Steve Sweeting

WALTZES TO A MUSE

Songs in 3/4 Time

12:01
Ayi's Lament
Billy's Arrival
Cinco de Mayo
Foolish Waltz
Night Biking
Skating
Street Circus
Time and a Half
Waltz to a Muse
Wanting What?
Whirl

Xano Music

Steve Sweeting

Cover and book graphic design by Toyi Matos

Xano Music

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WALTZES TO A MUSE

Songs in 3/4 Time

Thinking about sublime jazz waltzes like “A Child is Born” or “Waltz for Debby”, makes me wonder under what circumstances they were written? Where does new music come from? Every composer might give you different answers. It’s true at times I am inspired by a person, or a mood, or by something I ate for lunch. But what do you do if all nine daughters of Zeus happen to be on holiday? Even if there is no muse handy, I can usually persuade myself to sit down and think about writing something in the key of D major or something in 6/8, for example. It’s part of a lifelong practice of improvising at the piano until some kernel of an idea appears. Then I try not to break the spell by thinking too hard about it or stopping to write down actual notes. At that point, I habitually start recording so I don’t forget it the next day. Very often, I don’t notate anything on paper or the computer until I’ve been playing with it for a couple days and am still interested in it. I find that whatever I’m writing, when I begin to improvise and play with it, almost always it sounds better in ¾ than whatever meter I began in, thus this volume of waltzes, that probably began as something else entirely.

-- Steve Sweeting

To hear recordings of these pieces please check:
SteveSweeting.com

In 2008, I wrote a collection of songs without words called “Midnight Til Dawn”. **12:01** is a time of night when music seems to pour out of me; it’s one of the moments when I am most myself.

Ayi’s Lament is dedicated to Xiao Li, our “ayi” who helped care for our family during the entire time we lived in Shanghai, and who heard most of these songs as they were being written.

Billy Marcus is a swinging American jazz pianist who overlapped with me in China for a year or so and when he came back to visit once, he stayed in our apartment, so I wrote a tune called **Billy’s Arrival**.

Cinco de Mayo does little to evoke that Mexican holiday. I was living in New York City, far from the epicenter of enchiladas, when I wrote it, but it did happen to be May 5th.

A **Foolish Waltz** is often what I wind up with when I start the day intending to write something grander or more profound.

It didn’t take us long to decide that the best way to see Shanghai is by bicycle at night. I wrote **Night Biking** to remember how much fun it was to come home from gigs after midnight with Kate.

Skating was written in the summer of 2012 in New York, a sequel to the “Playground” series in which every piece was a child’s activity, a gerund that began with ‘S’.

When I heard the frequent firecrackers celebrating neighborhood weddings and looked out the window of my Shanghai music studio from the seventh floor and watched the taxi drivers below arguing every day with the food vendors, it made me feel like I had free tickets to the **Street Circus.**

I’ve always been a misfit trying to live within the normal schedules of 8am-5pm, or 6-day work weeks or any conception of holidays vs. work days. **Time and a Half** for me is about how being a musician transcends those routines and pays you back even more than the hours you put into it.

A fondness for bad puns runs in my family, thus: **Waltz to a Muse**. I hope all my muses will be amused by all these waltzes.

Recently, I was sitting in the music office of the YK Pao School on a rainy day in Songjiang not knowing quite what I was doing and **Wanting What?** seemed to capture the mood.

Watching people waltz around a dance floor or a skating rink, arms and skirts flying = **Whirl**.

WALTZES TO A MUSE

Songs in 3/4 Time

LEAD SHEETS

9 Ayi's Lament
10 Billy's Arrival
11 Cinco de Mayo
12 Foolish Waltz
13 Night Biking
14 Skating
15 Street Circus
16 Time and a Half
17 Waltz to a Muse
18 Wanting What?
19 Whirl

PIANO ARRANGEMENTS

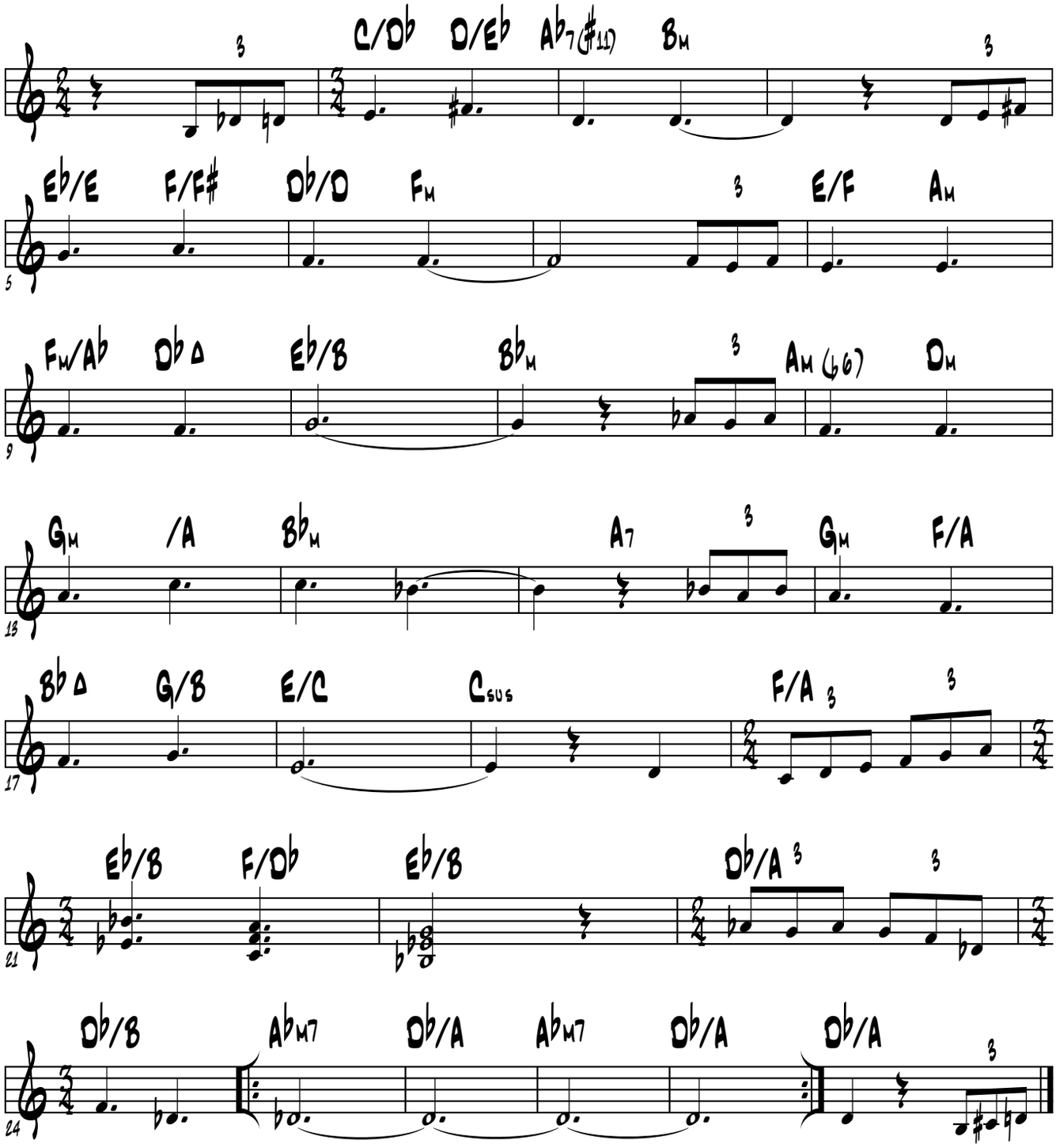
22 12-01
24 Ayi's Lament
26 Billy's Arrival
28 Cinco de Mayo
30 Night Biking
32 Skating
34 Street Circus
36 Time and a Half
38 Waltz to a Muse
40 Wanting What?
42 Whirl

AYI'S LAMENT

SLOW JAZZ WALTZ ♩=124

BY STEVE SWEETING

JUL 2008



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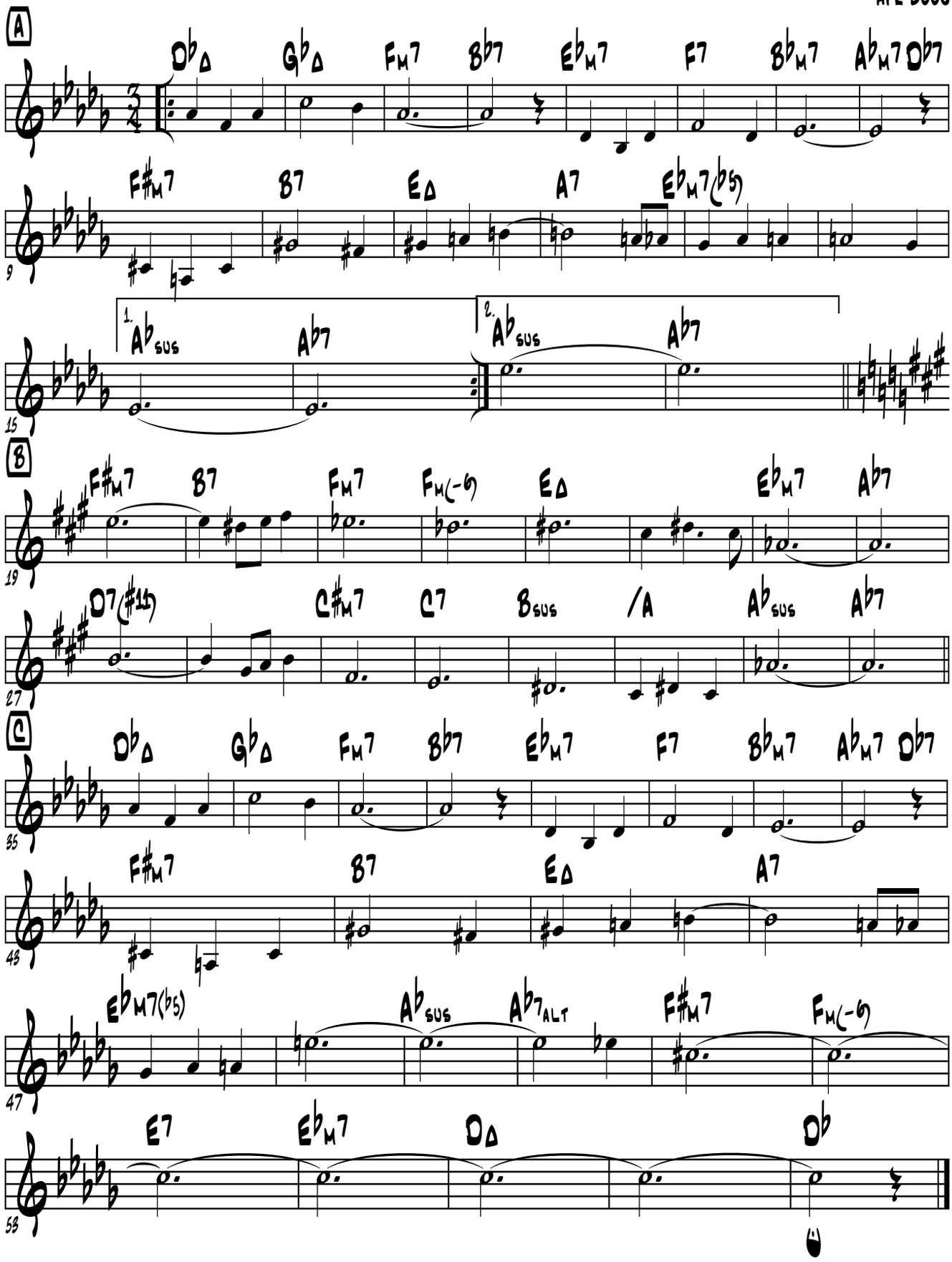
BILLY'S ARRIVAL

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=160

BY STEVE SWEETING

APR 2008



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CINCO DE MAYO

JAZZ WALTZ

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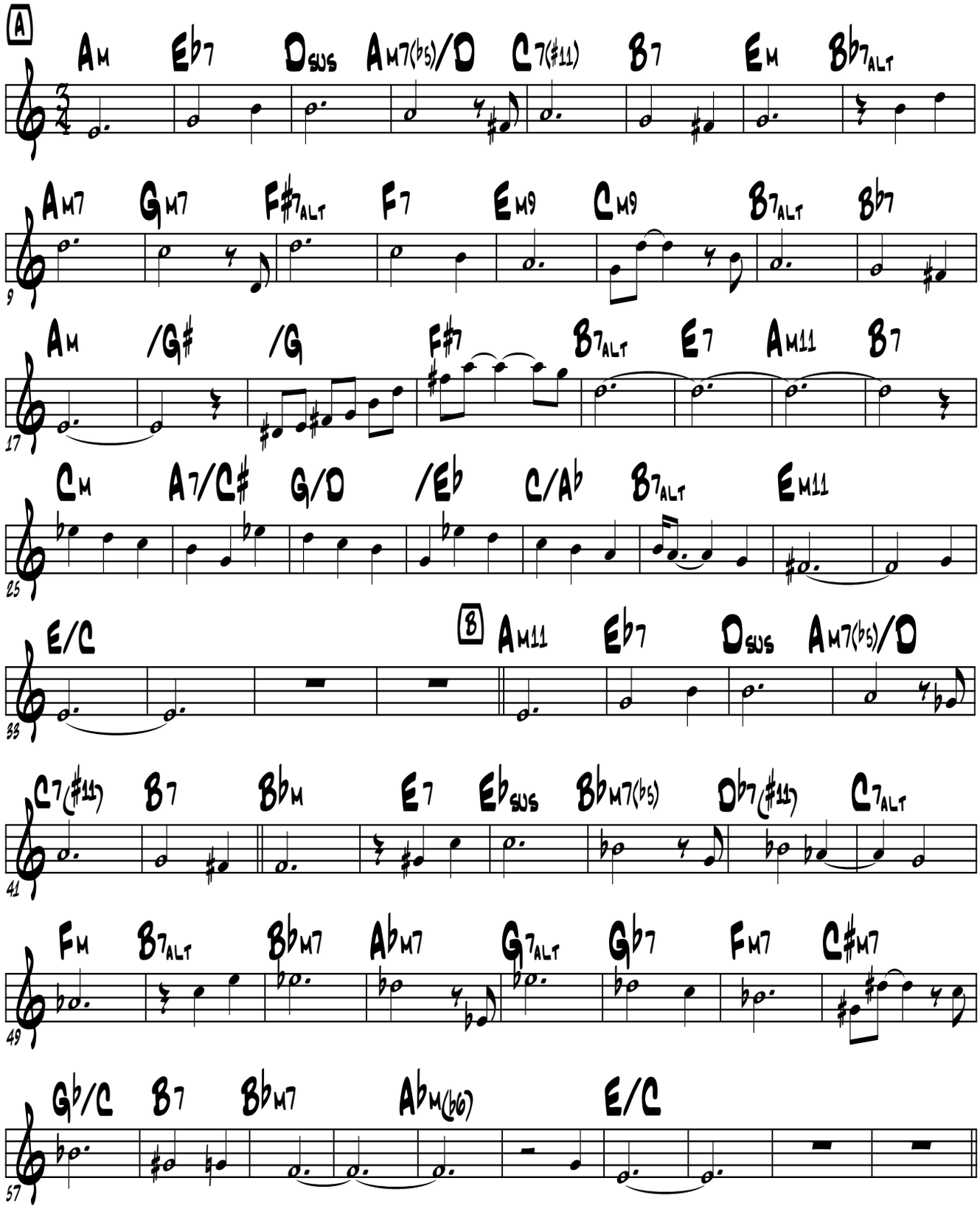
MAY 2001



