NSIDE IMPROVISATION SERIES

for all instruments

vol.6

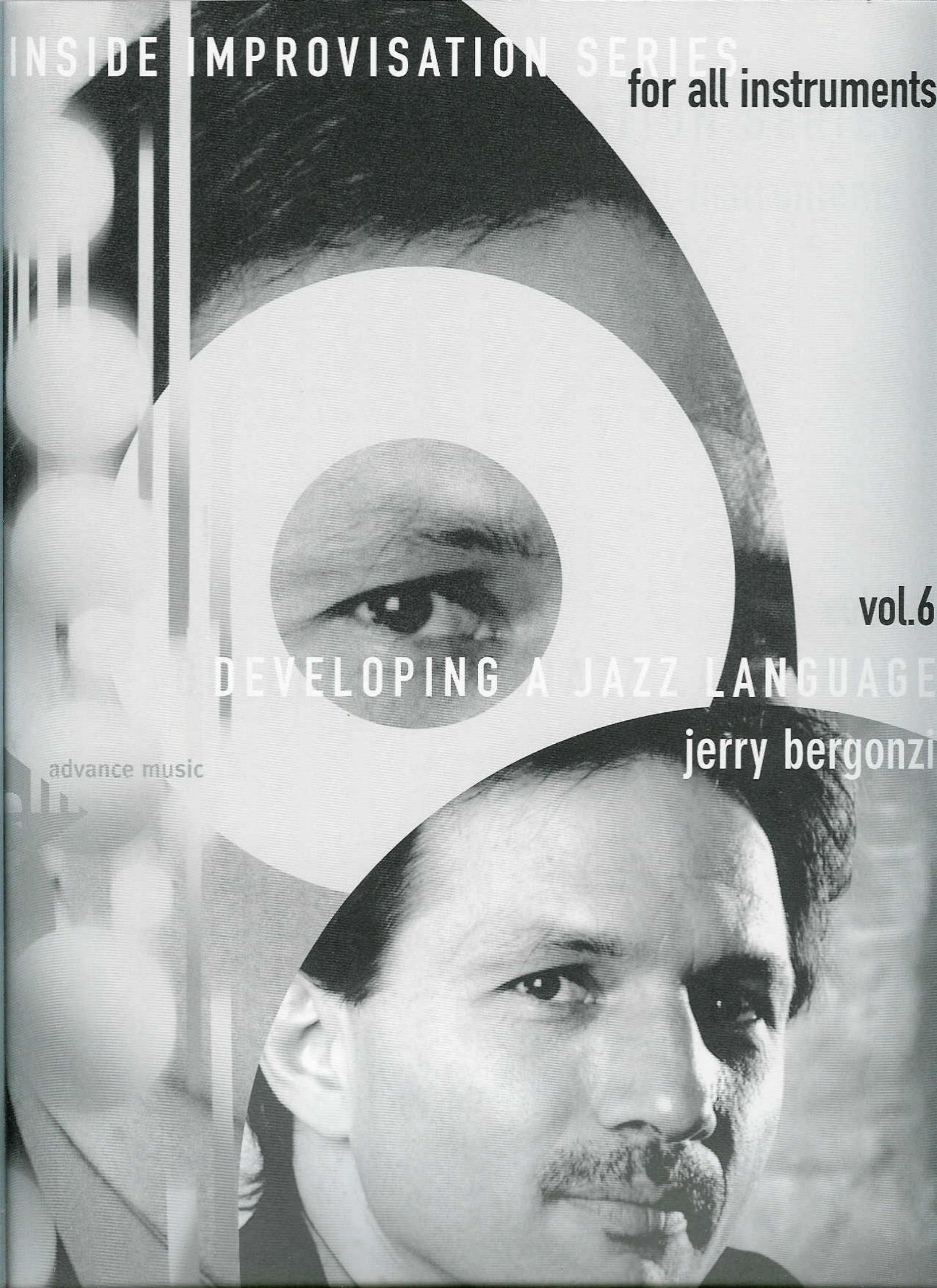
DEVELOPING A JAZZ LANGUAGE

jerry bergonzi

advance music

INSIDE IMPROVISATION SERIES

for all instruments



vol.6

DEVELOPING A JAZZ LANGUAGE

jerry bergonzi

advance music

INSIDE IMPROVISATION SERIES

for all instruments

vol.6

DEVELOPING A JAZZ LANGUAGE

jerry bergonzi

Cover Art: Manx Design
Layout: T. Max Zentawer
Music typesetting: T. Max Zentawer, Nico Schliemann
Editing: Geraldine Bergonzi, Chuck Gee
Production: Hans Gruber

Order No. 14266

Renato Chicco, Piano

Dave Santoro, Bass

Adam Nussbaum, Drums

Recorded and mixed at PBS Studios, Westwood, MA, U.S.A.

Jerry Bergonzi plays SELMER Saxophones and RICO Reeds
and uses SHURE Microphone

Table of Contents

Part ONE

Part TWO

CD Index

Preface

How do children learn to speak the language of their parents? They listen, listen and listen. In order to learn the language of jazz one needs to develop a regimen of listening. Children learn to speak by constantly listening to the sounds of the words, listening to the meanings and intentions of the phrases, listening to the inflections of the dialect and then imitating what they have heard. So too for the improvising musician. One needs first to listen to the music, sing along with the music and play along with the music. Finding one's own voice doesn't just happen without checking out what came before, and as with learning any language you don't become proficient without years of study.

The material presented here in the first chapters of this book is definitely nuts and bolts sort of information. Like spelling and grammar, this material is a prerequisite for the improviser. If you don't know this material, it means that you have a handicap. That is not to say that you can't have fun improvising, it simply means that you have a disadvantage when you are musically speaking because you are missing vital information.

So let the work begin!

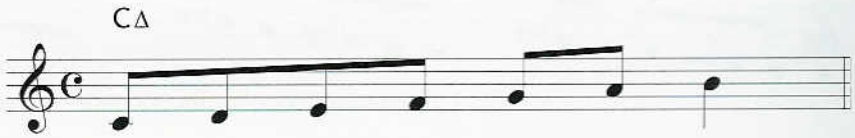
Developing a Jazz Language, is the sixth volume of Jerry Bergonzi's series, INSIDE IMPROVISATION. Learning a language requires listening on many levels to the meanings, the sounds, the intentions and the inflections or nuances of the language. The first chapters of this volume on learning the language of jazz focus on the prerequisites of chord scales, chord tones, approach notes and target notes, scale motives and sequences, and lines. Part Two qualifies improvisational techniques into three areas; melodic, harmonic and sonic (rhythmic devices are the focus of VOL. IV, MELODIC RHYTHMS), and it is designed as a menu of soloing devices from which you can select your personal course of study. Over 100 specific devices are discussed and conceptualized so as to give the improviser more depth of expression and a greater well from which to draw ideas. Among the numerous topics presented are: guide tones, voice leading, chord substitutions, 4-tonic system for composition, tritonics, hexatonics, tonal expansions, whole tone playing, augmented symmetrical scales, double diminished scales, limited range and large range playing, shapes, blues melodies, accents, comping as a soloing device, common tones, articulations, laying back on the beat, playing on top, and many more!

Part ONE

1. Chord Scales

In this first chapter, learning chord scales is the main objective. Every chord has its appropriate chord scale and knowing these scales without having to think about it is a prerequisite for the improviser. To know a scale "inside out" means that you know a scale starting anywhere in the scale, both ascending and descending. The first exercise is to play the entire chord scale from the root ascending to the 7th of the scale.

Example: 1 - 7



If you are a more advanced player you can do the following exercises playing 16th notes rather than 8th notes. When you play the scales with 16th notes you play from the root ascending to the 9th of the scale.

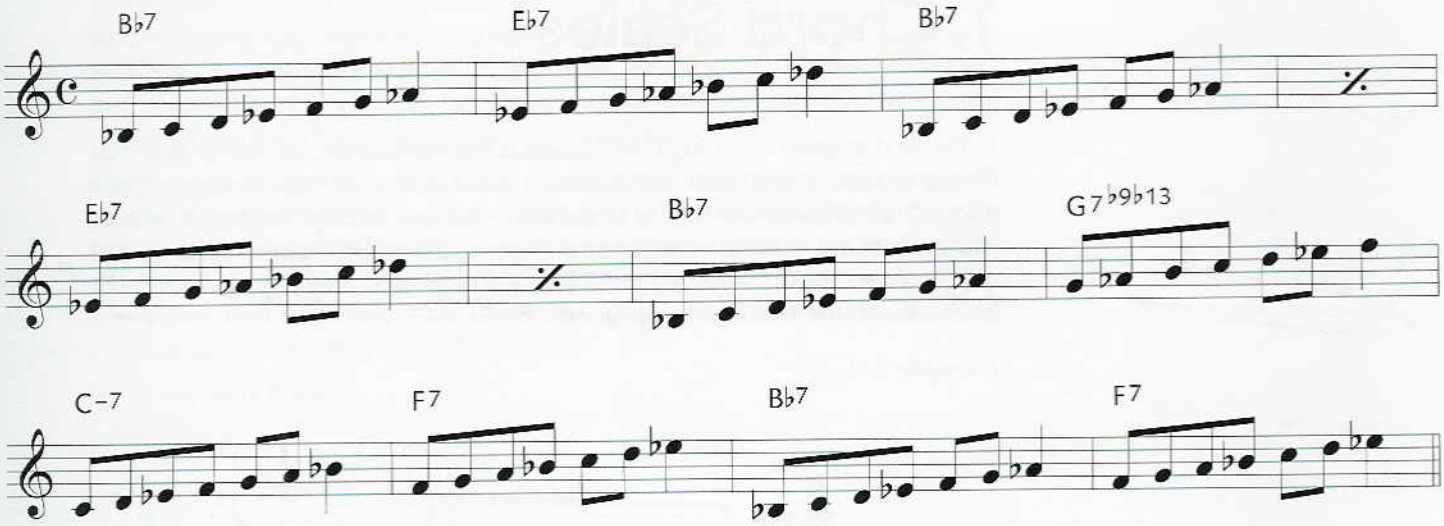
Example: 1 - 9

Playing through to the 7th or the 9th of the scale provides a destination or target note, which lands on the beat. Practicing the scales in this way facilitates one's awareness of all the scale tones.

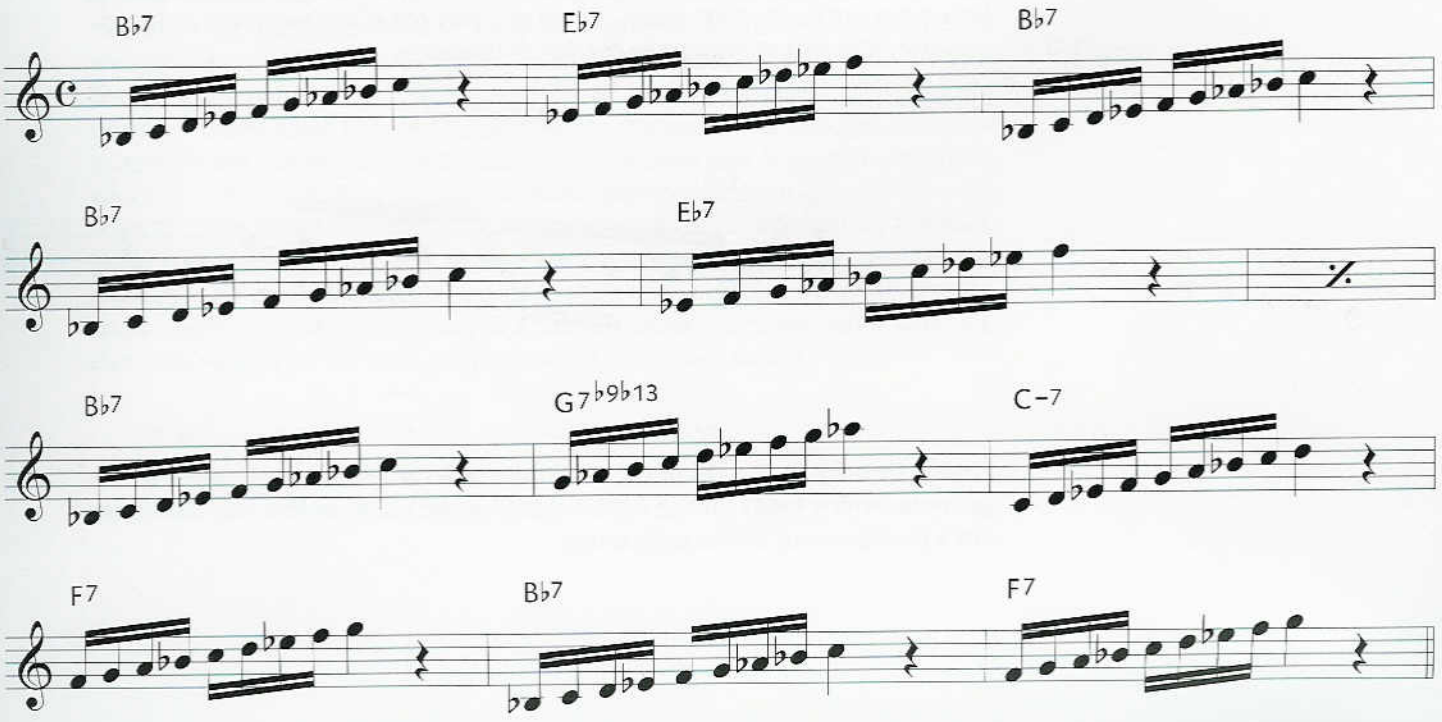
Exercise #1

Try playing through a blues starting each chord scale on the root and landing on the 7th (if you are playing 8th notes) or the ninth (if you are playing 16th notes). The tempo can be as slow as you like. The 8th-note rhythm sounds like 1 and, 2 and, 3 and 4. The 16th-note rhythm sounds like 1-e-and-a, 2-e-and-a, 3 (rest).

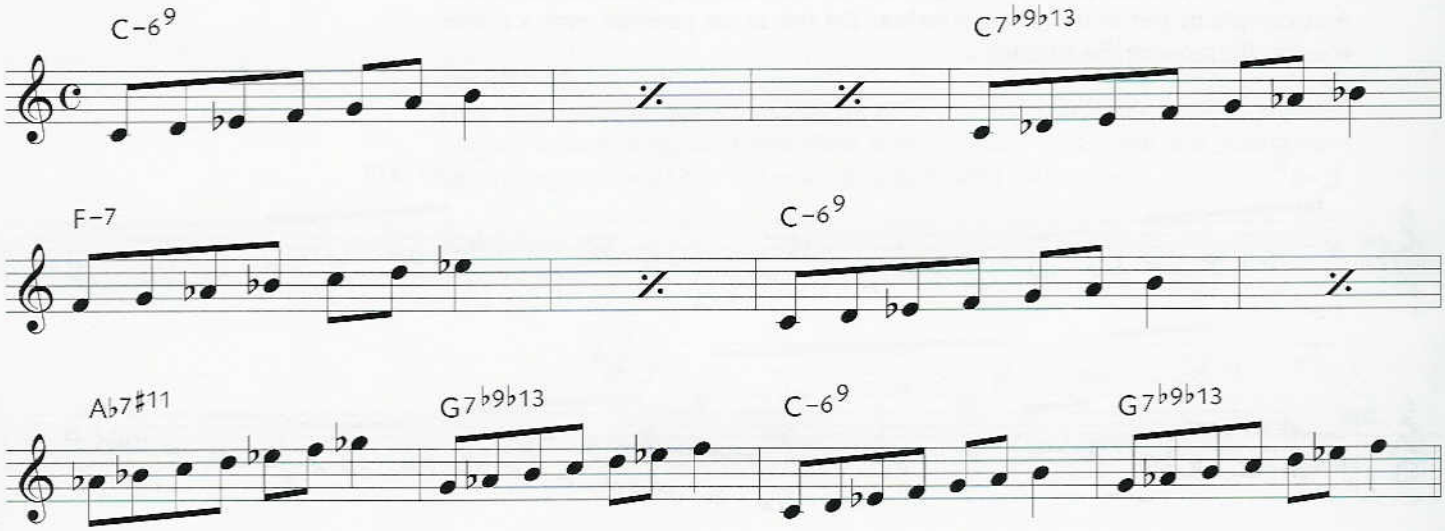
Example: 1 - 7



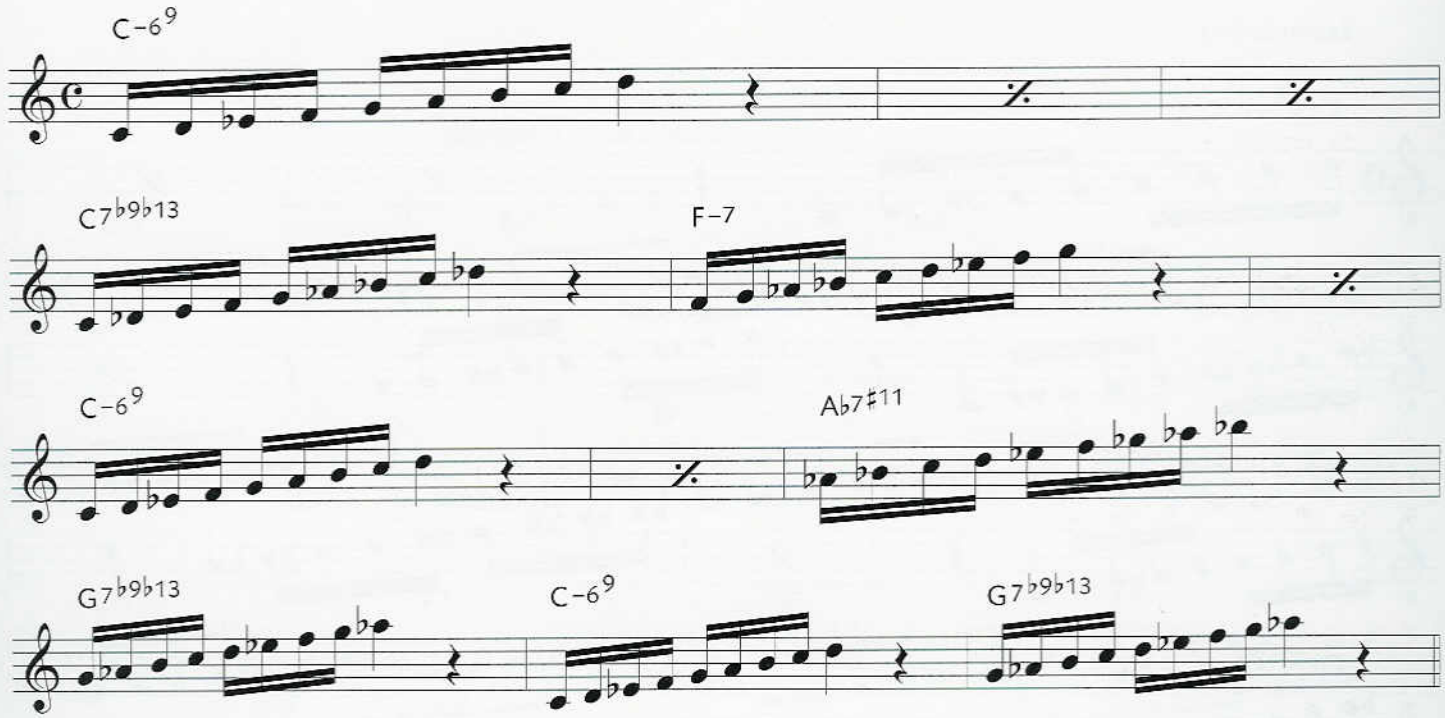
Example: 1 - 9



Example: Exercise #1 on a C minor blues (ascending 1 - 7)



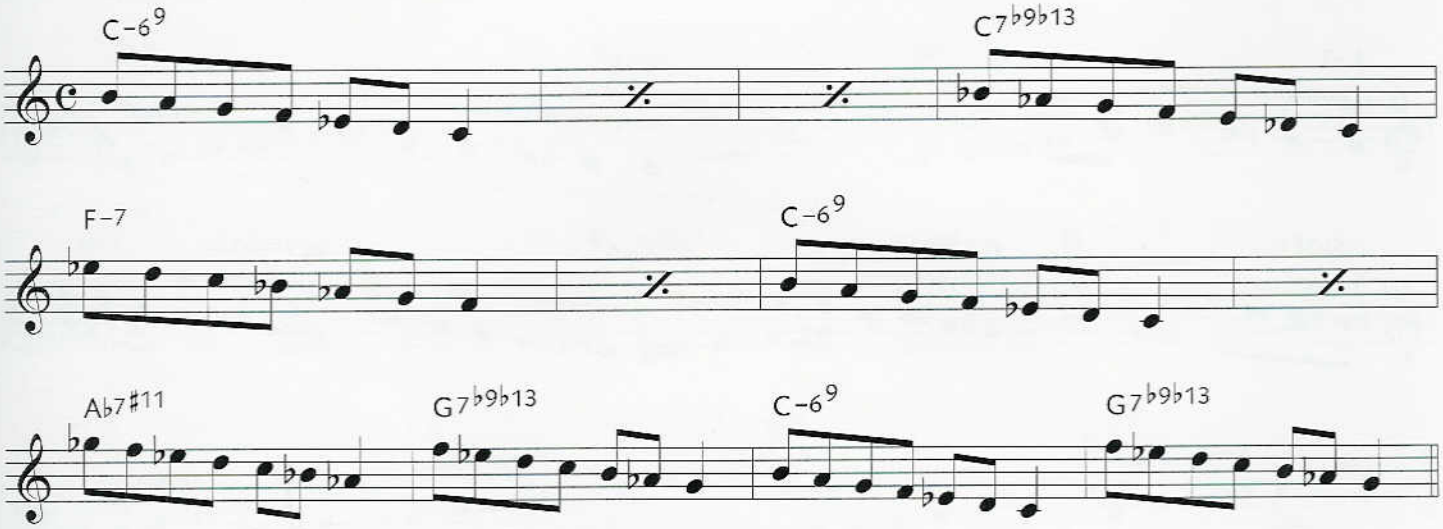
Example: Exercise #1 on a C minor blues (ascending 1 - 9)



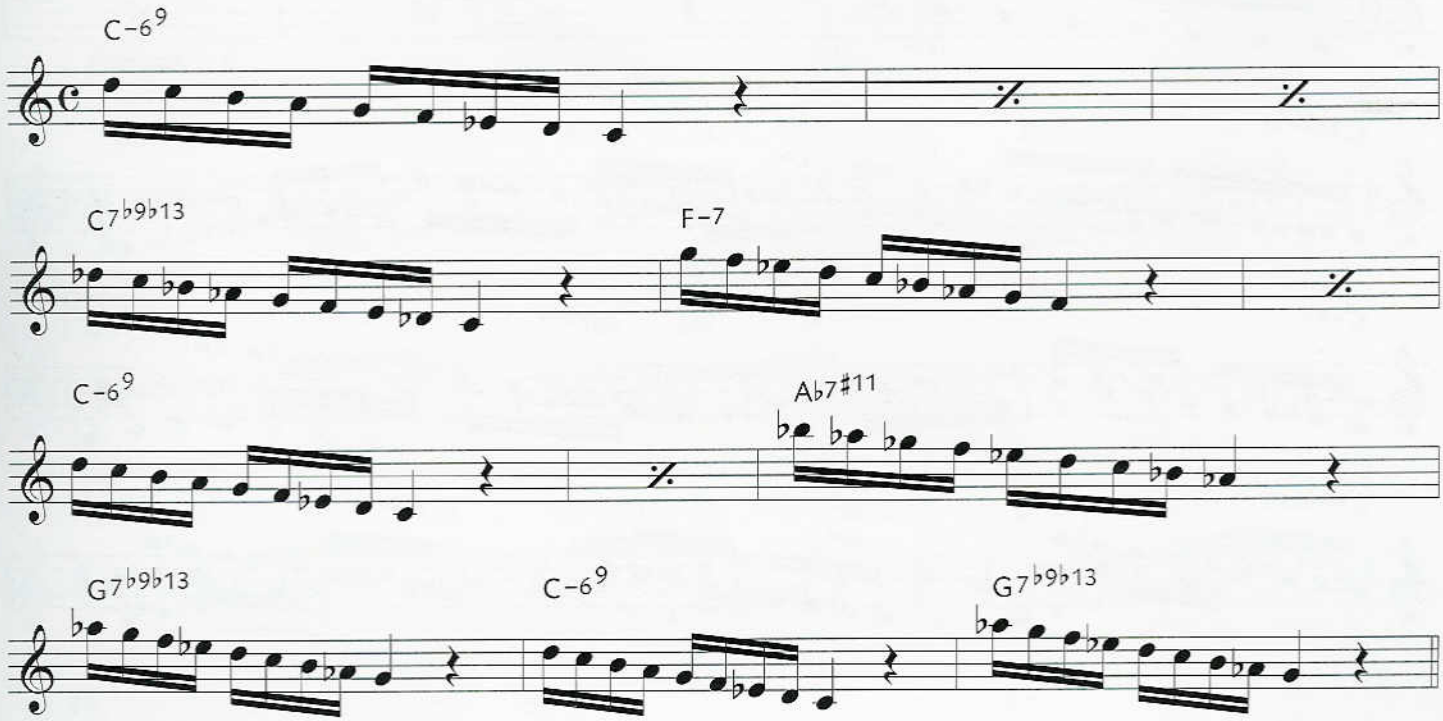
Exercise #2

After playing the ascending 1 - 7 or 1 - 9 chord scales, next repeat the exercise playing the chord scales descending 7 - 1 or 9 - 1 on the major and minor blues. An example of the minor blues is below. Do the same exercise over a minor blues as in the example below.

Example: 7 - 1



Example: 9 - 1



Note that over the C-6⁹ chord you can also play a Dorian scale.

Practicing scales in this way is not only good for your technique but it also develops your harmonic understanding of the scales. After a while you are able to analyze harmonically whatever it is that you are practicing.

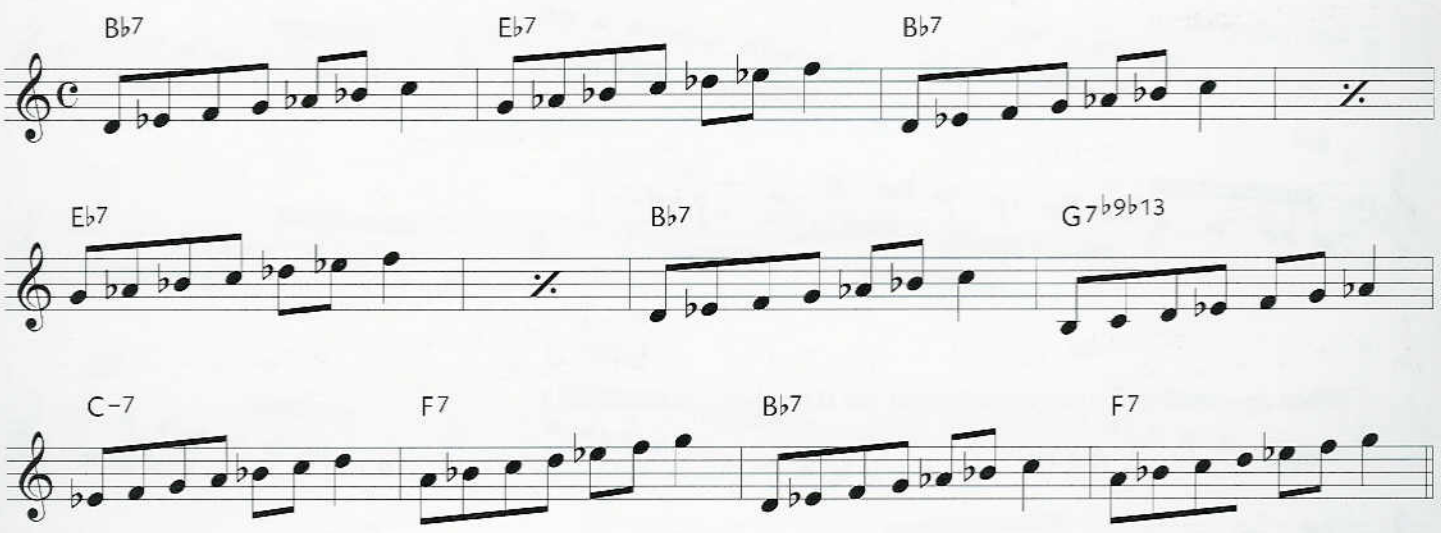
Exercise #3

After playing exercises #1 and #2 on both the major and minor blues, next try playing 3 ascending to 9 and then 9 descending to 3 (with 8th notes), or 3 ascending to 11 and then 11 descending to 3 (with 16th notes).

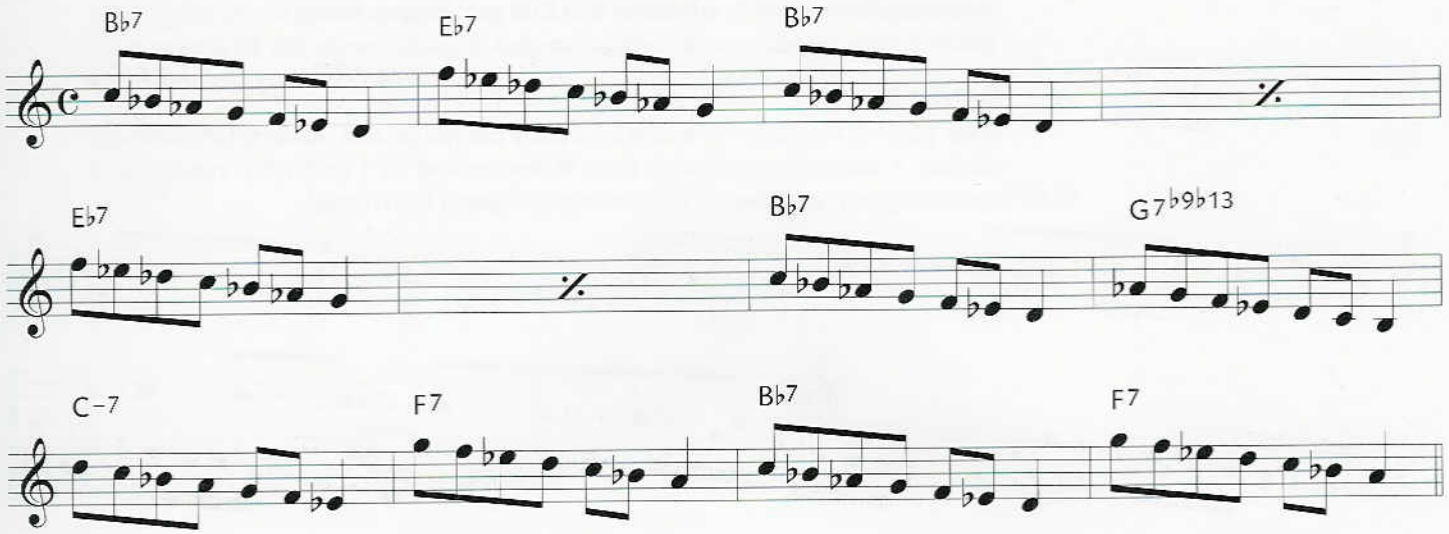
Example: 3 - 9

Example: 9 - 3

Example: 3 - 9 on a blues



Example: 9 - 3 on a blues

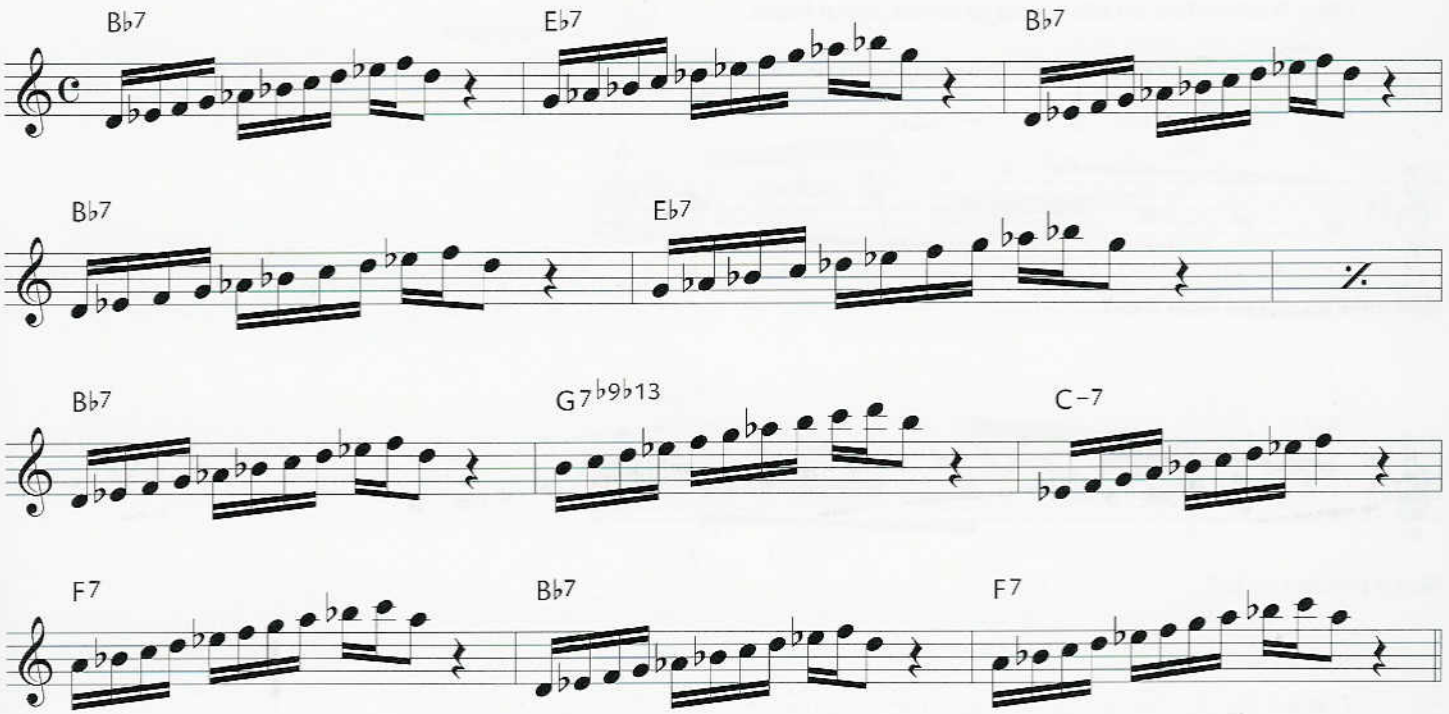


The 11th (or the fourth scale tone) is the least understood of the scale tones. It has been called an "avoid" note but more accurately should be described as a scale tone that requires special attention. The 11 needs to be resolved when played over a major or dominant chord. When played over a minor 7, minor 7♭5, or a diminished chord, the 11 does not need to be resolved, in fact it sounds great. In the example below, when played over major or dominant chords, the 11 is resolved up to the 5 and back to the 3. This is one of many possible resolutions for the 11. Practicing the 3 - 11 scales really tunes the ears into the special attention required by the eleven.

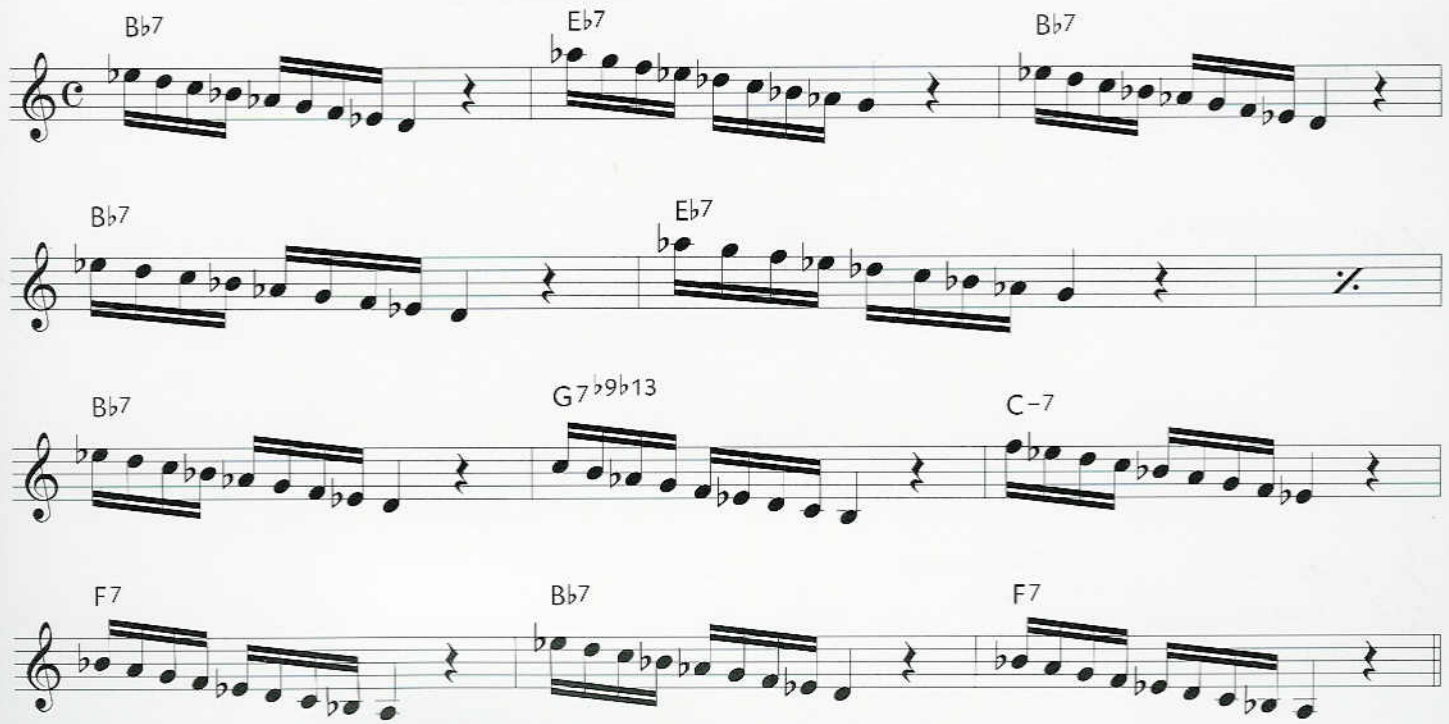
Example: 3 - 11

When descending from 11 to 3, note that the 11 resolves right into the 3.

Example: 3 - 11 on a blues



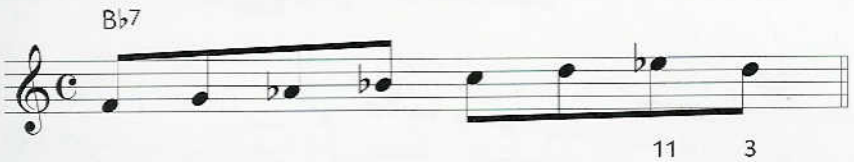
Example: 11 - 3 on a blues



Exercise #4

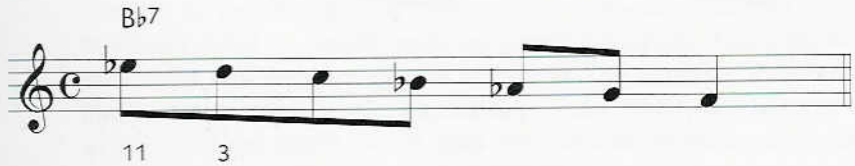
Try playing the chord scales starting on 5 and ascending to 11, then descending from 11 down to 5 on both a major and a minor blues.

Example: 5 - 11. Resolve the 11 up to 5 or down to 3 as in the example below.



Notice the resolution from 11 to 3

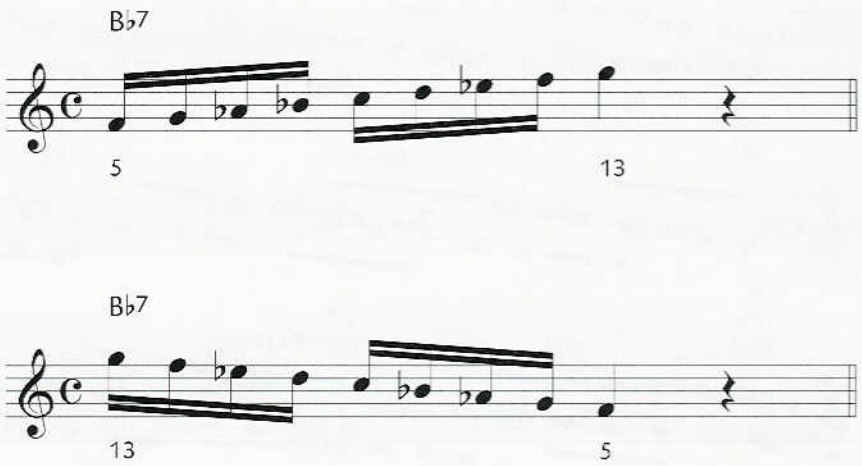
Notice 11 moves up to 5



Notice 11 resolves to 3

Or using sixteenth notes, try playing the chord scales starting on 5 and ascending to 13, then descending from 13 down to 5 on both a major and a minor blues.

Example:



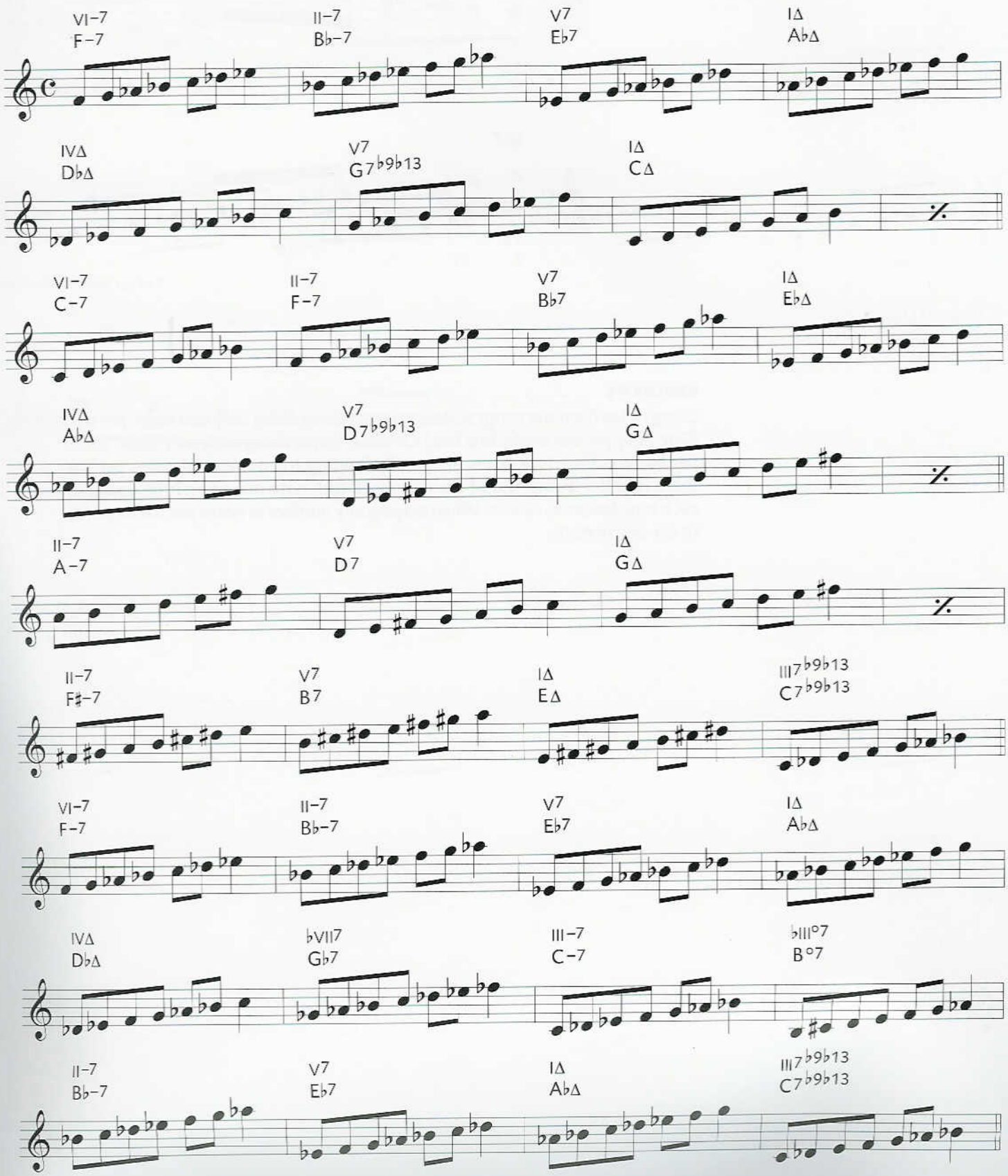
Exercise #5

Using notes from the chord scales try improvising using only two notes per bar. (One note per bar works fine too.) Continue improvising with only three notes per bar and then four notes per bar. By limiting the number of notes per bar there is better awareness of the degree of each note played and the sound of each tone becomes clearer. When playing any number of notes per bar, feel free to use any rhythm.

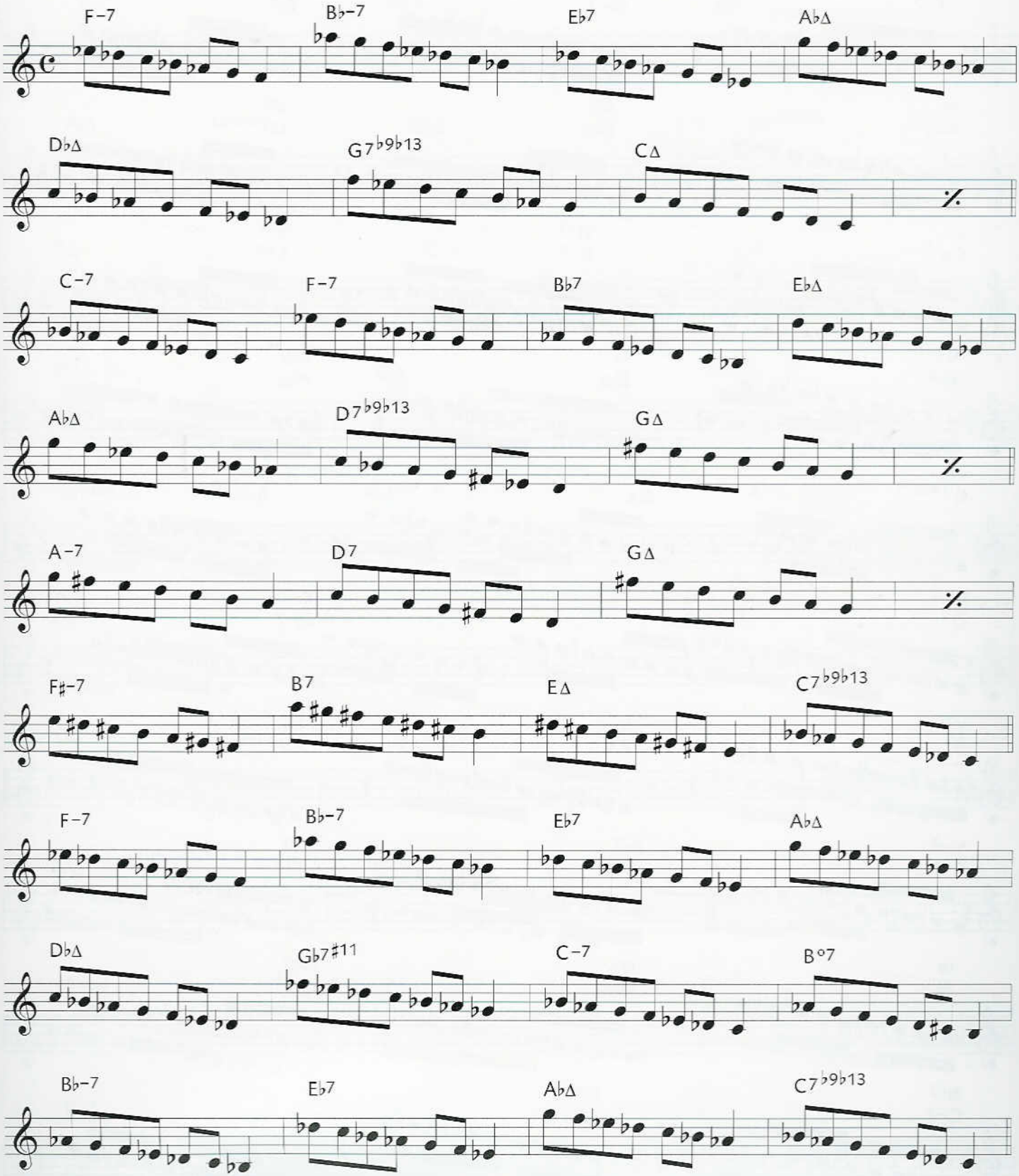
Exercise #6

Next, try the preceding steps on the standard tune *Fangs from Afar*. Because this tune passes through five different key centers, it's a big jump. Give it a shot! Nobody's human!

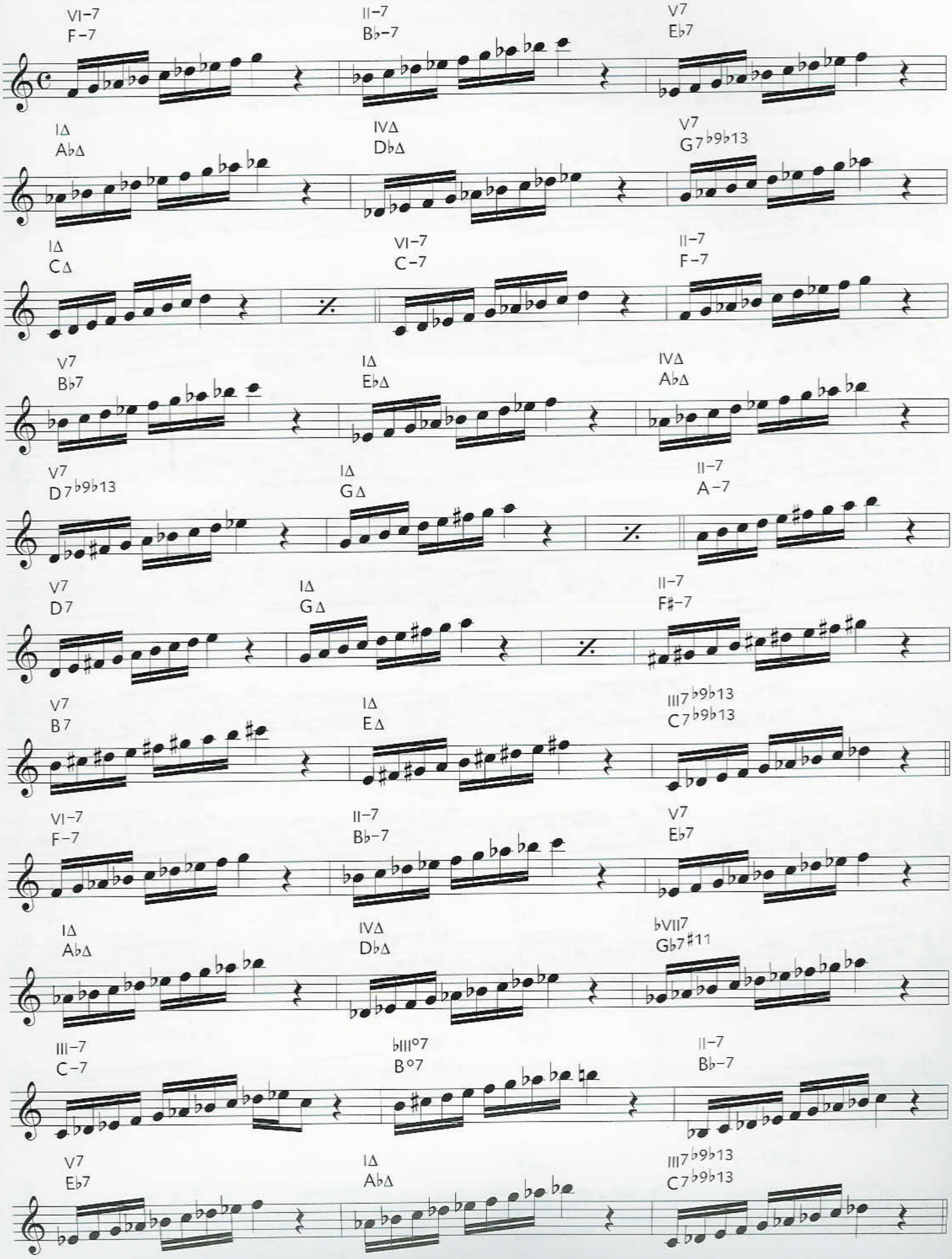
FANGS FROM AFAR 1 - 7



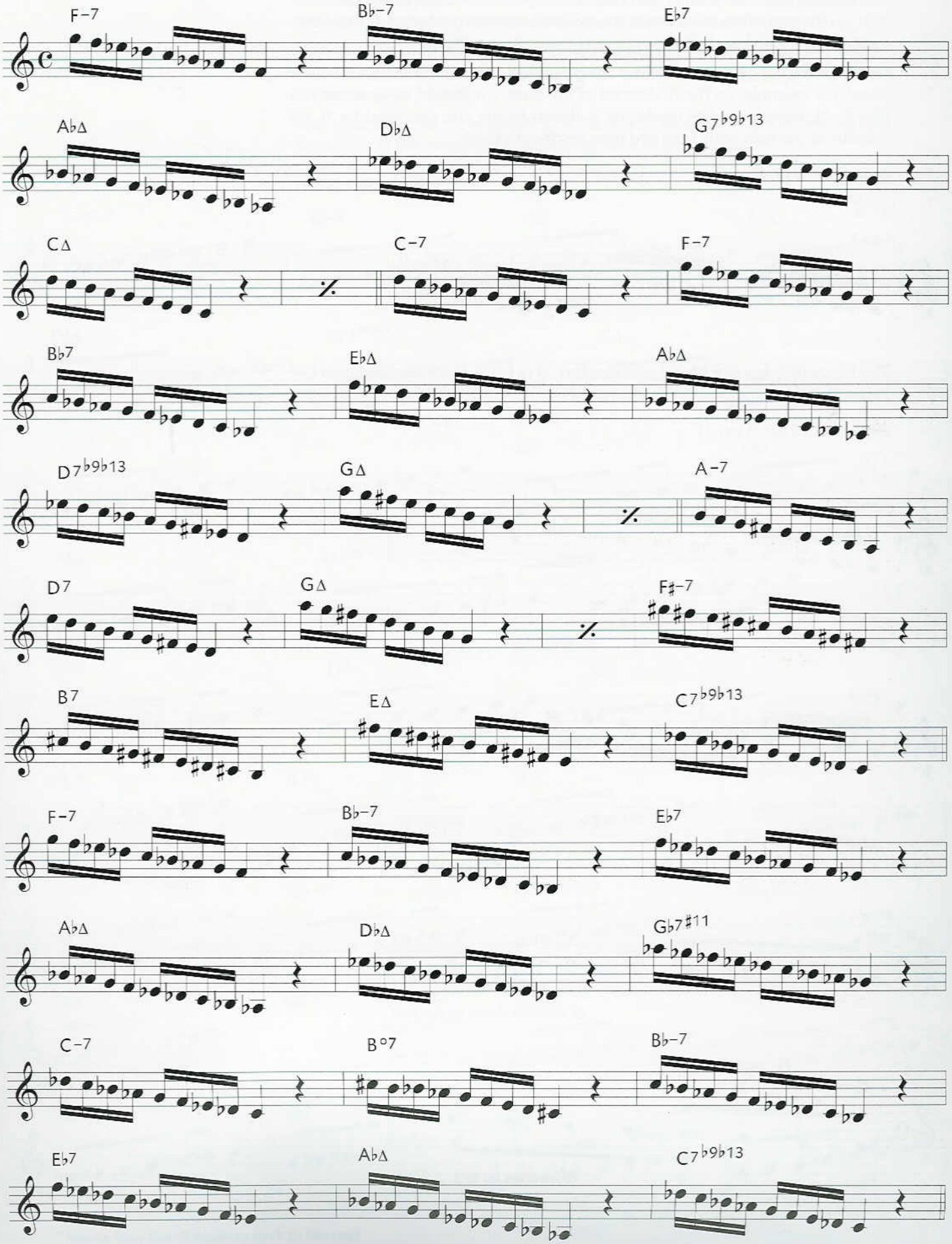
Fangs from Afar 7 - 1



Fangs from Afar 1 - 9



Fangs from Afar 9 - 1

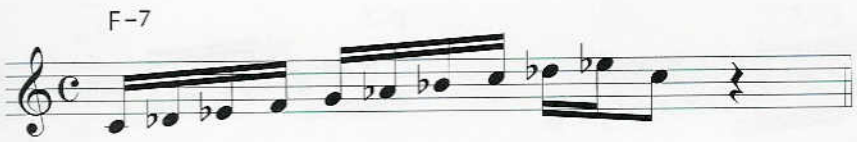


Note that within the tune, *Fangs from Afar*, as in other standard chord progressions, there are sometimes different choices of chord scales that you can use. The choices made here work and help to keep the material presented finite. Also, on the end of the tune where there are two chords per bar, only the dominant chord is addressed in order to keep the example uniform.

Other "avoid" or special attention notes include the ♭9 and ♭13 on a minor chord. For example, on the first chord of the tune, F minor 7 (VI–7), when you play 5 - 13, notice that the resolution is similar to the one described for 11. ♭13 ascends to the next scale tone and then resolves to the 5.

Example: F–7 (VI–7)

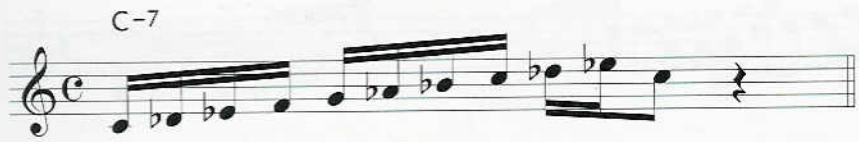
5 - 13



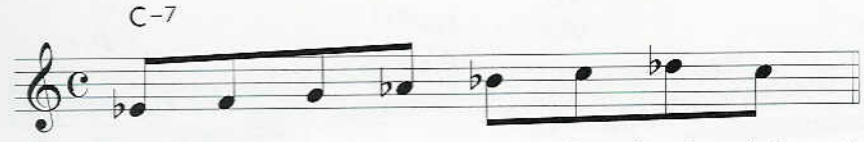
This happens in bar one on F–7, and also on C–7 in bar 9, F–7 in bar 25 and on C–7 in bar 31.

Example: C–7 (III–7) bar 31

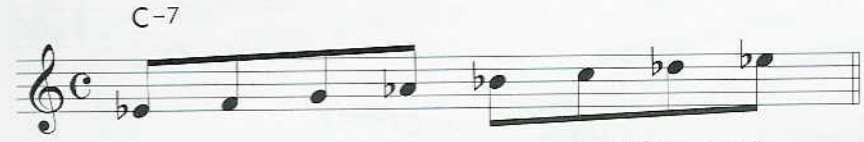
1 - 9



5 - 9



♭9 resolves down to the root



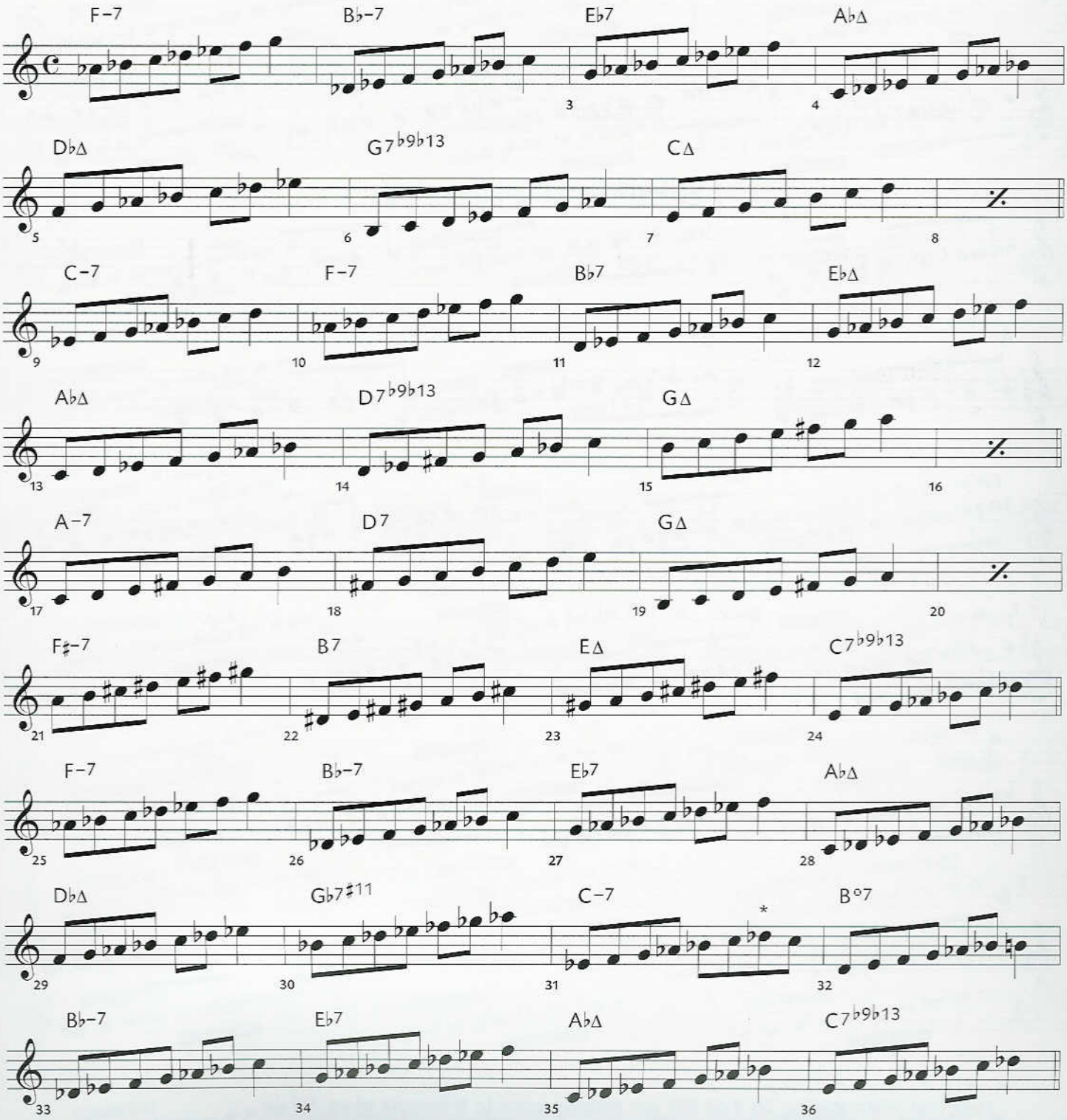
♭9 resolves up to 3

A symmetric diminished scale has eight notes (not including repeated notes) while a standard diatonic scale (like C major) has only seven notes. When you are playing any of the chord scale exercises over symmetric diminished chords the landing notes are different because of the one extra note.

Here are the landing notes if you are playing the exercises with 8th notes: 1 ascends to ♭♭7, 3 ascends to 1, 5 ascends to 3, 9 descends to 11, 11 descends to ♭13, ♭13 descends to major 7.

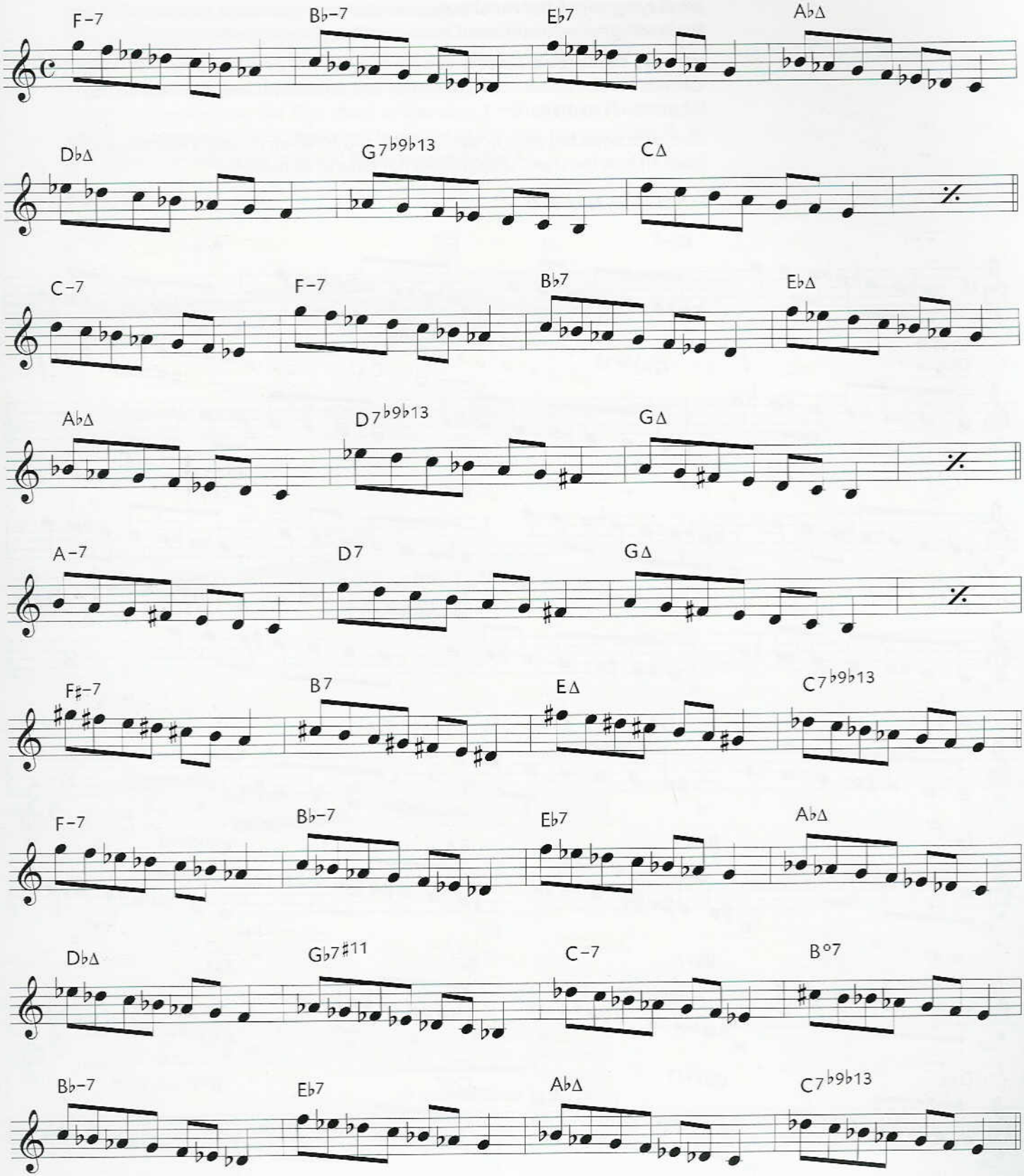
Also, note what happens in bars 5, 13, 29, and 30 when playing 3 ascending to 11. Since ♯11 is in the chord scale, it does not have to be resolved.

