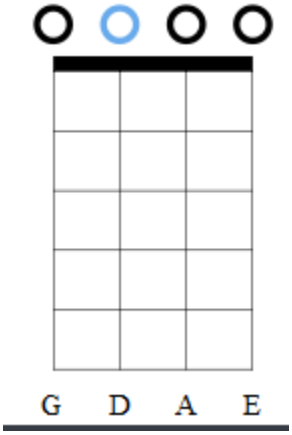
WHAT MAKES A MANDOLIN

Parts of the mandolin: Let's start by putting names to all the different bits and bobs that make up this wonderful little instrument. There are plenty of different looking mandolins out there but they pretty much all of these parts:

A. Body - Top, Sides & Back of mandolin (typically made of wood)
B. Tailpiece - String anchor (where the strings attach to the body)
C. Bridge - Piece of wood that sends vibrations of strings into body of mandolin
D. Neck - Long piece of wood extending away from the body where you place your left hand
E. Frets - Vertical metal strips that make new notes
F. Nut - Where strings slot into place at end of neck
G. Headstock - End of the mandolin neck
H. Tuning pegs - Used to adjust pitch of each string

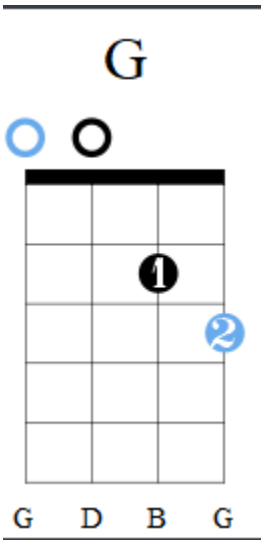


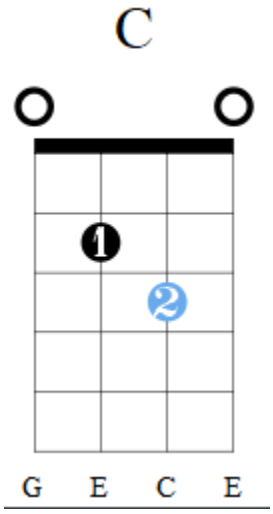
The mandolin has 8 strings tuned in pairs. Play each set of strings at the same time. To make things easier, think of the mandolin having 4 strings instead of eight. Each string has note names that are very important to memorize. Starting with the lowest sounding string (the one furthest away from the ground) - the string names are G, then D, then A and then E.

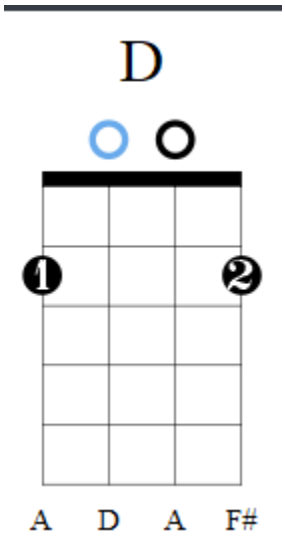


CHORDS

One of the very first things we are going to learn is how to make chords.
THE FIRST THREE CHORDS: The three most commonly used chords on the mandolin are G, C & D. Each of these chords only requires the use of two fingers and the open strings. Try these out!

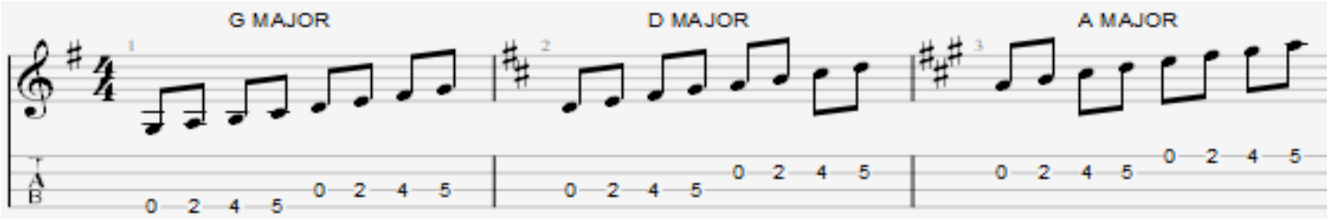






It is a good idea to have these chords play loud and clear. First, hold down the notes and play all of the strings. Stop and listen. Did you hear any buzzing or dead sounds? Stop and play each string individually. Isolate the issue and try to adjust your hand until you can get clear notes. An important thing to notice between the G & C chord is how the shape of the chord remains the same but has shifted position. Patterns are common and recurring on the mandolin! That is the part of the beauty of the instrument.

