

Early Jazz

a method for improvising in styles from the 1920s and 30s



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Dedication & Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my grandchildren.

For whom I must thank my wife and greatest friend, Diana, and of course the two best things we ever made—our children, Edward and Amy.

*David Burnand
Brighton, 2012*

When I decided to give up the study of Physics and Maths to become a musician, things might have turned out much less interesting if it hadn't been for the following people: Dave Parsons, Brian Richardson, Stanley Glasser, Darren Costin and Janet Ritterman.

From Brian, especially, I learned that a teacher needs to be completely honest with his students, and then patient and generous to a fault. He was all of those to me, when others dismissed my early ambitions.

*From Darren, I learned that you don't have to go to college to become a great musician, and that Pellici's in Bethnal Green does the best breakfasts, and that you needn't take **** from anyone,*

The rest is just practice.

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including prerequisites

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to introduce the improvisational style associated with jazz of the 1920s and 30s. Despite the stylistic changes that occurred as Hot Jazz developed into Swing, these examples demonstrate an underlying unity of approach to the melodic interpretation of harmony, and one which continued within Boogie Woogie, R&B, Rock 'n Roll, Skiffle and Country music, even if modern jazz took a different route.

Of course, there's more to playing jazz than just playing the notes, so listen to as much of the repertoire as possible, in order to internalize the music.

Prerequisites

To fully benefit from this booklet, you must be able to read standard music notation and chord symbols. You should also understand intervals, which will be described as: e.g. '3' for thirds, '7' for sevenths, etc. You should also be familiar with terms such as 'passing note' and 'auxiliary note'.

Later, it will help if you also understand the way that chord progressions can be described generically, using Roman numerals: e.g. [vi ii7 V7 I] represents all of the following.

The image displays four chord progressions on a single musical staff in 4/4 time. Each progression is separated by a double bar line and a key signature change symbol. The chords are written above the staff.

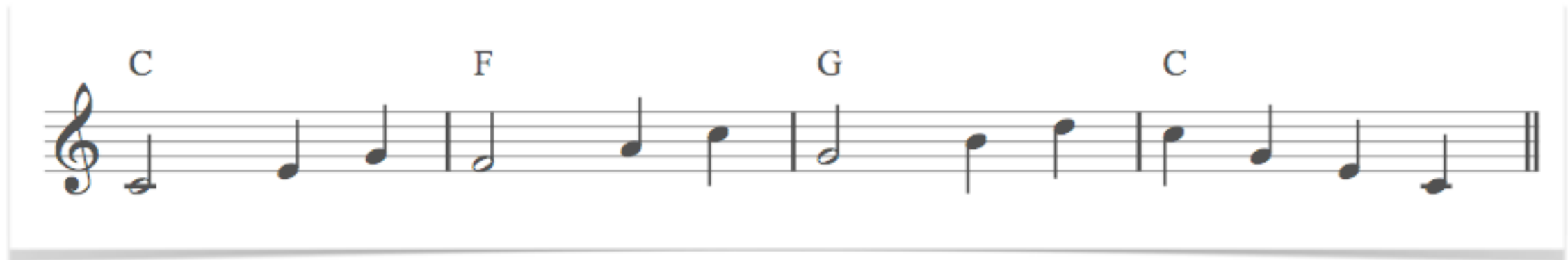
- Progression 1: Em Am7 D7 G
- Progression 2: Am Dm7 G7 C
- Progression 3: Dm Gm7 C7 F
- Progression 4: Gm Cm7 F7 Bb

Chord structure

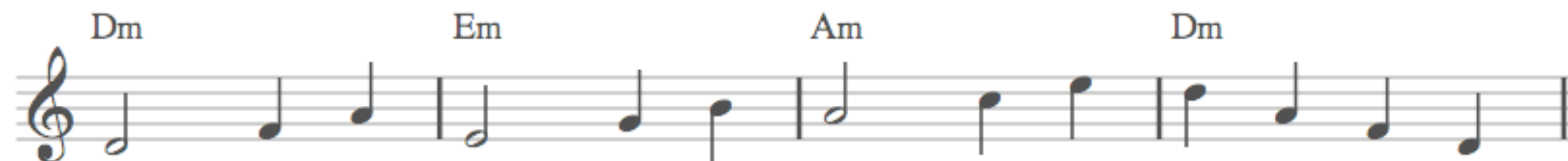
Chords underly the structures of tunes and improvisations in early jazz and swing. Most of the chord types found in jazz of the 1920s and 30s may be derived from a standard 7-note scale.

For example, using only the notes of C major, we can produce the following chords. Play through them.

