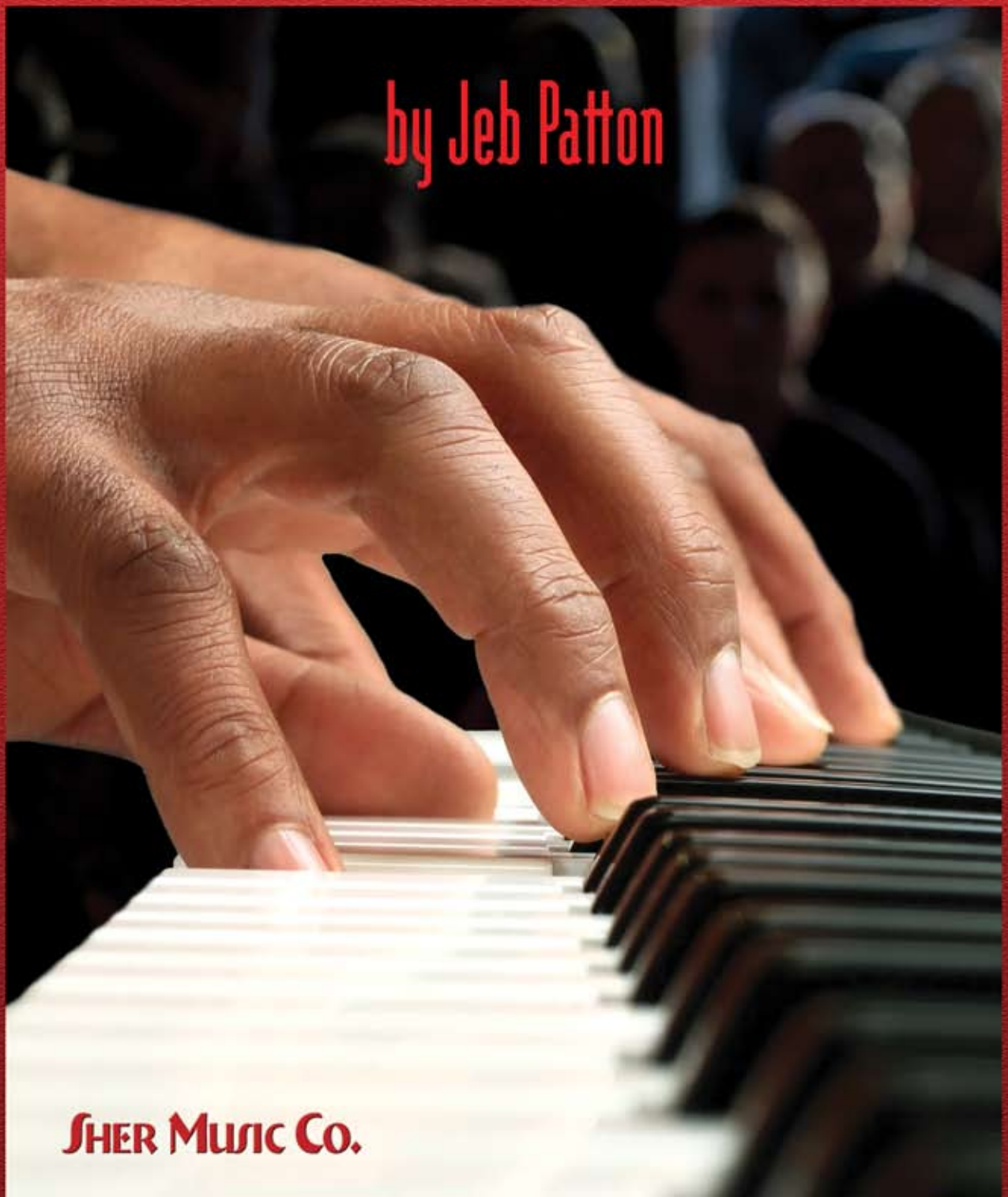
# AN APPROACH TO COMPING

## THE ESSENTIALS

*a guide to jazz accompanying*

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# AN APPROACH TO COMPING:

## THE ESSENTIALS

by Jeb Patton

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*This book is dedicated to the memory of*
*Sir Roland Hanna, Mulgrew Miller, and Cedar Walton*


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# INTRODUCTION

This is the book I searched for when I first started playing jazz, but could never find. I wanted to know what the pianist was doing exactly when he/she was comping. It is my hope that this workbook series can uncover some of these mysteries and act as a helping hand for the aspiring jazz musician. It is meant to be a window into the mysterious world of what happens in the background: the groove, the backdrop, the rhythmic conversation, and the colors behind the soloist. It underscores the piano player's role behind a horn player, as a comper.

Comping is a term to explain how a pianist, guitarist or other chordal instrument plays chords in rhythm to propel, or support the soloist. It is different than playing behind a vocalist in a rubato fashion (often called accompanying) in that there is a propulsive component to it that often reflects the short, percussive sound of the word, "comp" itself. The world of comping is not limited, however, to short, percussive rhythms; comping can be soft and airy, it can be distinguished and subtle, just as it can be vigorous and driving.

Just as a language developed in jazz about how to improvise, a parallel language developed pertaining to how to comp. Even though the intangible sublime moments that happen during the interplay between soloist and comper cannot be captured in a book, you can be challenged and inspired by imitating and assimilating some of the comping that is a part of the jazz canon.

This is part one of a two-part endeavor. Each part is completely self-sufficient and can be used alone. Together the two workbooks address the comping language as practiced by thirteen unique pianists with twenty five complete comping transcriptions accompanied by over one hundred and fifty comping exercises all aimed at helping the aspiring music student learn about comping, and moreover, about playing jazz.

Generally speaking, the two workbooks are divided based on level; thus the two titles: ***An Approach to Comping: The Essentials*** and ***An Approach to Comping: Advanced Concepts and Techniques***. In the appendix you will find a complete guide explaining how jazz pianists, classical pianists, non-pianists, vocalists, guitarists, bassists, and drummers can best use these workbooks.

In ***An Approach to Comping: The Essentials*** you will find the nuts and bolts of comping rhythms and creating basic jazz piano voicings. A considerable amount of time is given to the study of the left hand. Being nimble rhythmically and harmonically with your left hand (LH) is crucial in becoming a great comper. Only after achieving a firm foundation using basic voicings containing the root, will rootless voicings be discussed.

In ***The Essentials*** the five chapters build on each other to chart a workable spectrum of jazz voicings, rhythms, and progressions that are often used when comping. The workbook takes you through boogie woogie comping rhythms, 2-note shell voicings, 3-note

skeletal structures, 4-note trombone voicings, and 5-note spread voicings. It also offers an introduction to passing chords and comping during the bebop and post-bop eras. In addition to a variety of comping exercises, you will find eleven note-for-note comping transcriptions of Bud Powell, Horace Silver, Tadd Dameron, and Barry Harris.

At the end of the current volume, modified comping transcriptions of Red Garland, Sonny Clark, and Bobby Timmons are offered with the idea that the student will recreate the original using the given modified comping example as a transcription aid. It is my hope, that having put the effort into transcribing, the student will more effectively assimilate the comping language.

Some of the transcriptions are examples of left hand comping, most are examples of two-handed comping as played behind a given soloist. As you comp along with each one you will be adding new comping rhythms and progressions from the pianist that you are studying to your comping repertoire.

## *The following is a more detailed overview*

**Chapter 1** is meant as a tool to develop a sense of groove and time without the aid of bass and drums. It consists of thirty arbitrary comping rhythms that often come up in the language of comping. Cross rhythms are touched on here, to help develop independence between the hands, and to introduce some of the West African rhythms that are an integral part of the jazz feel, and therefore of jazz comping. In addition, bass lines and boogie woogie figures are used to develop the pianist's ability to be self sufficient, i.e. to become a one-person rhythm section.

**Chapter 2** is an introduction to ***shell voicings***, ***guide tones***, and ***skeletal structures*** to be used in conjunction with the rhythms, voicings, and progressions of Sonny Clark, Bud Powell, and Horace Silver. Reharmonizing a 12-bar blues using LH shell voicings is discussed at length. Developing a strong left hand (LH) is crucial to become a great comper. Remember, besides comping for horn players, we have to become excellent compers for our own right hand (RH) horn lines.

**Chapter 3** deals with closed position chords, or ***trombone voicings*** to be used in conjunction with the rhythms, voicings, and progressions of Bud Powell and Tadd Dameron. ii-V-I progressions, 12-bar blues and rhythm changes are discussed.

**Chapter 4** is devoted to bebop comping–first by exploring vertical sonorities, and then by studying horizontal motion. Passing chords inspired by the teachings of Barry Harris are discussed. Several examples of Barry's and Bud's comping through rhythm changes and related forms are offered.

**Chapter 5** addresses ***spread voicings*** and uses them in conjunction with the rhythms, voicings, and progressions of Horace Silver, Red Garland, Sonny Clark, and Bobby Tim-

mons. Arranger's piano is introduced as a way to create solo arrangements of standards. Voicings in this chapter are created by placing RH shapes over shells. Rootless voicings are introduced by playing TV's and spread voicings without the root.

Of course, hundreds of exemplary compers are not included in this volume. It is not meant to be an encyclopedic survey of comping. Hopefully, you will be inspired to explore further and study the comping of other great artists on your own.

The comping transcriptions contained within span different styles and eras of jazz. It is my belief that the lineage of jazz comping is interconnected in many ways. To be an accomplished "comper", one must have a firm grasp of the history, and at the same time be striving forward, in search of your own unique voice.

Investigating the jazz canon does not just include learning solos from your heros, but also studying what they are playing when they are not soloing. For a piano player in a jazz quartet or quintet that is most of time. Moreover, it is illuminating to check out what the left hand is doing during a piano solo that is predominately made up of RH lines.

This book offers an opportunity to imitate the masters, and at the same time combine and assimilate the material with the hope of synthesizing something new and unique. The goal is to assimilate the unique language of jazz comping so that you can start to comp tastefully, thoughtfully, and decisively on your own.

## *Comping Transcription Instructions*

For each comping transcription, you are advised to "comp" along with the original recording at different tempos using a slow-down device. The OR icon found throughout the workbook indicates that the given example, transcription, rhythm guide, progression, or exercise should be used in conjunction with the original recording. Whenever possible hum or sing the melody (if applicable) and/or the horn solo from the original recording as you play through the comping transcription. This way you can begin to get a feel for the interaction between comper and soloist. Afterwards, you may use the CD that accompanies the book to "comp" along with a piano-less band. ***See CD instructions*** for more information.

These volumes are to be worked through several times in different ways. As you gain more knowledge and skills regarding voicing styles you may be able to revisit old exercises and apply the new skills learned. In this way, professionals and beginners alike will be able to gain something unique and worthwhile from each exercise found inside.

After the comping transcriptions, a comping guide is provided which outlines the comp in rhythmic notation. Comp through the example following the rhythms using a variety of voicing styles that will be explained in the upcoming chapters. Since the comping

transcriptions are dispersed throughout the two volumes, only apply the voicing styles that you have acquired up to that point and then move on to the next exercise. After gaining the skills necessary later in the workbook you may return to that particular comping exercise to apply the new voicing styles learned.

The following is an outline of the voicing styles to be applied to the rhythms of each comping transcription. Keep in mind these voicing styles will be explained in detail in the upcoming chapters.

1. Comp with only skeletal structures (from Chapter 2)
2. Comp with trombone voicings over bass notes (from Chapter 3 and 4),
3. Comp with spread voicings (from Chapter 5)

Following each comping guide, five comping rhythms and five progressions are provided. These are rhythms and short progressions extracted from the comping transcriptions. The CR's (comping rhythms) are to be applied to other standards, the CP's (comping progressions) are meant to be looped and transposed through the keys. The five comping rhythms and five comping progressions are for the purposes of assimilating some of the language of the comp so that you can apply some of the material in different situations and eventually create your own comping language.

## *CD Instructions.*

The most important aspect of this two-volume workbook is what is not written inside. It is the music itself that the workbook attempts to explain. It is vital that you play along with recordings, and whenever possible, with other live musicians. That's really how the music is learned, not from words.

I realize that many of the examples presented are difficult, some being at break-neck speeds, others are slow but with huge voicings with difficult stretches etc. I'm afraid this is an unavoidable reality of this music. Jazz is hard. On the bright side, I have decided not to simplify anything or give you anything that is watered down. I think that if you are willing to break these transcriptions down to more digestible pieces, and slow the tempo down, you can have a lot of fun comping along with the incredible original recordings (easily available on itunes or amazon.com).

Accompanying the book are two CDs containing demonstrations and comp-along tracks. You will be able to listen to a demonstration of all of the comping transcriptions and several of the comping exercises as played by the author as well as comp along yourself to tracks without piano. Because the piano part is prominent in the mix, the comping is much easier to hear. Keep in mind that the demo tracks contain material that sometimes differs slightly from what is written in the transcription. They are only meant to be a rough guide. Selected tracks contain no drums allowing drummers to comp along with the piano comps as well as with the soloist.

To make things a little easier, tracks on the CD are played at a slower tempo compared to the original recording. The CD icon found throughout the workbook indicates that the given example, transcription, rhythm guide, progression, or exercise should be used in conjunction with the CDs that are included with this workbook. The appropriate CD and track number is listed beside the icon.

On the CDs, the soloist is not playing the solo from the original recording, and the bass and drummer are not playing the precise notes as played on the original. Here are some pros and cons pertaining to the "comp-along" CDs included in this volume.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| • The tempo is slower<br>• Its track contains no piano allowing you greater freedom<br>• Provides a different solo to comp along to over the same progression<br>• It's not meant to be a mere copy of the original, and thus is more in line with the general idea of jazz: constantly evolving | • You aren't playing with the jazz masters<br>• You can't hear the pianist's place ment of comp (where exactly the chord occurs rhythmically in the measure; often these subtleties cannot be written down)<br>• You won't be inspired by the pianist's sound he gets from the piano<br>• You can't hear the pianist's swing feel and other subtleties<br>• You won't hear the subtleties of the bass and drums from the original recording |

In conclusion, the "comp-along" CDs, although helpful and hopefully fun to play with cannot be a substitute for the original recordings. It is vital that you take the time to acquire the following records/CD's not just for the purposes of this workbook, but to have them for your own jazz record collection. Each comping transcription is taken from a record that falls under the category of "records every jazz musician should have".

Below is a list of the albums that you will need before going on. If you would rather not purchase the entire album, many of the individual tracks are available on itunes for about a dollar.

You may notice that the selections are all from a period in jazz spanning from the late 1940's through the 1960's. This is not to dissuade you from absorbing and listening to the great jazz from the 70's, 80's, 90's and 2000's, it's just that much of the foundation of modern jazz comping occurred in that magical twenty-year period mentioned above. Interestingly, the same period gave birth to many different eras and styles in jazz. Gaining an understanding of the comping taking place during this extremely fertile period will allow you to pursue any direction in jazz that you desire. Not only that, hopefully you

will be inspired to carve a new path. ***Please do not proceed to the following chapters without first acquiring these tracks from the original recordings***.

**Chapter 2:**

1. "Straight no Chaser" from *Bud Powell in Copenhagen.* Storyville – 1018518 (1962).
2. "Celia" from Bud Powell Trio: *Jazz Giant.* Norgran/Verve (1949)
3. "Opus de Funk" from *Horace Silver Trio, Vol. 1: Spotlight on the Drums.* Blue Note – 1520 (1953)

**Chapter 3:**

1. "Dance of the Infidels" from *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1.* Blue Note BLP 1503 (1949)
2. "Eb-Pob" from *Opus de Bop.* Savoy MG 12114 SV – 0118 (1946)

**Chapter 4:**

1. "Sonny Side" from *Sonny Stitt, Bud Powell, J.J.Johnson.* Prestige – 7024 (1950)
2. "Bombay" from *Opus de Bop.* Savoy MG 12114 SV – 0118 (1946)
3. "Nicaragua" from *Barry Harris Sextet – Luminescence!* Prestige – 7498 (1967)
3. "Bouncin' with Bud" from *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1.* Blue Note BLP 1503 (1949)

**Chapter 5**

1. "Airegin" from Miles Davis's *Bag's Groove.* Prestige – 7109 (1954)
2. "Blowin the Blues Away" from Horace Silver's *Blowin the Blues Away.* Blue Note BST 84017 (1959)
3. "Diane" from *Steamin' with The Miles Davis Quintet.* Prestige – 7200 (1961)
4. "Somethin' Special" from Sonny Clark's *Leapin' and Lopin'.* Blue Note BST 84091 (1961)
5. "Politely" from Art Blakey's *The Big Beat.* Blue Note – BST 84029 (1960)

After comping along with the original recordings, use the "comp-along" CDs as you venture away from merely copying the masters note-for-note to creating your own comp that is quite different from the original. In this way the comping transcription is used only as a jumping off point. When Sonny Clark or Bud Powell were comping on these records they weren't playing something they had memorized previously, they were in the moment, improvising, creating, and moving the music forward.

In addition to the comping transcription comp-alongs, the accompanying CDs contains some helpful tools to help develop your skills playing blues and rhythm changes. This includes a drum track to play along with as you delve into boogie-woogie comping rhythms and bass lines in Chapter 1, and bass and drums playing blues and rhythm changes through various keys to be used as needed throughout the workbook to aid in the transposition of voicing styles or progressions. Moreover, tracks without drums are included on CD 2 so that drummers can experience comping along with the transcriptions included.

Finally, as a special bonus, the final section contains two conversations with some of my favorite musicians that also happen to be some of my favorite "compers". The first is a question and answer session with the inimitable Harold Mabern. Following that is a candid discussion with the incredible Renee Rosnes.

Hopefully these informal interviews that address more of the abstract aspects of effective and artful comping will serve as a stimulating contrast to the technical material that makes up most of the volume. Sometimes the wisdom imparted by master musicians that are a part of this great music and that have played with so many legends of jazz can be even more worthwhile and inspiring than studying the actual notes.

It is my hope that ***An Approach to Comping: The Essentials*** can uncover some of the mysteries surrounding the art of comping, challenge you, and ultimately elevate your comping experience. Maybe the next time you are called up to play at a jam session with a line of fifteen saxophonists, comping for fifty choruses won't be so painful—it may actually be fun.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRO TO COMPING RHYTHMS

Before diving into a discussion about harmony and voicings, it seems to make sense to address the most important component to comping: rhythm. It's what propels us, its what makes the music come alive, it's what can inspire a soloist, and it's what ultimately touches the listener.

The comping transcriptions that fill these two volumes will not mean a thing if their rhythms are not interpreted correctly. Jazz feel and rhythm are very tricky things to notate. The subtleties are constantly changing, even within the same tune. That is why playing along with the record is the only way to capture the true essence of the rhythmic figure that you see written down in these volumes. The following comping rhythms will hopefully aid you when tackling some of the rhythmic figures found in the later comping transcriptions.

The current chapter aims to jumpstart your sense of swing with an exaggeration. At this point we will be playing everything with a triplet feel. Later, you will discover more of the subtleties of jazz feel as you listen to a variety of artists all with their own unique sense of swing.

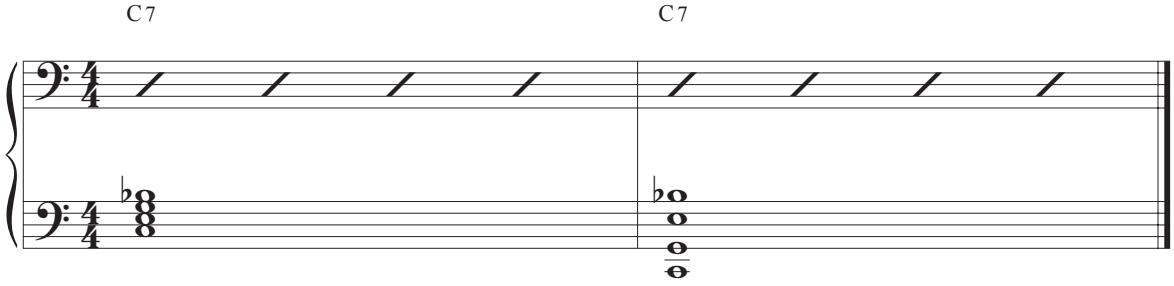
You may feel boogie woogie is an outdated style without too much validity today. But, not only does it represent the deep blues history in this country, it offers a way in which your two hands can play rhythms independently. It also offers a way to build your own sense of time without the aid of a play-along record or accompanying musicians.

We will be using boogie woogie as a foundation as we study thirty common comping rhythms along with some simple blues voicings for the right hand. In the following section we will replace the boogie woogie pattern with walking bass lines that we learn to build. Finally, we will integrate simple blues voicings with comping rhythms over walking bass lines to create a way to effectively comp through a blues without the aid of bass or drums.

## CHAPTER 1A: BOOGIE WOOGIE COMPING RHYTHMS

To get started, let's take a C7 chord in root position (C, E, G, Bb) starting on the C below middle C. Drop the root and fifth down an octave. Playing an open fifth (C and G) two octaves below middle C creates a classic bluesy sound and provides a solid foundation for our boogie-woogie bass figure. Use your left hand (LH) to play the root and fifth, leaving your right hand (RH) to play the 3rd and 7th. Keep in mind, for dominant seventh chords the 7th is flattened.

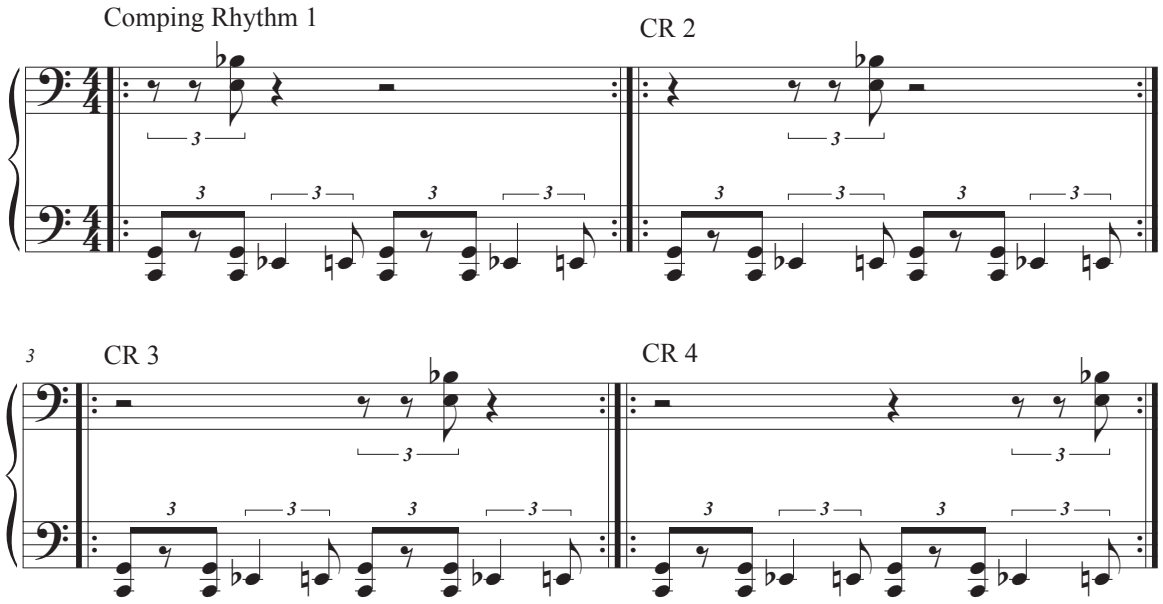
FIG. 1




The 3rd and 7th form the core of most jazz chords. They identify the quality of the chord (whether it's major or minor, etc.) and whether it's a major 7th, minor 7th, or diminished 7th. For now we will limit ourselves to the dominant seventh chord as we begin our discussion about comping rhythm. Effective comping can often drive a rhythm section. To create forward motion, chords are often anticipated and upbeats are utilized.

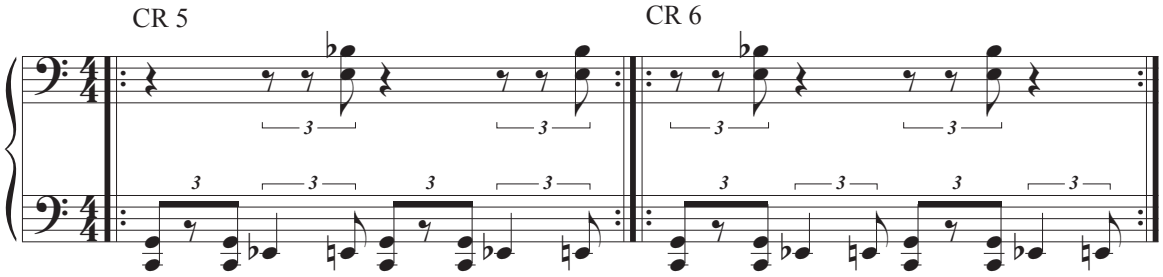
**Comping Exercise #1: Comping on the Upbeats**. Throughout this workbook you will be given various comping exercises to target a specific comping problem. For our first comping exercise, use a classic boogie-woogie bass pattern in the LH (see below). Above it practice comping on all of the upbeats of a measure by following the four examples below. Keep in mind, the triplet notation is used to make it easier to synchronize the hands. Normally the RH figures in the FIG. 2 would be written on the "and of 1," "and of 2," "and of 3," or "and of 4." In other words, often when comping, the upbeats actually happen a little later, closer to the third triplet of the beat. The precise location of the rhythmic occurrence has to do with the individual pianist and their sense of swing. For now, just be aware of this rhythmic subtlety.

FIG. 2



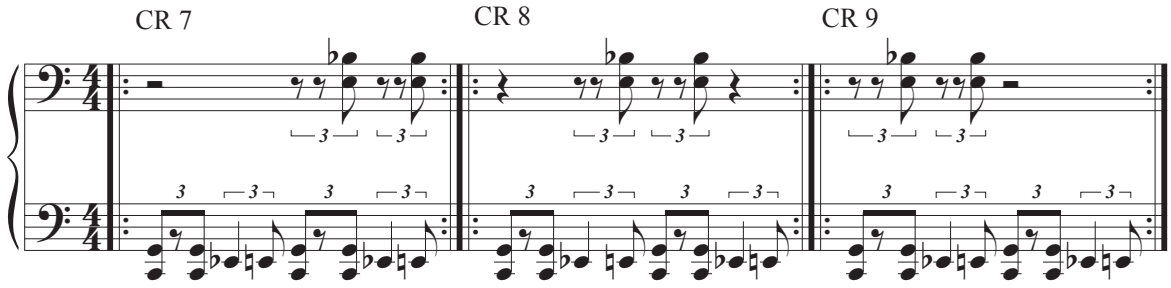

Ahmad Jamal and Red Garland are famous for making use of the "and of 2" and "and of 4" to propel the rhythm section forward. Red often uses the rhythm while comping behind Miles; Ahmad often uses it in his left hand while soloing with his right. Of course, as we will see in Chapter 5 of this volume and in Chapter 3 of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***, the two pianist's acute rhythmic sense is much more involved than just playing the "and of 2" and "and of 4." But for now, let's experiment with these two important rhythmic occurrences over the boogie-woogie bass figure. Also, try playing the "and of 1" and "and of 3".

FIG. 3



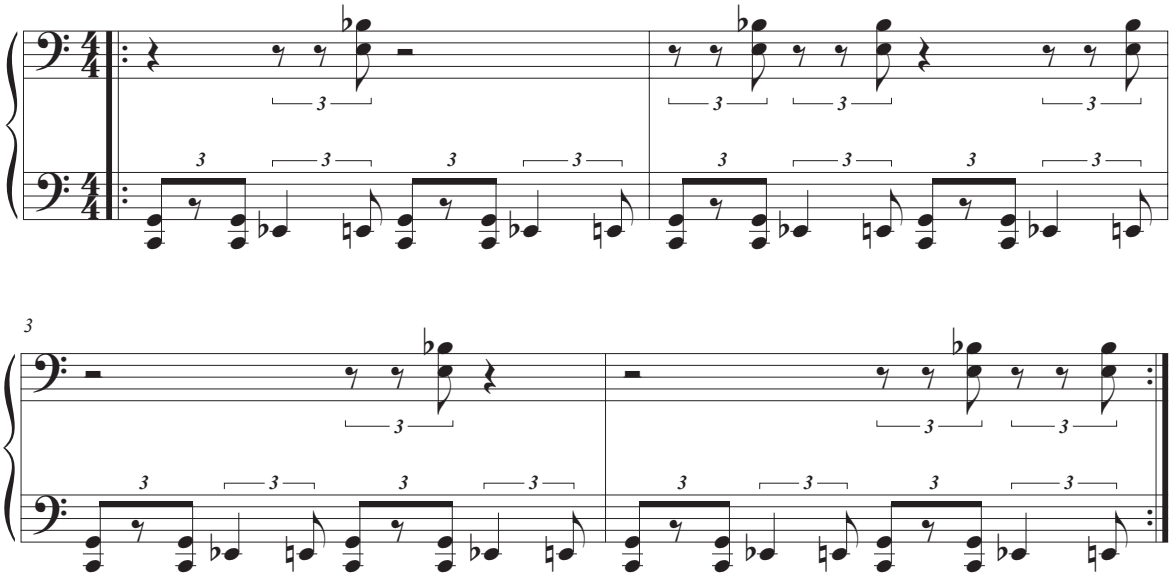
Here is some more upbeat practice. This time play the 3rd and 7th on the "and of 3" and "and of 4"; the "and of 2" and "and of 3"; and the "and of 1" and "and of 2".

FIG. 4




Below is a composite pattern made up of upbeats.

FIG. 5

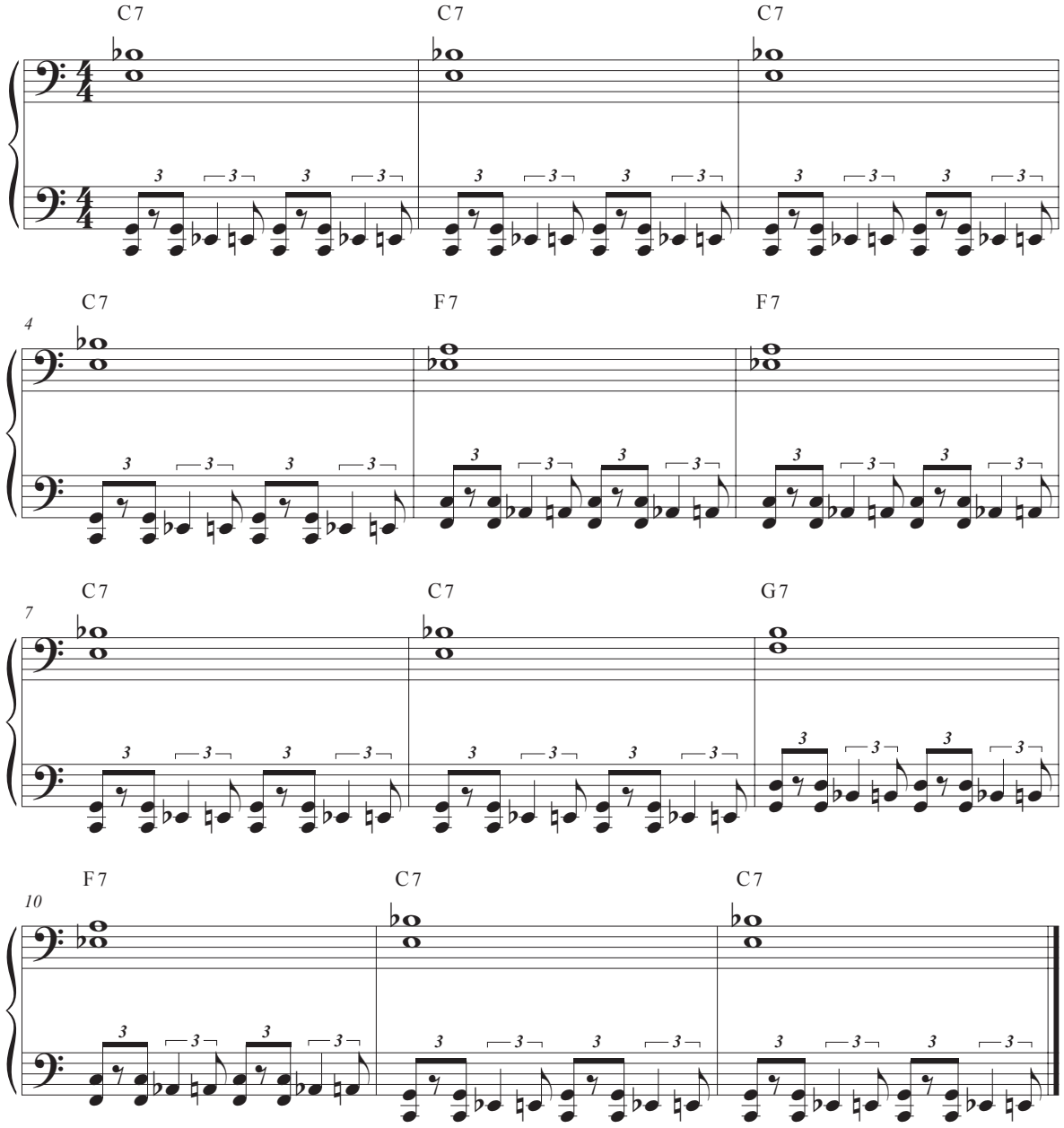


We are now ready to apply the boogie-woogie bass pattern to a simple three-chord, 12-bar blues. As you change chords move the open fifth in the LH up or down to the root and fifth of the next chord. In the RH strive for good voice leading. This means moving to the closest 3rd and 7th available. In most cases, the 3rd will move to the 7th of the next chord, and the 7th will move to the 3rd.

No matter what happens harmonically in later chapters to this blues progression, it is important never to lose sight of this simple three-chord progression. It is the deep harmonic structure of the 12-bar blues. From here, as you will see in Chapter 2, we can find different ways to navigate through the form, but at its core, the deep harmonic structure never changes.

The next example shows the smooth harmonic motion in the RH. Notice how the RH moves smoothly from I to IV, back to I, to V, to IV, and finally back to I, during a simple three-chord, 12-bar blues. As we will study in more detail in Chapter 2, the 3rd and 7th of a chord guides you to the 3rd and 7th (or 7th and 3rd) of the next chord. Because of this, these two chord tones in the RH are referred to as ***guide tones***.

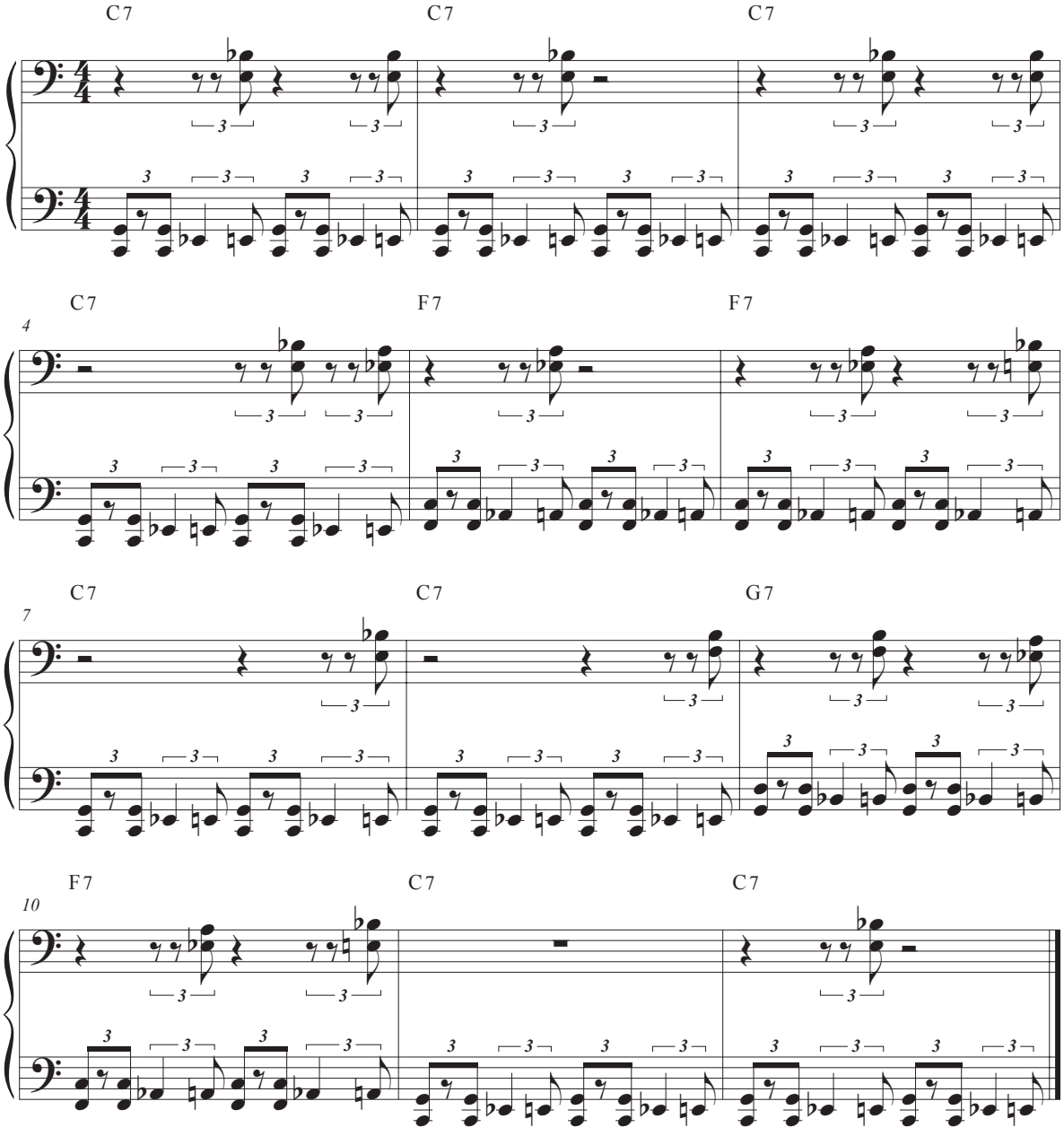
FIG. 6



**Comping Exercise #2: Comping through the Blues Using Upbeats**. Practice comping through a simple three chord blues progression using upbeat rhythms. Improvise your own upbeat comping rhythm.

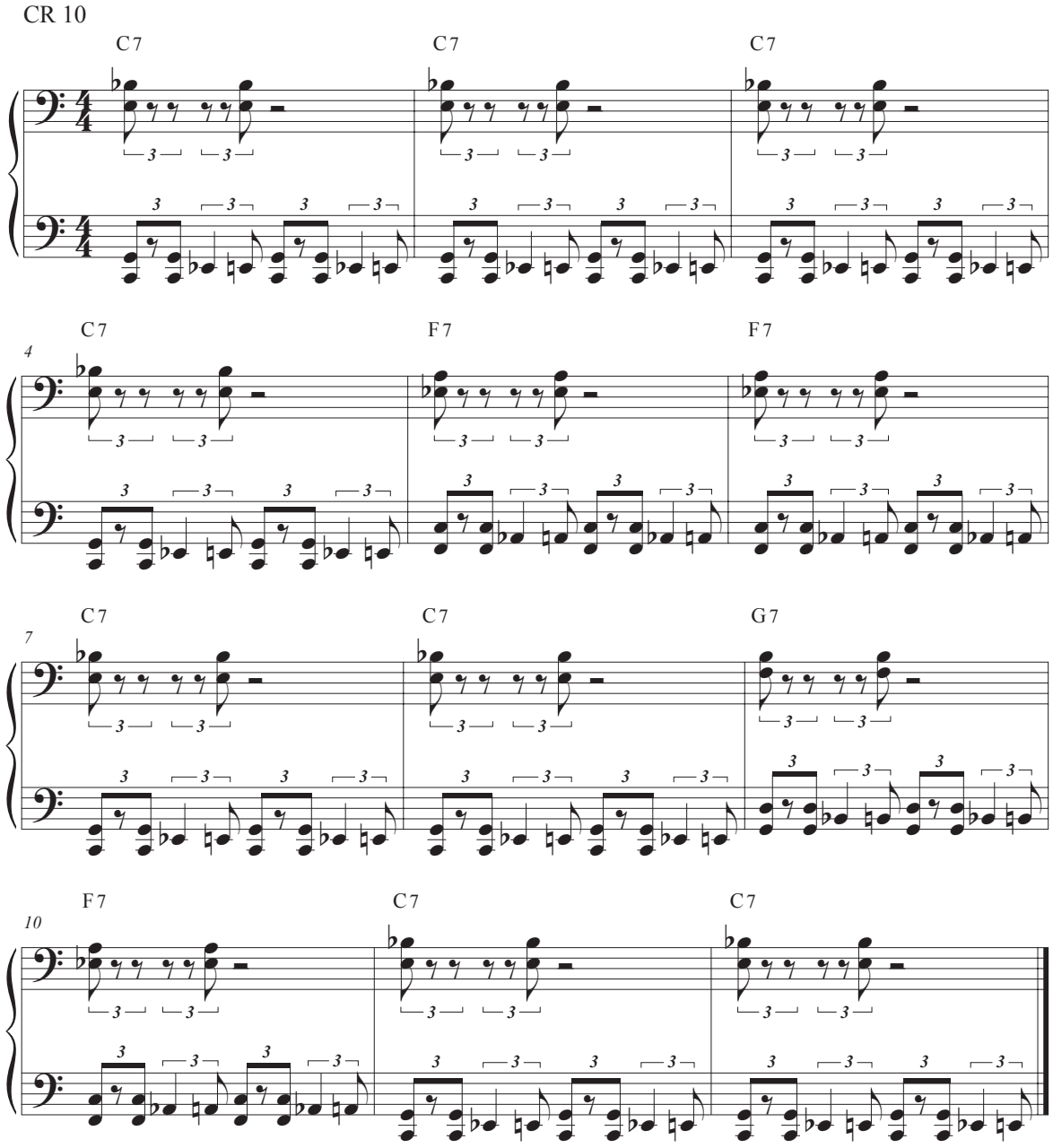
When the comp occurs on the third triplet of beat four the harmony of the following bar is anticipated. This is illustrated in several places in the next example: bar 4 into bar 5; 6 into 7; 8 into 9; 9 into 10; and 10 into 11. Dissonances on the third triplet of beat four between the LH and RH happen from time to time. The harsh sound is momentary, however, immediately resolving in the next measure. In context the dissonance is tolerable because of the forward motion.

FIG. 7



Almost a century ago a dance craze in South Carolina known as the "Charleston" gave birth to a fundamental rhythmic pattern that found its way into the language of jazz. The Charleston rhythm (see below) is a basic component of jazz comping. Notice the alternation between downbeat and upbeat.

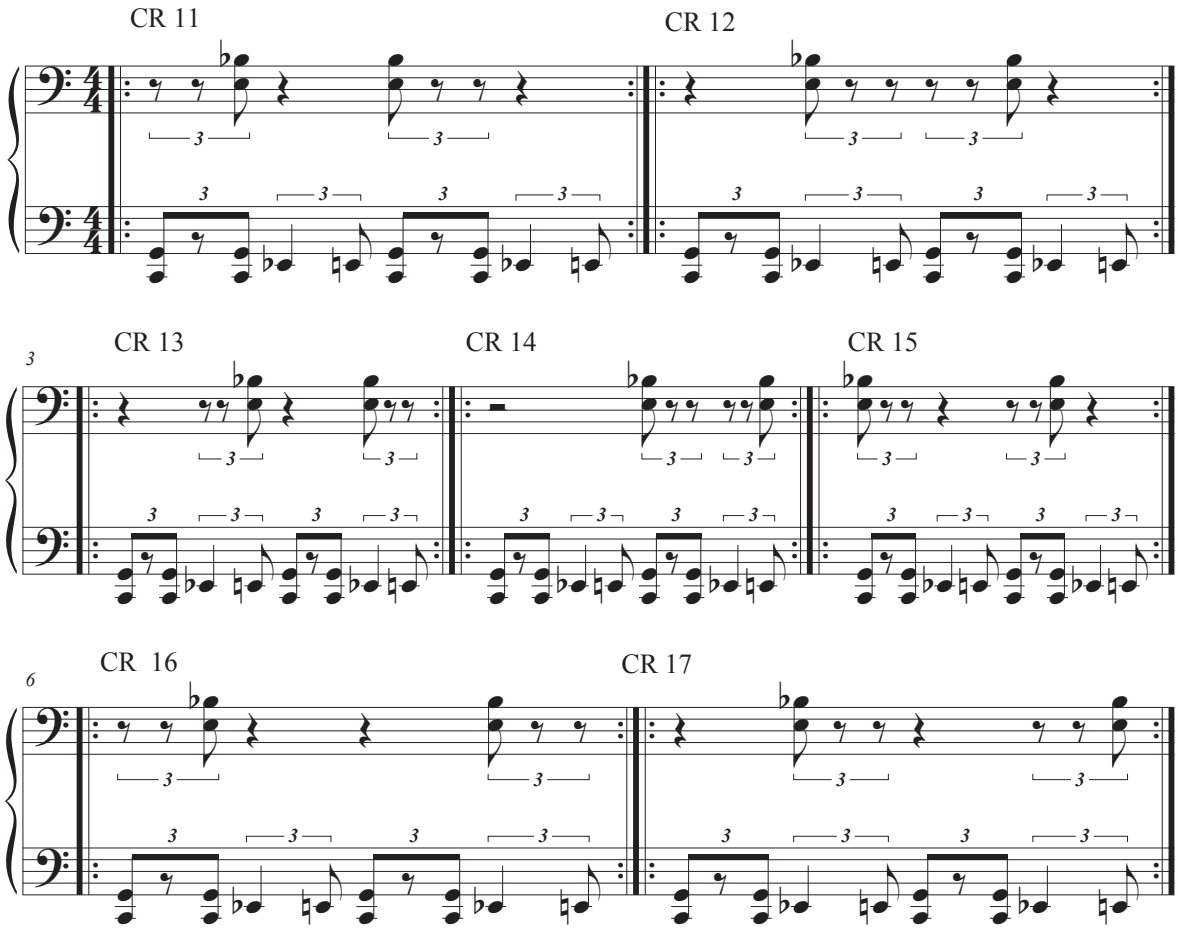
FIG. 8




Use **CD 1 Track 1** as a reference when first getting started. As you become more comfortable with the comping rhythm, comp along with **CD 1 Track 6**.

Now displace the Charleston rhythm so that it is on the "and of 1" and "3"; "2" and the "and of 3"; the "and of 2" and "4"; "3" and the "and of 4"; the "and of 3" and "1"; "4" and the "and of 1"; and finally the "and of 4" and "2". See below.

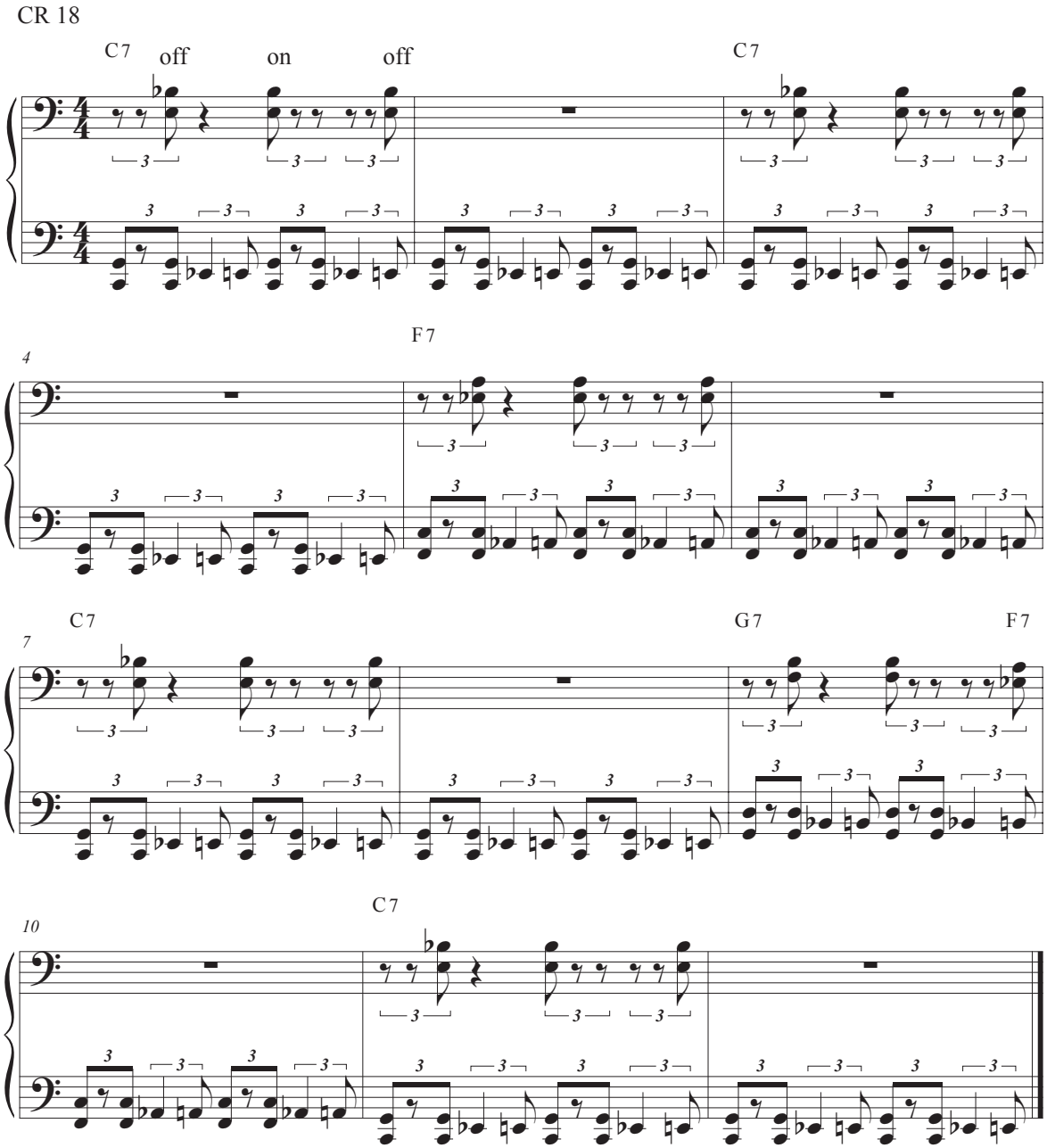
FIG. 9




**Comping Exercise #3: Displacing the Charleston Rhythm**. Take each one measure pattern and play through the blues just as you did with the Charleston rhythm on "1" and the "and of 2" from the previous example. Use **CD 1 Track 6**.

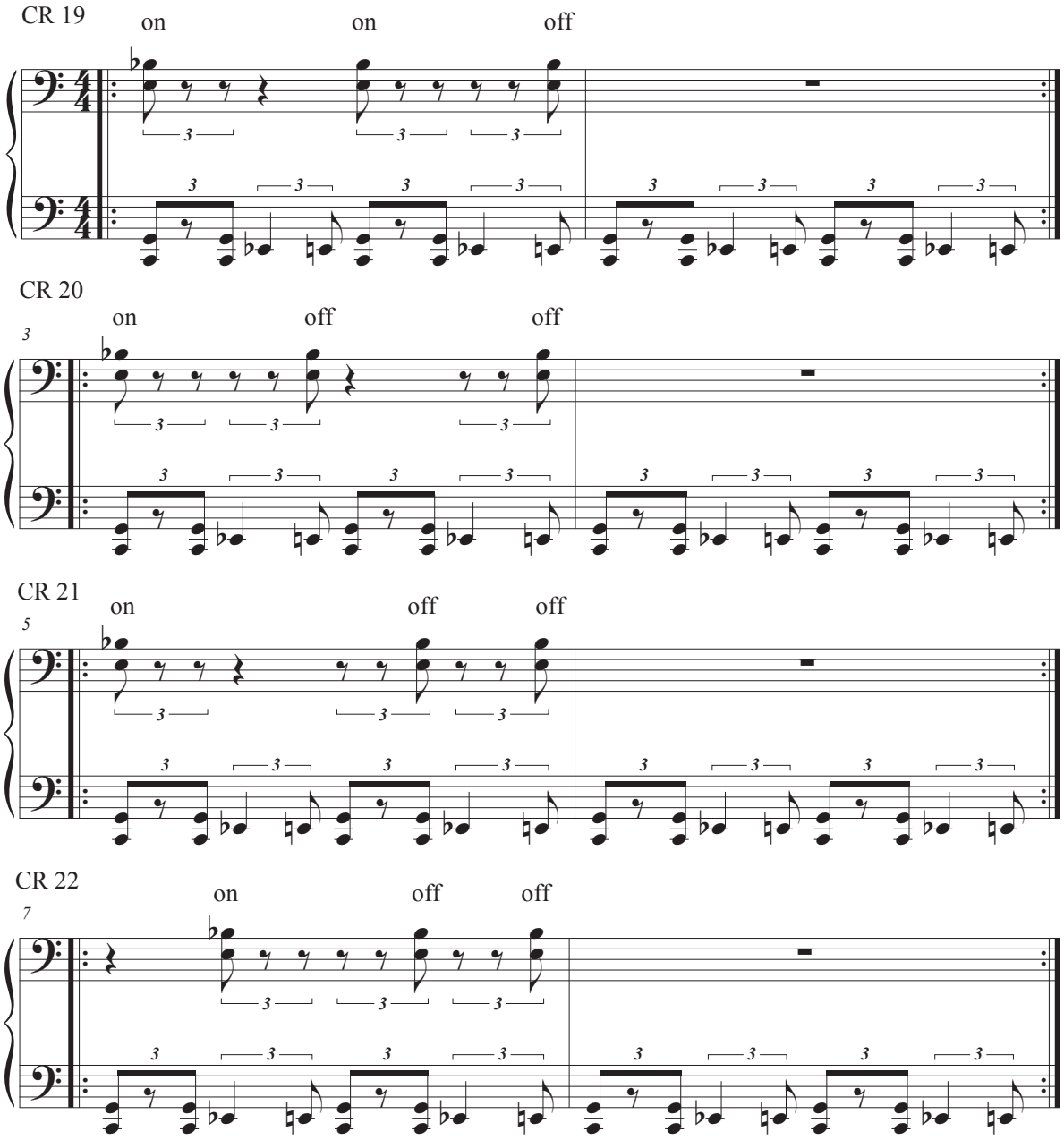
Next, we can elongate the rhythmic phrase so that it lasts for two measures. Notice the comp is off the beat, on the beat, and then off the beat. This comping rhythm is another essential part of the jazz canon. Pay special attention to measure nine, in which the RH voicing anticipates the harmony of the next bar. In this case, F7 is played right before beat 1 of measure ten.

FIG. 10



Apply these additional 2-bar comping rhythms consisting of hits on the beat and off the beat to the 12-bar blues. Notice that the third hit of all of these CRs is on the "and of 4".

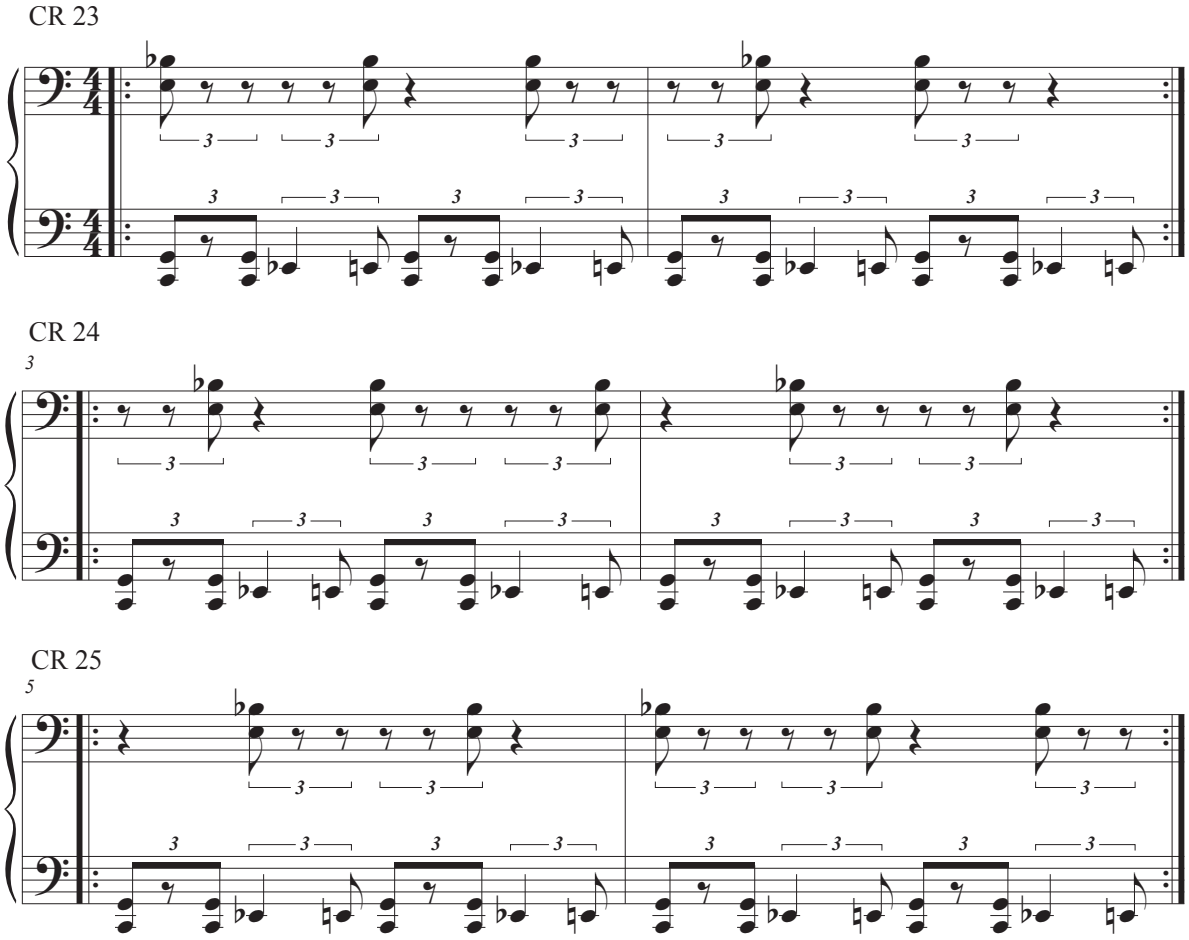
FIG. 11



We are now ready to introduce the use of cross rhythms to our comping. A cross rhythm is a sustained interplay between two conflicting rhythms. Often in jazz, this conflict can create a dance-like feeling that makes the music flow forward and swing. The first cross rhythm to be addressed is one that is everywhere in jazz comping. As the bass and the ride cymbal connect with solid quarter notes, the snare and the pianist's or guitarist's comp often interact with variations of dotted quarter notes. The superimposition of dotted quarters over the quarter note bass line can create a dance-like feeling.

Below are three examples of the dotted quarter cross rhythm to be applied to the 12-bar blues. In the first example (CR 23) the two bar RH rhythmic phrase starts on beat one. In the second example (CR 24), the RH phrase starts on the "and of 1". And finally, in the third example (CR 25) the RH phrase starts on "2". Remember to anticipate the harmony if the RH comp occurs on the third triplet of beat 4 in the given measure.

FIG. 12



Keep in mind, that since we are writing these rhythms using triplet notation, the upbeats in the RH happen a bit later, making the comping rhythm a bit lopsided. Experiment with sliding the upbeats closer to the actual "and" of the beat. Doing this will give a more pronounced cross rhythm. The actual placement of the "ands" in the RH is a personal thing. Playing closer to the true "and" of the beat will make you sound more "on top"; playing closer to the third triplet will give a more "laid-back" feeling. These are elements that cannot be notated, and are best left for you to discover by listening to the music. As you comp over the boogie-woogie blues bass pattern, experiment with playing on top of the beat or more behind.

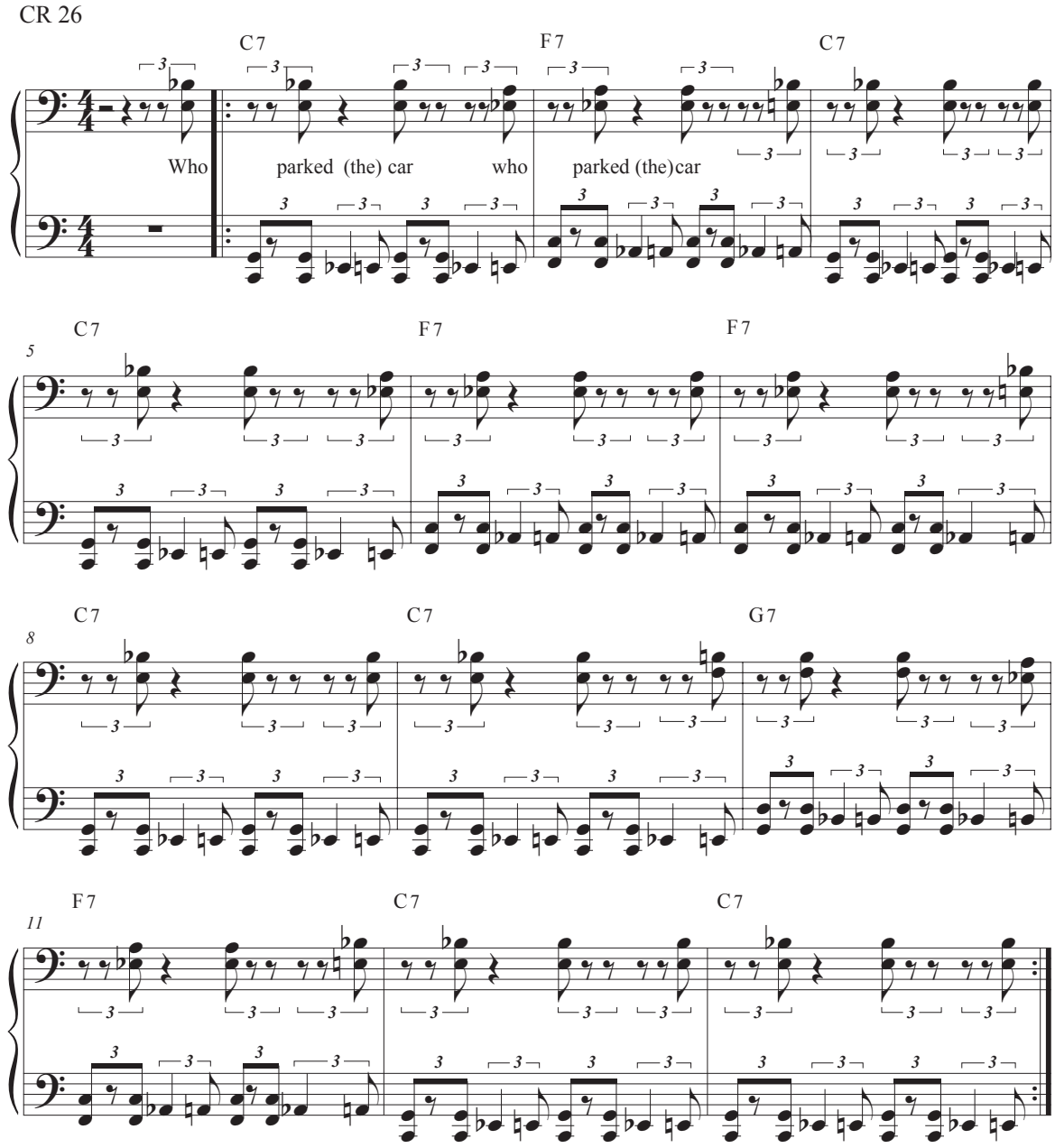
**Comping Exercise #4: Displacing the Dotted Quarter Cross Rhythm**. Practice CRs 23-25 over the boogie woogie bass pattern while being careful to keep the blues form. CR 24 is demonstrated on **CD 1 Track 2**. Feel free to use this as a reference before comping along with **CD 1 Track 6**.

When I first started playing, I have a vivid memory of the sax player asking me (or rather telling me) not to play. His forceful exclamation, "lay out!" is a painful memory, but at the same time, became a valuable lesson. He wasn't happy with the way I was comping behind him and wasn't shy about letting me know. Not being a piano player himself, he didn't attempt to teach me exactly what voicings to play behind me, but taught me something much more useful. He said simply, "All I want you to play behind me is, 'who parked the car'." Although it took some time, I eventually figured out what he meant.

The following is a composite comping rhythm using upbeats and displaced Charleston rhythms. The overall rhythmic phrase corresponds to the sax player's phrase, "who parked the car". Often it is easier to use a phrase (as silly as it may sound) to sing the rhythm so that you don't have to count. Feeling the comp is just as important as counting and figuring out the rhythm mathematically. "Who parked the car" is analogous to the bebop scat phrase, "Ooh bop sh'bam" and other similar phrases. When recited in rhythm, these phrases form highly effective comping rhythms. "Who parked the car" is meant to signify short, crisp but full comps. An accent should be placed on "parked" and "car". "The" is really just said under your breath rather than played as part of the comping rhythm.

Again, notice how RH chords anticipate the harmony. When the 3rd and 7th occurs on the 3rd triplet of the fourth beat of a given measure, it should correspond to the harmony of the next bar. Also, note that F7 is played in the second bar to add some more harmonic motion to our simple blues.

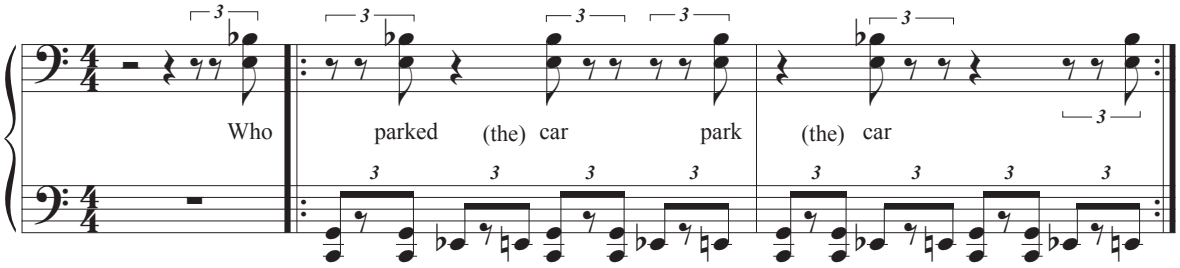
FIG. 13




Below is a variation on “who parked the car” to be applied to the blues. Use F7 in the second bar just like we did in the previous example. “Who parked the car” is followed by a fragment, “park the car” to create a longer rhythmic phrase. Feel the dance between the hands as you hint the dotted quarter cross rhythm in the RH. Again place an accent on “parked”, “park”, and “car”.

FIG. 14

CR 27

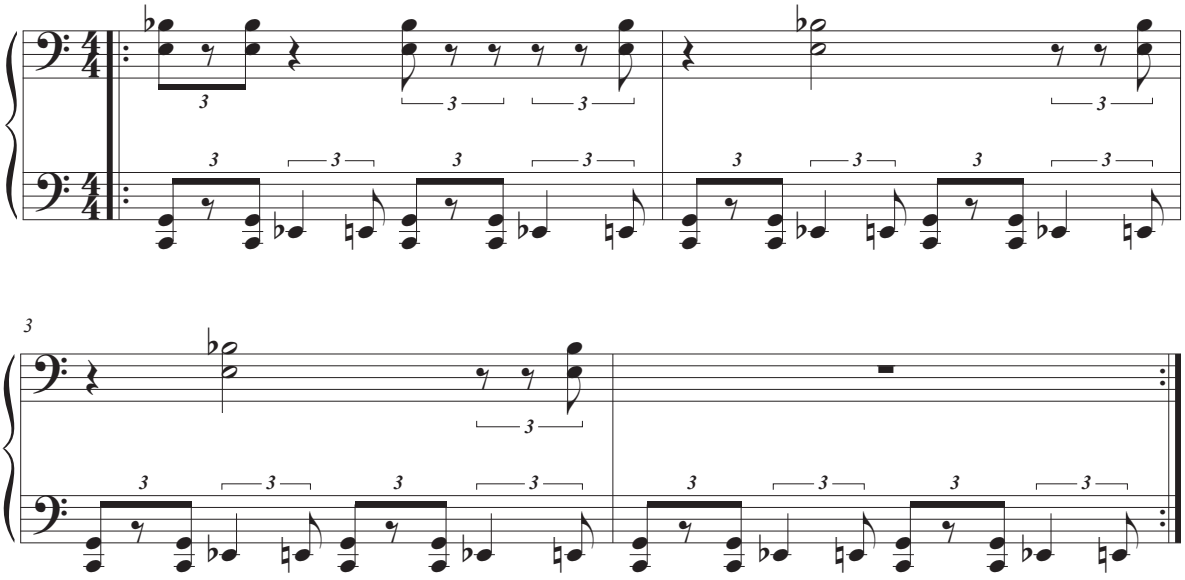



**Comping Exercise #5: "Who Parked the Car".** Make up your own variation using "who parked the car" as a RH rhythmic motif over the LH boogie woogie pattern. Play the rhythm while keeping the blues form. CR 26 ("Who Parked the Car") is demonstrated on **CD 1 Track 3**. Use it as a reference before comping along with **CD 1 Track 6.**

Here is another comping rhythm to be applied to the blues, taken from one of the famous shout choruses from the big band era. Many of the best compers had a firm command and working knowledge of big band music, especially backgrounds and shout choruses. Notice how this CR creates a four bar rhythmic phrase.

FIG. 15

CR 28

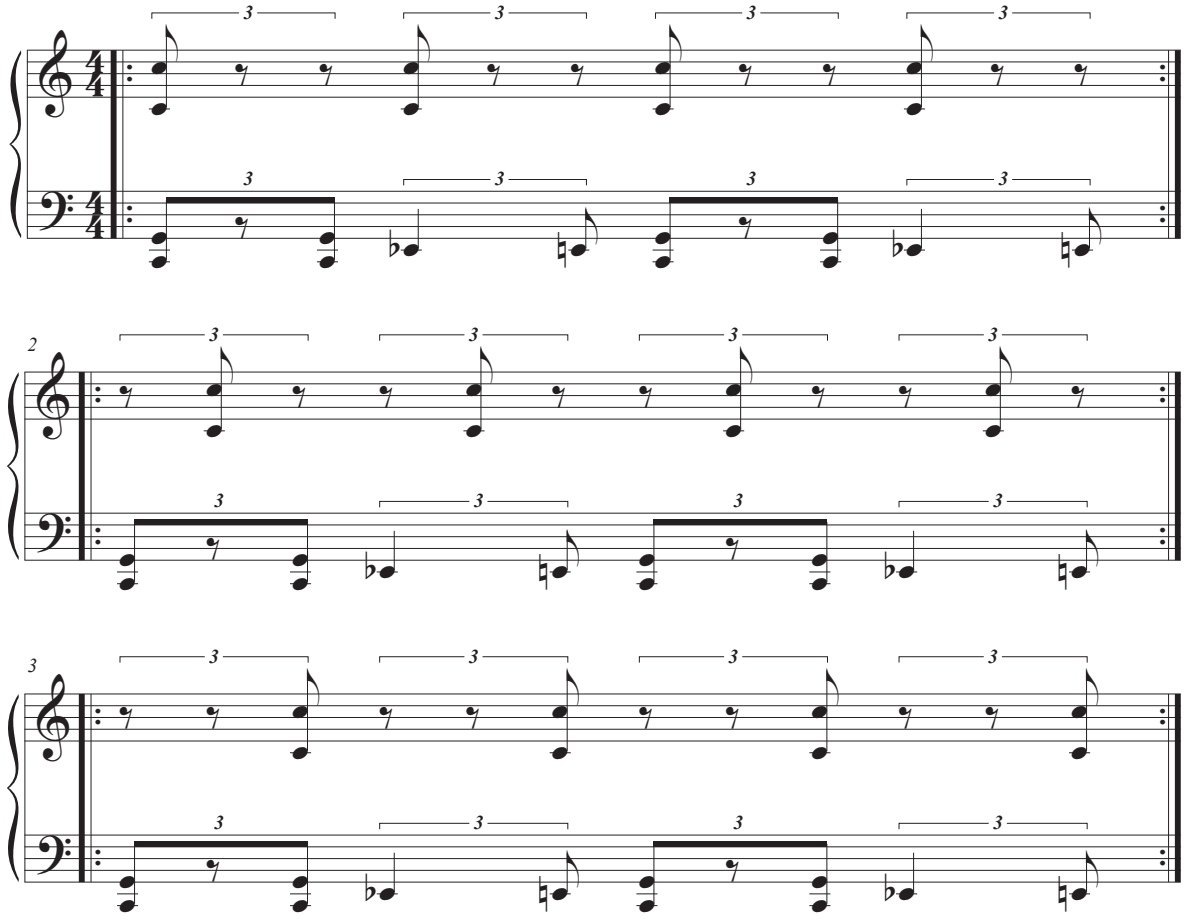


Another important cross rhythm that permeates almost every aspect of jazz rhythm and feel is six against four (6:4). It is a common occurrence in both West African music and African American Folk music including jazz. To get the round, flexible feel in jazz, especially on a slow ballad, feeling the measure in six rather than in four can help immeasurably.

To help internalize the 6:4 cross rhythm we have to return to the triplet itself. So far we've only been dealing with rhythmic occurrences on the first or third triplet of the beat. In the next few exercises we will investigate comping on each part of the beat including occurrences on the second triplet.

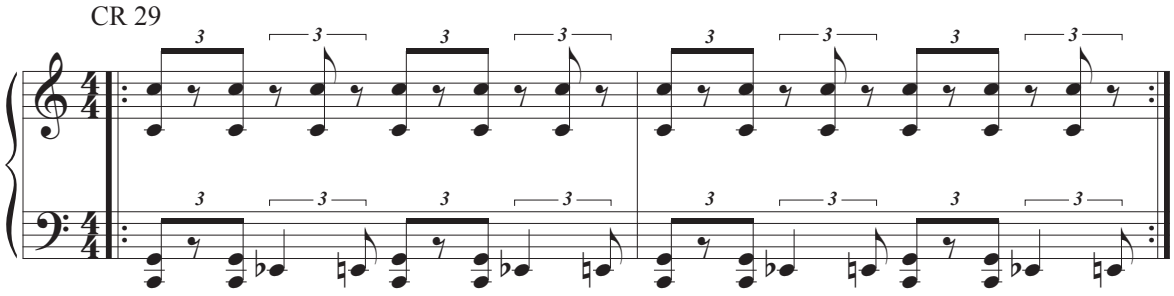
To get started, let's start with our boogie-woogie bass figure in your LH. Above it, play a "C" octave placing your RH thumb on middle C. Begin by playing the octave on the first triplet of every beat. Settle into a groove. Use **CD 1 Track 6** and play along with the shuffle beat. Next move the "C" octave over so that it occurs on the second triplet of every beat. Comp along with the shuffle beat from the CD. Finally, move the "C" octave over one more triplet so that it occurs on the third triplet of every beat. Be careful not to rush as you play with the CD.

FIG. 16



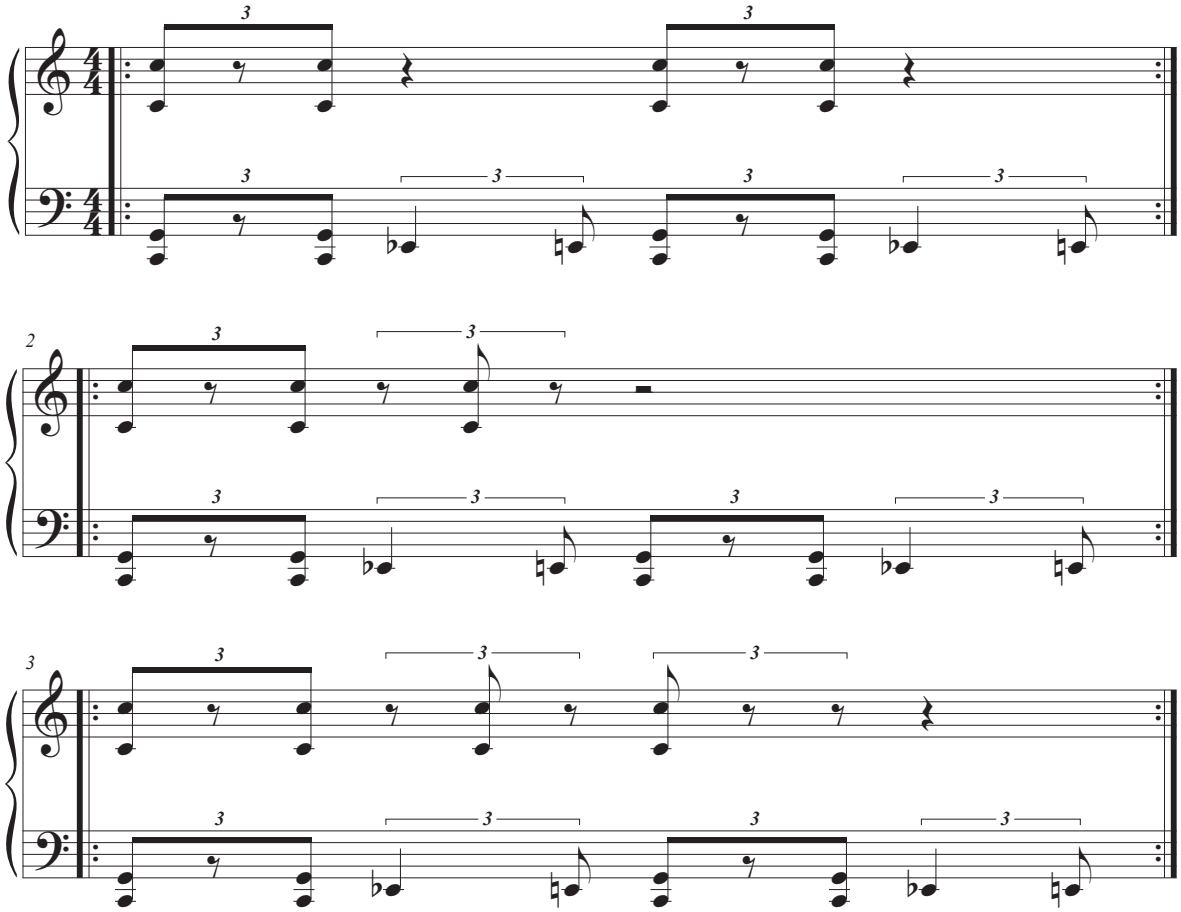
By playing the "C" octave on the first triplet, then on the third triplet, and then on the second triplet of the next beat, and continuing this pattern we can generate quarter note triplets. In other words, by playing every other triplet in the RH we are in fact playing quarter note triplets over the LH boogie-woogie bass. See below.

FIG. 17



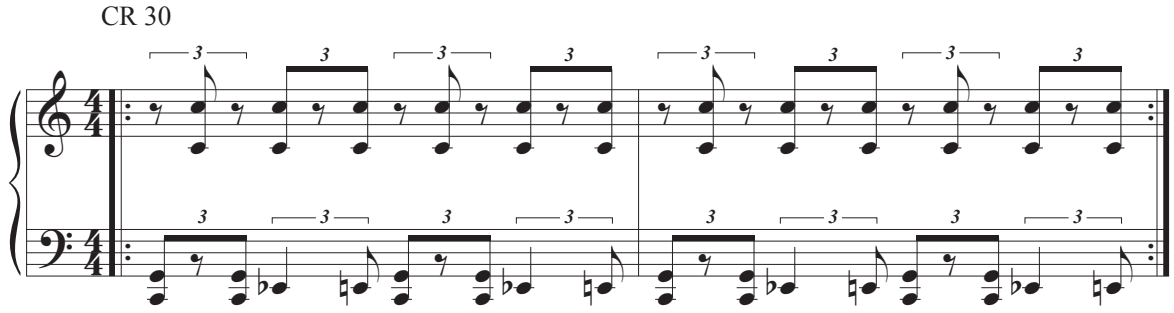

If you are having difficulty synchronizing your hands, try the following exercises. Isolate shorter rhythmic events between the hands, and practice in easy sections. Then return to FIG. 17 and put the small pieces together.

FIG. 18



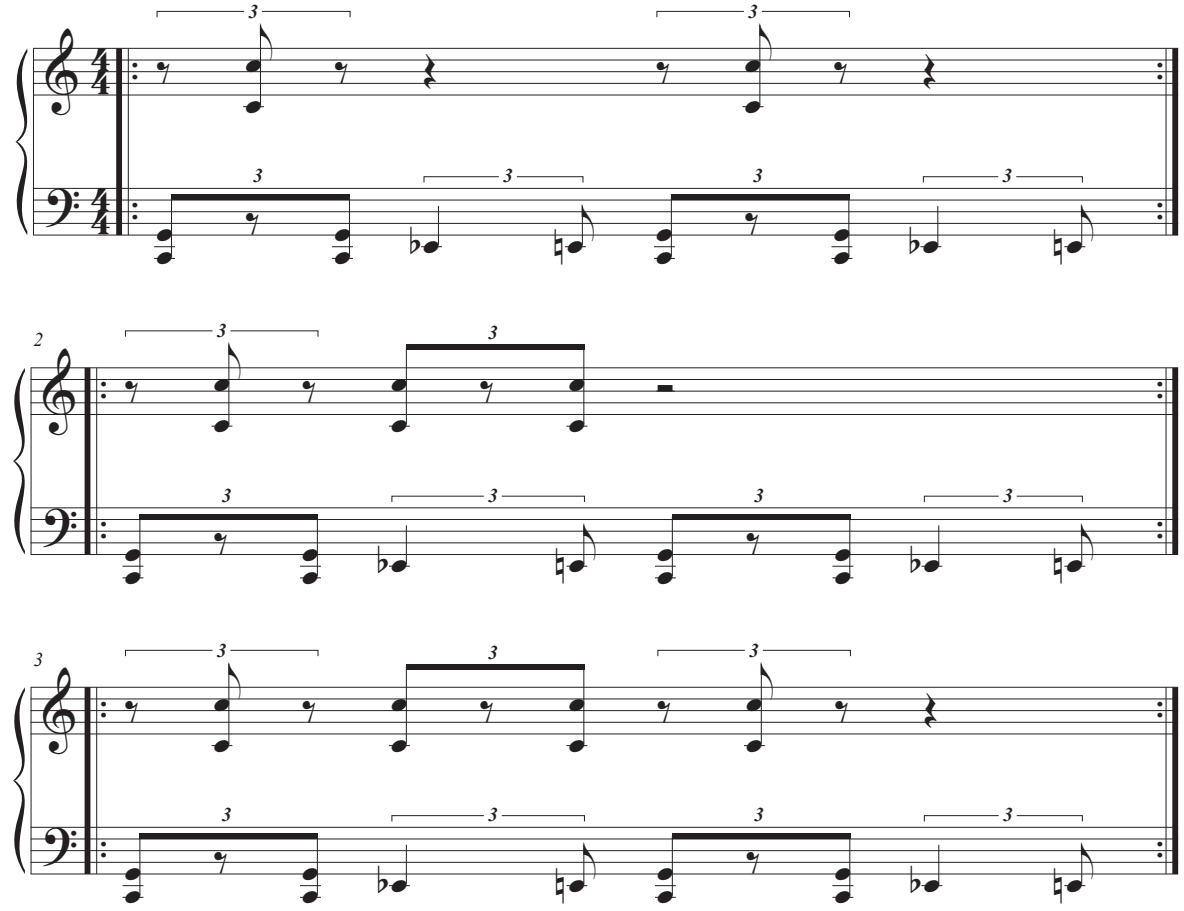
In the next pattern, the quarter note triplets are displaced. Instead of starting on the first triplet, the pattern starts on the second triplet.

FIG. 19




Again we can break it down into simple parts.

FIG. 20



**Comping Exercise #6: Comping Using a 6:4 Cross Rhythm Over the Blues**. Comp quarter note triplets with "C" octaves in the RH with a LH boogie-woogie bass pattern over the blues progression. Start the RH comping rhythm on the first triplet, and then do it again, starting on the second triplet. Be careful to keep the blues form. Note that the "C" octave in the RH moves up a whole step in m. 9 to accommodate the G7. CR 30 is demonstrated on **CD 1 Track 4**. Use it as a reference before comping along to **CD 1 Track 6**.

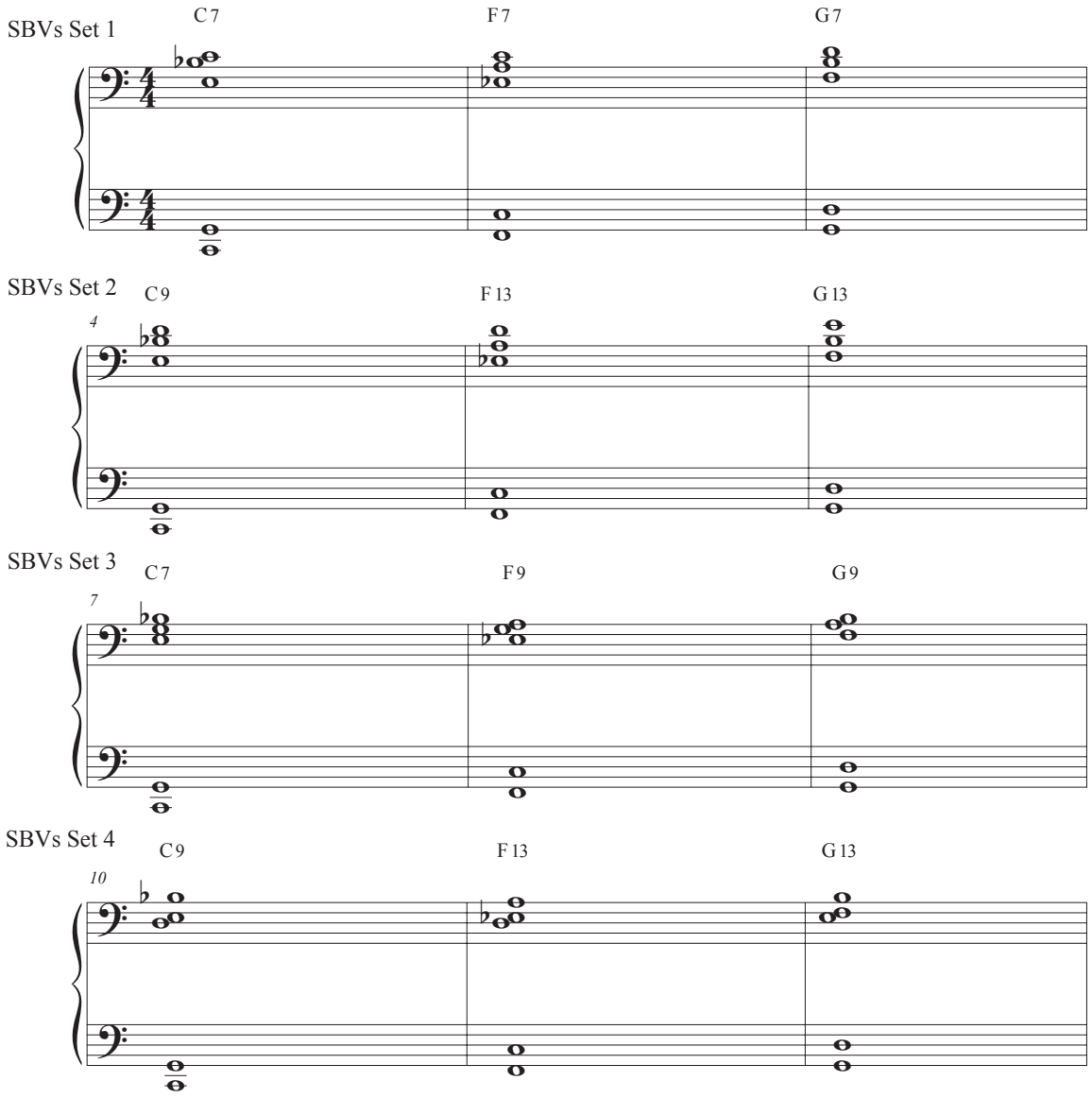
***Simple Blues Voicings (SBVs)***

As we near the end of our introduction to comping rhythms, let's return to our RH voicings. So far we've been concentrating on playing the guide tones only. In Chapter 3 we will explore in detail building around the guide tones to create closed position voicings called trombone voicings for a variety of chords. For now, let's add one more voice to our dominant seventh chords for some added color. Since we are dealing with a simple blues progression, we will only use other chord tones and natural tensions. We can start by adding a root, $5^{th}$, $9^{th}$, or $13^{th}$ to our RH guide tones. We'll discuss other tensions in Chapter 3. Doubling the root or fifth in the RH will lead to a simpler, more earthy sounding voicing. A chord with no doublings will have a more sophisticated sound. In general, having a half step below the melody should be avoided.

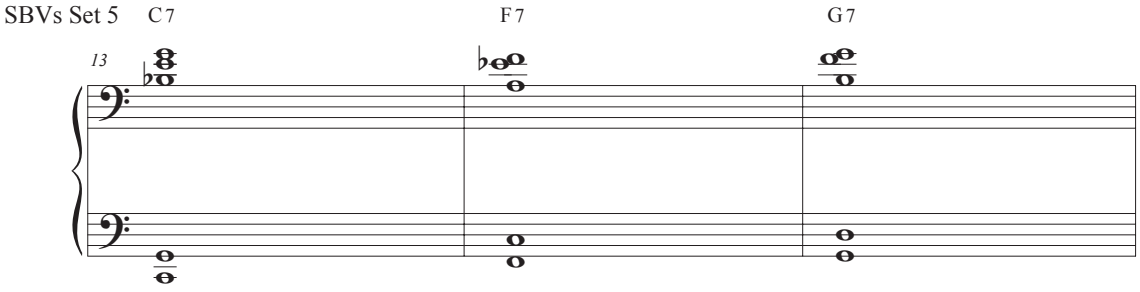
Below are eight voicing possibilities for playing the blues using these new three-note RH simple blues voicings (SBVs). Each set of SBVs contains the I, IV, and V to be used together when playing through the blues progression. Care has been taken in grouping together SBVs so that smooth voice leading can be observed when moving from chord to chord.

The SBVs themselves are generated by adding a third voice either above, in between, or below the two guide tones. For SBVs Set 1, one note is added above the guide tones. SBVs Set 2 contains slightly more sophisticated voicings as 9ths are substituted for roots and 13ths for 5ths. For SBVs Set 3, the new note is placed in between the guide tones. SBVs Set 4 contains voicings in which the new note is placed below the guide tones. SBVs Sets 5-8 work the same way, except that the guide tones are inverted.

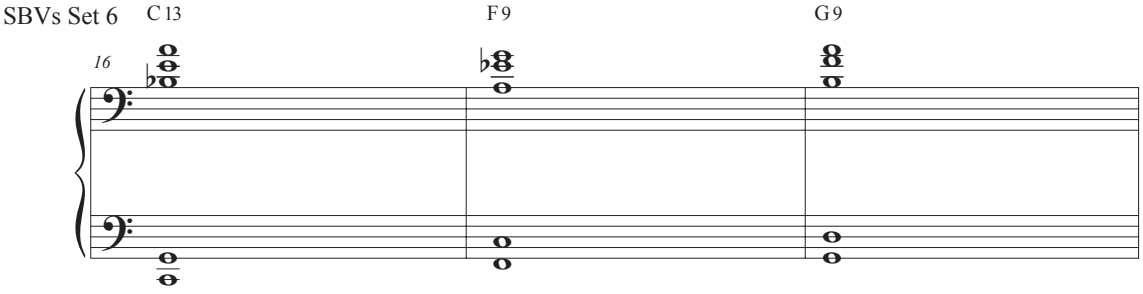
FIG. 21


SBVs Set 1
C7
F7
G7
SBVs Set 2
4
C9
F13
G13
SBVs Set 3
7
C7
F9
G9
SBVs Set 4
10
C9
F13
G13

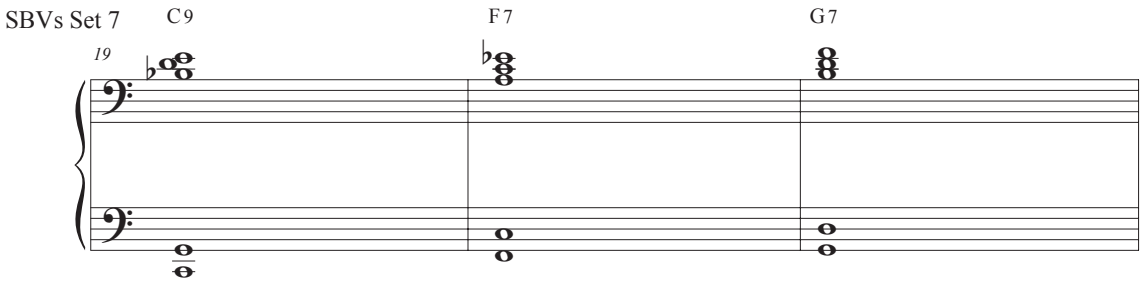
SBVs Set 5



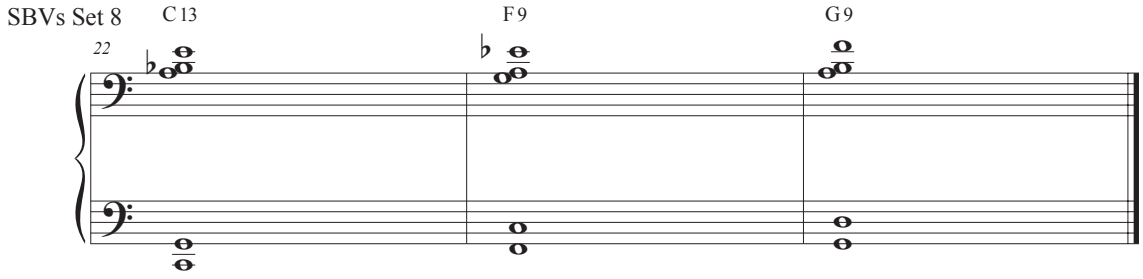

SBVs Set 6




SBVs Set 7




SBVs Set 8



As you apply these sets of SBVs to the 12-bar blues be aware of the line created by the top voice, middle voice, and bottom voice as you move from chord to chord. Any of these three-note RH voicings can be substituted for the simple two-note RH voicings from the previous exercises.

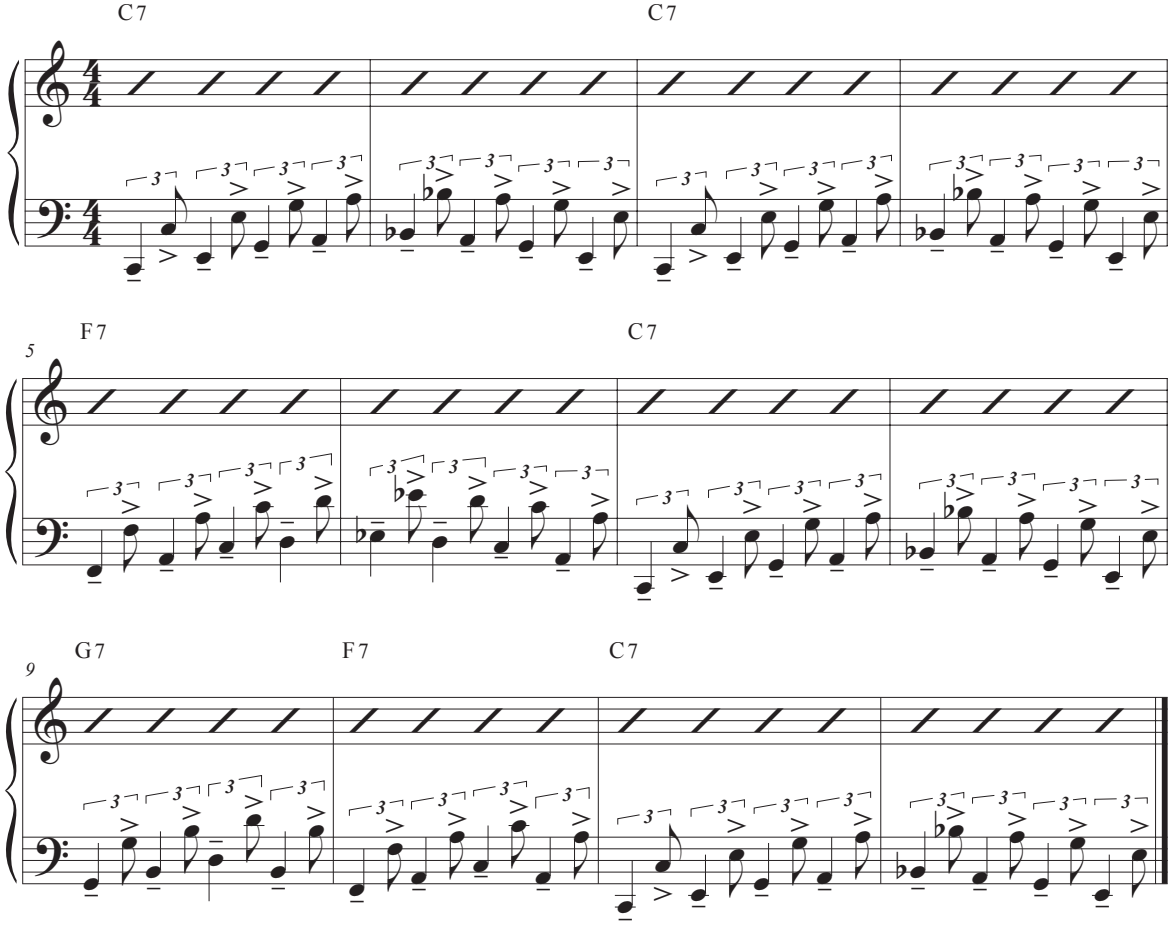
**Comping Exercise #7: Boogie-Woogie Comping Rhythms**. It's your turn to be creative. Combine your choice of comping rhythms (CRs) with your choice of three-note RH simple blues voicings (SBVs) from the last example while playing the boogie-woogie bass pattern in your LH. Play using the shuffle beat from the "comp along" CD. After a while transpose to G, F, and Bb. Listen to your RH voicings. If they seem to muddy, play them up the octave or invert the guide tones. If too thin, play down an octave. As a reference, SBVs Set 8 used with the Charleston rhythm is demonstrated on **CD 1 Track 5.** Comp along to **CD 1 Track 6**.

## Chapter 1B: Intro to Bass Lines

The importance of the bassist's role in jazz cannot be stressed enough. It's the anchor and the pulse of the rhythm section. If you imagine a jazz quartet as four independent levels horizontally streaming along, improvising at four distinct levels separated by range, timbre, and function, the bass line is at the lowest level, providing the foundation of the quartet's sound. Understanding a little bit of the counterpoint, and simultaneously working to attain a buoyant and propulsive quarter note time-feel is a crucial step in developing a deep groove as a comping pianist. We need to feel the quarter note, and get intimately involved in what the bass player is doing before we can comp effectively above the bass line.

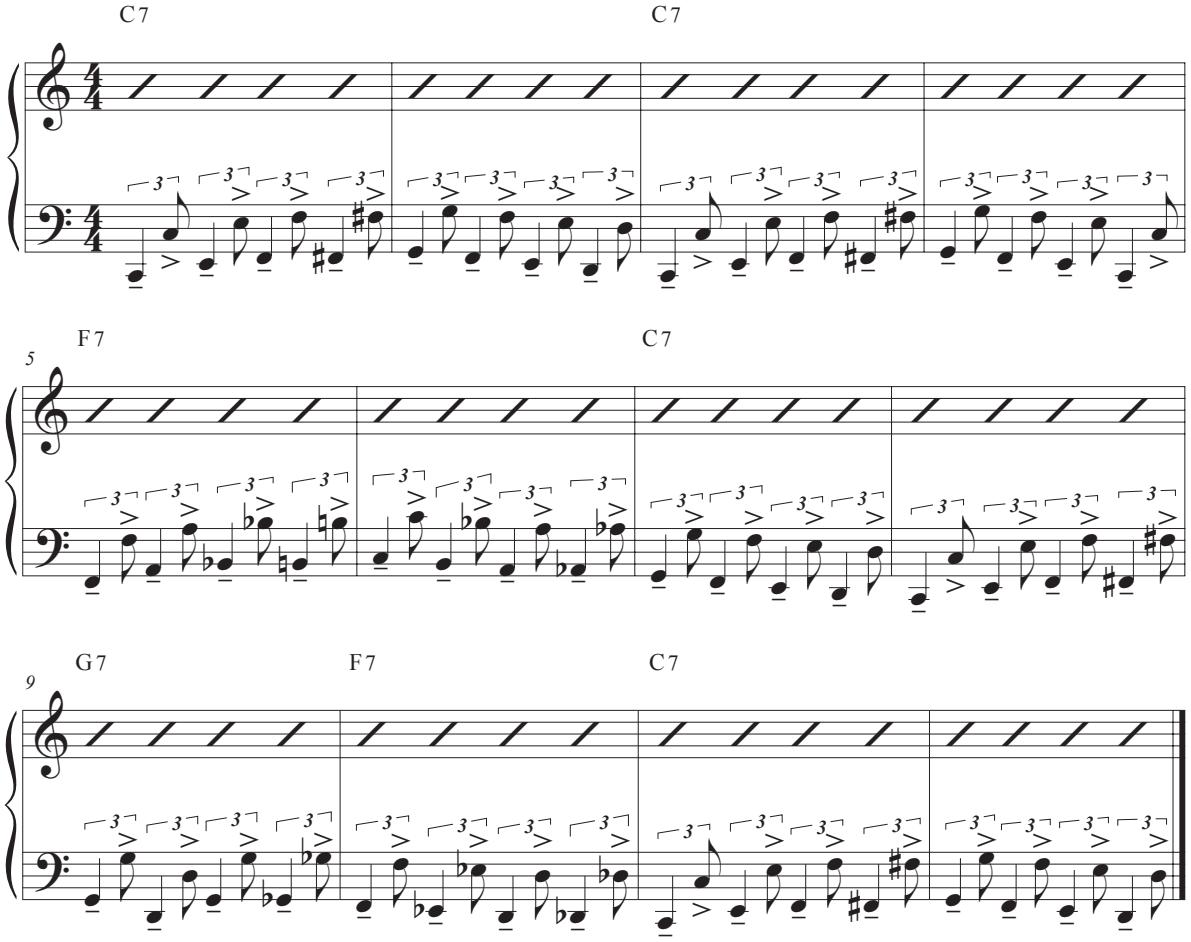
Our left hand is our way to model the bass player. So far, we have been using a boogie woogie figure with little contrapuntal interest. The first example below is another variation of a boogie woogie bass figure used by traditional rhythm and blues pianists. Although not especially elegant, the notes of the bass line clearly outline the harmony of each chord. Practice with a CR and SBV of your choice from Part 1A. Transpose the bass figure down an octave to give more space between the hands. Non-pianists feel free to skip to the basic quarter note bass lines later in the chapter.

FIG. 1



The following is a slightly more elegant boogie woogie bass line. Observe the chromatic passing tones and the smoothness of the line. Note the differences between this bass line and the one from FIG 1. Again, practice the bass line transposed down an octave using a CR and SBV of your choice from Chapter 1A in your RH.

FIG. 2




If we simplify the octave-skipping and just play the basic quarter note bass line pattern, we can see some patterns emerging. Observe the following two choruses of this basic blues bass line. Pay attention to beat 1 of each measure and to where the half steps lie within the bass line. Suggested fingering is provided below the bass line.

R = root
5th = fifth
HS = half step
V-1 = V-1 motion
WS = whole step
DL6th = downward leap of a 6th
UL7th = upward leap of a 7th

FIG. 3

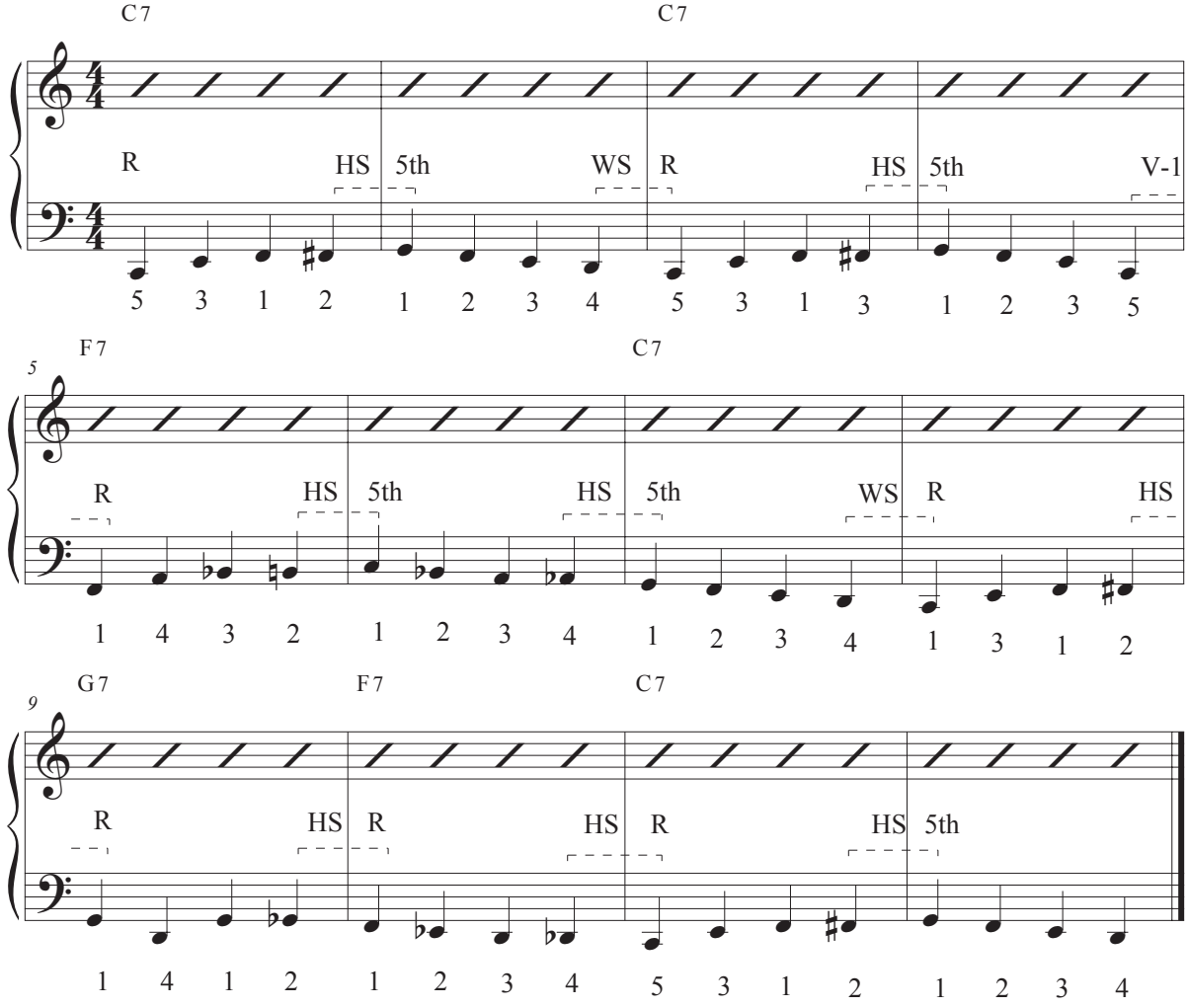
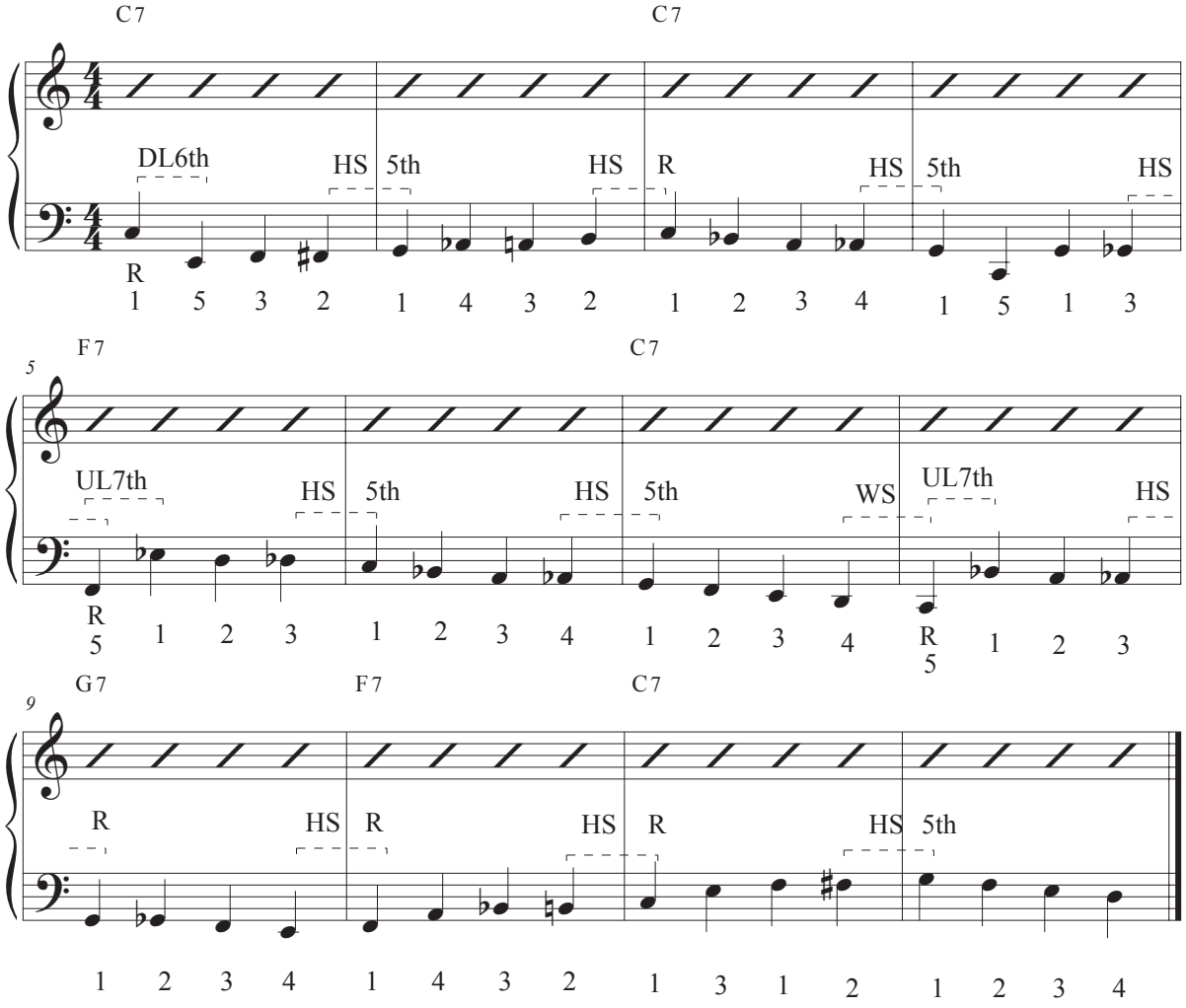


FIG. 4



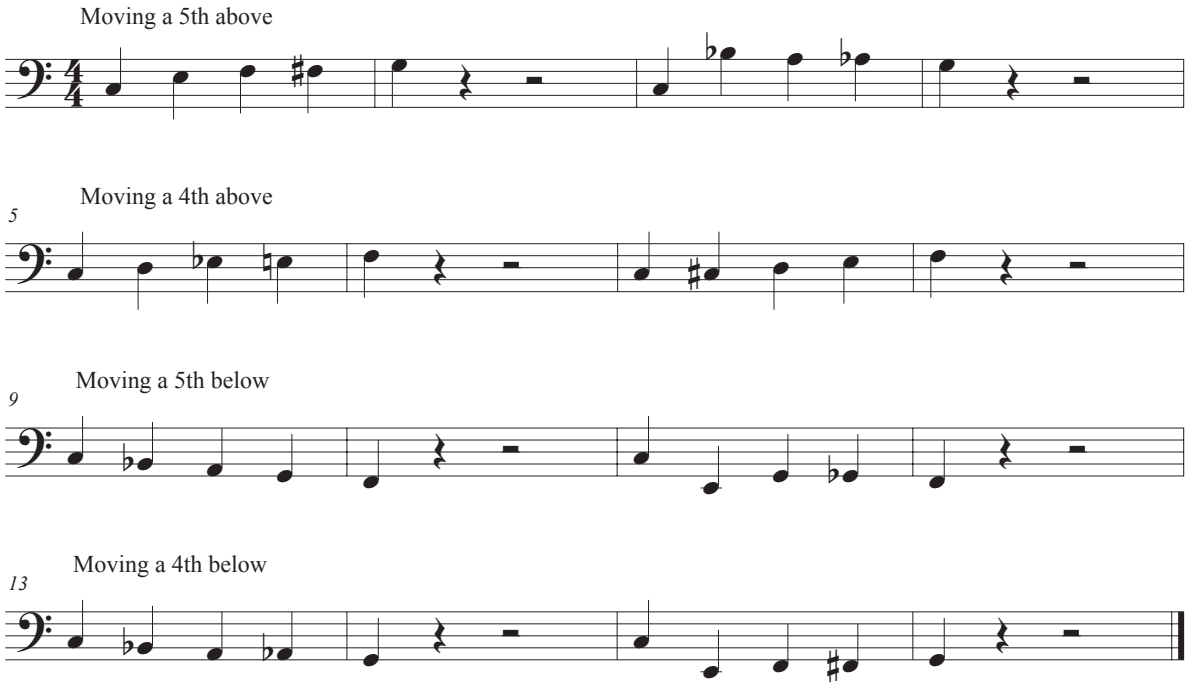

The following is not meant to be an all inclusive guide to constructing bass lines, but rather, a simple quick way to construct the most basic bass line for navigating through a blues.

