Jazz Saxophone Improvisation Manual Eb

Introduction

Learning to improvise in the jazz idiom has many times been compared to learning a new language. Like learning a new language, learning to improvise jazz is mostly learned through listening and imitation. After all, music is auditory.

There are many tools that can help such as theory, transcriptions, and written exercises. However, they would not make a difference if the student does not spend a great amount of time listening to music and making music.

This manual is designed to explain the many theories and concepts behind improvising jazz. The manual is designed to take a closer look at the concepts that great jazz saxophonists implemented in their solos. The manual is designed for the young soloist to grasp a basic understanding of voice leading and theory through the standard jazz repertoire. It does not encompass all the elements that a musician needs to ultimately make great music and is by no means an end all to creating great solos or great music.

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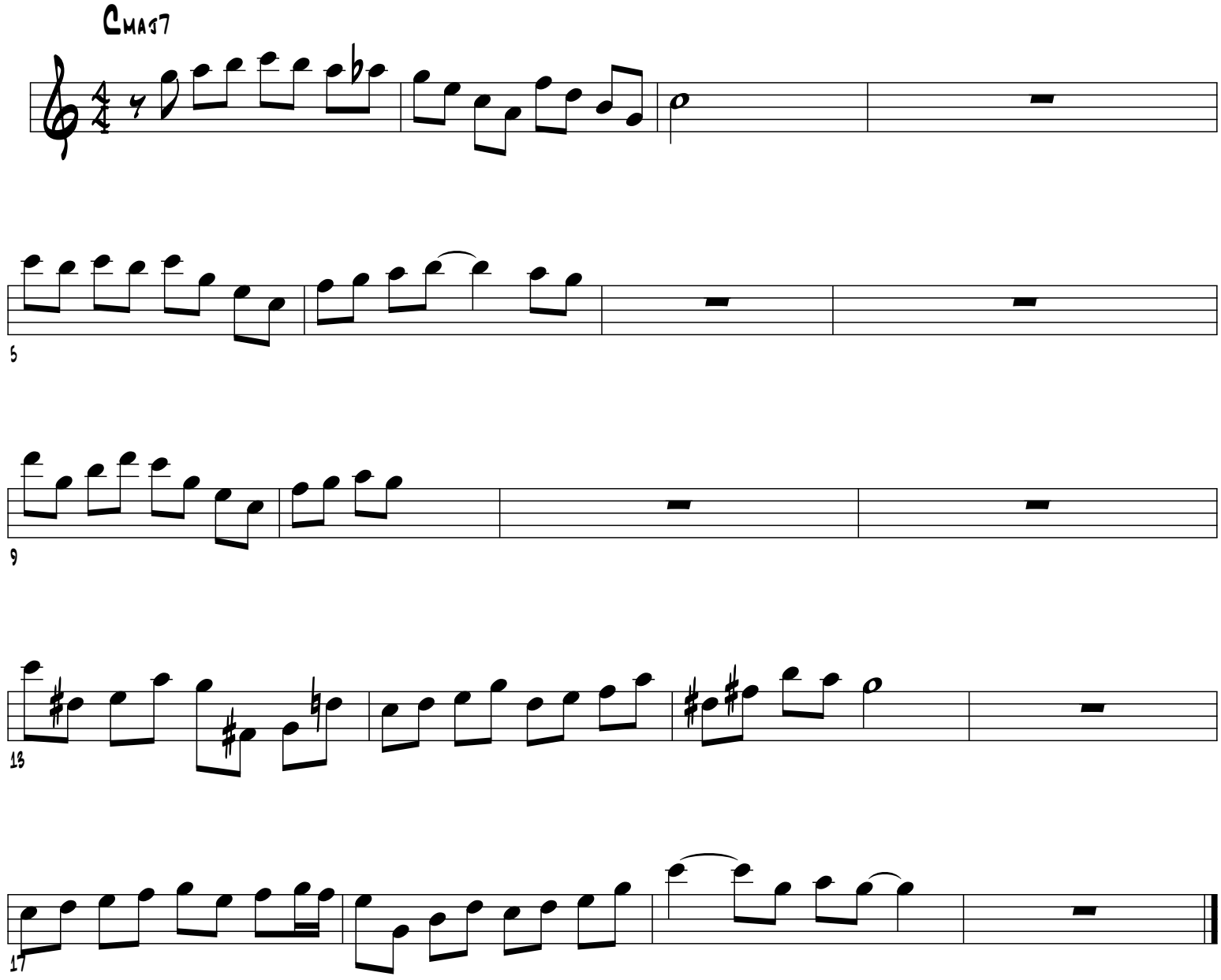
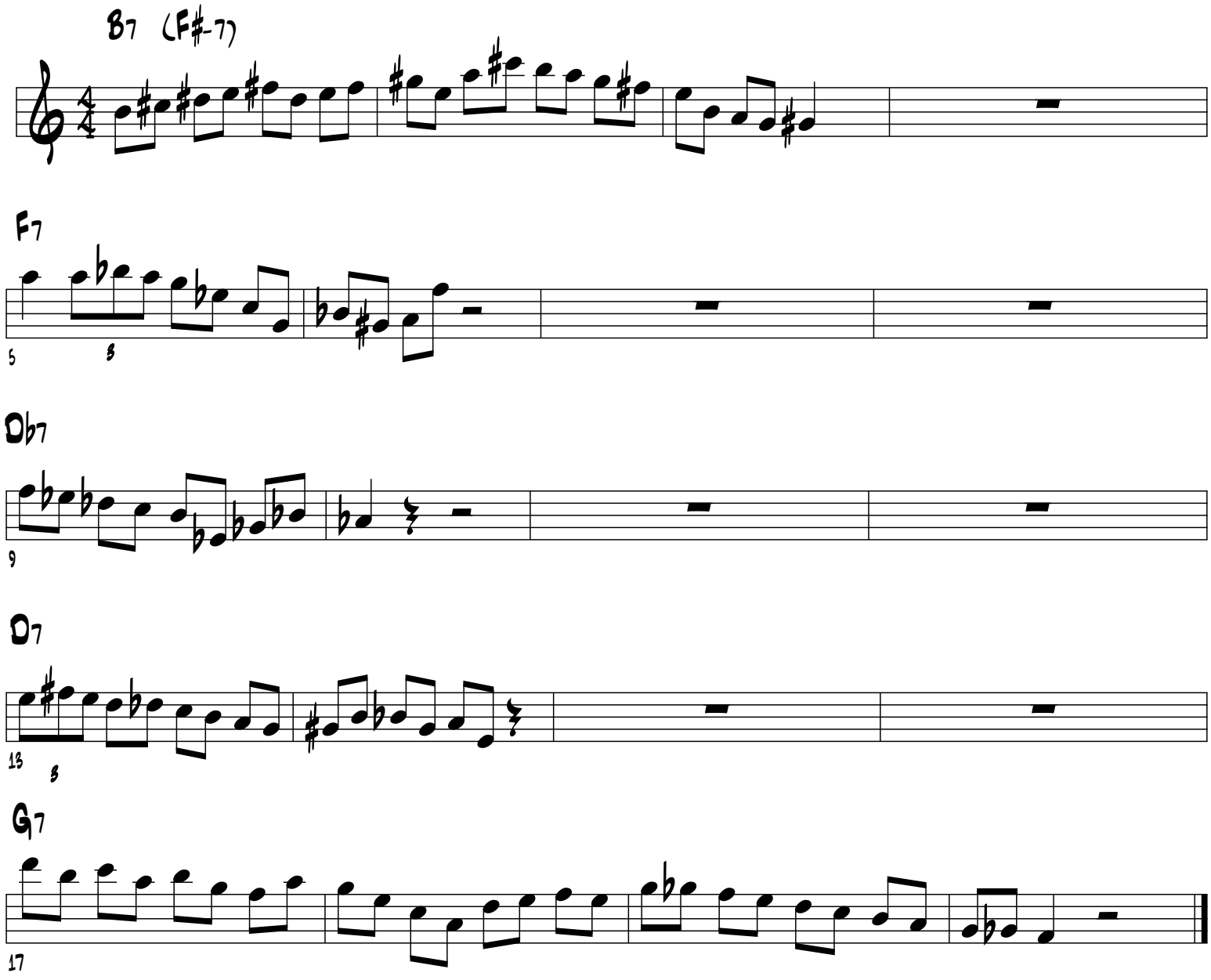
Major, Dominant, Dorian

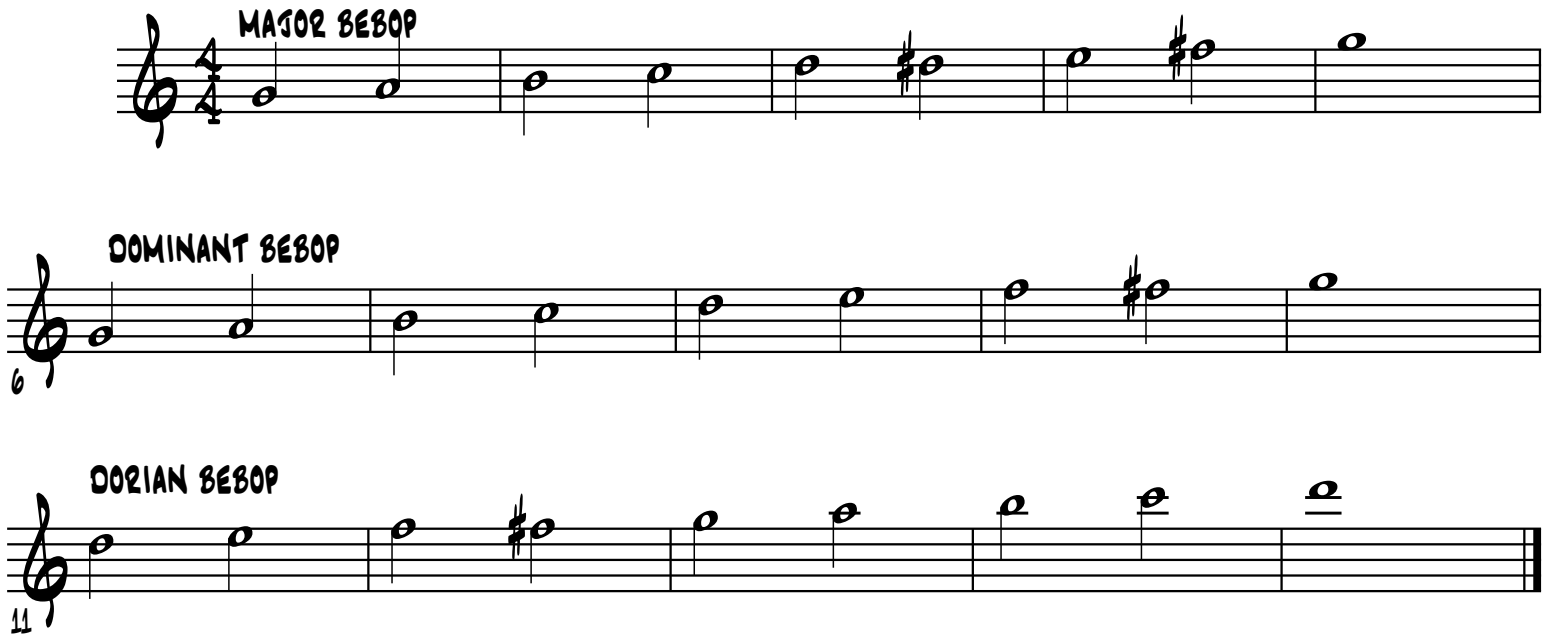
Major Scale Examples



Dominant and Dorian Examples



BeBop Scales



I have always liked to approach improvisation by playing as many tunes as possible. I have never been one to really work on patterns, transpositions of patterns, or playing certain licks in different keys. I like to immerse myself in as many recordings of a tune I am working on and try my hardest to abstract the concepts that the artist is trying to convey. I then try to constantly play over the tune. There are three tunes I like to explore with my students when we are working on Major, Dominant, and Dorian."So What","Dig",and "Flamenco Sketches". I think the melodies and the harmony are great launching points for students to wet their imaginations with those tone pallets.

The following is a transcription of Miles Davis's solo on "So What". It's a great example of how one can play over minor 7 chords. I like to approach think of minor 7 chords as Major scales with a flat 3rd and a flat 7th. In this case for Bb instruments, I would think of it as E major but I will a G natural and a D natural instead of a G# and a D#. Again, I'm being very academic and analytical in this approach. There are really no restrictions as to what you can play over a E-7, but for this purpose I'm trying to break it down to most simple form. One can also think of it as D Major starting on E. "So What" is in the Dorian mode. The second mode of the major scale. I don't really approach it that way but I'm trying to explain it in every angle as to further gain more understanding from the reader.

I would also like to recommend "Dig" by Miles Davis as a great tool to work on the dominant bebop scale. The melody is a great view into how one can use the scale to create ideal jazz melodies and improvisational vocabulary.

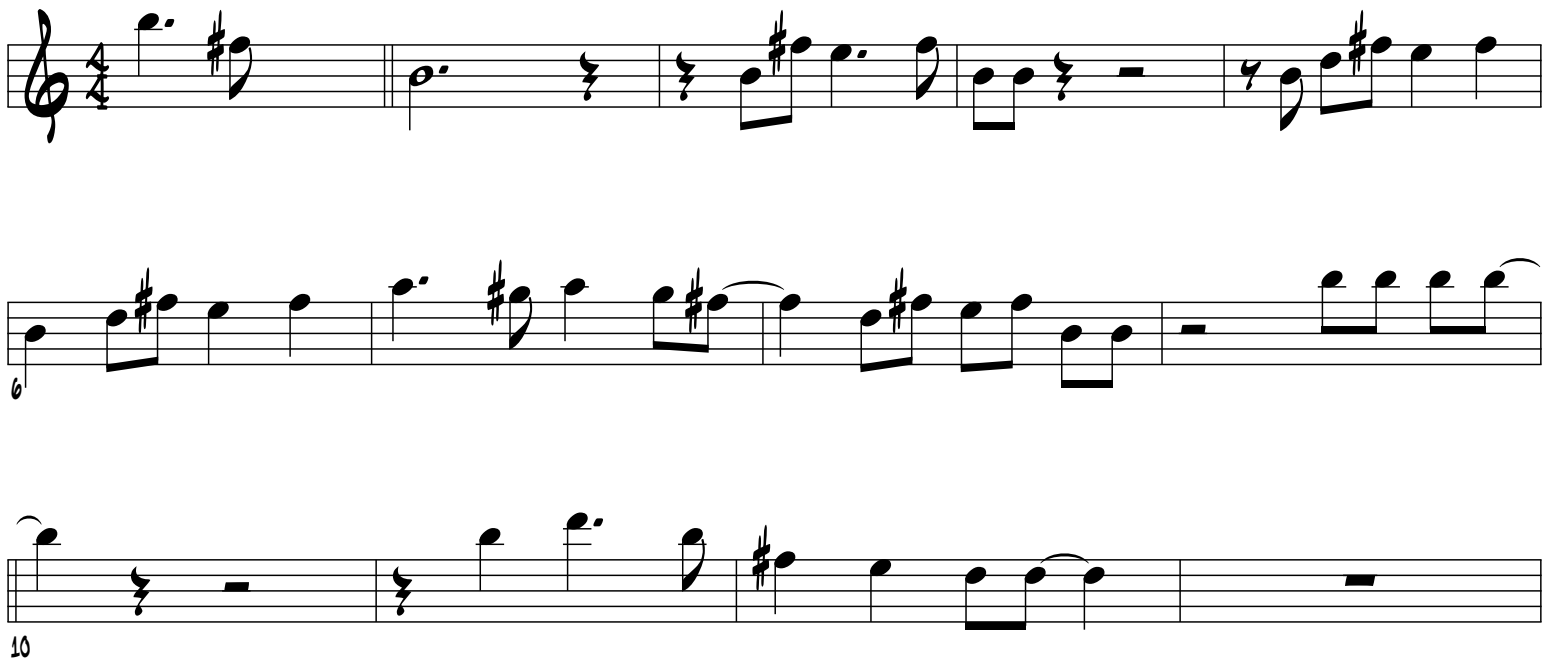
Finally, the last tune I like to play with my students to get them going on the various modes of Major is "Flamenco Sketches". Again, I don't really approach improv studies in terms of "modes" but I feel that this tune allows the young improviser to get a basic feel of jazz harmonies and theory.

