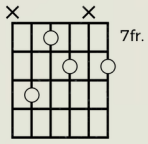
CHORD YOGA



CONCEPTS for SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCE / 3rd Edition

Studies for Electric Guitar Tone / Technique / Theory

A JME CY eBook / Seattle 2020

Part I

Studies for electric guitar

Tone - Technique - Theory

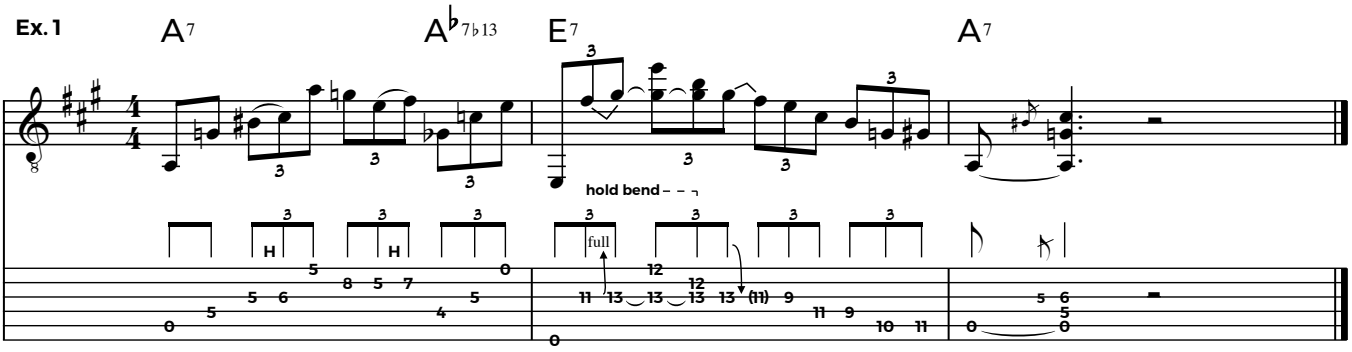
Pitch, texture and dynamics

Studies for electric guitar

Applied Music Theory

Pitch, texture and dynamics

1. Sound consistency



The term // **tone** [tōn] // can be defined as your perception of the *interplay of pitch, texture and dynamics*.
The complexity behind a single sounding note - from the initial tone production to the resulting sound - is what makes 'tone' unique to every musician.

The *tone imprints* of guitarists like Jim Hall and John Scofield differ by a great margin - one sounds rather 'round', 'jazzy' and 'composed', the other one 'ragged', 'bluesy' and 'expressive'. Yet, both sound amazing!
In conjunction with their musical imagination and their gear of choice, both musicians developed tools to create their respective signature sounds. This inherent variety of tone(s) also shows that their approach towards musical expression and instruments still shares a crucial common denominator: **sound consistency**

a) ***Sound texture*** **(timbre)** - whether you play with a pick or fingerstyle, *the way you apply various techniques* determines the *quality* of the sound.
b) **Dynamics** are crucial to connect single events (pitches, rhythms) towards a coherent musical statement. Using dynamics also goes a long way to be able to 'tell a story' with your performance.

Ex. 1

- Learn the musical phrase by heart.
- Practice and record it with relatively 'flat' EQ settings and less or no reverb at all.
- Pause and start listening actively to evaluate your sound:

Does it sound 'musical', e.g. like a coherent sentence? [general rhythmic accuracy, musical interpretation]
Did you like the sound of all notes? [tonal quality, dynamics]

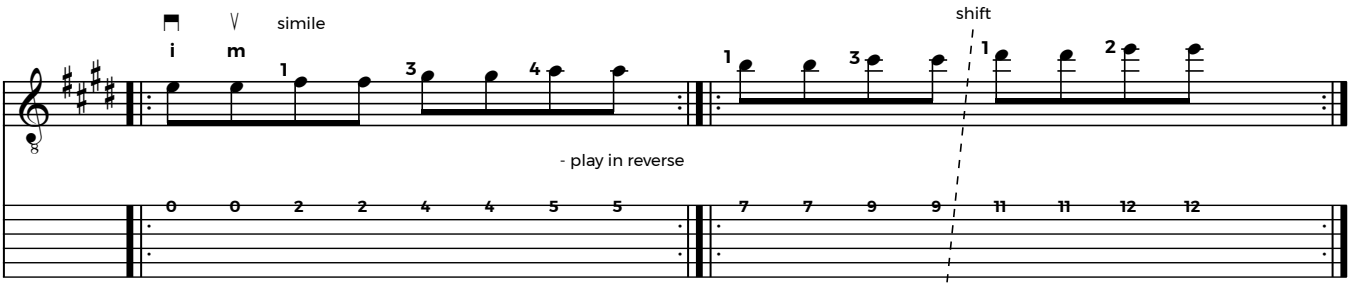
Since the lick comes with harmonies vs. single note-lines, fretted vs. open strings, position changes, bends and hammer-ons, it creates a varied sound texture. Depending on your perception, musical choices and your technical abilities it might be the case that the open strings sound less pronounced than the fretted ones - or the opposite. Does it still sound consistent - like one sound - or do some notes 'pop out' in an unintended way? Is the sound transparent or muddy? The overall goal isn't necessarily to develop a 'clinical' / absolutely even sound (unless that is what you're striving for) - the goal is to be able to perceive and evaluate accurately how you sound, why you sound that way and finding out how you're able to tweak your own sound.

The following exercises offer perspectives to further and adjust your available palette of 'sound production'-techniques to your own specifications.

Synchronizing left and right hand

2. a) Synchronizing left and right hand

b) 'Up and down the neck'



Fretting hand: keep your neck and shoulders as *relaxed* as possible and avoid moving them in order to be able to reach certain notes or chords on the fretboard: adjusting the positions of elbow and wrist are far more useful to adapt your hand's position and posture.

There is an abundance of seamlessly shifting postures happening while you access notes and chords across the fretboard. Consider that most of them already follow patterns you're very familiar with.

Since everybody does come with a slightly different build, there isn't a 'one size fits all' technique which you have to follow. Everbody learns best practices as how to move effectively and how to avoid unhealthy habits that can cause injuries.

For this exercise, rely on your established motion patterns and listen actively how your notes sound. Keep in mind that you only have to slightly adjust and tweak your motions to create the tones you strive for. Repeat the exercises while focussing on the listed aspects, one at a time.

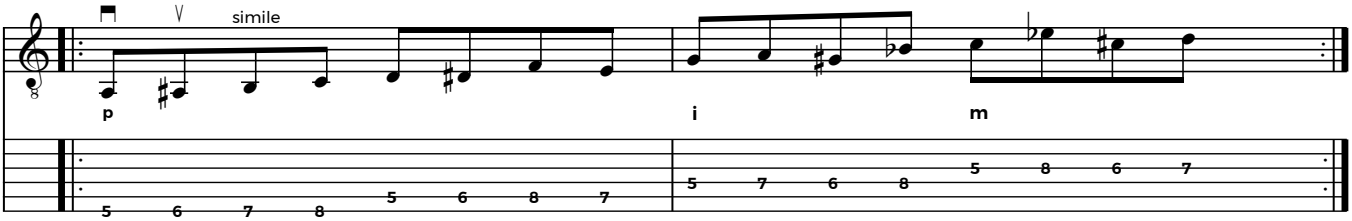
- Keep your wrist straight [especially for repetitive ex.] That still entails that there's a lot of 'wiggle room': you have to bend your wrist to access notes and chords in context. It's about allowing your hand to be in a **relaxed yet moving flow** as opposed to a rigid posture which doesn't help your sound nor your tendon's performance and longevity.

- Your fingers should be relaxed, resting in a natural 'bent' position, before you play a note. The fingers don't have to be perfectly lined up so you avoid unnecessary tension.

- When fretting notes, use **minimal pressure** to push the string towards the fretboard. To begin with slight string buzz is a nice tool to gauge how much pressure is actually needed to make a specific note on a specific string ring.

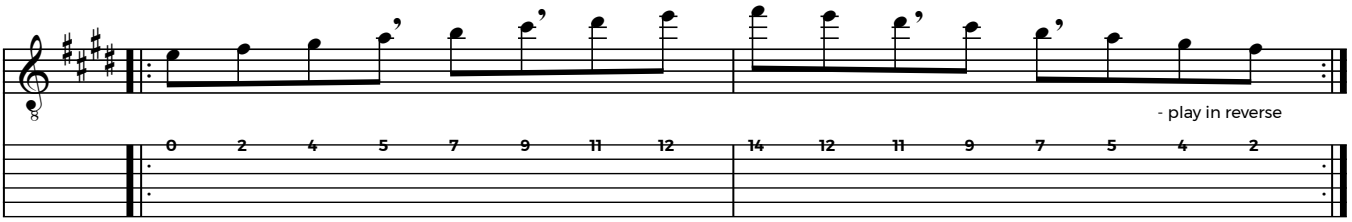
- Movement of the pick / 'plucking' finger: to get the most substantial tone out of your string you have to **push the string towards the guitar body**. By imposing slight pressure to the string, it is briefly displaced from its 'resting position', only to rebound when your pick or finger leaves the string. Unless you opt for a 'Chicken pickin' sound, you don't pick, rip or slide along the strings: these are all valid techniques, used for specific effects.

c) '2 in 1' ex. Fretting hand permutations // tone production



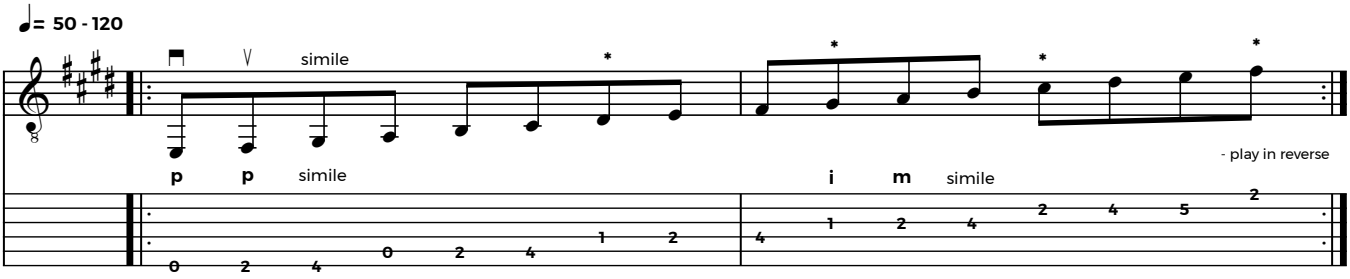
The purpose of this exercise is to:
1. establish the needed *muscle memory* for possible permutations on the fretboard - play these patterns in variations up and down the fretboard on all strings.
2. establish a more coherent tone using alternate picking or fingerstyle playing: try different 'p - i - m - a' combinations and listen for sound consistency.

d) Ascending / descending scale on one string



1. Focus on playing the position changes without interrupting the sound
2. Play the scale with very even dynamics (mp)
3. Apply dynamic changes, e.g. from *piano* to *forte*.

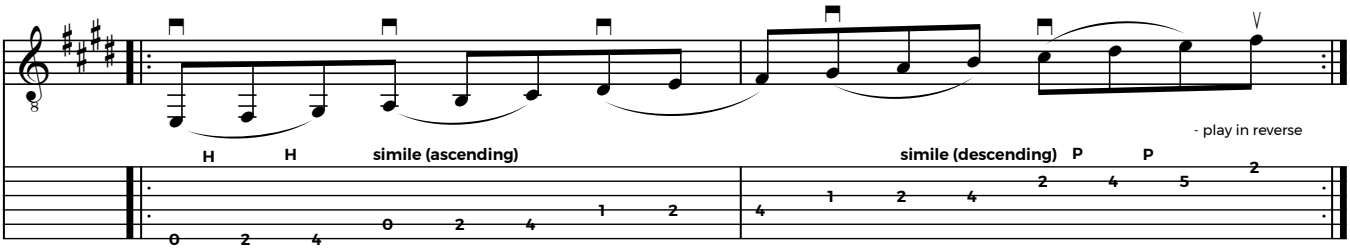
3. Rhythmic and dynamic balance



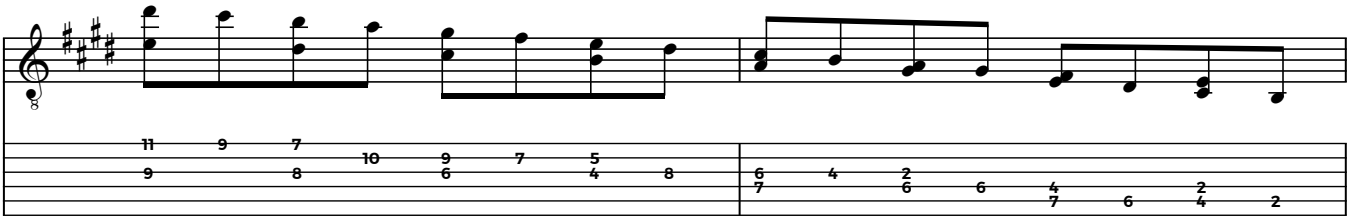
Ex. 3 'Rhythmic accuracy': use a metronome, play half a bar, let the last played note ring while you count the subdivisions.
For now, make sure that the 'gaps' between the notes are as short as possible and that the dynamics are consistent.
Listen closely and try to hear (not to see) if the fretting hand is the cause for rushed or delayed notes or if the (finger) picking hand isn't in sync with the metronome or your other hand.
Again, everybody has different tendencies - these aren't beneficial or 'bad' per se - they are what you work with.
It's your conscious perception of the sound and your knowledge about your tendencies that enable you to tweak your movements towards an expedient guitar technique.
Fretting hand technique: remember to keep your hand and fingers slightly relaxed and aim to 'prepare' notes.
E.g. when changing from one string to the next, the index finger can already be placed on the string and fret which is to be played next, while the pinky is still fretting the prior note. This applies to the labelled notes in the above sample.
This approach is also practical to create a legato sound or to let notes 'bleed' into each other.

Apply the same approach to the next exercise to practice sound consistency with hammer-ons / pull-offs.

b) Legato

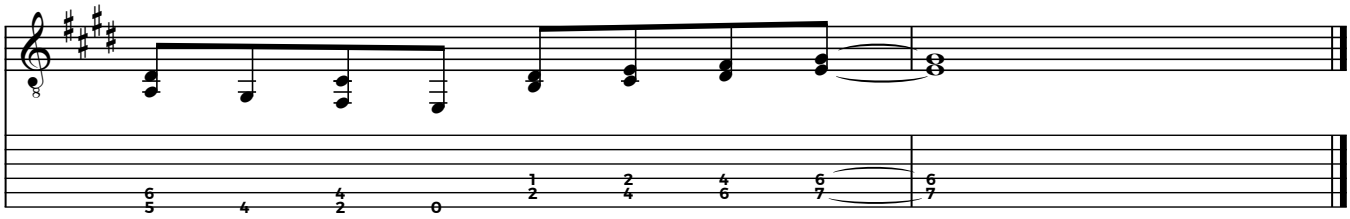


c) Two-line scale

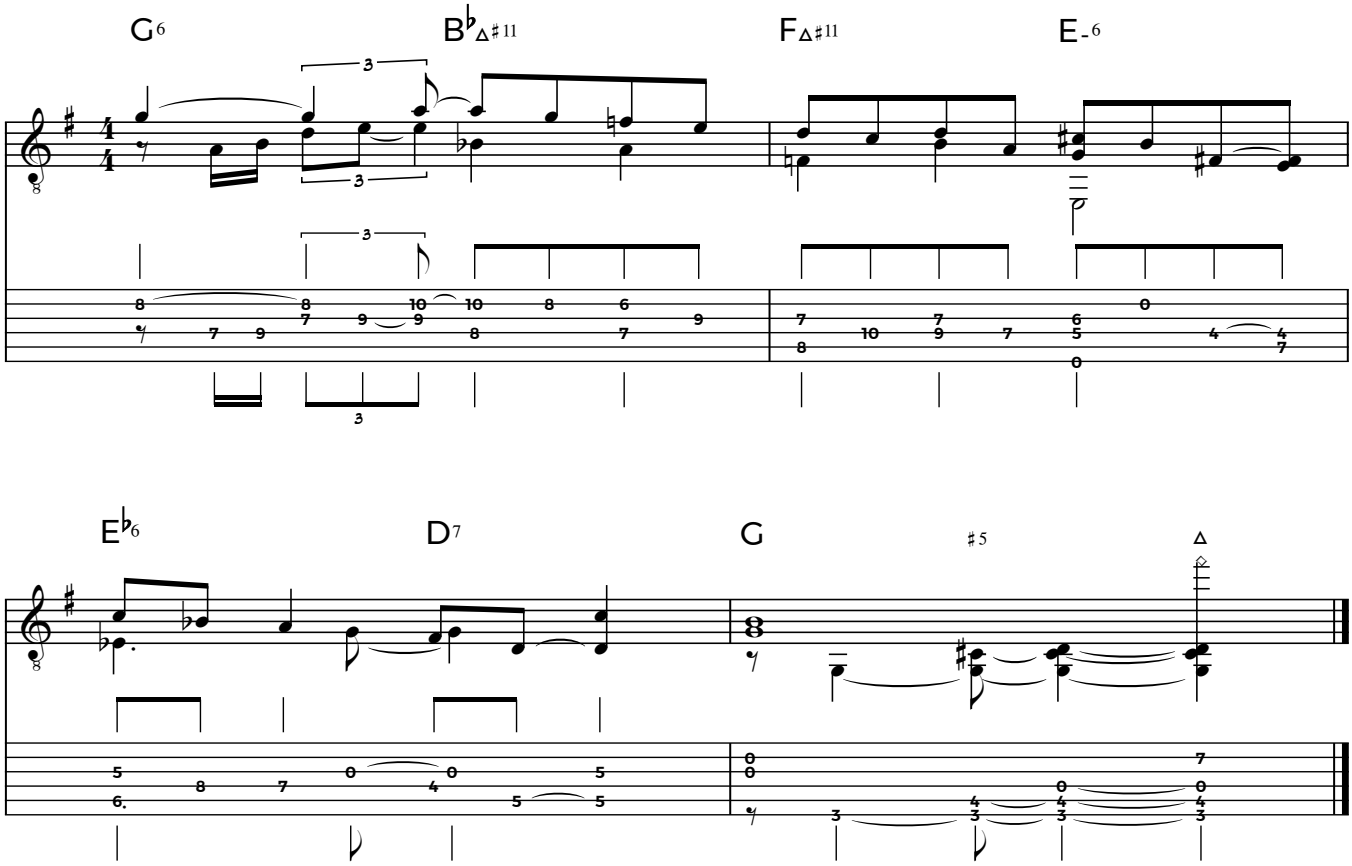


Focus on even dynamics while playing the double-stops throughout the register. Listen to:

a) how the low strings sound in comparison to the high register. Adjust your picking hand's attack accordingly.
b) the dynamic balance of the notes which are being played simultaneously. No matter if you opt for using a pick only, hybrid-picking or fingerstyle - all techniques have pros and cons in this context - go with the sound you like best and work slowly on improving it



d) 'Two-line' scale concept applied to the changes of 'Black Hole Sun'



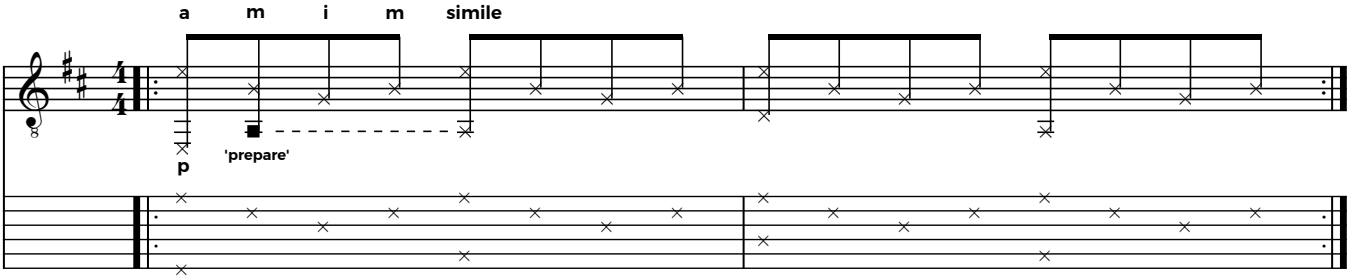
In the example prior to this one the upper voice was played at twice the pace of the lower one which diminuishes intervals until the voices cross and the intervals become wider again. As seen above, you can also apply this approach more freely to outline harmonies and harmonic progressions with only two notes at a time.

It is also a practical exercise for the finger independence of the fretting hand: While there are 'pedal notes' that have to be sustained with one finger, the second melodic line still requires the other fingers to move.

Synchronizing left and right hand

- chordal playing -

1. Picking patterns: preparing notes, posture and dynamics



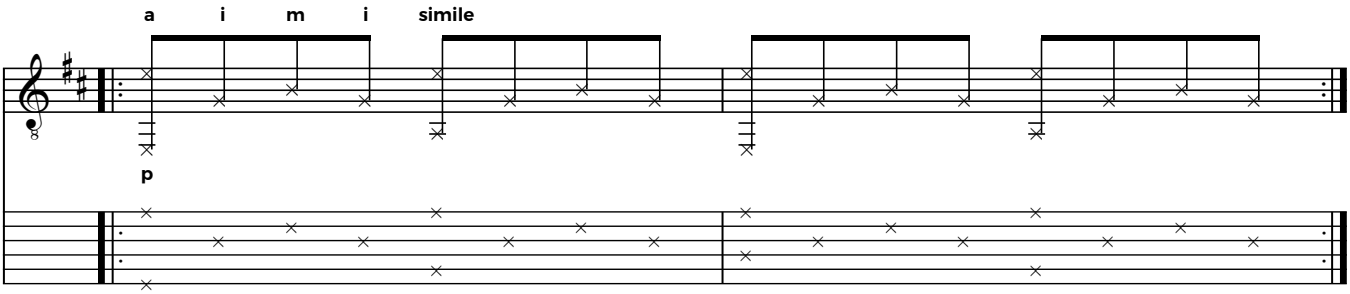
The purpose of this preliminiary exercise is to establish efficient *muscle memory* and *finger independence* in the picking hand to facilitate chordal playing. Use fingerstyle technique or hybrid-picking.
Remember aforementioned aspects concerning tone production:
"to get the most substantial tone out of your string you have to **push the string towards the guitar body**."

Play the muted notes **very slowly** since now all fingers including the thumb are involved.
Listen for sound consistency and adjust your hand position and angle accordingly.

1. After playing the first notes on low and high e-string with thumb (p) and ring-finger (a), move and place the thumb and middle finger (m) immediately on the strings where the following notes are going to be played. This is a 'snapping' motion rather than a gradual one. Your fingers are ready and in place to play the next notes, immediately after playing the first notes.

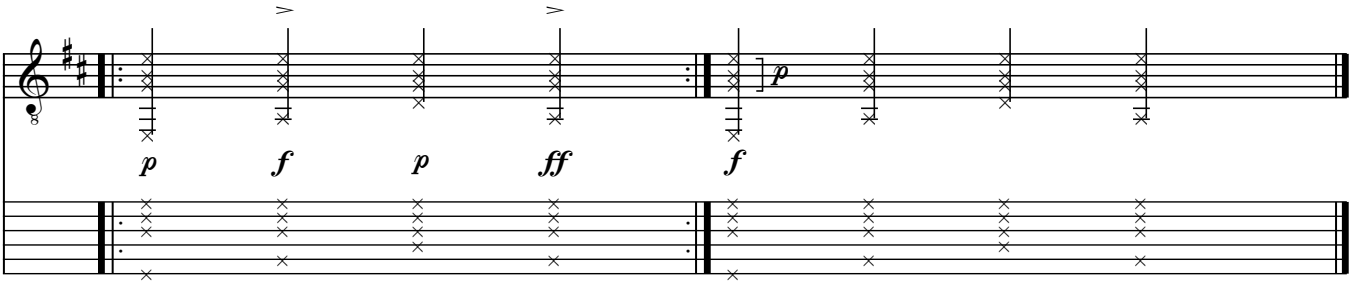
2. Index, middle and ring finger play a repeating pattern on the high string-set while the thumb moves independently from E to D sting and back. Repeat this exercise while *shifting your focus* from sound consistency to preparing notes and back. Also, monitor if the position and posture of your 'shoulder-arm-wrist-hand-complex' is stable. Ideally, you find a position that allows for a relaxed and resting position of shoulder, arm and wrist while the fingers do the work.

b) Permutations



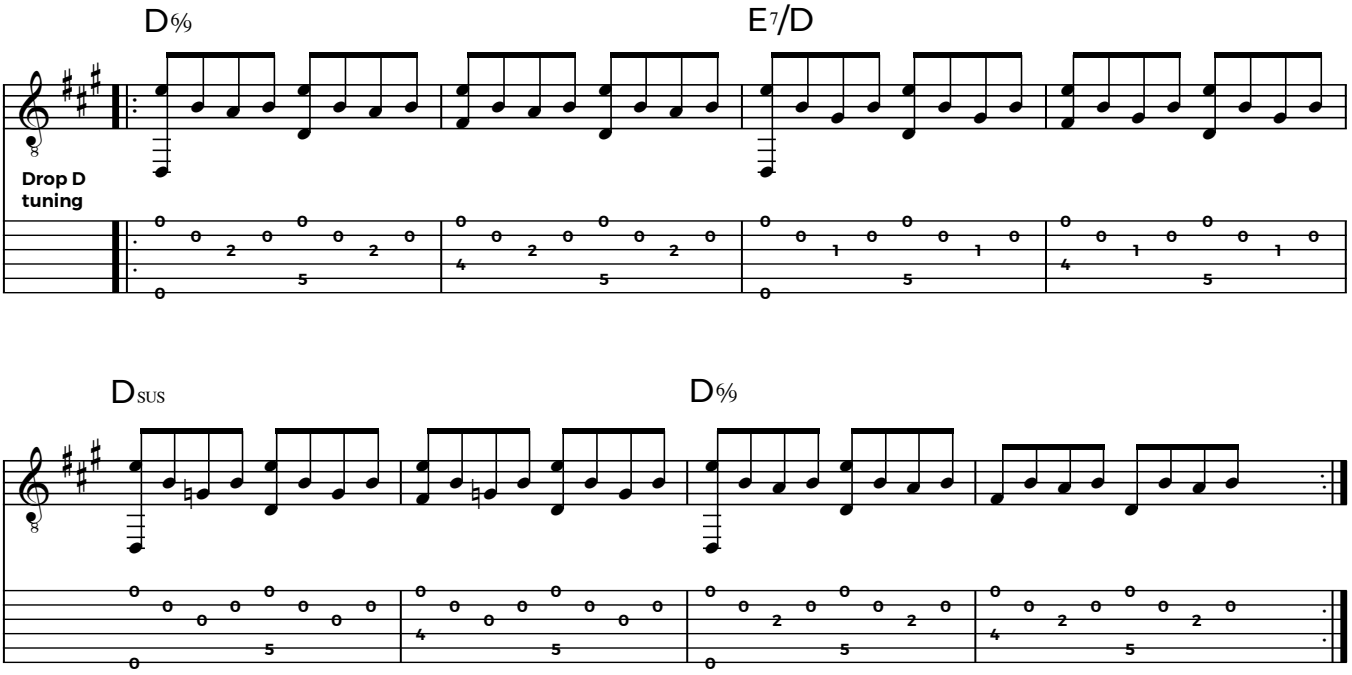
Try more possible permutations like the one above when you're comfortable with the first one.
Practicing each pattern adds to your picking hand's dexterity. Apply this approach also to accompaniments and riffs you already know well and listen to how you improve your sound.

c) Block chords and dynamic control



'Emphasize single notes dynamically:
e.g. accentuate the bass notes with your thumb.'

d) Adding chord shapes

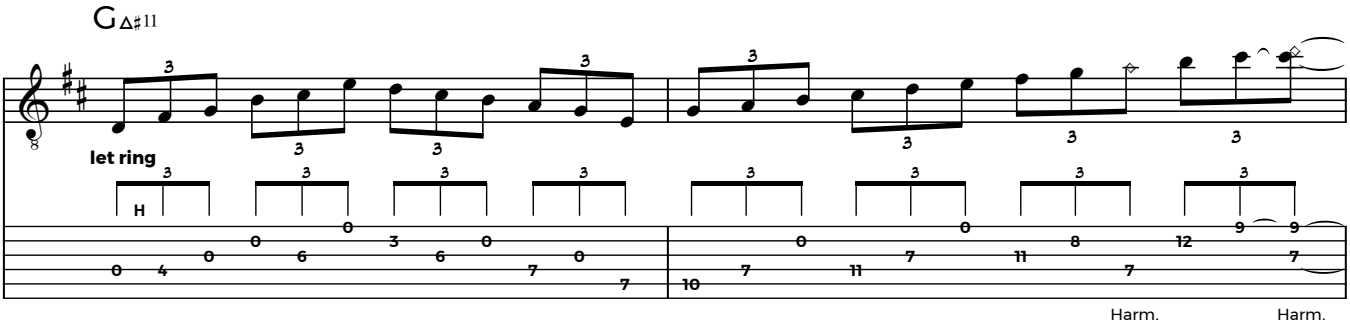


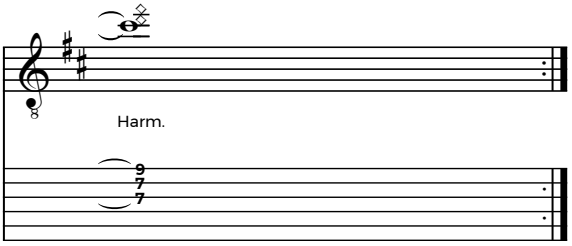
Now combine picking and fretting hand. Starting out with this root position triad shape allows for a relaxed hand posture in bars 1-2. Take your time to find a **very** comfortable shoulder-elbow-wrist-hand posture for this triad and keep the fingers curved so the open strings can ring throughout.
The following two bars come with a healthy :) fretting hand stretch (pinky on the 5th fret A string, index on the 1st fret G string) which is resolved in the last four bars.

Practice this exercise slowly and focus on keeping your fretting hand relaxed:

- apply the least amount of pressure necessary to fret the notes, take a break before your fretting hand starts to feel slightly uncomfortable. You can also start out with other chord shapes, e.g. open position E, A or D chords.
- tilt your hand position by adjusting your elbow and wrist angels to facilitate the 'stretchy' chord shape before moving back to your **very** comfortable starting position.

e) 'Blurring the lines'





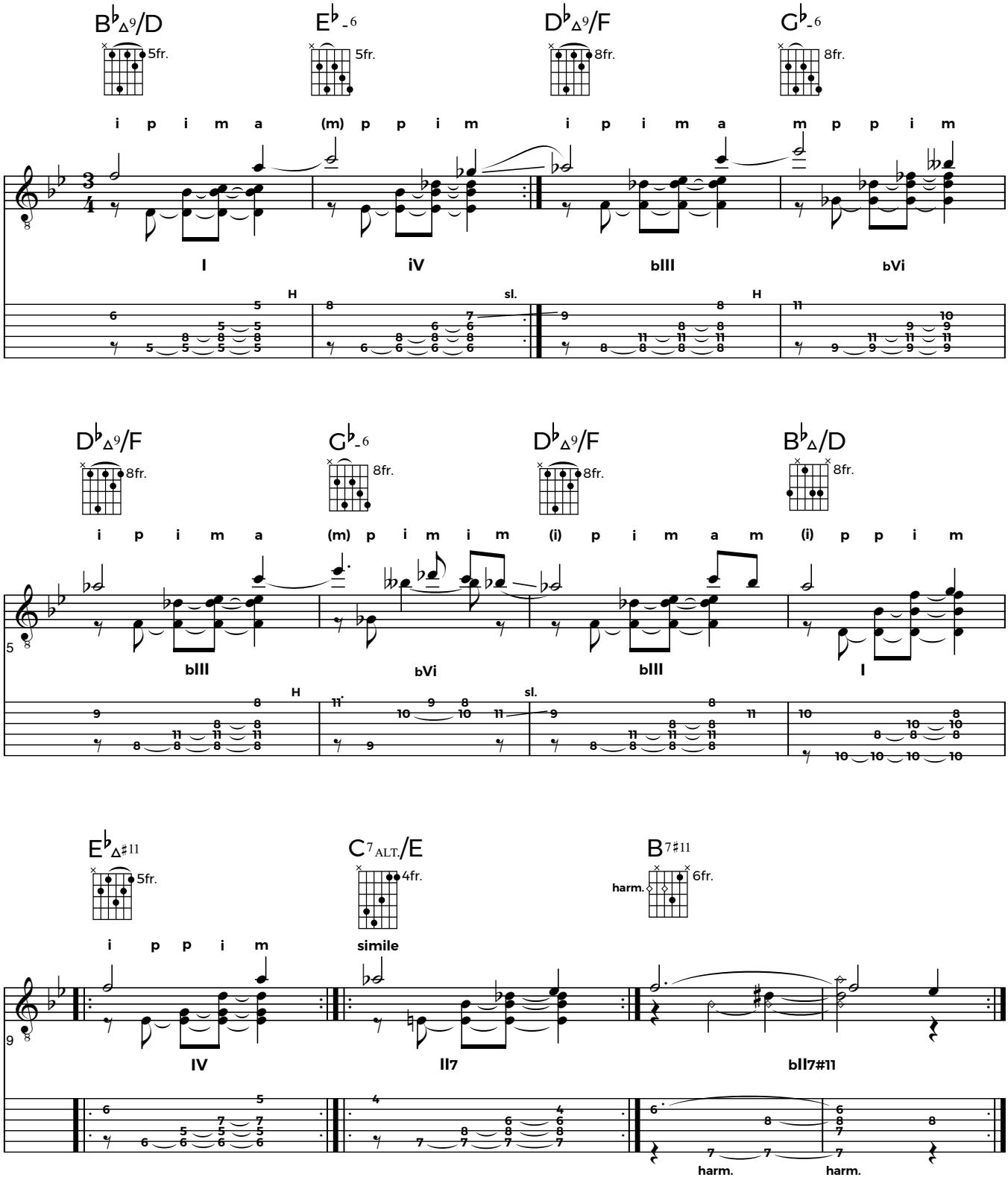
This brief yet more complex idea combines some of the challenges of **single-note and chordal playing**.

Since the fretting hand is often in a *'transitioning position'* from single notes to dyads to full chord shapes, this exercise can be used as a tool to:

- become aware of different *'in-between' positions* and connective movements in between
- find and reduce unnecessary or exagerrated movements which slow you down and detract from sound quality.
- a better understanding how to move elbow, wrist, hand and fingers to connect positions in a practical way.
- establish a flexible technique which addresses more complex textures, e.g. the combination of open strings, harmonics and fretted notes in one line.

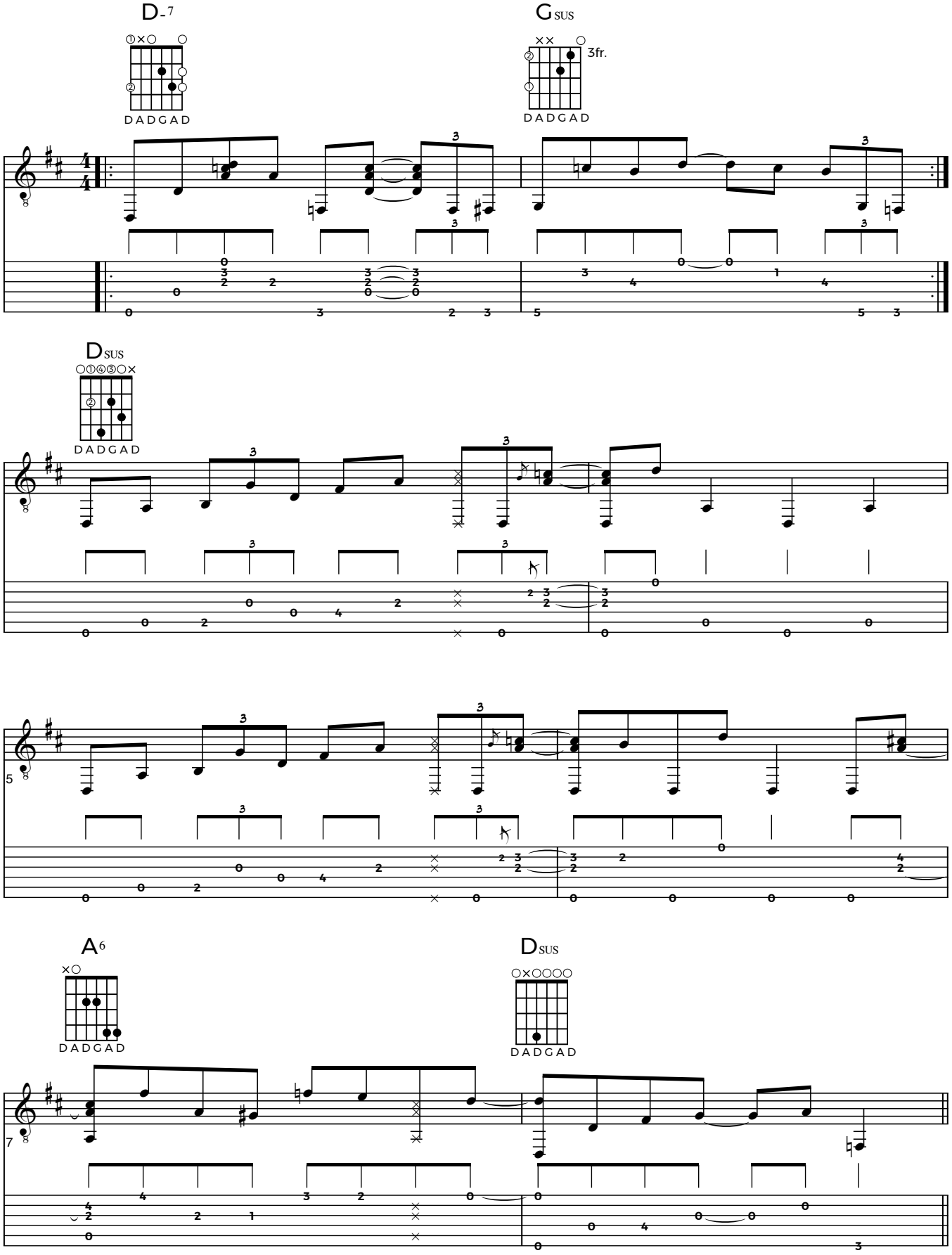
Studies for electric guitar

(1) Stella Watches the Stars

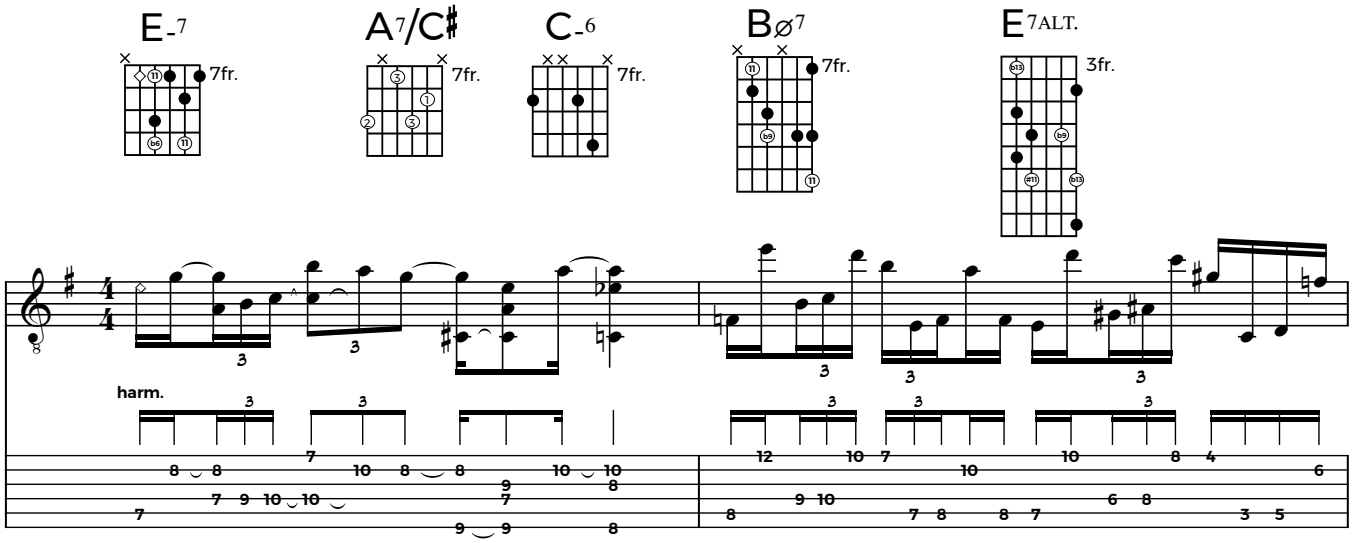


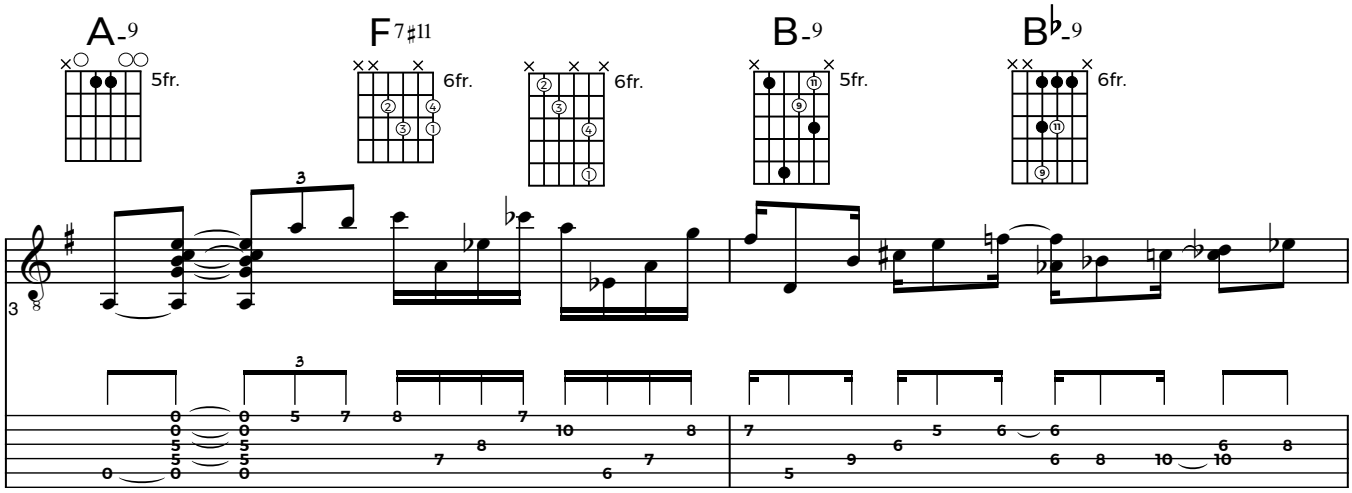
(2) 'Nioma Stoops'

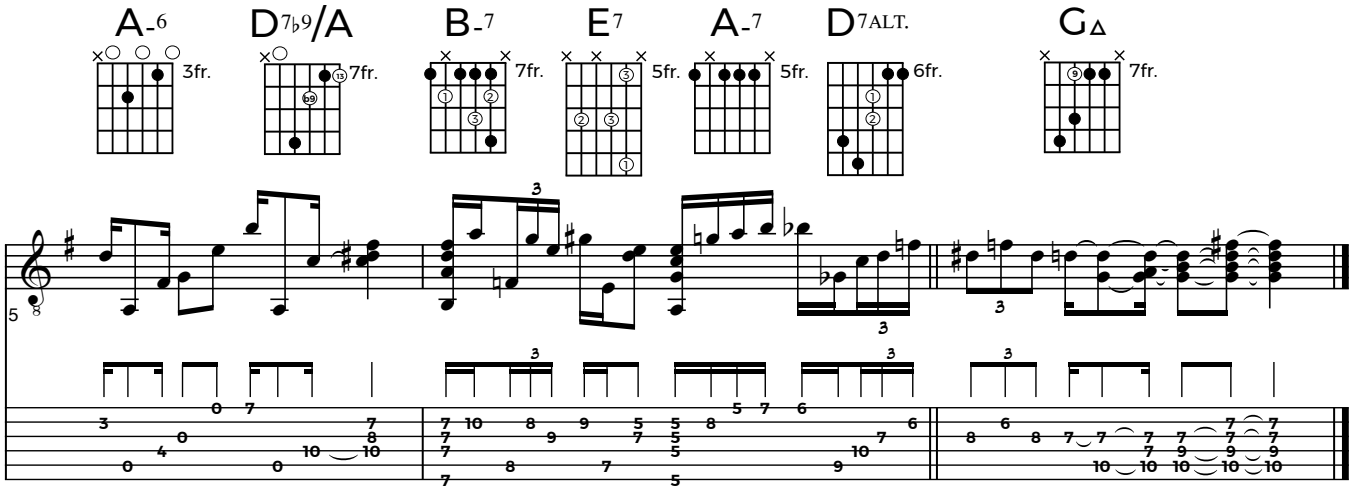
Blues riffs in DADGAD tuning



(3) Chet's Dream



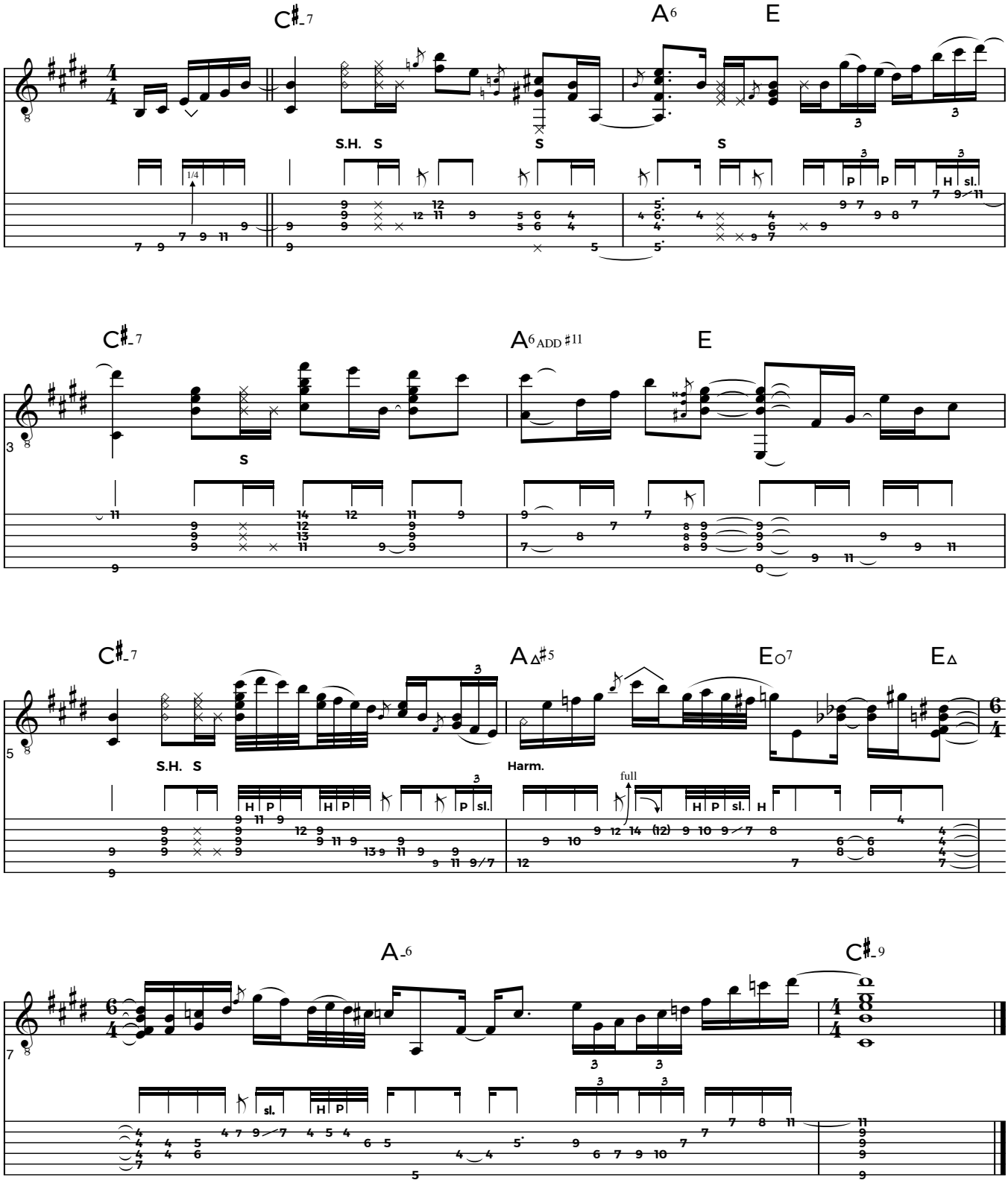




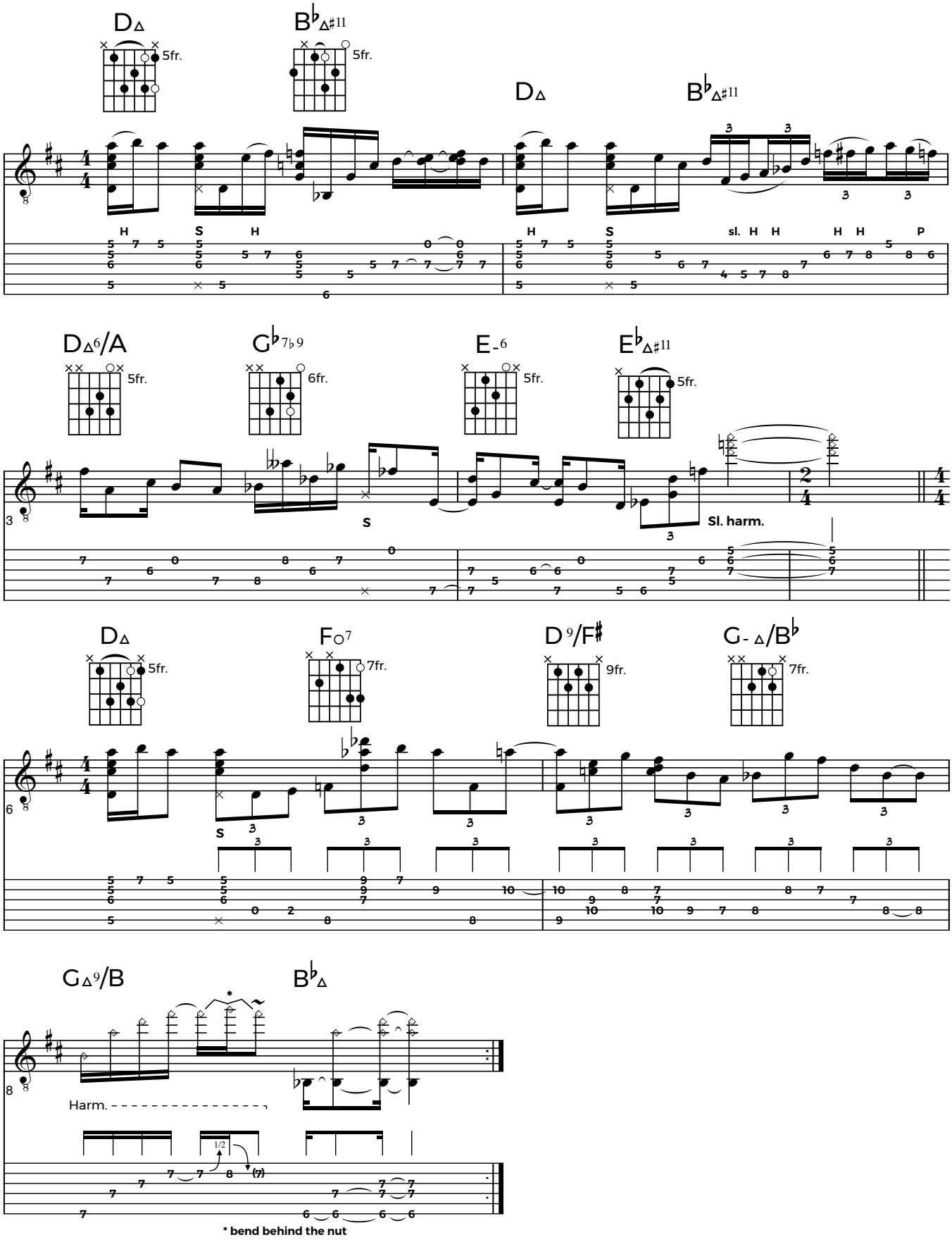
Studies for electric guitar

(4) Slow Dancing

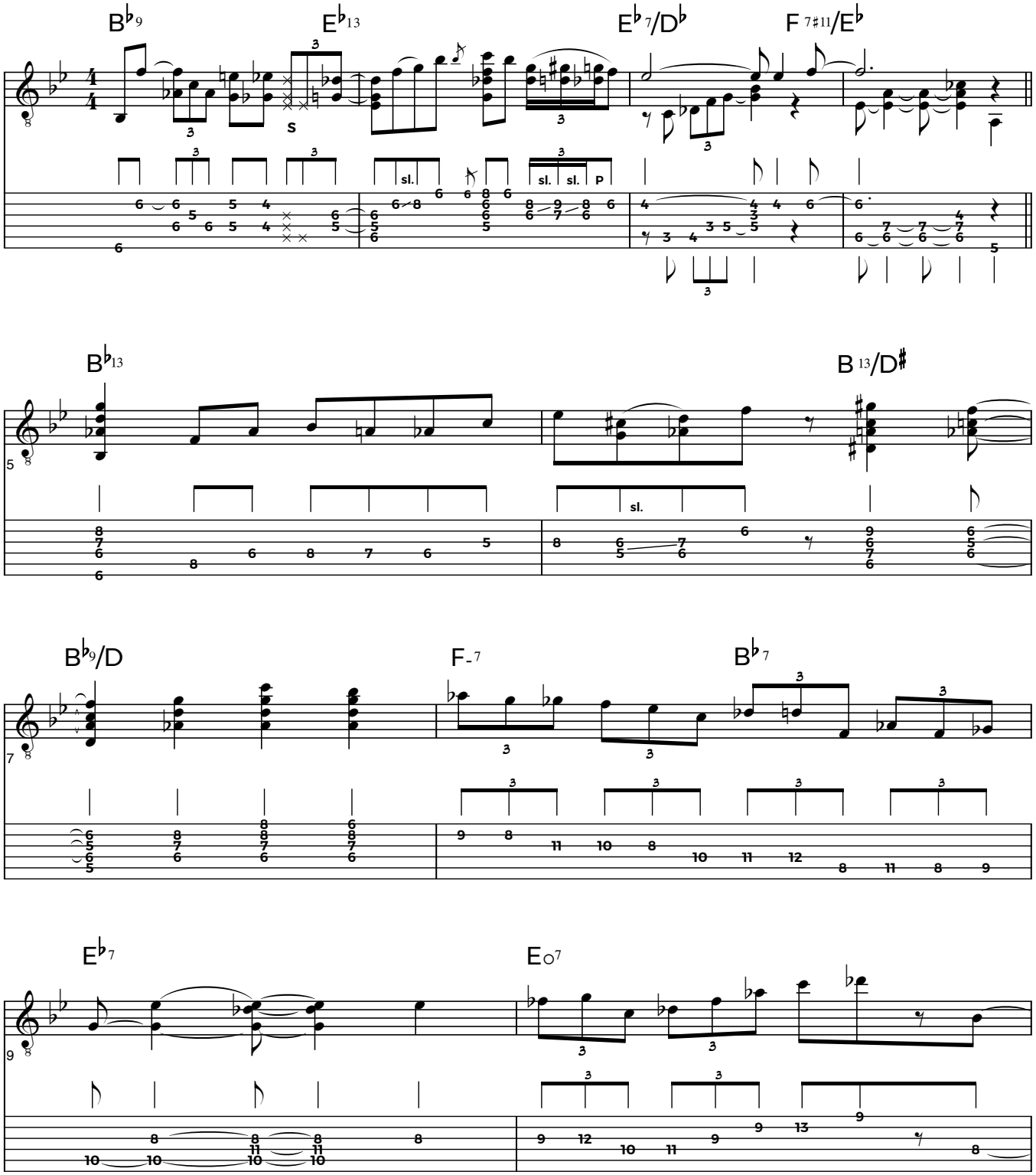
a John Mayer-inspired guitar stroll



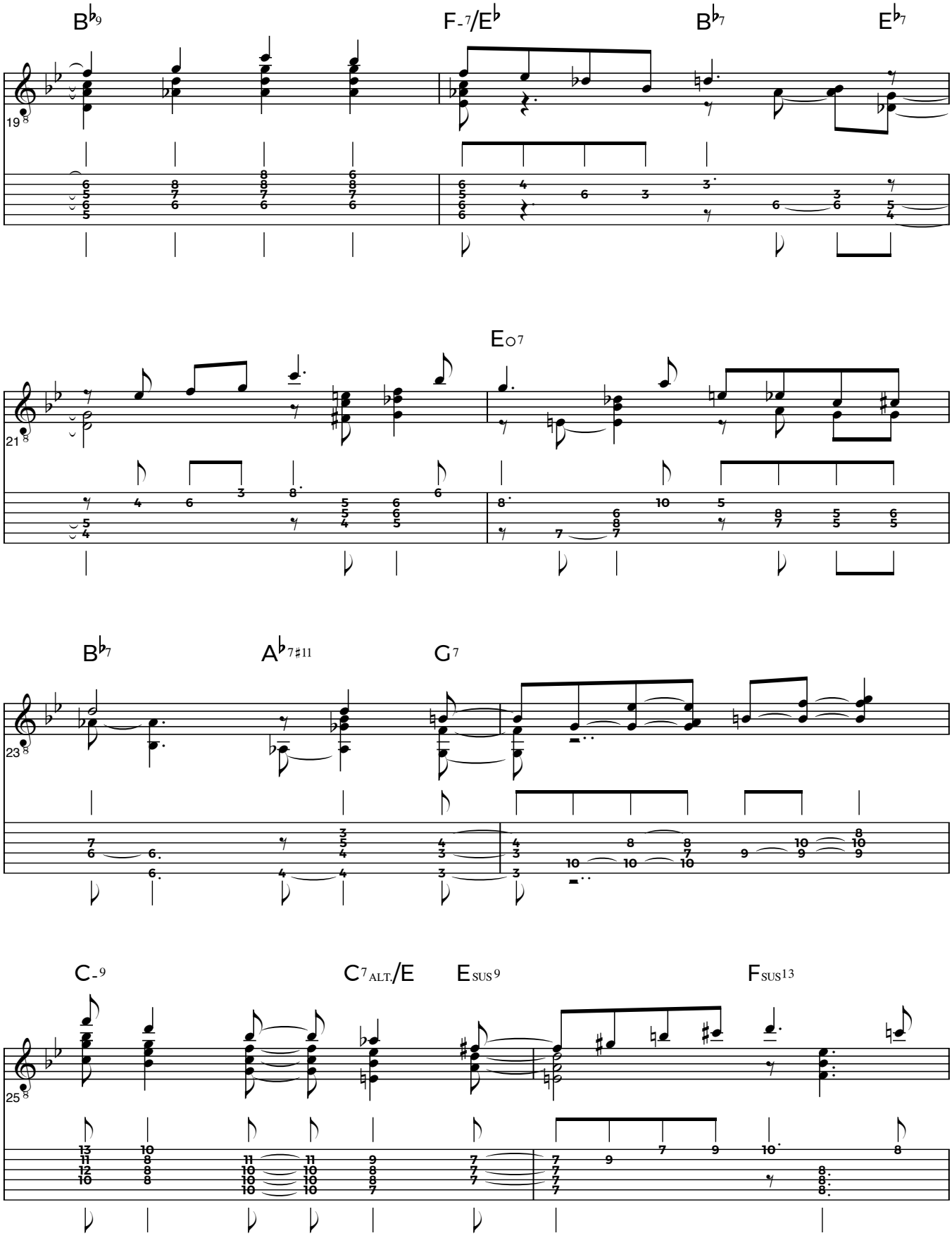
(5) Akane

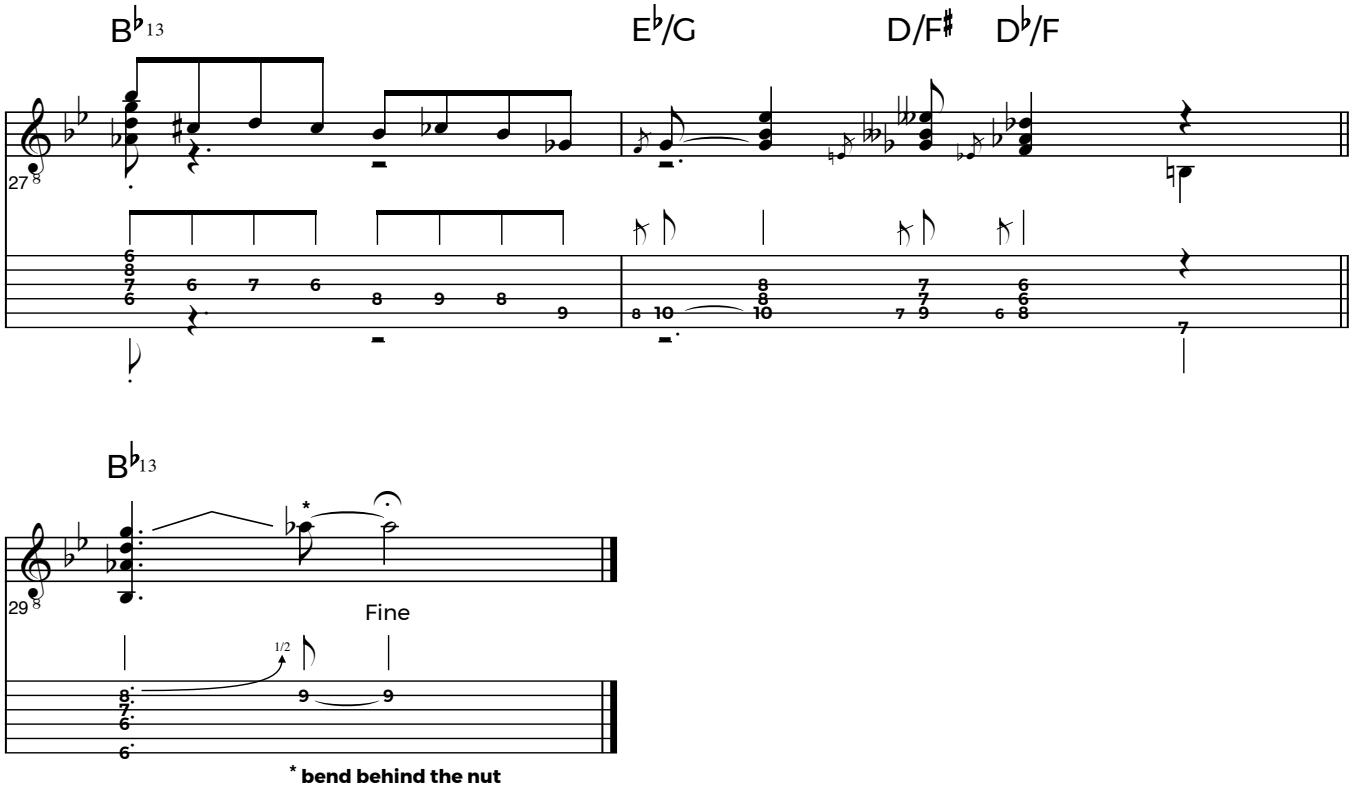

D△
B♭△♯11
5fr.
D△
B♭△♯11
H
S
H
H
S
sl. H H
H H
P
D△6/A
G♭7♭9
E-6
E♭△♯11
5fr.
6fr.
5fr.
5fr.
S
Sl. harm.
D△
F○7
D9/F♯
G-△/B♭
5fr.
7fr.
9fr.
7fr.
S
G△9/B
B♭△
Harm.
1/2
(7)
* bend behind the nut

