SYNCRONA MUSIC EDUCATION SERIES

# Early Jazz

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

PROFESSOR DAVID BURNAND

# Copyright

# EARLY JAZZ

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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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# Introduction

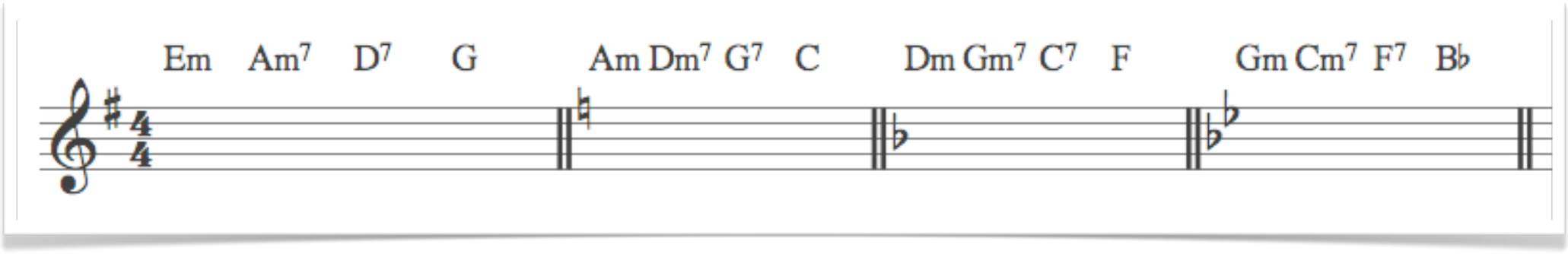
The purpose of this booklet is to introduce the improvisational style associated with jazz of the 1920s and 30s. Despite the stylistic changes that occurred as Hot Jazz developed into Swing, these examples demonstrate an underlying unity of approach to the melodic interpretation of harmony, and one which 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.

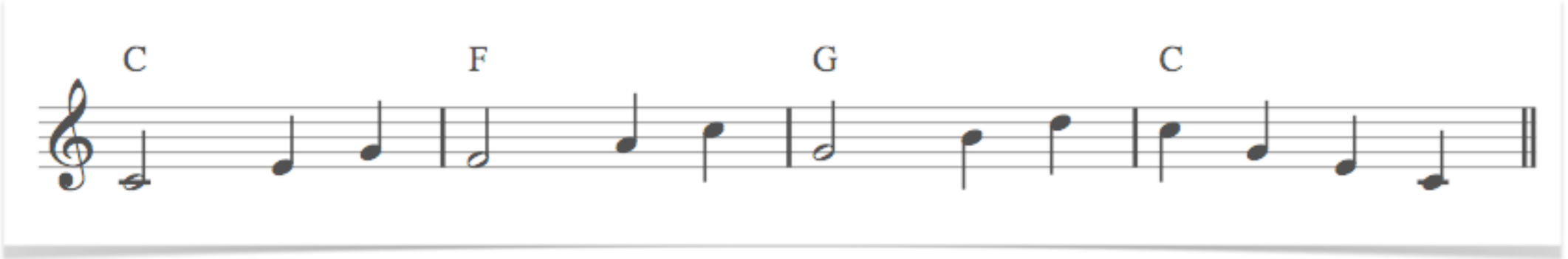


# Chord structure

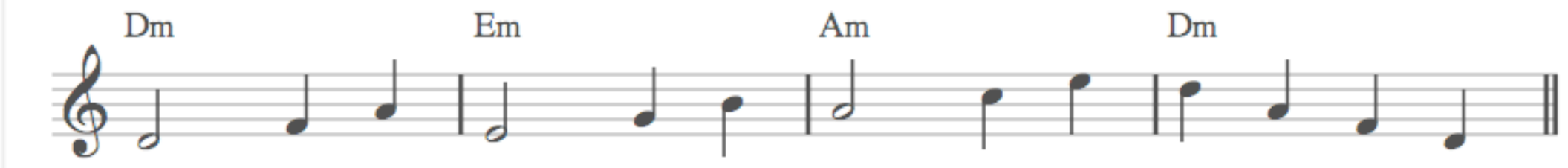
Chords underly the structures of tunes and improvisations in early jazz and swing. Most of the chord types found in jazz of the 1920s and 30s may be derived from a standard 7-note scale.

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

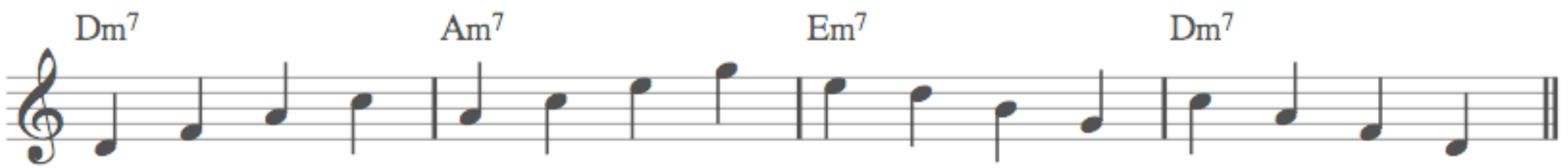
**Major triads**



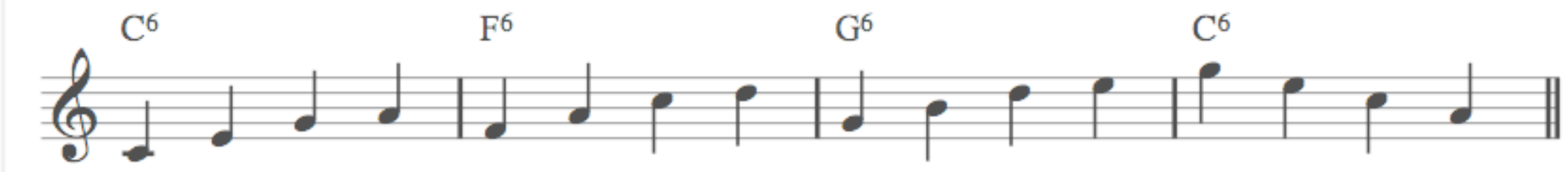
## Minor triads




## Minor 7



## Major 6



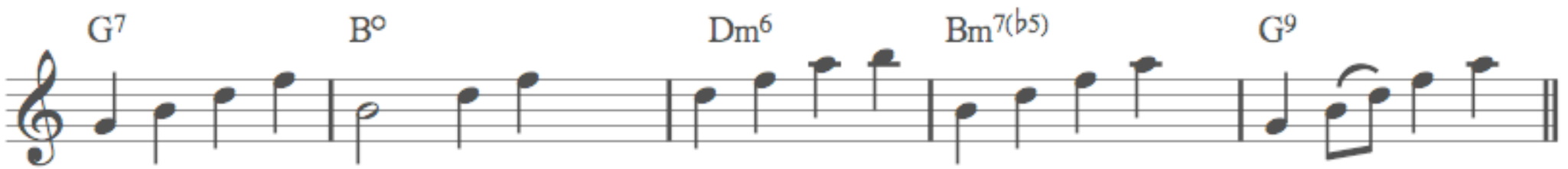

Have you noticed the similarity between Major 6 and Minor 7 chords?
If not, go back to the previous page and figure it out.

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.

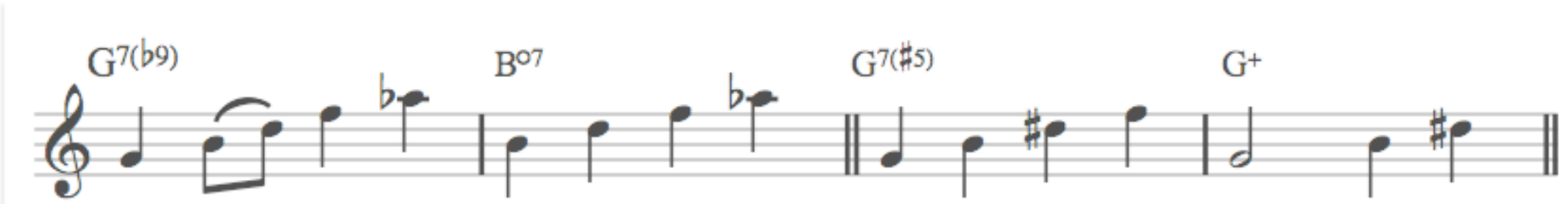
**Dominant 7 / Diminished triad / Minor 6 / Minor 7**(b5) **/ Dominant 9**



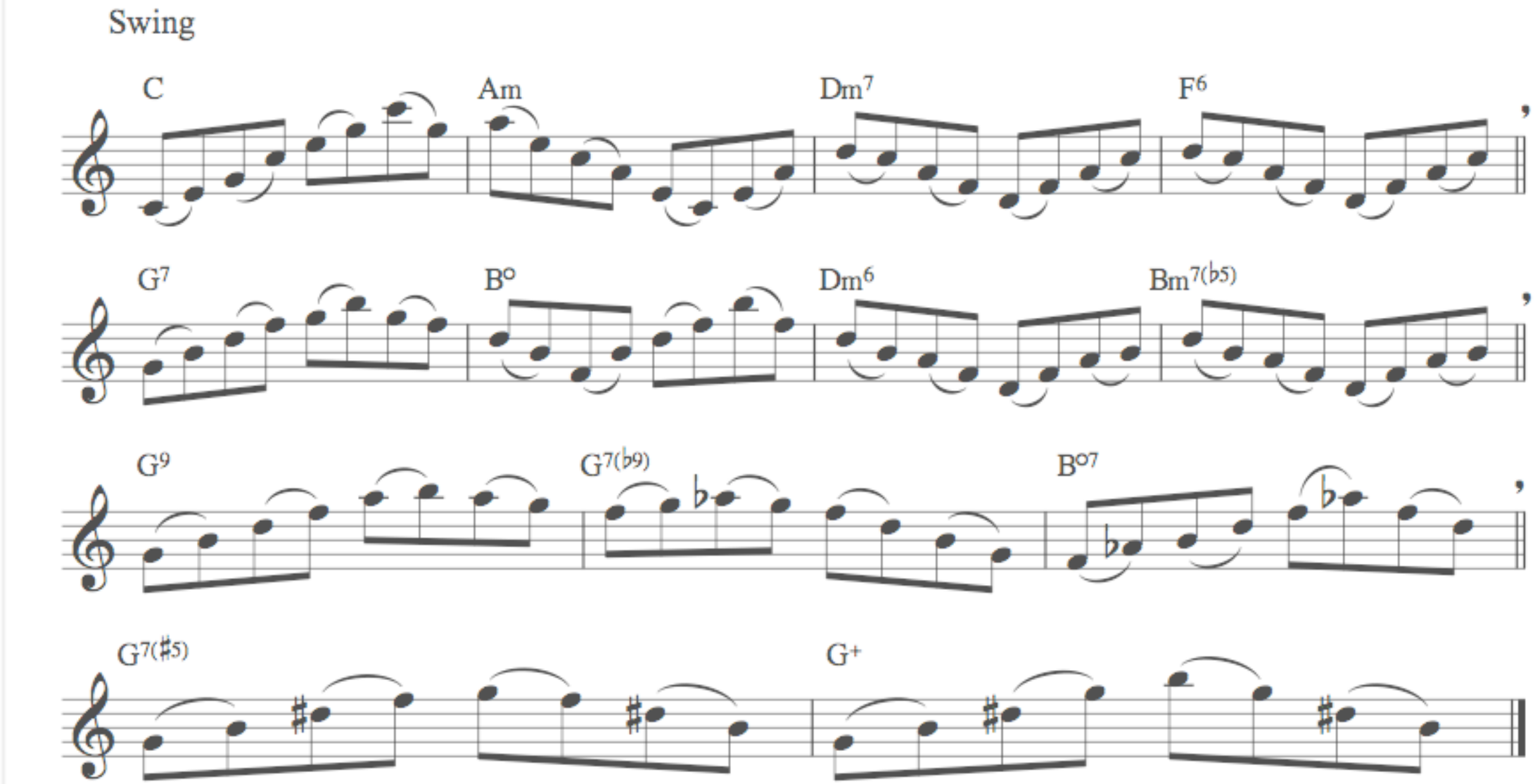

Note the similarity in content of these five chord types.

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.

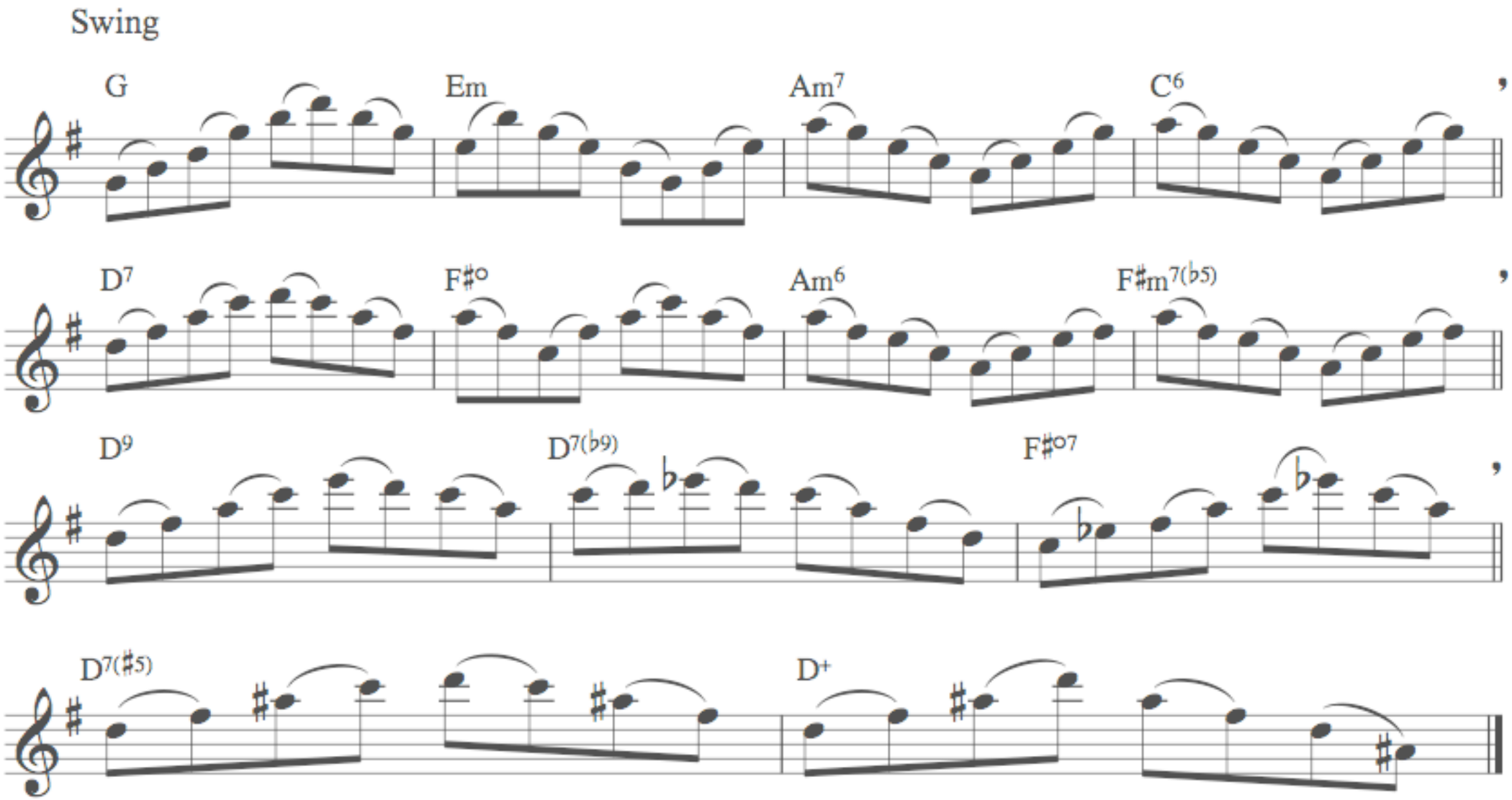
**Dominant 7**b9 / **Diminished 7** // **Dominant 7**#5 / **Augmented triad**




Note the similarity of content in each pair of chords, above. Also note the construction of the Bo7 chord, which shares its contents with o7s built on D, F and Ab. Similarly, G+ shares its contents with B+ and D#+, for reasons that should be obvious. If not, think about it.