FANGS FROM AFAR 3 - 9



* Notice how the ♭9 resolves back to the root

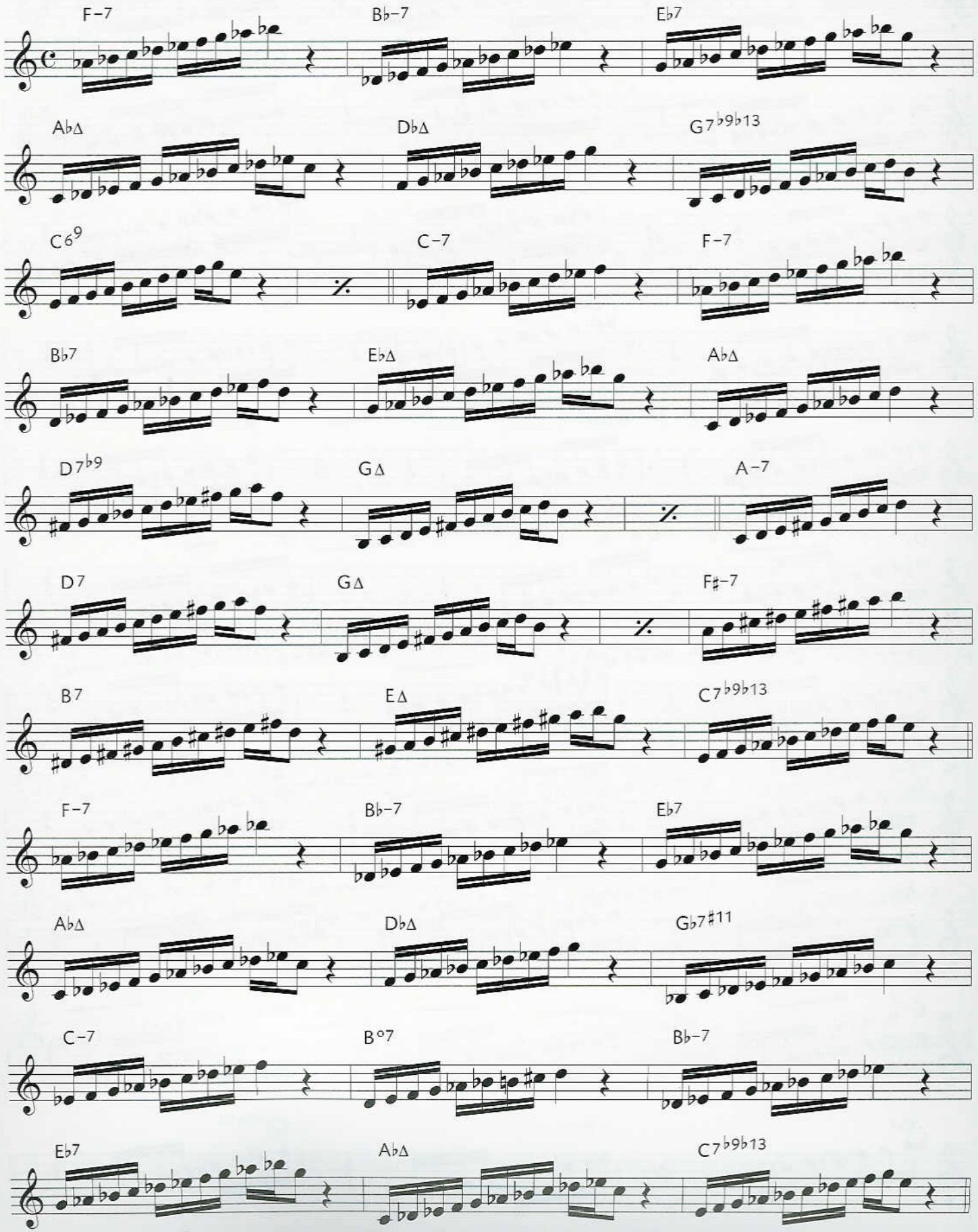
Fangs from Afar 9 - 3



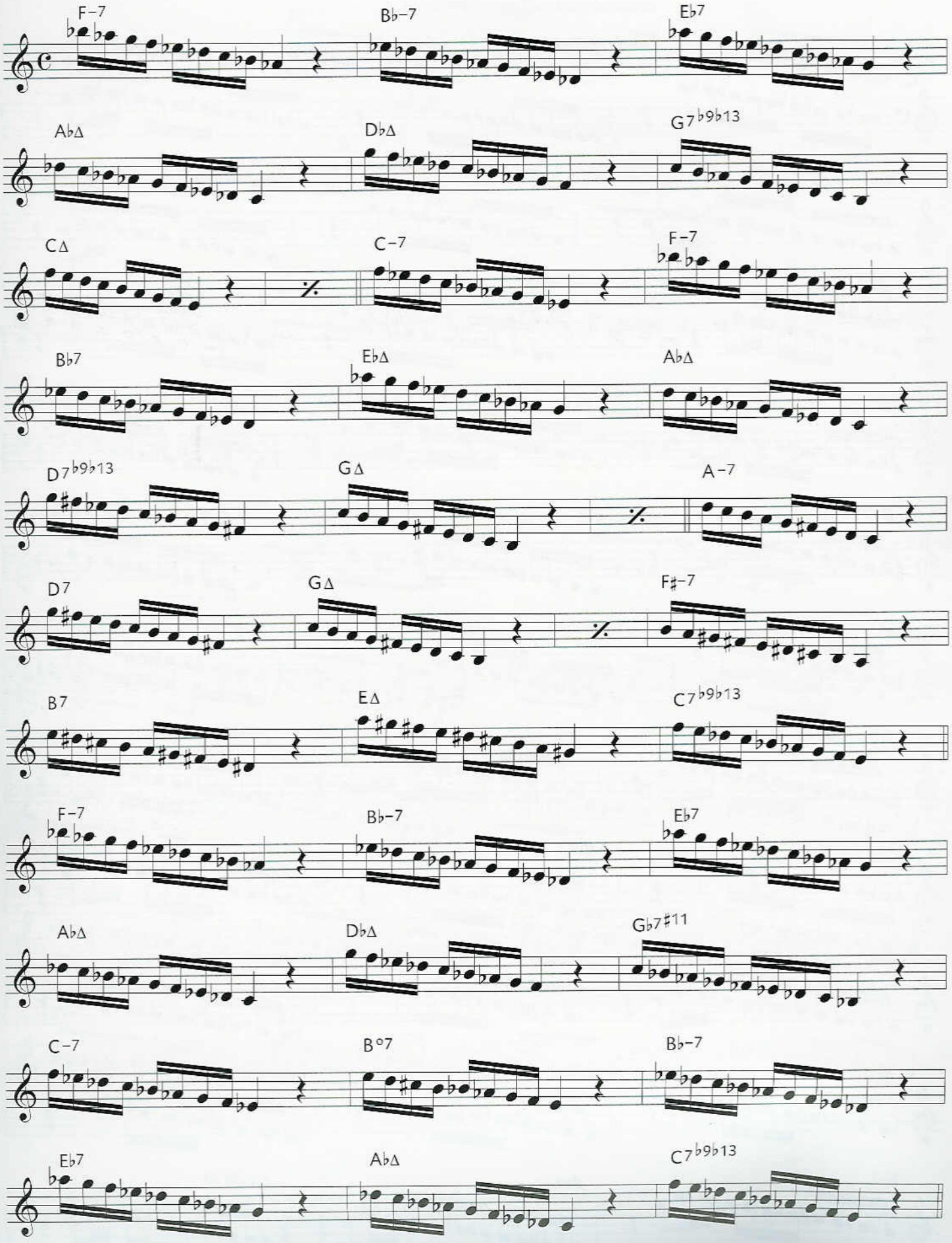
Note that when starting on 9 on B°7 you descend down to 11 because of an extra note in the symmetric diminished scale.

Here are the landing notes of a diminished chord when playing the exercises with 16th notes: 1 ascends to 1, 3 ascends to 3, 5 ascends to 5, 9 descends to 9, 11 descends to 11, ♭13 descends to ♭13.

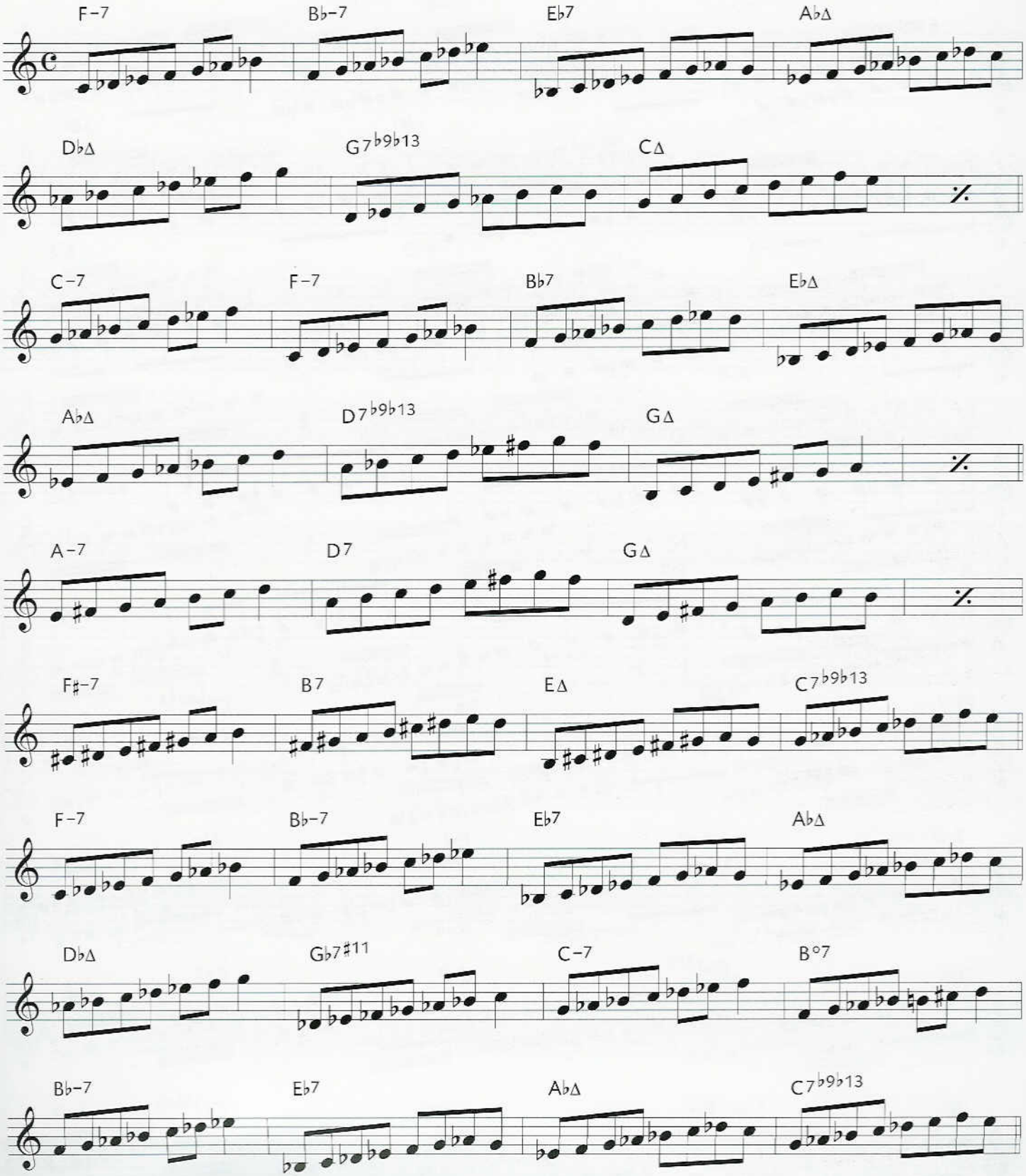
Fangs from Afar 3 - 11



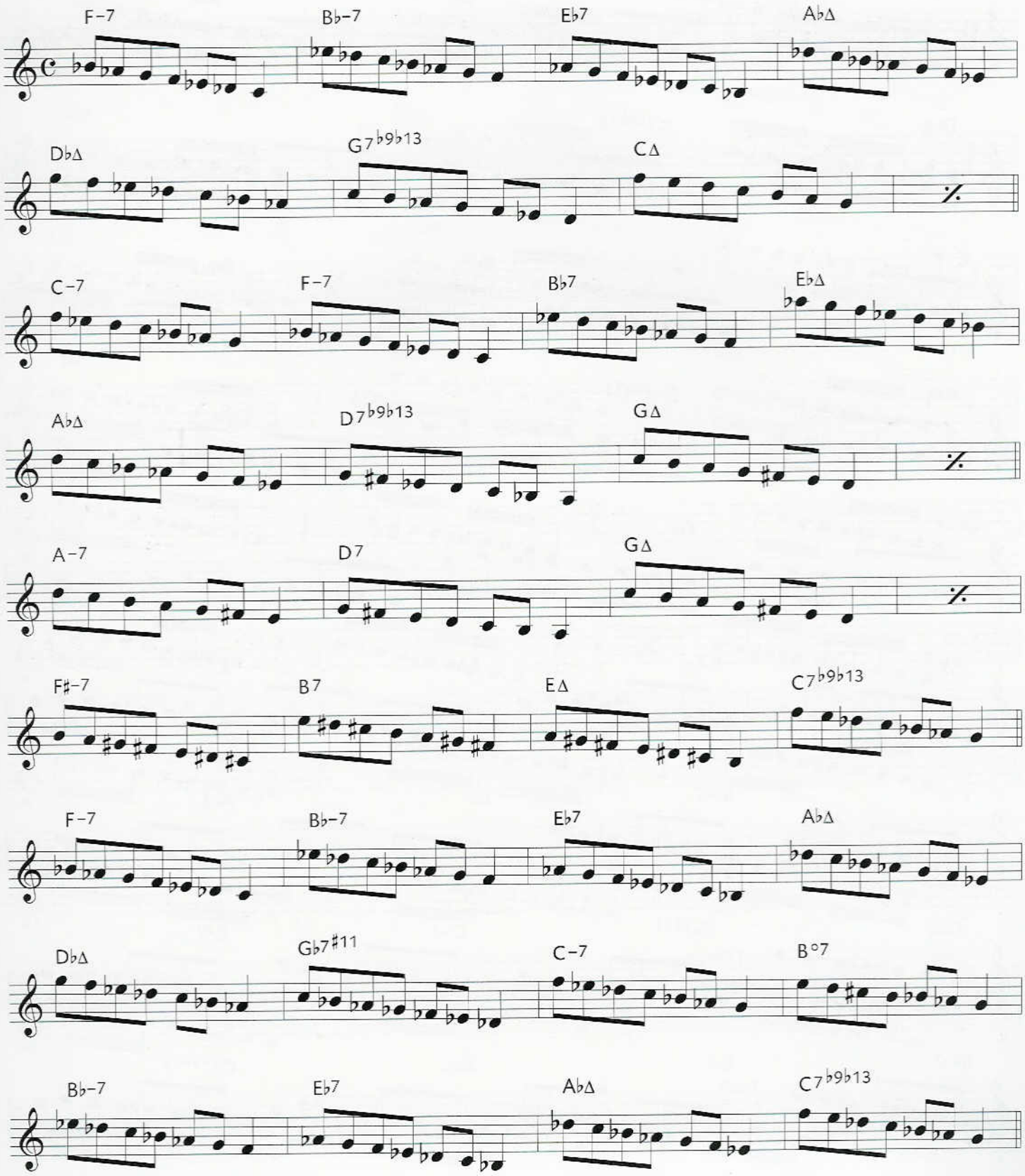
Fangs from Afar 11 - 3



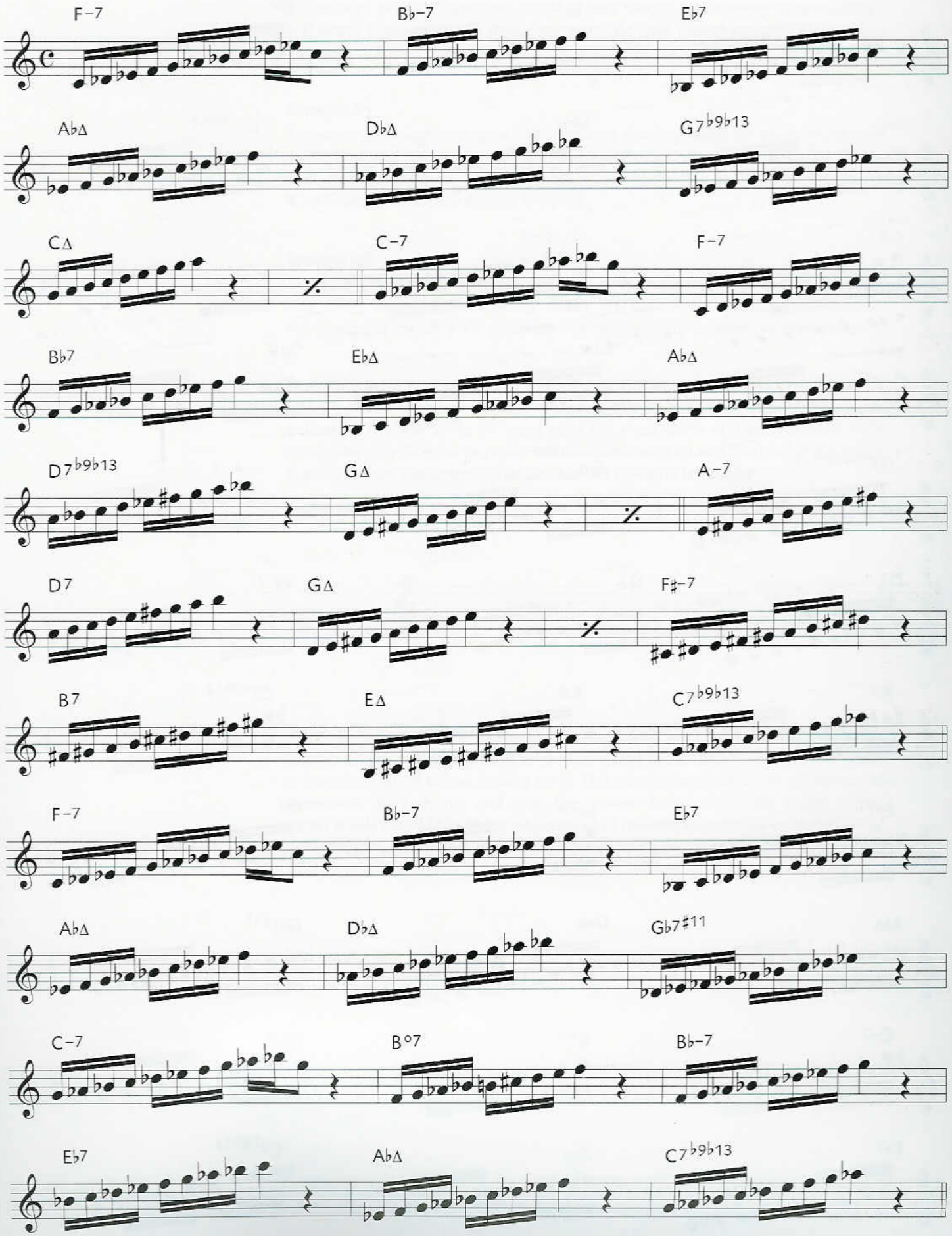
Fangs from Afar 5 - 11



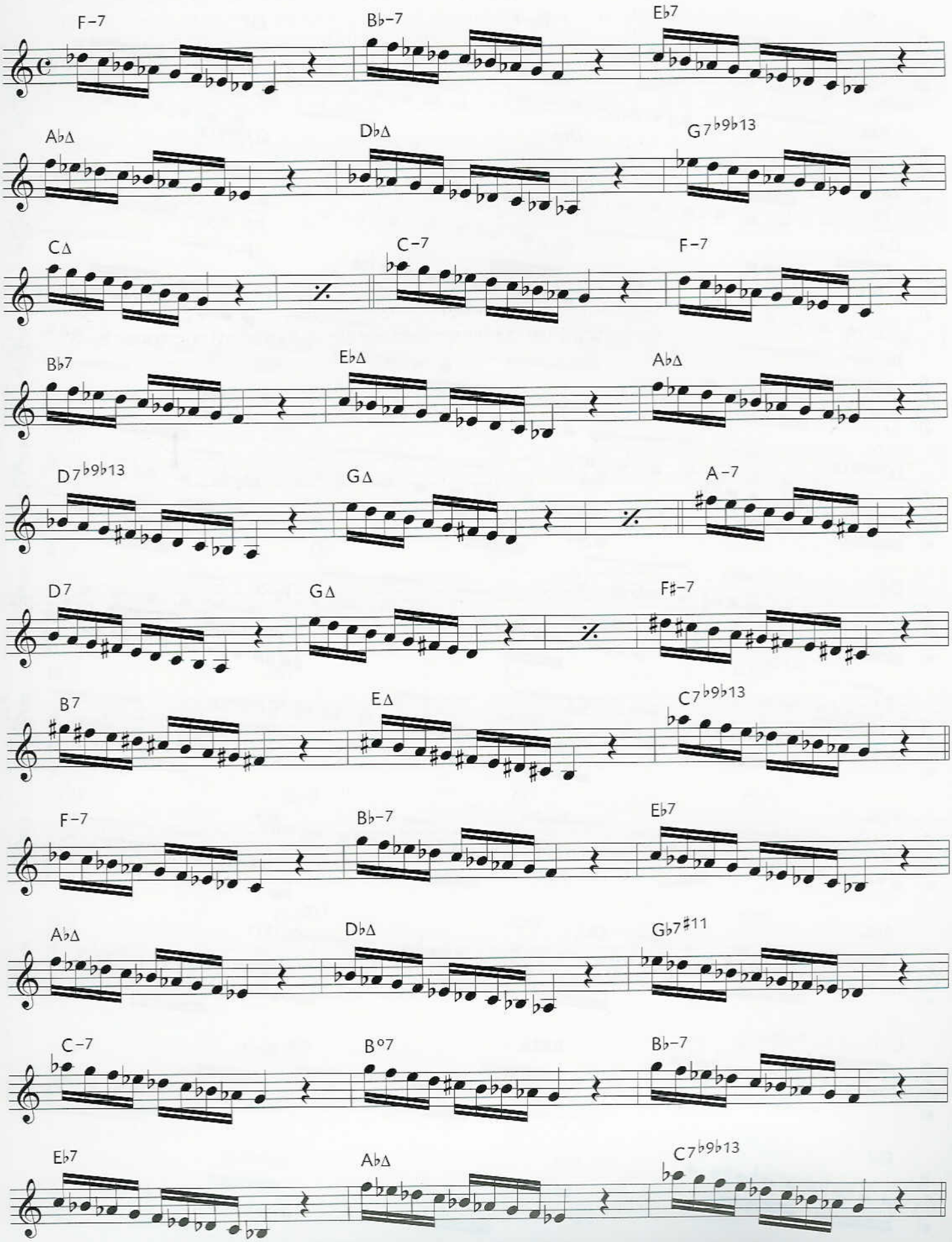
Fangs from Afar 11 - 5



Fangs from Afar 5 - 13



Fangs from Afar 13 - 5



Note that a chord with the same name may have a different function and hence a different scale as in bars 1 and 9, or bars 4 and 13, or bars 9 and 31. These differences provide harmonic detail. If you simply make every minor seventh (–7) chord Dorian or every major seventh (Δ) chord Lydian you neutralize these details.

Exercise #7

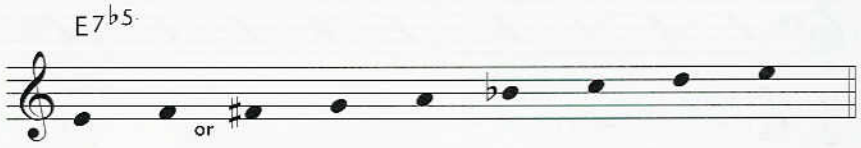
Try playing through the tune using various starting notes for each chord both ascending and descending. Take many choruses until you feel that it has become second nature to you and starting on the 1, or 3, or 5 ascending or the 9, 11, or 13 descending is a walk in the park.

Exercise #8

Repeat all of the previous exercises on a new tune; *Tell Her to Hold Tight*. Practice using each of the starting notes for the chord scales ascending and descending. Then vary the direction and mix up starting notes as in exercise #7.

This tune introduces –7s with a ♭5 (or half-diminished chords) and dominant altered chords. On the –7♭5, the tension 9 can be either a ♮9 or a ♭9. Some jazz educators think of ♭9 as an avoid note but most think of it as a tension to be used sparingly. The minor ninth interval between a ♭9 and the root of the chord is what causes the tension that sounds like it wants to resolve.

Example:



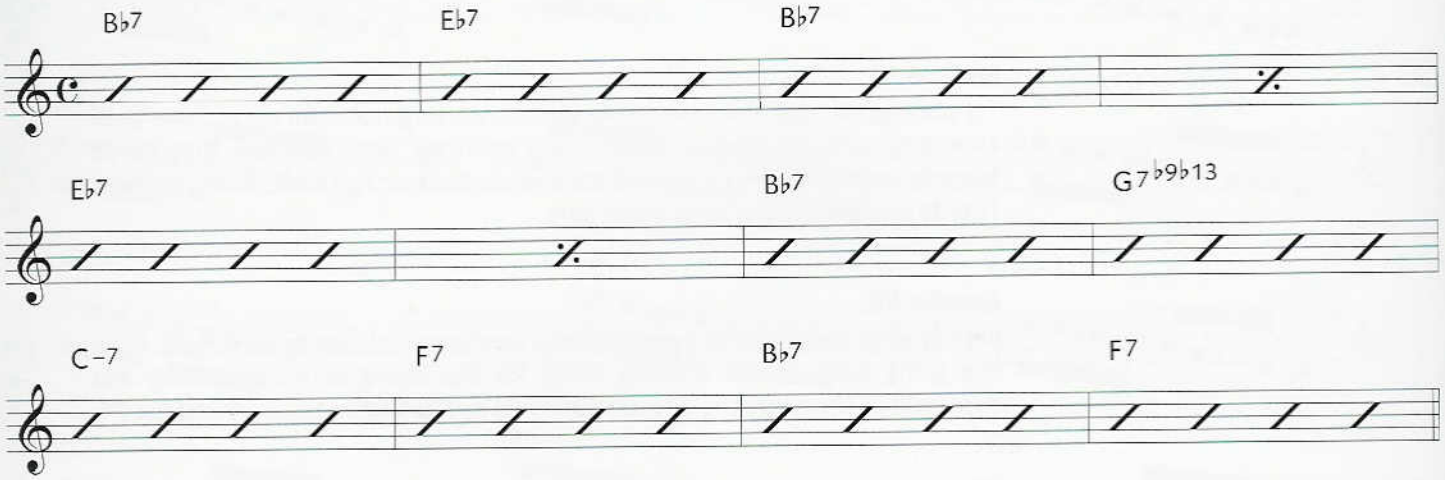
The scale for a dominant ♭9♭13 chord is built like a Mixolydian with ♭2 and ♭6, or harmonic minor starting from 5. For example, a G7♭9♭13 looks like a C harmonic minor starting on G and ending on G. This chord progression has a number of dominant ♭9♭13 chords and uses the related harmonic minor scales. Other chord scales could fit in these situations but in order to keep the exercises finite this choice was made. A Zen approach would be to pick the scale that sounds best to you.

3 · *slow*

4 · *fast*

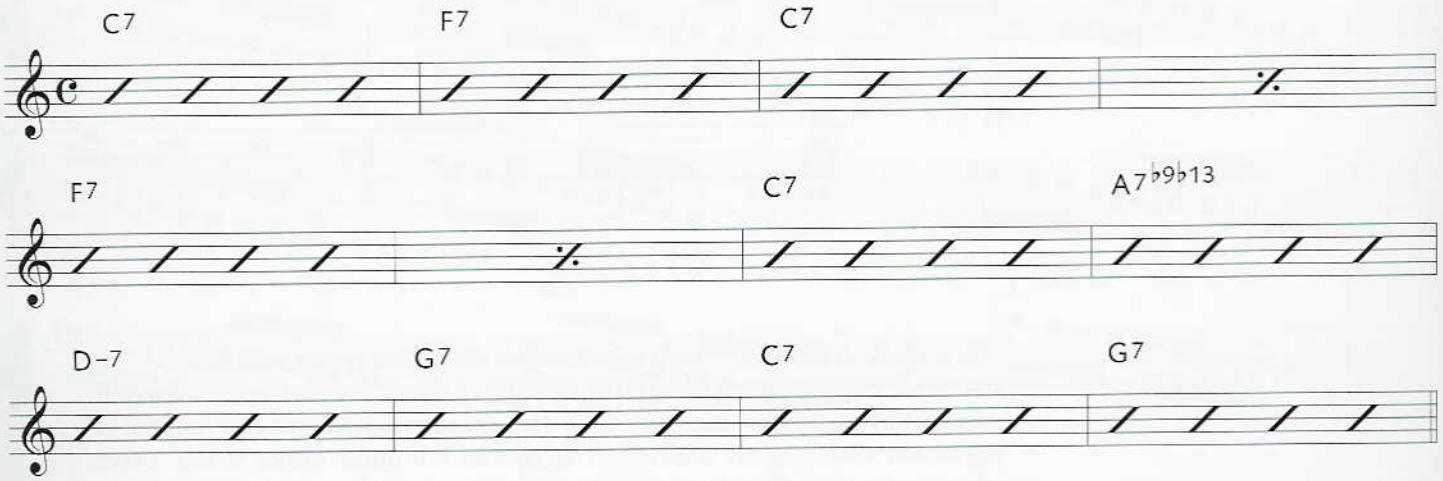
TUNE 1 - Blues in B♭

C Instruments



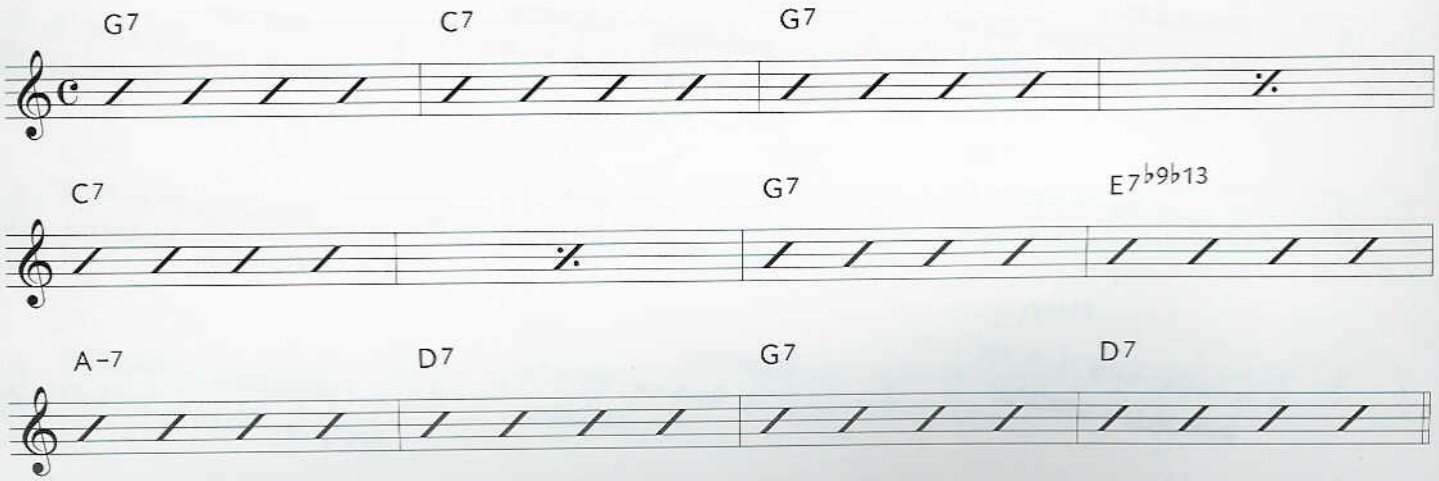
TUNE 1 - Blues in B♭

B♭ Instruments



TUNE 1 - Blues in B♭

E♭ Instruments

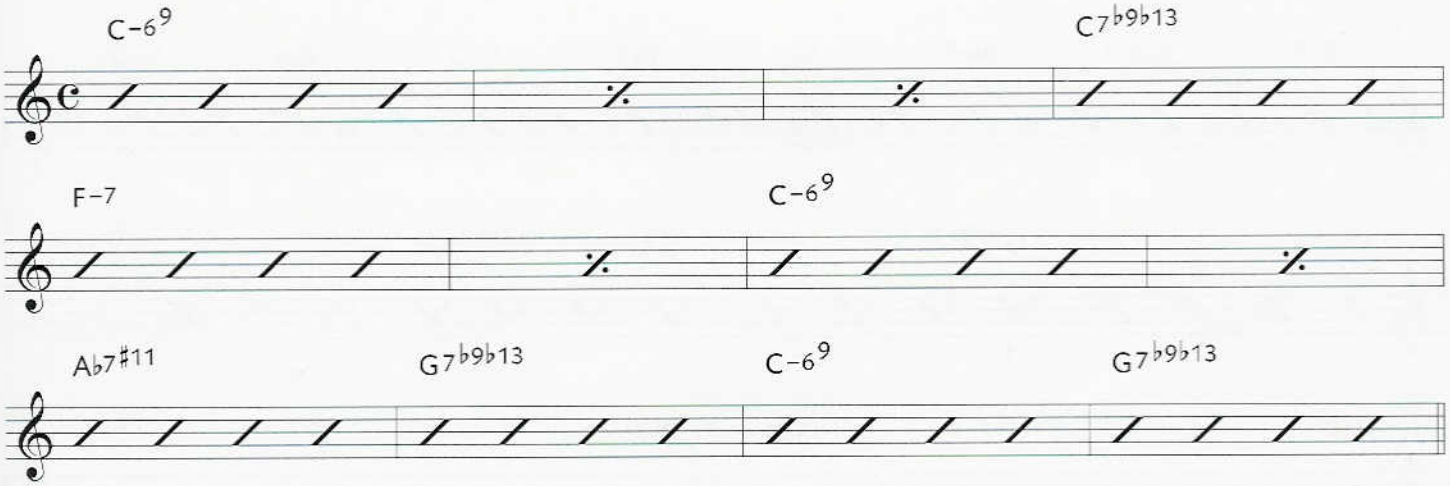


5 · *slow*

6 · *fast*

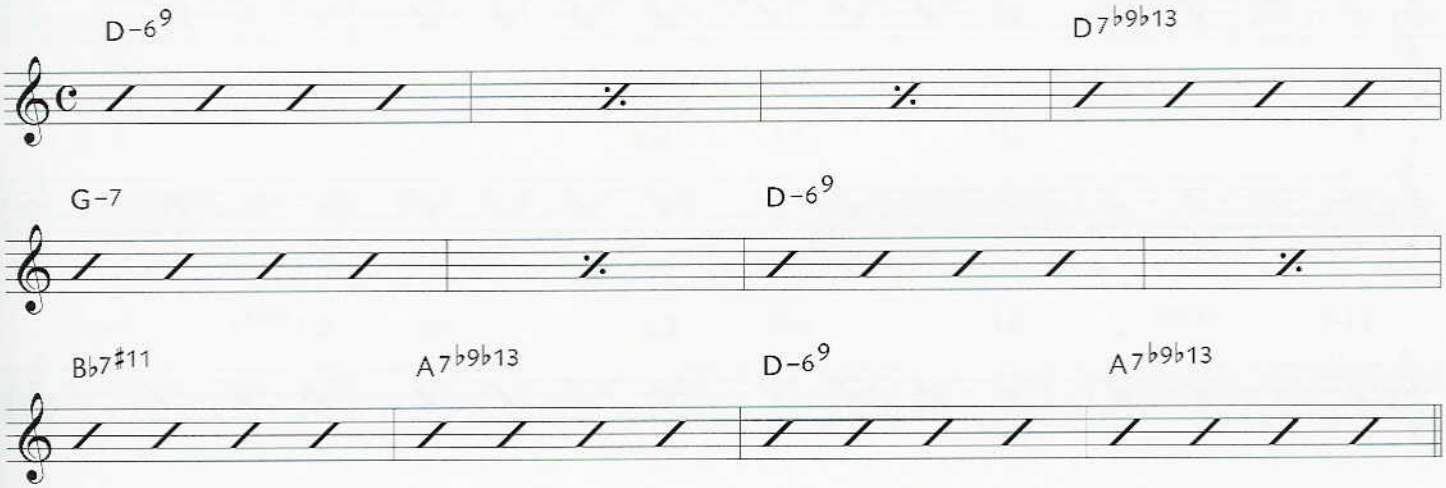
TUNE 2 - C Minor Blues

C Instruments



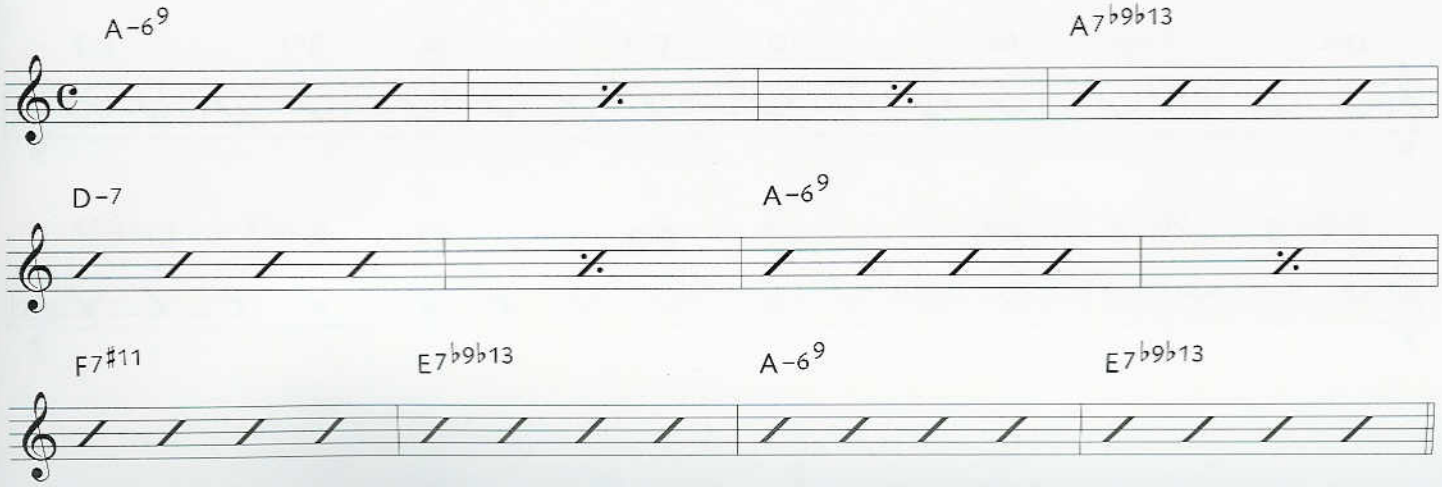
TUNE 2 - C Minor Blues

B♭ Instruments



TUNE 2 - C Minor Blues

E♭ Instruments

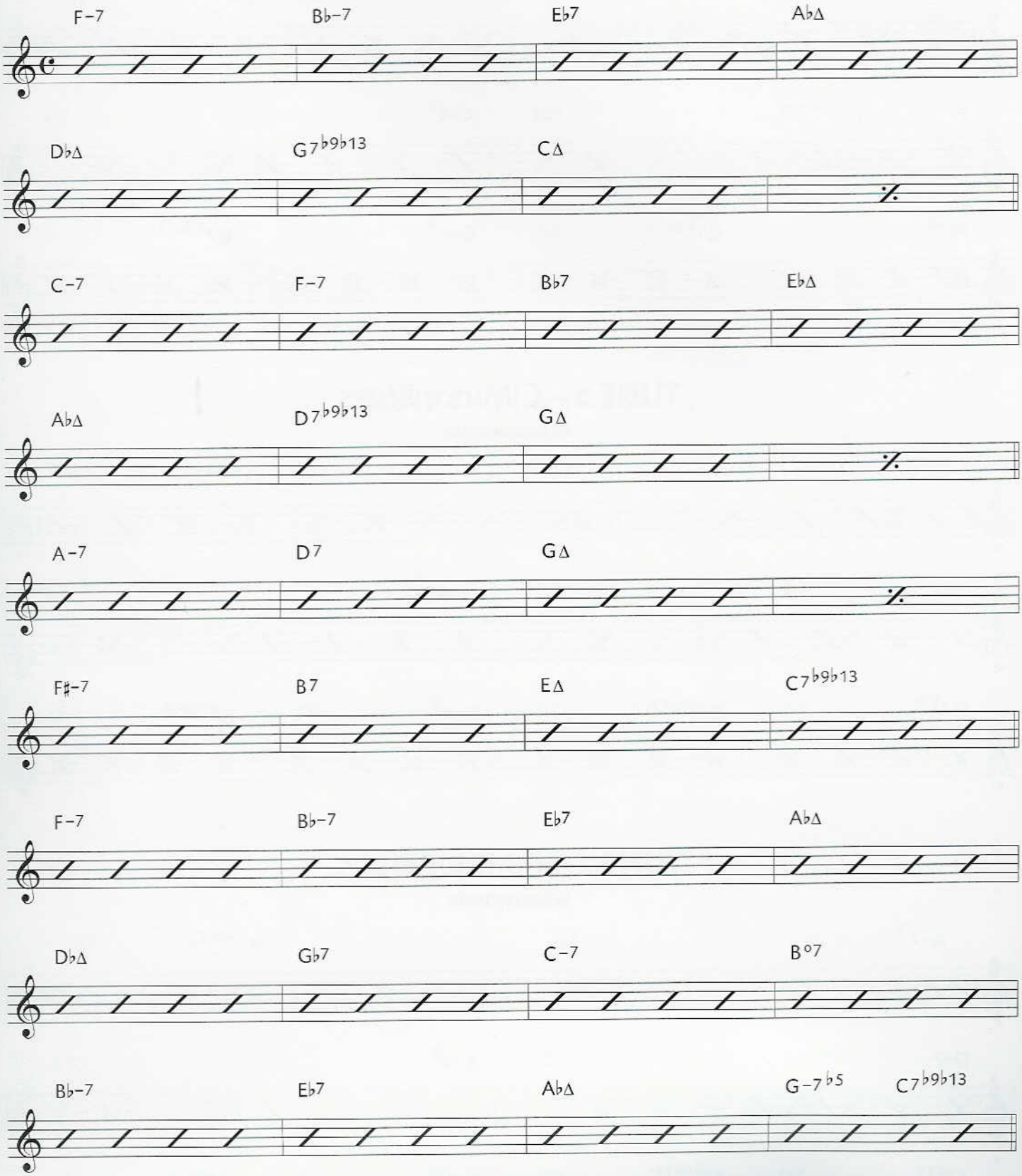


7 · *slow*

8 · *fast*

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar

C Instruments

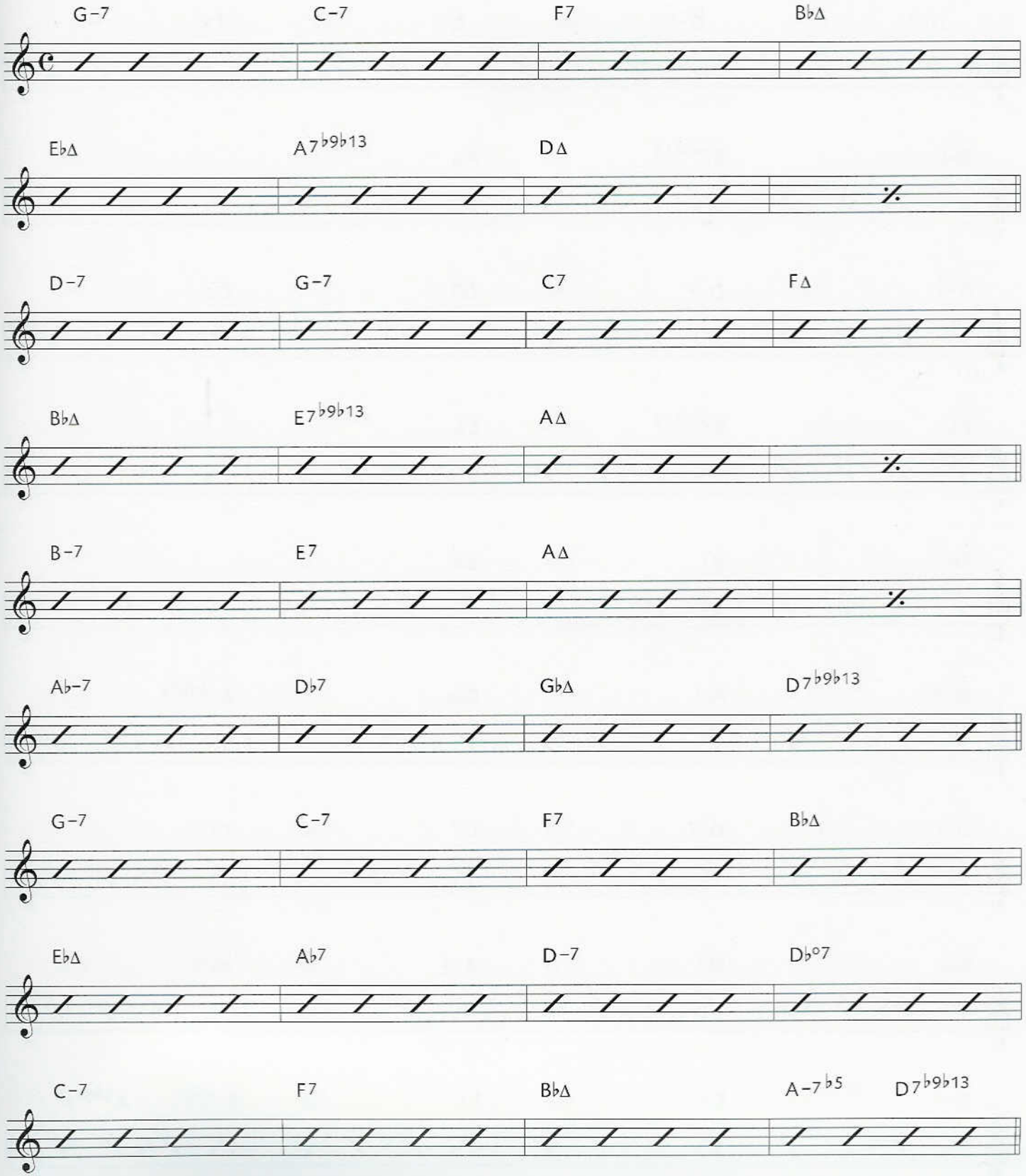


7 · *slow*

8 · *fast*

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar

B♭ Instruments

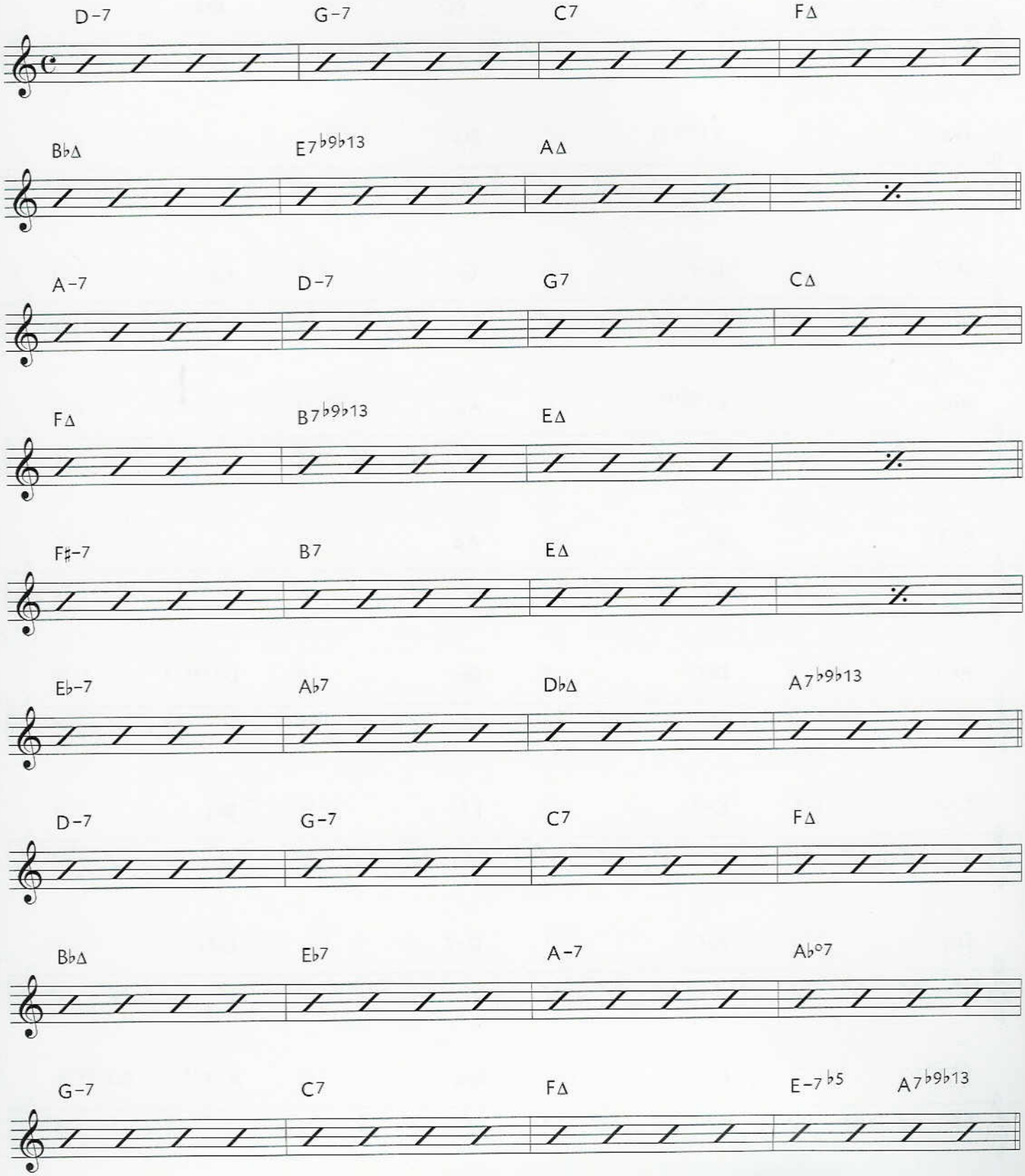


7 · *slow*

8 · *fast*

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar

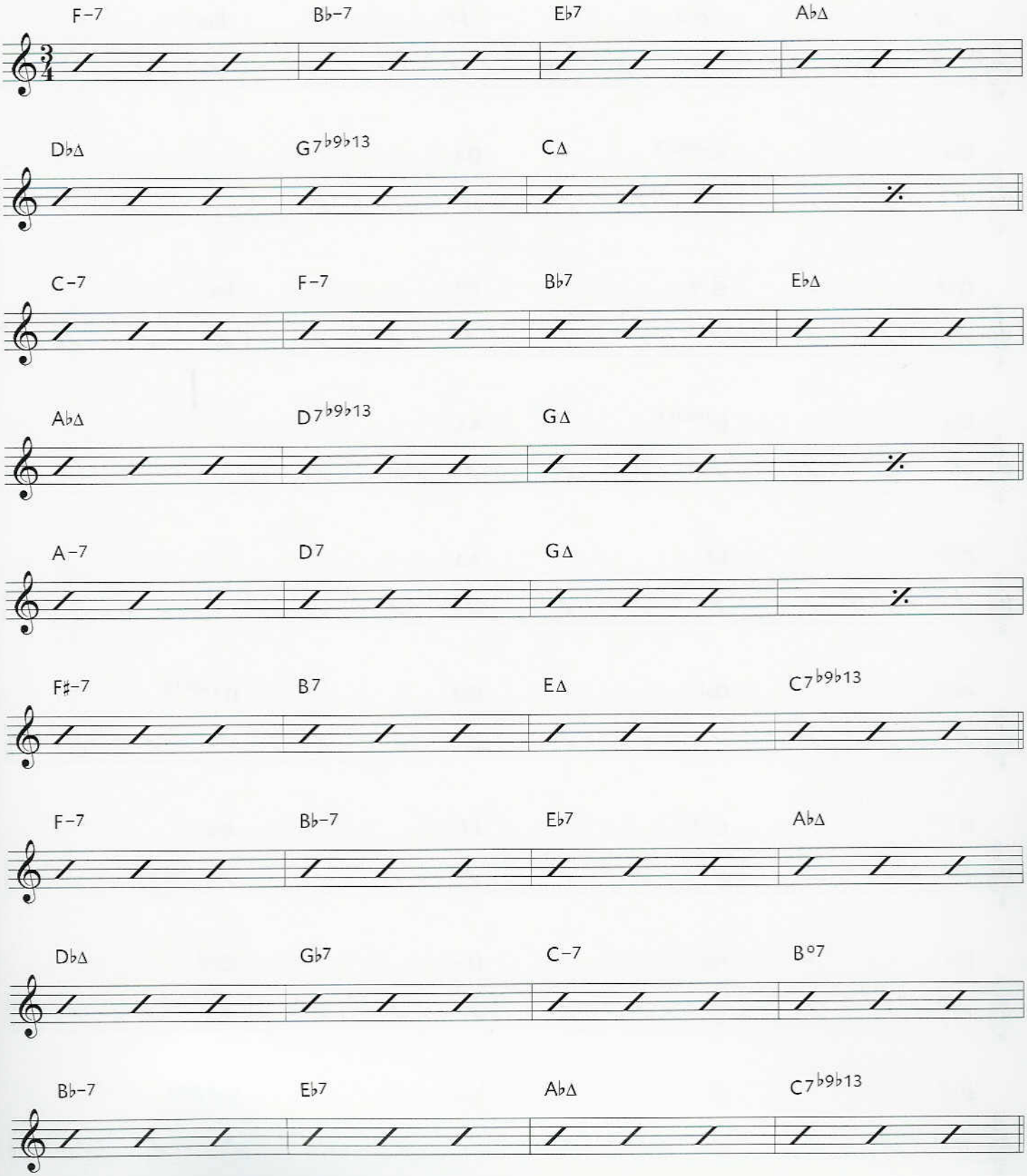
E♭ Instruments



· 9 ·

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar 3/4

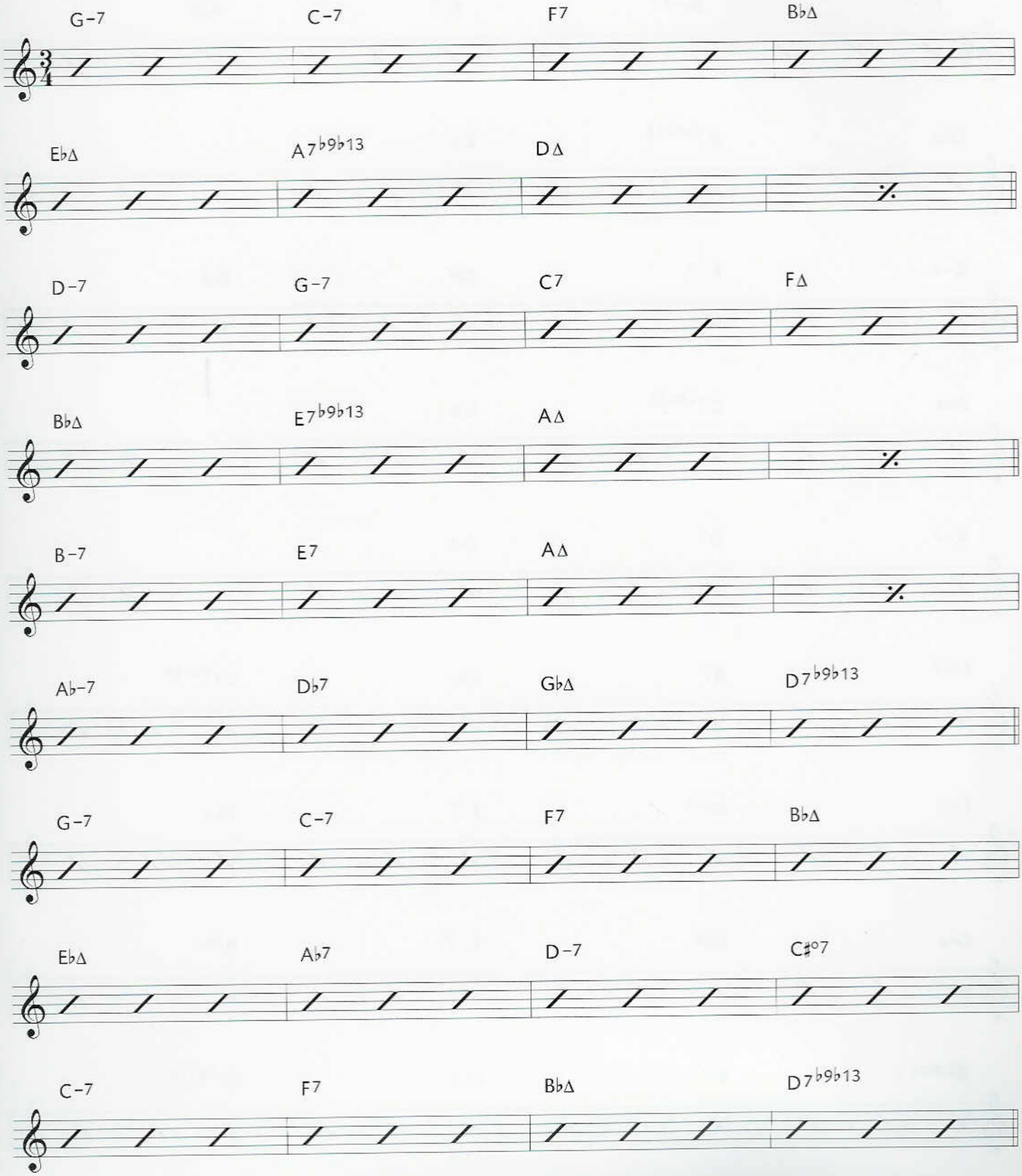
C Instruments



·9·

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar 3/4

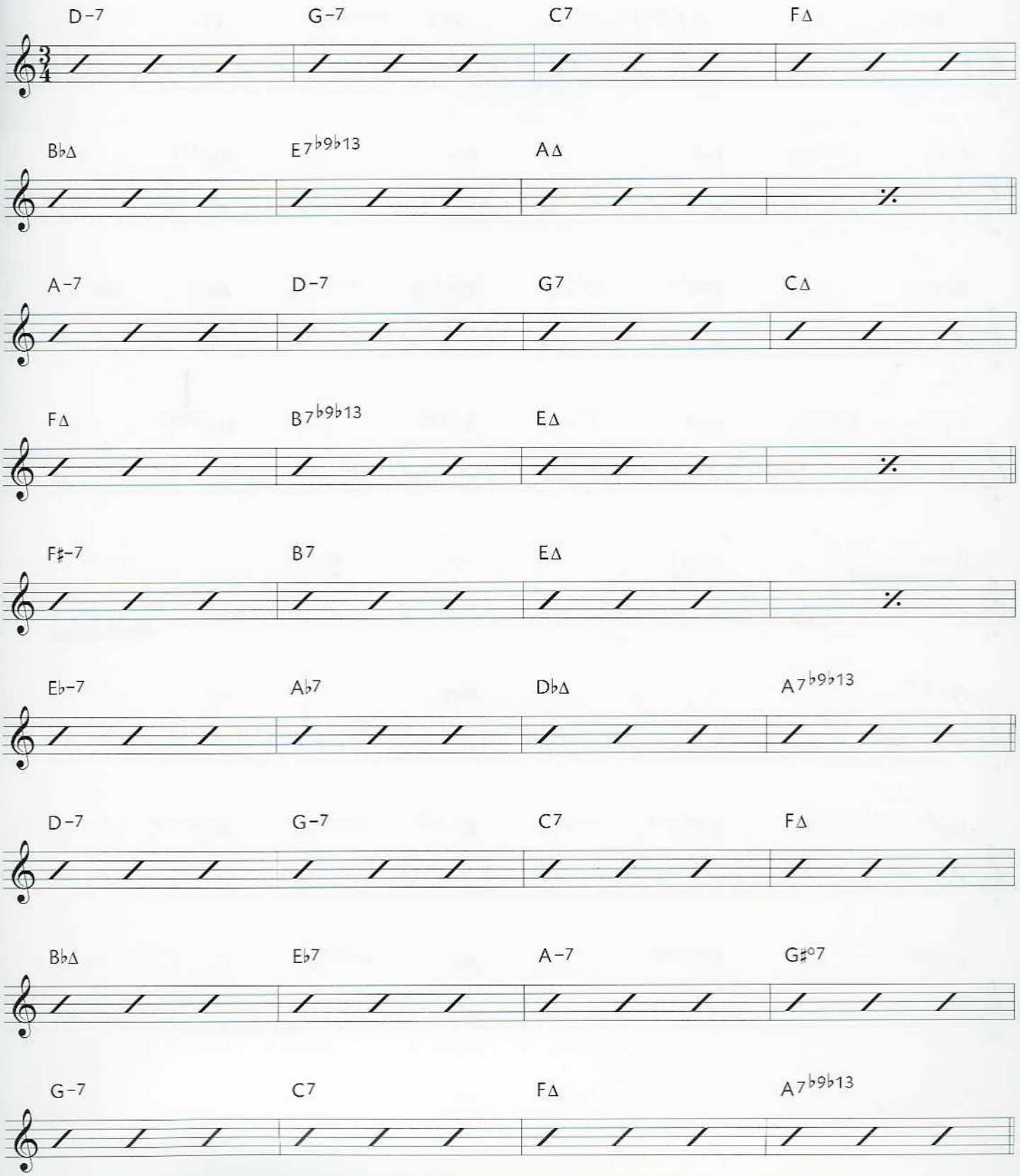
B♭ Instruments



· 9 ·

TUNE 3 - Fangs from Afar 3/4

E♭ Instruments

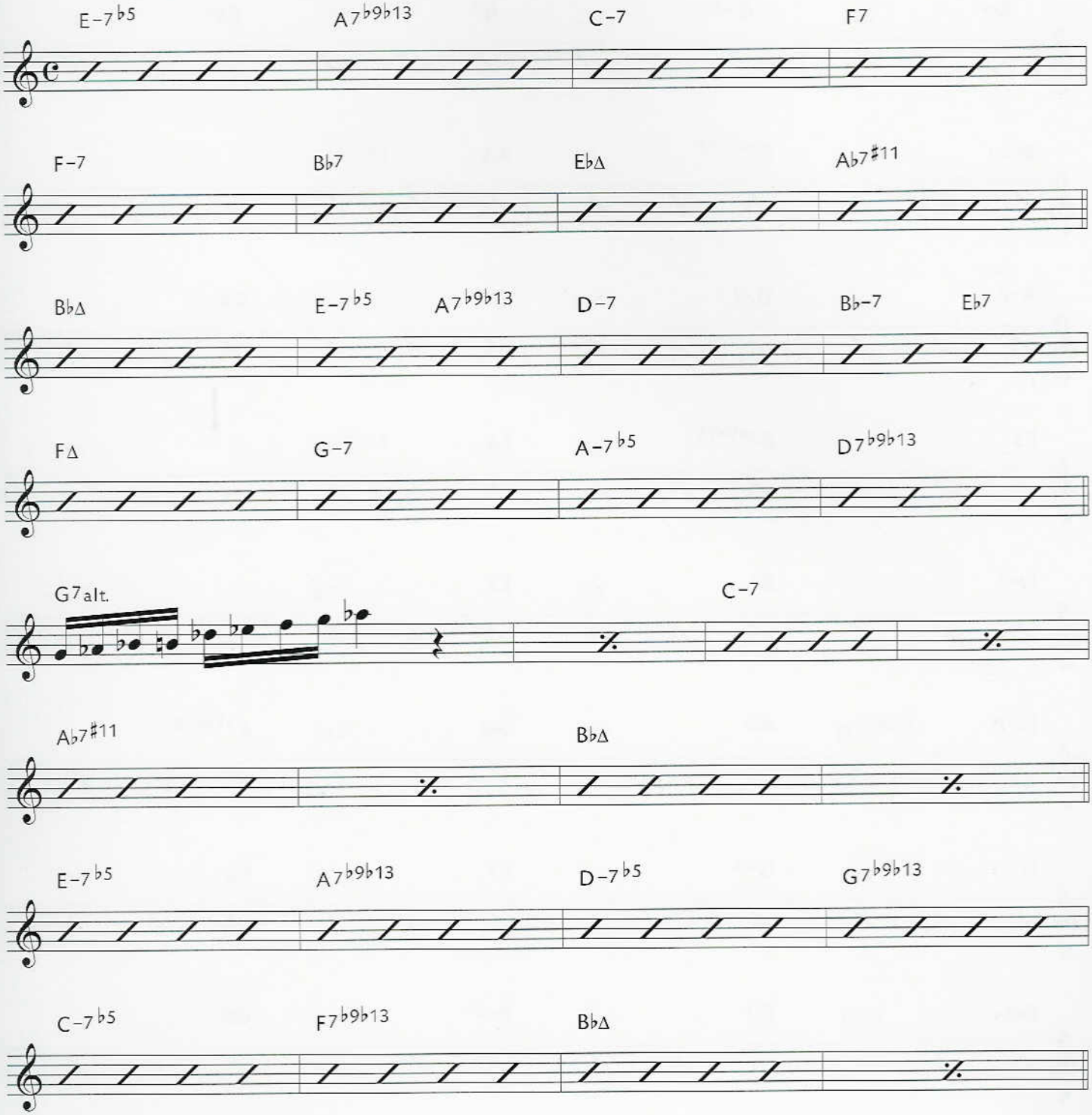


10 · *slow*

11 · *fast*

TUNE 4 - Tell Her to Hold Tight

C Instruments

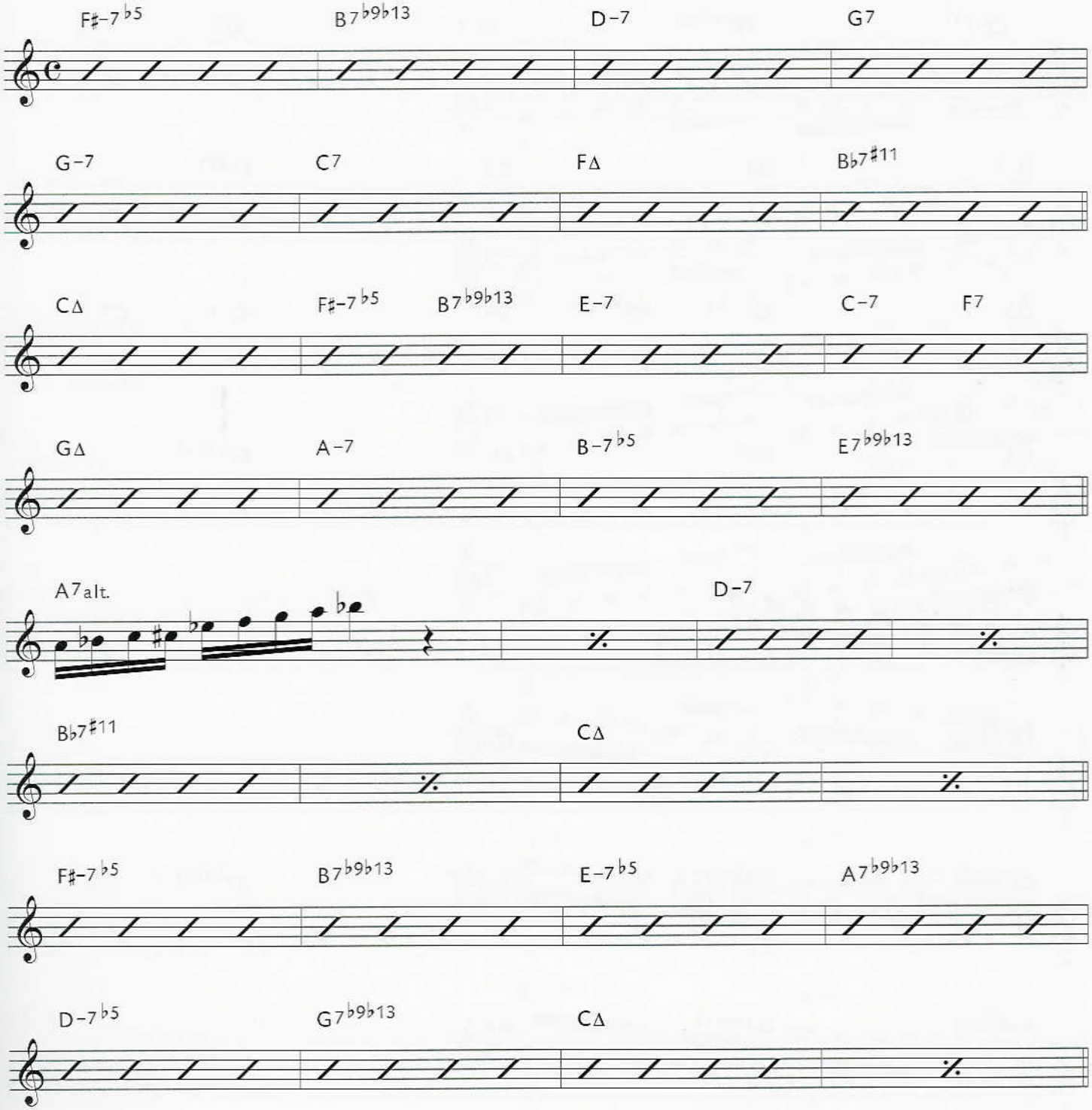


10 - *slow*

11 - *fast*

TUNE 4 - Tell Her to Hold Tight

B♭ Instruments

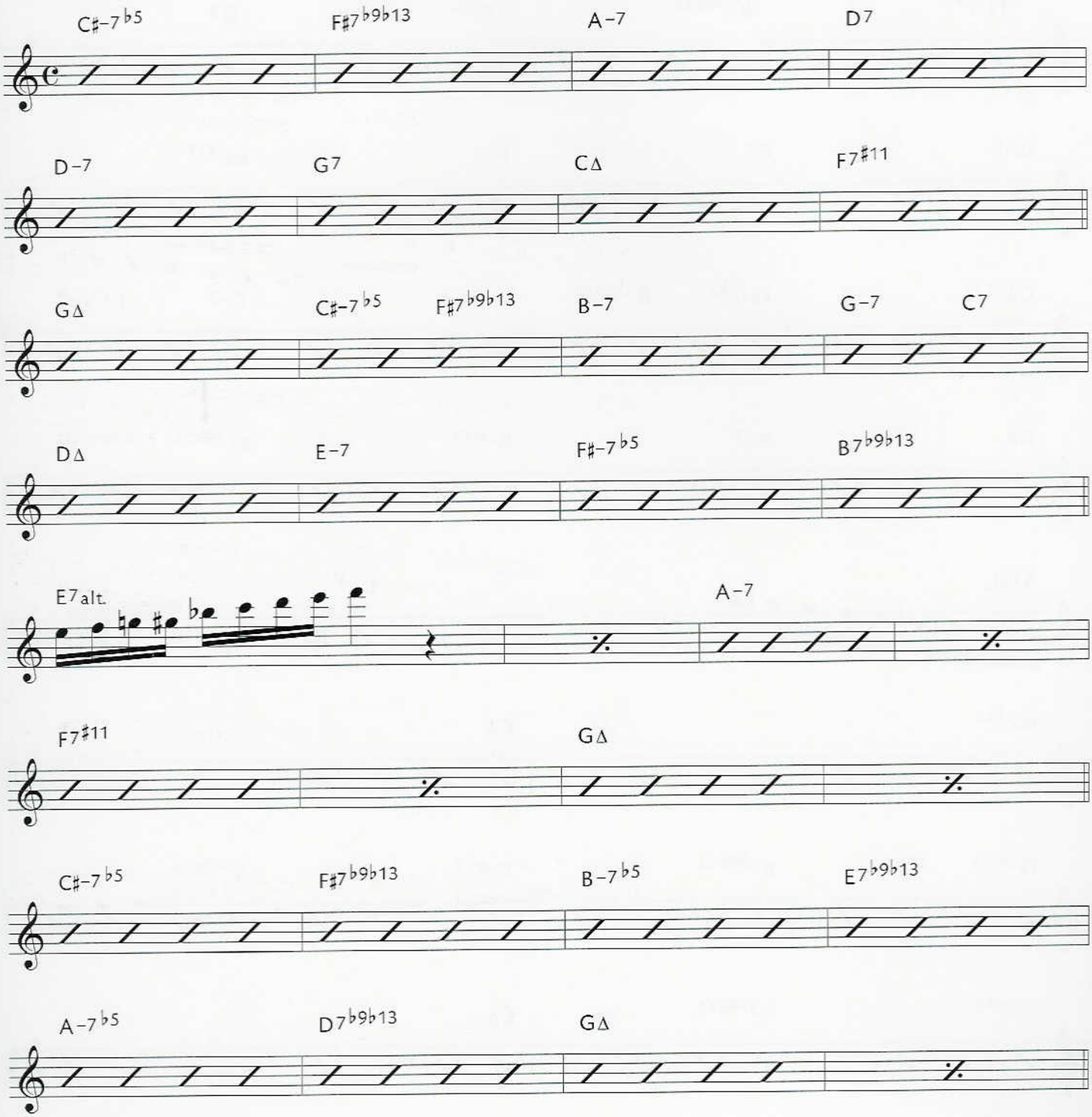


10 · *slow*

11 · *fast*

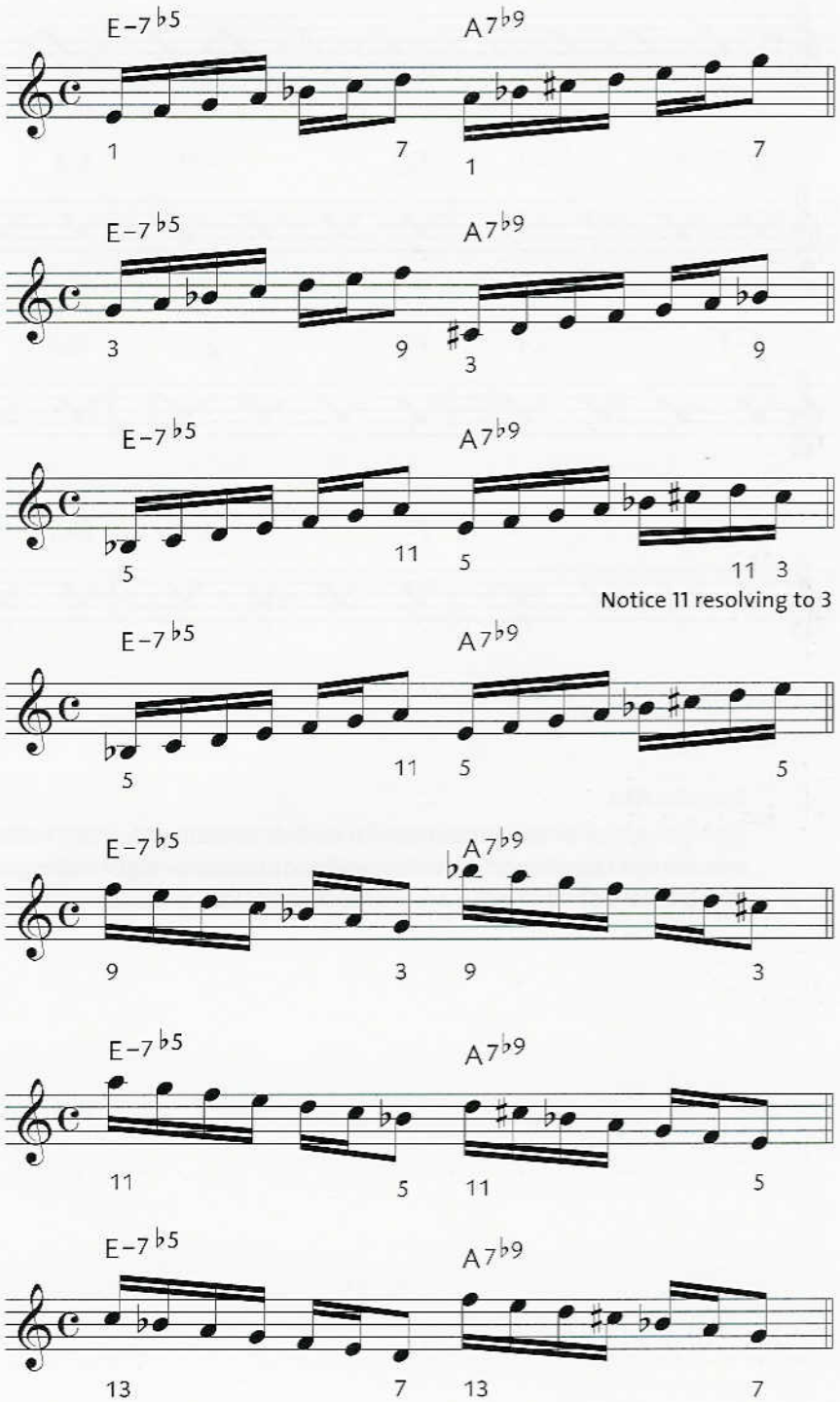
TUNE 4 - Tell Her to Hold Tight

E♭ Instruments



Altered scales have no avoid notes. Dominant 7♯11 or Lydian ♭7 scales have no avoid notes.