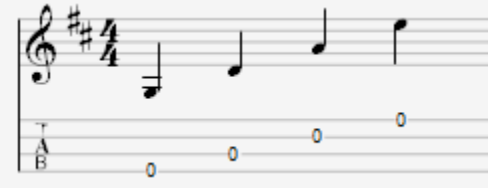
SCALES



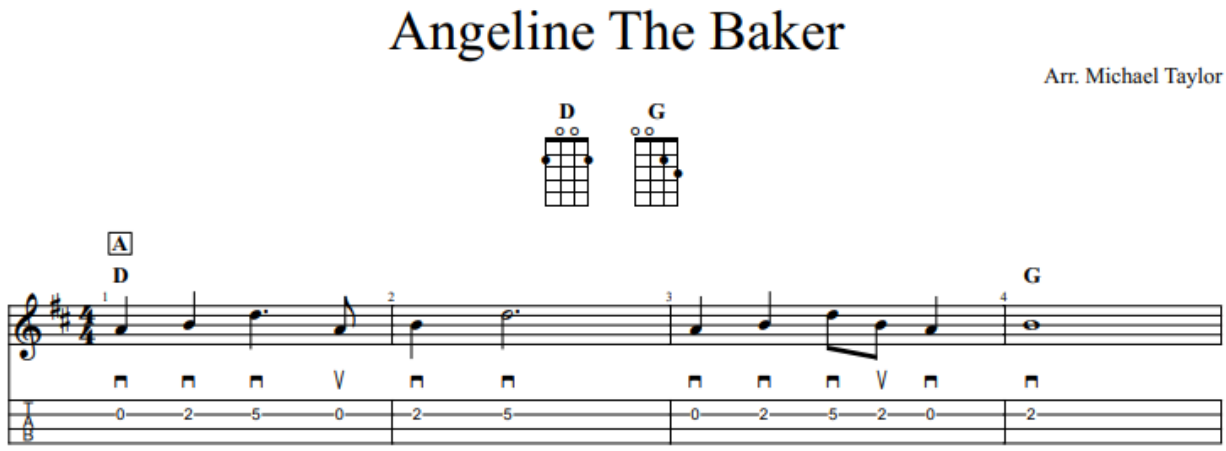
The three most commonly used scales a G, D and A. Each one is laid out here for you. Please observe the patterns at work. Notice that the D scale is the same thing as the G scale but up a set of strings. The same thing holds true for the A scale. It's the D scale moved up a set of strings. This is a powerful realization and one that definitely helped me a lot when I started learning!

READING TABLATURE

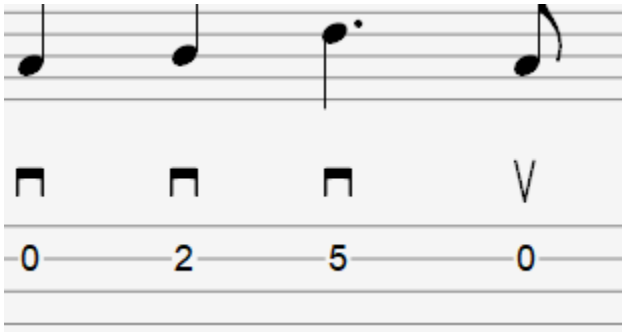
We're going to do a quick rundown on how to read tablature (most people call it tab). This is different from ready sheet music. While knowing how to read sheet music is helpful it is not required to start playing.



Mandolin tab always has four lines (one for each string). The lowest string would be G then D, then A, then E on top. On each of these lines you'll find numbers. These numbers let us know which frets to play. If you need to play an open string, it will be marked by a zero.
Let's start out by looking at one of our first songs!



In the first bar of Angeline the baker we will need to play the open A string, the second fret on the A string, the fifth fret of the A string and then the open A string.



The “upside down” U represents a down stroke with your pick. The V represents an upstroke with your pick. If we were counting 1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 4 AND - the 1, 2, 3, 4 would usually be a down stroke. AND AND AND AND would usually be an upstroke.

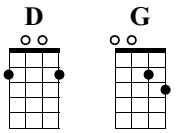
Towards the back of this book you will find a few tunes that most people would consider “jam standards”. These will be the focus of the bulk of our lessons at camp. Angeline The Baker is an excellent beginner tune that everybody will be playing every night!