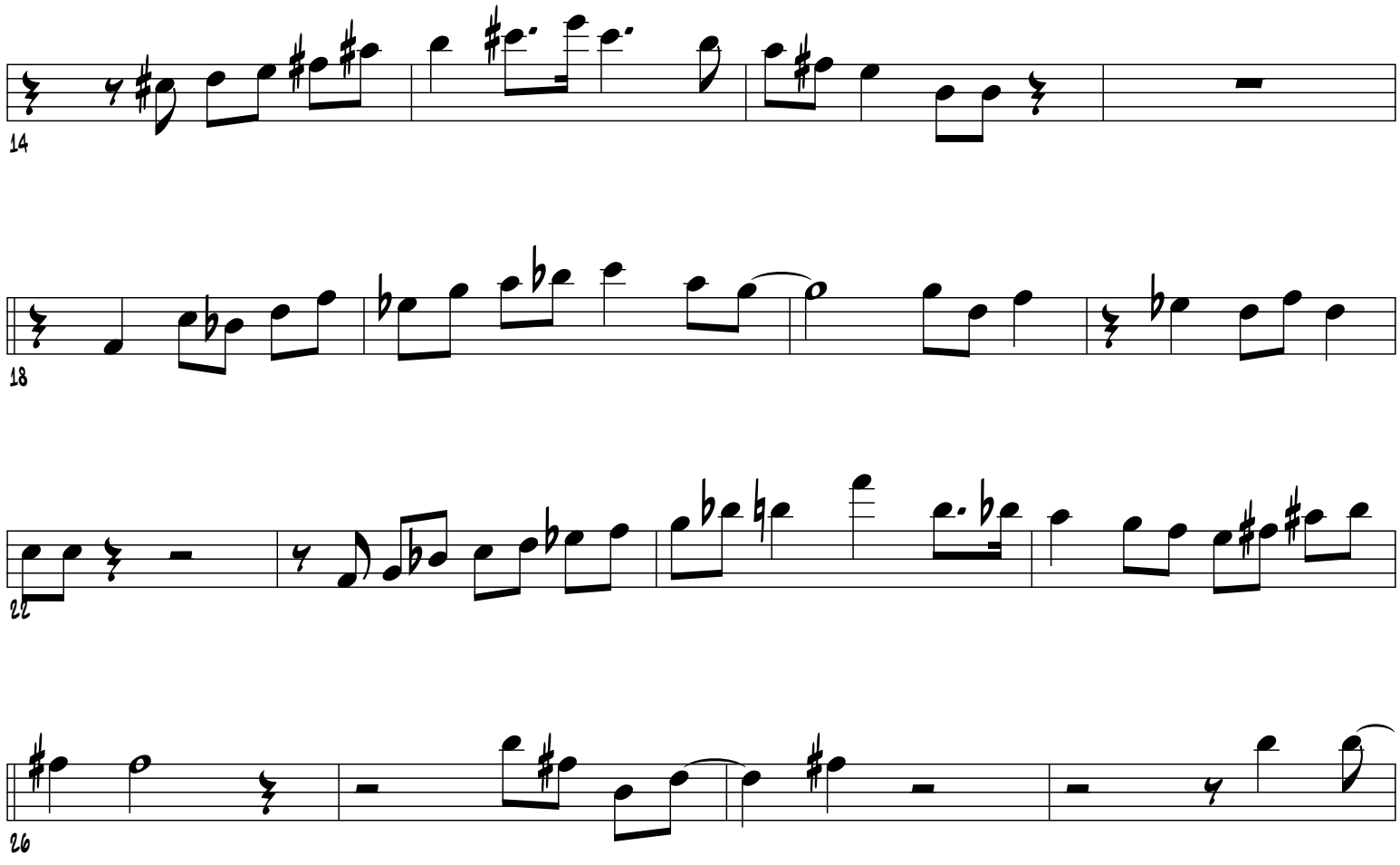
The tune begins in C Major concert and then goes to Ab7. It then goes to Bb Major 7 and sits on a section that many jazz scholars label as D Phrygian. I hear it as G harmonic minor but the more terms you can get familiar with the stronger it will make you. The tune finally resolves to G-7. What I really enjoy about playing this tune is that it's a ballad and it's slow enough for students to grasp the harmony and explore their tonal options.

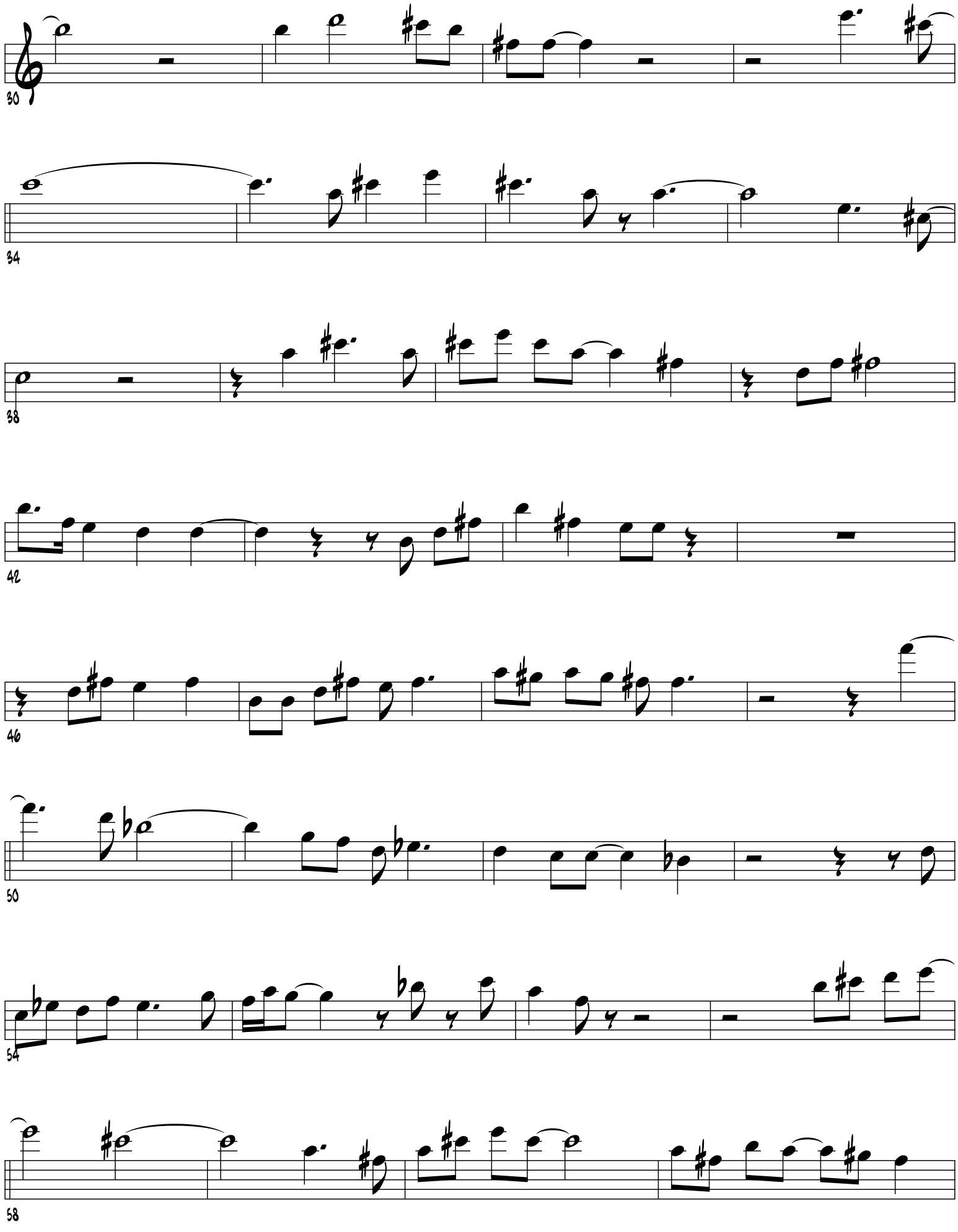
So What

E flat

Miles Davis



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34
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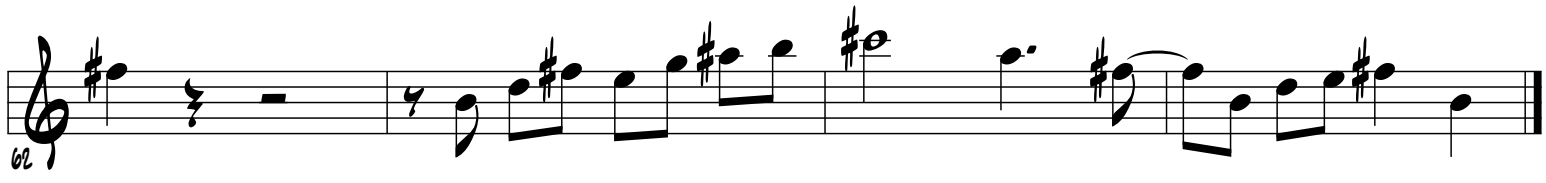
58


62

Dig

E Flat

Davis

D7

G7

5

C7

9

F

13

2. D-

Eø

A7

D-

G-7

C7

17

F

D7

G-7

C7

F

21

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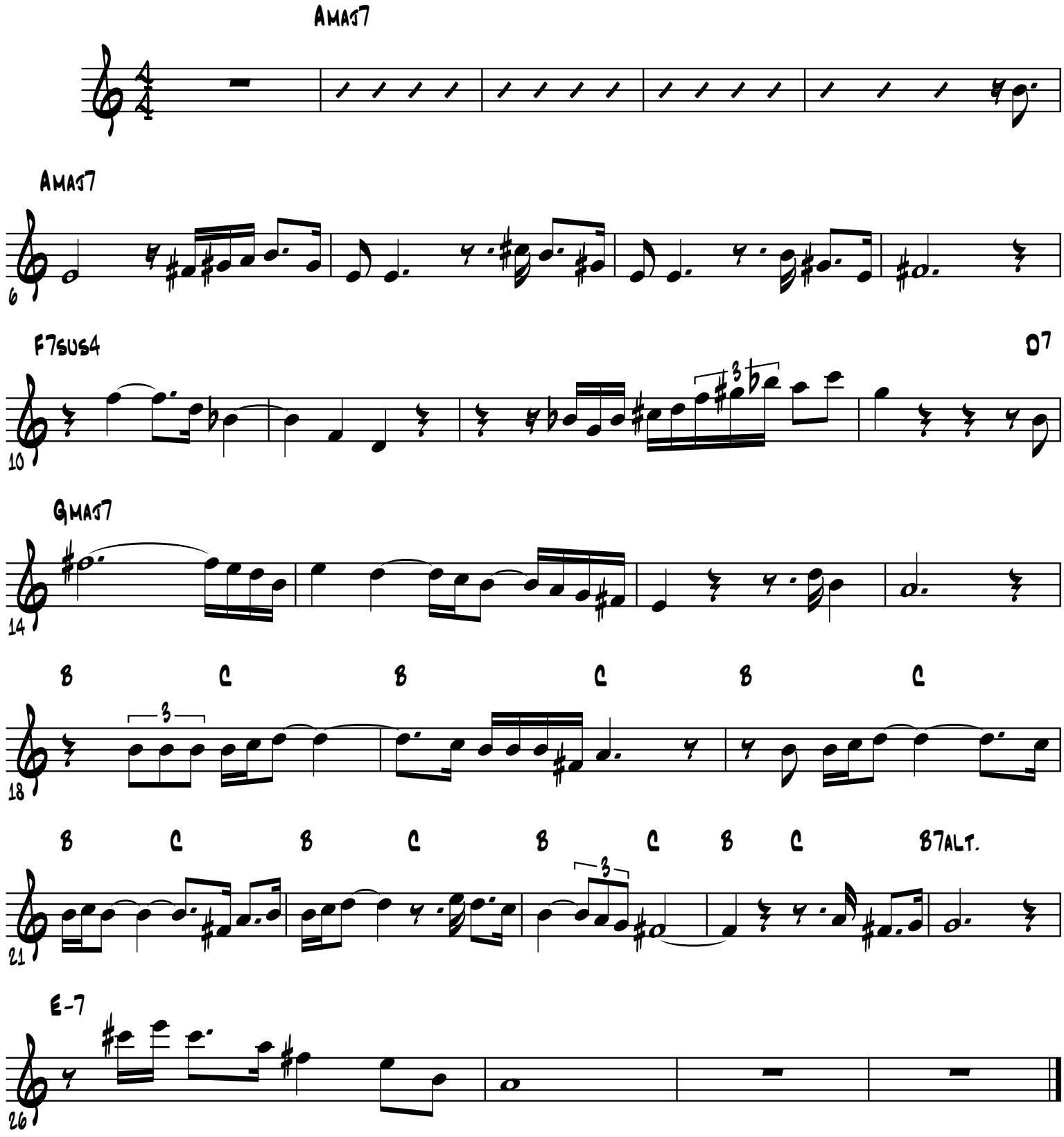
Flamenco Sketches

E Flat

Davis



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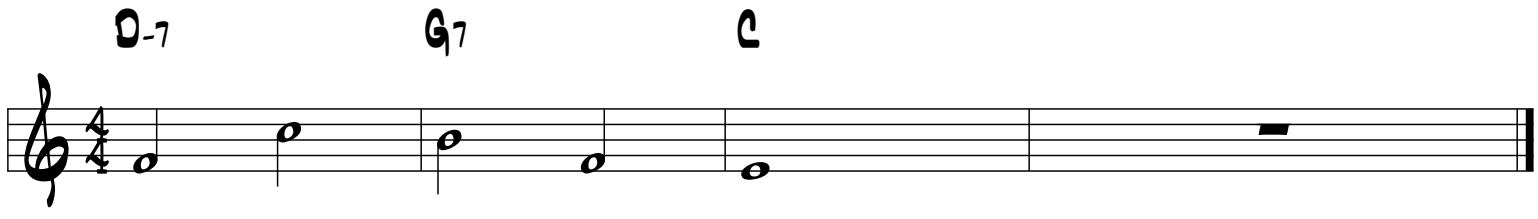
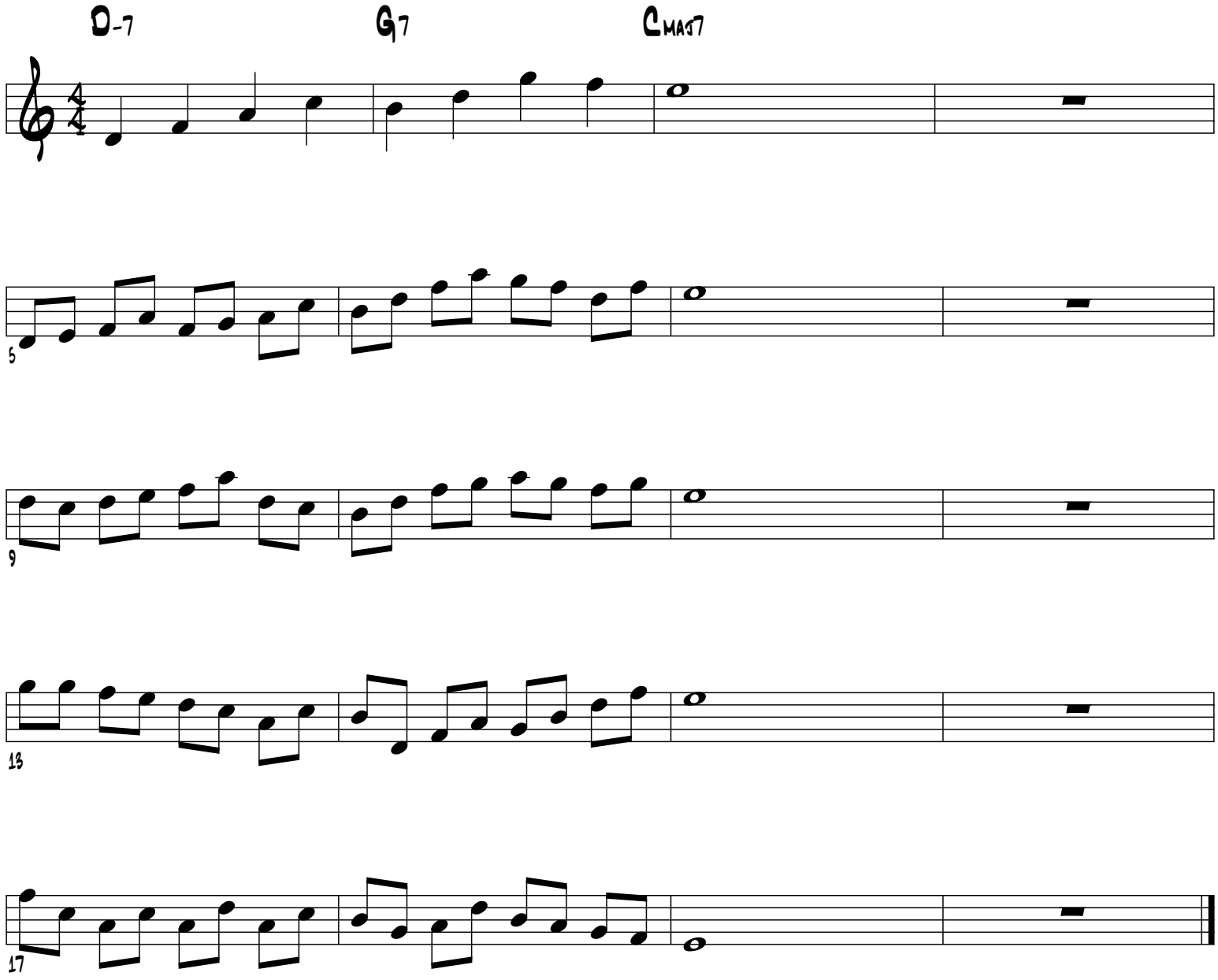
Getting Across the Bar Line

