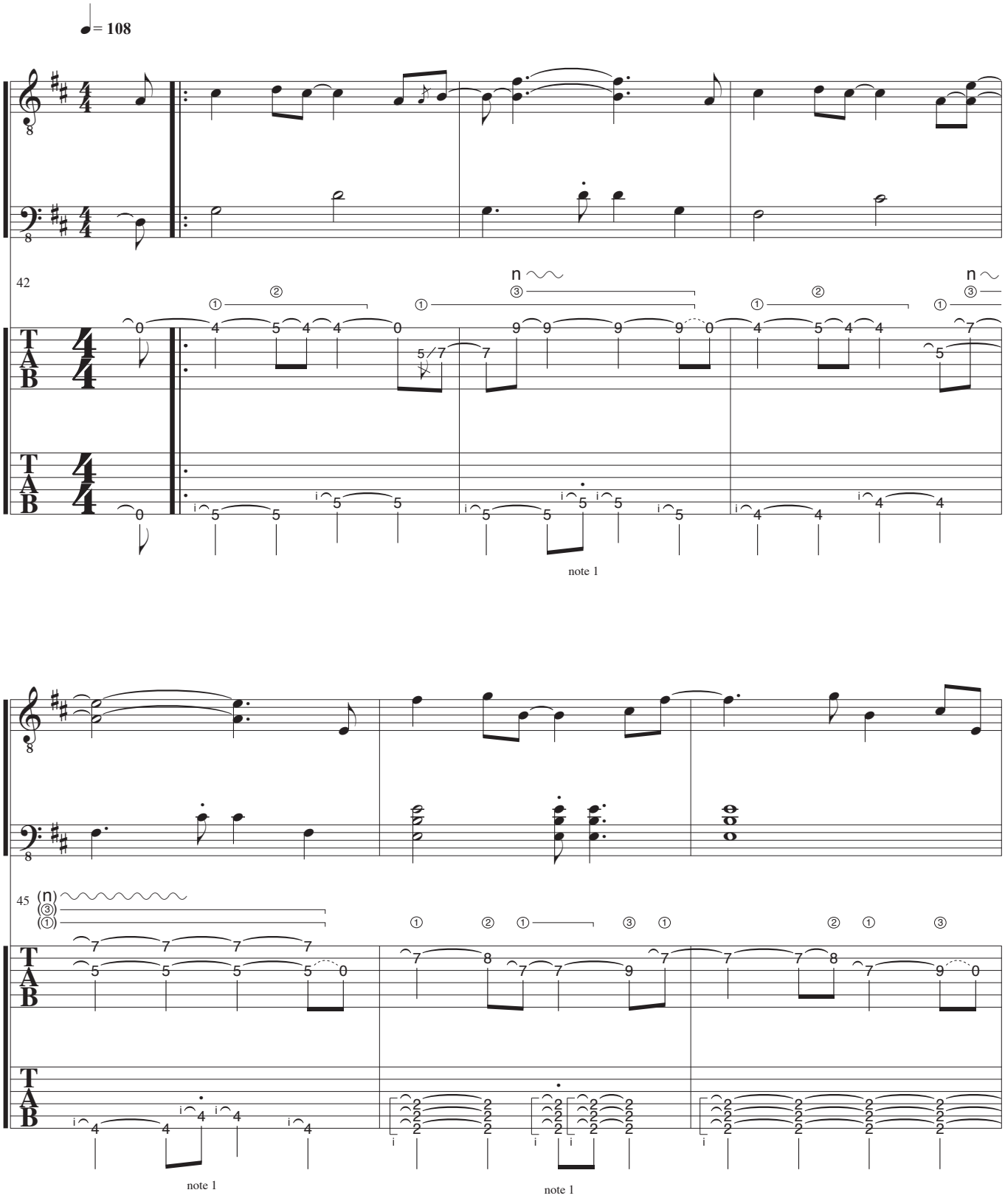
Helms Place

D_2 A_2 D_3 E_3 B_3 A_3

alternate measures, mm. 42-57

Billy McLaughlin



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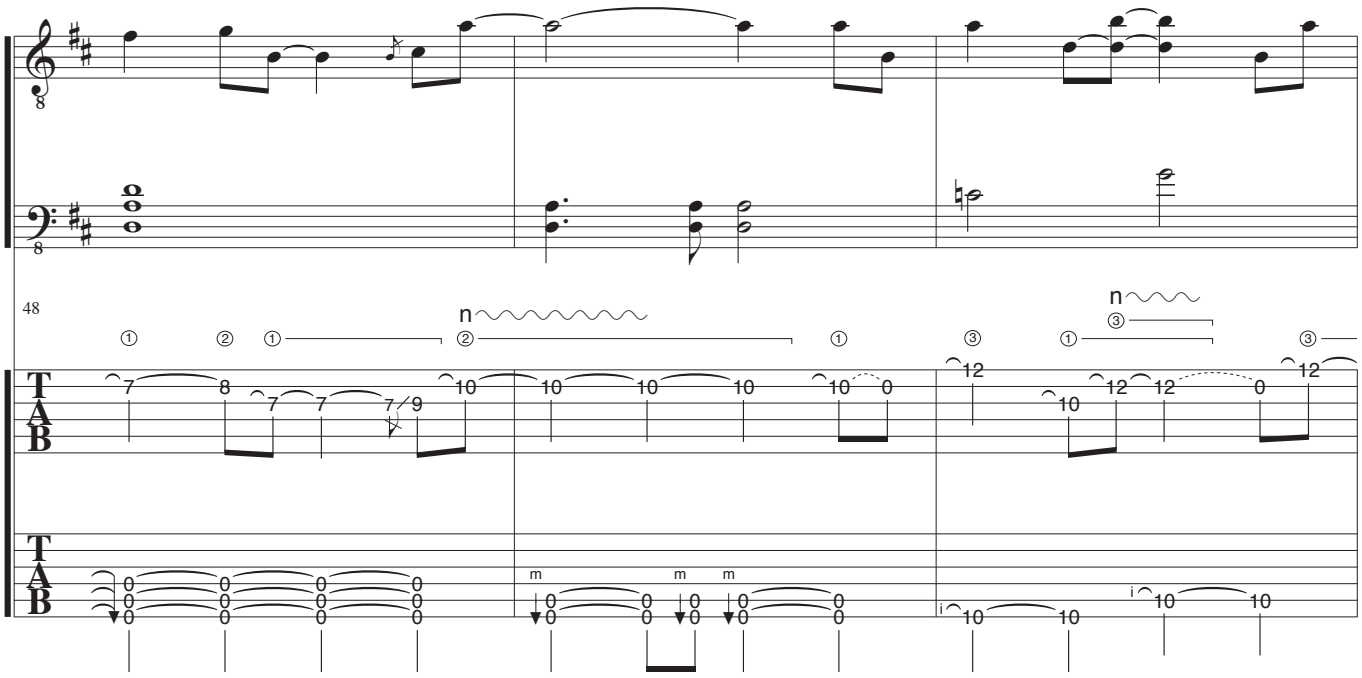
