FIVE PERFORMANCE ETUDES FOR JAZZ PIANO

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Abstract

There are currently numerous texts and publications which outline the fundamental concepts which are relevant to the study and performance of jazz piano. However, there is a smaller body of work that clearly demonstrates the practical real-world application of these fundamental concepts.

This thesis presents a collection of five performance etudes for jazz piano which encompass a number of concepts and approaches which are fundamental to the study of jazz piano, while also, as performance relevant pieces, illustrate the practical application of these approaches and concepts.

The relevance of the concepts and approaches covered is justified by providing examples of their use on recordings by historically significant pianists.

These *Five Performance Etudes for Jazz Piano* are based of the practical application of relevant styles and concepts spanning the 1940s to the 1960s – the period of jazz which cultivated the greatest number of musical tools still used today.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professors Al Henderson and Sundar Viswanathan for their guidance and assistance during the process of creating this thesis. In particular, the guidance of my primary advisor Al Henderson was greatly appreciated -- his willingness to be of assistance and his insights during the process went far beyond the basic requirements of his role.

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I would like to thank my parents Bruno and Theresa who have always encouraged me to follow my heart in life and were instrumental in giving me the courage to pursue a life in music. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Sophia who has always been a great source of inspiration and encouragement in my personal and professional endeavours.

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Introduction

***" jazz is not so much a style as it is a process of making music."* – Bill Evans[1]**

Since its beginnings, jazz piano performance has incorporated many approaches. Within these stylistic variations there have emerged a number of specific concepts and approaches that have proven to be especially durable as evidenced by their common range across a wide number of contexts. In this thesis I've chosen to focus on the melodic/harmonic musical concepts and approaches most commonly used by the modern jazz[2] pianists spanning the early 1940s to 1960s.[3]

These concepts involve a number of specific areas of study, including:

- various left hand and two-handed harmonic approaches
- the application of specific scales, chromatic techniques, and phrasing considerations when creating melodies
- the use and development of musical motifs[4] when improvising
- specific solo piano techniques.

Differing from common performance practices in the classical music[5] tradition, where the performer learns via the written musical page, mastering the instructions given

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[1] *The Universal Mind of Bill Evans* (Rhapsody Films, 1966)

[2] *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* defines Modern Jazz as: "A term used collectively of the jazz styles developed between the early 1940s and the 1960s; it covers mainly bop and its offshoots. (It is not applied to free jazz, despite the fact that the latter developed during this period.)"

[3] Rhythm is also as valuable a concept as the melodic and harmonic concepts covered, and I've endeavoured to include stylistically appropriate rhythmic content in each composition.

[4] "a short musical phrase" (New Grove Dictionary of Music, 1980)

[5] The term *Classical music* in this context refers to music which conveys all instructions via the written page. The expectation is that the performer only plays what is written.

by the composer, the performance of jazz music involves the creative interpretation and application of learned concepts in an often highly improvised way involving musical choices made by the performer – hence the mastery of jazz music involves not only developing techniques and understanding concepts, but also a fundamental understanding of the process involved in making aesthetic and executive choices based on the considerations of any given situation the performer finds themselves in.

My own compositional process involved first identifying key concepts to include in each work. Once these concepts were established, the process then moved to the piano where I began exploring the concepts through a process of improvising; listening for compelling ideas to emerge. When ideas emerged that I felt would be useful as core concepts for a composition I recorded these ideas and listened back, and then continued to develop them through an improvisational process of exploration. They appear in a distilled and refined form in the resulting etude.

For several of the etudes, the harmonic progressions emerged first. In these instances, I then began to explore various stylistically relevant melodies over top of the already established harmonies. For other etudes I first conceived of the melody of the piece, and then began exploring various harmonic possibilities to support the melody. While composing these etudes I was also mindful of finding balance between clearly illustrating the concepts which would serve the pedagogical intentions of these pieces, while also creating pieces which would use these concepts in such a way as to illustrate actual performance applications informed by my own experience as a performer, as well as ideas commonly used by historically significant jazz pianists.

Although there is a large body of work in the world of jazz education that outlines the many concepts, skills, and techniques that are essential learning for any student of jazz music, there is a significantly smaller body of work that provides illustration of these concepts.

Therefore, in this collection of *Five Performance Etudes for Jazz Piano* I endeavour to add to that smaller body of work, by creating a collection of musical compositions that both utilize core concepts and techniques commonly employed by modern jazz pianists, as well as illustrating these concepts used in a real-world musical context, thereby giving the student/performer a window into ways that the jazz process can be applied to composing and improvising in a wide variety of contexts.

Chapter 1: Etude #1: Bud's Bop

(Bebop Lines, Bud Powell and Bill Evans/Wynton Kelly Voicings)

1.1 Overview of "Etude #1: Bud's Bop"

"Etude #1: Bud's Bop" is a 51-bar composition in 4/4 'swing feel'[6] demonstrating the practice of right-hand melodic lines accompanied by left hand chords in a style of jazz music commonly referred to as bebop[7]. The piece is comprised of a 16-bar form repeated three times, followed by a short 3-bar coda at the end. I chose a repeating chord progression that utilizes common harmonic movements found in the bebop style and, in line with jazz and improvised music practices, various chord alterations are applied as the piece progresses to demonstrate some of the ways that jazz pianists manipulate the basic harmony of a piece.

Although this piece functions as both a performance piece as well as a pedagogical vehicle for study, the emphasis here is particularly on exploring common lines found in bebop music, and thus sounds more like a demonstration of improvising practices in this style rather than a formal jazz composition.

1.2 Historical Antecedents

One of the most fundamental skills in the modern jazz piano tradition is the ability to play legato eighth-note improvised melodies accompanied by supportive left-hand chords. The application of this approach has been well demonstrated historically in a style of music of music referred to as bebop.

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[6] See **Conclusion** for more information on 'Swing feel'

[7] "One of the main styles of jazz, generally considered to be the foundation for modern jazz… its fundamental principles became the foundation for later jazz styles." (Scott DeVeaux, Grove Music Online)

In Etude #1 I've endeavoured to create a piece that illustrates a well-constructed bebop piano solo. The right hand incorporates long legato eighth-note melodic lines, typical of the style, utilizing scale passages combined with arpeggios relative to the underlying harmony, as well as chromatic devices such as passing tones and 'enclosures'[8]. The left hand plays accompanying chords which are reflective of the common structures and methods of resolution used by pianists of the bebop era, such as Bud Powell, and subsequently Wynton Kelly and Bill Evans. This style of piano playing is often considered the 'parent language' for modern jazz players and thus a very relevant path of study. In *Bebop: The Music and Its Players*, Thomas Owens writes:

> "Bebop, in fact, is now the *lingua franca*[9] of jazz, serving as the principal musical language of thousands of jazz musicians. It also affects the way earlier jazz styles are played and is the parent language of many action jazz and fusion players."[10]

1.3 Left-Hand Voicings

There are two fundamental types of left-hand voicings[11] used in this etude. Fig. 1.1 illustrates what are commonly referred to as 'shell voicings' or 'Bud Powell voicings.[12]These

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[8] "An enclosure is a musical device in which a goal note is surrounded from above and below with auxiliary tones that act to direct the listener's ear to the goal note". Definition taken from Williamflynnmusic.com

[9] "a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different." (Oxford Dictionary)

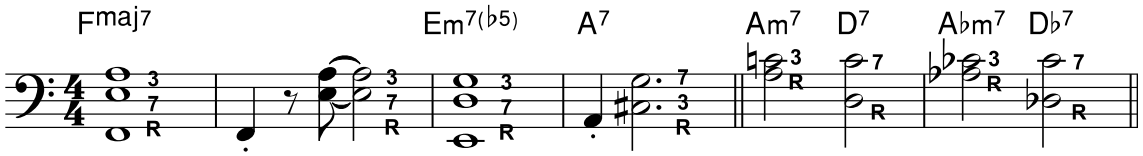
[10] Thomas Owens. *Bebop: The Music and Its Players* (USA: The Oxford University Press, 1995) 4

[11] "Voicing" or "voicings" is a term used by jazz musicians and others to describe a collection of musical tones which when combined, form a *chord*. In music, sounds are often categorized in two ways: single tones in succession form a *melody*, and multiple tones executed simultaneously are referred to as a *chord*.

[12] For examples of these voicings see: Bud Powell *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol.1* Blue Note CDP 7 81503 2

two or three note voicings utilize the minimal amount of harmonic data needed to express a chord's sound.

Fig. 1.1 'Shell' or 'Bud Powell' Voicings (measures 1-4, 11-12)

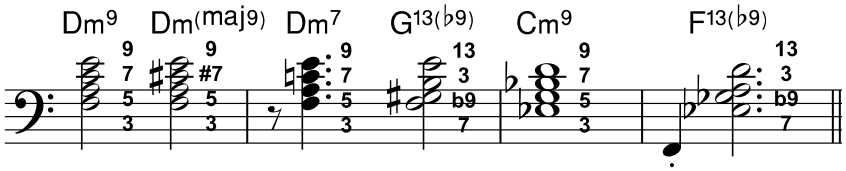


These minimalist expressions of the chord include only the most essential notes needed to fulfill upon the basic requirements of defining the chord; the root, the 3rd, and the 7th, or even only the root and 3rd, or root and 7th.

By choosing only the simplest fundamental chord tones in the left hand the performer conversely has more freedom to explore much more complex combinations of notes in the right hand while avoiding creating any sonic clashes between the two hands. Simply stated: simple left-hand chords allow for complex right-hand lines. Also, these less dense left-hand voicings allow the pianist to voice the chords lower on the piano without creating a 'muddy' sound in the left hand, which creates more space on the piano for the right-hand to explore melodic lines. Fig. 1.2 illustrates the use of what are commonly referred to as 'Bill Evans/Wynton Kelly' voicings. These voicings, although similar to the Bud Powell variant in that they contain the essential third and seventh of each chord also emphasize some key differences – they typically omit the root of the chord and also contain various non-essential chord tones such as fifths, ninths, and thirteenths. These voicings have a more dense and 'floating' quality to their sound, due to the extra notes and the absence of the root of the chord. These voicings serve to create a more complex harmonic palette underneath the right-hand melodic lines. They were popularized

by pianists such as Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly[13] and are also often implemented by pianists when playing in the bebop style.