Getting Across the Barline



Getting across the barline

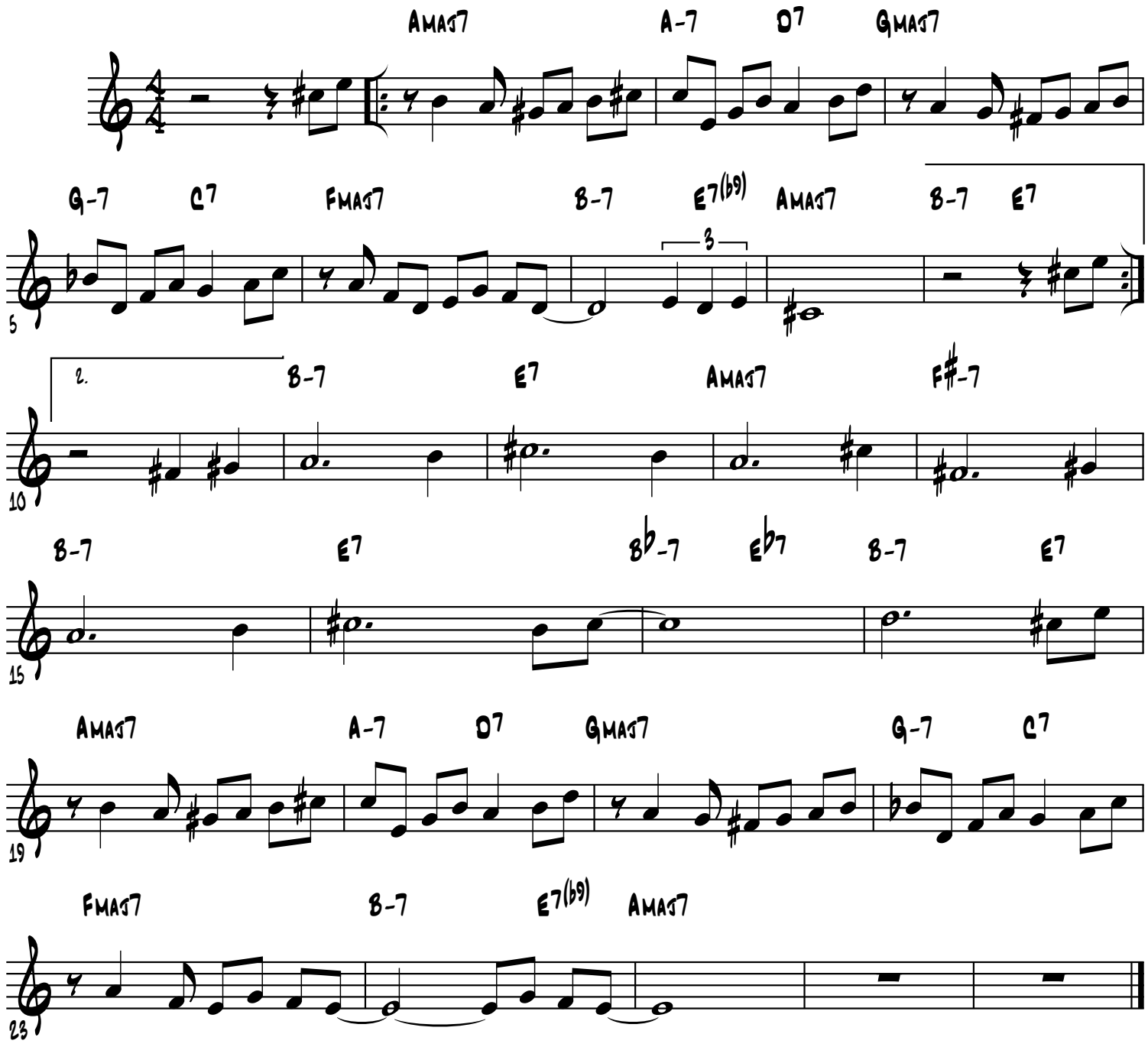
examples



Afternoon in Paris

E Flat

Lewis



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The Blues

The Blues

E flat

D7 G7 D7 D7

G7 G#° D7 B7

5

Emin7 A7 D7 B7 Emin7 A7

9

Dmaj7 B7(b9) E-7 A7

13

5

Dmaj7 B7(b9) E-7 A7

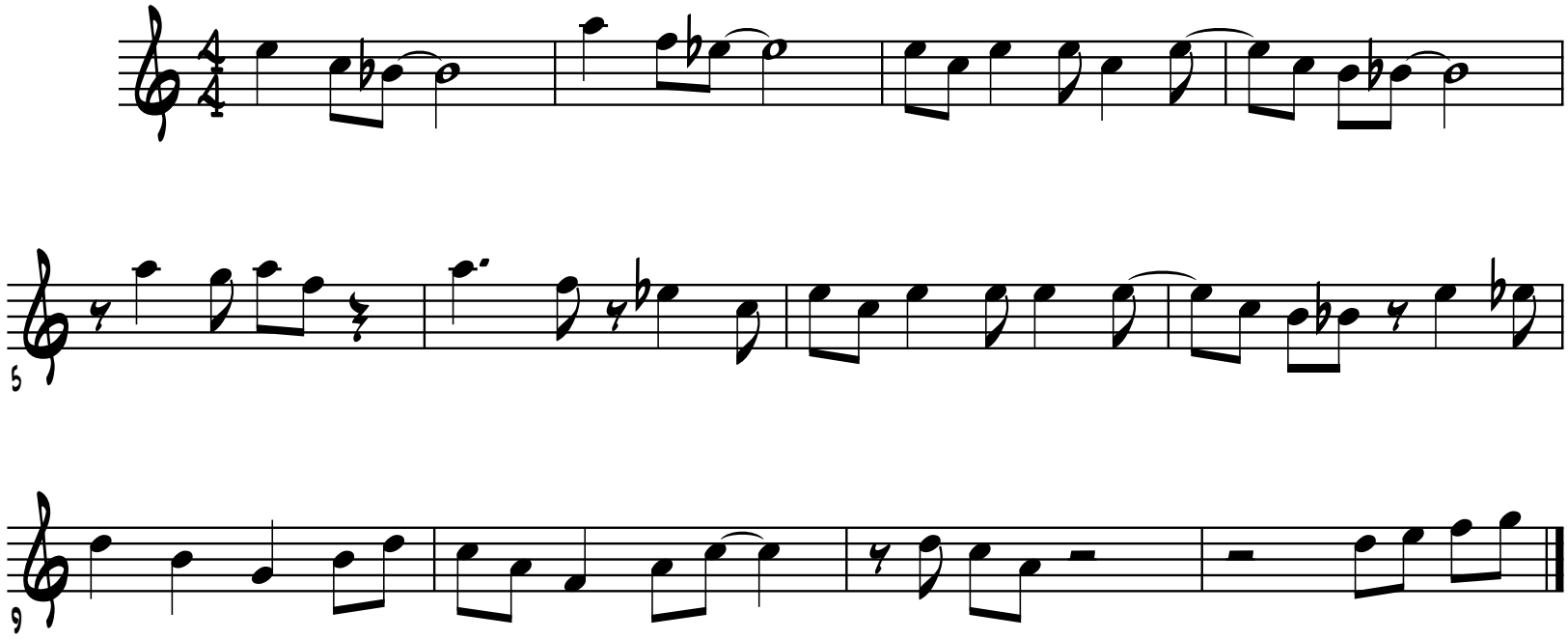
17

5

Bessies Blues

E Flat

Coltrane



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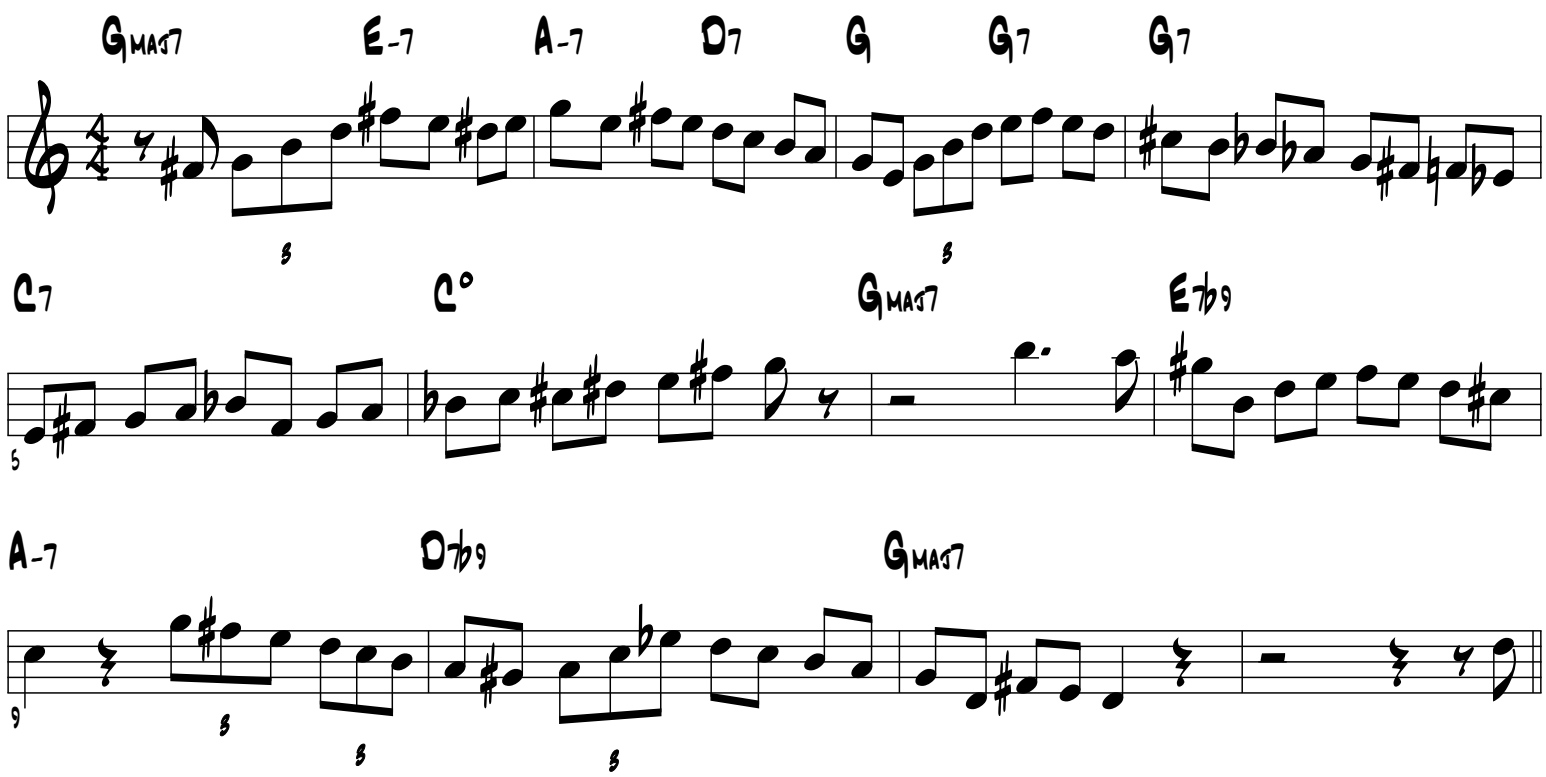
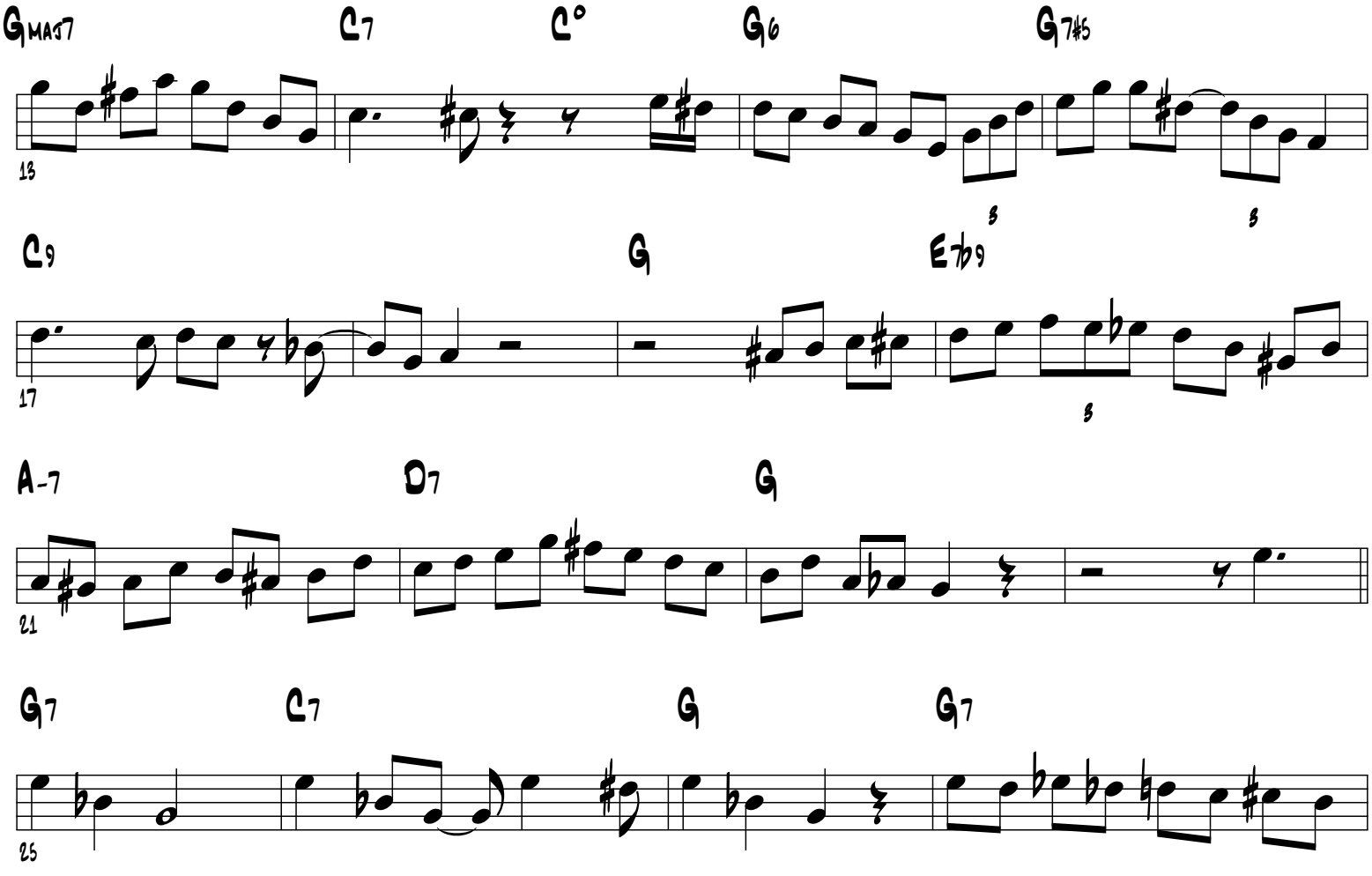
The Breakdown

E Flat

Mobley





C7 C-7 B-7 Bb-7

29

A-7 D7ALT. G D7

33

GMAJ7 C7#11 D-7 G7ALT.