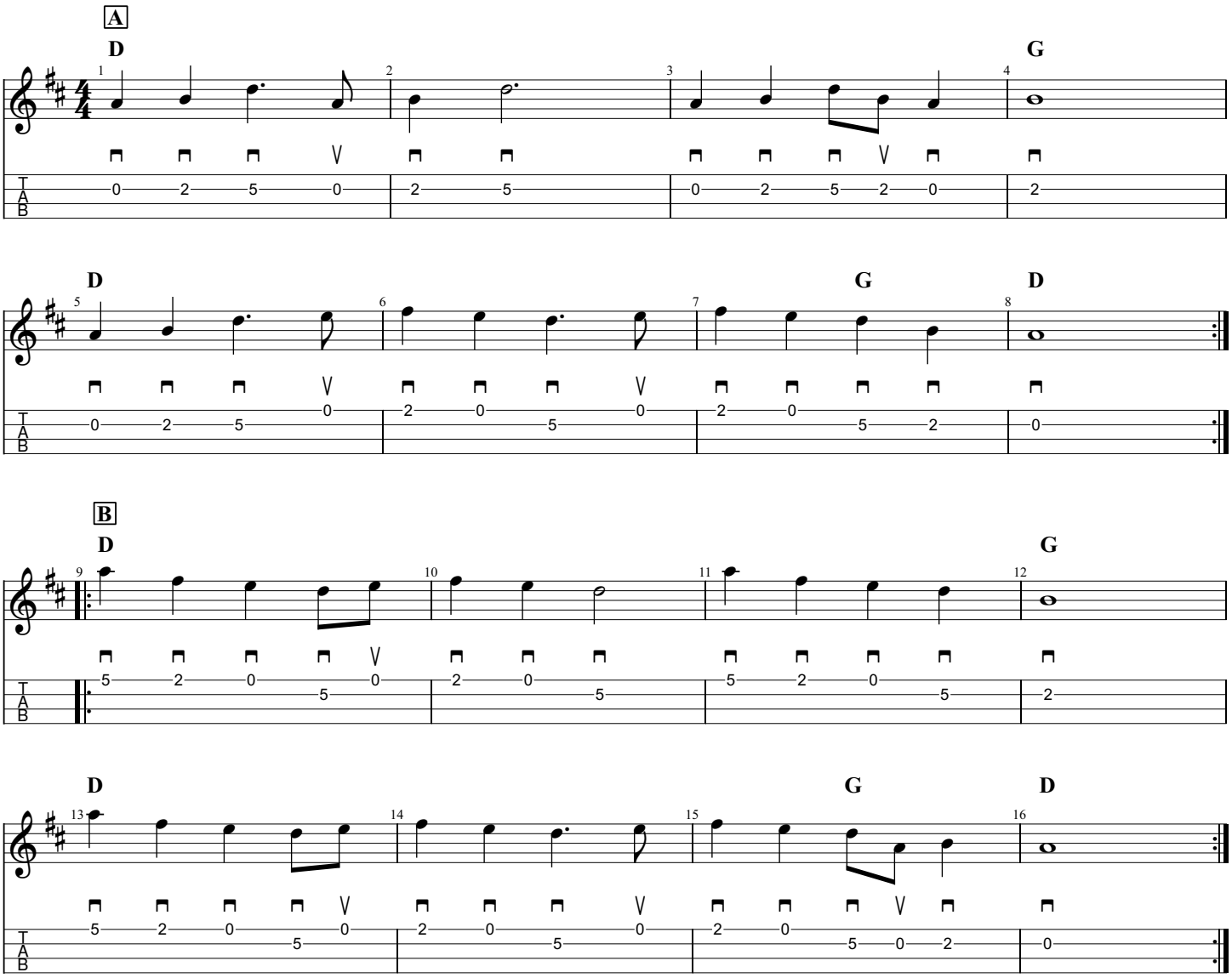
PLAYING TUNES

The primary focus of this class is to get you playing music with other people as quickly as possible. Below are several common songs. This booklet is meant as a resource to get you to start playing but the journey you go on will be uniquely your own. Have fun and keep at it! I hope to see you again soon!