Fig. 1.2 'Rootless' or 'Bill Evans/Wynton Kelly' voicings (measures 21-22)



The learning and implementing of both shell voicings and rootless voicings are a valuable and fundamental part of the learning process for any student of jazz piano. In *The Jazz Piano Book*, Mark Levine writes:

> "The Bud Powell voicings…skeletal, rudimentary, and transparent – were the left-hand voicings of choice for most of the early bebop pianists, including Horace Silver (he later changed his left-hand style to incorporate the voicings that Bill Evans and Wynton Kelly developed)...Many of the best pianists today play an eclectic mix of left-hand voicings [Bill Evans/Wynton Kelly], Bud Powell voicings…and others".[14]

1.4 Right-Hand Bebop 'Devices'

Bebop solos are typically characterized by their long and legato eighth-note lines incorporating scale passages, arpeggios, a variety of intervallic leaps, the use of upper extensions[15] and altered extensions (such as flat 9, sharp 9, sharp 11, and flat 13) and various

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[13] Examples of these voicings can be found on Bill Evans, *New Jazz Conceptions* Riverside Records CDRIVM 005 and Wynton Kelly, *Kelly Blue* Riverside Records RLP-1142

[14] Mark Levine, *The Jazz Piano Book* (Petaluma, CA: SHER MUSIC CO., 1989) 162

[15] *Upper extensions* refer to notes which correspond to 'higher' tones of a chord. The fundamental tones in a chord are the *root, third, fifth, and seventh* degrees, whereas the *upper extensions* refer to the *ninth, eleventh,* and *thirteenth* degrees.

chromatic devices. All of these individual considerations combined are worthy of extensive study and serve to create a challenging experience for improvisors. Scott DeVeaux writes:

> "Bop built upon and extended the chromatic harmony of the more progressive artists of swing. Throughout the 1930s and 40s, composers and pianists used increasingly complex chords, featuring chromatically altered extensions such as 9ths and 13ths. Improvisers worked with this harmonic landscape, often adding new chords to the original progression… For soloists, bop demanded a startling leap in technical virtuosity"[16]

"Etude #1" includes some of the more common melodic devices I've garnered from my own study of bebop music – common melodic lines which utilize some of the key musical devices employed by bebop musicians. As a student masters these musical phrases and incorporates them into their own playing in a variety of contexts, this will create opportunities for continued growth in the form of expanding and altering these ideas over time. They serve as a starting point, the mastery of which is intended to facilitate further exploration. The following discusses some of the common right- hand devices used in "Etude #1":

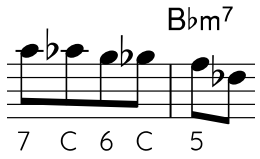
1.4.1 Common melodic devices: Chromatic passing tones and 'Enclosures'

Chromatic passing tones are notes that create temporary dissonances and serve to connect two chord or scale tones. They create a 'tension and release' effect in the music and also serve to create more varied, and longer musical phrases. Stated simply, chromatic passing tones are 'wrong' notes used to connect 'right' notes in a melody. Fig. 1.3 illustrates how chromatic passing tones (indicated with a "C") are used to connect the scalar tones of Bb major in "Etude #1". The momentary tension created by these chromatic insertions serves to emphasize the chord tones as points of resolution. They also serve to allow the player to place the chord tones at various points inside of the rhythmic continuum in a controlled way, allowing their resolution to

[16] Scott DeVeaux, *Bop [bebop, rebop]* (Grove Music Online, 2013)

fall wherever the player decides. Mastery of this musical ‘tool’ gives the improvisor a greater number of options in creating colour and shape in their music, based on tension and release, as well as options for creating unique sounding musical and rhythmic phrases.

Fig. 1.3 Use of chromatic passing tones (measure 9)



Enclosures are another chromatic melodic device wherein two or more tones are used to ‘enclose’ a chord tone. This musical device, like chromatic passing tones, serves to create a point of resolution drawing the listener’s ear to the more consonant-sounding chord tone resolving after the enclosure. Enclosures are also a very useful musical device in creating interesting musical phrases both rhythmically and harmonically by sometimes delaying the expected resolution points of consonant notes. Fig. 1.4 illustrates the use of enclosures to affect the sound and points of resolution in a simple diatonic melody. The effect created is a longer musical phrase as well as a delay in the sounding of the note(s) that the ear expects to hear, creating a temporary sense of dissonance in the music. The first example uses an enclosure to delay the resolution of the final note of the phrase, the second example delays the beginning of the phrase by using an enclosure on the first note, and the final example uses enclosures on both the first and last notes of the original melody.

Fig. 1.4 using "Enclosures"[17]

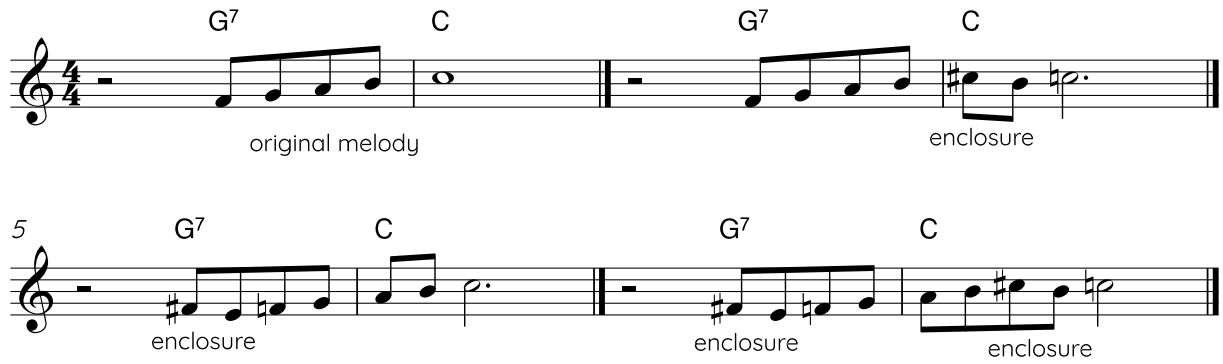
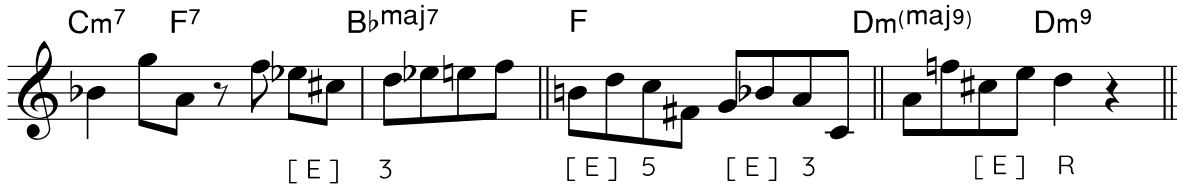


Fig. 1.5 demonstrates a number of examples of the use of enclosures I in Etude #1, particularly their integration into the broader scope of the piece and in combination with various melodic movements, which is an essential aspect of applying isolated concepts in improvisation.

Fig. 1.5 Etude #1 examples of enclosures (measures 8-9, 18, 37)



1.4.2 Other common melodic devices used in "Etude #1": "Altered upper extensions"

The ability to integrate the upper extensions[18] of a chord in a melodic line creates an exotic and colourful sound which is a common characteristic of bebop music. Fig. 1.6 is a short excerpt from Bud Powell's solo on "Parisian Thoroughfare" from *The Amazing Bud Powell Vol.1*.[19]

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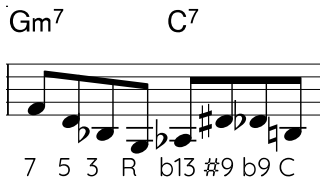
[17] Illustration composed by Adrean Farrugia, 2020

[18] Upper extensions are the chord tones above the 7th of a chord. These include 9, b9, #9, 11, #11, 13, and b13. Altered upper extensions, typically found on dominant chords, refer to pitches derived from a non-diatonic tonality.

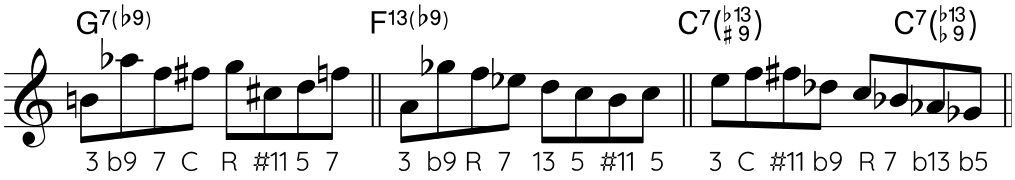
[19] transcription by Adrean Farrugia, 2020

Fig. 1.6 Bud Powell "Parisian Thoroughfare" (measure 12 of solo)



Powell's use of altered upper extensions, primarily on dominant 7th chords, creates a sound which serves to create a complex variety of tensions against the more consonant sound of the basic chord and scale tones. These less conventional note choices, combined with other devices such as chromaticism, serve to create new challenges and opportunities for students of improvisation. Fig 1.7 illustrates selected examples of altered upper extensions in Etude #1. As a vehicle for study, these lines can be learned as 'language devices' or licks[20] by the performer and then reapplied to various musical contexts.

Fig. 1.7 altered upper extensions in Etude #1 (measures 6, 24, 32)



By combining a number of key bebop piano techniques such as shell voicings, rootless voicings, long legato eighth lines incorporating chromatic passing tones, enclosures, and altered upper extensions, informed by the playing styles of artists such as Bud Powell, Wynton Kelly, and Bill Evans, "Etude #1" serves to create a compelling snapshot of a number of fundamental

[20] a *lick* is a common colloquialism used by jazz musicians to describe a commonly played musical phrase or idea.

and widely appliable tools for jazz piano. The learning and integration of the concepts covered, combined with a mindful observation of how these tools have been applied in this piece, will give the student of jazz piano useful insights into how to approach their own practice of this music.

Chapter 2: Etude #2: Theme for William Evans

("Modal Jazz" Harmony and Melodies)

2.1 Overview of "Etude #2: Theme for William Evans"

"Etude #2" is a 33-bar composition in 3/4 time with a swing feel, with a 48-bar solo section, and an 8-bar coda section. The piece demonstrates a style of jazz playing commonly referred to as modal jazz.[21] While earlier forms of jazz such as bebop often adhere to a more functional[22] harmonic structure involving chords relating to a tonic key centre, modal jazz utilizes a relationship between melody and harmony that is somewhat free of the confines of movement around a fixed key centre, and instead focused on moving between various modes of different major or melodic minor scales which dictate both the melodic and harmonic content in a piece.

A common jazz performance is often organized as follows:

- Statement of the main theme (typically referred to as the melody or 'head' of the piece)
- Solo section, where improvisation over the song form or a solo section occurs
- Restatement of main theme
- Coda, which is a thematically relative conclusion to the piece.

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[21] "A style of jazz, developed in the late 1950s, in which modal scales (or their general characteristics) dictate the melodic and harmonic content." (Grove Music Online, 2001)

[22] Functional harmony: a theory of tonal music that regards all harmonies as functioning as essentially tonic, dominant, or subdominant harmony (Merriam Webster Dictionary, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/functional%20harmony#h1)

Etude #2 follows this approach and uses the following form: A B C (main theme), D (solo section), A B C (restatement of main theme), E (coda).

These are arranged in five distinct sections:

- Section "A" is a 10-bar phrase utilizing 4 different minor 7th chords, and melodies derived from the dorian mode[23].
- Section "B" is a 12-bar phrase also utilizing 4 different minor 7th chords and dorian modes, however also illustrating new options for harmonic progression (this will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter)
- Section "C" is an 11-bar phrase incorporating 3 different minor 7th chords as well as 2 different major 7th chords. The minor 7th chords support melodies derived from their respective dorian modes, and the lydian mode[24] is used to construct melodies on the major 7thchords.
- Section "D" is a 48-bar solo section where the performer is given the opportunity to create an improvisation utilizing the chords and modes outlined in the preceding statement of the main theme of the piece.
- Finally, Section "E" is an 8 bar Coda.

[23] The dorian mode is the second mode of the Major scale, meaning that the tones used to comprise this scale are the same tones found in a major scale except that the organization of the notes are such that the major scale starts and ends on the second degree of the scale. This rearranging of the scales tones creates a uniquely 'minor' sounding tonality.

[24] The Lydian mode is the 4th mode of the major scale. Its sound conveys the tonality of a major scale with a raised fourth.