How to 'Pass' a Blue Monk



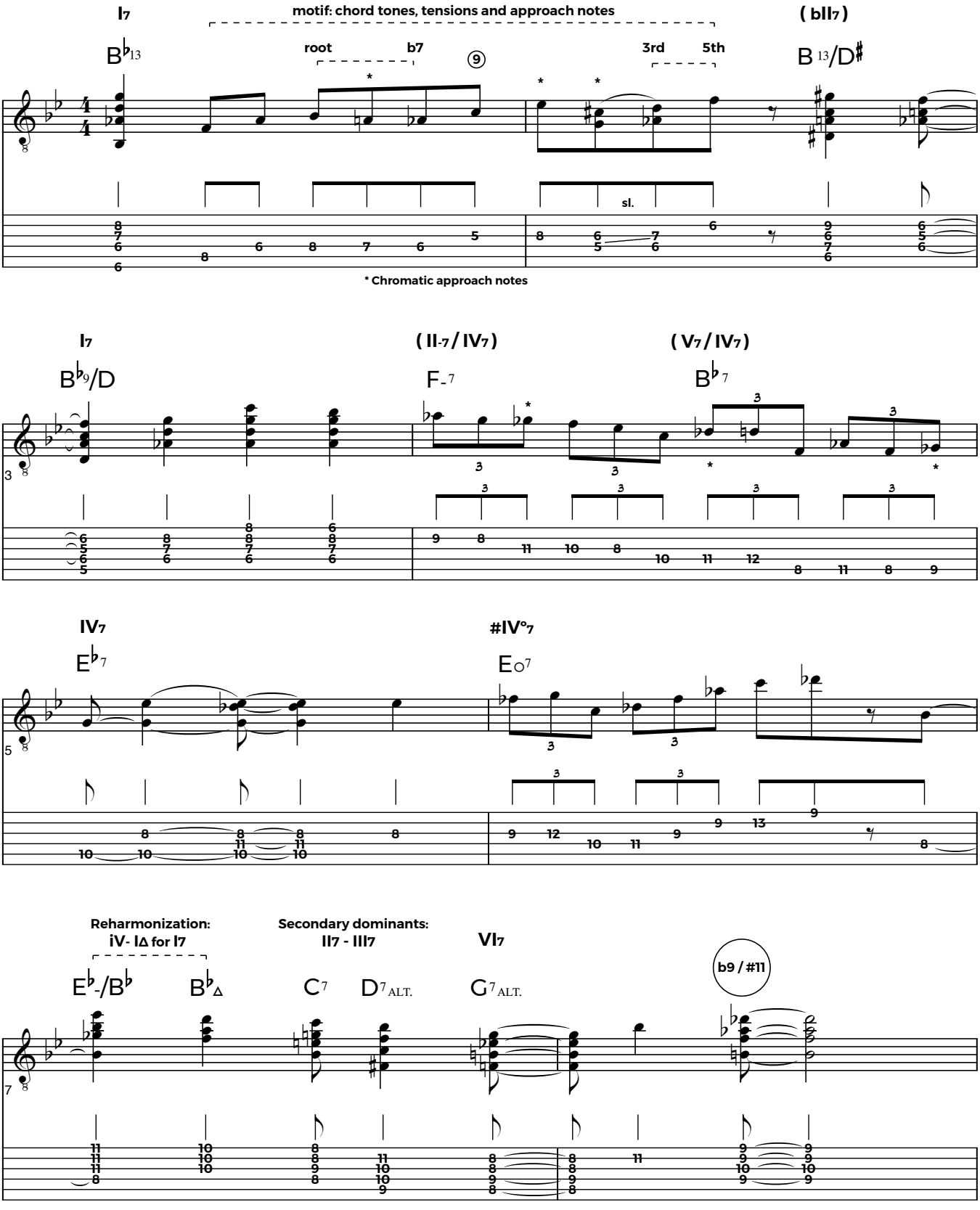

E♭-/B♭
B♭△
C7
D7 ALT.
G7 ALT.
11
C-7
F7 ALT.
13
D7♯9
G7 ALT.
C-7
F7
15
B♭13
B13
B♭13
E9
E♭9
E♭7/D♭
B♭9/D
17

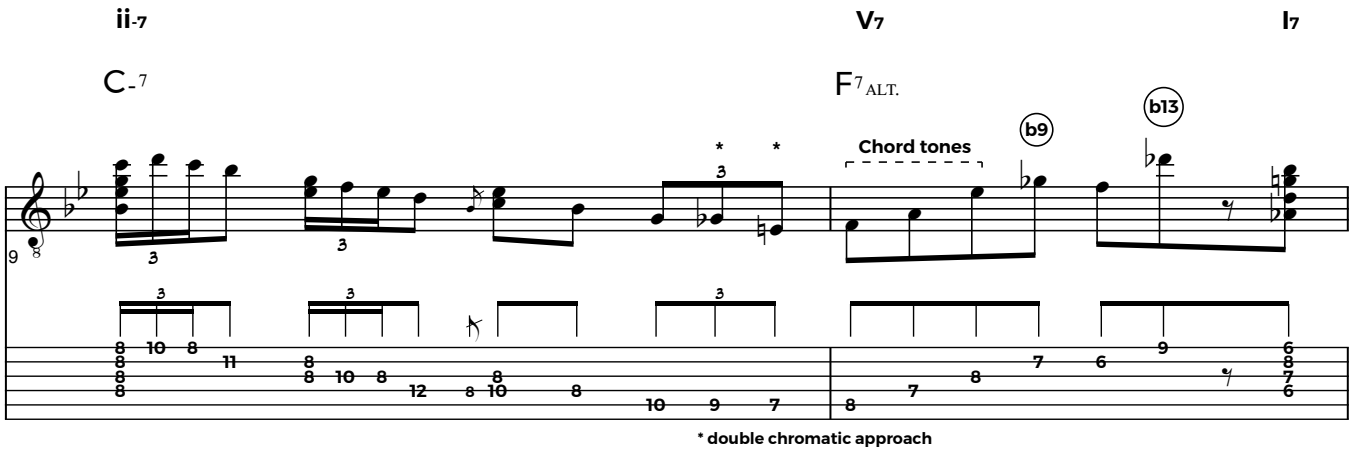

B♭9
F-7/E♭
B♭7
E♭7
19
Eo7
21
B♭7
A♭7♯11
G7
23
C-9
C7 ALT./E
E SUS9
F SUS13
25

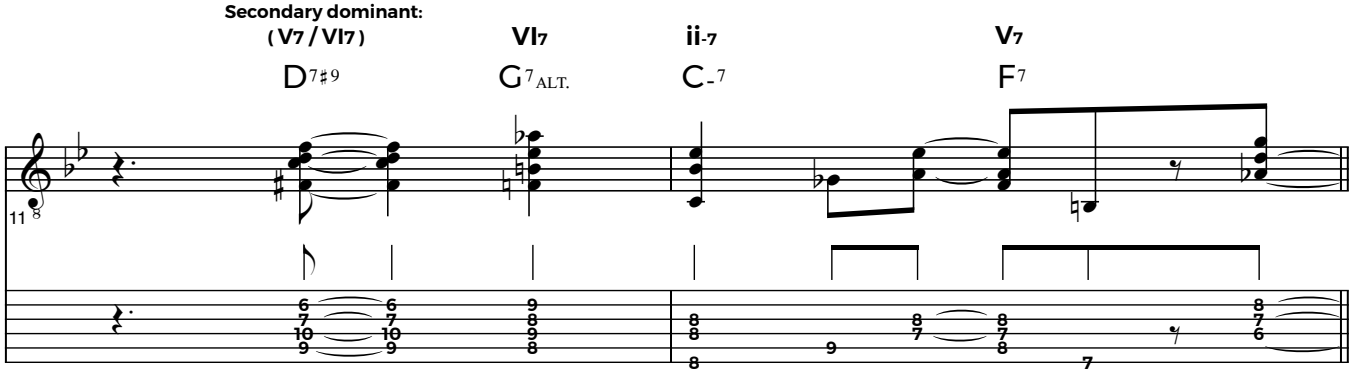

B♭13
E♭/G
D/F♯
D♭/F
27
B♭13
29
Fine
1/2
* bend behind the nut

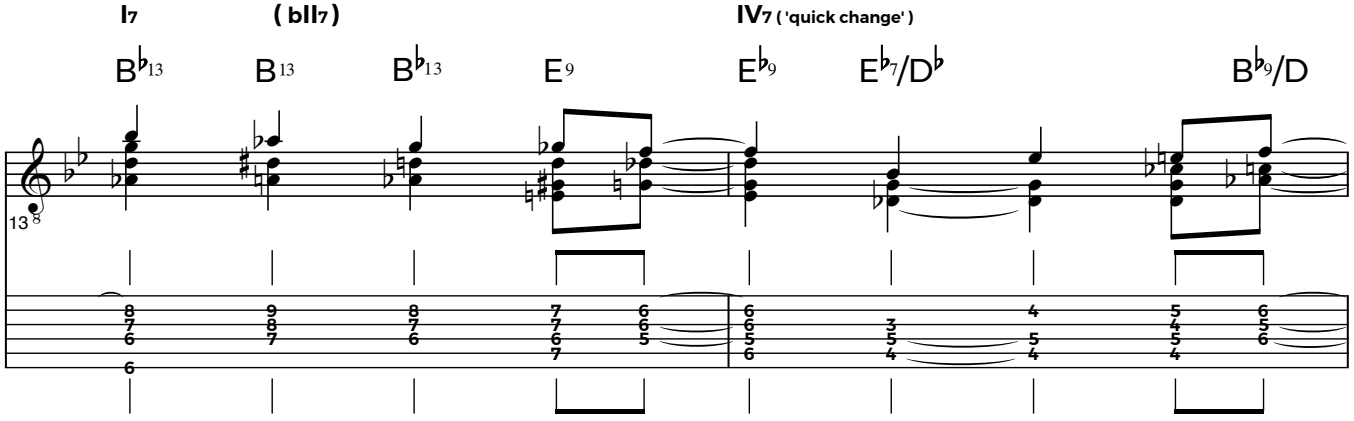
How to 'Pass' a Blue Monk

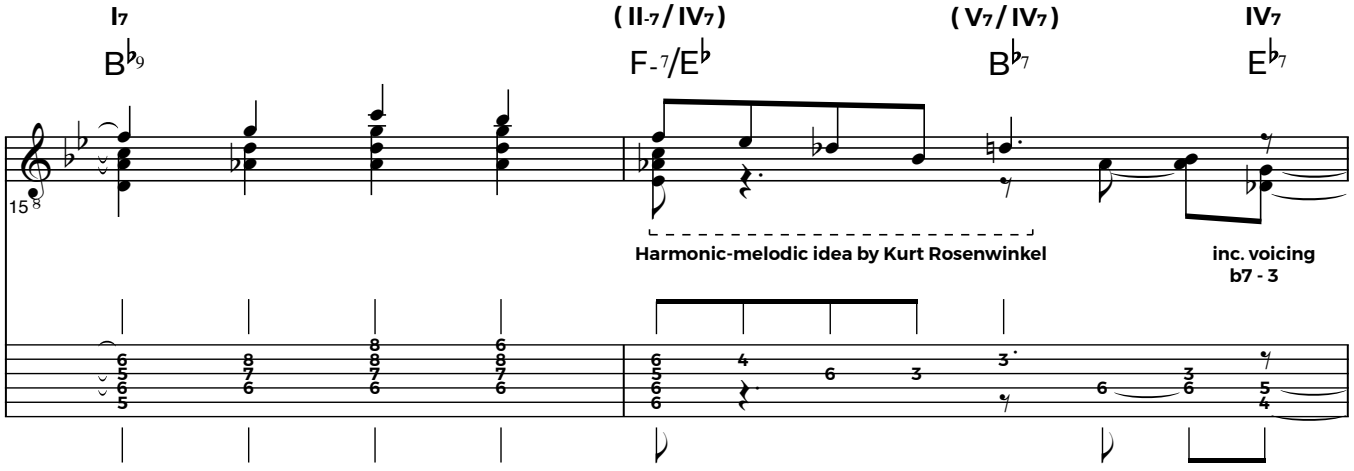
(Jazz Blues analysis)




ii-7
C-7
V7
F7 ALT.
I7
Chord tones
b9
b13
* double chromatic approach


Secondary dominant:
(V7 / VI7)
D7♯9
VI7
G7 ALT.
ii-7
C-7
V7
F7


I7
B♭13
(bII7)
B13
B♭13
E9
IV7 ('quick change')
E♭9
E♭7/D♭
B♭9/D

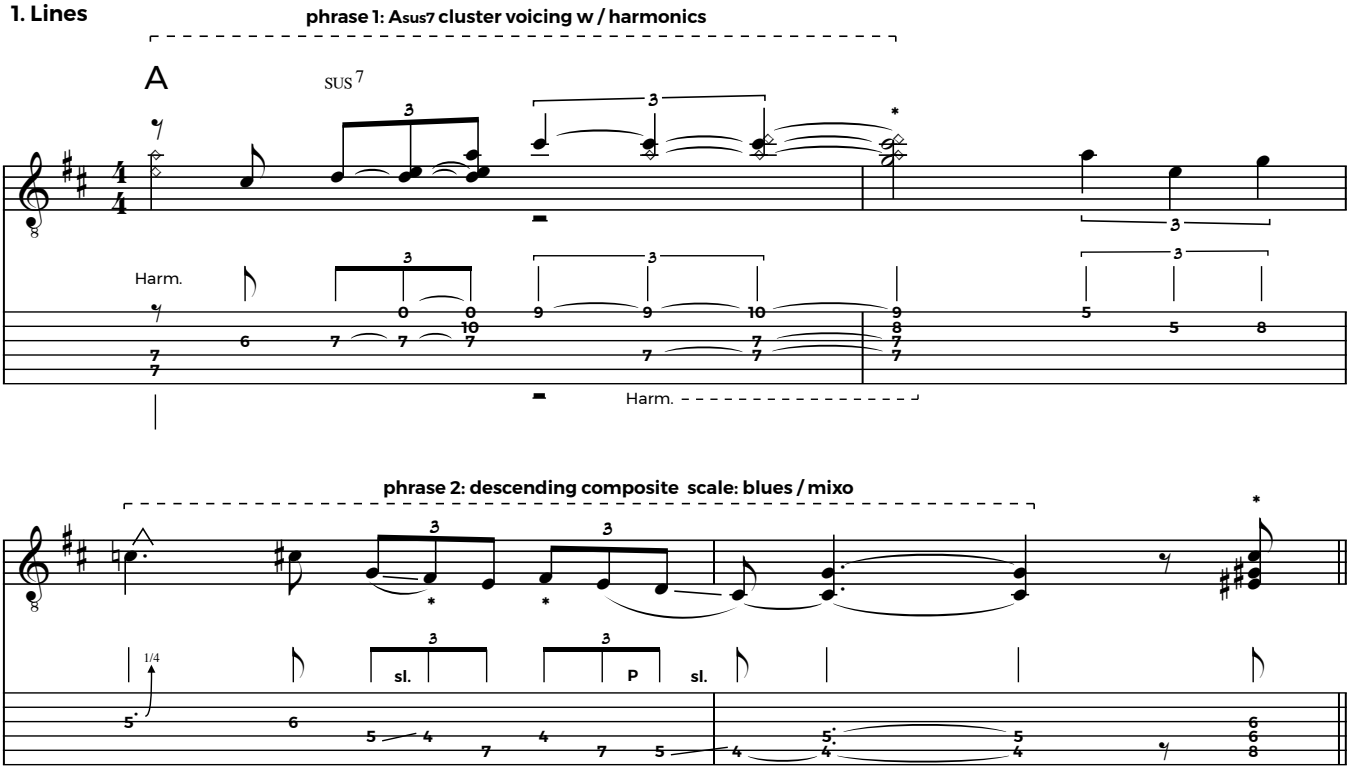

I7
B♭9
(II-7 / IV7)
F-7/E♭
(V7 / IV7)
B♭7
IV7
E♭7
Harmonic-melodic idea by Kurt Rosenwinkel
inc. voicing
b7 - 3


#IV°7
scale: WTHT
E°7
targeting b7 - 3rd of Bb7
17
I7
B♭7
A♭7♯11
secondary dominant
VI7
G7
19
ii-7
C-9
(V7/V7)
C7 ALT./E
E SUS9
superimposed harmony
V7
F SUS13
21
Joe Pass inspired chord-melody lick
I7
B♭13
'The Wind Cries Mary' chords in reverse ;)
1st inversion triads w / hammer-on
E♭/G
D/F♯
D♭/F
23

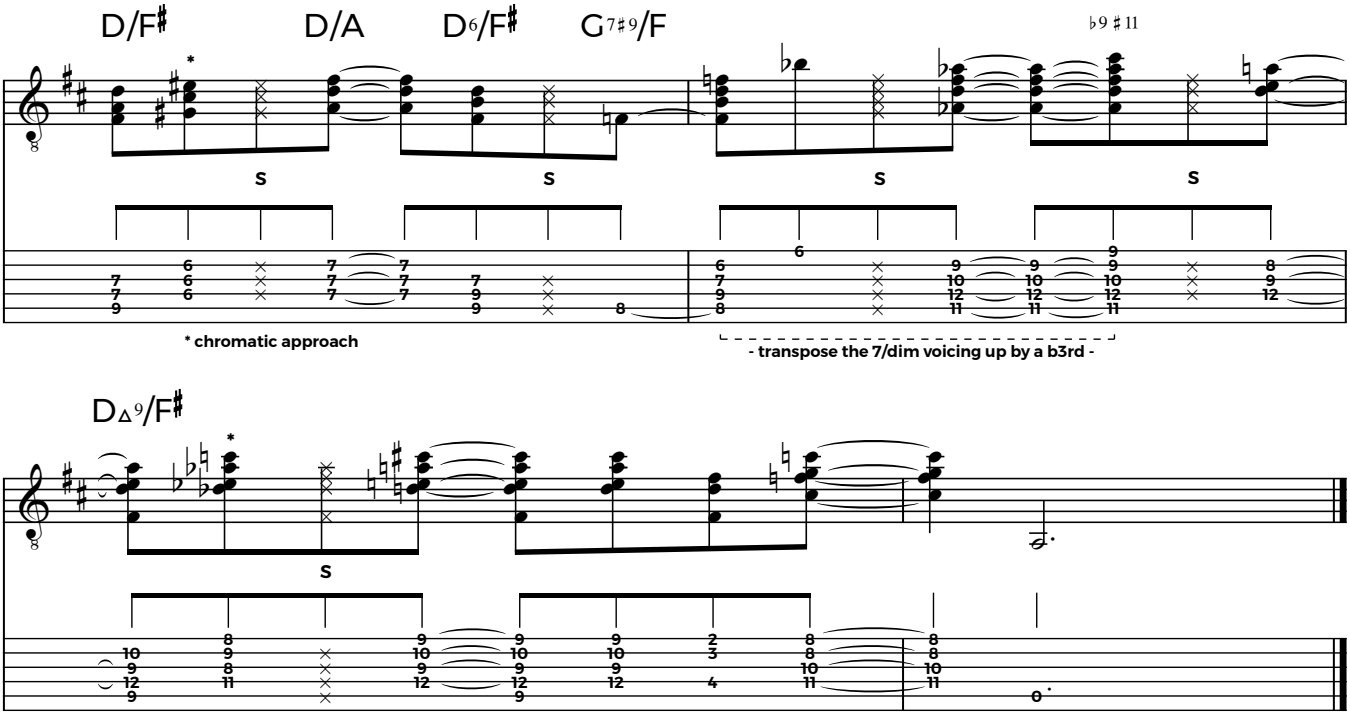
Tone & Technique (1): 'Tele moves'

2 licks and riffs inspired by Jim Campilongo

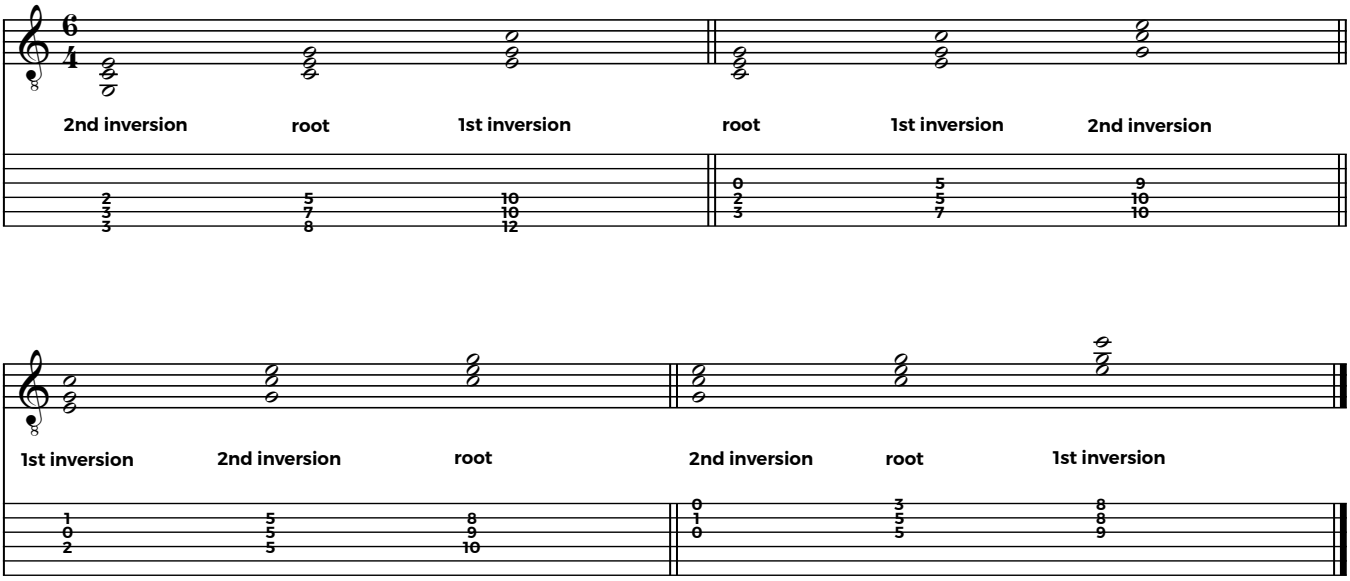
1. Lines



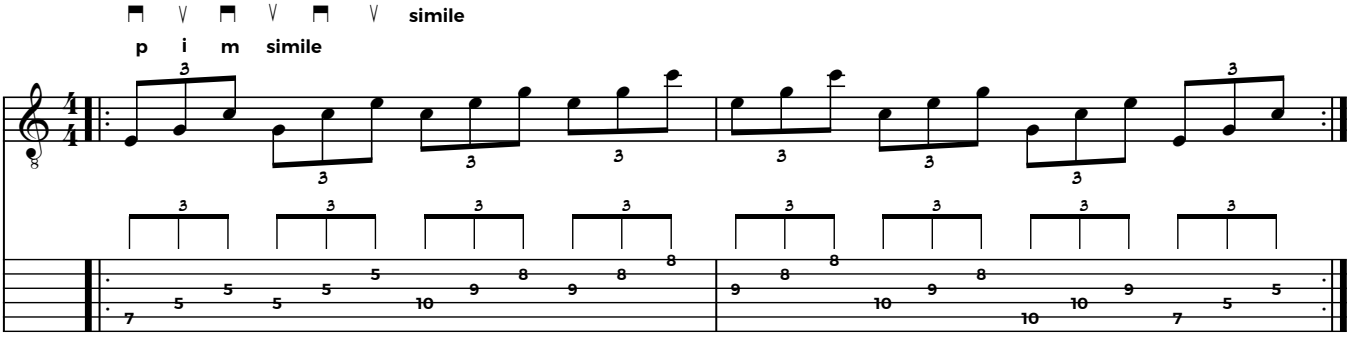
2. Comping: triads and cluster voicings + chromatic approaches



3. Close position triads on all string sets (C major)



b) Triad inversions picking hand exercise



Wether you play fingerstyle or with a pick, this exercise is intended to improve overall '*tone consistency*'.

1. The triad shapes should become **second nature**: very slow but active repetition builds the **necessary muscle memory**. E.g. stick with the picking pattern, aim to be always aware which inversion you're playing, then gradually increase the speed until your muscle memory is 'up to speed': that would be the case if you simply think "C major 1st inversion" and your hand 'finds' the chord grip autimatically while you don't have to think about where the notes are or which fingers to use.

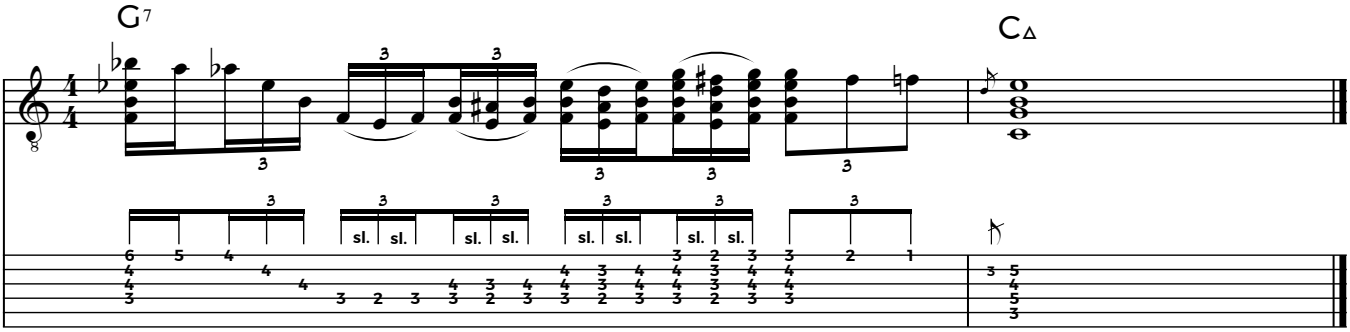
2. For now, each note should sound **dynamically** similar: adjust your fingers attack until you achieve even dynamics from piano to forte. In the beginning, specific movements might create louder or more silent notes - listen and watch your fingers closely to adjust the way the strings are plucked.

3. Each sound has a **texture**: independent from what kind of guitar and amp you use your tone's initial imprint is determined by the velocity with which you pick the strings, the picking angle, the surface of your fingers/nails or picks, your picking hand position (e.g. near or far from the neck) and how you 'leave' the plucked string.

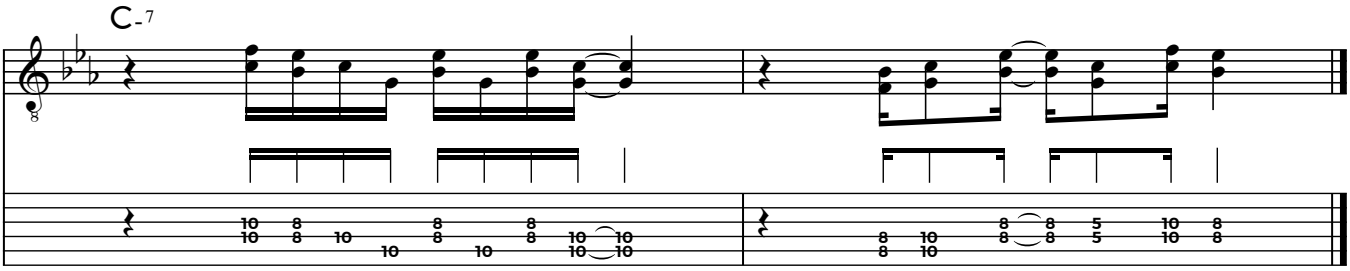
Neo Soul flares

inspired by Chalmers 'Spanky' Alford

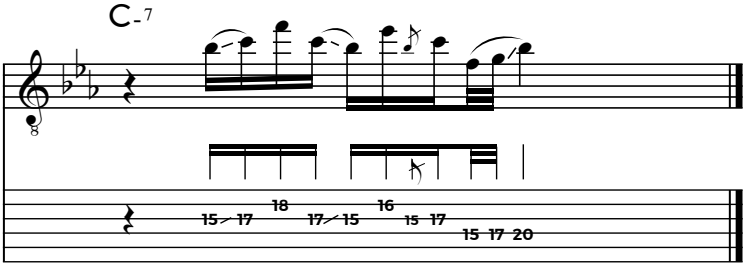
a) 'Gospel flares: outlining a V - I with a 'Spanky' Alford concept



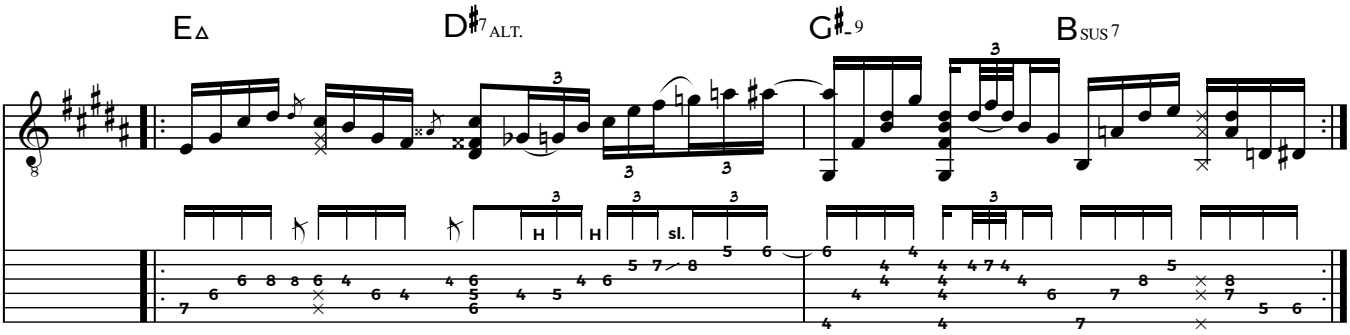
b) [00:58] Douple stop fill, 'Forget Regret' - the RH Factor (2003)



c) [01:11] Smooth slides, 'Forget Regret' - the RH Factor (2003)

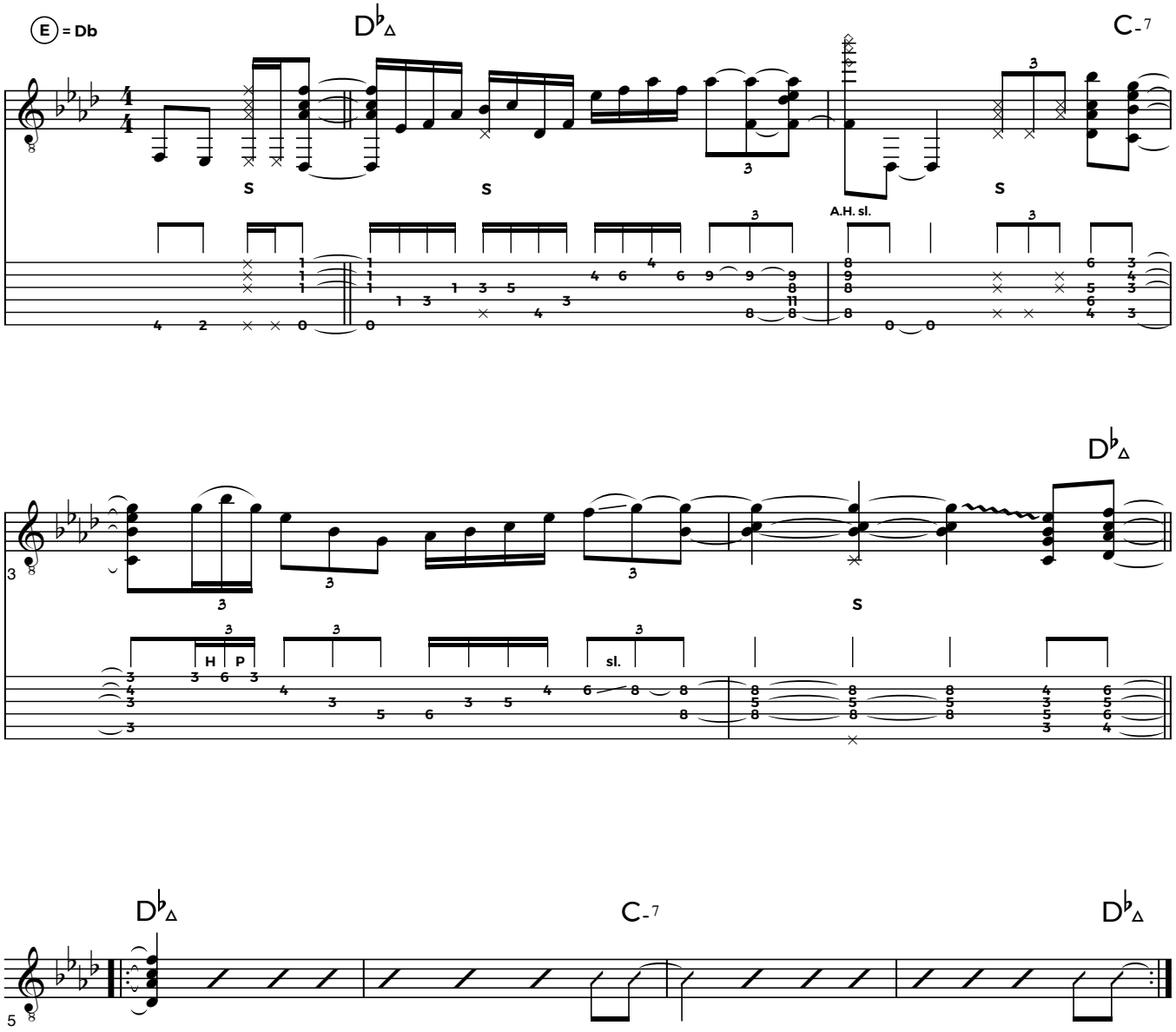


d) 'Neo soul' chord progression: IV - III7 - Vi - I7



Arranging grooves for guitar (1)

inspired by Rich Brian's track 'Kids'

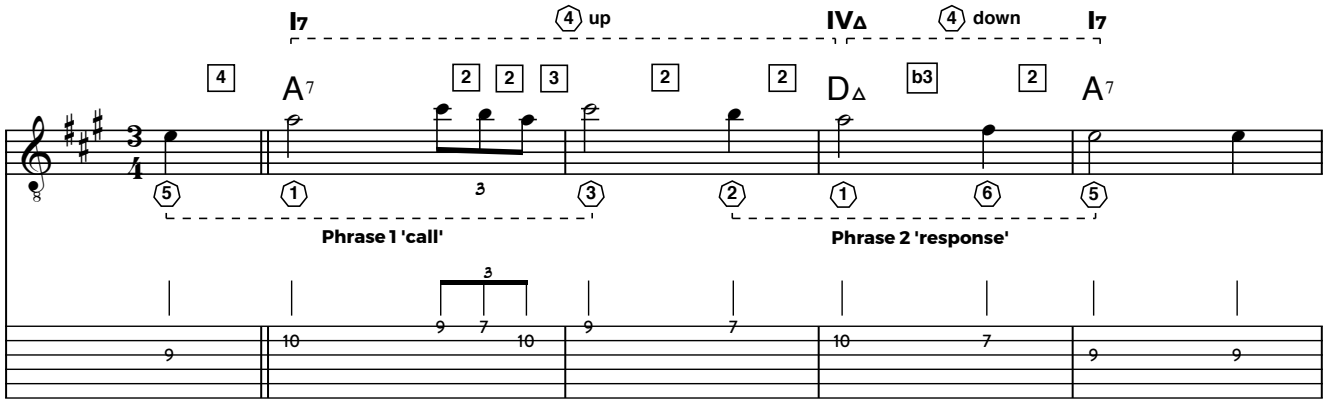


Arranging for Solo Guitar: Basics

"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 to 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

a) Learning melodic phrases and harmonic progressions on a structural level: 'Amazing Grace'



□ = **tonal interval structure** - in relation to the present heptatonic scale / tonality / mode

⬡ = **chromatic** 'substantial' **interval structure**

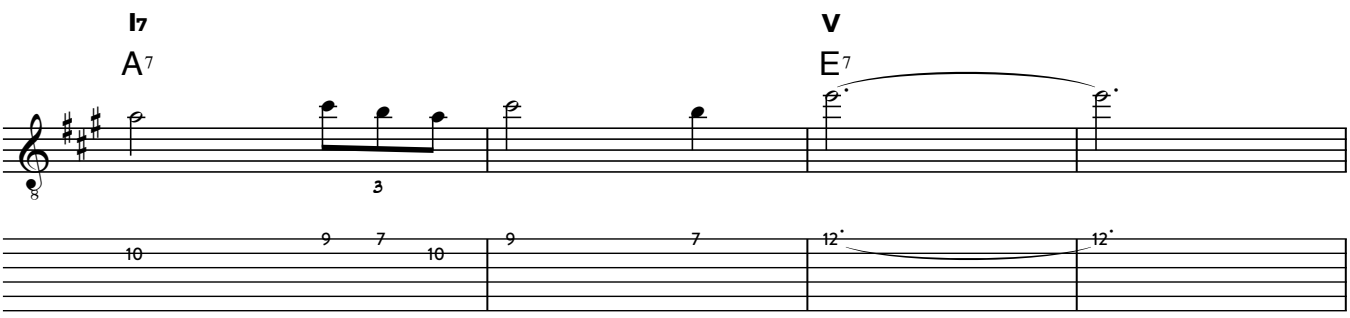
Identify and analyze **'melodic tonal groups'*** and **'harmonic tonal groups'*** by measuring their intervallic structure:

- intervallic relationship of melody notes = chromatic interval structure
- intervallic relationship between melody, heptatonic scale and actual harmonization = tonal interval structure
- intervallic movement of the root or the lowest note of a chord to the subsequent harmony
- kind and characteristic of the harmonization (e.g. triads, seventh chords, quartal harmony, inversions, tensions etc.)

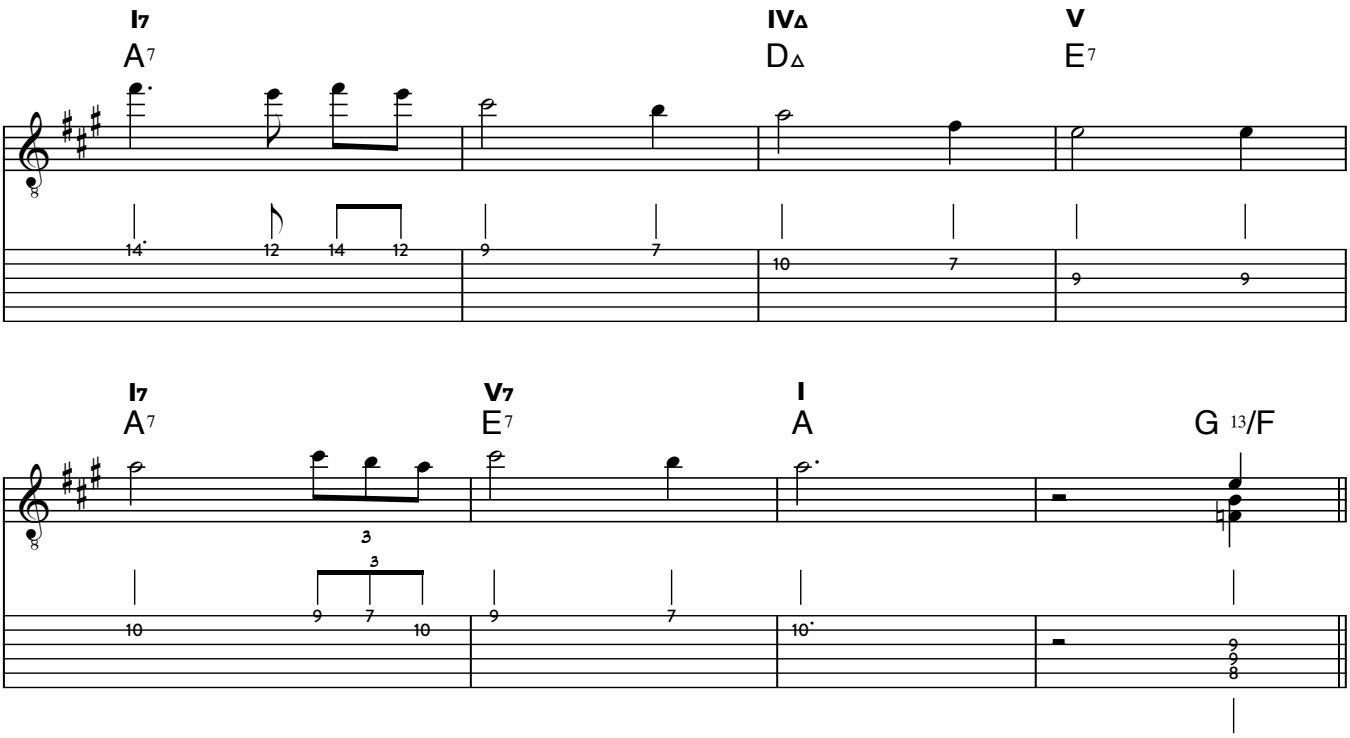
Learning musical motifs, chord progressions and entire songs on a **structural level** helps to memorize tunes and to understand which notes are important to outline melodic and harmonic development with one instrument.

Knowing intervallic structures also enables to hear the 'abstract musical concepts' behind the specific notes of a melody, lick or improvisation. This is extremely helpful to develop your own musical ideas and vocabulary based on your favorite musical performances / artists.

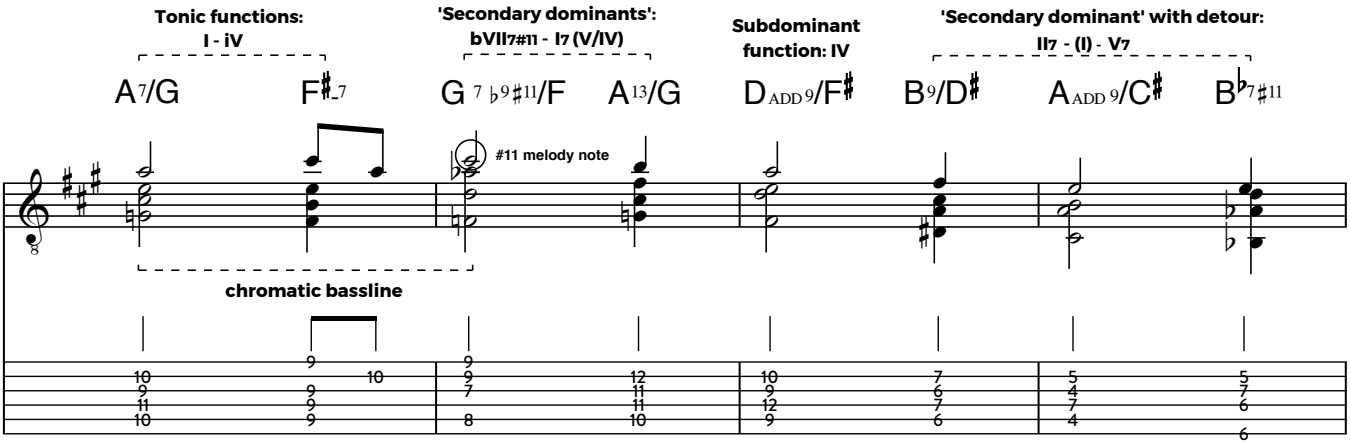
b) Continuation of 'Amazing Grace': melody and basic harmonies



* Intervals can be measured based on any arbitrary group 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. [...] (Kissenbeck 2007)



c) Chord-Melody 'Gospel Chords' : (re)harmonization ideas based on the original changes

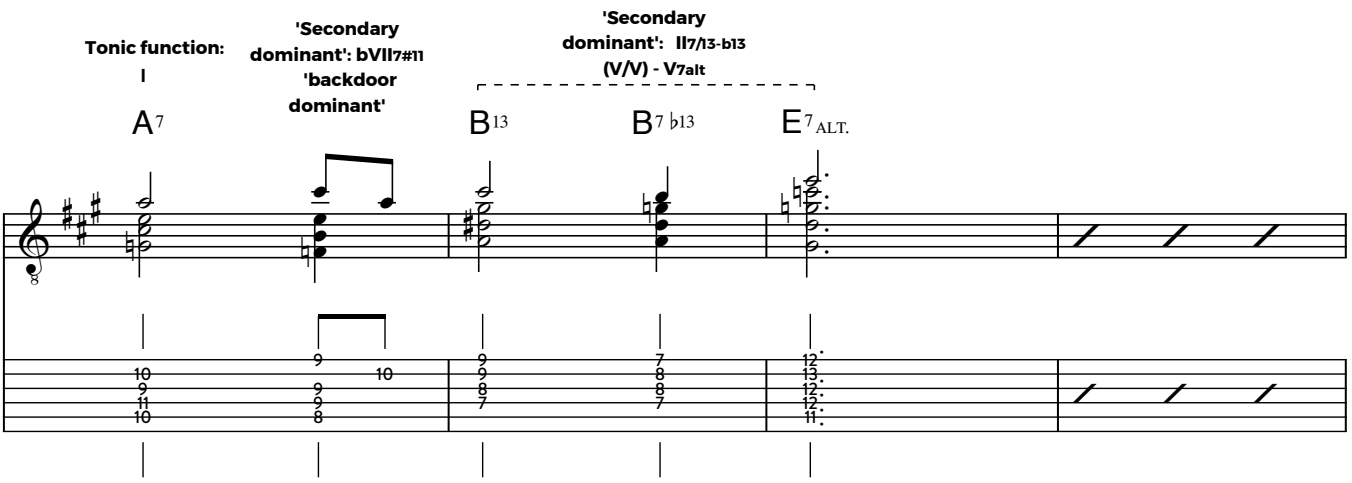


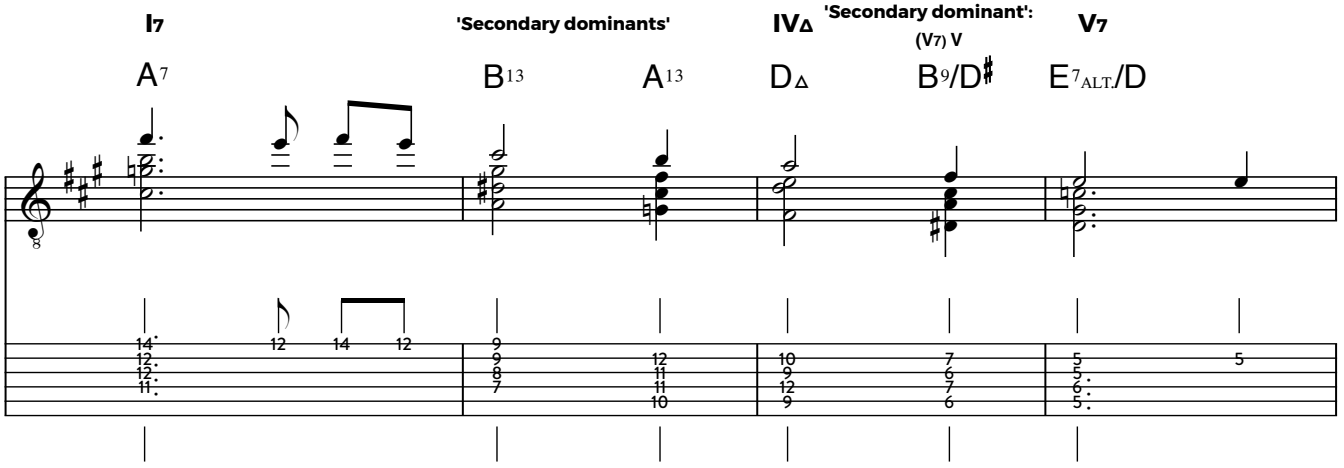
Chords that are either related to tonic, subdominant or dominant degree are interchangeable because of common notes they share. Within a tonal context they serve the same function and can be used to harmonize melody notes, substituting the main functions I, IV, V. This knowledge is practical to find substitutions, voicing ideas or alternative bass movements.

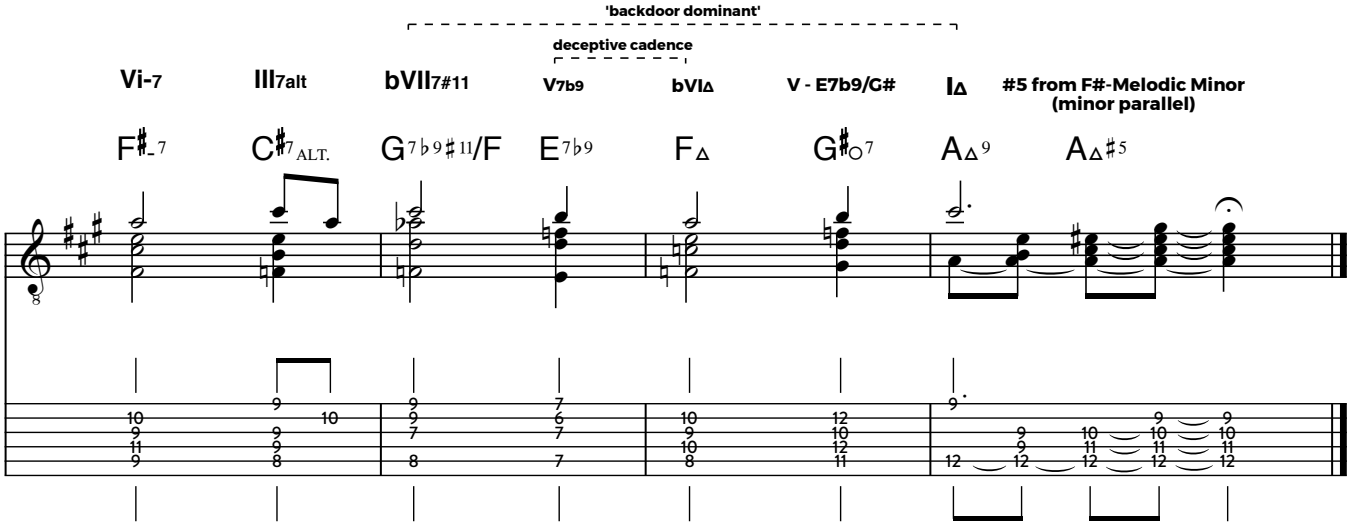
Tonic functions:	I - iii - iV
Subdominant functions:	IV - ii
Dominant functions:	V - Vii

E.g. both harmonies, A or F#-, are alternatives to harmonize a 'tonic' melody note.

Beyond this basic interchangeability of chords, secondary dominants provide for more tension and resolution tendencies. As in the sample above secondary dominants don't have to resolve directly to the following chord. They can also be followed by another inserted chord before finally resolving to the target harmony: e.g. B9/D (II7) - Aadd9/C# (I) - Bb7#11 (V7).
In the key of A the secondary dominant B7 (V/V) leads to the V (E7). E7 is present as tritone substitute - Bb7#11.

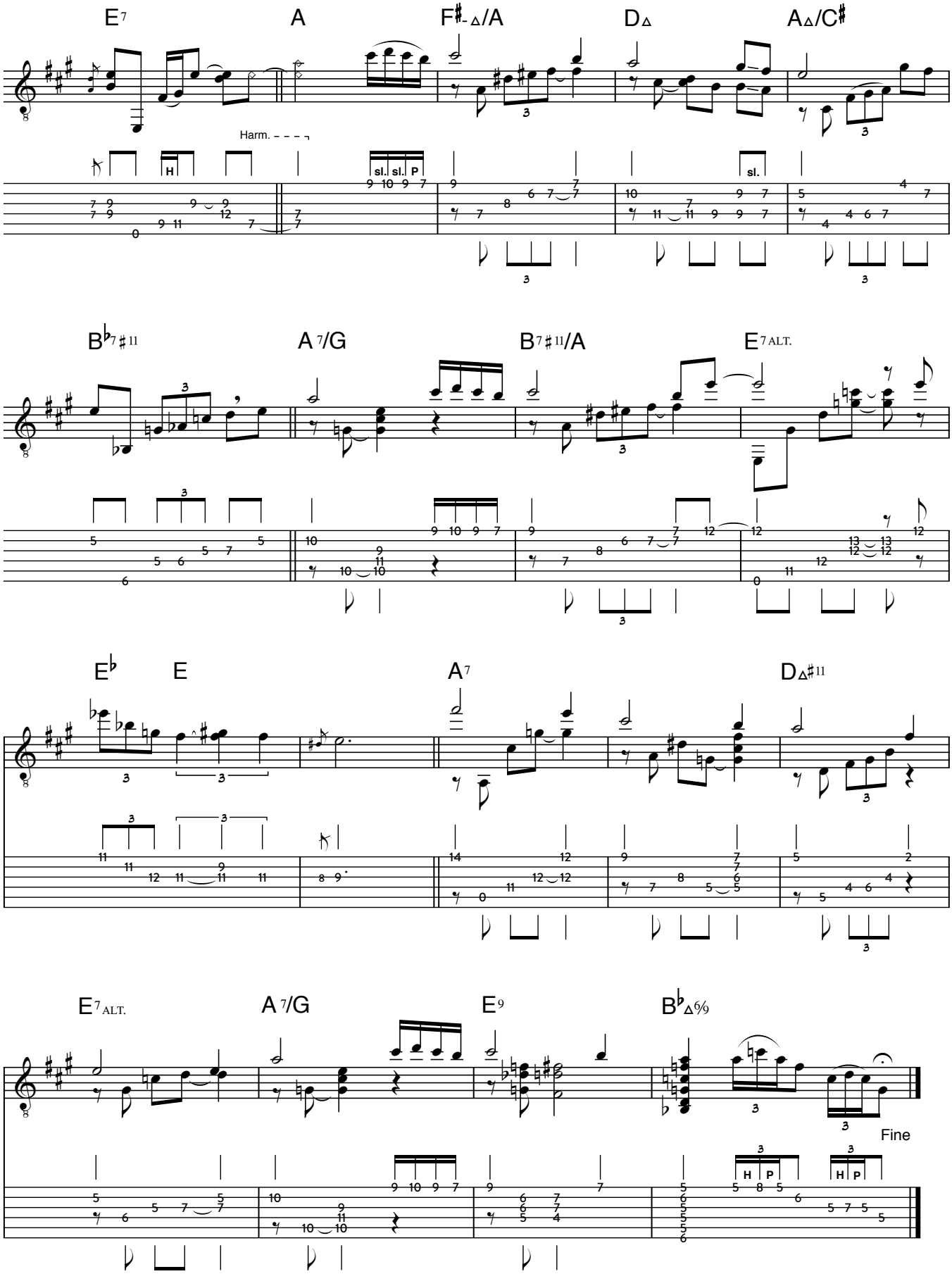

Tonic function:
I
'Secondary dominant': bVII7#11
'backdoor dominant'
'Secondary dominant': II7/13-b13
(V/V) - V7alt
A7
B13
B7 b13
E7 ALT.


I7
'Secondary dominants'
IVΔ
'Secondary dominant':
(V7) V
V7
A7
B13
A13
DΔ
B9/D#
E7 ALT./D

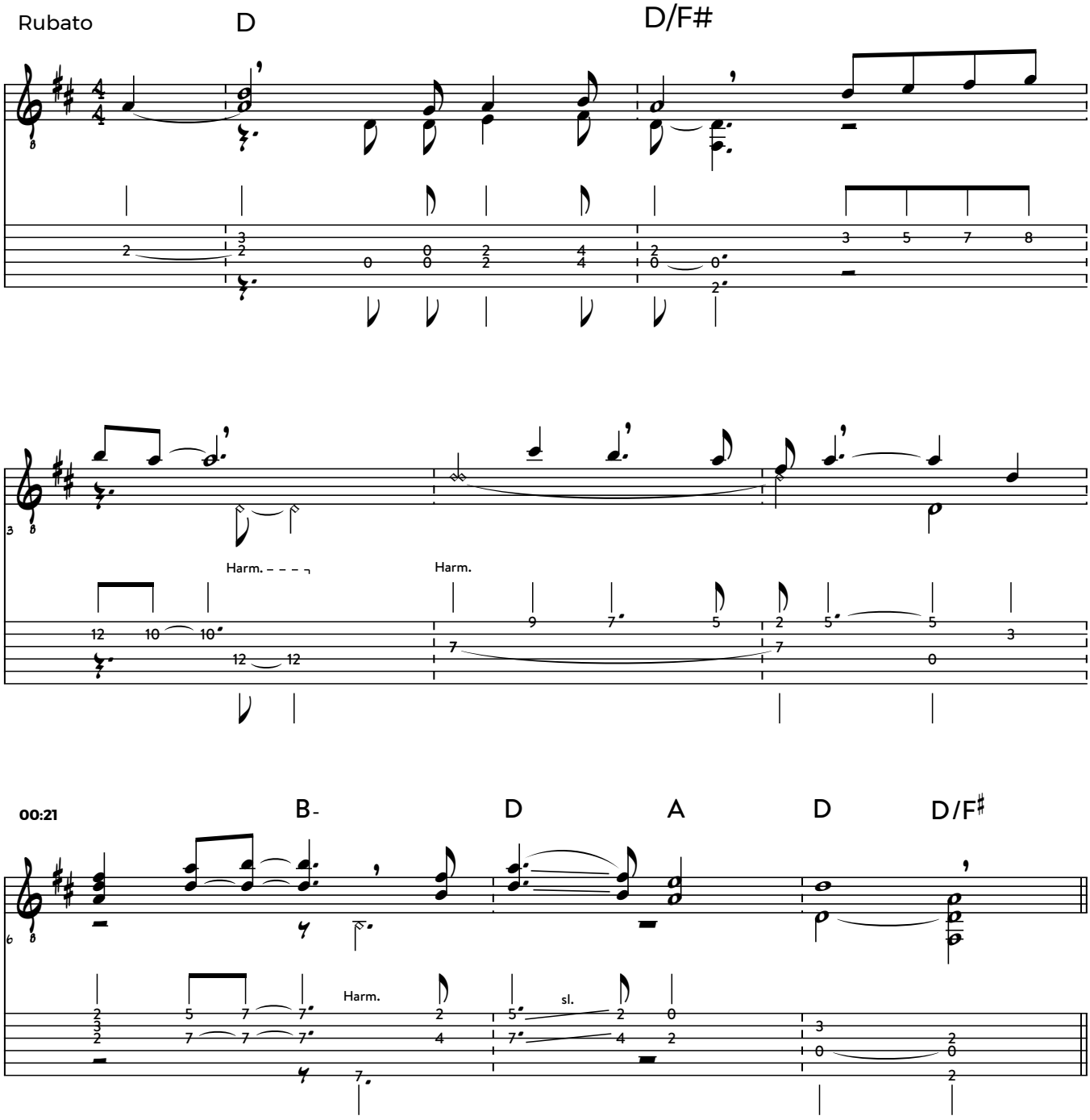

'backdoor dominant'
deceptive cadence
Vi-7
III7alt
bVII7#11
V7b9
bVIΔ
V - E7b9/G#
IΔ
#5 from F#-Melodic Minor
(minor parallel)
F#-7
C#7 ALT.
G7 b9 #11/F
E7b9
FΔ
G#ø7
AΔ9
AΔ#5

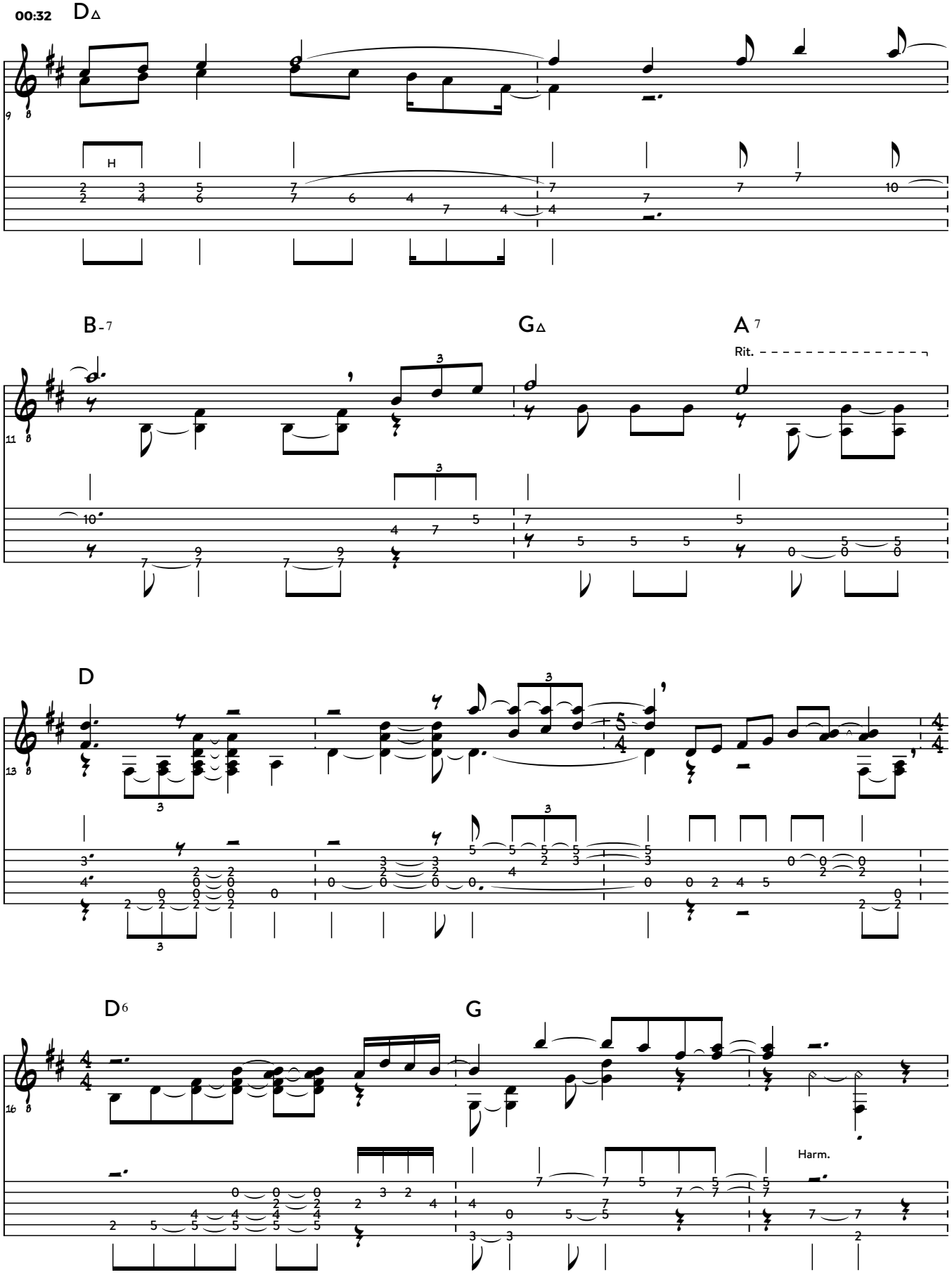
Amazing Grace

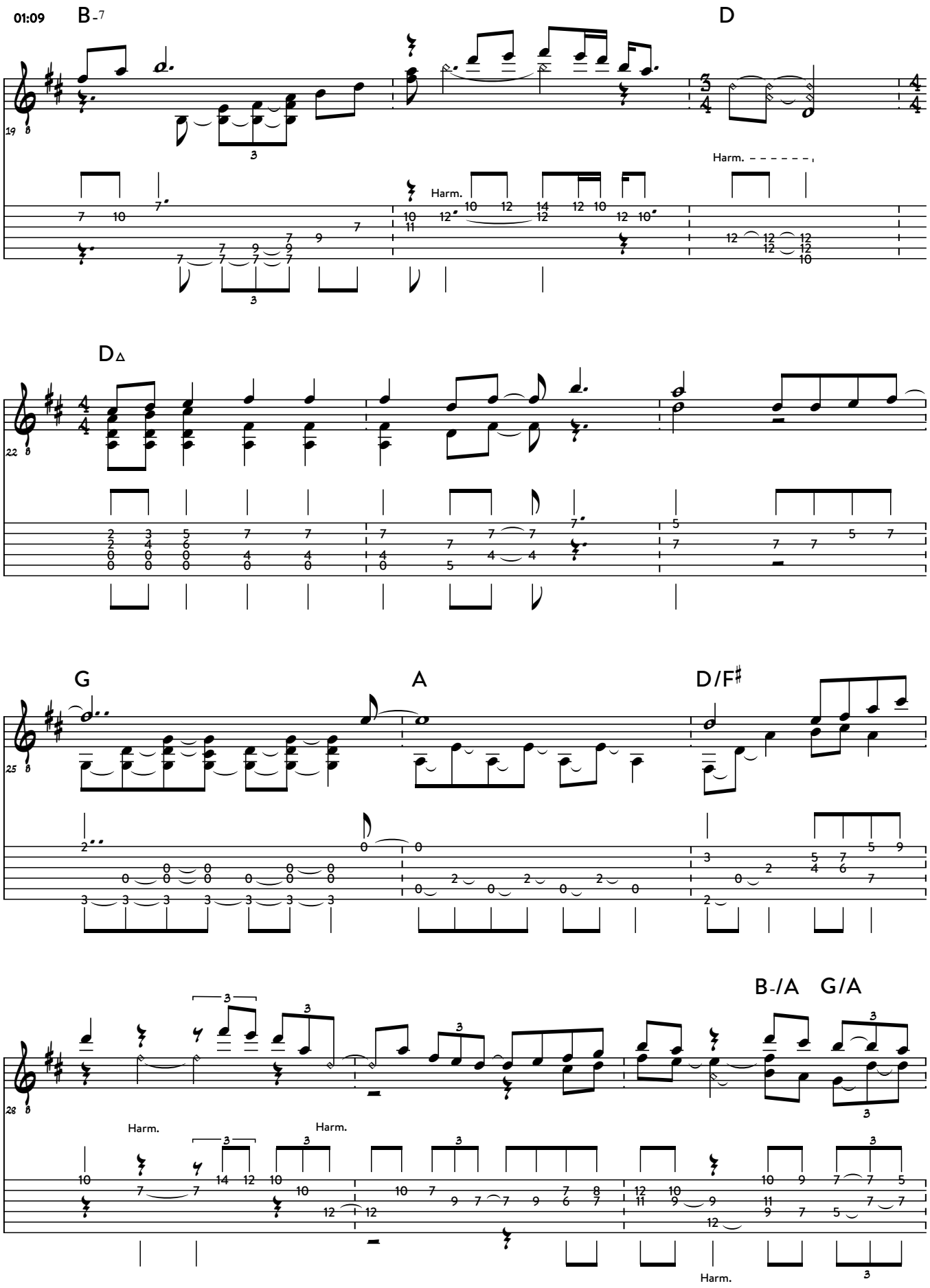
Arranging Ideas

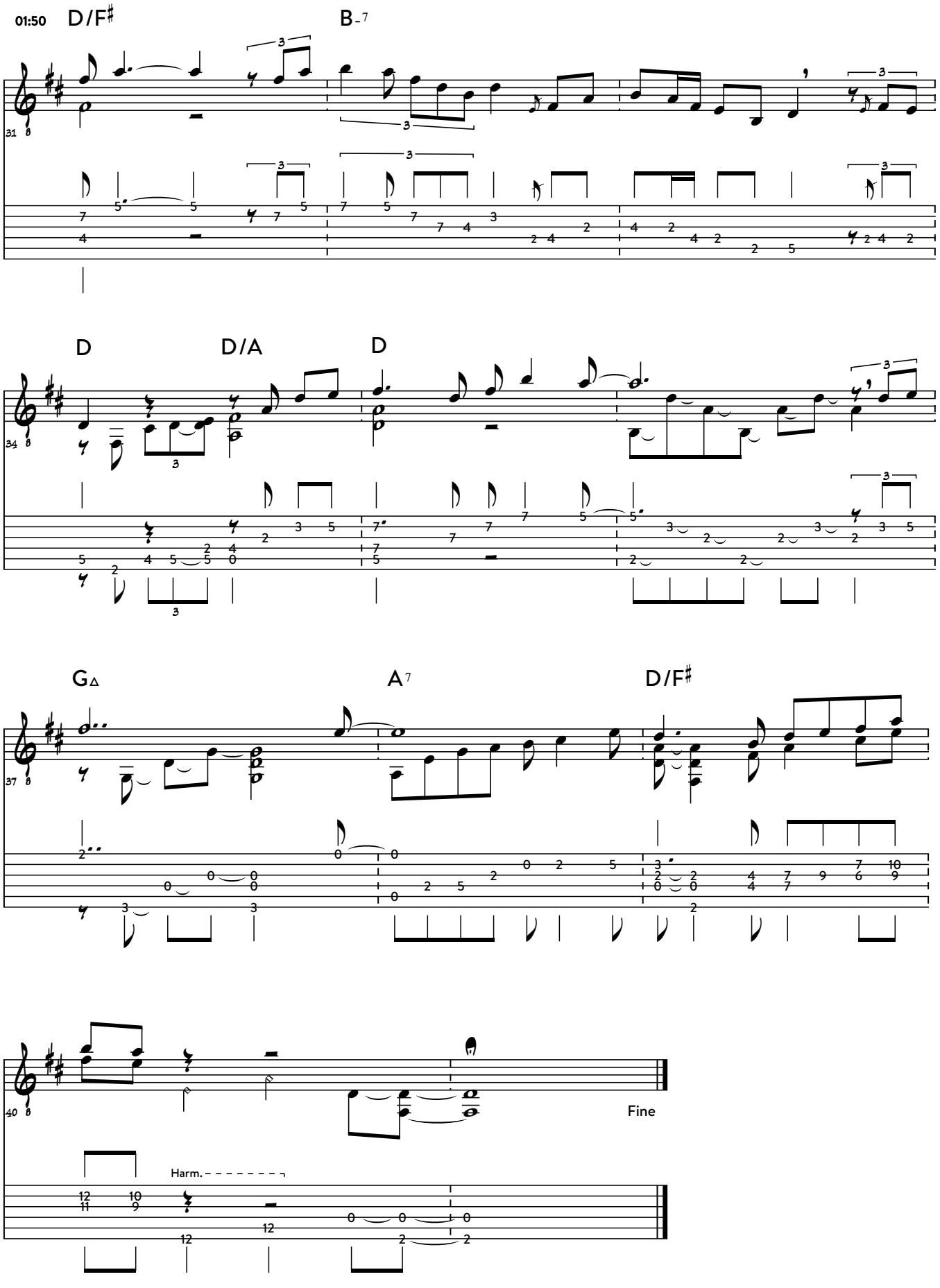


Shenandoah - Bill Frisell (solo)




00:32
D△
H
B-7
G△
A7
Rit.
D
D6
G
Harm.


01:09
B-7
D
Harm.
Harm.
D△
G
A
D/F♯
B-/A
G/A
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.