When there are two chords per bar the 16th-note rhythm described for these exercises doesn't fit within the four beats. So when that situation occurs try playing 1 - 7, 3 - 9, 5 - 11, or 9 - 3, 11 - 5, or 13 - 7. Here are some examples:



There could be many other possibilities regarding starting and ending points so as not to make this too exhaustive we will leave it as such.

Exercise #9

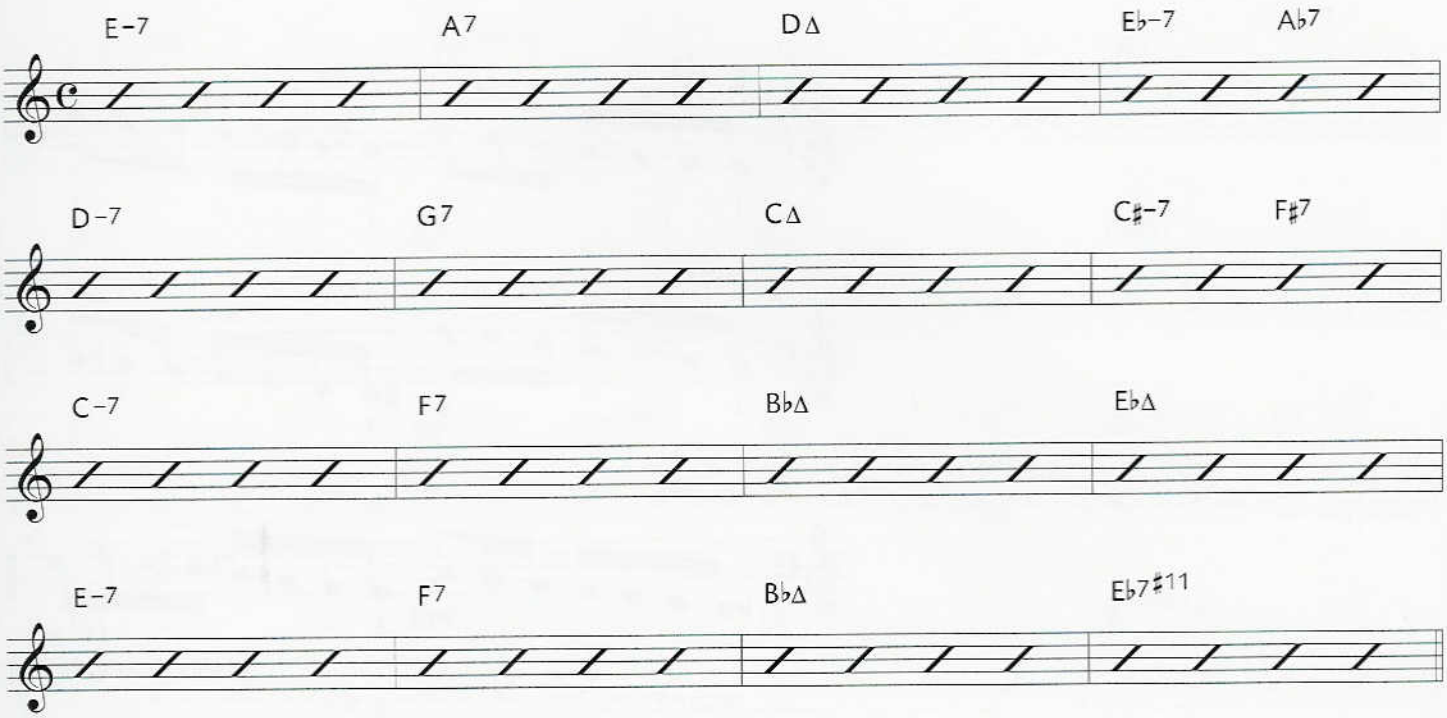
Play all chord scales on the following tune.

12 · *slow*

13 · *fast*

TUNE 5 - Tone Down

C Instruments



Exercise #10

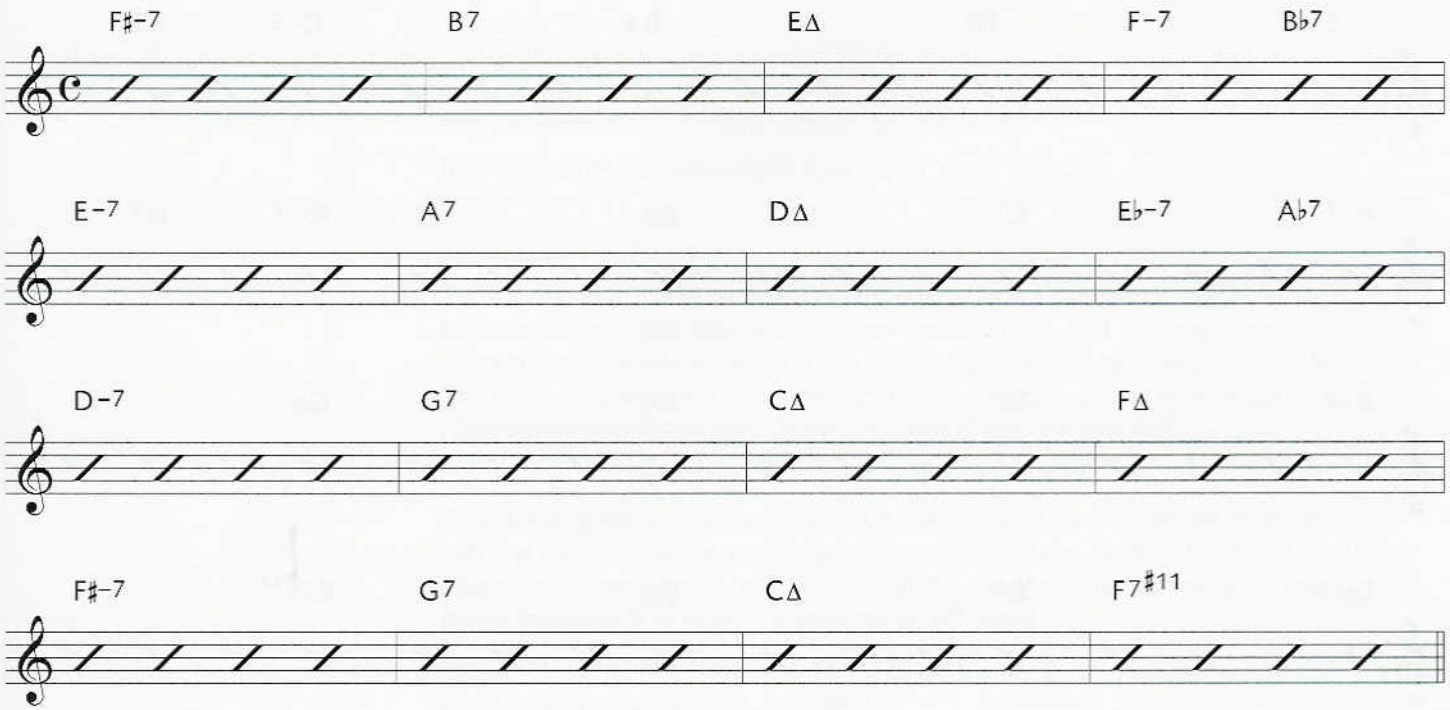
Go through all of the tunes thus far and do exercise #5. Start with playing only one note per bar, then two notes, and continue until eight notes per bar, always being aware of where you are in the chord scale.

12 · *slow*

13 · *fast*

TUNE 5 - Tone Down

B♭ Instruments



Exercise #10

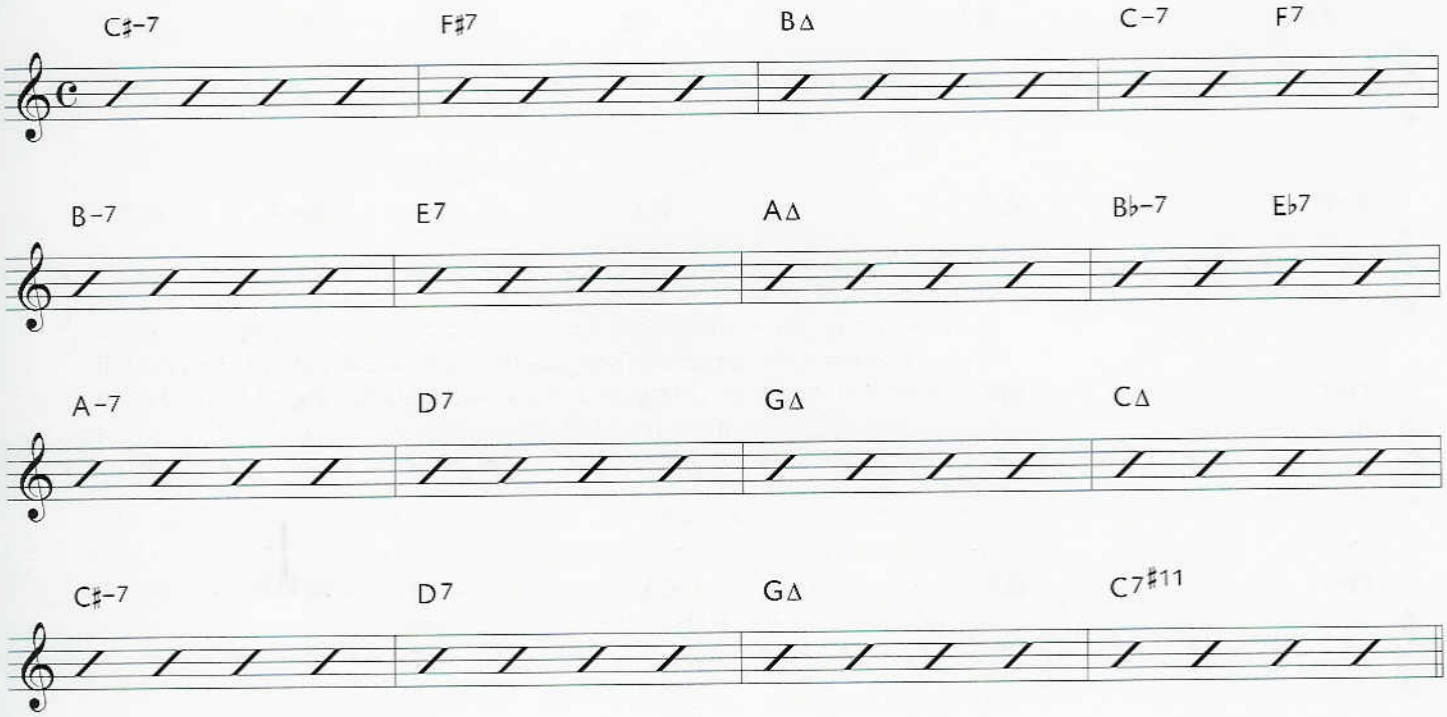
Go through all of the tunes thus far and do exercise #5. Start with playing only one note per bar, then two notes, and continue until eight notes per bar, always being aware of where you are in the chord scale.

12 · *slow*

13 · *fast*

TUNE 5 - Tone Down

E♭ Instruments



Exercise #10

Go through all of the tunes thus far and do exercise #5. Start with playing only one note per bar, then two notes, and continue until eight notes per bar, always being aware of where you are in the chord scale.

2. Chord Tones and Target Notes

Every chord has seven chord tones: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13

(Diminished chords have eight: 1, ♭3, ♭5, ♭♭7, maj7, 9, 11, ♭13)

Exercise #1

Go through a blues and play every chord tone, one at a time through the form. In other words, play through the form seven times, first playing the root on every chord for a whole chorus. Then play the third on every chord, then the 5th, 7th, ninth, 11th and 13th. On major and dominant chords use ♯11 instead of ♮11. (Chord tone notes may differ from the notes of the chord scale.)

After playing through a blues form, try doing the same on a minor blues. Also play the exercise on the tunes, *Fangs from Afar, Tell Her to Hold Tight* and *Tone Down*. On minor chords, use ♮9, ♮11, and ♮13. On the minor blues, you have a choice between ♯7 or ♭7 on the tonic minor 6^9 chord.

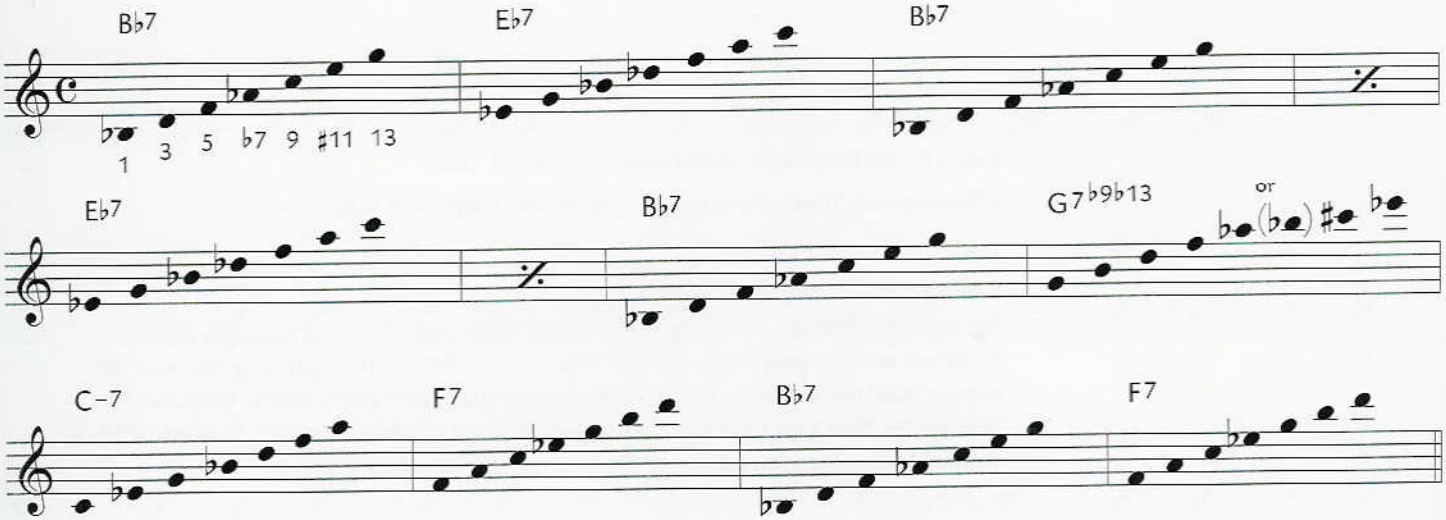
Minor 7♭5 chords are: 1, ♭3, ♭5, ♭7, ♭9 or ♮9, ♮11, ♭13

Dominant chords are: 1, 3, 5, ♭7, 9, ♯11, 13

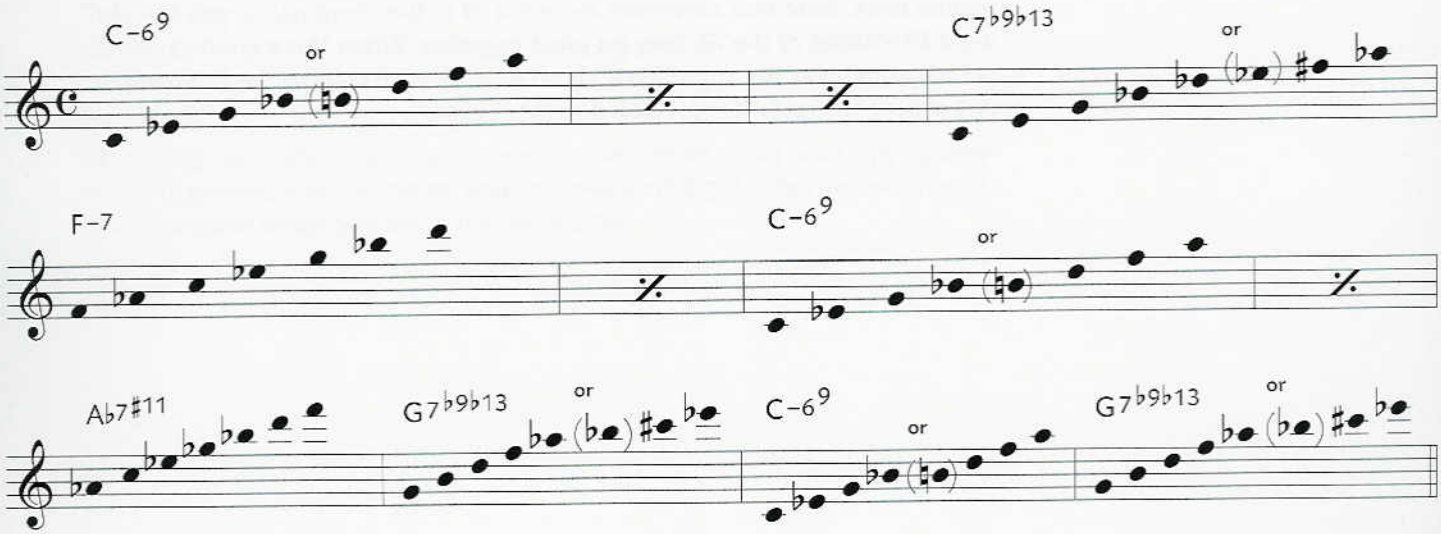
If the chord change says ♭9 or ♭13, then substitute those altered tensions for the regular ones. Note that whenever there is a ♭9 in the chord name, you can also use a ♯9 instead of the ♭9, they go great together. When there are two chords per bar either play the appropriate chord tone for each chord or for this exercise just choose the second chord (the dominant chord).

Example:

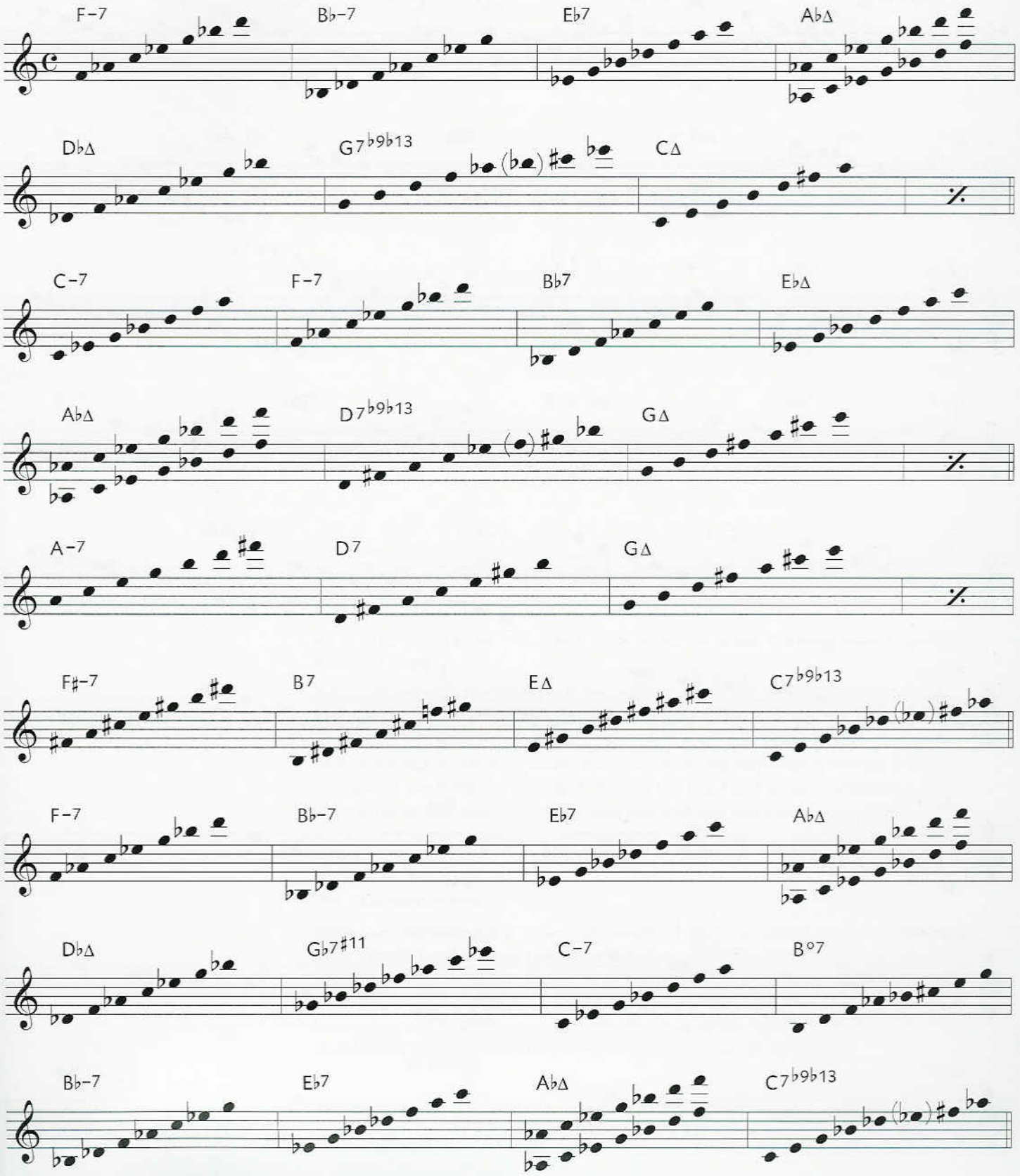
Major Blues



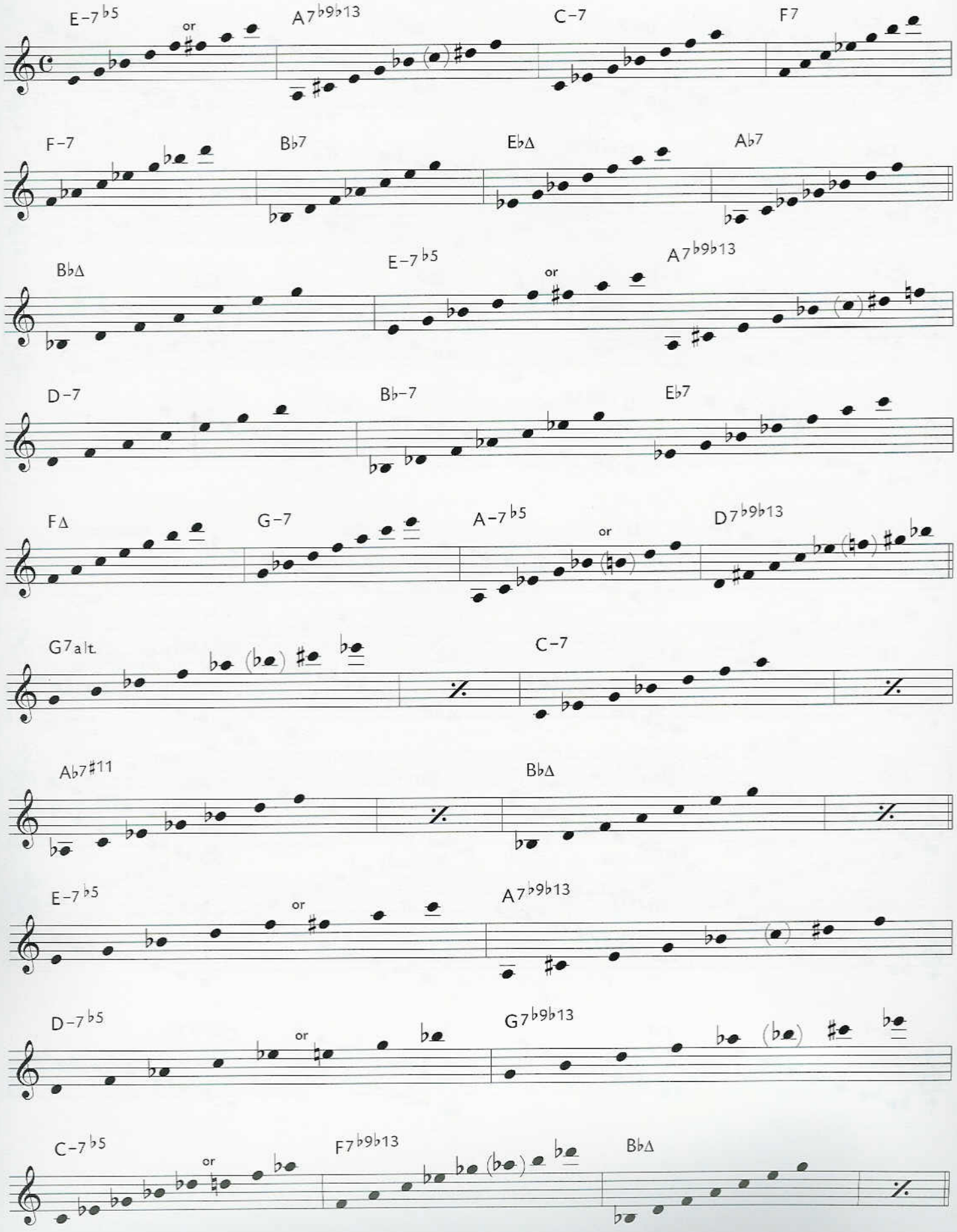
Minor Blues



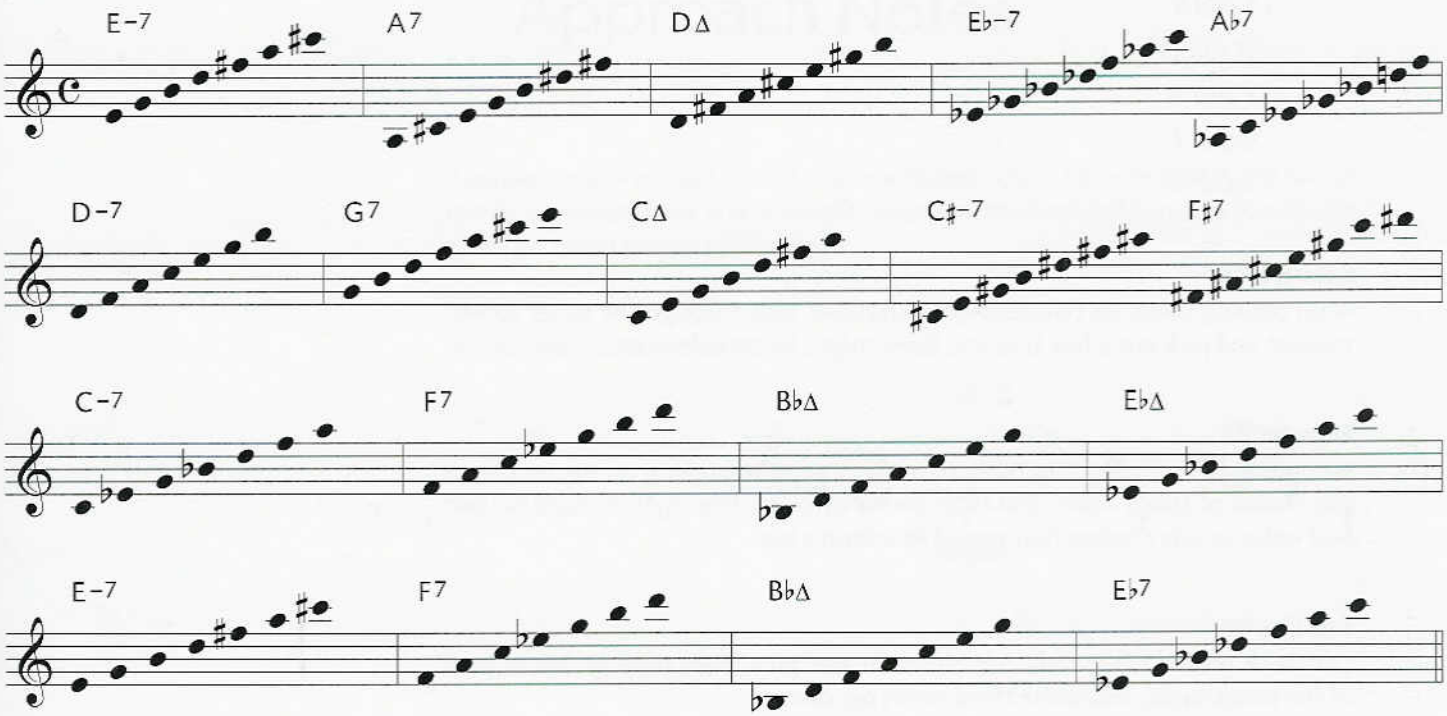
Fangs from Afar



Tell Her to Hold Tight



TONE DOWN



All of this chord scale and chord tone material is ear training, that is giving sounds a name.

Again, go through the first five tunes and be able to play every chord tone without hesitation. For the professional, being able to conjure any chord tone is as easy as conjuring the root of C major. Practice the ones that challenge you. At first, the mind builds structures, such as the appropriate 11th is always a whole step above the third so you might think of the third and go up a whole step. But in time these processes fall by the wayside and you just know the answer.

Exercise #2

The 42 combinations

There are 42 two-chord tone combinations (not including repeated notes). After practicing the chord tone exercise along with the play alongs, one should begin to hear the different colors of each chord tone. I recommend singing every chord tone throughout the tunes, getting the sounds totally in your ears. When you are listening to your favorite recordings, try to recognize specific chord tones within the melodic lines. Here are the 42 combinations:

13 - 11	11 - 13	9 - 13	7 - 13	5 - 13	3 - 13	1 - 13
13 - 9	11 - 9	9 - 11	7 - 11	5 - 11	3 - 11	1 - 11
13 - 7	11 - 7	9 - 7	7 - 9	5 - 9	3 - 9	1 - 9
13 - 5	11 - 5	9 - 5	7 - 5	5 - 7	3 - 7	1 - 7
13 - 3	11 - 3	9 - 3	7 - 3	5 - 3	3 - 5	1 - 5
13 - 1	11 - 1	9 - 1	7 - 1	5 - 1	3 - 1	1 - 3

Play on the previous tunes:

3 and 7 (these are called the guide tones)

5 and 9

11 and 13

3 and 13

9 and 7

7 and 11

Exercise #3

After playing these six two-note combinations, look through the other combinations and pick out a few that you think might be troublesome.

Exercise #4

Using the same tunes, improvise two notes per bar keeping an awareness of the choice of chord tones and their sound or color. The rhythm could be two half notes or any rhythm that would fit within a bar.

Exercise #5

Compose several three-note combinations and play them through some or all of the tunes. Next, improvise three notes per bar.

Exercise #6

Use scale tones or chord tones to play the following rhythms through the tunes. This exercise will not only help to conjure up notes and shapes but will also help develop an awareness of where you are within a bar as well as how to play over the bar line.

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

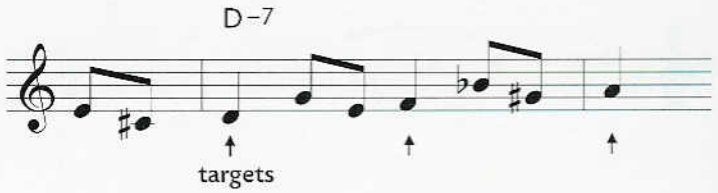
H

3. Target Notes and Approach Notes

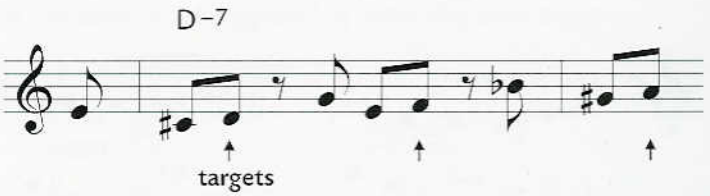
Approach notes are notes that frame a target note. The note that is the target can be any chord tone and is usually played on the beat but can also sound very effective when played off the beat.

Example:

on the beat target notes



off the beat target notes



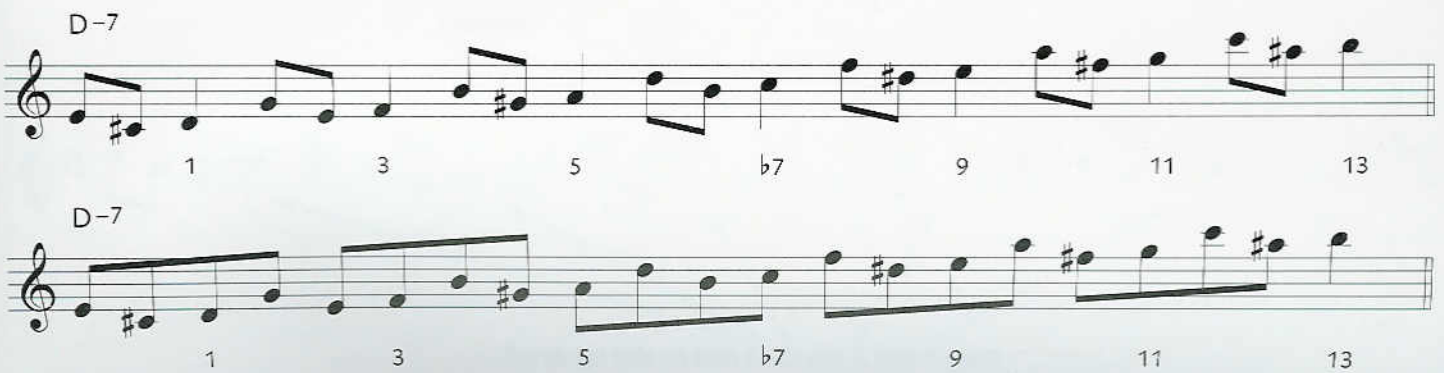
The approach to the target note can be a single note that steps up or down to the target or there can be a grouping of notes that approach the target note. The approach notes frame the target as a picture frame would. So in order to use approach notes it is essential that you know your chord tones. Let's start with two-note approaches.

Approach 1: scale from above to chromatic from below

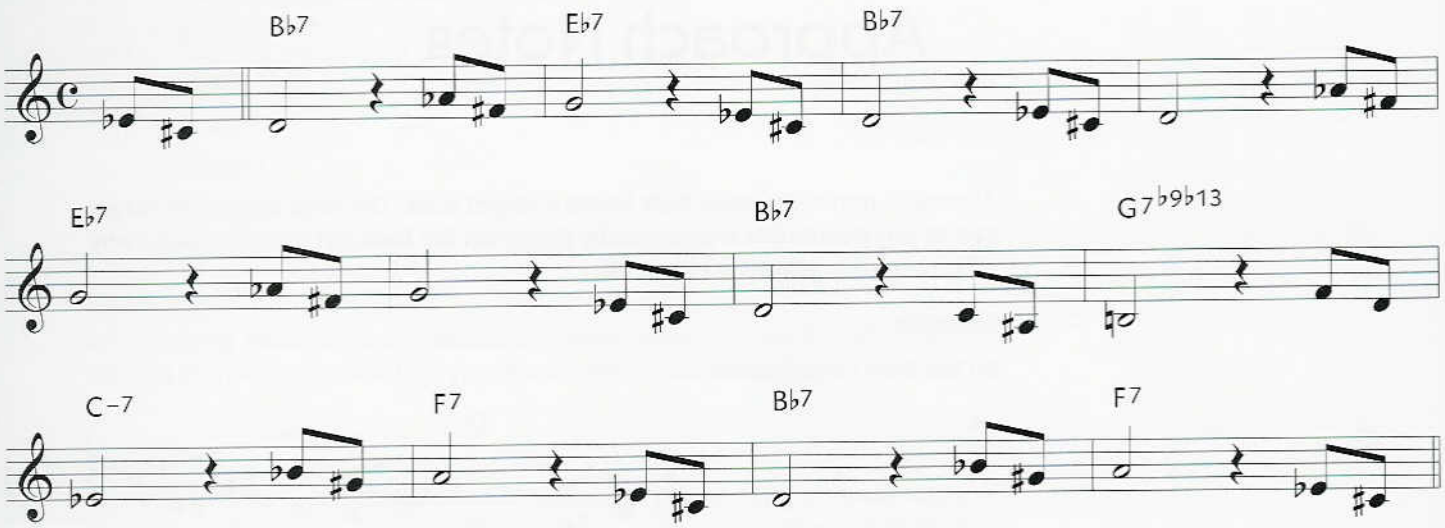
The first approach is scale tone from above to chromatic tone from below to the target. That is, you pick your target note (any chord tone), play the scale tone above your target, then the chromatic tone below your target, and then the target note.

Example: scale above to chromatic below

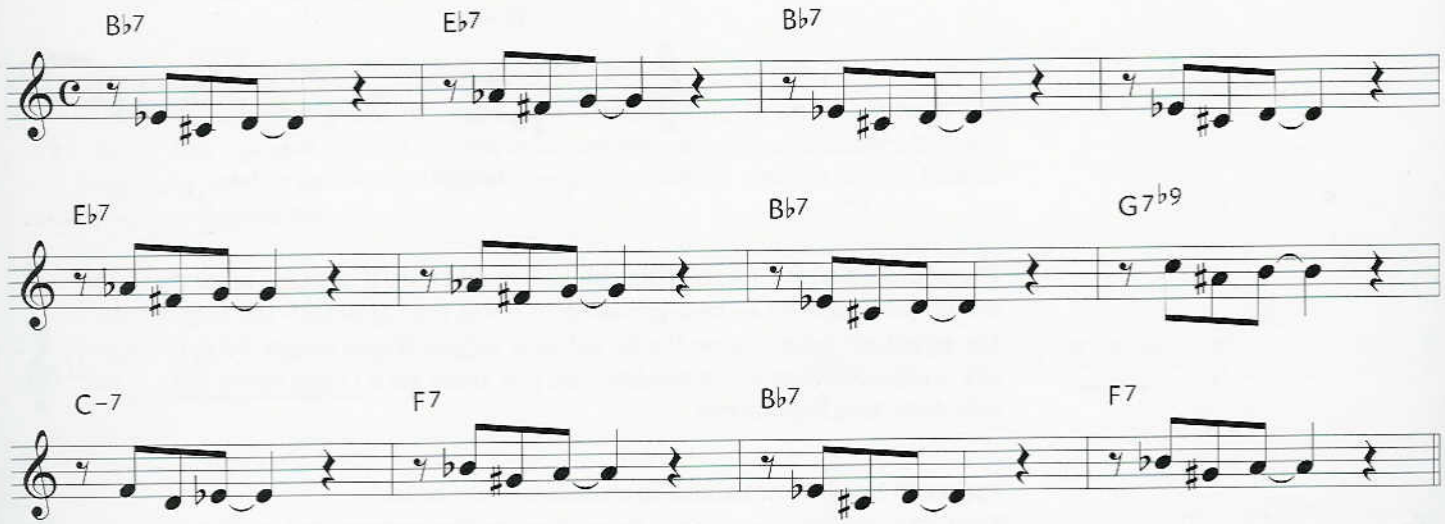
The target notes for D–7 below are D, then F, then A, C, E, G , and B.



Here is an example of approaching the third of every chord on a B♭ blues.



Here is another example playing targets off the beat.



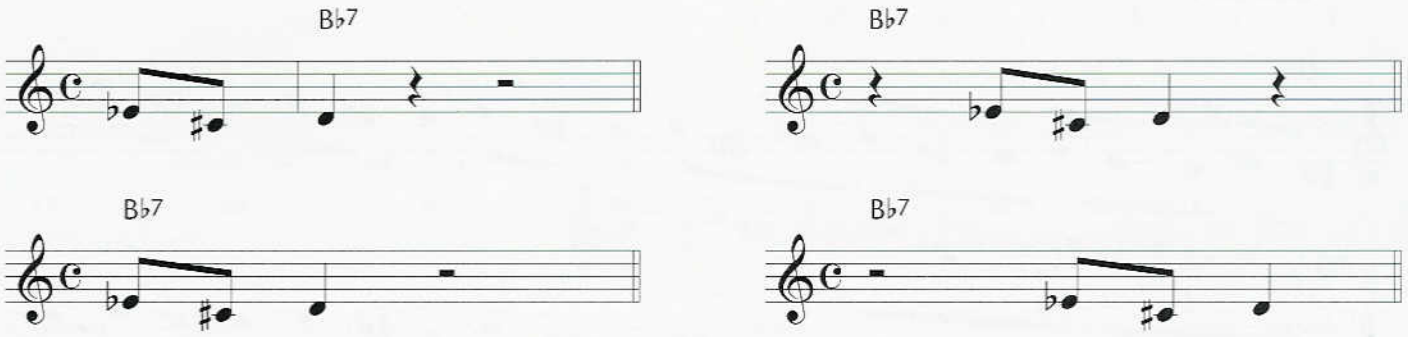
Exercise #1

Using approach one, scale above to chromatic below, approach every chord tone (one at a time) through a B♭ blues.

Exercise #2

Approach random (meaning a different target choice in each bar) tones, one per bar through a B♭ blues. Play through many choruses. Notice that the approach notes were written as pick-ups to beat one. Starting on beat four precipitates the next chord but you can also start on beat one, two or three.

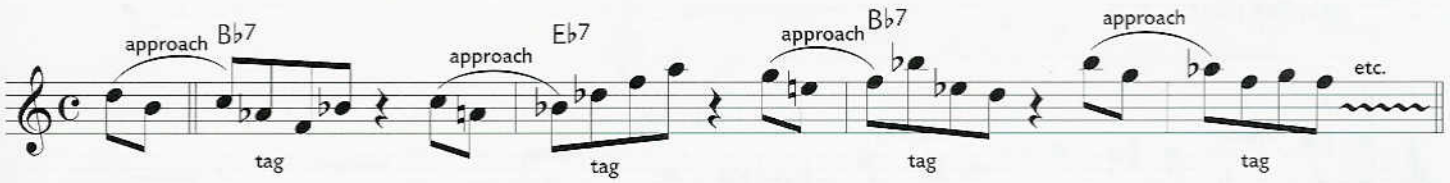
Example: B♭7 chord



Exercise #3

Approach random chord tones followed up with a tag note. Tag notes are improvised notes of your choice. Try to be aware of the shapes you create with different tags, try to use a variety. Once you have played through a B♭ blues adding one tag note, repeat the exercise adding two tag notes and then three.

Example: approaching targets with three note tags



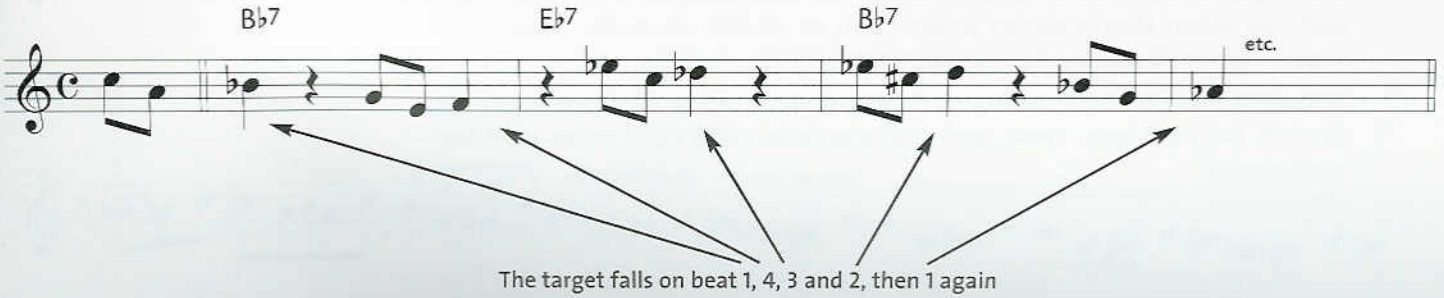
Exercise #4

Approach two chord tones per bar.

Exercise #5

Play 3/4 over 4/4 and you will have started approach notes on all beats. In the example below the target falls on beat one, then beat four, then beat three, then beat two, and then beat one again.

Example:

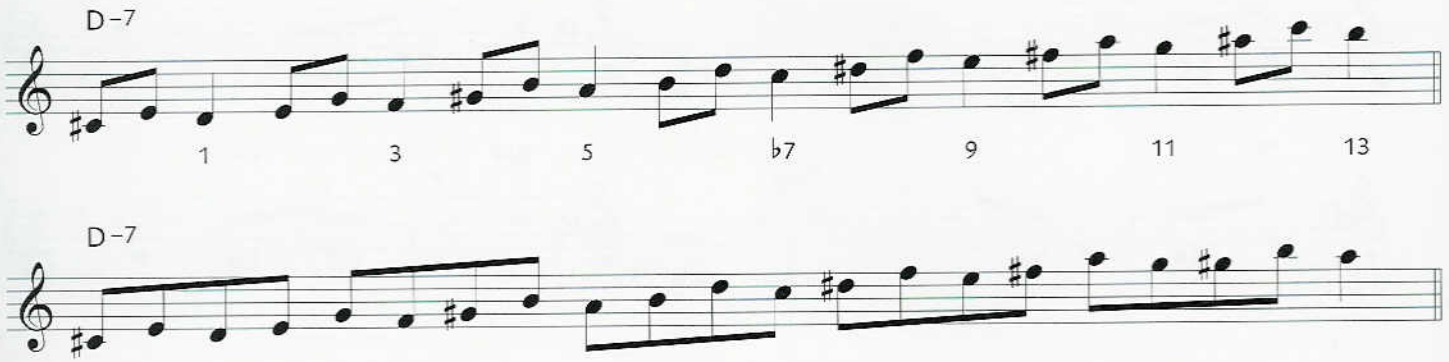


Exercise #6

Mix it all up! Also notice that approach notes can sound very good starting on the up beat.

Approach 2: chromatic from below to scale tone from above

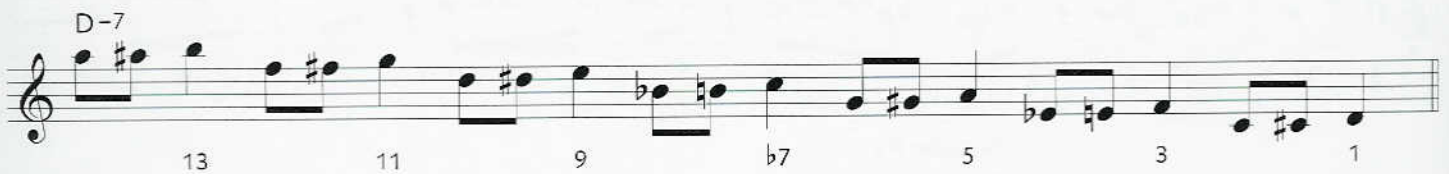
Example: D–7



Try doing the six exercises above for approach one using approach two. Also try playing through different tunes with the same exercises using both approaches.

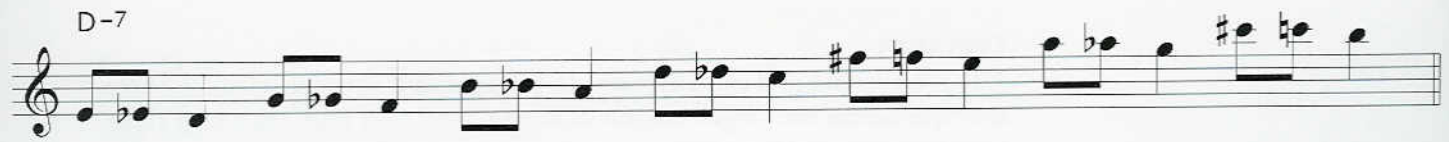
Approach 3: double chromatic from below

Example: D–7



Approach 4: double chromatic from above

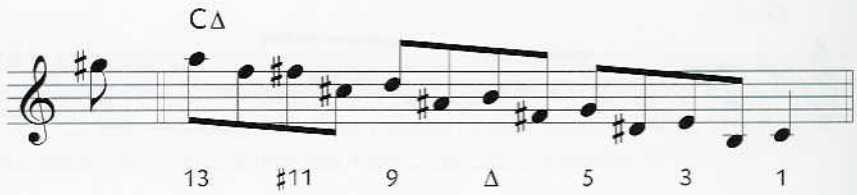
Example: D–7



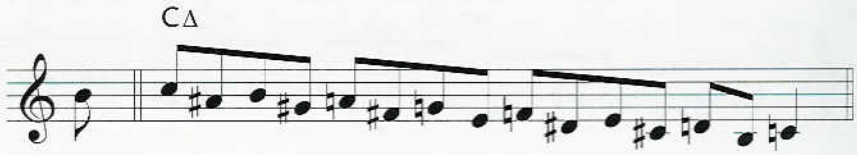
Notice that in the last example, non-diatonic notes such as the F♯ and C♯ really stick out when they occur on down beats as double chromatic notes from above. This could sound offensive depending on the situation.

All twelve tones of the chromatic scale are usable on any given chord if they are used in the right way. There are no wrong notes, only right notes used the wrong way.

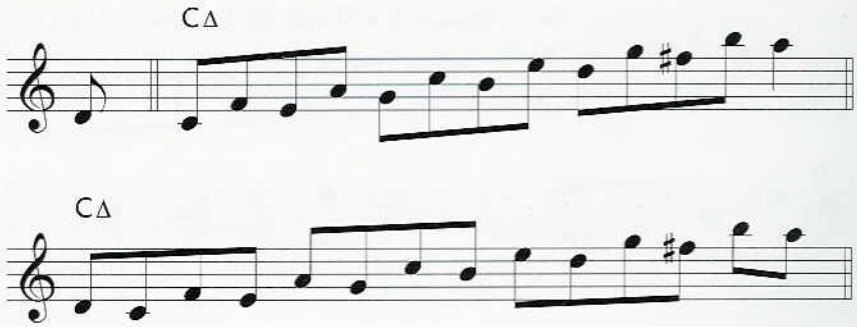
Approach 5: chromatic from below, simple but very effective!



To a major scale:



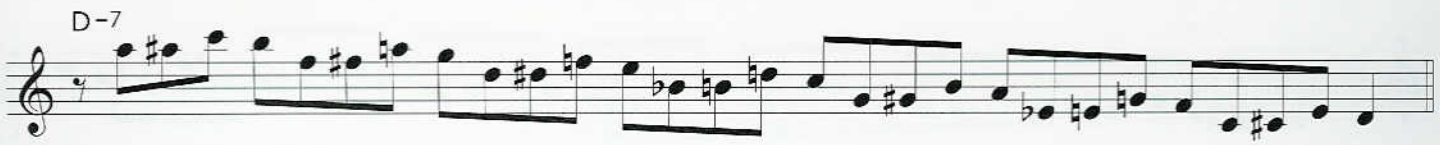
Approach 6: scale from above



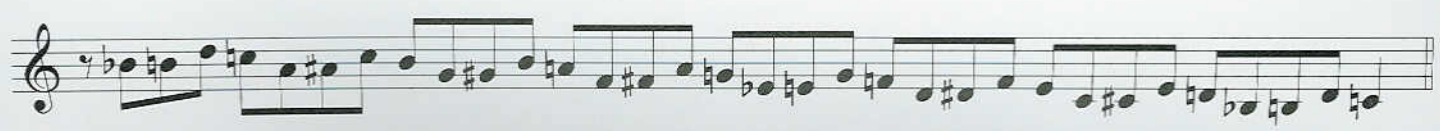
To a C scale:

Three-Note Approaches

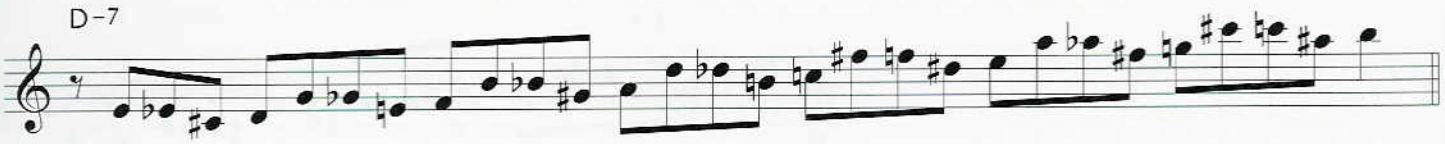
Approach 7: double chromatic from below to scale tone from above



To a C scale:

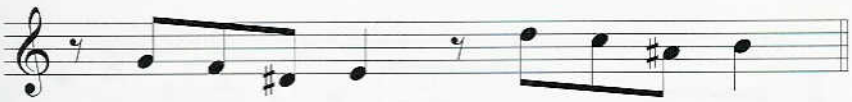


Approach 8: double chromatic from above to chromatic from below



To a C scale:

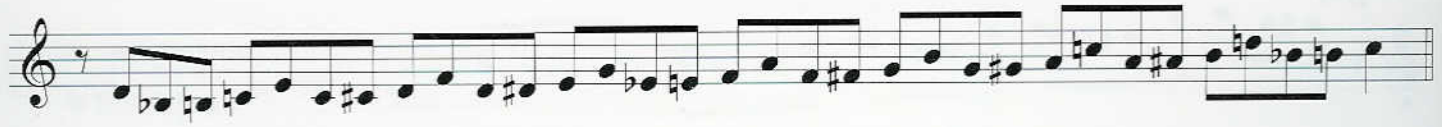
Very often, double scale from above is substituted for double chromatic from above when the notes are non-harmonic, as with the F♯ and C♯ on the first example above. The G replaces the F♯ and the D replaces the C♯ in the example below.



It's okay to live on the wild side.

Approach 9: scale from above to double chromatic from below (similar to approach 7)

To a C scale:



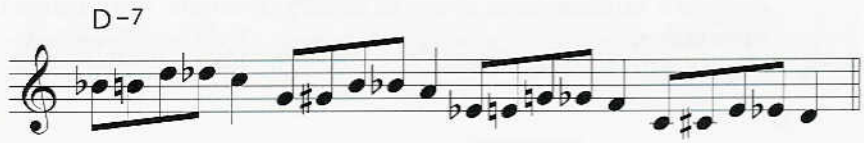
Approach 10: chromatic from below to a double chromatic from above (with exceptions)

Again, you could keep this constant structure or use a double scale from above when the double chromatic from above starts with a non-harmonic tone. If you do this however, playing a double scale from above makes the chromatic from below stick out because it too is a non-harmonic tone. It is a matter of context, for example:

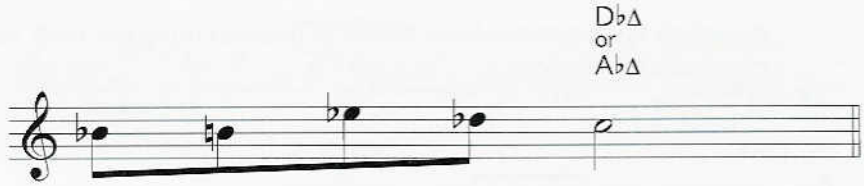
Example: D–7 constant structure without modifications

Four-Note Approaches

Approach 11: double chromatic from below to double chromatic from above

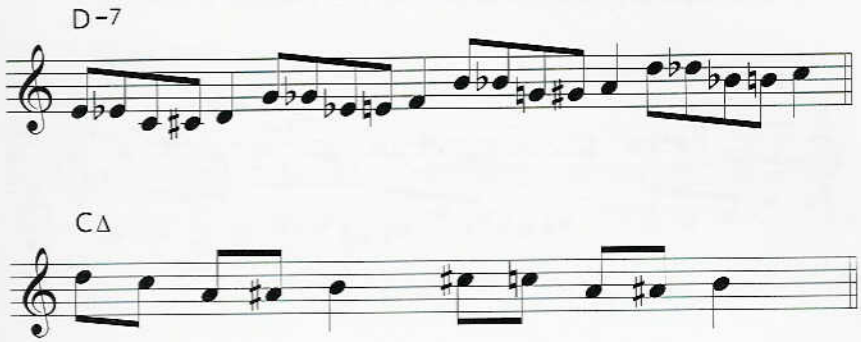


Again, if the first note of double chromatic from above is not in the chord scale, you can make the approach more consonant with a double scale from above.

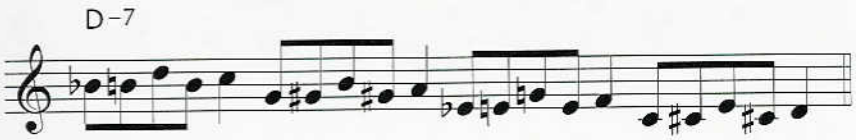


Approach 12: double chromatic from above to double chromatic from below

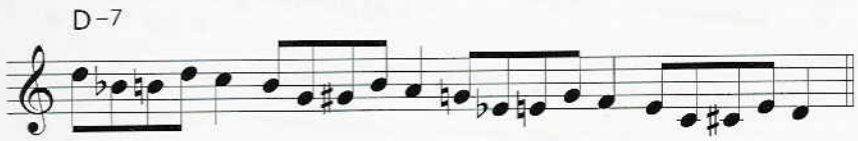
This approach is dissonant sounding because the second note of the approach, which is not in the chord scale, is left by a skip. If the first note is not in the chord scale you can use double scale from above.



Approach 13: double chromatic from below to scale from above back to chromatic from below



Approach 14: scale from above to double chromatic from below back to scale from above

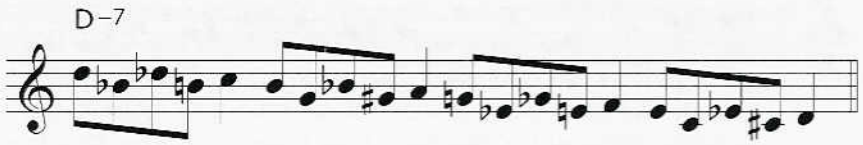


Approach 15: chromatic from below to double chromatic from above back to chromatic from below

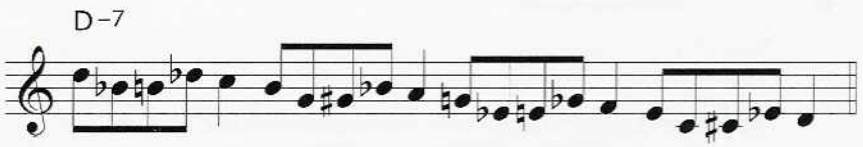
Constant structure four-note approaches

These approaches contact a lot of non-harmonic tones as they keep the interval from the target constant regardless of harmonic consideration.

