Concepts for Solo Guitar Performance
2nd Edition

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CONCEPTS

FOR

SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCE

By

Jan Jakut

2nd Edition

Juju Music Edition
Seattle

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Jan Jakut is a musician and music publisher living in Seattle, Washington. He received his undergraduate training in Jazz Guitar at the University of Mainz - School of Music (Germany) and studied for his master's degree in Jazz and Improvised Music at the University of Washington - School of Music. He is a multiple published author with Schott Music International and has received awards and scholarships, among them the A. Reynolds Endowed Scholarship in Music. Based on his published work and his solo guitar performances, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services granted him permanent residency with an EB-1 visa, addressing extraordinary abilities in the arts. With Juju Music Edition he publishes transcriptions and educational material for solo guitar to sustain and propel the rich heritage of American Popular Music by making its idiom and general body of knowledge available for current and future students of music in the US and abroad. Since 2015 he performs on the West Coast and frequently teaches at institutions like the California Jazz Conservatory, Berkeley.

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1. Analyzing Melodic and Harmonic Tonal Groups

"One of the first things that's really important is to actually know the song [...] What do I mean by knowing the song? I mean being able to play it anywhere (on the fretboard). Not have to think about what the next chord is, because you just know it." [...] First figure out one very simple way to play the melody with chords." [1] Rosenwinkel 2013)

- **Kurt Rosenwinkel** about Chord Melody

How do you go about that?

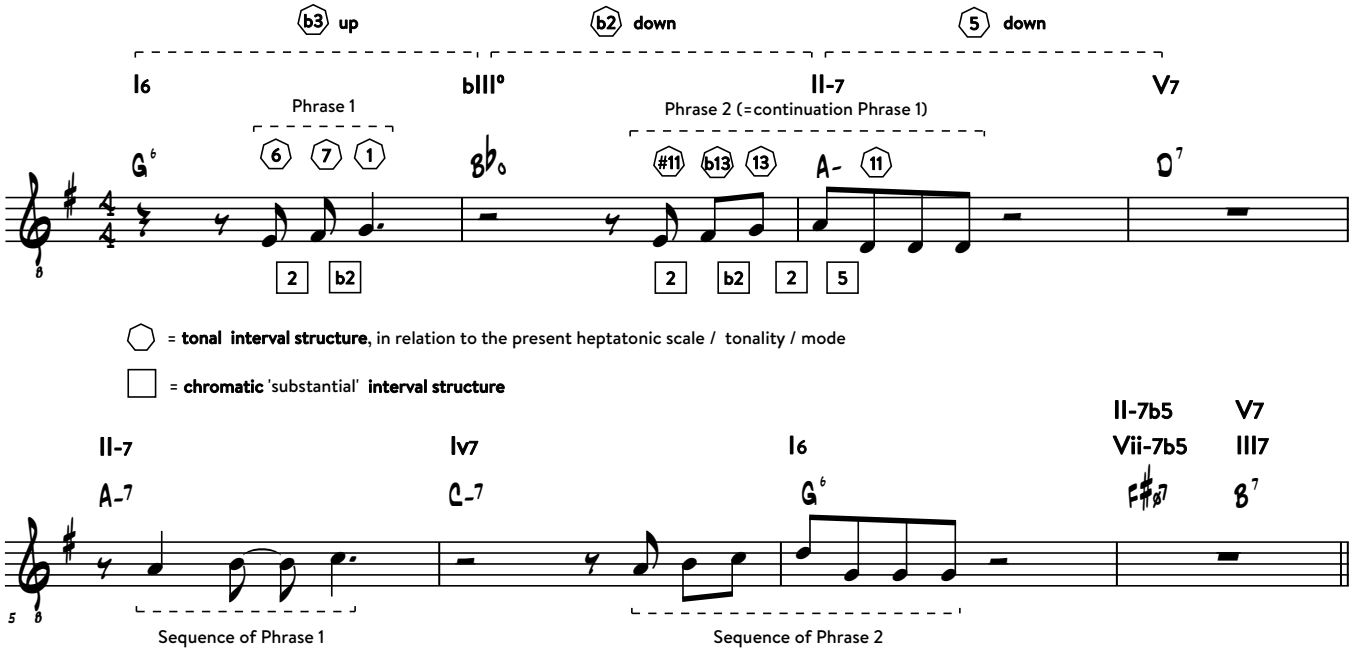
1.1 Find the most common and defining recordings of the song. Decide *which versions* fit both the common playing practices and the given purpose of learning the **basic structure** (plain melody + basic harmonies). For instance, a standard like *Embraceable You* is commonly played with different harmonies and varying keys - Charlie Parker version is in F, Billie Holiday's in C. In this case, for a guitar solo performance, it is practical to choose the key of G:

- it's a common and good sounding key for the instrument
- initially, tonal relationships and harmonic progressions are easier to process in a key with less accidentals
- there are interesting recordings of guitar performances and sheet music available

1.2 **Melodic Tonal Groups***: identify and analyze melodic phrases by measuring their intervallic structure.
Harmonic Tonal Groups*

- identify the harmonic progression (e.g II-V-I)
- the characteristic of the harmonies (triads, seventh chords, specific inversions & tensions, constant structure ...)
- the intervallic movement of the root or the lowest note of a chord

Sample 1.2a: *Embraceable You* - Melody based on Billie Holiday's recording.
Harmonies based on Bill Frisell's performance and availabe sheet music.

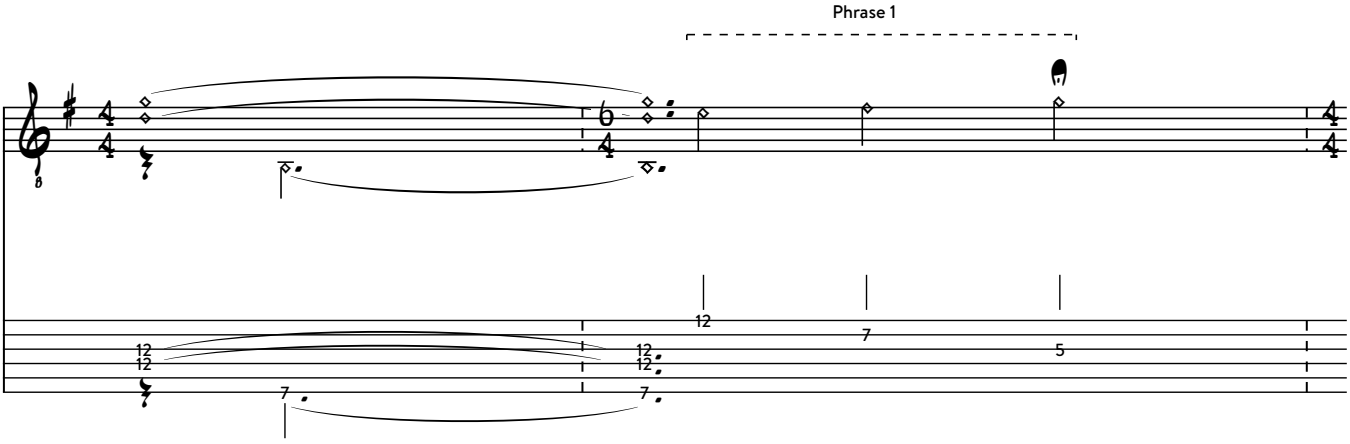


Learning musical motives, chord progressions and entire songs on a **structural level** helps to memorize tunes and to understand which notes are important to outline melodic and harmonic development with one instrument. Knowing **intervallic structures** enables playing musical ideas in different areas of the fretboard. By having access to all available registers you can take advantage of guitar specific techniques to play legato and with added sustained notes. Excerpts from Bill Frisell's solo rendition of *Embraceable You* illustrate the use of sustained notes, reoccurring musical motives and added bass notes.

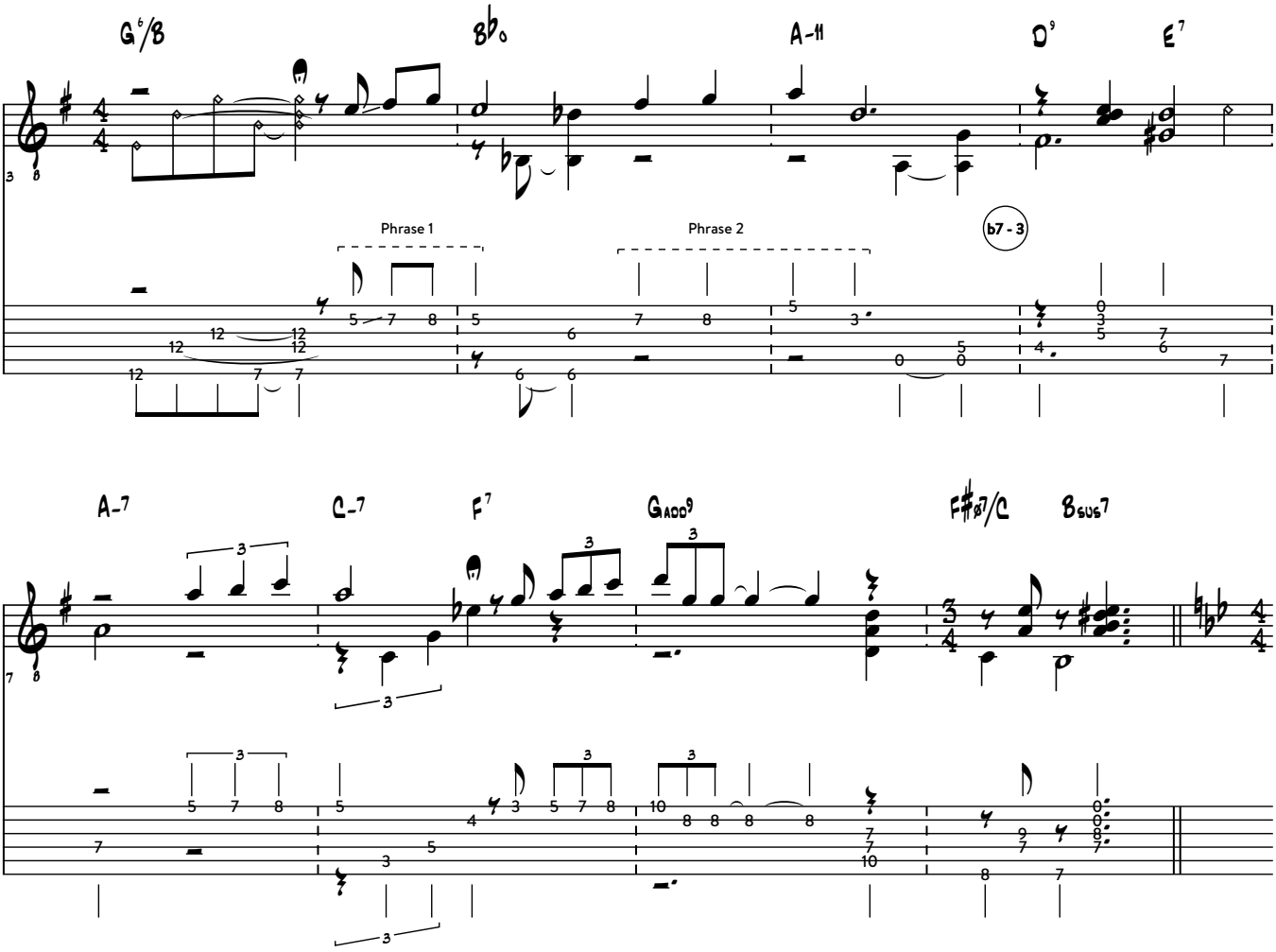
* Intervals can be measured based on any arbitrary tonal group. Both the tonal interval structure and the chromatic interval structure can be identified as particular cases of tonal groups. This is of consequence for evaluating structural value and permutations. [2] *(Kissenbeck 2007)*

Sample 1.2b: Bill Frisell - *Embraceable You* [3]
Use of motives and sustained notes

In the intro a G-triad and the first melodic motive as found in sample 1.2b are played entirely with natural harmonics. The sustained plain triad establishes the tonality while providing a harmonic background for the motive that anticipates the melody of the tune.

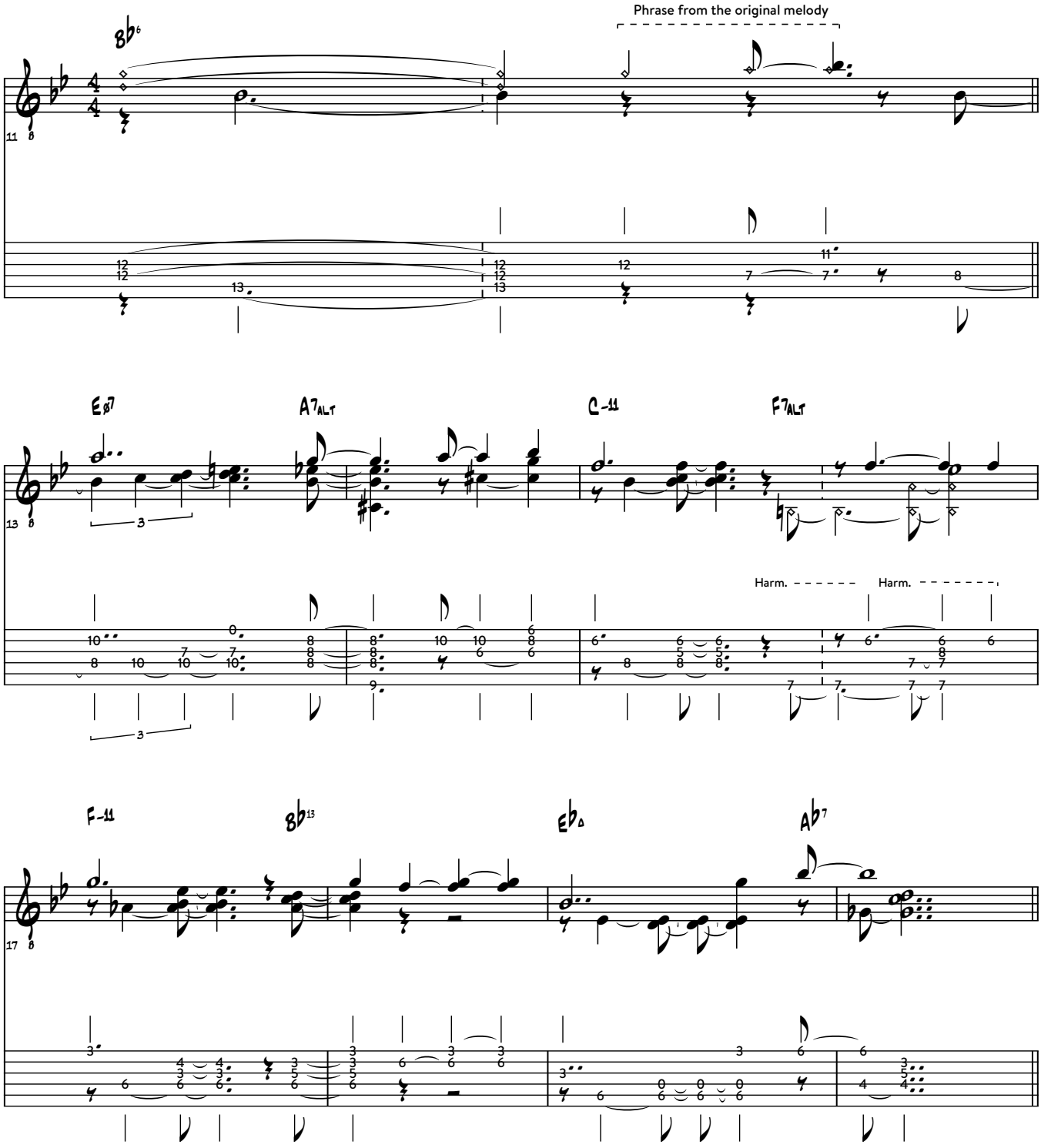


After more arpeggiated harmonics in bar 3, the harmony is outlined with a variety of techniques: sustained bass notes (bars 4-8), chromatic approach (bar 10), voice-leading b7-3 (e.g. bar 5) and chords (bar 6, 9-10).



Most notably are the varying rhythms and that the melody "comes first". Accompanying notes aren't played simultaneously but rather fill the gaps between melodic phrases.

Sample 1.2c: Concepts found in Bill Frisell's playing style applied to *Stella By Starlight* [4]



Sources:

[1] Rosenwinkel, Kurt (2013): *Clinic Gdansk,* Akademia Muzyczna w Gdańsku

[2] Kissenbeck, Andreas (2007): *Jazz Theorie II, Kassel* : p. 16

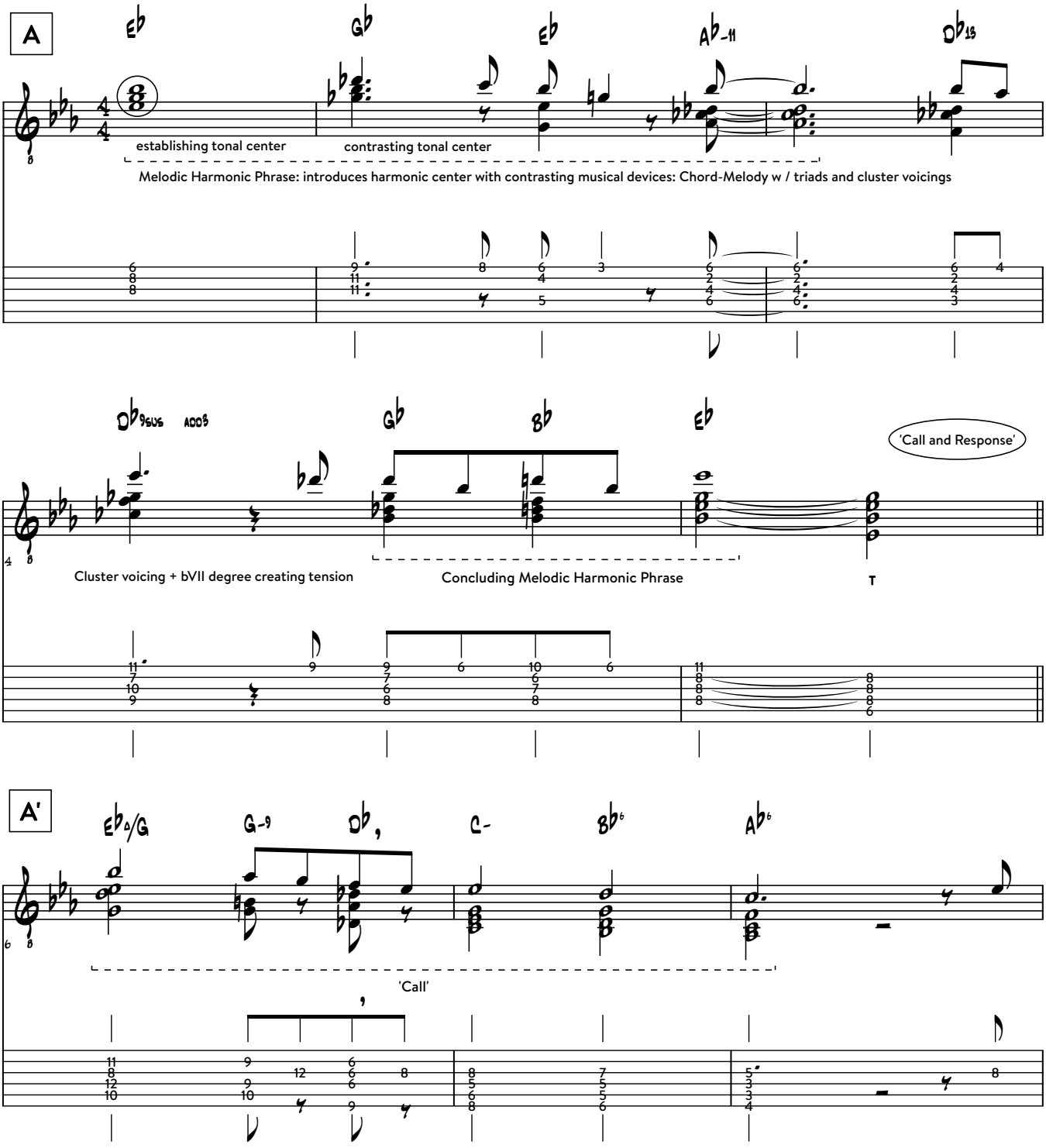
[3] Frisell, Bill (2013) *Embraceable You (Solo),* Seattle

for the Fretboard Journal published on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEHdvZD5jFc

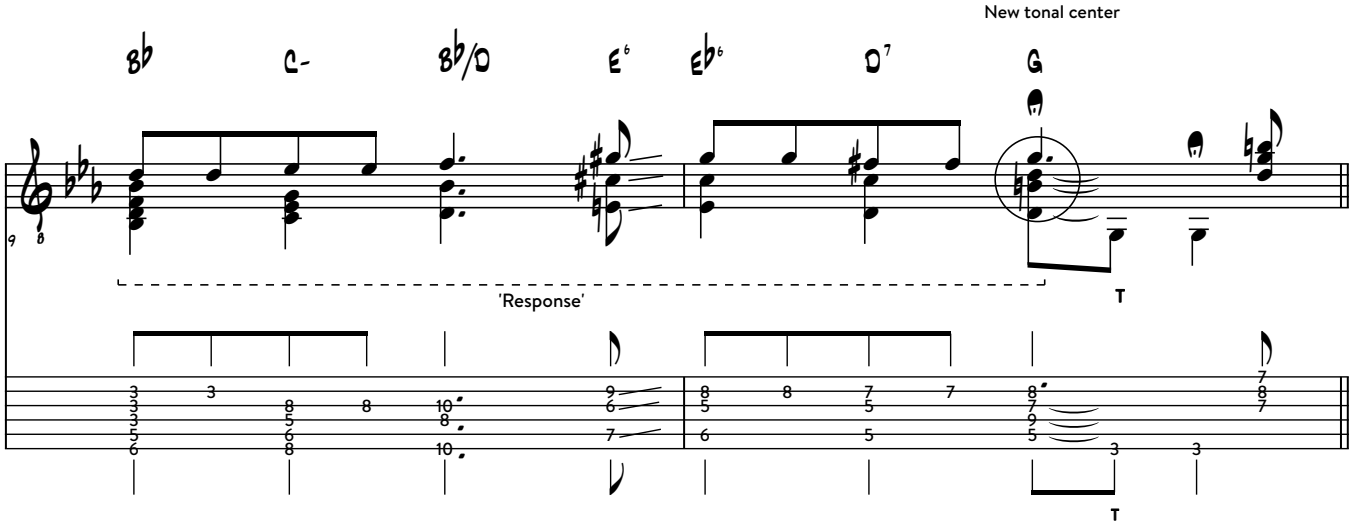
[4] Jakut, Jan (2017): *Interstella*, Seattle - Juju Music Edition

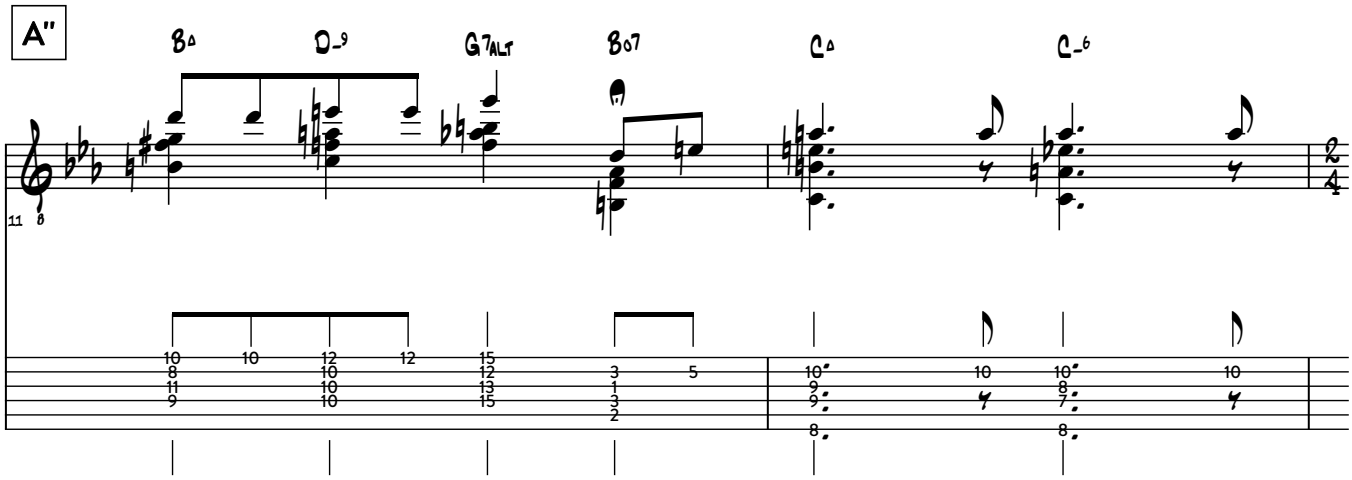
2. Analyzing Musical Forms

The majority of playing practices found in American Popular Music favor cyclic forms like AABA in Jazz or Verse-Bridge-Chorus in Rock/Pop-related repertoire. It's a practical organization principle to establish musical ideas while complementing them with contrasting elements. The transcription of Julian Lage's improvised solo performance shows how to organize musical ideas around this principle to create compelling solo performances.

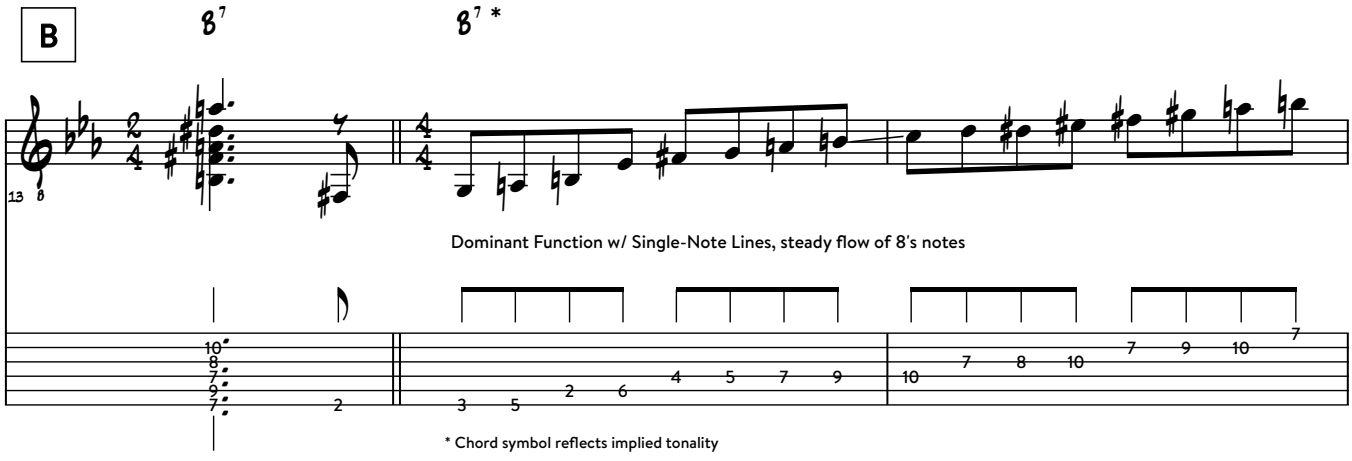


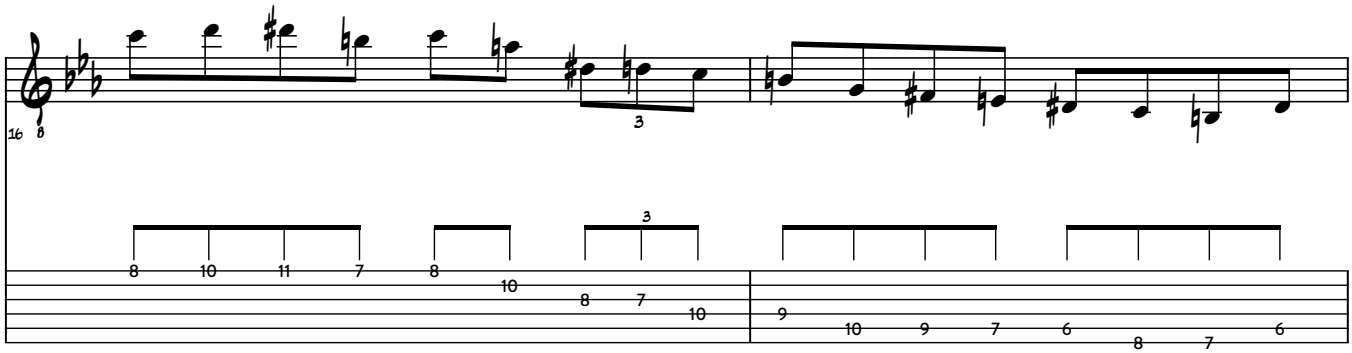
*Lage, Julian. *Improvisation.* For Carter Vintage Guitars (1997 Gibson Super 4000 Demo) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJg08nQjBrA

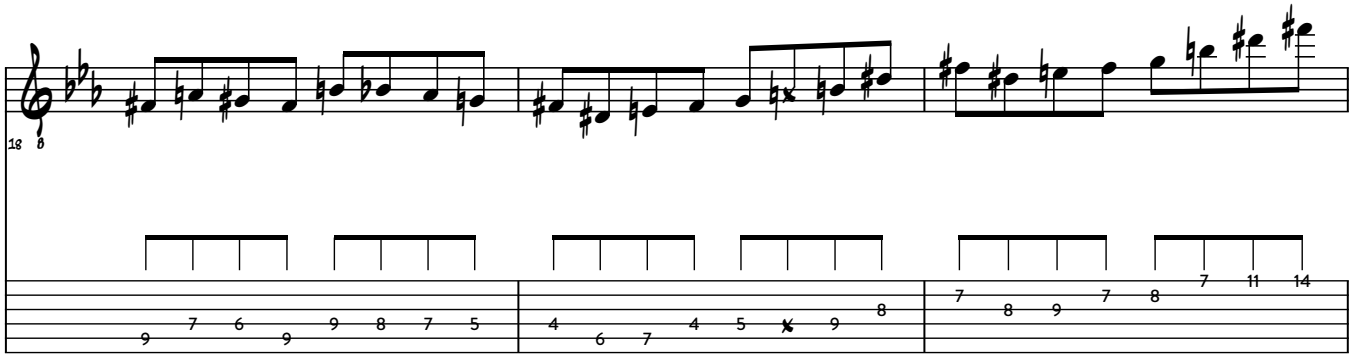




The musical phrases labeled as three different A parts have less melodic and harmonic conformaty as compared to the one found in the segmentation of a Jazz standard but their development paired with used musical devices create a concistency that leads to a contrasting B-part with a new tonal center:







A''''

I- / VI- in G-Major

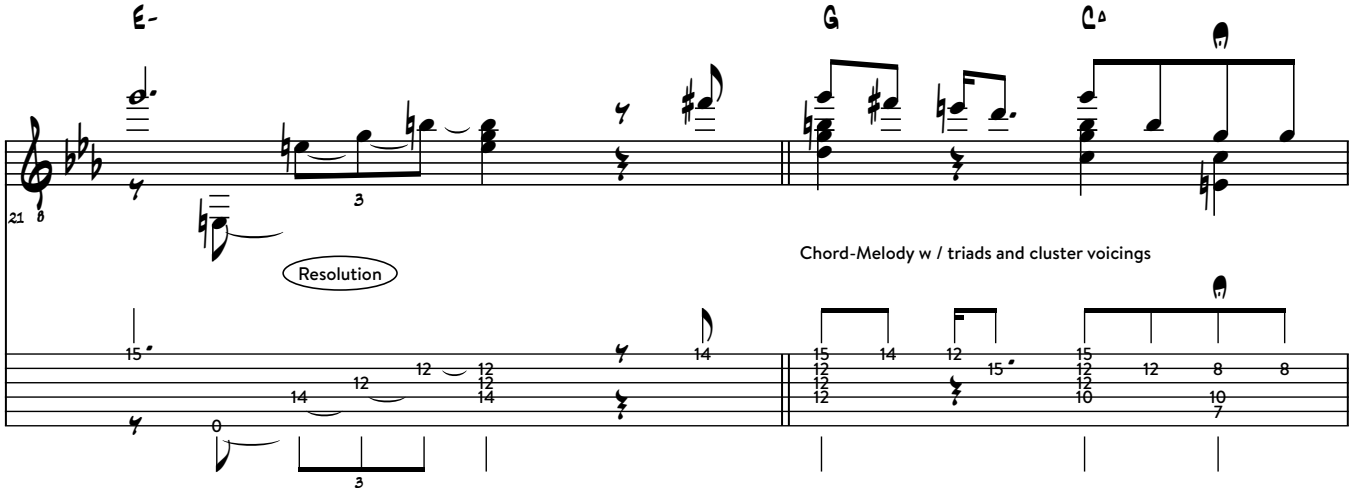
E-

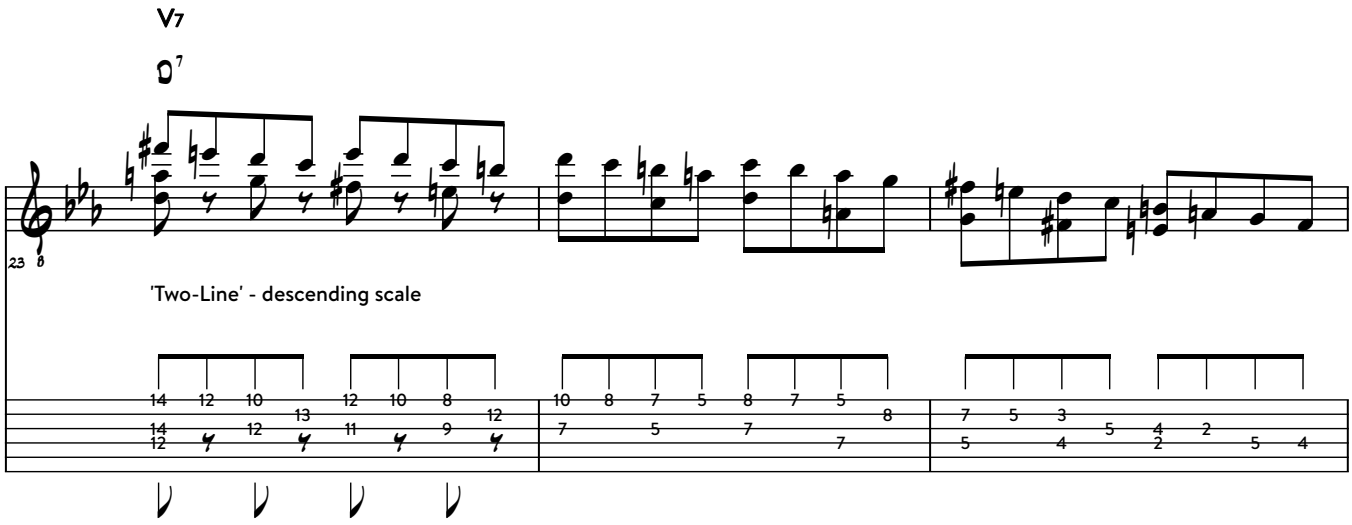
I- / VI- in G-Major

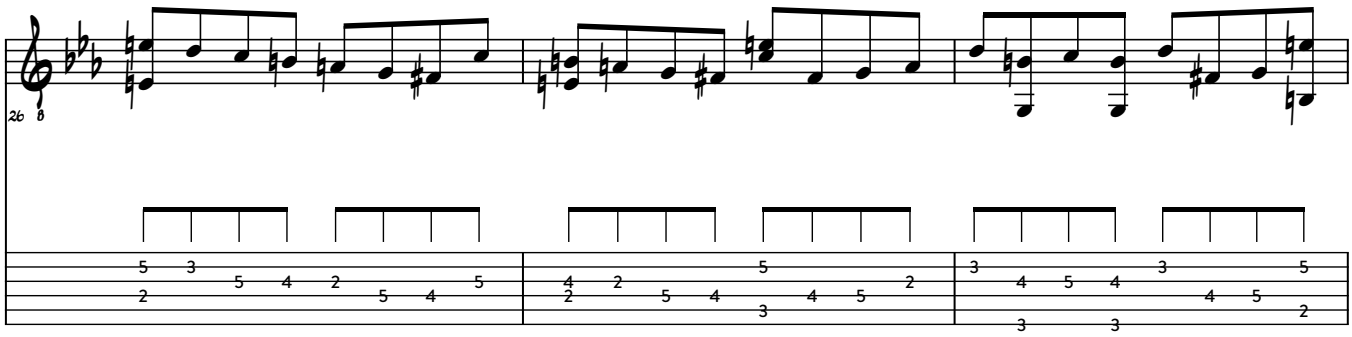
G

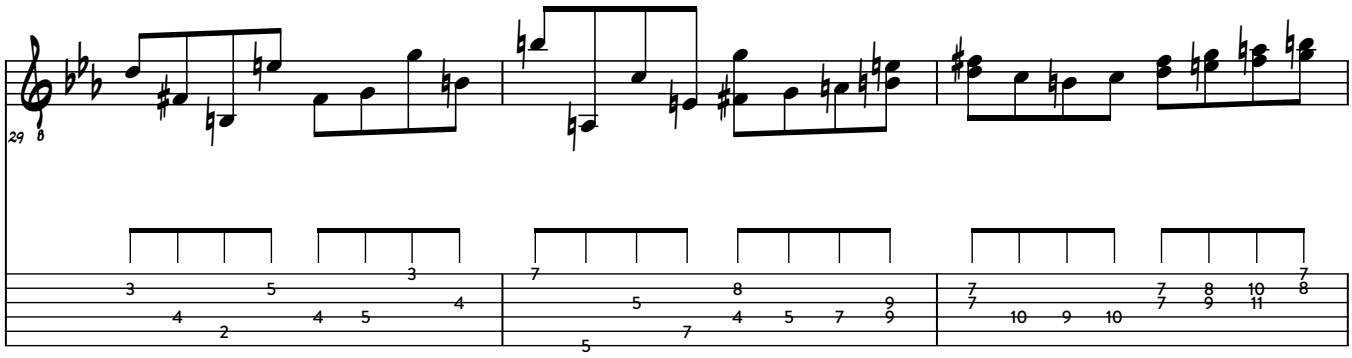
IVΔ

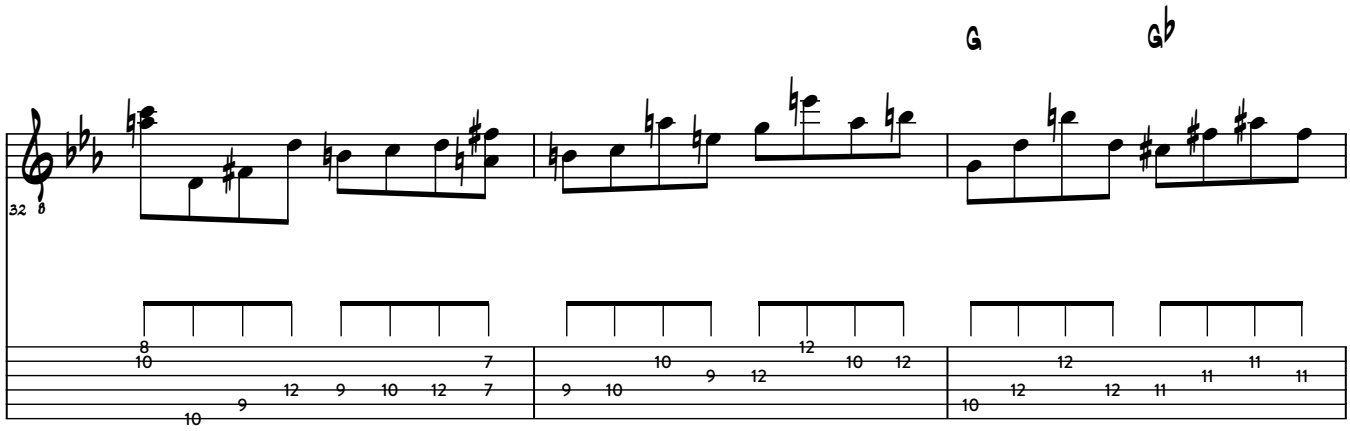
CΔ

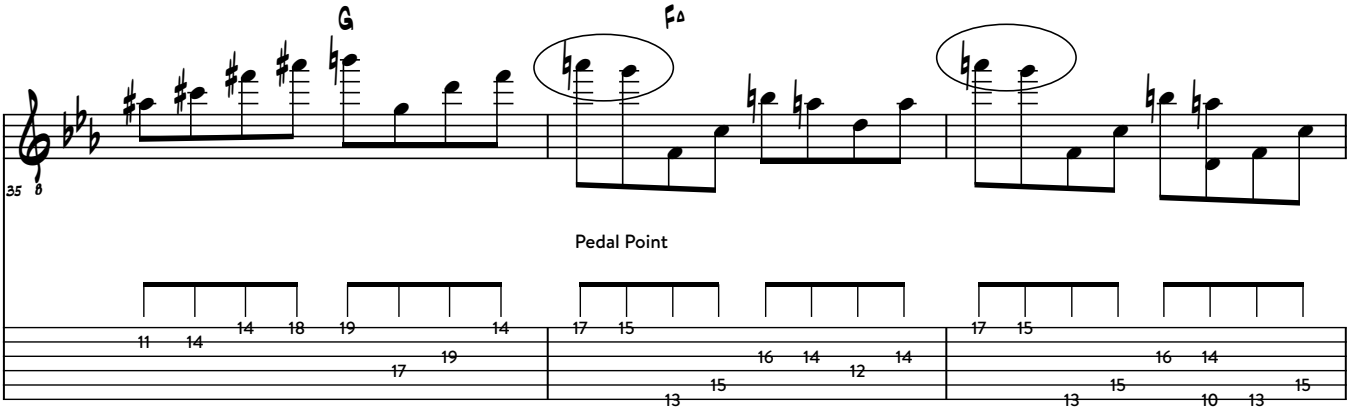


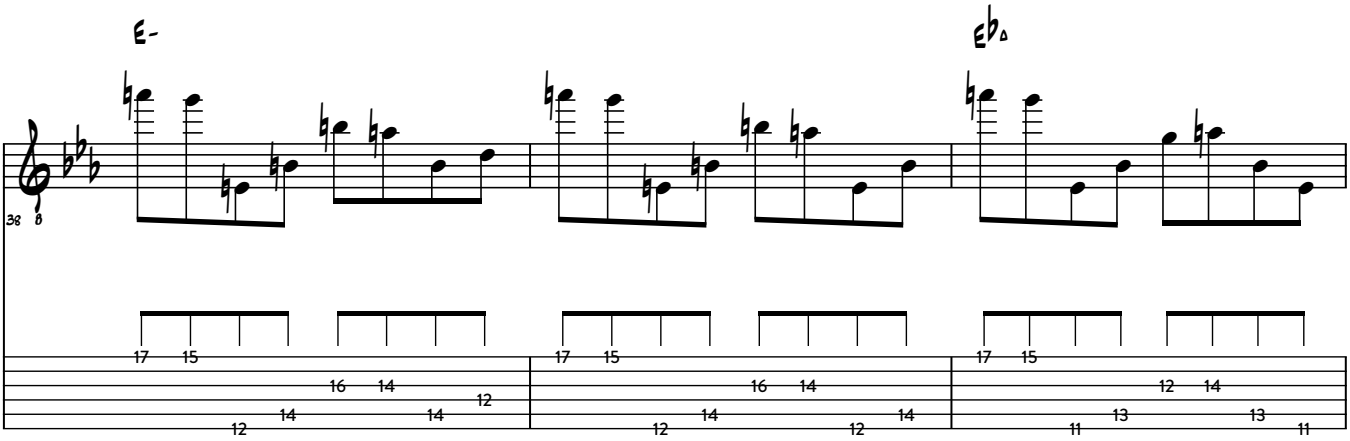

V7
D7
'Two-Line' - descending scale

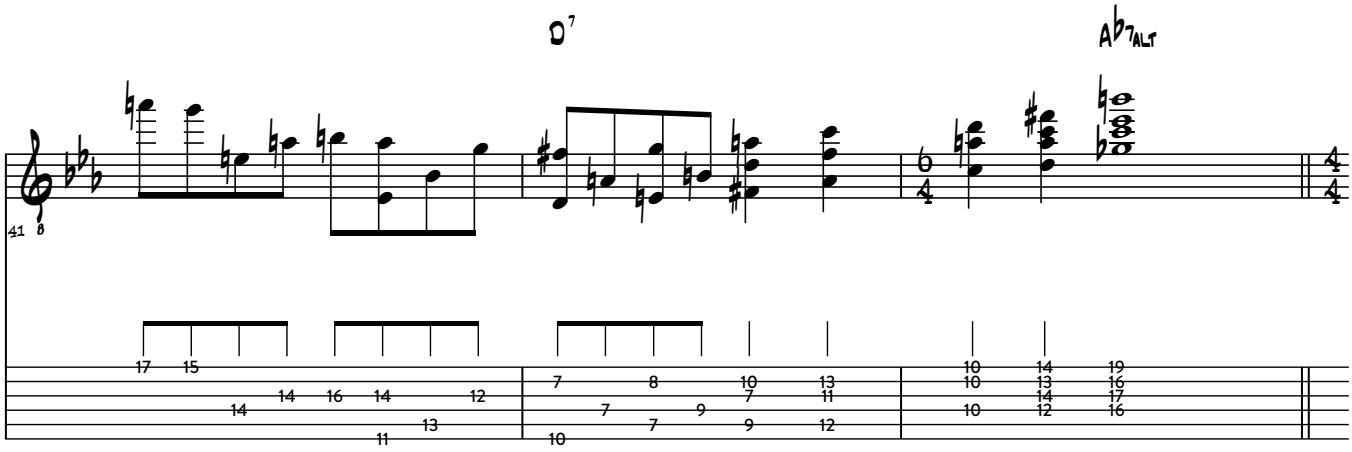


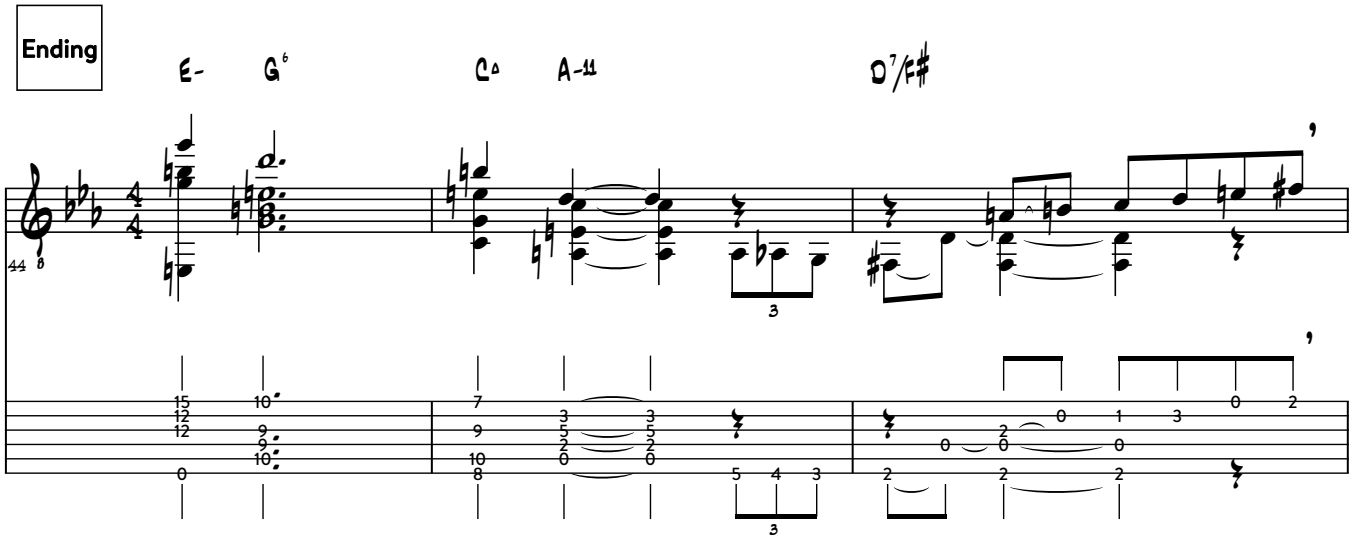


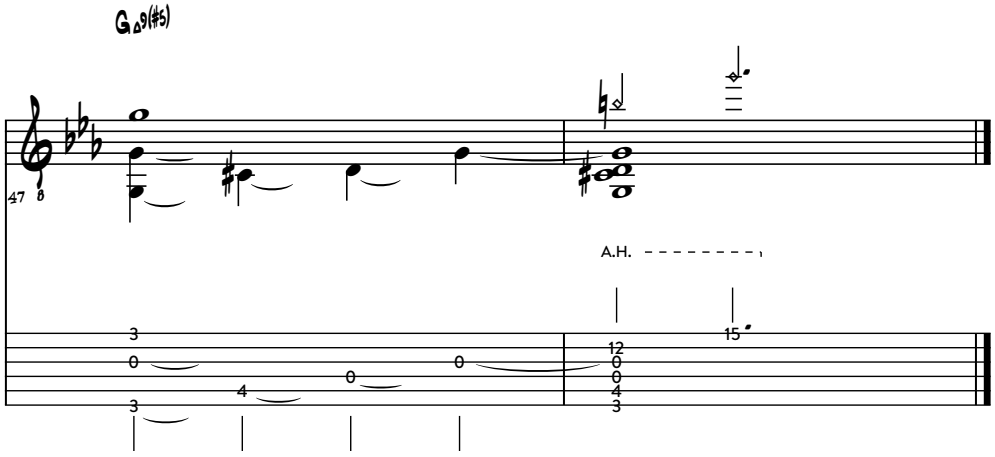

G
Gb


G
F△
Pedal Point


E-
Eb△

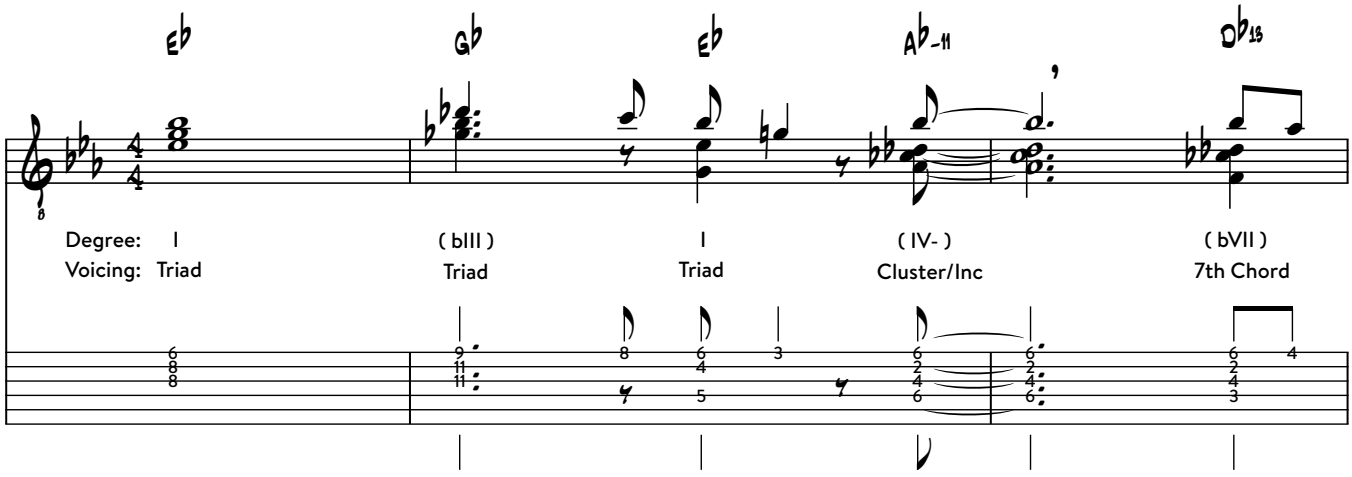

D7
Ab7ALT

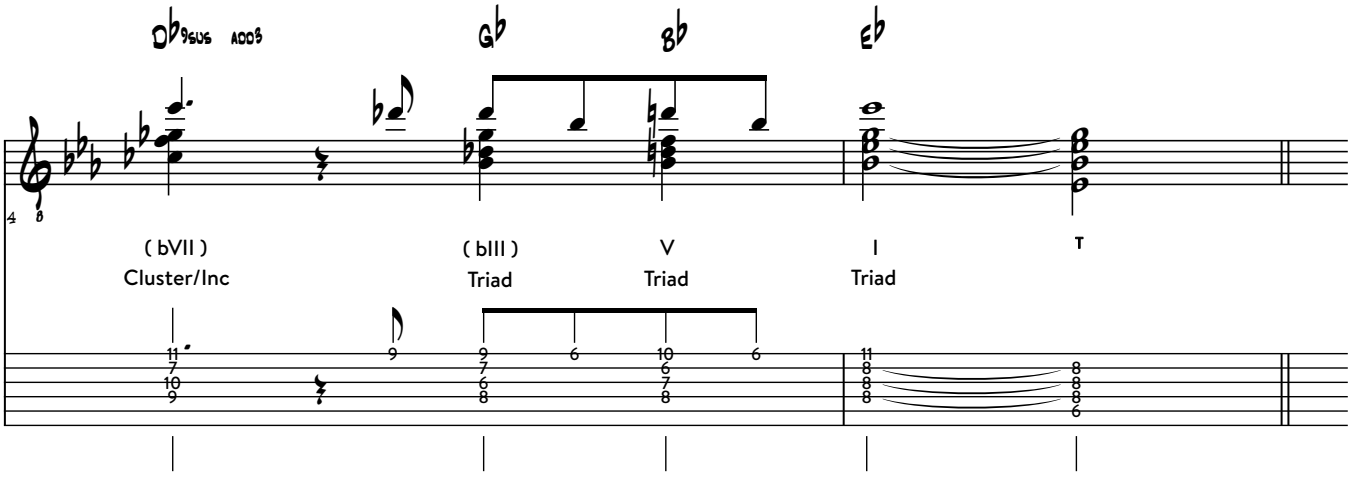

Ending
E-
G6
CΔ
A-11
D7/F#


GΔ9(#5)
A.H.

3. Means of Harmonic Organization

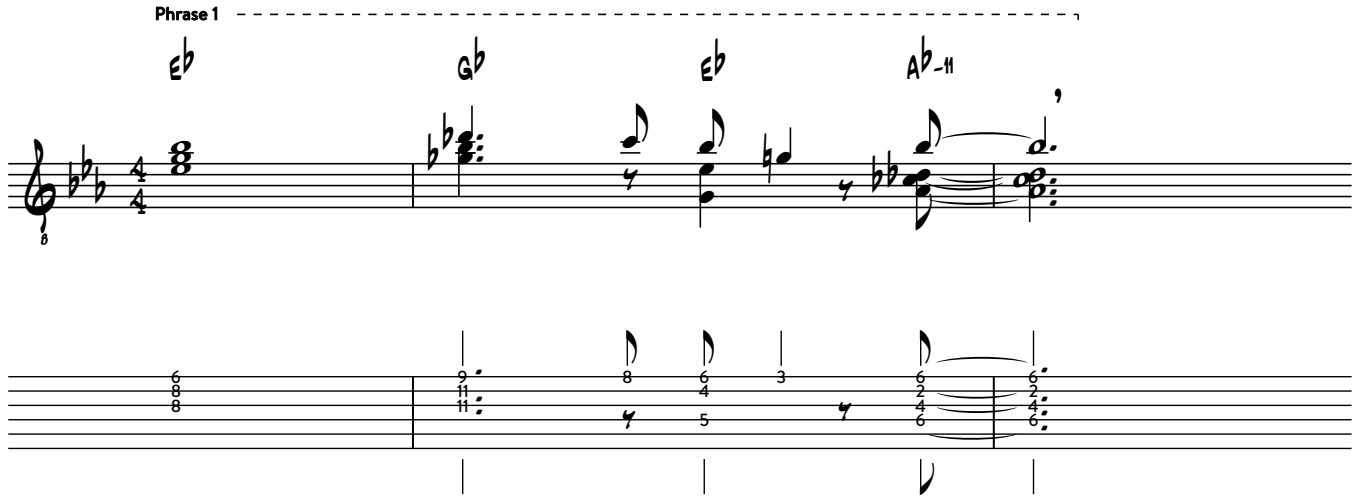
Sample 3.1a: 'Improvisation' - Julian Lage (1997 Gibson Super 4000 *Demo for Carter Vintage Guitars*)



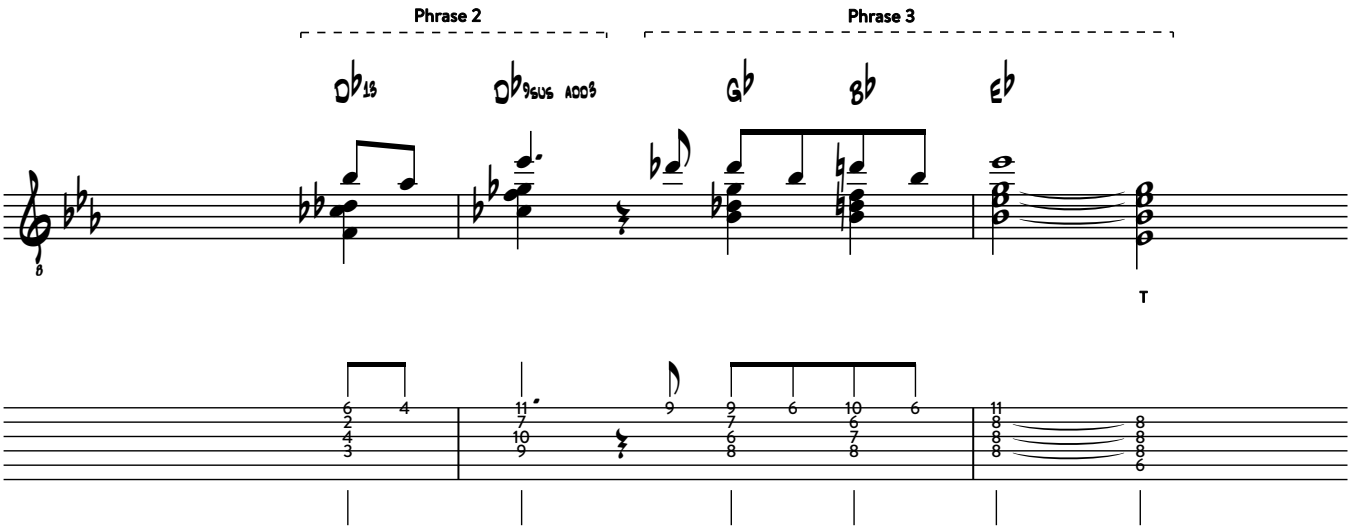


I. Musical Phrases

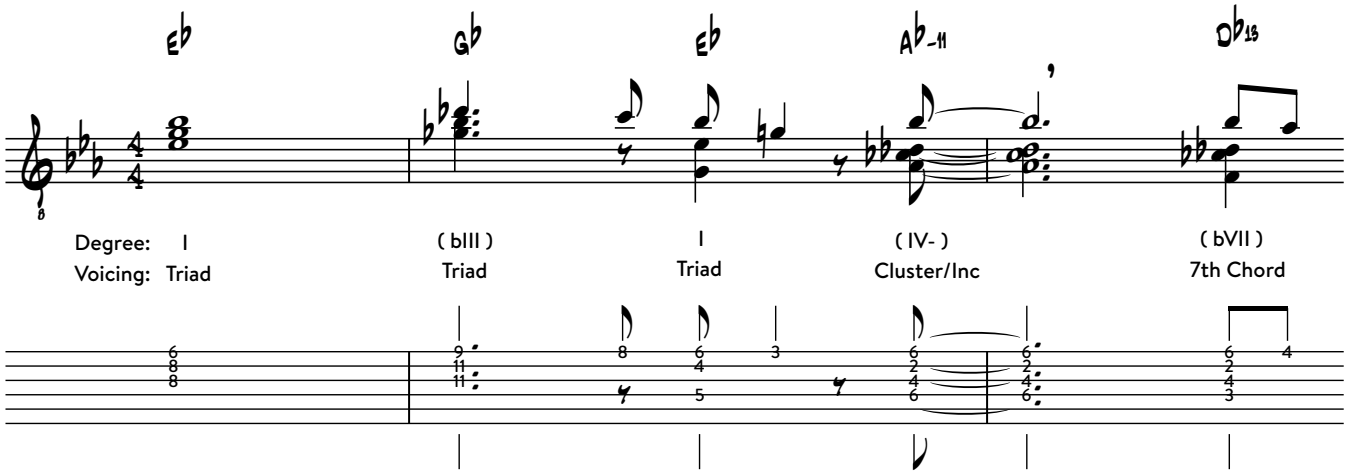
Phrase 1: A plain triad establishes a tonality and the **listener's expectation** while the following rhythmic phrase with more triads **surprises** with a brief detour to another tonality and **contrasting** cluster-like voicings.