Angeline The Baker

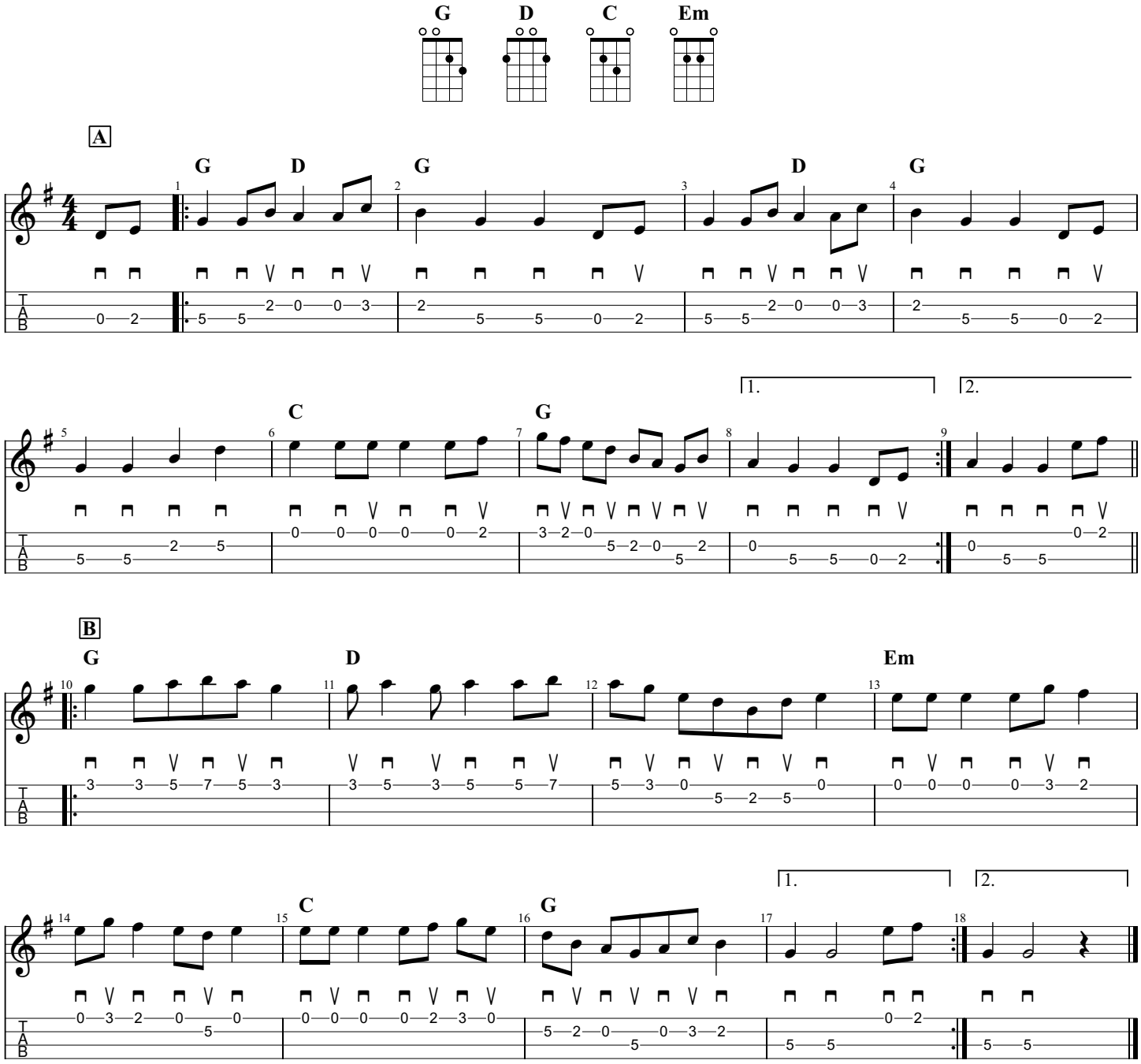
Arr. Michael Taylor





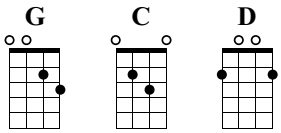
Big Sciota

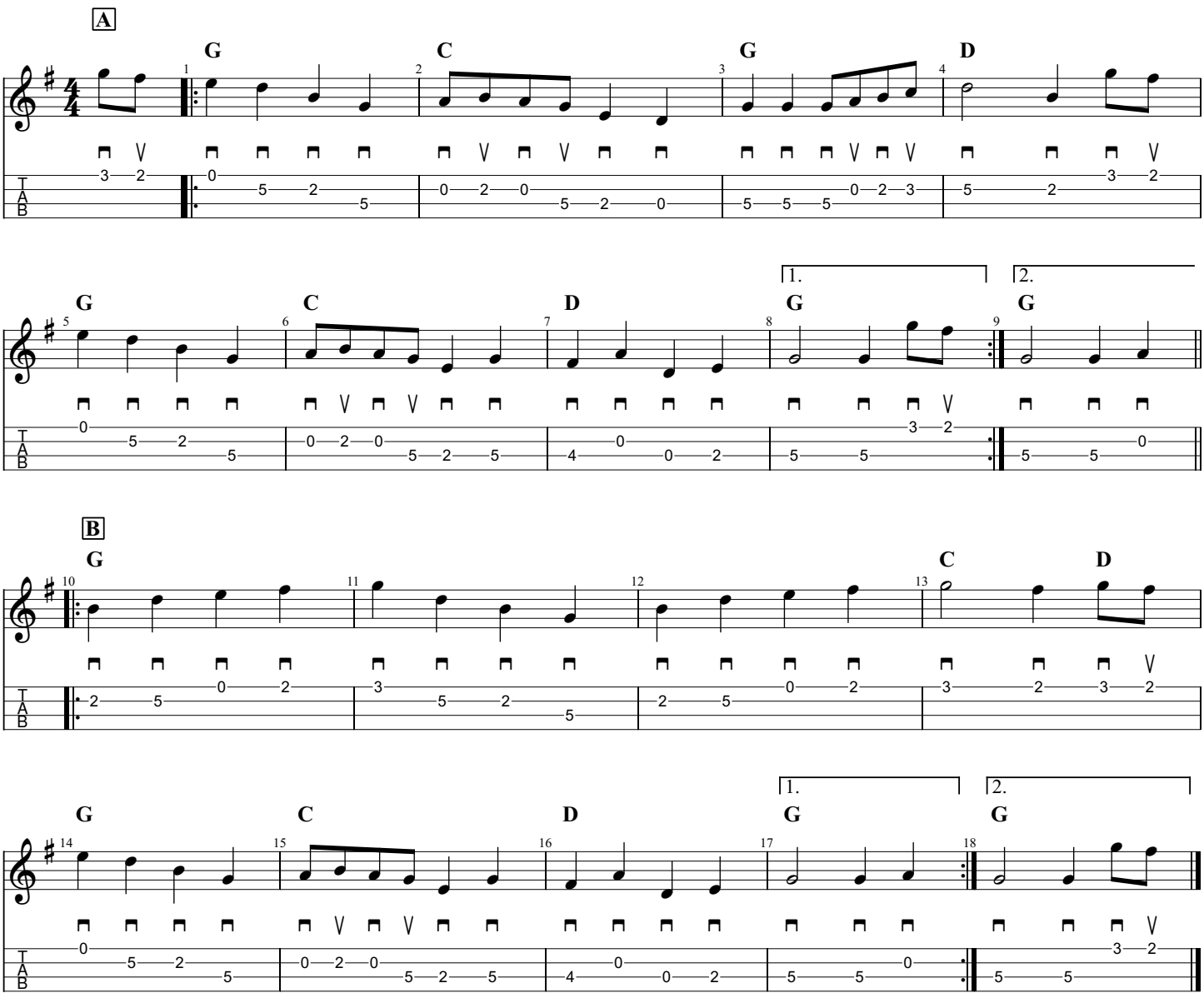
