Walking Bassics

The Fundamentals of Jazz Bass Playing

by Ed Fuqua

with Michael Zisman and Chuck Sher

Sher Music Co.

$22 includes CD

"Thoughtfully conceived, informative, concise, and organized with the needs of the young musician in mind."

EDDIE GOMEZ
(bassist with Bill Evans, Chick Corea, etc.)

"I found this book to be a really well-planned, in-depth and articulate study of the walking bass concept. I recommend this book for those who are searching for the right answers on how to create a strong, solid and confident walking bass line. I am now personally excited to schedule 'Walking Bassics' into my own study rotation."

JIMMY HASLIP
(bassist with Yellowjackets, Alan Holdsworth, etc.)

"This is a simple yet thorough book on beginning bass lines. Music is all about group interplay and most accomplished modern improvisers see a performance as a conversation. This book gives beginning musicians some of the basic tools they need to get into that kind of conversation on a deep level."

BEN ALLISON
(bassist and Palmetto Records recording artist)

"I call the bass line the bass melody. It is a really important area for all bass players to dig deep into. Ed Fuqua's book is an important edition to the jazz pedagogy for bass players. I highly recommend it."

MEL GRAVES
(bassist with Denny Zeitlin, Mose Allison, etc.
Head of Sonoma State Univ. Jazz Dept.)

"Wonderful job! For the past several years I have been teaching private bass lessons at the La Guardia High School for the Performing Arts. I have been going over these exact ideas, but you have really organized these basic, and incredibly IMPORTANT, concepts into an orderly and easy to understand system. A great idea!"

NEAL MINER
(bassist with Jon Hendricks, Annie Ross, etc.)

"Provides the aspiring jazz bassist with a thorough guide to walking bass lines. An in-depth look at the heart and soul of jazz bass playing."

JOHN GOLDSBY
(bassist, author and jazz educator)

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Ed Fuqua

with Michael Zisman
and Chuck Sher

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ISBN 1-883217-50-4

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How to Use the Accompanying CD

The idea of this book is to give you a firm foundation in how to create swinging, supportive walking bass lines. In order to do that, we have transcribed every note that NY bassist Ed Fuqua plays on the accompanying CD. We suggest that you follow the following steps in order to get the most out of this book:

1. Listen to a track while watching the transcription go by. Notice Ed's rock-solid sense of time, fat tone and rhythmic bouyancy.
2. Without the CD, play through the transcription yourself, slower than the recorded tempo if necessary, until you can play it without stopping.
3. Work up to the tempo of the recording and then try playing along with the CD. Try to imitate Ed's sense of rhythmic propulsion and the supple sound of the notes. If the last few tracks are too fast for you to play up to tempo, just skips steps 3 & 4 for now.
4. Then try turning off the bass channel and playing along with the piano and drums yourself, using first the written notes and then making up your own lines.

About Ed Fuqua

Ed Fuqua is a young, but already seasoned veteran of the New York jazz scene, having performed with Clifford Jordan, Junior Mance, Pete Yellin, Leon Parker, Yoron Israel, Jimmy Lovelace, Bernard Purdie, Ron Afif, Doug Raney and Dakota Staton, among many others. He studied music at Augusta State University and the Berklee College Of Music, and privately with Joe Solomon, Lennie Tristano's bassist.

His discography includes:

- The Jeff Silverbush Quintet's "Pojo" and "Grandma Mickey"
- The Jon Raney Trio's "Waltz For Talia"
- The Burt Eckoff Trio's "Ecology"
- The Charles Krachy Quartet's "Jazzman's Serenade"

Ed's Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'd like to thank Chuck Sher for helping make this book possible. Since working together for the recording that accompanied Sher Music Co.'s "The Blues Scales: Essential Tools For Jazz Improvisation", he has been very encouraging and supportive. I'd also like to thank Dan Greenblatt, for all the great music we've played together for the last five years and for bringing Chuck and I together. And many thanks to Michael Zisman for his cogent and insightful contributions to the text.

Much of what I talk about and play in this book is due to the work I have done with my teacher, Joe Solomon, for the last ten years. He was the one that gave me a way to see the path ahead. Thanks, Joe! I'd also like to thank the musicians on the recording—Dave Marck, Jon Easton and Chris Roselli—for their contributions. It was **always** swinging!

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank two people who meant so much to me when I started playing, lo those many years ago (and continue to do so to this day). Tommy Gulley—friend, fellow bassist, jazz enthusiast and mentor. I'll always treasure the memory of being a callow youth on the bandstand with Tommy; he'd play bass for a chorus, then I'd play bass for a chorus, trying to match that propulsive swing and deep feeling. And my buddy, guitarist Matt Whittington, who uttered the fateful words to me as a young rock bass player, "Hey, didja ever hear any Clifford Brown?"

PREFACE

If you're a beginning bassist or even if you have some experience with other styles of music, playing jazz standards can be a scary proposition. Creating a walking bass line can seem almost too hard; it challenges your understanding of functional theory (what notes will work with these chords), your physical approach or technique (finding those notes on the fingerboard), and your ear (which notes will sound good). And to do all of that not only with the chord changes as composed, but also in answer to a soloist's direction, and to drive a rhythm section—well, it can be almost overwhelming.

But don't despair—you hold in your hand a book that can give you the tools you need to build dynamic, propulsive, swinging, melodic walking bass lines that are **yours**, which you come up with on your own. The points we'll cover in order to learn how to create good walking bass lines are these:

1. Harmonic Propulsion - All we mean by this is playing so that there is a feeling of forward motion from one chord into the next in the harmonic progression. Although many jazz books and teachers base the swing feel on the correct phrasing of the eighth notes, we as bassists (in the context of a walking line) are dealing with quarter notes. And to give forward movement to a line, to the harmony, it is really important that your note choices *move the music forward.*

2. Harmonic Definition - "Harmony" means the chords, right? So harmonic definition must mean "defining the chords." We bassists are the foundation of the harmony; whatever note we play can, in many situations, define and change how the harmony is heard or functions. The most basic way to "define" a chord is to arpeggiate it, which we will discuss in first section of the book.

3. Melodicism - So many young players have a mental "divide"; they ask, "Should I work more on accompaniment (walking) or soloing?", as if they are two different things. The work that helps you create a walking line also helps you build an improvised solo line. And all of the "vocabulary" that you use to build melodies—sequence, motivic development, scalar movement, arpeggiation, interval leaps—also helps you build a walking line.

In this book, we will work on helping you create your own walking bass lines using these three points.

LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY

Learning a new language is always a challenge, there's just so much to learn—vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, even slang. And in order to end up at the point that you can talk about your thoughts, feelings and intentions in a very precise and nuanced way, you have to work pretty hard at a lot of concurrent skill sets. Just like the best way to learn a foreign language is to live for a time where it is the native spoken language, the best way to learn jazz is to absorb as much of it as you can. So, in addition to working on the "vocabulary" and "grammar" in this book, we highly recommend listening to as much walking bass on recordings as possible. Not with an eye to transcribing or even mining for phrases, but just to immerse yourself in the way the language **sounds** and **feels**.

We also recommend practicing these exercises (and the ones you will come up with yourself) **without** the accompanying CD as often as you do playing with the CD. Hearing how these lines

and phrases state or imply the harmony, how they build forward motion through the changes with no other instrument to "help", is key to creating your own lines that exist as an independent melodic entity.

The following pages will explore specific approaches to creating a walking line. We'll look at using chord tones to define the harmony, using melodic devices such as sequences, stepwise motion and intervallic leaps to help link the chord tones in such a way as to always move the harmony forward, And to do so in such a way as to create a line that stands on its own as a quarter-note melody.

Using This Book

In order to create bass lines on the spot, a level of mastery is needed with the materials you are working with. To gain mastery, the elements of the music must be learned and understood on all three of the following levels:

1. **Intellectual** - understanding why and how something works.
2. **Aural** - clearly hearing and identifying notes or chords when they are played or when they are heard internally.
3. **Tactile** - being able to find and play the notes you want on your instrument.

The order of learning these three levels might change with any given person, but to gain mastery over any given aspect of music, all three paths must be gone down.

For example, if we want to learn the Bb7 chord, it is one thing understand what notes are used to create the sound of Bb7 when that symbol appears on a piece of written music (intellectual).

It is another thing to actually be able to hear the Bb7 chord, identify it and identify all the notes within the chord (aural).

It is yet another thing to find these notes and actually be able to play them on your instrument (tactile).

When we have all these things, we have the beginnings of mastery over Bb7. We are able to identify it, take it apart and put it back together again, and execute it on our instrument. Next we may want to learn the Bb dominant scale and how it relates to the chord. Next we may want to learn Eb7. We may then want to learn how these chords relate to each other. On and on we go, but we must learn each of these things fully on each of the three levels.

It is our hope that you learn the material in this book on all three levels so that you will truly be able to use it creatively, and come out swinging!

(**Note on the transcriptions in the second half of the book**: While learning to play Ed's bass lines, analyze them as well, using the concepts we give you in the first part of the book, in order to understand how Ed created them and why. Copying a good bass player's notes and feel is the quickest way to start sounding good. But understanding how good bass players think is essential to be able to create good bass lines on your own. Have fun!)

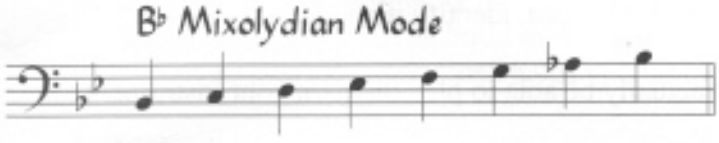
PRINCIPLES OF WALKING BASS LINE CONSTRUCTION

There are some basic principles at work in good bass lines, as typified by the classic walking bass playing of Ed Fuqua on the accompanying CD, which you will find transcribed in Section 2 of this book.

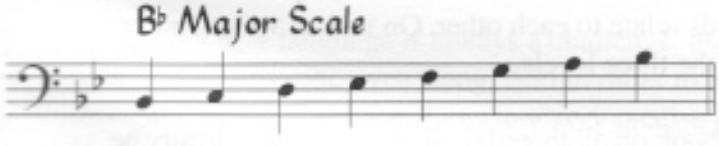
PART 1 - FOUNDATION TECHNIQUES

1. **SCALE NOTES** - One of the main building blocks of a good walking bass line is using scale notes to connect the roots of each chord. The roots of the chords are generally played on beat 1 of the bar whenever there is a new chord indicated. Make sure you know the scale degree (1, 2, 3, etc.) of each note as you play it.

- For dominant 7th chords (Bb7, Eb7, etc.) the most common scale is the Mixolydian mode.

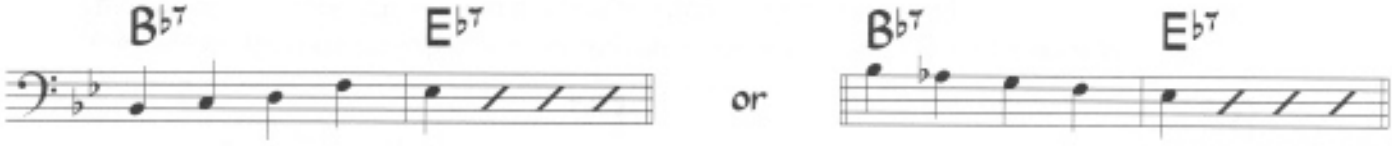


- For major 7th or major 6th chords, the major scale is the most common one.



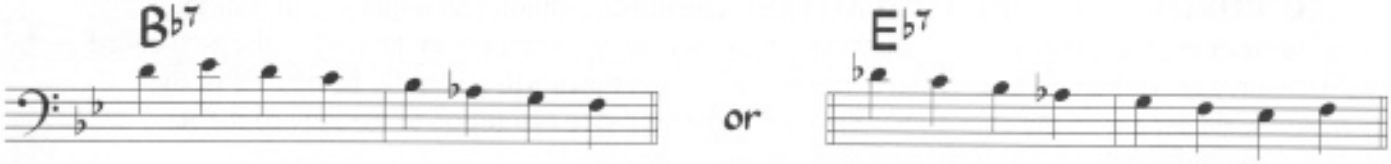
- For minor 7th chords, the natural minor or Dorian mode are both used frequently.

- You can go up or down the scale to reach the next root.



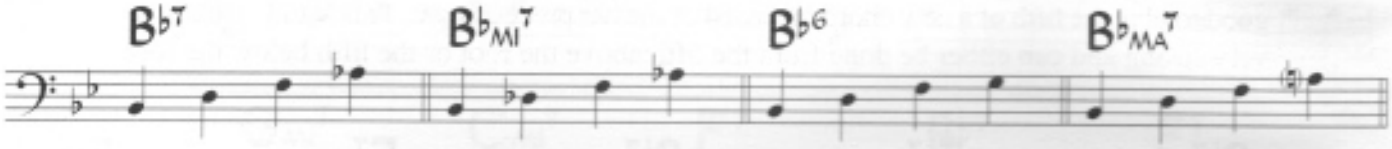
- Don't hit the root of the next chord on beat 4 of the bar leading up to it.

- Analyze how Ed uses scale notes in these transcriptions. For example,

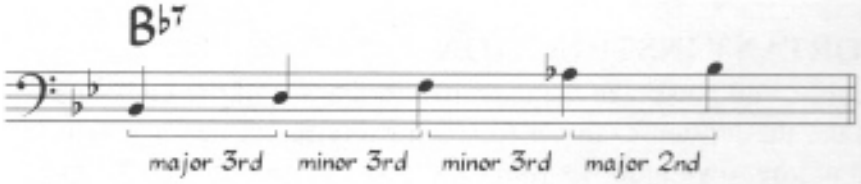


2. **CHORD ARPEGGIOS** - Outlining the notes of the chord is the second technique that is most frequently used to create a strong walking bass line. Make sure you know the scale degree of each note as you play it (1, 3, 5, or 7).

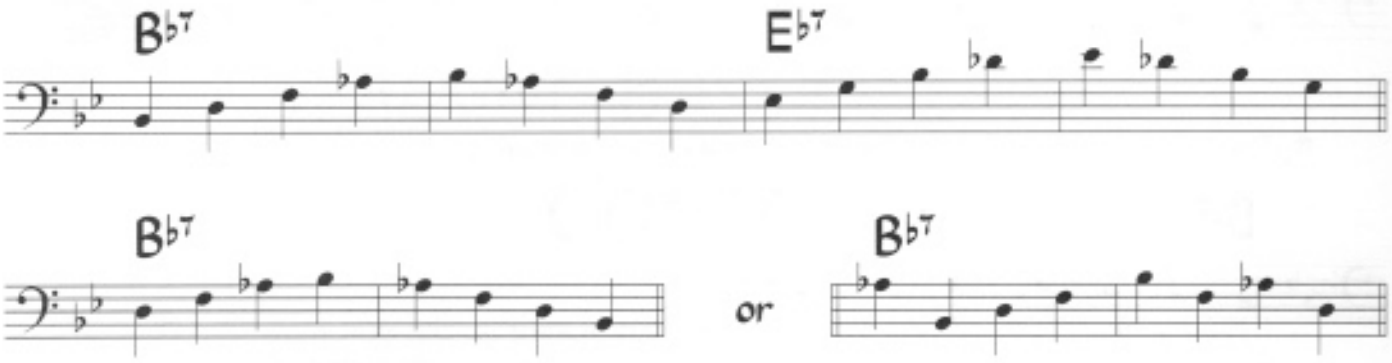
- Here are the chord notes for Bb7, Bbmi7, Bb6 and Bbma7—the most common types of chords.



- You can create the same chords starting on other root notes by just keeping the intervals between chord notes the same. For example, a dominant 7th chord has:
  - a major 3rd interval between the root and the third of the chord
  - a minor 3rd between the third and the fifth of the chord
  - a minor 3rd between the fifth and the 7th of the chord
  - a whole step from the 7th to the root above it.

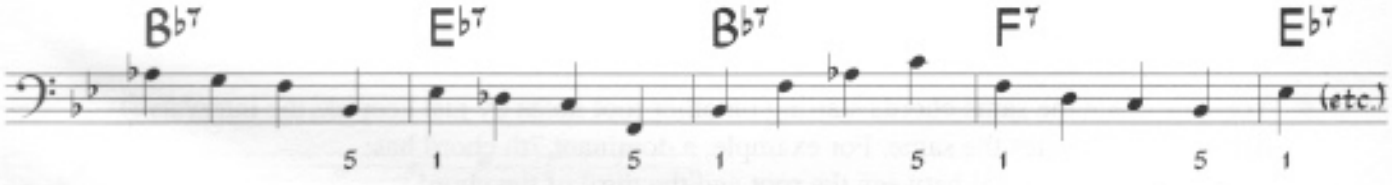


- At first, play the notes of the chords in ascending or descending order starting on the root note (first line below). Then try starting on notes other than the root occasionally, or skipping to non-adjacent chord notes instead of always playing them in sequence (second line below).



3. **CHROMATIC APPROACH NOTES** - The third common technique you'll hear in walking bass lines is using chromatic approach notes to resolve to the root of the next chord on beat 1 of a new bar. These chromatic approach notes will generally be outside of the scale used with the chords, but the pull of the half-step resolution to the new root note justifies leaving the tonality you've created.

4. **V TO I MOVEMENT** - Regardless of the notes already played in a bar, it generally sounds good to play the fifth of a new chord on beat 4 of the bar preceeding it. This V to I resolution is very strong and can either be done from the fifth above the root or the fifth below the root.



These four principles are at work in the vast majority of note choices in basic walking bass lines, so learn them well—you'll be using them as long as you play bass.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION

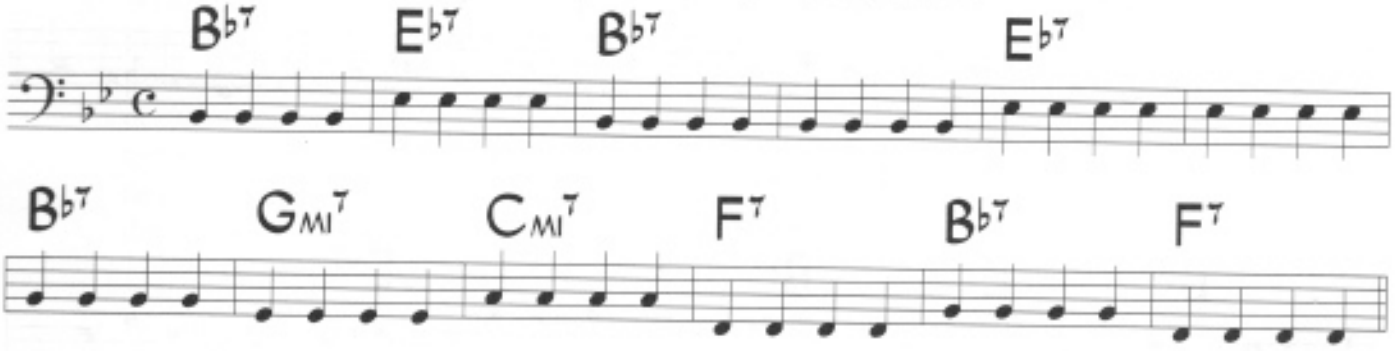
In order to learn these ideas thoroughly, you must take the exercises in the rest of the book and practice each one over and over. Take the written example for each exercise and learn it as is first, then play numerous variations of your own until it's *yours* and you can do it in your sleep.

PART 2 - MAKING GOOD NOTE CHOICES

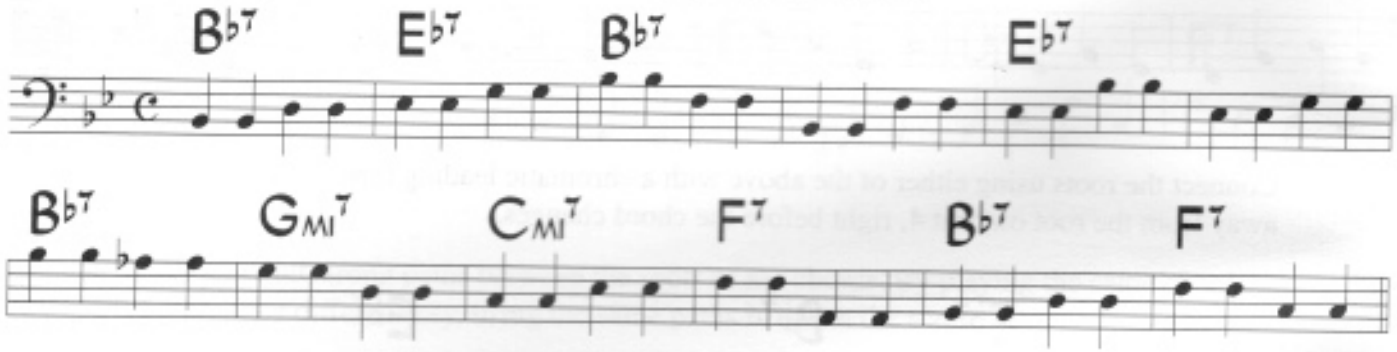
How do you figure out which of the preceeding principles to use at any given point in creating a bass line of your own? This section of the book will give you some solid direction so you can learn how to answer that question for yourself.

1. **CONNECTING THE ROOTS OF THE CHORDS** - The first job of a good bass line is to outline the root movement of the chords of the song. Take a tune or the chord progression from one of the CD tracks here, and go through the following steps:

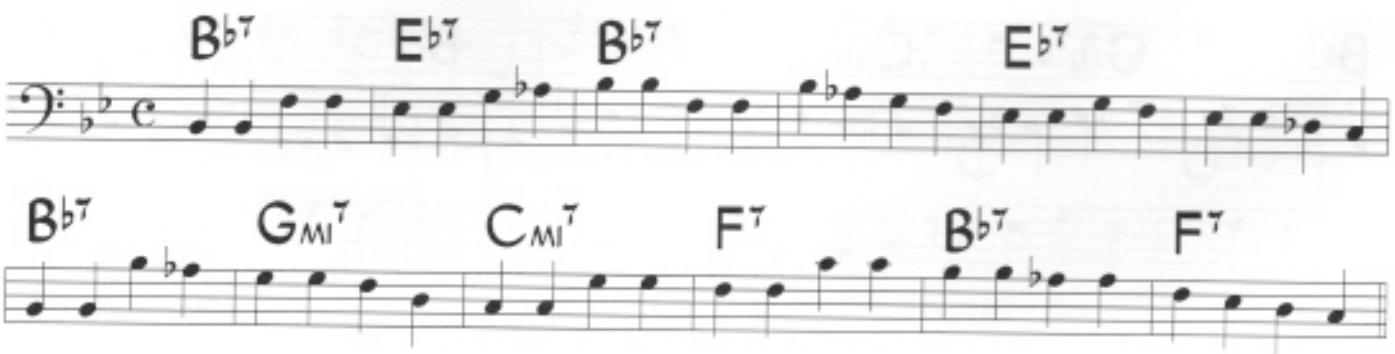
- Play quarter notes on just the roots of each chord. Make sure you have a firm grasp of the sound of the root movement of the piece before you go any further.