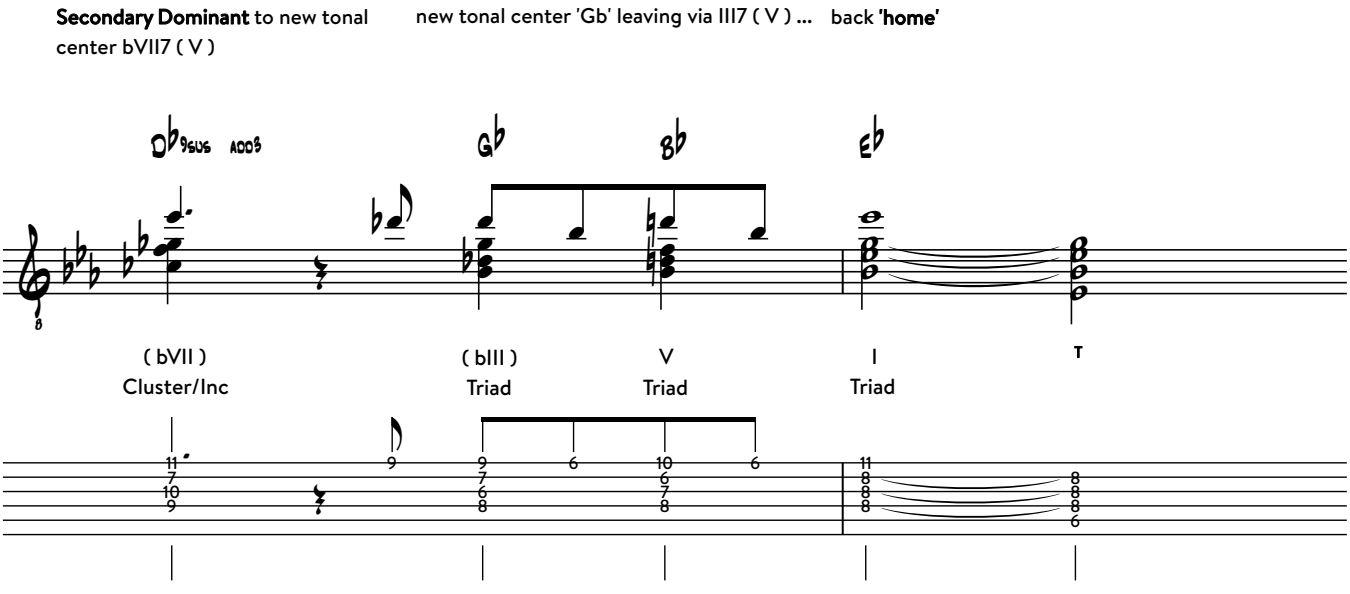


Phrases 2 & 3 reference harmonic elements of the first phrase in reverse (cluster-voicing to triads). The contrasting rhythm concludes the musical idea logically and leads back to the original tonic.



II. Harmonic Structure

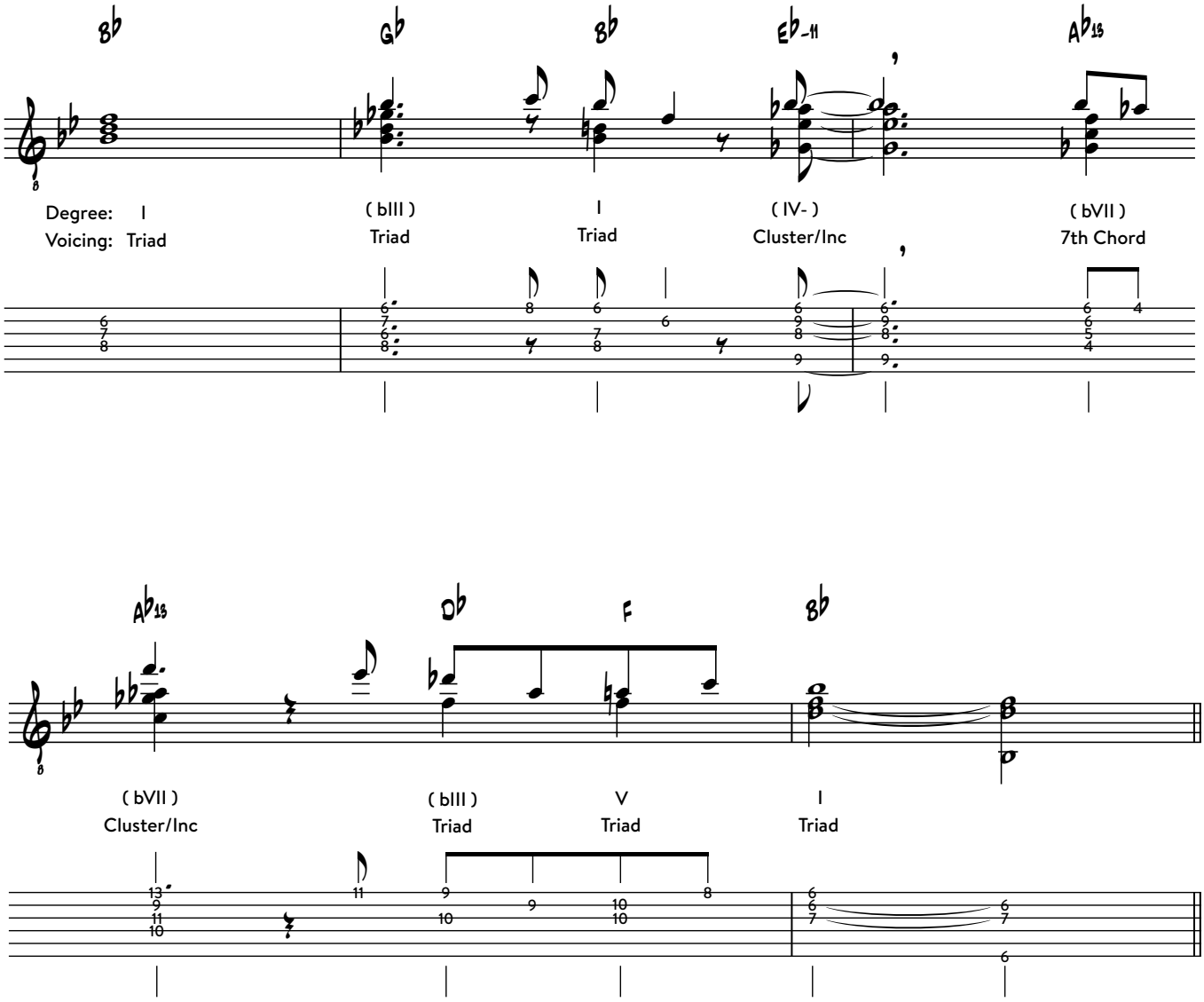




III. Application

Sample 2.1b: 'Improvisation' based on found organization principles / musical 'syntax'

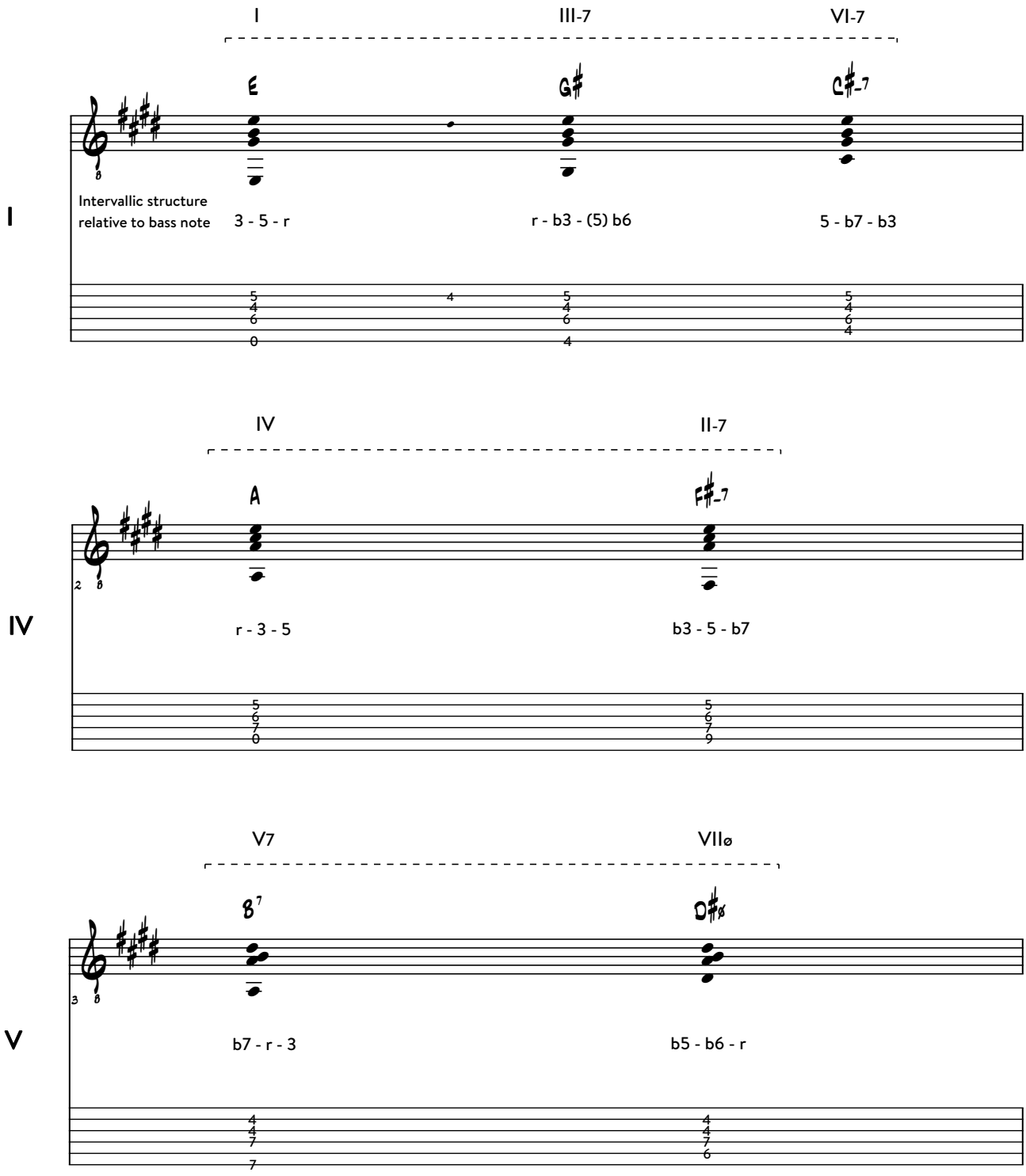
abstract structure:	**concrete structure**:
tonal center, harmonic progression	chord, voicing
melodic and harmonic phrases	melody, rhythm



Means of Harmonic Organization

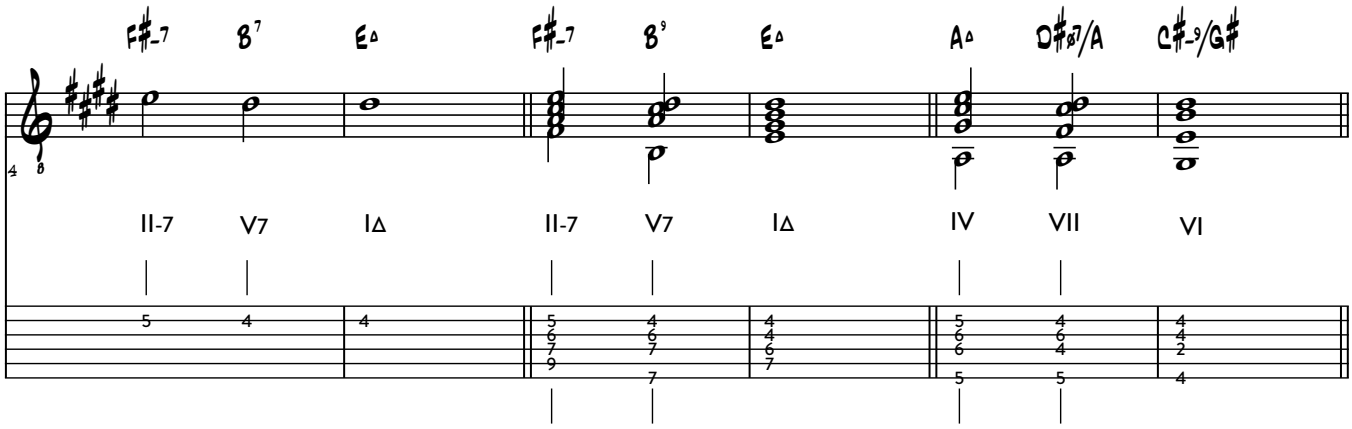
I - IV - V

Sample 3.2a: I - IV - V - Principle

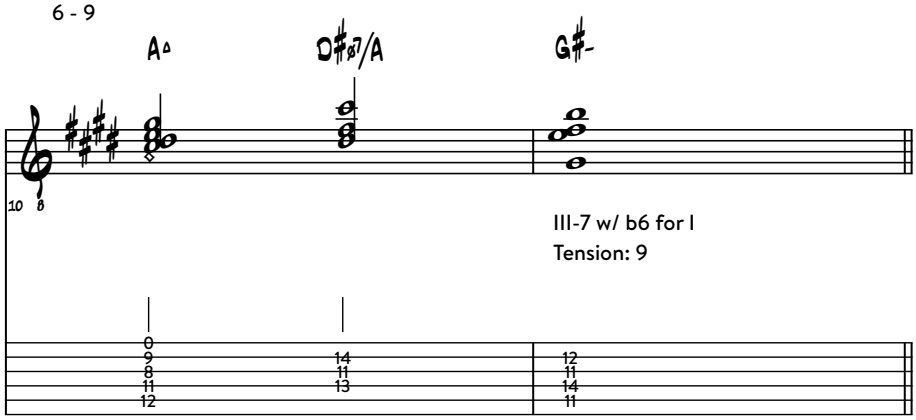


Chords that are either related to tonic, subdominant or dominant degree are interchangeable because of common notes they share. Within a tonal context they serve the same function and can be used to harmonize a melody, substituting the main functions I, IV, V. This is also useful to interpret chord progressions and to come up with substitutions, voicing ideas or different bass movements. In the key of E the changes F#-7 - B7 - EΔ (II-V-I) can translate to AΔ - D#ø7/A - C#-9/G# (IV-VII-VI).

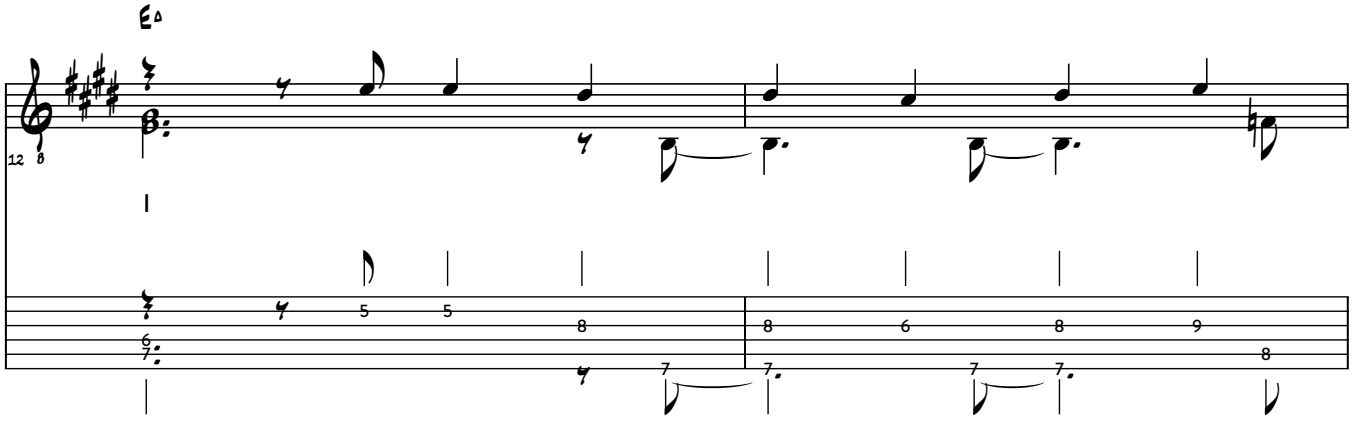
Sample 3.2b: Chord Substitutions and voicing ideas - II-V-I - based on interchangeability of chords

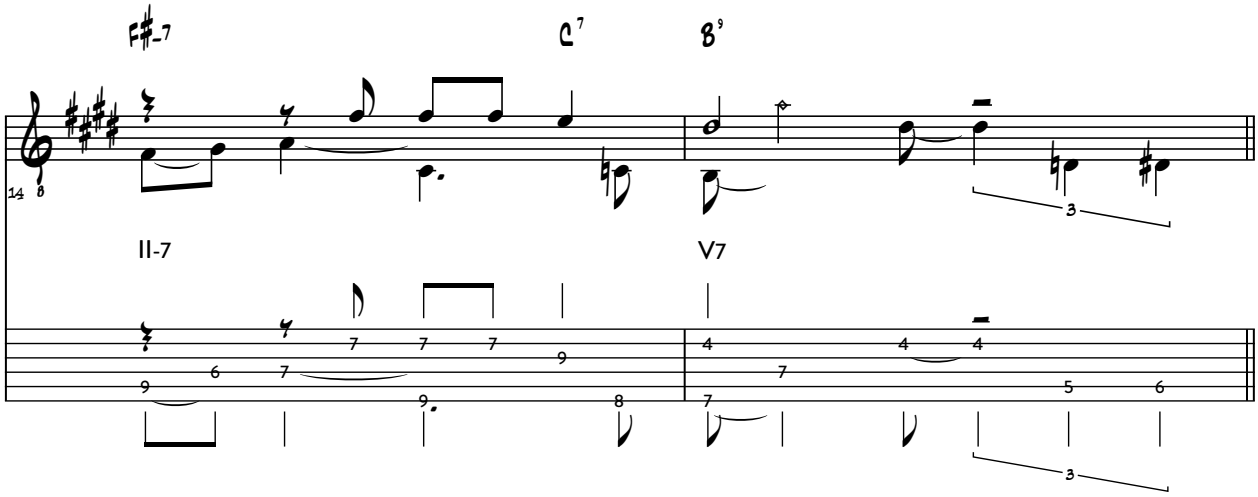


tensions for F#-7:
6 - 9

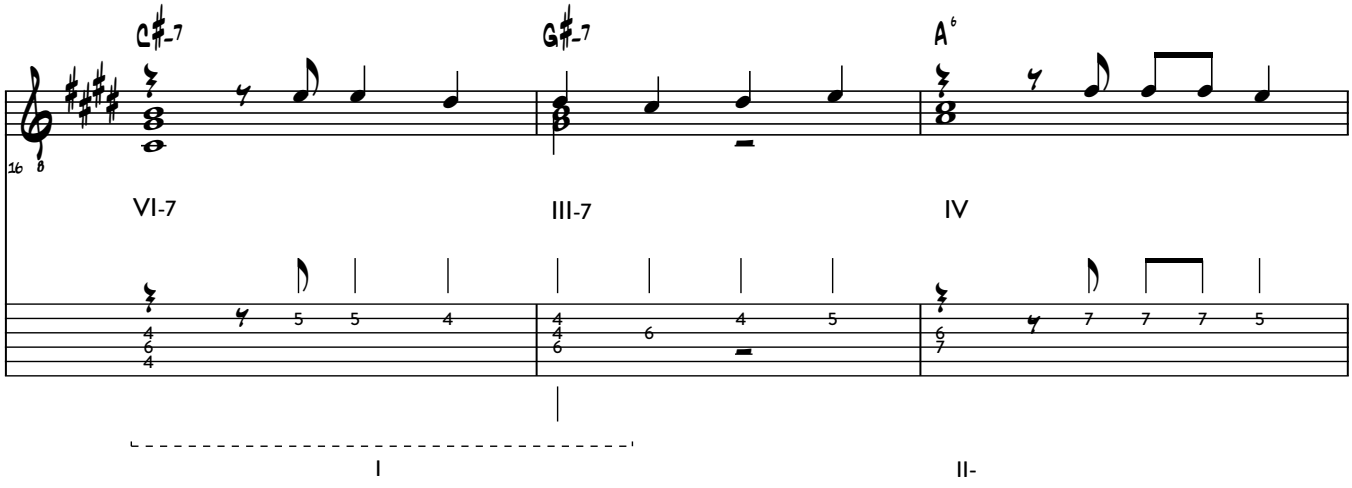


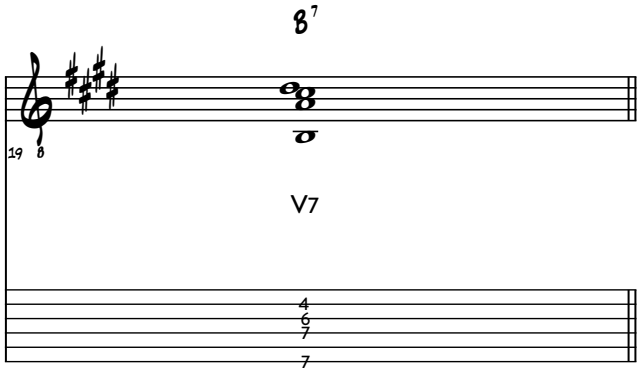
Sample 3.2c: Chord changes for a simple melody (I - ii - V)





Sample 3.2d: Chord Substitutions





4. Melodic Devices

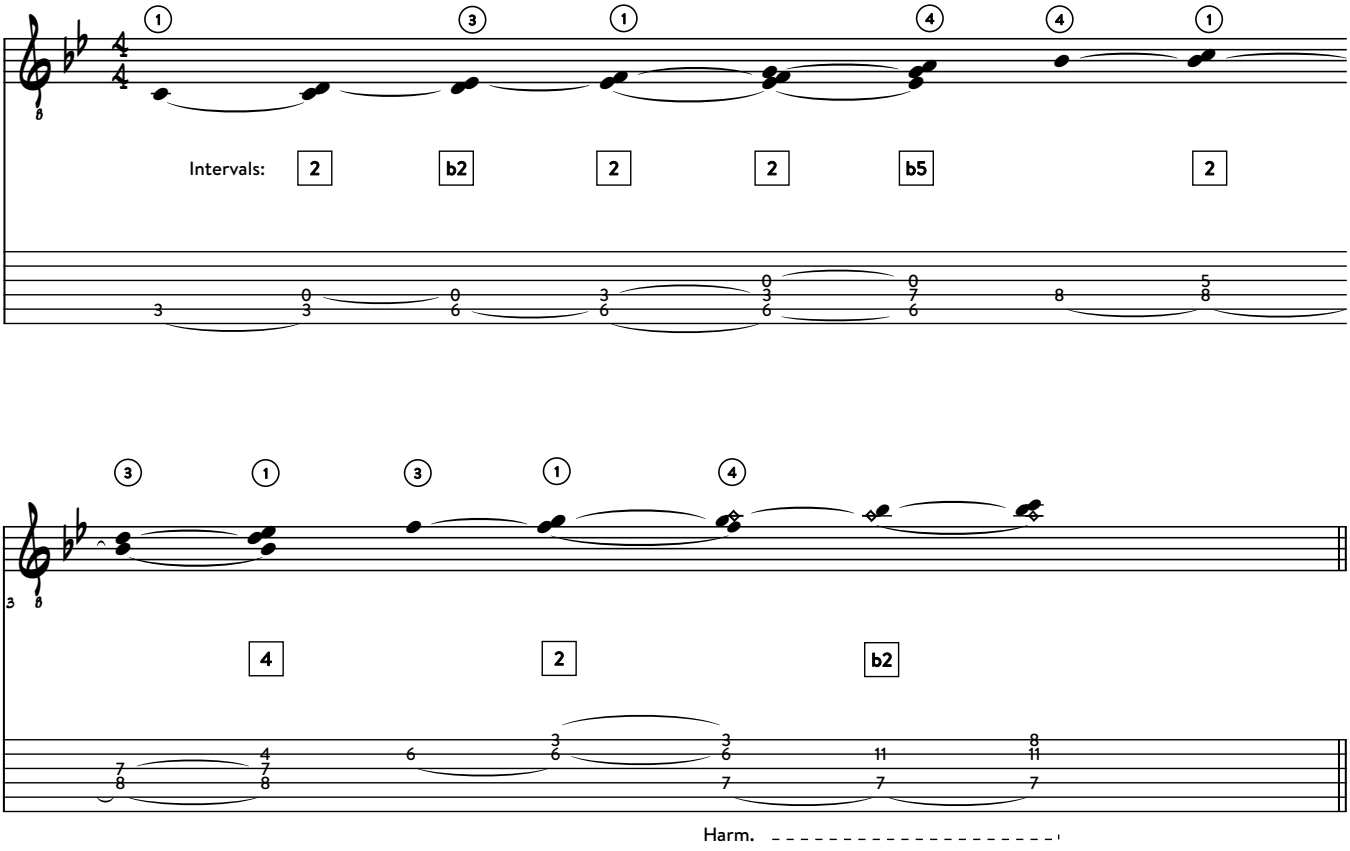
Guitar Techniques of Jim Hall & Bill Frisell

4.1 Sustained Notes: Open Strings, Harmonics, Pedal Point & Barre

> "I like to work out fingerings for scales or melodies that get things running like a piano. For example, I'll take a G major scale and re-finger it using open strings. I let everything ring as long as it possibly can by holding every note until the last moment. Curve your fingers so they don't dampen the open strings." [1]
>
> - Bill Frisell

Using open strings and harmonics instead of a fretted note creates a varity of intervallic textures and allows for longer sustained notes. It creates a similar effect as a sustain pedal does on a piano: e.g. smaller intervalls like major and minor seconds resonating together. "I find this way of thinking interesting because it opens possibilities for dissonant or closely voiced chords not so commonly used on the guitar." - Bill Frisell [2]

Sample 4.1a: Unconventional scale fingerings for C-Dorian [see Lewis, p. 15-16*]

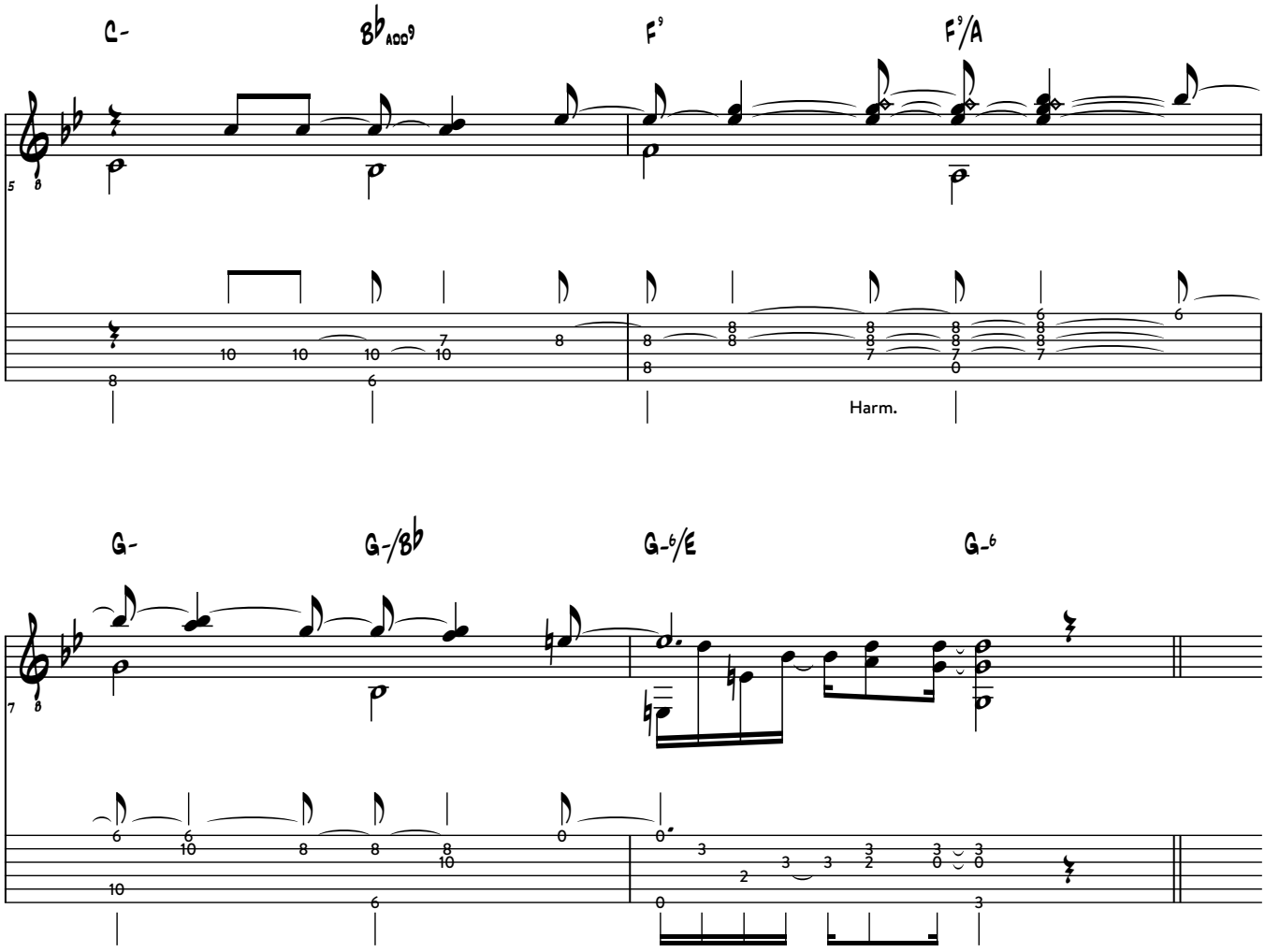


[1] Jude Gold. "The Big Bang: Bill Frisell Helps You Unleash an Ever-Expanding Universe of Melodic, Harmonic, and Textural Possibilities," Guitar Player 36, no. 12 (Dec., 2002): pg 61.

[2] See Bill Frisell, "An Approach to Guitar Fingering," in Arcana: Musicians on Music , edited by John Zorn, 140-144 (New York: Granary Books, 2000).

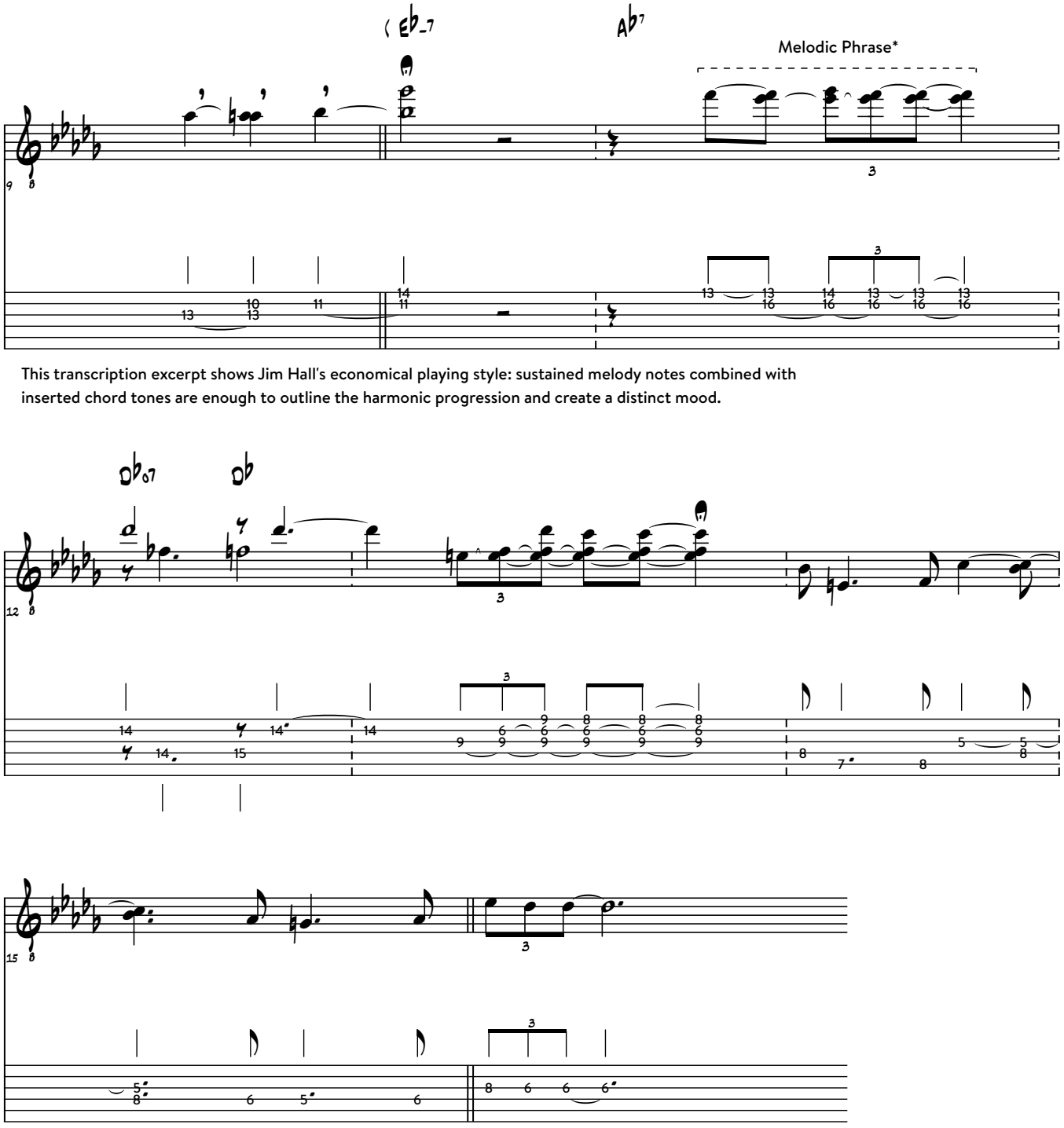
*Lewis, Travis. A STUDY OF BILL FRISELL THROUGH PAUL MOTIAN'S ON BROADWAY RECORDINGS. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016. 15-16.

Sample 4.1b: Unconventional Scale Fingerings applied to the chord progression of *Paranoid Android* - Radiohead (C-Dorian to G-Dorian)



As opposed to playing a melodic phrase with one note ringing at a time, this practice allows to benefit from a fuller sound when performing solo or in a band context without another harmony instrument. Including bass notes the melody creates complete harmonies (e.g. bar 6: F9 - F A Eb G). The crucial categories of the harmony, like 3rd, b7th and 9th substituting the root category, are present without the added bass note.

Sample 4.2a: Transcription Excerpt Poor Butterfly as played by Jim Hall (solo)* - use of Pedal Point



This transcription excerpt shows Jim Hall's economical playing style: sustained melody notes combined with inserted chord tones are enough to outline the harmonic progression and create a distinct mood.

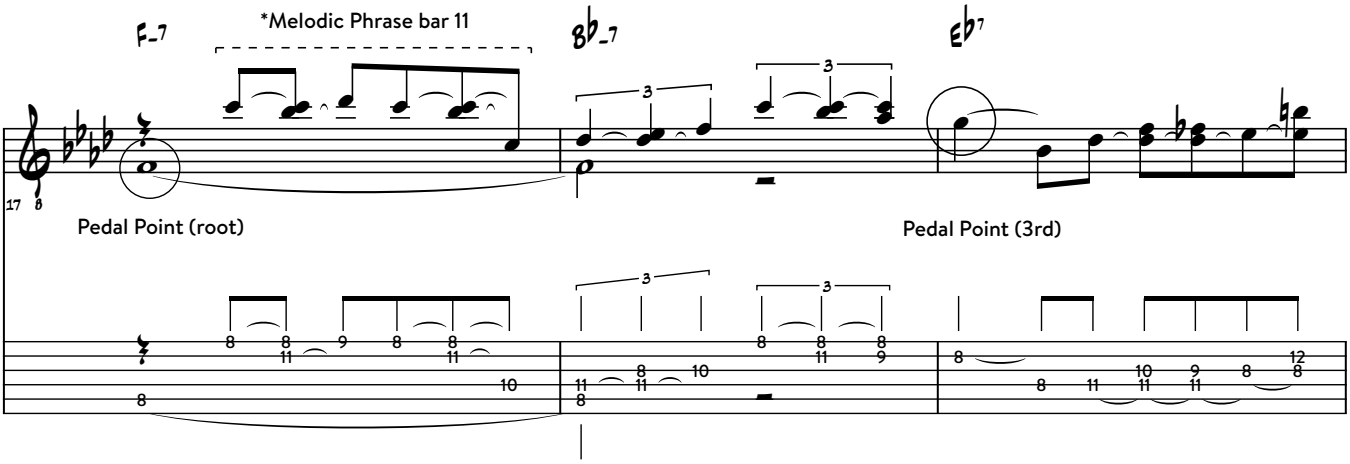
Without using open strings and harmonics to sustain notes, one or more fretted notes act as pedal points. E.g. F and Eb in bar 11.
As every finger of the fretting hand can provide a given pedal point this technique is a great exercise finger independence as well.

Ex. : Play a C-Major scale (from C) 5th fret on the G-string, while simultaneously sustaining the root on the E-String (8th fret).
This is a good add-on to the standard way of learning and practicing scales:

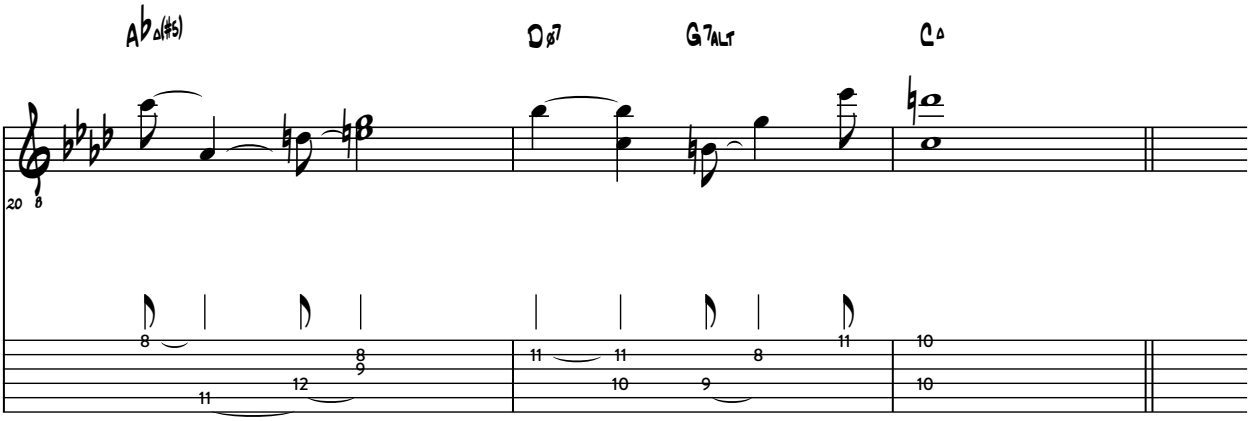
- with the sustained root (or any other category) the tonal relationships of the scale notes are audible
- by deprieving yourself from muscle memory it shows you if the structure of the scale is internalized
- finger independence

*Hall, Jim. *Jim Hall's Three.* Concord Records, 1986, Compact Disc.

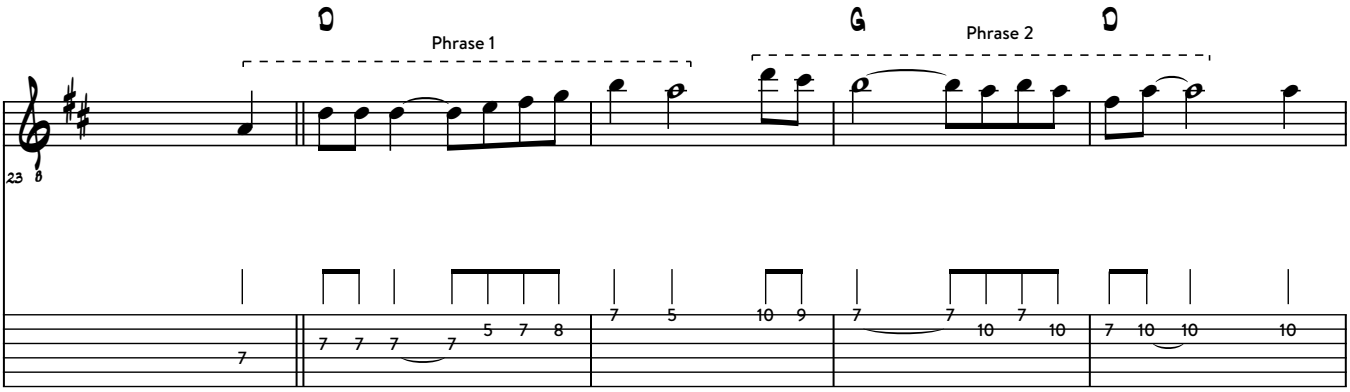
Sample 4.2b: Pedal Point & Jim Hall's melodic ideas applied to the changes of *All The Things You Are*

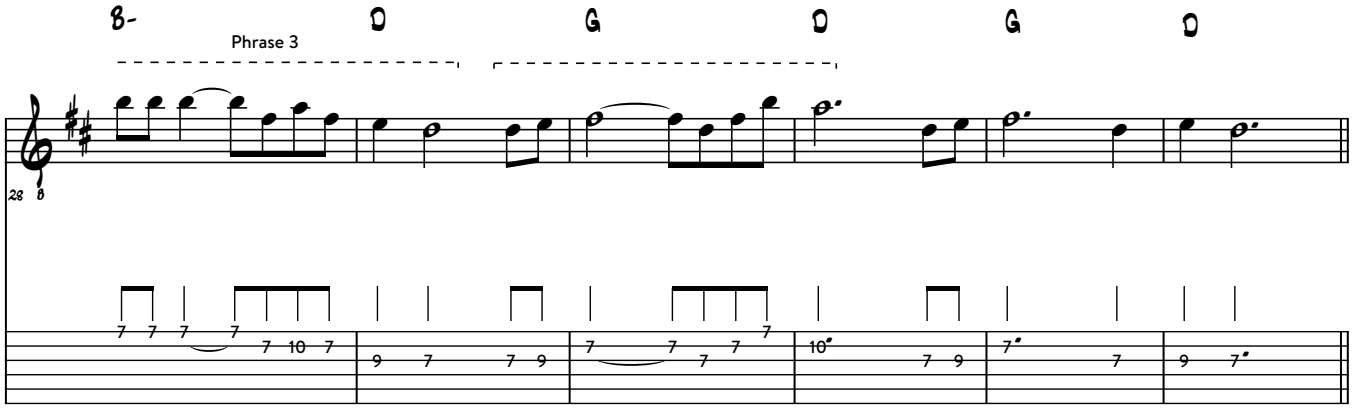


Jim Hall's way of playing concise melodic ideas is great to use as a springboard for improvisational ideas.

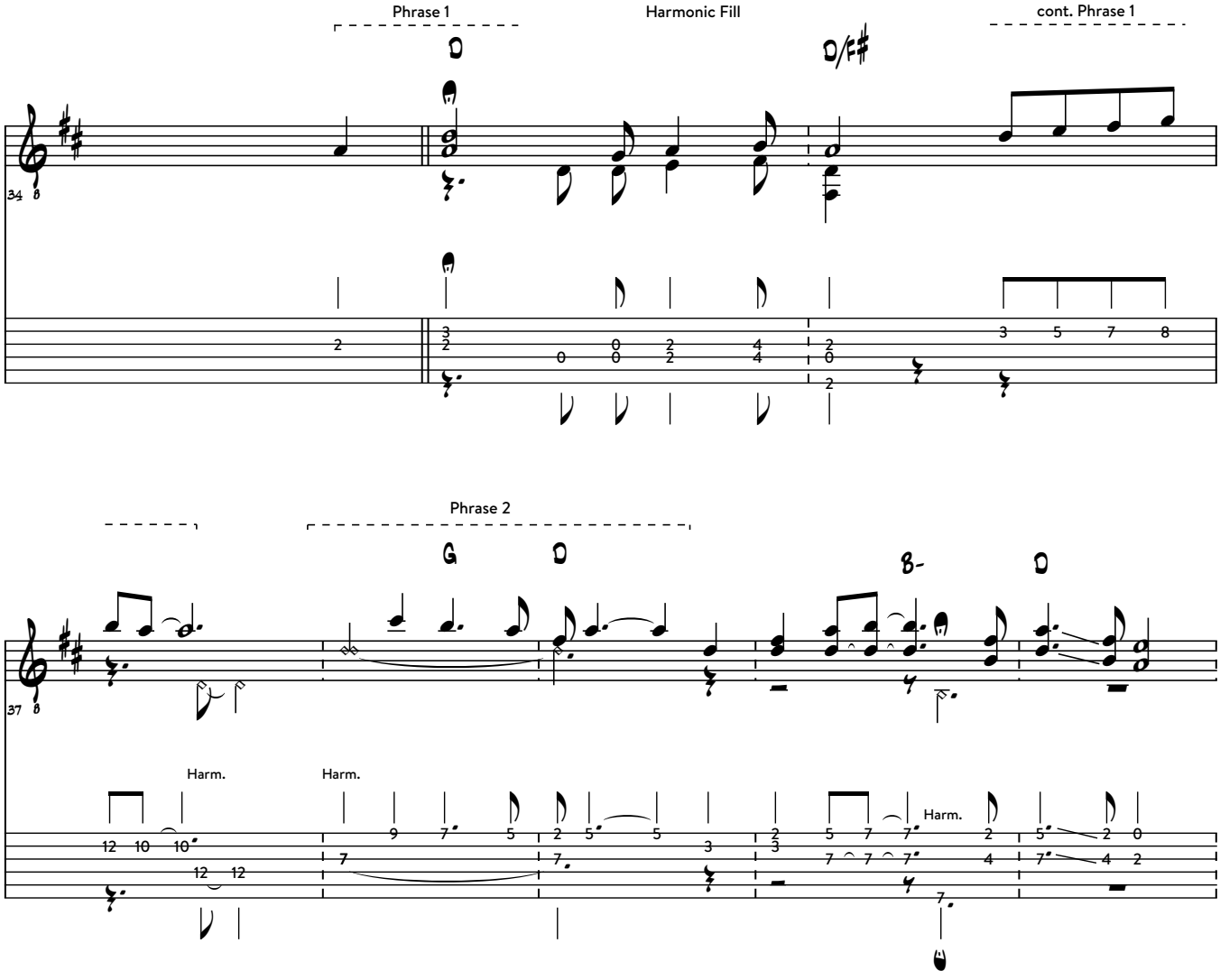


Sample 4.3a: Melodic and harmonic outline of *Shenandoah*

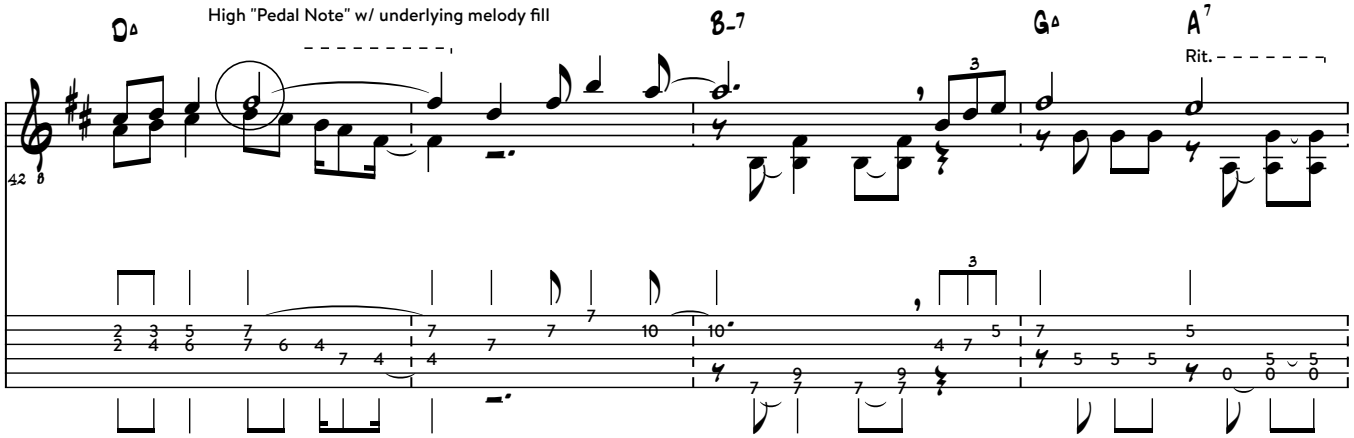


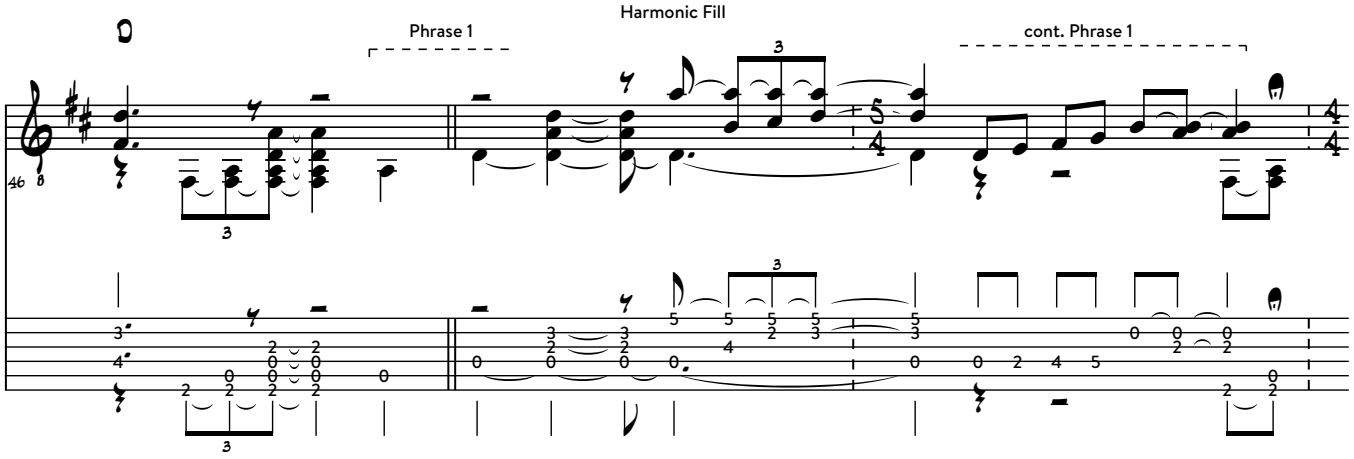


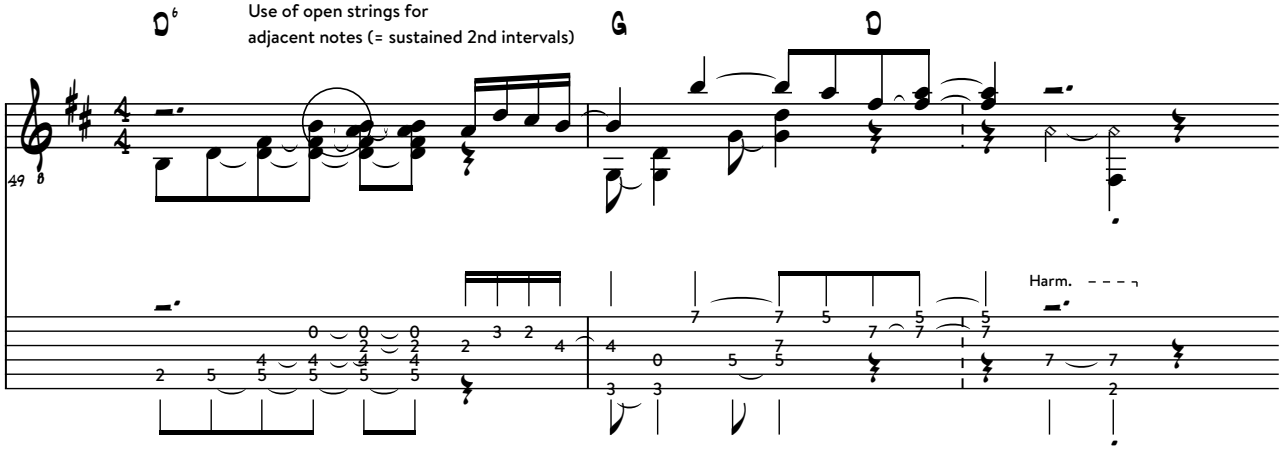
Sample 4.3b: Transcription excerpt *Shenandoah* - Bill Frisell (solo)*. Application of Pedal Point, Open Strings and Harmonics



*Frisell, Bill. *Shenandoah.* For the Fretboard Journal, 2013, Youtube.

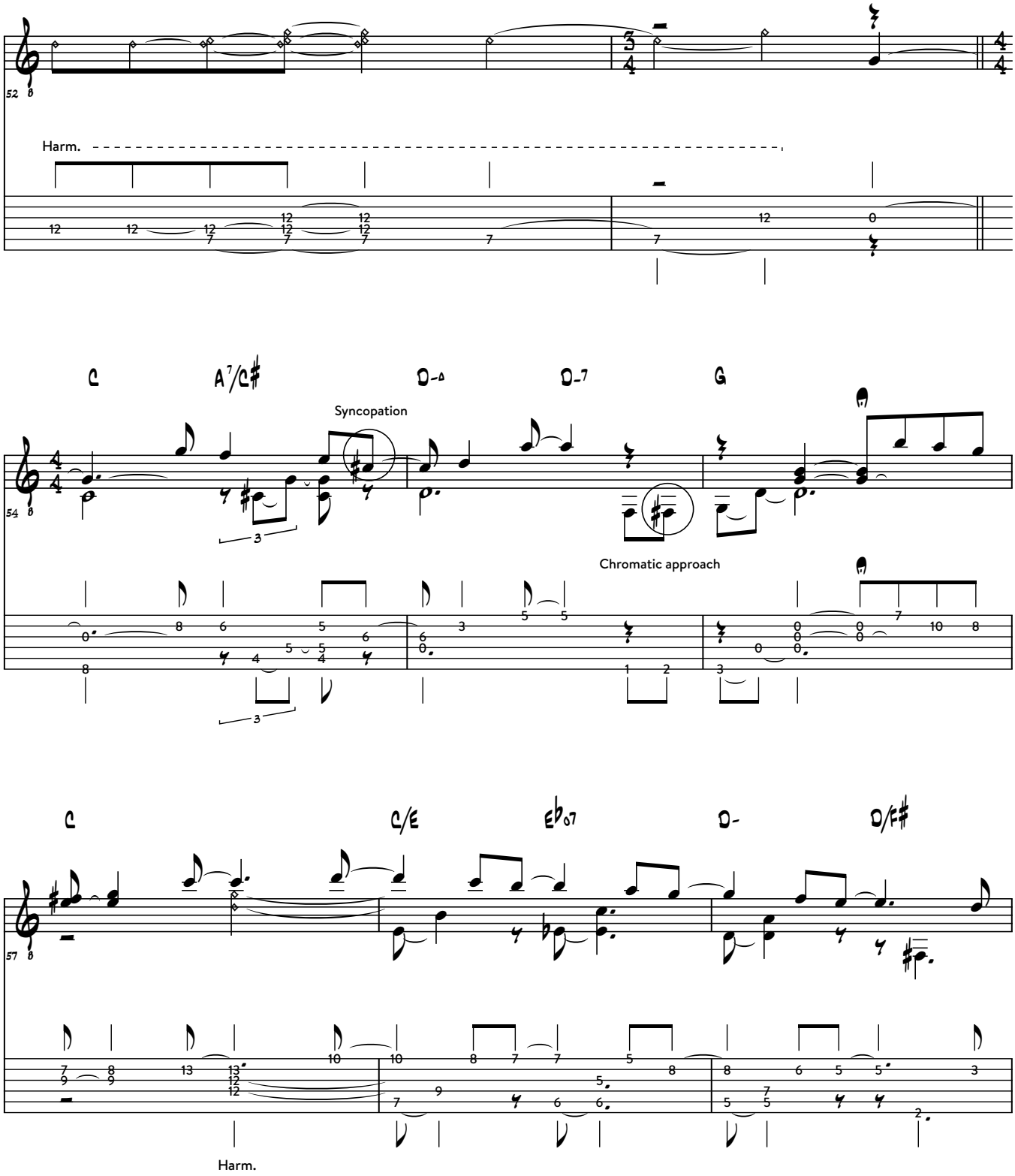

D△
High "Pedal Note" w/ underlying melody fill
B-7
G△
A7
Rit.

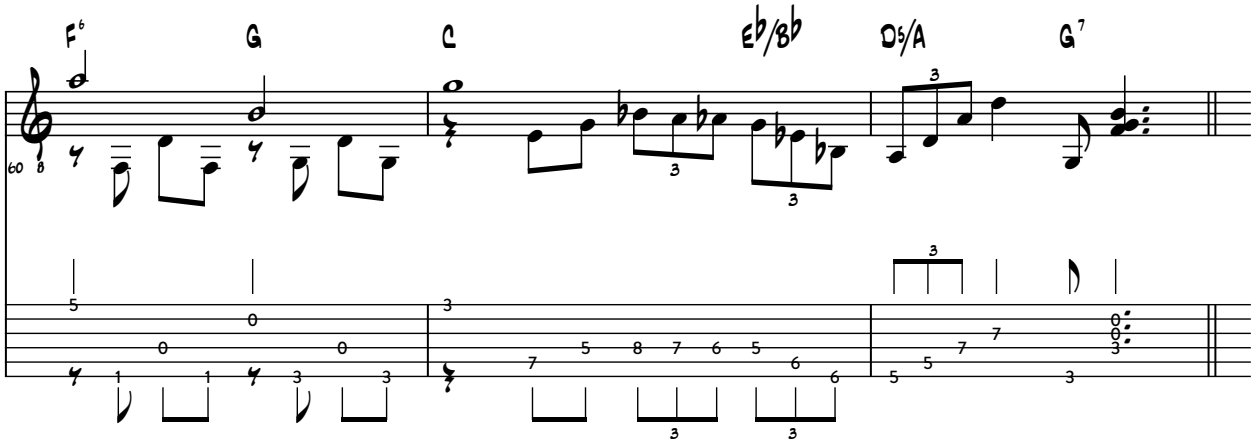

D
Phrase 1
Harmonic Fill
cont. Phrase 1


D6
Use of open strings for
adjacent notes (= sustained 2nd intervals)
G
D
Harm.

Sample 4.3c: Transcription excerpt *When You Wish Upon A Star* - Bill Frisell (solo).

This performance uses discussed devices and accompanies the melody with harmonic fills. Note the chromatic approach in bar 55, and the frequent use of syncopation of the melody (e.g. bars 54-55, 58-59).