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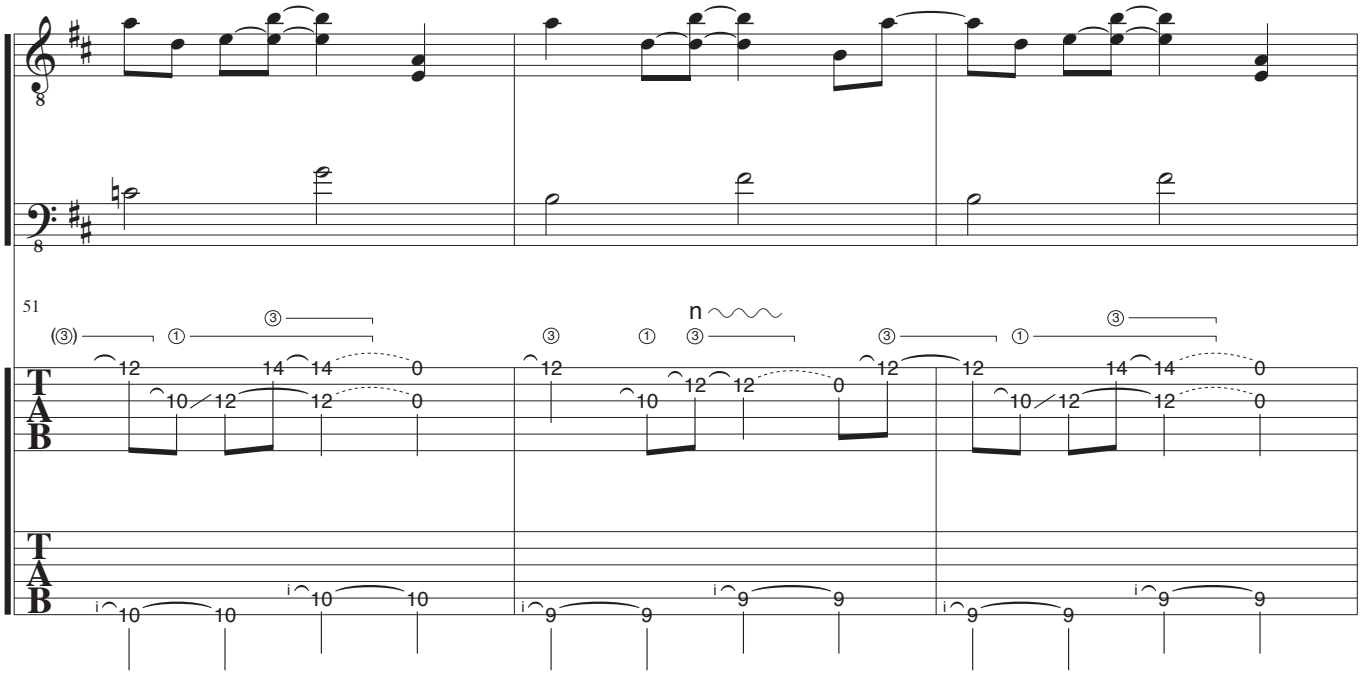
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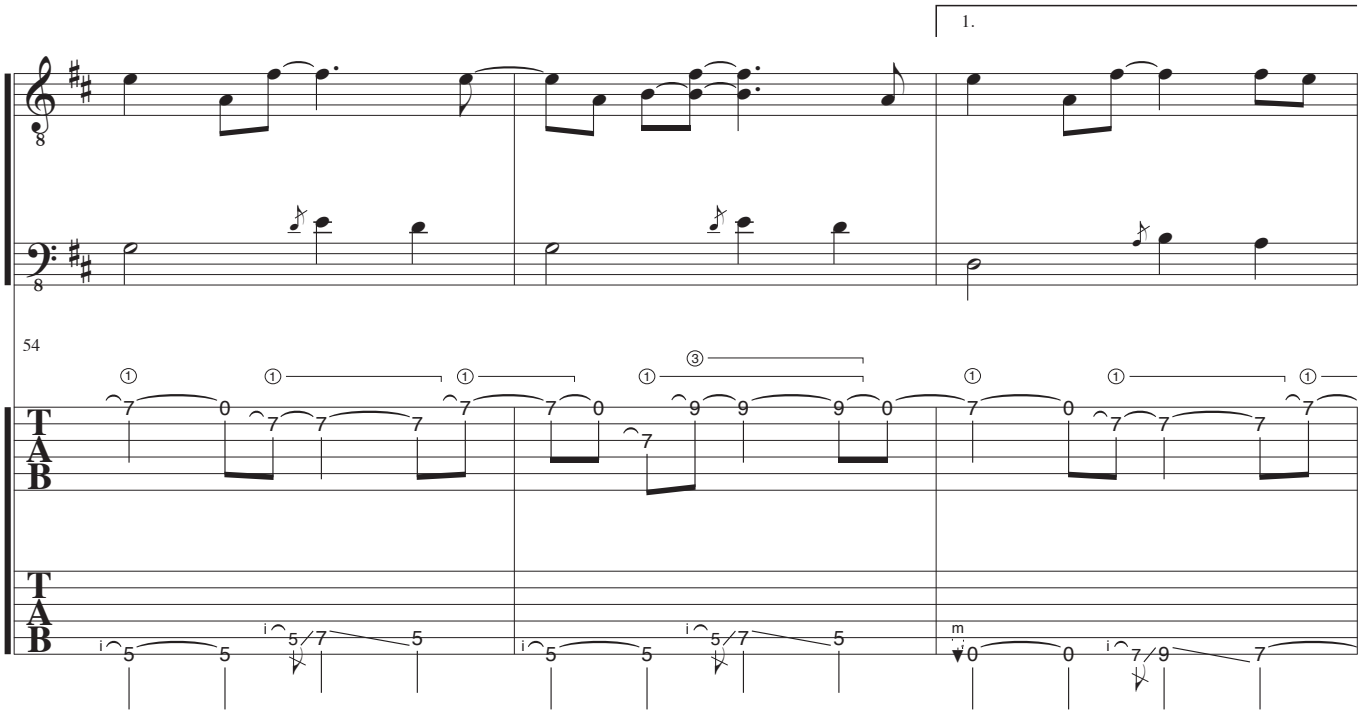
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