37

C7 C-7 G Eb9

41

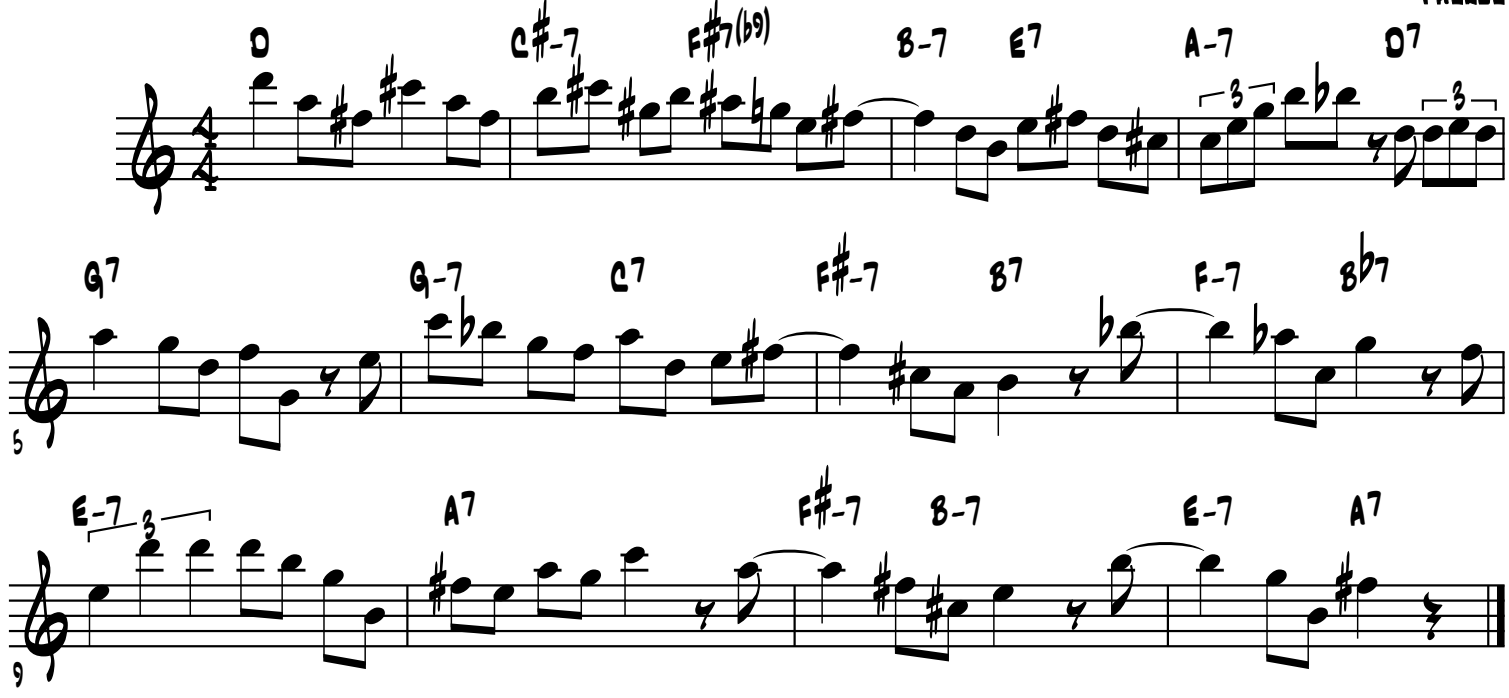
A-7 D7 G Eb9 A-7 D7ALT. G

45

Blues for Alice

E Flat

Parker



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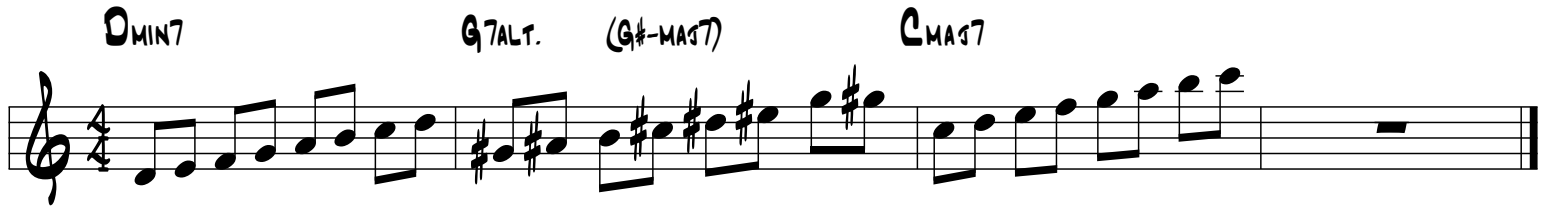
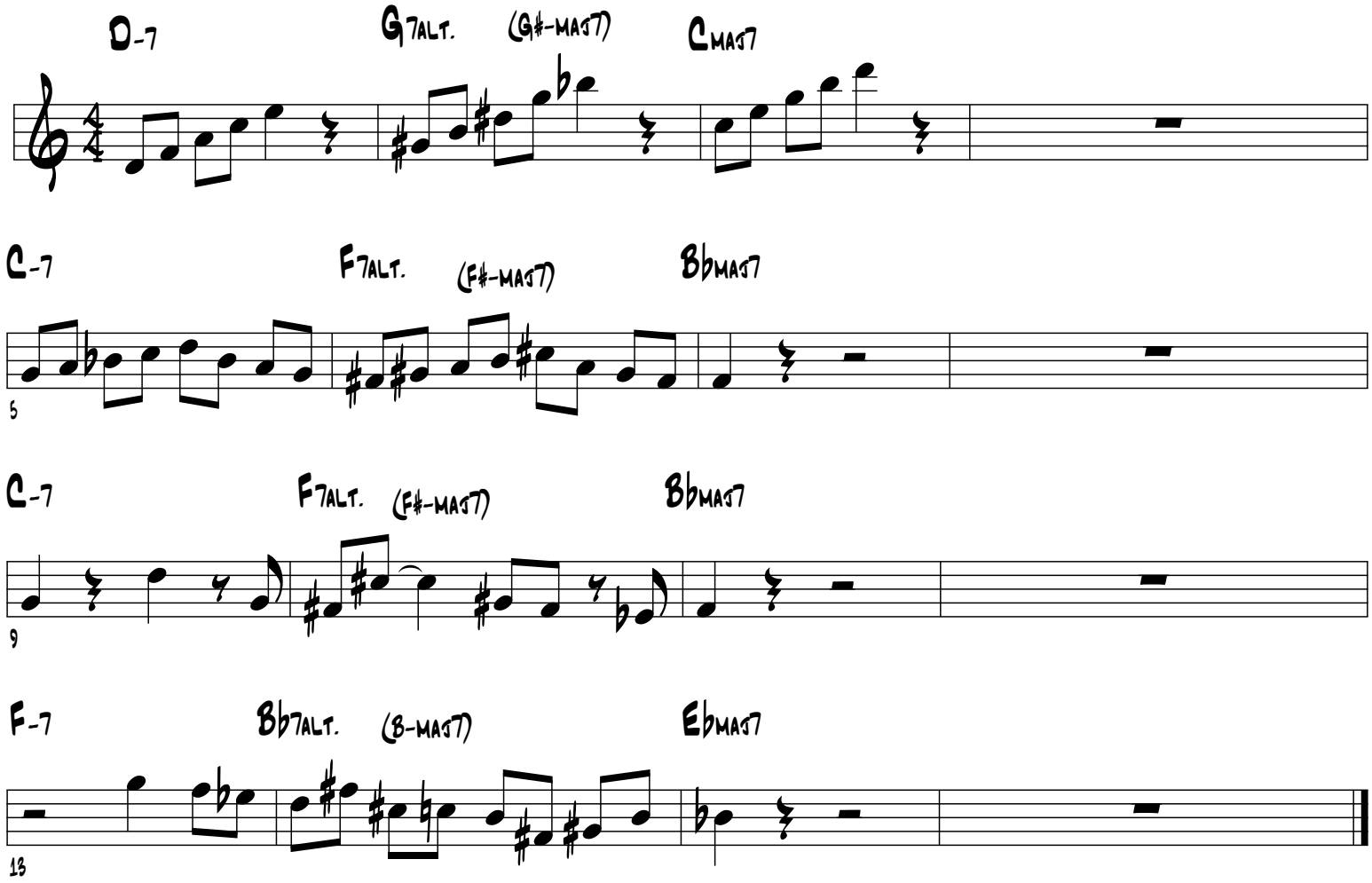
Altering the V7 Chord with Melodic Minor

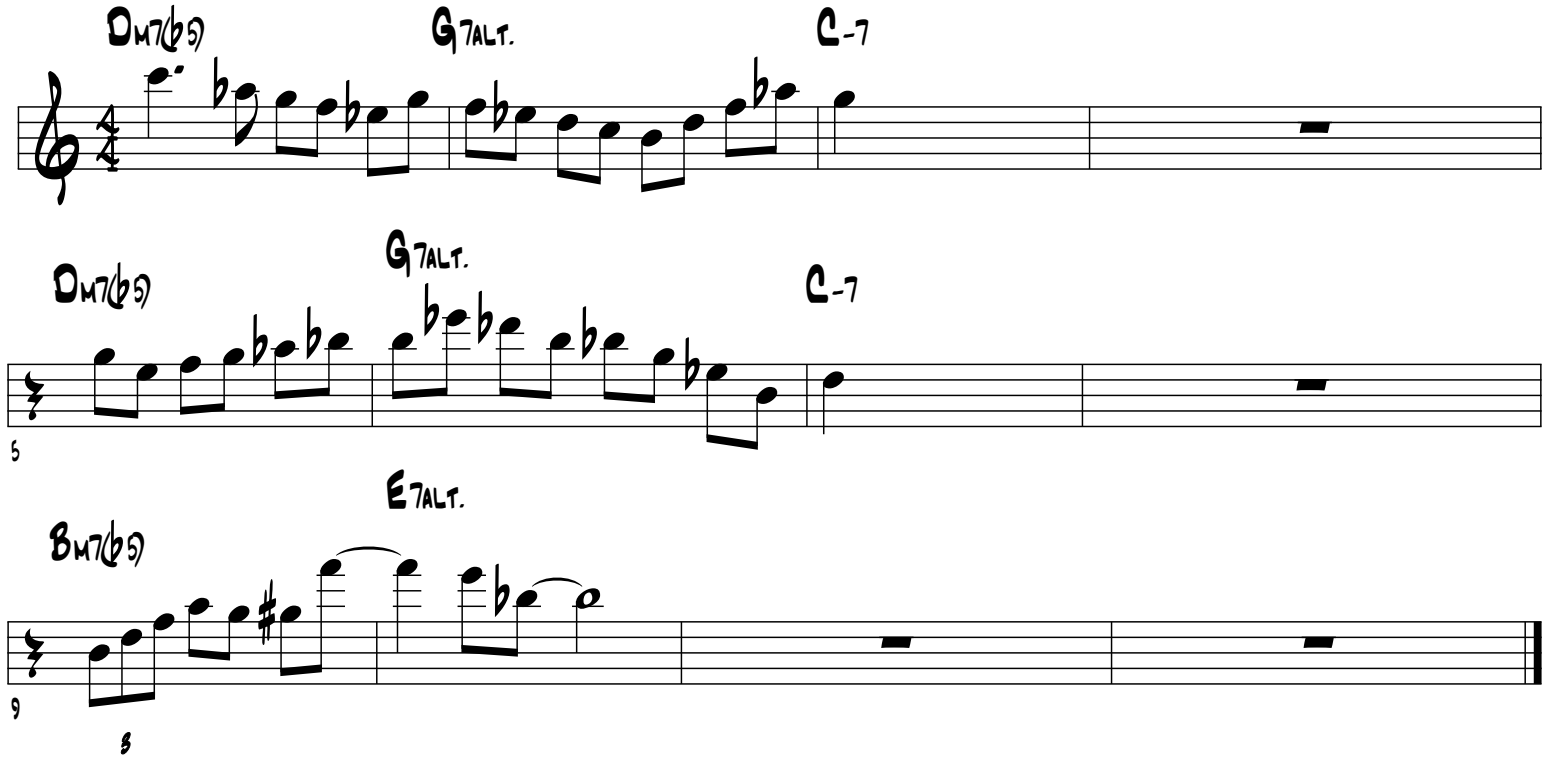
Altering V chord with melodic minor scale