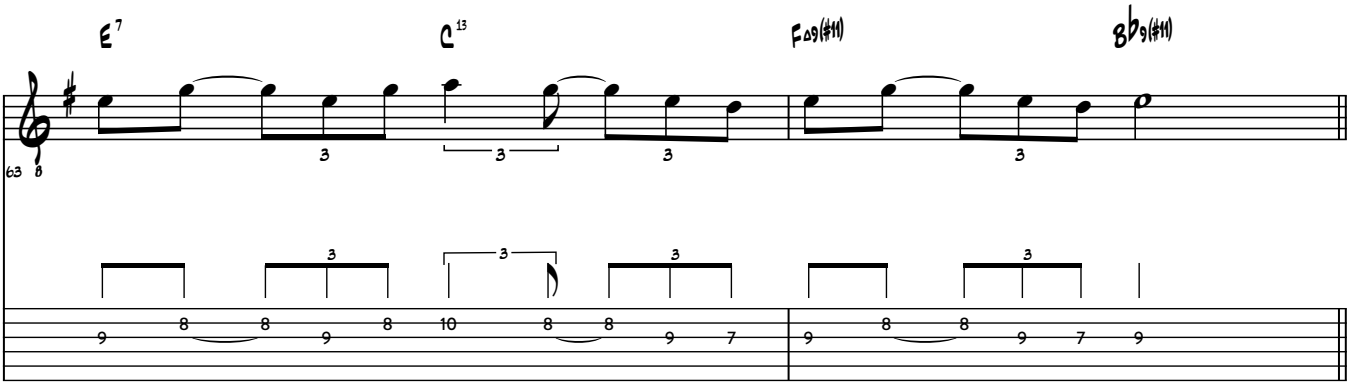


The playing aspects and their musical effect found in this transcription excerpt correspond with Travis Lewis' analysis of Bill Frisell's improvisations:

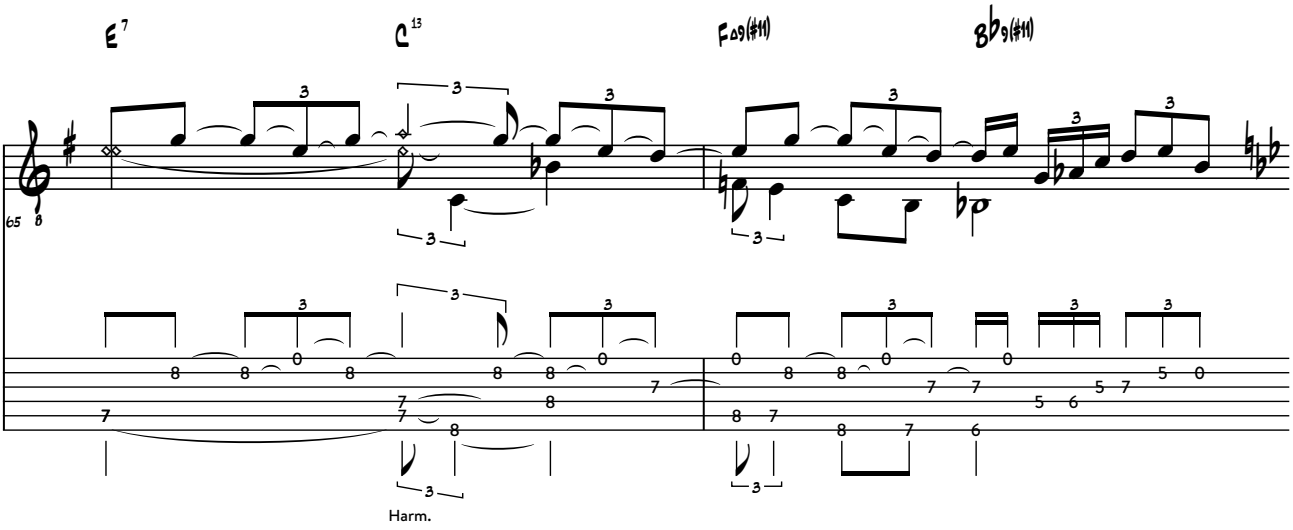
"The use of syncopation and note pairs is something that frequently occurs throughout Frisell's improvised solos. He rarely resorts to complicated rhythmic patterns, but instead utilizes syncopation by playing strictly on upbeats. [...] The end result of each of these devices is a **looser time feel** that sits behind the beat and gives the impression of floating. This floating syncopated effect, when **combined with his tendency to sustain notes, thickens the overall texture of his performances** and allows him to avoid the thin sound that is sometimes associated with guitars playing in a group without a pianist." [5]

[5] Lewis, Travis. A STUDY OF BILL FRISELL THROUGH PAUL MOTIAN'S ON BROADWAY RECORDINGS. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016. 102.

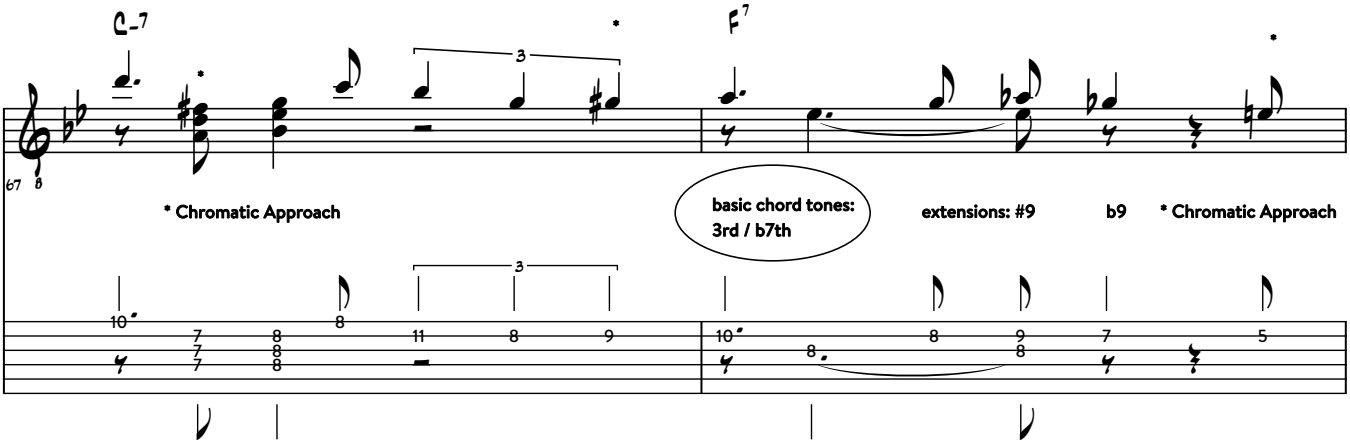
Sample 4.3d: Melodic phrases and harmonic outline of *Goodbye Pork Pie Hat* - Charles Mingus

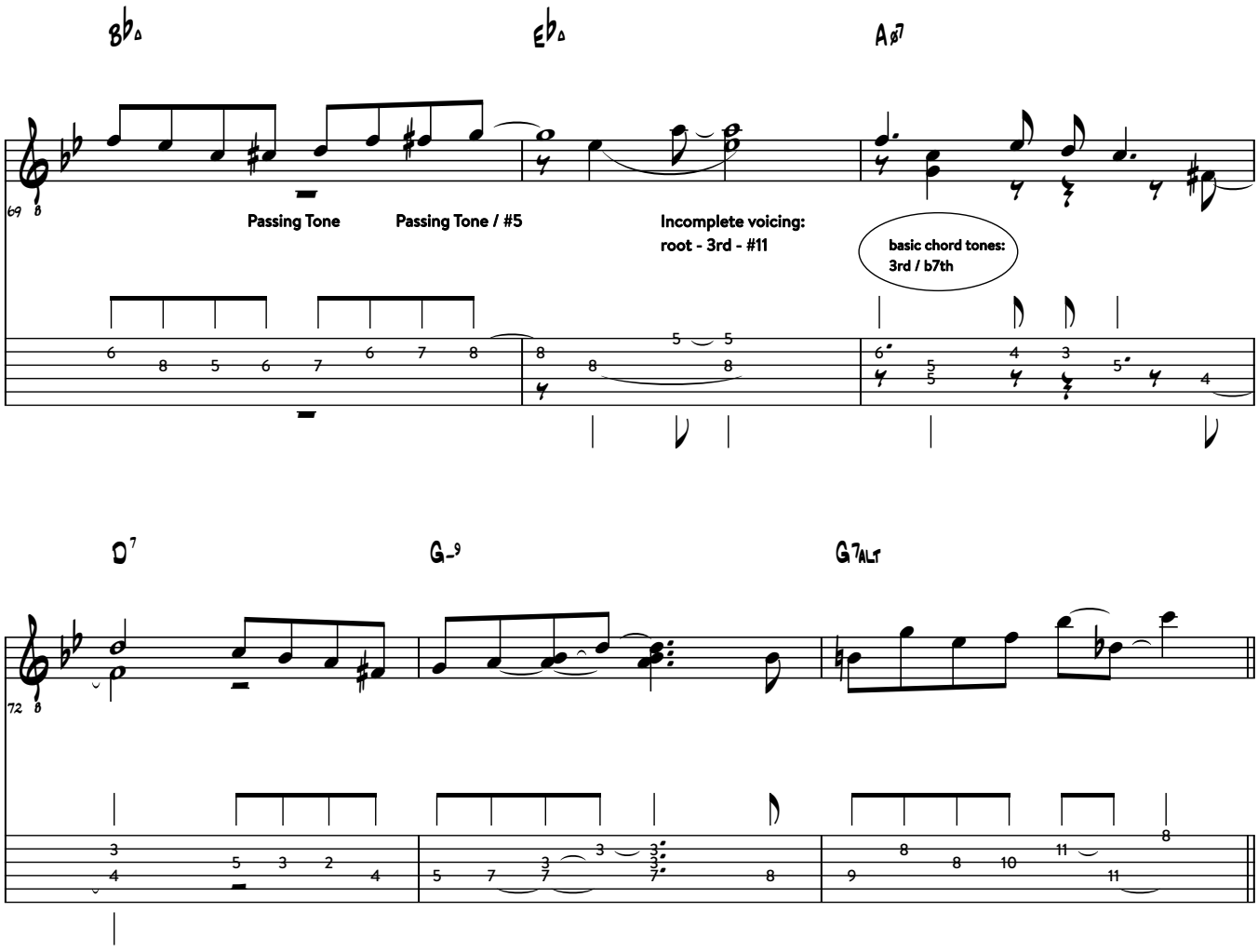


1. Arrangement ideas using Open Strings, Harmonics and Pedal Point

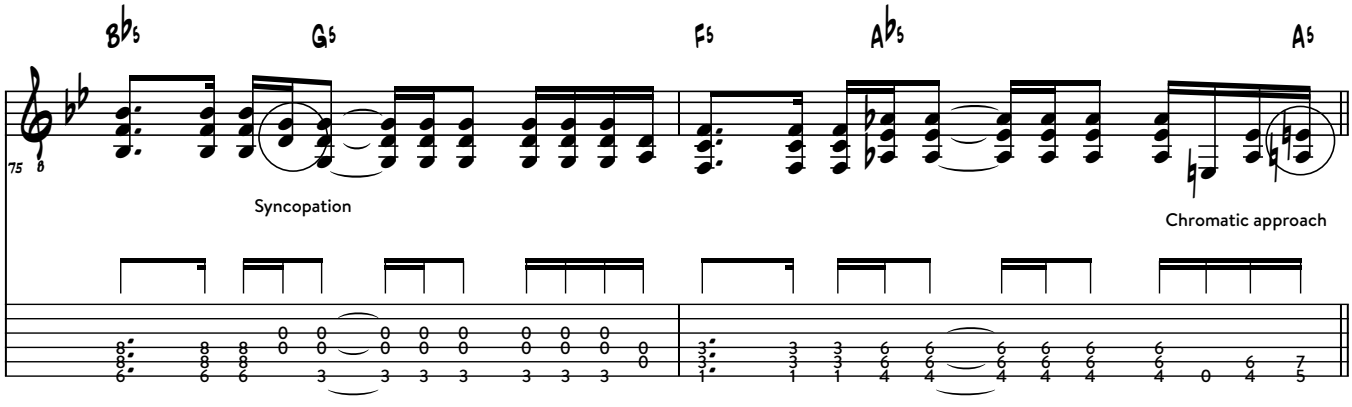


2. Pedal point concept applied to the changes of *Autumn Leaves* - J. Kosma

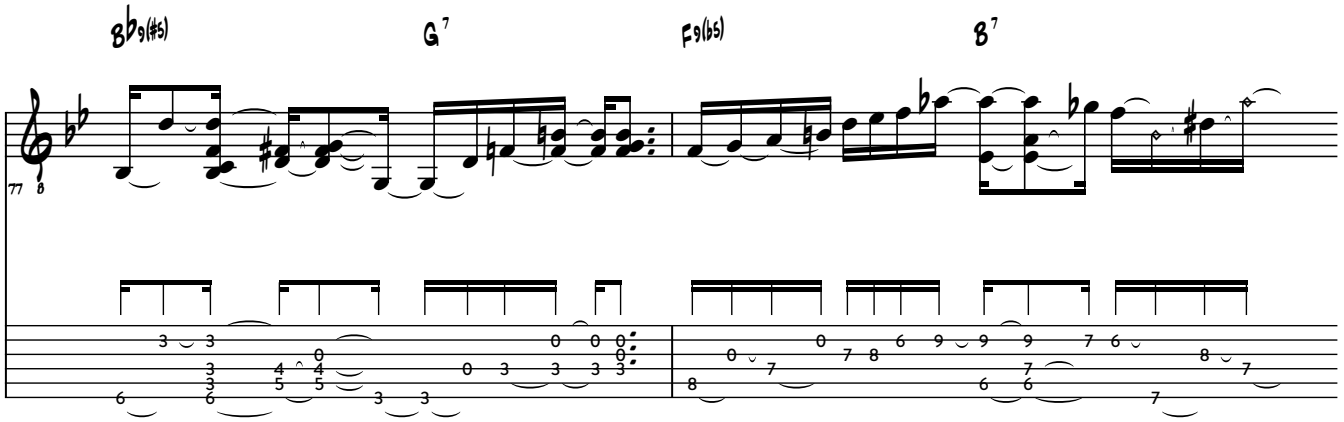




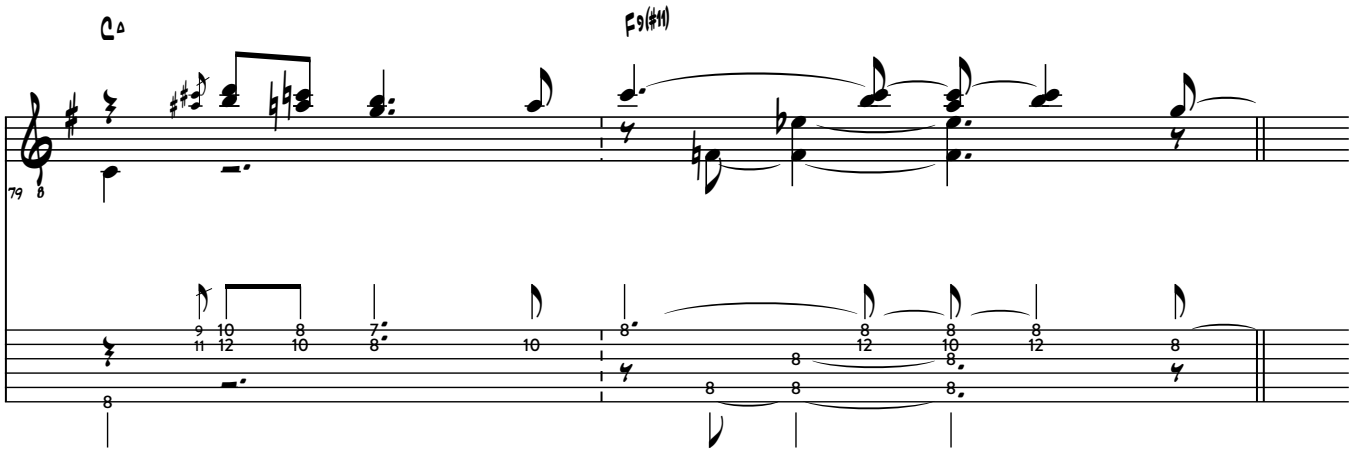
3. Original rhythm guitar part for *In Bloom* - Nirvana. It utilizes syncopation and chromatic approach.



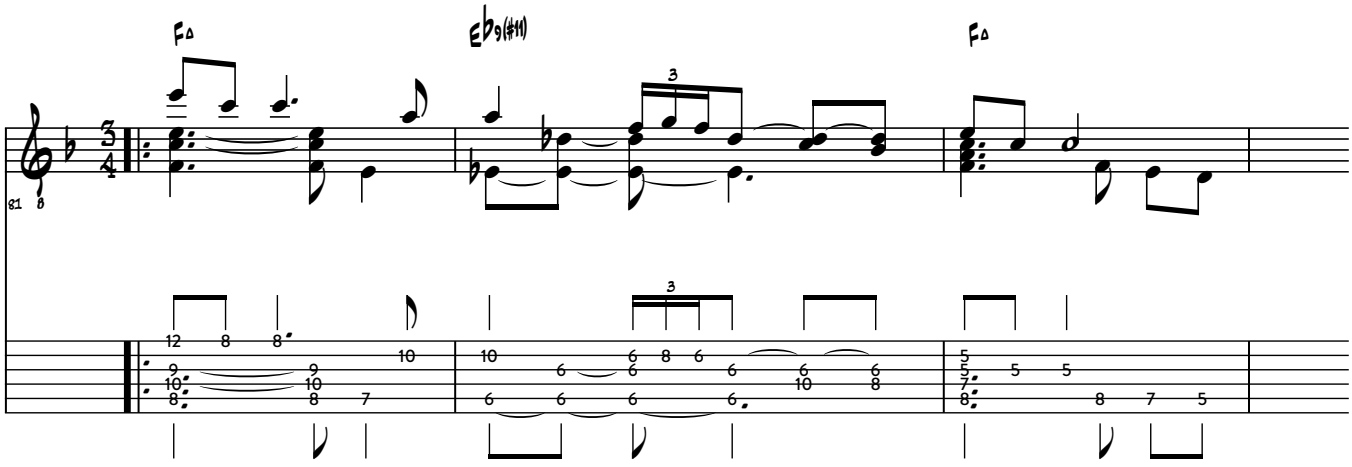
Intro for *In Bloom* using reharmonizations, open strings, harmonics and pedal point



Sample 4.4: Barre technique as used in *Embraceable You* - Bill Frisell (solo)

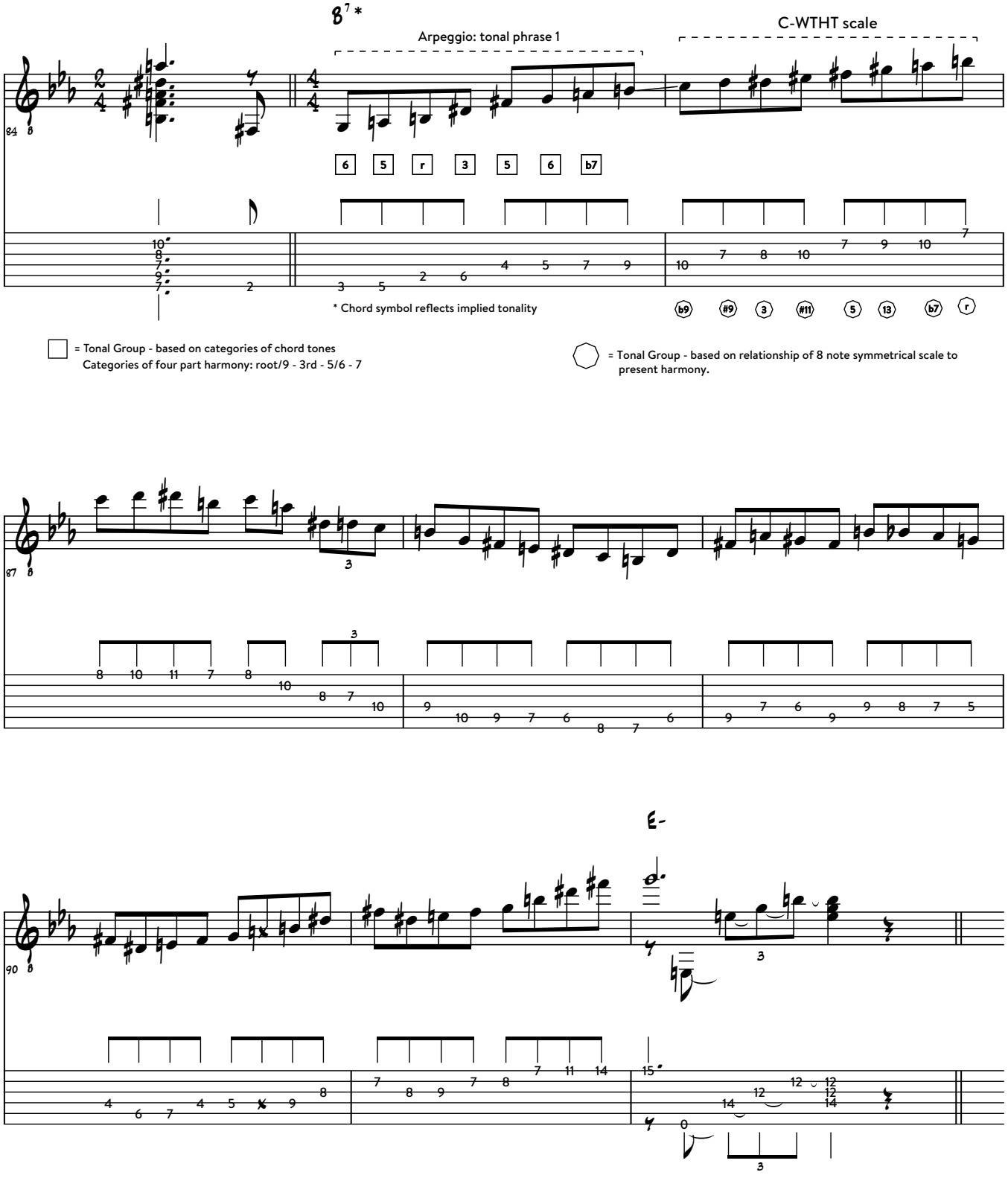


Christmas Time Is Here - the barre technique is applied to play the melody and simultaneously create a Eb7#11 harmony



The “barre” technique is used as a temporary and flexible capo (index finger) to let ring notes as if they were played with open strings. All other fingers are freed up to play melodic fills or create sustained notes and emphasize tensions like #11 and chord tones resonating simultaneously.

Sample 4.5: Transcription excerpt *Improvisaton* as played by Julian Lagel (solo)* - Single-Note Lines



Playing single-note lines without underlying harmony requires a more dense and directed harmonic and rhythmic consistency on a small and large scale level. A logical structure (e.g. arpeggios, scales) with repetitions and references create a musical statement listeners can follow.

5. (Re)harmonization Techniques

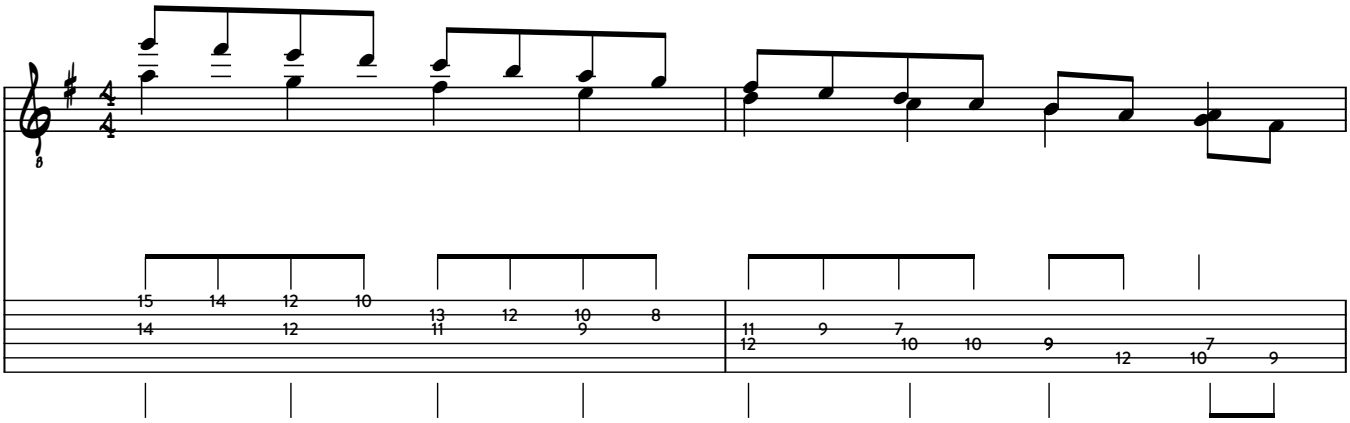
Outlining Sounds, Harmonic Tonal Groups, Chords and Voicings

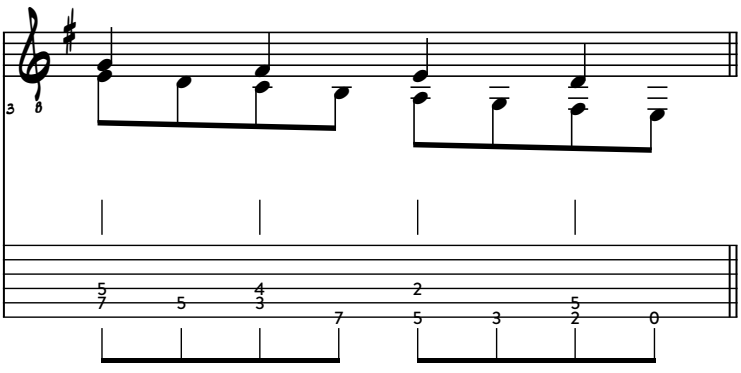
"The two notes C & E, although a valid sound, are not named as a chord when standing alone [...]. Even though the sound is not as definite as with three notes , the listener still hears the OUTLINE of a chord. If no other notes are present, he hears the sound as a C chord sound. His ear relates to the bottom note C. Because of this ambiguity in a two-note sound, it is very flexible and open to interesting and surprising additions which can really intrigue a listener. [1]

- Jimmy Wyble

An effective approach to spell out harmonies (basic triads) including their extensions (9, 11, #11, 13) and suspensions (sus2, sus4) is to use dyads. To play two notes at a time is sufficient to define the harmonic context and allows for melodic movement.

Sample 5.1a: "Two-Line" Descending Scale with Crossing Voices





This sample of a descending scale with two voices starts with a b7 dyad. In the key of G-Major its harmonic function can be interpreted as a suspension of D7:

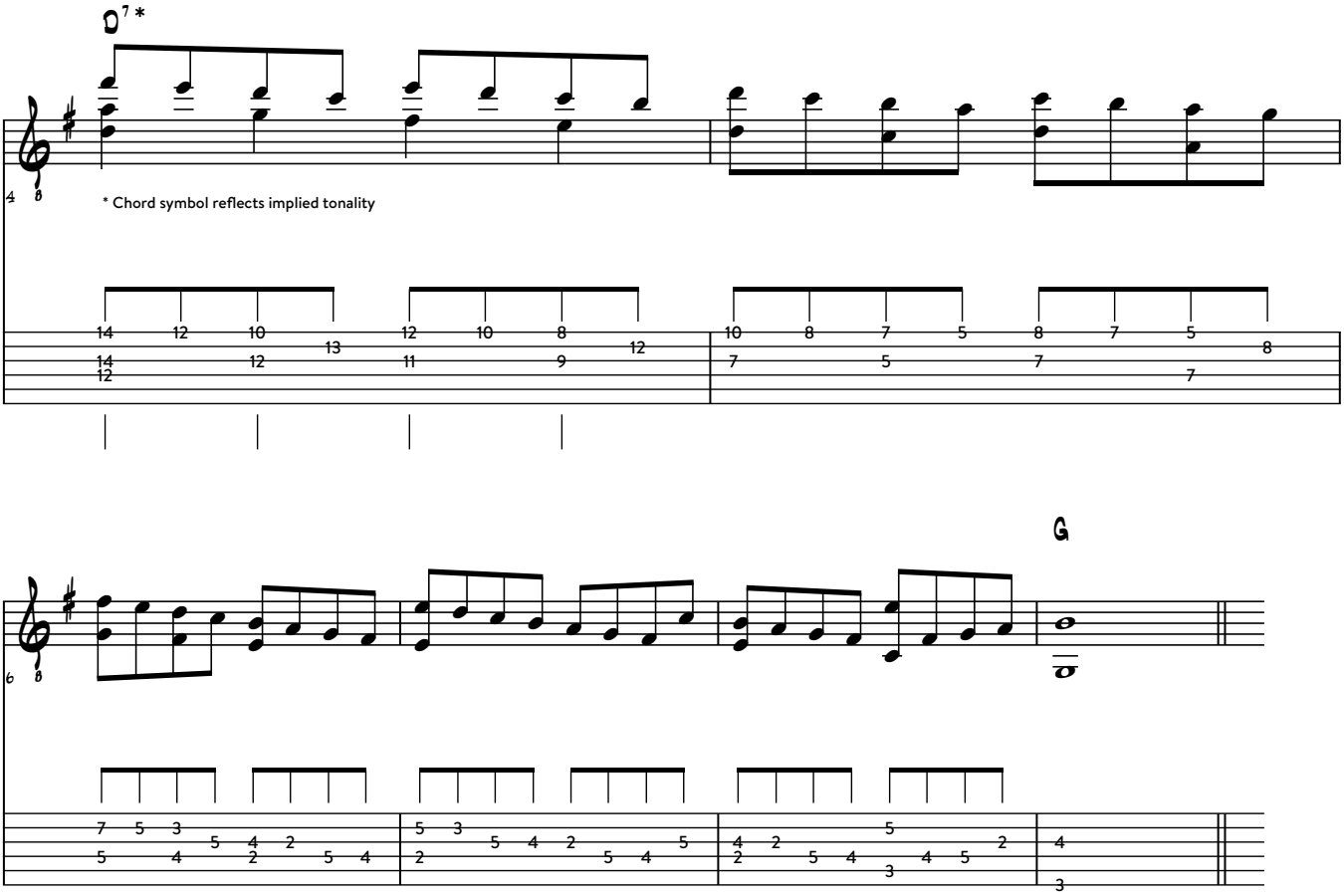
A - G = 5th - sus4

resolving to

A & F# = 5th - 3rd

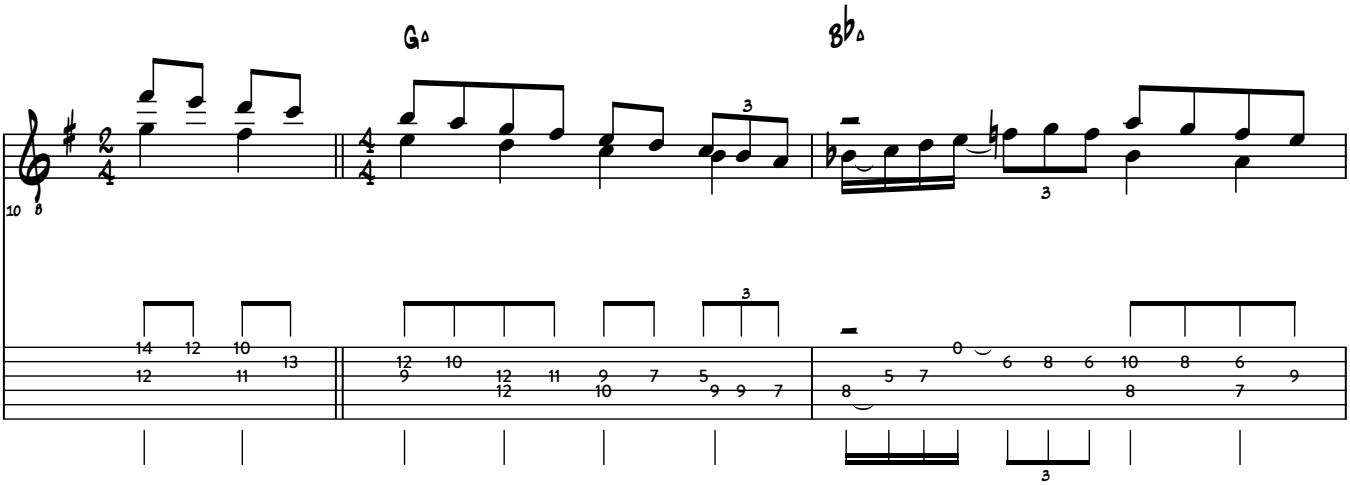
The upper voice is played at twice the pace of the lower one which diminuishes intervals until the voices cross and the intervals become wider again. You can find the same principle used in Julian Lage's improvisation in sample 5.1b.

Sample 5.1b: "Two-Line" Descending Scale as played by Julian Lage - *Improvisation for Carter Vintage Guitars* (from 01:11)*

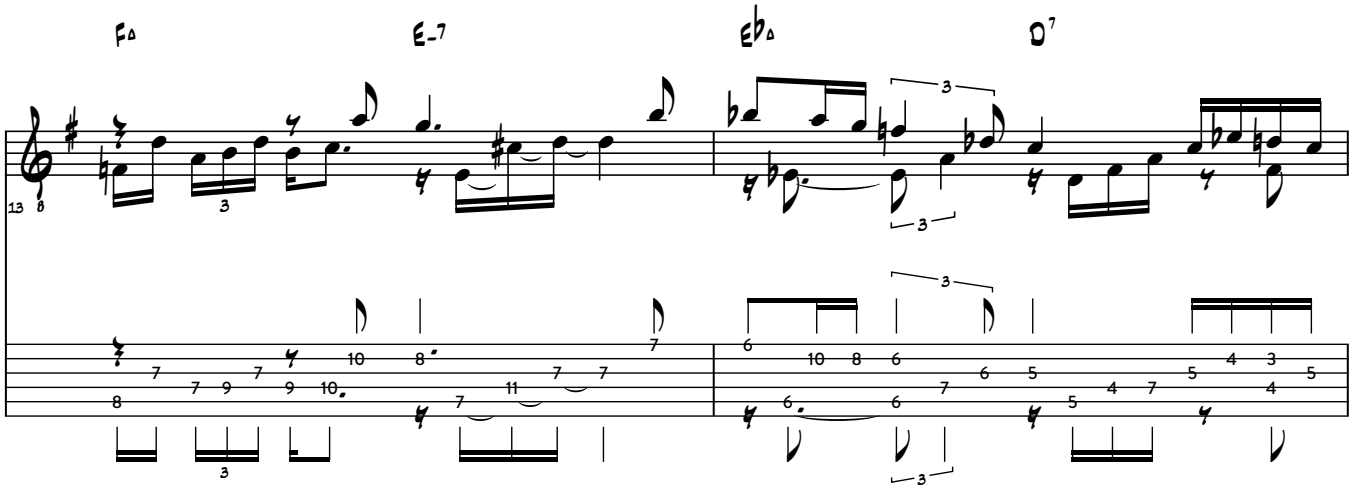


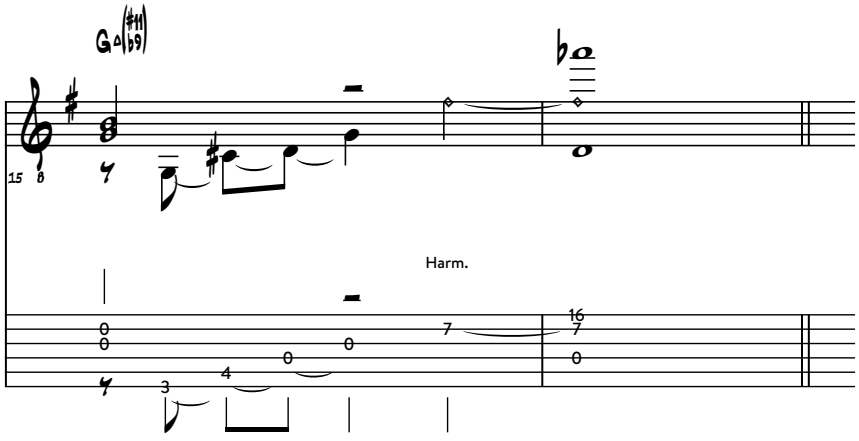
Ex. : Play scales with this approach, starting with different dyads / intervals to get familiar with tension and resolution tendencies. Find short melodic phrases and combine them with chords and lines to play a harmonic progression. It's not so much about spelling out a harmony with all of its standard chord tones (GΔ = G - B - D - F#) but creating a harmonic tonal center. Allow for tensions and even 'avoid notes' (see C in GΔ, bar 11). In a tune like *Black Hole Sun* shifting tonal centers can be connected with common tones.

Sample 5.1c: "Two-Line" Scale applied to the changes of *Black Hole Sun* - more ideas on Soundslice



*Lage, Julian - *Improvisation* - Demo for Carter Vintage Guitars
https://www.youtube.com/watch/?v=LJg08nQjBrA





from Jimmy Wyble's general theory for **OUTLINING SOUND**:

- start with two notes of any interval
- add one or two notes which either make the original sound definitive and expected or which make it unusual and surprising
- the added notes can be above, below or between the original two notes as long as they come after them. [2]

The sound in bar 15 is a good example for the flexiblility of a two-note sound. It's based on the approach described in *Jimmy Wyble's Classical/Country* book:

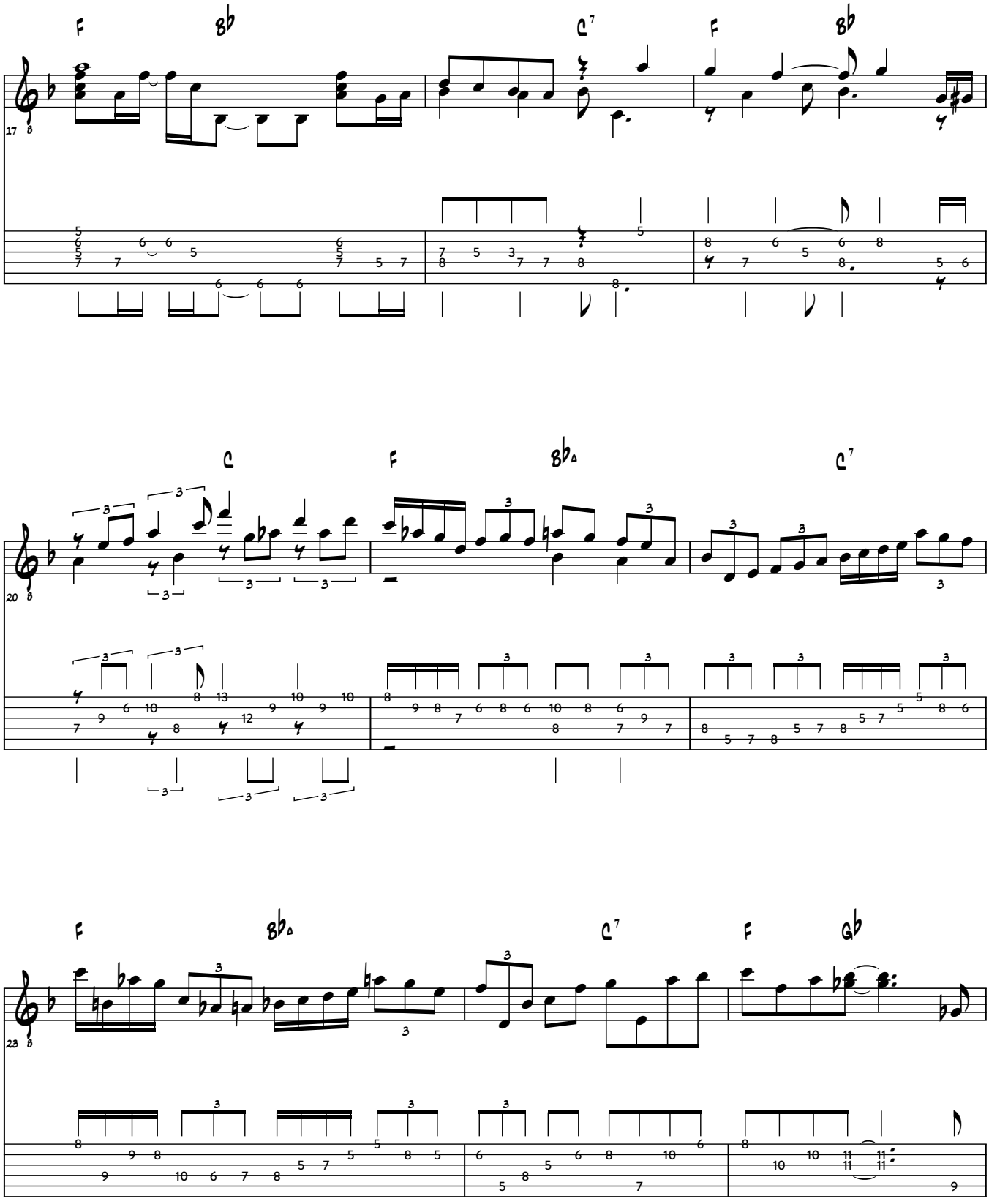
This example starts with a flexible two-note G-sound (G, B). With an added G in the bass the listener is likely to perceive a more definitive G-chord. The next introduced note (C#) on beat two suggests another sound to the listener: it's an A7 sound with resolving tendency to D-Major. However, with the next added note D, it sounds more like a Gb5-sound, including a natural 5th.

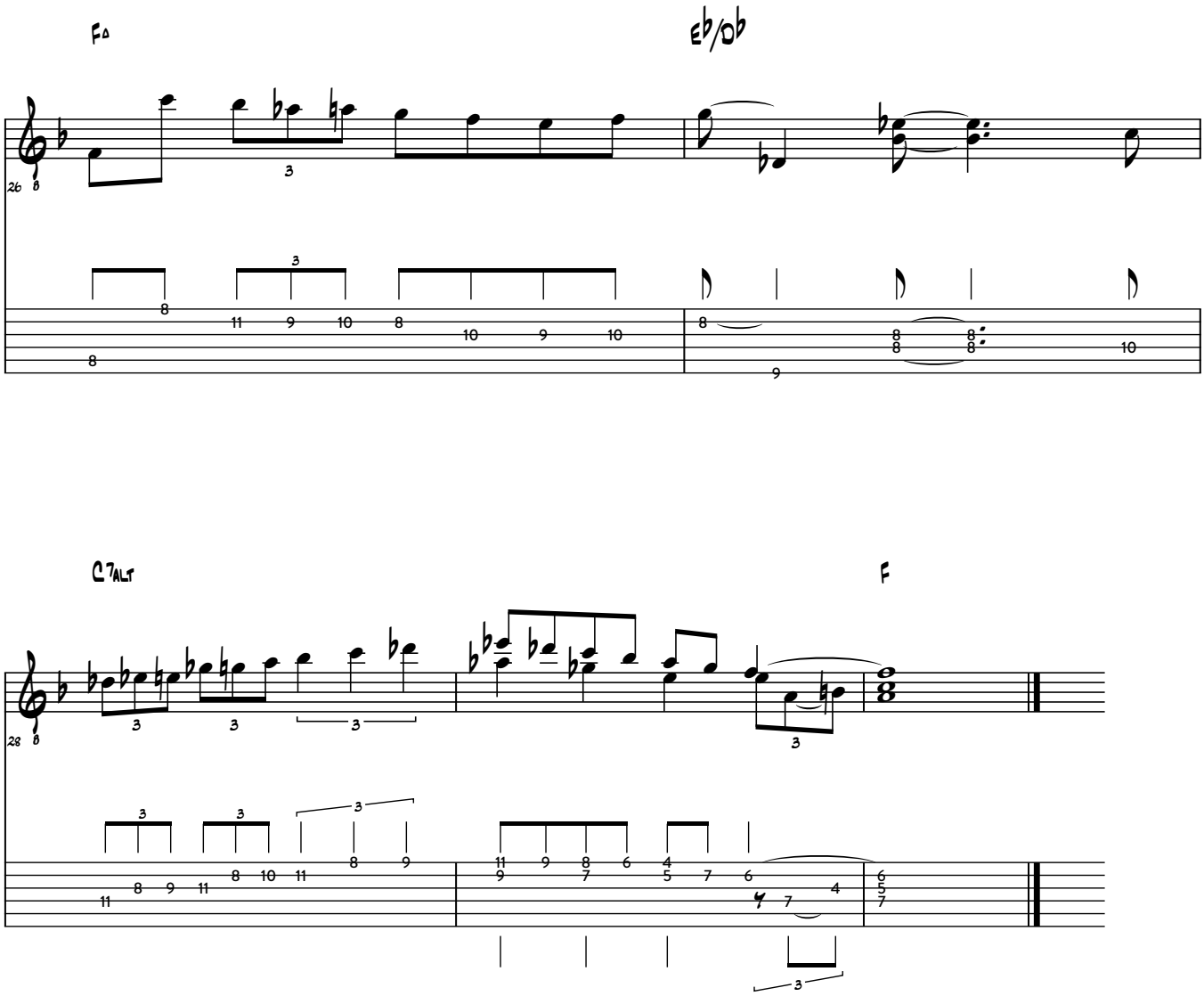
"The point is - we've made the listener interested enough to try and find out. He wonders what comes next." [3]

The final harmonics confirm (F# = G∆#11) and develop (Ab - G∆#11b9) the perceived harmony.

[1-3] Wyble, Jimmy. "Jimmy Wyble's Classical/Country. (North Hollywood: Playback Music Publishing Co., 1973)

Sample 5.1d: "Outlining Sound" with dyads, lines and bass notes over the changes of *Free Fallin'* - Tom Petty (I-IV-V)




F5
Eb/Db
C7ALT
F

Harmonic Tonal Groups, Chords and Voicings

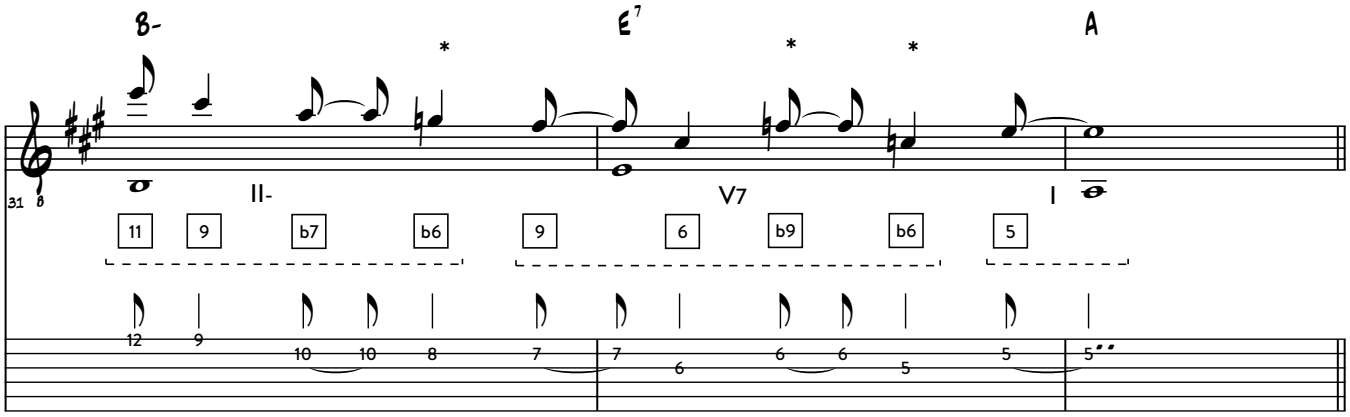
Before harmonizing melodies with more complex sounds, keep in mind that every tone being part of a harmony exists within a context. *Every 'chord-tone' is a part of a melodic pathway* that at a point in time converges into a chord. Thinking of an individually moving voice rather than a static event helps to make more conscious decisions about which chord and voicing structures to pick to harmonize a melodic line.

Harmonic Tonal Group
Analyze the tonal interval structure of the melody. Which possible harmonic centers / keys does it imply? The tonal center determines the function / effect each note has at a given moment. The majority of melody notes in sample 5.2a indicates the key of A.

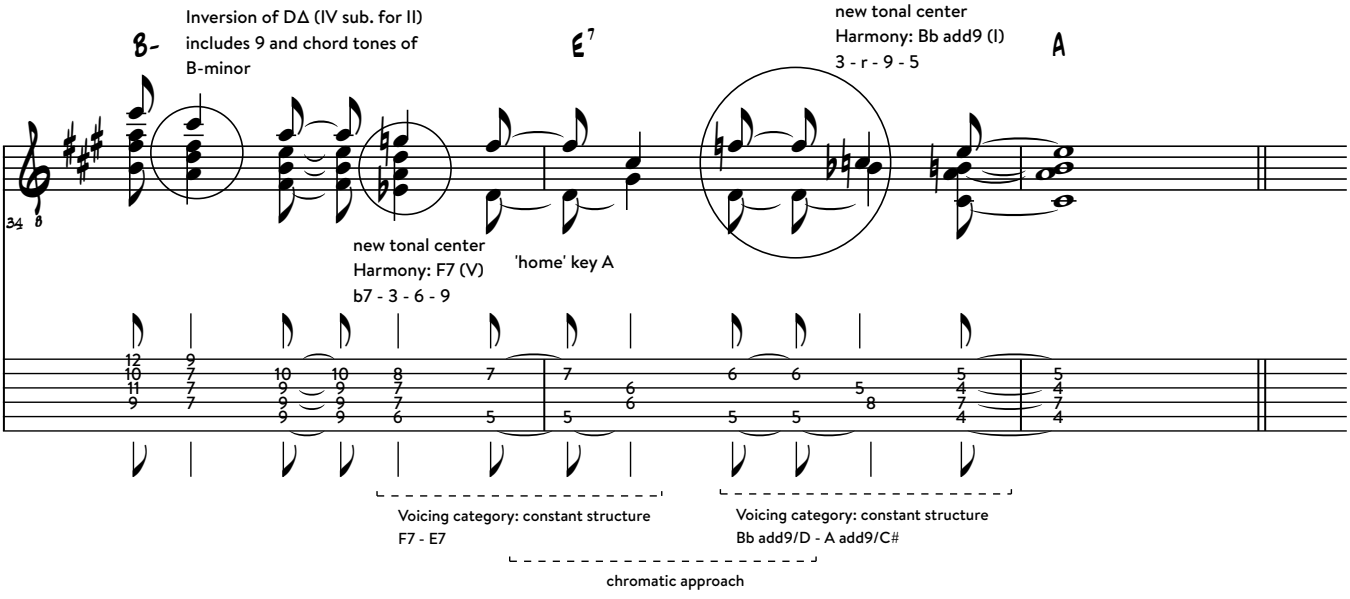
Chord
The term chord is the abstract definition to categorize different organization principles for sounds consisting of more than two different notes within a harmonic tonal group: Triads, 7th-chords (with/without tensions), Quartal Harmony. Triads most clearly define the perceived harmony , whereas 7th-chords and quartal harmony offer a more open sound. Apart from stylistic choices this should be a simple guideline when choosing and combining different chord structures.

Voicing
The term voicing describes the categories and intervallic arrangement of chord tones added to the melody. E.g. a 'complete' 7th-chord sound consists of: root/9th - 3rd - 5th - 6th/7th. Every chosen sound to harmonize a melody can either enforce, color or disguise a melody note, depending on the tonal relationship and intervallic distance.

Sample 5.2a: Tonal Interval Structure, in relation to chosen harmonies.

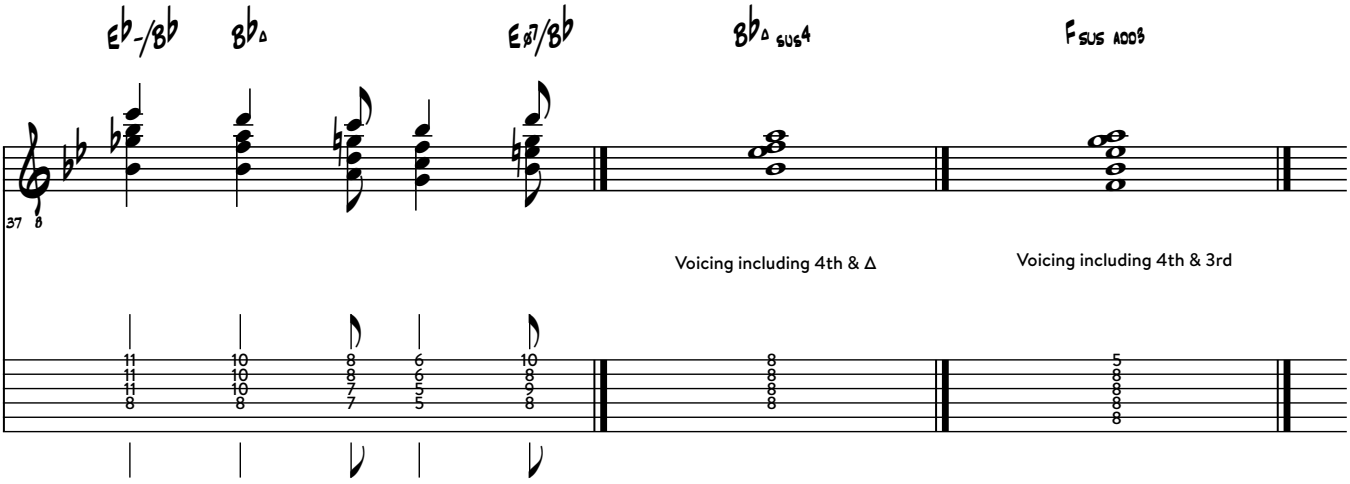


Sample 5.2b: Harmonization with 7th-chords and Quartal Harmony, application of Chromatic Approach

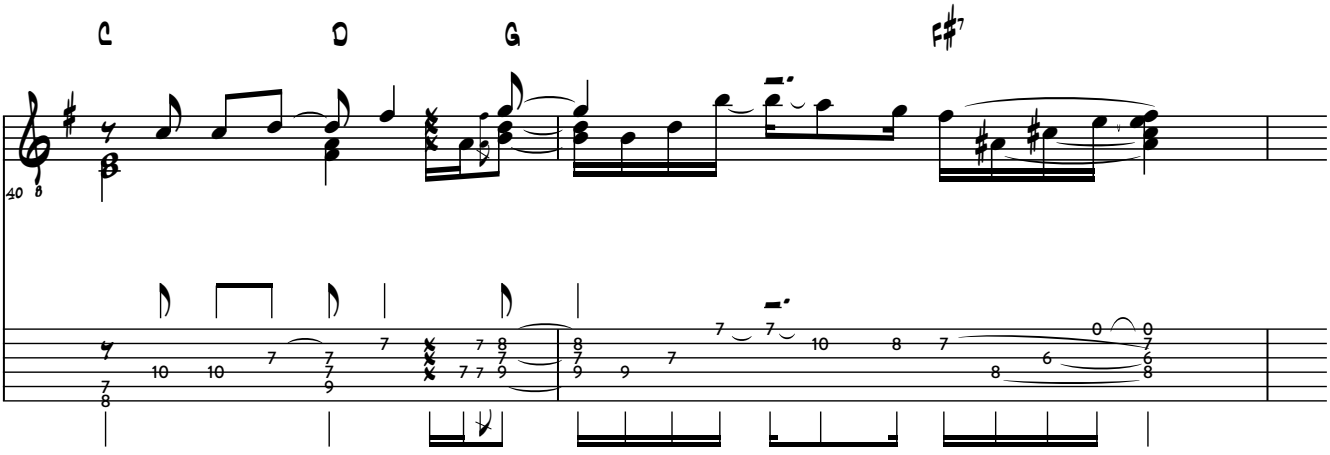


A melody note that doesn't match either available chord tones or tensions within the key, indicates a shift of the tonal center. An exception are 'avoid-notes' that resolve to a chord tone, functioning as suspended notes. E.g. a 4th during a I chord, like in *Stella By Starlight*. It can also be harmonized with a minor iv derived triad (Eb-/Bb) which would indicate a tonal shift. However, looking at its function and brevity, it still would rather be considered to be a reharmonization than a change of key.

Sample 5.2c: *Stella By Starlight* - 4th melody-note during IΔ harmony / ideas for avoid notes

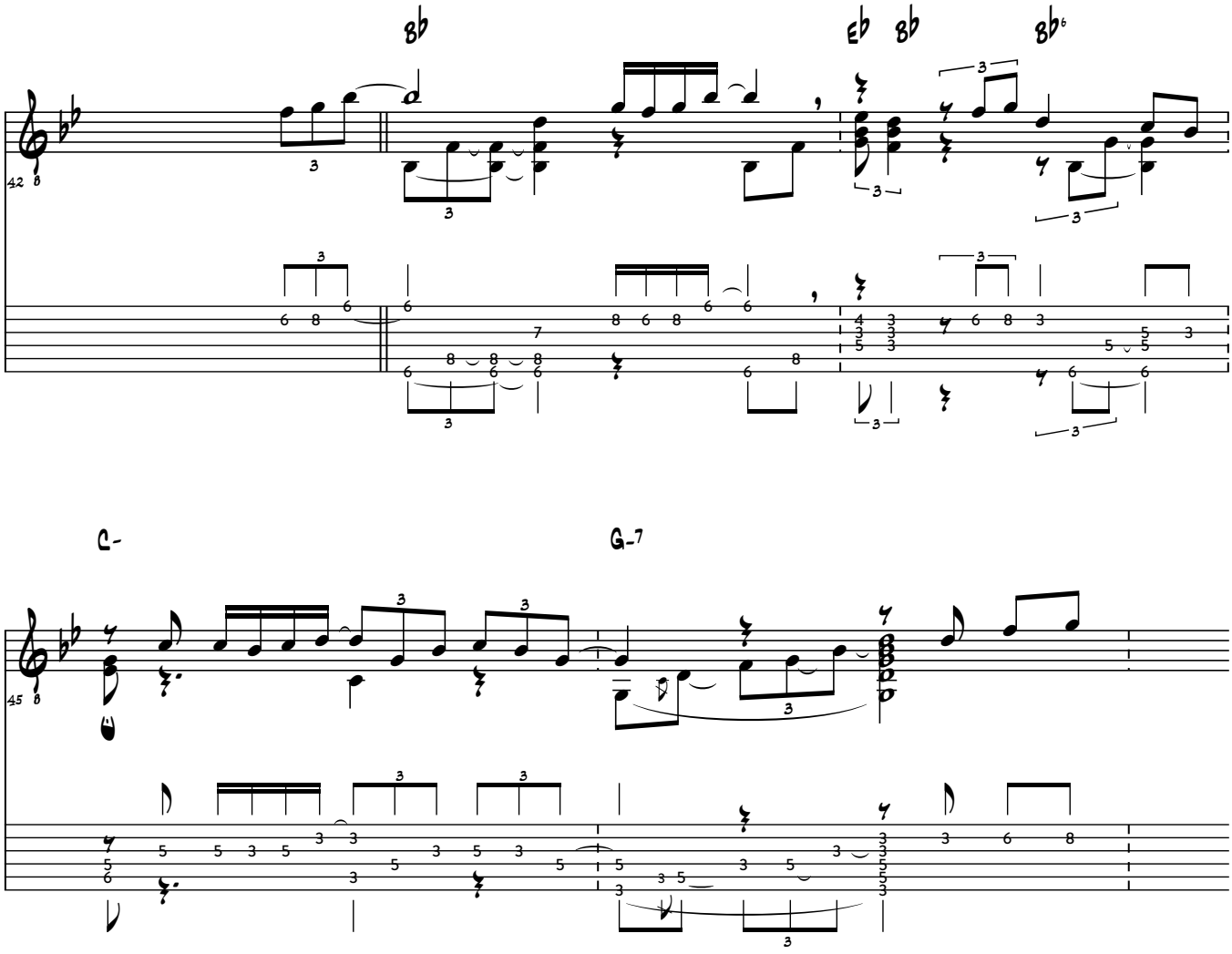


Sample 5.3a: Harmonization with triads *Karma Police* - Radiohead

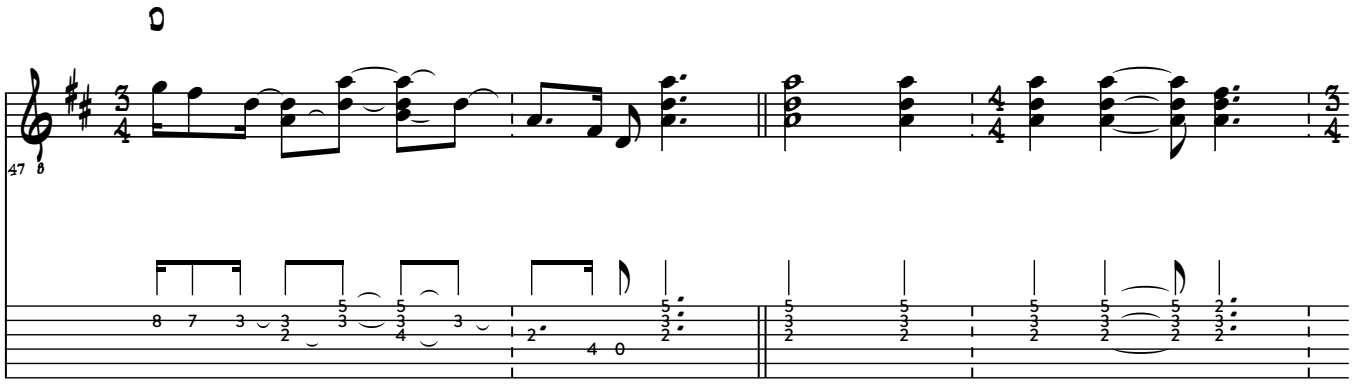


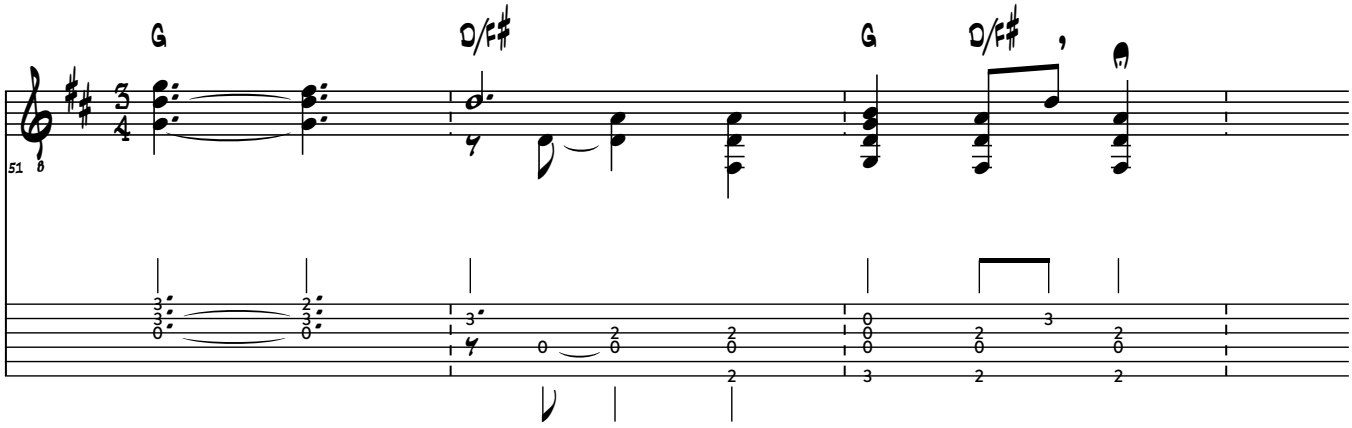
Use inversions to create economic voice leading and harmonize a melody in one area of the fretboard. Inversions differ slightly in their intensity: the intervallic structure of the second inversion of each major, minor or diminished triad creates the most distinct sonority indepedent from which register it's played in.

