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An analysis of selected rhythmic, harmonic and melodic devices used in the arrangement and improvisation by Gwilym Simcock on The Way You Look Tonight (2007)

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Bachelor of Music Honours

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Supervisor: Nicholas Abbey

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Signed:

Brodie Stewart

04/11/2016

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Abstract

Gwilym Simcock, a seminal jazz pianist at the forefront of the European music scene, sees no boundaries between jazz and classical music. His debut album *Perception* (2007) received impressive critical acclaim, and has been considered a musical fingerprint of his various influences and composition style. This research pursues a deeper insight into the characteristics of his arranging and improvisational style by identifying notable devices used in the performance of *The Way You Look Tonight*, a well-known jazz standard that is featured on the album.

The tune itself is has been reimagined as a modern-sounding arrangement centred on a rhythmic bass pattern in an odd meter, featuring extensive reharmonisations and virtuosic improvisations. The study aimed to demystify the specific devices used, and through musical transcription and analysis, prevalent techniques have been categorised to create a vocabulary of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic devices that could be employed when composing and improvising. The notable techniques include adaption to odd time signature, rhythmic super imposition, metric modulation, counterpoint, several reharmonisation techniques, and motivic development, complemented by various more typical jazz concepts. An interview was conducted with Simcock to further explore his approach to the concepts and techniques, adding fascinating insight into their conception and application.

The findings uncovered in this paper contribute to knowledge on an excellent but as yet unstudied modern jazz musician, providing a list of devices that may be used by others to assimilate his techniques into their own playing, a high quality musical transcription of a seminal performance, and a transcript of an insightful and personal interview with the subject.

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Introduction

Gwilym Simcock, born 24th February 1981 (Chilton, 2004), is at the forefront of the European music scene. A gifted pianist, French hornist, composer, and arranger, Simcock sees no boundaries between jazz and classical music; his music is said to have a "harmonic sophistication and subtle dovetailing of musical traditions" (Simcock).

Simcock's debut album *Perception* (2007) received impressive critical acclaim, and has been considered a 'musical fingerprint' of Simcock's various influences and composition style. This album features a well-known jazz standard entitled *The Way You Look Tonight* (Kern, 1936), an arrangement that incorporates odd time signatures, metric modulations, reharmonisations, as well as harmonic and rhythmic superimpositions.

This research uncovers insight into some of the characteristics of Simcock's arranging and improvisational style by identifying notable devices used throughout this recorded track. Through the analysis presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, these devices are categorised into a vocabulary of rhythmic, melodic and harmonic devices that could be employed by other jazz musicians in their composition and performance practices.

Biography: Gwilym Simcock

Born in North Wales, Simcock began piano lessons with his father at the age of four, and by eight years of age he was studying piano, composition, and French horn at the Trinity College of Music. In 1990, he was accepted into Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, majoring in classical piano (Chilton, 2004).

During his time at Chetham's, Simcock was introduced to jazz by the former Loose Tubes bassist and composer Steve Berry (Fordham, 2011). Regarding his discovery of this new idiom, Simcock notes that:

> I was already uneasy with the competitiveness of the classical world, and being shut away alone in a practice room for hours at a time. I could immediately hear that jazz was a communal music, and one with a different take on what was right or wrong. (Fordham, 2011)

His interest in jazz led him to study at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he attained a BMus degree with first class honours (Chilton, 2004), and has recently been inducted as a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) (Music, 2016).

The breadth of Simcock's influences stretches from iconic jazz legends such as Keith Jarrett (to whom he is often compared), Chick Corea, Jaco Pastorius, and Pat Metheny, through to classical composers Maurice Ravel, Henri Dutilleux, Béla Bartók, and Mark-Anthony Turnage (Simcock). But it's not just jazz and classical where his strengths lie; indeed, Simcock has worked in a wide variety of musical styles, also including Latin, funk and pop (Chilton, 2004).

Simcock has graced the stage and studio with many well-respected jazz musicians, including Kenny Wheeler, Dave Holland, Lee Konitz, Bob Mintzer, Tim Garland, and Bobby McFerrin. He has also performed with the BBC Big Band and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra on piano and French horn. (AllMusic; Chilton, 2004; Simcock).

Simcock's growing success as a leader has spanned various line-ups, ranging from his trio to a 40-piece ensemble featuring a choir and chamber string orchestra. In 2006, Simcock began touring with his new quintet which featured Stan Sulzmann on saxophone, John Parricelli on guitar, Phil Donkin on bass, and Martin France on drums (AllMusic). It is with this band (plus Ben Bryant on percussion) that he recorded his debut album *Perception* (2007) (BBC). In recent years, however, Simcock has become known for his solo piano performances. His album entitled *Good Days at Schloss Elmau* (2011) received critical acclaim, and has toured Europe and other parts of the world such as Australia, the USA, Canada, China and Korea with his music (Simcock).

Rationale

The playing of Gwilym Simcock immediately resonated with me. The fluidity and clarity of his playing is lyrical and melodic, with each note conveying a great sense of purpose. There are beautiful crossovers between the worlds of classical and jazz: Simcock himself acknowledges this blurring of idioms in his performances, describing in an interview with Ian Patterson (2010) that his approach is simply "all just music" (para. 5) and that he "had a classical music background but wanted to find a different angle. [He] was introduced to jazz whilst [he] was still at classical music school and found an area which is the one [he seems] to operate in now" (para. 7). This musical upbringing has parallels

with my own, and as a result I feel a strong connection with the aesthetic of his approach.

There are many aspects of Simcock's playing that inspire me. Beyond his concept of rhythm, harmony and melody, his sound and touch also drew me in, particularly via his *cantible* approach to composing and improvising on the album *Perception* (2007). I feel that his exquisite delivery of each note and phrase allows the core elements of the music (rhythm, harmony, and melody) to shine in a way that is fascinating and captivating both as a listener and as a musician. This intense personal interest makes the performance practices of Simcock an ideal subject for my own research.

Justification and Significance

Simcock is a critically acclaimed performer with a wide audience of jazz and classical fans. His playing proves to be an excellent subject for this study given his virtuosity and his blurring of the lines between these idioms. This research contributes knowledge to the currently limited literature on this acclaimed player through focus on his advanced rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic concepts. In conjunction with the high quality musical transcription and fascinating interview transcript available as part of the research, the results of this analysis and interview will serve to educate other musicians on aspects of Simcock's approach and allow them to assimilate these techniques and concepts into their own playing.

Selection of the Tune, Scope, and Limitations

The Way You Look Tonight (composed by Jerome Kern and lyrics by Dorothy Fields) has been covered and reimagined numerous times by jazz vocalists and instrumentalists alike. Simcock's version is a complex arrangement showcasing the interesting and personally appealing aspects of his compositional and improvisational abilities.

Whilst the research may seem inherently somewhat limited by focusing on only one transcription, the performance that has been chosen for this topic is substantial, and so the entire track's piano part (including the arrangement and full piano solo) has been transcribed and analysed in fine detail; a relatively lengthy and advanced undertaking that has yielded interesting and applicable results. This method of enquiry has been

successful in the past. For example, Foster's thesis (2011) only focused on one Clare Fischer transcription, but in great detail, leading to a series of interesting harmonic, rhythmic, and structural findings. Additionally, the interview undertaken with Simcock provides fruitful corroboration of the findings, leading to a deeper and insightful understanding of his musical approach, significantly bolstering the integrity of the study.

Further, examining a complex performance on a jazz standard such as *The Way You Look Tonight* (rather than an original composition) provides a well-understood and more general foundation for the analysis, and aids in exploring and generalising his tendencies and concepts in a way that makes them most re-applicable to other situations for a jazz musician.

Importantly, this study does not claim to be a longitudinal investigation of Simcock's overall style, but instead aims to illuminate novel aspects of his approach to this specific performance, providing codified musical concepts for others to potentially apply to their own arrangements and improvisational style. This presentation of discreet devices for immersive practise is commonplace in jazz literature, such as Mark Levine's seminal text *The Jazz Piano Book* (1989).

Aims and Research Questions

The aim of this research is to gain a deeper insight into some of the characteristics of Gwilym Simcock's arranging and improvisational style by identifying notable devices used throughout *The Way You Look Tonight* to create a vocabulary of various rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic techniques that could be reapplied by a practicing jazz musician. The primary questions driving the study are:

- What rhythmic, harmonic and melodic devices does Gwilym Simcock use in creating his arrangement of *The Way You Look Tonight*?
- What rhythmic, harmonic and melodic devices does he use whilst improvising on this arrangement?
- What interesting connections are there between the arrangement and improvisational devices?

Chapter 1: Literature Review & Exploratory Discussion

As is the case with many contemporary jazz artists, there is limited literature pertaining to Gwilym Simcock and his playing despite his profile and virtuosity, making him an ideal candidate for this research. Fortunately, despite this paucity in formal research, there is plenty of relevant contextual material to frame this investigation. The review of these sources is presented below as follows:

1. Existing knowledge on Gwilym Simcock
2. Similar research into other jazz artists, including pertinent methodologies
3. Supplementary jazz theory and history texts

Existing Gwilym Simcock Resources

The majority of the extant material pertaining to Simcock is in the form of interviews, biographies, and criticism; there are no dissertations, books, or journal articles available that specifically discuss his musical techniques. Reviews of performances and albums are also abundant, and whilst these are of varying relevance, some aspects of his playing style are occasionally addressed.

Interviews with Simcock mostly focus on his life as a musician, development, and his views on the current music scene. However, there are a few sources that delve deeper into his sense of musicality. In an interview with Ian Patterson from All About Jazz (2010), Simcock identifies harmony as the most appealing element of music to him, stating that "out of the three elements of music, melody, rhythm and harmony the one that really appeals to me is harmony, but that's the thing people are least familiar with" (para. 20). Simcock also discusses the concept of 'clarity' to help define accessibility to people not used to jazz, elaborating that:

> I guess you're trying to find a way of playing music without selling out which has its artistic integrity but which can appeal to as many people as possible, so you've got to have a strong thread of melody which is something people can really hang onto. (Patterson, 2010, para. 19)

Simcock views the bass as an integral aspect of his compositional approach. His favouring of players with the ability to execute melodic lines adds a strong voice to the ensemble that "as a composer [is] a great thing to work with" (Patterson, 2010, para.

38). This really ties in with the strong melodic bassline in *The Way You Look Tonight*, a core idea for this particular arrangement.

Similar Research Into Other Jazz Artists

The dissertations of Foster (2011), Minness (2013), and Laclair (2015), each undertake paradigmatically similar transcription and analysis research focused on other renowned jazz artists, and have been useful in distilling a methodology for this research.

Foster (2011) presents his results categorised and listed by device. He states that it is not a bar-by-bar analysis, as this doesn't allow for areas such as mood and arrangement to be considered as a whole. Further to this, he presents the information in a table that displays the devices uncovered and when they appear on a musical timeline. A similar method will be adapted for the summary of results within this proposed research.

Minness (2013) also categorises devices, and then explores each with musical examples from transcriptions. He firstly identifies common techniques used by his subject, and then analyses transcriptions from a compositional perspective to gain insight into his use of these techniques. This method is effective in being able to identify the key devices, and categorise them into rhythmic, harmonic, or melodic techniques.

Laclair (2015) follows a similar trend, also analysing by device. He uses a method of displaying a passage of 4-8 bars across consecutive choruses to see if any continuity or similar ideas occur.

Additionally, a dissertation by Stroessner (2016) provides an interesting framework for stylistic analysis, an adaptation based heavily on a book entitled *Guidelines For Stylistic Analysis* (LaRue, 2011). The foundation for his methodology is the separation of music into five elements: sound, harmony, melody, rhythm, and form. Similar to the design of this study's analysis, he also dividing each of these components into both composed and improvised descriptors. From here, the relationships within each category can be explored.

Supplementary Jazz Theory and History Texts

Seminal jazz piano theory texts available have proved useful for describing, notating, and discussing particular techniques in the analysis phase of this research. The most relevant of these are *The Jazz Piano Book* (1989) by Mark Levine, and *Jazz Theory and Practice* (1993) by Richard Lawn and Jeffrey Hellmer.

Both books are of a similar nature, but cover slightly different topics. These include, but are not limited to: voicings, walking bass, harmonisation of melodies, substitutions, rhythms (e.g. displacement, syncopation etc.), and improvisation.

Although *The Jazz Piano Book* (Levine, 1989) covers some general theory, it mostly tended to focus more on specific pianistic devices. This was by no means a negative thing, however there are some devices that are not covered in this book and so can't be referenced. The major attraction for this staple text is that it provides a great methodology that can be adapted for this research: it is a paper that documents specific pianistic and jazz theory devices, and provides key musical examples of the device in action, often from famous recordings. Methodology aside, the book was useful in assisting with definitions of devices.

Jazz Theory and Practice (Lawn & Hellmer, 1993) provides a wider range of general jazz devices that can be applied to all instruments. It covered broader topics in finer detail such as substitutions, and scale theory. This text was incredibly useful in determining names for specific reharmonisations during the analysis, and also some definitions.

The nomenclature used in these texts have also provided a framework for how this paper will present the findings, such as the use of standard jazz notations and chord symbols to articulate harmonic devices.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Methodology

This study follows a typical jazz research methodological paradigm. As discussed in the literature review, there has been no investigation into Gwilym Simcock's playing, however similar research into other jazz artists is plentiful and has provided a framework for this paper's methodology.

Essentially, the process of this research involves investigating specific musical devices used by Simcock by analysing a musical transcription of his performance. The methods of study are:

1. A **musical transcription** of the entire track's piano part (including the piano solo) of *The Way You Look Tonight.*
    - To gain a greater sense of Simcock's playing characteristics on this tune, the entire track's piano part will be transcribed from beginning to end.
    - The full transcription will be available in Appendix A: Transcription of *The Way You Look Tonight* with pertinent excerpts presented in the analysis to facilitate concise discussion of prevalent devices.
2. **Analysis** of the transcription for rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic devices, borrowing aspects of analytical methodology from Minness (2013), Foster (2011), Laclair (2015), Stroessner (2016), and Levine (1989):
    - Foster's (2011) approach to uncovering prevalent devices from a holistic analysis of the transcription (rather than bar-by-bar analysis) provides a clear framework, as does his use of tables to aid in presenting a concise summary of the emergent techniques.
    - Minness (2013) and Laclair (2015) also both focus on analysing their musical excerpts by device, with musical examples given for each instance of the device. Given the relatively broad scope of techniques examined in this paper, analysis will focus on key examples only, with other occurrences indicated by bar numbers of the full score.
    - As mentioned, Stroessner's (2016) idea of splitting material into improvised and composed components and greatly affected the design of the analysis.

- Levine (1989) has formed part of this research's methodological backbone, using the concept of a resource of useful devices that one could read, practice, and employ whilst composing and improvising.
- The net result of these models is that prevalent musical devices have been identified and presented with key musical examples used to demonstrate each of the techniques.
    - Devices have been categorised as rhythmic (Chapter 3), harmonic (Chapter 4) or melodic (Chapter 5).
    - This is further broken down into devices used in the arrangement and those used in Simcock's improvisation.

3. An **interview** was undertaken via Skype with Gwilym Simcock to explore ideas emergent from the literature review and analysis of the transcribed material. This process was carried out in line with the Edith Cowan University Ethics Policy via an approved application through the System for Tracking Research Ethics Applications and Monitoring (STREAM) portal. No harm to the participant other than minor inconvenience of his time was anticipated nor eventuated. Simcock's responses have been worked into the discussion and the interview is presented in full in Appendix B.
4. **Draw conclusions and summarise** prevalent devices (Chapter 6). Links discovered between the use of devices in the arrangement and the solo are also noted and discussed.

Chapter 3: Rhythmic Analysis

The investigation of Gwilym Simcock's version of *The Way You Look Tonight* has uncovered a number of interesting rhythmic devices used in the construction of the arrangement and his improvisation. This section of the paper discusses these concepts and key musical examples of their application.

Devices used in the arrangement

Adaption of 4/4 standard into complex time

Many jazz standards originated as old show tunes, and they have been played repeatedly in a similar style over many years. Nowadays, it is a common motivation for modern jazz musicians to find creative ways to reinterpret this 'standard' repertoire: arranging a tune into an odd time signature can breathe new life into it and allow it to take on a different character. A very brief list of notable examples of modern jazz artists using this concept includes:

- Brad Mehldau: *Alone Together* (Dietz & Schwartz, 1932) [on *Progression: That Art of the Trio, Vol. 5* (2001)], *It Might As Well Be Spring* (Hammerstein II & Rodgers, 1945) [on *Introducing Brad Mehldau* (1995)]
- Gerald Clayton: *All The Things You Are* (Kern, 1939) [on *Bond: The Paris Sessions* (2011)]
- Robert Glasper: *Beatrice* (Rivers, 1964) [on *In My Element* (2007)]
- Joshua Redman: *Summertime* (Gershwin, 1934) [on *Timeless Tales (For Changing Times)* (1998)]
- Troy Roberts: *Stella By Starlight* (Young, 1944) [on *Secret Rhymes* (2015)]

The melody of the tune is originally written in 4/4. As shown in Figure 2, Simcock's interpretation of the tune's A section transfigures the melody into 7/4 by pairing two 4/4 bars from the original meter into a bar of 4/4 and a bar of 3/4 (Figure 1). This condenses into 7/4 in what is conventionally known as a 4-3 clave, where clave refers to a key rhythm the defines the rhythmic framework of a groove (Hagedorn, 2013).

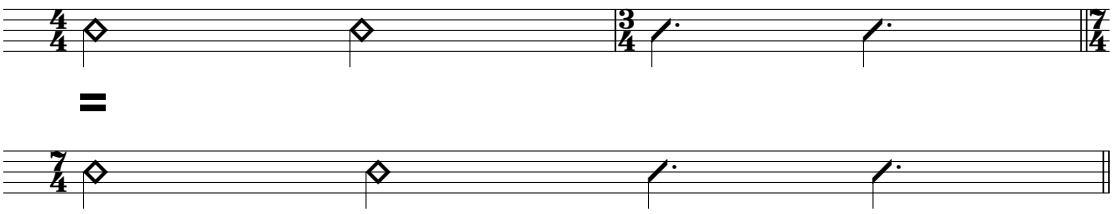


Figure 1: A bar of 4/4 and 3/4 combined to create a 7/4 clave

This clave is featured most prominently in the bassist's accompaniment during the solo sections.

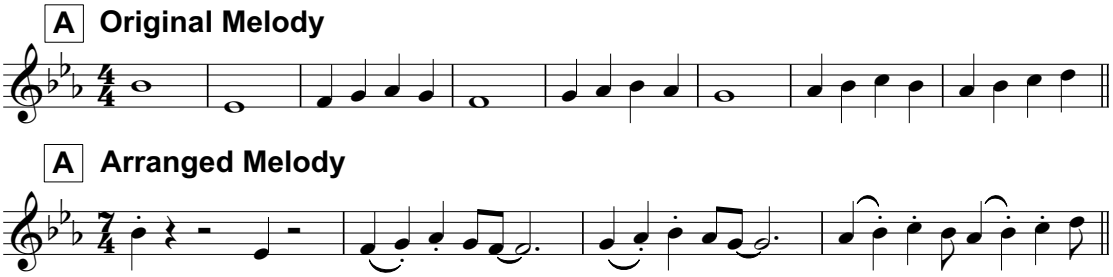


Figure 2: Sample of original melody vs. arranged melody (A section)

The B section of the melody is adapted into a new time signature using the same principle. Two 4/4 bars are condensed into a bar of 3/4 and a bar of 2/4, as shown in Figure 3.

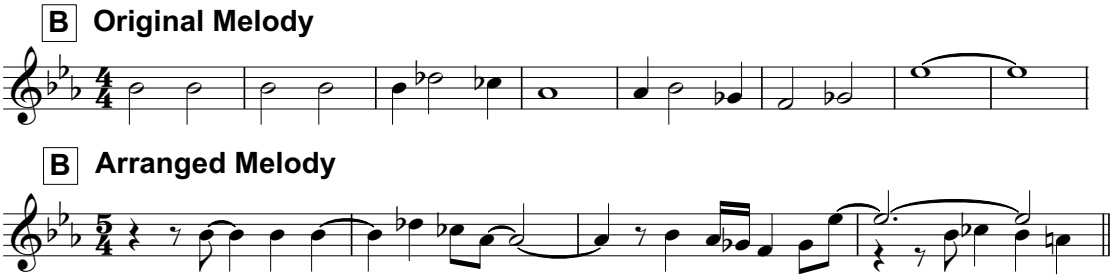


Figure 3: The original melody vs. the arranged melody (B section)

Superimposition of 5/4 over 7/4

Another central pillar of this arrangement is an aural illusion achieved through rhythmic superimposition. This concept involves layering notes of a new rate over an original rate without changing the pulse, often explained as 'one rhythm over or against another' (Lippi, 2008). In this arrangement, superimposition is used to suggest a swung 5/4 time signature running concurrently with the underlying straight 7/4 pulse by juxtaposing five equally spaced notes over the bar, as shown in Figure 4.

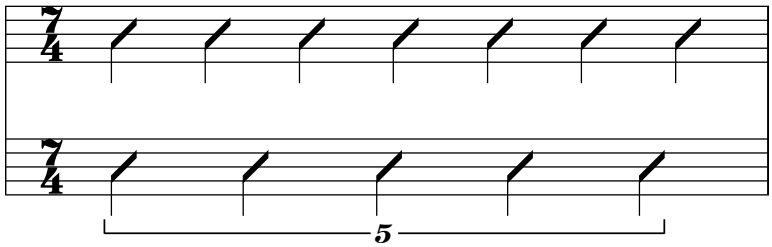


Figure 4: 7/4 vs. 5/4 superimposition

Figure 5 displays a sample of how this superimposed 5/4 rhythm is adapted into the arrangement's feature bassline, used in the introduction, melody, interlude, and coda.

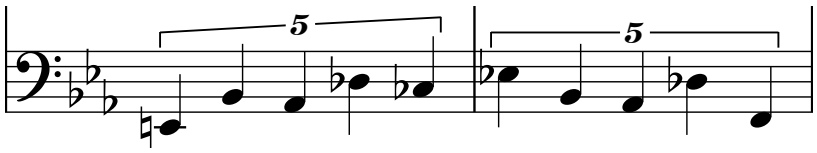


Figure 5: Sample bassline

The A section melody is interpreted in 7/4 over the top of the superimposed 5/4 bassline as shown in Figure 6. This creates a rhythmic disorientation for the listener by blurring the lines of which meter the arrangement is in. This superimposition also facilitates the metric modulation into the B section, which will be discussed later.

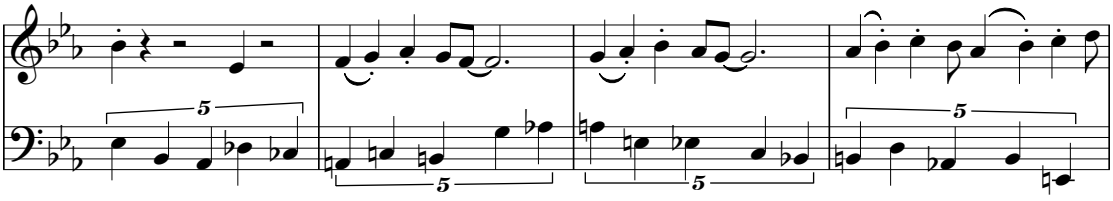


Figure 6: First four bars of A section melody (bars 17 - 20)

During the interlude between the A sections, Simcock implies swing in the superimposed 5/4 time, as shown in Figure 7, further abstracting away from the arrangement's underlying meter.

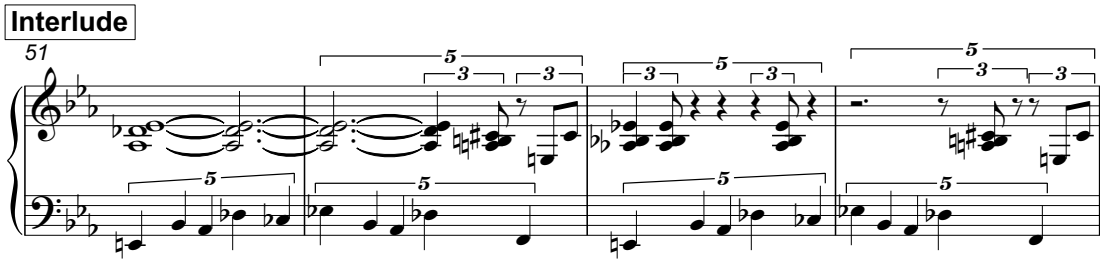


Figure 7: Sample implied swing in the superimposed 5/4 time during the interlude (bars 51-54)

Perceiving and physically executing two meters concurrently becomes difficult at fast tempi like the one featured in this arrangement. For a 5/4 meter to be superimposed accurately, one would need to subdivide the bar of 7/4 into 16th note quintuplets, and arrange them into groups of seven to create the five pulses, as shown in Figure 8.

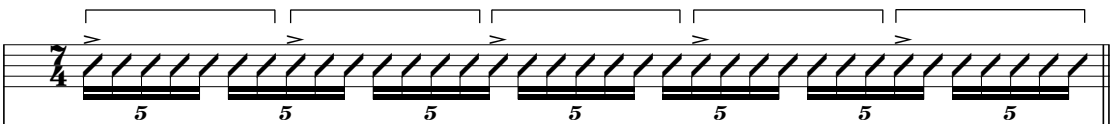


Figure 8: 16th note quintuplets grouped in sevens

As this particular arrangement sits around 260 beats per minute, accurately subdividing quintuplets into groups of seven is impractical. The illusion could instead be achieved in several conceptually simpler ways.

One approach might be to approximate the pulses via more user-friendly and common subdivisions. To do this, one could exploit the 4-3 clave of the bar by dividing the first four beats into three (minim triplet), and the last three beats into two (dotted crotchets), as shown in Figure 9.

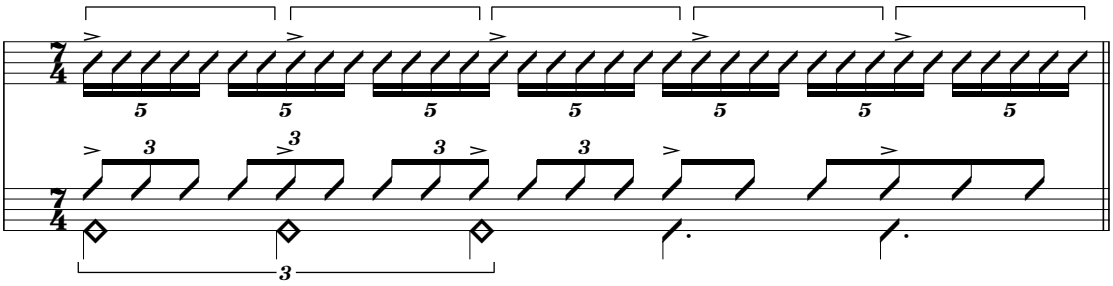


Figure 9: Quintuplets grouped in sevens broken down into a simpler approximation

The inaccuracy of these accents is negligible at fast tempi, and the perceived effect is a superimposed 5/4 meter (the treatment of the accents through the player's articulation further 'sells' the illusion of 5 equidistant beats to the listener).

Simcock himself corroborated this way of approaching the superimposition in the interview, explaining that "you can sort of get an approximation of [the 5 over 7 superimposition] by doing four over three and then three over two," which is "not a million miles away from seven over five… obviously evened out a bit" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Simcock also mentioned that the main inspiration for his own use of these rhythmic concepts came from his bassist, Phil Donkin. He explained that Donkin was "brilliant at 'time' things," and encouraged him to "get [Simcock's] stuff together". Simcock is a big believer in "trying to write stuff to improve" your skills as a musician, and felt "it's nice if you can write music that aids your own learning process" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

It was initially hypothesised that another way to feel this superimposition would be to feel the bar in 'one' and access the various meters as subdivisions of the 'bar pulse.' Wynton Marsalis's arrangement of *Autumn Leaves* (Kosma, 1945) [on *Marsalis Standard Time, Vol. 1* (1987)] employs this concept by using the downbeat as a consistent reference point and having the rhythm section sequentially access various subdivisions of the bar to imply different meters, giving the illusion that the tune is speeding up (Figure 10).

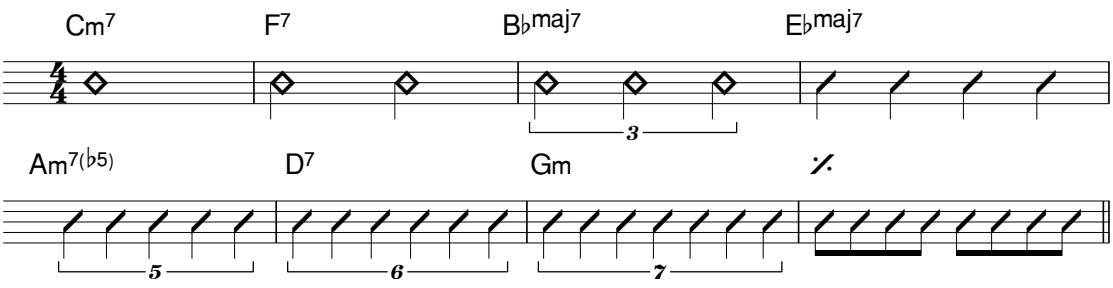


Figure 10: The generalised concept of Marsalis's arrangement of *Autumn Leaves* (Kosma, 1945)

Whilst this approach is theoretically a reasonable way to conceptualise imposed meters, Simcock expressed concern in the interview that it might be prone to rhythmic inaccuracy, stating "there's so much wiggle room within the metronome hits [playing every downbeat] that I'm not sure that that would be as helpful as working on the relationship between the two different times". He also added that he spent a long time practicing to be rhythmically as accurate as possible, and that "you can start with an approximation of the four and the three, and the three and the two, and then that eventually gets to the point where hopefully you are doing it sort of diligently" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Metric modulation between 7/4 and 5/4

A metric modulation is a change to a new tempo via some mathematical relationship to the original (Lippi, 2008). Simcock's arrangement notably uses this concept to transition from 7/4 to 5/4 in the B section of the melody, basing the modulation off the established 5-over-7 polyrhythm. Essentially, the superimposed 5/4 rhythm becomes the new crotchet pulse, as shown generically in Figure 11.

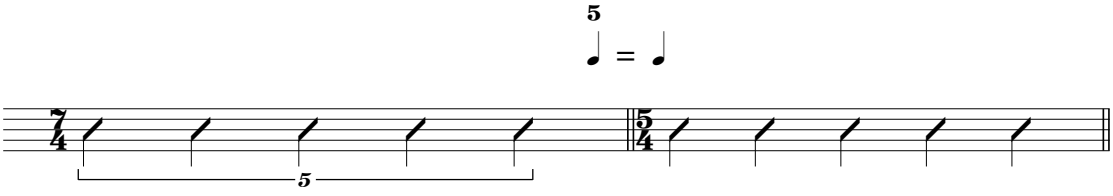


Figure 11: Metric modulation from 7/4 to 5/4 using superimposed rhythm as the pivot

Figure 12 shows Simcock's actual realisation of this transition from the interlude into the B section.

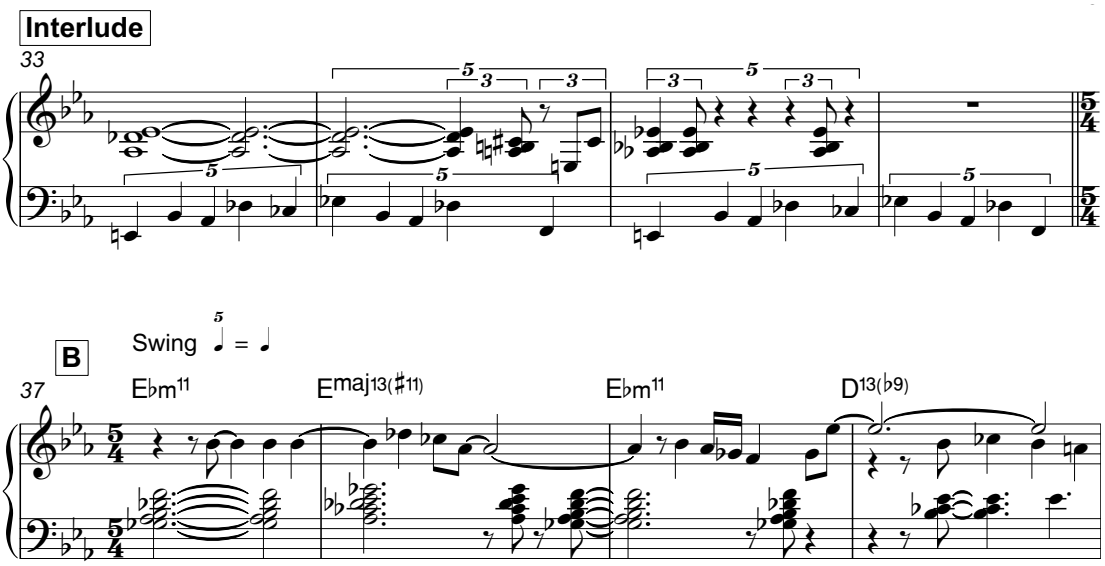


Figure 12: Metric modulation from the Interlude to the B section

The reverse of principle is used to modulate from the B section back to the final A section (the crotchet pulse of the B section becomes the superimposed 5/4 again). Simcock was able to illuminate his thought process behind this, explaining that

> I'd work through the A sections and think about what to do in the bridge. Do you just carry on doing more of the same or try to do something a little bit different? Then it occurred to me that you could just use the five as the new tempo. (Personal communication, October 8, 2016)

Across-the-barline phrasing and other shorter meters

Across-the-barline phrasing is a simple concept that can significantly increase the aural complexity to the listener. In the B section, the melody frequently crosses the barline, blurring the boundaries of the meter and briefly implying other time signatures. For example, the melody in bars 37 and 38 (Figure 13) could theoretically be grouped into bars of 4/4 as indicated by Simcock's phrasing.

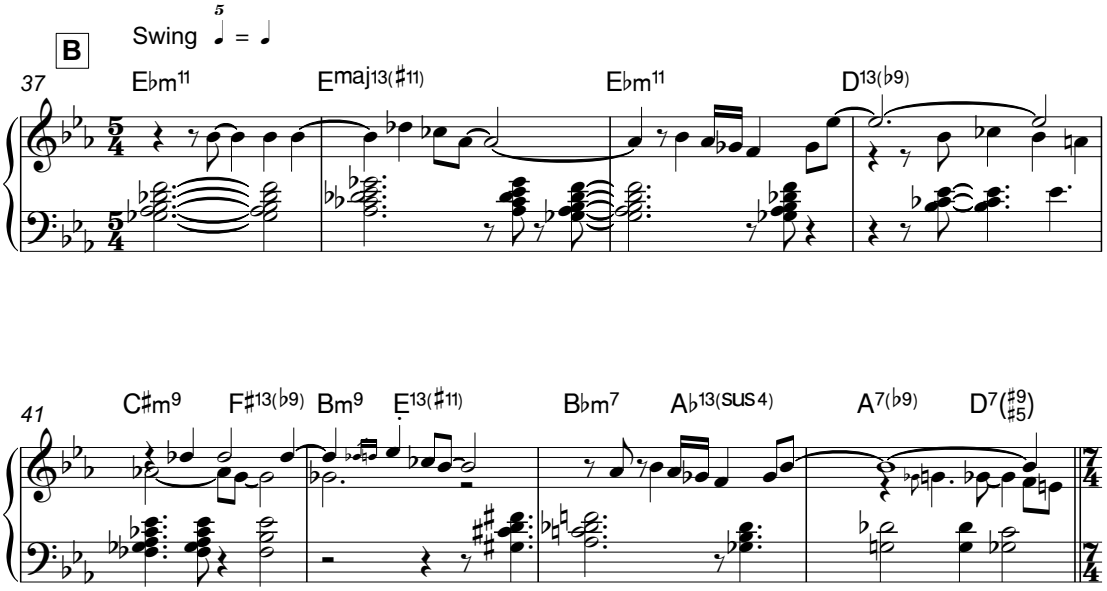


Figure 13: B section of the melody makes use of across-the-barline phrasing

In the last line of the A section, Simcock uses a repeating 3/8 (dotted crotchet) rhythm to create a line that strongly targets an anticipation of bar 22. This is a feature that he considers to be a "kick in the tune," giving it a real sense of momentum at that specific point, as shown in Figure 14, (personal communication, October 8, 2016). Simcock further explained, "If you work backwards from that and you started on the second quaver of the bar then you could do the dotted crotchets there." He also pointed out that anticipated chord is then held throughout the next bar, which he likes "having it let ring on those… so when the drums come back in on the next bar it feels like it starts again" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

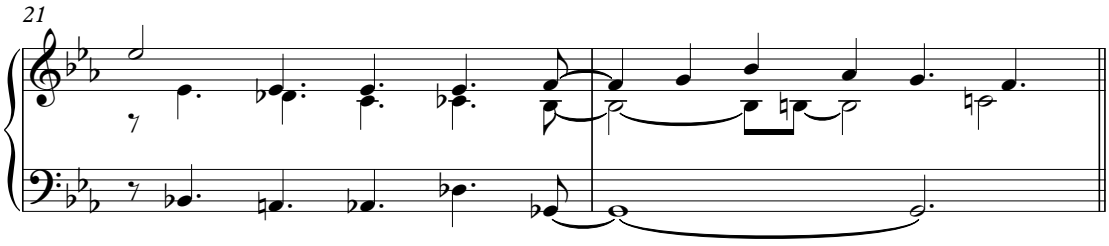


Figure 14: Last line of the A section

As the top E flat at the start of bar 21 is the climax of the melody, according to Simcock, the change in rhythm by using dotted crotchets facilitates momentum right through to the anticipated chord. Simcock considers this held chord to be the point in which "the left hand groove breaks where there's most intensity to what's happening," allowing it to "sort of [simmer] back down to… having the vamp in between the A sections" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Improvisation

Syncopation and over-the-barline phrasing

One of Simcock's most prevalent rhythmic tendencies whilst improvising is the use of syncopation (stressing of the 'off' beats over the 'on' beats) (Lawn & Hellmer, 1993) and phrasing over the barline using ties, giving his lines forward momentum and implying a higher degree of complexity.

The first instance of this technique begins in the second bar of his solo (bars 61-63), as shown in Figure 15. The structure of the phrase obscures the downbeat of each bar, creating interest for the listener via rhythmic tension and release, especially given the odd meter.

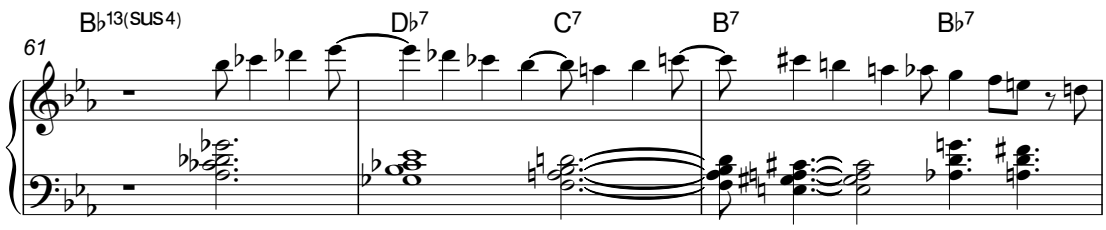


Figure 15: Bars 61-63 demonstrating syncopation and over-the-barline phrasing

Another example of over-the-barline phrasing occurs throughout bars 222-225 (Figure 16). Simcock plays an arpeggiated triad beginning on beat 5 of bar 222, and then moves the cell chromatically upwards. The bottom and top note of the cell, generally, are held by one extra quaver, delaying and syncopating the rhythm. Again, the downbeats are disguised and forward momentum is created.