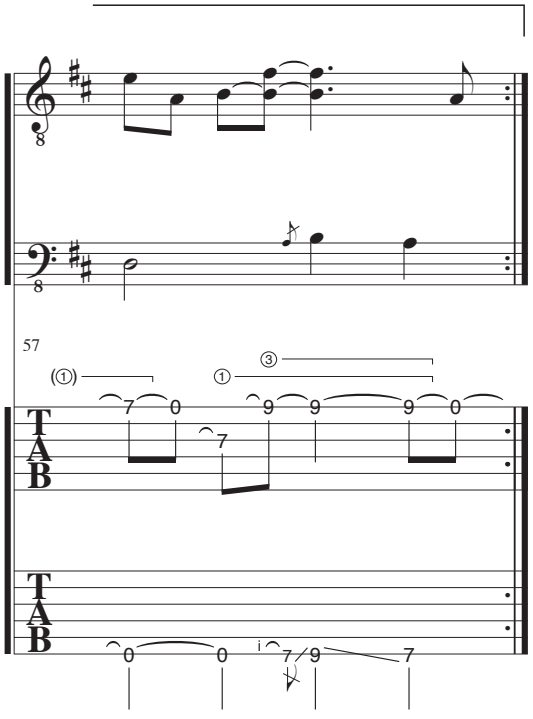
57
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A
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study notes for “Helms Place” alternate measures, mm. 42-57