Sample 5.3b: Harmonization with triads - *A Change Is Gonna Come* - Bill Frisell (solo)

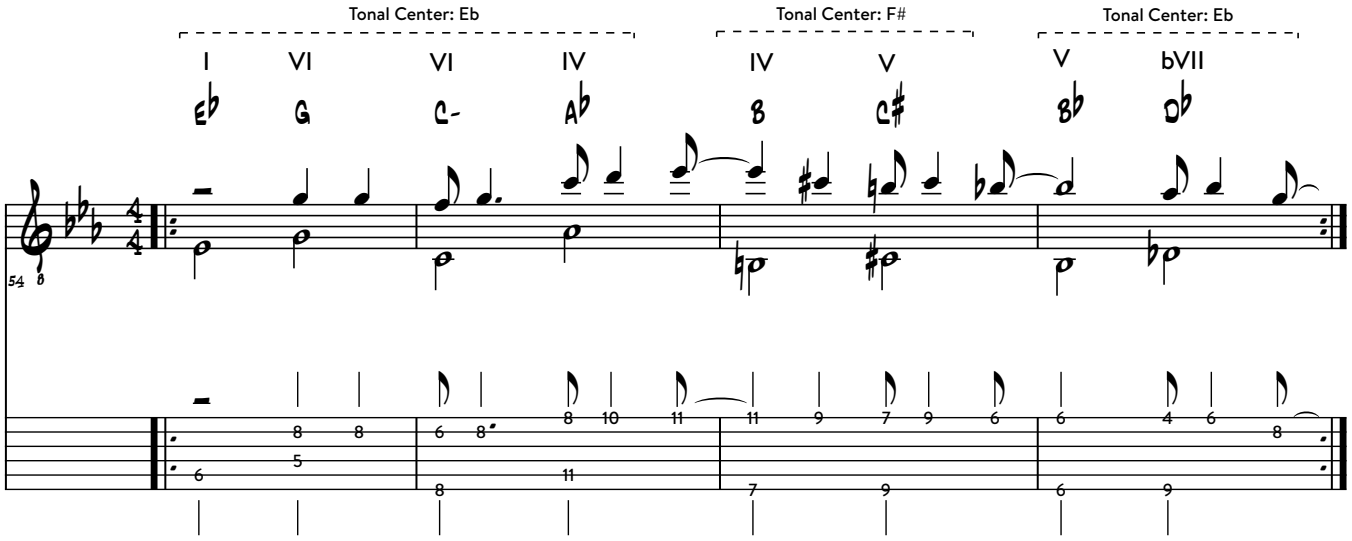


Sample 5.3c: Harmonization with triads - *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* - Bill Frisell (solo)

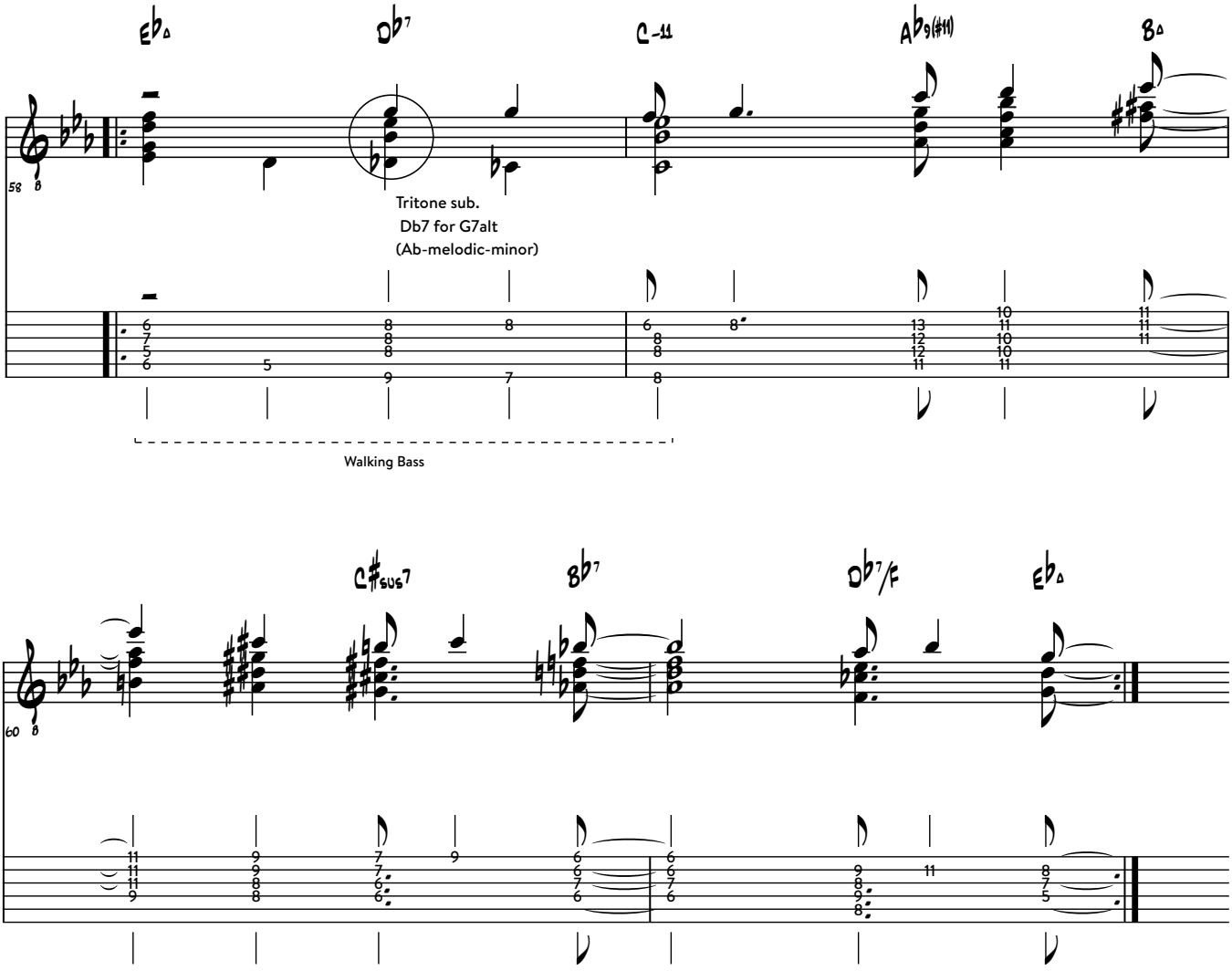




Sample 5.4a *Lithium* - Nirvana



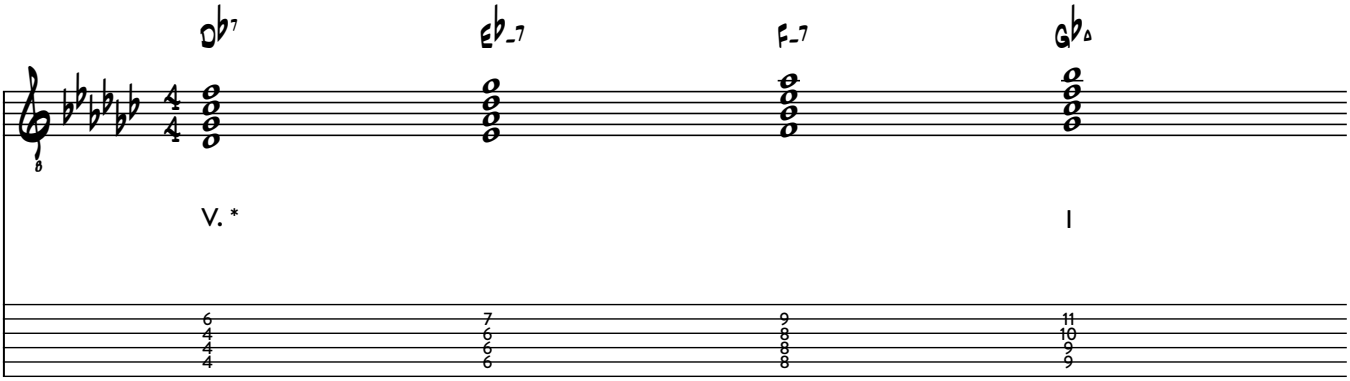
Sample 5.4b: (Re)harmonization with 7th-chords and substitutions, *Lithium* - Nirvana



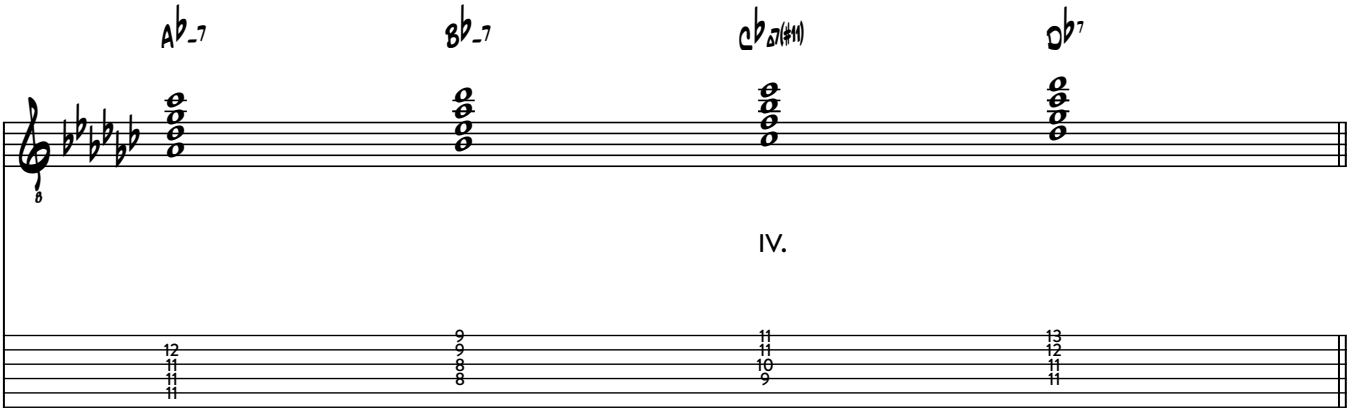
Quartal Harmony - the 4th way: "All Apologies"

Quartal Four Part Harmony voicings create full sounds and tensions, especially for comping or harmonizing a melody in a modal playing context.

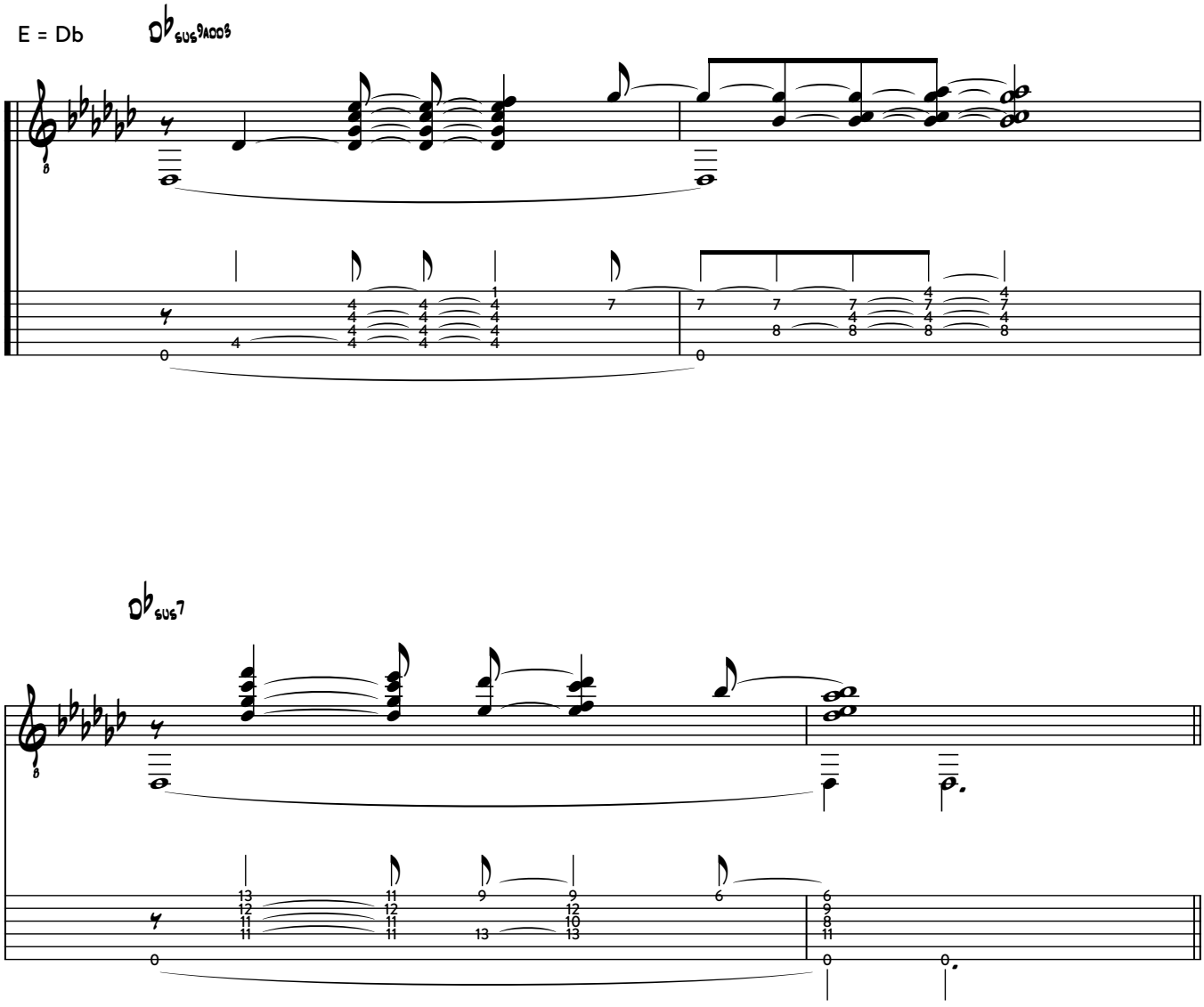
Standard quartal four-part voicings



*Degree in functional harmony



Melody of *All Apologies* harmonized with quartal harmony and constant structure voicings



The main riff in Nirvana's "All Apologies" contains every pitch of Db-Mixolydian and emphasizes the intervalic movements which are characteristic for the Mixolydian mode (e.g. 3rd-4th, 6th-b7). To add more voice movement and 'color' tones (characteristic tensions) harmonize the melody with stacked-4th and constant structure voicings.

Structure of stacked-4th voicings and derived constant structure voicings

V

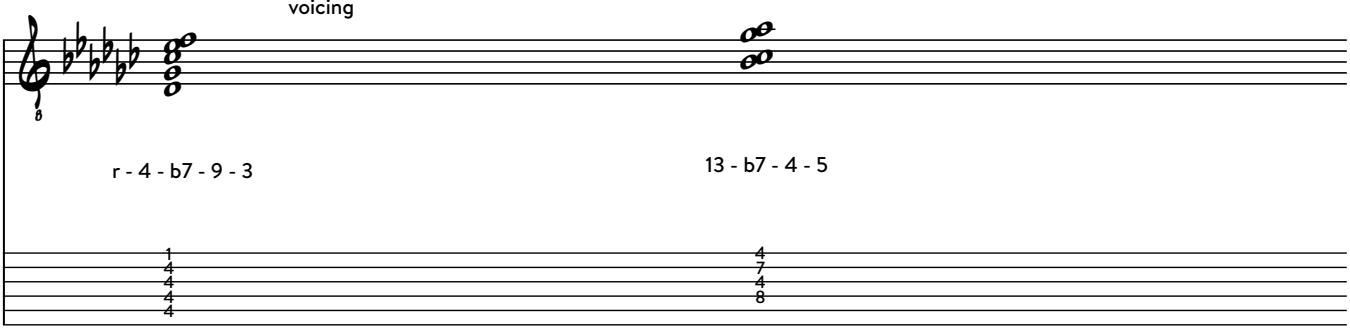
$Db_{sus9add8}$

4th 'Block Chord' +
3 - 4 categories in one
voicing

II

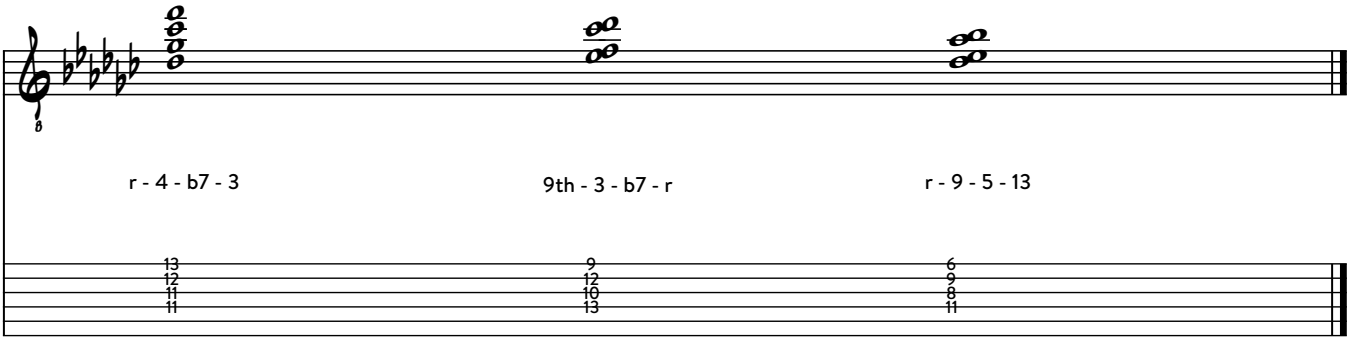
Ab_{-9}

Chords are interchangable in modal playing. Voicing based on Ab-minor, the intervallic structure features 2nds.



I

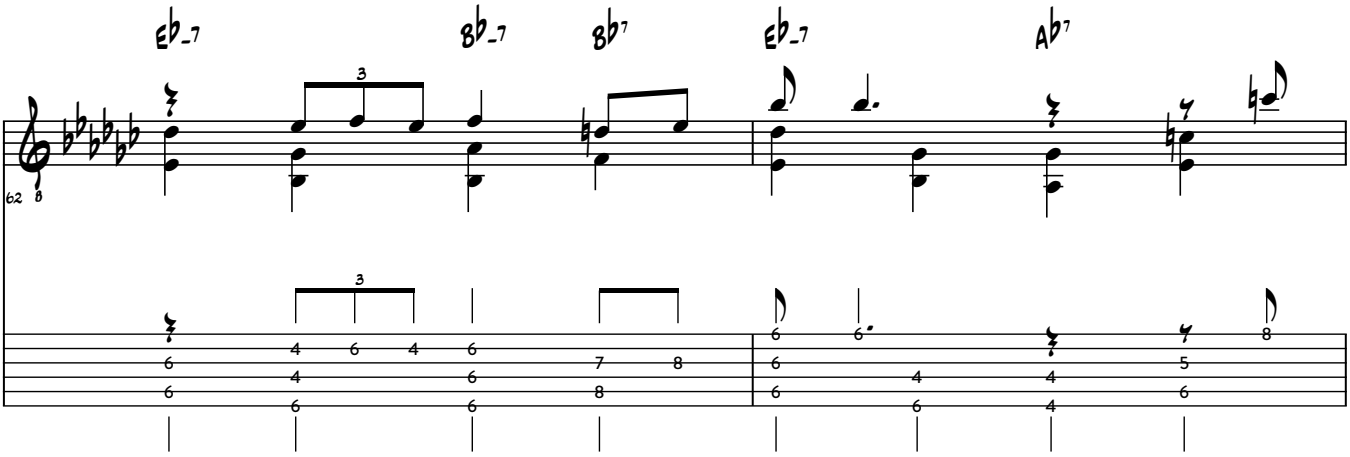
Constant Structure
Intervallic formula*:
"r" - (b)2 - (#)4th - (b)2



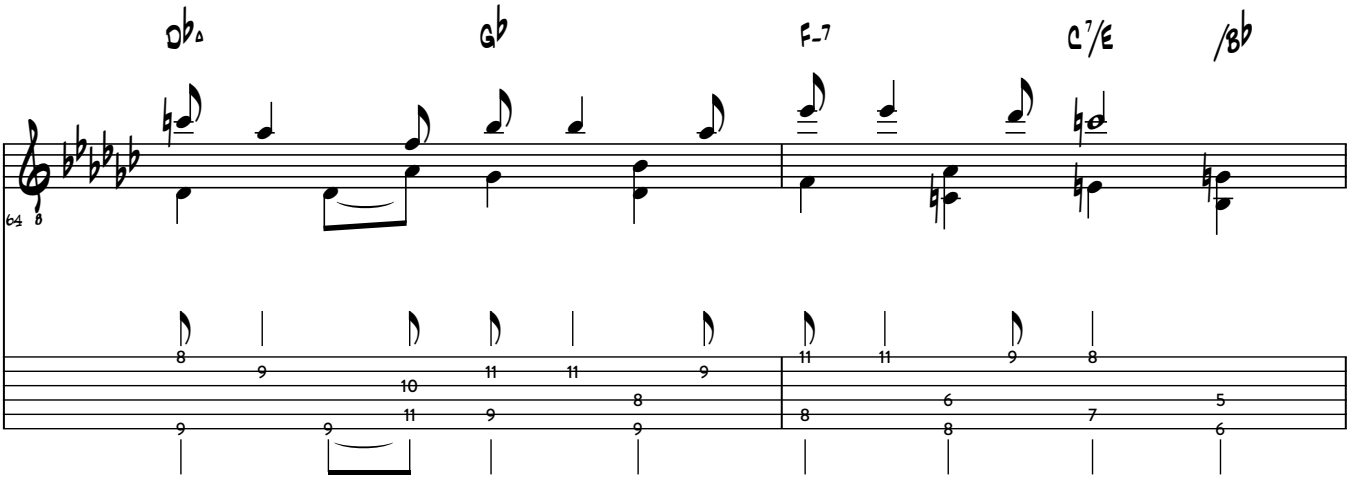
*Intervallic formula in relation to
a given note from Db-Mixolydian "r"

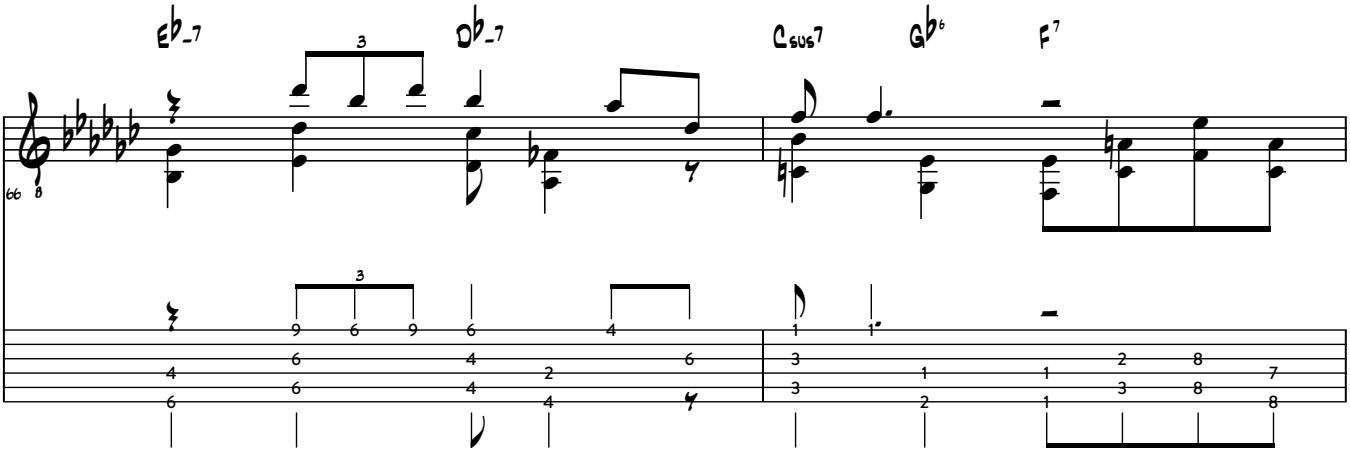
Ex.: Use an intervallic formula like the one above and play the resulting constant structure voicings within a tonality.
E.g. starting from G the same formula would yield the voicing G - A - D# - E in the key of E-Melodic-Minor.
The voicing can be used for all degrees of the melodic-minor scale. The intervallic structure in relation to Eb7alt (VII) would be 3 - b5 - r - b9. With the b7 category missing it is an incomplete voicing including two tensions.

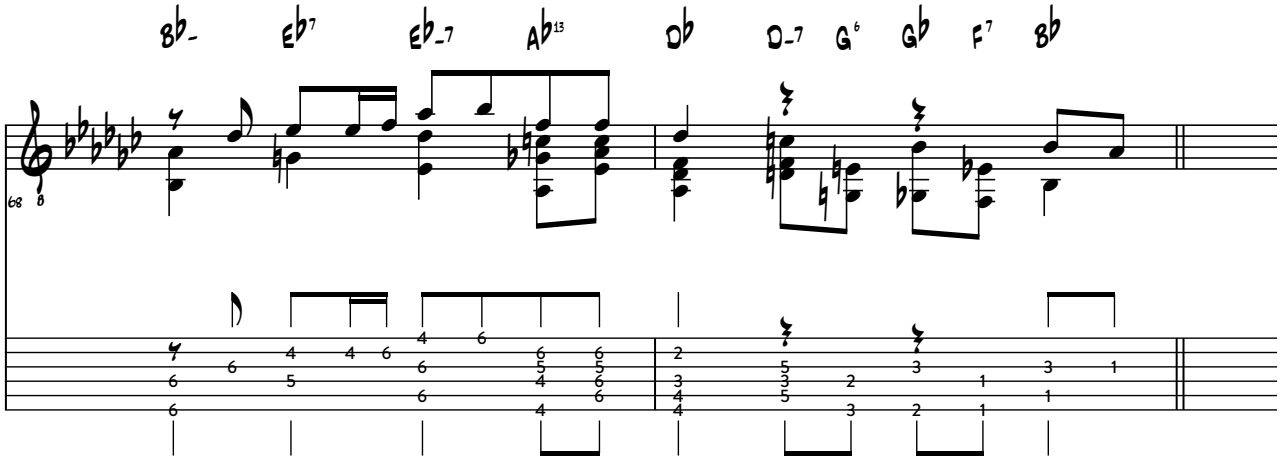
Sample 5.5a: Harmonization with interval pairs, outlining 7th chords - *You Don't Know What Love Is* - Kurt Rosenwinkel*



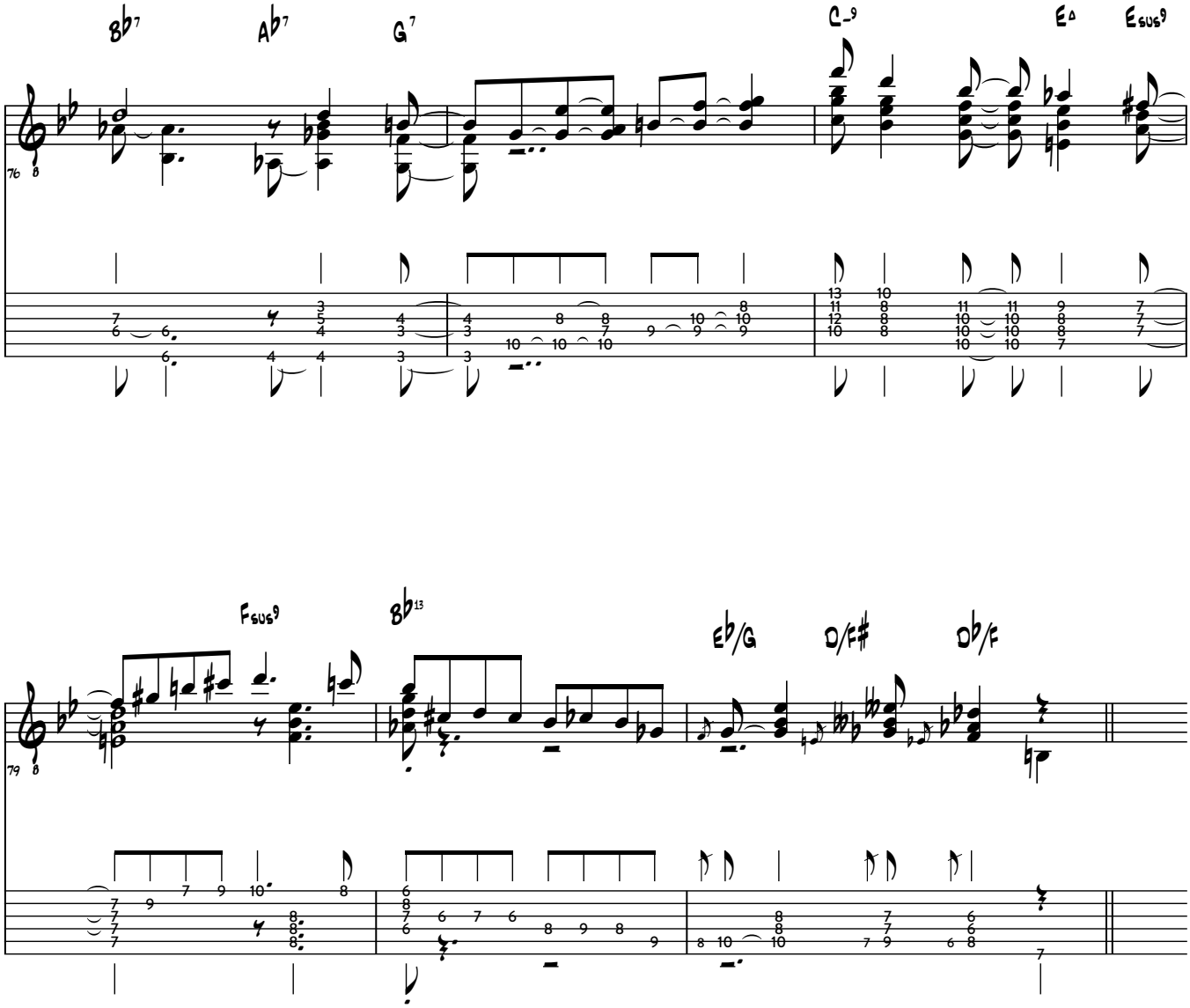
Kurt Rosenwinkel's approach to comp behind the melody, both outlines the voice leading and creates a rhythmically steady 'four to the beat' alternating bass with only two chord notes at a time. In this sample root and 7th and 5th and 3rd are combined. Another effective combination is to play root and 9 of a given chord.



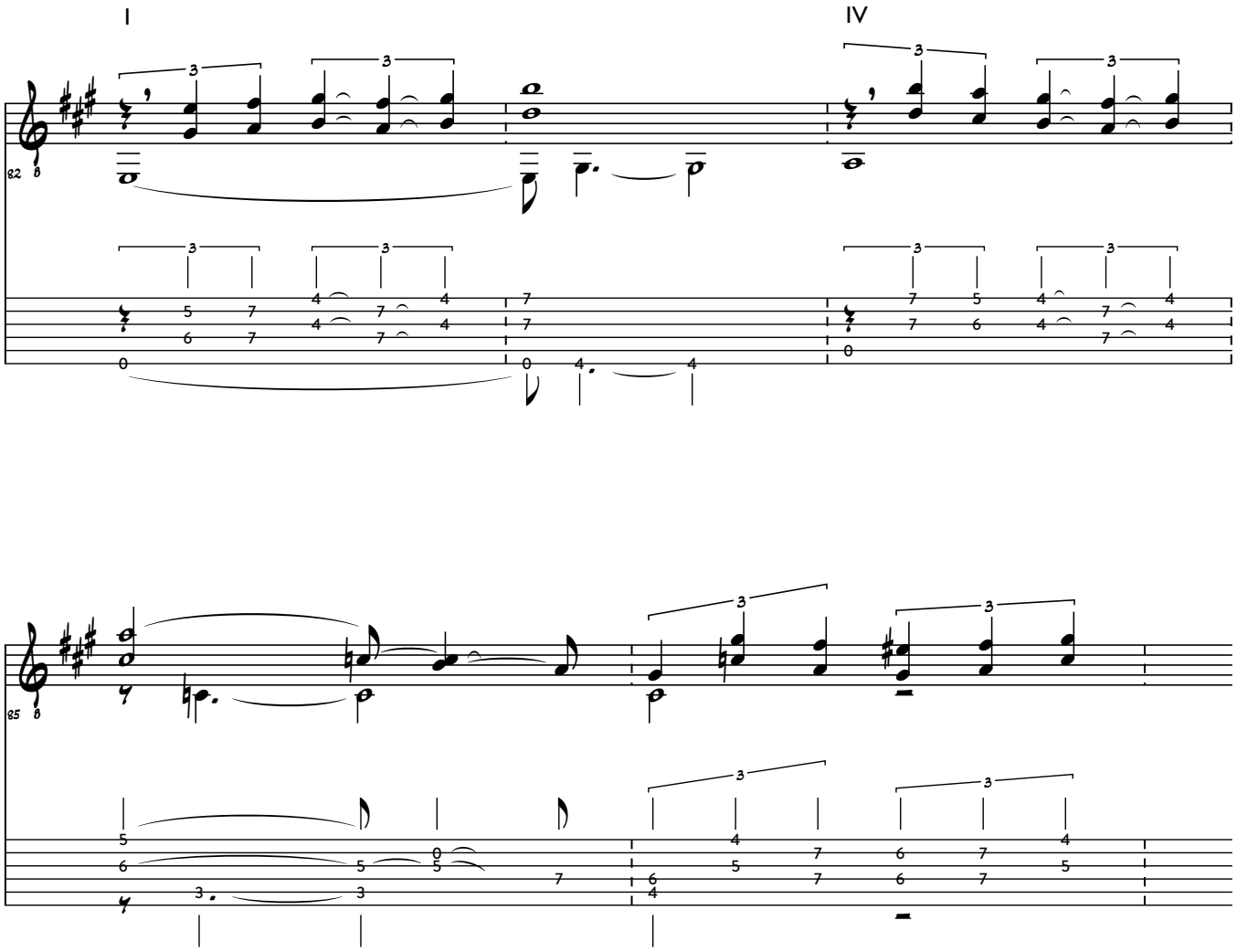




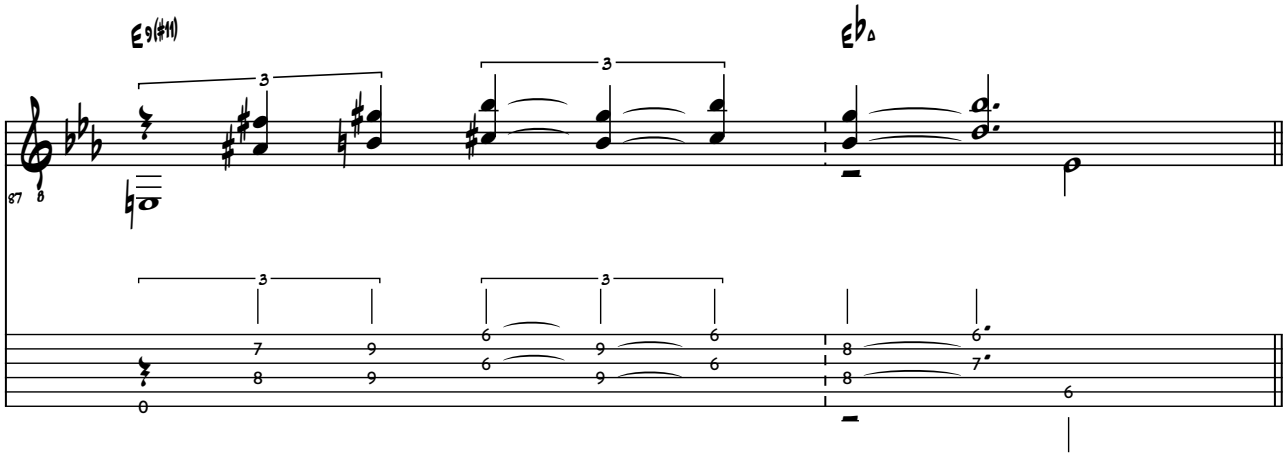
Sample 5.5b: Block chords, chromatic approaches, incomplete voicings - *How To Pass a Blue Monk*


8♭7
A♭7
G7
C-9
E♭
Esus9
Fsus9
8♭13
E♭/G
D/F♯
D♭/F

Sample 5.6a: Voicing formula as played by Julian Lage - *Study for Electric Guitar*



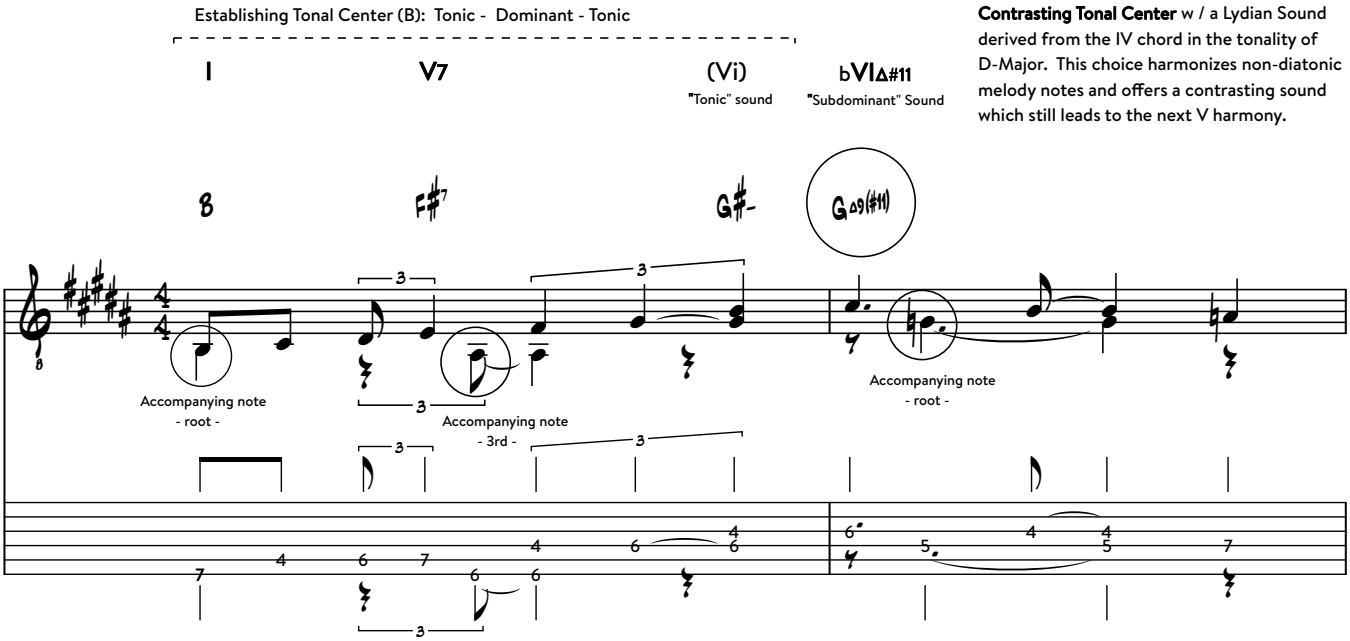
Sample 5.6b: Voicing formula adapted for bII7#11 - I∆



6. Creating Arrangements & Improvisations

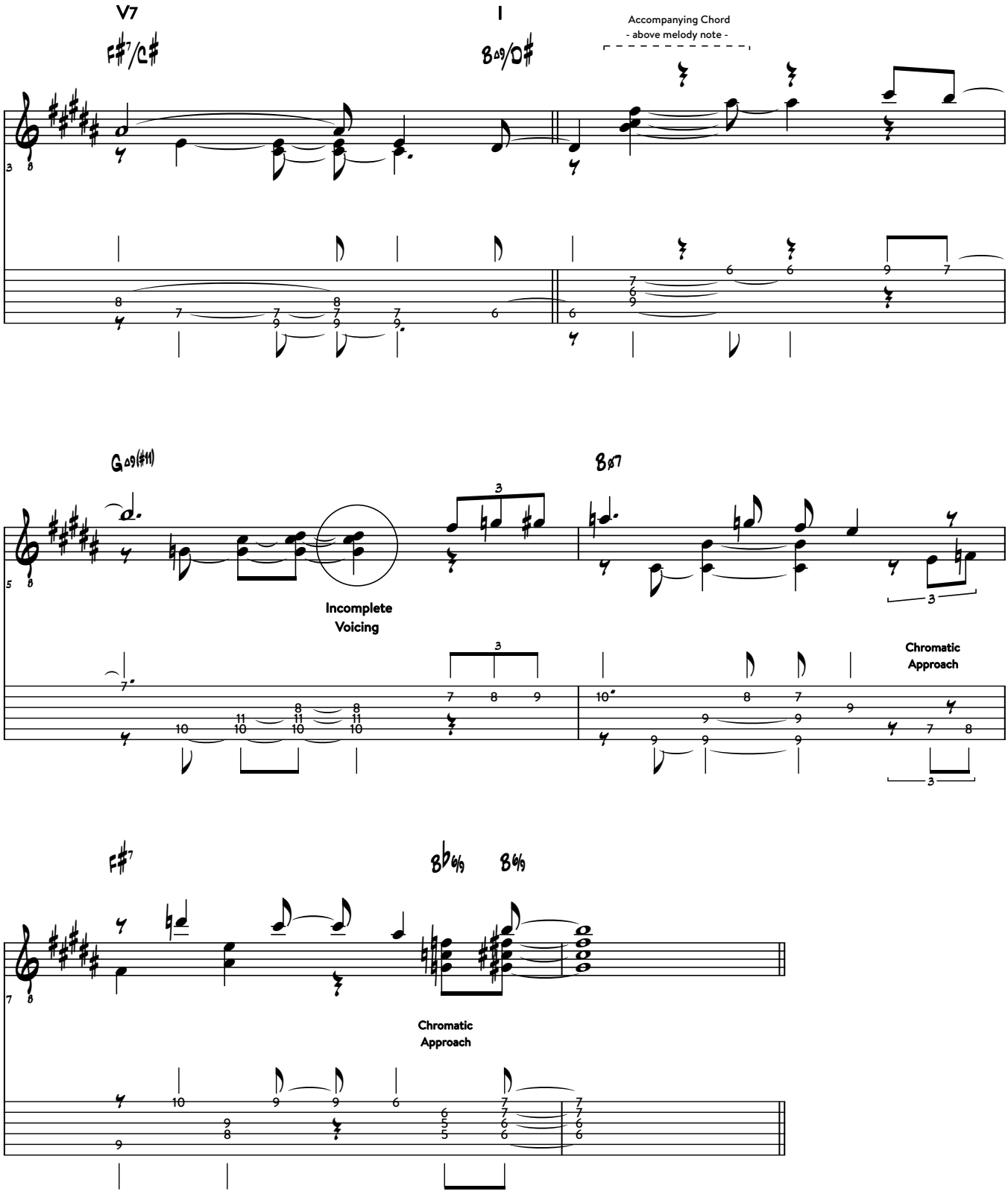
A rewarding path to learn and arrange a musical idea or an entire song is to first internalize its basic structure. This way you end up with a couple of arrangement sketches which may either lead up to a "definitive" performance or to the flexibility to play and improvise with the musical material at your hands.
First learn to play a melodic musical phrase in one area of the fretboard, then find the spaces the phrase leaves to insert accompanying notes easily. Easily means that the note is not too difficult to reach - consider range/fingering. The accompaniment should complement the rhythmic structure of the melody - you don't always have to accent the first beat of a bar, at times the melody takes care of this job quite beautifully and you can insert notes where they lead directly to the next harmony. The chosen accompanying notes should help to establish the tonal center so both the defining bass note (root) and the 3rd and 7th (guide-tone lines) of the given harmony are good candidates.
You don't always have to play these specific notes and while voice-leading is important, try to create a rhythmic-harmonic flow first. After you learned the basic harmonic and melodic structure of the song and you found where all the practical note options are on the fretboard you can start to adjust the voice-leading and the rhythmic structure to your liking. This approach opens up the flexibility play and alter the melody freely, change harmonies on the fly and to add the middle voices ad libitum. The middle voices are more likely subject to change, depending on how you intend to color the melody.

Sample 6.1a: The following sample illustrates this concept, applied to an improvised melody, which is harmonized with switching tonal centers and a minor iiø - V - I progression:



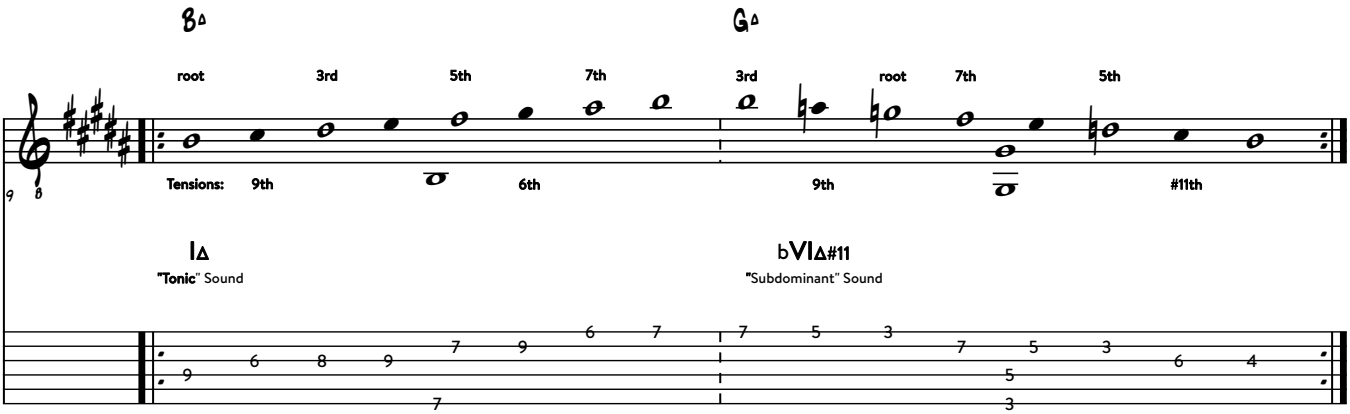
Notice in the first two bars that melody and accompaniment consisting of only two notes at a time are sufficient to establish harmonies and to create a harmonic and rhythmic movement. As opposed to playing full chords this minimalistic approach literally frees up your hands and mind. It is easier to phrase the melody differently (e.g. more legato) or to change it altogether. This musical model can be used as basic outline to improvise freely with the given musical material.

For a listener's perception and interpretation of a sound, context provides for most of the necessary information. Playing a root and a 9th simultaneously might have the same musical effect as playing a complete four-part voicing. Depending on the tonal context the listener will still 'hear' a major chord which you can either enforce by adding the defining note later on or contradict by playing a minor third.



Bars 5-8 show the same approach with more added notes to outline the harmonic movement with different textures. GΔ#11 comes as an incomplete voicing with #4 and 5 next to each other, creating an interval of a second. The minor iiø-V-I-progression is connected with a guide-tone line (7th-3rd), chromatic approach bass notes and chords.

6.1b Exercise: Improvisation



1. Find the notes which resolve from BΔ (Ionian) to GΔ (Lydian) and back and create melodic phrases. It is advisable to start with chord tones only to really hear and establish a tonal center before adding tensions like 9 and #11. Play simple rhythmic phrases with a start and ending, so you have a musical statement that creates a clear structure which can be repeated, altered and developed.

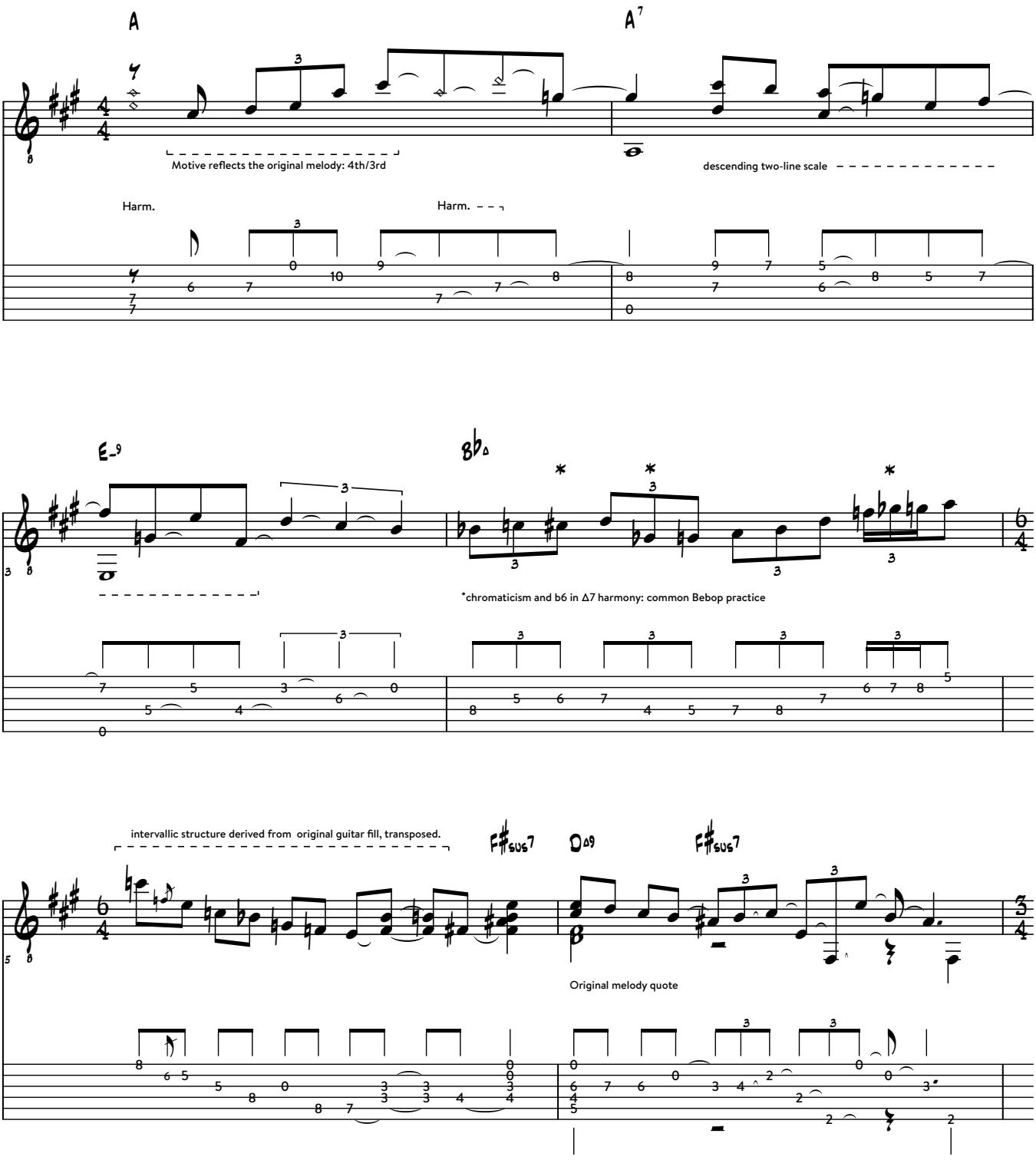
2. Play the respective bass notes either simultaneously with the current melody note or insert them in between your melodic phrases. To accomodate that, alter common fingerings in a way that frees up a finger or two.

3. After you've found musical melodic lines and you're comfortable playing and altering them with added bass notes, try to add a third note to create more complete harmonies, e.g. A# in BΔ resolving to B in GΔ (7th-3rd).

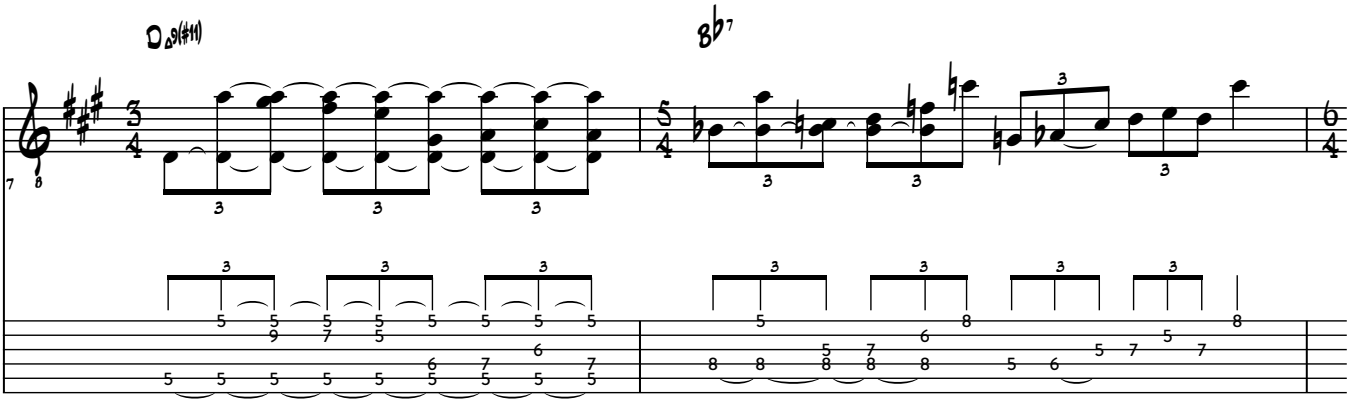
4. Melody notes with a longer rhythmic value can be accompanied by more than two notes. Try to build voicings based on the scale rather than common chord shapes (see bar 5). Meanwhile the melody note can act as a pedal point.