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

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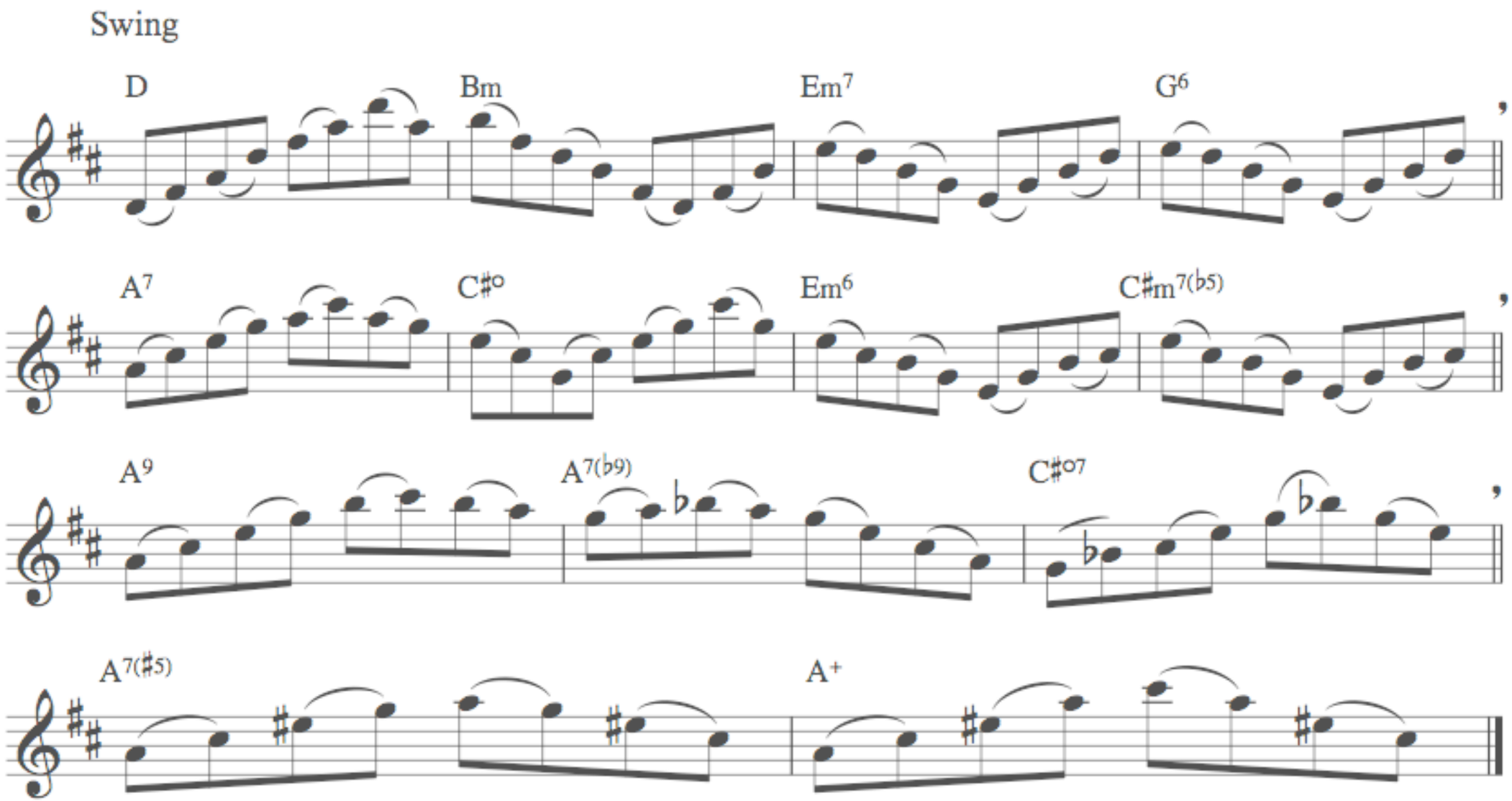


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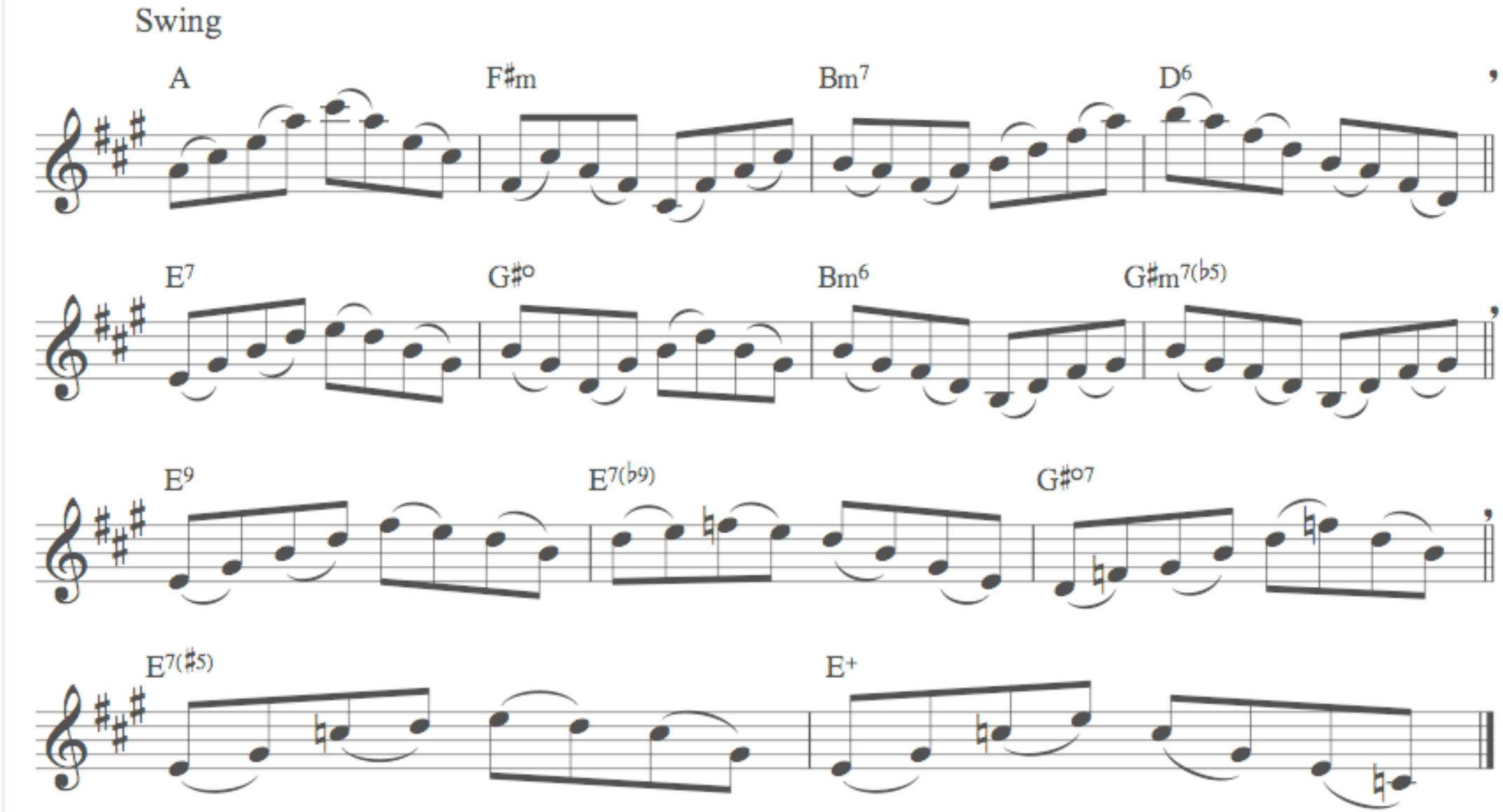


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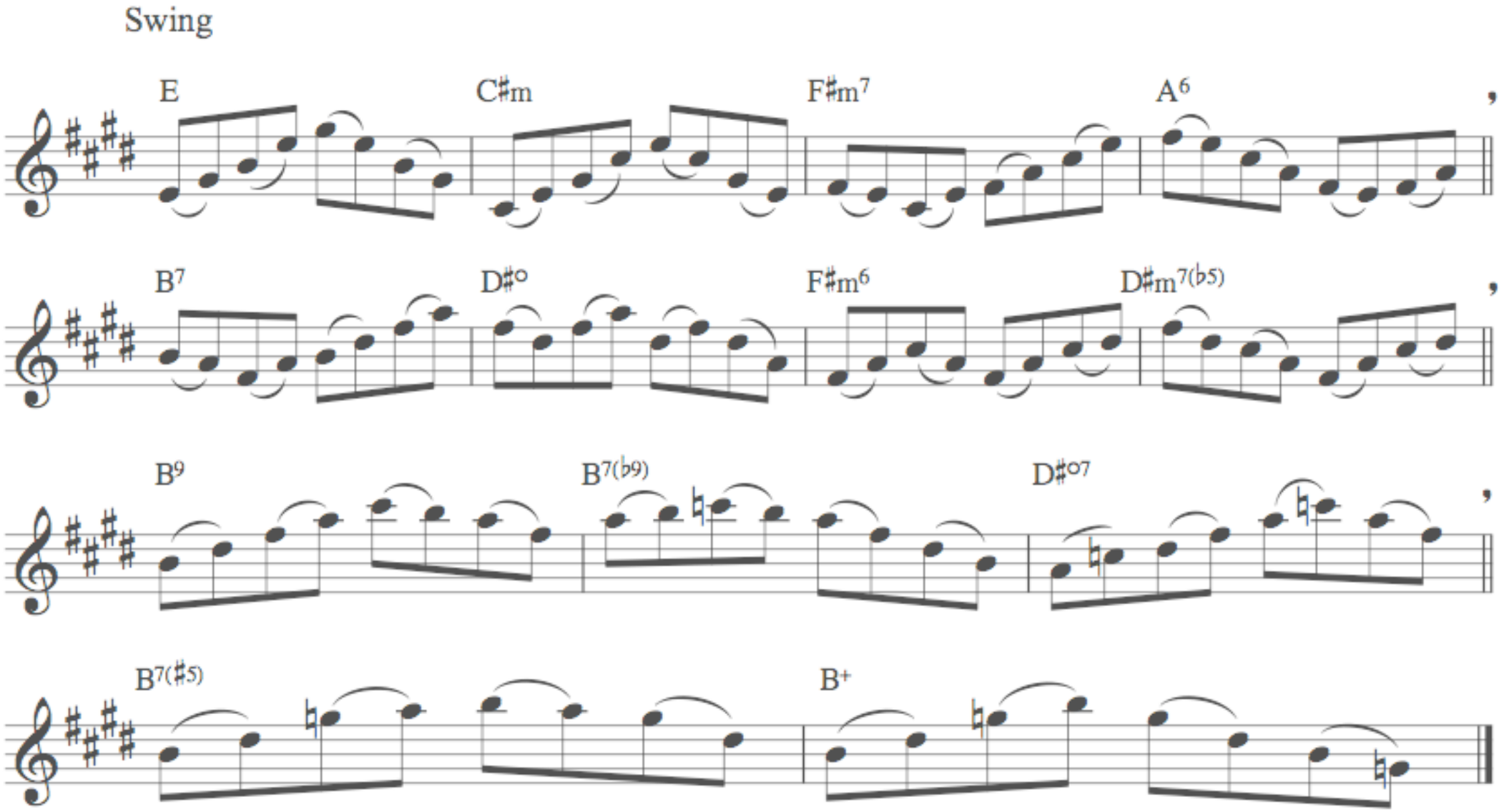


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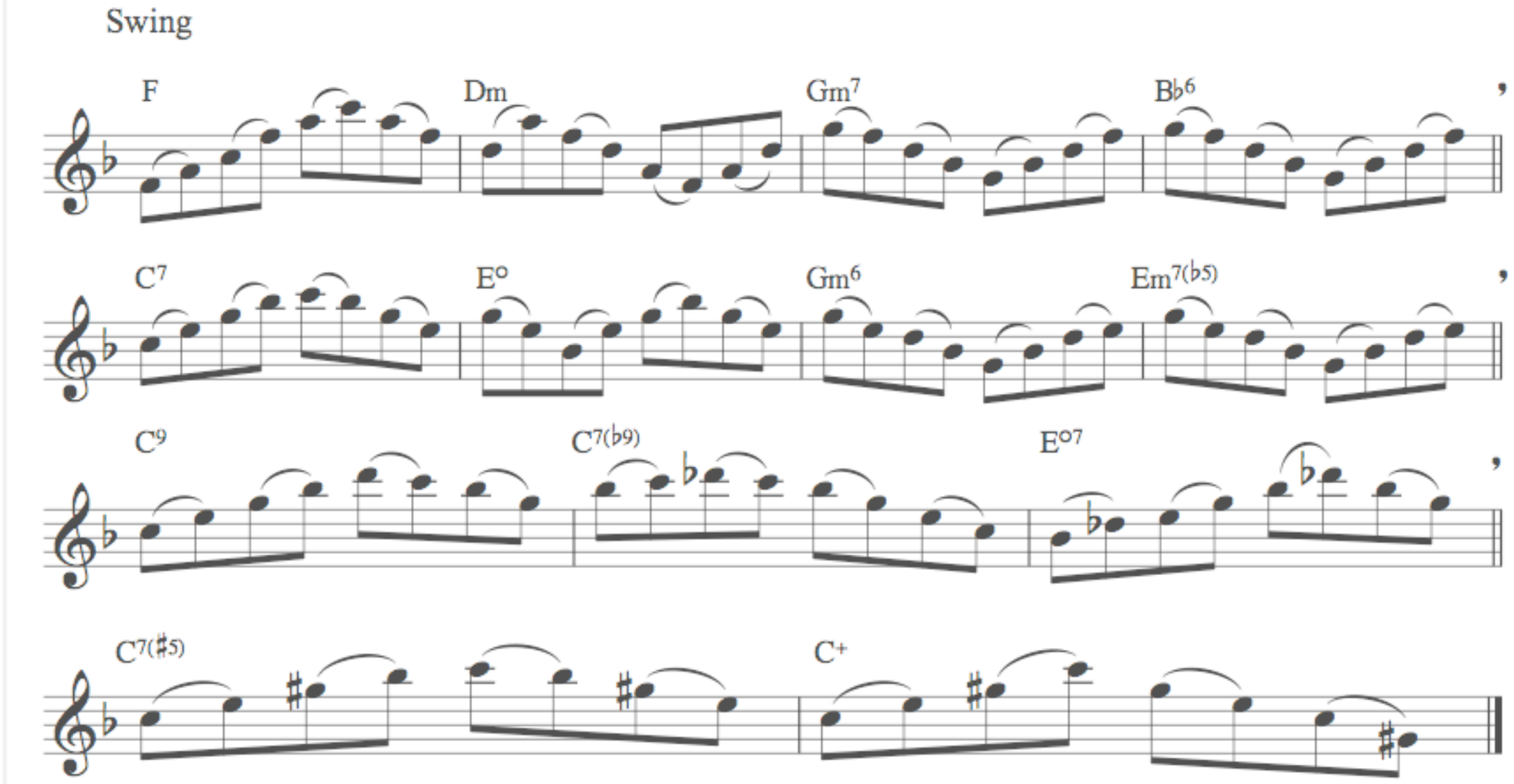
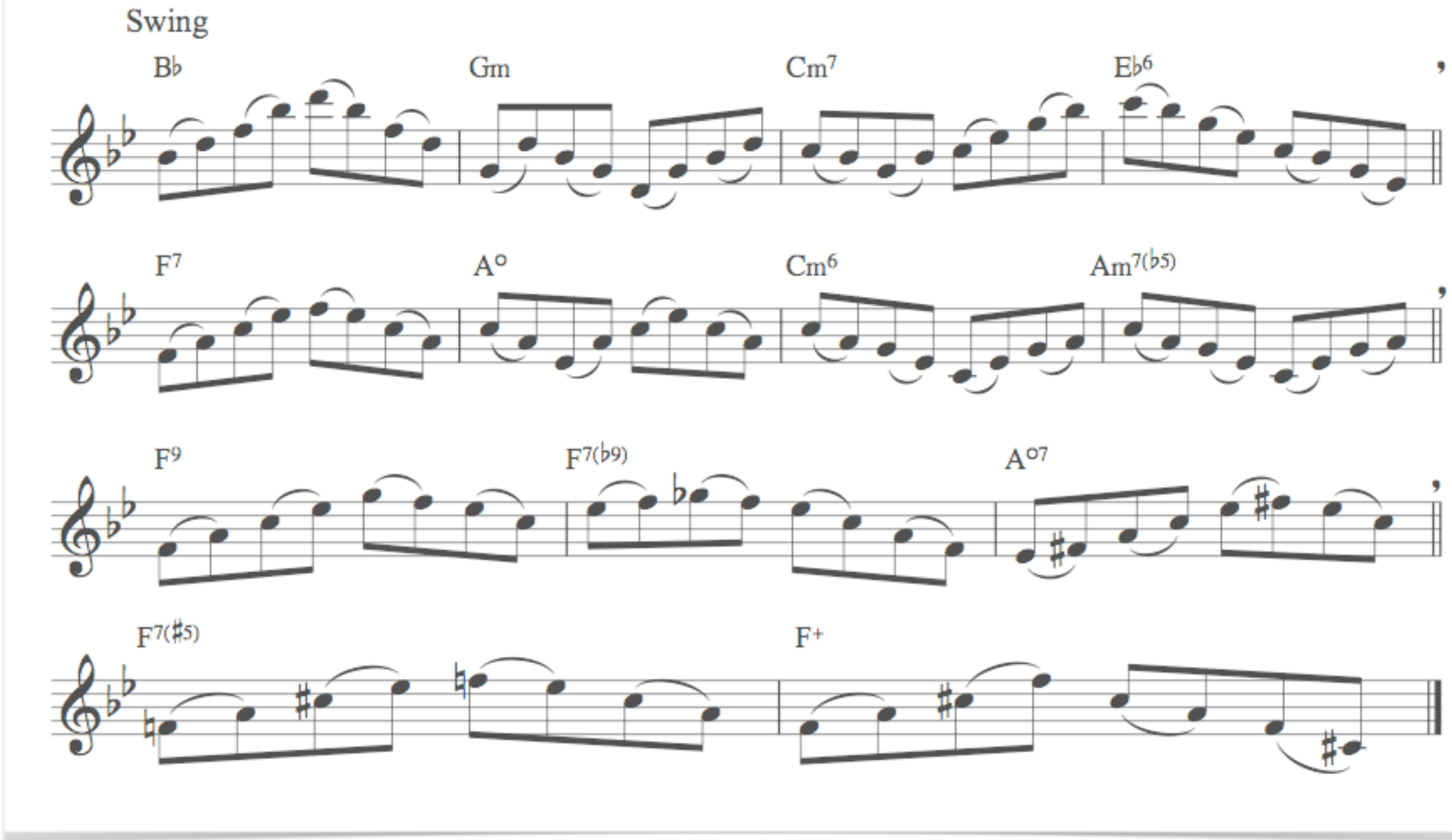
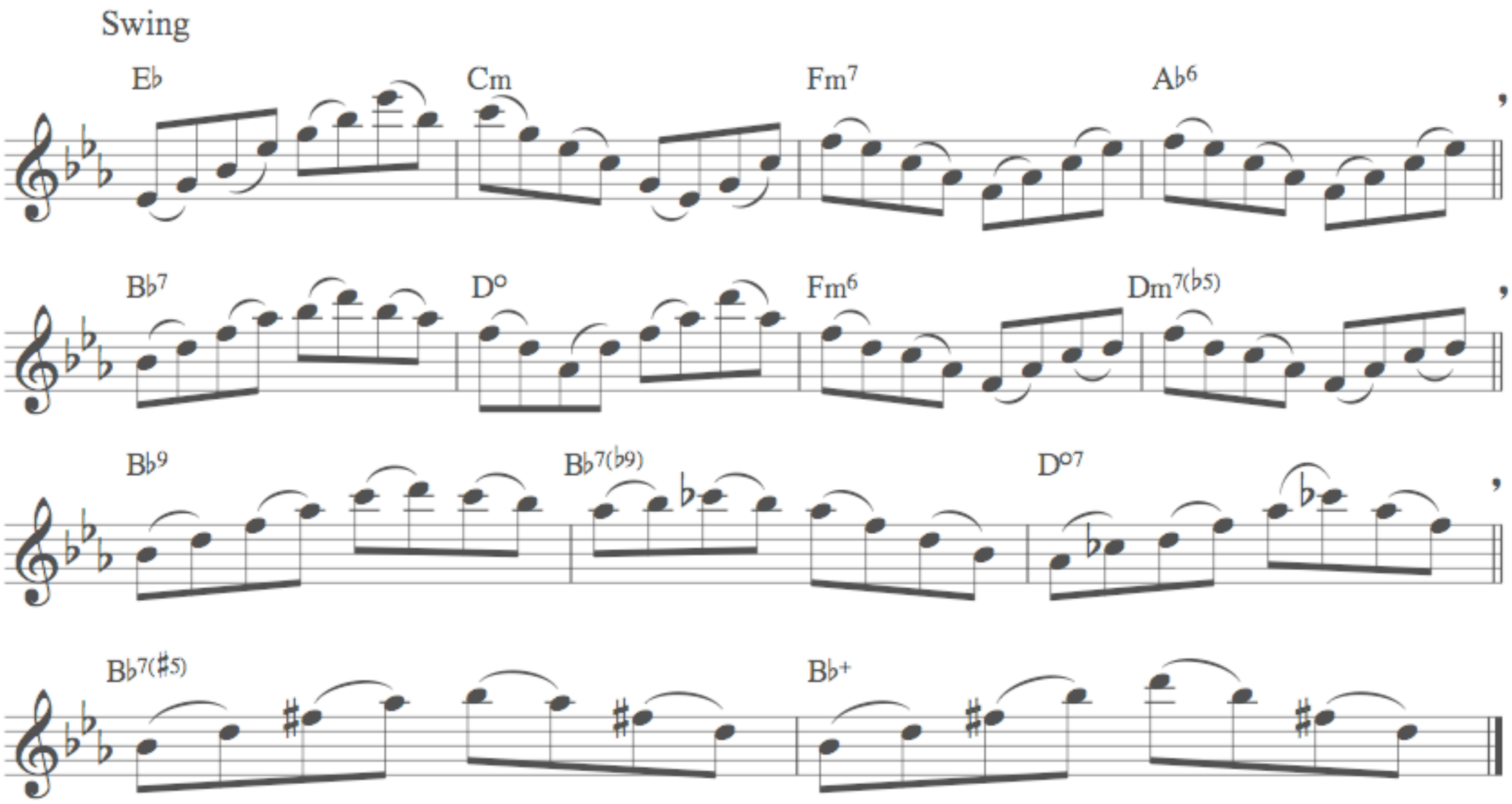