01:50
D/F♯
B-7
D
D/A
D
G△
A7
D/F♯
Fine
Harm.

The transcription at hand is Bill Frisell's improvised rendition of the traditional American folk song "Shenandoah", filmed for the *Fretboard Journal's* subscriber exclusives in 2013.
He played this performance on a 1930 Gibson L-00 flat-top acoustic guitar which was handed to him shortly before. This very intimate, acoustic performance, stripped of his usual electric-guitar sound enables us to focus on inherent musical qualities and ideas in Bill Frisell's playing style that truly are the cornerstones of his famed signature sound and musical vocabulary.

Regardless of the final purpose of working with a transcription, it is immensely beneficial for every player's progress not only to learn the music note-for-note but to identify and analyze musical ideas within their context to be able to deduct musical principles. Musical methods then can be applied to improvise new choruses or to harmonize any other given melody 'in the style of'.

Musical Devices

Most notably throughout the performance is the use of varying but logical rhythms and that the melody always comes first. As opposed to a plain chord-melody style, accompanying notes that outline harmonic progressions aren't necessarily played simultaneously with the melody but rather fill in the gaps between melodic phrases (bar 1-3, 11-13). Applied rhythms to both melody and harmonies add variety and momentum to the performance by constantly contrasting shorter note values with longer ones. The treatment and relationship of melody and accompaniment in the first three bars is exemplary for this organization principle. A sustained melody note
(half-note) is followed by a melodic-rhythmic fill with shorter note values. The next melodic phrase, comprised of eight-notes, is followed by a sustained accompanying note.

Bill Frisell's general rhythmic approach and its musical effect found in this transcription 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." [1]

Melody notes are frequently anticipated and followed by accompanying notes on offbeats (bar 10-11, 16-17). Melodic-harmonic fills often start and end on upbeats (bar 14-15). You can find note pairs like 2nds, 3rds and 4ths intervals throughout the performance.

Sustained Notes: Open Strings, Harmonics & Pedal Point

"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." - Bill Frisell [2]

Bill Frisell's use of open strings and harmonics instead of fretted notes create a variety of intervallic textures and also allows for longer sustained notes. It creates a similar effect as a sustain pedal does on a piano: e.g. smaller intervals like major and minor seconds resonating together (bar 4, 6, 16). The use of open strings for adjacent notes creates sustained 2nd intervals as well. These techniques are combined to great effect in bar 14 - 15: The melody is played in a low register, taking advantage of open strings while the accompaniment simultaneously adds a dyad on G and B-string, a pedal point with a fretted note on the E-string and a short melodic fill before the next melodic phrase begins. A similar principle is applied in bar 9: the sustained high pedal note F# is complemented with a descending melodic line.

In conclusion these musical devices show Bill Frisell's economical playing style. Instead of block chords, sustained melody notes combined with inserted chord tones are sufficient to outline the harmonic progression of a tune and create a distinct mood at the same time.

A great exercise to apply the found principles to the guitar fretboard is to first outline the tonic chord D-Major by playing a lower open string (A or D) and a sustained pedal note like A on the E-String while playing fills with notes of the D-Major scale (compare bar 14). This most likely results in unconventional fingerings which shows you if the sound of the scale is internalized and accessible on the fretboard. Another benefit is that with added sustained notes the tonal relationships of the scale notes are audible. You can advance this exercise by applying it to different scales and harmonies to connect tonic, subdominant and dominant functions.

Sources:

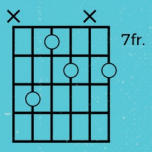
Frisell, Bill. Shenandoah. For the Fretboard Journal, 2013, Youtube

[1] 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.

[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)

CHORD YOGA

Part 2



CONCEPTS for SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCE / 3rd Edition

Studies for Electric Guitar Tone / Technique / Theory

A JME CY eBook / Seattle 2020

Table of Contents

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's version is in F, Billie Holiday's in C.
In this case, for a guitar solo performance, choosing the key of G is practical because of a number or reasons:

- it's a common and good sounding key for the instrument, e.g. you can take advantage of all open strings
- 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

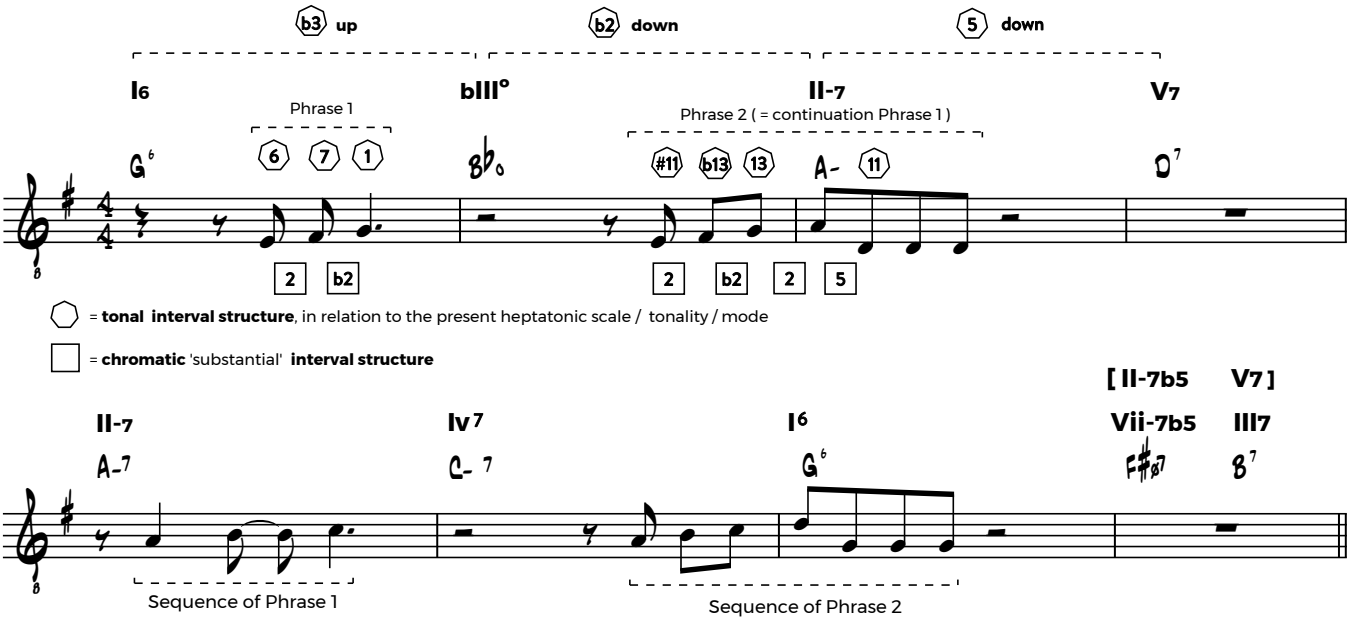
1.2 Melodic Tonal Groups * :

- identify and analyze melodic phrases by measuring their intervallic structure

Harmonic Tonal Groups * :

- identify the harmonic progression: e.g. is it a static harmony (modal) or an often used harmonic 'template' [I - Vi - ii - V] / [ii - V -I] ?
- what are the characteristics 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* - the melody is based on one of Billie Holiday's recordings of this tune.
- the harmonies are based on Bill Frisell's performance and availabe sheet music.

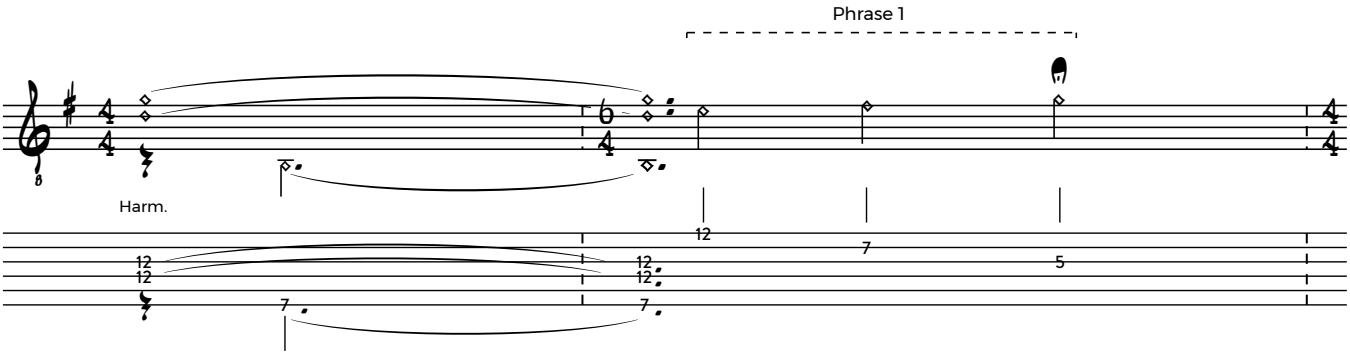


Learning musical motives, chord progressions and entire songs on a **structural level** helps to memorize tunes and to understand which notes are important to outline melodic and harmonic development with one instrument.
Knowing **intervallic structures** enables playing musical ideas in different areas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

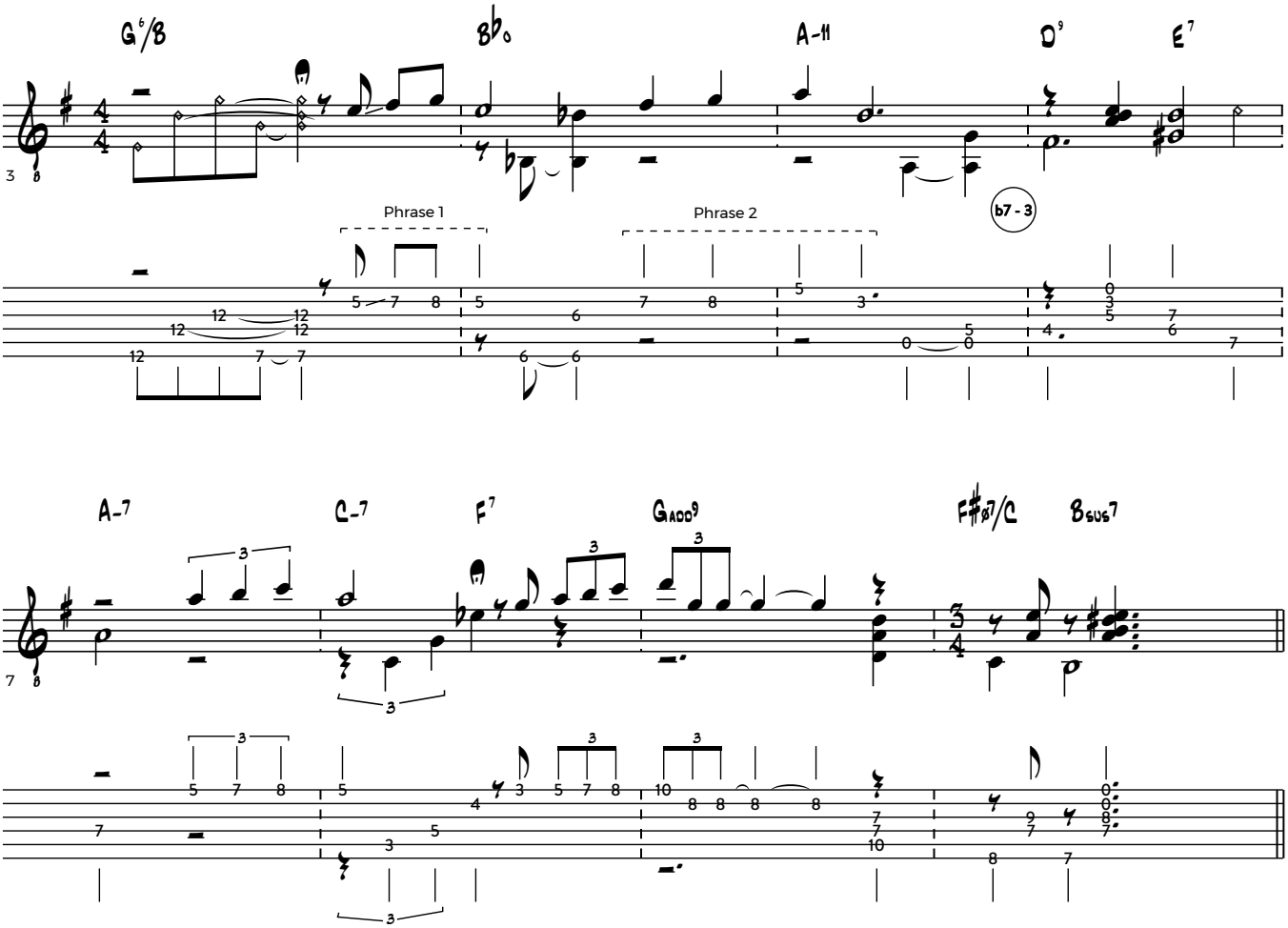
* Intervals can be measured based on any arbitrary tonal group. Both the tonal interval structure and the chromatic interval structure can be identified as particular cases of tonal groups.
This is of consequence for evaluating structural value and permutations. [2] *(Kissenbeck 2007)*

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

The G-triad and the first melodic motive in the intro are played by using natural harmonics only. The sustained triad establishes a tonal center while providing a harmonic background for the motive that anticipates the melody of the tune.



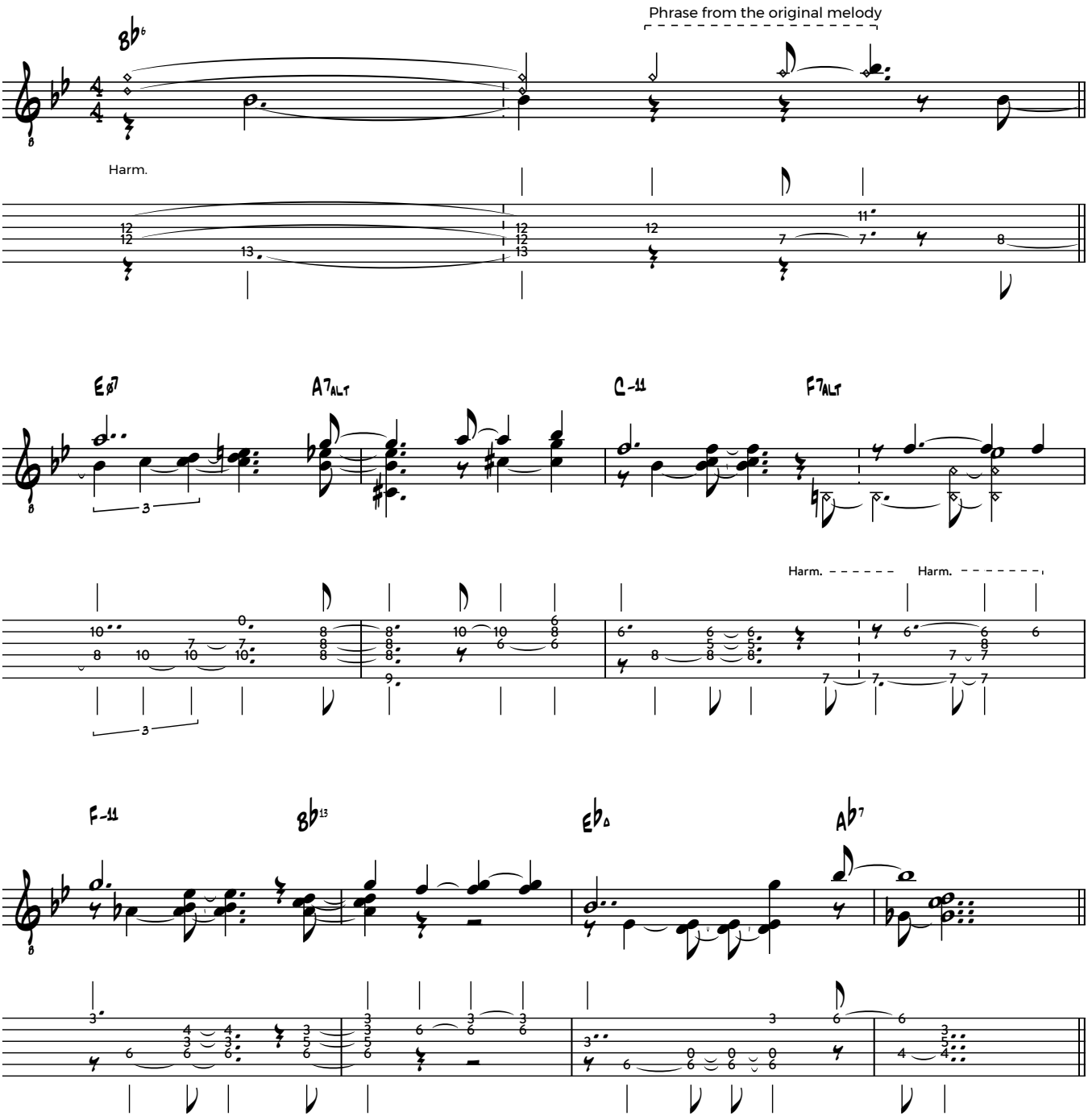
After more arpeggiated harmonics in bar 3, the harmony is outlined with a variety of techniques: sustained bass notes (bars 4-8), chromatic approach (bar 10), voice-leading b7-3 (e.g. bar 5) and chords (bar 6, 9-10).



Most notably are the varying rhythms and that the melody 'comes first'.

The accompanying notes aren't played simultaneously with the melody, they rather fill 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

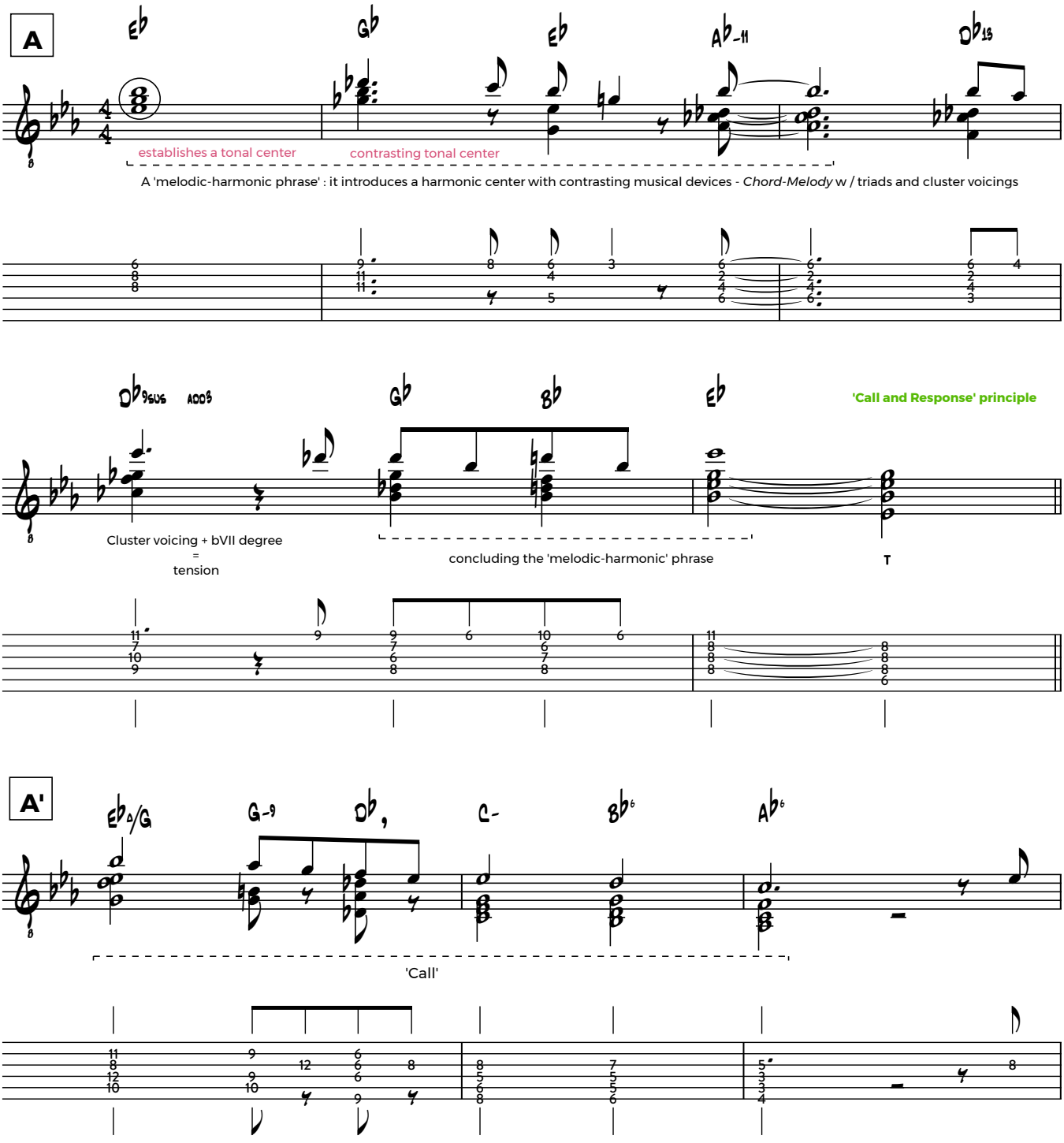
[2] Kissenbeck, Andreas (2007):*Jazz Theorie II, Kassel* : p. 16

[3] Frisell, Bill (2013) *Embraceable You (Solo),* Seattle
for the Fretboard Journal published on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uEHdvZD5jFc

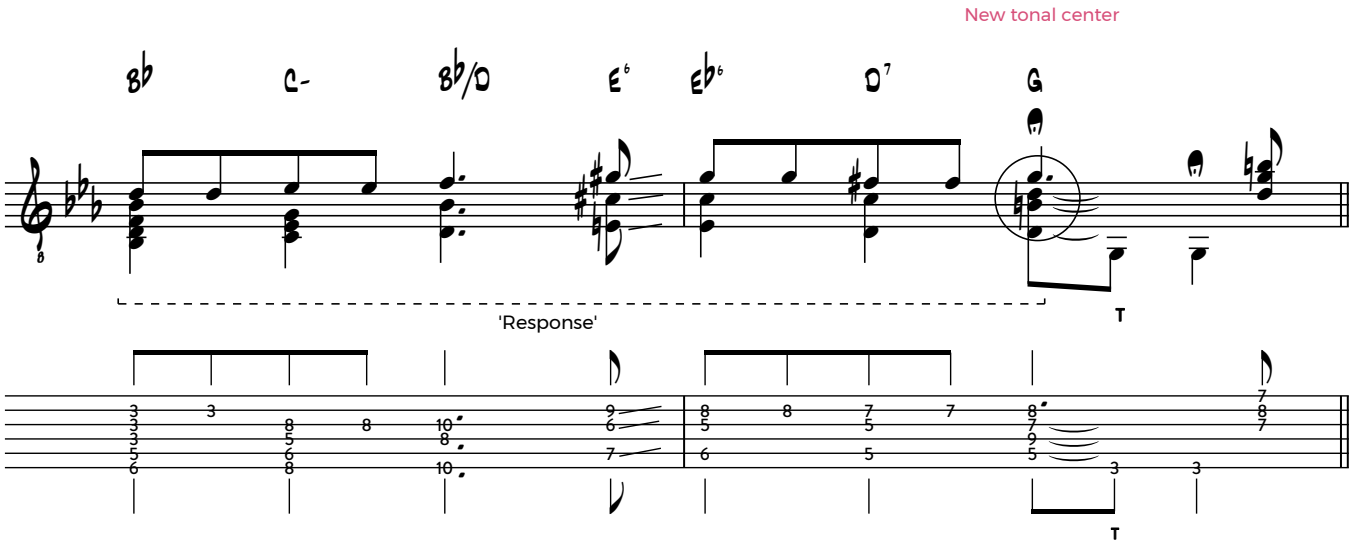
[4] Jakut, Jan (2017): *Interstella*, Seattle - Juju Music Edition

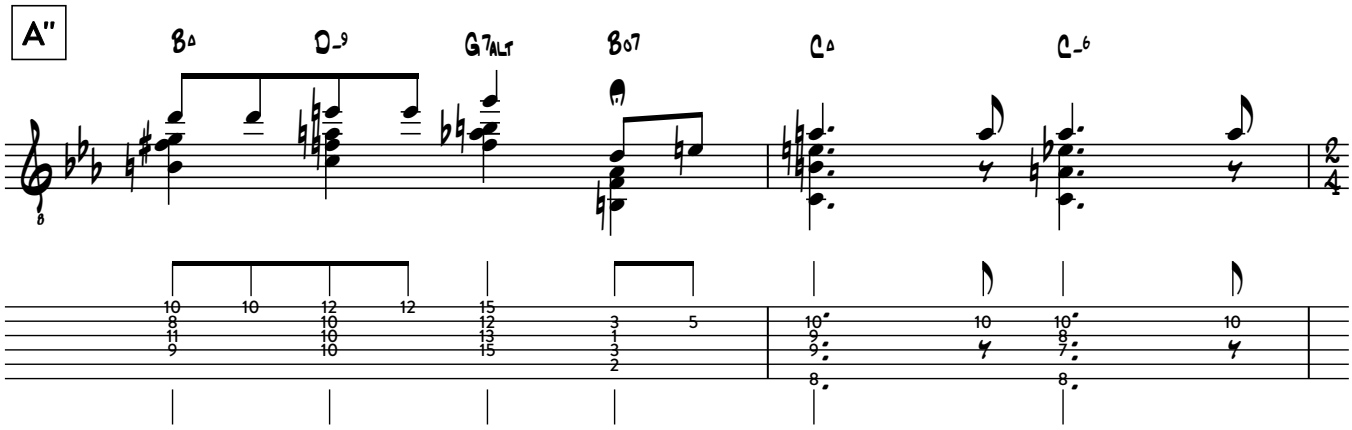
2. Analyzing Musical Forms

The majority of playing practices found in American Popular Music favor cyclic forms like AABA in Jazz or Verse -Bridge - Chorus in more 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.

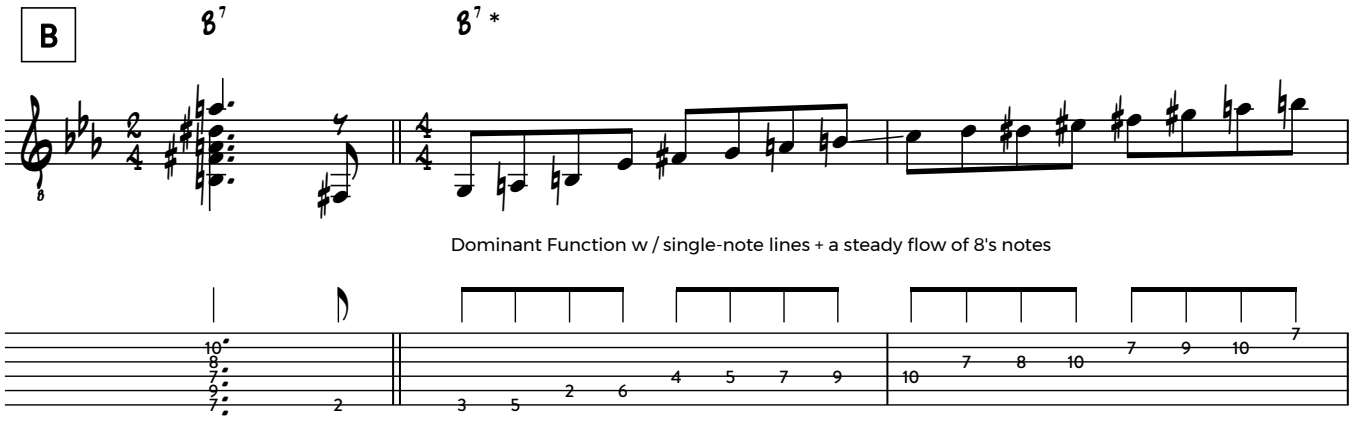


* Lage, Julian. *Improvisation*. For Carter Vintage Guitars (1997 Gibson Super 4000 Demo) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJg08nQjBrA

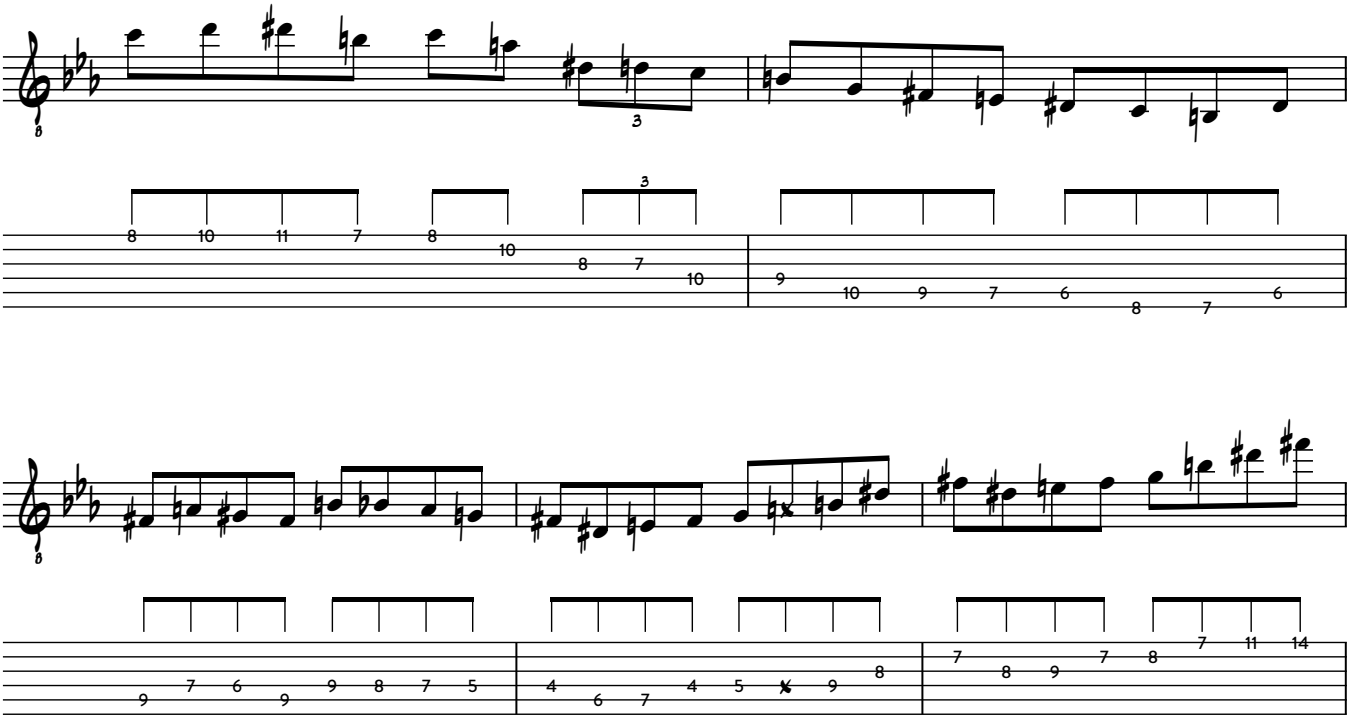




The musical phrases which are here labeled as three different 'A' parts have less melodic and harmonic conformaty as compared to the ones found in the segmentation of a Jazz standard but their development paired with the use of musical devices create a concistency that leads to a contrasting B-part with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

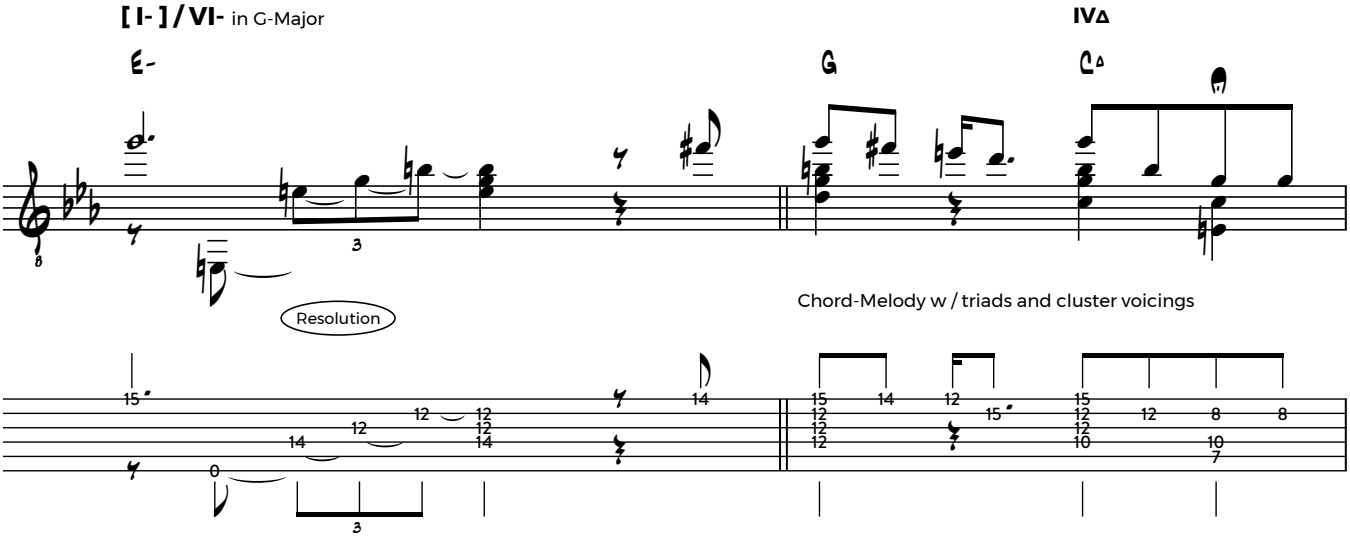


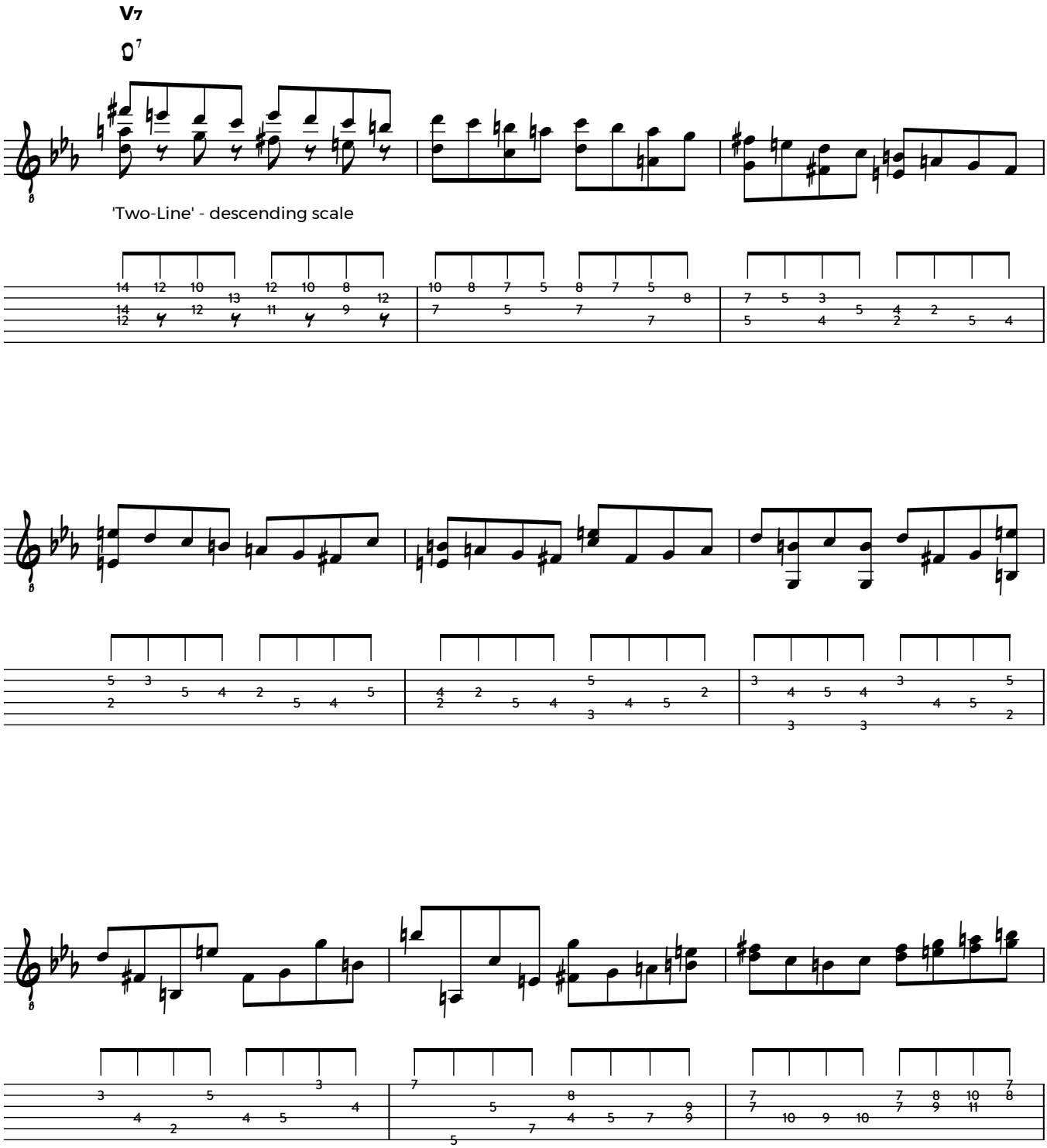
* Chord symbol reflects implied tonality

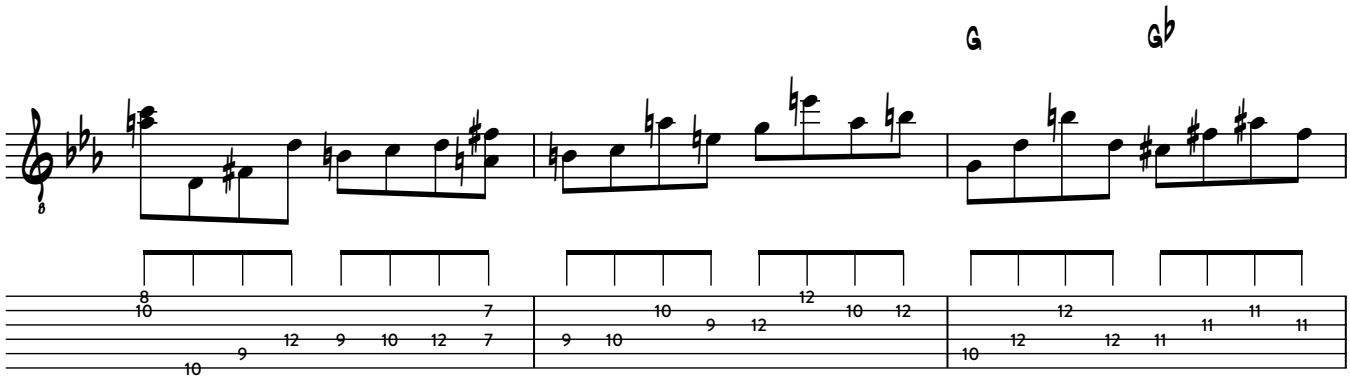


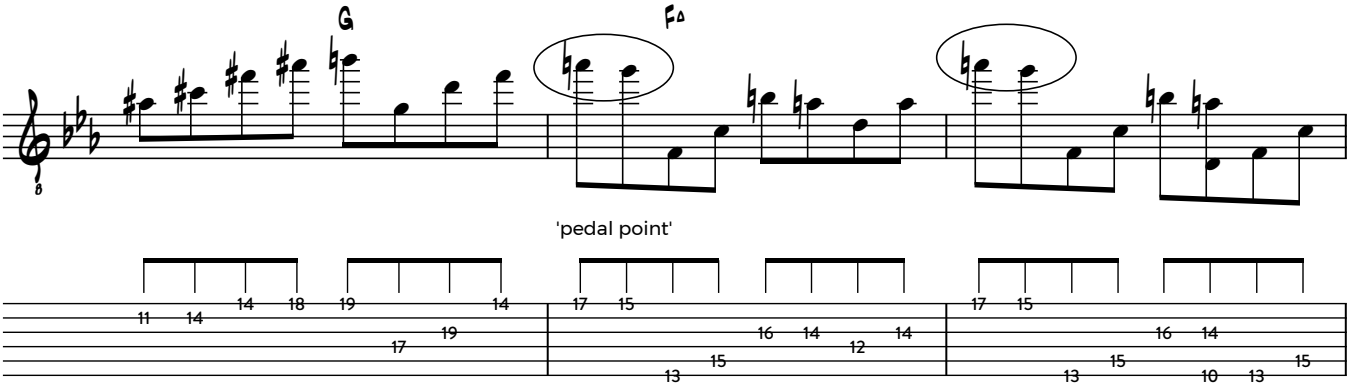
A''''

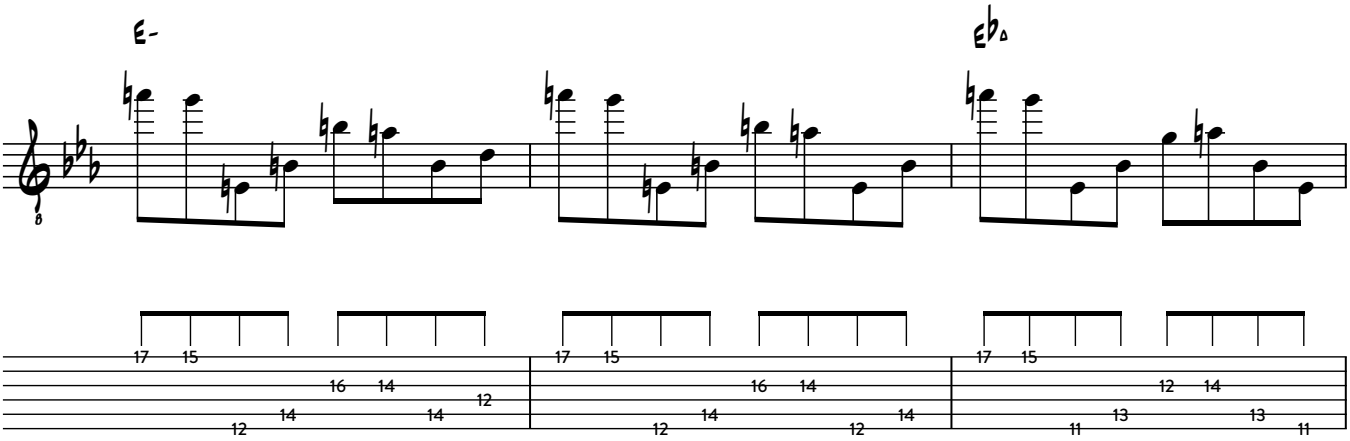
[I-] / VI- in G-Major

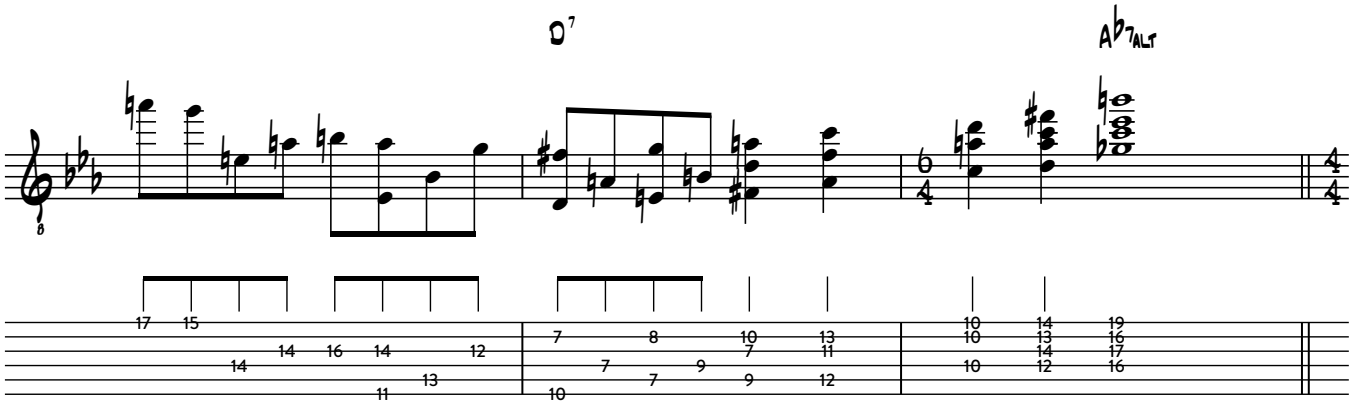


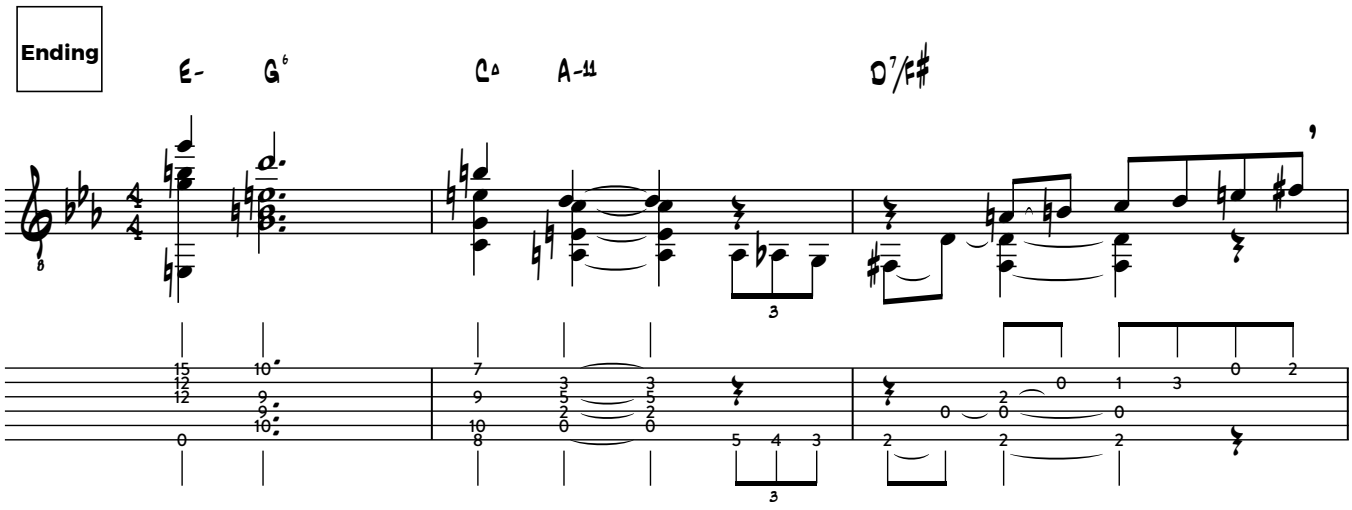

V7
D7
'Two-Line' - descending scale

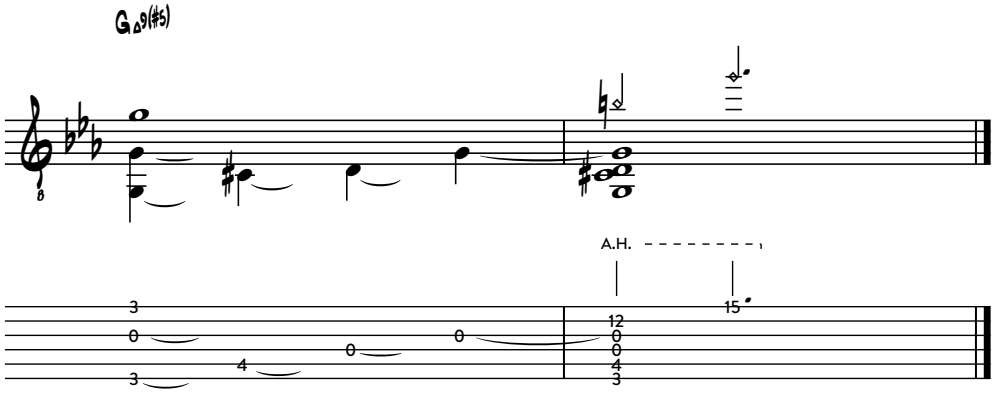

G
Gb


G
F△
'pedal point'


E-
Eb△

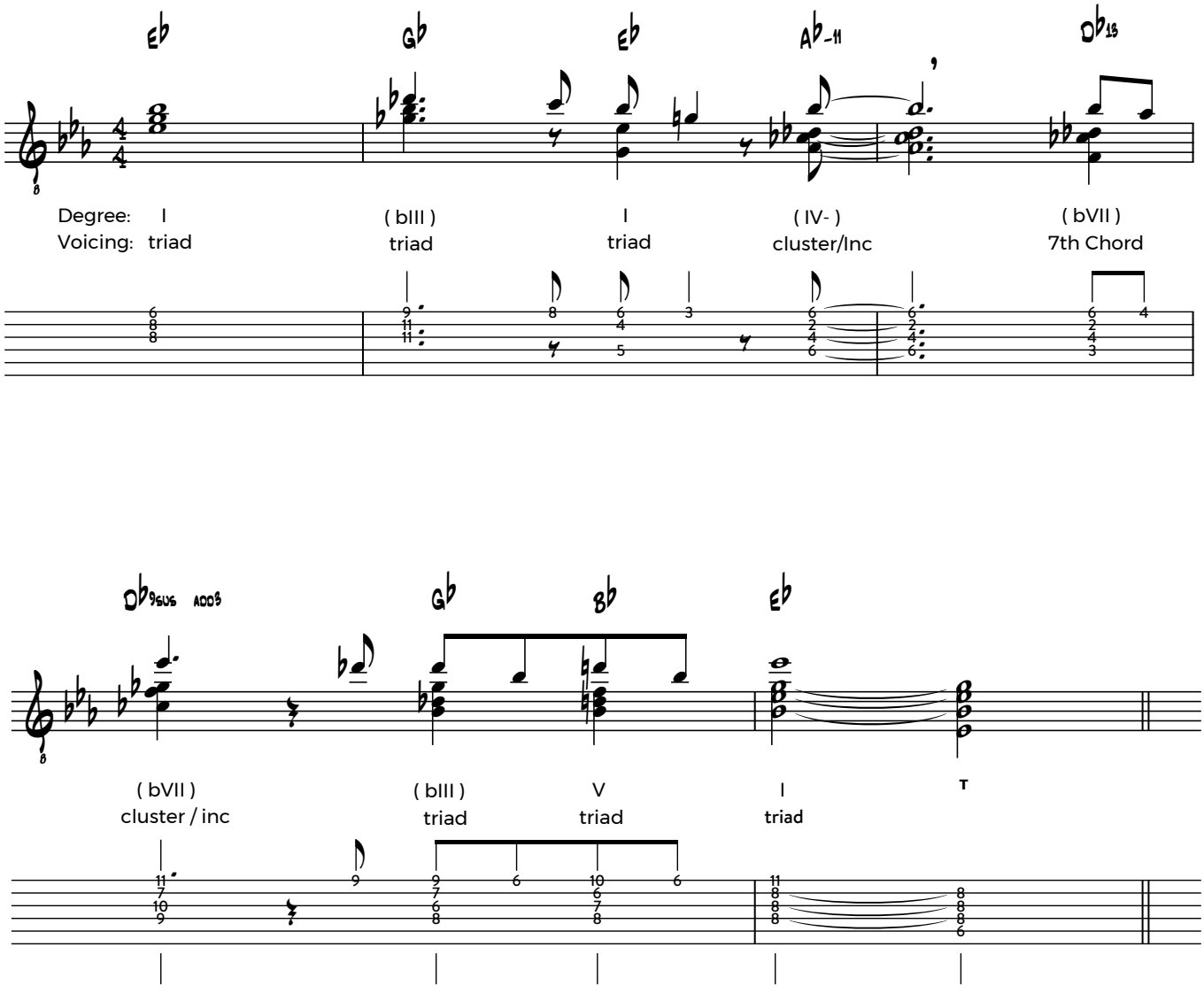

D7
Ab7ALT


Ending
E-
G6
CΔ
A-11
D7/F#


GΔ9(#5)
A.H.

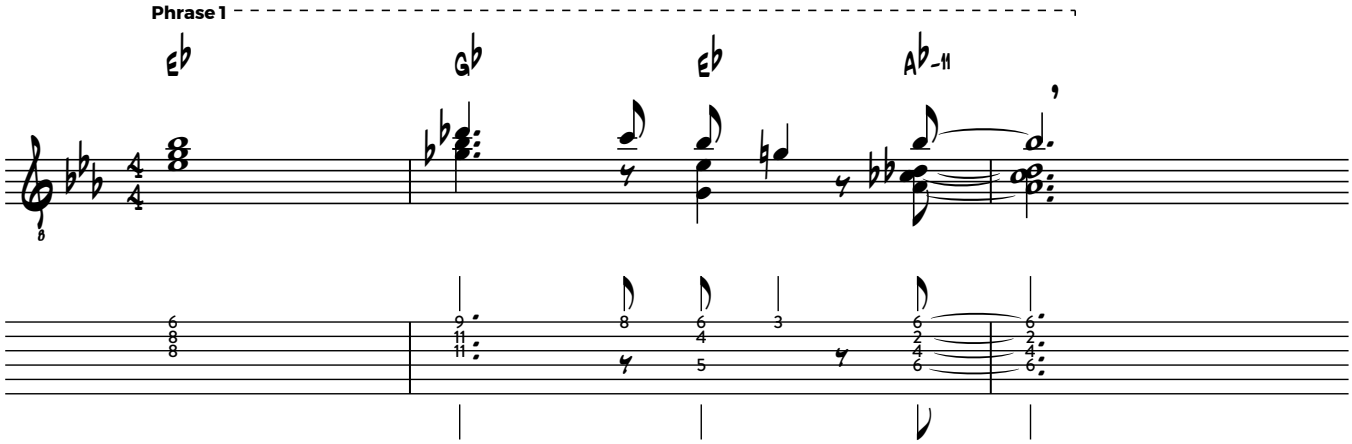
3. Means of Harmonic Organization

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

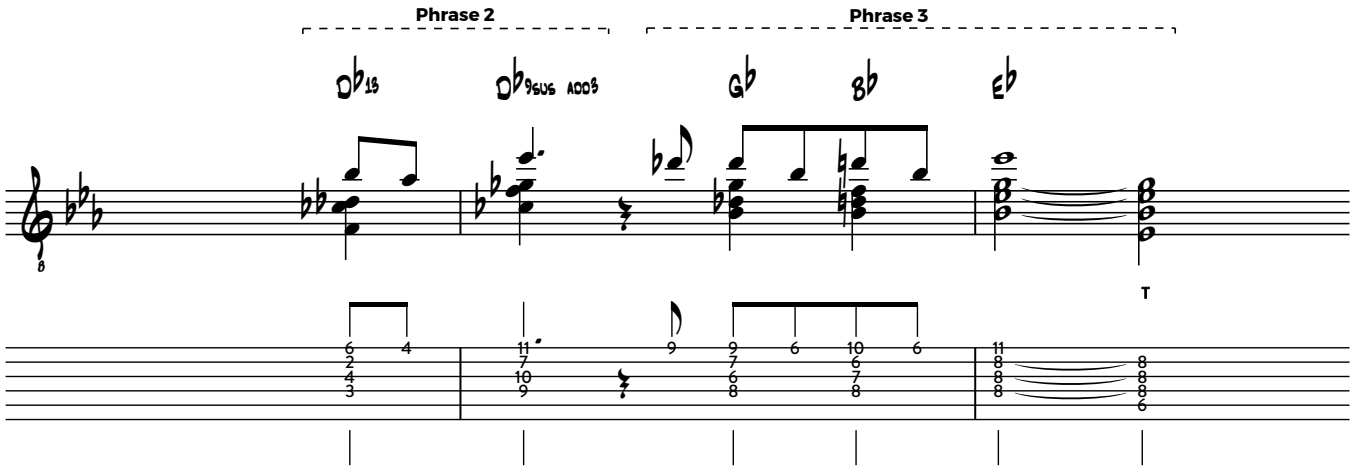


I. Musical Phrases

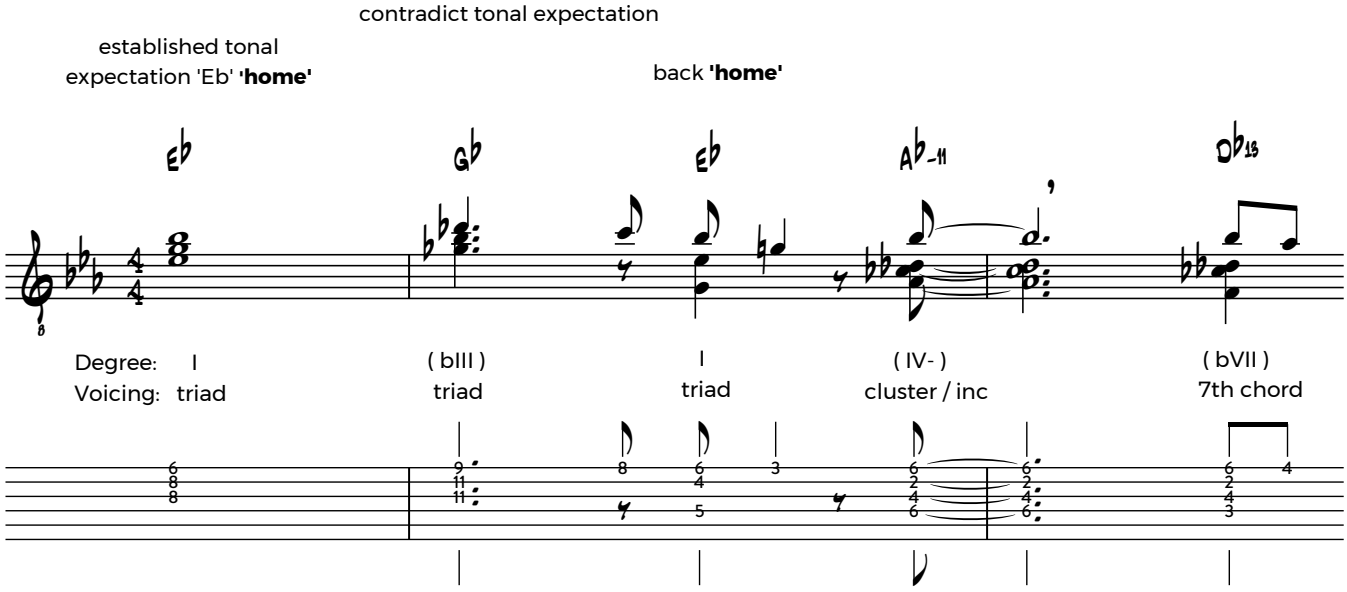
Phrase 1: A plain triad establishes the tonal center as well as the **listener's expectation** while the following rhythmic phrase '**surprises**' with a brief detour to another key and **contrasting** cluster-like voicings.

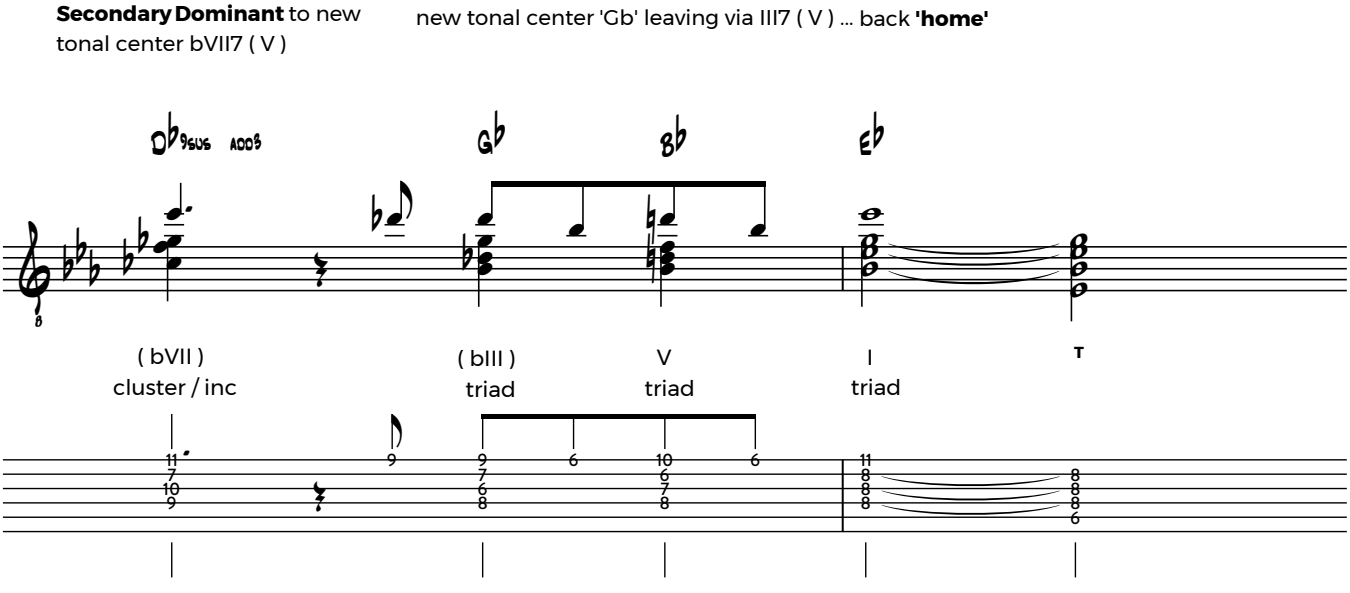


Phrases 2 & 3 reference harmonic elements of the first phrase in reverse (cluster-voicing to triads). The contrasting rhythm concludes the musical idea logically and leads back to the original tonic.



II. Harmonic Structure





III. Application

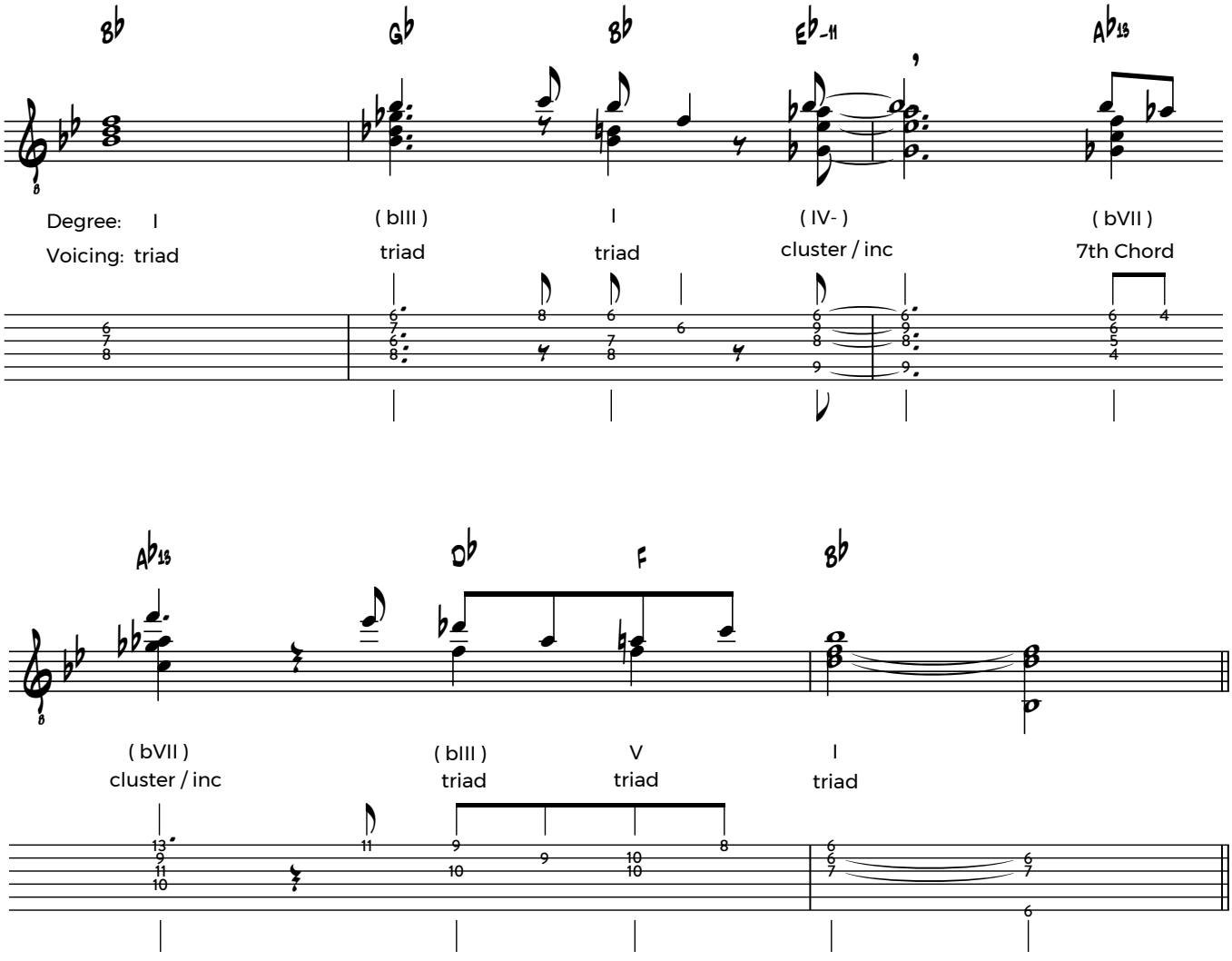
Sample 2.1b: 'Improvisation' based on analyzed organization principles - a 'musical syntax'

abstract structure:

tonal center, harmonic progression, melodic and harmonic phrases

concrete structure:

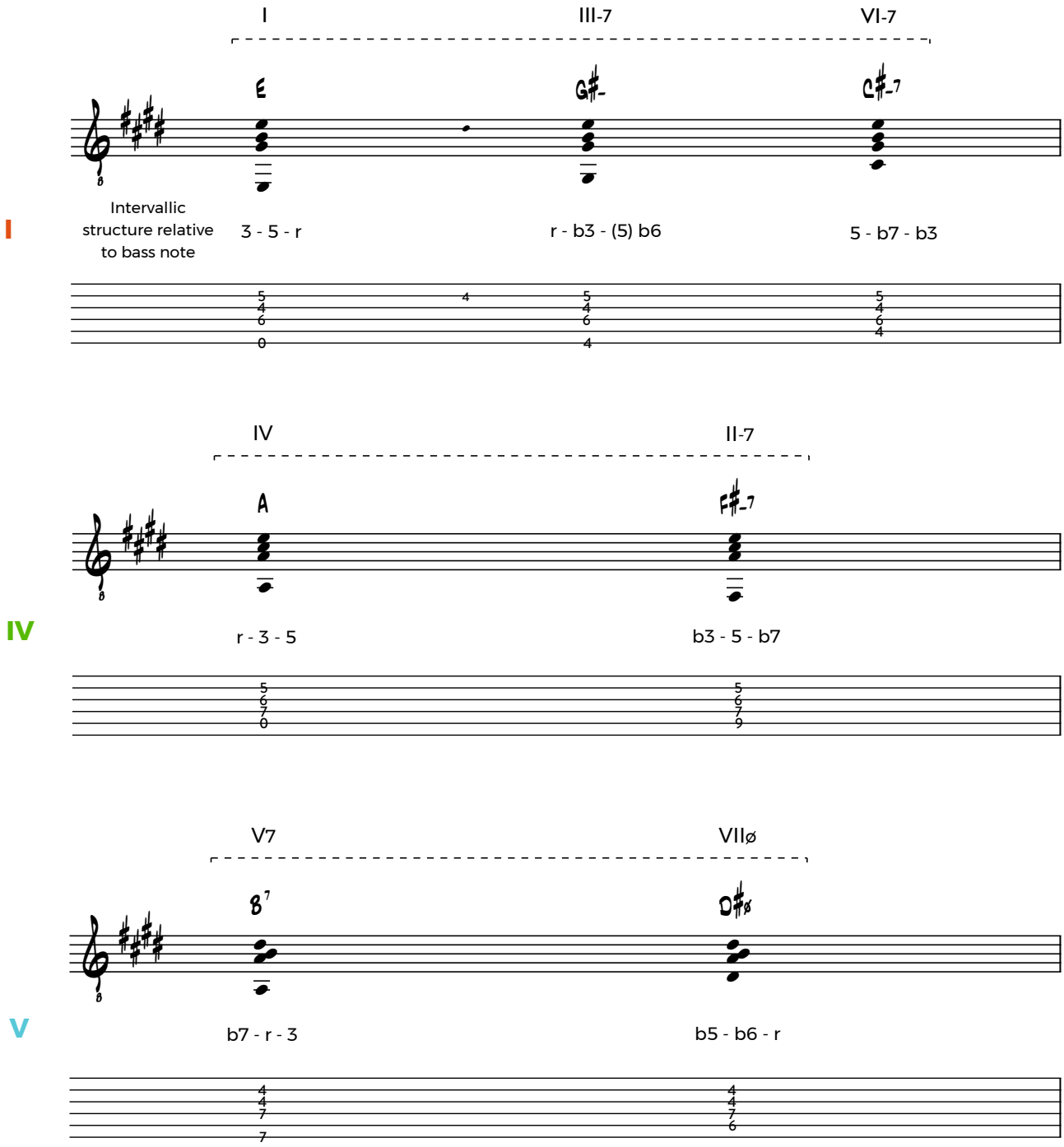
chord, voicing
melody, rhythm



Means of Tonal Harmonic Organization

I - IV - V

Sample 3.2a: I - IV - V - Principle

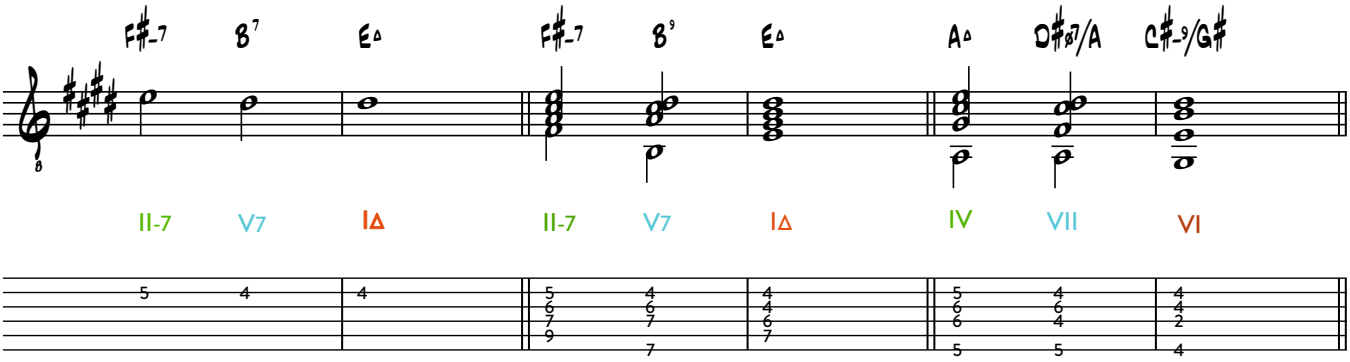


Chords that are either related to tonic, subdominant or dominant degree are **interchangeable** because of common notes they share. Within a tonal context **they serve the same function** and can be used to harmonize a melody, substituting the main functions I, IV, V.