- Use repeated notes - Start with the root on the first two beats of any chord change and then go to another chord tone and play it twice as well. For chords lasting two bars, you will be able to play each of the four chord notes twice, if you want to.

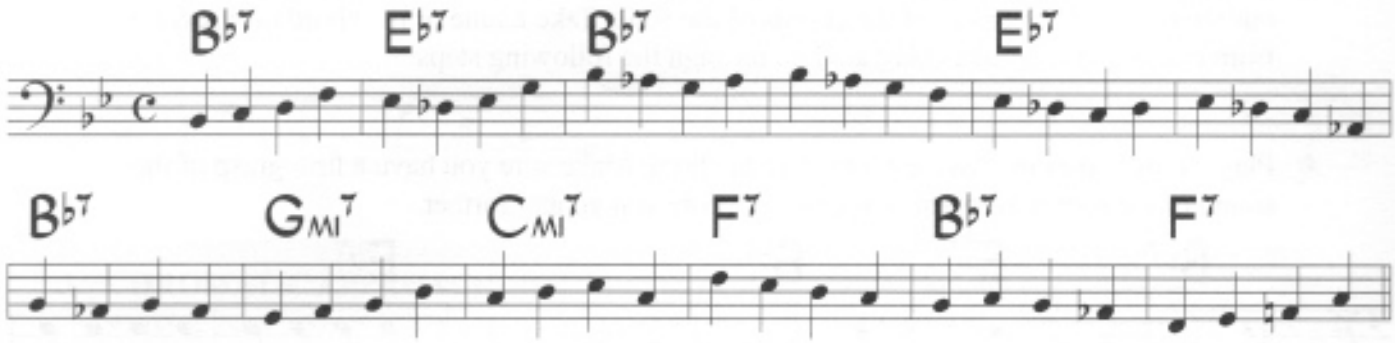


- Once this is comfortable, start adding in some lines that only hit each note once before going to a different note.

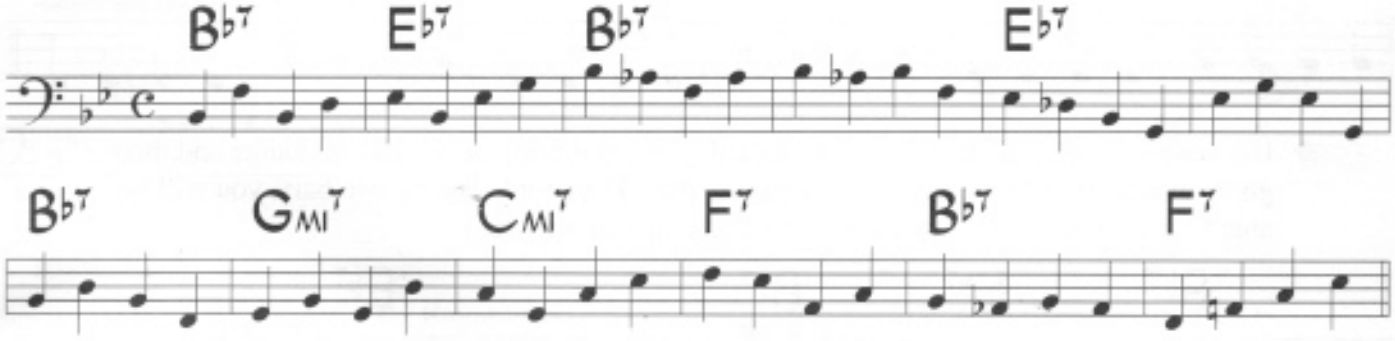


2. **STARTING TO WALK** - Once you have a good grasp of the sound of the root movement, try (slowly) to start walking using the roots of each chord on beat 1. Find paths between the roots using the following principles:

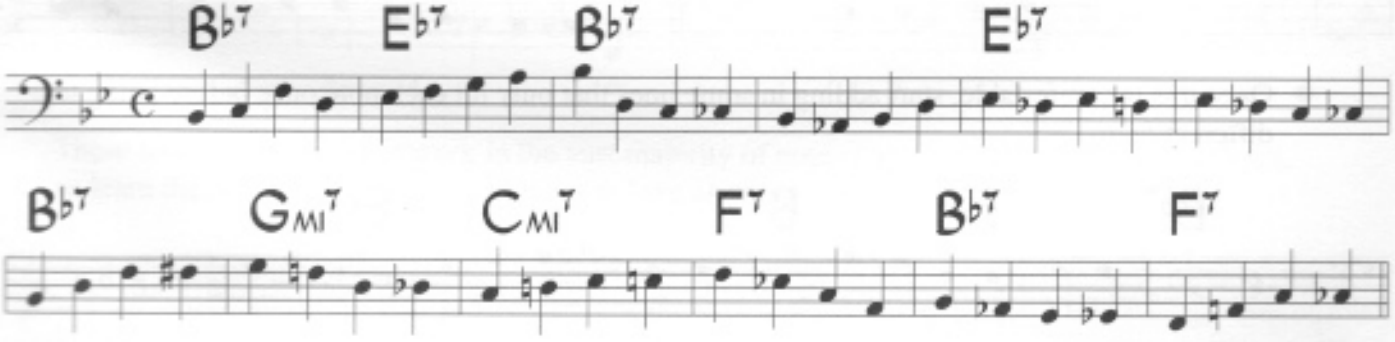
- Connect the roots using scale tones:



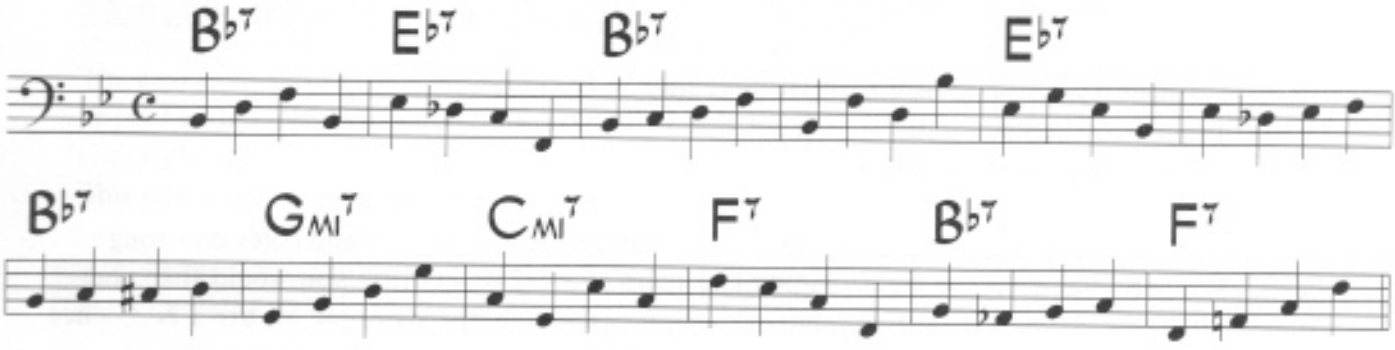
- Connect the roots using only chord tones:



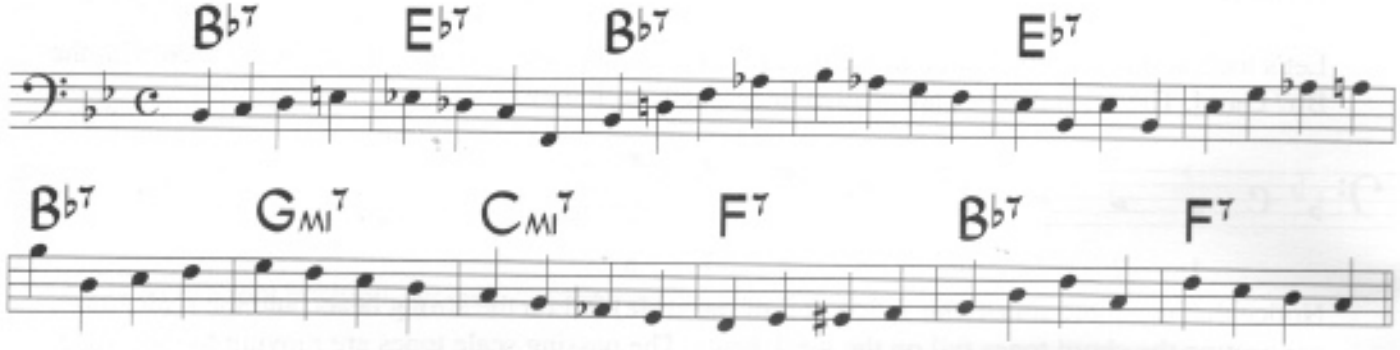
- Connect the roots using either of the above with a chromatic leading tone a half-step away from the root on beat 4, right before the chord changes.



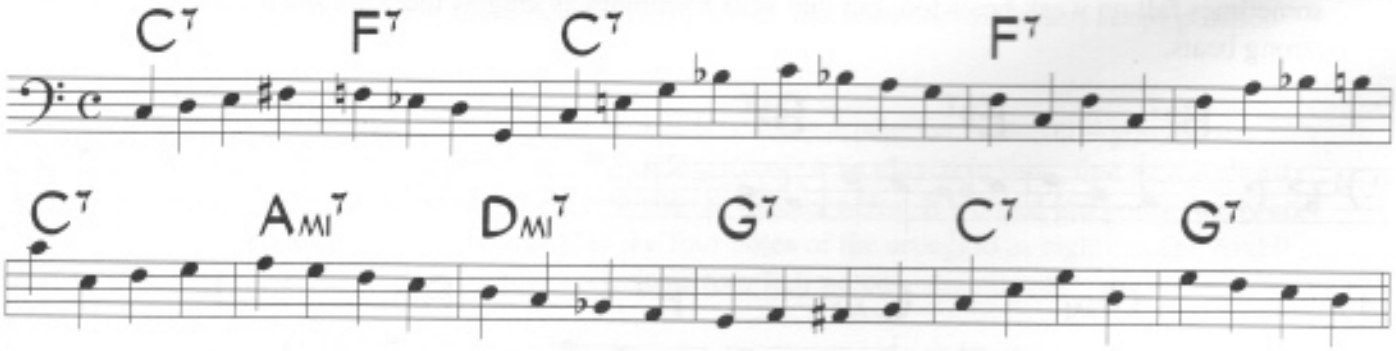
- Connect the roots using either scales or arpeggios, but instead of a chromatic leading tone on beat 4, use the fifth of the new chord on beat 4 of the bar leading up to it.



- Now mix up these four basic principles in the same line. Please start this exercise slowly so that you give your ear a chance to really tell you what note choices will actually sound the best to connect the roots. As a general guideline, you shouldn't use scale notes exclusively or chord notes exclusively for more than a bar (or two at the very most), before switching to the other one. Chromatic lead-in notes and V to I resolutions will be less frequently used (more like spice in the stew)—unless there are two chords per bar, in which case these devices will be used much more frequently.



- Once you find strong paths between the roots of the chords, try playing the same chord progression in a different key, using the same paths between the roots.



3. USING STRONG NOTES ON STRONG BEATS - Once you have the ability to play "right" notes, the next question is how to decide which notes should be played when. The following concept is crucial to answering that question correctly:

The two primary functions of walking bass lines are:

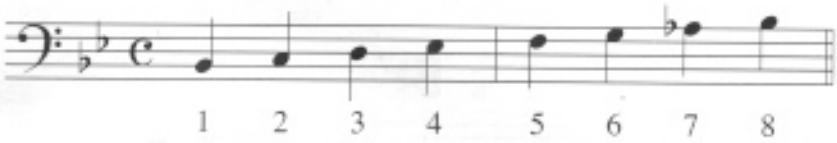
a) To provide rhythmic pulse and propulsion
b) To define the harmony of the piece.

The best way to accomplish both these things at the same time is to use "strong notes on strong beats". While rhythmically we feel swinging jazz more on the 2 & 4 (where you would snap your fingers), in terms of defining the harmonic movement of the tune, **the strong beats are 1 & 3**, since this is where the chords change the great majority of the time.

What this means is that beat 4 is always moving to, or headed for, beat 1 of the next bar, and beat 2 is always moving towards beat 3. If we can think of and hear rhythm this way, we can generate propulsion or "forward motion" within our lines.

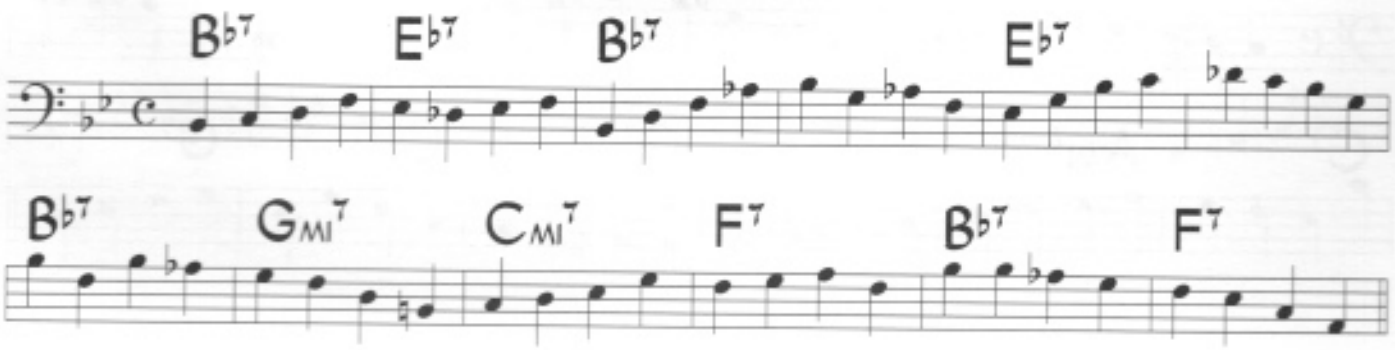
What are the strong notes that should fall on the strong beats of 1 & 3? You can only create the unique sound of any given chord with its corresponding chord tones. All other notes only color that sound, and should therefore fall on the weaker beats, as a rule. For example, you can only make the sound of Bb7 by using the notes Bb, D, F and Ab—all other notes are color notes or passing notes.

Let's look at the Bb Mixolydian mode we looked at earlier, which is the primary scale used with the Bb7 chord. The scale degrees are written underneath each note:



Notice that the chord tones (the 1, 3, 5 & 7 of the scale) fall on the strong beats, and the scale tones connecting the chord tones fall on the weak beats. The passing scale tones are moving to the strong chord tones, just as the weak beats are moving to the strong beats—at least up until the last note. (Please note that playing scale tones in order like this is not something you would generally do for very long. We included this just as a demonstration of the principle.)

Below please find a chorus of a Bb blues that show this idea in action. Notice that strong notes sometimes fall on weak beats too, but that isn't a problem as long as there are strong notes on all the strong beats.

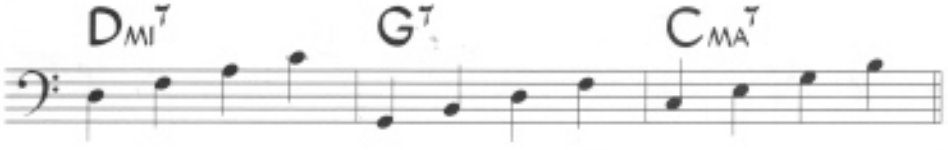


Looked at from another perspective, the question becomes, "How do you develop the ability to make the notes you play lead convincingly to the next chord change?" Neither scales nor arpeggios by themselves will do the trick for long. Playing a line that's almost entirely scale tones doesn't really define the chord; playing one that's just arpeggios can nail the time down, instead of keeping it moving forward; and using too many chromatic notes will obscure the harmony. The answer?—having the chord changes in your ear (not just intellectually memorized as a group of pitches, but also as a distinct **sound**) really helps develop a line that doesn't just define the chord you are playing, but also leads to the next chord, and the next, and the next.
This next exercise is designed to help you develop this skill.

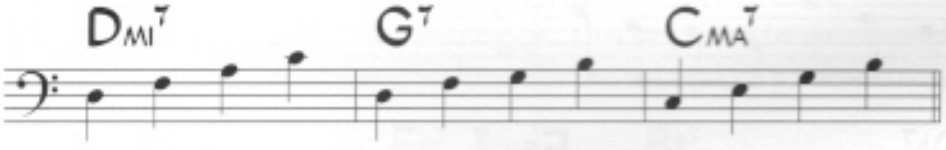
4. **CHORD LINES** - Getting the sound of a tune's chord progression in your ears is vital to getting your head out of the way and letting your ears do the driving. An exercise that we have found useful is building a **chord line** based on the chord changes of a song.
What is a chord line? It is basically just arpeggiating the chords in a song with two important guidelines:

- **Proximity of fingering** - Rather than using a root position arpeggio with each chord change (root, third, fifth seventh), try using inversions to emphasize the common voices between chords, and to keep the fingering for each arpeggio in close proximity.

  By way of example, a progression of Dmi7 to G7 to Cma7, instead of being all root position arpeggios, like this:



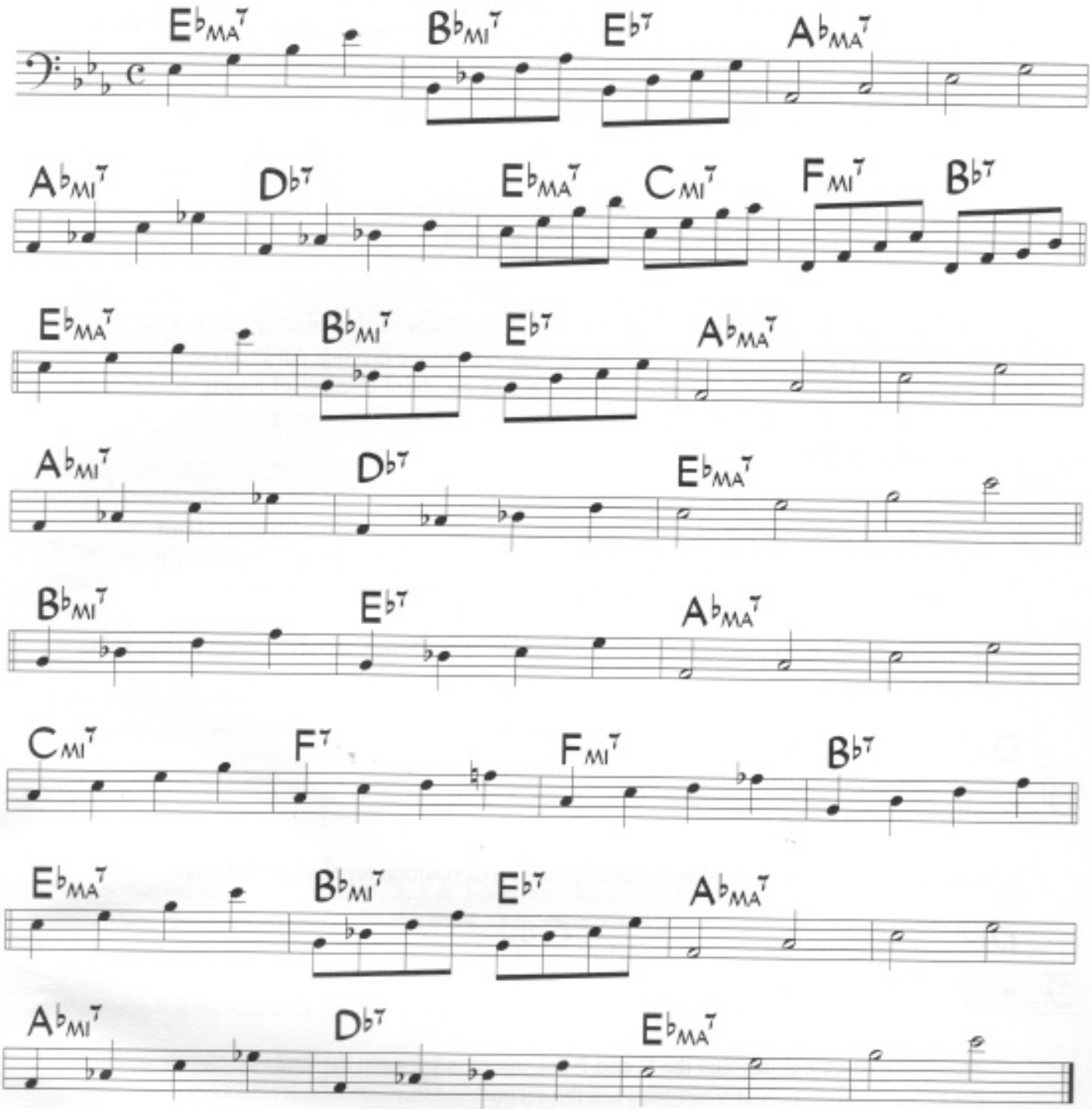
  can use root position, second inversion and then root position arpeggios, like this:



  This emphasizes the fact that the D and F are common between the first two chords, and that the G and B are common tones between the second and third chords. It also keeps position shifts to a minimum.

- **Playing in time** - This isn't an exercise in just running arpeggios, however—you are trying to *hear* the song in the bass line. So arpeggios must be played in time; that is, if a chord lasts for a full bar, you will play the arpeggio as quarter notes. If a chord lasts only two beats then, for the sake of this exercise, play the four notes of the arpeggio as eighth notes. And if the chord lasts two bars, play the arpeggio as four half notes.

  On the following page is a sample of a chord line based on the chord changes to the standard tune, "September In The Rain":

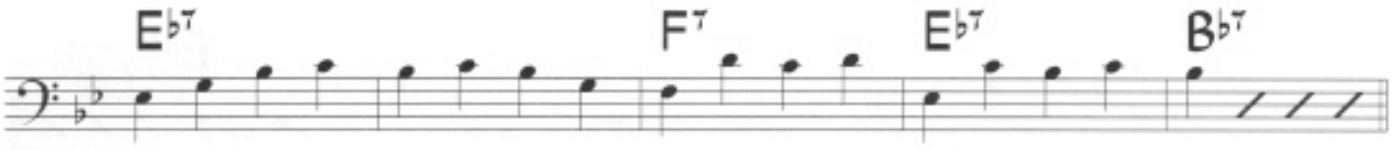


Remember, this is only a suggested line. Try several different ways of building a chord line through this tune. Once you have something that you like, set your metronome to quarter note = 60 bpm, and play your chord line for a chorus, improvise a walking line for a chorus, then play the chord line again. Really **listen** to the improv line, don't think so much about what notes to play. Let your ear tell your fingers what note is going to be the one that will get you in the most musical way to the next change.