Billy McLaughlin graduated from the University of Southern California in 1987, and, over the next 15 years, established himself as a recording artist and performer. He pushed forward with two-hands-on-the-fingerboard technique and wrote some great compositions that utilized this technique. One of the most requested was “Helms Place.”

In 2002 he was diagnosed with focal dystonia, a neurological mapping disorder that is, unfortunately, not uncommon among musicians. As a result, he lost the ability to control his left-hand third and fourth fingers when playing the guitar.

He overcame this difficulty by restringing his guitar and retraining himself to perform his signature two-hands-on-the-fingerboard compositions left-handed. By 2006, he was back on stage.

However, “Helms Place,” had a bridge section that used conventional technique, and McLaughlin was not able to play conventional technique left-handed, so he arranged the bridge section for two-hands-on-the-fingerboard technique. These alternate measures are his two-hands-on-the-fingerboard arrangement of the bridge.

The upper standard notation staff and the upper tablature staff represent the notes played by McLaughlin’s right hand (which, presuming that you play the guitar right-handed, will be your left-hand), and the lower standard notation staff and the lower tablature staff represent the notes played by McLaughlin’s left hand (which, presuming that you play the guitar right-handed, will be your right-hand).

Note that almost all of the notes in the bass line are played with the right-hand index finger. The actual time value of each of these notes is probably about a sixteenth note shorter than written. This is the time necessary to lift your right-hand index finger in order to tap the next note that is written. It is more a practical matter than one of rhythmic precision.

note 1
Here, and in similar instances throughout this alternate version of the bridge, the note marked staccato is not only short but also mostly percussive.