2.2 Historical Antecedents

Modal jazz is a term often used to describe a specific period in jazz music's history where a departure from the more densely populated chord progressions defined by bebop music moved toward a more sparse, or spacious, harmonic concept, accompanied by melodies that emphasized some of the specific tonal colours imparted by the unique sounds of modal scales, rather than the fast developing successions of changing scales embellished with chromaticism also found in bebop music. Compositions such as Miles Davis' *Milestones* and *So What* and works by John Coltrane are often cited as early examples of compositions that popularized this style. In an article entitled *What is Modal Jazz?* from The Jazz Educator's Journal, Keith Waters writes:

> "What *is* modal jazz? Jazz historians usually have no trouble identifying Miles Davis' 1958 recording of "Milestones," and his 1959 recordings of "So What," and "Flamenco Sketches" (*Kind of Blue)* as important points of departure for modal jazz. In addition to Davis, historians are quick to cite John Coltrane as the other early representative of modal jazz, usually beginning with Coltrane's 1960 recording of "My Favorite Things," and including "Impressions," "India," up through Coltrane's 1964 landmark recording *A Love Supreme.* Following this first wave of modal jazz, other musicians, including Davis' and Coltrane's sidemen–pianists Herbie Hancock and McCoy Tyner, and saxophonist Wayne Shorter–continued and extended the modal innovations pioneered by Davis and Coltrane."[25]

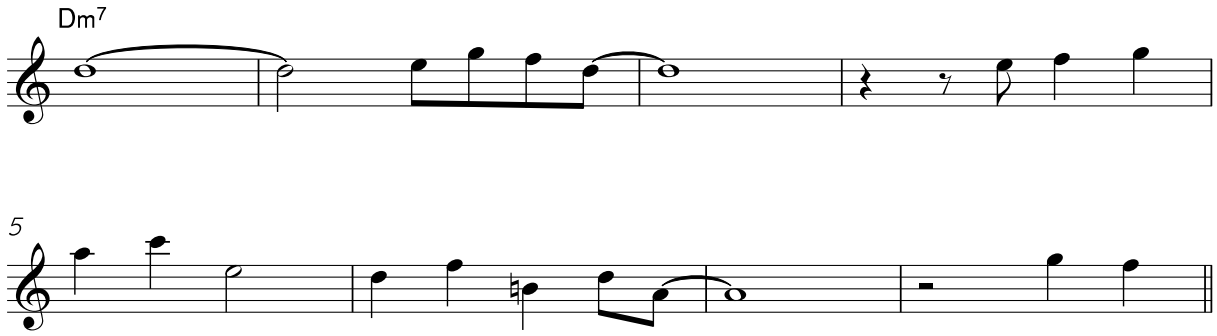
While bebop is often characterized by fast-moving chord *progressions* which move in ways associated with more traditional functional harmonic movements, accompanied by melodies and improvisations that seek to navigate and move *through* these chord progressions, modal jazz is often characterized by more static and ambiguous chord progressions and melodies

[25]Keith Waters. Jazz Educators Journal; Manhattan, Kan. Vol. 33, Iss. 1, (Jul 2000): 53-55.

which seek to explore and emphasize the unique qualities of the modes in which they are composed.

Fig. 2.1 shows the first eight bars of John Coltrane's composition "Impressions".[26] The melody is derived from a D dorian scale, which emphasizes a minor tonality with a major 6th scale degree. Also notice that the entire 8-bar melody utilizes only one chord to underpin the melody. By using this approach, the emphasis becomes largely about the sound of various notes in the mode against the repetitive harmonic accompaniment. This approach is a foundational aspect of what defines modal jazz.

Fig. 2.1 John Coltrane's "Impressions" measures 1-8



Perhaps the most famous example in the jazz vernacular defining modal jazz is Bill Evans' chordal accompaniment in the Miles Davis composition "So What" from the classic 1959 album *Kind of Blue*[27]. The 32-bar composition consists of two modes, D dorian and Eb dorian. While the bassist outlines the underlying harmony of D Dorian, Bill Evans uses chord voicings on top which suggest D-7 and E-7 (Eb-7 and F-7 chord voicings over Eb dorian). This piece, among

[26] John Coltrane *Impressions* Impulse! 314 543 416-2

[27] Miles Davis *Kind of Blue* Columbia, CS 8163

others, demonstrates an approach in which chords are derived from *scales*, creating new possibilities in jazz for harmonic accompaniment.

In "Etude #2: Theme for William Evans", a tribute to the great pianist Bill Evans, I've endeavoured to capture some of the key elements of modal jazz including chord progressions outlining non-functional harmonic movements, melodies outlining and exploring the sound of commonly used modes in this style of jazz, and a section for improvisation that allows the performer to explore the practice of developing musical ideas within a single modal landscape for a prolonged duration. The ability to perform, compose, and improvise in the modal jazz style gives the performer and student of jazz piano access to techniques and musical ideas which are a valuable set of tools for being a versatile modern jazz pianist.

2.3 The Chord Progression

"Etude #2" incorporates aspects of modal jazz harmony that are common to the style: extended harmonic passages outlining chord movement within one mode, ambiguous chord progressions often dictated by *melodic* resolutions rather than the rules of functional harmony, and the tonicization[28] of chords which, in functional harmony, usually serve as non-tonic chords.[29]

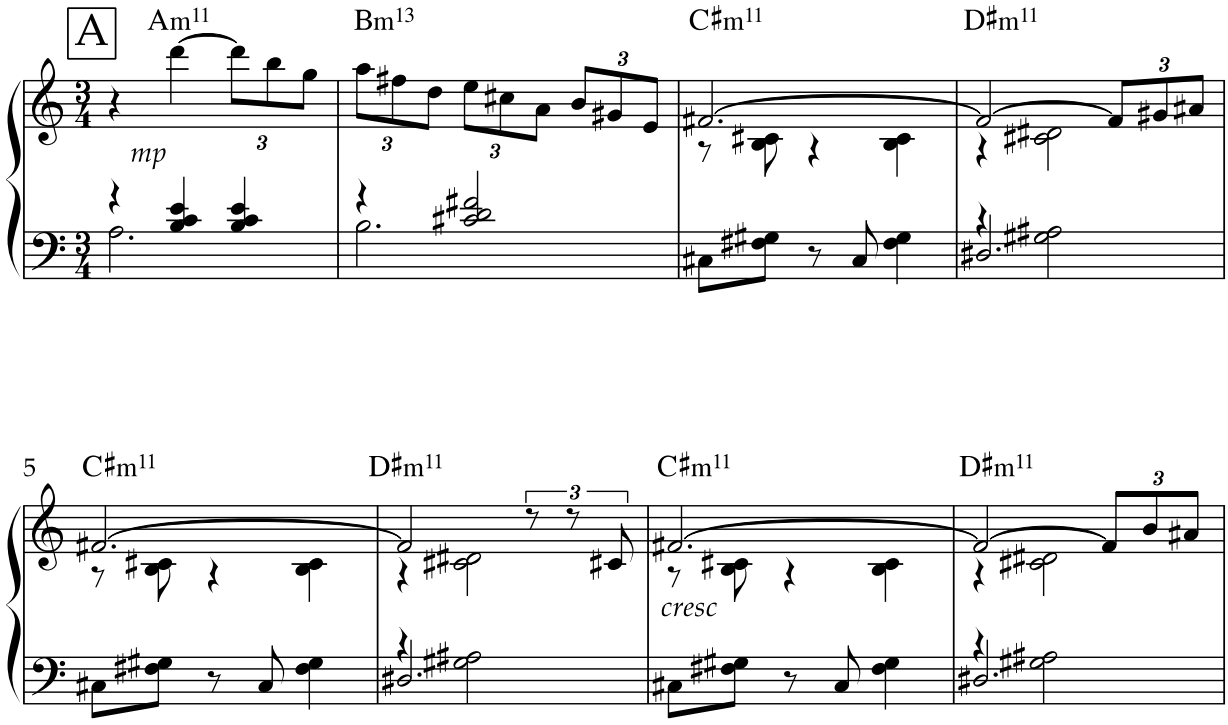
Fig. 2.2 illustrates measures 1-8 from Etude #2. The piece begins with an A-7 chord moving to a B-7. The four notes of a root position A-7 (A C E G) combined with the notes from a root position B-7 (B D F# A) outline the seven notes of an A dorian mode. This harmonic underpinning sets the harmonic support for a melody utilizing notes from the A dorian mode. I

[28] Tonicization refers to the treatment of a chord in such a way as to assign its function as 'I' or the 'home base' chord in a progression.

[29] Non-tonic chords fulfill the function of being transitory in nature, creating harmonic movement moving toward the end goal of a tonic chord.

chose to include a C# (9th) in the left-hand chord voicing for the B-7 as well to create added harmonic colour and momentary tension to the piece. In measures 3-8 in the sample below the chord progression moves back and forth between a C#-7 chord and a D#-7, together outlining a C# dorian mode. The chord progression at this point has a static quality as it sits in one place harmonically for a time, allowing the melody to unfold in a way which explores the sound and character of the prescribed mode. This compositional technique is characteristic of modal jazz.

Fig. 2.2 measures 1-8 of "Etude #2"



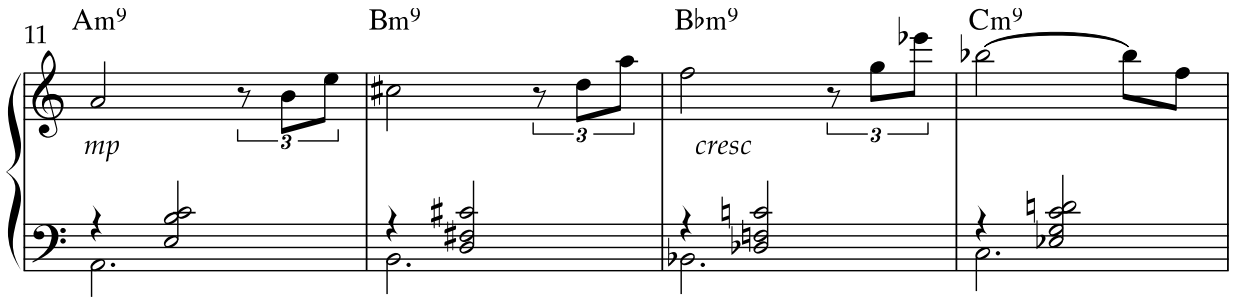
The two 'parent' key centres of A dorian and C# dorian are G major and B major respectively. By means of more traditional functional harmony these two keys are not closely related; G major has a key signature of one sharp and B major has a key signature of five sharps. In traditional harmony a modulation between these two keys would typically need to be justified by finding a *sequence* of chords to take the listener from G major to B major in a way that

creates a logical resolution toward the new key centre. Yet here the piece suddenly jumps into the new key centre. This is justified in three ways:

- The chords in the progression are of the same quality (minor 7th) therefore the listener's ear is led by the sound of a parallel-moving harmonic sequence which can freely roam to chosen points of resolution.
- The use of a 'pivot tone' justifies the sudden harmonic modulation by using a note common between the two keys; in this case the melody note F# serves as the 6th in A dorian as well as the 4th (or 11th) of C# dorian.
- A melodic sequence which utilizes a recurring intervallic or rhythmic theme can facilitate a sudden jump into a new key centre. Fig. 2.3 (measures 11-14 from "Etude #2") illustrates the use of such a device employing a melodic and rhythmic motif which facilitates a sudden modulation from A dorian to Bb dorian.