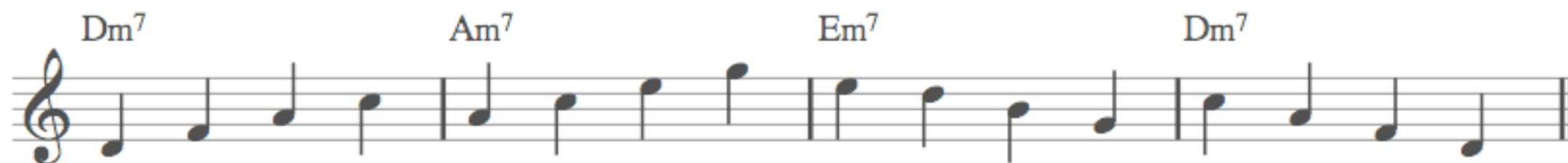
Major triads



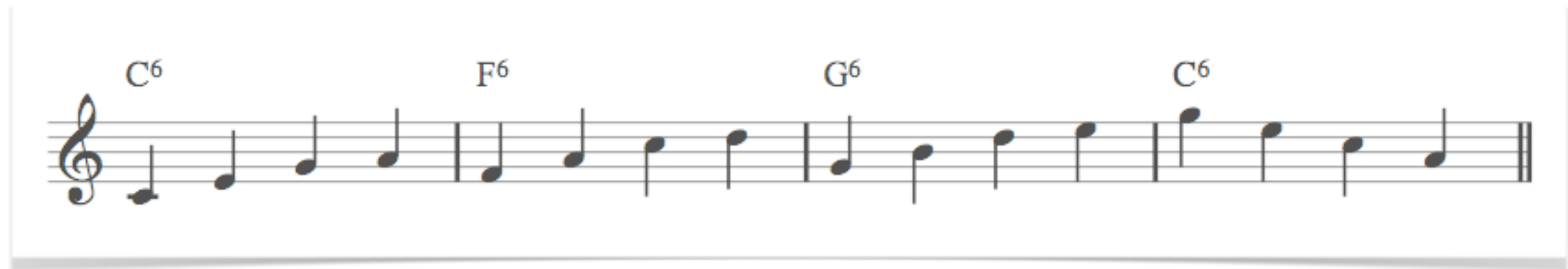
Minor triads



Minor 7



Major 6



Have you noticed the similarity between Major 6 and Minor 7 chords?
If not, go back to the previous page and figure it out.

C⁶ contains the same notes as which m⁷?
F⁶ contains the same notes as which m⁷?
G⁶ contains the same notes as which m⁷?

You'll have noticed that what you're playing doesn't sound like jazz yet. That's because—in real music—the chord types might often be standard, but how they're put together in sequence is not.

Let's carry on building the common chords found in early jazz and swing, while still limiting ourselves to the notes of C major, for the moment.

Dominant 7 / Diminished triad / Minor 6 / Minor 7(b5) / Dominant 9



Note the similarity in content of these five chord types.

Now we need to leave the confines of a standard 7-note scale to create four more chord types found in early jazz. In some contexts, these derive from the minor mode and the influence of the Blues: i.e. think of D# as Eb in the key of C minor.

Dominant 7^{b9} / **Diminished 7** // **Dominant 7^{#5}** / **Augmented triad**



Note the similarity of content in each pair of chords, above. Also note the construction of the B^o7 chord, which shares its contents with o7s built on D, F and A^b. Similarly, G⁺ shares its contents with B⁺ and D[#]⁺, for reasons that should be obvious. If not, think about it.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing a sequence of arpeggios for different chords. The chords are labeled above the staves:

- Staff 1: C, Am, Dm⁷, F⁶
- Staff 2: G⁷, B[°], Dm⁶, Bm^{7(b5)}
- Staff 3: G⁹, G^{7(b9)}, B^{°7}
- Staff 4: G^{7(#5)}, G⁺

The arpeggios are written in treble clef and follow a consistent rhythmic pattern, typically consisting of eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation includes various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) to indicate the specific notes of each chord.

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggios for different chords. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating the key of G major. The chords are labeled above each measure:

- Staff 1: G, Em, Am⁷, C⁶
- Staff 2: D⁷, F^{#o}, Am⁶, F^{#m}7(b5)
- Staff 3: D⁹, D7(b9), F^{#o}7
- Staff 4: D7(#5), D⁺

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggiated chords in the key of D major. The chords are labeled above each measure:

- Staff 1: D, Bm, Em7, G6
- Staff 2: A7, C#o, Em6, C#m7(b5)
- Staff 3: A9, A7(b9), C#o7
- Staff 4: A7(#5), A+

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggiated chords in the key of A major. The chords are labeled above each measure:

- Staff 1: A, F#m, Bm7, D6
- Staff 2: E7, G#o, Bm6, G#m7(b5)
- Staff 3: E9, E7(b9), G#o7
- Staff 4: E7(#5), E+

The notation uses a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The arpeggios are played in a consistent rhythmic pattern across all staves.

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggios. The key signature is E major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The chords and their corresponding arpeggio patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: E (E-G#-B), C#m (C#-E-G#), F#m7 (F#-A-C#-E), A6 (A-C#-E-G#).
- Staff 2: B7 (B-D#-F#-A), D#o (D#-F#-A), F#m6 (F#-A-C#-E-G#), D#m7(b5) (D#-F#-A-C#).
- Staff 3: B9 (B-D#-F#-A-C#), B7(b9) (B-D#-F#-A-C), D#o7 (D#-F#-A-C#-E), D#o7(b9) (D#-F#-A-C).
- Staff 4: B7(#5) (B-D#-F#-A-C#), B+ (B-D#-F#-A-C#-E), B7(b9) (B-D#-F#-A-C), B7(b9) (B-D#-F#-A-C).