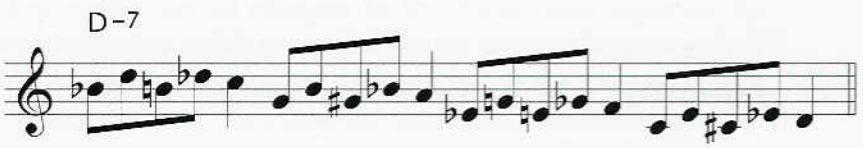
Approach 16: whole step from above to whole step from below to chromatic from above to chromatic from below



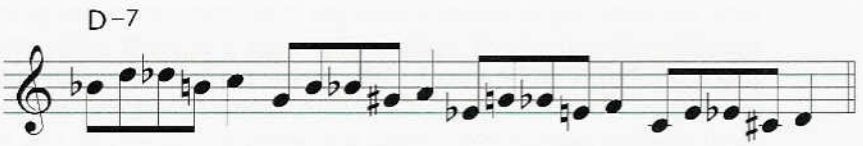
Approach 17: whole step from above to whole step from below to half step from below to half step from above



Approach 18: whole step from below to whole step from above to half step from below to half step from above

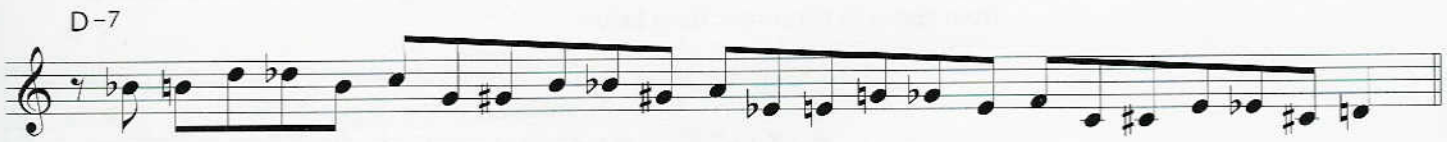


Approach 19: whole step from below to whole step from above to half step from above to half step from below

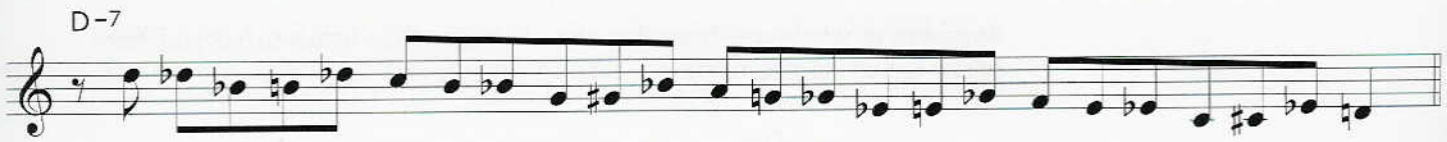


Five-note approaches
(not constant structure)

Approach 20: double chromatic from below to double chromatic from above back to chromatic from below



Approach 21: double chromatic from above to double chromatic from below back to chromatic from above



Approach 22: chromatic from above to chromatic from below

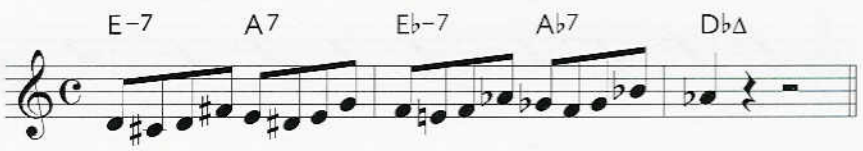
Approach 23: chromatic from below to chromatic from above

This is not meant to be a book solely on the study of approach notes. There are many more that could be described here. Rather than take every approach with every possible permutation I think it is better to choose one and apply it to different tunes, hear it in context and make it a part of your language. Use it in sentences or phrases. The use of approach notes can get into your playing quite fast and at times it is difficult to stop using them.

4. Scale Motives or Modal Sequences

In the following pages there are a number of motives or sequences written out. You can play these motives on major, harmonic minor and melodic minor scales. Before you begin get comfortable with the major scales. Rather than taking every motive and working it out on each scale start by selecting a few and playing them through the major scales. Realize that when you do this, these motives also fit all of the modes contained within the major scales. (A sequence played over C major scale would also fit D Dorian, E Phrygian, F Lydian, etc.) Next, work out those sequences on melodic minor scales again noticing all of the modes contained within. Try the same on harmonic minor scales and modes. After achieving some degree of physical dexterity try applying them to tunes. Use tunes 6, *My Time to Shine* and 7, *Swollin'*. These modal sequences can be started on all seven chord tones or scale tones. The challenge is to go across the bar from one scale into another without breaking the flow.

Example:



You can also take a scale motive and play it in 3/4, 5/4, 7/4, 3/8, or 7/8 or any polyrhythm. Any motive can be changed to fit another time signature by adding or subtracting notes, which makes the pattern displaced against 4/4.

Try something very simple to start with, often the simplest things sound the best. Playing a whole solo with one motive can inspire the imagination and the intuition with new ideas that you might not have thought of. Make a mental note of it. It is really important for the student to figure things out on his or her own. Don't wait for every little question and detail to be explained in a book. Investigate. Keep playing and make it sound right.

On pages 70-76 is the list of some motives, all written on a C major scale, to pick from. The lines could start anywhere in the scale. Apply them to your instrument and play them the full range to get comfortable. When you play them on tunes try keeping the same direction in the scale motives as you cross bar lines and particularly when there is a harmonic change. This makes the changes appear to be seamless.

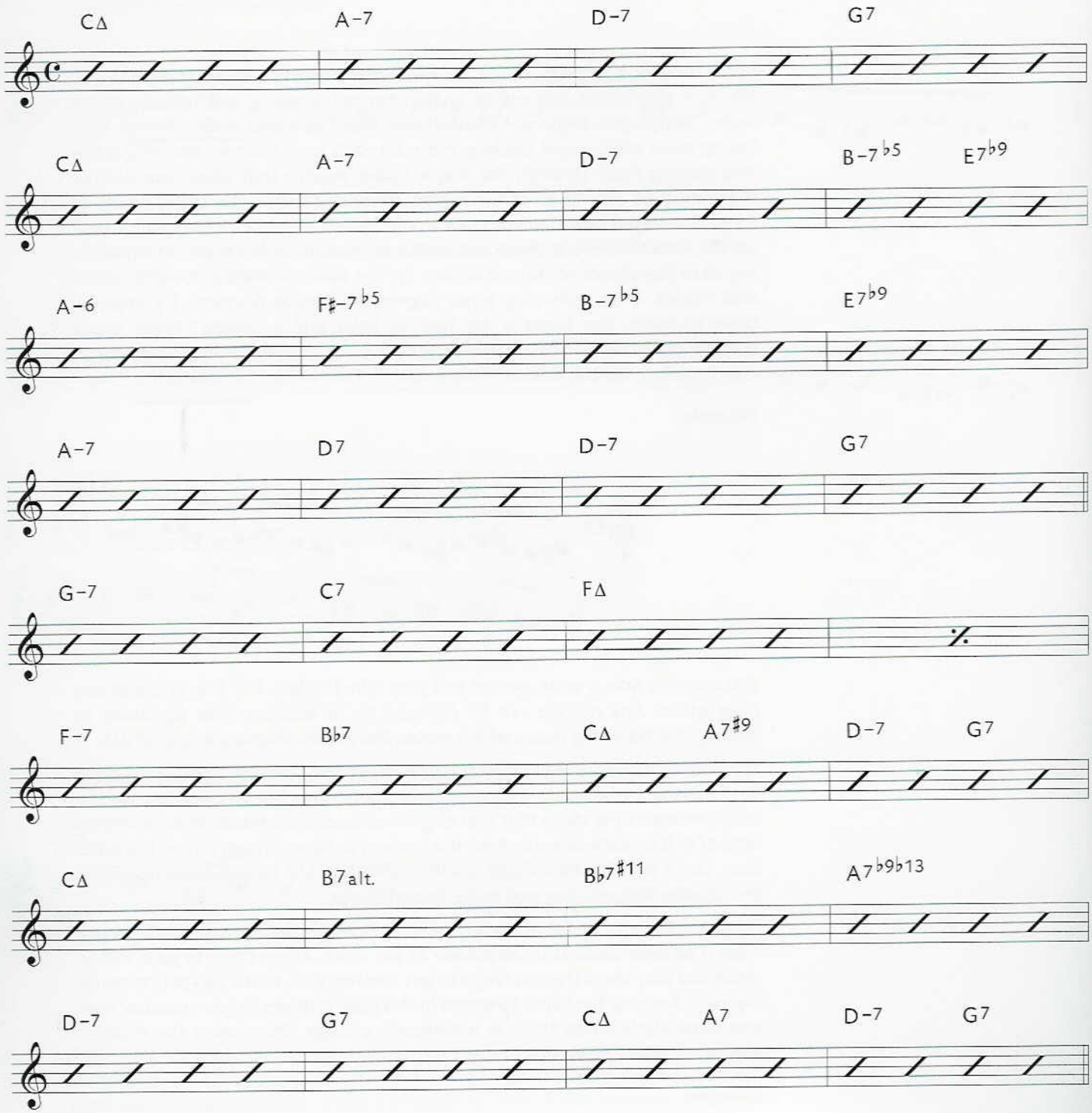
Example:

14 · *slow*

15 · *fast*

TUNE 6 - My Time to Shine

C Instruments

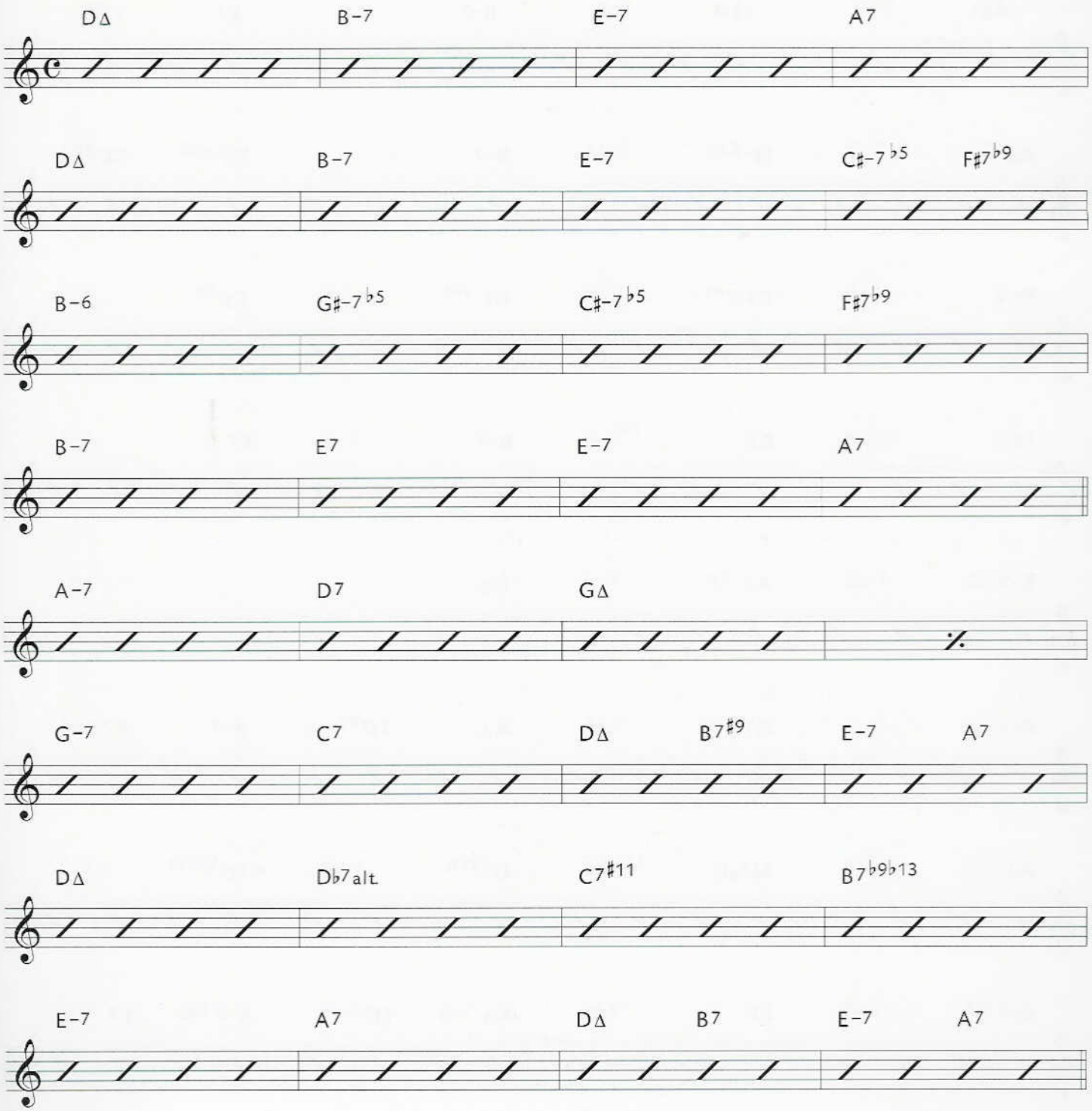


14 · *slow*

15 · *fast*

TUNE 6 - My Time to Shine

B♭ Instruments

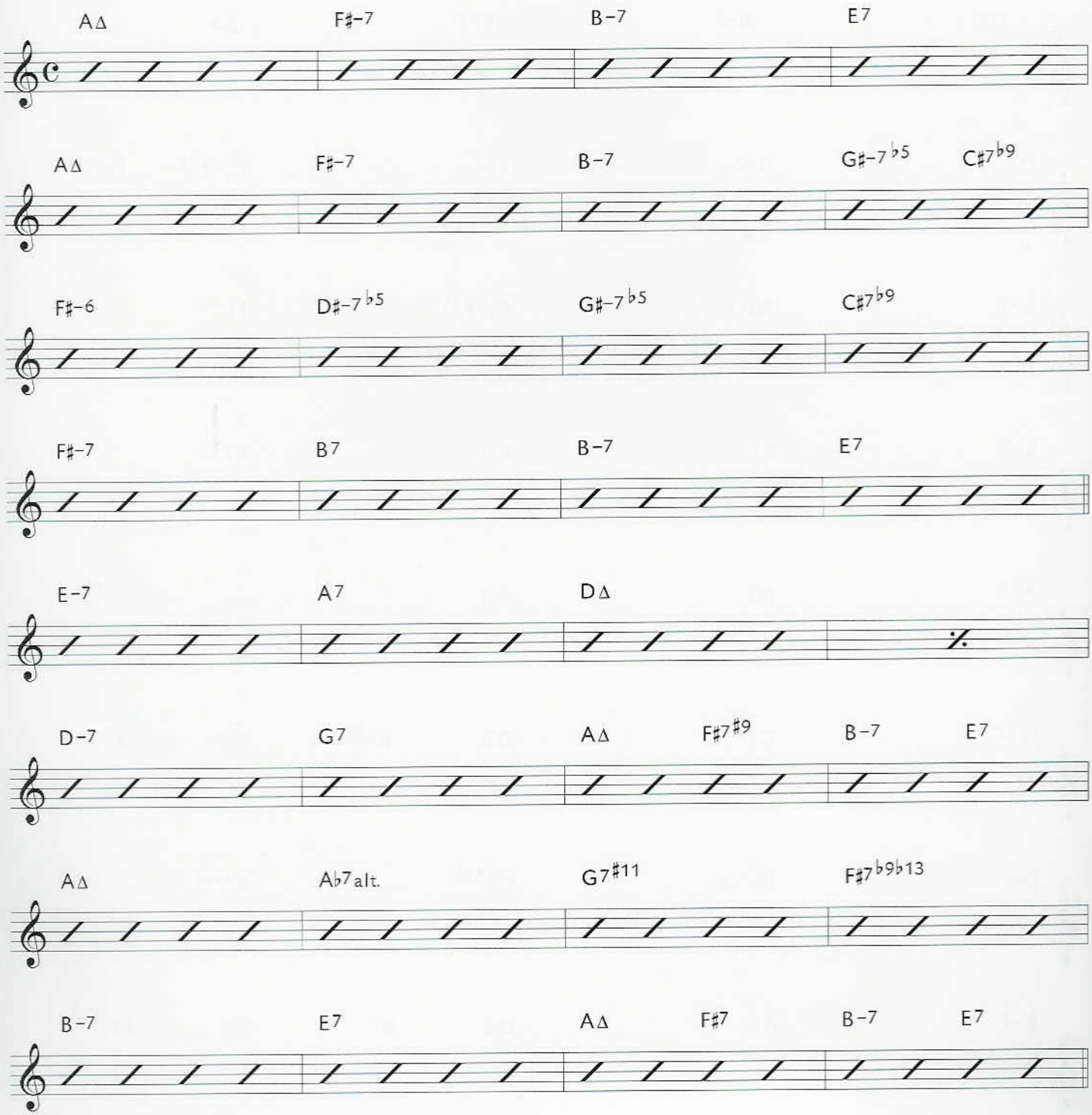


14 · *slow*

15 · *fast*

TUNE 6 - My Time to Shine

E♭ Instruments

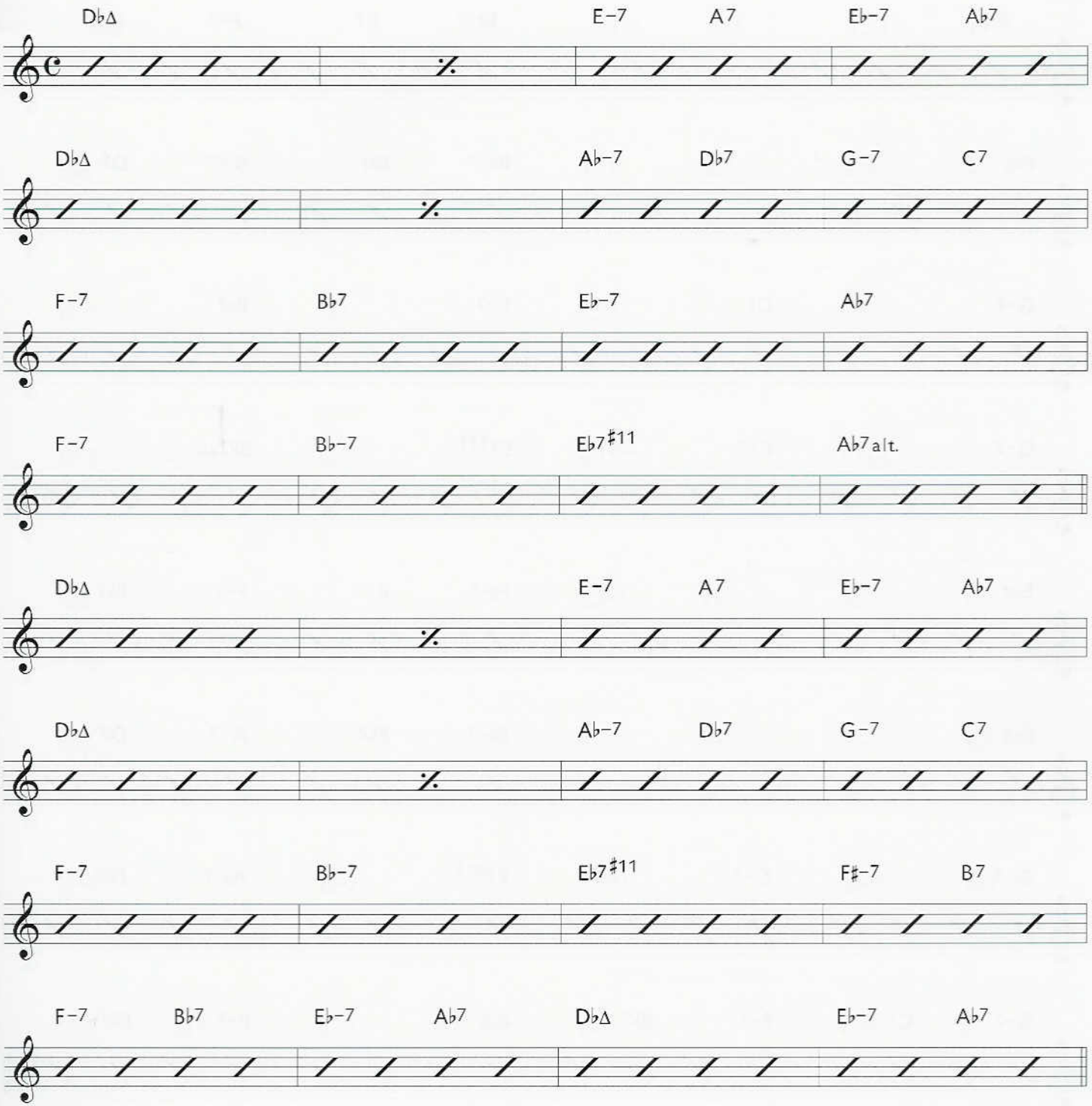


16 · *slow*

17 · *fast*

TUNE 7 - Swollin'

C Instruments

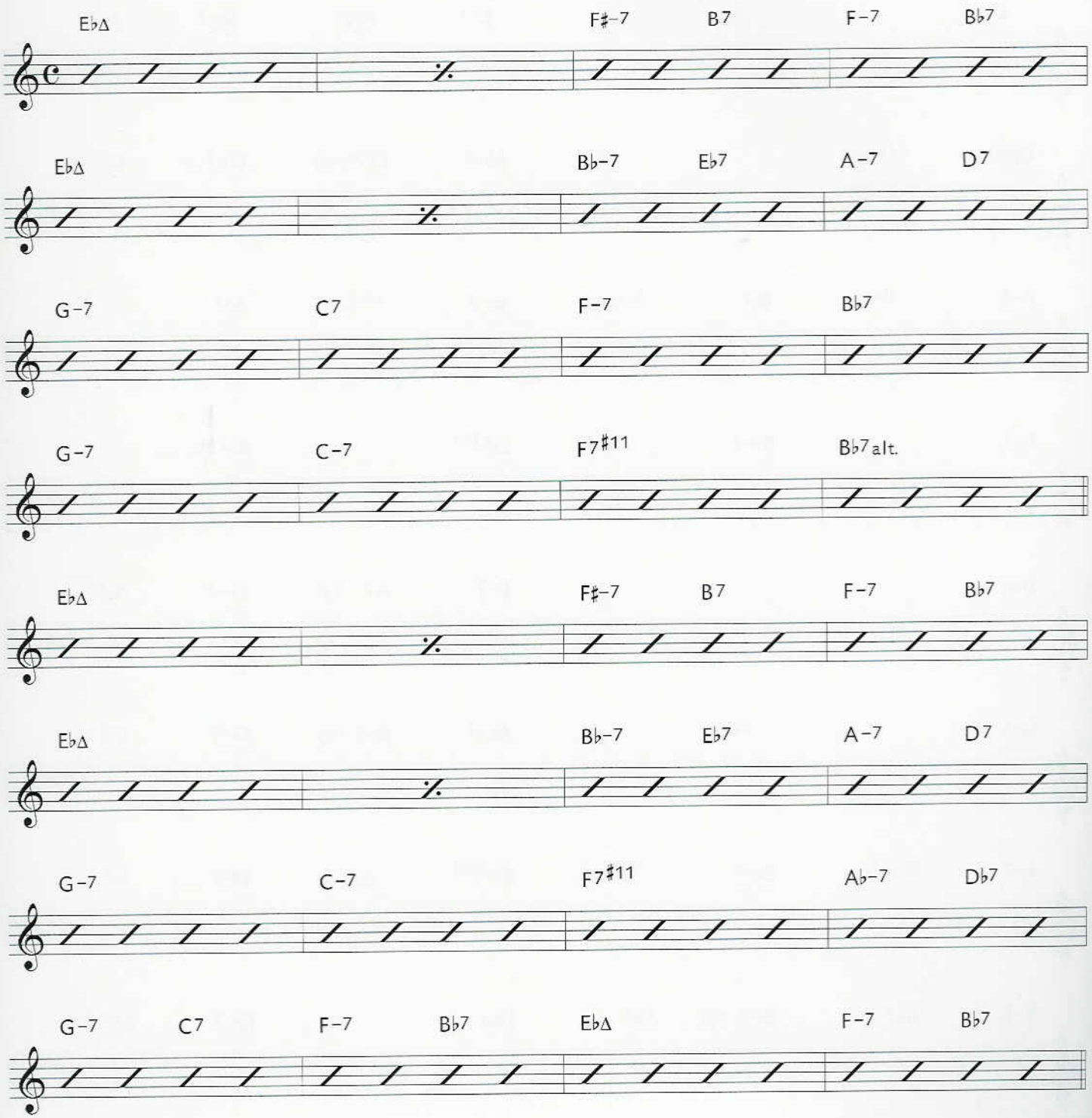


16 · *slow*

17 · *fast*

TUNE 7 - Swollin'

B♭ Instruments

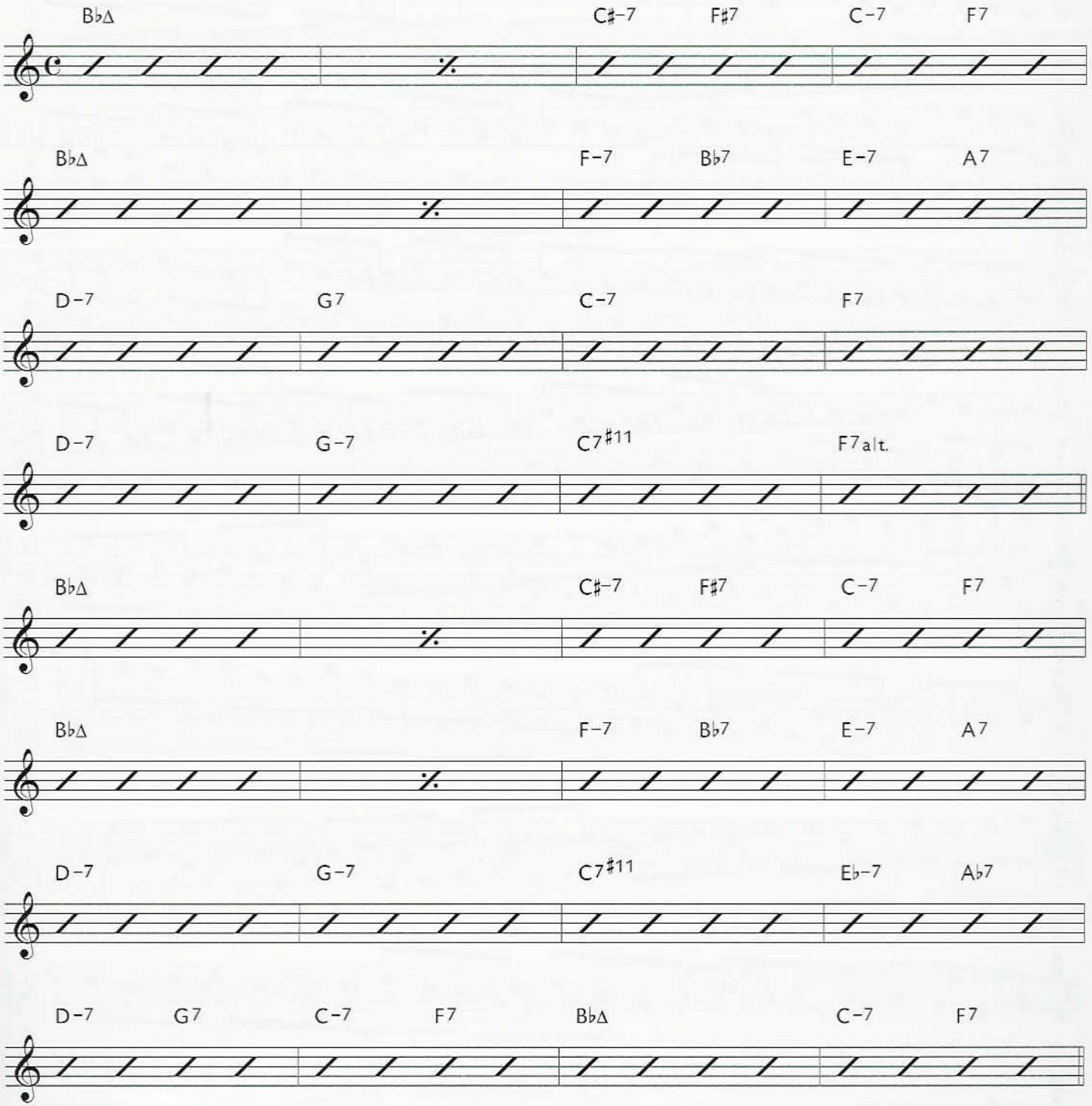


16 - *slow*

17 - *fast*

TUNE 7 - Swollin'

E♭ Instruments



Scale Motives or Modal Sequences

1

2

3

4

5

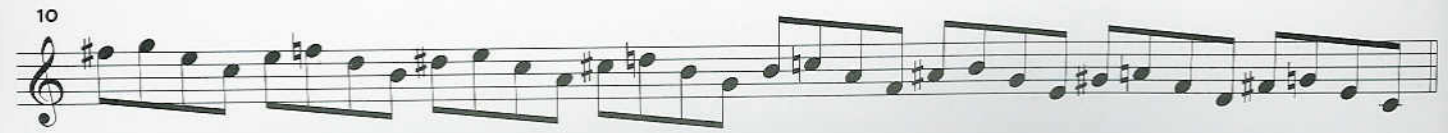
6

7

8

9

10



11

12

13

14

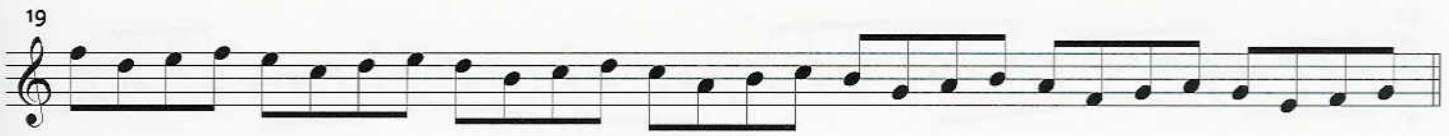
15

16

17

18

19



20

21

22

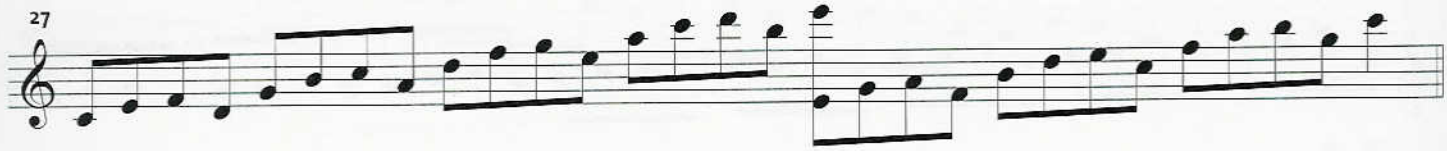
23

24

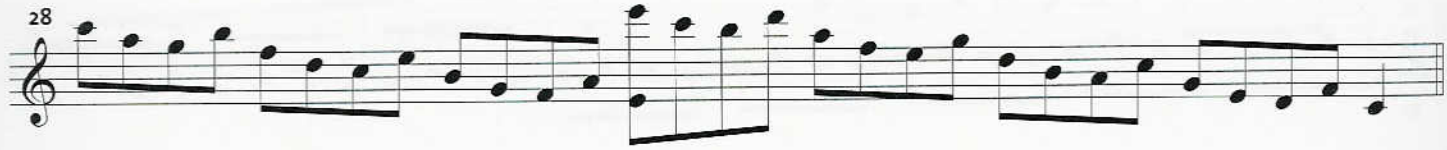
25

26

27



28

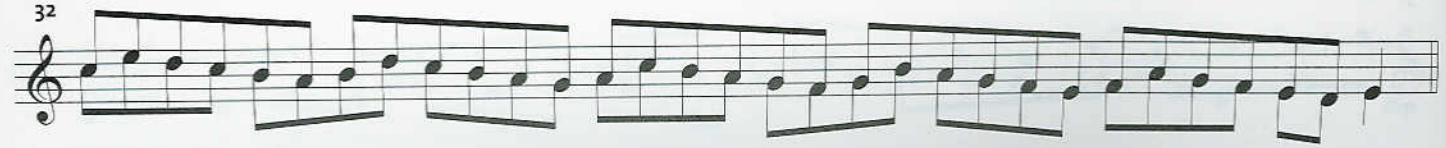


29

30

31

32

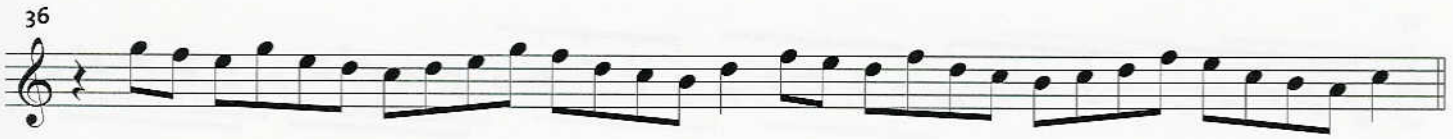


33

34

35

36



37

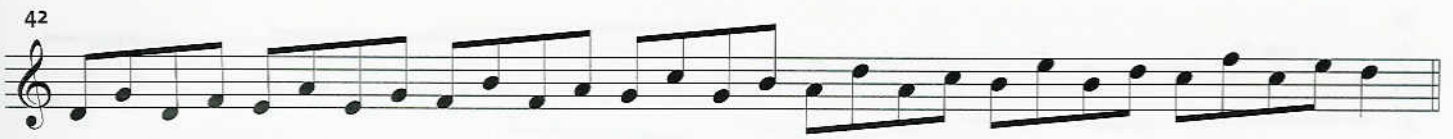
38

39

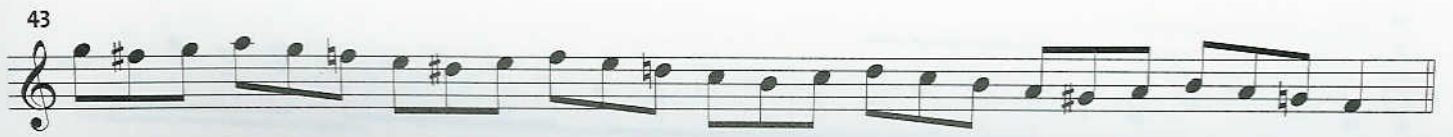
40

41

42



43



44

45

46

47

48

49

50

51

52

53

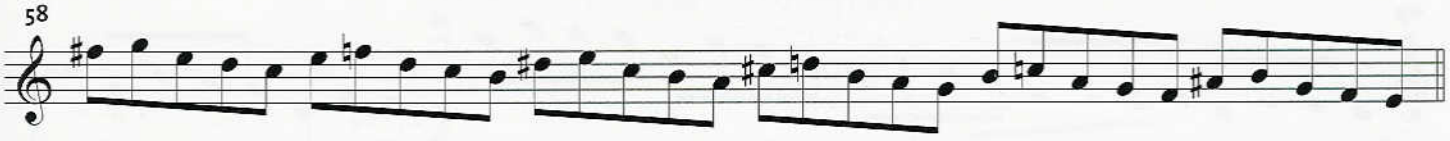
54

55

56

57

58



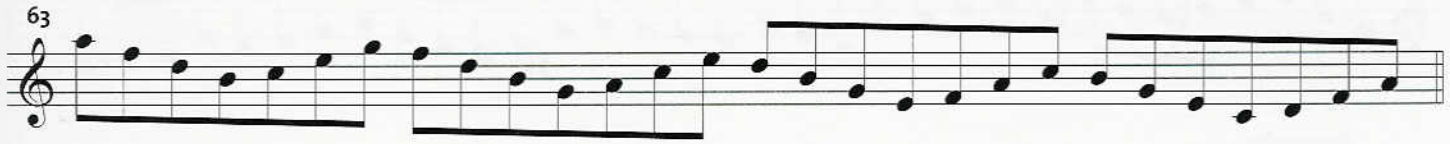
59

60

61

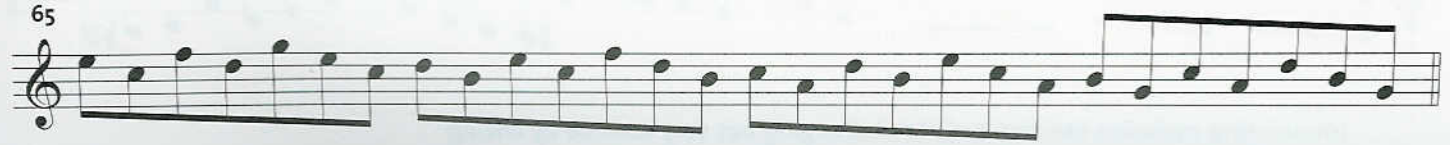
62

63



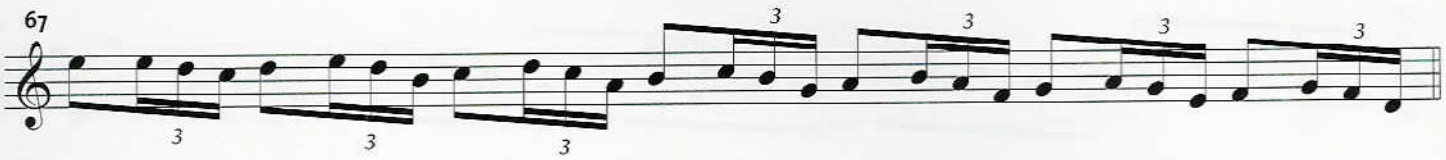
64

65



66

67



68

69

70

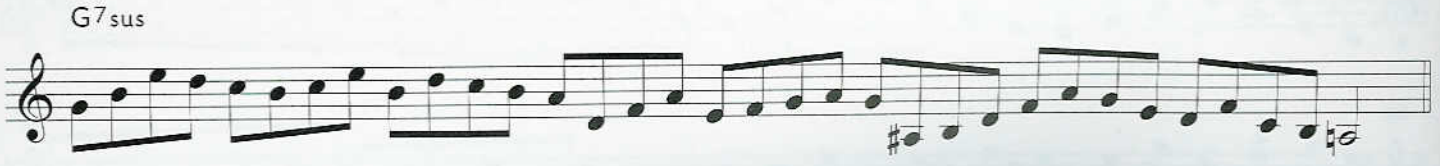
Needless to say, there could be many more scale motives or a lot less. The ones presented here can give you ideas to create your own. Even going through and playing them a few times will help your ear to hear and qualify these scale shapes in other people's playing. After playing a few of these on tunes 6 and 7 (or any of the other tunes), try mixing up one scale motive with another. First try it over a scale or mode and then over a set of chord changes.

Example:

Here are eight different motives strung together to make one through-composed motive over a G7sus chord.

Example:

Here are the same motives taken up one scale step.



Improvising melodies like this is quite challenging but very feasible by linking up smaller motives.

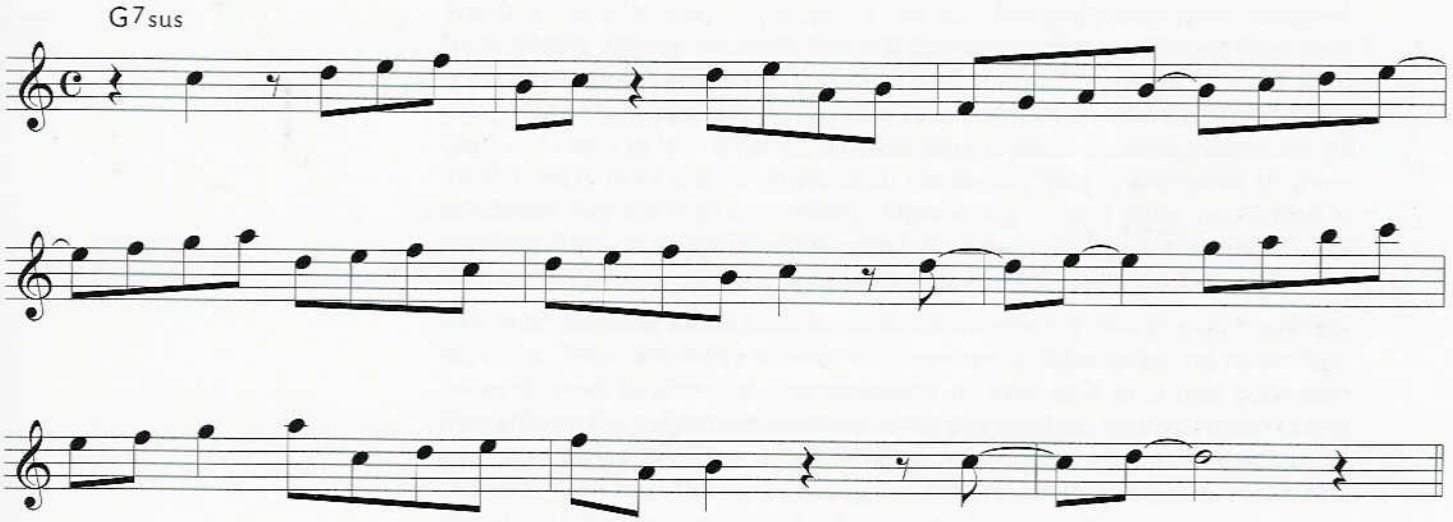
Rhythmizing Motives

Take any scale motives and try putting them to different rhythms and syncopations. Leave notes out or take any other liberties in order to play what you hear.

Example:

Using this motive:

Rhythmized with skips and leaving notes off:



Take any tunes and rhythmize your selected motives.

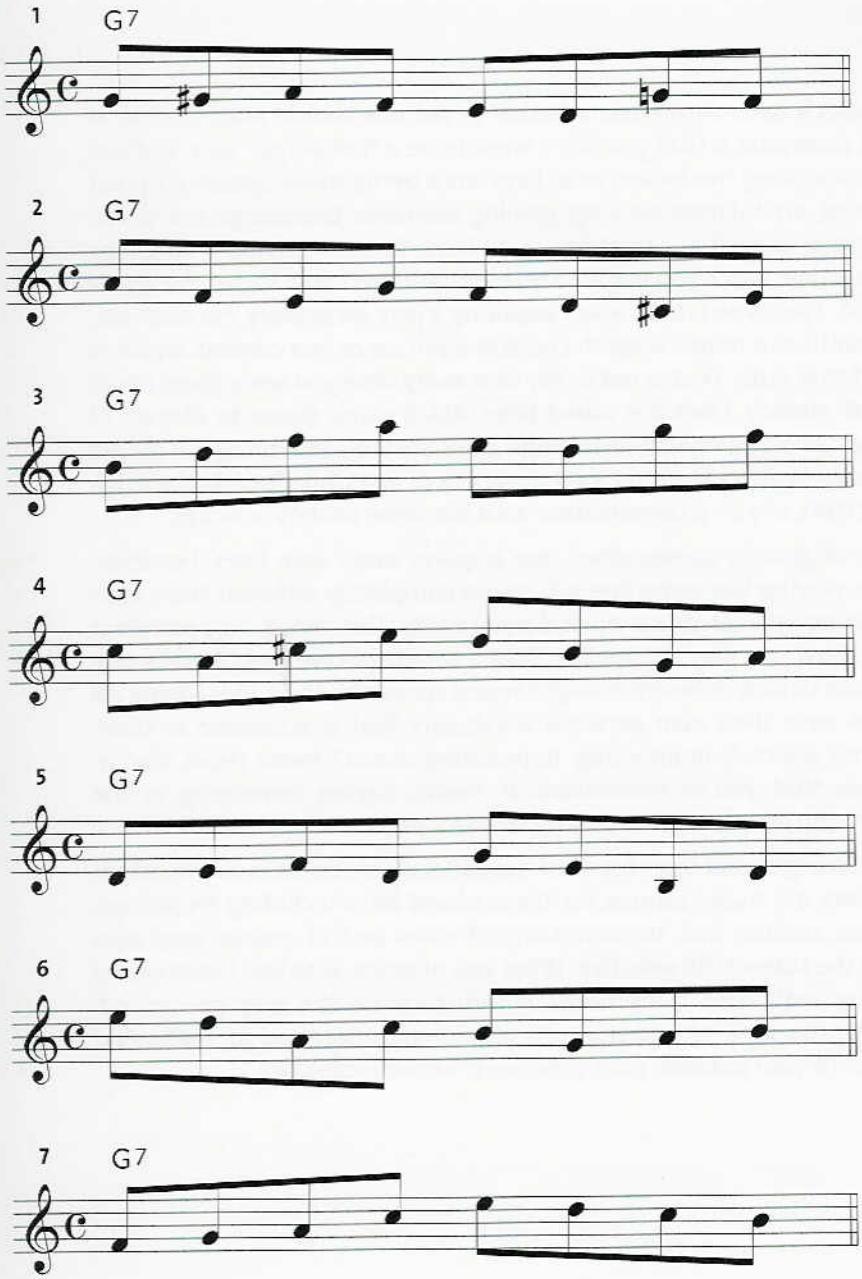
5. Lines

There is always a controversy over whether or not one should practice lines in all keys. The downside is that you don't want to be a "lick player" or a "pattern player". But practicing "melodies" in all keys has a tremendous upside. It's great for ear training, articulation training, gaining harmonic knowledge and developing technique as well as versatility in all keys. When studying a language there comes a time when you begin to learn phrases and how to put the words into a context. The same is true when acquiring a jazz vocabulary. For example, to play the ninth of a minor seventh chord in a phrase or in a context captures the sound of that note. That is not to say that every time you see a given chord you play that melody. Lines are sound bites. Ask a piano player to play an F7 chord and he can play a myriad of voicings. Lines are the same thing but played in a linear fashion. After learning a great variety of lines, one forgets the original lines but can carry on a conversation with the same sounds or words.

Tremendous originality comes when one acquires one's own lines. However, three people playing the same line will sound completely different from each other depending on each one's musical personality. The saying, "It's not what you play but how you play it!" applies. Take a simple phrase like, "Have a nice day", and listen to how different it might sound spoken by three individuals. All great players have their own personal vocabulary that is accessible to them whenever they are truly improvising. Improvising doesn't mean recall, that is, recalling lines that you've memorized. It means saying something in the moment with the people you are playing within a particular context.

Of course, learning sound bites for all of the varieties of chords is an important objective. There are many sources for these sound bites including recordings, books of lines written out, transcriptions of solos and of course your own thoughts on the subject. Be selective. What you practice, who you listen to and who you play with have a tremendous influence on the way you sound. Depending on the style of jazz that you play or are interested in, try to find melodies that fit your passion. Each style has it's own vocabulary.

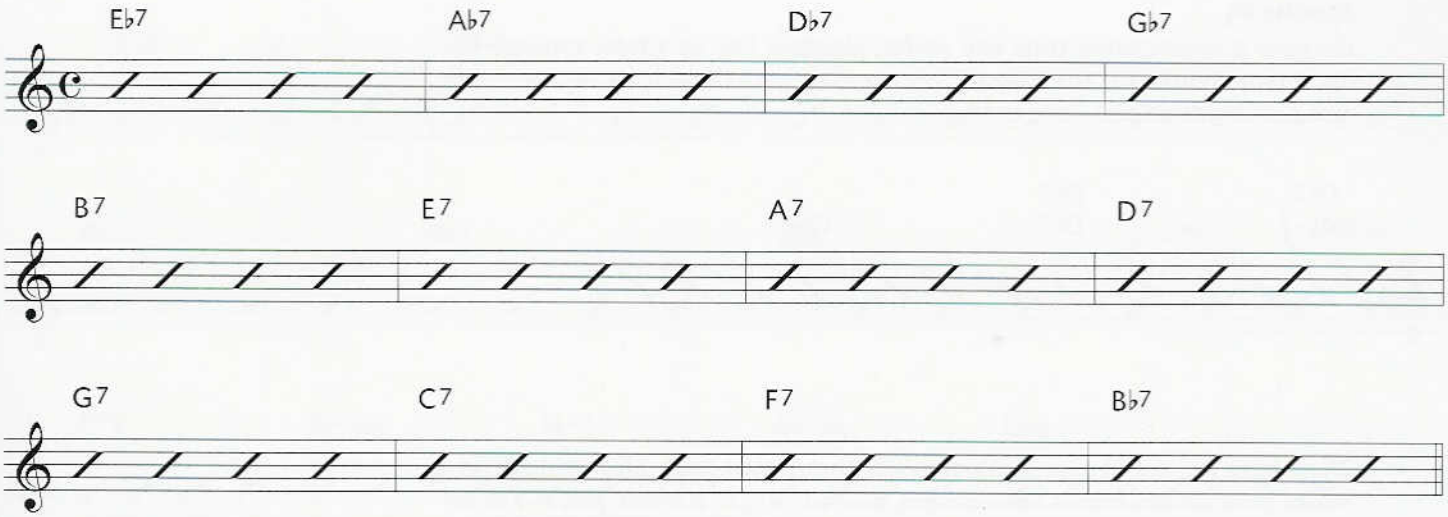
Dominant Lines G7



The lines above all fit a G7 chord or a D–7 to G7 progression. There are seven lines, one starting on every degree of a G7 Mixolydian scale. There is a line starting on the root, the 9th, the 3rd, the 11th, the 5th, the 13th, and the 7th. Each line is a G7 or D–7/G7 sound bite. If you prefer, you can write out seven of your own lines which might intrigue you more to use for the following exercises.

Exercise #1

Play each line in all keys. Try playing them in the cycle of 5ths as in the progression below.



Notice that E♭7 is the first key and once you get through some of the more challenging keys the lines seem to get easier.

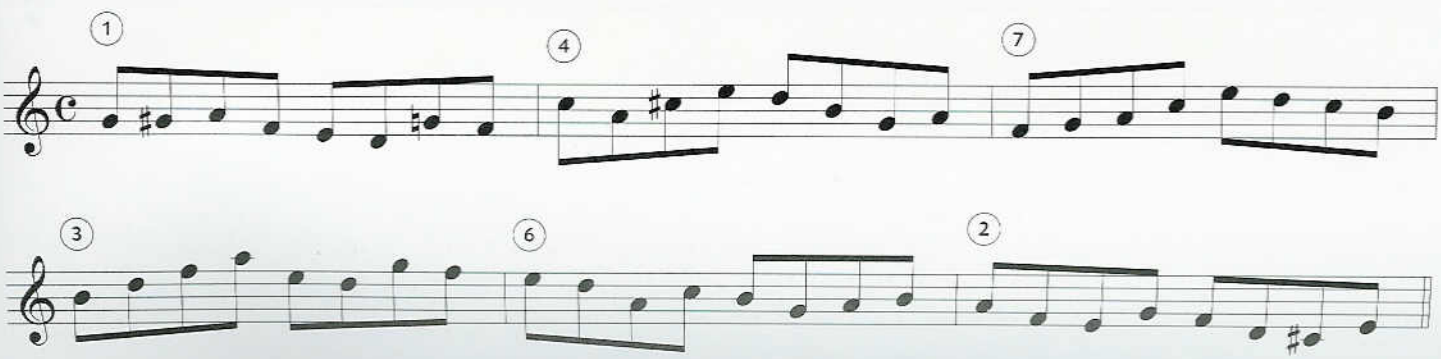
On another day, try playing these lines moving up or down in half steps. After getting used to playing them in all keys, try singing each line starting from random notes. Play a note on your instrument and sing line number 7 for example starting from that note. Play another note and have that be the starting note of line number 4 etc. Remember, this is all ear training.

Exercise #2

Sing the lines in one key at a time starting on the numbers in the grid below. If you can play a chord on the piano or guitar to sound the chord as you sing. It might be helpful but not necessary.

1	4	7	3	6	2	5	1	5	2	6	3	7	4
2	4	6	1	3	5	7	2	7	5	3	1	6	4
3	4	5	7	6	2	1	3	1	2	6	7	5	4

Each number represents the starting note of the line.
For example, here it is on G7.



After singing the grid in one key in time (slow tempo), then play the grid in every key. Taking it to another level, you can play the lines in triplets while articulating them the same way as you would articulate eighth notes.

Exercise #3

On tune 8 or any other tune you prefer, play one line at a time through the dominant chords. For the sake of this exercise, play these lines on the minor seventh chords as well. For example:

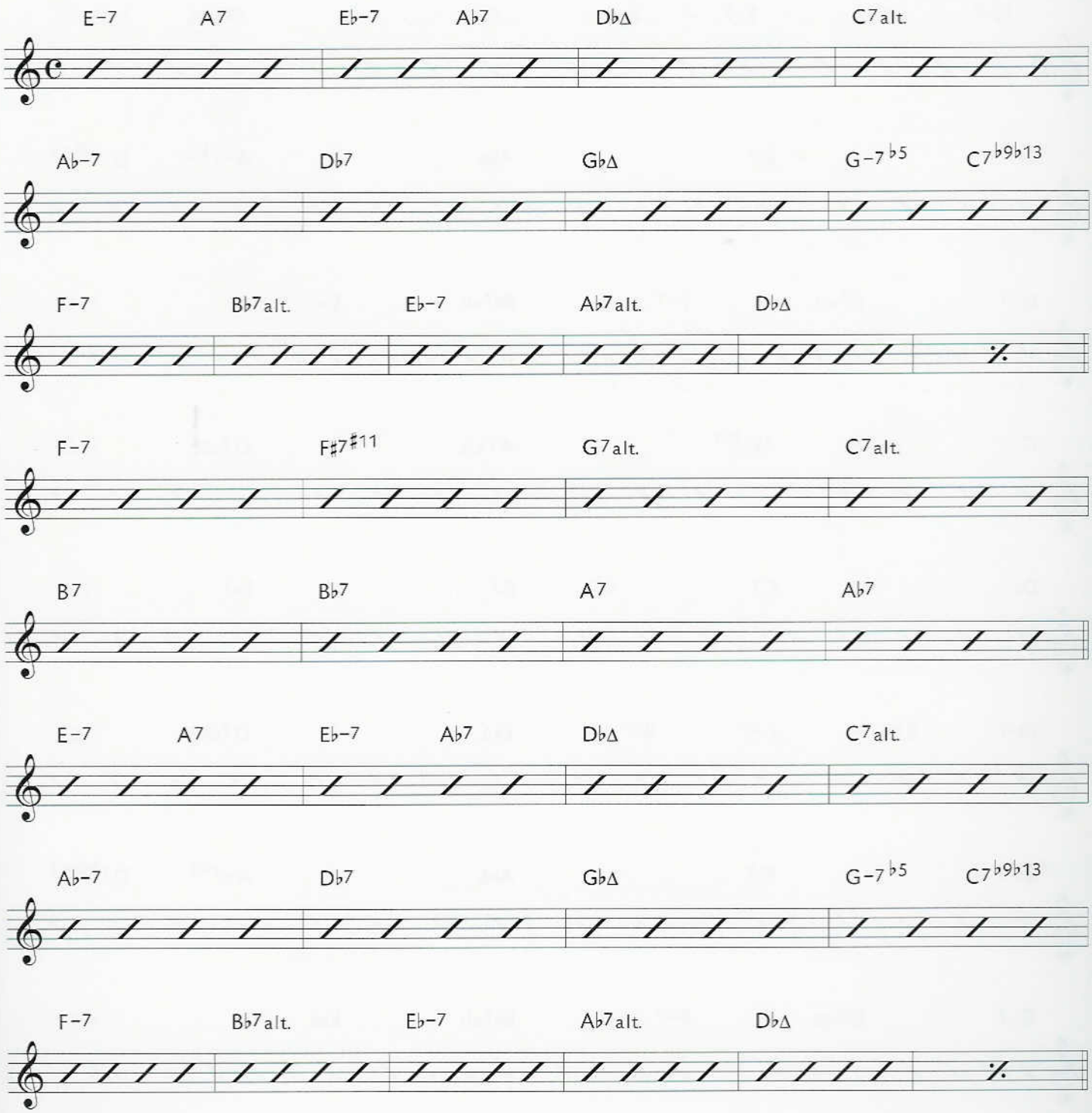
These lines will not fit over dominant ♭9♭13 chords. Although, playing them up a minor third usually works. For example, over a D–7♭5 to G7♭9♭13, play F–7 to B♭7 lines. Over a G7alt, very often D♭7 lines will work.

18 - *slow*

19 - *fast*

TUNE 8 - Table Stakes

C Instruments

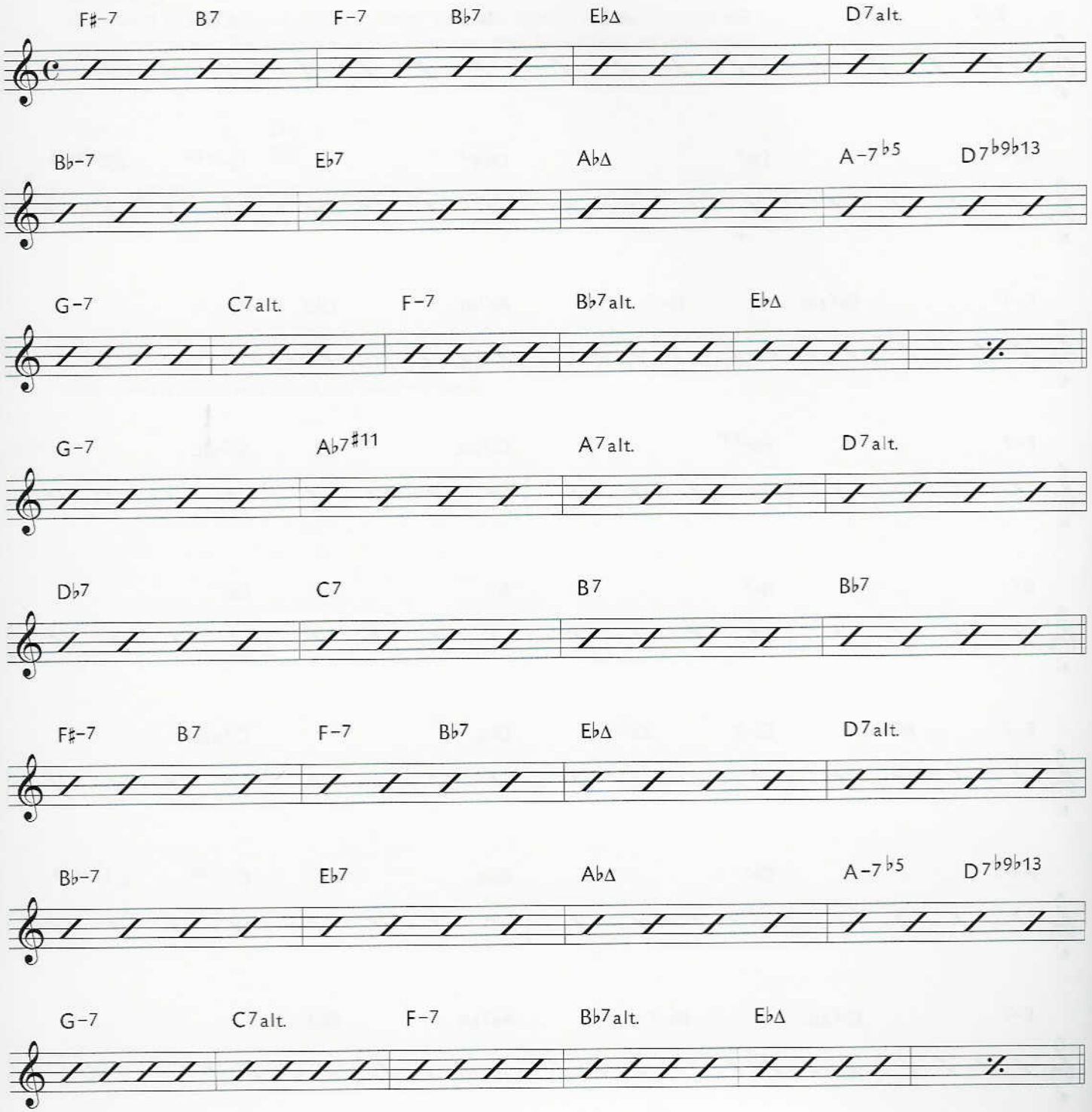


18 · *slow*

19 · *fast*

TUNE 8 - Table Stakes

B♭ Instruments

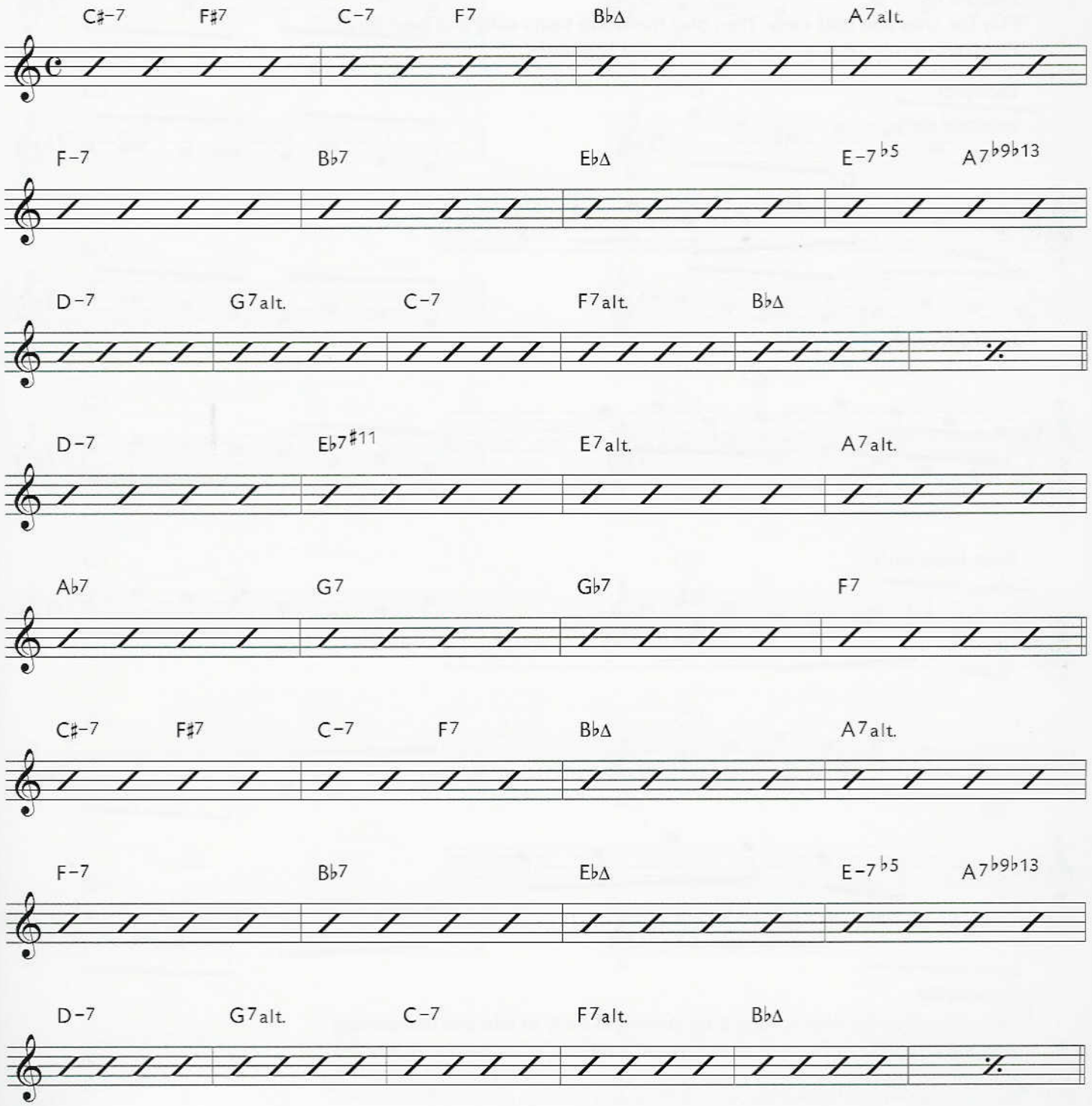


18 · *slow*

19 · *fast*

TUNE 8 - Table Stakes

E♭ Instruments



Exercise #4

Play the lines on the tune randomly trying to use all seven lines. Try to avoid repeating the same line over and over again. Have no favorites.

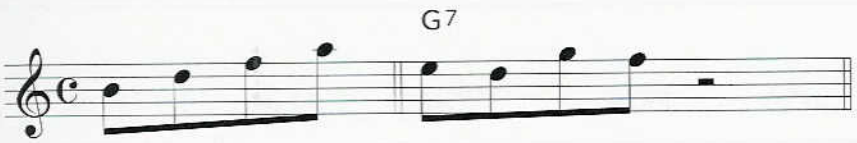
Exercise #5

Play the lines one beat early. Then play them two beats early and even three. Play the lines one beat late leaving off the last two notes.