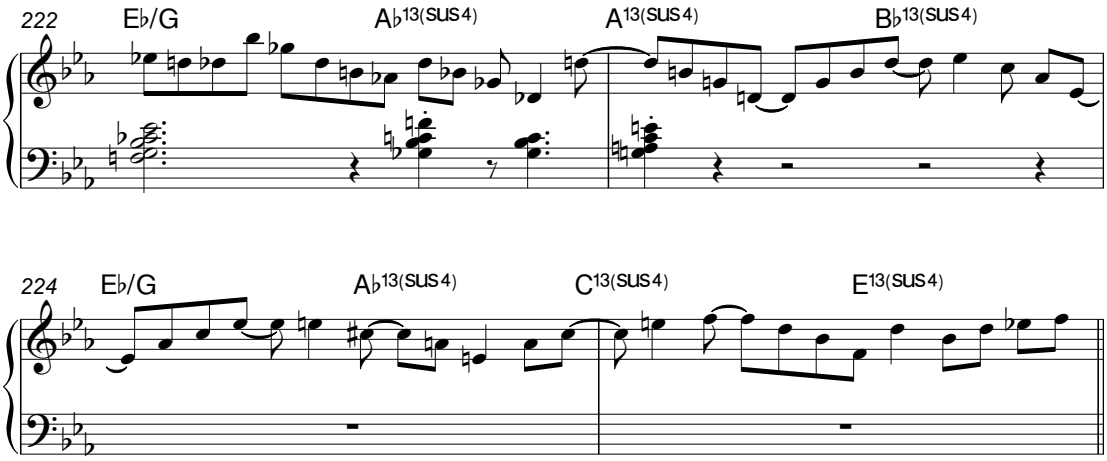


Figure 16: Bars 222-225 demonstrating across the barline phrasing

Another significant example of syncopation occurs in bars 238-241, where the majority of the phrase is placed on offbeats, as shown in Figure 17. Other examples of syncopation and over-the-barline phrasing can be found in bars 91-93, 214-215, 228-230, 242-243, 251-253, and 255-256 (Appendix A).

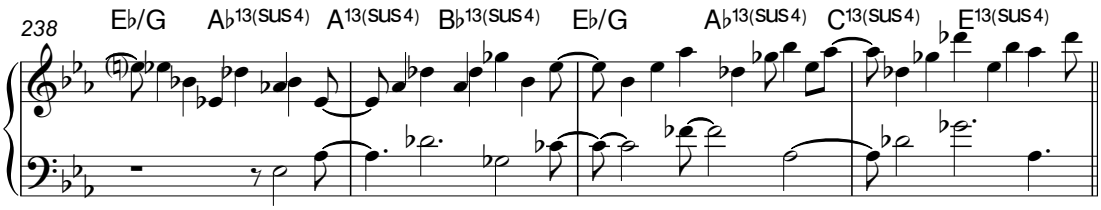


Figure 17: Bars 238-241 demonstrating syncopation

Groupings

Playing notes repeatedly in specific odd groupings can temporarily imply for the listener the feeling of another time signature or tempo. These rhythms often cross the barline, and resolve after a period of time.

Simcock uses a 5/8 grouping (quavers grouped in fives), beginning on beat 5 of bar 246, and continuing through to beat 3 of bar 248 (Figure 18).

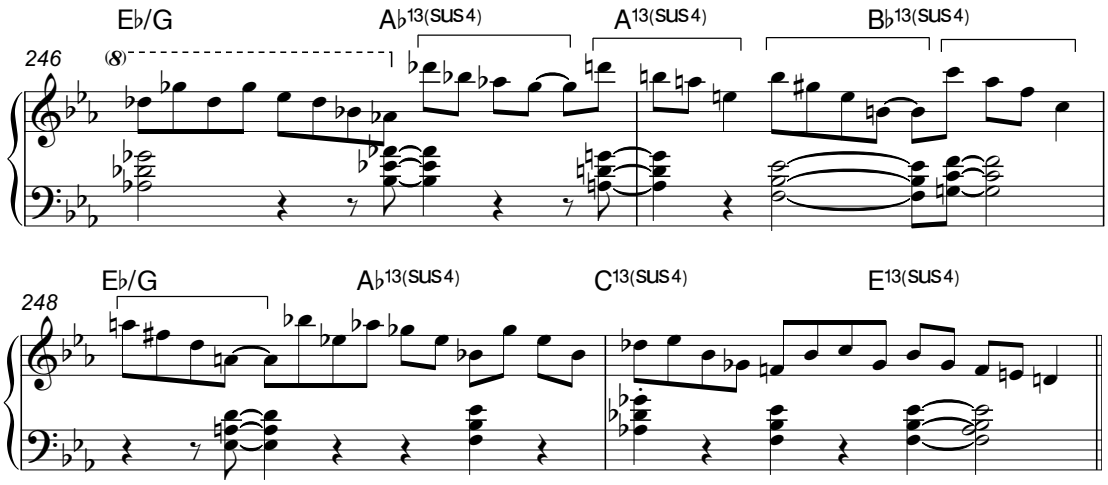


Figure 18: Bars 246-248 demonstrating a 5/8 grouping

Another example of Simcock improvising with odd groupings is in bars 236-237 (Figure 19). In this example, the grouping is a rhythm in 3/4.

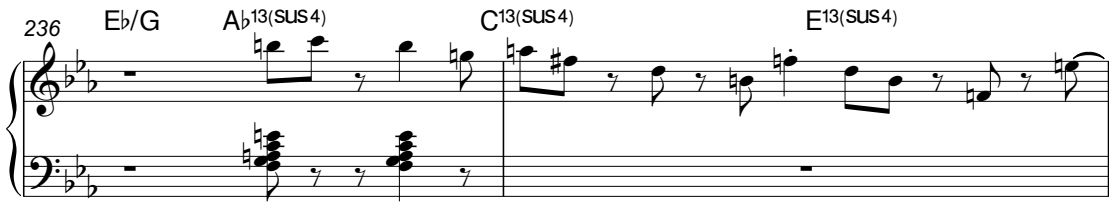


Figure 19: Bars 236-237 demonstrating a 3/4 grouping

Simcock makes extensive use of groupings as an improvisational technique, with other examples occurring in bars 65-66, 69, 70-71, 84-85, 92-93, 98-99, 139-146, 205, and 251-253 (Appendix A).

Interlude improvisations

A significant feature of the arrangement is the use of interlude vamps as improvisational frameworks. Simcock lightly improvises in these sections during the first and third head, but during the second head (bridging the piano solo and bass solo) significantly deviates away from the established part using a combination of devices.

The first instance of this departure begins at bar 111 (Figure 20). Here, Simcock implies heavy swing within the superimposed 5/4 meter. Within this superimposed meter, he does not intentionally outline the expected 3-2 clave, instead choosing to blur the downbeats further by seemingly grouping crotchets in threes. Simcock's expresses it's "quite fun with the five" as it "loses that middle post" when compared to a 4-3 clave in seven (personal communication, October 8, 2016), and his avoidance of the 3-2 clave here (which, as discussed, feels close to the 4-3 clave) further abstracts from this feeling in line with that sentiment.

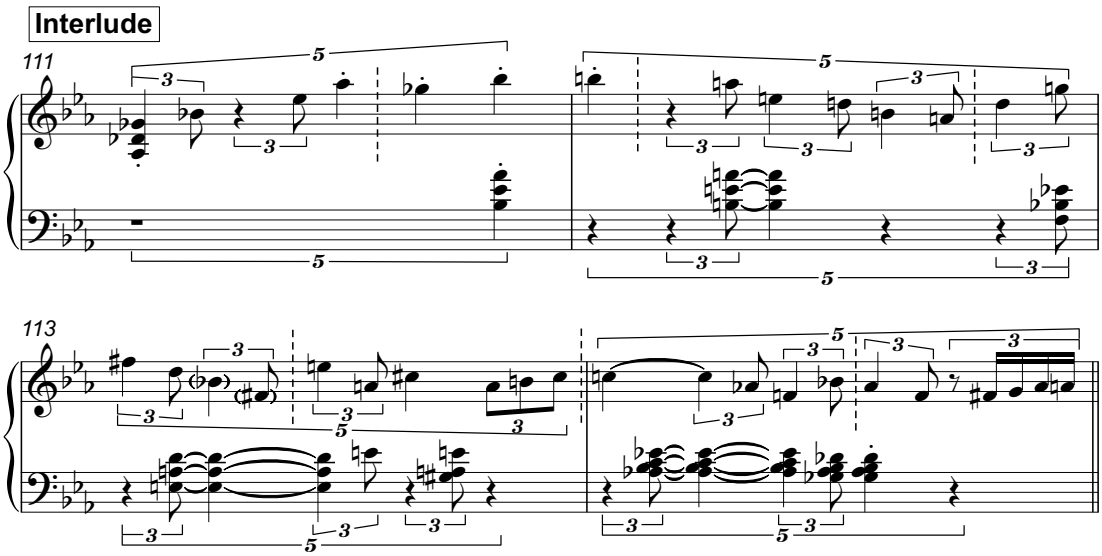


Figure 20: Bars 111-114 using groupings of three in the superimposed 5/4 meter

The next instance of interlude improvisation bridges the second A and B sections. Figure 21 shows Simcock again implying swing in the superimposed 5/4 meter. These four bars are significantly more complex, as Simcock explores crotchet triplets, displacement, syncopation, and across-the-barline phrasing, with the resultant effect being a 'stretching of time' (using subdivisions to create the illusion of changing tempo). The feeling of the downbeat is exceptionally concealed, as Simcock makes no reference to the clave or phrasing towards the downbeat.

The left hand 'comping further adds to the rhythmic disjuncture by playing mostly offbeats and filling the gaps between right hand phrases. Again, the left hand makes no references to the clave or signposts any downbeats, additionally obscuring the meter. Simcock's improvised melody not only implies swing in the superimposed 5/4 meter, but also creates an added layer of complexity through the extreme juxtaposition of rhythmic devices familiar to his 5/4 language that interact in unexpected ways with the underlying meter.

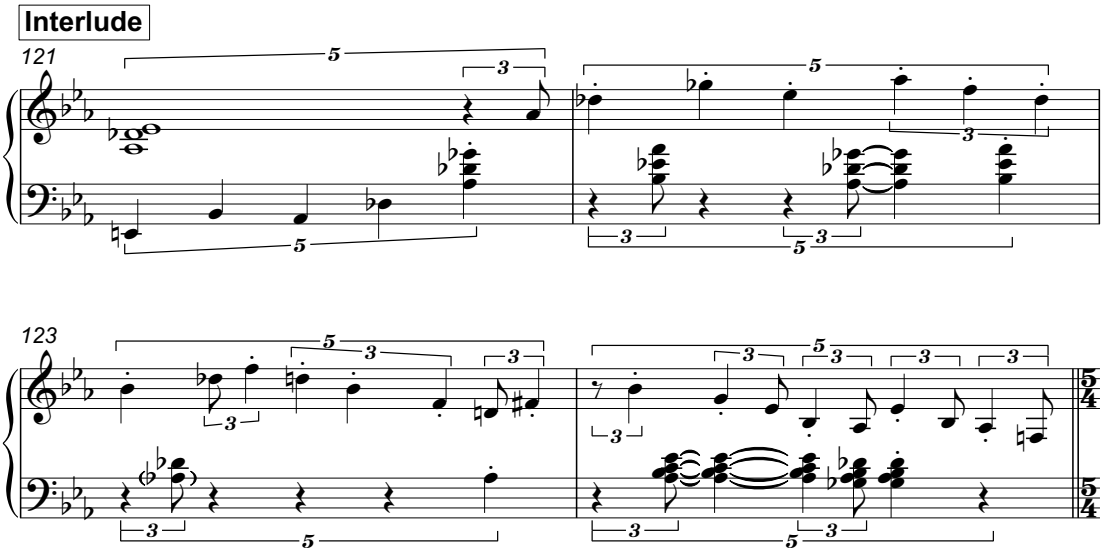


Figure 21: Bars 121-124 further implies swing in the superimposed 5/4 meter

The last of the interlude improvisations before the bass solo is eight bars long, and for the purpose of analysis it has been split in half. Figure 22 displays the first four measures at bars 139-142. Simcock again imposes 5/4 swing, and in bars 141 and 142 further increases the rhythmic interest by grouping the phrases in a 2-2-1 clave rather than the expected 3-2 clave.

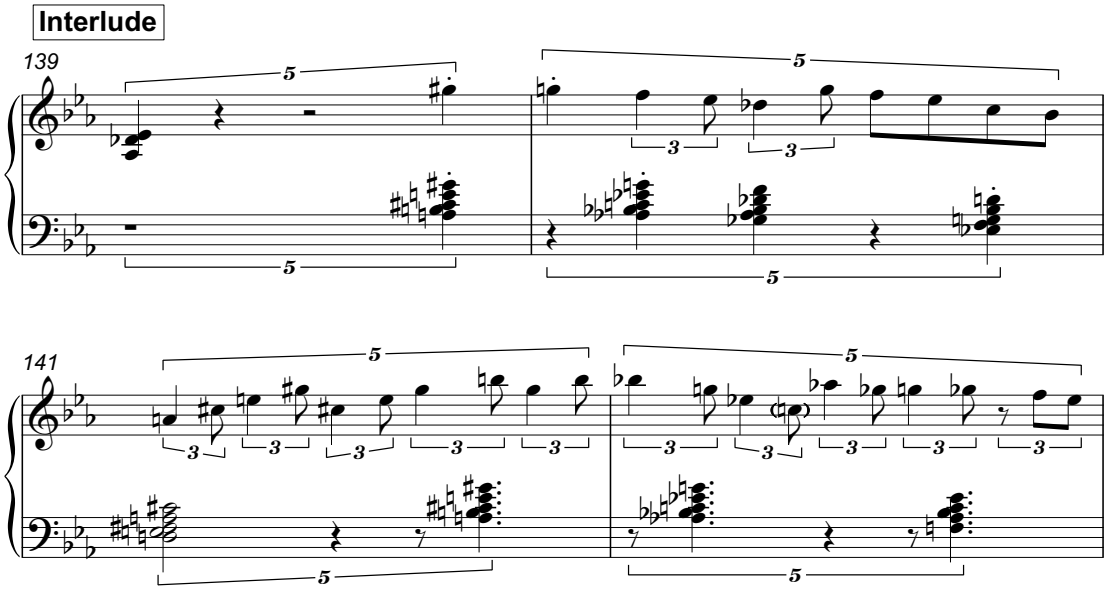


Figure 22: Bars 139-142 further implying swing, and employing the use of groupings

In the next four bars, Simcock begins stretching the time using a combination of changing tuplet figures. Initially, the rate of the 4-over-3 superimposition leaves the impression that the tempo has temporarily increased. The phrase is also grouped in fours, beginning again on beat five of the superimposed 5/4 meter. From there, the motif is displaced, beginning again on the second partial of the crotchet triplet that start on beat three of the superimposed 5/4 meter, and then on one-and of bar 145.

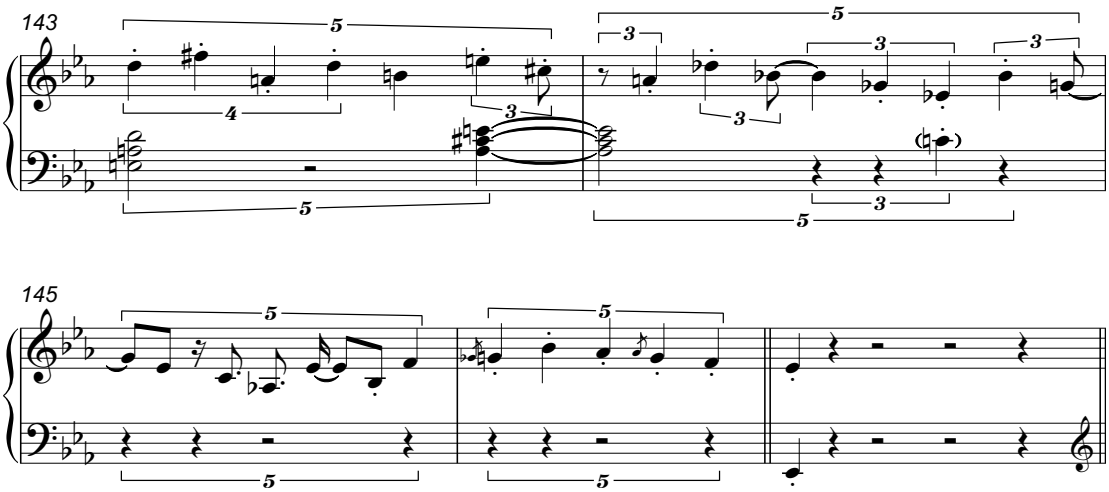


Figure 23: Bars 143-145 employ time stretching, groupings, displacement, and syncopation

Perceived stretching of time

Simcock occasionally cycles through different tuplet divisions to give the perceived effect of time slowing down and speeding up, as briefly introduced above. When used within a consecutive quaver line, such as bars 88-89 (Figure 24), the effect can be disorienting to the listener. The technique essentially follows the clave in concept, but results in a much freer aural feeling of time, with the strength of the gradually widening tuplet rates implying a tempo change. A repeated melodic shape used through these subdivisions further enhances this effect.

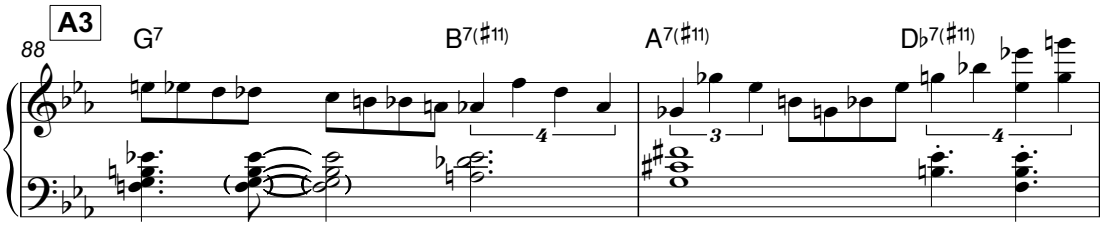


Figure 24: Bars 88-89 displaying an example of time stretching using tuplets

Simcock also begins his solo on the track with this technique (Figure 25). The complexity and effect of this line is heightened as it comes directly out of the superimposed 5/4 meter of the interlude and leads into the original 7/4 tempo. Time feels suspended, due to the rhythm section dropping out for this bar for Simcock's solo break. Whilst the rhythm section return on the downbeat of the A section, Simcock avoids a clichéd beat one resolution by continuing the idea to maximise its effect.

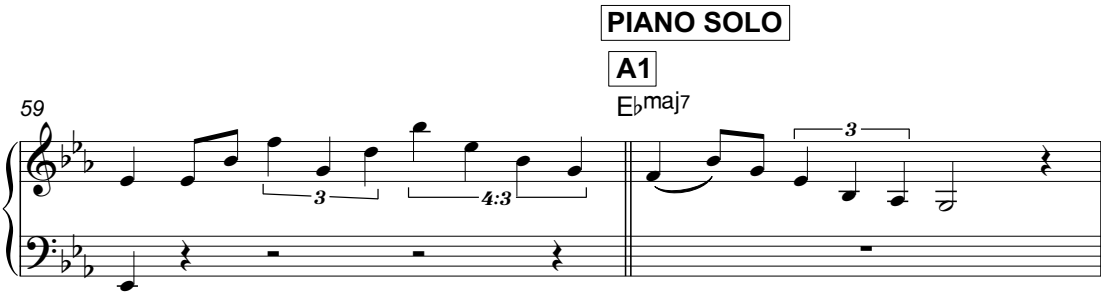


Figure 25: The start of Simcock's solo (bars 59-60) makes use of time stretching

Figure 26 shows another example of this device. The phrase grouped in minims beginning at bar 70 seems to speed up at end of bar 71 due to the 4-over-3 tuplet, and then again when the line develops into quavers.

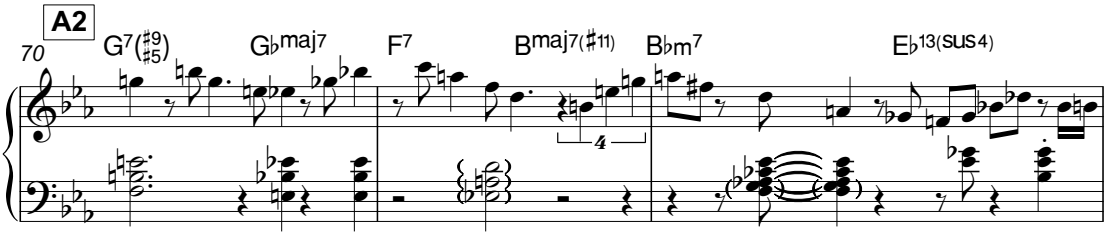


Figure 26: Bars 70-72 displaying an example of time stretching

Long quaver and quaver triplet lines

Longer phrases of consecutive quaver lines are used by Simcock to contrast the shorter rhythmic phrases, increasing tension and helping to avoid over-reliance on phrasing within the established 4-3 clave, which is a common tendency when improvising in odd meters such as this one. Simcock confirmed that he actively attempts to "blur the barlines" and "[play] phrases, which are not just [the 4-3 clave in seven]," elaborating further that:

> Trying to make longer phrase lengths, that's something always I've tried to… work hard to aspire to, because it's a classic thing for all of us with jazz; you just play a short phrase and then a different short phrase, and then you move onto something else. (Personal communication, October 8, 2016)

He goes on to infer that he is "trying to do something which is a bit more overarching, and has a longer forward form to it" with his rhythmic approach in pursuit of a freer improvisational aesthetic in this odd meter.

Figure 27 displays a four-bar phrase consisting of consecutive quaver lines that avoids the 4-3 clave. The fluidity of the line evokes a Classical aesthetic (particularly through the left hand counterpoint), building tension over the four bars before releasing into a fully harmonised resolution chord at the start of the B section.

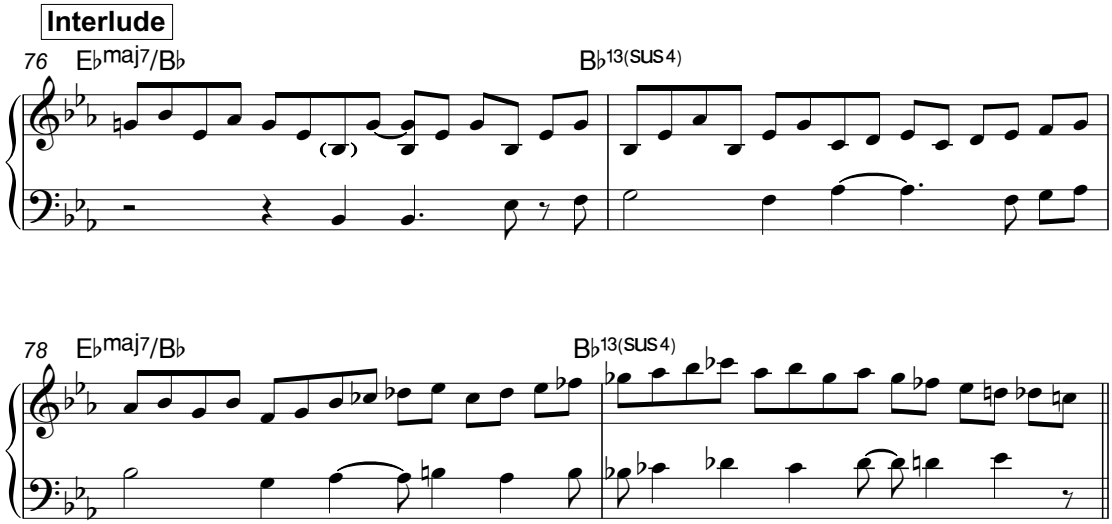
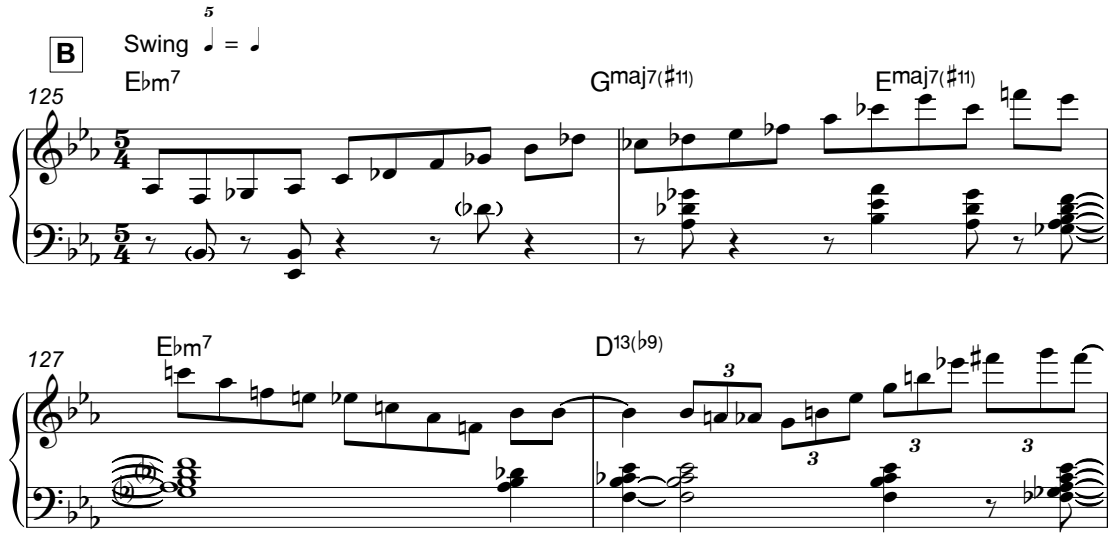


Figure 27: Bars 76-79 consisting of longer consecutive quaver lines

Figure 28 takes the concept of longer consecutive quaver phrases a step further. The phrase begins with a stream of quavers, before switching to quaver triplets in bar 128, which continue for almost three bars before returning to quavers again. Quaver triplets can be considered as an extra gear, adding further intensity to the overarching phrase.



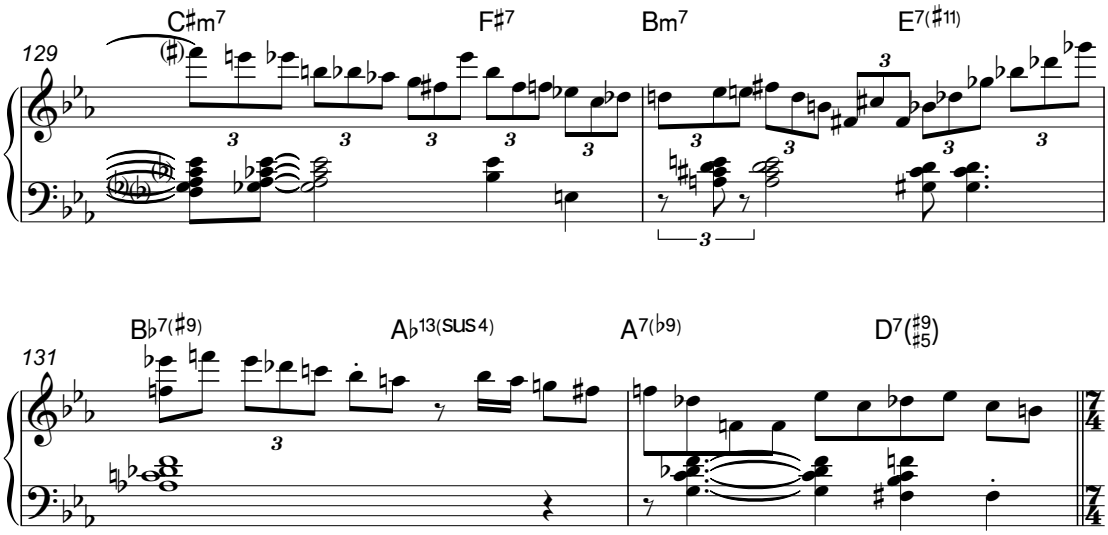


Figure 28: Bars 125-132 demonstrating consecutive quaver lines, evolving into consecutive quaver triplets

Other examples of Simcock using extended phrases of consecutive quaver lines can be found in bars 81-84, 217-220, 232-234, and 244-246 (Appendix A).

Chapter 4: Harmonic Analysis

Devices used in the arrangement

The introduction/interludes/coda vamp tonal centre

A central pillar of the arrangement is the vamp that makes up the introduction, interludes, and coda. This vamp is an adaption of the last four measures of each A section of the original tune, which features an instrumental interlude melody. Simcock discusses the use of this material (unusually, he refers to this feature of the tune as the 'tag,' where conventionally the last two bars of the form usually carry that title), saying that the tag is:

> Maybe a little bit unusual for a standard, having [the tag] there. So I guess that turning that tag [of the composition] into the… tag of the [arrangement]… Basically… using the concept of it having a tag but then changing it to the one that I wanted. (Personal communication, October 8, 2016)

Essentially, the usual I-vi-ii-V interlude that usually occurs at the conclusion of the A section melody has been adapted into a pedal-based idea that is used as a vamp and transition section at various points of the arrangement, creating a very different and more modal aesthetic. The tonal centre is predominantly E Lydian (Figure 29), where E is the flat two of Eb major, resulting a in a reharmonisation of the formerly tonic melody note as the major 7th of the new chord. The last half of the two bar phrase adds a brief moment of tension via a similar sideslipping idea, with the right hand outlining A major and the left hand playing an F (implying F Lydian Augmented), creating a voicing that wants to resolve downwards to the established E Lydian.

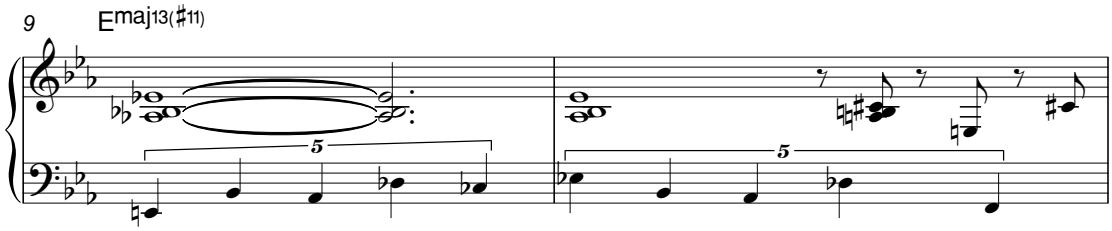


Figure 29: Sample figure of the introduction/interludes/coda vamp

The vamp is of particular interest because it simultaneously acts as a point of rest between the A and B sections and a point of slight tension due to the nature of the flat two tonality: it in fact resolves strongly via sideslipping to both the Eb major and Eb minor tonalities of the A and B sections, respectively.

Simcock explores another approach during the coda vamp by moving around a major 7 (often with a ninth) chord, following the bassline in parallel to create a series of 13sus4 voicings over each note. The colour of this tonality provides harmonic interest to the listener, particularly in the context of E Lydian.

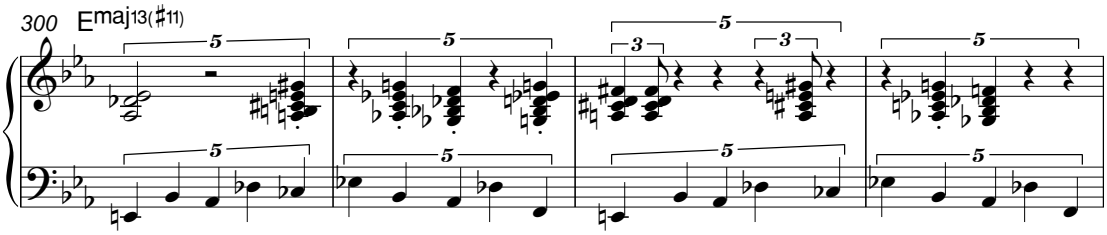


Figure 30: Bars 300-303 demonstrate an example of how Simcock creates harmonic interest by moving a chord shape around

Reharmonisation of the A sections

Simcock's arrangement has undergone extensive reharmonisation. The core of this aesthetic is based on the interaction between the new bassline and the melody, which manifests in various ways in different sections of the tune. In each of the figures, the standard chord changes have been placed on the top stave for comparison. The reharmonised chord changes have been inferred through analysis of the bassline in relation to the melody, and some extensions and alterations have been applied based on what Simcock played during the Skype interview in explaining the new chord progression. Importantly though, Simcock mentioned during this demonstration that "some of them don't really translate into whole chords. Some of them were only supposed to be passing linear things," further corroborating his horizontal approach to reimagining this section (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

The reharmonisation that occurs in these sections is dictated by the contrapuntal interaction of the bassline and melody. Counterpoint is the combination of different melodic lines that are related harmonically ('vertically') while still holding

some degree of 'horizontal' independence (Jackson, 2016). As Simcock described in the interview, he likes "harmony being disguised in a horizontal way" (personal communication, October 8, 2016). Inspiration for this style of arranging may have be emergent from his classical upbringing.

The clearest example this device occurs is in the first A section of the melody (Figure 31), where there is no chordal accompaniment. Here, Simcock uses two independent lines; one playing the melody, and the other the bassline.

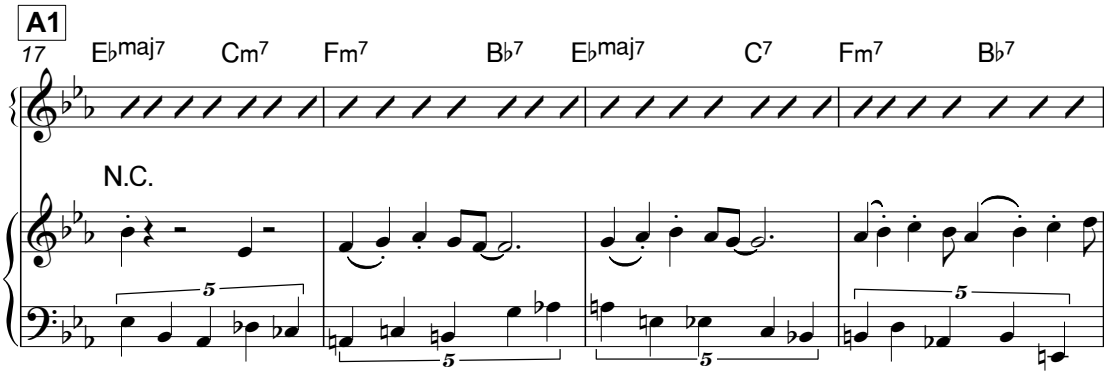


Figure 31: Simcock's reharmonisation of the first A section (first four bars)

The melody and bassline interacting create a counterpoint line that results in interesting tensions and a very different aesthetic to the 'standard' progression of the original. Some harmony is implied by this counterpoint, although is not orchestrated this way and were only intended as passing chords. Some of these chords have a clear relationship to the original changes (such as an implied E7alt in bar 20), but in general it the strength of the individual lines and their interaction that is the feature rather than an obvious sequence of functional chords.

The last two bars of the A section (Figure 32) feature counterpoint in three parts. In this example, the melody is the first (top) voice, a moving counter line in the second (middle) voice, and thirdly the bassline. In the interview, Simcock specifically referenced this bar, saying that he likes those "little passing notes… [because] you get tension and then release" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Looking at the chords inferred by this three-part harmony, Simcock has adapted a iii-VI-ii-V progression to harmonise the Eb melody note, leading cyclically towards the

main point of interest of the phrase: the Gbmaj7 that has replaced the expected Abmaj7 resolution. Given the inherent strength of cyclic patterns, this extensive change does not sound out of place but instead adds colour and harmonic momentum. The Gbmaj7 is also considered a point of rest, allowing the interlude to have more of an impact. Simcock feels that:

> I like the idea of having a break in the bar… So it feels like you've arrived… at a point when you get to that last note of the tune. As opposed to that just being the end of the phrase. (Personal communication, October 8, 2016)

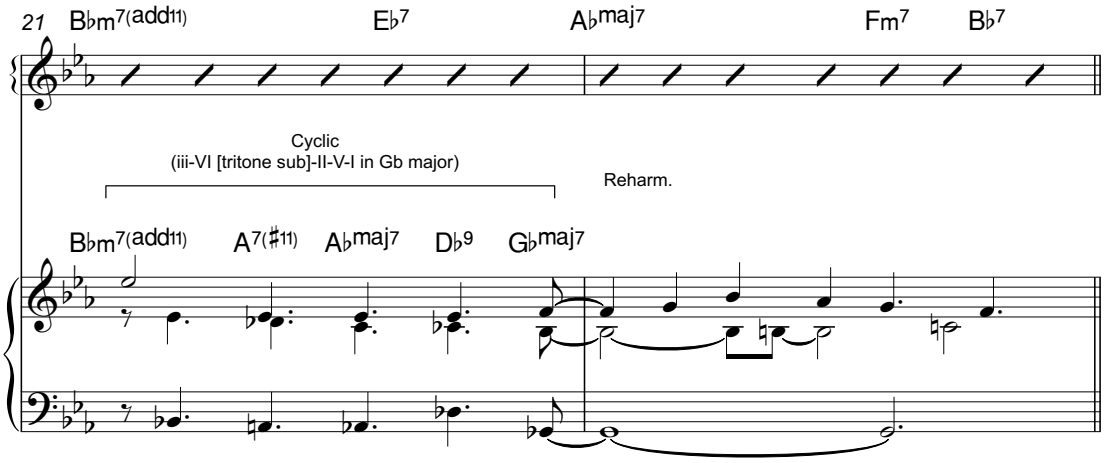


Figure 32: Simcock's reharmonisation of the first A section (last two bars)

The first four bars of second A section are more significantly altered than the first (Figure 33). The melody and bassline are orchestrated with chords, adding an extra layer of complexity by often positioning the melody notes as more colourful extensions.

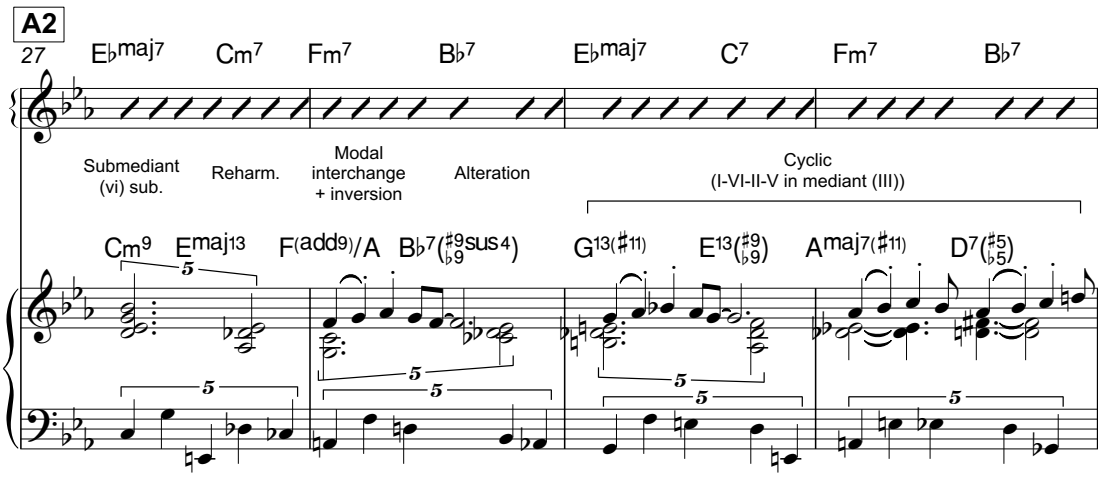


Figure 33: Simcock's reharmonisation of the second A section (first four bars)

The last two bars of this section mirror those of the first A section, albeit with slight alterations (Figure 34). The target chord is still Gbmaj7, although the three chords that precede it suggest a VI-II-V turnaround in D major, the tritone of Abmaj7 (the original chord).

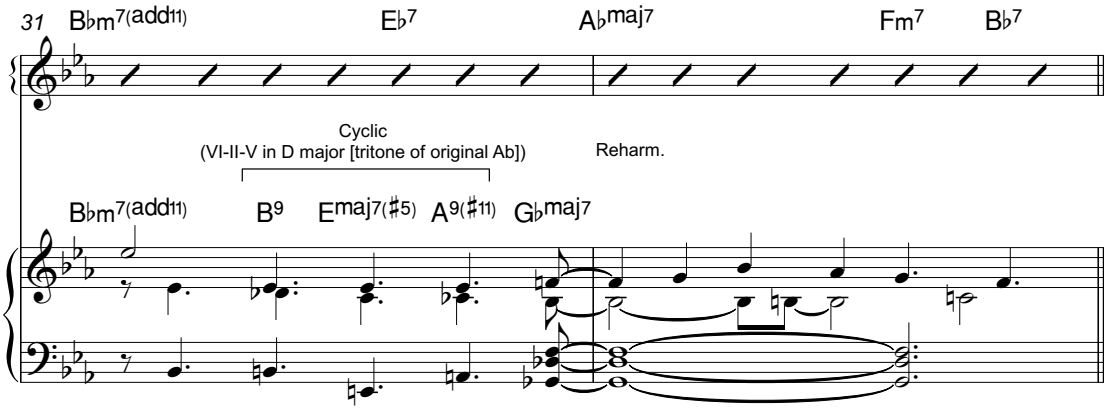


Figure 34: Simcock's reharmonisation of the second A section (last two bars)

The third A section bears close resemblance to the previous A section in terms of texture and harmonic choices, granting the listener with familiarity in a harmonically dense arrangement. The last two bars are identical to the first A section; the harmonic choices for the first four bars are outlined in Figure 35, below.