Fig. 2.3 (below) shows a recurring melodic and rhythmic motif which creates a structured sense of continuity in the melodic line which allows for an abrupt modulation to a new key. The repeating figure of eighth-note triplet to a half-note with the two eighth-notes enclosing the half note pulls the listener's ear to the changing key centre.

Fig. 2.3 measures 11-14 of "Etude #2" – recurring motif



These modulation techniques allow for an interesting array of colourful shifts to sometimes unexpected key centres. The understanding of how these techniques work, applied in

a practical way, is a useful skill for any improvisor or composer interested in expanding their own musical vocabulary. In “Etude #2” the key centres and modulations outlined are as follows:

- A dorian to C# dorian (measures 1 to 10)
- A dorian to Bb dorian (measures 11 to 22)
- A dorian to Eb lydian to Db dorian to Eb lydian to D lydian (measures 23 to 33)
- A dorian to C# dorian to Eb dorian to F dorian to A lydian (measures 82 to 89).

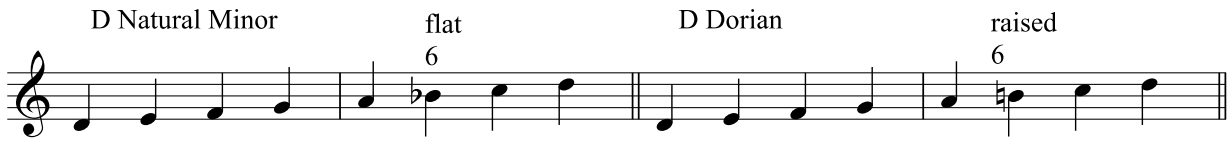
I chose to use a fixed starting point of departure (A dorian) for each section in order to clearly illustrate several different possibilities for modulation to different key centres. In a pedagogical setting the student would be encouraged to utilize the techniques outlined above in their own composing and improvising to further explore a variety of ways to create chord progressions and modulations in a non-traditional way.

2.4 The Melody

In constructing the melody of “Etude #2” the intention was to capture several key aspects that define the modal jazz sound.

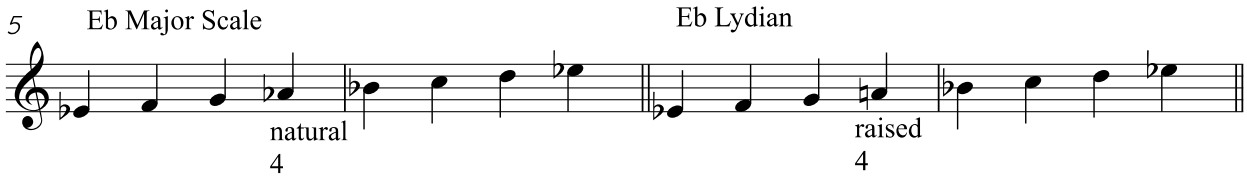
When employing a modal approach to melody there are specific scale notes in any given mode which are defining notes in that they contribute what gives the mode its characteristic sound. The two modes used in this piece are the dorian mode and the lydian mode. The dorian mode resembles the natural minor scale from traditional harmony with the exception that the sixth scale degree of the mode is raised, as compared to the natural minor scale. See Fig. 2.4

Fig. 2.4 natural minor scale and dorian mode



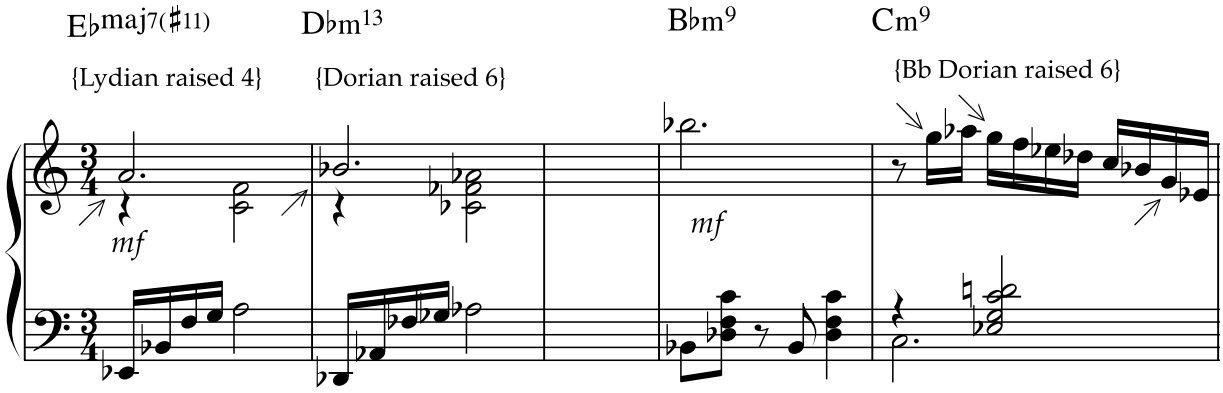
The lydian mode resembles the major scale with the exception of the fourth scale step which is raised. See Fig. 2.5

Fig. 2.5 major scale and lydian mode



In order to capture the tonal quality of any given mode, it is valuable to make use of its unique sounding notes so as to bring forth the characteristic sound of that mode. Therefore, when writing the melodies in "Etude #2" I was mindful to include the characteristic 'raised 6th' dorian sound and the 'raised 4th' lydian sound to emphasize the unique qualities of sound that each mode brings forth. Fig. 2.6 outlines selected examples from measures 25-26 and 15-16 in "Etude #2":

Fig. 2.6 use of lydian mode and dorian mode in "Etude #2"

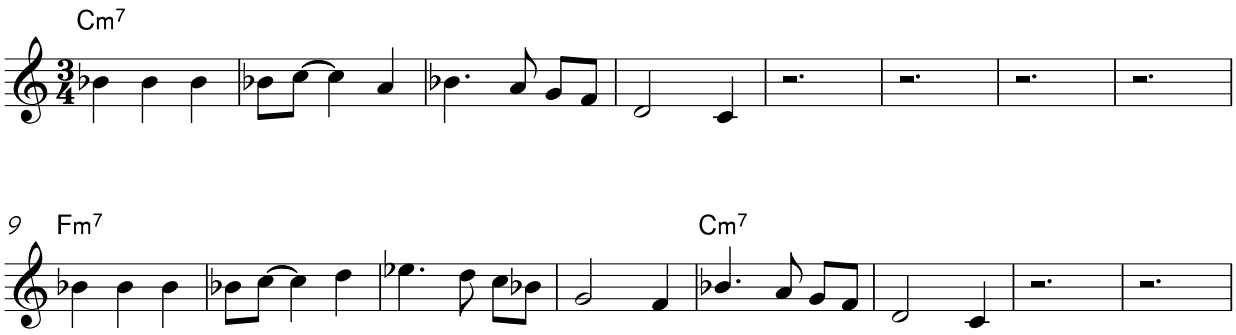


By utilizing these characteristic notes, the music captures the essence of a mode's sound in an effective way.

Another consideration with regards to melody writing in this style is to integrate the use of repeating melodic themes which develop to bring out the character of that mode's sound while creating melodic movement. Considering that often in modal jazz there is an economy of harmonic movement, it is valuable to be able to explore various melodic movements inside of prolonged harmonic passages to create forward motion in the music, as well as sometimes using sequential musical ideas which ease the transition into non-traditionally related chords.

Fig. 2.7 demonstrates the main theme from saxophonist Wayne Shorter's classic composition *Footprints*[30]. The opening phrase states a musical idea in the C dorian mode, and then the subsequent phrase develops the musical idea into F dorian and then develops it further while moving back to C dorian.

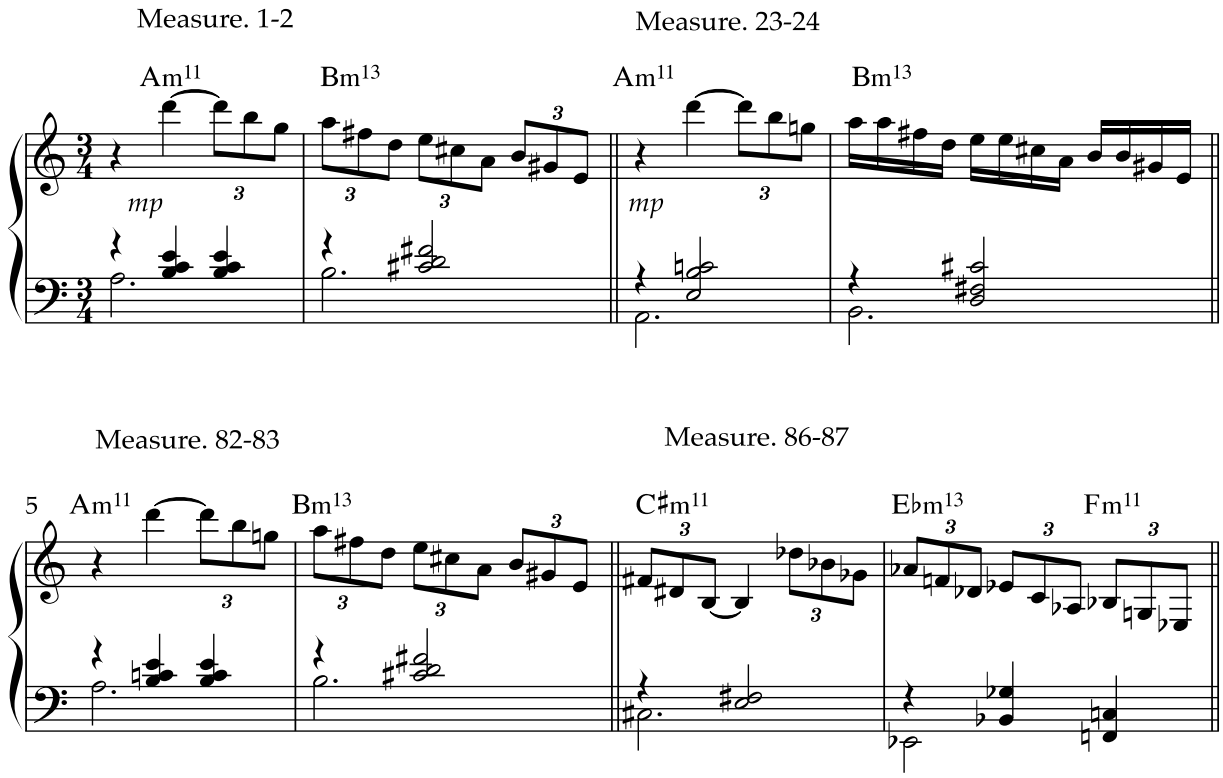
Fig. 2.7 Wayne Shorter's "Footprints"



In "Etude #2" this concept was used in several ways. Fig. 2.8 demonstrates the use of a triadic melodic motif—a three-note descending melody that outlines the notes in a major triad, passing through A dorian and B dorian modes. This melodic motif occurs several times in the piece in measures 1-2, a developed variation in 23-24, and again in the Coda in measures 82-83 and 86-87.