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggiated chords. The chords are labeled above the notes. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The chords are: F, Dm, Gm7, Bb6, C7, Eo, Gm6, Em7(b5), C9, C7(b9), Eo7, C7(#5), and C+.

| Staff | Measure 1 | Measure 2 | Measure 3 | Measure 4 |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | F | Dm | Gm7 | Bb6 |
| 2 | C7 | Eo | Gm6 | Em7(b5) |
| 3 | C9 | C7(b9) | Eo7 | C7(b9) |
| 4 | C7(#5) | C7(#5) | C+ | C+ |

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing two measures of arpeggiated chords. The chords are labeled above the staves:

- Staff 1: Bb , Gm , Cm^7 , Eb^6
- Staff 2: F^7 , A° , Cm^6 , $Am^7(b5)$
- Staff 3: F^9 , $F^7(b9)$, $A^{\circ 7}$
- Staff 4: $F^7(\#5)$, F^+

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Swing

The image displays four staves of musical notation, each containing four measures of arpeggios. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The chords and their corresponding arpeggio patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: E_b , C_m , F_m^7 , A_b^6
- Staff 2: B_b^7 , D° , F_m^6 , $D_m^7(b5)$
- Staff 3: B_b^9 , $B_b^7(b9)$, $D^\circ 7$
- Staff 4: $B_b^7(\#5)$, B_b^+

Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.

Extend your knowledge of the 13 common types by playing arpeggios on all of the following chords, not yet covered. End columns denote the chord root.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|---|---|------------------|------------------|---|---|----|----|-------------------|----|---|--------------|
| E | | M6 | | | | | | | | | | | | E |
| B | M | M6 | | | | | | | | | | | | B |
| F#/Gb | M | M6 | 7 | 9 | 7 ^b 9 | 7 [#] 5 | + | | | | | | | F#/Gb |
| C#/Db | M | M6 | 7 | 9 | 7 ^b 9 | 7 [#] 5 | + | | m6 | m7 | | | | C#/Db |
| Ab | M | | 7 | 9 | 7 ^b 9 | 7 [#] 5 | + | m | m6 | m7 | | | | Ab |
| Eb | | | 7 | 9 | 7 ^b 9 | 7 [#] 5 | + | m | m6 | m7 | | | | Eb |
| Bb | | | | | | | | m | m6 | m7 | m7 ^b 5 | o7 | o | Bb |
| F | | | | | | | | m | | | m7 ^b 5 | o7 | o | F |
| C | | | | | | | | | | | m7 ^b 5 | o7 | o | C |
| G | | | | | | | | | | | m7 ^b 5 | o7 | o | G |

Improvisation techniques

Later we'll look at the 13 common chord types in context, using examples from the tunes and improvisations of W.C Handy, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, George Lewis, Sidney Bechet, Benny Goodman and many others.

But first, play through the following illustrations of the commonest techniques for elaborating chords, in order to create melodic improvisation. This includes adding intervals 6 and 2 to the roots of chords, for example. However, instead of describing the latter as 2, we'll call it 9, as if adding a ninth to the root of the chord being played by lower instruments in the arrangement. Think of these additions as ways of extending the chord type through melody.



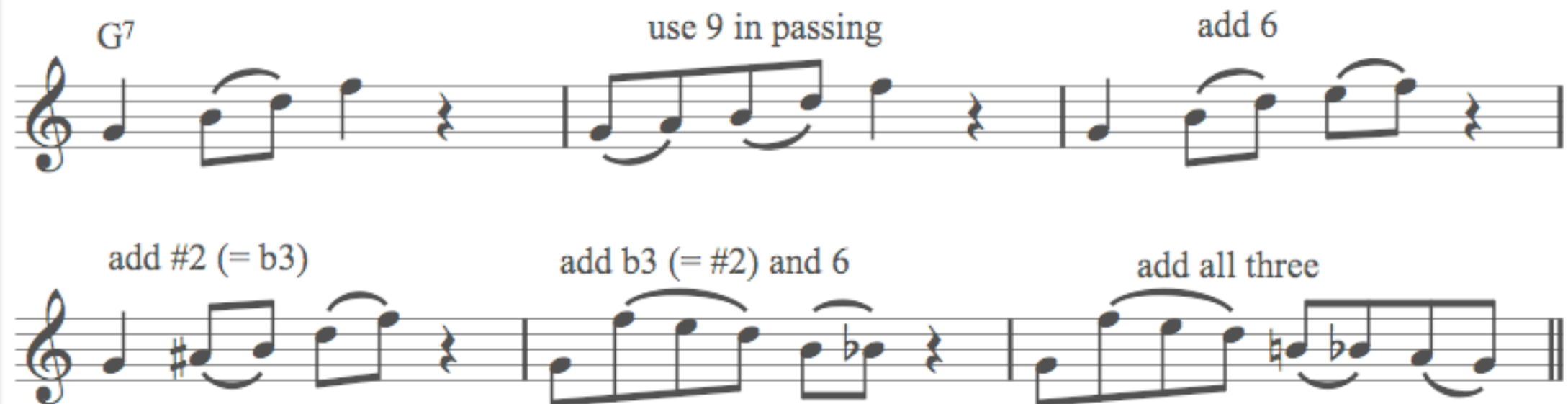
We'll also add intervals $b3$ ($= \#2$) and $b7$ to the roots of major chords, and $b5$ ($= \#4$) to the roots of minor chords. These altered pitches derive from the Blues, which mixes major and minor modes. How the notes are spelled (sharp or flat) depends largely on convenience to the player's eye.

Transpose these initial examples to a range of common keys for your instrument. And always swing the quavers.