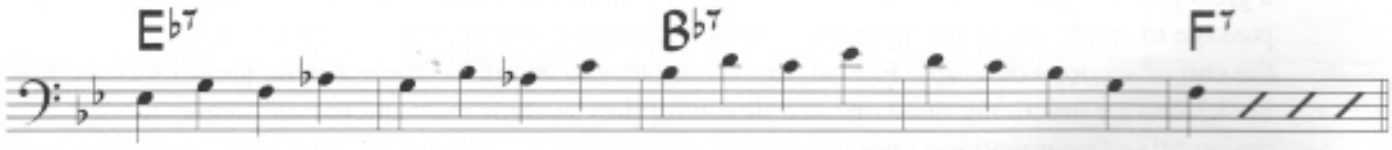
PART 3 - ADDITIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR BASS LINE CONSTRUCTION

(Note: In these more advanced ideas, you will notice that the root of the chord is no longer always played on beat 1 every time the chord changes. If the bass line has an internal logic that necessitates this, it won't be a problem, especially after the harmony of the tune has already been established for awhile. But when in doubt, roots on downbeats will never be wrong!)

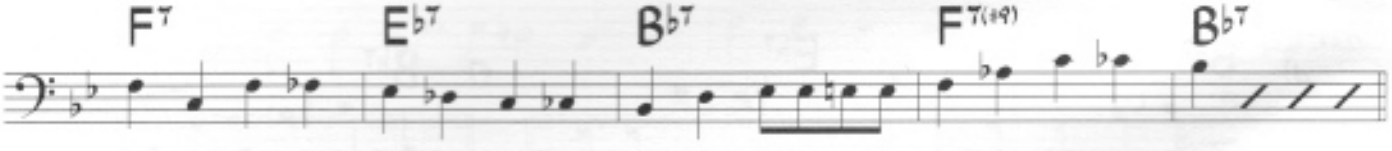
1. **USE OF MOTIFS** - In the transcriptions of Ed's bass lines in this book, you'll notice that he plays four note patterns using notes from the underlying scale or chord, but which aren't strict arpeggios or scale fragments. For example, on a dominant 7th chord, Ed will sometimes use 1 3 5 6 instead of 1 3 5 b7 to give a different flavor to the line. Composers develop melodies by taking a small motif and repeating and expanding it throughout the song. Using devices like this can help you develop your own quarter note melodies.



2. **PARALLEL INTERVALS** - As a variation of playing notes up and down the scale, try playing one interval (most often thirds) off of each scale note for a while. For example:

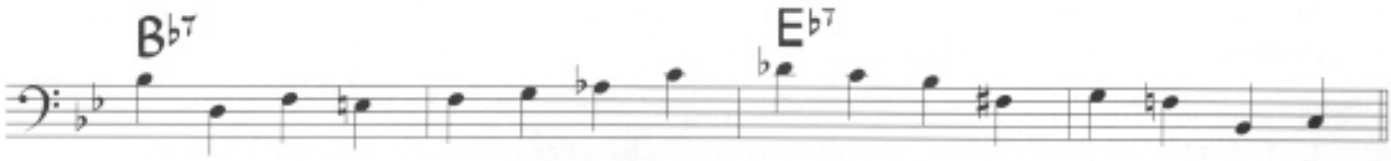


3. **LONGER CHROMATIC LINES** - In addition to single chromatic notes leading to a new root, you will often hear Ed play a series of 2-4 chromatic notes in a row, usually resolving to the root of the next chord change. This can either be an ascending or descending line.

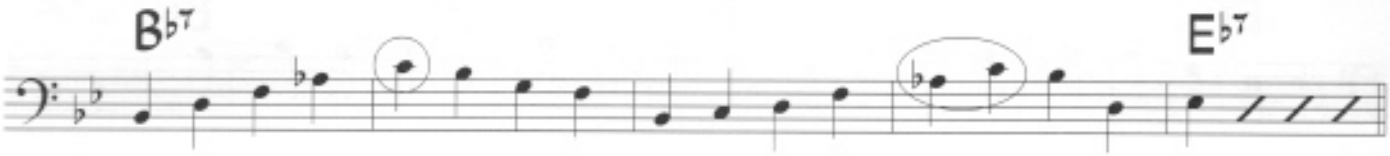


4. **TARGET NOTES ARE CRUCIAL!** - Beginning bassists are sometimes so involved in choosing correct notes that they miss the first principle of creating forward motion in their bass lines. The main function of the notes on beats 2, 3 and 4 of a bar of 4/4 is to lead, somehow or another, to beat 1 of the next bar. So be sure you know what the next target note is, way before you get there. The target note can be other chord notes besides the root, if that is what your ear is telling you. Memorizing the chord changes of the music you are playing is crucial in this regard.

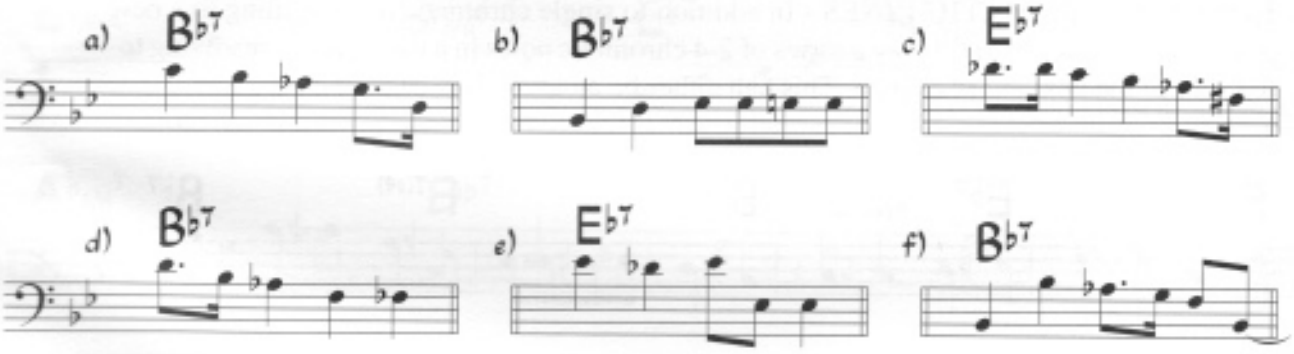
5. **CHROMATIC EMBELLISHMENT** - Besides getting to the next root using chromatic approach notes, you will sometimes hear chromatic, non-scale notes used to resolve to chord notes other than the root. For example:



6. **DELAYED RESOLUTION** - In these transcriptions you will notice that sometimes Ed delays resolving to the root of a chord until later in the bar, with other notes falling on beat 1. Used occasionally to break up the predictability of a bass line, this can be an effective technique.



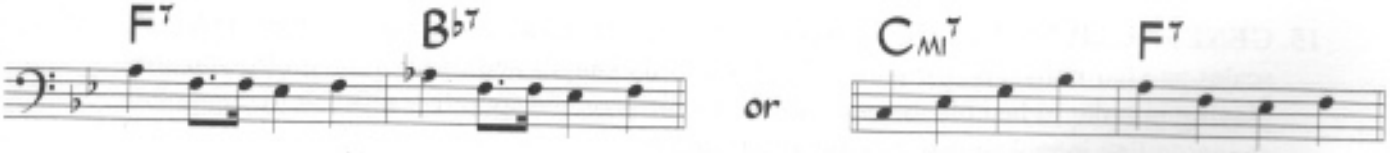
7. **RHYTHMIC MOTIFS** - Even though playing four quarter notes in a bar of 4/4 is the meat-and-potatoes of walking bass, a little rhythmic variety to spice things up is sometimes a great boost to the music. These can be single occurances or else used several times in a passage to create sustained rhythmic tension and release, and are sometimes used to mark the end of sections of a tune. Find all the variations you can in the transcription part of this book, then try practicing them one at a time until they become easy and natural to play in the middle of your walking lines.



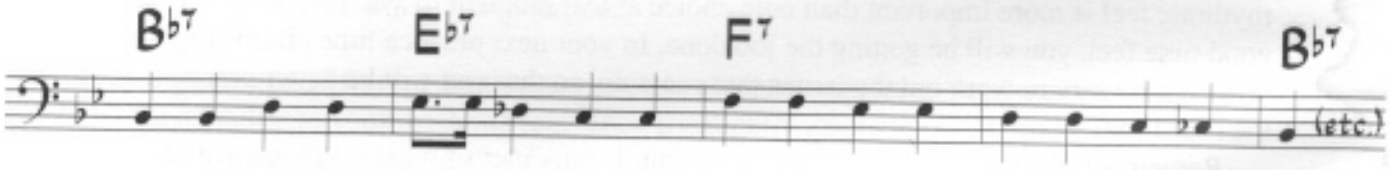
8. **LARGER INTERVALS** - The scalar and chordal bass lines we've looked at so far rarely use an interval greater than a third (except for the V to I resolution). But if you go through the bass lines on the accompanying CD, you'll find that Ed periodically uses larger intervals, especially between beats 1 and 2 of a bar. If the larger interval jump is downward, the rest of the bar will generally be an ascending line, and visa versa. The second note of the interval is almost always a chord note in order to create stability after the large jump. (See next page.)

9. OSTINATO FIGURES - Sometimes you will hear Ed repeat a 3-5 note figure a few times. This is done to create tension that is then released by a return to a normal walking line. In other styles of music, of course, ostinato figures are often the main technique used by bassists to create a groove.

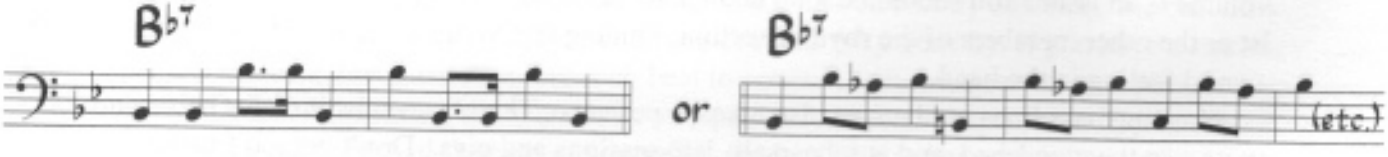
10. EMPHASIZING THE MOVING VOICE - It is useful to look at the notes of two adjacent chords and see if there are any half-step movements between notes of the chords. If so, try making this movement prominant in your bass line, either by putting the moving voices both on beat 1 of their respective bars (first example below), or by having the moving voice go from beat 4 of the first bar into beat 1 of the following bar (second example below).



11. REPEATED NOTES - Repeating notes can create even more bottom and stability in your bass line. This was the foundation of many trad jazz and swing styles of bass playing.



12. PEDAL TONES - You can use a pedal tone (first example below) or pedal point phrases (second example below) to break up a normal walking line.



12. SCALAR SEQUENCES - When there are four bars of one chord, try playing a sequence of notes on the first beat of each bar that moves up or down the scale by steps.

13. PLAY WHAT YOU HEAR INTERNALLY - Here are a few ways to get the music that's inside of you out into the world. If singing in tune is a problem for you, just getting the general idea of a bass line is still very helpful.

a) Try singing along with yourself when you practice.
b) Try singing a line, then try to play it on your bass.
c) Sing a bass line along with a recording and then go back and try to play ideas that came out when you were singing.
d) Try recording the previous idea and learn some of what you sang.

14. PHRASING CONSIDERATIONS - Once you have mastered the basics, try thinking of your bass lines in two bar phrases, instead of one. This is more the way good jazz bass lines are felt. And then there are longer rising and falling arcs of a good walking line over the course of 4 or 8 bars. See if you can find examples of these in the transcription part of this book.

15. GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP - Remember that you must have a working knowledge of scales and harmony, and a command of the chord changes and form of the music you are playing in order to be able to create solid bass lines on the spot. It is difficult to create a swinging line in real time if you are also trying to remember what notes are in a given chord or what chord is coming up two beats from now.

All good bass players know many ways to get from one chord to another and draw on that knowledge when making lines up on the spot. If you are in a situation where you have less than complete mastery over the material at hand, remember that, to the other musicians, rhythmic feel is more important than note choice at that moment. If you play simply with good time feel, you will be getting the job done. In your next practice time afterwards, however, be sure to work out the issues that came up, so that you will be better prepared the next time.

Remember that the bass line, while important, is only part of what is going on at any given moment in the music. The bass' role is generally a functional one, not the featured part. With that in mind, note that in order to best fit in with everyone else in the group, much of your attention should not be on what you are playing. Only by having a firm command of what you are playing will it be possible for you to put your awareness elsewhere. Also, volume is an issue. You should be loud enough to be heard, but not overshadow the soloist or the other members of the rhythm section. Finding this volume balance is critical for a good feeling in the band.

Creating bass lines on the spot also takes experience. There's no substitute for hours and years – in the woodshed, and at rehearsals, jam sessions and gigs. Don't get too frustrated – give yourself time, and keep at it. It will come with study and practice!

PART 4 - TIME FEEL TIPS

The job of everyone in a jazz rhythm section is to create a swinging, forward-moving time feel. Here are some suggestions for how to develop this skill:

1. **Be Confident Of Your Note Choices** - You can, and should, experiment around when you are practicing by yourself. But by primarily sticking with lines you know will work when you are playing with other people, you can then also focus on keeping things swinging. And remember that people will forgive occasional "odd" notes if the time feel is strong and bouyant.

2. **Listen To The Masters** - Paul Chambers, Ray Brown, Ron Carter, Sam Jones, etc. created the "gold standard" for walking bass. Listen to recordings of them playing walking bass and internalize how their sense of time feels. See our *Suggesting Listening* list a couple of pages further on in the book.

3. **Practice With A Metronome** -At least some part of every practice session should be devoted to checking your rhythmic accuracy against a metronome. Try putting the metronome
   on every quarter note
   on beats 1 & 3
   on beats 2 & 4
   on just beat 1 of every bar.
   Each of these will give you some new information about your rhythmic tendencies. You should be able to make the metronome click disappear by being exactly on time.

4. **Playing In Time** - The goal is to develop a real feeling for what playing in time is. And I mean really feeling—it should be something in your gut. Developing a relaxed, open, swinging sound and a propulsive quarter note feel that swings is all about playing **in time**. And **in time** should feel better than **out of time**. Keep your diaphragm relaxed and breathe. Try to get to that state where you are aware of what you're playing, but you don't have any real emotional attachment to it. You're just listening to the notes and you're staying relaxed. If you feel yourself tensing up or holding your breath, don't worry about what notes you're playing—just try to recover that sense of relaxation and detachment. You've got to **let** things happen, not **make** things happen.

5. **Emphasizing Different Beats** - Try slightly emphasizing beats 2 and 4 of each bar to add extra solidity to your rhythmic feel. Then try slightly emphasizing beat 1 of each bar. What does that do to the time feel?

6. **Feeling The True Length Of Each Beat** - Try experimenting with making notes last for their full time value, then try making each note a bit shorter than that. Having this variable under your conscious control is a useful skill to develop—for groove-oriented music as well as walking bass. If you have a tendency to rush, focus on exactly how long one beat lasts and don't play the next note until the previous beat has fully gone by. If you have a tendency to slow the beat down, try counting each beat to yourself very precisely as you play, until the time feels like it is moving along under its own power. At slower tempos, counting or singing the basic subdivisions of the beat to yourself is the best way to keep your sense of the tempo accurate.

7. **Listening to the Music as a Whole** - When playing with other people, make sure that a portion of your mind is focused on what the other musicians in the band are doing. Good time feel is a group endeavor! Try to hear your voice (your bass line) as part of the whole conversation that is going on with the other musicians on the bandstand, and how what you play interacts with what everybody else is playing. Specifically, try to make sure that your bass line always hooks up rhythmically with the drummer, and harmonically with the chord player. And remember that, as the keeper of the quarter note pulse, you can pull the whole band together with a strong, simple, coherent walking line. Listen to how Ed does exactly that, over and over, on the accompanying CD.

Ed's Suggested Listening List

MOTION – LEE KONITZ with Elvin Jones and Sonny Dallas.
Sonny is a *master* of the quarter note melody—it's like he's singing back there.

GROOVY – RED GARLAND with Art Taylor and Paul Chambers. Paul at his swingingest.
I spent a *lot* of time with this record when I was coming up.

BASS ON TOP – PAUL CHAMBERS. Beautiful intro and solo on *You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To*, among others.

MOTOR CITY SESSION – THAD JONES, Billy Mitchell, Al Grey, Hank Jones, Paul Chambers and Elvin Jones

THE ARRIVAL OF VICTOR FELDMAN – VICTOR FELDMAN with Stan Levy and Scott LaFaro

WALTZ FOR DEBBY – BILL EVANS with Paul Motian and Scott LaFaro

INTERPLAY – BILL EVANS with Freddie Hubbard, Jim Hall, Percy Heath, Philly Joe Jones

ALL NIGHT SESSIONS – HAMPTON HAWES w/Jim Hall, Red Mitchell, Russ Freeman

LIVE IN PARIS – JIMMY RANEY QUARTET with Sonny Clark, Red Mitchell, Bobby White
Both of these have some *great* "pre fifths tuning" Red.

LIVE IN TOKYO – JIMMY RANEY with Sam Jones and Leroy Williams

STORYVILLE SESSIONS – STAN GETZ w/Jimmy Raney, Al Haig, Teddy Kotick, Tiny Kahn

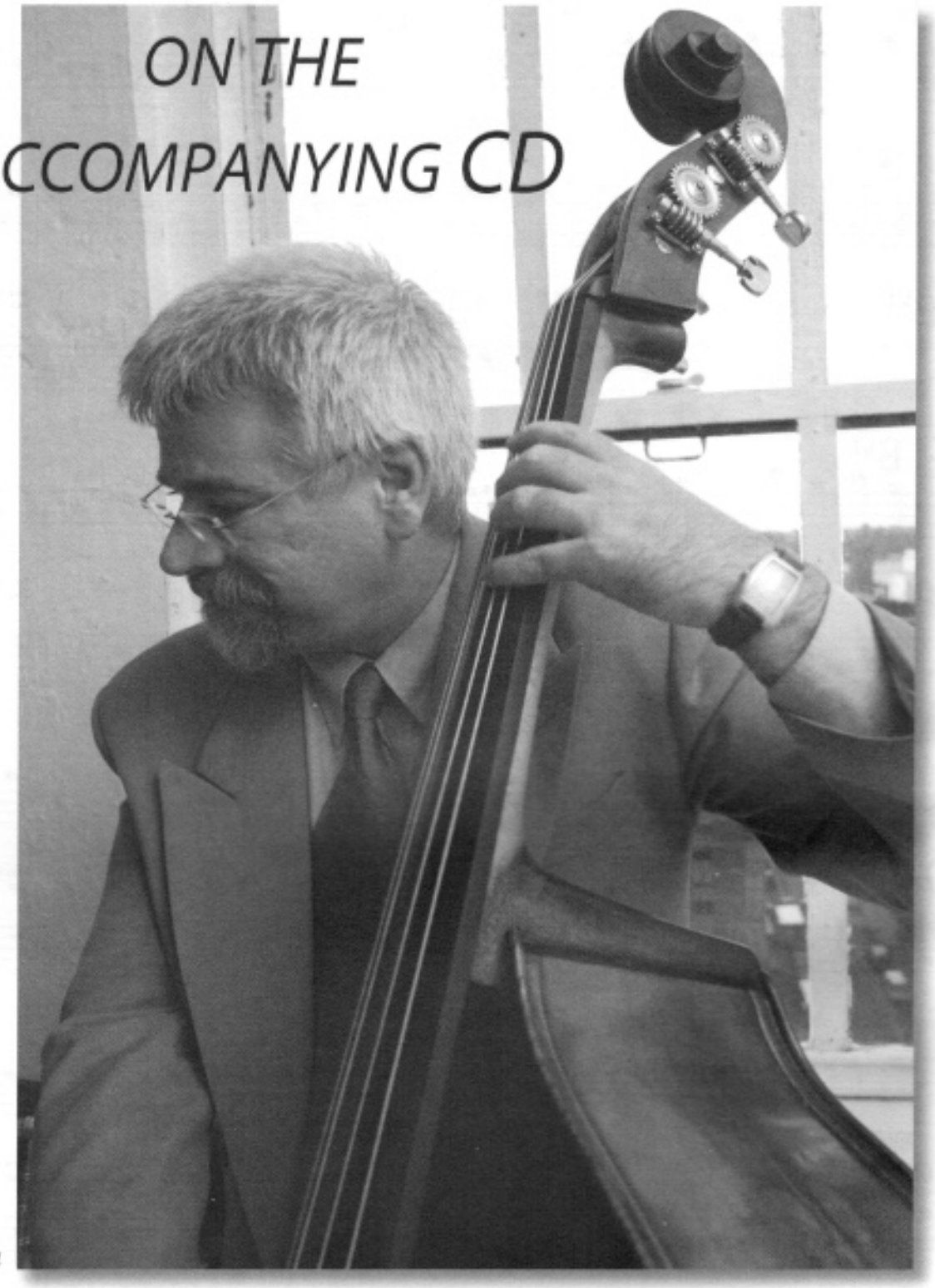
MILESTONES – MILES DAVIS w/John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Red Garland, Paul Chambers, Philly Joe Jones

FOUR & MORE – MILES DAVIS w/George Coleman, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Tony Williams

MODE FOR JOE – JOE HENDERSON w/ Lee Morgan, Curtis Fuller, Bobby Hutcherson, Cedar Walton, Ron Carter, Joe Chambers

RAY BROWN – Pretty much any CD with Ray Brown on it will be swinging!