Arr. Michael Taylor



Girl I Left Behind

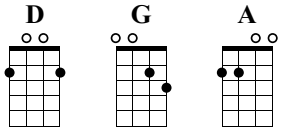
Arr. Michael Taylor

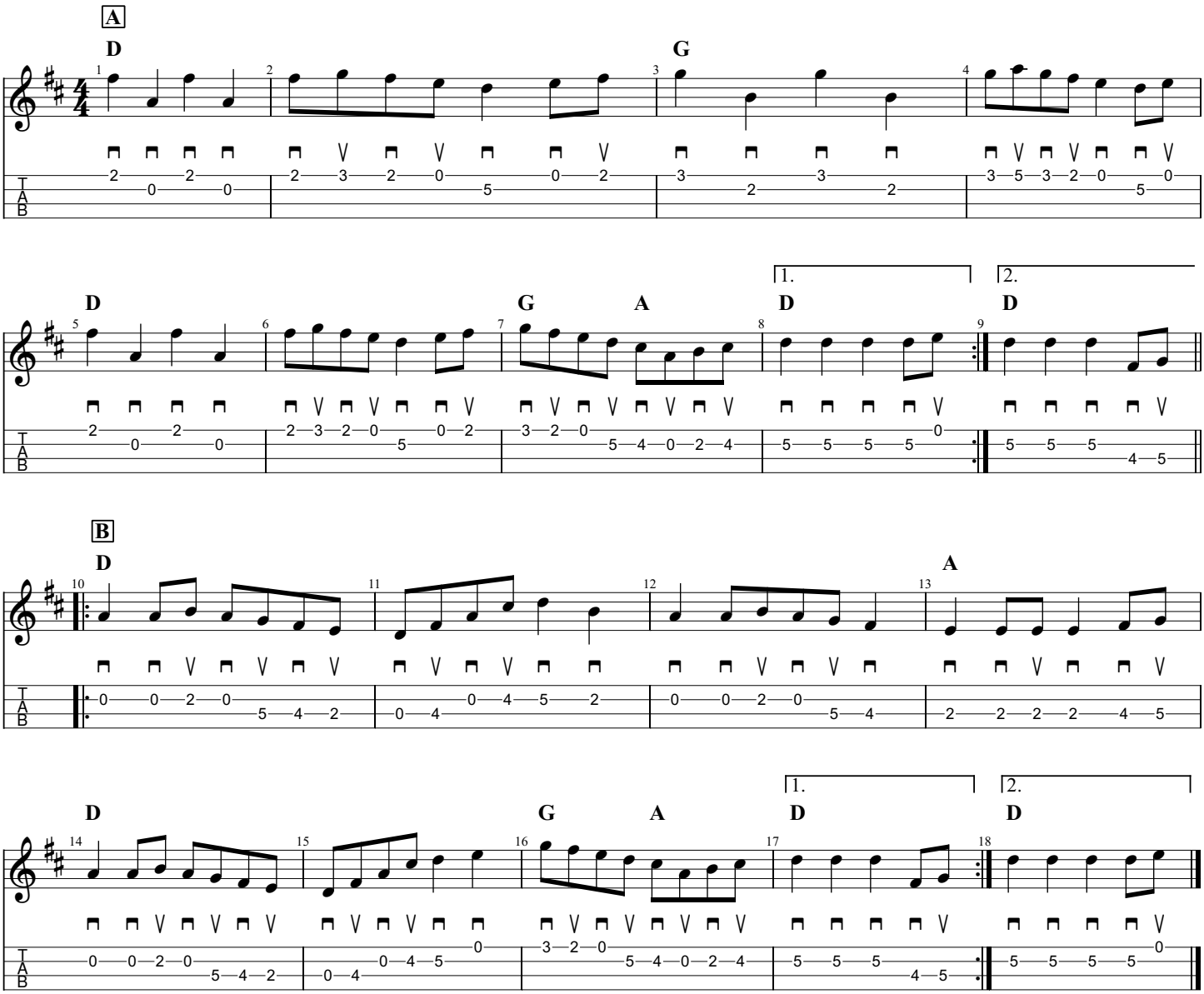




Liberty