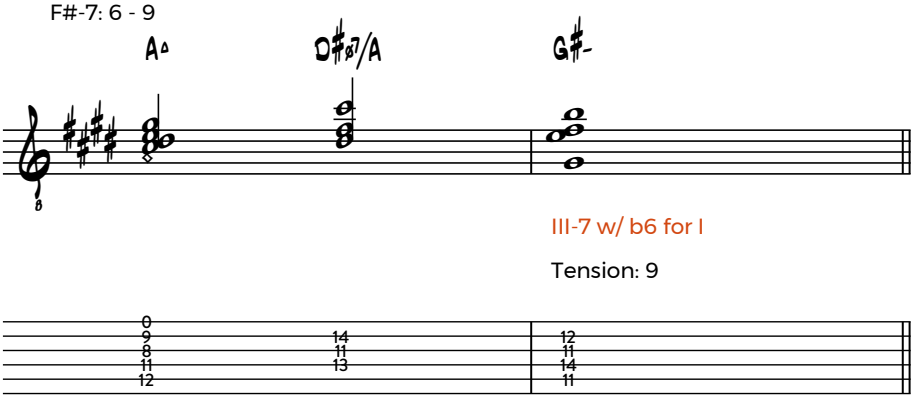
This is also useful to interpret chord progressions and to come up with substitutions, voicing ideas or different bass movements.

E.g. in the key of E, the changes [F#-7 - B7 - EΔ (II-V-I)] can be translated to [AΔ - D#ø7/A - C#-9/G# (IV-VII-VI)] as shown in sample 3.2b.

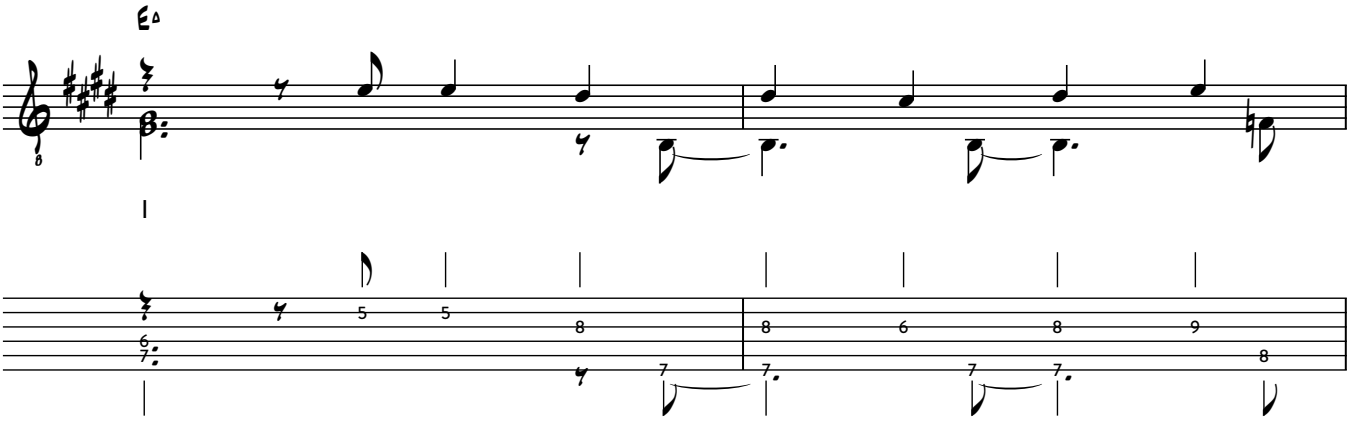
Sample 3.2b : Chord Substitutions and voicing ideas [II-V-I] - based on the interchangeability of chords

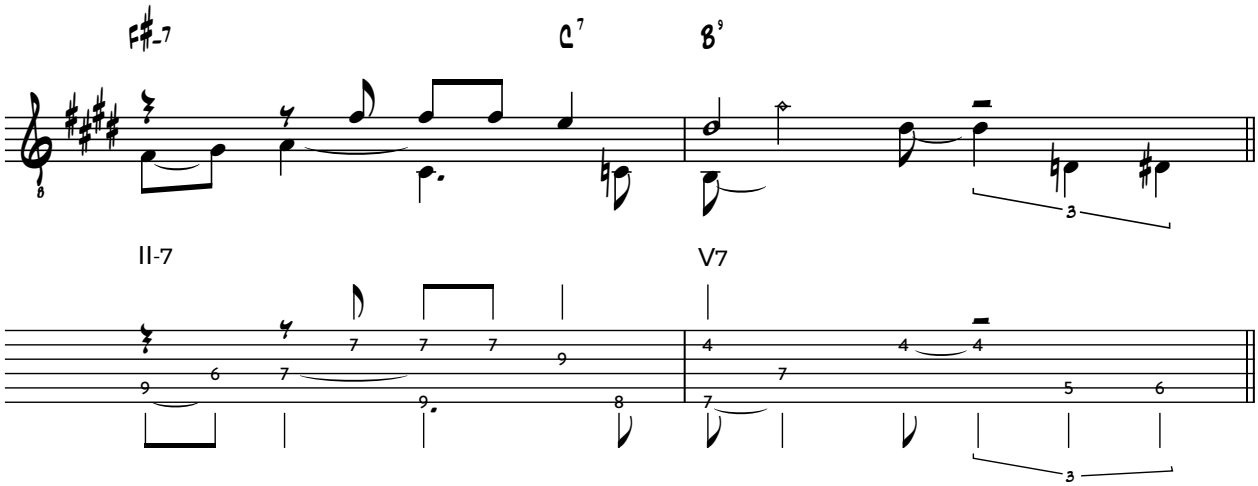


tensions for
F#-7: 6 - 9

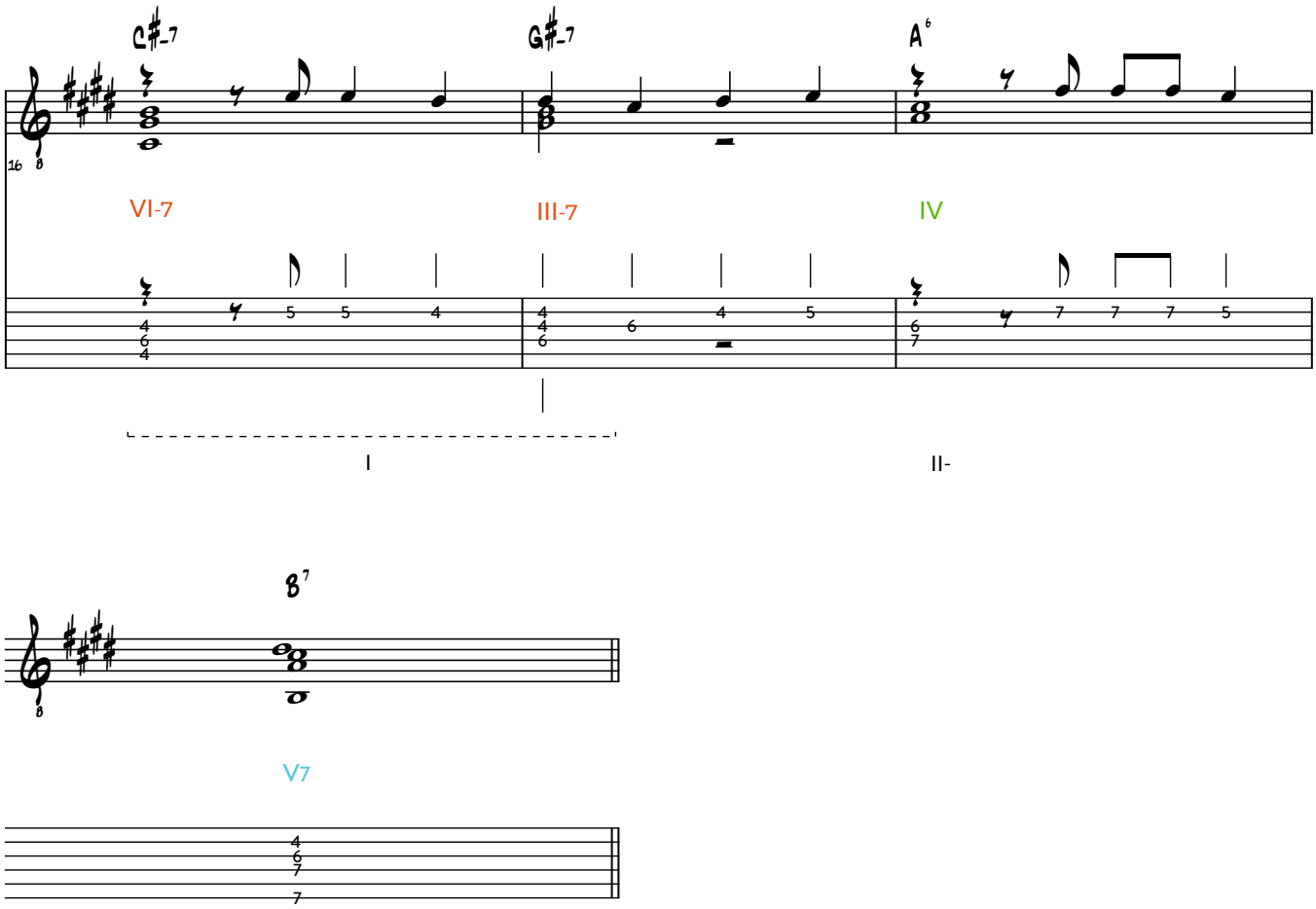


Sample 3.2c : Chord changes for a simple melody (I - ii - V)





Sample 3.2d : Chord Substitutions



4. Melodic Devices

Guitar Techniques of Jim Hall & Bill Frisell

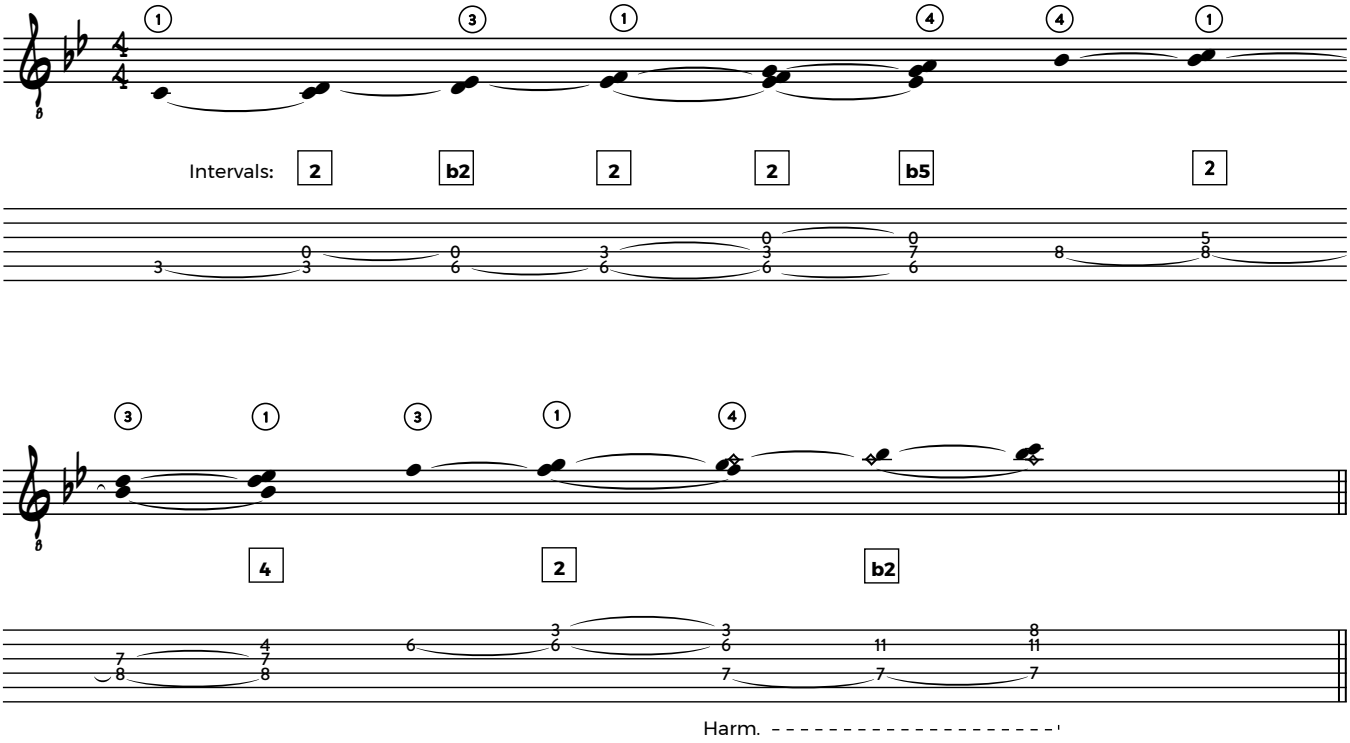
4.1 Sustained Notes: Open Strings, Harmonics, Pedal Point & Barre

> "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*]

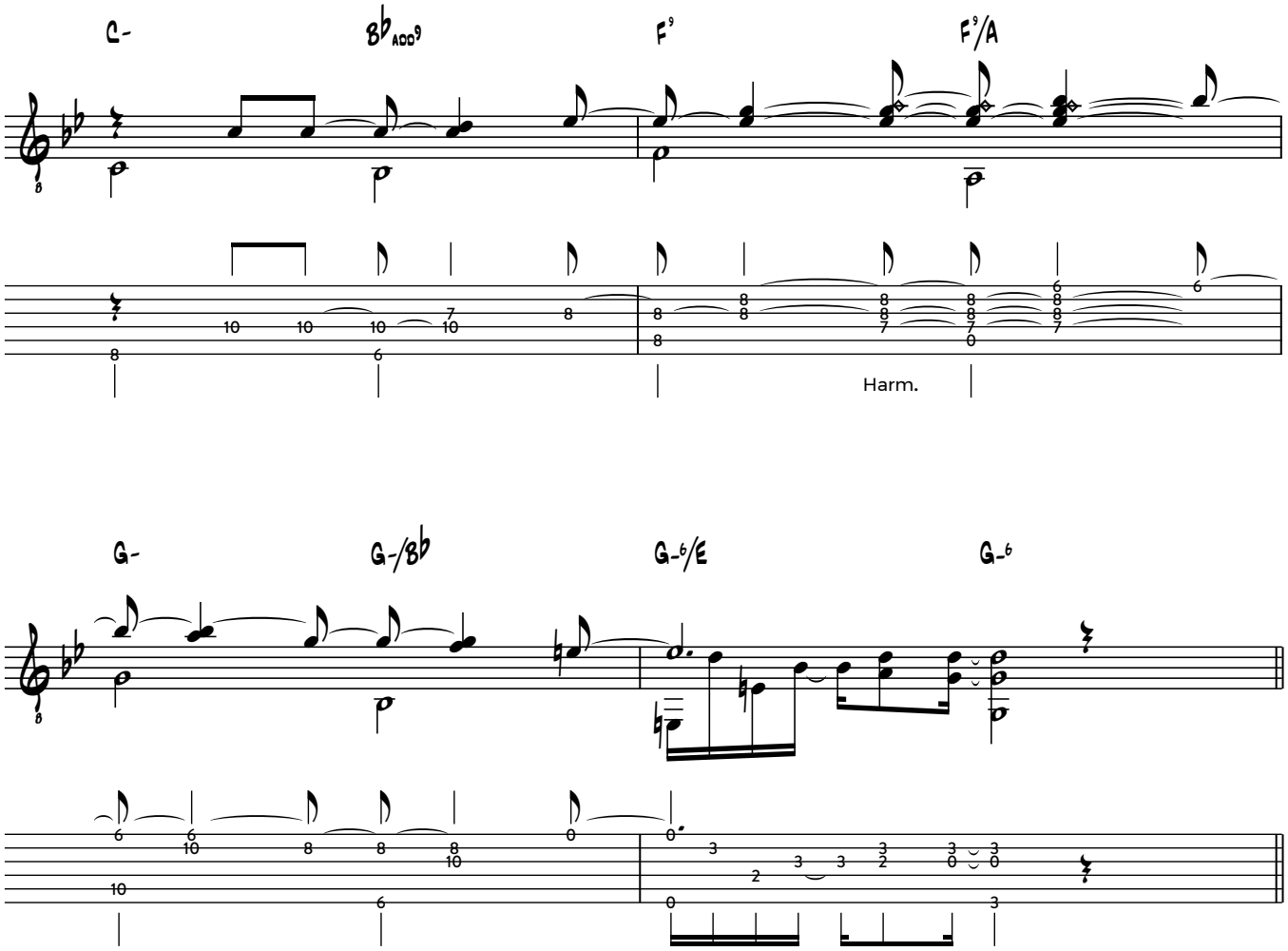


[1] Jude Gold. "The Big Bang: Bill Frisell Helps You Unleash an Ever-Expanding Universe of Melodic, Harmonic, and Textural Possibilities," Guitar Player 36, no. 12 (Dec., 2002): pg 61.

[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).

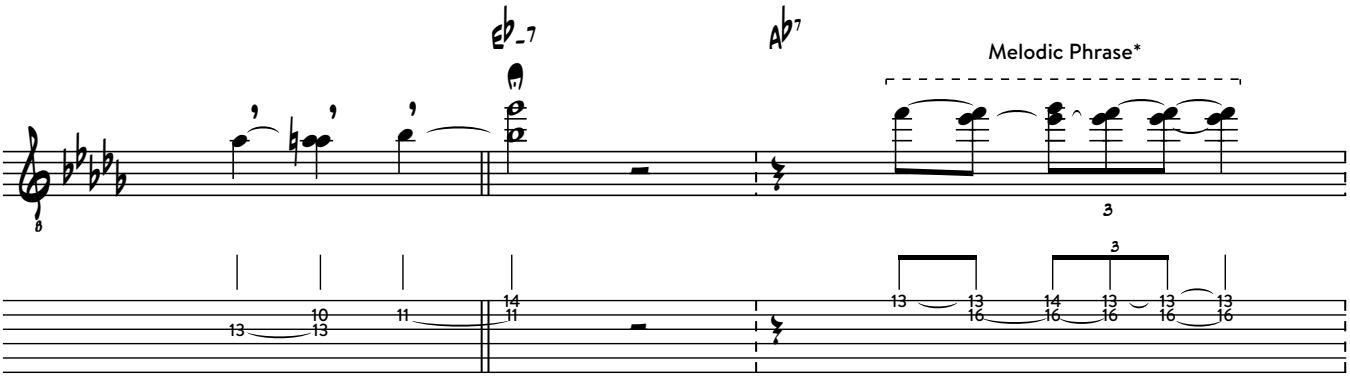
* Lewis, Travis. A STUDY OF BILL FRISELL THROUGH PAUL MOTIAN'S ON BROADWAY RECORDINGS. Urbana, IL : University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016. 15-16.

Sample 4.1b : Unconventional fingerings applied to the chord progression of *Paranoid Android* - Radiohead [C-Dorian to G-Dorian]

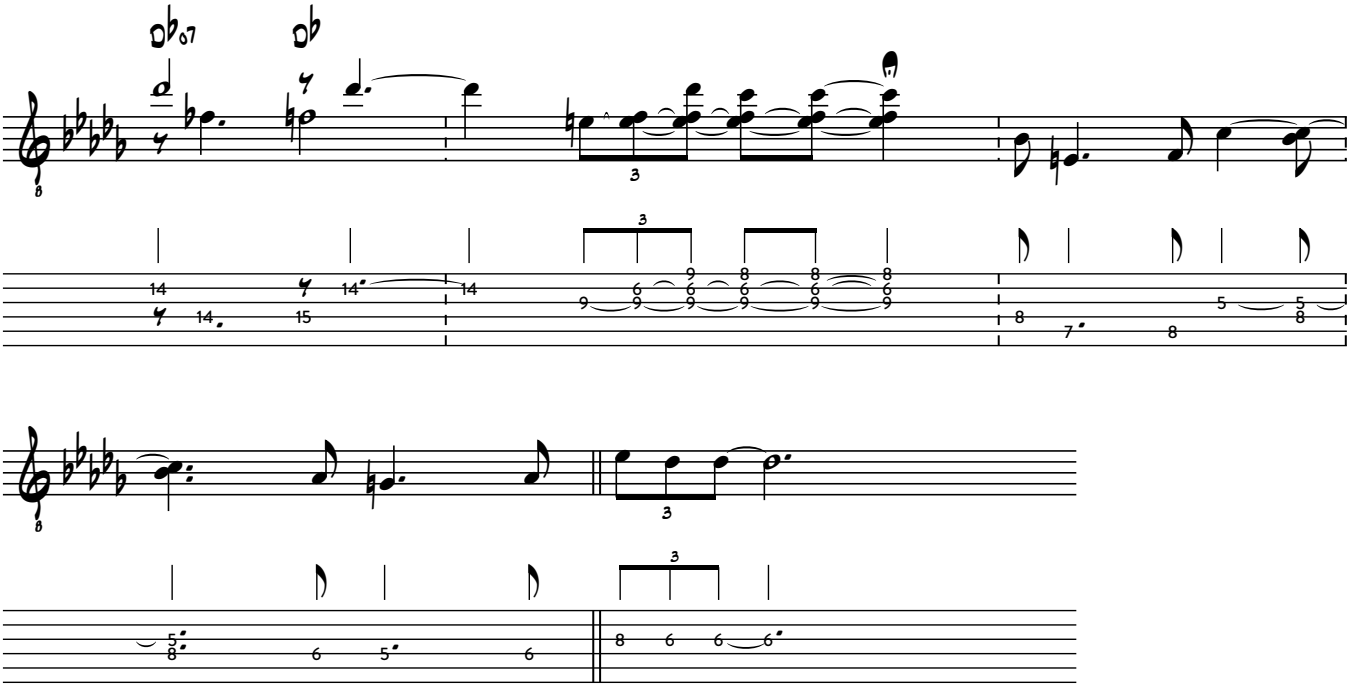


As opposed to playing a melodic phrase with only one note ringing at a time, this playing practice allows to benefit from a fuller sound when performing solo or in a band context without another harmony instrument.
The melody creates complete harmonies with the bass notes (e.g. bar 6: F9 - F A Eb G).
Also, the 'crucial' categories of the harmony, e.g. 3rd, b7th and the 9th (which substitutes for 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 the features of Jim Hall's economic playing style :
sustained melody notes combined with inserted chord tones are enough to outline a harmonic progression and to create a distinct mood.



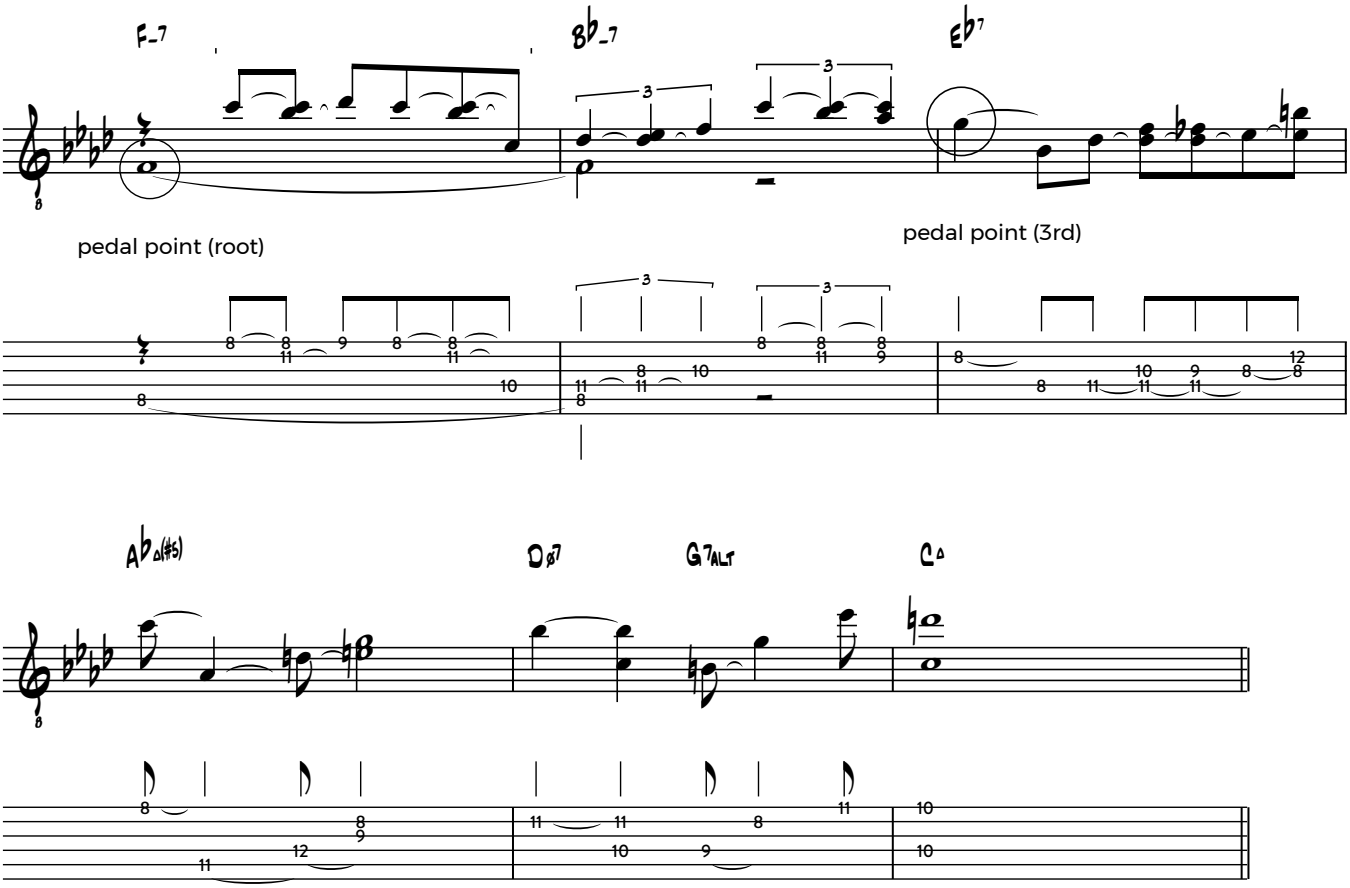
Without using open strings and harmonics to sustain notes, one or more fretted notes act as pedal points.
E.g. F and Eb in bar 11. Since every finger of the fretting hand can provide for a pedal point this technique is a great exercise finger independence as well.

Ex. : Play the 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:

- now, with the root being sustained (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

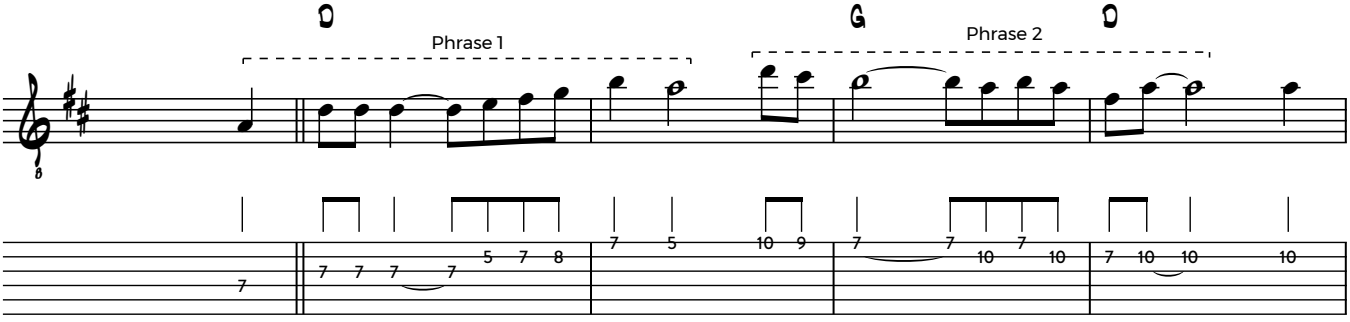
* Hall, Jim. *Jim Hall's Three.* Concord Records, 1986, Compact Disc.

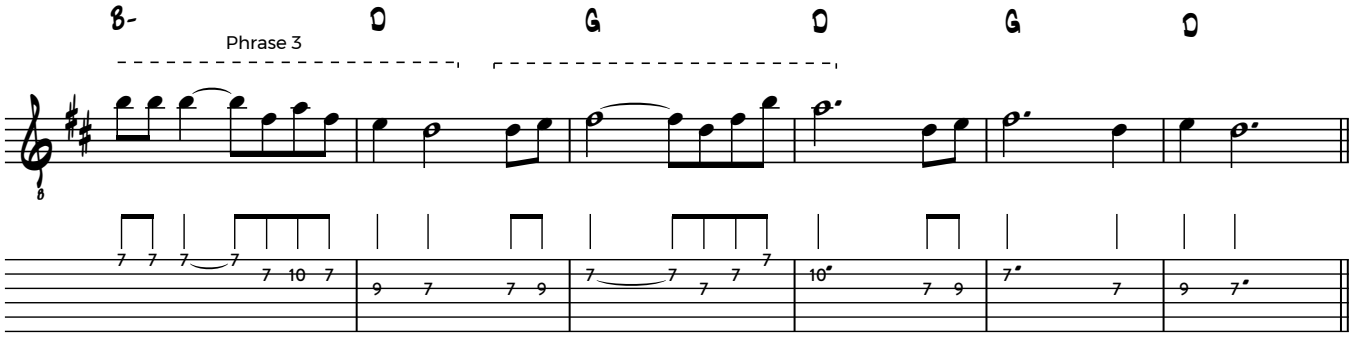
Sample 4.2b : Pedal point & Jim Hall's melodic ideas applied to the changes of 'All The Things You Are'



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

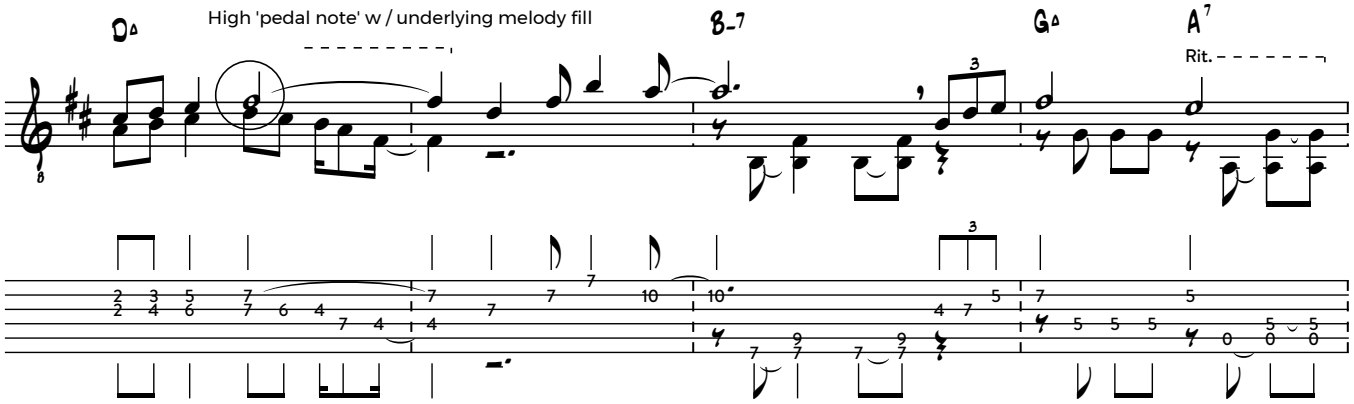
Sample 4.3a : Melodic and harmonic outline of "Shenandoah"

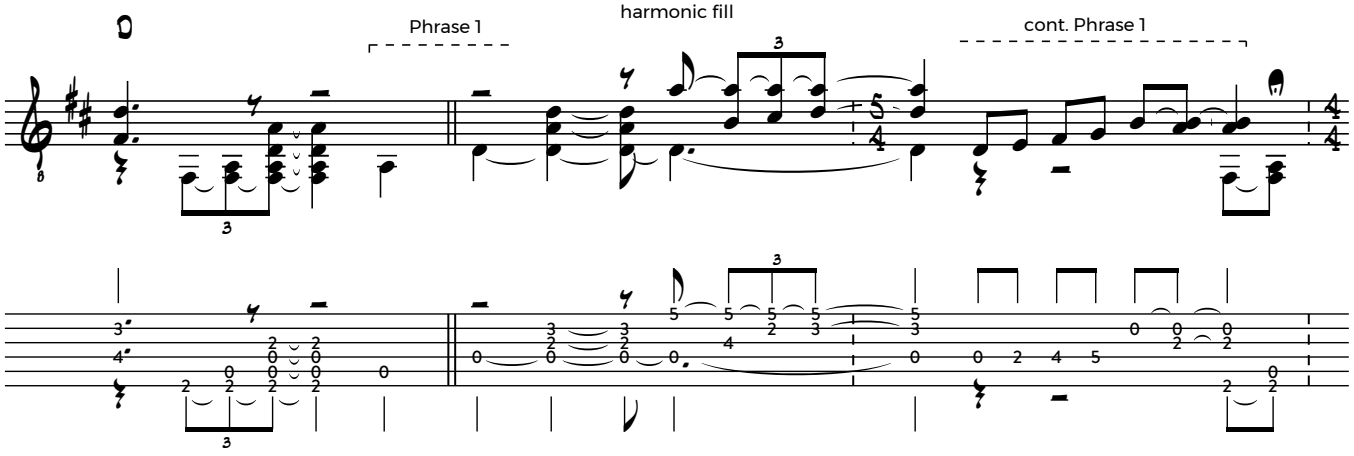


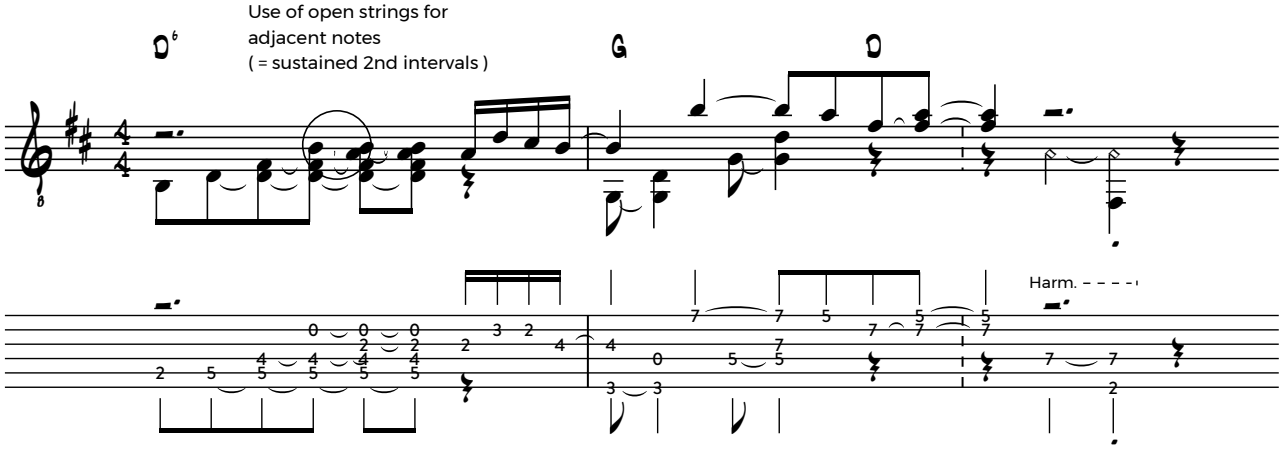


Sample 4.3b : Transcription excerpt *Shenandoah* - Bill Frisell (solo) *
Application of pedal point, open strings and harmonics

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

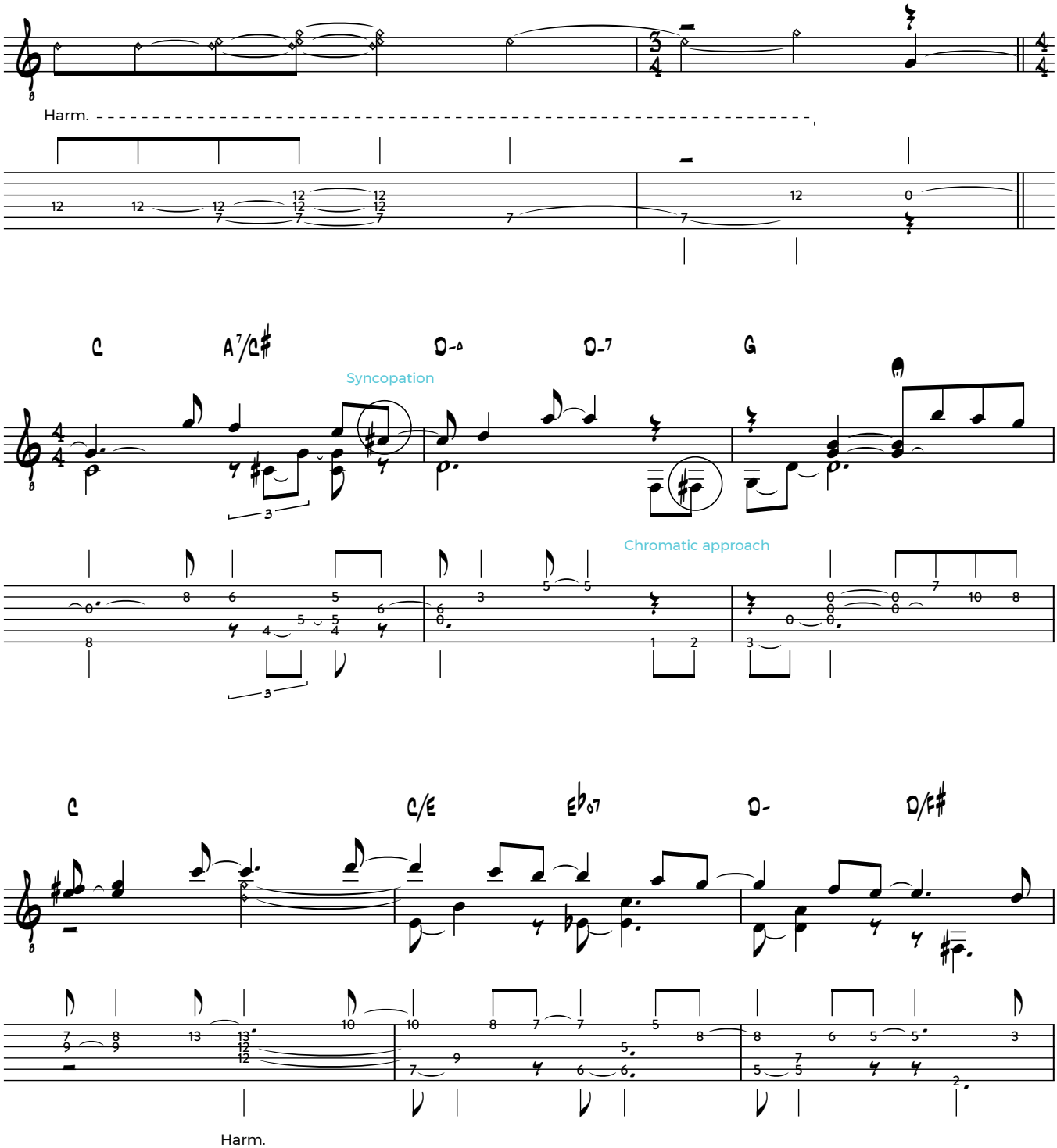

D△
High 'pedal note' w / underlying melody fill
B-7
G△
A7
Rit.

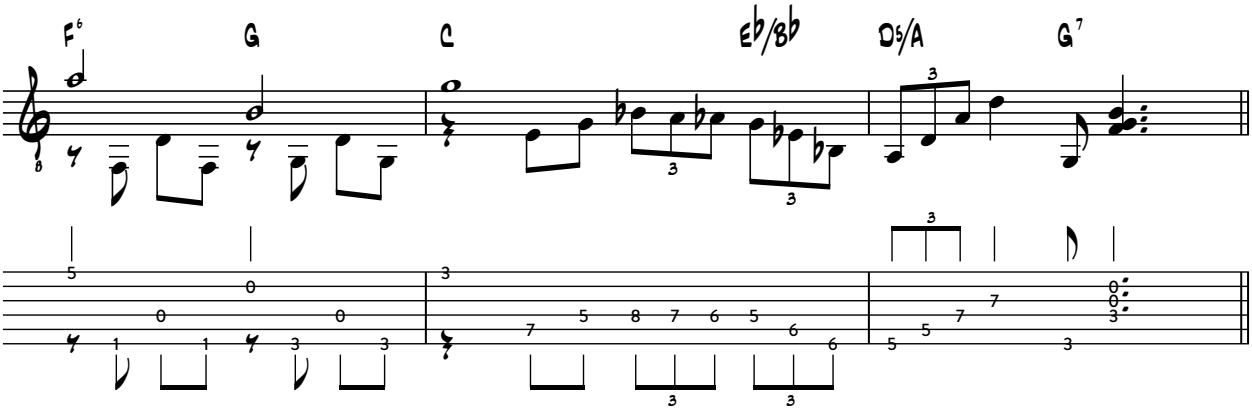

D
Phrase 1
harmonic fill
cont. Phrase 1


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

Sample 4.3c : Improvisation excerpt 'When You Wish Upon A Star' - Bill Frisell (solo)

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



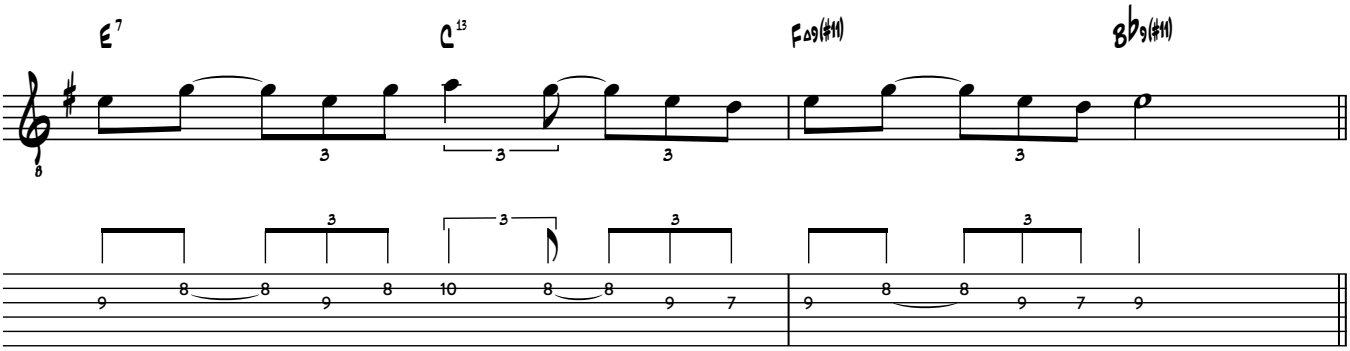


The playing practices and their musical effects found in this transcription excerpt correspond with Travis Lewis' analysis of Bill Frisell's improvisations :

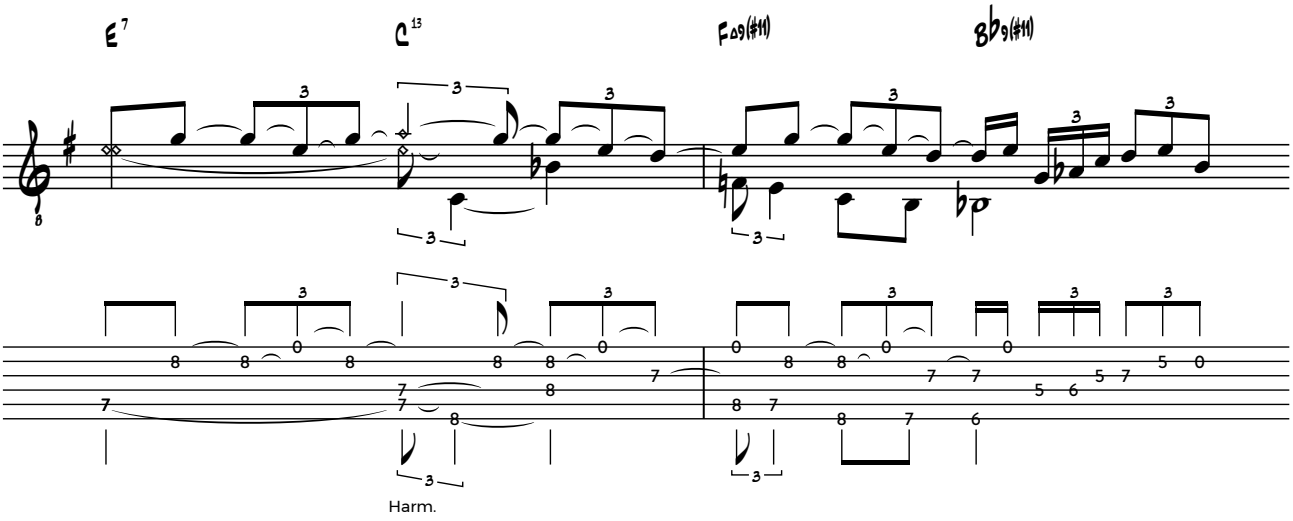
"The use of syncopation and note pairs is something that frequently occurs throughout Frisell's improvised solos. He rarely resorts to complicated rhythmic patterns, but instead utilizes syncopation by playing strictly on upbeats. [...] The end result of each of these devices is a **looser time feel** 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.

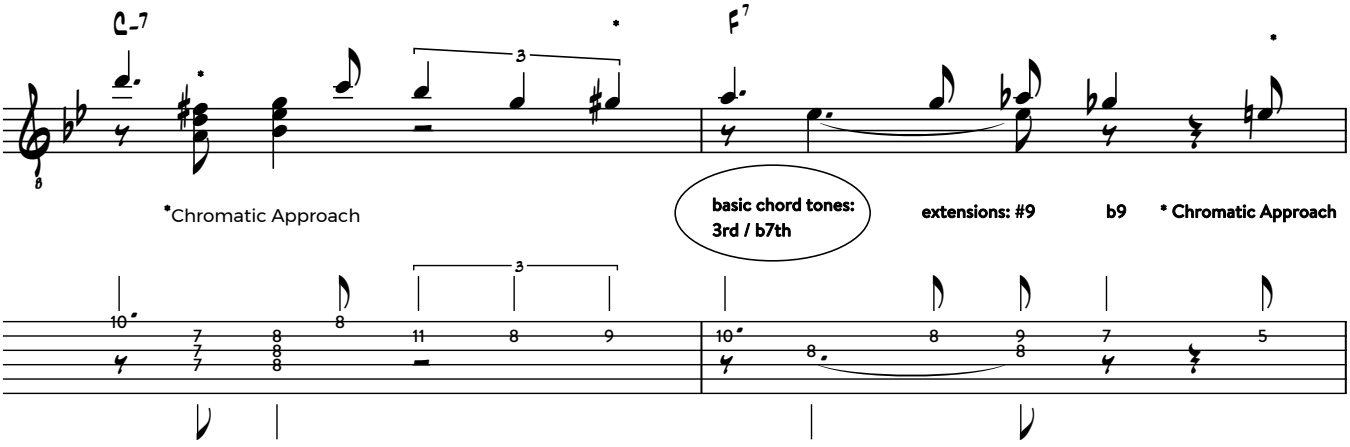
Sample 4.3d : a pentatonic melody in a 'Mingus mood'

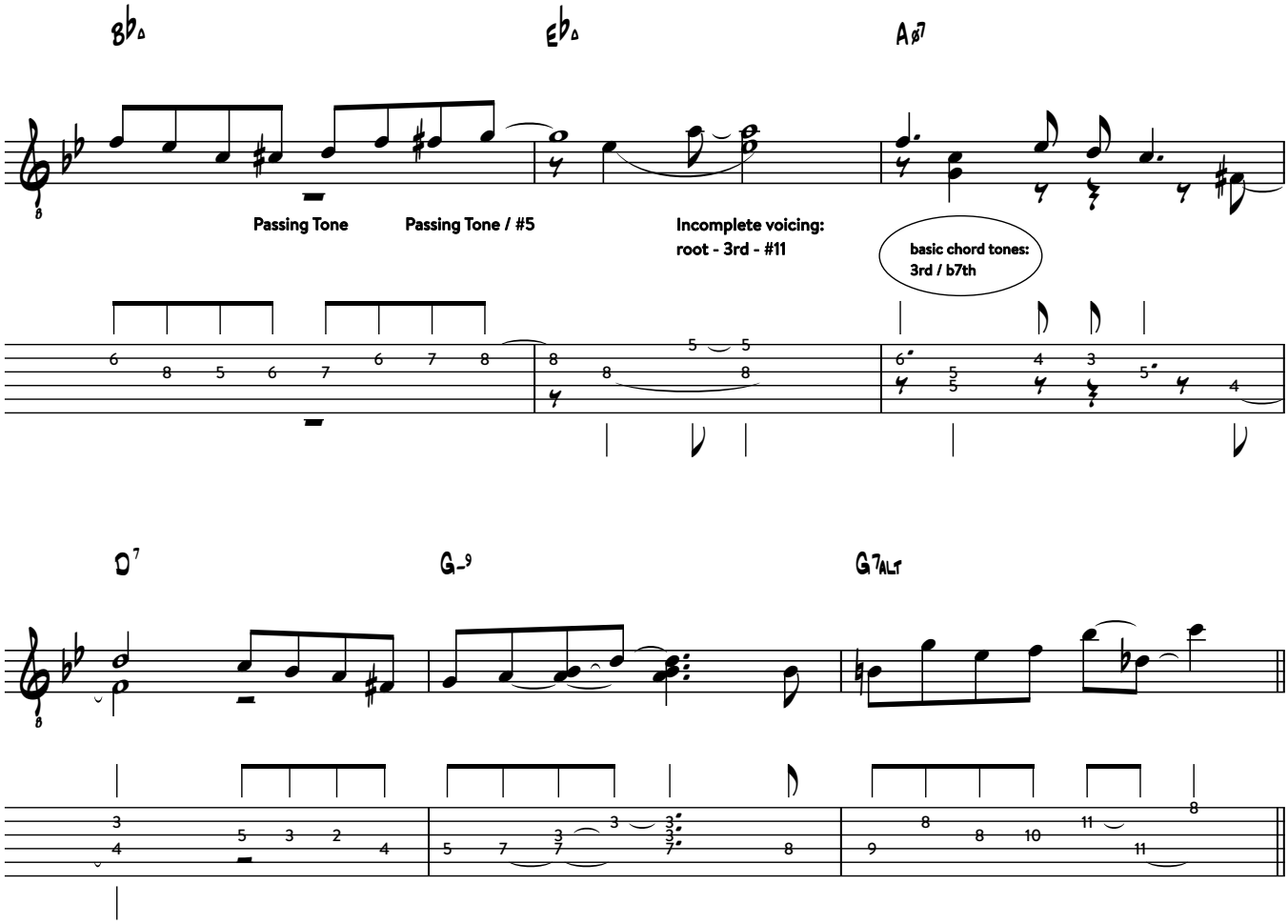


1. Arrangement ideas using open strings, harmonics and pedal point

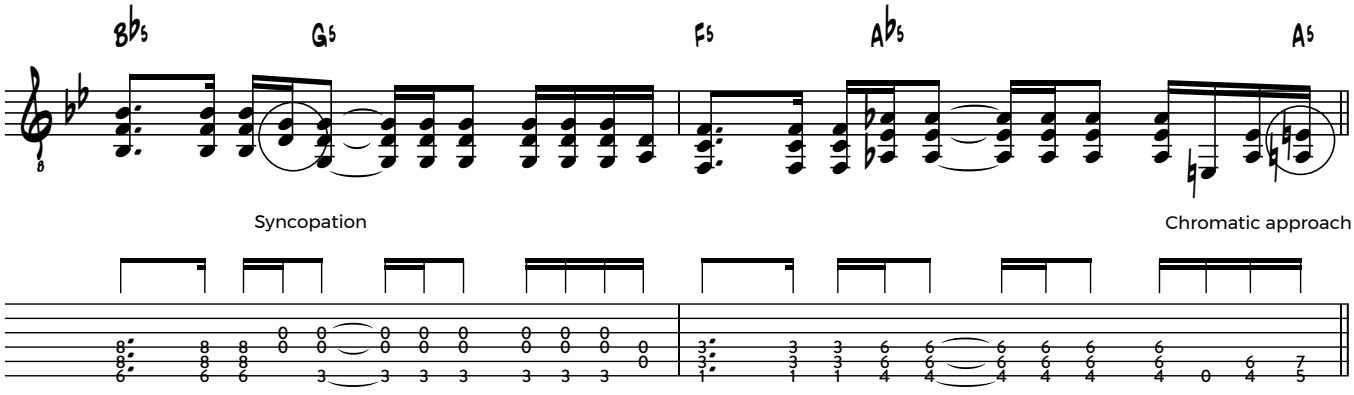


2.Pedal point concept applied to the changes of *Autumn Leaves* - J. Kosma

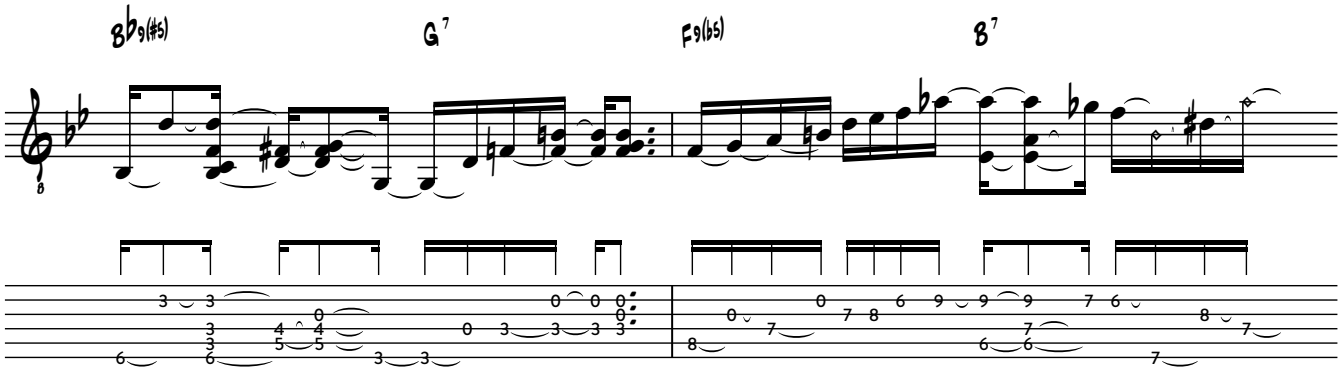




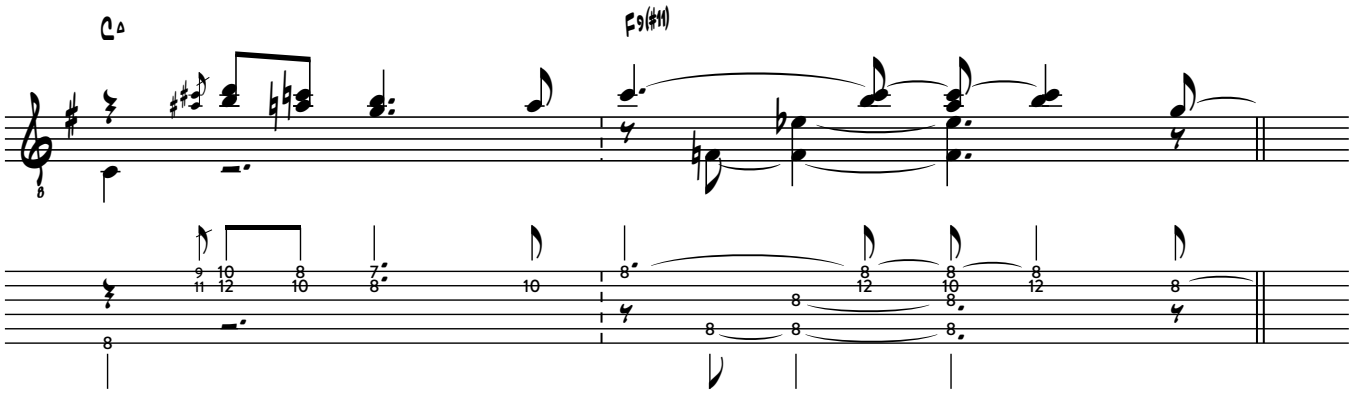
3. Original rhythm guitar part for 'In Bloom' by Nirvana w / syncopation and chromatic approach.



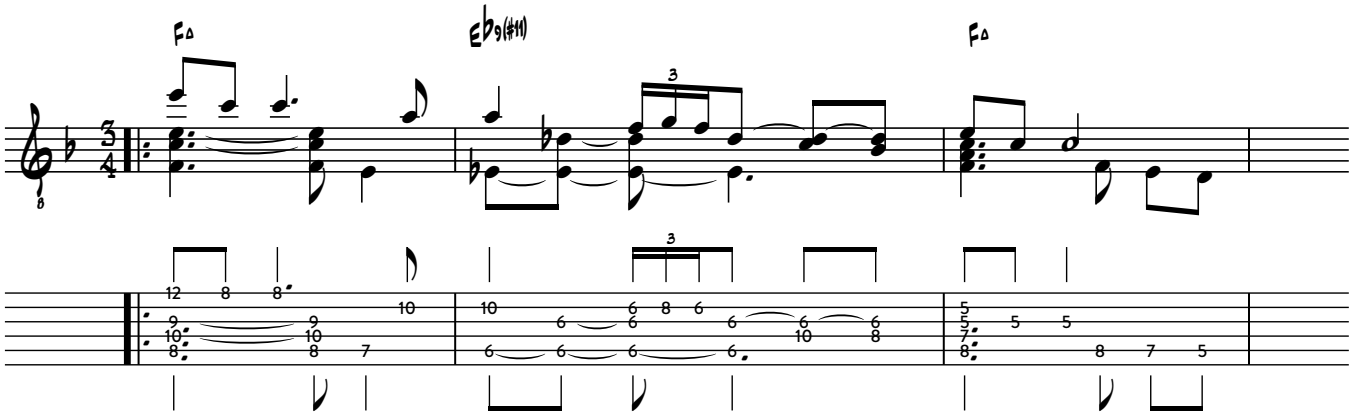
Intro for 'In Bloom', using reharmonizations, open strings, harmonics and pedal point



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

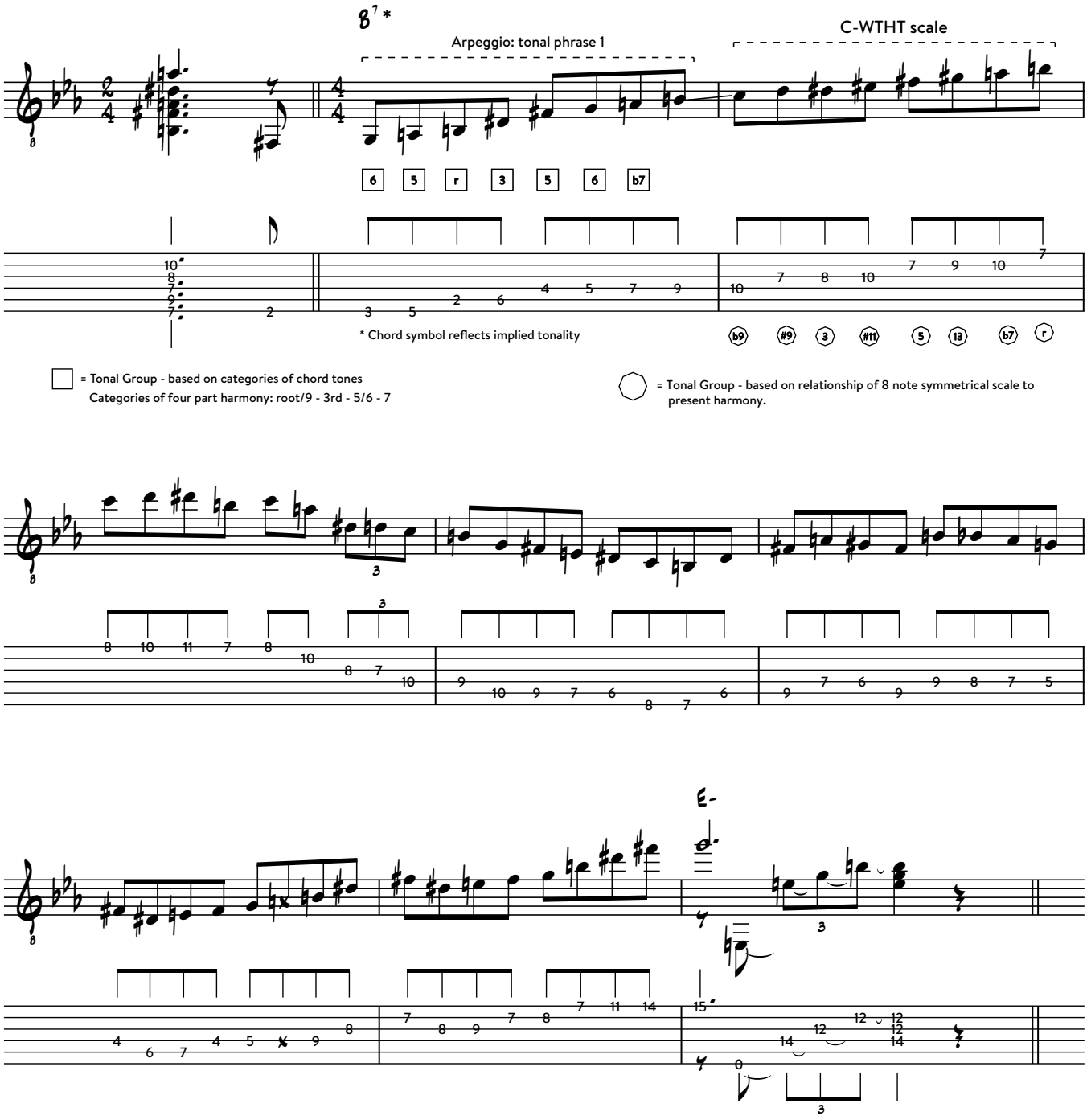


'Christmas Time Is Here' : the barre technique is applied to play the melody while simultaneously creating an Eb7#11 harmony



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 an underlying harmony requires a more dense and directed harmonic and rhythmic consistency on a small and large scale level.
Coherent structures (e.g. arpeggios, scales) including repetitions and references create a musical statement that is easier to follow for the listener.