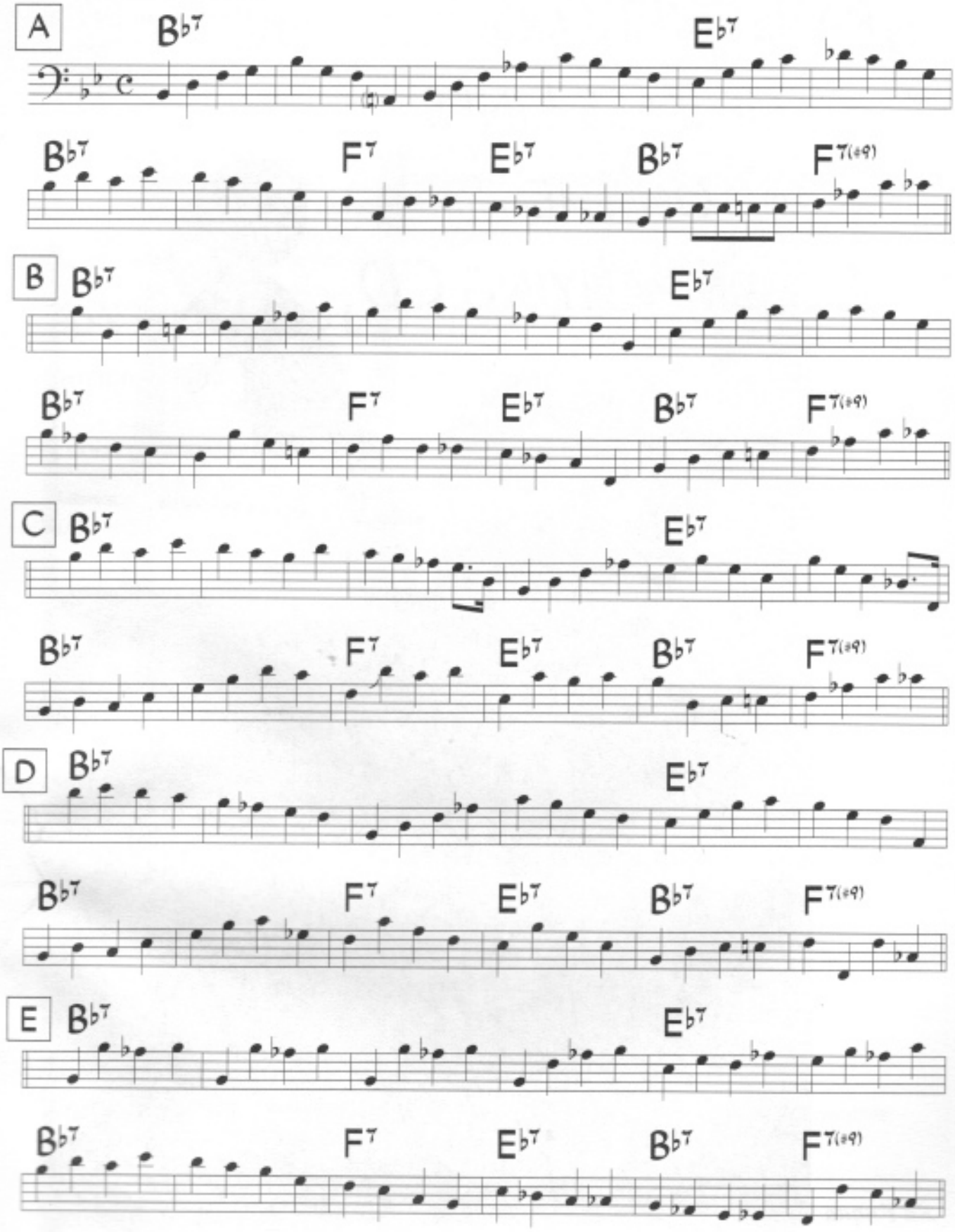
TRANSCRIPTIONS OF BASS LINES ON THE ACCOMPANYING CD

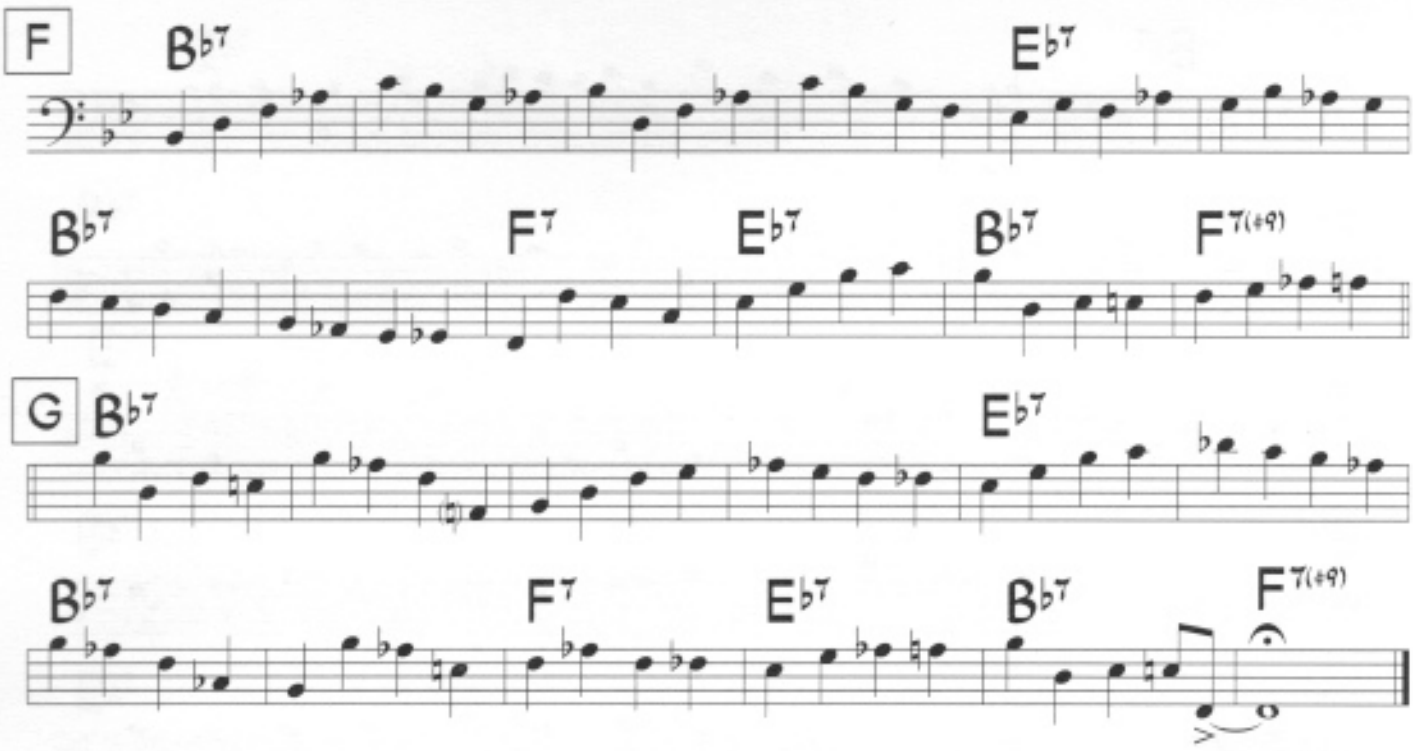


Ed Fuqua

Track #1

"B♭ Blues" (♩ = 112)

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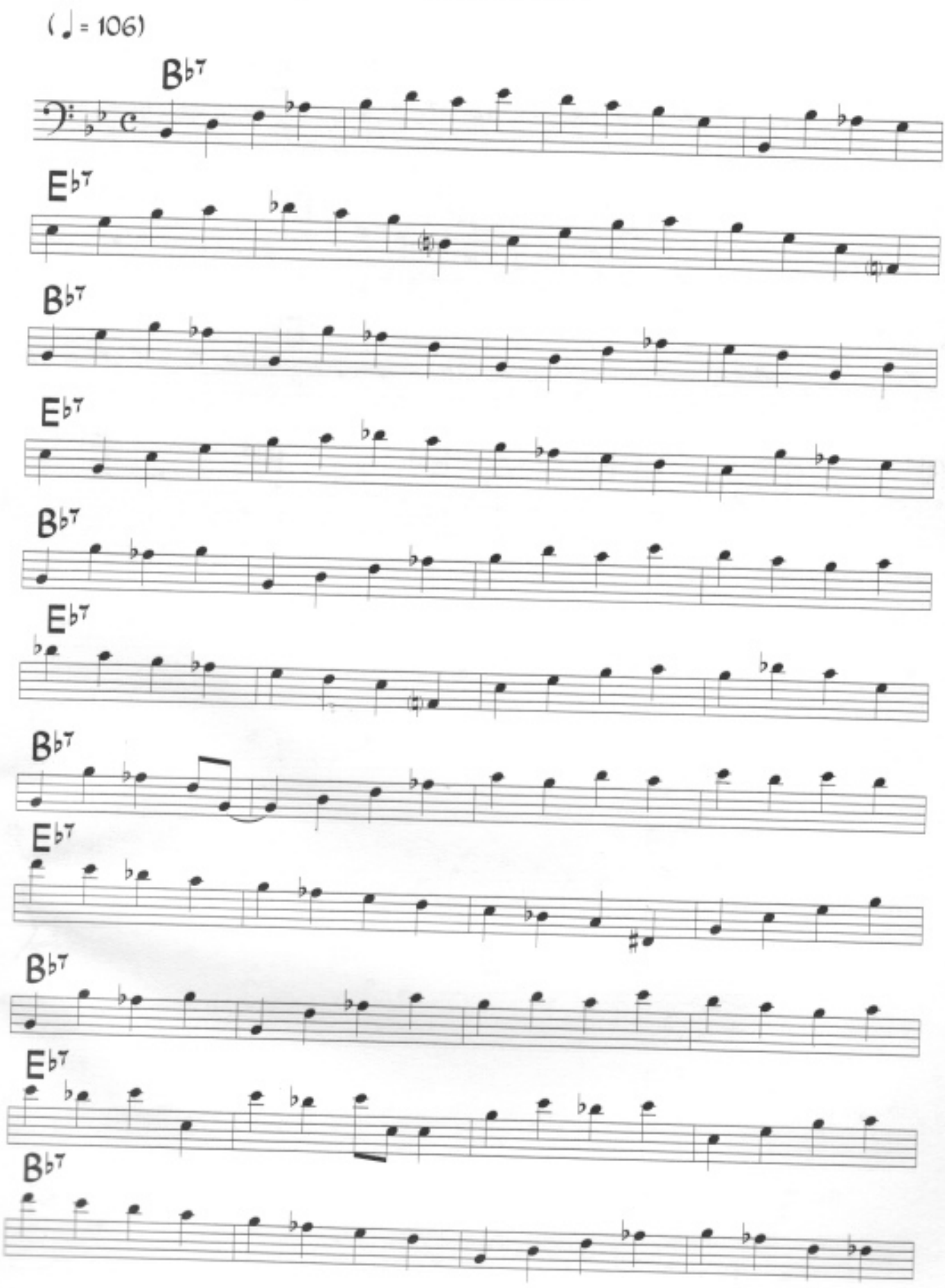
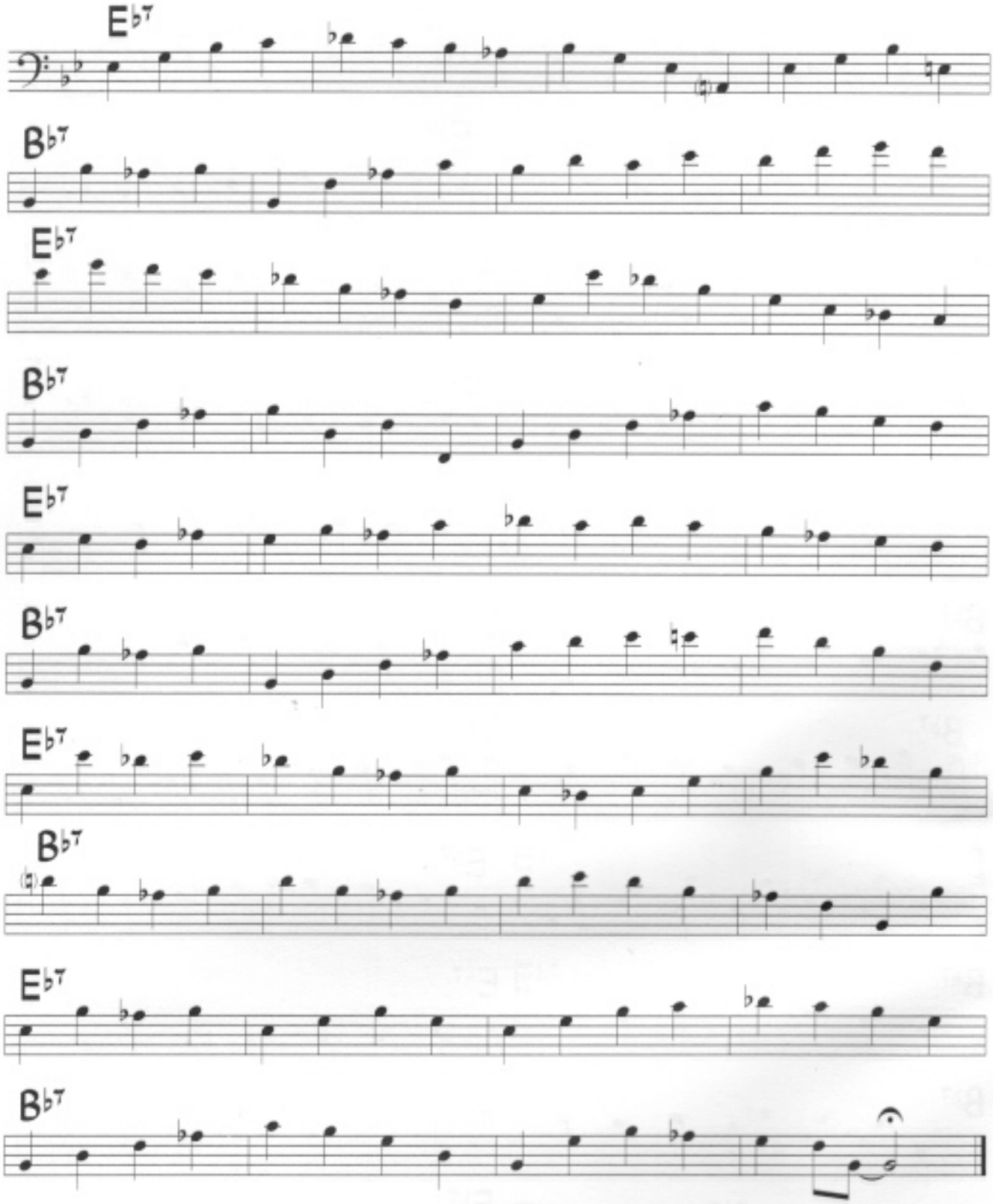
E♭7
B♭7
F7
E♭7
B♭7
F7(♯9)
G
B♭7
E♭7
B♭7
F7
E♭7
B♭7
F7(♯9)

Track #2

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B♭7
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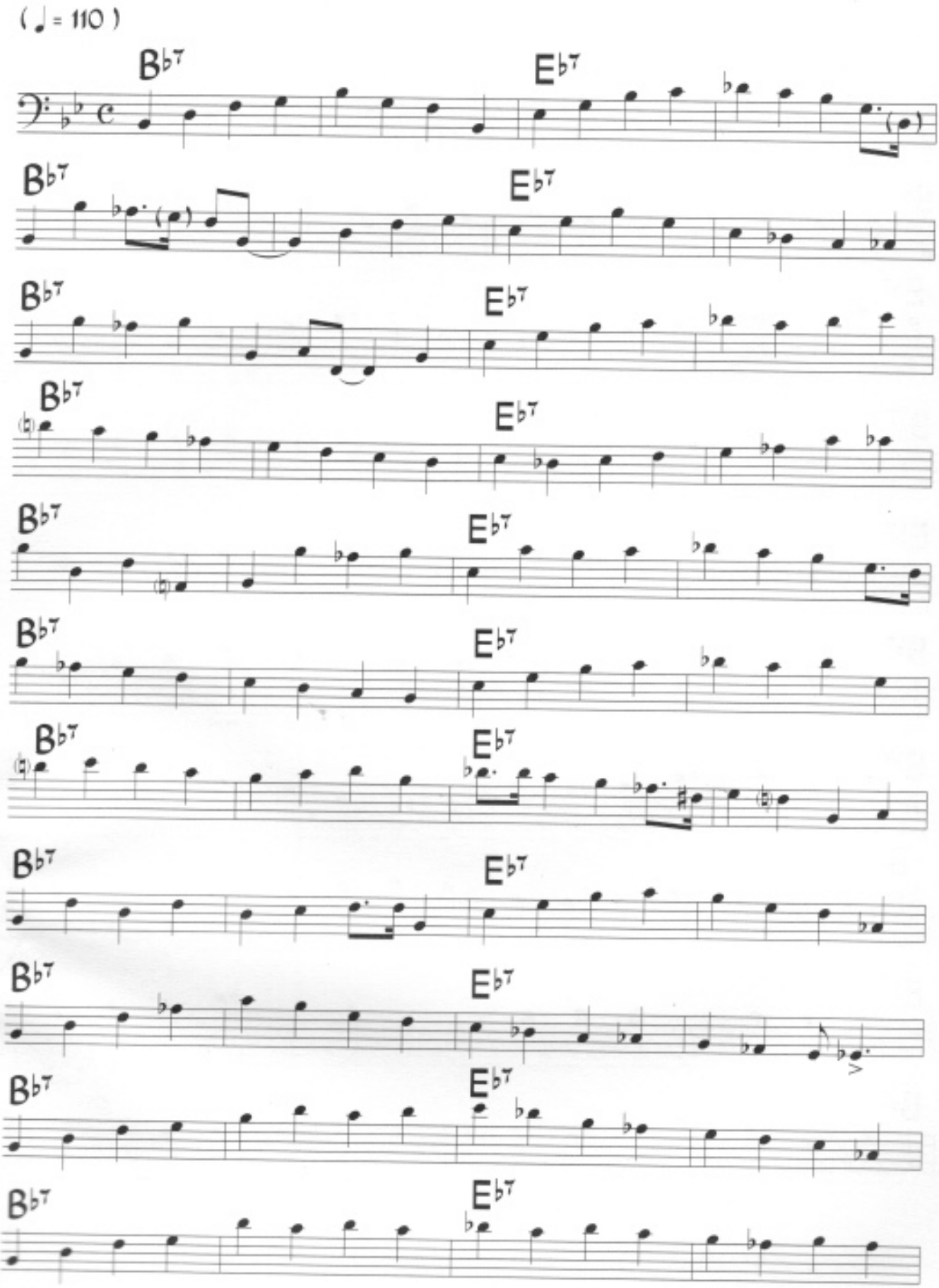
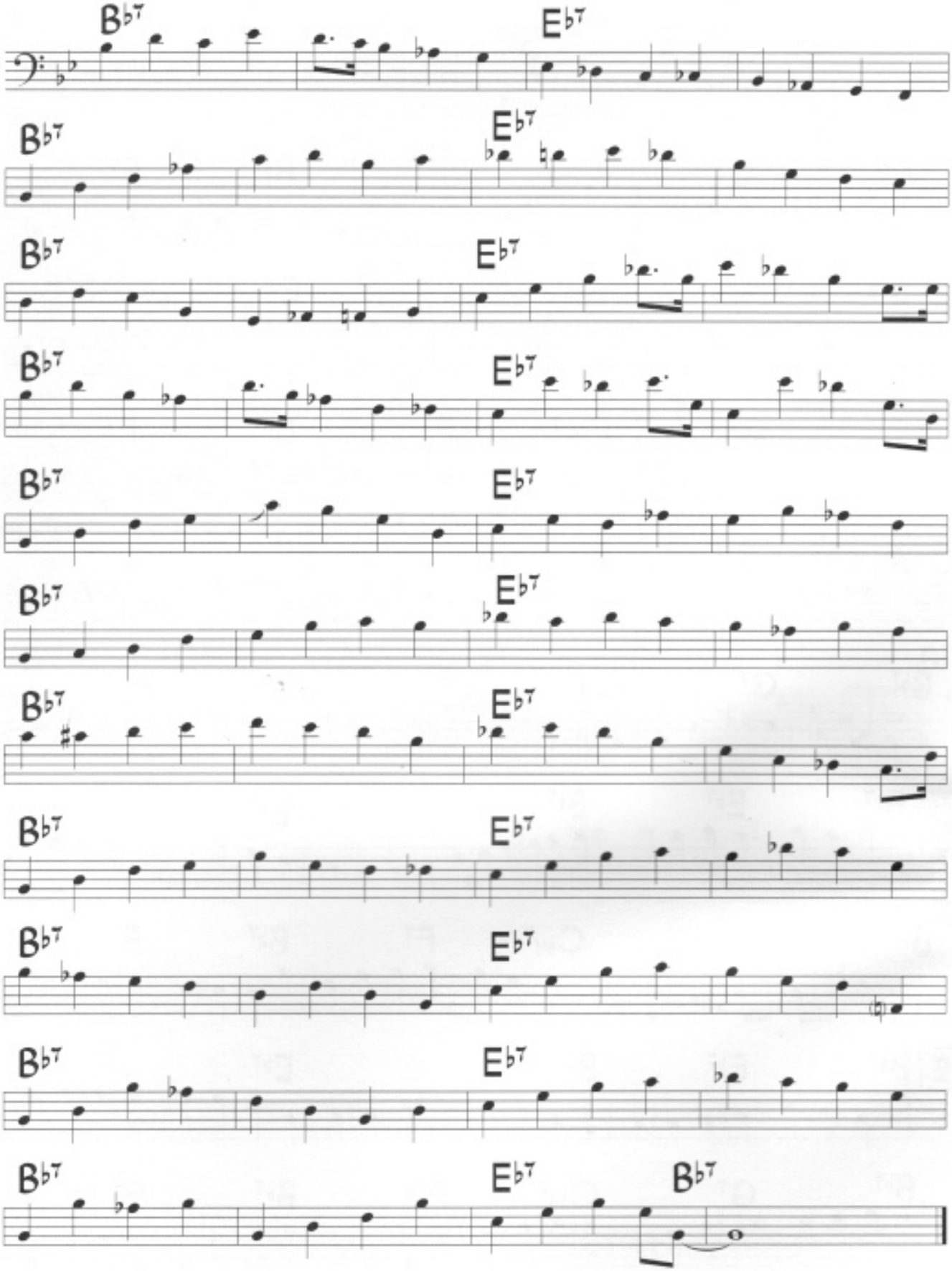
B♭7