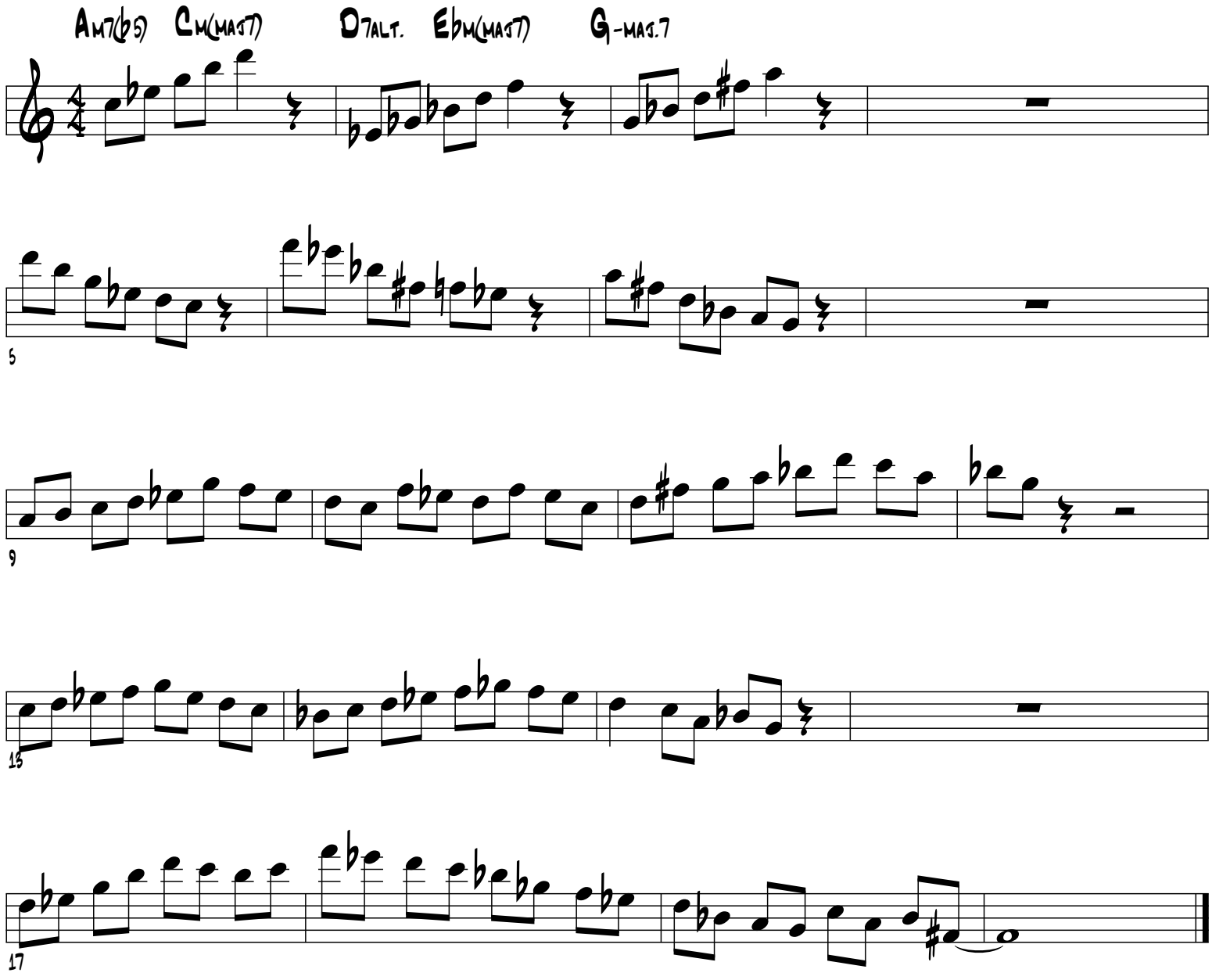
Altering V chords



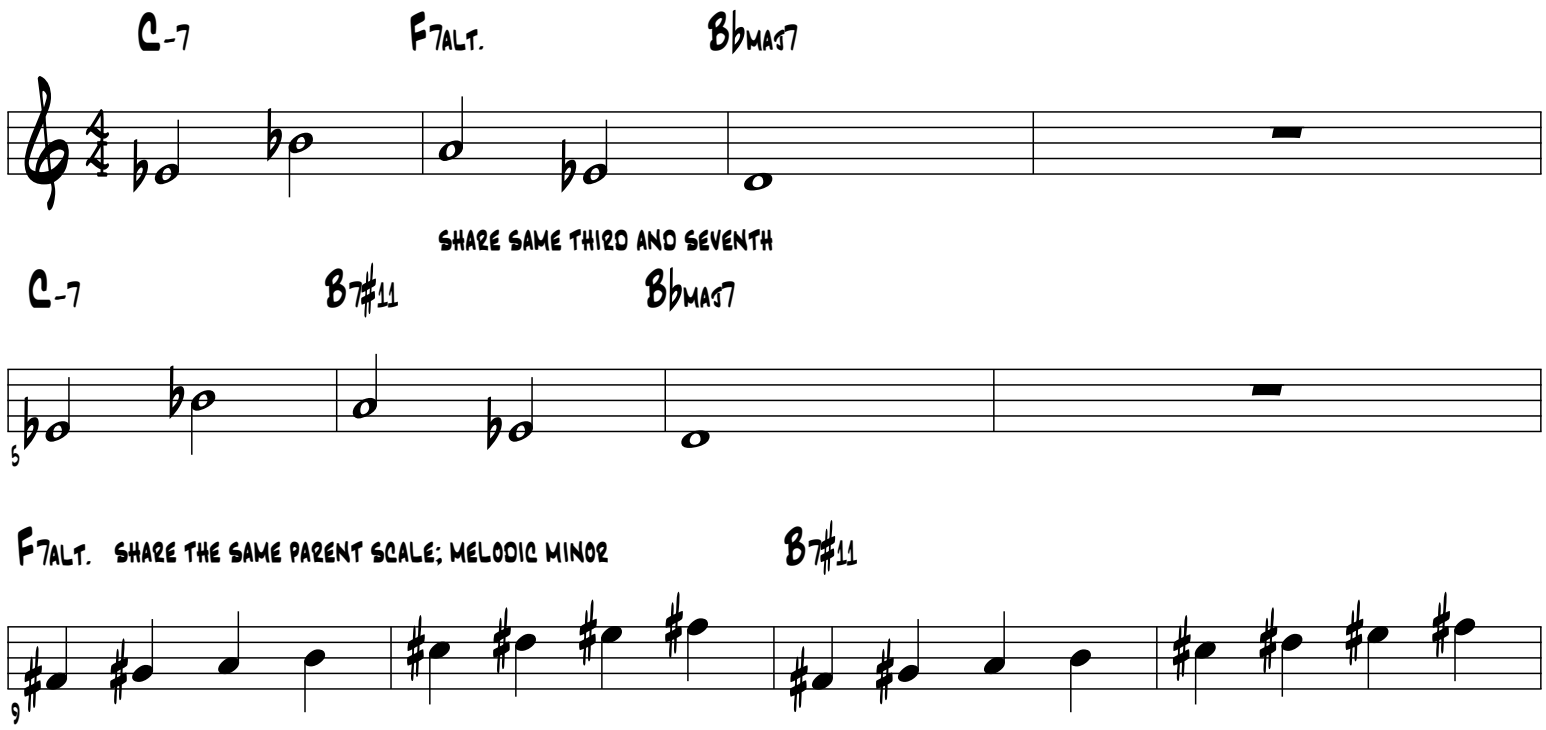
Minor ii-V's

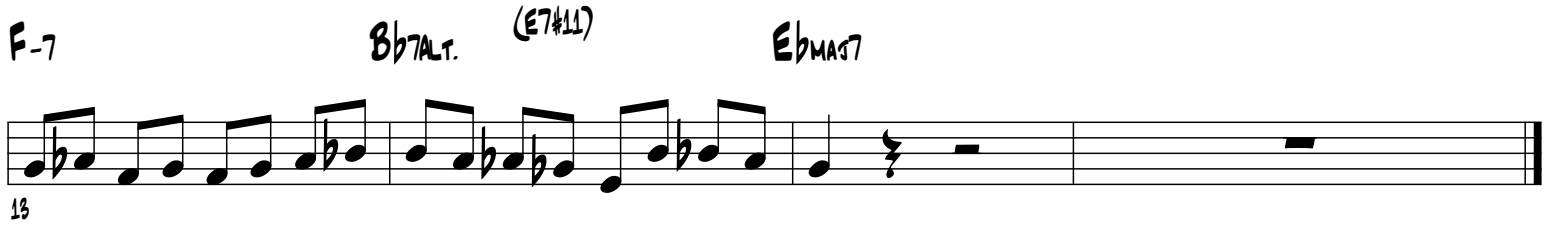


Minor ii-V's



Tri-Tone Subs

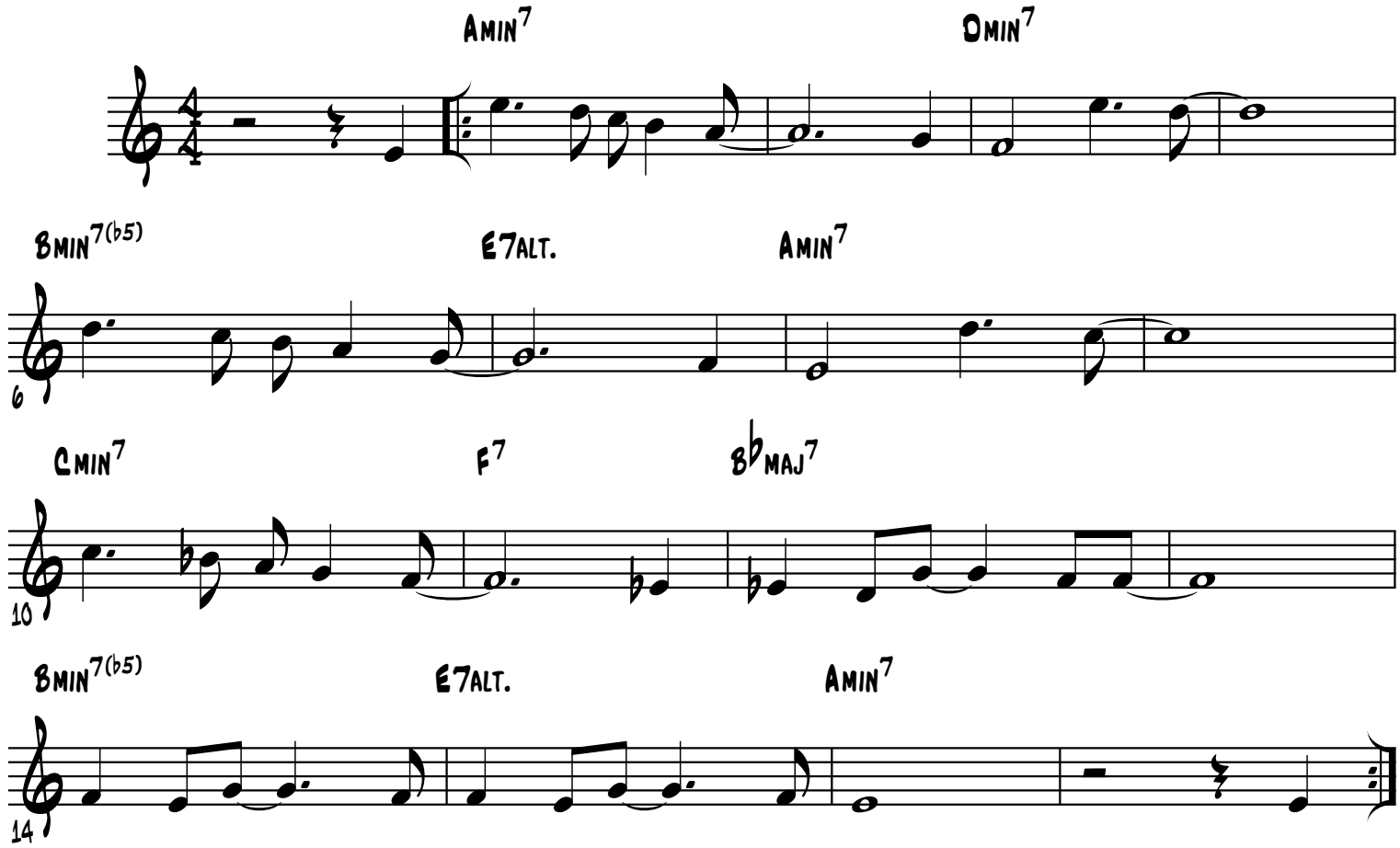




Blue Bossa

E Flat

Dorham



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An exercise I like to with students is having them write a chorus over a standard to see if they are understanding the concepts that we have discussed. I feel that it slows down the process of improvisation and provides a visual component to understanding voice leading. Being a saxophonist, we don’t really get to visualize chords on our instrument like a pianist or a guitarist would. I have found in my experience for this to be valuable tool. However, I always do encourage to play and learn by ear as much as possible. To write down etudes and solos is very academic and analytical and not very musical.

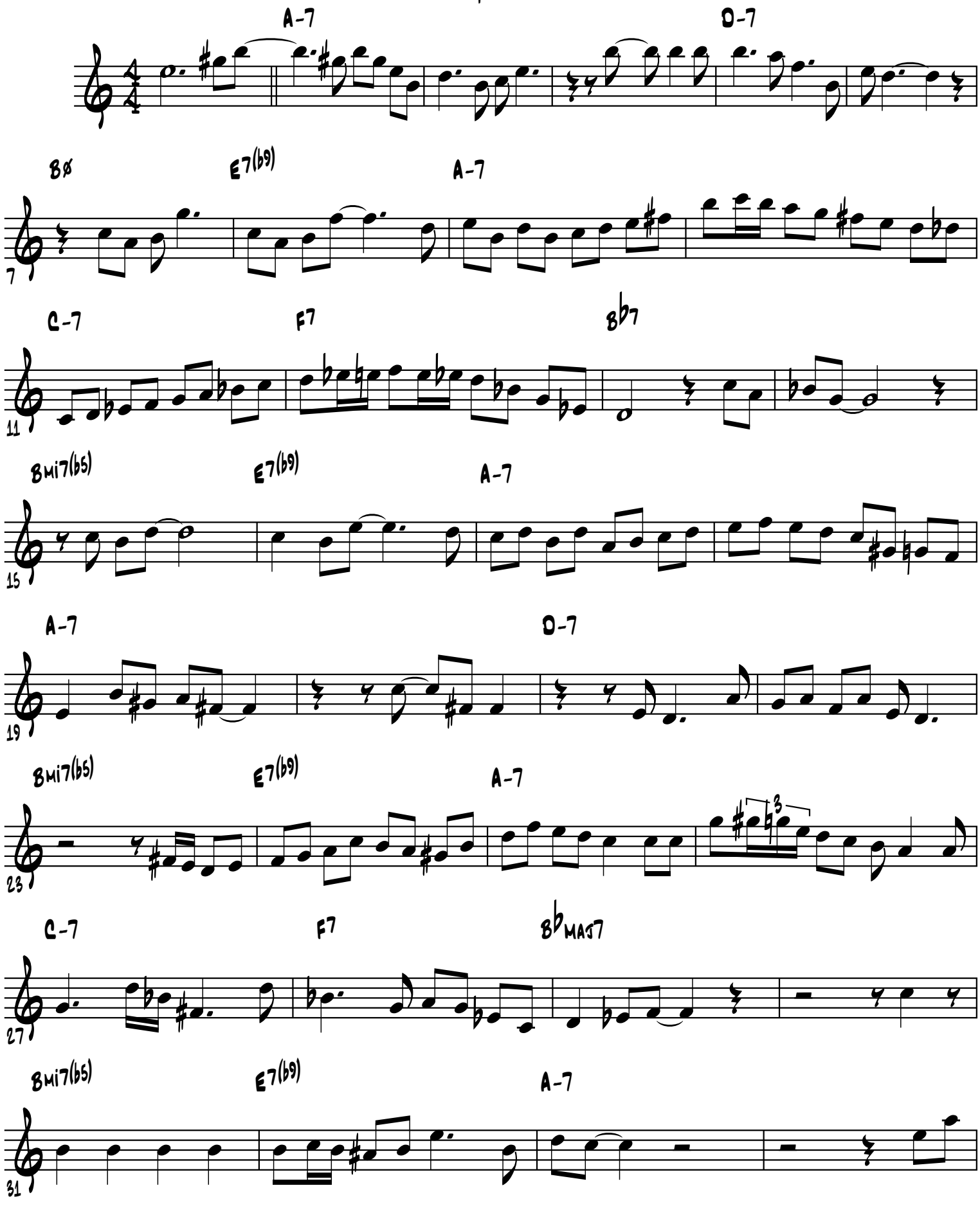
In the next two pages I use a common standard,“Autumn Leaves,” to write a simple etude using the concepts that we have covered until this point. Voice leading, bebop scales, and altering chords with the melodic minor scale.