5. (Re)harmonization Techniques

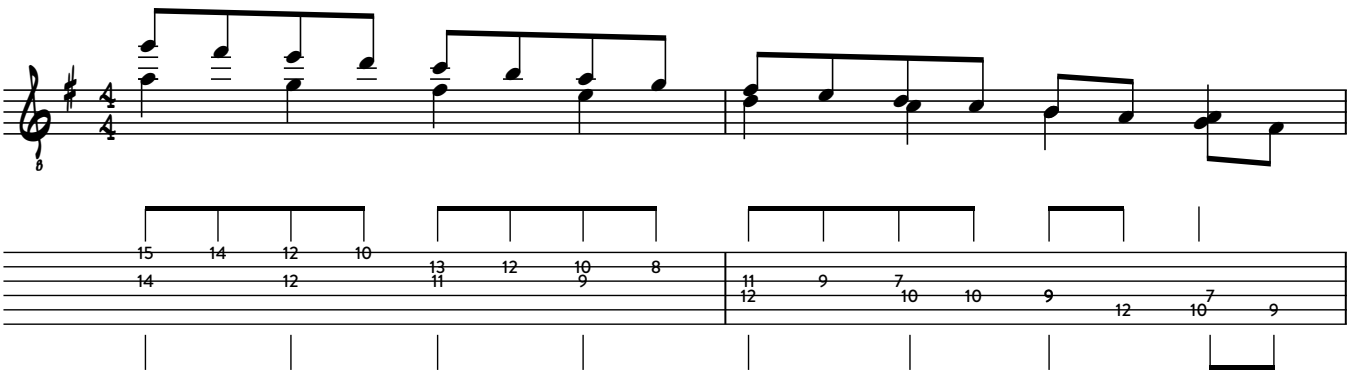
Outlining Sounds, Harmonic Tonal Groups, Chords and Voicings

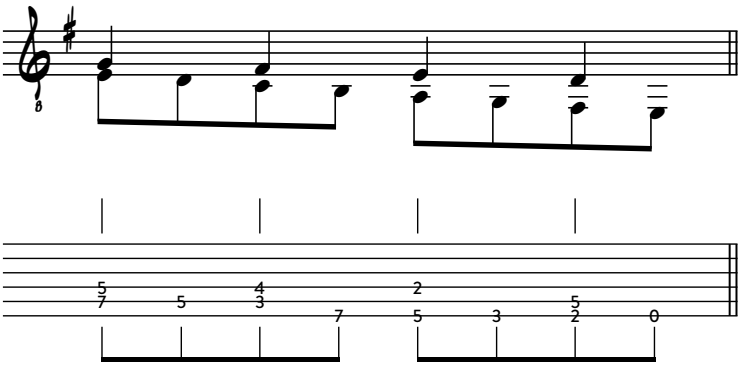
" The two notes C & E, although a valid sound, are not named as a chord when standing alone [...]. Even though the sound is not as definite as with three notes , the listener still hears the OUTLINE of a chord. If no other notes are present, he hears the sound as a C chord sound. His ear relates to the 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:

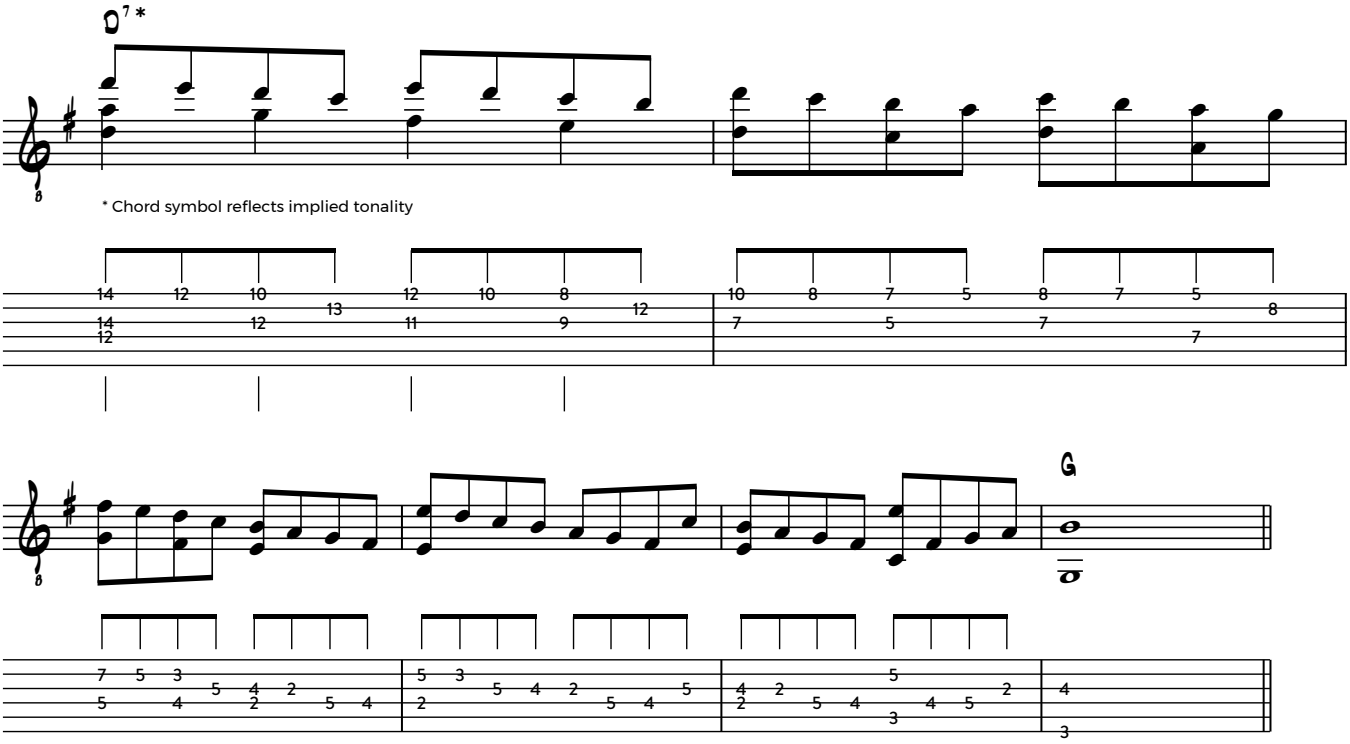
A - G = 5th - sus4

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

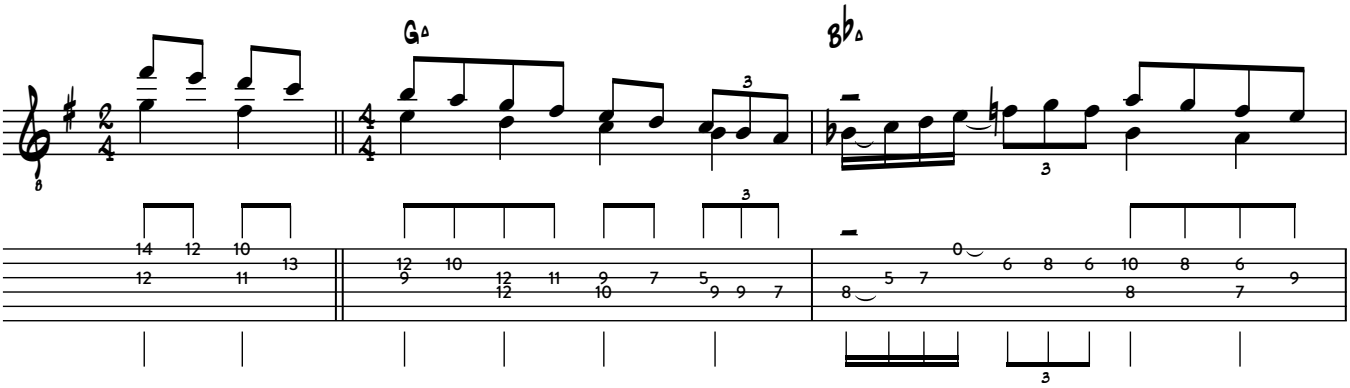
Sample 5.1b : "Two-Line" Descending Scale
as played by Julian Lage - *Improvisation for Carter Vintage Guitars* (from 01:11) *



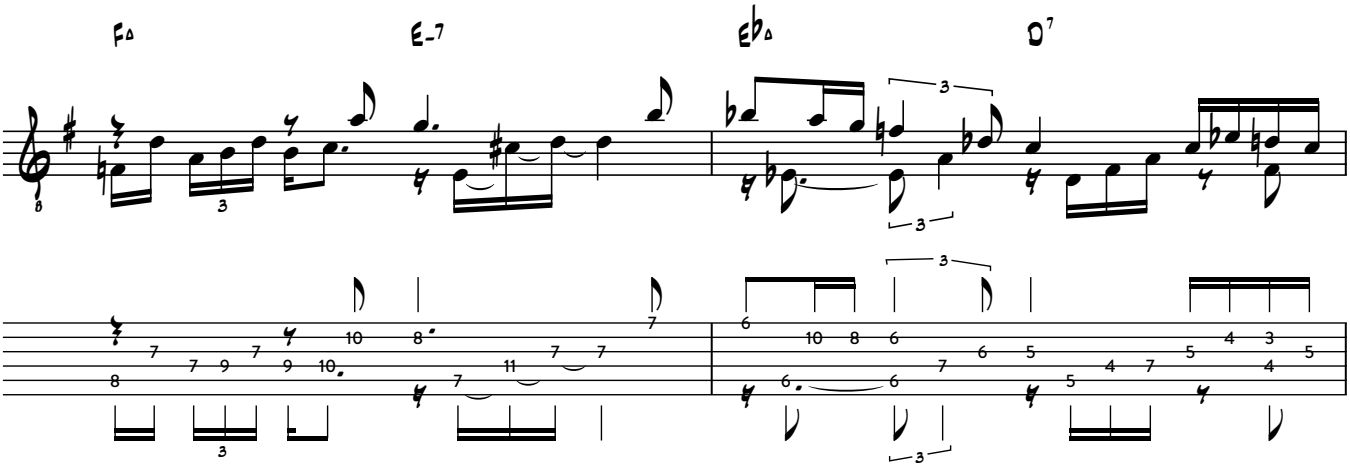
Ex. : Play scales with this approach, starting with different dyads / intervals in order to get familiar with tension and resolution tendencies.

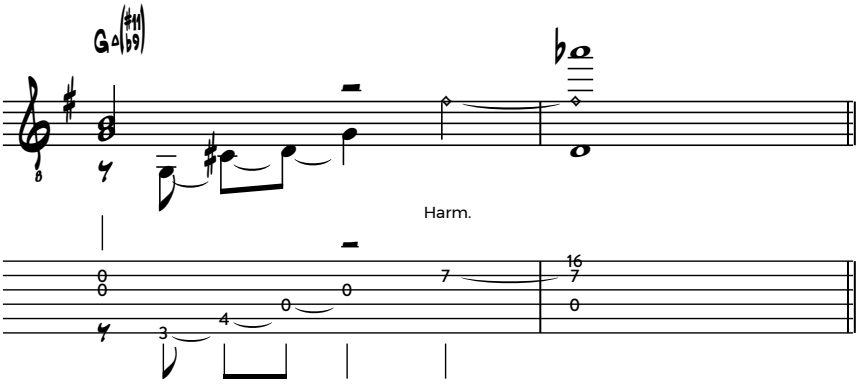
Find short melodic phrases and combine them with chords and lines to play a harmonic progression.
It's not so much about spelling out a harmony with all of its standard chord tones, e.g. [G Δ = G - B - D - F#] , it is about establishing a harmonic tonal center and outlining harmonic changes with a more minimalist approach. Allow for tensions and even 'avoid notes' (see C in G Δ , bar 11) - they bring color an movement ('passing notes'). Meanwhile, shifting tonal centers as in a song like Black Hole Sun' can be connected with common tones.

Sample 5.1c : "Two-Line" scale applied to the changes of *Black Hole Sun* **Sound sample**



* Lage, Julian - *Improvisation* - Demo for Carter Vintage Guitars





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 'G Δ #11 b9 sound' is a good example how to combine dyads effectively.
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 note [C#] introduced 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 'G add b5 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]

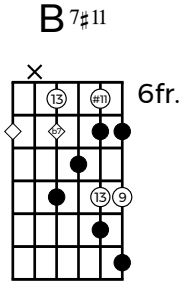
The final harmonics confirm [F# = G Δ#11] and develop [Ab - G Δ #11 b9] the perceived harmony.

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

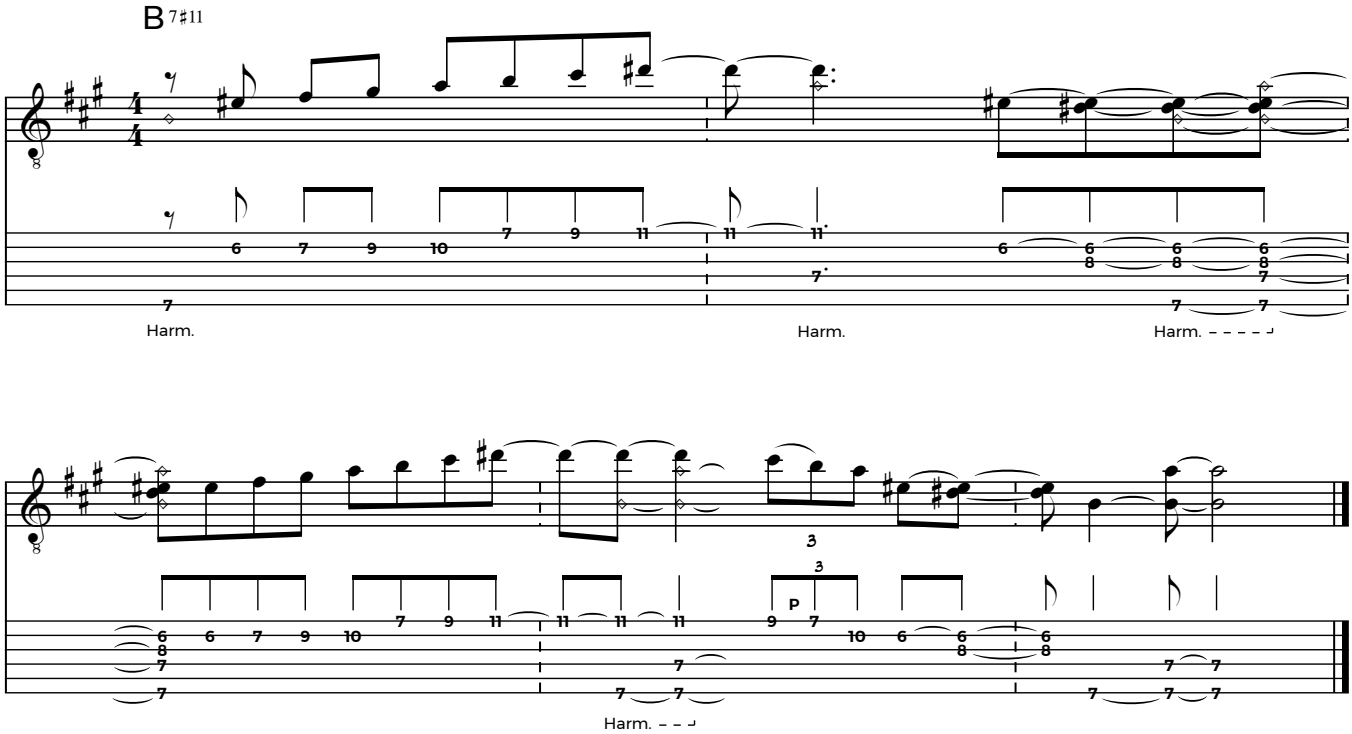
Outlining Lydian Sounds (1) Lush Life

inspired by Bill Frisell's solo performances

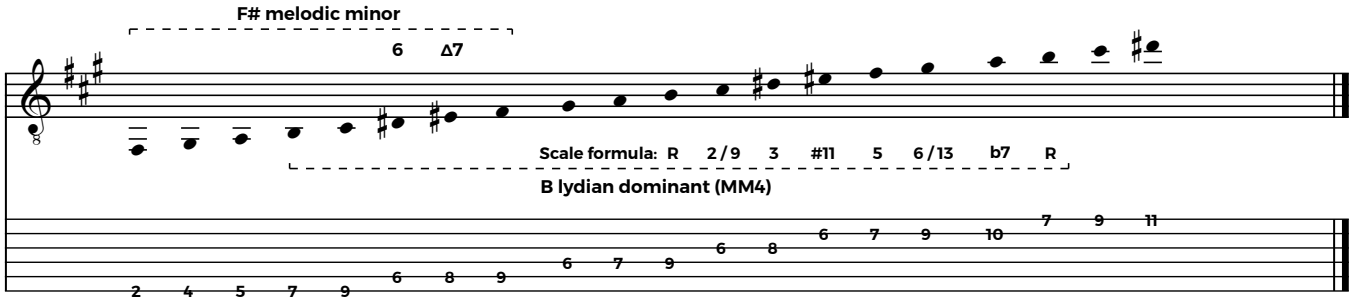
B lydian dominant 'box'



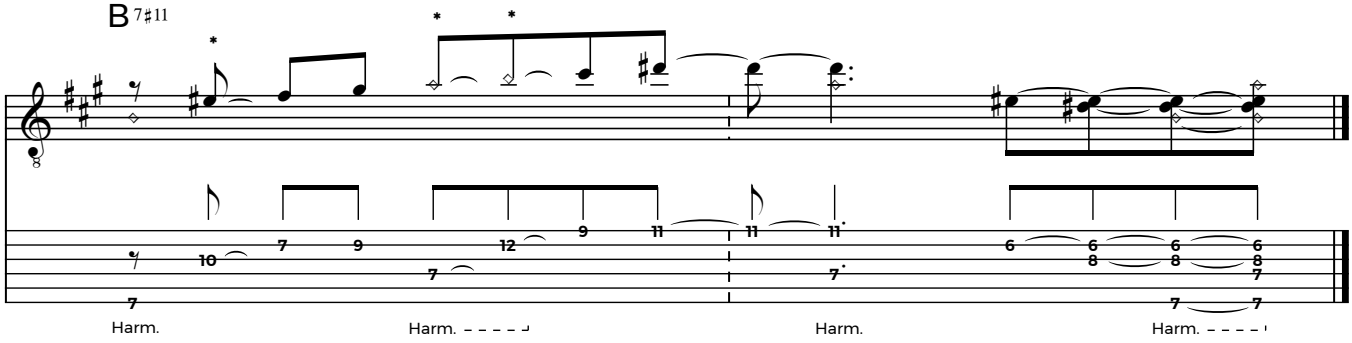
Sample 5.2 : Outlining a lydian dominant sound, from the intro vamp of 'Lush Life' [bII to I (verse) / B 7 #11 to Bb]



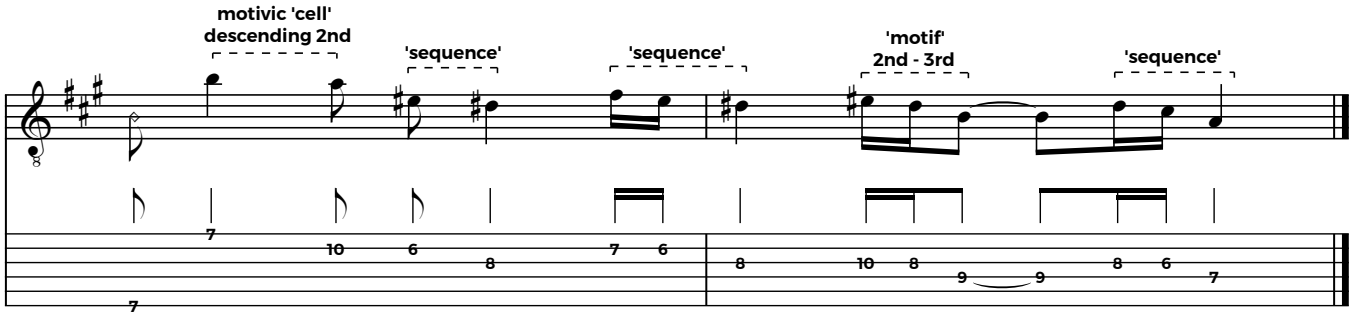
b) Scale formula for B lydian dominant', derivative of F# melodic minor



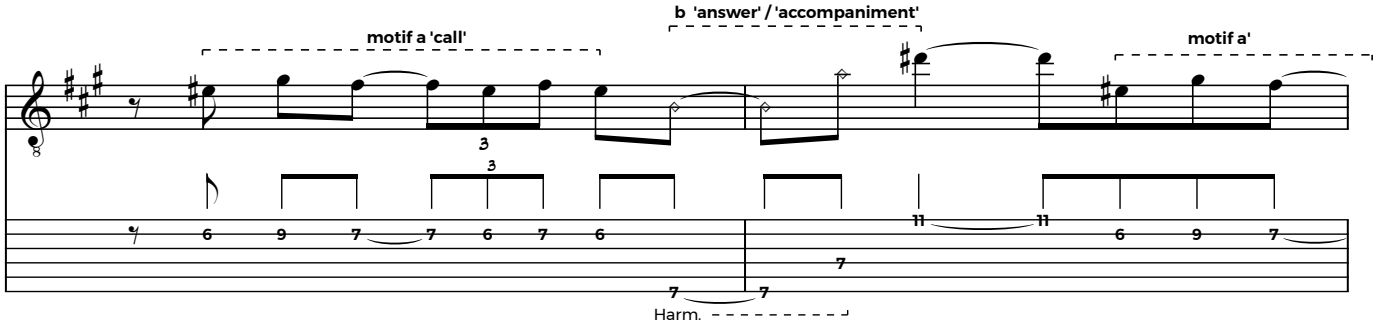
Improvisation concepts: alternative scale fingerings

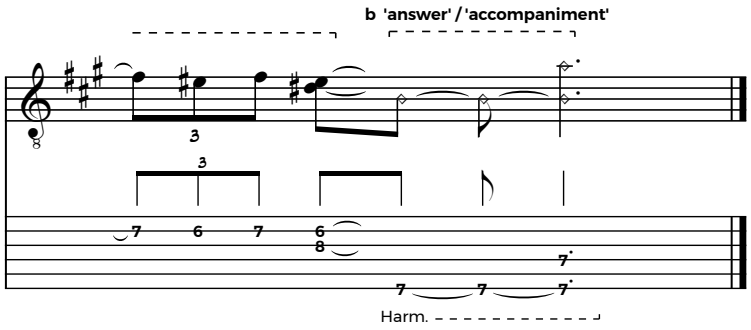


Building blocs of improvisation: use of alternating rhythm, motivic cells, motifs and sequences



Repeating motifs



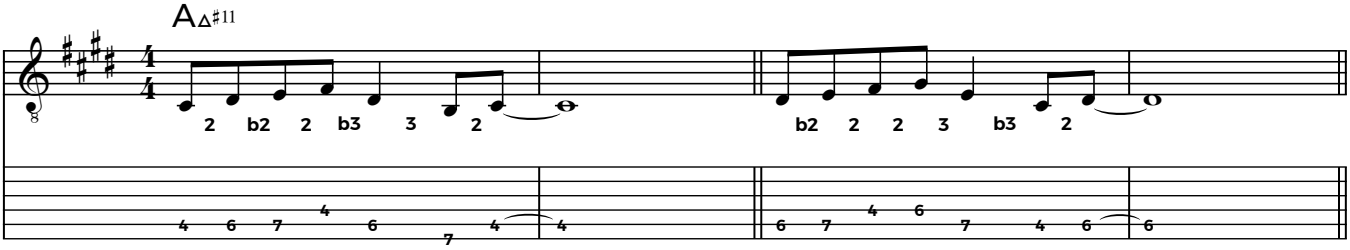


Outlining Lydian Sounds (2)

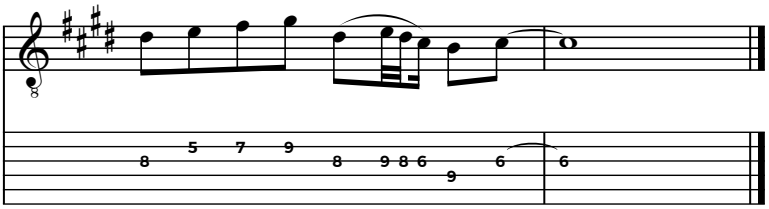
'The Lick'

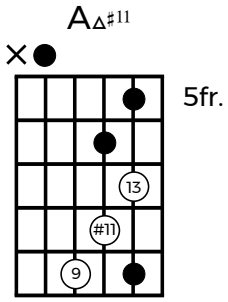
1. 'The Lick' : intervallic structure

a) Diatonic transposition (+1) / sequence

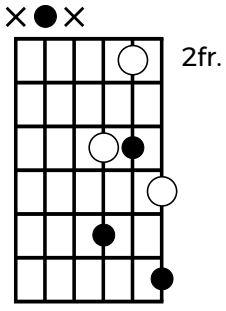


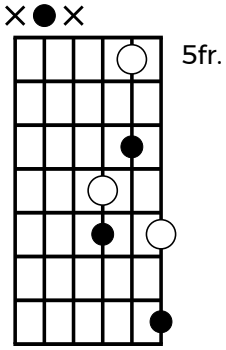
b) Variation of the sequence

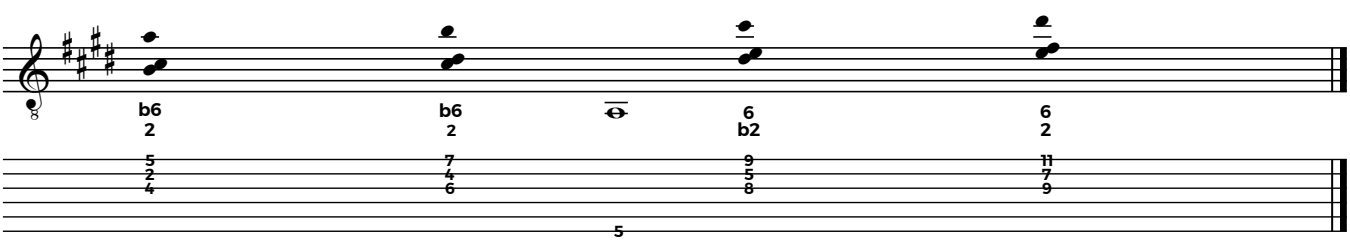




2. Constant structure voicings







Outlining Sounds (3)

Movement within a Harmony

1. Taking advantage of *open strings* :

Combining shell voicings with open strings already creates a rich sound texture.
In this example the open strings remain static (pedal point) yet they change their respective function within harmonies while the shell voicing is being moved down the neck:

The Ab7alt voicing can be used as a colorful chromatic approach to A9, e.g. while improvising in a modal context to create tension or simply as a voicing in a minor ii - V - I progression.

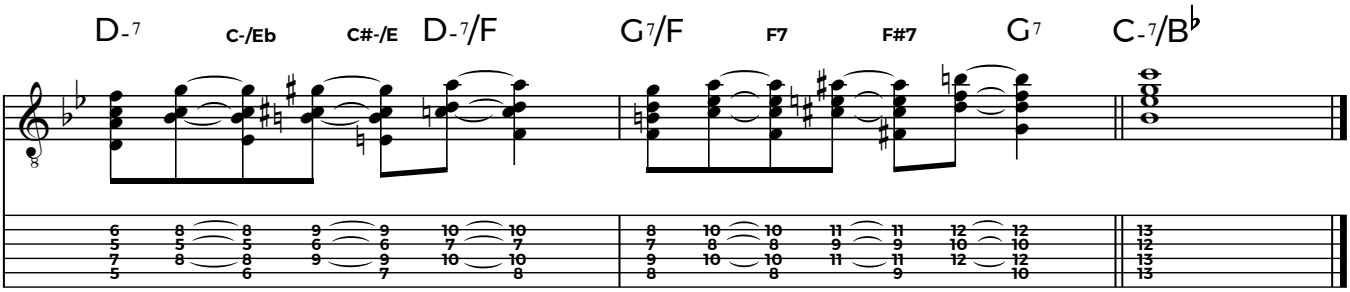
2. Creating movement *within* a harmony:

Adam uses a similar progression in his composition. Although it's moving down (II-V-I), the voicings are moving up. This is always a fresh sound since most progressions move downwards.

This movement is achieved by moving from a root position voicing to an inversion (D-7 to D-7/ F) and connecting these with a double-chromatic approach.

Think: - *1 step* below the target chord, then move up chromatically. You can also think of it as using an inversion of the harmony one step below from D-7 (C-7) which is being moved up chromatically.

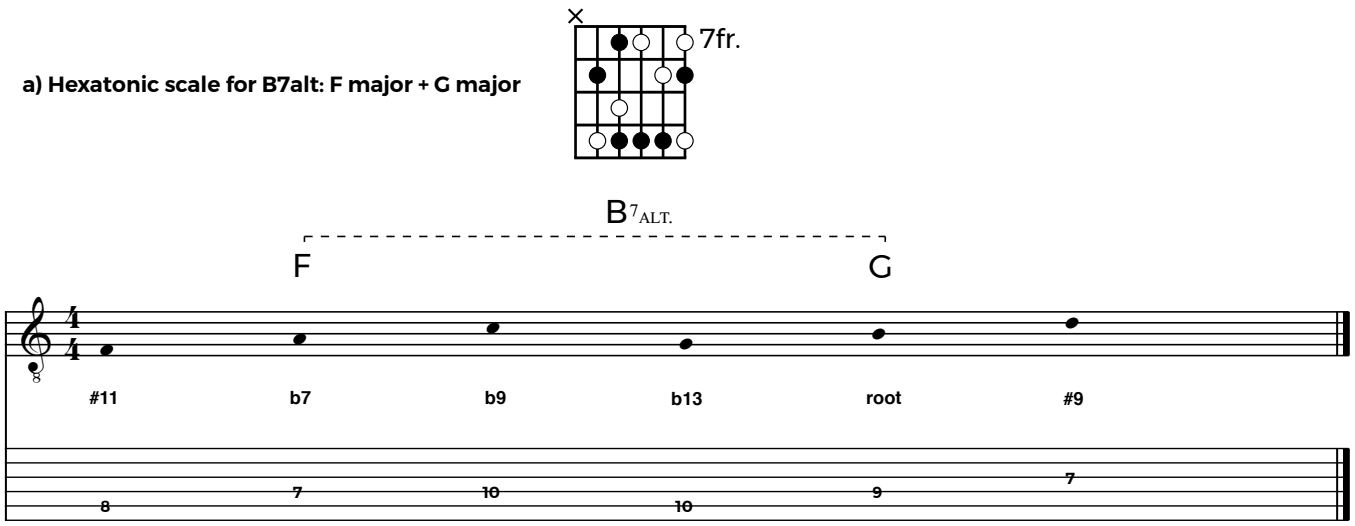
Do you recognize the same principle applied to the G7 harmony in the following bar?



Concepts in Context

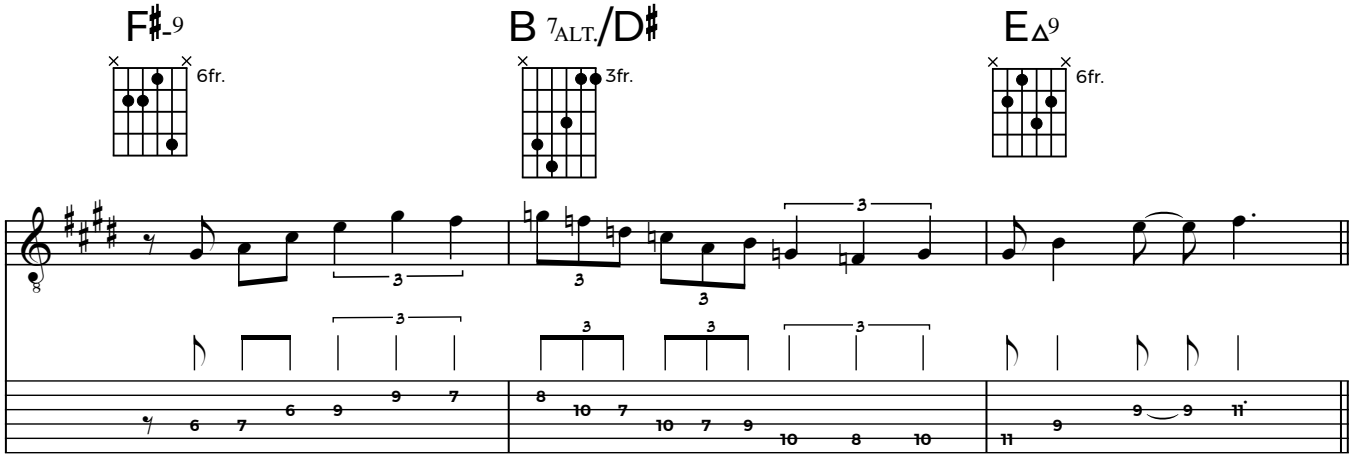
(1) Bi triadic hexatonic scales

a) Hexatonic scale for B7alt: F major + G major

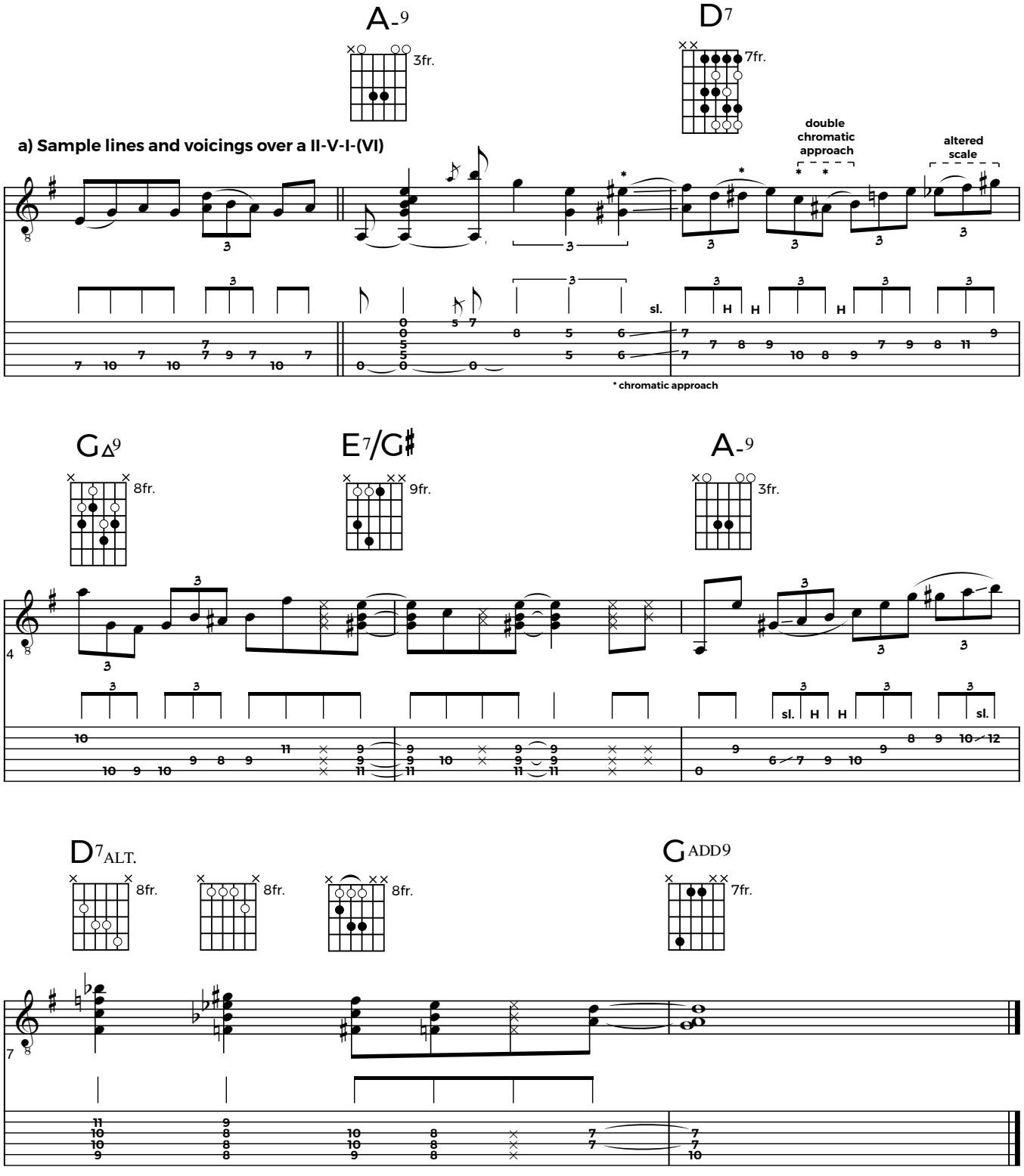


Triads offer - similar to the benefits of the pentatonic scale - a strong sound with structural integrity that is easy to identify even when embedded in more complex structures. By combining two triads that have no common tones into a hexatonic scale you can a) create lines that have a defined, recognizable outline and b) create new 'colors' since using the scale emphasizes different combinations of notes than the standard scales. In this case the resulting hexatonic scale is basically B-altered omitting the major third. It is also helpful to be able to think and find 'F-triad' and 'G-triad' on the fretboard while playing over altered harmonies, here B7alt.

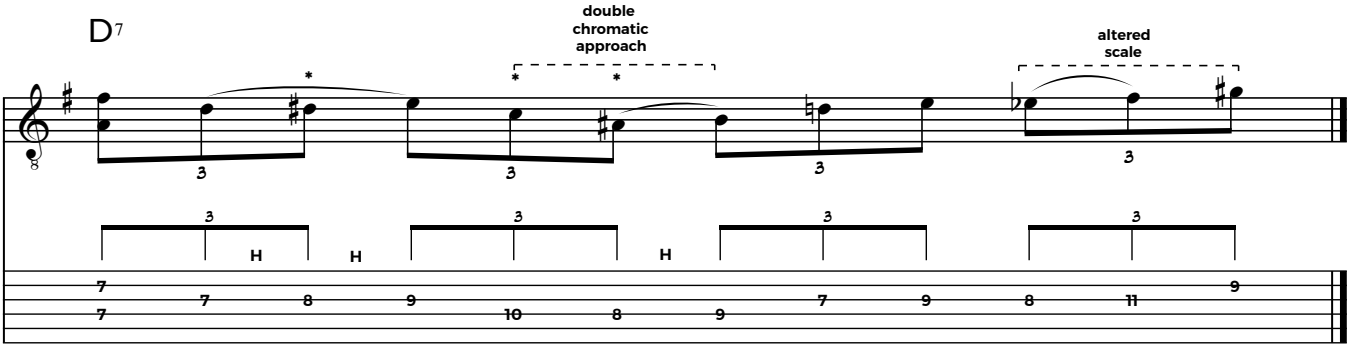
b) Sample line: ii - V7alt - I



(2) II-V-I: altered colors and chromaticism



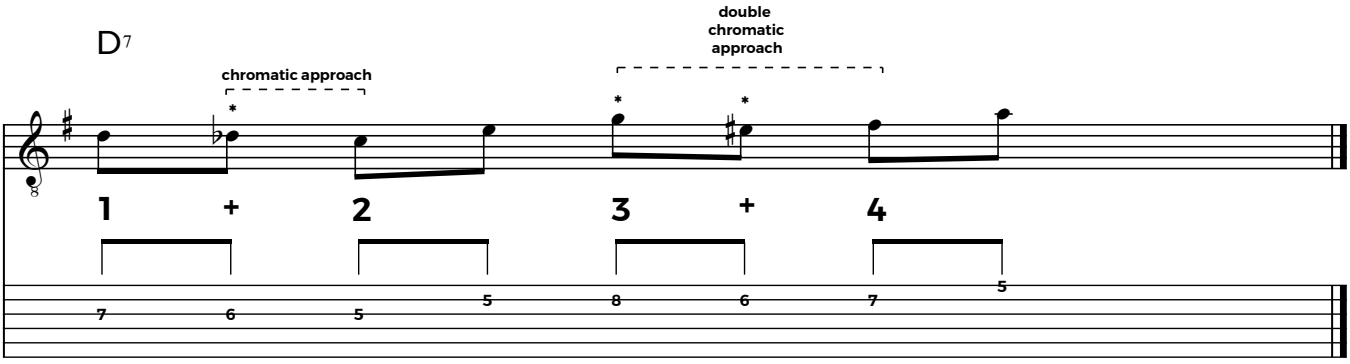
b) Chromaticism



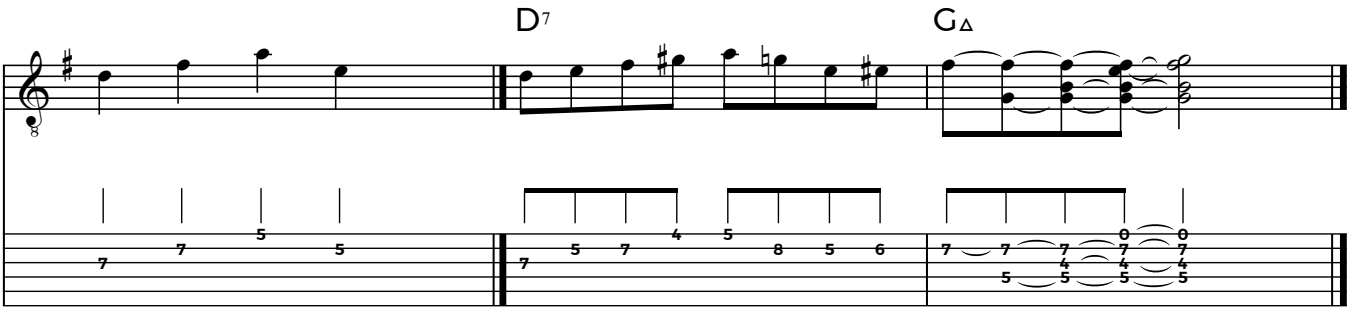
The non-diatonic notes from the sample line (a) add extra 'colors' by contrasting the current tonality and by creating stronger resolution tendencies. Where and how does one find these on the fretboard? There are two concepts at display how to find 'dedicated color notes' for a chord function.

The first one is rather intuitive. **Chromatic approach**: a target note (e.g. B in bar 3) on a heavy beat (e.g. 1-2-3-4) can always be approached from a half or whole-step below and above itself.
Here it is encircled by c' an a#' which happen to be both diatonic (c) and non-diatonic notes (a#). This concept is dubbed 'double chromatic approach' - a common technique often found in bebop improvisation.
You can always go for a less chromatic sound by opting for an a' instead of a#'. Still, more important than the note choice is the rhythmic placing: rather think 'one fret below - one fret above' when approaching target notes.

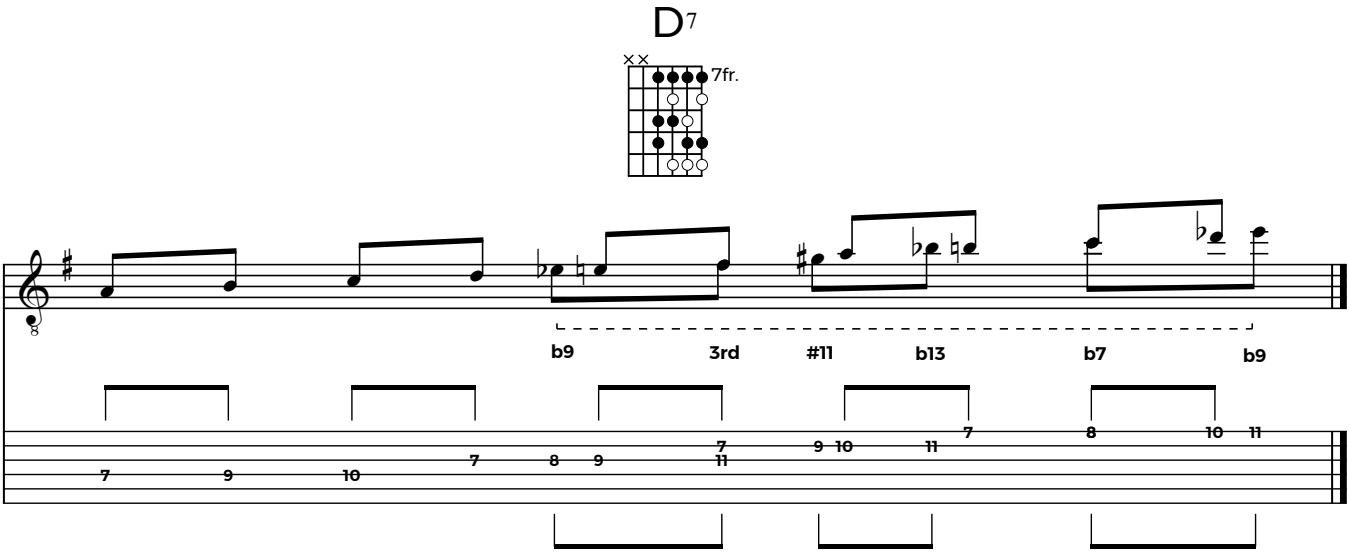
Here's another sample using chromatic and double chromatic approach:



Here's another way how the space between target notes can be filled up. The first half of the measure is almost diatonic, creating an augmented sound with the inserted g# approach note. The last three notes encircle the f# target note of GΔ. Build your own!



c) D-mixolydian scale with superimposed notes from D-altered



The second concept is **superimposing** notes from the respective altered scale. How to go about that in a musical way?
A good start is to establish the diatonic outline of the chord in the first half of a bar, similar to the prior exercise.
Then add notes from D-altered, they create tension and a resolving tendency towards a following harmony.

The above chord diagram 'box' shows the diatonic notes (black dots). It is a D-Mixolydian scale minus the 4.
First, play the notes in this position only. Ideally with a drone of the root (sing or loop: D) so you can both establish

1. a 'sonic imprint' of the sound and
2. muscle memory regarding to where this sound is located in this area of the fretboard.

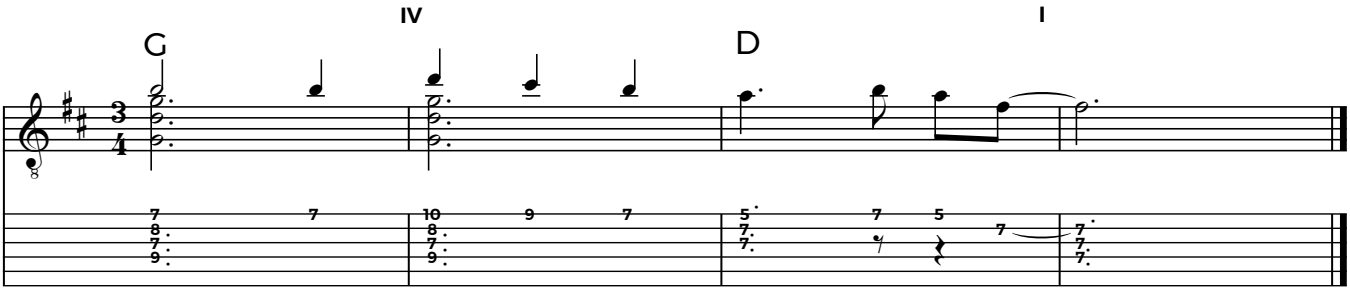
The second step is to slowly add altered notes (white dots). Listen to how the sound differs and if you can hear the resolving tendencies towards the following chord (e.g. GΔ or G-). Looking at the diagram / fretboard you'll notice as well that the altered notes come in 'triadic shapes':

Ab triad & Eb-minor triad. When you're looking for altered sounds you can always think

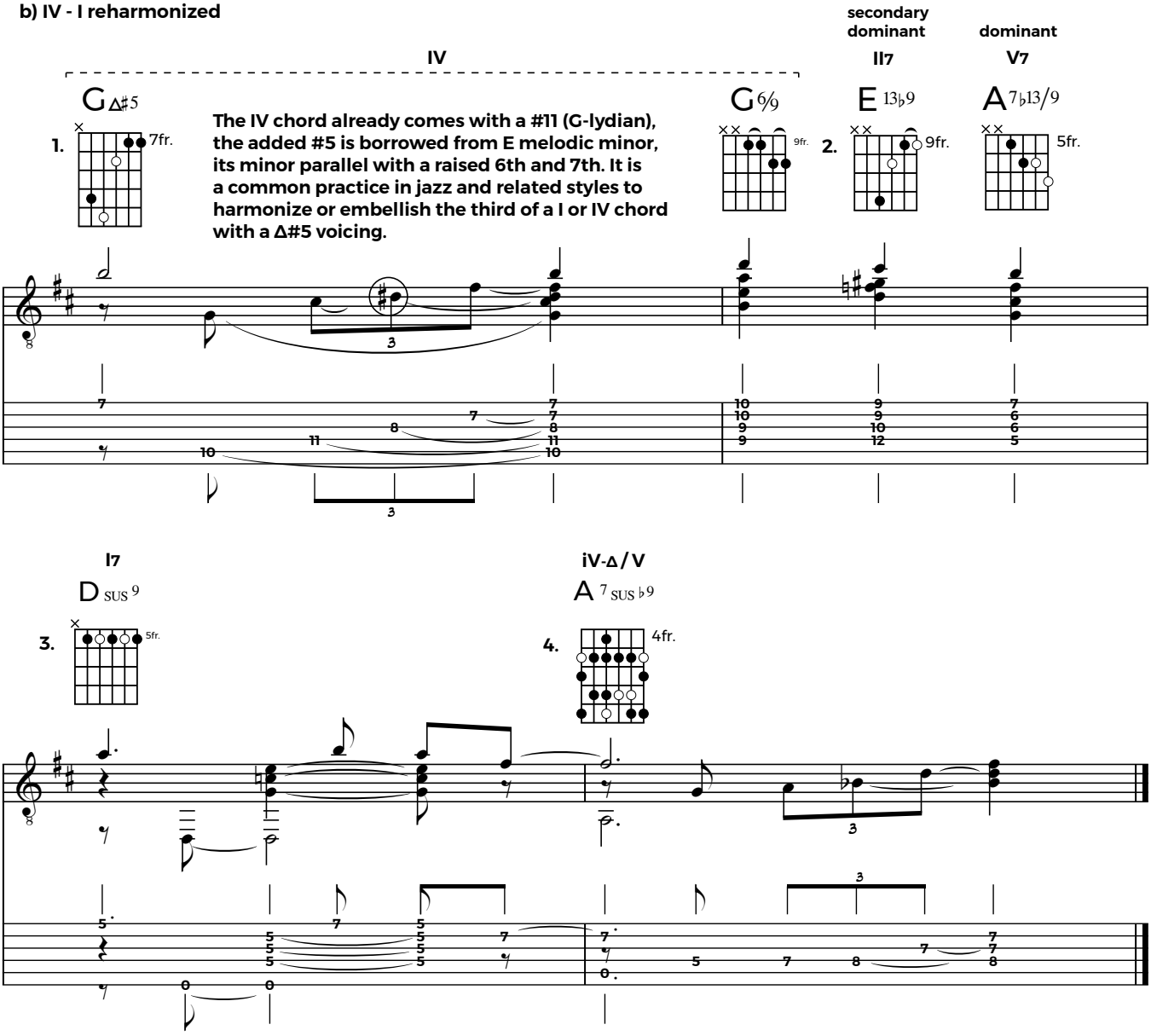
1. major triad from the b5 of the chord (D - Ab: Ab c eb) -
2. minor triad from the b9 of the chord (D - Eb: Eb gb bb).

Melodic Minor: (Re)harmonization ideas

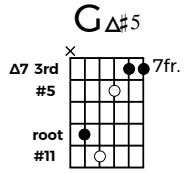
a) IV - I: bars 8-11 of 'Silent Night'



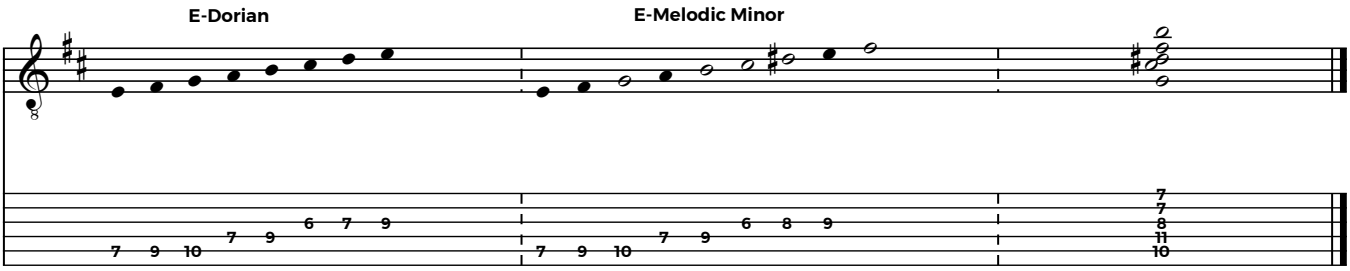
b) IV - I reharmonized



Applied reharmonization concepts:

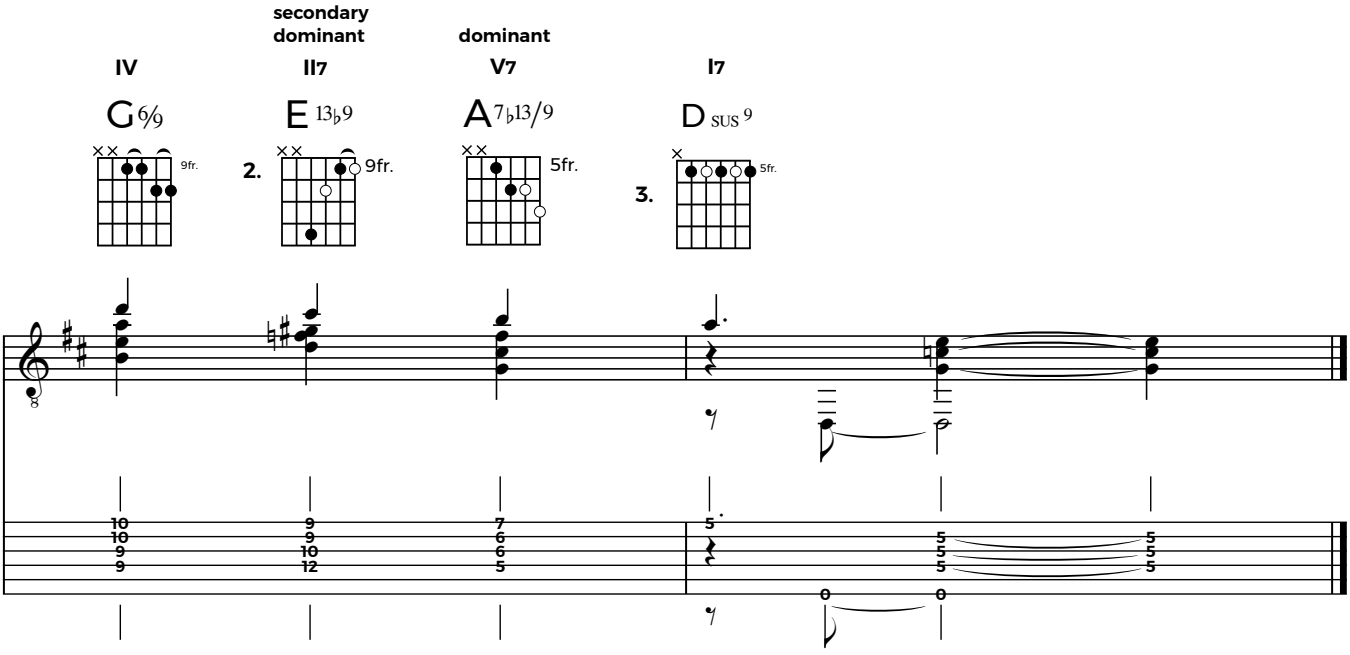


1. The 'lydian augmented' scale: using Δ♯5 voicings to harmonize the 3rd (melody note) of a I or IV harmony:

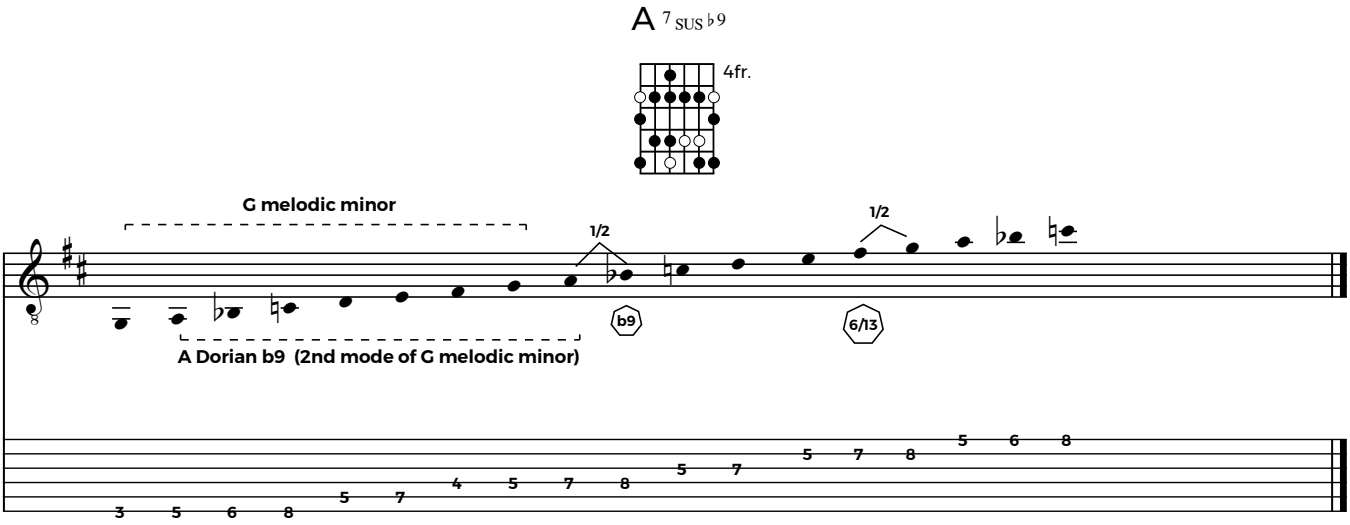


Where is this non-diatonic note coming from? Here's one possible approach:
The minor parallel for the IV chord (G) in the key of D major is E-minor. Since E is the second degree in D major it already comes with a raised 6th (C#) which is the #11 in the IV chord - practical! The raised 5 can be borrowed from the E-Melodic Minor scale by changing the D to a D#. The resulting voicing offers a lydian augmented color derived from the third mode of melodic minor, here: G lydian augmented.

2. & 3. Superimposed secondary dominants



4. Susb9 - not your common dominant chord



Harmonic Tonal Groups, Chords and Voicings

Before harmonizing melodies with more complex sounds, keep in mind that every sound that is part of a harmony, exists within a context. Every 'chord-tone' is part of a **melodic pathway** that at a point **converges into a harmony**. Thinking of an individuallymoving 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 / the effect each note has at a given moment. The majority of melody notes in sample 5.2a points towards the key of A.

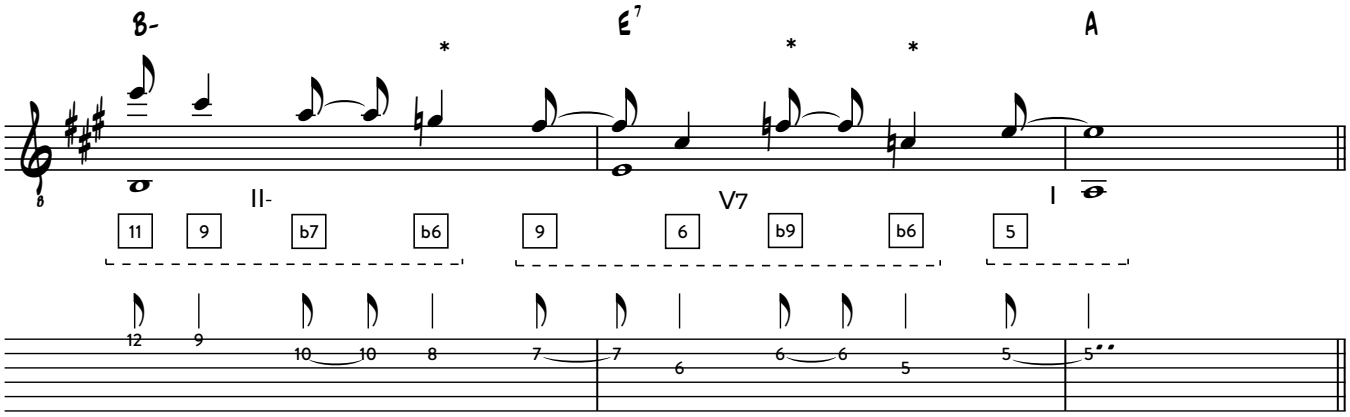
Chord

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 define perceived harmonies clearly, whereas 7th-chords and quartal harmonyies can offer a more open sound.
Apart from stylistic choices this should be a simple guideline when choosing and combining different chord structures.