Here are some guidelines:

1. Beat 1 of each measure is either a root or a fifth of the chord symbol. It is approached by either a half step above or below; a whole step above; or by its fifth (creating a V-I motion)

2. The following motions are commonly used in simple blues bass lines:

FIG. 5

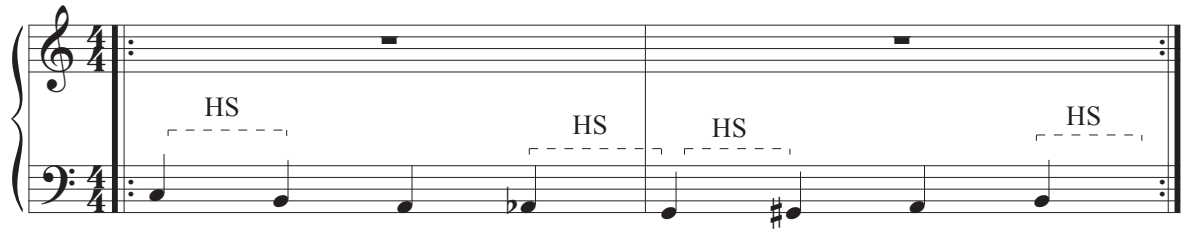



3. A downward leap of a 6th or an upward leap of a 7th usually occurs between beat 1 and beat 2. Usually a large leap away is followed by motion back toward the starting tone. In FIG. 5, measure 15, notice how the bass line moves up to the F on beat 3 immediately after the DL6th. Also, in FIG. 5 measure 3, notice how the bass line moves down to the A on beat 3 immediately after the UL7th.

4. Having three half steps in a row between beats 2 and 3, 3 and 4, and 4 and 1 of the next measure is especially strong. This can be observed in FIG. 4 in measures 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 11 and in FIG. 5 in measures 1, 3, 5, 13, and 15.

5. Although not usually an issue in a simple 3 chord blues, it should be noted that the bassist must pay special attention to the chord quality. For example, the following line has strong motion.

FIG. 6




It's only a strong bass line, however, if played with the right chord changes. In general, if the chord symbol is C7, B- natural should be avoided unless it occurs on a weak beat (as a passing tone) ***and*** resolves to either the root or flat-7. Conversely, B-flat should be avoided on a CΔ7 chord. In FIG. 6, the first measure would work better if the chord was CΔ7 or Cm6/9 since the B-natural does not resolve to a flat-7 or root. The bass line in the second measure works for CΔ7, Cm6/9, or C7 because the B-natural falls on beat 4 and resolves to C in the next measure.

Try to use your thumb or pinky on the downbeat of each measure. Keep in mind that if you choose to use your pinky, you must go up on beat 2. If you choose to use your thumb, you have a choice. You can either go down on beat 2, or cross over your thumb with your 2nd, 3rd or 4th finger and go up on beat 2. Observe the fingering included in the two sample bass lines above.

**Comping Exercise #8**: **Comping over Simple Bass Lines.** Using a variety of CRs and SBVs from Chapter 1A, practice comping with the RH over a walking bass line. Concentrate on constructing a meaningful bass line, and at same time fitting the comping rhythm on top while maintaining a steady quarter note pulse. Feel free to transpose the bass line down an octave to maintain enough space between the hands. Practice with the solo drum track from the practice **CD 1 Track 6**.

Up to this point, all of the comping exercises have involved practicing arbitrary rhythms with different simple voicings over a boogie woogie or walking bass LH figure. As you go further through the workbook and start playing actual comps from records, you will get a taste of what true comping means i.e. interacting with a soloist rather than just playing rhythmically in time. I cannot stress enough that whenever possible, sing or hum the melody of the soloist as you play through the comping transcriptions. This will help you feel intuitively where to place your comp by following the masters.

For now, since we haven't been comping behind a soloist, we'll have to try to simulate what that experience might feel like using the skills developed so far.

**Comping Exercise #9: Give and Take Part 1**. For this exercise you will need a fellow instrumentalist or vocalist. Using the shuffle drum track, play comping rhythms over boogie woogie or walking bass lines in the following ways:

1. Have your musical partner solo for 2 bars. Answer his/her solo with a CR and SBV of your choice for the following 2 bars. Continue this back and forth for an entire blues chorus. This way of interacting is called trading. After doing this for a couple of choruses, trade 4's (4 bar phrases) and 3's (3 bar phrases).
2. Have your musical partner solo freely with one stipulation: have him/her leave plenty of space between each phrase. Then, answer the phrases by finding the space and filling with a CR and SBV. Continue this question/answer routine for an entire chorus. It's your job as a comper to sense where the soloist will end their phrase so that you can interject a CR/SBV in the spaces.
3. Change musical roles with your partner. This time initiate the conversation by playing CRs and SBVs of your choice for as long as you want. Leave space for your partner to answer your comp with his/her solo. Continue this give and take for an entire chorus.

Use CD 1 **Track 6**.

## CHAPTER 2: INTRO TO LH COMPING AND THE BASIC CHORD TONES

In order to build a firm foundation for jazz piano harmony, we need to spend a considerable amount of time working exclusively with roots, 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths before adding tensions (9ths, 11ths, and 13ths) to chords. We can do this while still making interesting music with compelling rhythm, melodic interest, and harmonic motion.

In Chapter 2, we study left hand shells, skeletal structures, and other shapes using basic chord tones for several purposes; first, as a way to develop vertical structures that we can build upon in later chapters; second, to embark on the endless pursuit of harmonic motion within your voicings and comping; and finally, to provide a backdrop for our study of LH comping.

It's important to observe how effective simplicity can be when it comes to comping. In the following pages in addition to building basic jazz piano voicing skills we will be examining three excellent examples of left hand comping by Bud Powell and Horace Silver in which the pianist only uses essential parts of the chord (root, 3rd, 5th, and/or 7th) in their LH comping while still weaving supportive and propulsive comps to accompany their RH soloing.

## CHAPTER 2A: INTRO TO LEFT HAND SHELL VOICINGS

The ***shell voicing*** is an indispensible basic structure that serves as the basis for building many jazz piano voicings. It became popular during the bebop era, used frequently by Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell. Beboppers played shells in their left hand not only while soloing or playing melodies with their right hand, but often as the foundation for their 2-handed comping voicings as we will see in Chapter 5.

In this workbook, we will be referring to shell voicings as simple 2-note voicings played by the left hand most commonly consisting of either root and 7th or root and 3rd of any chord. In addition to these common shells, we will be working with some other shell possibilities including: root and 6th, 5th and 3rd, 7th and 5th, and 3rd and root. Keep in mind that root and 3rd is equivalent to root and 10th for pianists with larger hands.

Most books and tutorials only include root and 7th or root and 3rd. As we will see in our actual examples from bebop era comping, being able to play the 5th in the bass is also important and characteristic of the era. It can add richness and provide an excellent choice when finding lines through chord changes with your shells. Even though the 5th is often omitted when first learning jazz voicings, to completely abandon it during your early jazz piano studies, I believe, would be a mistake.

Shells are versatile and easy to create. They provide a quick way to create a left hand accompaniment for a RH melody. Their transparency makes them suitable to be played in the lower register of the piano without sounding too muddy. Shells outline the basic harmony of a chord without being too dense. The right hand is then free to fill in the harmony without being redundant. For example I can imply a C7#11#9b9#5 chord by playing the tensions in my RH as a melody while playing a simple C7 shell with my left.

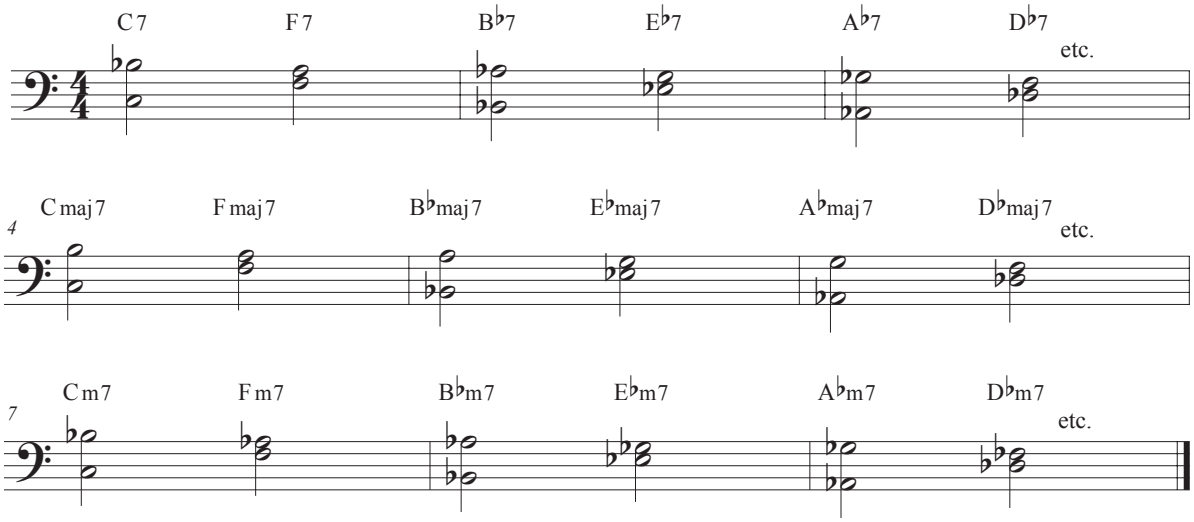
FIG. 1


Not only are shells useful harmonically, their compact shape and crisp sound make them useful rhythmically as well. As we will see later in the chapter pianists like Horace Silver make excellent use of the shell voicing's punchy quality.

The first thing to do is to get acquainted with these shapes and get them into our hands. The following shells alternate root-7th to root-3rd and imply the following chord qualities: dominant, major, and minor. The alternating shell voicings are meant to alleviate unnecessary leaping around the keyboard. When moving from a wider interval (root-7th in this case) to a smaller interval (root-3rd in this case) that is only a step away try using the following fingering: 5-1 to 3-1. Even if you cannot connect thumb to thumb, you can connect switching from your fifth finger to your third finger. If we can connect the bottom notes with our 5-3 fingering, we can achieve an overall legato sound.

Work the following shells through the entire cycle of 4ths. Observe the voice leading.

FIG. 2



Below are other possible shell voicings to work through the circle of 4ths. Play through the entire cycle of 4ths in dominant, major and minor. Observe the voice leading. Note: other fingering will be necessary. Don't worry too much about connecting everything.

FIG. 3i: shells made up of root-3rd moving to shells made up of root-7th

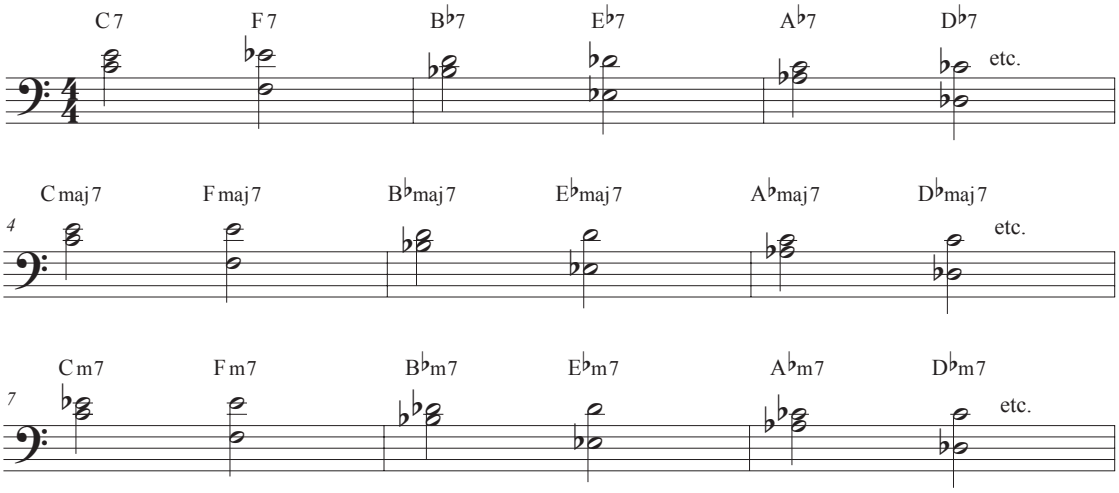



FIG. 3ii: shells made up of 5th-3rd moving to shells made up of root-7th

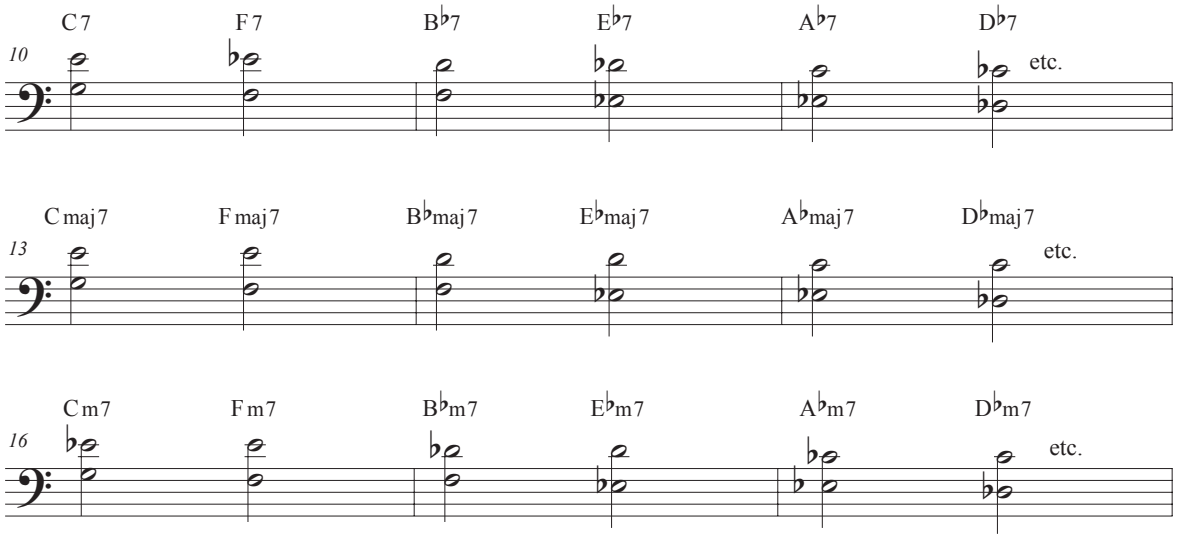
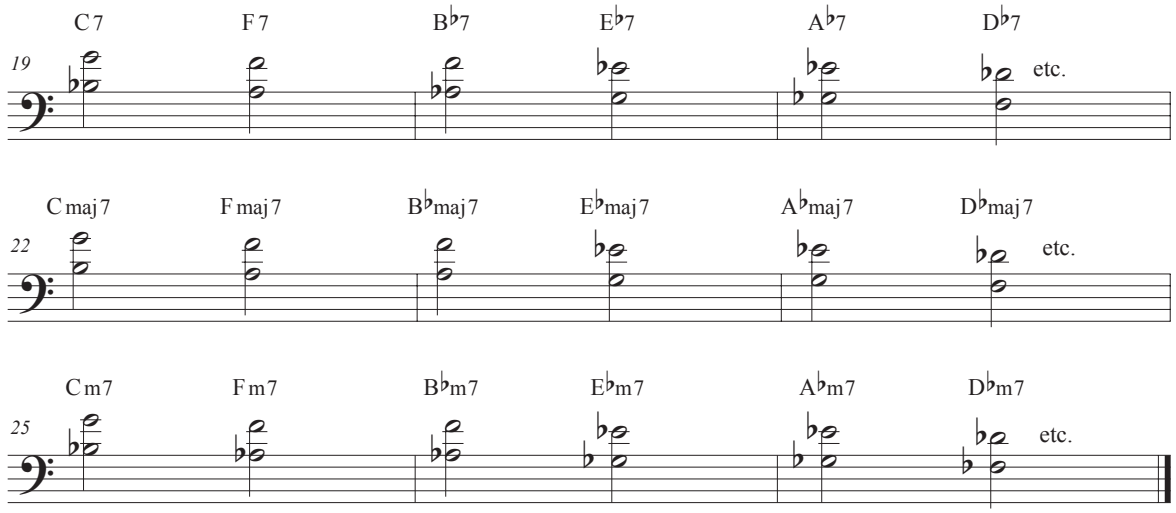


FIG. 3iii: shells made up of 7th-5th moving to shells made up of 3rd-root

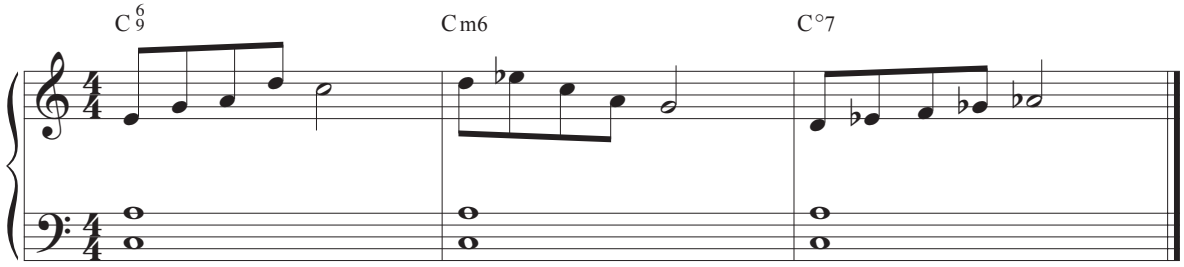



**Comping Exercise #10: Shell Workout.** Practice the shell progressions from FIG. 2, 3i, 3ii, and 3iii. In order to better hear some of these rootless shells, arpeggiate the original root position chord in the RH using eighth notes. As you become more familiar with the chord sound, feel free to invert the RH chord and experiment with playing the chord tones in a different order.

By themselves, shells do not provide nearly enough harmonic information. They are not complete chords; they only imply the harmony of the original chord. Sometimes more than one chord is implied with one shell voicing. Evidence of this can be found above in FIG. 2. Notice how the root-7th shells for dom7 and m7 are the same. This vagueness is sometimes desirable in that the shell voicing does not box in the RH. One shell can accommodate multiple chords.

Let's do an experiment to demonstrate the shell's versatility. Over a CΔ6 shell (root-M6) I've composed 3 very different melodies, each implying a very different chord. Meanwhile, my LH shell remains unchanged.

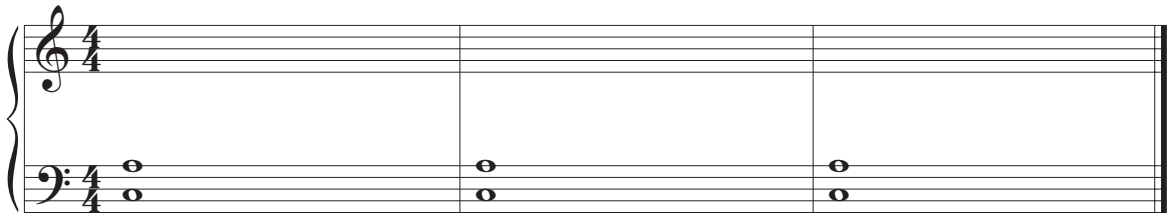
FIG. 4




Now it's your turn. Play the same shell in your LH. With your RH, improvise 3 different one measure long melodies, each one implying a different chord compatible with the

shell other than the chords implied above. Write in the chord symbol that you are implying. Remember, the bottom note of the shell doesn't necessarily have to be the root.

FIG. 5



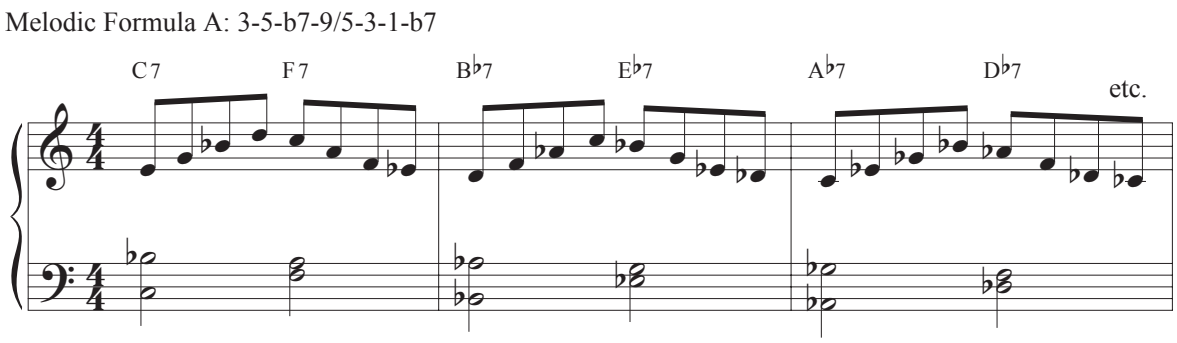
***Using Melodic Formulas to Create 4-note Cells.***

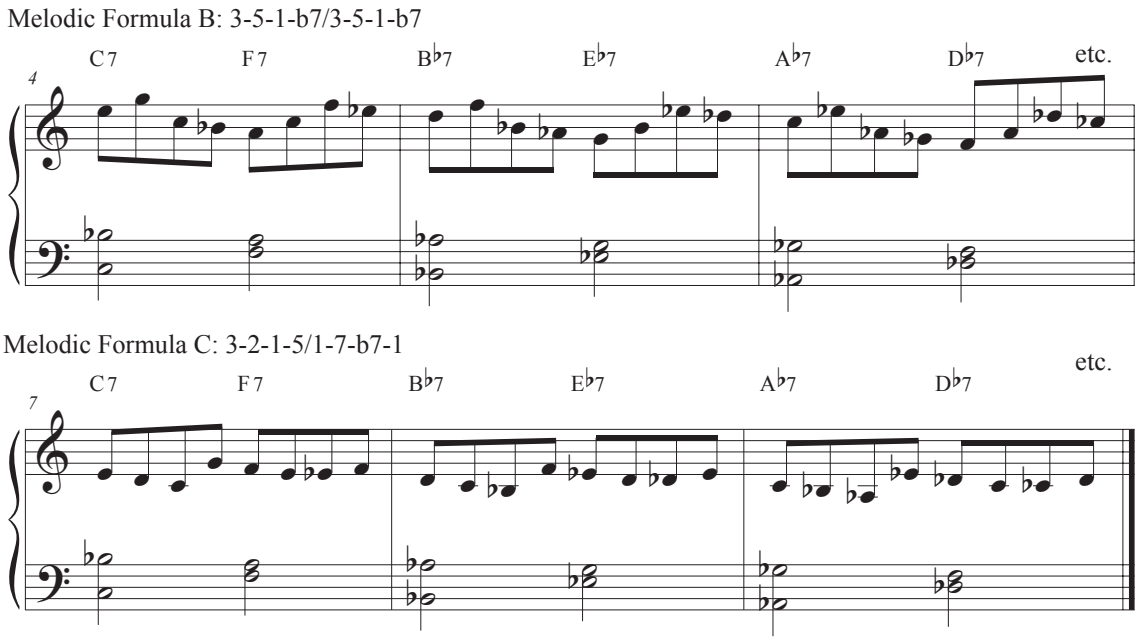
As you experiment with melodies that imply different chords and seventh chord arpeggios superimposed over shells, you can begin to create a repertoire of melodic sequences that could be used when improvising. Spelling out chords in a linear way is the secret to playing "on" or "inside" the changes. Thinking linearly also goes hand in hand with effective comping. As we will see later, the top voice of our comping should form a smooth and tuneful melody.

Using eighth notes in your RH above LH shells in half notes creates 4-note melodic fragments that correspond to each shell. As you move through the cycle of 4ths, these 4-note cells can be connected in a melodic way. If we label the 4-note cell in terms of chord tone function we can come up with melodic formulas that work on each individual shell, allowing us to traverse through the cycle of 4ths more easily.

**Comping Exercise #11: 4-note Cells Applied to Dominant 7th Shell Progressions.** Try the following melodic formulas to create RH 4-note cells applied to basic LH dominant 7th shell cycles (see FIG. 2). Complete the following sequences using the following melodic formulas. Then come up with your own melodic formulas to create original 4-note cells to be applied to dominant 7th shell progressions.

FIG. 6





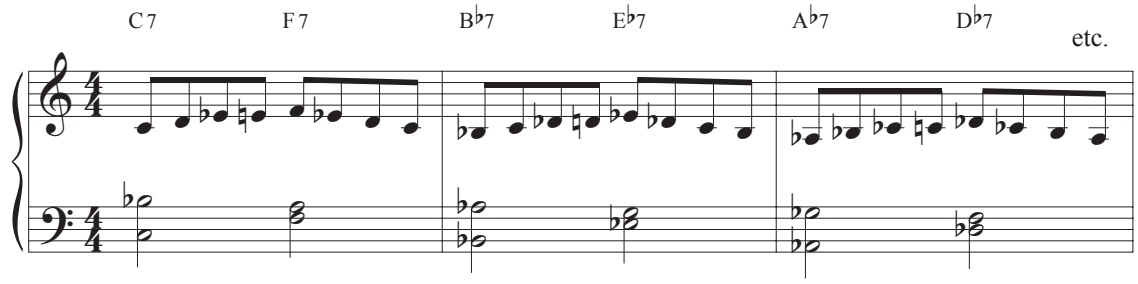

For Melodic Formula B, feel free to transpose the 3rd and 4th notes of each 4-note cell up or down an octave depending on the direction you wish to go as you play through the keys.

We can apply the techniques we learned in Chapter 1B regarding constructing bass lines to create RH melodic patterns. The linear nature of bass lines is quite compatible with creating lines in your RH. The main difference is that often bass lines are at the quarter note level, while RH lines tend to be at the eighth note level. This is only relative, however. To generate more 4-note cells let's start by targeting the root and the fifth of every chord as we did when making bass lines. This time, we will expand our lines to include targeting the 3rd and 7th of every chord as well. Below are more RH 4-note cells derived from LH bass lines above LH shells. As you become familiar with connecting 3rds and 7ths of each chord with a line, revisit Chapter 1B and experiment with bass lines that start on the 3rd or 7th on beat 1.

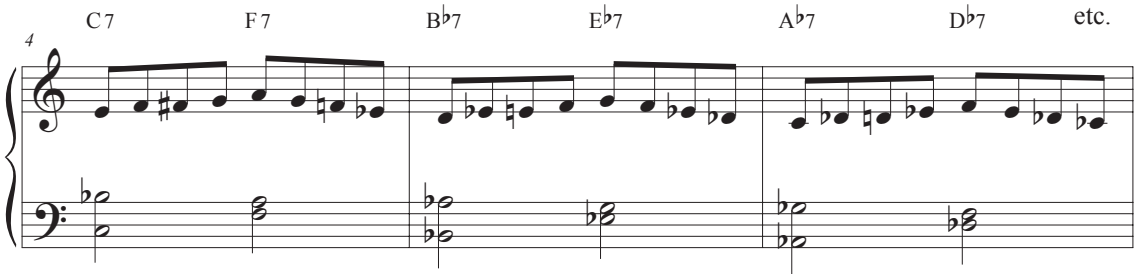
**Comping Exercise #12: 4-note Cells Derived from Bass Lines.** Complete the following sequences using the melodic formulas listed. Melodic Formula D targets the root of each chord; Melodic Formula E targets the 3rd; Melodic Formula F targets the 5th; and Melodic Formula G targets the 7th; and Melodic Formula H targets a combination of 7th and 3rd of each chord. Experiment with creating more of your own original 4-note cells. Write all of your patterns down in a journal for practicing.

FIG. 7

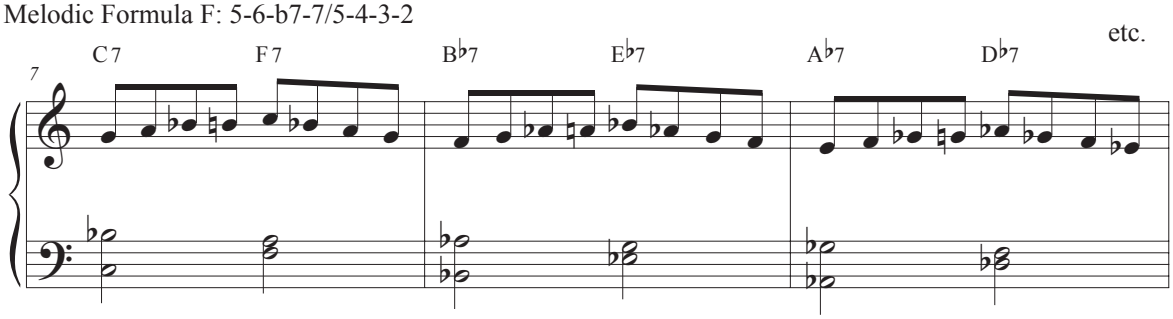
Melodic Formula D: 1-2-b3-3/1-b7-6-5



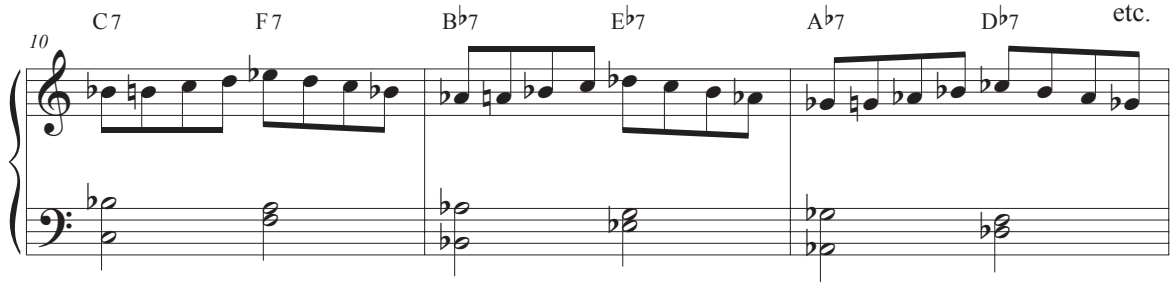

Melodic Formula E: 3-4-#4-5/3-2-1-b7



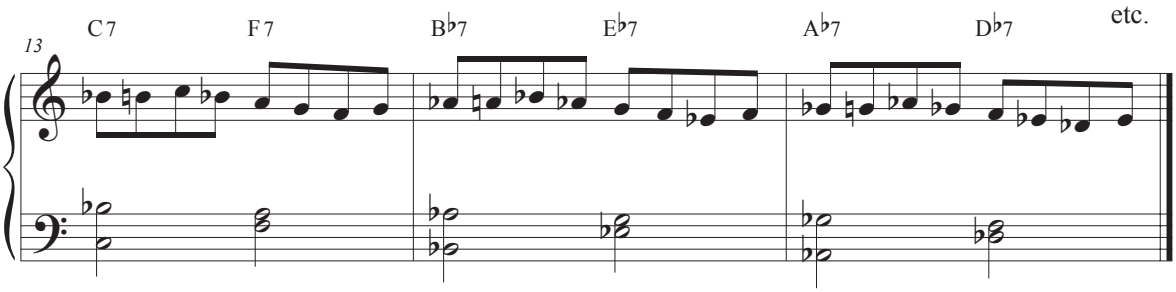

Melodic Formula F: 5-6-b7-7/5-4-3-2




Melodic Formula G: b7-7-1-b7/b7-6-5-4



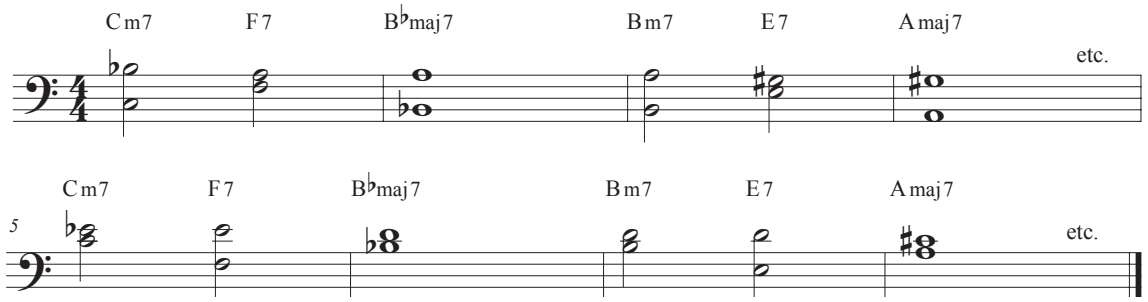

Melodic Formula H: b7-7-1-b7/3-2-1-2



We can extend our study of shell progressions to include ii-V-I's. The following sequence moves down in half steps, modeled after the bridge to Billy Stayhorn's "Day Dream". The first pattern starts with root-7th moving to root-3rd; the second starts with root-3rd moving to root-7th.

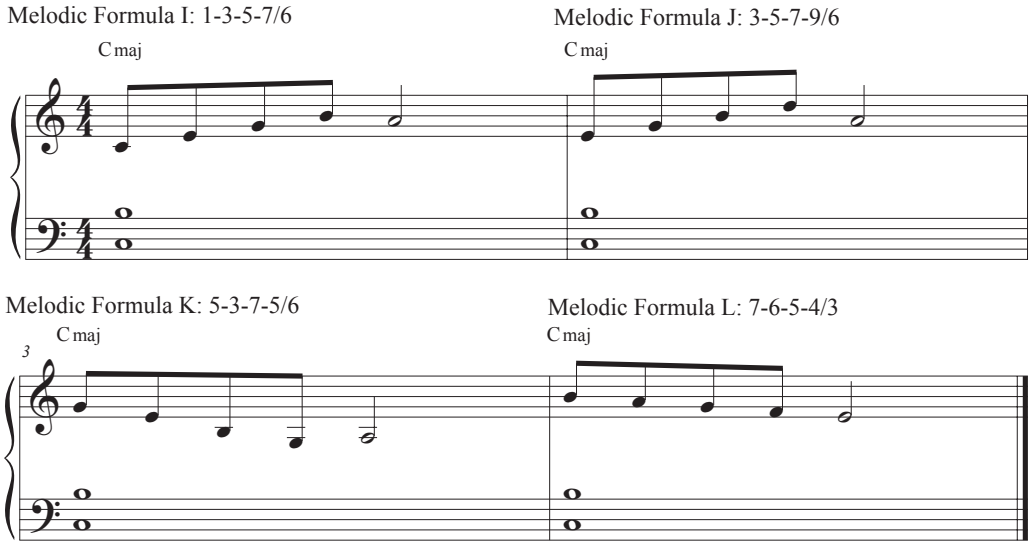
**Comping Exercise #13: ii-V-I Shell Progressions**.
Continue these patterns through the keys.

FIG. 8




Finally, we can apply RH 4-note cells to these ii-V-I shell progressions. By replacing 3 with b3, we can tweak our melodic formulas to fit the ii-V portion of the ii-V-I's above. The only thing left to do is to find melodic patterns to play on the maj7 chord. If we can come up with 4 patterns, each starting from a different chord tone, we can successfully fit these new puzzle pieces together with our ii-V progressions to create complete ii-V-I melodic patterns. Here are 4 sample patterns starting from the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th:

FIG. 9




Note: Melodic Formulas (I-L) refer to major chords.

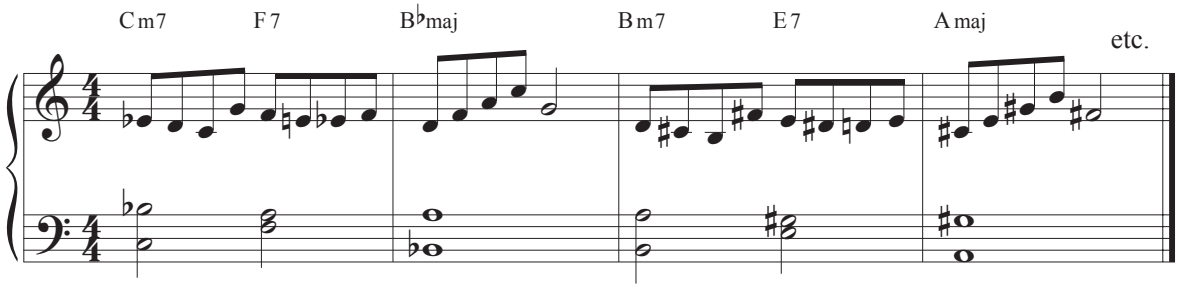
By linking 4-note cells created with modified Melodic Formulas (A-H) together with cells created with Melodic Formulas (I-L), we can create several RH melodic patterns to fit over ii-V-I. Keep track of the chord tone targeted and always strive for smooth voicing leading.

Since modified Melodic Formulas (A-C) target the 3rd, all three resulting 4-note cells can easily be linked together with the cell created with Melodic Formula (J). The cell created with Modified Melodic Formula (D) targets the root, therefore fits nicely with the cell created with Melodic Formula (I). Also, cells generated from modified Melodic Formulas (E) and (J); (F) and (K); and (G)/(H) and (L) can be played together because of the chord tones targeted.

**Comping Exercise #14: Connecting 4-note Cells over ii-V-I Shell Progressions.** Link together your choice 4-note cells created using melodic formulas. Finally, compose your own ii-V-I RH melodic patterns and include them in your practicing journal.

Below is one possible example (the 4-note cell created using modified Melodic Formula C is connected to the cell generated from Melodic Formula J).

FIG. 10




Play this progression using **CD 1 Track 7**.

We are now ready to move on to exploring harmonic motion through the blues using shell voicings.

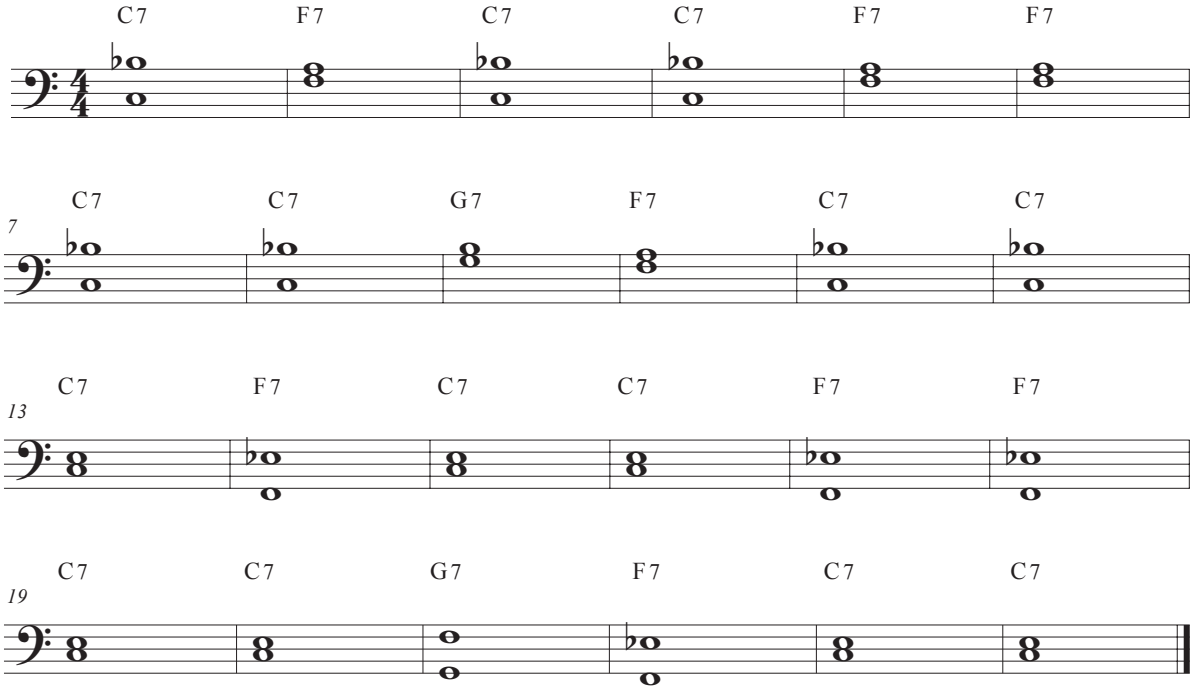
# CHAPTER 2B: HARMONIC MOTION THROUGH THE BLUES AND INTRO TO LH COMPING

Using shells is an easy way to introduce harmonic motion into your playing. It is my hope that upon completing this chapter you will have gained a basic understanding of some of the harmonic options available to you as you play through a blues or other simple progression. In the end, we will examine three examples of LH comping using shells and basic chord tones.

When comping it is often necessary to find smooth ways to move through long stretches of the same chord, to find ways to connect chords, and to ultimately find new chord progressions that lead to desirable harmonic destinations. The main goal is to develop our ears so that we can spontaneously find lines that weave through the basic chords of the blues. By doing this we can find an infinite number of blues progressions without having to memorize chord sequences.

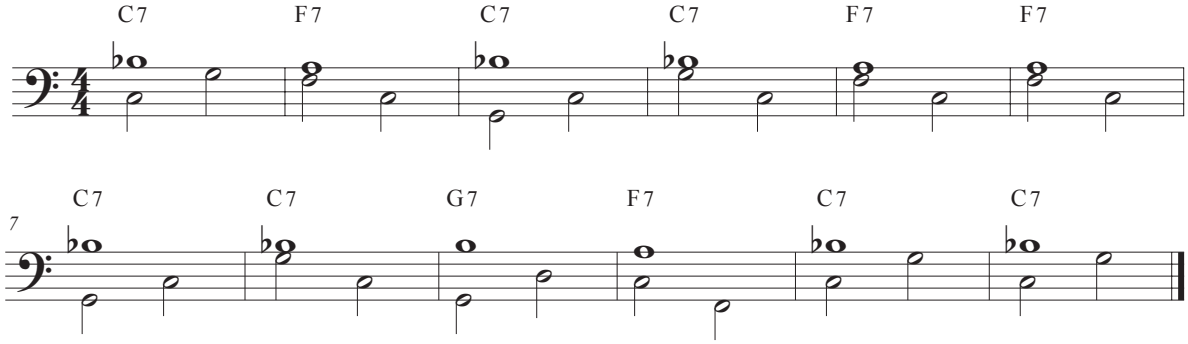
Let's start by simply playing through the blues with our LH using the root-7th shell, and then smoothly moving to root-3rd for the IV chord. Continue this pattern through the 12 bar blues. Next start with the root-3rd shell, and do the same thing.
Using F7 in bar 2 allows for a little more harmonic motion in this basic 3-chord blues.

FIG. 1



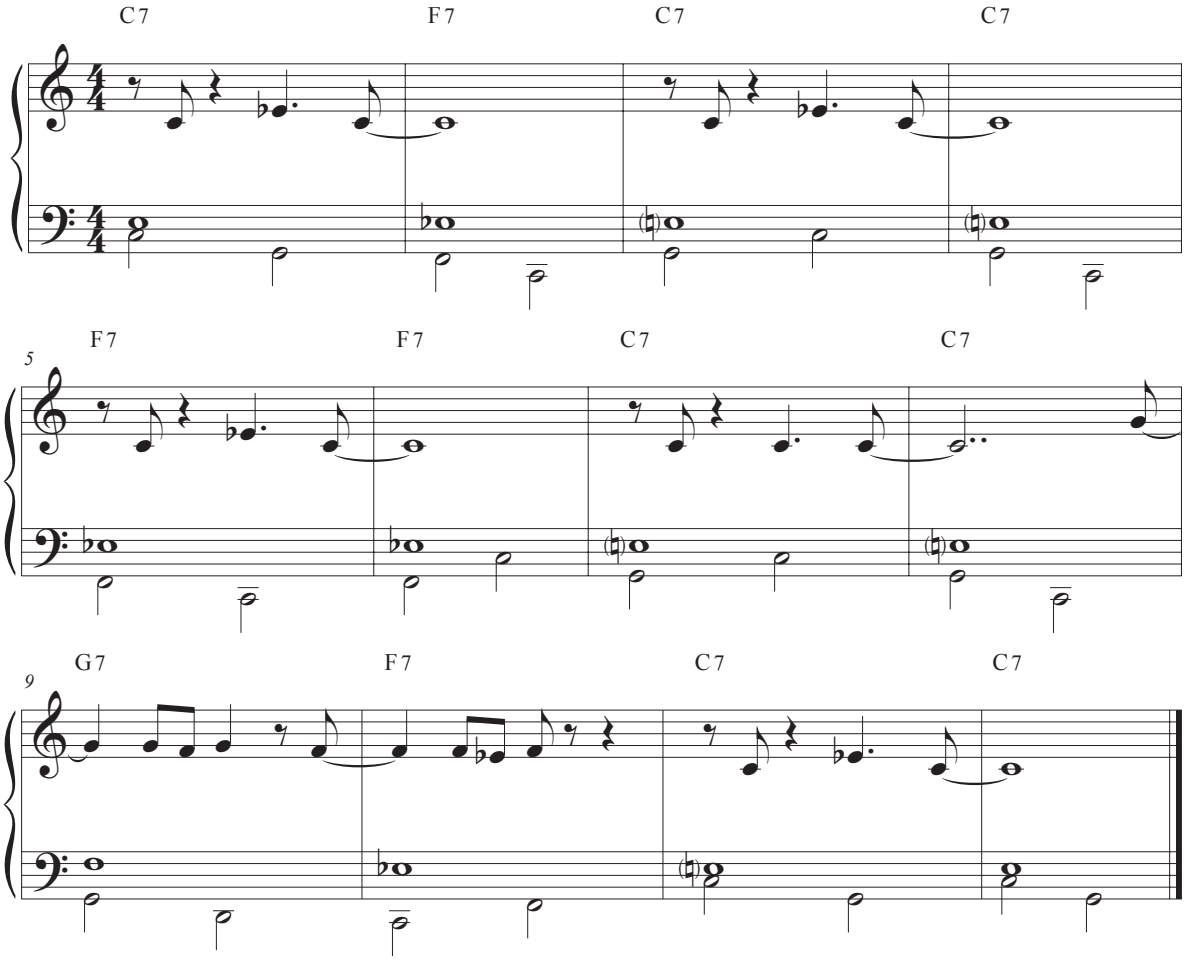

We can always use the 5th of the chord as a passing note. It's wise to become accustomed to quickly locating the 5th of every chord you play. Note: if your LH cannot stretch a tenth, feel free to move the bottom note up an octave.

FIG. 2




Starting with the root-3rd in the LH, try the same thing. This time we add a riff in the RH generated by using 2 notes from the C minor pentatonic scale to create a rhythmic interplay with the static half notes in the left hand, and to reinforce the sound of the blues in our ears.

FIG. 3

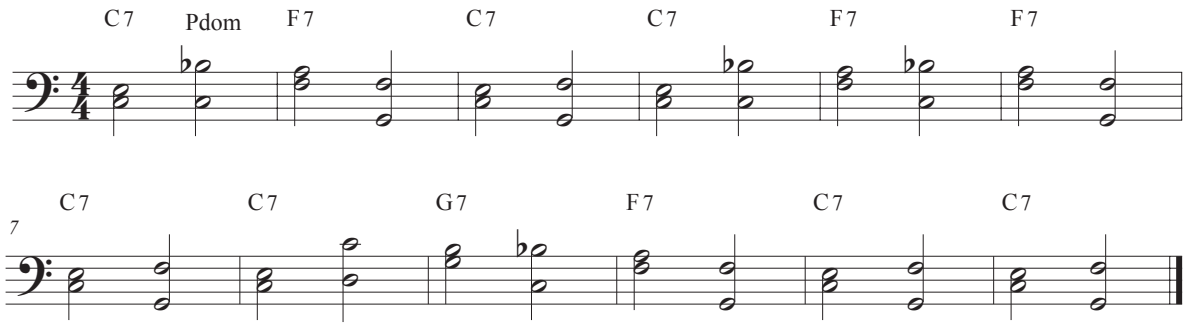


Playing chords often requires you to think backwards. You should get in the habit of asking yourself, "What is the V7" wherever you are in the song that you are playing. The V7 is a strong precursor to any chord. The V7 of I is sometimes called the primary dominant. A dominant chord that brings you to a diatonic chord other than the tonic is called a secondary dominant. Some common examples of secondary dominants include the V7 of ii, the V7 of iii, the V7 of IV, the V7 of V, or the V7 of vi.

We can use the primary dominant and secondary dominants as passing chords in the blues. In other words, we will precede I, IV, and V with each of their corresponding dominant chords. G7 goes to C7; C7 goes to F7; and D7 goes to G7.

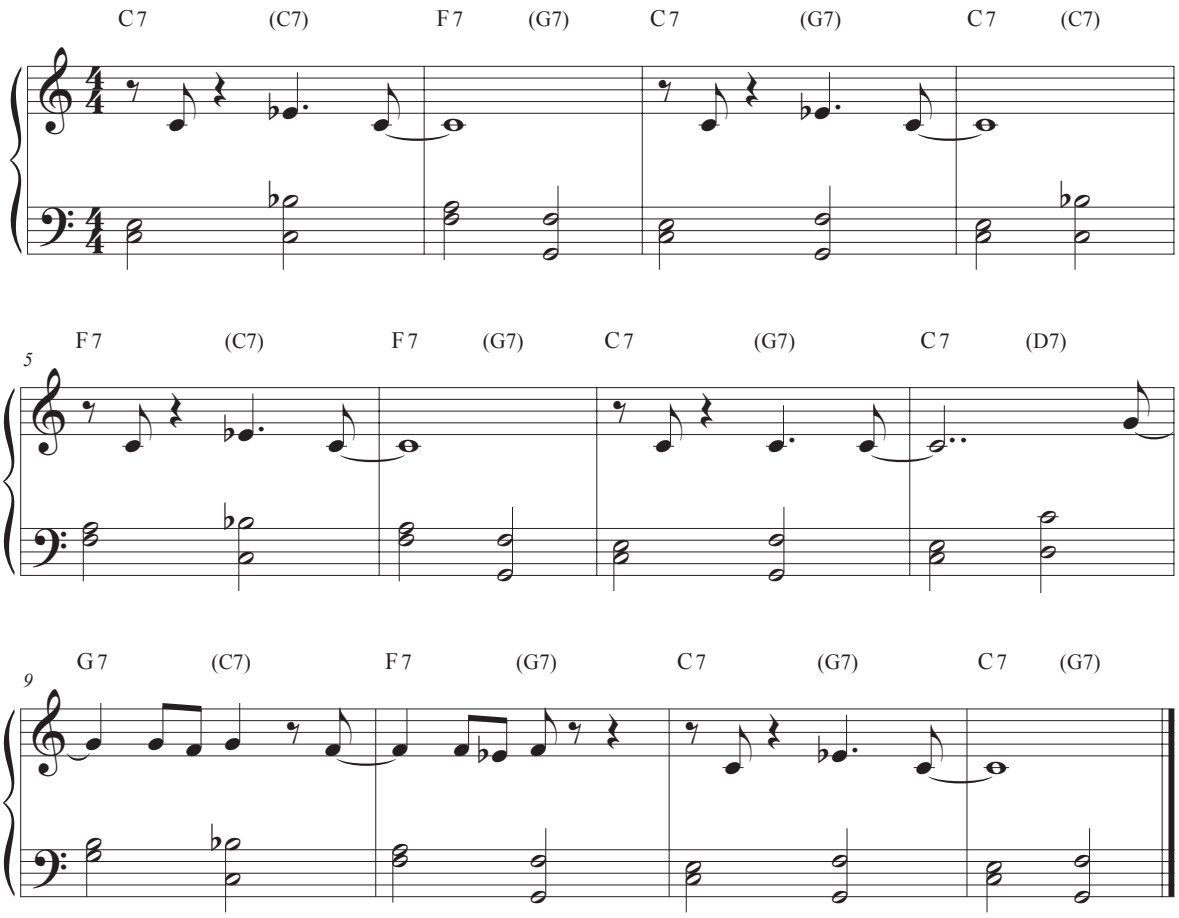
Keep in mind that secondary dominants often contain notes that are not in the tonic key. This adds to the richness of the progressions we are creating. Of course, for now we are only playing shells in our left hand. We will have to wait (until we get to Chapter 3) to fully realize this richness. For our purposes, let's generalize and call these passing primary and secondary dominants passing dominants (or ***Pdom***). In the following example, each chord is preceded by its passing dominant.

FIG. 4



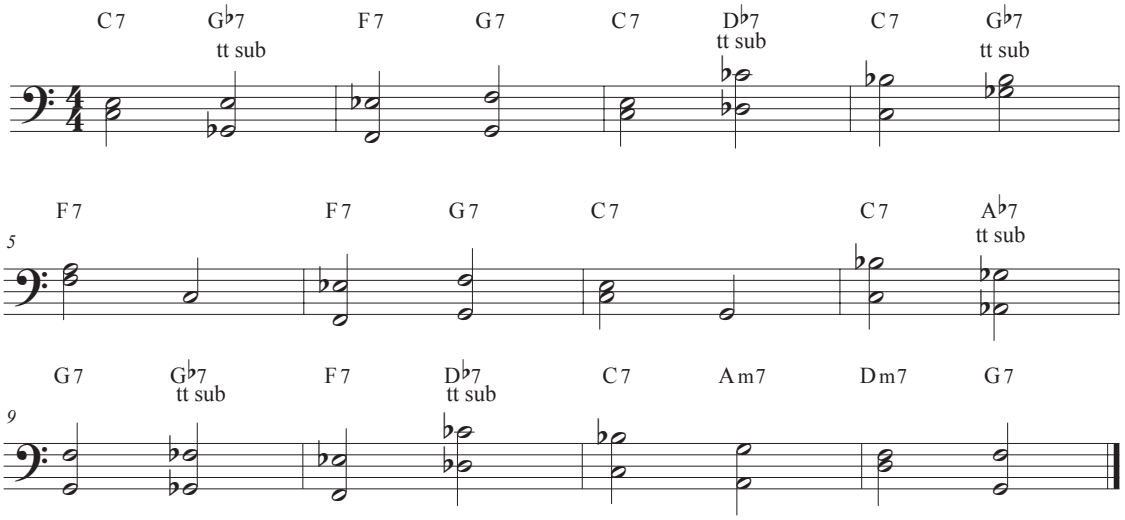

**Comping Exercise #15: Playing Through a Blues Using Passing Dominant Chords**. Play through a simple 3-chord blues using Pdoms before each of the three basic chords. Add a blues riff to the RH to reinforce the sound of the blues in your ear. Try this in three keys of your choice. Below is an illustration in the key of C using the riff from the last exercise.

FIG. 5




Not only can we precede each chord with its V7, we can also use its flat-II7. Or, in other words, substituting the V7 with a V7 a tritone away. This is an example of tritone substitution, so we can label these chords tritone sub (or ***tt sub***).

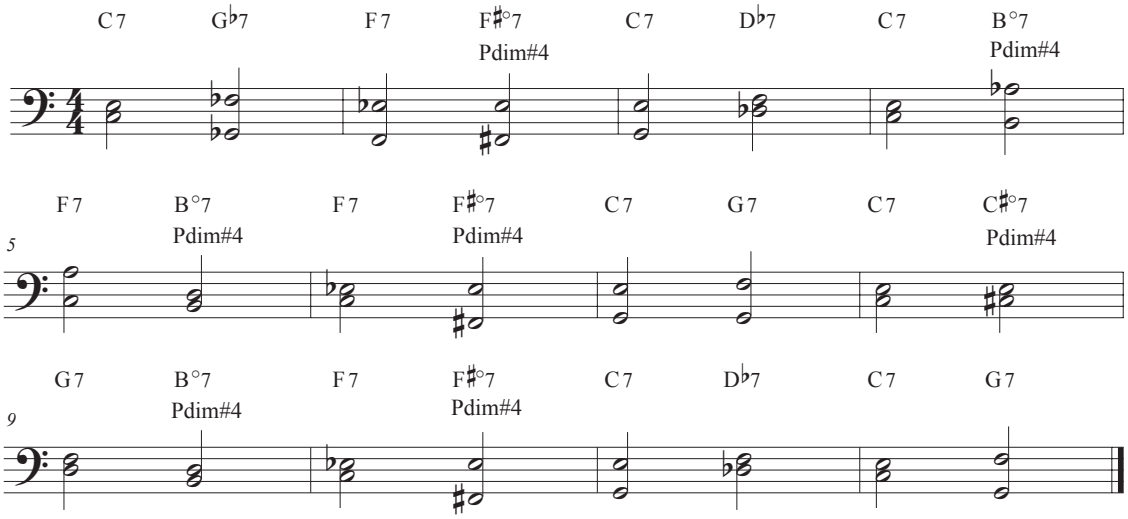
FIG. 6



**Comping Exercise #16: Playing Through a Blues Using Pdoms and tt subs**. Pick three keys of your choice and play through a blues preceding each chord on beat one with a passing dominant or the passing dominant a tritone away on beat three. Add a blues riff in your RH.

Another way to create motion is by using a passing diminished 7th chord built on the #4 of the key ***(Pdim#4)***. To get from the IV chord back to the I chord, you can move the bass by half step from the IV chord through the #IVo7 to the I chord with the 5th in the bass. As complicated as that sounds, the bass line is quite simple: F - F# - G. Here is an example of a rootless shell voiced 5th-3rd just as we practiced it in Chapter 2A. Now let's practice this motion by applying it to the blues.

FIG. 7




Practice FIG. 3, 5, 6, and 7 with **CD 1 Track 8**. Feel free to add a bluesy riff in your RH when playing FIG. 6 and 7.

So far we have been adding passing shells to a basic 3-chord blues to add harmonic motion. This is the point in which we begin reharmonizing the blues in addition to adding passing shells to add motion.

The most common reharmonization is to substitute the V – IV progression in m. 9 and 10 with a ii – V that leads back to I. In a C blues, especially in jazz, G7 to F7 is replaced with Dm7 to G7.

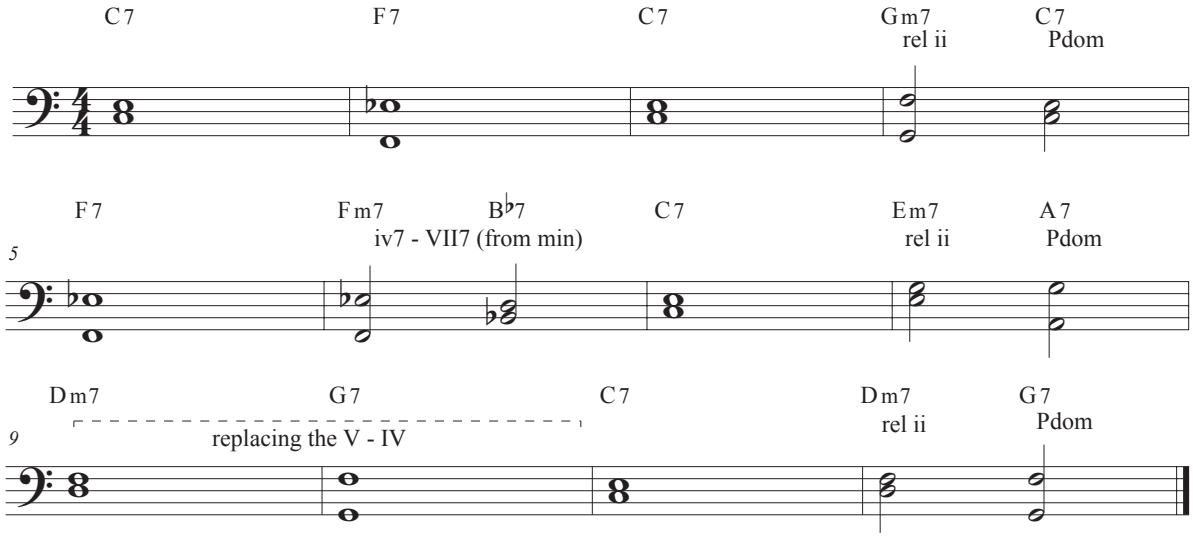
Other places in the blues that call out for reharmonization are spots that take you to important harmonic destinations. Since measures 11 and 12 bring you back to the top of the chorus, it is a hot spot for harmonic activity. Often turnarounds are employed (especially in blues used in jazz) that employ variations of I – VI – ii – V. Other harmonic hotspots include m. 2 (which leads back to I in m. 3); m. 3 and 4 (which leads you to IV in m. 5); m. 6 (which brings you back to I in m. 7); and m. 7 and 8 (which pulls you to the

ii chord in m. 9). Often, ii7 – V7 or its cousin, iv7(6) – VII7, which has a similar function but is borrowed from the parallel minor are used in these harmonic hot spots.

One way to create these progressions is to simply precede the original dominant chord with its related ii7 (***rel ii***). Sometimes we have to add a passing dominant before making the ii - V. Once we have the A7 in place in m. 8 to pull us to Dm7 in m.9 we can precede it by its related ii7 (Em7) giving us Em7 – A7 in m. 8. Another common reharmonization in the harmonic hotspot around m. 2 or m. 6 is replacing IV with iv7 – VII7, borrowed from the parallel minor, to bring us back to I.

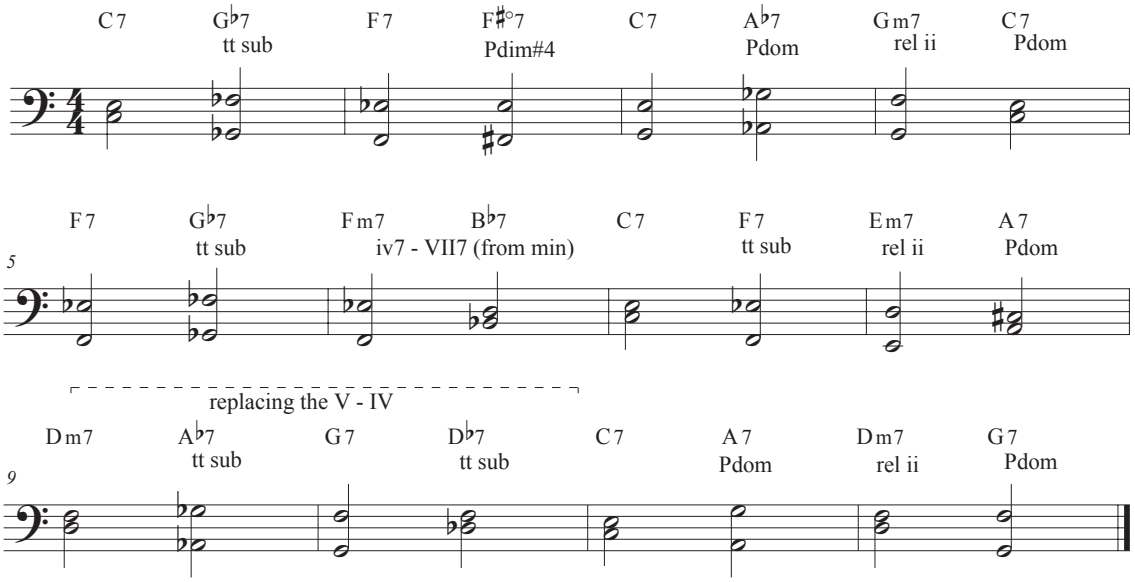
Below is an example of a simple reharmonized blues. Observe the ii –V leading to m. 5; the ***iv – VII7 (borrowed from minor)*** leading to m. 7; the ii – V leading to m. 9; and the ii –V leading back to m. 1.

FIG. 8i




Next we can add more passing dominants, tritone substitutions, and passing diminished chords built on the #4 to create a way to navigate through the blues with all half notes.

FIG. 8ii



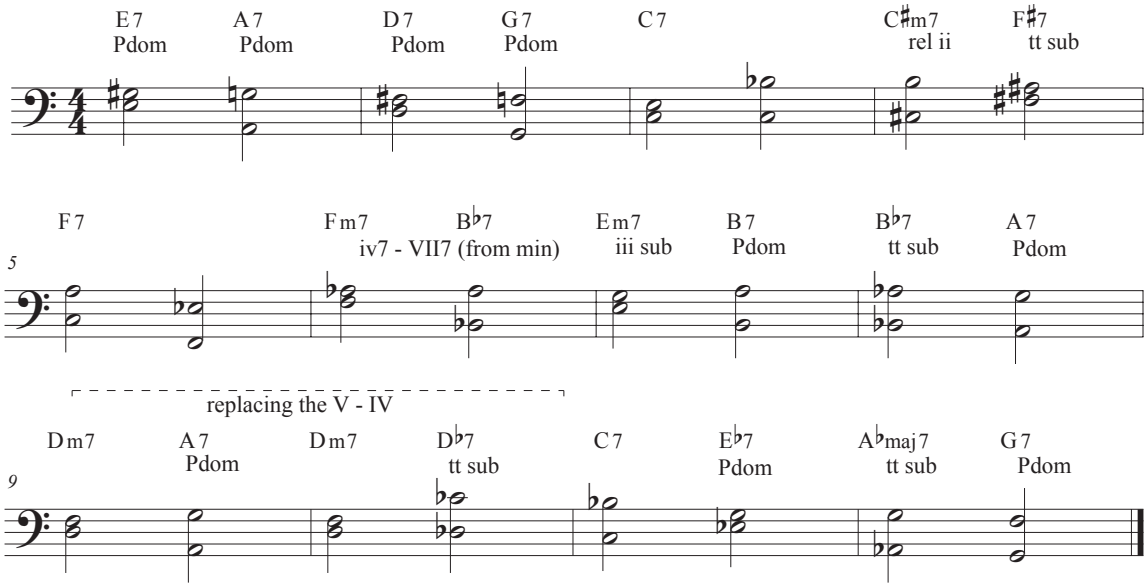

The following examples are variations of this sort of stretching of the harmony through reharmonization. For the next 2 examples we opt to start from a simpler blues palette: 4 bars of C7, 2 bars of F7, 2 bars of C7, 1 bar of Dm7, 1 bar of G7, and 2 bars of C7 (in other words, no F7 in bar 2). Anytime you have a long stretch of one particular chord a turnaround can be used to add motion. Having that long stretch of C7 for the first 4 bars of the blues opens up many more possibilities for inserting turnarounds and ii-V7's (or related progressions).

In the next example we insert a III7 – VI7 – II7 – V7 turnaround in m. 1 and 2. The I chord can be substituted with the similarly functioning, iii or III for more variety. When this happens we will label the chord iii sub or III sub. In other words, in C major, the tonic chord can be replaced with Em7 or E7.

Another alteration that we haven't encountered yet in our reharmonizations happens in m. 9 and 10. We replace the G7 in m. 10 with its related ii – V, Dm7 – G7. We then substitute Db7 for G7 on beat 3. Now we have a measure of Dm7 in m. 9 going to Dm7 to Db7 in m. 10. On beat 3 of m. 9 we can insert a Pdom (A7) to pull us to m. 10.

Finally, during the final turnaround in m. 11 and 12, we substitute Abmaj7 for Dm7 (a type of tritone substitution) and precede the bVI chord with bIII7 (Eb7), or the V of bVII. See below.

FIG. 9




To make things more clear, here is a summary of all of the passing shells and reharmonizations studied so far:

| | |
|---|---|
| Pdom | Passing Dominant |
| tt sub | Tritone Substitution |
| Pdim#4 | Passing Diminished built off the #4 |
| rel ii | Relative ii (as part of a ii-V sequence) |
| iv7-VII7 (from min) | iv7-VII7 borrowed from the parallel minor |
| iii sub/III sub | iii/III substituting I |

The turnarounds used in m. 1-2 and m. 11-12 of FIG. 9 are just two of the many variations you can find when working with I – vi7 – ii7 – V7. When reharmonizing turnarounds always start with the last chord of the progression and work backwards. If the last chord is G7 (as in the examples above), we can precede it with its dominant (D7), its related ii (Dm7) or tt sub of its dominant (Ab7 or Abmaj7). This third chord can be major, minor, or dominant. Next we find the second chord of our four-chord turnaround, which can be the dominant of the third chord (A7 or Eb7) or its related ii (Ebm7 or Am7). The first chord can be the tonic (C or Cm), a dominant of the second chord (E7 or Bb7), or related ii (Em7 or Bbm7). It is also common to see parallel dominant chords in turnarounds either moving in half step or whole step. Of course, these are only the common choices; parallel major chords or minor chords are also possible as well as momentarily modulating to another key before returning to the tonic. Hearing the chord's related passing dominant, tt sub of its dominant, or related ii in real time can make the process of finding turnarounds very intuitive. This process takes some time, but it's an essential component of becoming a true improviser.

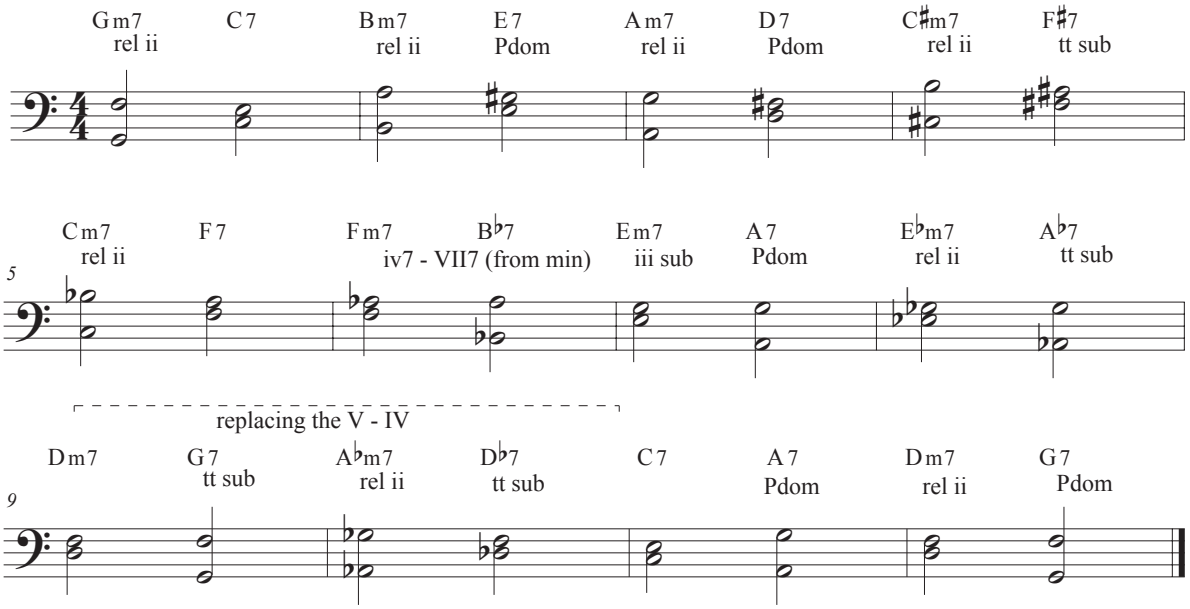
Here is a list of some common turnarounds in the key of C:

Cmaj7 – A7 – Dm7 – G7
Cm7 – Eb7 – Ab7 – G7
E7 – A7 – Ab7 – Db7
Em7 – A7 – Abmaj7 – Db7
Bbm7 – Eb7 – Abmaj7 – G7
Bb7 – A7 – Ab7 – G7
E7 – Eb7 – D7 – Db7
Ab7 – A7 – Bb7 – B7

**Comping Exercise #17: Turnarounds with Shells**. Practice ten turnarounds of your choice in three keys of your choice using LH shells in half notes. Arpeggiate the root position chord in your RH using eighth notes, or use 4-note melodic cells from the previous chapter.

In the following example ii –V's moving in whole steps and half steps are employed. ii –V's are like building blocks—they can interlock creating sequences that can last several measures either ascending or descending in half steps or whole steps. Pay attention to points (or at least areas) where certain chords need to be played to maintain the progression's identity as a 12 bar blues i.e. where the harmonic hotspots lead. For example, the area around m. 5 should contain a IV chord, the area around m. 7 should contain a I or related chord, and the area around m. 9 should contain a V, ii7, or related chord. From these points or areas you can work backwards or forwards to find motion to and from these harmonic destinations. In this case the sequences of ii –V's pull to these destinations.

FIG. 10



Eventually, your ear helps you to hear a couple harmonic steps ahead, so that the technique of working backwards from a harmonic destination is less necessary. The ultimate goal to work toward is hearing the next chord that will bring you to your desired harmonic destination. This technique is especially important in composition.

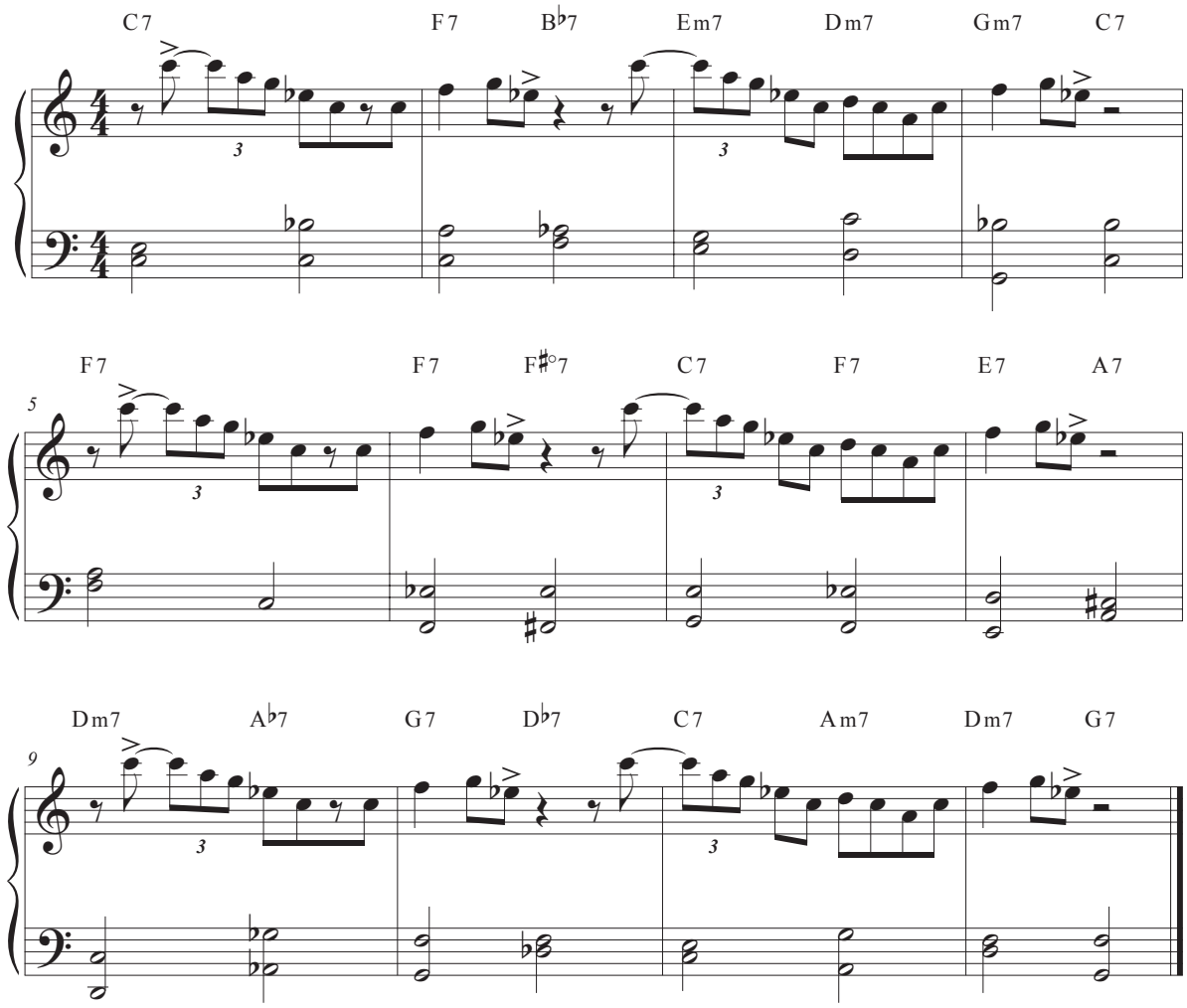
It's important to keep your ear grounded in the blues. Sing or hum the blues riffs from the previous exercises. As "far out" as the chord progession becomes, the ear should still hear the blues progression clearly.

**Comping Exercise #18: Internalizing the Blues Progressions**. Make a list of the eight blues progressions found in FIG. 3, FIG. 5, FIG. 6, FIG. 7, FIG. 8i, FIG. 8ii, FIG. 9, and FIG. 10 using chord symbols and with roman numeral notation. Then, using the shells of your choice in half notes, play through the eight progressions. Transpose to three keys. The purpose of this exercise is to help you assimilate these progressions by helping you see how they are all related. Being able to interpret the chord symbols is important, rather than just reading the music printed on the page.

In the final examples of this chapter we will be playing shout choruses in our RH as our LH navigates through the blues using half notes, implementing passing shells and reharmonizations studied so far.

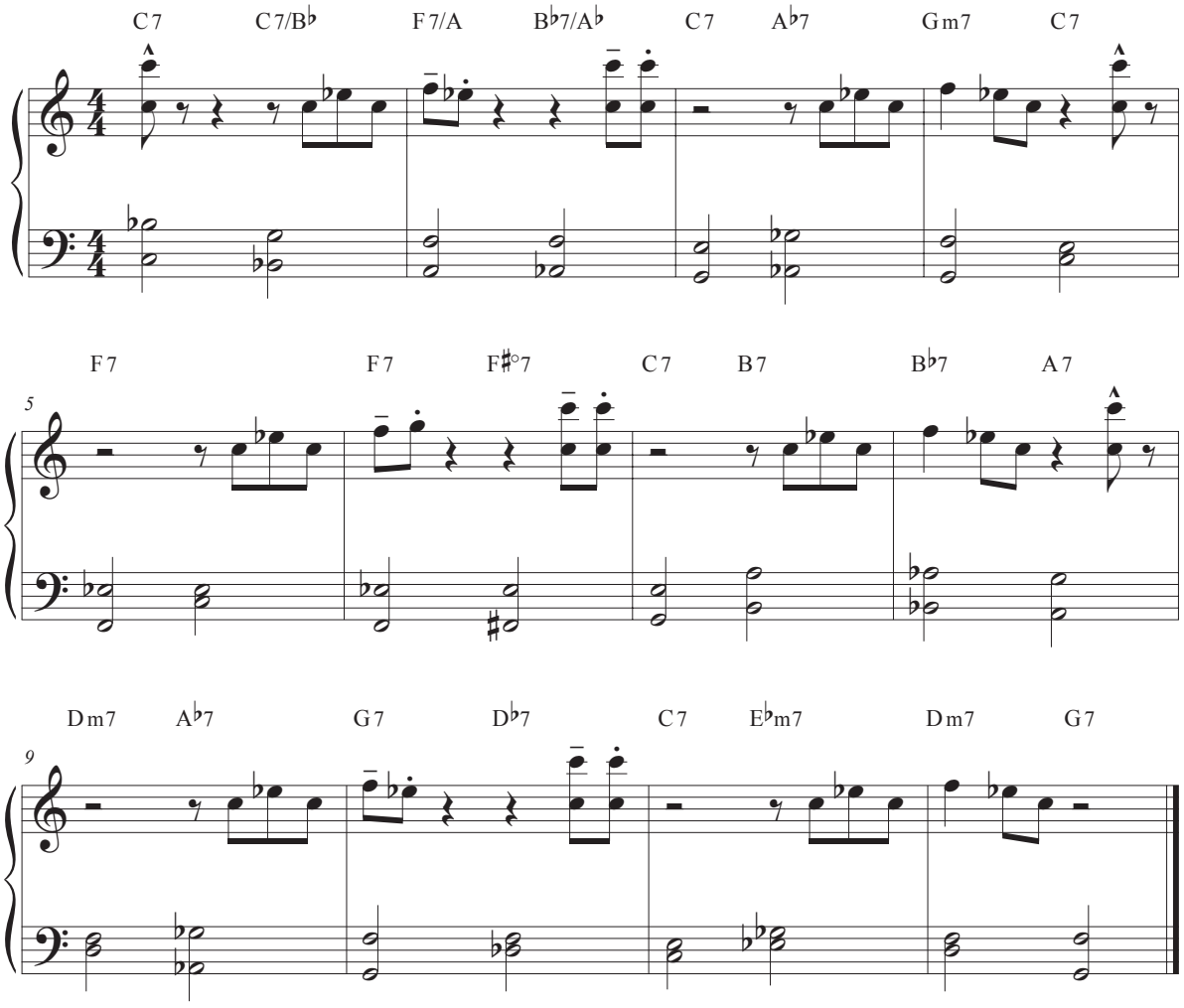
In FIG. 11, listen to how the blues riff (the shout chorus from "Bag's Groove") makes the unusual changes seem almost unnoticeable, and appropriately bluesy. One wrinkle worth mentioning is what happens in m. 3. Em7 is a iii sub for I and the Dm7 is a diatonic passing ii7 chord. I7 – ii7 – iii7 or iii7 – ii7 – I7 is a common motion. In this case, the I7 in m. 4 is replaced by its related ii7 – V7. There will be more about passing ii7 chords in Chapter 4B. For now, listen to the big picture, to the horizontal motion, and not too much to the individual vertical changes. Jot down all of the reharmonizations and passing shells that you can recognize. Non-pianists should skip to the next blues shout chorus, as the RH requires a bit of tricky fingering.

FIG. 11


C7 F7 B♭7 Em7 Dm7 Gm7 C7
F7 F7 F♯°7 C7 F7 E7 A7
5
Dm7 A♭7 G7 D♭7 C7 Am7 Dm7 G7
9

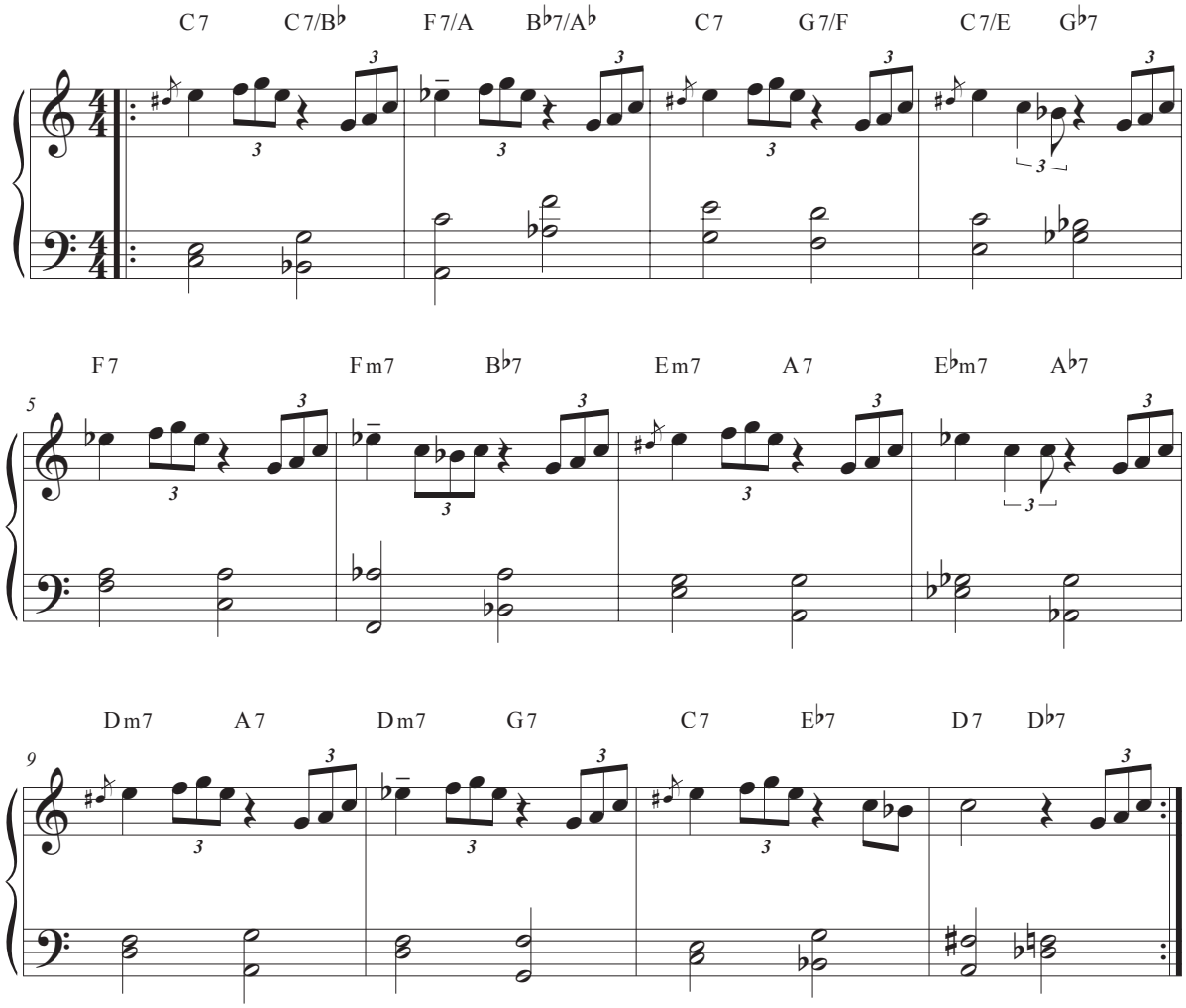
Here is a shout chorus that should be accessible to pianists and non-pianists alike. Notice the 7ths and 3rds in the bass of some of the shell voicings. Listen to the smooth line formed by the progression of the shell voicings. Again, there is a dichotomy between down-home blues in the right hand, and the many chord changes in the left. Often, when improvising on a piece with a lot of changes, playing simply is very effective.

FIG. 12




Finally, here is one more shout chorus. Identify the reharmonizations and passing chords implied. A quick note about fingering and hand size: when playing the RH always lift your whole hand after the 1st beat before playing the 2nd beat. Don't try to connect. Also, some of the LH shells span a 10th. If you have a smaller hand, don't hesitate to raise the lower note of the shell up an octave.

FIG. 13




**Comping Exercise #19: Navigating Through the Blues with Shells**
Compose a simple blues riff for the RH. In your LH improvise/compose a reharmonized blues progression of your choice with shells using half notes. Play along with **CD 1 Track 6.** Also, practice with bass in C, F, and Bb using **CD 1 Tracks 8, 10, and 14.** Listen to the bass line being played on the CD and try to find shells that work with the harmony implied. For example, on **CD 1 Track 8,** the bass player plays a V–IV turnaround in bars 9 and 10. Always listen to the musicians around you. Certain reharmonizations that work fine with no bass player will now clash. React and adjust.

**Comping Exercise #20: Playing along with Bud Powell's LH Comp on the changes to "Straight no Chaser."** Often called the father of modern jazz piano, Bud Powell paved the way for countless jazz pianists. Born in Harlem, NYC in 1924, he straddled the swing and bebop eras. Along with Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, and Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell stands as a central figure of the bebop revolution. His syncopated comping approach together with his dazzling right hand language that rivaled Bird in intensity and clarity, created a distinctive new jazz piano style.

Here, follow along with his left hand shells as he navigates through F blues. Since Bud is influenced in part by the stride tradition, his left hand comping often occurs on "1" and "3" modeling the bass notes of a typical stride pattern. Of course, the occasional upbeats create an exciting contrast. One could make a case that almost every other pianist in these two workbooks owes a great deal to the remarkable jazz piano of Bud Powell.

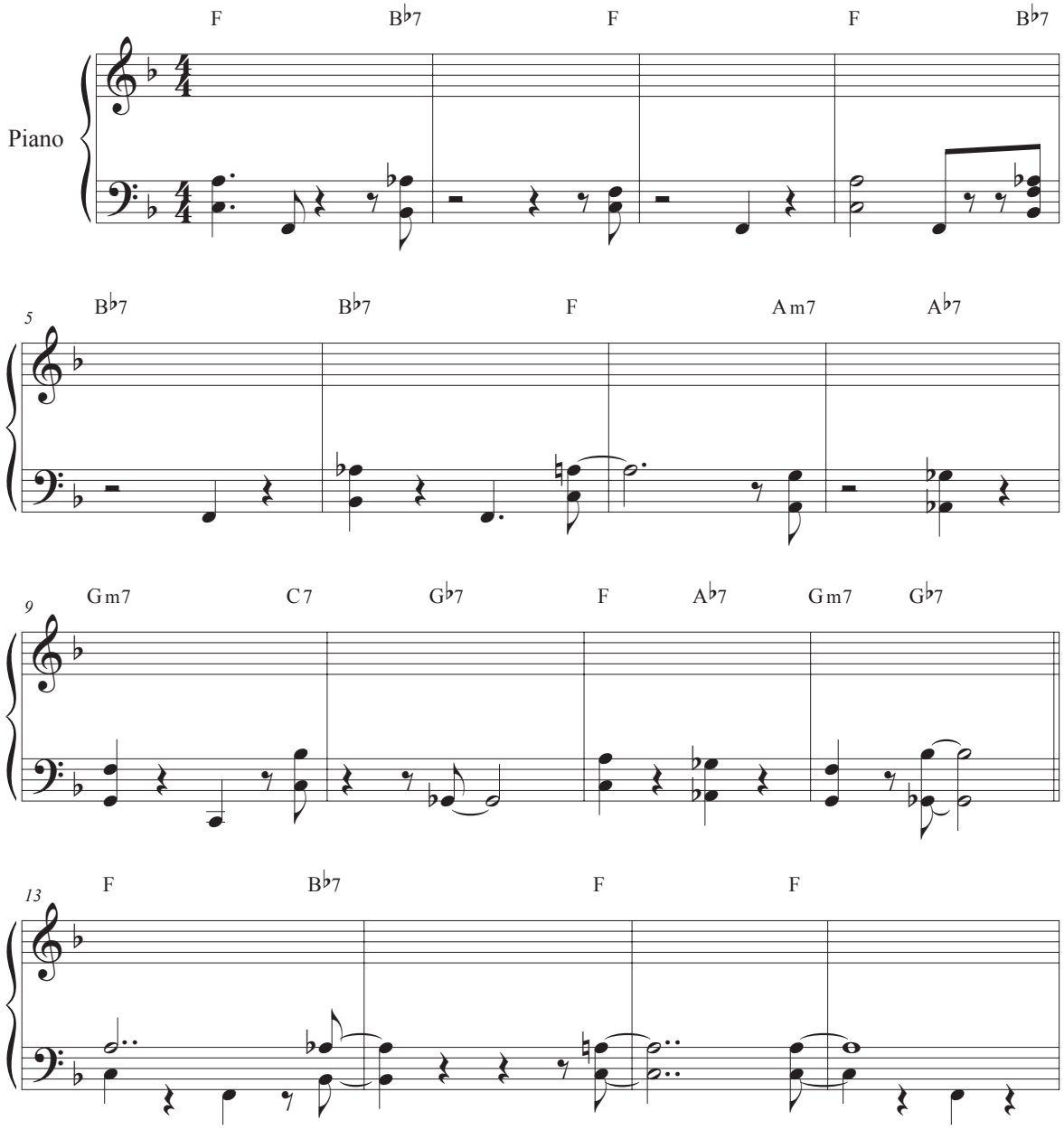
The first six choruses of Bud Powell's left hand comping during his solo on "Straight no Chaser" are provided below. Listen to the OR several times before playing along. You can also listen to **CD 1 Track 9** to hear a demonstration of the LH alone. Then use **CD 1 Track 10** to play along with a piano-less track. Finally, comp along with the OR using a slow down device before building to the original tempo. Advanced students should learn Bud Powell's RH solo and/or improvise their own RH solo while playing Bud's LH shell pattern.

For pianists with smaller hands, feel free to substitute the lower note of a root–10th shell with the 5th. If the three-note LH structures are too wide to manage, feel free to omit the bottom note.

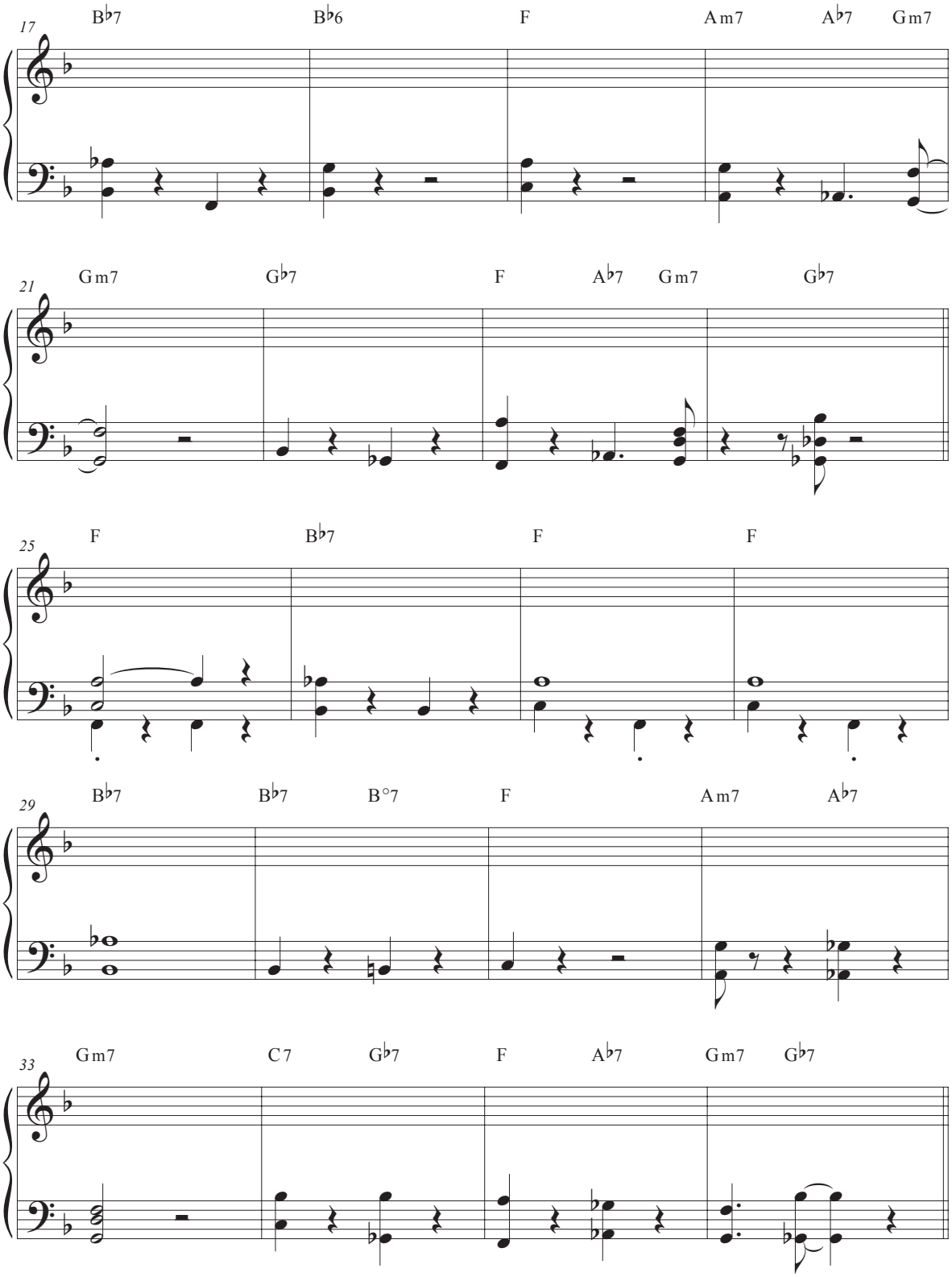
FIG. 14

# Bud Powell's Left Hand Comp

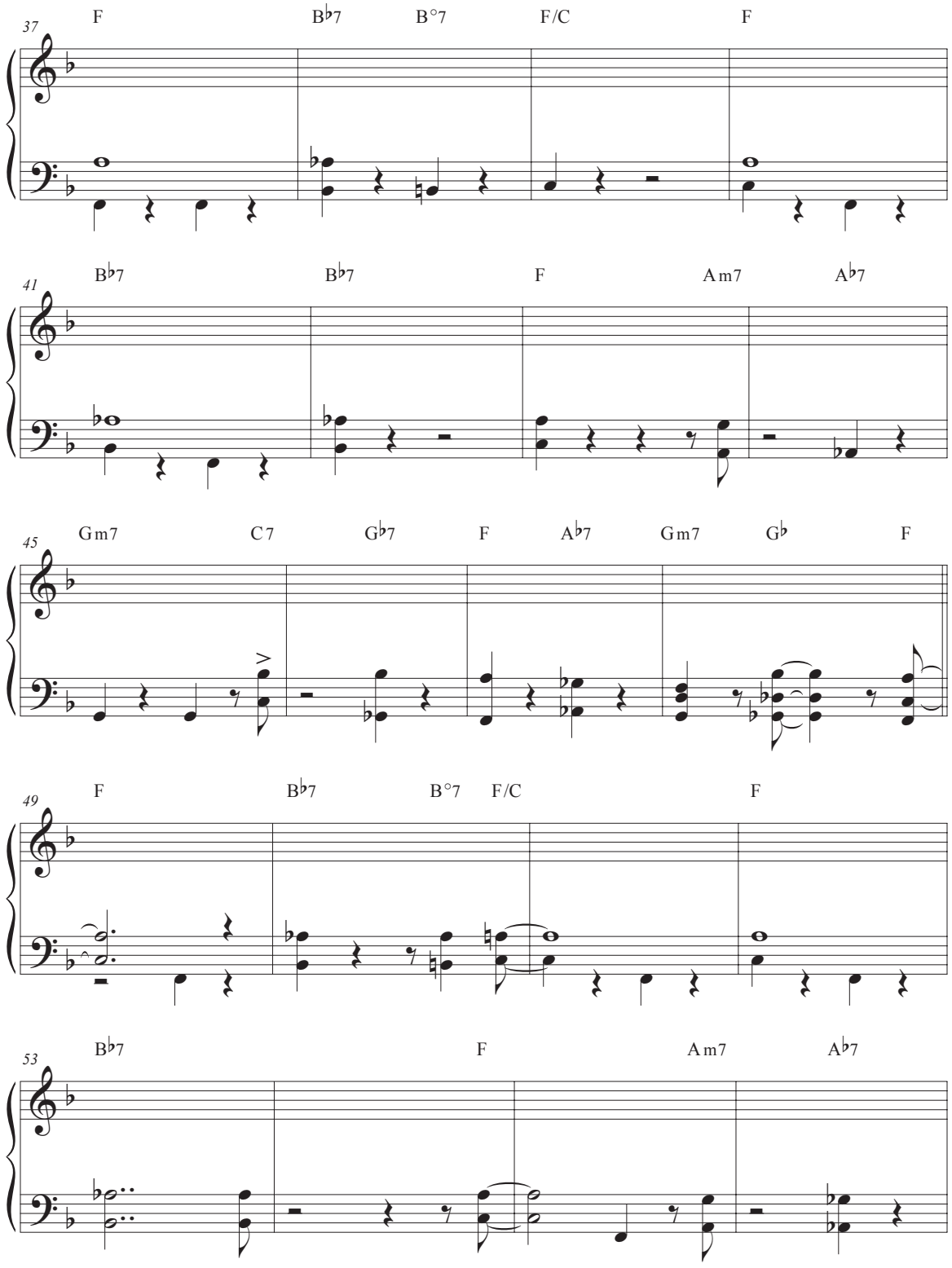
On the changes to "Straight no Chaser"

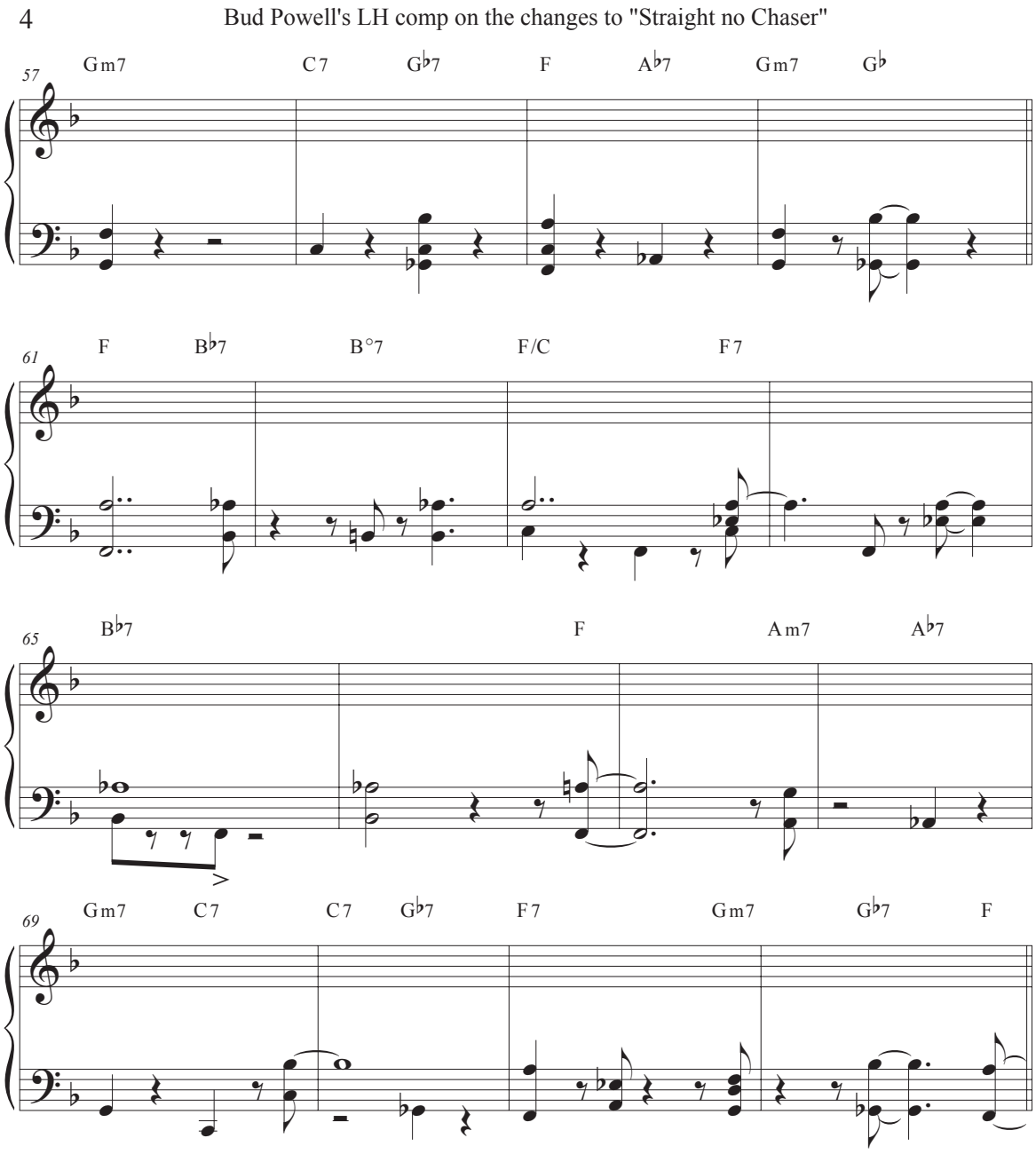


2 Bud Powell's LH comp on the changes to "Straight no Chaser"



Bud Powell's LH comp on the changes to "Straight no Chaser" 3

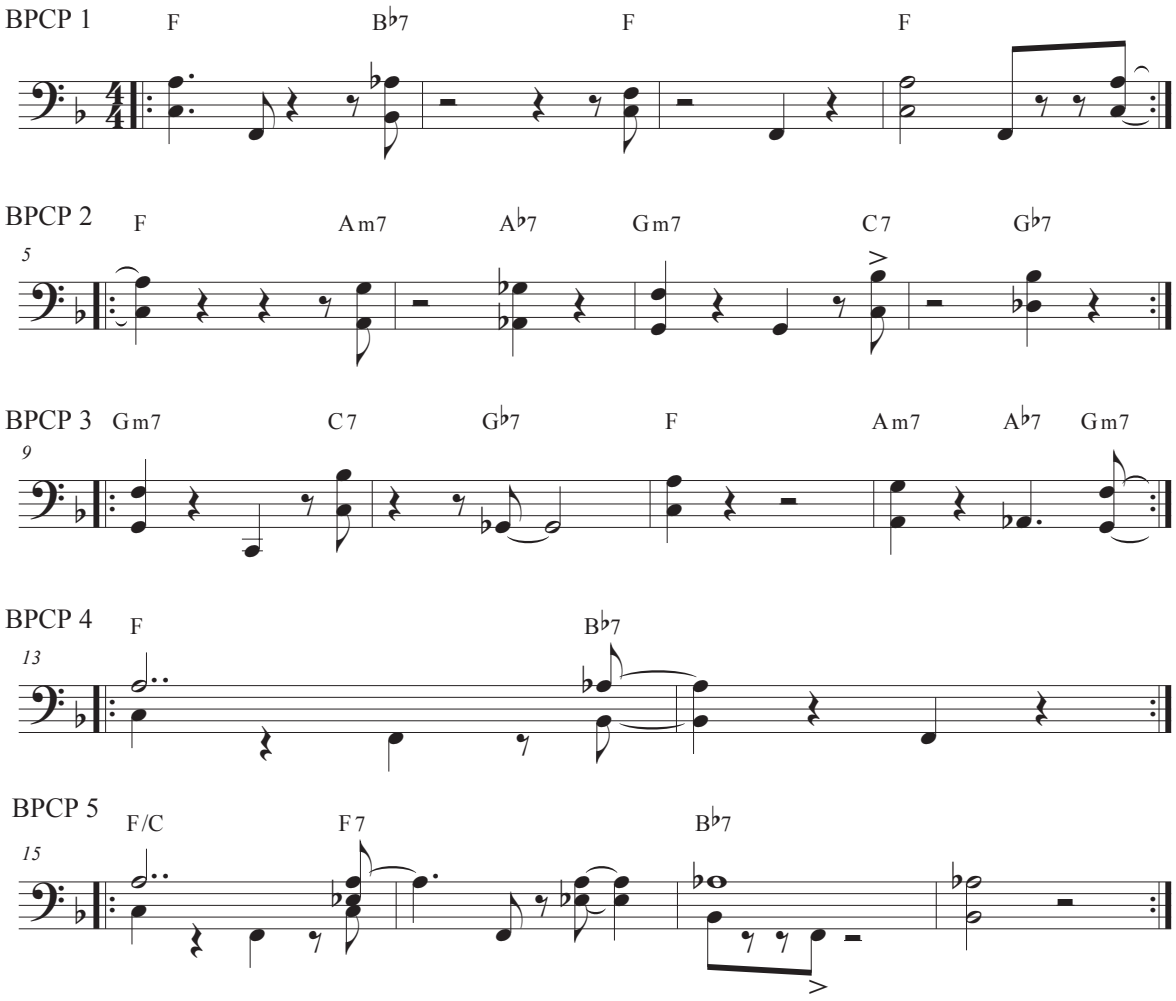





**Comping Exercise #21: Bud Powell Comping Progressions 1-5**. Transpose the following Bud Powell comping progressions (BPCP's) through several keys. Improvise with your RH as your LH loops these comping progressions. Take ideas from Bud Powell's solo. You can also see Chapter 2A from ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** for more melodic ideas.

FIG. 15

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions



Below is another example of a left hand comp by Bud Powell as he plays the melody to "Celia" in his RH. Instead of only using shells, Bud uses a variety of shells, 3-note structures, and 4-note structures, all of which containing basic chord tones: root, 3rd, 5th, and/or 7th (6th). Often, Bud uses simple root position seventh and sixth chord voicings i.e. root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th(6th) in his LH. This would be a good time to review in both hands root position seventh and sixth chord voicings for Δ7, m7, 7, m7b5, 7#5, 7b5, mΔ7, 6, m6, and o7.

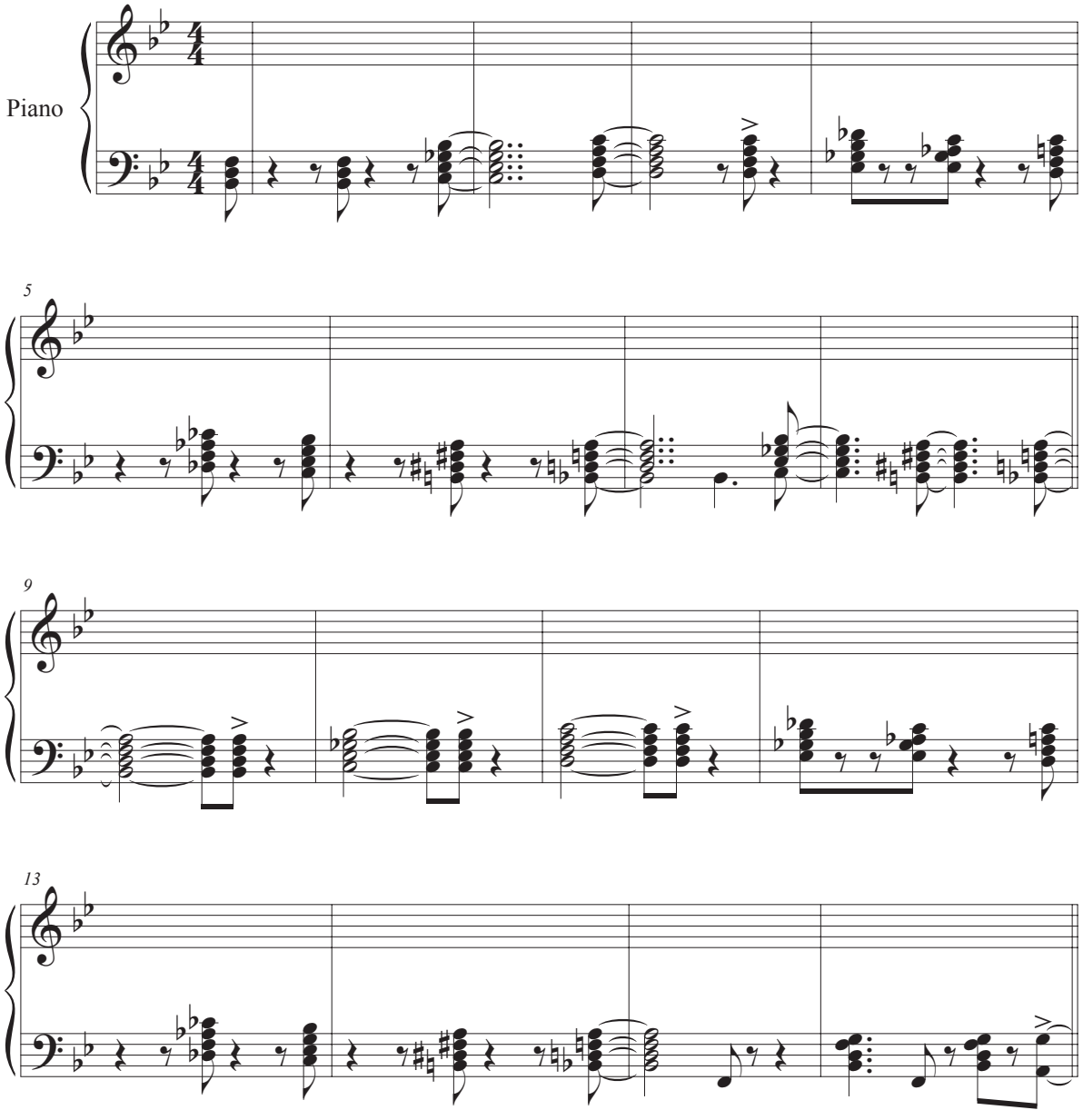
Many jazz piano texts caution against voicing seventh chords in root position. The sound by itself is rather old-fashioned and boxy. In context, however, these meatier voicings (compared to the more austere shells) sing out when played with Bud's propulsive rhythms. This is another illustration how, in the hands of a master, the most simple harmonies can sound beautiful, warm, and current.

**Comping Exercise #22: Investigating Bud Powell's LH Comping on the changes "Celia."** Below is a transcription of Bud Powell's LH comping as he plays the melody of his composition, "Celia". Play the LH as written. Write in the chord symbols above the treble clef. For advanced piano students, memorize or transcribe Bud Powell's RH in the space given. Play along with the **OR** with a slow-down device and with **CD 1 Track 11/12** (for demo and track without piano). The demonstration track consists of the melody chorus with interlude only. The piano-less track consists of an 8-bar introduction, melody chorus with interlude, one solo chorus, and final melody chorus without the interlude.