[30] Wayne Shorter *Adam's Apple* Blue Note, BLP 4232

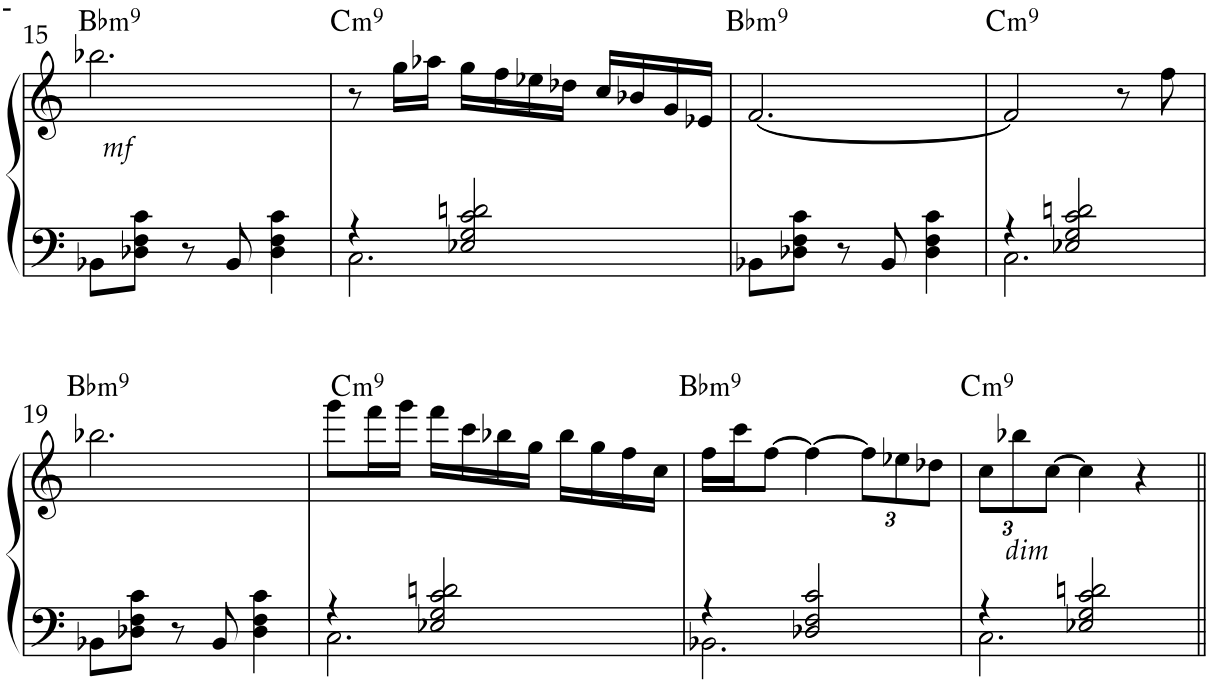
Fig. 2.8 motivic development in "Etude #2"



This simple triadic motif allows a sense of harmonic movement as dictated by the *melody* rather than the underlying harmony. It also creates a musical sense of inner logic which helps justify to the listener harmonic movements which are typically not found in traditional functional harmony.

After establishing the new key centre of Bb dorian in measure 13 of the etude, the harmonic progression stays in that mode for ten measures. In order to create musical interest and a sense of forward motion, a new and more complex theme is introduced—long tones on the root and 5th of the mode followed by a sixteenth-note passage which outlines the tonal character of the mode. This occurs twice with the second sixteenth-note passage developing into a longer phrase than the first one. See Fig. 2.9.

Fig. 2.9 "Etude #2" measures 15-22



Understanding these various approaches to improvisation and composition is valuable in developing a well-rounded set of musical tools for the modern jazz pianist. While bebop music largely focuses on one's ability to navigate rapidly moving chord progressions, while constructing melodies which fit each chord and weave a musical line *through* the chord progression, the demands of the modal jazz style focus more on one's ability to create interesting and exploratory melodies with a variety of musical expositions within longer and more fixed harmonic structures.

2.5 Notes on the Solo Section of "Etude #2"

In "Etude #1" the focus of the composition centred around creating an authentic sounding bebop piano solo illustrating common melodic and harmonic devices in action. With "Etude #2" the focus is similar. However, it is structured more closely to a performance piece rather than only an etude for study. As such, it sits more in line with a concert/performance scenario, which typically consists of an exposition of the composition followed by improvising, and then the

main composition again at the end. Typically, in jazz performances a portion of each composition allows the performer(s) to improvise over the form of the composition or over a dedicated solo section which has some kind of pertinent relationship to the composition as a whole. In this piece I chose to construct a solo section which emphasizes an opportunity for exploration of each of the modes used in the piece. It's a simplified representation of the composition's chord progression which gives the performer an opportunity to utilize the prescribed modes in a creative and personal way to create a unique musical statement of their own, while still including all of the essential harmonic and modal material found in the body of the composition. From a pedagogical standpoint, the section also gives the student an opportunity to explore the chord progression and related modes in a clearly defined and structured way, while also practicing one of the most fundamental aspects of jazz playing – improvisation.

The solo section is divided into eight- bar sections which allow the performer to spend a significant enough amount of time inside of each mode so as to have the opportunity to explore musical ideas with a certain level of depth. The solo section is broken down as follows:

- A dorian for 8 bars with A-7 and B-7 as accompanying chords
- C# dorian accompanied by C#-7 and D#-7
- A dorian again
- Bb dorian accompanied by Bb-7 and C-7
- A dorian again
- A final 8 bar phrase moving between Eb lydian and Db dorian and finally resolving on D lydian, accompanied by Eb Maj 7, Db -7, and D Maj 7.

This solo form mimics the movements between key centres found in the main composition, allowing the performer to practise some of the melodic techniques used in the composed part of the score in an improvised way.

Chapter 3: Etude #3: Blues for McCoy

(Pentatonic Scales and Quartal Harmony)

3.1 Overview of "Etude #3: Blues for McCoy"

"Etude #3" is composed over the common jazz form of a 12- bar blues in the key of C minor. The piece explores various applications of quartal harmony in the accompaniment of pentatonic melodies. Quartal harmony utilizes chords constructed using combinations of perfect fourth and augmented fourth intervals, rather than the more common approach of tertiary harmony which combines major and minor thirds. Pentatonic scales utilize five-note combinations in contrast to the seven-note scales found in major and minor modes.

The form of the composition is as follows:

- 12-bar introduction outlining the left-hand chord voicings for the C minor blues form
- Chorus 1: the main theme of the piece, which is 12 bars repeated
- Chorus 2: a composed chorus of soloing ideas illustrating improvisational concepts
- Chorus 3: another composed chorus of soloing ideas further illustrating improvisation concepts
- Chorus 4: a solo section giving the performer an opportunity to improvise their own unique solo for 24 bars (12 bars repeated). Left-hand chord voicings are provided as well as suggested pentatonic scales to be used for melodic improvisation.
- *D.S al fine* indicating a reprise of the main theme

"Etude #3" achieves two main goals. It serves as a piece for pedagogical study in that it illustrates the fundamental jazz piano concepts of left-hand quartal harmony combined with right-hand pentatonic scale melodic ideas applied to composition; as well as being an illustration of various stylistically appropriate improvisational ideas.

Quartal harmony, in contrast to tertiary harmony, allows the performer to create what may be thought of as a more open or less confining harmonic sound underneath melodies, allowing the improvisor or composer to create melodies of a more exploratory nature. Although there are many possible variations of the pentatonic scale (five-note scales) throughout many areas of music, the scales utilized in "Etude #3" are:

- A scale which consists of the scale steps 1, b3, 4, 5 and b7
- A scale which consists of the scale steps 1, 2, b3, 5, and 6.
- The piece also gives the performer an opportunity to apply the concepts illustrated in a unique and improvised way in the solo section, while also observing the common jazz form structure of: Introduction – Theme – Solo – Head Out.

"Etude #3" can also be applied as a stand-alone performance piece suitable for concert and recital settings with the option of adding bass and drums for an ensemble performance. The concepts covered explore a sound which is unique to jazz and are indispensable in certain musical contexts as well as exploring specific technical techniques and challenges which add to a pianist's overall skillset and abilities.

3.2 Historical Antecedents

It would be difficult to discuss the use of quartal harmony and pentatonic scales in jazz without acknowledging the impact of pianist McCoy Tyner. His contributions to such classic albums as John Coltrane's *My Favorite Things (1961), Impressions (1963),* and *A Love Supreme*

(1965) as well as saxophonist Joe Henderson's *Inner Urge (1964)* and trumpeter Freddie Hubbard's *Ready for Freddie (1962),* to name but a few, practically single-handedly defined the style on piano. Tyner's introduction of this style of playing into the jazz lexicon is widely considered to be one of the key points of innovation in jazz piano history. In *Thinking in Jazz,* quoting legendary trumpeter Art Farmer, Paul Berliner writes:

> "I remember every piano player was trying to play like Horace Silver at one time,and then later on, everybody was trying to play like Bill Evans…And then everybody was trying to play like McCoy Tyner."[31]

In an obituary tribute to Tyner on NPR.org Nate Chinen writes:

> "Tyner was the last surviving member of the John Coltrane Quartet, among the most momentous groups in jazz history. Few musicians have ever exerted as much influence as a sideman. His crucial role in the group's articulation of modal harmony, from the early 1960s on, will always stand as a defining achievement: The ringing intervals in his left hand, often perfect fourths or fifths, became the cornerstone of a style that endures today."[32]

Tyner's style can be described as virtuosic and muscular, employing a powerful left-hand approach combining low roots and 5^{ths} with moving quartal harmony as well as fast developing right-hand melodies employing diatonic and chromatic pentatonic scale passages. Like other jazz pianists, Tyner employed a wide variety of other concepts and techniques as well, but it is these fundamental concepts that were the cornerstone of his playing, and the concepts that "Etude #3" seeks to emphasize. Fig. 3.1a and 3.1b illustrates excerpts from McCoy Tyner's solo[33] on his composition "Blues on the Corner" from the 1967 album *The Real McCoy*[34]

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[31] Paul F Berliner. *Thinking in Jazz* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1994) 274

[32] Nate Chinen, "McCoy Tyner, Groundbreaking Pianist Of 20th Century Jazz, Dies at 81" NPR, March 6, 2020 https://www.npr.org/2020/03/06/812940062/mccoy-tyner-groundbreaking-pianist-of-20th-century-jazz-dies-at-81

[33] Transcription by Dmitri Tymoczko https://dmitri.mycpanel.princeton.edu/files/transcriptions/bluesonthecorner.pdf

[34] McCoy Tyner *The Real McCoy* Blue Note, BST 84264

Fig. 3.1a Minor Pentatonic Scale with Left-Hand Quartal Structures (perfect 4 + perfect 4th) 1:35 from "Blues on the Corner"