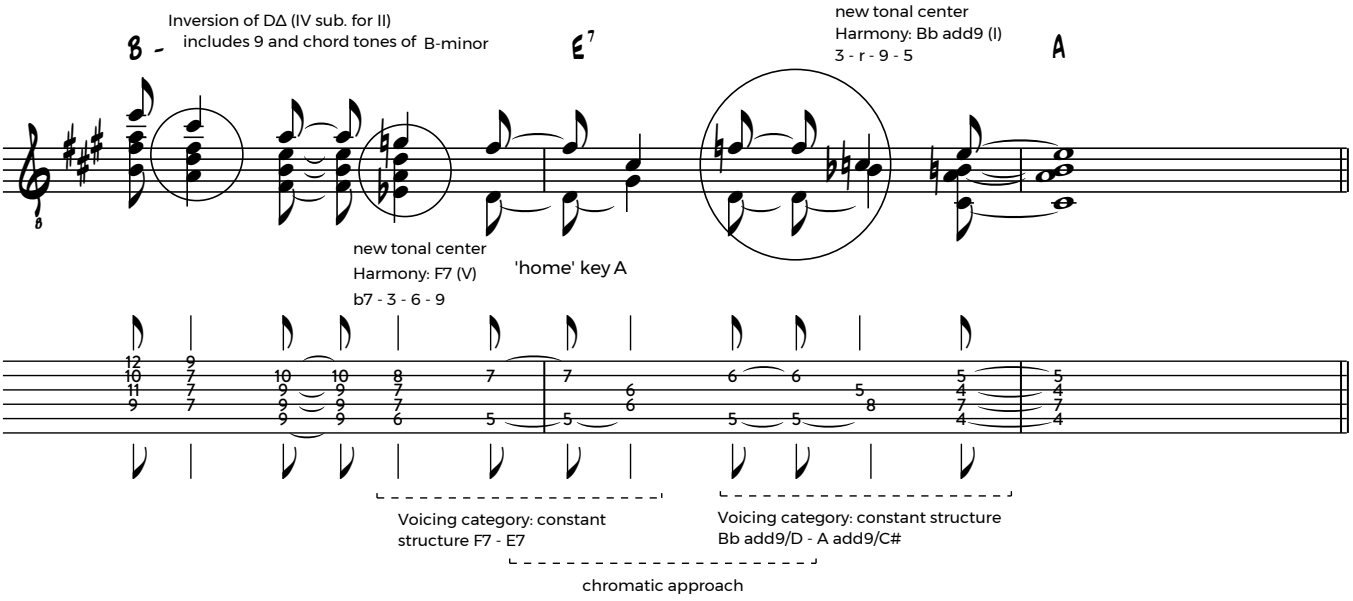
Voicing

The term voicing describes the categories and intervallic arrangement of chord tones added to a melody note.
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

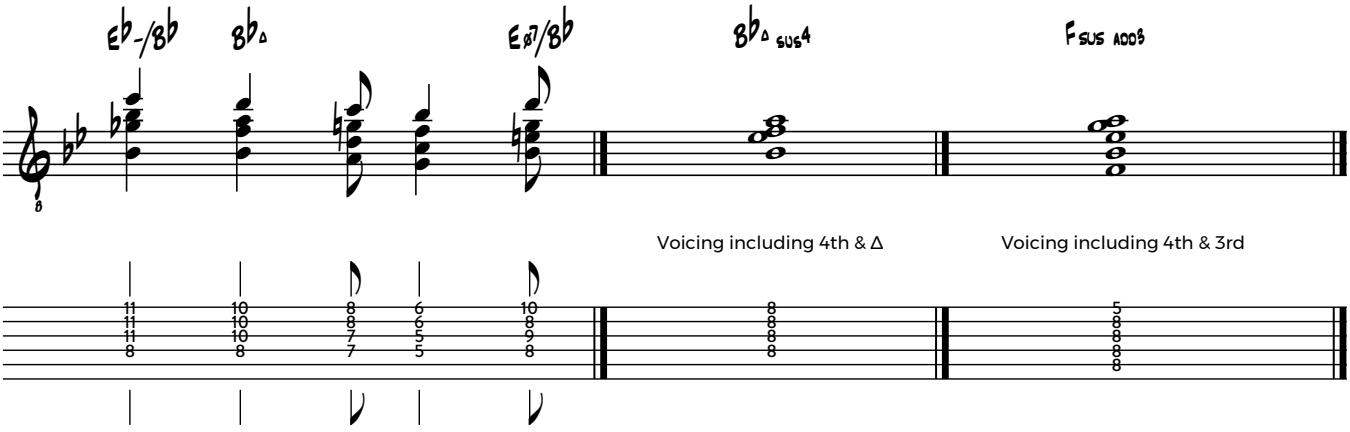


Sample 5.2b : Harmonization with 7th-chords and quartal harmonies, application of chromatic approach

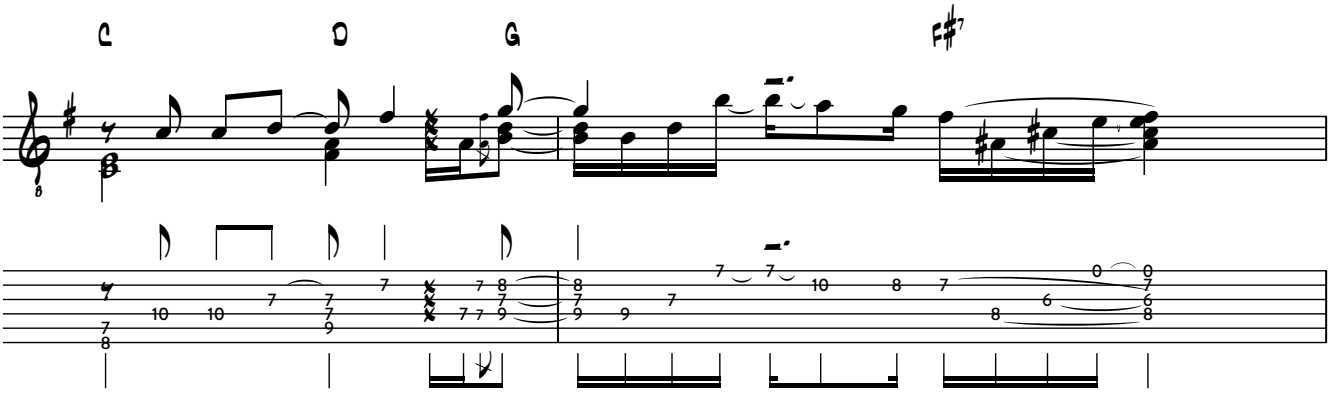


A melody note that doesn't match any available chord tones or tensions within the key, indicates a shift of the tonal center. An exception are 'avoid-notes' which resolve to a chord tone, functioning as suspended notes. E.g. a 4th during a I chord, like in 'Stella By Starlight'. It can also be harmonized 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 / I Δ harmony / harmonization ideas for ' avoid notes '



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

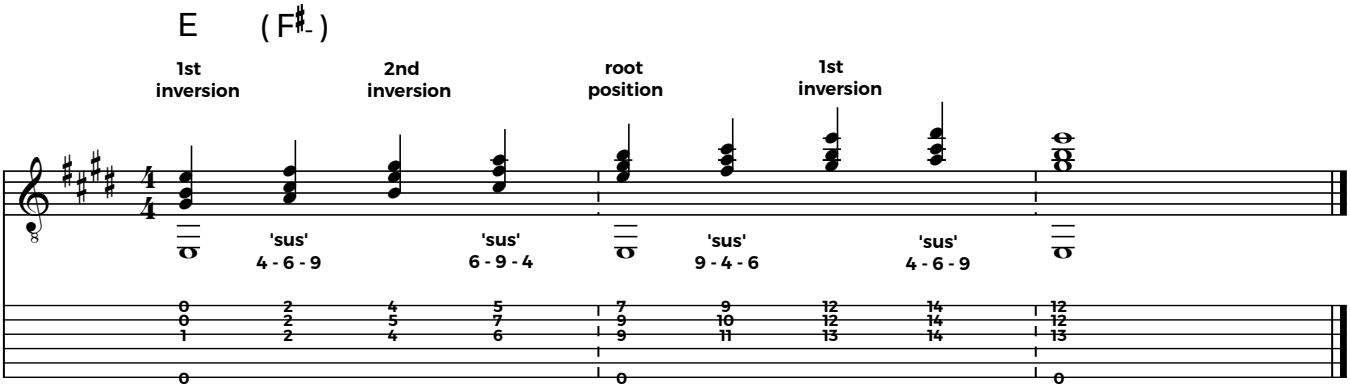


Use inversions to create economic voice leading and harmonize a melody in one area of the fretboard. Inversions differ slightly in their intensity: the intervallic structure of the second inversion of each major, minor or diminished triad creates the most distinct sonority, indepedent from which register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

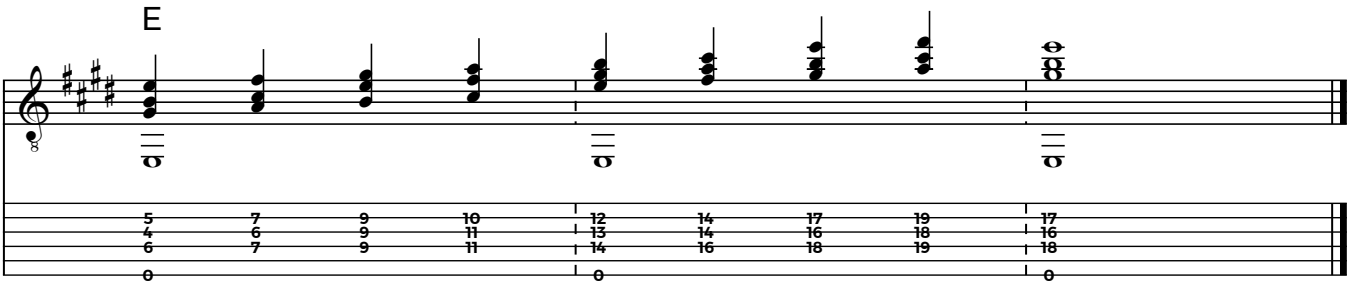
Harmonizing Melodies with Triads and Seventh Chords

'Gospel Chords'

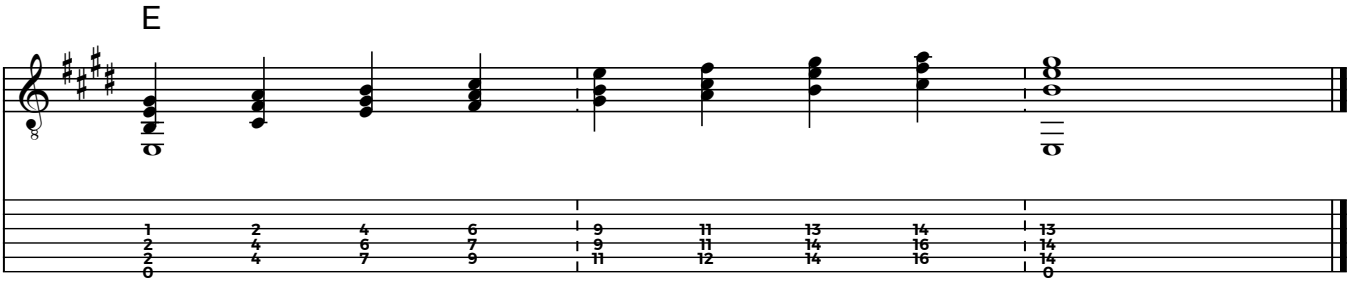
1. Harmonizing scales with triads: I - ii



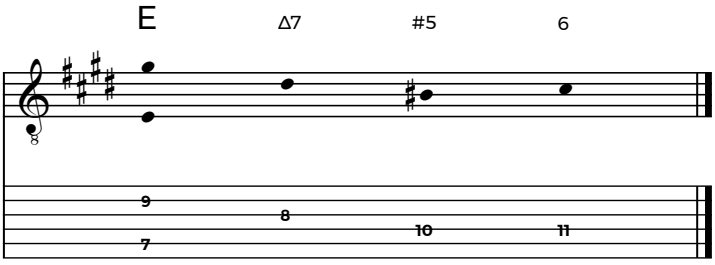
b) D-G-B string-set

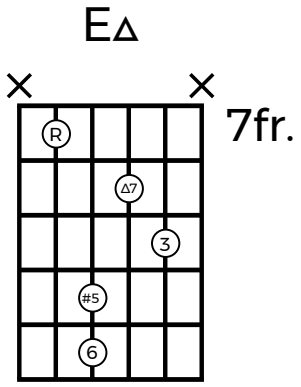


c) A-D-G string-set

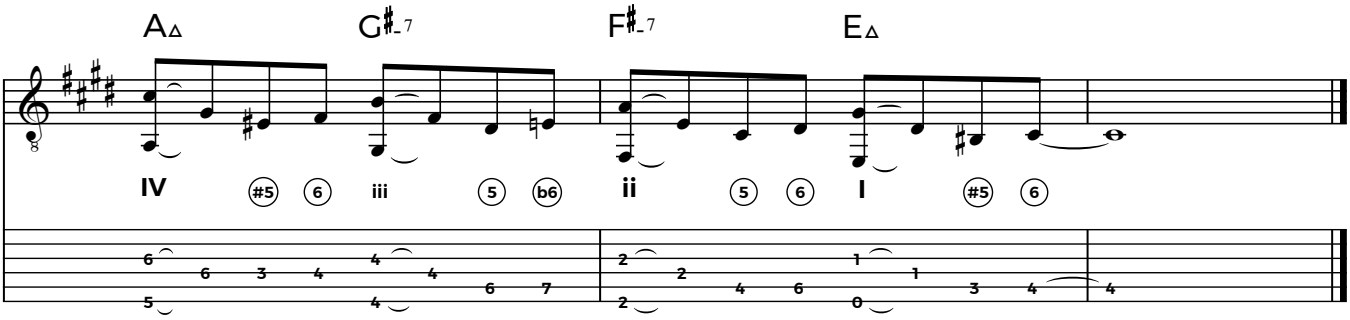


2. Inner movement: (#)5 - 6

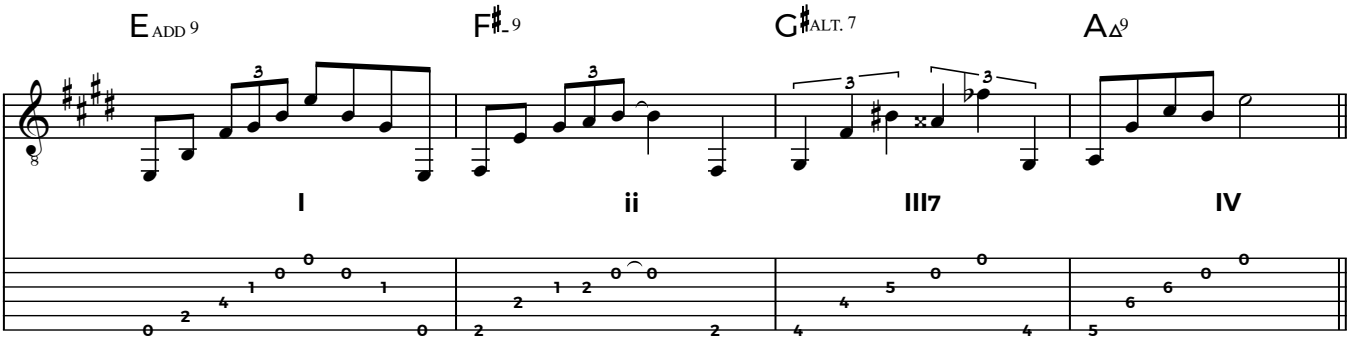


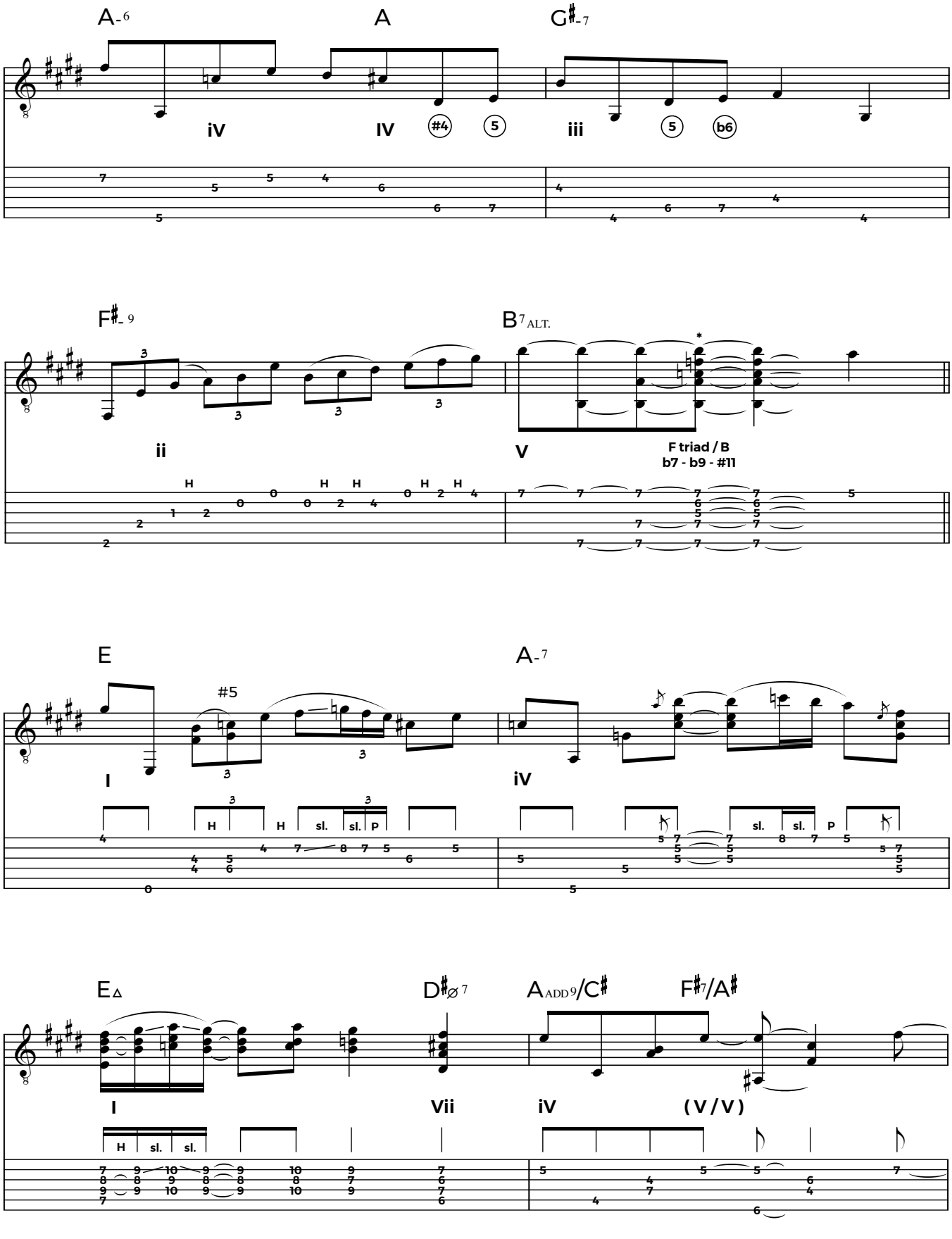


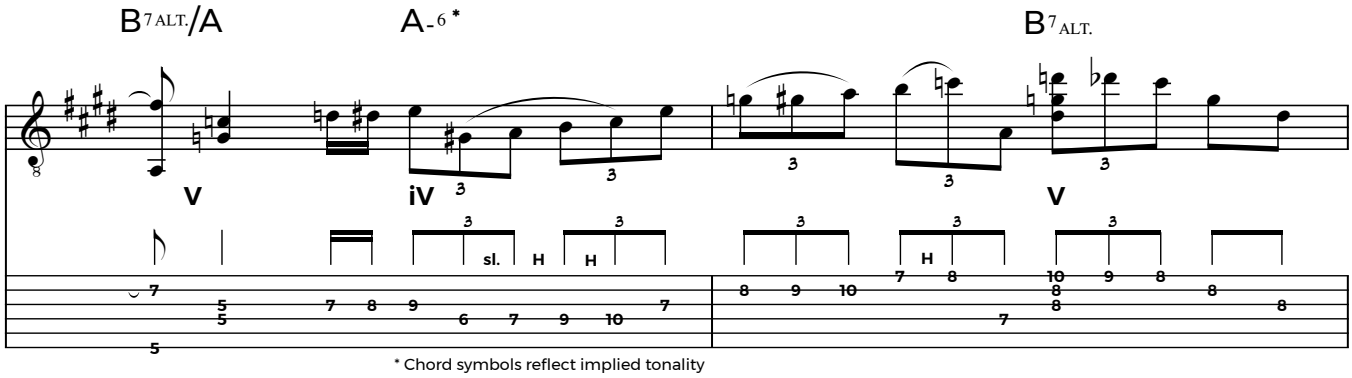
b) Application: IV - I



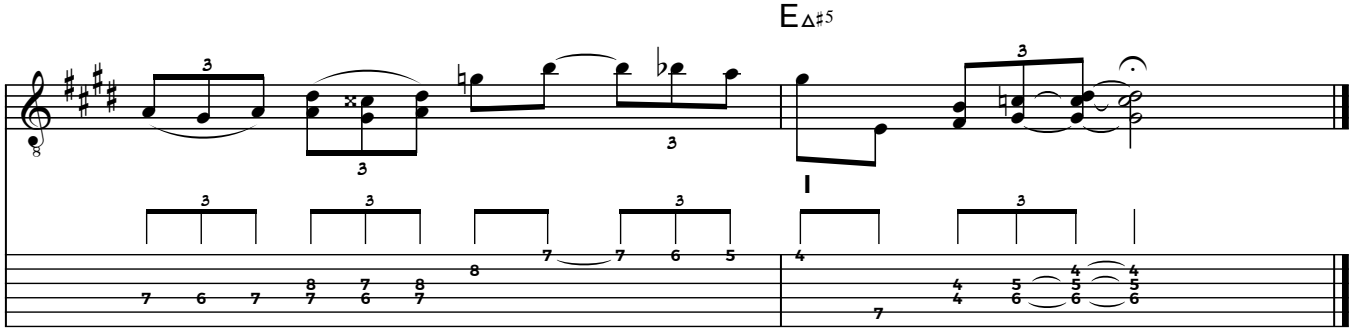
3. 'Gospel chords': guitar moves inspired by Spanky Alford, Isaiah Sharkey and Melanie Faye



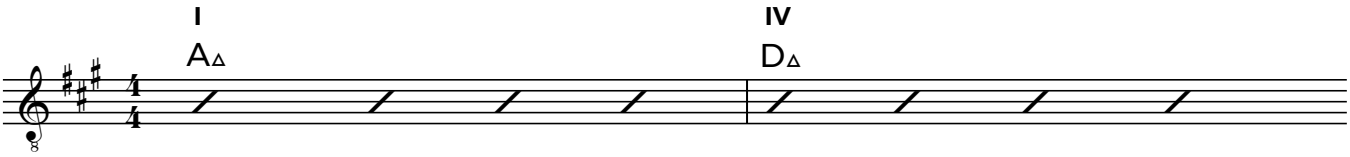

A-6
A
G#-7
iV
IV
#4
5
iii
5
b6
F#-9
B7 ALT.
ii
V
F triad / B
b7 - b9 - #11
E
#5
A-7
I
iV
sl.
P
E△
D#ø7
AADD9/C#
F#7/A#
I
Vii
iV
(V / V)
H
sl.



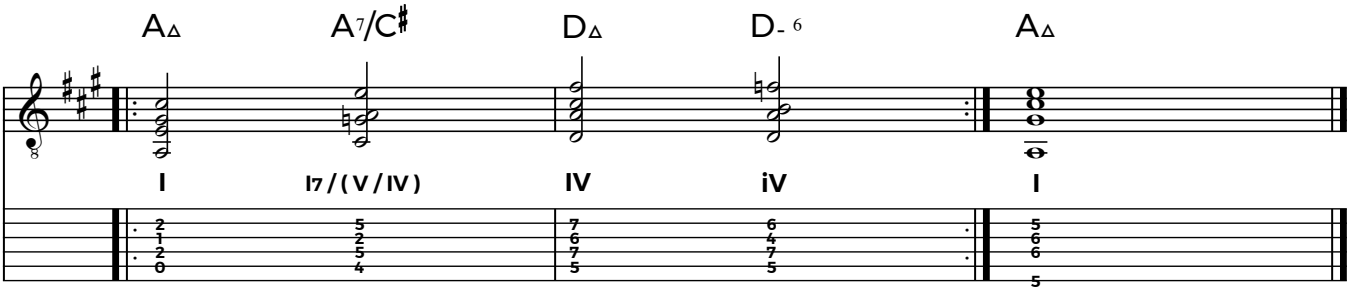
* Chord symbols reflect implied tonality



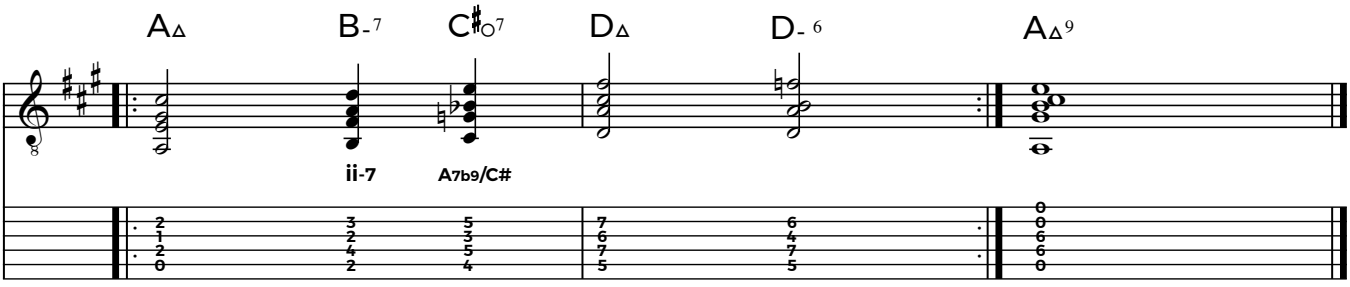
I - IV progressions w / passing chords



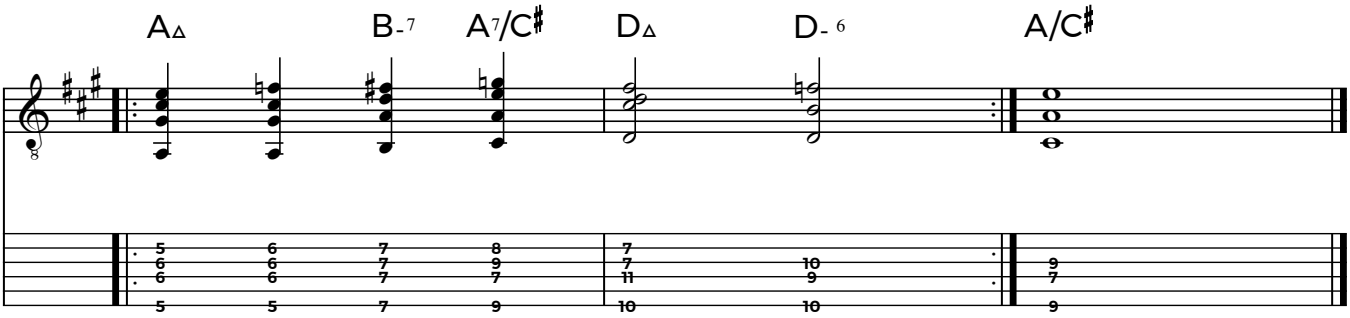
1. IΔ - I7 - IVΔ - iV6

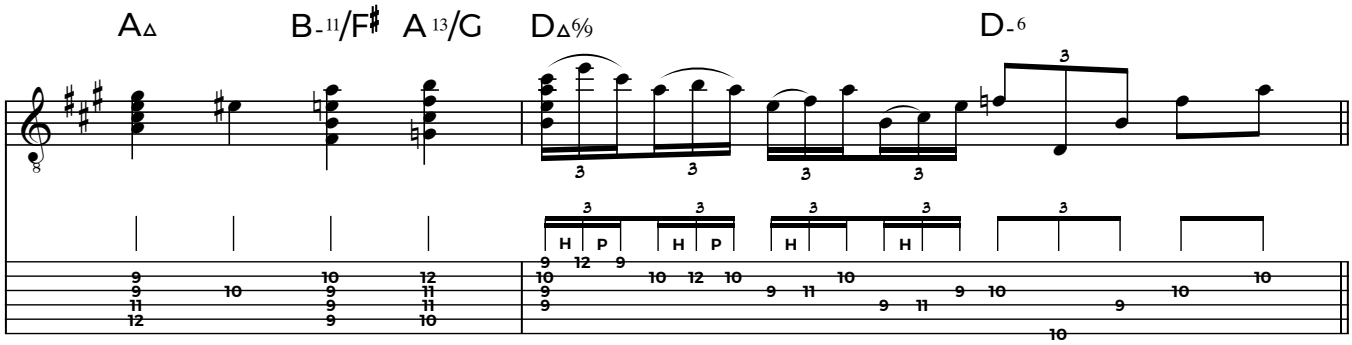


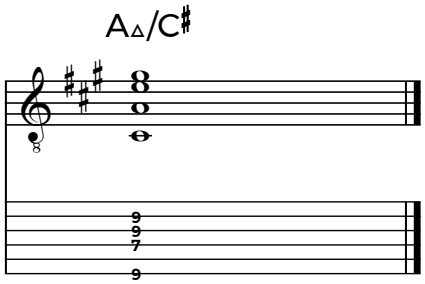
2. IΔ - ii-7 - I7 - IVΔ - iV6



3. IΔ - #5 - ii-7 - I7 - IVΔ - iV6




A△
B-11/F♯
A13/G
D△%
D-6

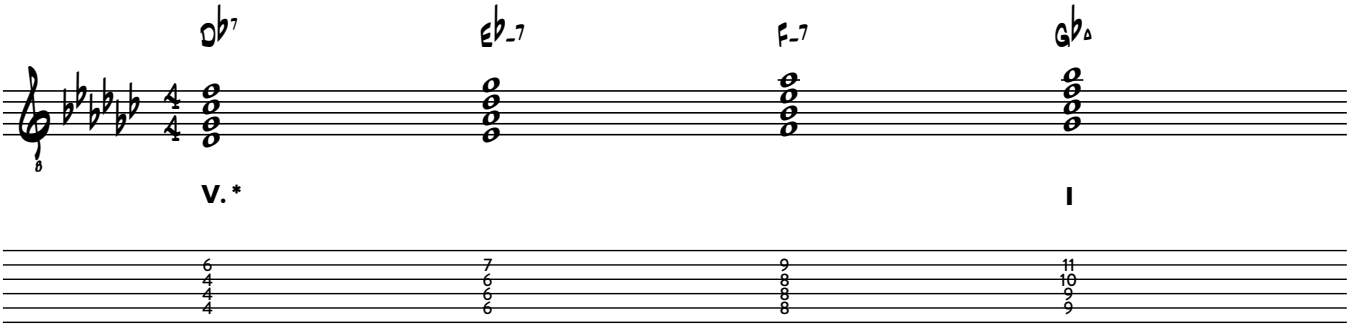

A△/C♯

Quartal Harmony - 'The 4th Way'

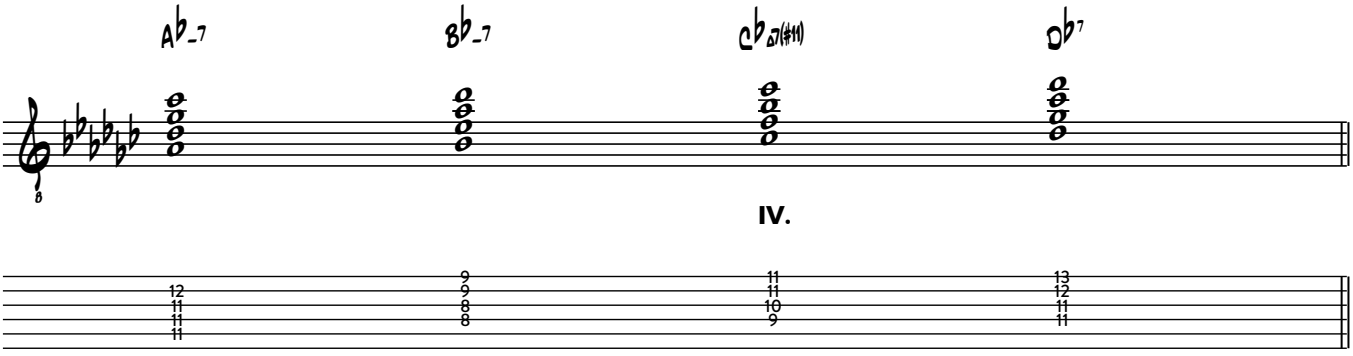
"All Apologies"

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

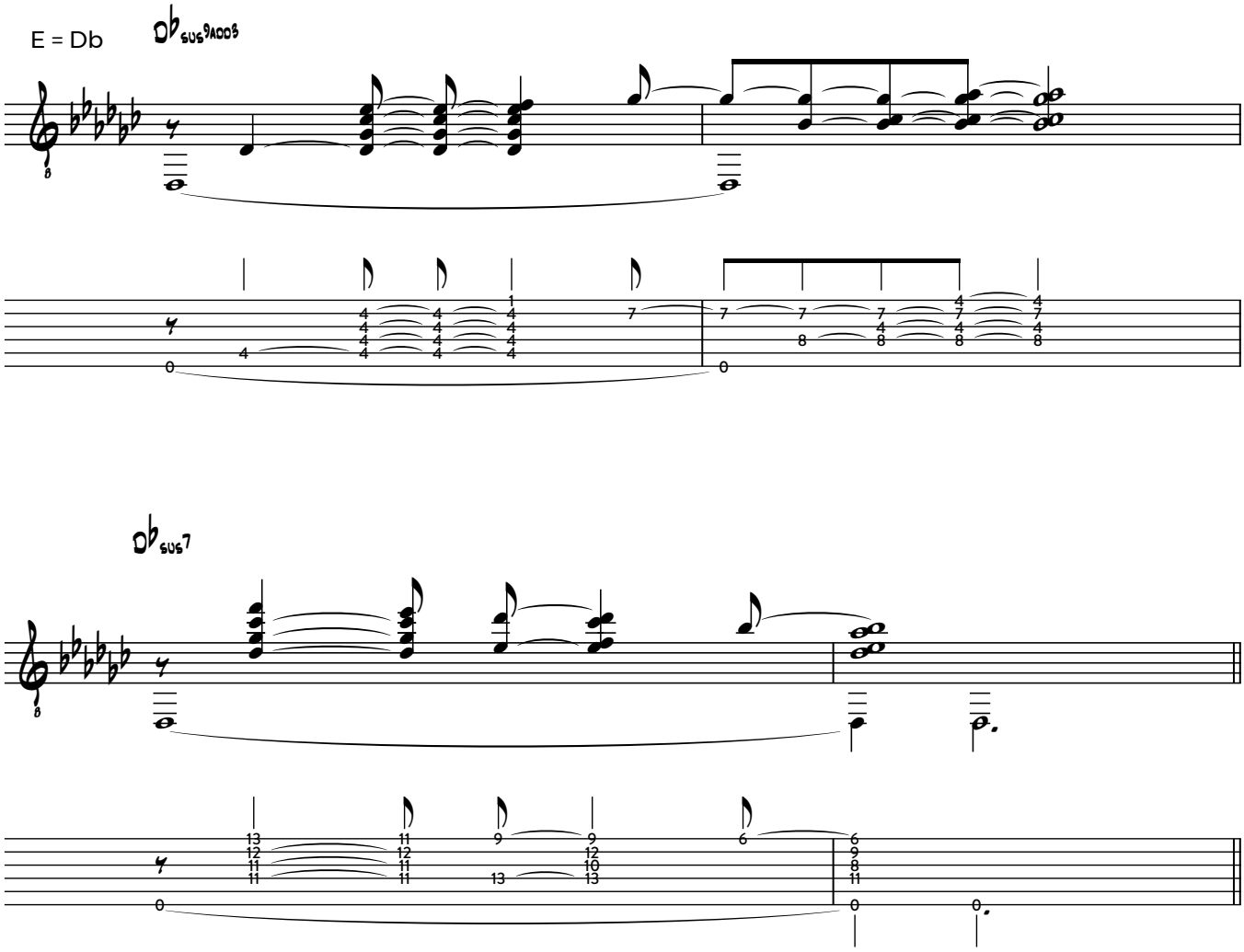
Standard quartal four-part voicings



* Degrees in functional harmony



The changes of 'All Apologies' harmonized with quartal harmony and constant structure voicings



The main riff of 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.

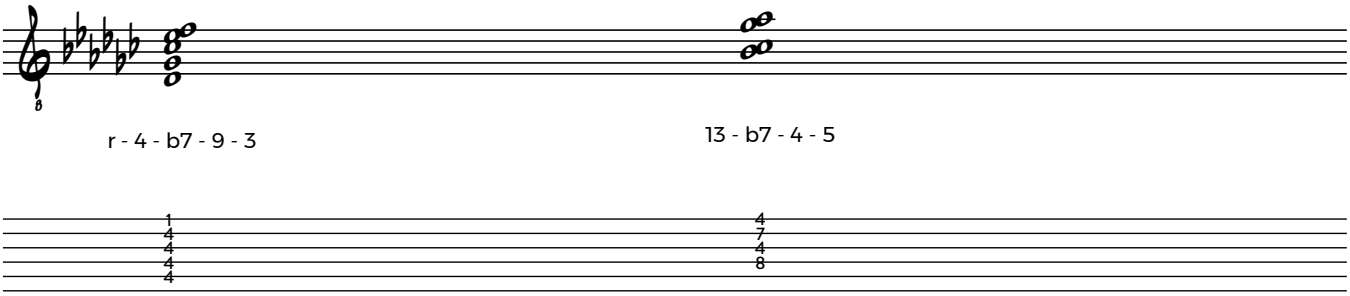
Structure of stacked-4th voicings and derived constant structure voicings

V

4th 'block chord' + 3
4 categories in one
voicing

II

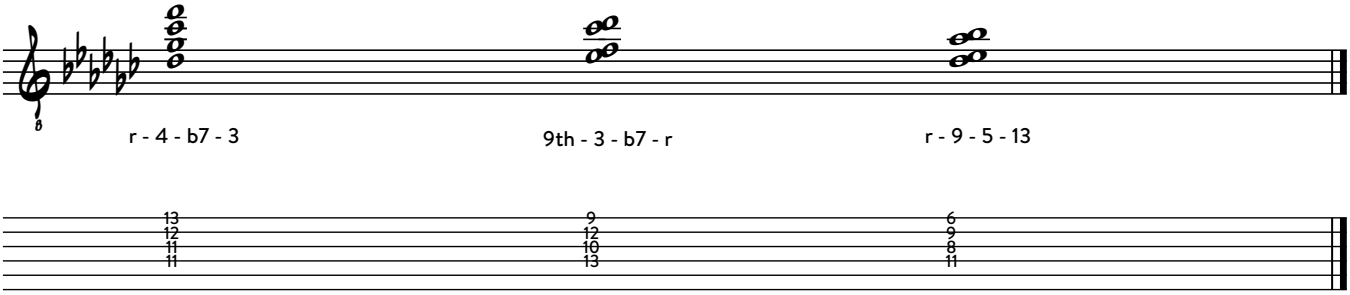
In modal playing, voicings are interchangable .
This voicing is based on Ab-minor, the intervallic
structure features 2nds.



I

Constant Structure

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



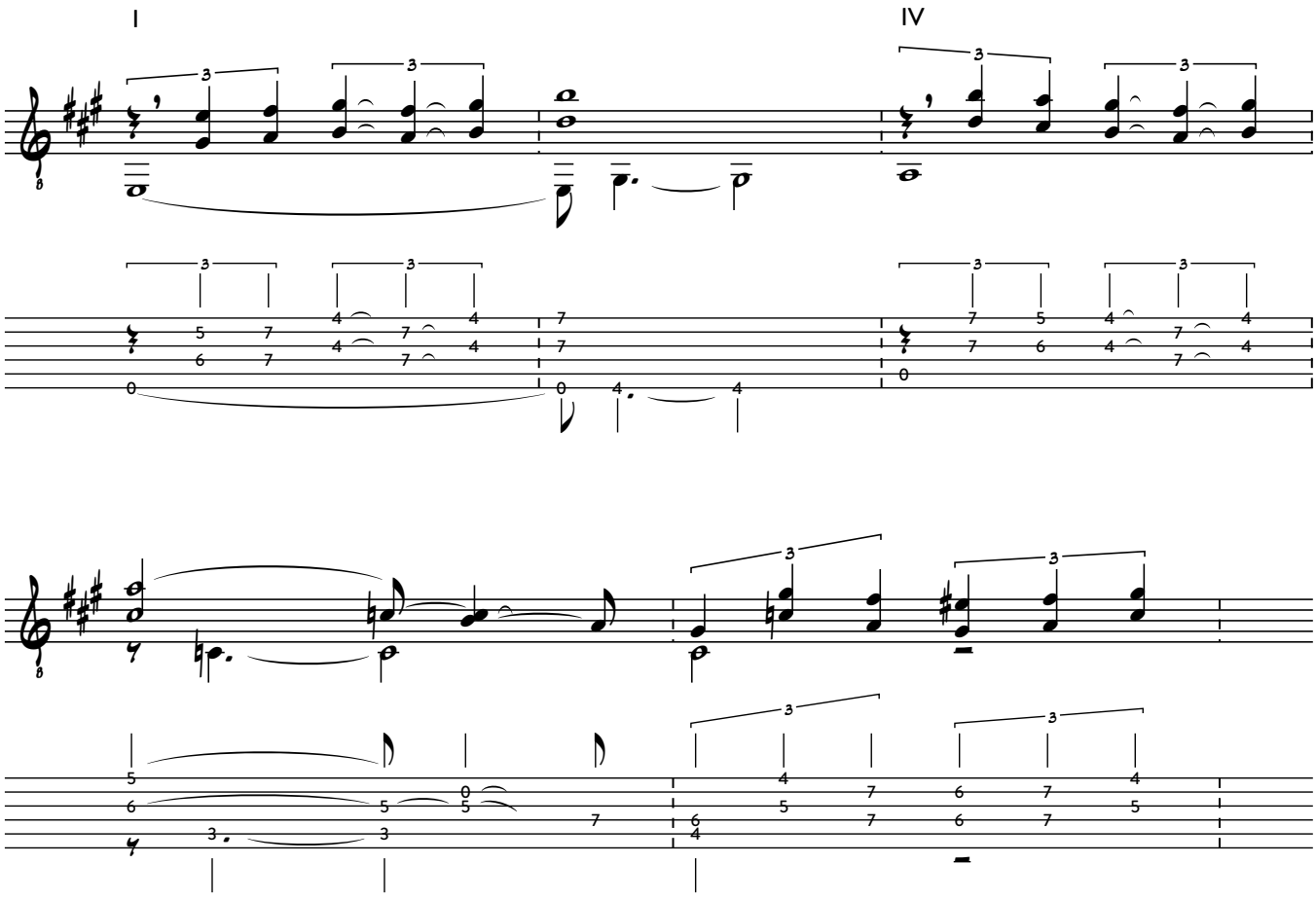
* Intervallic formula in relation to a given
note from Db-Mixolydian "r"

Ex.: Use an intervallic formula like the one above and play the resulting constant structure voicings within a tonality.

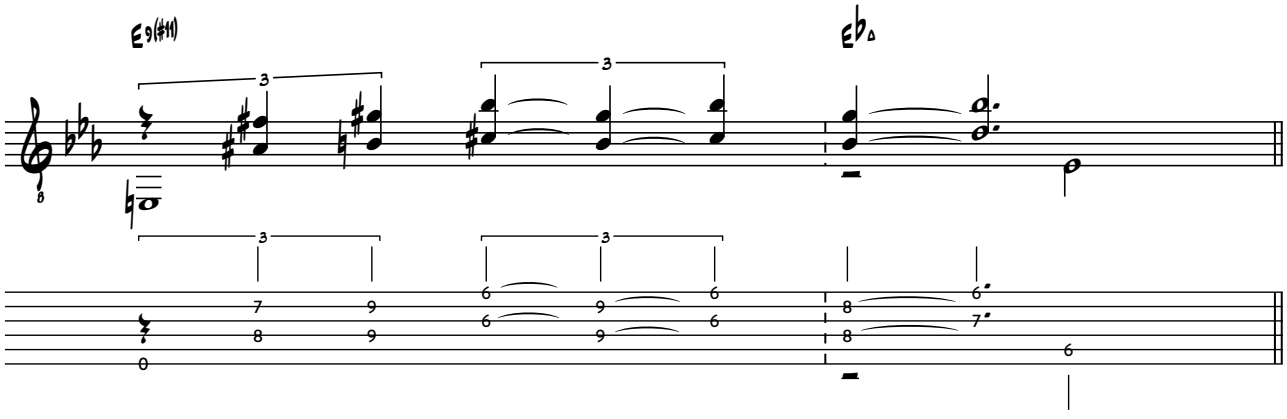
Starting from G the same formula would yield the voicing [G - A - D# - E] in the key of E-Melodic-Minor.
The voicing can be used for all degrees of the melodic-minor scale.
The intervallic structure in relation to Eb7alt (VII) would be 3 - b5 - r - b9.
With the missing b7 category it is an incomplete voicing (inc) including two tensions.

Voicing formulas

- 6s -



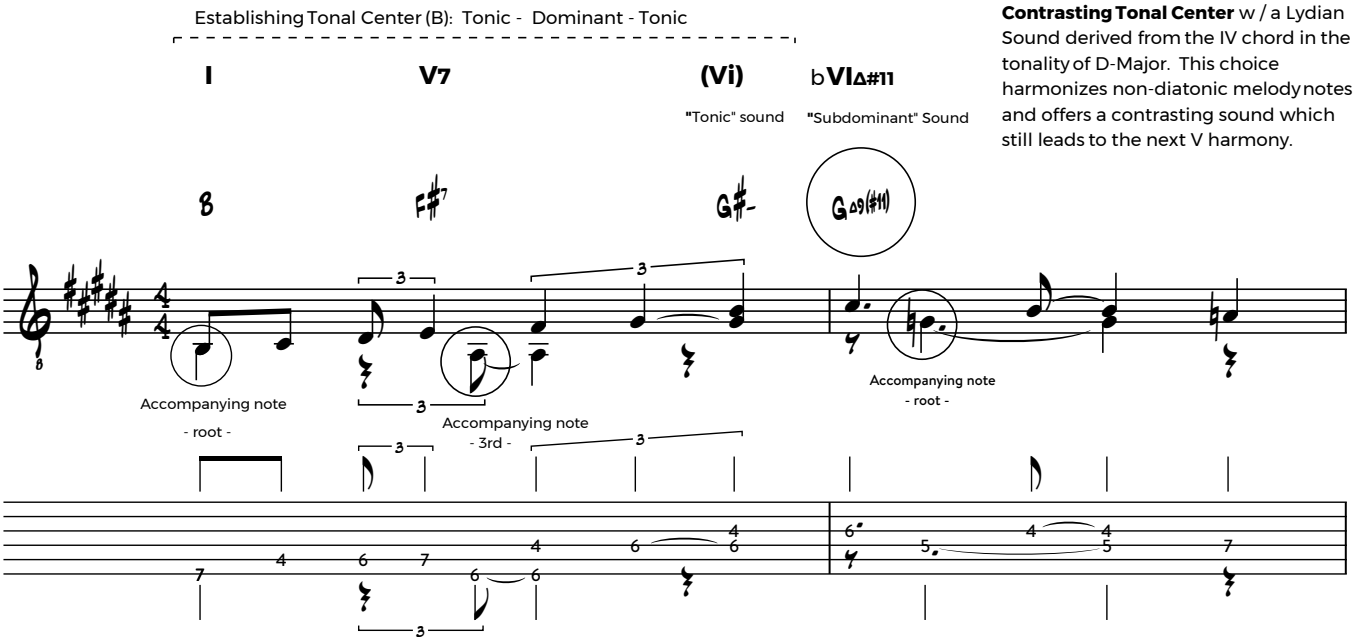
Voicing formula, adapted for [bII 7#11 - IΔ]



6. Creating Arrangements & Improvisations

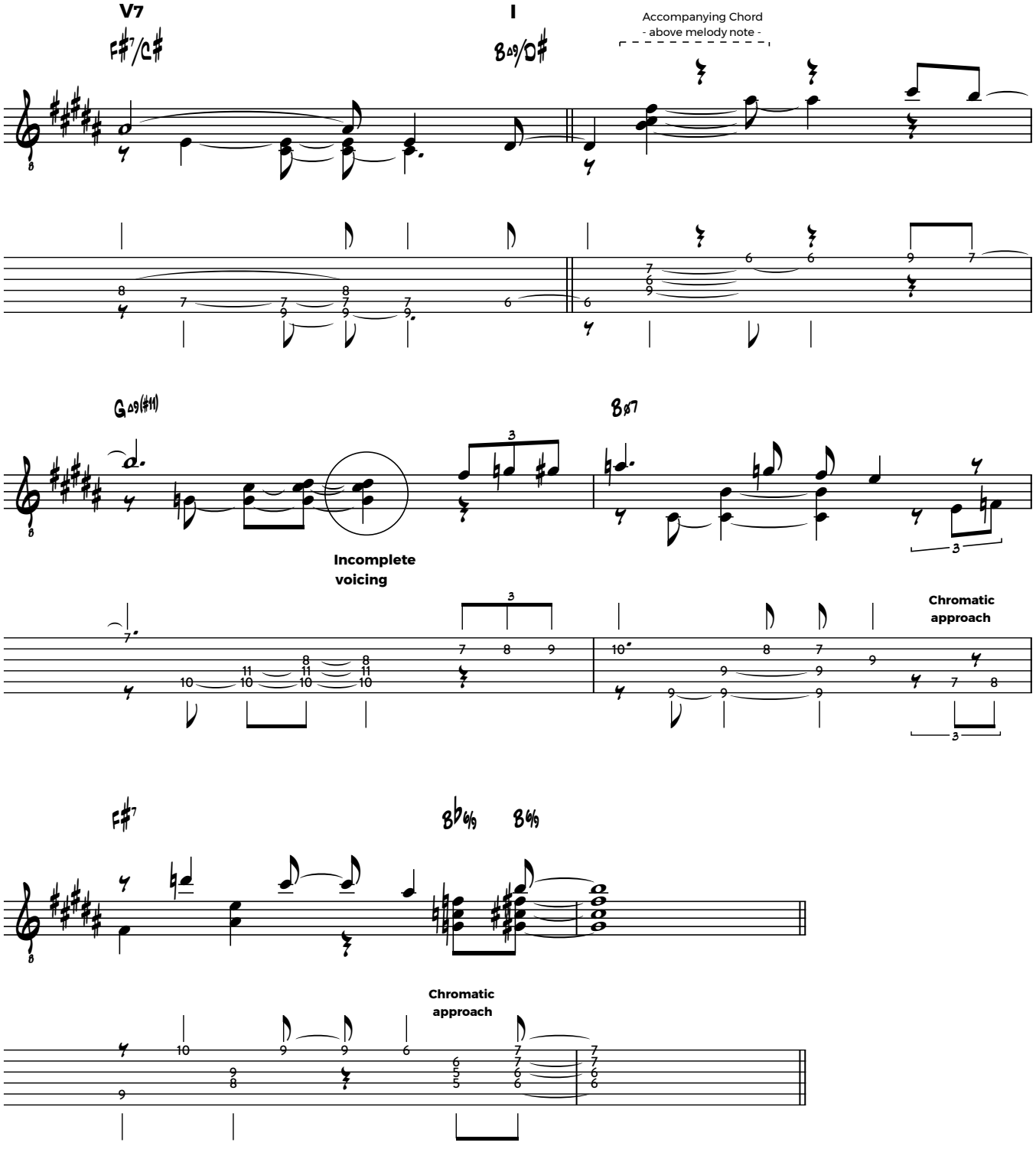
A rewarding path to learn and arrange a musical idea or an entire song is to first internalize its basic structure.
This way you end up with a couple of arrangement sketches which may either lead up to a "definitive" performance or to the flexibility to play and improvise with the musical material readily available 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've 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 to 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:



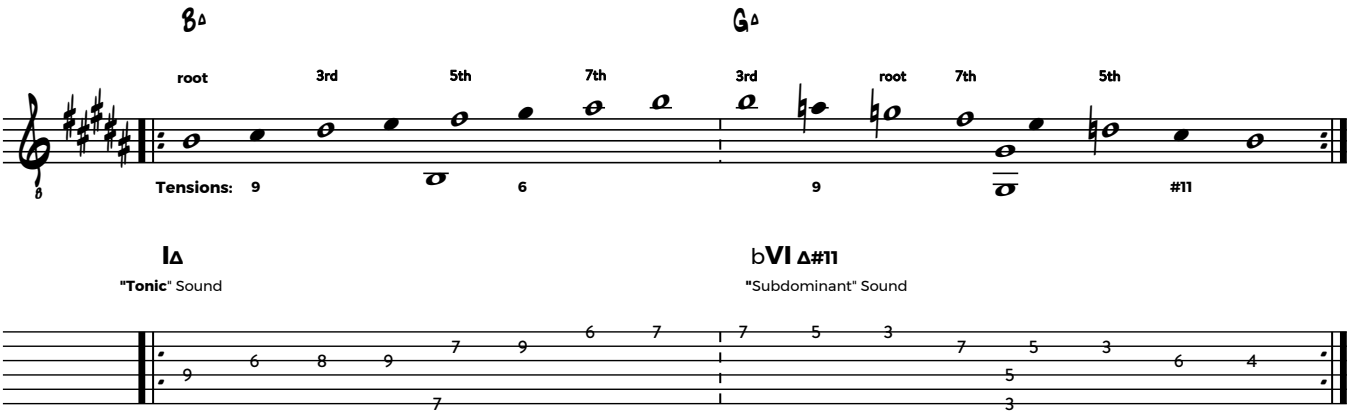
Notice that in the first two bars melody and accompaniment , consisting of only two notes at a time, are sufficient to establish harmonies and to create harmonic and rhythmic movement. As opposed to playing full chords , this minimalistic approach - literally - frees up your hands and mind.
It is easier to phrase the melody differently (e.g. more legato) or to alter it even further.
This musical model can be used as basic outline to improvise freely with any 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 later adding the defining note 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. The G Δ#11 harmony 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.

Ex : Improvisation



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.

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'.

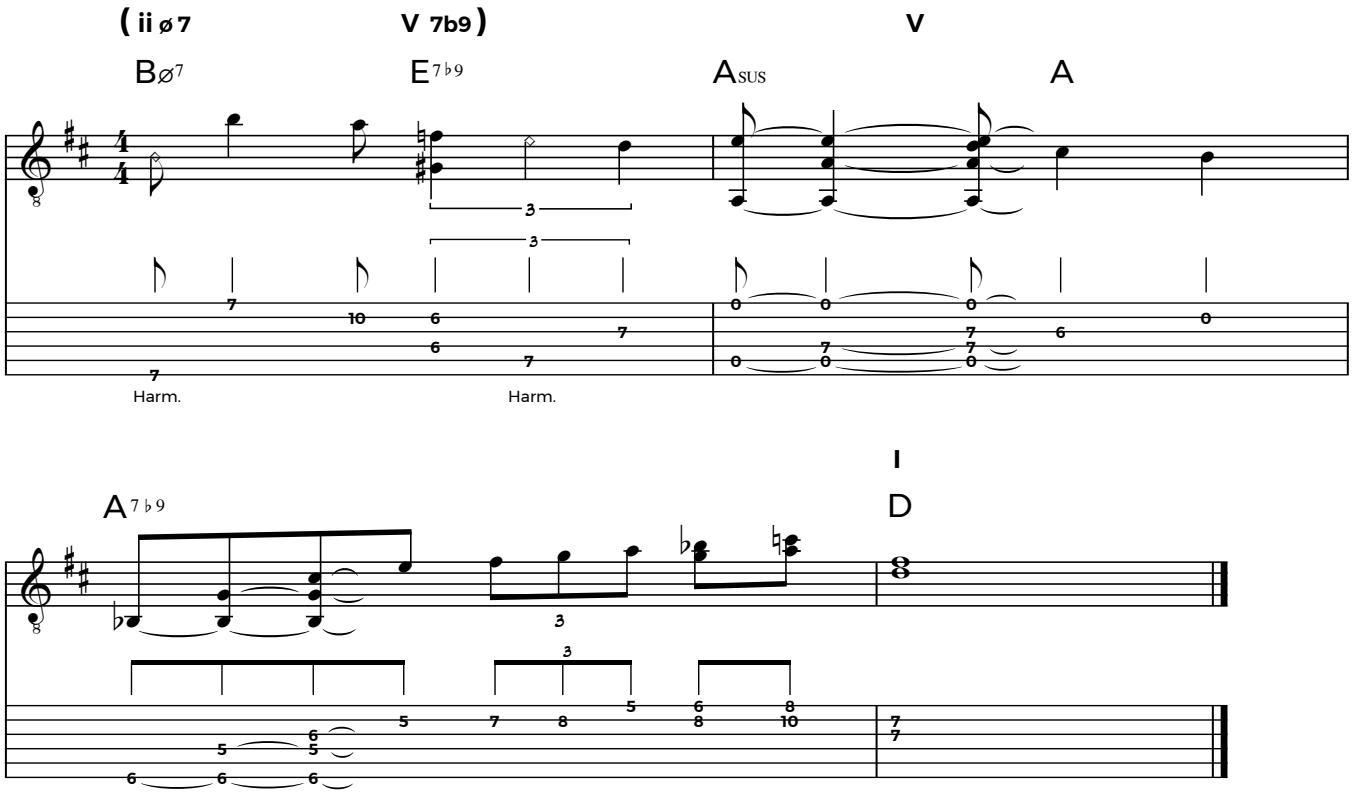
After you've found musical melodic lines and you're comfortable to play and alter them with added bass notes, try to add a third note to create more complete harmonies, e.g. A# in B Δ resolving to B in G Δ (7th-3rd).

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.

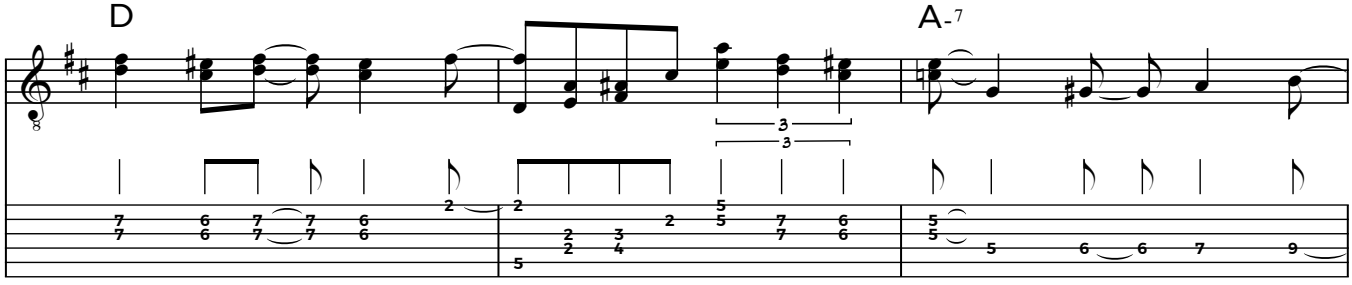
Outlining Chord Progressions

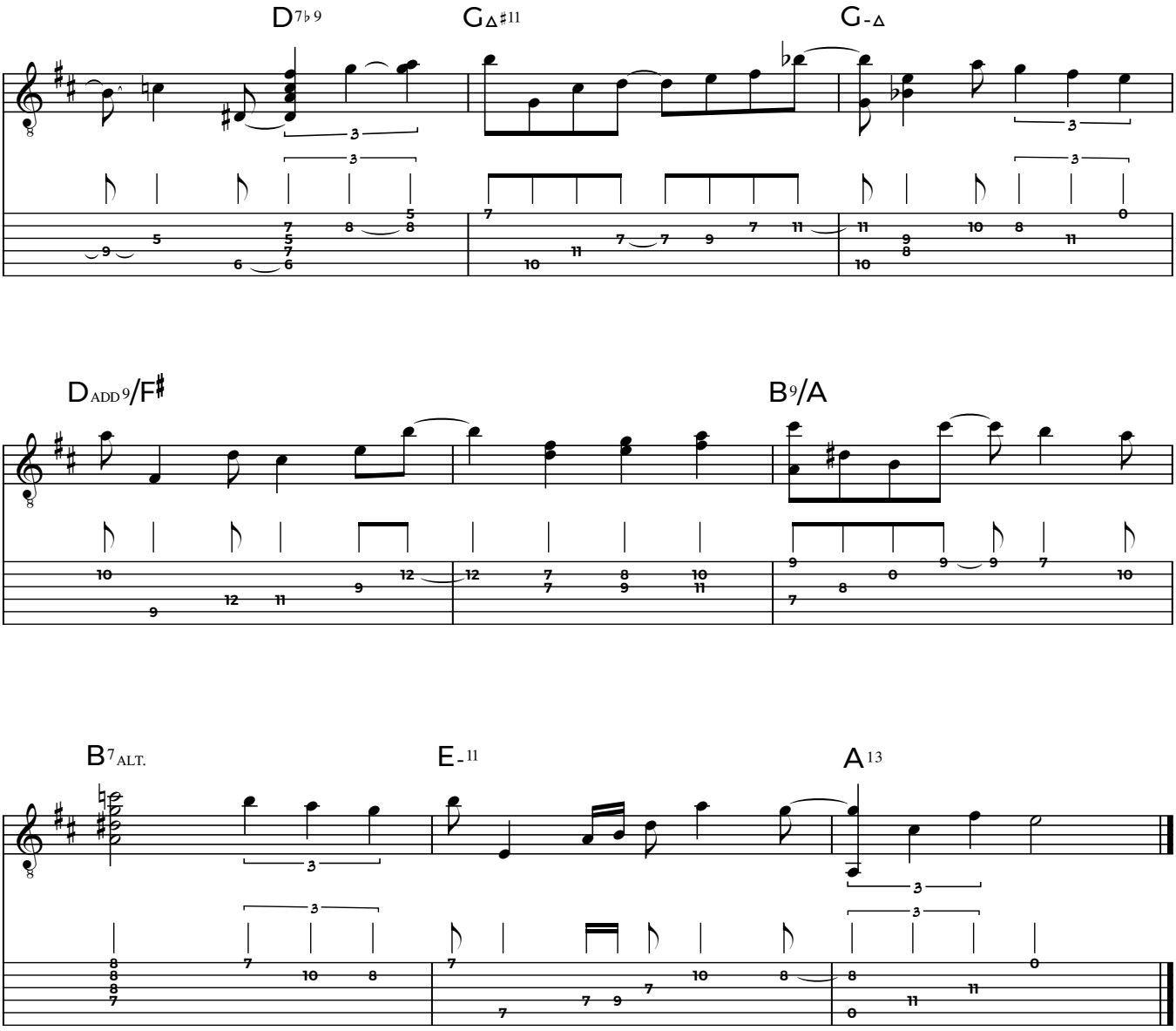
Licks and riffs inspired by Bill Frisell

1. Minor (iiø-V7b9) V - I idea w / open strings, harmonics and double-stops



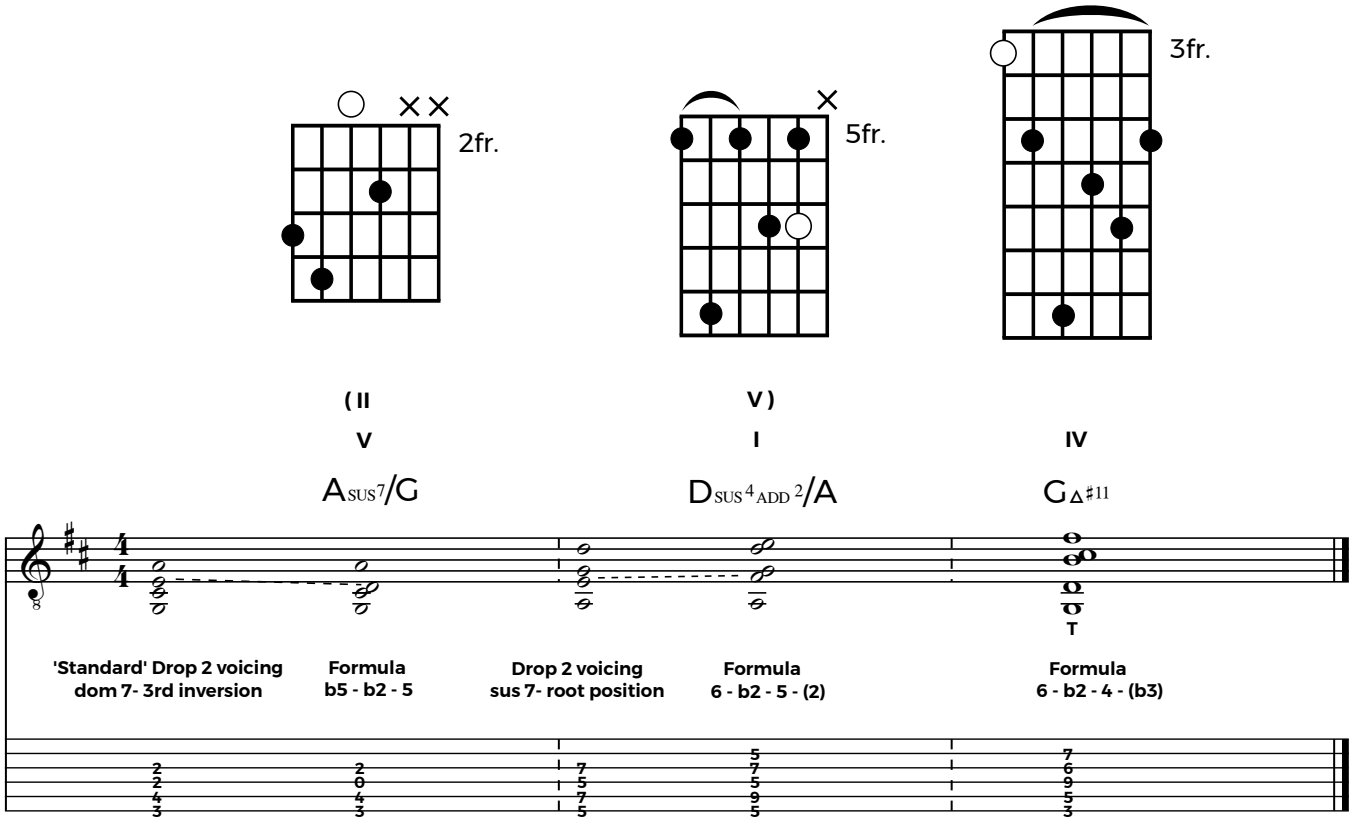
2. 'New York' syncopations




D7♭9
G△♯11
G-△
DADD9/F♯
B9/A
B7ALT.
E-11
A13

Outlining Chord Progressions

(2) 'Flexible Voicing Formulas'



This chord kit shows how standard drop-2 grips can be used as a template to come up with more colorful voicings. One way to apply (or hear) these voicings is as a (II - V) in the key of D moving to the IV chord - actually without adding any non-diatonic notes.

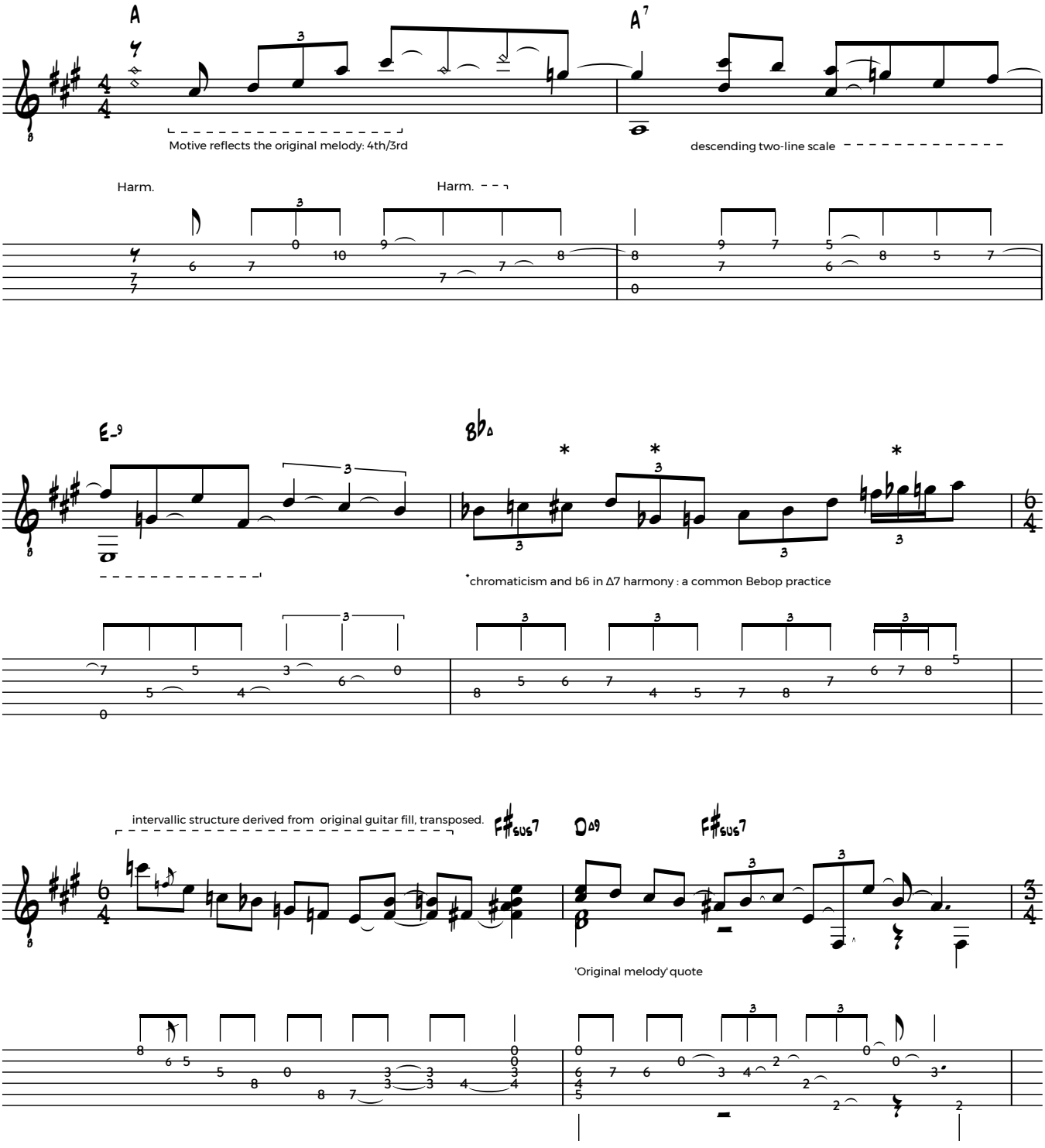
The only tweak to the inversion of A7 is lowering the 5th (E) one whole step. This adds the sus4 (D) to the harmony which creates a rich texture (‘b2 rub’) in conjunction with the still present 3rd (C#).

The Dsus4add2/A also features a dissonant b2 interval between the 3rd (F#) and 4th (G) of the harmony. The 5th (A) in the bass is a nice touch - instead of always moving from root to root in the lower register. Notice that the voicing qualifies as ‘incomplete’ since the b7 (C) is missing which would make this harmony a ‘full-fledged’ dom7 function. That works in this specific context and for musical situations where you look for colorful chords rather than for strict resolution tendencies only. It creates a more ‘open’, floating sound.

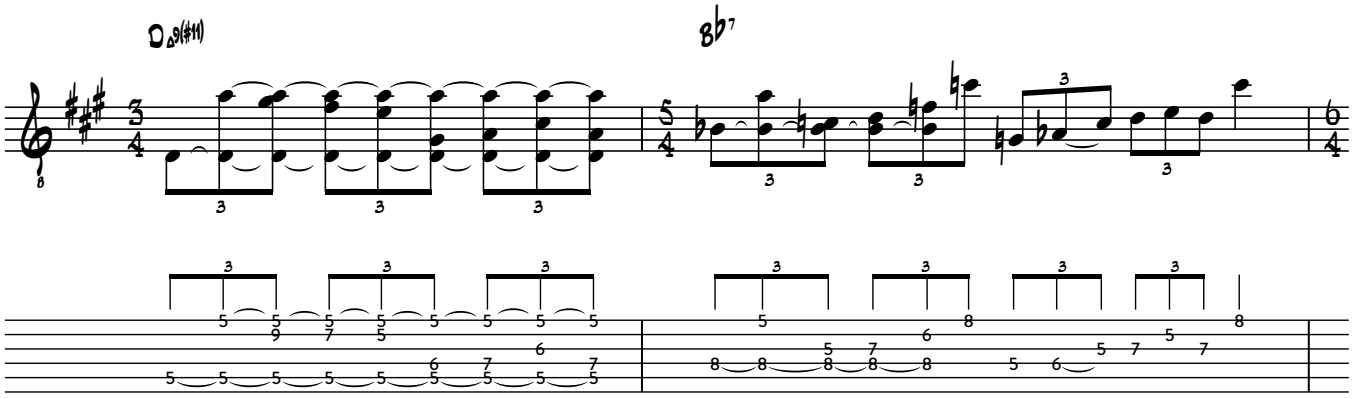
The IV chord is created by simply taking the voicing formula of the prior chord and reusing it from the 5th (D) of the G chord. Again, this choice was made to create a b2-tension within the voicing.
Since the G is a subdominant function it comes with a raised 4th (or b5) - making it possible to have a ’sus’-type major 7 chord.

Check out if you can use these concepts and similar voicing formulas as a springboard to tweak your known chord grips!