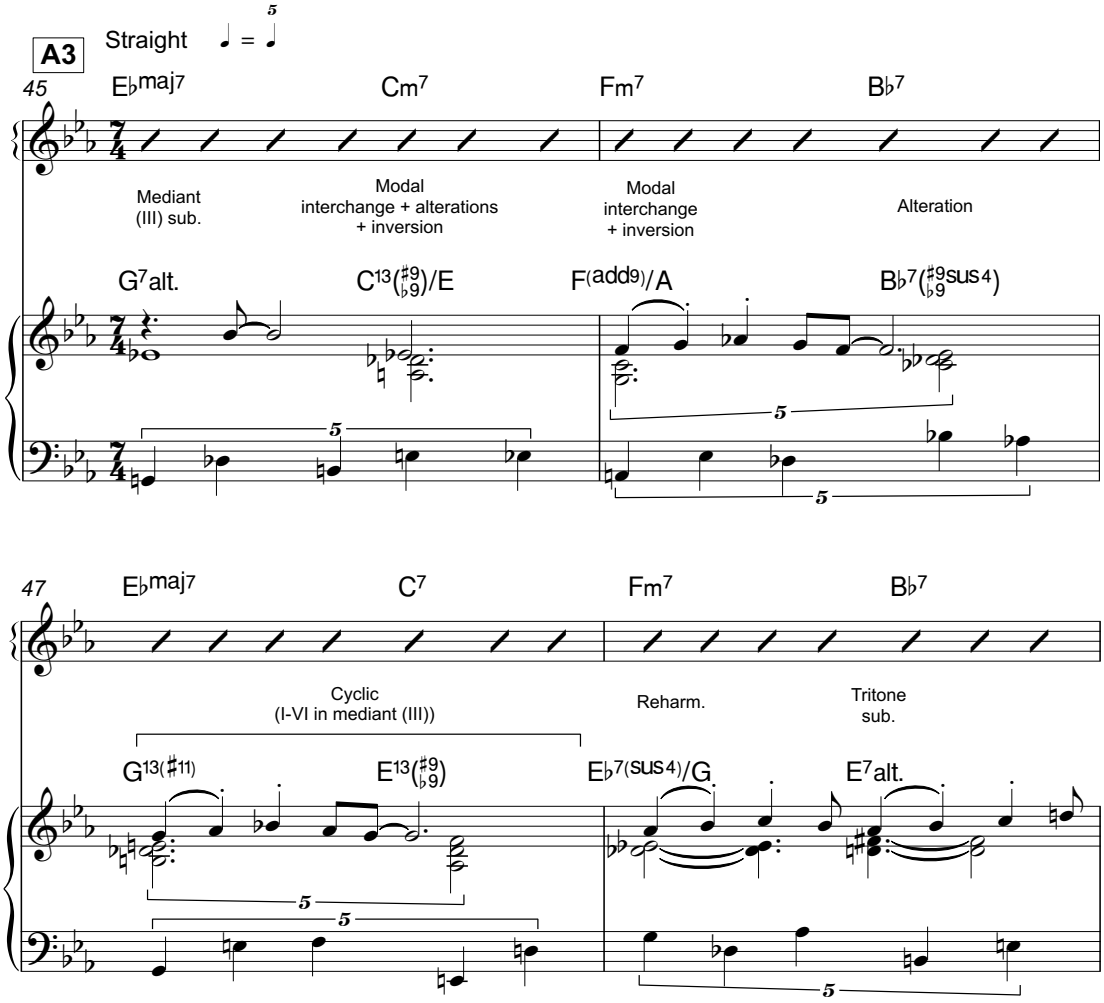


Figure 35: Simcock's reharmonisation of the third A section (first four bars)

Reharmonisation of the B section

Traditionally, the tonality of the bridge modulates to Gb major. Simcock chooses instead to diatonically substitute Gb major for its relative Eb minor, which coincidentally is the tonic minor of the tune.

The chords in the first four bars of the B section have been simplified, resulting in a greater sense of space that contrasts the density of the A section (Figure 36).

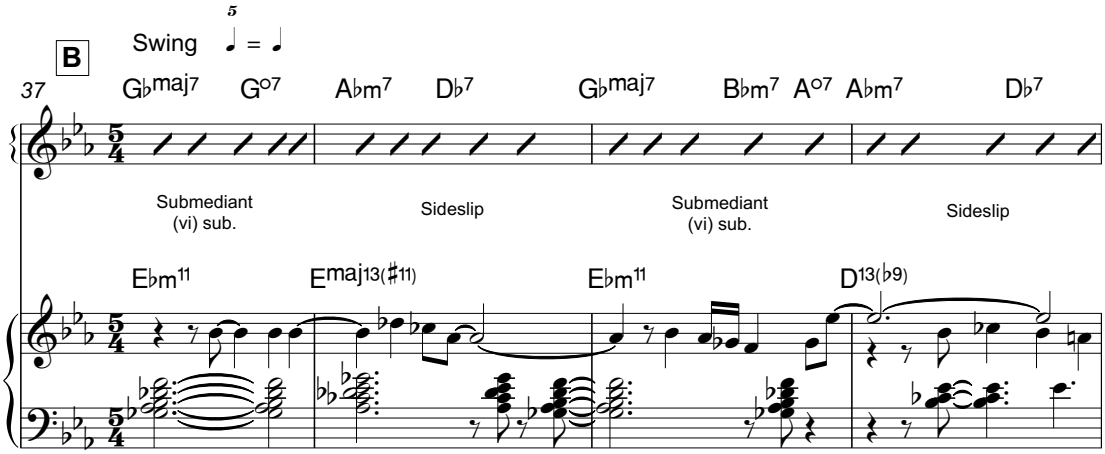


Figure 36: Simcock's reharmonisation of the B section (first four bars)

The Emaj13#11 in the second bar is sideslip used to reharmonise the diatonic melody in the same way as the vamp. In the fourth bar, Simcock sideslips again, reharmonising the Eb melody note from a fifth to a flat nine (in the D13b9 voicing). During a demonstration of the tune in the interview, Simcock paused at this chord and explained that "if you've got certain notes that are high points of the phrase, you know, crucial melodic notes of the phrase, trying to harmonise them in a way that they become a very fruity extension" is something he actively pursues (personal communication, October 8, 2016). This sideslip also functions as a pivot, as it is a tritone substituted V chord for the next bar.

Figure 37 shows the next four bars of the B section, which contain extensive but more conventional reharmonisation. Interestingly, Simcock plays an Eb melody note, which according to standard music theory is considered an 'avoid' note. Simcock disagrees, proclaiming that "I quite like having those little tasty things in there that sound a little bit odd like [plays a D# melody note on a Bm9 chord], you get that for a second, but it's almost intangible because it passes so quickly" (personal communication, October 8, 2016). Similar 'avoid' note tensions are also apparent in A sections.

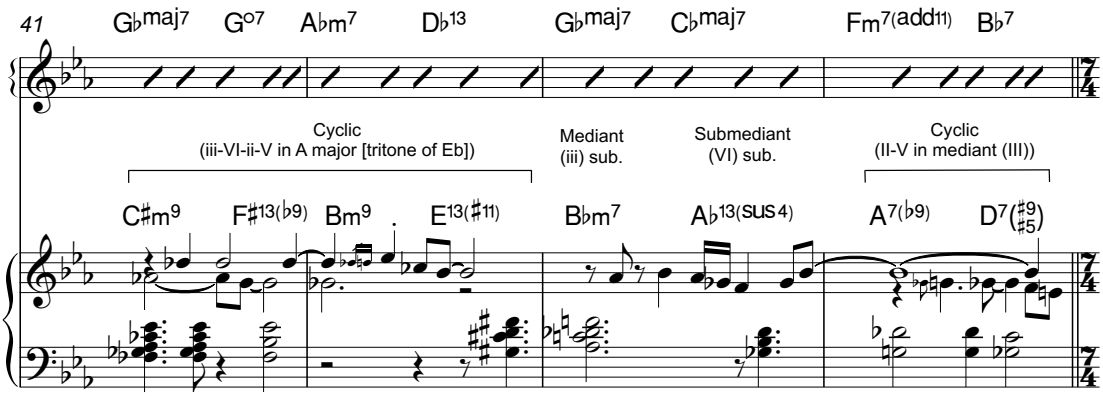


Figure 37: Simcock's reharmonisation of the B section (last four bars)

Solo form chord changes

The solo chord changes the arrangement contrast the harmonic complexity and modern sound of the reinterpreted melody, bearing closer resemblance to the standard progression and creating a form that is more conventional to improvise on. Simcock did provide a lead sheet of the changes (Appendix D), but this is an evolved chart (labelled *Tidied 2014* in the filename), and thus often has discrepancies with recorded solo from 2007. Thus, the changes notated below are all derived from the analysis performed earlier on the actual recording, unless otherwise specified.

A1 follows the standard changes reasonably closely (Figure 38), often condensing two related chords into one (such as the combination of the ii-V to create a Bb13sus4).

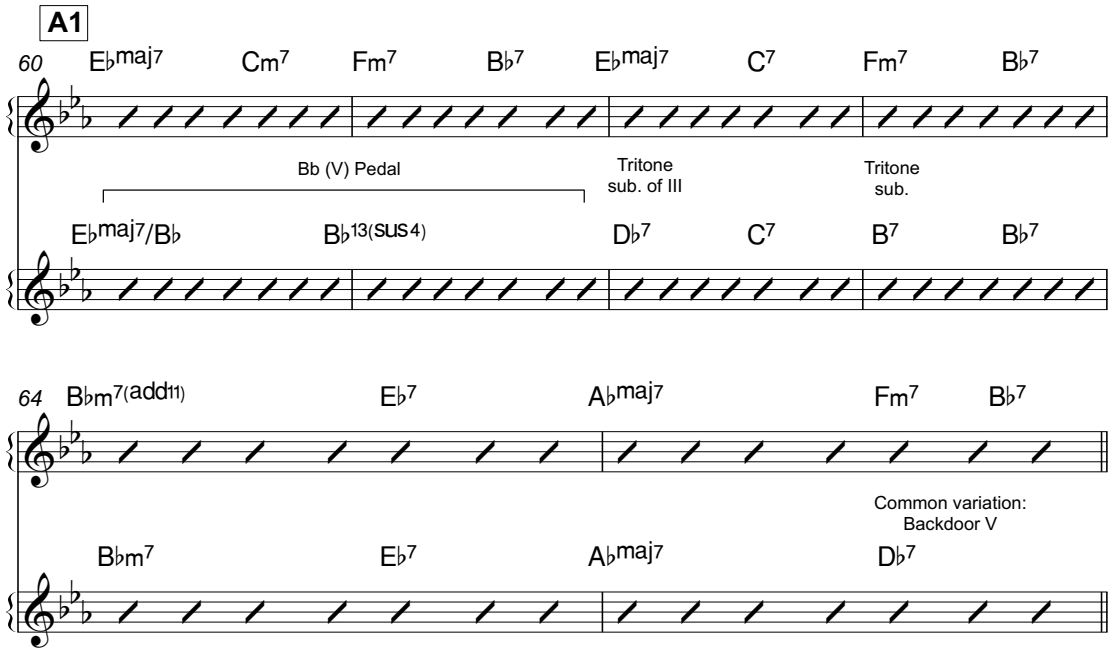


Figure 38: Harmonic analysis of A1 solo changes

Similar to the first two bars of the A1, the interludes are reharmonised with a V pedal (Figure 39).

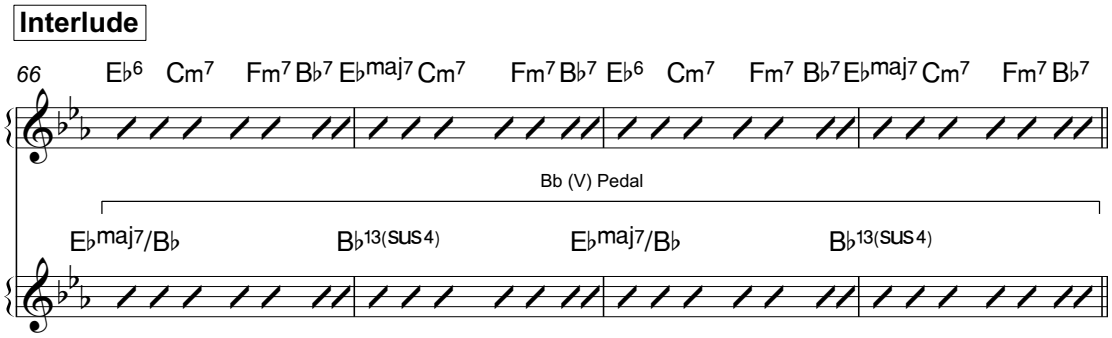


Figure 39: Harmonic analysis of interlude solo changes

A2 sees a slight increase in the harmonic complexity, making use of tritone substitutions and reharmonising I chords to iii chords (Figure 40).

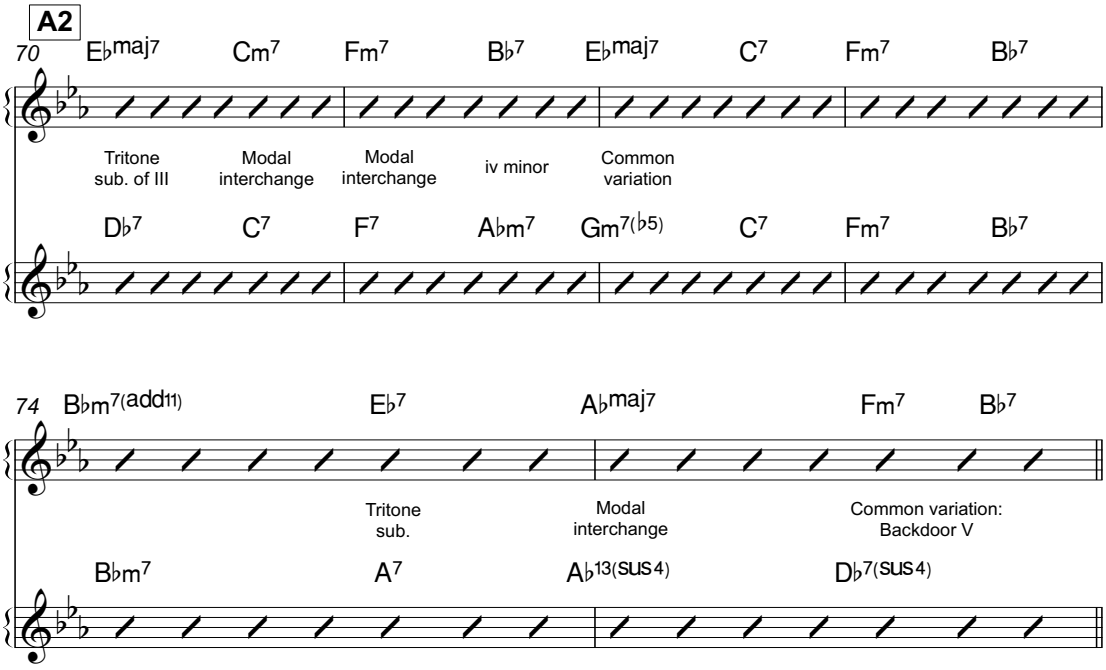


Figure 40: Harmonic analysis of A2 solo changes

The B section essentially follows the same changes as the B section in the head.

A3 is of particular interest as it is harmonically more active. As outlined in Figure 41, the root movement (and some voicing structures) are similar to that of A3 in the head. Whilst some of these chord qualities have been varied slightly, the genesis of the structural idea is clear.

The first two bars feature a series of parallel 7#11 chords, with Db7#11 being the target. This chord, a dominant built from the bVII of the key, is a common substitute for a V chord, and is used throughout the arrangement to approach the tonic resolution. Simcock notes that parallel progressions such as this make for a useful springboard for soloistic ideas:

> Something that I've always really enjoyed in improvising is having a lot of chords to deal with. In fact, I almost enjoy that way more than if you're just on a one chord vamp or something, because it's the way that you navigate between the chords which is kind of fun. And trying to create something horizontal over these very vertical things is something I really – really enjoy that challenge. (Personal communication, October 8, 2016)

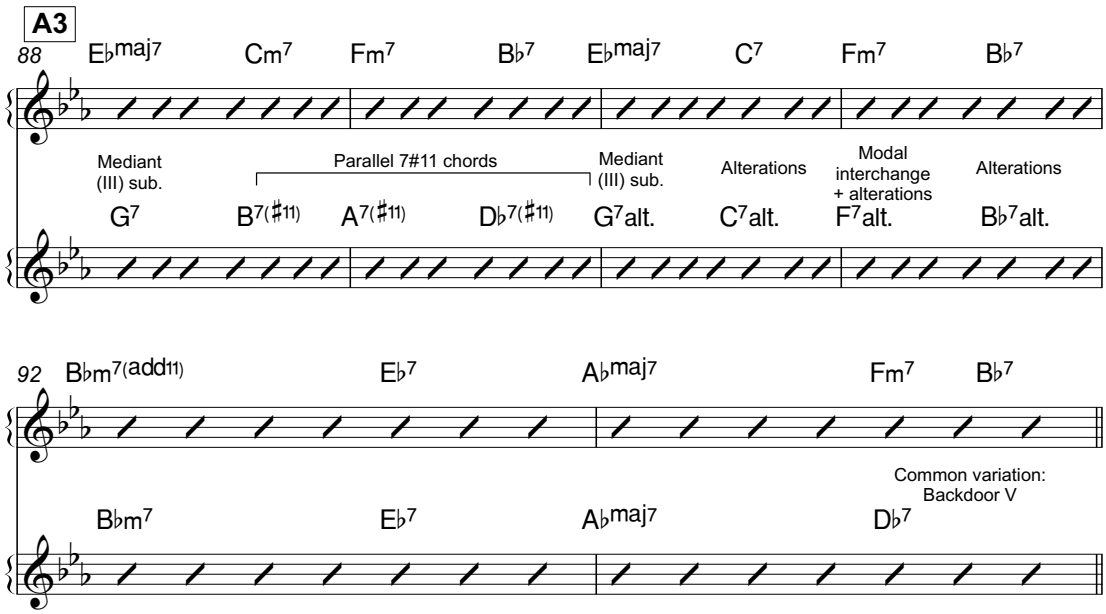


Figure 41: Harmonic analysis of A3 solo changes

The solo vamp

At the end of Simcock's solo, a new vamp section occurs, which also forms the basis of a second solo section after the bass solo. Figure 42 shows these chord changes lined up against the standard interlude changes.

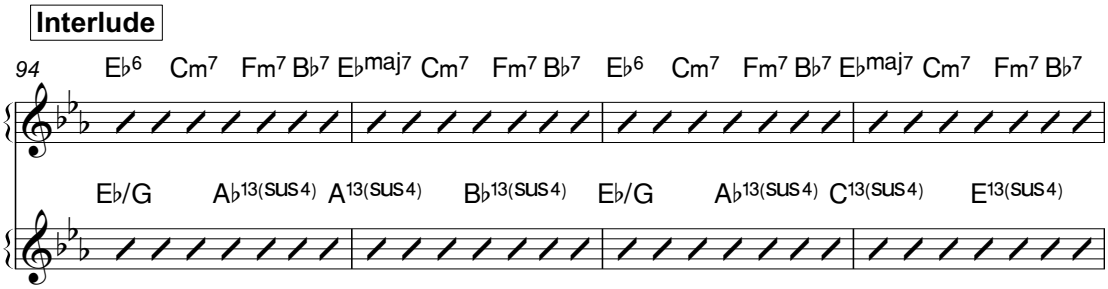


Figure 42: A sample of the solo vamp

The use of suspensions is a notable characteristic of Simcock's playing and arranging on this tune, whereby he often replaces expected 7 chords with a 13sus4 voicing. The result is a rich, colourful sound that creates forward momentum while feeling quite open,

particularly to solo on (Levine, 1989, p. 23). Occasionally, he will also play G13sus4 in place of the Eb/G to create a series of parallel 13sus4 chords.

Discussing the thinking behind the vamp, Simcock stated that he "quite [likes] finding a pedal point" that give you "a little bit of tension… so when it comes back around again it feels like you've arrived somewhere" (personal communication, October 8, 2016). It should be noted here the discrepancies between Simcock's lead sheet and the recorded track, most notably bar 4, which has a C13sus4 and an E13sus4 in place of the Ao7 and Bbsus13 respectively. Simcock also always plays Ab13sus4 instead of Abmaj, and A13sus4 instead of Ao7. On the lead sheet, it is clear that the Eb melody note that belongs to each chord is the pedal Simcock refers to. However, on the actual recording not every chord contains this pedal note in the left hand voicing (the right hand occasionally references it) – the genesis of the idea is still clear though, especially given the implied Eb home tonality.

He further explained that he "[tries] to work on [that] with compositions, maybe in small blocks like that, but also larger blocks," as well as "ending the cycle so that you feel like when you get back to the top again you've gone to a new place" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Devices used in the improvisation

Sideslipping

A technique that sees extensive use is sideslipping (temporarily shifting a phrase or voicing up or down a semitone to increase tension). In, Figure 43 Simcock using B minor pentatonic over a Bb13sus4 chord to achieve this effect.

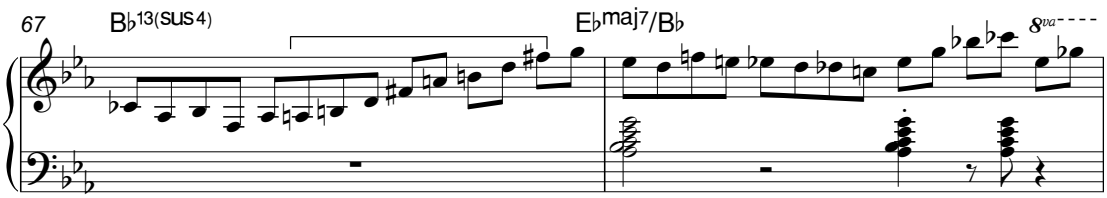


Figure 43: Sideslipping in Bar 67

Bar 112 (Figure 44) shows an example of the use of the device in interlude. Here, Simcock has momentarily shifted both the line and the voicing up a semitone.

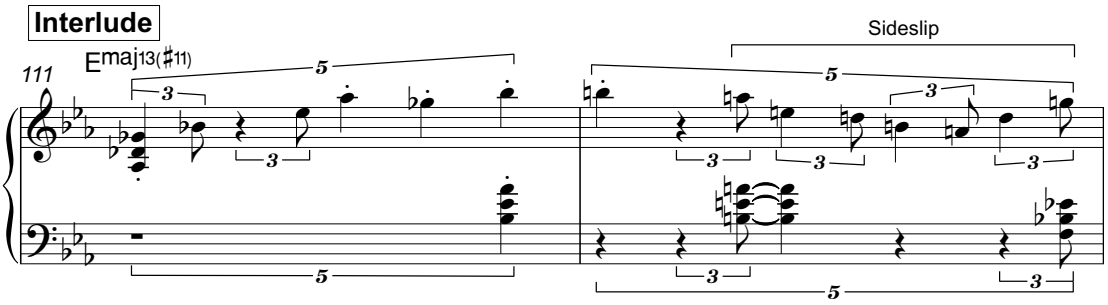


Figure 44: Bar 112 shows an example of sideslipping

Figure 45 displays pertinent example: Simcock plays a melody, and sequences it up a semitone, temporarily shifting outside of the key centre.

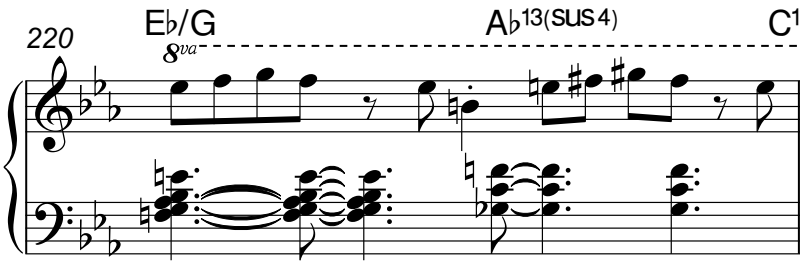


Figure 45: Bar 220 employing sideslipping

Other examples of this technique can be found in bars 63, 82, 211-212, and 244 (Appendix A).

Triadic soloing

The inherent harmonic strength of a triad can be an effective way to increase tension and create structured 'outside' lines, which are melodic phrases constructed of tones predominantly not contained within the established tonality. Simcock often achieves this effect by outlining various triads (not necessarily related to the chord) through

arpeggiation. In Figure 46, Simcock implies D major, A major, Gb major, Eb major, and Ab major triads over the interlude vamp (Emaj13#11).

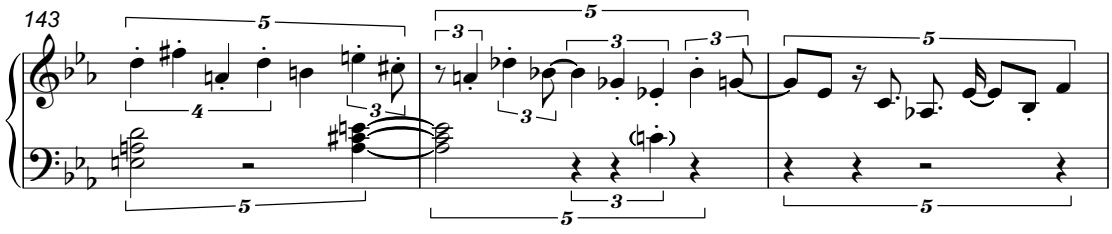


Figure 46: Bars 143-145 demonstrating triadic soloing over the E Lydian vamp

Similarly, at bars 222-225 (Figure 47) Simcock begins by outlining a Gb major triad (initially accessing 'inside' extensions of Ab13sus4) on beat 5 of bar 222, and climbs upward chromatically. The combination of this strong harmonic idea with the syncopated rhythm creates significant tension over these four bars. The Bb major triad outlined over the C13sus4 returns the line to 'inside' extensions of the chord, resolving the idea.

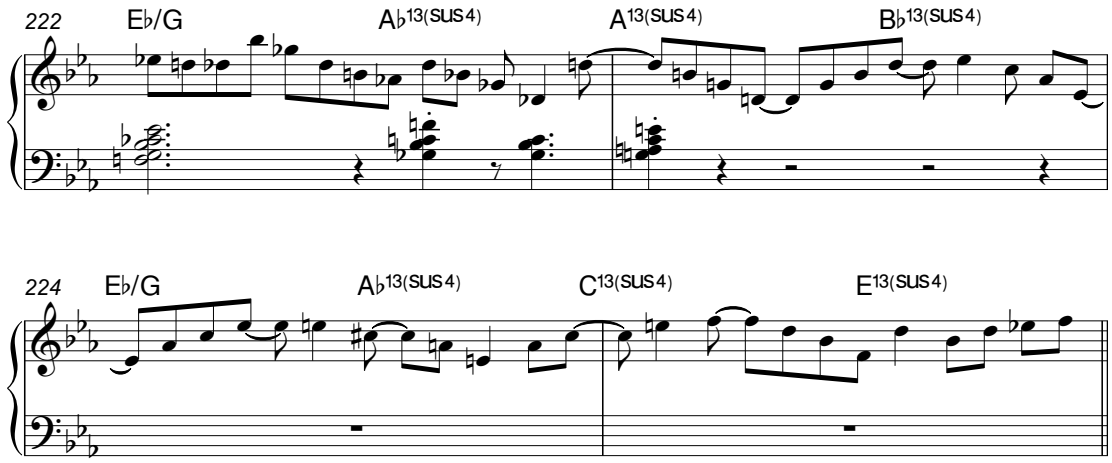


Figure 47: Bars 222-225 demonstrating triadic soloing

Other examples of triadic soloing occur in bars 70-72, 122-124, 247-248, and 254-256 (Appendix A).

Pedal

Pedal points are a useful way to increase the harmonic tension whilst creating a more open sound that lends itself well to playing with wider intervals. Bars 238-241 (Figure 48) show an example of this, where Simcock disregards the established changes and conceptualises the four bars as a pedal, improvising a long and engaging melodic line mostly based on fourths that is a contrasting feature of the solo.

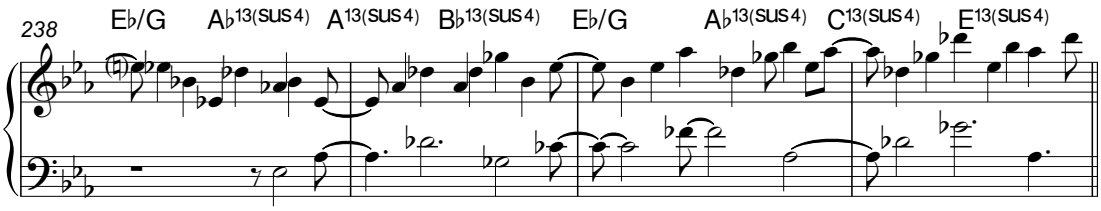


Figure 48: Bars 238-241 utilising a pedal point

A slightly different example occurs in bars 250-253 (Figure 49). Here, the notes Db and Eb are used as a pedal point, where a lower melody note is moved chromatically up and down. This form of pedal point is combined with moving left hand harmony and across-the-barline phrasing to create significant tension.

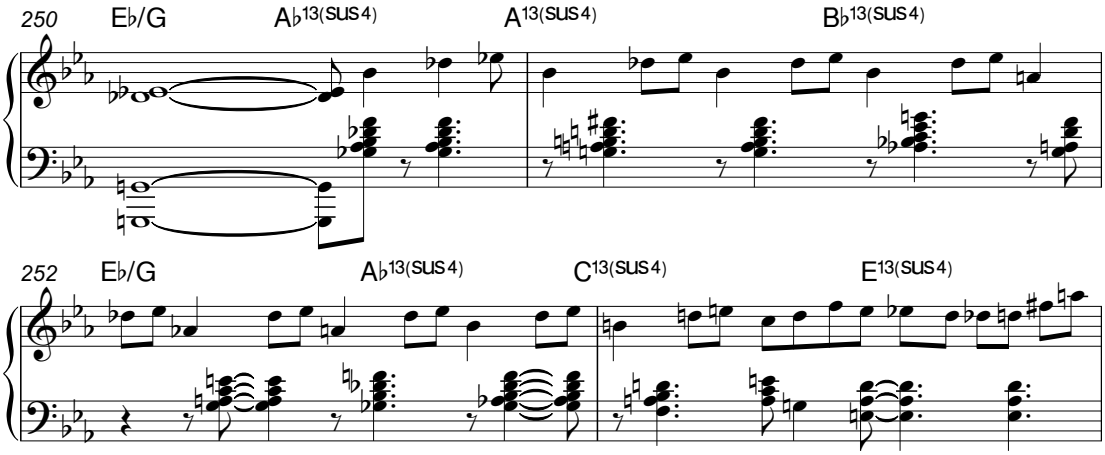


Figure 49: Bars 250-253 utilising pedal points

Implied other chord changes

By implying other chord changes through juxtaposition, Simcock is able to create structured tensions in both the comping and the solo line, in much the same way as non-diatonic triad sequences are used. In Figure 50, Simcock implies A major, Ab major, Gb major, Eb major, D major, A major, Ab major, and F minor over the top of the E Lydian interlude vamp. Interestingly, some of these chords line up with the notes from the bassline to create 13sus4 voicings. As Simcock has been shown to favour this type of voicing, this particular implied cycle might be typical of his broader improvisational tendencies.

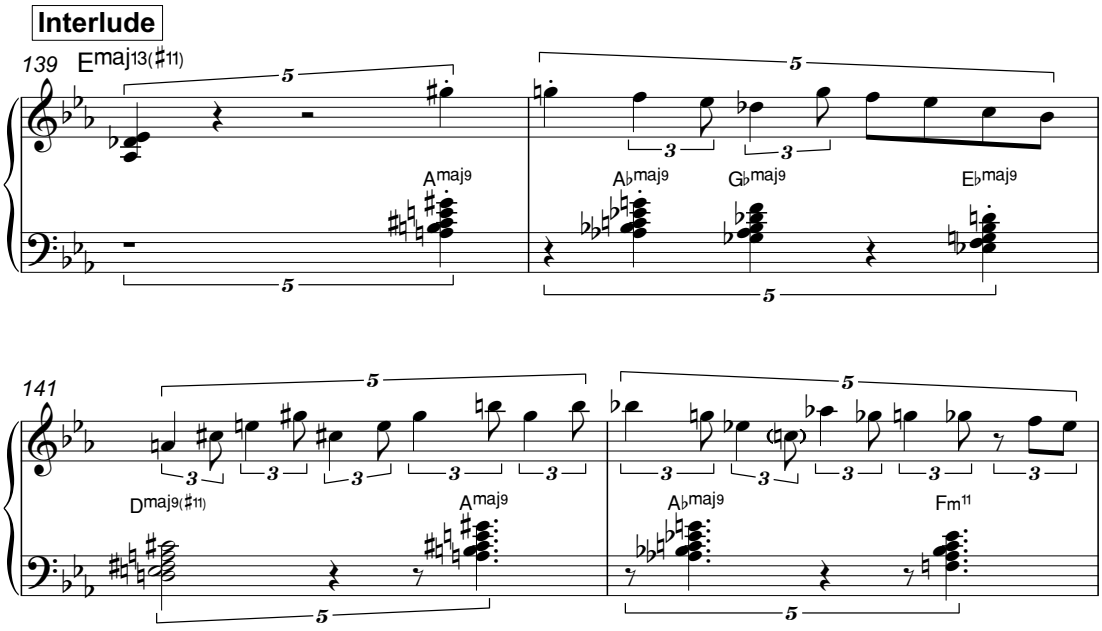


Figure 50: Bars 139-142 implying other chord changes over the E Lydian vamp

In Figure 51, the hands are playing a third (plus two octaves) apart and outline F major, Eb major, Db major, C major, A major, and Bb major over the established vamp changes.

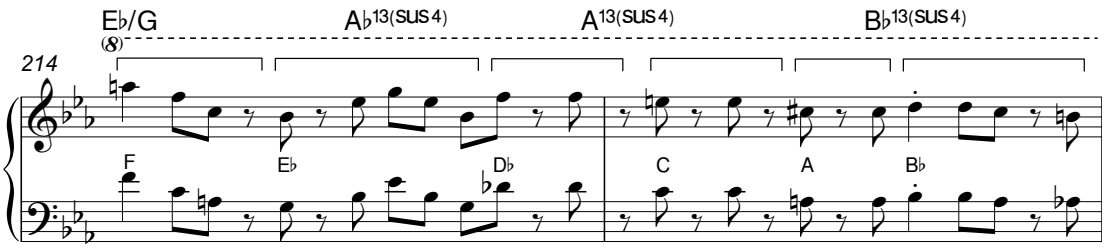


Figure 51: Bars 214-215 implying other chord changes

Altered chords, alternate modes, and chromatic passing notes

These devices are common improvisational techniques used to depart from overly diatonic treatment of chords (especially dominants), and are not particularly specific to Simcock. He occasionally makes use of alterations to V chords to contrast the often-written 13sus4 chord. Figure 52 shows an example where a contrapuntal Locrian mode is used to create alterations over the Bb pedal.

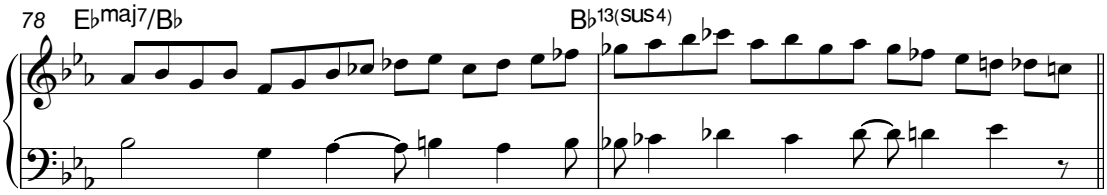


Figure 52: Bars 78-79 showing altered V chord tonality

Similarly, Simcock uses the Phrygian mode in Figure 53 to achieve a similar effect. These two modes bring out different extensions over the Bb pedal, resulting in different aesthetic 'colours'.

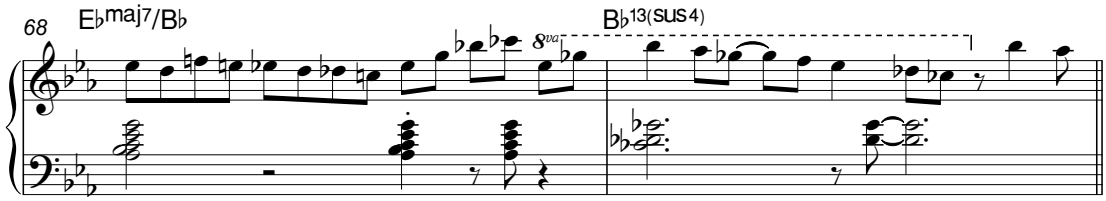


Figure 53: Bars 68-69 using the Phrygian mode

The chromatic scale is also used occasionally to link target melody notes, such as the E to Ab shown in Figure 54.

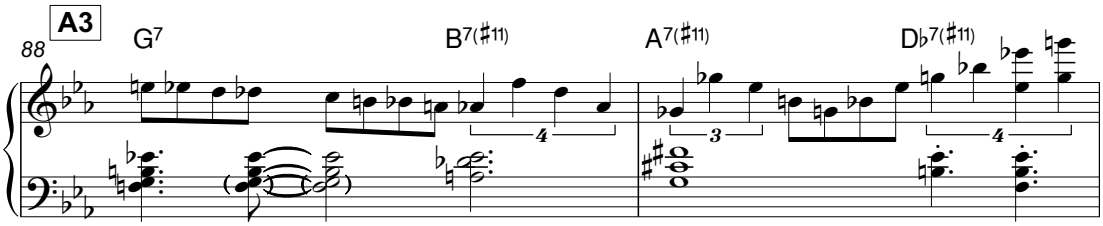


Figure 54: Bar 88 displaying chromaticism

Other examples of these techniques occur at bars 61, and 68-69, 82, 209, and 221-222 (Appendix A).

Chapter 5: Melodic Analysis

Many of the major melodic devices used in the written passages were covered in the harmonic analysis of the arrangement. Here, the melodic devices used in Simcock's improvisation will be discussed.

Counterpoint

In addition to its use in the arrangement, counterpoint is also a prevalent device within Simcock's improvisations. Figure 55 a two-part counterpoint improvised over the interlude. Initially, the right hand, whilst also a melodic phrase, outlines the harmony more clearly than the left. In the second half of the phrase, the right hand takes a little more focus and plays more linearly. Overall, evolution of the scale from Eb Ionian to Bb Locrian creates a semi-altered tension that releases into the Eb minor of the bridge.

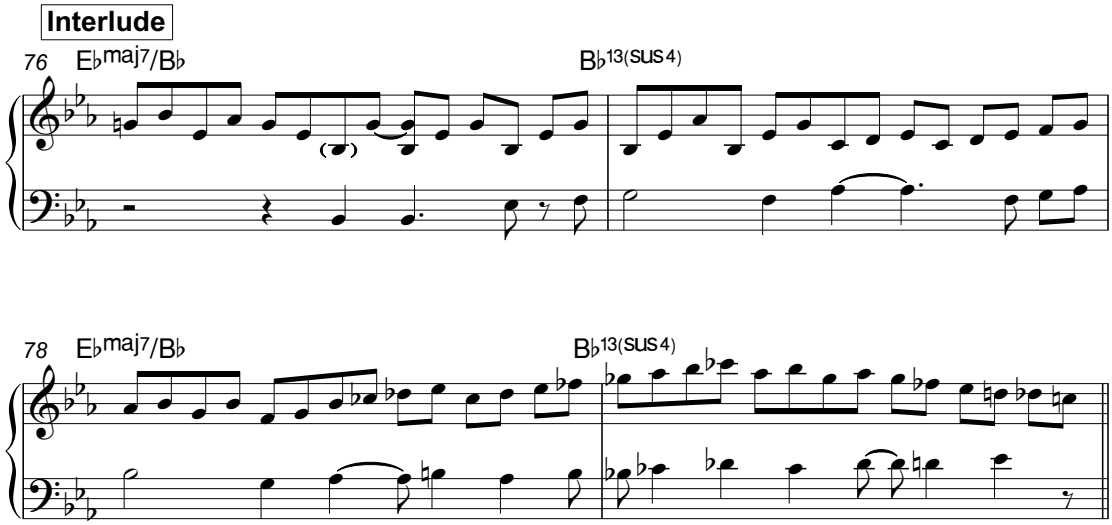


Figure 55: A four-bar improvised passage using counterpoint

Figure 56 shows another four-bar example of Simcock's improvised counterpoint. Again, the phrase begins with an idea in the right hand, before entering with the left. The line is heavily syncopated, with the more rhythmically active left hand phrasing creating the impression of three distinct answer phrases. Another occurrence of contrapuntal improvisation occurs in bars 259-260.