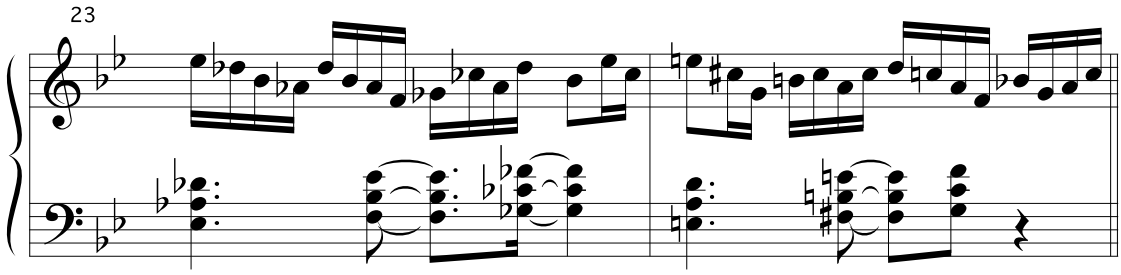
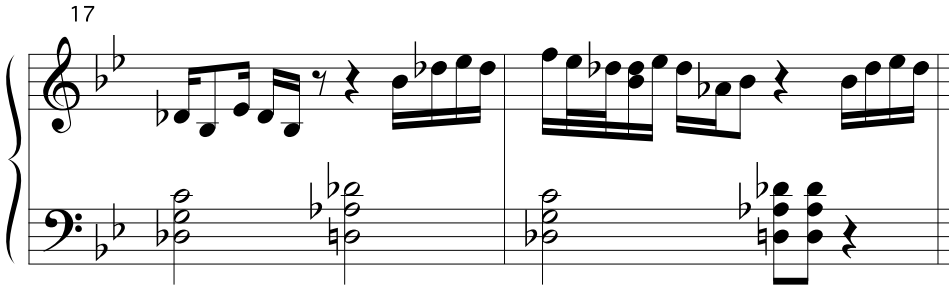


Fig. 3.1b Minor Pentatonic with Left-Hand Quartal Structures (augmented 4th + perfect 4th) 1:22 from "Blues on the Corner"



This solo, typical of much of Tyner's work, clearly illustrates the use of a left-hand approach employing various quartal structures (perfect 4th + perfect 4th and augmented 4th + perfect 4th) underneath right-hand melodies derived from pentatonic scales. What is particularly interesting is in how Tyner uses both chords and scales which are relatively simple and transparent in their construction, yet in the ways he combines them he is able to create a series of mounting and releasing dissonances and implied chord progressions within the already established chord progressions.

In measures 17 and 18 of the above excerpt, the right-hand melody clearly illustrates the use of notes from a Bb minor pentatonic scale (Bb Db Eb F Ab) over an Eb7 chord. There is nothing particularly arresting about these note choices in that context. However, in the left-hand

accompaniment he outlines the Eb7 chord on beat one using a quartal structure outlining the 7th, 3rd, and 13th of the chord; then moving the left-hand structure up a half step, a polytonal effect suddenly creates dissonance against the notes of the original scale (this is sometimes termed "side-stepping").

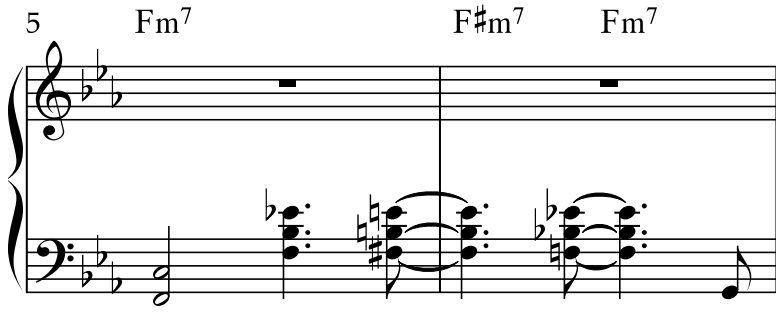
In the excerpt from measures 23-24 above, a similar approach is employed. However in this example, a much more complex sequence takes place employing both left-hand and right-hand structures which navigate away from the original chord progression. It is this use of simple structures moving in complex ways that creates the essence of this approach. Quartal harmony structures and pentatonic scales in and of themselves are relatively simple concepts, but in using them in ways such as this an infinite number of possibilities emerge. This approach is not only valuable in that it defines a fundamental *sound*, still relevant today within the jazz piano language, but also in that it employs a valuable universal musical concept – the application of simple concepts in an exploratory way that has infinite possibilities. These concepts are explored in several fundamental ways in "Etude #3: Blues for McCoy".

3.3 Introduction Section of "Etude #3"

For the introduction I chose to use left hand only. The purpose of this section is to establish the feel of the harmony used in the piece, allowing the performer/student to hear and play the isolated left-hand concepts used in the piece. This section establishes the fundamental left-hand role in this style of playing, demonstrating quartal harmonic structures as they are typically applied in a minor blues form. There are also some basic chord substitutions demonstrating possible ways to reharmonize a basic minor blues progression, giving the performer/student insights into ways to add variety and colour to their own interpretations of pieces as well as their own compositions.

One of the most common ways that harmonic colour is achieved in quartal accompaniment is through the use of a technique commonly referred to as ‘side-stepping’. This technique involves moving a chord voicing up or down a half-step and then back to the original chord, creating a momentary dissonance and then a resolution. This technique is demonstrated in measures 5 and 6 of the introduction. In a traditional blues, measures 5 and 6 would typically be occupied by two bars of the IV chord in the progression
(F min7 in the case of a C minor blues). See Fig. 3.2.

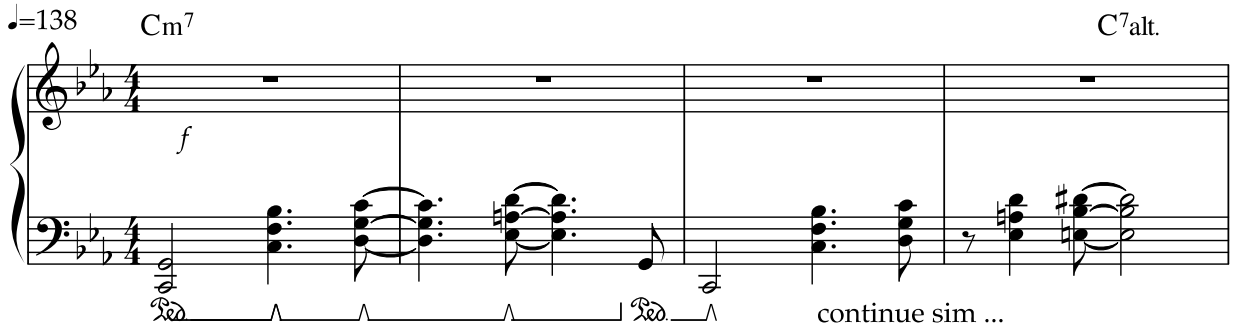
Fig. 3.2 ‘side-stepping’



This technique is very common in quartal harmony accompaniment and its use in “Etude #3” establishes a useful context for its application.

Another common technique found in this style is a harmonic technique referred to as harmonic ‘planing’ or ‘parallelism’. This concept involves moving a harmonic *shape*, such as triads or stacked fourths, either diatonically (within the prescribed notes of a scale), chromatically (independently of a fixed set of diatonic notes), or in a mixed fashion (a mixture of both diatonic and chromatic movements). This is a very effective technique for creating both harmonic tension and release as well as a sense of movement within a chord progression. Fig. 3.3 demonstrates one of many examples of harmonic planing in “Etude #3”

Fig. 3.3 left-hand harmonic planing



In measure 1 the low C and G in beats 1 and 2 establish a basic harmonic underpinning for the C-7 chord. In beats 3 and 4, and moving into the next bar, a quartal shape is established and then 'planed' diatonically stepwise up the dorian mode. In measure 4 a chromatic planing movement occurs when the last quartal shape of the bar moves away from the dorian mode employing new notes up one half-step from the last diatonic shape before it. While creating momentary tension this chord also implies a C7 alt chord which acts as a secondary dominant chord (V/vi) which will resolve to the F-7 in the next bar. There is an almost infinite number of possibilities when using this technique to establish interesting and colourful ways of exploring a basic chord progression – several of which occur later in "Etude #3" and will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.4 Chorus 1 – Main Theme

In the introduction section of "Etude #3" the basic feel and rhythmic propulsion of the piece is established through the left hand's use of low 5^{ths} followed by moving quartal structures. Chorus 1 of the piece introduces right-handed melodic content as well as continuing development of the left-hand approach.

The right-hand melody utilizes pentatonic scale melodies – five-note scales. The possible variations and applications of five-note scales are vast. Encyclopaedia Britannica gives this definition of the scale:

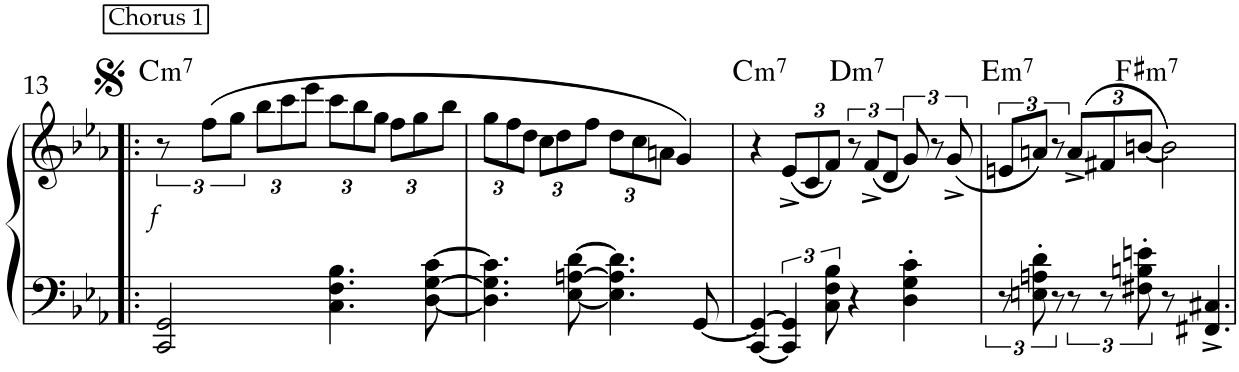
> "Pentatonic scales may have been used in ancient times to tune the Greek kithara (lyre), and some early Gregorian chant incorporated pentatonic melodies. A variety of pentatonic scales occur in the musics of Native Americans, sub-Saharan Africans, and East and Southeast Asians (e.g., the five-tone *slendro* scale of the Javanese), as well as in many European folk melodies. Pentatonicism was used in an experimental capacity by many 20th-century Western composers, such as Claude Debussy, who employed it in his prelude for piano, "Voiles" (1910)."[35]

Pentatonic scales became common in the jazz of the 1960s, particularly in the music of the John Coltrane Quartet. It is valuable to note that it is the *absence* of notes from more common seven-note scales which makes a pentatonic scale's sound unique. Pentatonic scales create a unique colour in music and, particularly in jazz, create a sound that is distinct from bebop and modal jazz approaches. When combined with the quartal harmony of the left-hand, pentatonic scales serve to create what is considered one of the most fundamental-sounding approaches in jazz piano.