Consolidate your knowledge of the 13 common chord types by playing these arpeggios.




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




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.

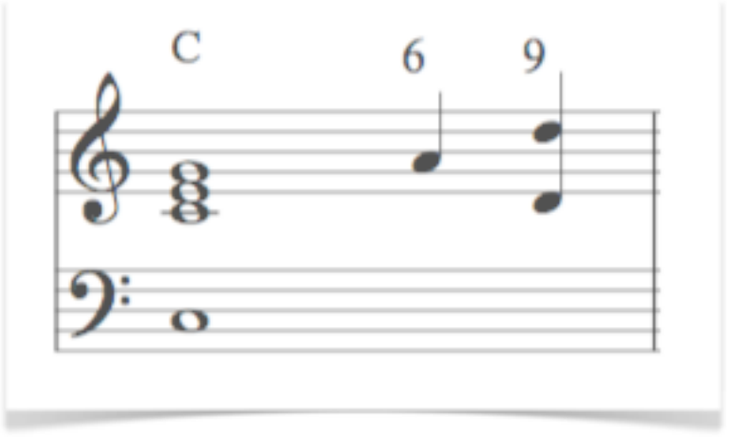
| **E** | | M6 | | | | | | | | | | | | **E** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **B** | M | M6 | | | | | | | | | | | | **B** |
| **F#/Gb** | M | M6 | 7 | 9 | 7b9 | 7#5 | + | | | | | | | **F#/Gb** |
| **C#/Db** | M | M6 | 7 | 9 | 7b9 | 7#5 | + | | m6 | m7 | | | | **C#/Db** |
| **Ab** | M | | 7 | 9 | 7b9 | 7#5 | + | m | m6 | m7 | | | | **Ab** |
| **Eb** | | | 7 | 9 | 7b9 | 7#5 | + | m | m6 | m7 | | | | **Eb** |
| **Bb** | | | | | | | | m | m6 | m7 | m7b5 | o7 | o | **Bb** |
| **F** | | | | | | | | m | | | m7b5 | o7 | o | **F** |
| **C** | | | | | | | | | | | m7b5 | o7 | o | **C** |
| **G** | | | | | | | | | | | m7b5 | o7 | o | **G** |

CHAPTER 2

# Improvisation techniques

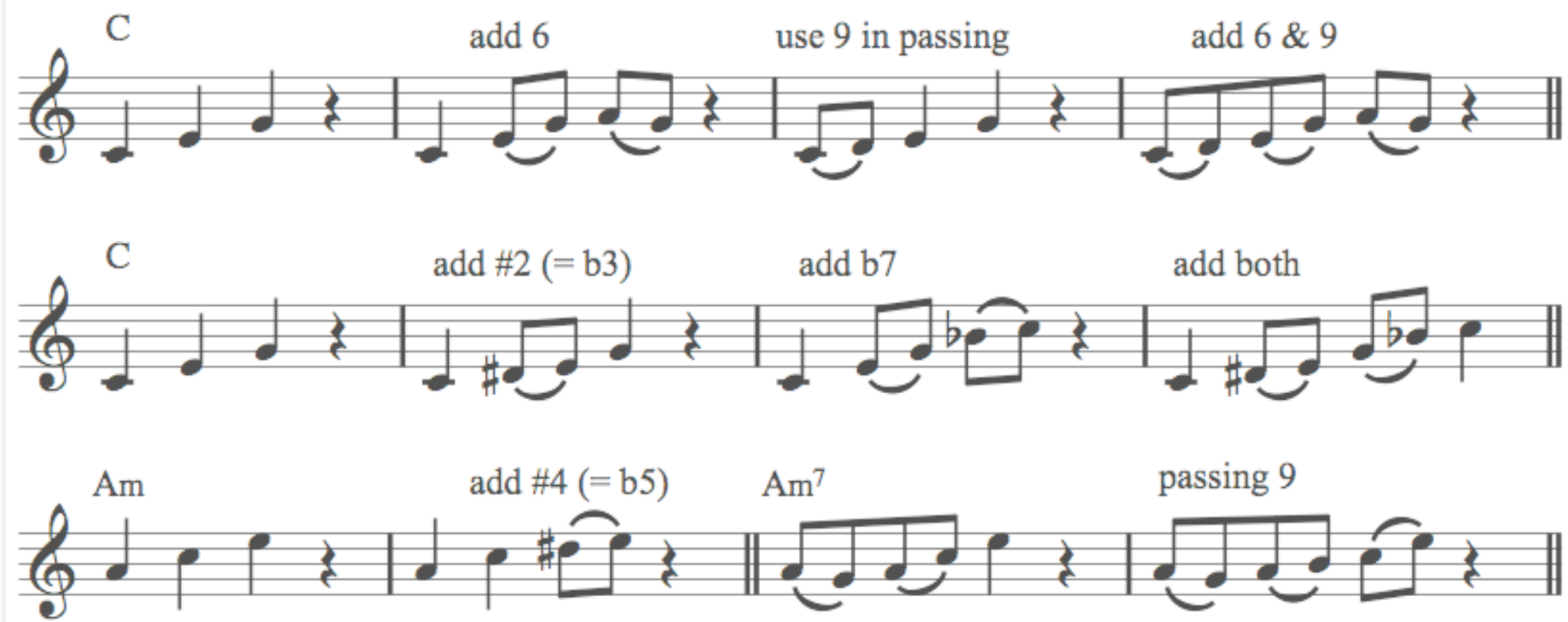
Later we'll look at the 13 common chord types in context, using examples from the tunes and improvisations of W.C Handy, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, George Lewis, Sidney Bechet, Benny Goodman and many others.

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.

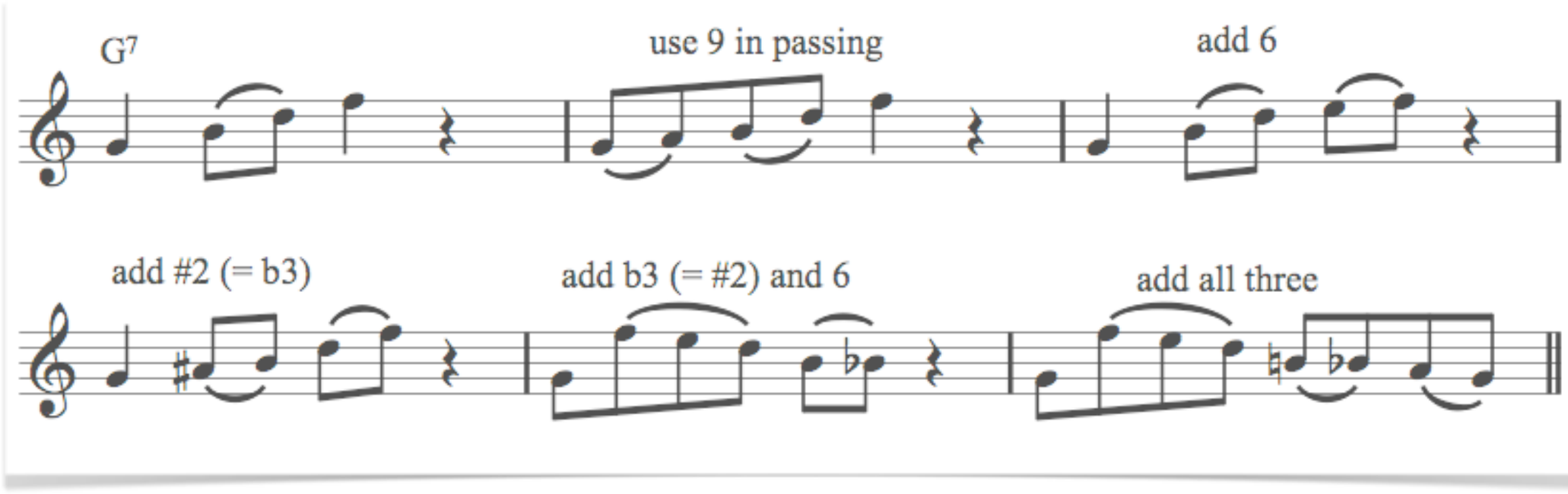


We'll also add intervals b3 (= #2) and b7 to the roots of major chords, and b5 (= #4) to the roots of minor chords. These altered pitches derive from the Blues, which mixes major and minor modes. How the notes are spelled (sharp or flat) depends largely on convenience to the player's eye.

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

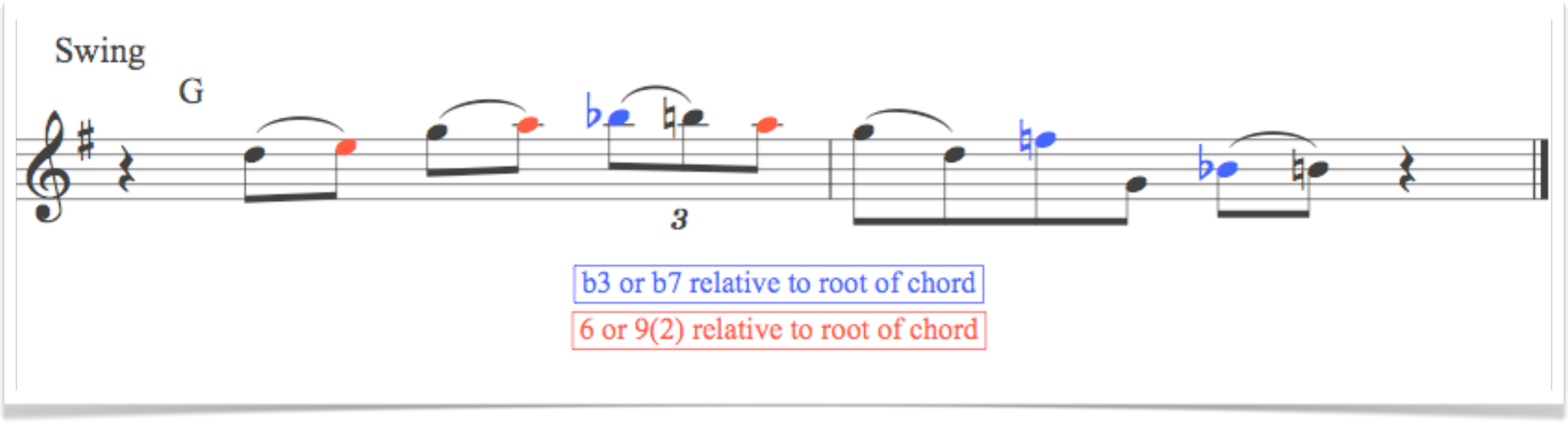


Transpose to a range of common keys for your instrument.
And always swing the quavers.



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.



CHAPTER 3

# 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.

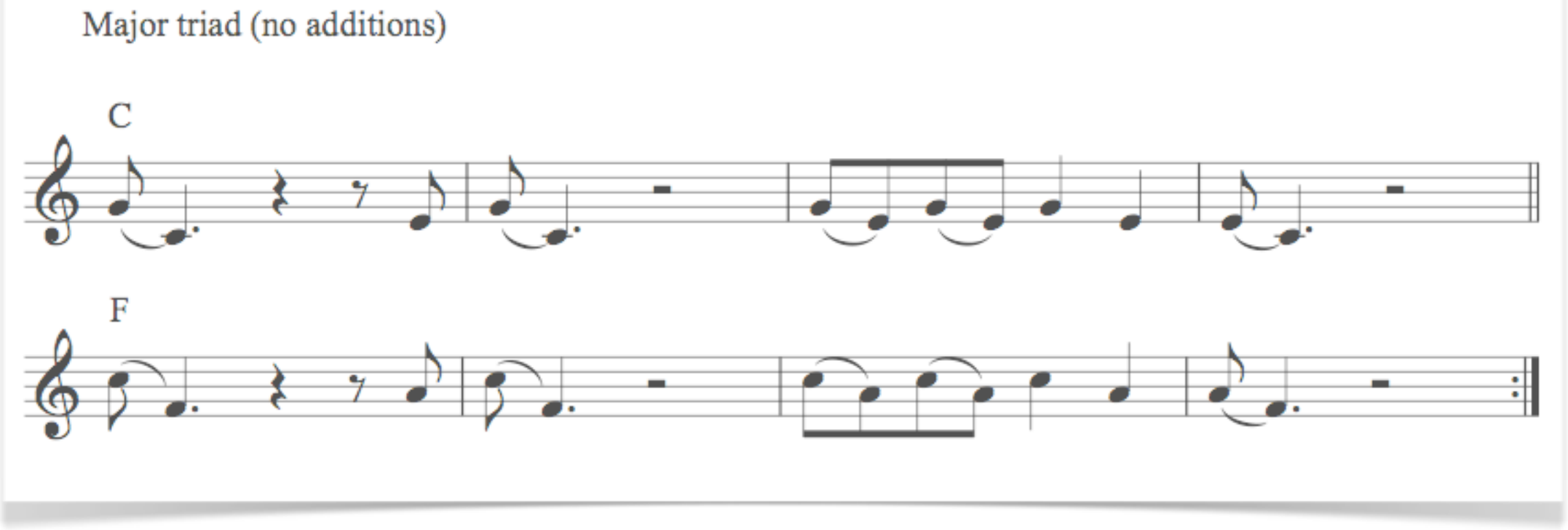
Play these exercises in a range of tempos and with a range of dynamics. Alter the phrasing, too.