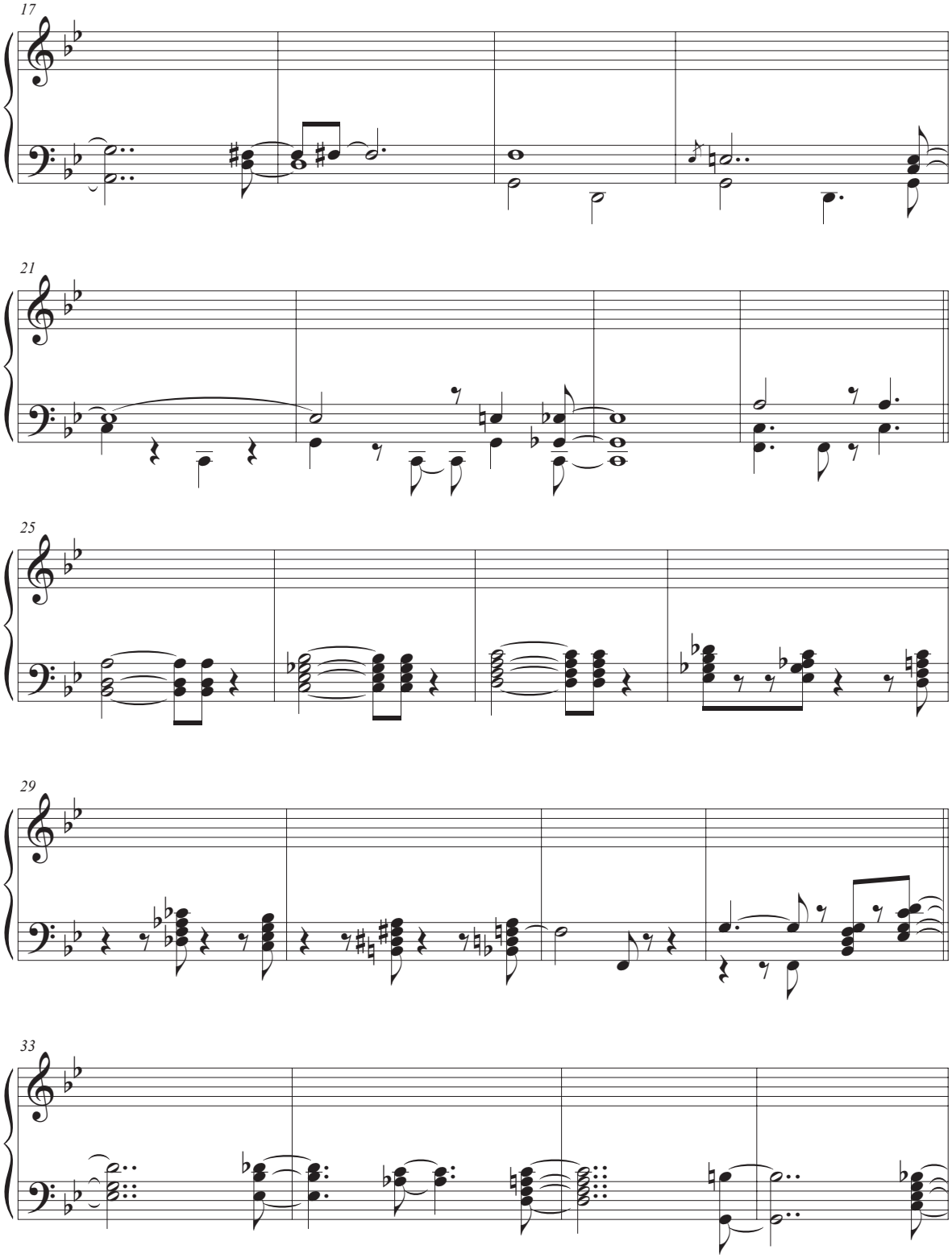
FIG. 16

# Bud Powell's Left Hand Comp

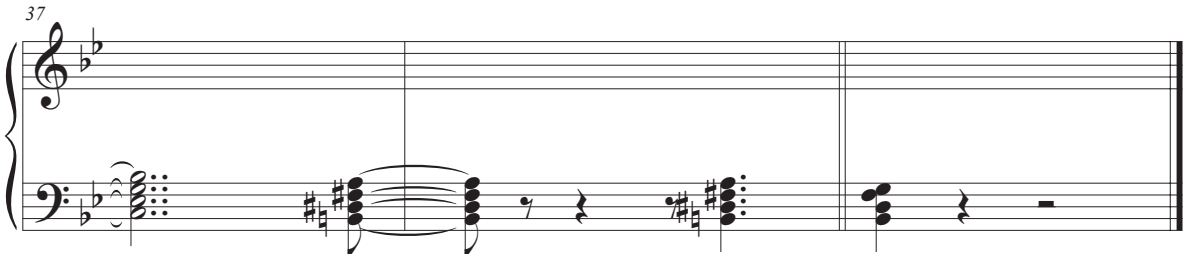
On the changes to "Celia"



2 Bud Powell's LH comp on the changes to "Celia"



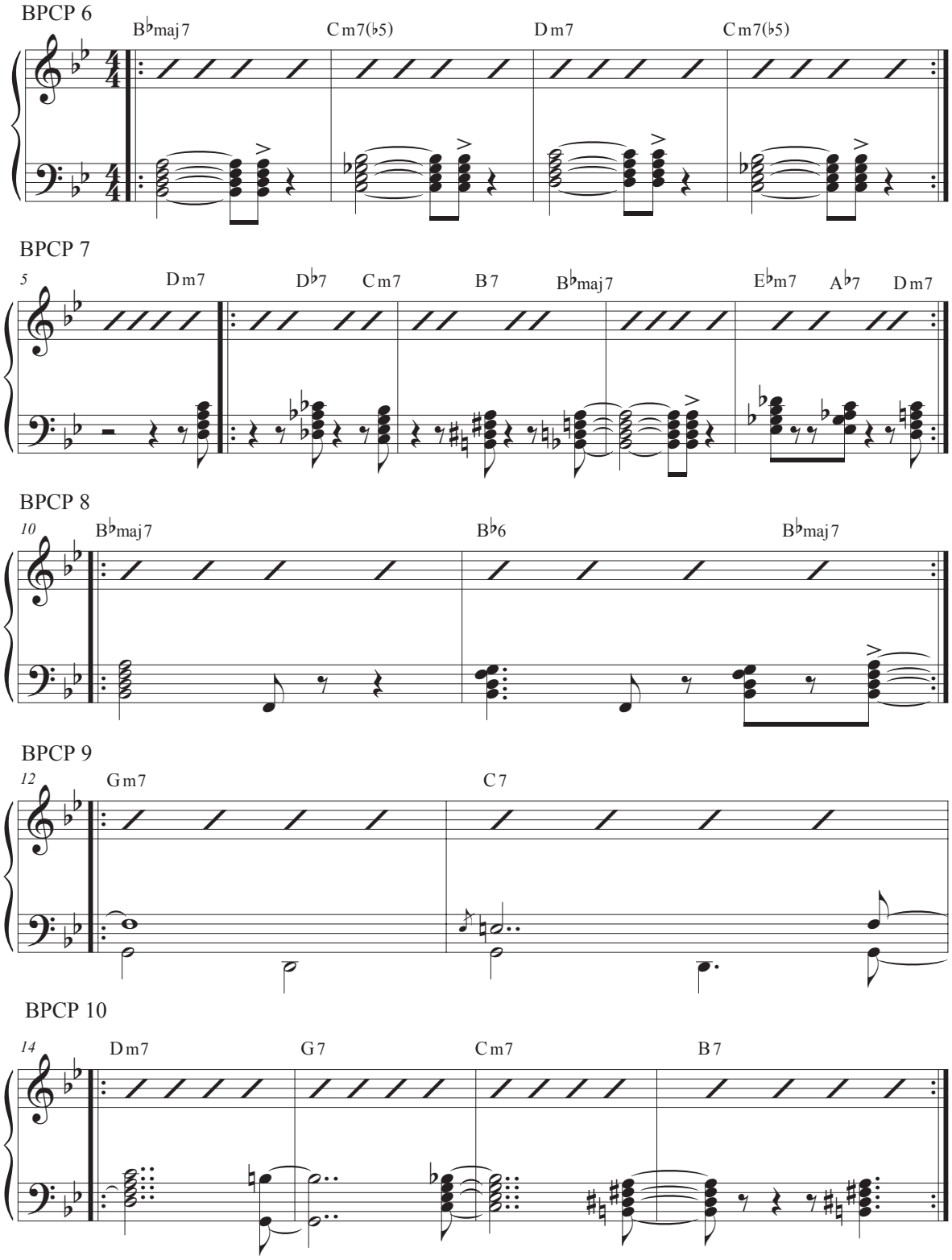
Bud Powell's LH comp on the changes to "Celia" 3




**Comping Exercise #23: Bud Powell Comping Progressions 1-5**.
Practice selected BPCP's (Bud Powell Comping Progressions) at the end of the comping transcription. Improvise over the harmonic progressions as you transpose them through the keys. Take melodic ideas from Bud's melody or solo.

FIG. 17

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #24: Exploring Horace Silver's LH Comp on the changes to "Opus De Funk".** Pianist, composer, and arranger, Horace Silver is one of the central figures of modern jazz. Born in 1928 in Norwalk, CT., Horace grew up influenced by jazz and big band music (especially the Jimmy Lunceford orchestra), Latin music, and Black Gospel music. At 21, he went on the road with Stan Getz and quickly became part of a circle of musicians that would later become the Art Blakey Jazz Messengers. Horace Silver found his own group in 1956, the Horace Silver Quintet, consisting of a revolving roster of some of the most celebrated musicians in jazz. It is Horace's comping that is always the driving force in this seminal ensemble, which to many jazz fans represents the pinnacle of the modern jazz quintet.

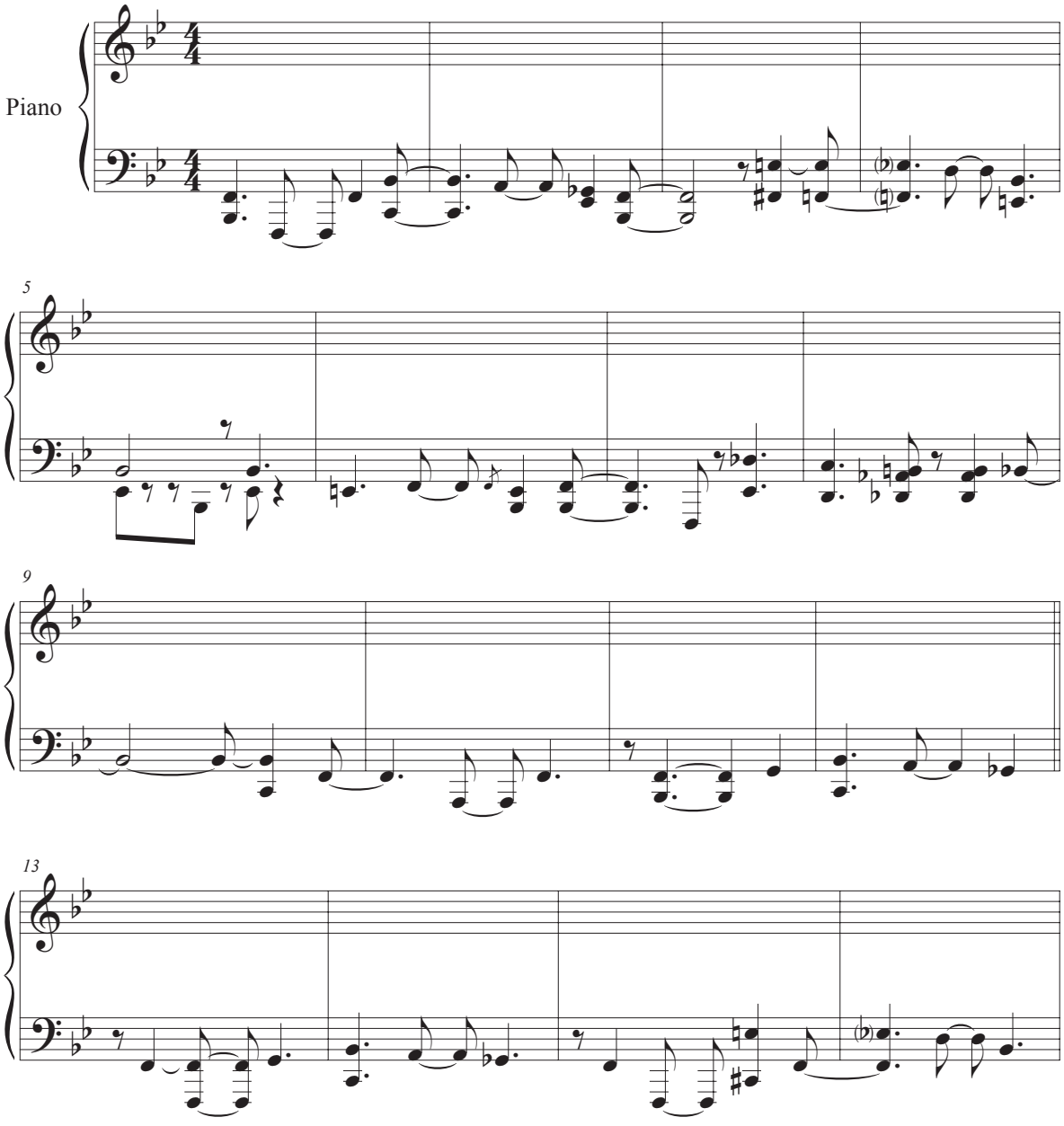
Horace Silver's sound is immediately recognizable; infectious, funky, and down-home. His funkiness can be partially attributed to his syncopated use of LH shells in the lower register of the piano. Practice the following LH comp (during Horace's solo choruses) at different tempos using the original recording with a slow-down device. Practice with the comp-along CD included. Write in the chord symbols implied. Advanced students should memorize or write in the RH solo. Also, improvise a RH solo while playing Horace Silver's LH.

Pay attention to Horace Silver's use of shells as he navigates through this Bb blues. Use the OR and CD 1 Track 13/14 (for demo and track without piano). The demonstration track consists of Horace's LH comping with minor deviations, plus two additional improvised choruses of comping.

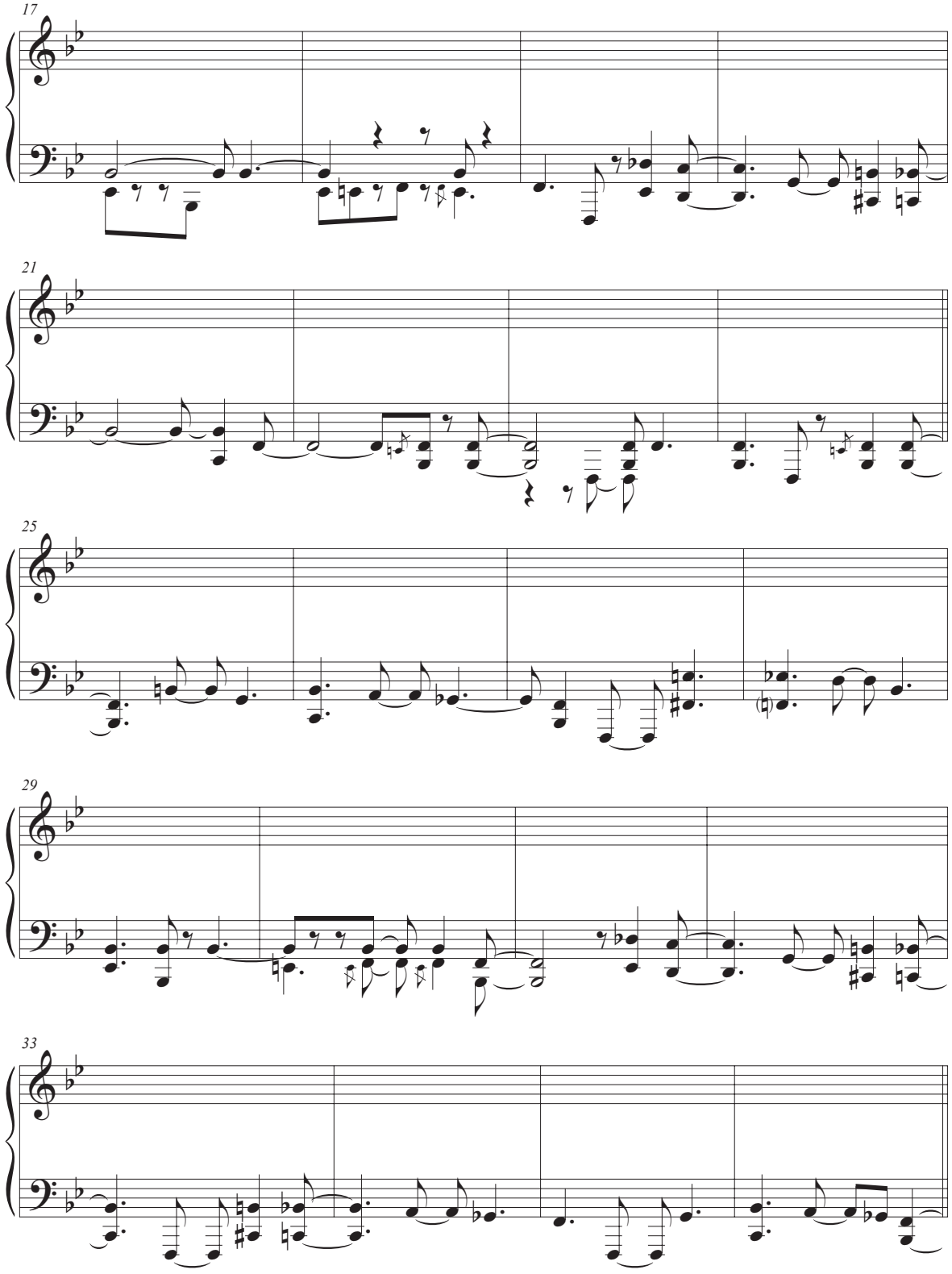
FIG. 18

# Horace Silver's Left Hand Comp

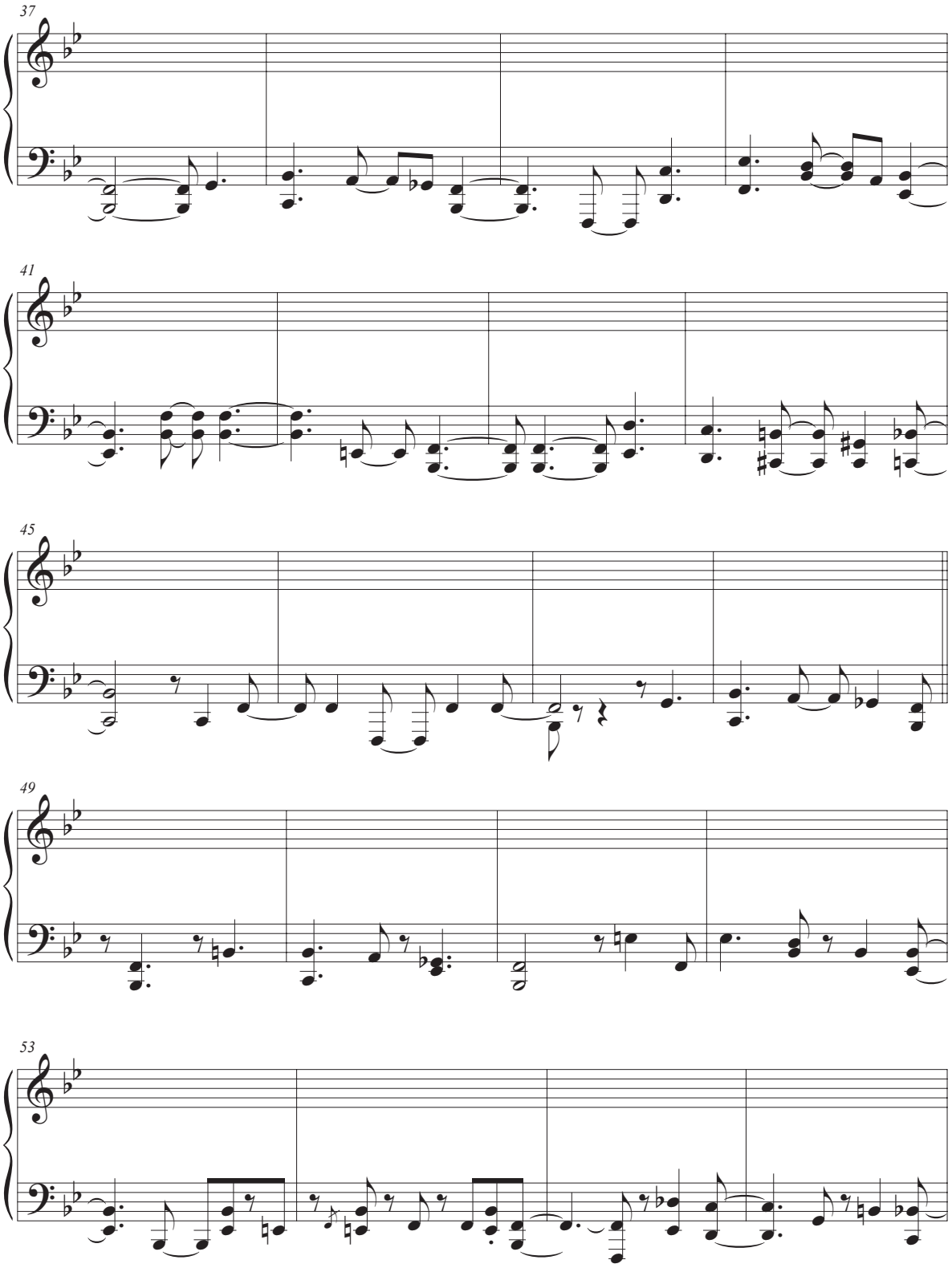
On the changes to"Opus De Funk" (Blues)



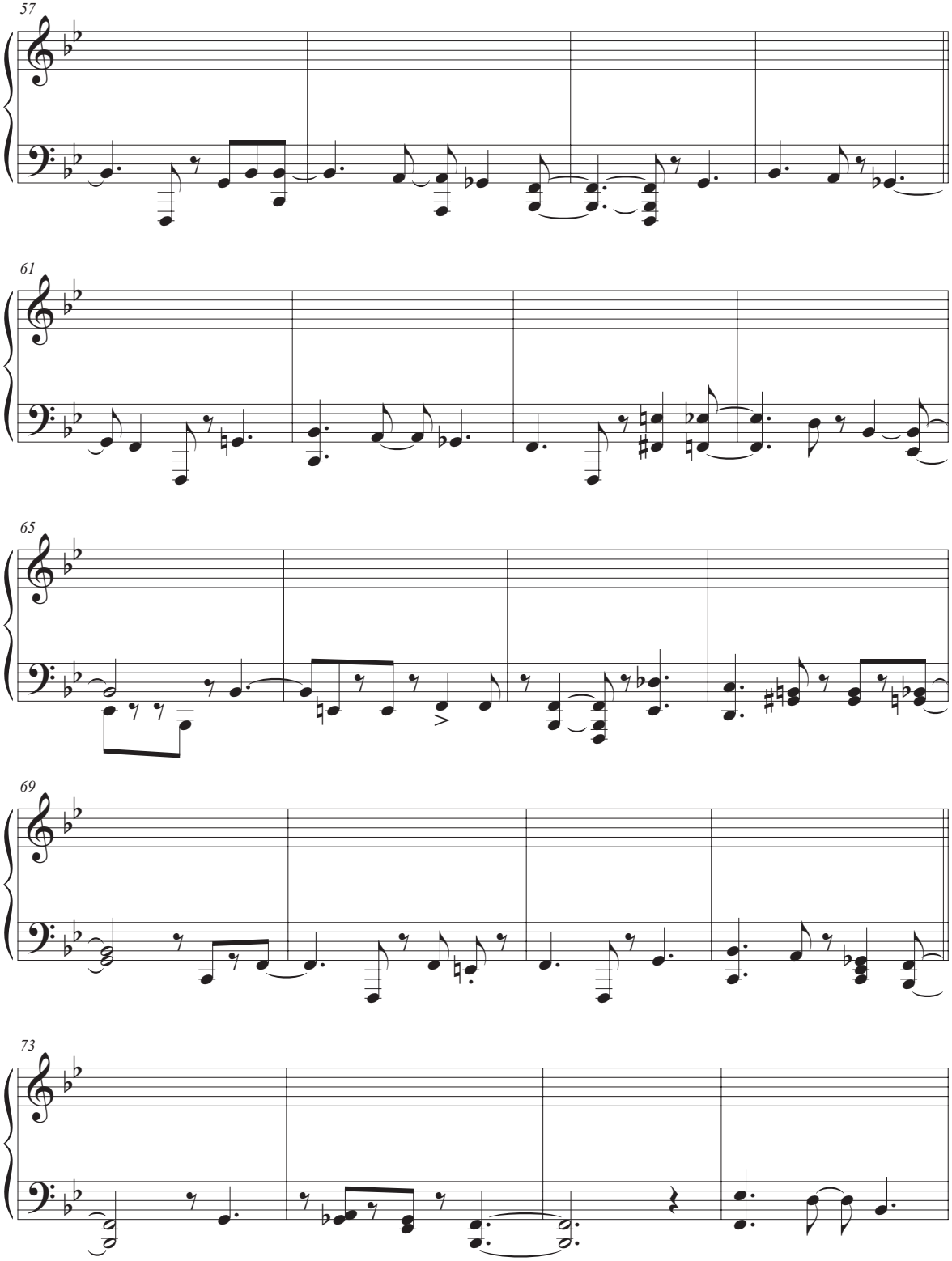
2 Horace's Left Hand Comp on the changes to Opus de Funk



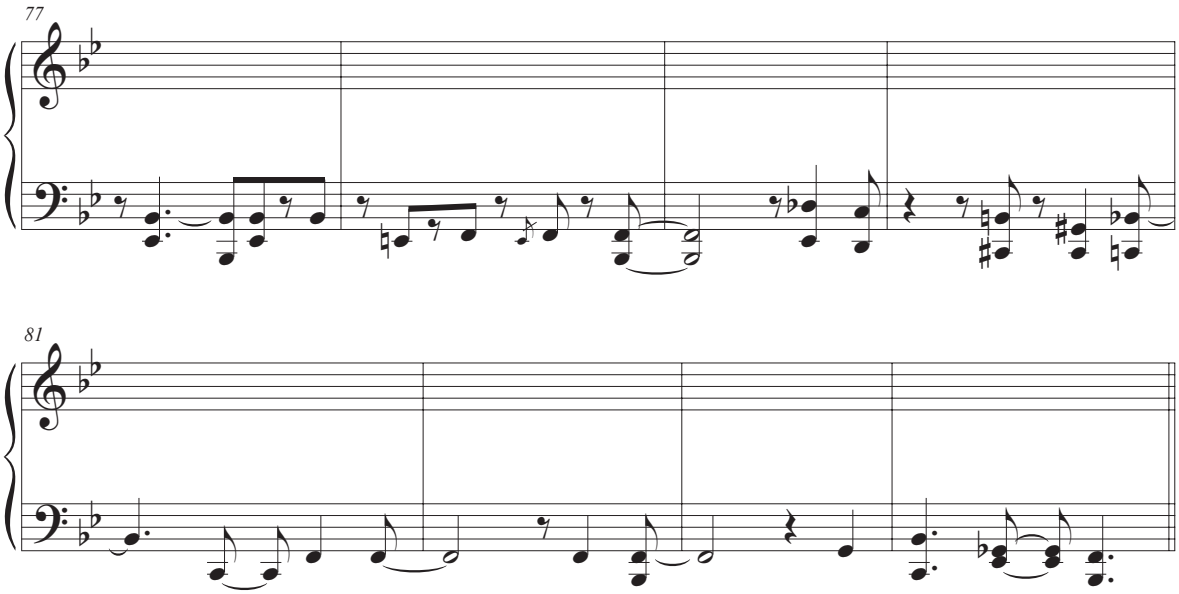
Horace's Left Hand Comp on the changes to Opus de Funk 3



4 Horace's Left Hand Comp on the changes to Opus de Funk

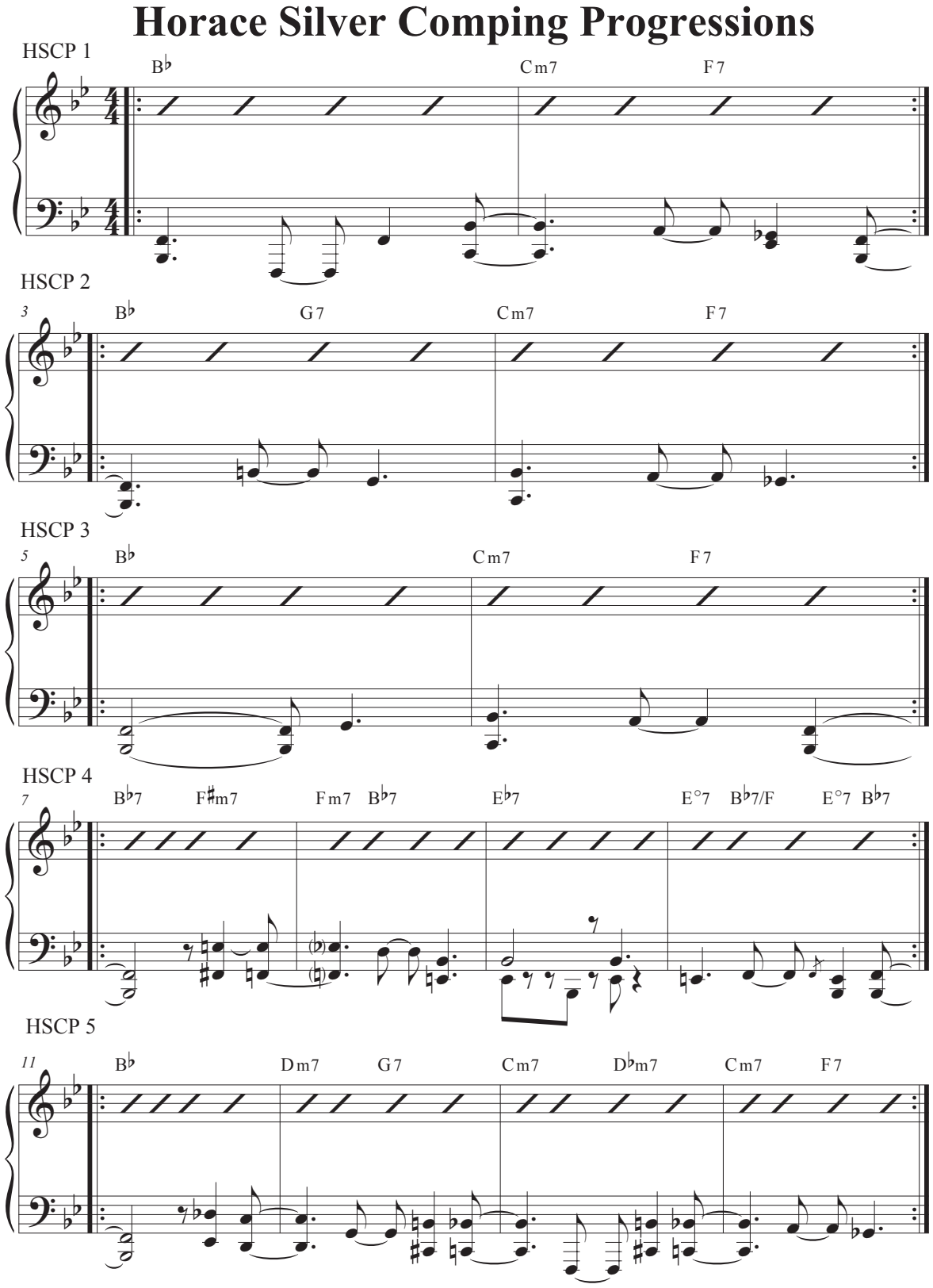


Horace's Left Hand Comp on the changes to Opus de Funk 5




**Comping Exercise #25: Horace Silver Comping Progressions 1-5**. Transpose the following Horace Silver comping progressions (HSCP's) through several keys. Improvise with your RH as your LH loops these comping progressions. Take ideas from Horace Silver's melody or solo. You can also see Chapter 2A from ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** for more melodic ideas. Diatonic patterns in Bb major will work for all 5 HSCPs.

FIG. 19


Horace Silver Comping Progressions
HSCP 1
B♭
Cm7
F7
HSCP 2
3
B♭
G7
Cm7
F7
HSCP 3
5
B♭
Cm7
F7
HSCP 4
7
B♭7
F♯m7
Fm7
B♭7
E♭7
E°7
B♭7/F
E°7
B♭7
HSCP 5
11
B♭
Dm7
G7
Cm7
D♭m7
Cm7
F7

## CHAPTER 2C: INTRO TO SKELETAL STRUCTURES AND GUIDE TONES

Let's return to the voicing that you might remember from Chapter 1; that is root, 3rd and 7th. In Chapter 1A, however, we only touched upon the dominant version of the voicing. Now we will explore the voicing further. If the shell voicing is the most basic voicing, the second most basic is what I refer to as a ***skeletal structure***: a 3-note structure consisting of the root, 3rd, and 7th or root, 7th, and 3rd. For 6 and m6-type chords we replace the 7th with the 6th.

In the following pages we will be working with the skeletal structure through the keys. We can use skeletal structures to create simple 3-note accompaniments to standards by playing a root in the LH and 2 notes in the RH.

Just like the shell voicings, the economy and maneuverability of these voicings make them very useful to get in our hands. The added note makes the skeletal structure more specific and harmonically meaty than the shells. And, just like the shells, they are easy to build upon as our harmonic knowledge deepens.

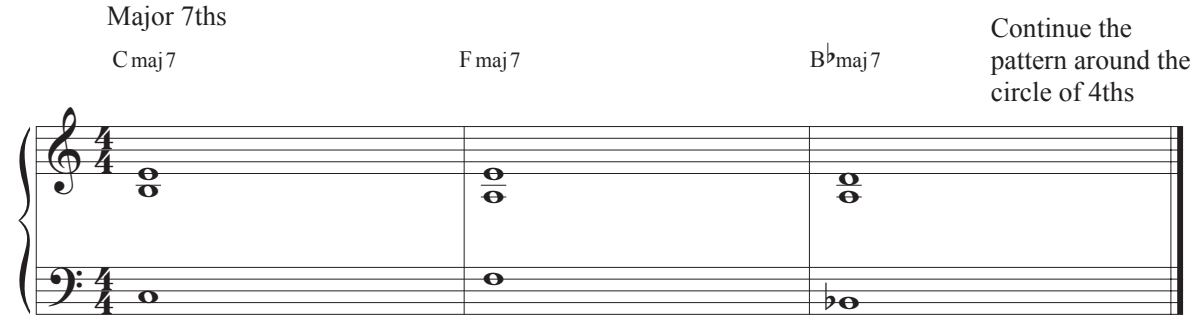
For now we will concentrate on: maj7, m7, dom7, maj6, and o7. What we will soon see is there is some overlap with these skeletal structures (ss). For example the ss for Co7 is enharmonically the same as the ss for Cm6. Likewise, the ss for C half diminished (or Cm7b5) is the same one for Cm7.

In these cases the mighty 5th is the missing piece of the puzzle that would make the tonal center and chord quality unmistakable. Later in the chapter we will explore some beautiful voicings that incorporate the 5th.

For now, let's examine these 5 categories of skeletal structures and find melodic connections as we move through the circle of 4ths. Pay special attention to the stepwise motion in you RH as you go through the circle of 4ths. The 2 notes in the RH, i.e. the upper two notes of the skeletal structure, are often referred to as ***guide tones*** because they guide you through the harmonic progression of the song. Moving from one guide tone to another is a way horn players find a secondary line when harmonizing under a melody.

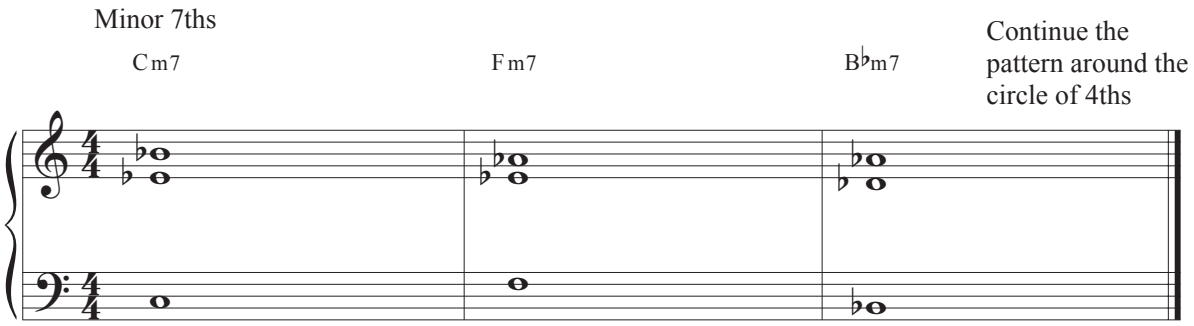
For each chord, 2 voicings are possible by inverting the RH. Get used to freely inverting the 3rd and 7th or 3rd and 6th for each skeletal structure.

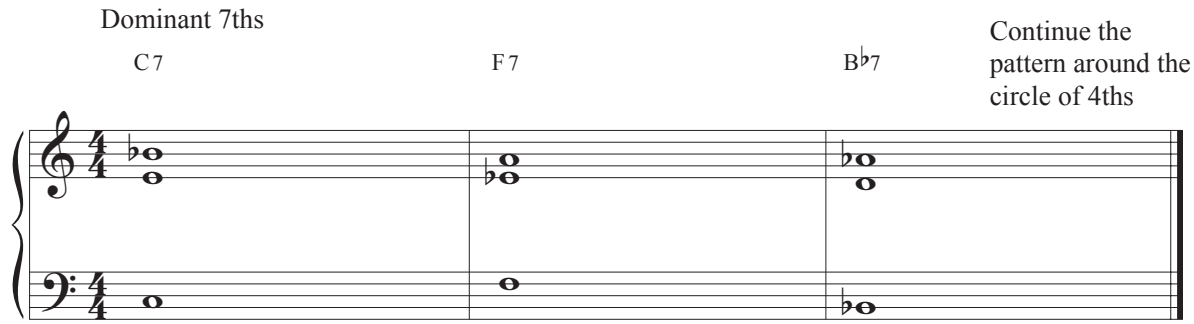
FIG. 1

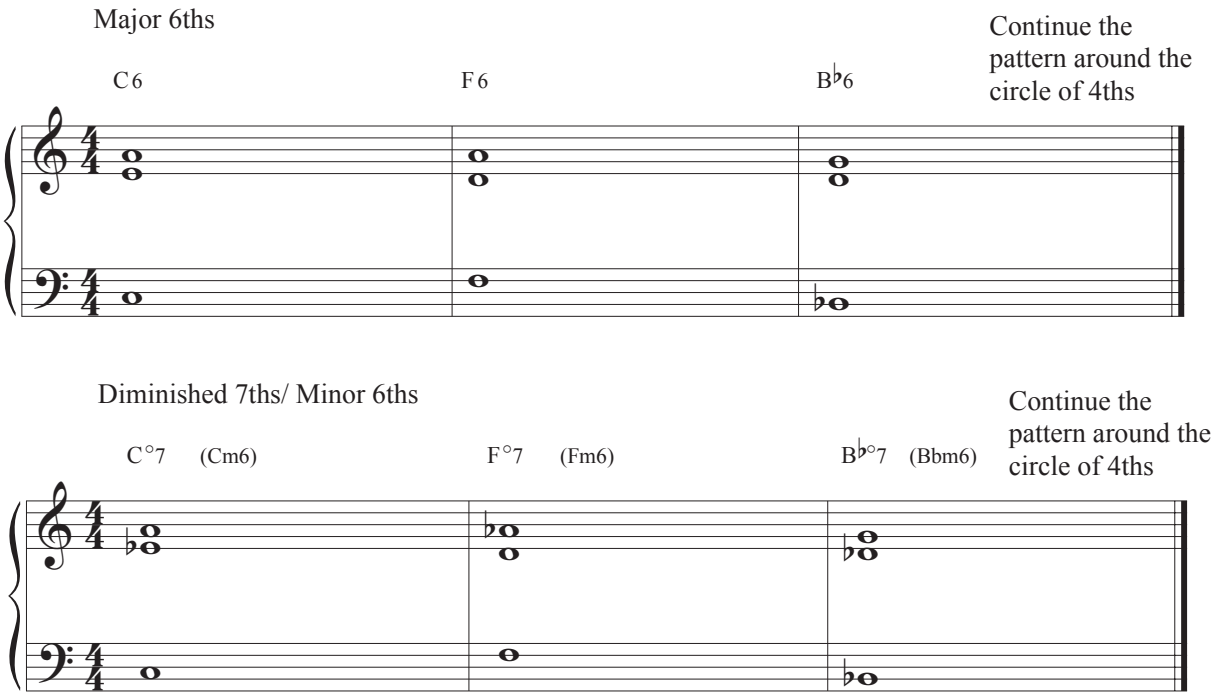



Note: After Gbmaj7 the voicing will become a little too low and muddy. One easy remedy is to invert the RH voicing. For example, instead of playing 1, 7, 3 for Gbmaj7 play 1, 3, 7. The melody note of the voicing changes from Bb to F. Now, continue through the circle of 4ths. You should end up on Cmaj7 voiced 1, 3, 7 with the melody note of the voicing on B right below middle C.

For the following exercises, experiment with inverting the 3rd and 7th of each voicing after you feel comfortable playing the pattern as written. Remember, if the voicing is too muddy, simply invert the RH voicing.



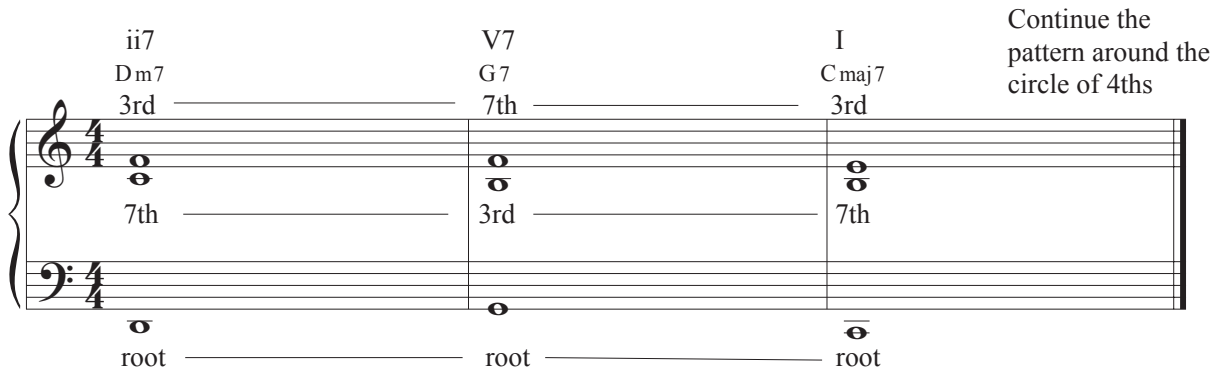






ii – V – I Patterns:

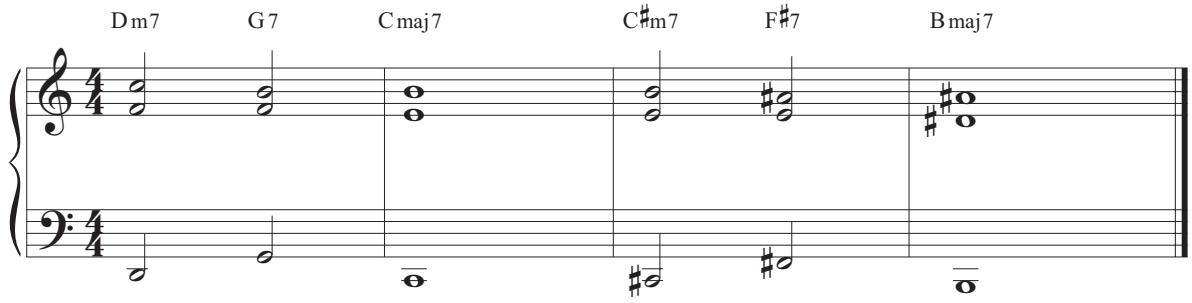
The ii – V – I pattern and it's myriad of variations appear over and over again in the harmonies of Jazz and American Standards. The progression itself provides a satisfying feeling of arrival in the tonic key (I). This is because of its elegant voice leading pattern that can be easily observed when you play the skeletal structure of each chord. See example below. The 3rd of Dm7 is a common tone shared by the 7th of G7, which resolves by half step to the 3rd of Cmaj7. The middle voice of Dm7 (7th) moves down a half step to the 3rd of the G7, which is a common tone shared by the major 7th of the tonic chord.

FIG. 2




Practice the ii – V – I motion through the keys using this chord progression found in the bridge of Billy Strayhorn's "Daydream". Listen to the motion of the inner voices. As you play, hum or sing the top voice, the middle voice, and then the bottom voice.

FIG. 3




Now comp FIG. 3 in time using comping rhythm (CR) 18 from Chapter 1A. Transpose and use **CD 1 Track 7**. Note: the track starts with Cm7–F7–Bbmaj7

Below are comping guides written in rhythmic notation with chord symbols using the rhythms from Horace Silver and Bud Powell LH comping transcriptions from earlier in the chapter. In the next few exercises, you will be applying chord voicings to these rhythmic comping guides.

Skeletal structures work best when applying different voicing styles to the LH shell patterns. This is because of the high frequency of long sustained chords and chords occurring on beats "1" and "3". Having a long sequence of these two elements tends to relax the music instead of driving the music forward. Even so, more advanced students may apply voicing styles other than shells and skeletal structures. As you add more complexity to the voicing, experiment with a mix of longer and shorter note values. Also experiment with anticipating some of the chords if faced with a long succession of chords occurring on "1" and "3." This will help propel the music forward. It is important to note, that having a mix of downbeats and upbeats is also important, as we studied in Chapter 1. Anticipating everything leads to a comping pattern that sounds rushed and unsettled.

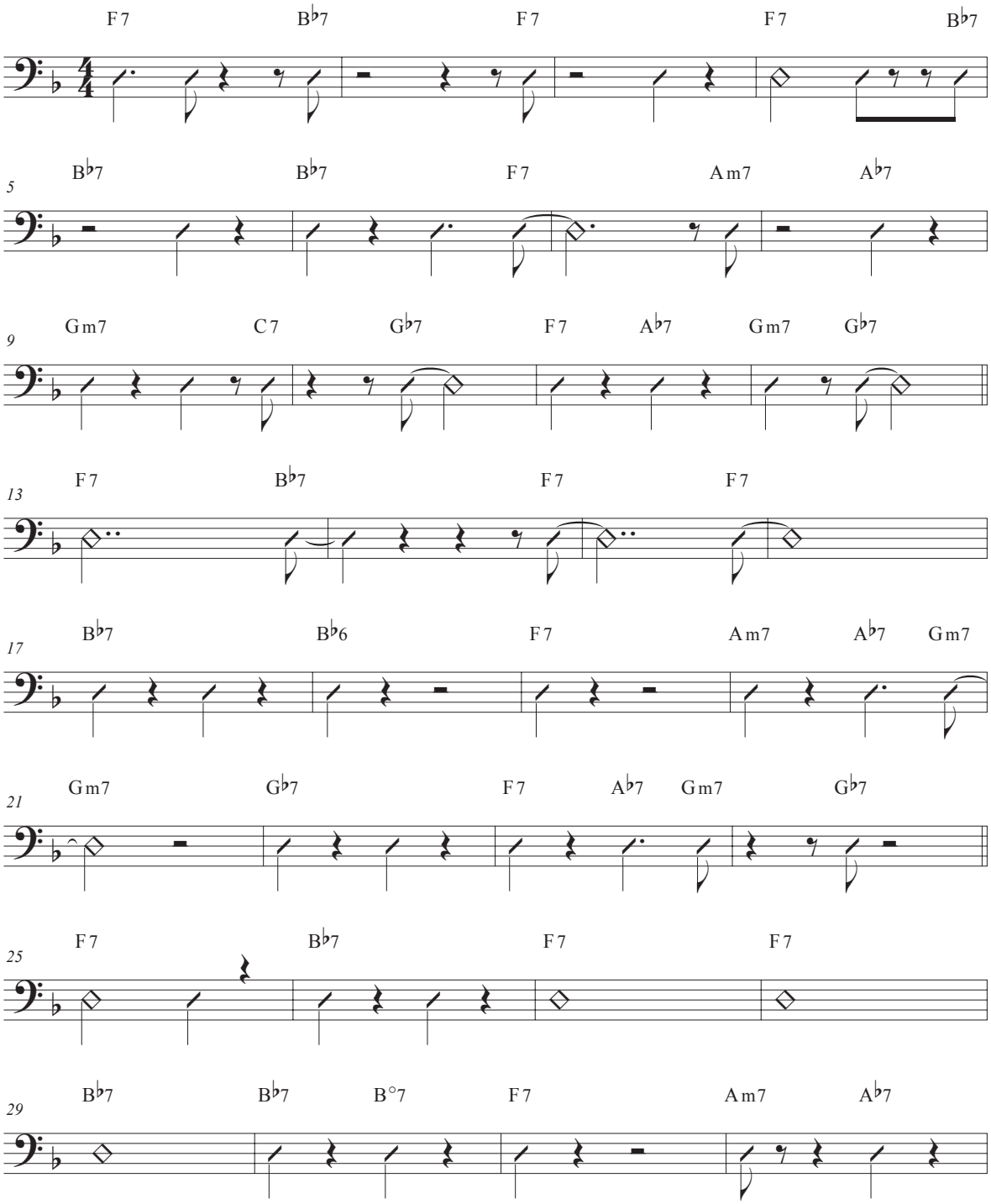
**Comping Exercise #26: Applying Skeletal Structures to the LH Comping of Bud Powell on the changes of "Straight no Chaser."** Use skeletal structures (LH plays the root, RH plays the guide tones) to comp through the following comping rhythm guide. For slash chords (chords with alternate bass notes) play the two guide tones of the upper chord with your RH and the alternate bass note with your LH.
Use the OR and **CD 1 Track 10.**

FIG. 4

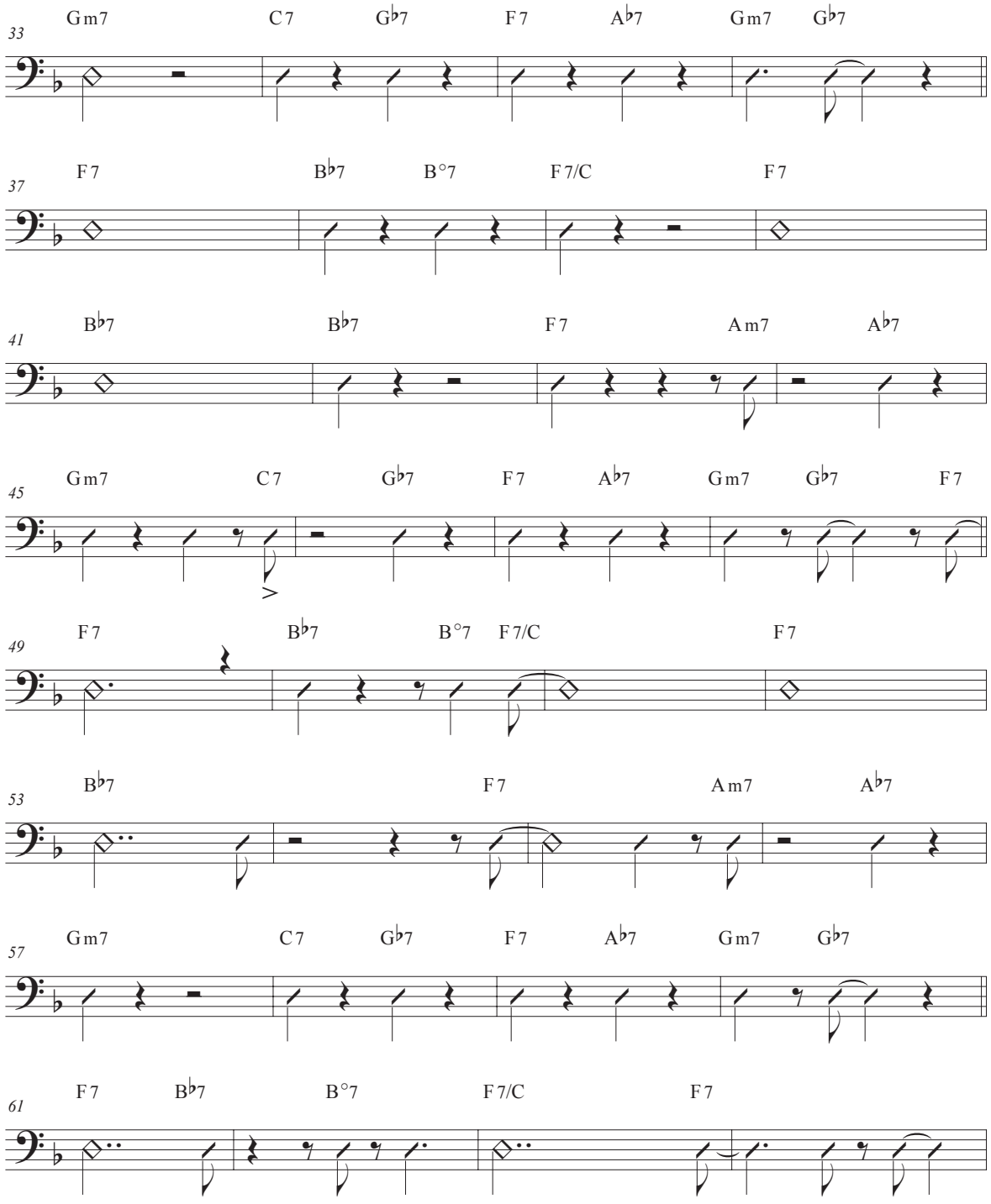
# Bud Powell's Left Hand Comping Guide

## On the changes to "Straight no Chaser"

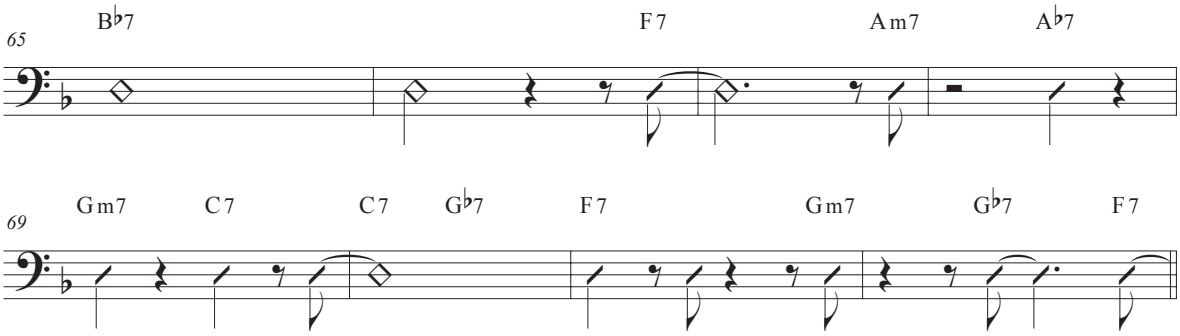
for use with skeletal structures



2 Bud Powell's LH comping guide on the changes to "Straight no Chaser"



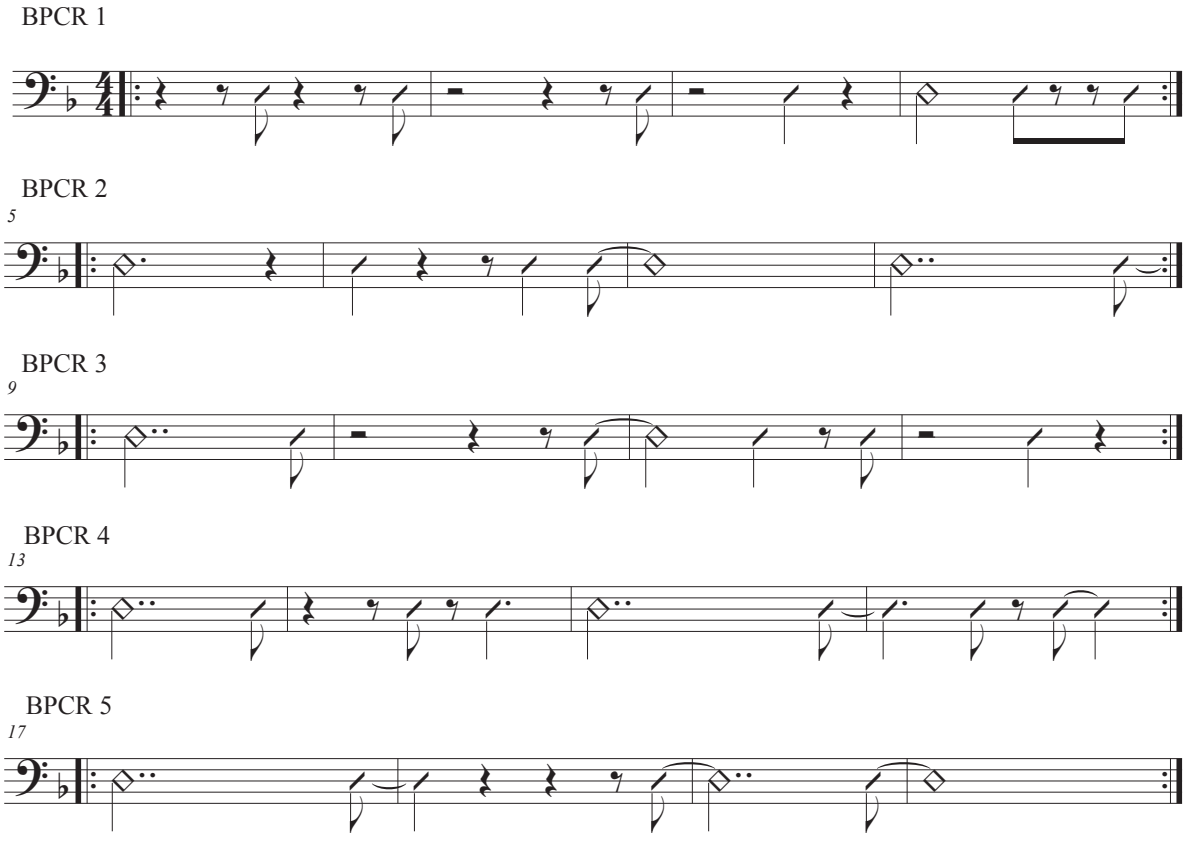
Bud Powell's LH comping guide on the changes to "Straight no Chaser" 3



**Comping Exercise #27: Working with Bud Powell Comping Rhythms 1-5.** Below are five isolated comping rhythms as played by Bud Powell derived from the "Straight no Chaser" comping guide. Practice these rhythms by applying them to jazz tunes of your choice**.**

FIG. 5

## Bud Powell Comping Rhythms



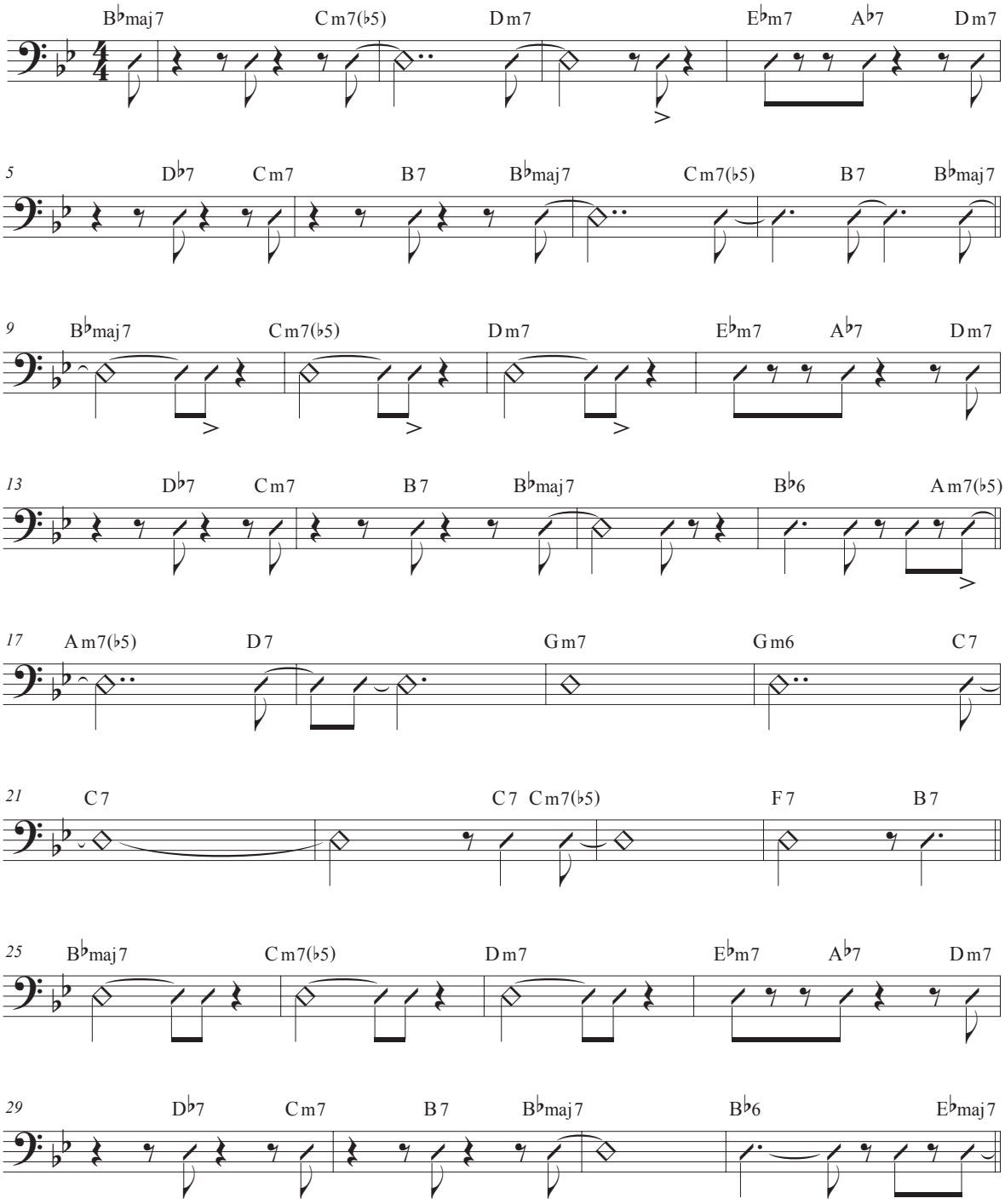

**Comping Exercise #28: Applying Skeletal Structures to the LH Comping of Bud Powell on the changes of "Celia."** Use skeletal structures (LH plays the root, RH plays the guide tones) to comp through the following comping rhythm guide. For now, disregard the (b5) designation. At this point we are only playing root, 3rd, and 7th. Sing or hum the melody as you comp. Use the OR and **CD 1 Track 12.**

FIG. 6

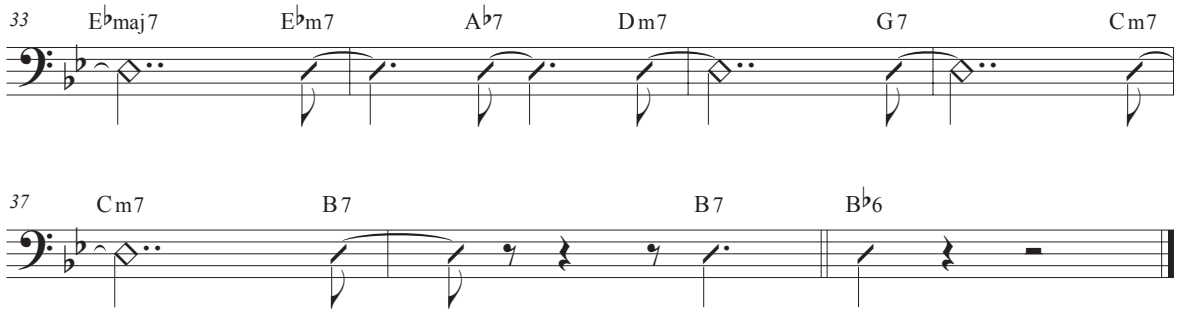
# Bud Powell's LH Comping Guide

## On the changes to "Celia" adapted

for use with skeletal structures



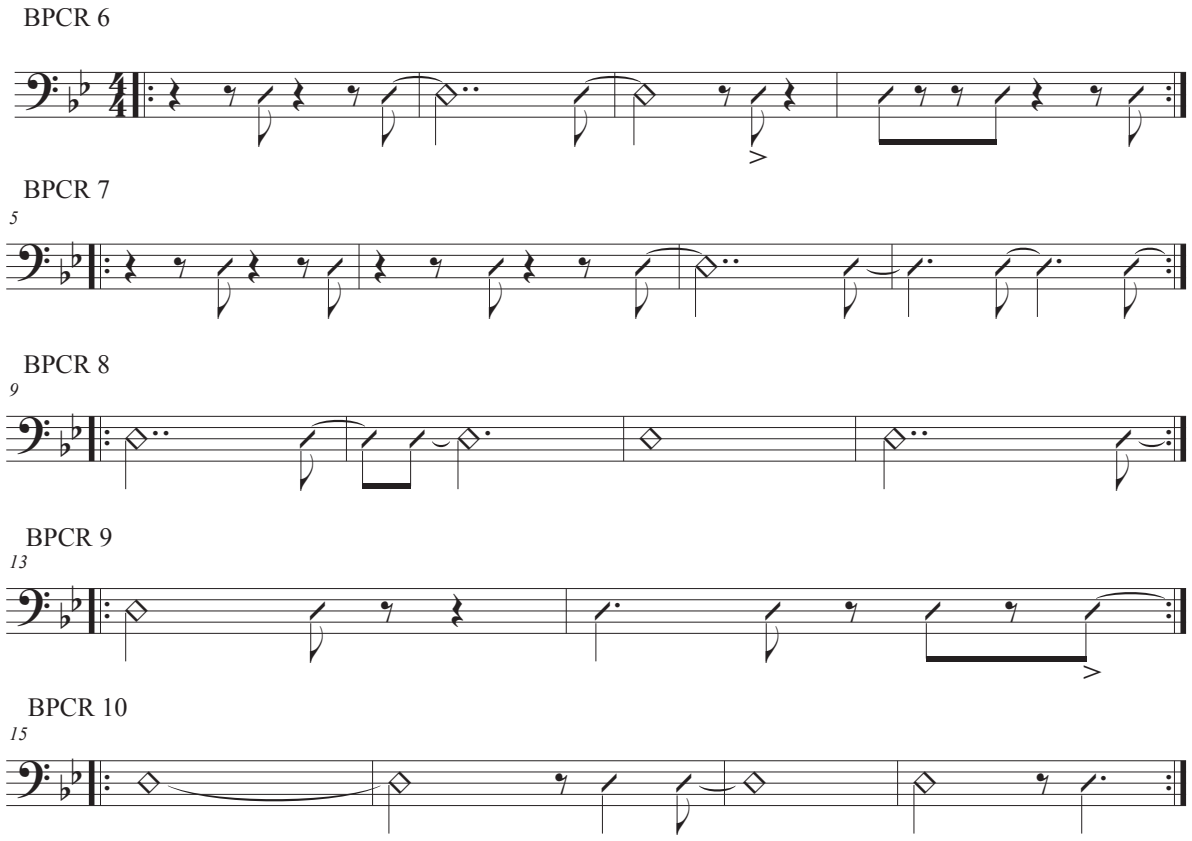
2 Bud Powell's LH comping on the changes to "Celia"



**Comping Exercise #29: Practicing with Bud Powell Comping Rhythms 6-10.** Below are five more isolated comping rhythms as played by Bud Powell derived from the "Celia" comping guide. Practice these rhythms by applying them to jazz tunes of your choice.

FIG. 7

## Bud Powell Comping Rhythms



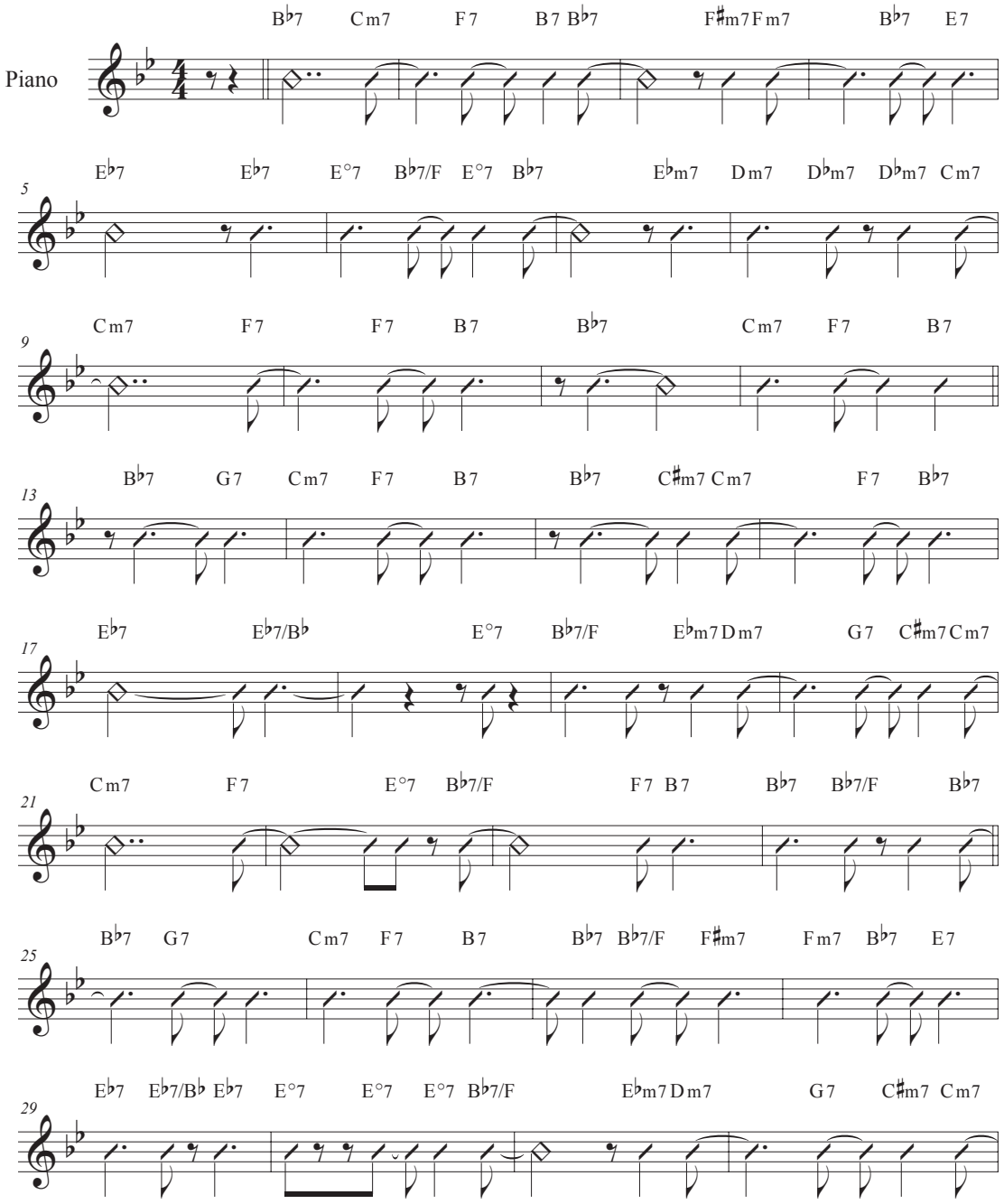

**Comping Exercise #30: Applying Skeletal Structures to the LH Comping of Horace Silver on the changes of "Opus de Funk."** Use skeletal structures (LH plays the root, RH plays the guide tones) to comp through the following comping rhythm guide. Use the OR and **CD 1 Track 14.**

FIG. 8

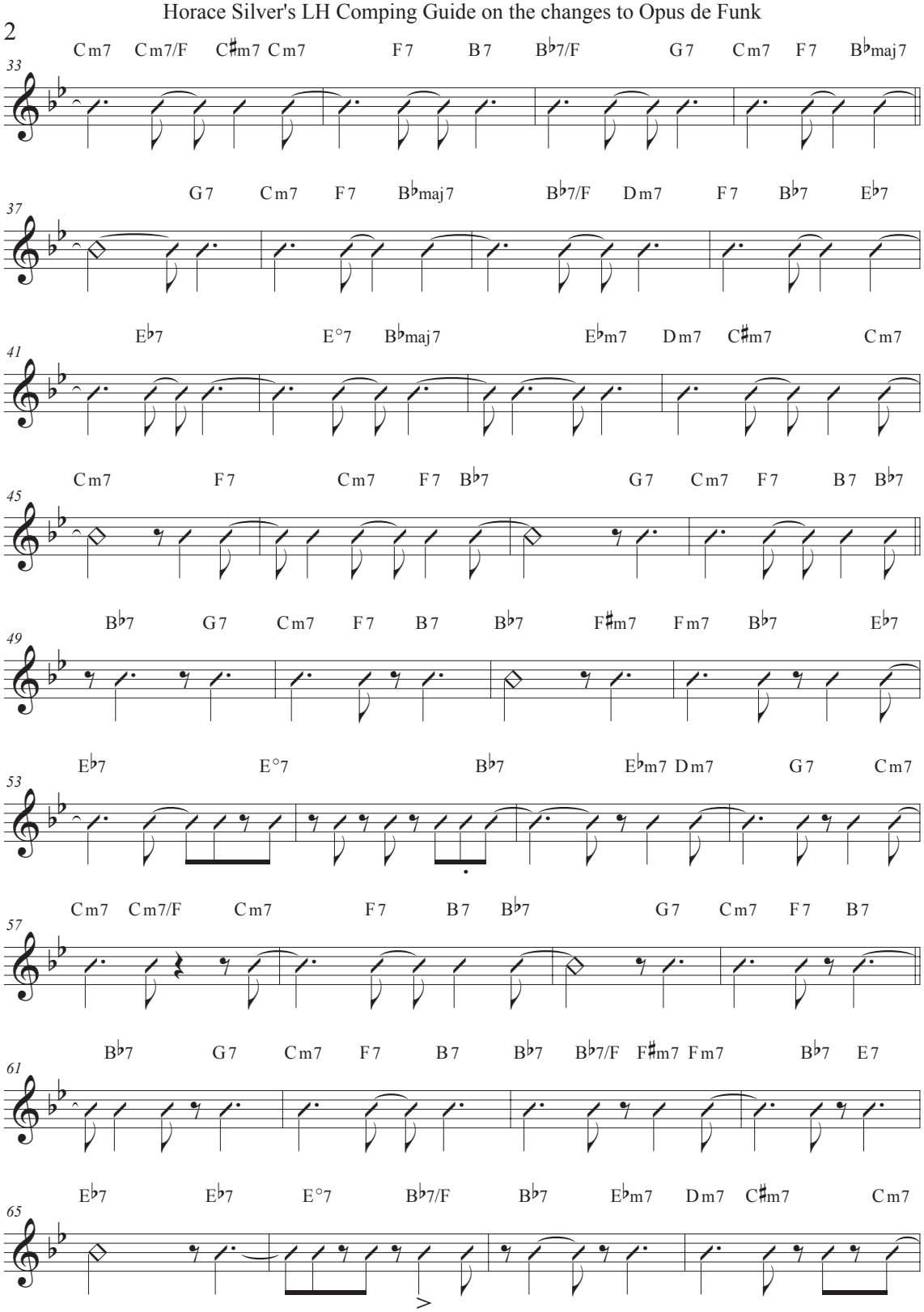
# Horace Silver's LH Comping Guide

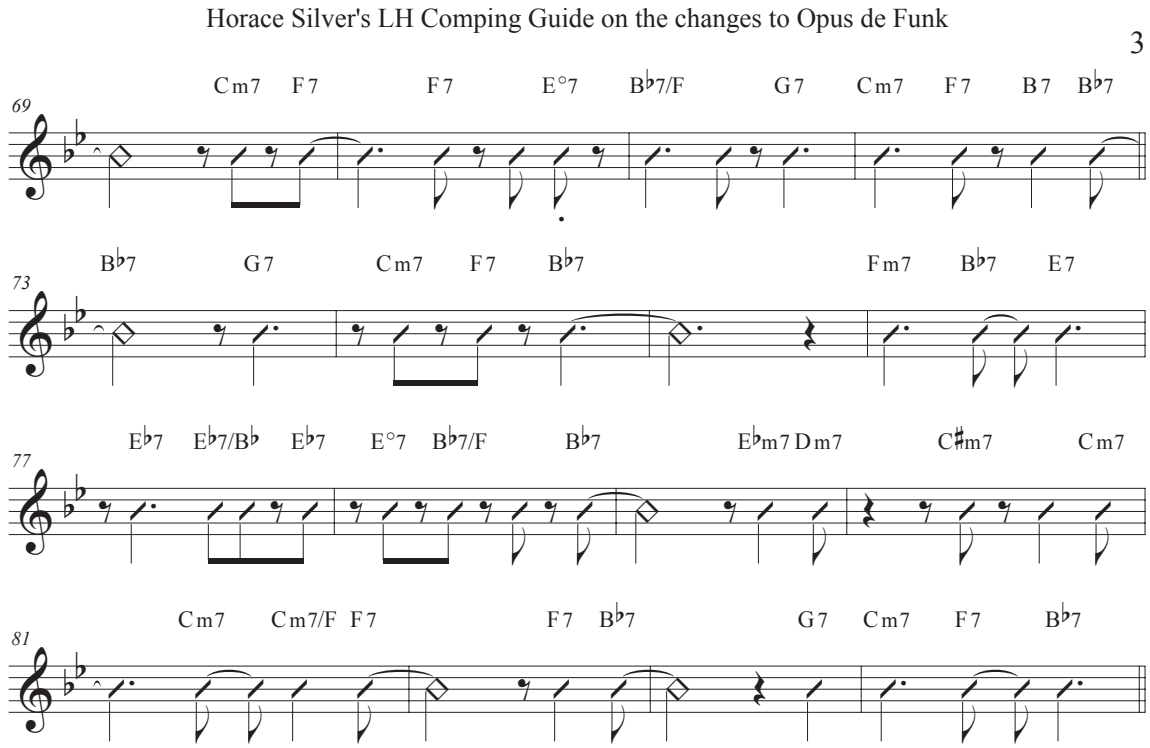
## On the changes to"Opus de Funk" adapted

for use with skeletal structures



Horace Silver's LH Comping Guide on the changes to Opus de Funk

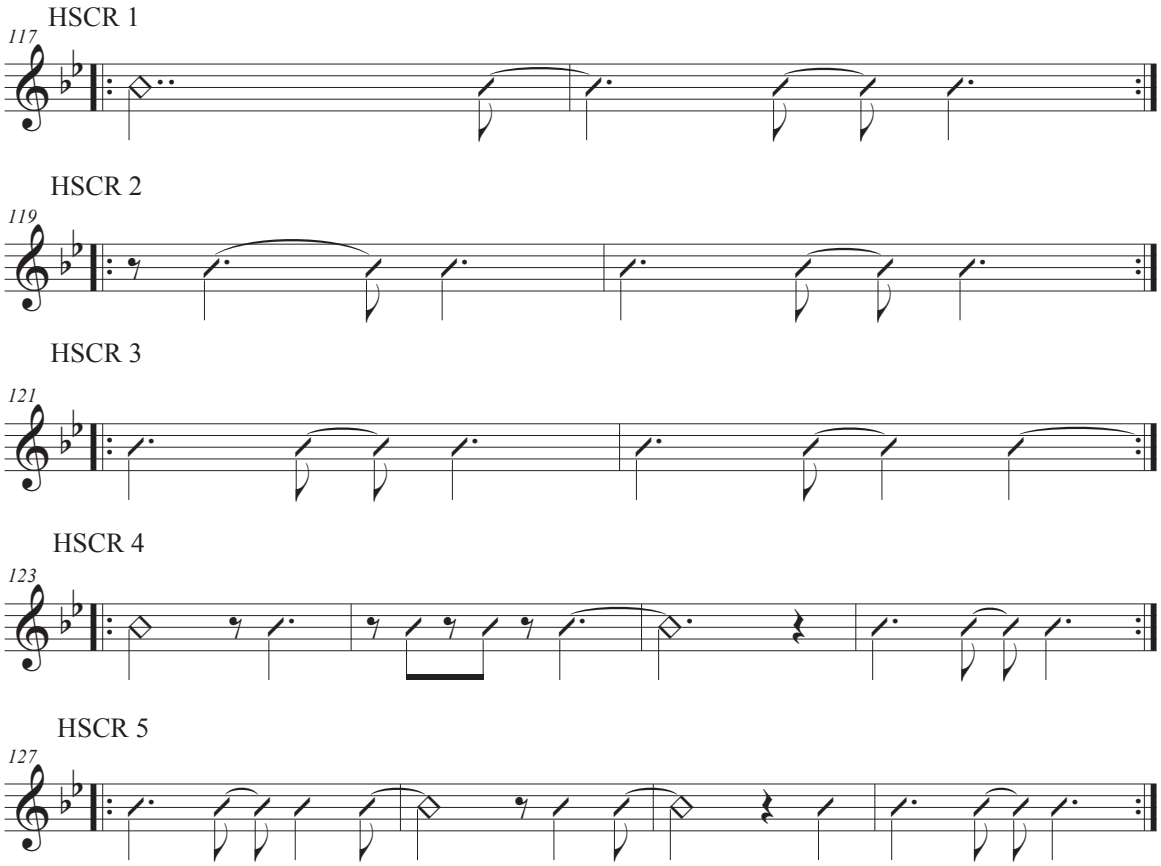





The above LH comping rhythm guide is extremely busy and intense. If you apply other voicing styles besides shells and skeletal structures be aware that you might be crowding the soloist. Although an excellent rhythmic exercise, comping like this with two-handed voicings may be too much under ordinary circumstances.

**Comping Exercise #31: Applying Horace Silver Comping Rhythms 1-5.** Below you will find five isolated comping rhythms as played by Horace Silver derived from the "Opus de Funk" comping guide. Practice these rhythms by applying them to jazz tunes of your choice.

FIG. 9

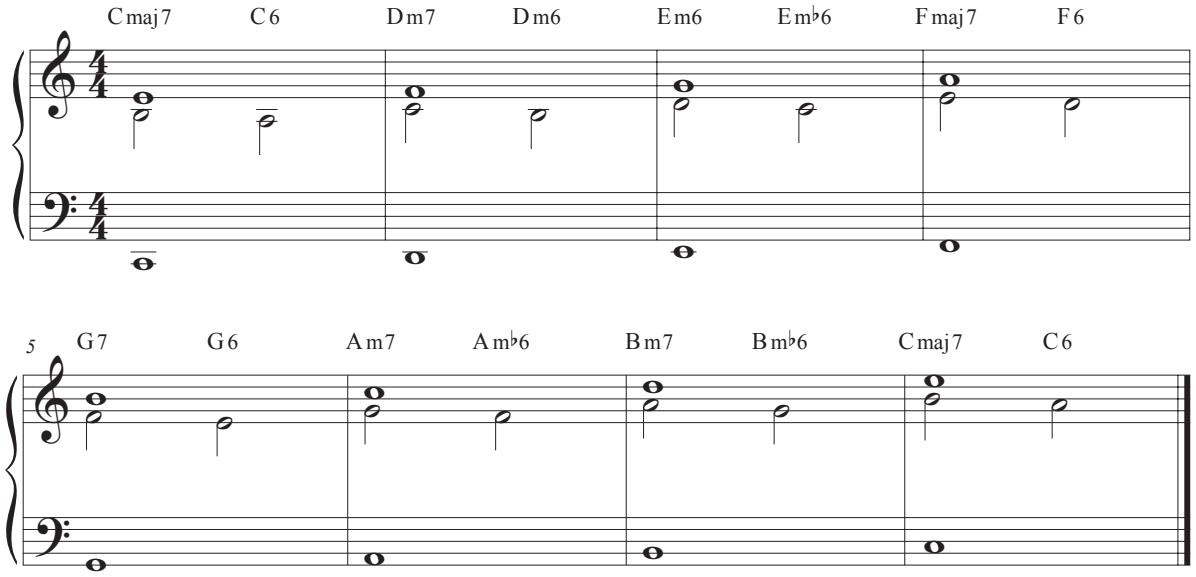


## CHAPTER 2D: APPLYING SKELETAL STRUCTURES TO THE MAJOR SCALE

Skeletal structures can be applied to the major scale. By doubling 3rds and 7ths we can create a richer texture. The following exercises make for a wonderful warm up routine to get your hands warm and also to get your brain to think in all 12 keys.

Major scales are utilized all the time in chord playing, especially when accompanying singers and establishing a tonality. By applying the shape of the skeletal structure to a major scale and shifting the shape up and down diatonically, we can successfully harmonize every note of the scale. Notice the voice leading between chord tones 7 and 6 as we play up the scale with a tenth between the outer two voices.

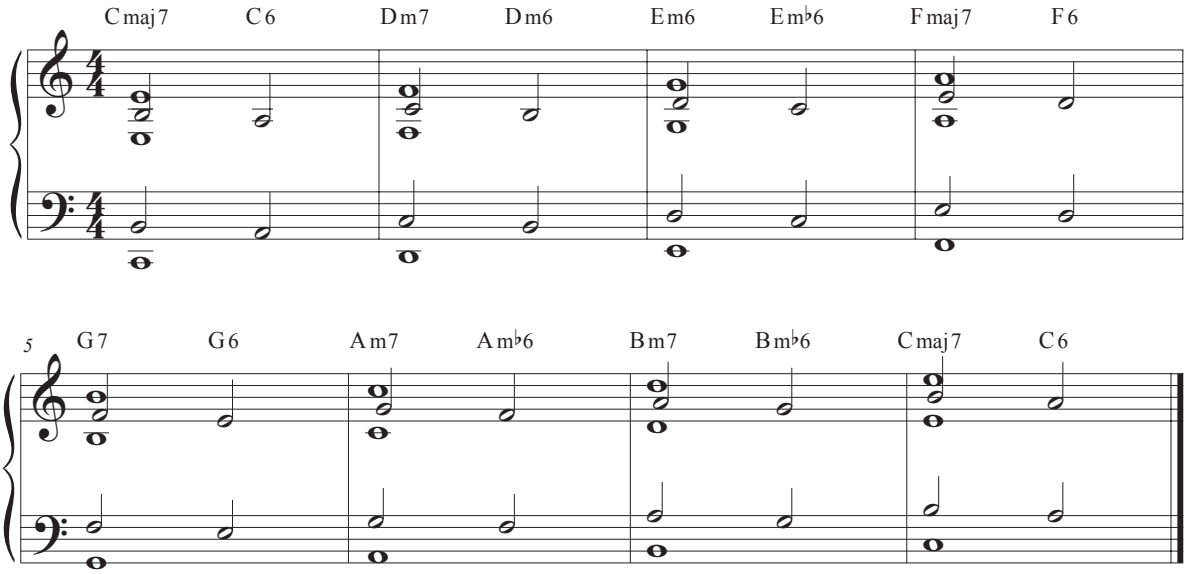
FIG. 1




By simply doubling the 3rd an octave below and adding a 7 to 6 motion in the LH, we can create a richer voicing. Now the upper voice in the LH doubles the middle voice in the RH. Holding all of the voices down may be unnecessary. If your left hand is smaller, feel free to let go of your left pinky when playing the 6th with your second finger on beat 3.

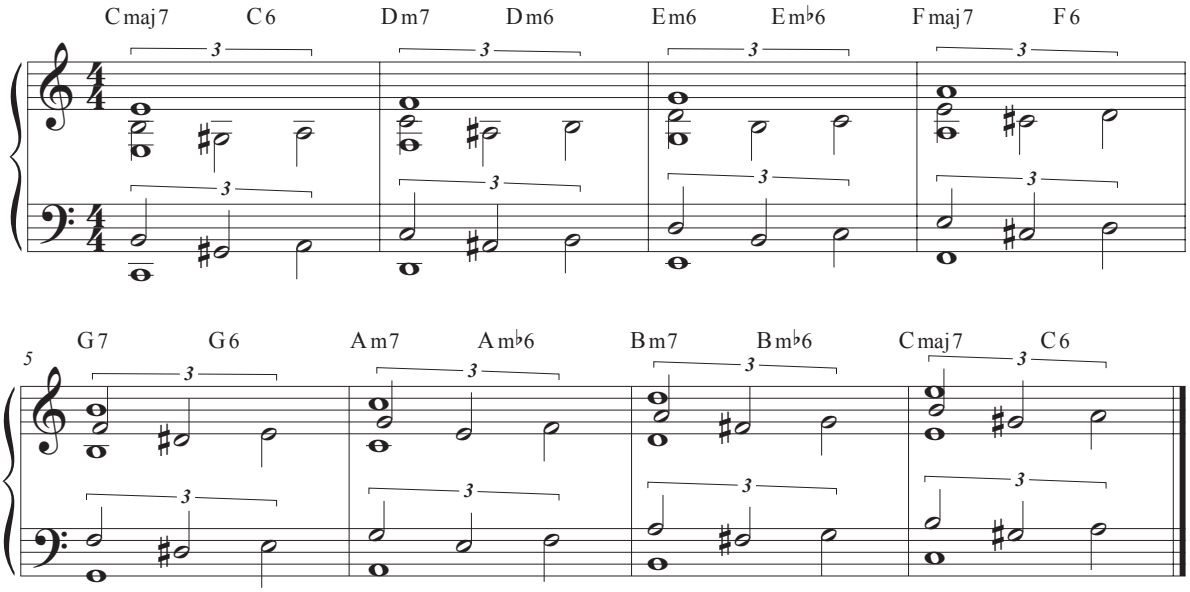
This new voicing can be described as an octave-related shape (3 – 7 – 3 or 7 – 3 – 7) in the right hand over a shell in the left hand.

FIG. 2



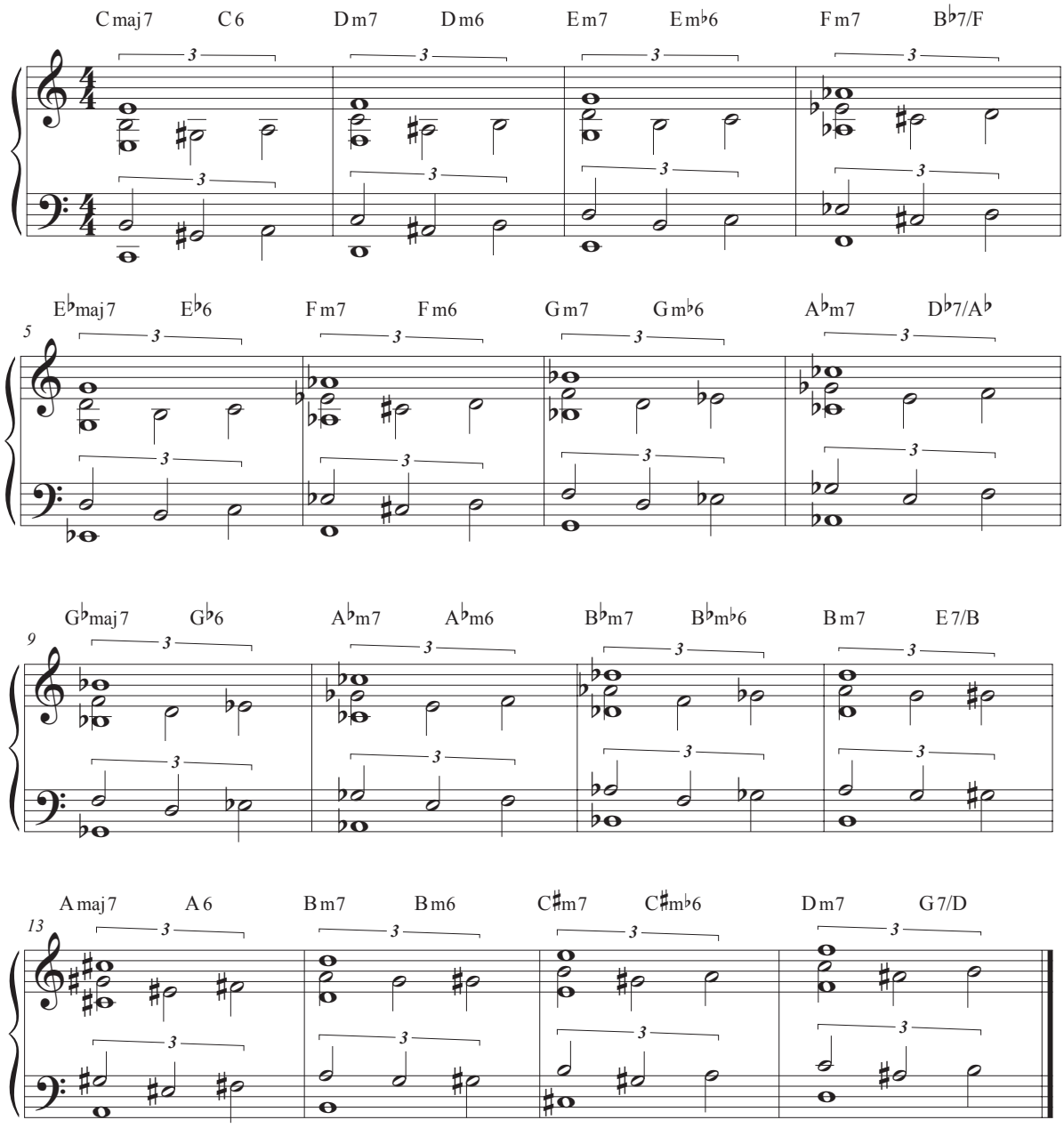

Creating the internal motion 7– b6 – 6 is another way to add richness as you practice your major scale. The outer two voices are still separated by a tenth.

FIG. 3



**Comping Exercise #32: Using Skeletal Structures to Play Major Scales.** The following exercise modulates up a minor 3rd after every 4 bars. In addition to Cmaj7, if you practice this starting on Dbmaj7 and Dmaj7, you can successfully navigate through all twelve keys.

FIG. 4

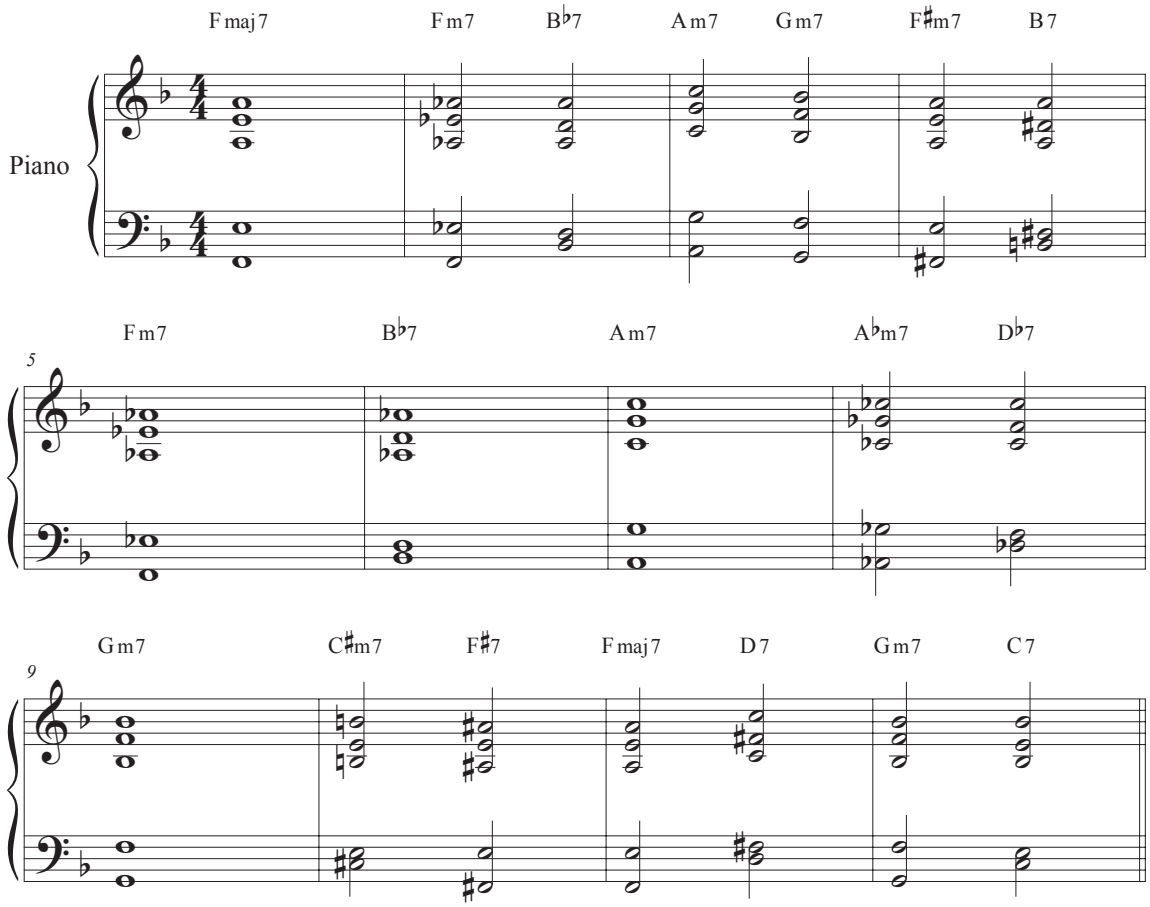



We can apply this voicing technique to comping rather easily. In the example below, the RH is always playing an octave-related shape (3-7-3 or 7-3-7) over a LH shell. This template is used as we navigate through a modified blues progression.

FIG. 5

## Comping Using 3-7-3 or 7-3-7 over Shells

On the Changes to "Dance of the Infidels" by Bud Powell



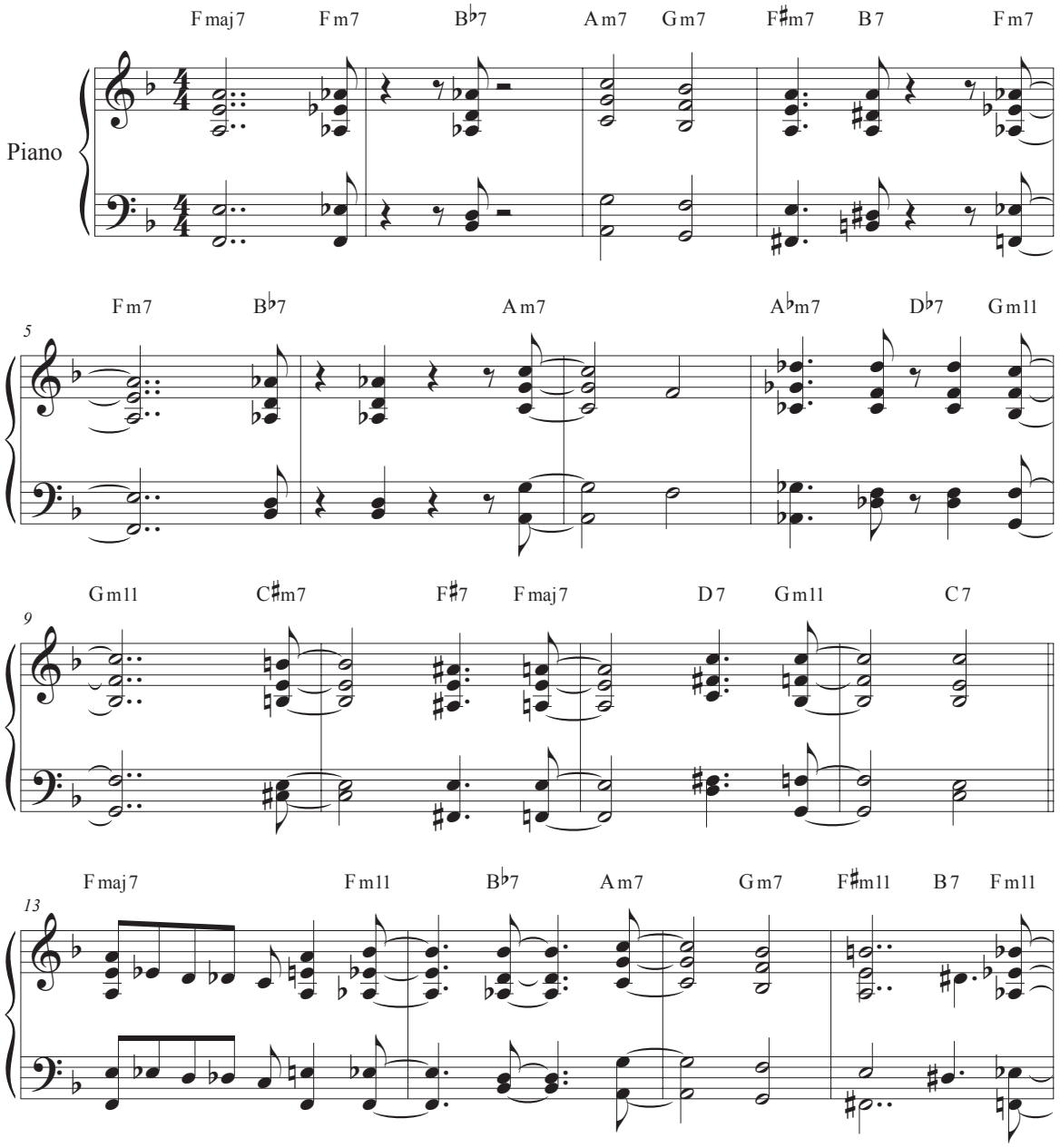

In Chapter 3 we will study the comping of Bud Powell as he navigates through these same changes, which happen to be the chords to his composition, “Dance of the Infidels.”

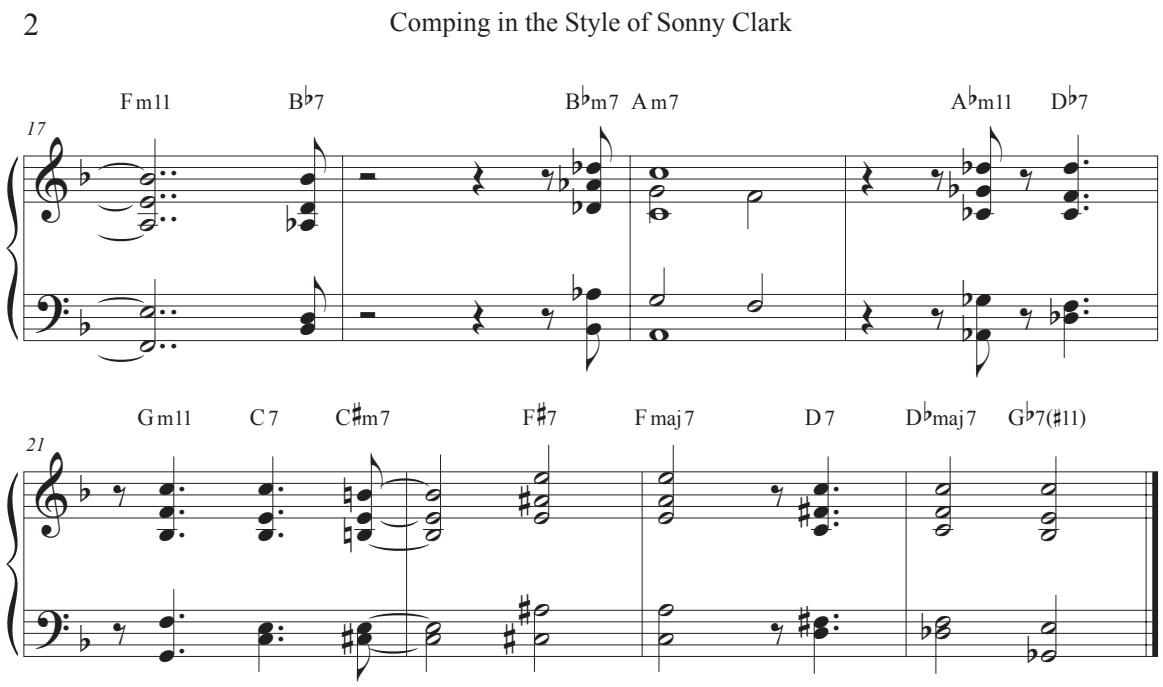
In the following example, we add comping rhythms as well as a few melodic alterations. If the 3rd is in the melody it can be adjusted up a whole step to create an 11th chord if the original chord was m7; or a #11 chord if the original chord was maj7 or dom7. The combination of voicing and rhythmic style, makes the following example sound a bit like the comping of Sonny Clark, who’s personal style we will study in Chapter 5.

FIG. 6

# Comping in the Style of Sonny Clark

On the Changes to "Dance of the Infidels" by Bud Powell






**Comping Exercise #33: Comping through the Blues in the Style of Sonny Clark**. Using the voicings and rhythms above as a guide, practice comping through various blues progressions in the style of Sonny Clark. Basically use 3-7-3 or 7-3-7 over shells. The 3-7-3 RH shape may be changed slightly by raising the top note up a whole step to create m11, 7#11, or maj7#11 voicings. If the voicings are too large for your hands, experiment with lowering the top note of the tweaked voicing down an octave.

Use the **OR** (the original recording to "Dance of the Infidels" [see List of Comping Transcriptions]) and comp for the first two choruses of Bud's solo, or play along with **CD 1 Track 17.**

## CHAPTER 2E: FULL SOUNDING VOICINGS USING ONLY ROOT, 3RD, 5TH, AND 7TH(6TH)

By adding a fifth to the LH we can create an impressive palette of voicings that only utilize (at the most) root, 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths with some doubling of voices. Before adding tensions to your voicings it's very important to spend time with the basic building blocks of jazz harmony. The following voicings below are sometimes referred to as drop 2-4 because the second and fourth voices of the basic seventh chord voicing (with the lead note doubled an octave below) are dropped an octave.

After playing through the following sequences, it will be up to you to use what you have learned so far in Chapter 2 (exercising taste and discretion) to come up with a piano solo arrangement for the standard, *All the Things You Are*.

Below are inversion exercises and cycles for Δ7, m7, and 7. It's up to you to also apply this idea to 6, m6, m7b5, o7, 7#5, 7b5, mΔ7, Δ7b5, and Δ7#5.

These inversions and cycles are created by using 3–7–3 or 7–3–7 in the RH, and either 1–5 or 5–1 in the LH. Now we are able to differentiate between m6 and diminished, or m7 and m7b5. The shape of these new structures are the same as the skeletal structure, only the 3rd or 7th(6th) is doubled and a fifth is added in the LH.

Observe the voicings with the 5th in the bass. For voicings reminiscent of Duke Ellington or Sir Roland Hanna, placing the fifth in the bass creates an elegant and rich sound.

Inversion Exercises

FIG. 1i

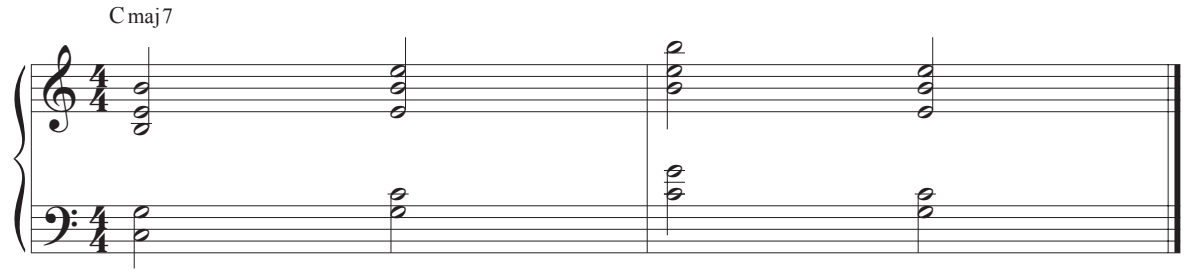



FIG. 1ii

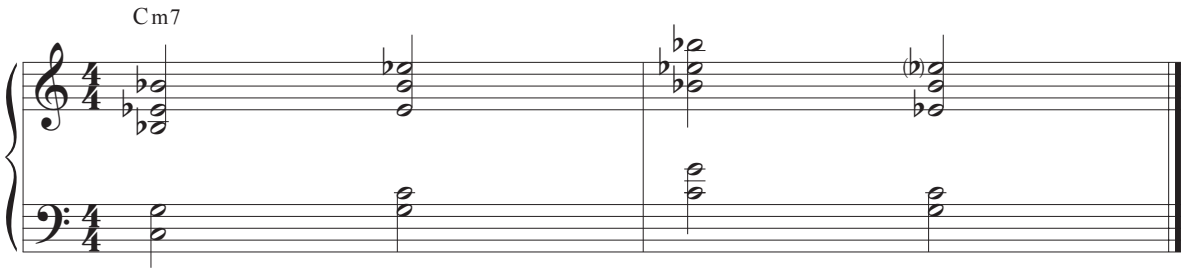
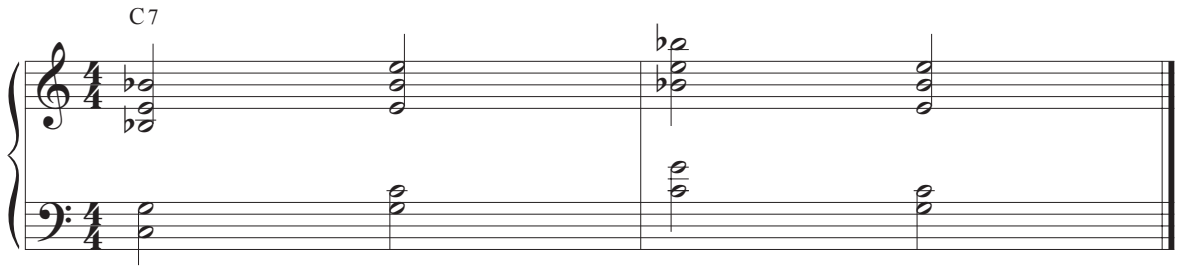


FIG. 1iii




Cycles

FIG. 2i

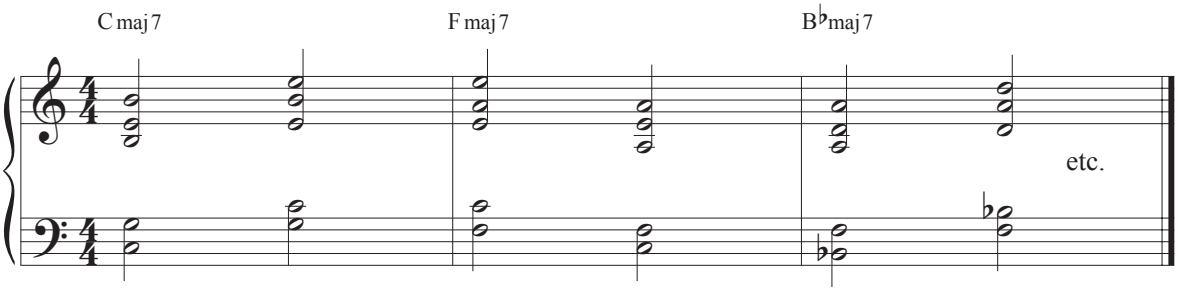



FIG. 2ii

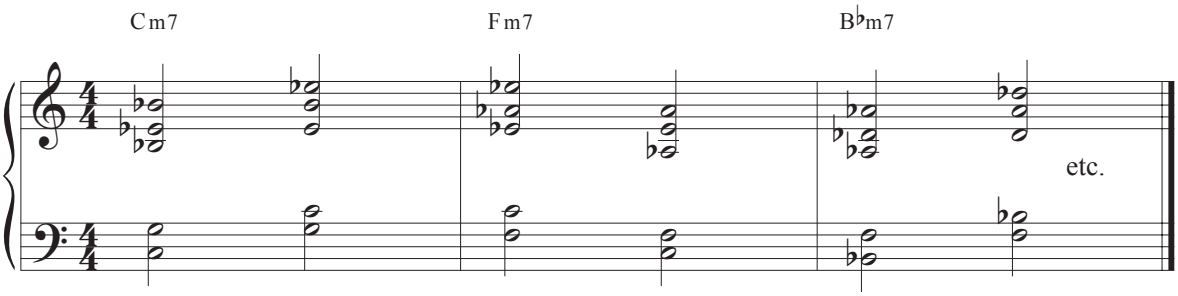
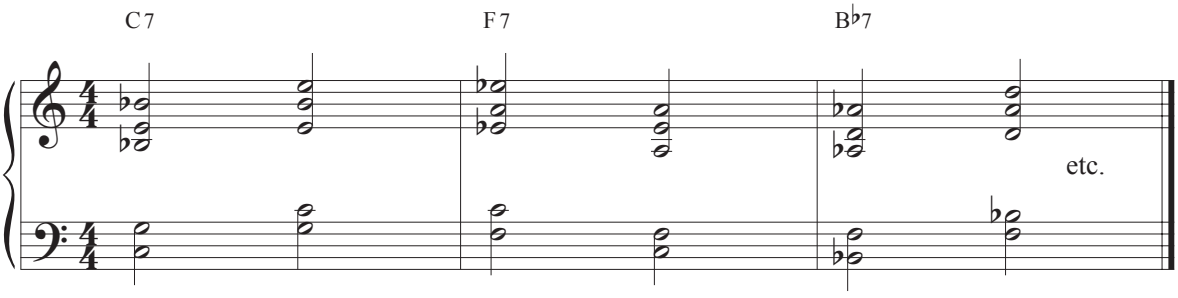
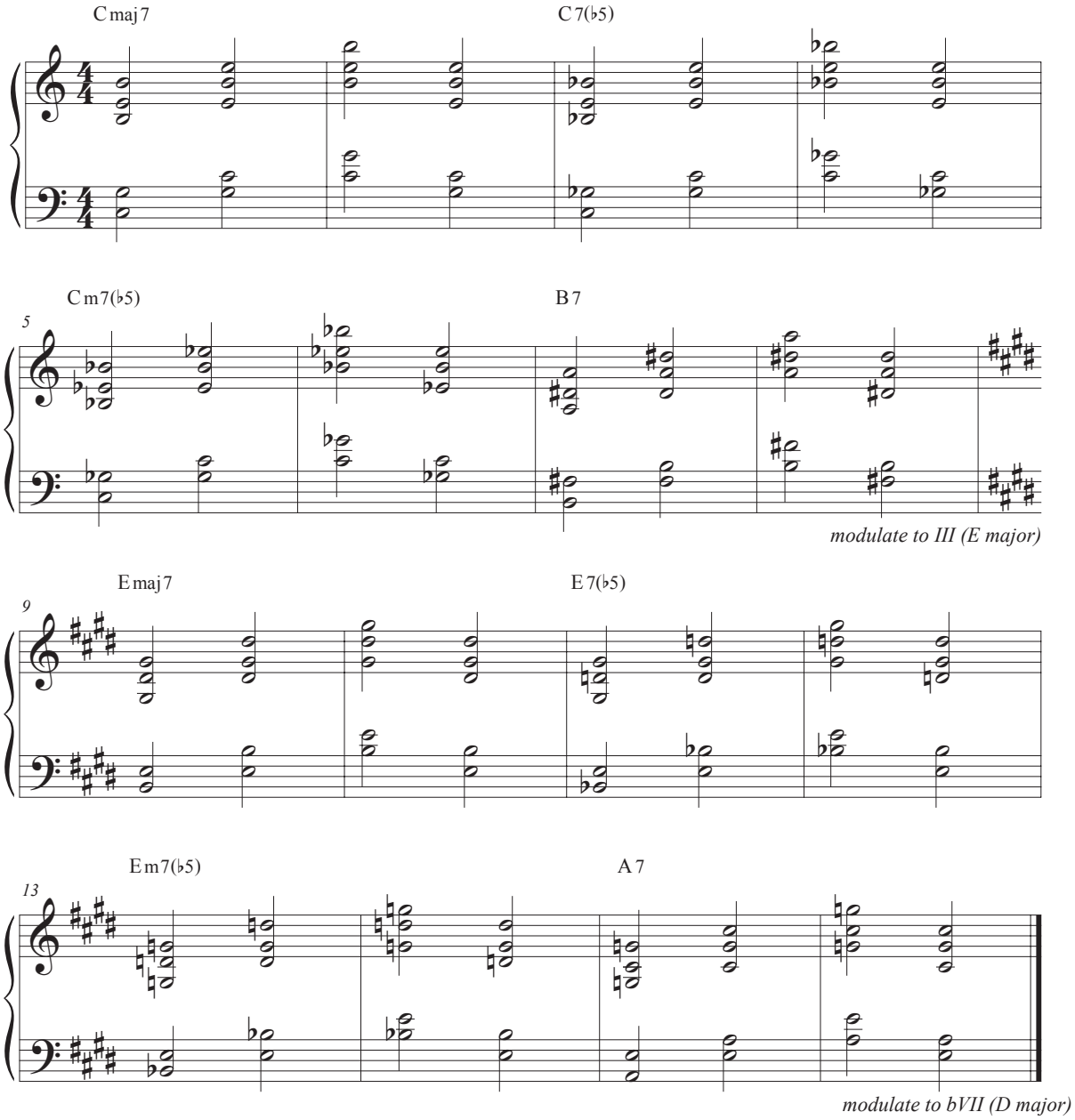



FIG. 2iii




Always try to come up with a way to practice creatively. Create an etude for yourself connecting several types of these chords. For example you could try playing in order the inversions of Δ7, 7b5, m7b5, and V7/III (or bVII) and starting again in the new key (see below).