6.2 Improvisation Practices: Strawberry Fields Forever

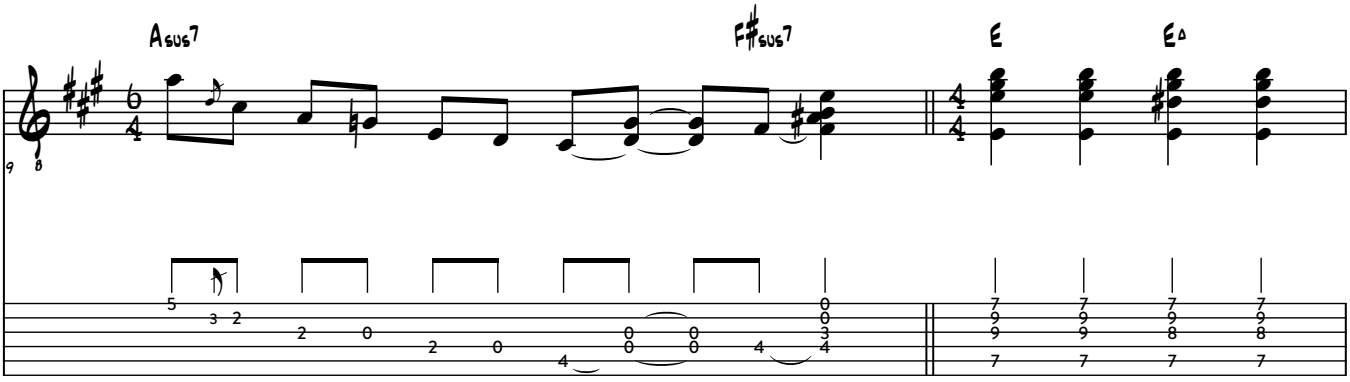
Sound Sample

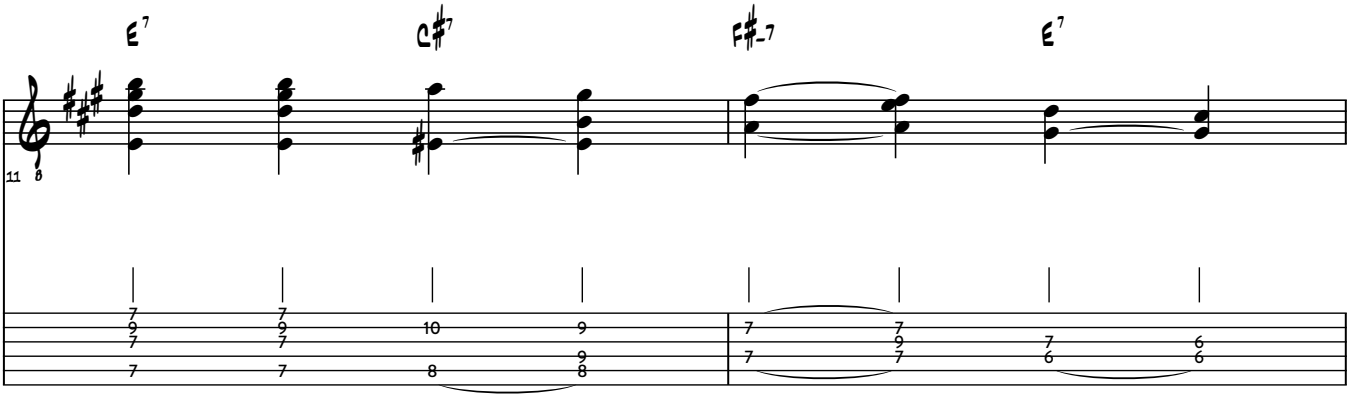


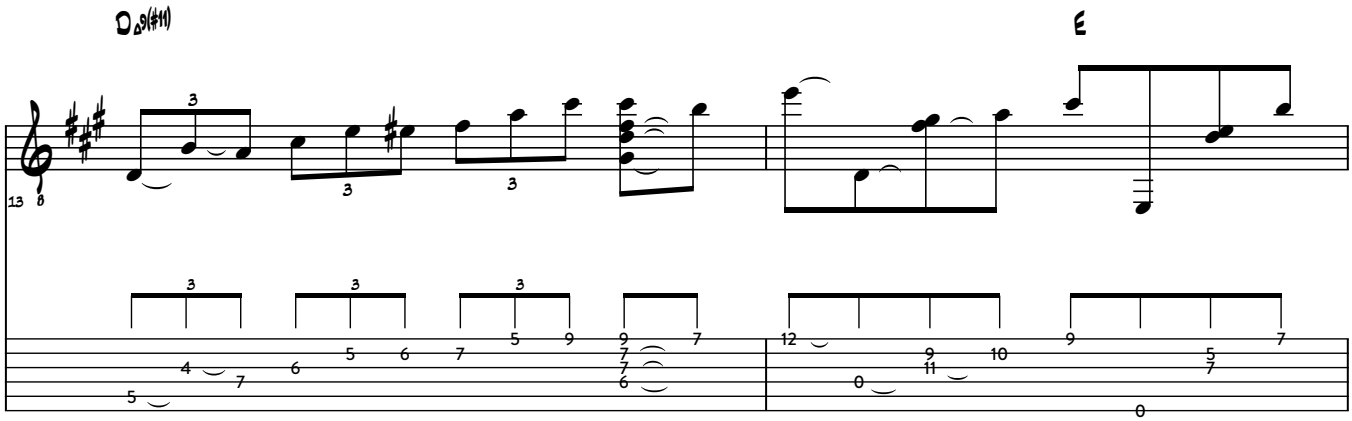
rhytmically contrasting triplets w / sustained pedal notes

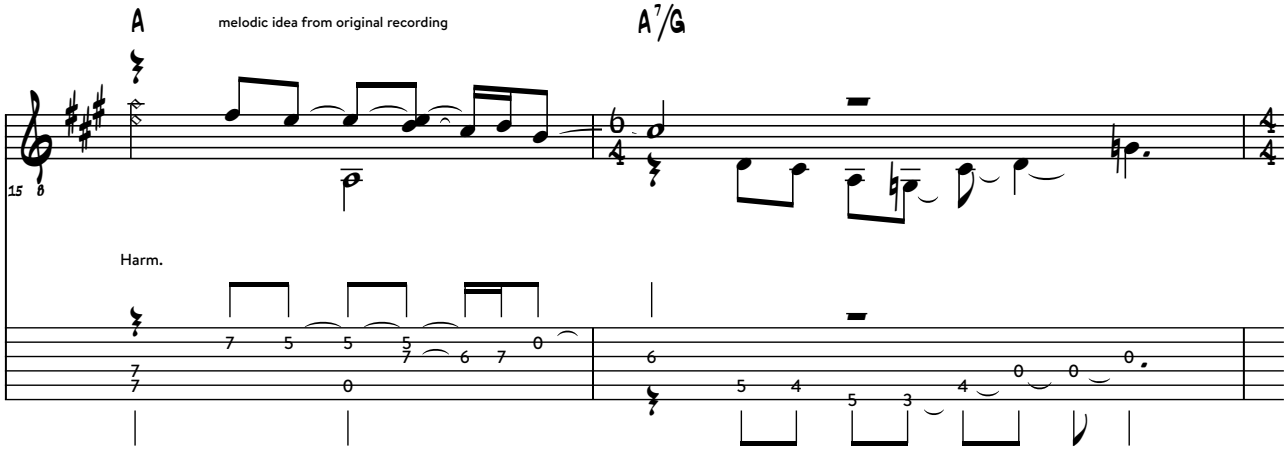


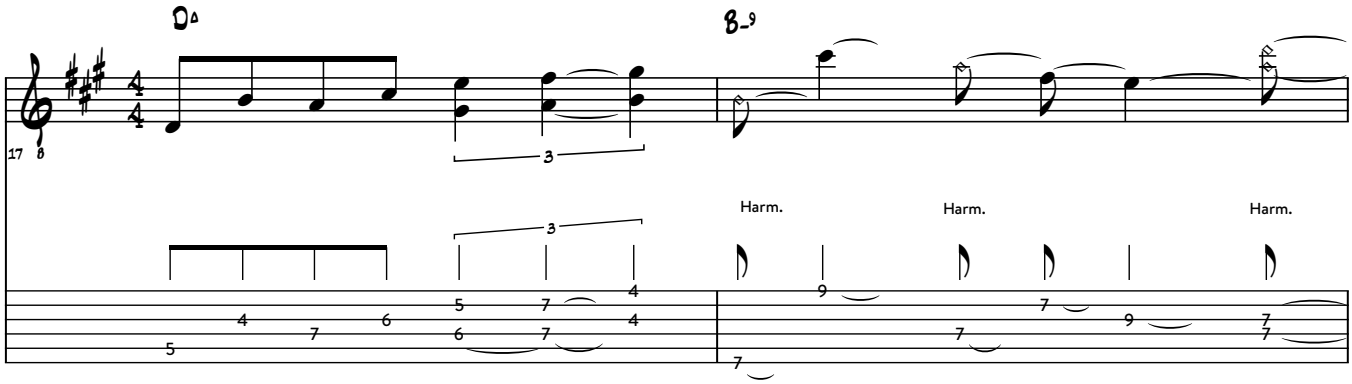
original guitar fill, see bar 5

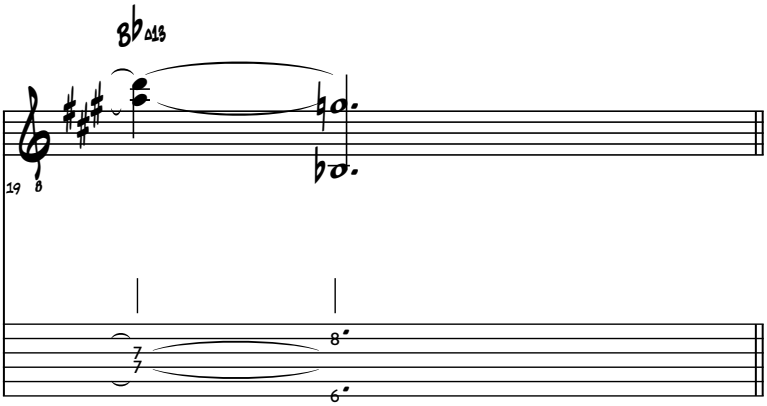





D♭9(♯11)
E


A
melodic idea from original recording
A7/G
Harm.


D♭
B♭9
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.



6.3 Arrangement Ideas - Soundslice

"Self-Portrait In Three Colors" - Charles Mingus (Jazz)

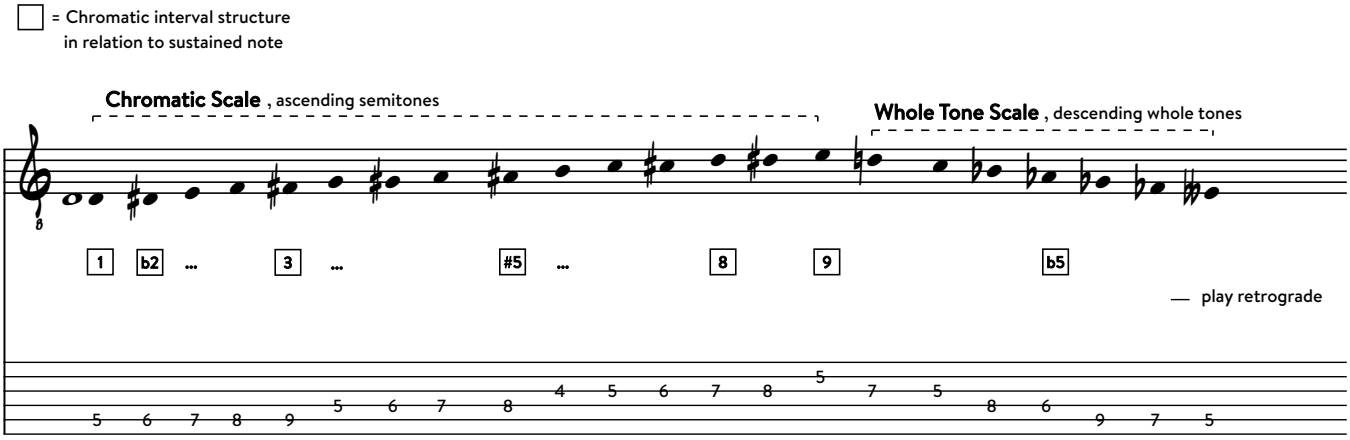
"Toxic" - Britney Spears (Pop)

"Guitar Jingle" - Jan Jakut (Neosoul)

"Wouldn't It Be Nice" - The Beach Boys (Reharmonization)

Supplement: Sonic Imprints

Exercises to speed up your ears for performance and transcription



Here's an economic way to speed up your ears and to map the fretboard without shapes or patterns*.
It combines different ways of learning sounds (auditive, visual and tactile) to create a stable sonic imprint in your mind, whose structure you can compare and match with actual sounds you encounter.
The idea is to establish your perception of both semitones / whole tones and intervals (b2 - 9) in relation to another pitch.
Focus on one aspect at a time.

1. Sustain a pitch with your voice or a loop and play an ascending chromatic scale followed by a descending whole tone scale.
2. Try to anticipate the sound of each following note in your mind before playing it.
3. Follow your ears to find other possible fingerings and stringsets to play these notes on the fretboard.
4. Play only the sustained pitch and sing/imagine the sounds of the scales without your instrument.

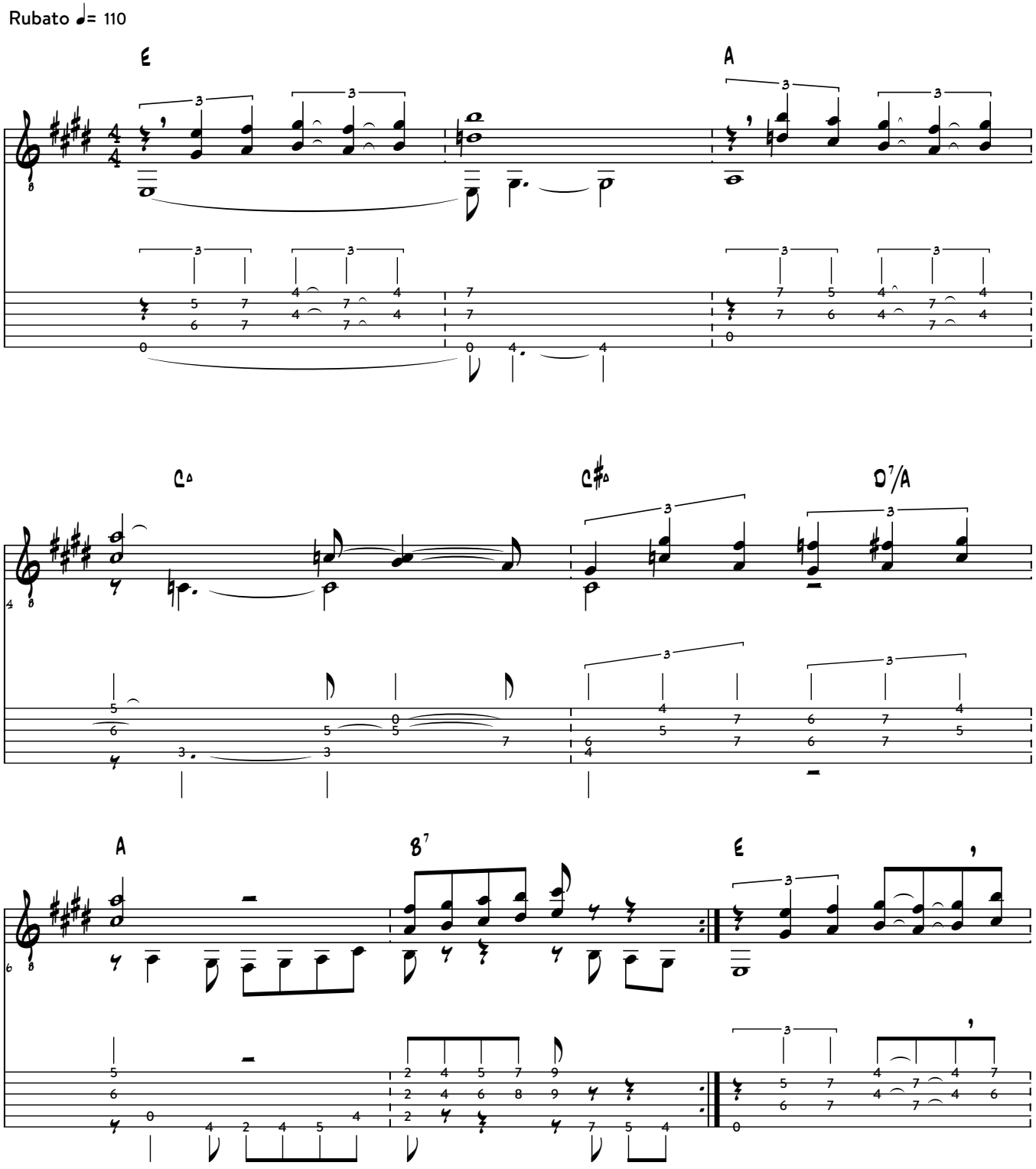
*Shapes and patterns are very useful when trying to play an instrument consistently ;) This exercise complements your helpful knowledge of shapes and patterns.

Julian Lage
Transcription: Jan Jakut

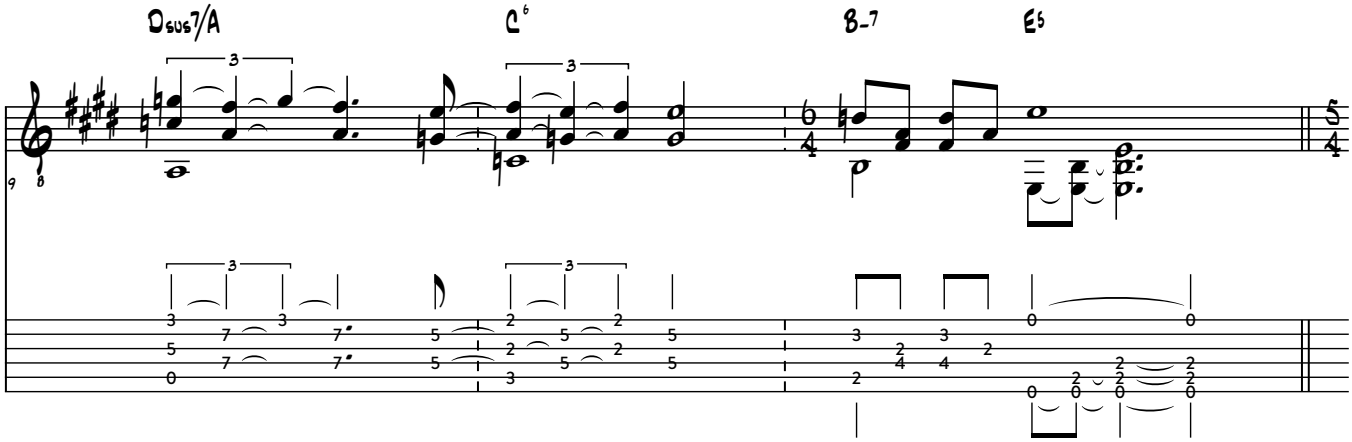
Julian Lage - *Live at National Sawdust in Brooklyn*

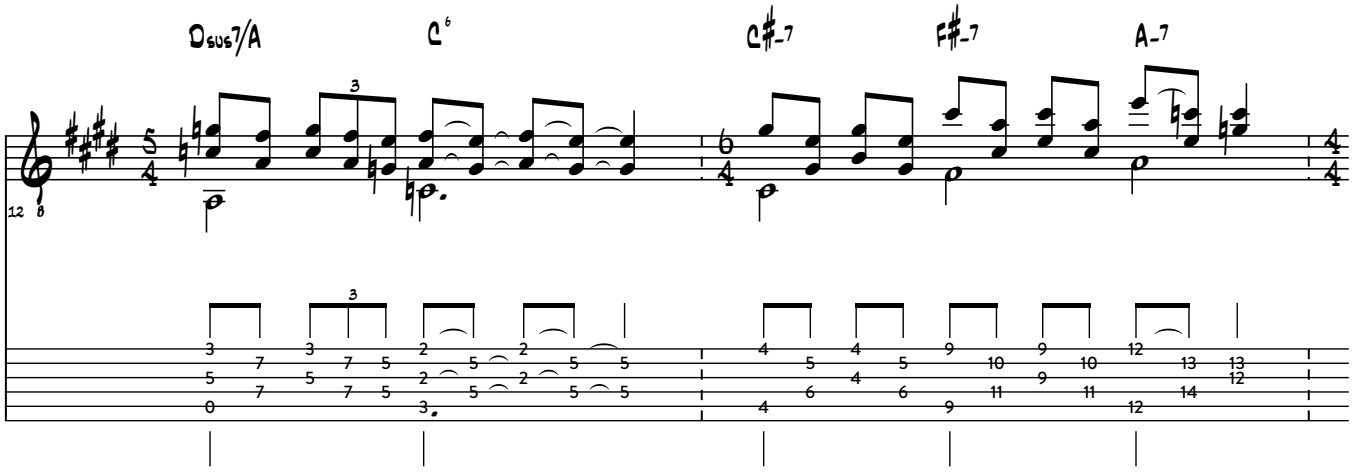
Study for Electric Guitar

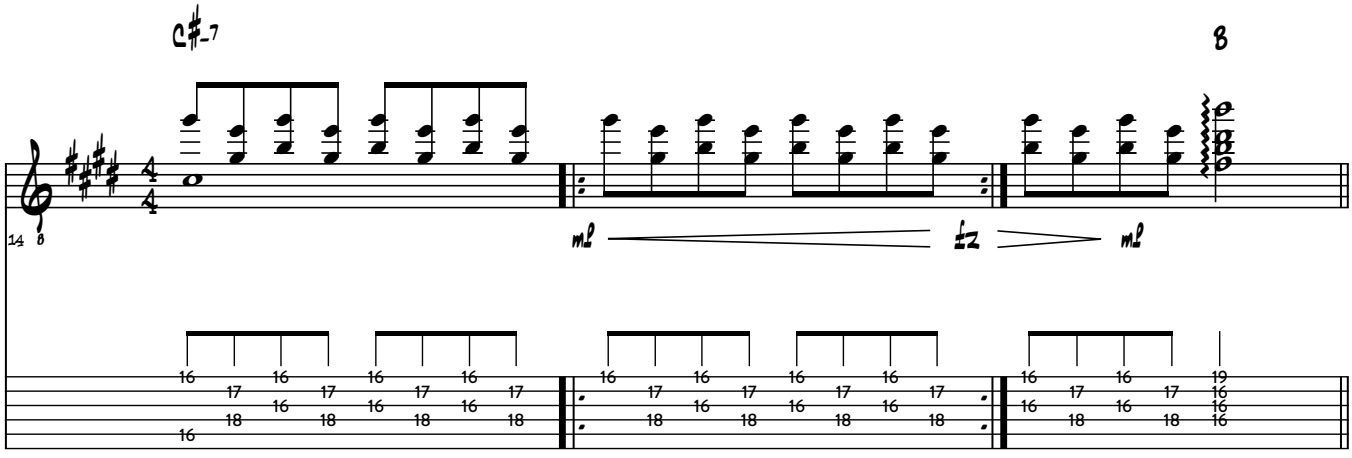
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhUMUeyrlNY



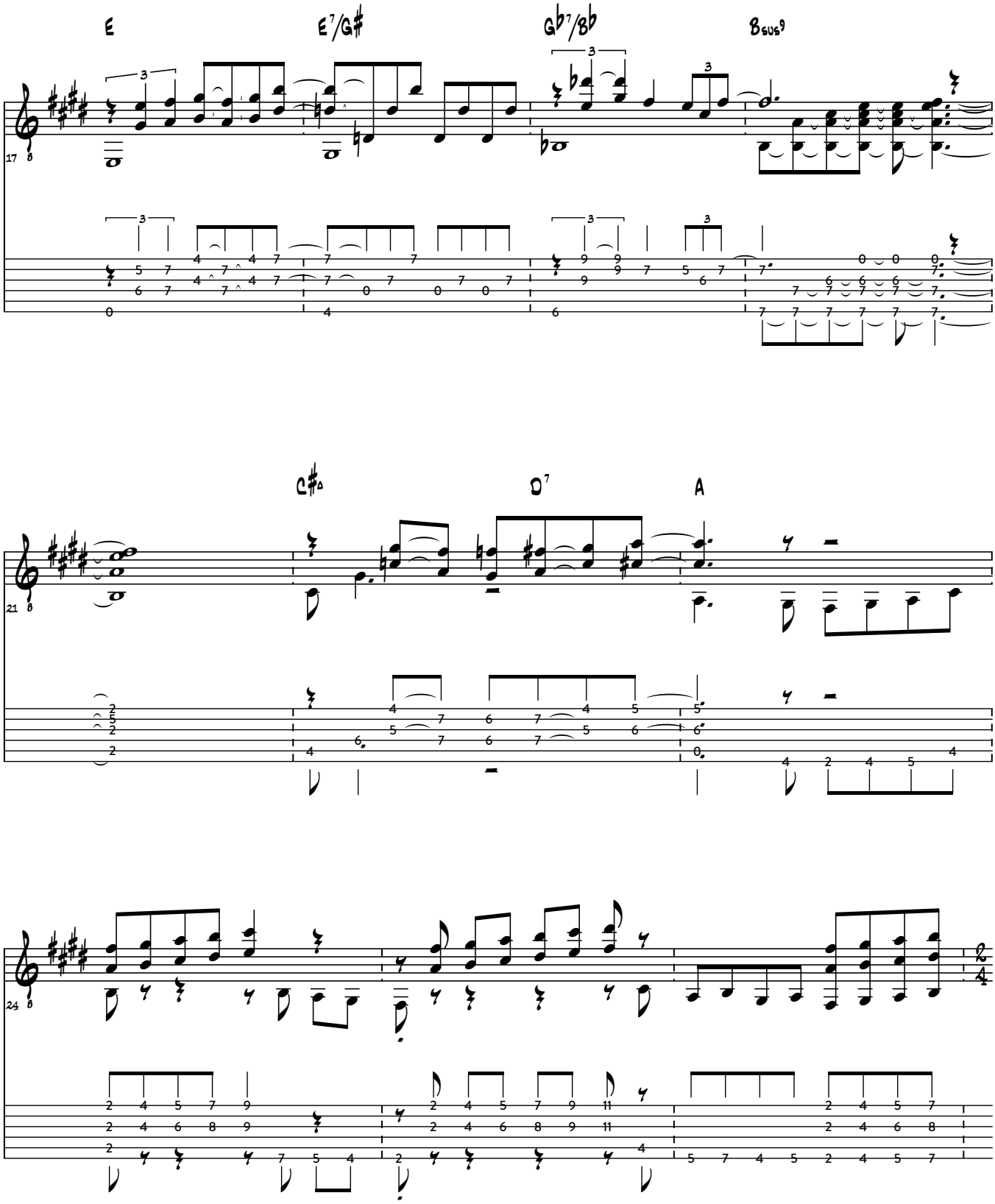
Study For Electric Guitar

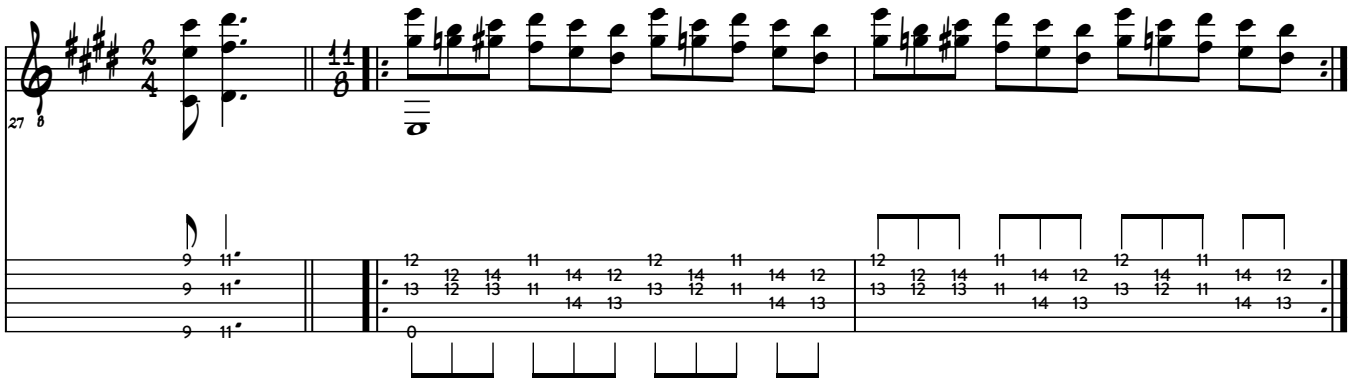


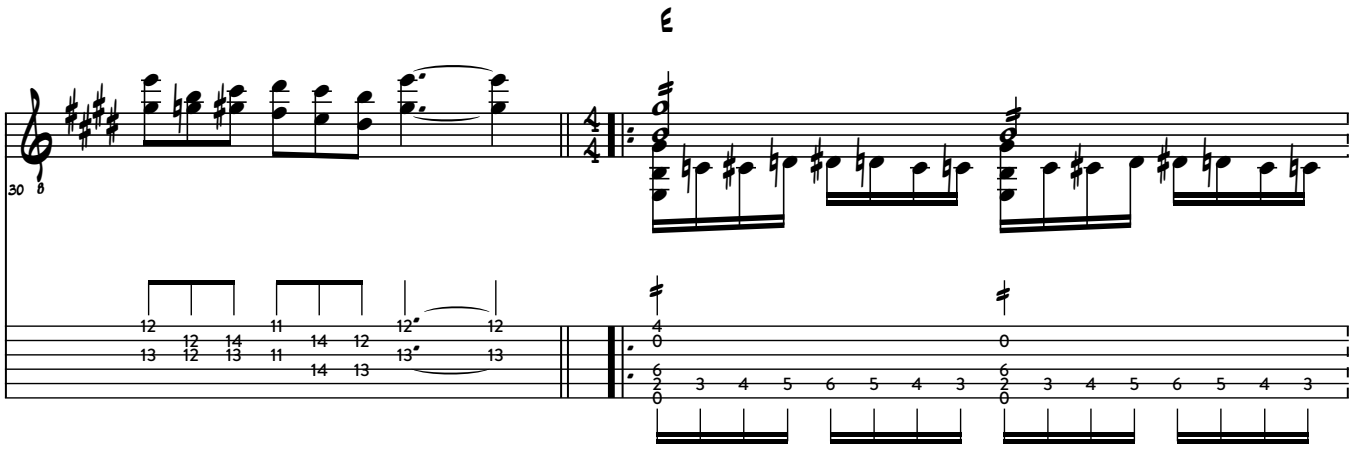




Study For Electric Guitar



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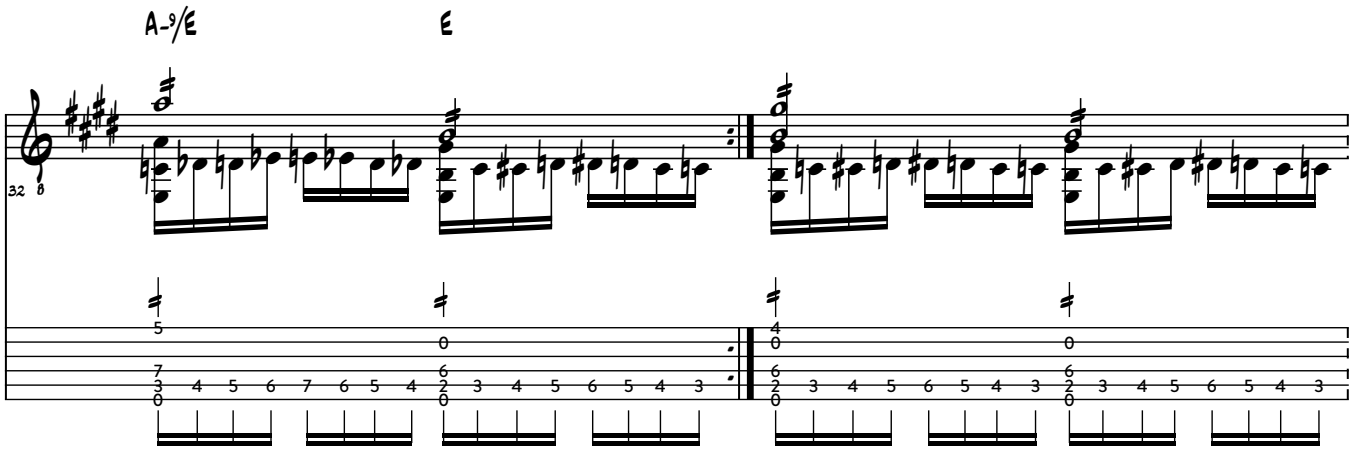
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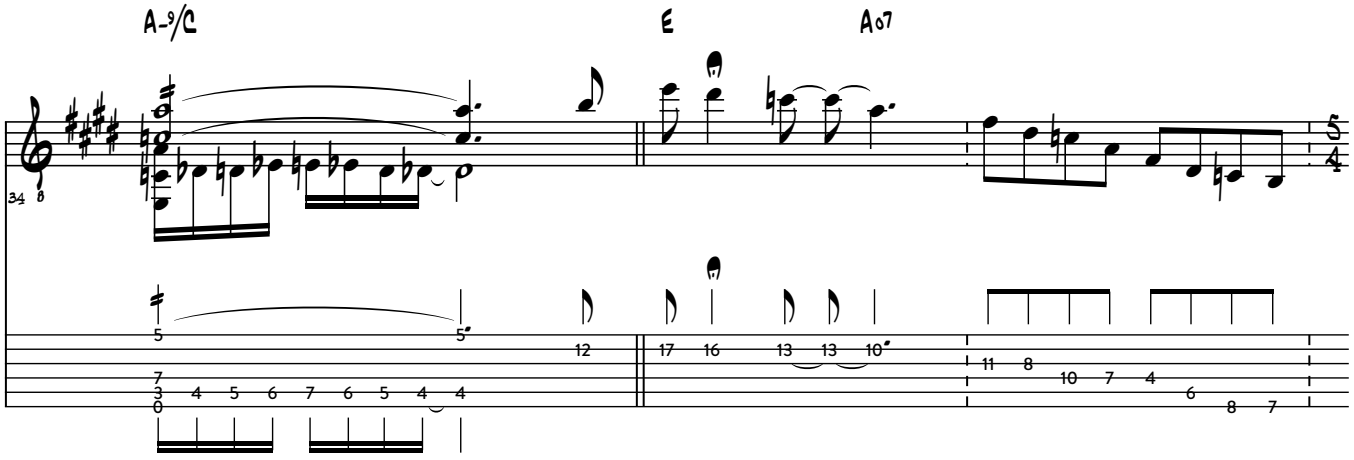
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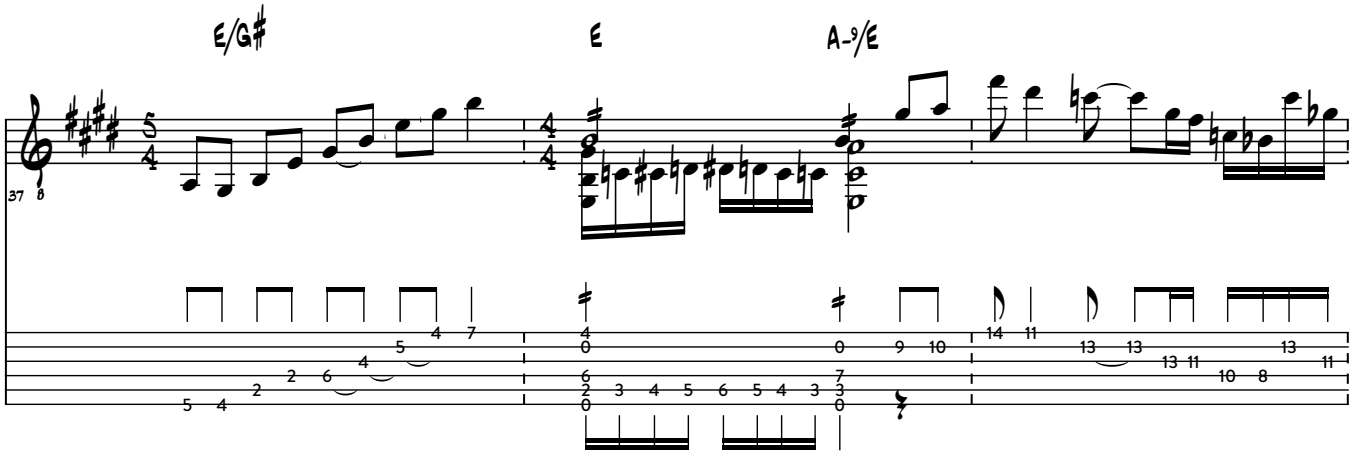
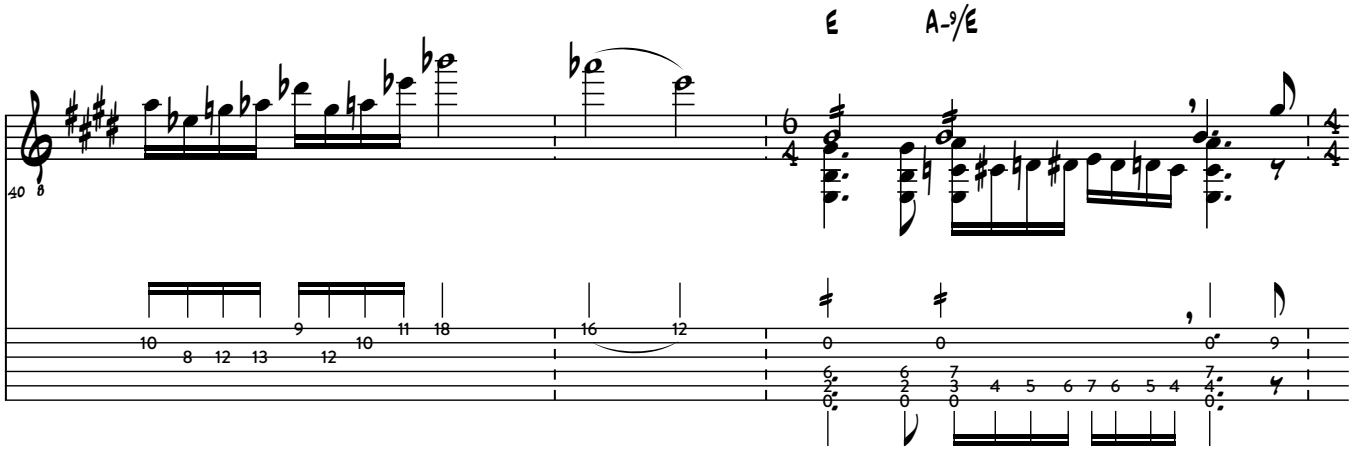
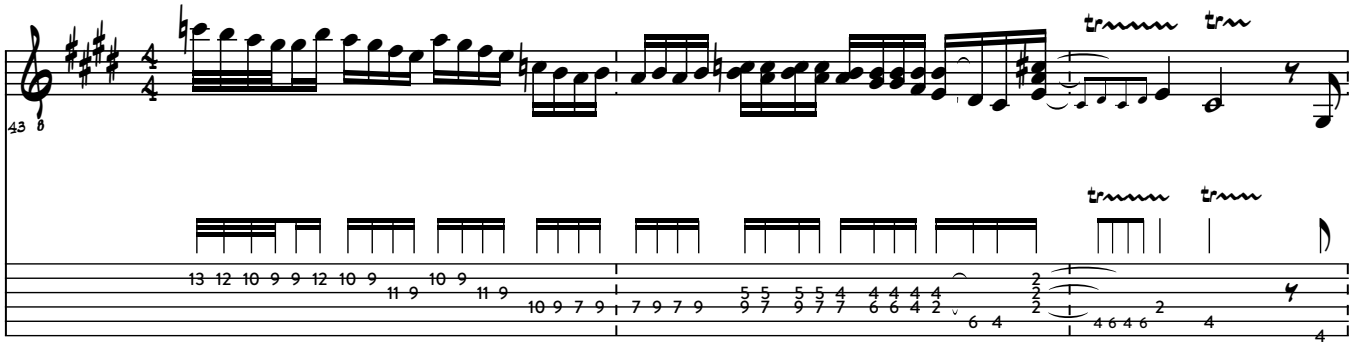
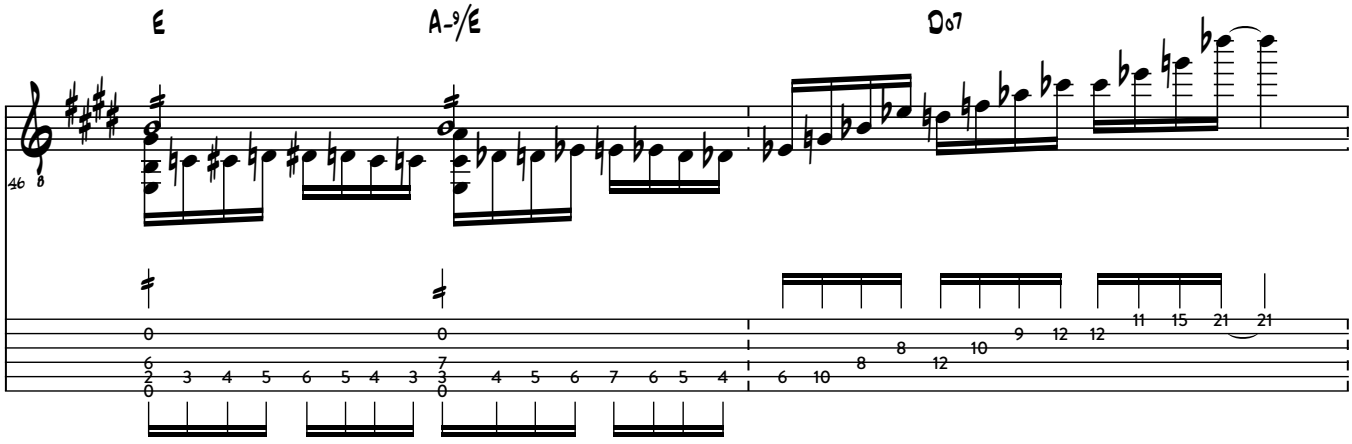
E
A07