The image displays three staves of musical notation, each illustrating a different blues-scale variation. The notation is in treble clef and 4/4 time, with a swing feel indicated by the phrasing of the eighth notes.

- Staff 1 (C major):** Shows four variations of the C major scale. The first is the standard C major scale. The second, labeled "add 6", adds the sixth degree (F). The third, labeled "use 9 in passing", uses the ninth degree (E) as a passing note between F and G. The fourth, labeled "add 6 & 9", adds both the sixth (F) and ninth (E) degrees.
- Staff 2 (C minor):** Shows three variations of the C minor scale. The first is the standard C minor scale. The second, labeled "add $\#2$ ($= b3$)", adds the sharp second degree (D#). The third, labeled "add $b7$ ", adds the flat seventh degree (Bb). The fourth, labeled "add both", adds both the sharp second (D#) and flat seventh (Bb) degrees.
- Staff 3 (A minor):** Shows three variations of the A minor scale. The first is the standard A minor scale. The second, labeled "add $\#4$ ($= b5$)", adds the sharp fourth degree (D#). The third, labeled "A m^7 ", adds the flat seventh degree (G). The fourth, labeled "passing 9", uses the ninth degree (G) as a passing note between F and A.

Transpose to a range of common keys for your instrument.
And always swing the quavers.



The image displays two staves of musical notation in treble clef, illustrating variations of the G7 chord. The first staff begins with a G7 chord symbol. The first measure contains a quarter note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter rest. The second measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The third measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The second staff illustrates three variations: 1. 'add #2 (= b3)': The first measure contains a quarter note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The second measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The third measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. 2. 'add b3 (= #2) and 6': The first measure contains a quarter note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The second measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The third measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. 3. 'add all three': The first measure contains a quarter note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The second measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The third measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The fourth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The sixth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B. The seventh measure contains a quarter note G and a quarter rest. The eighth measure contains an eighth note G, an eighth note A, and a quarter note B.

As jazz developed after the 1930s, improvisation increasingly relied on techniques based on scales. But other styles of music continued to use the same elaborations of chords, as outlined above.

So, the following phrase would work in Boogie Woogie of the 1940s, or in later Rhythm & Blues, Rock & Roll, Skiffle and Country, etc.

Swing

G

b3 or b7 relative to root of chord

6 or 9(2) relative to root of chord

Exercises: individual chords

The following exercises are based on repertoire from jazz tunes and improvisations by W.C Handy, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, George Lewis, Sidney Bechet, Benny Goodman and many others. These melodic techniques were common beyond jazz, in Ragtime, Blues, Country and Skiffle, for example, and influential on later styles such as Boogie Woogie, Rhythm & Blues, Rock & Roll, etc.

Starting with individual chords and their elaboration, we'll then move on to short harmonic sequences.

Play these exercises in a range of tempos and with a range of dynamics. Alter the phrasing, too.

You should transpose the exercises to different keys, especially those you commonly play in, and alter registers where appropriate.

A version with audio accompaniment is in development. For further details contact:

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burnand369@gmail.com

Major triad (no additions)



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Major triad (no additions)



Major triad with added 6 & 9



Identify the added notes.

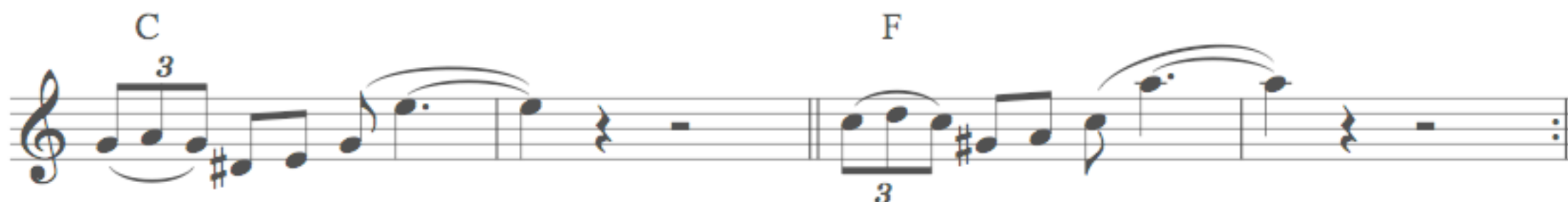
Then practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Major triad with auxiliary 6, as well as #2 (= b3, which will be referred to as blues 3 from hereon)



N.B. these inflections of the 3rd derive from the mix of major and minor modes in the Blues, as stated above, but can also be found as chromatic ornamentation of melody in classical music of 100 years earlier:

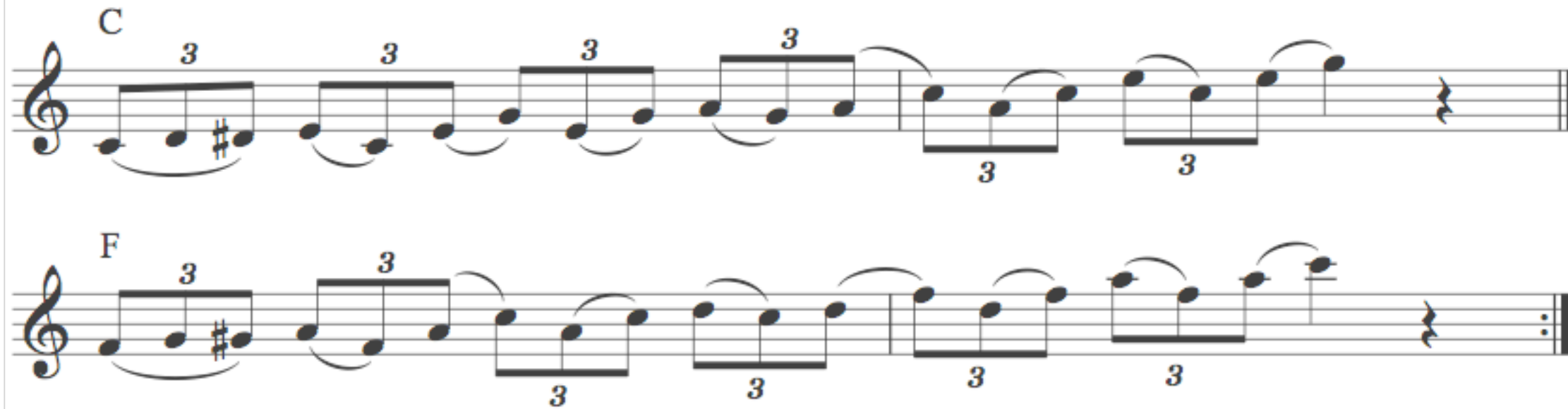
Major triad with auxiliary 6, as well as #2 (= b3, which will be referred to as blues 3 from hereon)



From Schubert's *Scherzo* No. 1 D593 for piano (1817)
(transposed from Eb)

Note the added 6, as well.

Major triad with added 6 & 9, plus blues 3 as chromatic passing note



Remember to identify the added notes.

Then practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Major triad with added 6, blues 3 & auxiliary 4

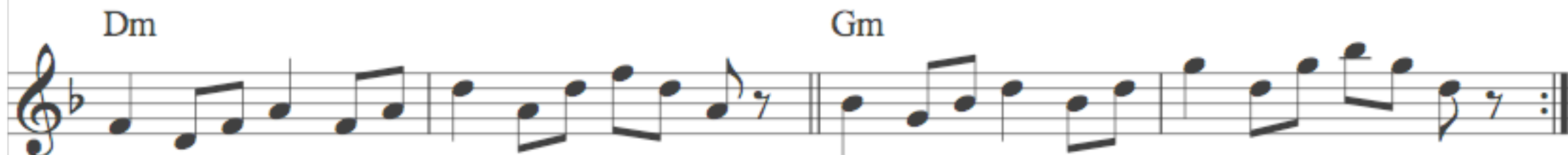


Major triad with added 6 & blues 3, as well as #4 as chromatic passing note
(N.B. #4 or b5 is also typical of the blues)



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Minor triad (no additions)



Minor triad with b5 (referred to as blues 5 from hereon)



Consider how added notes compare between minor chords and their relative majors: i.e. b5 of Am = b3 of C.

Try the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

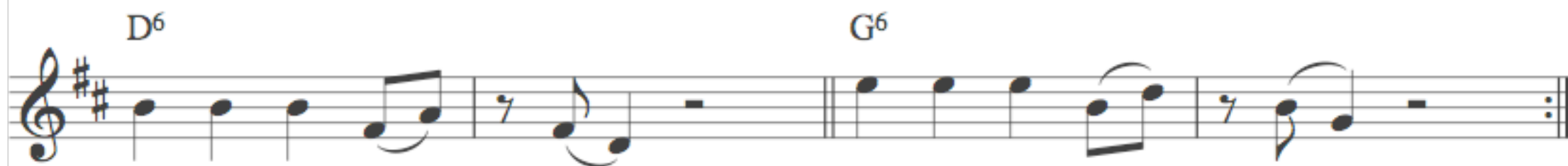
Minor 7 (no additions)



Minor 7 with & without passing note 9



Major 6 (no additions)



Major 6 with chromatic passing notes, including 9 & blues 3



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

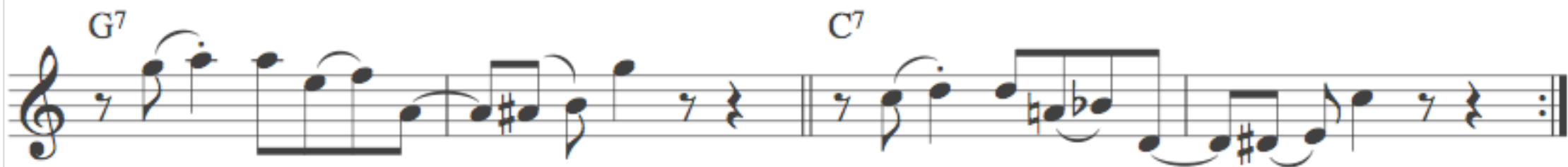
Dominant 7 (no additions)