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

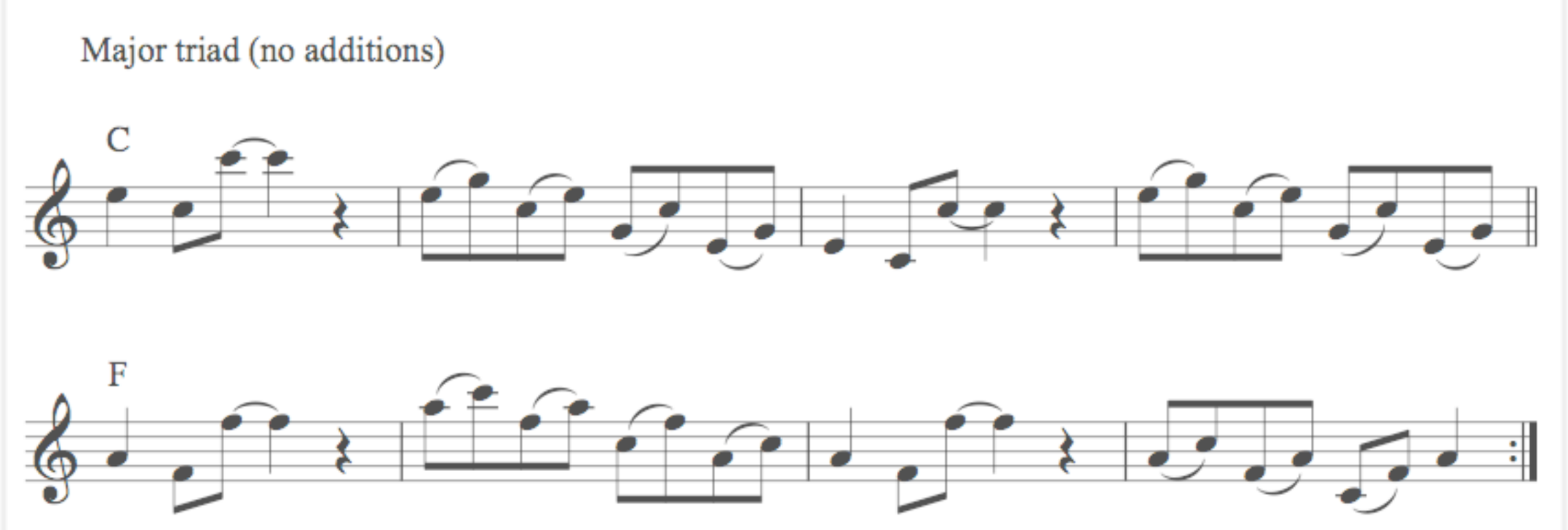
A version with audio accompaniment is in development. For further details contact:

~~dburnand@rcm.ac.uk~~

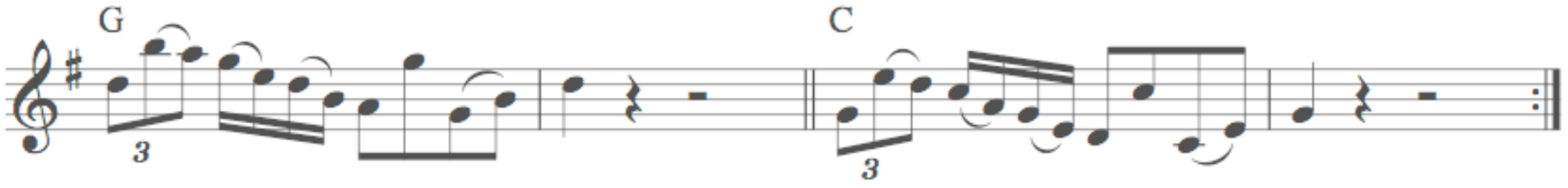
burnand369@gmail.com




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



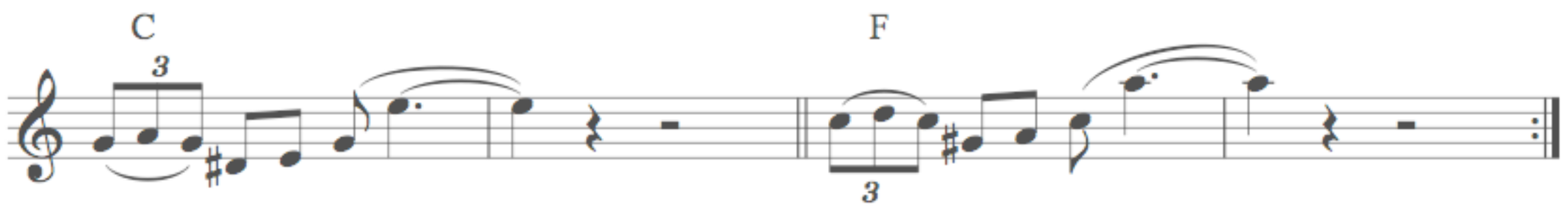
Major triad with added 6 & 9




Identify the added notes.

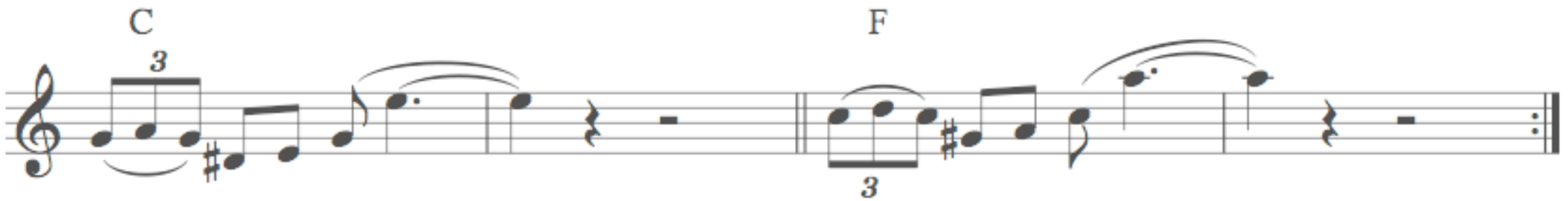
Then practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

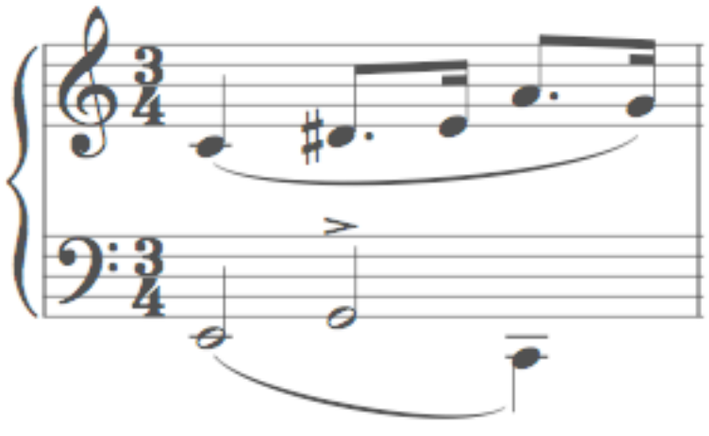
Major triad with auxiliary 6, as well as #2 (= b3, which will be referred to as blues 3 from hereon)



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:

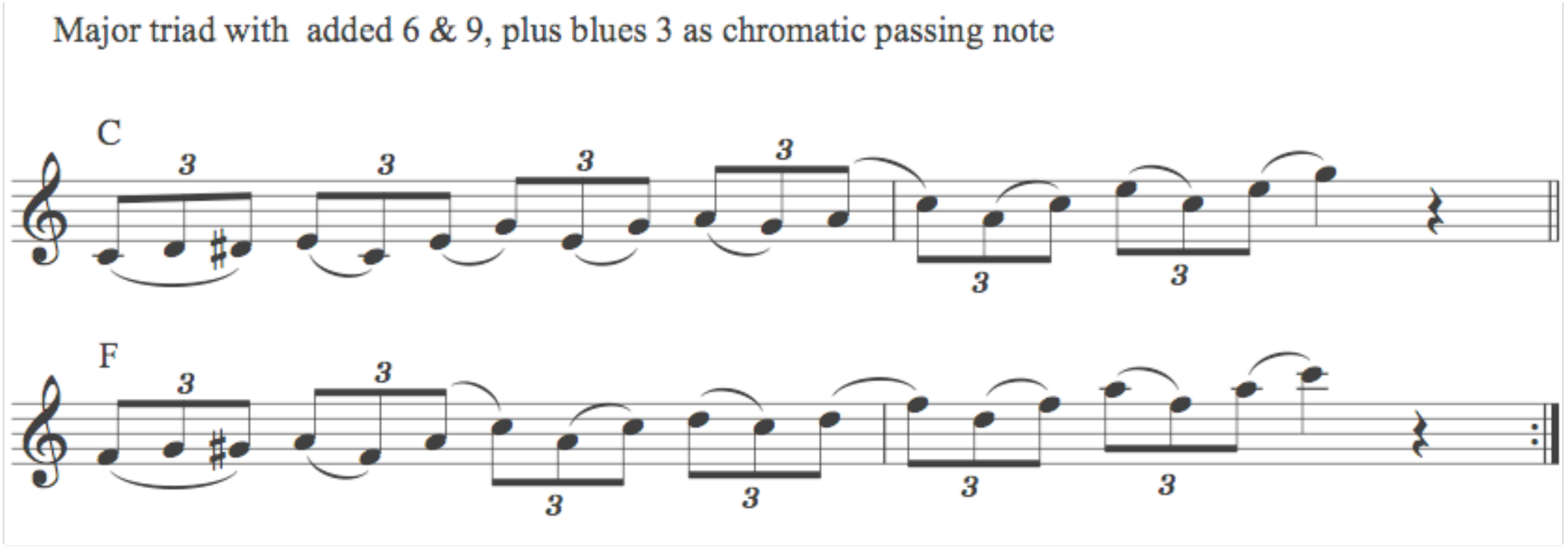
Major triad with auxiliary 6, as well as #2 (= b3, which will be referred to as blues 3 from hereon)



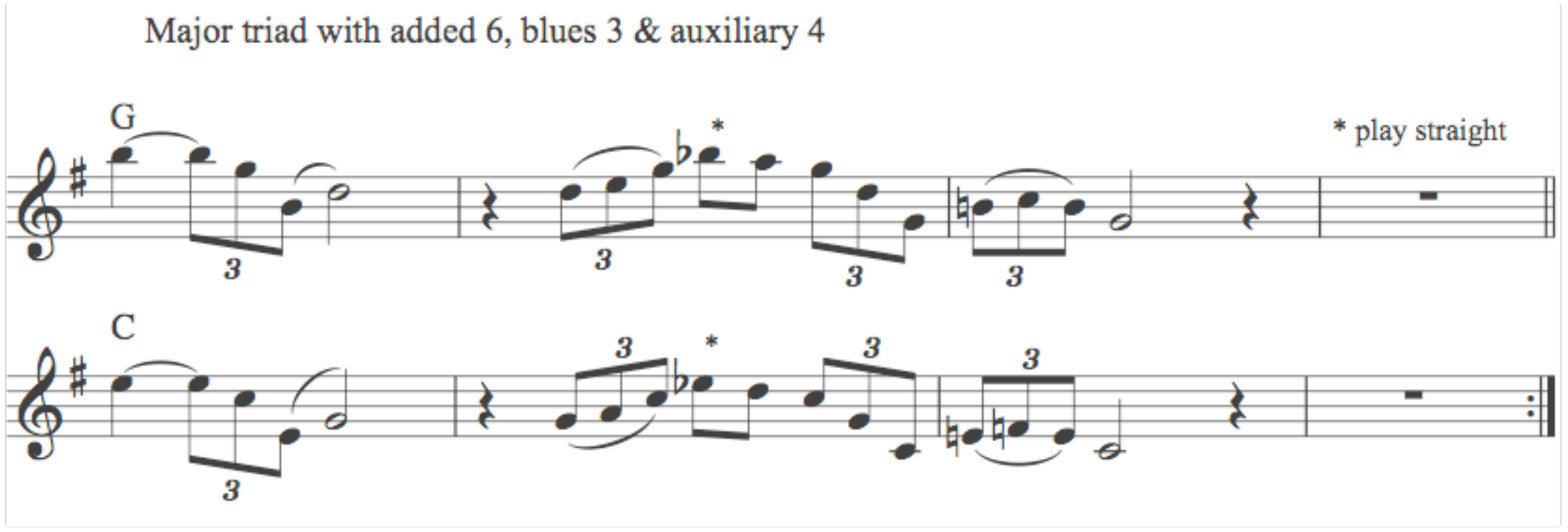
From Schubert's *Scherzo* No. 1 D593 for piano (1817)
(transposed from Eb)

Note the added 6, as well.

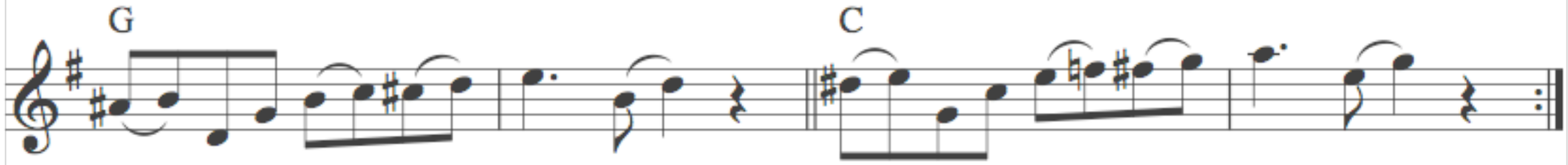



Remember to identify the added notes.

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

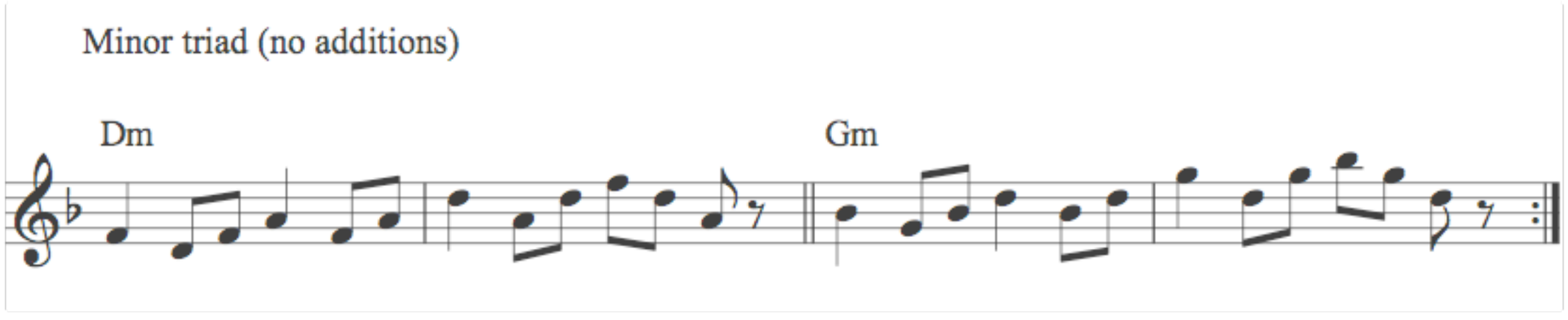


Major triad with added 6 & blues 3, as well as #4 as chromatic passing note
(N.B. #4 or b5 is also typical of the blues)

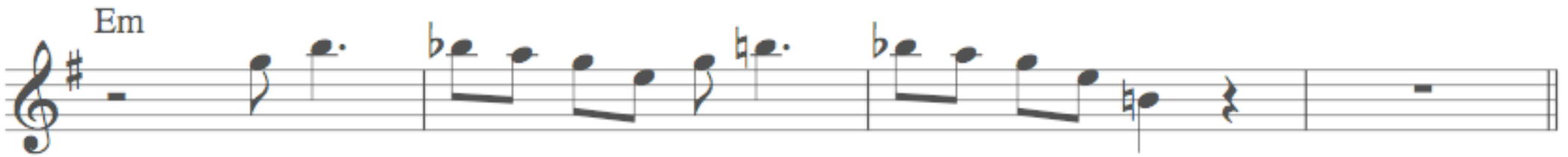


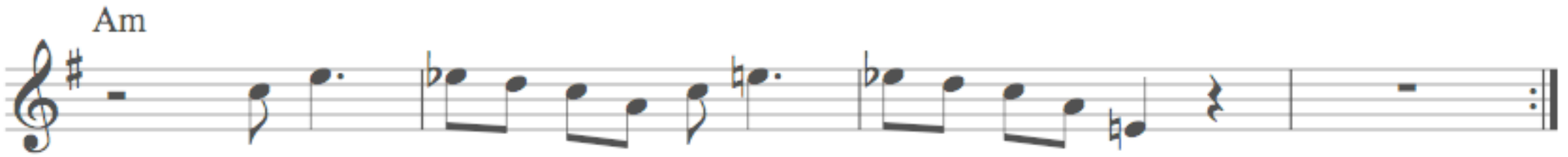

Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

Minor triad (no additions)



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

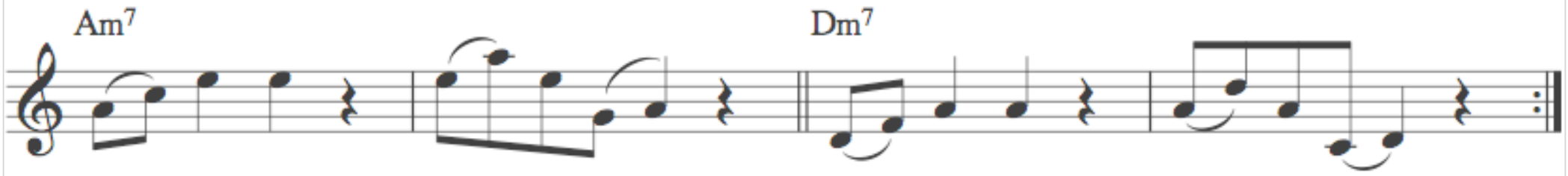


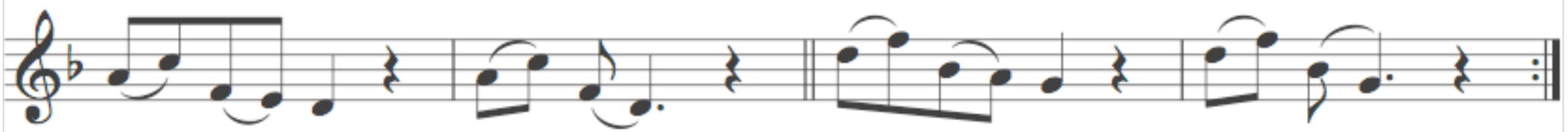

Consider how added notes compare between minor chords and their relative majors: i.e. b5 of Am = b3 of C.