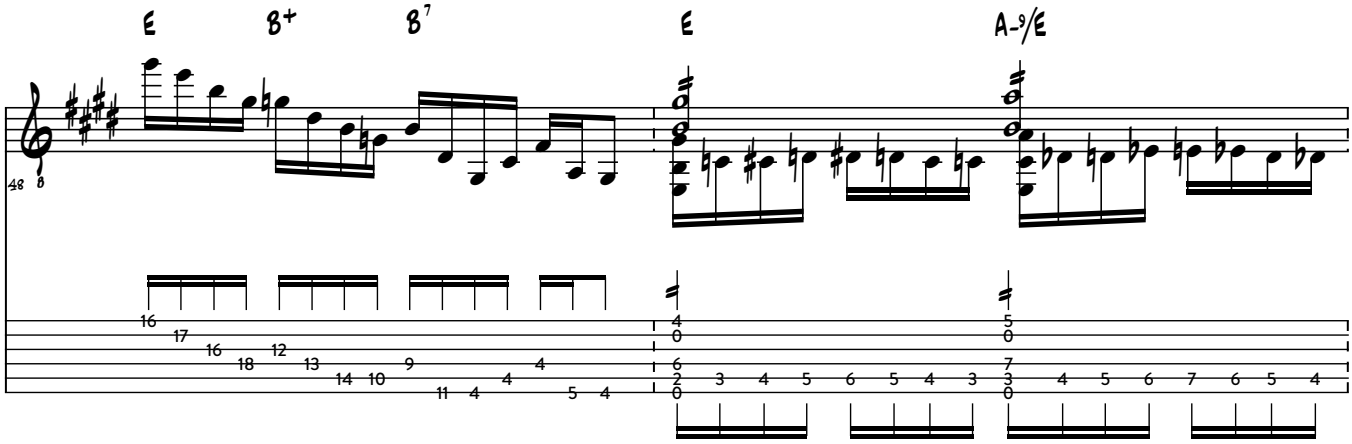

E/G#
E
A-9/E


E
A-9/E

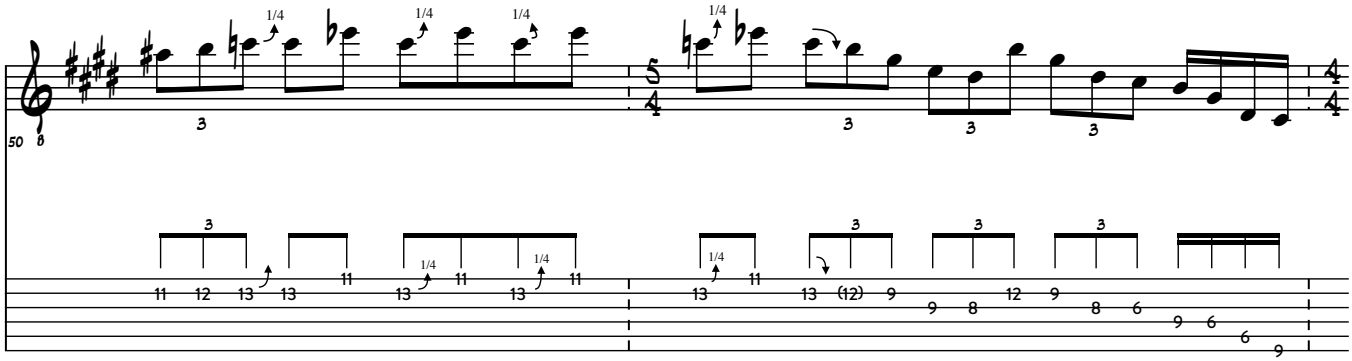
Study For Electric Guitar

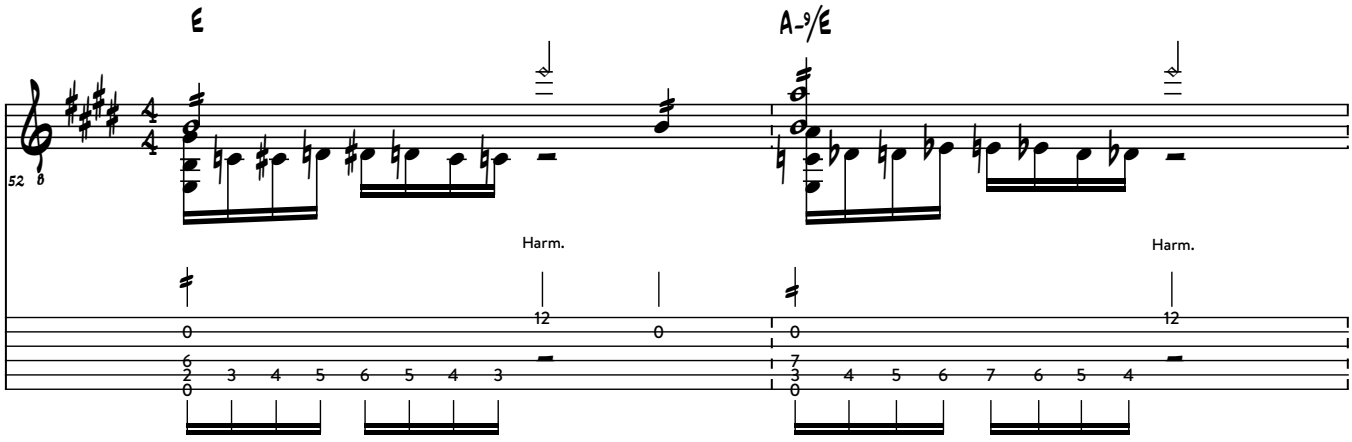


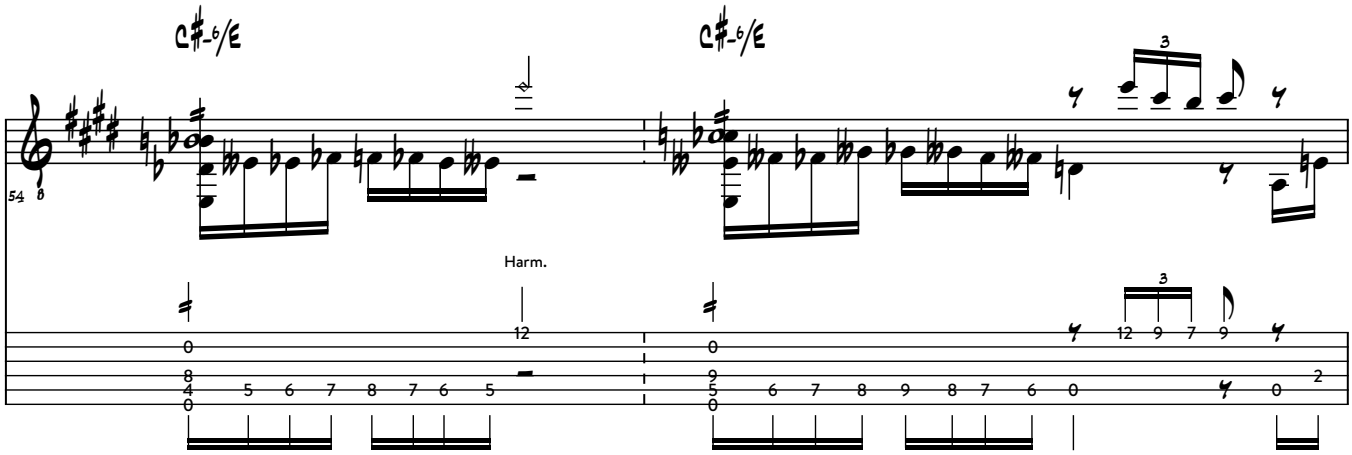


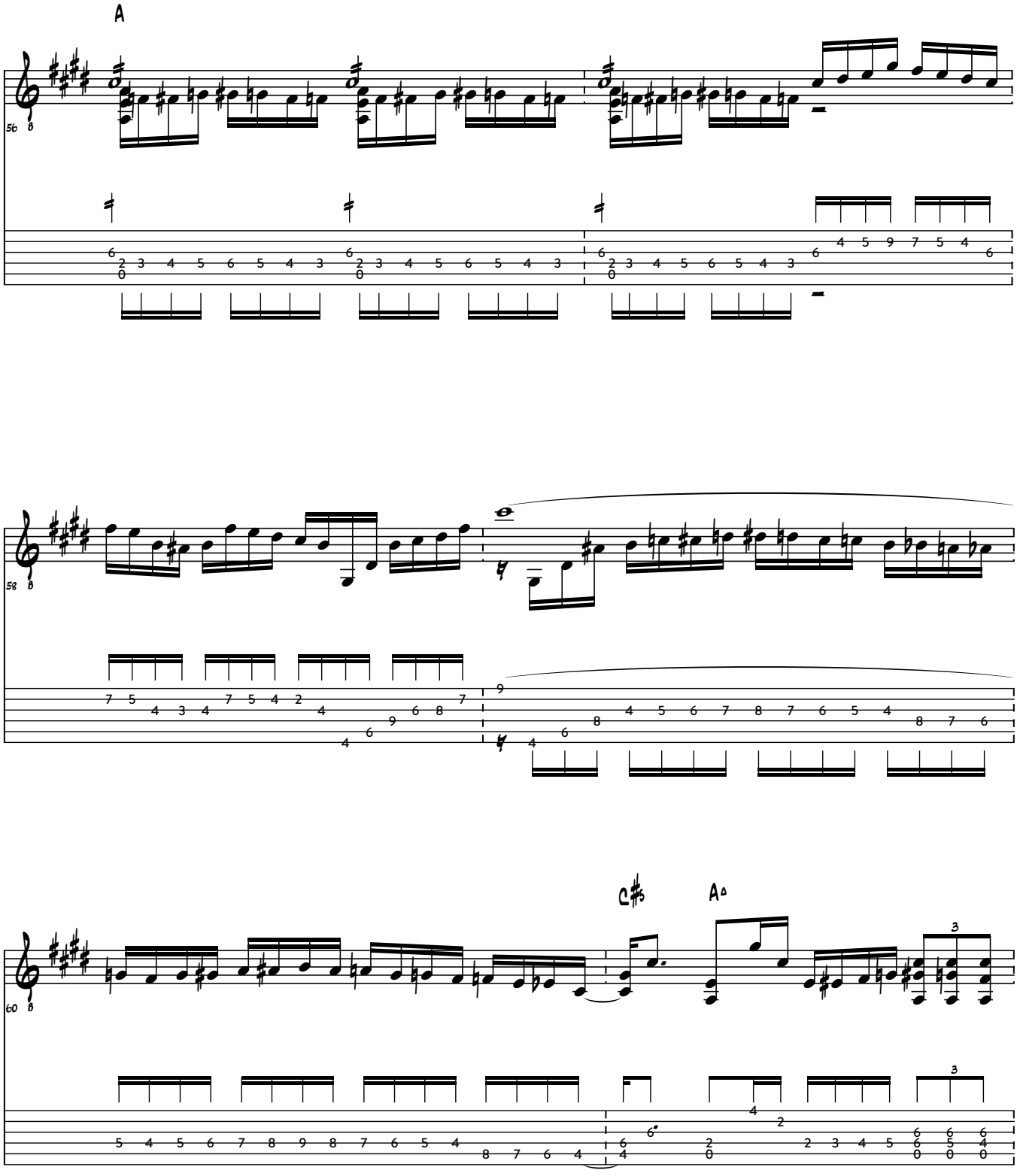


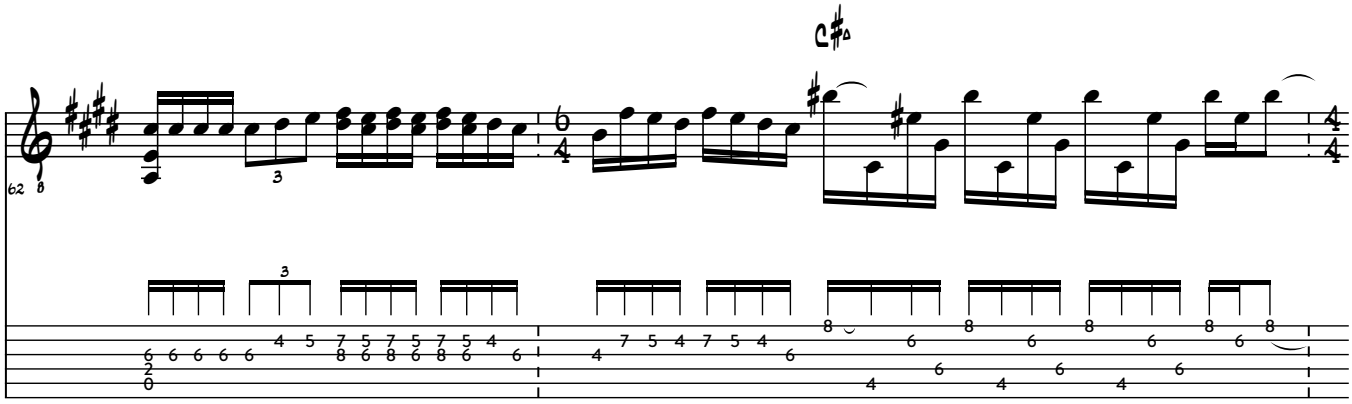
Study For Electric Guitar

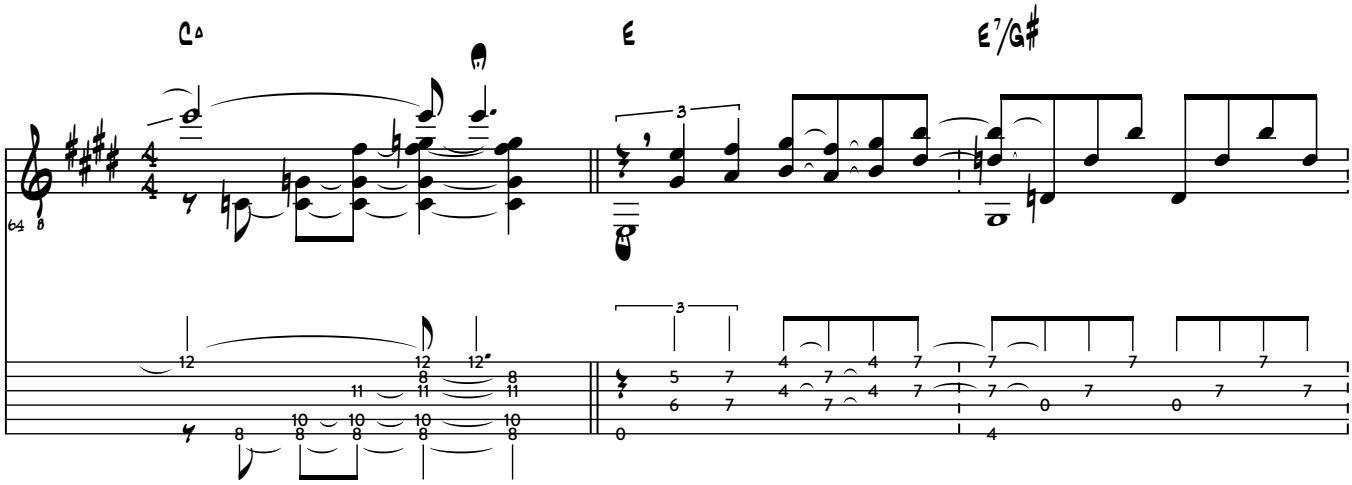


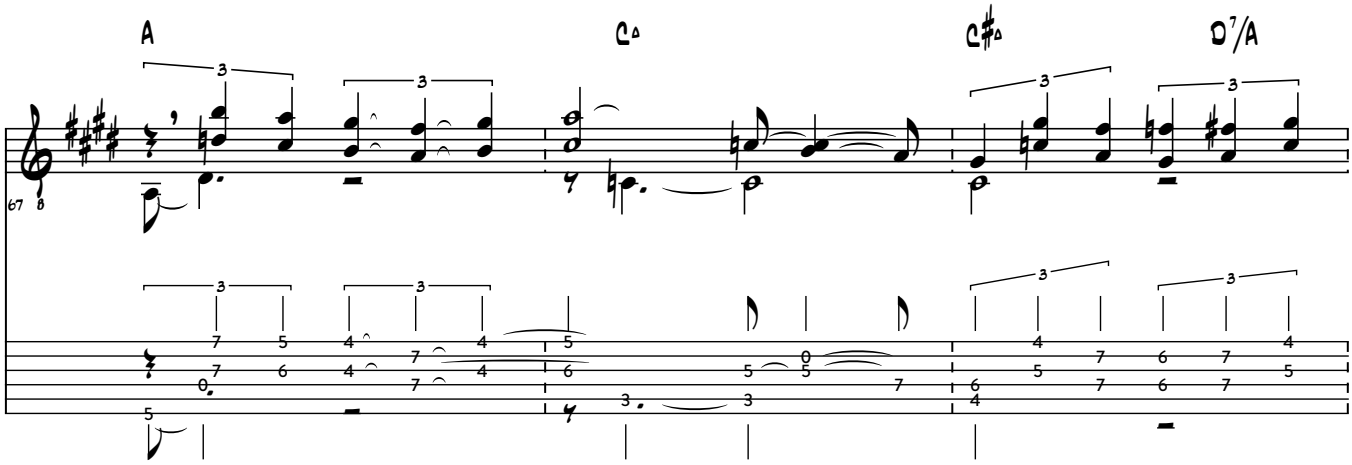


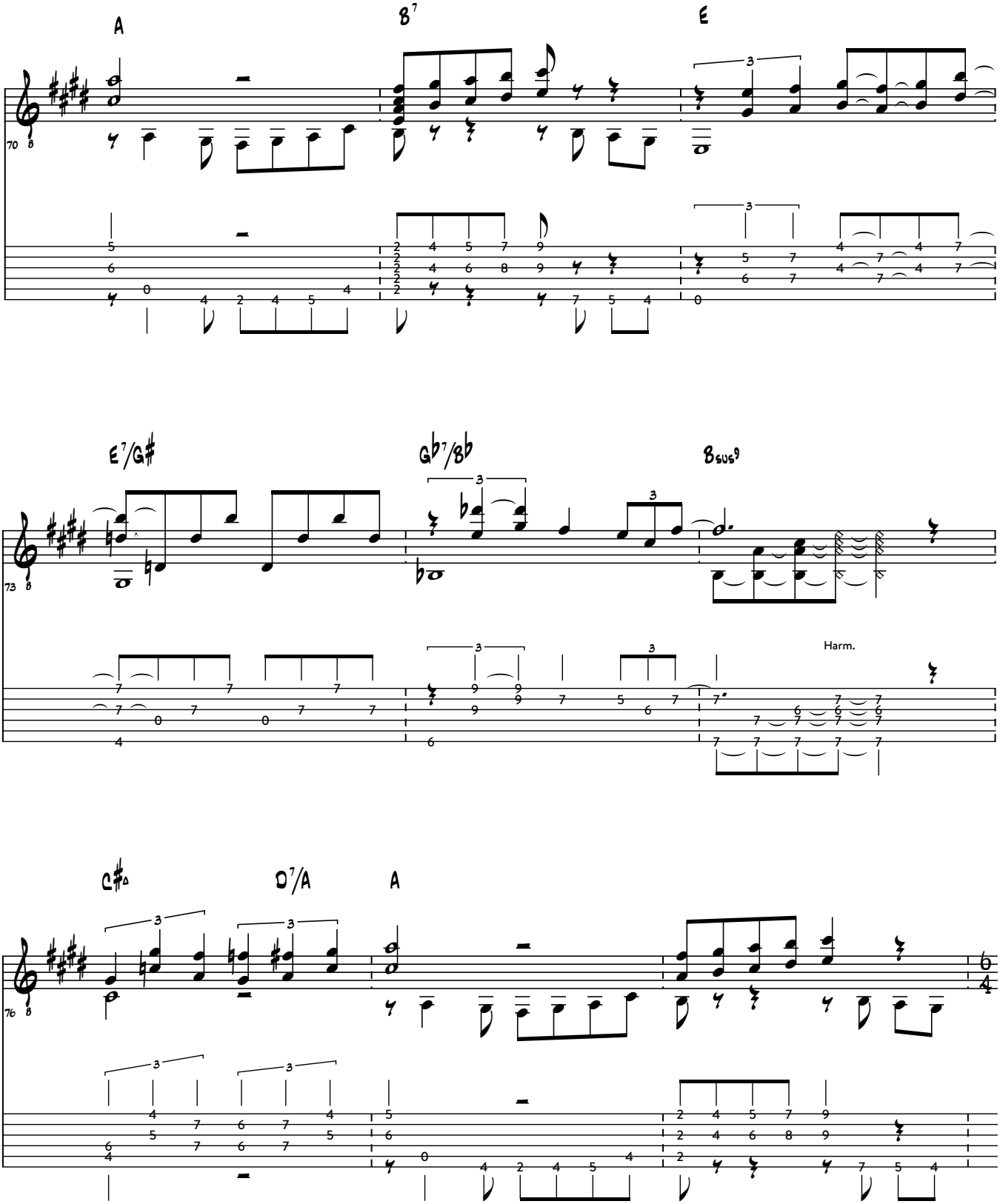


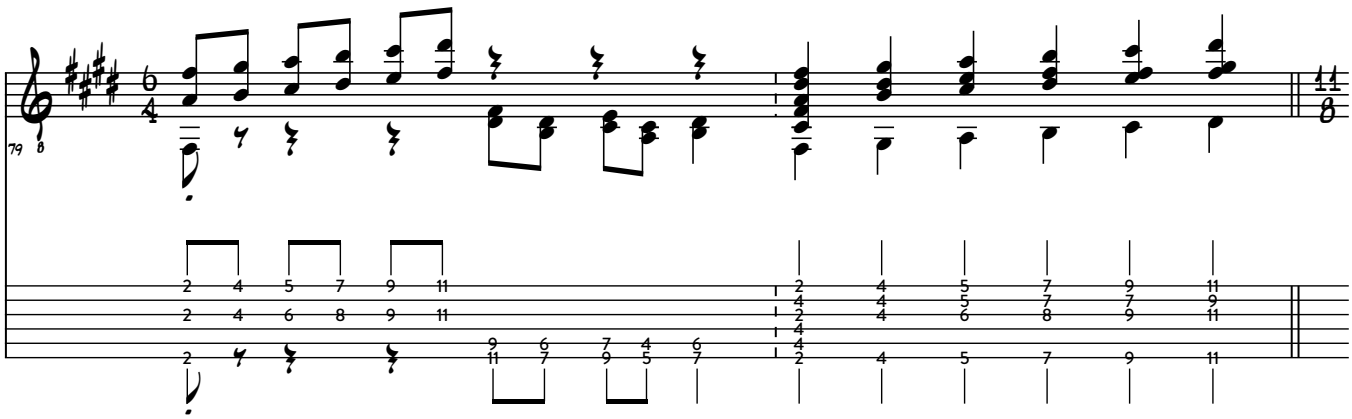

A
C♯
A

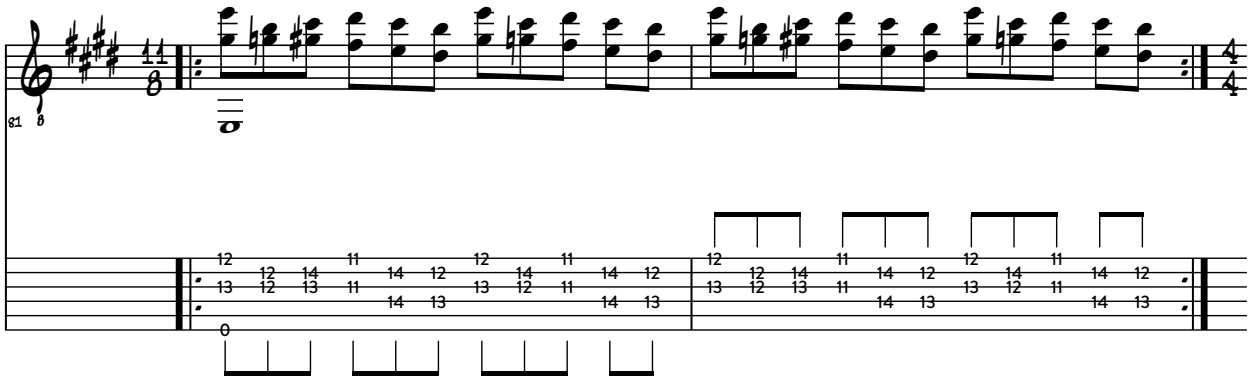

C♯Δ

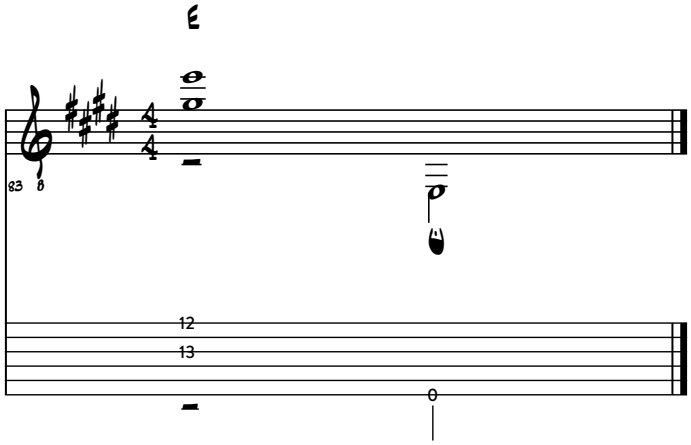

CΔ
E
E7/G♯


A
CΔ
C♯Δ
D7/A


A
B7
E
E7/G#
Gb7/Bb
Bsus9
Harm.
C#o
D7/A
A





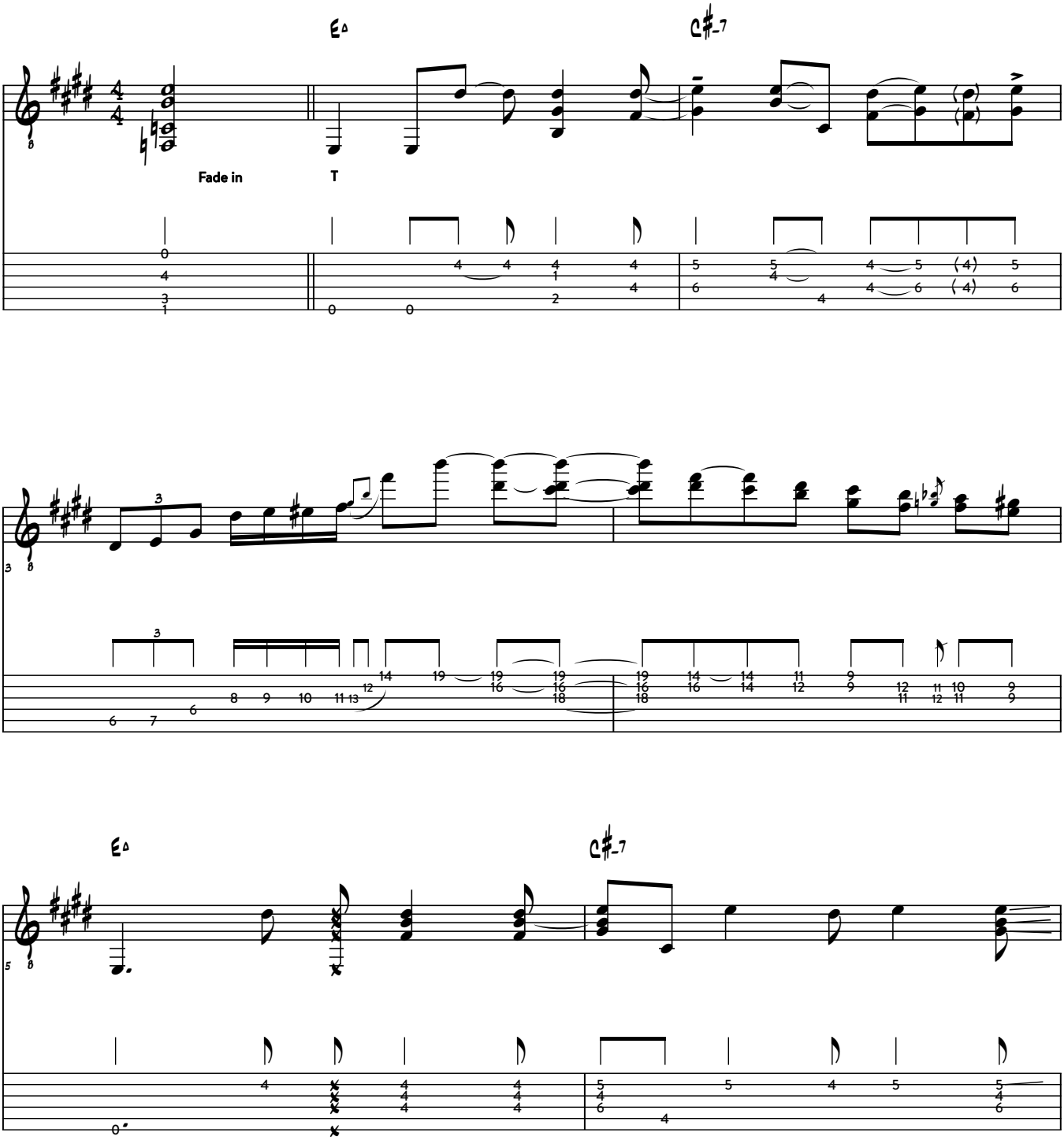


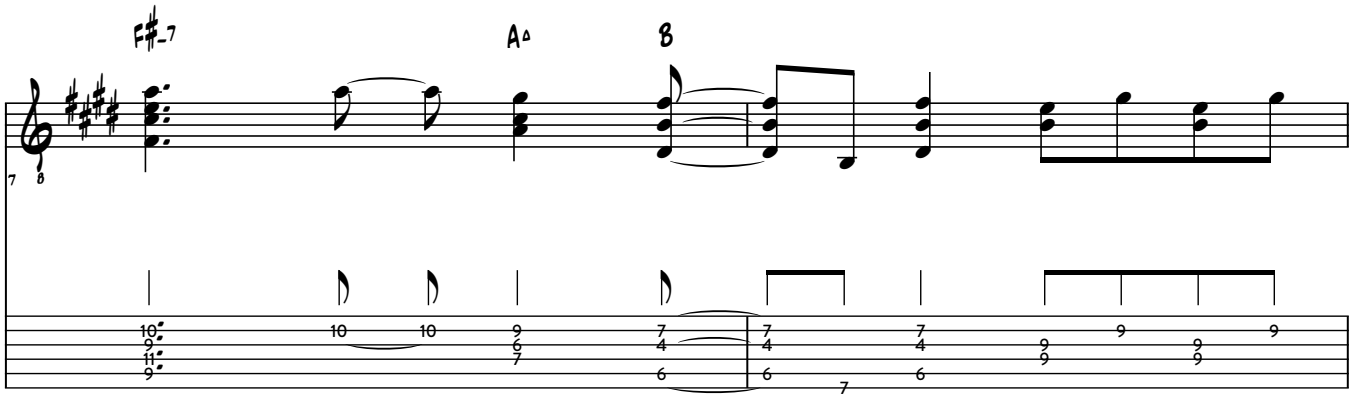
Transcription: Jan Jakut

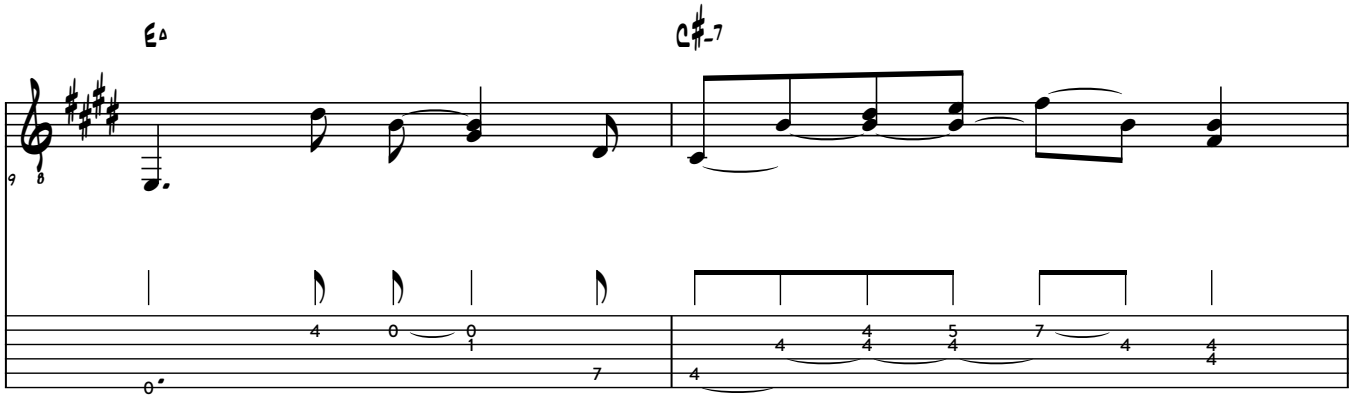
Chordal and melodic ideas by

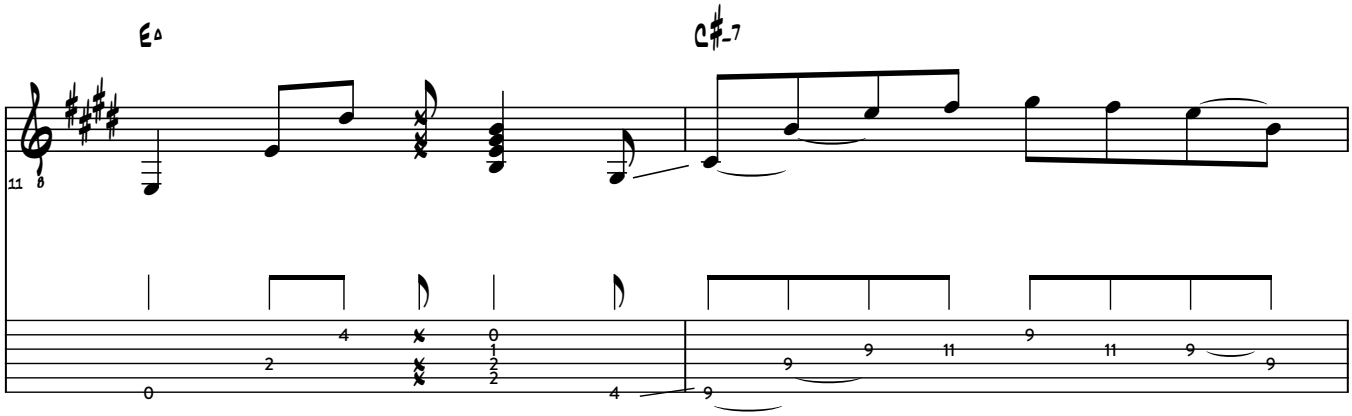
Arianna Powell

Soundslice Link




F#-7
A
B


E
C#-7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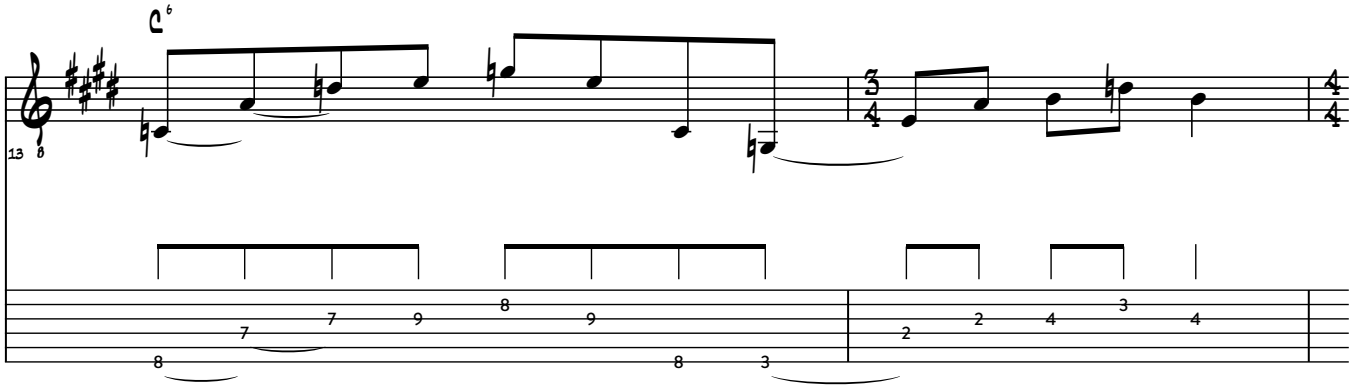
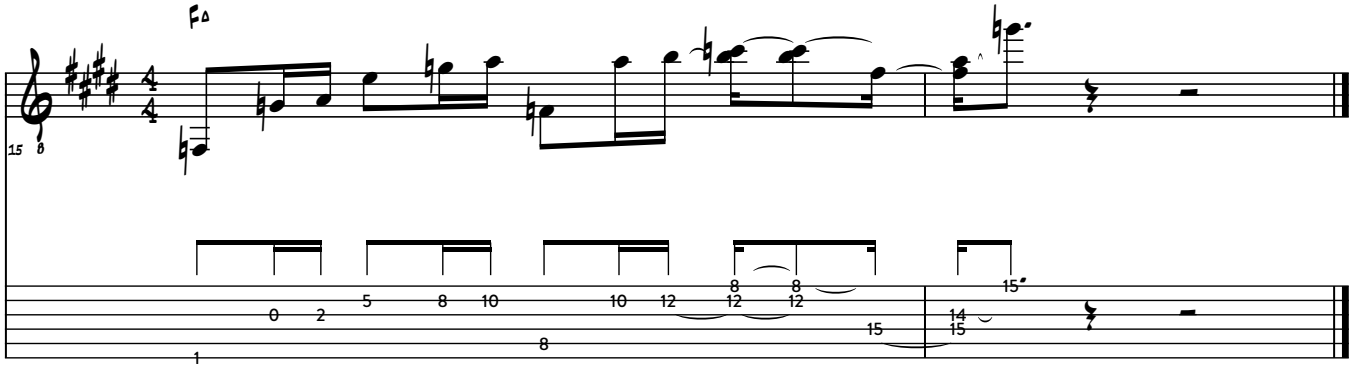
C#-7

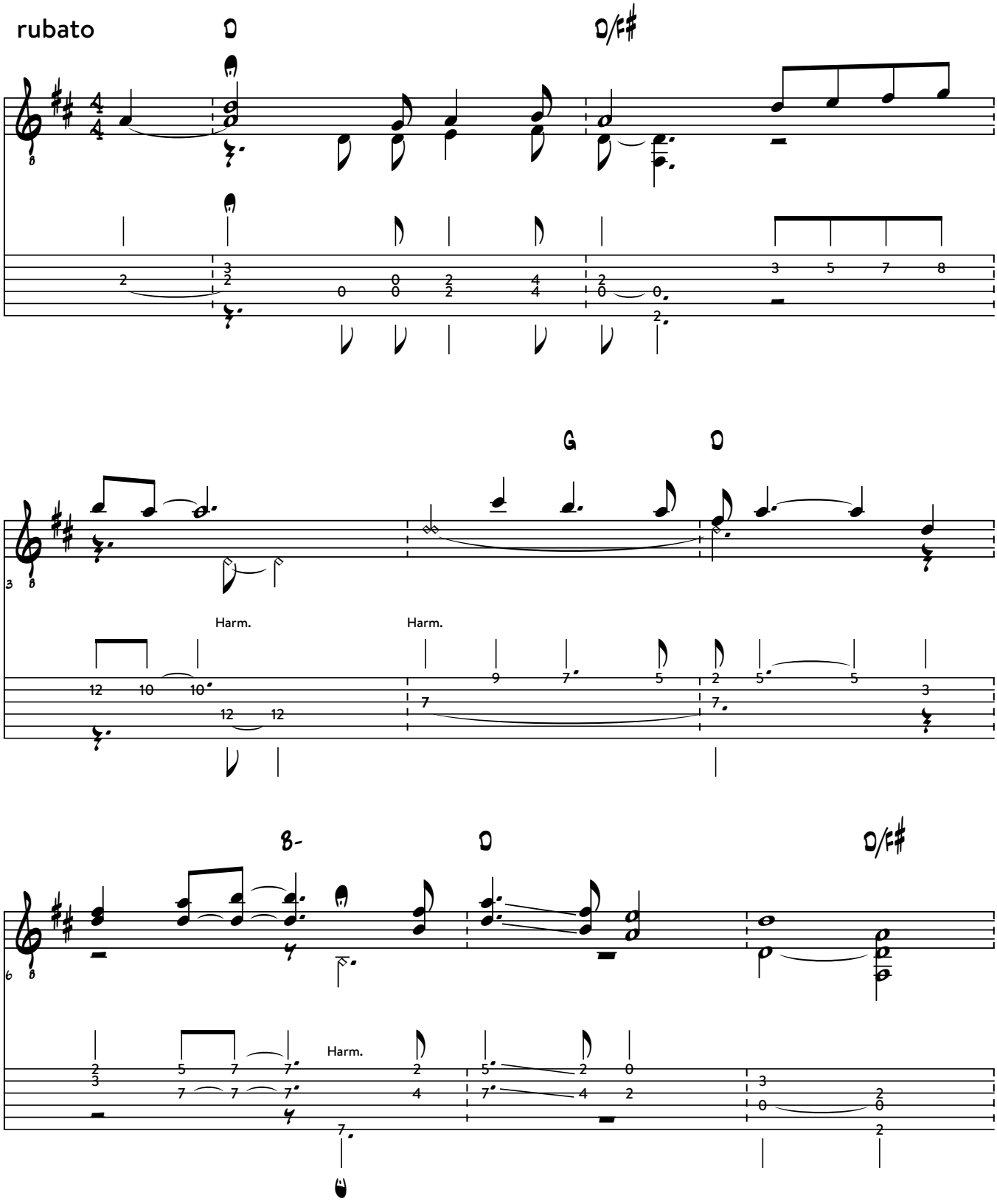

C♭
13
8
7
7
9
8
9
8
3
2
2
4
3
4

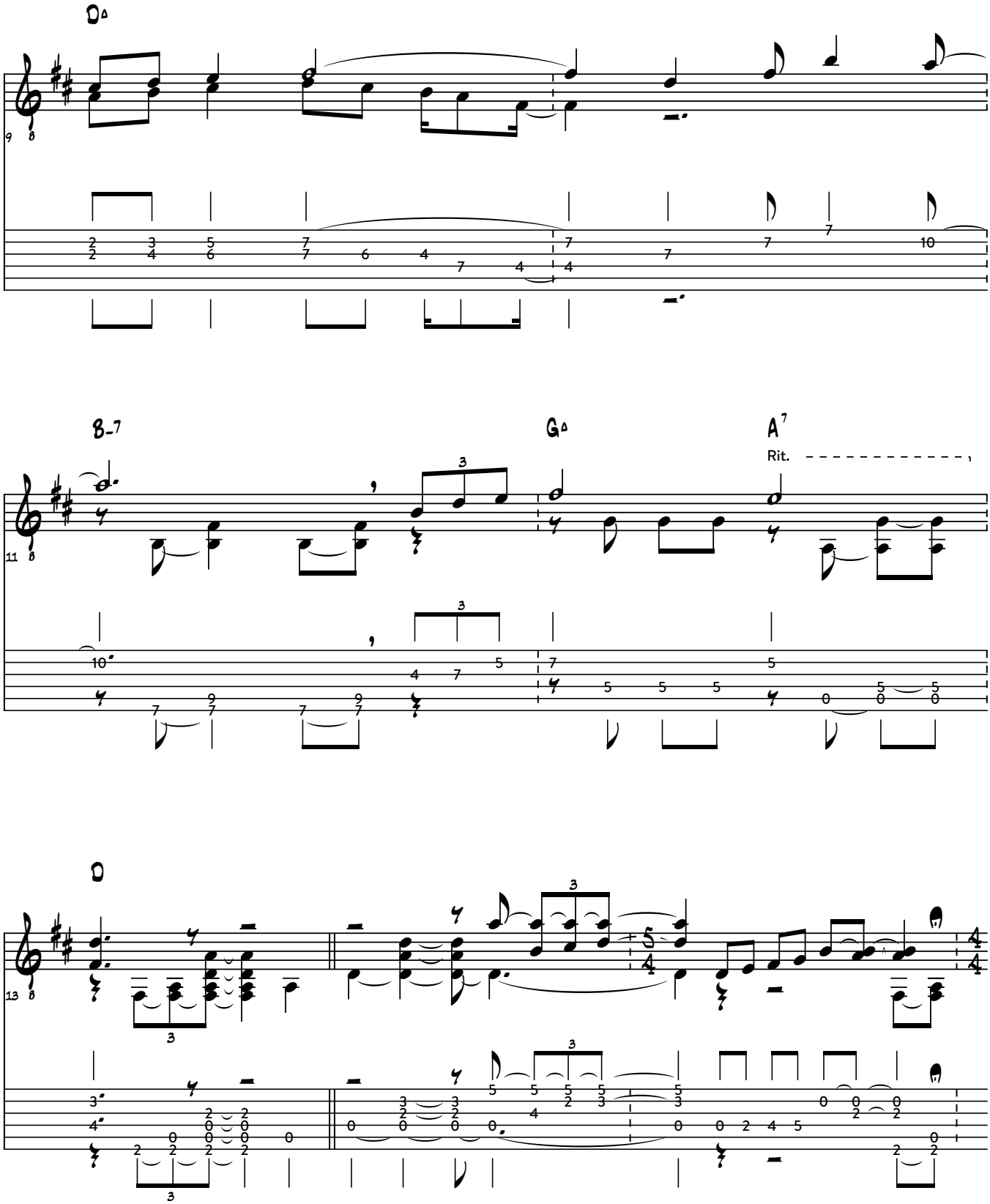

F♭
15
8
1
0
2
5
8
10
8
10
12
8
12
8
12
15
14
15
15

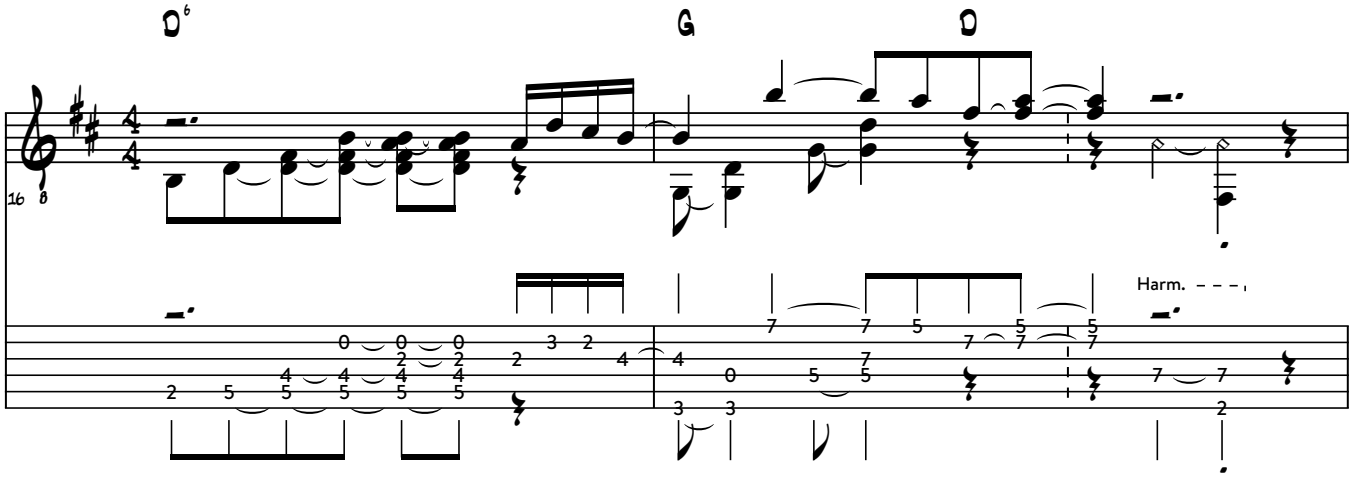
Shenandoah

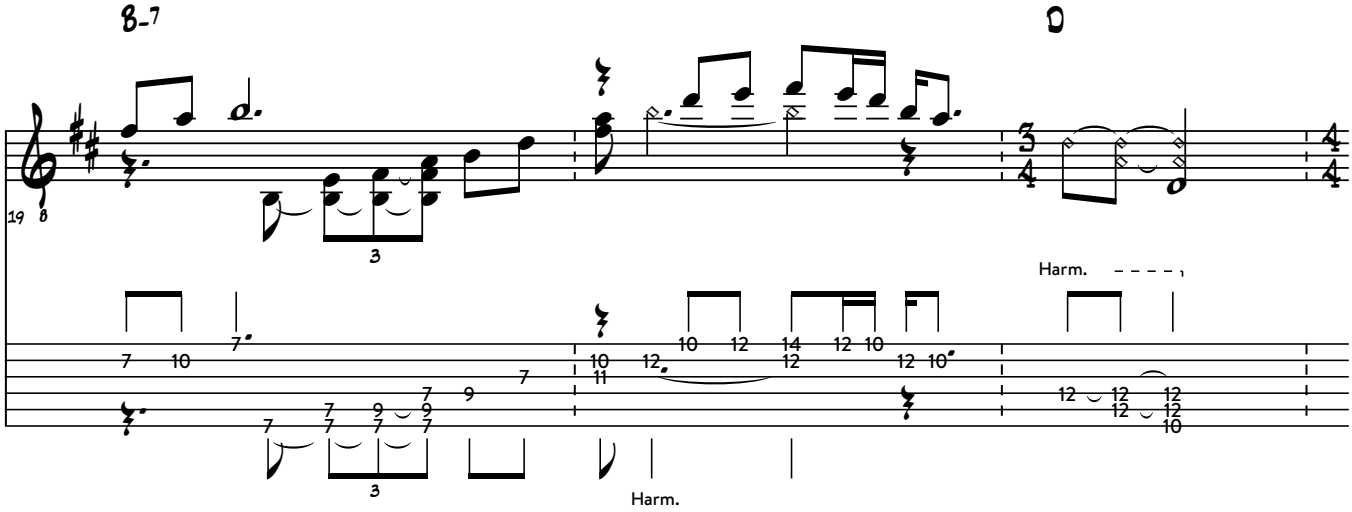
Traditional
Transcription: Jan Jakut

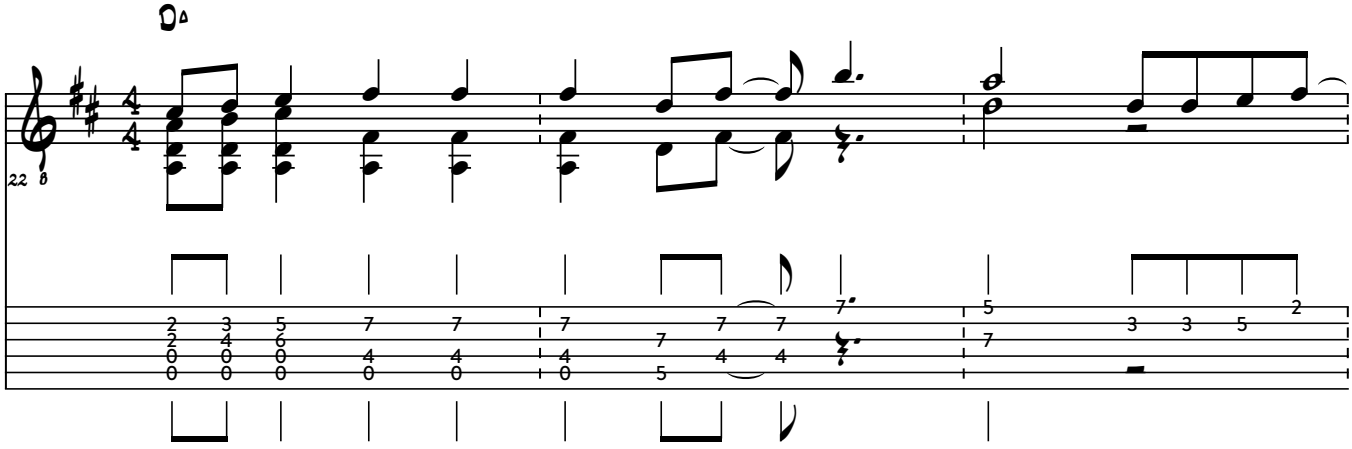
Bill Frisell - "Shenandoah" (solo)
Published by the Fretboard Journal on YouTube

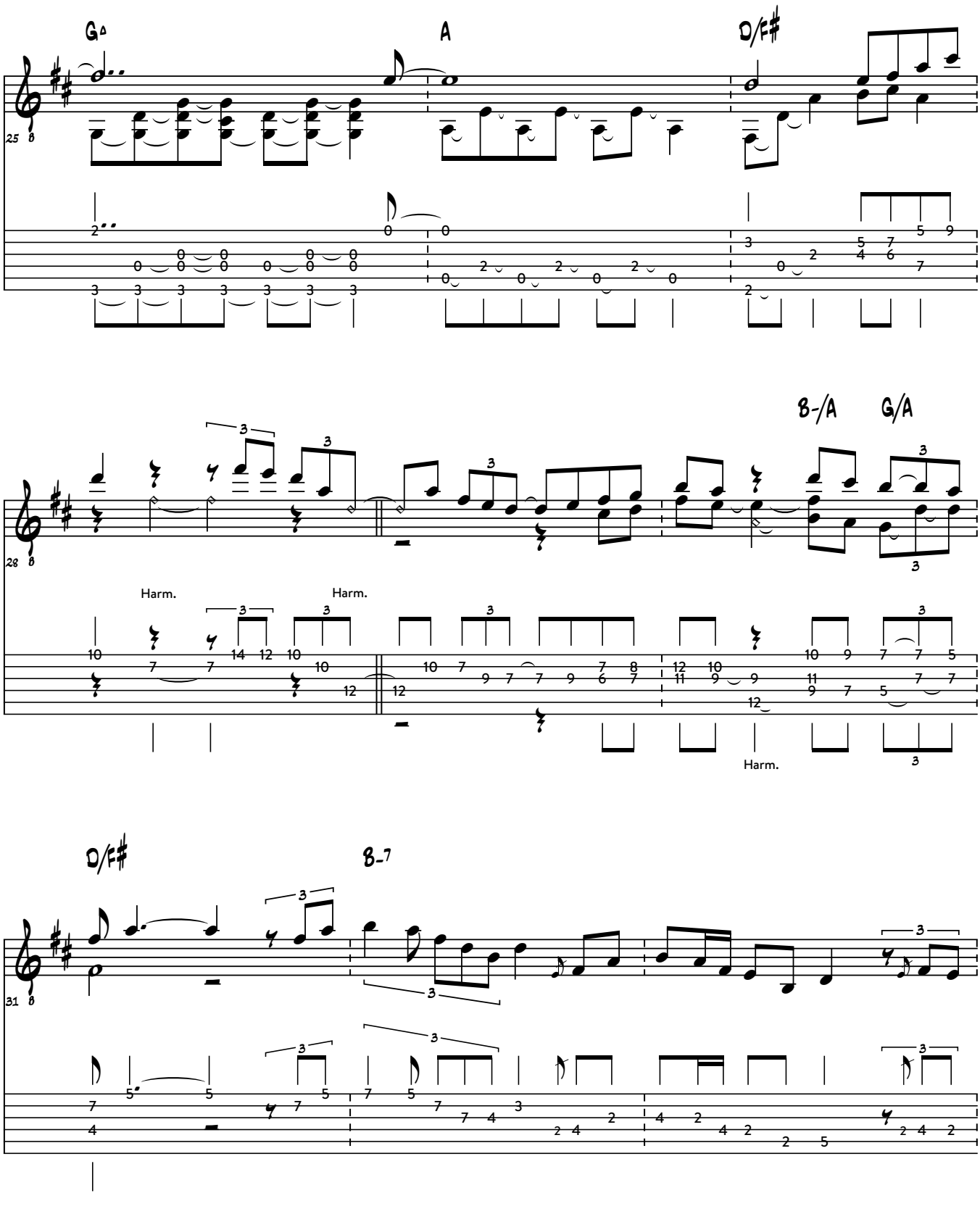


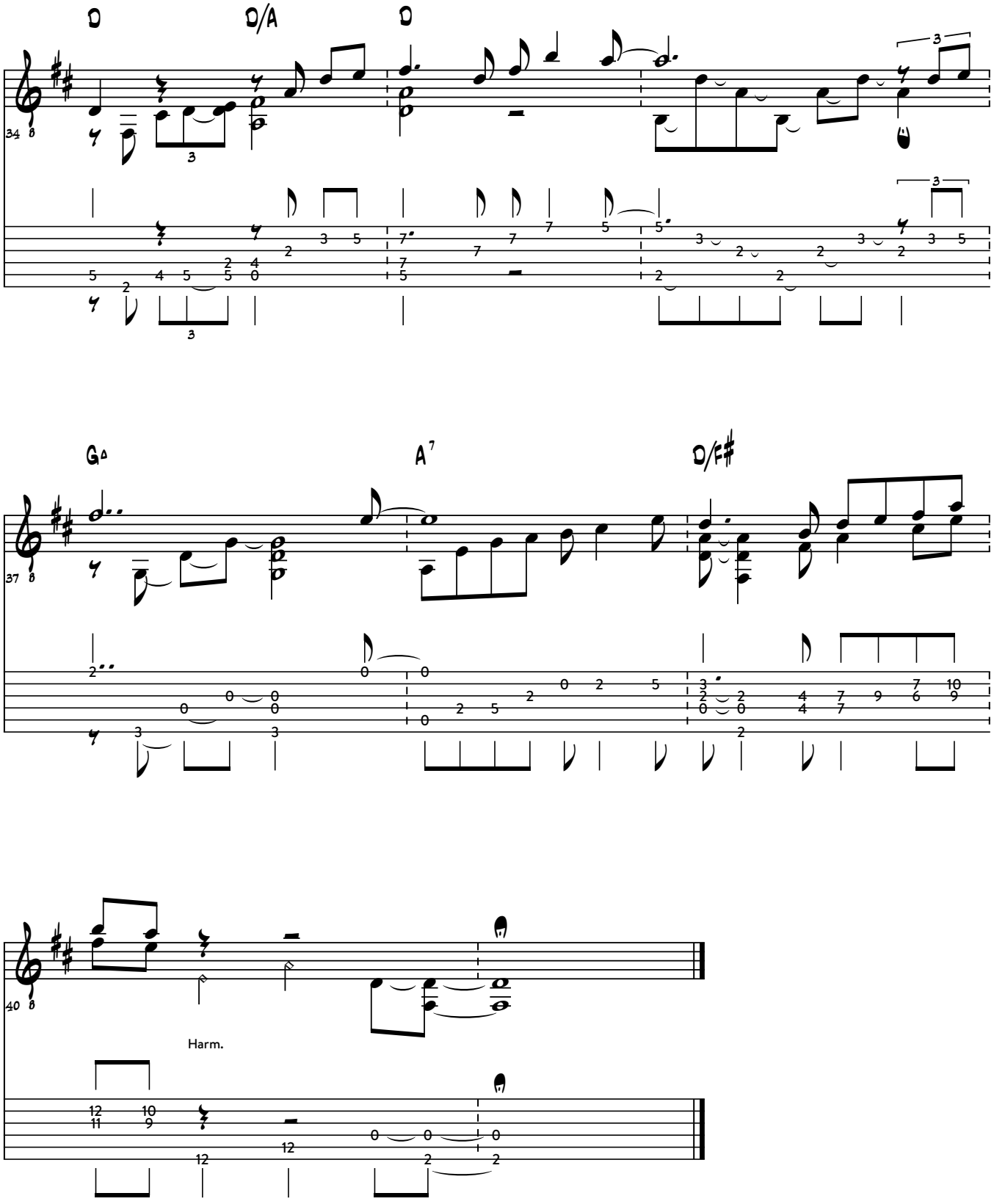

D△
B-7
G△
A7
Rit.
D


D6
G
D
Harm.


B-7
D
Harm.
Harm.


DΔ

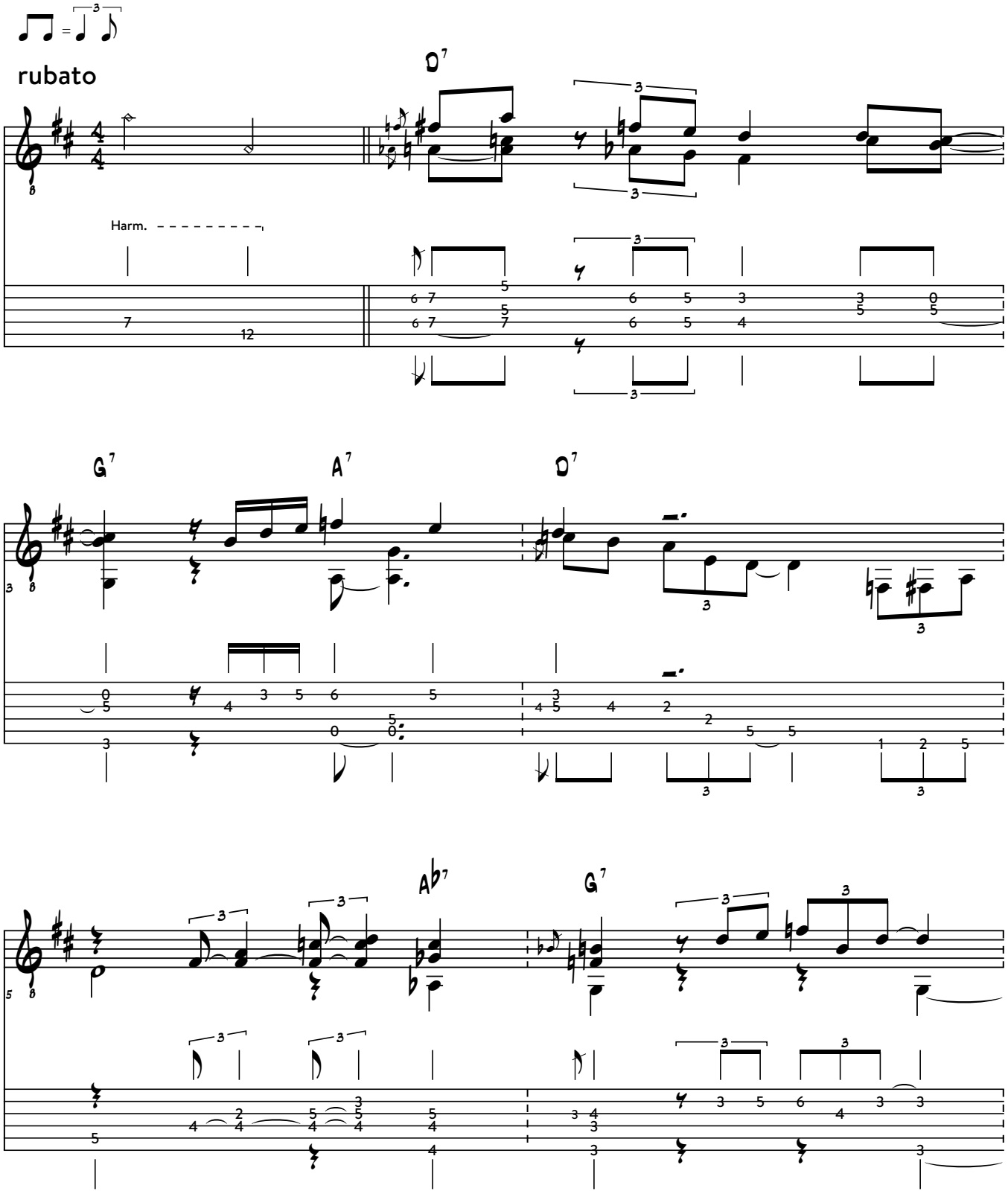

G^
A
D/F#
B-/A
G/A
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.
D/F#
B-7

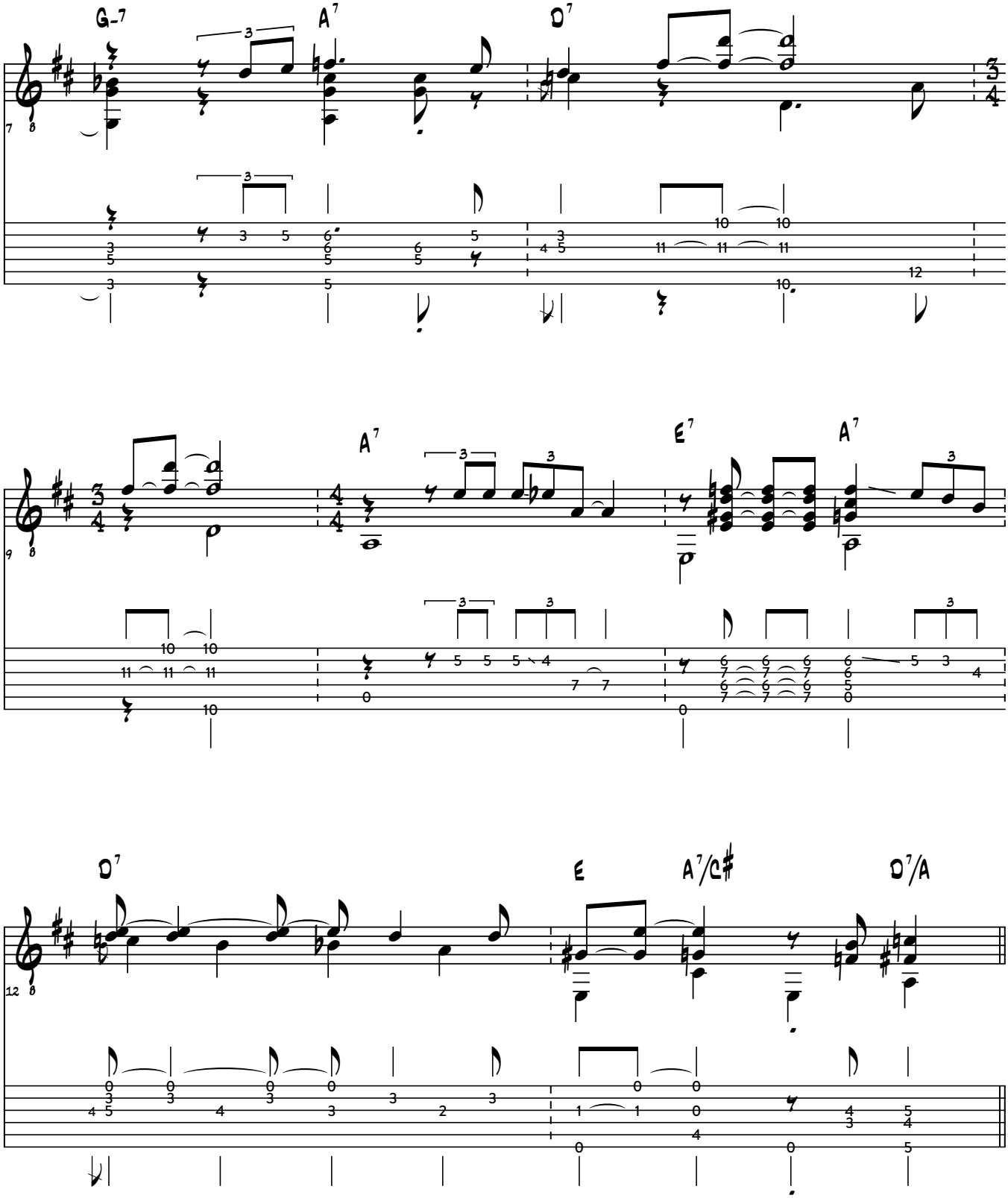

D
D/A
D
34
G
A7
D/F#
37
40
Harm.

St. Louis Blues

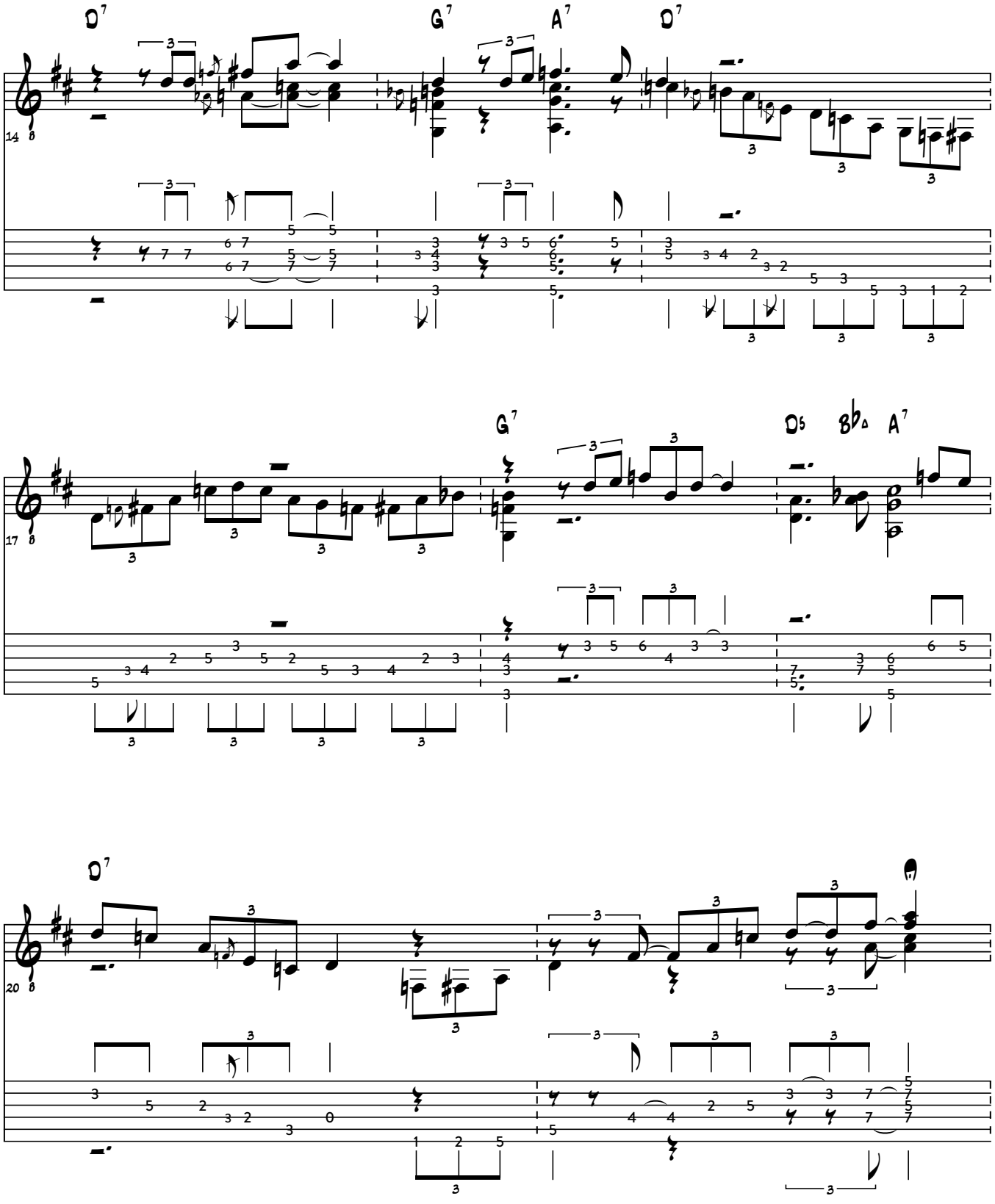
W. C. Handy
Transcription: Jan Jakut

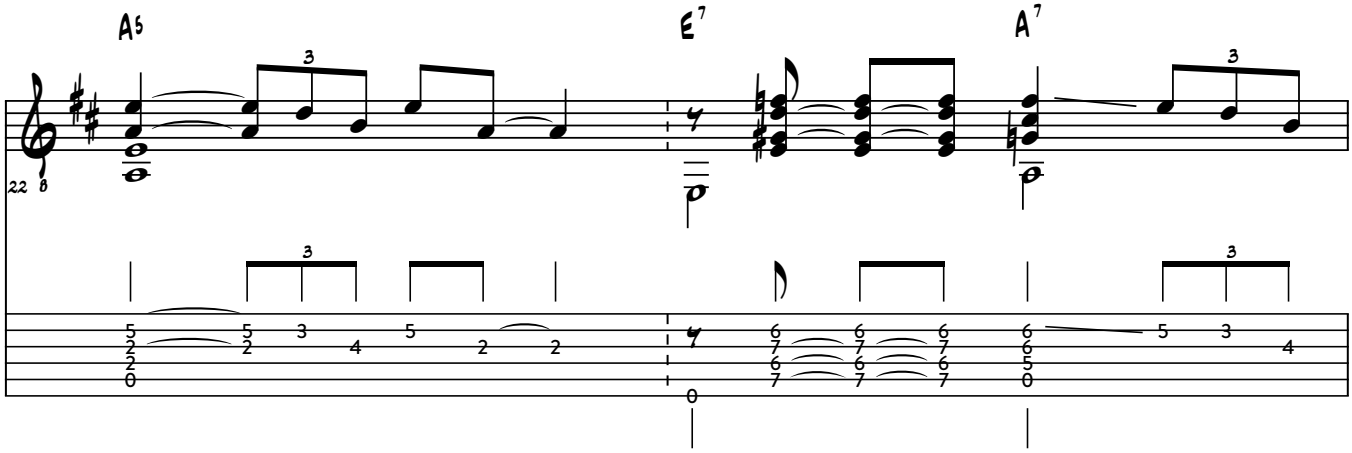
As played by Bill Frisell
Published by Fretboard Journal on YouTube

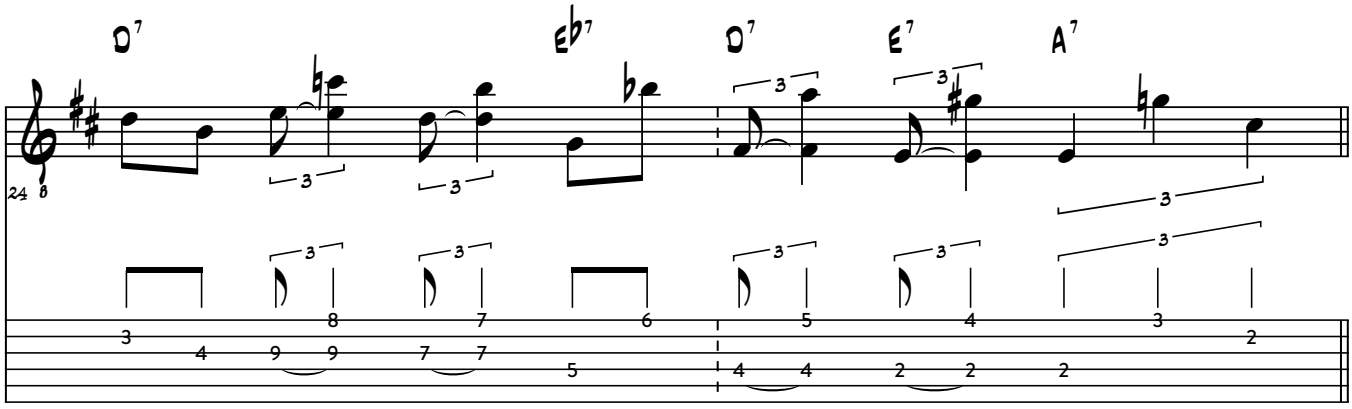



G-7
A7
D7
A7
E7
A7
D7
E
A7/C♯
D7/A

00:51







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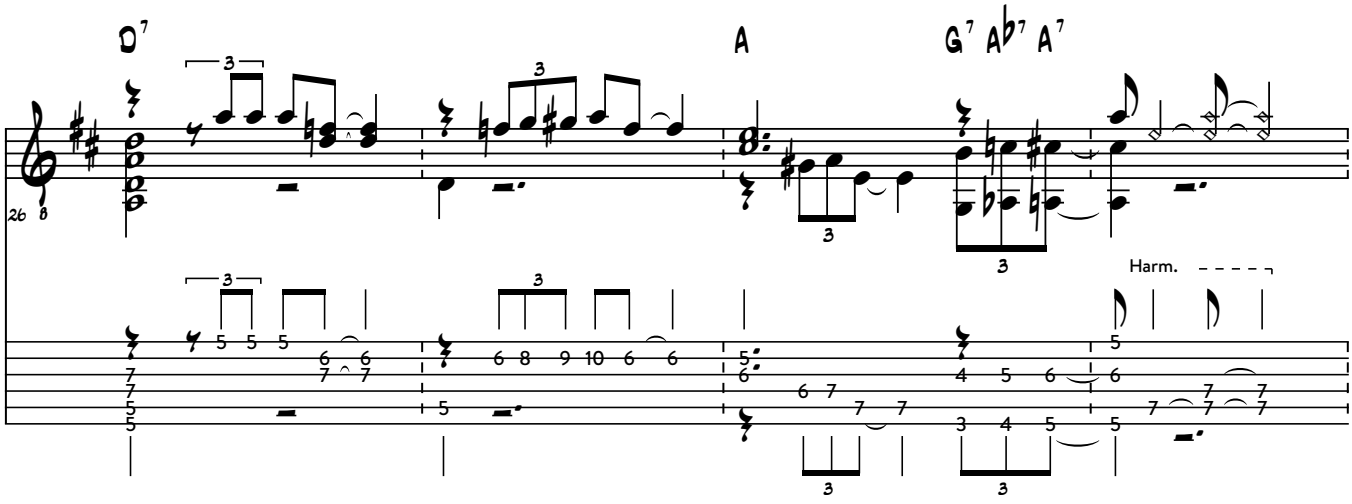
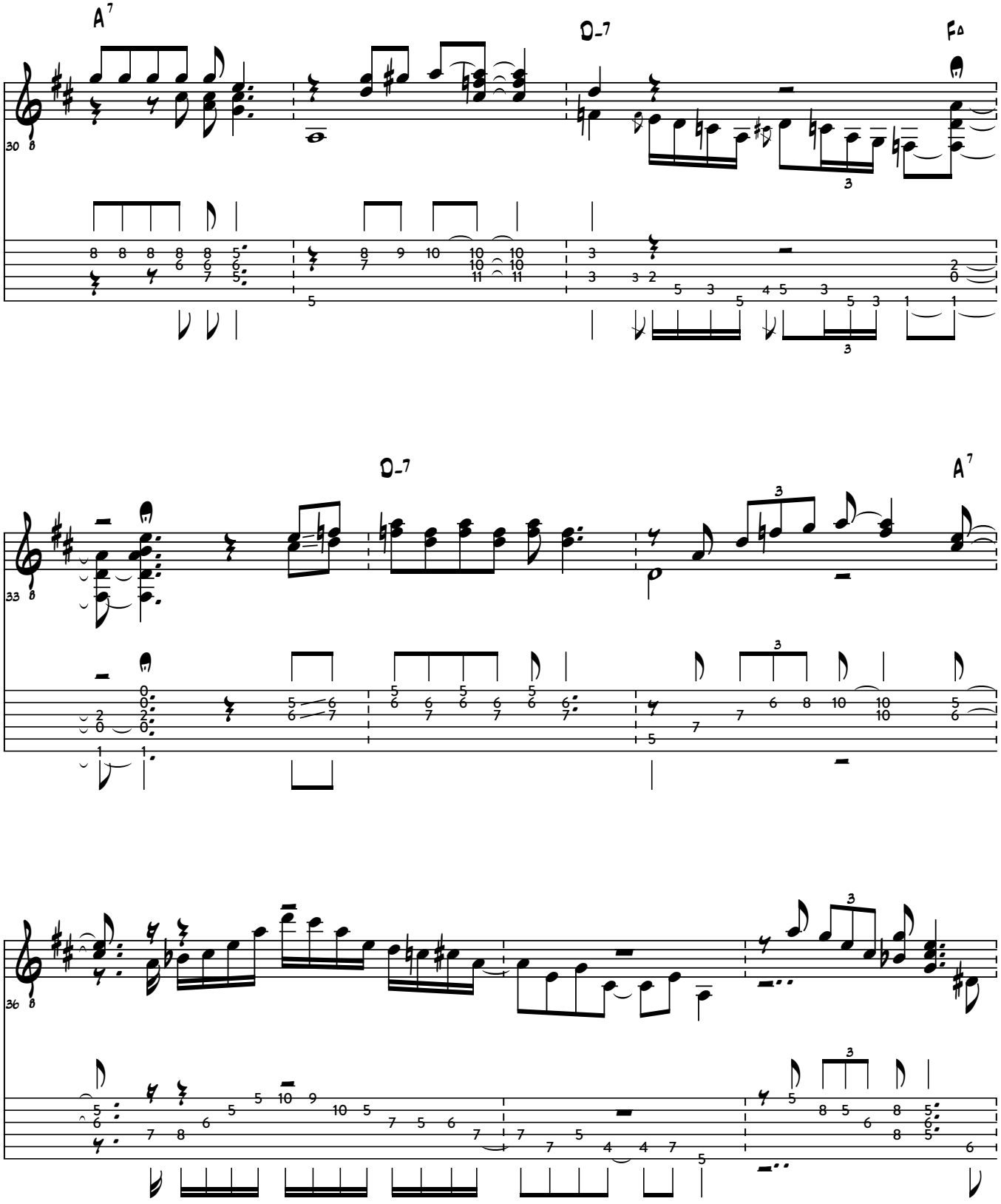
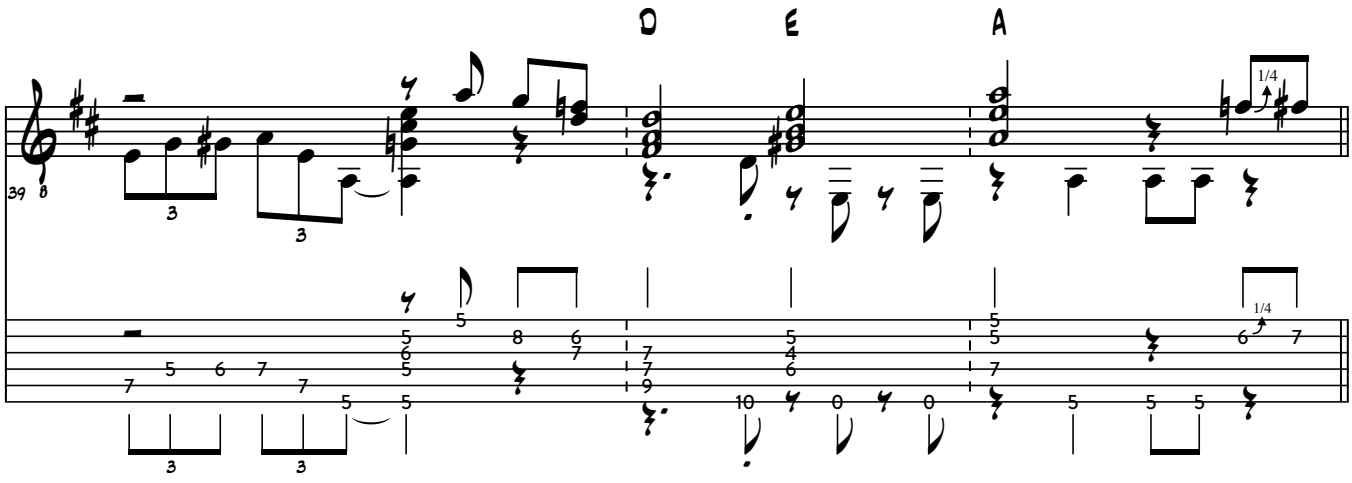
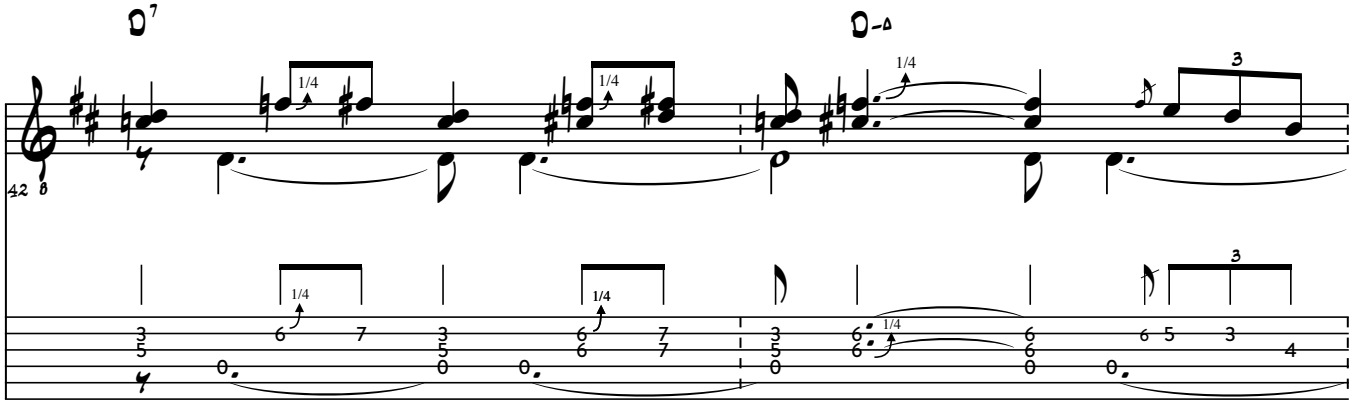
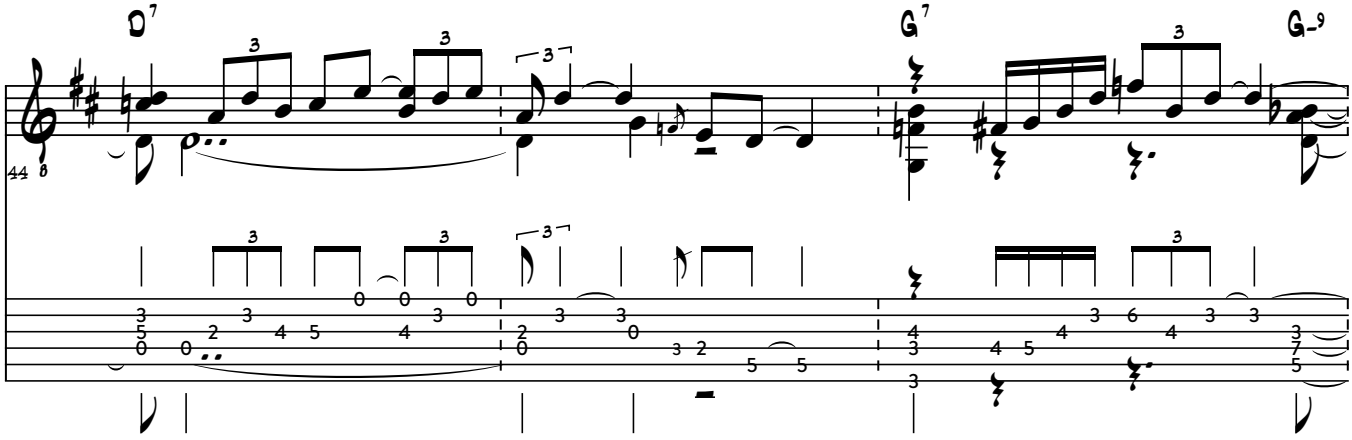