Dominant 7 with blues 3 & auxiliary 9



Dominant 7 with blues 3, added 9 & 6



Dominant 7 with added 6 & chromatic passing note

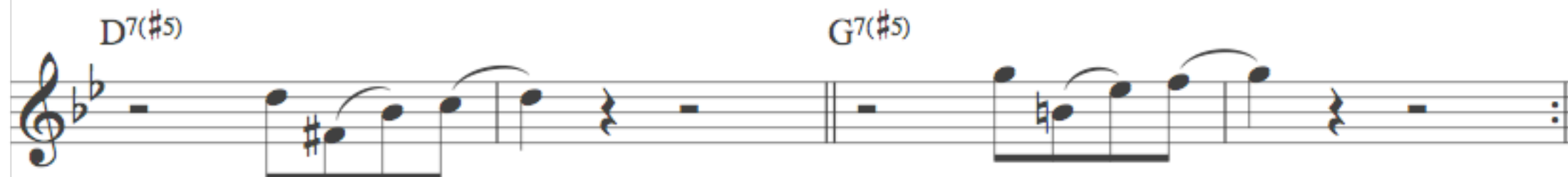


Diminished 7 (no additions) N.B. $G^{\#}o7 = B o7 \text{ \& } D o7$ $A o7 = C o7 \text{ \& } E b o7$ $B b o7 = C^{\#} o7 \text{ \& } E o7$

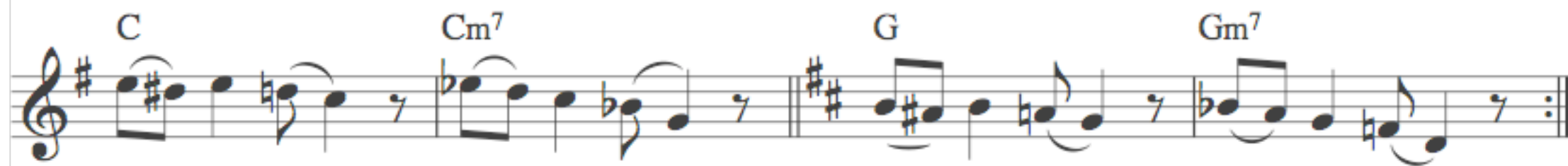


Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Dominant 7($\#5$) notated here as $b6$ due to its common occurrence in minor keys



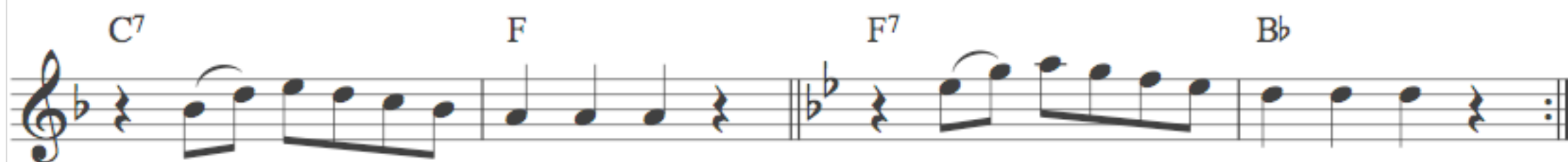
IV iv7 progression with blues 3 & passing 9



I V7 progression



V7 I progression with added 9



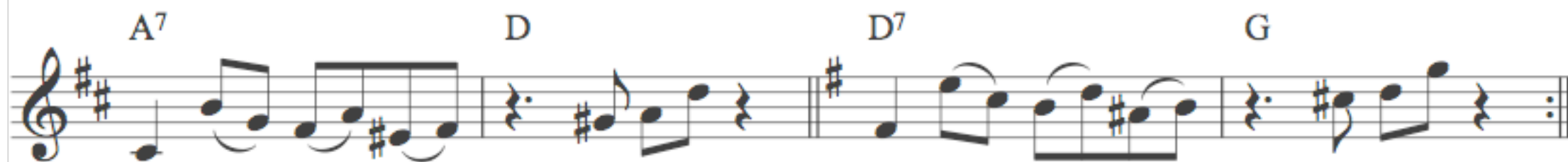
I IV7 progression with blues 3, added 9 & 6

Two staves of music in D major. The first staff is labeled with a 'D' above the first measure and a 'G7' above the fifth measure. The second staff is labeled with a 'C' above the first measure and an 'F7' above the fifth measure. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various ties and slurs. The first staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

V7 I progression with #5, added 6 & 9

Two staves of music in D major. The first staff is labeled with 'D7' above the first measure, 'G' above the second measure, 'D7' above the third measure, and 'G' above the fourth measure. The second staff is labeled with 'G7' above the first measure, 'C' above the second measure, 'G7' above the third measure, and 'C' above the fourth measure. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various ties and slurs. The first staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

V7 1 progression with added 6 & 9, #5 & #4



V7 I progression with blues 3 & added 9 chromatic passing notes, and anticipation of next chord

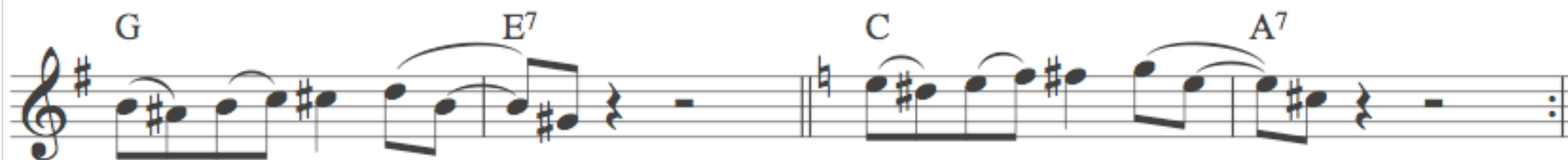


V7 i progression with auxiliary and passing notes

N.B. notice how the minor key influences treatment of its dominant 7 (i.e. D# & G# = b5 of Am & Dm respectively)