Track #3




B♭7
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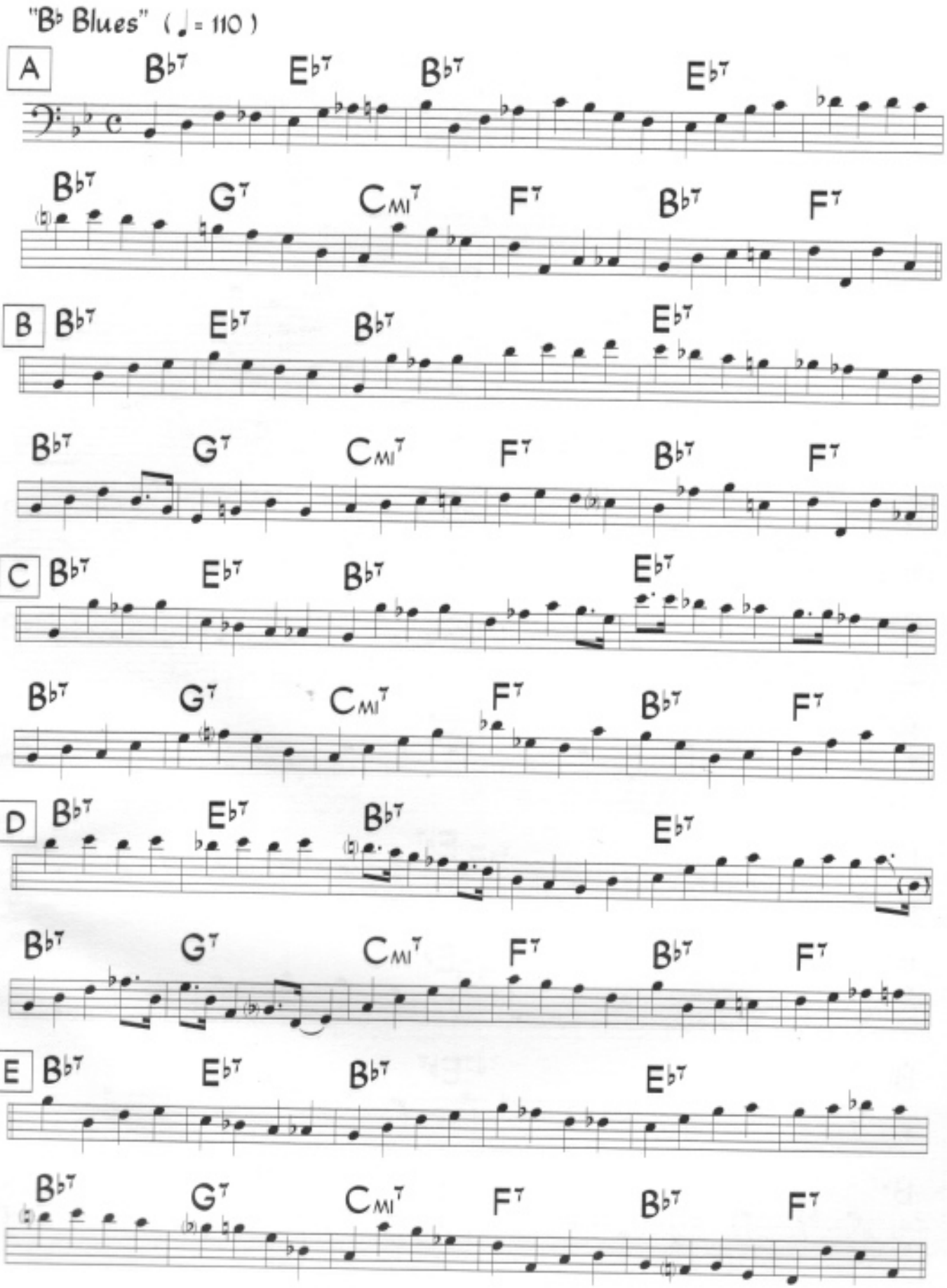
B♭7

Track #4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B♭7 G7 Cmi7 F7 B♭7 F7
B
B♭7 E♭7 B♭7 E♭7
B♭7 G7 Cmi7 F7 B♭7 F7
C
B♭7 E♭7 B♭7 E♭7
B♭7 G7 Cmi7 F7 B♭7 F7
D
B♭7 E♭7 B♭7 E♭7
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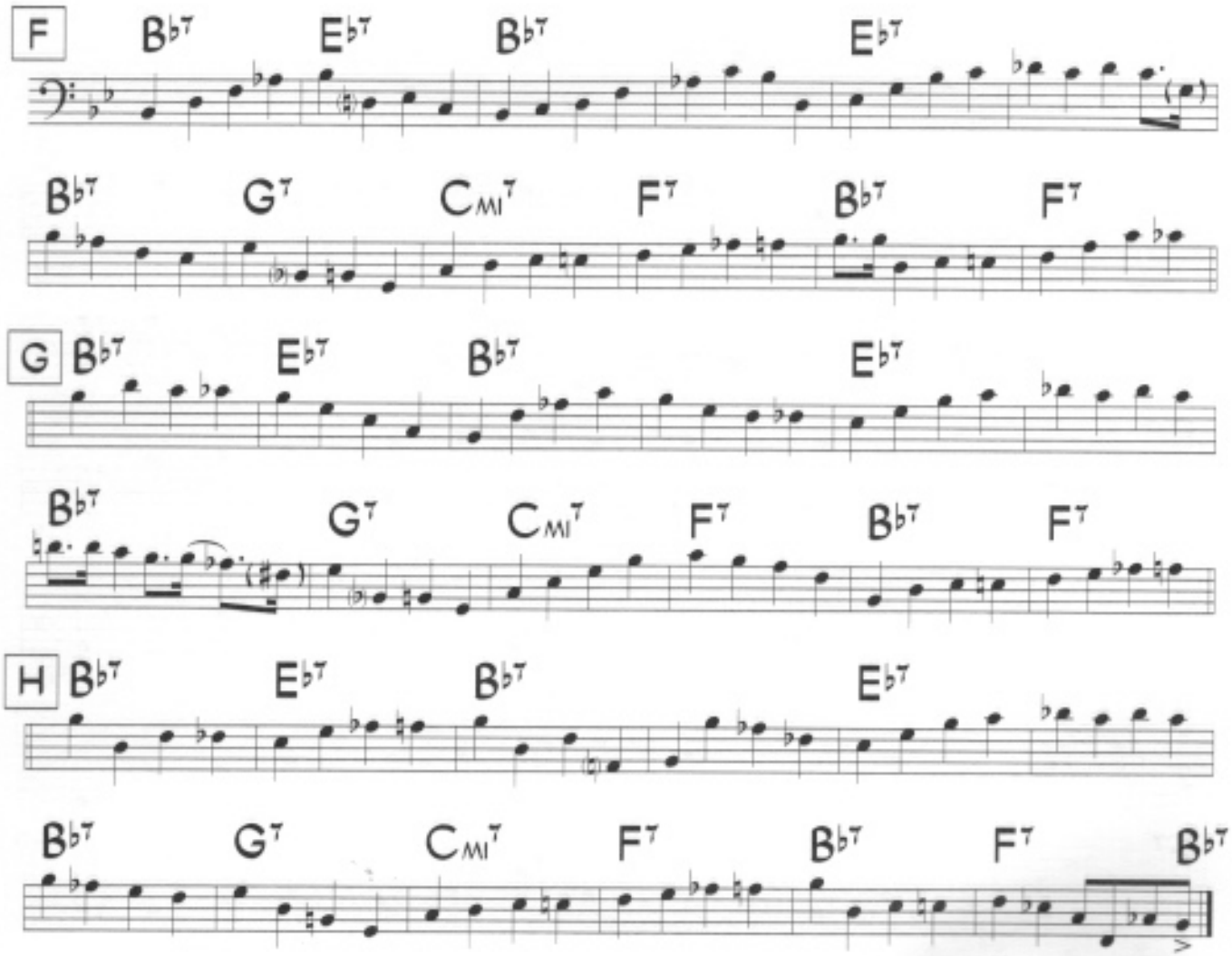
E
B♭7 E♭7 B♭7 E♭7
B♭7 G7 Cmi7 F7 B♭7 F7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Cmi7
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G
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B♭7
G7
Cmi7
F7
B♭7
F7
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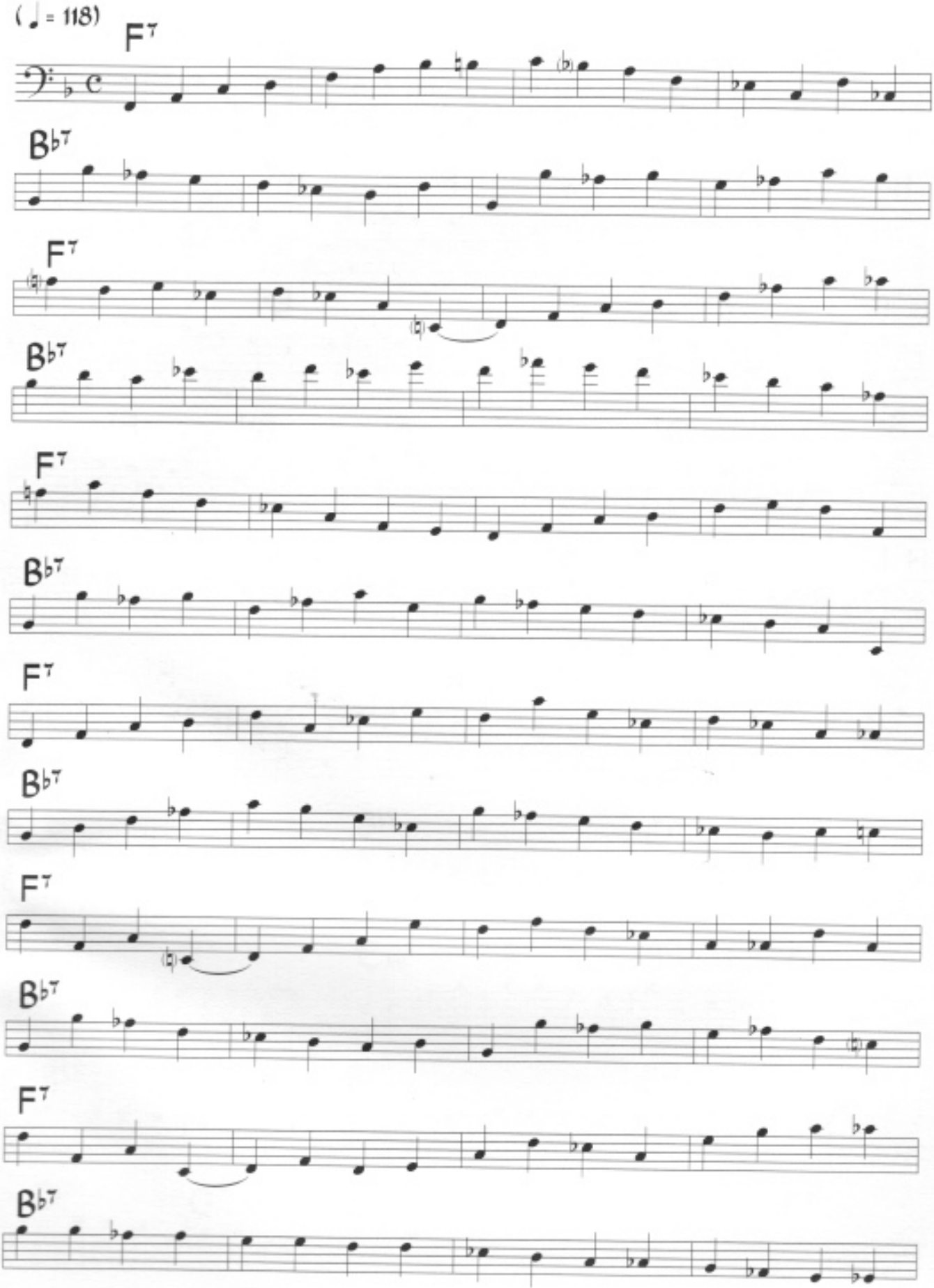
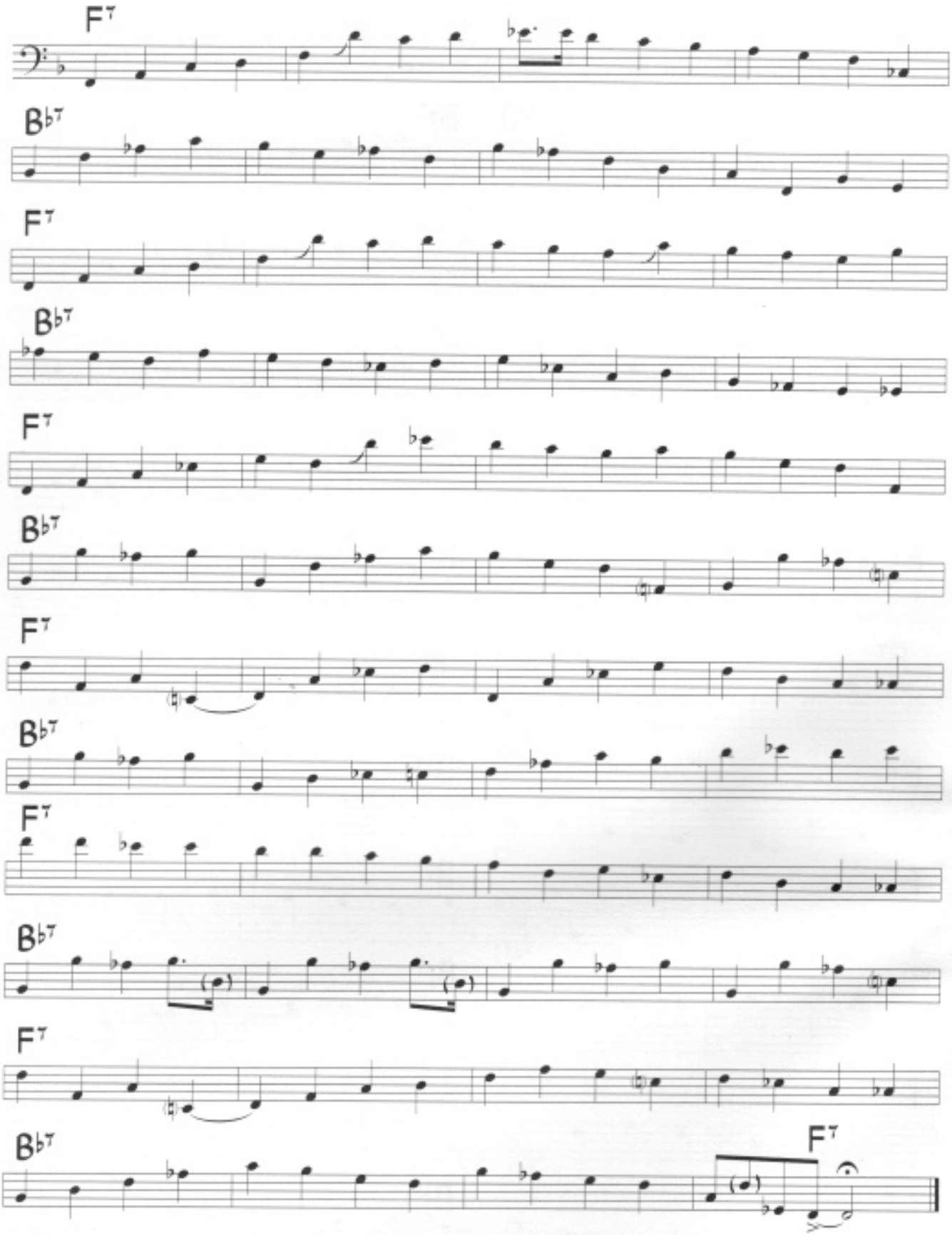
Track #5

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B♭7
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F7
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B♭7
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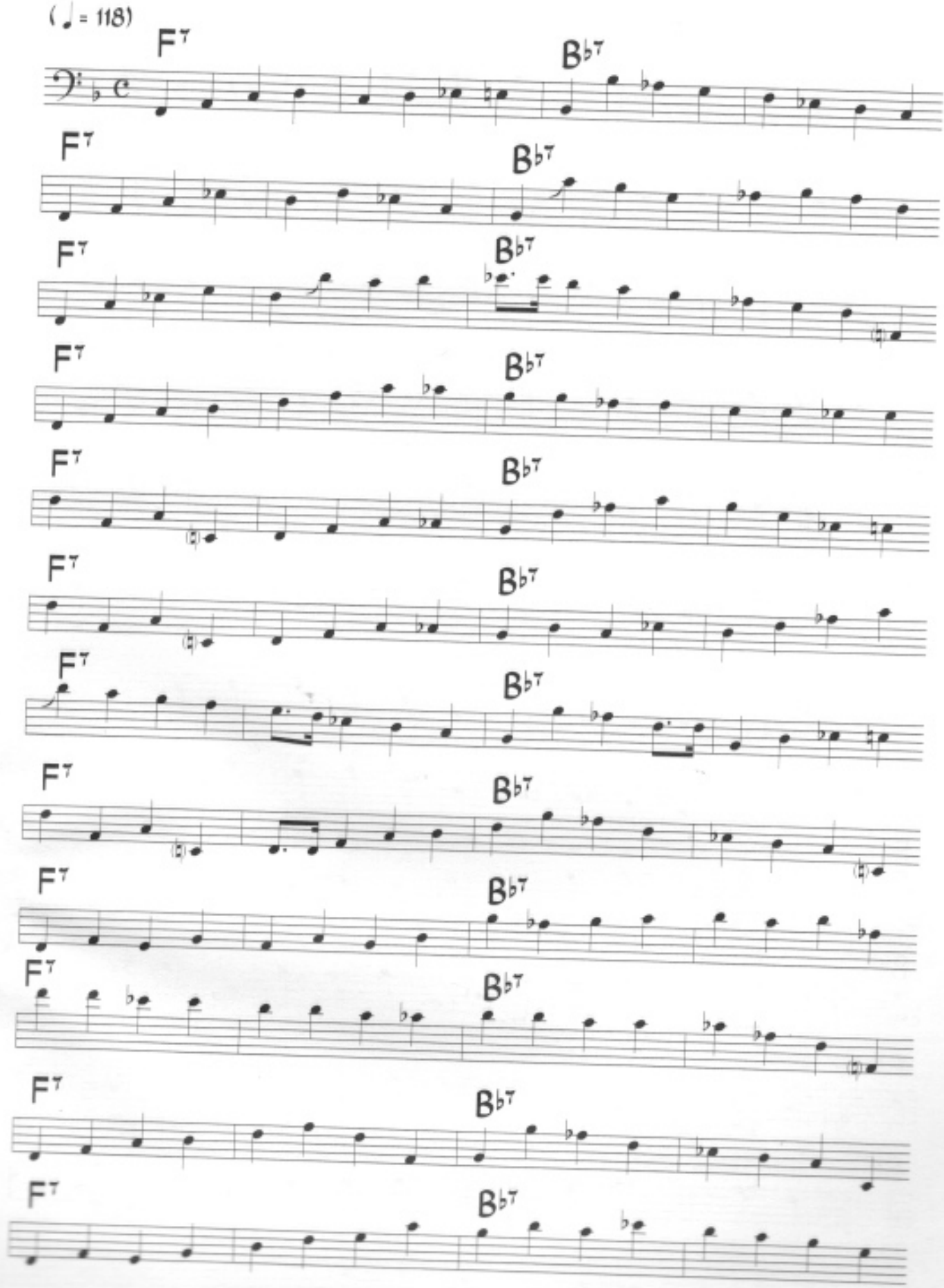
B♭7
F7