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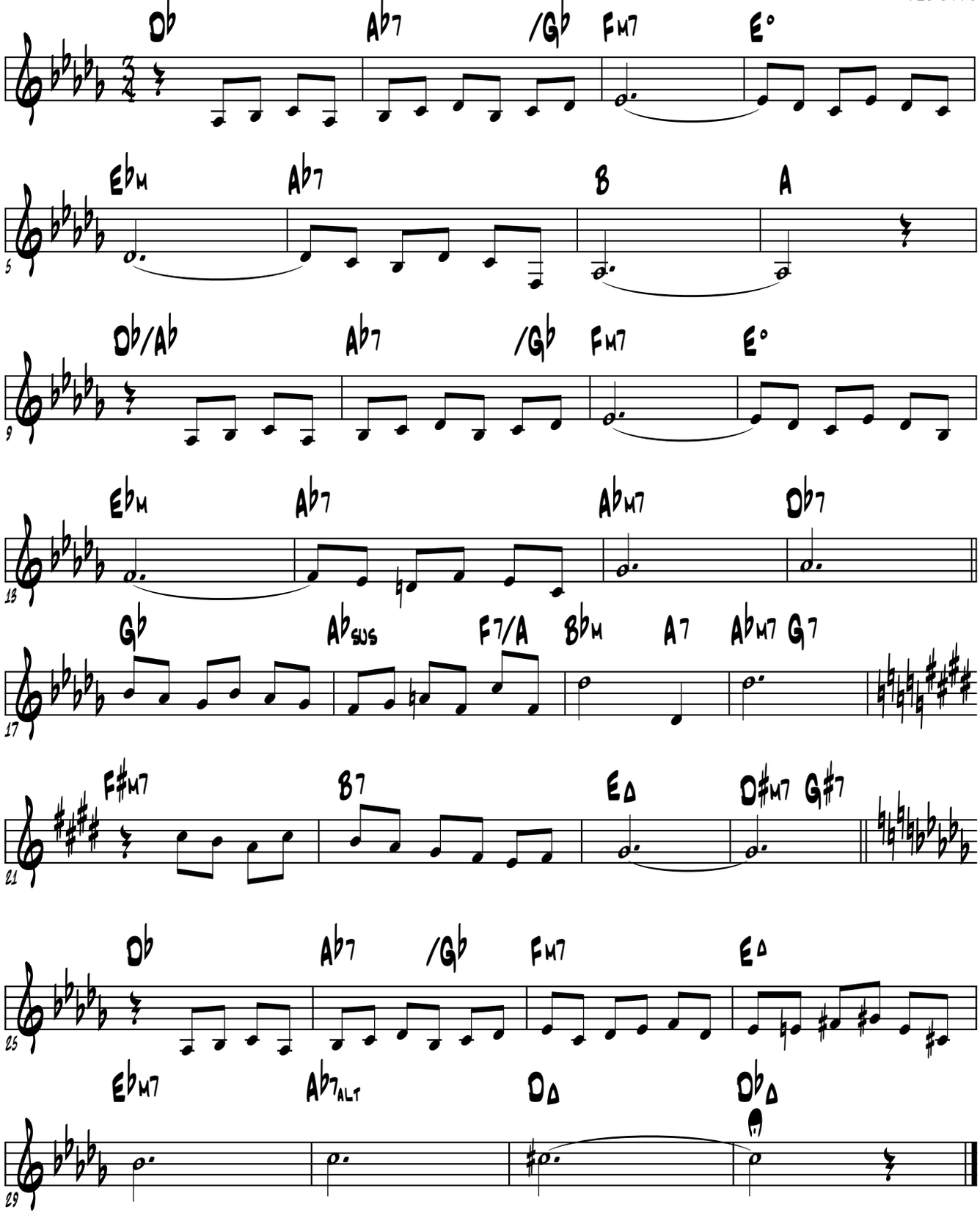
FOOLISH WALTZ

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

BY STEVE SWEETING

FEB 1998



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NIGHT BIKING

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=160

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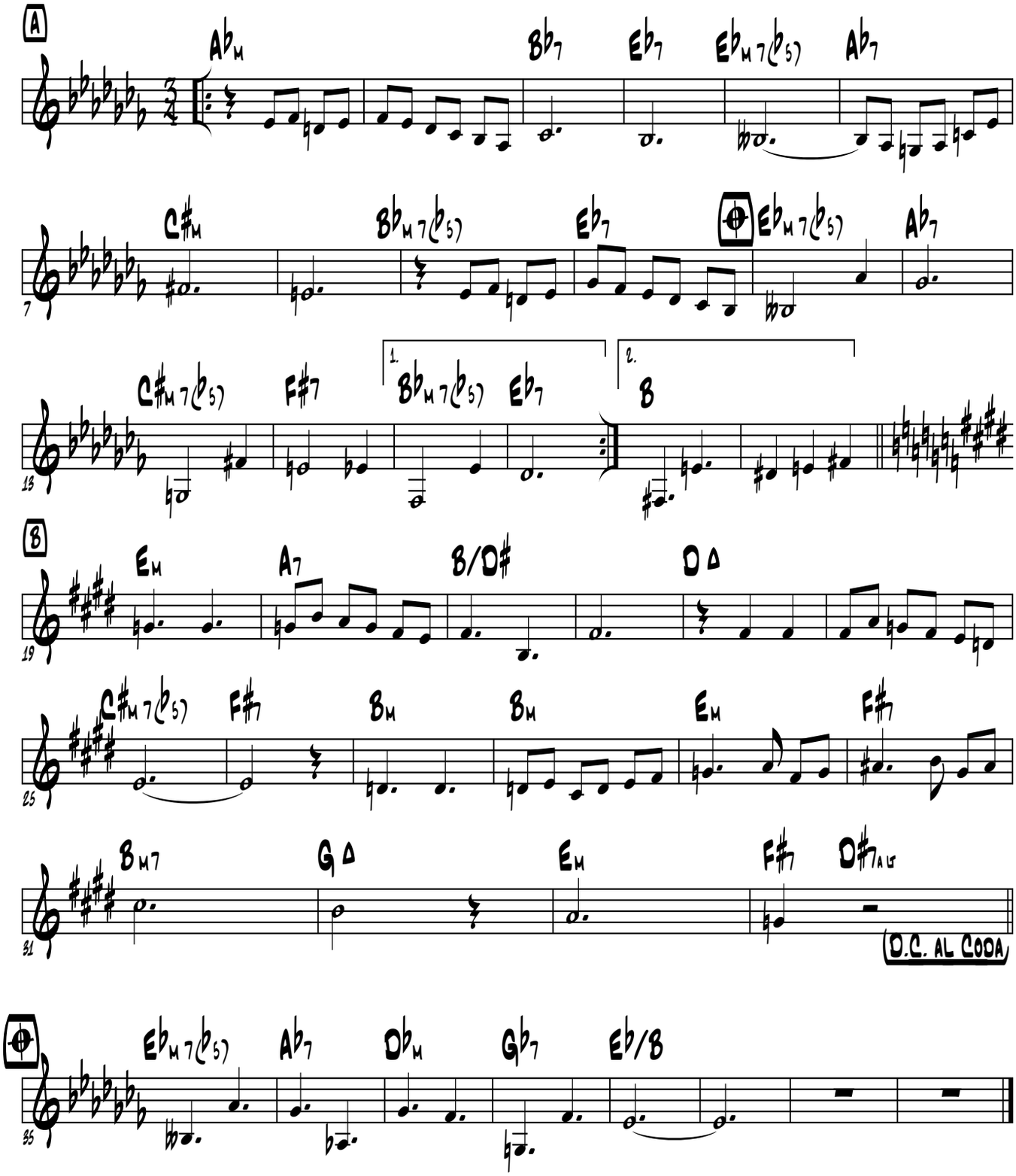
JUN 2008



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SKATING

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

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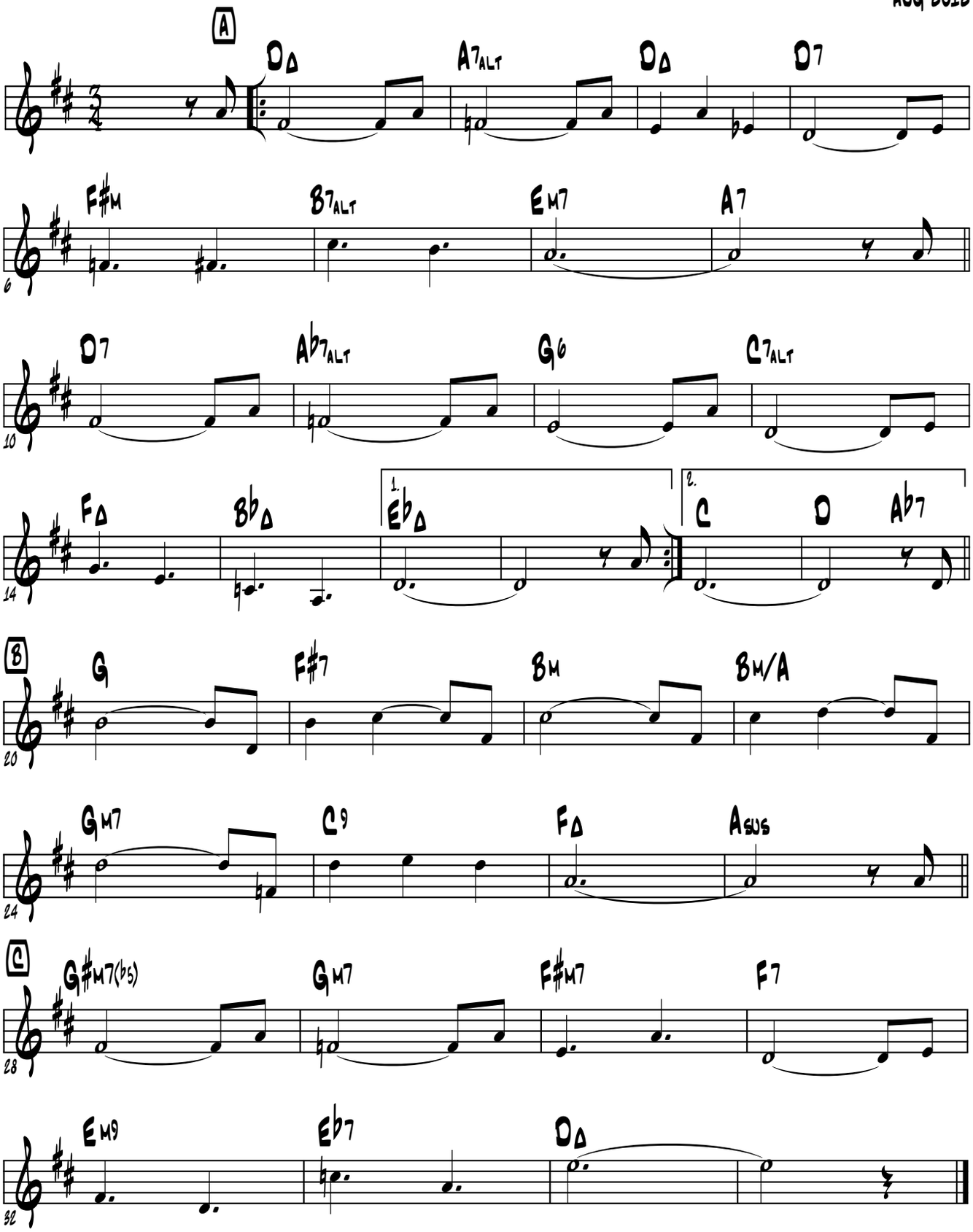
AUG 2012



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STREET CIRCUS

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=160

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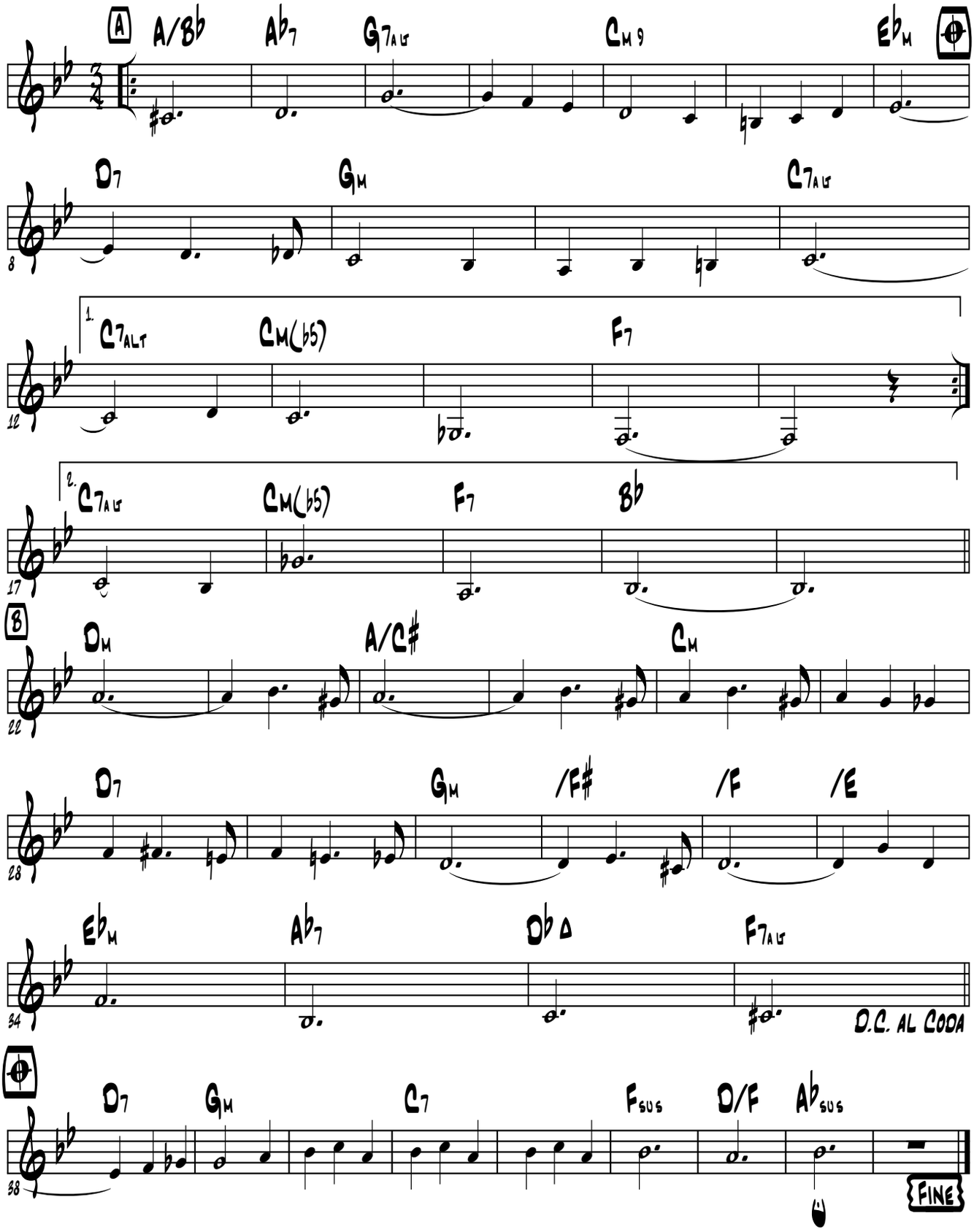
NOV 2008



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TIME AND A HALF

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

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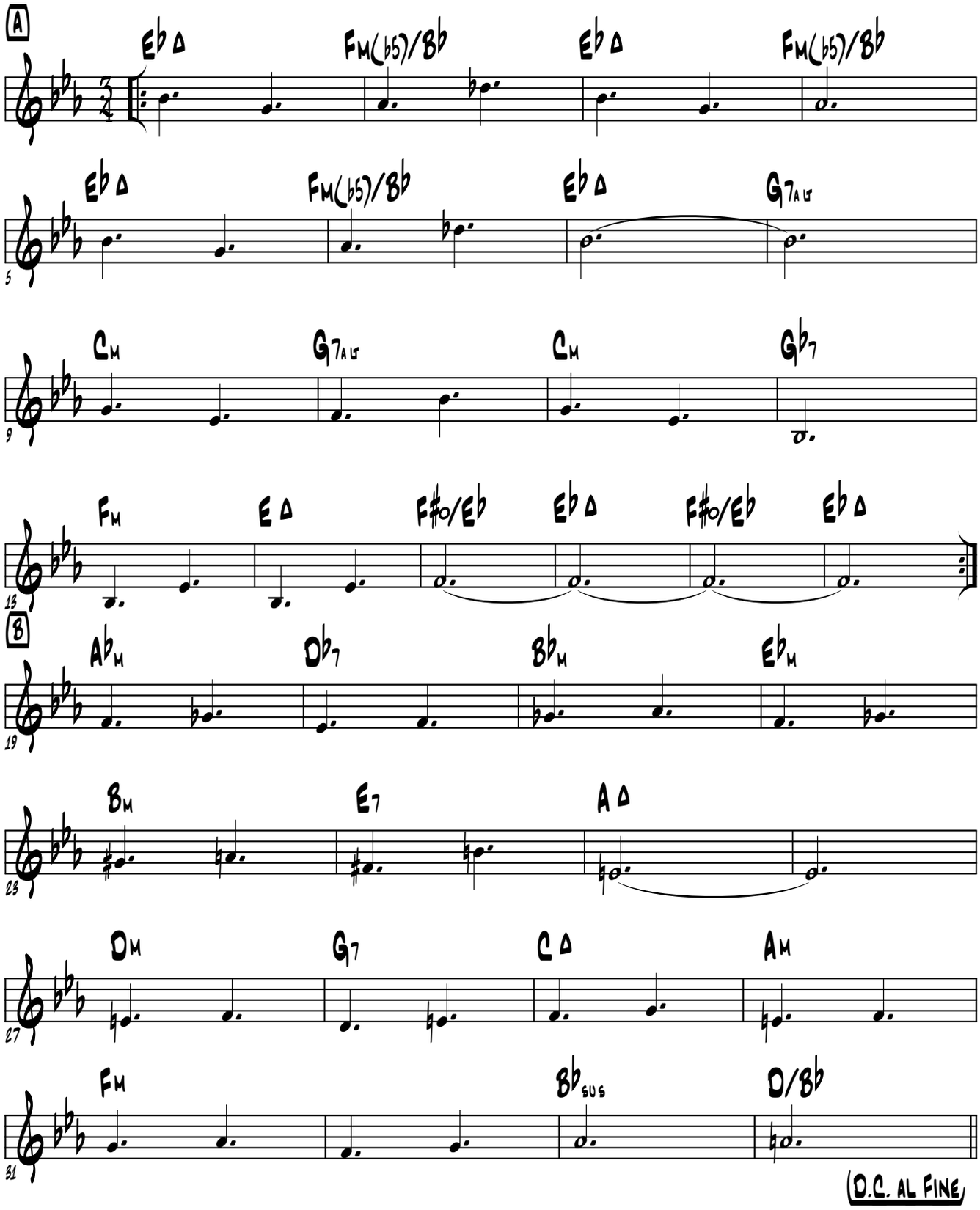
APR 2011