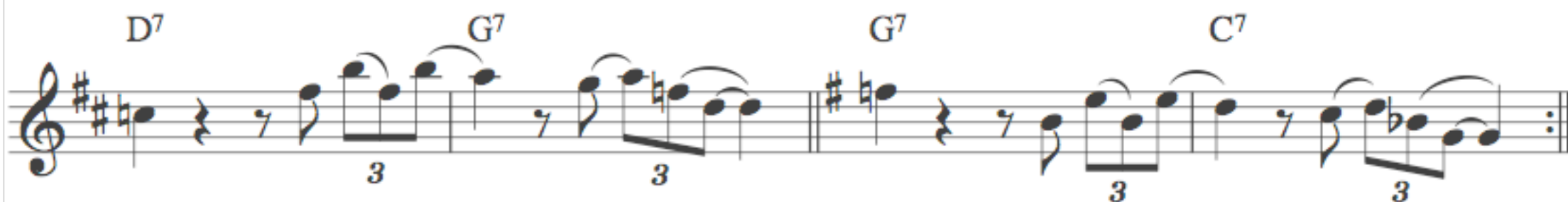
I VI7 progression with blues 3 & 5



V7 I6 progression with chromatic passing notes



I7 IV7 progression with added 6 and 9



V7b9 i progression

Two staves of music in D major. The first staff is labeled B7(b9) and Em. The second staff is labeled E7(b9) and Am. The first staff contains a melodic line starting with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note D, an eighth note E, a quarter note F# (marked with a sharp sign), and a half note G. The second staff contains a melodic line starting with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note E, an eighth note F#, a quarter note G, and a half note A. The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

V7#5 I progression with added 6

A single staff of music in D major. The staff is labeled D7(#5), G, G7(#5), and C. The music starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note D, an eighth note E, a quarter note F# (marked with a sharp sign), and a half note G. The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

#IVdim7 I6 progression



IV6 #IVdim7 progression with passing notes



Three or more chords

For the remaining exercises use your understanding of chord structure to analyze melody notes falling outside the chord. The techniques being applied are the same as those already encountered.

In all cases, practise the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Try different registers, phrasing and dynamics. Memorize and adapt.