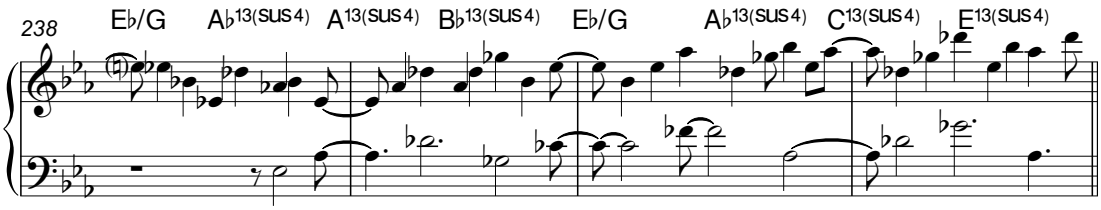


Figure 56: Bars 238-241 featuring two-part counterpoint

Sequences

Simcock makes extensive use of sequences (transposed repeated melodic figures that give the effect of development within a musical phrase (DeVoto, 2016)). In Figure 57, Simcock is shown to play the same melodic cell three times, each time ascending by a semitone, creating a melodically strong line that also relates to the underlying chord progression.

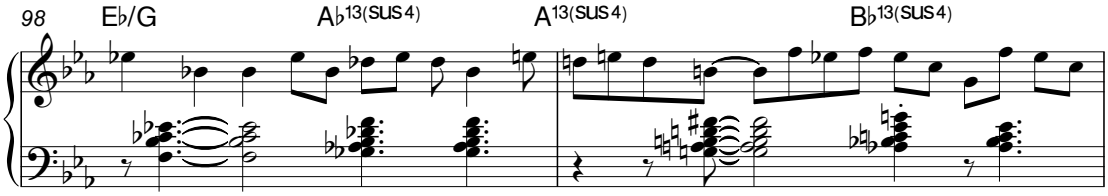


Figure 57: Bars 98-99 employing the technique of sequences

In bars 208-209, Simcock sequences a '1-2-3-5' melodic cell, as shown in Figure 58, moving the structure up a tone and then a semitone. Other examples occur in bars 61-63, 211-212, 213-214, 220, and 246-248 (Appendix A).

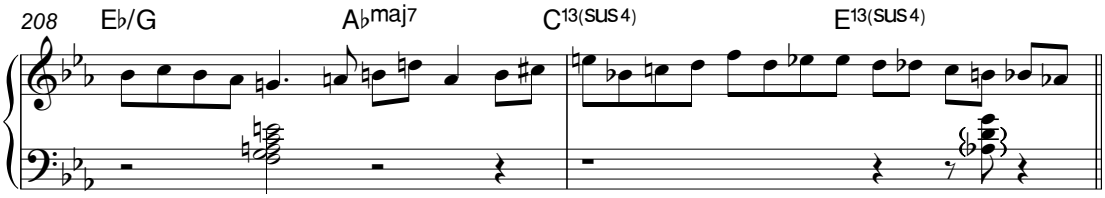


Figure 58: Bars 208-209 shows an example of sequencing

Arpeggiation

Tying in with the triadic soloing concept explored in the harmonic analysis, arpeggiated melodies strongly outline harmony and display virtuosity, and are used frequently by Simcock.

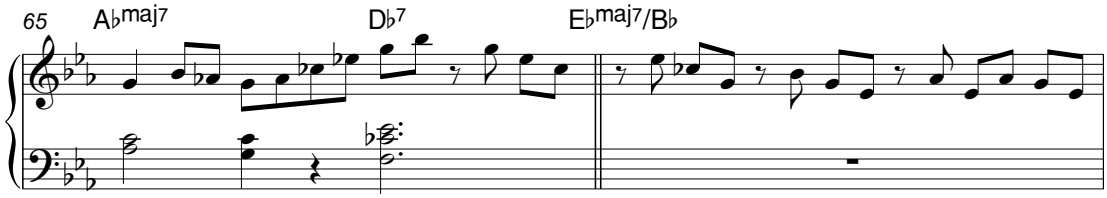


Figure 59: Bars 65-66 using arpeggiation

Figure 59 and Figure 60 demonstrate two instances, with the use of the Eb and Ebadd2 arpeggios, respectively. The second example is a particularly pianistic flourish, which at this tempo sounds rather virtuosic.

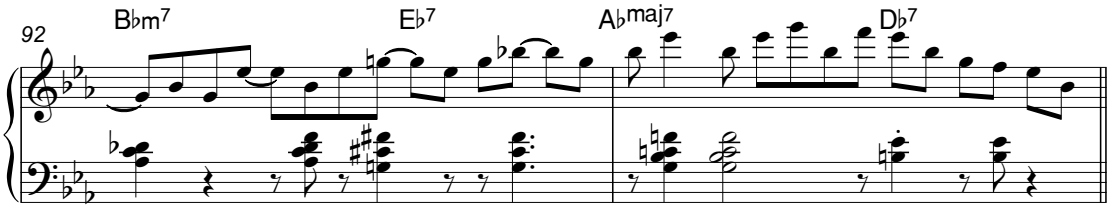


Figure 60: Bars 92-93 demonstrating virtuosic arpeggiation

Another notable use of the device occurs in bars 254-256 (Figure 61). Here, repetition is also used in the first bar before each full arpeggio is played.

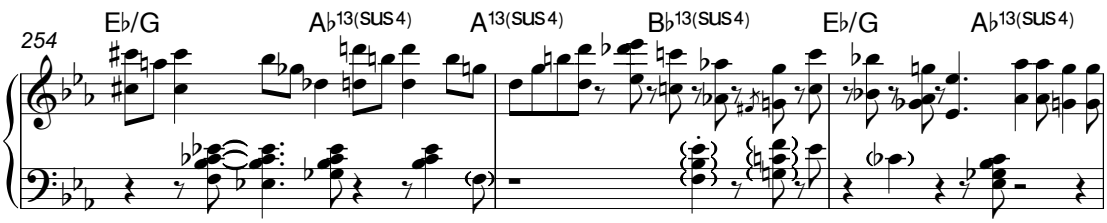


Figure 61: Bars 254-256 incorporating arpeggiation

Other instances of arpeggiation occur in bars 85-86, 121-124, 141-142, 210-214, 218-219, 228-229, 233, and 247-248 (Appendix A).

Motivic development

Throughout the improvisation, several key phrases are established and developed. These phrases – or motifs – are landmarks that tie the improvisation together, giving the listener familiar repeated figures to grasp onto. The idea presented in Figure 62 is one notable example, with a very similar line recurring in Figure 63.

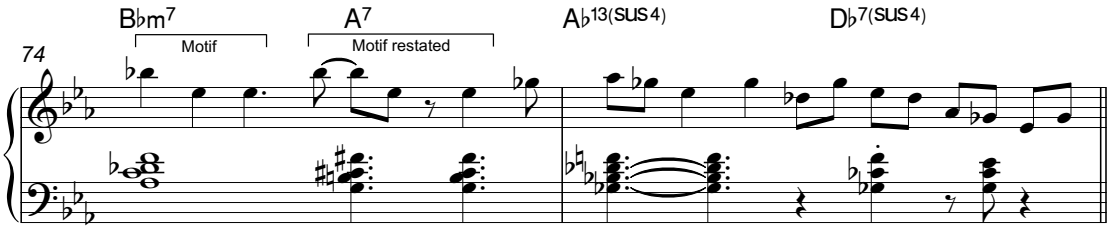


Figure 62: Bar 74 show a motif that Simcock uses again later

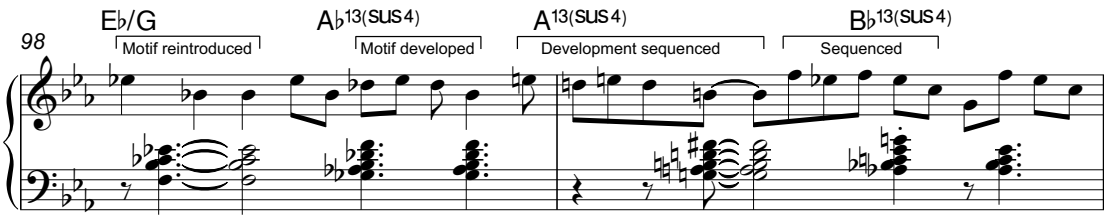


Figure 63: Bars 98-99 show the developed motif

Another prime example is the motif that is established in bars 94-95 (Figure 64), which later returns in 226-227 (Figure 65). This motif is of particular interest as it is repeated almost verbatim, at a much later point in the tune (in the second piano solo, in fact). Other examples of motivic development can be found in bars 70-72, 202-205, 242-244, and 250-253 (Appendix A).

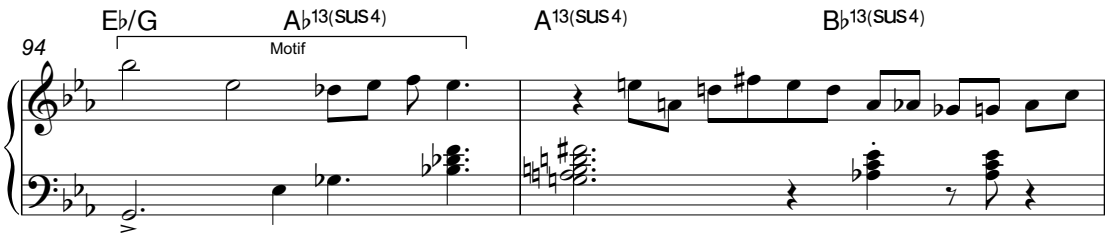


Figure 64: Bars 94-95 showing another motif

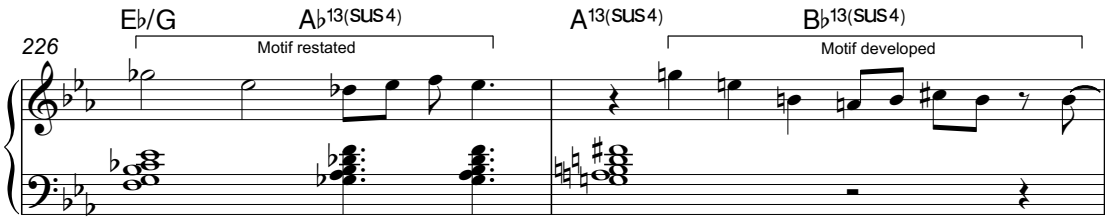


Figure 65: Bars 226-227 showing the developed motif

Blues scale/pentatonics

Simcock often makes use of pentatonics and blues scales whilst improvising, disregarding the chord changes in favour of a strong melodic idea. Levine (1989, p. 127) states that the characteristics of pentatonics are that of air, space, and light; something the ear enjoys. Additionally, they are technically rather simple to play, allowing the execution of a virtuosic-sounding line with comparatively little effort. One potent example spans six bars (Figure 66), where he begins with a simple and short melodic statement and develops it to longer phrases.

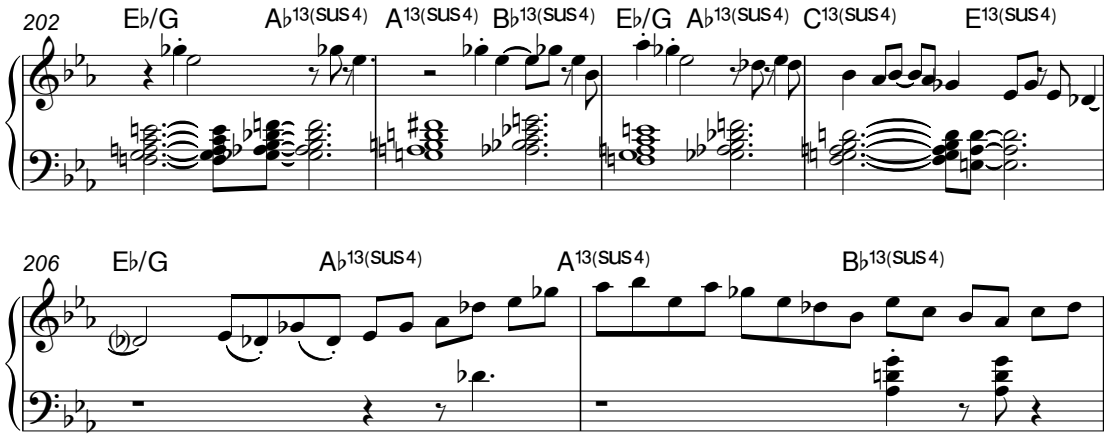


Figure 66: Simcock using pentatonics for six bars straight

Examples of Simcock using pentatonics and blues scales are plentiful throughout the track, and can be found in bars 67, 74-75, 80-81, 90, 93, 98-99, 208-209, 217-218, 230, 235, 238-244, 246, 248, 250-252, and 257 (Appendix A).

Dominant 8-note scale

There are a few instances in the track where Simcock improvises using the dominant 8-note scale (diminished half-whole). Of interest is that he tends to apply this scale over both the ii and V chords in such chord sequences.

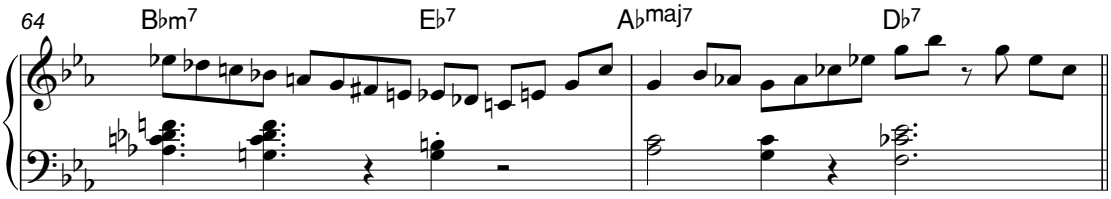


Figure 67: In bar 64, Simcock uses the dominant - note scale

In Figure 67, it is used to blanket the ii-V in Ab major, and in similarly in bars 84 and 85, Simcock employs the scale over two sets of ii-V progressions (Figure 68), again blanketing each time.

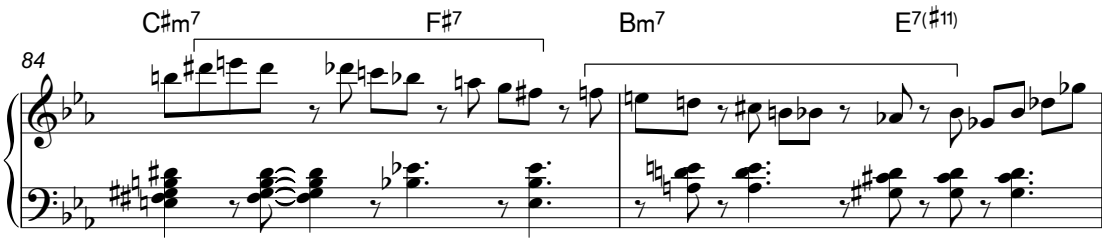


Figure 68: Bars 84-85 using dominant 8-note scales

Chapter 6: Summary and Discussion of Results

This chapter consolidates the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic devices that Simcock used in his the arrangement and improvisation of *The Way You Look Tonight*, presenting a summarised account of the prevalent techniques and discussing their use and the links between their improvisational and arrangement applications.

Rhythmic devices

Arrangement	
Adaption into complex time	A sections are transfigured into 7/4 by pairing two 4/4 bars from the original meter into a bar of 4/4 and a bar of 3/4. B sections follow a similar idea by converting two 4/4 bars into 3/4 and 2/4, creating 5/4.
Superimposition	A swung 5/4 time signature is juxtaposed over the underlying straight 7/4. Achieved in practicality by conceptualising 3:4 and 2:3 to create the impression of five equidistant notes.
Metric modulation	Used to transition from 7/4 to 5/4 in the B section of the melody via the established 5-over-7 superimposition. The concept is reversed to modulate back to 7/4.
Across-the-barline phrasing and shorter meters	Anticipations in the melody during the bridge are achieved by the use of shorter meters, facilitating the crossing of barline abstracting away from expected clave figures. Dotted crotchets and phrases in groups of four are recurring concepts.
Improvisation	
Syncopation and over-the-barline phrasing	One of Simcock's most prevalent rhythmic tendencies whilst improvising. Syncopation and phrasing over the barline with ties gives his lines forward momentum and implies a higher degree of complexity – especially in these odd meters – by obscuring the downbeats, creating interest for the listener via rhythmic tension and release.

Groupings	5/8 and 3/4 groupings are often used to temporarily imply the feeling of another time signature or tempo and to further enhance the approach to phrasing with longer lines independent of bar divisions.
Complex rhythmic ideas on interlude improvisations	Within the superimposed meter, Simcock does not intentionally outline the expected 3-2 clave, instead choosing to conceal the downbeats further using odd groupings, crotchet triplets, displacement, syncopation, and across-the-barline phrasing, and 'stretching of time'. There is an extreme juxtaposition of rhythmic devices familiar to his 5/4 language that interact in unexpected ways with the underlying 7/4 meter.
Perceived stretching of time	Different tuplet divisions are accessed in succession to give the perceived effect of time slowing down and speeding up.
Long quaver lines	Used to contrast shorter rhythmic phrases, increasing tension and helping to avoid over-reliance on phrasing within the established 4-3 clave, which is a common tendency when improvising in odd meters such as this one
Similar aspects	
Superimposition	The framework of superimposition established in the arrangement provides Simcock with fruitful material to exploit when improvising, creating additional interest through the interaction of his 5/4 language with the underlying 7/4 pulse.
Across-the-barline phrasing	Rhythmic devices used in both contexts serve to blur the barline and avoid the clichéd claves of each meter. Simcock views this rhythmic freedom as an important aspect of his approach to odd meters.

Table 1: Rhythmic devices

Harmonic devices

Arrangement	
Reimagined tonal centre for vamps and interludes	Eschews the expected I-vi-ii-V progression of the original 'tag' to create a modal and modern sounding pedal that acts as a point of rest and a strong precursor to both the A and B sections of the tune by reharmonising the tonic melody note as the major 7th of the flat two (Emaj7#11) tonal centre.
Counterpoint	Counterpoint defines much of the harmony for the A sections, avoiding the conventional 'vertical' reharmonisation approach and instead focusing on 'horizontal' harmony with passing linear tensions, particularly within the first A.
Chordal reharmonisation	The full chords of the A2, B, and A3 sections are extrapolated from the counterpoint line to create a sequence of chords that eschews obvious functionality in favour of a modern and angular sounding aesthetic. This is achieved through the novel combination of a variety of harmonisation techniques, including some cyclic patterns and bitonality.
Solo chord changes	Changes are simplified compared to the melody changes, bearing closer resemblance to the original progression. Reharmonisation is used more sparingly but with effect to create a form that retains aspects of the colour established earlier on that is more conventional to solo on.
Additional solo vamp	A four bar progression is established and repeated at the end of each solo, removing the boundary of form and allowing the improvisations and aesthetic to become more open.
Improvisation	
Sideslipping	Improvised lines are sideslipped by semitones to increase harmonic tension, typically using pentatonic lines to clearly outline the shift.
Triadic	Triads from various key centres are juxtaposed over the existing

	chord changes using arpeggiation to create controlled tension.
Pedal	Often used in conjunction with quartal harmonic ideas to create harmonic tension and forward momentum, particularly over ii-V progressions and at the ends of sections.
Implied other chords	Similar to triadic ideas, Simcock occasionally implies other chords to create controlled 'outside' lines.
Altered harmony	Modes such as Locrian and Phrygian are used to move away from diatonic treatment of chords, particularly over V and 13sus4.
Similar aspects	
13sus4 voicings	13sus4 voicings are used extensively throughout the arrangement. Such examples include the piano solo, particularly the solo vamp, as well as general reharmonisation of the head.
Sideslipping	Used in the B section as a reharmonisation tool, as well as whilst improvising.
Pedal	The interlude sections in both the head and the solo section involve a pedal, as well as various points throughout the arrangement (such as the first two bars of the piano solo).
Implied other chords	Simcock often reharmonises with cyclic patterns in other key centres (bitonality), and occasionally will imply other key centres, particularly with the use of triads, during the improvisation.

Table 2: Harmonic devices

Melodic devices

Improvisation	
Counterpoint	Two-part counterpoint used whilst improvising to build intensity at the end of sections, achieved via one voice in each hand.
Sequences	Melodic cells are sequenced to develop ideas.
Arpeggiation	Similar to the triadic soloing device, arpeggios act as a clear way to state harmonic choices, reinforce a melodic idea, and display virtuosity.
Motivic development	Simcock's reiteration of key melodic phrases throughout the track creates a sense of unity, familiarity, and development.
Blues scale and pentatonics	Comparatively effortless melodic choices bring a sense of air, space, and light to the listener, sounding virtuosic at tempo and contrasting more scalar melodic choices.
Dominant 8-note scale	Used occasionally to blanket ii-V progressions.
Similar aspects	
Counterpoint	Counterpoint is such a pertinent feature to this arrangement, particularly within the head. It is interesting to see Simcock use counterpoint to create tension whilst soloing, as the technique requires great skill to facilitate two independently improvised lines.

Table 3: Melodic devices

Discussion

The above analysis has uncovered many useful rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic devices that can be used not only for arranging jazz standards or improvising, but whilst composing too. The two most significant features of the arrangement are the rhythmic superimpositions and the contrapuntal lines. This gives the arrangement a sonic identity, and can be immediately recognisable by these two devices alone.

While the contrapuntal bassline does follow some voice-leading conventions a fair majority of it is randomised and not voice-led. This can be seen with the flow of the line often being broken up from small voice-led intervals to larger, more obscure intervals, causing the bassline to be rather angular. Combined with non-obvious sequences of functional harmony, this gives the arrangement a modern sound, and opens up the palette for harmonic choices. Mapping out harmony in such a 'horizontal' way is a method that Simcock confirmed using whilst arranging this tune.

Although a variety of harmonic devices were used when Simcock was reharmonising this tune, analysis showed that some reharmonisations were actually quite standard and closely related to the original changes, while others were simply just harmonising melody notes to be an extension of an unrelated chord. Simcock actively pursues the reharmonisation of chords in this way by looking for opportunities to make the melody a "fruity extension" (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

Simcock feels that "out of the three elements of music, melody, rhythm and harmony the one that really appeals to me is harmony, but that's the thing people are least familiar with" Patterson (2010, para. 20), and given how extensive this reharmonisation is this is not a surprising sentiment.

Interestingly, Simcock mentioned that he struggled a lot with rhythmic feel because of his classical background, saying that there's "such a difference with the way that you [would] approach it as a classical musician and as a jazz musician. So that was always the thing that I had to work really hard on" (personal communication, October 8, 2016). He often finds himself practicing away from his instrument, and using that time to do lots of tapping and focusing on practicing rhythmic concepts. Simcock further added that the piano is essentially "a percussive instrument… Obviously there's more elements to it, but that percussive side of it is something that you can practice away from the instrument" (personal communication, October 8, 2016). This stated desire to use composition to further one's skills, coupled with the motivation from his bassist, Phil Donkin, served as the inspiration for using many of these rhythmic devices to create this complex and engaging arrangement.

Conclusion

Modern jazz musicians are often searching for ways to reinterpret the much-loved standard repertoire of yesteryear. Through analysis of Gwilym Simcock's fresh arrangement and virtuosic performance of *The Way You Look Tonight*, this research has uncovered a vocabulary of rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic devices, as summarised in Chapter 6, that can be applied directly to arranging, composing, and improvisation.

The aims of the research were certainly met, with many interesting devices identified and demystified. In particular, the amazingly generous responses from Simcock himself have added depth to the empirical analysis, enhanced the findings, and provided a huge amount of inspiration to me.

Due to the relatively limited scope of this research, plenty of avenues have emerged to build on the findings of this foundational study. Further research opportunities include:

- Analysing other recordings to gain a more holistic appreciation of Simcock's overall style;
- Undertaking practice-led research to reapply the emergent concepts in arrangement and improvisation;
- Exploring the music of Phil Donkin (Simcock's bassist, who was the primary source of inspiration for this rhythmically complex arrangement) to gain greater insight into other music that utilises similar advanced rhythmic concepts;
- Exploring in further detail Simcock's ability to improvise over ostinatos, through research into the group *The Impossible Gentlemen*, of which Simcock is a part.

Gwilym Simcock is an acclaimed and virtuosic musician who has provided great inspiration to me as a practitioner. It is hoped that the knowledge presented here through the findings of the paper, musical transcription, and transcript of a very insightful interview will be of as much value to other appreciators of his work and to the wider jazz community as they have to me.

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Appendix A: Transcription of *The Way You Look Tonight*

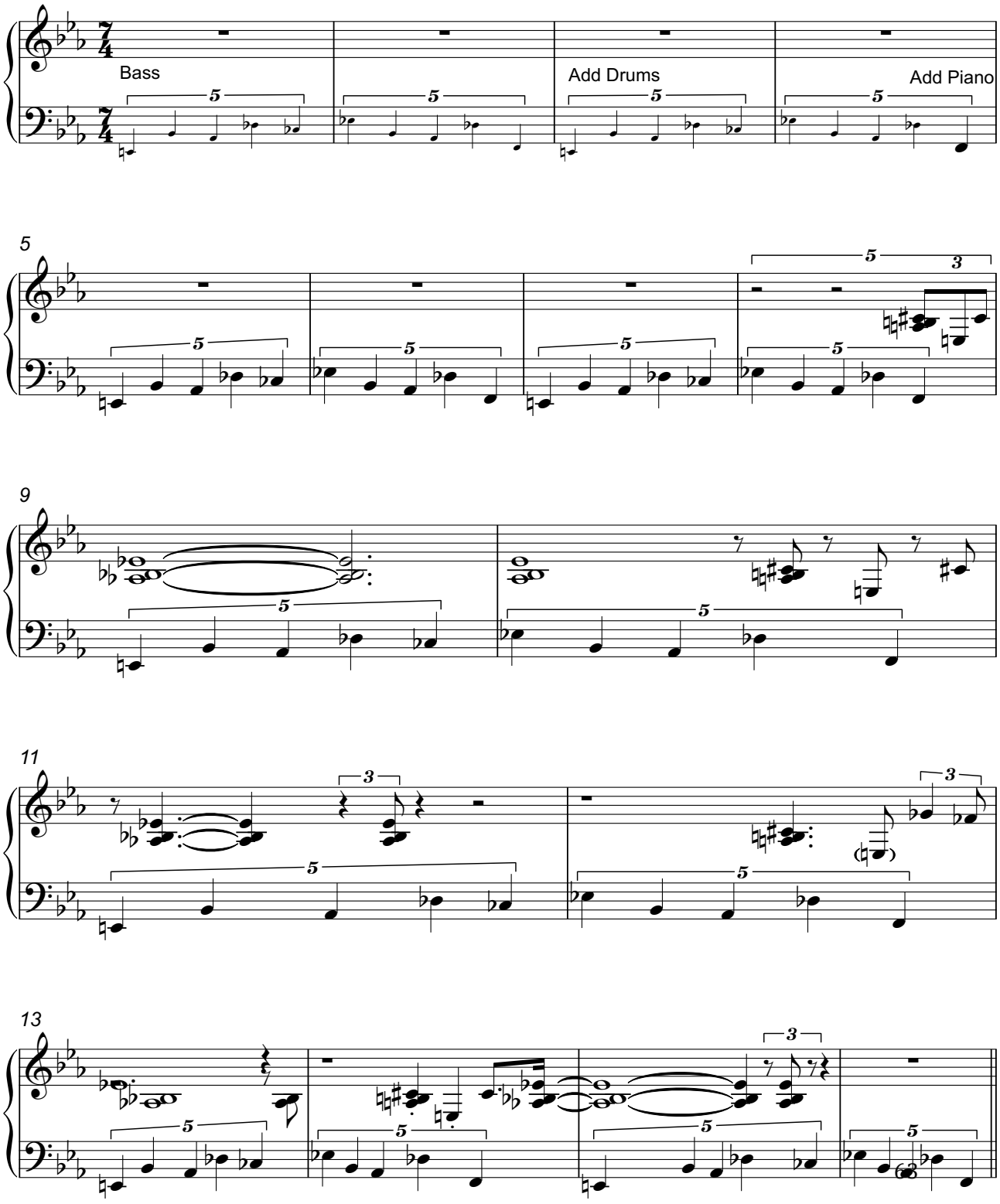
The Way You Look Tonight

From *Perception* (2007)

Jerome Kern
Arr. Gwilym Simcock
Transcribed by Brodie Stewart

Fast modern jazz ♩ = 260

INTRO



MELODY

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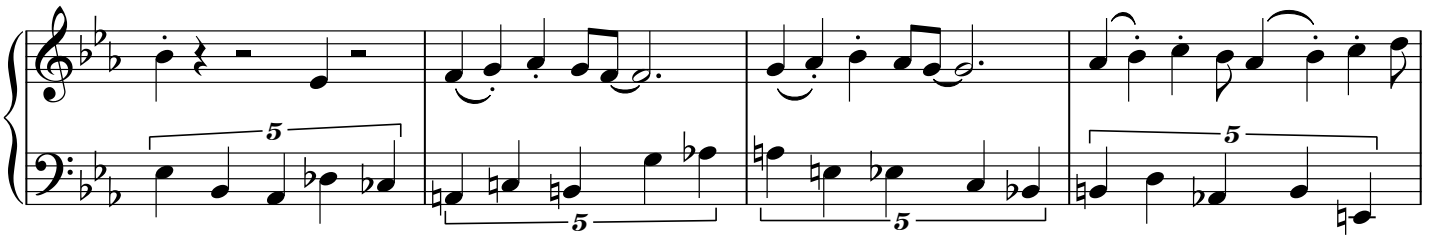

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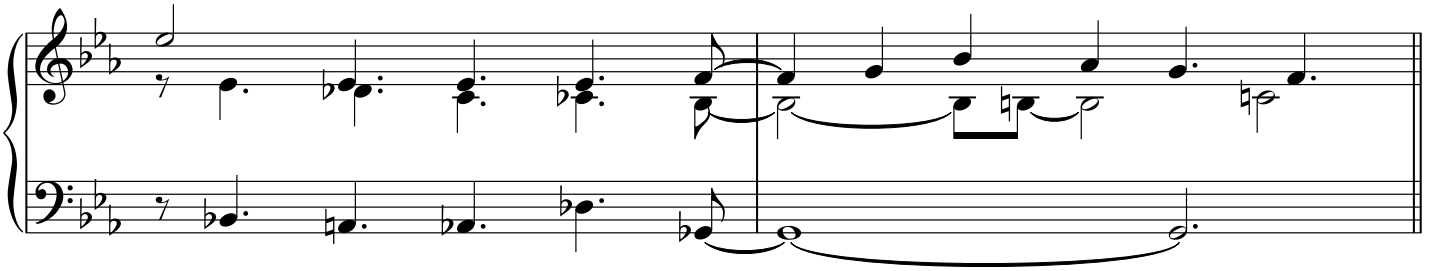

Interlude

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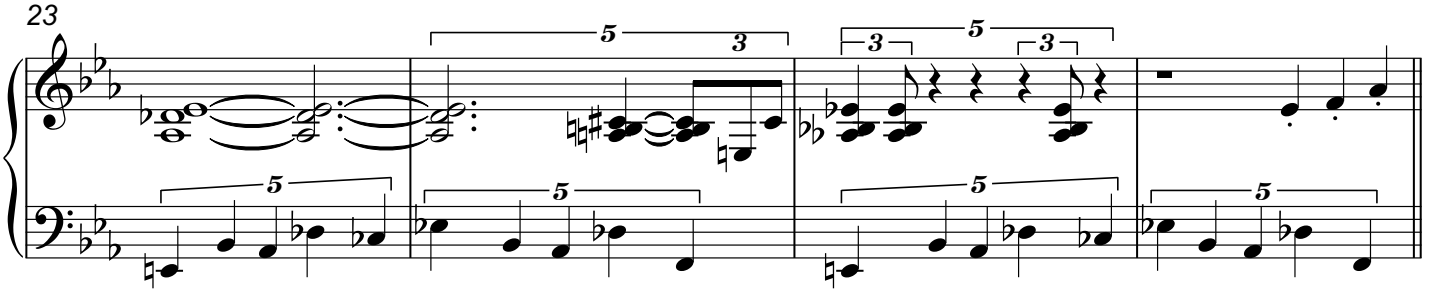

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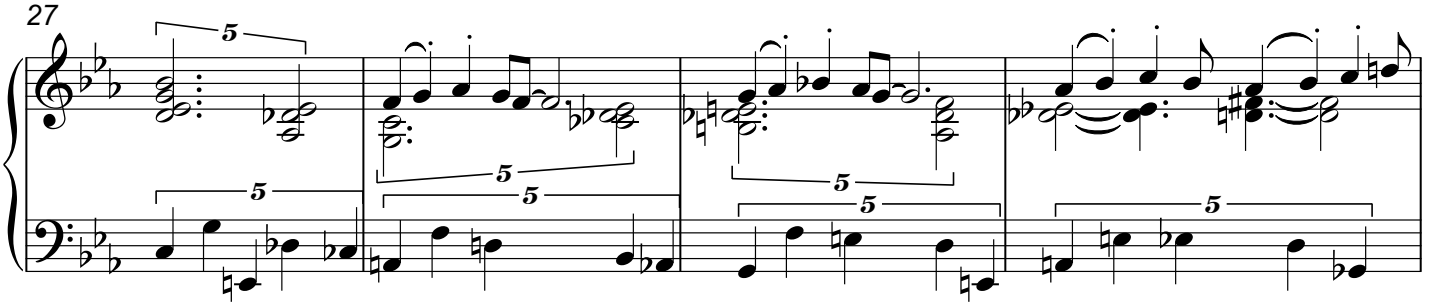

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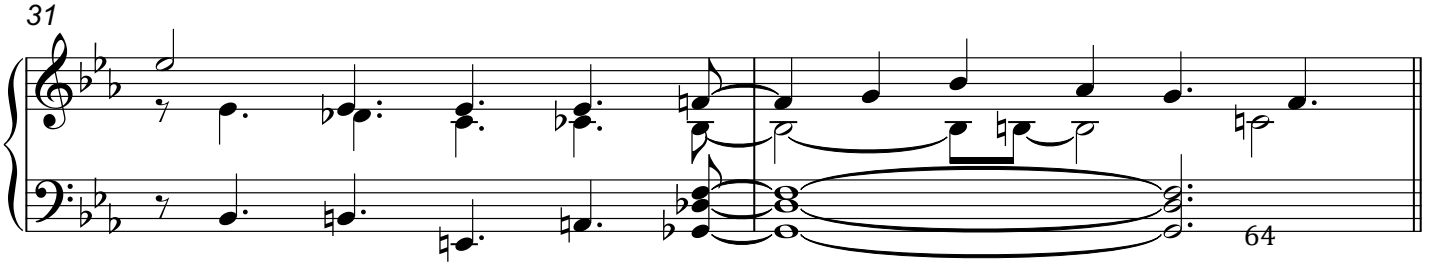

Interlude

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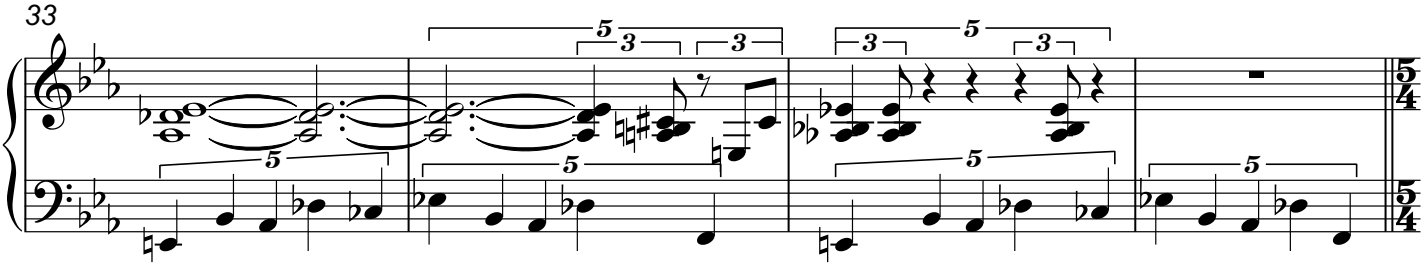
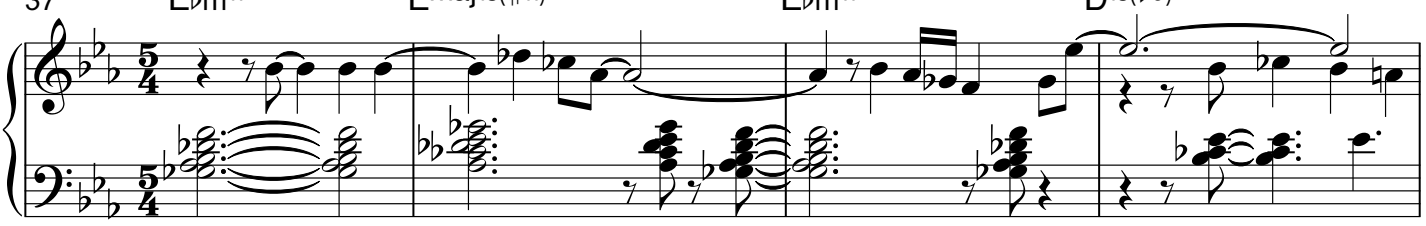


B Swing $\overset{5}{\text{♩}} = \text{♩}$

37 E♭m11 Emaj13(♯11) E♭m11 D13(♭9)



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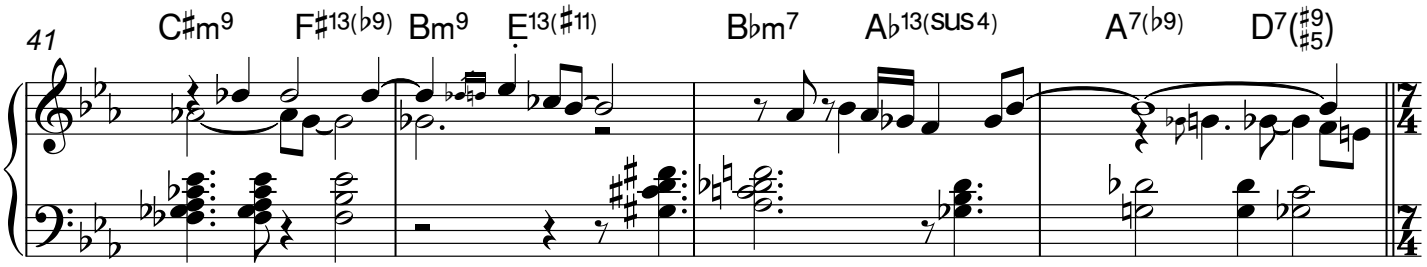

A3 Straight $\text{♩} = \overset{5}{\text{♩}}$

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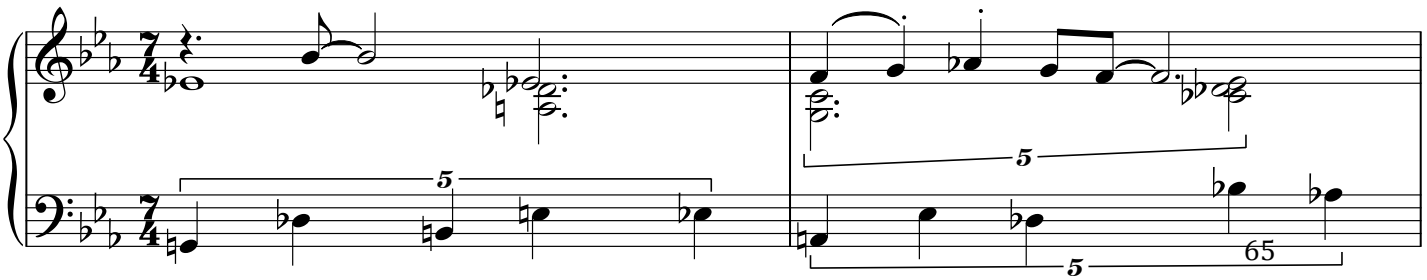