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WALTZ TO A MUSE

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=240

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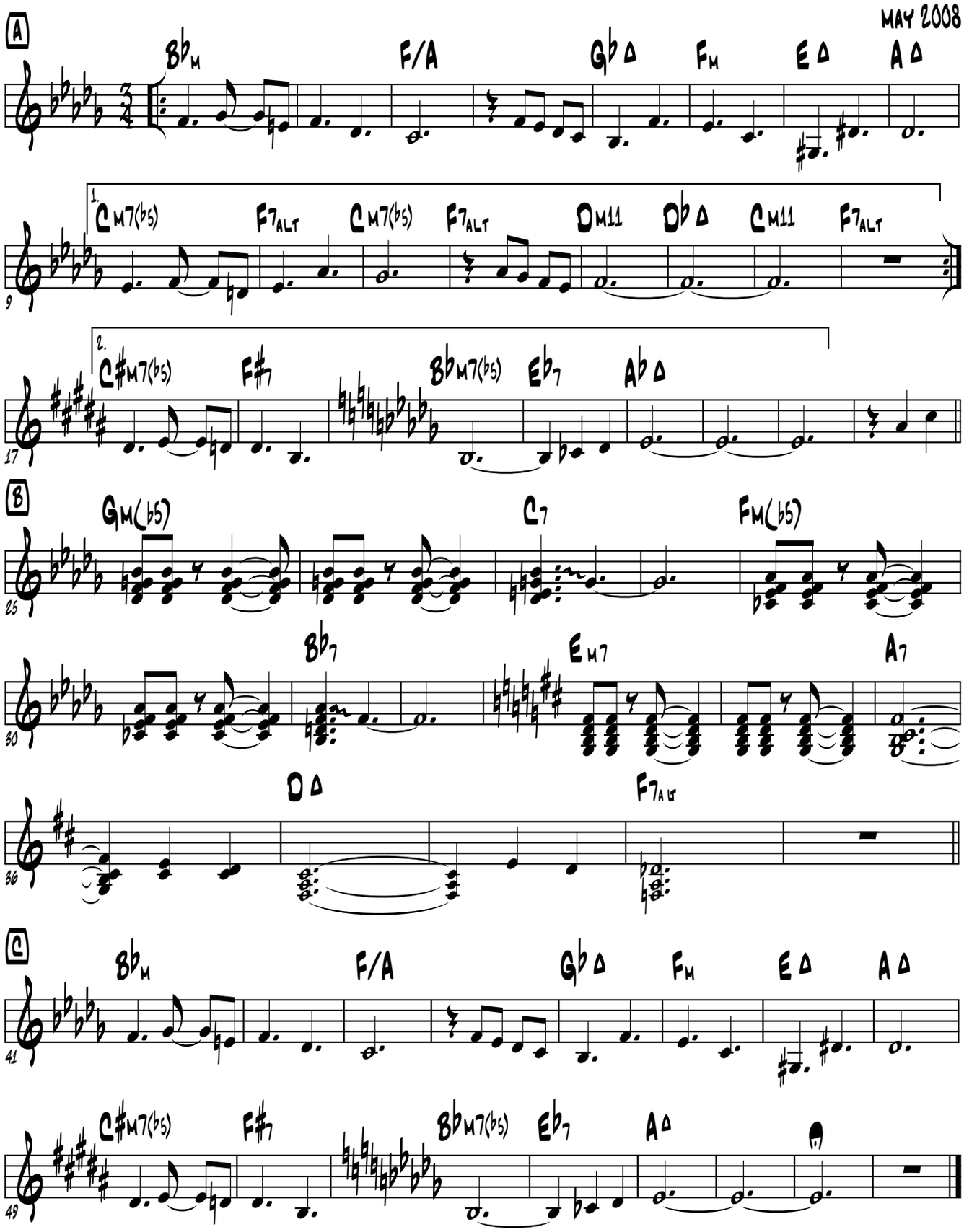
MAY 2008



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WANTING WHAT?

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

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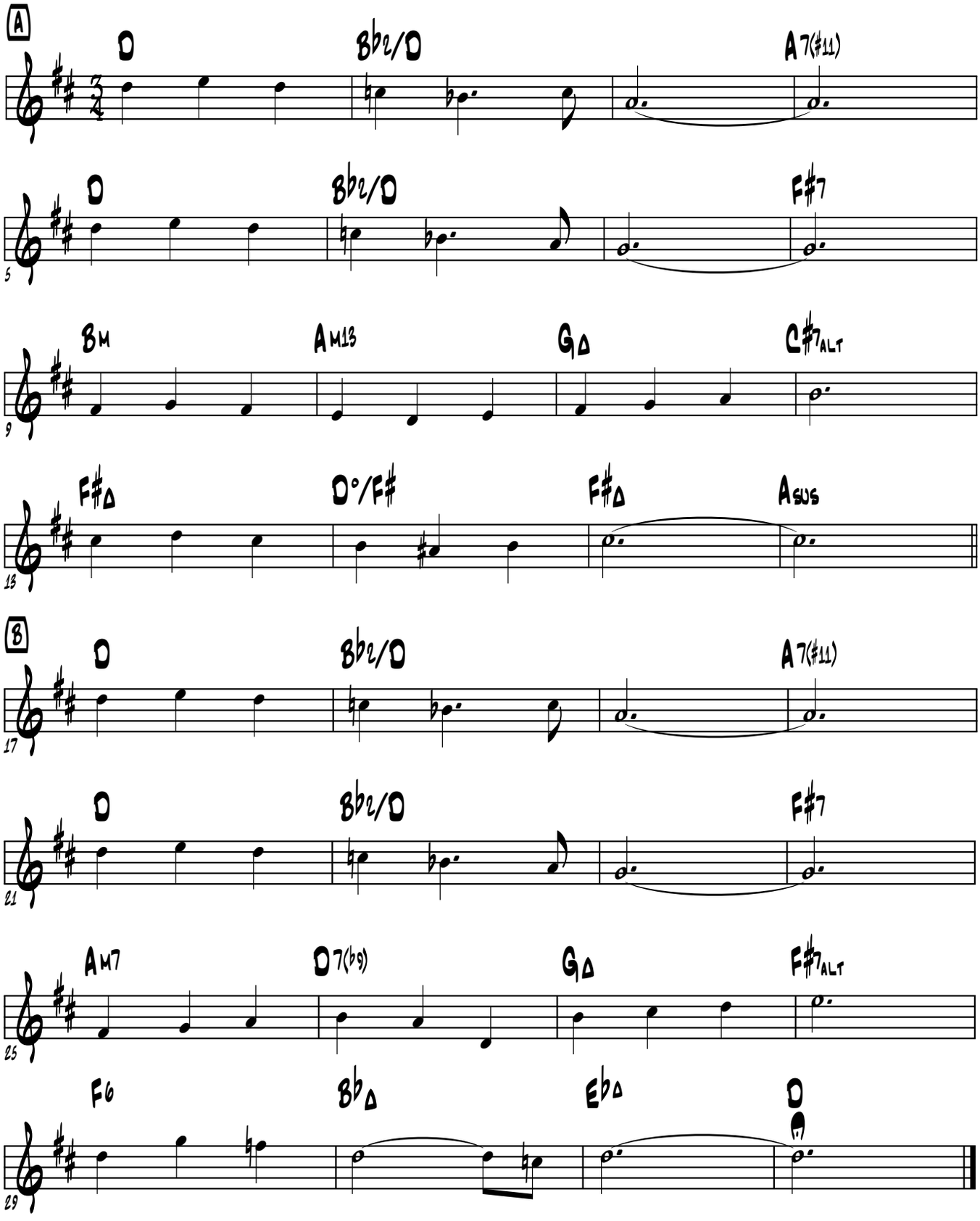
MAY 2013



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WHIRL

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=220

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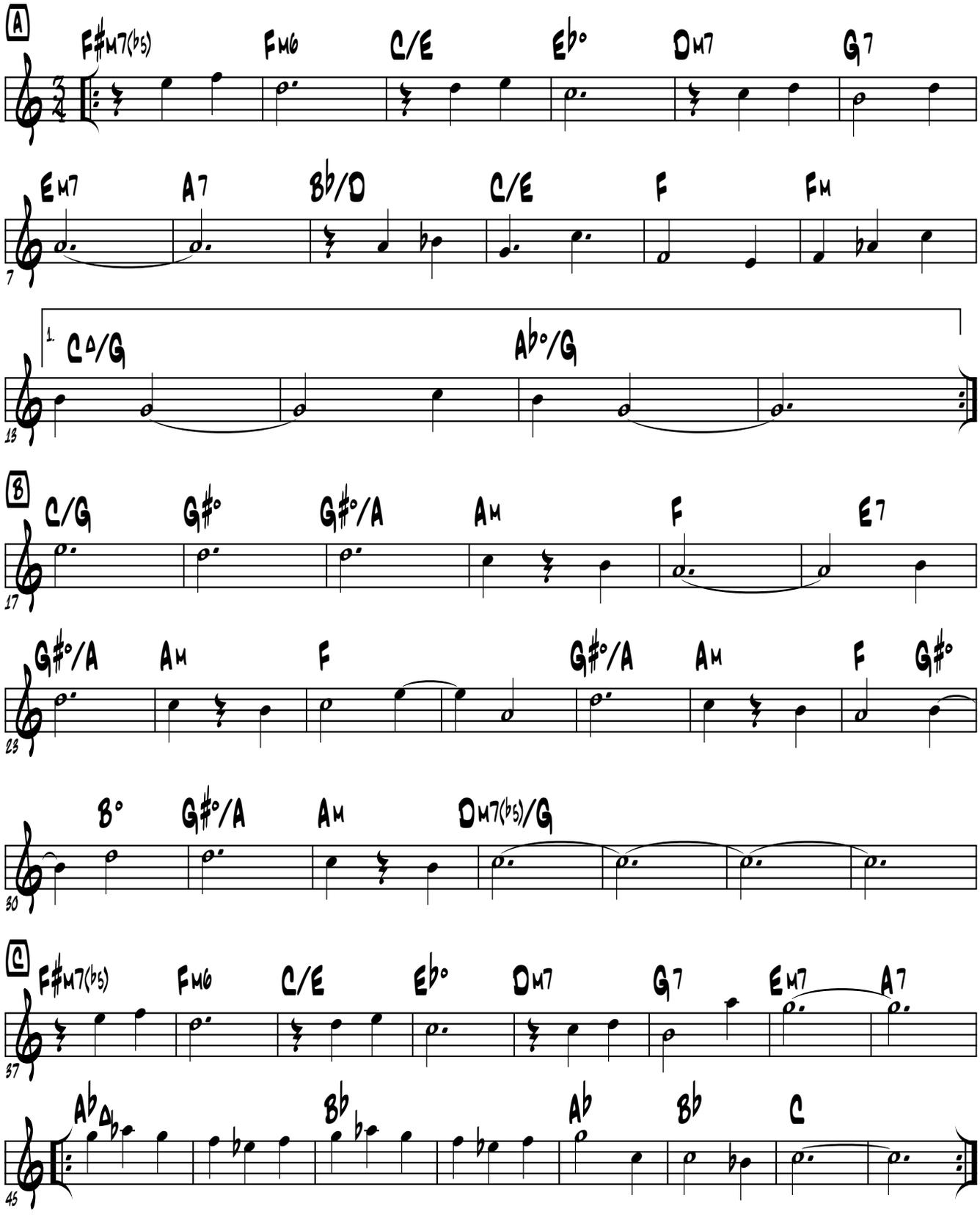
JAN 2013



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WALTZES TO A MUSE

Songs in 3/4 Time

PIANO ARRANGEMENTS

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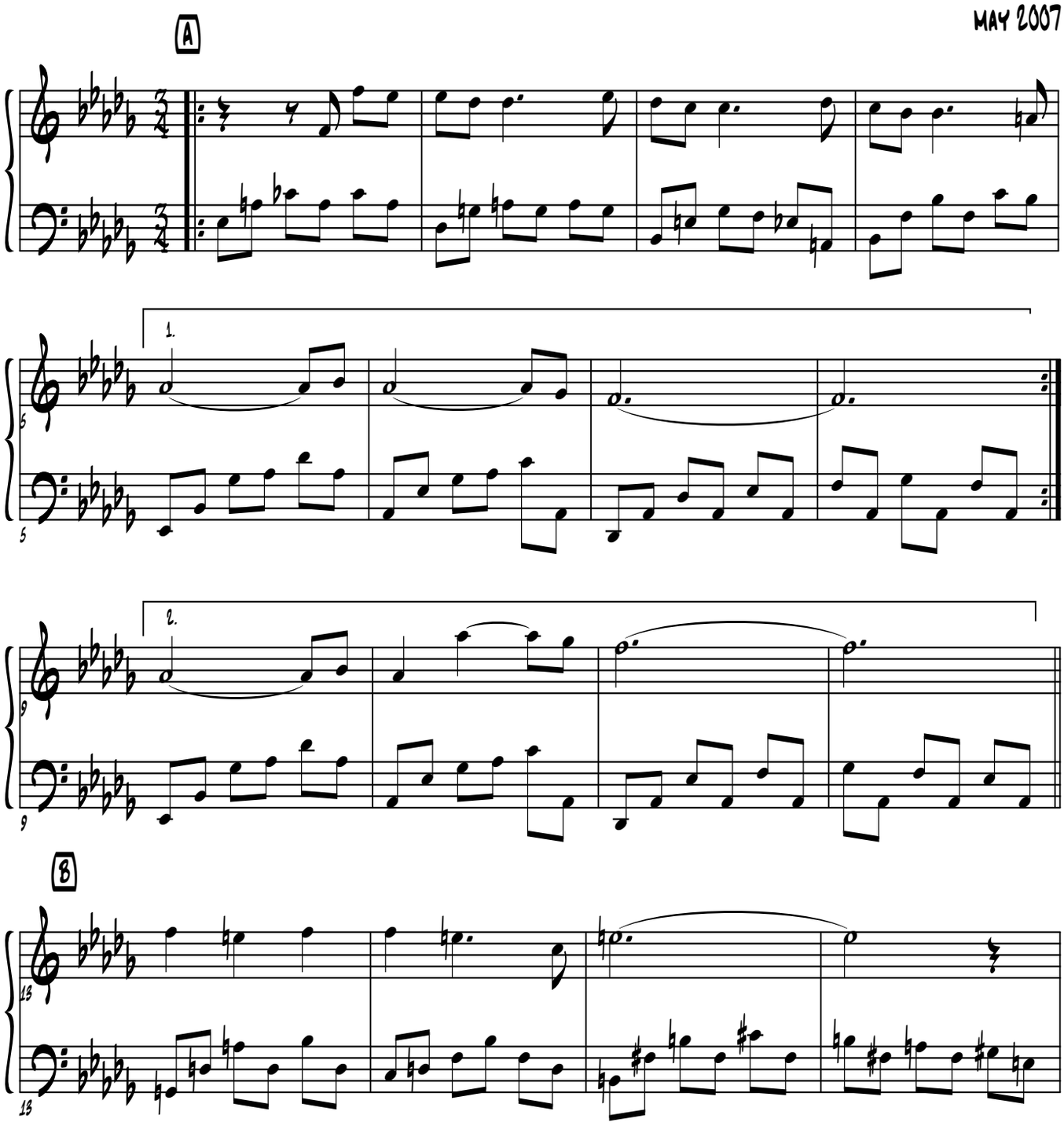
42 Whirl