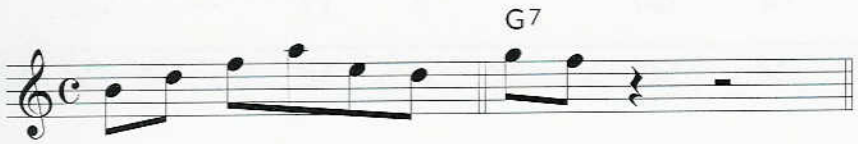
Examples:

one beat early

two beats early



three beats early

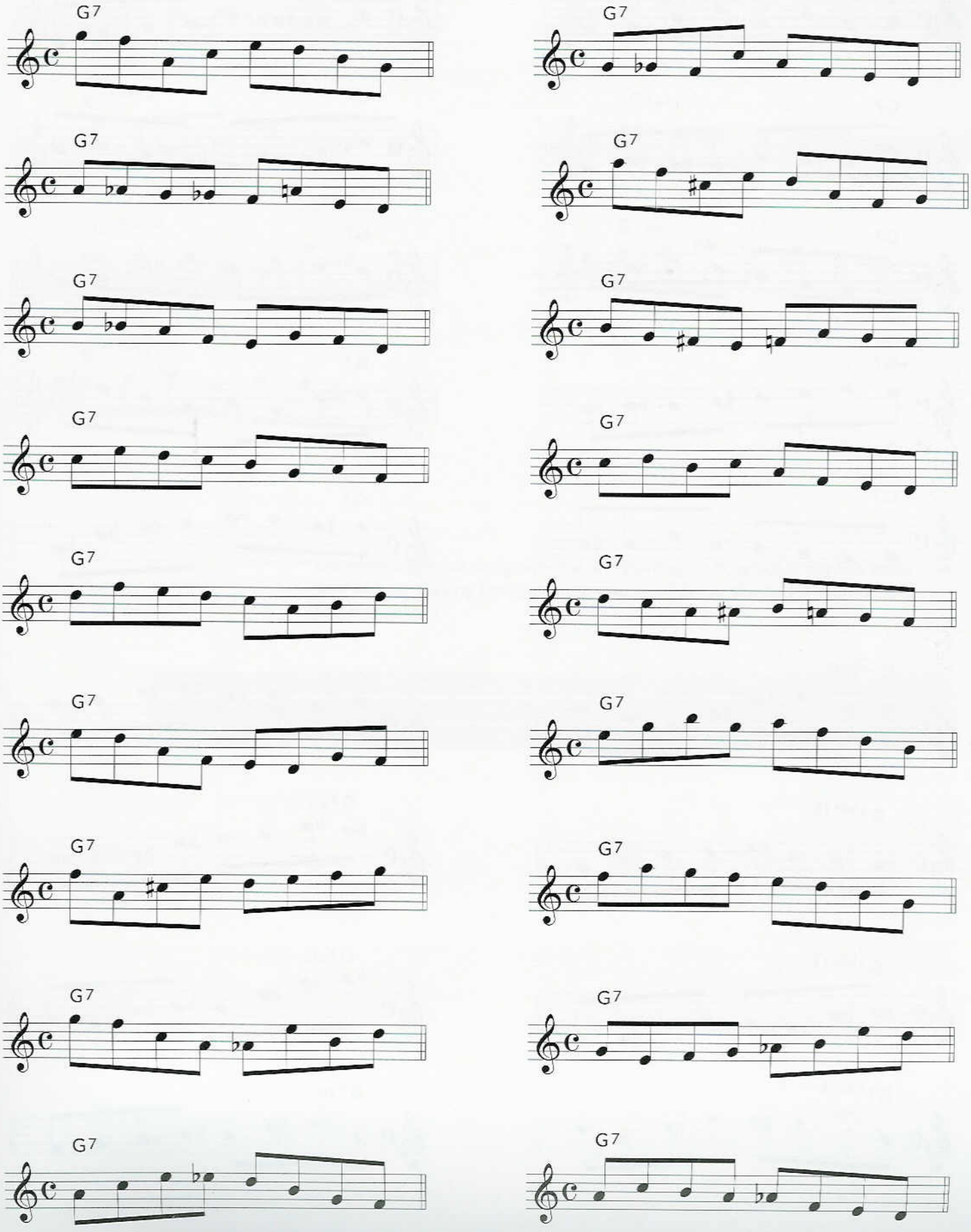


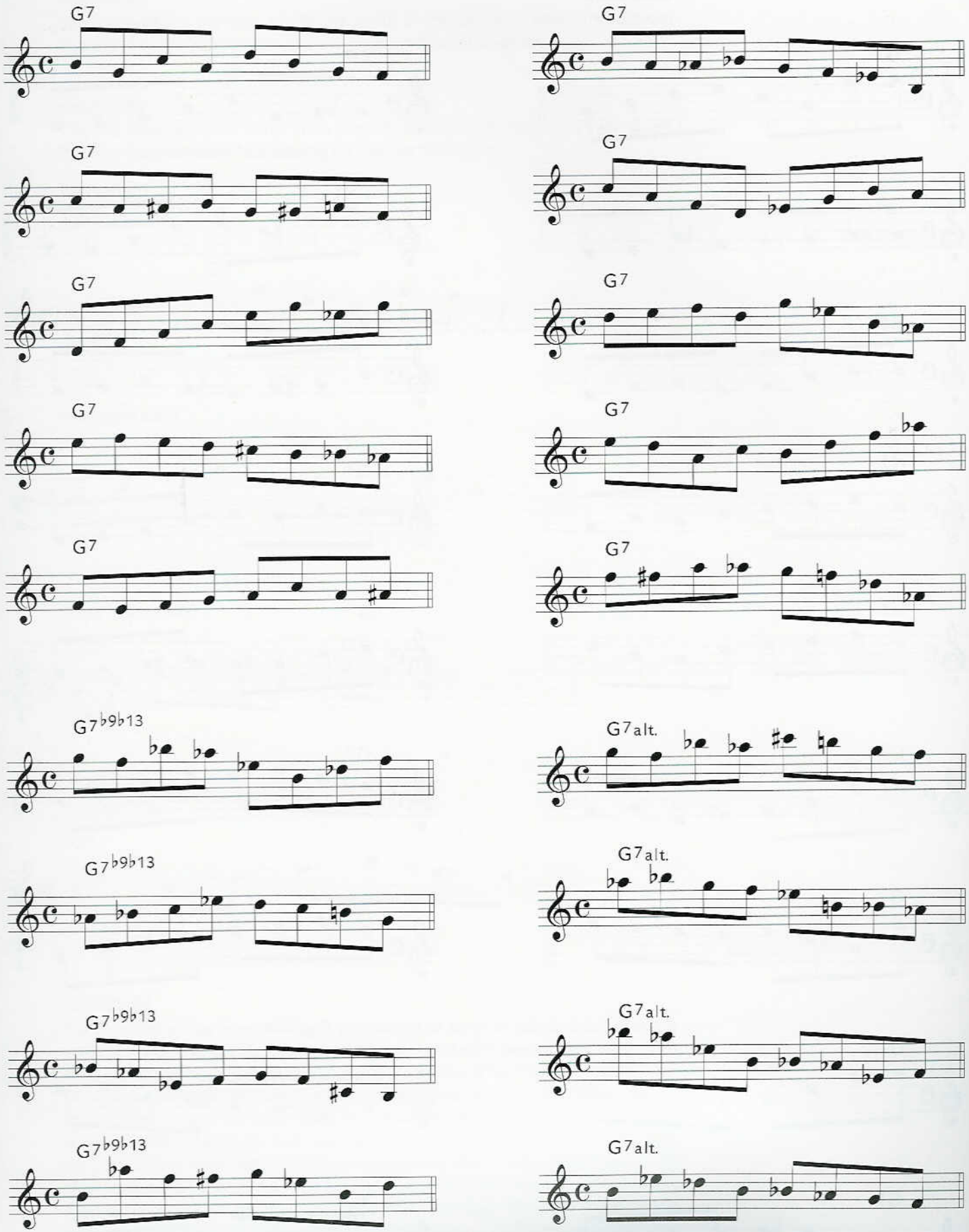
one beat late

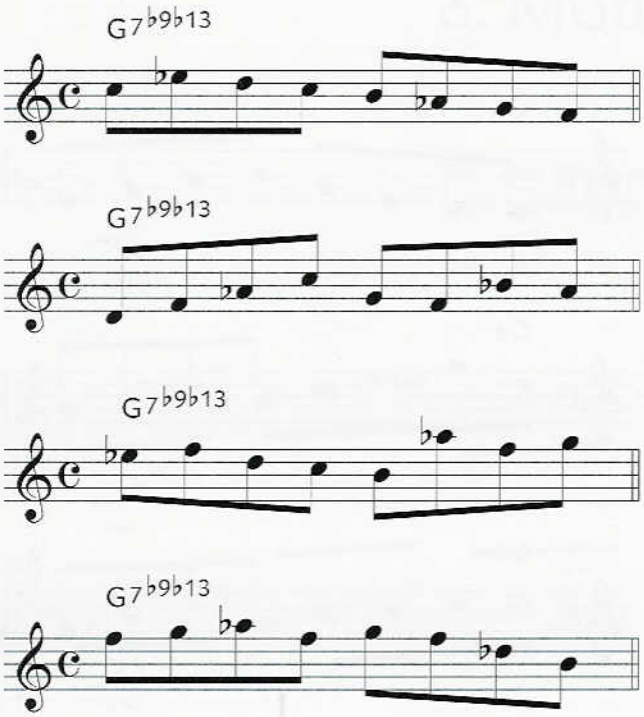
Exercise #6

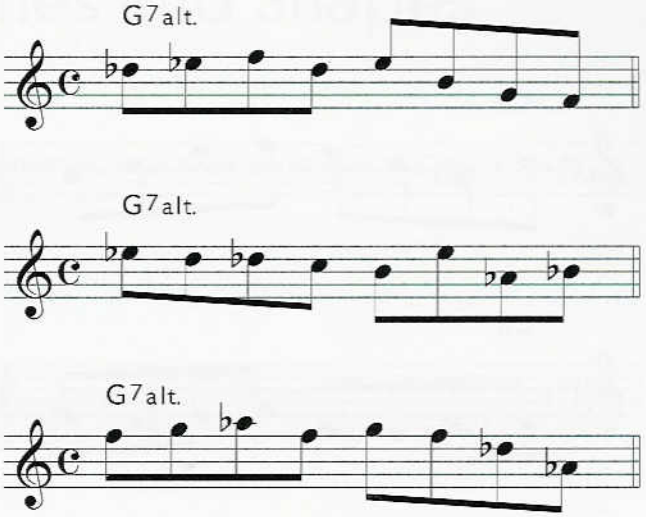
Try using all of the lines mixing it up coming in early or late and occasionally starting on beat one. This will make it sound less like it's four square. Again, this is all harmonic rhythm ear training. Recalling lines is a far cry from improvising. Trying to remember what lines you practiced just jams up your creative channel and makes it next to impossible to improvise. When the consciousness is involved with a particular task such as remembering a line, it puts a spotlight on that subject. Floodlight consciousness, on the other hand, illuminates all of the areas of sound that might be open to the artist. To make material your own, spotlight consciousness is a necessity. After learning countless numbers of lines you forget the phrases but remember the sound and context. These lines become part of your reservoir of melodic and harmonic material. You then improvise putting notes of one with notes of another. You might just refer to the general shape of the line. When you are playing music you must have a clear and open channel.

Other lines:




G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7
G7b9b13
G7alt.
G7b9b13
G7alt.
G7b9b13
G7alt.
G7b9b13
G7alt.

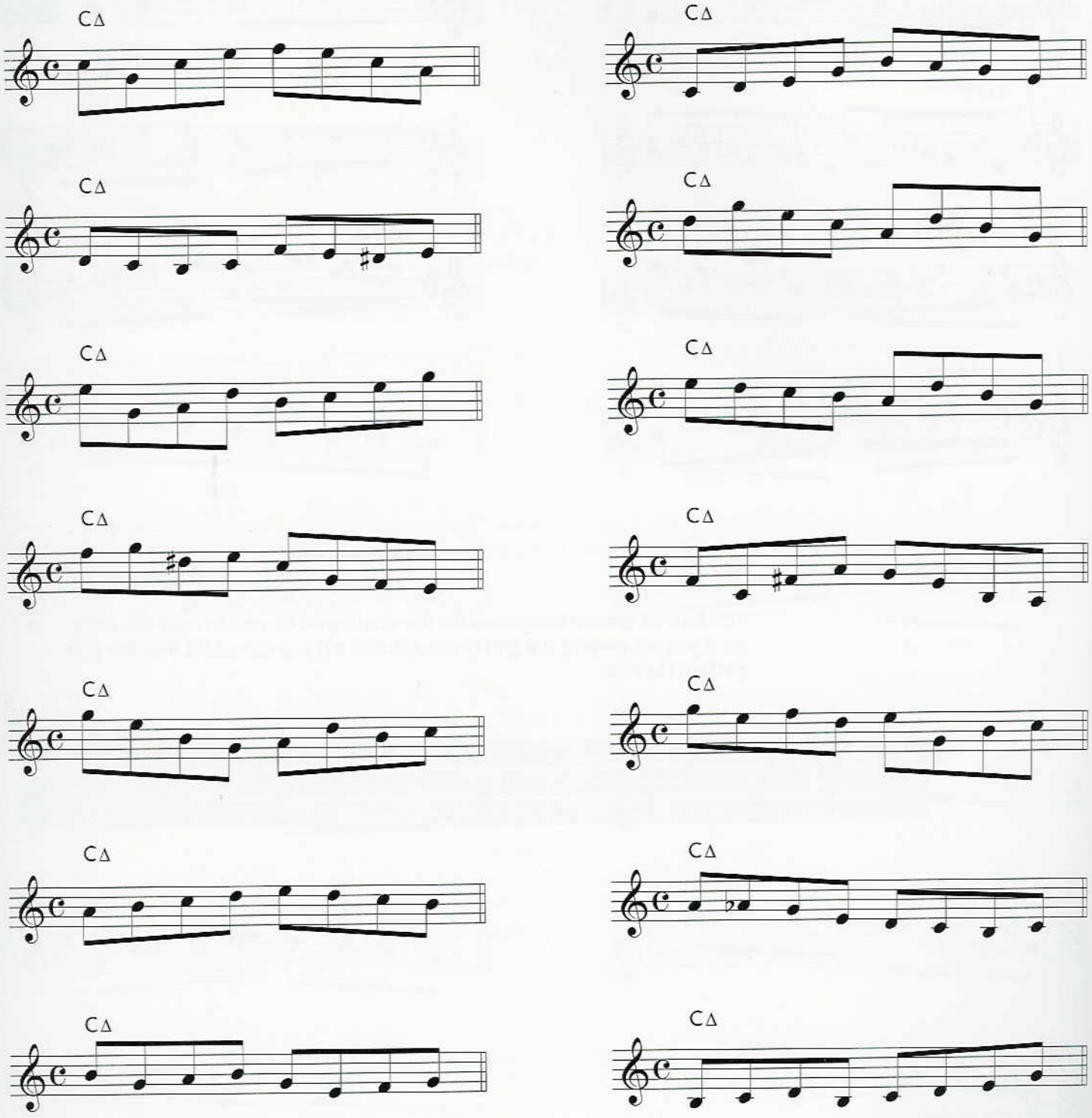




* The asterisk symbol designates the line starting on ♯9, which is one line extra. So if you are playing the grid (from exercise #2) you can add it into the grid pattern like this:

1	4	*	7	3	6	2	5	1	5	*	2	6	3	7	4
2	4	6	1	*	3	5	7	2	7	*	5	3	1	6	4
3	4	5	*	7	6	2	1	3	*	1	2	6	7	5	4

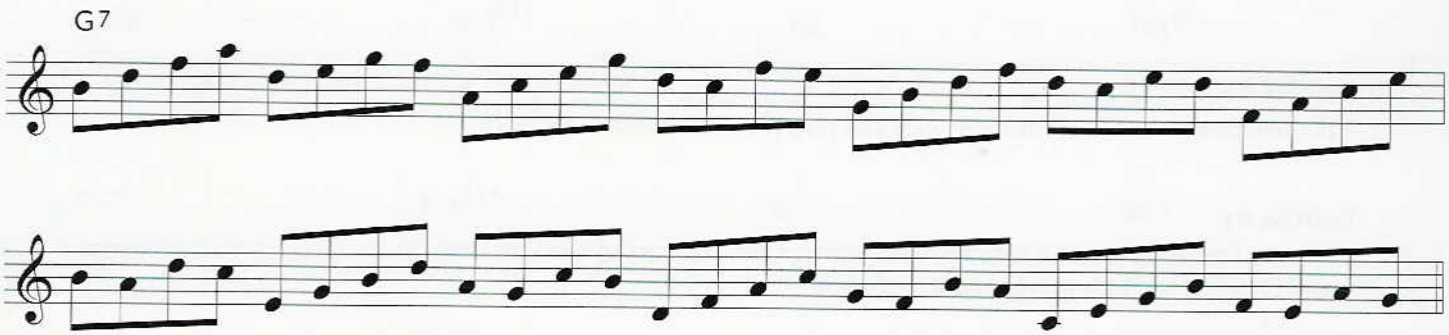
CΔ lines:



6. Motivic Lines and Shapes

Take one of the prototype lines that you have been working on and play it in a scale sequence or modal sequence.

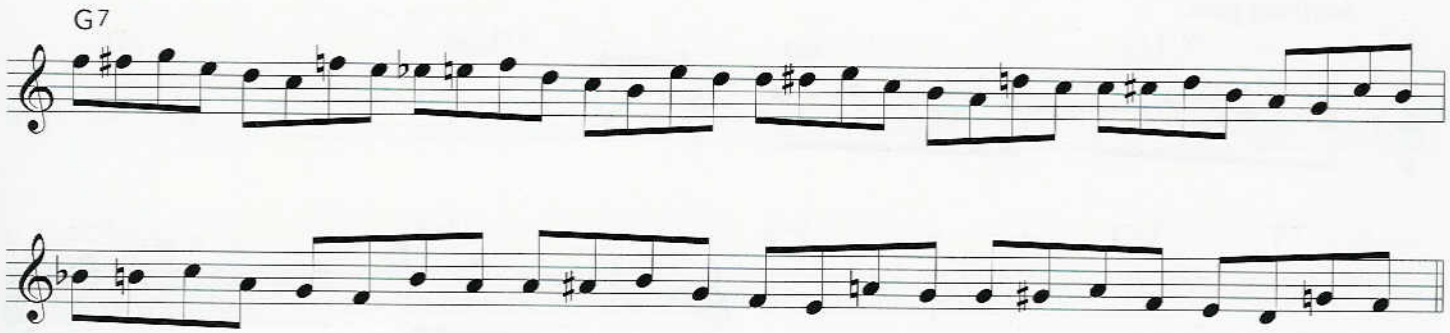
Example:



When lines have accidentals within them you can either treat them as approach notes or make adjustments to fit the scale.

Example: The first two notes of this line are a double chromatic approach to the ninth of G7.

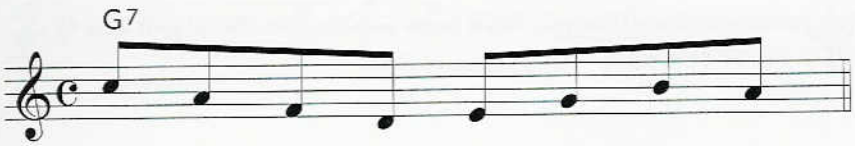
Here is how you can play that line in a scale sequence:



Here is an another example, which requires adjustments.

In this line there is an accidental, which is an altered tension, and if you played it in a modal sequence it wouldn't be harmonically appropriate. In this case you can make the notes diatonic to the key.

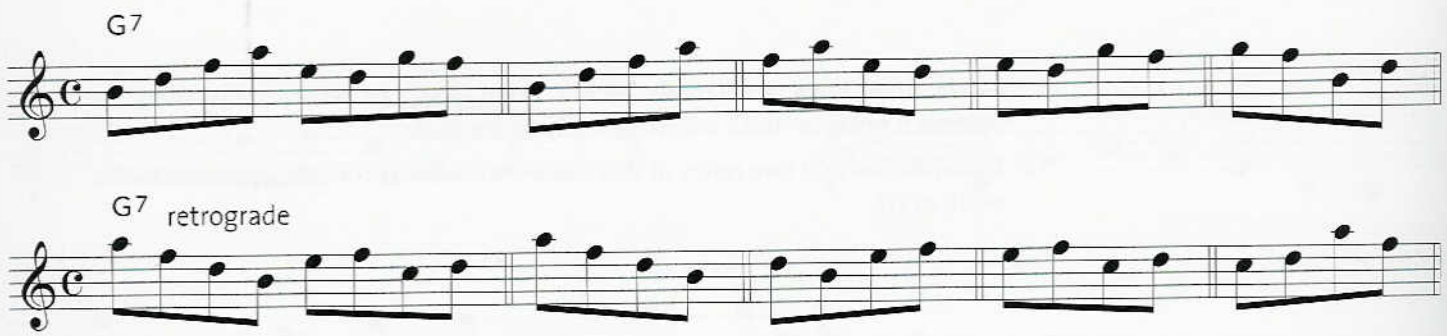
Example:



Exercise #2
Take several more of the prototype lines and play them in a modal sequence.

Exercise #3
Take any line and dissect it into different parts. Take any part of the line that appeals to you and play it in a modal sequence.

Example:



Exercise #4
Take a segment of a line and pick a key center, then play the shape of that line fragment in a loose fashion. It could be expanded or contracted or combined. Anything goes.

Example:

could be expanded to

or contracted to

or a combination

Exercise #5

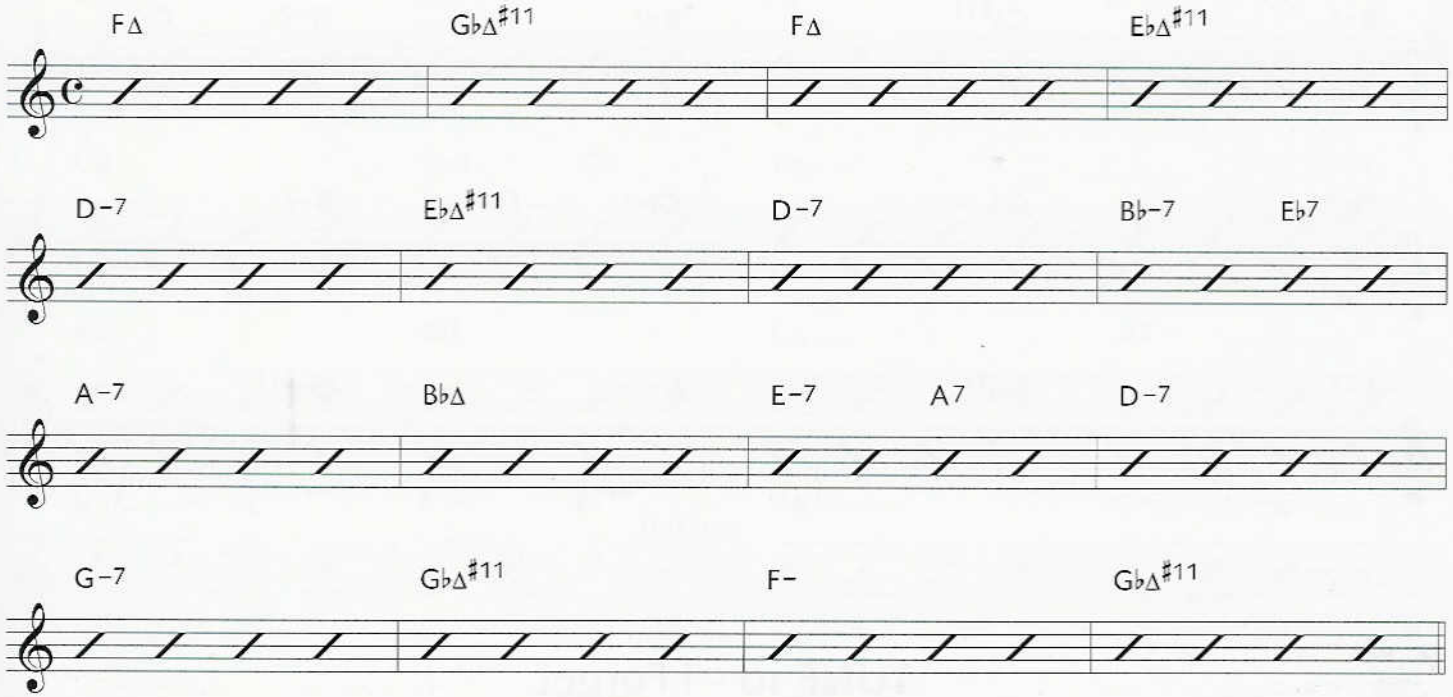
Take one prototype line at a time and use it as your motive improvising on tunes 9 and 10. Use fragments of the line. Use just the shape, expand it, contract it, play it retrograde, or in any other way that occurs to you.

20 · *slow*

21 · *fast*

TUNE 9 - Rice Beat

C Instruments

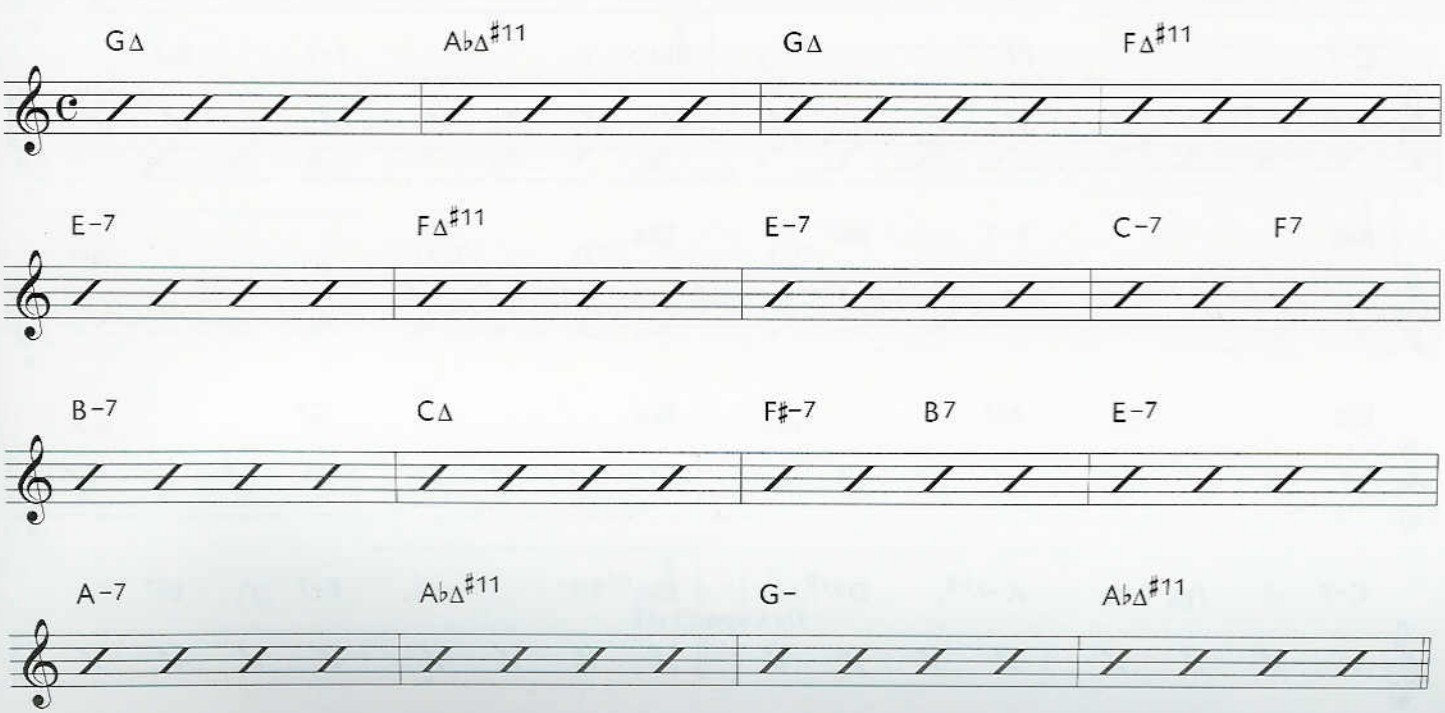


20 · *slow*

21 · *fast*

TUNE 9 - Rice Beat

B♭ Instruments

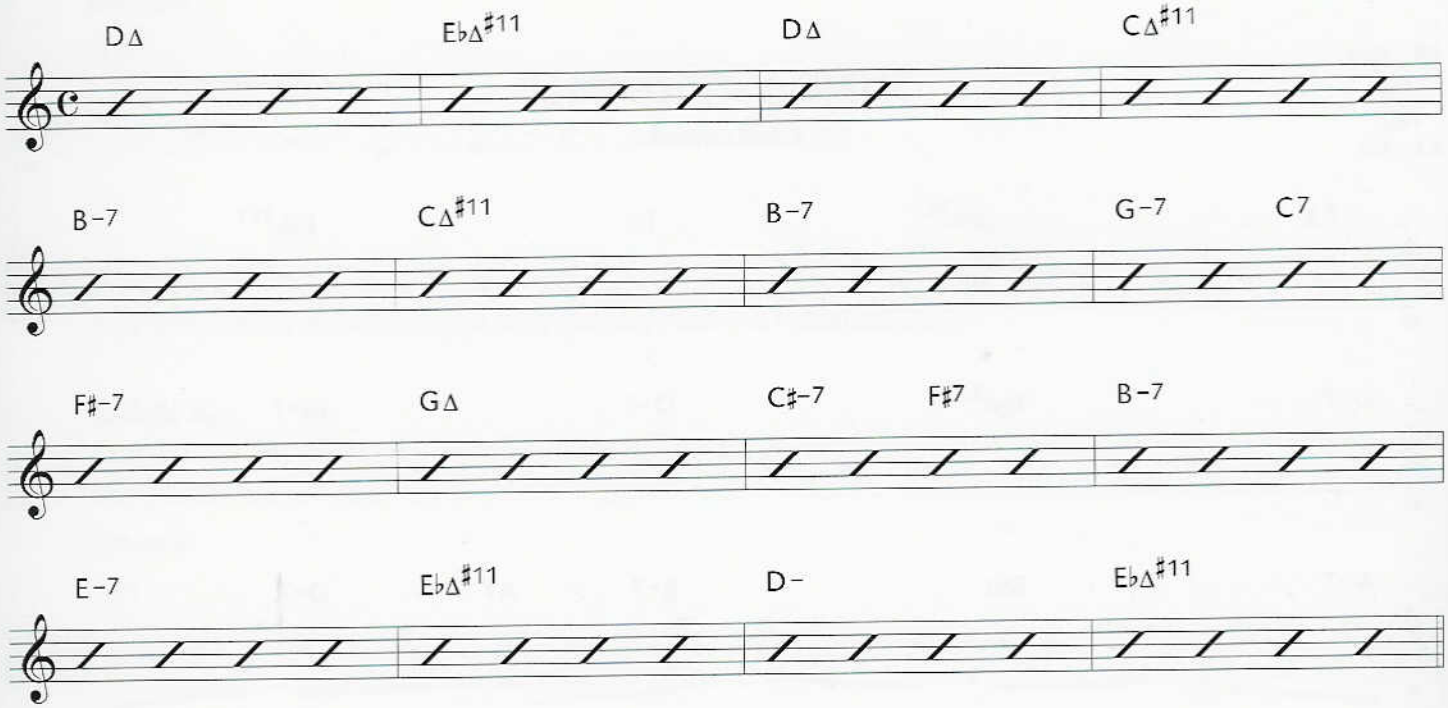


20 · *slow*

21 · *fast*

TUNE 9 - Rice Beat

E♭ Instruments

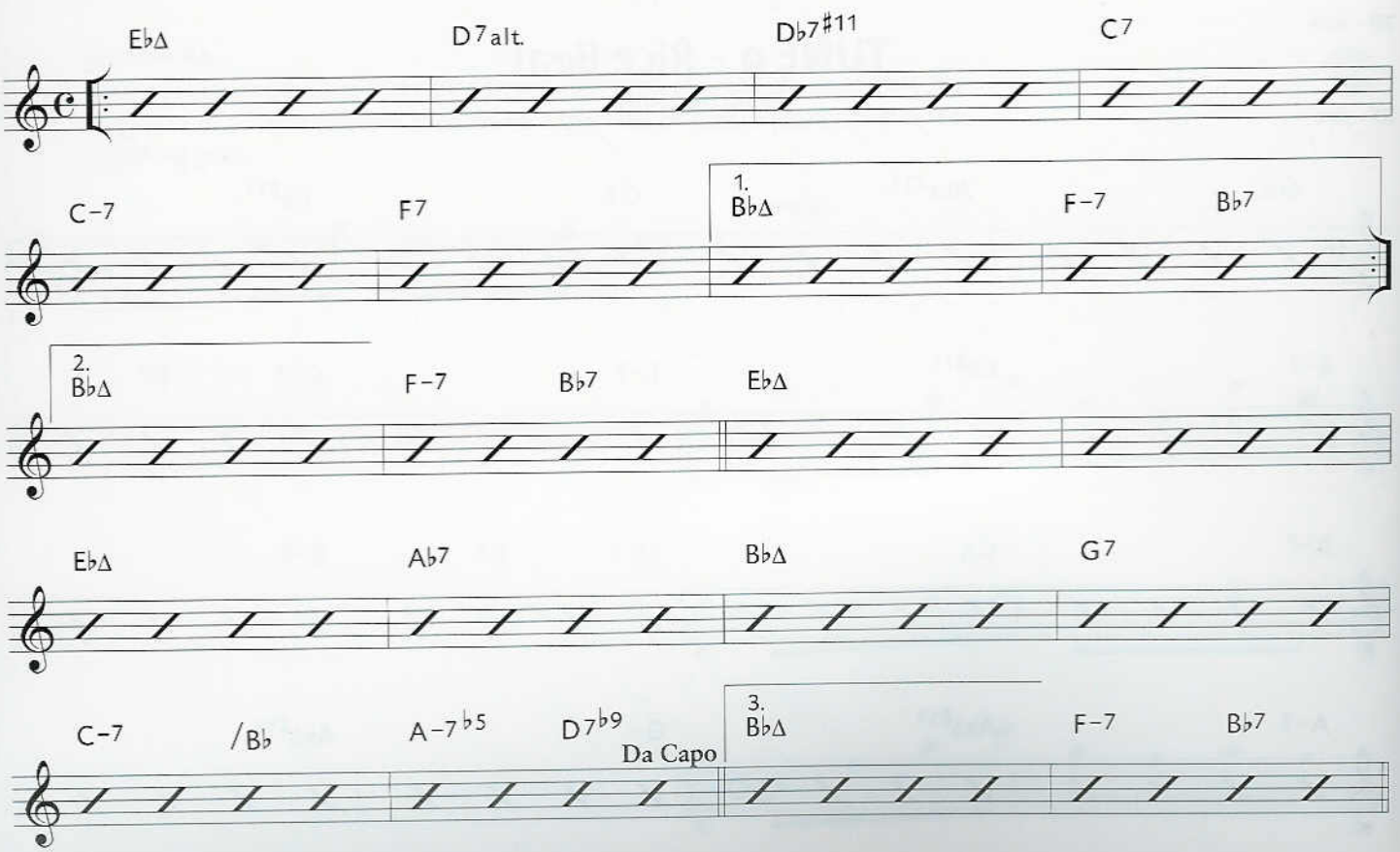


22 · *slow*

23 · *fast*

TUNE 10 - I Forget

C Instruments

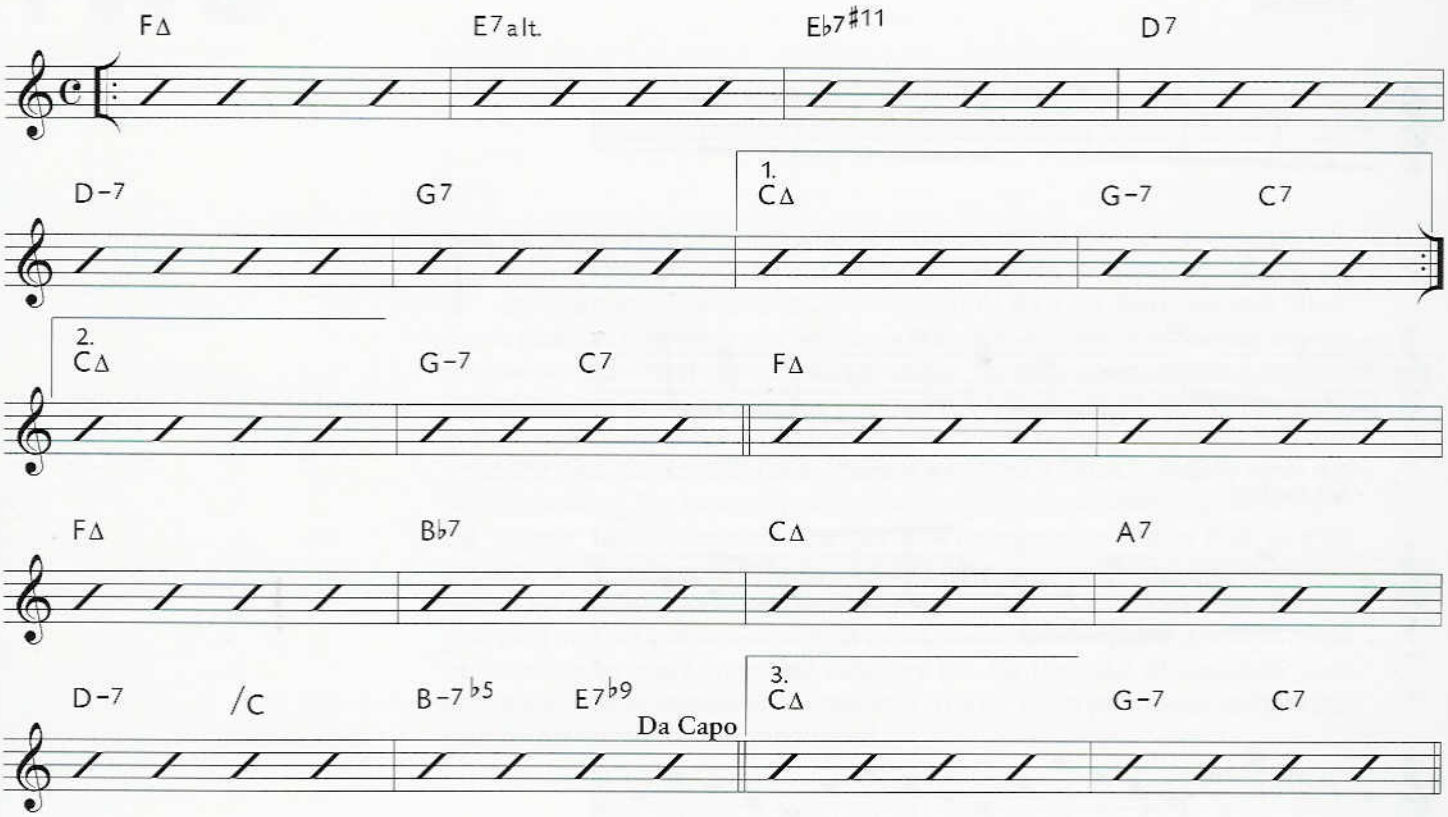


22 · *slow*

23 · *fast*

TUNE 10 - I Forget

B♭ Instruments

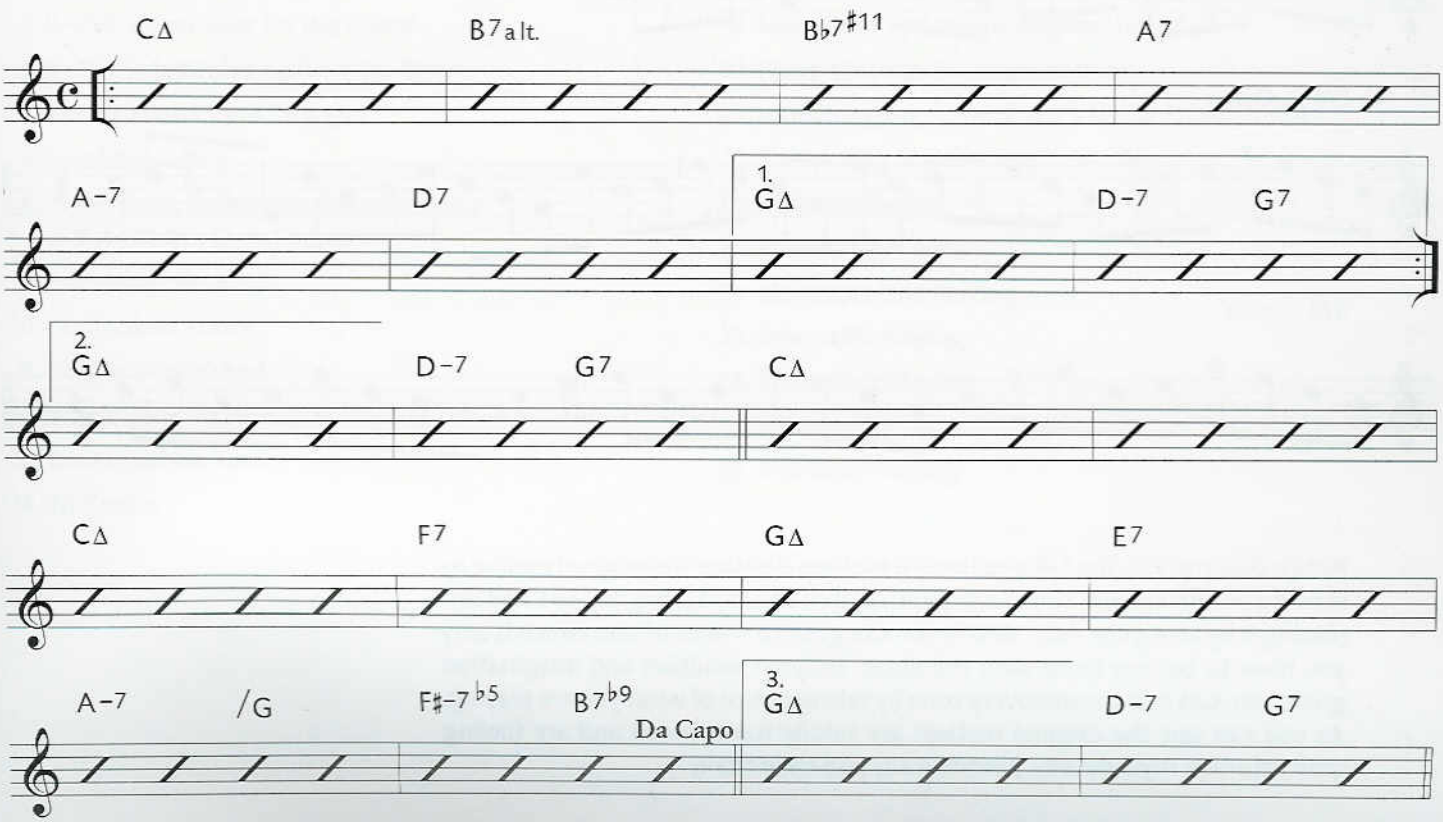


22 · *slow*

23 · *fast*

TUNE 10 - I Forget

E♭ Instruments



Exercise #6

Take any line or the shape of that line and play different time signatures over tunes 9 and 10 or any other tune.

Example:

2/4 motive

3/8 motive

5/8 motive

3/4 motive

7/8 motive

9/8 motive

Notice that the 9/8, the 5/8 and the 3/8 motives displace the original motive by starting on the upbeat. You can expand on that idea by taking any line and displacing it by an eighth note. Where you can go with this is infinite which is why you have to be very loose with the ideas. Let your intuition and imagination guide you. Get into the discovery zone by taking notice of what you are playing. As you can see, the original motives are totally transcended and are fueling your intuition rhythmically, harmonically and melodically.

Part TWO

Part two qualifies improvisational techniques into four areas; melodic, harmonic, sonic or nuance and rhythmic. (Because rhythmic techniques are given a comprehensive study in VOLUME IV, MELODIC RHYTHMS, less attention is given in this volume.) Part two is designed as a menu of soloing devices from which you can choose what to work on. The techniques are discussed and conceptualized so as to give the improviser more depth of expression and a greater well to draw from. Organizing the various techniques in this way also helps the musician to listen in a different way, and it helps to qualify what it is you are hearing. For example, after practicing approach notes and then listening to your favorite records you can now recognize melodies that contain approach notes where as before you didn't have a name for that sound. Having names for sounds gives one the ability to really develop the information and gain easy and natural access to it. At times, some of these soloing devices could be listed under more than one category but for the sake of simplicity each device will only be named under one area. The list is not prioritized and you can start on any of the devices mentioned.

1. Guide Tone Playing
2. Voice Leading to All Chord Tones
3. Upper Structure and Middle Structure Triads
4. II–7 V7 Substitutes for the Chord
5. II–7 V7 Substitutes Against the Chord
6. Anticipating Chord Changes
7. Resolving Late
8. Three-Tonic System for Composition or Substitutes Over Chords
9. Four-Tonic Systems
10. Diminished Scales
11. Double Diminished
12. Whole Tone Playing With Passing Tones
13. Double Whole Tone
14. Tri-Tonics
15. Tonal Expansions
16. More Tonal Expansions
17. Augmented Symmetric Scales and Uses
18. Nine-Note Symmetric Augmented Scale
19. Piano Voicings for Improvisation
20. Interchanging Tonic Major and Tonic Diminished
21. Composing Scales Using Intervals
22. Diatonic Playing
23. Parallel Key Centers
24. Moveable One Playing
25. Intervallic Playing
26. Pentatonic Playing
27. Hexatonics
28. Red-Note Playing

Harmonic Devices

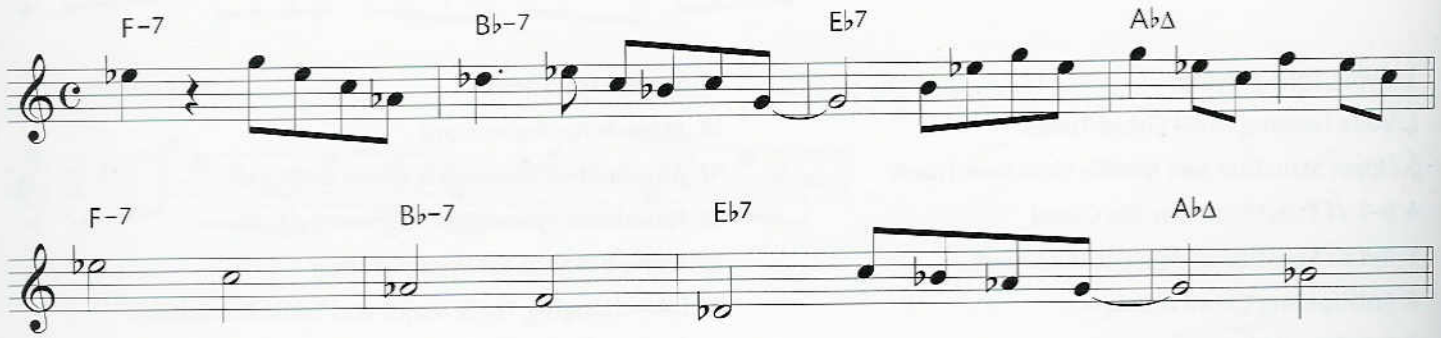
1. Guide Tone Playing

The ability to really delineate the sound of the changes is an invaluable tool. Guide tone playing is a skill that involves playing a melodic line through the changes that clearly defines what the chord changes are. Playing guide tone melodies, thirds and sevenths is an easy way to achieve this result and it offers a great contrast to the oblique sounding player. (Before attempting to sound oblique or nebulous it's a good idea to be able sound the changes.) Being able to play a melody through a tune without accompaniment that doesn't sound academic and can be easily recognized by the listener is a great objective.

Example: On the tune *Fangs from Afar*

The melody need not be all eighth notes and need not get to the target note by step. You can also use skips.

Example:



2. Voice Leading to All Chord Tones and The Ability to Use all Chord Tones As Target Notes

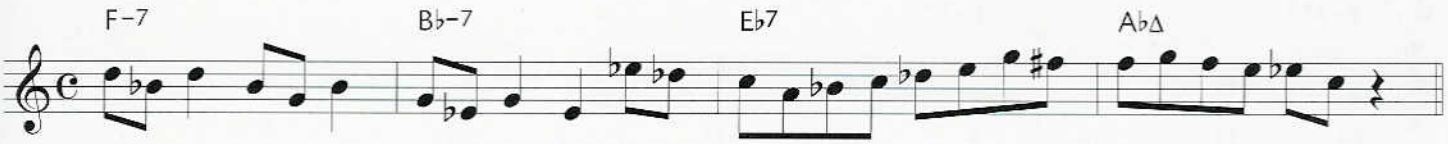
This is actually the same exercise as the previous guide tone exercise except that in this one try singling out one chord tone at a time and voice leading your melody into it. The target note doesn't have to fall on beat one; it could be either anticipated or happen later within the bar. Here is an example targeting the 11. ♯11 is targeted on major or dominant chords. (Using ♮11 over major and dominant is also a good exercise to practice resolving that special attention note.)

Example:

Voice leading to 11

Voice leading to 9

Voice leading to 13

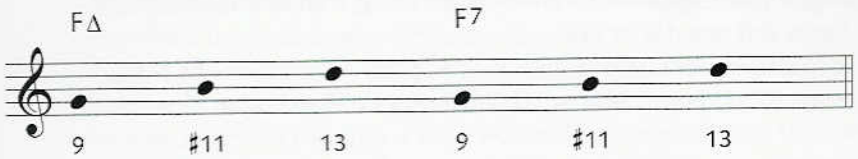


Sometimes players fall into a rut where they continually play the same chord tones again and again. This is great way to break that habit and begin to make all chord tones as accessible as the root. This exercise also lends a greater awareness to what one does play and again it is ear training in motion! It also forces one to hear ahead.

3. Upper Structure and Middle Structure Triads

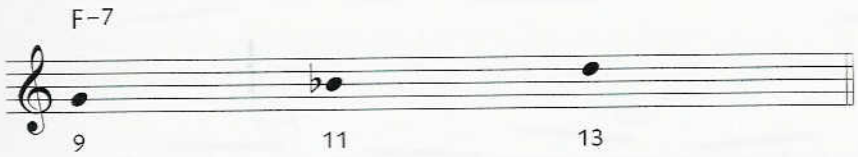
The most common of all of the upper structure triads is the triad built on 9, 11, and 13. On major and dominant chords, 9 - ♯11 - 13 forms another major triad built on the step above the root.

Example:



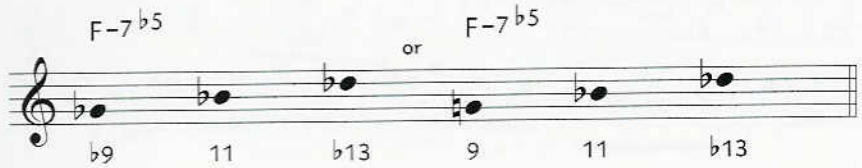
On a minor chord the upper structure triad is a minor triad built on the step above the root.

Example:



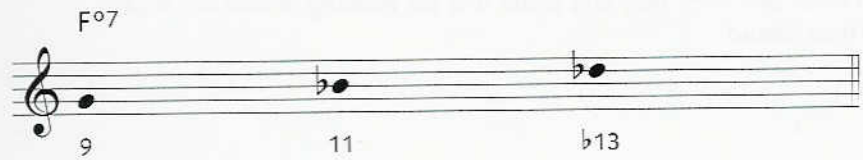
On a minor 7♭5, it is either a major triad starting a half step above the root or it is a diminished triad starting a whole step above the root.

Example:



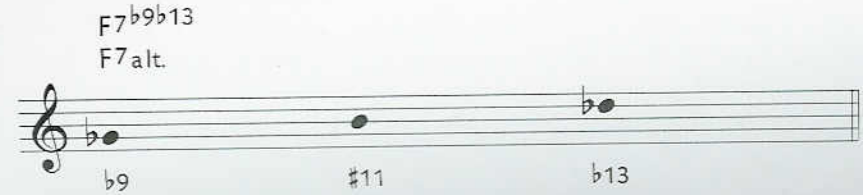
On a diminished 7th chord, it is a diminished triad starting a step above the root.

Example:



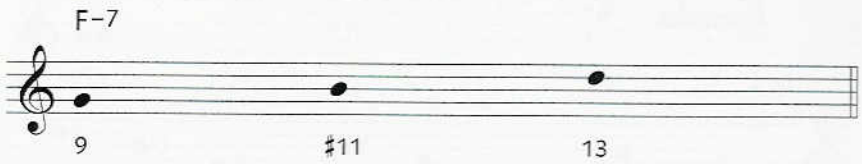
On a dominant 7 with ♭9 and ♭13 or a dominant altered, it is a sus4 triad starting a half step above the root.

Example:

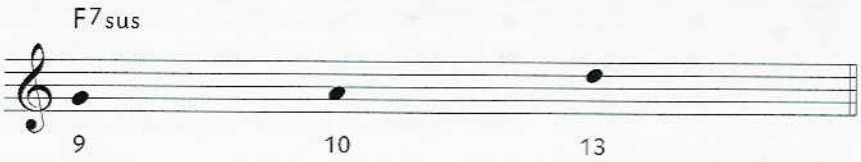


Sometimes on a minor chord you can use a major triad a whole step above the root.

Example:



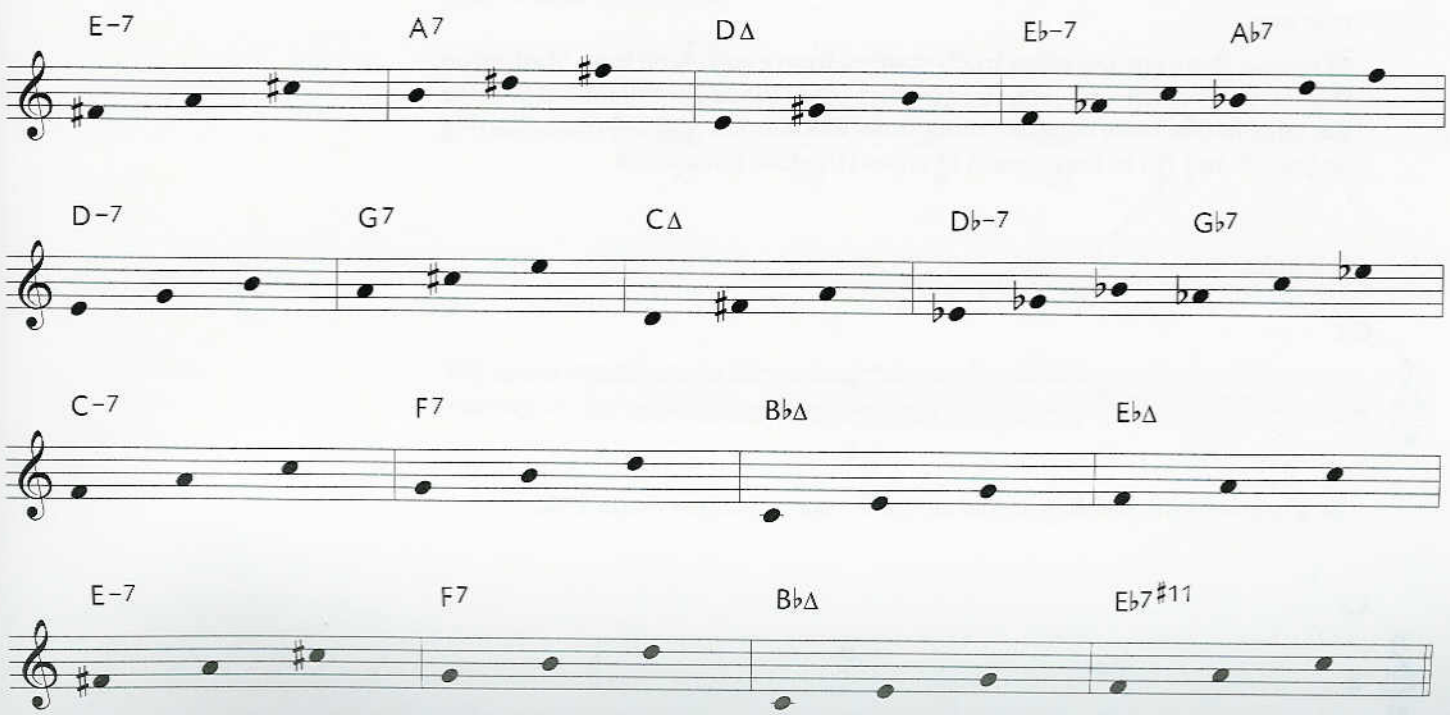
On a dominant 7sus4, the third becomes the tenth and the upper structure is as follows:



Take any of the tunes and be able to play any of the combinations of 9, 11, and 13, and be able to improvise with these notes:

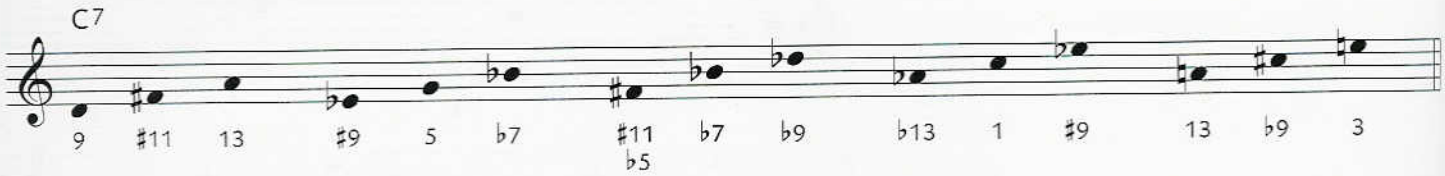
9	11	13
9	13	11
11	9	13
11	13	9
13	11	9
13	9	11

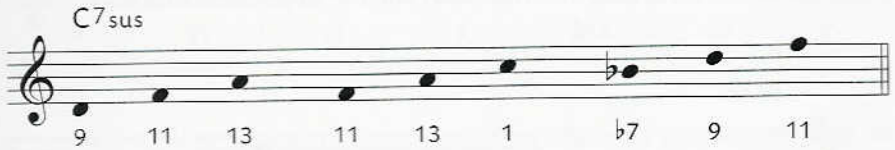
Example: *Tone Down*

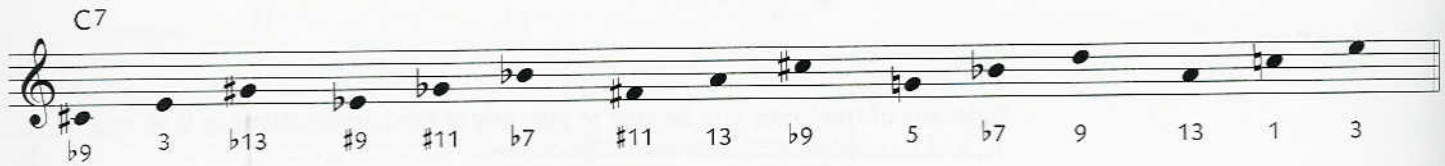


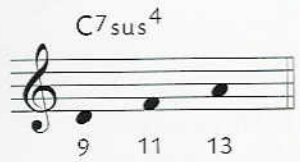
Dominant chords have the greatest variety of tensions and altered tensions. As a result there is also a huge variety of upper and inner structure triads for dominant chords.

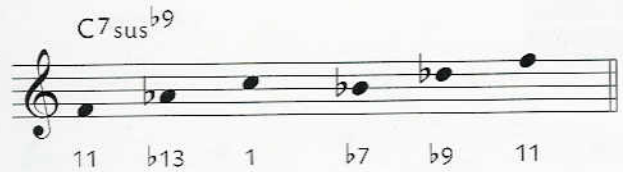
Examples:











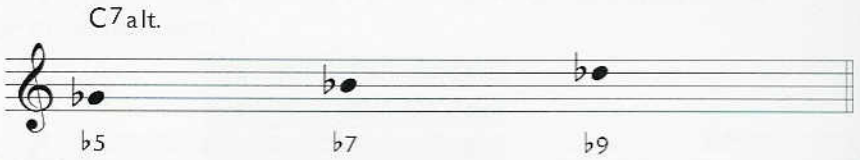
Take any of the tunes and focus on one triad at a time and make it sound like your own.

Of course, there are also other triads starting from every chord tone. Starting on the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 11th and 13th, you can form other triads. For the sake of keeping the information more compact though, we will address only the triads starting on the 5th and 7th as they consist of upper structure tensions.

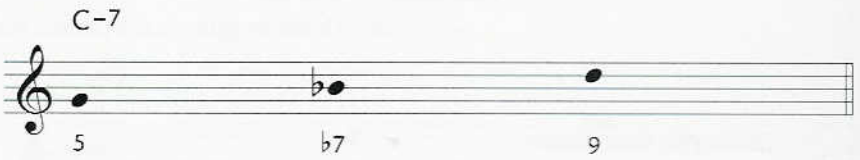
Examples:

On a major chord, building a triad on the 5th spells another major triad.

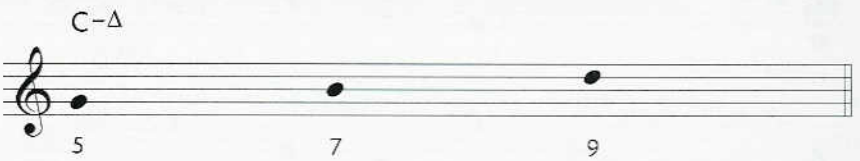
On altered dominant chords, starting on the ♭5, it is major triad.



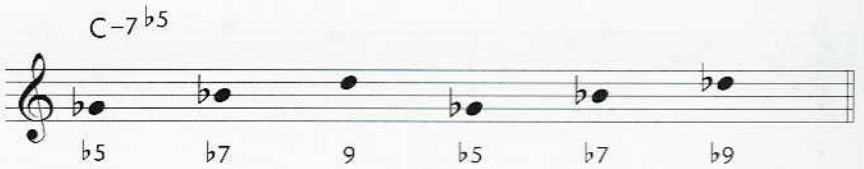
On minor 7 chords, starting on the 5, it is a minor triad.



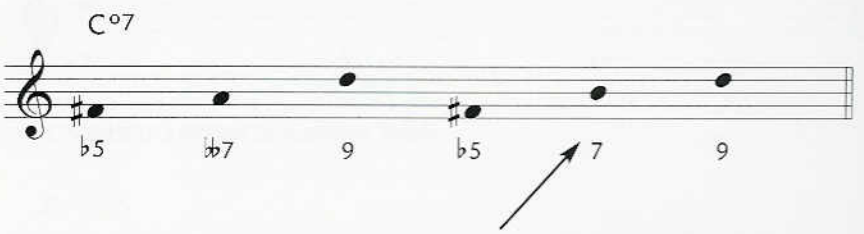
On a minor 6^{9} chords, starting on the 5, it is a major triad.



On minor 7♭5 chords, starting on the ♭5, it is either an augmented triad or a major triad.



On diminished chords, starting from the ♭5, it is either a major or a minor triad in other inversions.

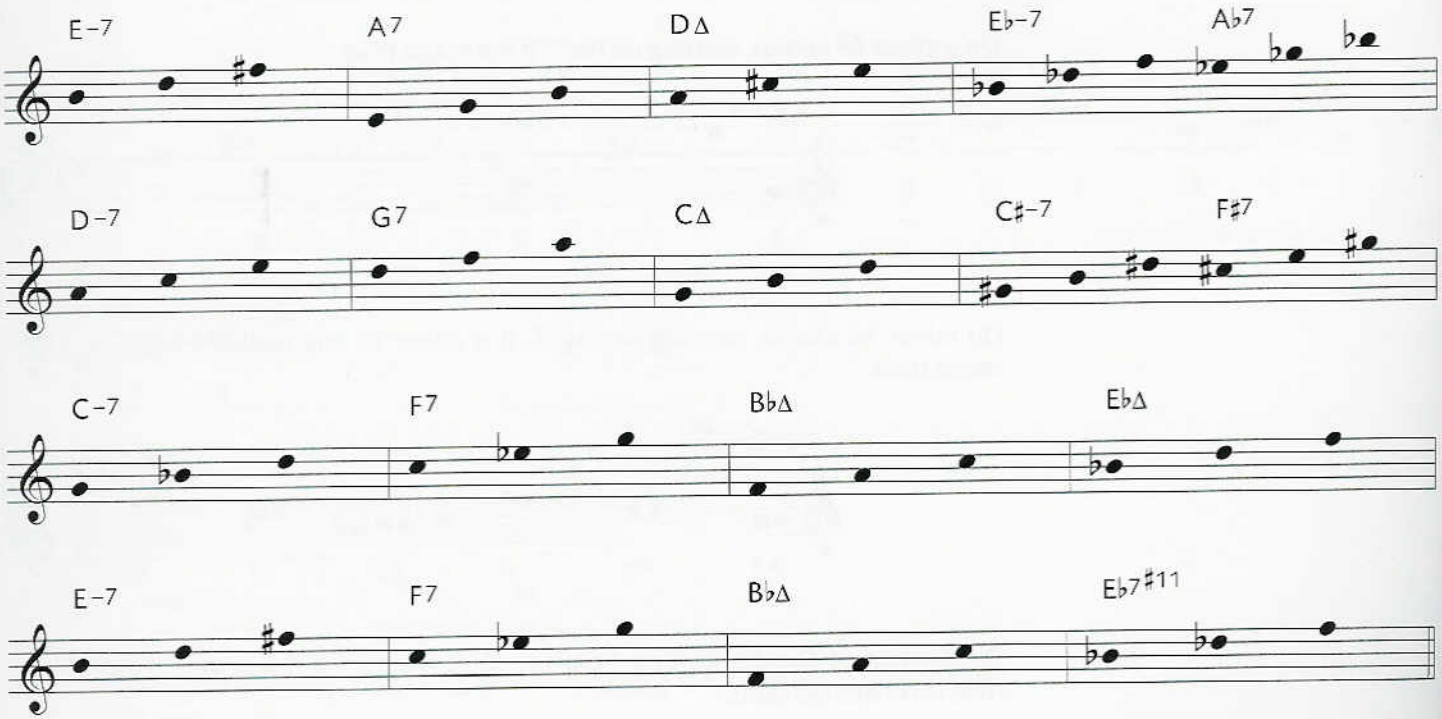


The upper structure of a diminished 7th chord is another diminished 7th chord starting on the major seventh (or starting a half step below the root).

Pick a tune and be able to play any combination of 5, 7 and 9, and improvise with these notes.

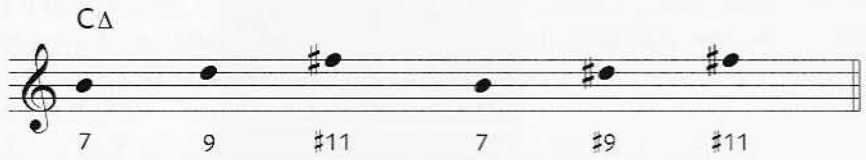
5	7	9
5	9	7
7	5	9
7	9	5
9	7	5
9	5	7

Example: *Tone Down*

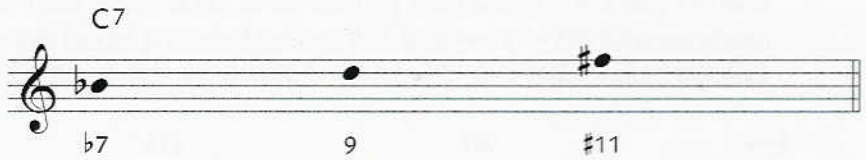


Triads starting from the 7th:

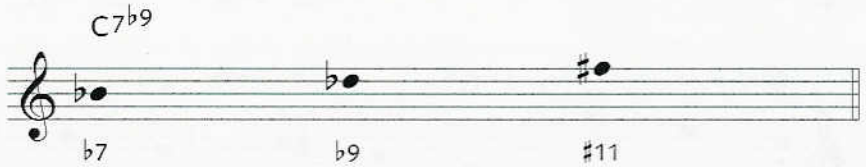
On a major 7th chord, the triad is usually minor however a major triad can be quite effective in the right setting.



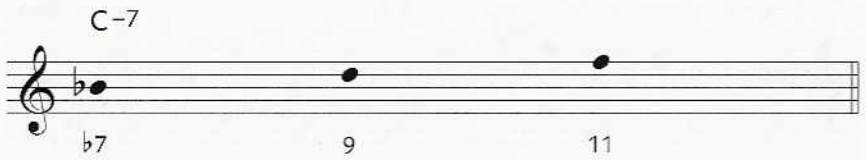
On a dominant chord, it is an augmented triad.



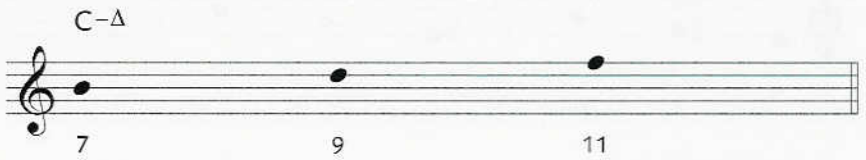
On a dominant 7♭9, it is a major inverted triad; the 3rd is on the bottom.



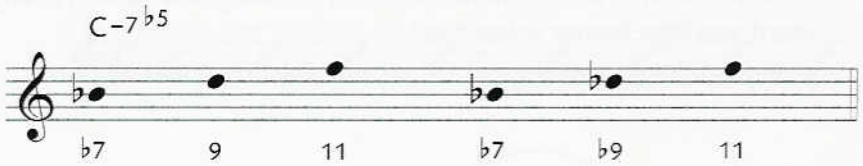
On a minor 7th chord, it is a major triad.



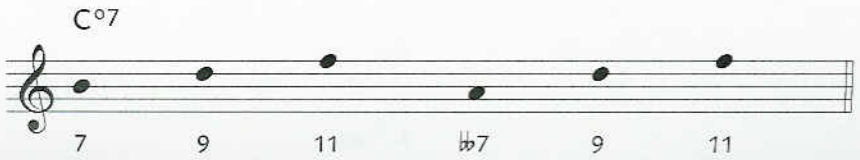
On a minor major 7th, it is a diminished triad.



On a minor 7♭5, it is either a major or a minor triad.



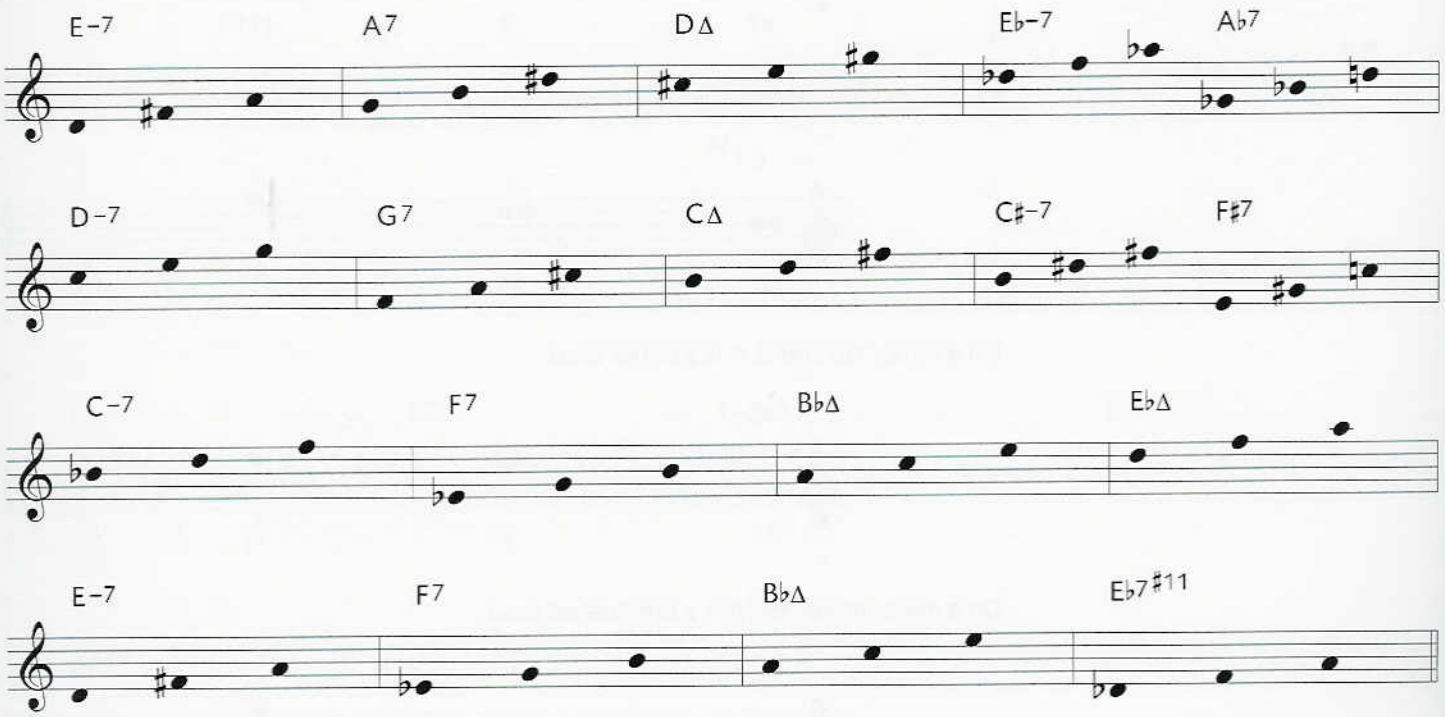
On a diminished chord, it is a diminished or minor triad.