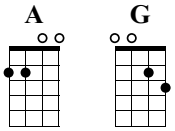
Arr. Michael Taylor

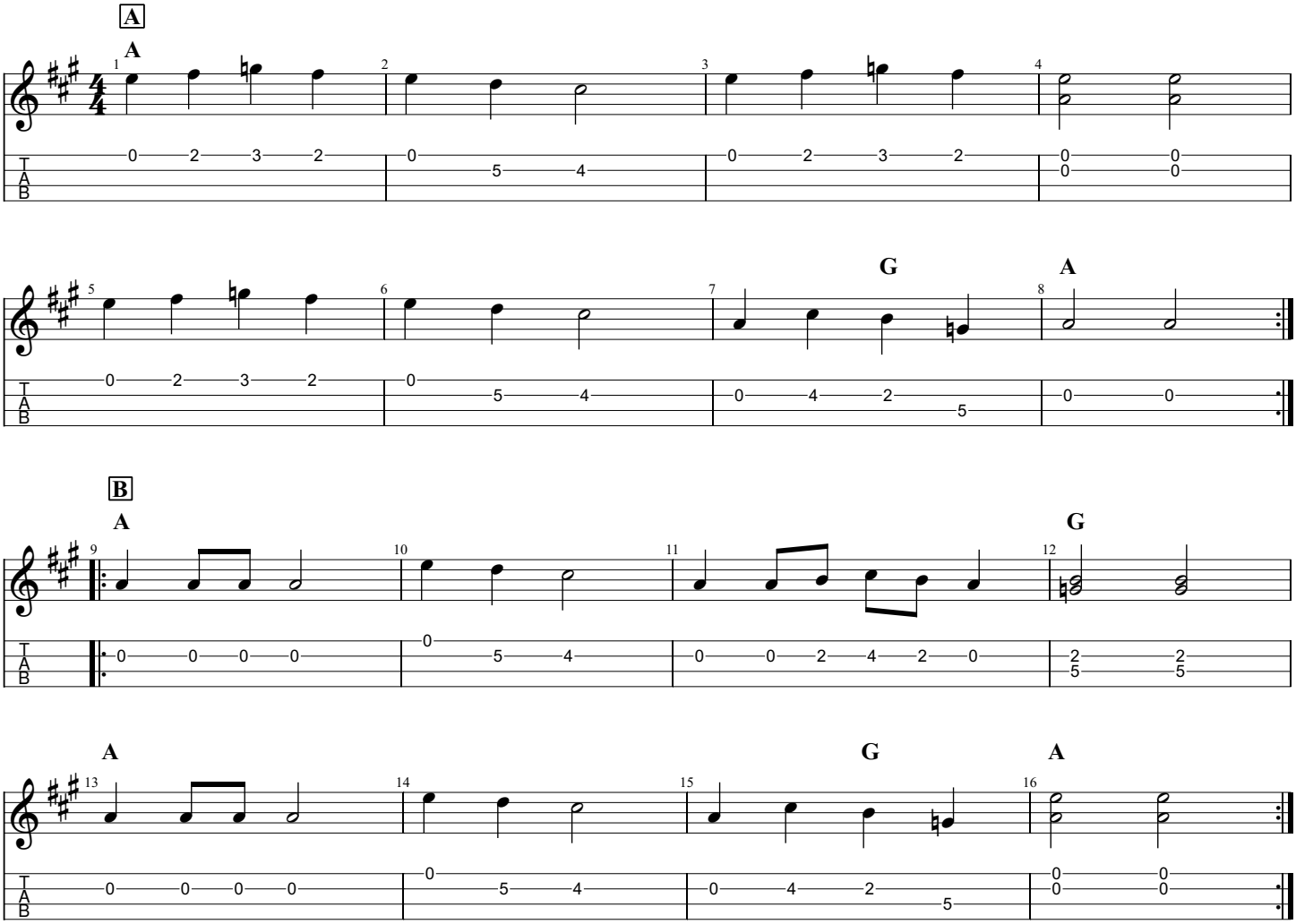




Old Joe Clark

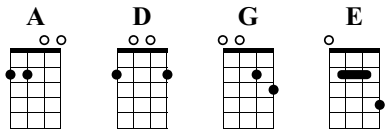
Arr. Michael Taylor