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

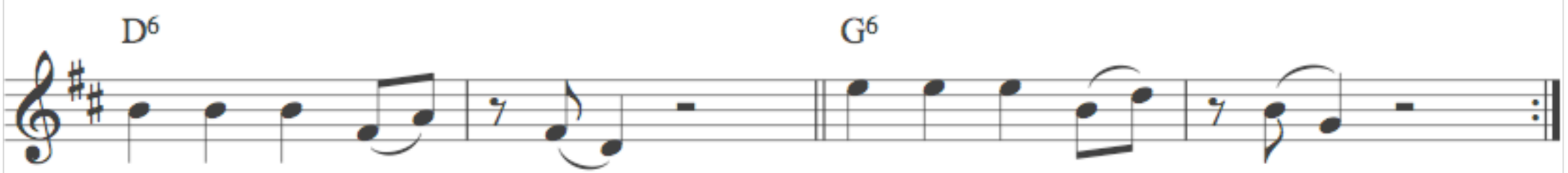
Minor 7 (no additions)

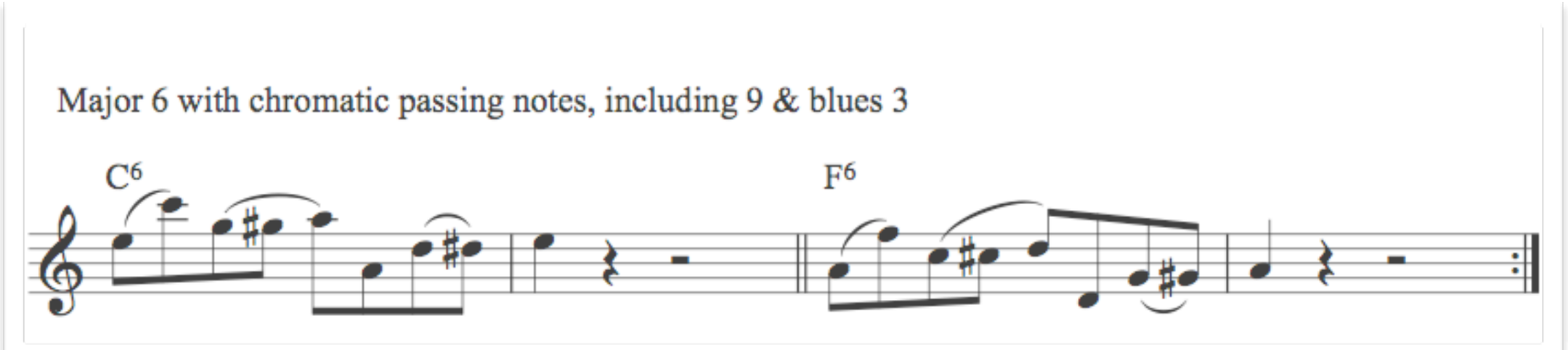



Minor 7 with & without passing note 9

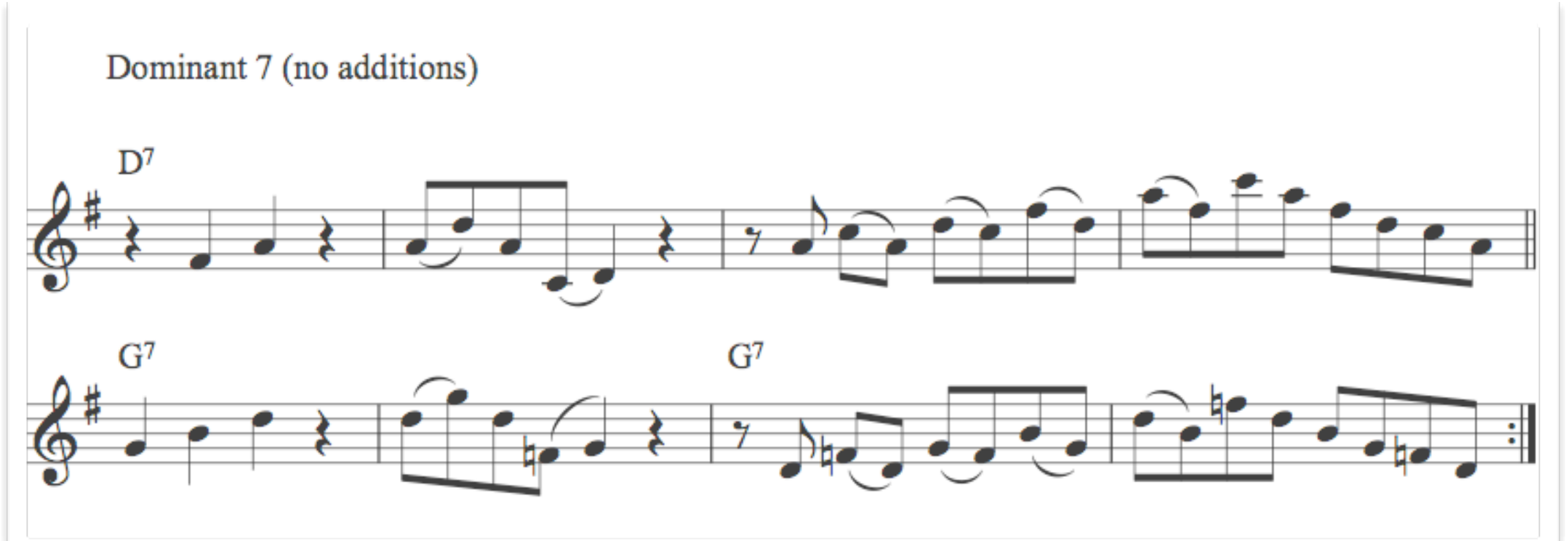



Major 6 (no additions)

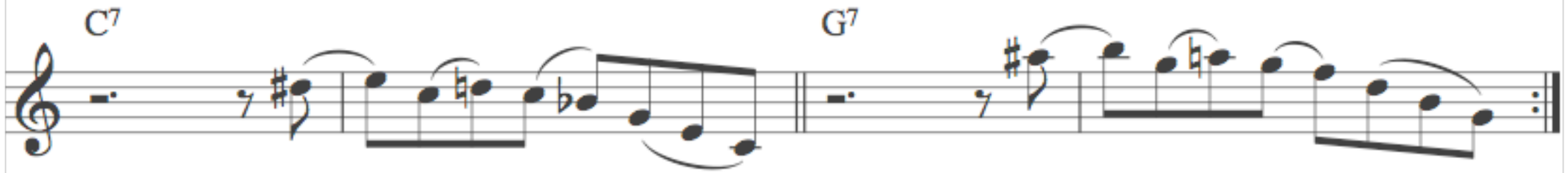




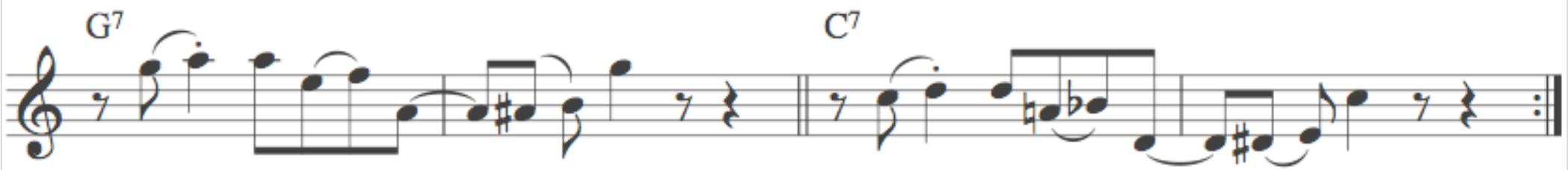

Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.



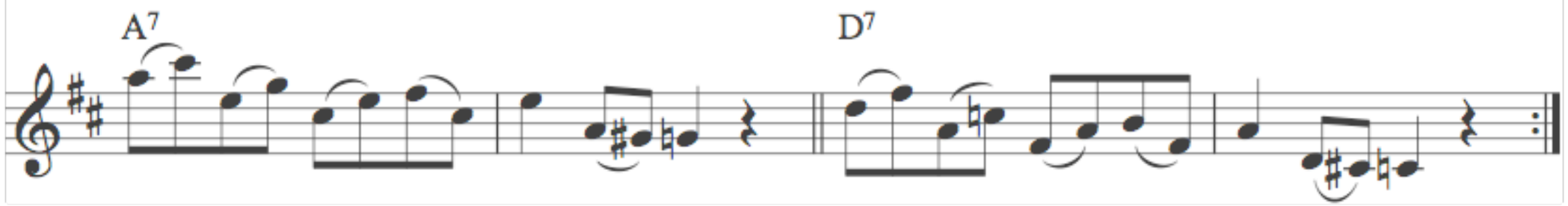
Dominant 7 with blues 3 & auxiliary 9



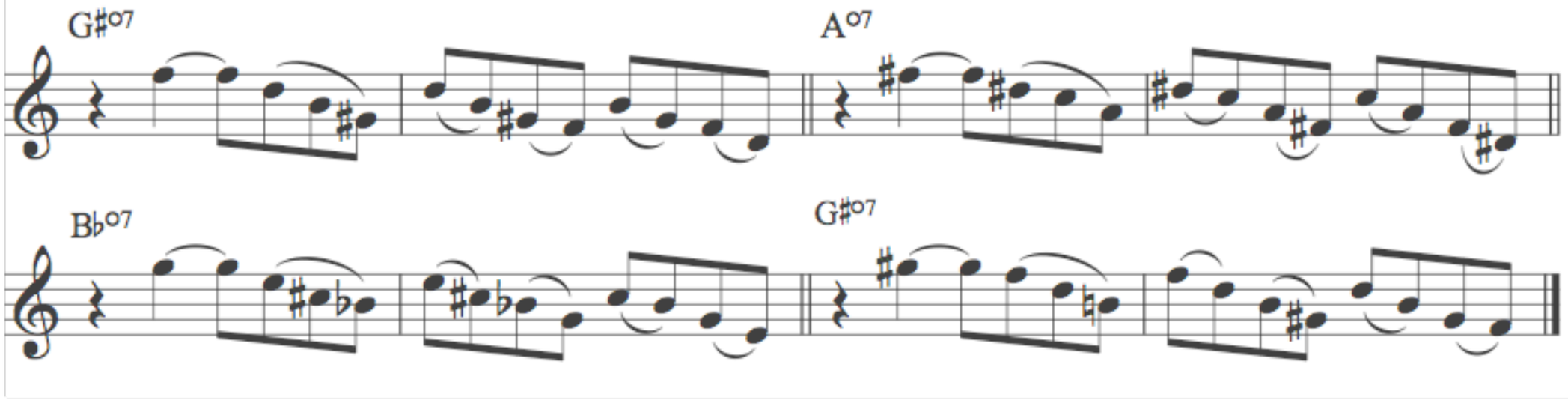

Dominant 7 with blues 3, added 9 & 6




Dominant 7 with added 6 & chromatic passing note

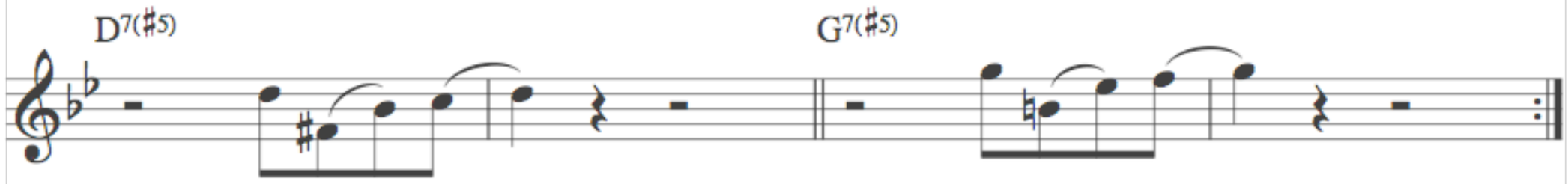


Diminished 7 (no additions) N.B. G#o7 = Bo7 & Do7 Ao7 = Co7 & Ebo7 Bbo7 = C#o7 & Eo7

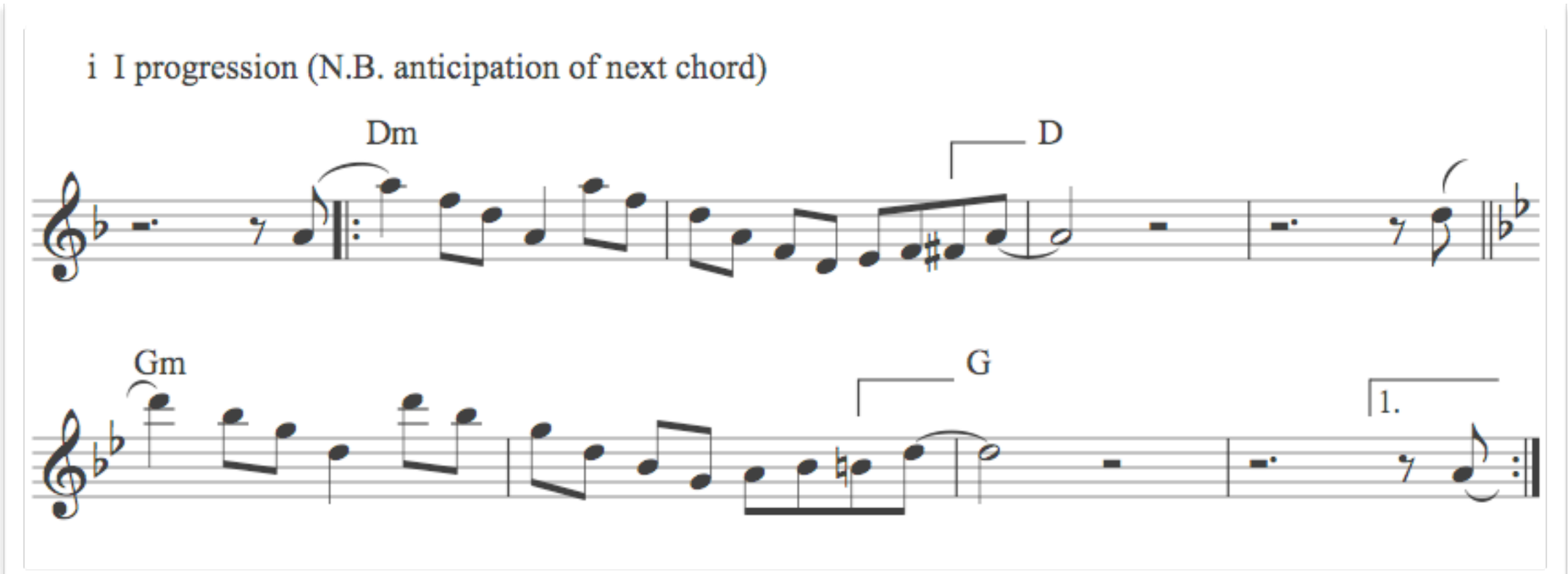



Practice the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

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

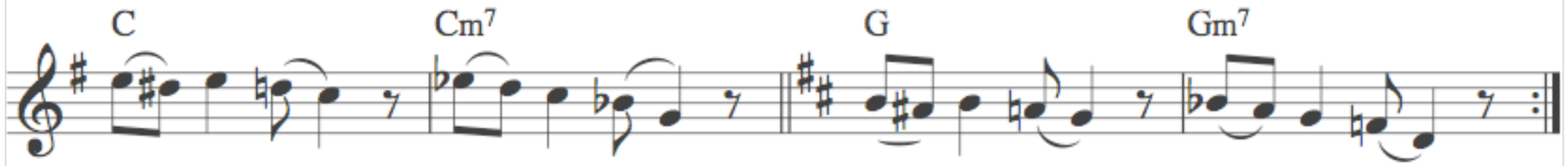


# Two-chord progressions

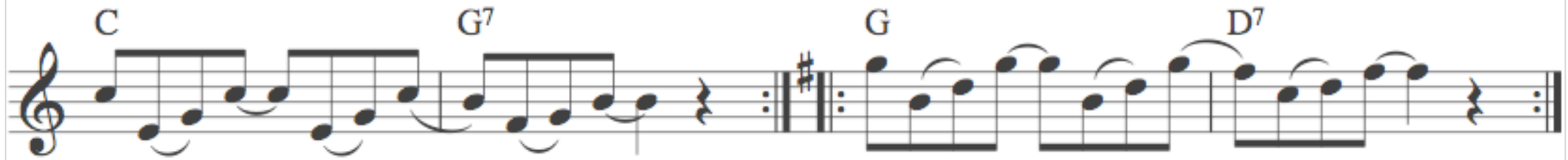



Remember to try the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

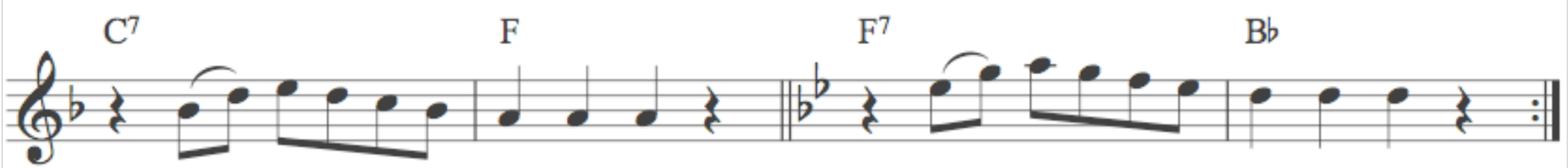
IV iv7 progression with blues 3 & passing 9