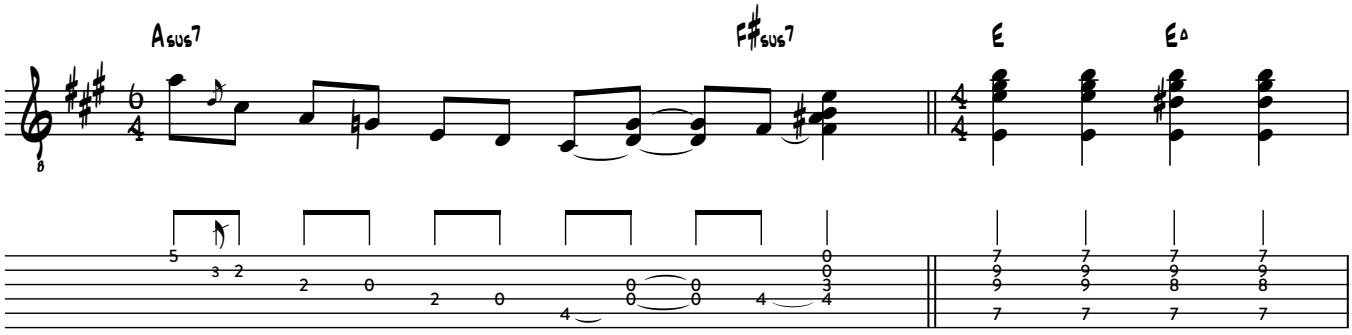
6.2 Improvisation Practices: Strawberry Fields Forever

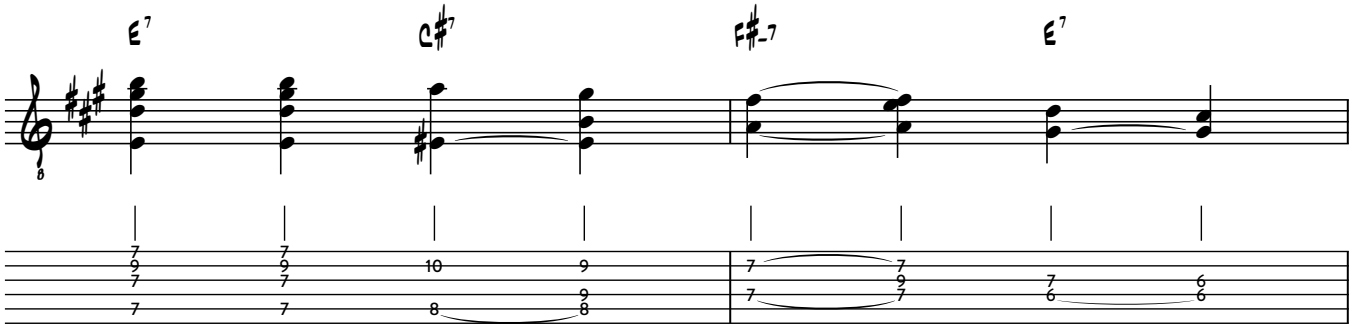


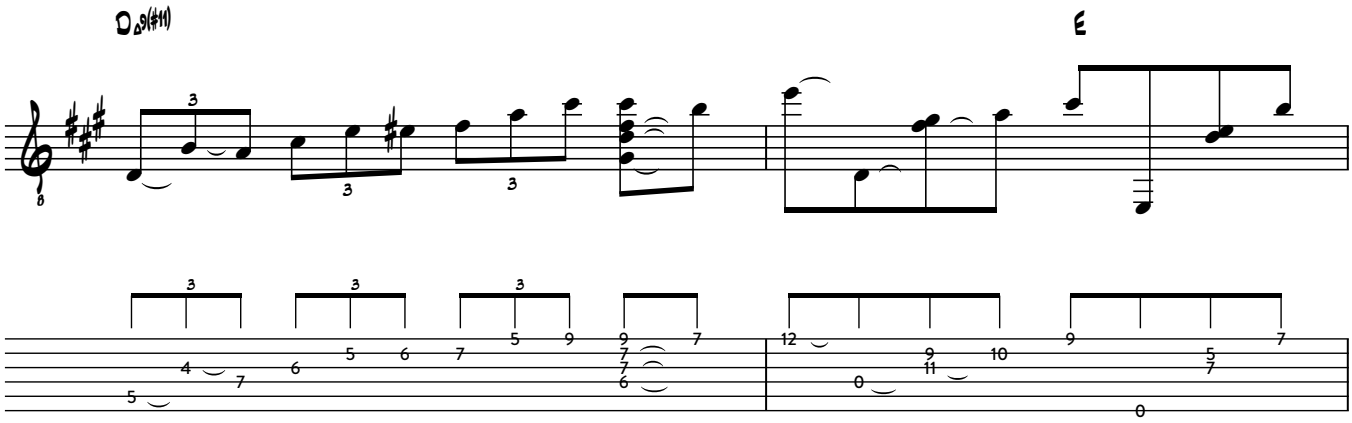
rhytmically contrasting triplets w / sustained pedal notes

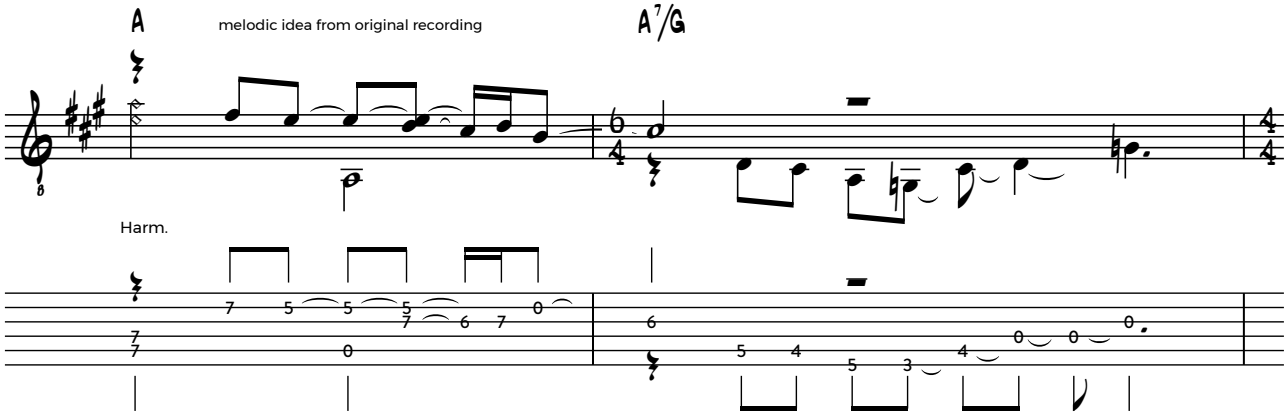


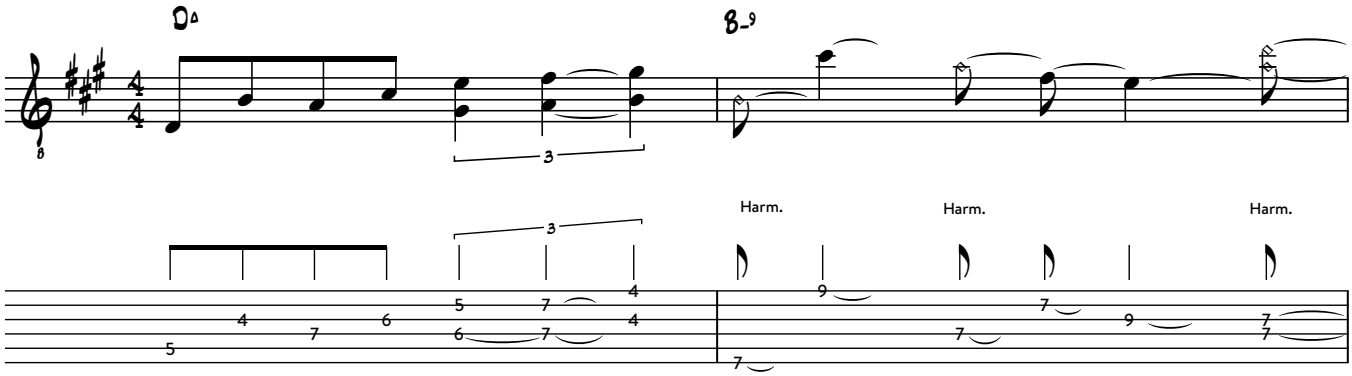
original guitar fill, see bar 5

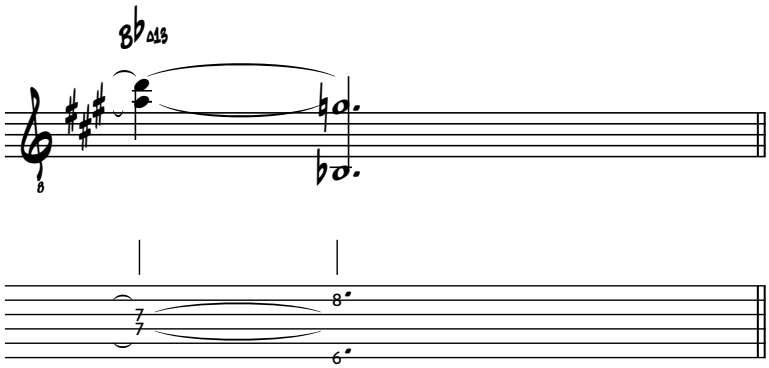





E


A
melodic idea from original recording
A7/G
Harm.


B-9
Harm.
Harm.
Harm.



6.3 Arrangement Ideas - Soundslice

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

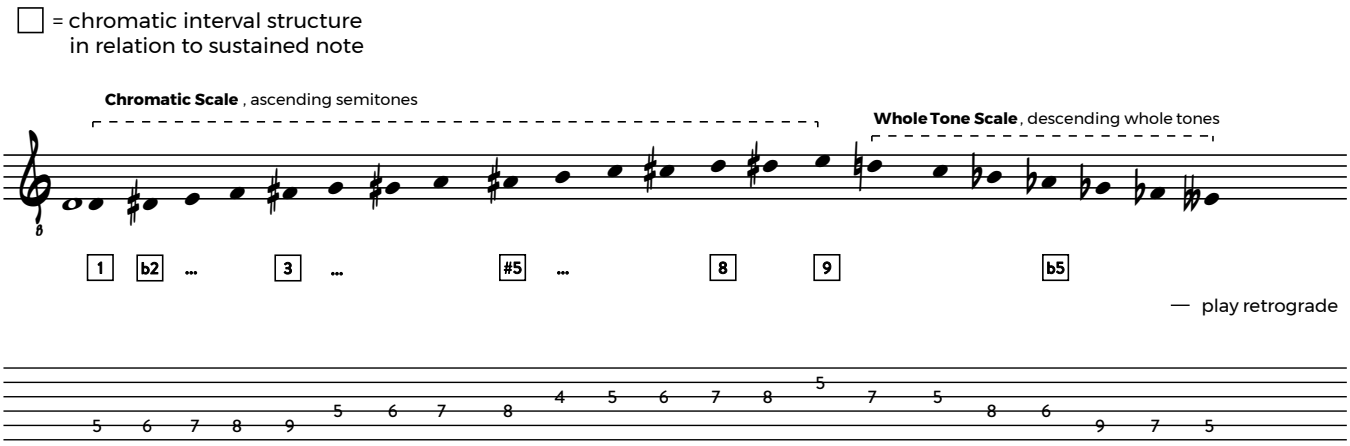
"Toxic" - Britney Spears (Pop)

"Guitar Jingle" - Jan Jakut (Neosoul)

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

Supplement: Sonic Imprints

An ear-training exercise



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.

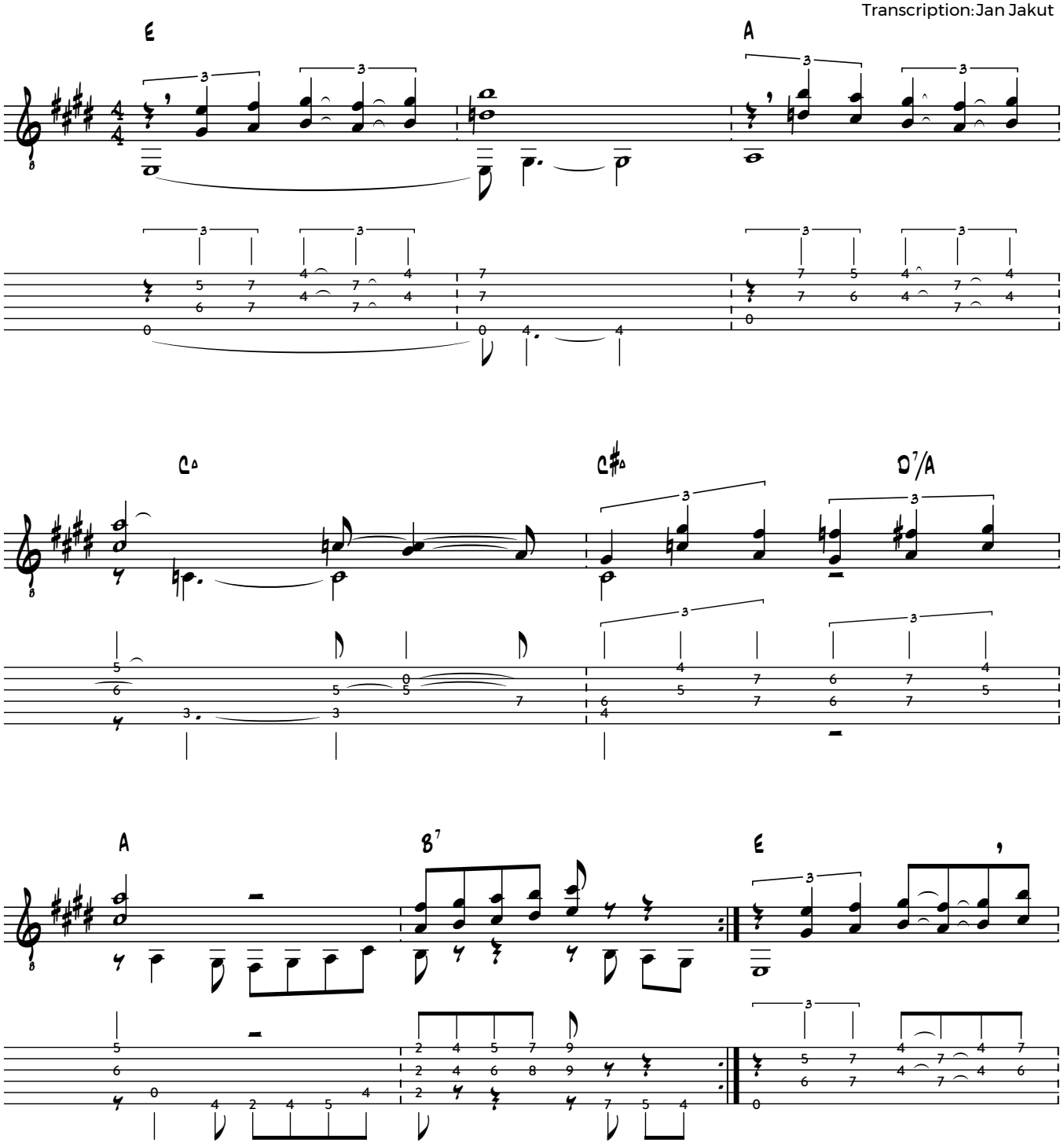
*Shapes and patterns are very useful when trying to play an instrument consistently :) This exercise complements your helpful knowledge of shapes and patterns.

Julian Lage - *Live at National Sawdust in Brooklyn*

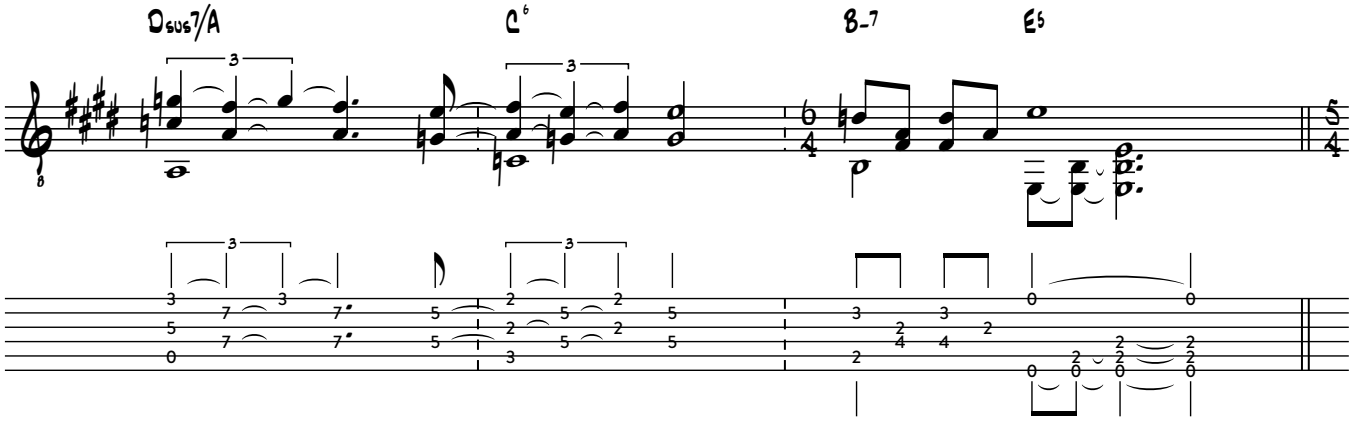
Study for Electric Guitar

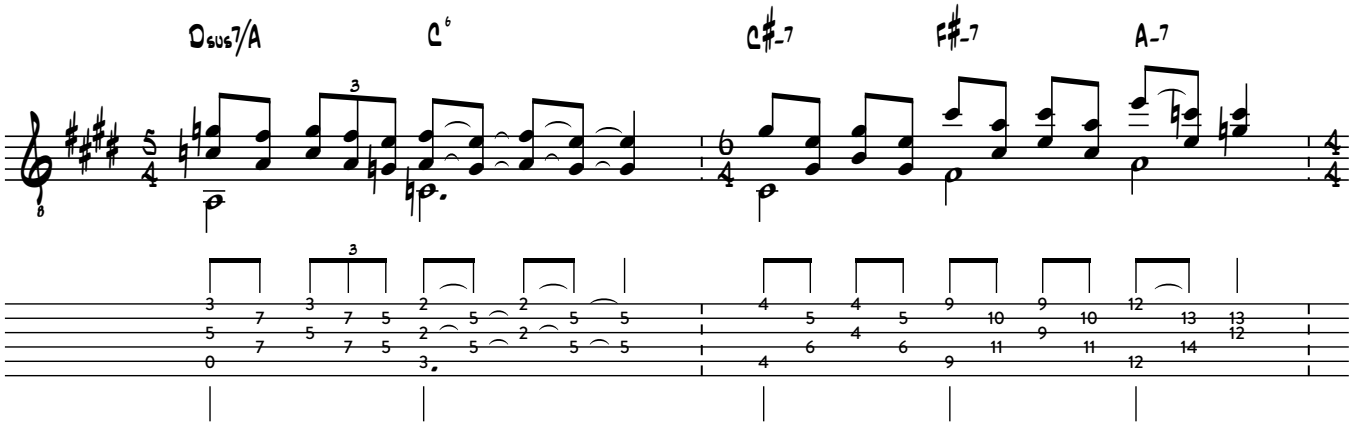
Rubato ♩= 110

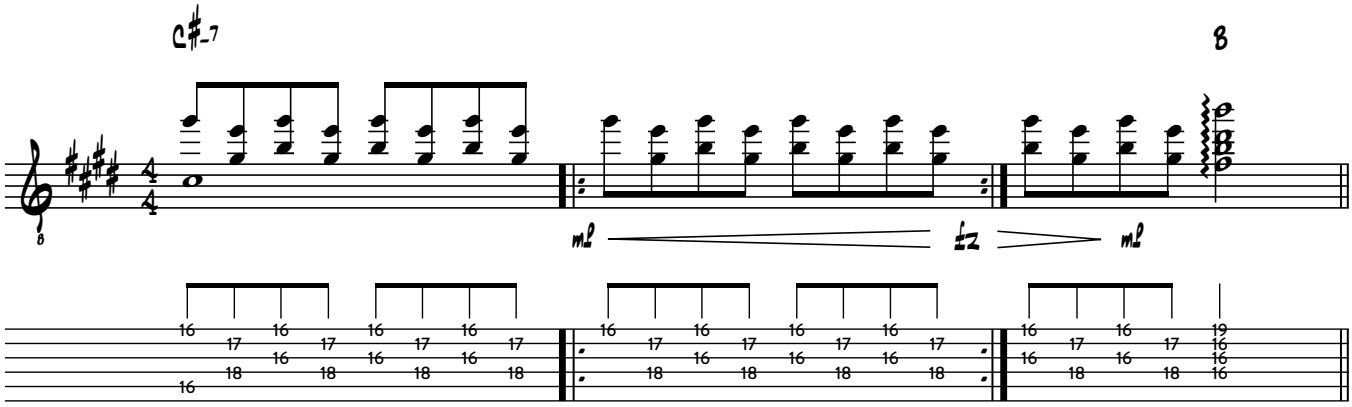
by Julian Lage
Transcription:Jan Jakut



Study for Electric Guitar







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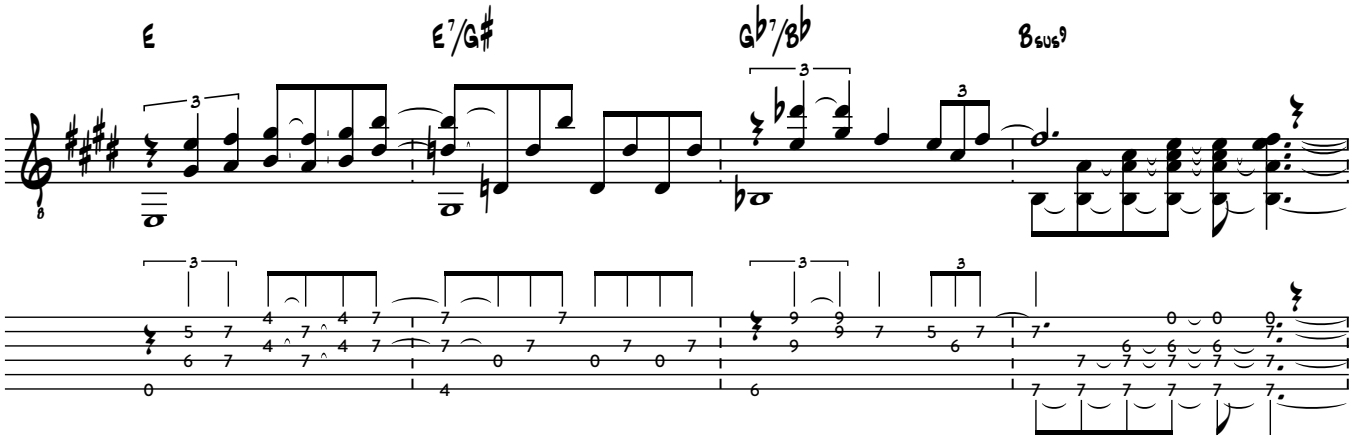
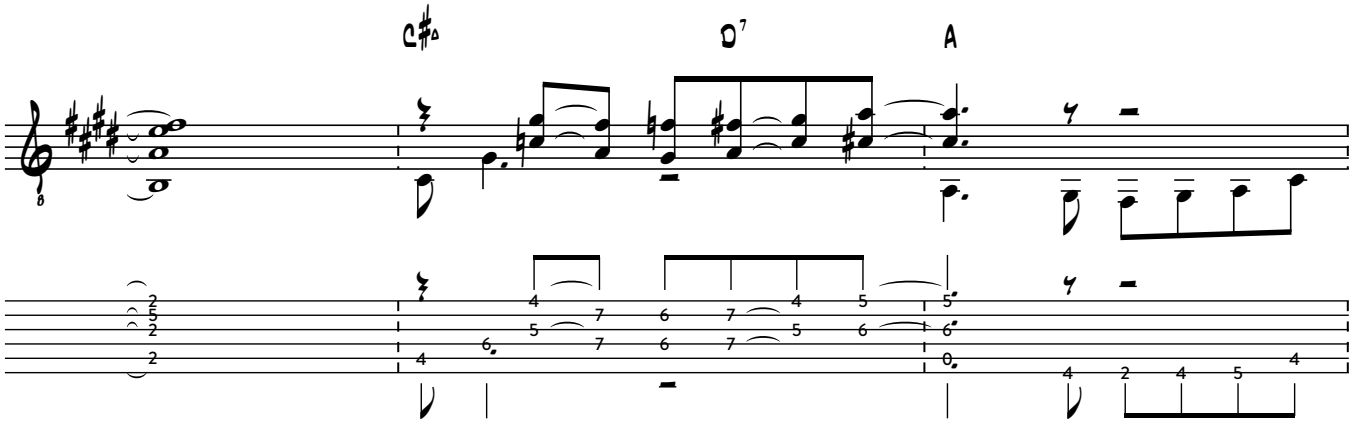
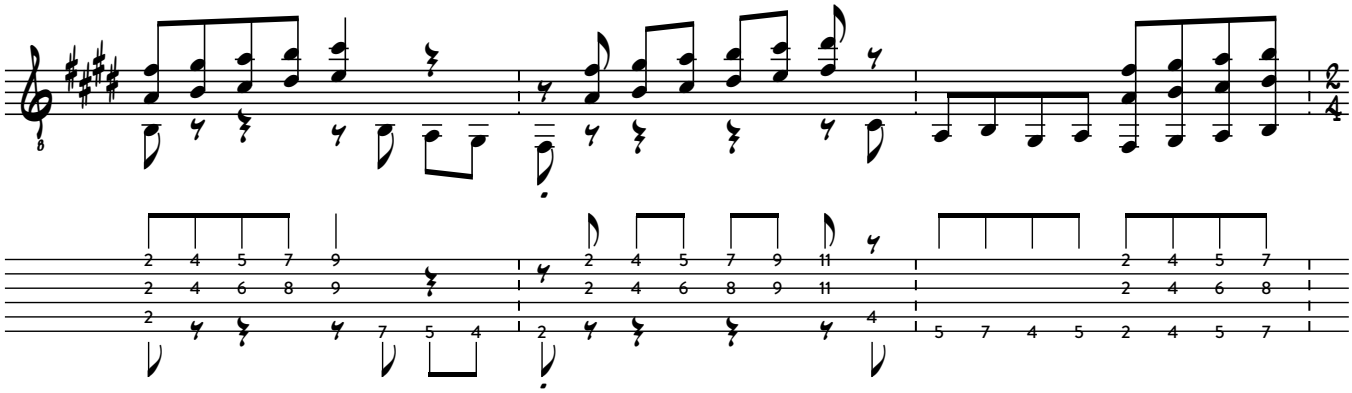
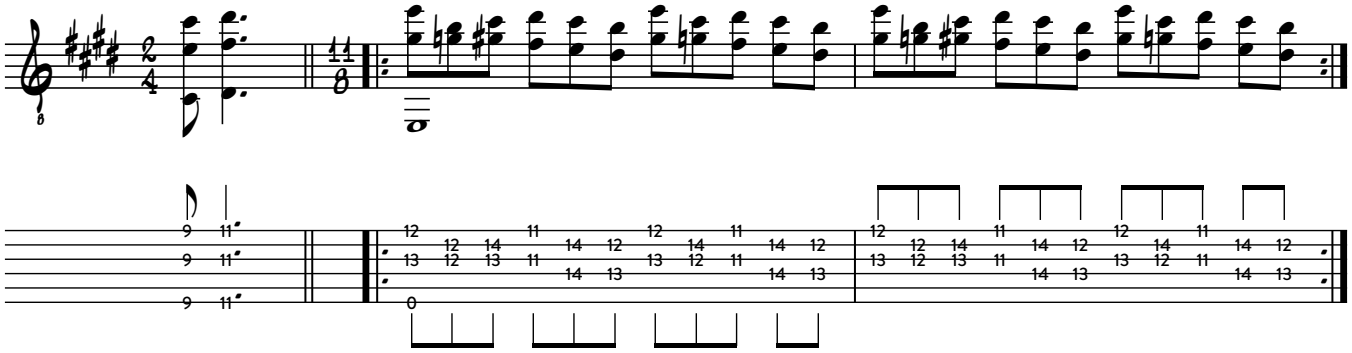
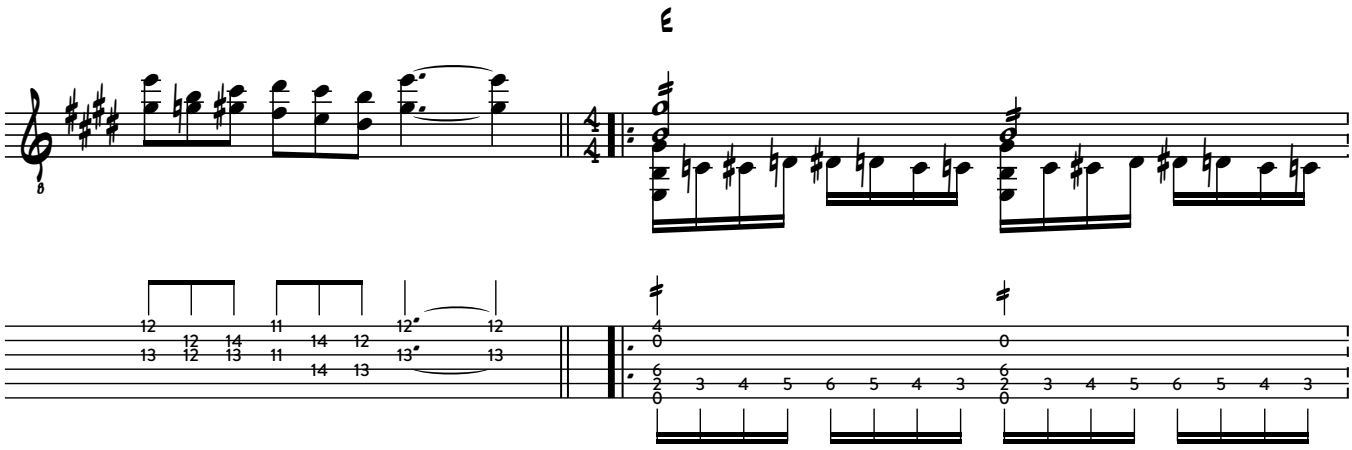


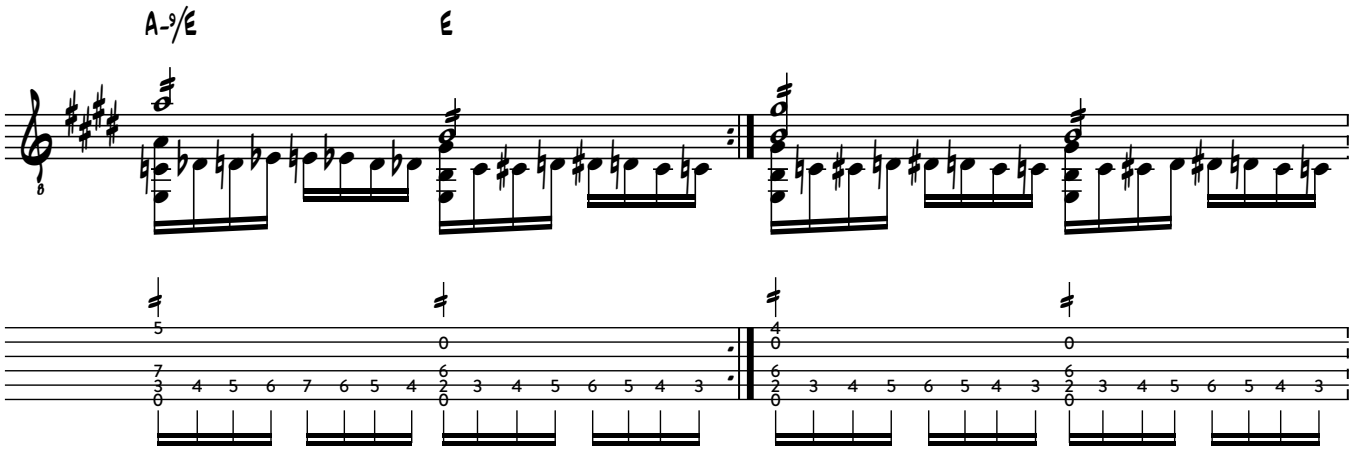




Study ForElectric Guitar







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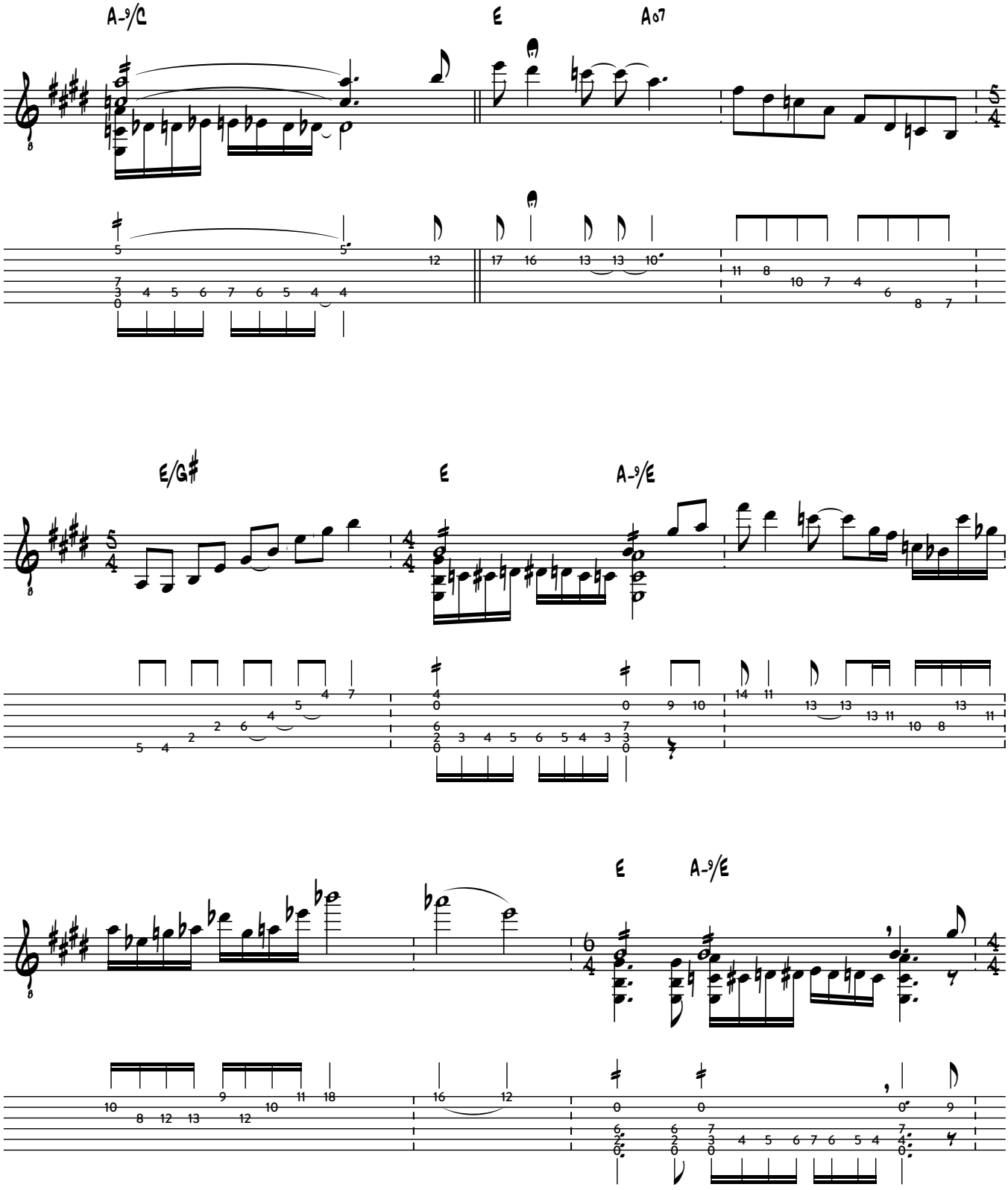

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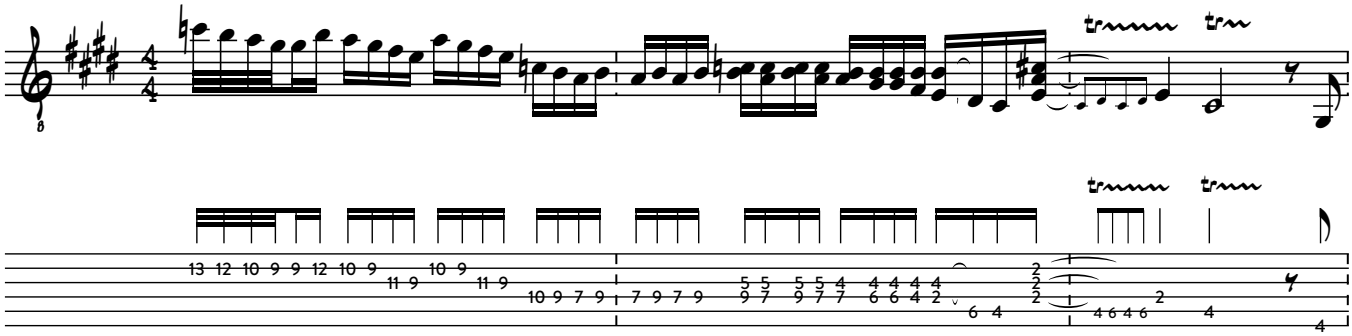
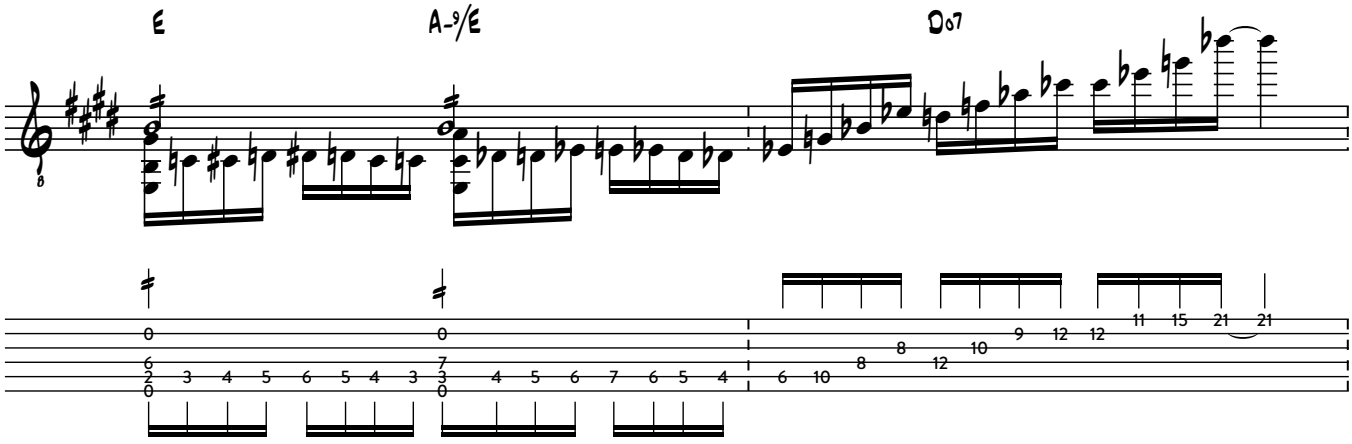
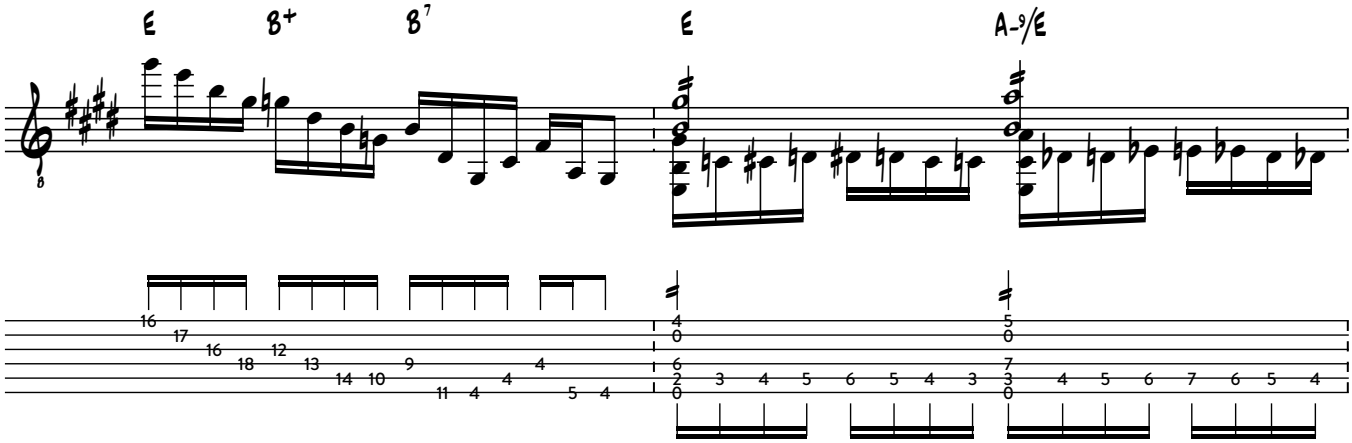
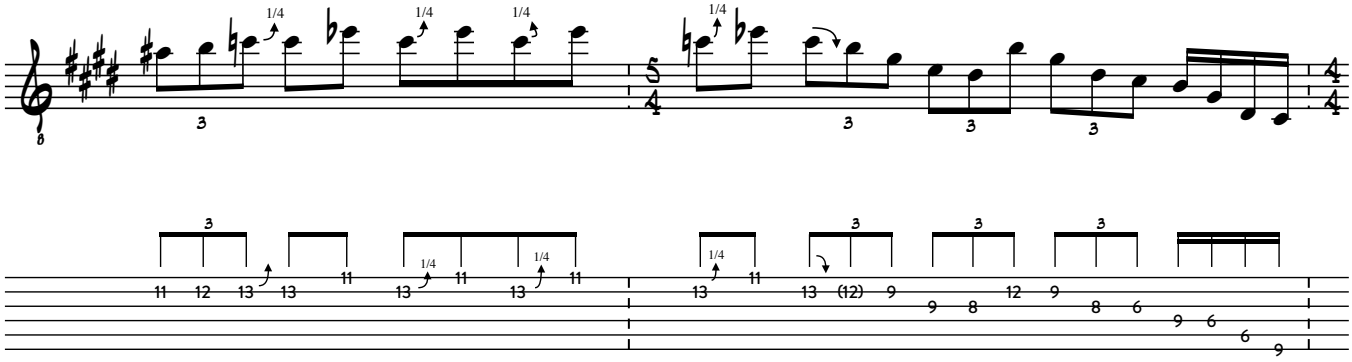
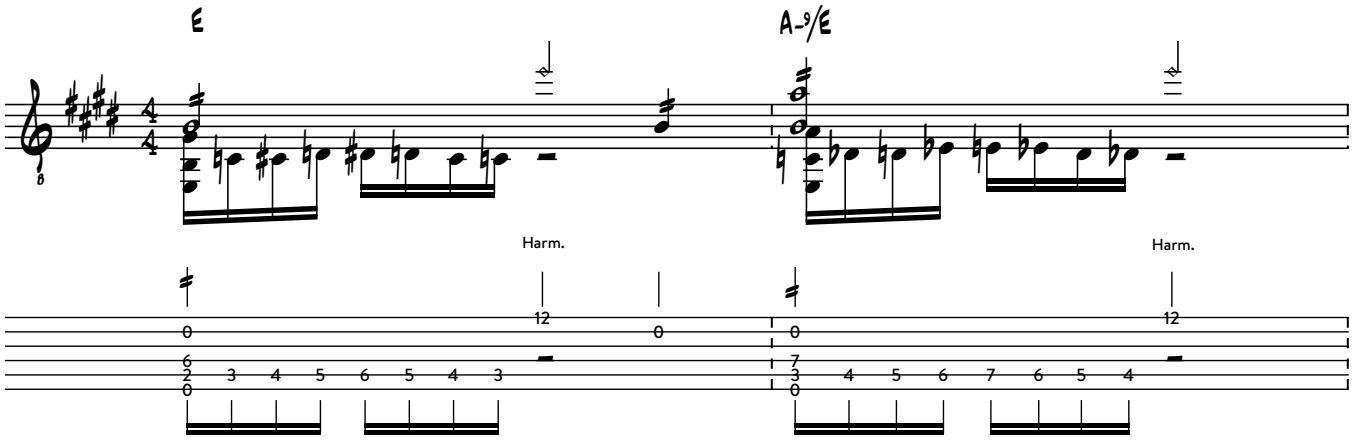


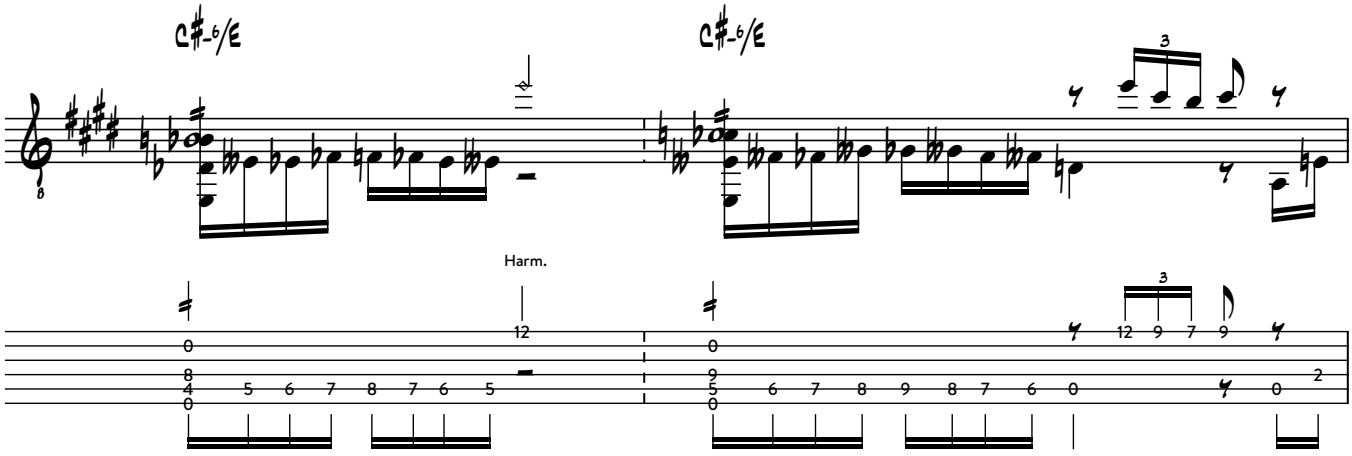




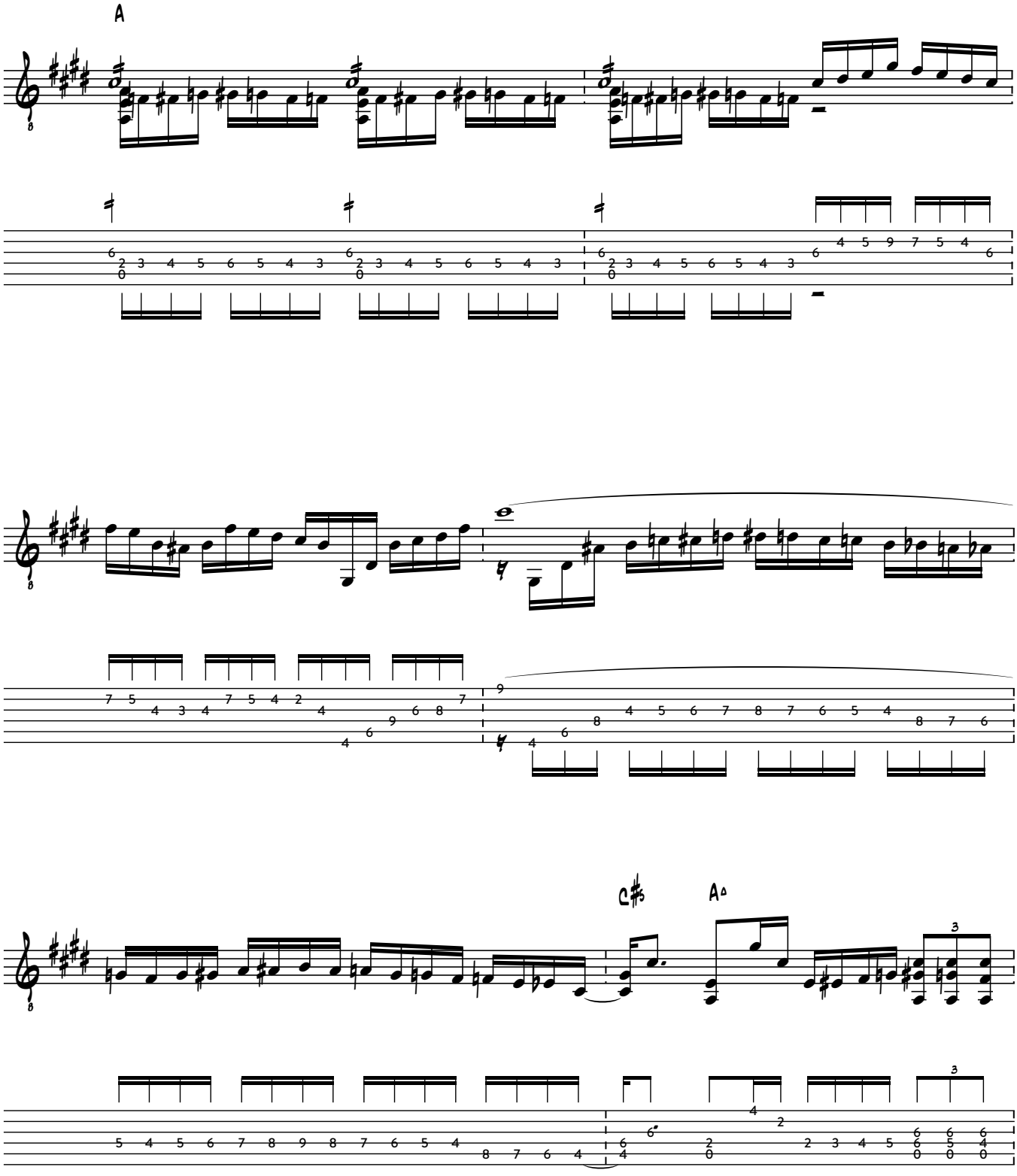
Study For Electric Guitar



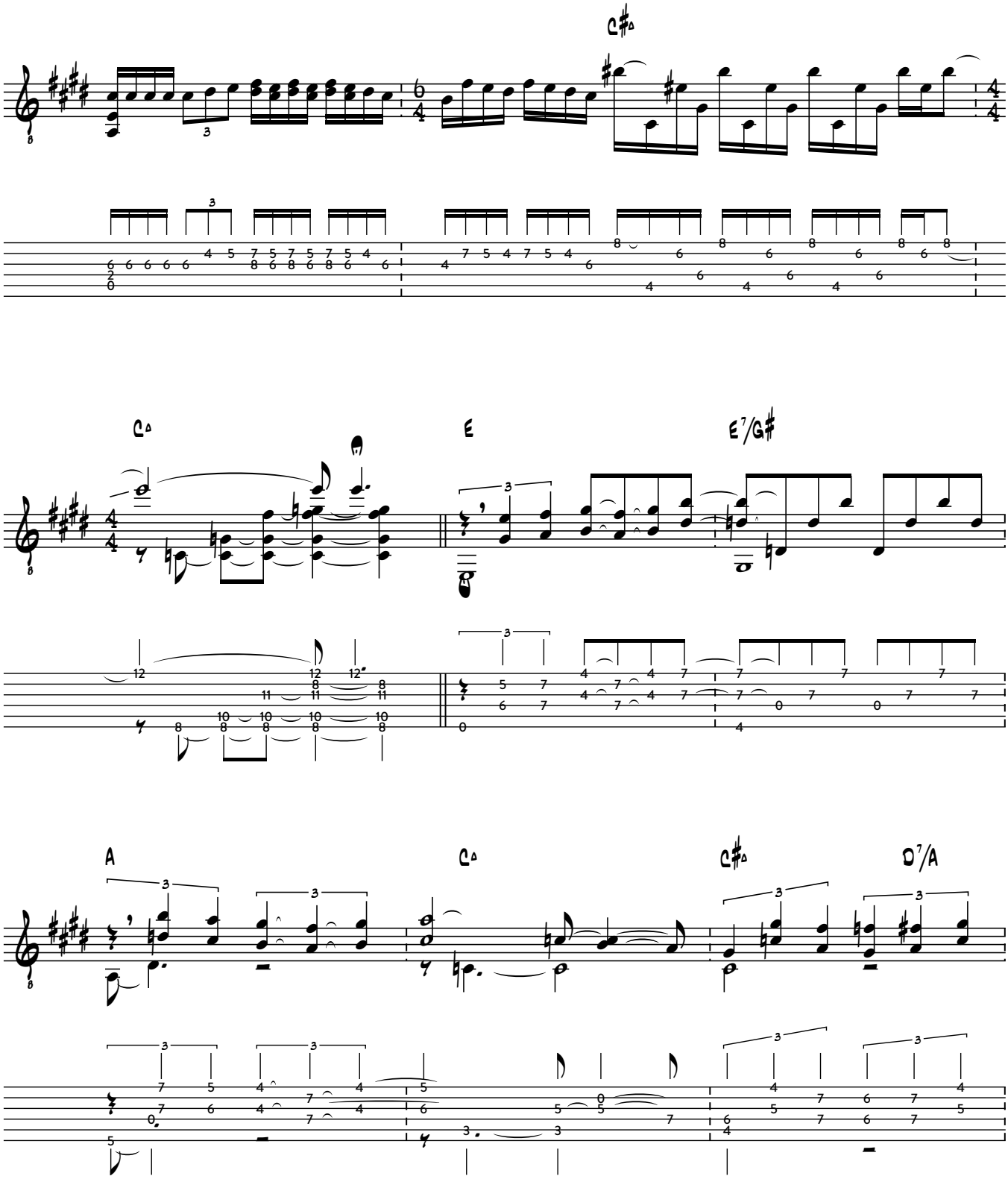




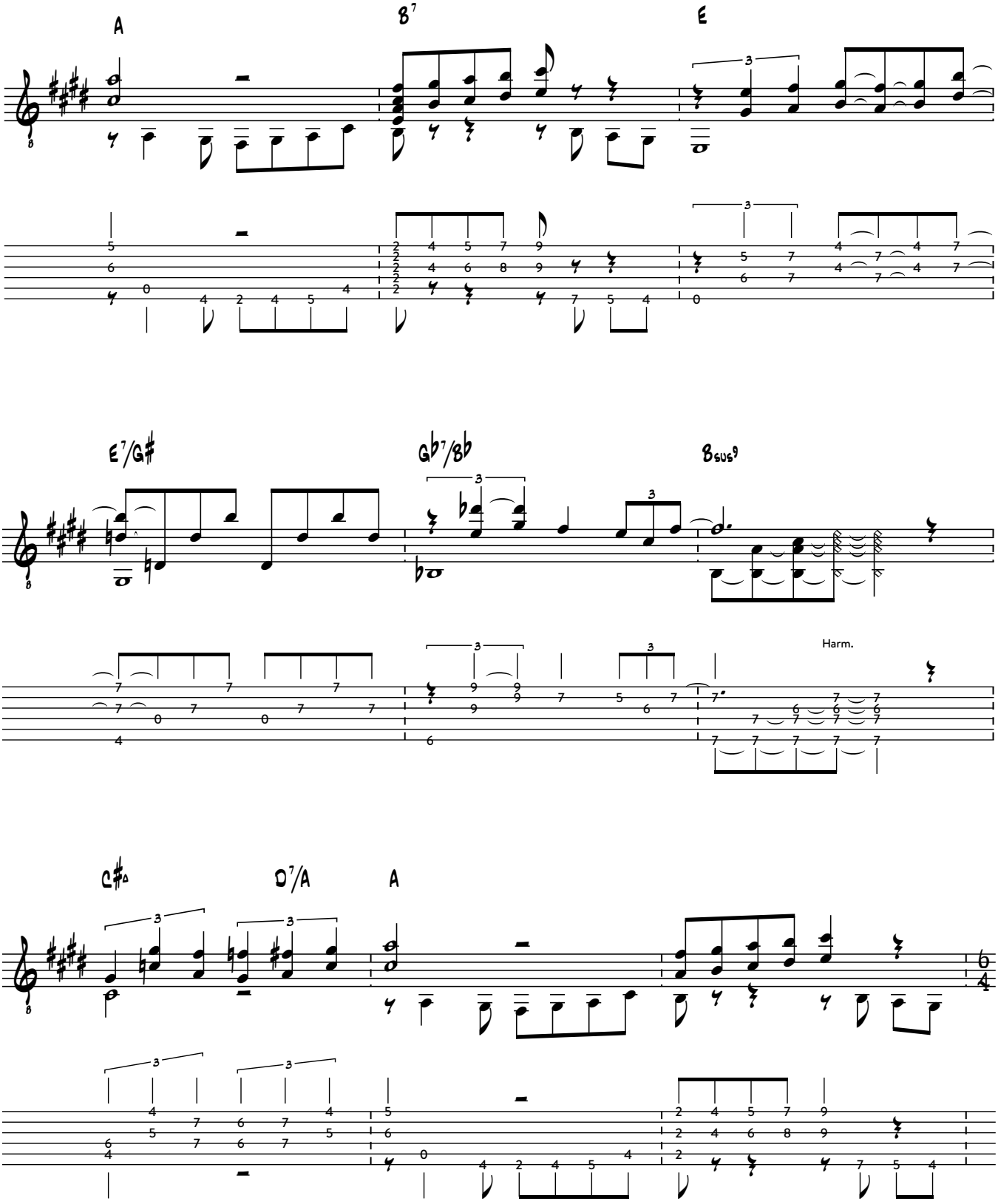
Study For Electric Guitar



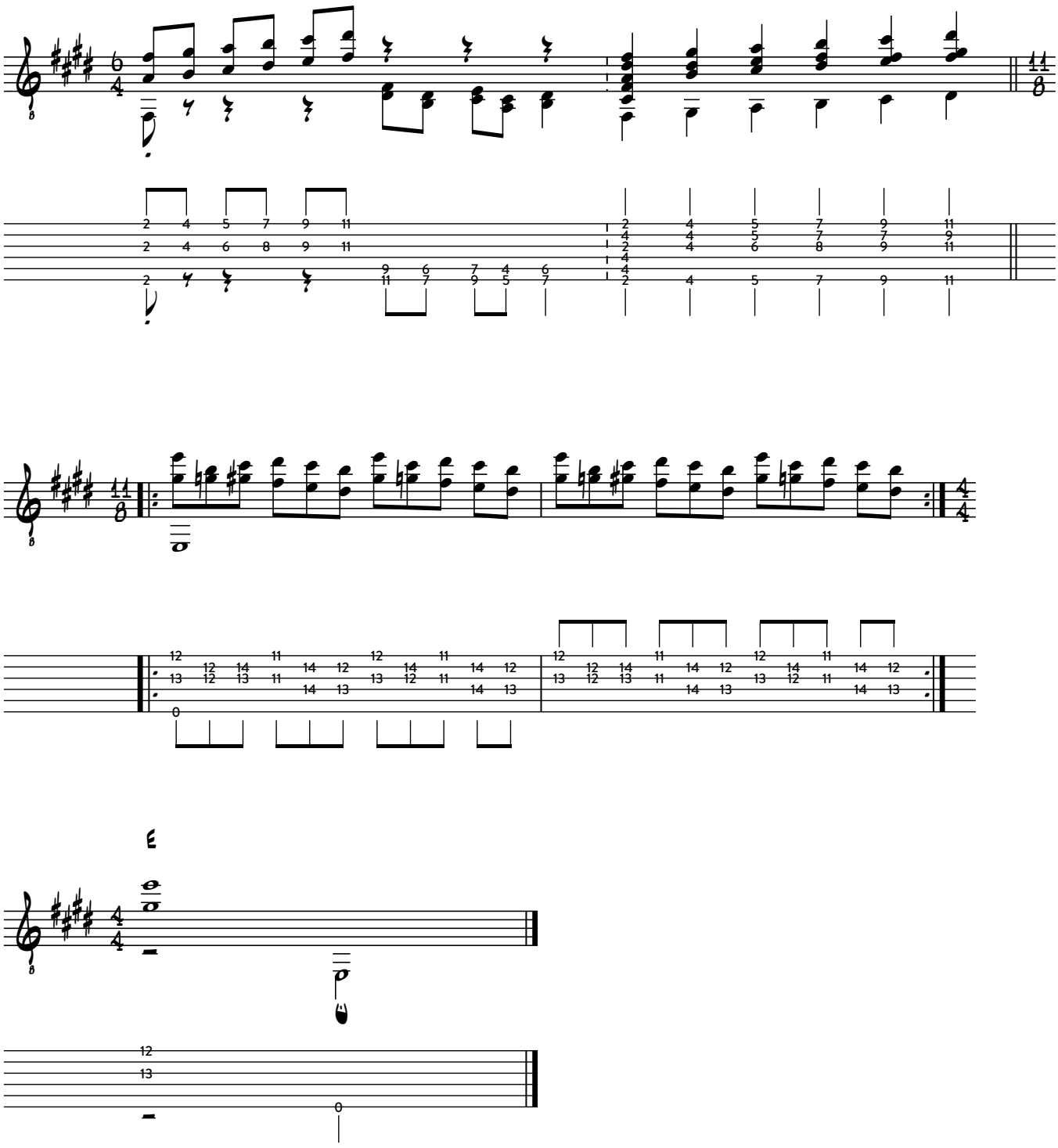
Study For Electric Guitar



Study For Electric Guitar



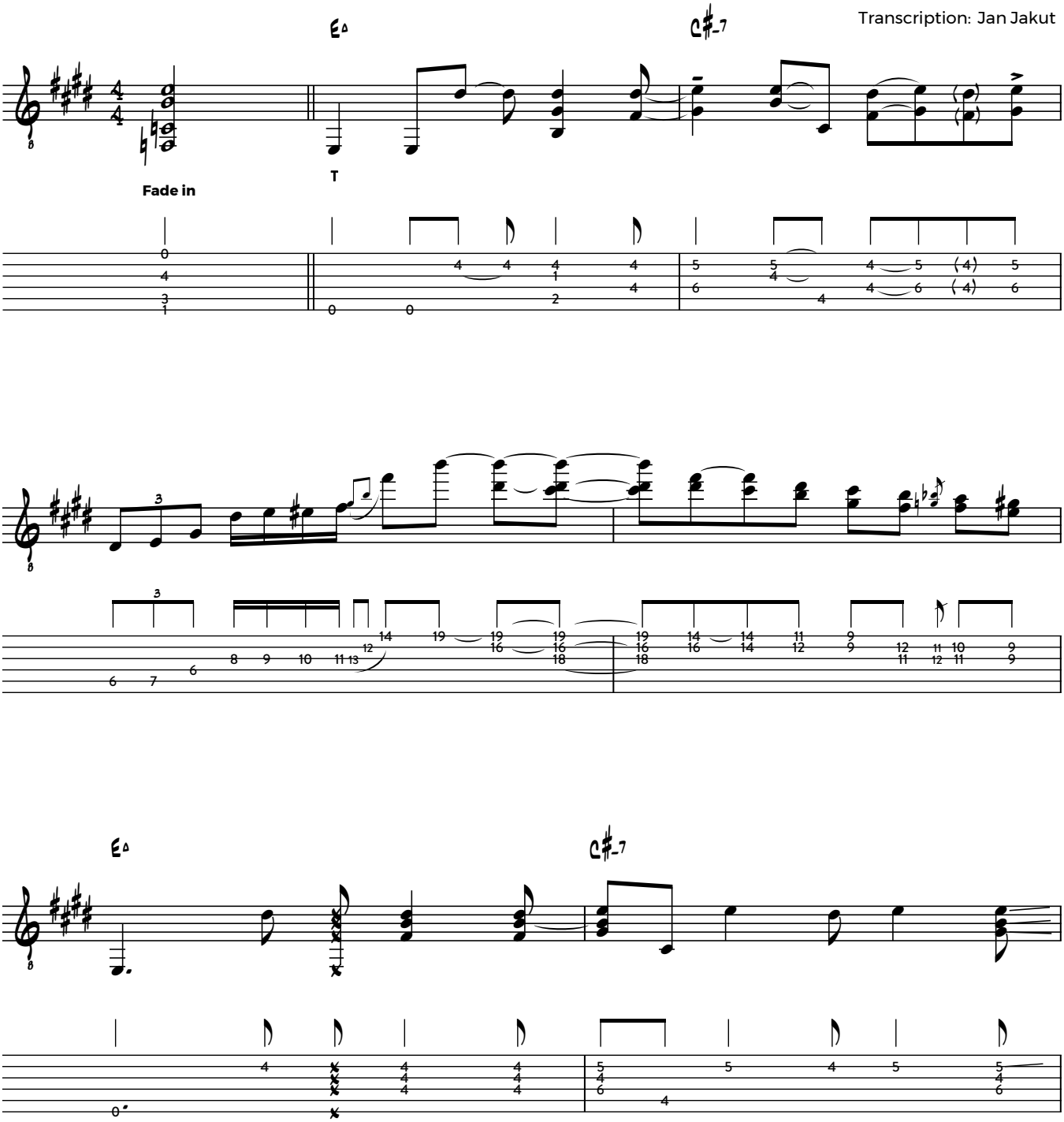
Study For Electric Guitar

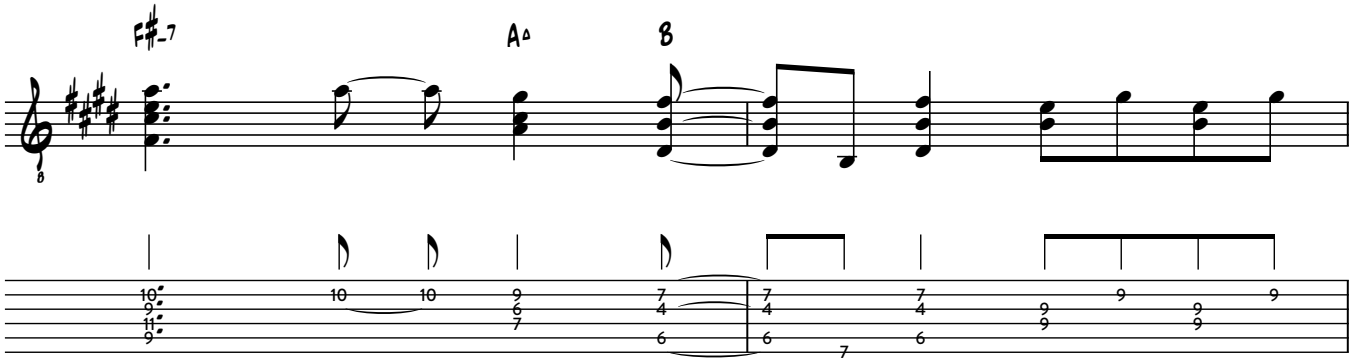


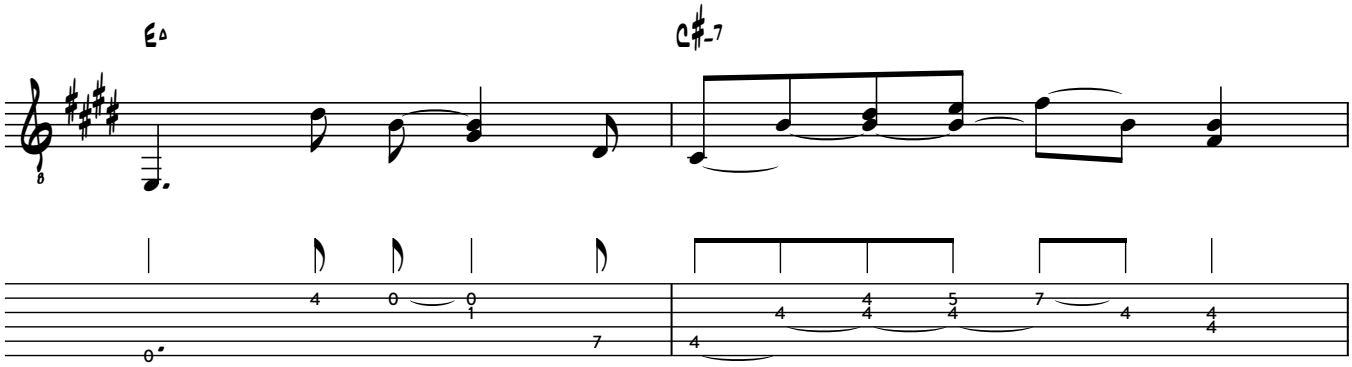
Arianna Powell - 'May Irwin'