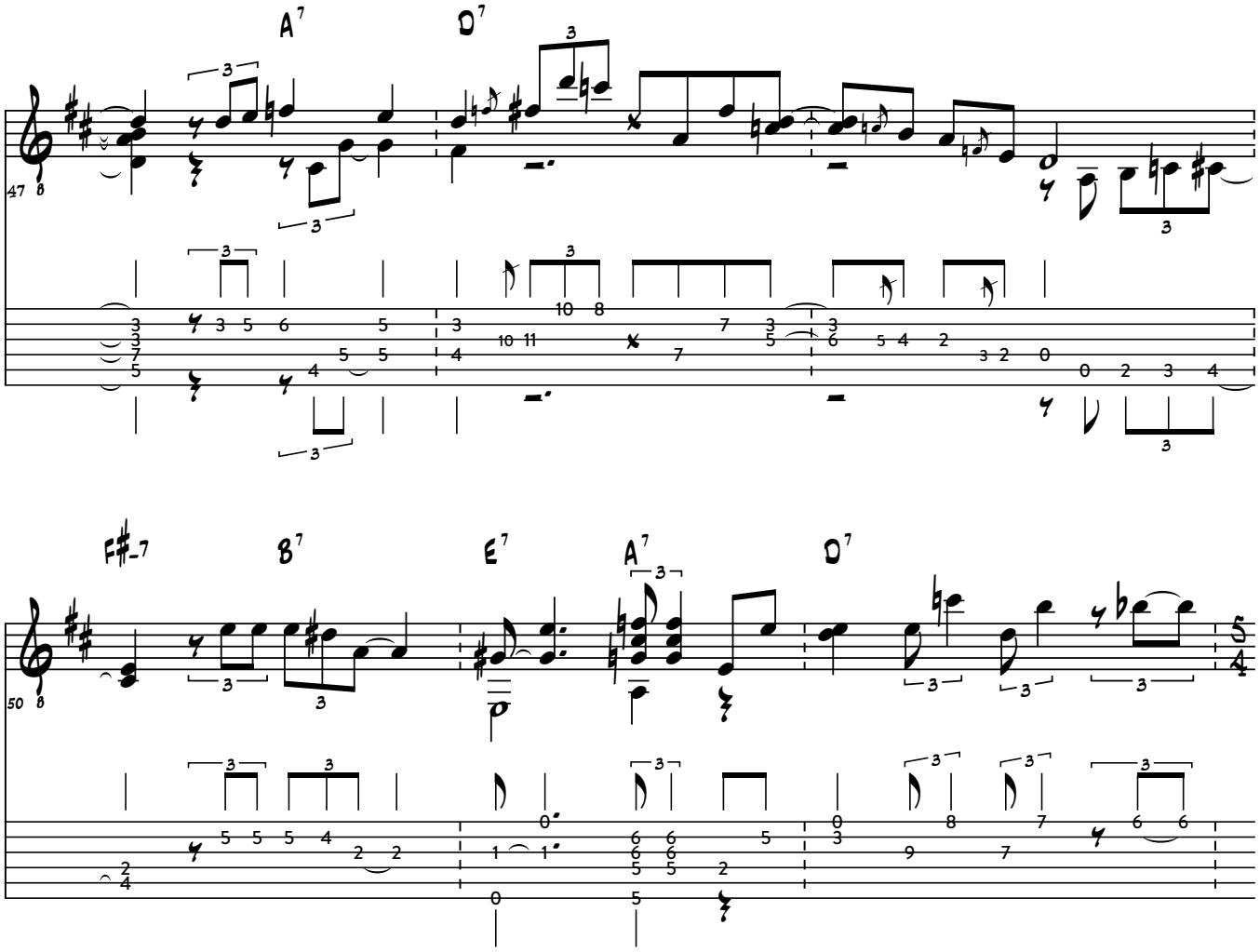

A7
D-7
F∆
30
D-7
A7
33
36



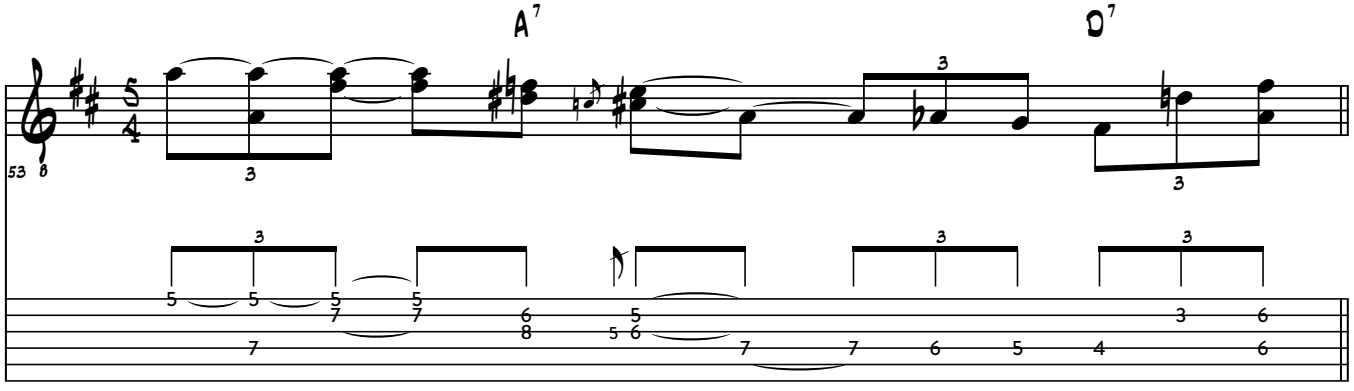
02:25






A7
D7
47

F#-7
B7
E7
A7
D7
50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D7
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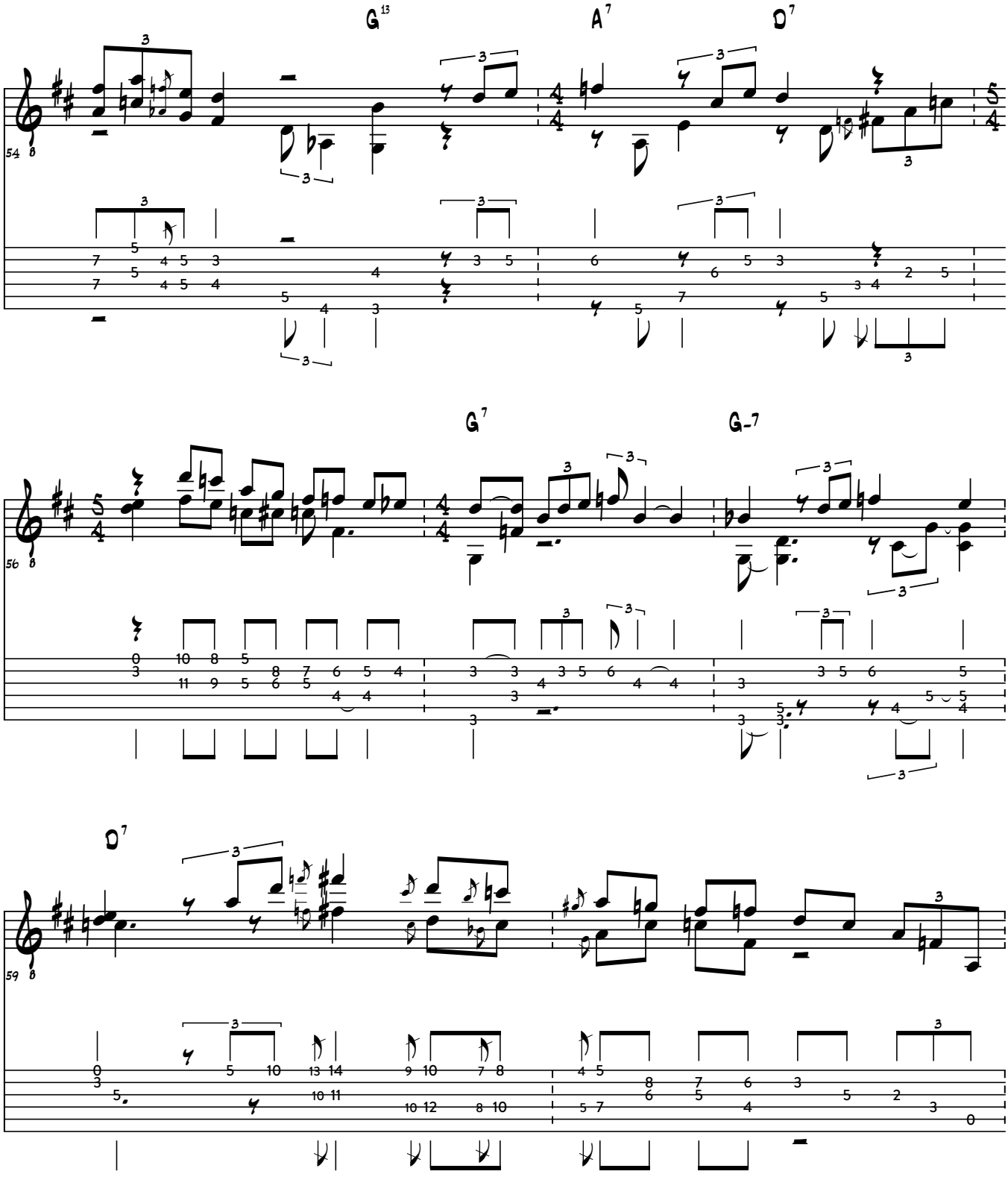
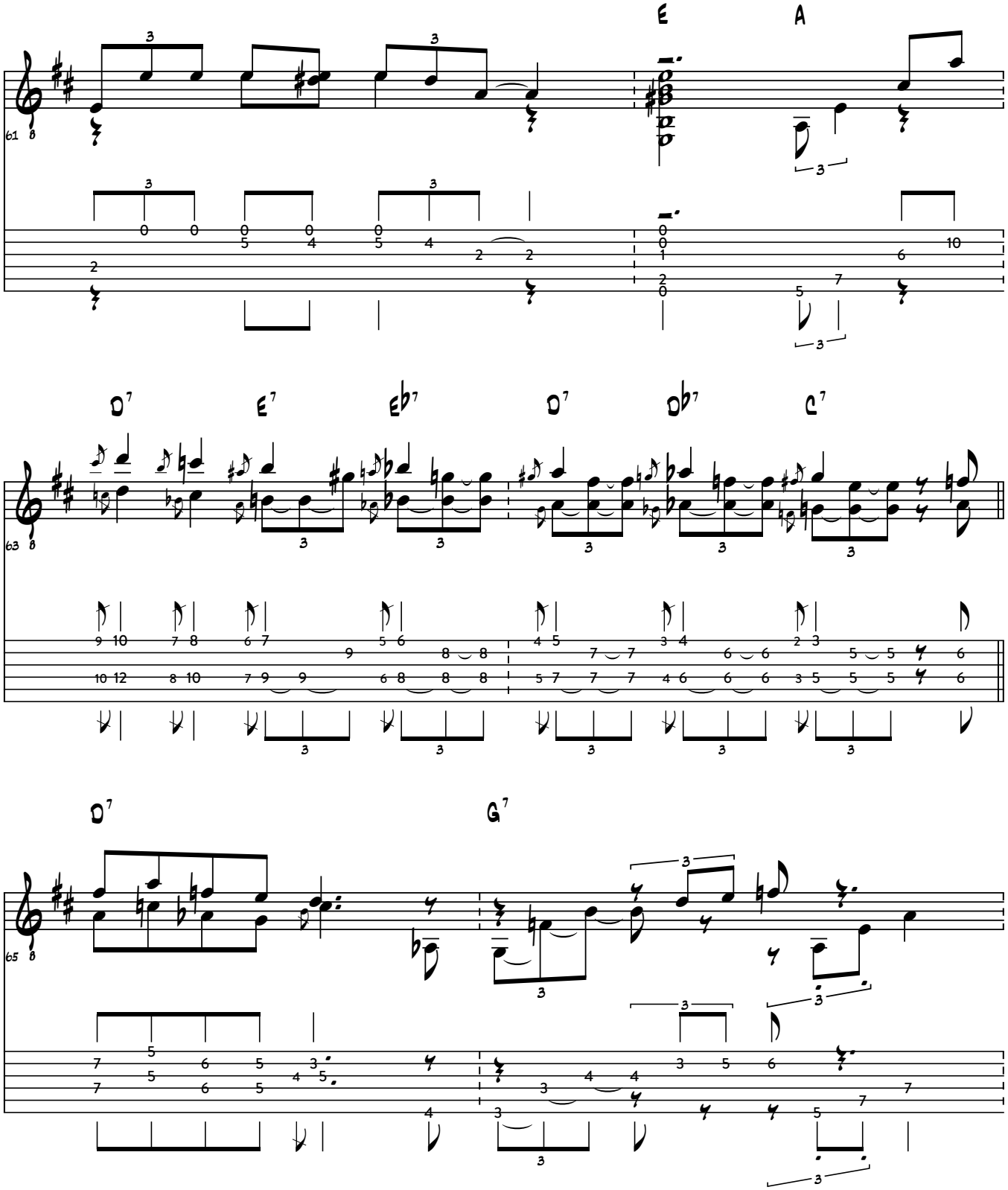
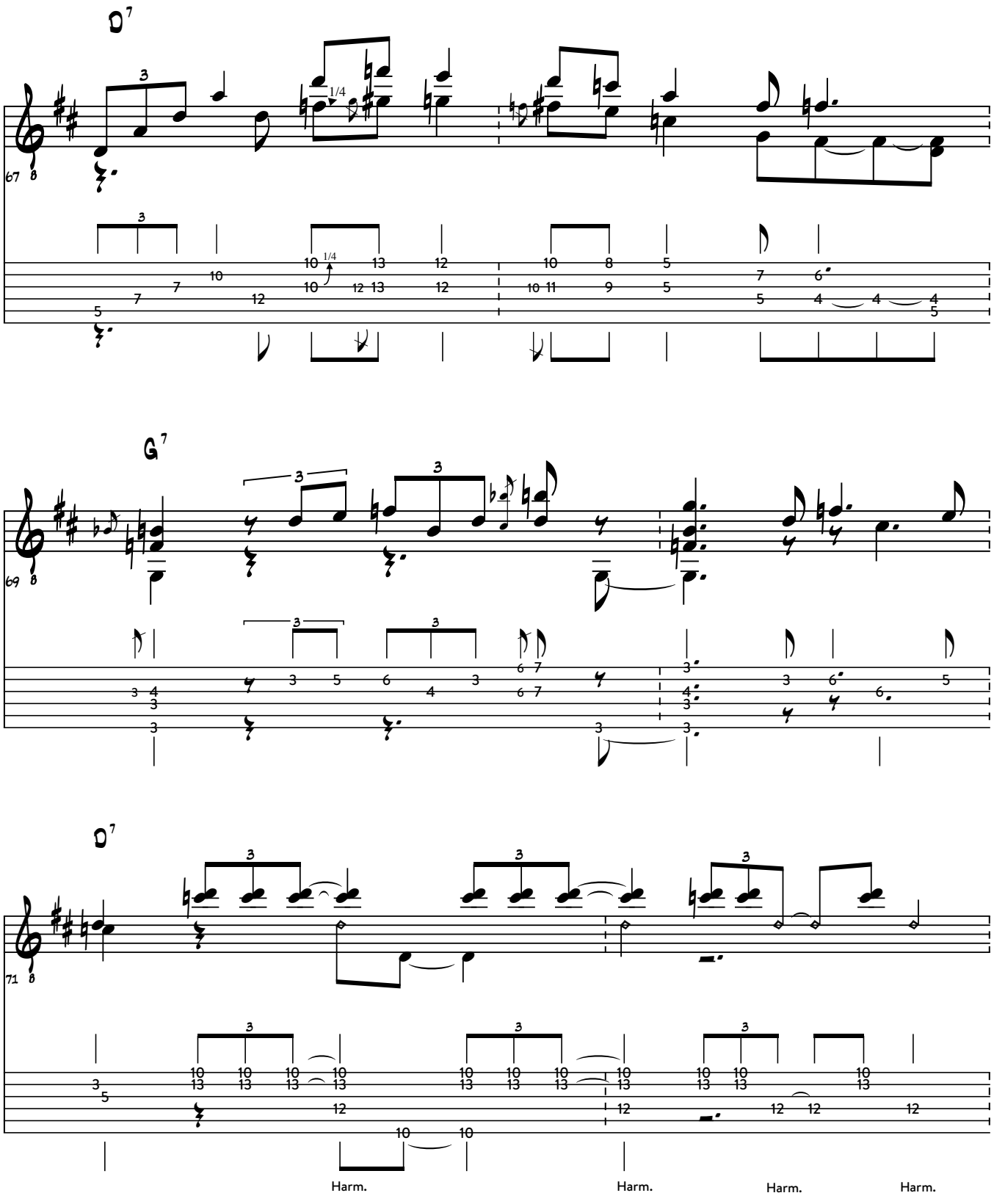
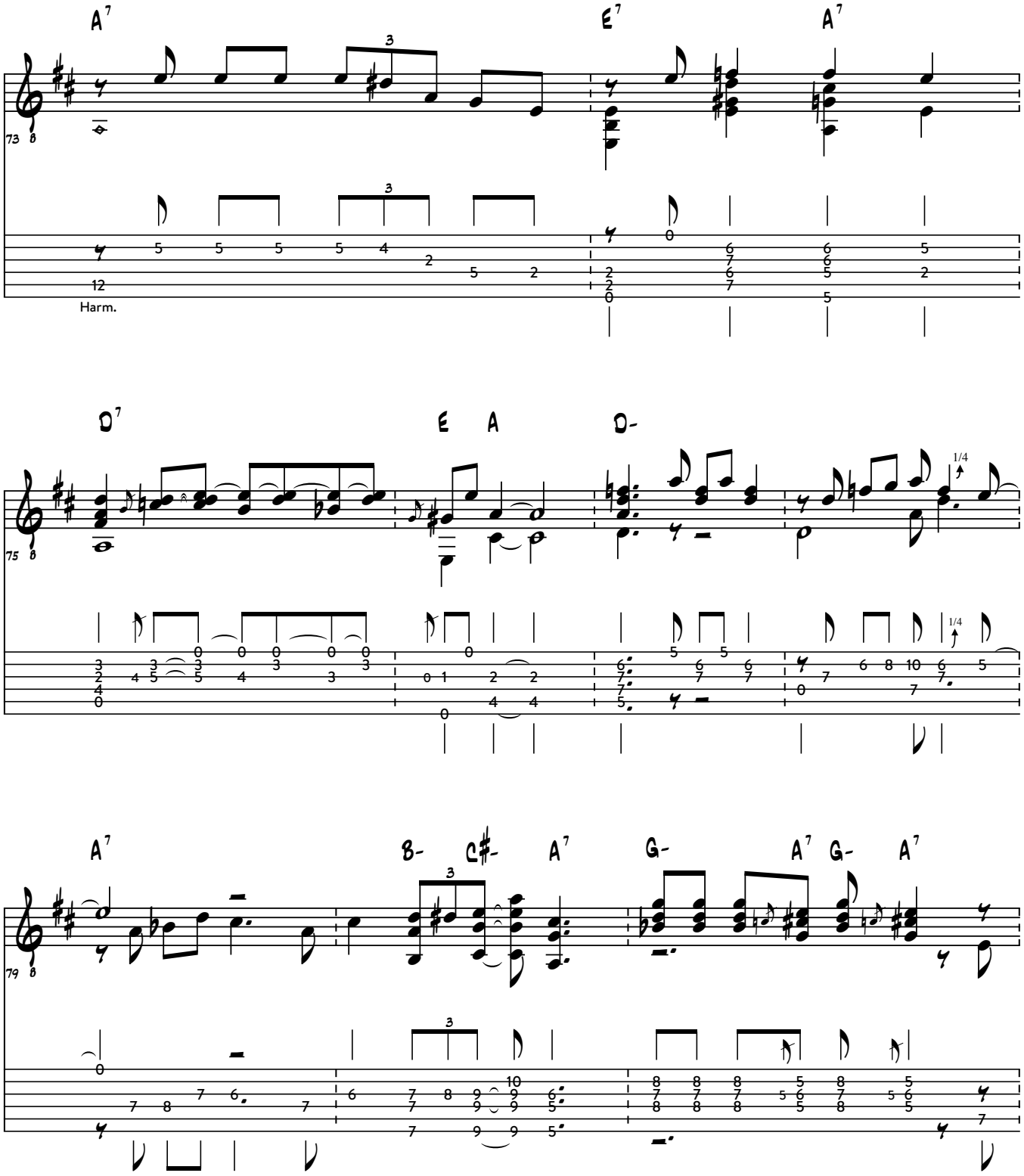
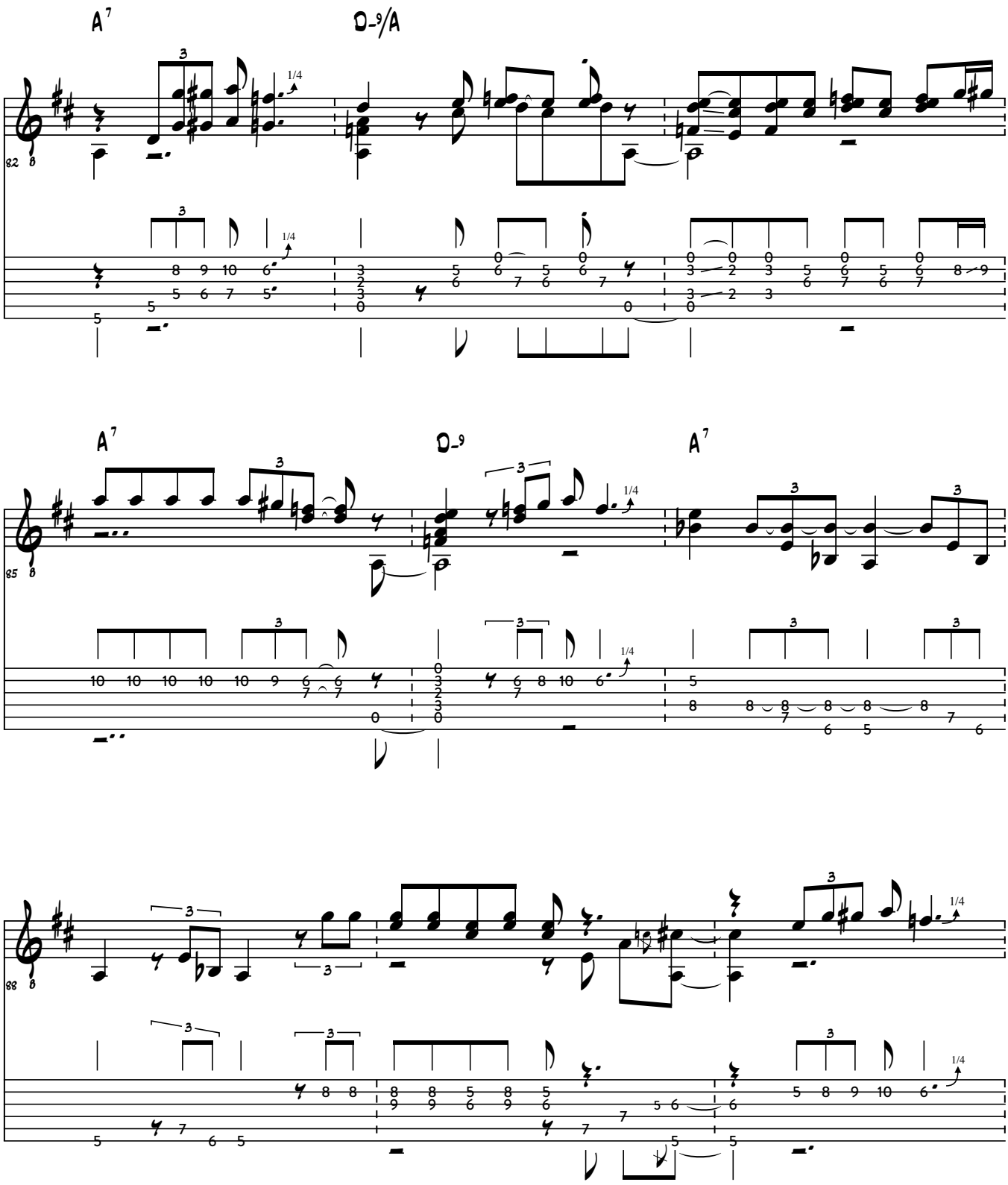
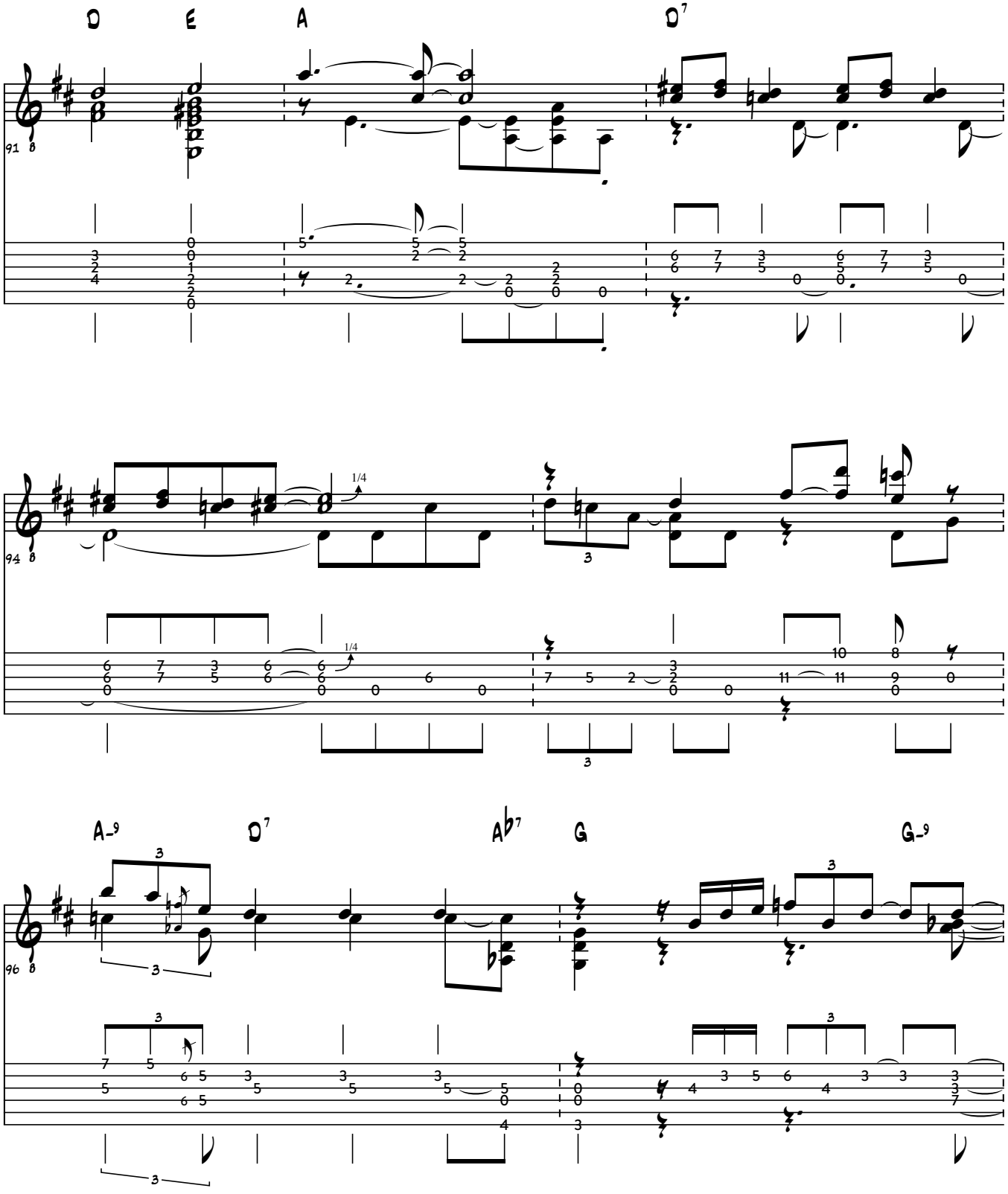

G13
A7
D7
54
G7
G-7
56
D7
59

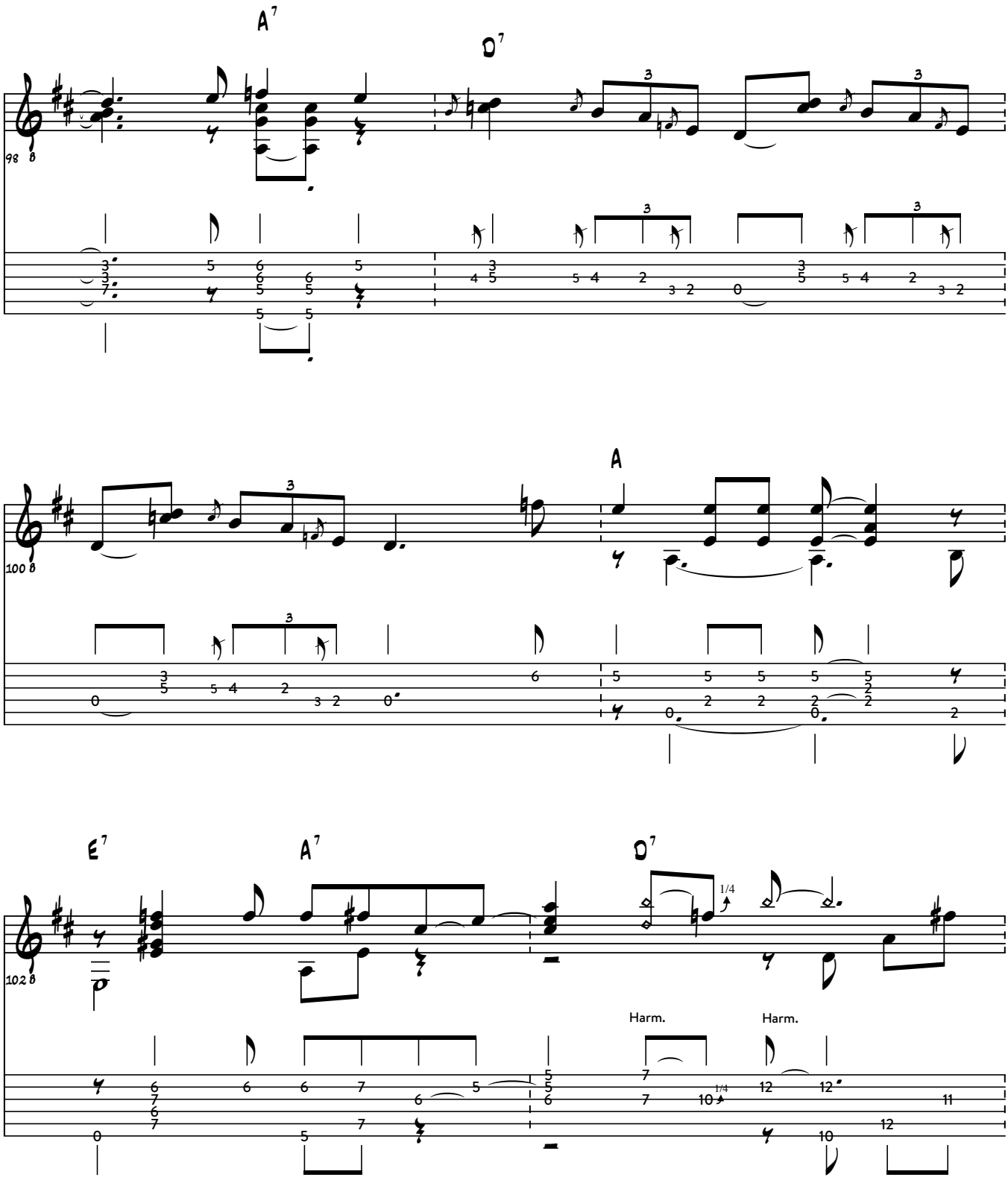

E
A
D7
E7
Eb7
D7
Db7
C7
D7
G7

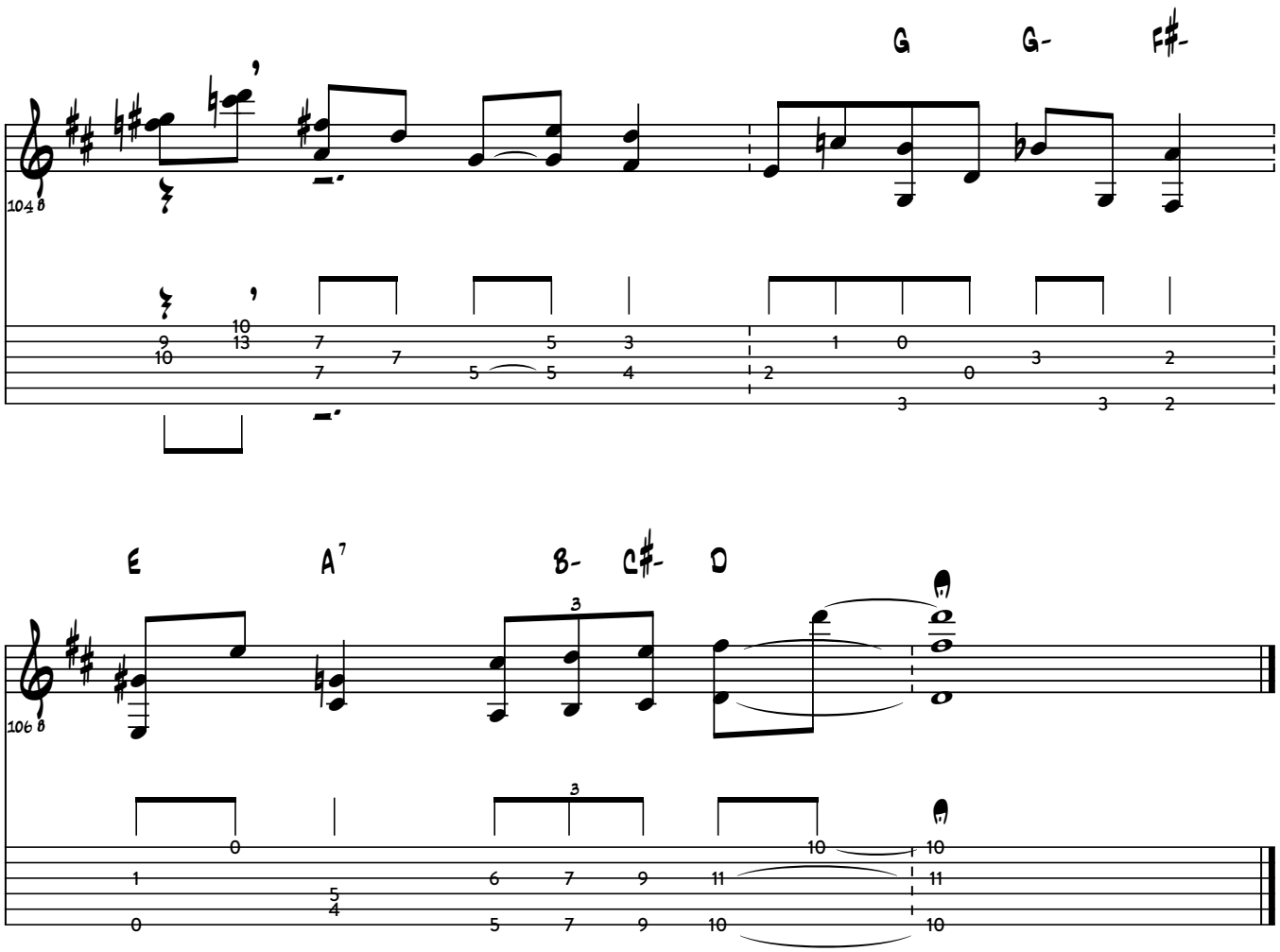

D7
67
1/4
G7
69
D7
71
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.


A7
E7
A7
73
Harm.
D7
E
A
D-
75
1/4
A7
B-
C#-
A7
G-
A7
G-
A7
79


A7
D-9/A
A7
D-9
A7


D
E
A
D7
91
1/4
94
1/4
A-9
D7
Ab7
G
G-9
96


A7
D7
98
A
100
E7
A7
D7
102
Harm.
Harm.