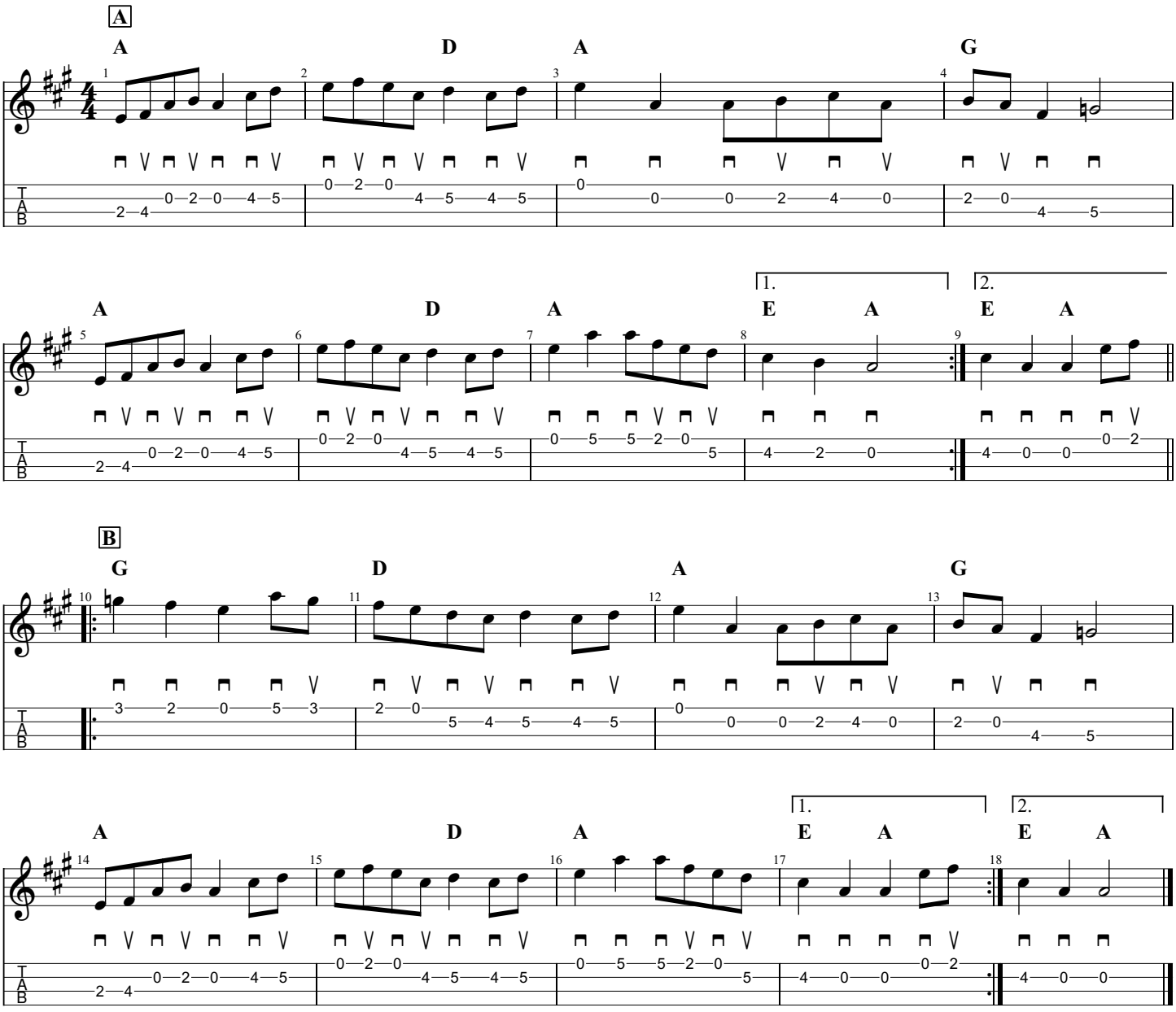




Red Haired Boy

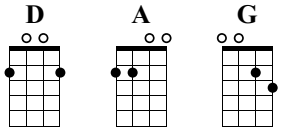
Arr. Michael Taylor

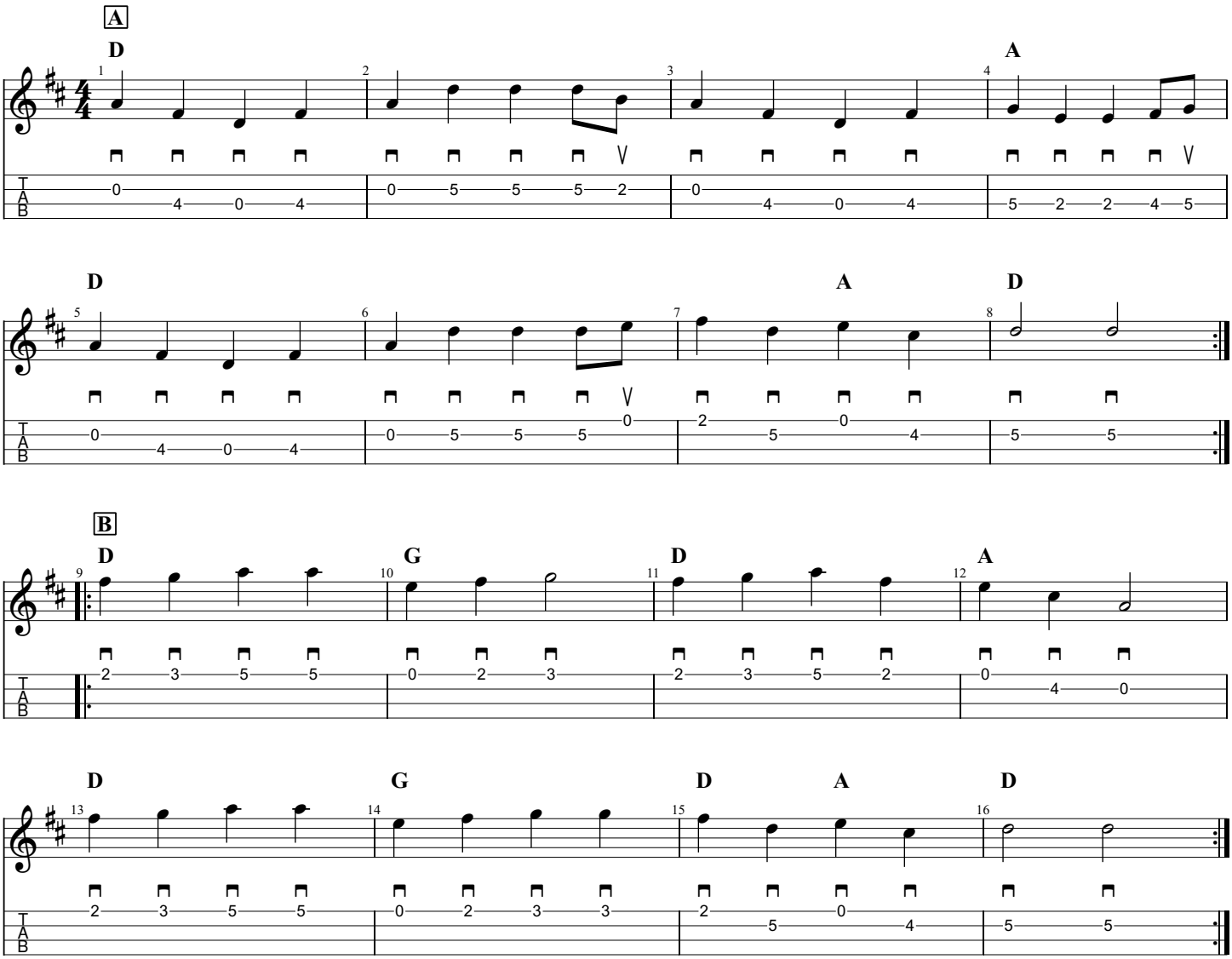




Soldier's Joy