12:01

LEGATO ♩=160

BY STEVE SWEETING

MAY 2007



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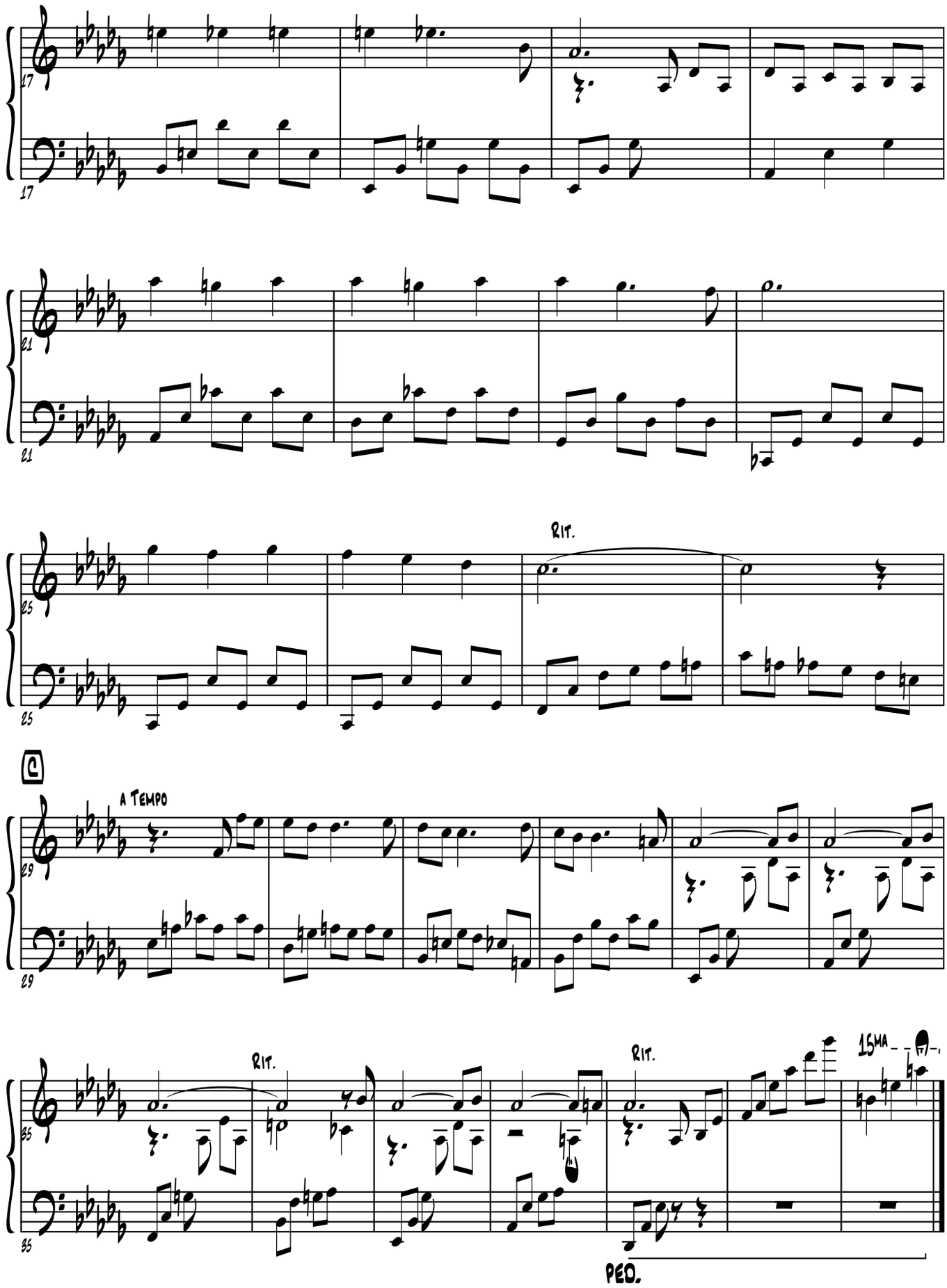
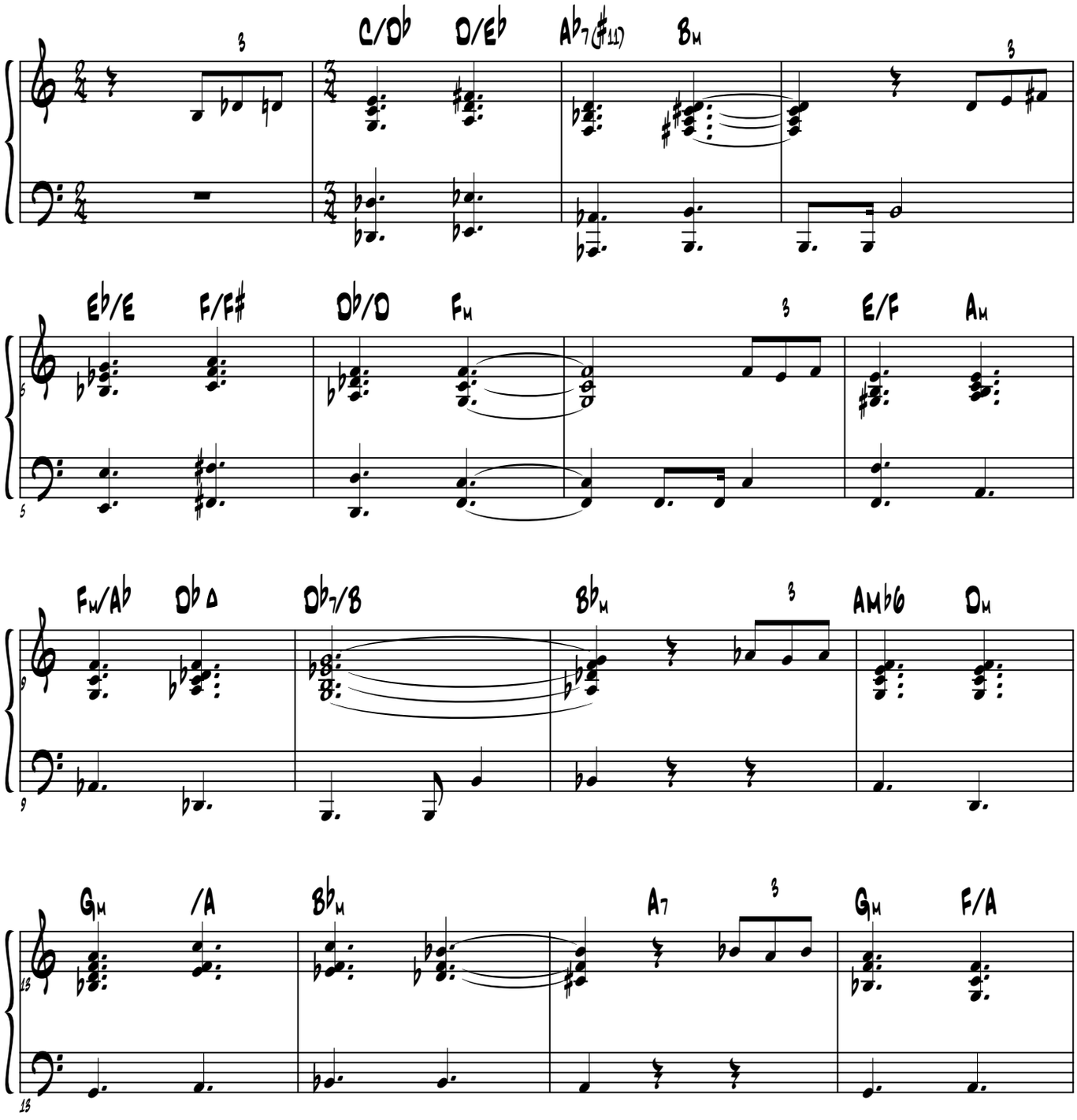

17
17
21
21
25
25
Rit.
C
A Tempo
29
29
35
35
Rit.
Rit.
15ma
Ped.

AYI'S LAMENT

SLOW JAZZ WALTZ ♩=116

BY STEVE SWEETING
JUL 2008



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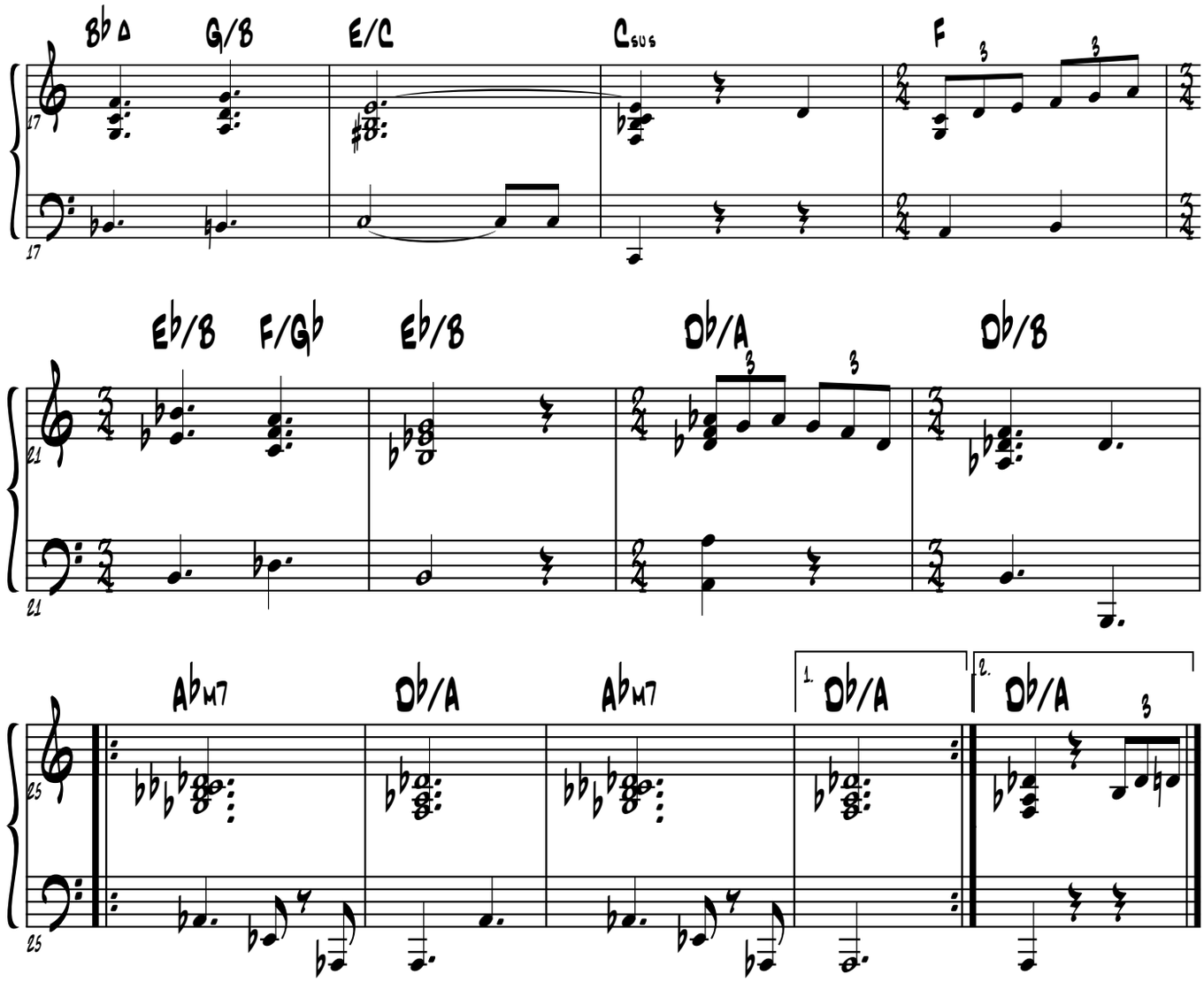
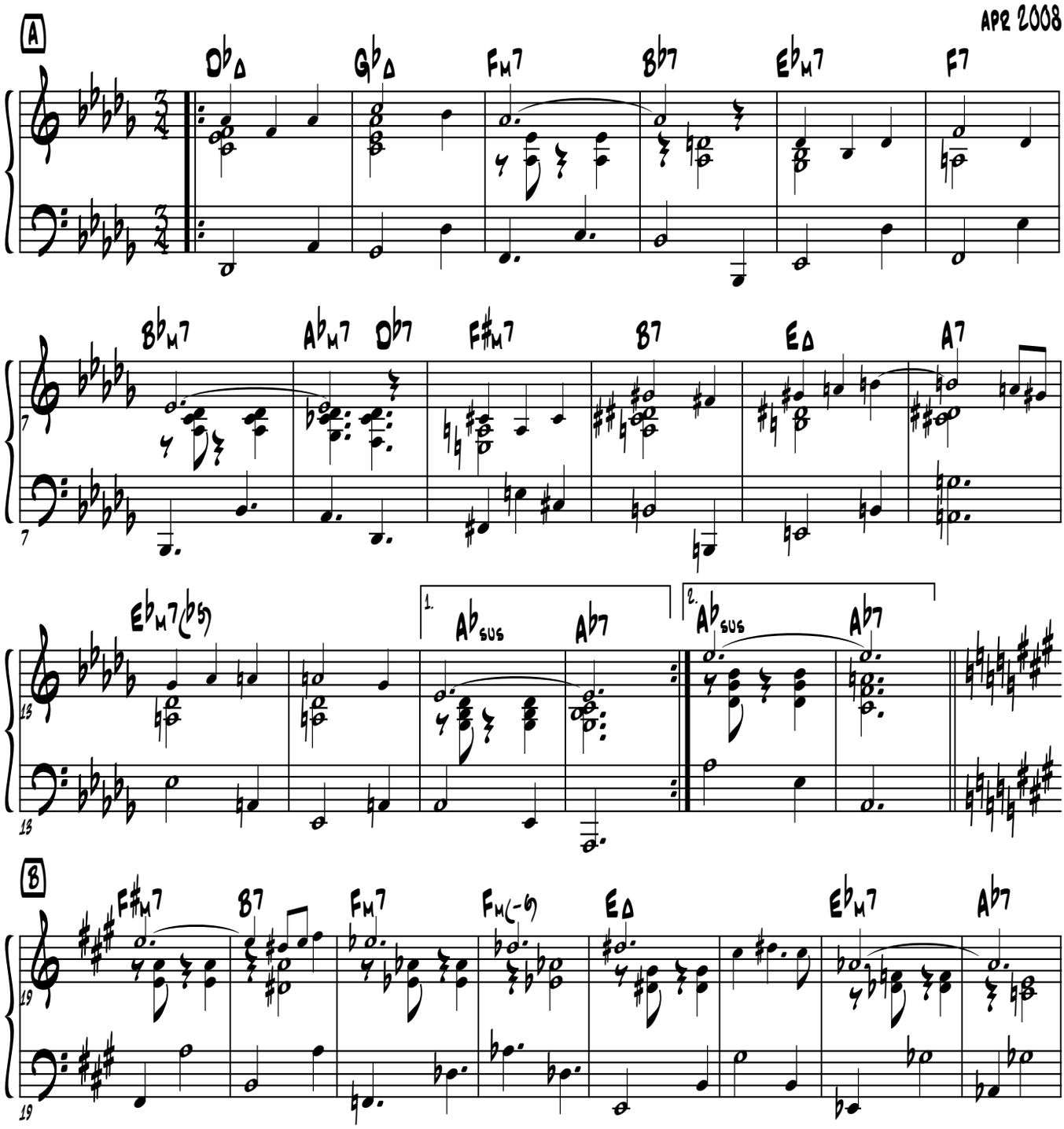