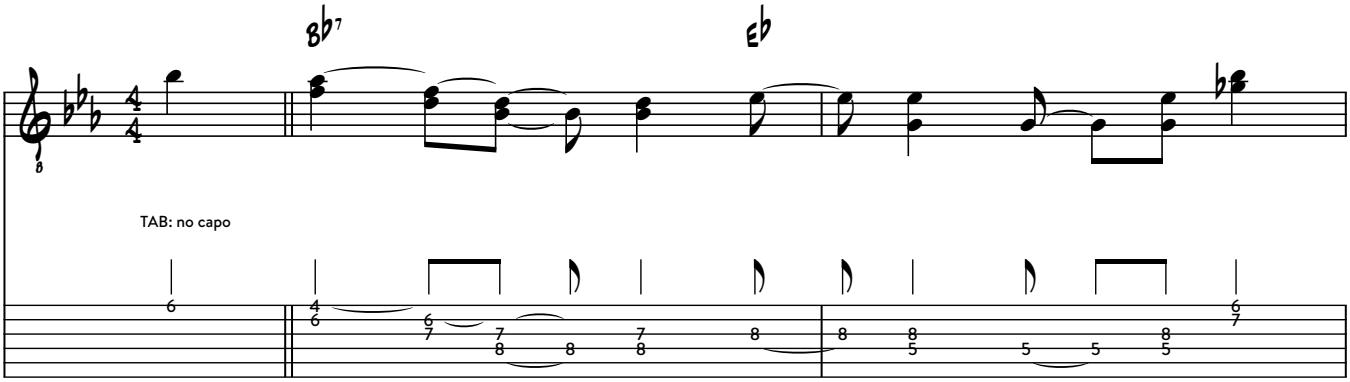

G
G-
F#-
104

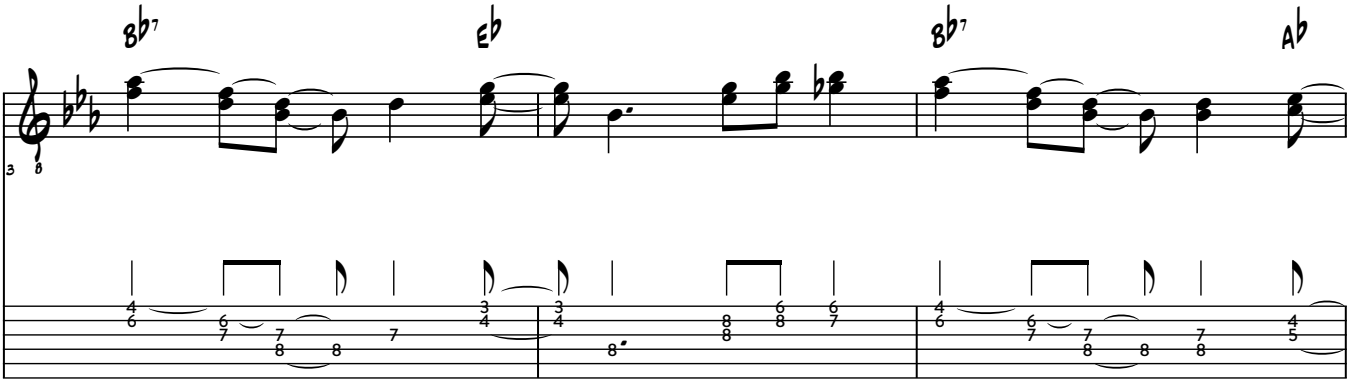
E
A7
B-
C#-
D
106

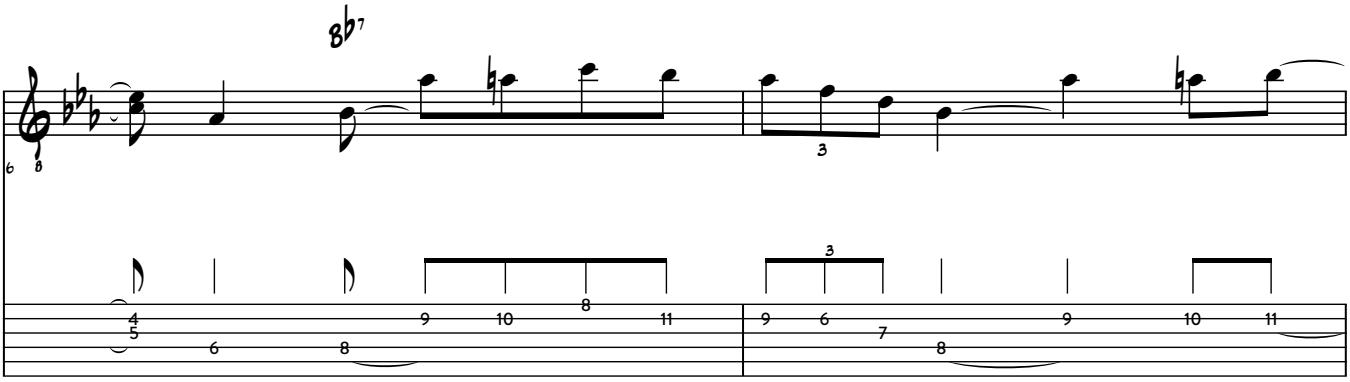
Transcription: Jan Jakut

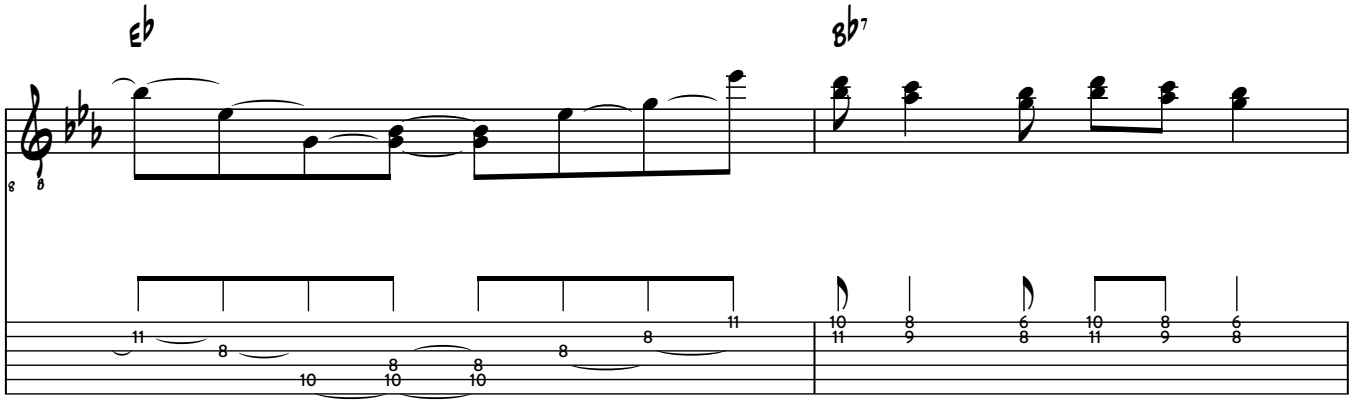
Rhythm & Triads - Blake Mills

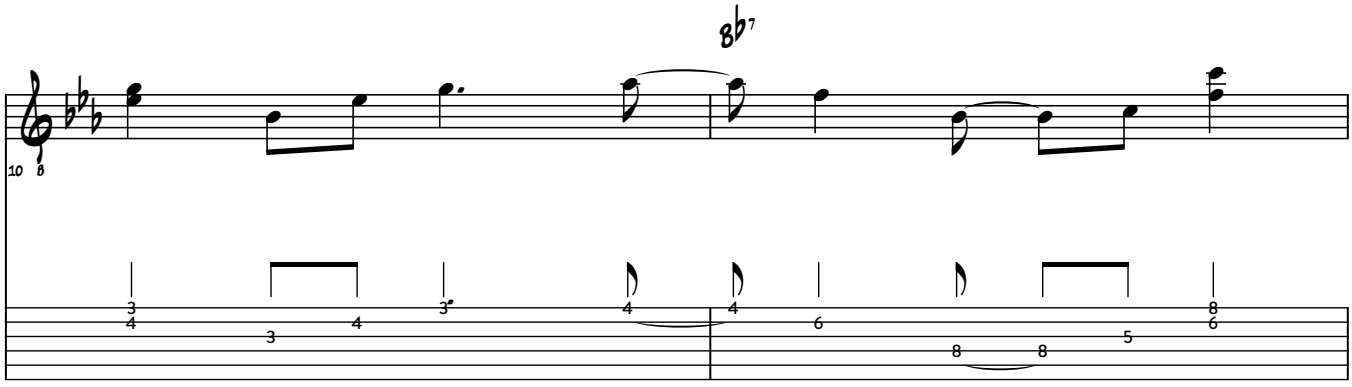
Soundslice Link

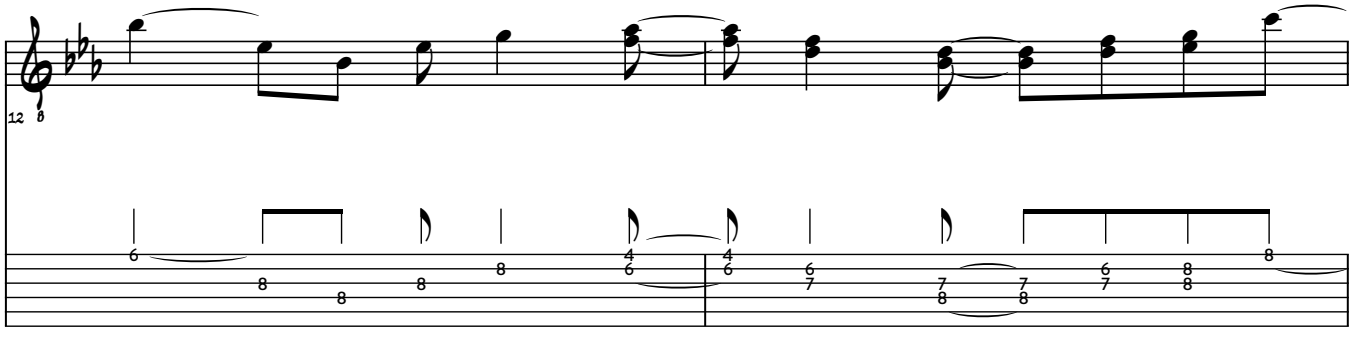


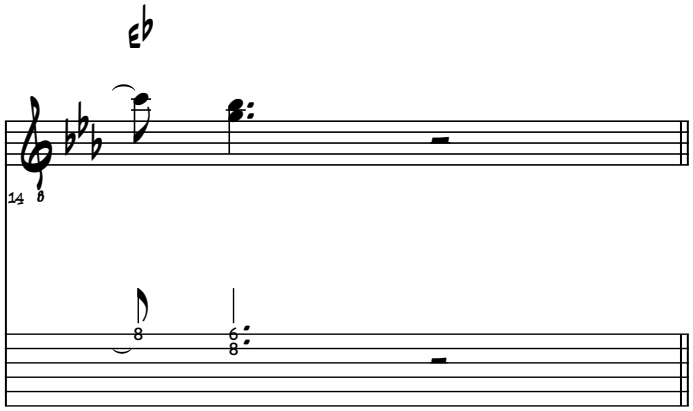





Eb
Bb7


Bb7

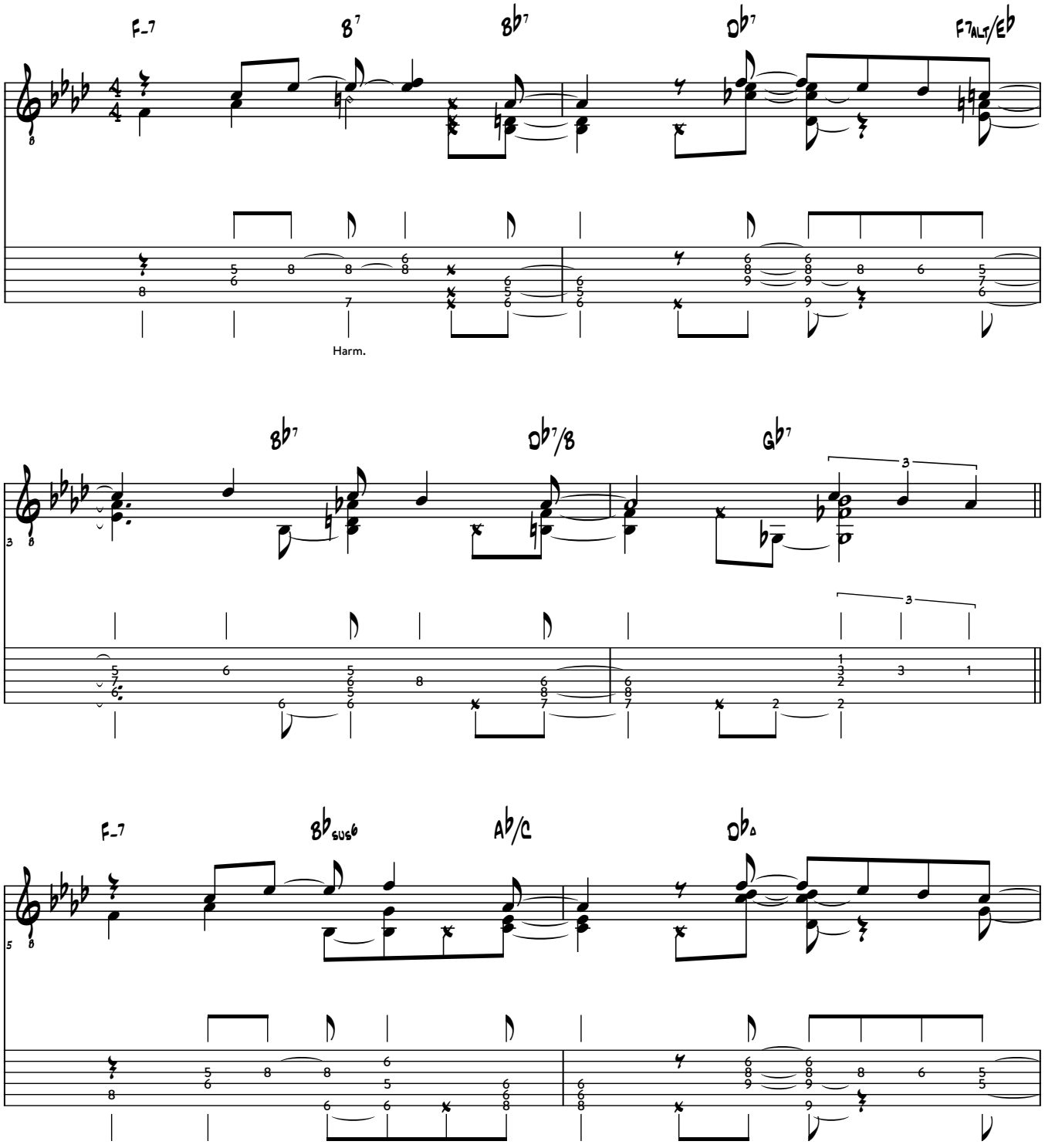


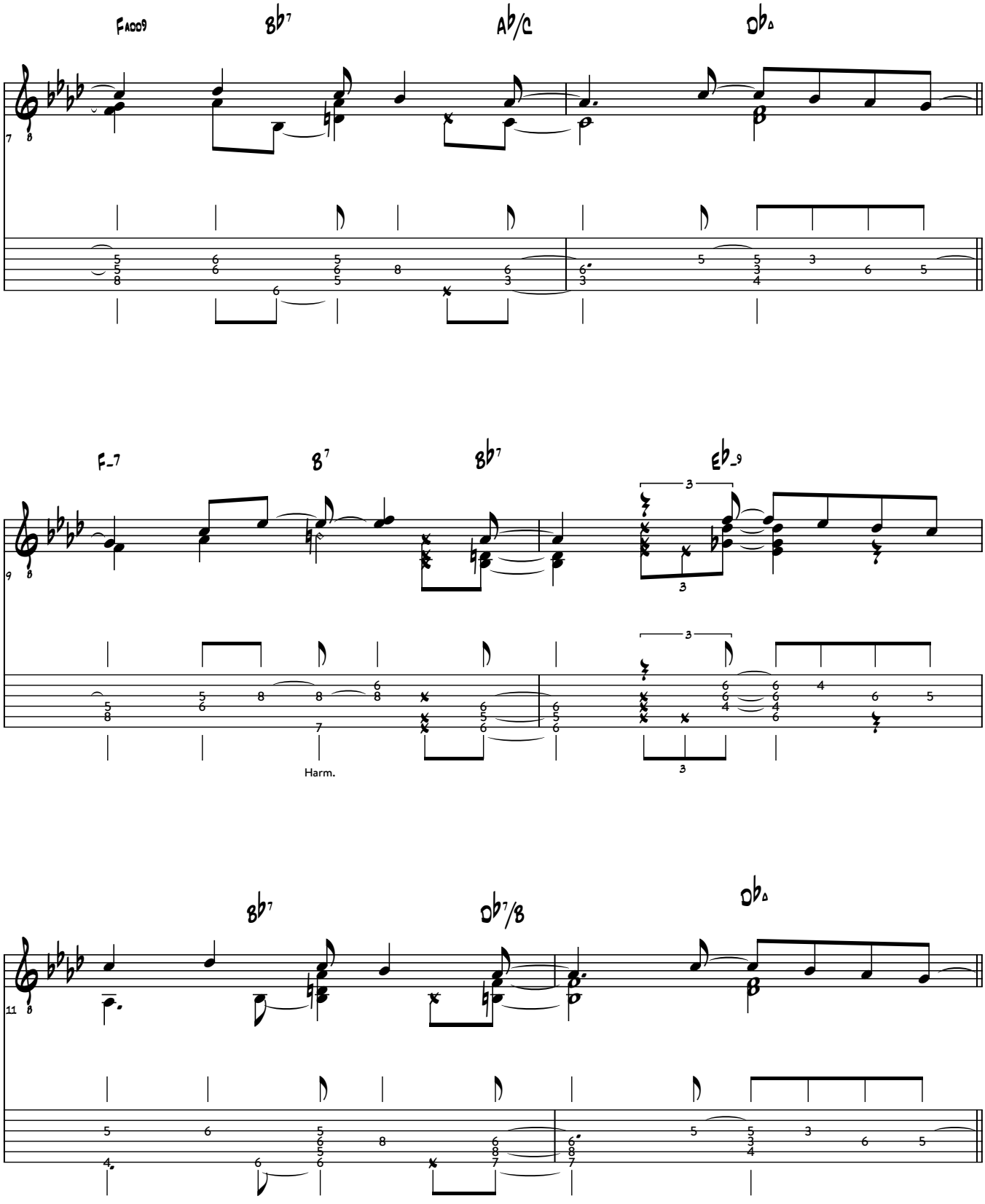

Eb
14
8
8
6
8

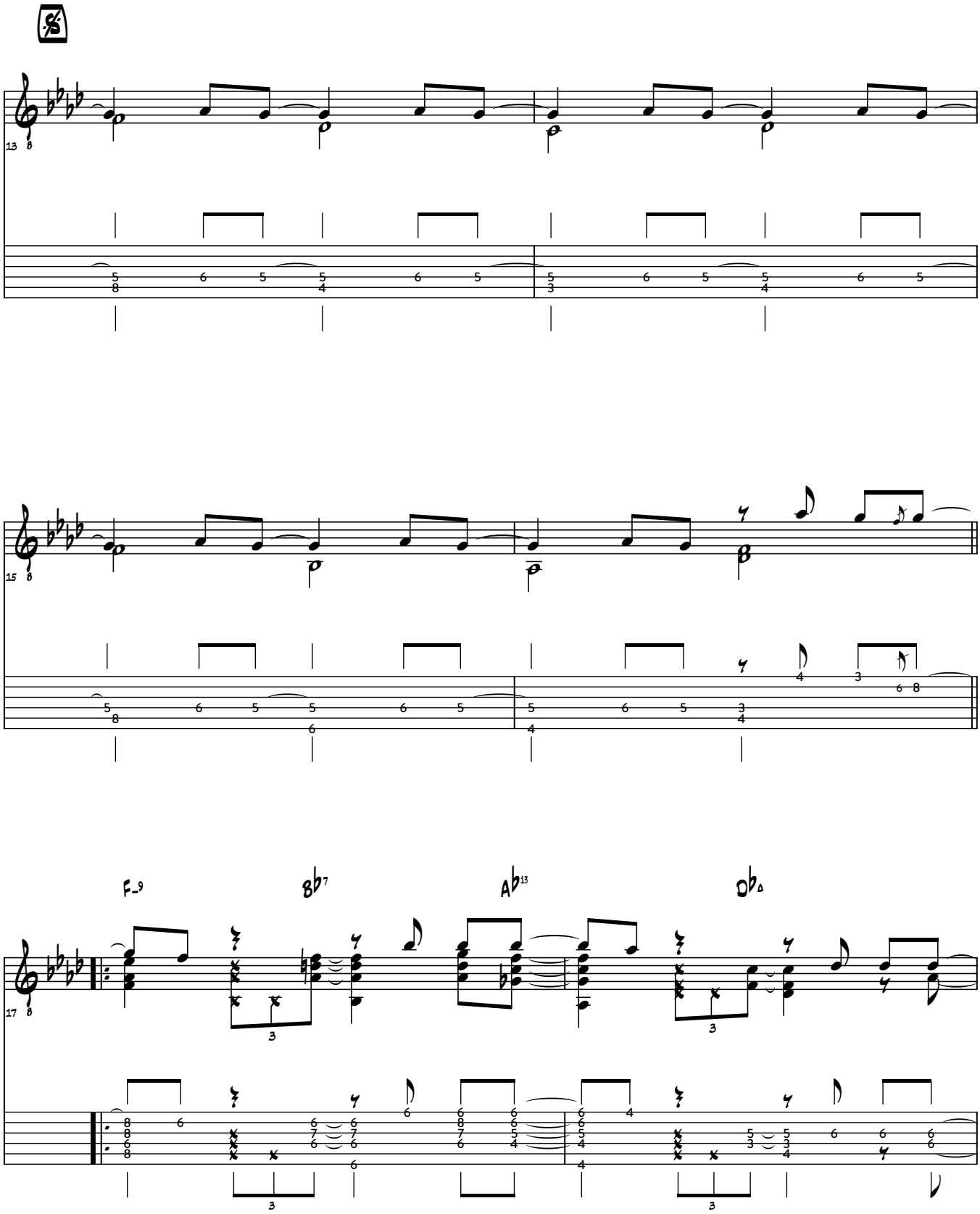
arr. Jan Jakut

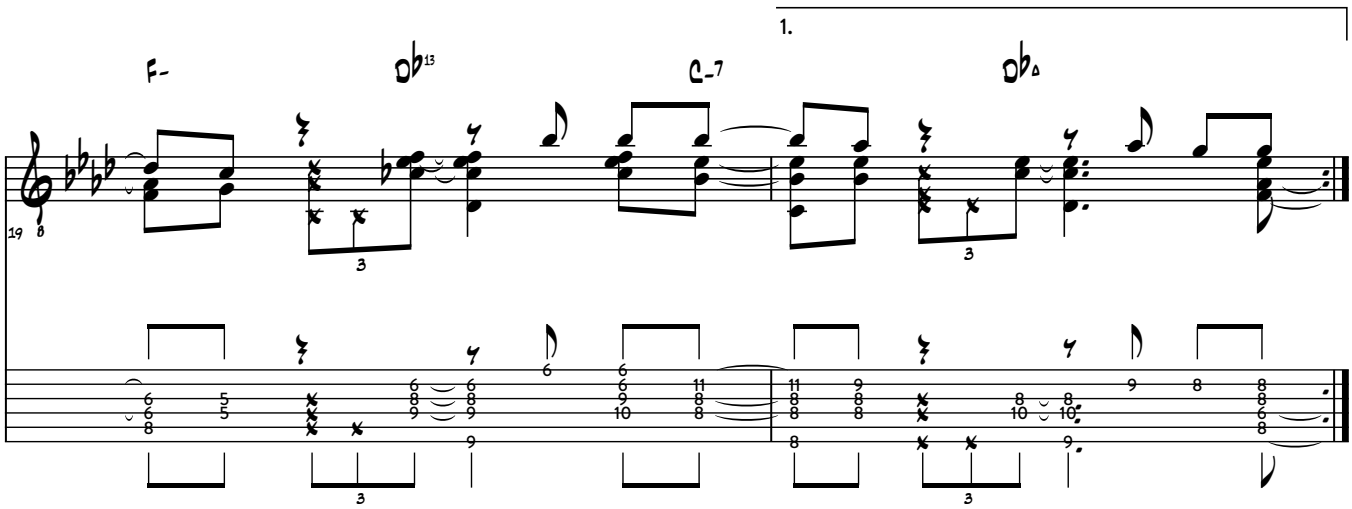
Modal Subversions: Nirvana

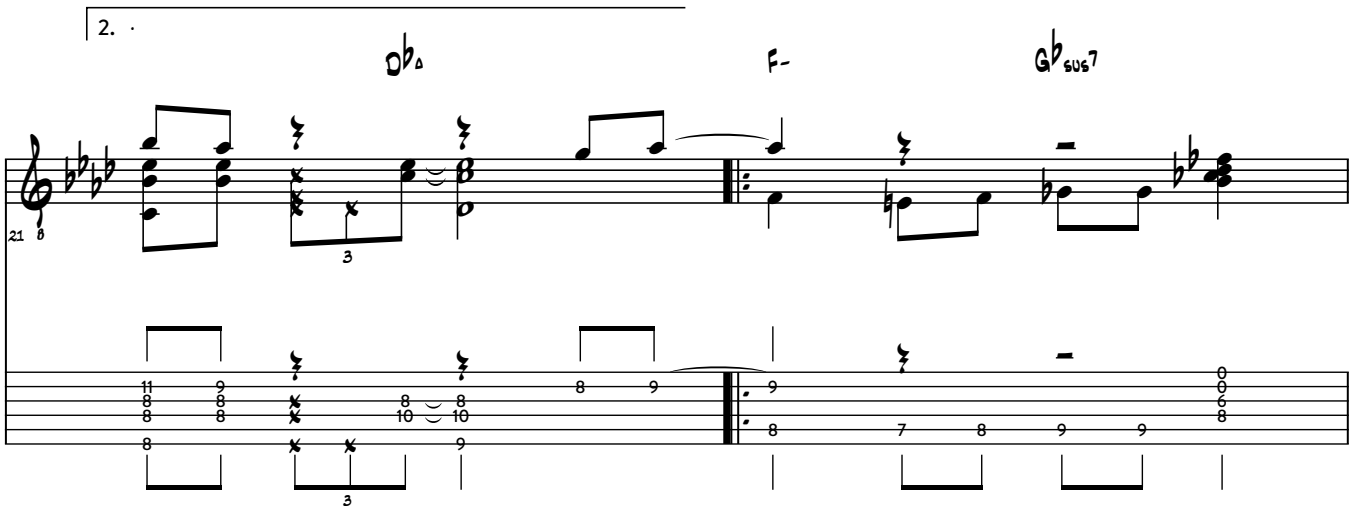
Sound Link

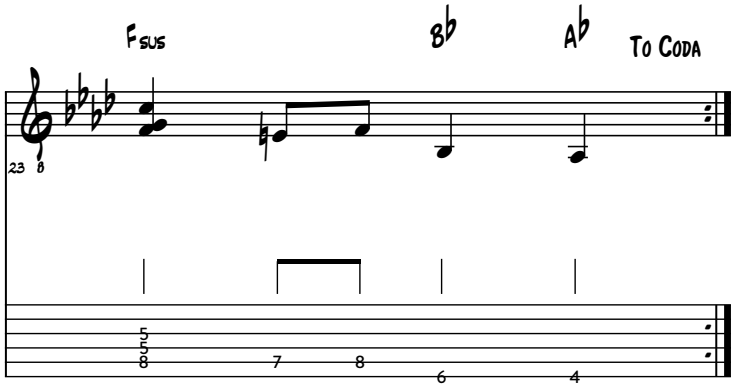


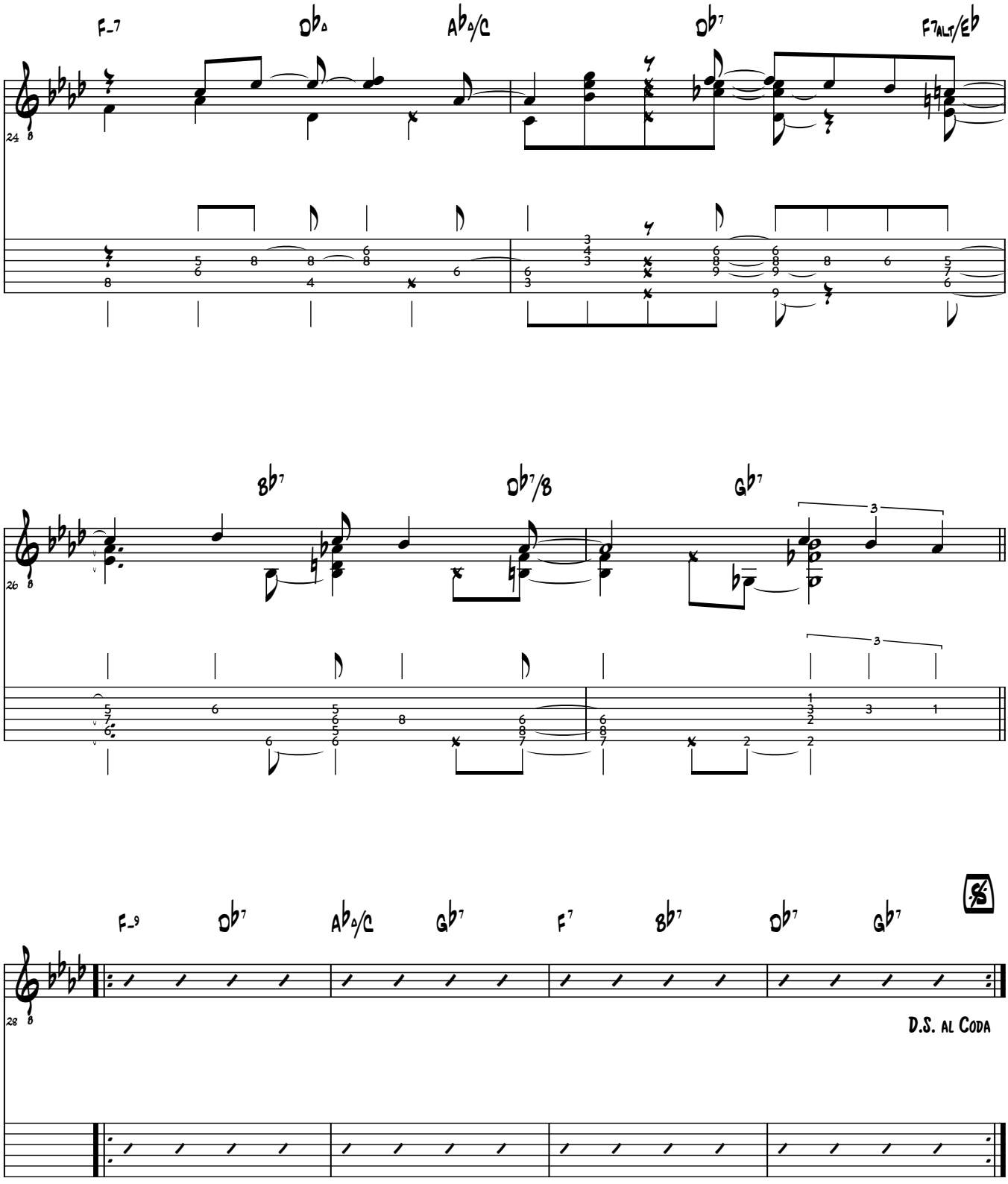

FADD9
B♭7
A♭/C
D♭Δ
F-7
B7
B♭7
E♭-9
Harm.
B♭7
D♭7/8
D♭Δ

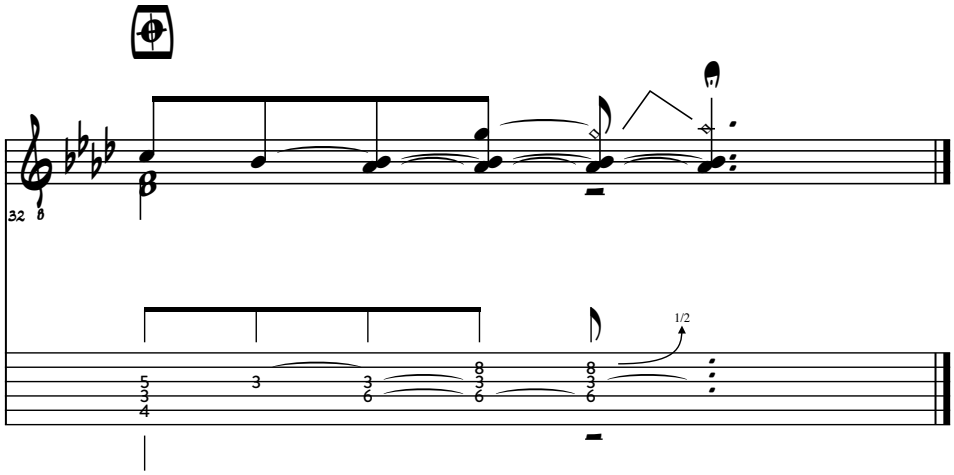

13
15
17
F-9
B♭7
A♭13
D♭Δ


1.
F-
Db13
C-7
Db△
19

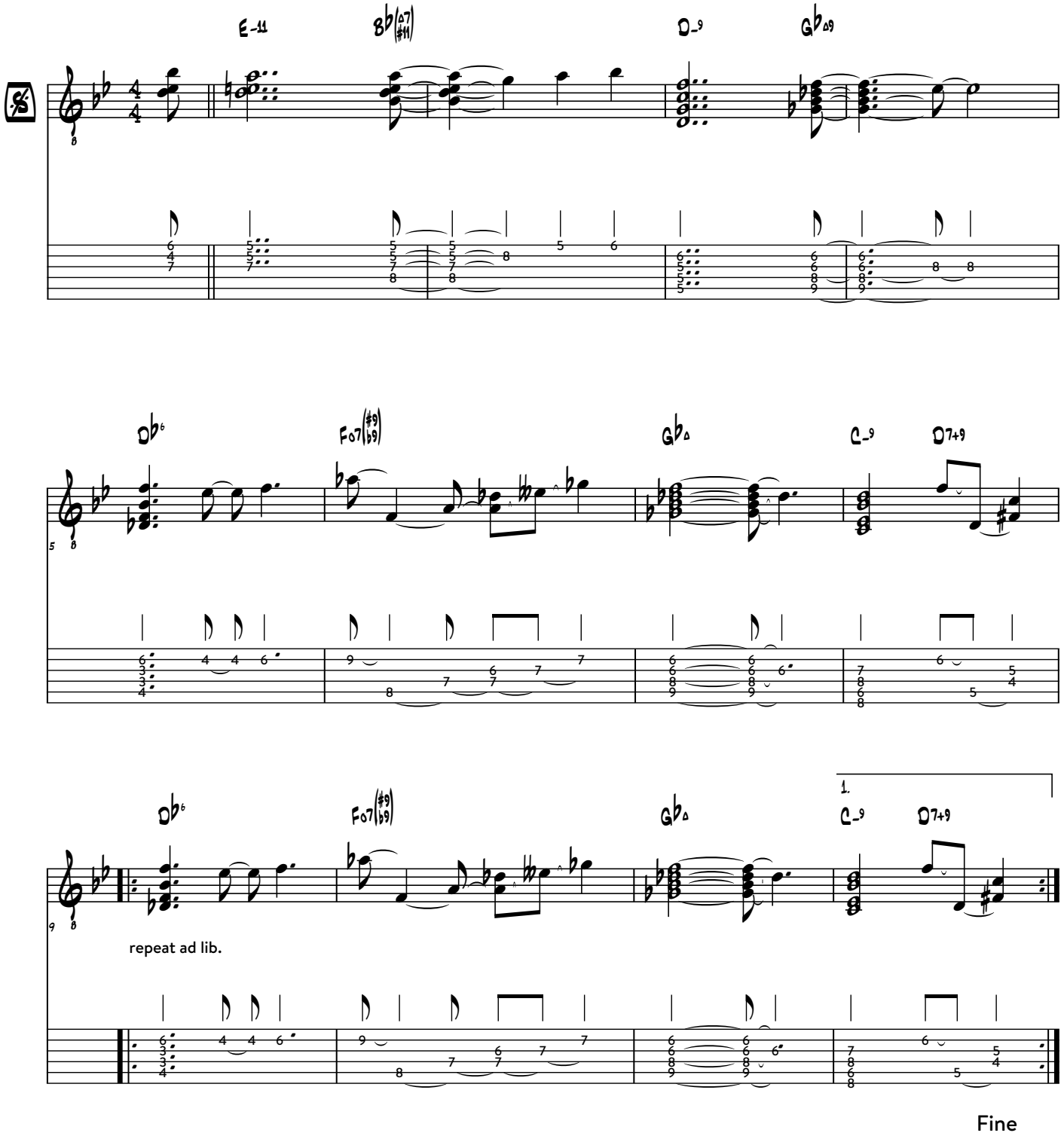

2.
Db△
F-
Gb sus7
21

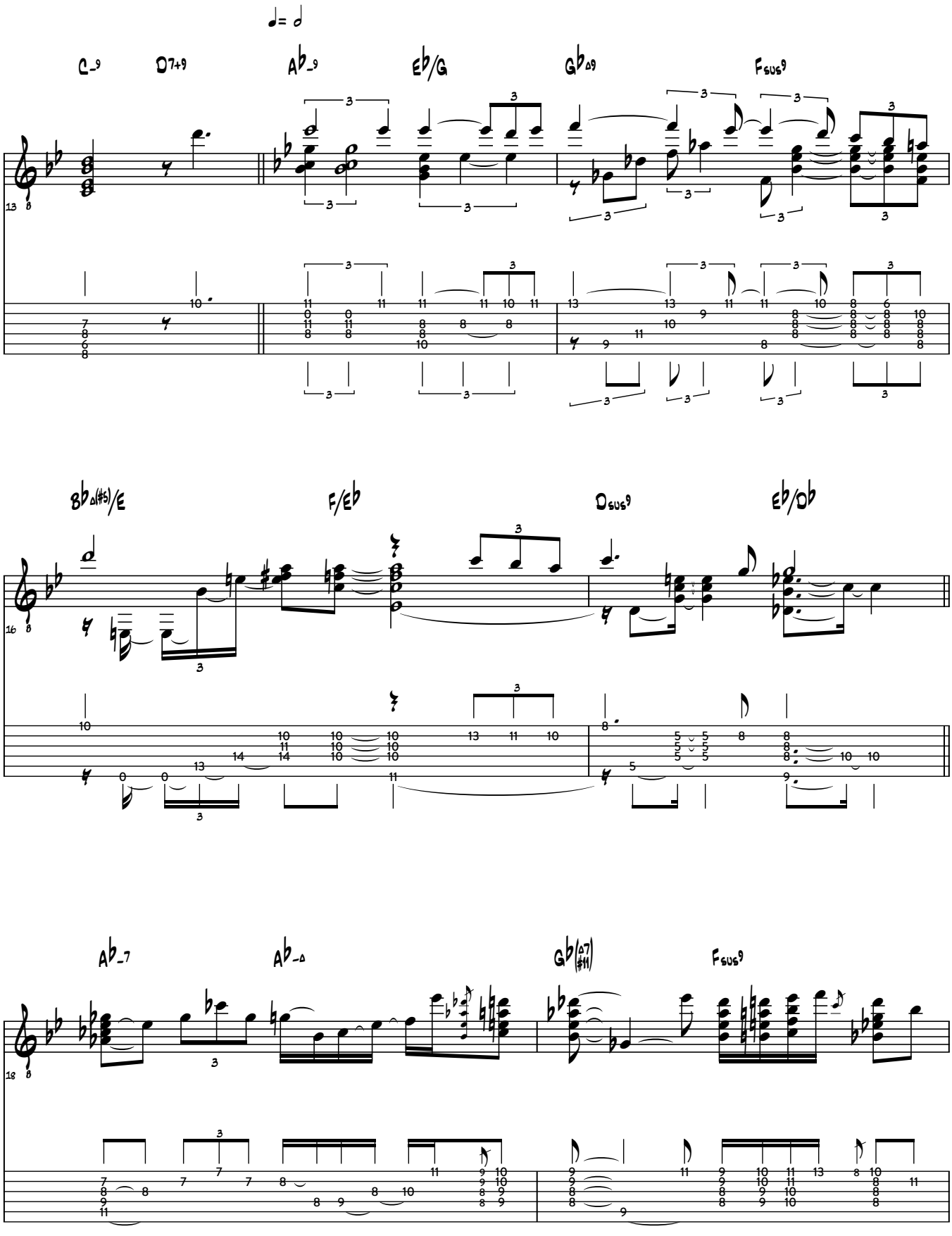

Fsus
Bb
Ab
To Coda
23

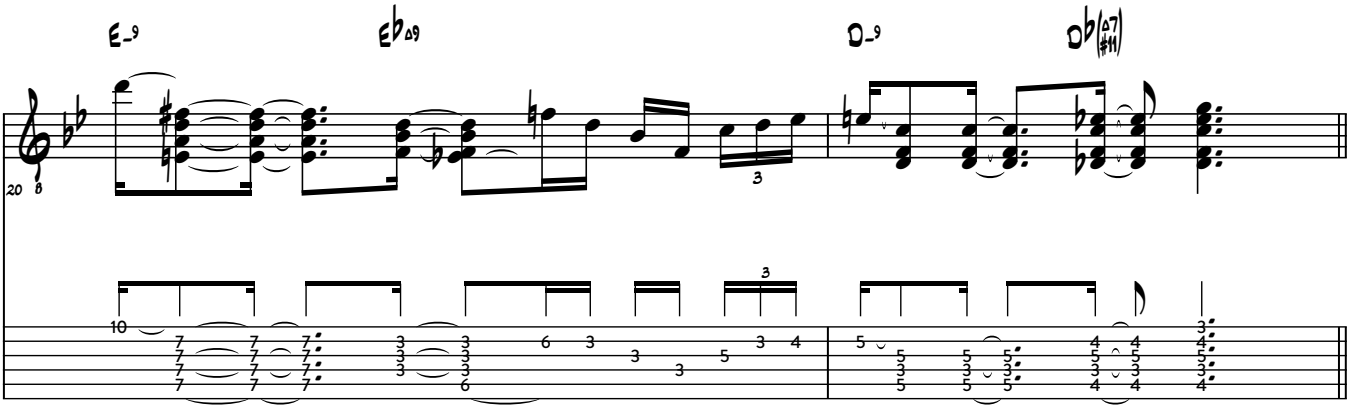

F-7
Db△
Ab△/C
Db7
F7ALT/Eb
24
Bb7
Db7/B
Gb7
26
F-9
Db7
Ab△/C
Gb7
F7
Bb7
Db7
Gb7
28
D.S. AL CODA

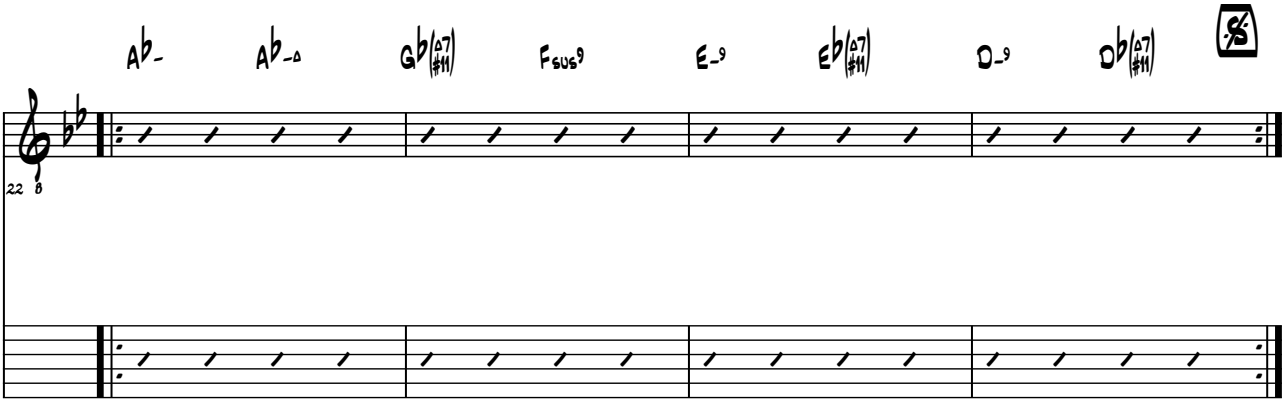

32
8
1/2

Robert Glasper's Changes for Stella



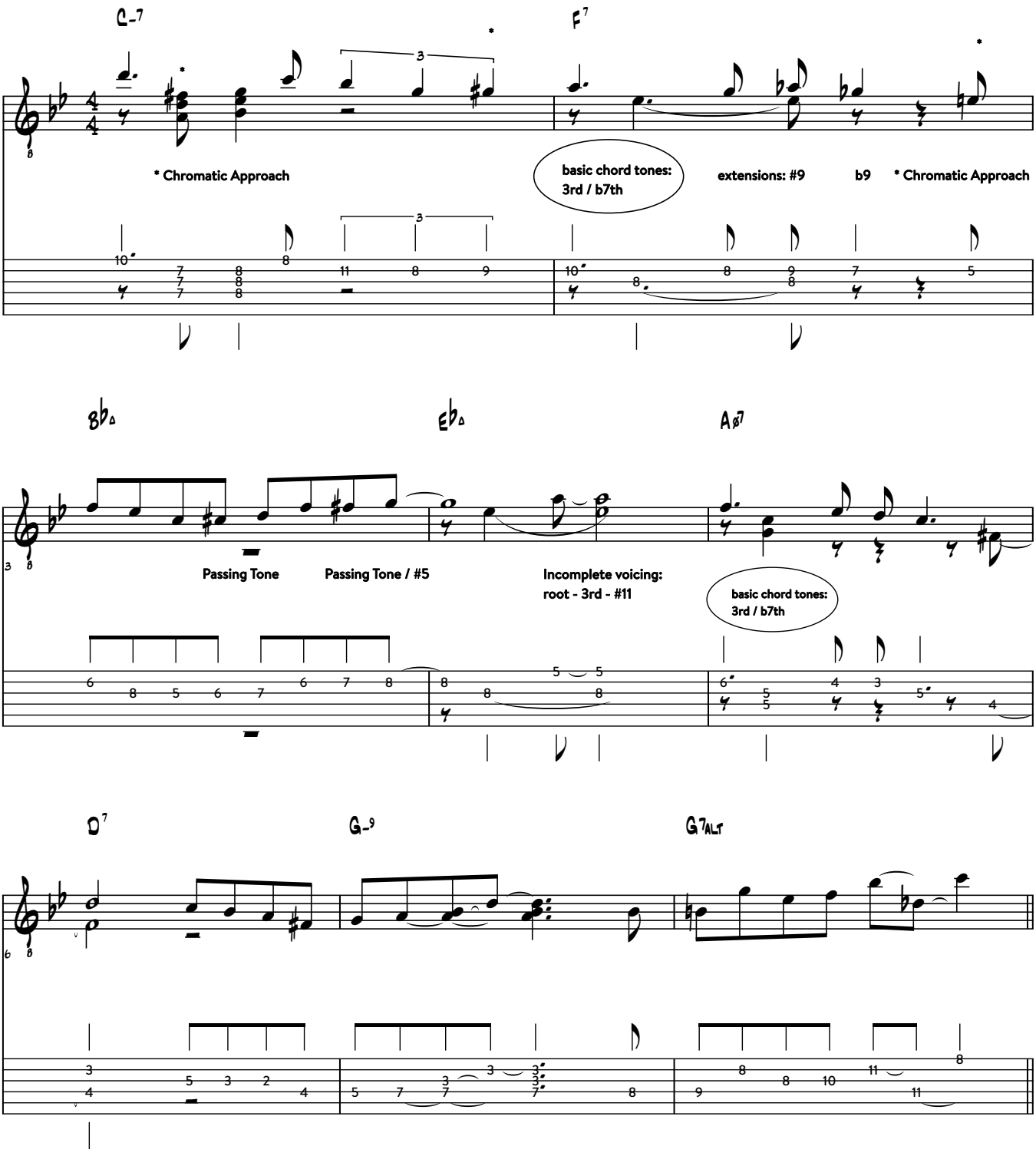

♩= ♩
C-9
D7+9
Ab-9
Eb/G
Gb∆9
Fsus9
Bb∆(#5)/E
F/Eb
Dsus9
Eb/Db
Ab-7
Ab-∆
Gb(∆7/#11)
Fsus9

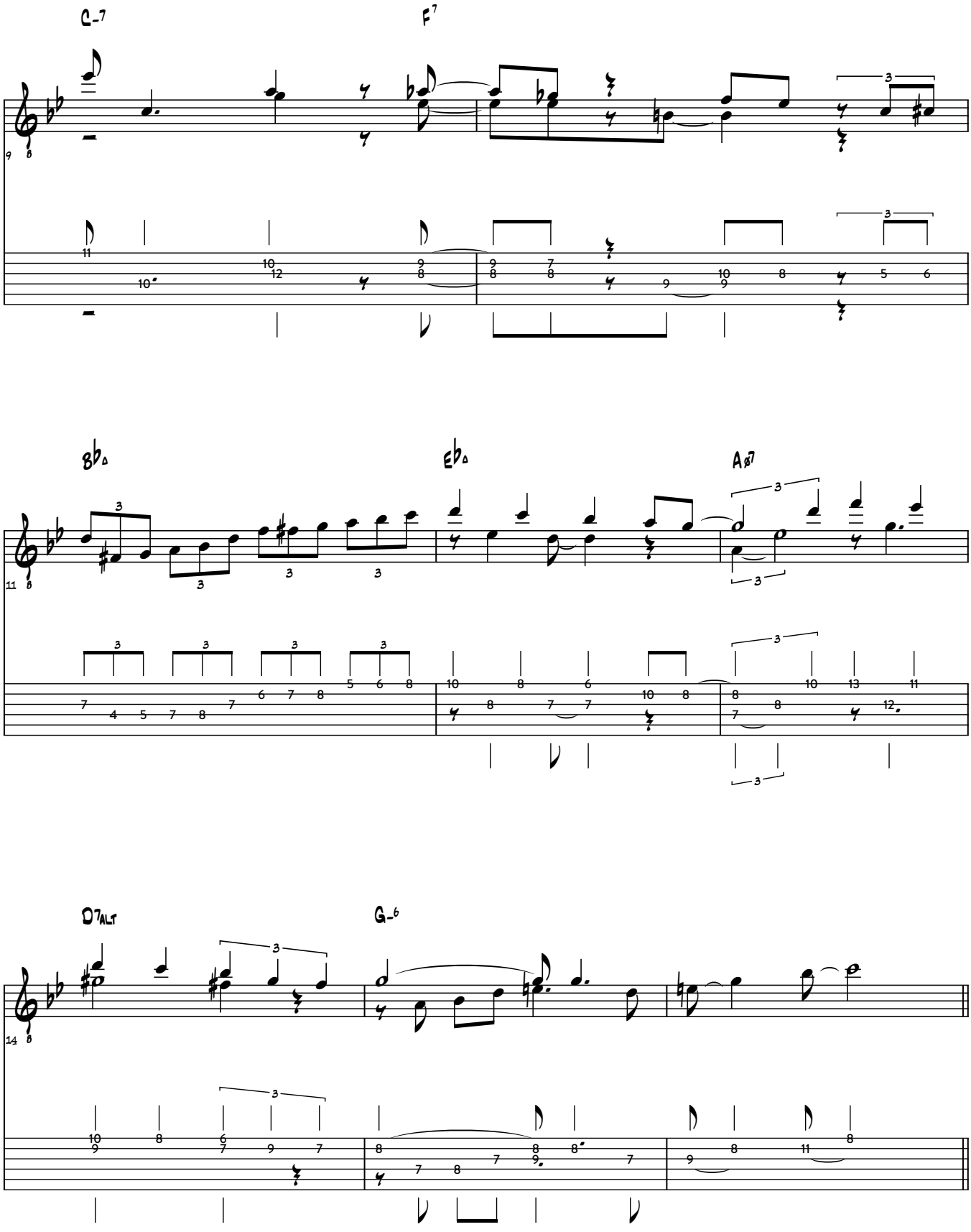

E-9
Eb69
D-9
Db(57/#11)

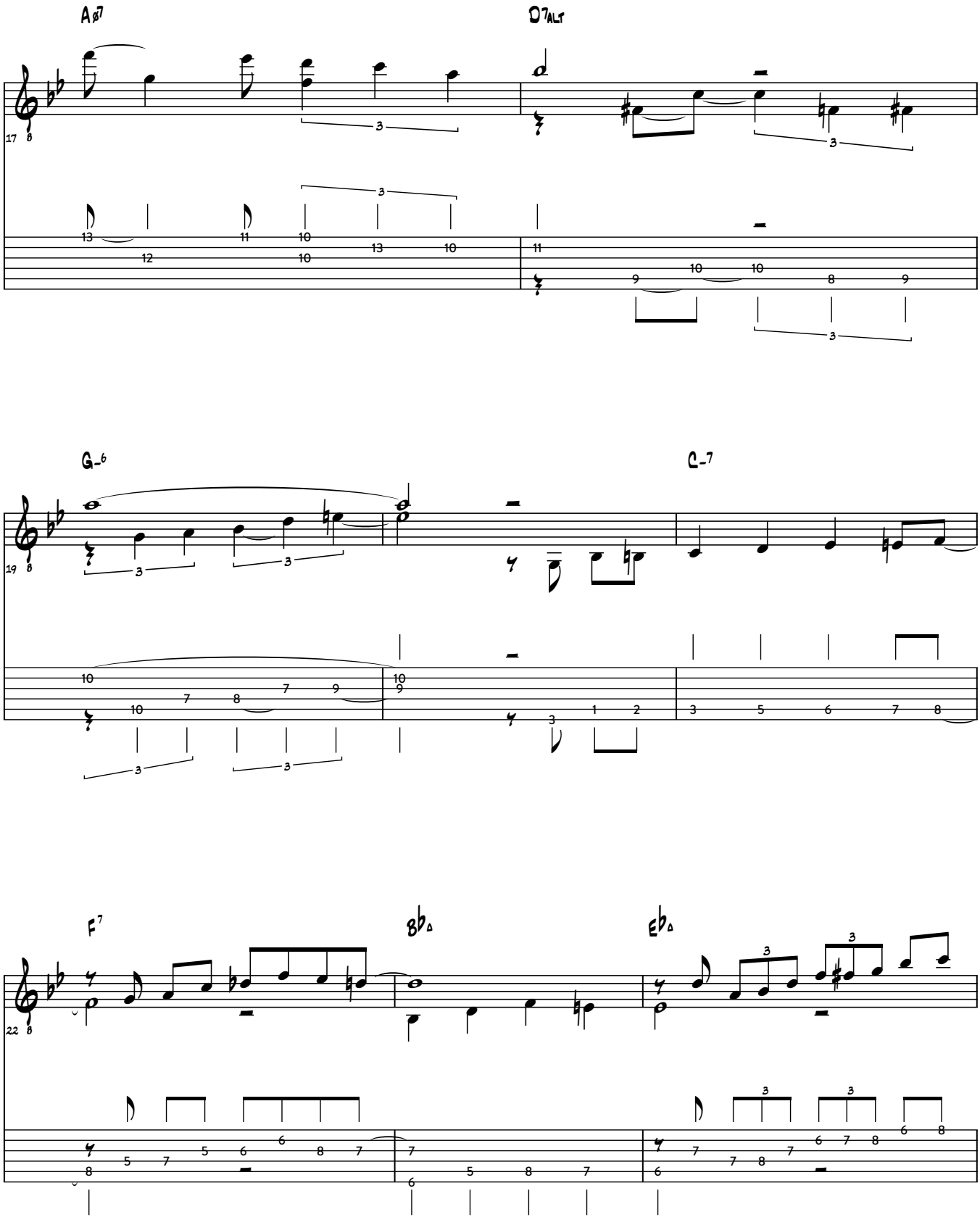

Ab-
Ab-5
Gb(57/#11)
F6sus9
E-9
Eb(57/#11)
D-9
Db(57/#11)

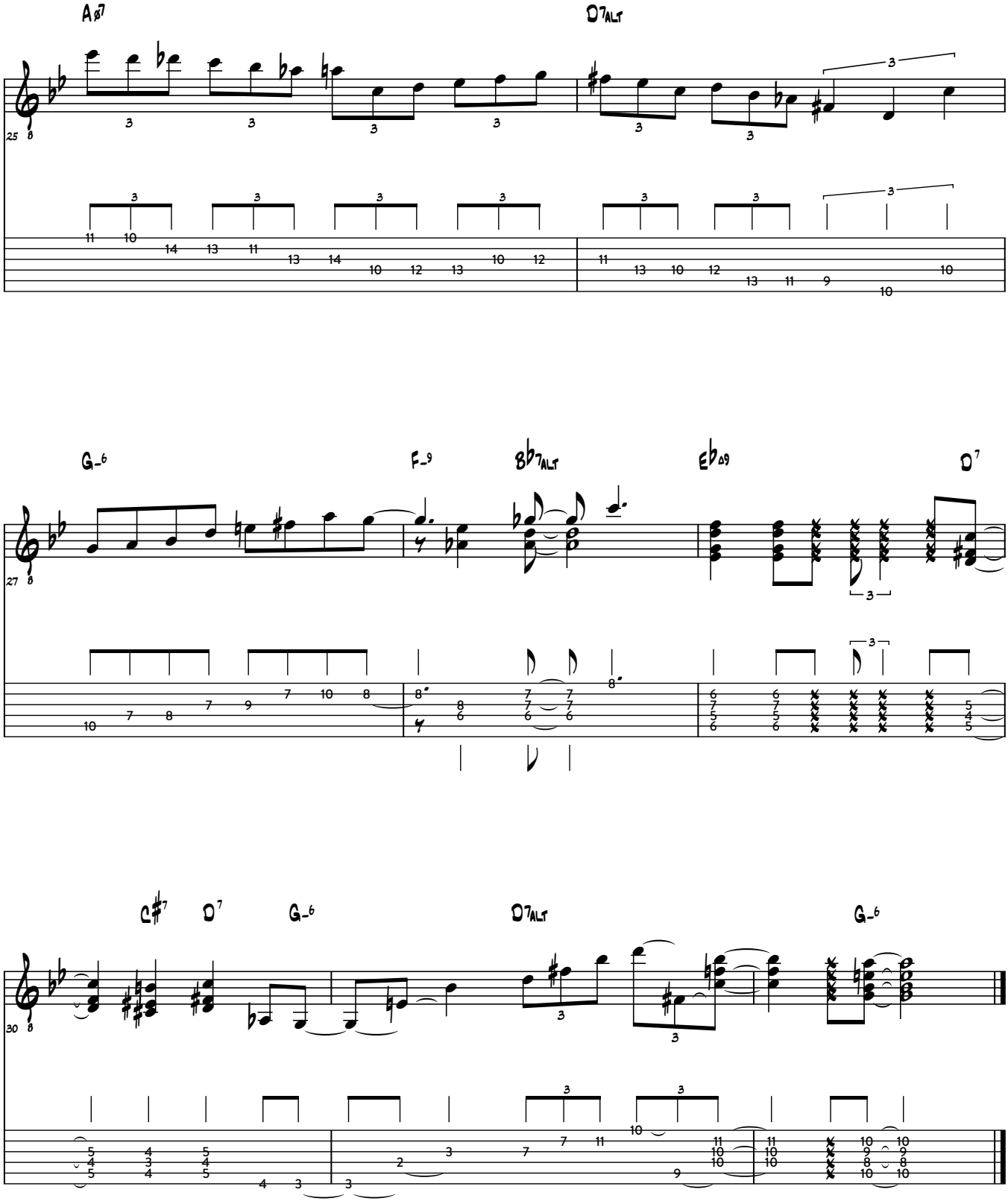
arr. Jan Jakut

Melodic Ideas for Autumn Leaves

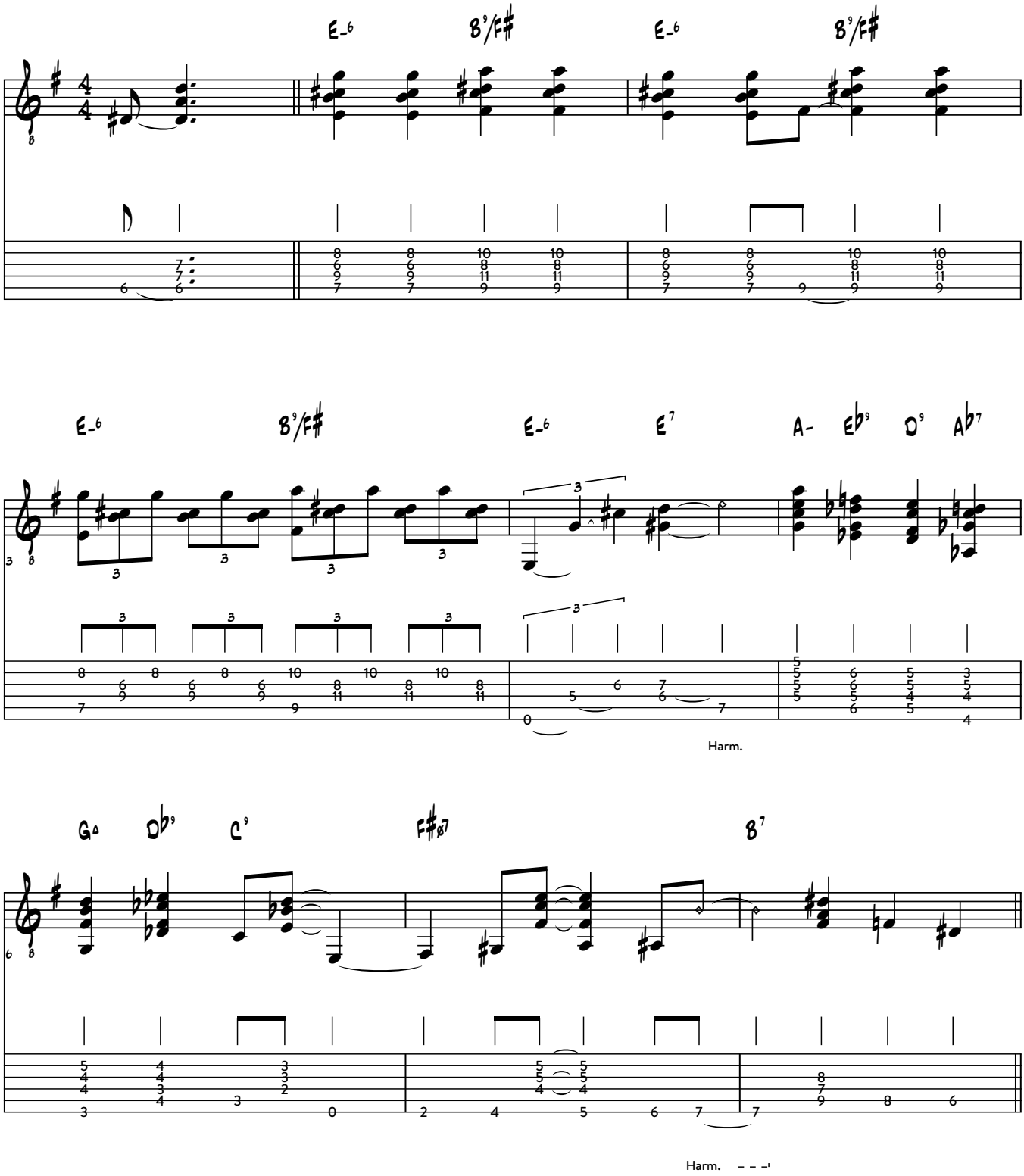


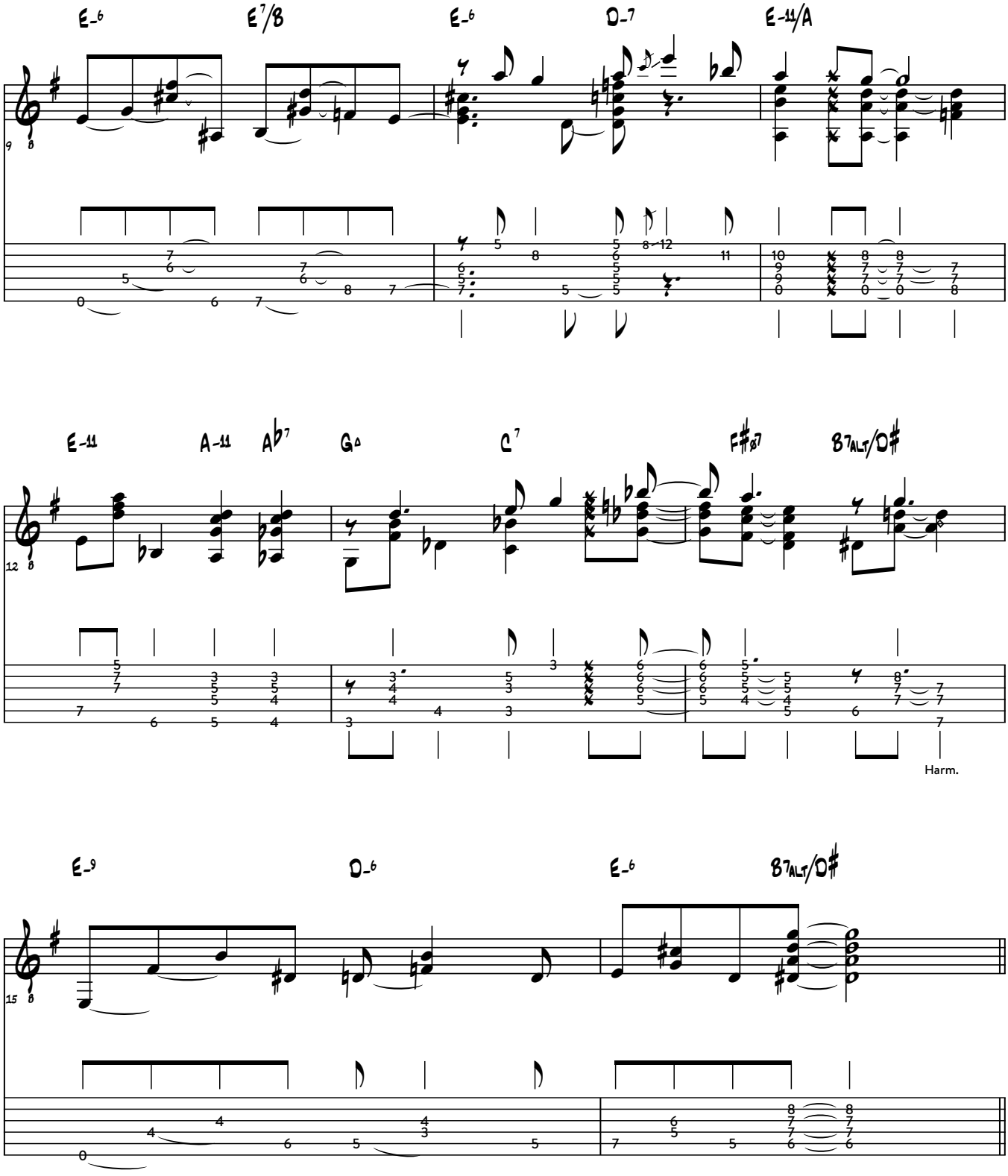

C-7
F7
B♭Δ
E♭Δ
Aø7
D7ALT
G-6

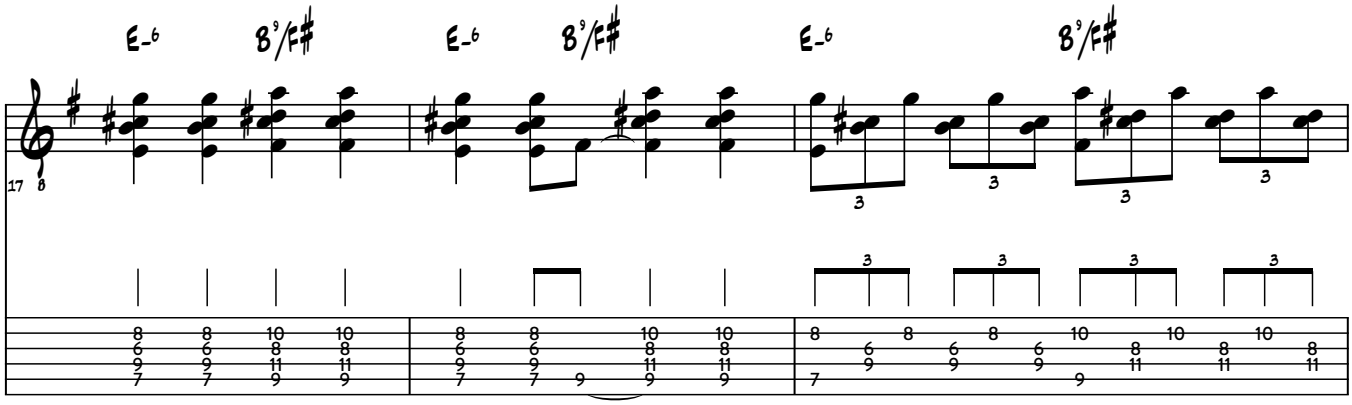

Aø7
D7ALT
G-6
C-7
F7
B♭Δ
E♭Δ

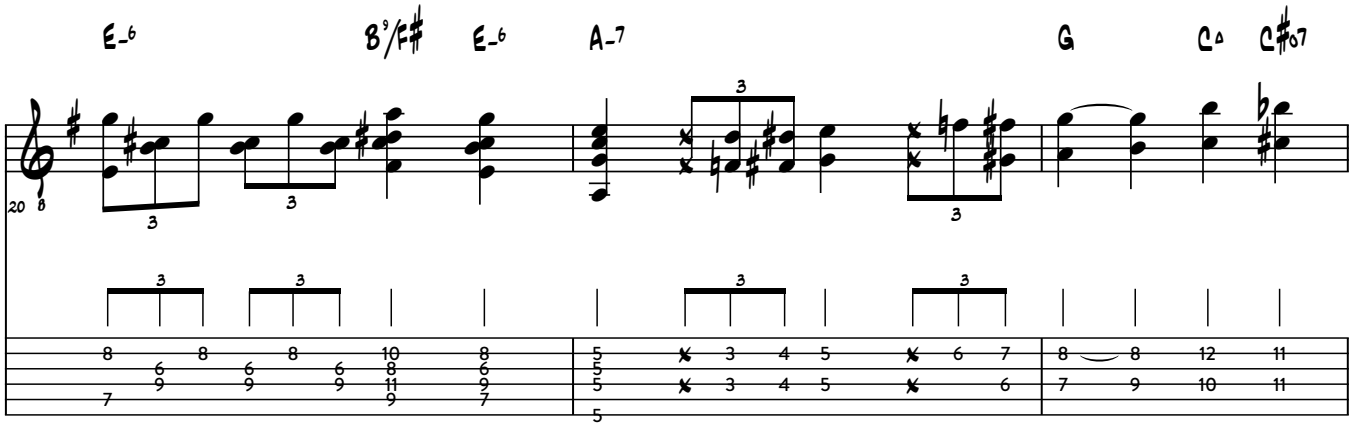

Aø7
D7ALT
G-6
F-9
Bb7ALT
Eb∆9
D7
C#7
D7
G-6
D7ALT
G-6

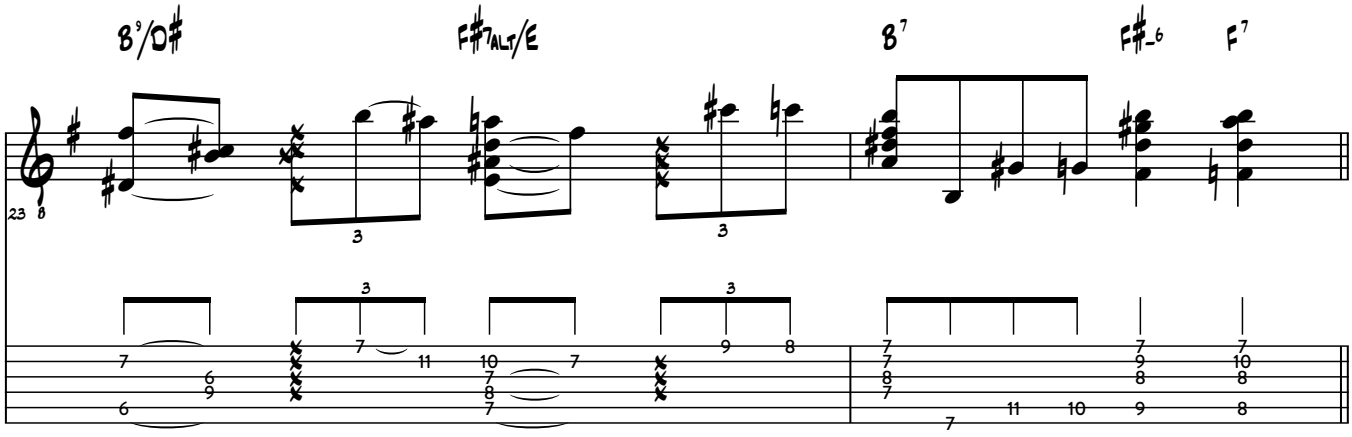
Comping Concepts - Gershwin's Chords

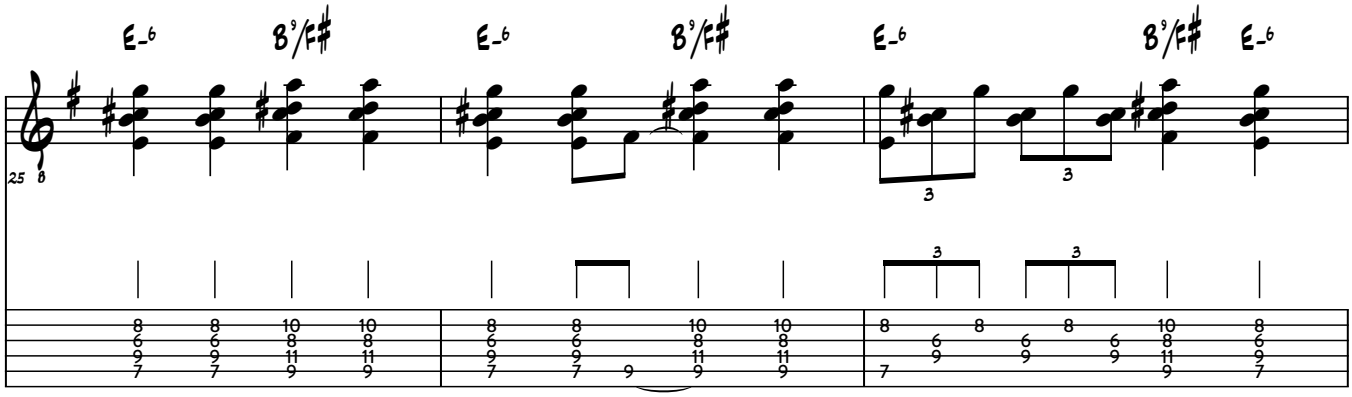


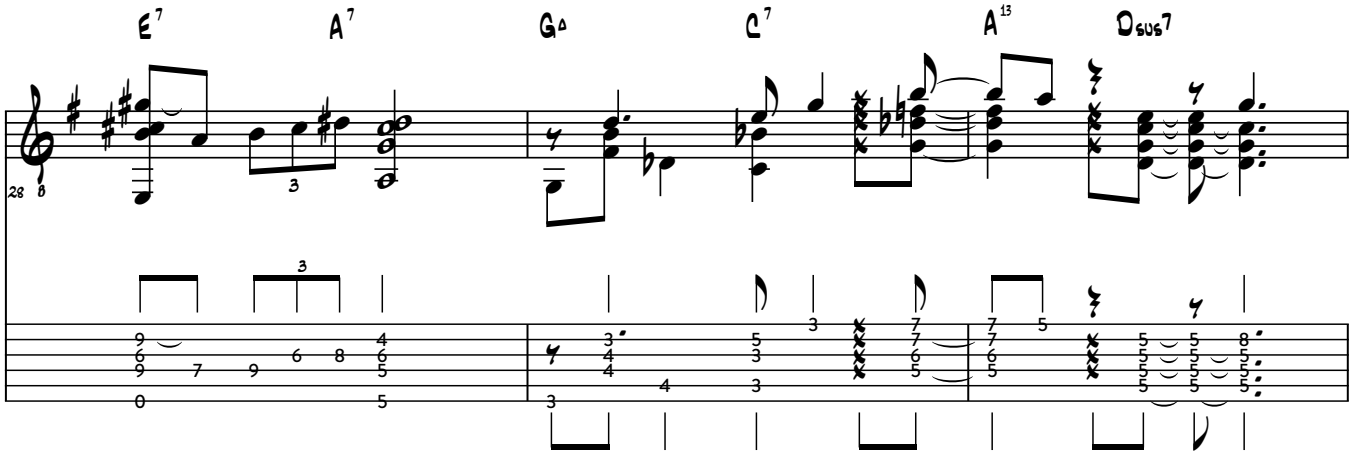

E-6
E7/B
E-6
D-7
E-11/A
E-11
A-11
Ab7
G∆
C7
F#ø7
B7ALT/D#
Harm.
E-9
D-6
E-6
B7ALT/D#

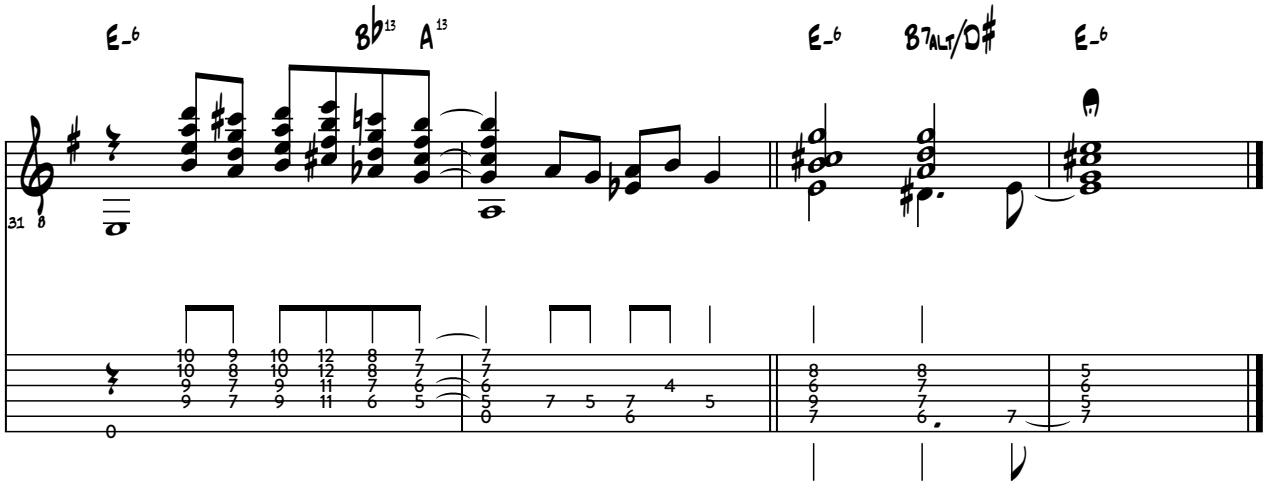

E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#


E-6
B9/F#
E-6
A-7
G
CΔ
C#ø7


B9/D#
F#7ALT/E
B7
F#-6
F7


E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#
E-6
25


E7
A7
GΔ
C7
A13
Dsus7
28


E-6
Bb13
A13
E-6
B7alt/D#
E-6
31