Once again, be able to play the combinations of 7, 9 and 11, and improvise using these notes.

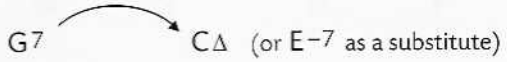
7	9	11
7	11	9
9	7	11
9	11	7
11	9	7
11	7	9

Example: *Tone Down*



Depending on the situation and function of the dominant chord, sometimes the altered tensions are appropriate and sometimes they are not. An easy rule to bear in mind is, if the dominant chord is resolving down a fifth to any type of chord, you have license to live it up!

Example: In these progressions below, the altered tensions will work.



C-7

C7

C7sus

X/C

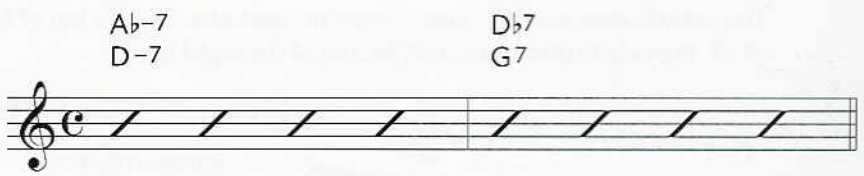
4. II–7 V7 Substitutes for the Chord

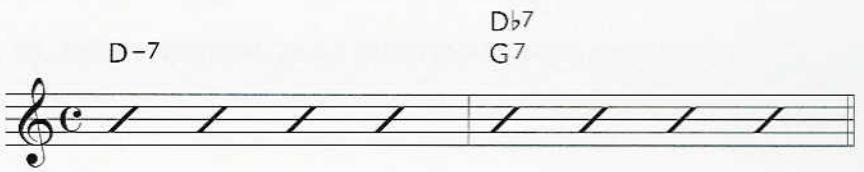
Again, anytime the dominant chord is resolving down a perfect fifth or up a perfect fourth, one has a lot of leeway. Making the dominant chord altered or changing the 9 to a ♭9 or ♯9, or changing the 13 to a ♭13 provides a greater tendency toward resolution. Other functions of the dominant chord may require you not to alter the chord (for example a ♭VII7 chord) so as to gain a greater tendency toward resolution.

Three substitutes that intimate an altered dominant sound or a dominant sound with some alterations are: the tritone substitution, going down a major third, and going up a minor third. For example, given the parent chord is G7 (or the II - V progression, D–7 to G7), you can substitute the tritone which is D♭7, down a major third which is E♭7, or up a minor third which is B♭7. Any of these dominant chords can be preceded by their II–7. So given a D–7 to G7 progression or just a G7 chord, you can substitute A♭–7 D♭7, B♭–7 E♭7, or F–7 B♭7 or just D♭7, E♭7, or B♭7.

Example:

D–7 G7	A♭–7 D♭7
	B♭–7 E♭7
	F–7 B♭7





When using substitutes which are a tritone away or down a major third, you create an "altered" sound. When using the substitute which is up a minor third you create a "♭9♭13" sound while retaining a natural 5th. The question always arises whether or not to alter the substitute chords and chord scales to fit exactly over the original chord.

$G7_{alt.}$ = $D\flat7^{\sharp11}$

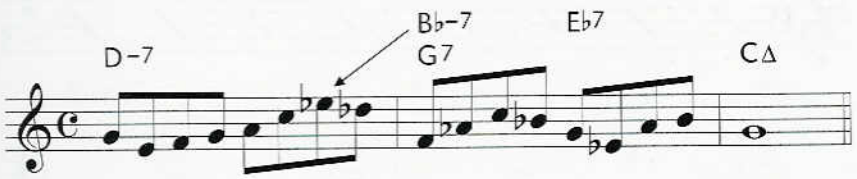
$G7_{alt.}$ = $E\flat7^{\flat13}$

$G7^{\flat9\flat13}$ = $B\flat7^{\flat9}$

Example:

One can certainly make the alterations in the substitute chord to get the exact chordal sound of the original or you can leave those notes unaltered and use them more as passing tones. If you play a strong melody using one of the substitutions you create a unique flavor that sounds correct yet different from the original. Any substitution needs finesse in order to sound good. Take many passes at trying to make the substitution sound correct to yourself. Sometimes it is a matter of your ears getting used to and accepting this new sound. Context is everything. Sometimes the smallest substitute doesn't work. Sometimes you could play another tune in another key in another tempo and it will sound okay!

The substitution doesn't have to start on beat one. Given a bar of II–7, and a bar of V7, the substitution can start on any of the eight beats.



Example:

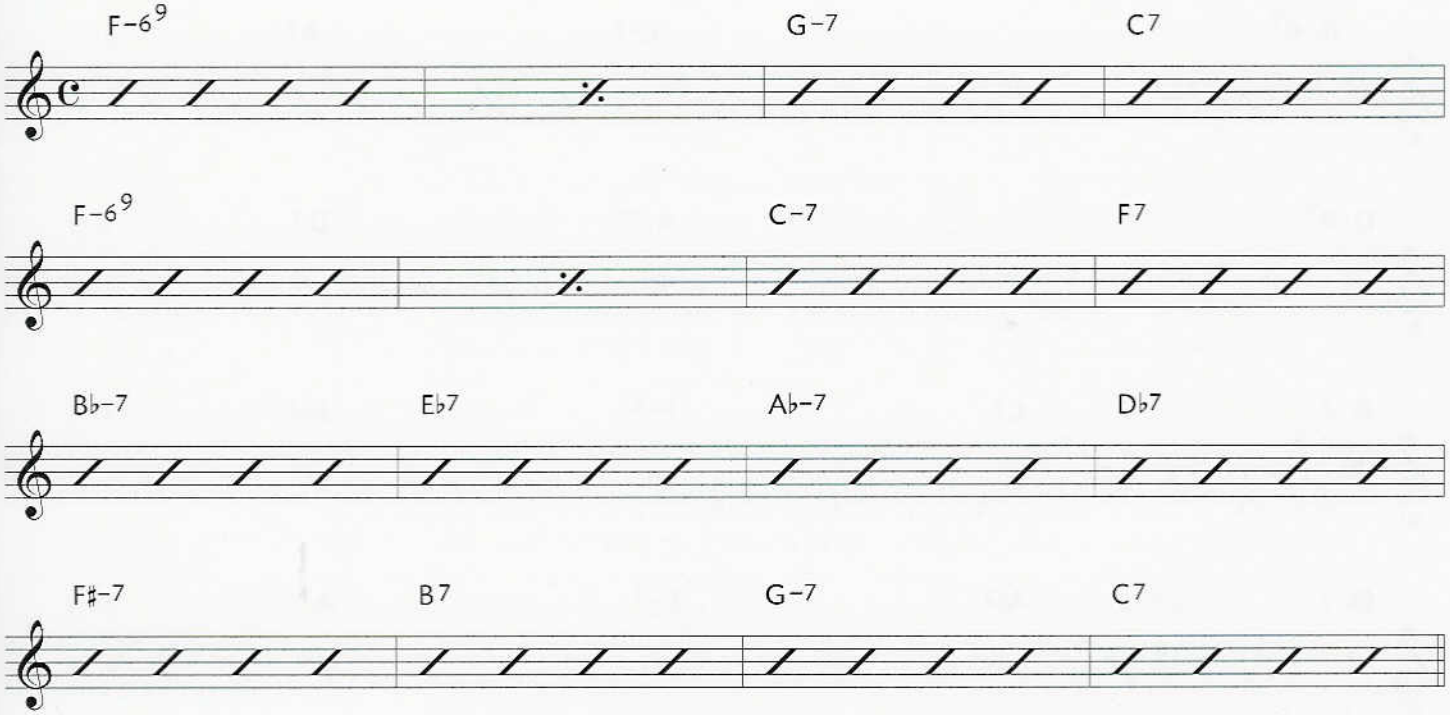
Try using these substitutions on the tunes *Underdog* or *What Up?*

24 · *slow*

25 · *fast*

TUNE 11 - Underdog

C Instruments

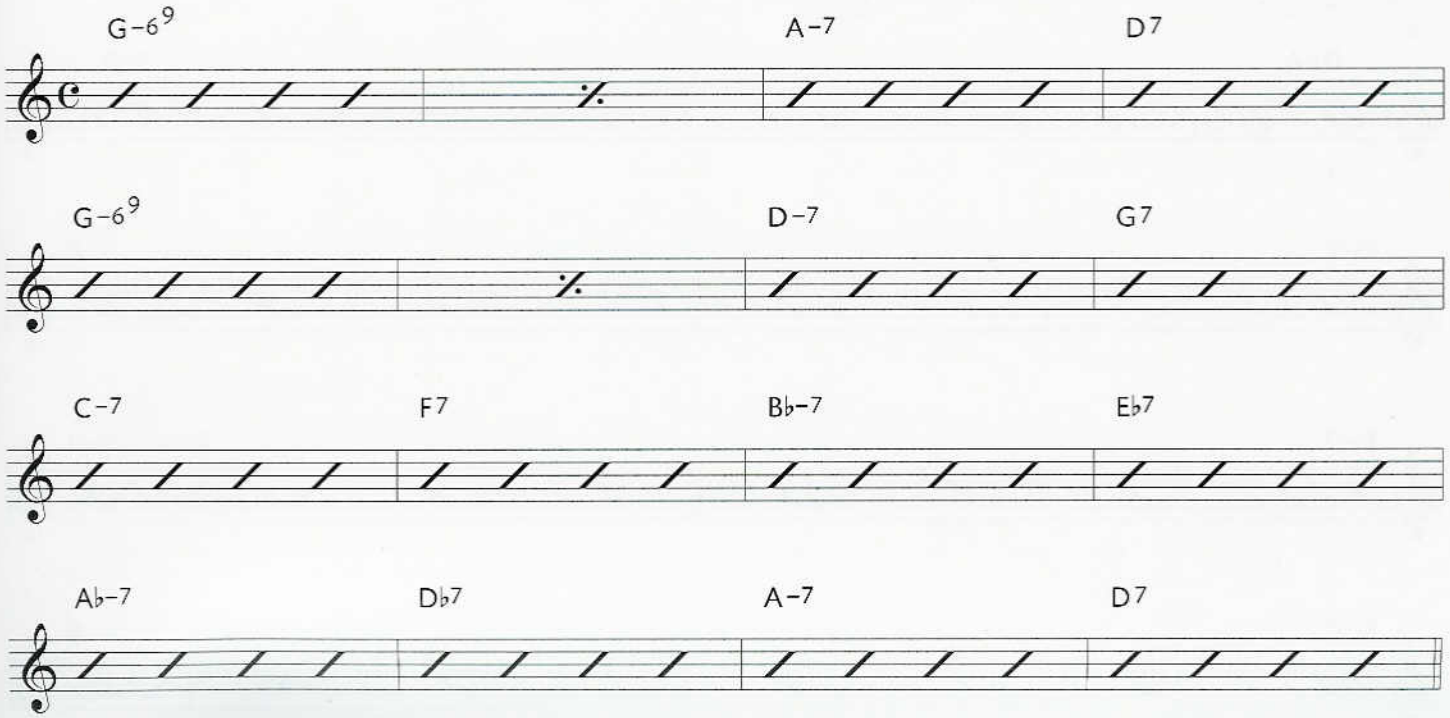


24 · *slow*

25 · *fast*

TUNE 11 - Underdog

B♭ Instruments

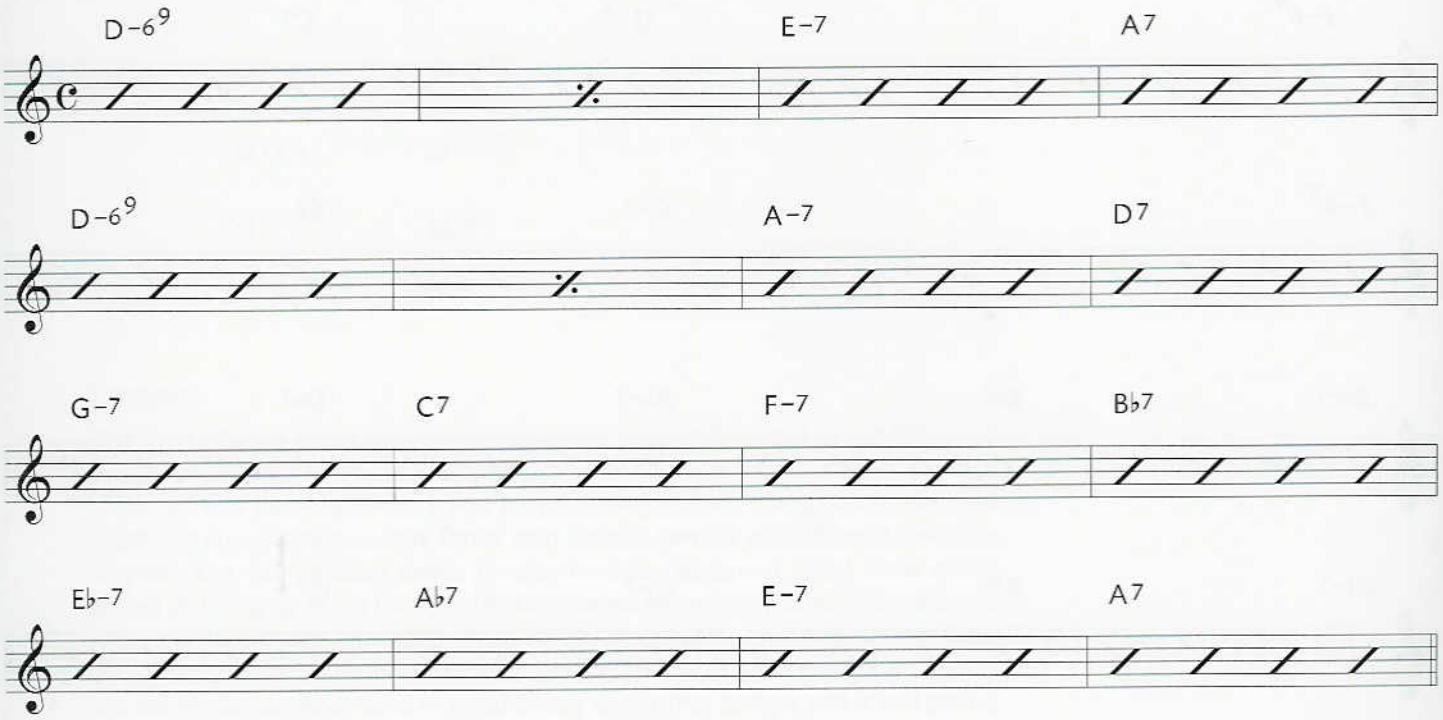


24 · *slow*

25 · *fast*

TUNE 11 - Underdog

E♭ Instruments

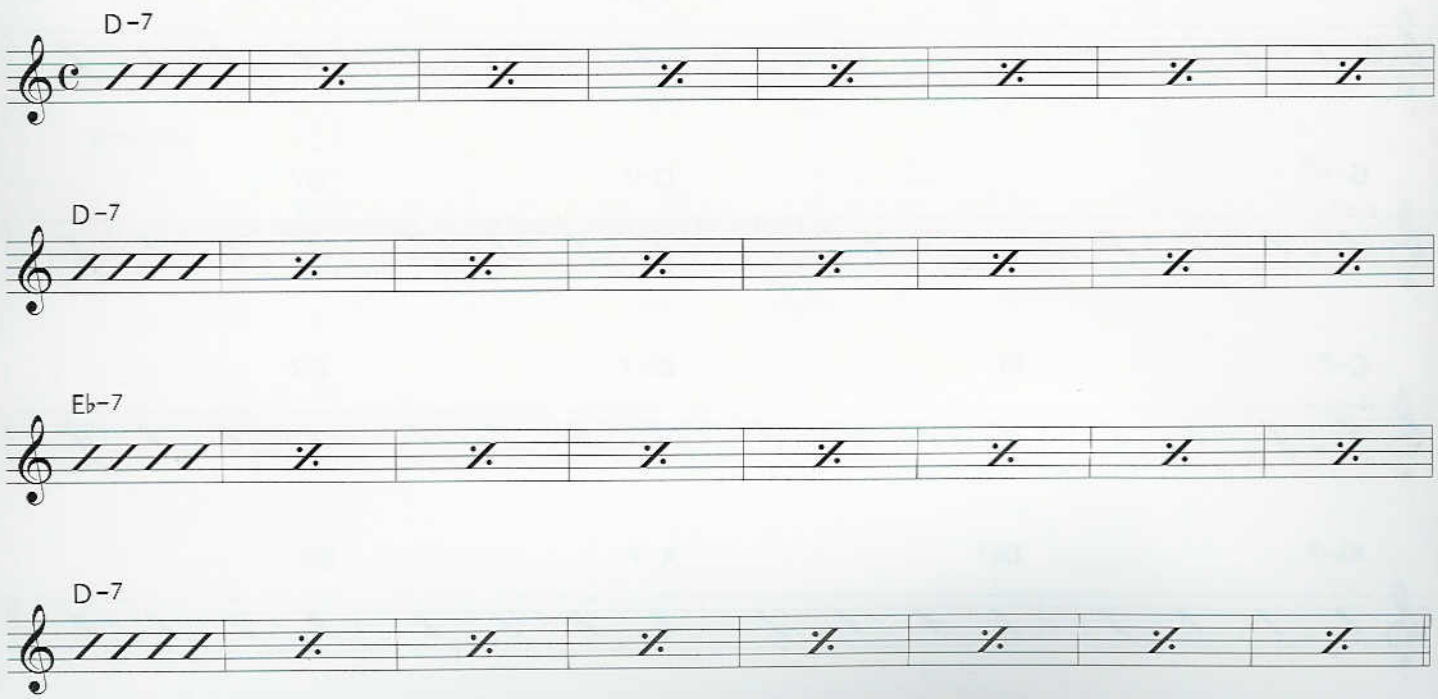


26 · *slow*

27 · *fast*

TUNE 12 - What Up?

C Instruments

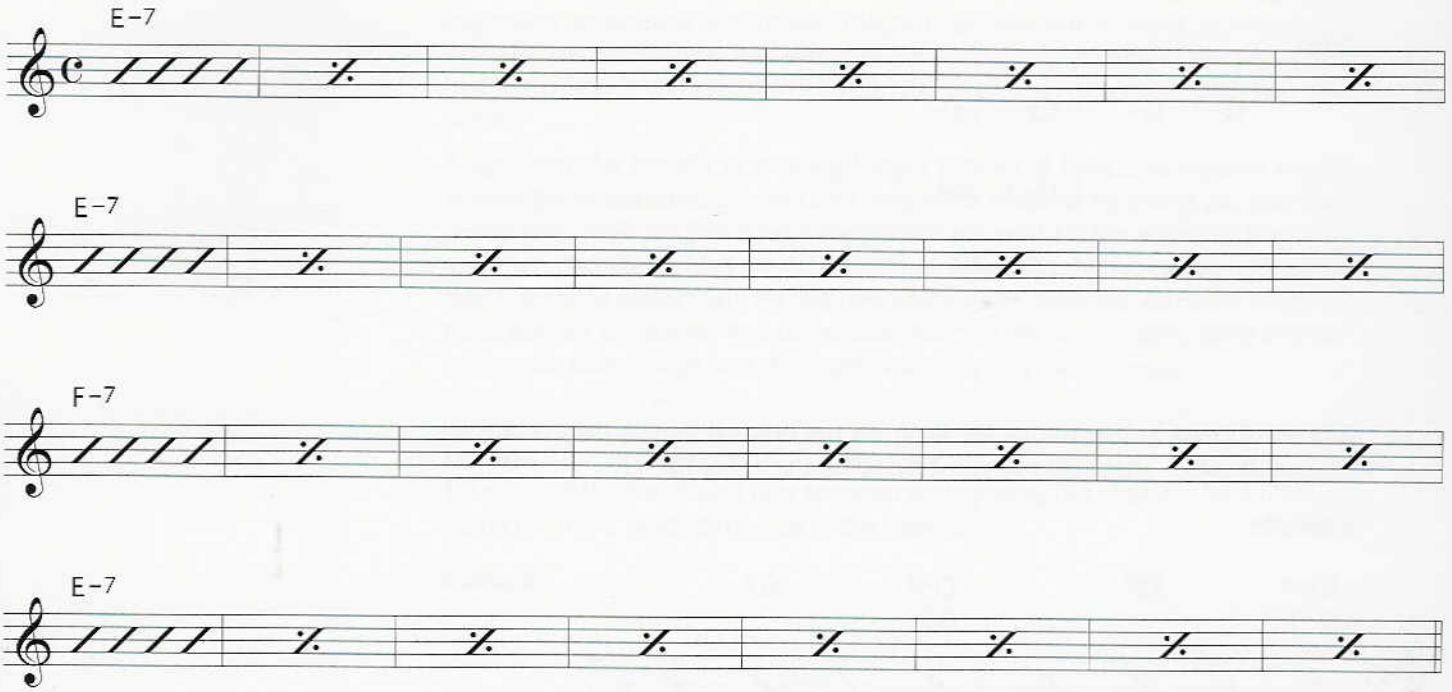


26 · *slow*

27 · *fast*

TUNE 12 - What Up?

B♭ Instruments

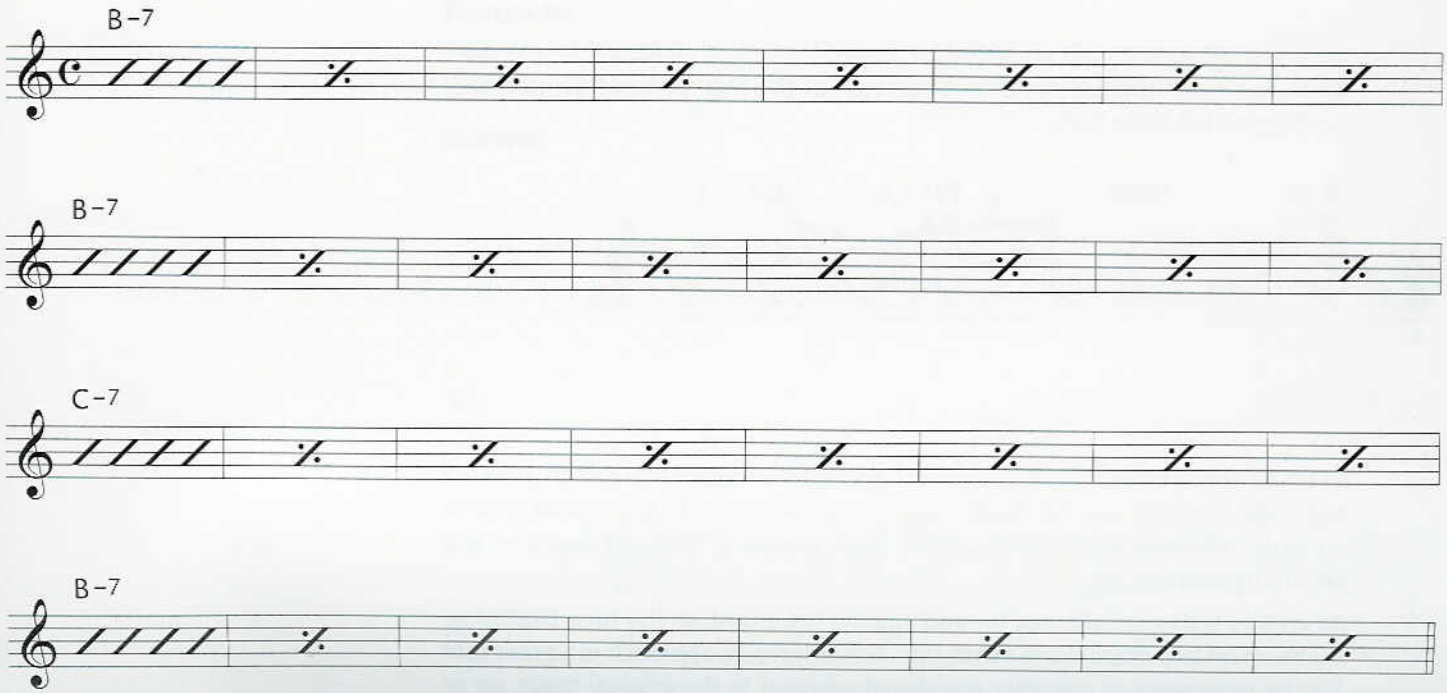


26 · *slow*

27 · *fast*

TUNE 12 - What Up?

E♭ Instruments



5. II–7 V7 Substitutes Against the Chord

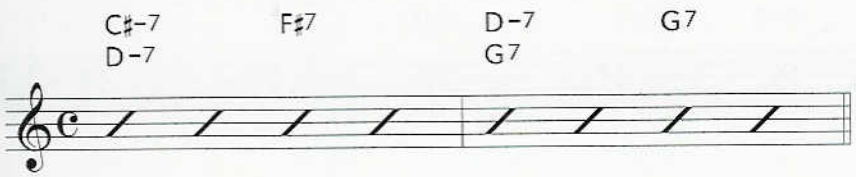
These next three substitutes are used against the chord. They do not take the place of the chord but instead have an almost approach note like effect. There is a tremendous rub against the original chord and it can then be resolved into the original.

Over:

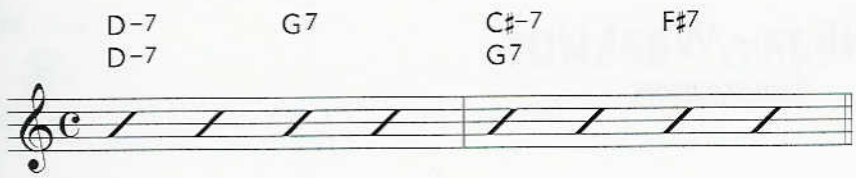
D–7 G7	C♯–7 F♯7
	E♭–7 A♭7
	F♯–7 B7

Any on of these substitutions are far from the original and so they create an intervallic effect. These may be substituted for the II–7 or the V7.

Example:



or:



Again, the substitutions don't need to begin at the beginning of the bar, they can happen between bars.

By trying these different substitutions over and over again you get an ear for it and make it one of your harmonic tools. It would be wise to spend a lot of time on each individual substitution rather than grouping them all together and skimming over the top.

As well as trying substitutes for and against the chord on the tune *Underdog*, try them on the modal tune *What Up?*. This intervallic approach is a great tool for the improviser as melodies are played adjacent to the original mode, up or down in half steps, major thirds and tritones.

6. Anticipating Chord Changes

Anticipating the chord changes can create a lot of forward motion in one's playing. There are also a number of other benefits to this harmonic device where you play melodies that fit the changes that are coming up in the tune. It opens a window in your mind and you hear what chords are coming up next. This is an expansive awareness where you might hear way out in front of where you actually are in the tune. And while you may hear eight bars ahead, you might just anticipate anywhere from a half a beat to two bars ahead, or even four bars ahead.

Aside from the benefit of hearing bigger chunks of time, the rhythm section knowingly or unknowingly will also very often respond by giving you the leadership role. Typically, the novice improviser will wait for the sound of the chord and then play something on it. Sometimes when the rhythm section takes the lead the chord players will try out new voicings or check out different substitutions leaving the soloist in a responsive position. When you anticipate the harmony, you take charge and the rhythm section plays accordingly.

Exercise #1

Take any of the tunes and play through anticipating the changes by a 1/2 beat. Come in on the "and" of four as in the example.

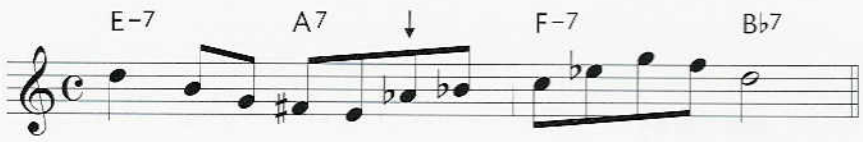
Example:

Very often the rhythm section anticipates the "and" of four, so it doesn't really sound like and anticipation. Coming in on the "and" of four is like hitting one.

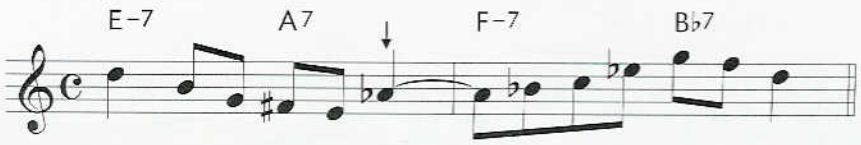
Exercise #2

Take any of the tunes and play through anticipating the changes by one beat. You can play a quarter note for that beat or any other rhythm.

Example:



or:

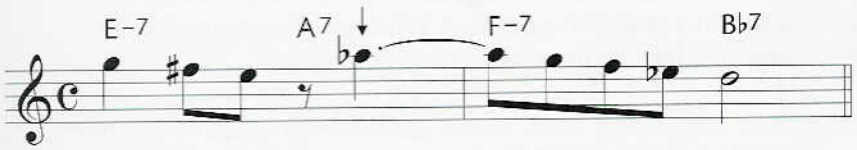


Exercise #3

Next, anticipate by 1 1/2 beats. Of course, anticipating on every chord would sound monotonous, so play it as you like it. For the sake of the exercise you can over do it.

Example:

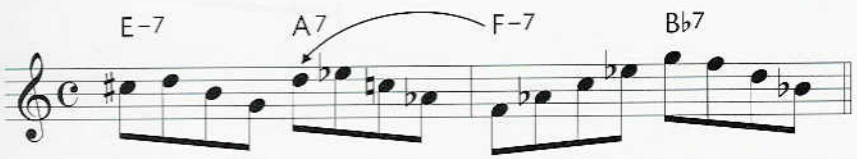
or



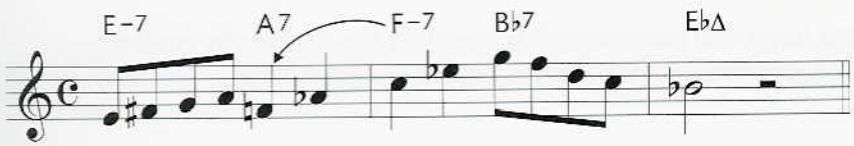
Exercise #4

Anticipate the changes by 2 beats.

Example:



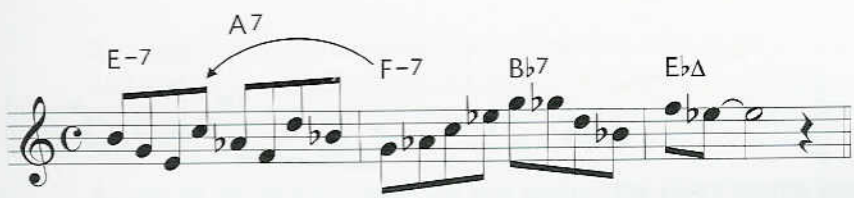
or



Exercise #5

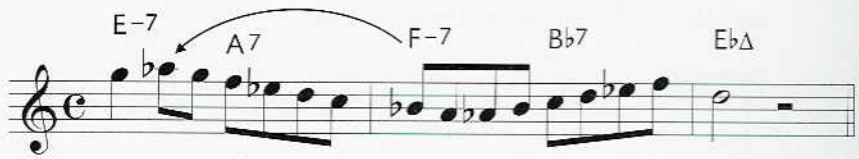
Anticipate by 2 1/2 beats.

Example:



Exercise #6
Anticipate by 3 beats.

Example:

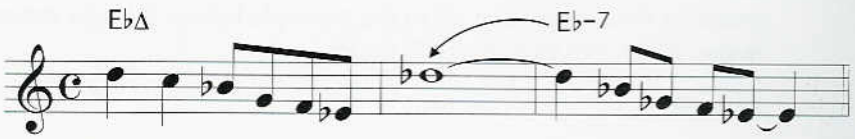


Exercise #7
Anticipate by 3 1/2 beats.

Example:

Exercise #8
Anticipate by 4 beats.

Example:

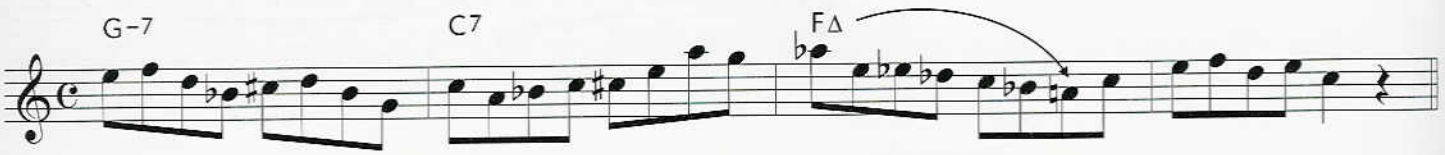


Needless to say, great finesse and doing this with taste is the key!

7. Resolving Late

Playing across the bar line and resolving late is another great device as it gives the improviser another tool. It has the effect of sounding horizontal and it creates tension by extending the resolution.

Example:

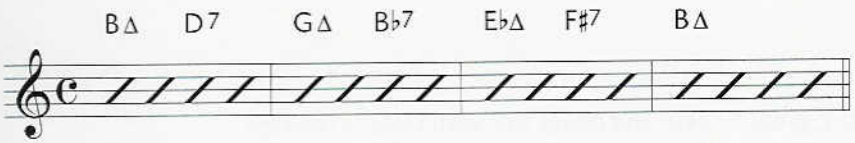


As you can see in this example, the C7 is carries over into the bar of FΔ.

8. Three-Tonic System for Substituting Over Chords

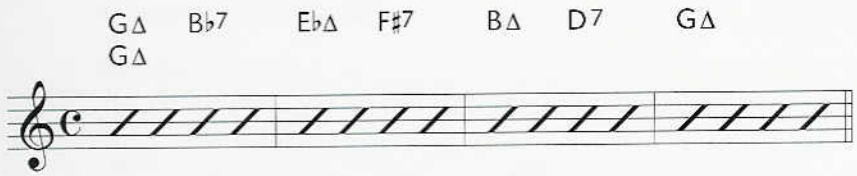
A common progression that can be used over another chord or chords is called the three-tonic system. An octave can be divided into three parts by moving up or down by major third intervals. The three-tonic system targets three tonic chords by going up or down a major third. Those tonic chords are usually preceded by their respective V7. In the example below, B major moves down to G major, which moves down to E♭ major.

Example:



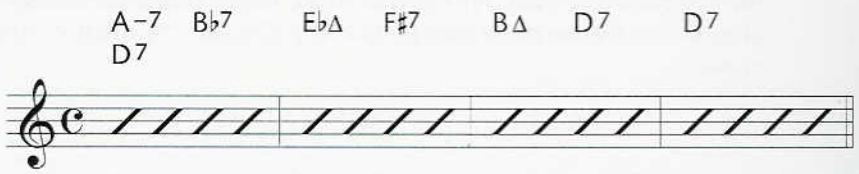
This system has many applications as it can be played over a major vamp, a dominant vamp or a minor vamp.

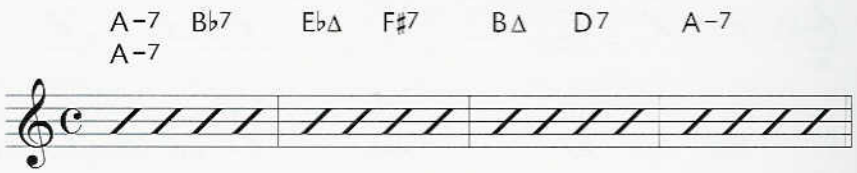
Example:



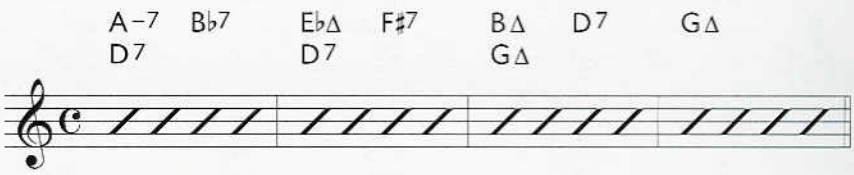
Over a minor or dominant modal situation, the II–7 can replace the first I∆.

Example:

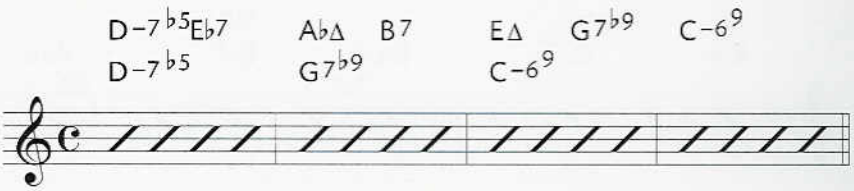




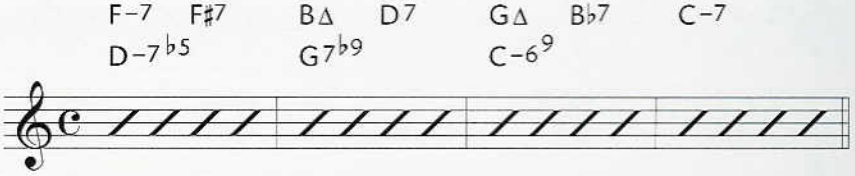
Example: over a II–7 - V7 - I



Example: over a minor II–7 - V7 - I–6^{9}

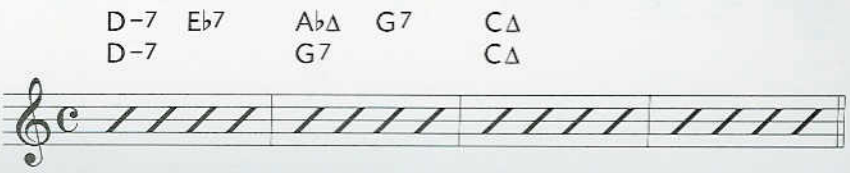


or:

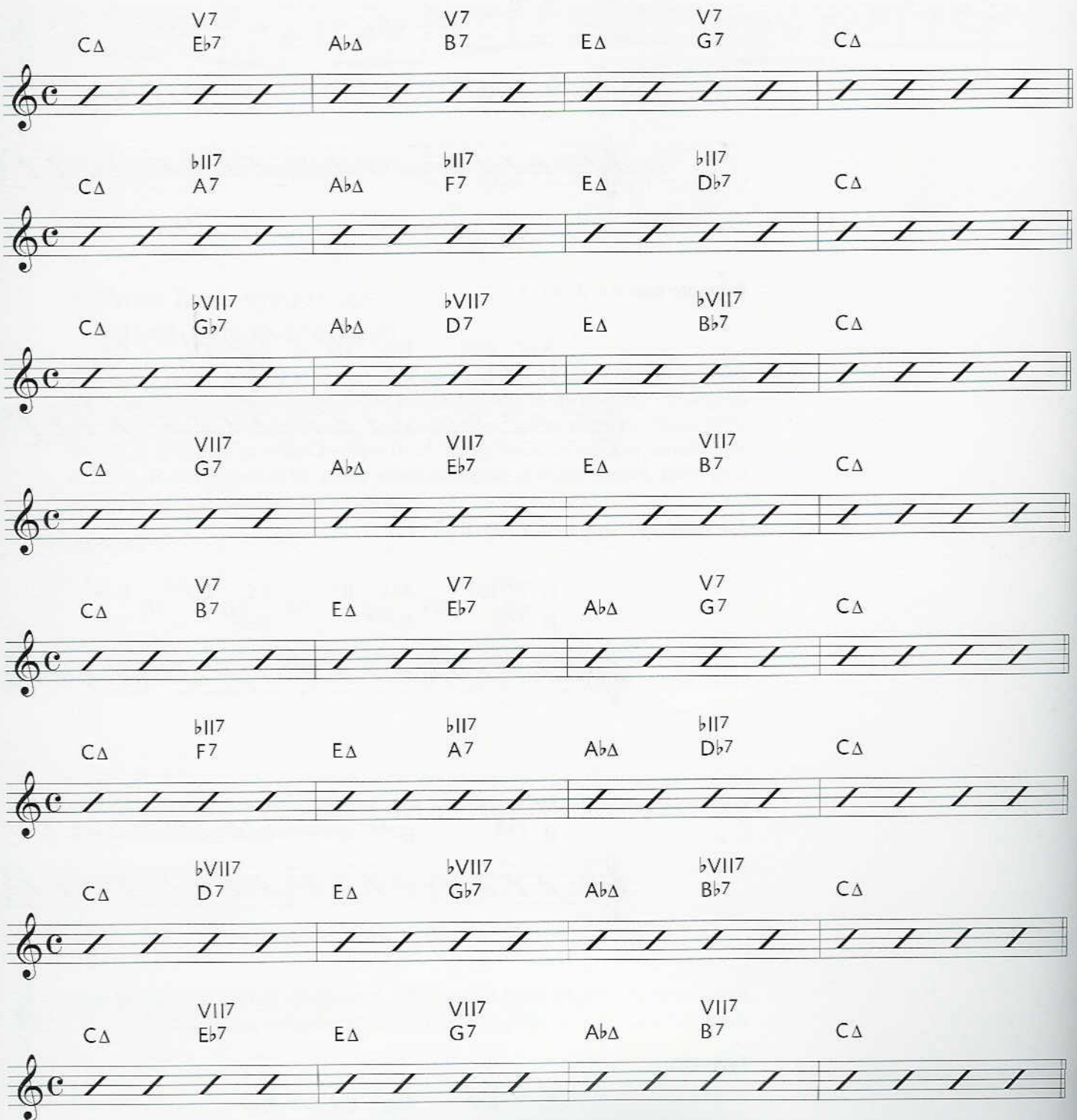


Sometimes you might want to imply the three-tonic system without actually playing it out, or you might just play a segment from the progression.

Example:

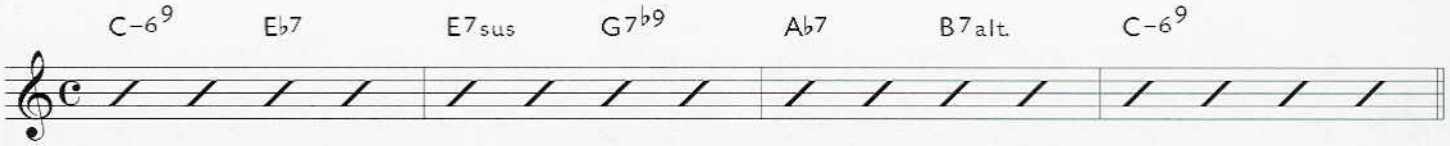


A little goes a long way! Aside from the three-tonic system there are several others that also work quite well. Each target center whether it be major tonic, minor tonic, dominant tonic, or dominant sus4 tonic can be approached by their respective V7, ♭II7, ♭VII7, or VII7. The C major chord at the beginning of each progression below could also be C–7, C 7, C7sus4, C7sus4♭9, C diminished, E–7, or A–7.



Practicing these three-tonic progressions is not only good for improvising chord on chord but it is also a great device for composing and reharmonizing tunes. Consider too that any tonic chord could become a tonic minor, a tonic dominant or a tonic dominant sus4.

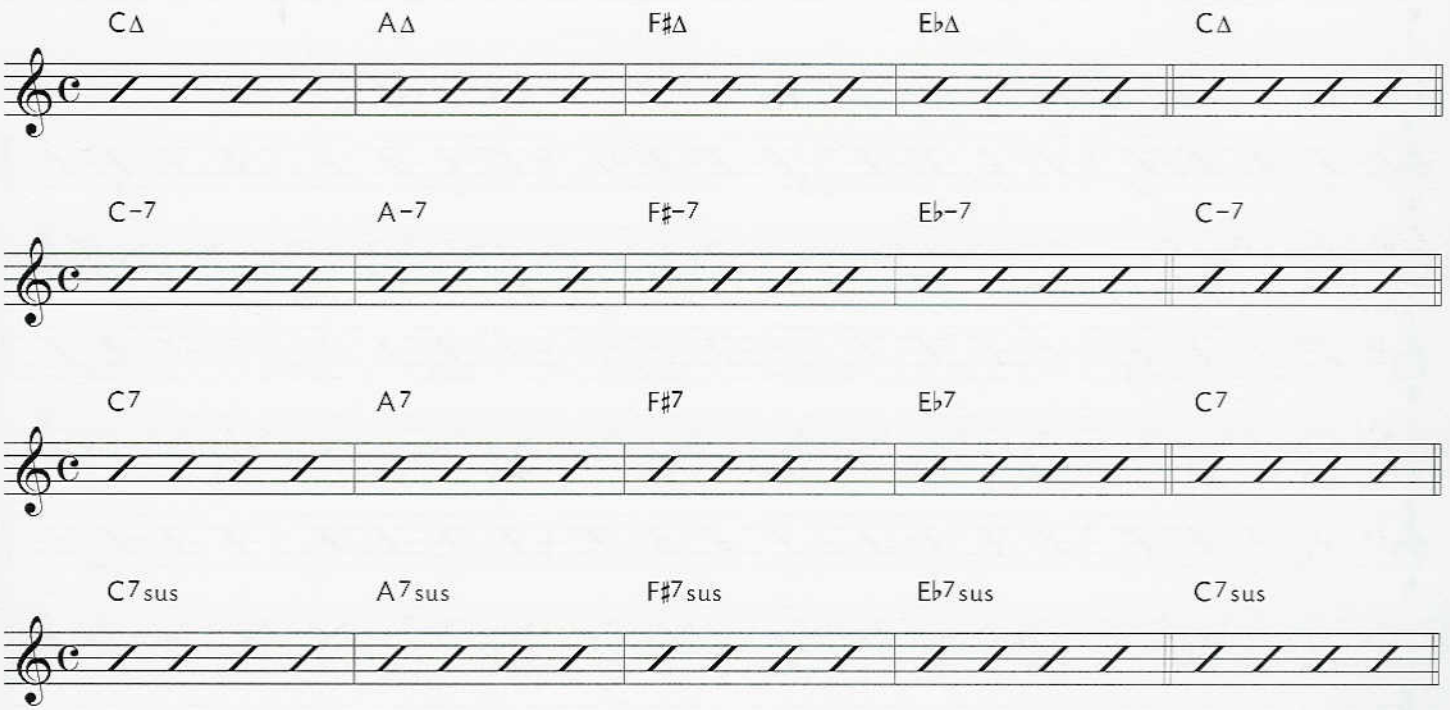
Example:



9. Four-Tonic systems

A four-tonic system is one where the tonic moves up or down in minor third intervals. The tonic chords can also be substituted by other chord types.

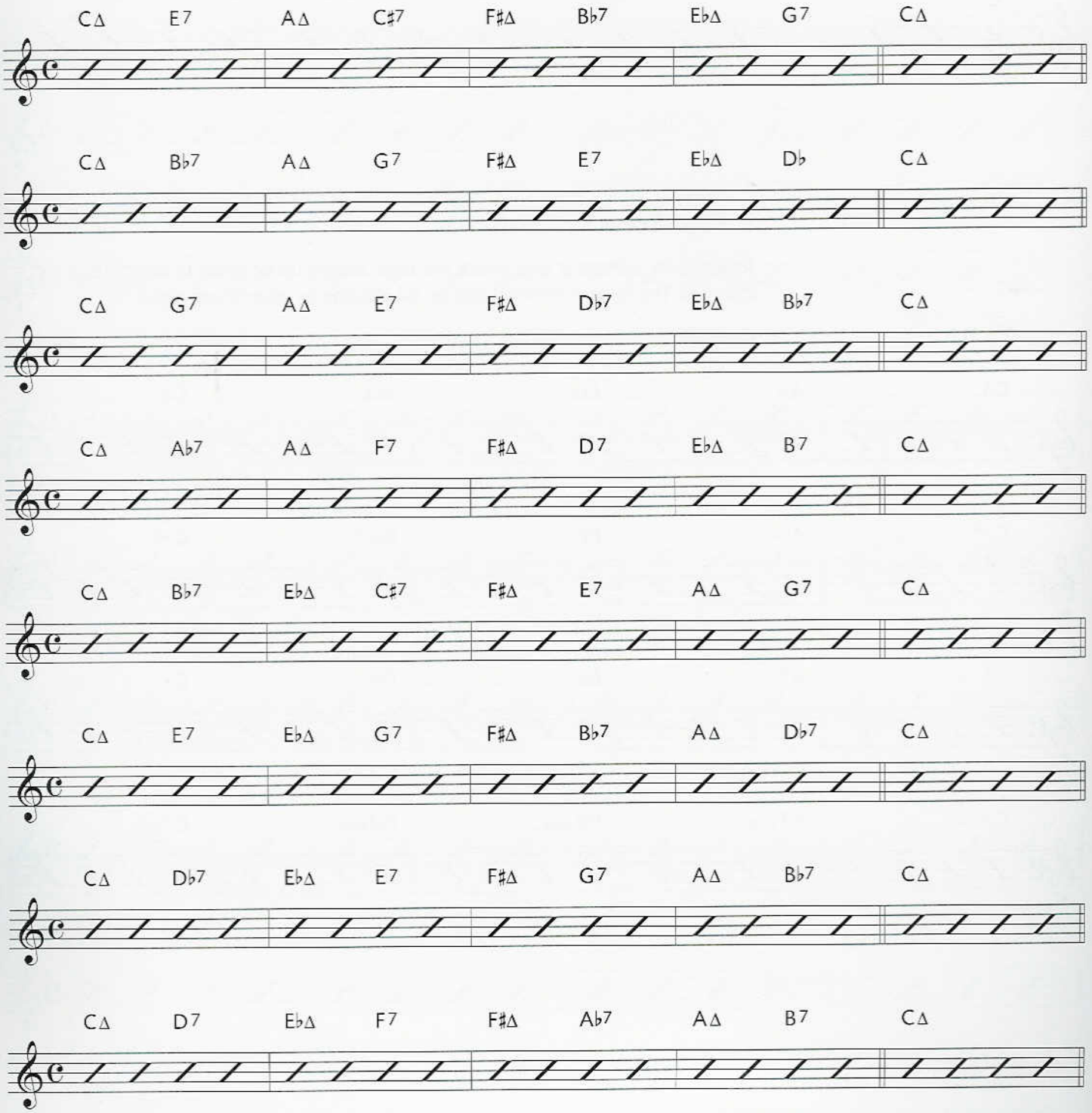
Example:



Each one of these chords can be approached by their respective V7, ♭II7,♭VII7, or VII7.

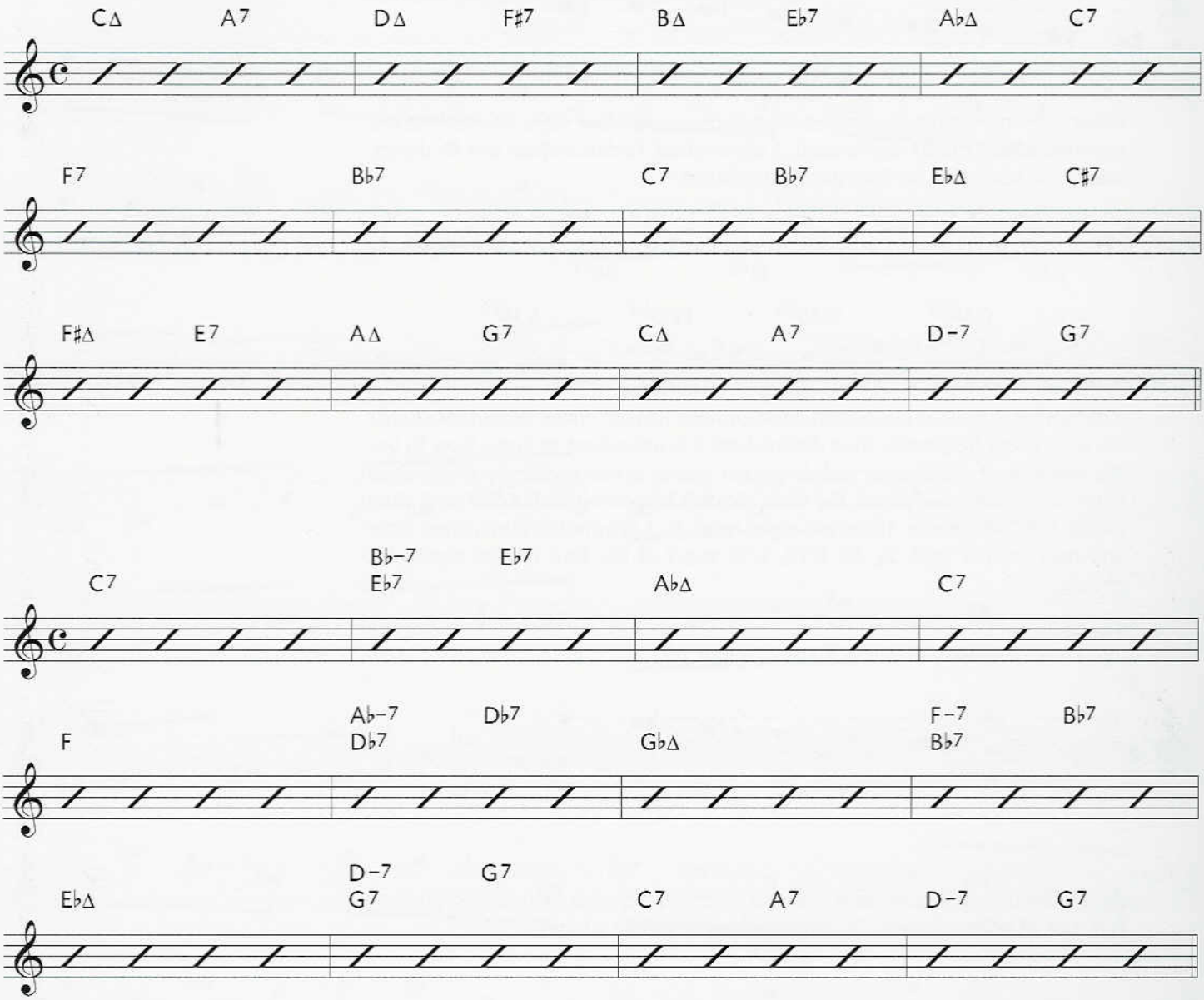
In the following examples, the major tonics are preceded by each possible dominant 7.

Example:



Four-tonic systems can be played over modal structures or chords that last for several bars. They are also very useful tools for composition and reharmonizations. Again, the entire cycle need not be played in order to be effective. Implying just a part of the cycle works quite well too.

Example: On a blues



10. Diminished Scales

A symmetric diminished scale ascends by a whole step, half step, whole step, half step pattern through the octave.

Example:

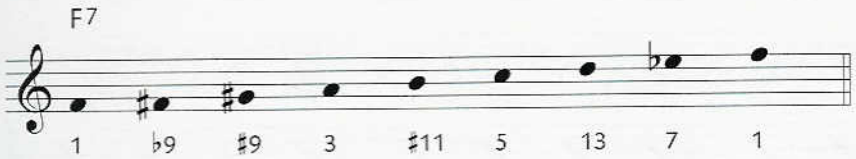
There are three diminished scales as each one covers four keys. The scale in the example above fits C♯ diminished, E diminished, G diminished and B♭ diminished. This scale also fits four dominant chords:

C♯°7 E°7 G°7 B♭°7

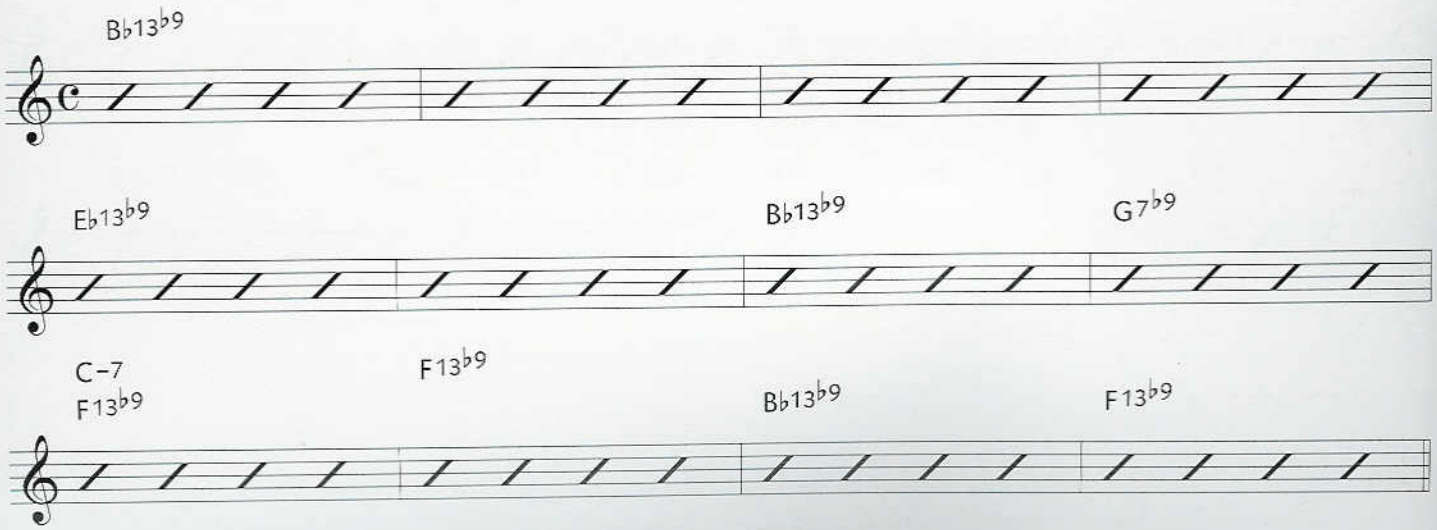
C13♭9 E♭13♭9 F♯13♭9 A13♭9

A diminished chord is like a dominant without its root. Since dominant chords are used more frequently than diminished, it is important to know how to use the diminished scales over the dominant chord. When spelling a diminished scale over a dominant chord, the scale ascends beginning with a half step, then whole, half, whole, etc. There are eight notes to a symmetric diminished scale and they are the root, ♭9, ♯9, 3, ♯11, 5, 13 and 7 of the four related dominant chords.

Example:

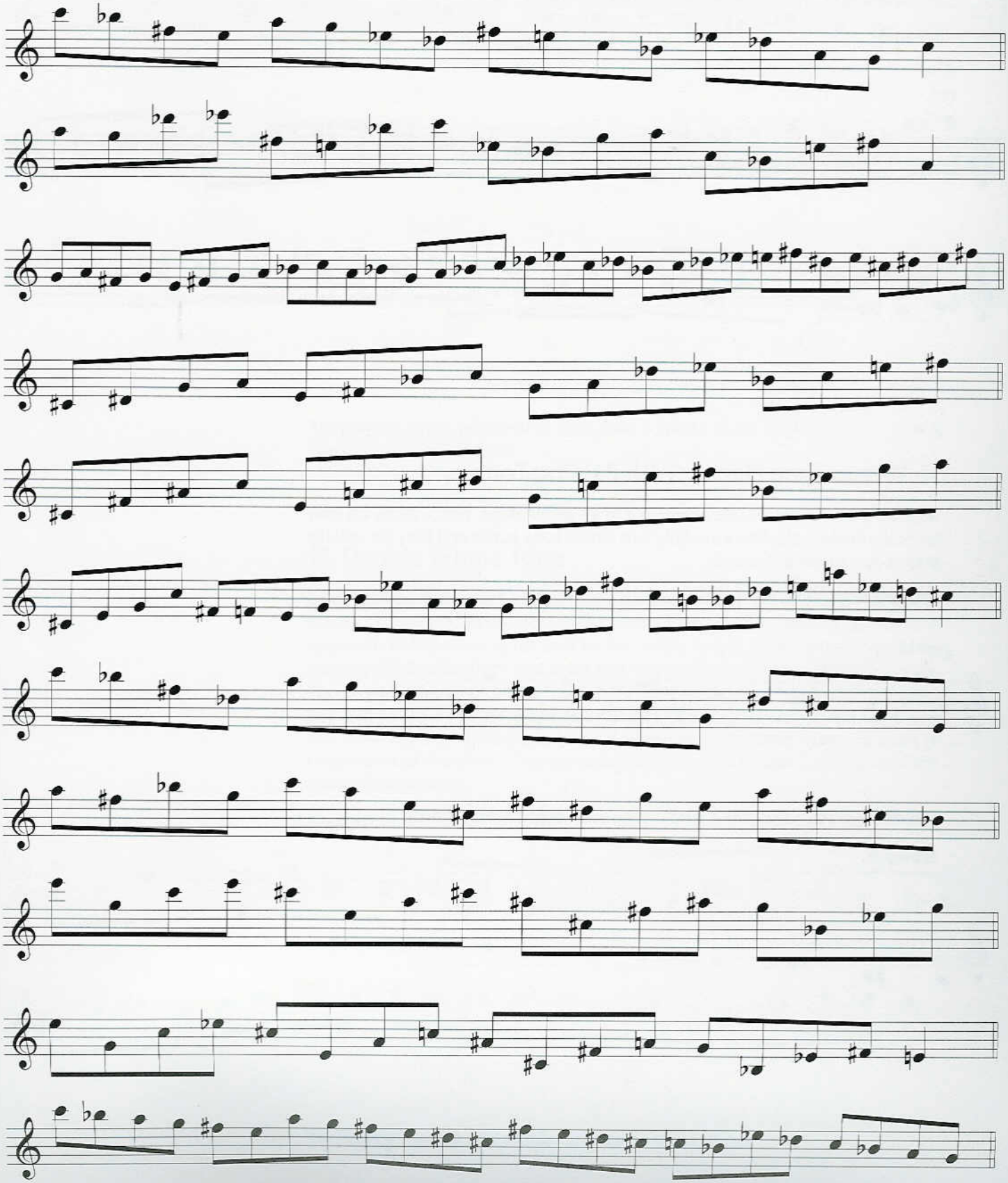


Again, anytime the dominant chord is resolving down a fifth, the improviser has a lot of artistic leeway. Try playing these scales on a blues.



Playing the diminished scale over the II–7 has a nice effect as it creates a rub against the chord until you hear it resolved on the dominant 7. Ninety percent of the time, a diminished chord is really a dominant 7♭9 chord down a major third. That is, for example, a C♯ diminished is actually an A7♭9. Go through your fake books and when you see a diminished chord, notice what dominant chord it is really used in place of.

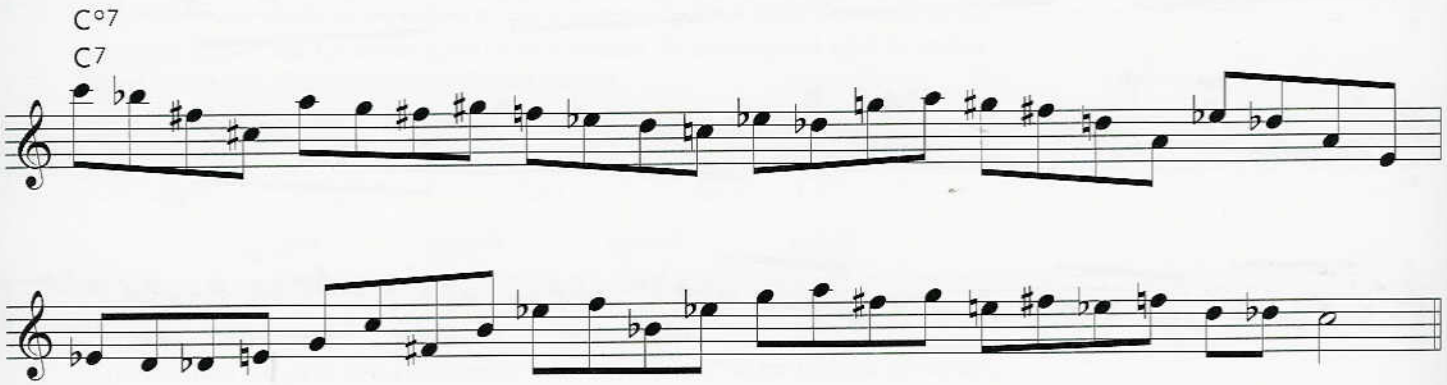
Here are some common diminished melodies:



11. Double Diminished

For a more oblique sound, try combining any two diminished scales (it could even be any three) to create melodies that flow in and out of the chord. Try playing eight notes of one and then eight notes of another. Then try playing six notes of one scale and six of another. Try four notes from each scale and then randomly mix up the scales. Playing the original diminished scale and then down a half step works well because it sets up chromatic approaches from below and also establishes a tonic diminished sound.

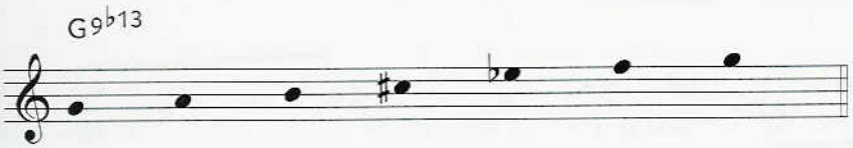
Example:



12. Whole-Tone Playing with Passing Tones

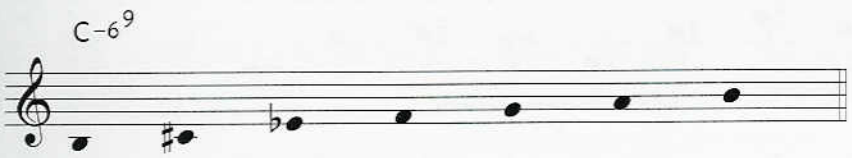
A whole-tone scale is a scale comprised of all whole steps; hence there are only six notes in the scale. There are only two whole-tone scales and they are usually played over dominant chords.

Example: over G9♭13



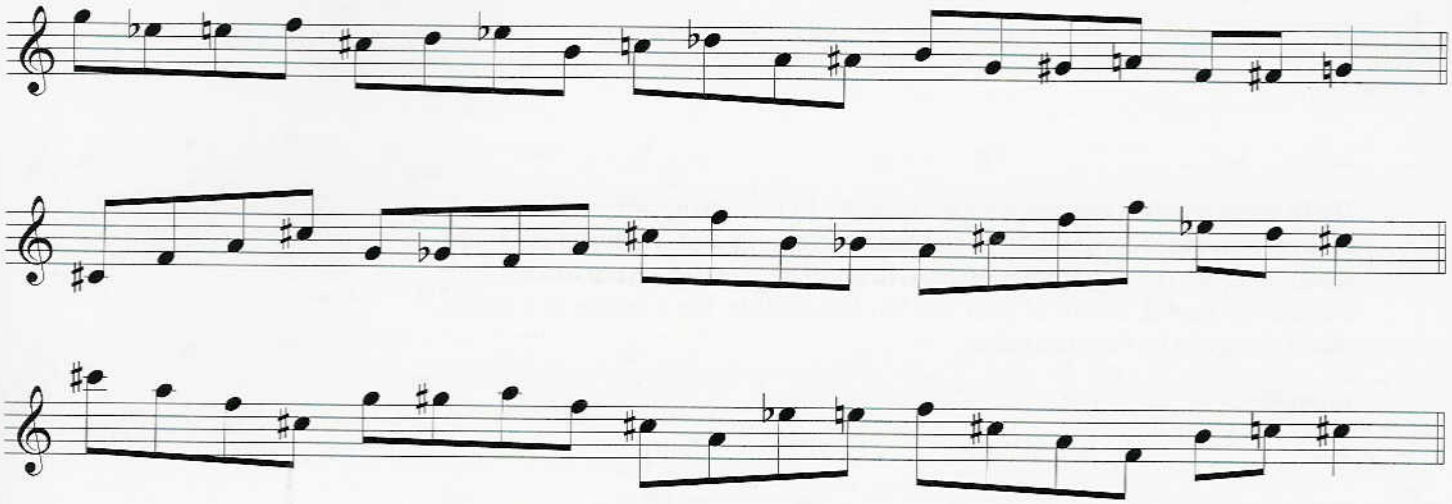
However, you can also play a whole-tone scale over a minor chord.