B♭Δ
G/B
E/C
Csus
F
E♭/B
F/G♭
E♭/B
D♭/A
D♭/B
A♭M7
D♭/A
A♭M7
1. D♭/A
2. D♭/A

BILLY'S ARRIVAL

BY STEVE SWEETING

APR 2008



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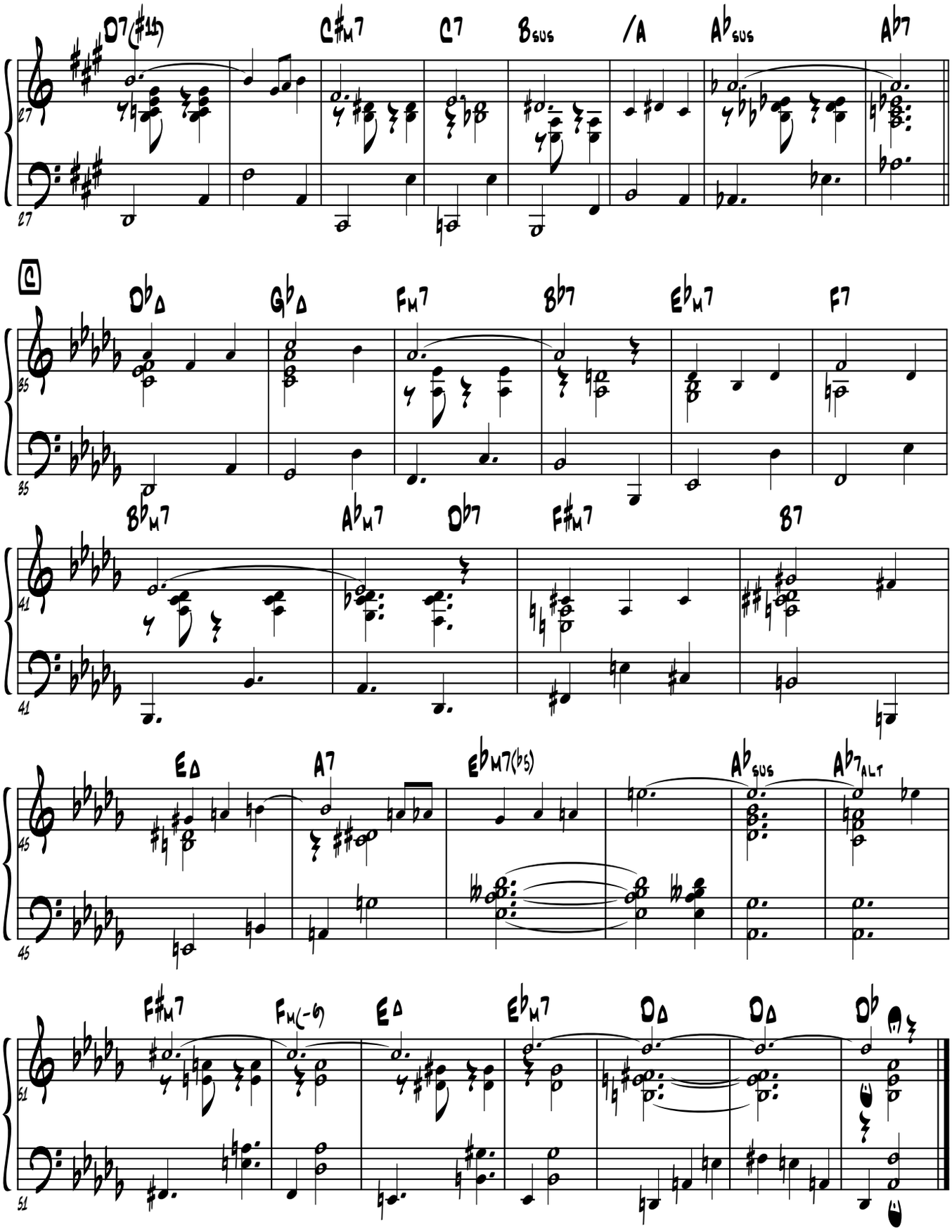
D7(♯11)
C♯M7
C7
BSUS
/A
A♭SUS
A♭7
27
C
D♭Δ
G♭Δ
FM7
B♭7
E♭M7
F7
35
B♭M7
A♭M7
D♭7
F♯M7
B7
41
EΔ
A7
E♭M7(♭5)
A♭SUS
A♭7ALT
45
F♯M7
FM(-6)
EΔ
E♭M7
DΔ
DΔ
D♭
51

CINCO DE MAYO

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

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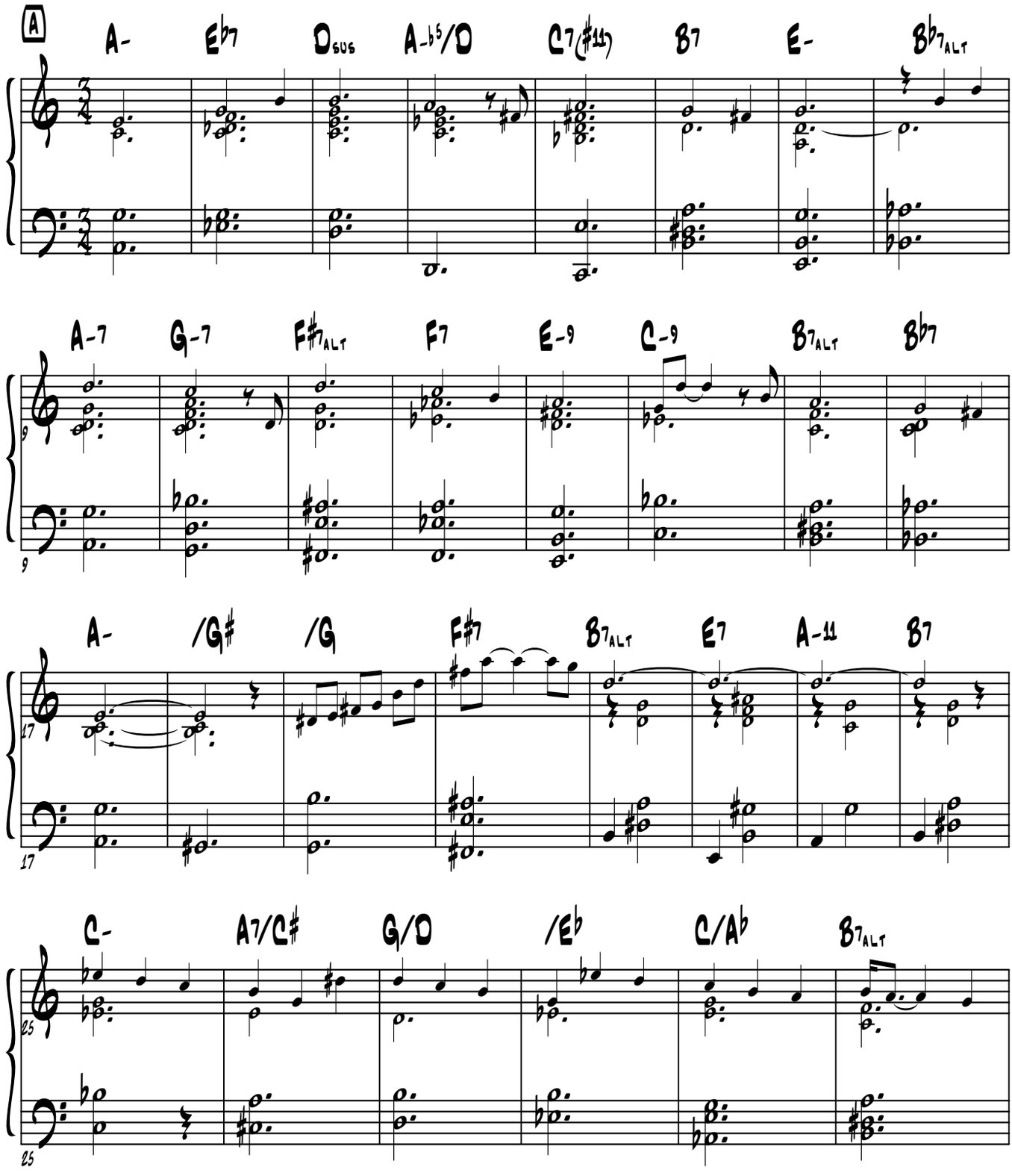
MAY 2001



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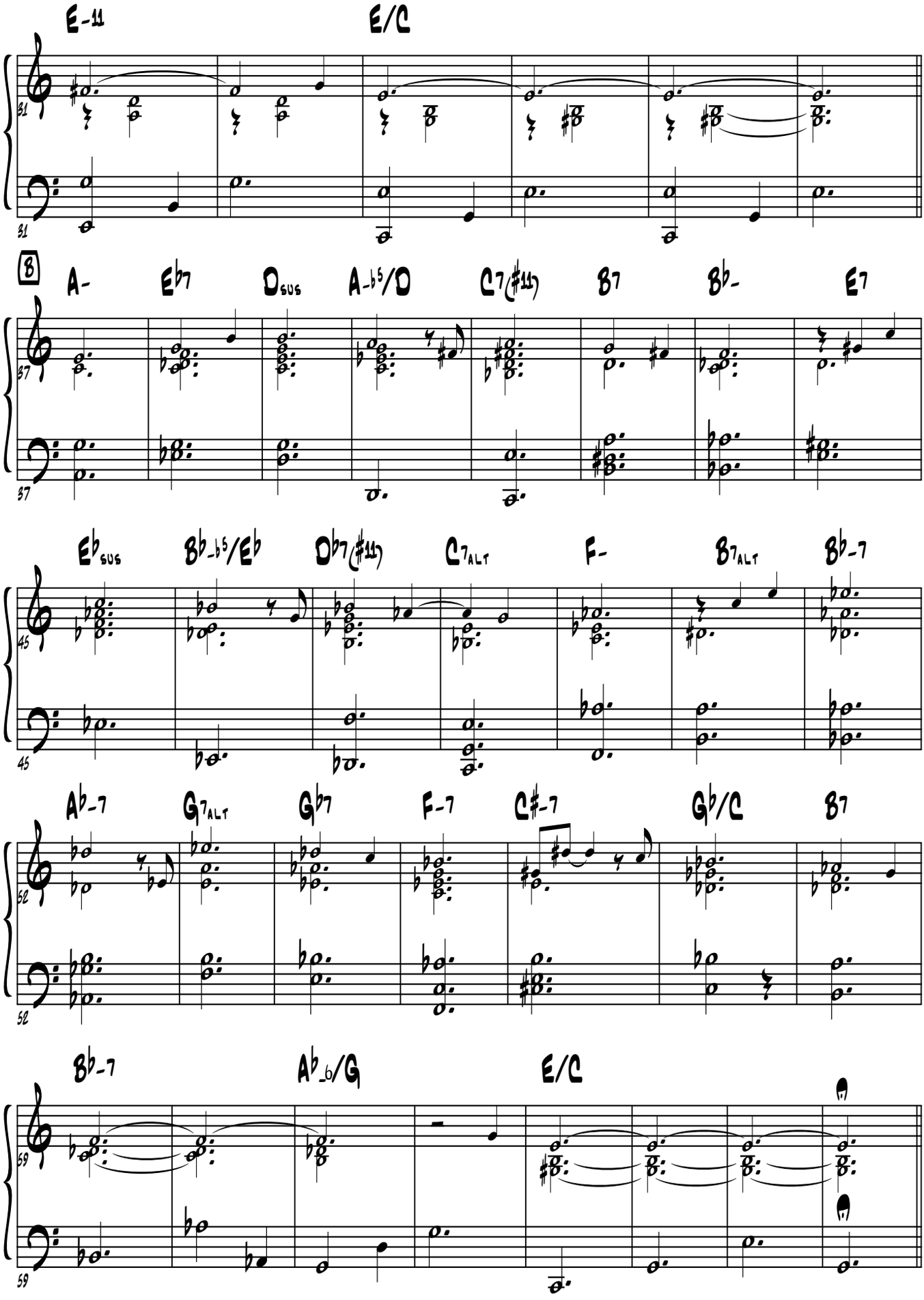
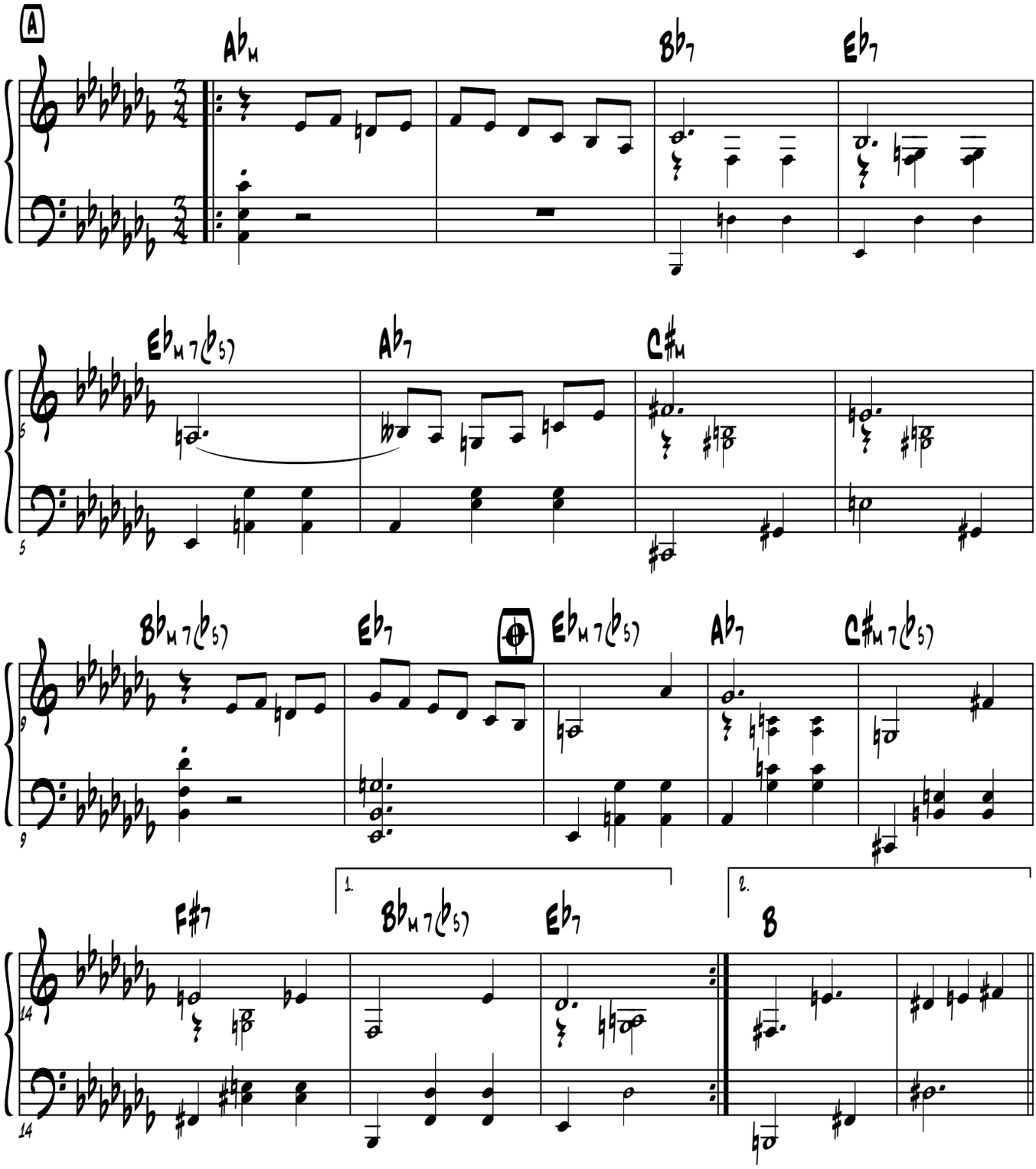

E-11
E/C
31
B
A-
E♭7
D SUS
A-♭5/D
C7(♯11)
B7
B♭-
E7
37
E♭ SUS
B♭-♭5/E♭
D♭7(♯11)
C7 ALT
F-
B7 ALT
B♭-7
45
A♭-7
G7 ALT
G♭7
F-7
C♯-7
G♭/C
B7
52
B♭-7
A♭-♭/G
E/C
59