Track #6


(♩ = 118)
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B♭7
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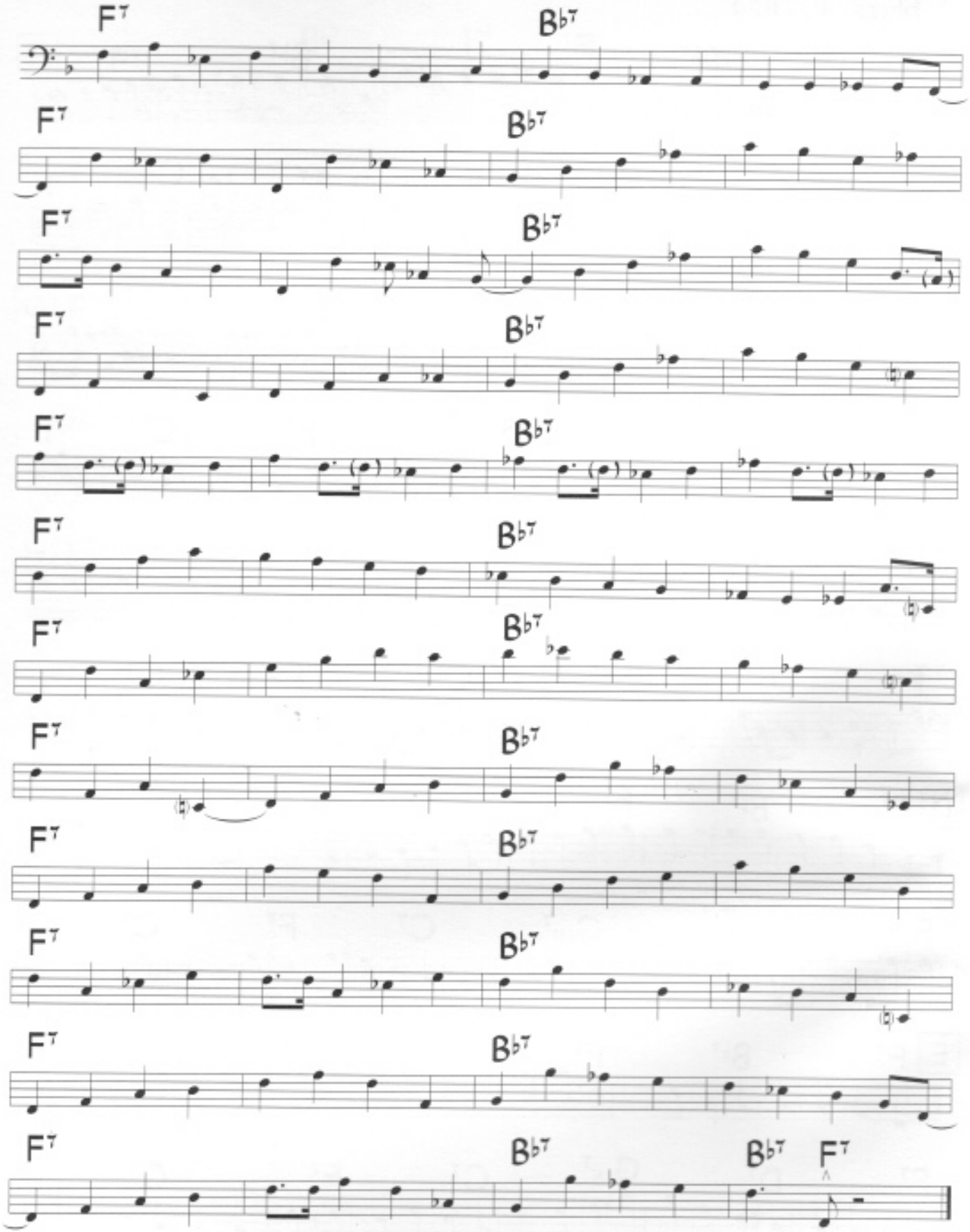
B♭7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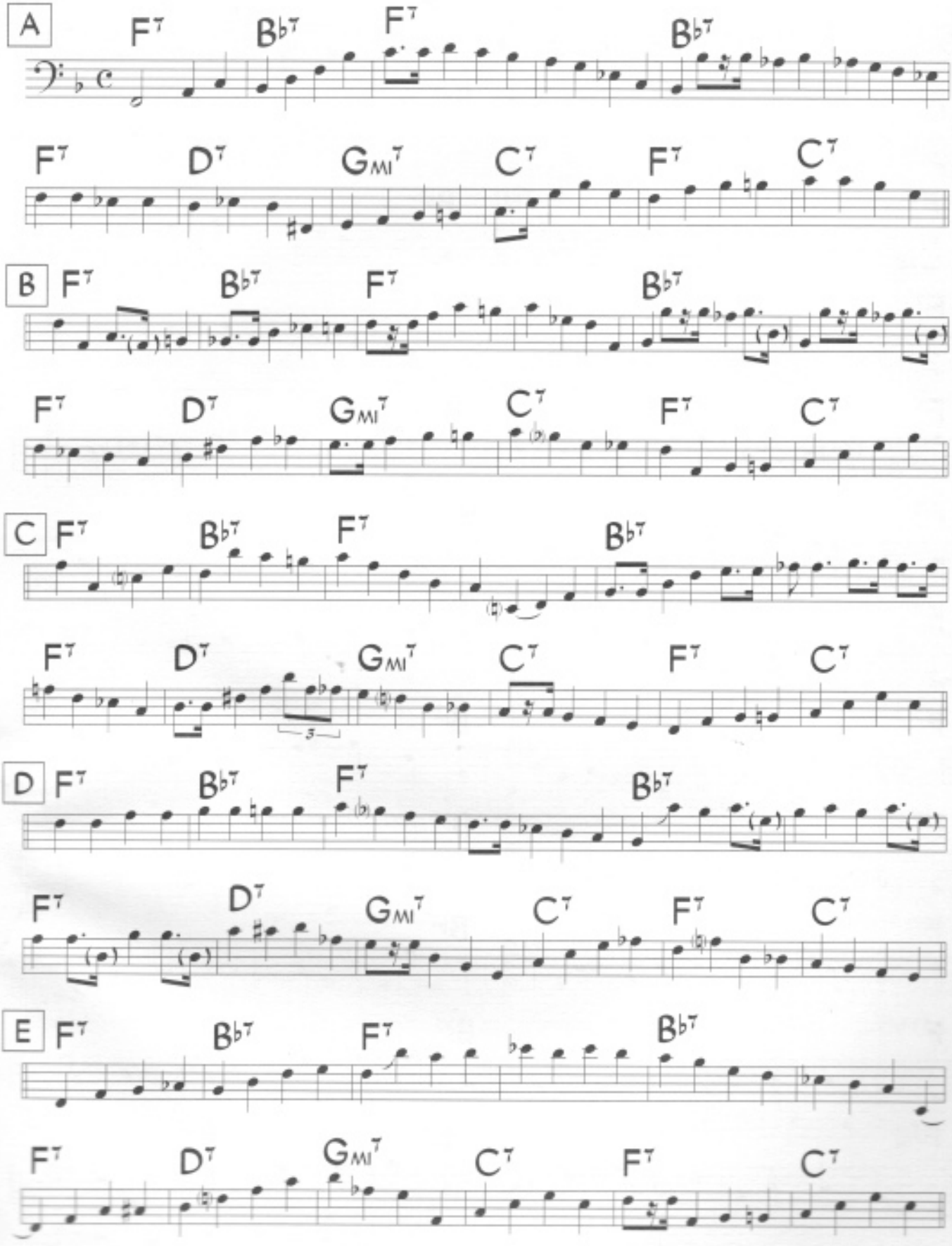
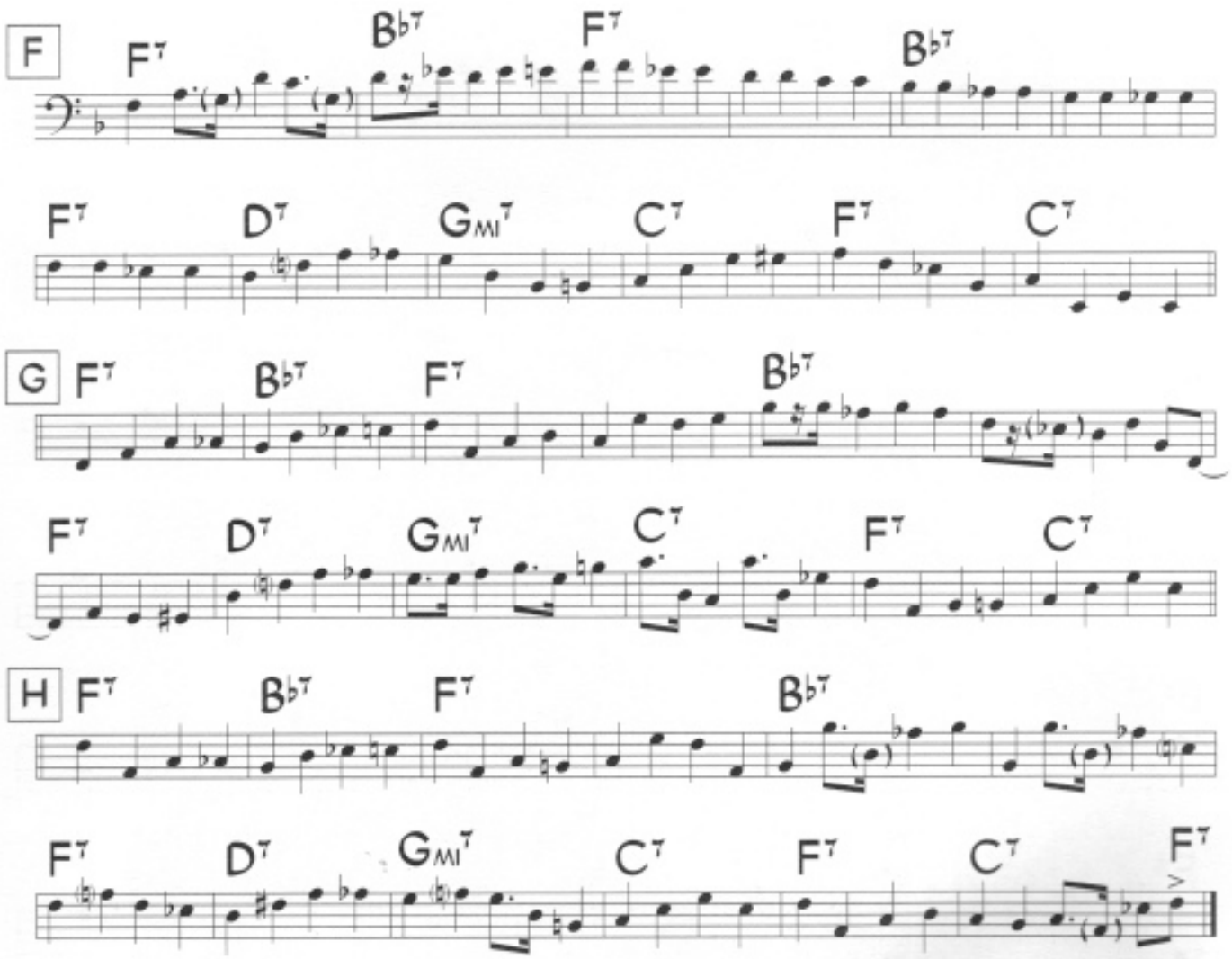
F7

Track #7

"F Blues" (♩ = 112)

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D7
Gmi7
C7
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C7
G
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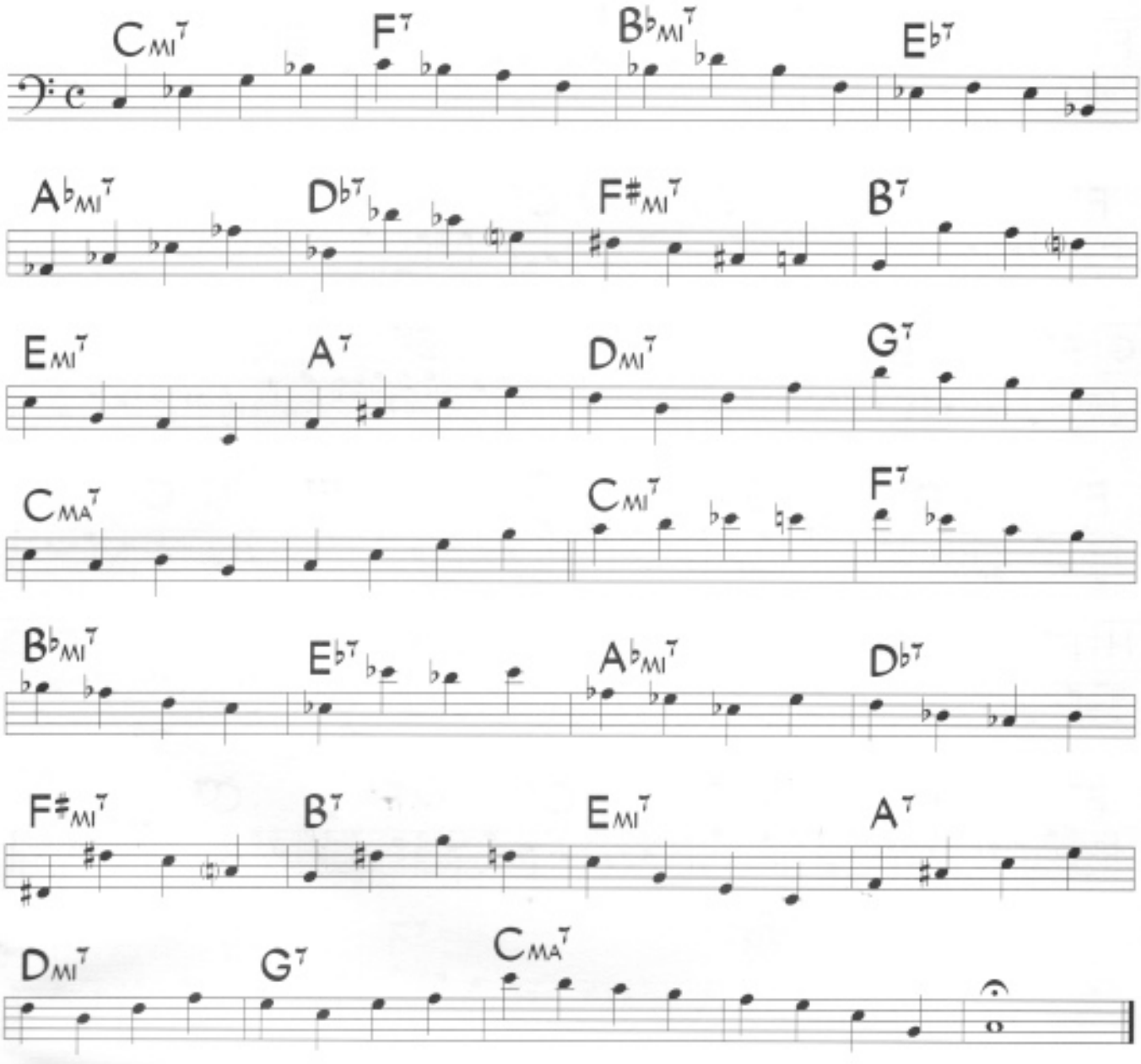
Gmi7
C7
F7
C7
F7

Track #8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B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭MI7
D♭7
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B7
EMI7
A7
DMI7
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CMA7
CMI7
F7
B♭MI7
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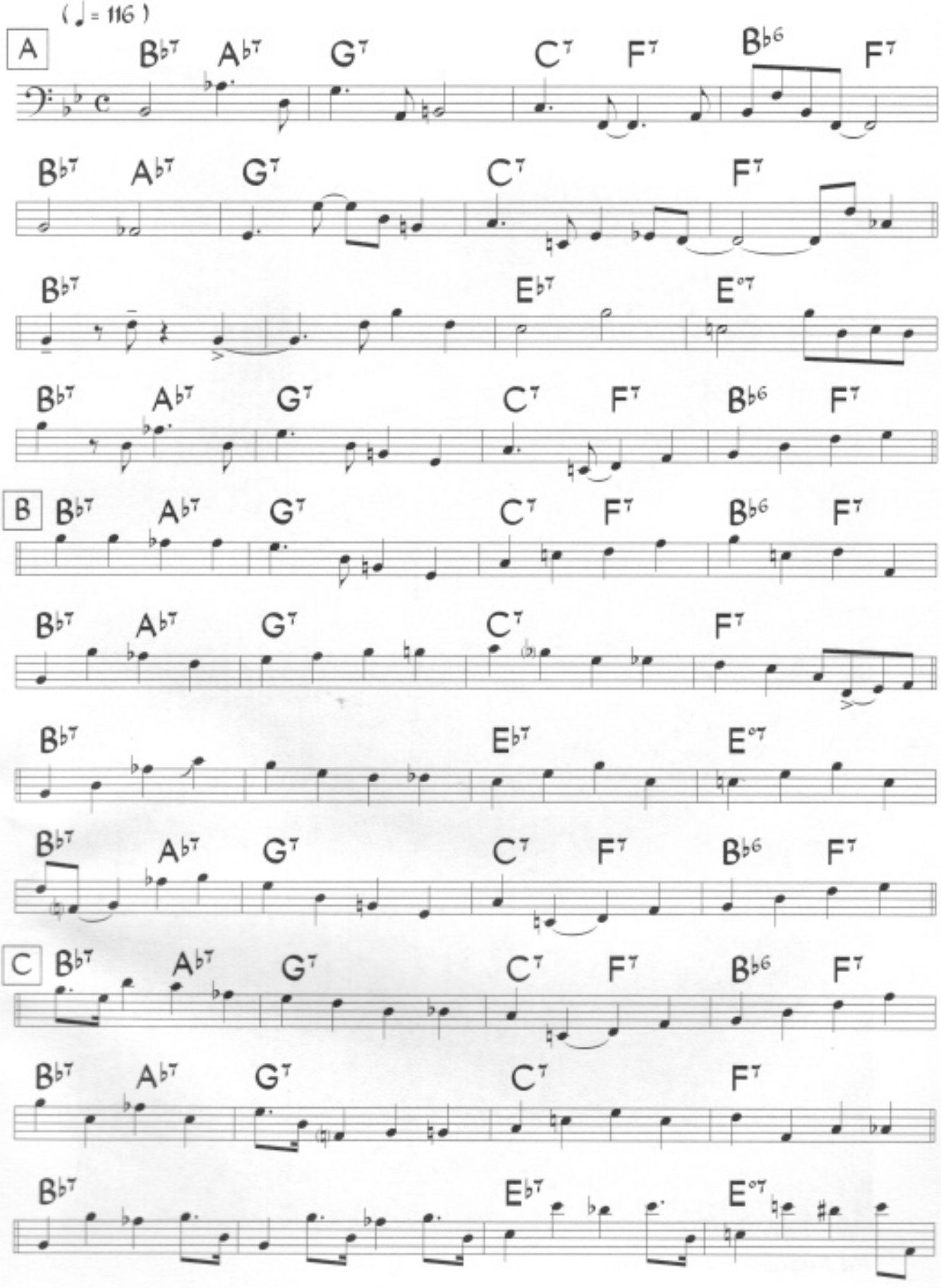
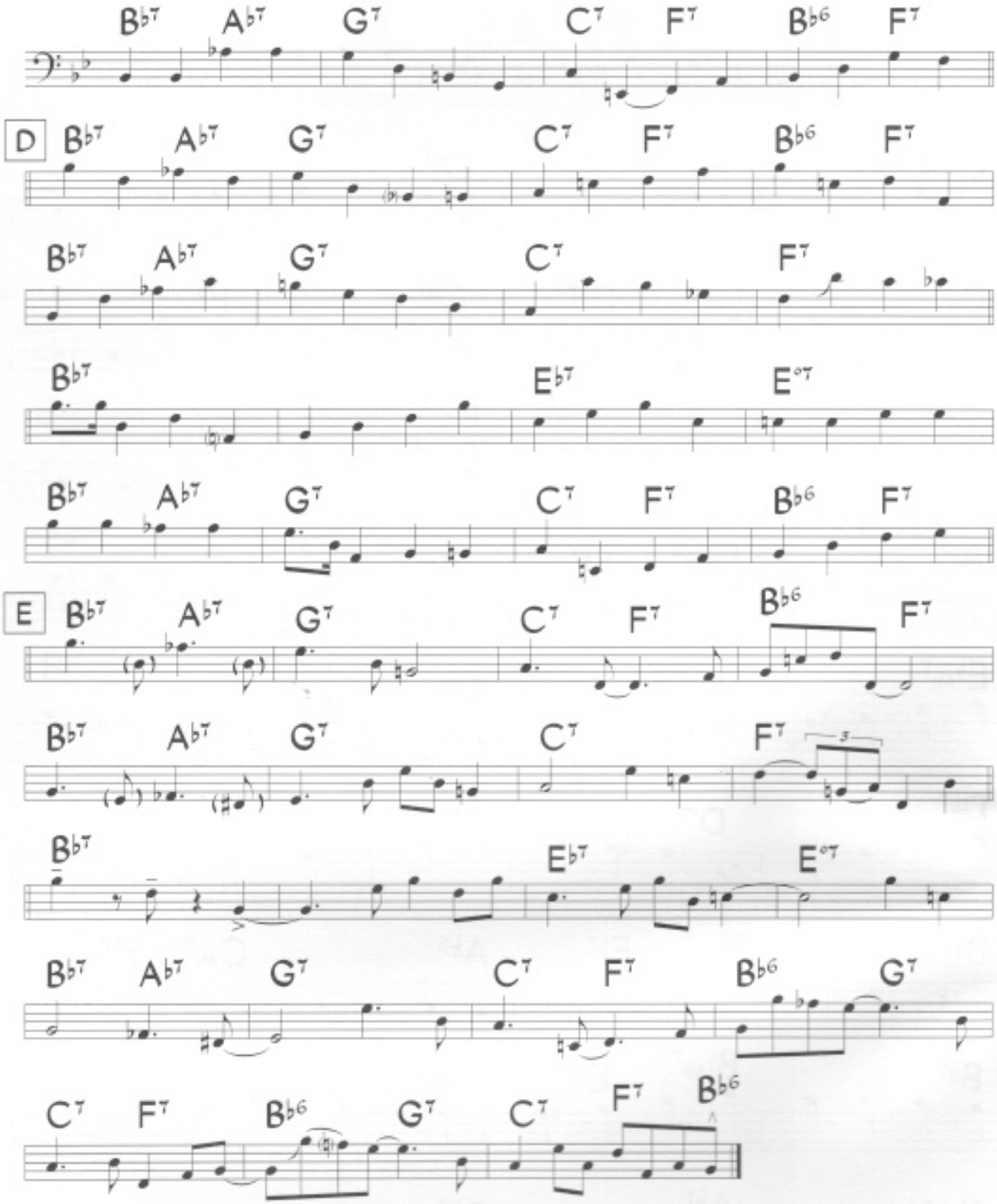
A7
DMI7
G7
CMA7

Ed Fuqua

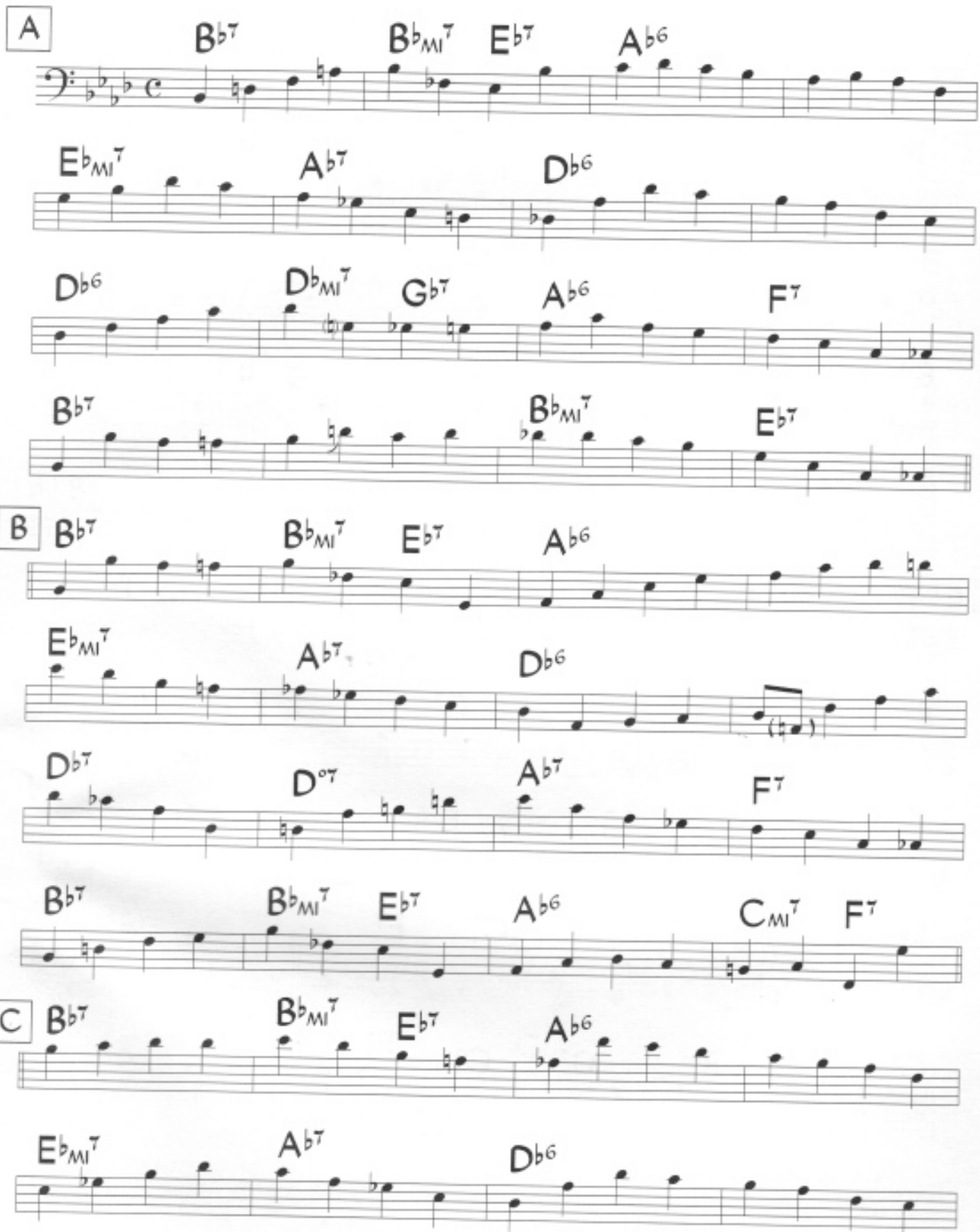
Track #9

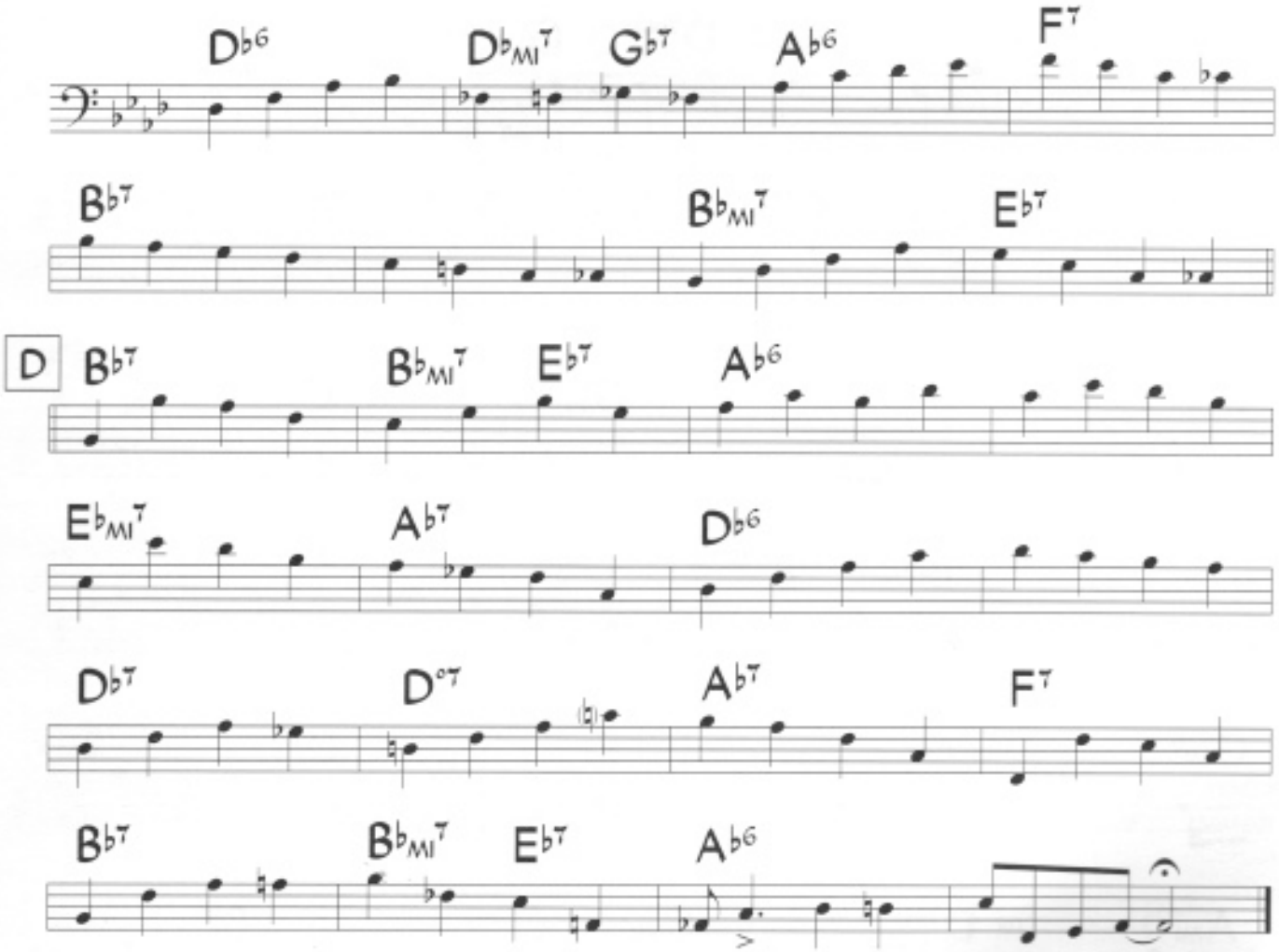

(♩ = 116)
A
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7
B♭7 E♭7 E°7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7
B♭7 E♭7 E°7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
C
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7
B♭7 E♭7 E°7