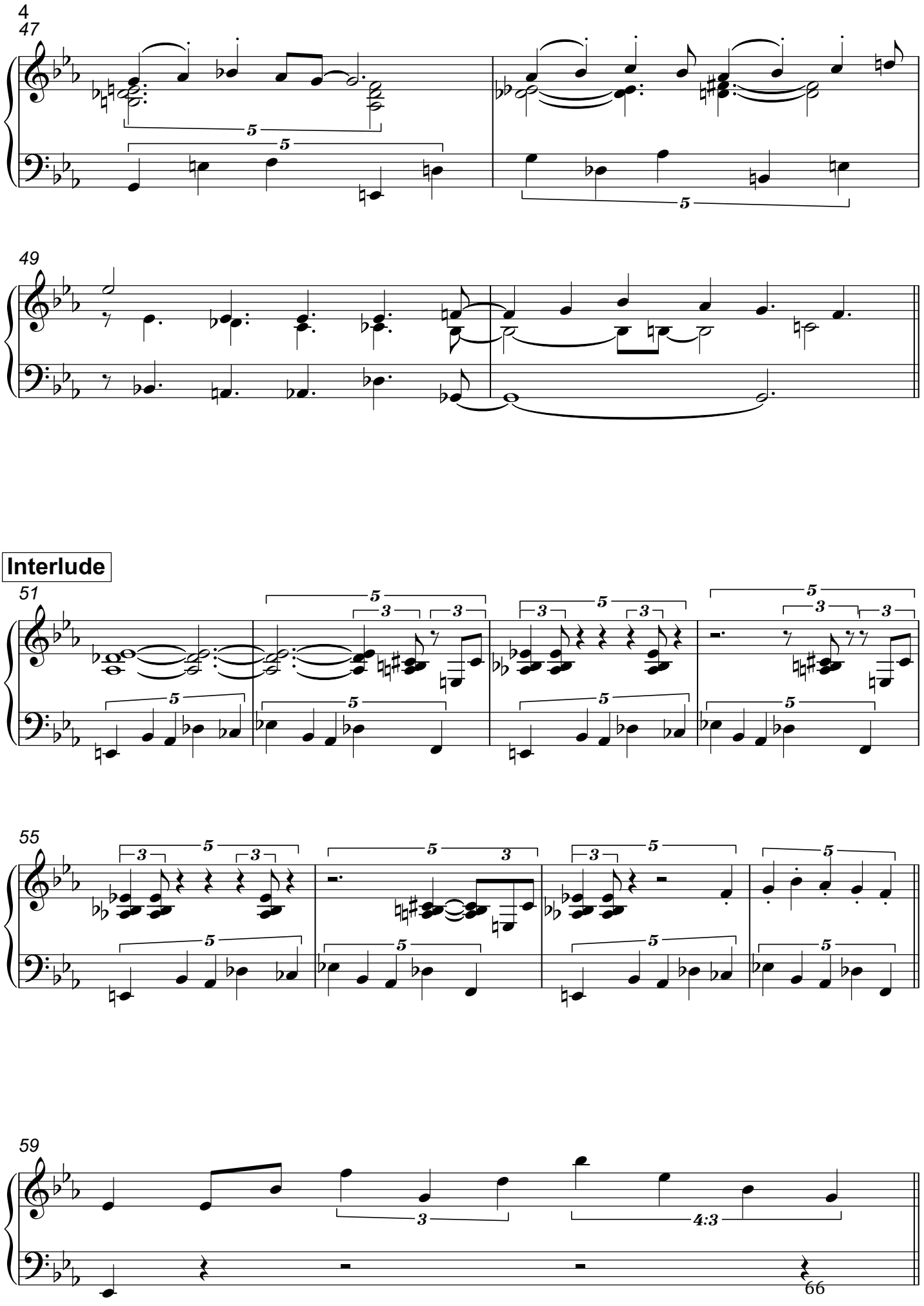
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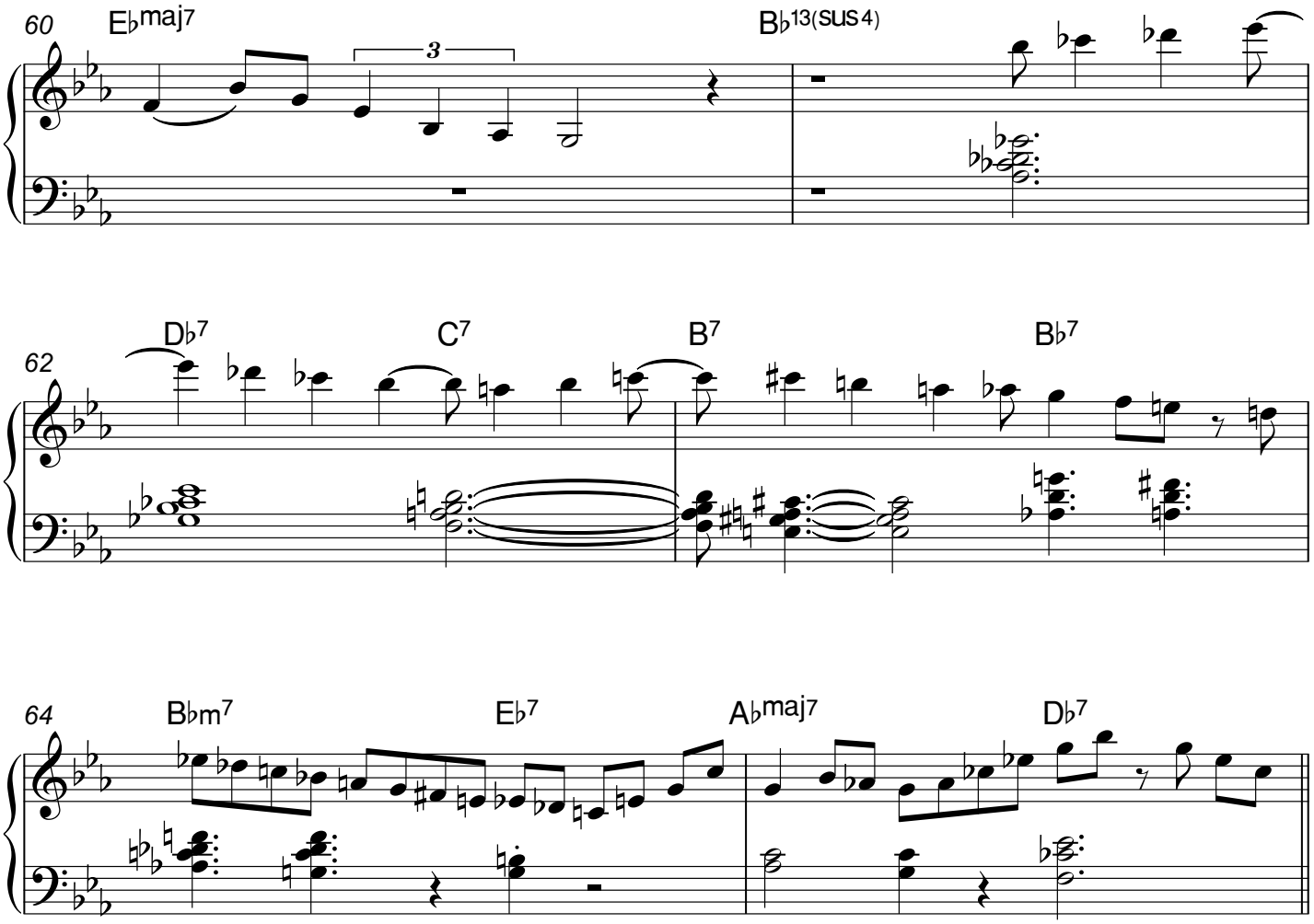
Interlude
51
55
59
66

PIANO SOLO

A1



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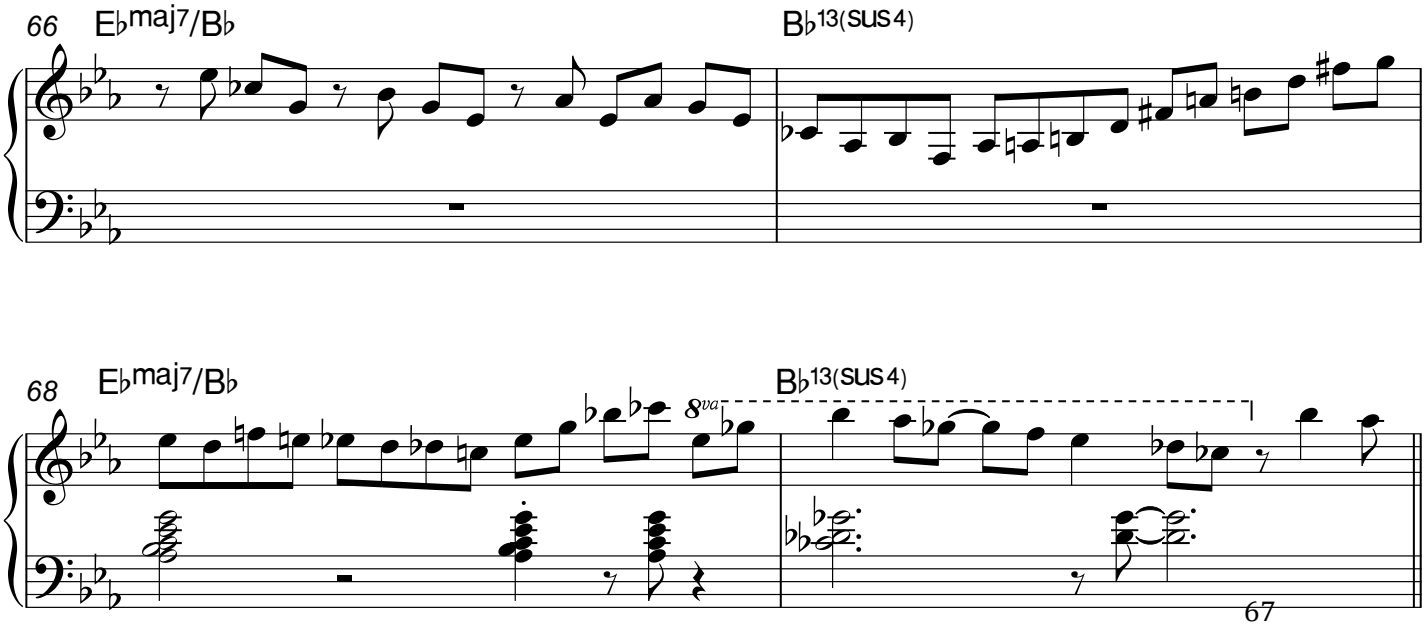

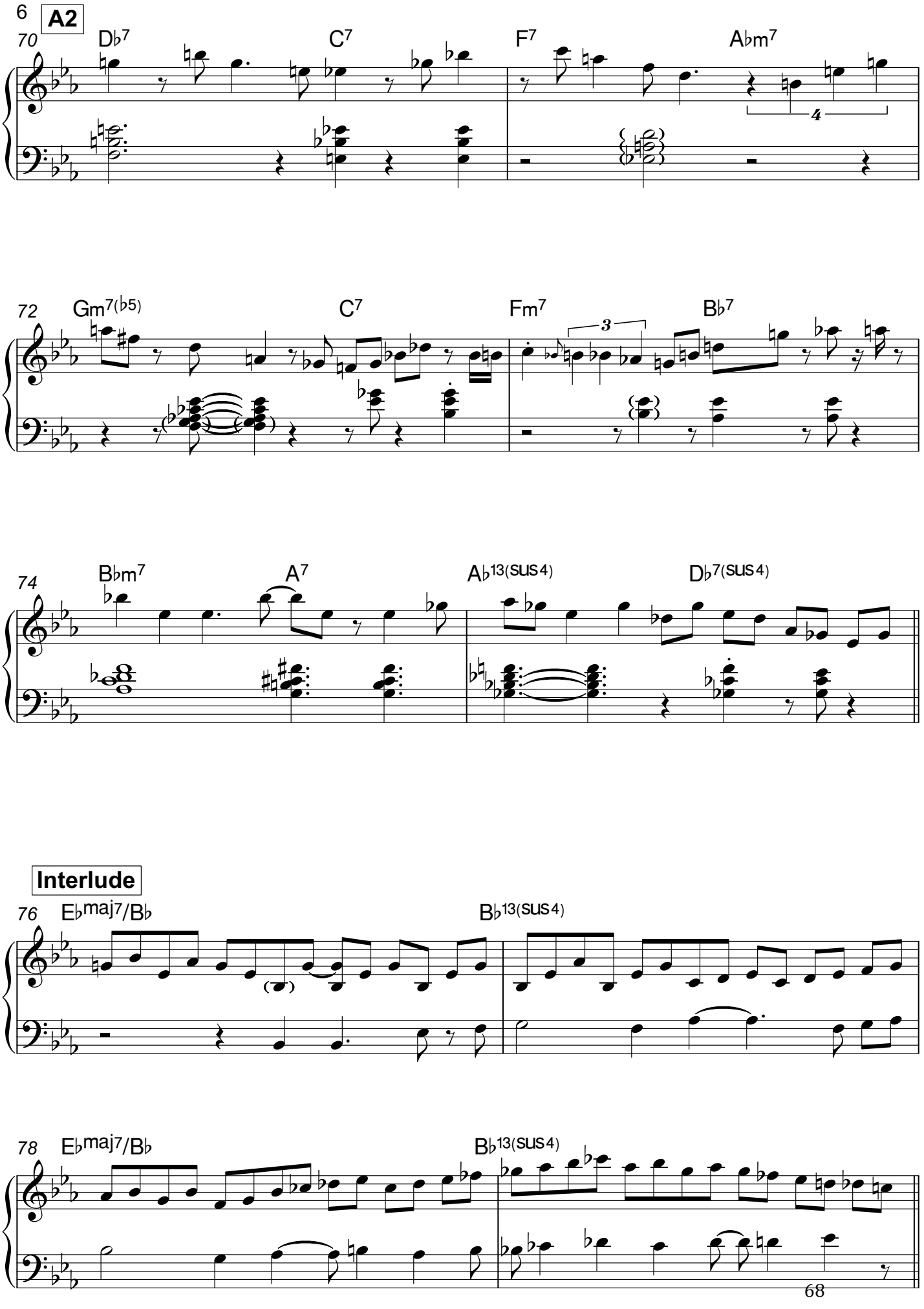
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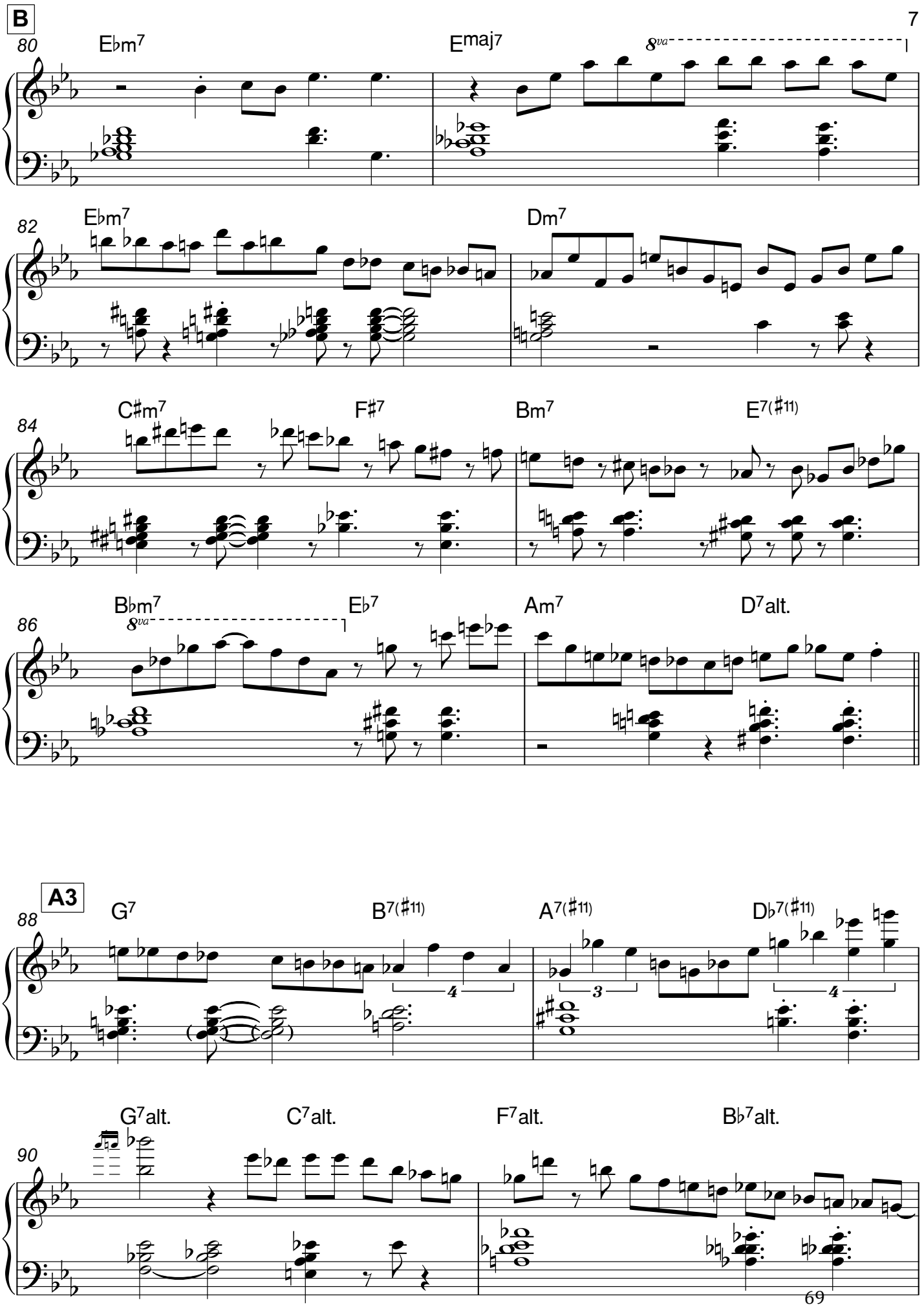
A2
70
D♭7
C7
F7
A♭m7
72
Gm7(♭5)
C7
Fm7
B♭7
74
B♭m7
A7
A♭13(SUS4)
D♭7(SUS4)
Interlude
76
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(SUS4)
78
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(SUS4)


B
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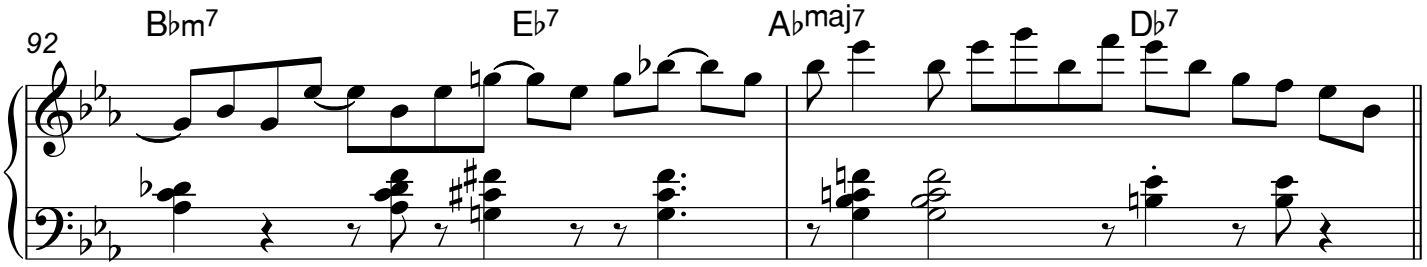
Emaj7
8va
82
E♭m7
Dm7
84
C♯m7
F♯7
Bm7
E7(♯11)
86
B♭m7
8va
E♭7
Am7
D7alt.
A3
88
G7
B7(♯11)
A7(♯11)
D♭7(♯11)
3
4
4
90
G7alt.
C7alt.
F7alt.
B♭7alt.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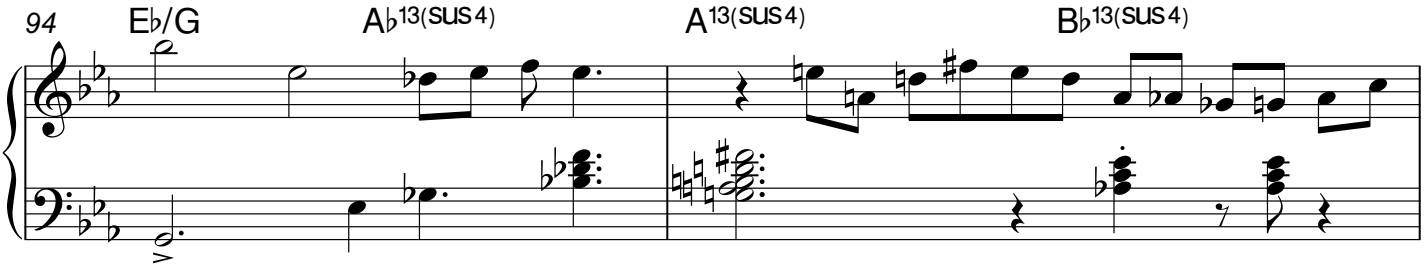
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭maj7
D♭7

Interlude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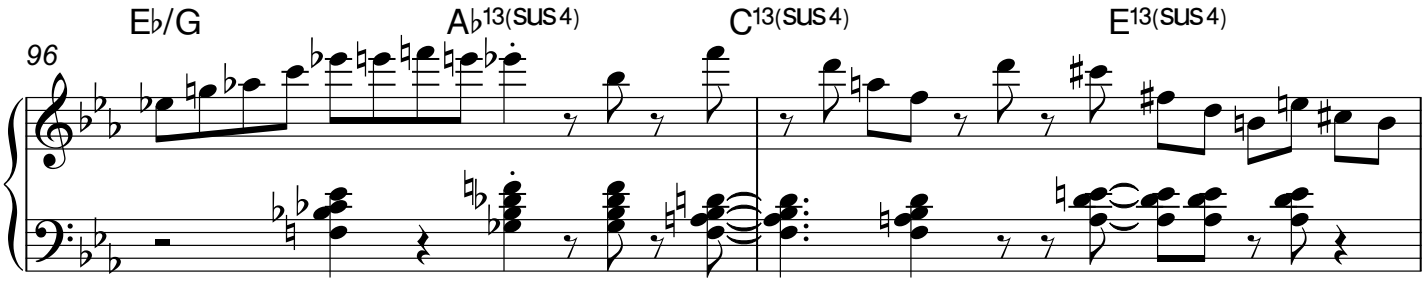
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)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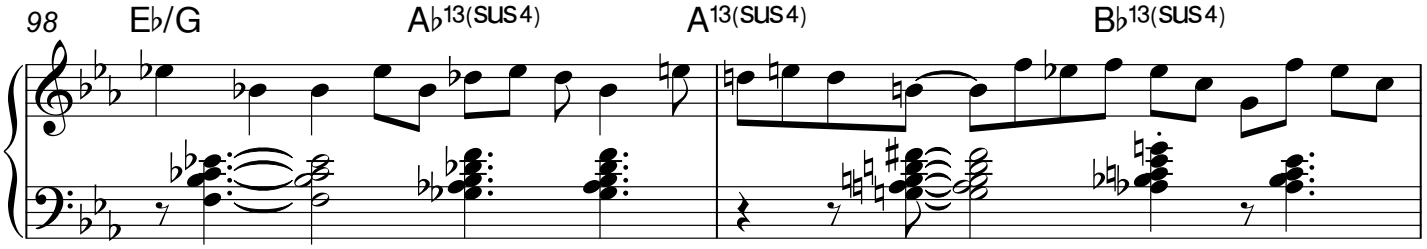
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)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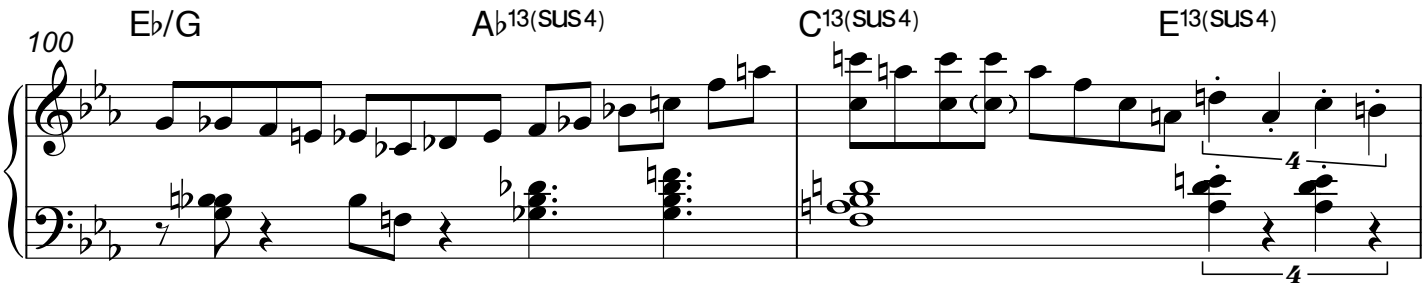
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)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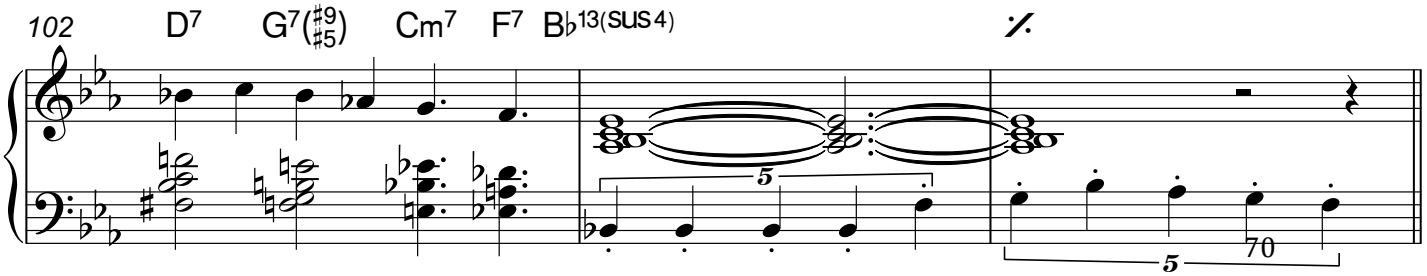
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
4
4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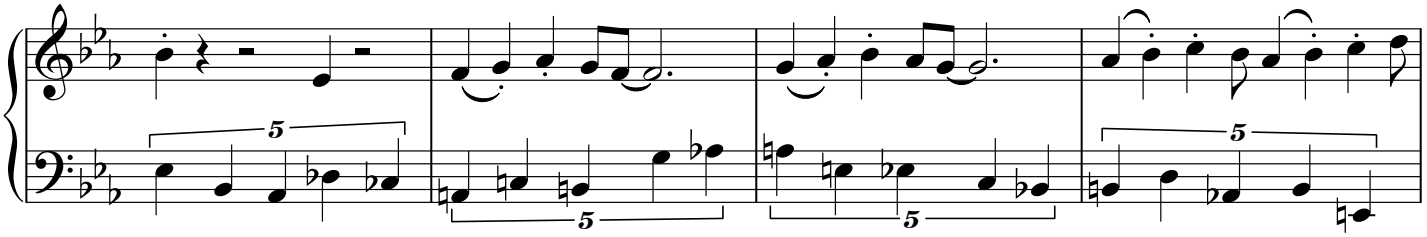
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
B♭13(SUS4)
5
5

MELODY

A1

105



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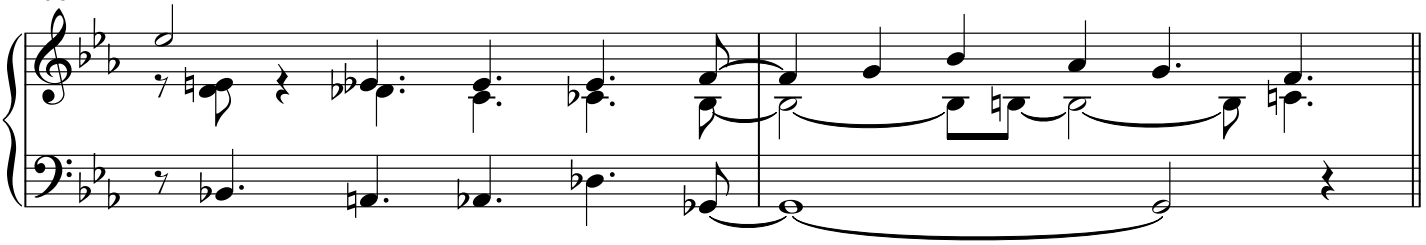
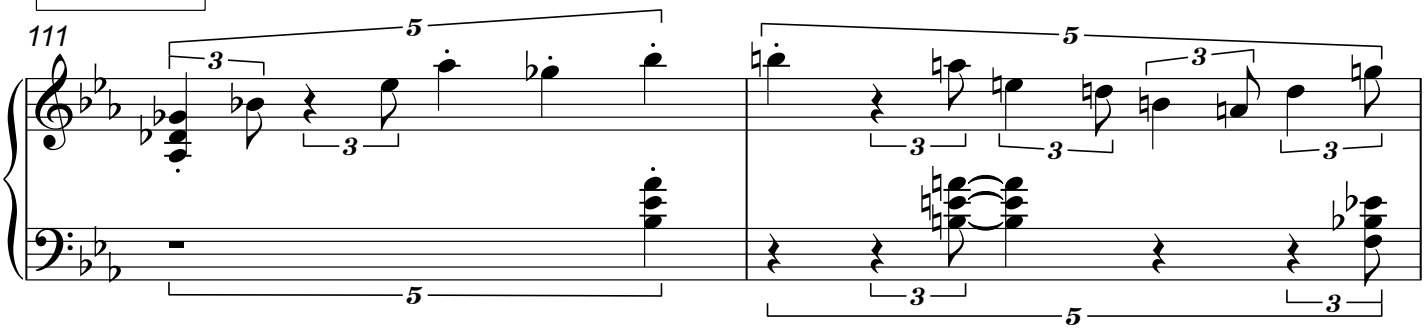


Interlude

111



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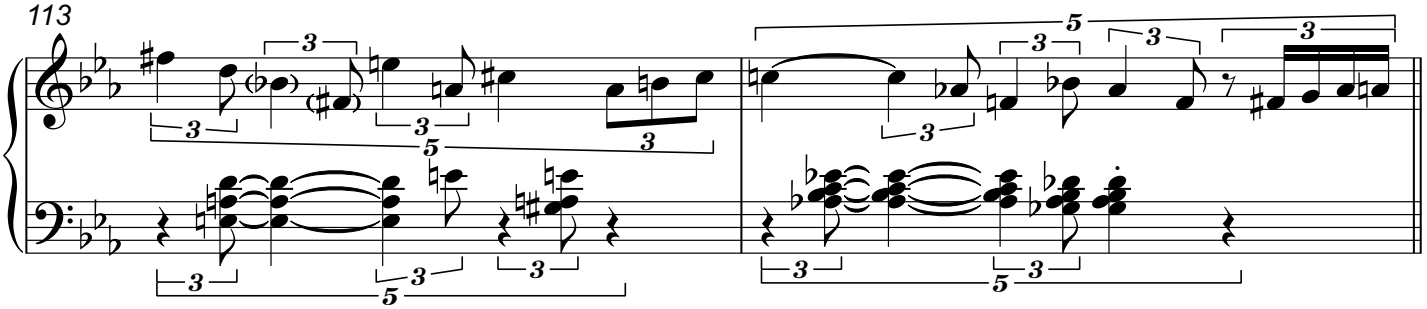

A2

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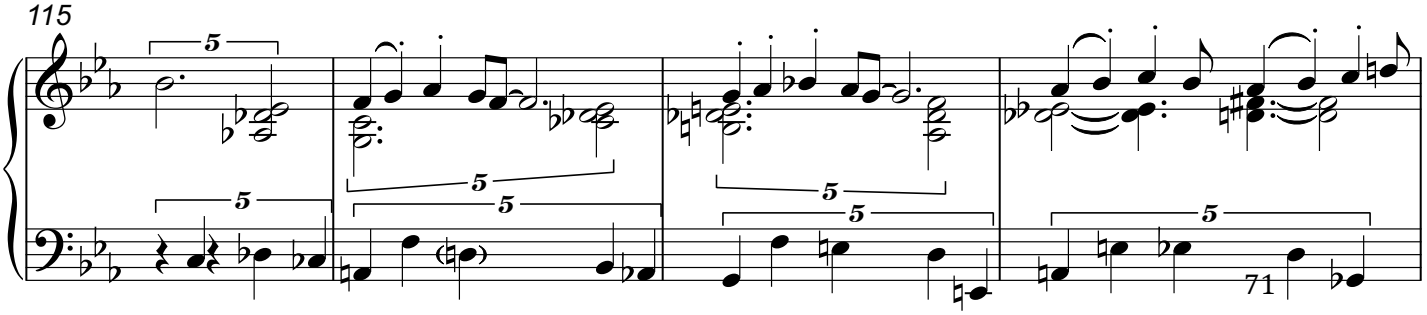

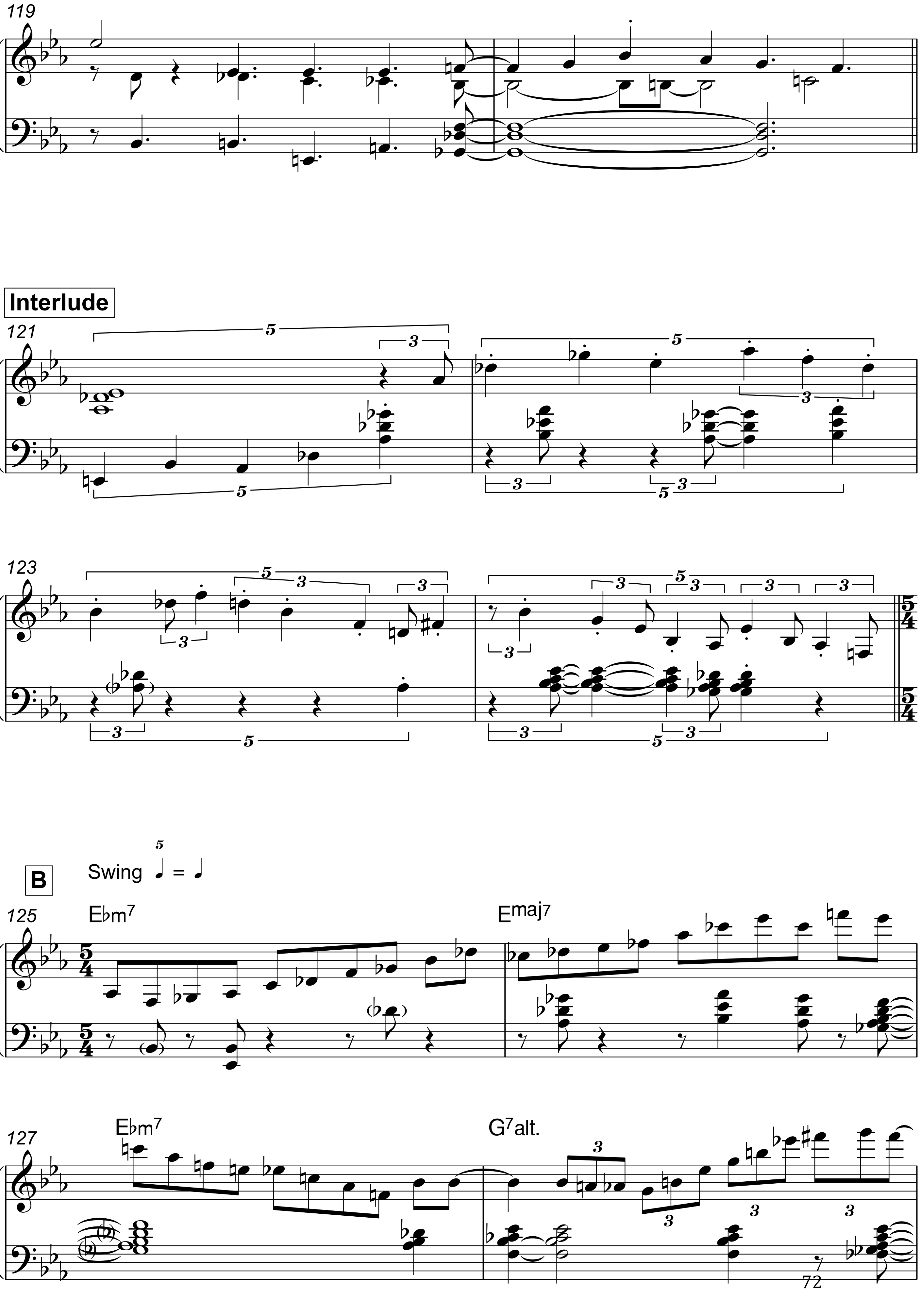
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Interlude
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5
3
123
B
Swing
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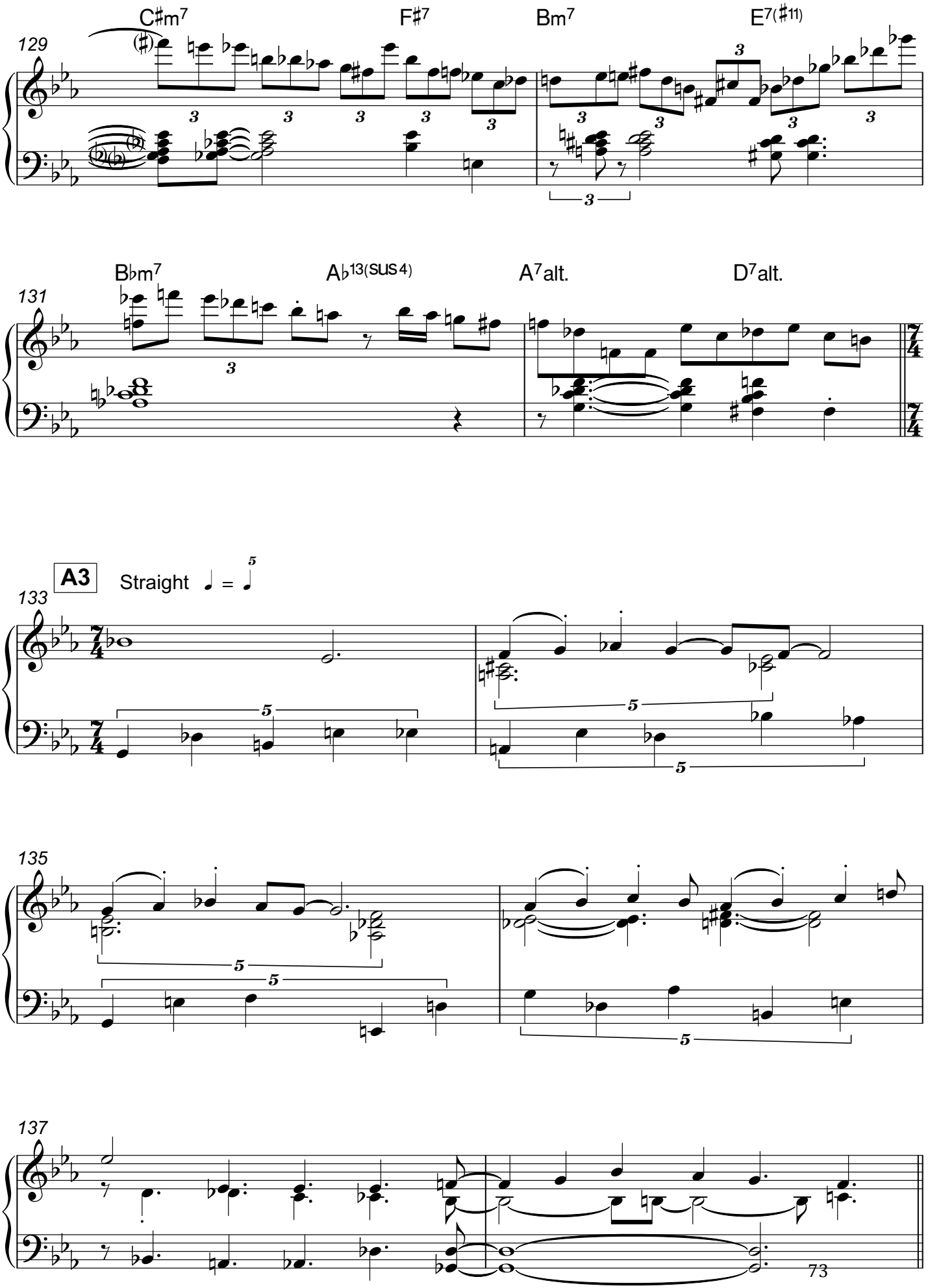
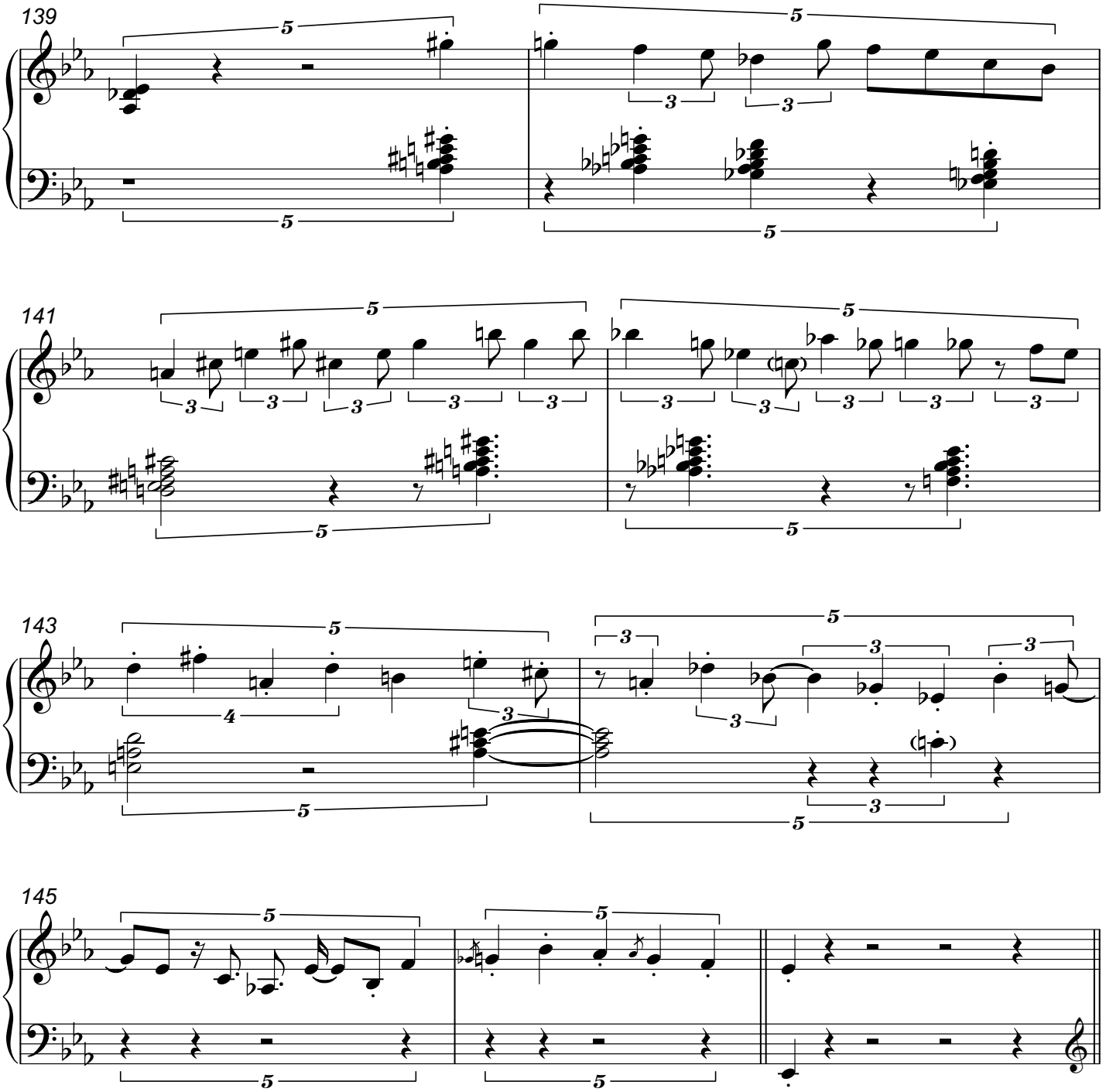
E♭m7
Emaj7
127
E♭m7
G7alt.