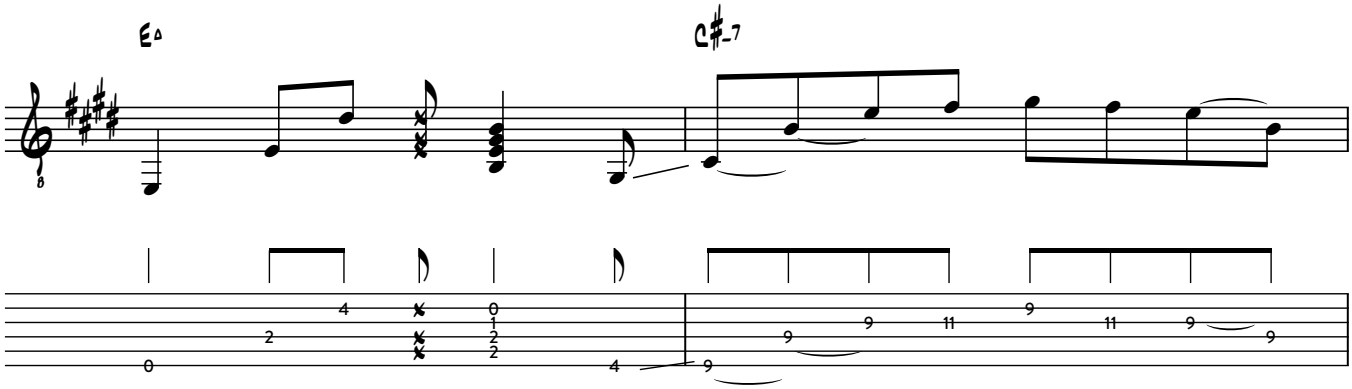
Soundslice Link

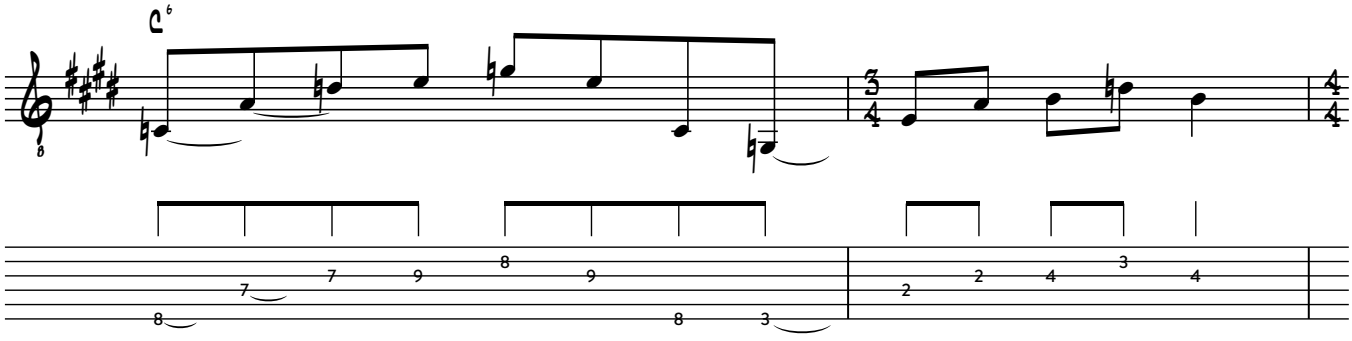
Transcription: Jan Jakut

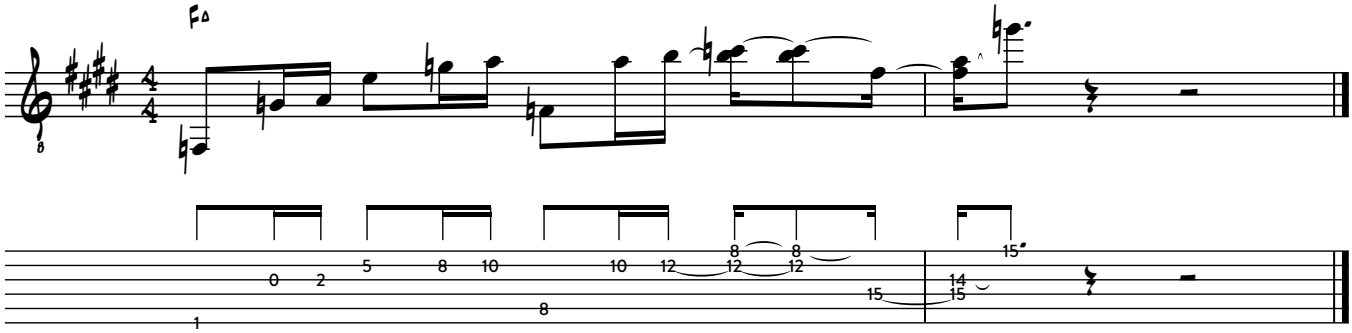



F#-7
A
B

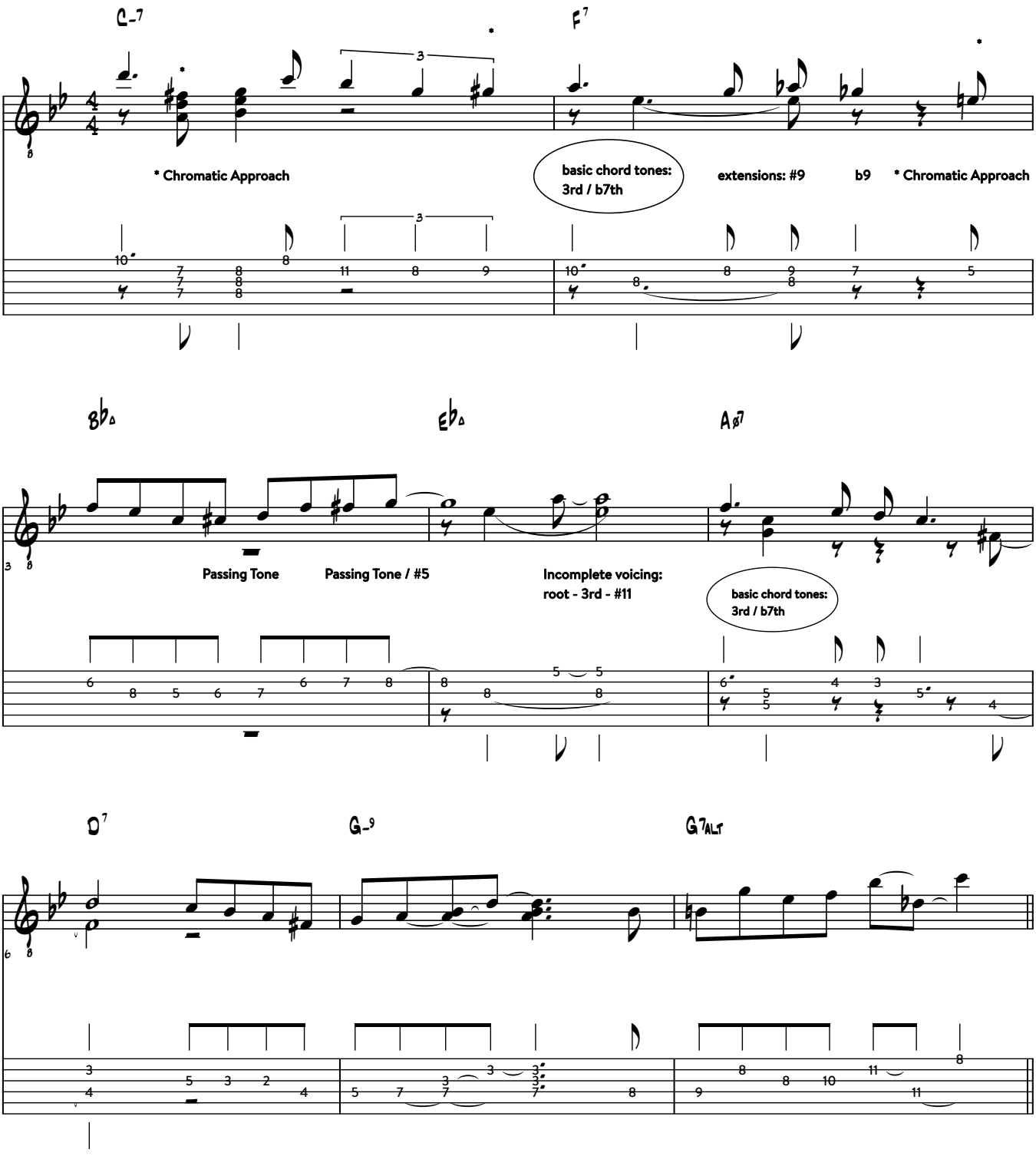

E
C#-7

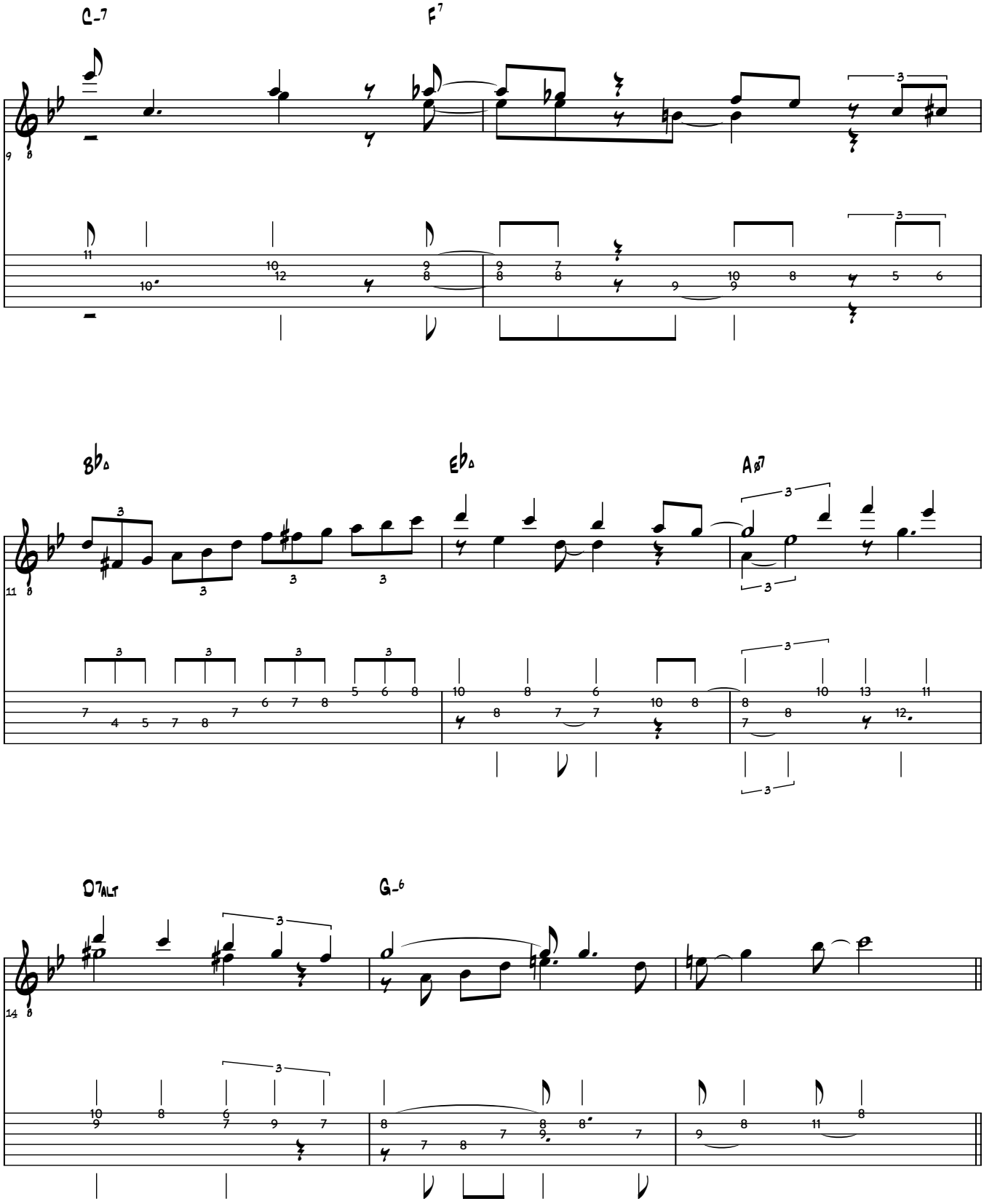

E
C#-7

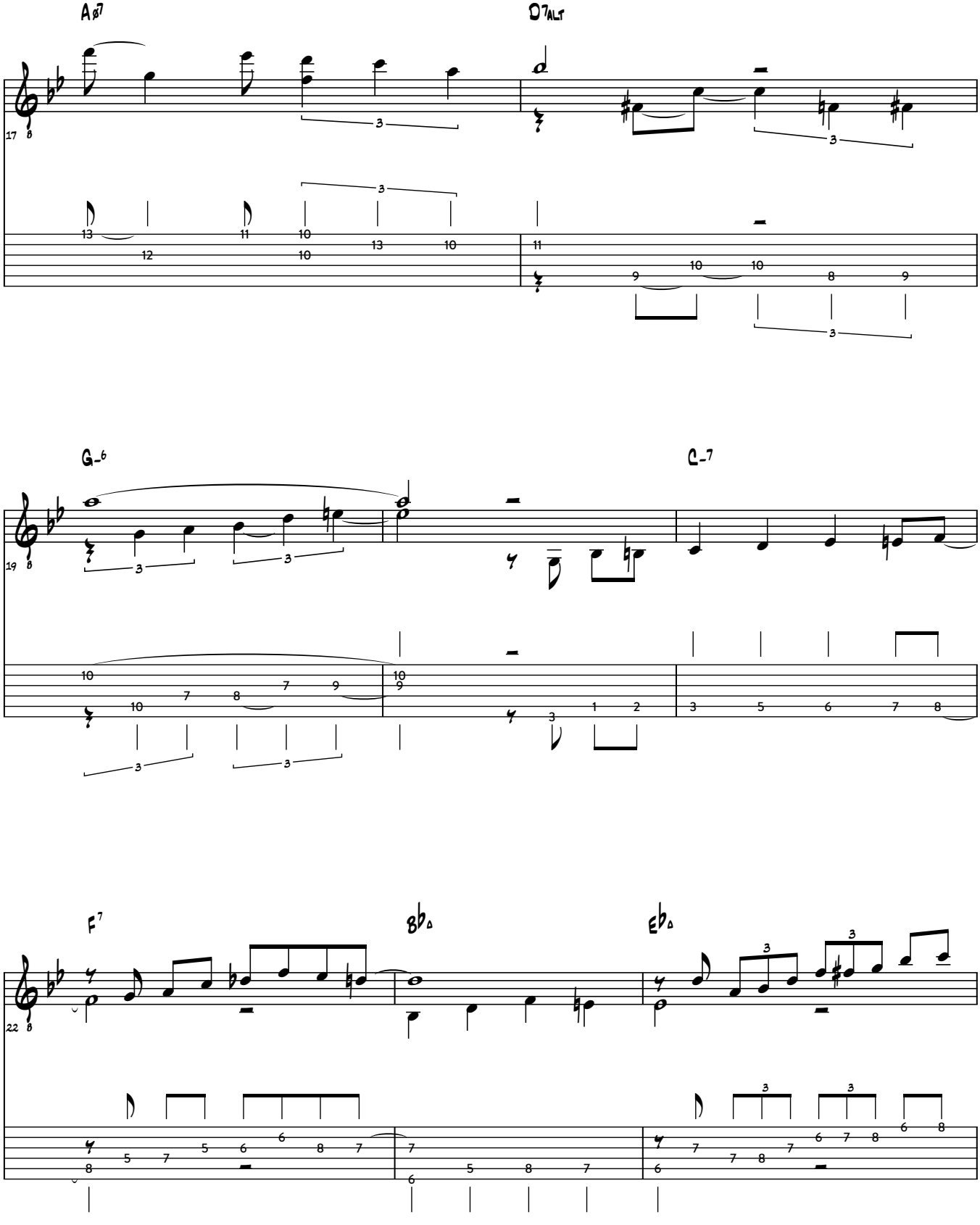

C♭
8 7 7 9 8 9 8 3
2 2 4 3 4

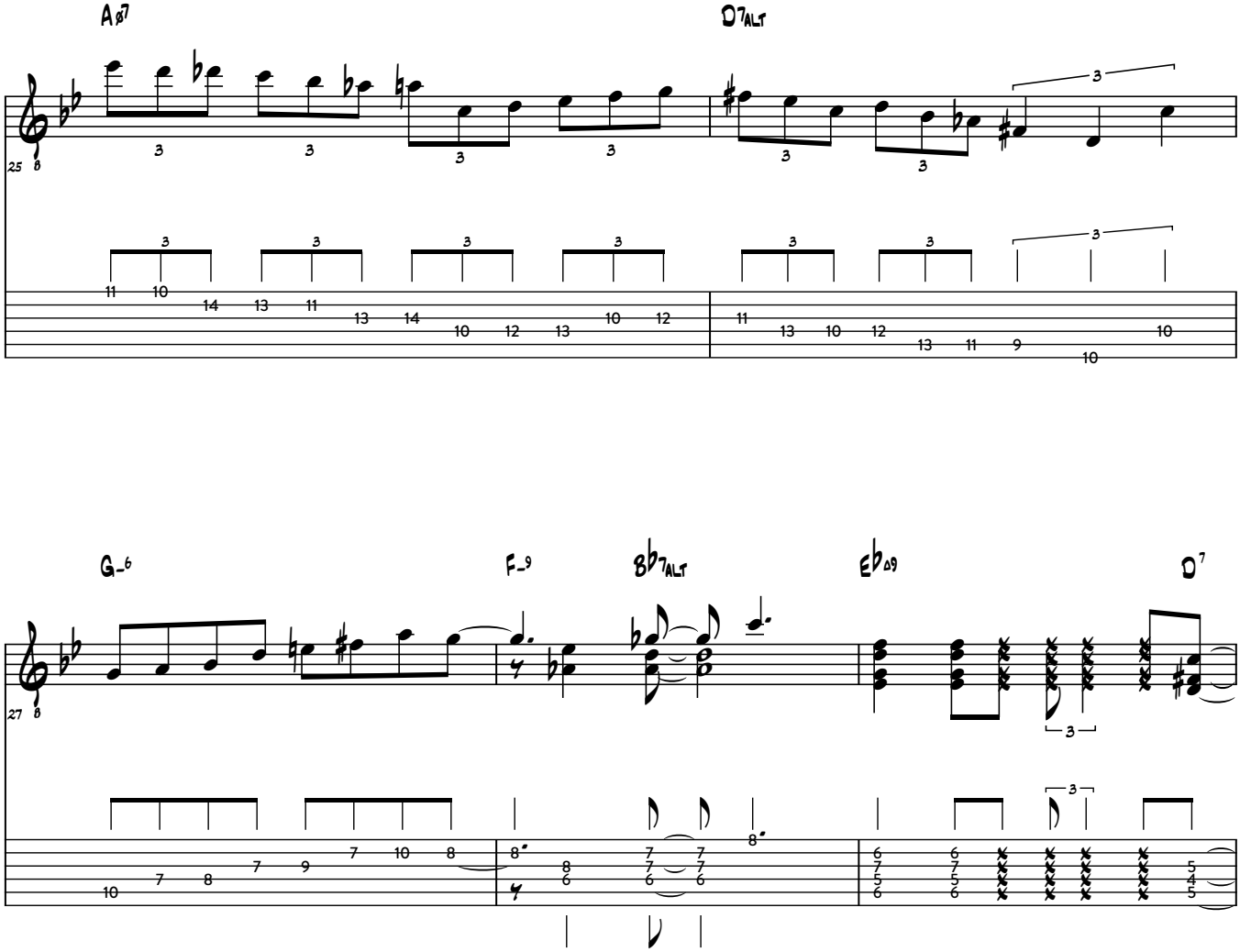

F♭
1 0 2 5 8 10 8 10 12 8 12 8 12 15 14 15 15

Melodic Ideas for Autumn Leaves

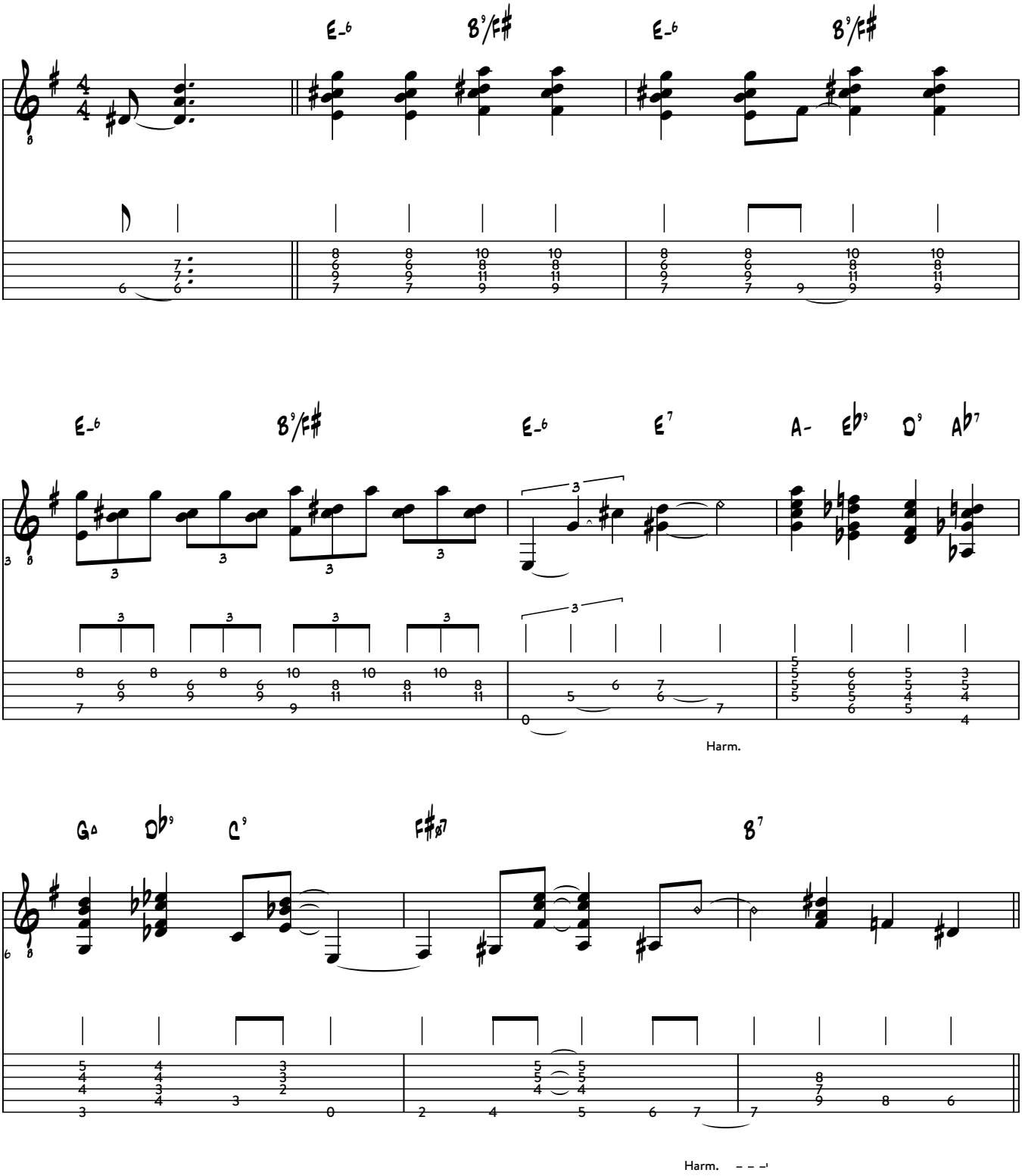


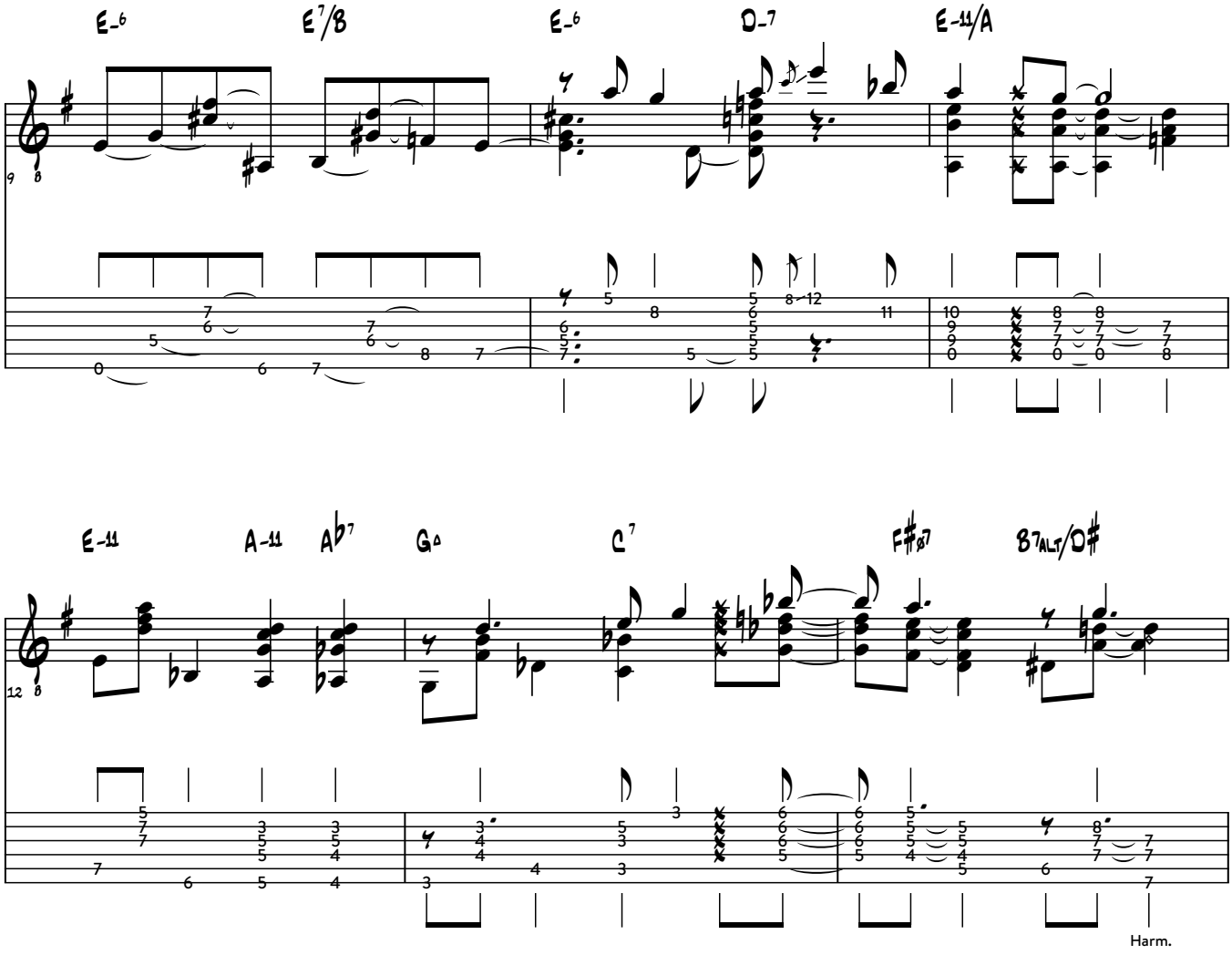

C-7
F7
B♭Δ
E♭Δ
Aø7
D7ALT
G-6


Aø7
D7ALT
G-6
C-7
F7
B♭Δ
E♭Δ

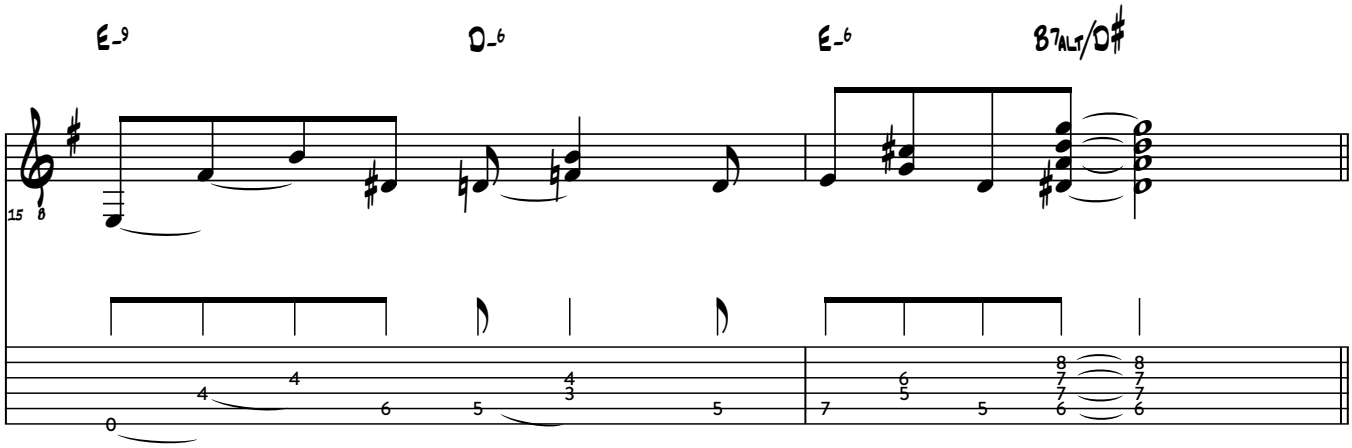

A♭7
D7ALT
25
G-6
F-9
B♭7ALT
E♭Δ9
D7
27
C♯7
D7
G-6
D7ALT
G-6
30

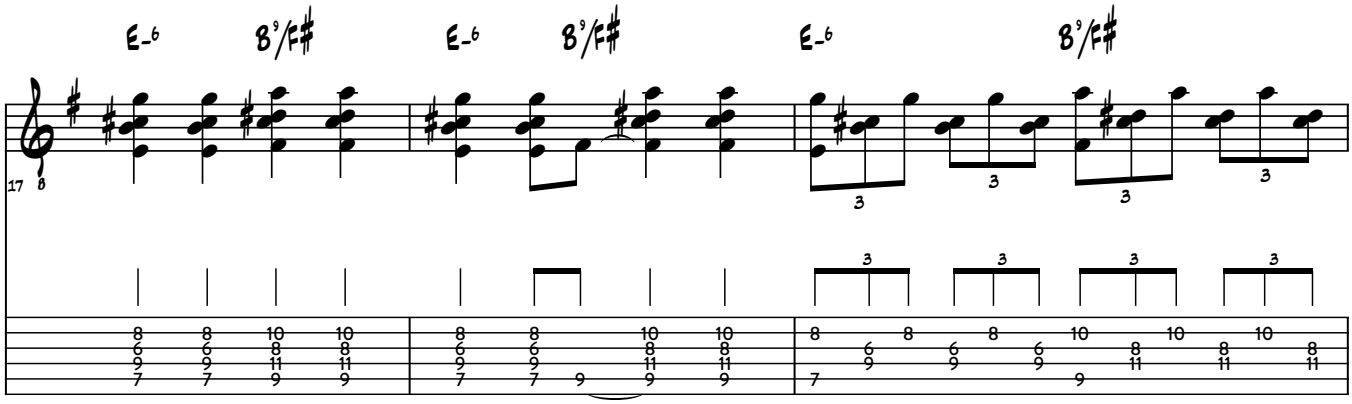
Comping Concepts - Gershwin's Chords

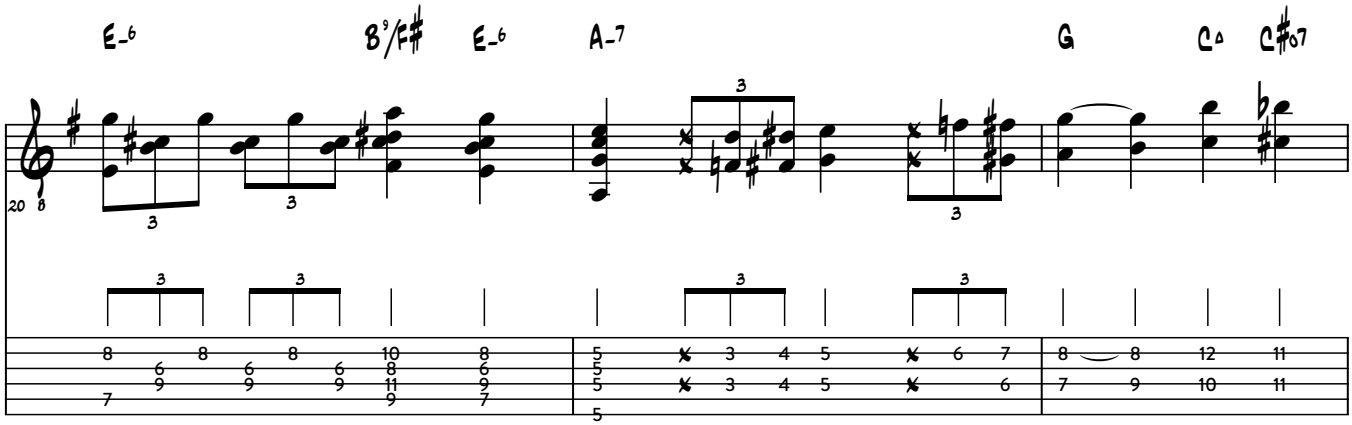


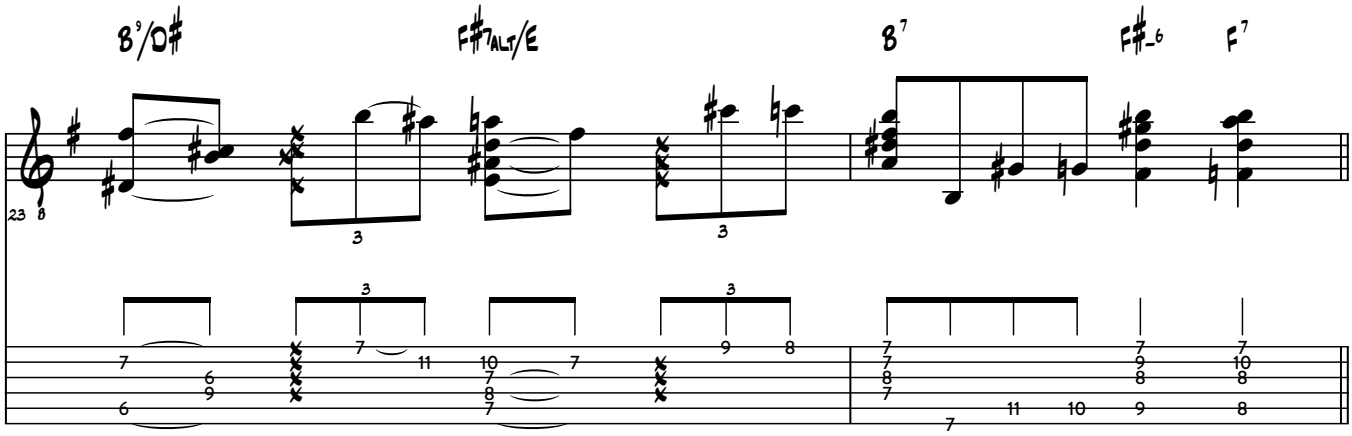

E-6
E7/B
E-6
D-7
E-11/A
9

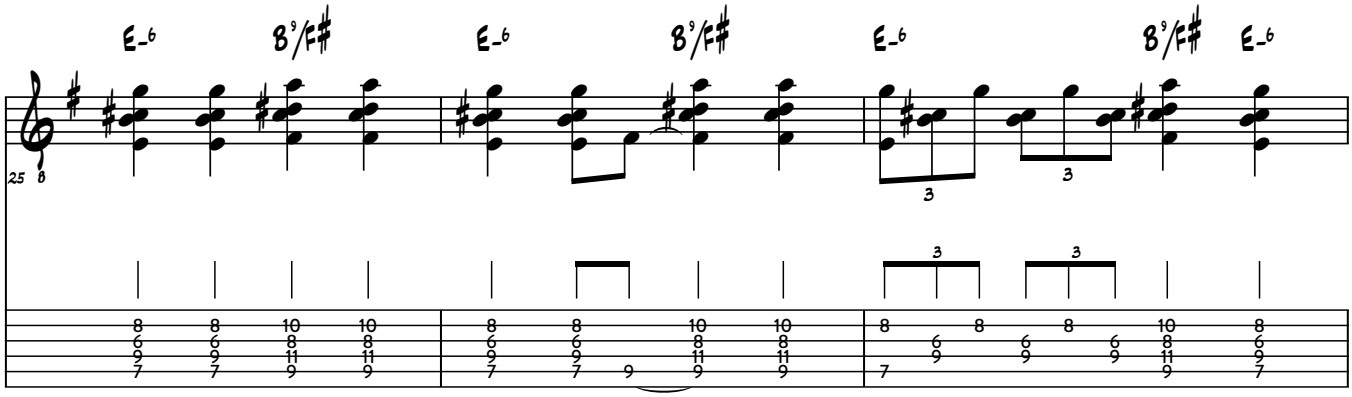
E-11
A-11
Ab7
G∆
C7
F#ø7
B7ALT/D#
12
Harm.

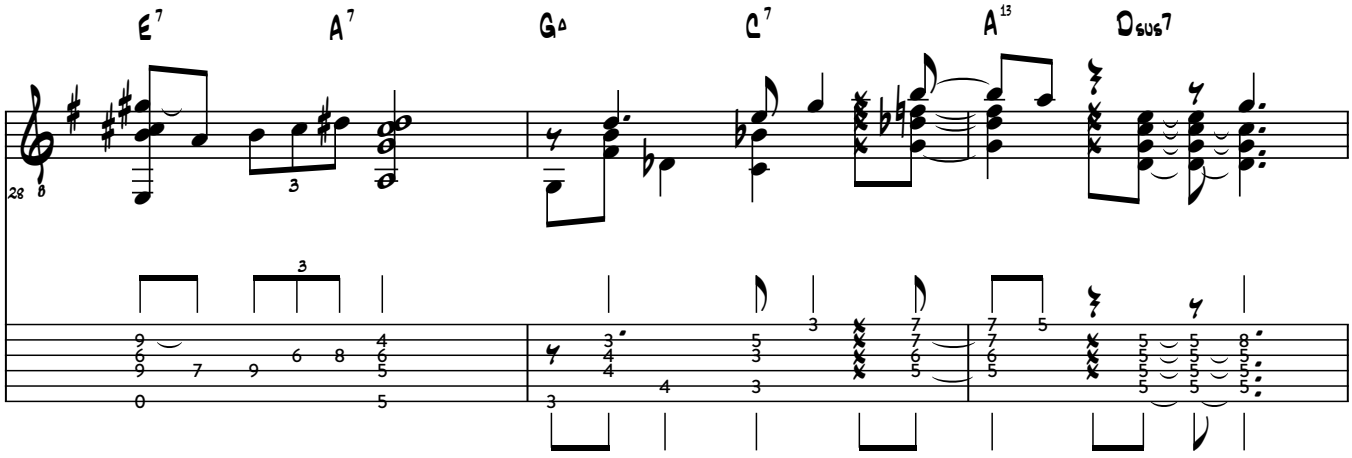

E-9
D-6
E-6
B7ALT/D#
15

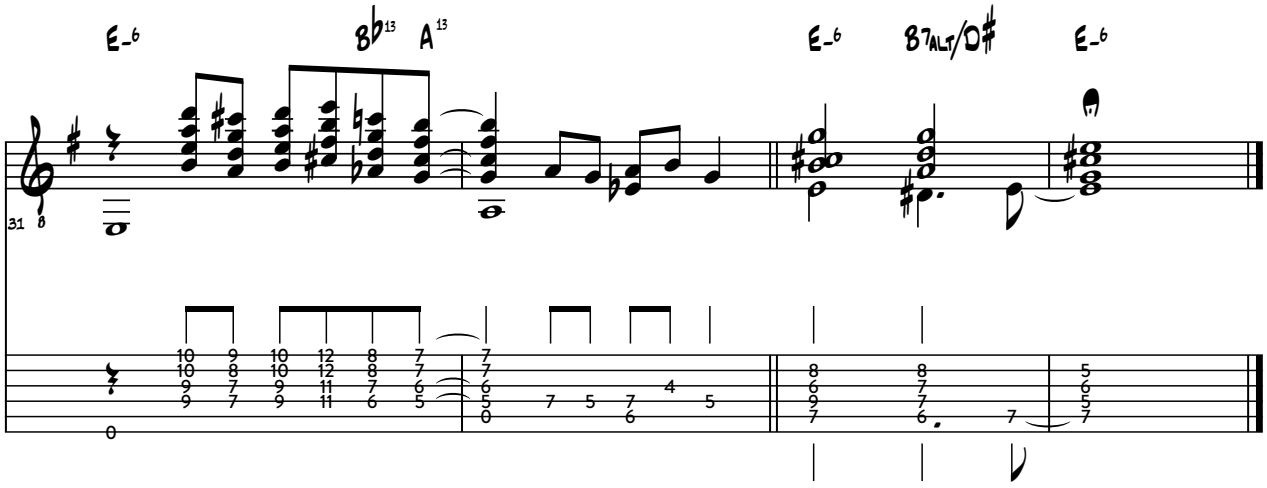

E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#
E-6
B9/F#
17


E-6
B9/F#
E-6
A-7
G
CΔ
C#07
20


B9/D#
F#7ALT/E
B7
F#-6
F7
23


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


E7
A7
GΔ
C7
A13
Dsus7
28

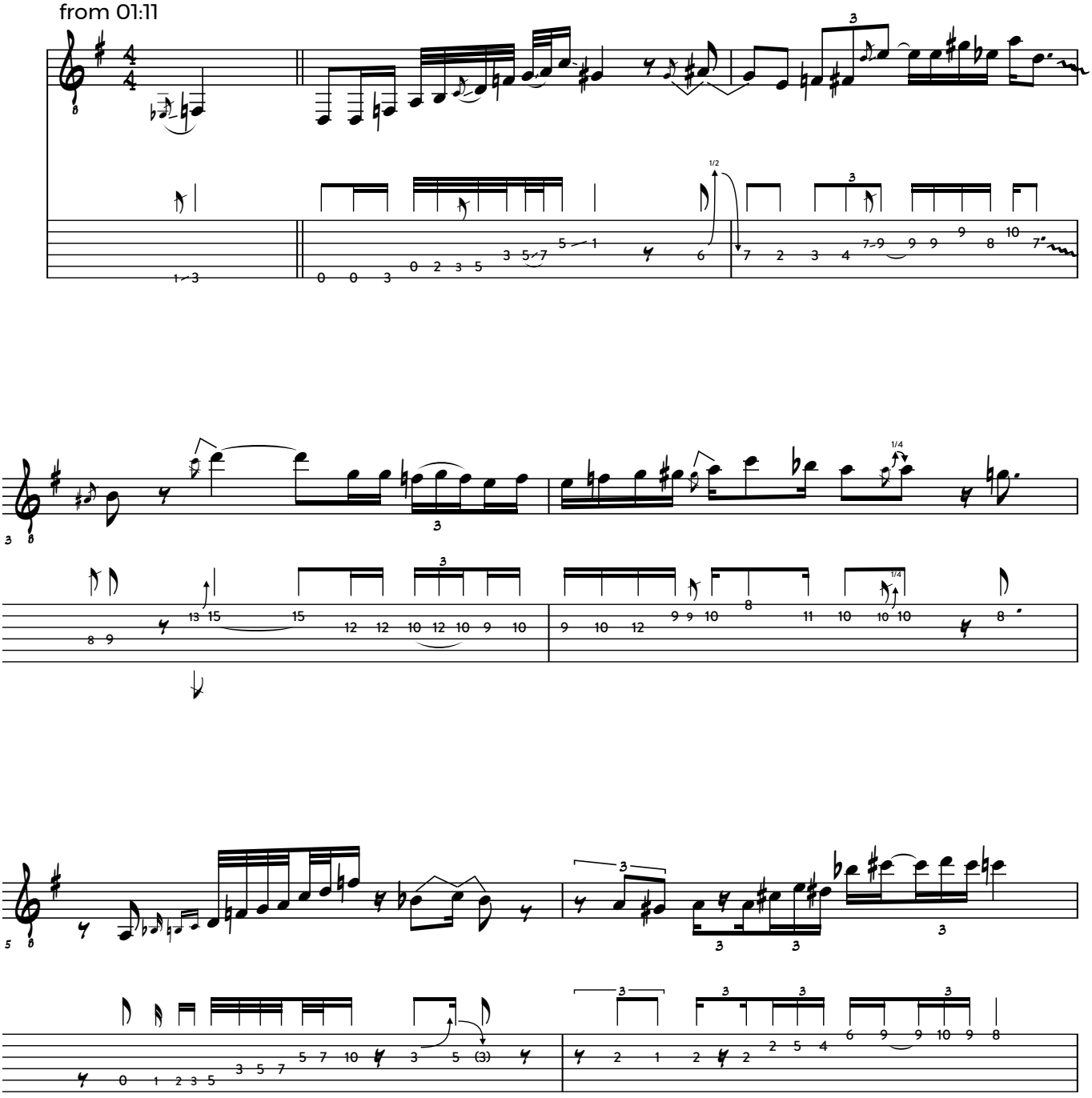

E-6
Bb13
A13
E-6
B7alt/D#
E-6
31

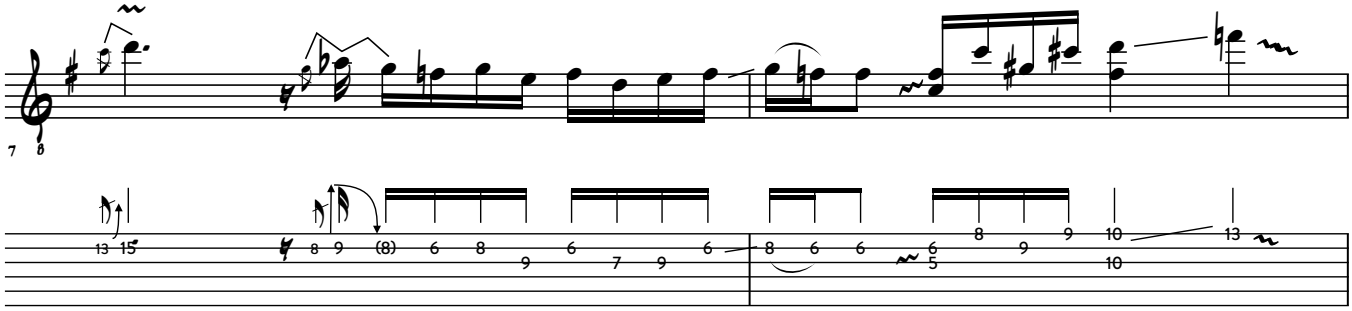
Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You

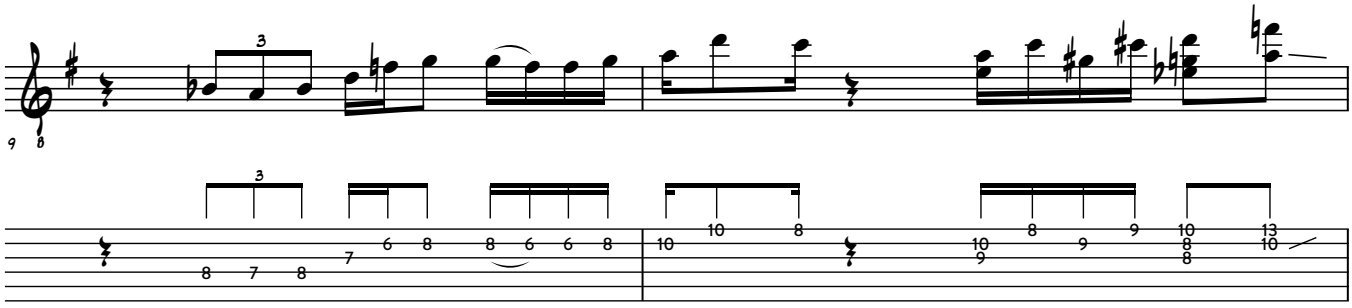
Guitar Solo - Amos Garrett

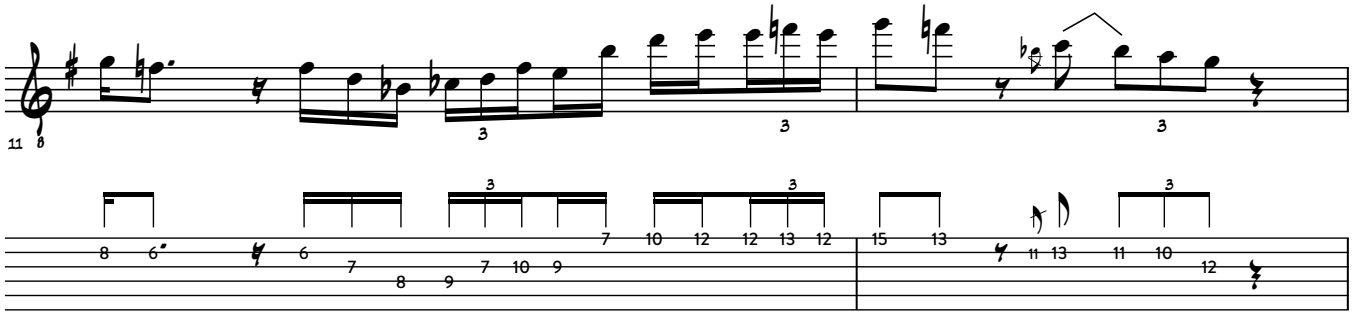
E = D

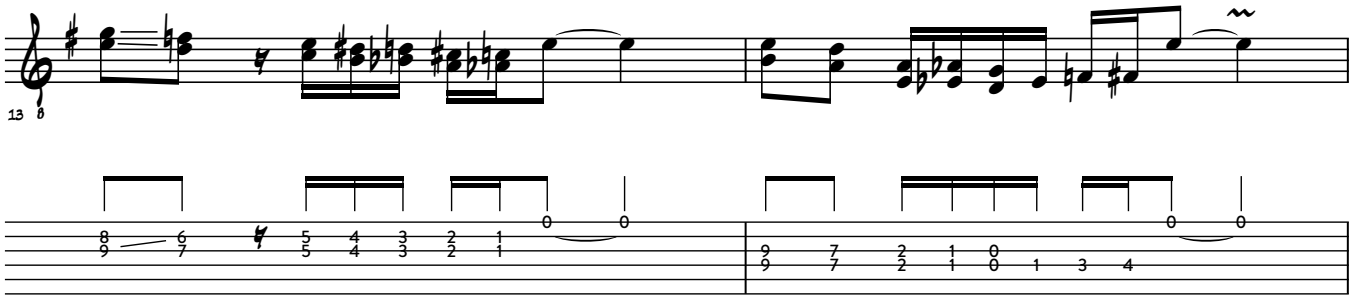
from 01:11

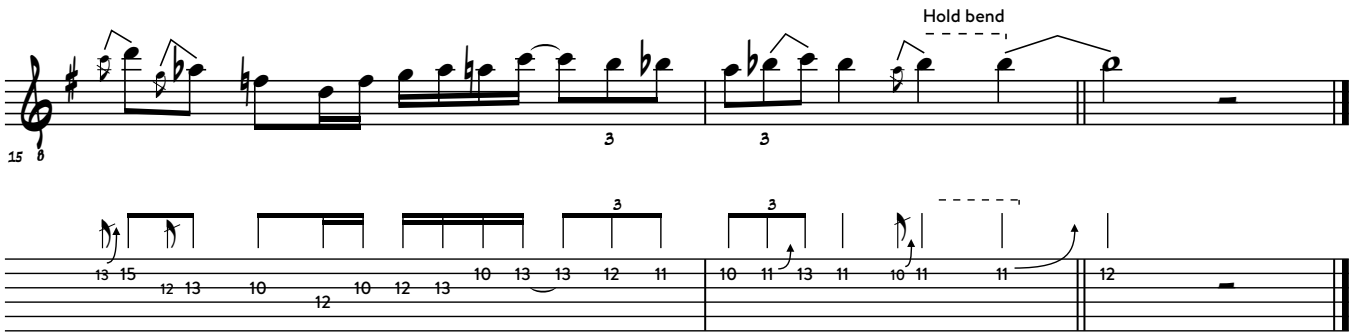






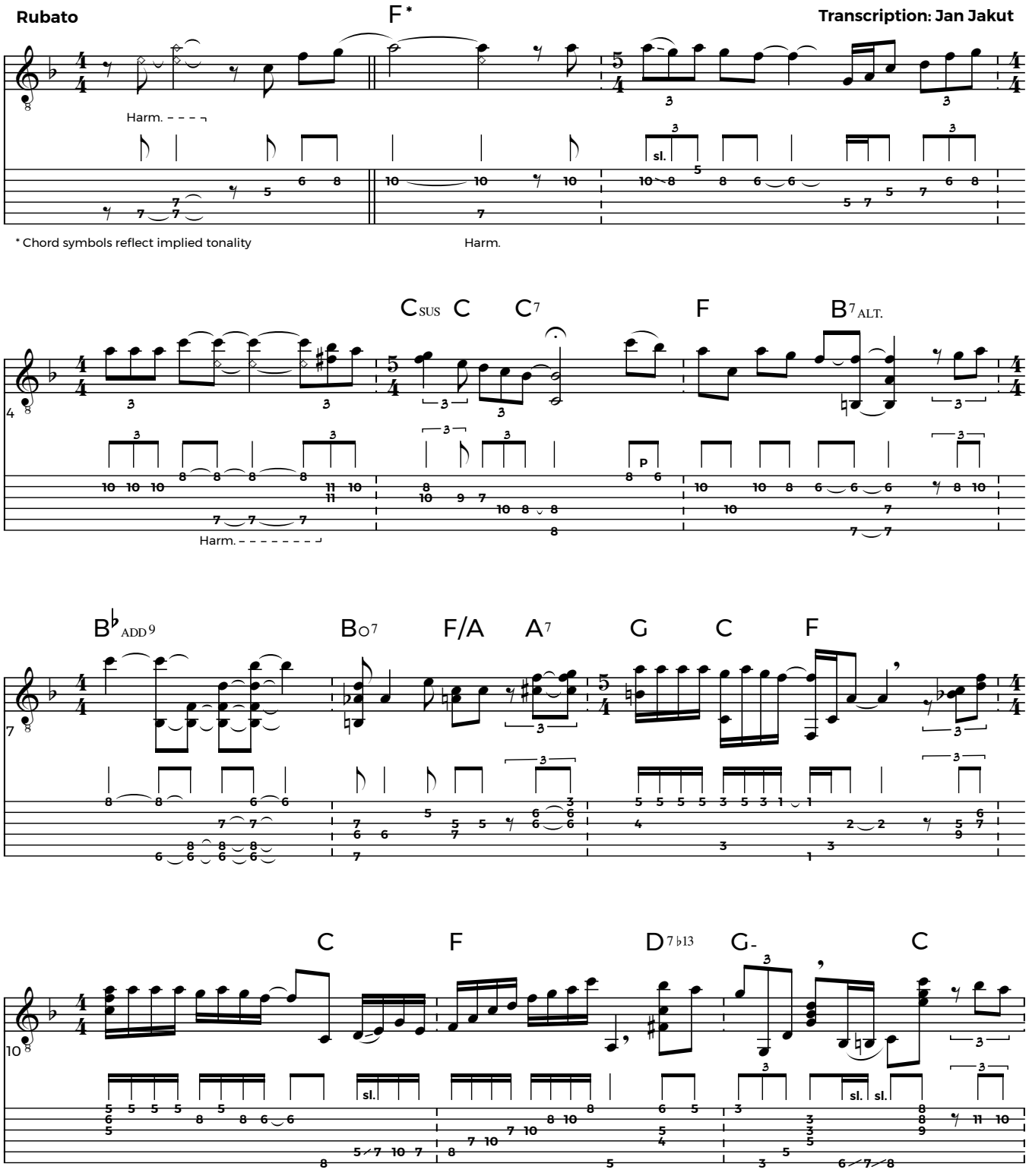


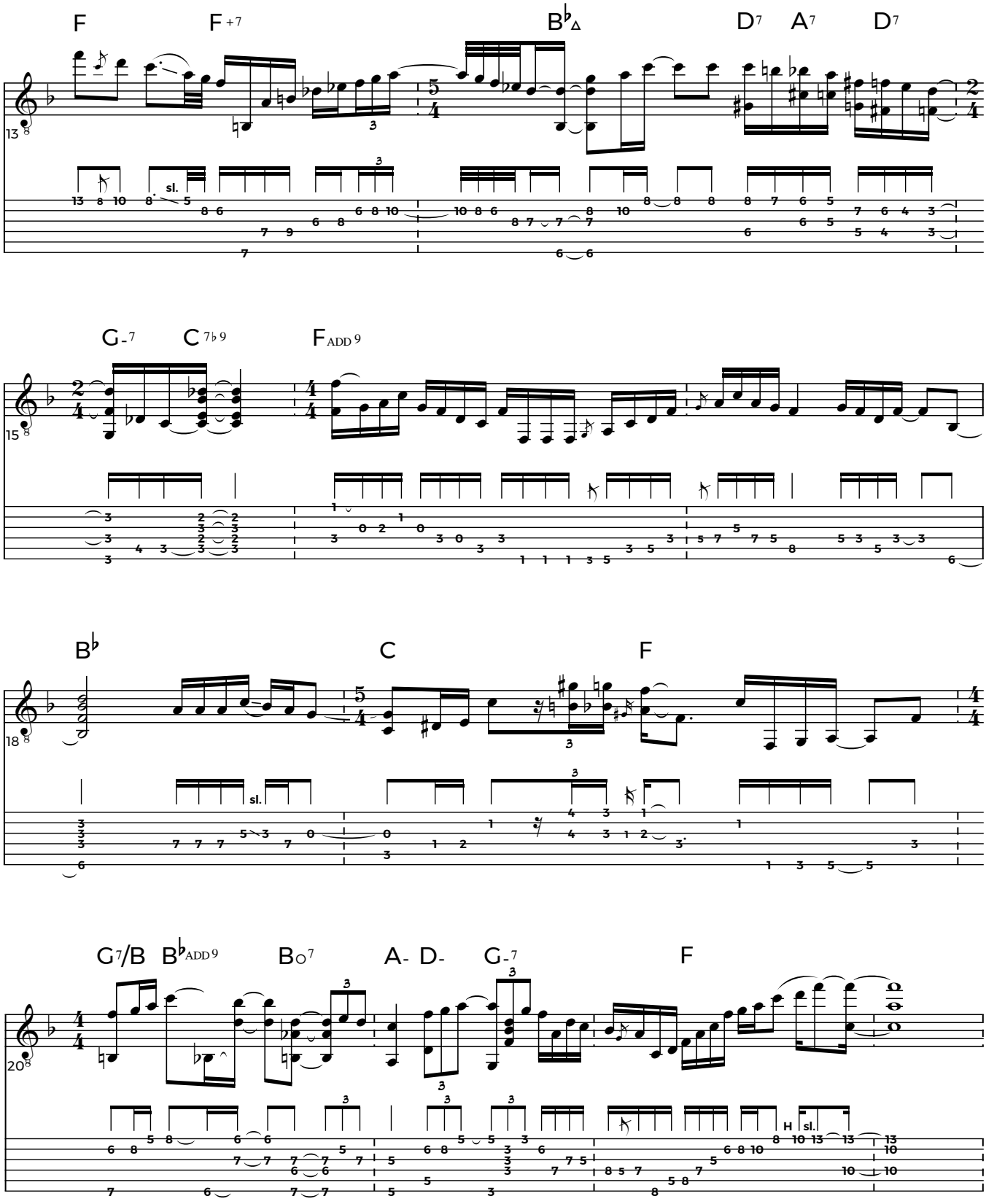


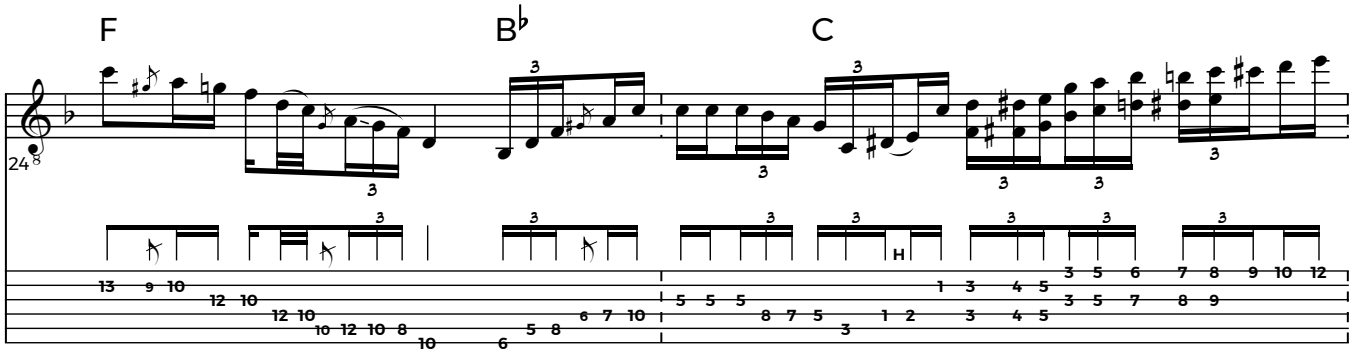

Hold bend

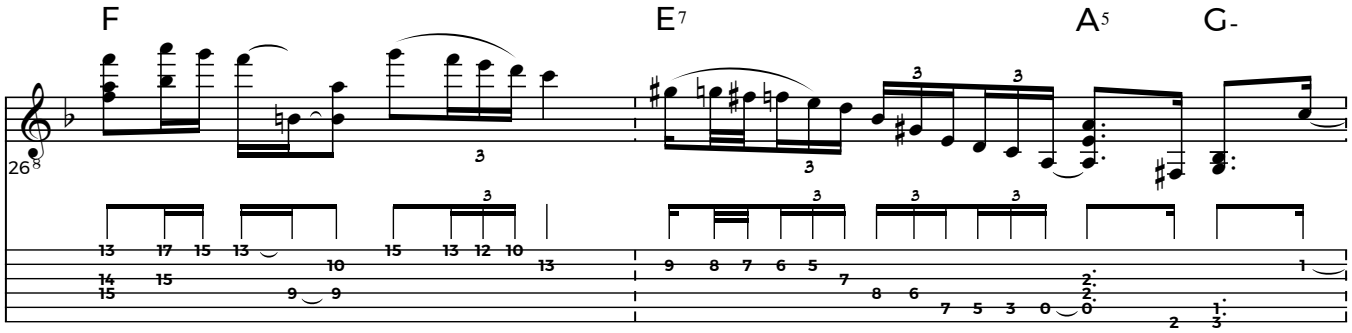
Red River Valley - Bill Frisell (solo)

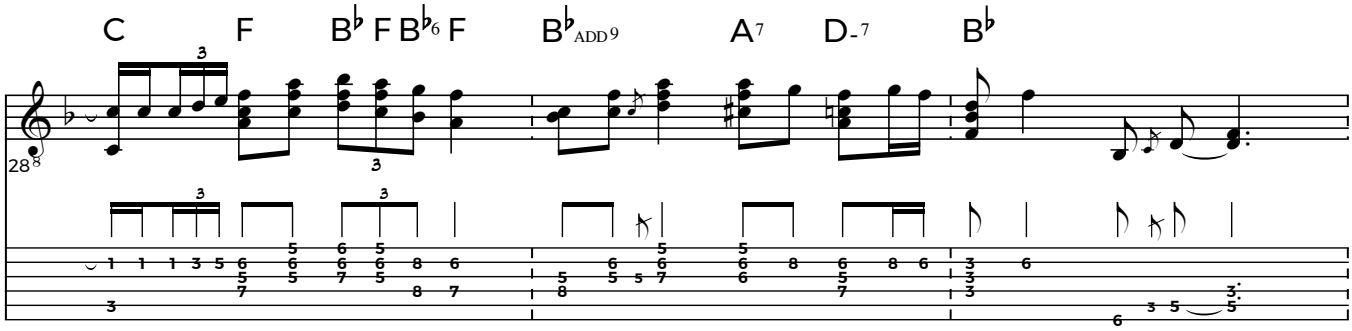
KUTX Radio - Studio 1A Sessions

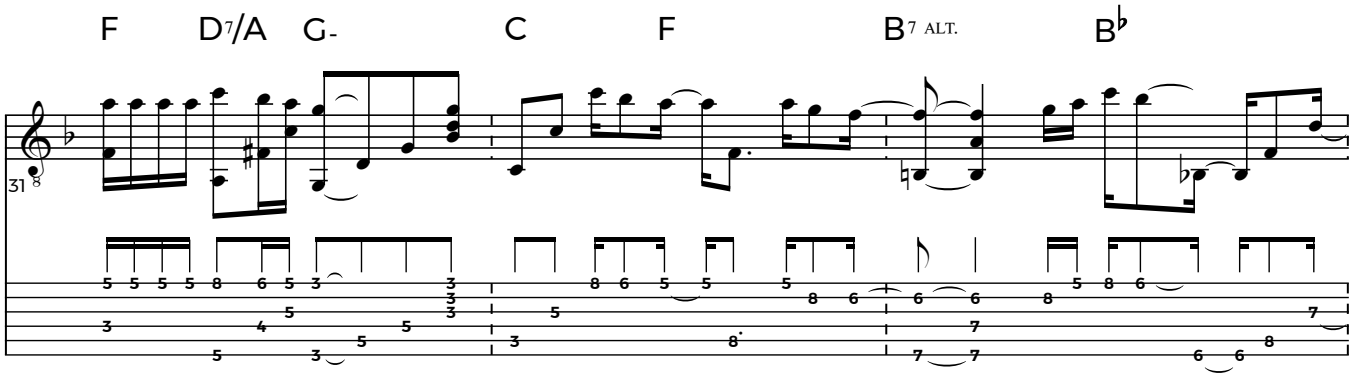



F
F+7
B♭Δ
D7
A7
D7
13
sl.
G-7
C7♭9
FADD9
15
B♭
C
F
18
sl.
G7/B
B♭ADD9
Bo7
A-
D-
G-7
F
20
H
sl.


F
B♭
C
24


F
E7
A5
G-
26


C
F
B♭ F B♭6 F
B♭ADD 9
A7
D-7
B♭
28


F
D7/A
G-
C
F
B7 ALT.
B♭
31