B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
D
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7
B♭7 E♭7 E°7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
E
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 F7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7
B♭7 E♭7 E°7
B♭7 A♭7 G7 C7 F7 B♭6 G7
C7 F7 B♭6 G7 C7 F7 B♭6

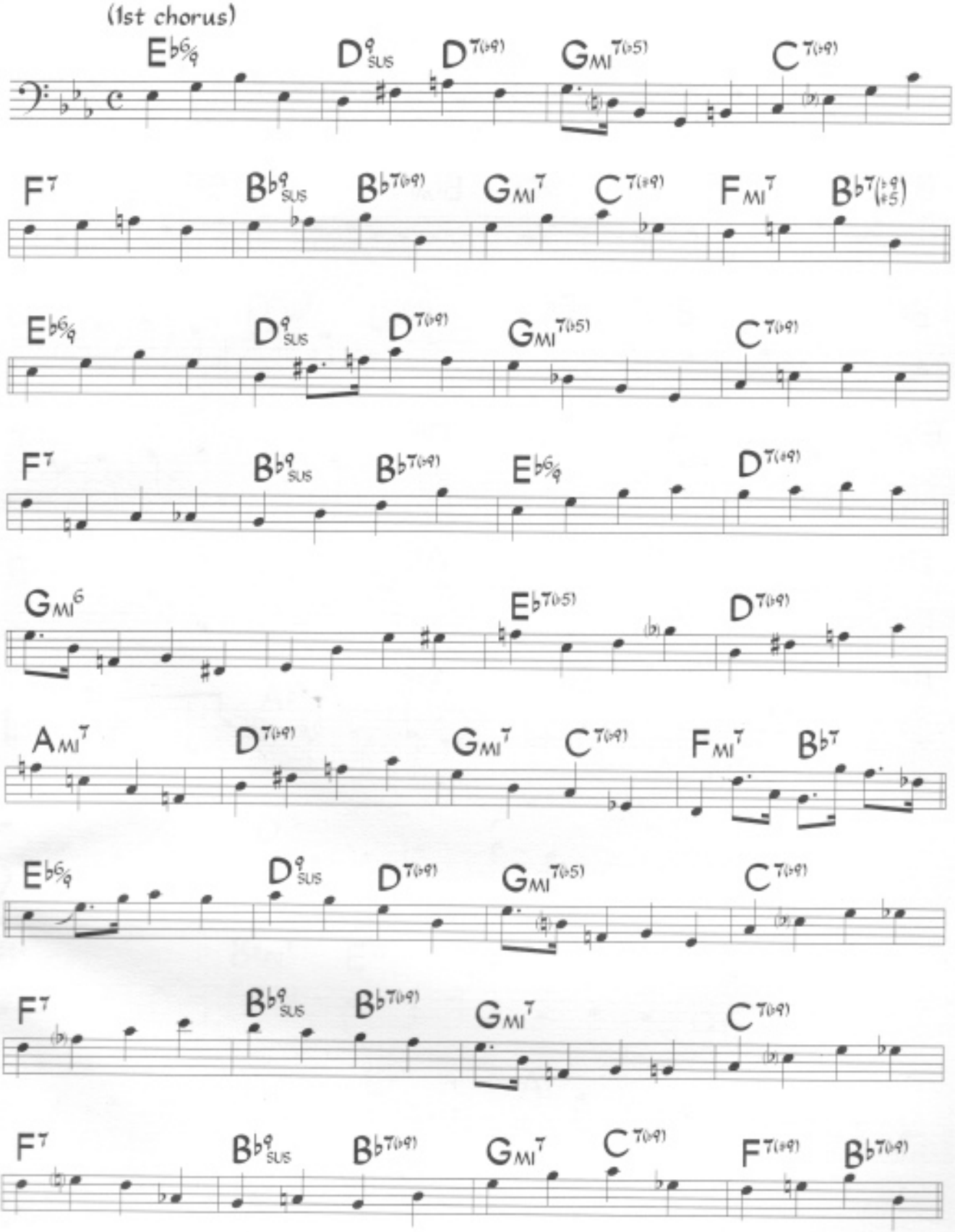
Track #10

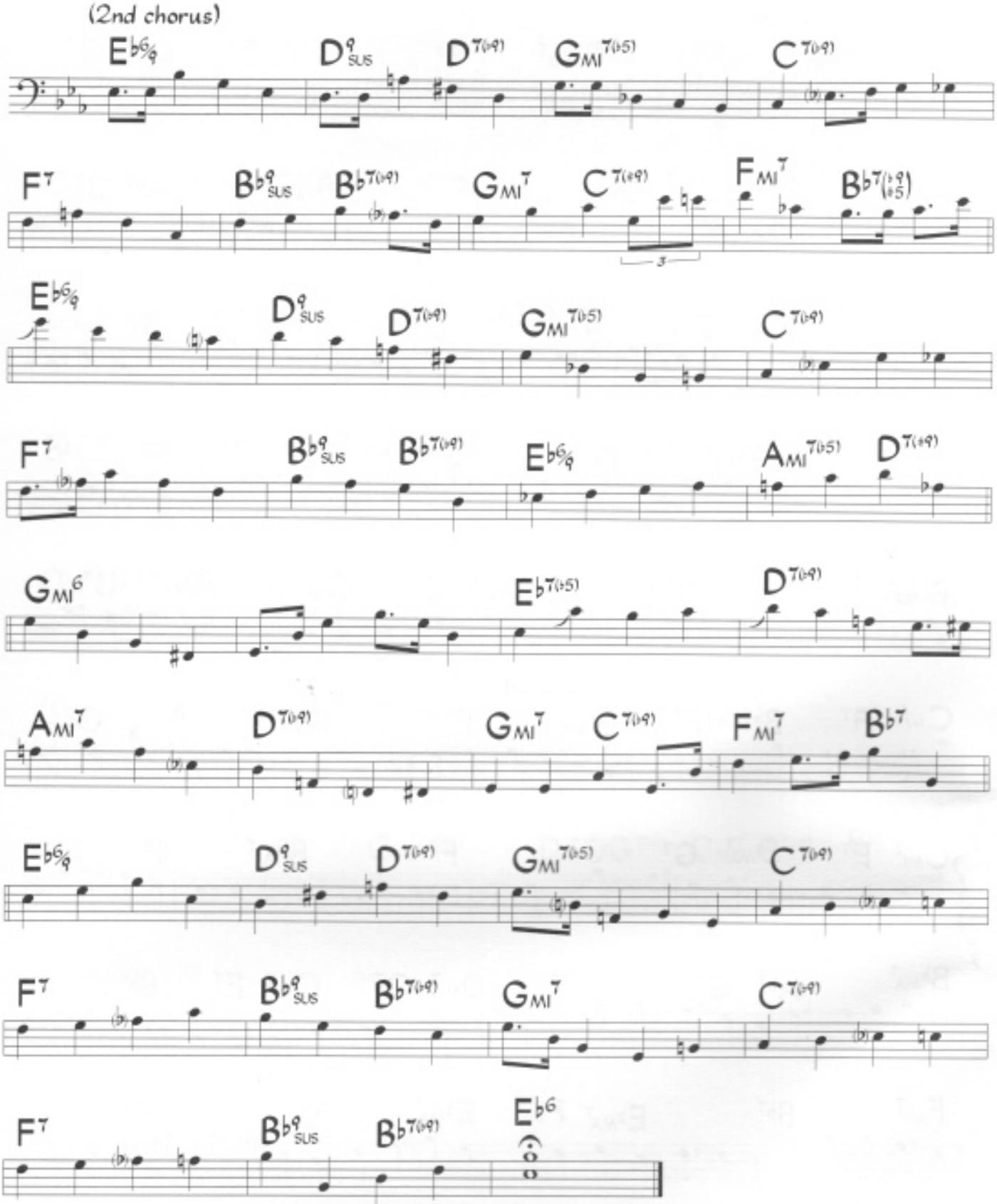
(♩ = 110)


A
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6
E♭MI7
A♭7
D♭6
D♭6
D♭MI7
G♭7
A♭6
F7
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
B
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6
E♭MI7
A♭7
D♭6
D♭7
D°7
A♭7
F7
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6
CMI7
F7
C
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6
E♭MI7
A♭7
D♭6

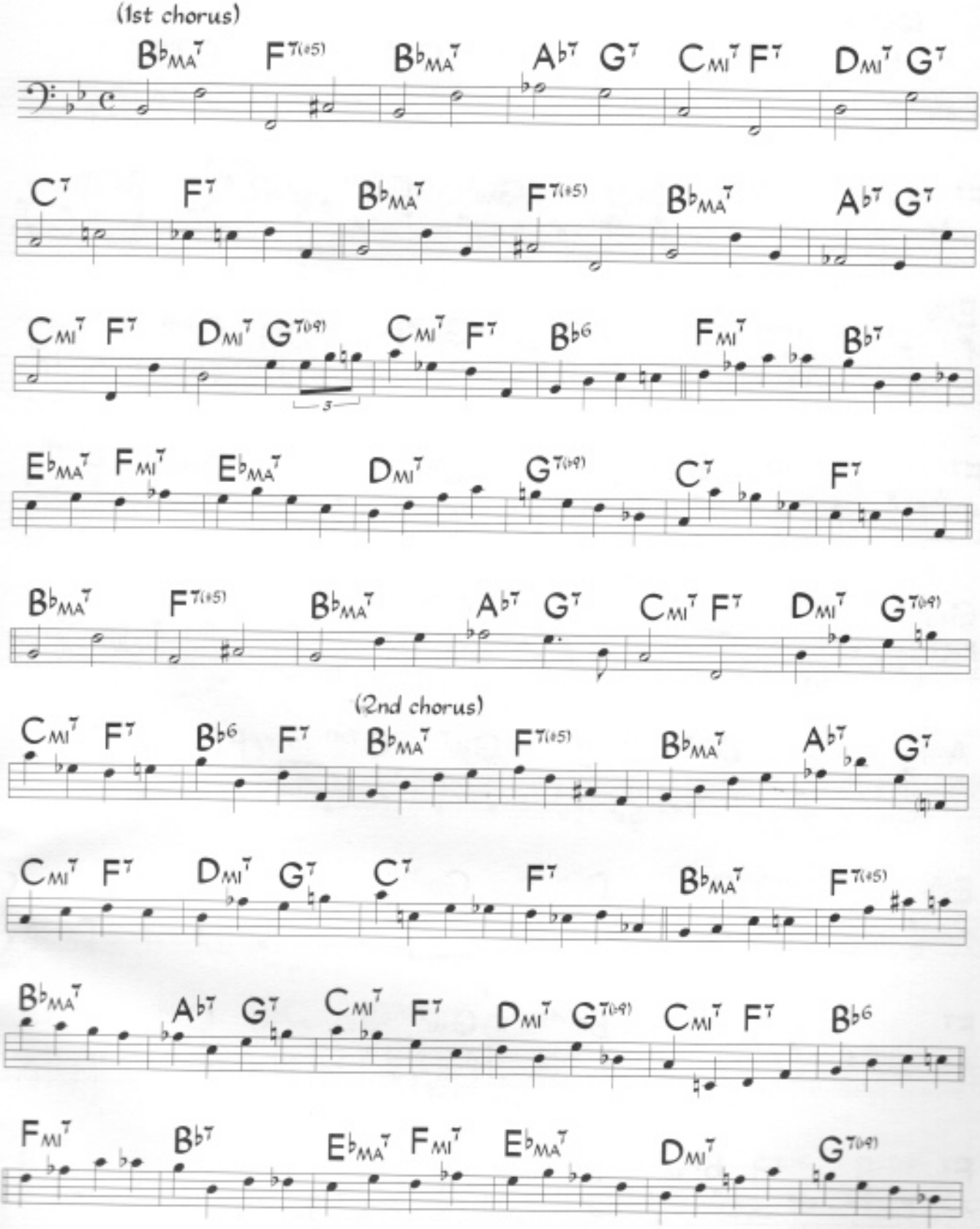

D♭6
D♭MI7
G♭7
A♭6
F7
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
D
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6
E♭MI7
A♭7
D♭6
D♭7
D°7
A♭7
F7
B♭7
B♭MI7
E♭7
A♭6

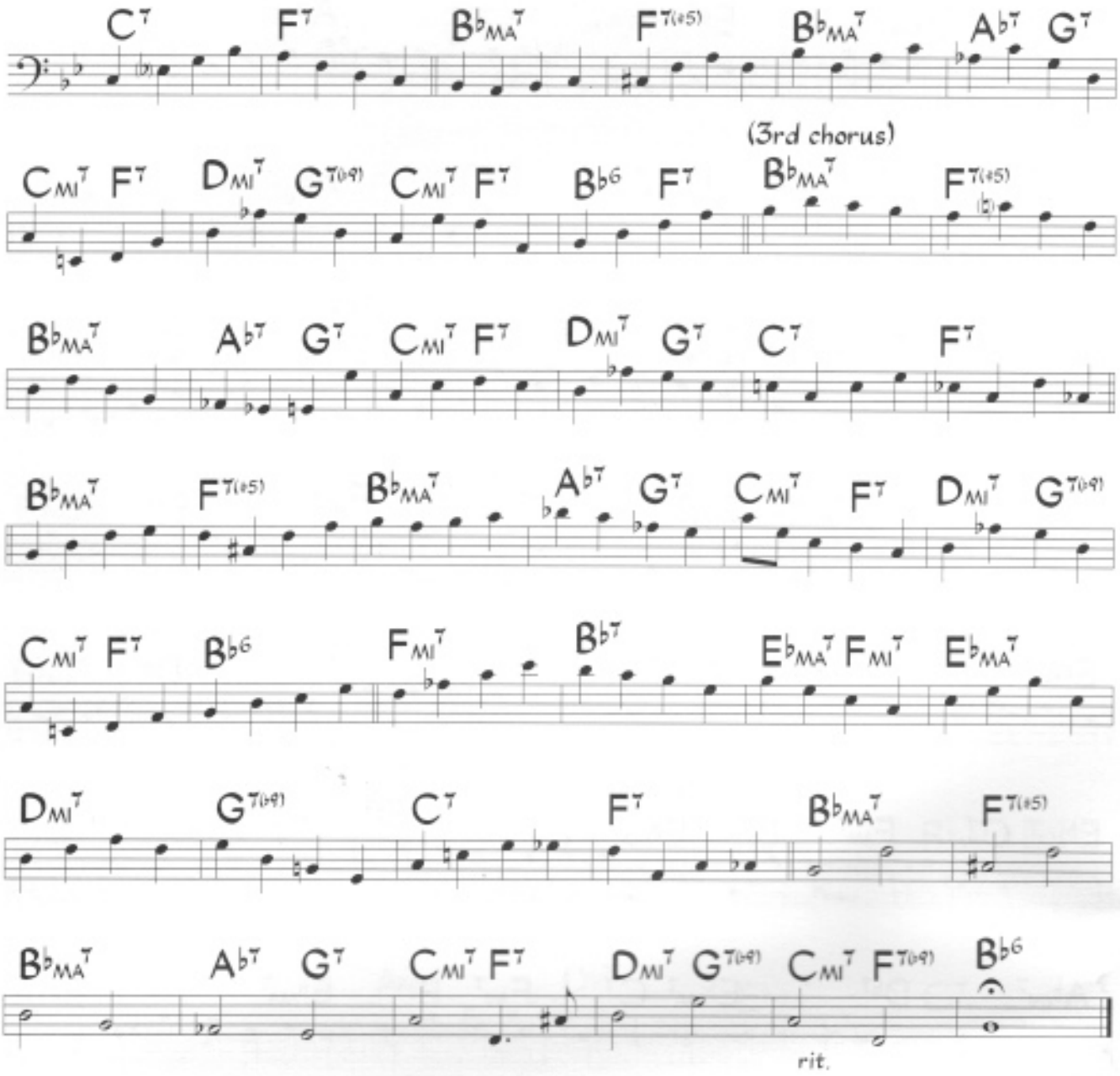
Track #11


(1st chorus)
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
FMI7
B♭7(♭9 ♯5)
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
E♭6/9
D7(♭9)
GMI6
E♭7(♭5)
D7(♭9)
AMI7
D7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
FMI7
B♭7
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
F7(♭9)
B♭7(♭9)

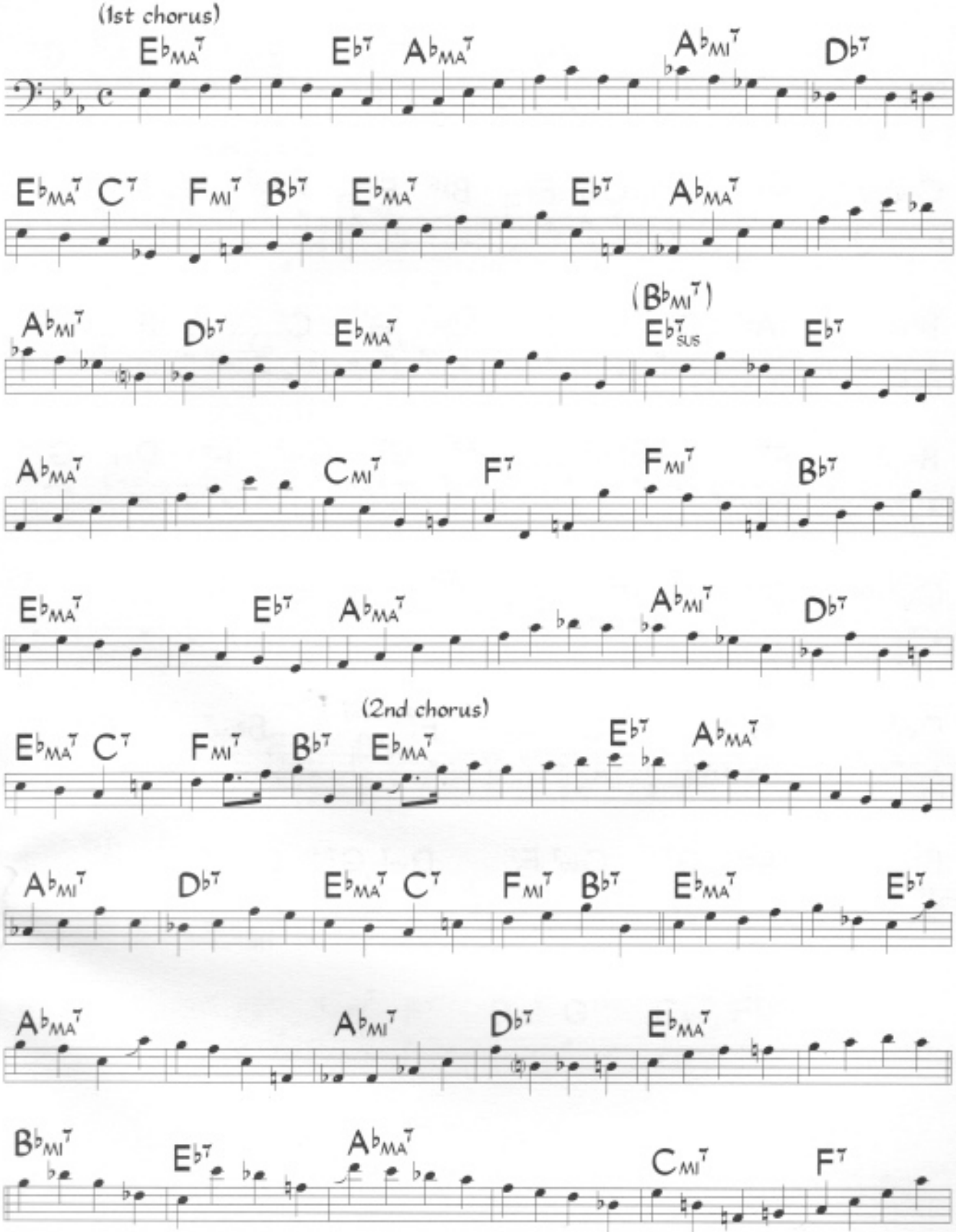

(2nd chorus)
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
FMI7
B♭7(♭9 ♯5)
3
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
E♭6/9
AMI7(♭5)
D7(♭9)
GMI6
E♭7(♭5)
D7(♭9)
AMI7
D7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
FMI7
B♭7
E♭6/9
D9 SUS
D7(♭9)
GMI7(♭5)
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
GMI7
C7(♭9)
F7
B♭9 SUS
B♭7(♭9)
E♭6