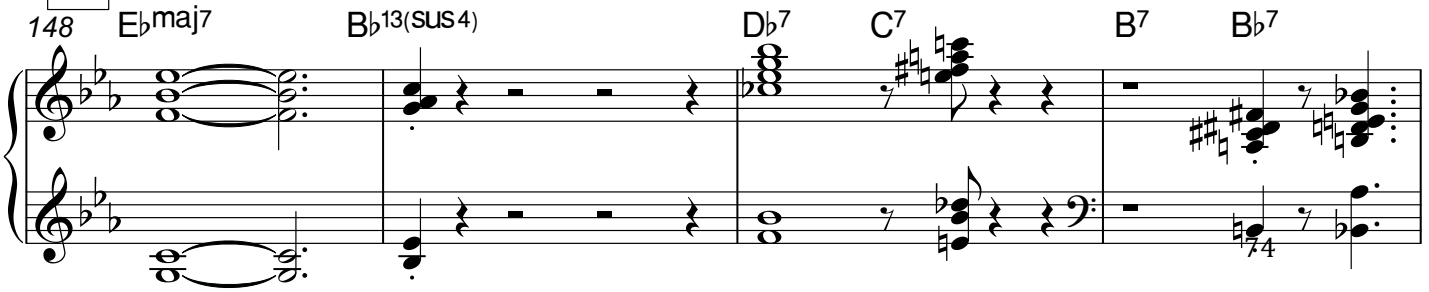

C♯m7
F♯7
Bm7
E7(♯11)
129
B♭m7
A♭13(SUS4)
A7alt.
D7alt.
131
A3
Straight ♩ = 𝅗𝅥
133
135
137

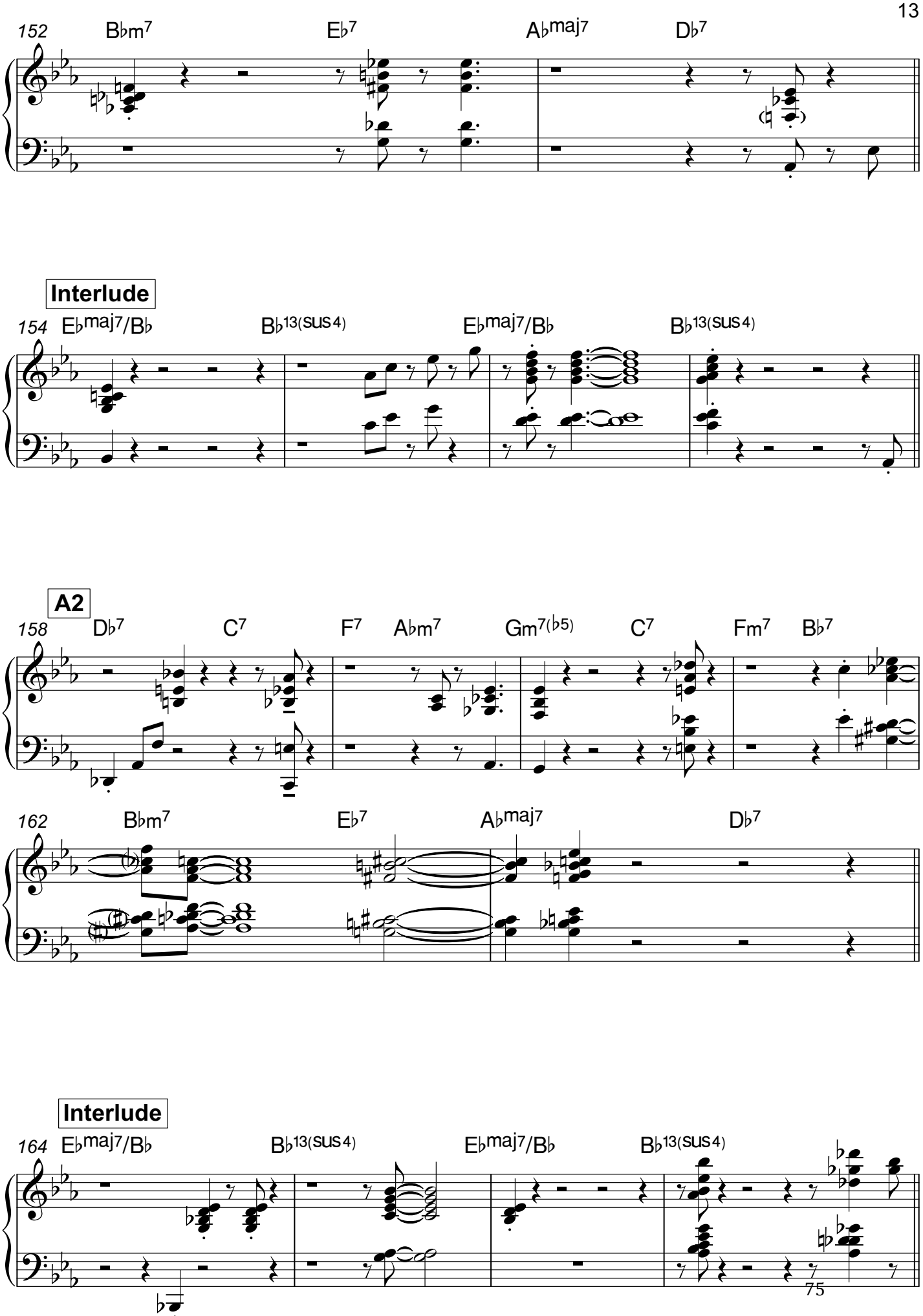
Interlude



BASS SOLO

A1

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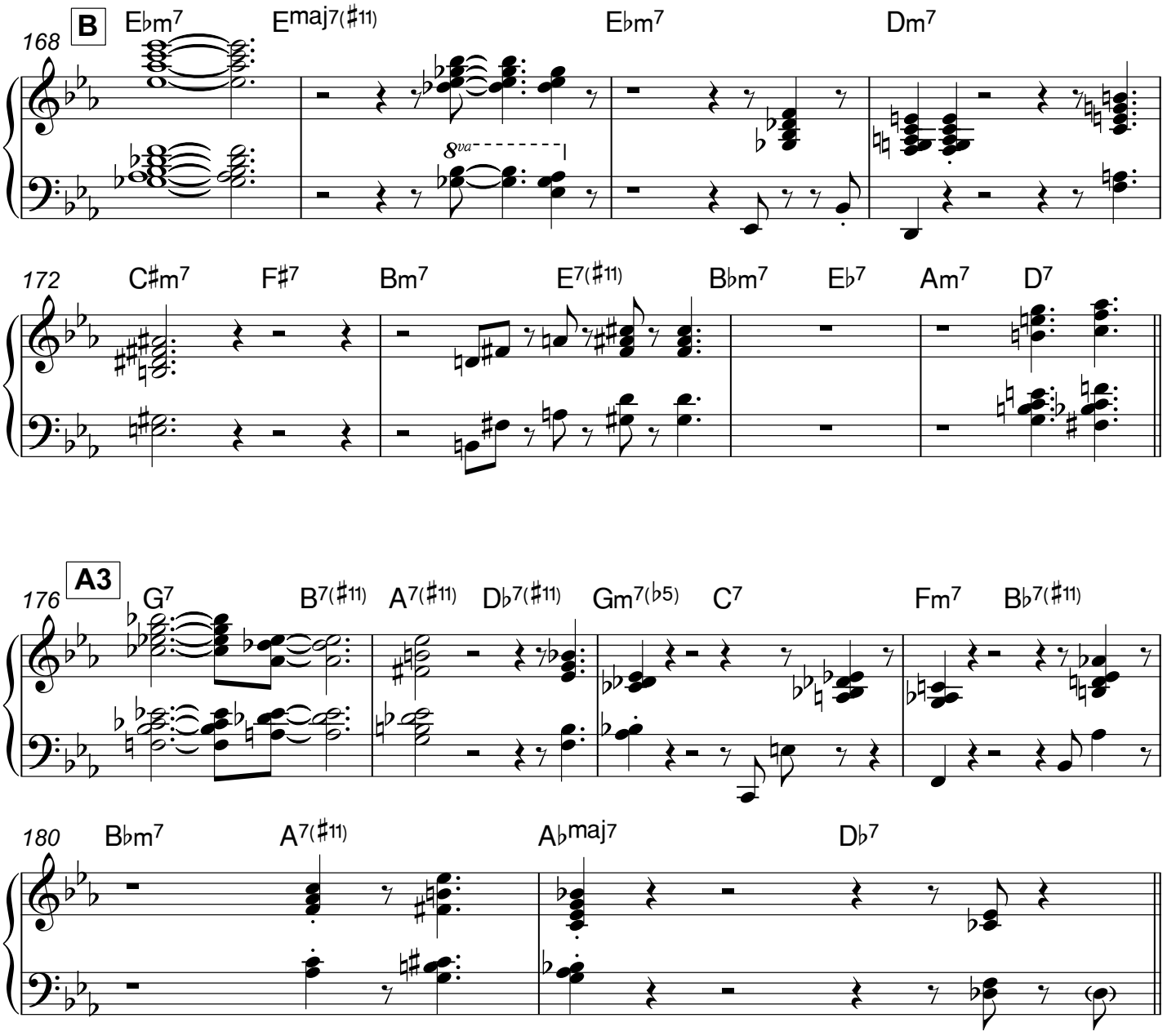
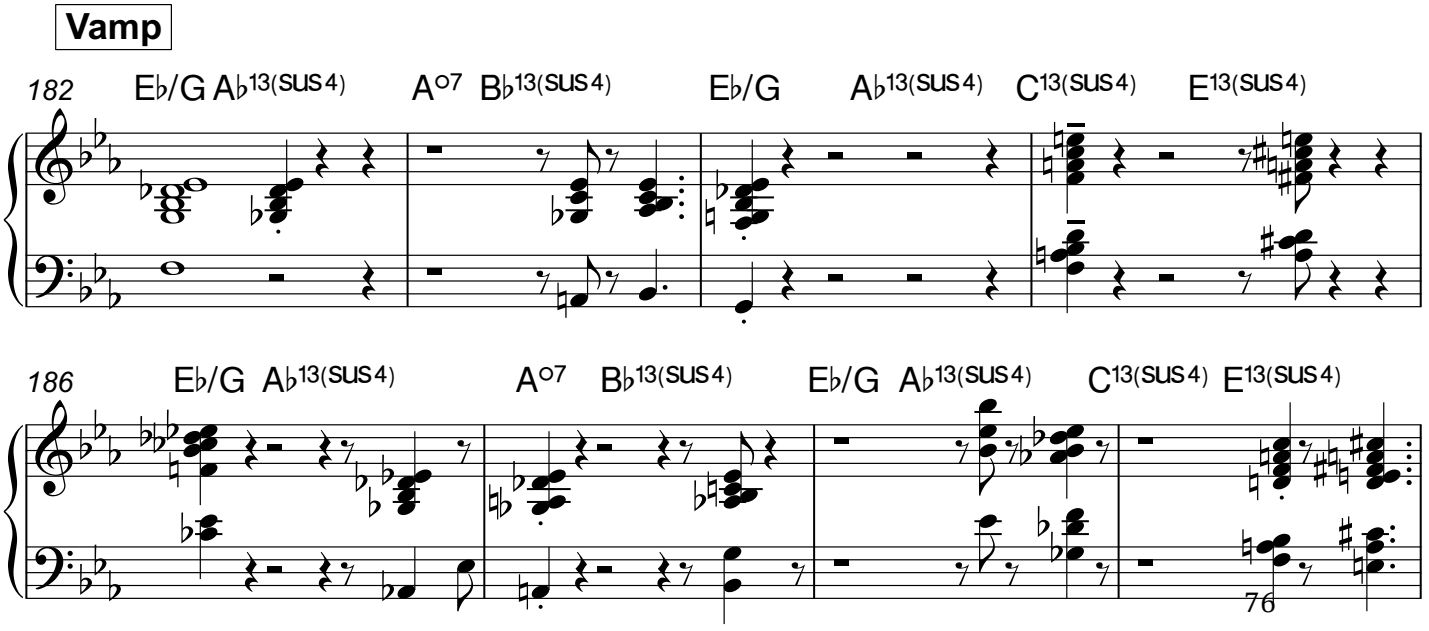
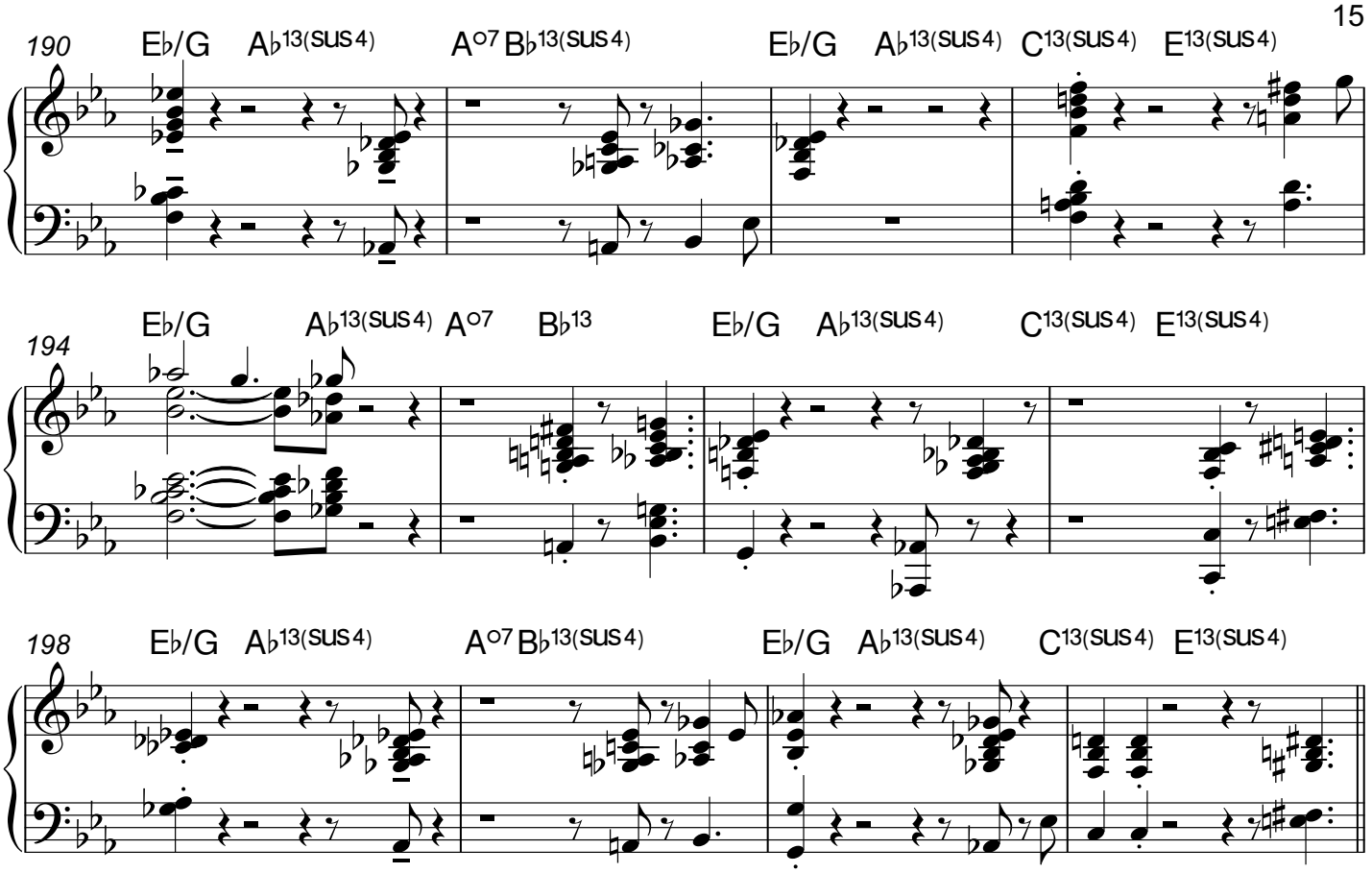
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭maj7
D♭7
Interlude
154
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(sus4)
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(sus4)
A2
158
D♭7
C7
F7
A♭m7
Gm7(♭5)
C7
Fm7
B♭7
162
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭maj7
D♭7
Interlude
164
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(sus4)
E♭maj7/B♭
B♭13(sus4)


B
168
E♭m7
Emaj7(♯11)
E♭m7
Dm7
8va
172
C♯m7
F♯7
Bm7
E7(♯11)
B♭m7
E♭7
Am7
D7

A3
176
G7
B7(♯11)
A7(♯11)
D♭7(♯11)
Gm7(♭5)
C7
Fm7
B♭7(♯11)
180
B♭m7
A7(♯11)
A♭maj7
D♭7


Vamp
182
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A°7
B♭13(SUS4)
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
186
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A°7
B♭13(SUS4)
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)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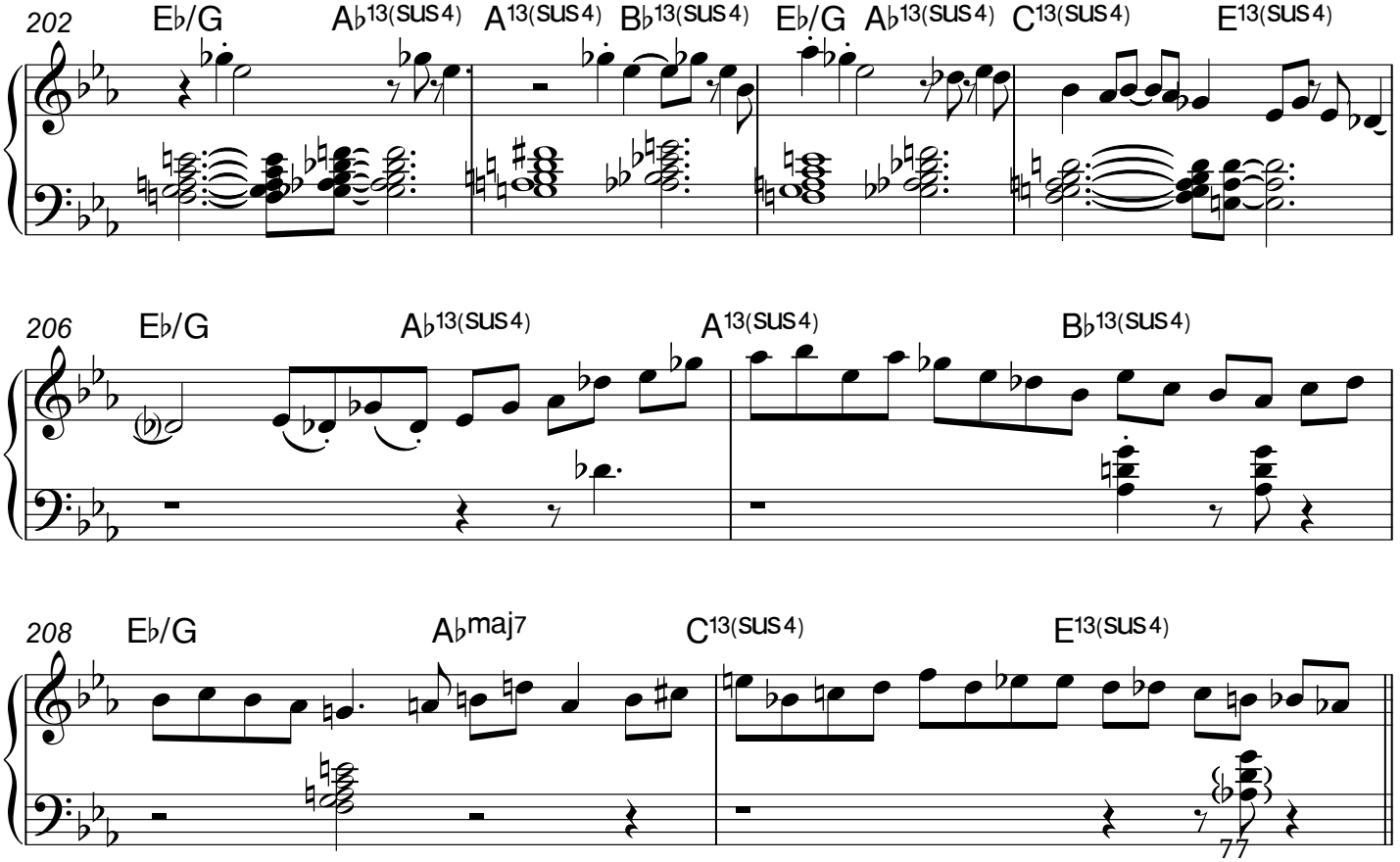
194
E♭/G A♭13(SUS4) A°7 B♭13 E♭/G A♭13(SUS4) C13(SUS4) E13(SUS4)
198
E♭/G A♭13(SUS4) A°7 B♭13(SUS4) E♭/G A♭13(SUS4) C13(SUS4) E13(SUS4)

PIANO SOLO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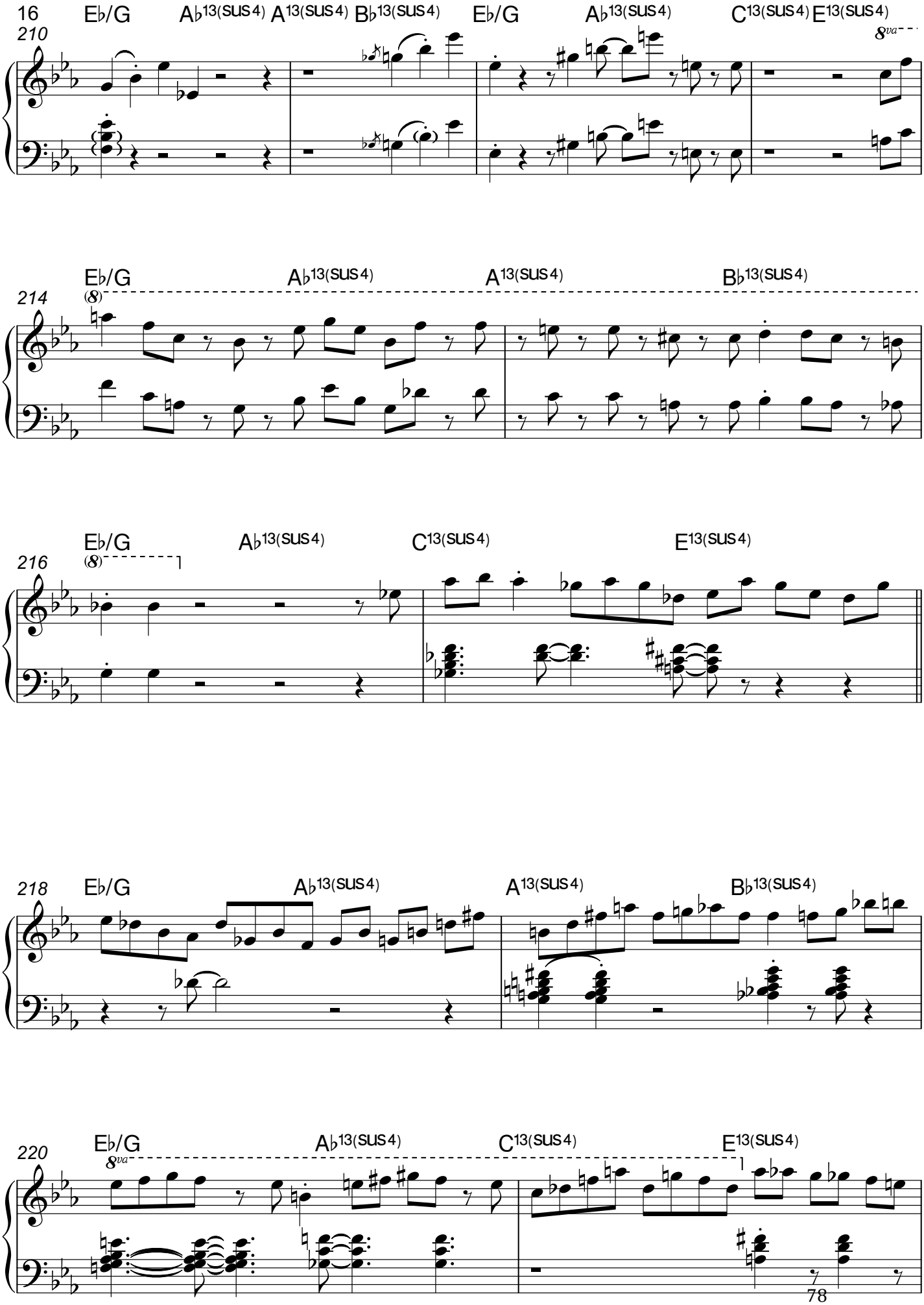
206
E♭/G A♭13(SUS4) A13(SUS4) B♭13(SUS4)
208
E♭/G A♭maj7 C13(SUS4) E13(SUS4)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210
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
8va
214
E♭/G
(8)
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
216
E♭/G
(8)
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
218
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
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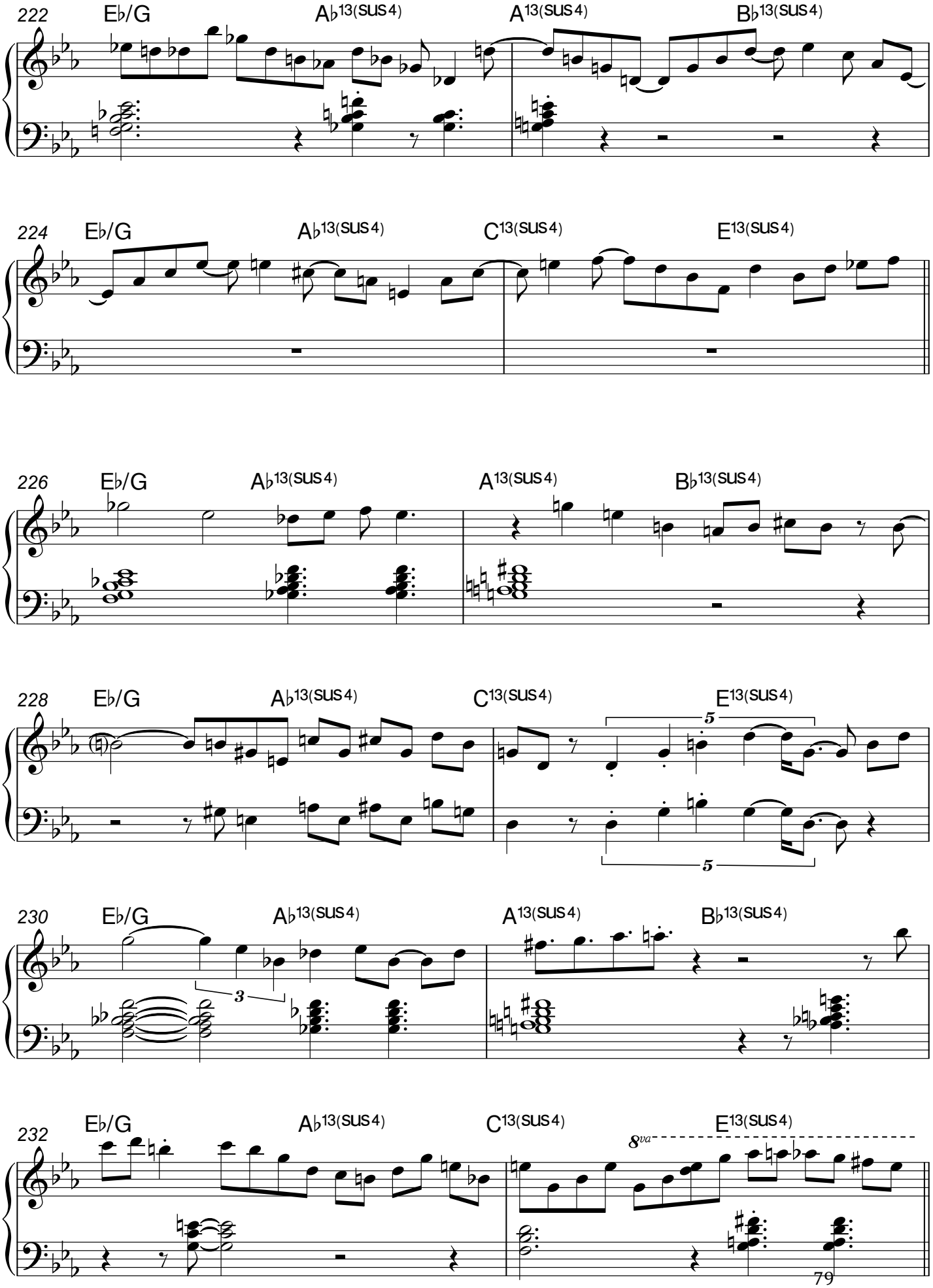
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)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E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
224
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
226
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
228
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
5
5
230
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
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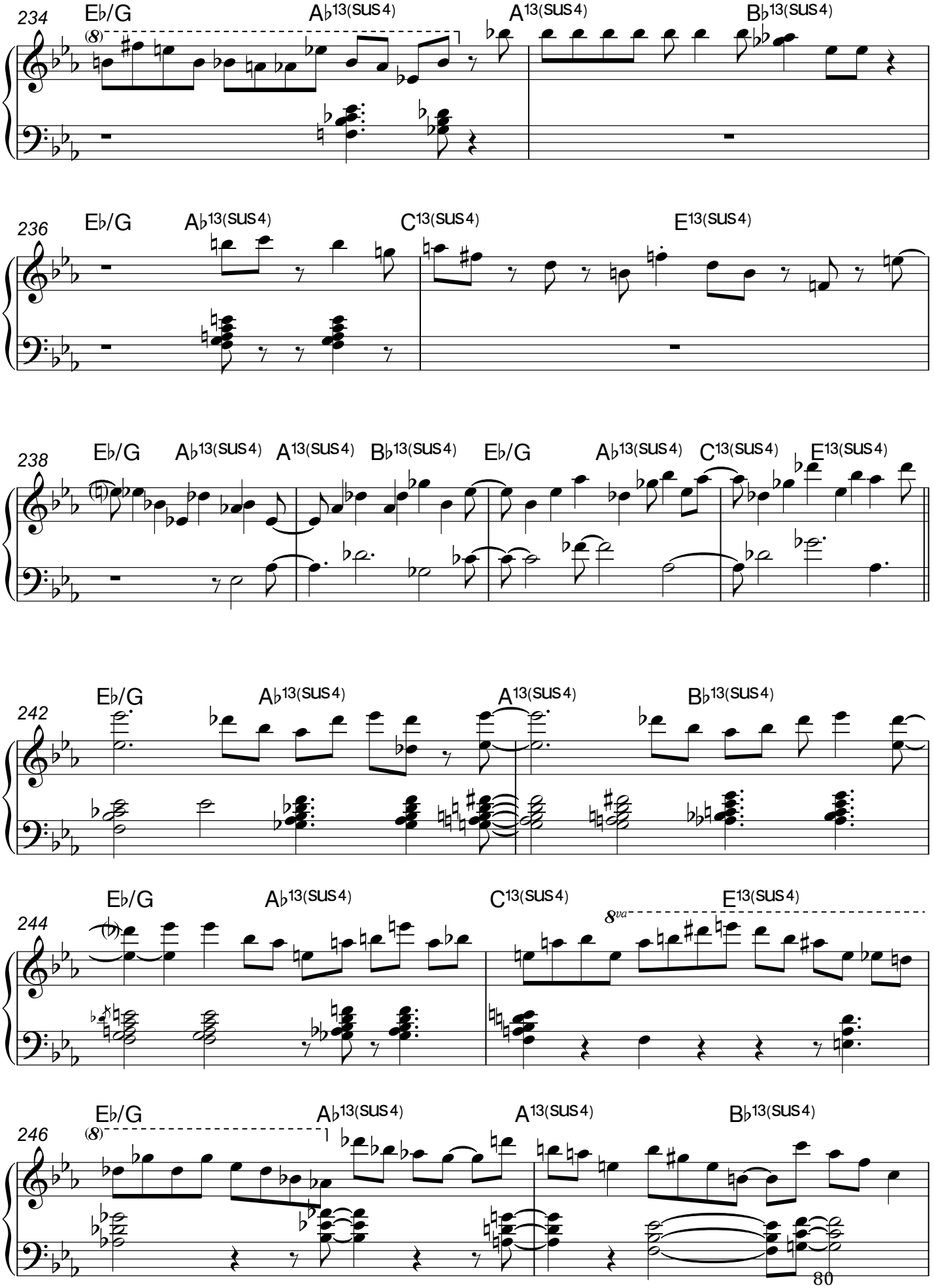
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
8va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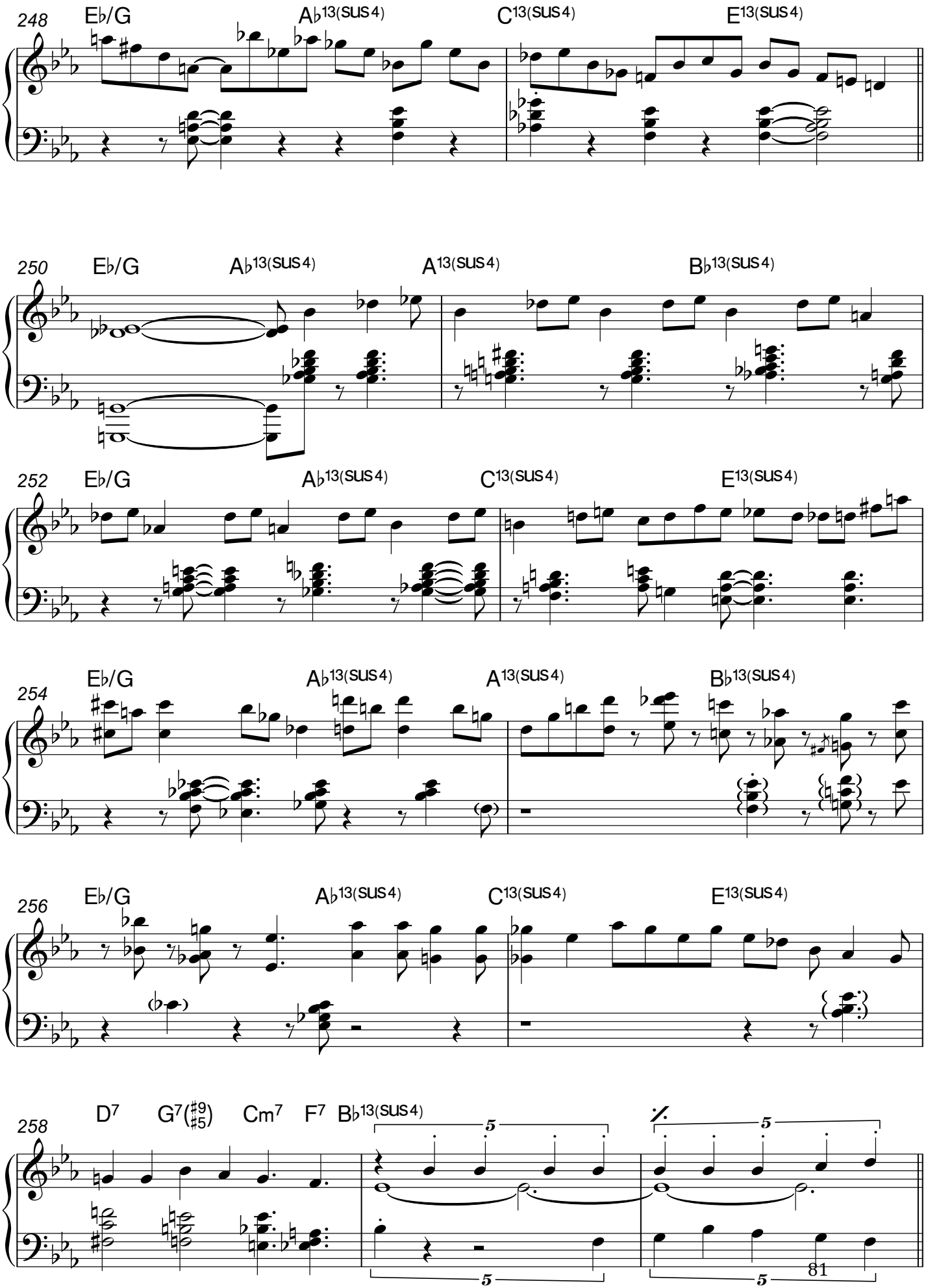
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
236
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
238
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
242
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
244
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
8va
246
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)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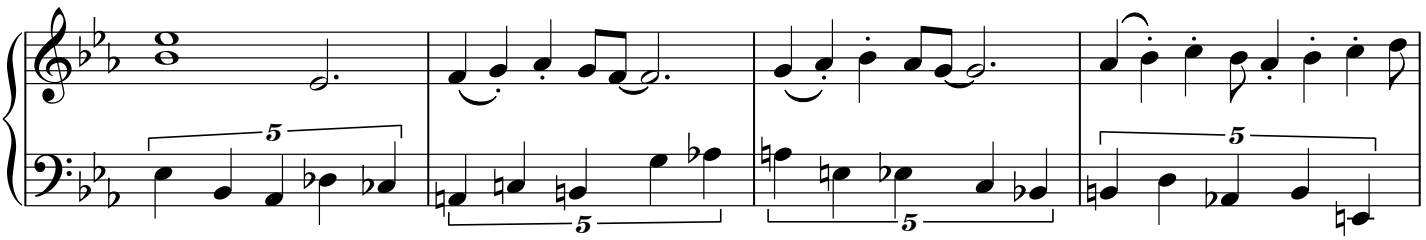
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
250
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
252
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
254
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
A13(SUS4)
B♭13(SUS4)
256
E♭/G
A♭13(SUS4)
C13(SUS4)
E13(SUS4)
258
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
B♭13(SUS4)
5
5
5
5