The melody of chorus 1 in the etude utilizes three basic themes. Measures 1- 4 establish an eighth-note triplet-based melody, using a combination of the C minor pentatonic scale and the D minor pentatonic scale over a C-7 chord moving to a second theme, a motivic passage which incorporates pentatonic scale fragments that coincide with left-hand quartal chords, ascending stepwise, planing toward a resolution point of the F-7 chord on measure 5. See Fig. 3.4

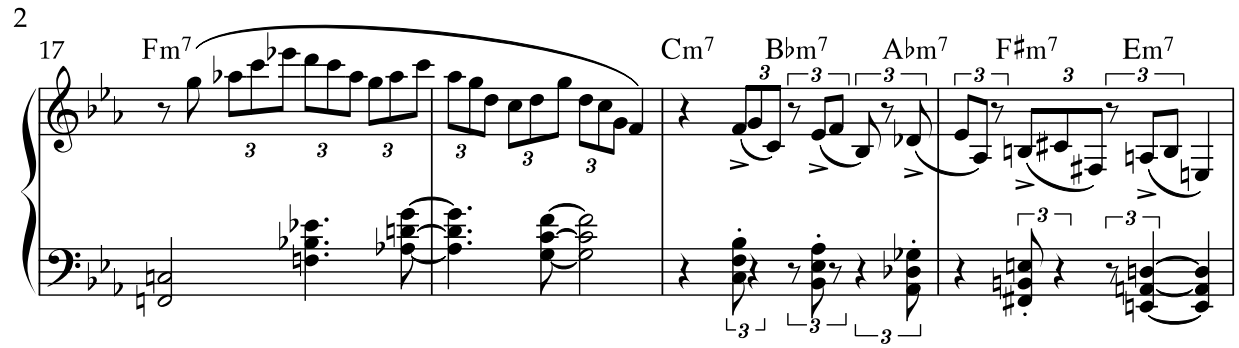
[35] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Pentatonic Scale" Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed June 24, 2020 https://www.britannica.com/art/pentatonic-scale

Fig. 3.4 triplet pentatonic theme and harmonic planing



Measures 17-20 transpose this thematic material to accommodate the changing chords in the blues progression by again using the established eighth-note theme on an F-7 chord, this time only using notes from the F tonic minor pentatonic scale, and then again utilizing the planing technique and pentatonic fragments established in measures 3-4, but this time as a variation by planing in a descending pattern. See Fig. 3.5.

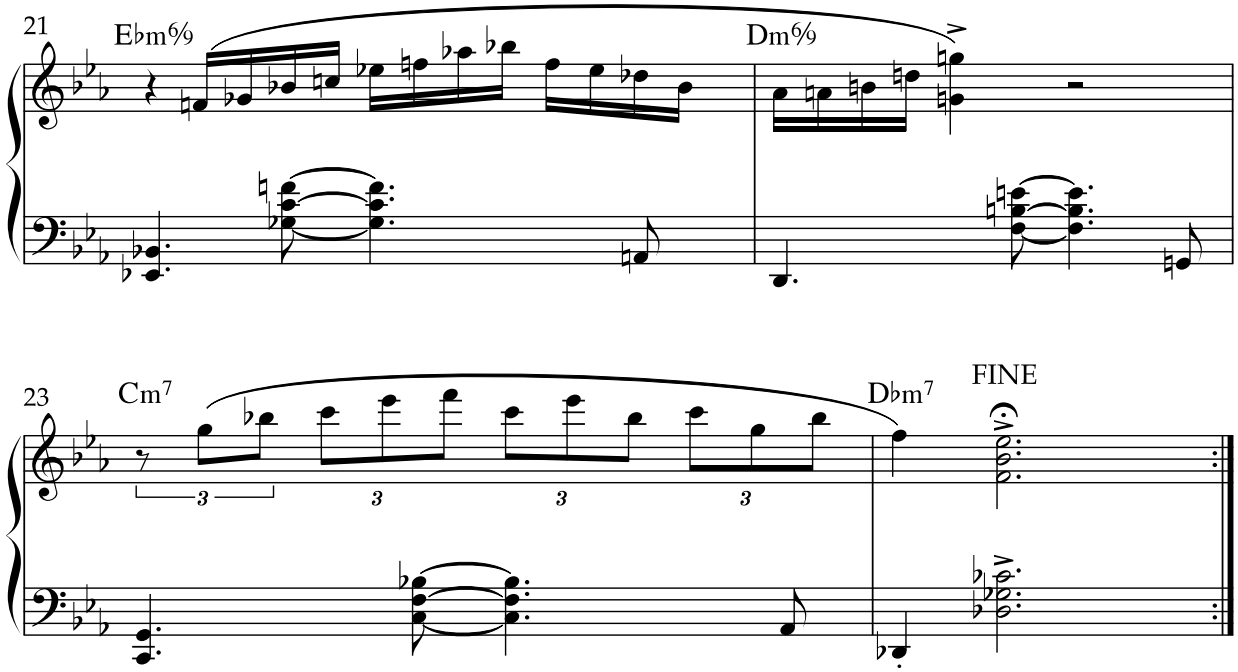
Fig. 3.5 variation of triplet theme and harmonic planing



Measures 21-22 introduces a third theme which acts as a sort of release from the tension created before it with a fast flurry of sixteenth-notes resolving to an accented G note which is the 5th or dominant tone of the key re-establishing a sense of focus in the sound. Then finally measures 23-24 recall the initial eighth-note triplet theme, bringing closure to the exposition of the ‘head’, and then finally landing on a Db-7 chord which is a semitone above the tonic,

creating a ‘unresolved’ harmonic effect at the end while also utilizing a side-stepping technique which will set up the C-7 which will start the next chorus of the piece (see Fig. 3.6 below).

Fig. 3.6 sixteenth-note theme and triplet theme



This first chorus of “Etude #3” serves to demonstrate several common concepts utilized by players such as McCoy Tyner in a cohesive and practical manner. From a pedagogical perspective it is the intention that the performer/student not only learn the notes and techniques involved in performance of the etude, but also *understand* the concepts involved and their integration into a practical and stylistically appropriate musical statement.

3.5 Choruses 2, 3 and 4: Soloing Techniques and Improvisation

The intention of these two choruses of the etude is to illustrate a natural sounding progression from the head of the piece leading into a solo section. These two choruses serve to illustrate for the performer/student useful approaches to improvisation within this style while also creating a ‘send-off’ for the performer’s own improvised solo at Chorus 4.

Chorus 2 begins with the now familiar left-hand approach of playing low 5^{ths} followed by various quartal structures. In this chorus there are new examples of possible variations in the harmonic interpretation of the blues progression, utilizing side-stepping and planing techniques, such as in measures 31-32 where the original progression of C-7 for two bars now uses a sequence of parallel minor 7th chords over a C pedal which first side-step descending from the tonic and then ascend non-diatonically. See Fig. 3.7. This further illustrates some of the possible harmonic movements that one can adapt into their own playing when exploring this style of jazz piano.

Fig. 3.7 parallel minor 7th chords left-hand

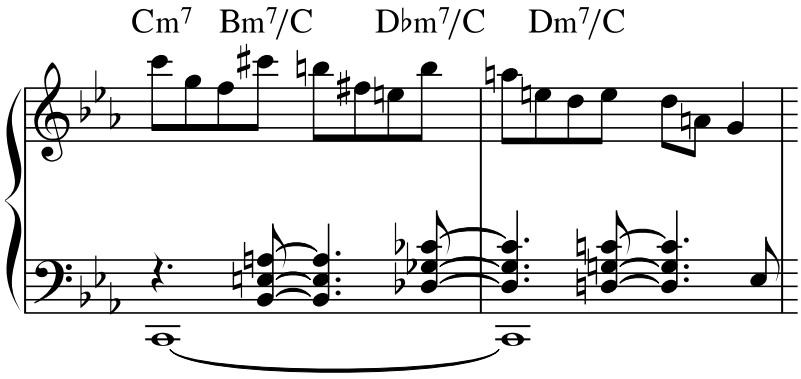
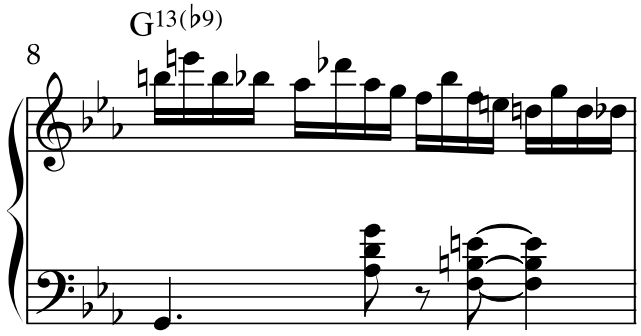


Fig. 3.7 also illustrates an example of how in situations of harmonic planing and/or side-stepping the right hand can adapt its trajectory to complement the harmonic movements or also create tension *against* the harmony. In this example the notes in the right-hand melody start on a C minor pentatonic scale and then move into B minor pentatonic scale when the harmony moves from C-7 to B-7. But in the later part of the phrase the melody moves into a D minor tonality while the harmony suggests Db-7, creating tension until the harmony moves to a D-7 chord resolving the created tension. This is again one example of many possible approaches in this style of playing which creates an ever-changing dynamic between consonant and dissonant sounds.

Later in the chorus, at measure 34, a half-whole diminished scale pattern (also referred to as the octatonic scale) is utilized on the G13b9 chord. I chose to abandon the use of pentatonic scale melodies momentarily here to create sonic variety and to illustrate the integration of other possible scale options. The melodic pattern used here is also a common theme used by pianists such as McCoy Tyner and see it as a stylistically appropriate expression (see Fig. 3.8)

Fig. 3.8 diminished scale pattern

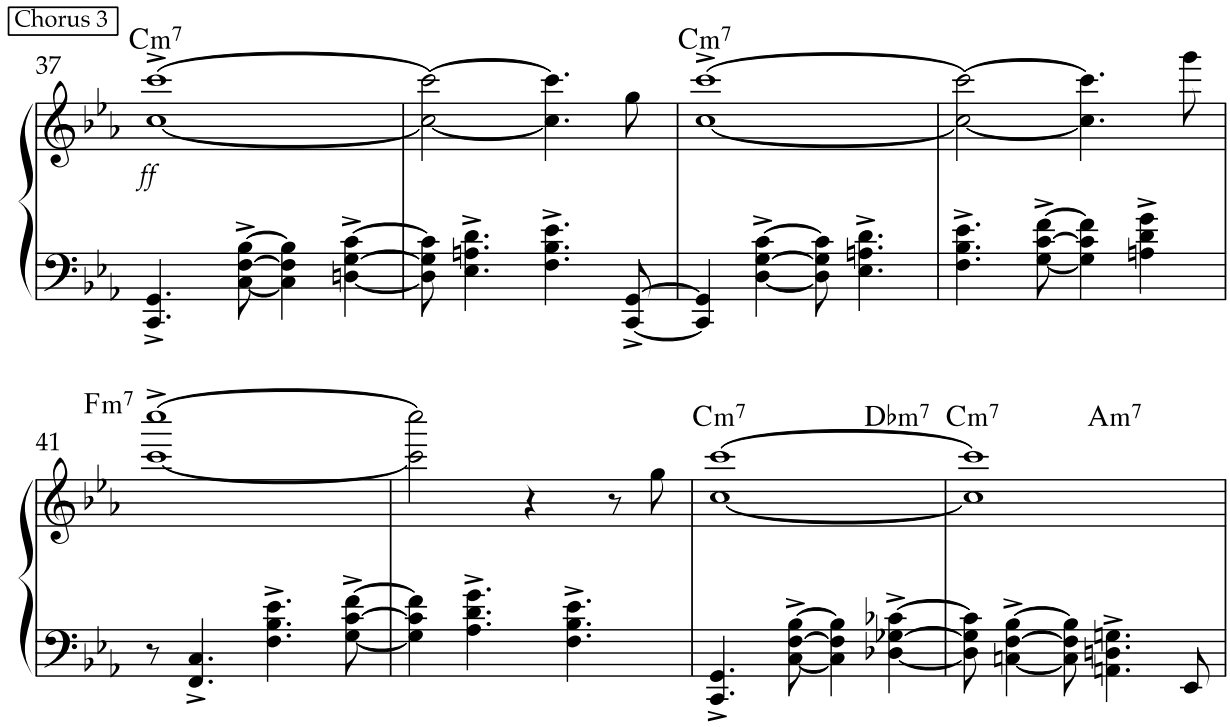


Chorus 3 demonstrates a very common improvisation technique employed in this style, where the right hand employs a repeating 'pedal point' or static repeating note which provides a tonal anchor for the changing harmony below. The left hand, in contrast to the static simplicity of the right-hand part, becomes increasingly active drawing the listener's ear toward the left hand as it creates a series of tensions and releases via moving diatonic and chromatic quartal structures. The left-hand part also employs a polyrhythmic pattern utilizing dotted quarter note figures which creates rhythmic tension during this climax of the piece. See Fig. 3.9.