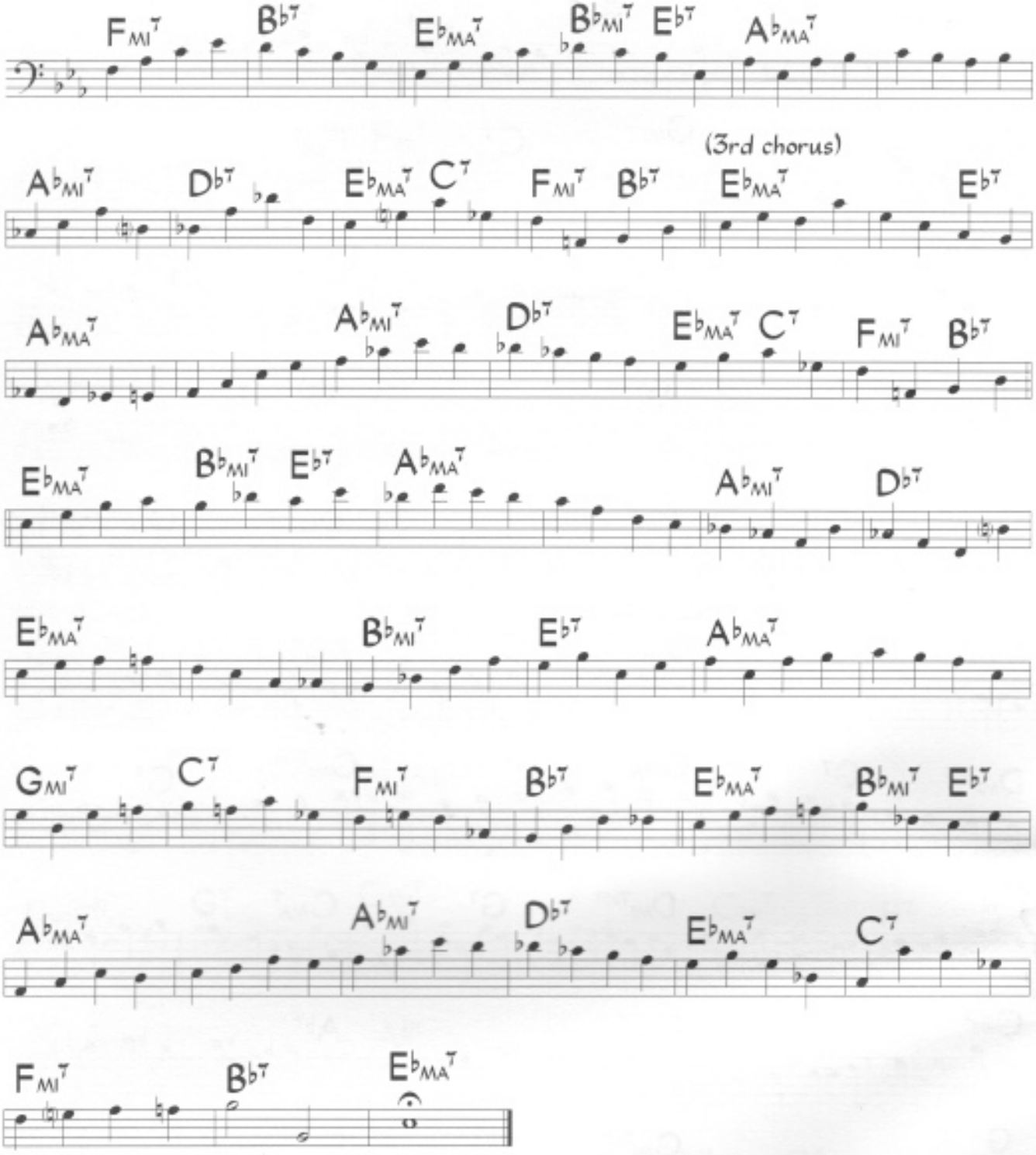
Track #12


(1st chorus)
B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7
C7 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7
CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9) CMI7 F7 B♭6 FMI7 B♭7
3
E♭MA7 FMI7 E♭MA7 DMI7 G7(♭9) C7 F7
B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9)
(2nd chorus)
CMI7 F7 B♭6 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7
CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7 C7 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5)
B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9) CMI7 F7 B♭6
FMI7 B♭7 E♭MA7 FMI7 E♭MA7 DMI7 G7(♭9)

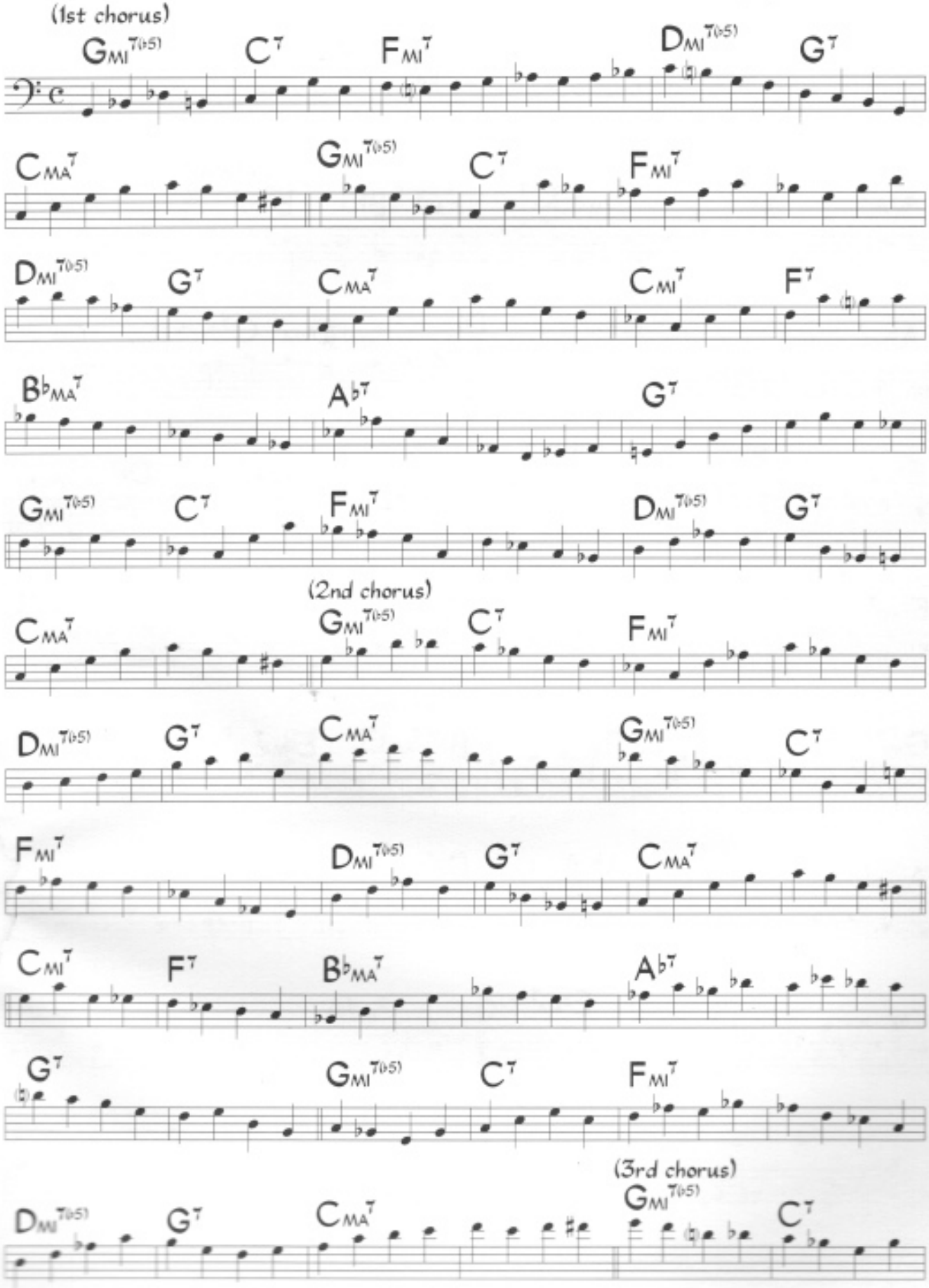

C7 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7
(3rd chorus)
CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9) CMI7 F7 B♭6 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5)
B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7 C7 F7
B♭MA7 F7(♯5) B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9)
CMI7 F7 B♭6 FMI7 B♭7 E♭MA7 FMI7 E♭MA7
DMI7 G7(♭9) C7 F7 B♭MA7 F7(♯5)
B♭MA7 A♭7 G7 CMI7 F7 DMI7 G7(♭9) CMI7 F7(♭9) B♭6
rit.

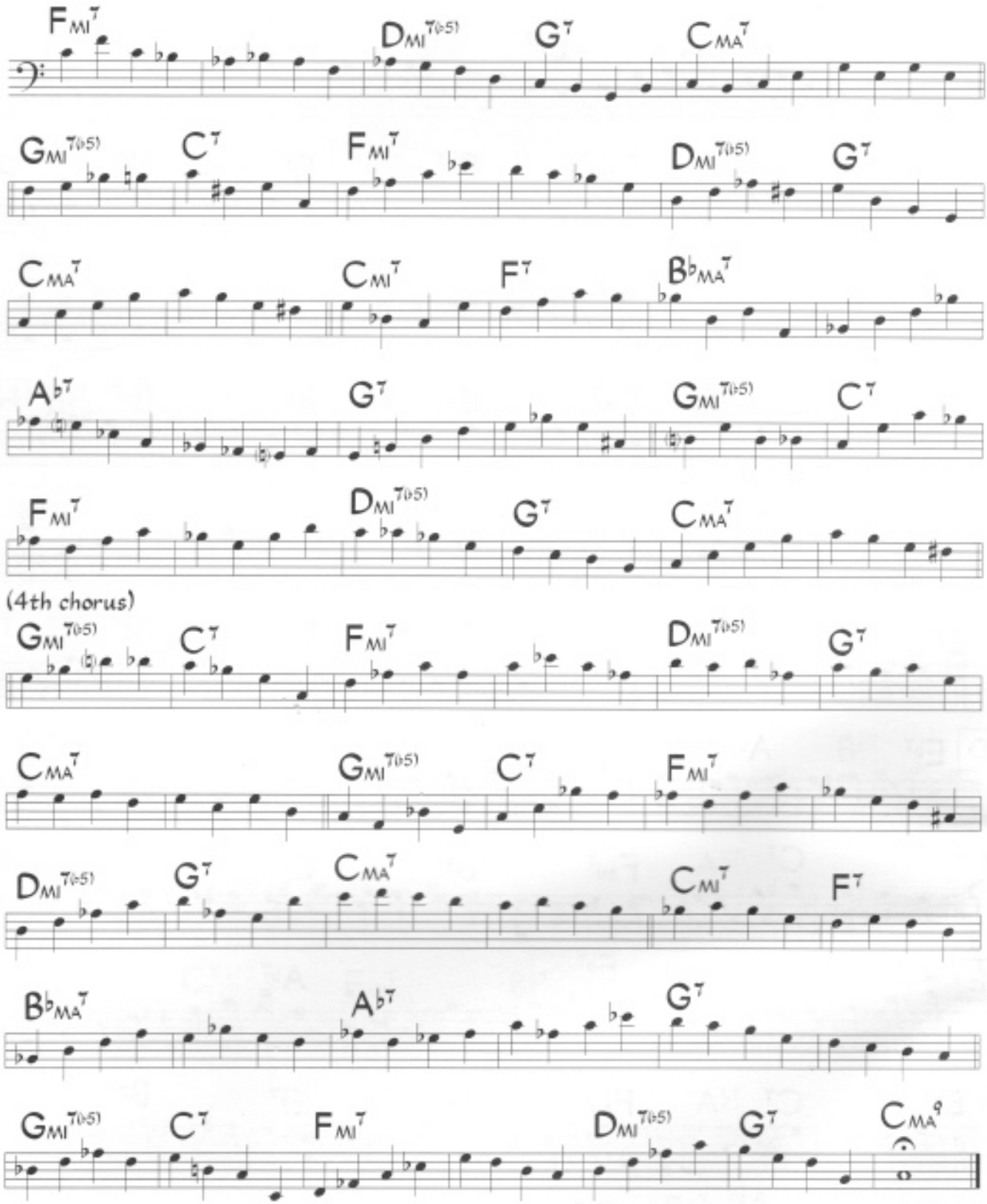
Track #13


(1st chorus)
E♭MA7 E♭7 A♭MA7 A♭MI7 D♭7
E♭MA7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭MA7 E♭7 A♭MA7
(B♭MI7)
A♭MI7 D♭7 E♭MA7 E♭7SUS E♭7
A♭MA7 CMI7 F7 FMI7 B♭7
E♭MA7 E♭7 A♭MA7 A♭MI7 D♭7
(2nd chorus)
E♭MA7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭MA7 E♭7 A♭MA7
A♭MI7 D♭7 E♭MA7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭MA7 E♭7
A♭MA7 A♭MI7 D♭7 E♭MA7
B♭MI7 E♭7 A♭MA7 CMI7 F7

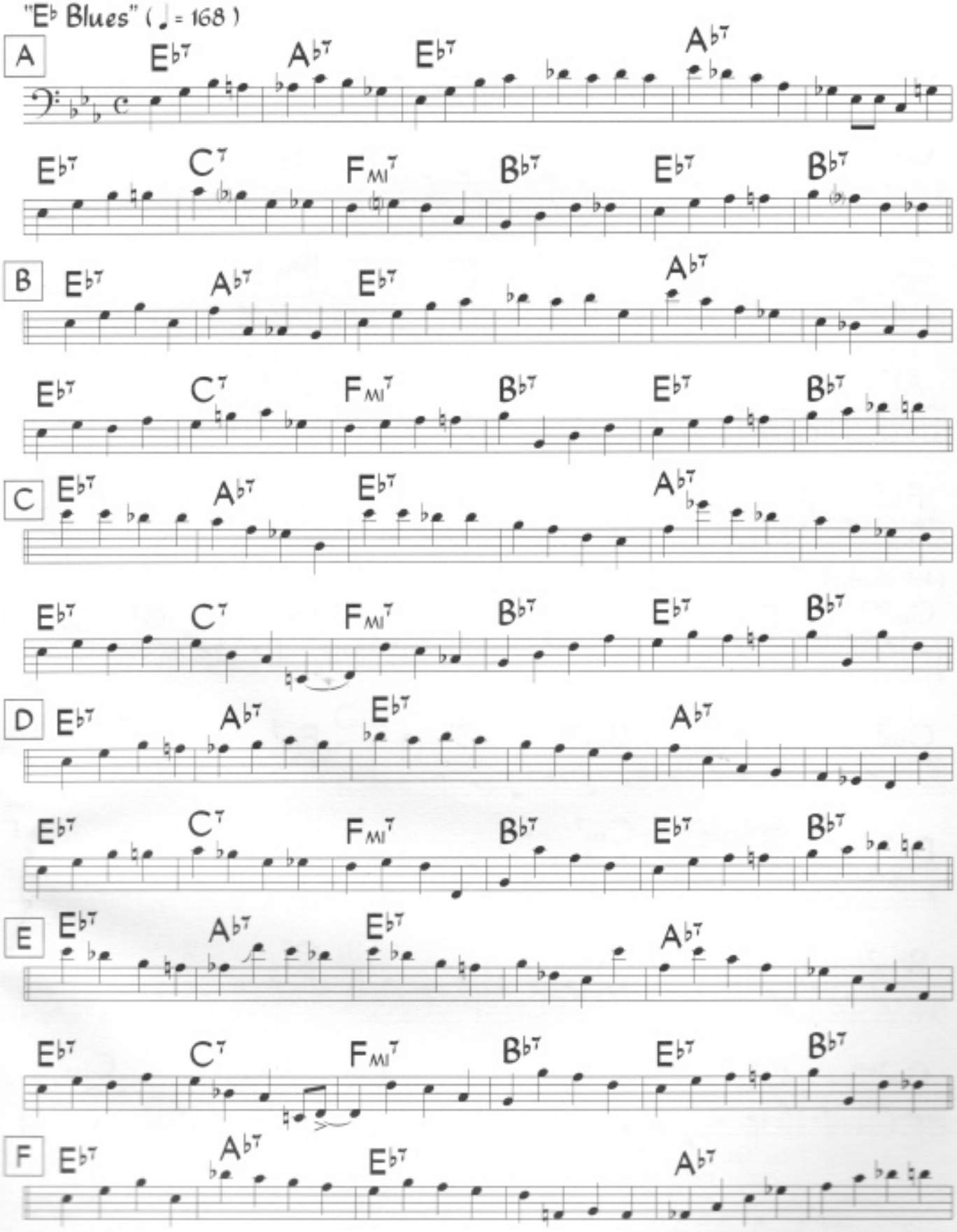

(3rd chorus)

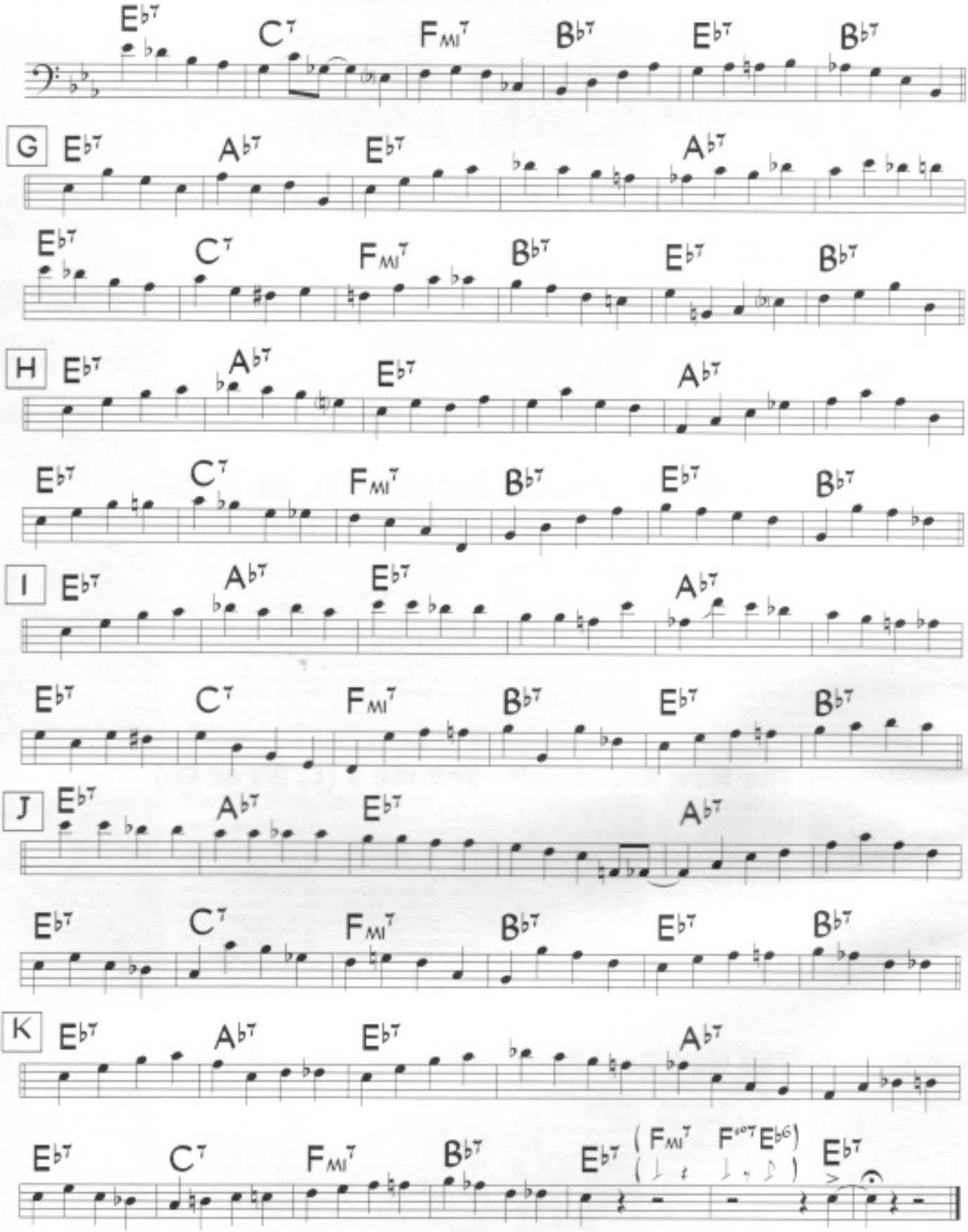
Track #14


(1st chorus)
GMI7(♭5) C7 FMI7 DMI7(♭5) G7
CMA7 GMI7(♭5) C7 FMI7
DMI7(♭5) G7 CMA7 CMI7 F7
B♭MA7 A♭7 G7
GMI7(♭5) C7 FMI7 DMI7(♭5) G7
(2nd chorus)
CMA7 GMI7(♭5) C7 FMI7
DMI7(♭5) G7 CMA7 GMI7(♭5) C7
FMI7 DMI7(♭5) G7 CMA7
CMI7 F7 B♭MA7 A♭7
G7 GMI7(♭5) C7 FMI7
(3rd chorus)
DMI7(♭5) G7 CMA7 GMI7(♭5) C7


FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA7
GMI7(♭5)
C7
FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA7
CMI7
F7
B♭MA7
A♭7
G7
GMI7(♭5)
C7
FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA7
(4th chorus)
GMI7(♭5)
C7
FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA7
GMI7(♭5)
C7
FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA7
CMI7
F7
B♭MA7
A♭7
G7
GMI7(♭5)
C7
FMI7
DMI7(♭5)
G7
CMA9

Track #15


"E♭ Blues" (♩ = 168)
A
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
B
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
C
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
D
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
E
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
F
E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7


E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
G E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
H E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
I E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
J E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 B♭7
K E♭7 A♭7 E♭7 A♭7
E♭7 C7 FMI7 B♭7 E♭7 (FMI7 F°7 E♭6) E♭7