Blue Bossa

E Flat

Dexter Gordon Solo

Dorham



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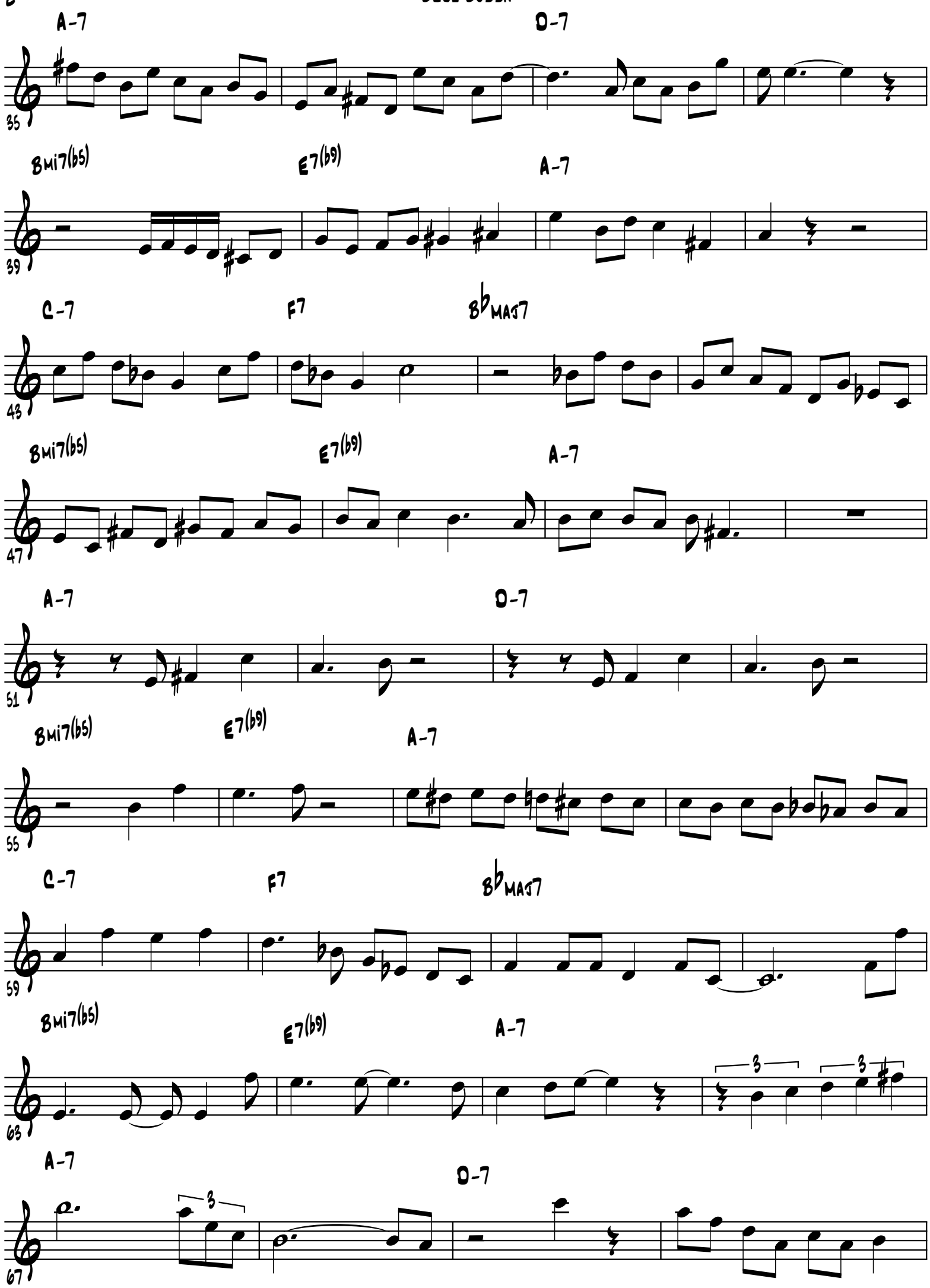
Blue Bossa



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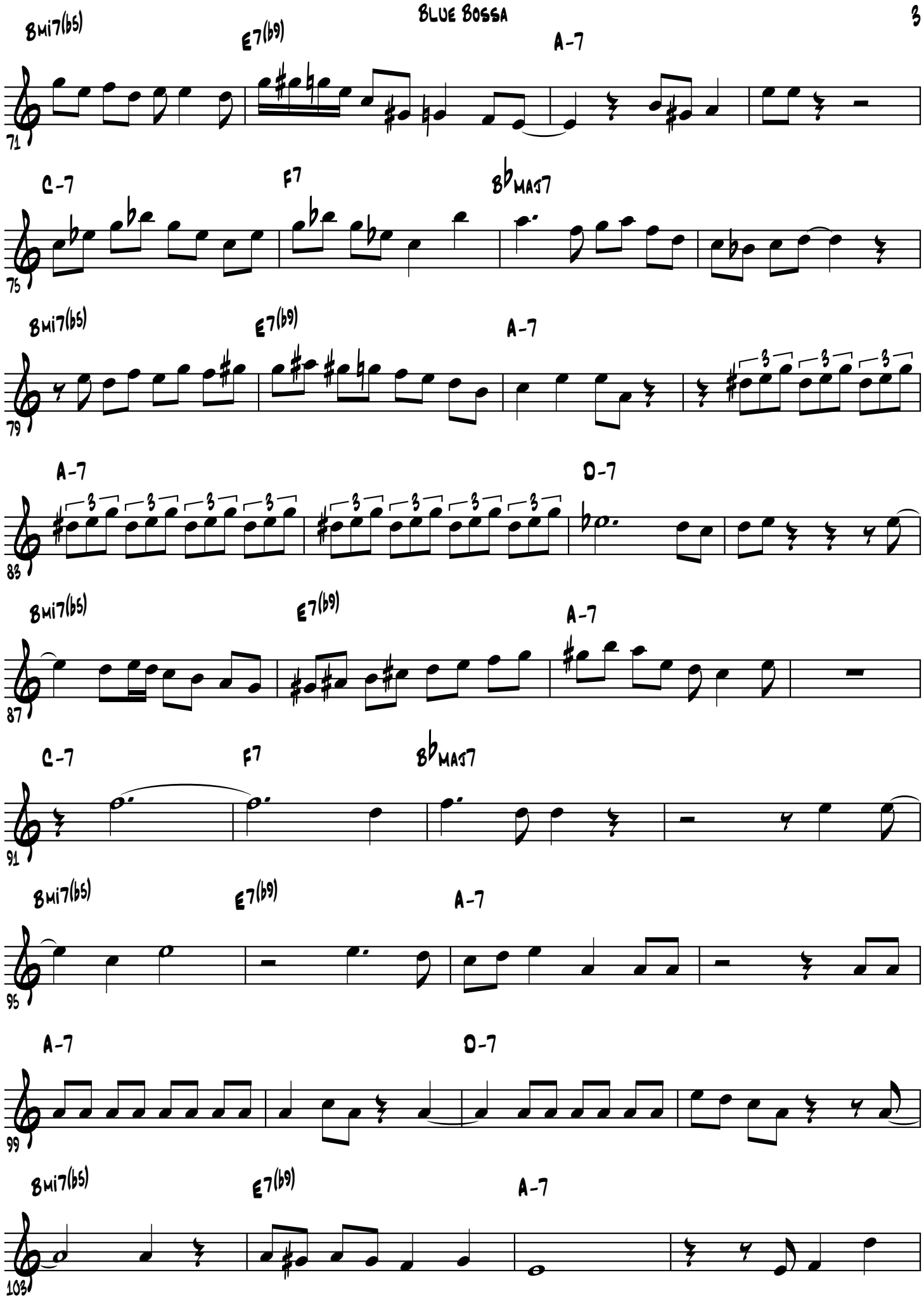

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Blue Bossa

C-7 F7 B♭MAJ7

107

Bmi7(b5) E7(b9) A-7

111

A-7 D-7

115

Bmi7(b5) E7(b9) A-7

119

C-7 F7 BMAJ7

123

Bmi7(b5) E7(b9) A-7

127

A-7 D-7

131

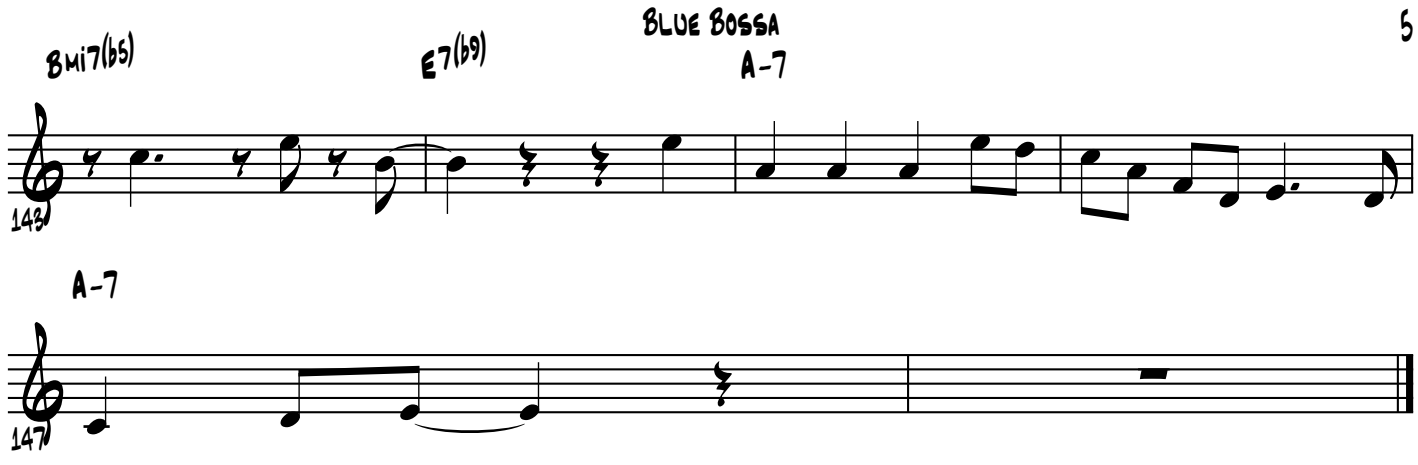
Bmi7(b5) E7(b9) A-7

135

C-7 F7 B♭MAJ7

139

Type to enter a caption.



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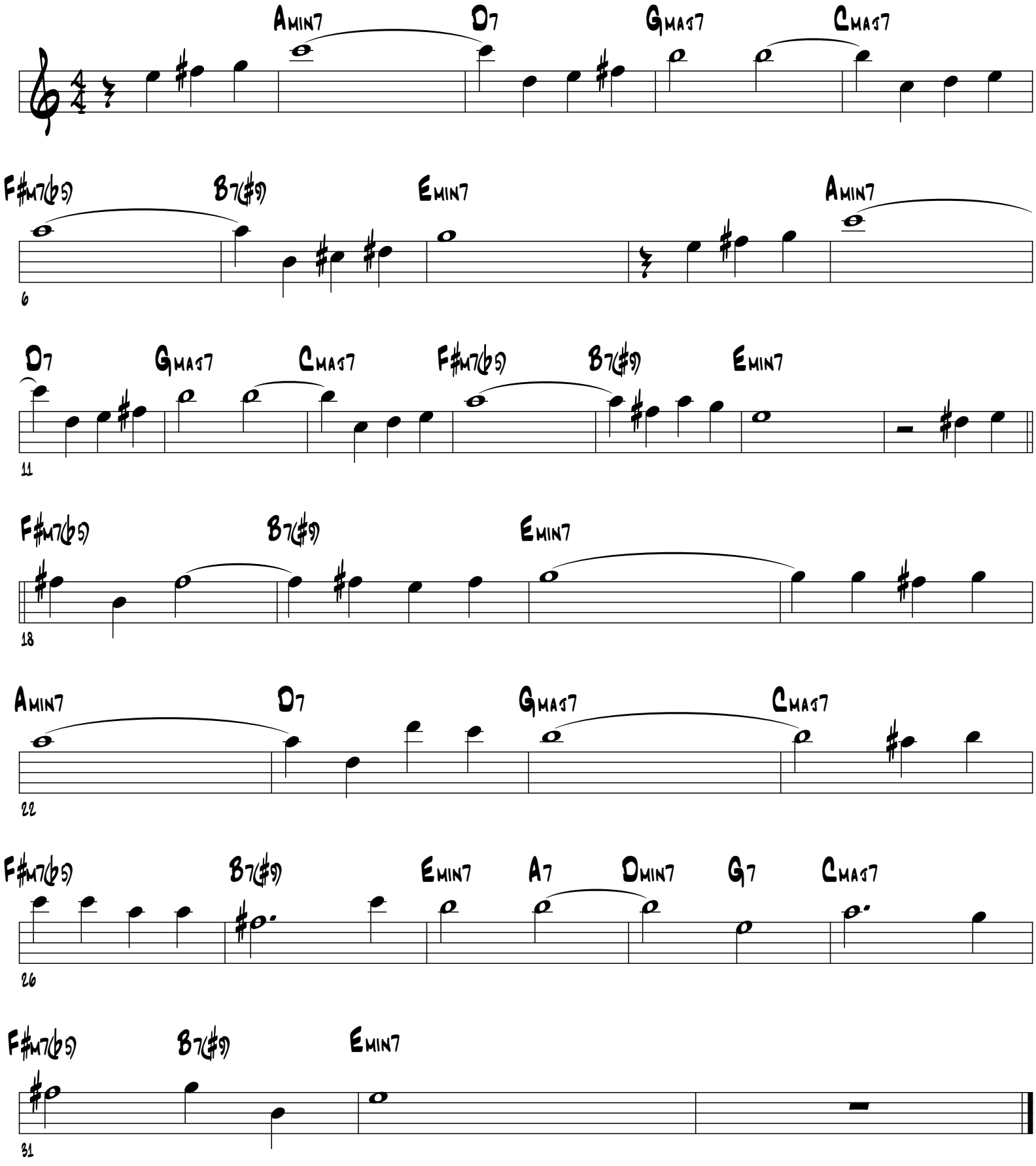
Autumn Leaves

E flat



Autumn

E FLAT

A-7 D7 GMAJ7 F#M7(b5)