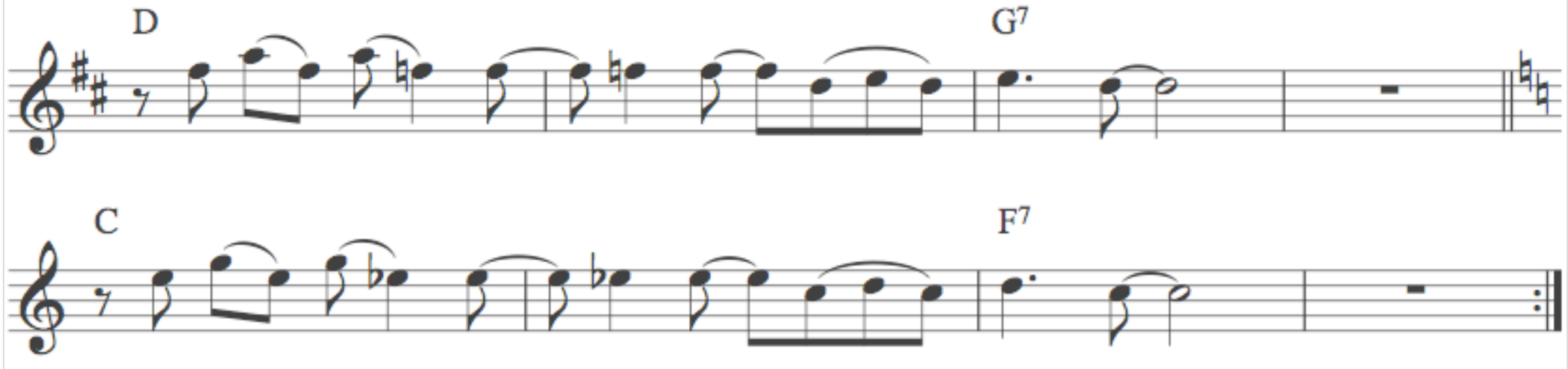

I V7 progression



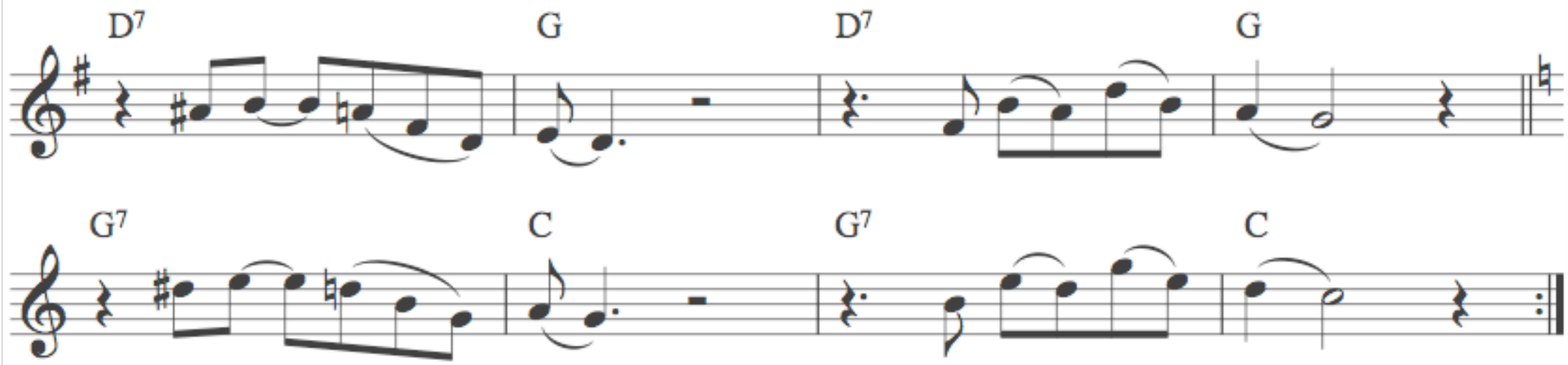

V7 I progression with added 9



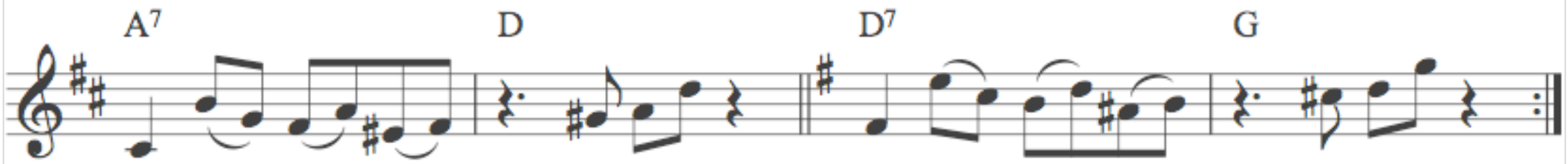
I IV7 progression with blues 3, added 9 & 6



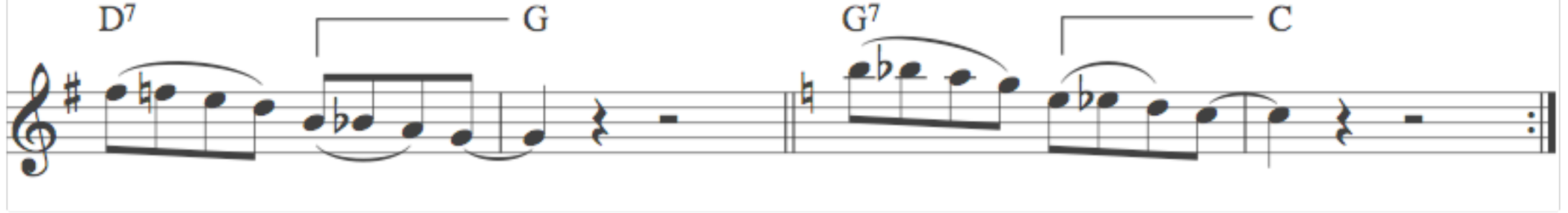

V7 I progression with #5, added 6 & 9



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

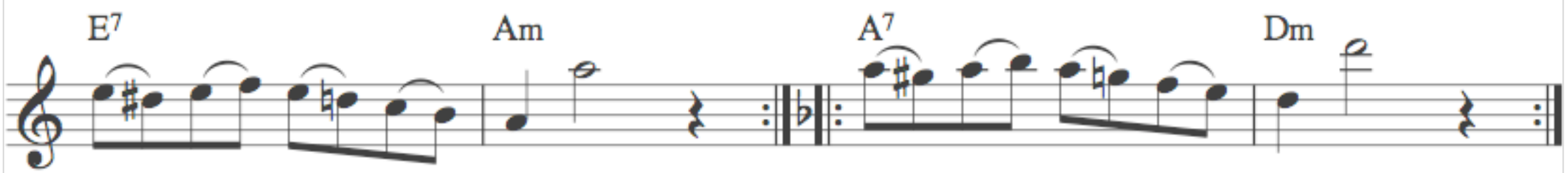



V7 I progression with blues 3 & added 9 chromatic passing notes, and anticipation of next chord

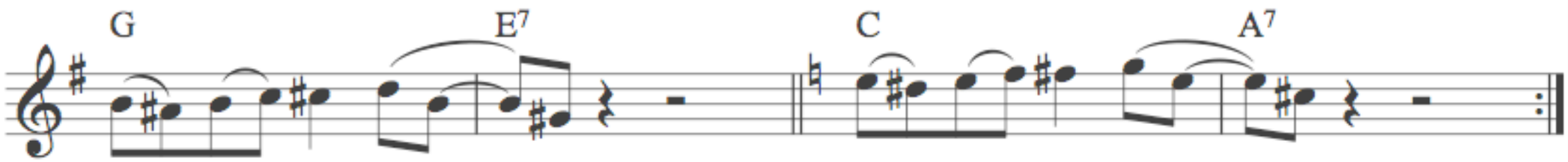



V7 i progression with auxiliary and passing notes

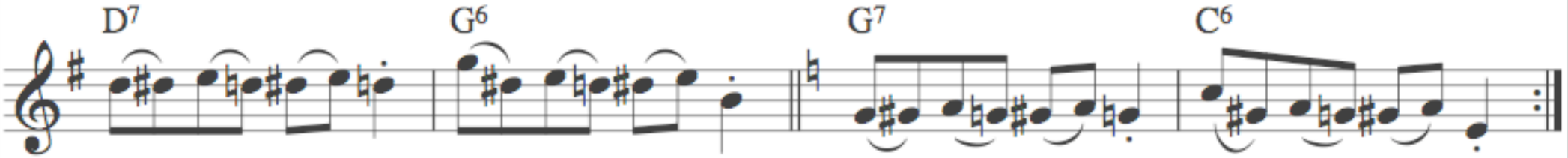
N.B. notice how the minor key influences treatment of its dominant 7 (i.e. D# & G# = b5 of Am & Dm respectively)



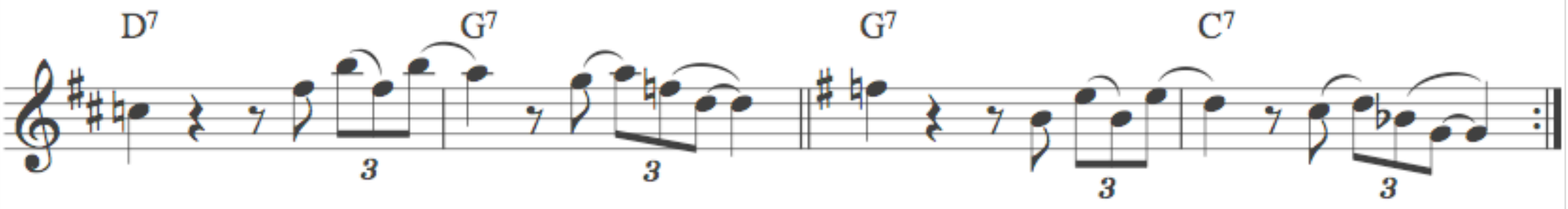
I VI7 progression with blues 3 & 5



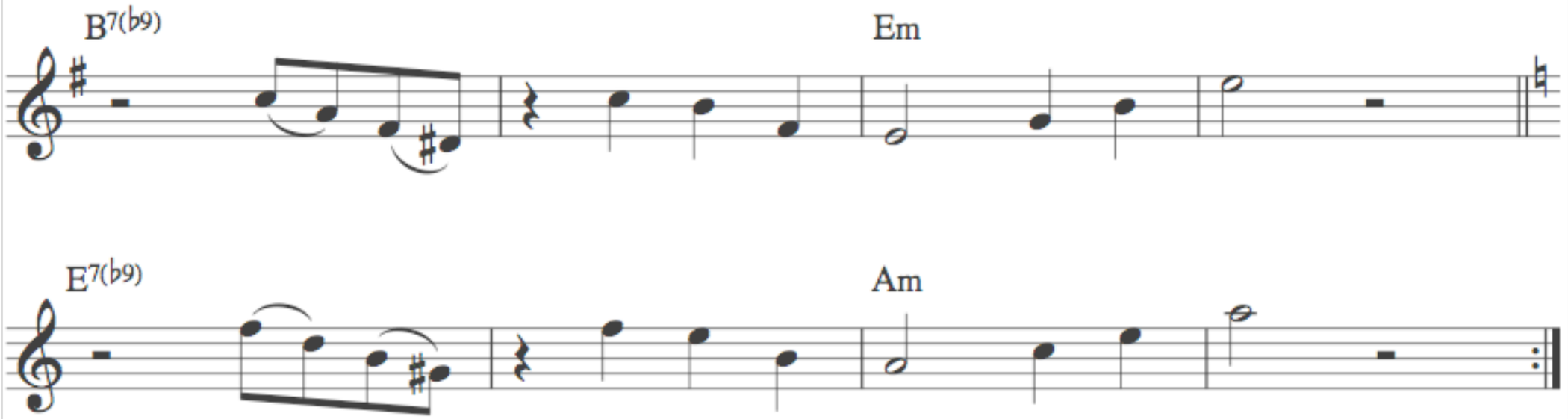

V7 I6 progression with chromatic passing notes



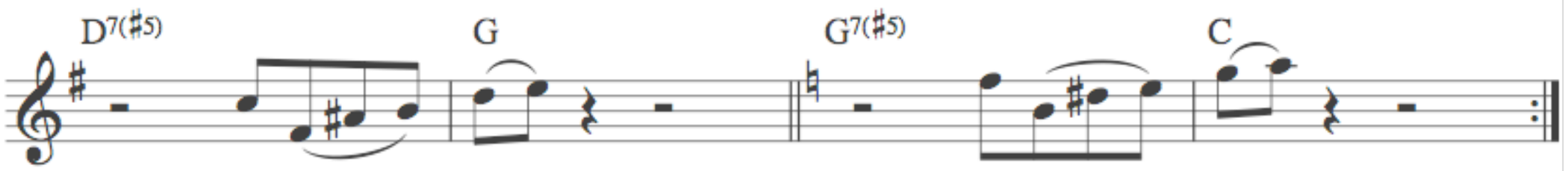

I7 IV7 progression with added 6 and 9



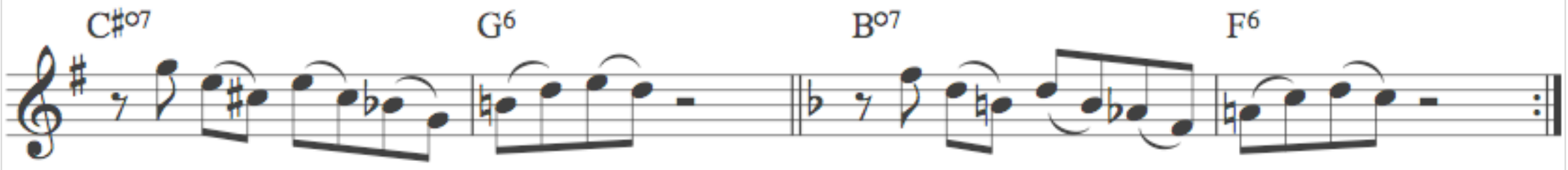
V7b9 i progression



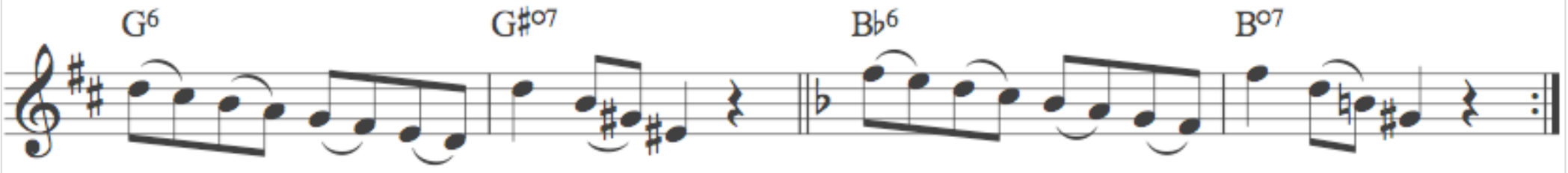

V7#5 I progression with added 6



#IVdim7  I6 progression




IV6  #IVdim7 progression with passing notes



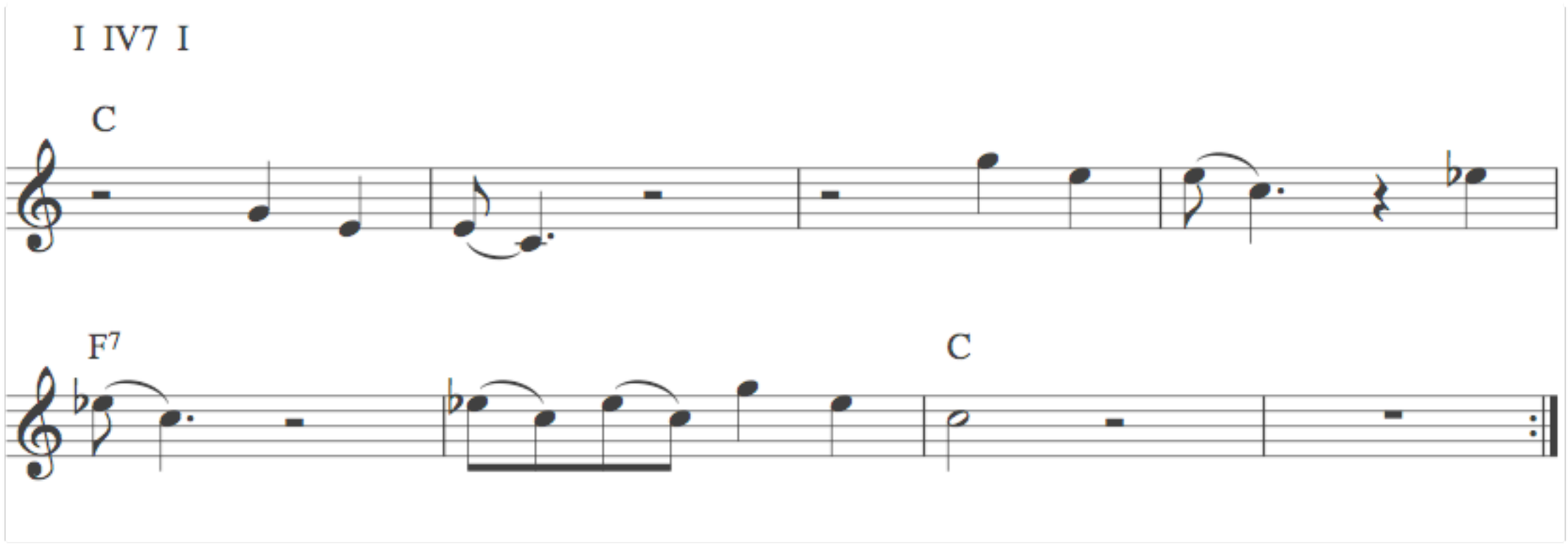
CHAPTER 5

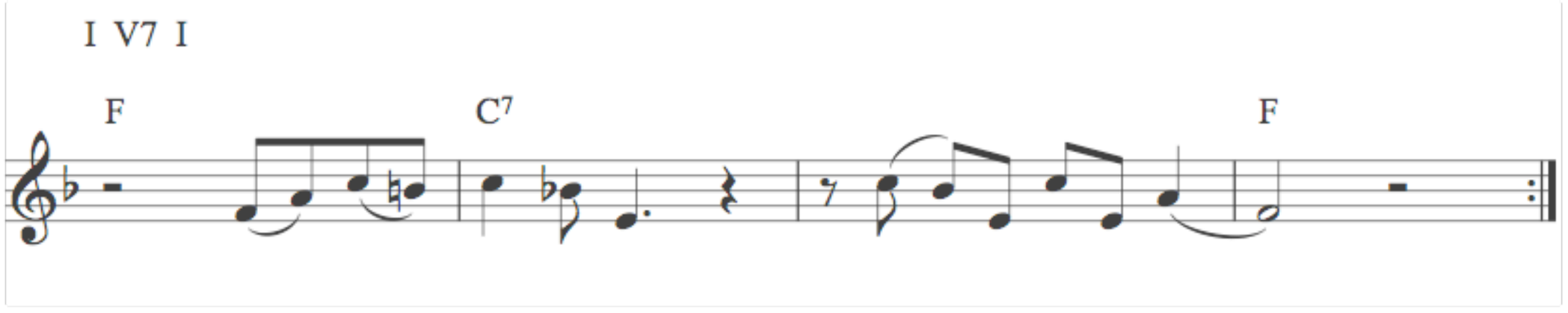
# Three or more chords

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.

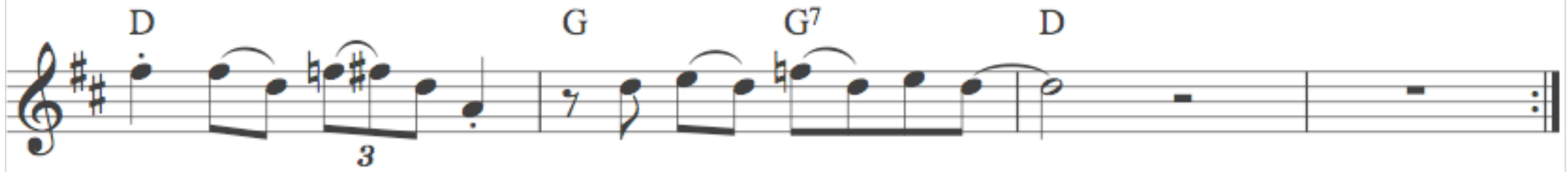
In all cases, practise the same figures in other common keys for your instrument.