NIGHT BIKING

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=160

BY STEVE SWEETING

JUN 2008



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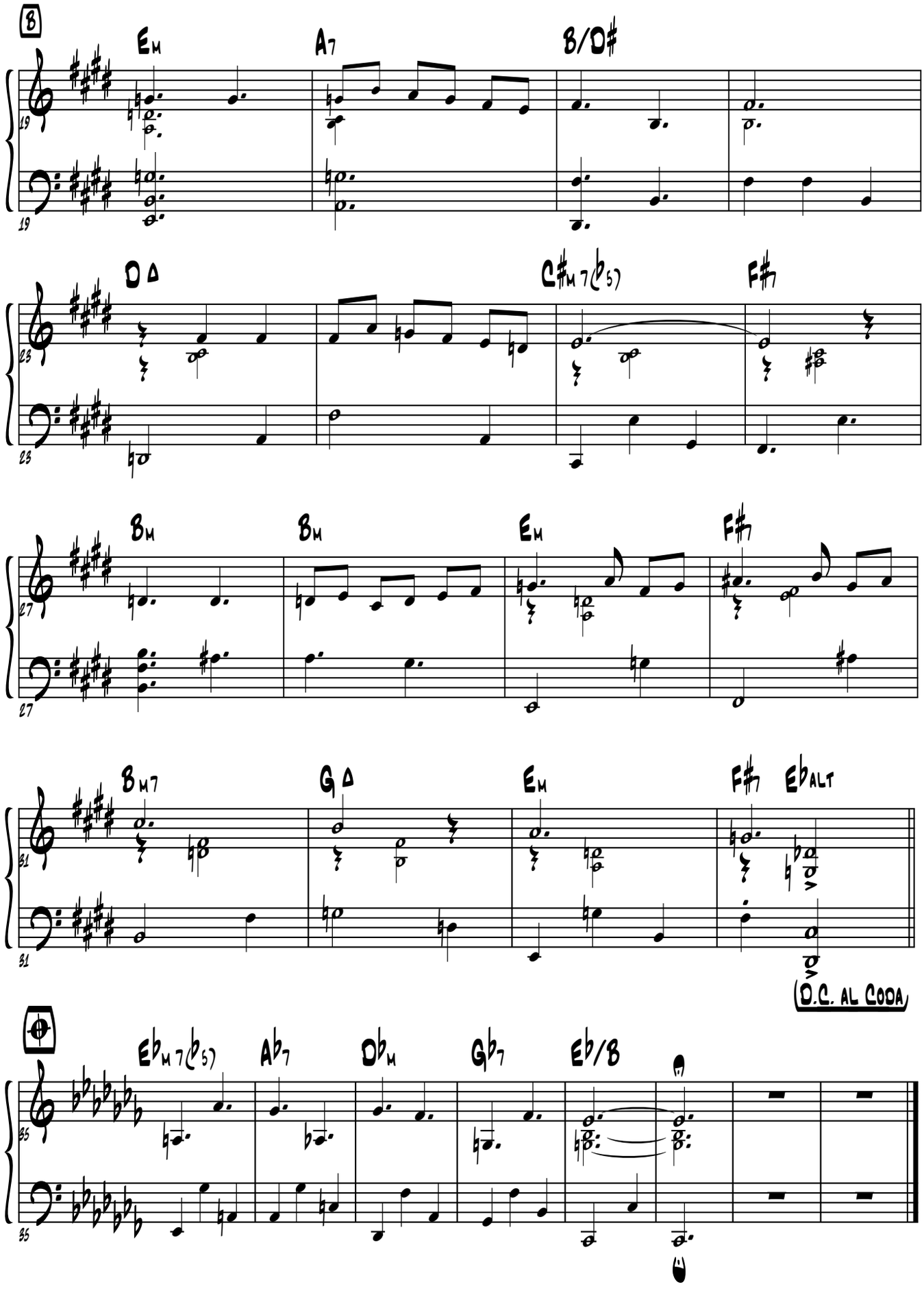
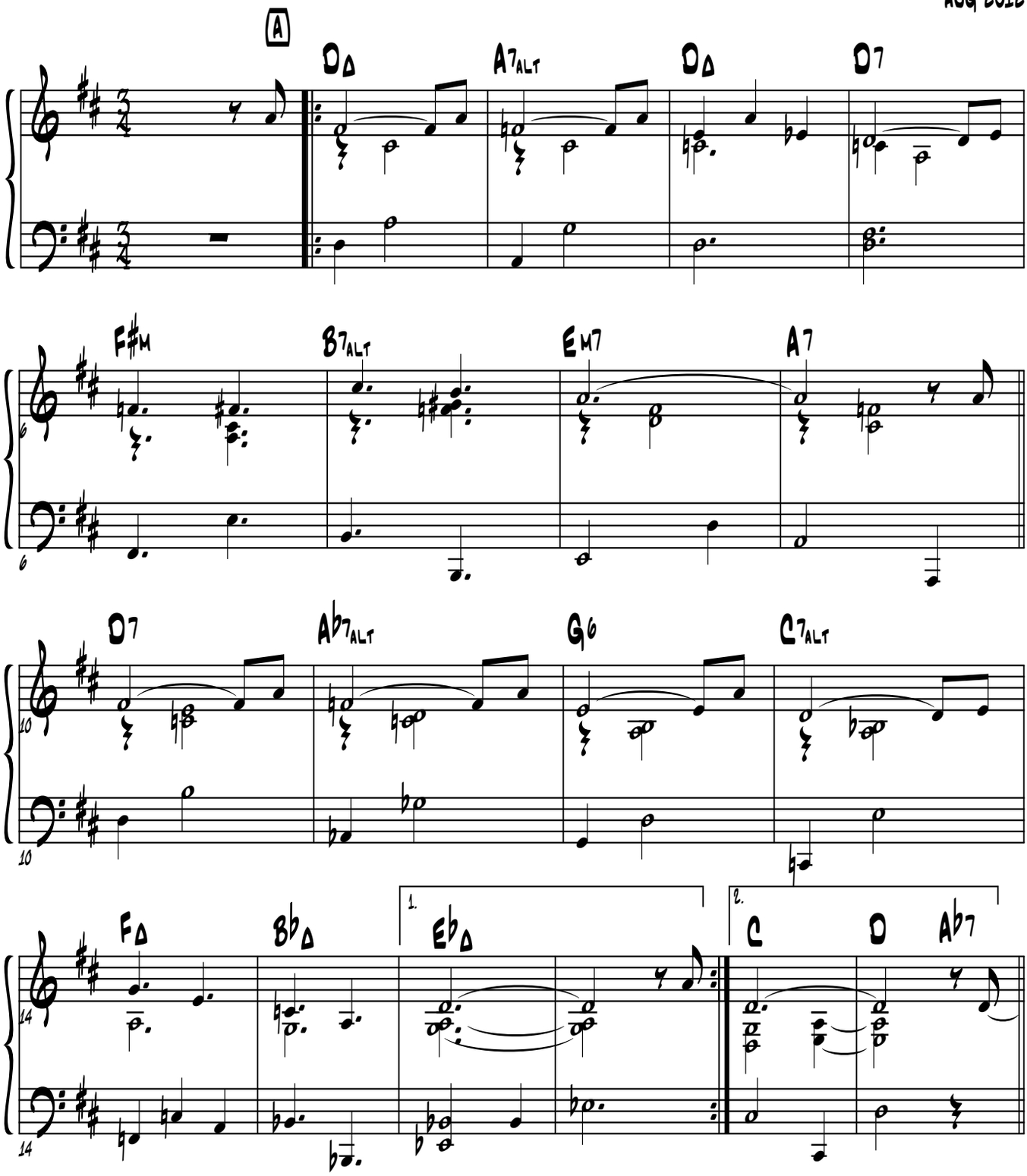

B
Em
A7
B/D♯
D Δ
C♯m7(♭5)
F♯7
Bm
Bm
Em
F♯7
Bm7
G Δ
Em
F♯7
E♭ALT
D.C. AL CODA
E♭m7(♭5)
A♭7
D♭m
G♭7
E♭/B

SKATING

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

BY STEVE SWEETING

AUG 2012



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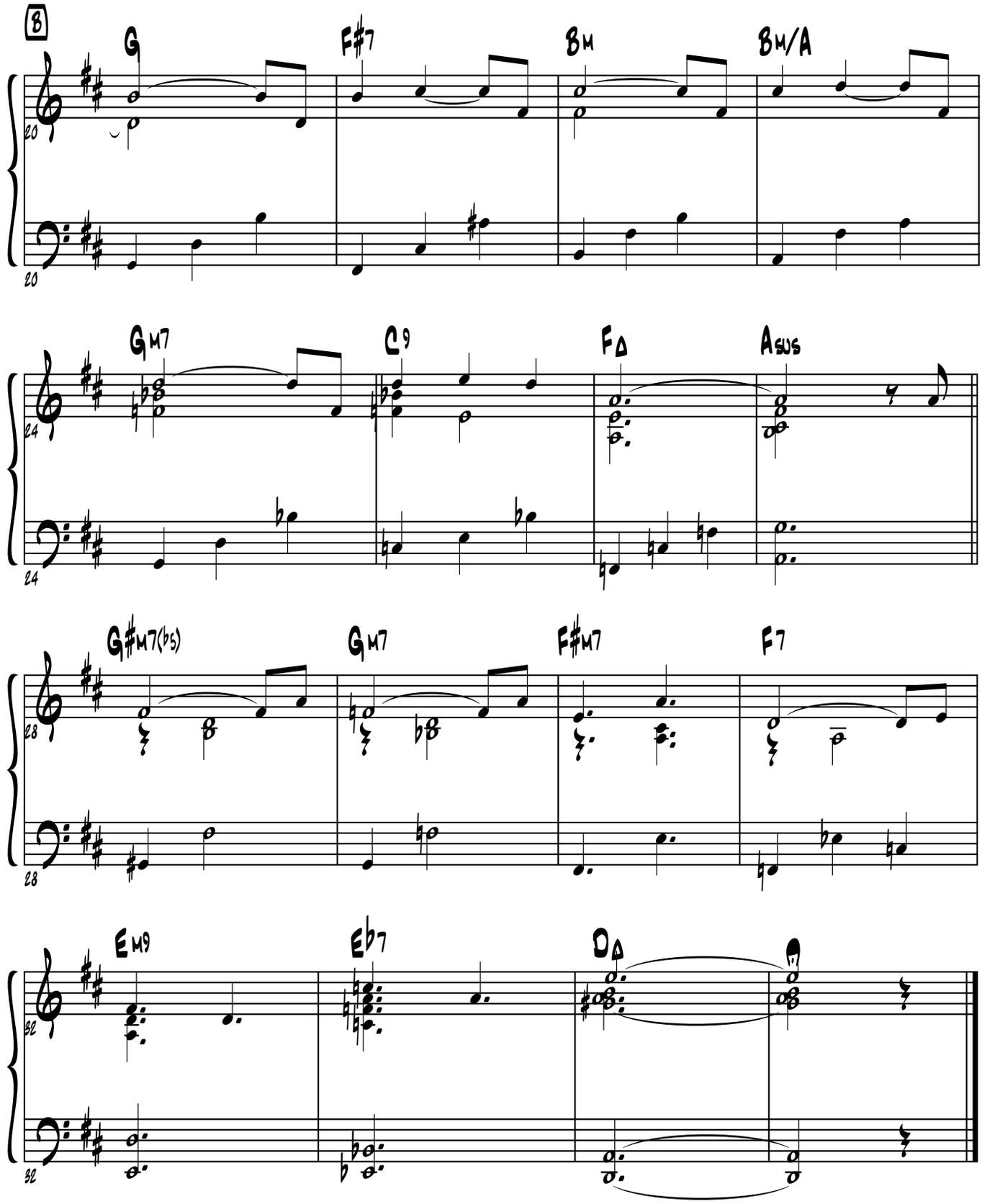
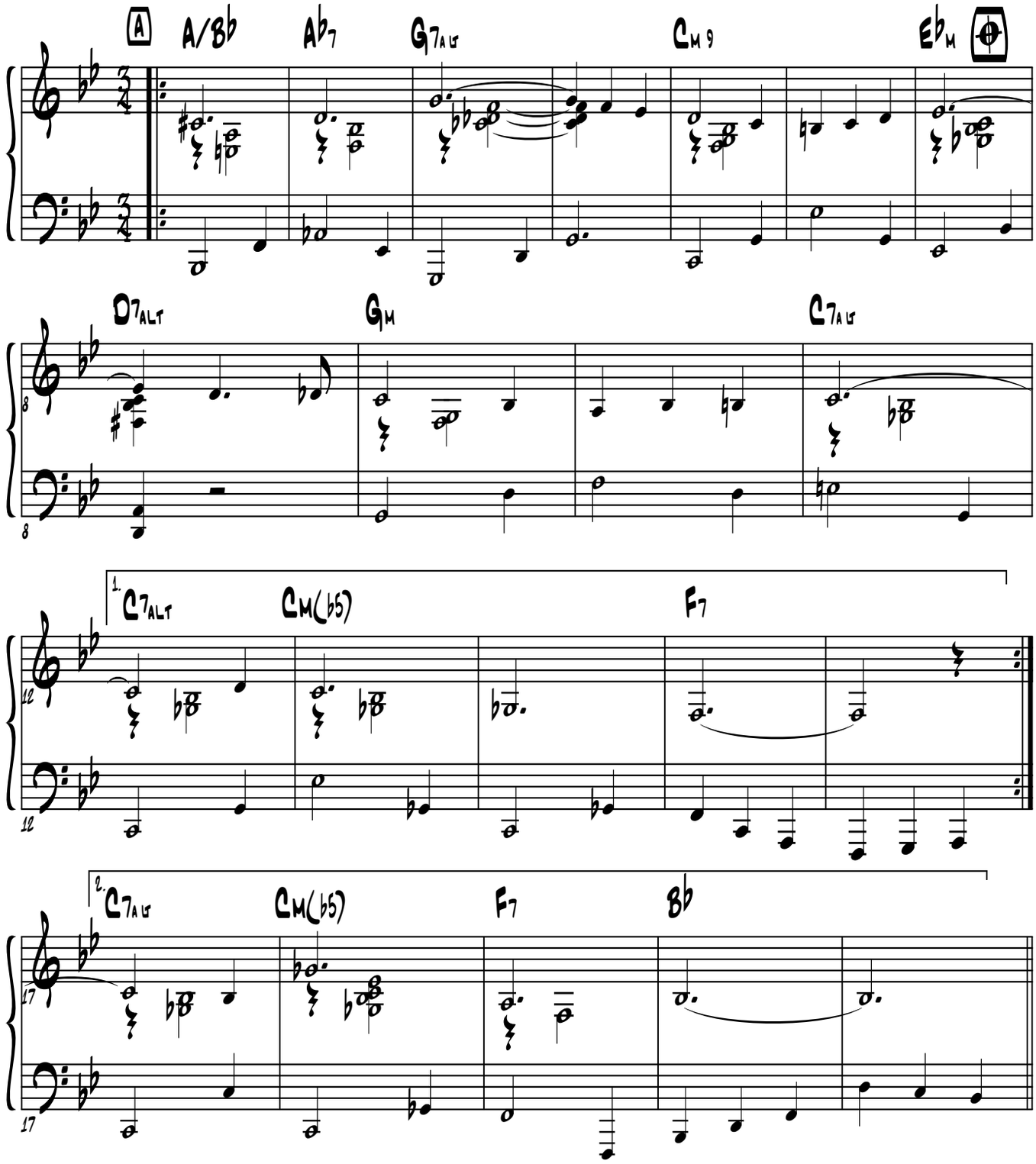