20 **MELODY**

A1

261



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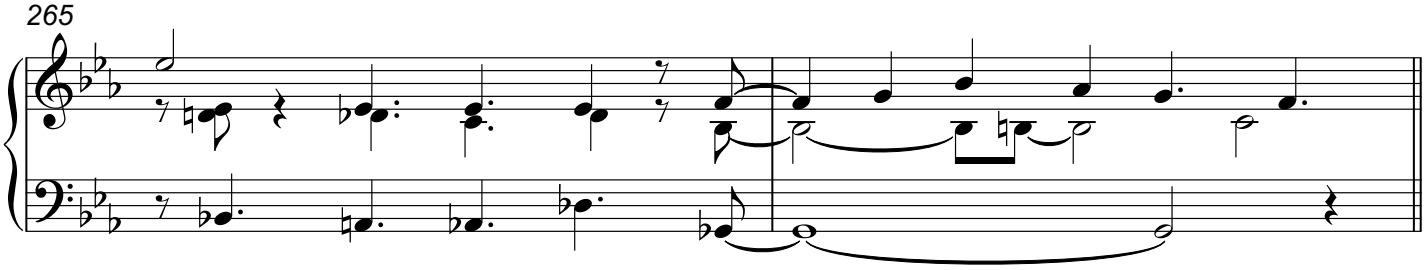
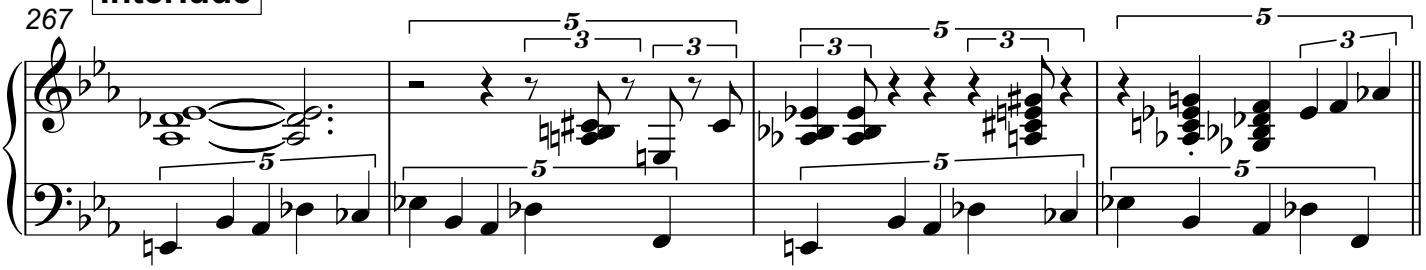


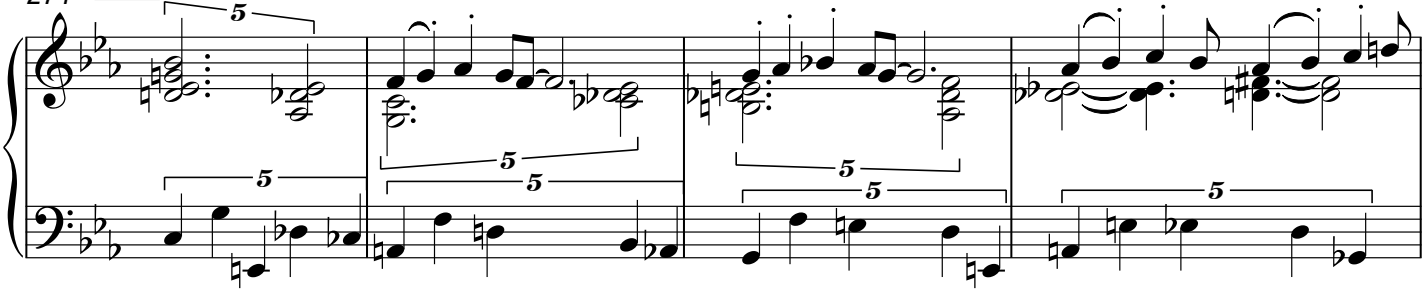
Interlude

267



A2

271



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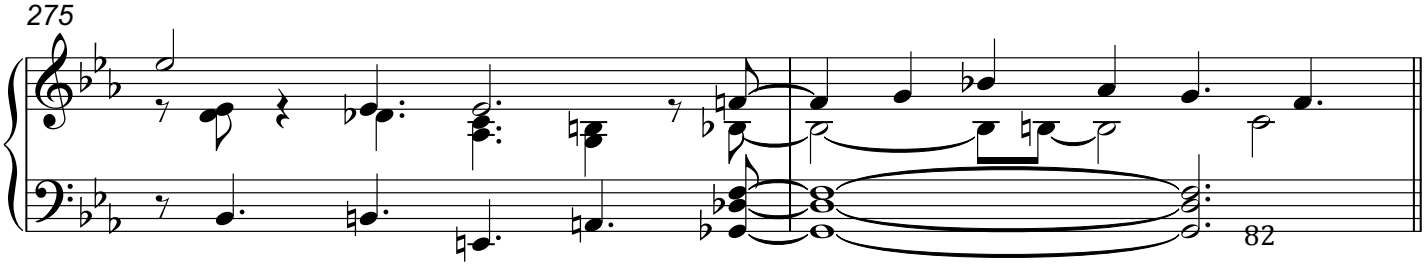
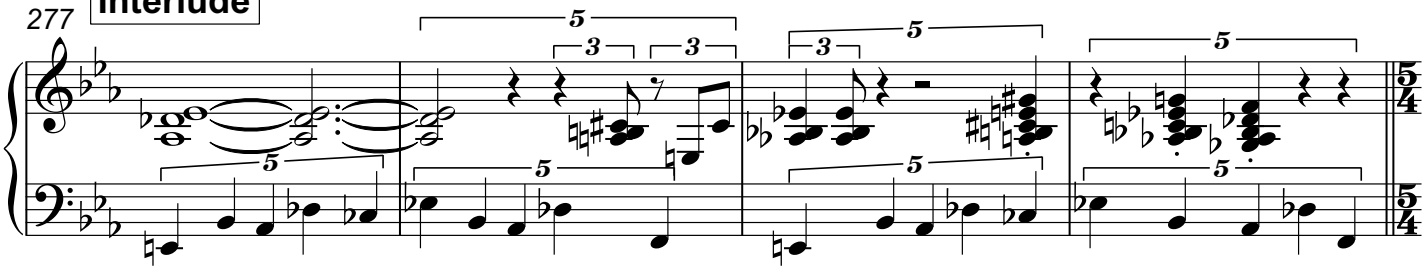
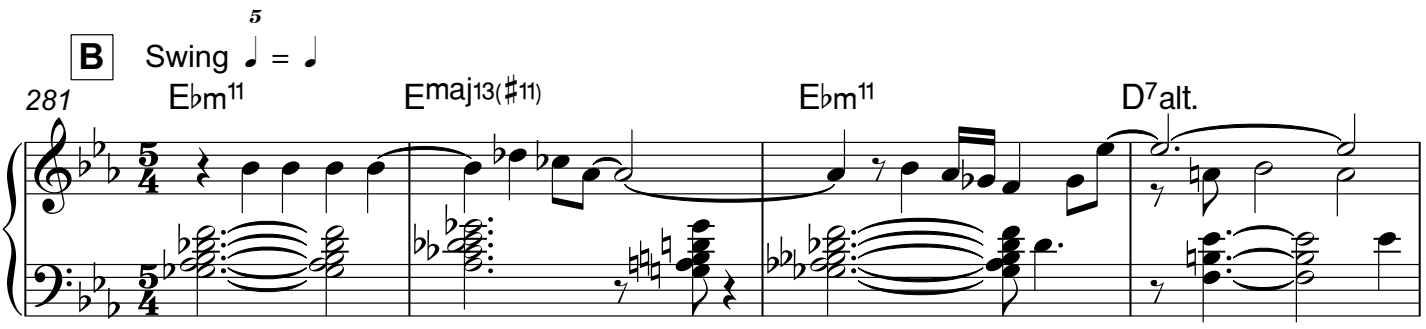


277 **Interlude**

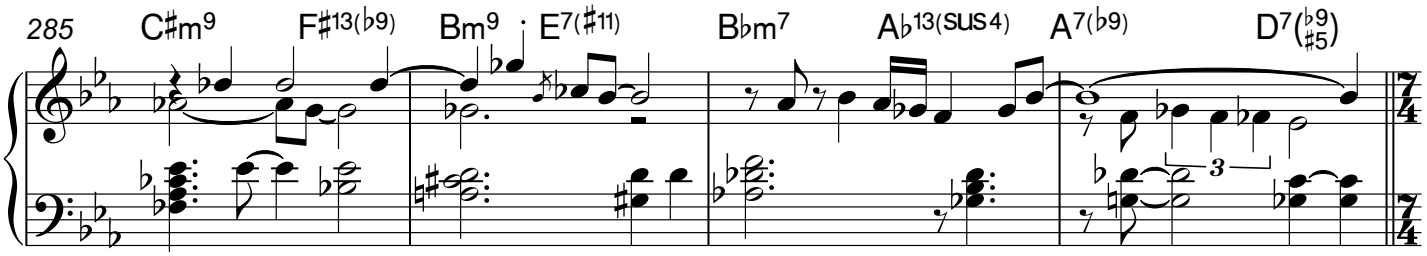


B Swing ♩ = ♩

281 E♭m11 Emaj13(♯11) E♭m11 D7alt.

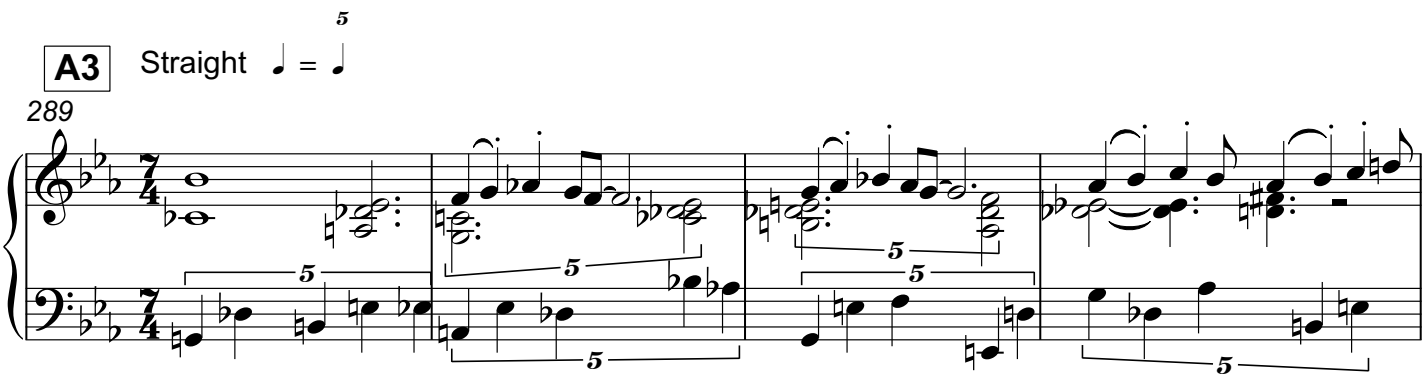


285 C♯m9 F♯13(♭9) Bm9 E7(♯11) B♭m7 A♭13(sus4) A7(♭9) D7(♭9 ♯5)



A3 Straight ♩ = ♩

289



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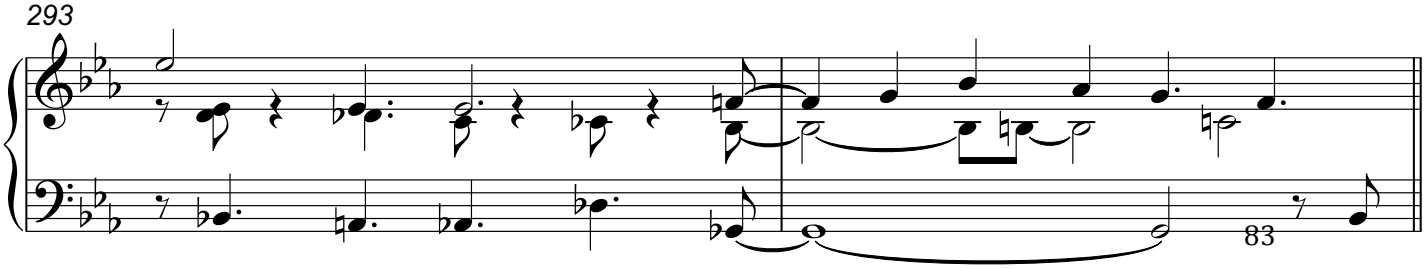
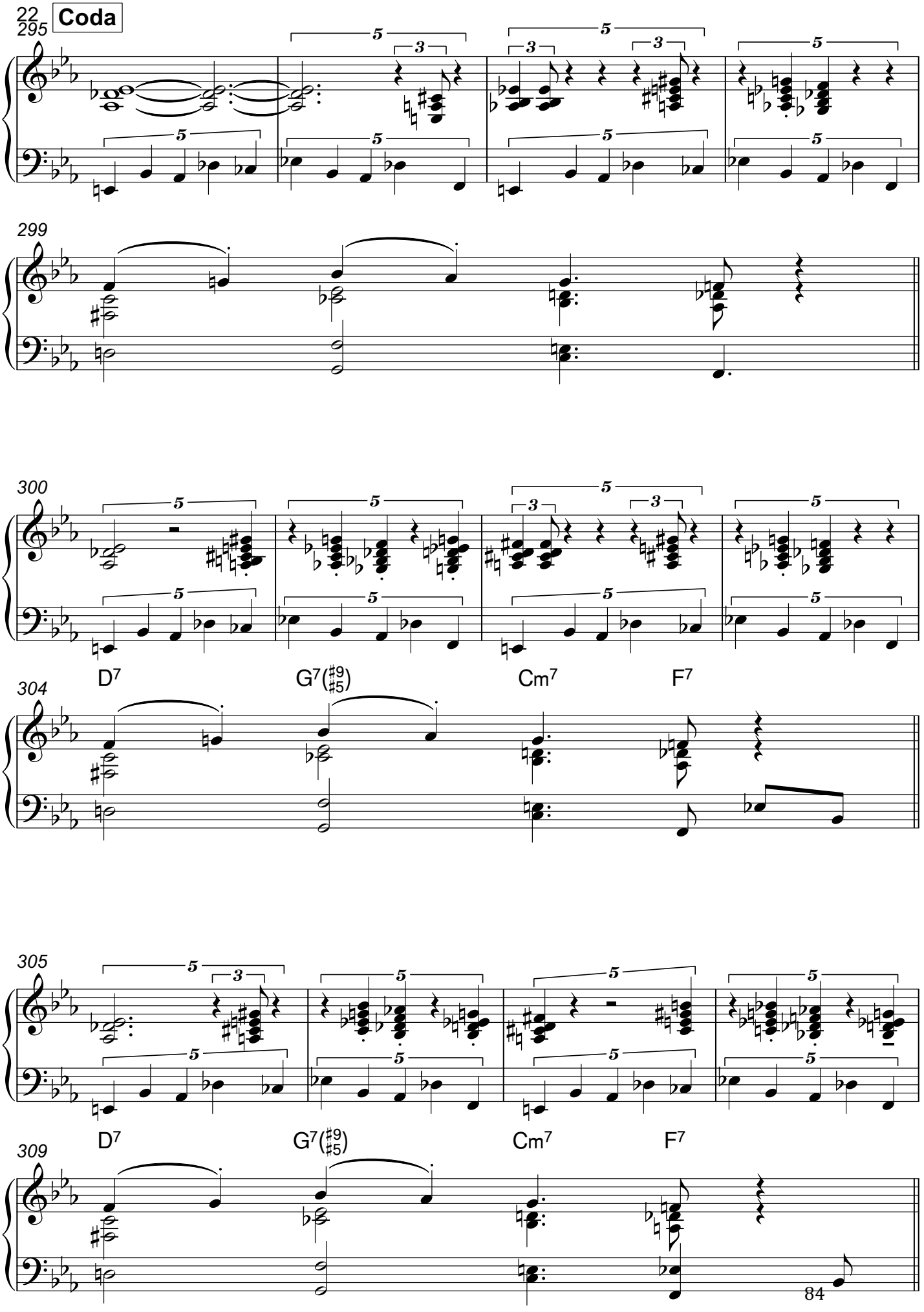
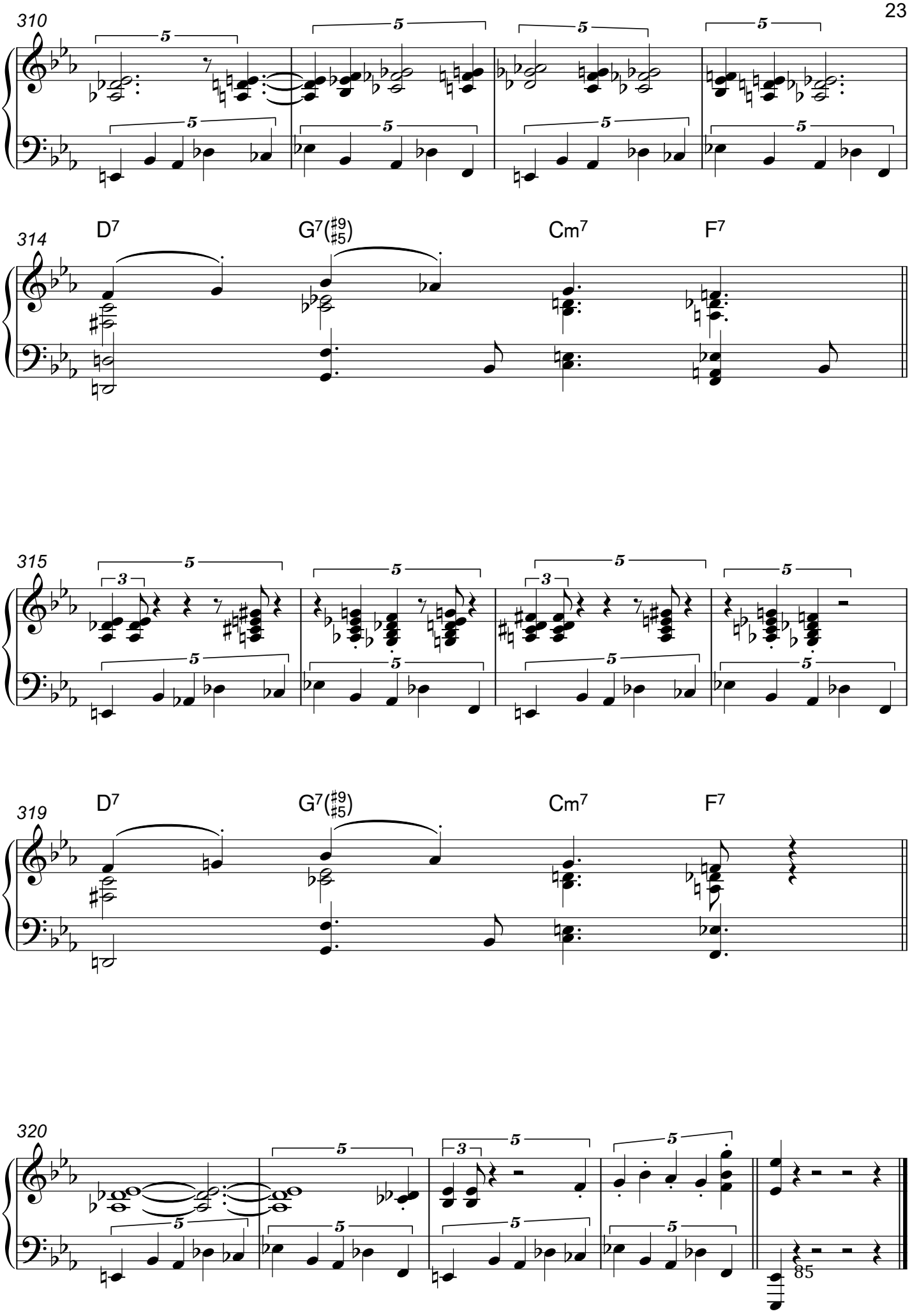



22
295
Coda
299
300
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
304
305
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
309


310
314
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
315
319
D7
G7(♯9 ♯5)
Cm7
F7
320

Appendix B: Transcript of Interview

Conducted October 8, 2016 [BS = Brodie Stewart, GS = Gwilym Simcock

NB: the author's interjections of agreement and interest have been ignored, as well as some stuttering from both parties.

BS: So, what aspects of classical music have influenced your jazz practice?

GS: Um, well I think probably – the – very much a pianistic – um, the pianistic side of it I would say a huge amount, because just the – they're such a general nuts and bolts of physically playing the piano.

Um, I've always found to have had that kind of classical background has been very useful. I mean, of course you don't have to have that, but for me I've always tried to bear in mind the things that I was taught in terms of technique in order to try and – ah to – well I've – I mean, I kind of, I've banged on about this when I teach, but in terms of trying to have a really consistent – ugh, that's a bit scary – err, but really consistent [laughs] – really consistent technique when you play the piano.

Because I teach a lot of people and then it's all about, kind of, if you play loud you do more like that [demonstrates], and then when you quieter it's more like [demonstrates]. And really, that's – there's no way you can have an accurate kind of response to what you do if you've got that kind of an – well, for me anyway – I feel like, to have an accurate technique, however hard or soft you're playing, um, is crucial to be able to accurately carry out the instructions that your brain is sending to your fingers. So if you have like an arbitrary figure to – stop me if this is boring and obvious…

BS: No, this is – this is fantastic. It's really interesting.

GS: If you're on like an arbitrary scale from, say, zero to a hundred, um, of level, and you want to play at eighty, then you've got to be able to have everything consistent so I can go "right, eighty is this, and then sixty is this." So if you're voicing a chord, for instance, then you might want the top note to be eighty, the middle chords to be sixty five, and the bass note to be seventy, 'cause you want – might want the bass note to stand out a bit.

Um, so – so having that consistency means that when you decide to make that musical decision, um, it – your fingers do what it – the result of it is what you wanted. Whereas if your technique has already got a kind of random factor to it then it's impossible to have that kind of precision to what you're trying to do. Um, and that feels like something I learnt from classical music.

I mean, of course, unfortunately with the piano if you're – certainly if you're playing solo piano – then the two most important fingers, or the two fingers that have so much to do are your two little fingers at the bottom and the top. So working on that kind of thing, you know the "three, four, five" fingers, sort of getting them as strong as possible, again, is a sort of important thing. And I think if, you know, if you're playing runs when you're improvising, you know

when your chops aren't in because you kind of – those are the ones that kind of fail a little bit and don't feel quite so strong. Your, sort of, first couple are always stronger anyway, but these – these guys are the ones that need a bit more maintenance, I find.

So, I mean jazz is such an amazing thing, and it's sad really that more people don't get, and excited by it because the concept of playing in a band where, you know, you're – at it's best, jazz is like a conversation, and what you're doing in real time is analysing what's going on, transcribing that in your head, working out what your musical response is going to be, then working out how you physically sort of manifest that into playing whatever instrument it is or singing, and then physically hearing it. And all that kind of happens in a split second [clicks], you know, every second of it, of the performance. So I find that's an absolutely, you know, really really exciting thing to think about. But it – that responsibility, and I think responsibility's a really important thing when you play in a band, a responsibility to be in the best shape so that when you're doing all this mental work and you get it down through to your fingers, you can – that response is as accurate as possible.

Um, I think that that's a really really important thing, and for me probably one of the most important parts of practice, I think.

BS: Wow. Yeah, cool. Do you find that's quite hard to do – for example, like, when you're playing at such a high intensity or a high level, um, when the band's kind of all raging and stuff like that - to kind of keep good technique and to not get tense, and, you know, kind of lines start getting sluggish and stuff – do you find that's quite hard to kind of remain, um, not tense and fluent but still have volume and power behind everything?

GS: Well, I think the main thing for me is nerves. I've always had a massive problem with nerves to be honest – performance anxiety. So, being in a nervous situation, I mean, I'm sure you've been there before, you know, all of a sudden these things which feel really solid suddenly turn into jelly, and it's like you've got no – there's – nothing's there.

Um, so again, that feels like an important reason to do practice, because I know personally that I'll probably only be playing at like eighty – seventy or eighty percent of what I feel like I could do if I was in my music room on my own, because I'll be nervous. So, really you're trying to over-practice so that at least that the worst you get to is hopefully okay [laughs].

Um, but I think another thing with that and performance and nerves – coping with the – keeping your fingers strong when you're feeling nervous, but also trying to play melodies, I mean that kind of is the hardest thing. I think when we're uncomfortable, if you're playing on a shit instrument, or it's a nerve-wracking situation, or it's a slightly shit situation, then the first thing to go is space. You know, you just try and fill up the gap with sound, you know, if you're playing in a really dead room or something, it's like you playing something and it's like 'ugh', and then you play something else to cover that. If you're playing on a beautiful grand piano in a lovely hall then you can just go 'bang' and it's lovely, and you leave space. So, to actually try and to find that humanity in what you play is something which I think is really – that's something I have to really think about when it's all going 'tits up' a little bit, you know.

BS: Yeah, sure. Do you find, like, just with the performance anxiety thing, do you find like it's, err, easier or harder in a recording situation vs. live?

GS: Um, harder. Definitely harder because you know that whatever you do is going to be documented forever, I mean, through the recording you have the opportunity to cherry pick, which is great, um, but, you do have that thing of thinking "oh shit, this is…" – you know, every little slip that you do, or every thing that feels like it's slightly out of time, um, everyone's going to mull over and think you're shit. So, yeah, that's the challenge with recordings.

Um, and actually, to be honest, I mean, coming from – maybe this all ties in together – but the classical side of it – the thing that I found the hardest in jazz, certainly from the beginning, was the time feel thing, because, you know, melody and harmony – there's such a strong link to classical music. And certainly the harmony that I enjoy in jazz, and try to – well certainly in the last couple of years more so – trying to sort of – sometimes trying to extend harmony a little bit so it's not just your regular chords. That has a lot to do with coming from the classical side. But the rhythmic feel – there's such a difference with the way that you approach it as a classical musician and as a jazz musician. So that was always the thing that I had to work really hard on.

Um, and funny enough, the guy on that album that you've been listening to, Phil Donkin, is just brilliant at time things, and playing like four over five over Thursday over pink over… [Laughs] you know, just he's – he was so mega at that. And really, the two tunes on that album, *The Way You Look Tonight*, and the first tune, um, what's it called, *A Typical Affair*, those two were certainly very much influenced by the fact I was playing with him a lot then and he could do all that stuff, and I was like "right, shit, I need to get my – get stuff together," and that – trying to write stuff to improve that is always a good way to do that, I think.

BS: So they were more exercises for you to be able to achieve a concept, was it?

GS: Yeah, I think a little bit so. Uh, and to be honest, like, a lot of the music I've written over – on various albums over the years, certainly on solo things, are – at least some of it has come from the concept of trying to improve at something. Um, well I think it's nice if you can write music that aids your own learning process maybe.

BS: Yeah definitely. So, well in that case, what was your process for arranging *The Way You Look Tonight*?

GS: I can't really [laughs]…

BS: [Laughs] yeah I know it's probably going back quite a while.

GS: Yeah, next question! Um, no, I think the idea of just doing the – is it poly – do you call it polyrhythms? I suppose if you're doing four over three or three over two, you know, like, more than one superimposed on top of the other. And it just occurred to me that, you know, you do the four – you can do four over three, which is an obvious thing and then three over two is a kind of obvious thing. And that's not a million miles away from then seven over five. Um, obviously evened out a bit. You can sort of get an approximation of that by doing four over three and then three over two. Um, if that makes any sense. And

then…

BS: Yeah. That's really interesting 'cause part of the analysis that I was looking at was just like, uh, trying to work out an easy way to approach, like, uh, the whole five over seven sort of thing. And same thing – yeah we kind of broke it down into – you could maybe do like, you know, minim triplets, like three over four sort of thing, and then two dotted crotchets and it roughly equates fairly similar to a five over seven … Even though it's not metrically accurate. But at that tempo it's pretty imperceivable.

GS: Exactly. Exactly that.

BS: Wow. That's interesting. Um…

GS: And they're both like 4/4 – you know, if you have seven – something in seven, you've got a four and a three, and something in five, you've got a three and a two, you've got a long pulse and a – a long length and a shorter length. Those two – they're quite a strong… [Pauses] um… [Pauses] what's the best way of putting it? Quite a strong kind of post within that to – as a time feel.

You know, if you're playing – if you're playing in seven then it's easy to – almost too easy to get into the kind of [sings 4-3 clave]. Um, which I guess kind of – we really do on that recording. I mean, there's nothing particularly mind-blowingly odd about it. That's pretty much what it gets into when we're – when we're soloing on that – that part of it.

BS: Yeah, I can definitely hear that in the bass part.

GS: But that's why it's quite fun with the five; it loses that middle – that middle post really. So, because it's not quite there, like you say, it's almost imperceivable at that tempo, but it's not quite [sing 4-3 clave]… Anyway.

BS: Yeah. Cool! Um, okay, so what were some of the key devices or concepts you used in the arrangement? So, obviously we looked at the – there's the five over seven sort of thing. Um, but yeah, were there any sort of key devices you were thinking, or aiming to use when taking a standard from such a, you know, very traditional chord sort of thing? So anything, like, concepts for harmony, or how did you explore it? Or the different meter thing? All that sort of stuff.

GS: Umm…

BS: Pretty broad question, I'm sorry [laughs].

GS: Yeah, no, no, I was just thinking about how it – what things – if anything interesting is going on. Um, one of those quite – one thing I like in that is the – having an almost like a little bit of a break. Um, [sings end of A section melody], having the – having a break below the [sings last line of A section melody], and then setting up the, um… Yeah, I'm sorry, I'm going to have to think hard to actually – to successfully answer the question.

Um, I mean, it's no – I wanted to set up the vamp at the beginning. Um, and it's clear with that kind of tune that probably wouldn't work to just maintain the

vamp underneath it. But the vamp's the reference point for the style of it, re the [sings bass line]. So…

BS: Did that come to you first? That idea…

GS: Sorry?

BS: Did that vamp idea come to you first? Is that sort of, what…

GS: You know what, I honestly can't remember now. It would have been about ten years ago. I just – I can't quite remember. But, um, in *The Way You Look Tonight* you've got that kind of tag between the A sections which is quite nice and a little bit unusual; they're a bit more extended.

Um, maybe I should go to the piano. Actually my piano is unbelievably out of tune, but um…

BS: [Laughs] it can't be worse than mine. Trust me. I won't even dare play it [laughs].

GS: Ah look, bear with me a sec [moves into different room].

BS: No worries.

GS: Try not to drop the tea. Got the laptop…

BS: [Laughs].

GS: Sorry about this.

BS: You're alright!

GS: Um… I haven't really been in this house very long. And I've not really been here for the time that I've owned it, so everything's an absolute tip.

BS: [Laughs] all good.

GS: And I bought it off an old guy so the whole décor of the place is kind of very 'old people' as you can probably notice from the wallpaper that's going on.

BS: [Laughs] man, I just love, like, London houses. So much cooler than Australia [laughs].

GS: [Laughs] well actually no I'm in the north of England actually. I'm near to Manchester.

BS: Oh, right!

GS: Um, in the countryside. So I recently moved out of London after sixteen years, so it's kind of nice to – nice to have got away, to be honest.

Yeah, um, [plays piano] can you hear that? Is that too loud or too quiet?

BS: That's great. That's perfect.

GS: [Plays *The Way You Look Tonight* in a more traditional way] that little tag thing is quite – is quite a nice, uh – that's maybe a little bit unusual for a standard, having that there. So I guess that turning that tag into the tag that became the tag of the piece [plays introduction vamp of arrangement]. Basically that's the – using the concept of it having a tag but then changing it to the one that I wanted.

BS: Yeah!

GS: Uh, [plays A2 of the arrangement in a more chordal fashion]. Let me get the – let me get the music on my laptop so I can at least see what I'm doing.

BS: Yeah, sure. It's actually really interesting even just kind of hearing it then with the melody in sort of block chords without – like, kind of roughly following the bass line but without the bass line, if that makes sense? Kind of hearing what were – what were the underlying changes.

GS: Yeah absolutely. Okay, right, yeah, so that's one thing I suppose is trying to map out harmony but in a horizontal way, as opposed to a vertical 'chord, chord, chord' way.

BS: Sure, yeah.

GS: Uhh, *Way You Look Tonight* [searches on computer]. I think that's something really nice to do with harmony, either you take three or four lines and try to… [Pauses] ah, try to do it in that – uh, *The Way You Look Tonight* [opens file on computer]. Right, here we go…

[Plays through intro and A1]

So that – things like that [plays last line of A section melody]. I love this…

BS: Like voice-leading things?

GS: That's probably not even in the chart actually. But, um, I things like that little passing notes that you get tension and then release.

BS: Yeah!

GS: [Plays through A2]

So all that kind of horizontal movements are really like, um…

BS: It's almost, like, fugue-like!

GS: Yeah, I kind of like that style – that kind of horizontal thing. 'Cause it is easier with jazz chords to get into the vertical kind of 'chord, chord, chord, chord, chord'. And then I guess – I guess you get that in the solo when it's got to have a sequence to – to play on, then it becomes a bit more… I think if I did it again

now, I might try and disguise the chords a bit more than I did.

BS: Interesting. Yeah, sure.

GS: The sequence ends up becoming a bit, um – [whispers] where's the chords? [Pauses] Sorry!

BS: [Laughs]

GS: [Typing] I'm not very used to sort of describing things that I've done. I have to work out what's…

BS: Must feel like you're under a microscope [laughs].

GS: [Pauses] I'm just trying to find the chart that I sent you that's got the chords on it.

BS: Is the one that you sent me the one that everyone read on the session? Or does – did everyone have sort of their own parts? Or?

GS: I think it's pretty much the one I sent to you really. I mean, Martin on drums doesn't necessarily tend to, um, read music that much. Once he's sort of got it together he'll just crack on with it.

BS: Yeah sure.

GS: Right, so, I'm just trying to work out what to say about this really.

So, yeah that harmony being disguised in a horizontal way. I like the idea of having a break in the bar – bar 9 going into the [plays last line of A section]. So it feels like you've arrived – um, you've arrived at a point when you get to that last note of the tune. As opposed to that just being the end of the phrase.

Sorry my washing machine's noisy in here now [laughs] [leaves to shut door].

BS: [Laughs].

GS: So that's one thing. I mean, I guess the bridge, I'd got to – I'd work through the A sections and think about what to do in the bridge. Do you just carry on doing more of the same or try to do something a little bit different? Then it occurred to me that you could just use the five as the new tempo. [Pauses] which is what happens obviously…

[Plays bridge]

There's something, and I'm not sure how to get into this, but in terms of reharmonising, um, if you've got certain notes that are high points of the phrase, you know, crucial melodic notes of the phrase, trying to harmonise them in a way that they become a very fruity extension. For instance, so [plays a D13(b9#9#11) with the Eb on the top]. So that – I think that was the thinking behind that one. [Plays melody in context, and pauses when he finds something new to discuss]. I quite like having those little tasty things in there that sound a

little bit odd like [plays a D# melody note on a Bm9 chord], you get that for a second, but it's almost intangible 'cause it passes so quickly. [Plays the phrase where this occurs].

BS: The melody is stronger, yeah.

GS: [Continues playing] again, I think if I did it again now I'd probably be a bit more – I can see the kind of immaturity of it in some ways. Uh, in some ways I'd – just the way the chords do just kind of 'chord, chord, chord'. I definitely would try and do that a little bit differently now. Um, but uh, yeah looking at that concept of the notes being fruity extension… [Plays A section melody] It's all pretty coherent.

BS: What are you hearing as sort of the underlying chords of those – the A section. 'Cause like the root movement suggests 'E', well especially with the intro, which uh is a – that's a cool change as well.

GS: [Plays Ema7 chord] yeah, um, I suppose um, starts pretty coherently. [Begins playing through A section slowly, filling out with chords] so like a Db sus. I presume you – are you recording this so it's easy to get through it?

BS: Yeah yeah, so I can check it out…

GS: Alright, cool. [Continues melody] I mean some of them don't really translate into whole chords. Some of them were only supposed to be passing linear things, I guess. [Plays A section again]

I think actually it's probably this second A that might be a bit more coherent. [Plays A2] Yeah so that – I think that's what I maybe did on the recording, I can't remember now, but maybe I left the first one a bit more bare and then got more into passing chords in this one [plays A2].

BS: In terms of actually like – like if I was to kind of go through and analyse the chords for the A section, are you roughly kind of hearing it every one and three? Or one and four of the five is kind of where the down points are for harmony? Like 'cause that time then kind of sounded more like, yeah, C minor 9, E major 7 sort of thing when you kind of played through it then.

GS: Yeah, I can't remember the recording if I maybe pre-empted the chords with the bottom half of my right hand, as in like, um… [Demonstrates chords falling before melody in bottom half of right hand with bass line] so like you say, maybe the chords move on the third of the fifth in the left hand, but then the tune kind of fits to something which happens after that in that little gap between the third and fourth.

BS: Yeah, wow.

GS: Like as I say, I can't remember, I haven't listened to it.

BS: I noticed there was a vamp thing, as well, that you guys do. I noticed it more at the end of the bass solo and I think, uh, you went to play over it yourself for quite a while – that extended vamp idea. Was that part of the arrangement as well? I don't think I noticed it on the lead sheet as much, but it could have been

an after thought thing.

GS: [Whispers] ah, I forgot what I was going to say then. Um [plays the vamp]. That bit?

BS: Yeah like the sort of – took a huge solo on that as well before coming back to the final head. And I think the bass maybe played on that for a while…

GS: The chart I'm looking at, and I can't remember if it's the right one, but um, it's just kind of got, uh – it's just a four bar vamp – a four bar loop. [Plays along], that's sort of Eb over G then [continues playing], is that roughly what you've got on the…

BS: Yeah, I think I've got the same chart as you. It's the 'tidied 2014'.

GS: No, I haven't got that sheet. Let me find that. I think it's probably similar, but… *Look Tonight, tidied* [typing].

BS: Which one were you looking at? Like a – one closer to the album recording?

GS: Yeah. Well I - basically all I did is just tidied the Sibelius file up, but um, I'm just wondering if there's slight discrepancy between the chords [typing].

BS: Yeah, a lot on that one, I think, was sort of – it was more like G13sus, Ab13sus, um, ugh I can't remember off the top of my head, I don't have my file open… I'll be able to send it to you and tell you exactly what you played! [Laughs]

GS: Oh right, so yeah, there's not that thing looped on that one, but um, it's bar eighty-four to eighty-eight. It's basically those four bars. It's still not a very tidy chart [laughs]. [Plays written vamp] ah, now that's interesting. Shit, I've missed a whole bit off. Okay, right, um… [Pauses] so I don't know on the recording if it sounds more like it goes, um – I think the first three bars of that right [plays vamp].