FIG. 3




Observe how the sequence begins again in the new key of E major in bar 9, this time starting with a maj7 chord voiced with the fifth in the bass. After the second eight bars the sequence modulates to bVII (D major) instead of modulating to the expected III of E major (Ab major). Notice how Ab major and D major are a tritone away from each other. Finding a creative modulation can make practicing sequences through the keys less monotonous.

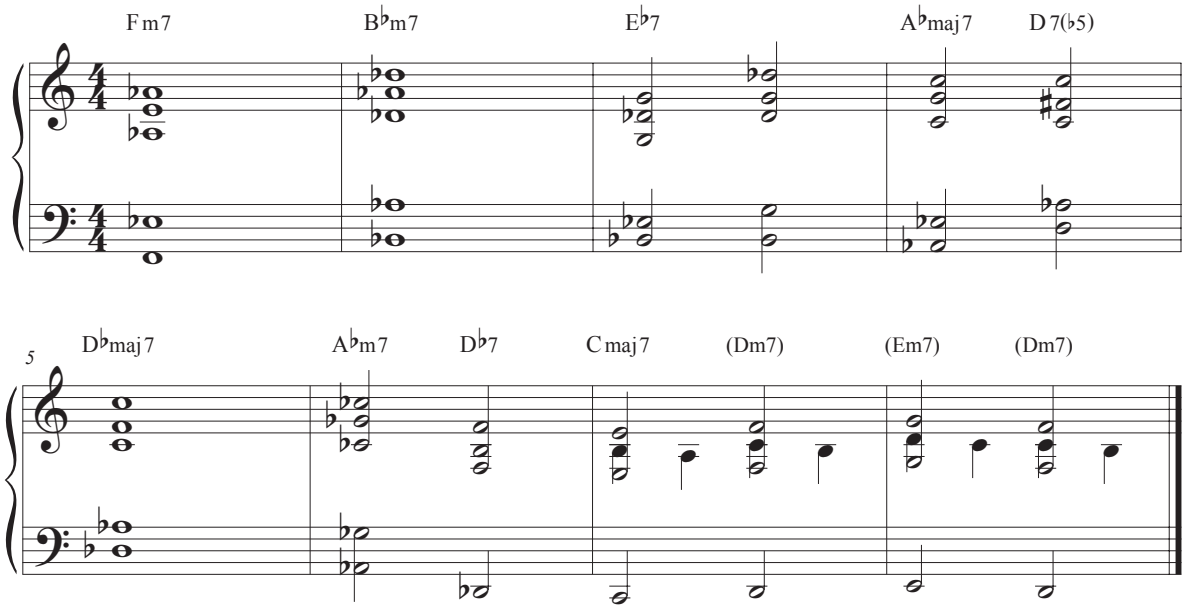
**Comping Exercise #34: Playing Through the Chords of "All the Things You Are".**
Create a piano accompaniment to *All the Things You Are* using only roots, 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths. As you sing or hum the melody notice how closely it aligns itself with the 3rd or 7th of each chord. To create voicings use the 3 – 7 – 3 or 7 – 3 – 7 RH octave-related shape while playing a shell in the LH. When the melody pauses at the end of phrases, you can fill by playing RH octave-related shapes over shells diatonically up and down the major scale related to the chord (see Chapter 2D; FIG. 2). At certain times, for added weight, you may add the fifth in your LH, or even play the fifth in the bass with the root right above like we did in FIG. 1 and 2. Use your discretion. Also, reharmonization is possible as discussed in Chapter 2B. If the melody permits, try substituting the ii – V a tritone away. Experiment with flatting the 5th. Keep in mind that instead of adding to your voicing you can also simplify your voicing to add freshness. Playing only the root under the RH octave-related shape can be enough.

Feel free to abandon the melody in your piano accompaniment by finding another inversion of the chord the way we did in the previous section (FIG. 1 and 2)

Now, play through the chords of "All the Things You Are". This technique can be used for playing through the chords of a variety of tunes on the piano. Singing the melody on top of the basic chord tones is a good place to start. Notice that in the bridge, the melody strays from the 3rd or 7th; it goes to the 11th. As we will see in the next chapter, superimposing extensions (9ths, 11ths, and 13ths) on top of skeletal structures can create beautiful voicings.

Here is an example of a few bars of a piano accompaniment to *All the Things You Are*, using only the basic chord tones (root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th).

FIG. 4



# CHAPTER 3: TROMBONE VOICINGS APPLIED TO BLUES AND RHYTHM CHANGES

Throughout the following chapter, we will be adding voices to the skeletal structure, examining melodic connections between chords by studying useful ii-V-I progressions, practicing blues and rhythm changes with trombone voicings, as well as studying two important comping transcriptions from the bebop era.

Most of the vertical structures we will be working with in Chapter 3 will be closed position 3 and 4-note RH voicings over a LH bass note. When I was in 7th grade, attending a week long summer jazz camp in Maryland I remember very vividly a man in a Hawaiian shirt sitting at a piano and describing how he fell in love with the sound of jazz. He happened to be a trombonist and the chord he played was a G13b9 chord voiced (from the bottom up) F, Ab, B, E in the RH over a low G in the bass. He relished in the lushness of the sound, beaming with excitement as he tantalized us with several other similar chords. At the time I figured that all trombone players played piano like that, i.e. with 4 voices around middle C, kind of like a trombone section in a big band playing with a bass player. So, in the current text, I've decided to refer to all 3 and 4-note closed position right hand voicings as ***trombone voicings*** (TV's) over bass notes in honor of the man in the Hawaiian shirt at the jazz camp.

Actually, these voicings are crucial in comping as we will see later in the chapter when we examine the comping of Bud Powell and Tadd Dameron. These voicings lend themselves to useful ii-V-I and related progressions, and comping through blues and rhythm changes with or without a bass player. Also, by manipulating these vertical structures we can generate beautiful spread voicings when arranging standards for solo piano as we will explore in Chapter 5.

For now, we need to start building these structures. By building on the skeletal structures from Chapter 2, we can create trombone voicings. The first step is to simply add a note to a skeletal structure to create a 3-note trombone voicing over a bass note.

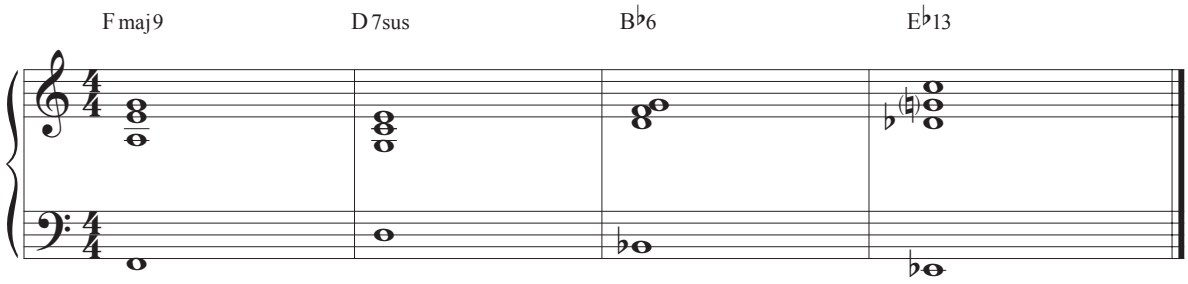
## CHAPTER 3A: ADDING TO THE SKELETAL STRUCTURE

You can add a note above, in between, and below the guide tones to create hundreds of 3-note trombone voicings over bass notes. This technique can be used to create major, dominant, sus, minor, half-diminished, and diminished voicings. Often what is added to the skeletal structure is an available tension or fifth of some kind.

For our purposes we will be building voicings by adding notes above or in between the guide tones. This will form the template for building many of the voicings used in this chapter. Keep in mind that your right thumb will almost always be playing a 3rd or a 7th except in the case of a sus chord in which the 3rd would be replaced with a 4th, or in the case of a sixth chord in which the 7th would be replaced with a 6th.

In the following example, 3-note trombone voicings over bass notes are created by adding a note above 3-7 guide tones; adding a note above 4-7 guide tones; adding a note in between 3-6 guide tones; and adding a note above 7-3 guide tones. See below.

FIG. 1



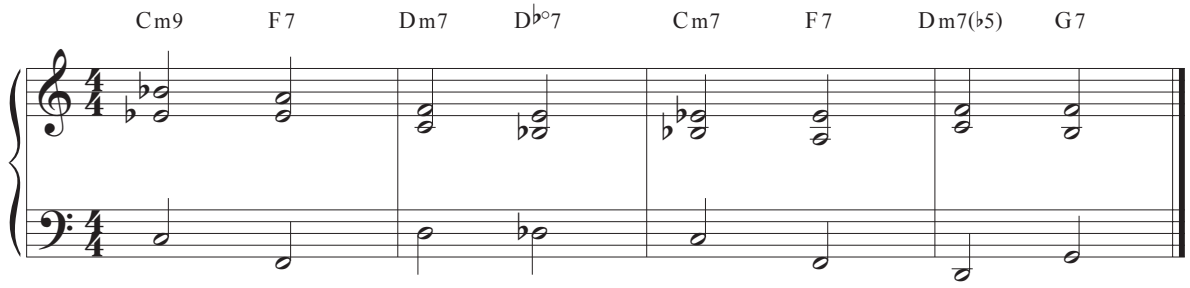

Keeping your RH shape within an octave, compile a catalogue of 3-note trombone voicings over bass notes in which you build above and in between the guide tones. It is also interesting to explore building voicings by adding the note underneath the guide tones, although that displaces our RH thumb. The beauty of our voicings, is that it is easy to track the thumb to both keep track of the voicing's identity and to make it easy to create smooth voice leading.

In order to practice these new trombone voicings, let's apply this style to a standard. I have selected Matt Dennis' "Everything Happens To Me" to illustrate how you can play through a standard using simple, 4 note voicings (3-notes in your RH over a LH bass line) while still creating a satisfying arrangement.

**Comping Exercise #35**: **Applying 3-note TVs Over a Bass Note to Standards**.
In the following example, the first four bars of the accompaniment are done for you. Play the melody with your fourth or fifth finger in your RH (not notated) over the skeletal structure while your LH plays the root. It is important to find the closest SS under the melody so that the 3-note voicing can fit in your right hand. It's ok to double 3rds or 7ths. Alternatively, if the melody is part of the skeletal structure and the melody is low

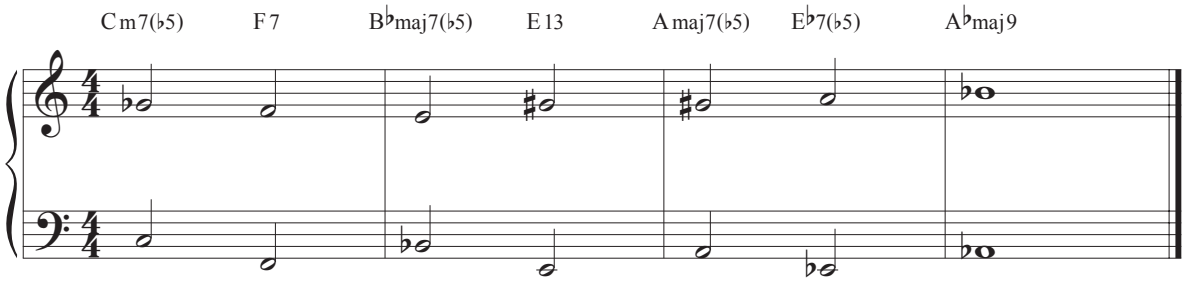
enough, you may simply use a 2-note RH voicing (consisting of only guide tones). Play through the entire tune using this technique. Select another standard of your choice and play in the same way.

FIG. 2




**Comping Exercise #36: Harmonizing a Melody using 3-note TVs Over a Bass Note**. Using the chord symbol as a guide, fill in the missing two notes under the melody to create 3-note TVs over a bass note. For most of the examples, simply find the associated guide tones. If the melody happens to be a guide tone, refer to the chord symbol for clues. First find the other guide tone. The other missing extension or chord tone can be played in between or underneath the guide tones. Keep in mind that the 5th is an option sometimes not reflected in the chord symbol.

FIG. 3



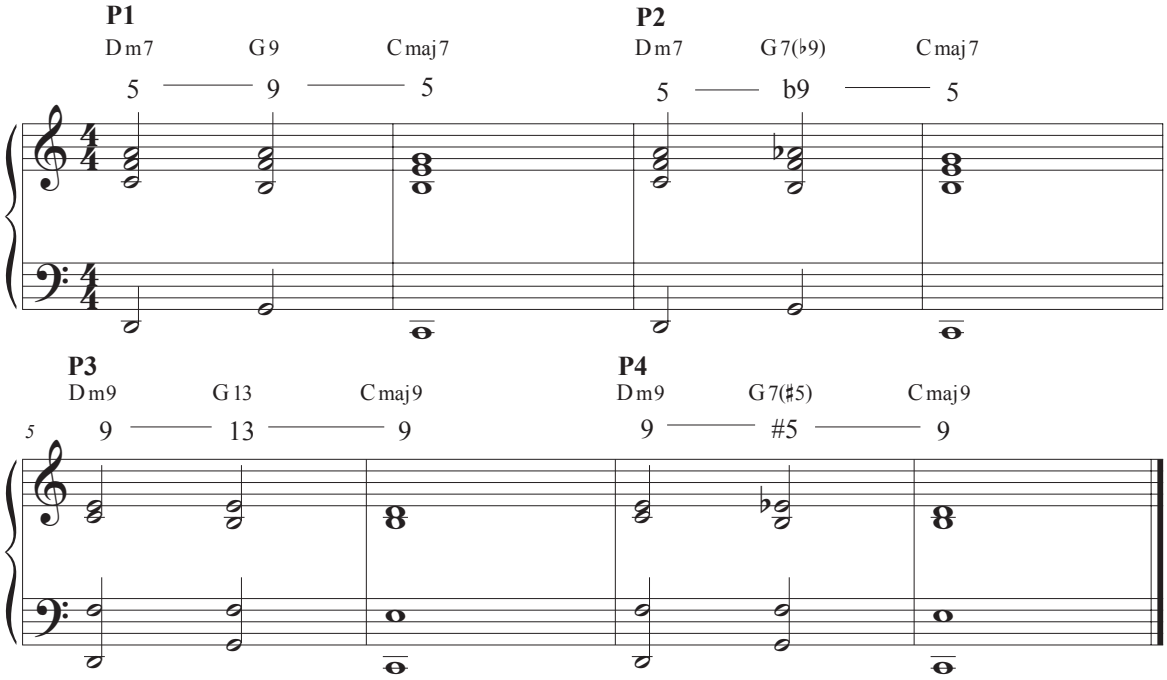
## CHAPTER 3B: ii-V-I PROGRESSIONS WITH TROMBONE VOICINGS

The melodic connection between chords should always be foremost in your mind. Below are some examples of ii—V—I progressions using 3-note and 4-note RH voicings over a root. The progressions are first organized by skeletal structure: P1 and P2 begin with the RH thumb on the 7th; P3 and P4 begin with the RH thumb on the 3rd. Progressions found in FIG 2 and FIG 3 follow the same template. Besides illustrating the familiar 3-7-3 and 7-3-7 motion, progressions 1-12 also show 5-9-5 and 9-5-9 motion. When practicing these ii-V-I's be aware of whether the V chord contains notes from the ***mixolydian scale*** or from the ***altered scale***. For now, we are separating ii-V-I's into these two general categories: unaltered and altered. P1, P3, P5, and P7 are examples of ii-V-I's using unaltered dominants for the V chords. P2, P4, P6, and P8-P12 are examples of ii-V-I's using altered dominants for the V chords.

**Comping Exercise #37: Playing Through ii—V—I Progressions using TVs.** Observe the melodic and inner voice motion as you play through these progressions in all 12 keys. To make reading easier, some of the RH notes are written in the bass clef. **Play the top 3 or 4-note TV with your RH. Only play the bass note with your LH**. Sing or hum the horizontal melodic connections between chords (notated with numbers above and below the RH voicing). This horizontal motion is the real secret to chord playing and comping. Play along with **CD 1 Track 7** (starting with ii-V-I in Bb) as you transpose the following eight progressions.

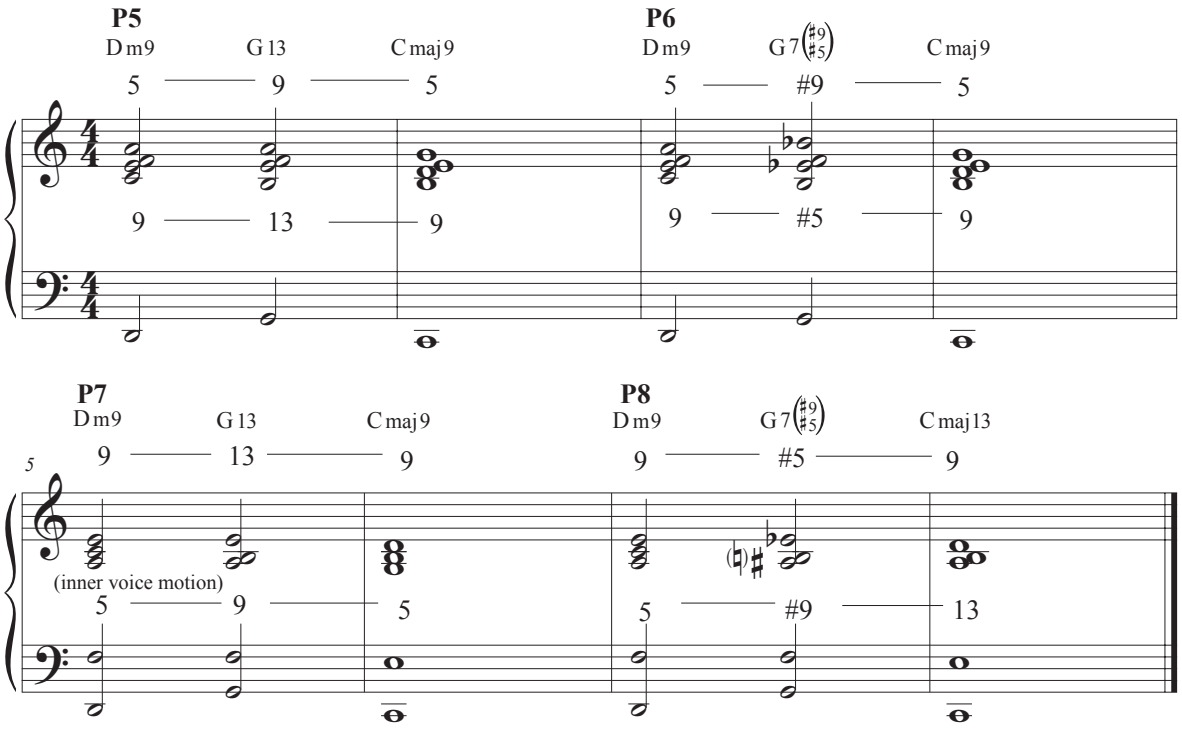
Progressions 1-4 (in C major) 3-note TV's over a root

FIG. 1



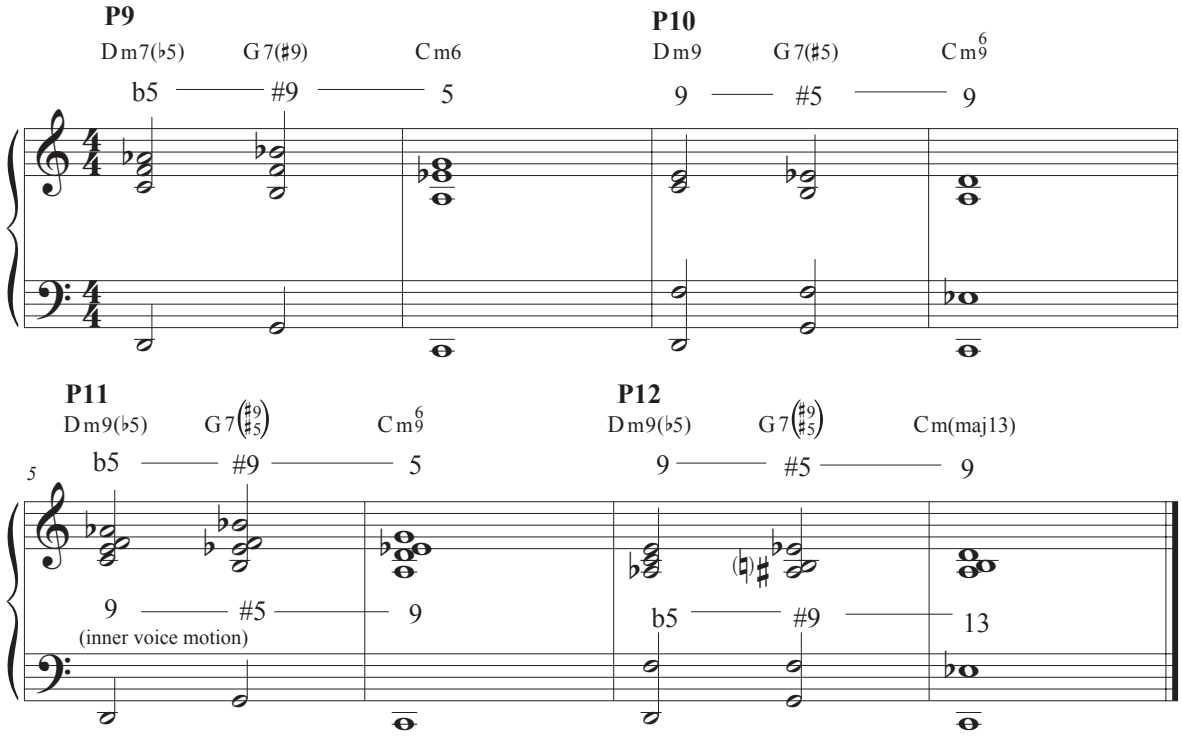
Progressions 5-8 (in C major) 4-note TV's over a root

FIG. 2




Progressions 9-12 (in C minor) 3 and 4-note TV's over a root. Use **CD 1 Track 15**.

FIG. 3



These progressions can be adjusted to include other available tensions or chord tones provided you maintain a 3rd and 7th (6th) in the voicing, and you avoid combining #5(b13) with 13 or #9/b9 with 9. Try substituting 11 for 5 on the ii chord or substituting #11 for 13 or #5 on the V chord.

***A note about m7 vs. m9:***

In the progressions above, the 9th is often used on a minor chord. It is important to be aware of the special sound created by the m9 and how it differs from its close cousin, the plainer sounding m7. It is recommended that you go back through progressions 1-12 and substitute the root for the 9th for all of the m9 or m9b5 voicings to create m7 and m7b5 voicings.

Sometimes the plainer, more versatile m7 is the sound that is appropriate for the given situation. This is especially true when the m9 yields a melody note that is outside of the tonic key and may clash with the melody. For example, if you are playing the standard, My Romance, you can use the chord sequence: I, ii7, iii7, biii o7, ii7, V7, I for the first phrase of the melody. Since the melody is entirely diatonic (every note is part of the tonic key) you have to be careful of what kind of iii chord you use. If you are in Bb major, and you're finding chords to: "My Romance, doesn't have to have a moon in the sky…" you want to play a plain Dm7 when you get to "have to have" as opposed to a Dm9. The 9th of Dm ("E") will clash with the "F" melody note.

When comping behind a soloist you need to be mindful of whether the soloist is more likely to play a diatonic ninth on a iii7 chord or some sort of sequence containing a natural 9th thus taking you out of the tonic key. Often, the older generation of jazz musicians will improvise using a diatonic ninth when playing the iii chord because of all of the standards that have that sound. In contrast, the younger improviser might use the non-diatonic 9th on a iii chord because he/she is basing his/her improvisations off of more modern sounding sequences rather than off old standard songs. It's a subtle difference, but being aware of this can make you a better comper.

The m7 chord can also give you an earthier more "down home" sound effective when playing rhythm changes or blues when wanting to get a more basic sound.

Using a ninth on half-diminished chord creates a unique, special sound. Use this sound sparingly. Before playing m9b5, make sure you can play the basic m7b5 by substituting the root for the natural 9 in the RH. In the context of playing a ii chord during a minor blues, the natural 9 sound will sound more modern and less earthy and "down home." Therefore a Dm7b5 is a better choice when playing a traditional minor ii-V-I. On the other hand, Slide Hampton and Jimmy Heath often used the m9b5-V7-i progression in their big band arrangements as an exotic coloring.

It's impossible to make any unbreakable rules. So much of it is subjective. You need to be sensitive to your surroundings and be able to implement both voicings successfully. The m7 and m9 are both beautiful. Learn to use them both.

***A note about spelling altered dominant chords:***

For a dominant chord to be called "altered dominant" it may not contain any unaltered 9ths or 5ths. In this workbook, 7#9#5 and 7b9#5 are used to describe these types of chords for two reasons: one, I believe these spellings are easier to read than 7b13#9 and 7b13b9, and two, the spelling immediately shows that both the 9 and 5 are altered (thus no unaltered 5ths or 9ths exist in the chord).

Having said that, we will still spell chords using the associated chord scale as a guide, which may differ enharmonically from the chord symbol. The parent chord scale often associated with dominants with altered tensions is the altered scale which consists of root, b9, #9, 3, #11, b13, and b7. The altered scale is usually spelled, 1, b2, b3, 3, b5, b6, b7. In other words the G altered scale is spelled: G, Ab, Bb, B, Db, Eb, F. The TV for G7(#9#5) built off the 3rd is therefore spelled B, Eb, F, Bb since these notes are found in the G altered scale (see P6 on page 106).

When the TV is built off the 7th and the #9 and 3 are right next to each other in the voicing, the #9 is spelled conventionally to avoid having a b3 and 3 together on the same line or space (see P8 on page 106). One of the advantages to this is that the conventional spelling of the 3rd is preserved making it easy to quickly spot the 3rd and 7th. Keep in mind to avoid clumsy accidentals it may be necessary to occasionally respell the 3rd enharmonically.

***A note about #5 vs. b13***

For the purposes of this workbook, b13 and #5 are equivalent. As far as chord symbols are concerned, #5 is favored over b13 for the simple reason that it's easier to read in my opinion. I realize that many people prefer to reserve b13 for altered dominants and #5 for augmented/whole tone-type chords, but professional players encounter both #5 and b13 for altered dominants on a regular basis. You should get used to recognizing them both. It should be noted that if #5 is coupled with 9 the overall chord sound is whole tone; if the #5 is coupled with #9 or b9 the overall chord sound is altered. If the #5 is alone, the chord sound could be whole tone or altered depending on the context.

***A note about the alt7 symbol***

This popular chord symbol is not used very much in this first volume. If a student hasn't mastered reading and deciphering the #9, b9, #11, and #5(b13) of a given chord, than the short cut of alt7 might be more confusing than helpful.

Open ended in nature, alt7 gives the player the choice to add 1, 2, 3, or 4 altered tensions drawn from the altered scale to a dominant chord. In the current volume, alt7 is used only to describe a chord that contains more than two altered tensions from the altered scale.

***A note about hearing dominant chords***

Often dominant chords are presented with no specific chord symbol information, leaving it up to the player to add alterations as he/she sees fit. Using your ears, try to differentiate the sounds of dominant chords containing different tensions. You can group dominant chords into four categories based on color. On one side of the spectrum you have mild unaltered dominant 7ths, and on the other side you have the rich sound of dominant chords derived from the altered scale.

See if you can differentiate the sound of dominant chord based on shades of color. Think of four different shades of the same color from light to dark. The lightest shade represents dominant chords derived from the mixolydian scale containing 9 and 13. The next lightest shade represents dominant chords derived from the whole tone scale, containing #5 and 9. This second group has a very distinctive whole tone sound. The next darker shade represents dominant chords derived from the half-whole diminished scale containing #9/b9/#11 with 13. The darkest shade represents dominant chords derived from the altered scale, containing #9/b9/#11 with #5(b13).

It's important to know which scale the dominant chord is derived from, especially when playing in an ensemble. But even if you can't hear the exact chord scale, hearing the presence of crucial notes in the voicing can go a long way when blending in an ensemble. For example, whether the chord has a natural 13 or #5(b13) is a critical difference. 99% of the time you will not have a 13 and a b13(#5) in the same chord (or in chords played by instruments in the same ensemble). Similarly, #9 or b9 will not be paired with a natural 9 in the same chord. The reason being the pairings will yield either minor ninths or three half steps in a row, both of which are almost always undesirable.

## CHAPTER 3C: APPLYING TV'S TO THE BLUES

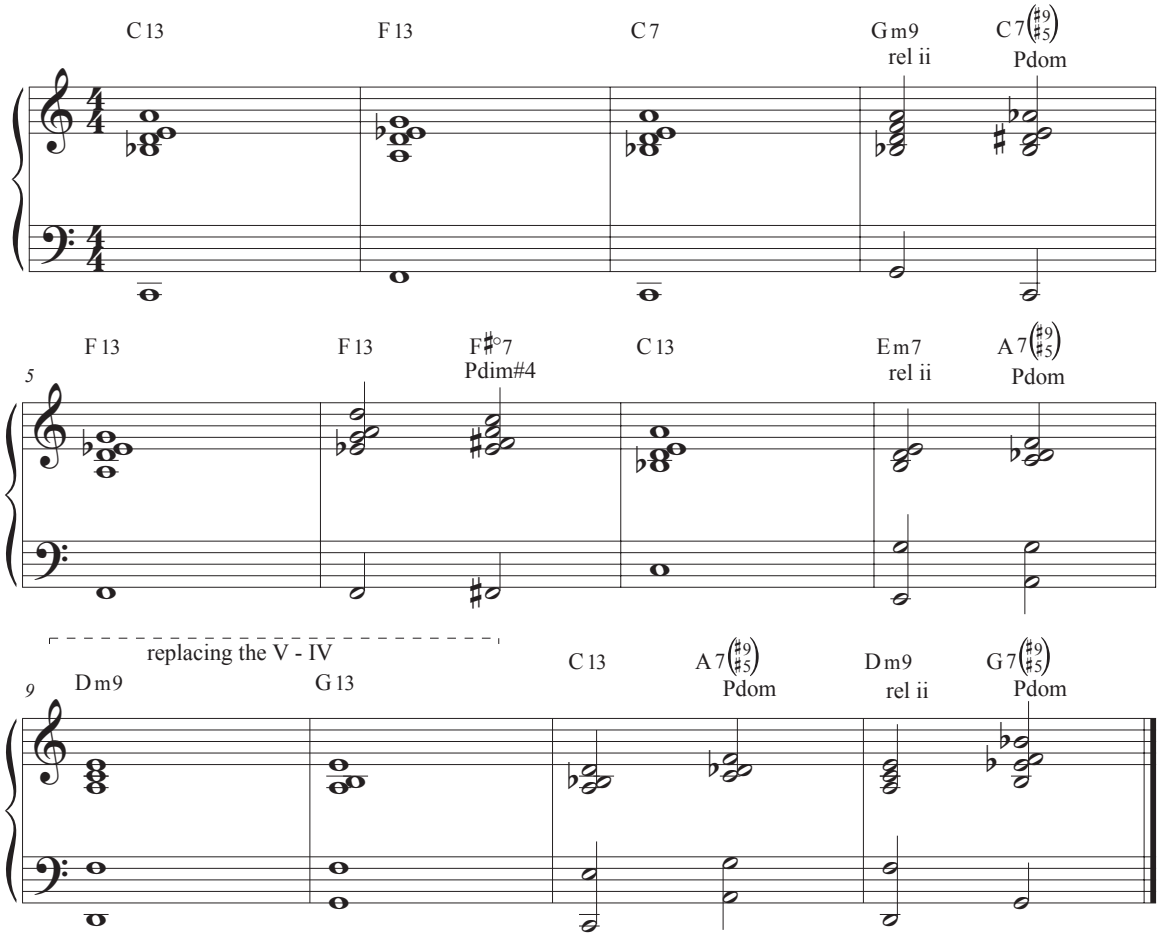
We will now create progressions made up of 4-note trombone voicings over bass notes for a typical blues progression you might encounter at a jam session, for a minor blues, as well as for progressions that we studied earlier in the book. As you go through these exercises always sing the top voice as you move from chord to chord. This top horizontal line is called the ***comping melody***. TV's are mobile, and easy to manipulate. By the end of this section you should be well acquainted with this RH shape and be moving smoothly through all kinds of blues progressions. The goal is doing this while maintaining a tuneful comping melody.

As we have learned from Chapter 2B, navigating through a blues is a never-ending, wide-open endeavor. Usually at a jam session, however, a blues is not made up of 24 different chords. Instead, it's usually a basic blues progression with some substitutions that don't interfere with the soloist. A jam session blues is a modified blues progressions that doesn't require a separate written out sheet of harmonic substitutions. The modifications should be unobtrusive enough to work with what the soloist and bass player is doing. Often the exact modifications happen in real time on the bandstand as everyone comes to an agreement as to what the precise chord changes should be. Playing a blues should feel natural and easy.

In FIG. 1 below, notice how the comping melody is diatonic on the downbeat of every measure. The melody note on beat 3, however, is at times non-diatonic. In the beginning, it is important to follow this tip when composing your own comping melody for a traditional sounding blues or rhythm changes.

Practice the following chorus of a typical jam session blues using CRs of your choice.

FIG. 1




Now compose your own comping melody for a jam session blues simply by inverting some of the RH chords already written. This means if your right thumb is on the 3rd, it should now be on the 7th and vice versa.

If you wish, you may change the melody note on any dominant chord. For altered dominants, instead of playing 7#9#5 (#9 in the melody), play 7b9#5 (b9 in the melody); or instead of playing 7#9#5 (#5 in the melody), play 7#9#11 (#11 in the melody). For unaltered dominant chords, you can substitute a root for a 9 and/or a 5 for a 13. Try not to have too many large leaps as you strive for a tuneful comping melody.

Make sure that your trombone voicings contain the guide tones under the melody. The fourth voice can be a root, or some kind of 5th, 9th, 11th, or 13th depending on the chord quality. Place the fourth voice in between the guide tones. Later we will discuss an exception to this placement, but for now we will follow this construction method.

With trombone voicings, comp through C, F, and Bb blues using **CD 1 Track 8, 10, and 14.** Listen closely to the bass player, as there might be slight differences from what is written in FIG. 1. For example, most of the choruses on Track 8 contain a V–IV turnaround in measures 9 and 10. Tracks 10 and 14 contain the ii–V turnaround. As you get more comfortable, transpose to several keys and play along with **CD 2 Track 11.**

Next, let's play through minor blues progressions using TVs over bass notes. First learn the progression below by applying CRs of your choice and then transposing it using the play along CD as an aid. After you feel comfortable in several keys, compose your own comping melody for a minor blues progression following the techniques above.

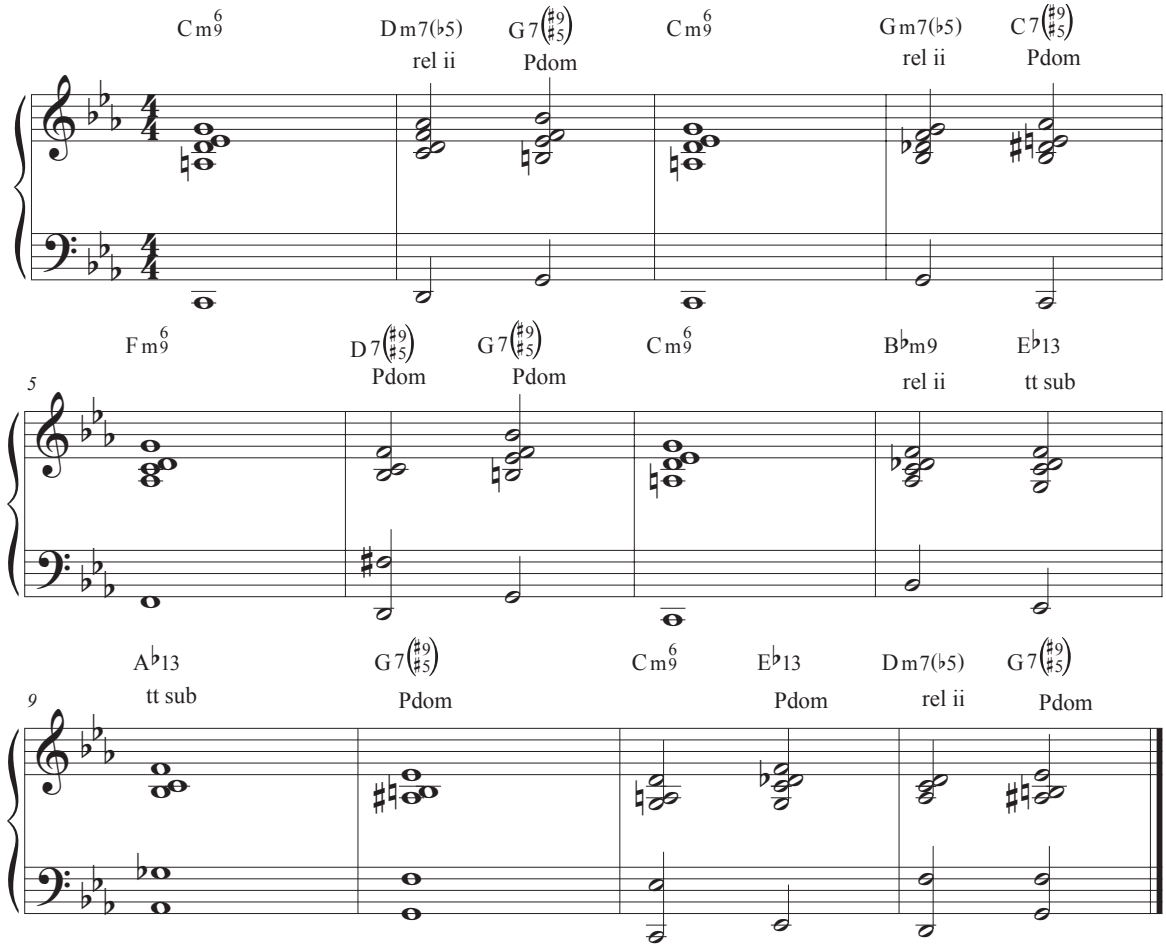
Before starting, let's go over a few things to watch out for when in minor. To give the feeling of tonic or "home base" m6/9 chords are often used for the i chord. If we're in C minor, Cm7 is tolerable, but has more of a transitional sound (as if it wants to move to another key). Cm6/9 has more of a feeling of "home base".

Often, when in a minor key, ii chords will have a flat-5 and V chords will be altered. The notes in these chords are more in line with the C minor sound. As an alternative, the tritone subs of the ii7b5 and V7alt are often used. In C minor, Dm7b5 is commonly substituted with Ab13; G7alt is often substituted with Db13 (unaltered).

In general, stay away from the major 3rd of the tonic key (E natural if we are in C minor). Following this tip, pay special attention to m9 chords when generating these progressions. For example, in C minor, the Dm9b5 chord sounds out of place since the 9th of the chord, "E", is not in the C minor scale. Instead use Dm7b5. It should be noted that other 9th chords, (such as Bbm9) sound fine if the 9th of those chords are in the C minor scale.

Again, for a traditional-sounding minor blues (the sound that most makes sense when just starting out), make sure your melody is diatonic on the downbeat of every measure. It's ok to have a non-diatonic melody on beat 3 (although in the example below the entire comping melody is diatonic).

FIG. 2



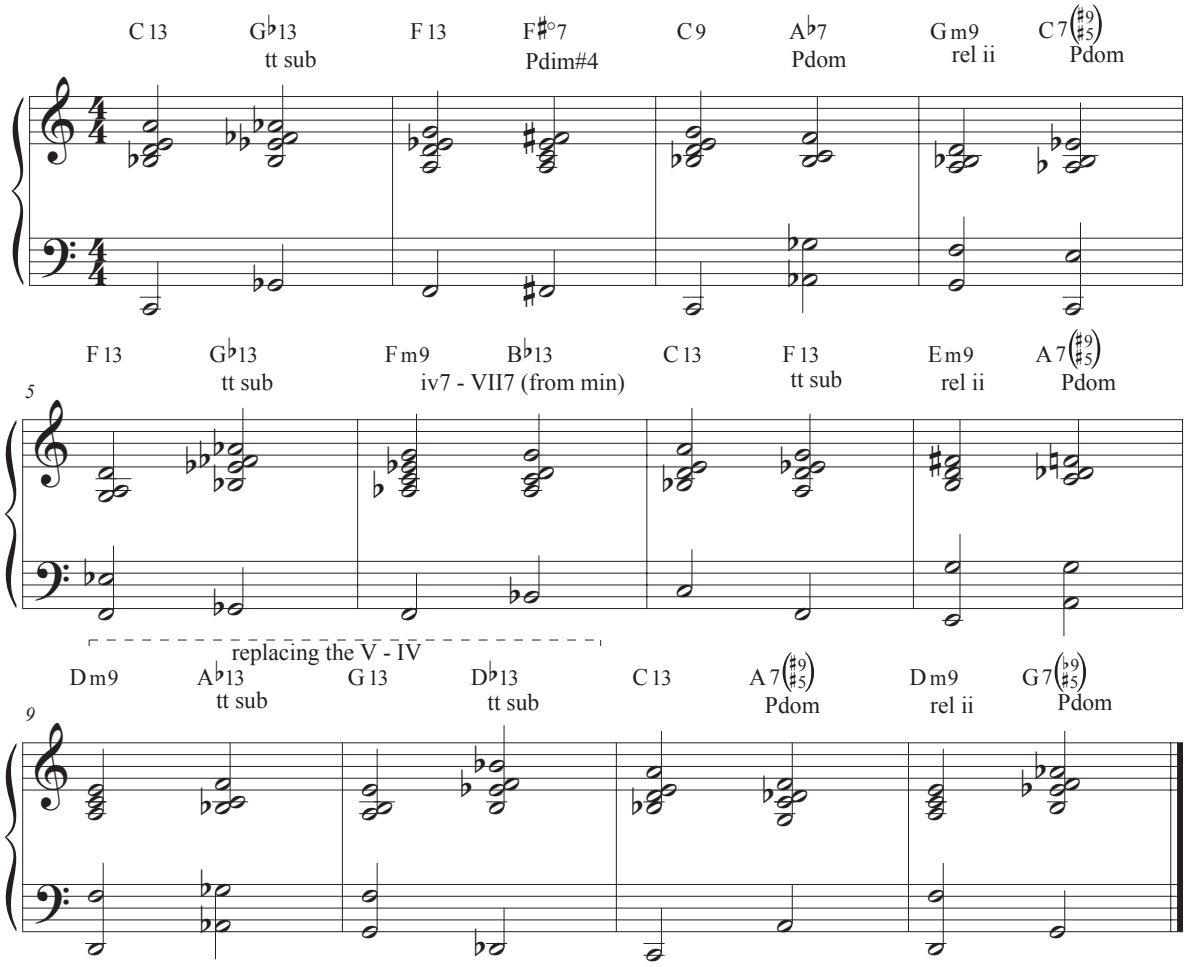

With TVs, comp through C minor, F minor, and Bb minor blues using **CD 1 Track 33** being mindful of the bass player. Advanced students may use **CD 2 Track 12** for minor blues through the keys.

As a challenge, create your own progressions for the blues and minor blues using the harmonic concepts from Chapter 2B and applying them to trombone voicings over bass notes. You can either create a new progression from scratch, or recycle an old one drawing from the numerous blues progressions that we created in Chapter 2B (Harmonic Motion through the Blues). Below I have used the blues progression from FIG. 8ii from Chapter 2B.

Using my ear, I make the decision of whether to use natural or altered tensions for dominant 7th chords by listening to the horizontal motion created and following through with the comping melody formed. One tip would be to use altered tensions for dominant 7th chords labeled as Pdoms in FIG. 8ii. Often, the altered tensions more effectively pull to the next chord.

In m. 8, I opt for the iii9 chord (Em9) giving me a 9th that is outside of C major. Since, the blues has so many changes and is non-traditional, I think this small wrinkle is allowable. Notice how it is the only place in the entire blues where a non-diatonic melody note on the downbeat of the measure occurs. At this point it becomes personal taste. Keep in mind that there isn't only one way to do this.

FIG. 3 (TVs applied to FIG. 8ii from Chapter 2B)

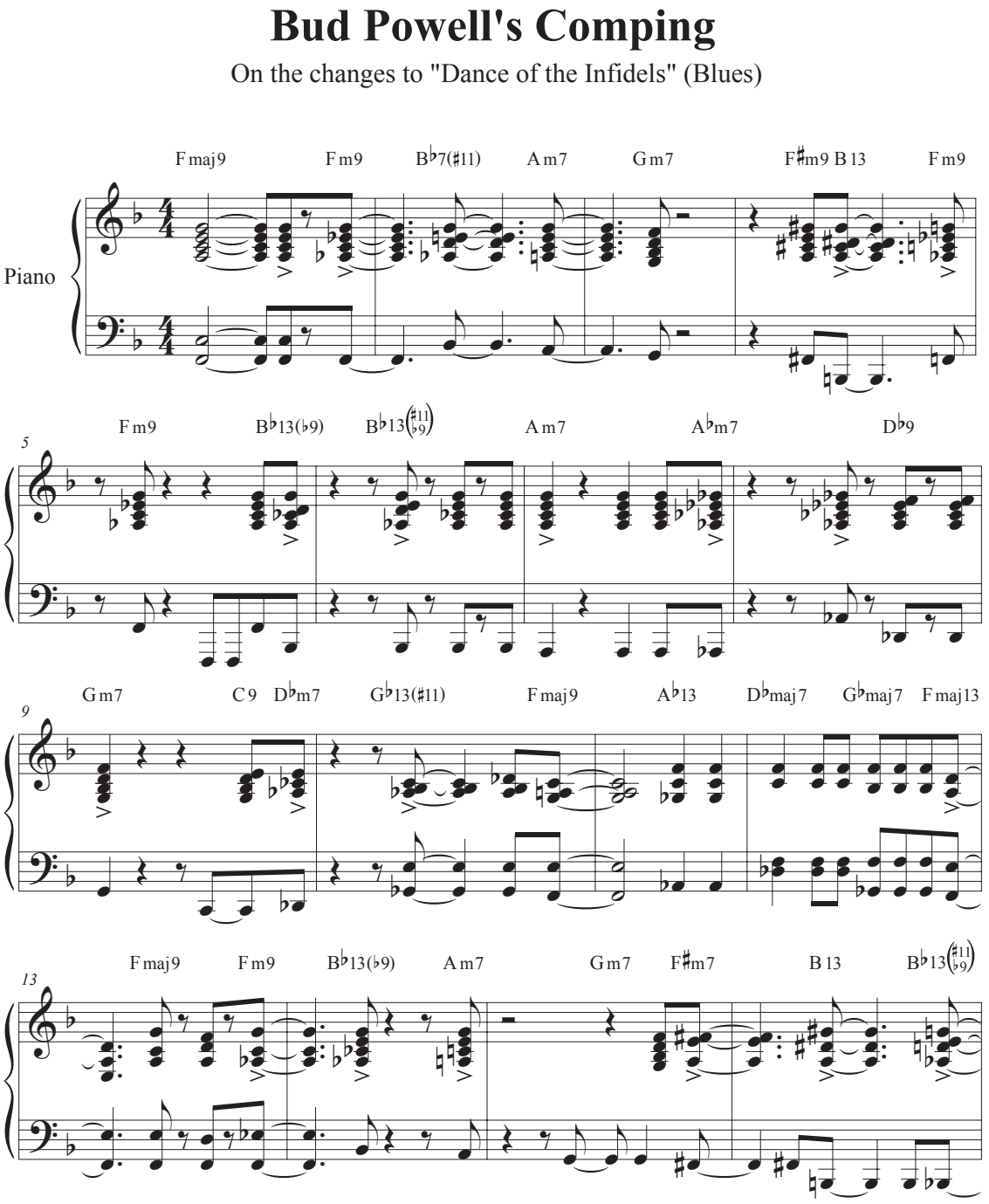


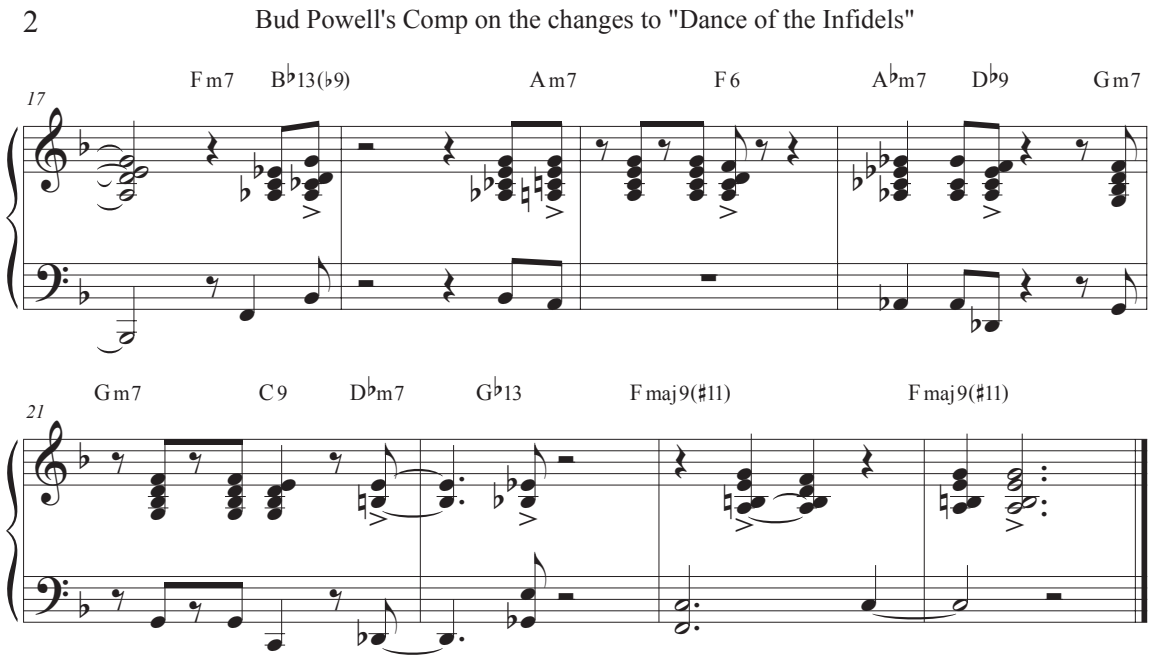

**Comping Exercise #38: Comping with TVs Through the Blues.**
Apply 4-note trombone voicings over bass notes to three blues progressions of your choice. Then, using CR's of your choice, practice comping TV's through the blues using the play along CD as an aid. For now, avoid progressions with a 3rd or 7th in the bass. Transpose to several keys. Use **CD 2 Tracks 11 and 12** for blues and minor blues through the keys.

**Comping Exercise #39: Comping Along with Bud Powell on the changes to "Dance of the Infidels".**
In the following transcription of Bud comping behind Sonny Rollins and Fats Navarro you can find many examples of TV's as well as an illustration of one of the most famous

reharmonizations of the 12-bar blues: Bud's "Dance of the Infidels". Use the OR with a slow down device and **CD 1 Track 16/17** (for a demo and piano-less track). Note: the transcription is played twice on the demo track.

FIG. 4






Aside from the basic voicings of m7 chords consisting of root, 3, 5, 7 in root position, Bud uses many of the trombone voicings that we've been discussing. One interesting exception happens in m. 2 and m. 6. Instead of voicing Bb13 with the 9 in between the guide tones as we've been doing earlier in the chapter, Bud uses the #11 in place of the 9. This fourth voice (after you've added the two guide tones under the melody) is normally supposed to go in between the two guide tones. In Bud's voicing the #11 is a whole step above the 3rd. Since there is no note in between the 7th and 3rd, the tritone created between the two chord tones is more apparent creating a voicing with a more pungent quality. It's a small detail, but makes a big difference when it comes to sound. Bud is careful to preserve the 3rd and 7th in the Bb13#11 voicing. The #11(b5) was such a distinctive and important sound during the bebop generation that it often trumped the 9th in importance.

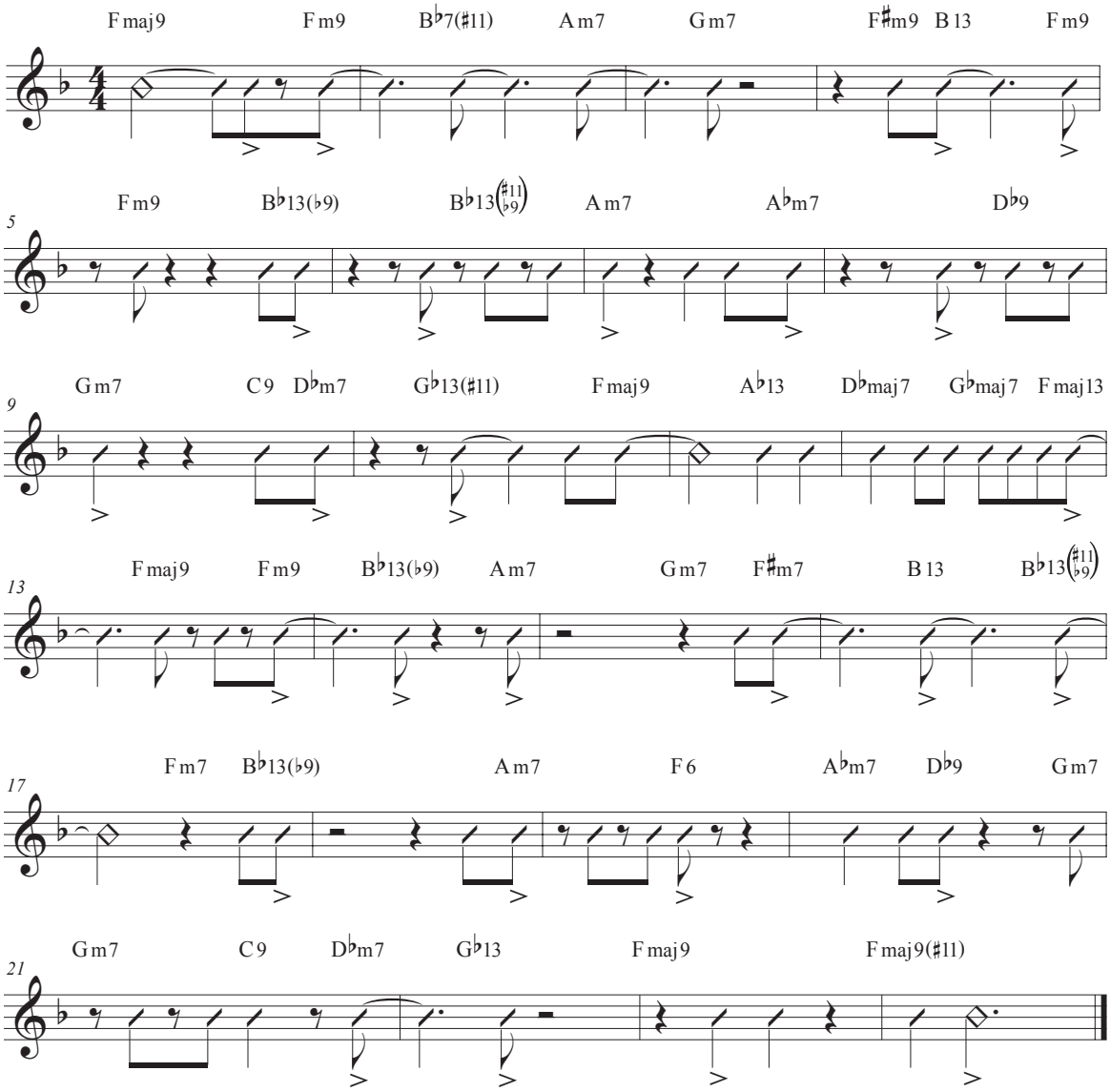
**Comping Exercise #40: Working with the Bud Powell's Comping Guide on the changes to "Dance of the Infidels."**

Below is a comping guide showing only Bud Powell's comping rhythms. Comp through the example following the rhythms using the voicing styles outlined in ***Comping Transcription Instructions*** (at the beginning of this book). Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 17**.

FIG. 5

# Bud Powell's Comping Guide

On the changes to "Dance of the Infidels"




**Comping Exercise #41: Working with Bud's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 11-15.**

Apply the BPCR's (Bud Powell Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the BPCP's (Bud Powell Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 6

# Bud Powell Comping Rhythms

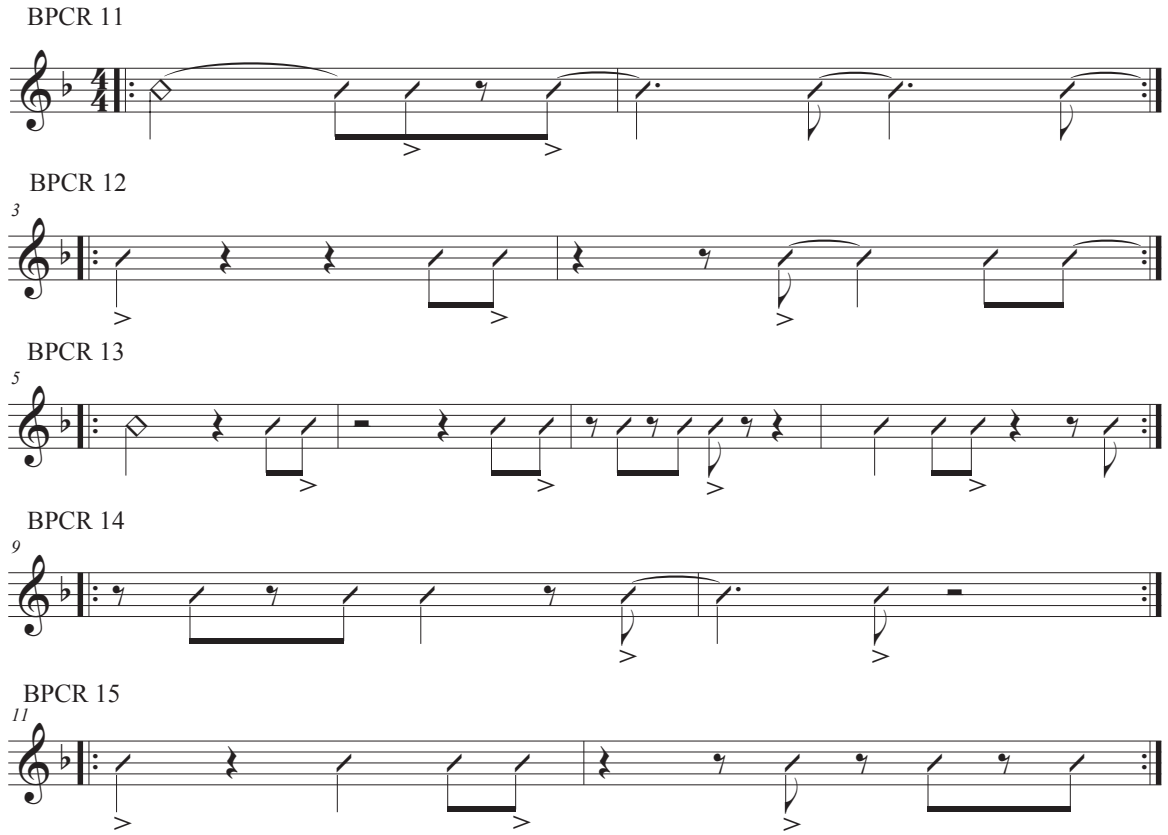
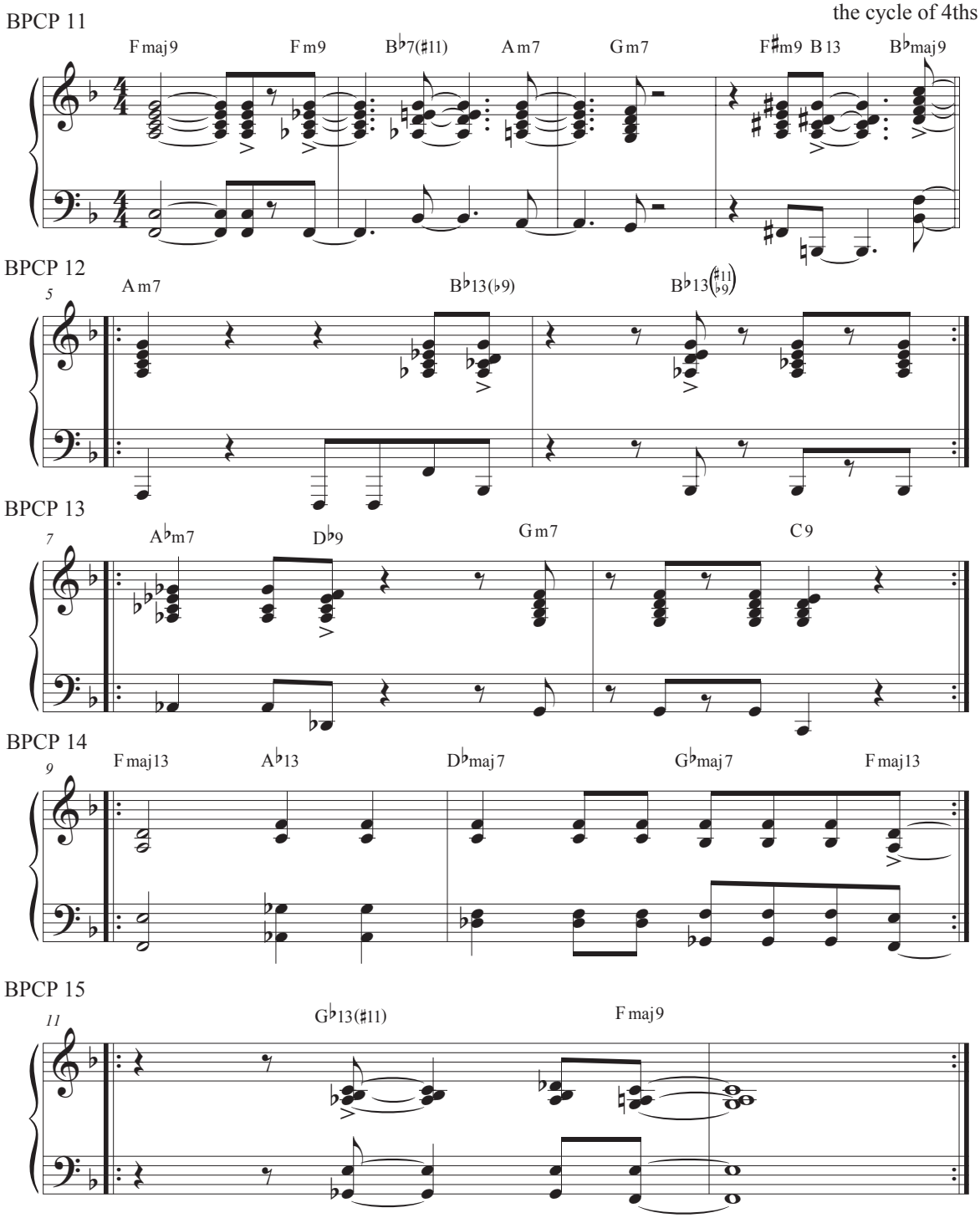


FIG. 7

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions

Continue through the cycle of 4ths



# CHAPTER 3D: RHYTHM CHANGES

Rhythm Changes (RC) is as basic as the blues, and should be learned in all 12 keys. The progressions derived from RC can be found in almost every standard song. To know RC means knowing most of the harmony of the Great American Songbook.

Learning a progression in all 12 keys can be a daunting task, especially given that rhythm changes is often presented as a steady stream of half note changes with no place to catch your breath. It's important to start from the deep harmonic structure when first learning the progression. The common form played most often at jam sessions is a more complicated version of the RC progression that is at its core extremely basic.

Just as the 12 bar blues can be explained as a simple three-chord progression, RC (with its 32-bar AABA form) can be boiled down to the following formula: I, V7, I, V7, I7, IV, I, V7 (changes are one measure each) for the "A" section; and: III7, VI7, II7, V7 (changes two measures each) for the "B" section. Knowing the deep harmonic structure to tunes is essential for seeing the big picture, being able to reharmonize on the spot, and understanding how to venture "outside" of the changes.

### *Comping Through RC using TVs Built from SS's*

In this first part we will explore comping through rhythm changes using trombone voicings generated by building onto skeletal structures.

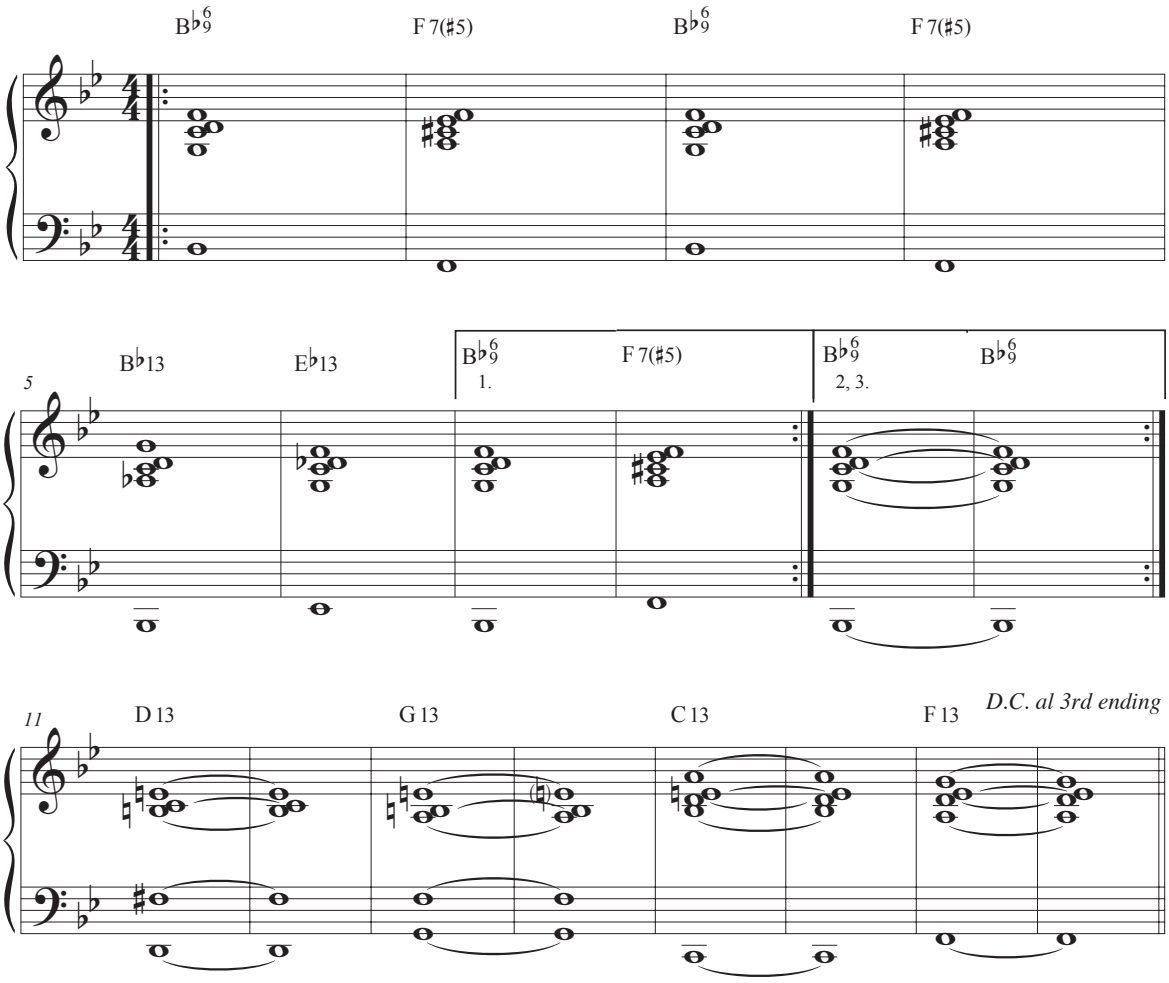
Below is an example of rhythm changes using TVs over bass notes in its most simple form. I've decided on F7(#5) for the V7 for the following reasons: first, the F on top creates a kind of pedal point in the melody voice which unifies the harmony of the first four bars, making it sound simpler. Second, the #5 provides a sound reminiscent of the whole tone drone patterns prevalent during the bebop generation. You can learn more about this in Chapter 2A of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques.***

To get started, comp along with **CD 1 Track 18** using the deep harmonic structure outlined in FIG. 1. Advanced students should add CR's, transpose, and practice with the **CD 2 Track 13**, "Rhythm Changes through Six Keys." The order of keys on the CD is: C, Eb, F, G, Ab, and Bb.

Keep in mind there will be minor differences between what the bass player is playing on **CD 2 Track 13** and the chord sequence in FIG. 1. This is to be expected. Remember, you are playing the deep harmonic structure over a bass line containing additional changes.

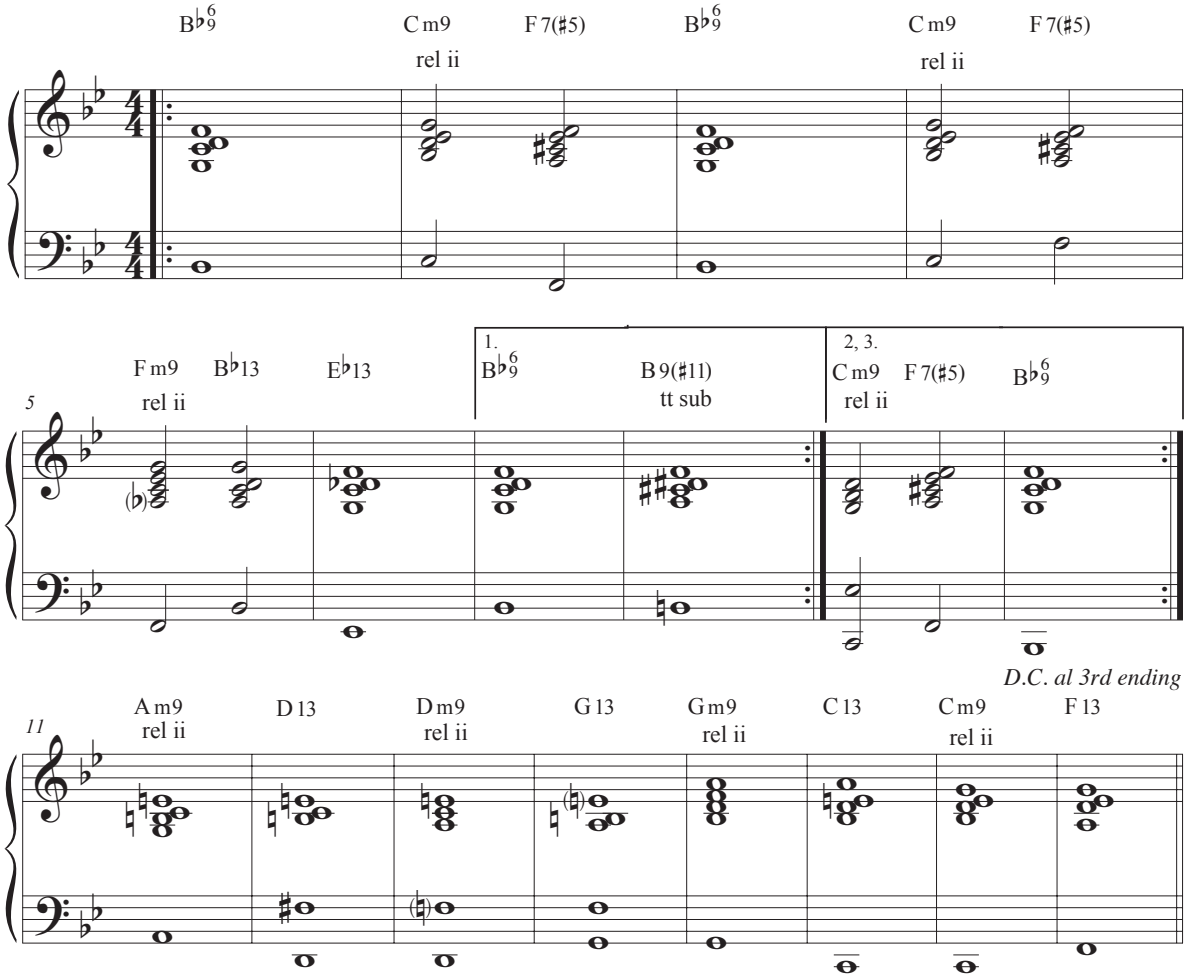
FIG. 1

Deep Harmonic Structure



Following techniques learned in Chapter 2B we can precede most of the dominant chords found in RC with their related ii7 chords. We want to keep the IV in m. 6 intact, however, since it is such an important harmonic destination. Tritone substitution is used in m. 8 to add more color. To give a little breathing room, we leave the B9#11 as a four-beat chord. For the 2nd and 3rd ending we replace the two measure-long I chord with a ii–V that resolves to I in m. 10.

FIG. 2

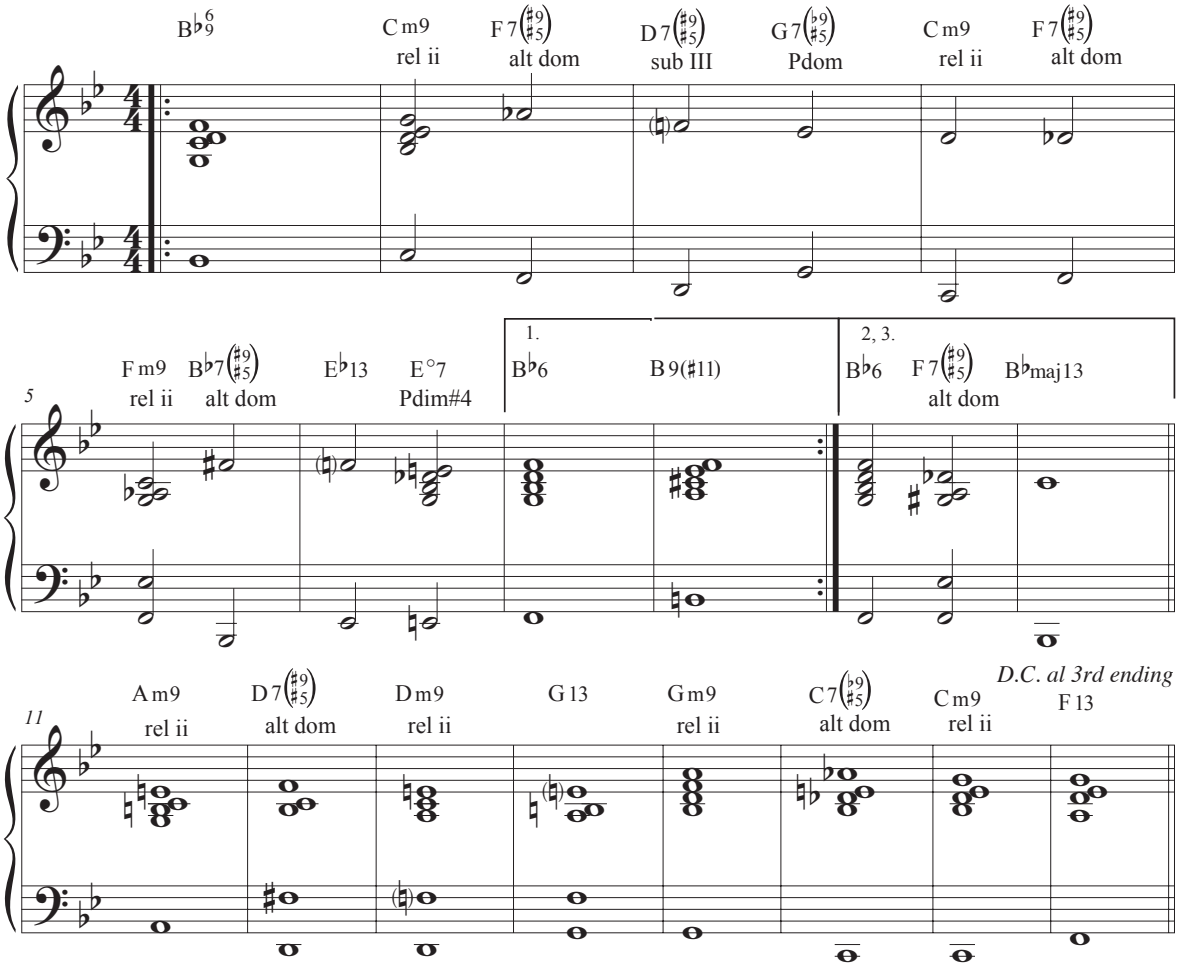



Taking it a step further, we make the following adjustments. The IV chord in m. 6 is followed by a #IVo7 chord to bring us back to I, this time with a fifth in the bass for both the first and second endings. Because we want to clearly delineate I, we use the 3rd inversion of Bb6 in the RH over the F. Since there is no root in the LH, having the root in the RH makes the tonic sound more clear. We will explore this voicing in more detail in the following section.

Next we replace the I in m. 3 with a III7-VI7 combination to bring us back to ii7 in m. 4. Finally, altered dominants are used in the second and sixth measure of the bridge.

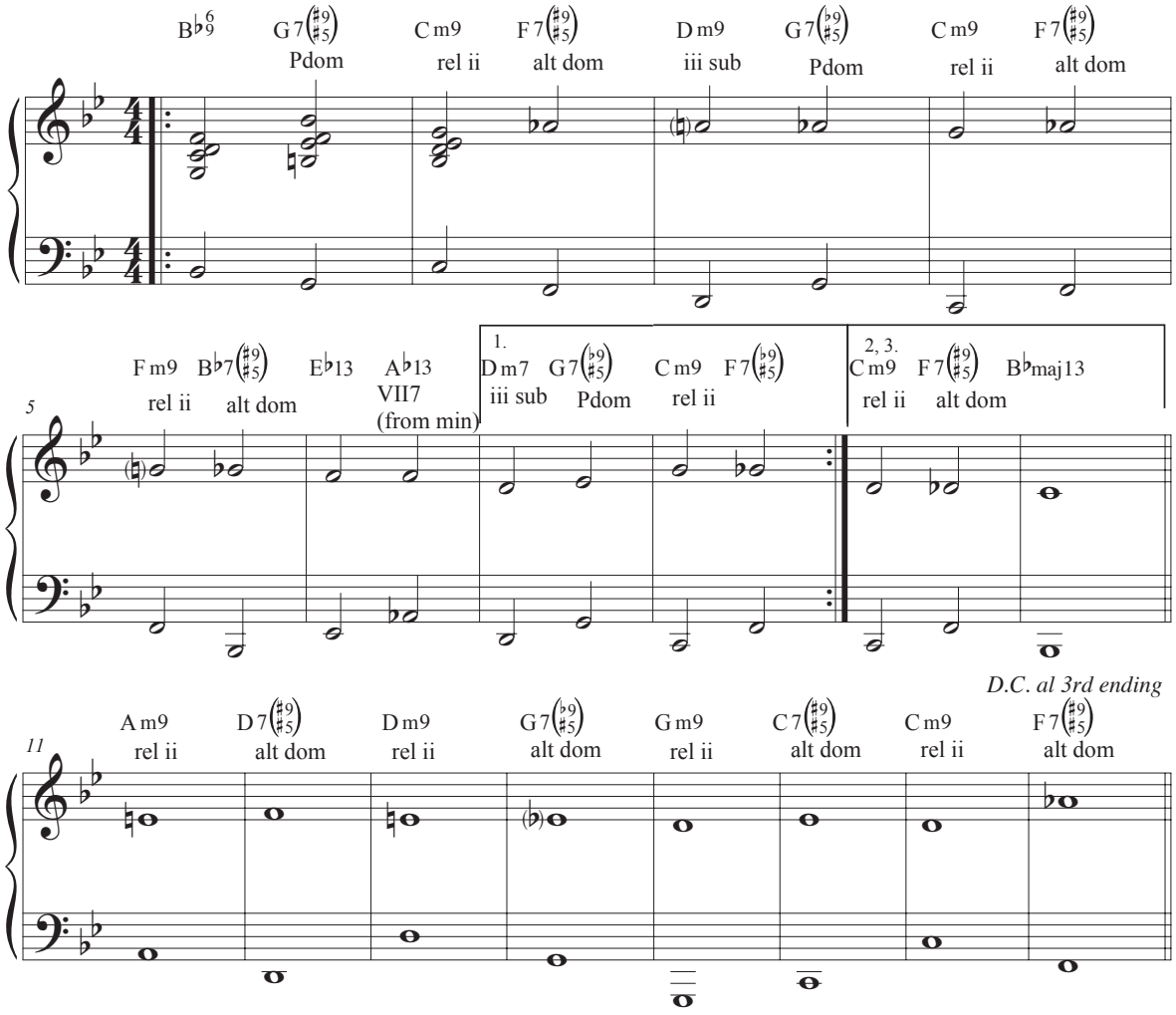
This time not all the TVs are voiced for you. Complete the RH voicings as you apply CRs of your choice.

FIG. 3




Finally, we can add two Pdoms, a iii sub, a related ii7 chord, and a VII (from min) to the "A" section to make a complete chorus of RC. Fill in under the comping melody to complete the trombone voicings. Apply CRs and practice this more sophisticated progression with **CD 1 Track 19**.

FIG. 4




This new progression contains changes every half measure during the "A" section and one-measure changes during the "B" section. It can be very challenging at first. Beginning with the "A" section from FIG. 1 can help. In other words feel free to mix and match elements from the "A" sections found in the first three figures above. Playing a chord every half measure is unnecessary. It's ok to let some passing chords go by. Think about the deep harmonic structure instead of every half-measure change.

Being sensitive not to use a melody note on a downbeat that's outside of the tonic key, we should usually opt for iii7 instead of iii9 in the "A sections." In m. 3 of the example above, however, since the melody note is the 5th, iii9 can be used because the 9th is tucked inside the voicing making the non-diatonic "E natural" less intrusive. Since the bridge modulates it's ok to have non-diatonic melody notes during the "B" section. One of the purposes of having a bridge is to have that fresh harmonic change.

Finally, pay special attention to the two endings of the "A" section. Often, it is a good idea

to have a full cadence right before embarking on the bridge. It provides a clear end to the "A", making the new chord changes of the "B" stand out. Although Ab13 to Cm7 might sound unusual in the second ending, the Eb9 pulls to Ab13 and the Cm7 pulls to F13.

**Comping Exercise #42: Comping through Rhythm Changes Using TVs built from SS's**

Find your own comping melody through rhythm changes using TVs over bass notes. Use the four progressions above as examples. You can invert the TVs to get started. Then remember the following potential substitutions: a (5) can be substituted with a #11(b5), 13, or #5(b13) on a dominant chord; or with an (11) on a minor chord. A (9) can be substituted with a #9 or b9 on a dominant chord; or with a root on a dominant or minor chord. Try to maintain a diatonic comping melody for the downbeats and save the non-diatonic melody notes for beat 3. During the bridge you don't have to abide by this rule. Comp along with **CD 1 Track 19**. Be aware of the harmony implied by the bass player as you find your own way through rhythm changes. Use your ear to adjust to avoid any clashes.

***Comping Through RC using TVs Built from Inversions of 7th Chords***

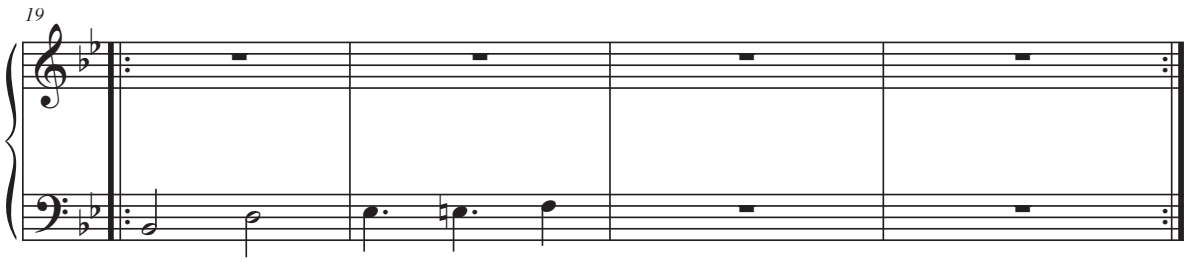
At this stage we need to augment our library of trombone voicings in order to address the challenge of comping smoothly through rhythm changes, and to add a classic vintage sound to our comping reminiscent of the bebop era.

As an alternative to building above and in between guide tones to generate TVs, we can also use inversions of simple seventh chords. You may have noticed from the last section that a couple of voicings that we have already been using could be described in terms of inversions of a seventh chord. For example, our voicings for Eo7 and Dm7 can both be thought of as 2nd or 4th inversions of seventh chords instead of as two tensions/chord tones added to two guide tones. If we can think of chords as seventh chord inversions we could potentially generate four different voicings for each chord (corresponding to the four inversions) instead of being limited to the two voicings for each chord involving either building off the 3rd or 7th. Even though the chord voicings are simpler (containg no 9ths or 13ths) we have four voicing possibilities instead of two, giving us more possibilities for unique comping melodies. The simpler voicings made by inverting seventh chords also give us a more basic, "down home" sound which is often preferable when playing the basic forms of blues and rhythm changes.

For now, review all inversions of o7 chords. This shouldn't be difficult since the shape is the same for all 4 inversions. Next practice sixth chords in all inversions. Conveniently C6 is the 1st inversion of Am7. Therefore, if you practice all inversions of sixth chords in all keys you will have successfully practiced all inversions of minor seventh chords in all keys. Similarly, if you practice minor sixth chords, you will have covered m7b5 chords as well. For basic Bb rhythm changes you should at the very least be well versed in all inversions of Bb6 (Gm7), Eb6 (Cm7), and Eo7.

To really capture the essence of rhythm changes (RC), merely playing ii-V progressions with 9ths and 13ths is not sufficient. It's too generic. Sure, it works for some rhythm changes-type tunes, but if you listen to rhythm changes from the bebop and swing era there's something more basic happening, something more organic. One way to think about it is to strip rhythm changes down to a fundamental bass line:

FIG. 5

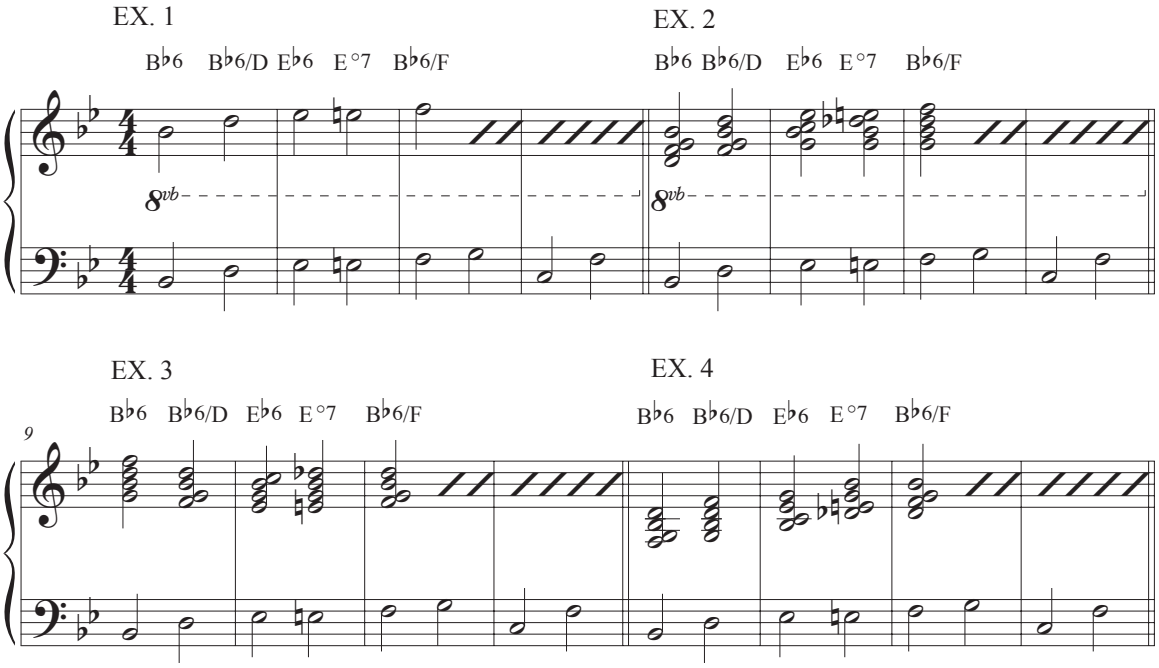



In fourth grade, if you've ever played in concert band, you might remember the tune "Go team go" which is basically this vamp. Pianists from every era have harmonized this bass line to create the following progression (in Bb major):

Bb6-Bb6/D-Eb6-Eo7-Bb6/F

The technique of building on the skeletal structure doesn't work as well for these chords. For one thing, if you add 9ths and 13ths the chords lose their vintage sound. So for these progressions we need a simpler approach. By simply playing inversions of the root position 4-note chords we can fill under the melody note. In the first example below the melody is simply doubling the bass. In the 2nd example we fill under each melody note using the other 3 notes from the chord symbol (ignoring the bass note if it's a slash chord). In the 3rd and 4th example we alter the melody by inverting the 4-note chords.

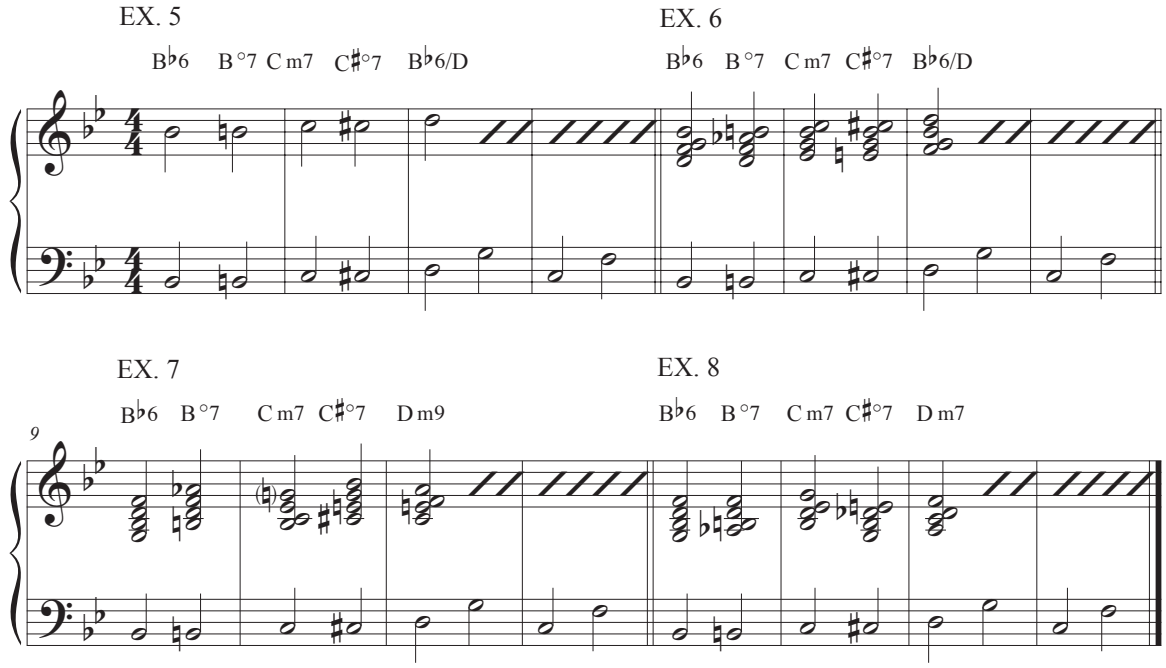
FIG. 6




Another way to navigate through the first 2 bars of rhythm changes is to play a bass line that chromatically ascends to beat 1 of bar 3 in which the 2nd and 4th chord is a passing diminished chord. This very common progression, found in such standards as "It could happen to you", "Imagination", "Easy Living" to name a few, goes as follows: I, #io7, ii7, #iio7, iii7. In Chapter 4B these passing chords are discussed in more detail, but for now, think of these diminished chords as substitutes for Pdoms from Chapter 2B. Here #io7 functions as the V/ii7 and the #iio7 functions as the V/iii7.

Harmonizing with simple 4-note chords works in the same way as before. In EX. 7 notice that when we get to the 3rd bar we switch back to using more modern 4-note closed position chords (building on SS's). In this way you can mix the two techniques for building trombone voicings when comping through rhythm changes.

FIG. 7



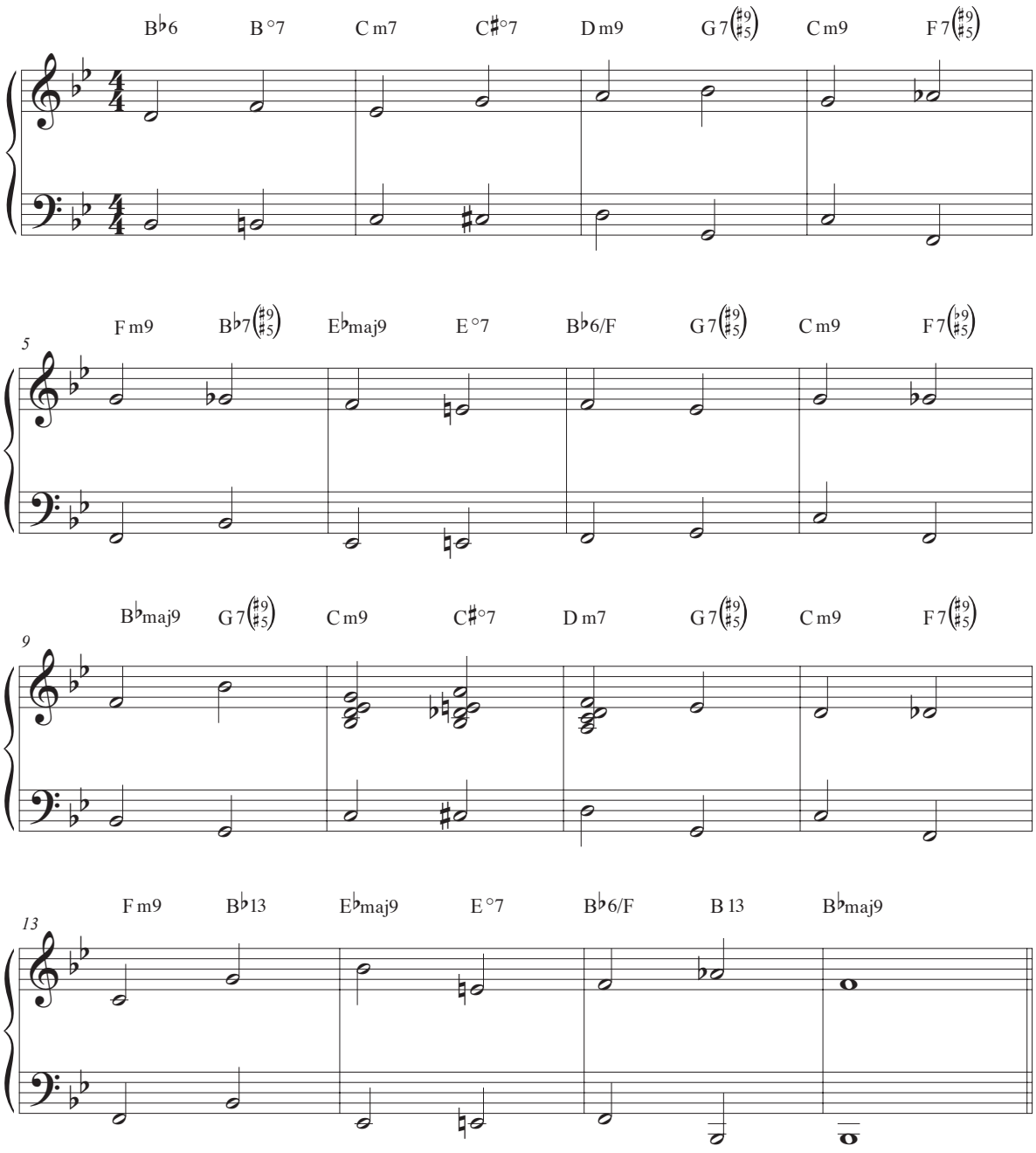

As an exercise, experiment with harmonizing the "go team go" or "chromatically ascending" bass line. Use Ex. 1-8 as guide. Mix and match different inversions to create different melodic connections between chords.

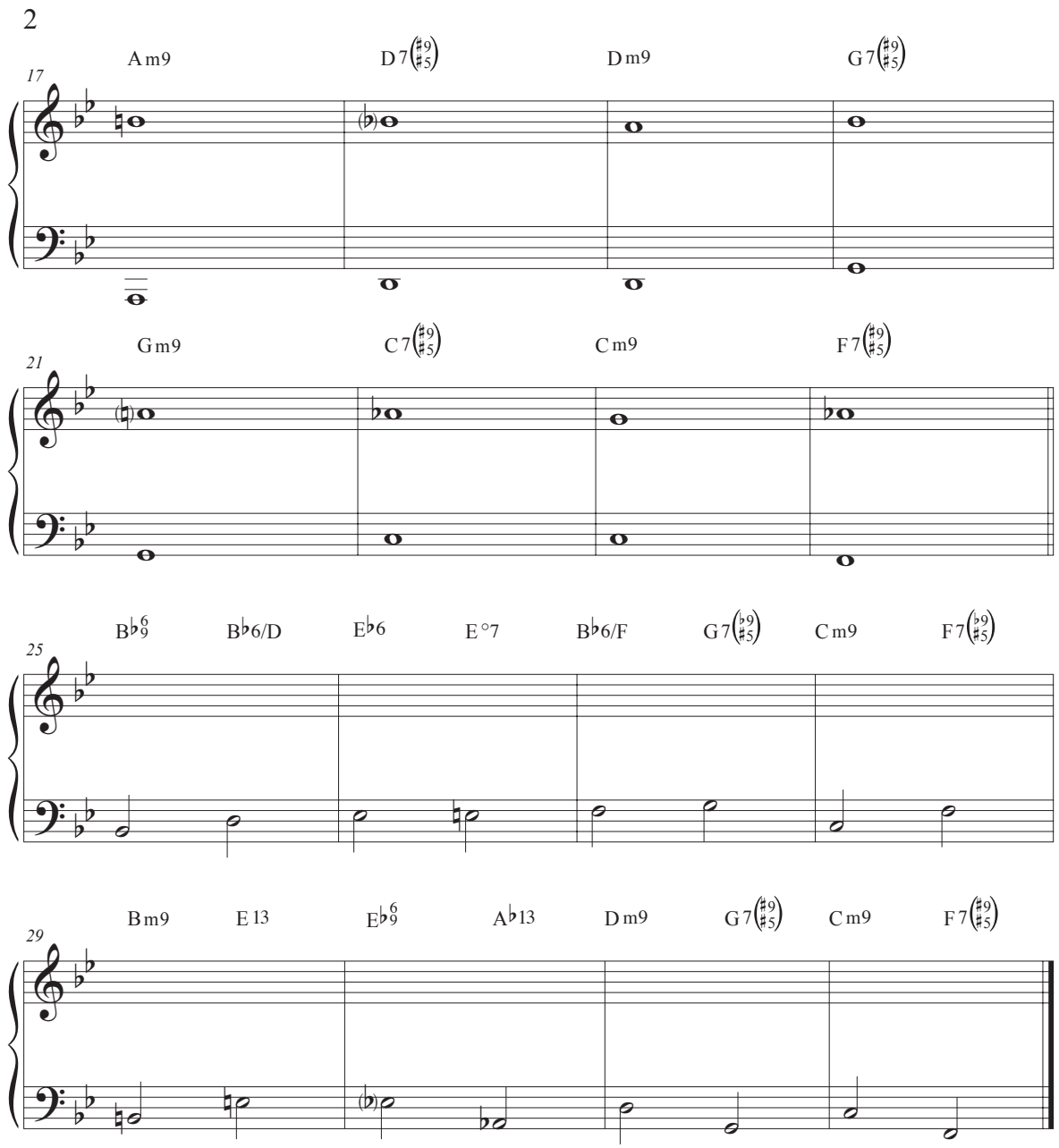
**Comping Exercise #43: Comping Through Rhythm Changes Using TVs built from Inversions of 7th Chords**

Fill in under the following melody provided creating 4-note trombone voicings for the 2 "A" sections and the bridge of this typical rhythm changes progression. Clue: if the chord symbol is simple (denoting a sixth chord, a diminished chord, or minor seventh chord), use the technique of finding an inversion of a seventh chord to create the trombone voicing. If the chord symbol is more involved (m9, 7#5#9 etc.) use the technique of building onto the SS to generate your trombone voicing. For the last "A" compose your own trombone voicings using a melody of your choice while still following the chord symbols.

To add tension to a diminished seventh chord you may raise the highest or lowest note up a whole step. An example of this is written in m. 10 below.

FIG. 8


B♭6 B°7 C m7 C♯°7 D m9 G 7(♯9 ♯5) C m9 F 7(♯9 ♯5)
5
F m9 B♭7(♯9 ♯5) E♭maj9 E°7 B♭6/F G 7(♯9 ♯5) C m9 F 7(♭9 ♯5)
9
B♭maj9 G 7(♯9 ♯5) C m9 C♯°7 D m7 G 7(♯9 ♯5) C m9 F 7(♯9 ♯5)
13
F m9 B♭13 E♭maj9 E°7 B♭6/F B 13 B♭maj9




To begin, apply CRs and practice the above rhythm changes progression with **CD 1 Track 20**. As you feel more comfortable, compose other RC progressions using TVs over bass notes following the techniques from Chapter 2B. Make sure to find an effective comping melody when constructing your progressions of TVs.

Next, comp along with **CD 1 Track 21.** This time use your ear to hear what the bass player is playing. Try to find TVs to match. Each chorus is slightly different harmonically. Finally, advanced students should use **CD 2 Track 13** and play rhythm changes through six keys.

**Comping Exercise #44: Comping Along with Tadd Dameron on the changes to Eb-Pob.**

One of the most important figures of the bebop era, composer, arranger, and pianist, Tadd Dameron, left a treasure trove of music for future generations. He composed many of the jazz standards still played regularly today such as "On a Misty Night", "Lady Bird", "If You Could See Me Now", and "Good Bait." As a composer and arranger, he wrote for many of the best bands of the era including Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, Billy Eckstine, and Dizzy Gillespie.

Not only was he a famous composer, he was another distinctive pianist of the bebop generation. In the late 40's he led a group featuring Fats Navarro and later Miles Davis. In the 50's he led a nonet featuring Clifford Brown and Max Roach, and later collaborated with John Coltrane on the album, Mating Call.

In the following transcription of "Eb-Pob" (bebop spelled backwards), you can find many examples of TV's applied to a typical Bb rhythm changes progression. Tadd's comping behind Fats Navarro's solo is provided below.

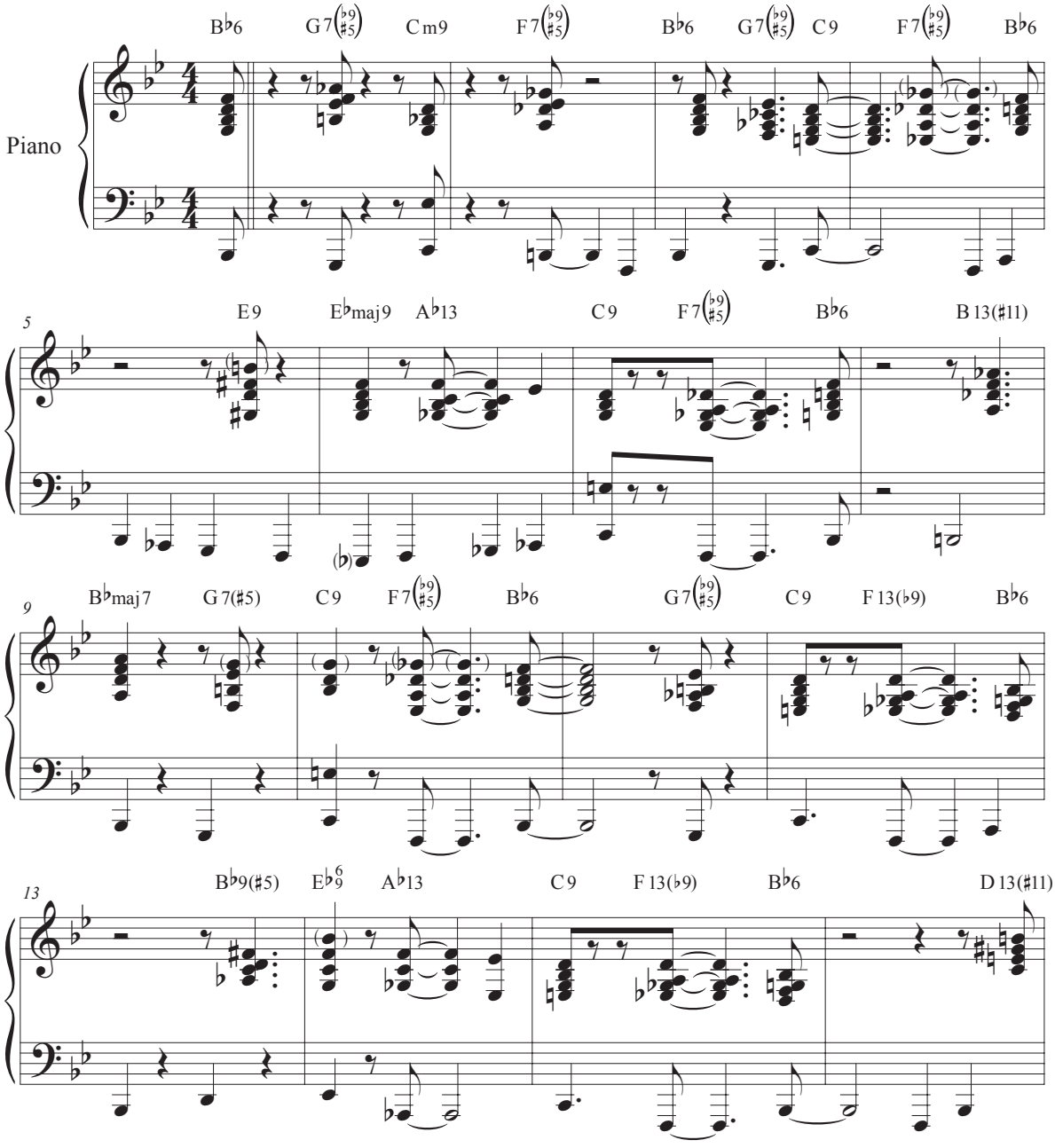
As a drummer might feather the bass drum, Tadd Dameron plays excerpts of bass lines very quietly while comping. When you comp along, try making your left hand subtle and soft, enhancing the bass motion instead getting in the way of the bass player. Although this style is not practiced often today, being aware of it is important and can help you establish a groove when playing with the rhythm section. Since this way of comping causes you to play notes in an unusual range, always be listening and aware of your musical surroundings. Also, note his distinctive use of TV's in the upper register of the piano. Notes in parenthesis are optional depending on your hand size. Alternatively, if the voicing is too large, you can omit the bass note and play the lowest note of the RH voicing with your LH. This gives you some beautiful rootless voicings.