B7 E-7 E7b9 A-7 D7

6

5

G C F#M7(b5) B7 E-7

11

F#M7(b5) B7 E-7 E7b9

17

A-7 D7 GMAJ7 CMAJ7

21

5

F#M7(b5) B7 E-7 A7b9 D-7 G7b9

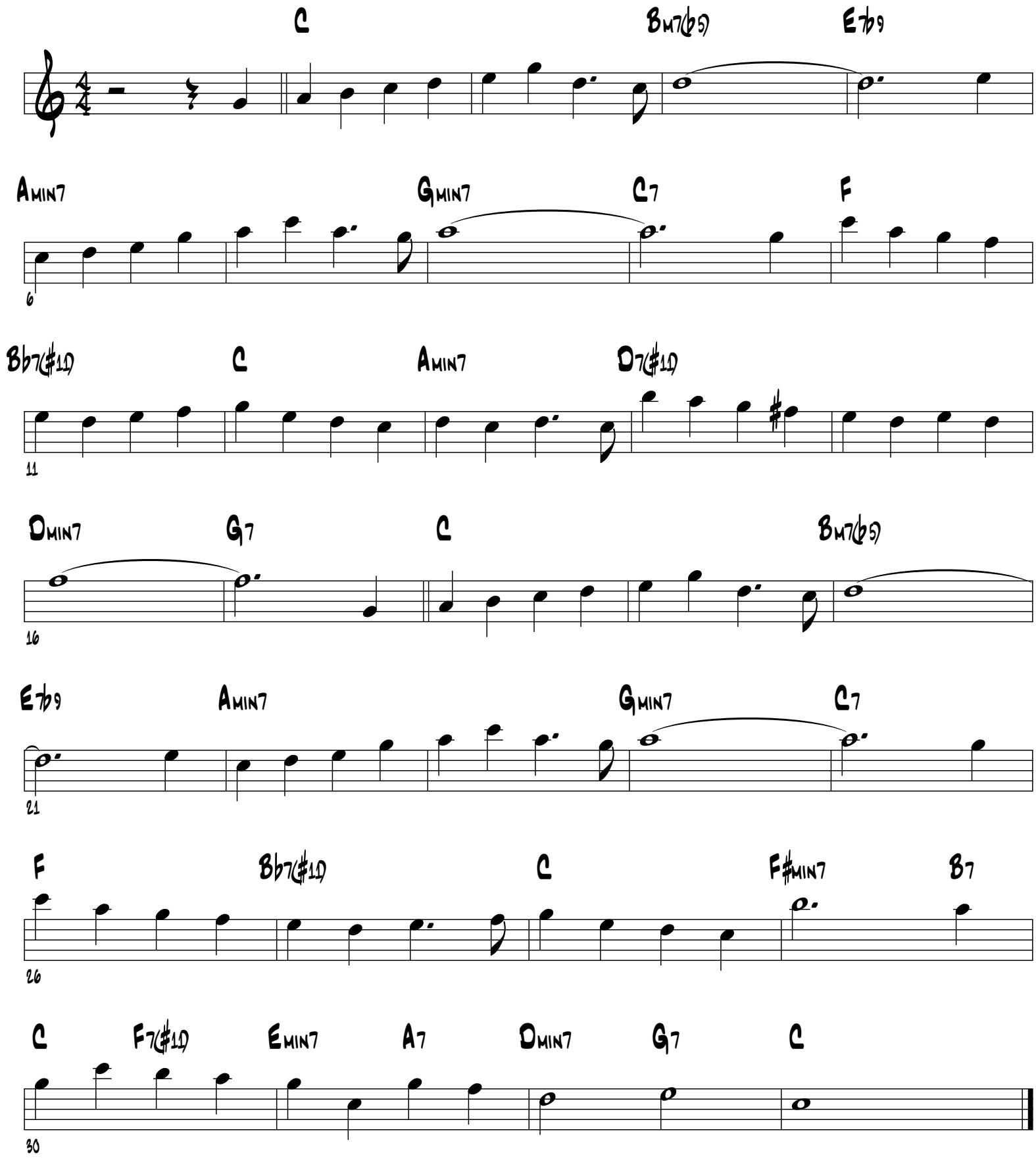
25

C7 B7b9 E-7

29

There Will Never Be Another You

E flat



EWE

Transcribed by Chris Nordello

Cmaj7 Bm7(b5) Eb9

Amin7 Gmin7 C7

Fmaj7 Bb7#11 Cmaj7 Amin7

D7#11 Dmin7 G7

Cmaj7 Bm7(b5) Eb9

Amin7 Gmin7 C7

Fmaj7 Bb7#11 Cmaj7 F#min7 B7

Cmaj7 B7 Emin7 A7b9 Dmin7 G7

29

Cmaj7 Bm7(b5) E7b9

33

Amin7 Gmin7 C7

37

Fmaj7 Bb7#11 Cmaj7 Amin7

41

D7#11 Dmin7 G7

45

Cmaj7 Bm7(b5) E7b9

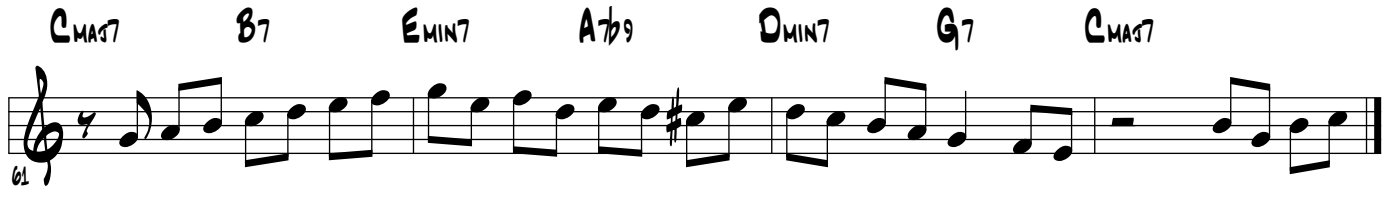
49

Amin7 Gmin7 C7

53

Fmaj7 Bb7#11 Cmaj7 F#min7 B7

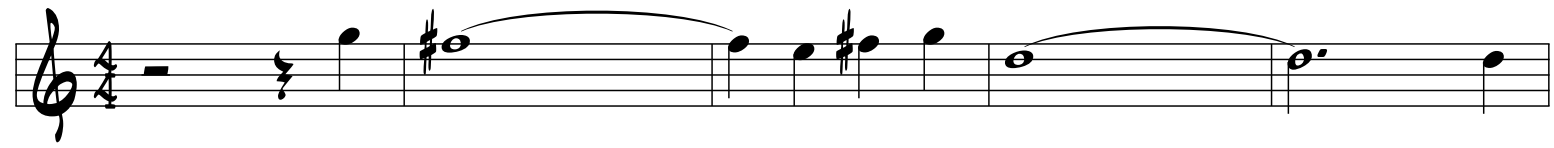
57


Cmaj7
B7
Emin7
A7b9
Dmin7
G7
Cmaj7
61

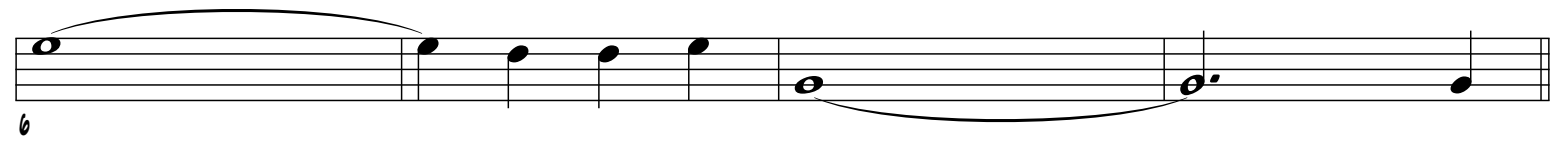
Stella

E flat

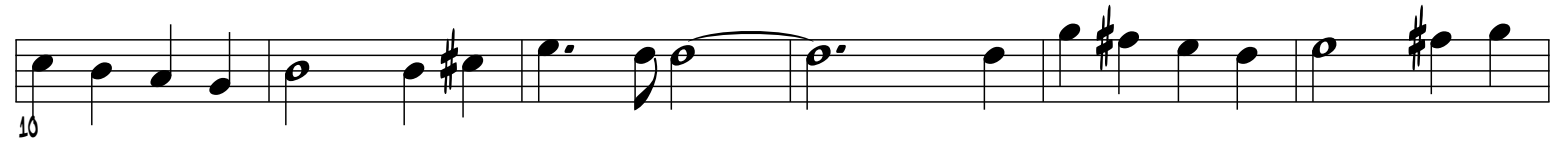
C#m7(b5) F#7(b9) Amin7 D7



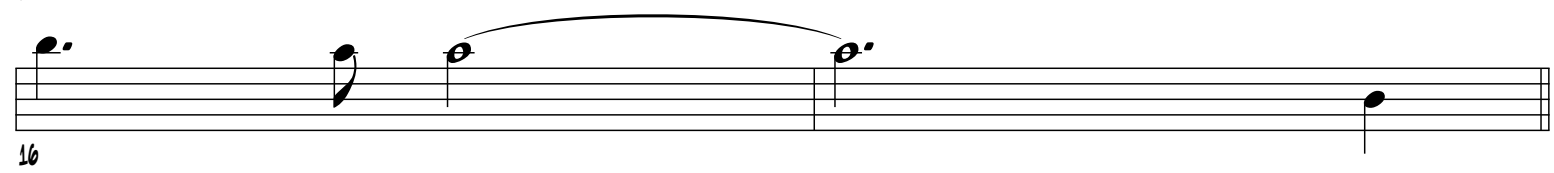
Dmin7 G7 Cmaj F7(#11)



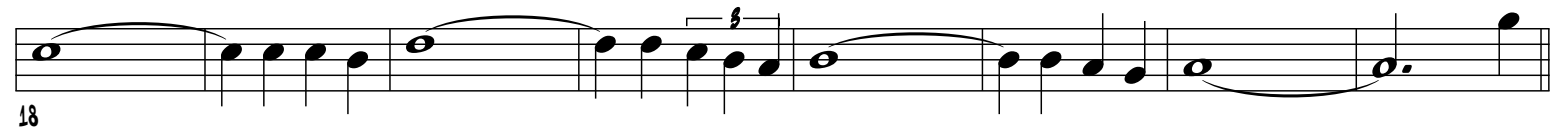
Gmaj C#m7(b5) F#7(b9) Bmin7 Gmin7 C7 Dmaj C#m7(b5) F#7(b9)



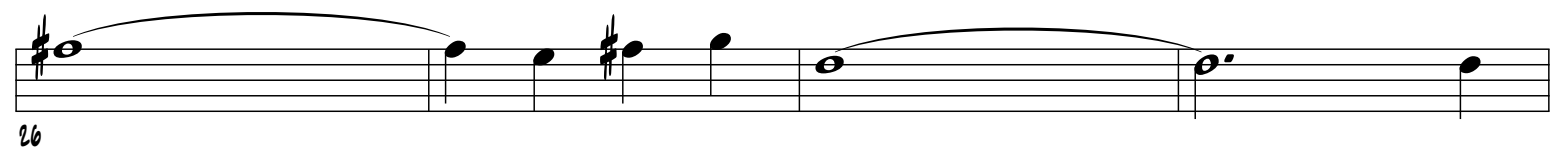
F#m7(b5) B7(b9)



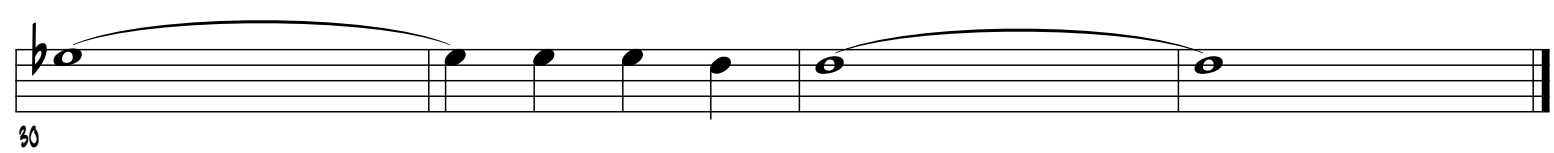
E7alt. Amin7 F7(#11) Gmaj



C#m7(b5) F#7(b9) Bm7(b5) E7(b9)



Am7(b5) D7(b9) Gmaj



Stella

E flat

C#m7(b5) F#7b9 A-7 D7alt. D-7

G7alt. Cmaj7 F7#11 G C#m7(b5) F#7b9

6

B-7 G-7 C7 Dmaj7 C#m7(b5) F#7b9 F#m7(b5)

11

B7alt. E7alt. A-7

16

F7#11 Gmaj7 C#m7(b5)

21

F#7b9 Bm7(b5) E7b9 Am7(b5)

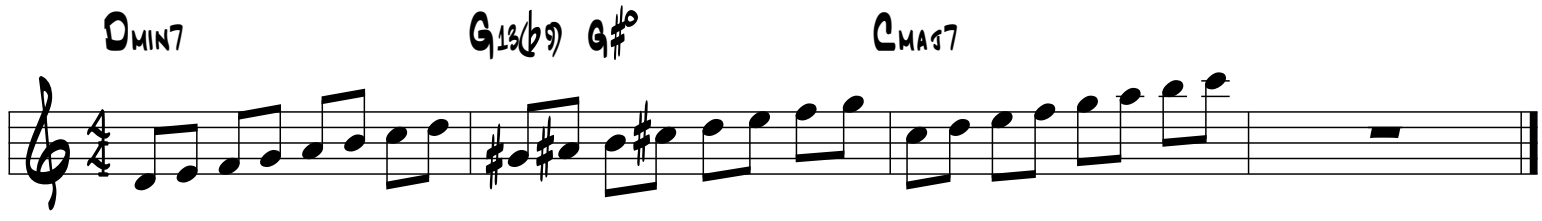
26

D7alt. Gmaj7

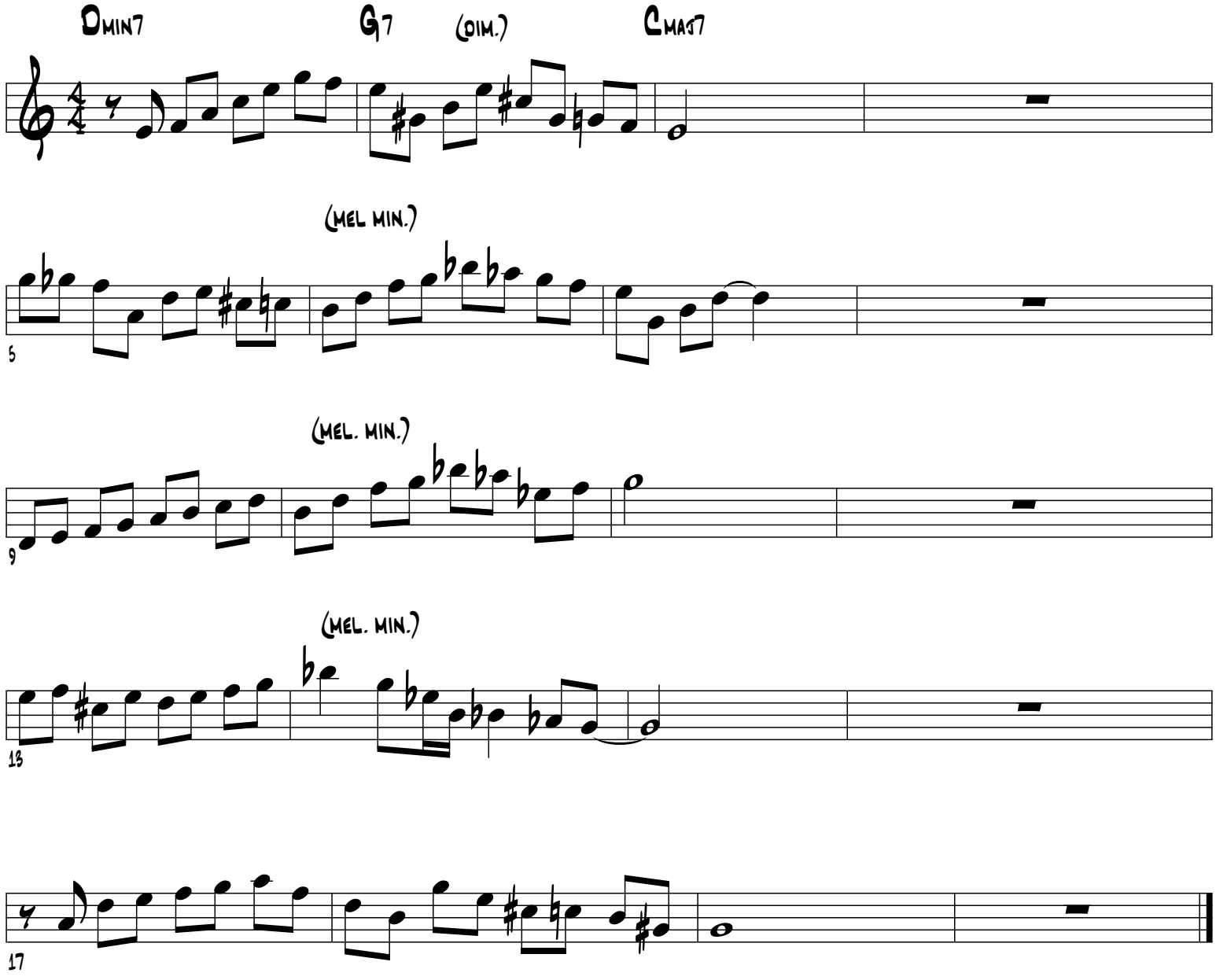
30

Altering the V7 Chord with the Diminish Scale

Altering V chord with diminished scale



II V I's



Dolphin Dance

E Flat

Hancock

Cmaj7 G7sus4 Cmaj7 Bmin7(b5) E7alt.

Amin7 F7(#11) Amin7 F#min7 B7 Emaj7

5

Fmin7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Dmin7 G7 Cmaj7 Amin7 F#min7 B7

10

Emaj7 E7sus4 F#/E E7sus4 D7sus4 D7(#11) D7sus4 C#minF#7

17

C7(#11) F#min7 B7 G#min7 C#7 Bmin7

25

A#min7 D#7 G#min7 F#min7/G# G#min7 F#min7/G#

29

C7sus4 G7(b9) G7sus4 Bmin7(b5) E7alt.

35

©

Rhythm Changes

Tenor Conclave

E flat

Mobley

G A-7 D7(#5) G A-7 D7

G A-7 D7 G7 C6 C#°

G E7 A-7 D7 G E7♭13 A-9 D7

B-7 E7♭9 A-7 D7#5 D-7 G7 C C-

GMAJ7 F#-7 B7

B-7 E7 E7 A7

A-7 D7 G A-7 D7

G E7 A-7 D7 G7 C C-

29

G G A-7 D7#5

35

G E7b9 A7 D7 G7 C C-

37

B- Bb- A-7 D7ALT. G A-7 D7

41

B-7 A-7 D7ALT. D-7 G7 C C-7

45

G F#-7 B7ALT.