BS: Yeah, there was like a second half to it.

GS: [Phone rings]. Oh, god! [Mumbles] what's happening there? Um… Right, that'll go away. I've just updated my computer and now my – when the phone rings it goes.

BS: Oh, it all goes everywhere, yeah.

GS: I've never had that before. So that's very confusing. Um, sorry!

BS: You're good.

GS: The one that I just looked at… I do apologise about this. Right, so the one I was looking at… [Pauses] there's a round and round bit which goes [plays along with chord naming] Eb over G, Ab, A diminished, B sus 13 [actually Bbsus13], Eb over G, Ab major, and then C sus, to E sus.

BS: Yeah, cool.

GS: I don't know if that's what happens on the record, but…

BS: Yeah, that sounds pretty right, yeah. So that's on a slightly different chart, yeah? That's cool! I can – I'll… Chuck all of those on the transcription as well, and then it'll make sense when seeing what was implied over it and…

GS: Mm, I mean, it's one of those things - I quite like finding a pedal point, so that's maybe something to mention [plays Eb note which acts as a pedal at the top of the voicing throughout vamp], so, over that kind of [plays progression] you get a little bit of tension when it comes back again.

BS: Yeah, lovely.

GS: [Continues playing] so when it comes back around again it feels like you've arrived somewhere. I think that's something to try and – I try to work on with compositions, maybe in small blocks like that, but also larger blocks. Um, ending the cycle so that you feel like when you get back to the top again you've gone to a new place. If that makes any sense?

BS: Right! Yeah, yeah, sure. Yep…

GS: Um, there's a tune that I – actually no we won't even go into – that's another composition where that's quite, um, quite apparent, but um. Um, have I been any help at all?

BS: Yes. It has [laughs].

GS: Uh. Well, is there any other elements that we can… Uh… I mean the kick in the tune – I'm really grasping at straws now for things that might be interesting [plays last line of A section melody]. Um, it's quite nice having that kind of kick, a quaver kick into, or eighth note kick into the bar, so [plays the melody of the last line of the A section in 4/4] if you were in 4/4, but then [plays same thing again but in 7/4]. Um…

BS: Yeah. Blurs the meter for a sec.

GS: Yeah, it occurred to be if you work backwards from that and you started on the second quaver of the bar then you could do the dotted crotchets there [plays last line of A melody]. Um, and I like those things like having it let ring on those. Or I'd say let ring, kind of [plays last bit of A section into vamp], so when the drums come back in on the next bar it feels like it starts again.

BS: Yeah, sure. Yep.

GS: Um. So is it that – it's sort of trying to find the tension of the tune. I mean, it builds up [plays just the melody by itself, stops at highest note] so that's the climax of the – you know, if you looked at it, physically that's the climax of the tune. Um, so that's the point where I did – there's a – where the groove, the left hand groove, breaks, where there's most intensity to what's happening. Um, uh, and then it sort of simmers back down to the – to having the vamp in between the A sections.

Um, blah-di-blah-di-blah-di-blah-di-blah.

BS: So your inspiration for implying the two meters over each other, was that mostly inspired by your drummer?

GS: Um, no, a little bit, as I say, from Phil, the bass player. And he's really good at doing those – and really really internalising those things, so not just skimming at it, but actually really being able to do it.

BS: Wow. Yeah, cool.

GS: So he was a large part of it. Um, and it's funny 'cause Martin plays in such an interesting way; he's a very, sort of – he's a very metronomic drummer, but not in the way that – like a kind of clinically metronomic, sort of Dennis Chambers-y type way, or something like that, or Dave Weckl, or something like that. He's very – very loose and soundscape-y, so that was quite interesting to have that particular style over something which essentially could have been very metronomic. It can be, kind of, very tight. Um, so yeah a lot of it came from the bass player.

BS: Yeah, that's so cool. Um, man, how did you develop the independence to, um, to cope with the complex meter and the superimposition? You know, being able to imply the five and lock it down, and still play a very clear seven melody over the top of it.

GS: In terms of the improvisation or just playing the head?

BS: Ah, yeah both, I suppose. Kind of, um, yeah, the hand independence sort of stuff, and is there any specific techniques for that? Or how do you go about breaking that down and working on that?

GS: What I think is, maybe not as specific to that, but as a general thing, um, the - I'd practice sort of independence by, again, creating almost exercises to be able to get one thing going and be able to leave it to do itself, without you having to do anything about it.

There's a tune I've written called *Barber Blues*, which is on an album that I did a couple of years ago with a band called The Impossible Gentlemen, um, and it's sort of like a sixteen bar blues, but the left hand's got an ostinato [plays ostinato] which kind of goes on for the whole tune but goes through – it maps out the chord sequence, but essentially it's got those two parts to the left hand. And then the right hand melody's got two parts to it. And then – I do it quite a lot on solo gigs, just playing and then improvising over the top. So, um, that was almost created as an exercise to be able to do something over – this will probably be shit [solos with right hand over left hand ostinato following chord progression], et cetera, et cetera.

BS: Yeah, yeah, sure.

GS: But starting off by maybe practicing things on the beat against that, so [demonstrates exercise]. And then off the beat [demonstrates exercise]. And then maybe groups of threes or fours, like [starts demonstrating], ahh, I'm trying to think of a good one, uh [demonstrates exercise]. So, the different

rhythmic cells over the top of that…

BS: Do you find, like, doing a lot of slow practice for that, or trying to do it…

GS: Yeah, absolutely. Because that was totally blagging then, but I – what I try not to do is accept blagging when I'm practice- 'cause there's – you can tell when something sounds okay, but when it really feels okay, like you're – like, very percussively feels like you're nailing it then that's what I try – at least try to aspire to with practice.

And then the idea being that every possible kind of combination of rhythmic events that could happen between the hands you've practiced so that you don't get tripped up by it. So if it's an 'on' on the left and an 'off' on the right, and this could be semiquavers, or you know, even smaller subdivision, the other way round or both together, or a cross rhythm, like [demonstrates dotted crotchets over ostinato] [mutters] which I fucked up there. So that kind of thing I'd slow down and practice so that it wouldn't fuck up. Um, so that when I'm improvising, hopefully it feels like you've got that kind of language at your fingertips to be able to nail – and the important thing will be the left hand there to make sure that that doesn't go wrong. And if it does, like then, I'd work out "oh, it was that coming a semiquaver in the right hand before the left hand, so, let's just practice that," [demonstrates]. So you've done it enough times that then it won't fuck you up.

So, just, kind of build a lexicon of possible rhythmic events on those really that are under your fingertips. Um, I mean, I guess that's maybe more of a general thing, but I would imagine that… [Phone rings] [Mutters] oh, for fuck's sake. Ah, that's my fiancé, never mind.

BS: [Laughs] sorry!

GS: [Laughs] I'll speak to her later. Um… Sorry! I don't know how to stop it without – I better not decline it or she'll get pissed off. Um, it's acceptable if I just look like I'm not next to the phone… Um, yeah! So, with the um [plays bass line] [phone stops ringing] weird.

BS: [Laughs] that was fun…

GS: [Quotes ringtone melody on piano over bass line] … That'd be too much. Um, I probably just spent ages just going [improvising freely over bassline] [phone rings again] [whispers] ahh, for fuck's sake! Um, I'm just going to answer it and tell her I'm…

BS: Yeah answer it, sure…

GS: [Speaks on phone]

[Returns] sorry!

BS: You're right…

GS: Um, yeah! So, probably just spending ages just nailing – keeping that five thing ticking along and then trying different types of things over the top of it. Um,

different rhythmic combinations of seven things.

BS: Did you find you had to, like kind of, clap it out or tap it out in both hands to be rhythmically accurate with the five in the first place?

GS: Oh yeah, god, I do that all the time actually. I mean, if I'm ever sitting on a trains or busses and things I do a lot of tapping, just practicing rhythmic things. 'Cause I mean essentially the piano is a percussive instrument. Um, obviously there's many more elements to it, but that percussive side of it is something that you can practice away from the instrument. And of course, you end up being a – as a piano player you spend a lot of time away from the piano [laughs] so it's kind of nice sometimes to utilise some of those things to do a bit of percussive practice. So yeah, definitely tapping and honing that away from the instrument.

BS: Sure. And did you – and to practice five over seven did you kind of still treat it as those two separate half things again? Like, you know, four over three, and the [pauses] two over, whatever's left, three, sort of thing? Is that how you were kind of using – to like equate it, or approximate it? Or, were you trying to be rhythmically as accurate as possible?

GS: I think probably trying to be rhythmically as accurate as possible. I mean, as you said, sort of many minutes ago you can start of with an approximation of the four and the three, and the three and the two, and then… that… eventually gets to the point where hopefully you are doing it sort of diligently, then you are doing something which isn't the four-three and the three-two but it's actually – the five weaves over the top of it. Um, I mean it is – it does come to the point where it might be indiscernible at that kind of speed, but I think aspiring to try and do it properly was what I was trying to do at least.

BS: Was it ever a case of even, um, just even putting the metronome on every 'one', and then just trying to feel five equally spaced beats, and land every 'one'? Is that another way that you've thought about it? Or, always tried to hear it against seven crotchets?

GS: I think I was trying to hear it against as opposed to doing that thing on the metronome. Um, just trying to fit five in – because in a way that's almost… there's something not – obviously it is accurate, because the thing is coming down at the top of every bar, but there's so much wiggle room within those metronome hits that I'm not sure that that would be as helpful as working on the relationship between the two different times, possibly.

BS: Um, this might be a silly question; you guys didn't record with a click track or anything for that record did you?

GS: No, no, no… Actually, we might – did we do *Time* – there's one tune called *Time and Tide* where there's some overdubs and things. I wonder if we maybe did that one. I really can't remember but…

BS: Yeah, sure.

GS: Um. I don't – I honestly don't think we did. If we did, then maybe the track called *Time and Tide*, just because there's quite a few different sections and we did some overdubs and things, but I've got a feeling that I think we just did it all

without. Certainly none of the other ones, all the [plays *A Typical Affair*]. That wasn't with a – definitely wasn't with a click track. So I think it speeds up quite a lot [laughs].

BS: [Laughs] doubt it. Um, with the seven to five to seven, the modulations, how much ensemble practice did that require to get the modulations and the superimpositions happening? And how did you guys workshop that?

GS: You mean between the A and the B section?

BS: [Nods] mm.

GS: Well, nothing really, because I mean the five is instantly setup before we even start, um, from the previous bass line of course. So, um, Phil would just play kind of - obviously just do the [plays bass line from vamp leading into the B section].

BS: Yeah. Going back seems quite tricky.

GS: Sorry?

BS: Going back to seven seems quite tricky though. Like even in the intro, hearing just the bass play five and then to… When the drums come in, it's very clearly seven. And just even – hear that against the five.

GS: Yeah, I think he kind of sets – I can't remember whether Martin sets up the seven in – or just sort of hits straight on it. But I guess he had the hardest job there, to get back into seven over the five. But, in a way, I mean he plays it, as I say, plays it really metronomically, but there's something very, uh, humane about the way that he plays the groove anyway. So um…

I mean, don't remember that being a tough thing to do, to get between the two sections. It just feels like it kind of rolls through a little bit. But, um. I guess, more so, just practicing improvising on that. I mean, even though we didn't do very much of that, really, I don't think we ever did that much practice, in a way. It would have been nice if we had done more, but, um… Yeah, in answer to your question, I don't think there was a massive amount with that, basically because that five is the constant, and that kind of hangs the room together, type… Situation…

BS: Yeah, sure. That makes sense. Yeah. Okay. Um, so onto, like, the improvising sort of stuff for the tune, ah, did you have an overarching sort of approach for improvising over like such a dense harmonically and rhythmically dense arrangement, such as this?

GS: Um, no. As I say, I mean, I think if I did it again I'd probably try and get away from the kind of [plays 4-3 clave in chords and then just lots of chords]. But I guess the other half of me was – would have thought at that time that because it's quite… It's quite an unusual arrangement maybe, that maybe it's nice as an audience member or listener to then have something that you can discernably recognise a bit… A bit more, which is something I think about a lot now in terms of how you communicate what you do, and how you make it kind of, um, accessible to a listening audience. Um, so maybe it was good that the harmony or the changes is a bit more kind of recognisably *The Way You Look Tonight*.

And, as I say really, that, um, that most of that, until we get back into the later part – the blowing is just, um, blowing in seven, which is nothing special, it's just blowing in seven.

And something that I've always really enjoyed in improvising is having a lot of chords to deal with. In fact, I almost enjoy that way more than if you're just on a one chord vamp or something, because it's the way that you navigate between the chords which is kind of fun. And trying to create something horizontal over these very vertical things is something I really – really enjoy that challenge.

BS: Yeah, sure. Were there any, um, improvisational concepts tied to any of the features of the arrangement?

GS: Uh, sorry, how do you mean?

BS: Um, so was there anything you were specifically trying to do or imply that was trying to link back with specific things from the arrangement? So like, uh, any implications of the five, or…

GS: No, I mean, I think again if I was to do it again now I'd try – hopefully I'd have more mental capacity to try and to be a bit more, uh, connected to the material or the head in the improvisation. I mean, I think probably at that stage I was just doing my best to improvise in seven [laughs] over the top of it, without having much…

BS: Oh, man, there's so many great moments in there. Especially, like rhythmically, sort of, really blurring lines between things, and crazy triplet ideas, or stretching of time, implying other meters, and… Yeah! It's cool…

GS: Oh [laughs] thanks. Ah, I mean I think that thing you're trying to – to blur the barlines and then playing phrases which are not just [sings 4-3 clave], or kind of little subdivisions of that clave, that is a quite nice thing to do. And in terms of trying to make longer phrase lengths, that's something always I've tried to – try and work hard to aspire to, 'cause it's a classic thing for all of us with jazz; you just play a short phrase and then a different short phrase, and then you move onto something else. But actually trying to do something which is a bit more overarching, and has a longer forward form to it. And I'd probably guess that I didn't achieve that greatly at that time. But, um, but that's something that I – if I, again, were to approach it now I'd be trying to do a little bit better.

BS: Yeah, sure. Cool! Um, were there any improvisational, uh… Oh sorry, any of those, um, improvisational approaches – how did they sort of translate to the practice room? So, were there any specific exercises or rhythmic patterns you were kind of working on/checking out to be able to play all those things that you're talking about?

GS: Uh, well may – I – uh, I mean, god, to be honest I've not really listened to it for about seven or eight years. But I mean I guess just, again, trying to do things like sub – putting dotted crotchets over the top of seven and then knowing where it comes out, and being comfortable with the different ways that that will cross across the kind of four-three groove of the solo section. Different types of rhythmic – little rhythmic cells, and superimposing them over the top, and feeling comfortable with doing that maybe.

BS: Yeah, sure. Yep… Um, and lastly, were there any sort of preconceived ideas in, like, being a recorded solo? Um, and yeah, does it – does that differ from a live performance?

GS: Um, I think you're more forgiving when you're in a live performance, that's for sure, 'cause it's, uh… And you sort of – I think you have a different adrenaline really when you're playing with – you know, as you know yourself, it's easy to forgive. It's like the right kind of mistakes and the wrong kind of mistakes. When you're playing with adrenaline in a live performance and something doesn't quite go then I find it easier. Should – had it been a live thing recorded I find it easier then to listen back and think "oh well, you know, at least I was going for it," whereas like if you're playing out of fear – which I'm very conscious of these two different things, either playing out of fear or playing out of joy – then mistakes that I make through playing out of fear then I hate because I know that I wasn't in that positive zone when I was doing it.

So, um, I guess I would probably listen back – if I did listen back to it now I'd probably think "argh, god!" I was probably too nervous about making a, certainly a rhythmical, error.

BS: Interesting…

GS: But, uh… But in other words I didn't, you know, didn't work out anything in advance in terms of particular bits of solo or anything like that. Um, and I think pretty much the soloing was all one take, it wasn't, um – not like it was the only take, but it wasn't bits and bobs sliced together of various, like eight bars of this, eight bars of that. Um, I think it was all just a solo and that was how it was. But um…

BS: Yeah, cool! How many takes of, not necessarily that tune, but like on all the tunes on the album – was it just sort of try nail it in two or three? Or as many as it took sort of thing? Or?

GS: I think most of the time it just tended to be two or three, maybe four. I mean it tends to be that… If you say four takes then maybe the first two have got interesting solos, or certainly the first one, 'cause you're giving less of a shit and you're just going for it. Um, and then maybe after that you try to – either you just do little fixes of the bits. I mean, not particularly this tune, but things that have got melody in and that, then maybe you work and sorting those bits out afterwards. But, I tend to find you only really get the first two or three takes of anything where you're in that zone, and then it becomes a question of you're trying to do either something the same as you did the last time or something different than what you did last time. And then, you've lost that spark 'cause you're second-guessing yourself, aren't you really?

Um, so if you haven't really got it at the beginning… I mean some tracks I remember in albums over the years that we've really struggled on, and then, you know, you've got to about seven or eight takes and you think "oh fuck this is not – this is definitely not getting any better!" [Laughs] Um, but then sometimes you listen back to the first thing, which you thought was maybe not great, and then after hearing six takes where it's really kind of lame, then you listen back to the first one and think, "oh, well, at least it was the right spirit to that."

And I would imagine it was the same for this album. I don't think we had a massive amount of time to do it. Maybe we did it in two or three days, and there was quite a lot of overdubbing and bits and bobs to put in, and different musicians and stuff, so um… So I would imagine we didn't get to many different takes of doing it.

BS: Mm. Oh it's a lovely album in terms of – just, it's so varied, you know. It's not just locked down to… There's plenty – so many albums out there where just every track sounds the same, and you almost don't know which track you're on. But here it's just like splashes of like – even just mixing up the instrumentation, and the way it's orchestrated, and different feels, and… yeah it's a really interesting album to listen to.

GS: Naw, thank you very much, that's very kind of you, I really appreciate that. I mean I – that's always something I've always enjoyed sort of in a career as a whole is just doing different things because it keeps things fresh, and then you're always, kind of, hopefully learning, and… As you say, you know, I've heard so many albums, that's why you feel like it's variations on a – quite a specific theme. Which is great, naturally… To be honest, that's what 95% of the listening public want, they want something they recognise and they can understand and be familiar with and, you know, there's many examples of great musicians and that's the way that they'd gone with their career. Um, I mean you could argue Mehldau, for instance, you know, a lot of the albums that he's done – whose one of my heroes and absolutely mega, but there's certainly a very specific sound to what he does, and – which is very quite clearly him when you listen to it, which is brilliant and that's something I should probably do more [laughs], but I just enjoy doing different stuff, and because it means you have to think harder.

BS: It's all music, you know. Yeah…

GS: Well, I hope that's of some use to you anyway.

BS: Very much so man. Really appreciate you giving up your time and showing me some stuff at the piano as well, and really get inside of it. Yeah, it's been awesome.

GS: No, no problem. I mean, if there's anything else that you think of then just drop us a quick email; I'll try answer it in the next few days when I'm travelling around, but um. And it'll be lovely to hear some of your stuff as well. Must definitely keep in touch and, um, if you're ever over this way you're more than welcome to come round obviously.

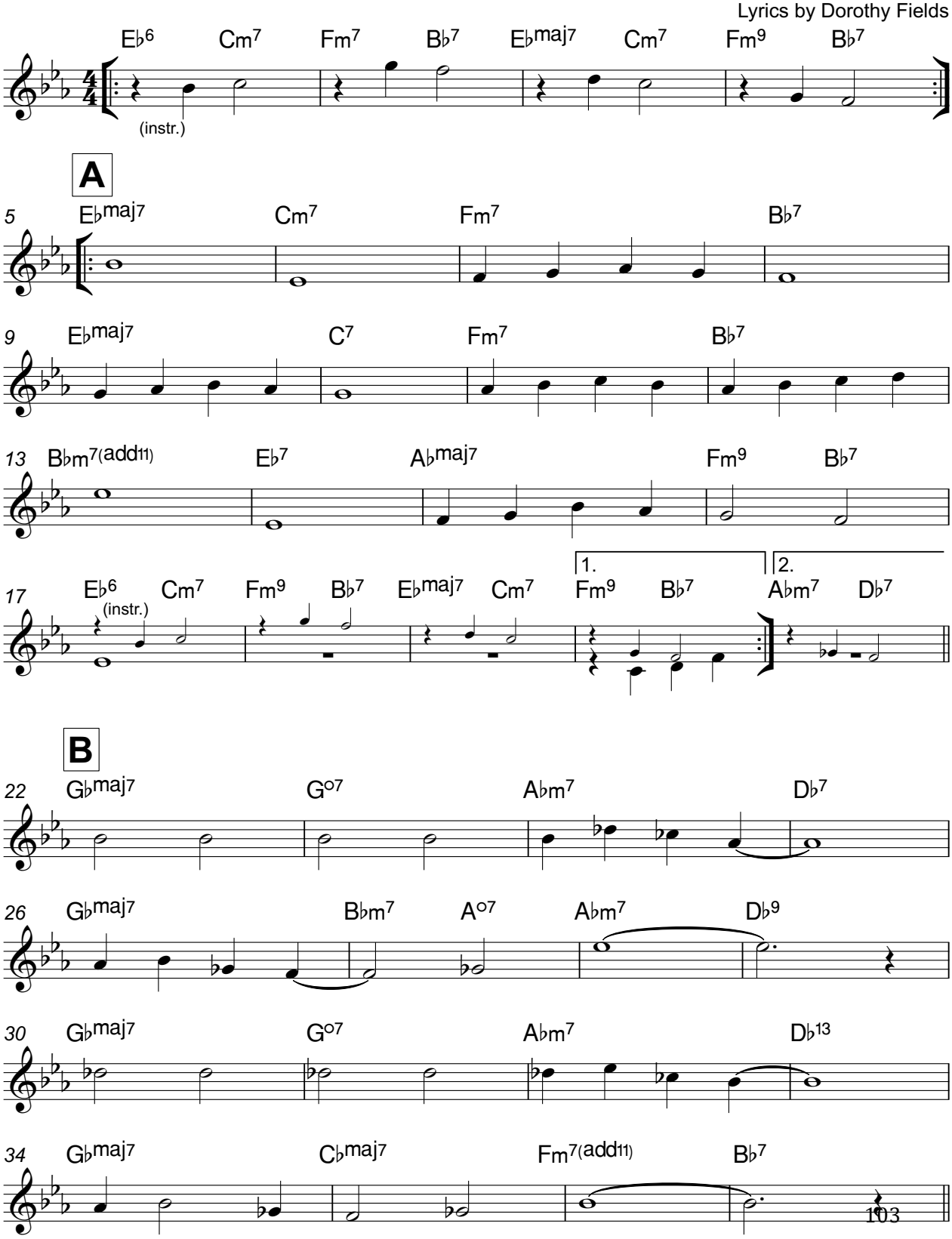
BS: Oh that would be fantastic. Yeah…

GS: Well, listen if I can do anything to help let me know. Um, sorry if I was waffling a bit – it's always kind of weird talking about your own stuff a little bit, but yeah. And thanks for your kind words and all the best with it.

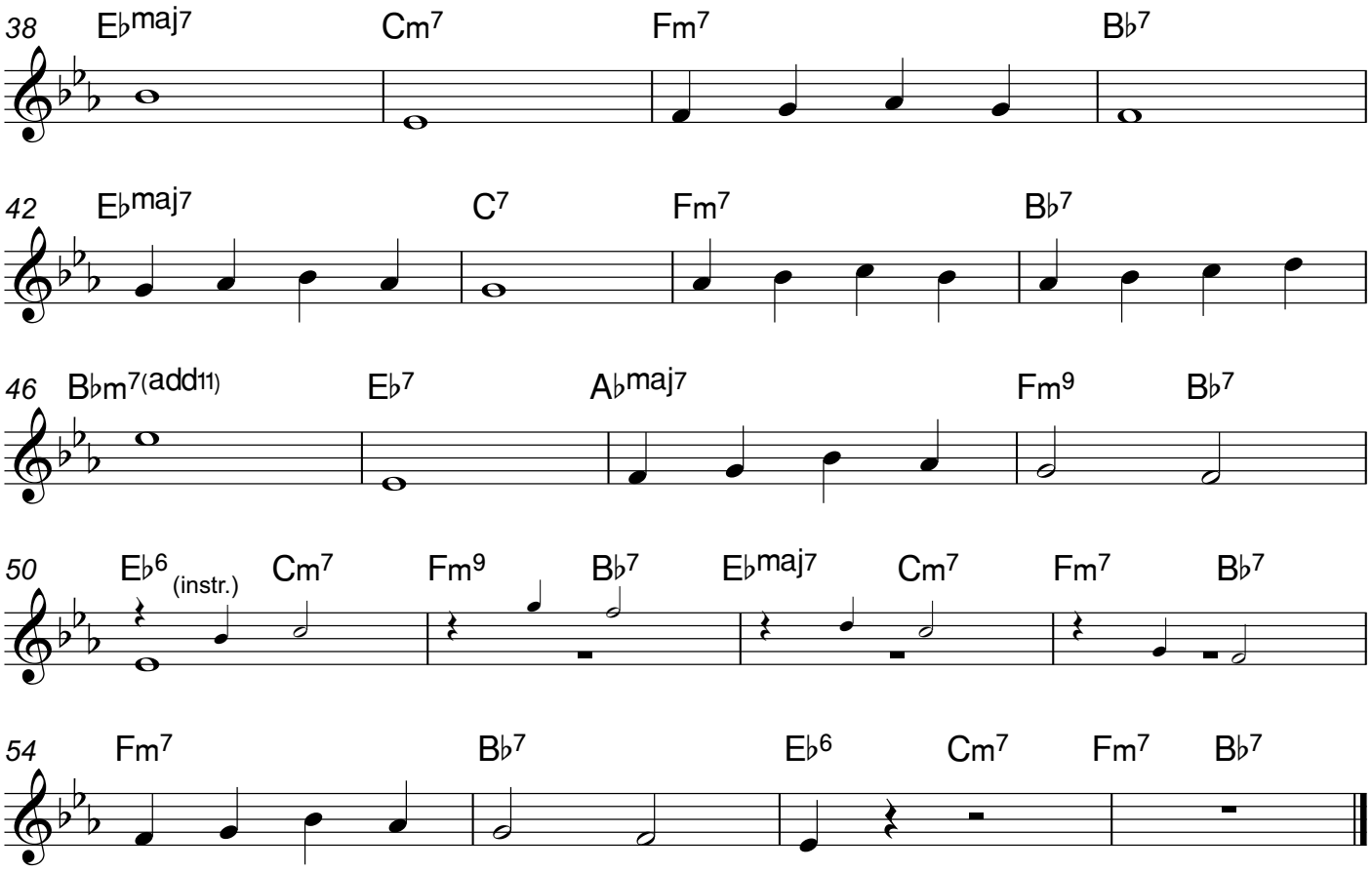
BS: Thanks very much.

Appendix C: Basic lead sheet for *The Way You Look Tonight*

This has been transposed from the version presented in *The New Real Book* (Sher, 1988).

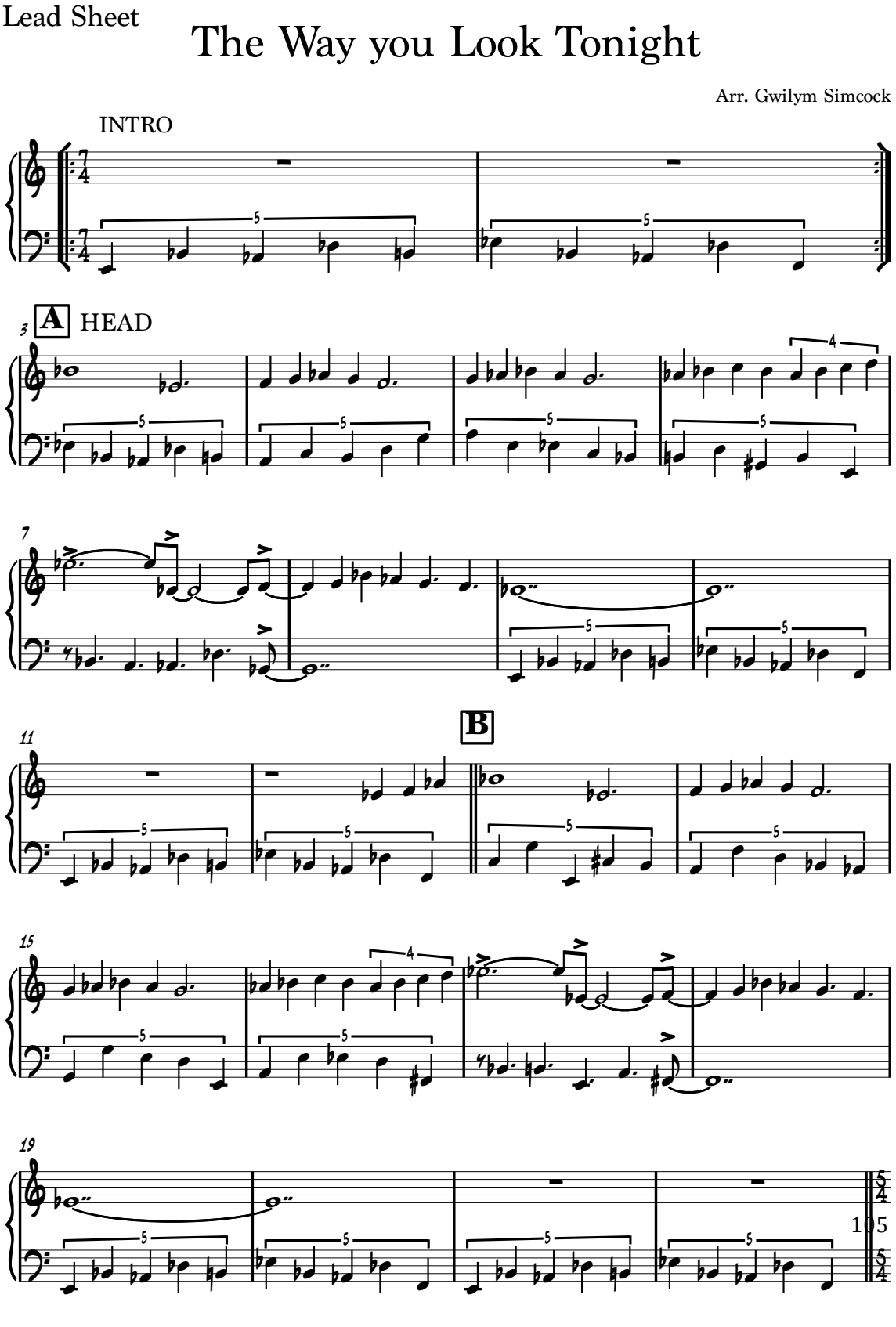


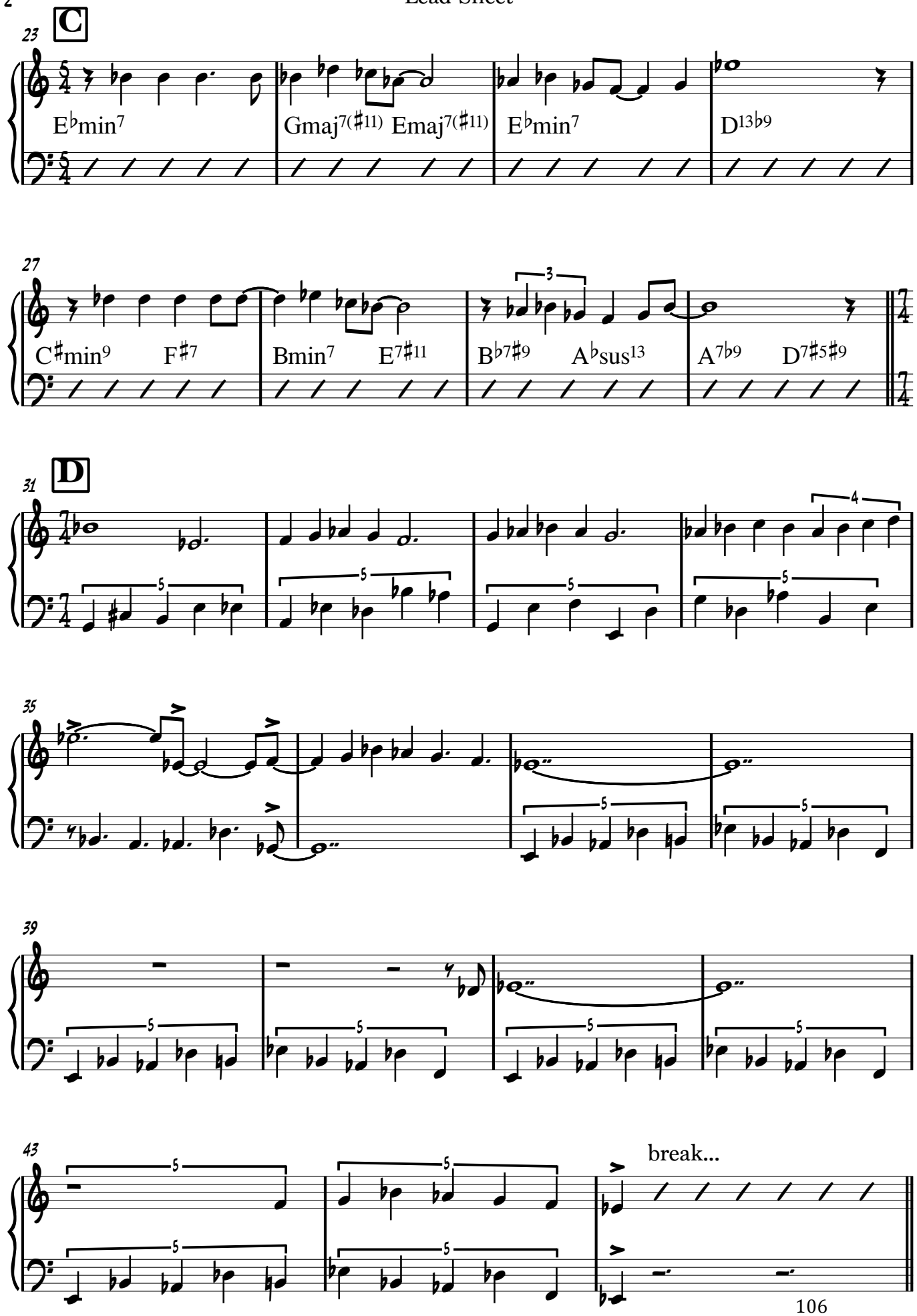
2 **C**


38 E♭maj7 Cm7 Fm7 B♭7
42 E♭maj7 C7 Fm7 B♭7
46 B♭m7(add11) E♭7 A♭maj7 Fm9 B♭7
50 E♭6 (instr.) Cm7 Fm9 B♭7 E♭maj7 Cm7 Fm7 B♭7
54 Fm7 B♭7 E♭6 Cm7 Fm7 B♭7

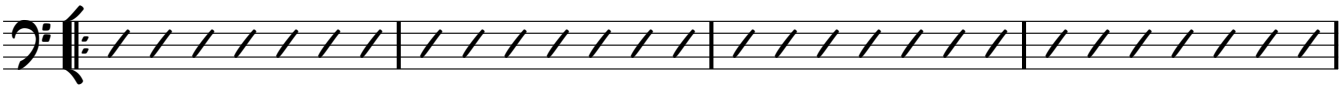
Appendix D: Arrangement lead sheet supplied by Gwilym Simcock

This file was received from Simcock on October 8, 2016. There are some discrepancies with the performance as this lead sheet was updated in 2014.

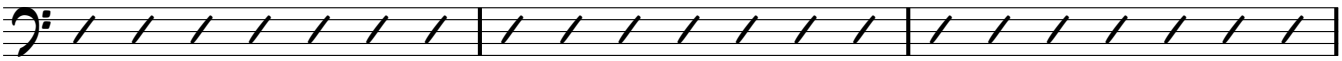



C
23
E♭min7
Gmaj7(♯11) Emaj7(♯11)
E♭min7
D13♭9
27
C♯min9
F♯7
Bmin7
E7♯11
B♭7♯9
A♭sus13
A7♭9
D7♯5♯9
D
31
35
39
43
break...

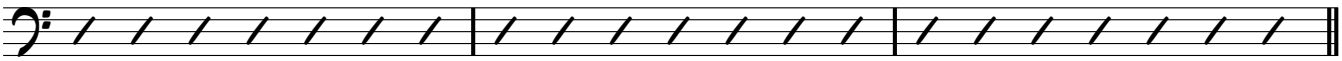
46 **E** $E^{\flat}maj^{7}$ $B^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $D^{\flat 7}$ C^{7} $Fmin^{7}$ $B^{\flat 7}$



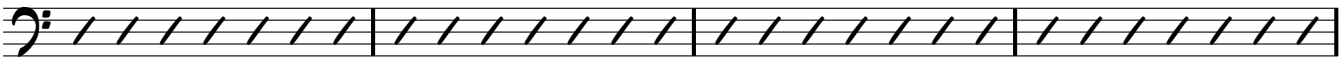
50 $B^{\flat}min$ $E^{\flat 7}$ $A^{\flat}maj$ $D^{\flat 7}$ $E^{\flat}maj/B^{\flat}$



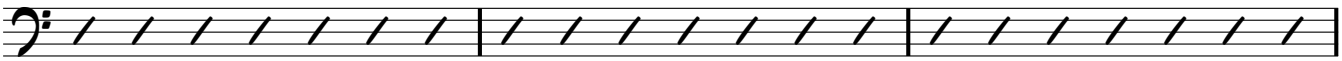
53 $B^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $E^{\flat}maj/B^{\flat}$ $B^{\flat}sus^{13}$



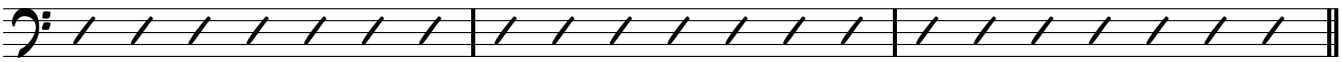
56 **F** $G^{7\sharp5\sharp9}$ $G^{\flat}maj$ F^{7} $Bmaj^{7\sharp11}$ $B^{\flat}min^{7}$ $E^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $Fmin^{7}$ $D^{\flat}maj$



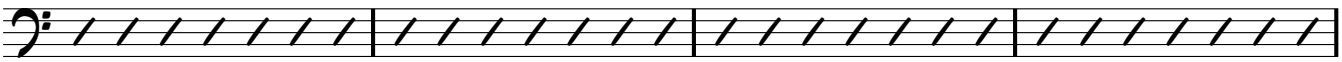
60 $Cmin^{7}$ $E^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $A^{\flat}maj$ $A^{\flat}min^{7}$ $E^{\flat}maj/B^{\flat}$



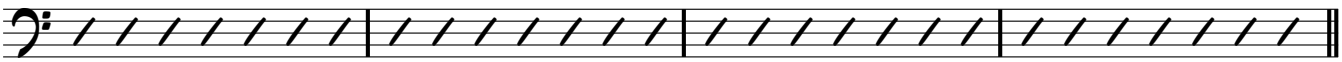
63 $B^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $E^{\flat}maj/B^{\flat}$ $B^{\flat}sus^{13}$



66 **G** $E^{\flat}min$ $Gmaj^{\sharp11}$ $Emaj^{\sharp11}$ $E^{\flat}min^{7}$ $D^{7\flat9}$



70 $C^{\sharp}min^{7}$ $F^{\sharp7}$ $Bmin^{7}$ $E^{7\sharp11}$ $B^{\flat7\sharp5\sharp9}$ $A^{\flat}sus^{13}$ $A^{7\flat9}$ $D^{7\sharp5\sharp9}$



Lead Sheet

74 H G7 B7♯11 A7♯11 D♭7♯11 G7♯5♯9 C7

77 Fmin7 D♭7♯11 B♭min7 A7♯11 A♭maj A♭min6

80 E♭/G A♭maj A°7 B♭sus13 E♭/G A♭maj A°7 B♭sus13

84 E♭/G A♭maj A°7 B♭sus13 E♭/G A♭maj A°7 B♭sus13

88 D7 G7♯5♯9 Cmin7 F7 B♭sus13