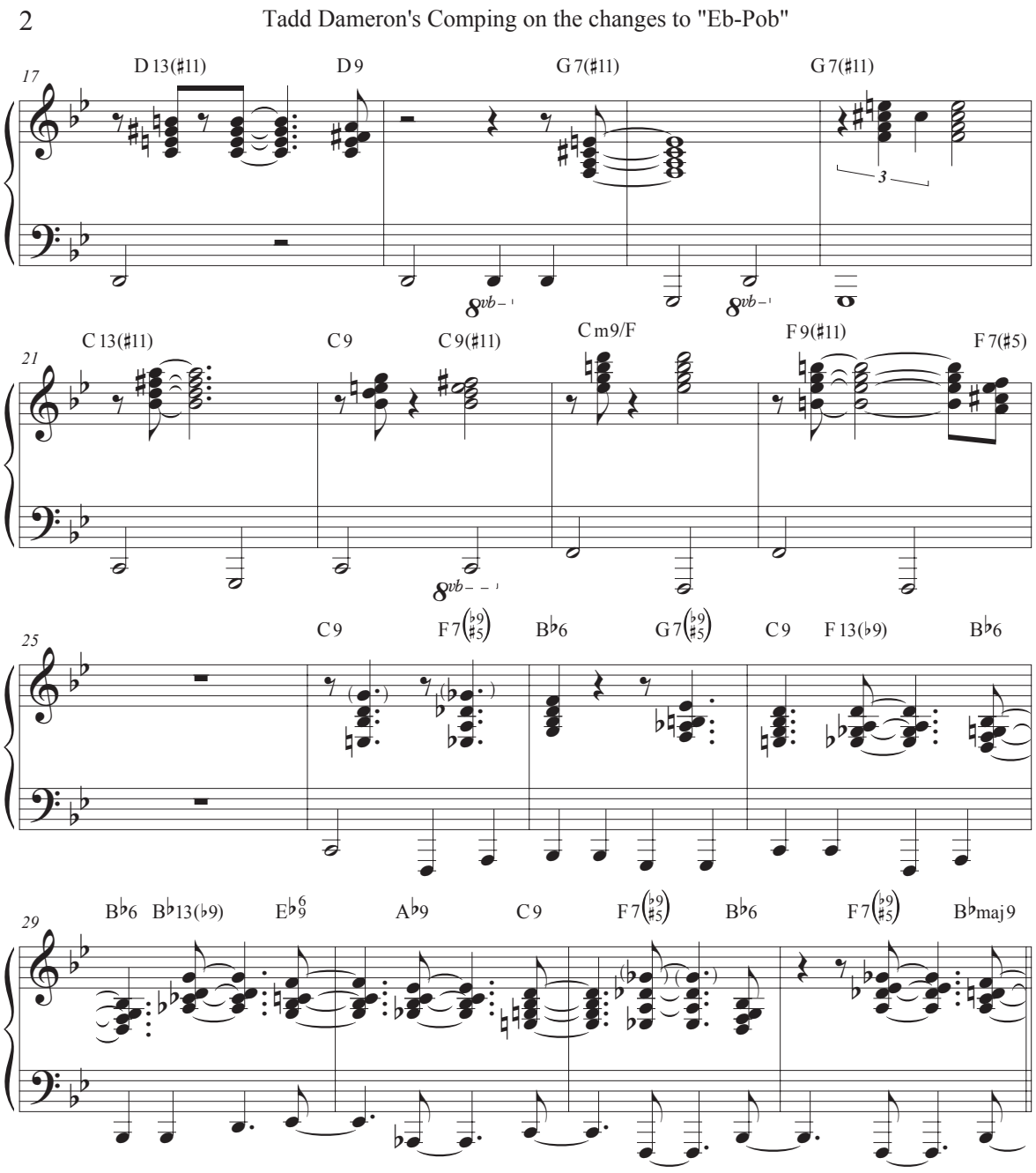
Comp along to the OR using a slow down device. You can also listen to **CD 1 Track 22** for a demonstration or comp along to **CD 1 Track 23** for a piano-less track. The demo track contains the comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

FIG. 9

# Tadd Dameron's Comping

On the changes to"Eb-Pob" (Rhythm Changes)



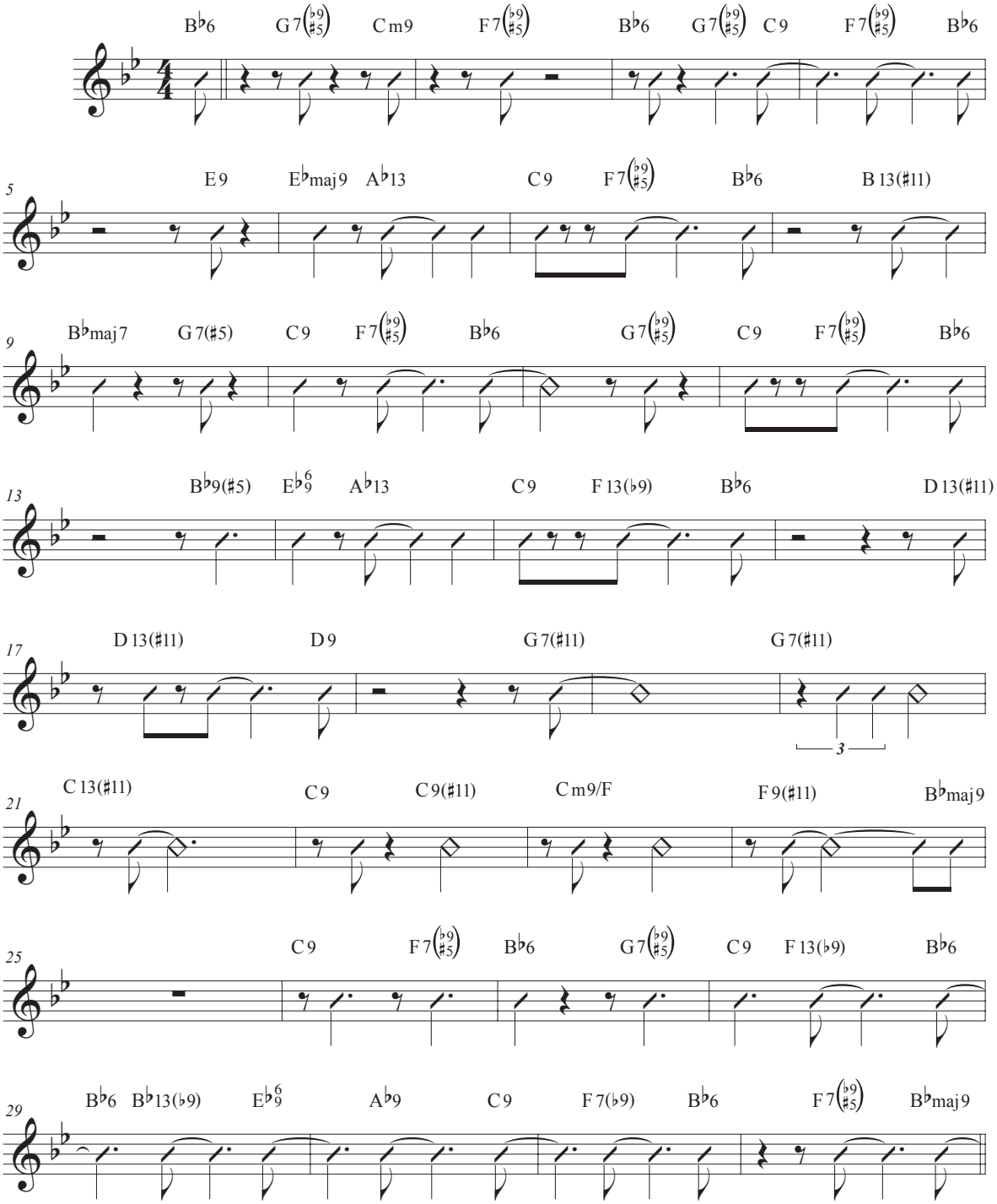



**Comping Exercise #45: Applying different voicings styles using Tadd Dameron's Comping Guide.** Apply a variety of voicing styles to Tadd Dameron's comping pattern. Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 23**.

FIG. 10

# Tadd Dameron's Comping Guide

On the Changes to Eb-Pob



**Comping Exercise #46: Assimilating Tadd Dameron's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 1-5**. Apply the TDCR's (Tadd Dameron Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the TDCP's (Tadd Dameron Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 11

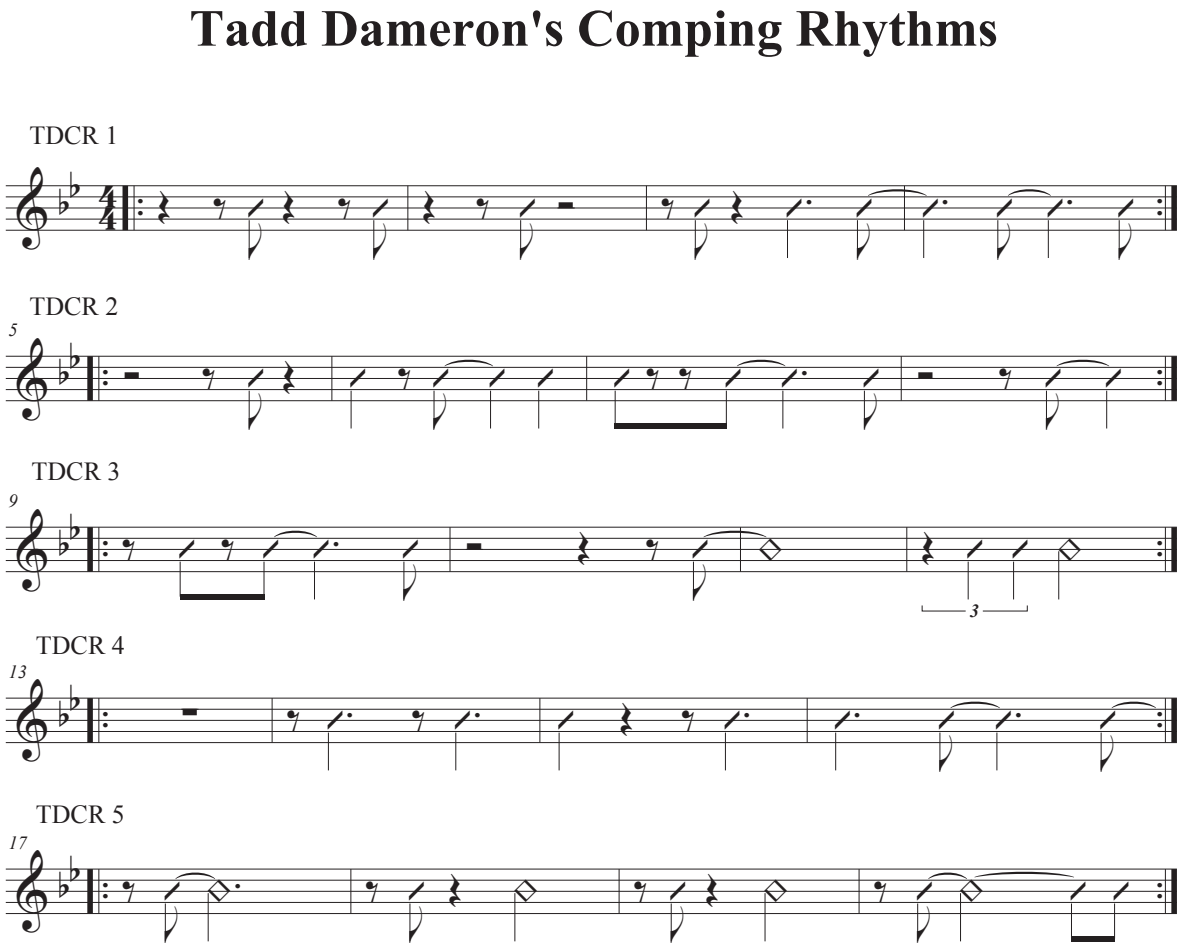
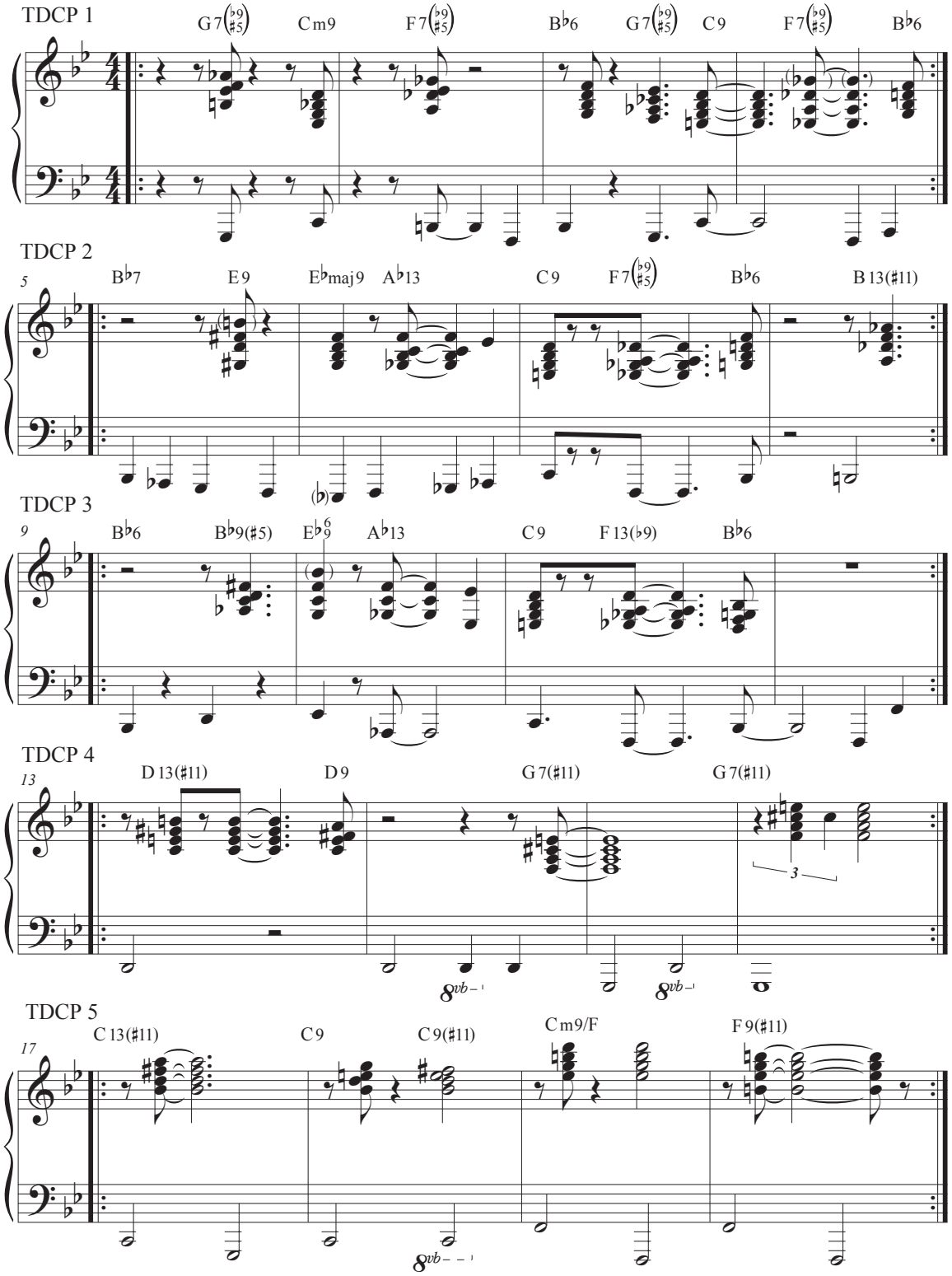


FIG. 12

# Tadd Dameron Comping Progressions



## CHAPTER 4: COMPING IN THE BEBOP ERA

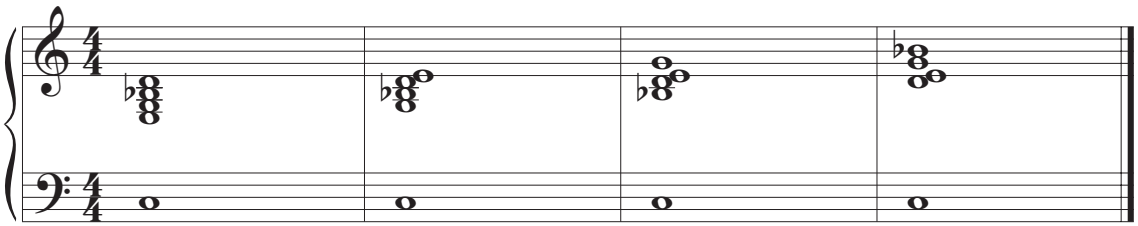
The great compers of the bebop generation utilized closed position chords or trombone voicings (as we are calling them in this workbook series) very often as part of their comping language. The bebop era, with its underground and revolutionary mystique called for a specific type of comp to complement the drummer's use of dropping bombs and the new harmonic ideas heralded by Diz and Bird. The comper's role was not merely to react to the soloist adding colors here and there as it would become in later years. The comper during this time was expected to propel the rhythm section, and provide a danceable rhythmic interplay over which the soloist could freely express him/herself while maintaining the basic harmony (perhaps with momentary adventures away from the expected harmony). Although the bebop comper played many of the roots with the bass player, the absence of the constant striding left hand (one of the main features of the swing era pianist), gave the pianist a freer and more buoyant feeling in the rhythm section. Beboppers had more space to concentrate on the new and exciting rhythmic accents and colorful voicings that became a staple of bebop comping.

The bebop comp was unique: compact, austere, at times guttural, always distinguished and classy, a secret rhythmic language, slick, piquant, at times humorous, cute, at times morose, "monkish", ugly and beautiful at the same time. Always pushing and pulling (as opposed to always pushing), the bebop comp was speech-like, human, not metric, settling during extremely fast tempos, in the groove, relaxed, and most of all, sophisticated.

## CHAPTER 4A: THINKING VERTICALLY AND HORIZONTALLY

Before we dive in and examine the next set of comping transcriptions, we need to continue expanding our palette of voicings. To begin, let's invert voicings that are already familiar to us. In Figure 1, we should recognize the trombone voicing for C9 in m. 1 and m. 3 from Chapter 3B. Below, we have simply inverted these RH voicings to generate 4 possibilities for a C9 trombone voicing. Pay attention to the RH thumb. In m. 1 and m. 3 the thumb plays 3rd and 7th; in m. 2 and m. 4 the thumb plays 5th and 9th.

FIG. 1



One way pianists quickly generate voicings like this is to think in terms of the 7th chord formed in the RH instead of thinking of the numbers (3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, etc.) Notice how Figure 1, which lists 4 voicings for C9, can also be thought of as an inverted Em7b5 chord over a C. If you have the four inversions of Em7b5 already in your fingers, there is no need to get bogged down with all of the numbers. Your fingers can quickly generate different C9 voicings up and down the piano.

The following chords are written in two ways. On the left side of the equation are chords in modern jazz notation. On the right, chords are written as simple 7th chords over another root or shell. This style of chord symbol writing was common during the big band era when arrangers wanted the pianist to play the specific brass voicing (trumpets in the RH, trombones in the LH).

FIG. 2

$$\text{Cm9} = \frac{\text{E}\flat\triangle 7}{\text{C}} \qquad \text{C13}\left(\begin{smallmatrix}\sharp 11\\ \flat 9\end{smallmatrix}\right) = \frac{\text{F}\sharp\text{m7}}{\text{C7}} \qquad \text{G7}(\flat 9) = \frac{\text{F}\circ 7}{\text{G}}$$

This brings us back to what we started to do in Chapter 3D–to practice inverting simple 7th chords. We've already inverted diminished 7, and minor 7 chords when we played the first two bars of rhythm changes. Now would be an excellent time to practice all of the inversions of the following 11 types of 7th chords:

Maj7, m7, dom7, dim7, Maj7#5, Maj7b5, 7#5, 7b5, m7b5, min(Maj7), dim(Maj7).

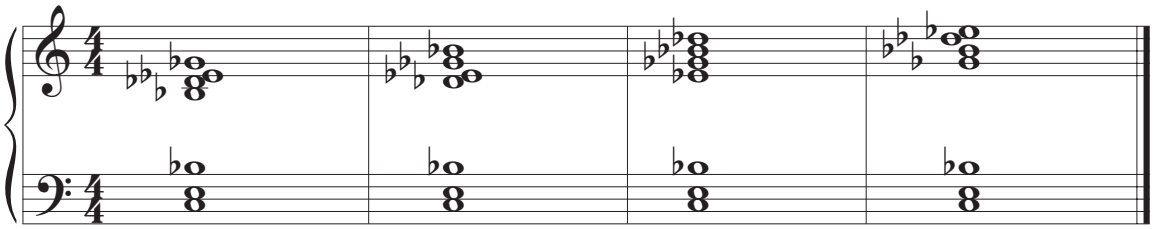
The following section is set up specifically to aid in what could be a tedious process.

***Thinking Vertically***...

Let's think vertically before we explore all of the beautiful, smooth, harmonic progressions we can create using 7th chords over roots/shells. To start, stack Ebm7 (in all inversions) on top of a C7 skeletal structure.

See the example below.

FIG. 3



Why does Ebm7 sound good over a C7 SS? How can we decide what 7th chords will work superimposed on top of a C7 SS?

When deciding on what 7th chords will work, we should first examine the chords that won't work. F and B are two notes that do not usually belong in a C7 voicing. They will clash with the notes of the LH, forming dissonant minor 9ths. The rest of the chromatic scale contains either chord tones or extensions of C7. C is the root; Db is the b9; D is the natural 9, Eb is the #9, E is the 3rd, F# is the #11 or b5, G is the 5th, G# is the #5, A is the 13, and Bb is the flat 7th. Theoretically these notes should sound good over the C7 SS.

Let's start by creating a table of all 12 keys (minus F and B) with eleven possible 7th chords qualities. First we can cross out all of the chords containing F and B and experiment at the piano with stacking the remaining chords in all inversions over the C7 SS.

| C7 | C7#5 | C7b5 | Cm7 | Cm7b5 | ~~CM7~~ | ~~CM7#5~~ | ~~CM7b5~~ | ~~CmM7~~ | Co7 | ~~CoM7~~ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ~~Db7~~ | ~~Db7#5~~ | ~~Db7b5~~ | ~~Dbm7~~ | ~~Dbm7b5~~ | ~~DbM7~~ | ~~DbM7#5~~ | ~~DbM7b5~~ | DbmM7 | Dbo7 | DboM7 |
| D7 | D7#5 | D7b5 | ~~Dm7~~ | ~~Dm7b5~~ | DM7 | DM7#5 | DM7b5 | ~~DmM7~~ | ~~Do7~~ | ~~DoM7~~ |
| Eb7 | ~~Eb7#5~~ | Eb7b5 | Ebm7 | Ebm7b5 | EbM7 | ~~EbM7#5~~ | EbM7b5 | EbmM7 | Ebo7 | EboM7 |
| ~~E7~~ | E7#5 | E7b5 | ~~Em7~~ | Em7b5 | ~~EM7~~ | EM7#5 | EM7b5 | ~~EmM7~~ | Eo7 | EoM7 |
| F#7 | F#7#5 | F#7b5 | F#m7 | F#m7b5 | ~~F#M7~~ | ~~F#M7#5~~ | ~~F#M7b5~~ | ~~F#mM7~~ | F#o7 | ~~F#oM7~~ |
| ~~G7~~ | ~~G7#5~~ | ~~G7b5~~ | ~~Gm7~~ | ~~Gm7b5~~ | ~~GM7~~ | ~~GM7#5~~ | ~~GM7b5~~ | GmM7 | Go7 | GoM7 |
| Ab7 | Ab7#5 | Ab7b5 | ~~Abm7~~ | ~~Abm7b5~~ | AbM7 | AbM7#5 | AbM7b5 | ~~AbmM7~~ | ~~Abo7~~ | ~~AboM7~~ |
| A7 | ~~A7#5~~ | A7b5 | Am7 | Am7b5 | AM7 | ~~AM7#5~~ | AM7b5 | AmM7 | Ao7 | AoM7 |
| ~~Bb7~~ | Bb7#5 | Bb7b5 | ~~Bbm7~~ | Bbm7b5 | ~~BbM7~~ | BbM7#5 | BbM7b5 | ~~BbmM7~~ | Bbo7 | BboM7 |

Obviously, some chords sound better than others when superimposing them over a C7 SS. Sometimes exploring all of the possibilities is the best way to go. A curious thing happens when you stack DMaj7 (DM7) on top of C7. Even though the DMaj7 contains

the 9, #11, 13, and b9 of C7, all of which are acceptable extensions, the 3 half steps in a row created by the 9, b9, and the root cause the chord to sound unusual, otherworldly, or dissonant. In certain situations this chromatic sound could be wonderful. Bebop straddles the fence between chromatic and tonal harmony. To capture the true bebop sound we have to be careful of venturing too far into chromaticism. In other words, a satisfying voicing (in the context of bebop) not only depends on the choice of notes, but on the choice of intervals between notes in the chord.

So let's further filter out all chords that contain 3 half steps in a row when stacked on top of a C7 SS. These include DMaj7, DMaj7#5, DMaj7b5, EbMaj7, EbMaj7b5, EbmMaj7, EboMaj7, AMaj7, AMaj7b5, AmMaj7, and AoMaj7.

| C7 | C7#5 | C7b5 | Cm7 | Cm7b5 | ~~CM7~~ | ~~CM7#5~~ | ~~CM7b5~~ | ~~CmM7~~ | Co7 | ~~CoM7~~ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ~~Db7~~ | ~~Db7#5~~ | ~~Db7b5~~ | ~~Dbm7~~ | ~~Dbm7b5~~ | ~~DbM7~~ | ~~DbM7#5~~ | ~~DbM7b5~~ | DbmM7 | Dbo7 | DboM7 |
| D7 | D7#5 | D7b5 | ~~Dm7~~ | ~~Dm7b5~~ | ~~DM7~~ | ~~DM7#5~~ | ~~DM7b5~~ | ~~DmM7~~ | ~~Do7~~ | ~~DoM7~~ |
| Eb7 | ~~Eb7#5~~ | Eb7b5 | Ebm7 | Ebm7b5 | ~~EbM7~~ | ~~EbM7#5~~ | ~~EbM7b5~~ | ~~EbmM7~~ | Ebo7 | ~~EboM7~~ |
| ~~E7~~ | E7#5 | E7b5 | ~~Em7~~ | Em7b5 | ~~EM7~~ | EM7#5 | EM7b5 | ~~EmM7~~ | Eo7 | EoM7 |
| F#7 | F#7#5 | F#7b5 | F#m7 | F#m7b5 | ~~F#M7~~ | ~~F#M7#5~~ | ~~F#M7b5~~ | ~~F#mM7~~ | F#o7 | ~~F#oM7~~ |
| ~~G7~~ | ~~G7#5~~ | ~~G7b5~~ | ~~Gm7~~ | ~~Gm7b5~~ | ~~GM7~~ | ~~GM7#5~~ | ~~GM7b5~~ | GmM7 | Go7 | GoM7 |
| Ab7 | Ab7#5 | Ab7b5 | ~~Abm7~~ | ~~Abm7b5~~ | AbM7 | AbM7#5 | AbM7b5 | ~~AbmM7~~ | ~~Abo7~~ | ~~AboM7~~ |
| A7 | ~~A7#5~~ | A7b5 | Am7 | Am7b5 | ~~AM7~~ | ~~AM7#5~~ | ~~AM7b5~~ | ~~AmM7~~ | Ao7 | ~~AoM7~~ |
| ~~Bb7~~ | Bb7#5 | Bb7b5 | ~~Bbm7~~ | Bbm7b5 | ~~BbM7~~ | BbM7#5 | BbM7b5 | ~~BbmM7~~ | Bbo7 | BboM7 |

From here, we can do a final bit of editing, and remove the voicings that have three doubles between the right hand and left hand. Let's remove the 7th chords that contain all three notes of the skeletal structure: C, E, and Bb. These include C7, C7#5, C7b5, and F#7b5. When played together with the left hand skeletal structure, these voicings tend to be weak and thin.

Even after all of the trimming we are still left with a myriad of 7th chords to stack and invert on top of a C7 SS to create two-handed dominant 7th voicings.

See the three lists below categorized based on doubled notes. Voicings containing no doubles, or at the most, one doubled note are sharper and more elegant. Voicings with two doubled notes yield a sound that is earthier and bluesier.

**7th Chords that Yield Voicings with No Doubled Notes**

Eb7b5, Ebm7b5, A7b5

**7th Chords that Yield Voicings with One Doubled Note**

Co7, D7, D7b5, Eb7, Ebm7, Ebo7, F#m7, F#o7, GmM7, GoM7, Ab7, Ab7b5, AbM7, AbM7b5, A7, Am7b5, Ao7, Bb7#5, BbM7#5

**7th Chords that Yield Voicings with Two Doubled Notes**

Cm7, Cm7b5, DbmM7, Dbo7, DboM7, D7#5, E7#5, E7b5, Em7b5, EM7#5, EM7b5, Eo7 EoM7, F#7, F#7#5, F#m7b5, Go7, Ab7#5, AbM7#5, Am7, Bb7b5, Bbm7b5, BbM7b5, Bbo7, BboM7.

**Comping Exercise #47: Stacking Seventh Chords over a C7 SS.** Practice stacking these 7th chords in all inversions over a C7 SS. Feel free to transpose. Of course, not all of these voicings are unique, but it's a worthwhile method to practice inverting seventh chords.

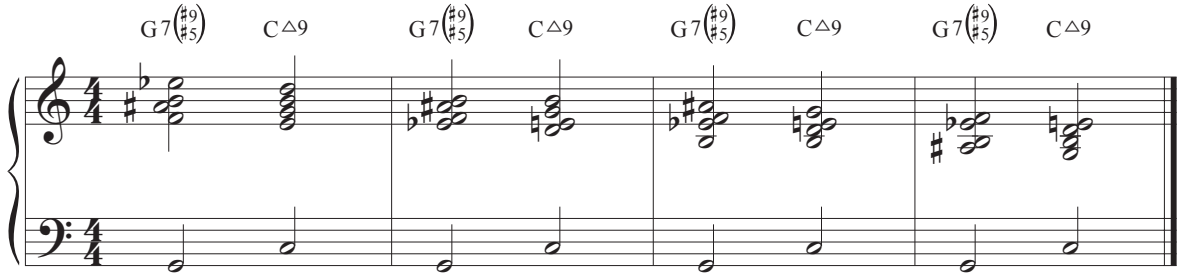
Cm7, Cm7b5, Co7, DbmΔ7, Dbo7, DboM7, D7, D7#5, D7b5, Eb7, Eb7b5, Ebm7, Ebm7b5, Ebo7, E7#5, E7b5, Em7b5, EM7#5, EM7b5, Eo7, EoM7, F#7, F#7#5, F#7b5, F#m7, F#o7, GmM7, Go7, GoM7, Ab7, Ab7#5, Ab7b5, AbM7, AbM7#5, AbM7b5, A7, A7b5, Am7, Am7b5, Ao7, Bb7#5, Bb7b5, Bbm7b5, BbM7#5, BbM7b5, Bbo7, BboM7.

47 choices X 4 inversions = 188 voicings for C7.

***Thinking Horizontally***...

The secret to successful chord playing is finding the connections between chords, not merely finding attractive vertical sonorities. Let's explore V7 – I progressions using this idea of inverting 7th chords. The goal here is to have smooth voice leading.
We can start with G7#9#5 going to CMaj9. This can be thought of as inversions of BΔ7b5/G going to Em7/C. Here are four ways to play the progression:

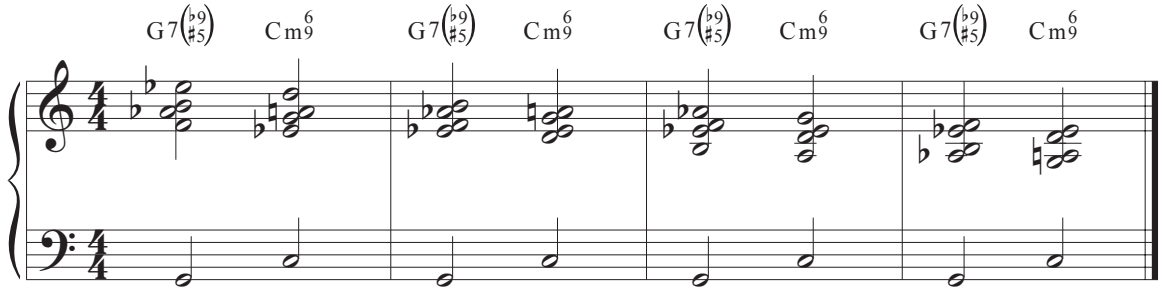
FIG. 4




It should be noted that m. 2 above contains a passing dominant in which there is a half step between the first and second voice. You should use this inversion with caution. Having said that, it's always a good idea to consider all possibilities before going through the editing process.

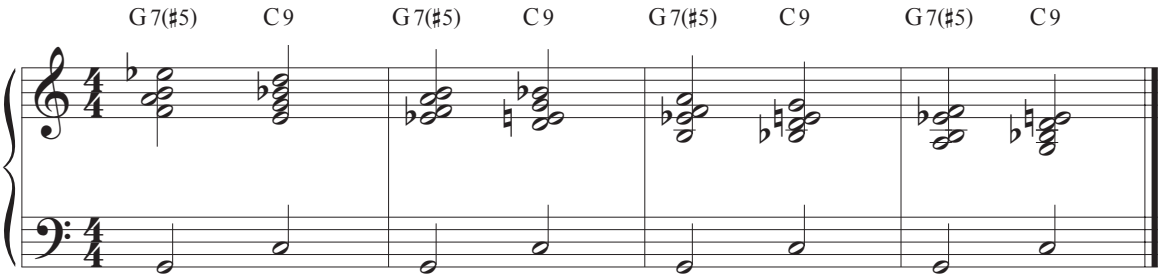
Next, let's try V – I progression is minor. Here we have G7b9#5 going to Cm69. This can be thought of as Fm7b5/G going to EbMaj7b5/C. Here are four ways to play the progression:

FIG. 5




Finally, let's use V7 – I7. Here we have G7#5 going to C9. This can be thought of as F7b5/G going to Em7b5/C. Here are four ways to play the progression:

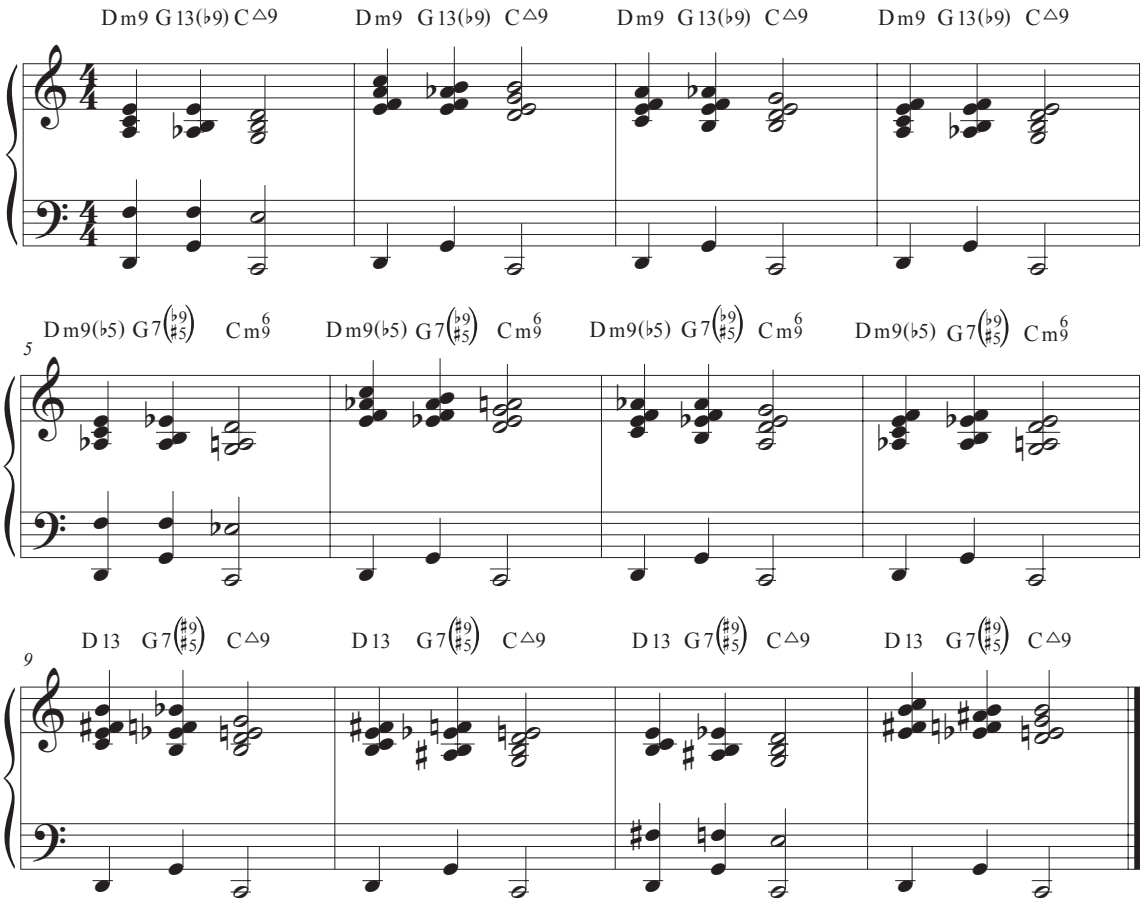
FIG. 6




Let's extend this idea to ii – V- I progressions. The first four progressions show four ways to play Dm9 – G13b9 – Cmaj9 thought of as FMaj7/D – FoMaj7/G – Em7/C. Progressions 5-8 illustrate four ways to play Dm9b5 – G7b9#5 – Cm69 thought of as FmMaj7/D – Abm6/G – EbMaj7b5/C. And progressions 9-12 show four ways to play D13 – G7#9#5 – Cmaj9 thought of as CMaj7b5/D – Bmaj7b5/G – Em7/C.

Chords with a half step directly under the melody can be made milder by moving the alto voice the alto voice down a whole step if the dissonance is too much for your taste.

FIG. 7




**Comping Exercise #48: ii-V-I's Using Inversions of Seventh Chords in the RH.** Transpose the above ii-V-I progressions to four keys of your choice.

**Comping Exercise #49**: **Turnarounds Using Inversions of Seventh Chords in the RH.** Try playing the following ii(II) – V – I – VI progression over a G pedal. Notice how the RH thumb creates a descending chromatic line. Simply follow the suggested inversions. If nothing is written, play the 7th chord in root position in the RH.

F#m7b5/G, Fm7b5/G, Em7/G, Eo7/G,
FΔ7(3rd inv)/G, Fm7b5(3rd inv)/G, Em7(3rd inv)/G, Eb7(3rd inv)/G,
FΔ7(2nd inv)/G, Bo7/G, Em7(2nd inv)/G, Bbo7/G,
F#m7b5(1st inv)/G, Fm7b5(1st inv)/G,
Em7(1st inv)/C

Experiment with inverting the 7th chords from the preceding exercise to create your own melodic lines.

# CHAPTER 4B: PASSING CHORDS

I remember listening to piano players in awe, especially during a ballad, as they would miraculously play incredible sequences of chords that fit their improvised melody and at the same time fit the chord changes. I thought to myself, "I know this song, and that's just ii-V-I. What are all of those chords that seem to fill in the spaces between the ii-V-I? What are those passing chords?"

In this section we will study passing chords (PCs) that lead us to target chords. A target chord can be the next chord change of a song, or simply another inversion of the chord that you a currently playing. PCs allow you to move around melodically without actually moving to another harmony. This is especially useful when playing a ballad where there might be one or two bars of the same chord at a slow tempo.

As pianists we want to come up with an intuitive way to use PCs to smoothly take us to our target. Unlike arrangers, as improvisers we don't have the luxury of playing two chords ahead, stopping, and working backwards to fill in the passing chord. Music flows in real time. By the end of our study we will see that you can approach a target from above, below or from the same plane. This visualization of PCs moving to targets can make the process more intuitive.

Unlike reharmonization, applying passing chords doesn't require the bass player to change notes. These passing movements happen above the basic bass line, meaning that 4-note TV's will move on top of a stationary bass note. The passing chords in this section are all about the chords happening in between the regular changes, especially useful when the normal changes are static. In other words, if you have 1 or 2 measures of C major7 during a ballad, we want to be able to move chords above the static harmony.

Before discussing passing chords let's decide on some useful target chords that we can use in most musical situations. A good place to begin is with Δ6 and m6. They are the most basic, versatile, and mobile target chords. These chords are indispensible in bebop comping because of the smooth way they fit with passing diminished chords, a type of PC commonly used in the bebop style. Δ6 and m6 are also very convenient because they imply other useful targets. If we change the bass note we can generate the following targets: m7, maj9, 9, and m7b5. See the chart of equivalencies below.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Cm7 =** | **Eb6/C** |
| **CΔ9 =** | **G6/C** |
| **C9 =** | **Gm6/C** |
| **Cm7b5 =** | **Ebm6/C** |

We can decide on the target depending on the effectiveness of the voice leading. The following are some voice leading tips to follow when first getting started:

**Tip #1: The top note of the passing chord has to move to the target by half step, whole step, or stay the same**

**Tip #2: Whenever possible, strive to have at least two voices move between chords.**

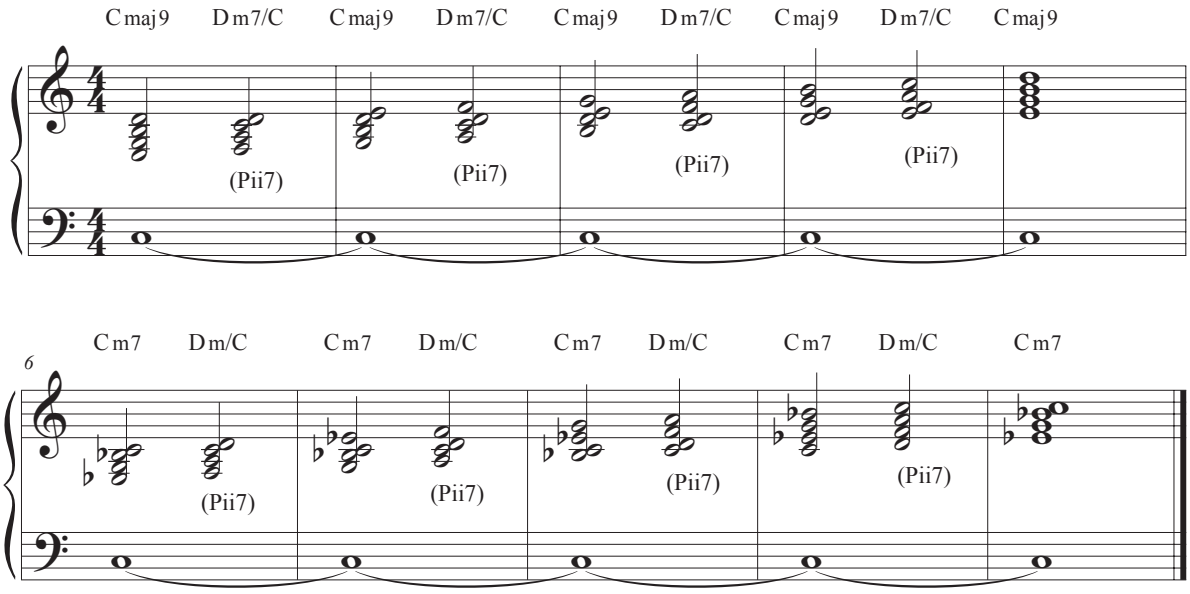
**Tip #3: Avoid having the maj3 of the tonic key in the passing chord if the target chord is minor. In some cases it can work, just be careful.**

**Tip #4: Avoid having a minor ninth and a minor third together in the same voicing.**

The first type of passing chord to investigate is the diatonic passing chord. Because it uses notes from the parent scale of the target chord its sound is often mild. For our purposes, we will investigate the diatonic passing seventh chord built on the second scale degree of the parent scale. Therefore, we will label it: Pii7.

In the key of C, because of better voice leading Pii7 sounds better when used to pass to CΔ9 or Cm7. Notice how the RH target is still Δ6 in both examples below: G6/C or Eb6/C (see the chart of equivalencies on p. 144).

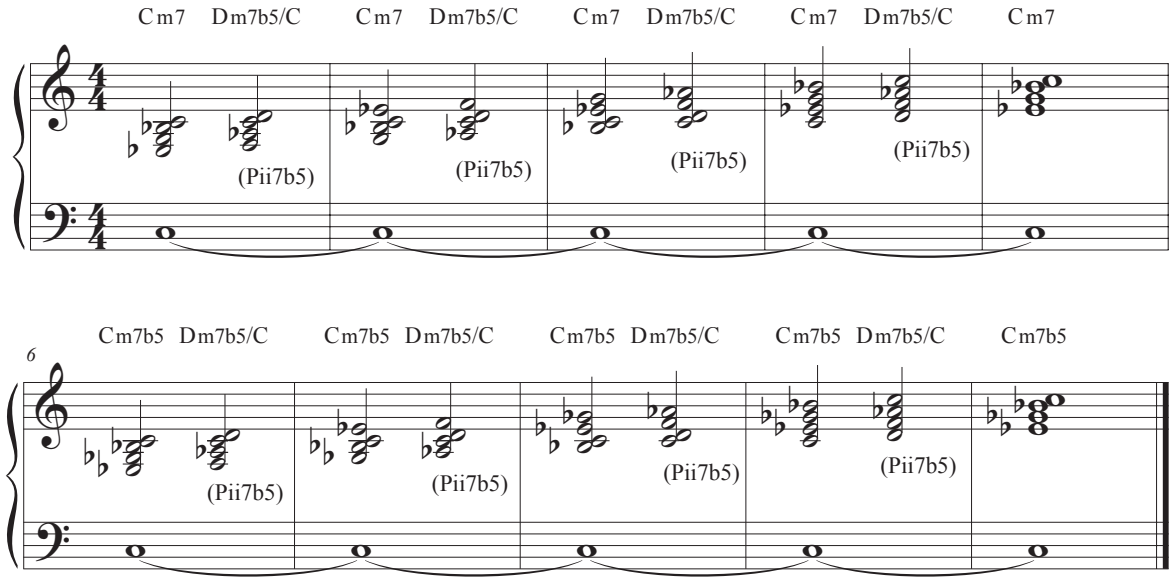
FIG. 1




When the musical situation calls for a m7 with a natural minor (b6) parent scale (for example, when used as a vi chord in a standard) the PC should reflect the change in parent scale. If we are in Eb major, and playing a Cm7, the PC to be used would be Dm7b5 since

Ab is in the tonic key. In this case the Pii7 would actually be labeled as Pii7b5 to show the change. Pii7b5 can be also used when passing to a m7b5 chord.

FIG. 2




**Comping Exercise #50: Pass to Targets Using Pii7 or Pii7b5**. Practice FIGs 1 and 2 in several keys.

The second type of passing chord to be discussed is the passing diminished chord (Pdim). As we will see in the transcriptions, Bud Powell and Barry Harris use the Pdim as an important staple of their bebop comping language. It allows for more chromatic movement between chords. Much of this material about passing diminished chords moving to sixth chords is inspired by the teachings of Barry Harris.

A chromatic scale can be divided into three unique diminished seventh chords (o7): Co7, Dbo7, and Do7. Every other o7 chord is simply an inversion of these first three essential o7 chords. A diminished seventh chord forms the (RH) trombone voicing of a 7b9. For example Eo7 when placed over a C in the bass becomes C7b9. Go7/C, Bbo7/C, and Dbo7/C also yield C7b9. Therefore, each essential o7 is related to four 7b9 chords, or, more generally, four dominant seventh chords.

The following chart lists the essential diminished seventh chords, their related diminished chords, and their related dominant seventh chords. Notice how the roots of the seventh chords are a half step lower than the roots of the diminished seventh chords. Or, how the o7 is built off the b9 of the dominant seventh chord.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Do7** | **Fo7, Abo7, Bo7** | **Db7, E7, G7, Bb7** |
| **Dbo7** | **Eo7, Go7, Bbo7** | **C7, Eb7, F#7, A7** |
| **Co7** | **Ebo7, Gbo7, Ao7** | **B7, D7, F7, Ab7** |

Another way to look at this is to manipulate the diminished chords directly. The related dom 7th chords are created by lowering each note of o7 chord, one at a time, by half step. For example, if we lower the bottom note of Co7 (and keep the other notes the same) we get B7; if we lower the 3rd note from the top we get D7 (in 3rd inversion); if we lower the 2nd we get F7 (in 2nd inversion); and if we lower the top note we get Ab7 (in 1st inversion). If we follow the same procedure for C#o7, and Do7 we generate the other eight dominant seventh chords in a 12-note chromatic scale. For each diminished seventh chord you should instantly be able to recite and play the four related dominant seventh chords and vice versa.

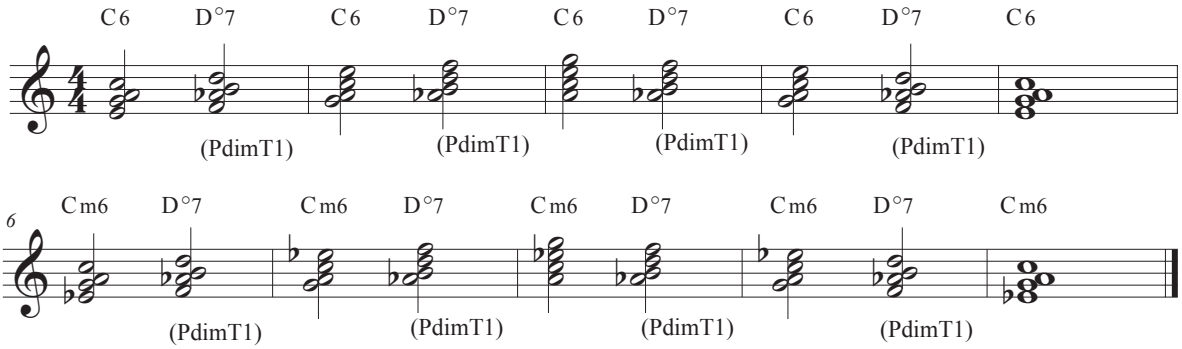
Let's begin by moving between sixth chord and passing diminished chord. The three o7 chords will form the basis of our "from above, below, and from the same plane" theory of passing chords. We can think of the three diminished seventh chords as corresponding to the three types of passing chords that will lead us to the target chord.

**Above–Below–Same Plane Chart**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **iio7** | **Do7 (G7b9) (V7)** | |
| **biio7** | **Dbo7 (C7b9) (I7)** | **C6 or Cm6** |
| **io7** | **Co7 (B7b9) (VII7)** | |

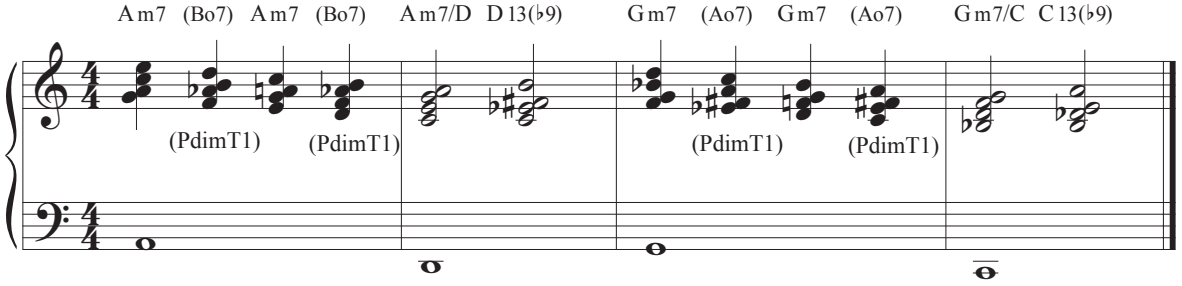
From the chart above we see that Do7, from the top row, is related to G7b9. iio7 is the first type of diminished passing chord (PdimT1). Do7 acts as V7 (G7b9), taking us to I (C6) or i (Cm6). If we visualize the movement it's as if we are approaching the target from above. This movement is perhaps the strongest out of the three because all voices move smoothly from chord to chord. In fact, the voice movement between PdimT1 and I6 or i6 forms an important scale used in bebop improvisation called the sixth–diminished scale (or minor sixth–diminished scale). The horizontal motion between passing chord and target forms this scale in all four voices. The sixth–diminished scale is essentially a major scale with the addition of a flatted 6. For the minor version, simply flat the 3rd. In the example below, the first five notes of this new scale can be found if you follow each voice horizontally. Play the following example an octave lower than written.

FIG. 3



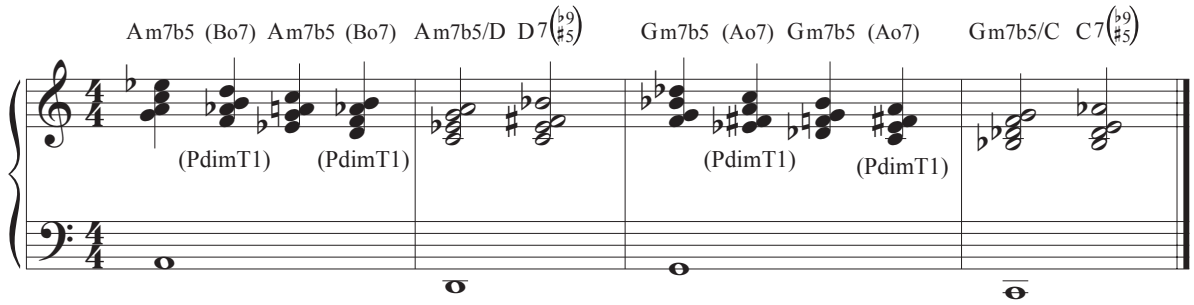

Remembering that C6 is the same thing as Am7, we can create an embellished ii–V progression in the key of G major using the PdimT1. If I use the same chord motion in FIG. 3, I can extend the Am7 with passing Bo7 chords before moving to the D13(b9). C6–Do7–C6 contains the same RH pattern as Am7–Bo7–Am7. The only difference is the bass note. Coincidentally, the G7(b9) implied by Do7 and the E7(b9) implied by Bo7 are in the same family of dominant seventh chords. Play the following ii–V progressions (in G major and F major) through several keys. Create your own progression that incorporates the PdimT1 that fits over ii–V–I. Comp along with **CD 1 Track 7.**

FIG. 4



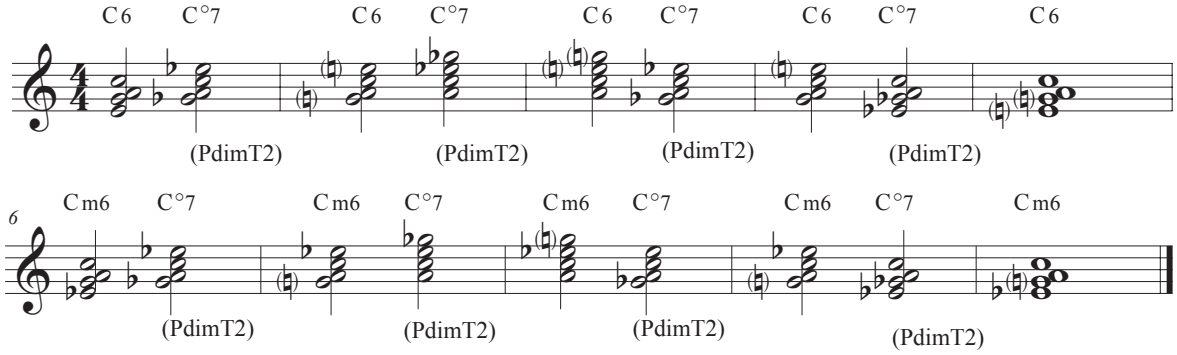

By flatting the third of all of my RH m7 chords we can create minor ii–V progressions. Remember Am7b5 is the same thing as Cm6. Notice that the RH chord motion in the G minor ii–V progression is the same as the chord motion in m.m.6–10 of FIG. 3. Play the following minor ii–V progressions (in G minor and F minor) through several keys. Create your own progression that incorporates the PdimT1 that fits over minor ii–V–I. Comp along with **CD 1 Track 15.**

FIG 5




The Co7 on the bottom row from the "Above–Below–Same Plane" chart is related to B7b9. The io7 is the second type of diminished passing chord (PdimT2). Co7acts as VII7 (B7b9), taking us to I (C6) or i (Cm6). This movement has the feeling of approaching the target chord from below. VII7–I, or leading tone to I, has a strong magnet pull, but perhaps not as strong as V7–I. Unfortunately, this time there is no elegant scale that emerges from the voice leading as before with PdimT1. Still, the pull to the target is there, making this movement a worthy option. Play the following example an octave lower than written.

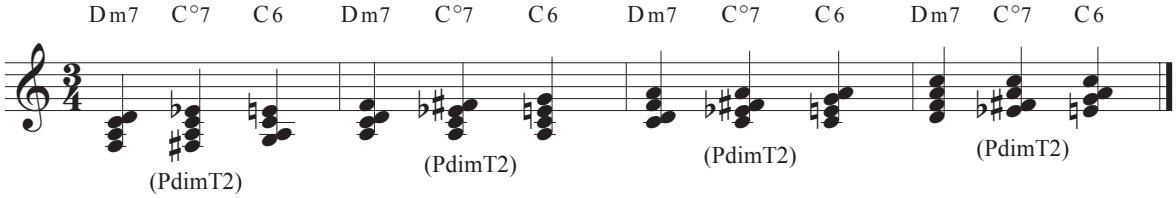
FIG. 6




The minor progression above is not as strong as the major since only one voice moves to the target chord. Later we will experiment with tweaking the passing diminished to allow more voice movement between chords.

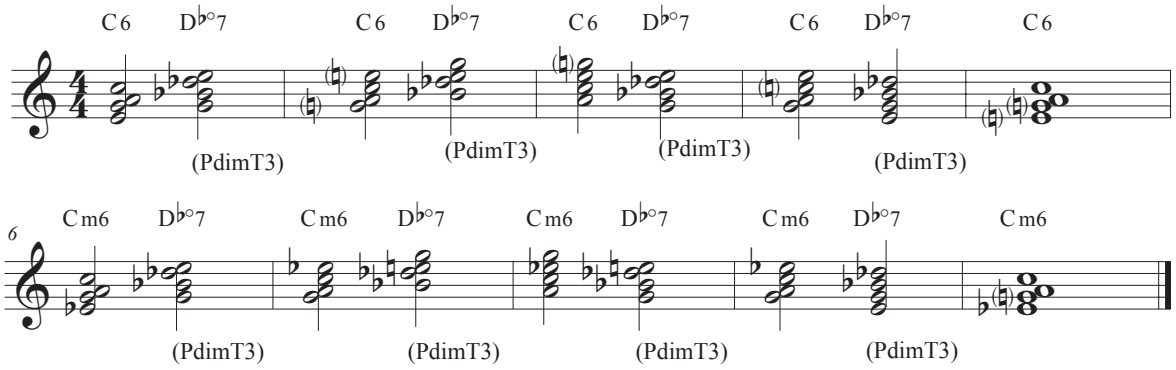
Try this sequence reminiscent of Count Basie. It incorporates PdimT2 as an approach chord to I6.

FIG. 7



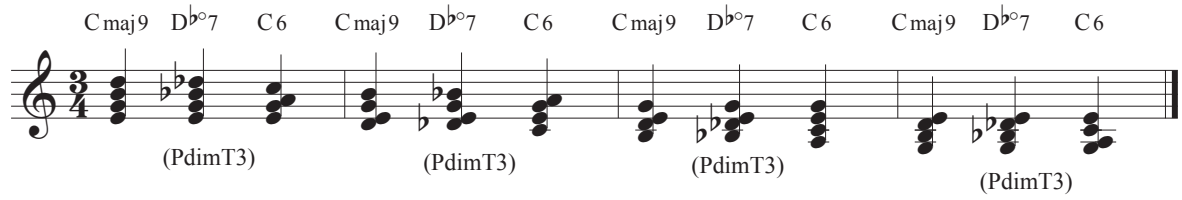
The Dbo7 from the middle row of the Above–Below–Same Plane chart is related to C7b9. The biio7 is the third type of diminished passing chord (PdimT3). Dbo7 acts as I7 (C7b9) taking us to I (C6) or i (Cm6). This movement has a feeling of approaching the target from the same plane. There is no strong implied bass movement as there is in the other two types. In this way, it has the weakest magnetic pull. Its function is more of embellishing the target chord rather than moving to it from above or below. Using PdimT3 to target Cm6 is also rare because the E natural (the major 3rd of the tonic key) is something to be avoided under ordinary circumstances. It is important, however, to explore all possible movements between Pdim and target. Play the following example an octave lower than written.

FIG. 8




Try this sequence reminiscent of Tadd Dameron's tune, "Lady Bird." It incorporates PdimT3 (biio7) as an approach chord to I6.

FIG. 9



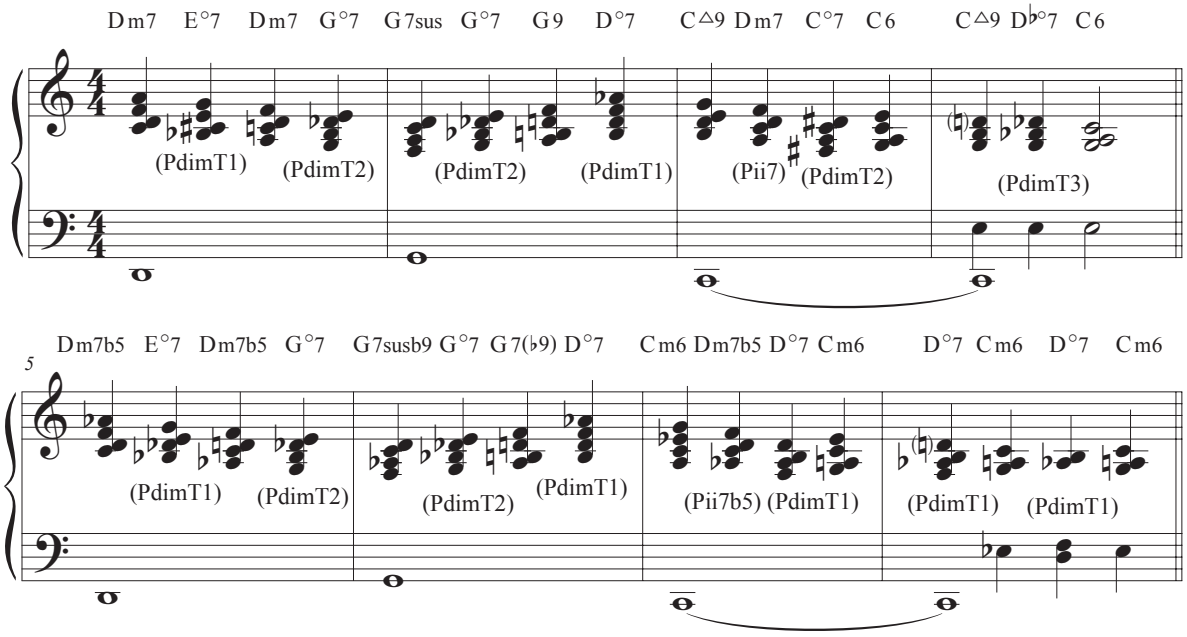

When we apply this motion to other target chords we only need to remember the above, below, or same plane analogy. Consider the whole chord when deciding on an approaching passing chord. If I have CΔ9 for example, I think V7(G7b9)–I(CΔ9) is the strongest motion; VII7(B7b9)–I the second strongest; and I7(C7b9)–I the weakest and most rare. G7b9 is implied using iio7; B7b9 is implied using io7; and C7b9 using biio7. **The root of the target chord is always (I); you're approaching the "chord of the moment".**

The following shows two ii–V–I progressions (major and minor) that are dressed up by adding the three types of passing diminished chords and diatonic passing chords.

The Pdims on beat 4 of m. 1 and beat 2 of m. 2 pass to G7sus and G9 respectively hence the Pdim2 status. If G7sus and G9 were renamed Dm7/G and Dm6/G then the Pdims would maintain their Pdim1 status. For our purposes we will name chords based on the bass note whenever possible i.e. G9 instead of Dm6/G. This will make thinking about the direction of approach easier.

By avoiding Pdim Type 3 in the minor progression, we eliminate the risk of having a major 3rd in the PC moving toward a minor target. Also, because of the two adjacent PC's in m. 3 and m. 7, the resolution to the passing chord on beat 2 is suspended. Both PC's in this case target the chord on beat 4. Play each progression below through the keys.

FIG. 10

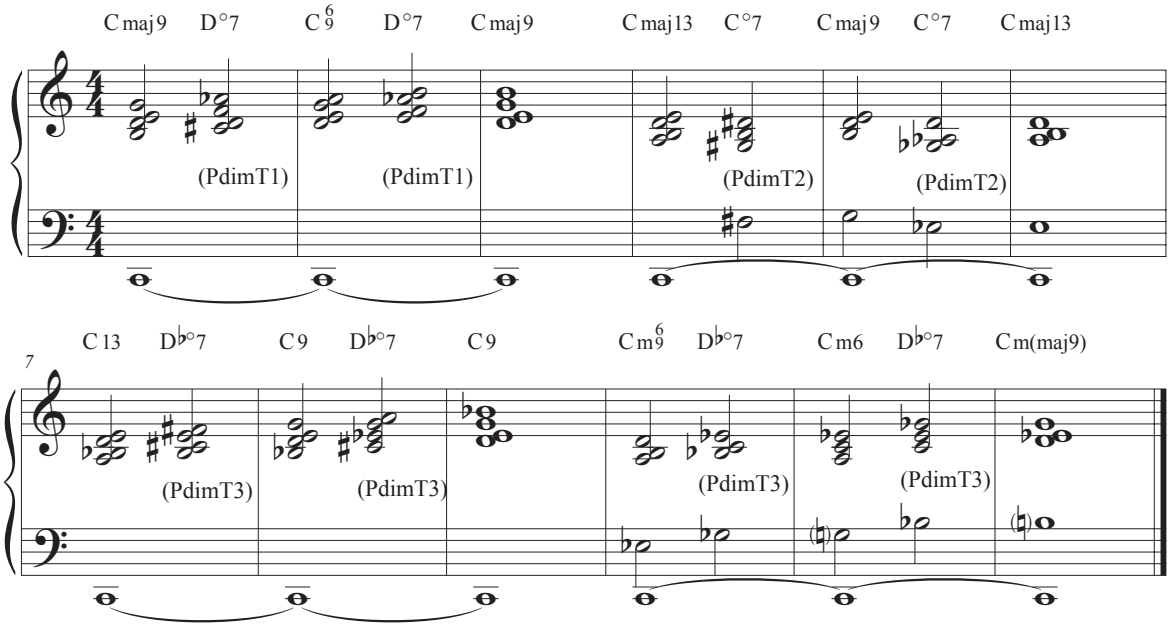



**Comping Exercise #51: Comp Through ii-V-I Using Passing Diminished Chords.** Transpose FIG. 10 to several keys.

We can tweak our Pdim voicings in the following way: **move one, two, or three chord tones down a half step or up a whole step.** Not only does this give us more exotic voicing possibilities, it gives us more options when it comes to voice leading. For example, by adjusting the Dbo7 (PdimT3) we are now able to pass to a minor chord (see FIG 11 m.m. 10-12).

In addition, we can tweak the target chords. By thinking of the four-note TV in terms of the chord implied (instead of just Δ6 or m6) we can make the usual substitutions: root can be replaced with 9 (for major and minor chords); 5 can be replaced with 13 (for dominant chords). See the tweaked Pdims and tweaked targets in the following example.

FIG. 11




At this point we need to see a bigger picture forming. Instead of being limited to Pdims, we should think of the passing chord as essentially a passing dominant leading to a target chord. A passing diminished is therefore only one possible form of a passing dominant (the V7b9). We can think more globally.

Let's relabel the PCs to reflect our theory and to widen our scope. Instead of Pdim(Type I), we will use Pdom(A) (passing dominant chord approaching from above); instead of Pdim(Type II) we will use Pdom(B) (passing dominant chord approaching from below); and instead of Pdim (Type III) we will use Pdom(SP) (passing dominant chord approaching from the same plane). Now we aren't restricted to use only o7 or tweaked o7 chords for our PCs. Instead we can use any type of dominant functioning chord from above, below, or from the same plane of the target chord as long as the voice leading rules are followed.

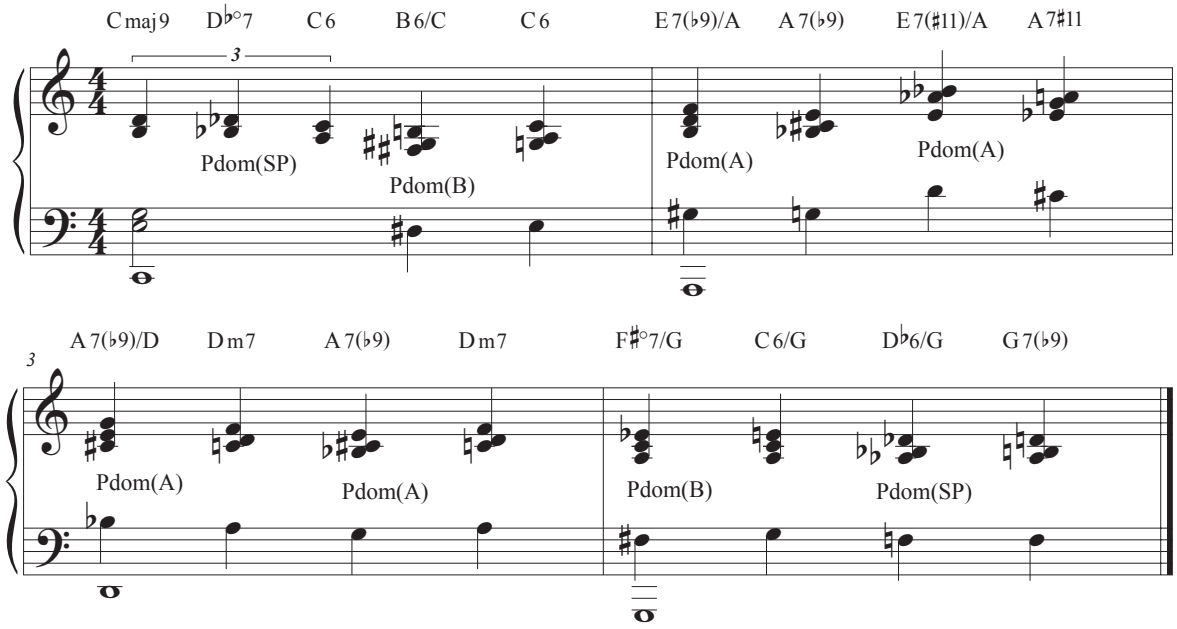
**Hint 1:** The four-note passing dominant chord sometimes isn't a dominant chord by itself. B6 or Cm(maj7) are possible Pdom that approach C major from below. They work as Pdoms because they imply B13 and B7#9#5 respectively if played over a "B" bass note.

**Hint 2:** When choosing a dominant chord from below avoid the natural 9. It often leads to a voicing with the undesirable pairing of minor 9$^{th}$ and minor 3$^{rd}$.

Applying this line of thinking to the diatonic passing chords studied at the beginning of the section, Pii7 or Pii7b5 can be considered a passing dominant from above Pdom(A) since they can also be thought of as 7sus or 7susb9 respectively.

In the last example, notice all of the Pdoms approaching targets in the three different ways. Also, be on the look out for tweaked Pdims (that now act as Pdoms) and tweaked target chords.

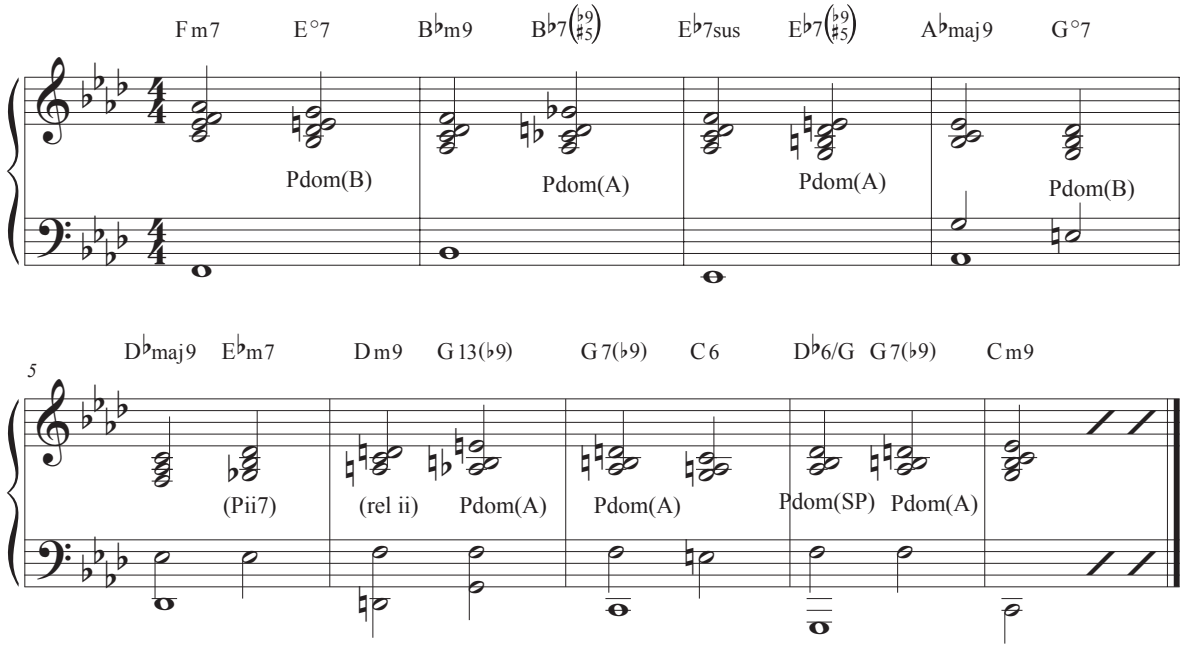
FIG. 12




***A note about chord symbol notation and passing diminished chords***: In the upcoming transcriptions and exercises iio7 is often written as V7(b9) while io7 is usually written as #ivo7. Note that the io7 is the same chord (different inversion) as the #ivo7, a chord symbol we are already familiar with from Chapter 2. The biio7 may be notated a few different ways depending on context. If it is part of a "Lady Bird" pattern it often appears as a biio7. If passing to a dominant like in m. 4 of FIG 12, it could be written as I7 or bV7 (bV6). Remember, the function of biio7 is primarily for embellishing the target. No root movement is felt as in the case of iio7–Target or io7–Target.

**Comping Exercise #52: Comping Through a Standard Using Passing Chords.**
Finish comping half notes through a chorus of "All the Things You Are". The first 8 bars are done for you. Try to smoothly comp through the rest of the chorus using the passing chords discussed in this chapter, creating a line in the top voice.

FIG. 13




Notice that in m.m. 7 and 8 the passing chord comes on beat one of the measure and the target is delayed until beat 3. Other anomalies include: in m. 5 the passing ii (Ebm7) passes directly to Dm7 (the rel. ii of G13b9) instead of back to the I of the moment (Db-maj9).

## CHAPTER 4C: COMPS BY BUD POWELL AND BARRY HARRIS

We are finally ready to tackle our next four comping transcriptions, all of which demonstrate comping on rhythm changes or related forms. The first two show Bud Powell's comping behind Sonny Stitt and Kenny Dorham, the third illustrates Barry Harris's comping behind Slide Hampton and the last one exhibits Bud Powell's comping behind Sonny Rollins and Fats Navarro. Observe their use of trombone voicings with a 3rd or 7th in the RH thumb. Also, note their use of inverted 7th chords and passing chords like the ones from the previous section. Of course, some of the voicings will be new to you and won't neatly fit inside this workbook's brief explanations. That is the beauty of jazz.

**Comping Exercise #53: Learning Bud Powell's Comping on the changes to "Sonny Side"**

Check out Bud Powell's comping behind Sonny Stitt on "Sonny Side" from the album: *Sonny Stitt, Bud Powell, and JJ Johnson.* Bud's aggressive and propulsive style drives the rhythm section. "Sonny Side" is a medium-up Bb rhythm changes tune.

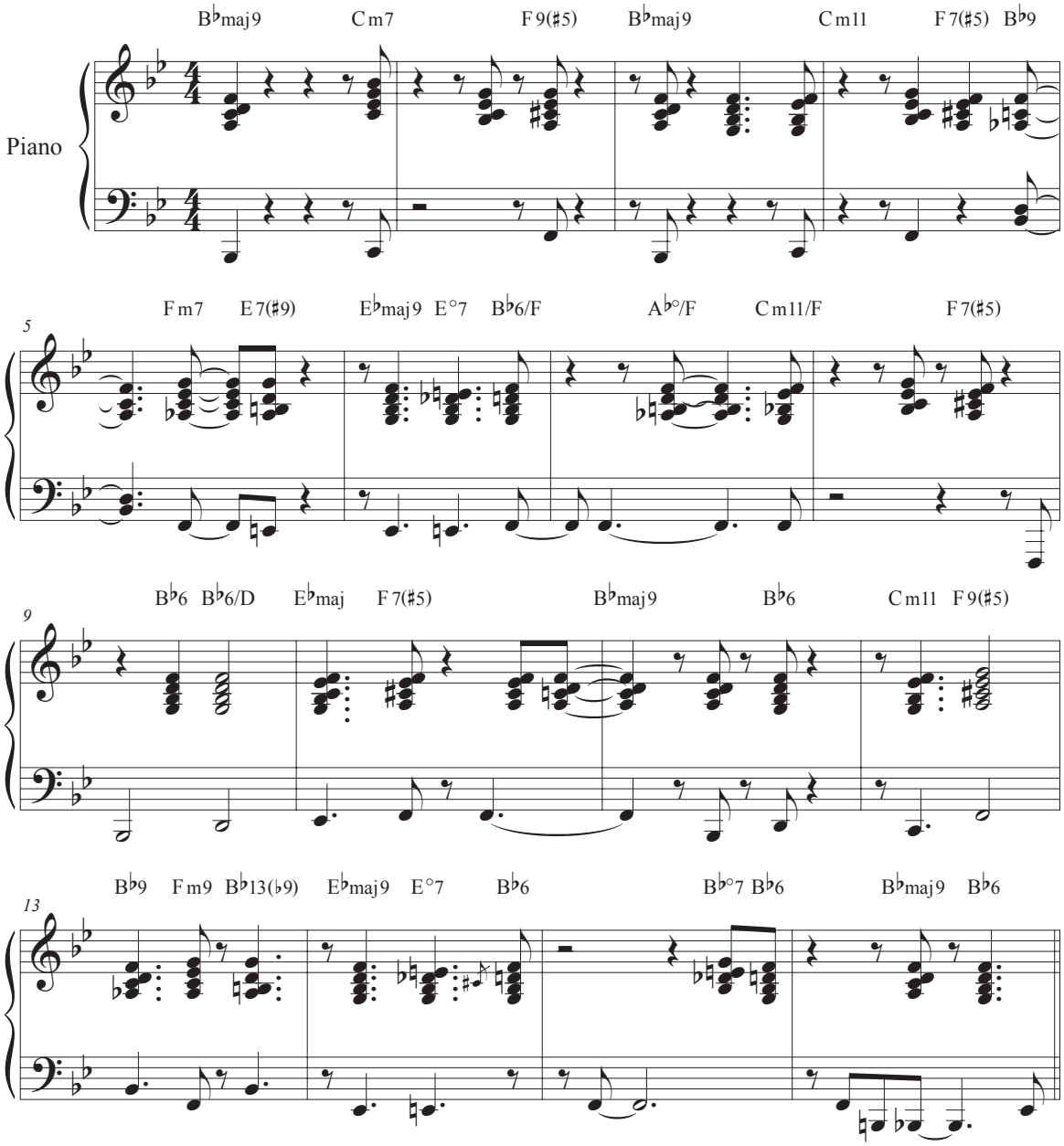
Again, use a slow down device to play along with the original recording **OR**, as well as using the play-along **CD 1 Track 25**. For a demonstration of the comping transcription listen to **CD 1 Track 24.** The demo track contains the comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

FIG. 1

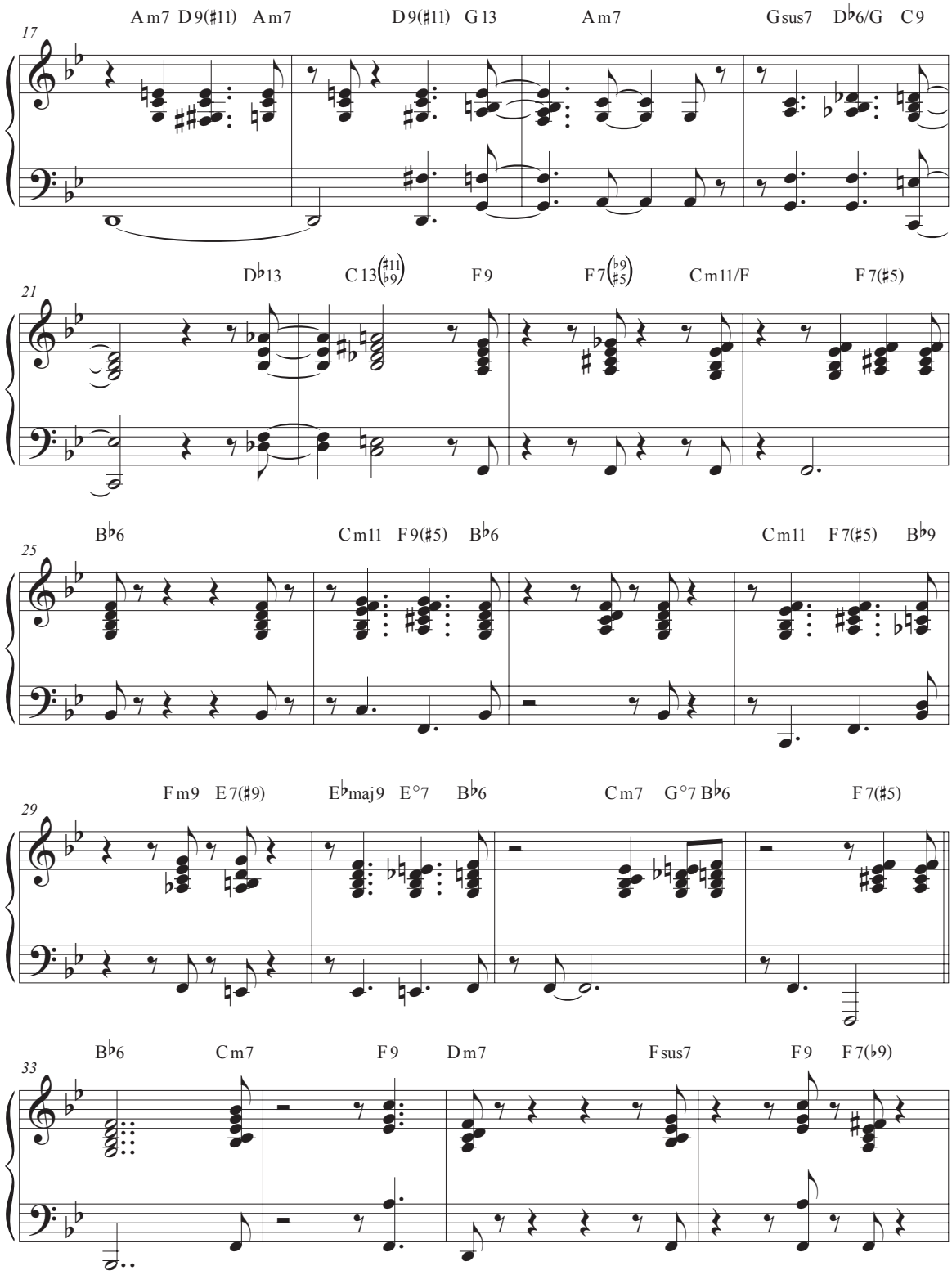
# Bud Powell's Comping

## On the changes to "Sonny Side" (Rhythm Changes)

Note: This is meant only as an approximation of Bud's comp. Some LH notes may have been added to fill out the sound. In any case, the LH should be under the RH in terms of volume. Also, pay careful attention to the independence between the hands.

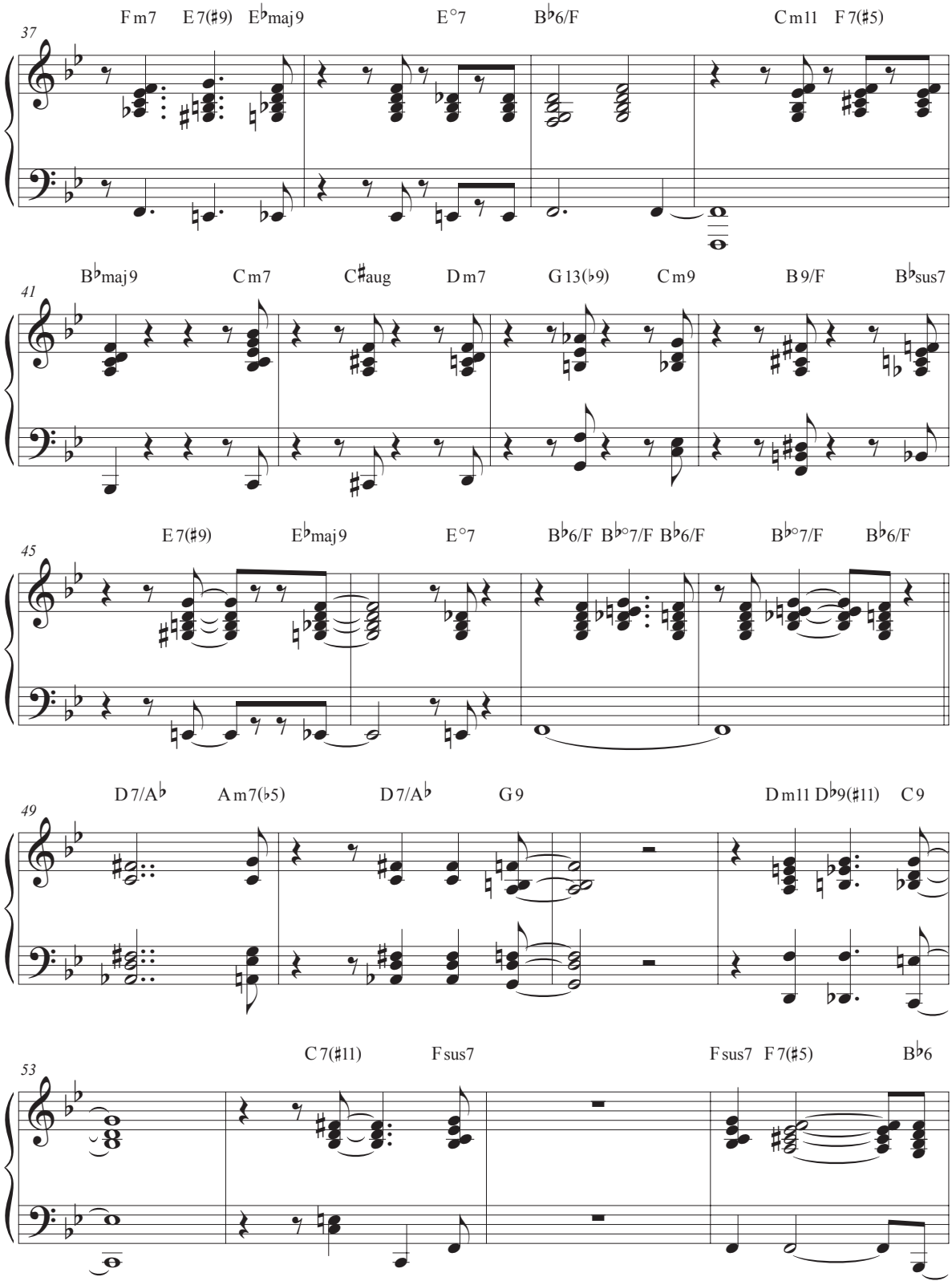


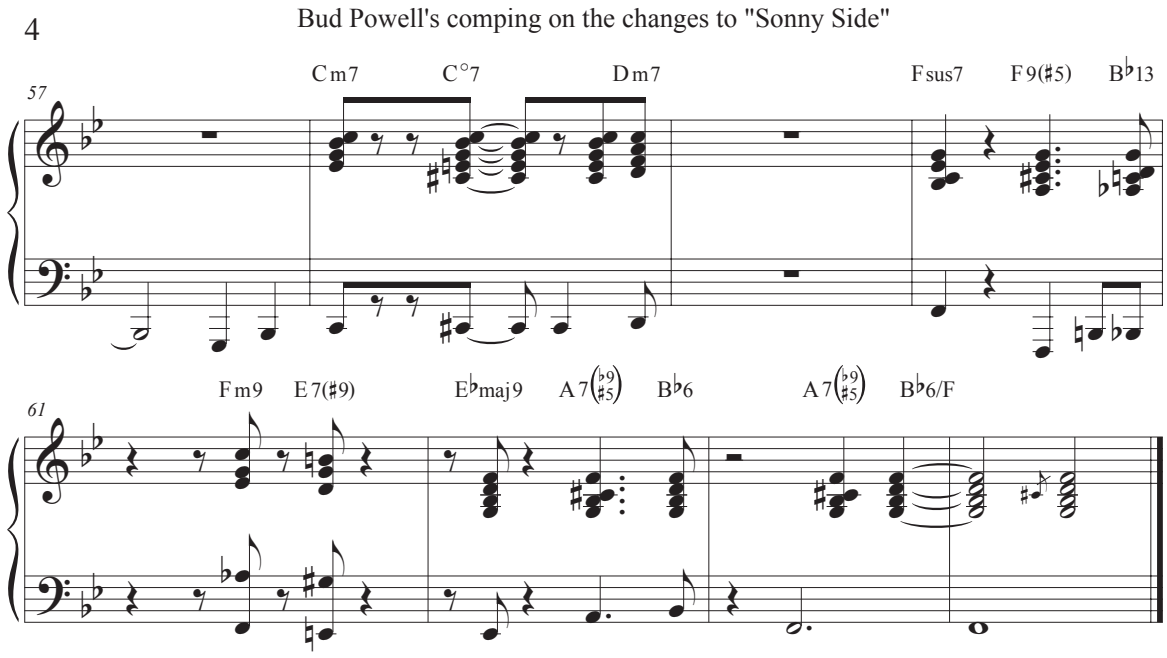
2 Bud Powell's comping on the changes to "Sonny Side"



Bud Powell's comping on the changes to "Sonny Side"







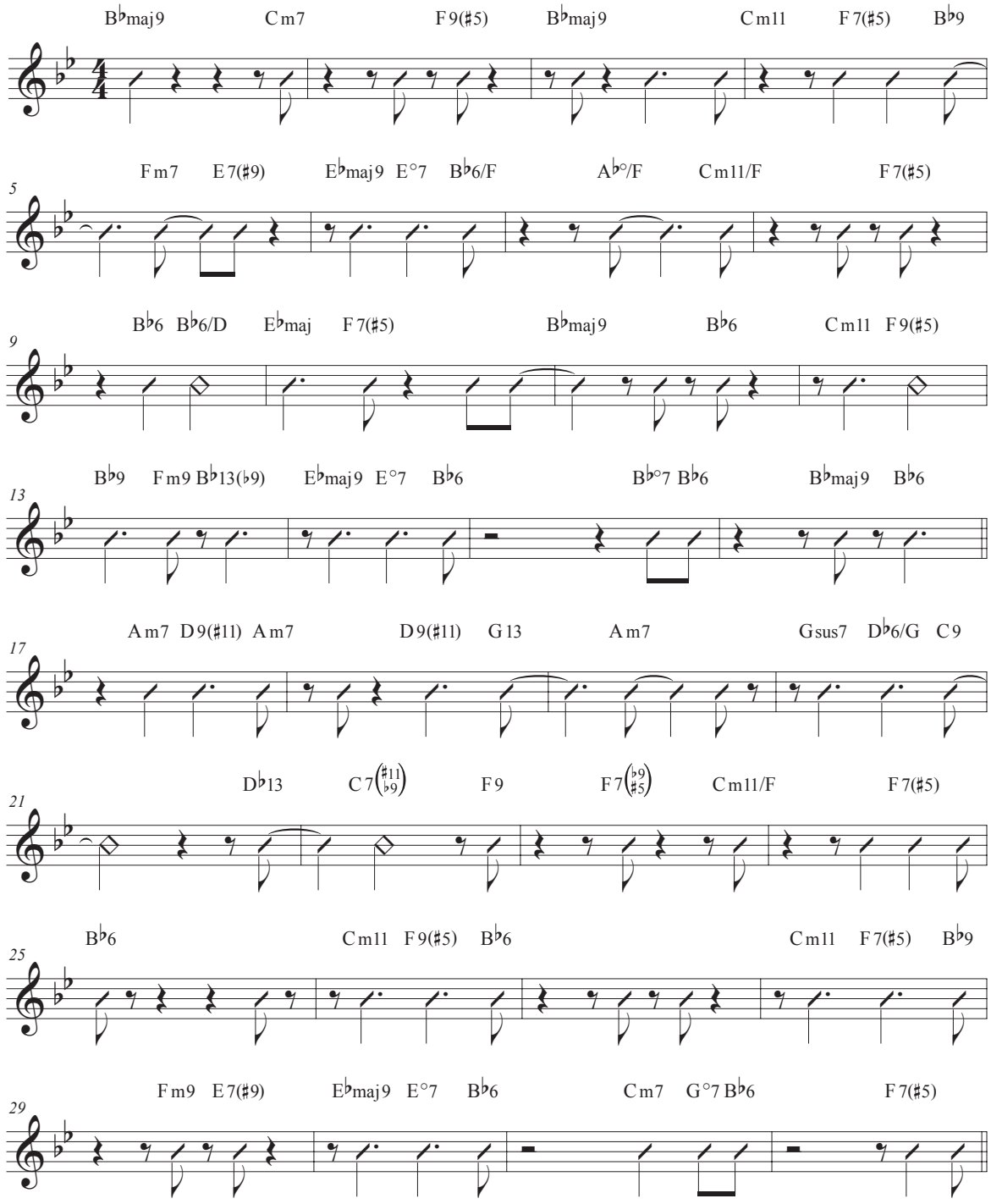

**Comping Exercise #54: Applying different voicings styles using Bud Powell's Comping Guide on the changes to "Sonny Side."** Apply a variety of voicing styles to Bud Powell's comping pattern. Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 25**.

Note that for some of the slash chords, the bass note was removed to simplify the voicings. For slash chords (chords with alternate bass notes) you can read the top chord for the rootless skeletal structure or trombone voicing in the RH and then play the alternate bass note in the LH. When using rootless voicings you can ignore the alternate bass note.

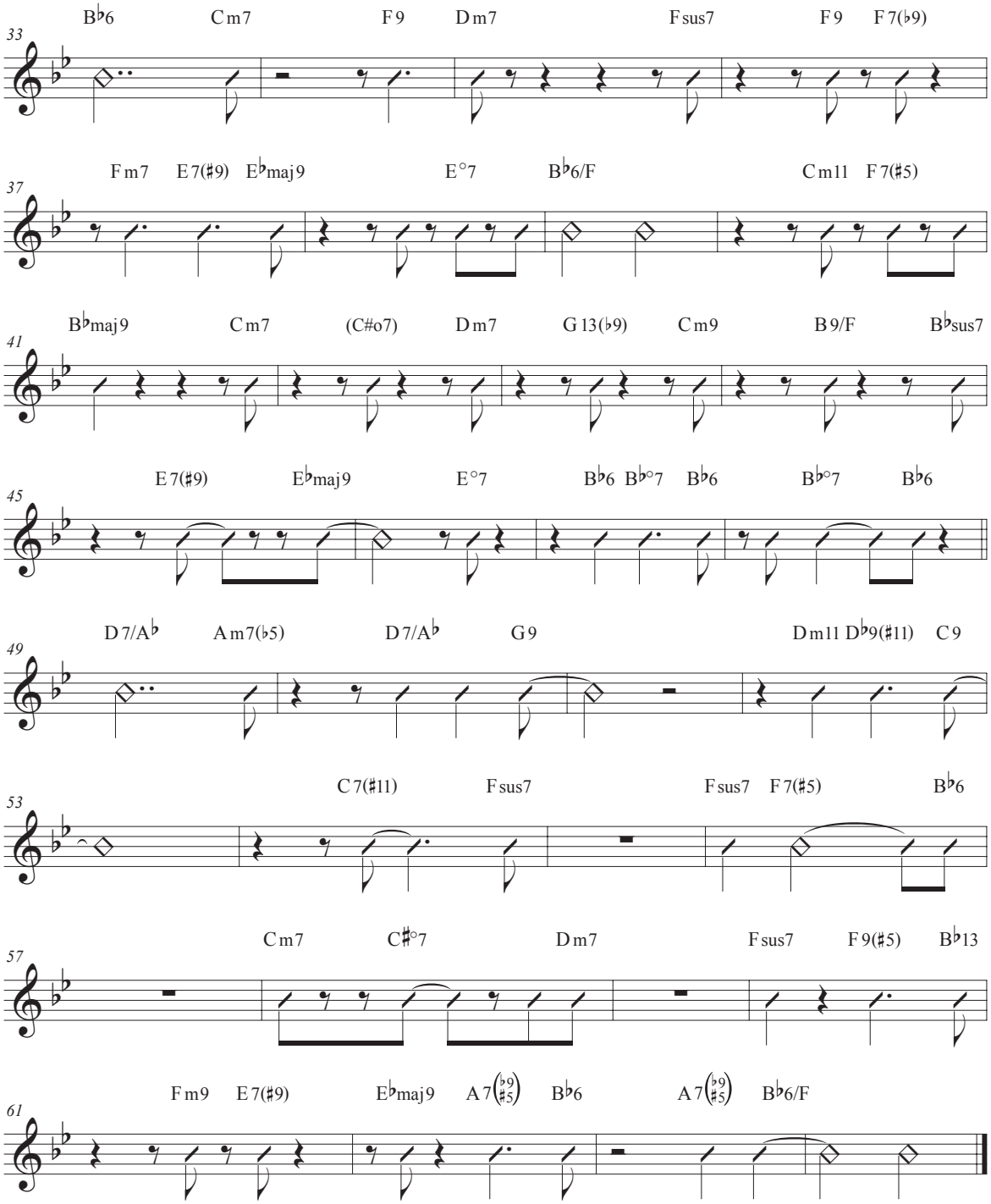
FIG. 2

# Bud Powell's Comping Guide

on the changes to "Sonny Side"



Bud Powell's Comping Guide on the changes to "Sonny Side"



**Comping Exercise #55: Working with Bud's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 16-20.**
Apply the BPCR's (Bud Powell Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the BPCP's (Bud Powell Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 3

## Bud Powell Comping Rhythms

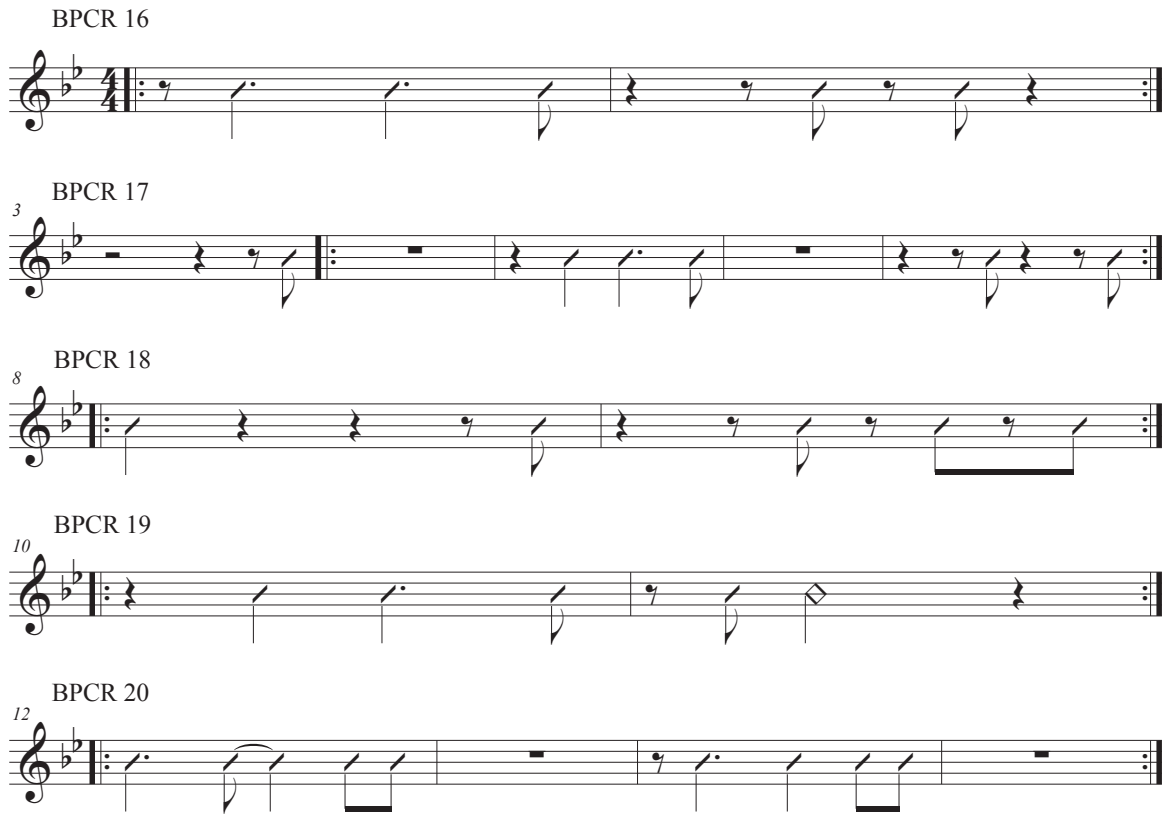
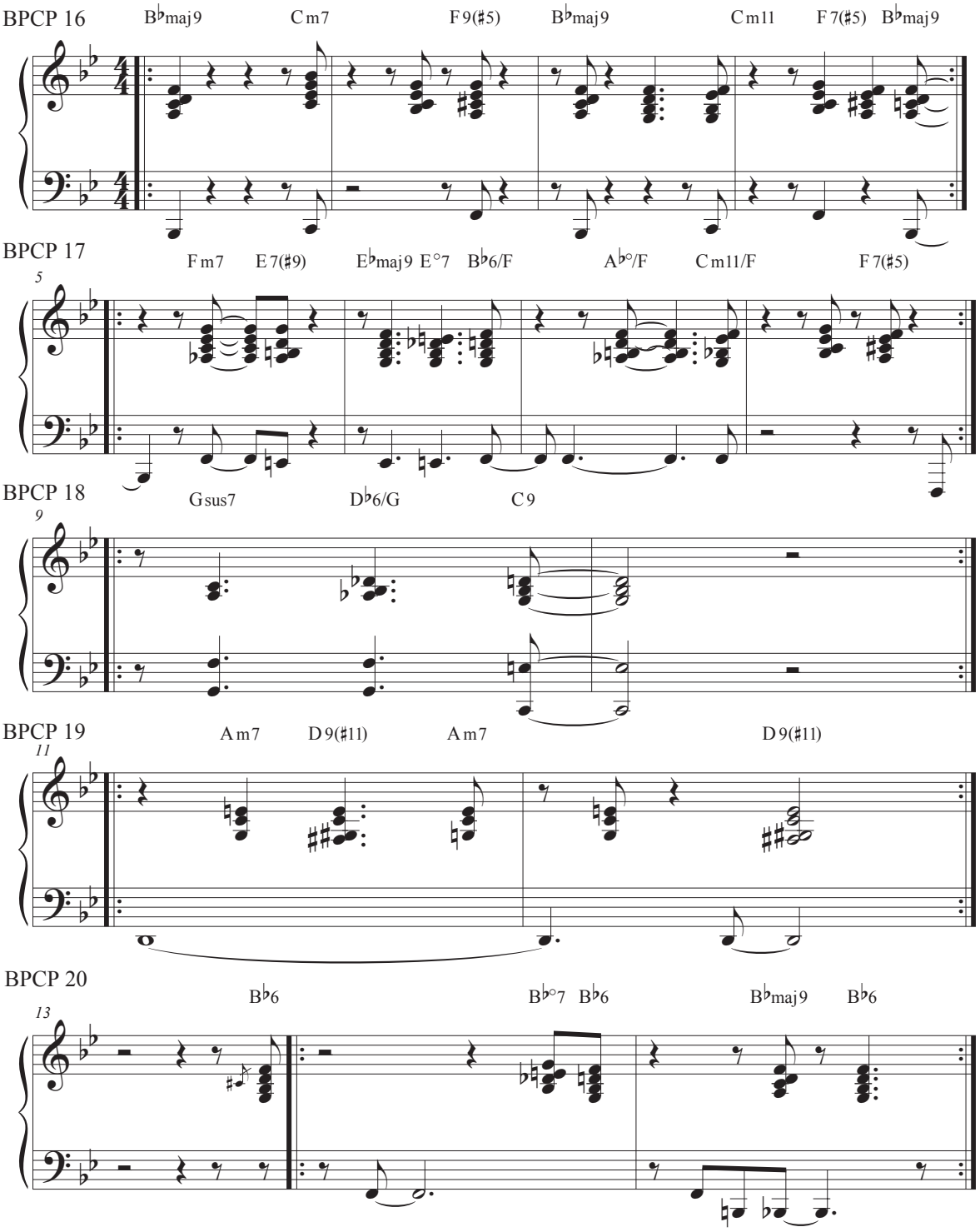


FIG. 4

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #56: Learning Bud Powell's Comping on "Bombay."**
Check out Bud Powell's comping behind Kenny Dorham's solo on "Bombay" from the album: *Opus de Bop.* Bud's funky and rhythmic style drives the rhythm section. The forward motion justifies Bud's use of harsh vertical sonorities that add to the overall funkiness of the comp. Notice his use of octaves in the LH (probably a remnant of an earlier era when fortifying the bass was important for recording purposes). "Bombay" is a Bb rhythm changes tune at a medium tempo.

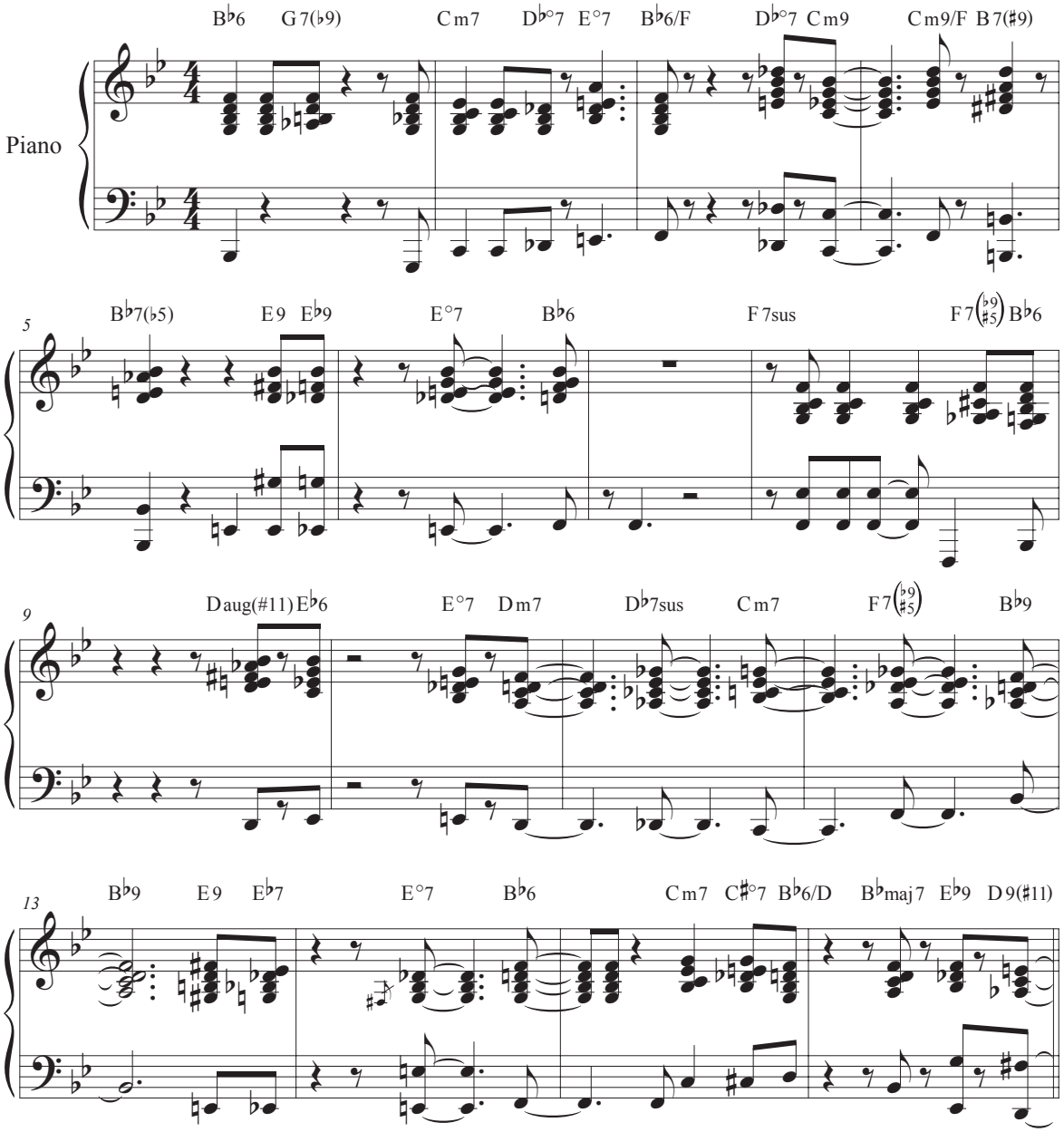
Again, use a slow down device to play along with the original recording as well as using the play-along CD provided. The demo track contains the comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

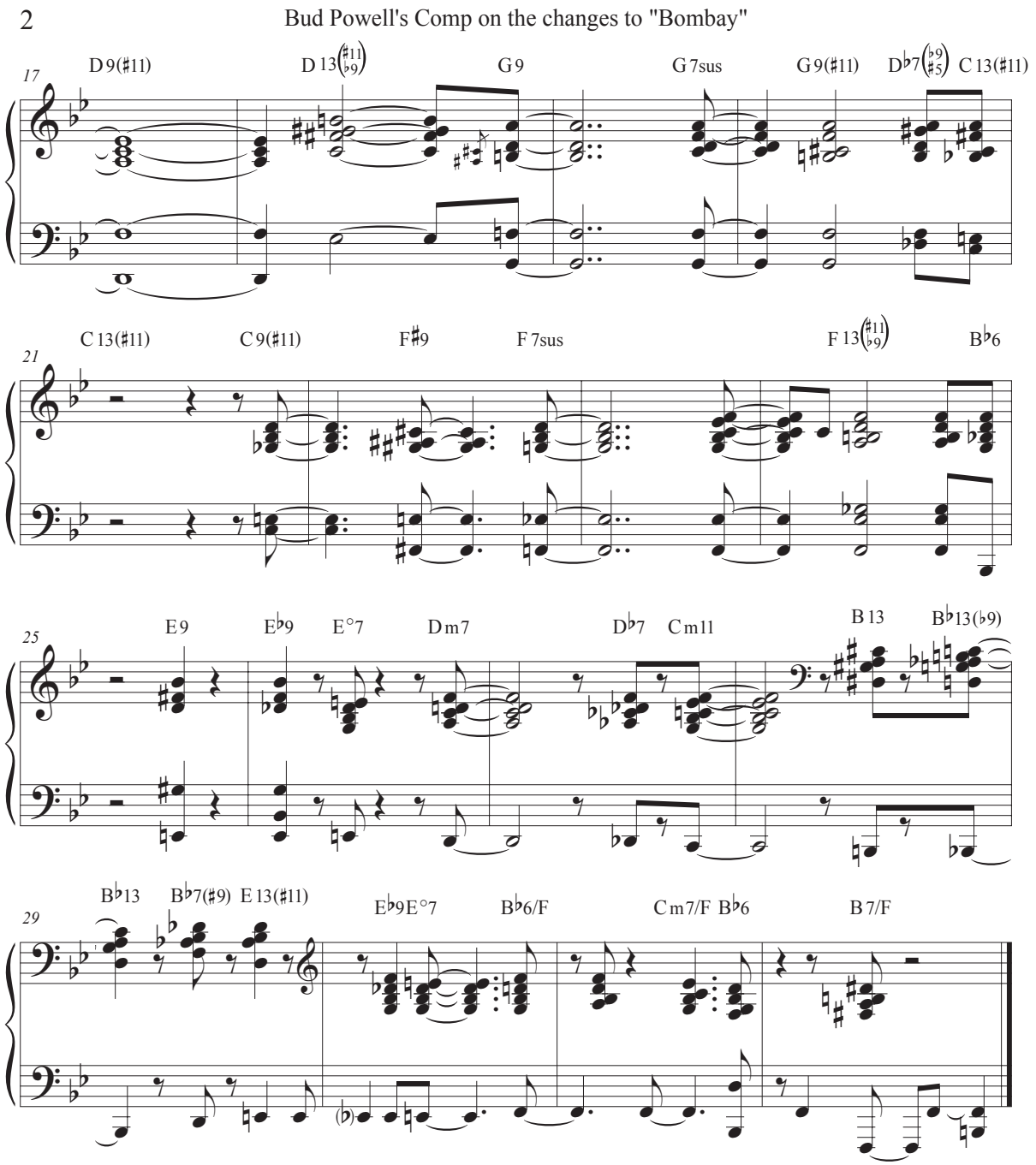
Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 26 (for demo) and Track 27 (without piano).**

FIG. 5

# Bud Powell's Comping

On the changes to "Bombay" (Rhythm Changes)



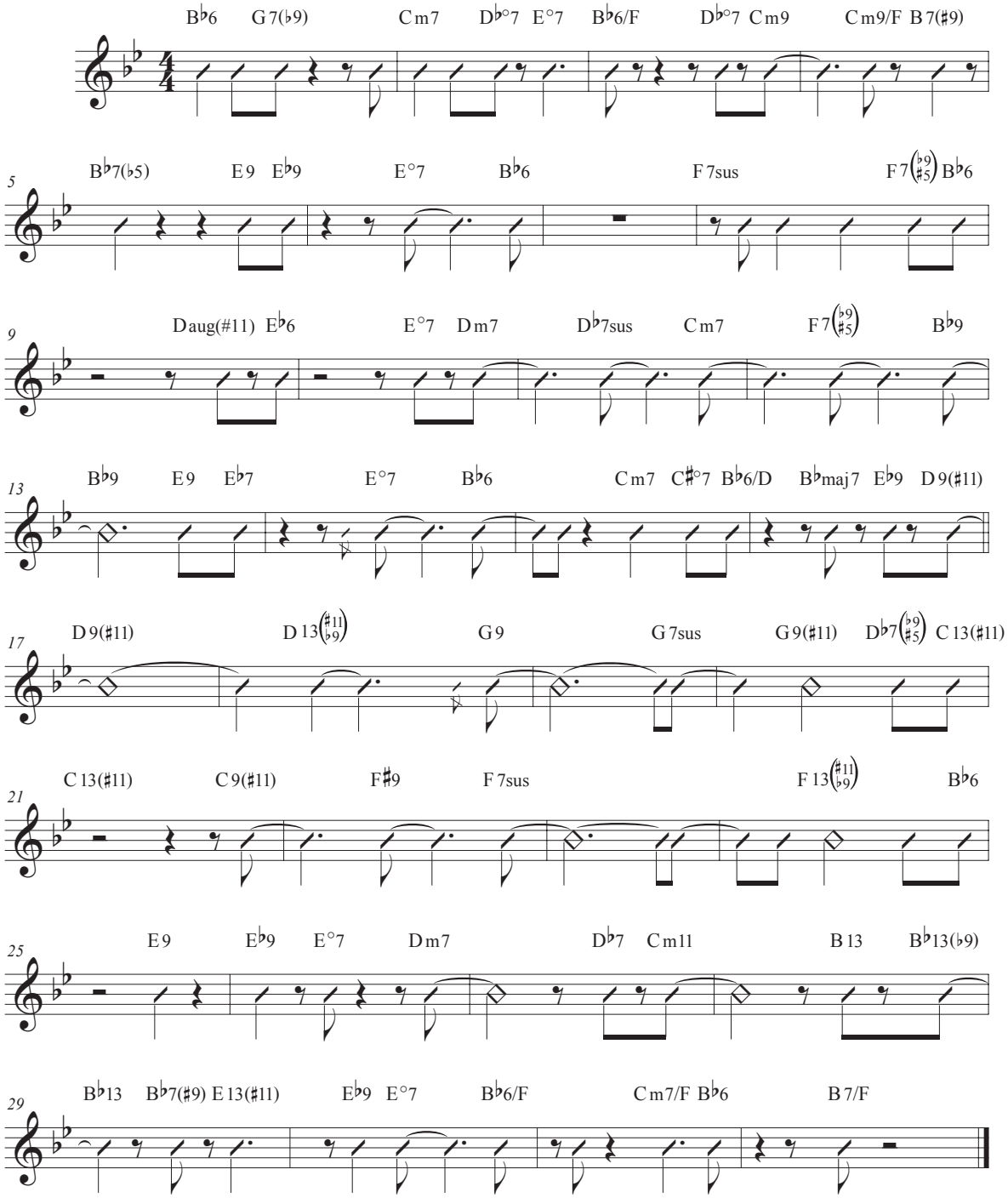



**Comping Exercise #57: Applying different voicings styles using Bud Powell's Comping Guide on the changes to "Bombay."** Apply a variety of voicing styles to Bud Powell's comping pattern. Use the OR and **CD 1 Track 27**.