B
G
F♯7
Bm
Bm/A
20
Gm7
C9
FΔ
Asus
24
G♯m7(♭5)
Gm7
F♯m7
F7
28
Em9
E♭7
DΔ
32

STREET CIRCUS

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=160

BY STEVE SWEETING

NOV 2008



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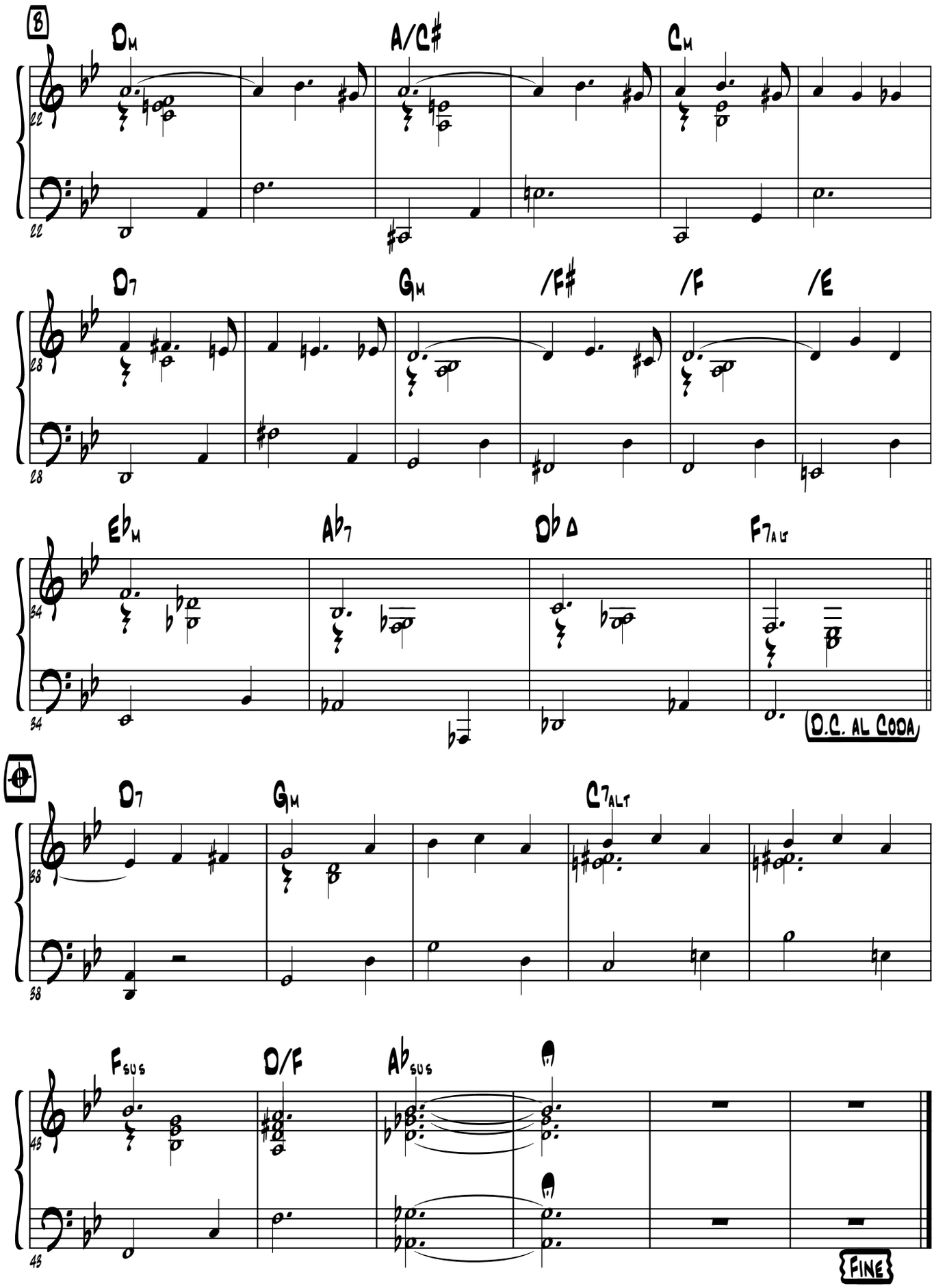
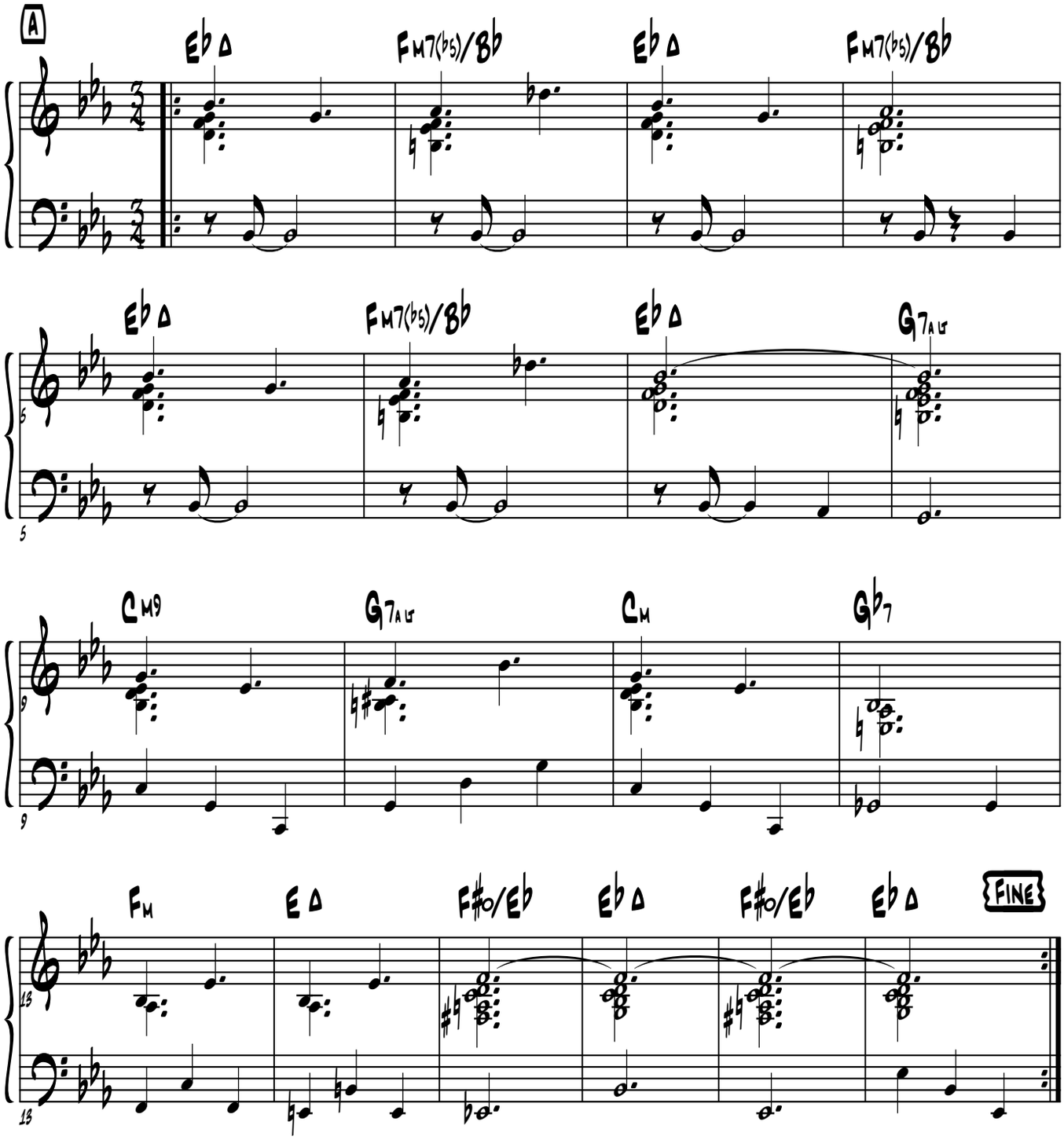

B
Dm
A/C♯
Cm
D7
Gm
/F♯
/F
/E
E♭m
A♭7
D♭Δ
F7ALT
D.C. AL CODA
D7
Gm
C7ALT
Fsus
D/F
A♭sus
FINE

TIME AND A HALF

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

BY STEVE SWEETING

APR 2011



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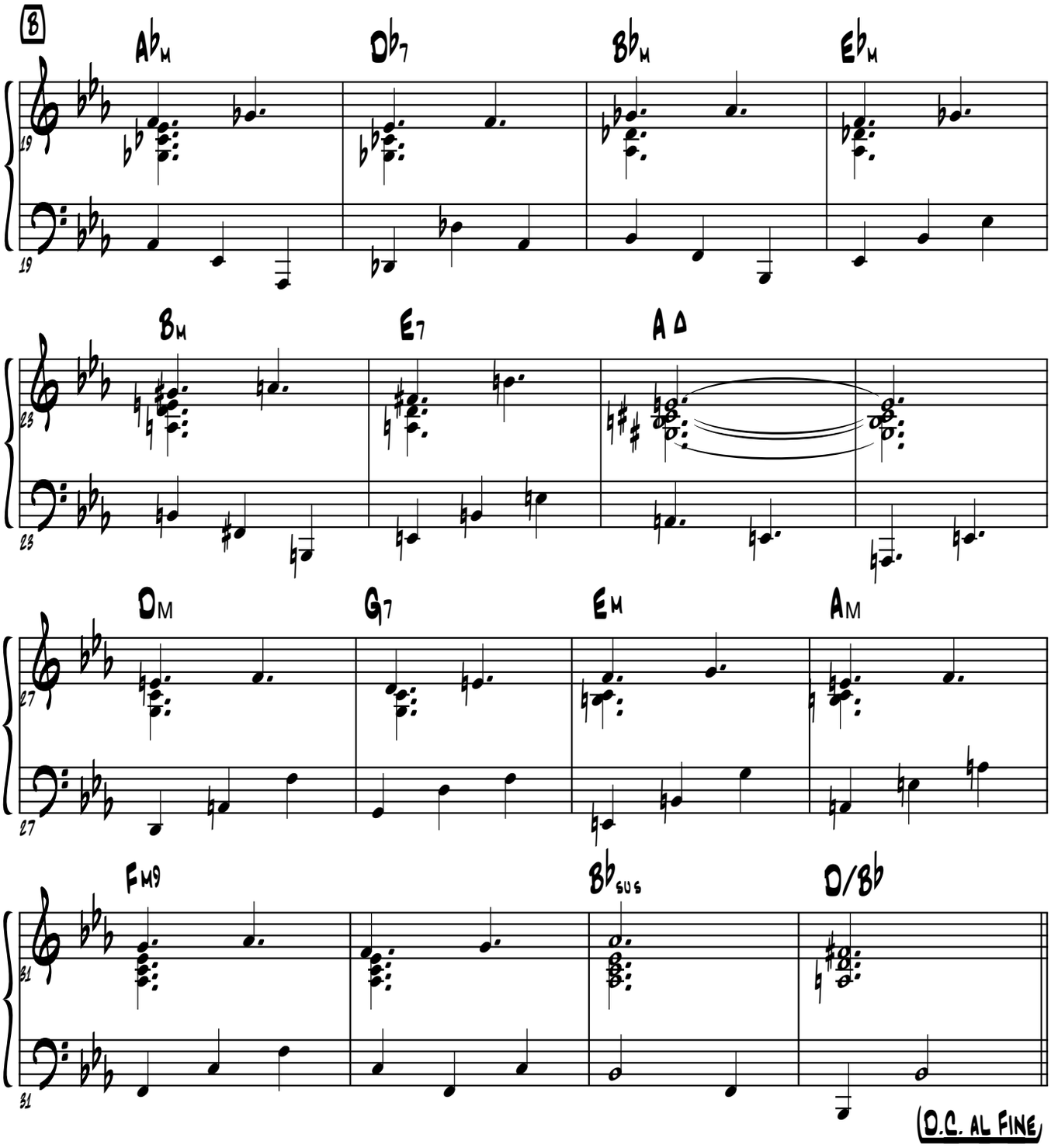
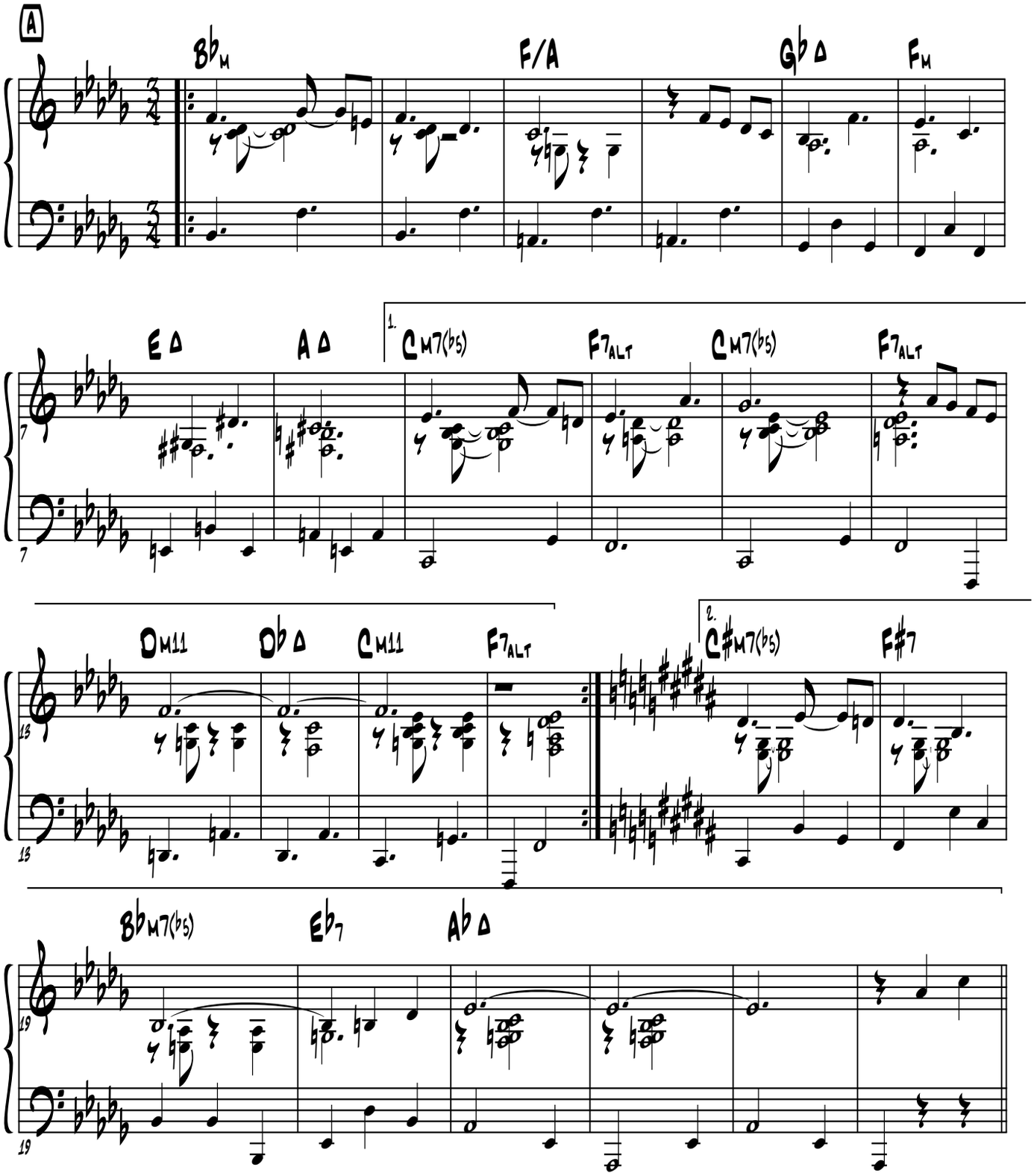