I IV7 I

C



F7

C

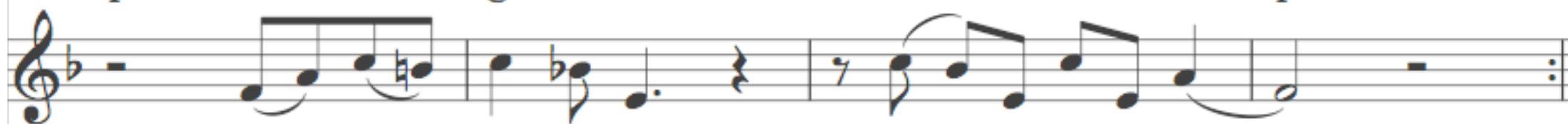


I V7 I

F

C7

F



Typical 12-bar Blues opening

IV iv 16

bVII V7 i

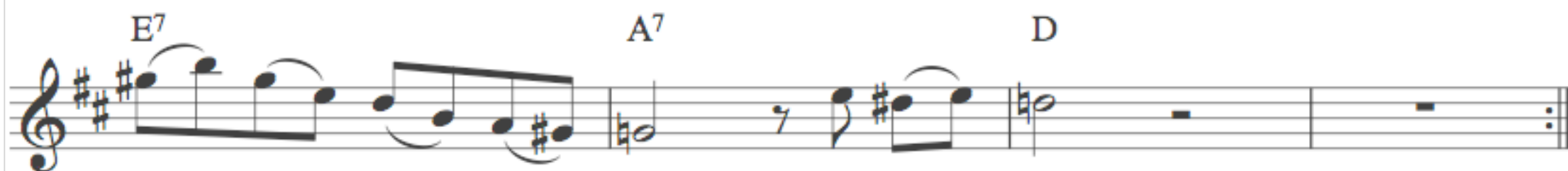
ii7 V7 I



II7 V7 I



II7 V7 I



II7 V7 I



II7 V7 I



IV #IVdim I



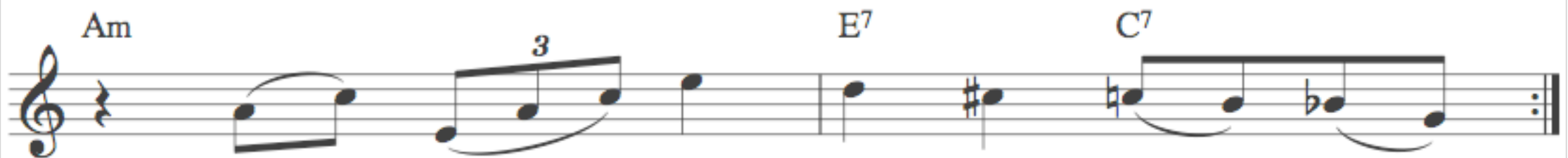
IV7 #IVdim I



ii7 V7 I6



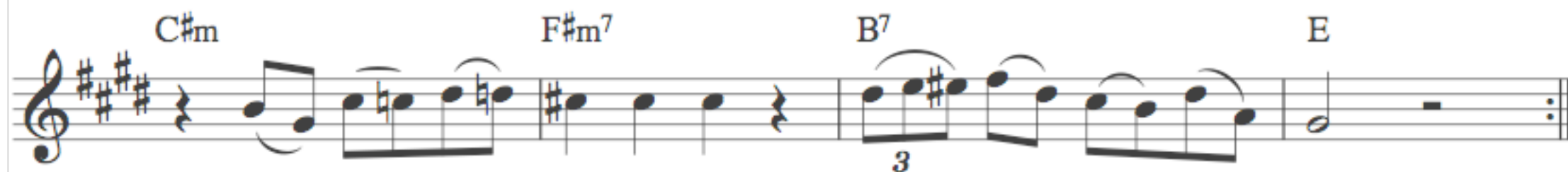
i V7 III7



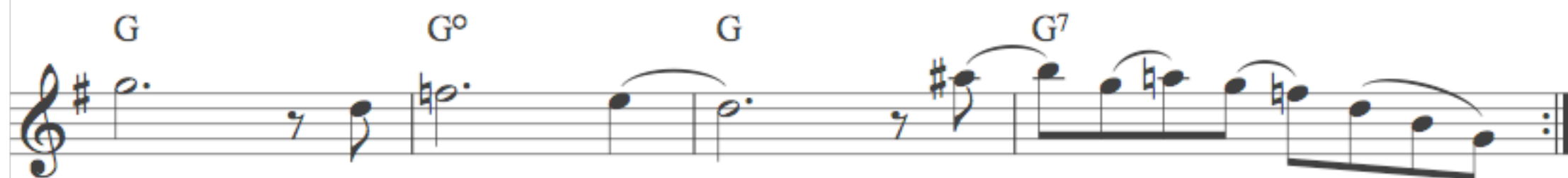
IV7 bVI7 V7 (minor key)



vi ii7 V7 I



I Idim I I7



V7 I I7 IV iv



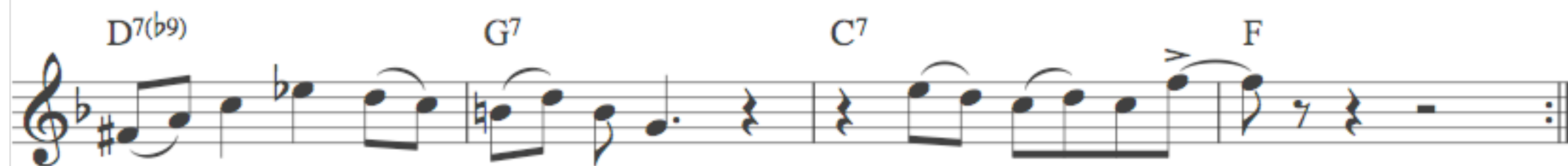
ii #IVdim I VI7



I II7 #IV7 V7 I

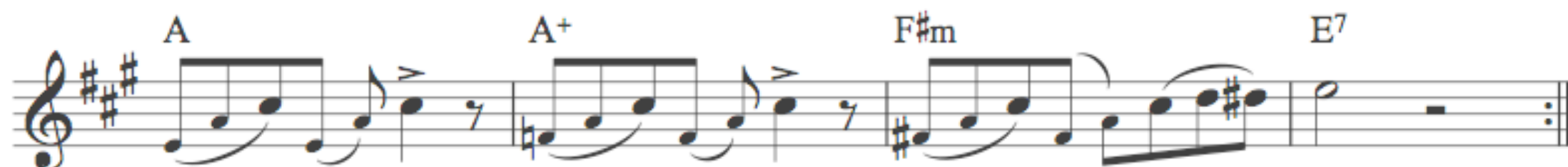


VI7(b9) II7 V7 I

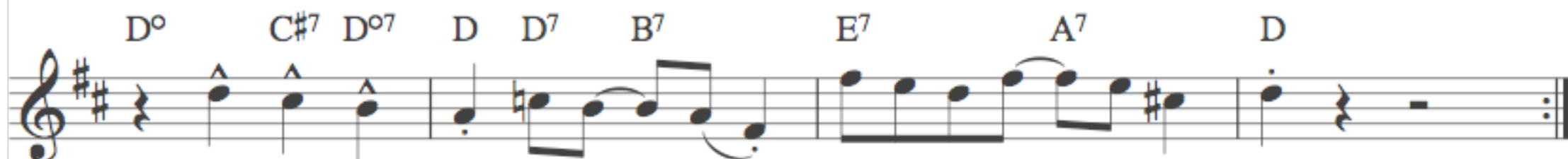


I I+ vi V7

(N.B. pivot note formed by the major third of the key: try leaving out the small notes)



Typical approach to a II7 V7 I



A passage of Benny Goodman's solo from 'After You've Gone'



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

12-bar blues improvisation in the style of George Lewis

N.B. Although this is from a 1940s recording, it's a stylistic throwback to earlier jazz

Extending to a Minor 9 is a modern touch

Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Major triads with added 9, 6, b7 & b3: a phrase readily transplanted to later styles beyond jazz



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

That ends this introduction to improvising early jazz. Now it's time to exploit what you've learned by playing complete tunes. Explore all the possibilities suggested above, when you do so.

Good luck.

A version with audio accompaniment is in development, including separate sections for transposing instruments.

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NEW ORLEANS

(CENTRAL)

Scale of Yards

0 500 1000