FIG. 6

# Bud Powell's Comping Guide

on the changes to "Bombay"



**Comping Exercise #58: Working with Bud's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 21-25.**
Apply the BPCR's (Bud Powell Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the BPCP's (Bud Powell Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 7

## Bud Powell's Comping Rhythms

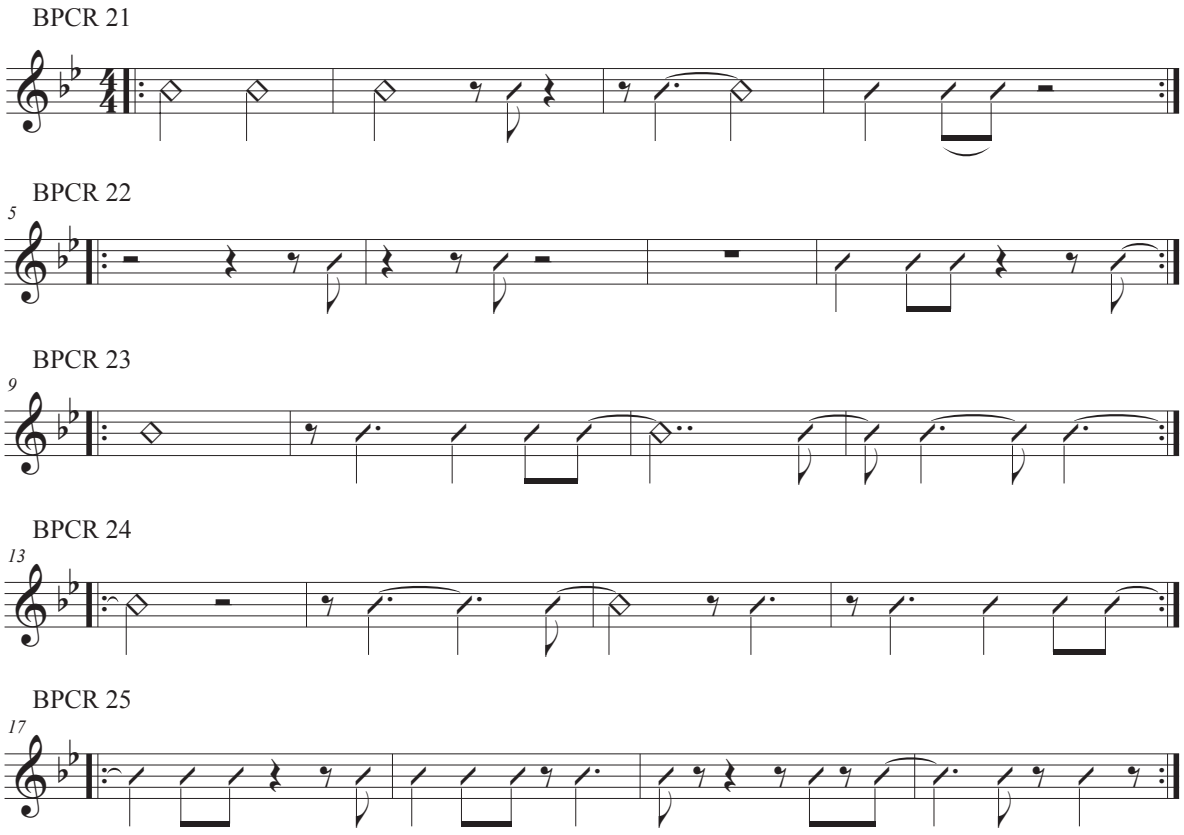
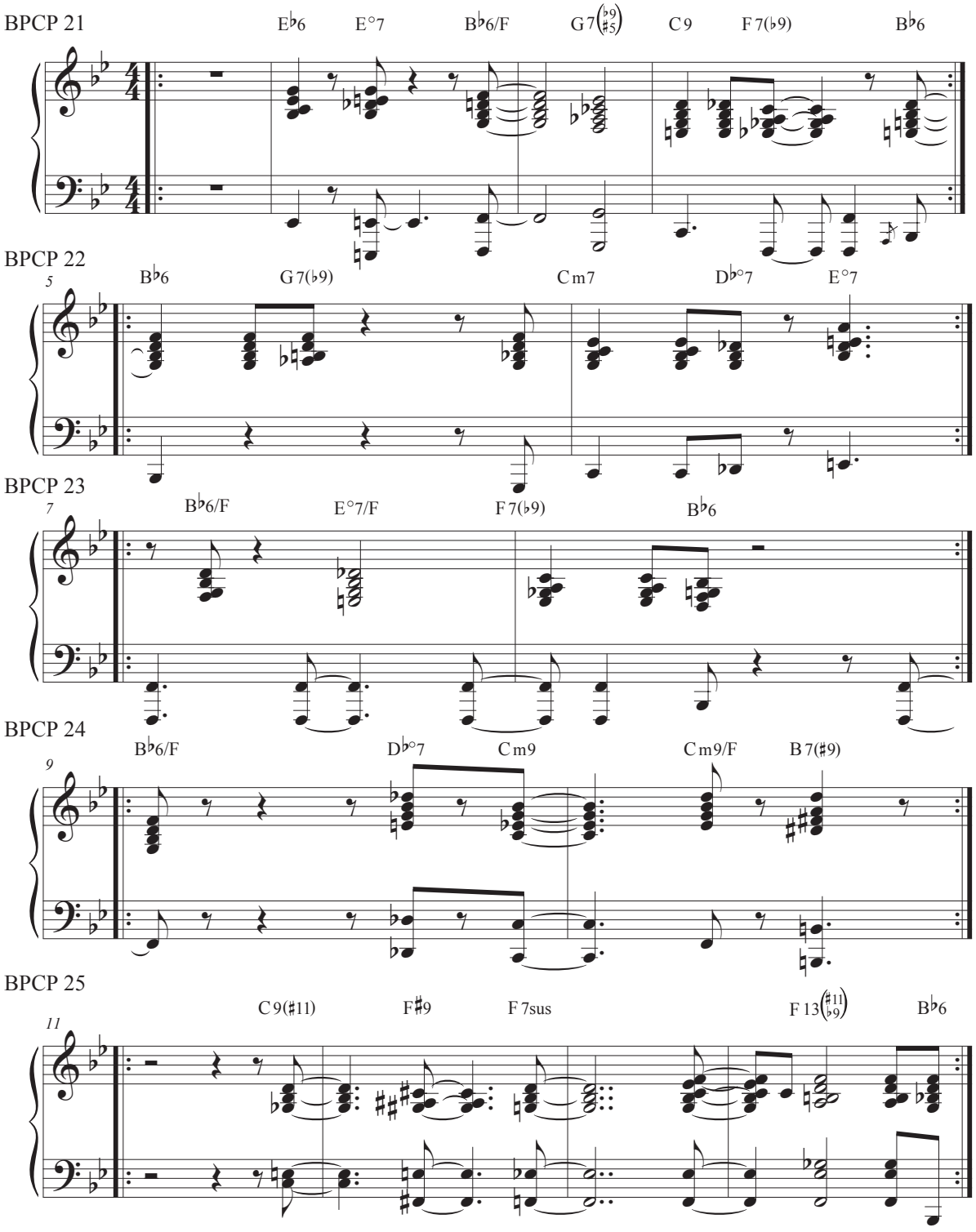


FIG. 8

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #59: Learning Barry Harris's Comping on the changes to "Nicaragua."**

Always eloquent and beautiful, Barry Harris is a living legend and a fervent proponent of bebop and its legacy. Barry was born and raised in Detroit and became a central figure of the Detroit jazz scene during the early 50's. During this time Barry Harris played with several luminaries traveling through town, including with the legendary Charlie Parker, who along with Bud Powell and Art Tatum had a great influence on Barry's style. In 1960, Barry Harris moved to New York, joined the Cannonball Adderley Quintet, and quickly gained national recognition. Barry Harris has recorded with many of the jazz greats including Coleman Hawkins, Sonny Stitt, Yusef Lateef, Dexter Gordon, and Jimmy Heath, in addition to recording and playing with his own groups since the late 50's. He has also been dedicated to teaching since the beginning of his career, and still offers weekly classes in NYC.

In regards to comping, Barry's effortless style seems to just flow. Check out his comping behind Slide Hampton on "Nicaragua" from the album: *Luminescence*. Barry's interaction with Slide is magical. "Nicaragua" is a C rhythm changes tune with a "Honeysuckle" bridge (the bridge goes ii—V to IV for the 1st four bars then ii—V of V for the next 2 bars, and finally ii—V to I for the final 2 bars.)

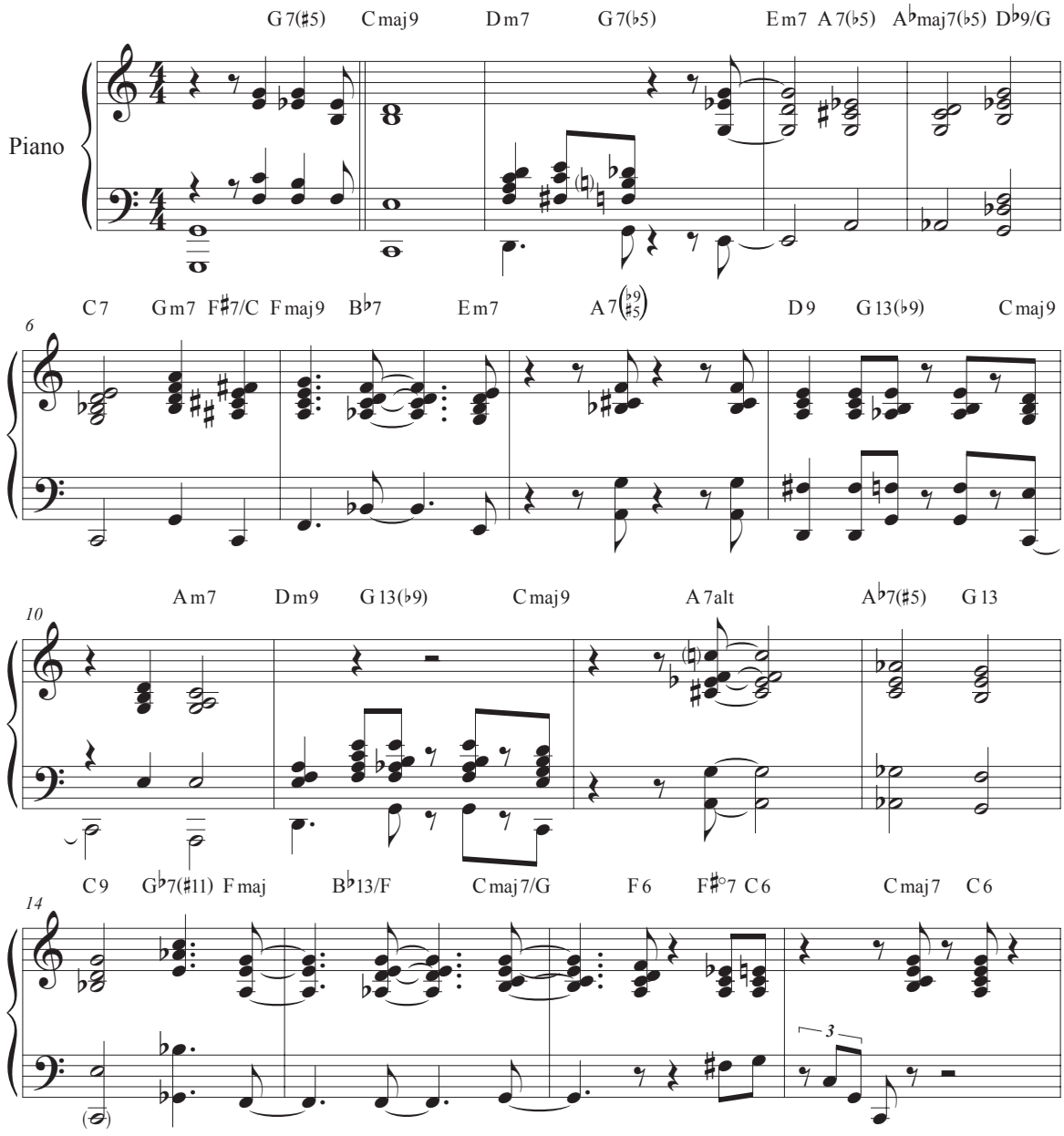
It's great to practice this comping transcription as is with the original recording. Try practicing with a slow down device and play it at different tempos. You can also comp along with the CD that accompanies this book. See CD instructions. Feel free to omit the root when the voicing is too large for your hands.

Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 28 (for demo) and Track 29 (without piano).** The demo track contains the comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

FIG. 9

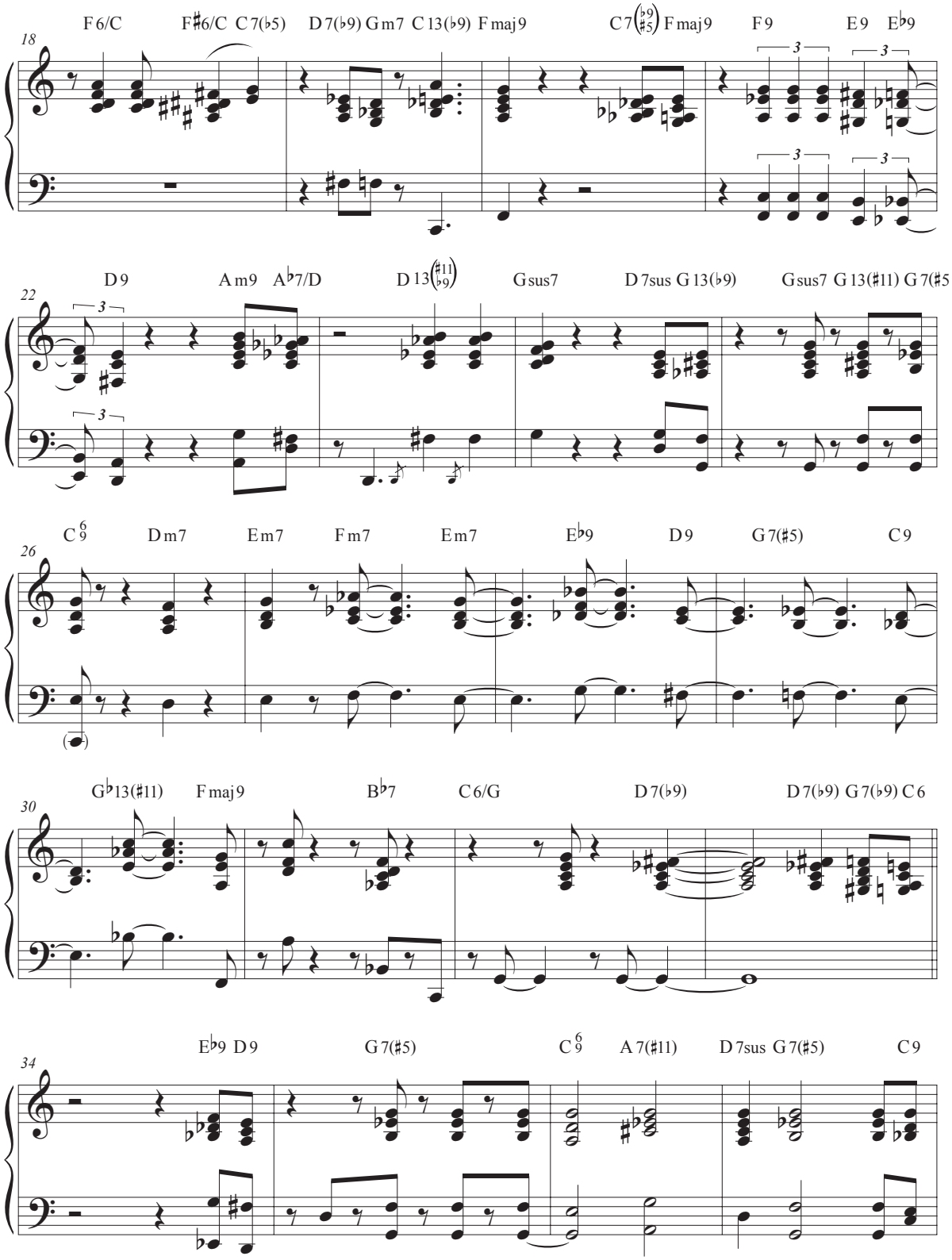
# Barry Harris's Comping

On the changes to "Nicaragua" (Rhythm Changes)



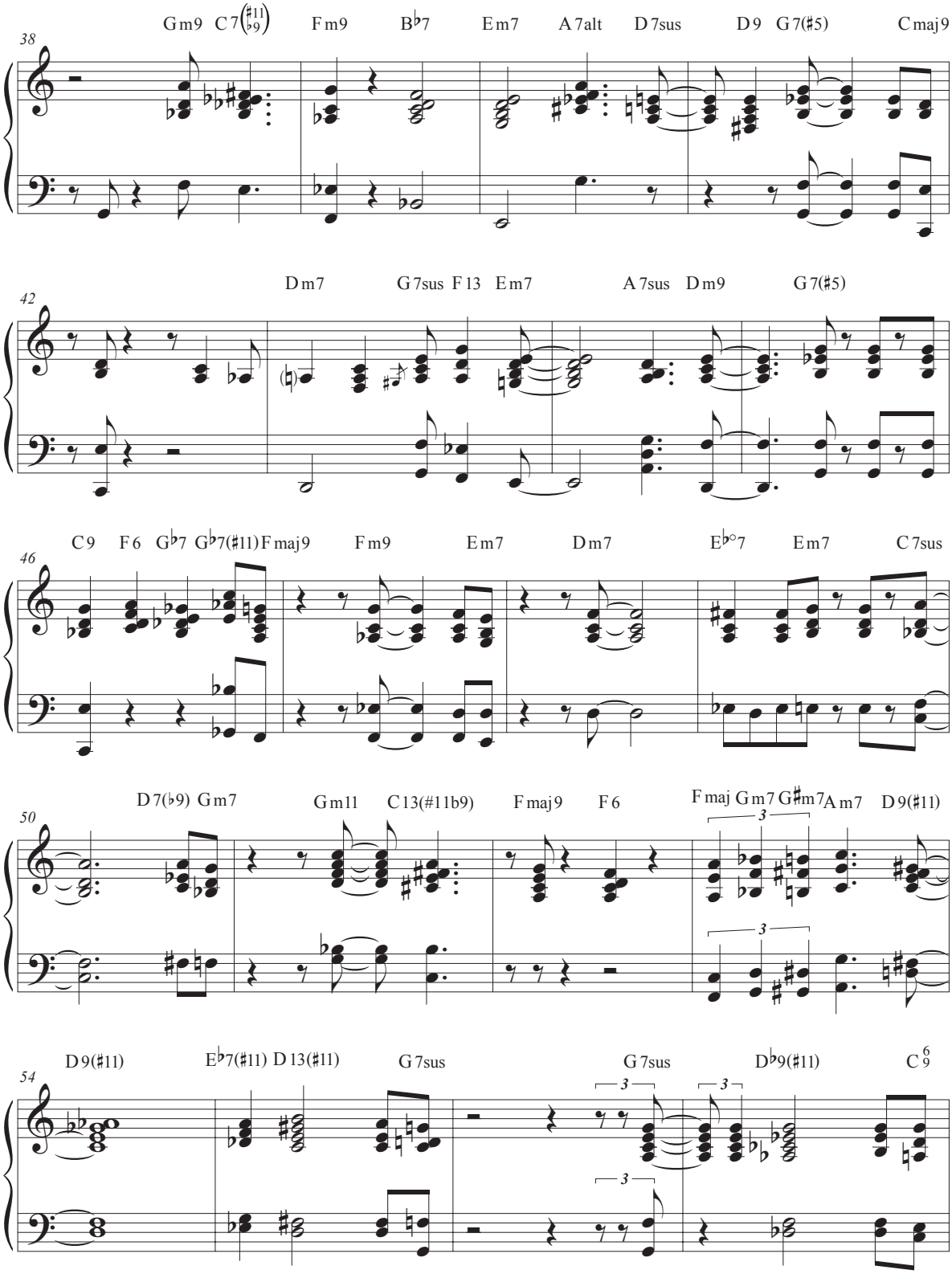
2

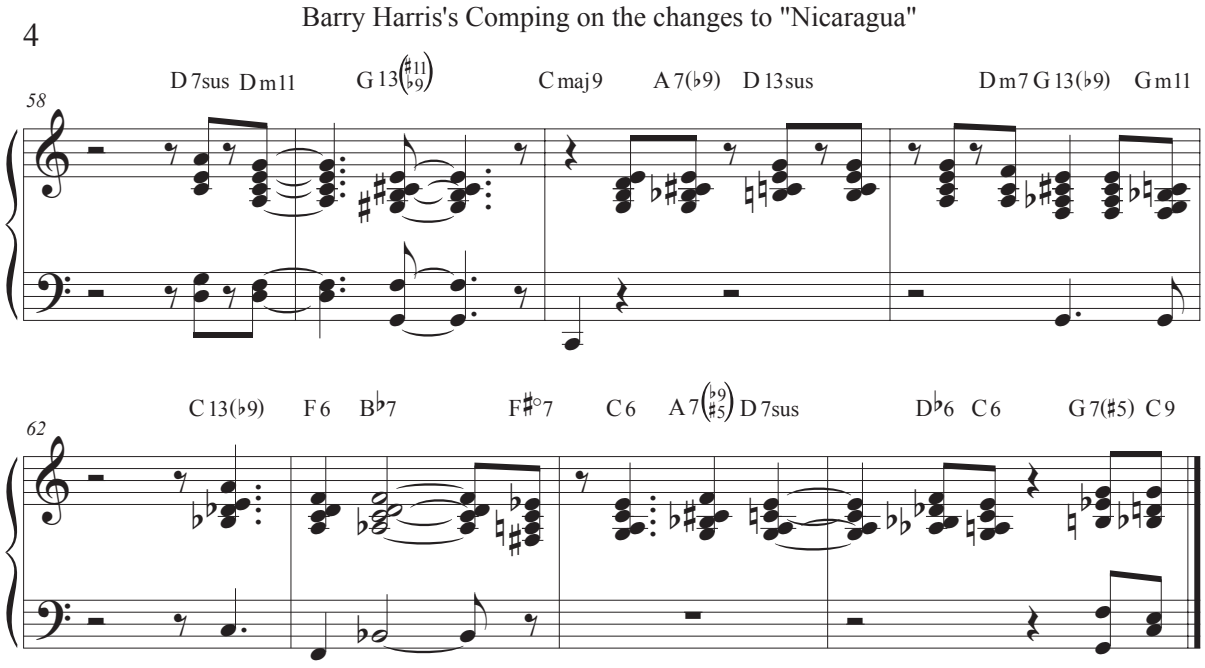
Barry Harris's Comping on the changes to "Nicaragua"



Barry Harris's Comping on the changes to "Nicaragua"








(Note: Chords in paranthesis refer to passing chords. See previous section for explanation. Again, due to the nature of transcribing comping, this is only meant to be an approximation of what Barry is playing.)

**Comping Exercise #60: Applying different voicings styles using Barry Harris's Comping Guide on the changes to "Nicaragua."** Below is a comping guide showing only Barry Harris's rhythms. Comp through the example using a variety of voicing styles as outlined in ***Comping Transcription Instructions.*** Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 29**.

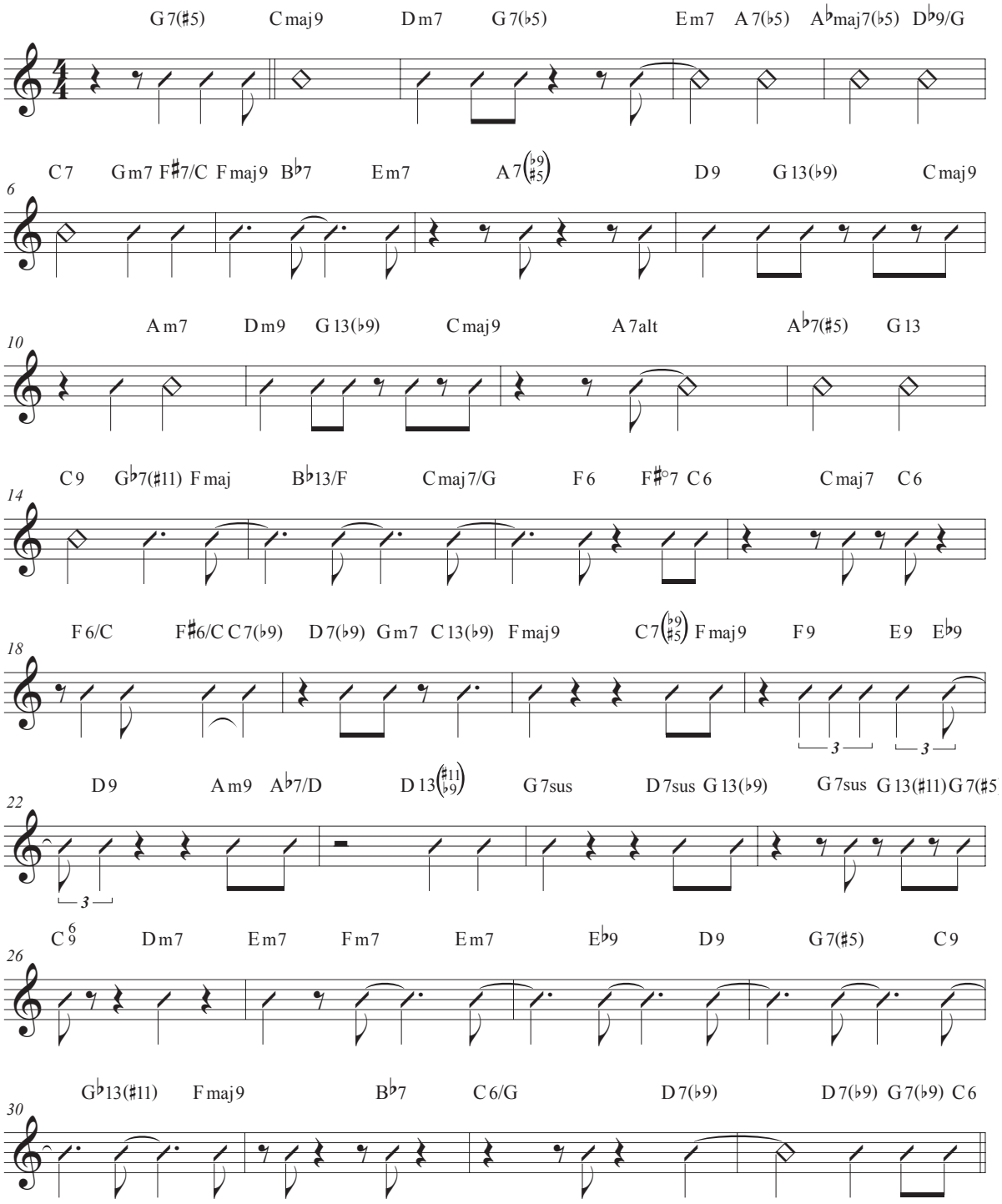
Because Barry uses so many passing chords, his way of comping is perhaps best suited for his own distinctive compact trombone voicings. When applying different voicing styles it might be more effective to leave out some of the passing chords. It is up to you to experiment and find what works best. For advanced pianists it is worthwhile to apply rootless voicings to all of Barry's chord changes to create a very rich and interesting comping pattern. Again, if this is your first time through this book, applying skeletal structures and trombone voicings (a la Barry) will suffice.

For slash chords (chords with alternate bass notes) you can read the top chord for the rootless skeletal structure or trombone voicing in the RH and then play the alternate bass note in the LH. When using rootless voicings you can ignore the alternate bass note.

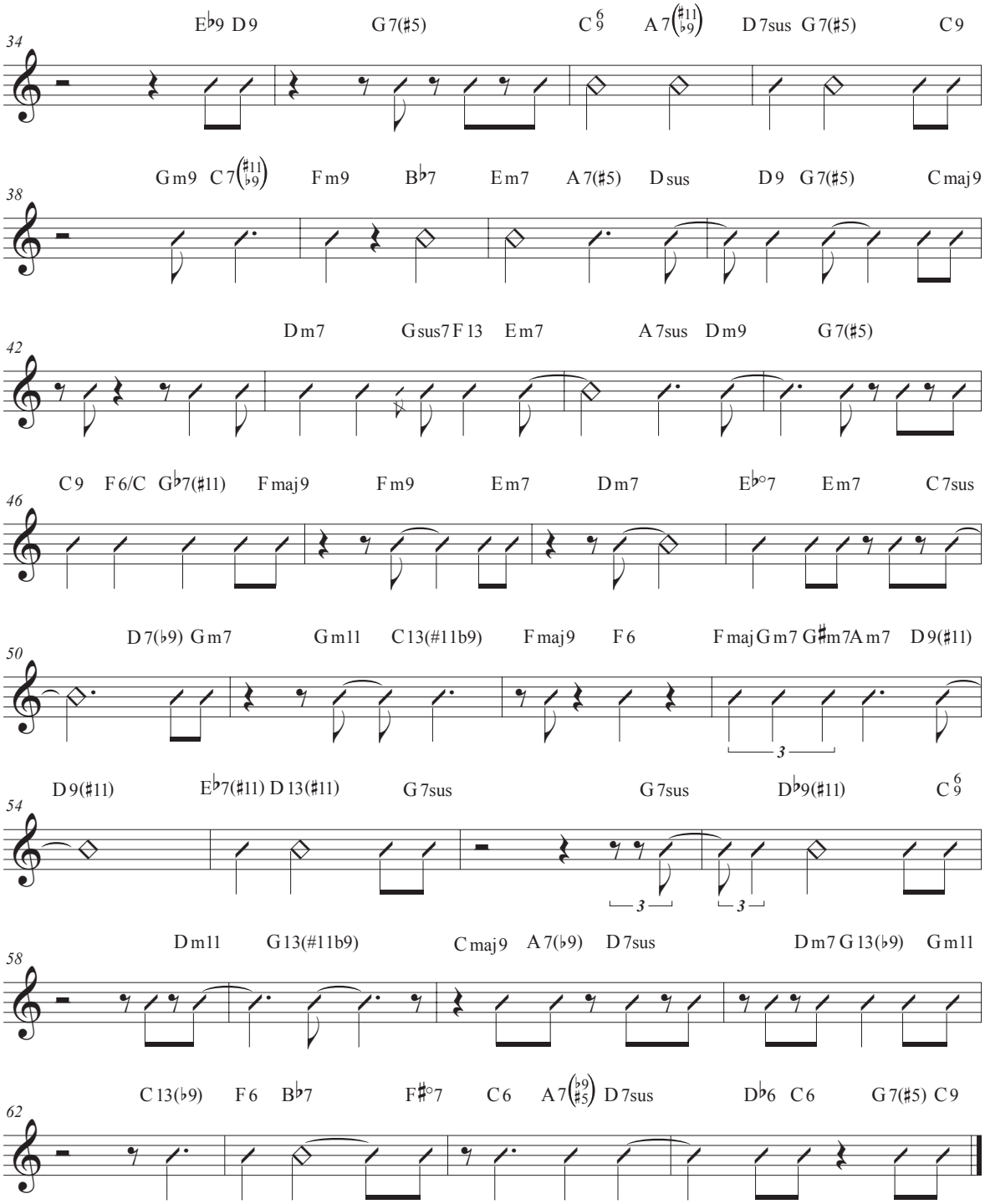
FIG. 10

# Barry Harris's Comping Guide

on the changes to "Nicaragua"



Barry Harris's Comping Guide on the changes to "Nicaragua"



**Comping Exercise #61: Working with Barry's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 1-5.**
Apply the BHCR's (Barry Harris Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the BHCP's (Barry Harris Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 11

## Barry Harris Comping Rhythms

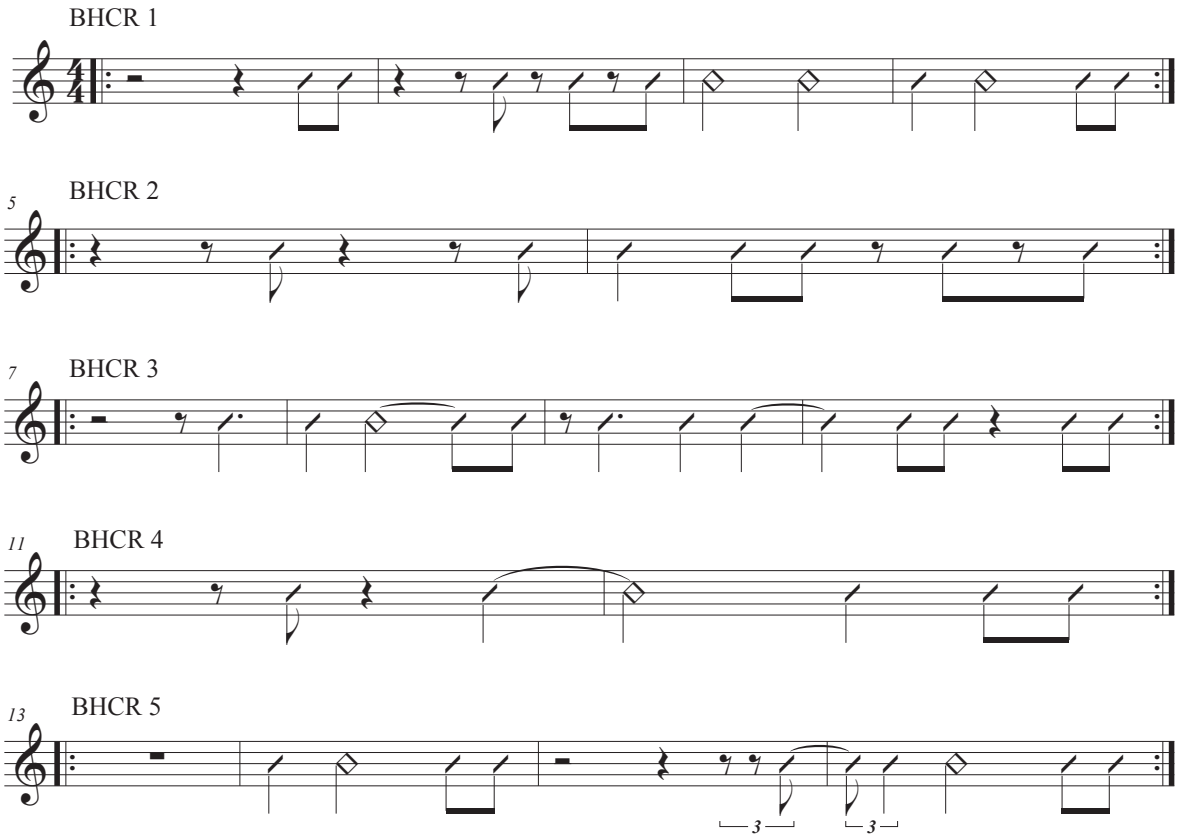
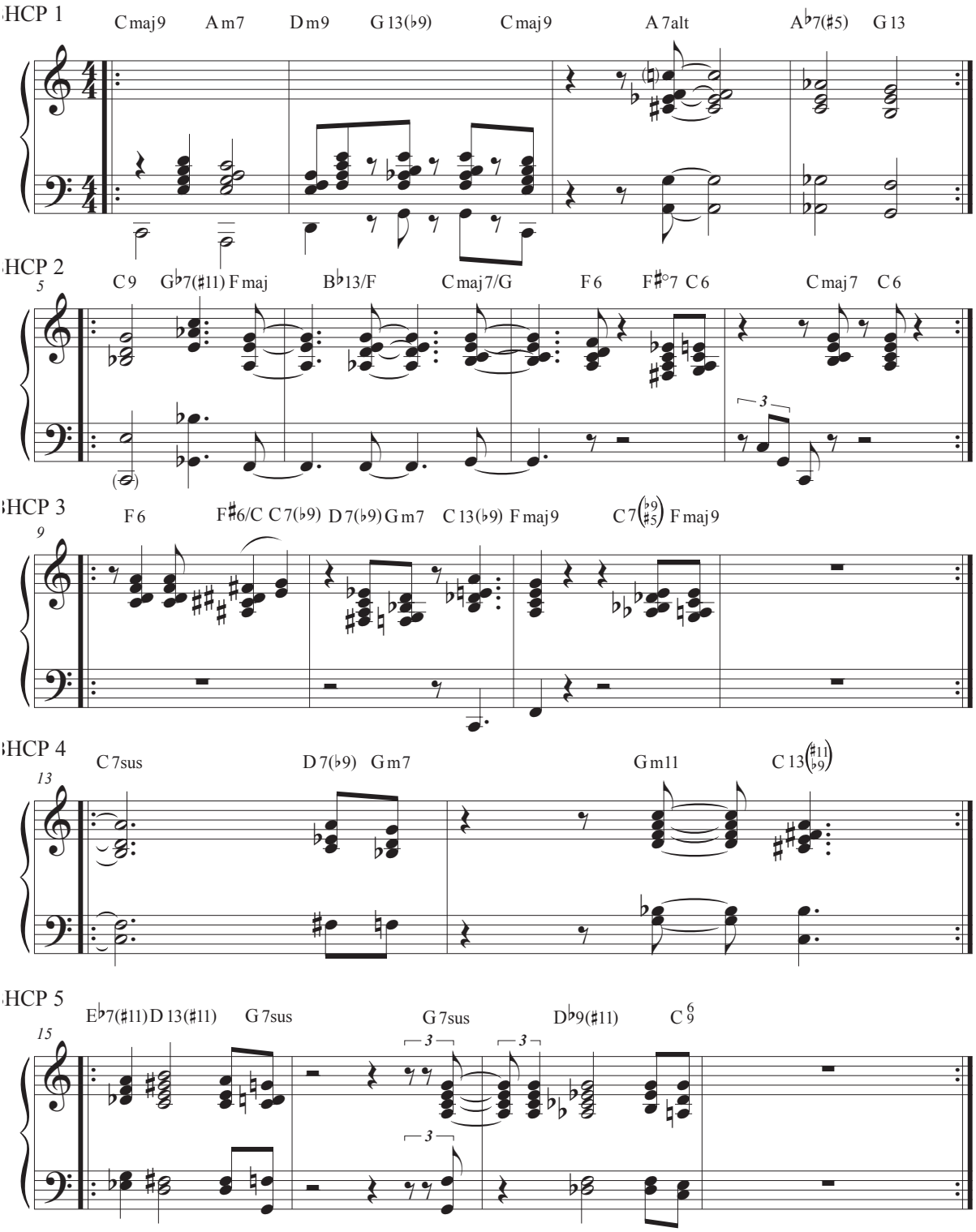


FIG. 12

# Barris Harris Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #62: Investigating Bud Powell's Comping on "Bouncin' with Bud."**

For the final transcription of the section, we will take a look at Bud Powell's distinctive comping behind Sonny Rollins and Fats Navarro on his seminal composition, "Bouncin' with Bud" from *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol. 1.* Notice Bud's extensive use of displaced quarter-note triplets as he interjects these comping rhythms behind the soloists, interacting with the great Max Roach. The abundance of octaves in the LH is characteristic of Bud's aggressive and propulsive comping. Although not technically rhythm changes, "Bouncin' with Bud" shares many similarities.

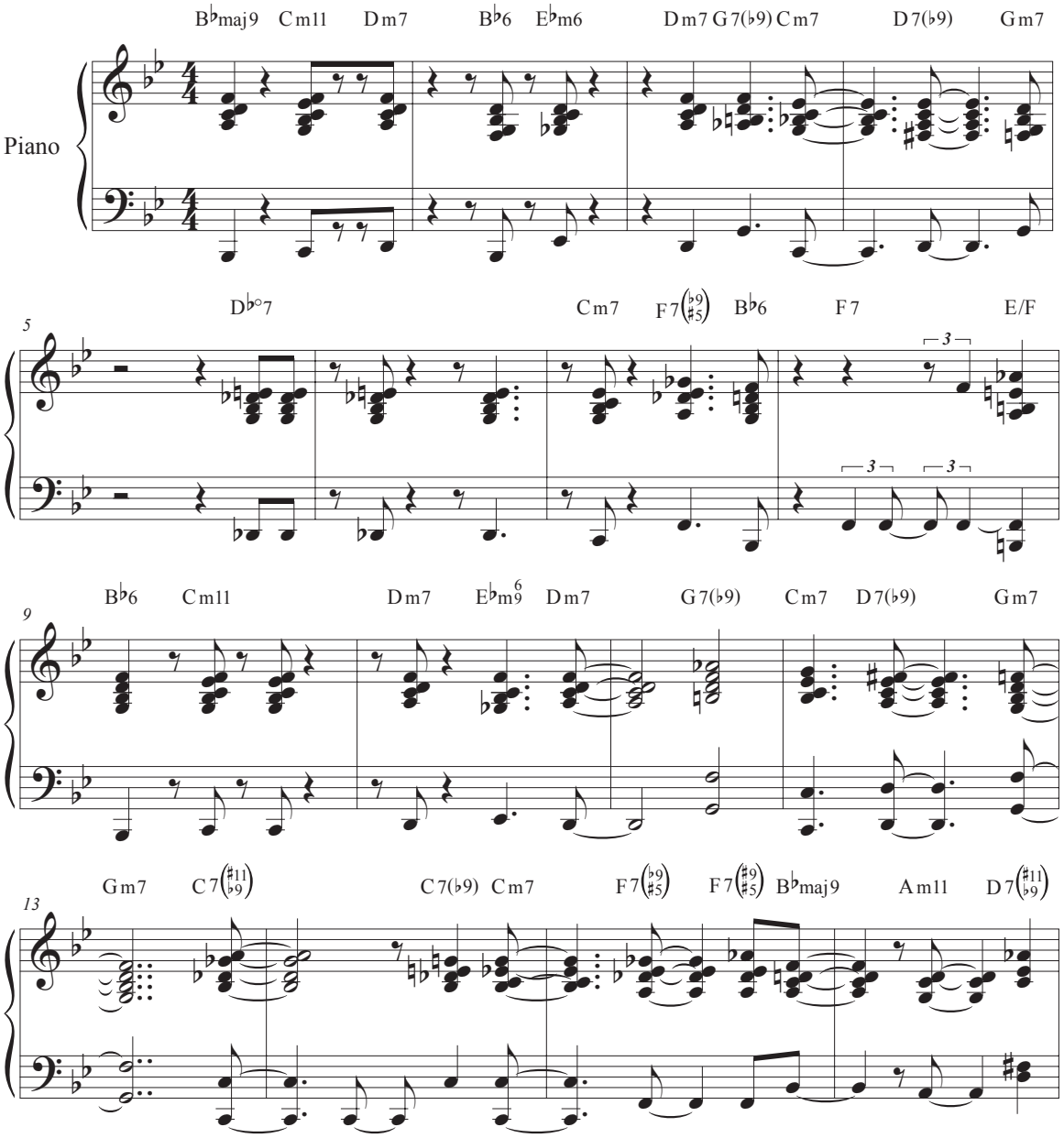
Use a slow down device to play along with the original recording as well as using the play-along CD provided.

Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 30 (for demo) and Track 31 (without piano).** The demo track contains the comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

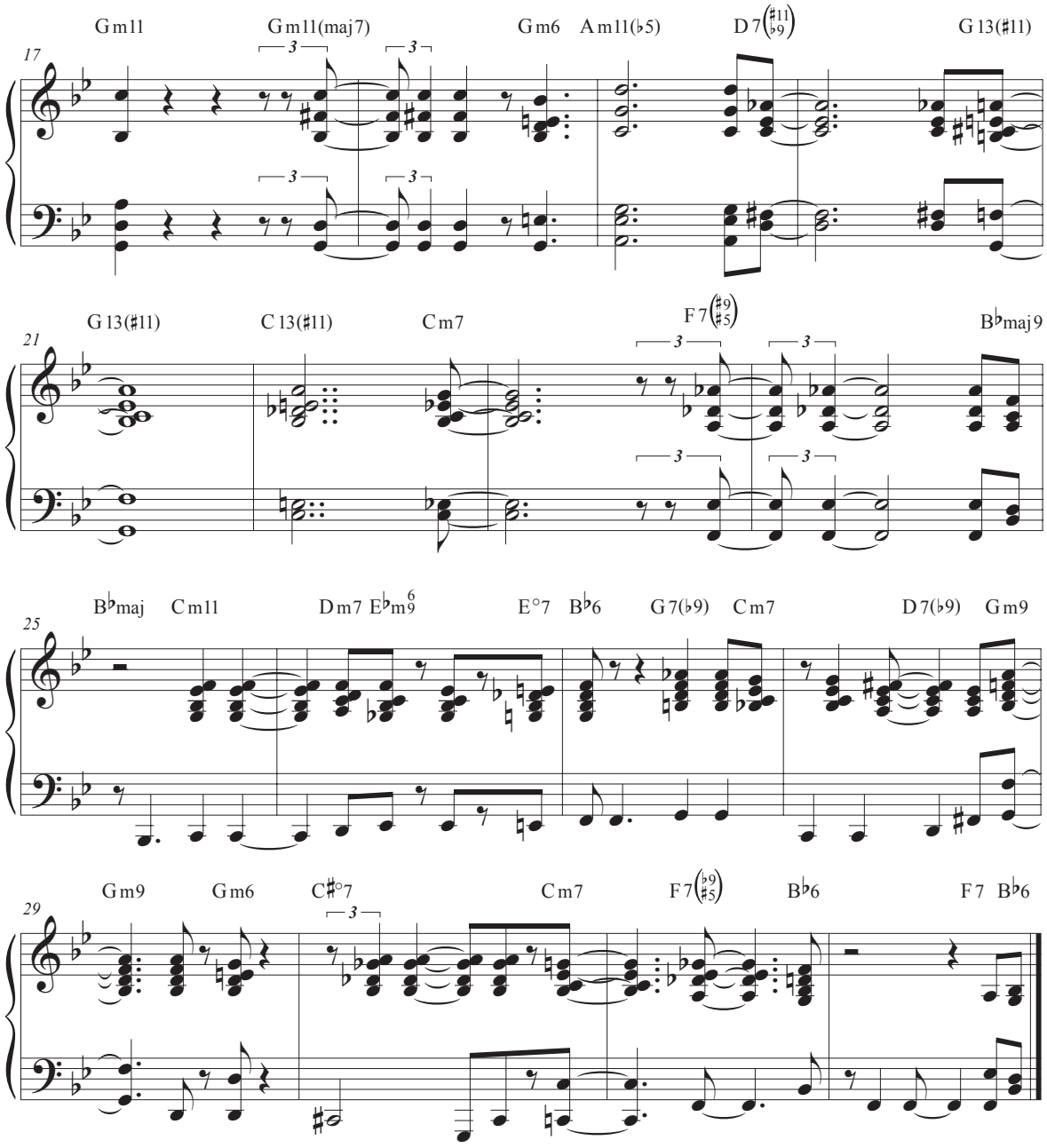
FIG 13.

# Bud Powell's Comping

On the Changes to Bouncin' with Bud



2 Bud Powell's Comp on the Changes to Bouncin' with Bud

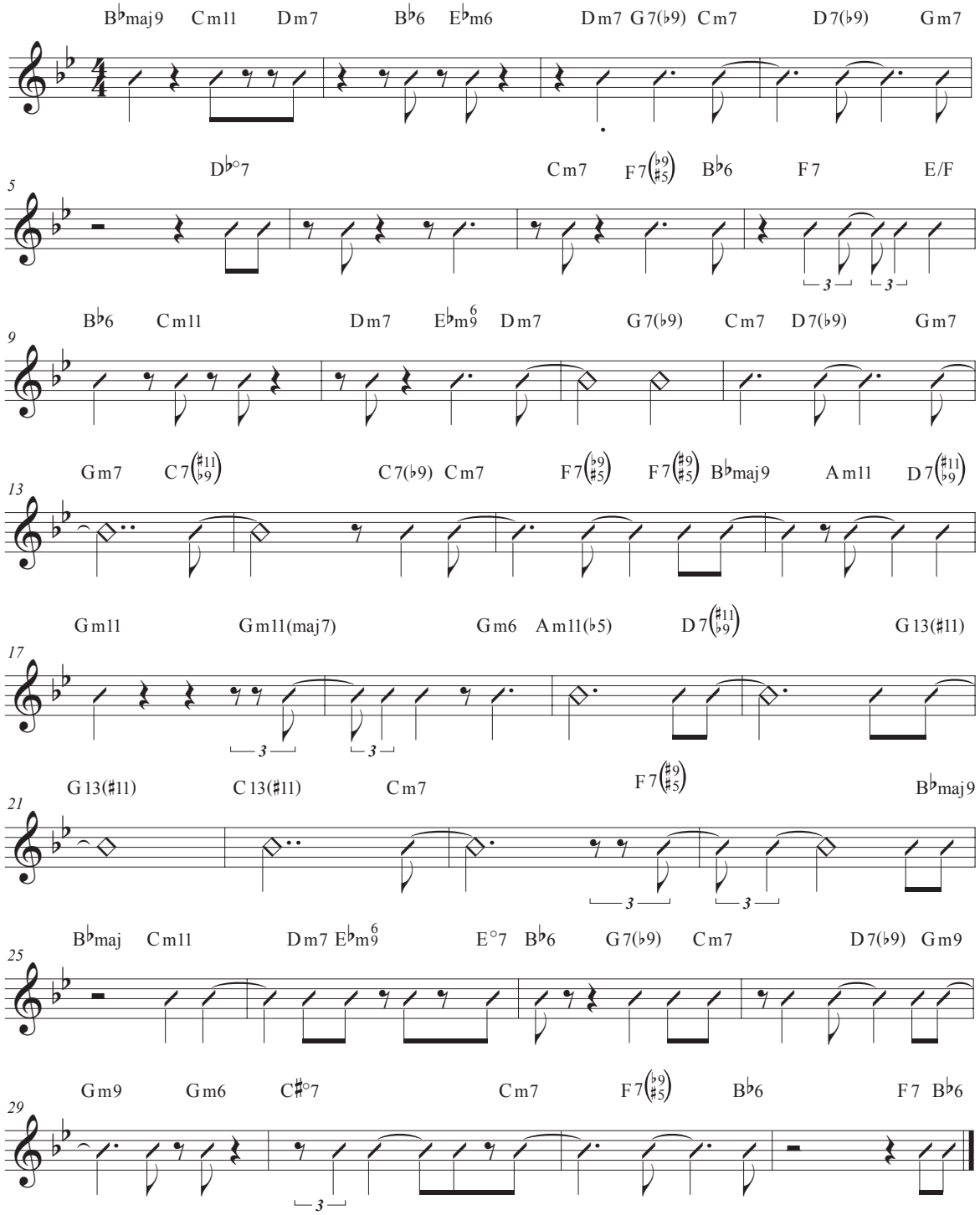



**Comping Exercise #63: Applying different voicings styles using Bud Powell's Comping Guide on the changes to "Bouncin' with Bud."** Below is a comping guide showing only Bud Powell's rhythms. Comp through the example using a variety of voicing styles as outlined in ***Comping Transcription Instructions.*** Use the OR and CD 1 **Track 31**.

FIG. 14

# Bud Powell's Comping Guide

On the Changes to Bouncin' with Bud



**Comping Exercise #64: Working with Bud's Comping Rhythms and Progression 26-30.**
Apply the BPCR's (Bud Powell Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the BPCP's (Bud Powell Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 15

# Bud Powell's Comping Rhythms

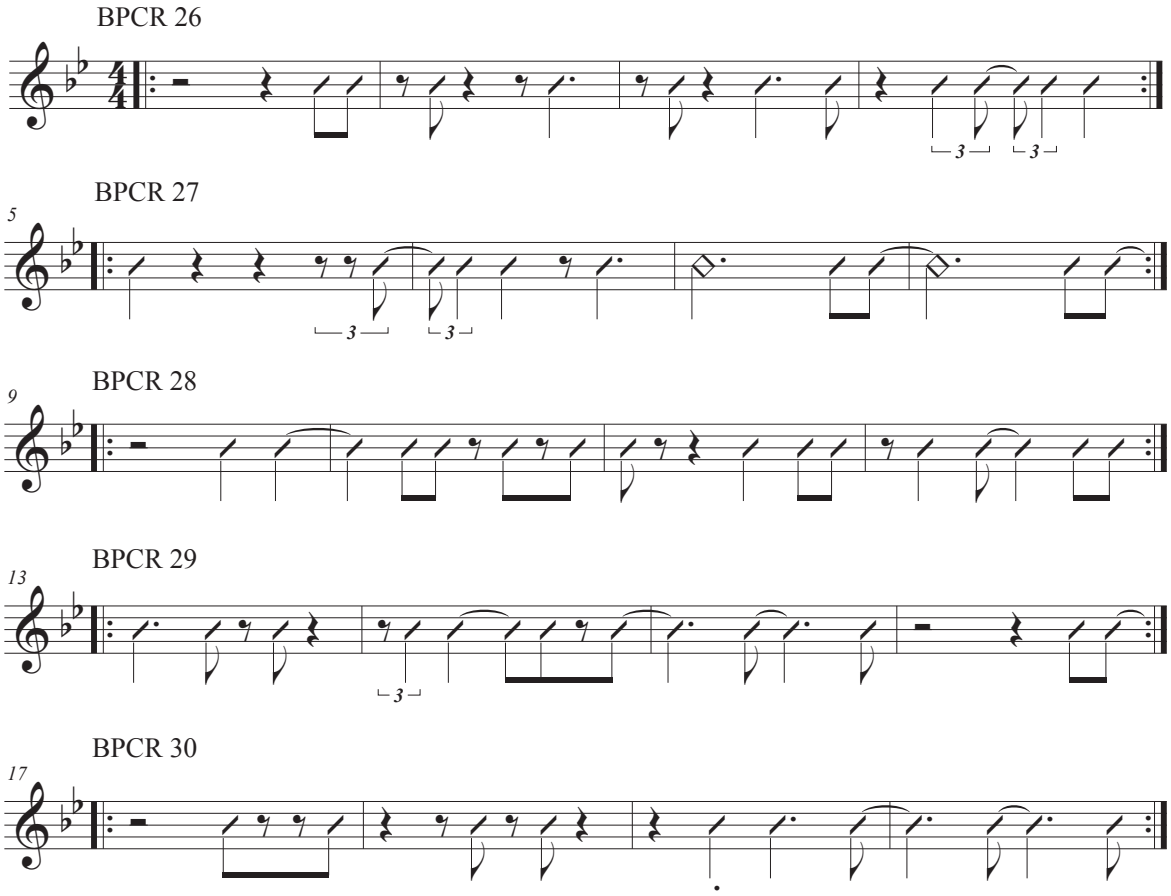
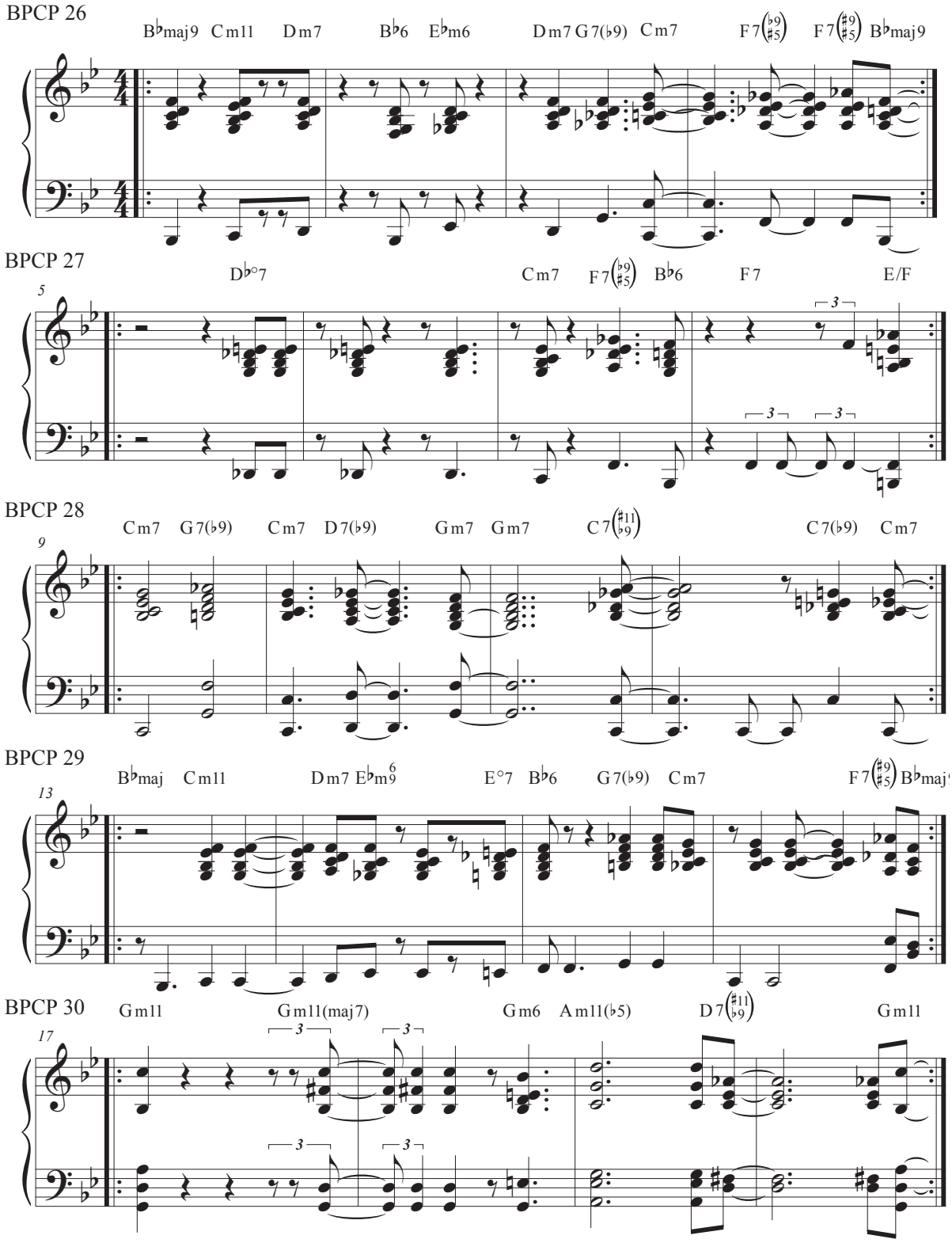


FIG. 16

# Bud Powell Comping Progressions



## CHAPTER 5: OPENING UP YOUR VOICINGS

In the previous chapter we've been concentrating mostly on 4-note closed position voicings (trombone voicings) in the RH over a bass note in the LH. Although effective for basic comping, TV's have their limitations. To play melodies more easily and effectively as well as to add richness and depth to your comping, redistributing and revoicing the notes of the trombone voicing is vital. To do this we will need to spread the notes more evenly throughout the voicing and/or distribute the voicing more evenly between the hands. Following this redistribution process we will be left with a distinctive structure that will constitute the style of voicings in this chapter: 3-note RH structures over 2-note LH shells. This style of voicing chords is often referred to as "arranger's piano" as it is utilized by many of the great arrangers for harmonizing melodies beautifully without requiring too much pianistic technique. Since the voicings often contain the root as the lowest note, they provide a clear harmonic picture.

At the conclusion of the chapter we will discuss other spread voicings created by stacking fifths. By the end, hopefully we can shed some light on some of the beautiful and funky comping as played by this chapter's featured jazz masters.

Accompanying the theoretical material are five comping transcriptions by Horace Silver, Red Garland, Sonny Clark, and Bobby Timmons that incorporate some of these new voicing techniques (as well as many other techniques that go beyond the scope of the brief explanations). It is my hope that the real-time comping examples will illustrate how to voice chords better than any finite set of rules and techniques, not to mention provide some beautiful music.

In this chapter, these new voicings fall under two main categories: spread voicings or trombone voicings redistributed between the hands (TVRs). Spread voicings have a more transparent and sonorous sound compared to the more compact and austere TVR's. Despite this difference, they work well together in progressions. For they share the structural characteristic mentioned above: both are made up of a 3-note RH shape over a 2-note LH shell. We will use this as a common thread as we progress through Chapter 5.

# CHAPTER 5A: INTRO TO SPREAD VOICINGS

Most of the voicings in this chapter consist of 5 voices: soprano, alto, tenor 1, tenor 2, and bass. For a voicing to be "spread" there needs to be at least an octave between the soprano and tenor 2. Also, in spread voicings, the 3rd and 7th will always be found in the tenor 1 and tenor 2 voice. Unlike TVR's made up of 2nds and 3rds between the top 4 voices, spread voicings contain larger intervals such as 4ths and 5ths. Not only does this add warmth and richness to the sound of the chord, it also adds transparency.

When the voices are all crammed together in a typical closed position trombone voicing it's hard for the ear to discern inner voices or the melody for that matter. The ear hears the chord as a clump of sound. As you increase the space between voices you allow the ear to better hear all of the colors within the chord. Because of this a melody can sing out when harmonized with spread voicings. In the following two sections we will examine two ways to generate these 5-note spread voicings.

## *The First Way*

You can simply take a TV from the previous chapter(s) and drop the 2nd voice from the top of each chord down an octave. Now play the two lower notes with your LH to form a shell and the 3 upper notes with your RH. You may have to raise the bass note up an octave so that you can fit the bass and tenor 2 in you LH. If you omit the root of this new voicing you are left with a 4-note chord often called a drop 2 chord or rootless drop 2 chord. There will be more about this in Chapter 3A of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***. For now we are going to keep the root to create 5-note spread voicings.

Below are four ii-V-I progressions from Part 3B. After each progression I've written the corresponding progression made up of 5-note spread voicings (generated by dropping the 2nd note from the top of each chord down an octave). ). Progression 1 (with natural tensions) and Progression 2 (with altered tensions) begin with the RH thumb on the 7th. Progression 3 (with natural tensions) and Progression 4 (with altered tensions) begin with the RH thumb on the 3rd.

FIG. 1

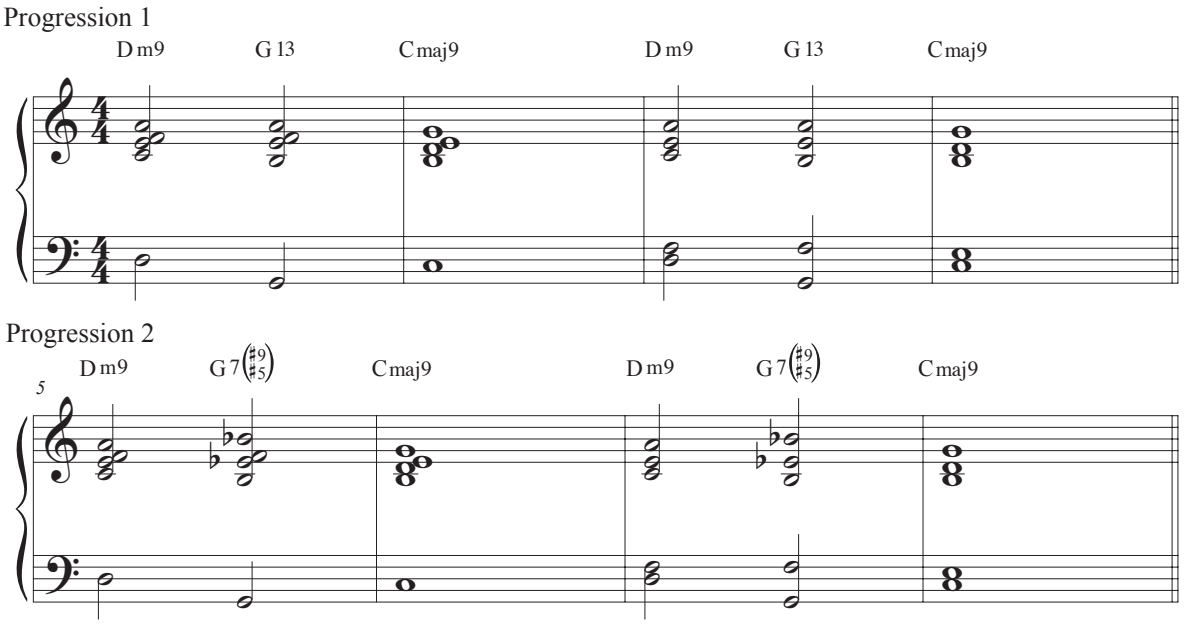
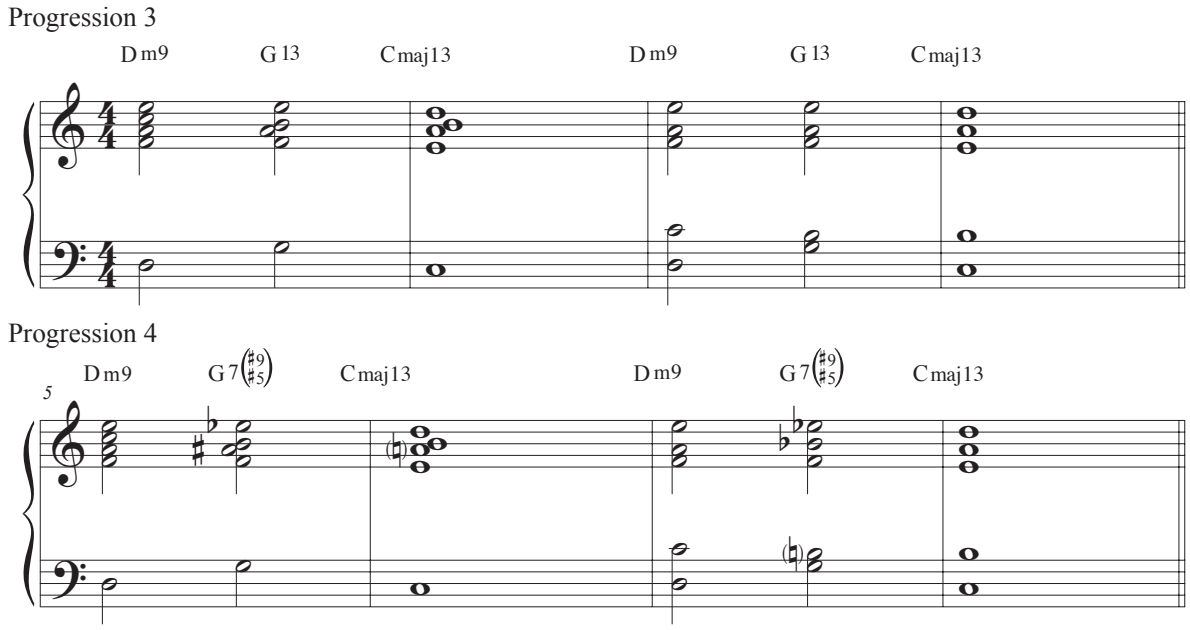



FIG. 2




Notice how by dropping the 2nd voice from the top we've changed the intervals within each chord. We now have no 2nd's, fewer 3rd's, and more 4th's and 5ths. Also, we've cut down on the space between the bass and the 2nd tenor (2nd voice from the bottom). In a sense the voices are spread out more evenly.

**Comping Exercise #65: ii–V–I Spread Voicings.** Using a variety of CR's, practice the four progressions that use the 5-note spread voicings through all 12 keys. To aid in the transposition let's observe the patterns emerging between voices as you change chords. Think horizontally. Use CD 1 **Track 7**.

**For Progression 1:**
the soprano voice moves 5-9-5
the alto voice moves 9-13-9
the 1st tenor voice moves 7-3-7
the 2nd tenor voice moves 3-7-3
and the bass voice moves root-root-root

**For Progression 2:**
the soprano moves 5-#9-5
the alto moves 9-#5-9
the 1st tenor moves 7-3-7
the 2nd tenor moves 3-7-3
and the bass plays roots

**For Progression 3:**
soprano 9-13-9
alto 5-9-5
1st tenor 3-7-3
2nd tenor 7-3-7
bass plays roots

**For Progression 4:**
soprano 9-#5-9
alto 5-#9-5
1st tenor 3-7-3
2nd tenor 7-3-7
bass plays roots

## *The Second Way*

The second approach for generating 5-note spread voicings doesn't involve transforming TV's. Instead, it involves building the voicings from scratch with just a melody and chord symbol, just as you would when reading from a lead sheet.

**Step 1:** Play the melody and bass together. Just play one bass note for each chord change even if the melody moves around a lot. At this point you are just playing roots in the bass.

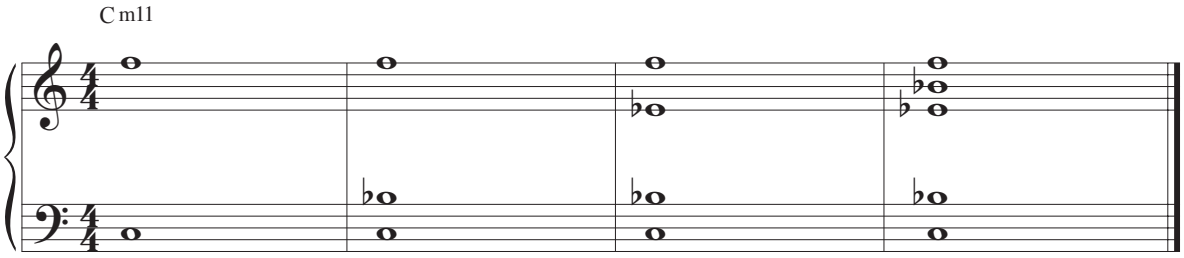
**Step 2:** To add the 2nd tenor voice, add a 7th or 3rd above the bass with your left thumb. Often, during a ii-V situation you can alternate 7th over the bass to 3rd over the bass (or vice versa). Another consideration when deciding whether to use a 7th or the 3rd is the distance between the bass note and the melody. If the distance is less than 2 octaves then use a 3rd over the bass. If the distance is greater use a 7th over the bass. It's still ok to use a 7th over the bass in the former case--you'll just have a trombone voicing redistributed in the hands (TVR).

**Step 3:** You are now ready to add the 1st tenor voice. With your right thumb play the other note of the skeletal structure. If you played a 7th over the root in your LH, then play the 3rd with your right thumb. And conversely, if you played the 3rd over the root in your LH, then play the 7th with your right thumb. Meanwhile, you are still playing the melody with your right pinky or 4th finger

**Step 4:** Finally you are ready to fill in under the soprano with the alto voice. This is your chance to add color to the voicing. In many cases (not all) the alto voice is a place where you can have your 9th's, 11ths, 13th's, #5s, etc. At the very least you can double a 3rd or 7th, or add a 5th. It depends on the sound you are going for. Do you need the chord to be more modern or more traditional? It is in the soprano and alto voices where you often find the tensions. The role of the 1st, 2nd tenor and the bass is to the anchor of the chord; providing the root, 3rd, and 7th, or root, 7th, and 3rd. To decide on a suitable alto voice look at the chord symbol. Is there anything in the chord symbol not reflected in your voicing so far? If that doesn't work you need to try different possibilities depending on the sound you desire, and the proximity of the desired note to your 2nd or 3rd finger of your right hand. You can try the following for the alto voice: 3, 5, b5, #5, 7, 9, #11, 13 for majors; b3, 5, b5, b7, 9, 11, 13, b13 for minors; 3, 5, b5, #5, 7, 9, b9, #9, 11, #11, 13 for dominants. For the richest voicings, find a note for the alto that is not doubled anywhere else in the chord. One note of caution: when selecting an alto voice for a dominant chord that contains the root in the melody, playing an unaltered fifth will sound very plain and thin. Even though it's technically ok, it normally should be avoided.

Now let's try constructing some 5-note spread voicings. For the first four random examples I've walked you through the steps. After that, I've supplied the melody note and chord symbol for you to fill in the voicing.

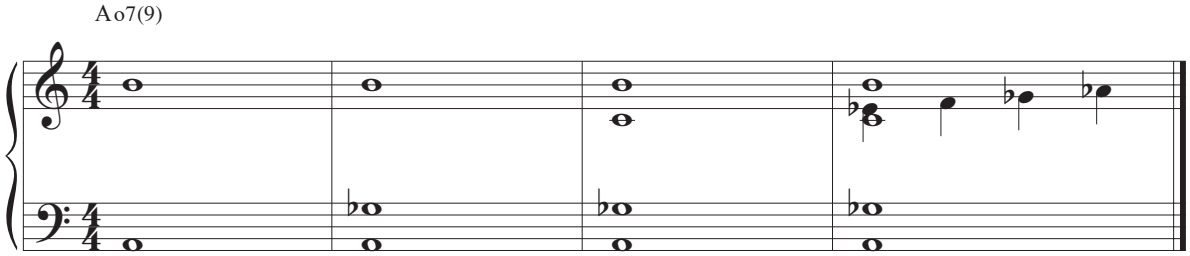
FIG. 3




**Step 1:** Play melody and bass together.

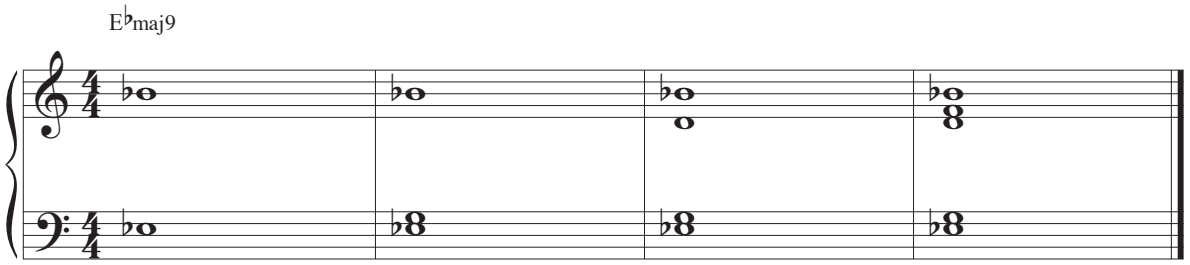
**Step 2:** Add 7th over bass since the melody is over 2 octaves higher than the bass.
**Step 3:** Add 3rd in the right thumb.
**Step 4:** Double the 7th in the alto. From an intervallic standpoint, the Bb adds another 2 perfect fifths to the voicing, provides a midway point between the 1st tenor and soprano, and creates a voicing containing notes that are very evenly spaced.

FIG. 4



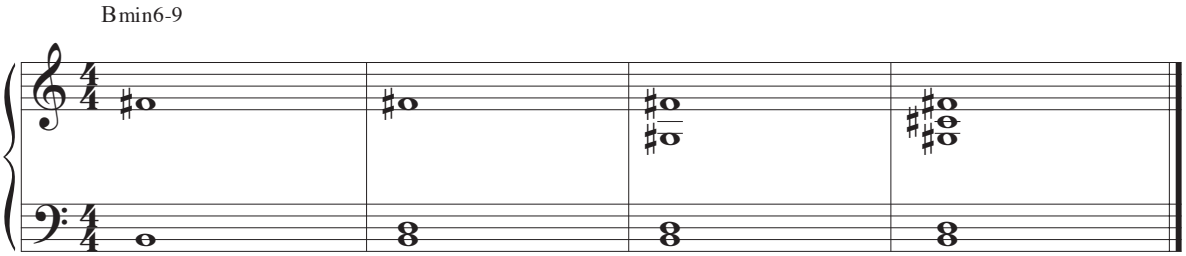

**Step 1:** Play the melody and bass together.
**Step 2:** Add 7th over bass since the melody is over 2 octaves higher than the bass.
**Step 3:** Add 3rd in the right thumb.
**Step 4:** Place the b5, b13, o7, or Δ7 in the alto voice. From a harmonic standpoint I simply selected notes from the related diminished scale that would be playable by my middle fingers in my right hand. For the clearest diminished chord sound, it's preferable to have the b5 in the voicing. It isn't a must, however.

FIG. 5




**Step 1:** Play the melody and bass together.
**Step 2:** Add 3rd over bass since the melody is only an octave and a fifth over the bass.
**Step 3:** Add 7th in the right thumb (the other half of the skeletal structure).
**Step 4:** Add the alto voice. Alas, a beautiful tension is well within reach of my 2nd finger of my RH. By looking at the chord symbol I know that a 9th is needed to make the voicing complete

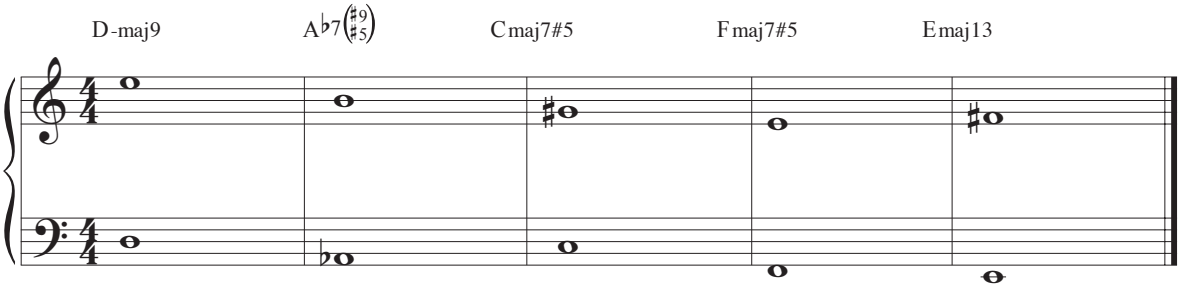
FIG. 6




**Step 1**: Play the melody and bass together.
**Step 2**: Play the 3rd over the bass since the melody is only an octave and a fifth over the bass.
**Step 3**: Add the 6th in the right thumb (the other half of the skeletal structure for a minor 6/9 chord.
**Step 4:** Add the alto voice. By looking at the chord symbol, I know that the 9th will make the voicing complete. Also, from an intervallic standpoint, observe how the C# cuts the distance between the 1st tenor and soprano in half, generating two perfect 4ths. Intervals are sometimes more important in creating beautiful voicings than harmonic function.

Now it's your turn. Create 5-note spread voicings using the 4 steps. Don't worry too much about the maj7#5 or the minor major 9. These chords work in the same way as the ones with which we've been working.

FIG. 7



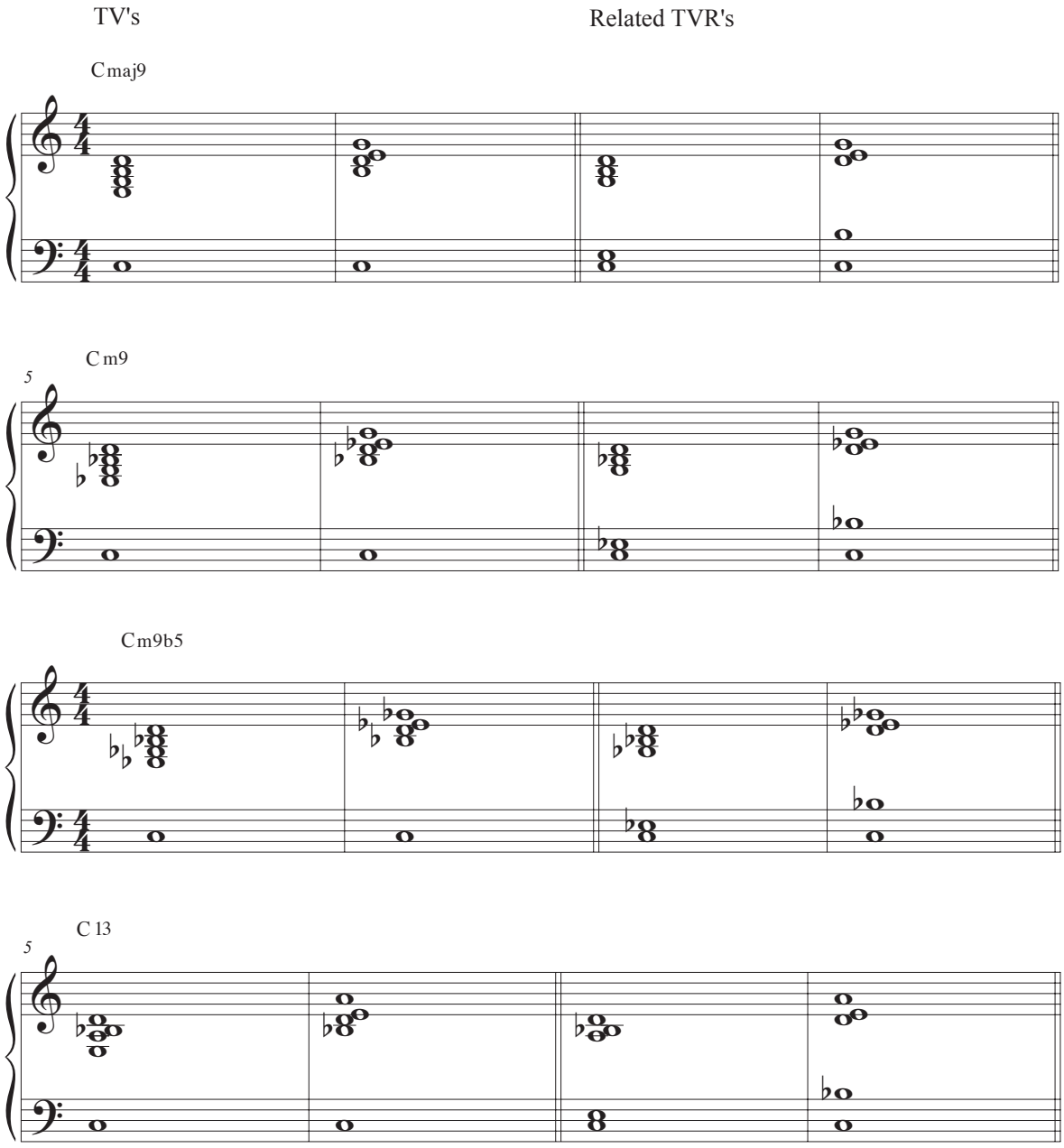

**Comping Exercise #66: Harmonizing a Standard Using Spread Voicings.** Choose a standard with a melody that contains mostly tensions and 5ths and harmonize it following the 4 steps above. Be careful of range. If the melody is too low, a 3 or 4-note voicing may suffice. Doubling may be necessary if the melody is a root, 3rd, or 7th. As an alternative, if the melody is the root on a major chord simply drop perfect fourths from the top note to generate your five-note voicing. This will yield a rootless voicing (see Chapter 3 of **Advanced Concepts and Techniques).**

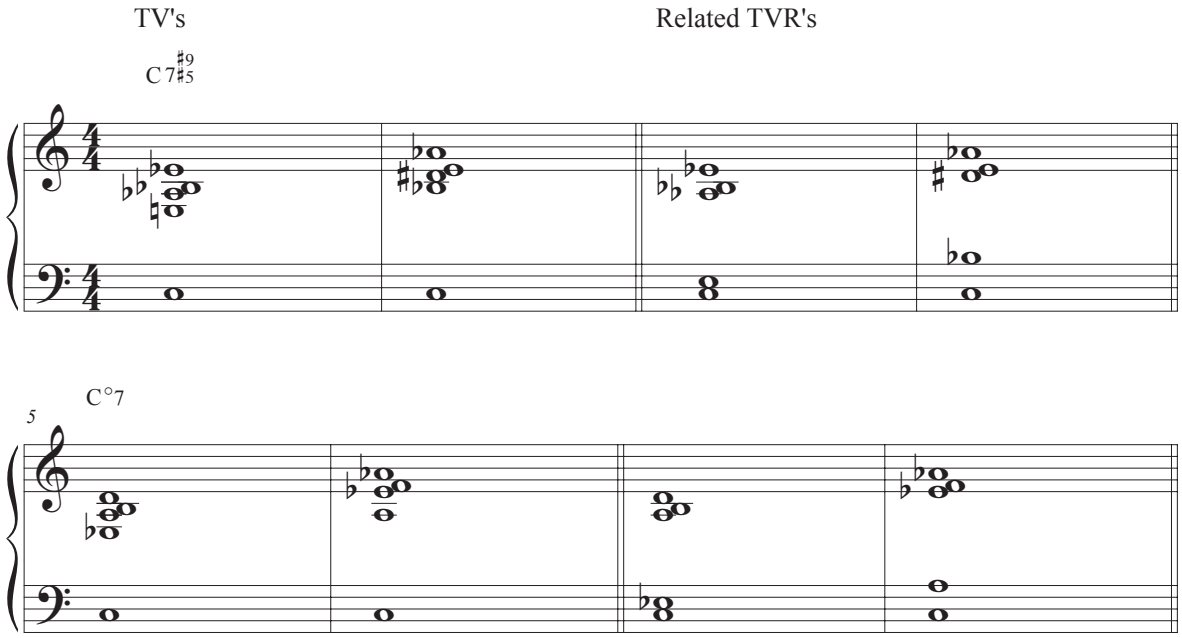
# CHAPTER 5B: REDISTRIBUTING THE NOTES OF A TV BETWEEN THE HANDS (TVRS)

In the following section we convert TV's into shapes over shells. Even though the notes of the following voicings are identical to the ones we studied in Chapter 3, practicing them using this alternative distribution in your hands is necessary. Visually, tactually, and psychologically, these voicings are quite different.

Below is a chart of TV's and their related TVR's.

FIG. 1



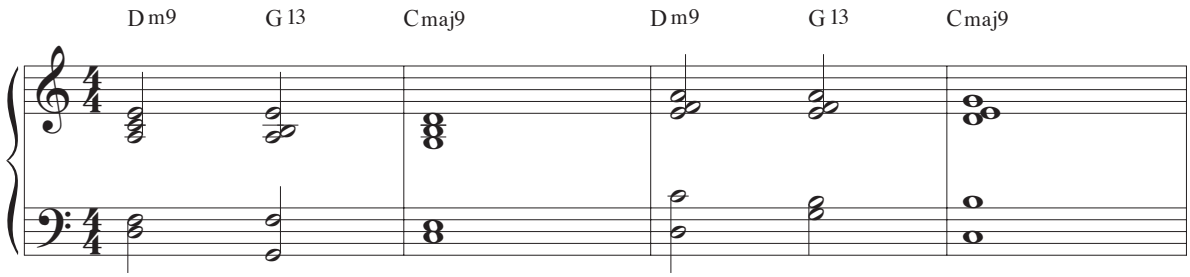


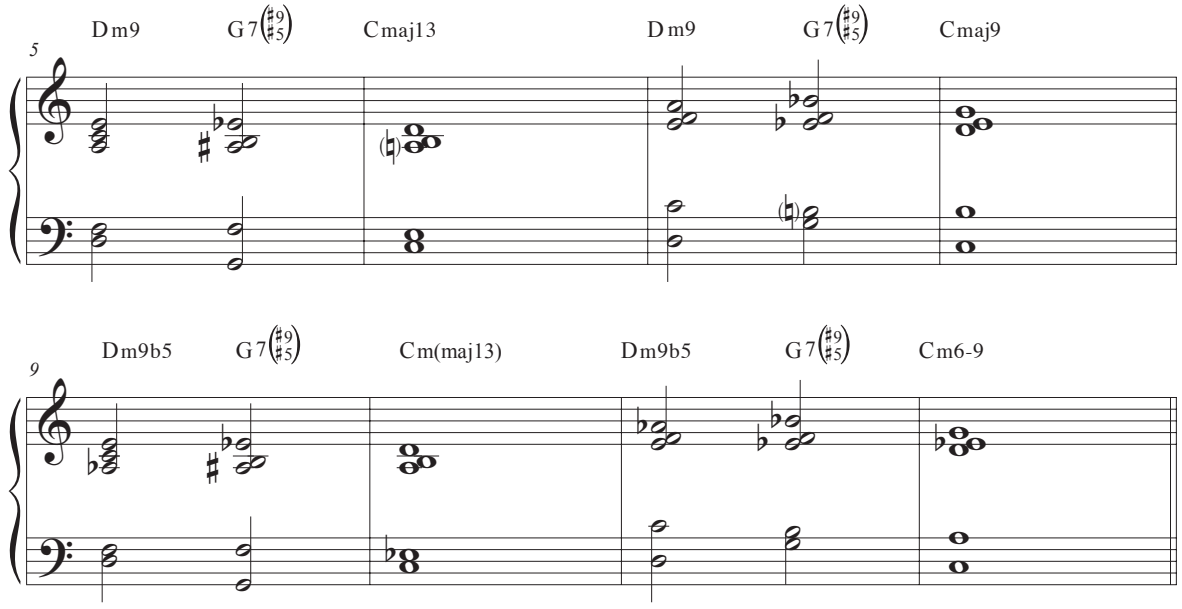

Observe the differences between these TVR's and spread voicings.

| SPREAD | TVR's |
|---|---|
| **1.** distance between ten2 and sop is greater than or equal to an octave | **1.** distance between ten2 and sop is less than an octave |
| **2.** 3rd and 7th are in ten1 and ten2 | **2.** the 3rd and 7th are in ten2 and alto |
| **3.** richer sonority, but not as movable unless root is omitted (more on this later in the chapter) | **3.** compact/austere yet easily movable |
| **4.** top 4 voices contain 4ths and 5ths | **4.** top 4 voices contain 2nds and 3rds |

**Comping Exercise #67**: **ii-V-I TVRs**. Using a variety of CR's, practice the following ii-V-I's redistributed 3 notes in the RH over 2 notes (forming a shell) in the LH. Use **CD 1 Tracks 7 and 15**.

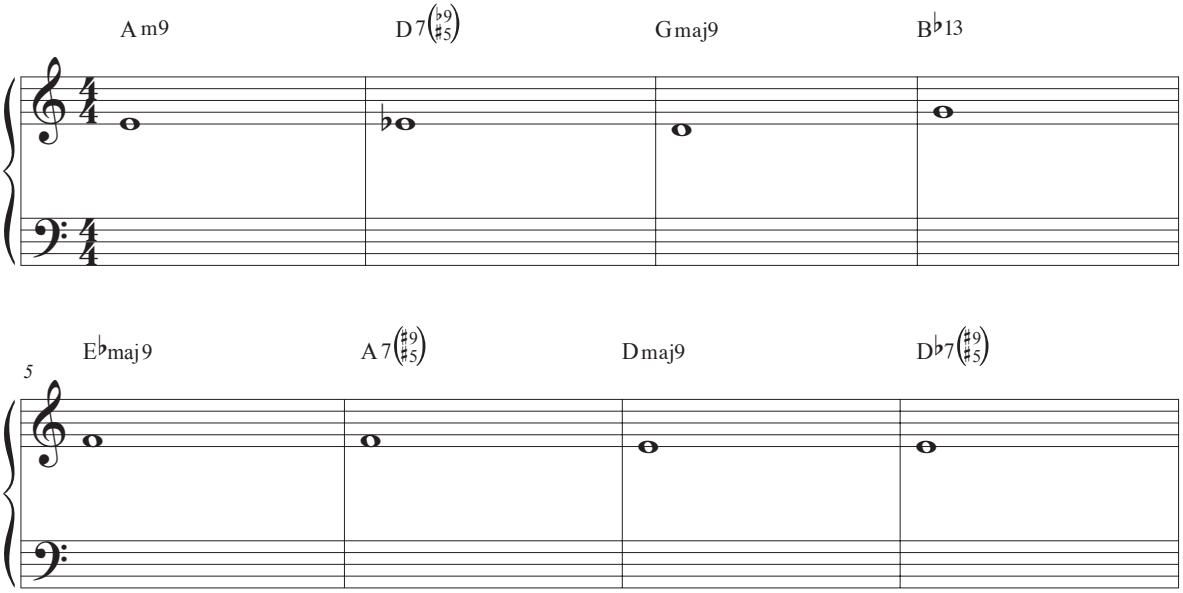
FIG. 2

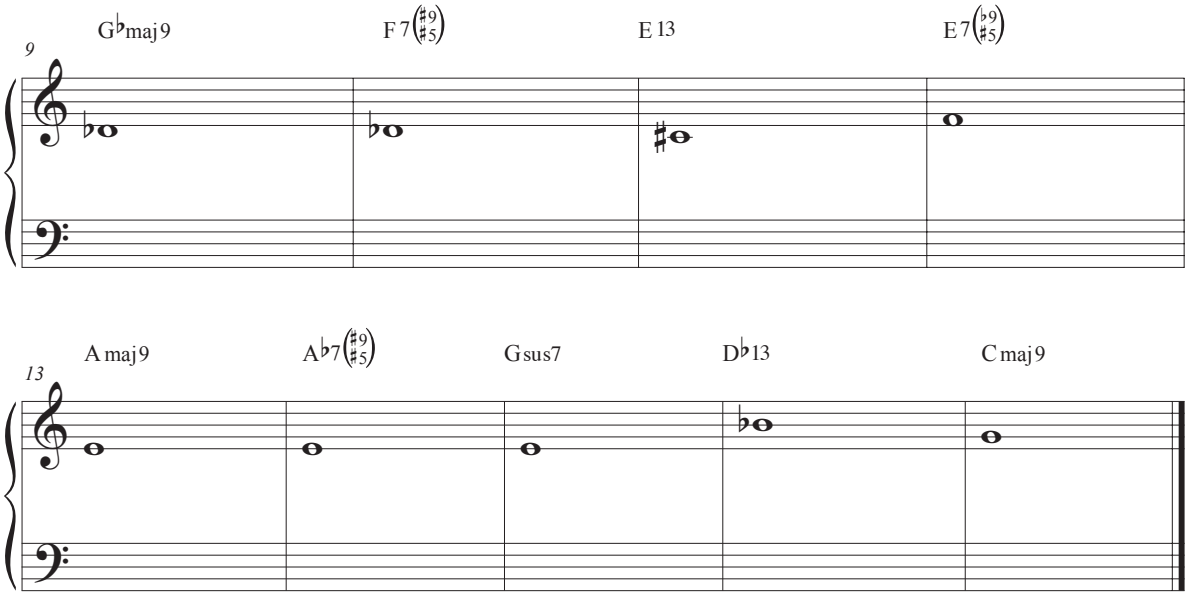





Harmonize the melody using 5-voices. Use TVR's, not spread voicings.

FIG. 3



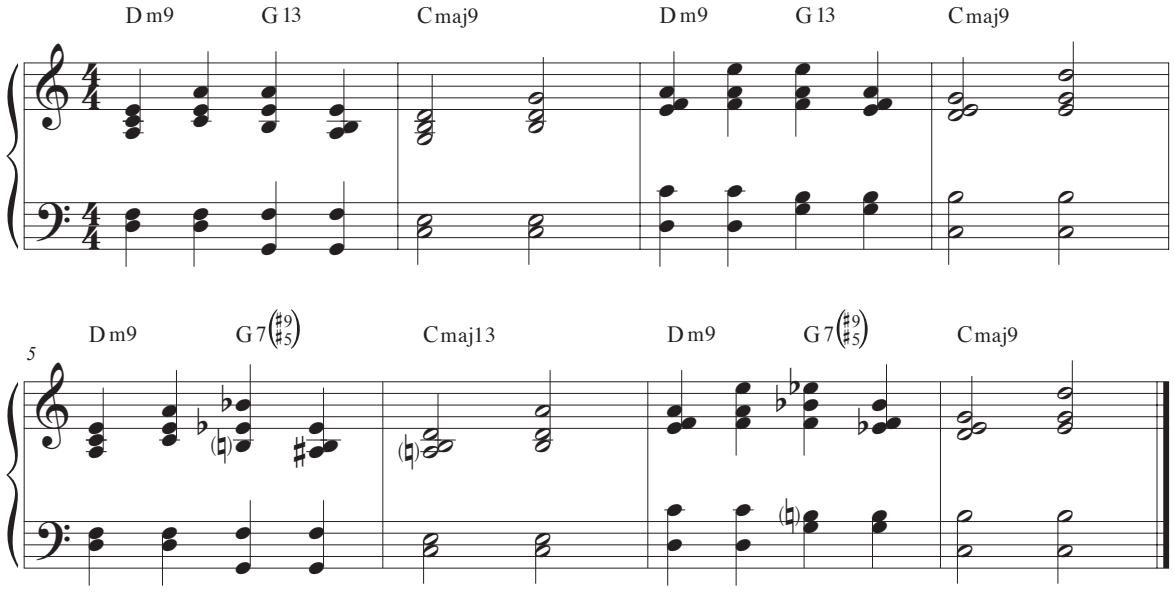

G♭maj9
F7(♯9 ♯5)
E13
E7(♭9 ♯5)
9
A maj9
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
Gsus7
D♭13
C maj9
13

# CHAPTER 5C: SWITCHING FROM TVR'S TO SPREAD VOICINGS AND BACK AGAIN

Since we will be using TVR's and spread voicings together in progressions, we need to come up with a quick and easy conversion from TVR's to spread and back again.

To go from TVR's to spread voicings simply move the 1st tenor up an octave. To go from spread voicings to TVR's move the soprano down an octave. From the ii-V- I TVR progressions from Chapter 5B we can generate a progression of 6 chords with two ii chords, two V chords, and two I chords (ii-ii-V-V-I-I). Notice how the two voicings for the ii chord, V chord, and I chord actually contain the same notes just that one is a TVR and one is a spread voicing. In this way we can add more motion between chords and familiarize ourselves with the two different voicings for each chord.

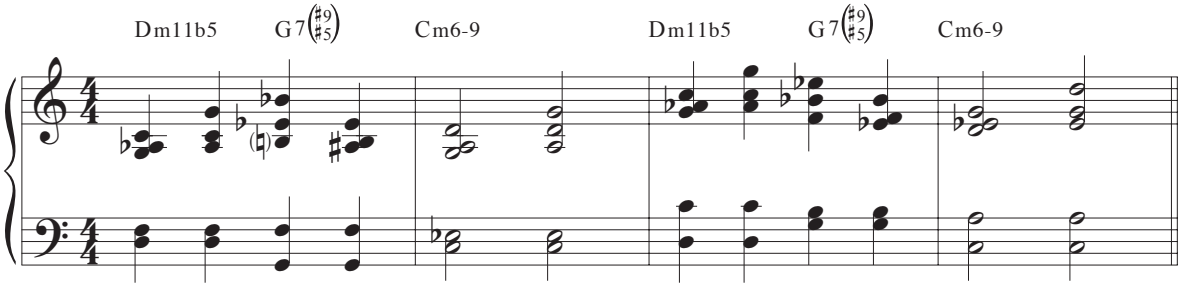
FIG. 1




In the following figure a new half-diminished voicing is introduced. The m9b5 is replaced with m11b5. The 11 and b5 are a half step apart in the alto and tenor 1 voice. For the m11b5 with the 1-3 LH shell these two tensions are embedded in between the guide tones. For the m11b5 with the 1-7 LH shell they are embedded between a doubled 7th. The four voicings for half diminished are shown in m. 1 and m. 3 of FIG. 2. Note that for two out of the four voicings the 3rd is only implied.

The advantage of this new m11b5 voicing is by omitting the 9th we can avoid the thorny issue of whether or not to use a natural 9 on a half diminished chord. This way the soloist isn't boxed in–he/she may play the more modern locrian (#2) scale or the more traditional locrian scale on the given half diminished chord.

FIG. 2




**Comping Exercise #68**: **Blues Using Spread Voicings and TVRs.** Using a variety of CR's, play through the three types of blues below in two ways. First, fill in the rest of the RH to form TVR's. Second, generate spread voicings by moving the tenor 1 up an octave. Note the new melodic line created. For the Bo7 simply play as written. Now comp using a mix of TVR's and spreads voicings. Transpose to C and Bb. Use **CD 1 Tracks 8, 10, and 14** for basic blues; **CD 1 Track 32** for "bird" blues; and **CD 1 Track 33** for minor blues. Listen carefully to the soloist and bassist for slight differences in chord changes. Also experiment with omitting the root.

FIG. 3i

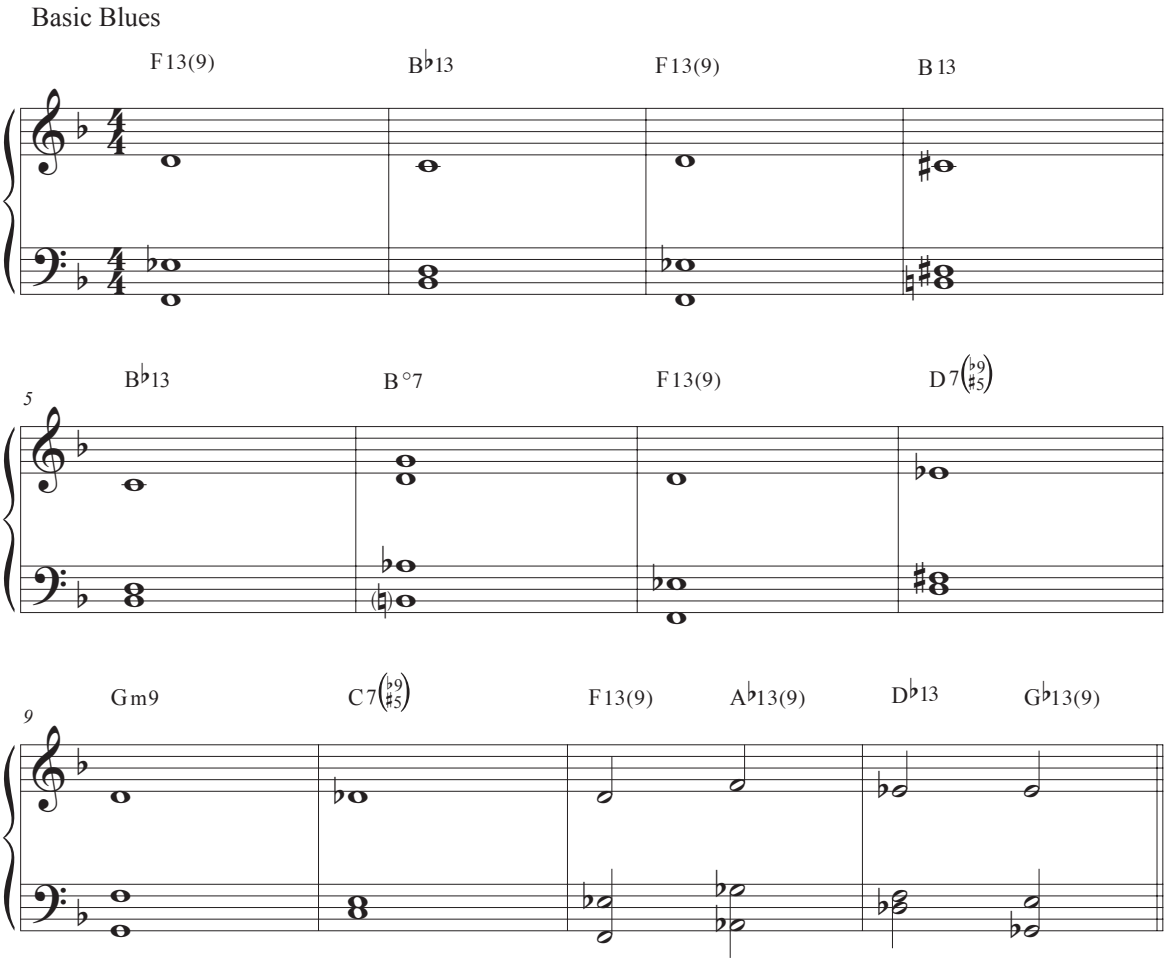


FIG. 3ii

"Bird" Blues

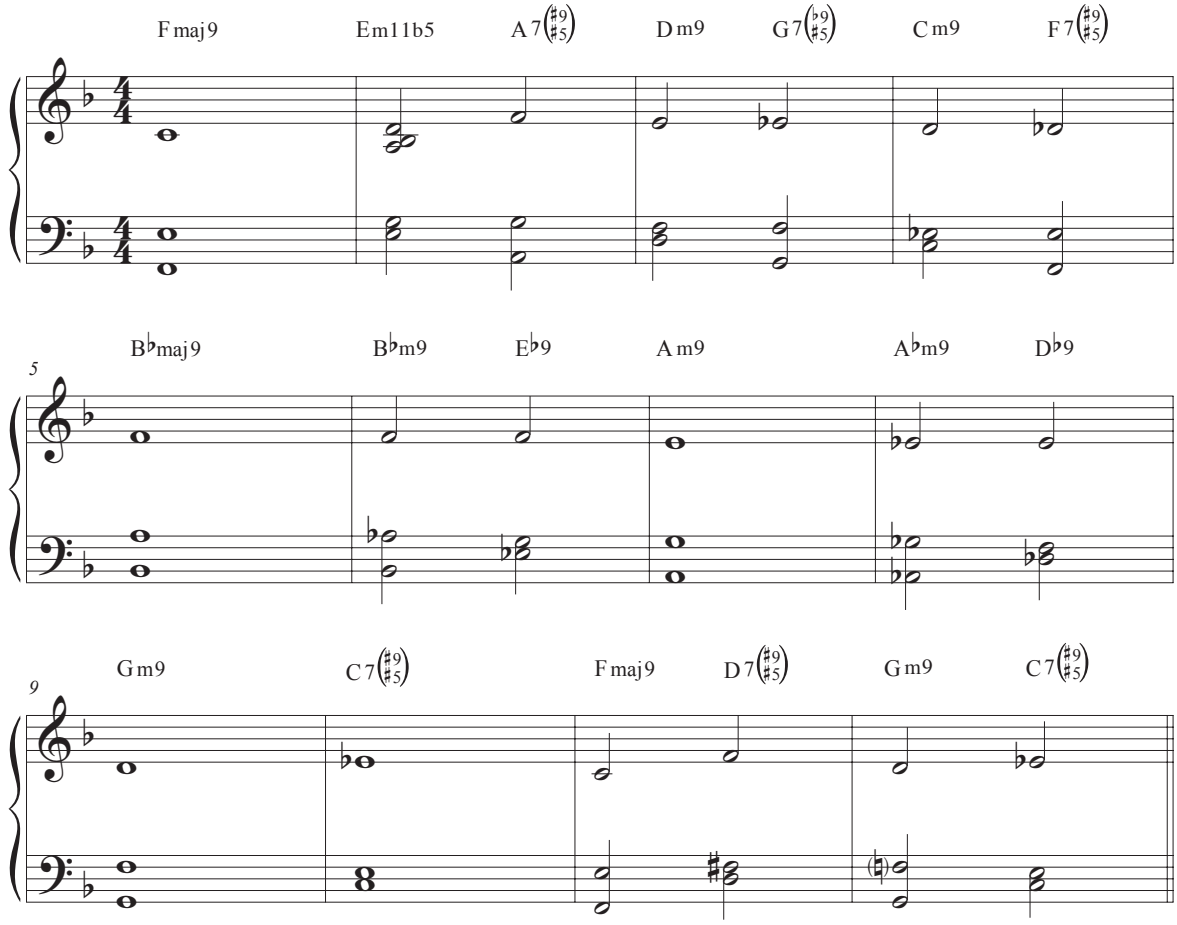
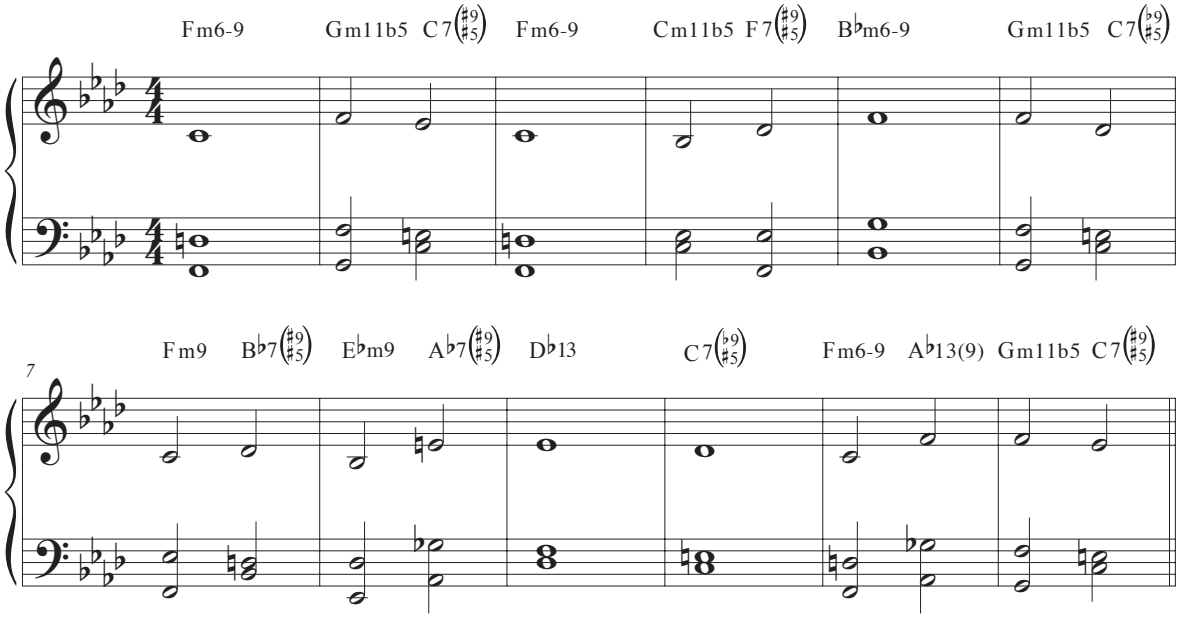



FIG 3iii

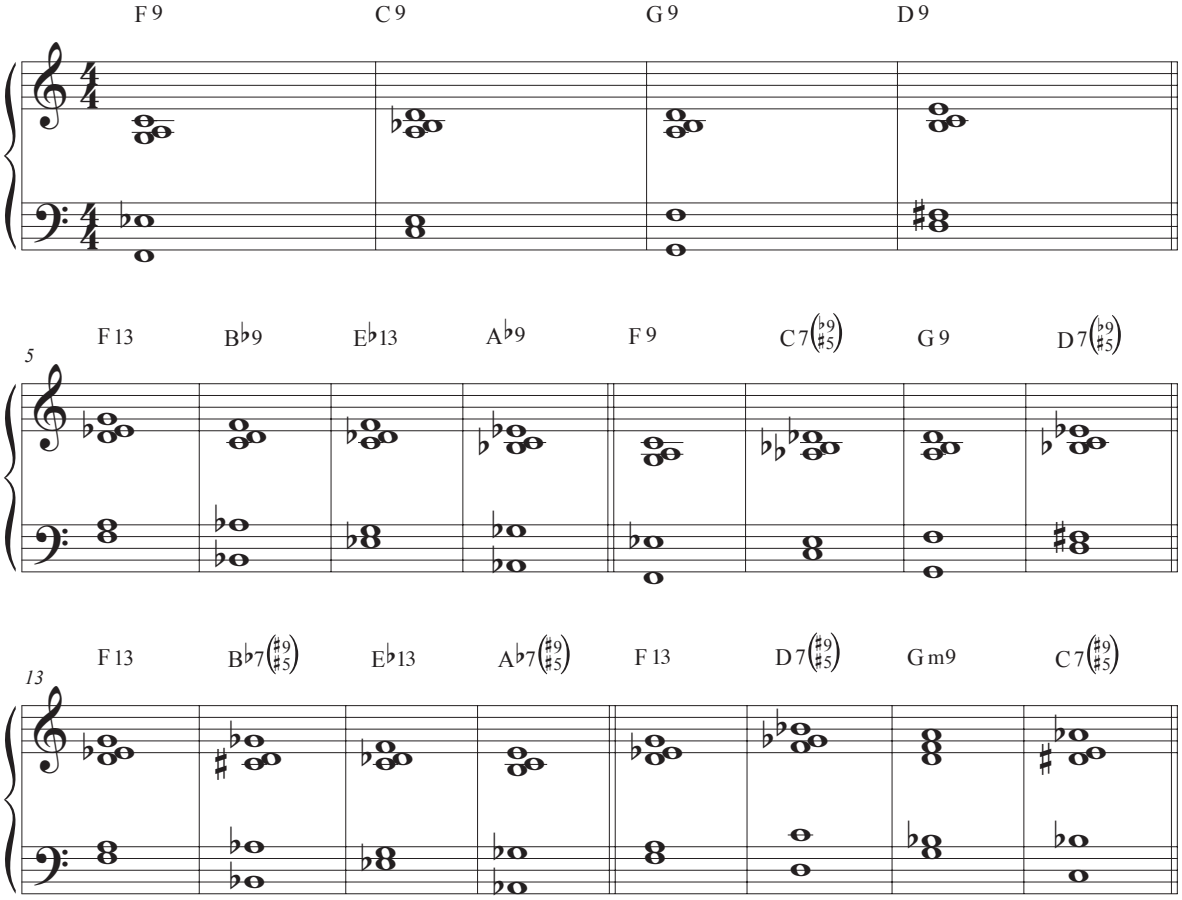
Minor Blues

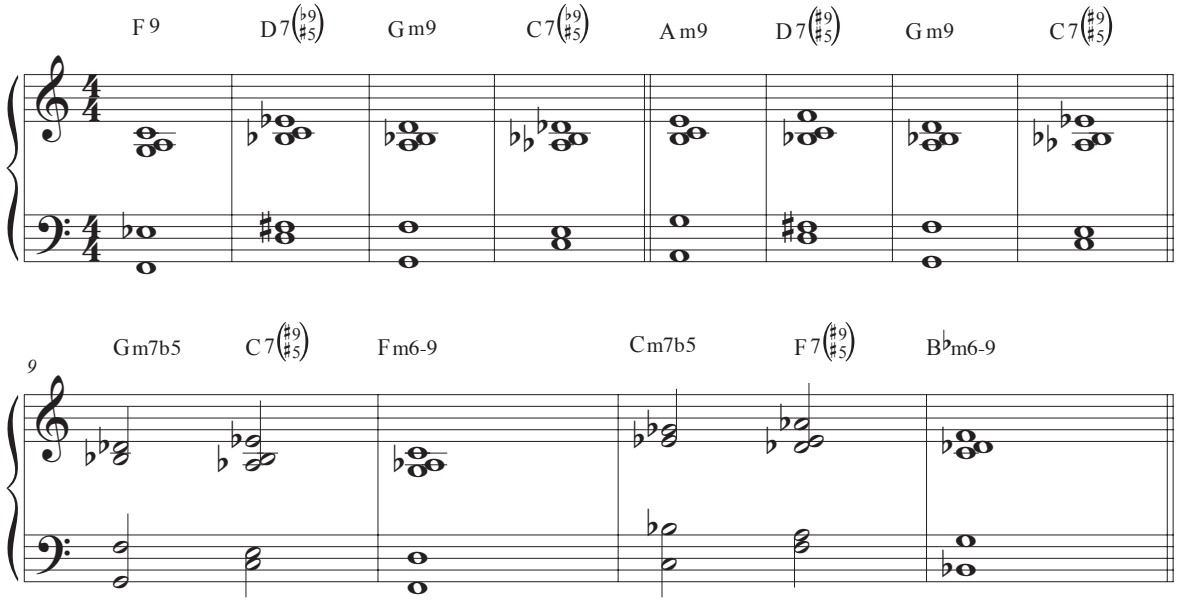


**Comping Exercise #69**: **Progressions Using TVR's and Spread Voicings**. Comp through the following progressions derived from portions of the basic, altered, and minor blues through the keys. The double barlines indicate a new progression. Again, observe the difference between TVR's and spread voicings. Also begin to take note of the 3-note shape in the RH over the shell.