Arr. Michael Taylor





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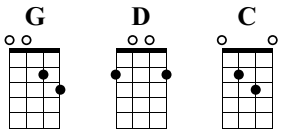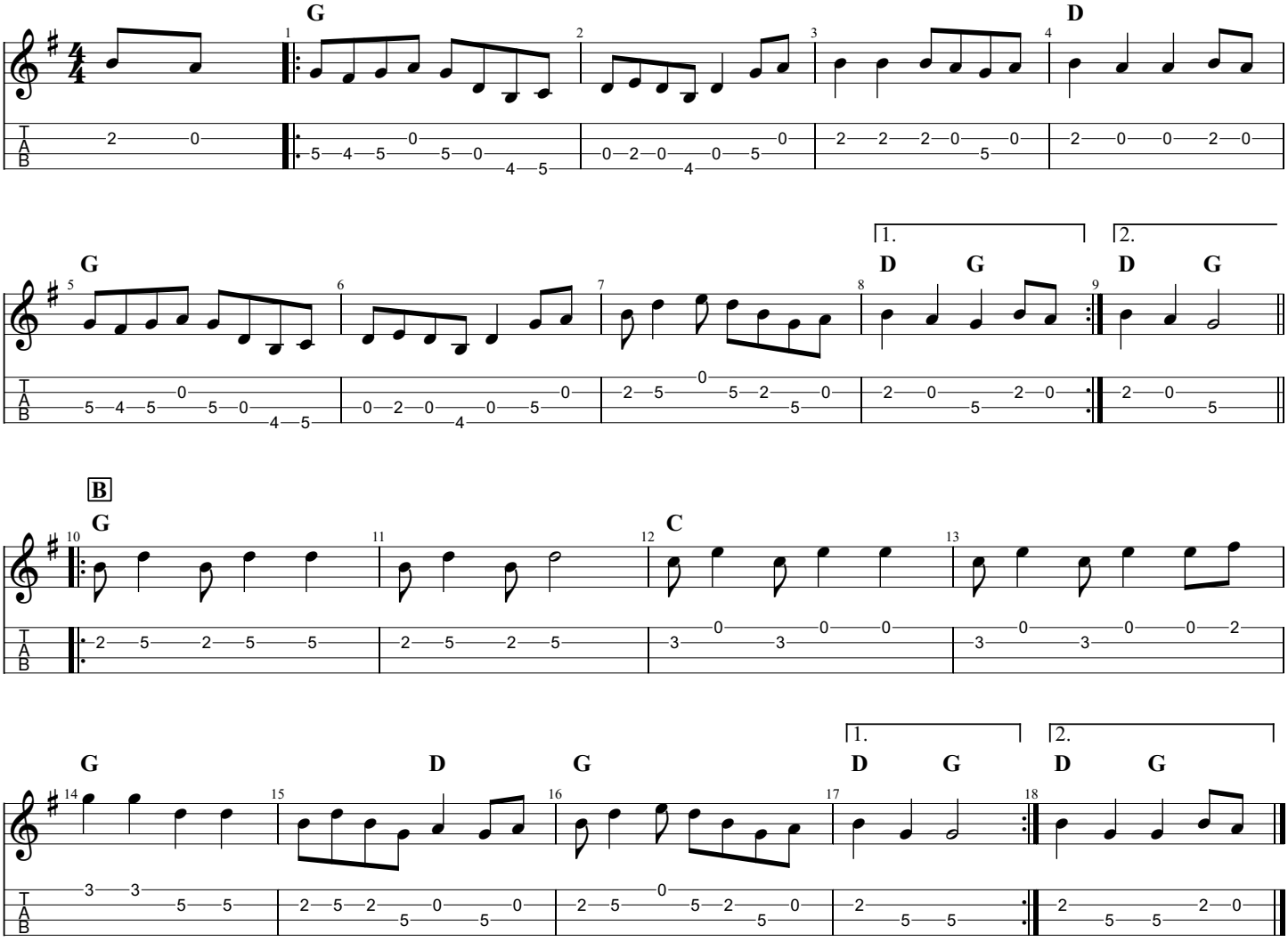
Arr. Michael Taylor