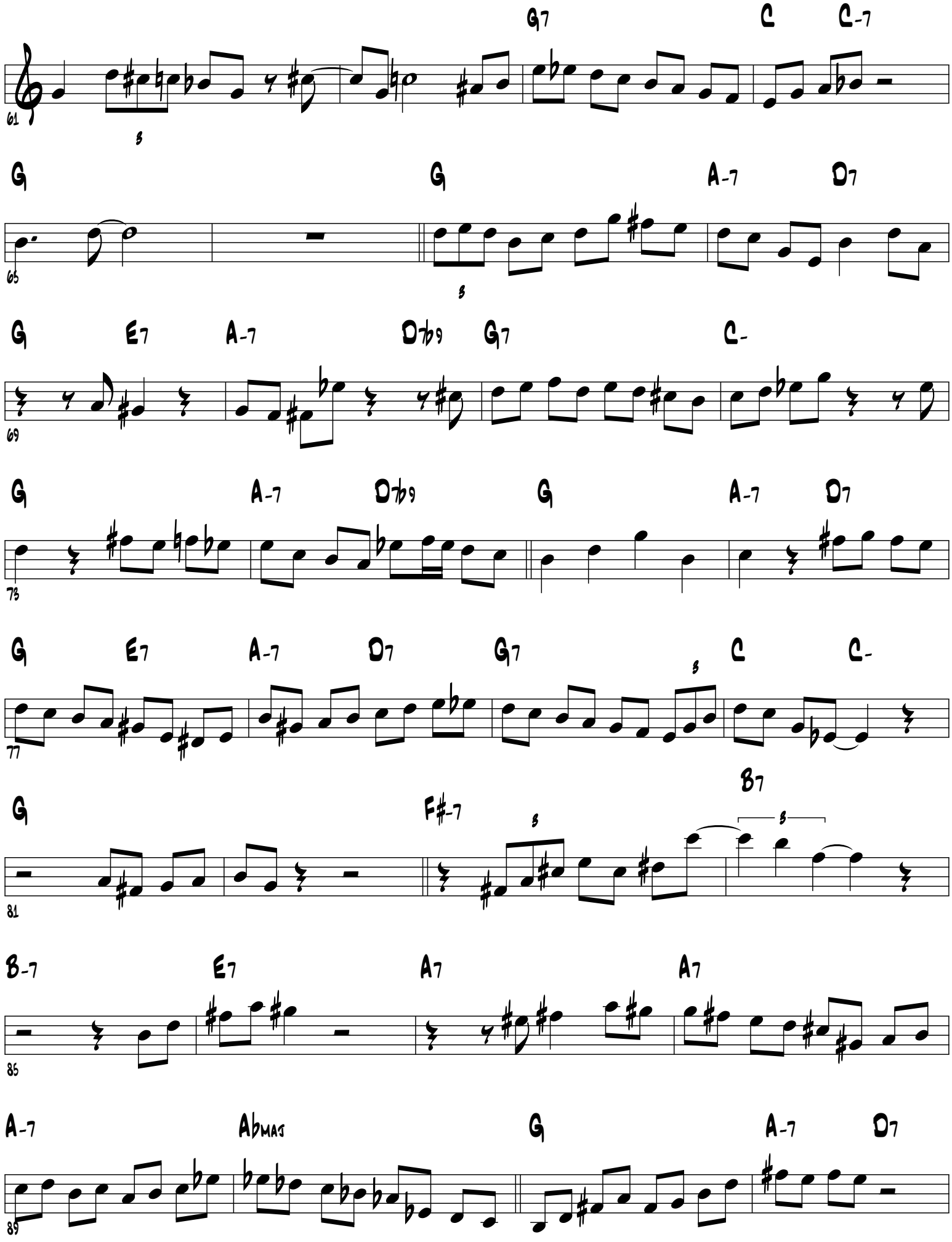
49

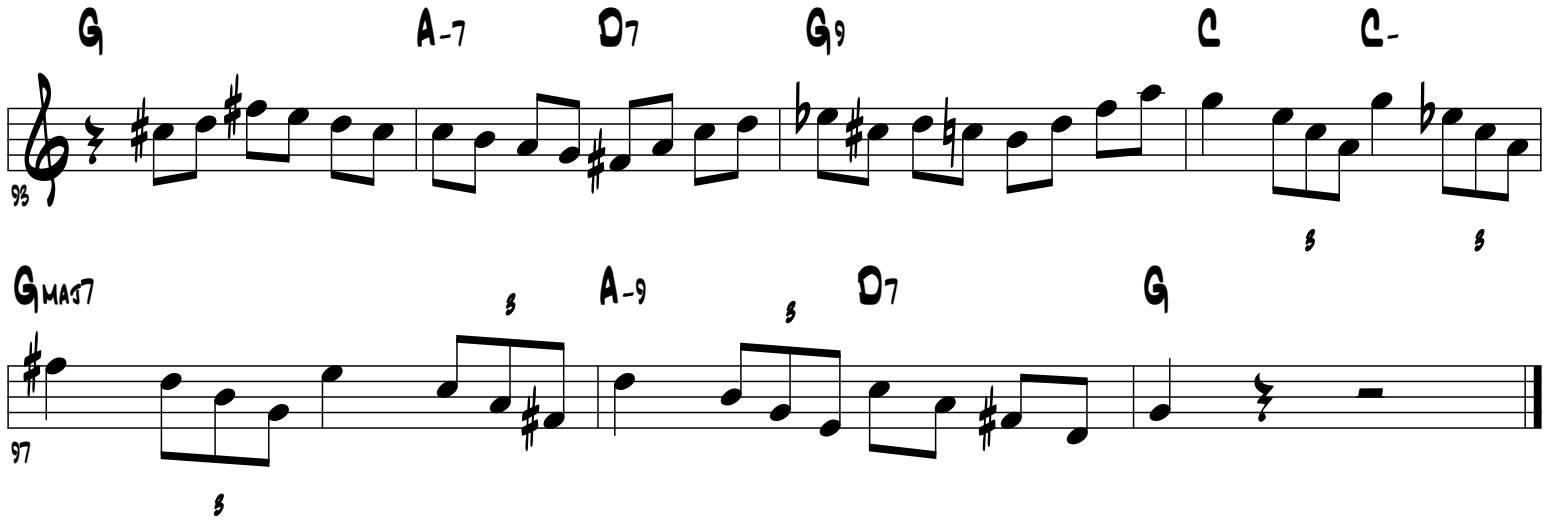
B-7 E7 E-7 A7

58

D7 G

57


G7
C
C-7
61
G
G
A-7
D7
65
G
E7
A-7
D7b9
G7
C-
69
G
A-7
D7b9
G
A-7
D7
73
G
E7
A-7
D7
G7
C
C-
77
G
F#-7
B7
81
B-7
E7
A7
A7
85
A-7
AbMAJ
G
A-7
D7
89

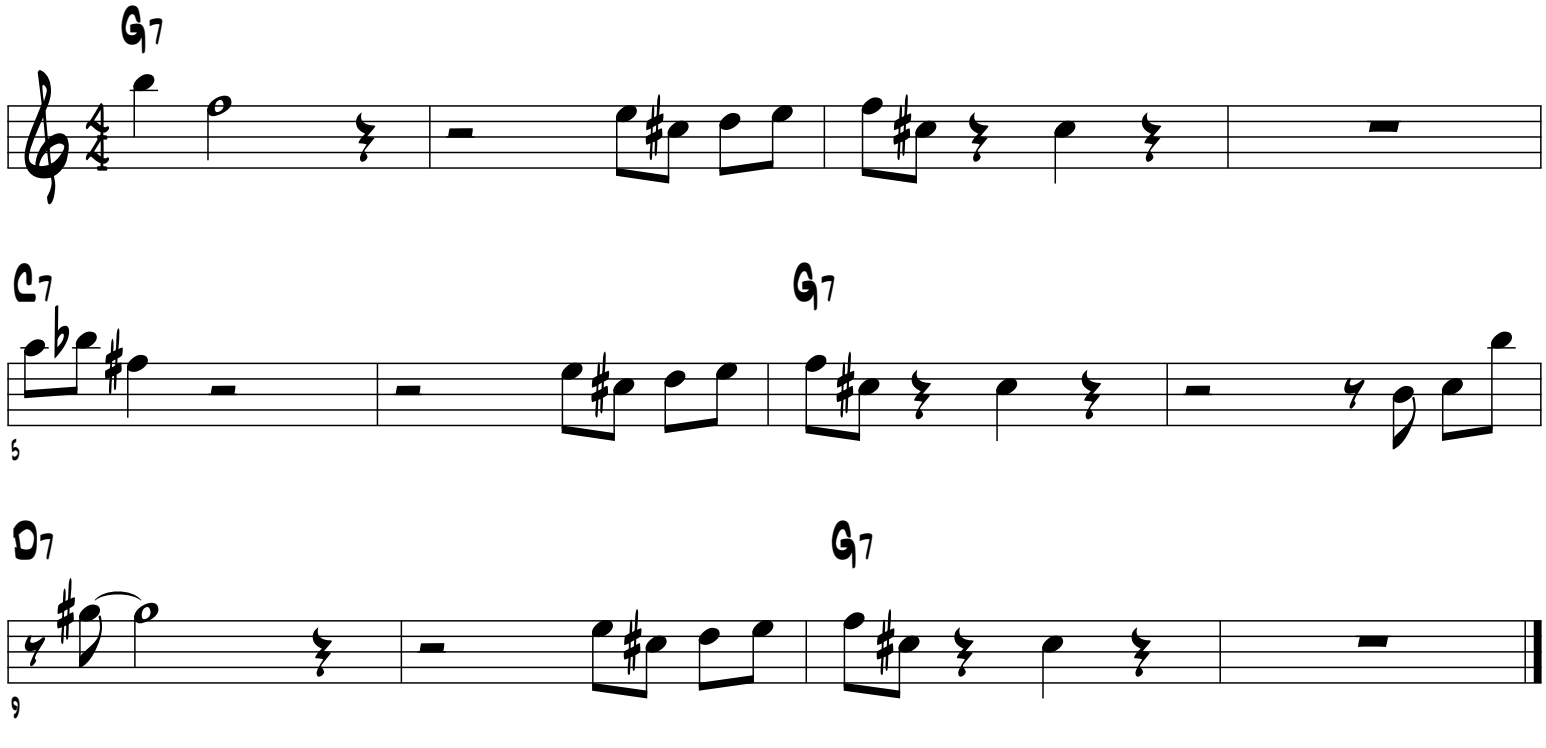

G
A-7
D7
G9
C
C-
96
GMAJ7
A-9
D7
G
97

Lydian Dominant

Blue Seven

E flat

Rollins



Blue Seven

E flat

Rollins

G7

C7 G7 D7

6

A-7 D7 G7 A-7 D7

11

G7 C7 G7 C7 G7

14

D7 C7 G7 A-7 D7

21

G7 C7 G7

26

C7 G7

30

A-7 D7 G7

34

A-7 D7 G7 C7 G7

38

C7

42

G7

46

D7 A-7 D7 G7 D7

48

G7 C7 G7

52

C7 G7

56

A-7 D7 G7 D7 G7

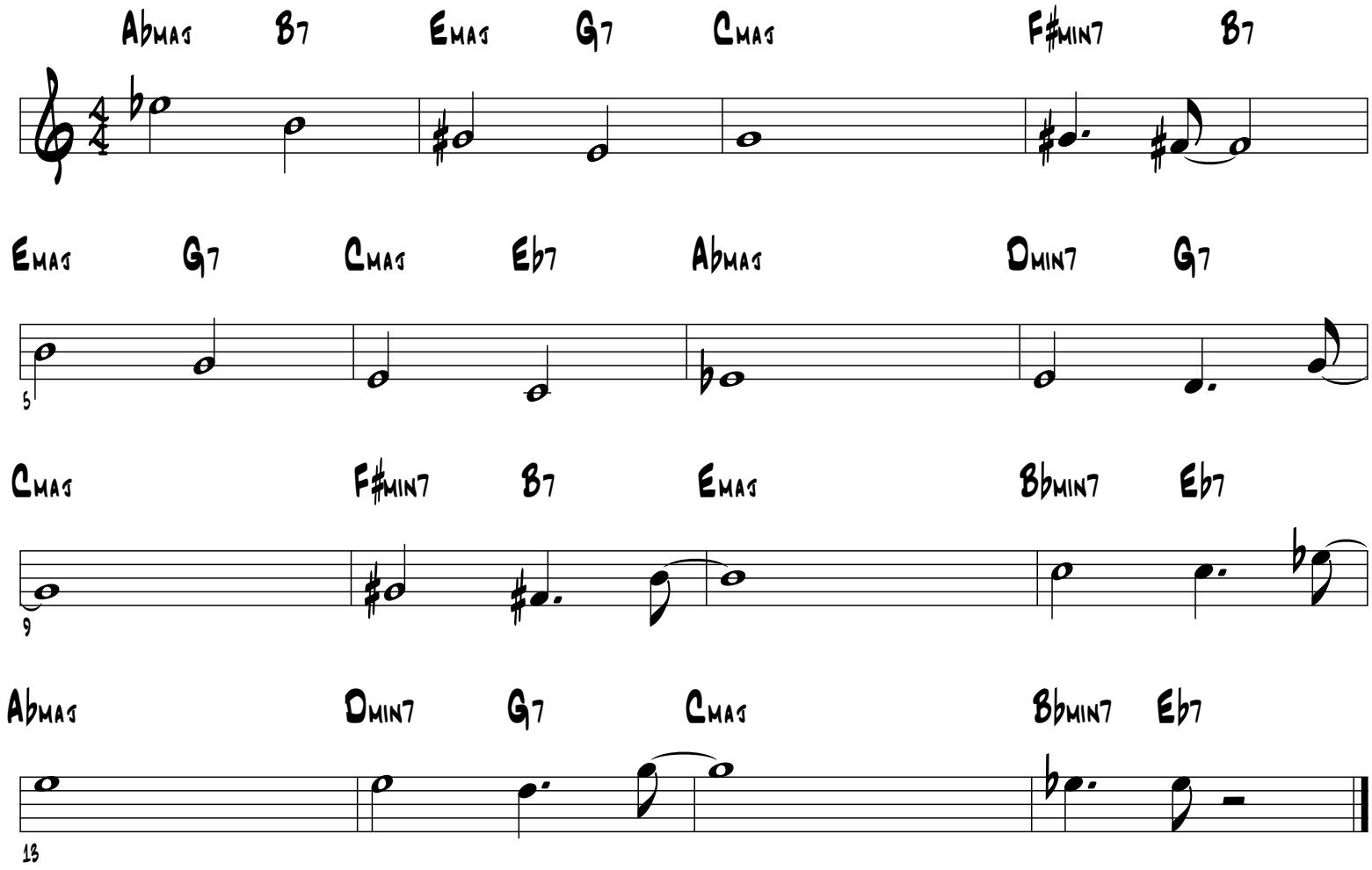
60

Giant Steps

Giant Steps

E flat

Coltrane



Giant Steps

E flat

Coltrane

Bbmin7 Eb7 Ab B7 Emaj7 G7 Cmaj7

F#min7 B7 Emaj G7 Cmaj Eb7 Abmaj

5

Dmin7 G7 Cmaj F#min7 B7 Emaj

9

Bbmin7 Eb7 Abmaj Dmin7 G7 Cmaj Bbmin7 Eb7

15

Abmaj B7 Emaj G7 Cmaj F#min7 B7

18

Emaj G7 Cmaj Eb7 Abmaj Dmin7 G7

22

Cmaj F#min7 B7 Emaj Bbmin7 Eb7

26

Abmaj Dmin7 G7 Cmaj Bbmin7 Eb7

30

Abmaj B7 Emaj G7 Cmaj F#min7 B7

34

Emaj G7 Cmaj Eb7 Abmaj Dmin7 G7

38

Cmaj F#min7 B7 Emaj Bbmin7 Eb7

42

Abmaj Dmin7 G7 Cmaj Bbmin7 Eb7

46

Abmaj7 B7 Emaj G7 Cmaj F#min7 B7

50

Emaj G7 Cmaj Abmaj Dmin7 G7 Cmaj F#min7 B7

54

Emaj Bbmin7 Eb7 Abmaj Dmin7 G7 Cmaj

60

Credits:

I would like to thank Dr. Brian Leavell and Professor Gary Campbell.