Clusters and triads on top of shells (TVR's)

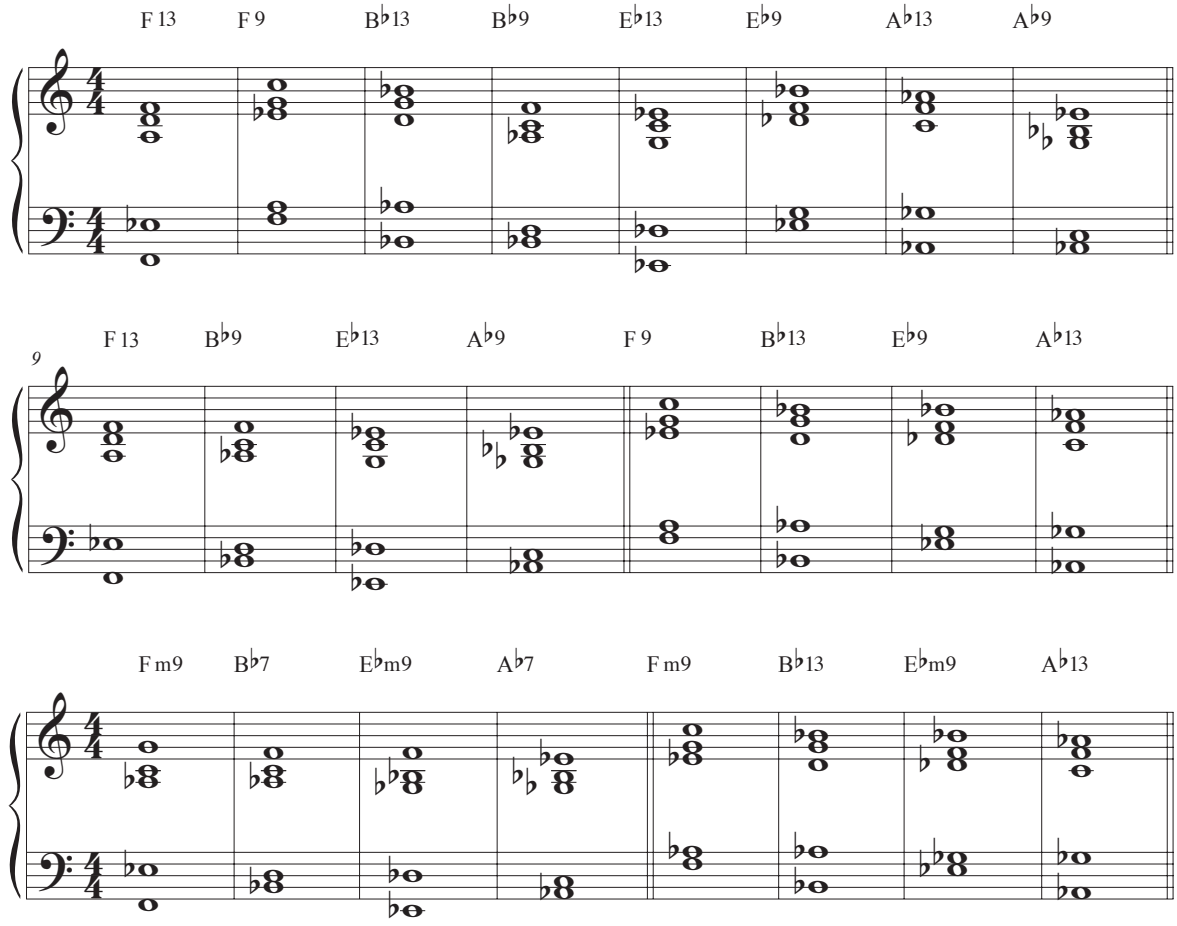
FIG. 4

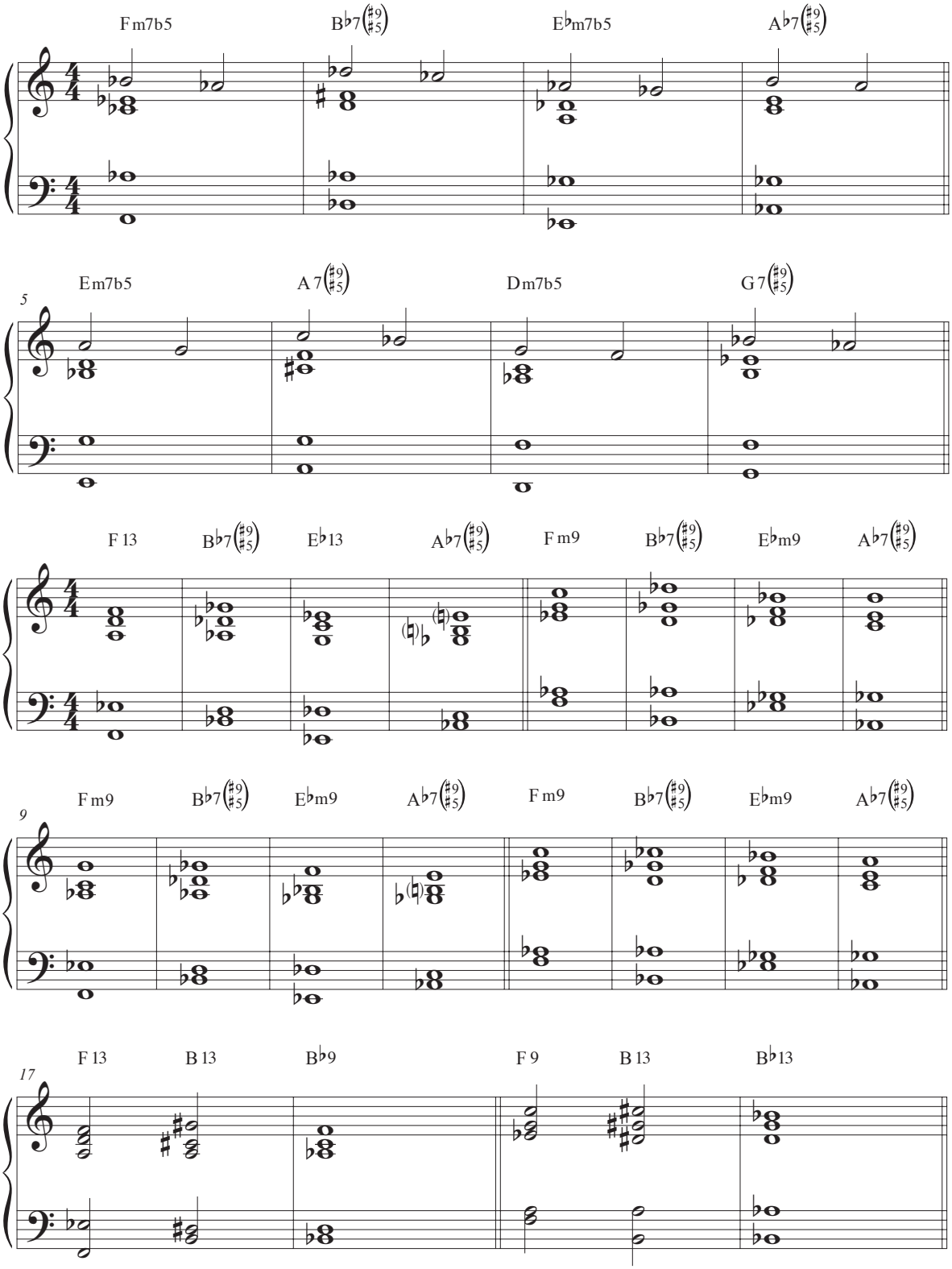





Larger intervals over shells (Spread Voicings)

FIG. 5




Fm7b5
B♭7(♯9 ♯5)
E♭m7b5
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
5
Em7b5
A 7(♯9 ♯5)
Dm7b5
G 7(♯9 ♯5)
F 13
B♭7(♯9 ♯5)
E♭13
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
F m9
B♭7(♯9 ♯5)
E♭m9
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
9
F m9
B♭7(♯9 ♯5)
E♭m9
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
F m9
B♭7(♯9 ♯5)
E♭m9
A♭7(♯9 ♯5)
17
F 13
B 13
B♭9
F 9
B 13
B♭13

## CHAPTER 5D: THINKING IN TERMS OF SHAPES OVER SHELLS

Sometimes the sensation of a shape in your hand can be easier to find than thinking about a series of numbers when voicing chords. In the following section we take a look at four useful voicings that contain distinctive 3-note right hand shapes over shells. These voicings can be generated as follows:

If we take a basic root position CΔ9 chord (C E G B D) we can revoice the chord in 4 different ways. Note: all of the following chords are distributed 3 notes in the RH, 2 notes in the LH.

Voicing 1: as is, in root position. It is a TVR with a 1-3 shell in the LH.

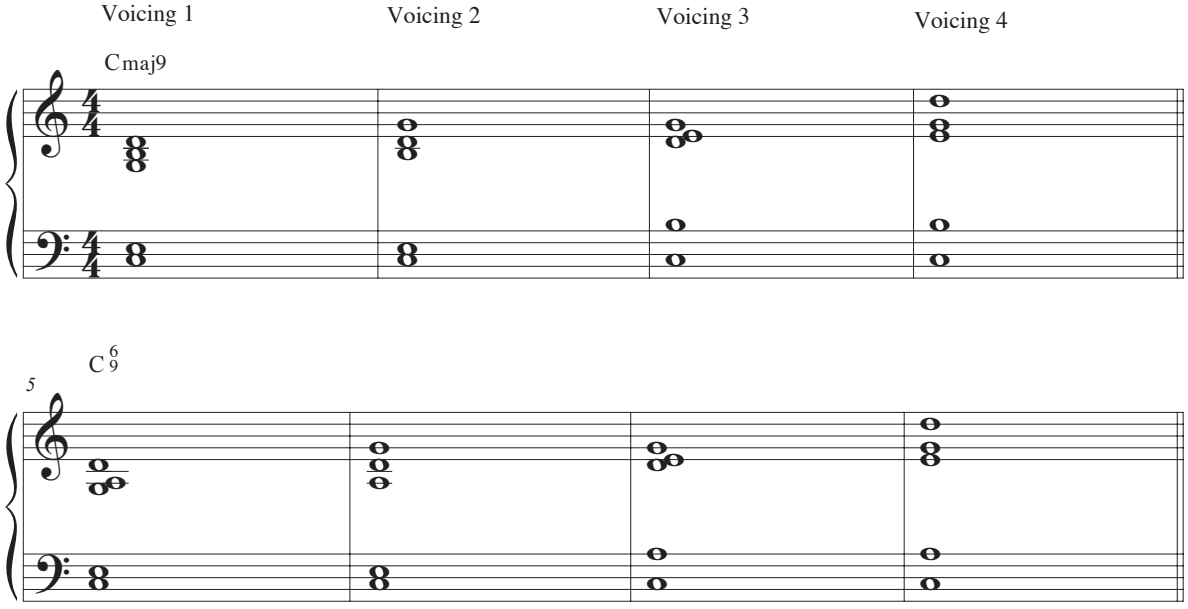
Voicing 2: by raising tenor 1 up an octave we generate a spread voicing with a 1-3 shell in the LH.

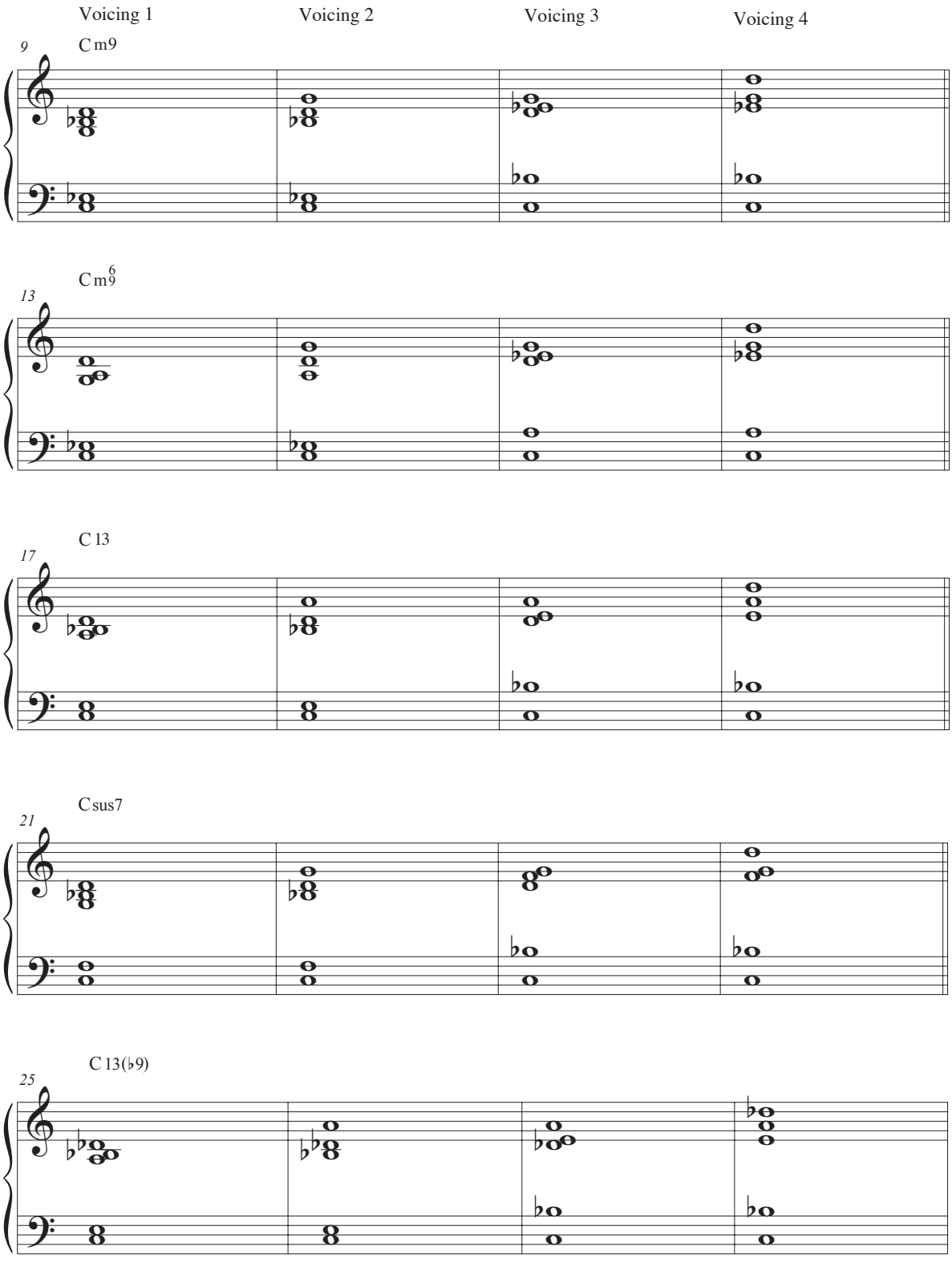
Voicing 3: by raising tenor 2 up an octave we create another TVR, this time with a 1-7 LH shell.

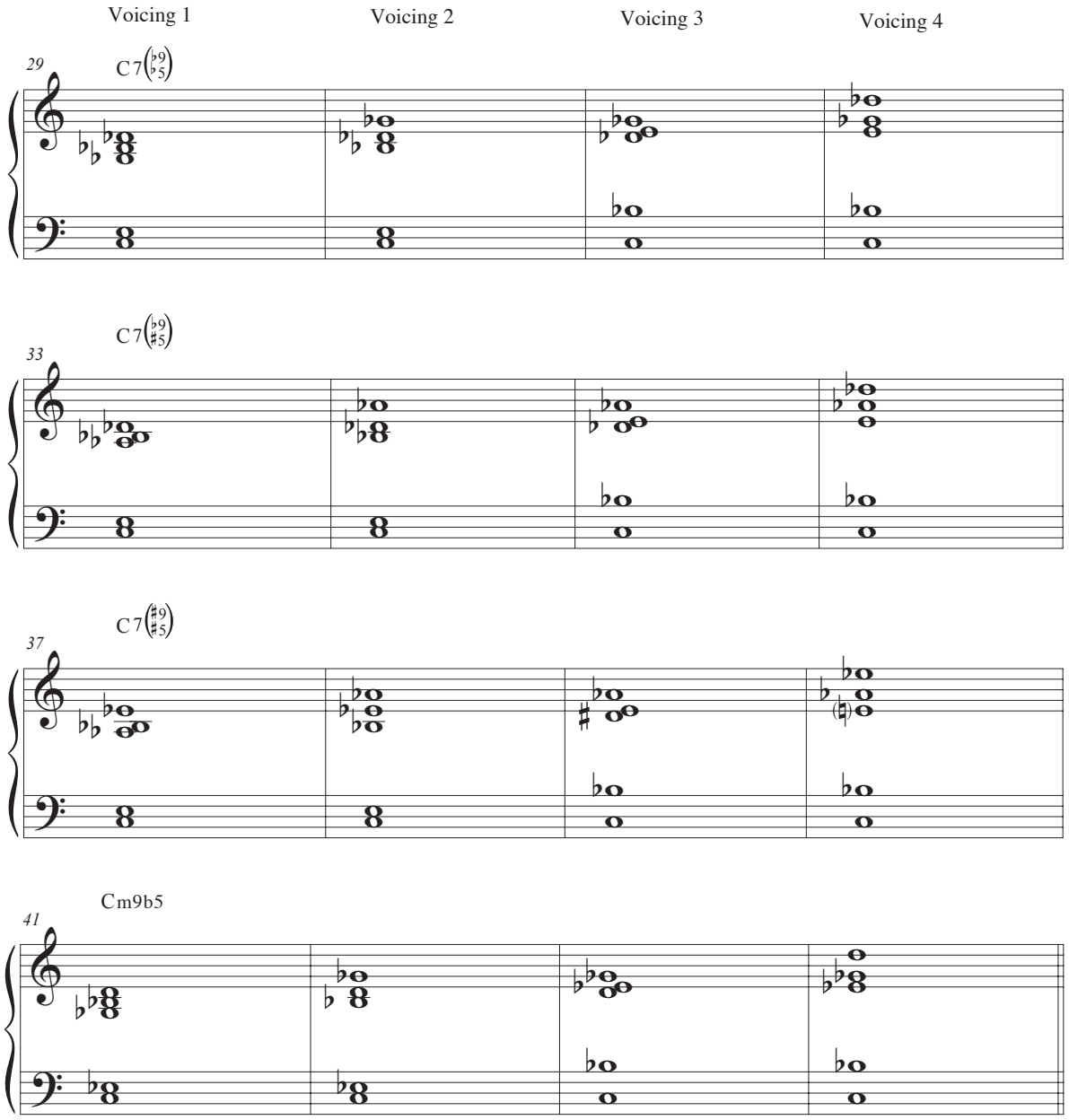
Voicing 4: by raising the tenor 1 again we create another spread voicing, this time with a 1-7 LH shell.

Below is a chart showing these 4 useful voicings for several common qualities of a "C" chord.

FIG. 1




Voicing 1
Voicing 2
Voicing 3
Voicing 4
9
C m9
13
C m6/9
17
C 13
21
C sus7
25
C 13(♭9)




**Comping Exercise #70**: **Shapes over Shells**. At a slow tempo, practice each row of voicings through the keys. Pay attention to the shapes in your RH.

Now, let's take a look at these RH shapes and see if we notice any trends. The RH voicings in the "Voicing 1" column are made up of either root position triads, 3rd/2nd, or 4th/2nd shapes. The RH voicings in the "Voicing 2" column contain either a 1st inversion triad, a 5th/3rd shape, or a stack of 4ths in the RH. The RH of "Voicing 3" contains either a 3rd/2nd, 2nd/3rd, or 4th/2nd shape. Finally, the RH of "Voicing 4" contains a 5th/3rd, a 5th/2nd,or a stack of 4ths. In conclusion, four important RH shapes (and their inversions) emerge from the four voicings as viable choices to be stacked on top of shells: a triad or its inversion; a 3rd/2nd or its inversion (5th/3rd); a 2nd/3rd or its inversion (5th/2nd); or a stack of 4ths or its inversion (4th/2nd). Let's examine each of these RH shapes.

**Triadic Shapes/Shells**

Using triads in a voicing can be both simple and effective. For pianists, the triad is probably the most comfortable and basic shape to manipulate. Triads used on top of shells usually consist of the extensions or upper parts of the chord, hence the name upper structure triads. In Chapter 3E we spent a considerable amount of time stacking seventh chords on top of skeletal structures. In many ways the present voicing is much simpler.

A C7b9b5 chord can be thought of as a Gb triad over a C7 shell. See Voicing 1 and Voicing 2 of the C7b9b5 row from the previous figure. Below are some more examples of shortcuts utilizing triadic shapes over shells. They are found predominantly in the columns marked Voicing 1 and Voicing 2.

CΔ7 = Em/CΔ 1-3 shell
C13(b9) = A/C7 1-7 shell
CΔ9 = G/CΔ 1-3 shell
C7+9 = Eb/C71-3 shell
C7b9#5= Dbm/C7 1-7 shell
C7b9b5 = Gb/C7 1-3 shell
C7#9b5 = Ebm/C7 1-3 shell
C-Δ7 = G/Cm7 1-3 shell

For added richness you can always double the tenor 1 voice an octave higher or double the soprano voice an octave lower creating a 4-note triadic shape in your RH.

**$3^{rd}/2^{nd}$ or its inv, $5^{th}/3^{rd}$**

If we examine the Voicing 3 column from FIG. 1, we find many examples of this distinctive RH shape. See the following rows: Cmaj9, Cm9, and Cm9b5. Its inversion, $5^{th}/3^{rd}$ describes many of the RH shapes in the Voicing 4 column, including Cmaj9, Cm9, C7#5#9.

**$2^{nd}/3^{rd}$ or its inv, $5^{th}/2^{nd}$**

This distinctive shape can be found in the Csus13 row from FIG. 1. Having a half step directly below the melody should be avoided (unless you are specifically seeking a sound reminiscent of Thelonious Monk). Because of this, the $2^{nd}$ as part of the $2^{nd}/3^{rd}$ shape is usually a M2. This gives this shape a softer, and somewhat milder sound compared to the $3^{rd}/2^{nd}$ shape (which often contains the spicier m2 interval). Not only should you be aware of the distances between notes, but you should listen to the distinctive sonority of each shape.

**A Stack of 4ths or its inv, $4^{th}/2^{nd}$**

Now let's observe one of the most important shapes for creating chord voicings: two 4ths stacked on top of each other. The wider interval of a 4th elicits a warmer sound when building chords as opposed to the more traditional and closer 3rd. Fourths are the cornerstone of the modern jazz sound. The 4th shape can be found in the "Voicing 4" column for C13 and in the "Voicing 2" column for C7#9#5. If we invert the stacked 4ths we get a 4th/2nd, which can be found in the "Voicing 3" column for C13 and in the "Voicing 1" column for C7#9#5.

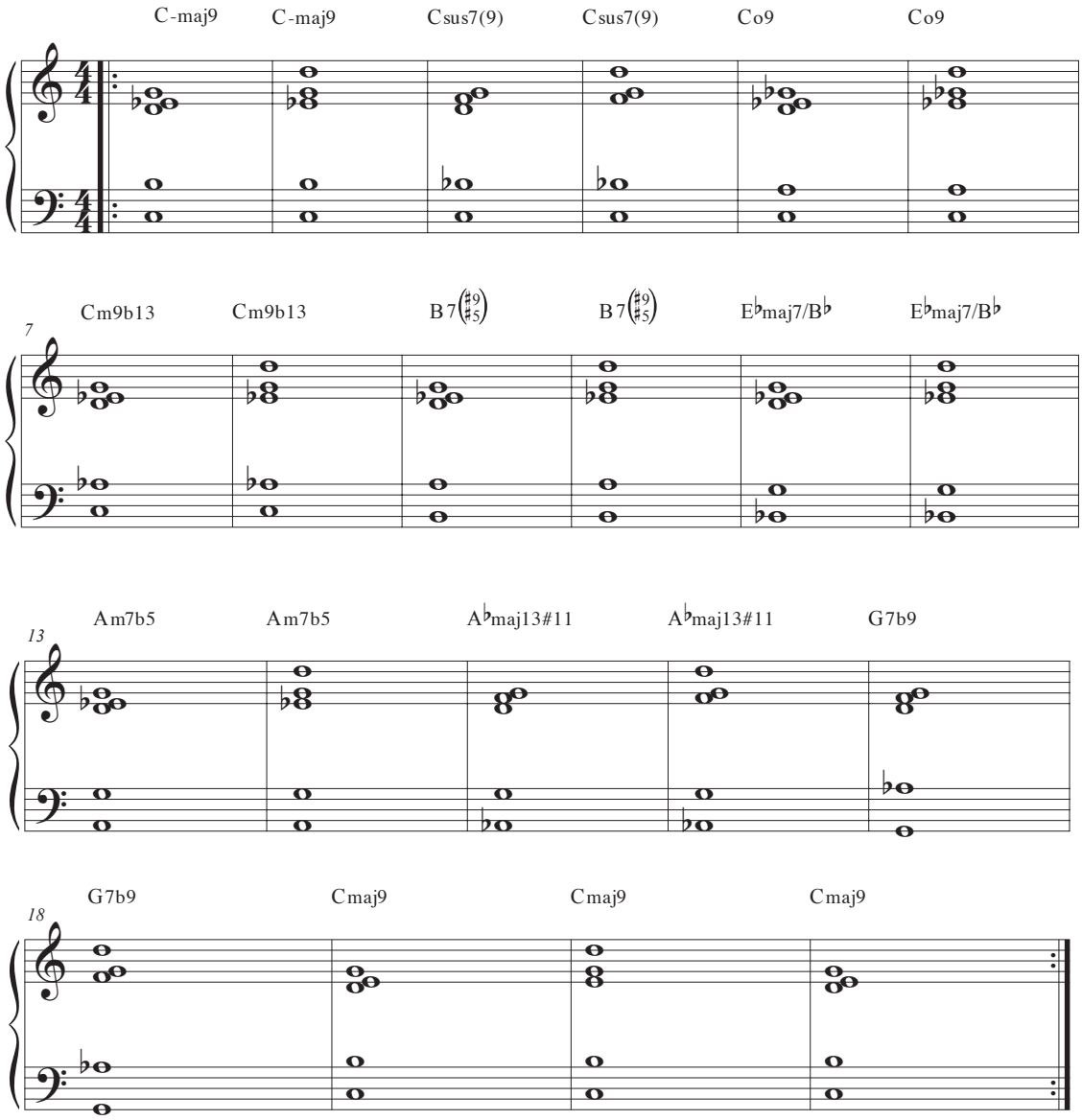
## *Enharmonics*

In this study of shapes over shells there may be some question about enharmonics. For example, C7#9#5 might be spelled with an Eb or D#, and Ab or G#. This can obscure how the RH shape is named. Since the study of shapes has less to do with reading music and more to do with your fingers on the keyboard, your shouldn't get bogged down with the spelling of chords. I'm less concerned with the spelling as I am with the tactual shape in the hand.

**Comping Exercise #71: Creating Your Own Chord Progression Using Shapes over Shells.** Starting with a RH shape(s) of your choice: triad, 3rd/2nd, 5th/3rd, 2nd/3rd, 5th/2nd, 4th/4th or 4th/2nd create a chord progression in which you change the LH shell while preserving the RH shape or shapes. Note that you may change the melody note provided you maintain the RH shape.

The following is an example of an etude that concentrates on two special shapes (3rd/2nd and 2nd/3rd) and their inversions (5th/3rd and 5th/2nd) superimposed onto shells. It consists of a largely static melody alternating between G and D. Most of the shells in LH will be familiar; a few of them are a little different. Note the minor 9th shell for the G7b9, observe the Ebmaj7/Bb and how the root is in the middle of the voicing, and notice how the Am7b5, Abmaj13#11, and G7b9 voicings are missing thirds. It's ok to break the rules sometimes, as long as it makes musical sense. You are free to explore unorthodox voicings. Use the sound of the chord to guide you rather than numbers and chord tones. Open your ears and search to create your own chordal etude.

FIG. 2

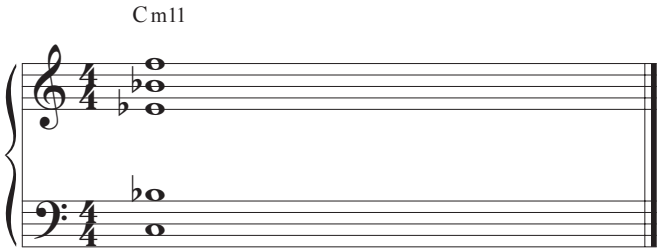



## *The Ninth Shape*

Besides the shapes found in FIG. 1, we can't forget about the iconic shape often used by Horace Silver and Sonny Clark for it's unique punchy yet elegant quality. The shape I'm referring to is the 9th shape. It commonly takes the form of a 3-note RH shape consisting of two 5ths stacked on top of each other. Just as 4ths offer a more open sound than 3rds, 5ths stacked together create an even more open sonority.

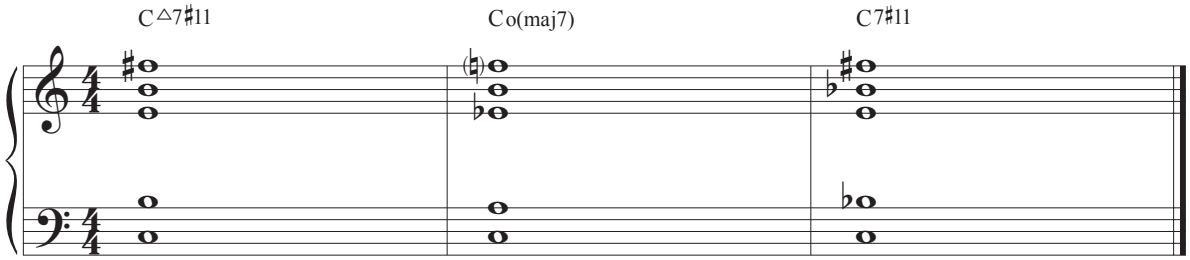
Below is the classic example of this ninth shape over a LH shell. This is the same voicing examined in Chapter 2 when we tweaked 3-7-3 over shells to create a comping pattern modeled after Sonny Clark. Also, we saw this voicing when constructing a piano accompaniment to "All the Things You Are", especially in the bridge.

FIG. 3



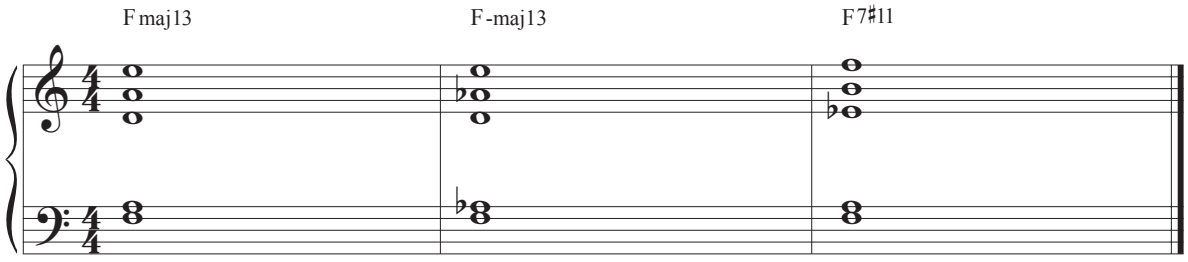

With minor adjustments, we can create several variants.

FIG. 4



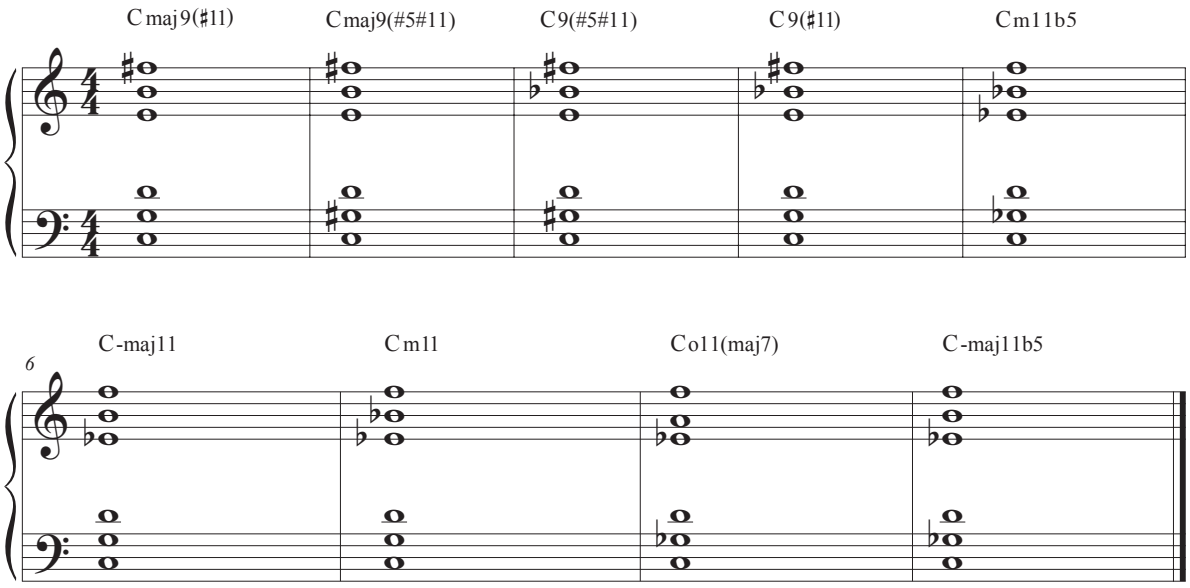

The ninth shape can be used over 1-3 shells.

FIG. 5




Taking the idea of the ninth shape one step further, we can combine a stack of 5ths in the RH with a stack of 5ths in the LH to create a richer, more exotic sound. Sometimes the musical situation calls for these voicings for soloing and/or comping, especially when you can linger, and let these chords ring. Consider adding the following voicings inspired by Duke Ellington to your expanding harmonic palette.

FIG. 6




**Comping Exercise #72: Ninth Shapes.** Transpose FIG. 6 to four keys of your choice.

## CHAPTER 5E: COMPS BY HORACE SILVER, RED GARLAND, SONNY CLARK, AND BOBBY TIMMONS

We are now ready to tackle five more comping transcriptions; two by Horace Silver, one by Red Garland, one by Sonny Clark, and one by Bobby Timmons. Observe their use of spread voicings, TV's, TVR's, and passing chords. Also, observe their use of voicings containing the ninth shape. For several of the spread voicings and TVs, the root is omitted creating rootless voicings. It should be pointed out, however, that all of these pianists play plenty of roots even though there is a bass player. This adds body and impact to their chords. Their rhythm and dynamic sensitivity is so acute, the fact that they are playing notes in the bass range is not a problem.

**Comping Exercise #73: Studying Horace Silver's Comping on "Airegin."** The first transcription illustrates Horace's comping behind Miles's solo on the changes to "Airegin" from the album, Bag's Groove. Always funky and driving, Horace's primary purpose was to facilitate the swing. In the following account, taken from his autobiography, it is obvious that comping was a big part of Horace Silver's musical sensibility.

> "All the cats dug the way I comped behind them. I always tried to get up under them and push them, to provide a great rhythmic and harmonic background that would inspire them to play their best and, above all, to swing. Many fine piano players of that era gave weak support to soloists, preferring to save most of their energy for their own solo spot. I wanted to put all of my energy in the song we were playing from start to finish, not just when it was time for me to solo" [1]

As you comp along with the transcription, notice Horace's captivating sense of syncopation as he employs both spread voicings and TVs. At times the roots are omitted, but more often than not, the roots are included. Note the interesting independent rhythms between the hands as you delve into Horace Silver's comping world.

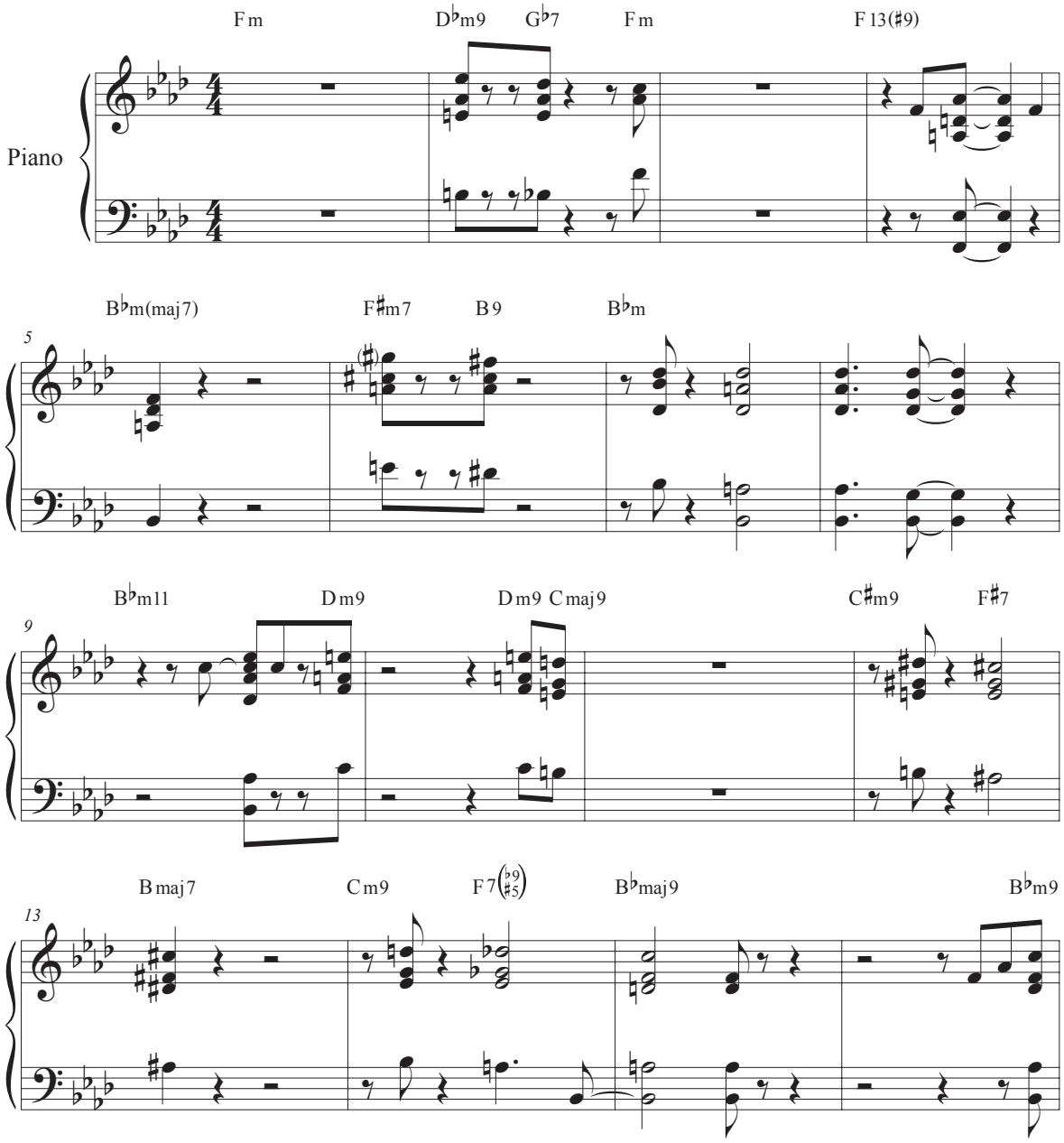
First use **CD 2 Track 2** to comp along to the changes of "Airegin" at a slightly slower tempo. For a demonstration, listen to **CD 2 Track 1.** Then comp along with the **OR**.

[1] Horace Silver, *Let's Get to the Nitty Gritty, The Autobiography of Horace Silver* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), 51.

FIG. 1

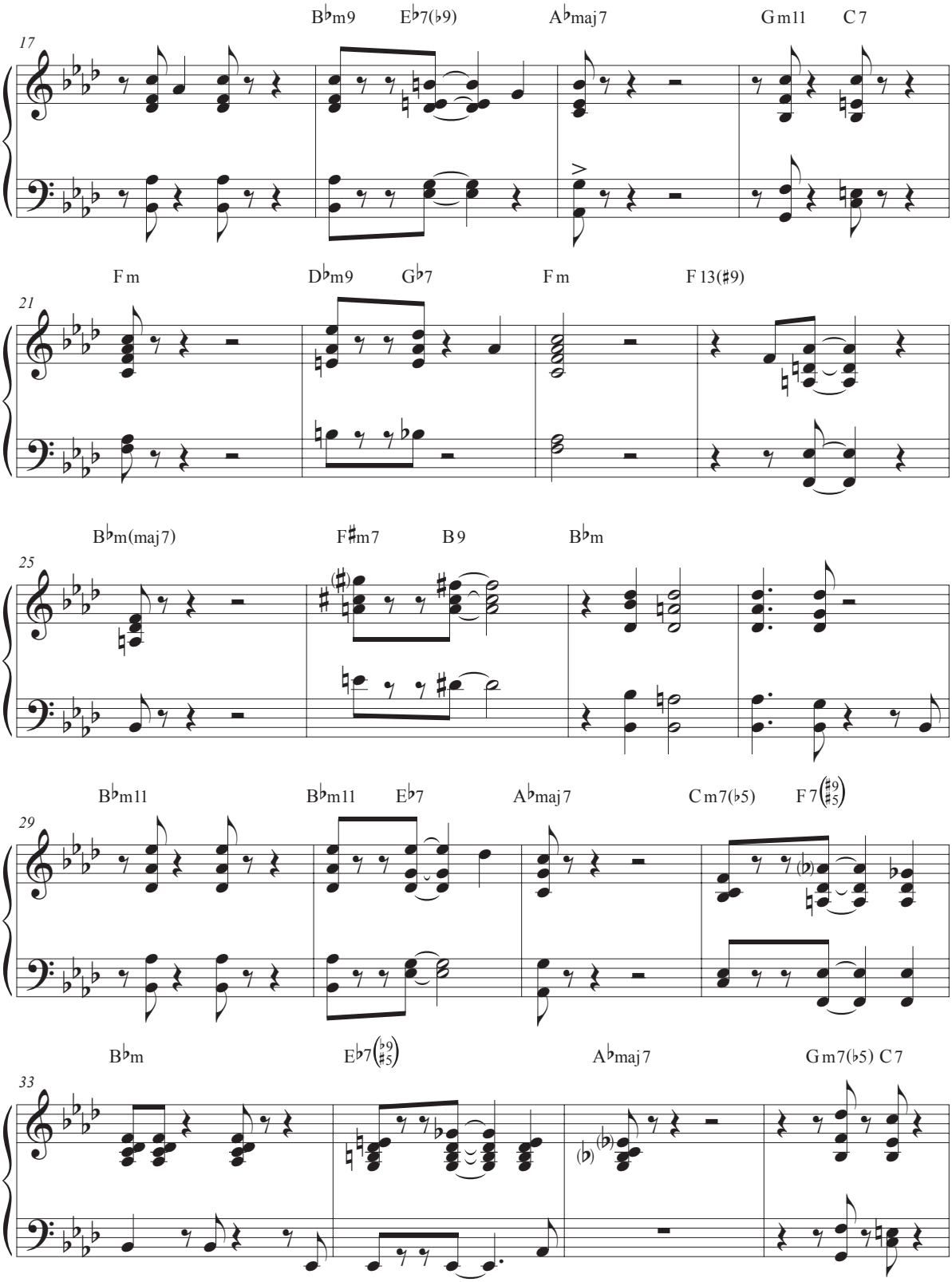
# Horace Silver's Comping

on the changes to Airegin



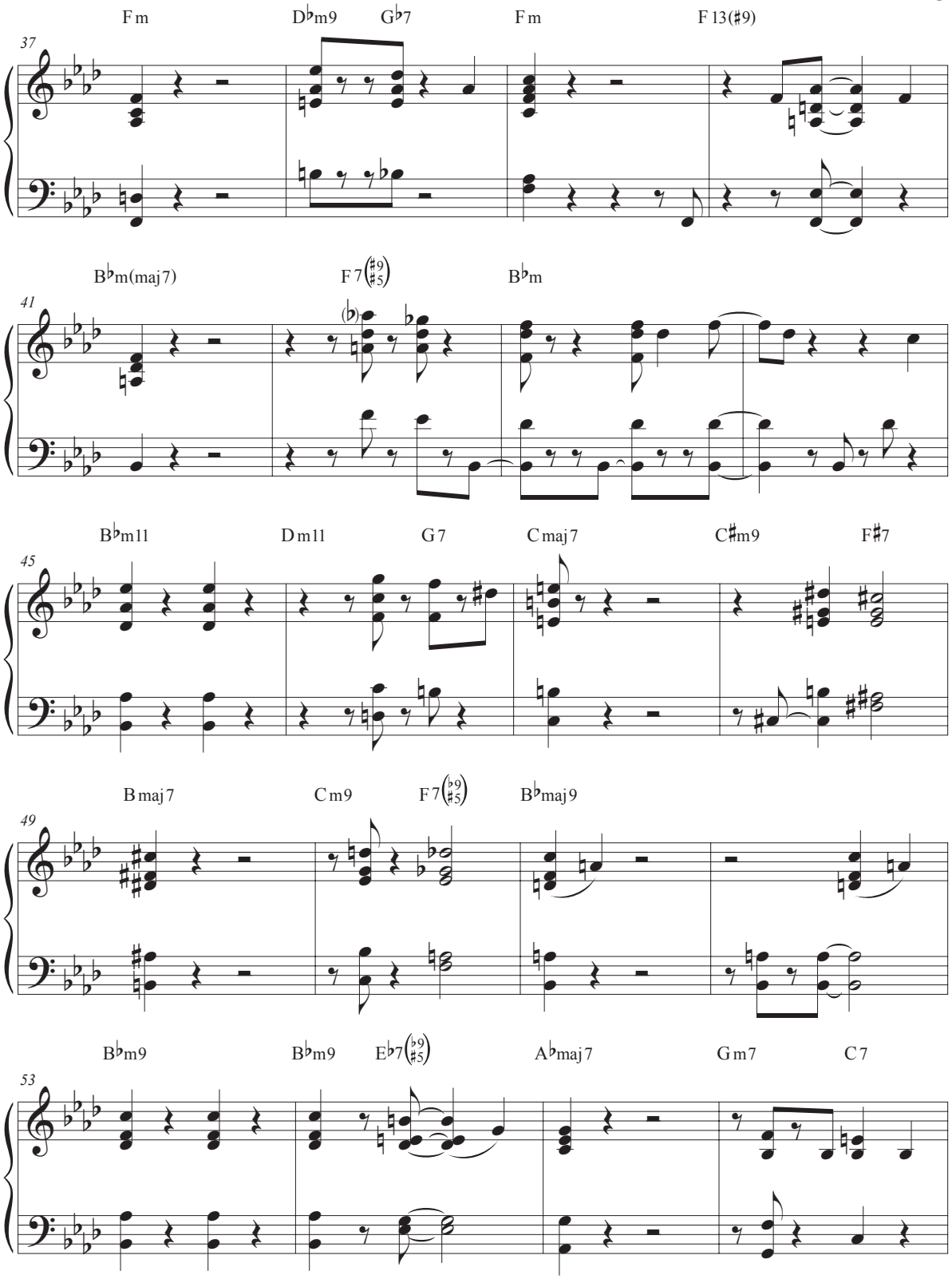
Horace Silver's Comping on the changes to Airegin

2

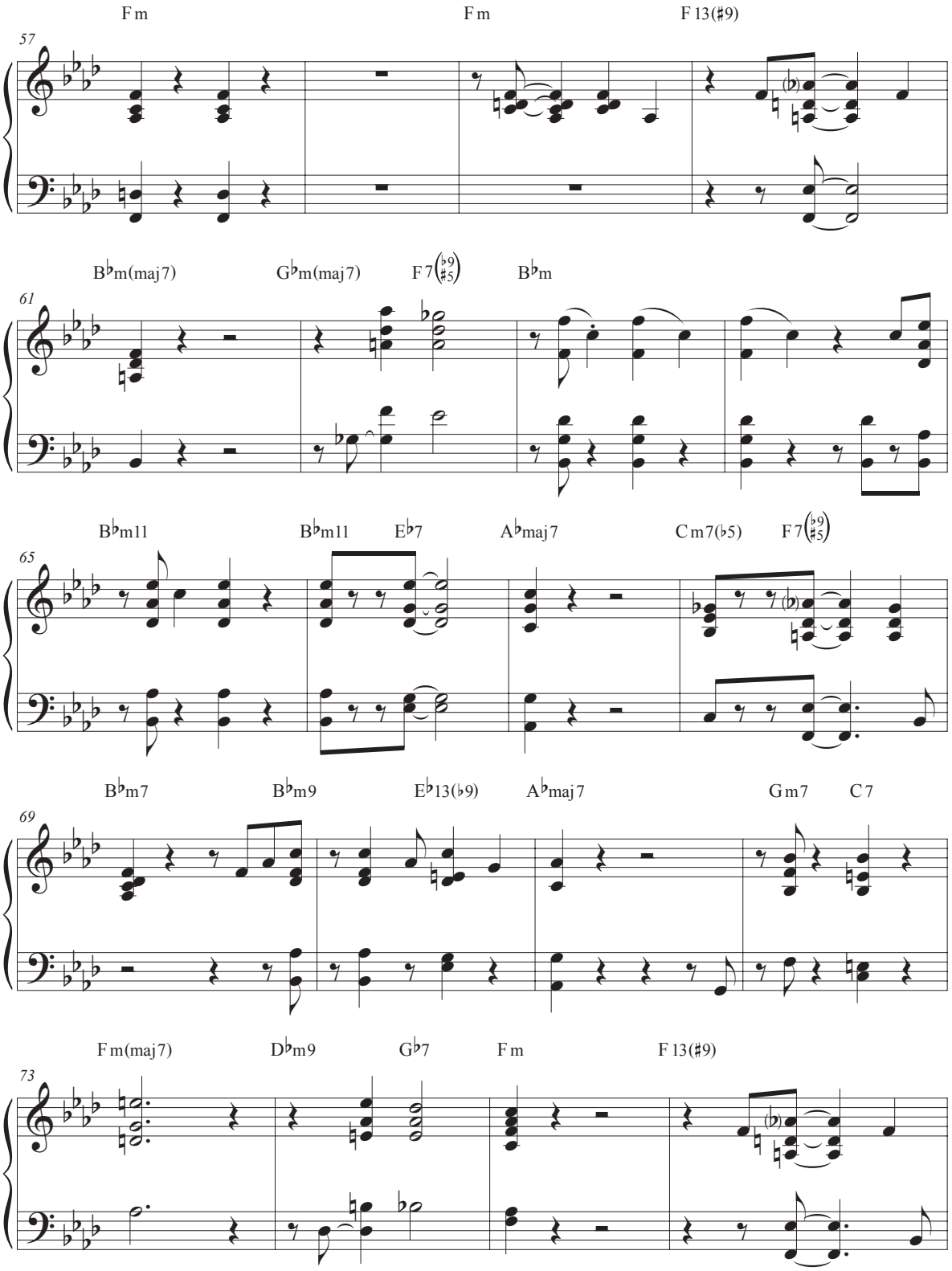


Horace Silver's Comping on the changes to Airegin



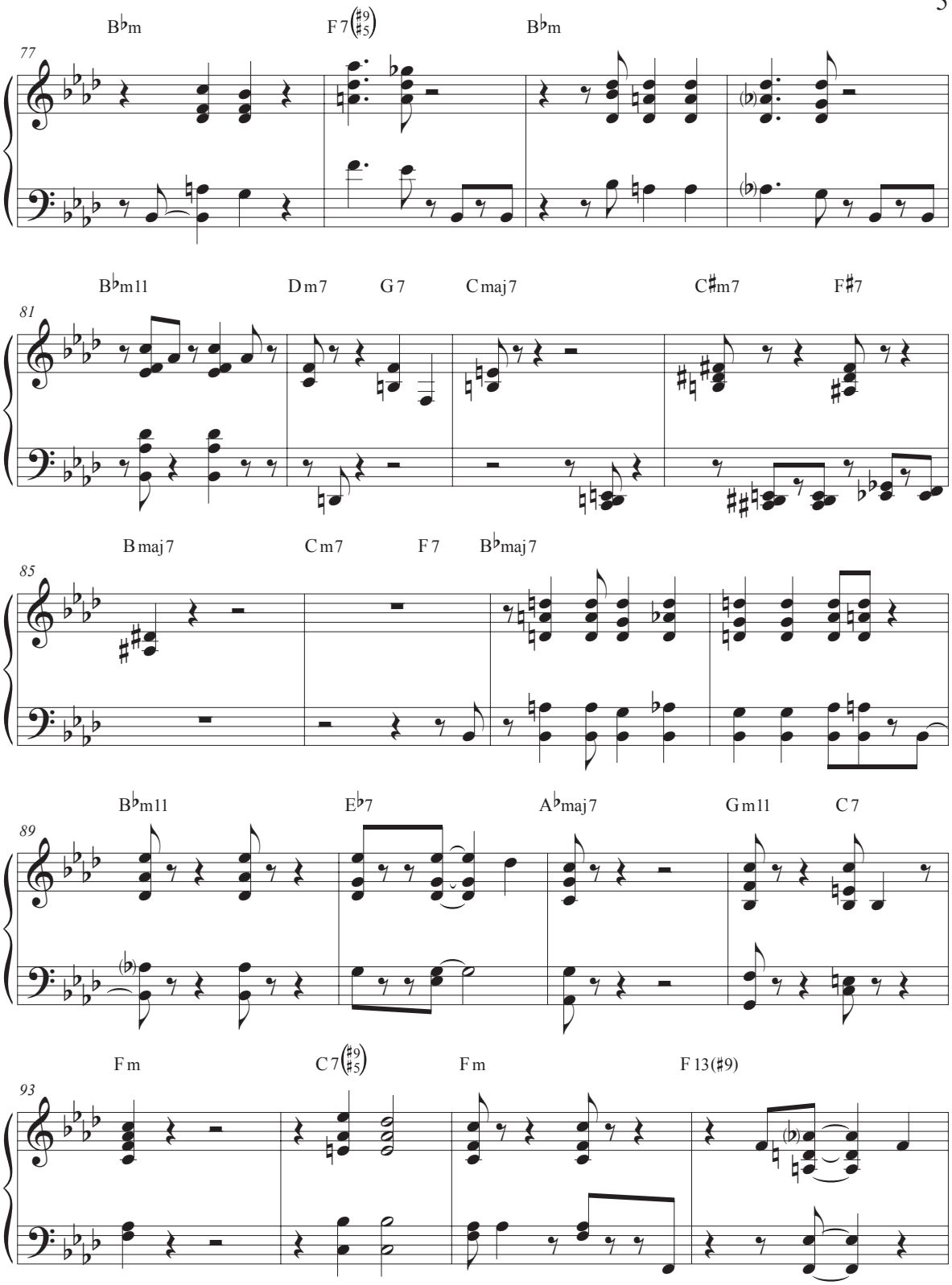


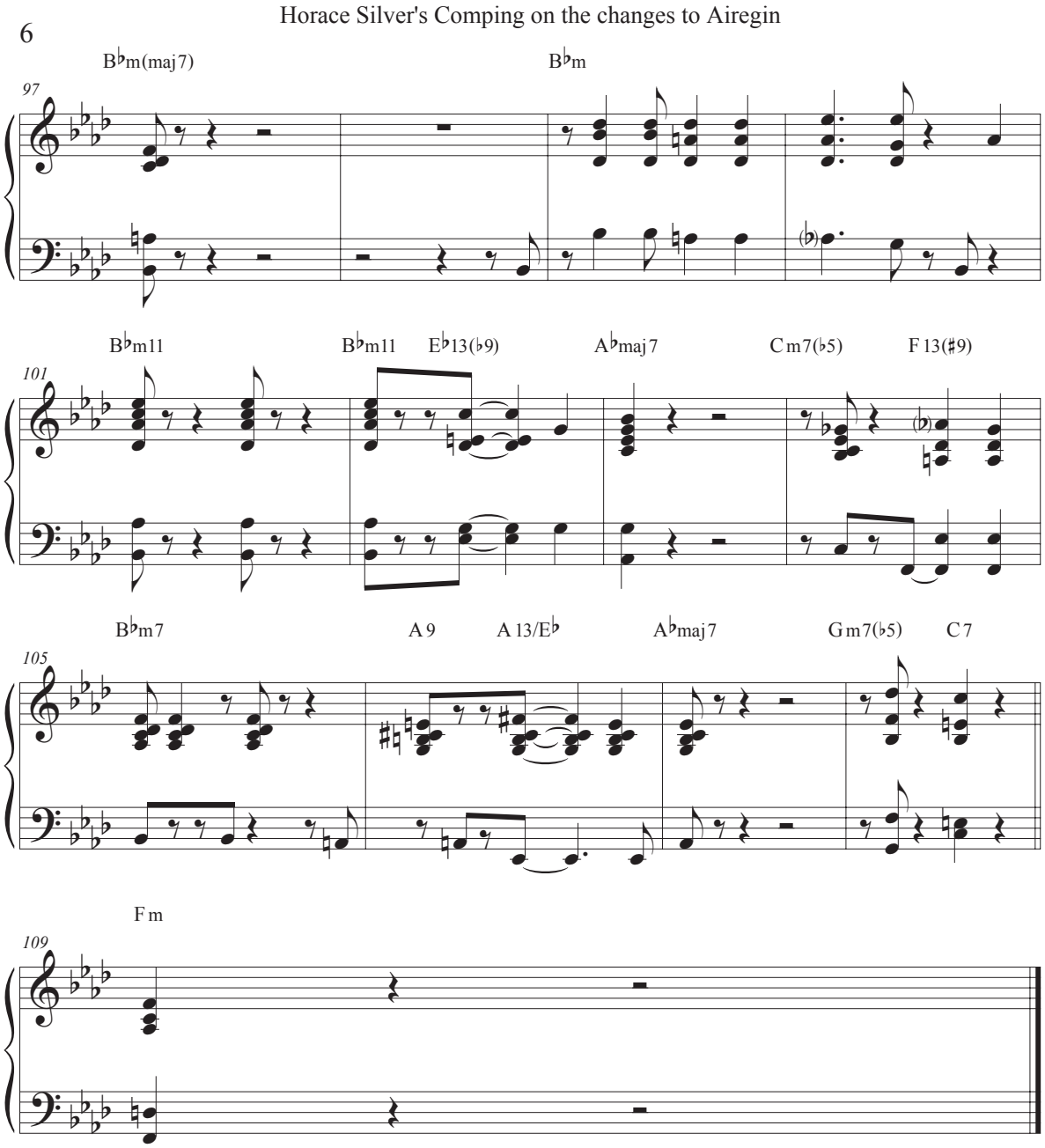
Horace Silver's Comping on the changes to Airegin



Horace Silver's Comping on the changes to Airegin





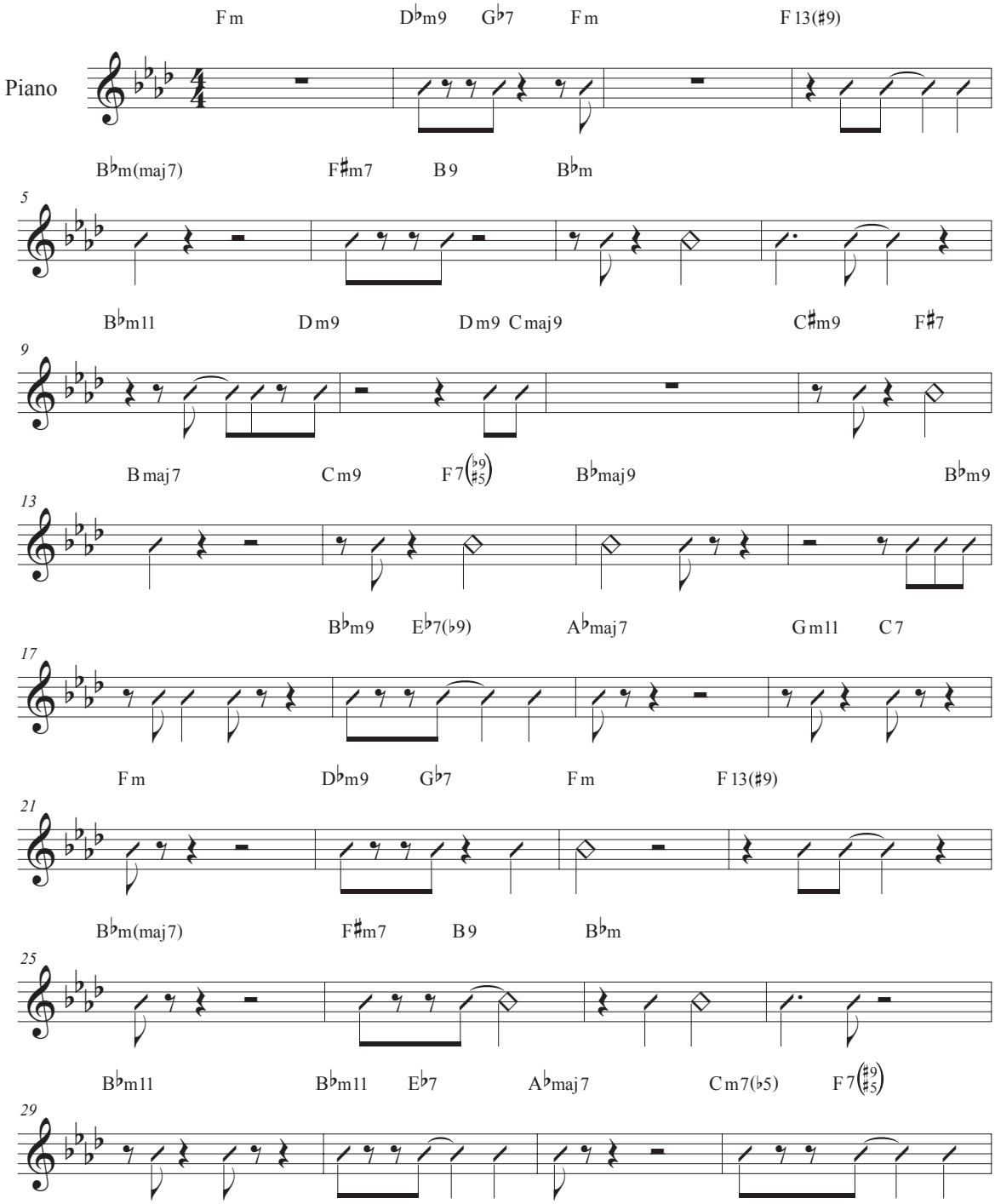



**Comping Exercise #74: Applying different voicings styles using Horace Silver's Comping Guide on the changes to "Airegin."** Apply a variety of voicing styles to Horace Silver's comping pattern. Use the OR and CD 2 **Track 2**.

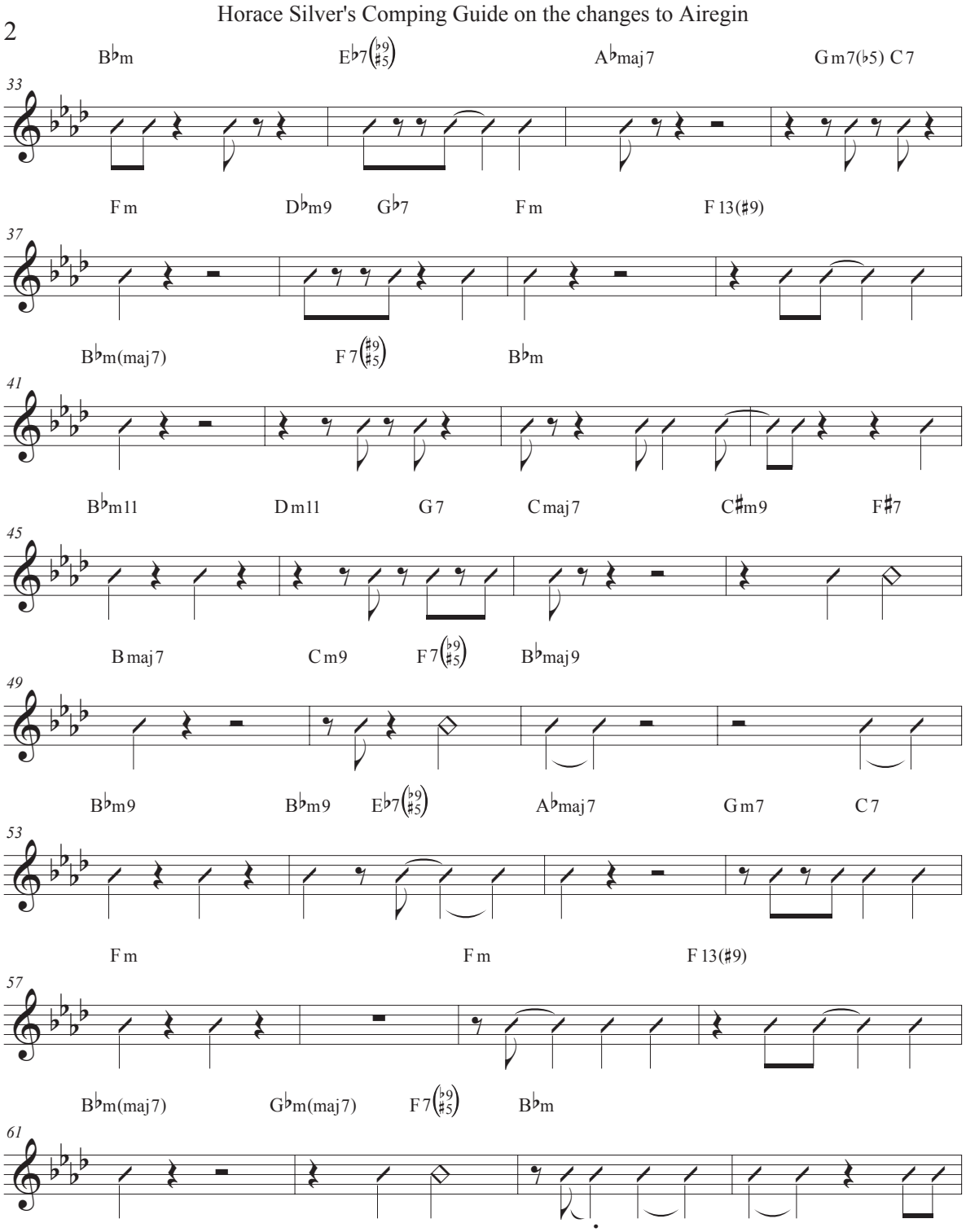
FIG. 2

# Horace Silver's Comping Guide

On the changes to Airegin

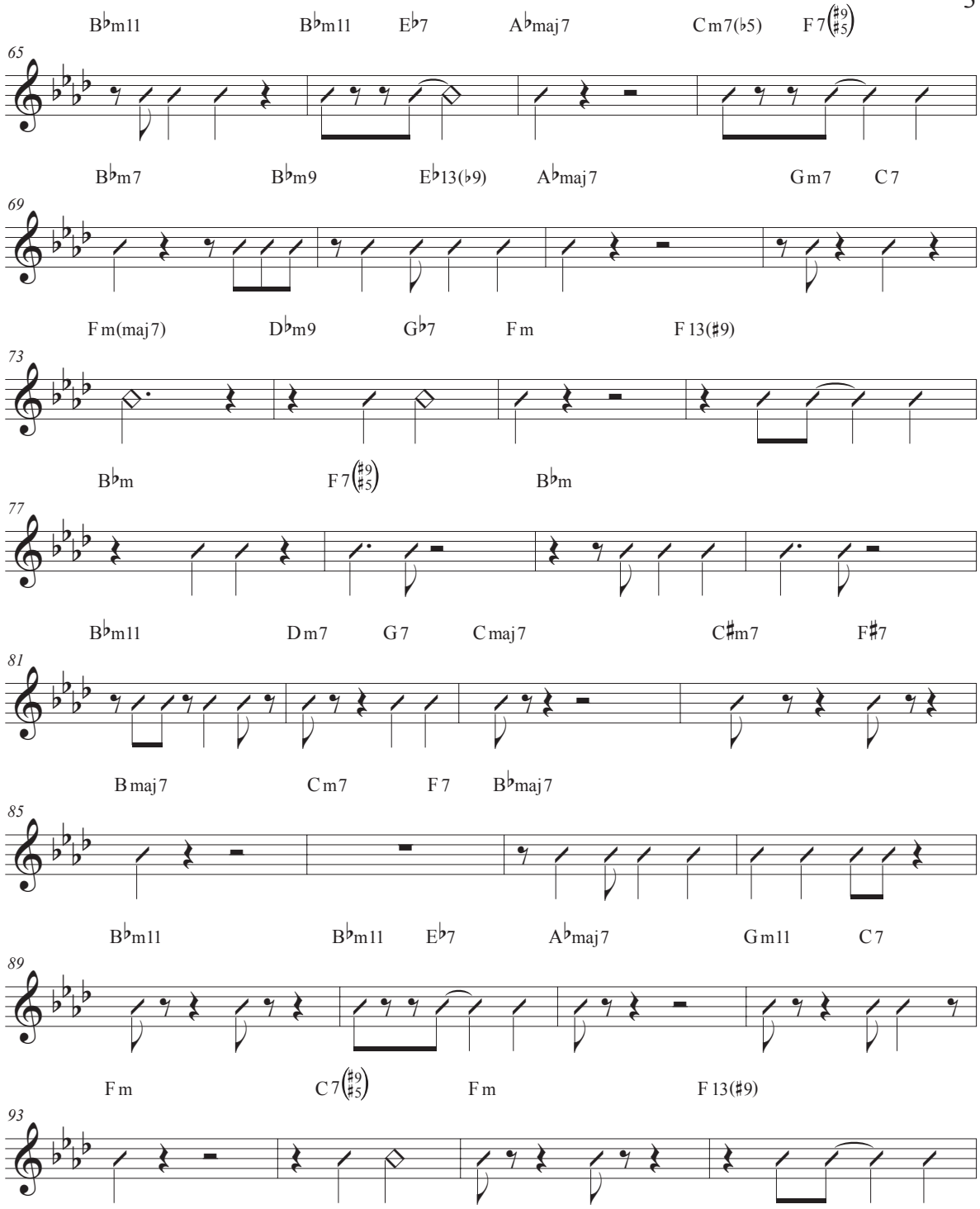


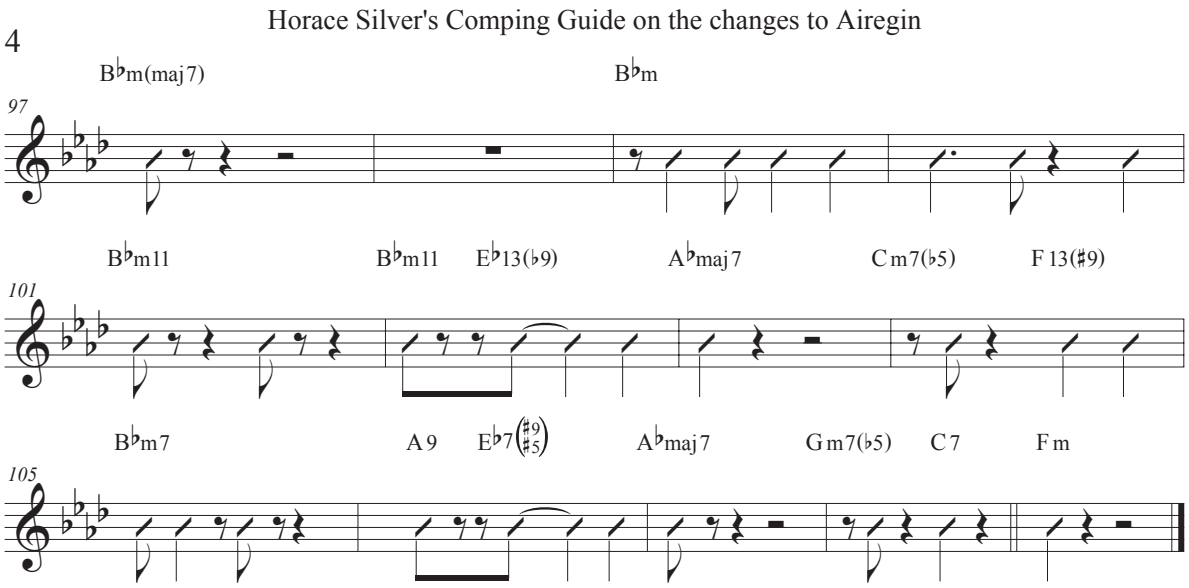
Horace Silver's Comping Guide on the changes to Airegin



Horace Silver's Comping Guide on the changes to Airegin








**Comping Exercise #75: Working with Horace Silver's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 6-10.**

Apply the HSCR's (Horace Silver Comping Rhythms) below to different standard songs. Then loop and transpose the HSCP's (Horace Silver Comping Progressions) that follow.

FIG. 3

# Horace Silver Comping Rhythms

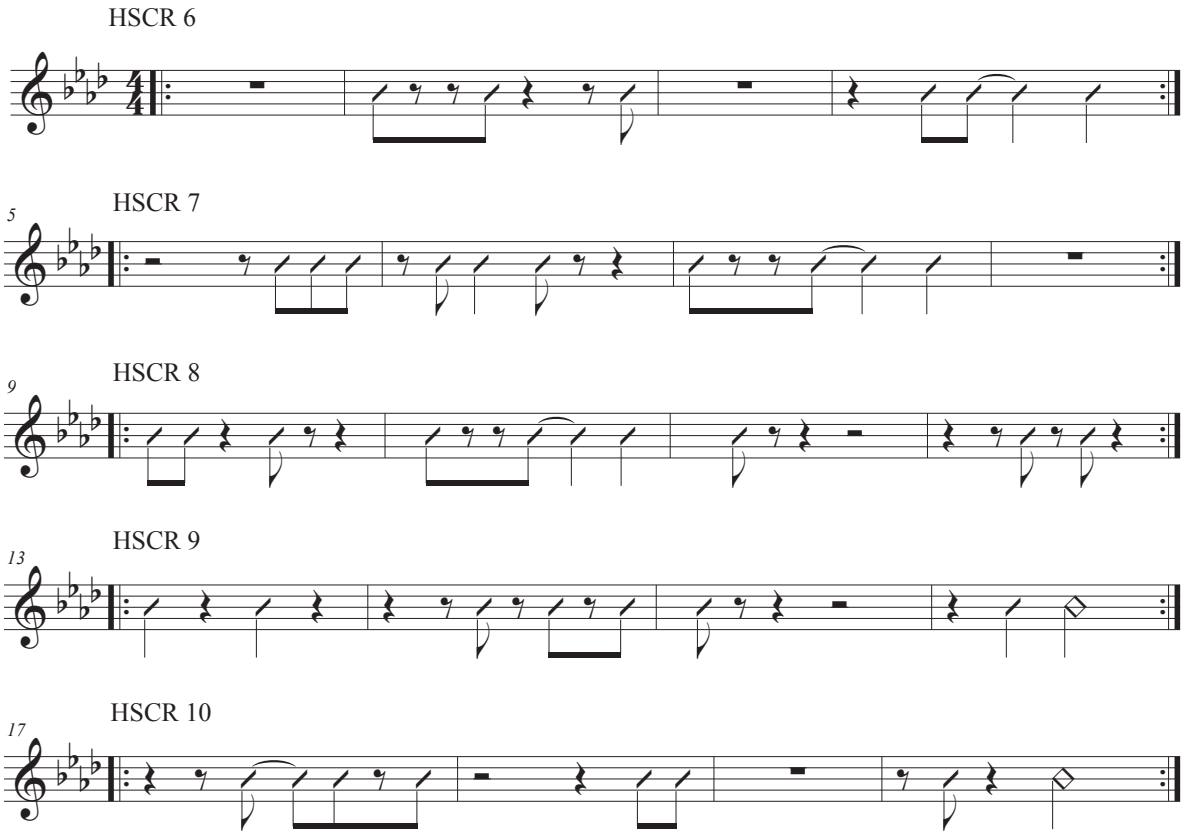
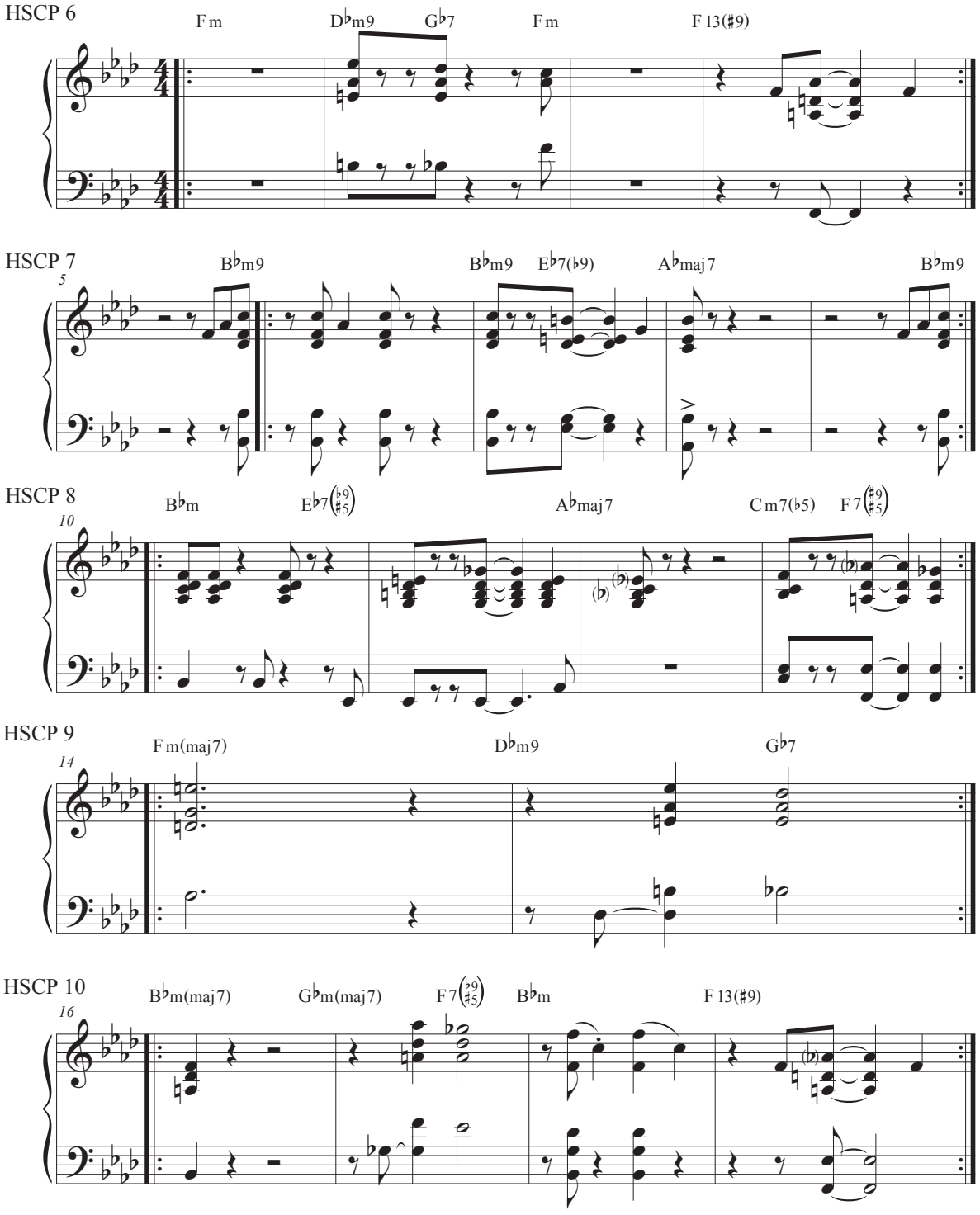


FIG. 4

# Horace Silver Comping Progressions



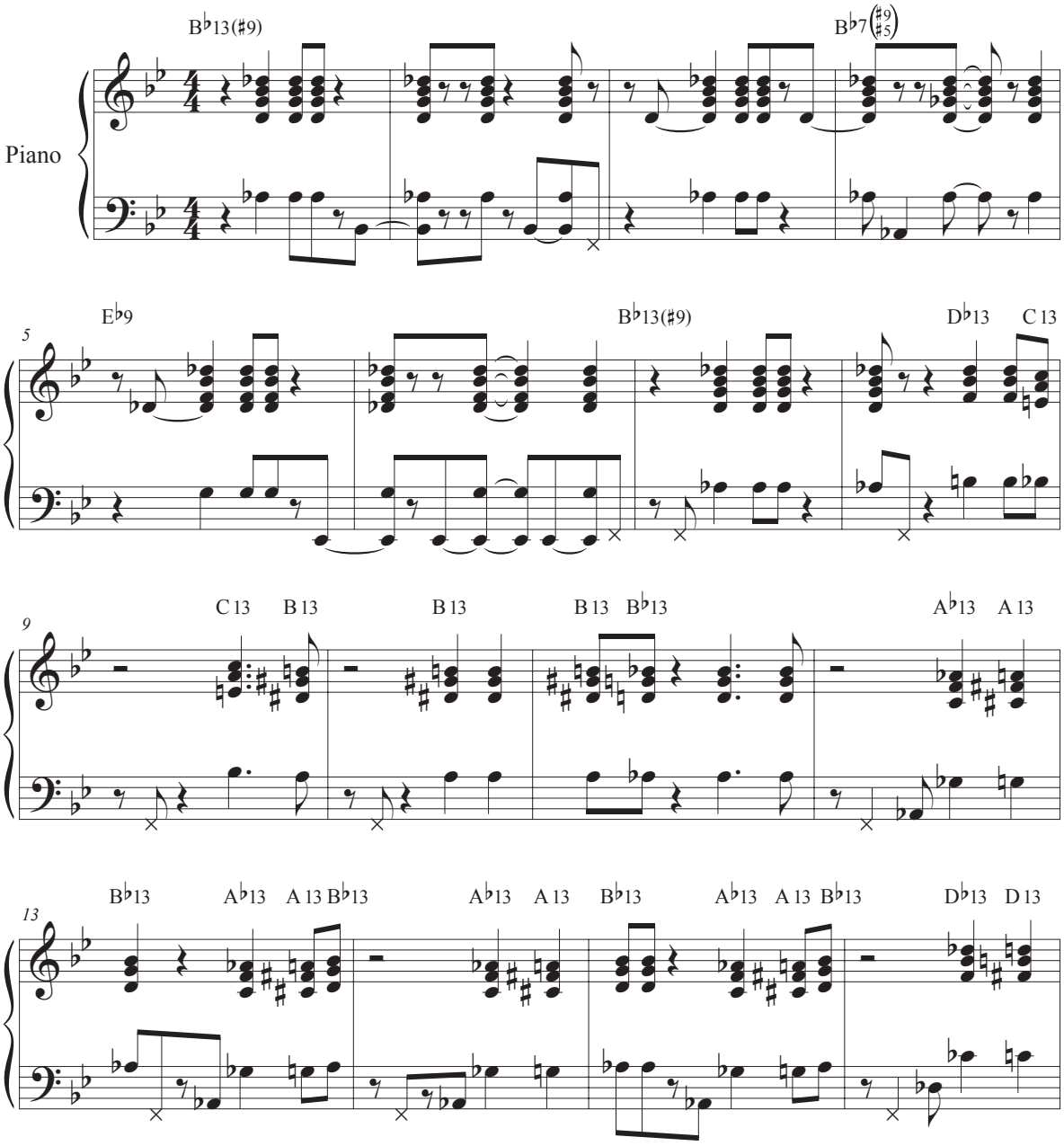
**Comping Exercise #76: Studying Horace Silver's Comping on "Blowin' the Blues Away."** Dive into Horace's comping on the changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away" behind Junior Cook. His comp is always driving and forceful; like a big band swinging behind a soloist. Some of the best background figures can be mined from Horace Silver's comping patterns.

First use **CD 2 Track 4** to comp along to the changes of "Blowin' the Blues Away" at a slightly slower tempo. For a demonstration, listen to **CD 2 Track 3.** Then comp along with the **OR** . On the demo track the transcription is played twice.

FIG. 5

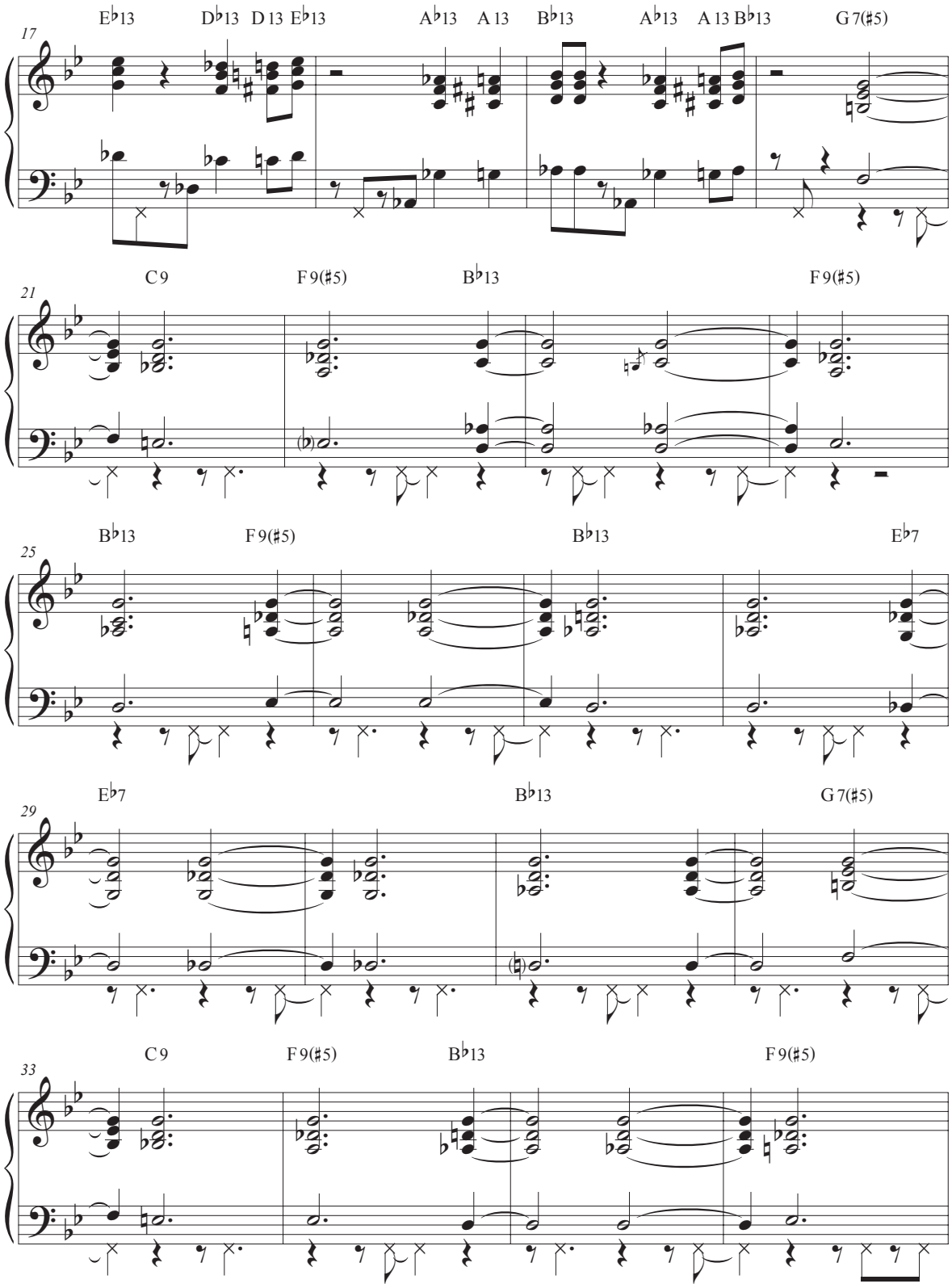
# Horace Silver's Comping

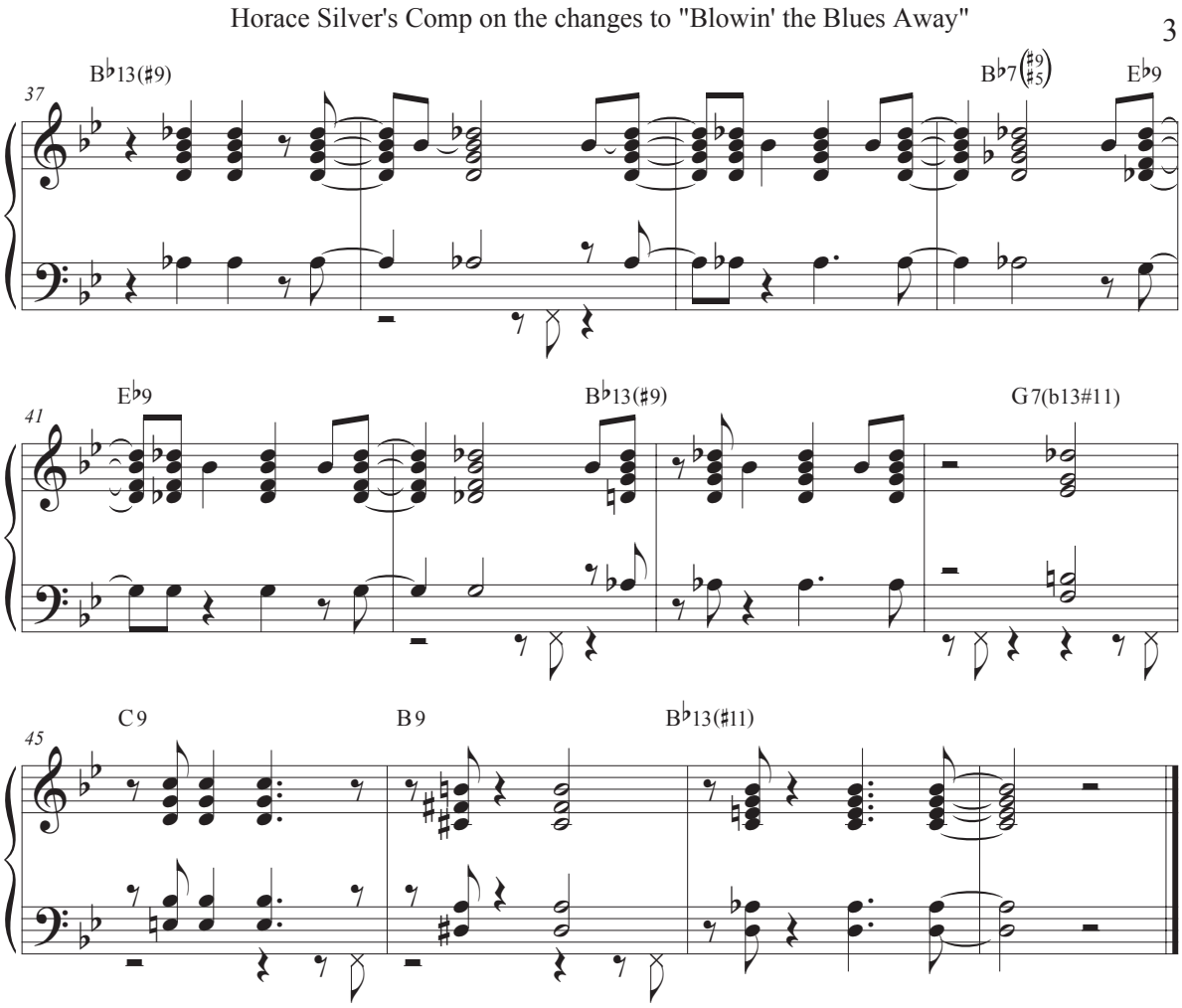
On the changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away" (Blues)




(Note: The low F with the "x" notehead signifies a low percussive sound Horace gets by playing a cluster with his left hand in the lower register inbetween comps. This crucial component adds to the funkiness of Horace Silver's comping.)

2 Horace Silver's Comp on the changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away"



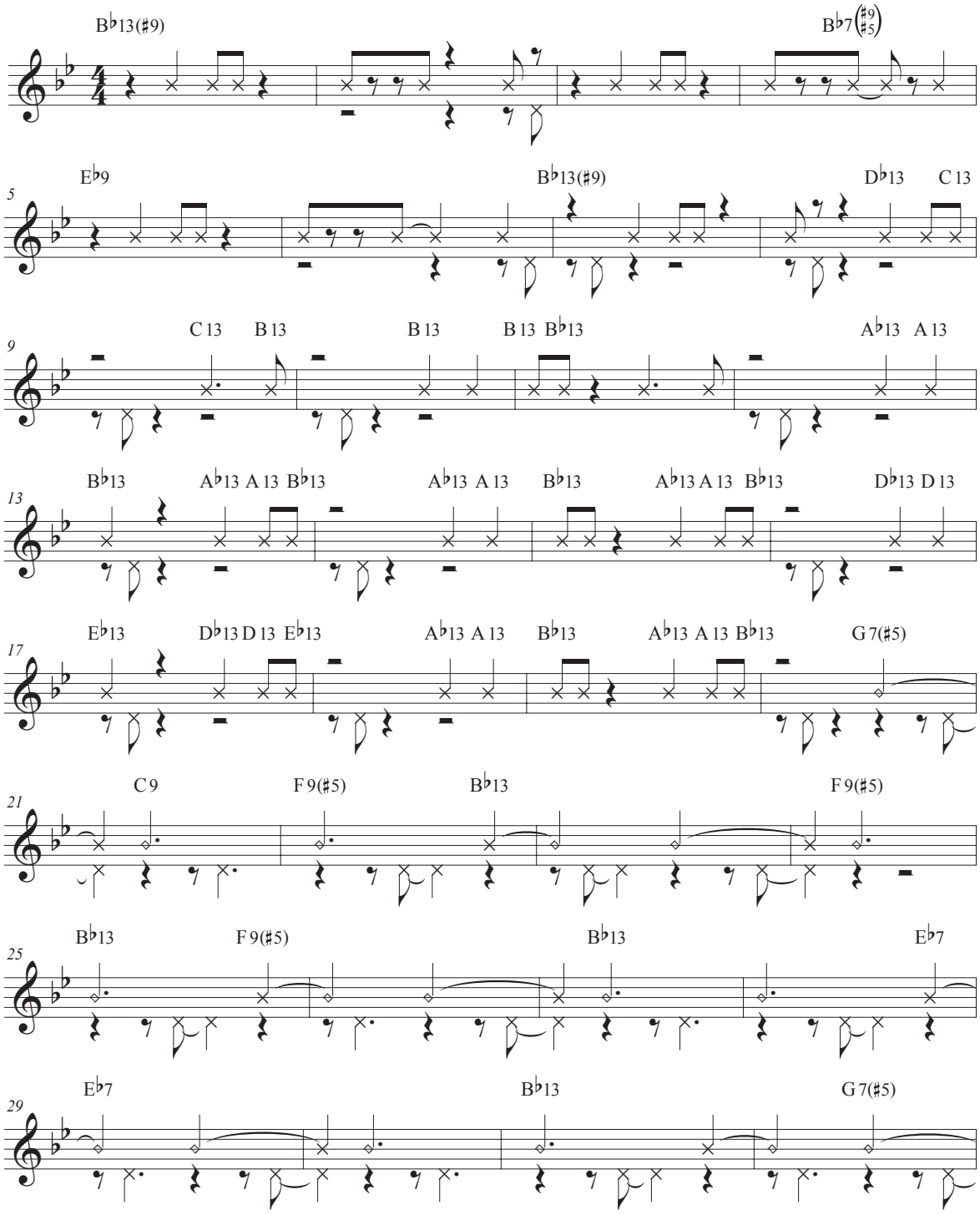


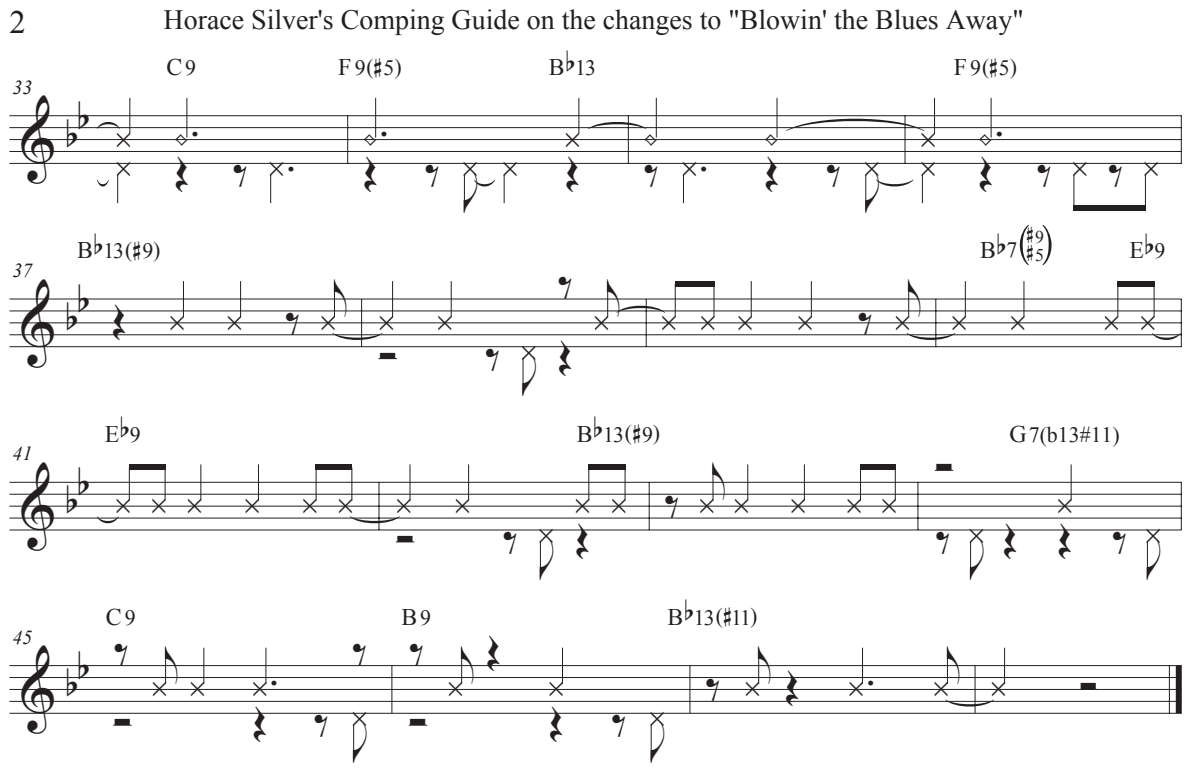

**Comping Exercise #77: Applying different voicings styles using Horace Silver's Comping Guide on the changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away."** Apply a variety of voicing styles to Horace Silver's comping pattern. Use the OR and **CD 2 Track 4**.

FIG. 6

# Horace Silver's Comping Guide

on the changes to"Blowing the Blues Away"






(Note: The "x" noteheads in the middle of the staff signify Horace's main comping pattern. The "x" noteheads below the staff signify a counter rhythm generated by clusters in the lower register.)

**Comping Exercise #78: Working with Horace Silver's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 11-15.**

Apply these HSCR's (Horace Silver Comping Rhythms) to different standard songs. Feel free to create your own. Then loop and transpose the following HSCP's (Horace Silver Comping Progressions).

FIG. 7

# Horace Silver Comping Rhythms

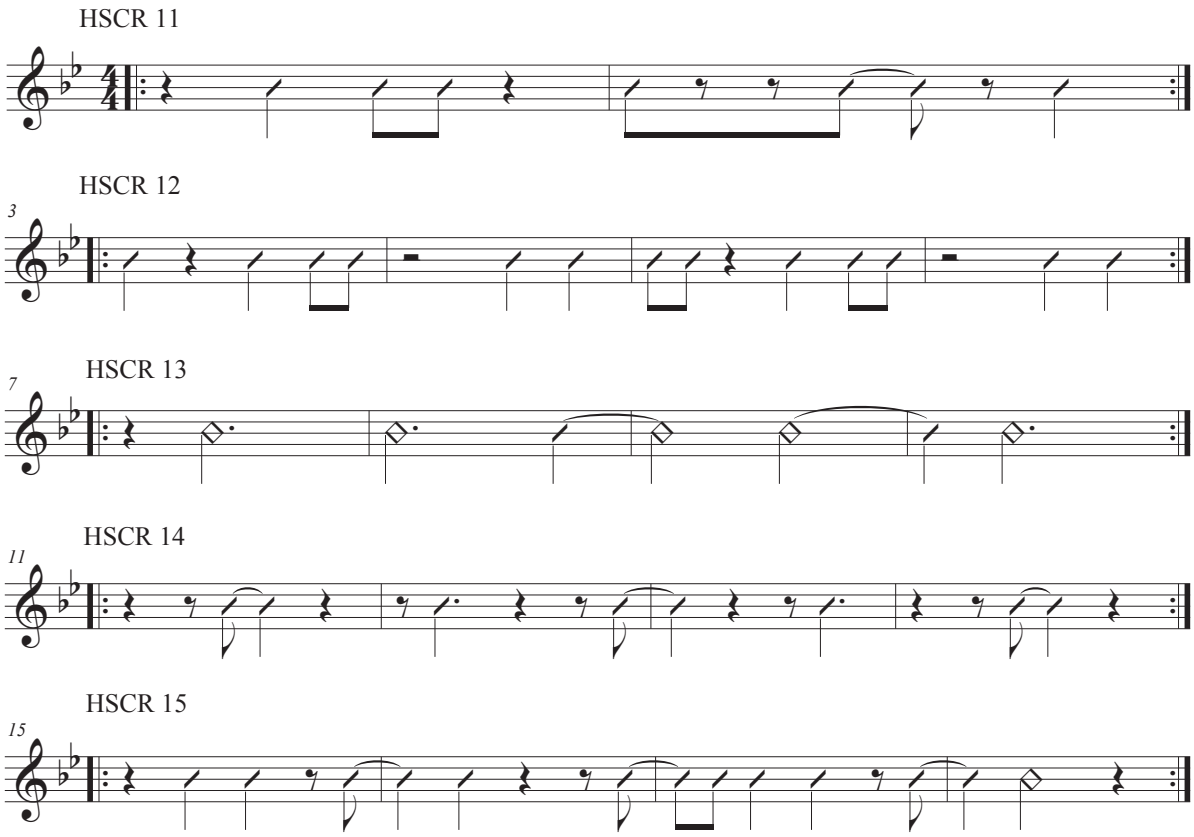
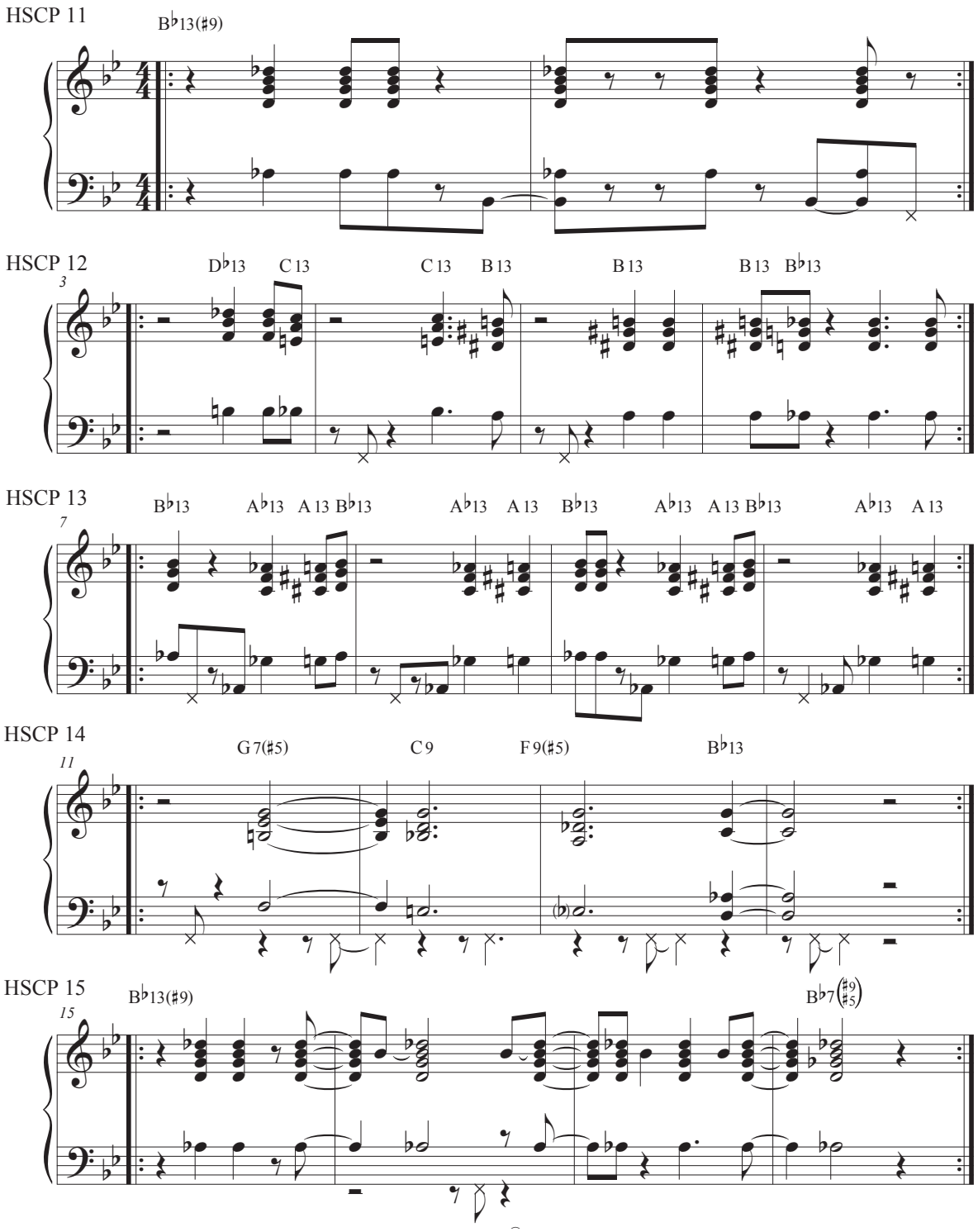


FIG. 8

# Horace Silver Comping Progressions



For the last three pianists (Red Garland, Sonny Clark, and Bobby Timmons), the comping transcriptions are purposely modified from the original. They are written to be in the pianist's style, but are not exact copies from the recording. Care has been taken to preserve some of the same voicings, progressions, and rhythms. They are presented, however, in a new way with the idea that you, as a student, will do your own investigating to uncover the original transcription. Since you are doing the transcribing and not simply reading a transcription, you will be better equipped to assimilate the material.