Example:



In the example above, the C♯ or ♭9 is the unusual note and there is no root in the scale, which definitely adds to the dissonance. To gain a little more flexibility with the whole-tone sound (which can sound one-dimensional) use passing tones between the whole steps.

Example: G whole tone

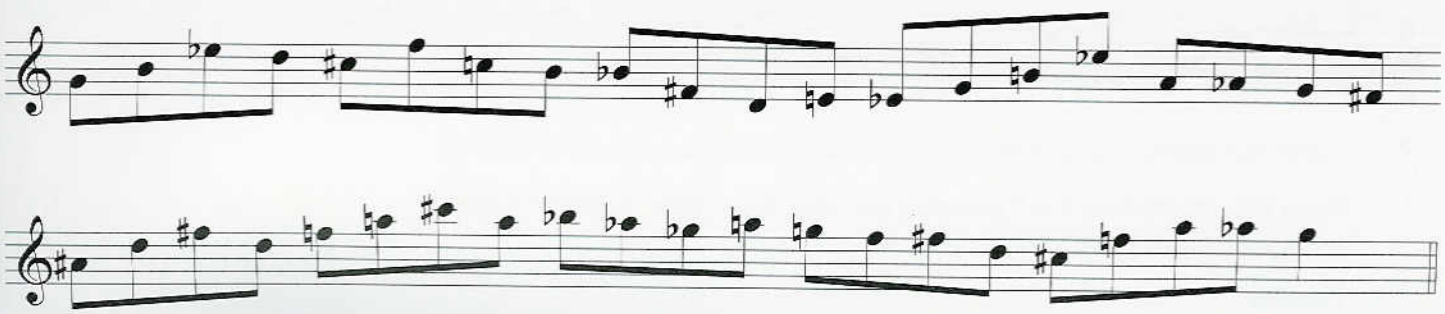


Try playing some whole-tone lines over a minor blues to get used to how it works in minor situations.

13. Double Whole Tone

Double whole tone is yet another way to organize "out" playing over changes or modes. Simply using the notes of both whole tone scales creates a twelve-tone approach to improvising (as well as the ability to get fired from any gig!). Try playing eight notes from one scale and then eight notes from the other scale. Then try playing six of one and six of the other, then four and four. Try playing any number of notes from one scale to any number of notes to the other and mix them up randomly. (For a twisted sound, try four notes from one scale to three notes of the other.) The example below shows a random mixing up of the whole-tone scales.

Example:



Try playing some double whole-tone scales over a blues.

14. Tri-Tonics

As with pentatonic scales, tri-tonics refers to a system of grouping three notes. Of course, any three notes can be considered a tri-tonic, but here we are addressing a very common three-note grouping, which is 1, 4, 5.

Example:

These notes create a very open sound that can fit over many different chords. It is easy to visualize common tri-tonics between chords and when you use these common tones moving from one chord to another, it can give your improvising a seamless sound, a kind of over the bar line quality. On a major or a minor chord there can be five tri-tonics.

Example:

CΔ

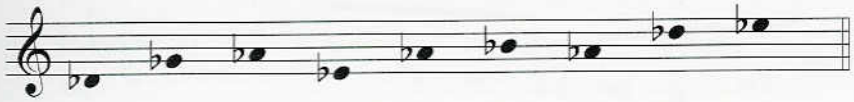
C-7

On a dominant (Mixolydian) there are three, and on dominant altered there are also three.

Example:

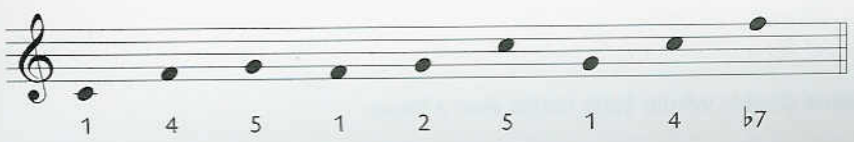
C7

C7alt.



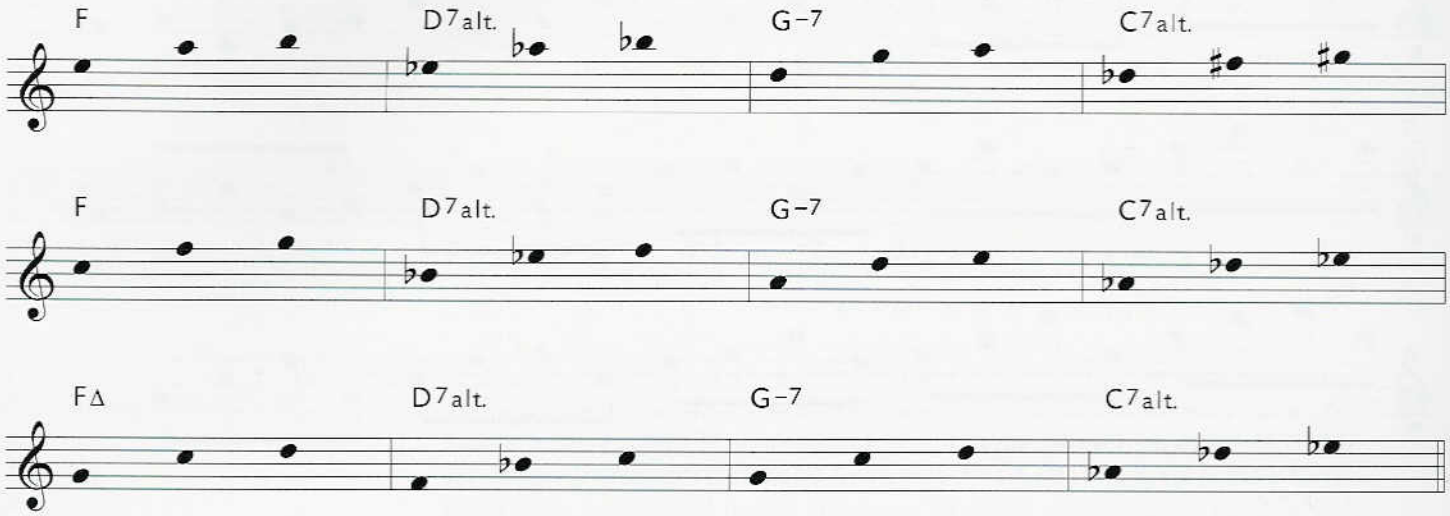
If you take the tri-tonic 1, 4, 5 grouping and play these notes in different inversions, you now have tri-tonic 1, 2, 5 or 1, 4, 7.

Example:

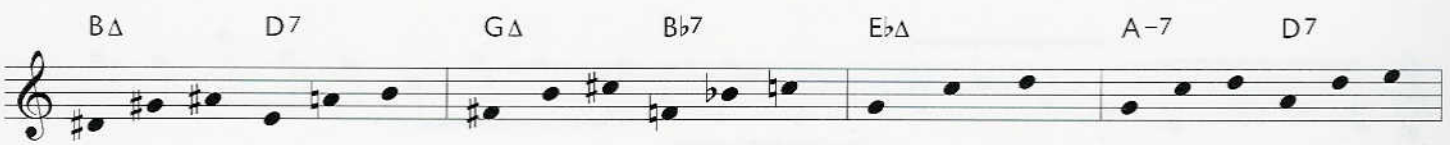


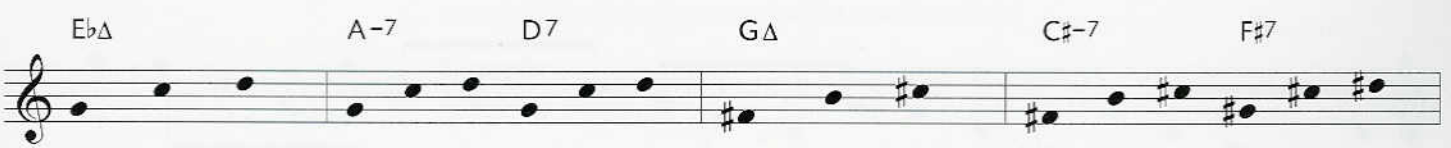
Starting with the first note of each inversion, the improviser can also find different avenues to play through the changes by thinking tri-tonic.

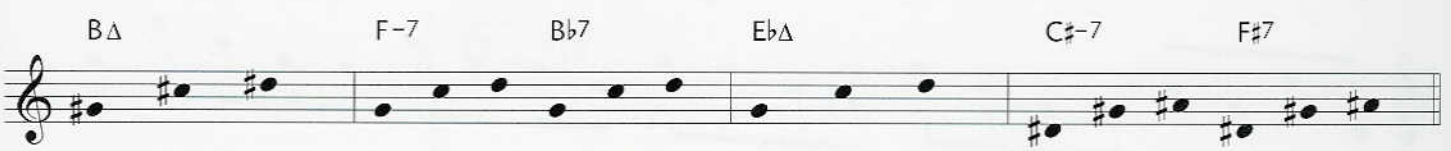
Example:



or:

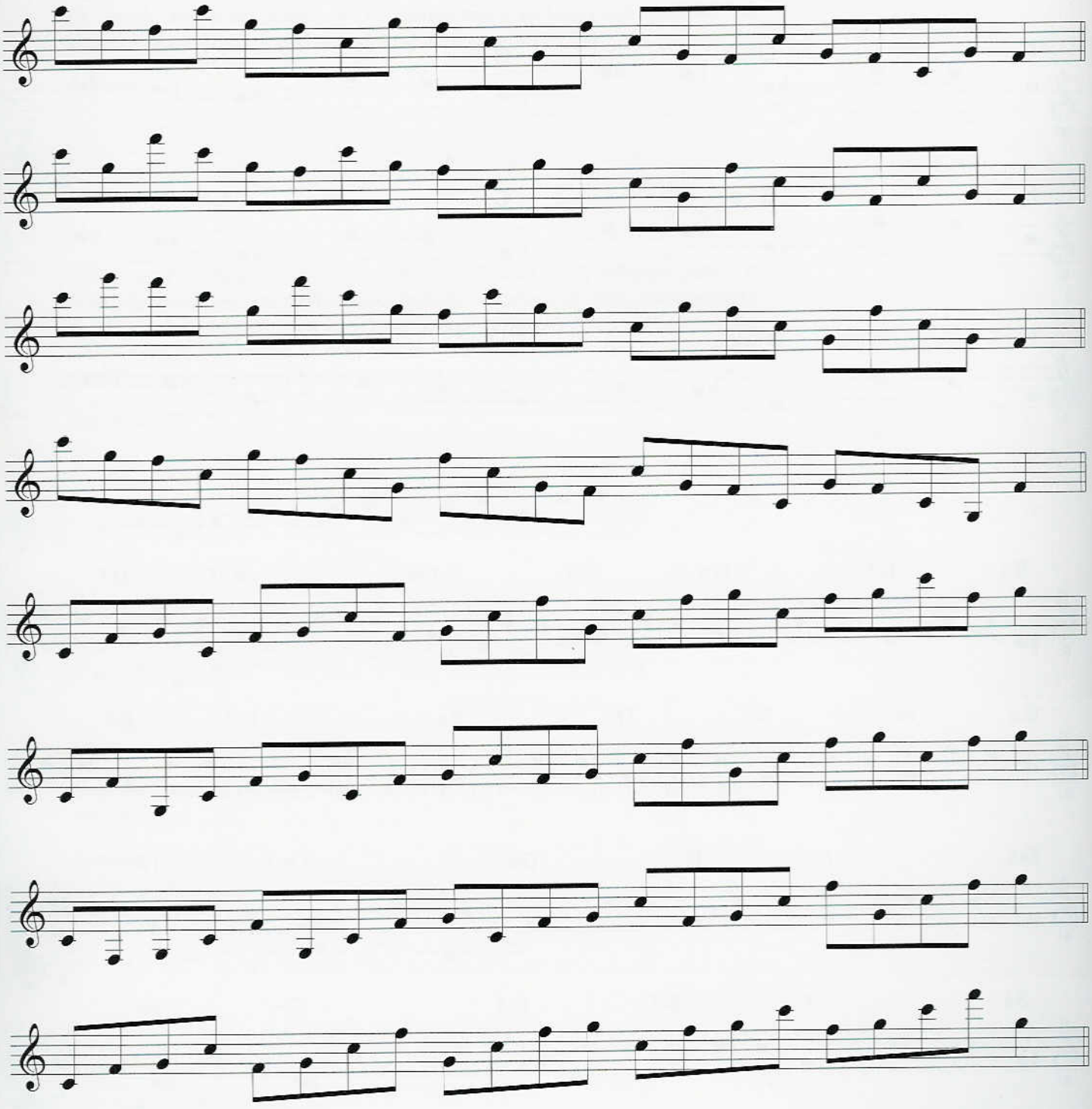






Finding common tone tri-tonics can help when playing over vertical harmony.

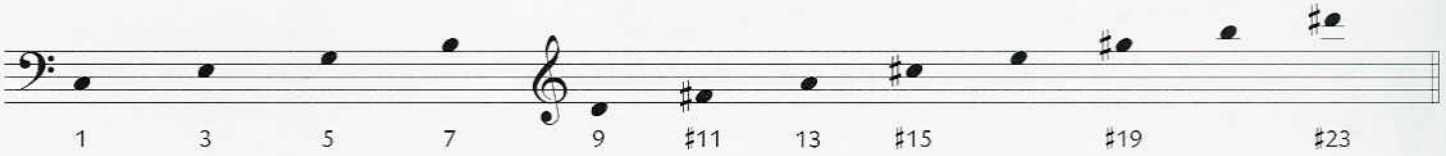
Try to figure out how many chords these C tri-tonics can fit:



15. Tonal Expansions

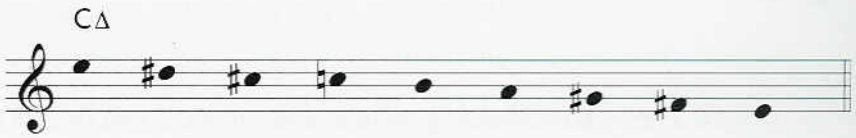
There are many ways to expand chords beyond their normal parameters of 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13. One way to do this on major chords is to stack major 7th chords on top of each other.

Example: CΔ, DΔ, EΔ



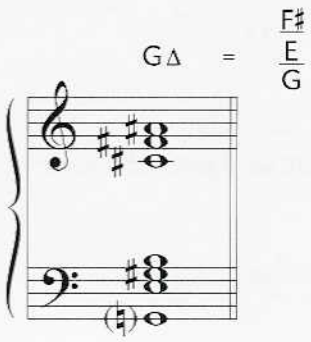
Stacking these major 7th chords on top of C major gives: 1 3 5 7 9 ♯11 13 ♯15 ♯19 ♯23. 17 and 21 are repeats of 3 and 7 whereas the ♯15, ♯19, and ♯23 are chord tones that create a polytonal flavor. There are six triads within that C major chord which are, C triad, G triad, D triad, A triad, E triad and B triad. An E major bebop scale will fit over C major 7 and in this case the C natural is not a passing tone.

Example:



Try playing on a major chord while using the major triads starting on 13, 3 and 7. Try using ♯15, ♯19 and ♯23 over tonic major chords in a tune. These additional tones set up a whole new arena for chord voicings.

Example:



Try playing other chords over a major chord. For example, over C major try F♯–13, C♯–9, B7, or A♭–7. Remember, in the wrong hands this could be dangerous!

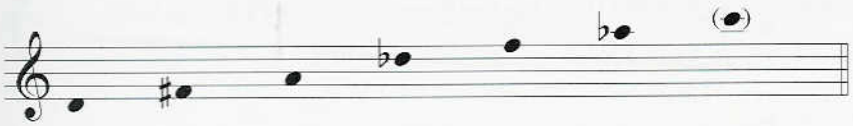
16. More Tonal Expansions

Try expanding on a II–7 V7 progression by stacking major triads a half step apart.

Example: On a C–7 F7 progression, you can stack a D triad on top of an E♭ triad. From the minor chord, the triads start on 3 and 9, from the dominant chord, they start on 7 and 13.

Another expansion for a dominant chord is triads starting on 13 and ♭13.

Example: On a C–7 F7 progression, stack a D♭ major triad on top of D major triad. This means that you have triads starting from the ♮13 and the ♭13 of the dominant chord.



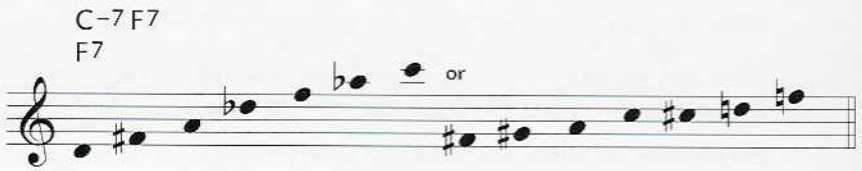
This is a very exotic sounding chord as a result of the two 13's, ♮13 and ♭13. Here is an F7 chord voicing:

Try playing with E♭, D, and D♭ triads over an F7, this results in a nine-note scale.

Using just two triads and adding one extra note forms a double harmonic minor scale which you can play over a V7 or even a II–7 V7.

Example 1: The extra note in this example is the C♯.

Example 2: The extra note in this example is a C natural.



There are also other places on the chord from which you can build tonal expansions. Aside from the triads starting on 7 and 13, as well as, 13 and ♭13, you can use triads starting on ♭9 and root, ♯9 and 9, or ♯11 and 11.

17. Augmented Symmetric Scales and Uses

The augmented symmetric scale consists of a minor third interval followed by a half step ascending pattern. It is comprised of two augmented triads a half step apart.

Example:

There are only four augmented symmetric scales, as the one starting on E is the same as the one starting on C, etc.

The scale starting on C fits over these chords:

CΔ		EΔ		A$\flat\Delta$	
C$\Delta^{\sharp 5}$		E$\Delta^{\sharp 5}$		A$\flat\Delta^{\sharp 5}$	
A-7	D7	C$\sharp-7$	F$\sharp 7$	F-7	B$\flat 7$
F$\sharp-7^{\flat 5}$	B$7^{\flat 9}$	B$\flat-7^{\flat 5}$	E$\flat 7^{\flat 9}$	D$-7^{\flat 5}$	G$7^{\flat 9}$

Have a friend randomly play any of the above chords switching from one to another at any time. As you improvise over it using just these six notes, notice that like a blues scale, this scale sounds right in most of these situations. At times, it might sound questionable unless played with finesse.

On a major 7th chord, the scale starts on the root.

On a minor 7th chord, the scale starts on the 3rd.

On a dominant 7th chord, the scale starts on the 7th.

On a minor 7$\flat$5 chord, the scale starts on the $\flat$5.

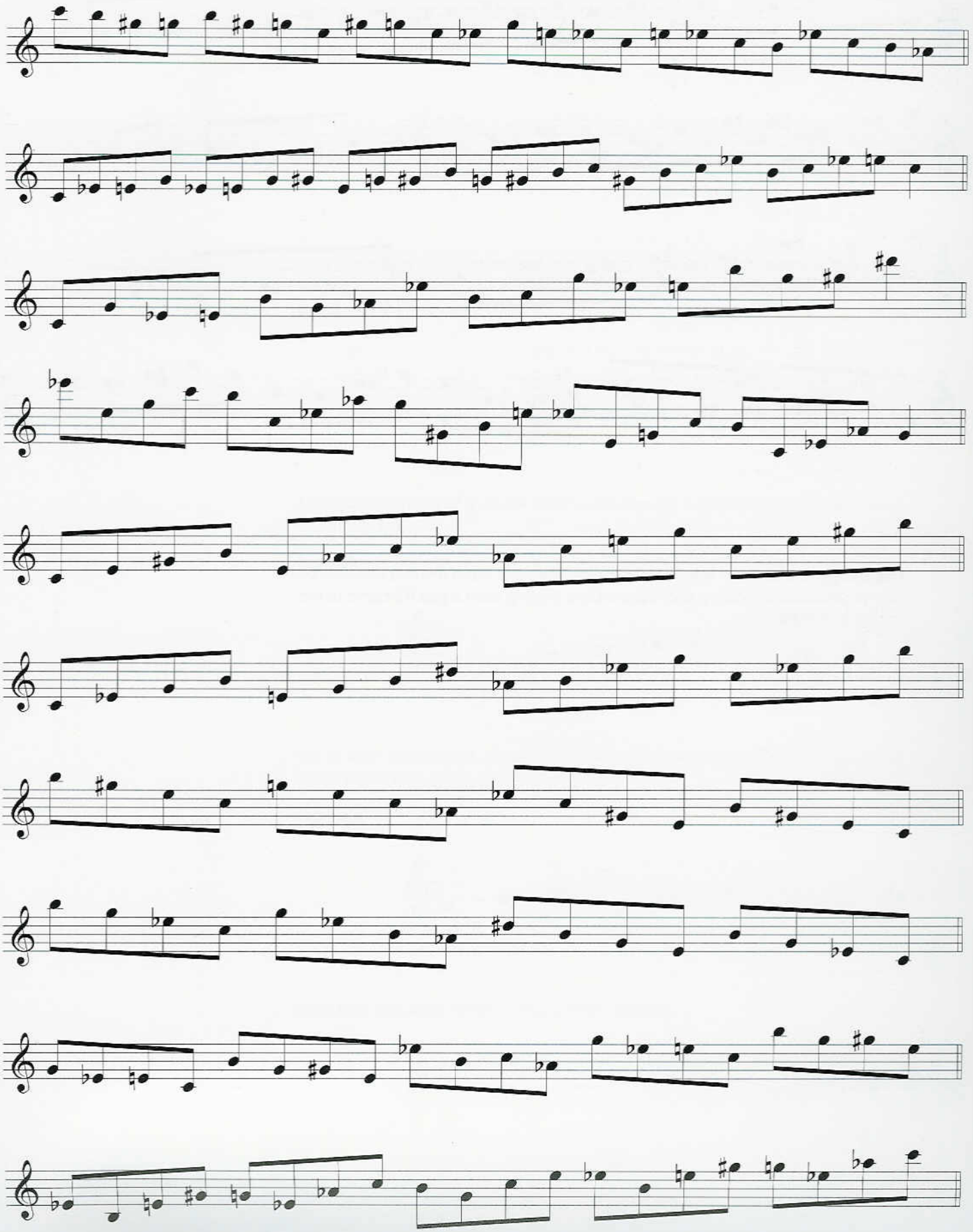
On a dominant 7$\flat$9 chord, the scale starts on the $\flat$9.

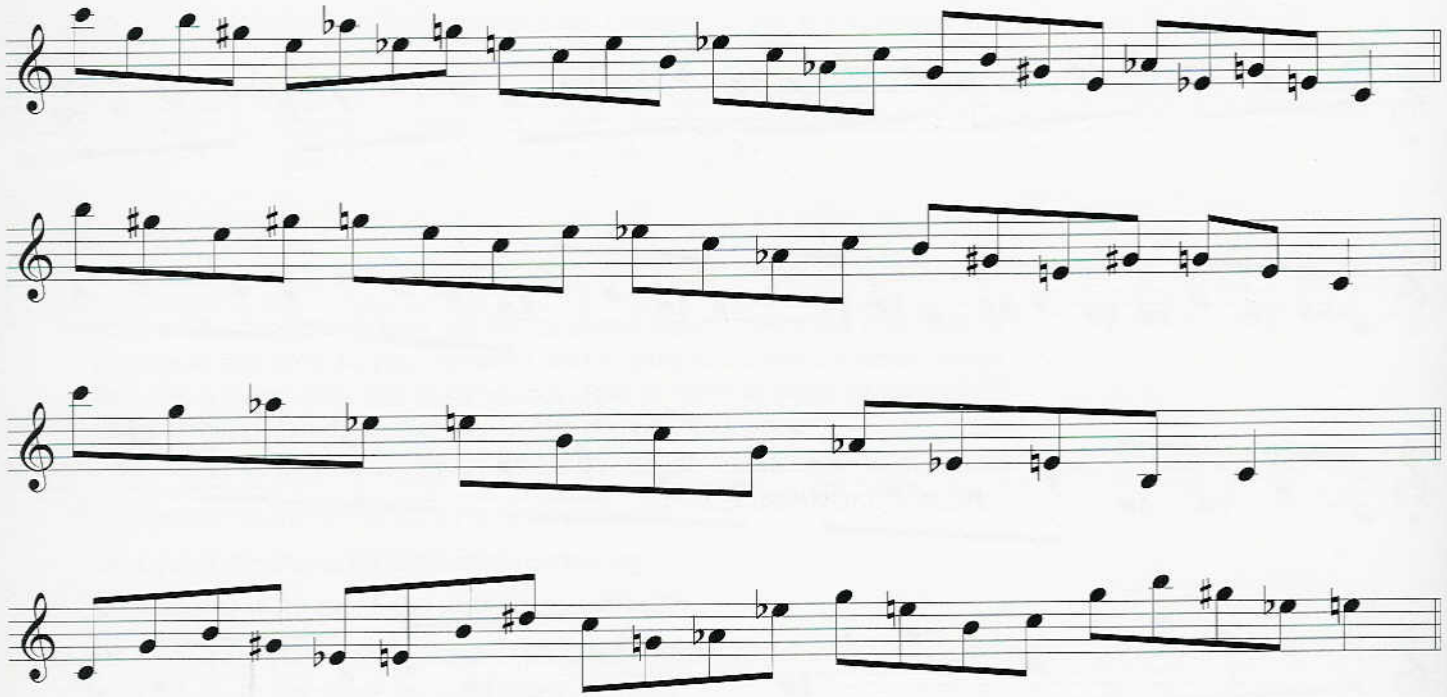
Sometimes the scale can start on the 3rd of a dominant 7$\flat$9$\flat$13.

major	=	**root**
minor 7	=	**3rd**
dominant 7	=	**7th**
minor 7$\flat$5	=	**$\flat$5**
dominant 7$\flat$9	=	**$\flat$9**
dominant 7alt	=	**3rd or $\flat$9**

Try using this scale on some of the play-along tunes.

Here are some warm-ups on a C augmented symmetric scale:



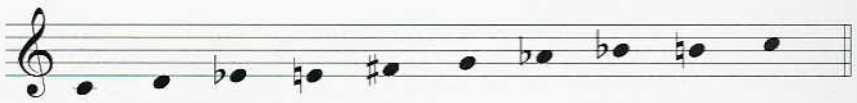


Like the diminished and whole-tone scales, this scale has a distinct and characteristic sound. Once you've spent some time playing with it you'll be able to recognize it immediately.

18. Nine-Note Symmetric Augmented Scales

The 9-note symmetric augmented scale starts with a whole step, then 1/2 step, 1/2 step, whole, 1/2, 1/2, whole, 1/2, 1/2.

Example:



This scale lends a chromatic exotic sound, however it has many avoid notes when played over various chords. Like the six note symmetric augmented scale, it fits over the following chords:

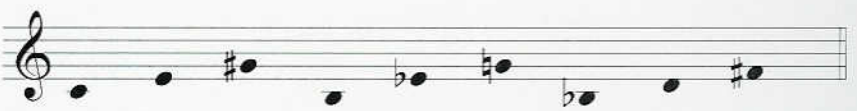
CΔ		EΔ		A$\flat\Delta$	
C$\Delta^{\sharp 5}$		E$\Delta^{\sharp 5}$		A$\flat\Delta^{\sharp 5}$	
A-7	D7	C$\sharp-7$	F$\sharp 7$	F-7	B$\flat 7$
F$\sharp-7^{\flat 5}$	B$7^{\flat 9}$	B$\flat-7^{\flat 5}$	E$\flat 7^{\flat 9}$	D$-7^{\flat 5}$	G$7^{\flat 9}$

This scale consists of a whole-tone scale plus an augmented triad starting on the minor 3rd.

Example:

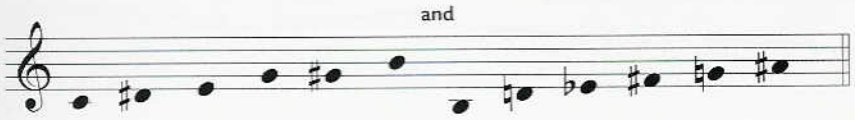
The 9-note augmented symmetric scale is also comprised of three augmented triads a half step apart.

Example:



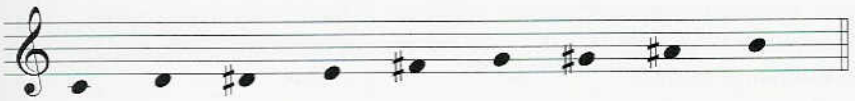
Note that this scale contains many fifth intervals:

It is also a combination of two six-note augmented symmetric scales that contains repeated notes:



There are six triads in the scale (C, E♭, E, G, A♭ and B).

Example:

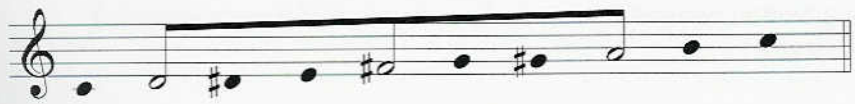


For a sound that's a bit more inside, try the 9-note hybrid. Take the six-note scale and add the most consonant triad to fit within the spaces.

Example: six-note scale

Add a consonant triad. This scale below would fit A–7 D7, F♯–7♭5 B7♭9 and CΔ.

Example:



So, the triad to add to the six note scale starts on the 11th for a minor 7, the root for a dominant, the 9th for the major, the ♭13 of the minor 7♭5, and the ♯9 for the dominant ♭9.

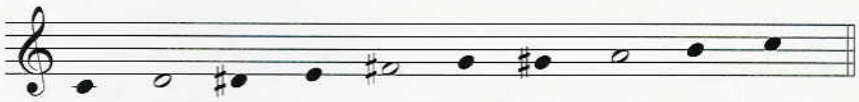
Example:

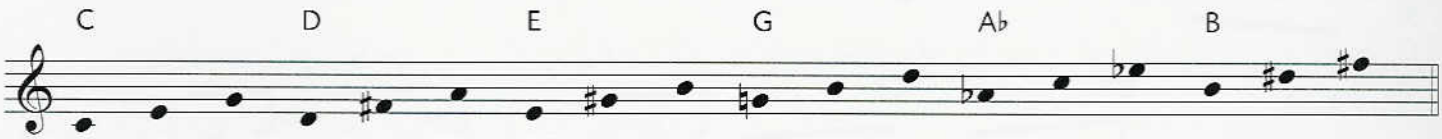
It is easier to visualize as:

a dorian with ♯11 and major 7 added,
a dominant with a ♭9 and ♯11 added,
a major with a ♯9 and ♯5 added.

This scale also contains six major triads.

Example: A–7 D7

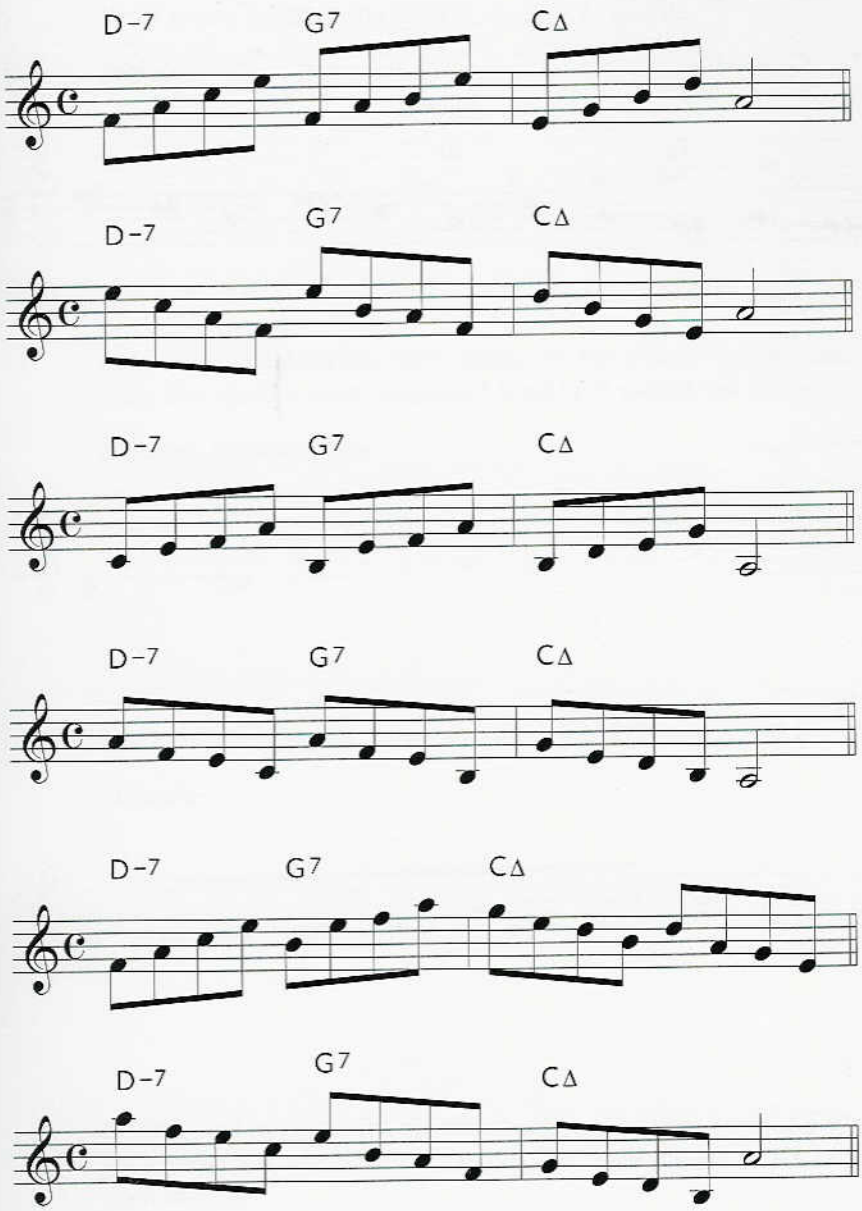




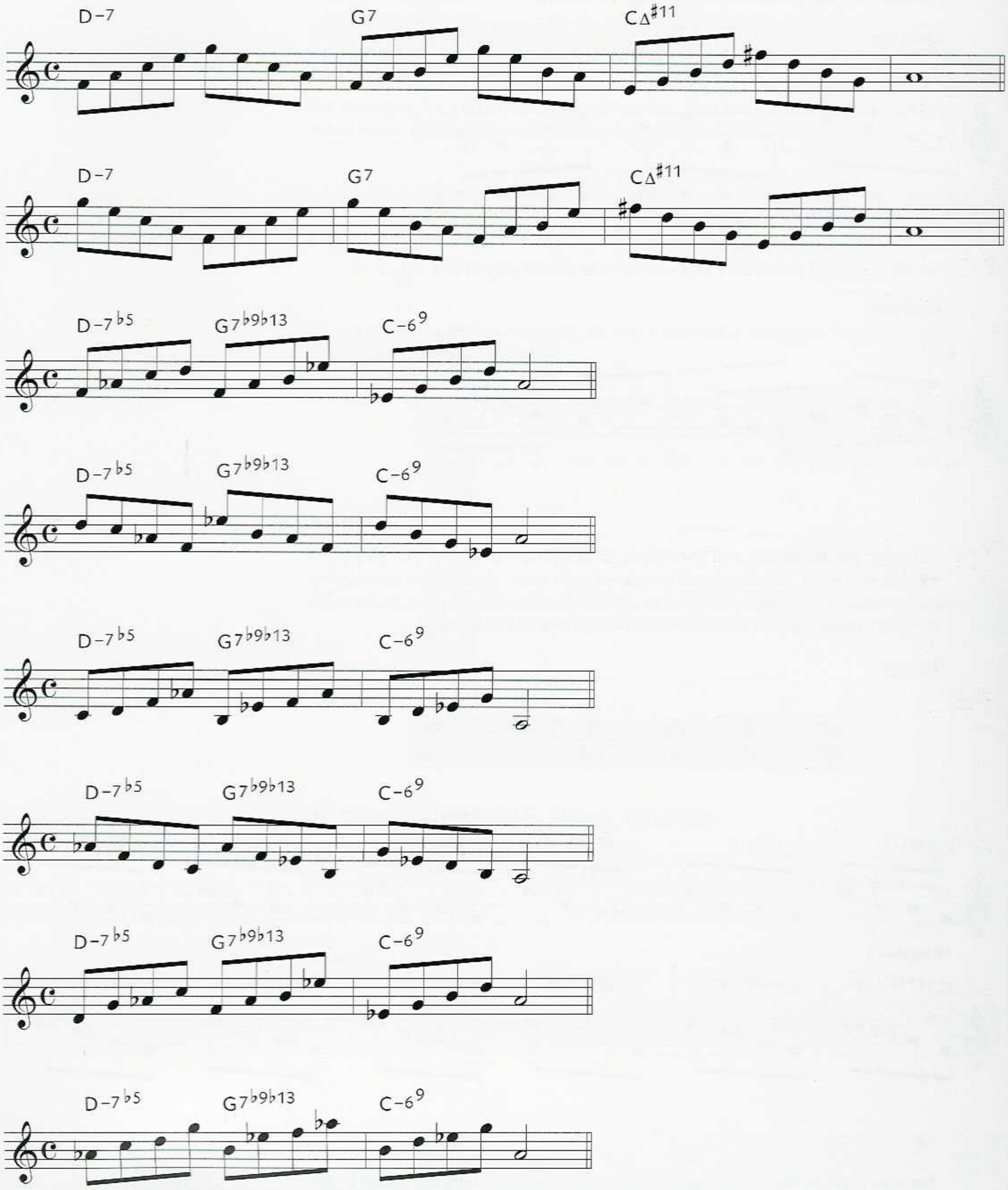
19. Piano Voicings for Improvisation

Today the modern day improviser plays off of the piano voicing of the chord rather than the symbol itself. On any given set of chord changes the interpretation of how to voice the chords can vary greatly. For this reason, it's a good idea to have some knowledge of piano voicings. This book is not intended for a complete study of piano voicings but here are a few basic ones spelled out in a linear fashion.

Example:

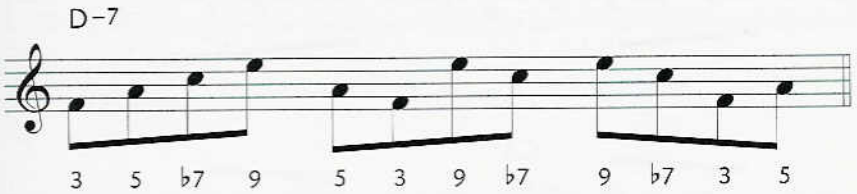


The above voicings can also be played out as:



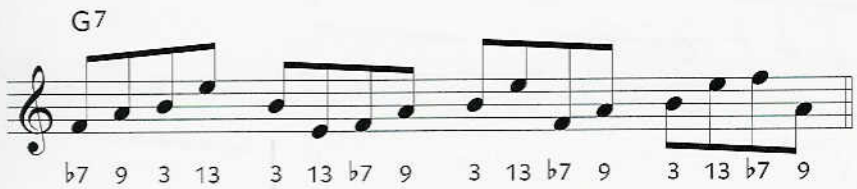
Needless to say, any combination can be used and there is much omitted here. Notice that for a D–7 chord the notes are 3 - 5 - 7 - 9. These notes can be played in other inversions, such as 5 - 3 - 9 - 7 or 9 - 7 - 3 - 5.

Example:



For a G7 chord, the notes are 7 - 9 - 3 - 13. They can be played as 3 - 13 - 7 - 9.

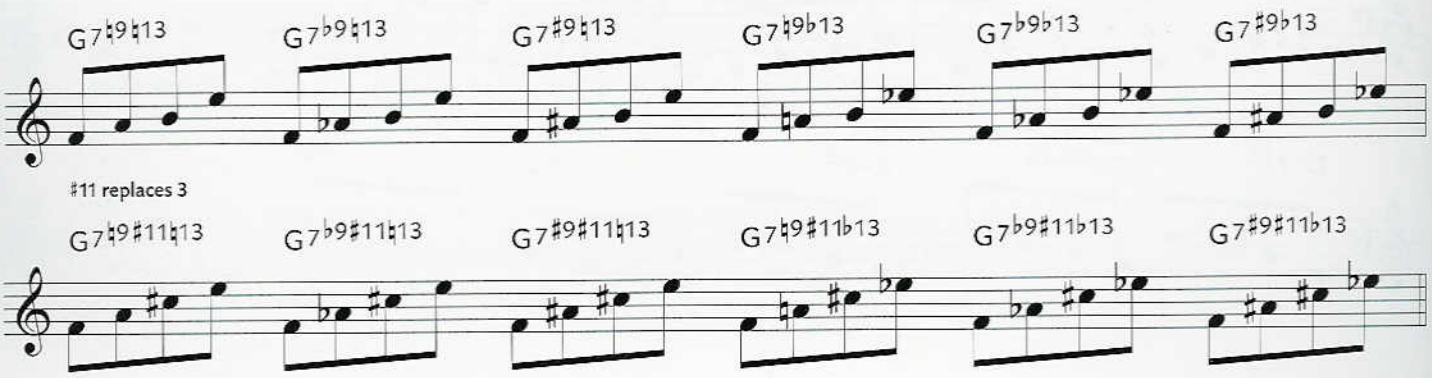
Example:



Including permutations and inversions, each four-note voicing can be played 96 different ways. The dominant chord has even more possibilities considering the possible variations for the ninths and thirteenths. Keeping the 3rd and 7th constant, there are six variations for combinations of the 9 and 13.

Example:

♮9	♭9	♯9	♮9	♭9	♯9
♮13	♮13	♮13	♭13	♭13	♭13



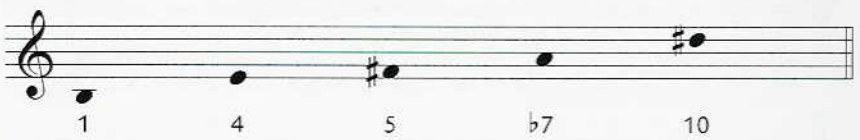
You can practice these arpeggios to familiarize yourself with the sound of different tensions. Playing these variations is great ear training. Listen for what kind of tensions the chordal instrument is using. Being able to determine what chord tones and what tensions are played in a voicing is key. Again, a whole study could be dedicated to different kinds of voicings and would be very helpful for improvisation. The above is just a linear approach to that end.

20. Interchanging Tonic Major and Tonic Diminished

One way to change the sound of a major chord is to give it a diminished sound. You can do this by moving down a 1/2 step from the root and thinking dominant ♭9 sus4.

For example, for a CΔ chord, play a B7sus4♭9 . This lends a kind of tonic diminished sound to the major chord. The chord scale could be this:

Over a CΔ this scale includes a ♯11, ♯9, and if you like, a ♯5 as well. The 3rd of the B7sus4♭9 becomes a tension 10.

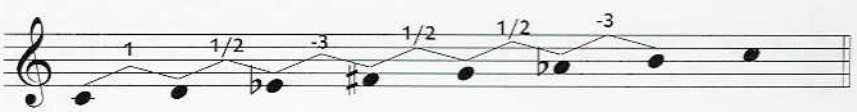


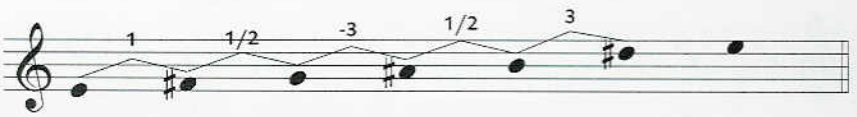
Another look:

21. Composing Scales Using Intervals

Using half steps, whole steps, and minor or major thirds, try to come up with scales that are not the typical forms of major, minor, melodic minor, or harmonic minor scales.

Example:





After composing several of these scales, try to find chords on which they might fit!

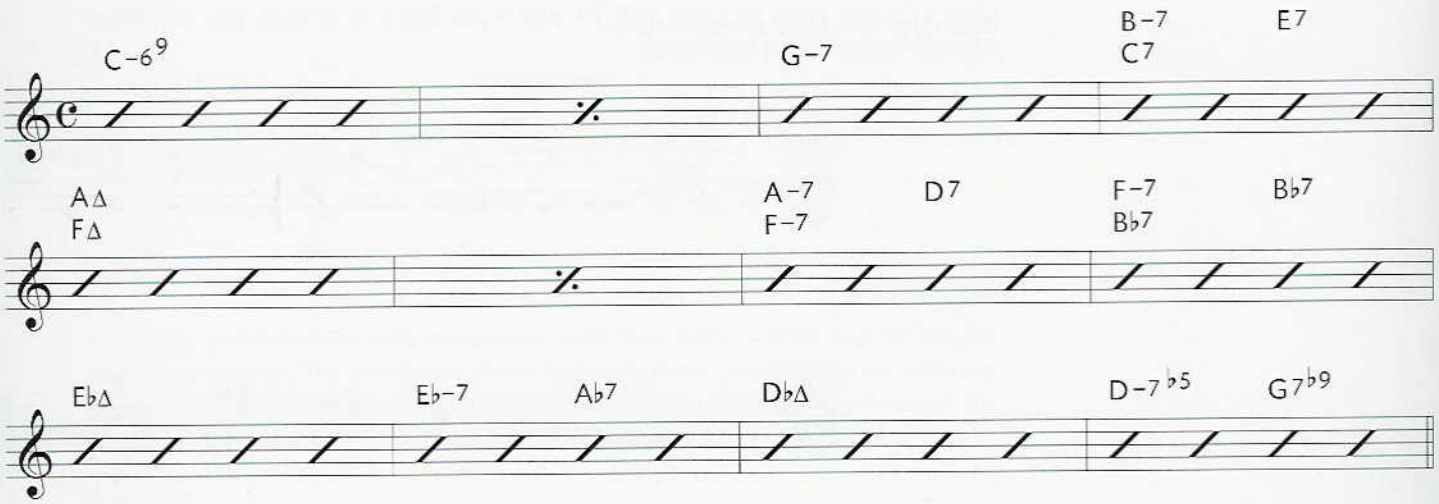
22. Diatonic Playing

Try improvising solos without using any chromatic approaches. Stick to playing only the notes within the appropriate chord scale. When you play within the chord and chord scale, it lends a particular sonority that is very recognizable.

23. Parallel Key Centers

Try choosing several bars of a tune (perhaps four) and as you play through a few choruses, play in another key for that segment. Often, the further away the key is from the original, the more convincing it sounds as it seems more intentional. Half steps, minor or major thirds and tritones work well.

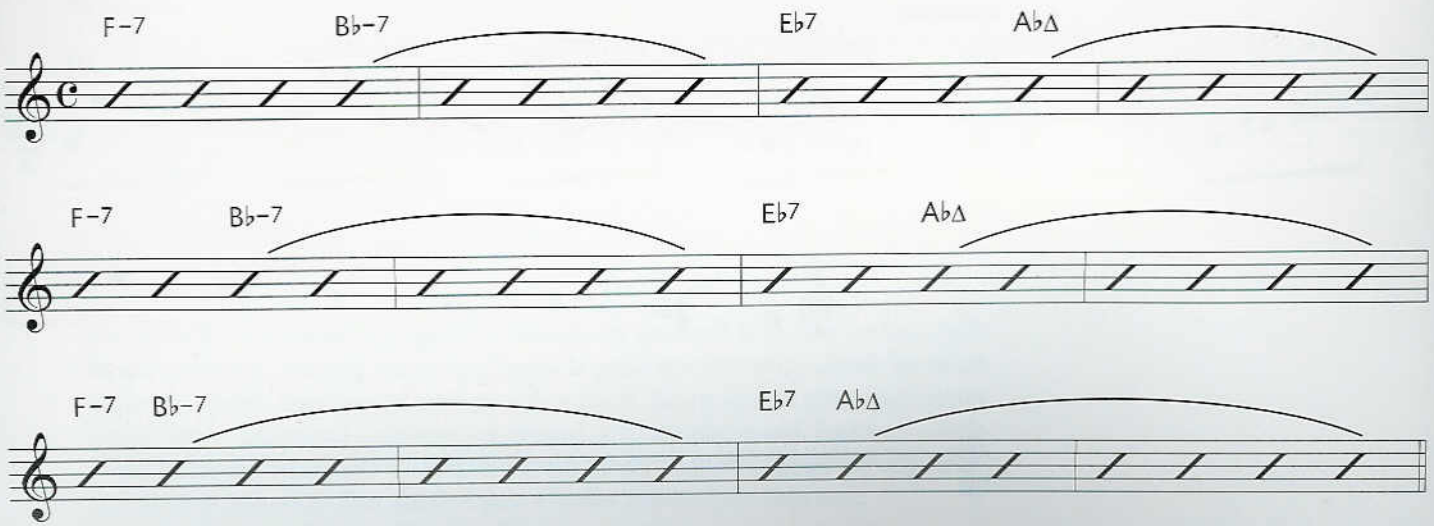
Example:



24. Moveable One Playing

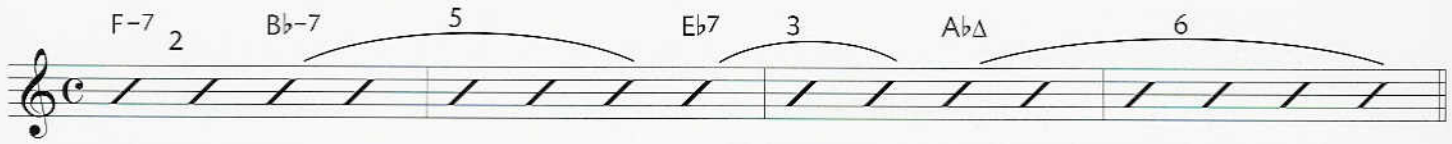
Rather than playing a usual 4/4 tune and thinking four beats of one chord to four beats of the next chord, try moving the chords and dividing the 4/4 into three plus five beats or two plus six, or even one plus seven.

Example: *Fangs from Afar*



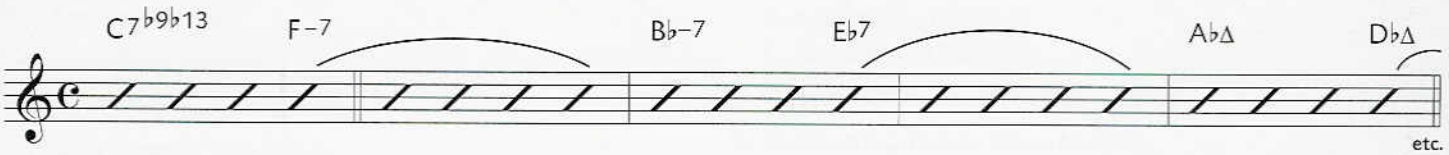
Again, thinking 3 plus 5, 2 plus 6, 1 plus 7, 5 plus 3, 6 plus 2, or 7 plus 1, can be very effective even if you don't actually play it because it opens a window in the mind that hears bigger spaces of time. In addition to thinking of these one at a time, you can play the different subdivisions randomly changing from 2 beats to 5 beats to 3 beats to 6 beats, for example.

Example:

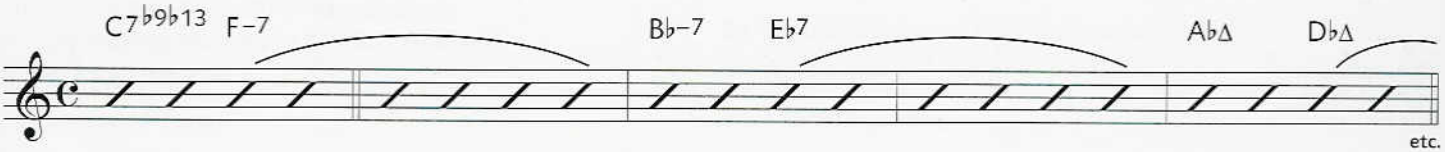


Another approach is to start on the last bar of the tune and cross all major bar lines with a moveable one.

Example: using 3 beats plus 5 beats



Example: using 2 - 6



25. Intervallic Playing Over Changes

Refer to VOLUME V, THESAURUS OF INTERVALLIC MELODIES.

26. Pentatonic Playing

Refer to VOLUME II, PENTATONICS.

27. Hexatonics

Refer to VOLUME VII, HEXATONICS, to be released.

28. Red-Note Playing

Try playing and hitting all of the wrong notes. (For some, this is easy.) It has quite a humorous effect. These notes will definitely create tension and demand resolution. Sometimes, being defiant pays dividends. Being aware of what you are doing and having intention are key.

Melodic Devices

1. 3, 4, 5, and 6-Note Shapes
2. Limited Range Playing
3. Large Range Playing
4. Avoid Starting on Beat One
5. Never End on Beat One
6. Creating Lyrical Melodies
7. Sparse Melodies
8. Angular Playing
9. Pointillistic Playing
10. Short Phrases, Short Rests
11. Long Phrases, Long Rests
12. Play Two Bars and Rest for One
13. Play Four Bars and Rest for One
14. Starting Motives on Different Beats (or Playing Motives in 3/4, 5/4, 6/4 and 7/4 Against 4/4)
15. Common Tones
16. Range Playing
17. Returning or Referring Back to a Tone
18. Starting Off a Phrase With the Same Notes That Ended the Last Phrase
19. Repeated Notes
20. Interval Playing
21. Comping As a Soloing Device
22. Approach Notes
23. Diatonic Playing
24. Rhythmizing Scale Sequences
25. Octave Displacement
26. Modal Sequencing Through Changes
27. Playing the Same Rhythm As in the Tune Melody Using Different Notes
28. Concept of Connecting Chords Rather Than Playing on Them As a Device
29. Concept of Playing
    A. On Changes
    B. Against the Changes
    C. Through the Changes
30. Quoting Melodies From Other Songs
31. Contrasting Two or More Motives
32. Number of Notes Per Bar
33. Number of Notes Per Phrase independent of Bar Lines
34. Quarter-Note and Half-Note Solos
35. Long Notes
36. Triadic Melodies
37. Chromatics
38. Blues Melodies and Blues Scales
39. Melody Notes Phrased With Different Rhythms
40. Contrasting Fast and Slow Melodies in a Duet Fashion
41. Large-Interval Playing
42. Space
43. Playing Accents

Melodic Devices

1. Shapes

Limiting one's playing to only three-note melodies (not including repeated notes) creates melodies with different shapes. There are four possible directional shapes. After playing the first note, the melody can move either

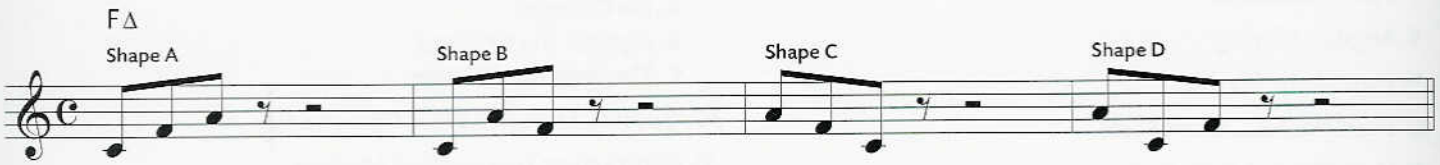
A) up, up ↑ ↑

B) up, down ↑ ↓

C) down, down ↓ ↓

D) down, up ↓ ↑

Example: three-note shapes

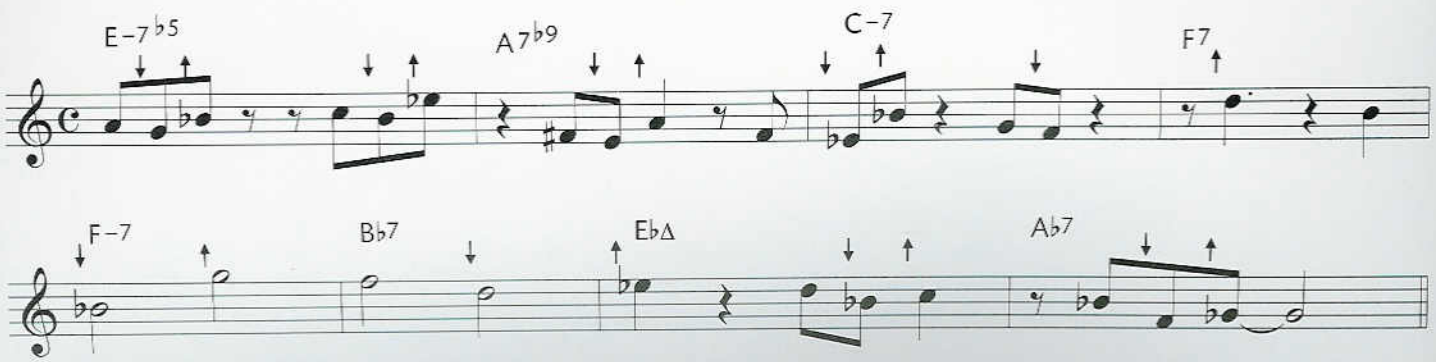


These directions are loose guide lines lending a lot of leeway to the creative improviser. The following example shows how differently the B up, down option can be played. Note that the last note can be above or below the first.

Example: B) could look like this

Along with the great variety of shapes you can create using only three notes, when you add the element of rhythm the possibilities become infinite.

Example: using shape D with varying rhythms *(Tell Her to Hold Tight)*



Playing these shapes will definitely help you to come up with ideas you would not normally play. Spending a lot of time with one shape and making it your own is recommended before moving on to another. You might find that certain shapes are ones that frequently show up in your playing while others feel more alien to you. Practicing these shapes will help to free up the contour of your melodies.

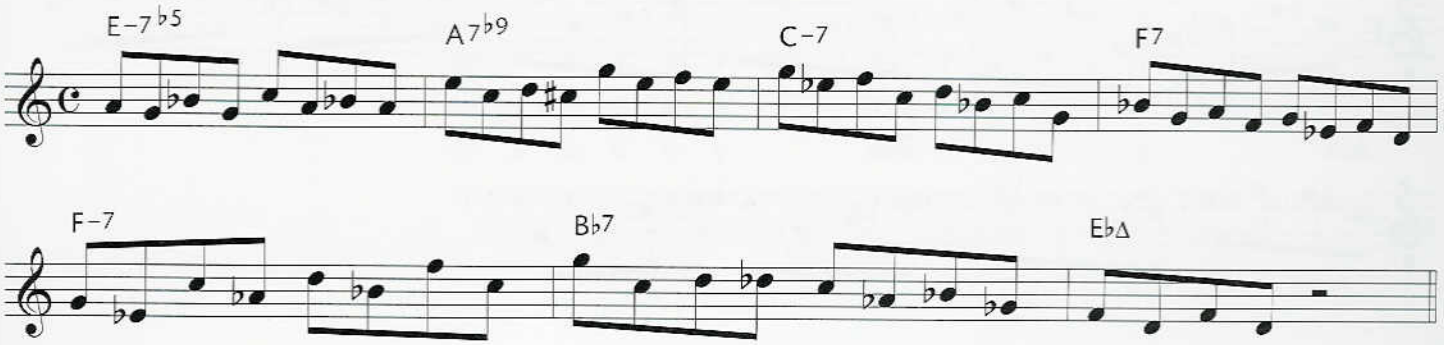
Four-note shapes:

A) ↓ ↓ ↓
B) ↓ ↓ ↑
C) ↓ ↑ ↑
D) ↓ ↑ ↓
E) ↑ ↑ ↑
F) ↑ ↑ ↓
G) ↑ ↓ ↓
H) ↑ ↓ ↑

Example: shape B on an E♭Δ

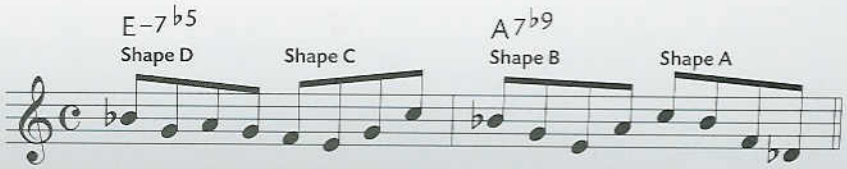
Four-note shapes are interesting played as all eighth notes. Try picking a shape and sticking to it.

Example: *Tell Her to Hold Tight*

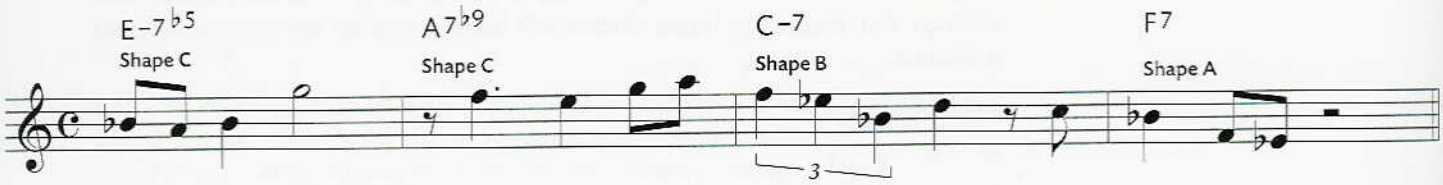


Another challenge is to play a different shape every four notes.

Example:



Here is an example of four-note shape s using different rhythms.



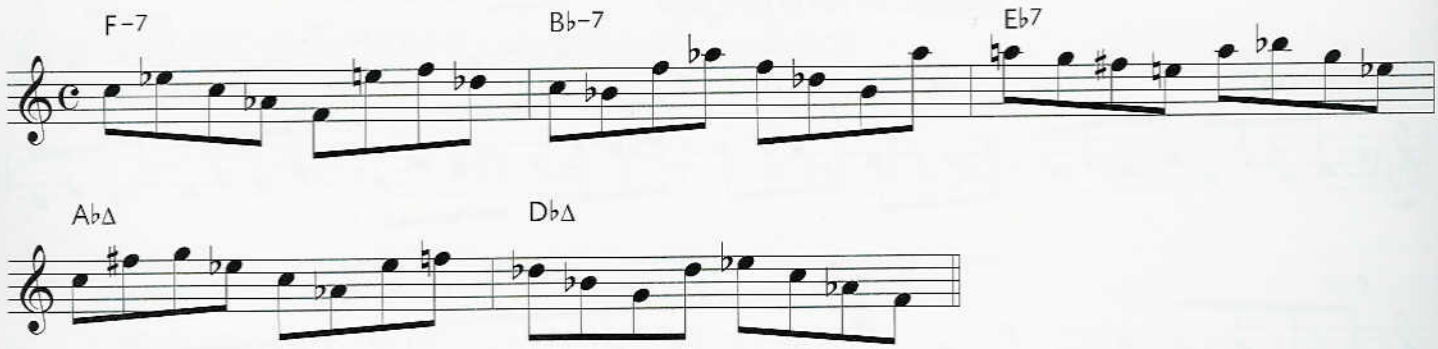
Example:

Five-note shapes:

A)	↓	↓	↓	↓		I)	↑	↑	↑	↑
B)	↓	↓	↓	↑		J)	↑	↑	↑	↓
C)	↓	↓	↑	↑		K)	↑	↑	↓	↓
D)	↓	↓	↑	↓		L)	↑	↑	↓	↑
E)	↓	↑	↑	↑		M)	↑	↓	↓	↓
F)	↓	↑	↑	↓		N)	↑	↓	↓	↑
G)	↓	↑	↓	↓		O)	↑	↓	↑	↑
H)	↓	↑	↓	↑		P)	↑	↑	↑	↓

Five-note shapes can be very intriguing because if played as consecutive eighth notes they create a 5/8 rhythm that passes over the bar lines of 4/4. (or 3/4)

Example: *Fangs from Afar* (shape M)



It takes five bars to work out and on bar six you begin the phrase on beat one again. Needless to say, you don't have to use consecutive eighth notes, nor do you have to use any eighth notes. Five-note shapes add a slightly different ingredient to the mix, as they are more atypical than the four-note shape. Any odd numbered grouping, such as threes, fives, or sevens, will create a downbeat followed by an upbeat phrase.

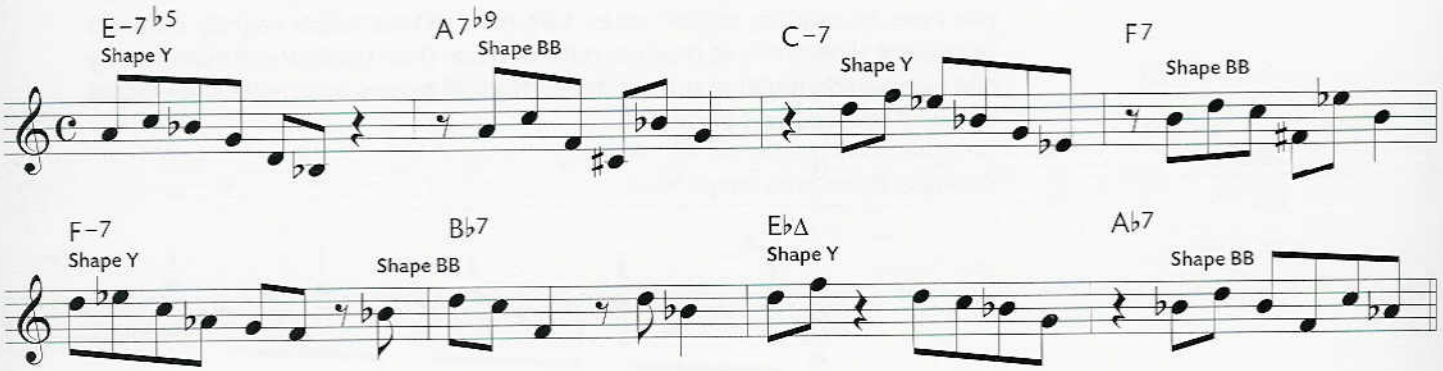
Example: three-note shape

All of the melodies in VOLUME V, A THESAURUS OF INTERVALLIC MELODIES, were composed with shapes in mind. Just playing those melodies stretches the ear into hearing different shapes without necessarily even being conscious of it.

Six-note shapes:

A) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
B) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑
C) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑
D) ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓
E) ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑
F) ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓
G) ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓
H) ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑
I) ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
J) ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
K) ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓
L) ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑
M) ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓
N) ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑
O) ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑
P) ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓
Q) ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑
R) ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓
S) ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓
T) ↑ ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑
U) ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓
V) ↑ ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑
W) ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑
X) ↑ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓
Y) ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Z) ↑ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↑
AA) ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↑
BB) ↑ ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓
CC) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↑
DD) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ ↓
EE) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↓
FF) ↑ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑

Example: Tell Her to Hold Tight



Longer shapes have slightly increased difficulty. Practicing these shapes of 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 or more notes, the improviser begins to retain the sound of each grouping and this helps with motivic playing. Being familiar with the sound of a five-note shape, for example, allows you to place that grouping within smaller of larger spaces of time. Playing five notes in two beats, three beats, or four beats can lead the way to some polyrhythmic playing. You can figure it out!

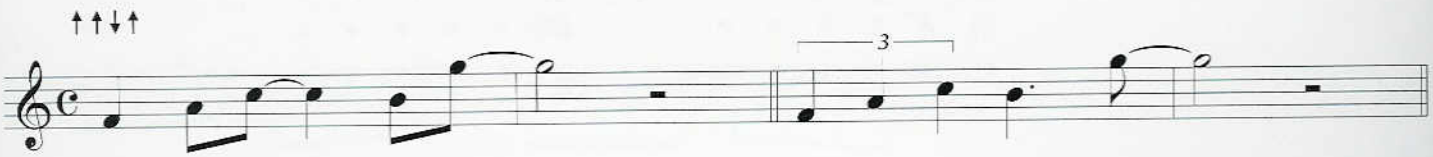
Here are some suggestions for practicing shapes:

1. First, play consecutive eighth notes to get used to the shape while leaving rests between each shape.
2. Be sure to play the shape starting on a downbeat and also on an upbeat.