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

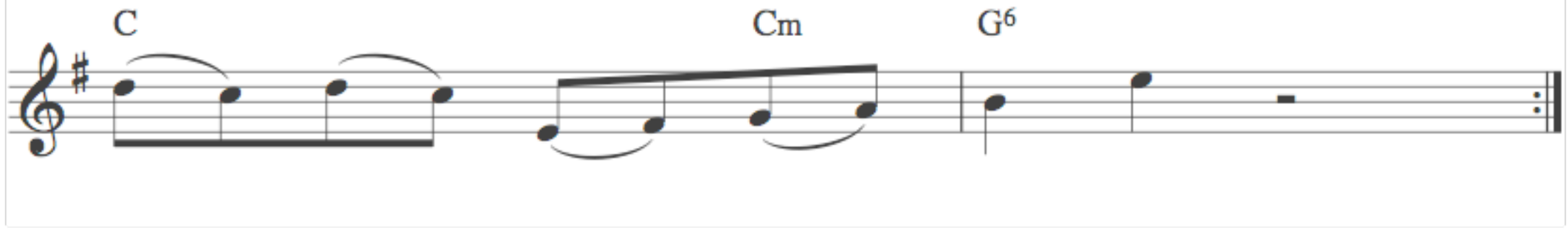

I IV7 I
C
F7
C


I V7 I
F
C7
F

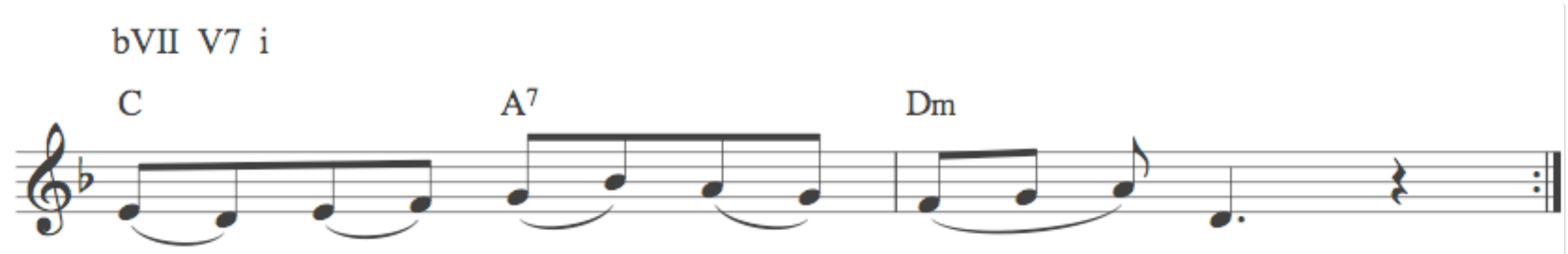
Typical 12-bar Blues opening

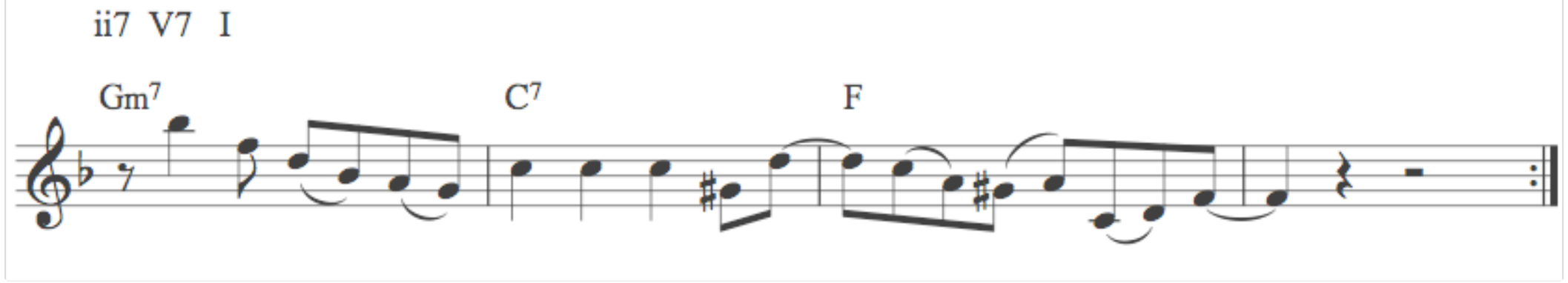


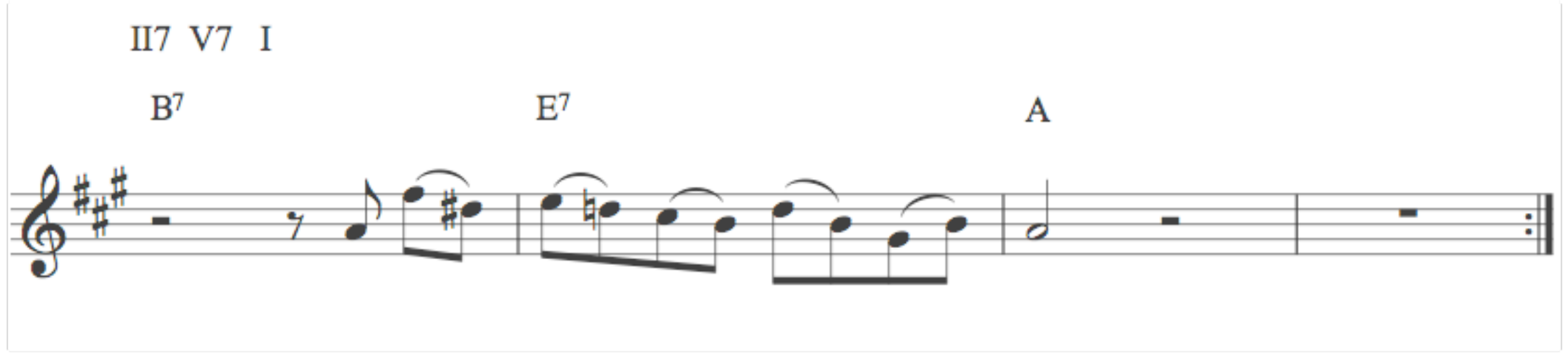

IV iv I6

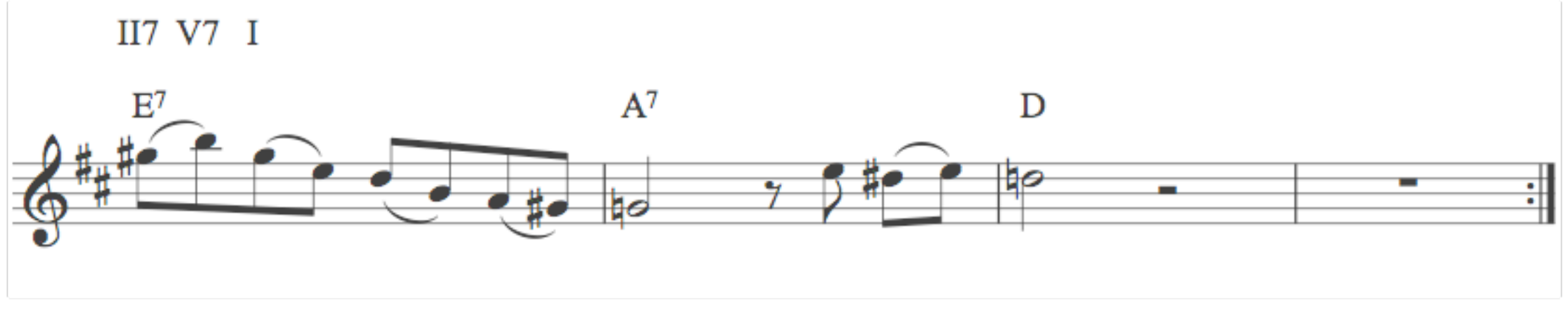


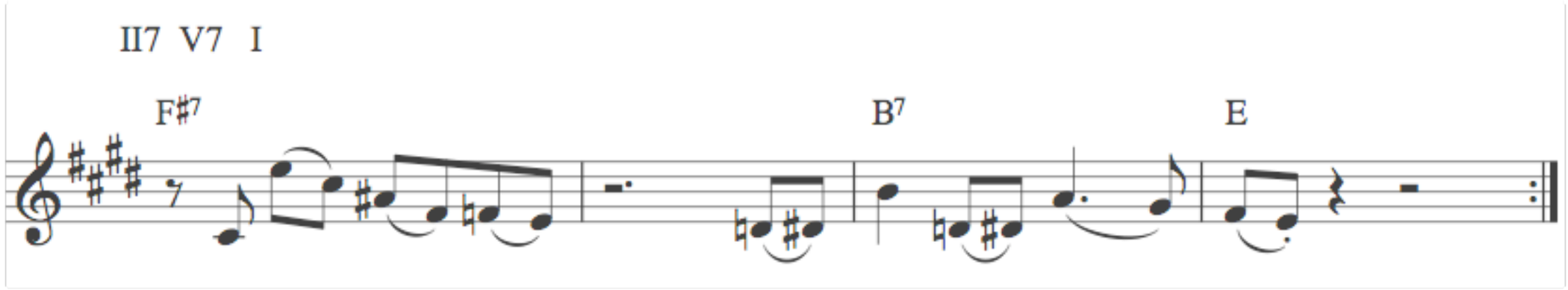

bVII V7 i

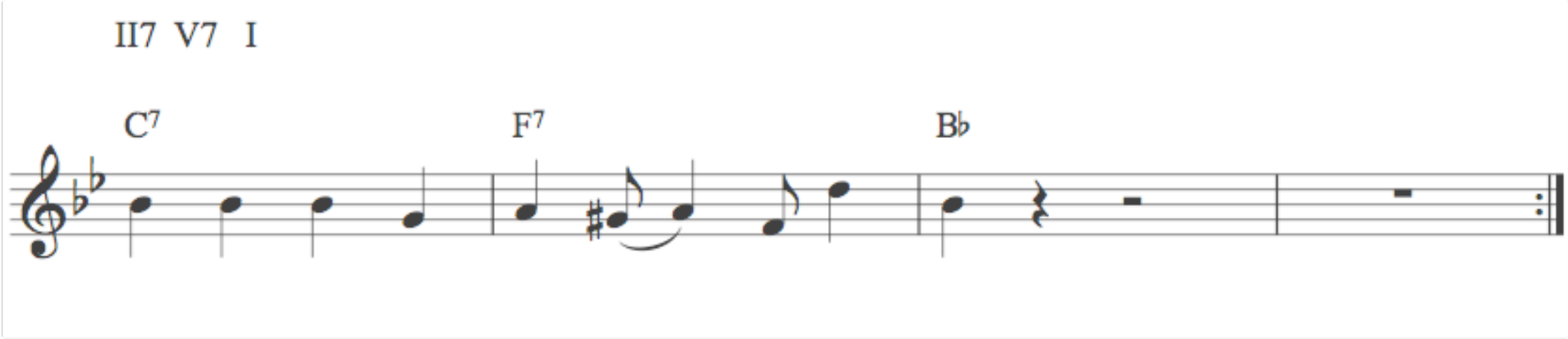


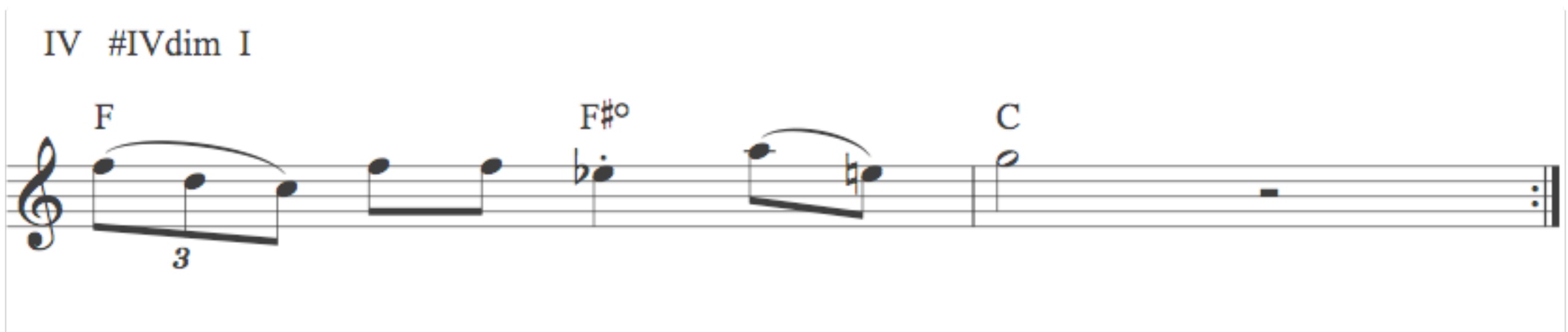

ii7 V7 I
Gm7
C7
F


II7 V7 I
B7
E7
A

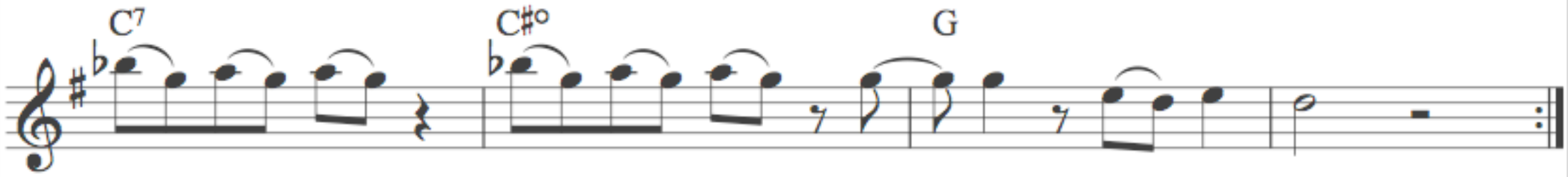

II7 V7 I
E7
A7
D


II7 V7 I
F♯7
B7
E

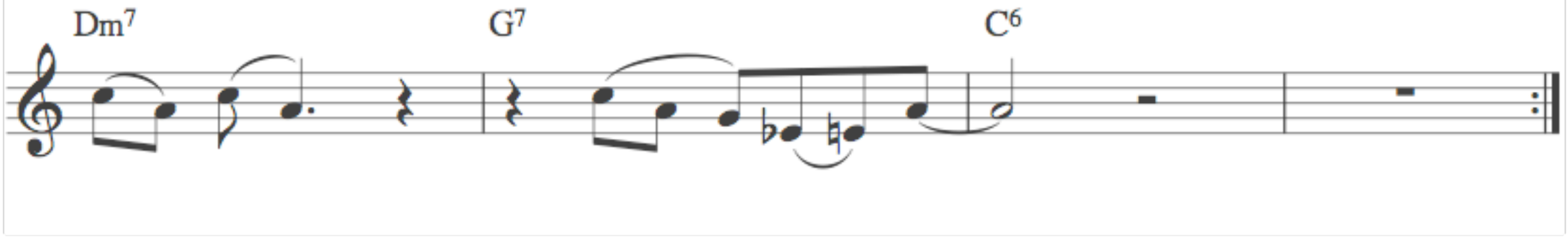

II7 V7 I
C7
F7
B♭


IV #IVdim I
F
F♯°
C
3

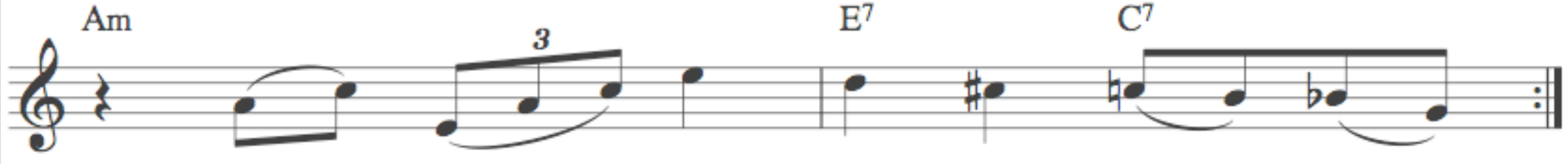
IV7 #IVdim I



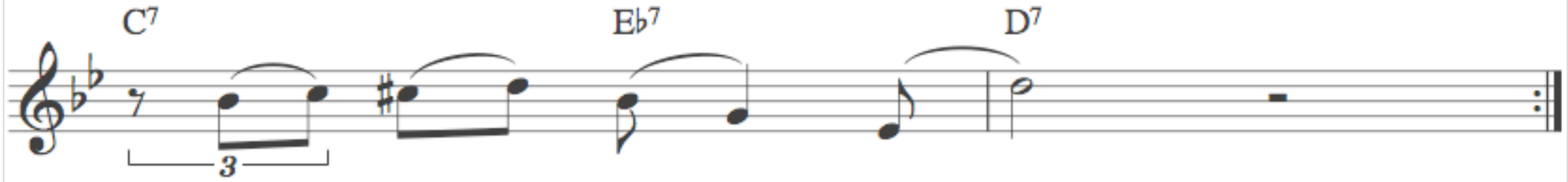

ii7 V7 I6



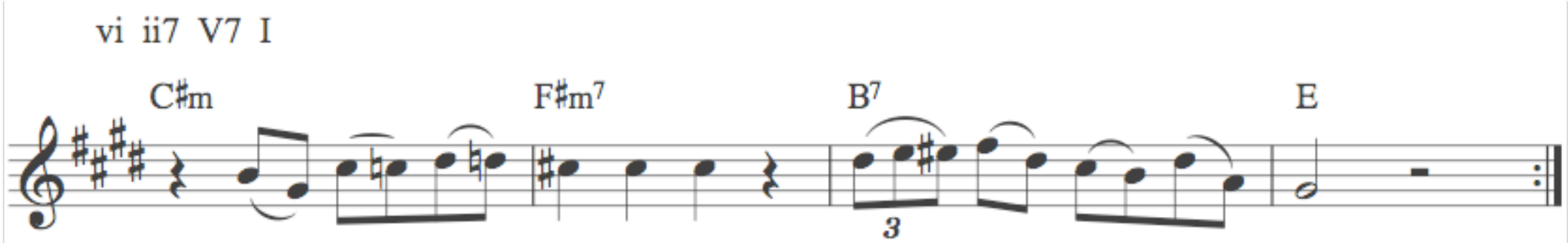

i V7 III7



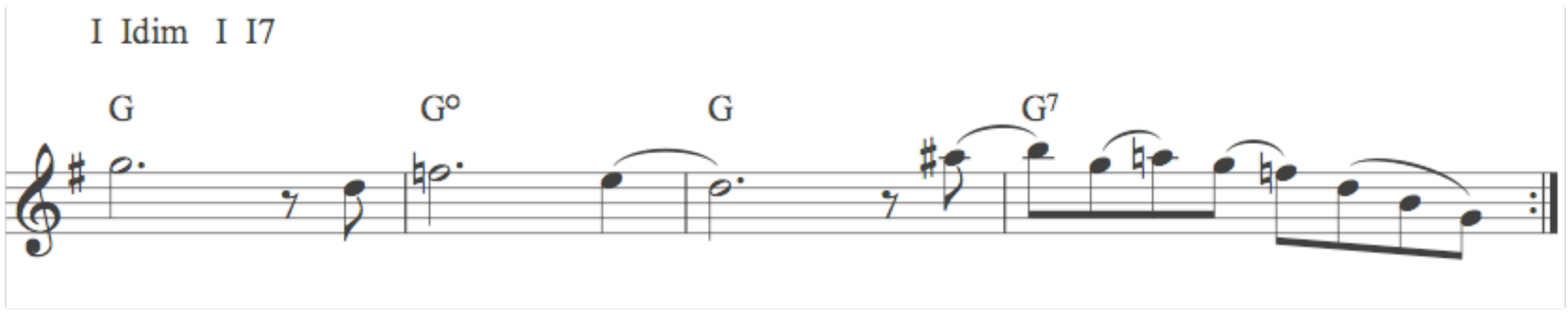
IV7 bVI7 V7 (minor key)