**Comping Exercise #79: Digging into Red Garland's Comping on "Diane."** Red Garland is one of the most revered in the pantheon of great jazz compers. He offered Miles Davis the ultimate cushion: constant subtle and warm support, coupled with finely tuned shouts and riffs, and lightening quick reflexes. Even while offering exquisite support to the soloist, he constantly interacted with Philly Joe Jones in ways that are mind-boggling.

Born in Dallas, Texas in 1923, Red Garland worked in New York and Philadelphia from the mid 40's to the mid 50's backing up many of the jazz greats such as Charlie Parker, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, and Lester Young. His unique style was a blend of Nat King Cole, Ahmad Jamal, and Bud Powell. It was not until he began working with the Miles Davis Quintet in 1955 that he gained proper recognition. It was at this time that Red Garland joined forces with Paul Chambers on bass and Philly Joe Jones on drums to create one of the most important rhythm sections in jazz.

Red Garland's understated and majestic comping behind Miles Davis is represented here in the next transcription. His comping consists of a mixture of spread voicings and TV's, at times without the root. Red employs movements reminiscent of the bebop era, rich with diminished passing chords. Interestingly, Red Garland keeps the root in many of his voicings while comping. For the most part, it's during his soloing that he employs the rootless block chord voicings that have become synonomous with his style.

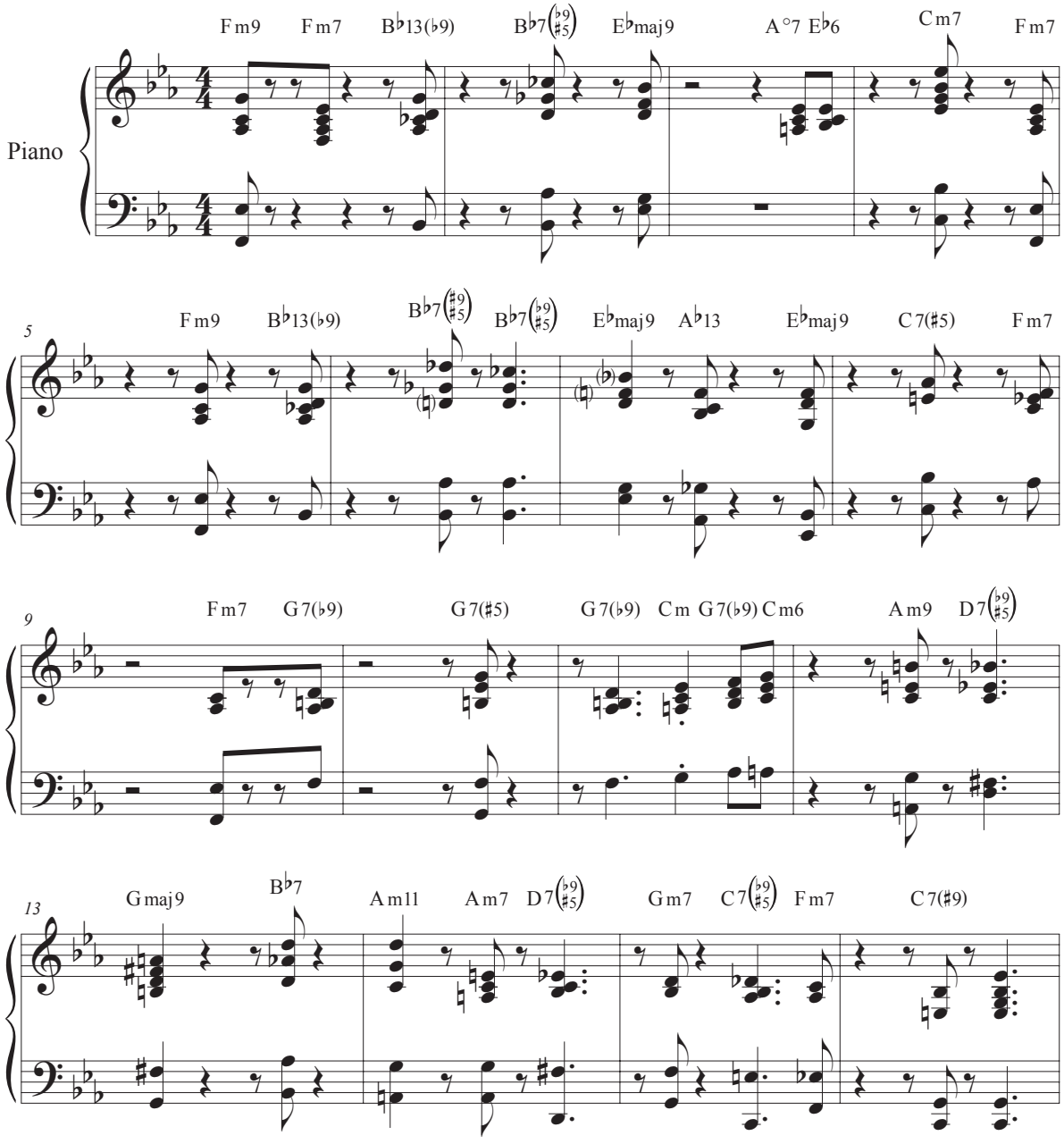
Below is a modified version of Garland's comping. Listen to the OR several times paying attention to placement and articulation. Play along with **CD 2 Track 6** using the modified transcription of comping in the style of Red Garland. For a demonstration listen to **CD 2 Track 5.**

Then play along with the OR using the modified comping transcription keeping in mind that you are playing an independent part.

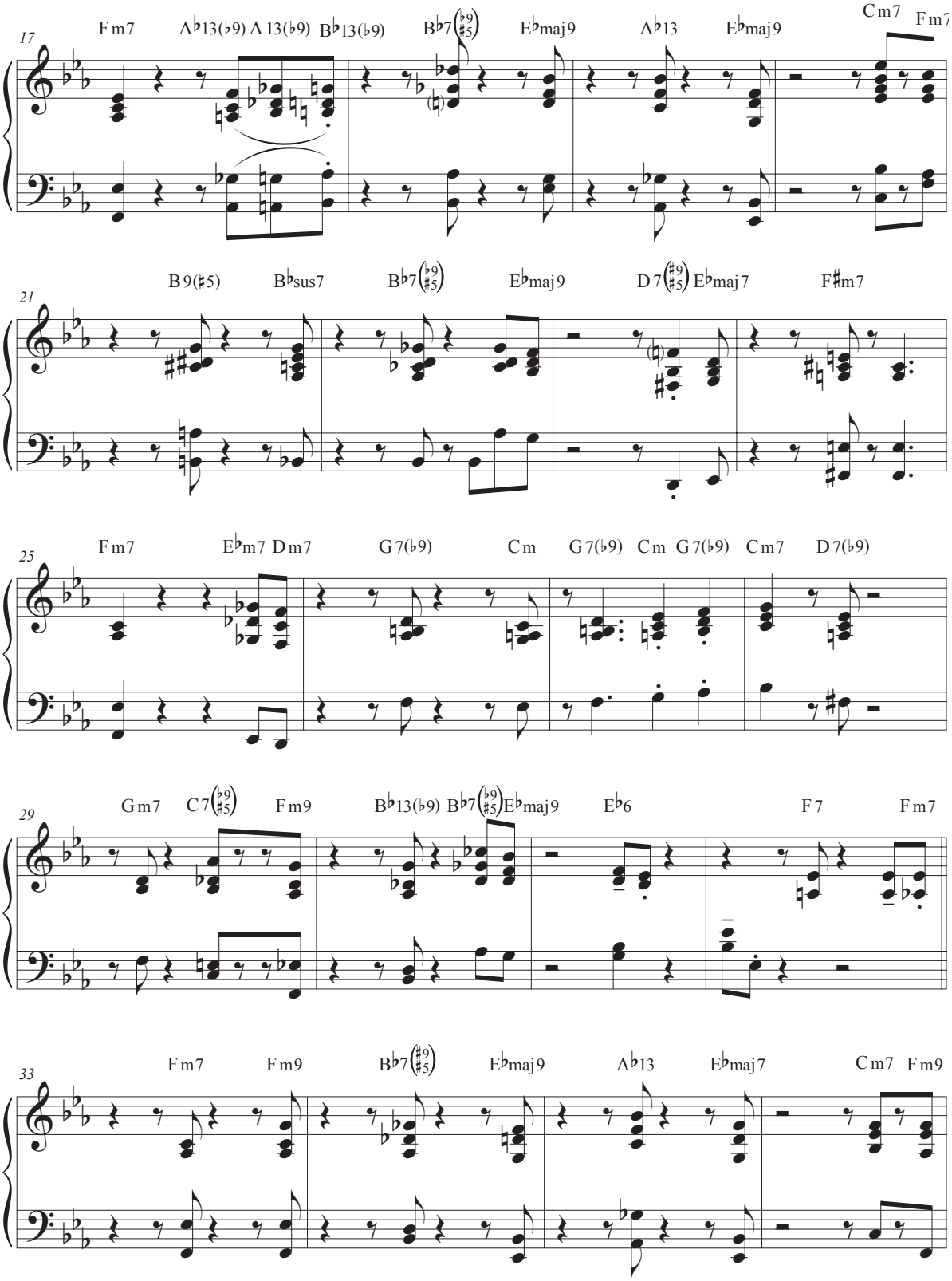
FIG. 9

# Comping in the Style of Red Garland

On the changes to "Diane"

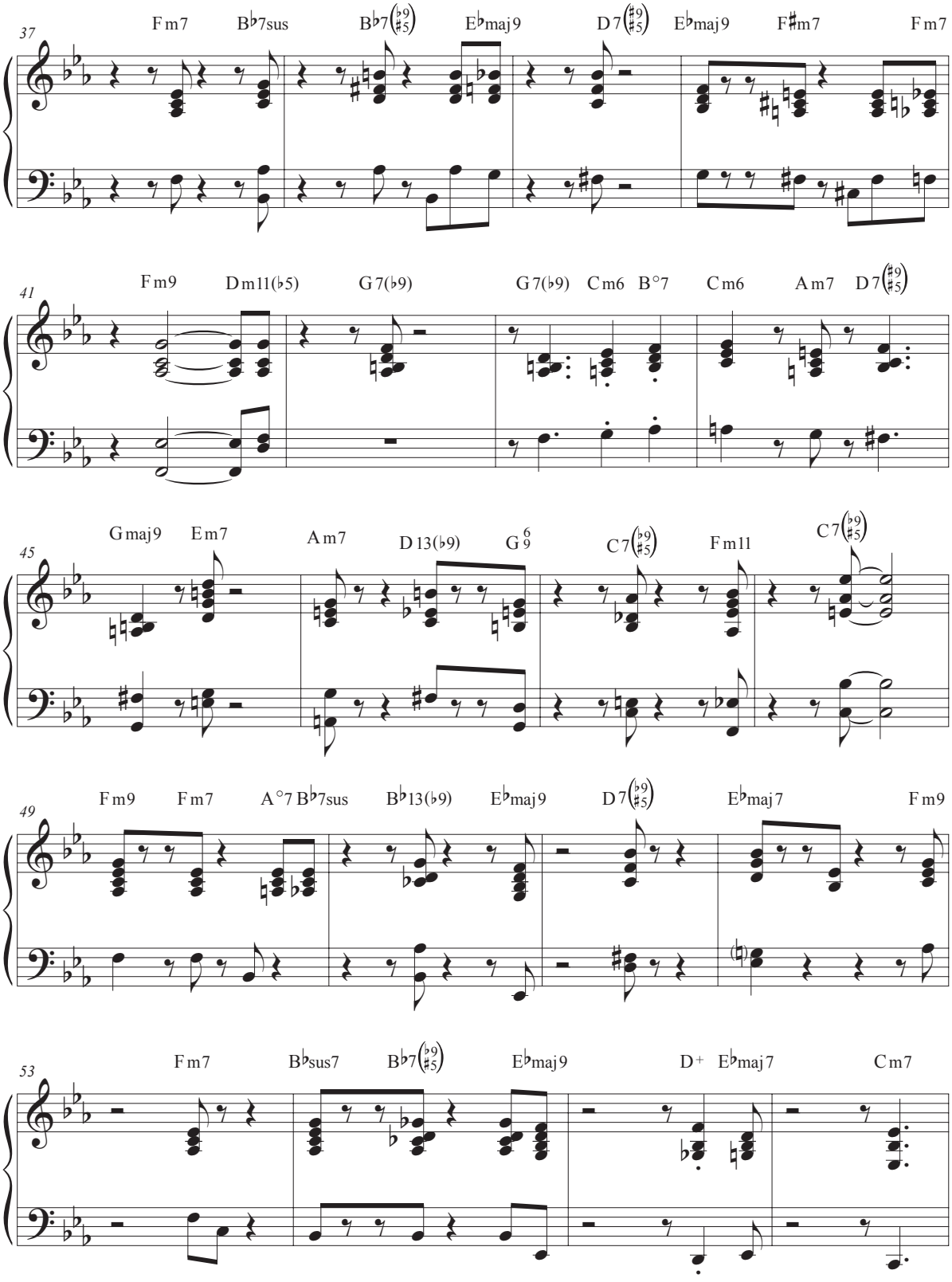


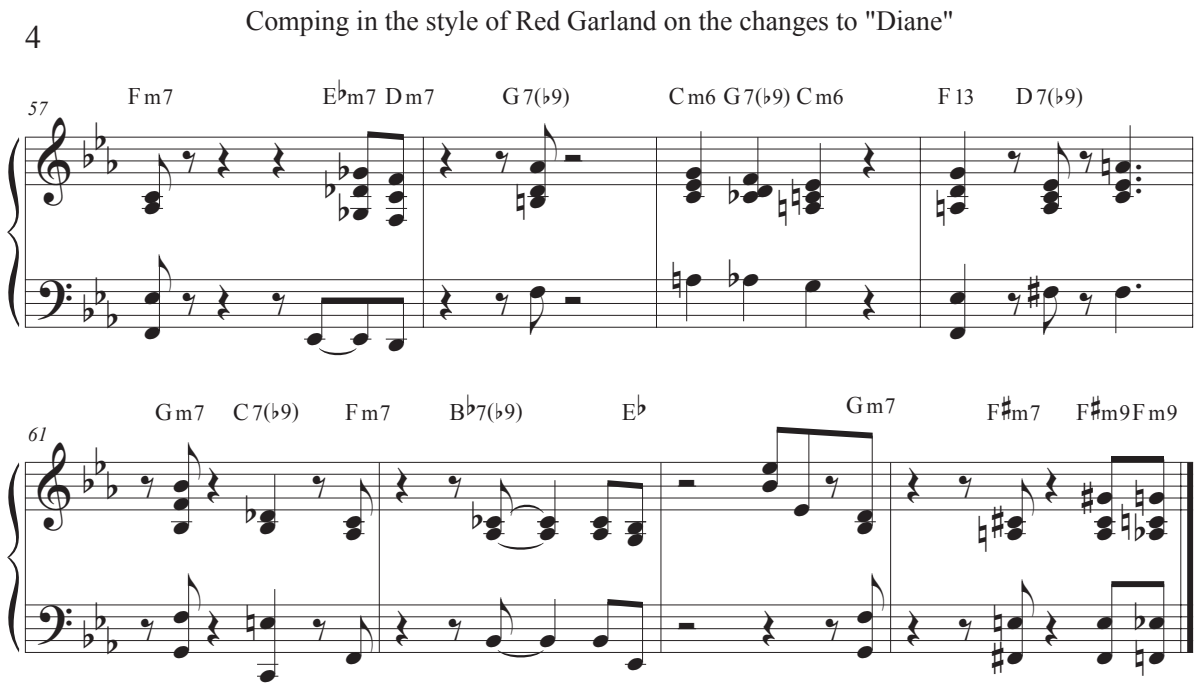
2 Comping in the style of Red Garland on the changes to "Diane"



Comping in the style of Red Garland on the changes to "Diane"





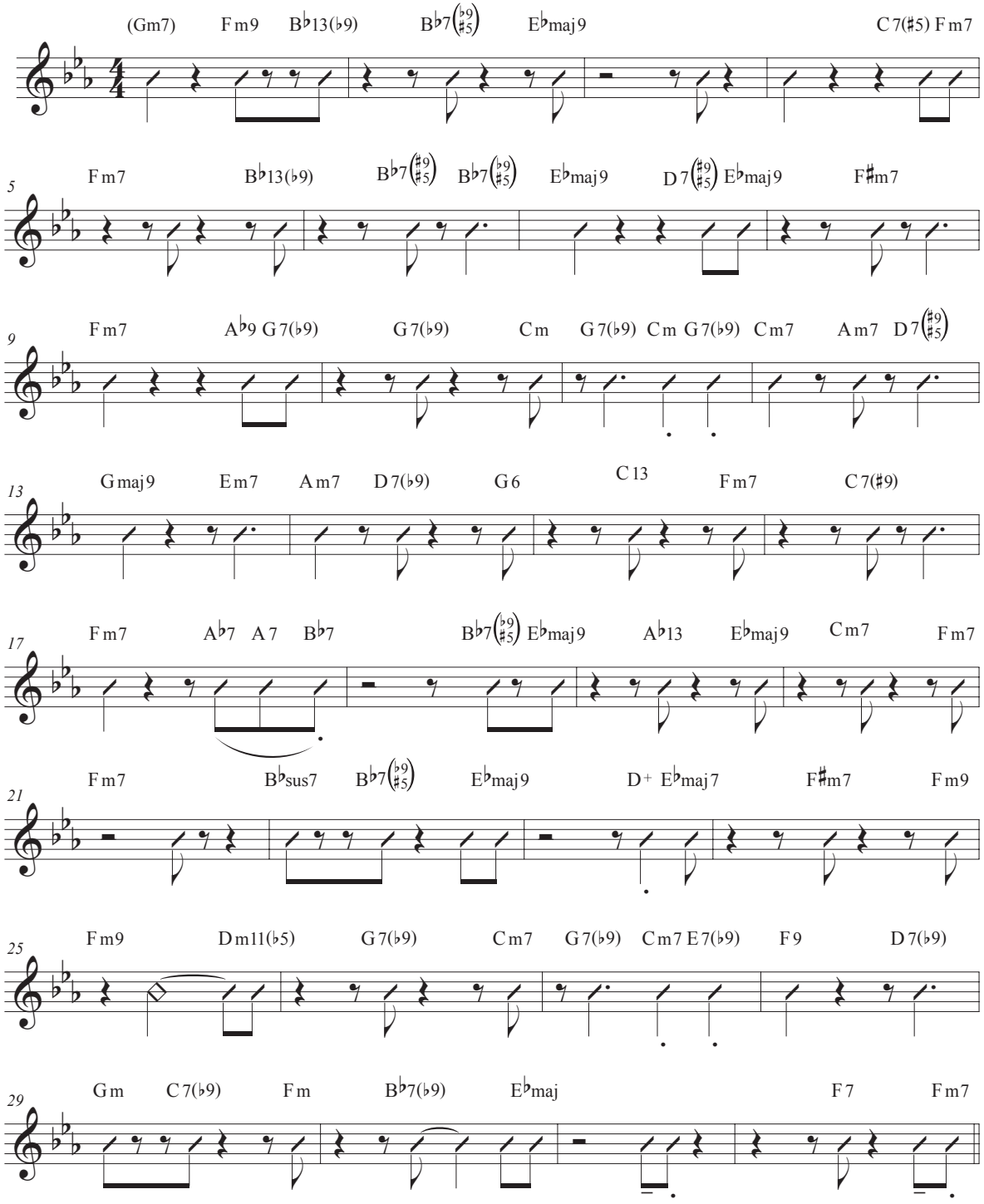



**Comping Exercise #80: Reconstructing Red Garland's Original Comping**.
As a challenging assimilation exercise, reconstruct Red Garland's original comping from the record. Apply the voicing styles found in the modified transcription above to the rhythms found in the following comping guide (taken from the original recording) to recreate the original comping transcription. Play along with **CD 2 Track 6** as well as with the **OR** .

FIG. 10

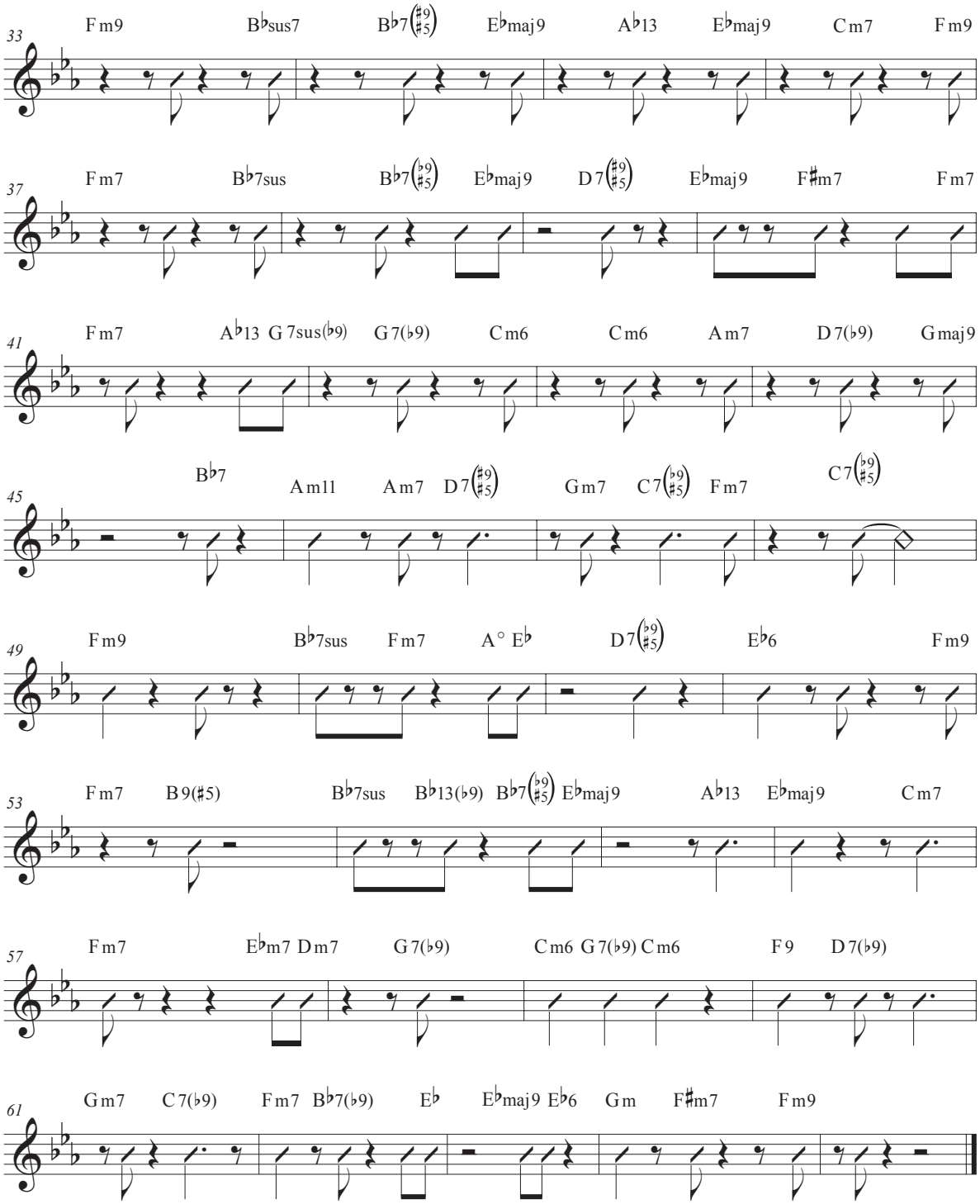
# Red Garland's Comping Guide

On the changes to "Diane"



2

Red Garland's Coming Guide on the changes to "Diane"



**Comping Exercise #81: Working with Red Garland's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 1-5.**
Apply these RGCR's (Red Garland Comping Rhythms) to different standard songs. Feel free to create your own. Then loop and transpose the following RGCP's (Red Garland Comping Progressions).

FIG. 11

## Red Garland Comping Rhythms

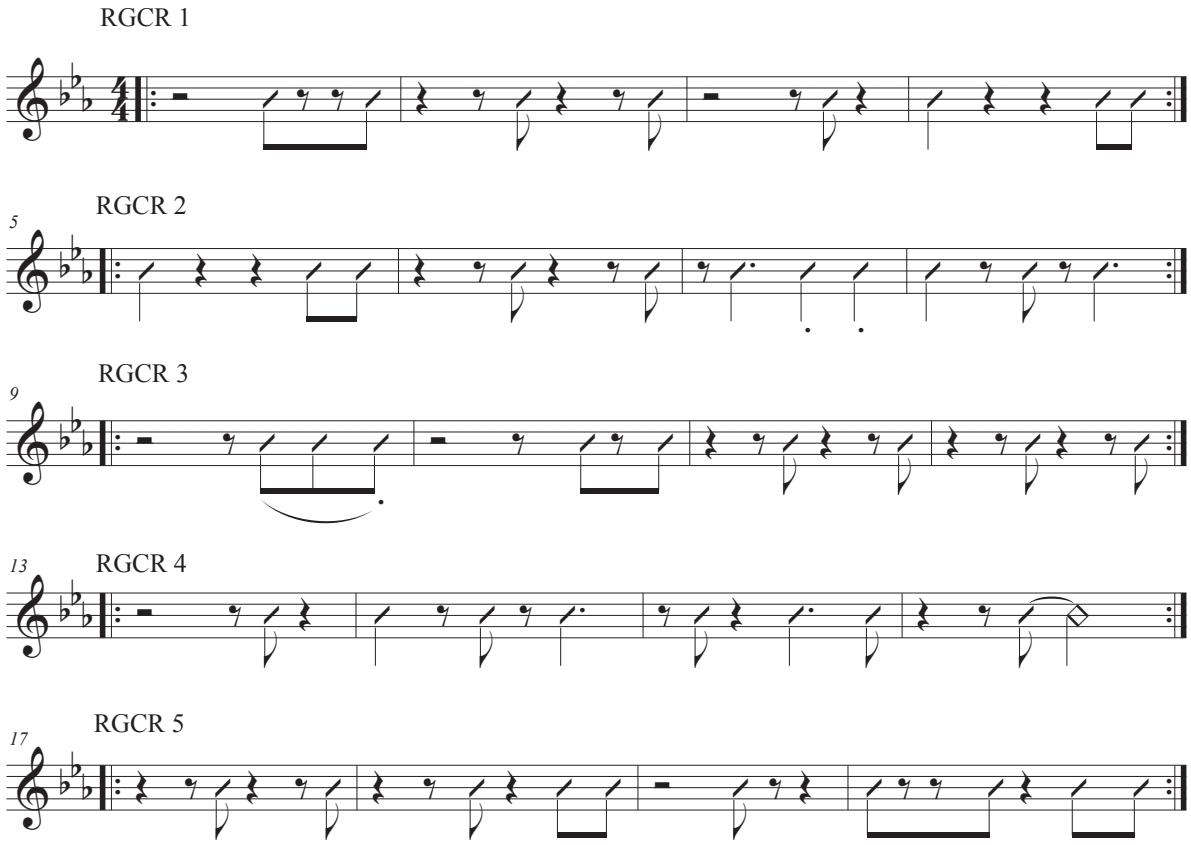
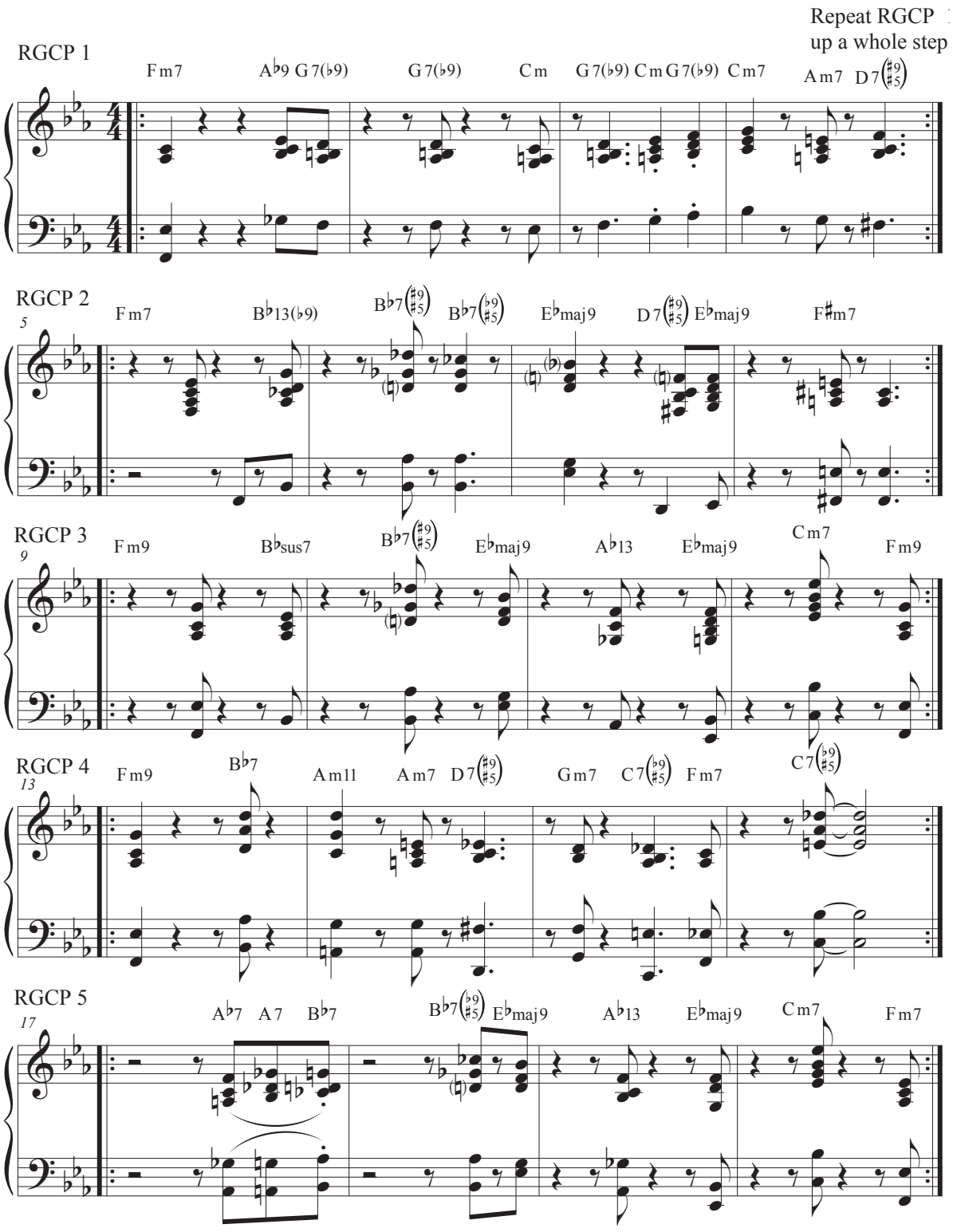


FIG. 12

# Red Garland Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #82: Studying Sonny Clark's Comping on the changes to "Somethin' Special.** Sonny Clark is one of the most underrated jazz pianists of the modern era. Always swinging with the utmost sensitivity and taste, Sonny plays crystal clear bebop infused lines while offering propulsive, witty, and supportive comping deeply rooted in the big band tradition. Although influenced by Bud Powell, Sonny Clark forged a new style steeped in both blues and bebop. Born in Herminie, Pennsylvania, outside of Pittsburgh, in 1931, Conrad Yeatis "Sonny" Clark moved to the west coast early in his career and made his recording debut with Teddy Charles and Wardell Gray.

Although his life was tragically cut short at the age of 31, Sonny Clark left behind an impressive catalogue of musical gems including his work with Buddy DeFranco, Serge Chaloff, Dinah Washington, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Criss, Ike Quebec, and Grant Green. His albums he did for Blue Note as a leader are essential listening as well, including *Cool Struttin', Dial "S" for Sonny, Blues in the Night, My Conception, Sonny's Crib,* as well as the record from which the comping on the following page was transcribed, *Leapin' and Lopin'.*

Check out Sonny Clark's comping behind Tommy Turrentine on the changes to "Somethin' Special" from his album Leapin' and Lopin'. Sonny makes effective use of the ninth shape as he comps crisply and elegantly behind the soloist.

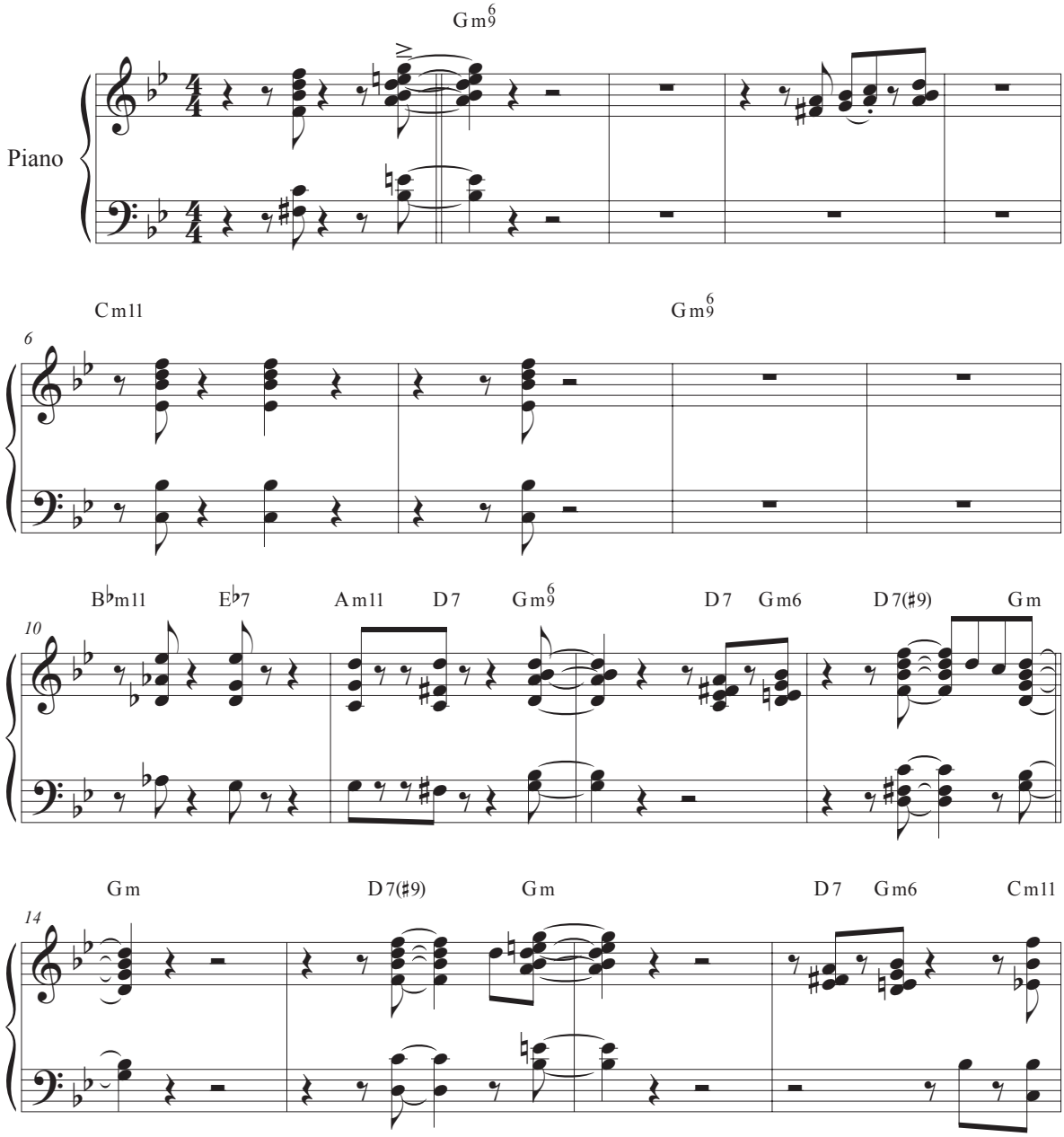
Below is a modified version of Sonny Clark's comping. Listen to the **OR** several times paying attention to placement and articulation. Play along with **CD 2 Track 8** using the modified transcription of comping in the style of Sonny Clark. For a demonstration listen to **CD 2 Track 7.** The demo track contains the modified comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

Then play along with the **OR** using the modified comping transcription keeping in mind that you are playing an independent part.

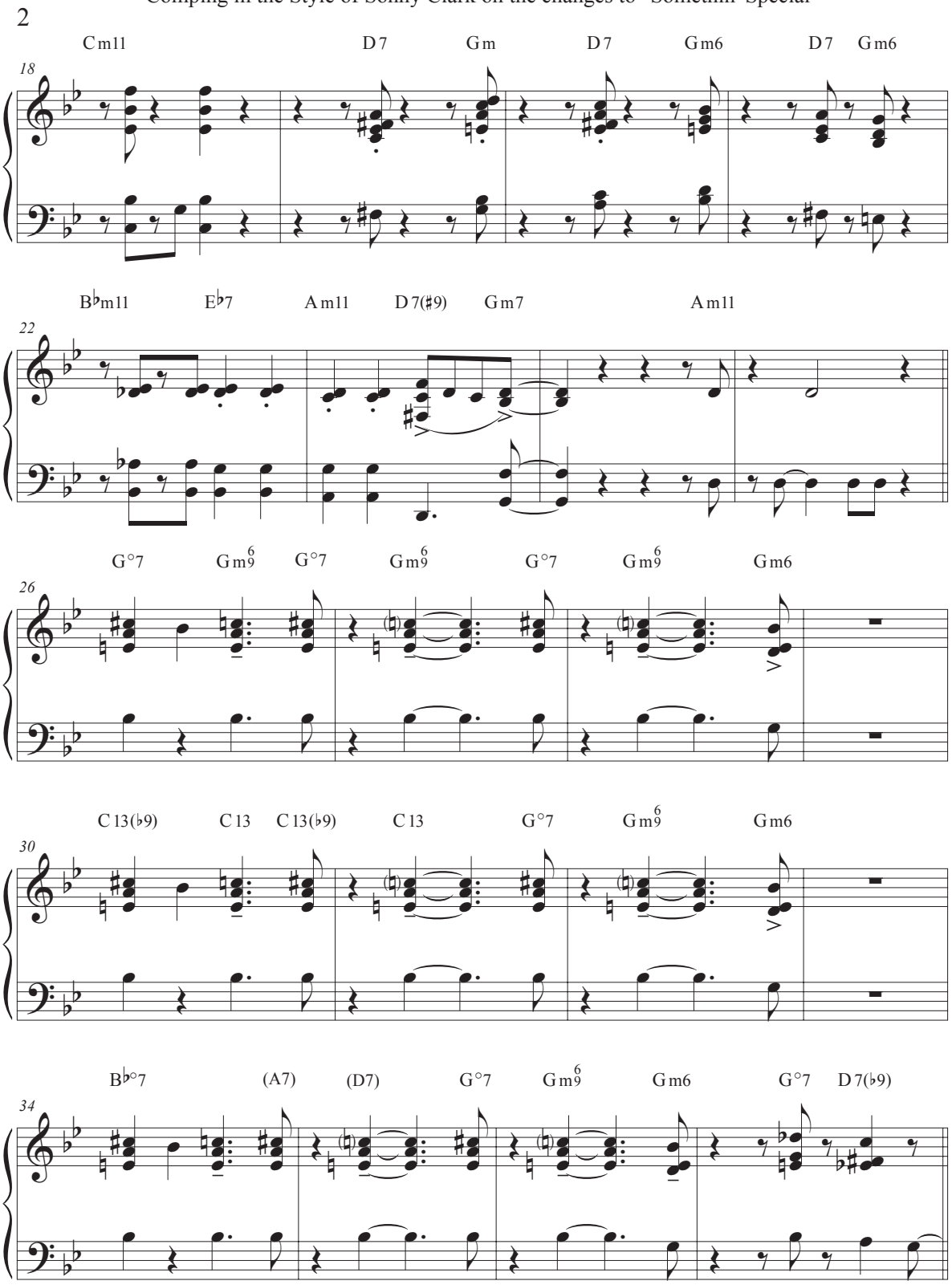
FIG. 13

# Comping in the Style of Sonny Clark

On the changes to "Somethin' Special" (Minor Blues)

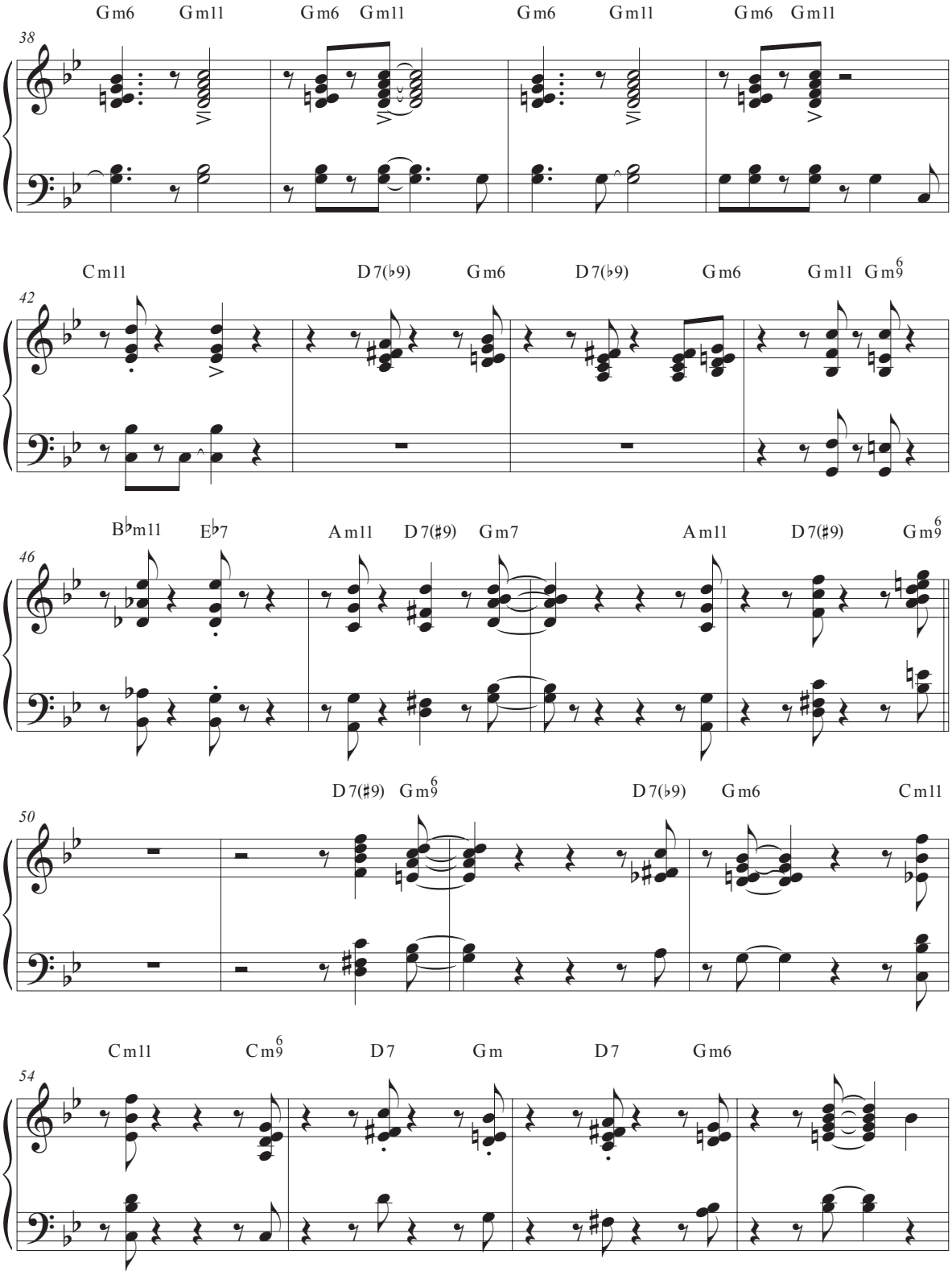


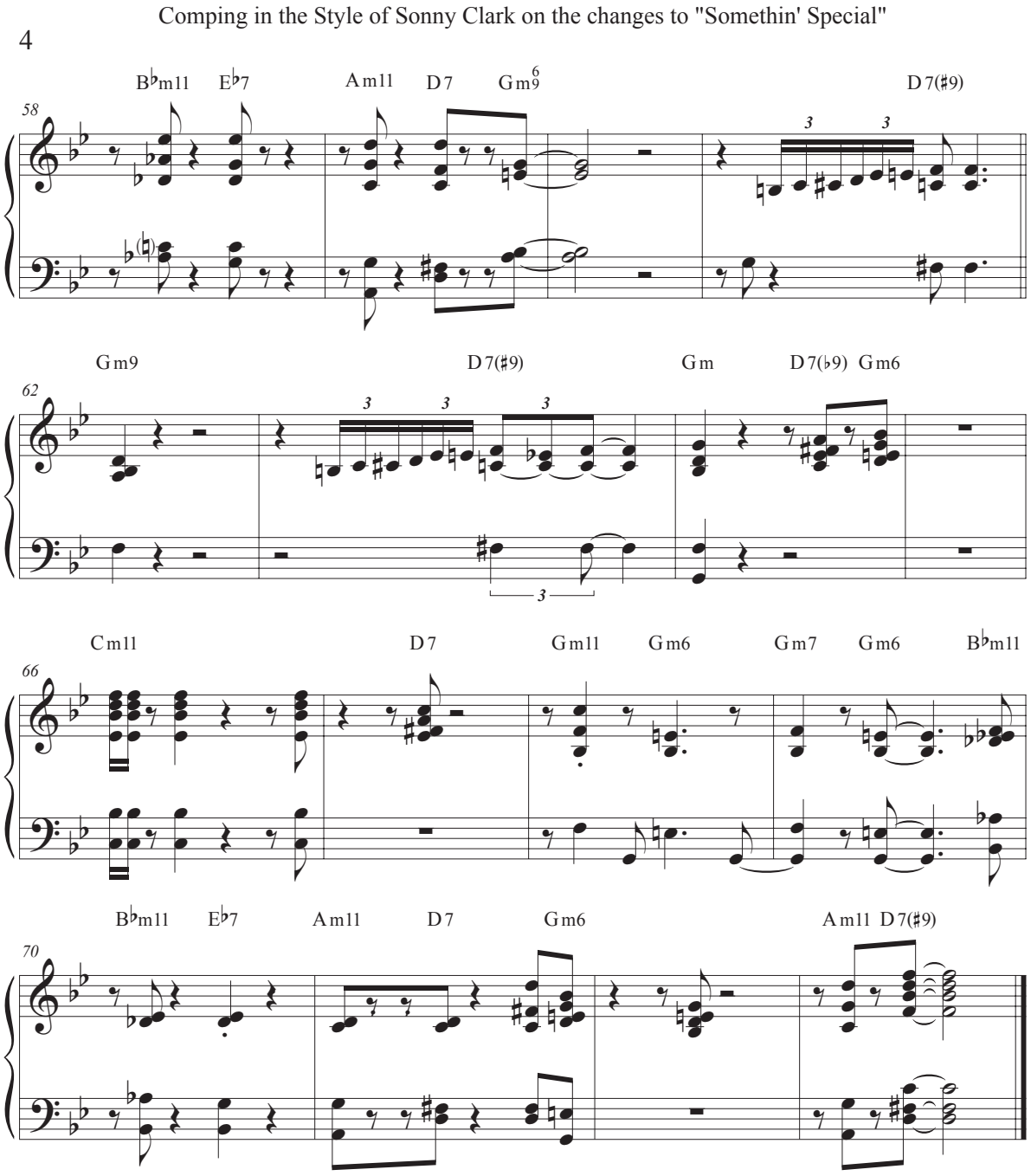
Comping in the Style of Sonny Clark on the changes to "Somethin' Special"



Comping in the Style of Sonny Clark on the changes to "Somethin' Special"





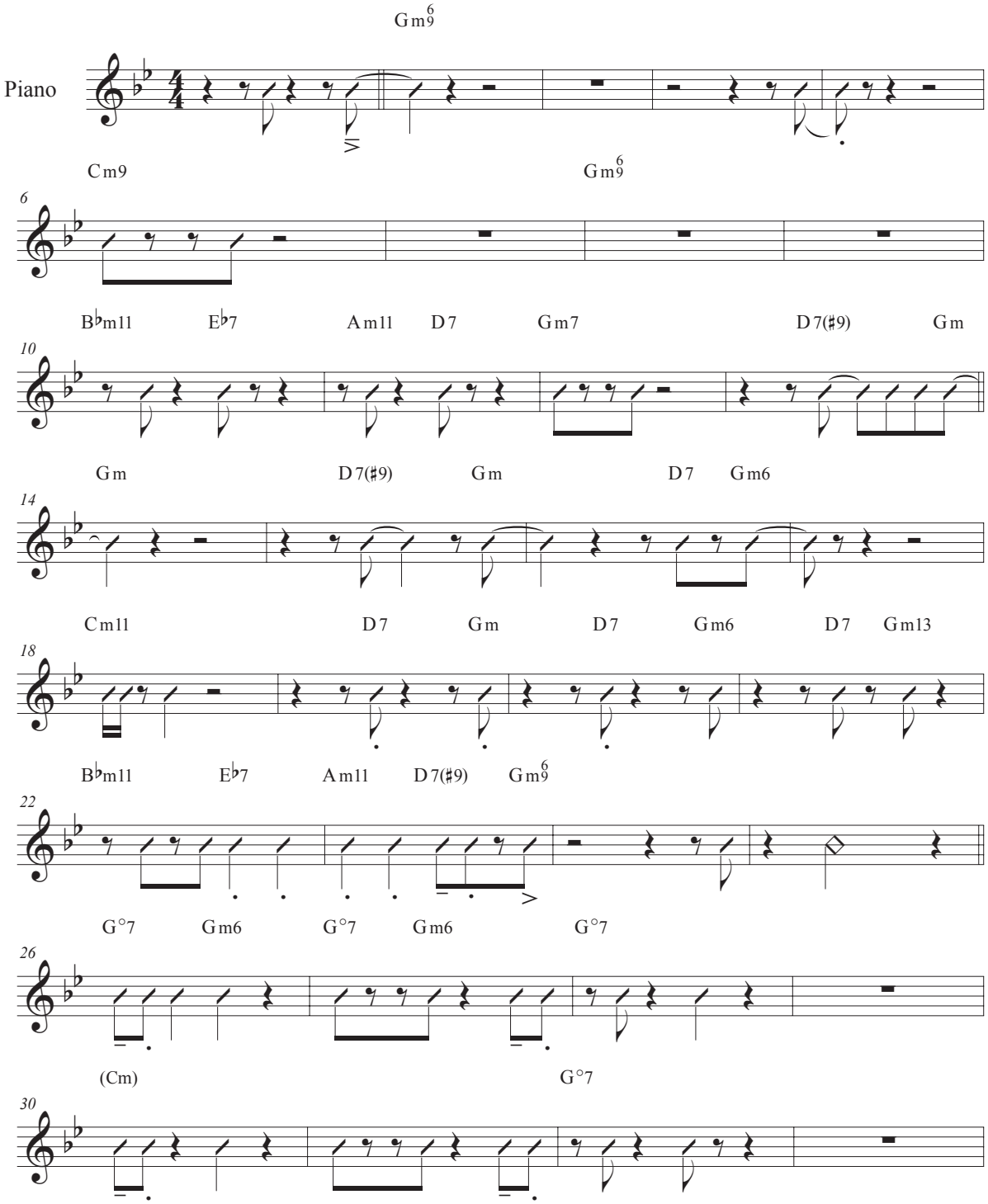



**Comping Exercise #83: Reconstructing Sonny Clark's Original Comping**.
As a challenging assimilation exercise, reconstruct Sonny Clark's original comping from the record. Apply the voicing styles found in the modified transcription above to the rhythms found in the following comping guide (taken from the original recording) to recreate the original comping transcription. Play along with **CD 2 Track 8** as well as with the OR .

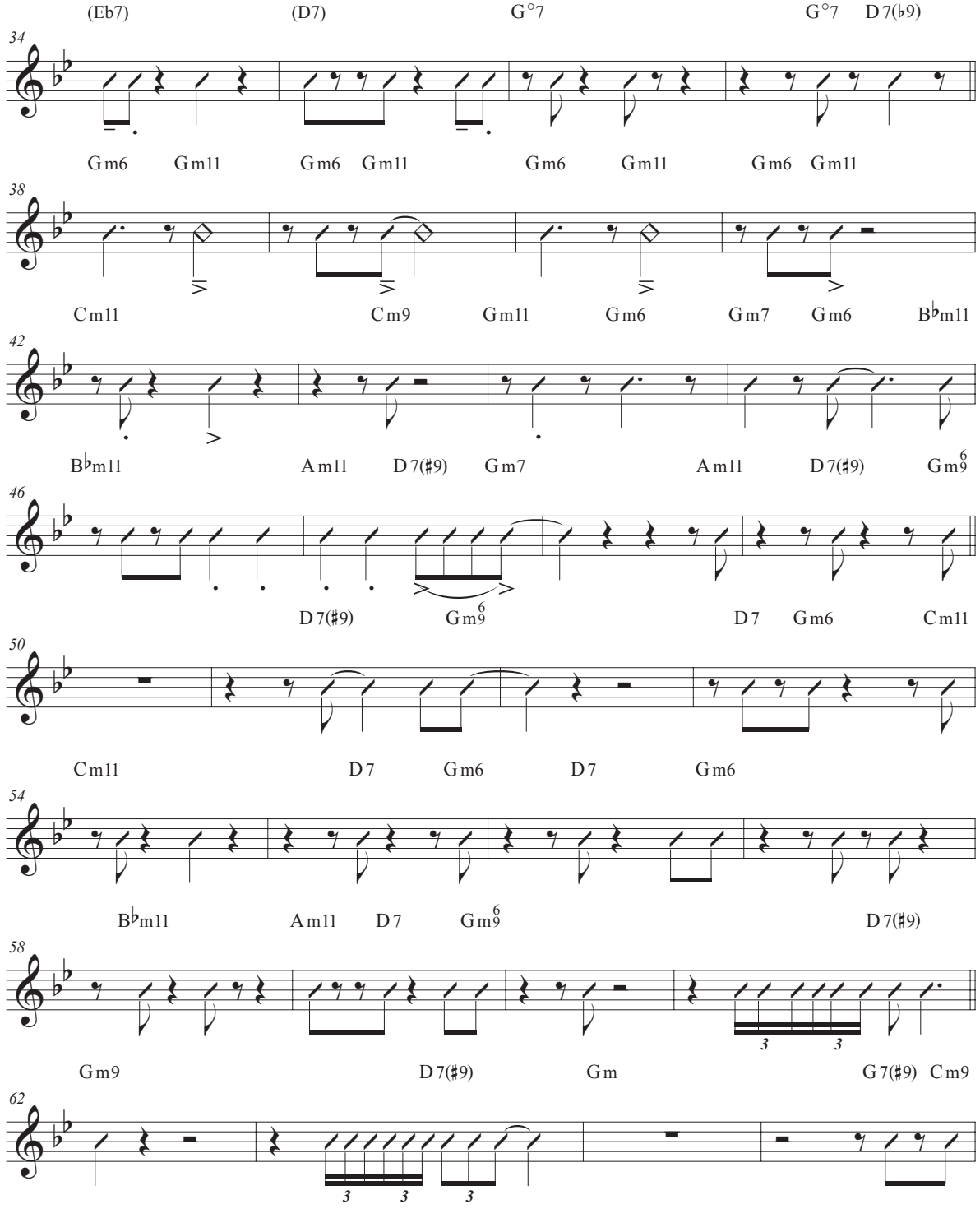
FIG. 14

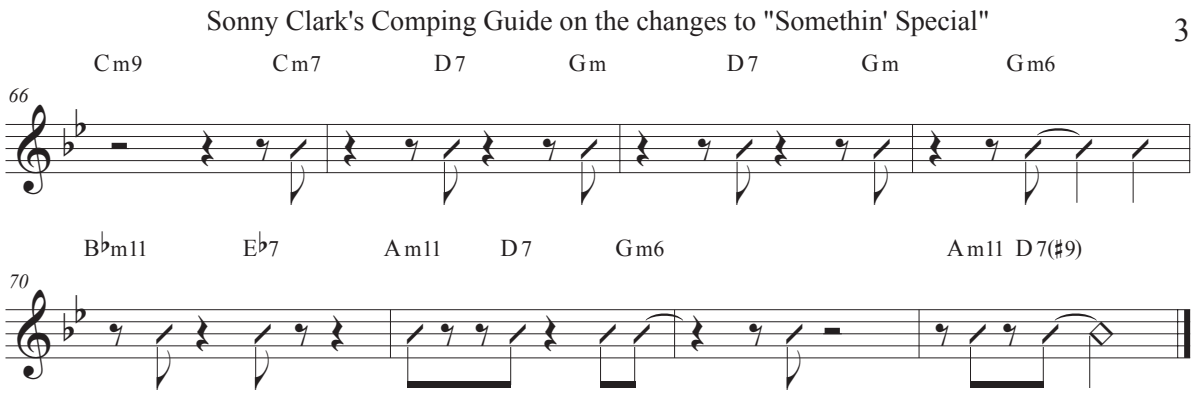
# Sonny Clark's Comping Guide

On the changes to "Something Special"



2 Sonny Clark's Comping Guide on the changes to "Somethin' Special"






**Comping Exercise #84: Working with Sonny Clark's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 1-5.**

Apply these SCCR's (Sonny Clark Comping Rhythms) to different standard songs. Feel free to create your own. Then loop and transpose the following SCCP's (Sonny Clark Comping Progressions).

FIG. 15

# Sonny Clark Comping Rhythms

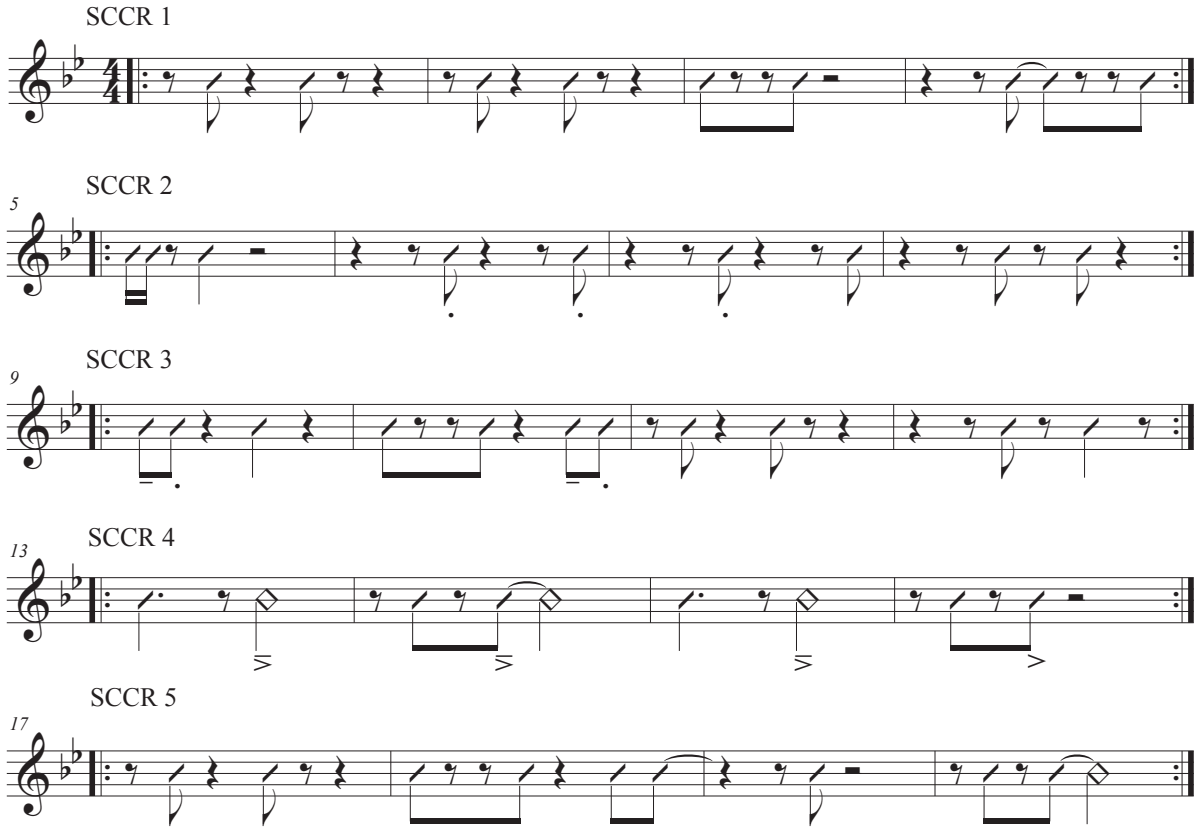
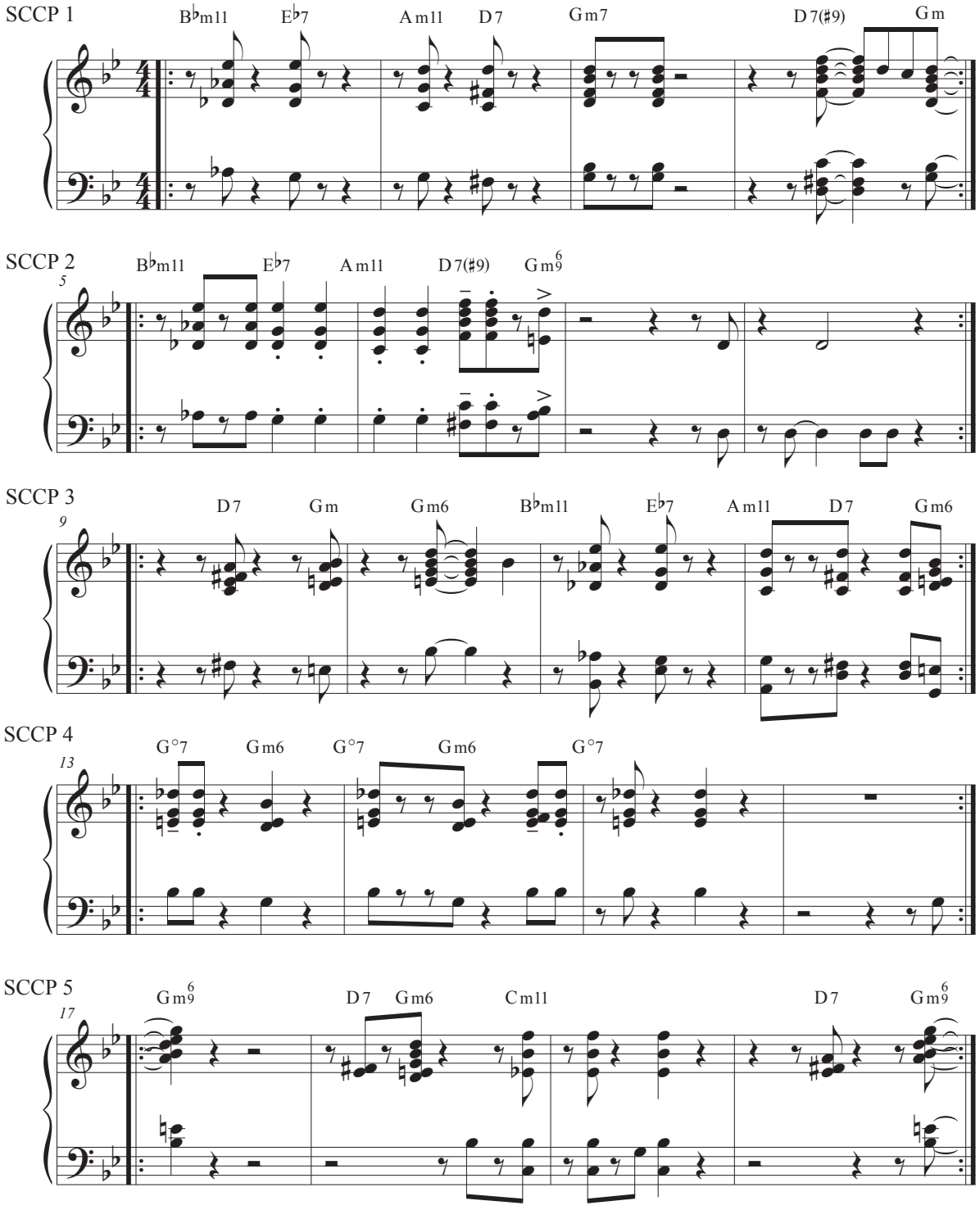


FIG. 16

# Sonny Clark Comping Progressions



**Comping Exercise #85: Studying Bobby Timmons's Comping on the changes to "Politely".** Bobby Timmons possesses one of the most distinctive voices in modern jazz. After only a few bars, the listener can identify his outgoing musical personality: danceable, blues and gospel infused, and rooted in swing. Timmons was born in Philadelphia, PA. in 1935 and began his early career as an organist at the church where his grandfather ministered. After moving to New York, Timmons began to work with an impressive array of musicians including Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley, Donald Byrd, Lee Morgan, Curtis Fuller, Chet Baker, and Maynard Ferguson. Throughout his career he was able to combine musical elements from his upbringing in the gospel church with bebop and modern jazz. Many of his compositions that have become jazz standards, like *Dat Dere* and *Moanin'* contain these elements. His style blends Bud Powell's bebop language with a celebrational church piano style. This mix of ingredients created a comping style that was joyful and unique. His contributions as a sideman with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers and Cannonball Adderley were invaluable to those groups.

Check out Bobby Timmons's comping behind Lee Morgan on "Politely" from Art Blakey's seminal album, *The Big Beat.* Below is a modified version of Bobby Timmons's comping. Listen to the OR several times paying attention to placement and articulation.

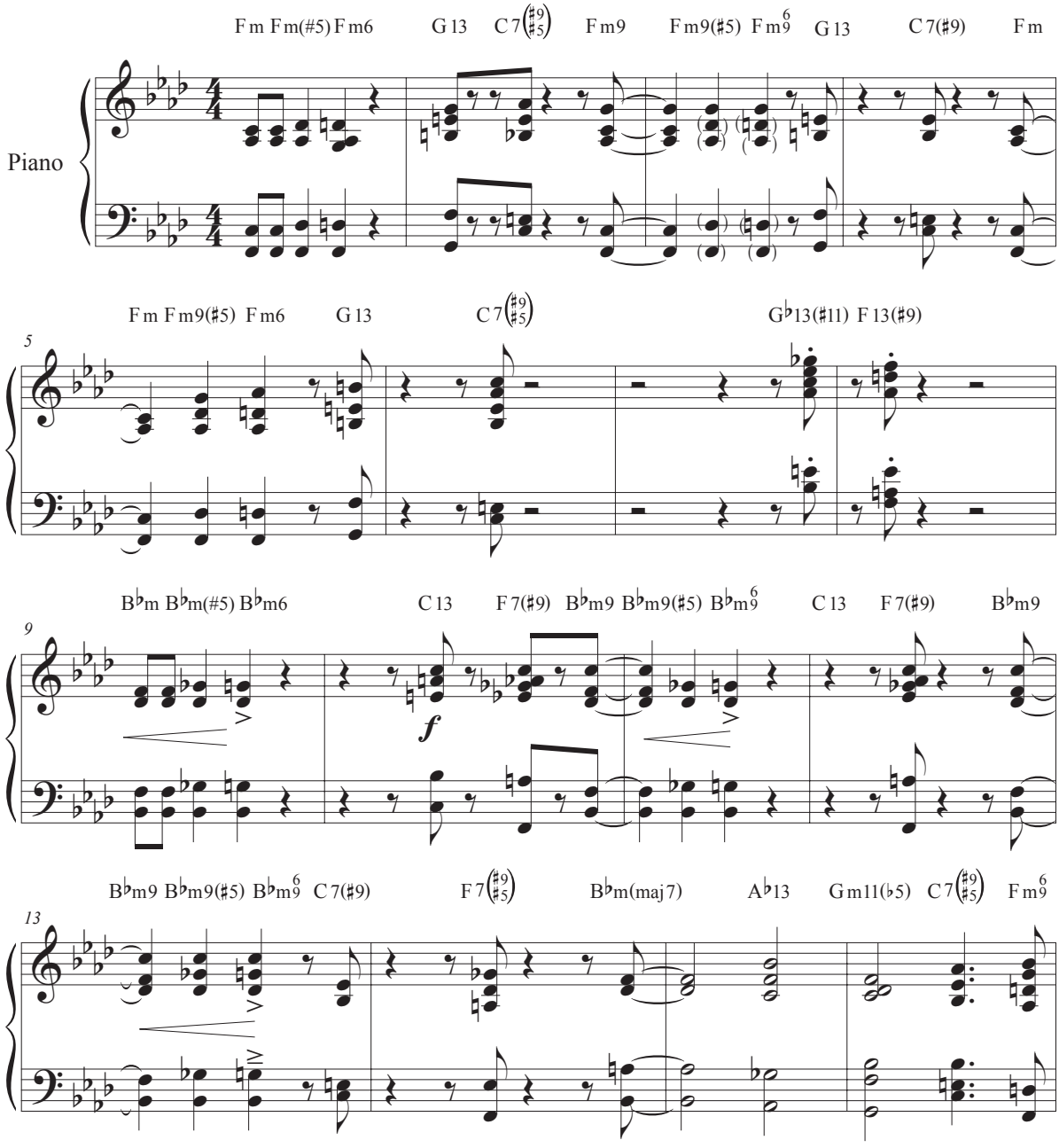
Play along with CD 2 **Track 10** using the modified transcription of comping in the style of Bobby Timmons. For a demo listen to CD 2 **Track 9.** The demo track contains the modified comping transcription as written plus one more chorus of improvised comping.

Then play along with the OR using the modified comping transcription keeping in mind that you are playing an independent part.

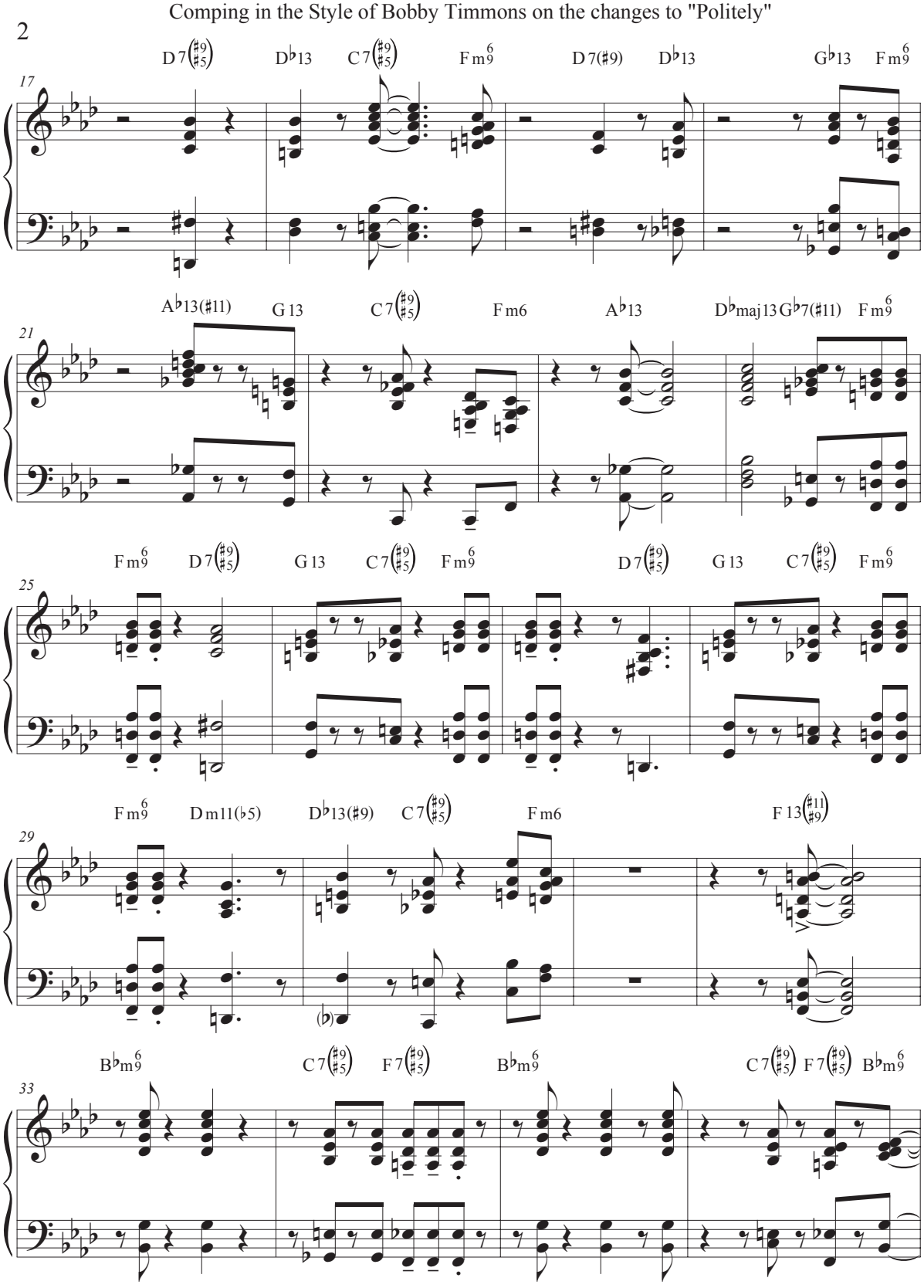
FIG. 17

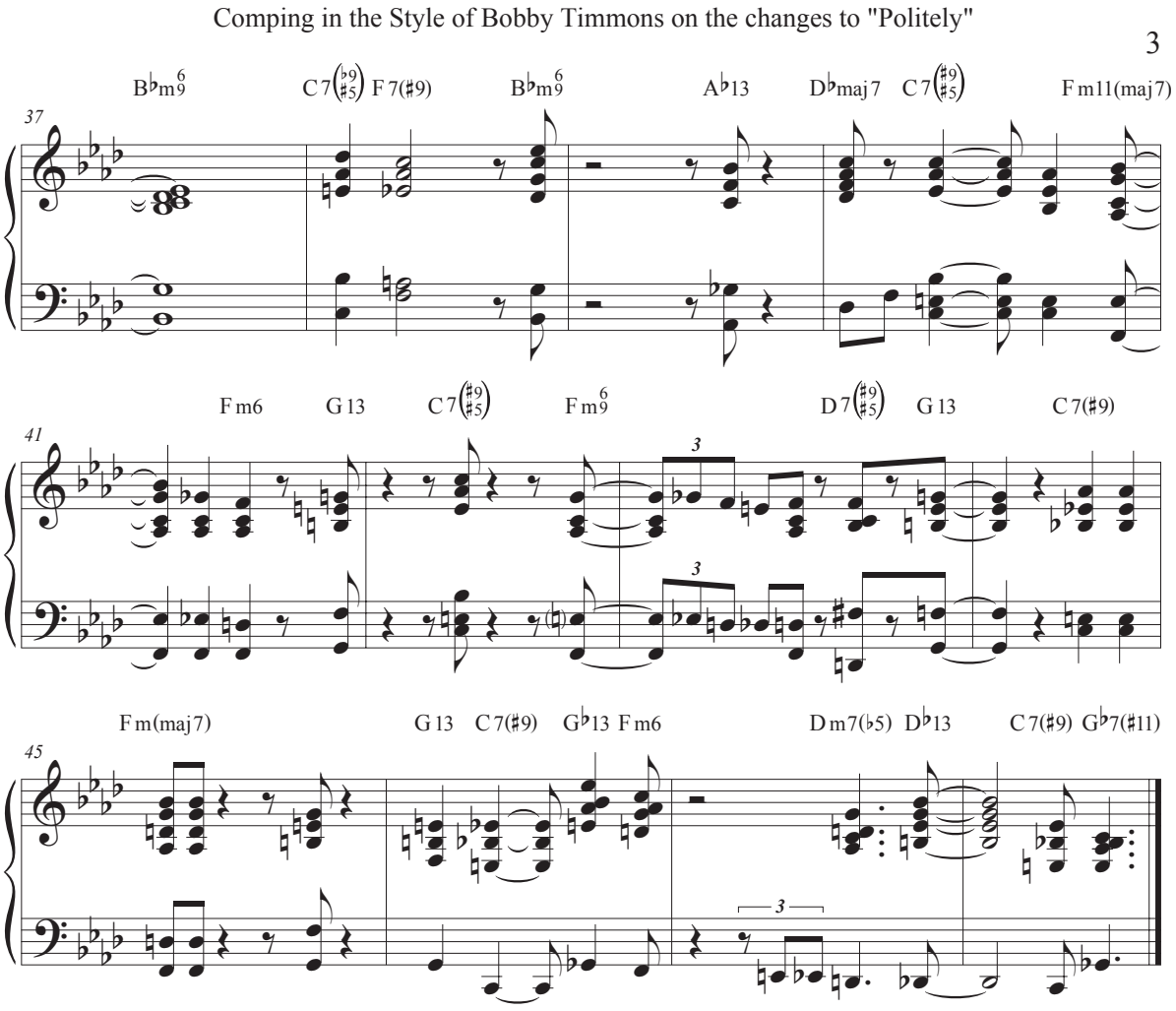
# Comping in the Style of Bobby Timmons

On the changes to "Politely"



Comping in the Style of Bobby Timmons on the changes to "Politely"



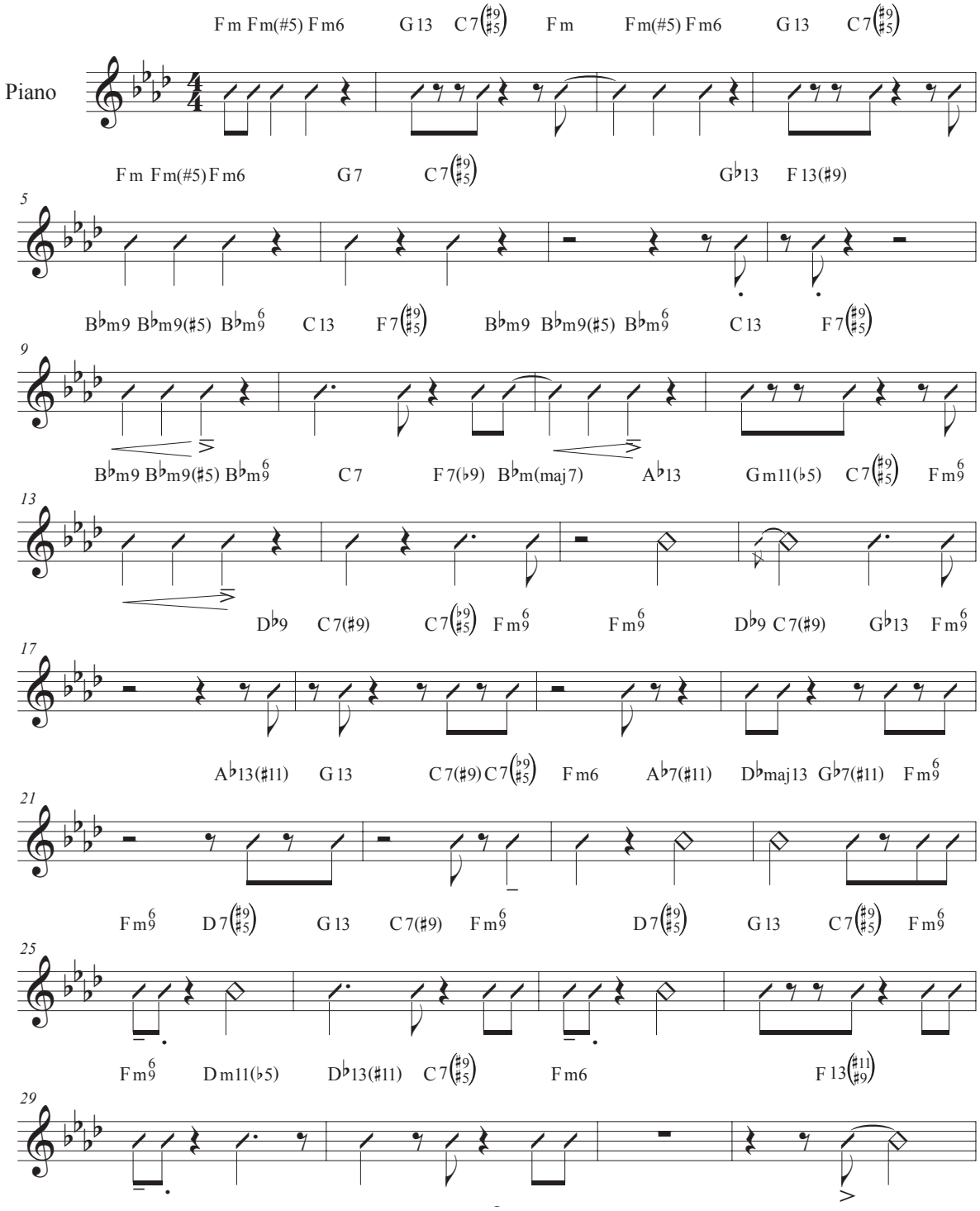


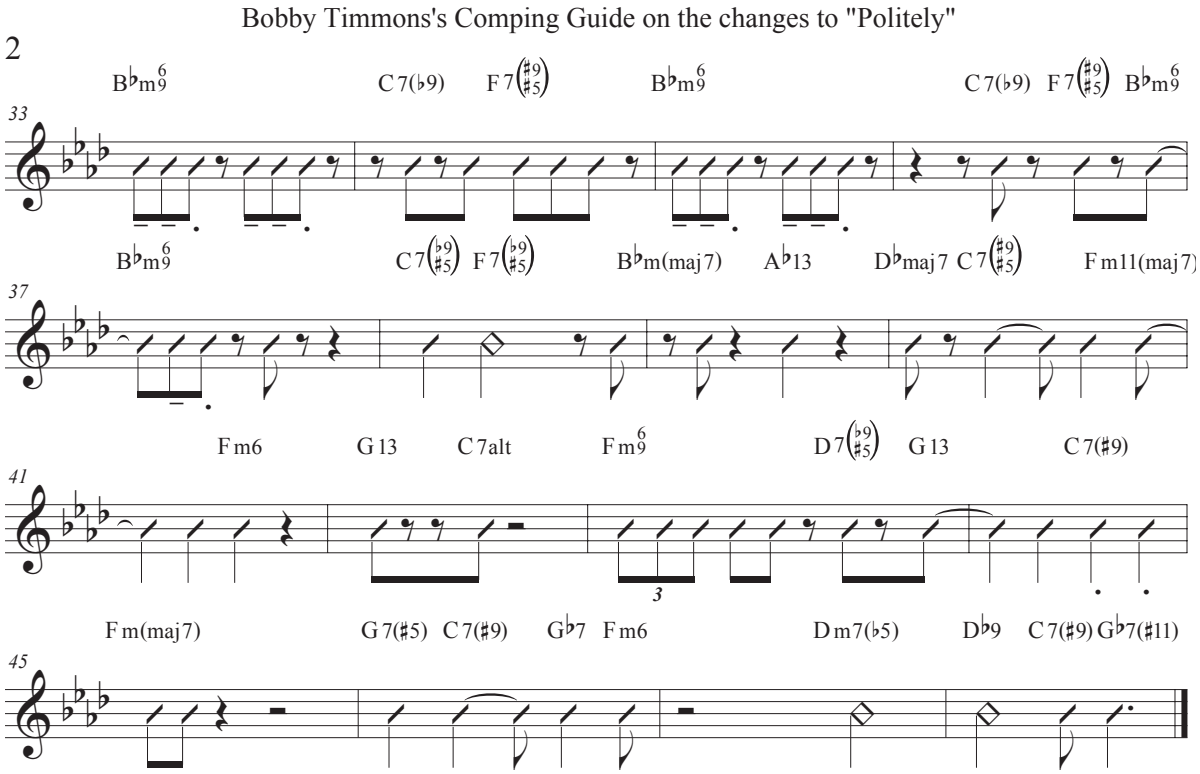

**Comping Exercise #86: Reconstructing Bobby Timmons's Original Comping**.
As a challenging assimilation exercise, reconstruct Bobby Timmons's original comping from the record. Apply the voicing styles found in the modified transcription above to the rhythms found in the following comping guide (taken from the original recording) to recreate the original comping transcription. Play along with **CD 2 Track 10** as well as with the **OR**.

FIG. 18

# Bobby Timmons's Comping Guide

on the changes to "Politely"






**Comping Exercise #87: Working with Bobby Timmons's Comping Rhythms and Progressions 1-5.**

Apply these BTCR's (Bobby Timmons Comping Rhythms) to different standard songs. Feel free to create your own. Then loop and transpose the following BTCP's (Bobby Timmons Comping Progressions).

FIG. 19

# Bobby Timmons Comping Rhythms

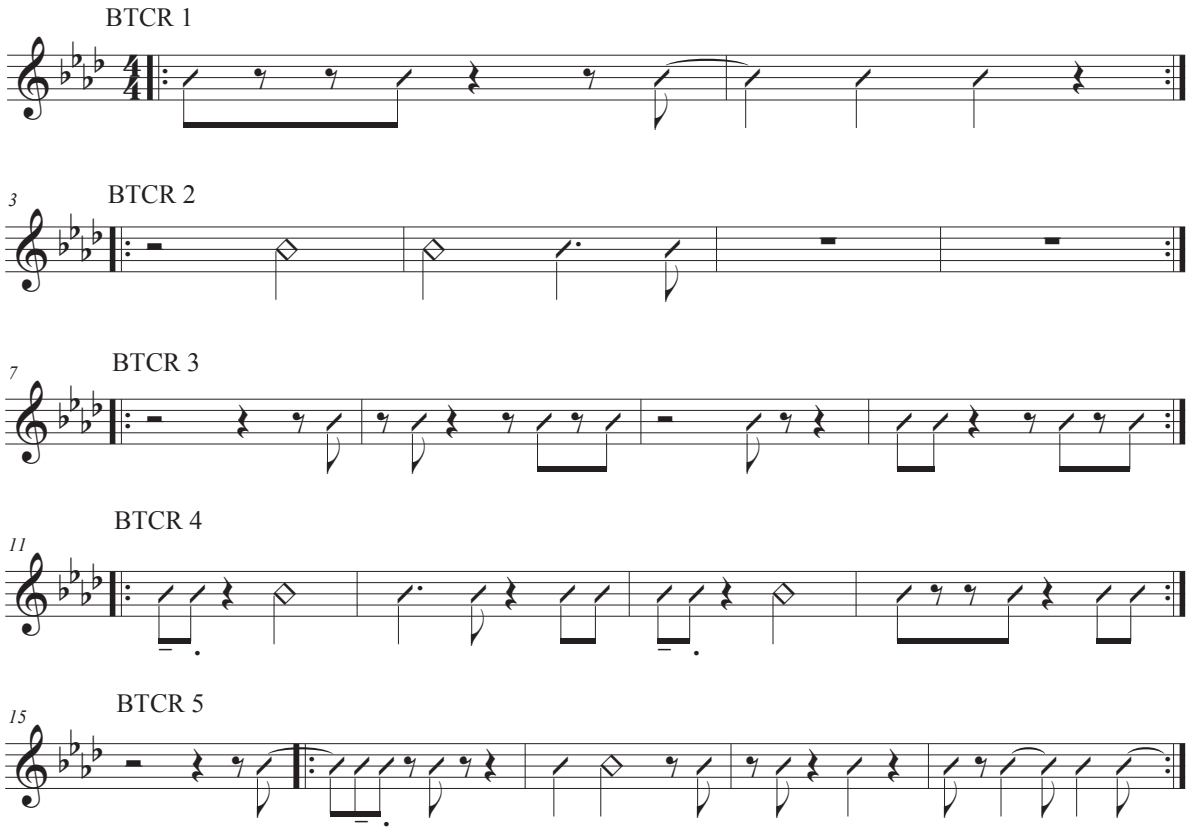
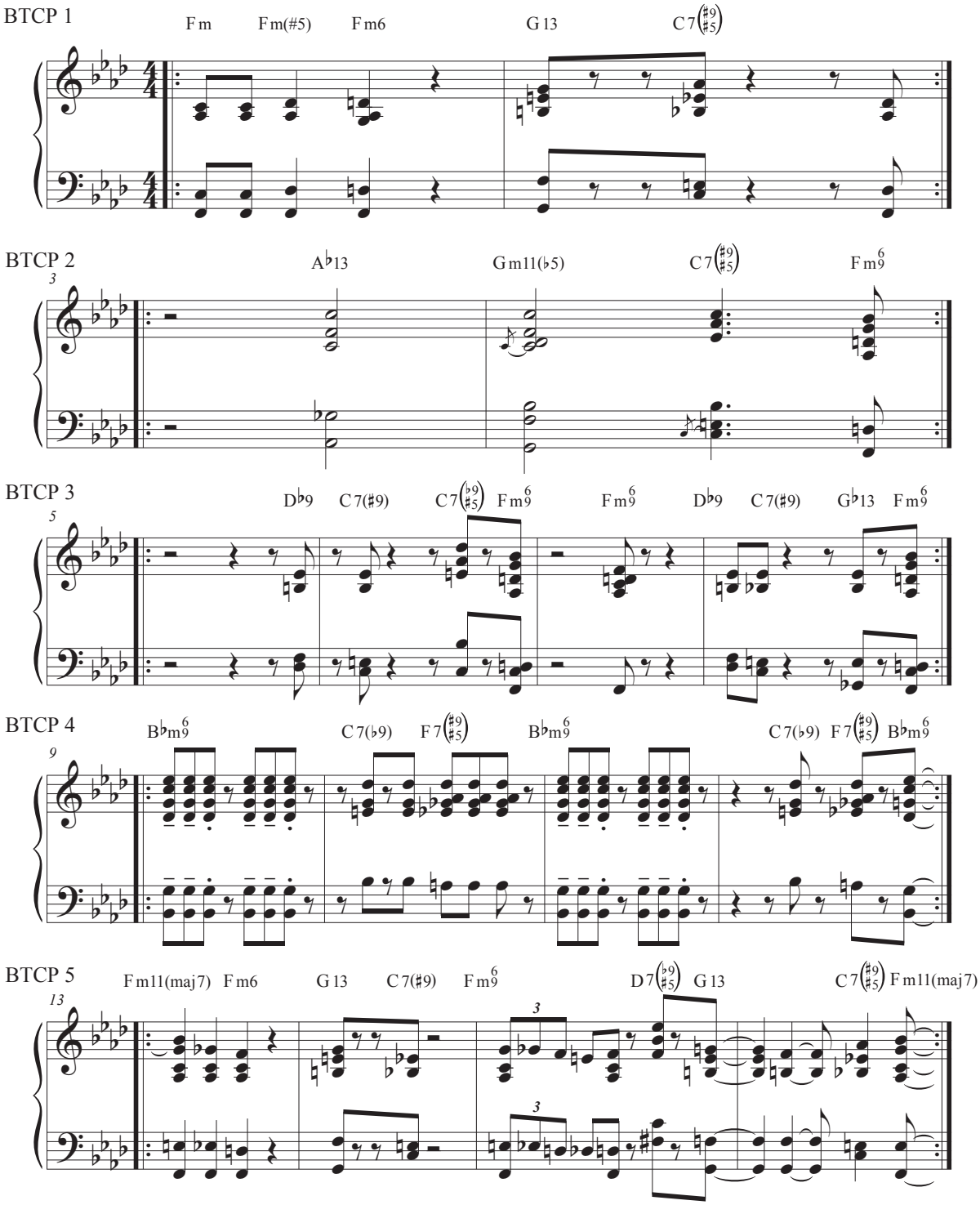


FIG. 20

# Bobby Timmons Comping Progressions



## *Interviews*

Sometimes stepping back from the actual notes and rhythms can widen your scope of the musical situation. This section is all about opening your ears, and heightening your awareness of what surrounds you. Thinking about comping abstractly can be very helpful. We have to be careful about getting lost in all of the notes, especially when studying transcriptions. These interviews are about the big picture.

Below is a summary of my interviews with some of my favorite compers. I simply asked these master musicians a few questions addressing their approach to comping.

### I. Harold Mabern

Harold Mabern is a legendary New York pianist, originally from Memphis, revered by his peers for his energetic and joyous playing, as well as for his incredible and infectious comping. According to Mabern, his comping is what made him standout to many of the jazz greats with whom he had the opportunity to play. Having worked and/or recorded with Johnny Griffin, Gene Ammons, Clifford Jordan, the MJT+3, the Jazztet, Jimmy Forrest, Lionel Hampton, Donald Byrd, Miles Davis, J.J.Johnson, Lee Morgan, Hank Mobley, Sonny Rollins, Freddie Hubbard, Joe Williams, Wes Montgomery, George Coleman, Stanley Turrentine, Stanley Cowell's Piano Choir, the Contemporary Piano Ensemble and Eric Alexander, Mabern has played with many of the jazz giants of his era. Recording highlights that showcase his excellent comping include his work with Hank Mobley on "Dippin'", with Lee Morgan on "Live at the Lighthouse", "The Gigolo", and "The Last Session" and with Stanley Turrentine on "The Sugar Man" and "Don't Mess With Mr. T." Please see Harold Mabern's complete discography available on line.

I sat down with Mr. Mabern to ask him a few questions about comping.

***JP:*** I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about your approach to comping, and why you think it is so important that young piano players learn how to comp.

***HM:*** Here's the thing. Before you can become a so-called bandleader you got to be a so-called sideman. The key for the pianist is to be a great comper, and to spark the rhythm section.

I'm sure you've been in situations where the drummer has his perception of where the beat is and the bass player has his perception. The pianist has to play somewhere in the middle to stabilize what they are doing. If there is a problem, more often than not, the horn player or leader will look around. They don't look at the drummer, they look right at the piano player. John Coltrane would look right at McCoy, "What's going on McCoy?"

You have to have a passion for comping. A lot of piano players didn't like comping; they didn't have the passion. If I'm comping and [only] play, "bling", that's not enough. Any-

body can do that. You have to play rhythmically. [Mr. Mabern then scatted and motioned in the air some common comping rhythms with his large hands] "Be di, di-duh dut!" That spurs the rhythms section. That also gets inside of the horn section.

When you're playing for horn players, you can't comp the same way behind each person. It was fine to play more behind George Coleman, John Coltrane, Johnny Griffin, and Benny Golson, as far as movement. Behind Frank Strozier, Joe Henderson, and Art Farmer you needed to leave more space so that you didn't crowd them.

The same thing goes for singers. Some singers like you to comp [sparingly] a la Count Basie; some singers like "bump and stuff" [big band-like chords] behind them. It's a fine line and a very artistic kind of thing.

Comping is an art in itself. Every job I've ever gotten…people hired me because of the way I comped. I could have said, "What about my soloing?" [Mr. Mabern raised his arm and motioned a RH line]. Soloing is a personal thing. [People hire you based on your ability to make the ensemble sound good, not necessarily because you are a great soloist].

Comping is also about harmony. I can play the same C minor7 chord and it sounds different because of my voicing and my touch. That's the beautiful thing about comping.

When I was in Chicago hanging out we were listening to one record in particular by Frank Sinatra and Nelson Riddle: "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning". Listening to that record also helped me learn how to comp because [I realized] the piano ***is*** the orchestra. When a singer or soloist leaves an opening that's your chance to fill up the gap.

Comping is a passion you really have to have. And the way to get it is to listen to records. The information is there. It depends on whomever you want to be like. You say, "I respect that person". I play baseball [Mr. Mabern holds an imaginary bat]. Who's the greatest ball player? Well I better check out Reggie Jackson. I play basketball; I want to work on my jump shot; Michael Jordan, Larry….you know. So that's what you have to do, you have to go to the records. With comping, you have to have a passion to want to do it.

I feel good because I got the job with Benny Golson and the Jazztet because he liked the way I comped. I got the job because I had a bit more experience in the department of comping compared to the other cat who had the piano book.

***JP***: Can you name one or two records that you are on where you are particularly proud of your comping?

***HM:*** There's a quartet recording with Art Farmer called "Perception". He [Art] told me on one of the songs we played, "Change Partners" that for my solo, to give contrast and to play a chordal solo. It was so interesting because I love chords too. Also, there's "Live at Yoshi's" with George Coleman. I said [after not being that enthusiastic initially about

my playing], "Who is that tearin' up "Up Jumped Spring". I didn't recognize the piano. "Wow, that sounds pretty good". [Sometimes revisiting a recording you haven't listened to for a while can give you a fresh perspective.]

**JP:** Could you speak a bit more about the importance of playing with singers to develop your comping skills?

***HM:*** I love playing with singers. The best way to learn how to play piano [or comp] is to become a good accompanist. You used to have to play for singers. Even more so than with a horn player, playing with a singer requires a certain sensitivity. Singers are sensitive to what you are doing anyway. They might say, "I didn't quite like the way you played that". It makes you dig down deep inside to try to come up with something. I would recommend playing for singers. Listen to orchestrations. Frank [Sinatra] was such a great singer he could conduct the band by the way he would breathe. It's like he would take over the band. They would respond to what he was doing.

## *II. Renee Rosnes*

To continue our discussion of comping I turned to one of the most exquisite pianists playing today, Renee Rosnes.

Having emerged as one of the most outstanding jazz pianists and composers of her generation, Renee Rosnes possesses a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the art of comping. Canadian born, she began classical piano studies at age three, and became interested in jazz music during high school. Moving to New York in 1986, Ms. Rosnes almost immediately began playing with the great Joe Henderson. Having also been a member of bands led by Wayne Shorter, JJ Johnson, James Moody, Bobby Hutcherson, the SFJAZZ Collective and Ron Carter, her resume reads like a who's who of jazz. Her own recordings have earned four Juno Awards (the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy), the honor of being named 2003 Composer of the Year by SOCAN, and a Gold Disc Award by Japan's Swing Journal magazine. Recently, she's been collaborating with her husband, acclaimed pianist Bill Charlap, in a two piano setting.

I spent some time with Ms. Rosnes during a recent gig in Uruguay and asked her a few questions regarding comping.

**JP:** When it comes to comping, what are some basic guidelines you would pass along to students?

**RR:** One of the first things I would tell a student is that the key to all great jazz playing is listening, whether you are soloing or comping. In the role of accompanying – or comping – you must take your cues from the soloist, and also the rest of the rhythm section. Your choices of what or what not to play should be based on what happening around you. So perhaps, try not to approach a piece of music with a preconceived notion about how you

think you should comp, because the musical requirement at that moment may be a little different than what you imagined.

**JP:** Do you sometimes sing along with the soloist to help find a counter melody as you comp?

**RR:** I don't actually sing, but do think that comping is a kind of melodic counterpoint to the lines a soloist creates. Voice leading is a big part of that. If you were magically able to separate the instruments, and take the lead line out, what's happening in the rhythm section should have it's own substance and integrity, and be completely melodic unto itself. Also, depending on the solo instrument, I often think about range. For instance, if I'm playing behind a flute, I may not necessarily want to comp in that same pitch range, and I'd be cognizant of perhaps playing in a slightly lower range, to provide more support.

Of course, there are many different choices in the densities of the chords as well. Depending on the style of the piece, I may choose to play more open-sounding voicings or alternately chords with more clusters in them. I'm completely influenced by the mood of the piece.

Rhythmically, there are also many options. I always try to find the groove that is going to best support the soloist and the rest of the band. That may mean getting into a swinging rhythmic pattern, or it might mean playing more legato. It solely depends on what's happening at that particular moment, and what the music requires.

I love listening to Monk's comping in particular because he invariably uses pieces of the melody in his comping. There are so many examples of this technique, and sometimes it's almost as if he's still playing through the melody behind the soloist. Of course, his music is so original and memorable, that those motivic cells stand out. They end up acting like glue holding the sections together. With Monk, the spirit of the melody always informs his comping, and that's really something to think about.

**JP:** I've always enjoyed your work with Bobby Hutcherson. Is there something you are thinking about when you interact with the vibes?

**RR:** To begin with, the vibes and the piano sound great together. The sonorities of each instrument just complement each other so well. Bobby's playing is so joyful and open that it's just kind of easy to play with him.
No one thing in particular comes to mind when I play with Bobby because his range is so wide.

**JP:** So, it's not like playing with a flute player where you are careful not to be in their range?

**RR:** No, I suppose I don't really think that way with the vibraphone.

**JP:** The sound is all around you.

**RR:** Yes, especially the way Bobby approaches his instrument. He's all over it. He might sustain an idea for a long period of time over a vamp, and throw some crazy extensions on top. He can get into some wonderful layering of the harmonies where he sounds like he's splashing paint on a canvas. It's so much fun to accompany him.

In terms of playing his compositions, Bobby would often come over to the piano and share a particular voicing with me. I always loved that, because it was great to know exactly what he had in mind, and then those voicings would always end up inspiring the improvising as well.

**JP:** I understand that you are getting ready to play a week with Bill Charlap at Marian's. What is it like comping for another piano player?

The art of playing duo piano is another animal altogether. You have so many notes at your disposal - 176 to be exact – that it can quickly become muddy. Both of us try to orchestrate in such a way that the overall effect doesn't sound doubled up even though there are two pianos involved. Less is more. It's not unusual for one hand to "lay out", as we're ultimately looking for clarity of harmony and ideas. Using four hands isn't always necessary to achieve what we're trying to express musically. However, there are also many moments when we're purposely creating a big sound and need the power and richness of the four hands.

When Bill and I play together we are pretty conscious of range. We don't feel that we have to cover everything all the time, which is liberating. For example, this may sound obvious, but if you are playing with good time, it's not important to keep a bass line happening underneath. People can feel the time if there's a cohesiveness and a bounce to the rhythm. It's all there in the groove.

**JP:** Is that the same thinking used when playing with guitar players?

**RR:** Yes and no. With the guitar, you are dealing with two different timbres, so you don't have as much of an issue regarding muddiness. Playing in a rhythm section with the guitar is more about finding a way to contribute to the groove, which may mean playing or laying out.

**JP:** Can you talk a little bit about your experience comping behind Joe Henderson and Wayne Shorter?

**RR:** Joe Henderson was very interesting. At times, he wanted something very specific from the piano, and other times it was wide open. I think he, like Wayne, thought very compositionally, and his attention to specific voicings and comping rhythms were integral to his concept of how he envisioned the piece to sound. For example, on his composition Recordame, he had a definite idea of the rhythms he wanted to hear, and he

differentiated between a Latin groove and a North African groove. At that time, I had to do some homework to fully understand just what he was talking about.

Wayne Shorter also had a unique approach. During sections or windows of blowing, the sky was the limit, but the material we were playing then [from Atlantis, Phantom Navigator, Joy Ryder and earlier] was very through composed. Every detail was indicated on the page. To study one of Wayne's scores is to study the mind of a musical genius!

Anyway, he had a tune with a detailed, moving bass line and on top of that mostly triads, which produced a chord progression with polychordal sounds. I questioned Wayne on what he might name the chords, so as to learn how to approach the improvisation. His answer was basically, "play what you hear." That may seem simple, but at the time was very revealing to me. He wasn't thinking in terms of scales or even the chords at all, but stepping out of that realm into harmonic freedom. It reminds me of a something Art Tatum once said, "There's no such thing as a wrong note. It all depends on how you resolve it." Along the same lines, Miles also said, "There are no wrong notes in jazz: only notes in the wrong places." So in the end, it still all comes down to the art of listening.

# Conclusion

As we come to the close of this workbook, it is my hope that you have gained inspiration from the fourteen comping transcriptions studied as well as from the comping rhythms, progressions, and over seventy comping exercises. Moreover, it is my hope that the two interviews offered added an additional dose of inspiration.

From the beginning, this workbook made no claims of being a comprehensive comping manual. It is up to you to explore the comping styles of other artists not included. To explore the concepts offered in this first volume at a deeper level and to investigate other approaches to comping please check out ***An Approach to Comping: Advanced Concepts and Techniques.***

Inside the second workbook you will find eleven more comping transcriptions by jazz greats including: Barry Harris, Bud Powell, Ahmad Jamal, Wynton Kelly, Hank Jones, Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, and Herbie Hancock accompanied by over fifty more comping exercises. Just like before, comping rhythms and progressions will also be presented. At the conclusion of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** you will find two more interviews by some of my favorite compers; this time by the great guitarist, Peter Bernstein, and by jazz drumming legend, Albert "Tootie" Heath.

By combining the technical details about comping with inspiring tips offered by master musicians, you will be well on your way to becoming an outstanding comper.

# Appendix

How to use these workbooks if you are a…

**Jazz Pianist**:

All parts of ***An Approach to Comping: The Essentials*** and ***An Approach to Comping: Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** should be useful. Used as a two-volume set, the workbooks take you through voicing techniques from basic to more advanced. Although it is recommended that you go through ***The Essentials*** before tackling ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***, it is possible to start anywhere in either of the two workbooks and begin working through any of the transcriptions/rhythms/progressions/exercises assuming that as a jazz pianist, you have the necessary harmonic and technical background. The two workbooks therefore can work independently. Moderate to advanced technique will be necessary to play some of the comping transcriptions. Some reading skills will be necessary before starting either of the two workbooks. See "Non-pianist".

**Classical Pianist:**

Focus on Chapter 1 from ***The Essentials*** when first getting started to develop your jazz feel and rhythmic independence. Then go through the first workbook making sure to spend plenty of time practicing with the original recordings and the CD included. (See introduction for CD instructions).

**Non-Pianist:**

A large part of ***The Essentials*** is used in my Jazz Piano Workshop course I teach at Queens College, designed especially for college-level jazz musicians whose first instrument is *not* piano. Even though some reading skills will be necessary, it is unnecessary to have piano technique. For you, go through Chapter 1A (from ***The Essentials***), but skip Chapter 1B. Concentrate on shell practice in Chapter 2. Skip the transcriptions except for "Straight no Chaser", "Celia," "Comping in the style of Sonny Clark," (from Chapter 2D), and Bud Powell's "Dance of the Infidels" from Chapter 3C. Concentrate on TV practice in Chapter 3 so that you can comfortably comp through blues and rhythm changes using TVs. Then proceed to Chapter 5 to learn about spread voicings so that you can play through standards at the piano. Check out Red Garland's comping on "Diane". By the end you should be able to comp through blues, rhythm changes, and some standards using spread voicings, TVR's, and a limited number of rootless voicings.

**Guitarist:**

Begin with ***The Essentials.*** The CRs (comping rhythms) from the entire volume should be useful for you. Get to the piano and check out the voicings as written before adapting them to guitar. Spend time with the upper part of the voicings found in the Comping Progressions in order to assimilate and adapt the comping language of the pianists to

guitar. Work with guide tones or skeletal structures (from Chapter 2 of ***The Essentials***). Work with the top one, two, or three notes from the TVs and spread voicings outlined in Chapter 3 and 5 (of the ***Essentials***.) Think about comping melodies through blues and rhythm changes from Chapter 3D. Study at least the top three notes of the voicings discussed in "Comping in the Bebop Style" from Chapter 4. Always play with the original records and the CD included. (See introduction for CD instructions).

After working through ***The Essentials*** continue with ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***. Again, it's important to spend time on the piano with the original voicings as written before adapting them to guitar. Comp using Barry's and Bud's LH shapes–omitting the bottom note if necessary from Chapter 1 of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***. Check out the fast tempo TV practice in Chapter 2. Investigate rootless voicings and drop 2's from Chapter 3 and 4. Adapt the basie-like voicings from the same chapter to guitar. Adapt Hank Jones's comping to guitar. Smaller shapes that fit on the guitar should be used when going through Chapter 5 (the final chapter of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques***). Adapt the comping styles of Bill Evans, McCoy Tyner, and Herbie Hancock to the guitar.

**Vocalist:**

Follow the guide for non-pianists. Using TVs over roots can be very effective when accompanying yourself. The voicings from 2C of ***The Essentials*** have a very open and airy sound–also useful when accompanying. In addition, the rootless voicings from Chapter 3 of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** are highly effective when playing with in a trio.

**Bassist:**

Follow the guide for non-pianists. Listen closely to all of the examples of bass lines presented on the piano-less tracks. The two CDs that accompany ***The Essentials*** contain plenty of ideas for walking bass lines on blues and rhythm changes.

**Drummer**:

Follow the guide for non-pianists. Pay special attention to all of the comping rhythms included. In Chapter 5 of ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** you will find an assortment of advanced comping rhythm drills. On CD 2 from ***The Essentials*** and ***Advanced Concepts and Techniques*** you will find tracks with no drums. Comp along with the transcriptions. See Play/Comp Along CD information.

## Play/Comp Along CD Information
## "The Essentials"

**CD 1**

**Track 1**: demo boogie: CR 10 (The Charleston)
**Track 2**: demo boogie: CR 24 (Dotted Quarter Cross Rhythm)
**Track 3**: demo boogie: CR 26 ("Who Parked the Car")
**Track 4**: demo boogie: CR 30 (6 against 4)
**Track 5**: demo boogie: SBVs Set 8 (with The Charleston)
**Track 6**: shuffle drums only

**Track 7**: ii–V–I progression through the keys (no piano)
**Track 8**: blues in C (no piano)
**Track 9**: changes to "Straight No Chaser" (blues in F) (demo)
**Track 10**: changes to "Straight No Chaser" (blues in F) (no piano)
**Track 11**: changes to "Celia" (demo)
**Track 12**: changes to "Celia" (no piano)
**Track 13**: changes to "Opus de Funk" (blues in Bb) (demo)
**Track 14**: blues in Bb (no piano)
**Track 15**: minor ii–V–I progression through the keys (no piano)

**Track 16**: changes to "Dance of the Infidels" (demo)
**Track 17**: changes to "Dance of the Infidels" (no piano)
**Track 18**: RC: Basic Harmonic Structure
**Track 19**: RC (rhythm changes): FIG 4
**Track 20**: RC: FIG 8
**Track 21**: RC: Dave's Choice
**Track 22**: changes to "Eb-Pob" (Bb RC) (demo)
**Track 23**: changes to "Eb-Pob" (Bb RC) (no piano)
**Track 24**: changes to "Sonny Side" (Bb RC) (demo)
**Track 25**: changes to "Sonny Side" (Bb RC) (no piano)
**Track 26**: changes to "Bombay" (Bb RC) (demo)
**Track 27**: changes to "Bombay" (Bb RC) (no piano)
**Track 28**: changes to "Nicaragua" (C RC w/honeysuckle bridge) (demo)
**Track 29**: changes to "Nicaragua" (C RC w/honeysuckle bridge) (no piano)
**Track 30**: changes to "Bouncin' with Bud" (demo)
**Track 31**: changes to "Bouncin' with Bud" (no piano)

**Track 32**: "bird" blues in C, F and Bb (no piano)
**Track 33**: minor blues in C, F and Bb (no piano)

**CD 2**

**Track 1**: changes to "Airegin" (demo)
**Track 2**: changes to "Airegin" (no piano)
**Track 3**: changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away" (demo)
**Track 4**: changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away" (no piano)
**Track 5:** changes to "Diane" (demo)
**Track 6:** changes to "Diane" (no piano)
**Track 7**: changes to "Somethin' Special" (demo)
**Track 8**: changes to "Somethin' Special" (no piano)
**Track 9**: changes to "Politely" (demo)
**Track 10**: changes to "Politely" (no piano)

**Track 11**: blues through the keys (bass and drums)
**Track 12**: minor blues through the keys (bass and drums)
**Track 13**: rhythm changes through six keys (bass and drums)

**Track 14**: changes to "Dance of the Infidels" (no drums)
**Track 15**: changes to "Eb Pob" (no drums)
**Track 16**: changes to "Sonny Side" (no drums)
**Track 17**: changes to "Bombay" (no drums)
**Track 18**: changes to "Nicaragua" (no drums)
**Track 19**: changes to "Bouncin with Bud" (no drums)

**Track 20**: changes to "Airegin" (no drums)
**Track 21**: changes to "Blowin' the Blues Away" (no drums)
**Track 22**: changes to "Diane" (no drums)
**Track 23**: changes to "Somethin' Special" (no drums)
**Track 24**: changes to "Politely" (no drums)