Example:

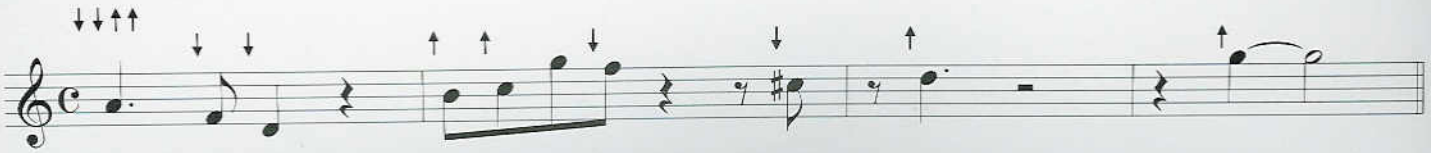
3. Play the shape without rests. Playing 3, 5, 6, or 7-note shapes without rests will give way to over the bar line phrasing in 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, or 7/8-phrases.
4. Play the shape with different rhythms. You can change the duration of each note although it isn't necessary.

Example:



5. Try disconnecting the shape.

Example:

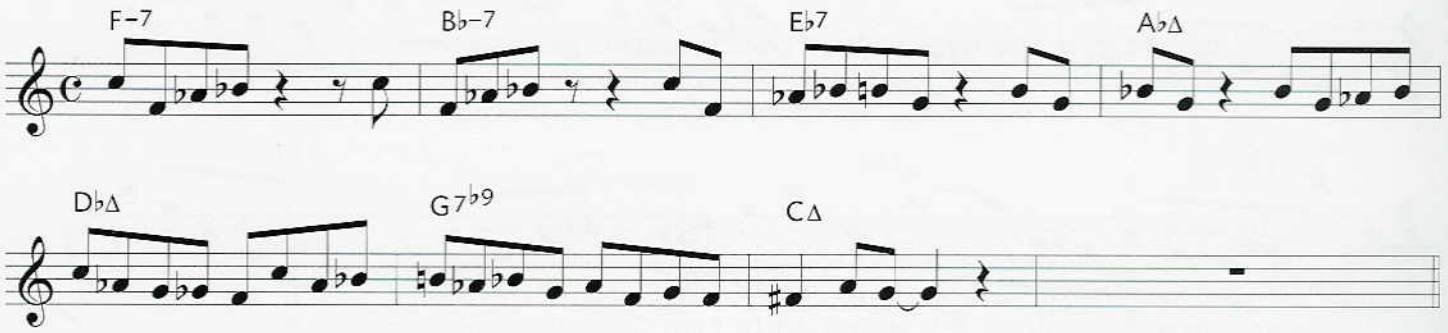


6. Try anything else you can think of. You make the rules and set the parameters.

2. Limited Range Playing

a. Try playing your entire solo (or just a part of it) within the range of a perfect fifth. Limiting yourself in this way forces the player to greater improvising, playing more motivically and more rhythmically.

Example: *Fangs from Afar*

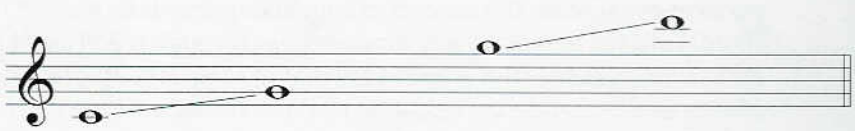


b. Try picking another perfect fifth range on the same tune. Playing within a limited range also helps you to play more horizontally rather than vertically.

c. Try playing a few more fifth ranges on the tune and it will give you a whole other take on visualizing the changes.

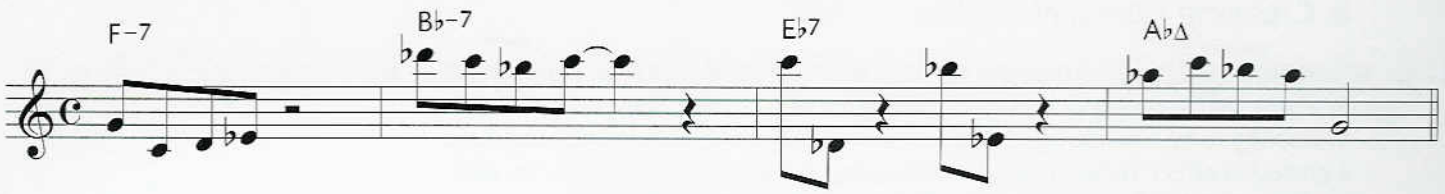
d. Choose two different fifth ranges that are in different registers of your instrument and play question and answer.

Example:



Playing only notes within these two fifth ranges and nothing between them lends a kind of call and response sound to your solo, a kind of duet with yourself. Use your imagination. You can play a phrase in the bottom fifth to a phrase in the upper fifth or even one note in the bottom to one note in the upper fifth range.

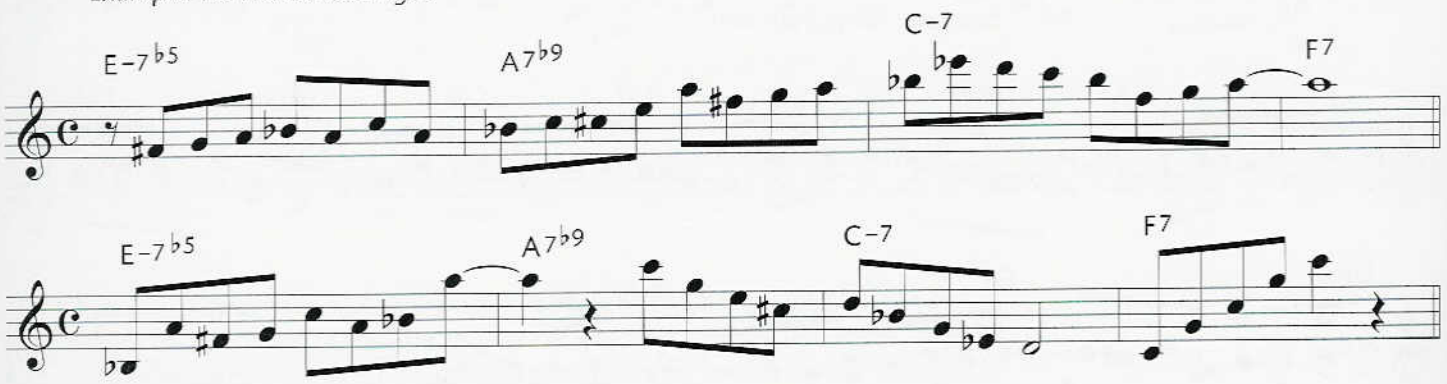
Example:



3. Large Range Playing

Try playing lines that span over 1 1/2 octaves. You can do it quickly by playing big leaps or you can take your time by playing smaller intervals.

Example: *Tell Her to Hold Tight*



Because there is a greater separation between notes when playing large interval melodies, sometimes it can create more impact.

4. Avoid Starting on Beat 1

Take a look at some solo transcriptions of your favorite players and notice how many times they start a phrase on beat one. Great players seem to play independent of bar lines. The concept of connecting chords by playing "between the chords" applies here. Take any tune and play through it and avoid starting your phrases on beat one. This is not to say that in a real playing situation you should always avoid starting on beat one but it is rather an exercise in gaining the independence from always having to start on beat one.

5. Never End on Beat 1

Not ending phrases on beat one is a similar exercise to the one above. It promotes independence and the ability to play over the bar line. It also enables you to have melodic contrasts to the harmonic cadences that are part of the tune, and tends to create a more horizontal sound.

6. Creating Lyrical Melodies

Sometimes the most memorable part of a solo is a lyrical phrase. It is the phrase in a solo that you might sing along silently and are more likely to internalize. The ability to be convincing in this way and to play a singable melody can have a profound effect. Notice if your favorite players have lyrical qualities. Try playing through a tune and using only what you hear as lyrical melodies.

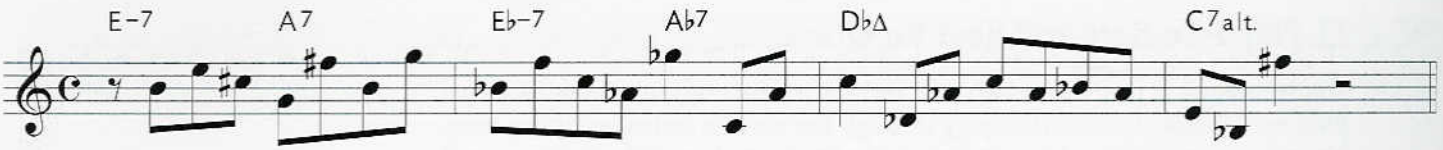
7. Sparse Melodies

Creating sparse melodies gives the rhythm section the opportunity to interact. This is a great device for pacing and developing a solo as each phrase seems to have more impact when left uncluttered.

8. Angular Playing

Try playing angular, creating a jagged effect with large intervals, starts and stops and unusual shapes. It is more challenging than it sounds. This technique can really stand out against a conservative rhythm section.

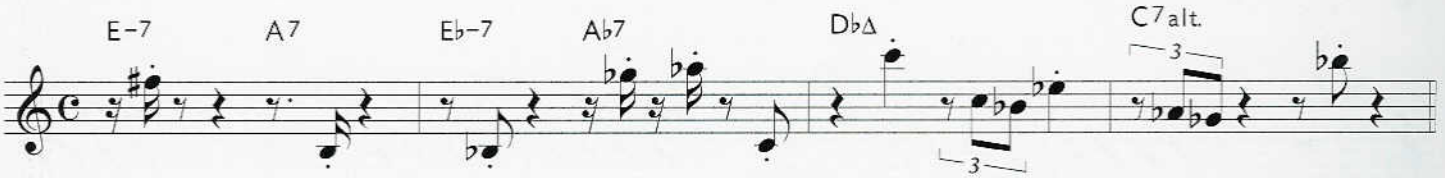
Example: *Table Stakes*



9. Pointillistic Playing

Pointillistic playing is also a contemporary classical technique that has a great impact as it draws attention to itself. It seems to say, "listen to me". This device usually employs short notes with jagged rhythms.

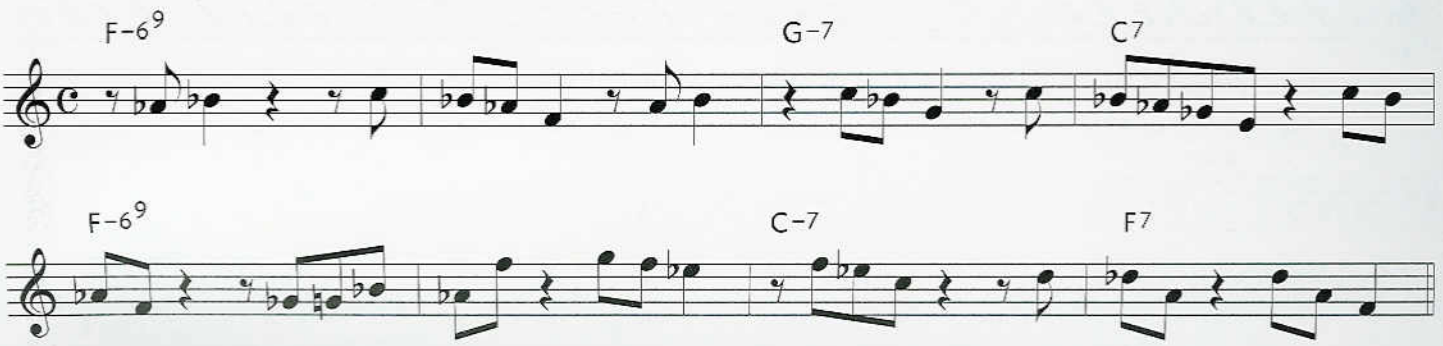
Example: *Table Stakes*



10. Short Phrases, Short Rests

Creating short phrases and short rests has impact when played at every entrance to a new phrase. You can use anywhere from one to five notes followed by a short space.

Example: *Underdog*



This technique has a teasing effect; the listener might be prompted to say "out with it!".

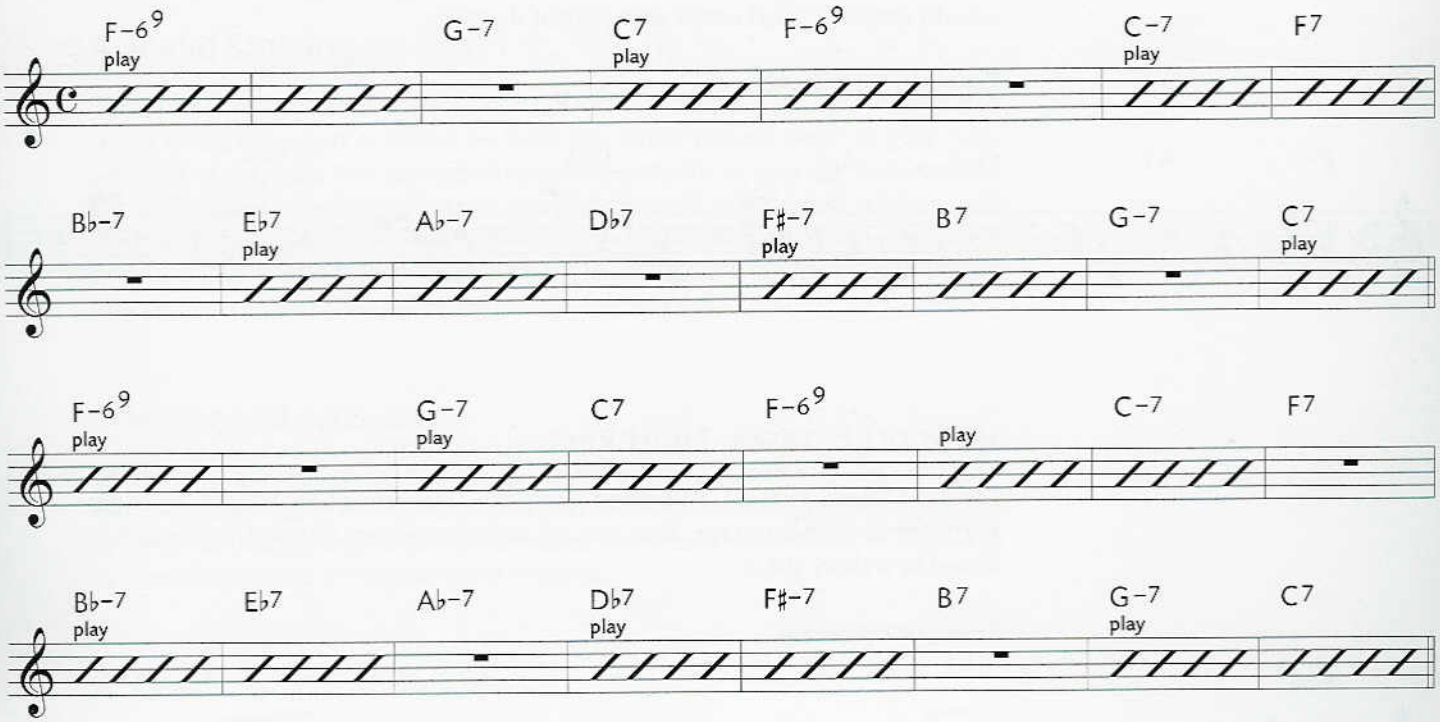
11. Long Phrases, Long Rests

Playing long phrases on the other hand can create another effect. Four bars or more could qualify as "long" but it depends on the tempo. On a slow ballad, for example, a two bar phrase might seem long while on an up-tempo tune a long phrase could be as much as sixteen bars. Leaving long rests seems to be more challenging to most improvisers. For some reason, players have a hard time leaving long rests. Sometimes, not playing for three beats can feel like an eternity. Try leaving two to eight bar rests. Needless to say, these exercises are all relative and are intended to help the soloist qualify different melodic techniques.

12. Play Two Bars and Rest for One

This technique of playing for two bars and resting for one bar creates three bar phrases. It helps the soloist to play through the natural cadences of the song. Playing in odd numbered bar phrases helps the ear to hear in larger phrases. It opens a window in the mind and develops the ability to hear eight, sixteen and thirty-two bar phrases. Phrasing with threes, fives or sevens overlaps the standard forms.

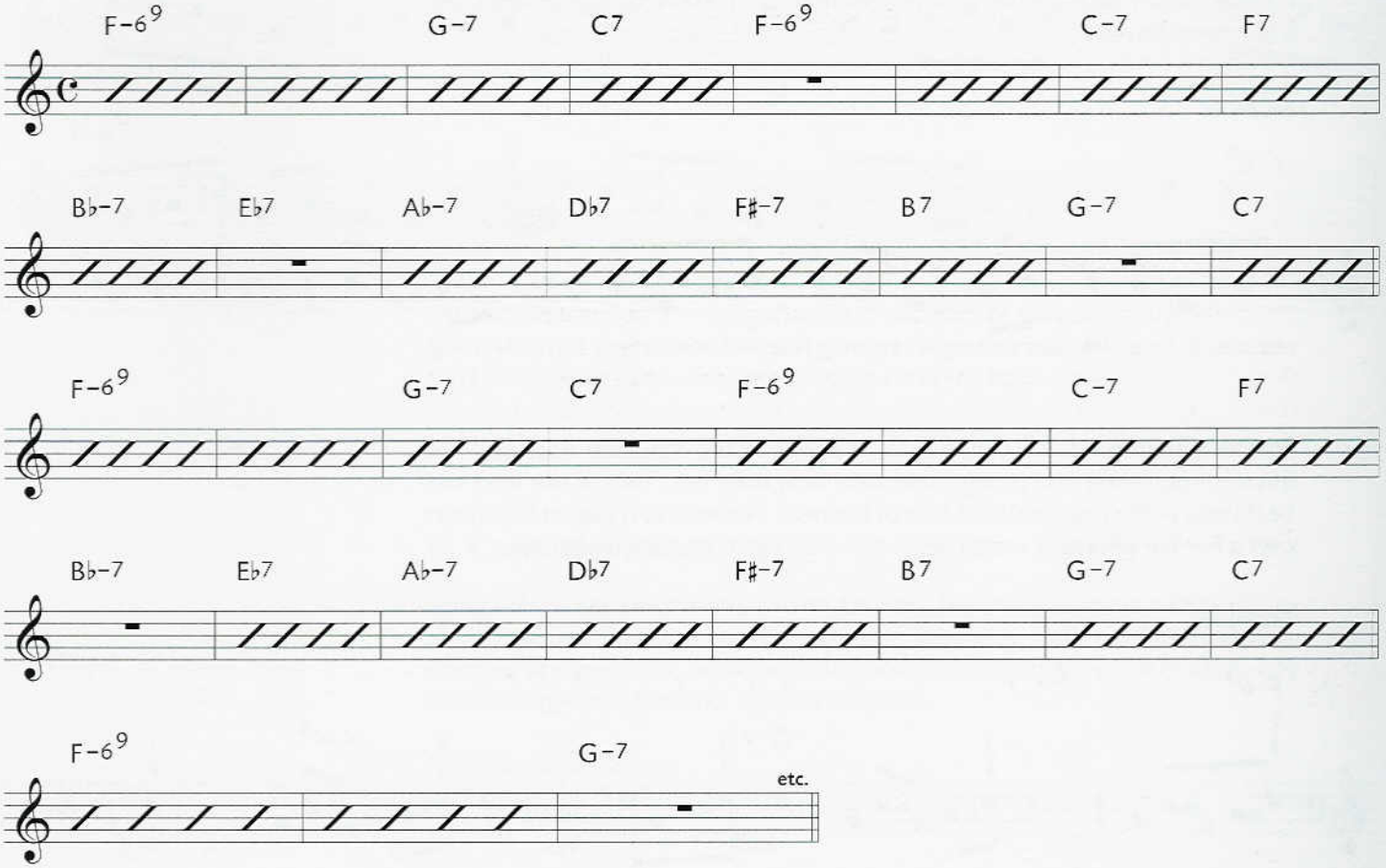
Example: *Underdog*



13. Play Four Bars and Rest for One

Do players actually think about playing for four bars and resting for one during any given solo? Hell no! This is something you do in a practice room to train the ear to hear phrases that vary in length and to also hear different entry points.

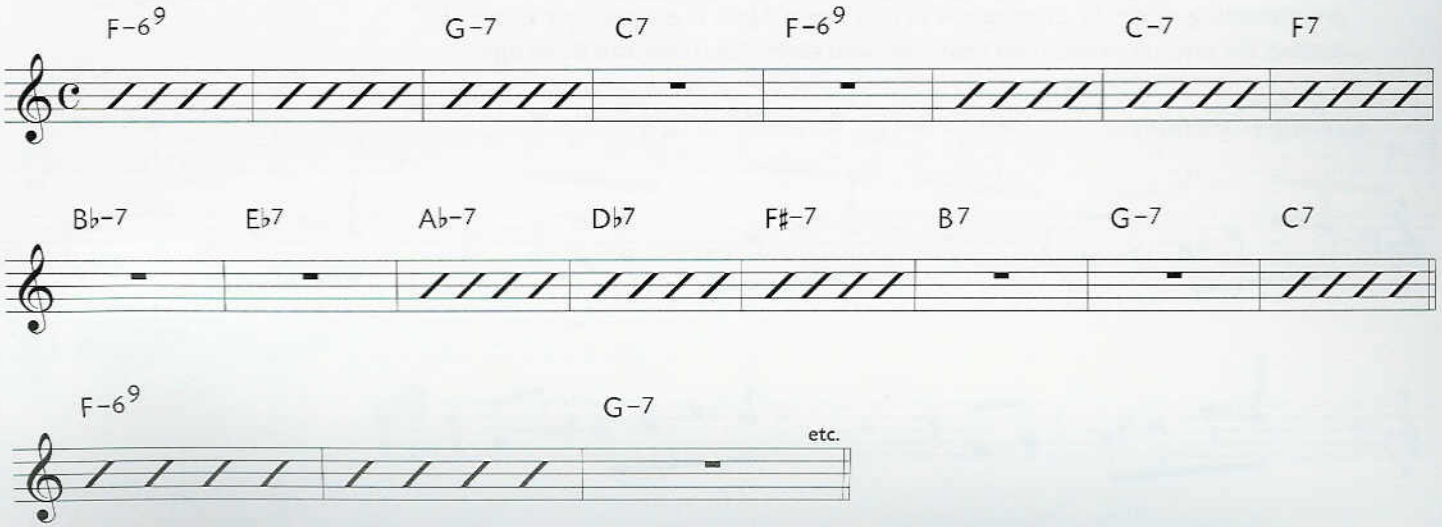
Example: *Underdog*



Play three bars and rest for two

This exercise creates five bar phrasing.

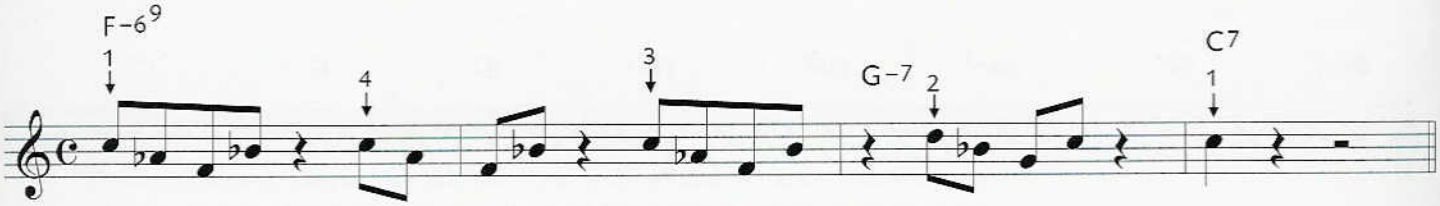
Example: *Underdog*



14. Starting Motives on Different Beats (playing motives in 3/4, 5/4, 6/4 and 7/4 against 4/4)

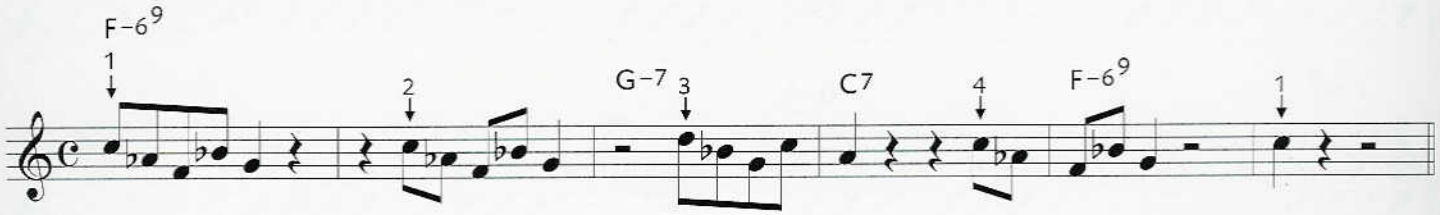
To play a motive in 3/4 you string together a three beat motive. If you begin the motive on beat one, you would repeat it starting on beat four, then beat three of the next measure and then beat two of the next measure. The cycle begins again when you start the motive again on beat one of the next measure. The following example is a three beat motive that consists of four eighth notes and a quarter note rest.

Example:



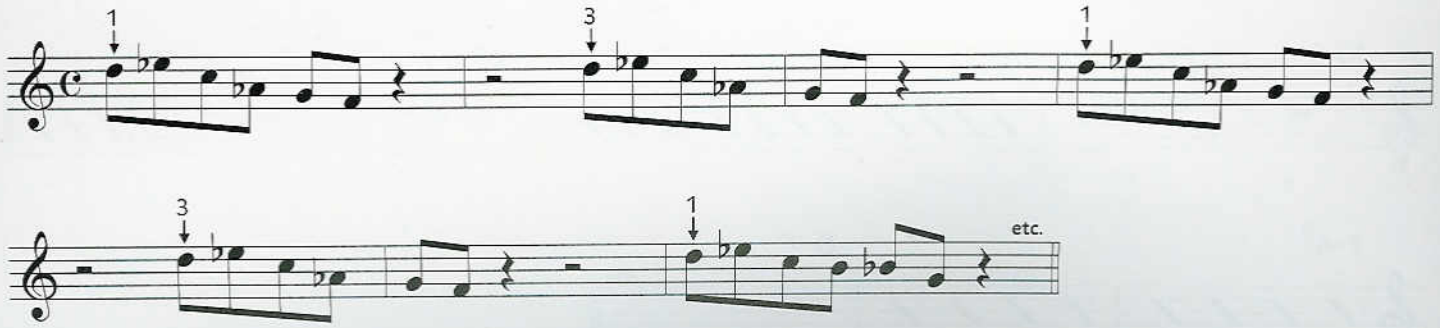
This next example is a 5/4 motive (four eighth notes, a quarter note and two quarter note rests) and it begins on beat one, then beat two of the next bar, beat three of the next and beat four of the next. The motive is played four times over a five bar phrase. It would begin the cycle again starting on bar six.

Example:



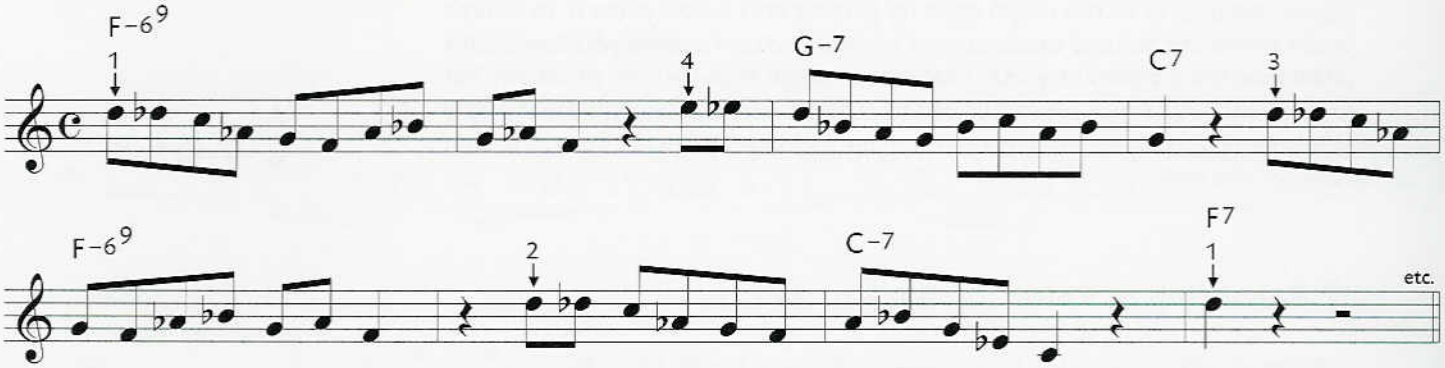
This device is made easier by starting the motive on beat one, obviously you can start a motive on any beat, on an upbeat or downbeat. Note that a 3/4 motive takes three bars to work out, a 5/4 motive takes five bars, a 6/4 motive takes six bars, and a 7/4 motive takes seven bars to work out on a 4/4 tune. On the other hand, when playing other time signatures like 3/4, 5/4 and 7/4, you can create an interesting effect by playing 4/4 across them. Here is an example of a 6/4 motive, the entrances occur on beats one and three, then one and three again.

Example: *Underdog*



Starting on beat one, the entrance points for a 7/4 motive will be beats 1, 4, 3, 2, and back to beat 1.

Example:

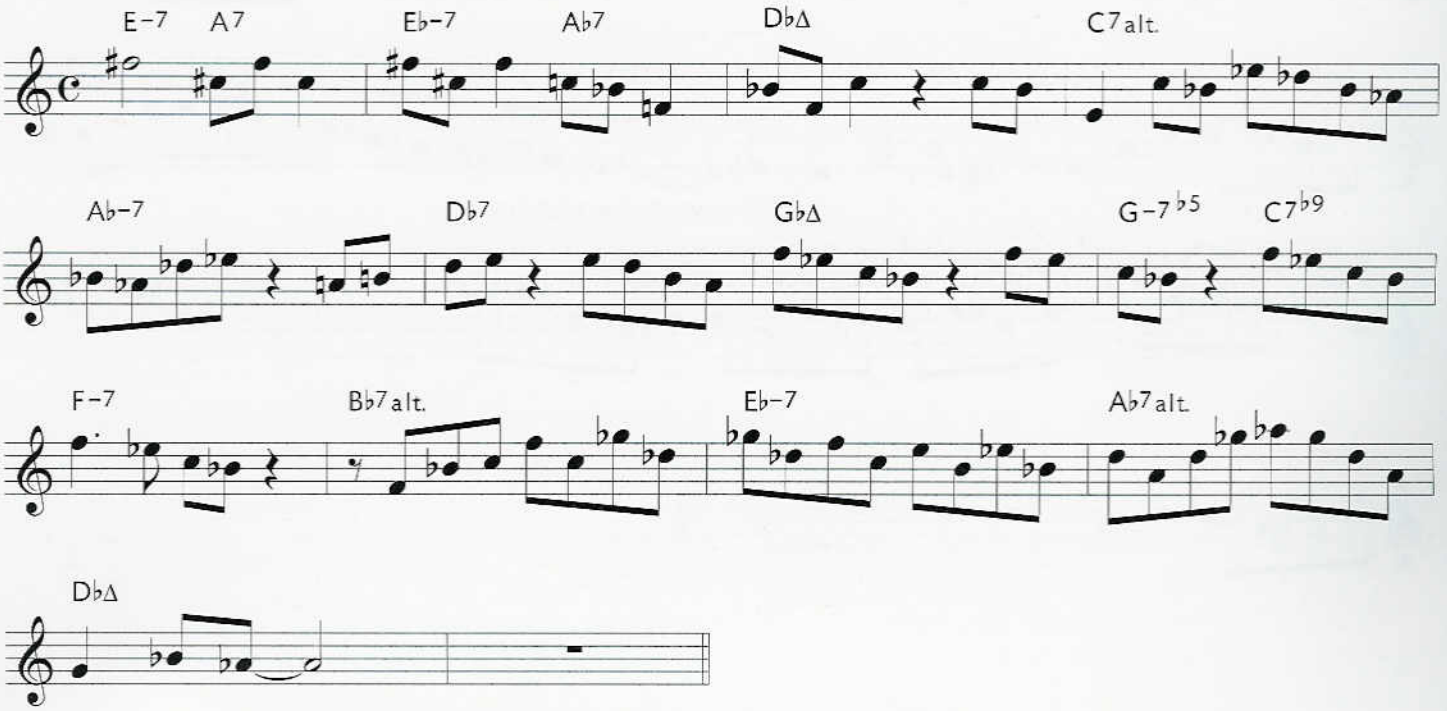


Just trying out these exercises will give you a greater awareness of where you start your phrases and what beat you are on in the bar.

15. Common Tones

Being able to see the common tones through the chord changes allows you to play melodies that are more horizontal, melodies that pass through the changes as opposed to sounding out the different changes. That is not to say that this approach is better, it is just different.

Example: *Table Stakes*



16. Range Playing

Pick a register on your instrument and stick to it. Play a whole chorus or solo within that range. For example, on saxophone, try playing a solo without going above middle D or C. You might even try playing only below a low G. In today's world where the volume levels can get up there, saxophone players have really developed the altissimo register that cuts through high volume situations but in many instances we have forgotten about the lower register. This area usually needs work. It is an invaluable asset to hear melodies and have fluency in that range of the horn.

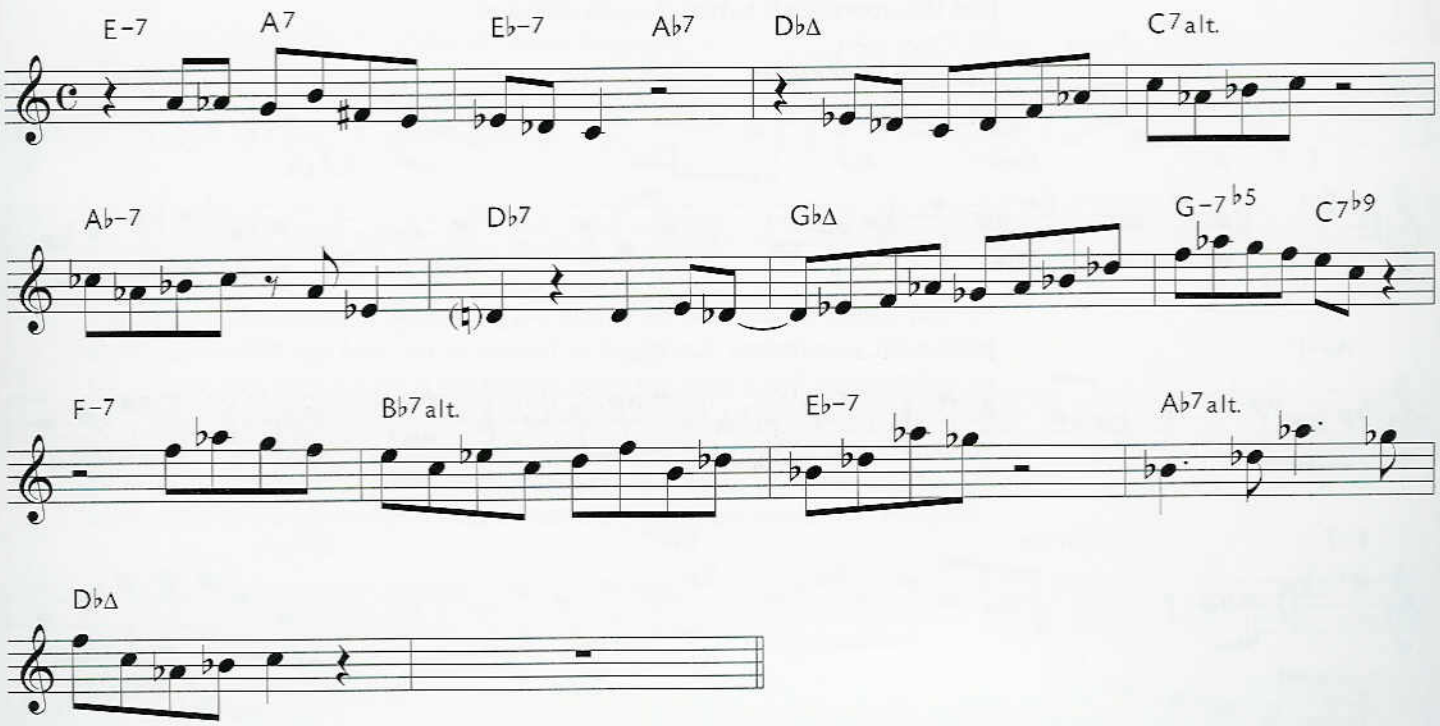
17. Returning or Referring Back to a Pitch

Coming back to or referring back to the same one or more tones during a solo creates continuity and is a very effective tool. These pitches can be highlighted by your sound and articulation, as well as, by the register that they are played in.

18. Starting Off a Phrase With the Same Note That Ended the Last Phrase

If the last note doesn't fit the next chord, move up or a down a half step.

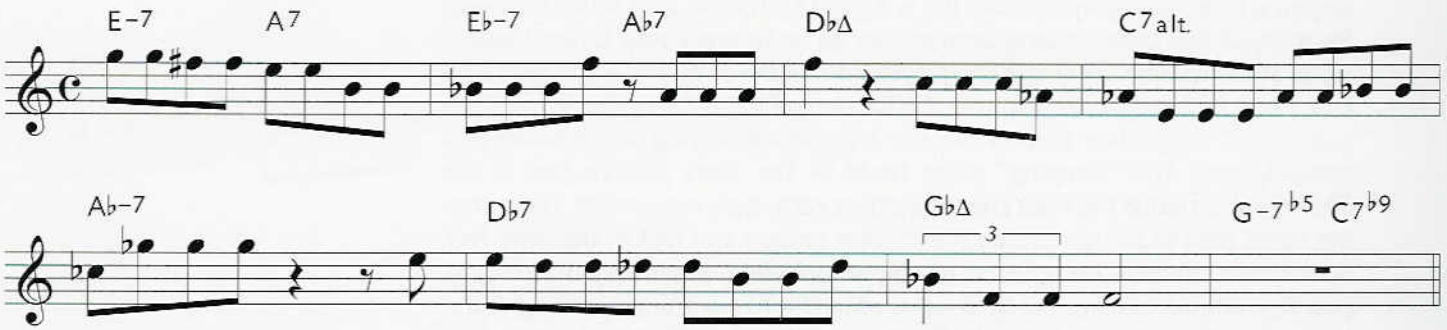
Example: *Table Stakes*



19. Repeated Notes

Try repeating the same pitch two or more times for a melodic and rhythmic effect.

Example: *Table Stakes*



Each of these melodic devices seems so simple as they are very conceptual but they are the kinds of things that you can immerse yourself in and really "stylize" and make part of your own voice.

20. Interval Playing

Try playing solos using predominantly one interval.

a. seconds

b. thirds

c. fourths

d. fifths

e. sixths

f. sevenths

g. combine any two intervals

Intervals can be played diatonically or chromatically in and out of the changes. Of course, it is next to impossible to play any interval exclusively and that is why I use the word, predominantly.

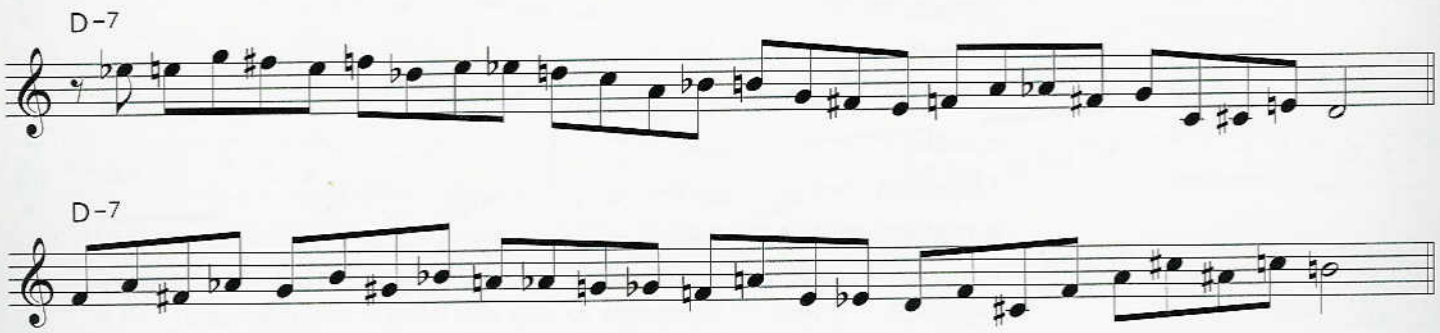
21. Comping As a Soloing Device

The ability to make someone else sound good is a real art! Using the right notes and the right rhythm is essential. When talking about comping as a soloing device here I am referring to comping for yourself. For a chordal instrument it is easy to understand the concept of setting the stage for your lines by playing a few comping chords. The ability to mix in a few beats, a bar, or a few bars of comping (like piano players often do) is a great technique that sets a backdrop for many of the other soloing devices that go on in one's solo. Often though, when students who are single line players (not piano or guitar) are asked to try this, there is the quizzical response, "What do you mean by supportive accompaniment?" Single line players can use this device playing single notes in a comping way. The "comping" notes could be the more passive part of the improvisation while the lines are more active with more movement. The comping notes help to put you inside the rhythm section and lock in the time feel. Sometimes students have a kind of epiphany feeling when they understand, "Oh that is what playing the time is!" Compare it to a piano player's right and left hands. The left hand comps for the right setting the stage for the lines. This is a great skill to have for duet playing as well. Some of the ways you can comp for yourself might be playing bass lines, guide tones, or simply rhythmic hits with great notes. Try getting together with another horn player and play tunes together and comp for each other. Are you helping or hindering the soloist?

22. Approach Notes

The use of approach notes and passing tones gives the soloist twelve notes that can be played over every chord. The sonority of approach notes is distinct.

Example: D–7



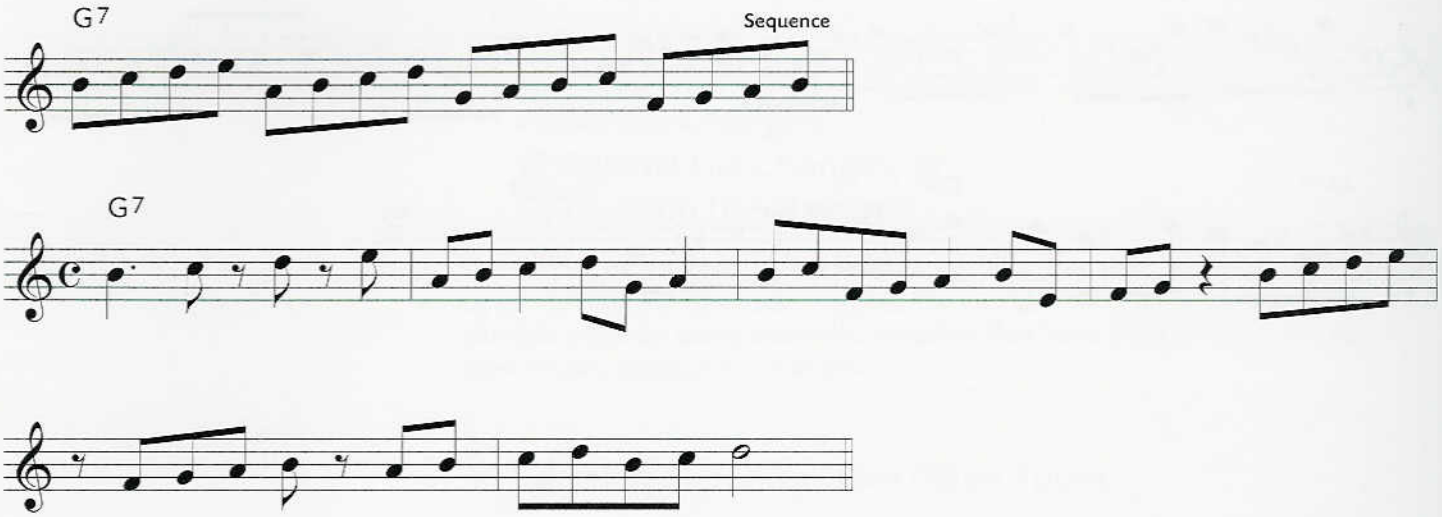
23. Diatonic Playing

Playing diatonic melodies without the use of approach notes, passing tones, or bebop scales is in stark contrast to treating every chord with the possible twelve tones. It has a very consonant sonority that can be quite lyrical and rhapsodic. Check it out.

24. Rhythmizing Scale Sequences

Try taking a simple scale sequence and rhythmize it by playing it with different rhythms, leaving notes out, inverting it, or skipping some notes. This technique can add continuity to a melodic line and its possibilities are infinite. Try whatever you think works, you're writing the book!

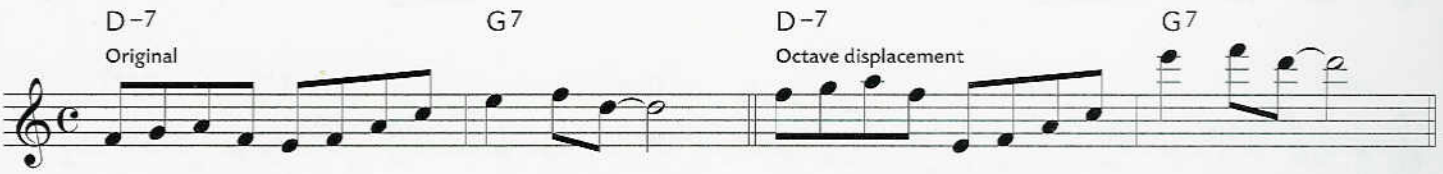
Example: G7



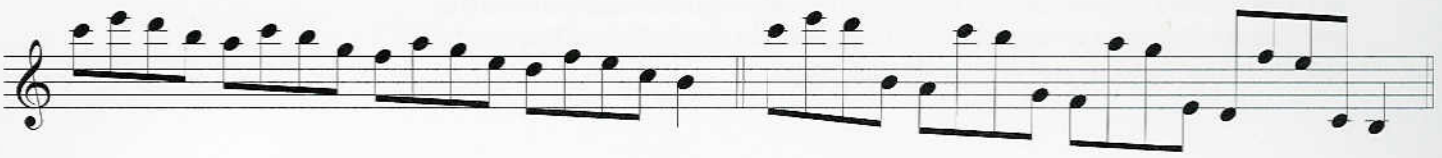
25. Octave Displacement

Take a melody and try to displace some of the octaves.

Example:



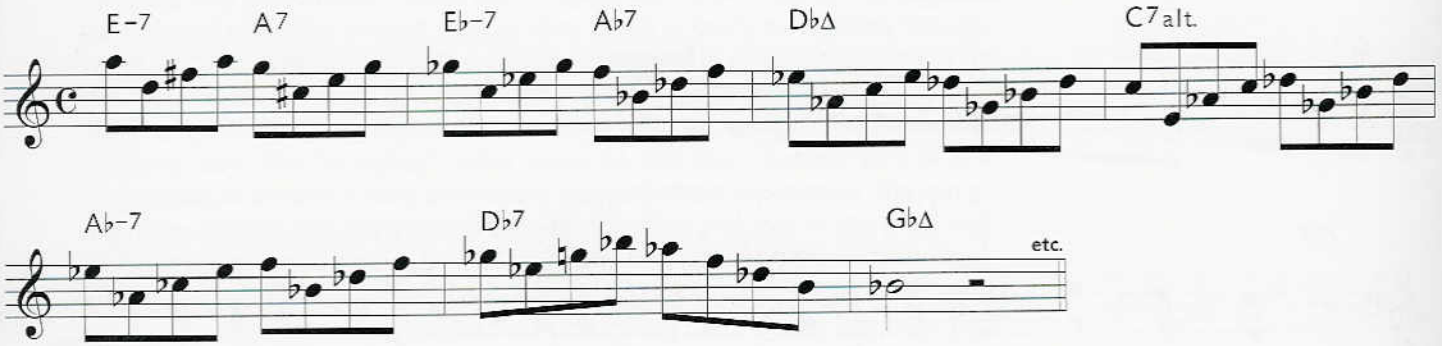
Example: octave displaced scale sequences



26. Modal Sequencing Through Changes

Taking a sequential melody and going through the changing harmony while retaining the shape of the sequences can give a seamless effect to chord playing.

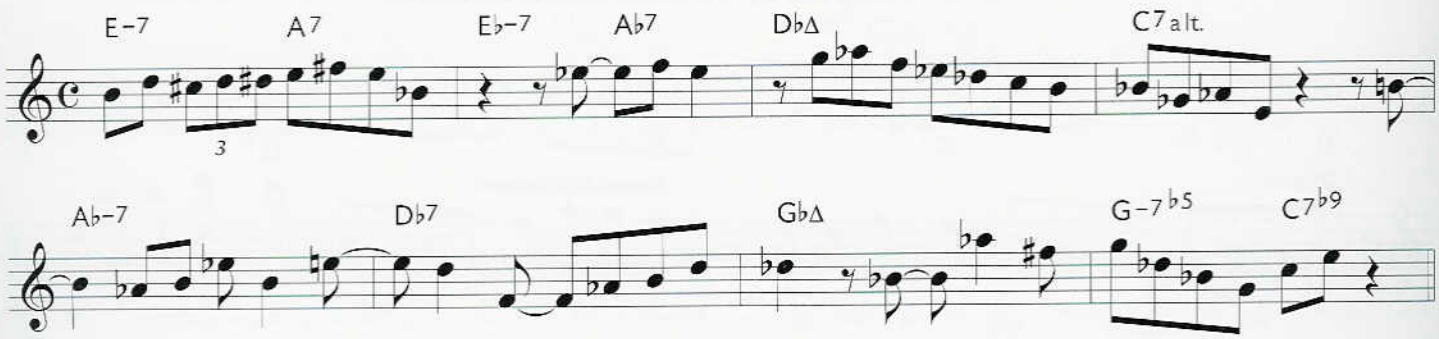
Example: *Table Stakes*



27. Playing the Same Rhythm As the Tune Melody But Using Different Notes

You can also try playing the rhythm of a different tune, as in the example below.

Example: *Table Stakes*



To take this a step further, try transcribing the rhythm of a solo and writing your own notes to that rhythm. Or, you might take that transcribed rhythm and put it on another tune. Notice if it is the rhythmic element that really makes the solo happen. It always amazes me that transplanting the rhythm still seems to sound convincing (choice of notes withstanding).

28. Concept of Connecting Chords Rather Than Playing on Them As a Device

The concept here overlaps a little with common tone playing. Trying to get melodies that continue from one chord to the next is key. Playing a melody on each individual chord without connecting them creates a "boxy" effect. Connecting the chords with melodies creates a horizontal rather than vertical effect.

29. Concept of Playing
A) On the Changes,
B) Against the Changes, or
C) Through the Changes

Playing on the changes is self-explanatory. Playing against the changes could be using different substitutes against the changes while playing through the changes could be using intervallic melodies that have a life of their own and seem to pass through the changes.

30. Quoting Melodies From Other Tunes

In the right hands this can have good effect, in the wrong hands it could sound corny or too cliche.

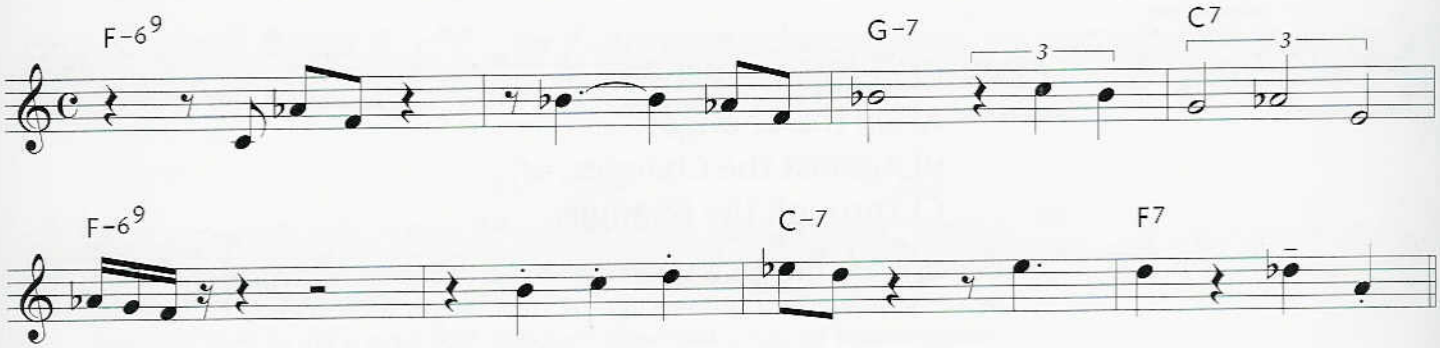
31. Contrasting Two or More Motives

Contrasting two or more motives in a solo leads to compositional solos. Start with two very distinct motives and see if you can play an entire solo with them. This can lead to question and answer type playing.

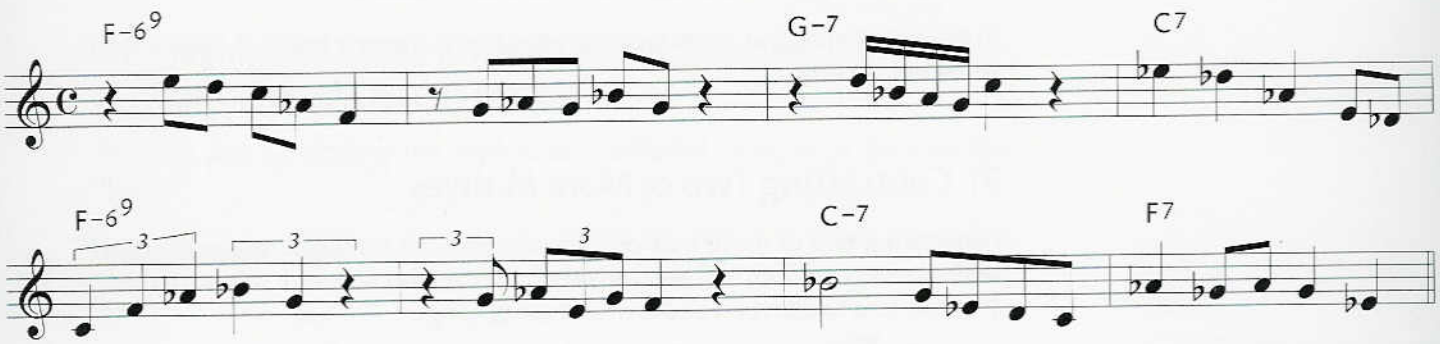
32. Number of Notes Per Bar

Using a specific number of notes per bar lends a motivic composition to your improvising. It is also a way to use pacing and create continuity in your expression. Try picking anywhere from one to seven notes per bar (only one number at a time) and varying the rhythm.

Example: *Underdog* 3 notes per bar



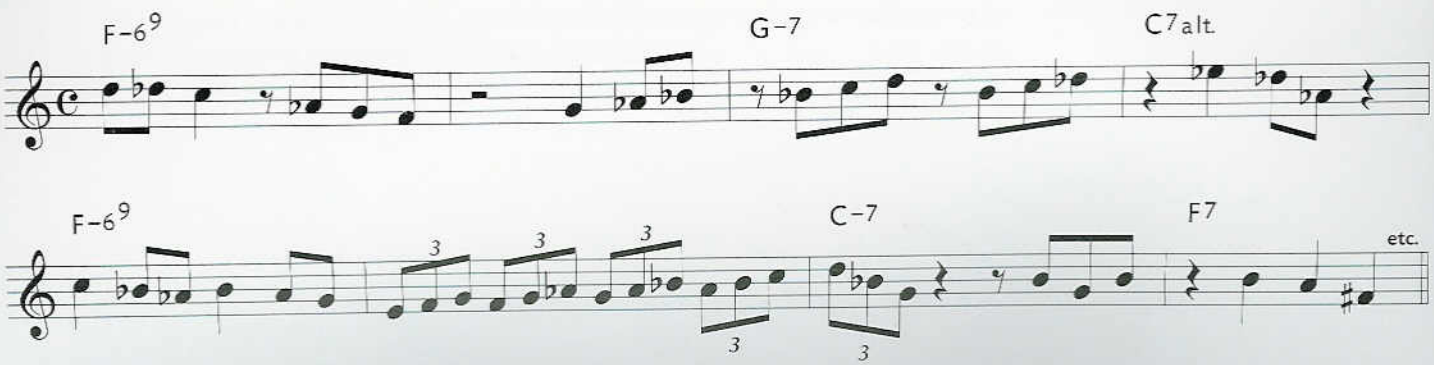
Example: *Underdog* 5 notes per bar



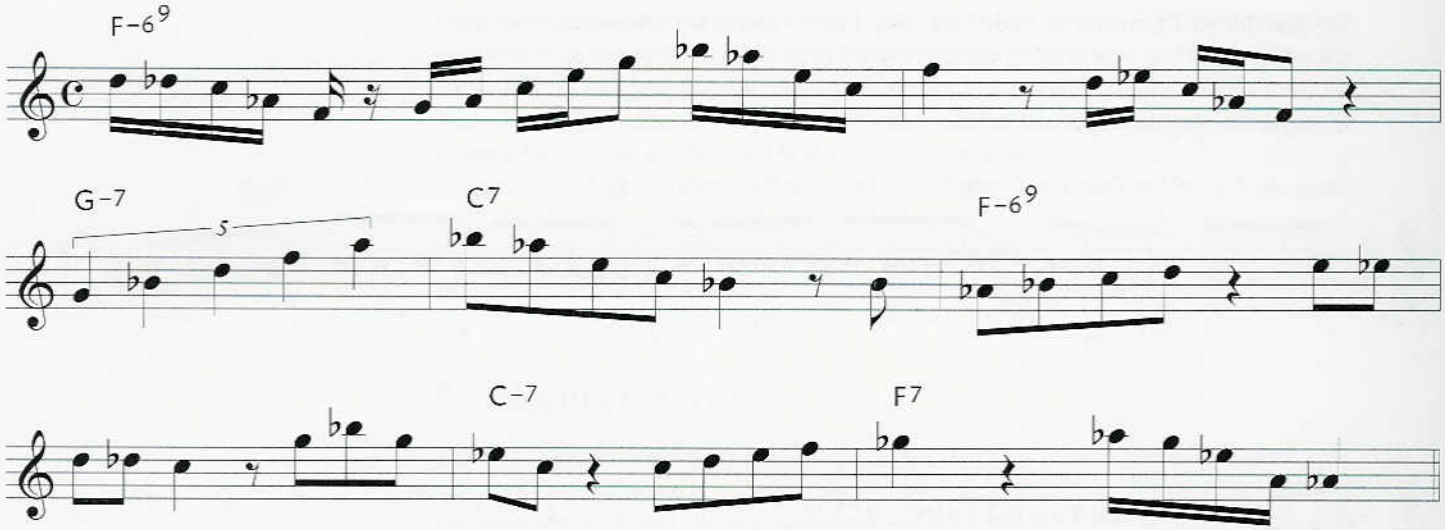
33. Number of Notes Per Phrase Independent of Bar Lines

Try using a particular number of notes per phrase independent of bar lines. You can start with anywhere from one to seven notes but you may use more if so desired.

Example: *Underdog* 3 notes per phrase



Example: *Underdog* 5 notes per phrase



34. Quarter-Note and Half-Note Solos

The daddy of the eighth note is the quarter note. Playing quarter notes both on the downbeat and the upbeat lends amazing perspective to how to play eighth notes. The ability to say something using only quarter notes is a skill that all of the great players have. This is an exercise that you can also try using dotted quarter notes. The daddy of the quarter note is the half note. Try creating a solo using only half notes coming in on upbeats and downbeats. Also try dotted half notes as well as notes that are 2 1/2 beats long.

35. Long Tones

The ability to hold a note for a bar or two is an incredible luxury that instruments with a fast decay just don't have. Try playing a solo and sometimes using long tones. Remember, more often than not when you think that you're holding out a note for a long time it could be longer. This exercise takes trust, patience, a sound and something behind the note that is not just air.

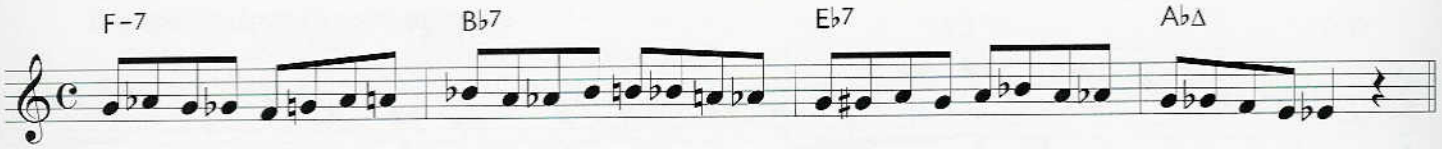
36. Triadic Melodies

Play solos using:
a. diatonic triads
b. upper and middle triads
c. passing chromatic triads
d. any triad

37. Chromatics

Try playing just chromatic melodies. This device lends a snakelike sonority to the solo.

Example: *Fangs from Afar*



38. Blues Melodies and Blues Scales

Blues melodies and scales have been used in jazz since the beginning. Do you use blues melodies and scales outside of the blues format? Try using them on a standard or original tune. It takes impeccable taste not to sound corny or pretentious when using blues notes. Try using blues scales on turnarounds.

39. Melody Notes Phrased With Different Rhythms

Playing melody notes and phrasing them with different rhythms is a great effect. Taking it a step further, delaying or anticipating the melody notes so that they fall on other bars is also catchy.

40. Contrasting Fast and Slow Melodies in a Duet Fashion

This is a great device. Try playing slow melodies on fast tunes.

41. Large Interval Playing

Ninety percent of solos consist of seconds and thirds intervals. Playing larger intervals is something that you hear more today. The notes have greater separation and impact. Try it, you'll like it!

42. Space

Experienced improvisers know how to use and create space. Putting a period at the end of a sentence or pausing between paragraphs are ways to create an atmosphere of space. Sometimes too many ideas create clutter and take away from the solo. Listen to your favorite solos and rather than focusing on what is played notice the spaces and rests. Sometimes you can create space by playing long notes or by playing understated. All of the great players have their own way of achieving space. Of course, to have a rhythm section that gives you space and still is supportive is what most players dream about! Space is the place!

43. Playing Accents

Playing accents means to play only the peak notes of a melodic line, just as a saxophone section in a big band would play behind a solo. Try playing the hits for a chorus and then filling in around the hits just a little. Practicing this helps to give perspective on how to play just the most important notes. One of the great features about using this device is that it allows for the development of those accents. You can keep adding to and playing around the hits until they are completely integrated into the melodic line. Playing hits is another way to lock in with the rhythm section. Also, placing hits in different places on the beat can create tension if so desired.

Rhythmic Devices

For a complete discussion on rhythmic devices, refer to VOLUME V of this series, MELODIC RHYTHMS.

Sonic Devices or Nuances

This section addresses the topic: how you play what you play. Why is it that so many musicians play or want to play jazz? It is and art form that offers the experience of self-expression in the present tense. Attaching life energy and personality to the notes and rhythms that you play adds depth of expression. One can perceive and hear the music on many levels. The music has intellect, emotion and spirit. Time and groove give it an earthy quality. To pay attention to sonic devices lends drama to the music. Think of your favorite players, how is it that when they play just a few notes they are immediately recognizable? Have you heard the expression, "It's not what you play, but how you play it."? Here is a short list of devices to consider.

The headings and suggestions below were deliberately kept short, even one word, so that you can investigate these ideas with an open mind. One word can mean something different to each individual. Use your imagination to fill in the gaps and explore these suggestions to make your own discoveries.

1. Articulations

Having a vast vocabulary of different ways to articulate is something that takes years to get together. These are just a few to think about and try on fast and slow tempos.

a. articulate upbeats

b. articulate downbeats

c. articulate every note

d. no articulation

e. articulate peak notes

f. light articulation

g. heavy articulation

h. letting the line suggest the articulation

i. how to articulate or not articulate

j. ghost notes

k. swallowed notes

2. Vibratos

a. fast and slow

b. wide and thin

c. when does it start

d. no vibrato

3. Endings of Notes

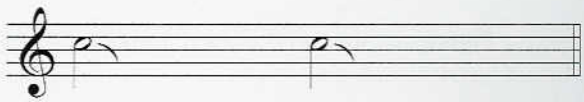
Develop a vocabulary for the endings of notes. Listen to your favorite players and notice how they end their notes.

4. Swoops Up to the Note

This nuance focuses on the beginning of the note.

Players need to be mindful that their nuances are not just bad habits that sound like pseudo jazzisms. The swoop is one such device to be used with taste.

5. Fall-Offs From Notes



6. Understated Playing

Often, the understated player can draw you in by compelling your attention, by not beating you over the head.

7. Aggressive, All Out, Going for the Jugular, Balls Out Playing

8. Layed Back Playing, in Back of the Beat

9. On Top of the Beat Playing

10. Flex-Time Playing, Going from on Top to in Back of the Beat

11. Falling and Catching Up to the Time

12. Staccato Playing

13. Legato Playing

14. Intonation

Use of quarter tones or purposefully altering the intonation of a note can add a lot of personality to your expression.

How about just playing "in tune"?

15. Contrasting Dynamics

Using dynamics and putting a different dynamic on every note gives every note a personality.

16. Harmonious Time Feel

Playing the same time feel that the rhythm section has (or doesn't have)

17. Conflicting Time Feel

Creating tension

18. Making the Rhythm Section Sound Good!!

19. Impact

Figure out sounds that have impact.

20. Time Gears

Hearing the bigger gears of time in operation lends a different feel. Hear the bigger gears of two bars, four bars, or eight bars.

21. Tone

How bright or dark, how spread and wide vs. centered, how much projection, what color is it?

22. Singing Playing With a Vocal Quality Goes to the Heart of the Matter

Listening to singers can give a wealth of knowledge to your expression. All instruments sing.

23. Alternate Fingerings for Creating Different Tambour

24. Quarter-tone Fingerings

25. Sounding Like Another Instrument

26. Flutter Tongue

27. Growl

28. Screams

29. Hard vs. Soft Sound

30. Swing Ratio

How much do you swing your notes, are they straight eighths, and do they change at different tempos? Where are they on the beat?

31. Sub-Tone Playing

32. Trills

33. Conjuring Up Emotions or Events in Life for Effect

34. Humor; a Much-Needed Device!

35. Surprise

36. Playing Sounds

Just playing sounds instead of pitches (usually these sounds have a completely different tambour).

Conclusion

In this book I have tried to address both fundamental nuts and bolts skills as well as some of the most sophisticated techniques of the modern day improviser. Today information is readily available but to make it your own requires diligence and patience. My intention in writing this book was to provide a menu of many techniques from which you can choose to fit your personal needs and vision. These techniques are all a means to an end. Everybody has their own story to tell, their soul's story, if you will. Sometimes certain techniques can add avenues of expression to that story. The concepts presented here are ones that I use in my private teaching as well as in classroom courses. Being an eternal student, I find it a real joy to learn certain approaches as it helps to qualify what one hears and give it a name. Stimulating the imagination by focusing on particular musical details can really expand one's playing. One final but important note, remember that this material is not meant to clog the mind and leave the improviser blocked with too many conscious thoughts. Often when the conscious mind enters, the creative mind retreats. Too much information can clog the mind. You've heard the expression; the mind is a terrible thing. We practice these techniques and make them our own so that they are below the thresh hold of our conscious mind and our creative self is free to tell the story.

8 05095 14266 2
Order No. 14266
COMPACT disc

Developing a Jazz Language, is the sixth book of Jerry Bergonzi's series, Inside Improvisation. Learning a language requires listening on many levels to the meanings, the sounds, the intentions, and the inflections or nuances of the language. The first chapters of this volume on learning the language of jazz focus on the prerequisites of chord scales, approach notes to chord tones and target notes, scale motives and sequences and lines. Part two qualifies improvisational techniques into three areas; melodic, harmonic and sonic (rhythmic devices are the focus of Vol. IV, Melodic Rhythms) and it is designed as a menu of soloing devices from which you can select your personal course of study. Over 100 specific devices are discussed and conceptualized so as to give the improviser more depth of expression and a greater well from which to draw ideas. Among the numerous topics presented are: guide tones, voice leading, chord substitutions, three-tonic system for composition, tritonics, hexatonics, tonal expansions, whole tone playing, augmented symmetric scales, double diminished scales, limited range and large range playing, shapes, blues melodies, accents, comping as a soloing device, common tones, articulations, laying back on the...

The CD contains twelve standard chord progressions, each played in two different tempos.