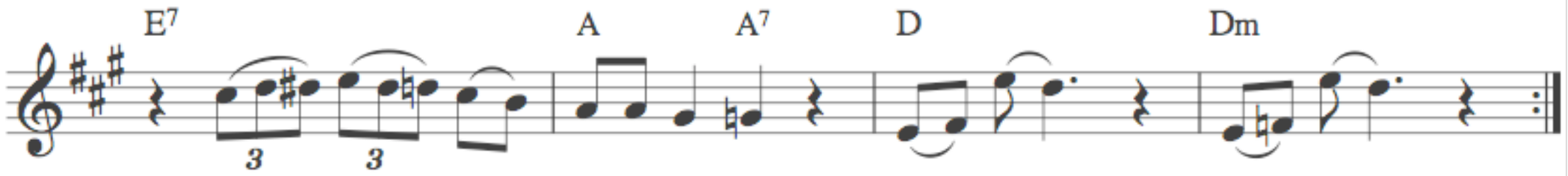

vi ii7 V7 I



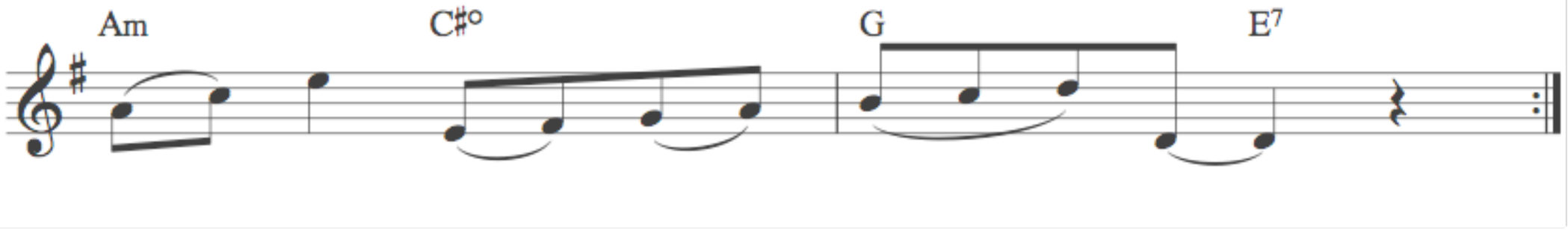

I Idim I I7



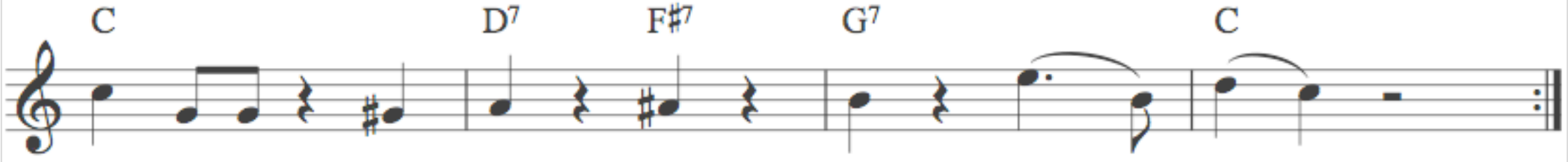
V7 I I7 IV iv



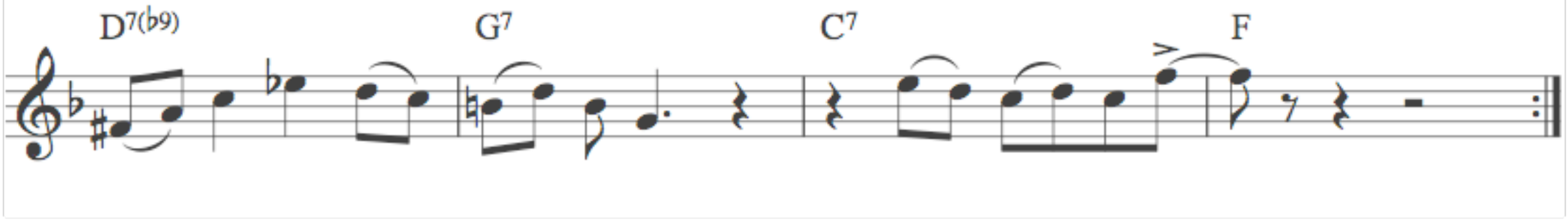

ii #IVdim I VI7



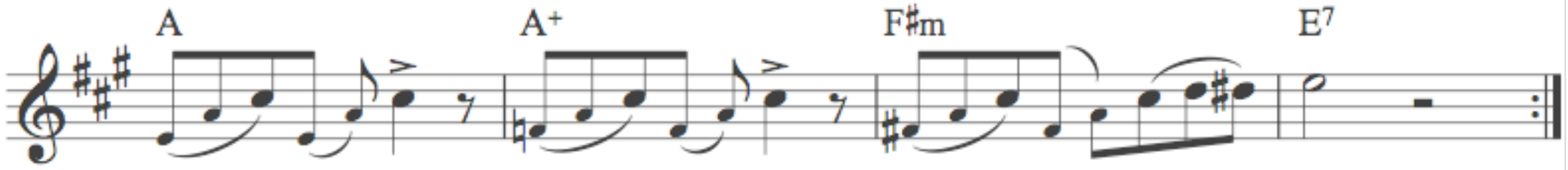

I II7 #IV7 V7 I



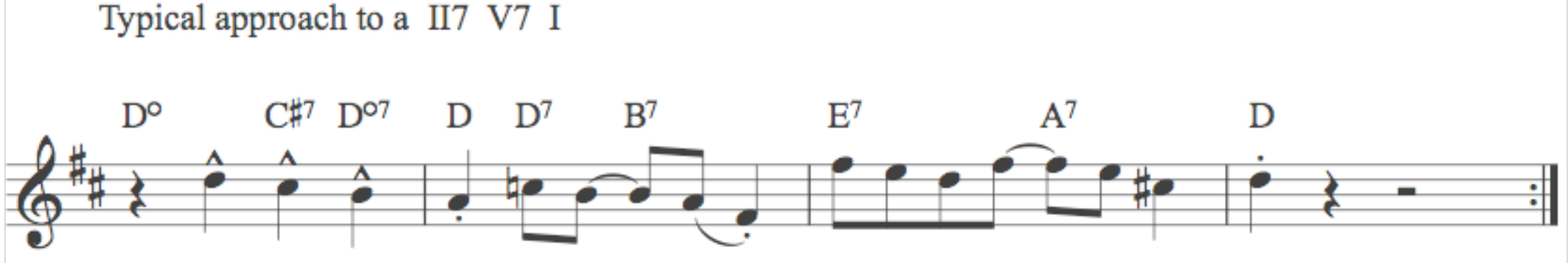
VI7(b9) II7 V7 I



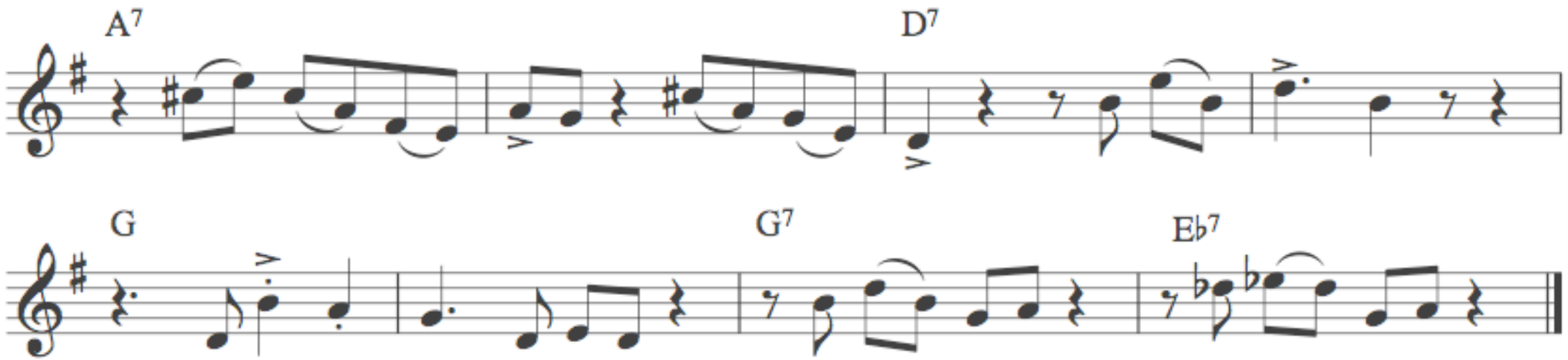

I I+ vi V7
(N.B. pivot note formed by the major third of the key: try leaving out the small notes)




Typical approach to a II7 V7 I



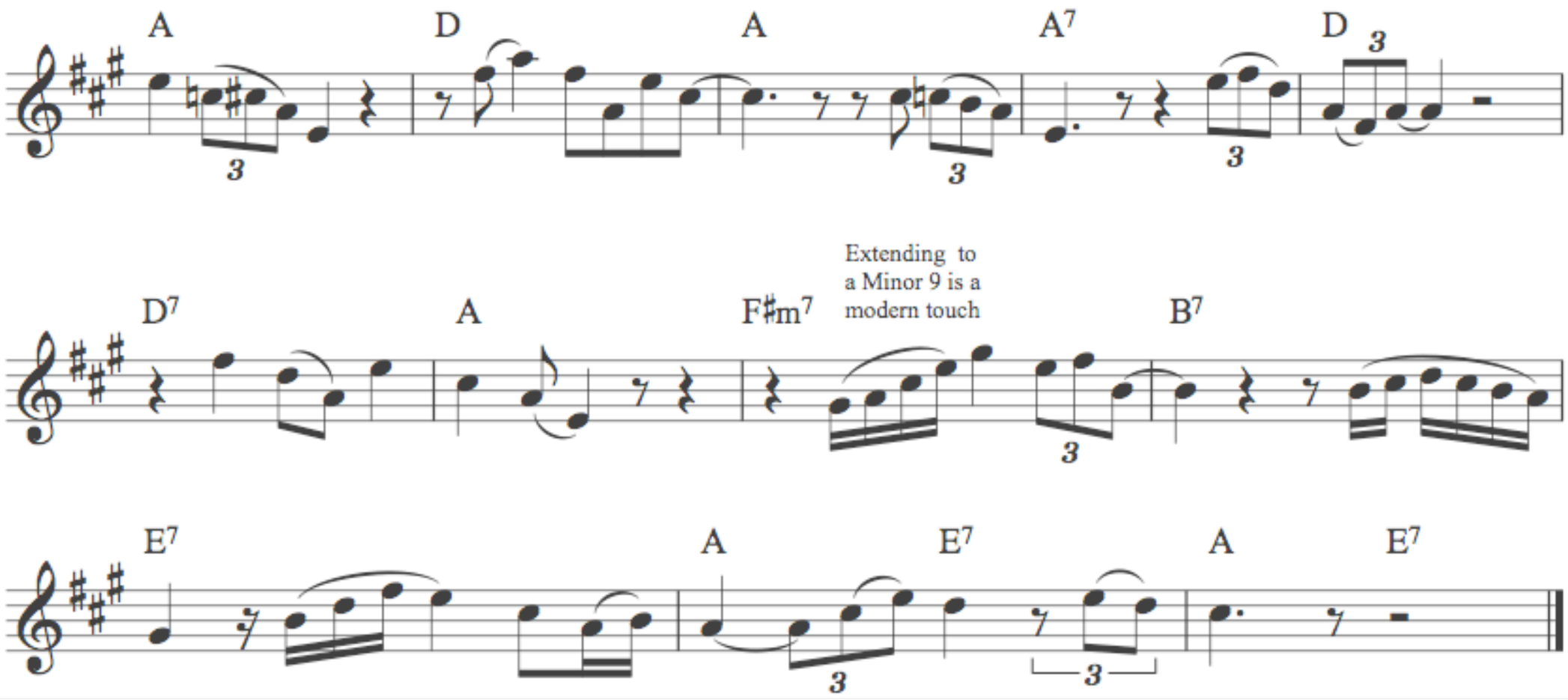
A passage of Benny Goodman's solo from 'After You've Gone'




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

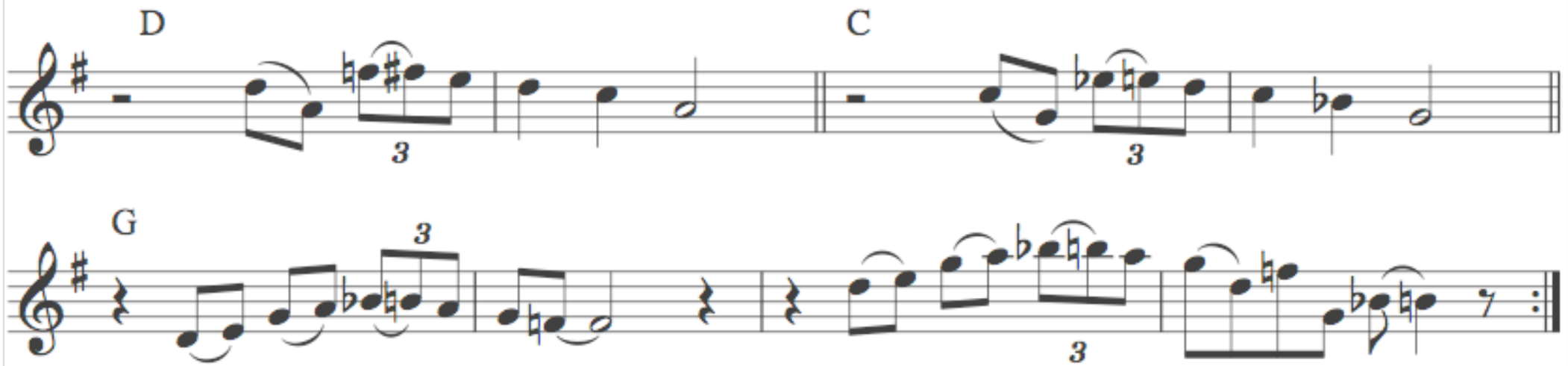
## 12-bar blues improvisation in the style of George Lewis

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




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.

For further details contact:
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burnand369@gmail.com

NEW ORLEANS
(CENTRAL)
Scale of Yards
0
500
1000
N.O.&S.Sta.
Old Lake Sta.
N.O.&N.E.Sta.
S.P.Sta.
U.S.Br.Mint.
Fr.Market
Cath.of S.Louis
Fr.Opera
JACKSON SQ.
Cabildo
Terminal Sta.
Court Ho.
Th.
Op.Ho.
West End Sta.
Char. Hosp.
Sugar Exch.
Custom Ho.
Cotton Ex.
Orpheum
L.&M.V. Sta.
S.Patr.Ch.
L.&N.Sta.
Prod.Exch.
City Hall
P.O.
1st Presb.Ch.
Union Sta.
Howard Lib.
Temp.Sinai
Market
N.O.Ft.Jacks. Sta.
RIVER
MISSISSIPPI
ALGIERS
Ferry
LEVEE
PATTERSON STREET
ST. BERNHARD AVE.
ST. ANTHONY AVE.
FRENCHMEN STR.
DECATUR STR.
LAFAYETTE AVE.
CHARTRES STR.
ST. JOSEPH STR.
HOWARD AVE.
JULIA STREET
POYDRAS STR.
GRAVER STR.
PERDIDO STR.
LAFAYETTE STR.
GIROD STR.
CAMP STREET
CALLIOPE STREET
ERRILLAT STR.
CYPRESS STR.
ELPHROSINE STR.
CALLIOPE STR.
CLARA STR.
MACHELLA STR.
CARONDELET WALK
GROUNDFLOOR CANAL
TOULOUSE
BEAUREGARD SQ.
ST. BERNHARD AVE.
ST. ANTHONY AVE.
ROBERTSON STR.
MARIONY STR.
MANDEVILLE STR.
SPAIN STR.
FIELD STR.
LAFAYETTE AVE.
FERDINAND STR.
MONTEGUT STR.
CLAUDE AVE.
ELMIRA STR.
ROCHELLE STR.
BROOKLYN AVE.
ADAMS STR.
RIVER STR.
LAMARQUE STR.
CRATES STR.
PATTERSON STREET
RONDE STR.
ICAN AVE.
ELIZA STR.
ELINA STR.
DELOUSSAB AVE.
ELMIRA STR.
ALGIERS