B
A♭M
D♭7
B♭M
E♭M
19
19
BM
E7
A Δ
23
23
DM
G7
EM
AM
27
27
FM9
B♭SUS
D/B♭
31
31
D.C. AL FINE

WALTZ TO A MUSE

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=240

BY STEVE SWEETING
MAY 2008



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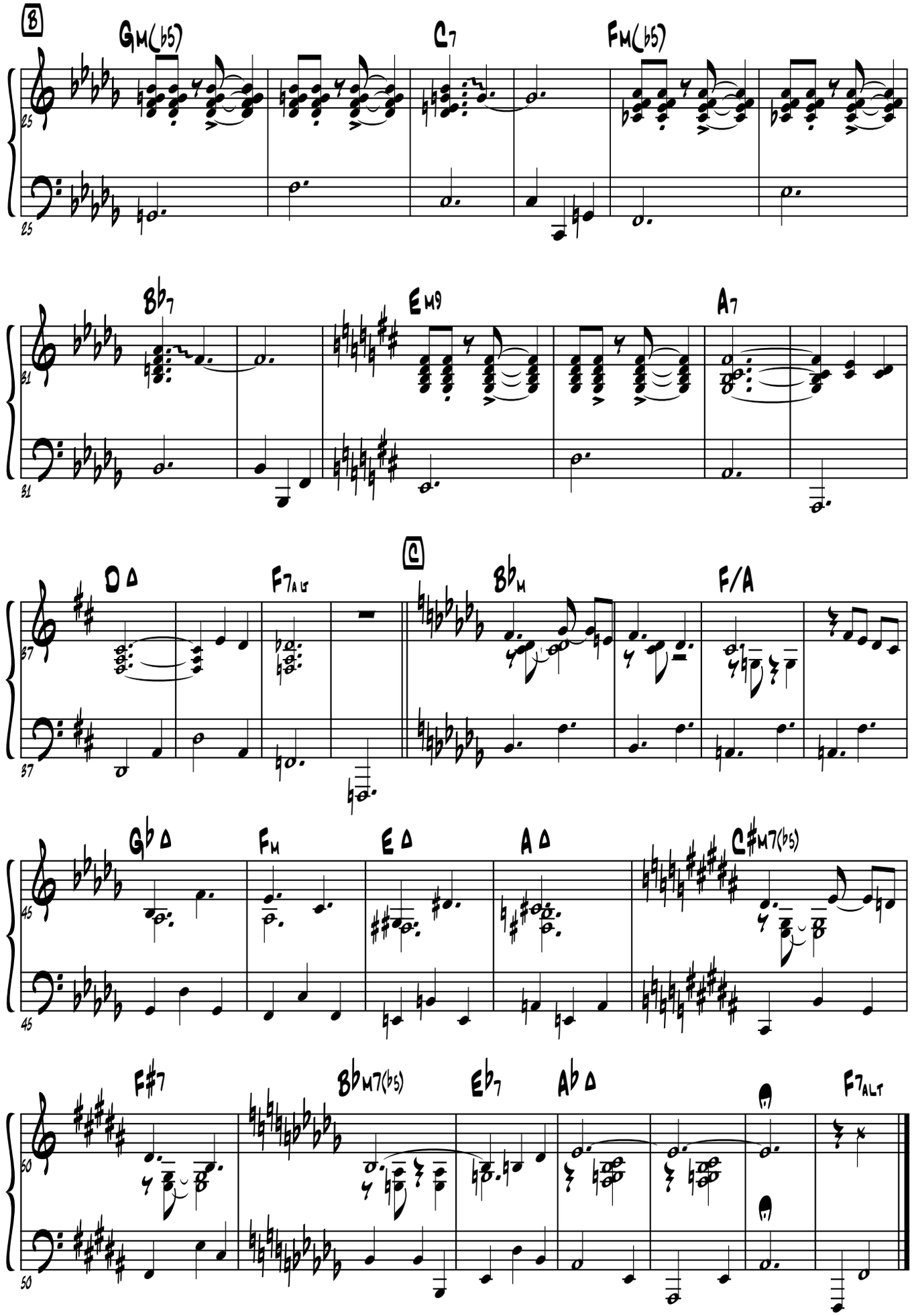
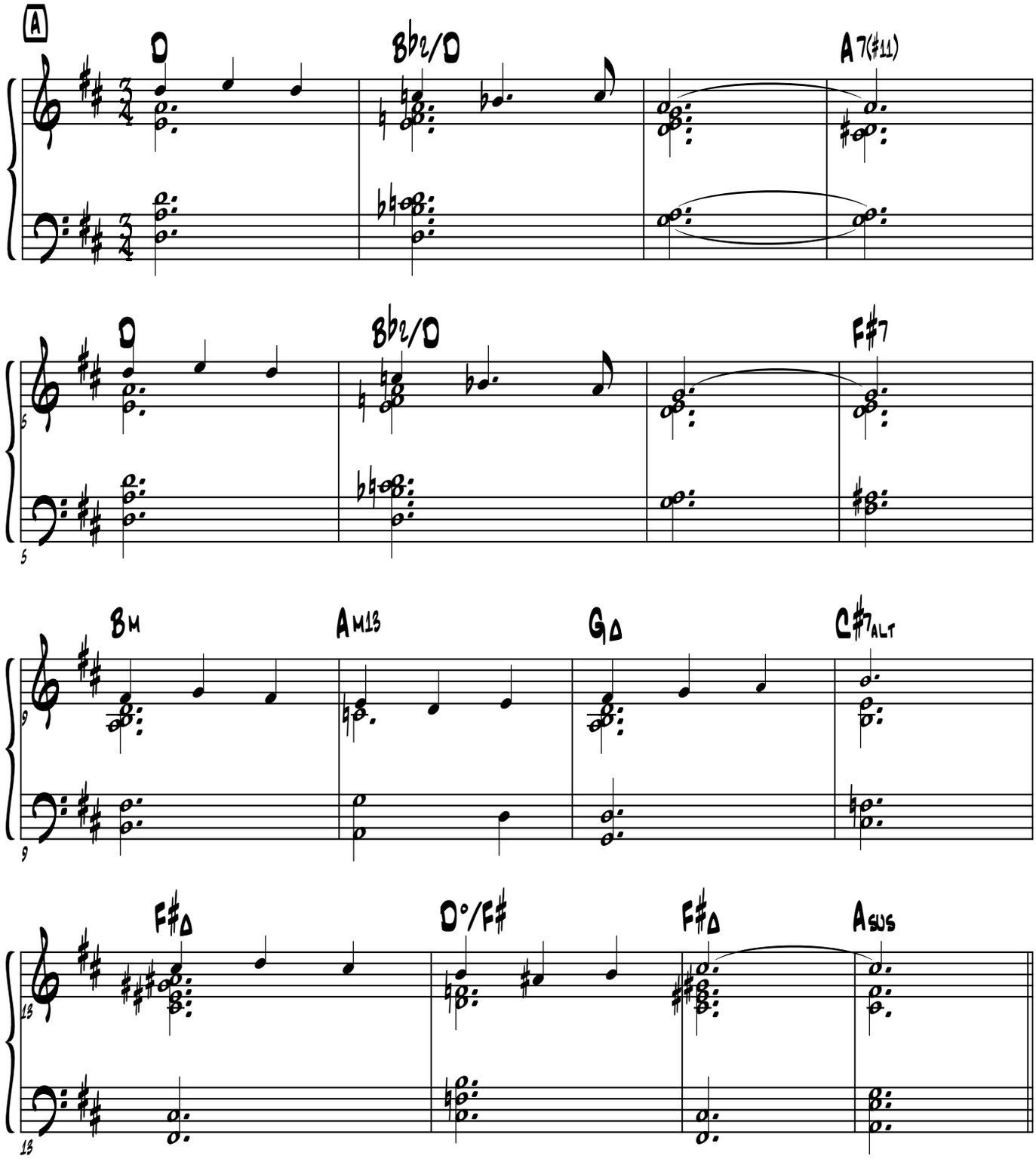

B
Gm(b5)
C7
Fm(b5)
Bb7
Em9
A7
C
D Δ
F7alt
Bbm
F/A
Gb Δ
Fm
E Δ
A Δ
C#m7(b5)
F#7
Bbm7(b5)
Eb7
Ab Δ
F7alt

WANTING WHAT?

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=188

BY STEVE SWEETING

MAY 2013



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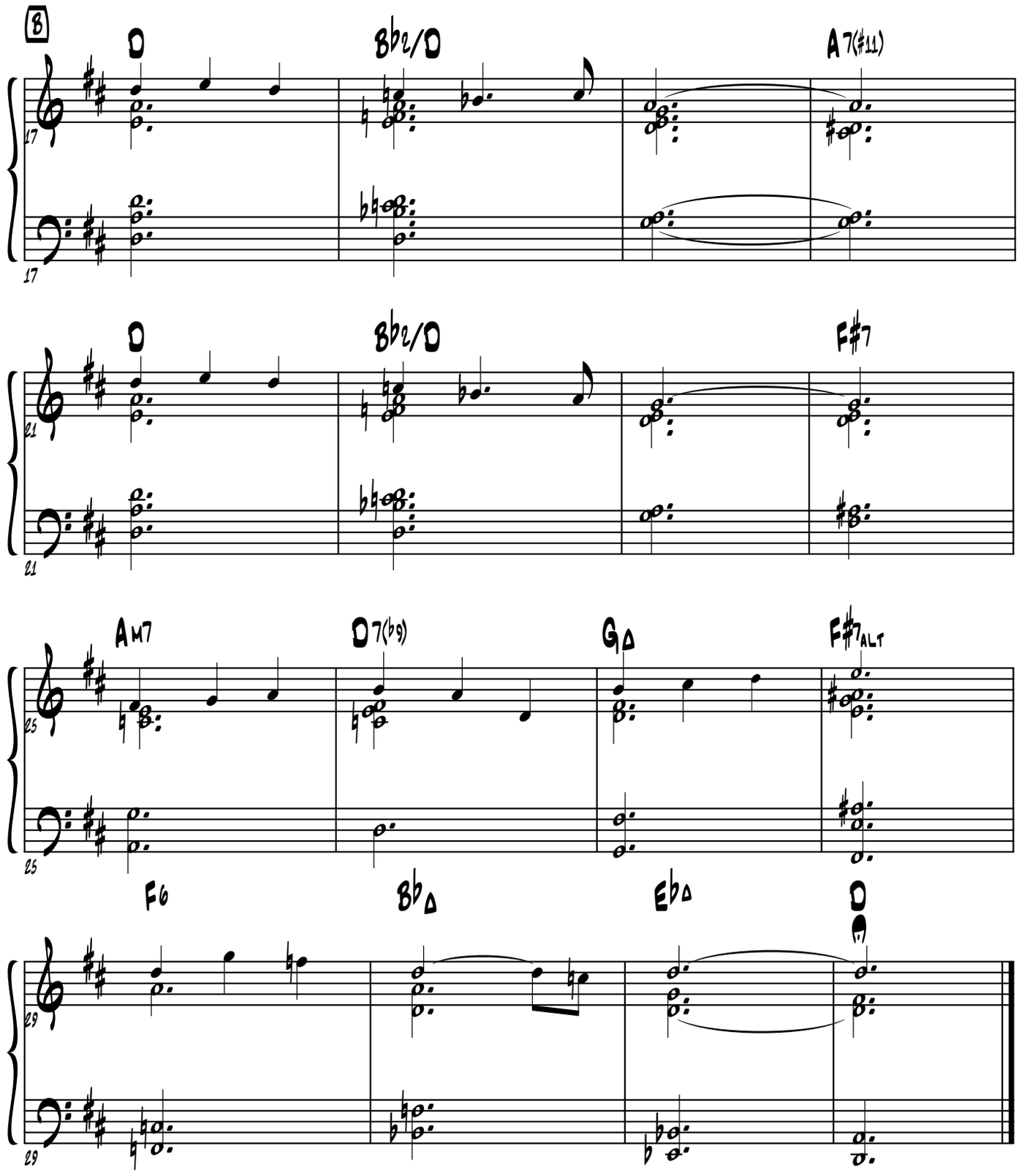
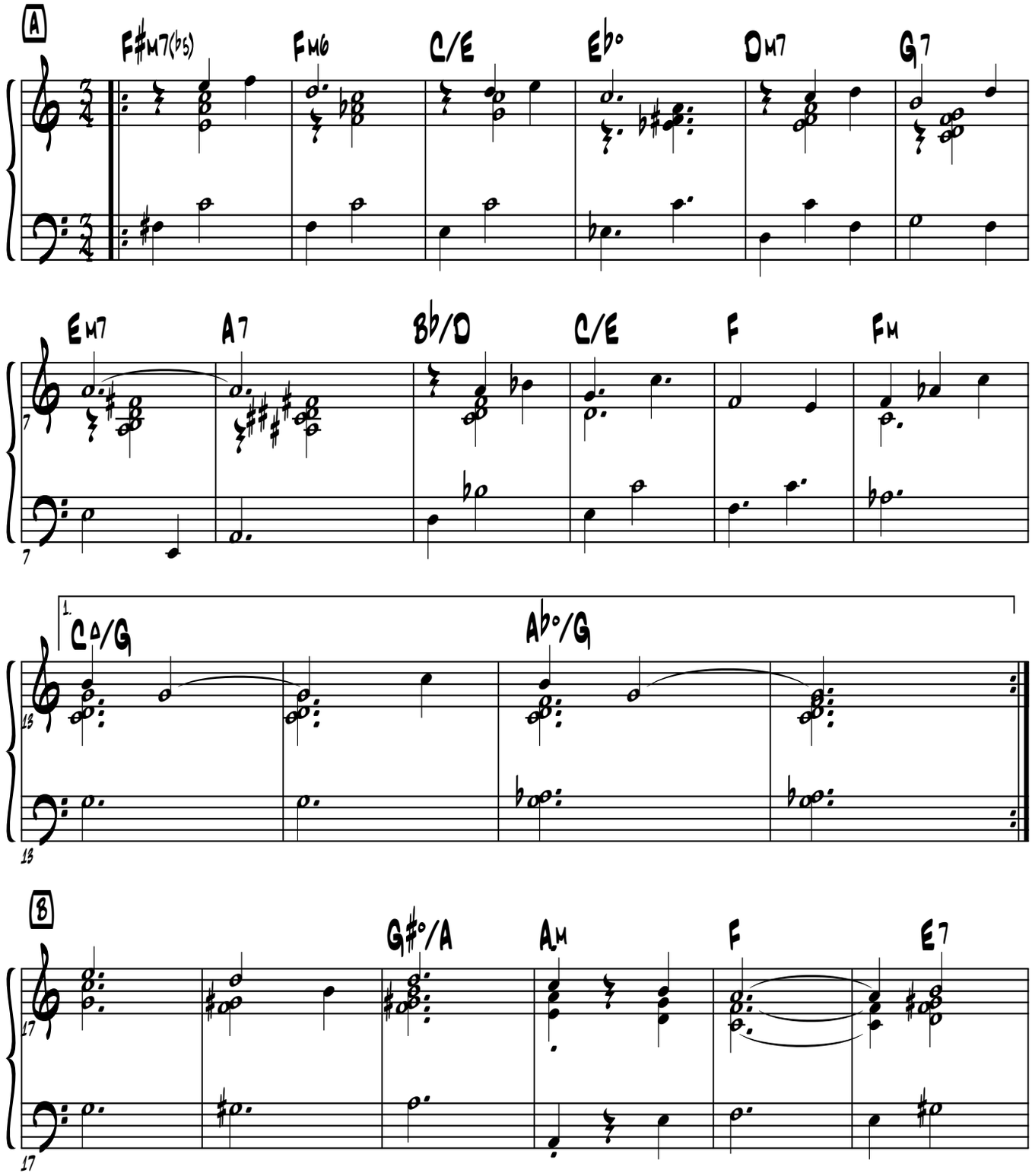

B
D
B♭2/D
A7(♯11)
17
D
B♭2/D
F♯7
21
AM7
D7(♭9)
G△
F♯7ALT
25
F6
B♭△
E♭△
D
29

WHIRL

JAZZ WALTZ ♩=220

BY STEVE SWEETING
JAN 2013



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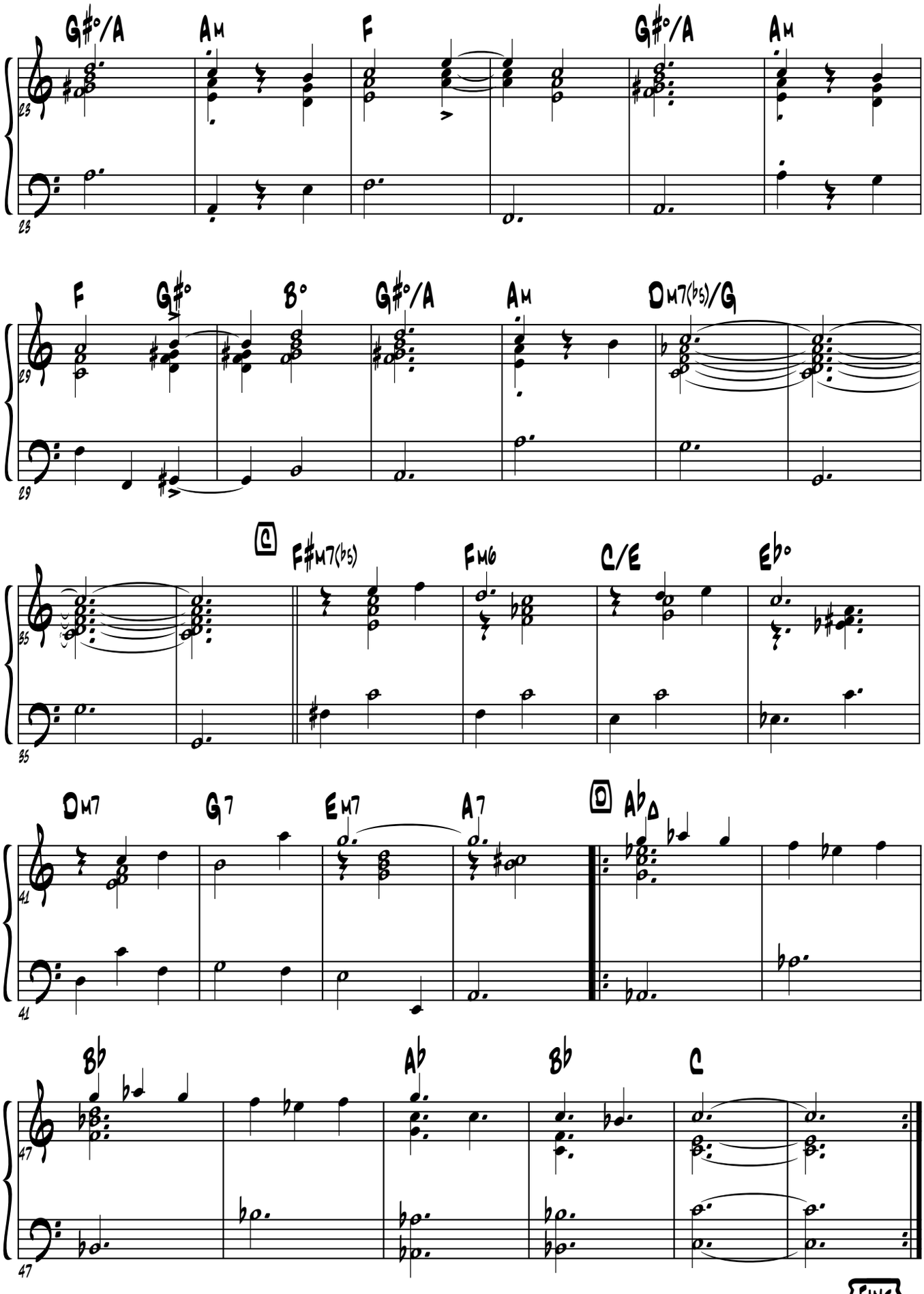
G♯°/A
Am
F
G♯°/A
Am
23
F
G♯°
B°
G♯°/A
Am
Dm7(♭5)/G
29
C
F♯m7(♭5)
Fm6
C/E
E♭°
35
Dm7
G7
Em7
A7
D
A♭
41
B♭
A♭
B♭
C
47
Fine

Nicky Almasy

Steve Sweeting

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Song from the Hills : Roots Music
Waltzes to a Muse : Songs in 3/4 Time

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WALTZES TO A MUSE

Songs in 3/4 Time

12:01
Ayi's Lament
Billy's Arrival
Cinco de Mayo
Foolish Waltz
Night Biking
Skating
Street Circus
Time and a Half
Waltz to a Muse
Wanting What?
Whirl

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Xano Music

3: 07-28-2013