With the dynamic level at this point indicated as fortissimo (very strong), this section of the piece illustrates the very muscular style of playing employed by performers such as McCoy Tyner during an era of jazz where power and intensity largely became a focus of the music. John

Coltrane's classic album *A Love Supreme*[36], particularly the tracks "Resolution" and "Pursuance", is a prime example of this style.

Fig. 3.9 right-hand pedal point, left-hand planing chords



Chorus 3 concludes with a motivic flurry of right-hand notes, played 'straight' for rhythmic contrast, with a repeating pattern that changes with the harmony and also serves to release the tension established earlier in the chorus. This sets the stage for the next section of the piece which is a two-chorus improvised solo by the performer, where the intention is for the performer to continue the established feel and energy of the piece while employing the concepts used in the piece. The solo section indicates left-hand chord voicings and scale note choices for

[36] John Coltrane **A Love Supreme** MCA Impulse! MCAD-5660

guidance, giving the performer an opportunity to create a contextually relevant improvisation with the materials provided.

As is the traditional approach in jazz of this era and style, the final section of the piece, after the improvised solo at Chorus 4 is a reprise of the main theme, as indicated by a *D.S al Fine* leading back to Chorus 1.

"Etude #3" illustrates a number of key applications of quartal harmony approaches combined with various pentatonic scale melodies. This piece works well as a performance piece as well as a vehicle for pedagogical study illustrating important aspects of the style including isolated concepts and their applications, common song-form practices in the jazz style, and illustrations of common improvising techniques; as well as providing an opportunity for the performer to create their own unique improvisation within the larger form of the composition.

Chapter 4: Etude #4: Queen's Park Avenue

(Block Chords and the 'Locked Hands' Style)

4.1 Overview of "Etude #4: Queen's Park Avenue"

"Etude #4" is a through-composed[37] composition consisting of four sections totalling 56 measures. The piece emphasizes a foundational jazz piano concept referred to as *block chords* or the 'locked hands' style which, as the name suggests, involves playing melodies which are harmonized by chords employed by both the right hand and left hand playing unison rhythms. There are a variety of block chord approaches in jazz, however "Etude #4" focuses on the three types of approaches most commonly found in the jazz repertoire spanning the 1940s to 1960s.

Type 1 involves harmonizing the notes in a scale by alternating 6^{th} chords[38] with diminished passing chords[39]. See Fig. 4.1 for an illustration of the basic concept in the key of C major. The right hand plays four-note inversions of the chords with the melody note on top, while the left hand plays single notes doubling the melody note down one octave. These five-note chord voicings create a sound which is unique in jazz and are used in a variety of settings such as piano composition and improvisation, big band and large ensemble writing, as well as vocal arranging. This approach is used in sections A, B, and D of the piece.

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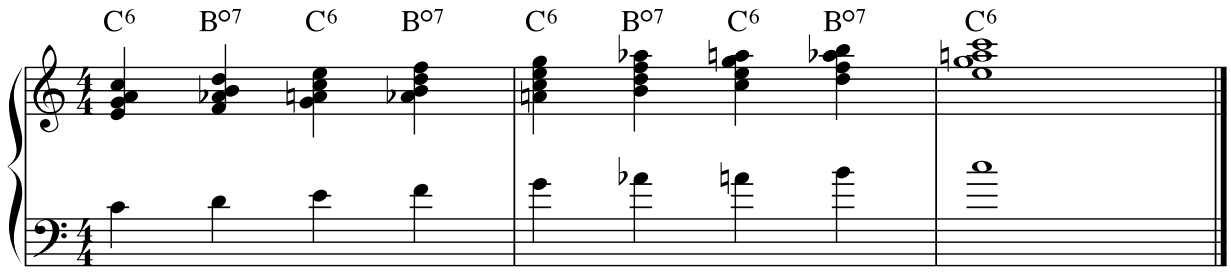
[37] *Through-composed* refers to a musical composition not based on repeated sections. The piece reads continuously from beginning to end.

[38] *6^{th} chords* are comprised of a root, 3^{rd}, 5^{th}, and 6^{th}

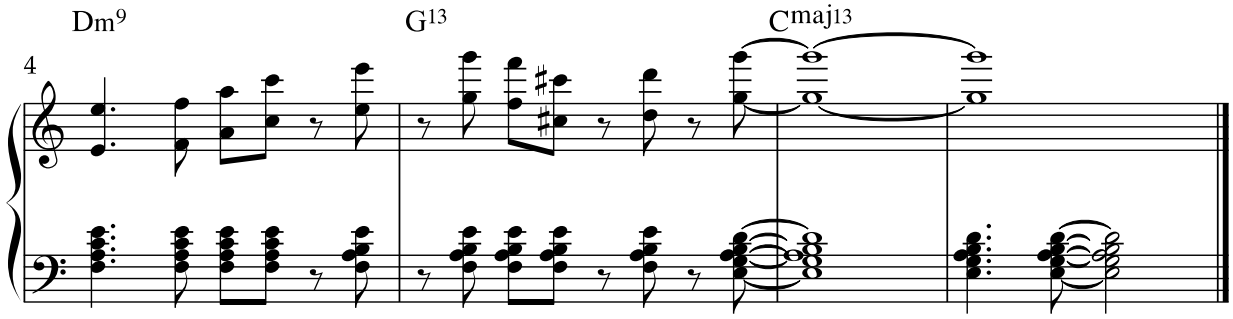
[39] In this context *diminished passing chords* are chords comprised of a root, minor 3^{rd}, diminished 5^{th}, and diminished 7^{th} which serve to pass between the inversions of the 6^{th} chords which serve a tonic function in the piece

Fig. 4.1 block chords Type 1 – alternating 6th chords and dim 7 passing chords[40]



Type 2 involves employing right-hand octave melodies, or octaves also including 5th intervals, accompanied by left-hand rootless voicings played in rhythm the right hand. This approach creates a very full and present sound on the piano, while also strongly emphasizing the melody by accentuating it with octaves. The accompanying chords in the left hand, although often static, create a strong support for the melody and often sound as though they are moving rather than static because of their recontextualization with each changing right-hand melody note. This approach is used in section C of the piece. See Fig. 4.2 for an illustration of this concept used over a simple ii – V – I progression in the key of C major

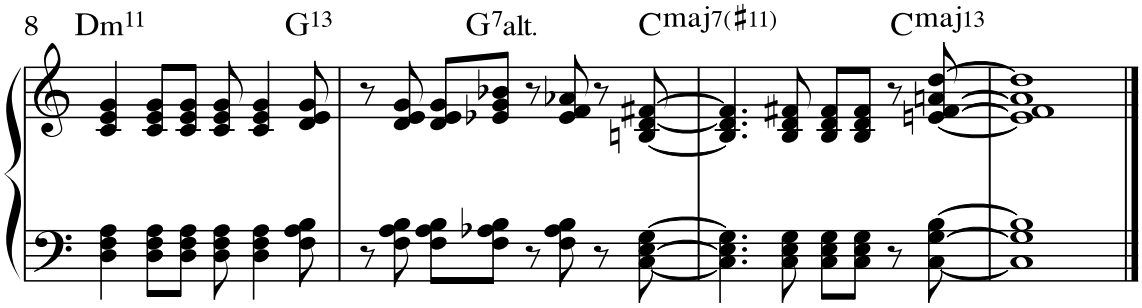
Fig. 4.2 block chords Type 2 – right-hand octaves, left-hand rootless voicings



[40] There are various ways of conceiving of this approach such as, C6 alternating with G7b9, or also C6 alternating with various diminished chords: C6, D diminished 7, C6, F diminished 7 etc.

Type 3 is a variation of the second approach used. In this third approach, rather than executing the melody notes as octaves in the right hand, the melody is the top note of a complete two-hand chord voicing. Often the more colourful notes in the chord such as the 9th, 11th, and 13th are organized in the right hand while the left hand plays the fundamental notes of the chord such as the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th. This approach is often used for melodies that are more static or consisting of successions of repeated notes. See Fig. 4.3 for an illustration of this concept in use in another ii – V – I in the key of C major.

Fig. 4.3 block chords Type 3 – two-handed chord melody, C major ii – V – I



4.2 Historical Antecedents

The 'locked hands' approach is widely associated with many jazz pianists across a number of styles and eras. Pianists such as Duke Ellington, George Shearing, Nat 'King' Cole, Oscar Peterson, Hank Jones, Red Garland, Phineas Newborn Jr., and Bill Evans employed versions of this approach in their improvisations and interpretations of standard songs as well as their own compositions. Some famous examples include:

- The Nat King Cole Trio, "Body and Soul"[41]

[41] The Nat King Cole Trio *The Best of the Nat King Cole Trio* Capitol Records, CDP 7 98288 2

- George Shearing, “Lullaby of Birdland”[42]
- Oscar Peterson, “Bag’s Groove”[43]
- Phineas Newborn Jr., “Cheryl”[44]
- Red Garland, “You’re My Everything”[45]
- Bill Evans, “Green Dolphin St.”[46]

Although these pianists and others popularized the approach, solidifying it into what is considered today to be a fundamental technique, the genesis of the type 1 block chord approach is often attributed to the lesser-known pianist/organist Milt Buckner. He is probably best known for his work as a member of legendary vibraphonist Lionel Hampton’s band between the years 1941- 48 where he was a featured soloist and arranger. In his article “Jazz Improvisation: The locked-hands style of Milt Buckner” Billy Taylor writes:

> “Milt Buckner was a great jazz pianist who, because of the star system that prevails in the jazz field, was never given proper credit for his tremendous contribution to the jazz lexicon. Buckner was an imaginative, innovative musician who developed orchestral-sounding block chording into a widely imitated piano style. His facility for playing rapid, highly rhythmic passages in chords was astounding … but he was so consistently relegated to the role of accompanist that few listeners realized what a great soloist he was. The devices he created were popularized by other pianists (George Shearing, Nat Cole, and so on) and have become an important part of contemporary jazz piano playing.”[47]

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[42] George Shearing *Lullaby of Birdland* Verve Records POCJ-2584

[43] Oscar Peterson *Night Train* Verve Records, V-8538

[44] Phineas Newborn Jr. *A World of Piano* Contemporary Records, S7600

[45] Miles Davis *Relaxin’ With The Miles Davis Quintet* Prestige, 7129

[46] Miles Davis *’58 Miles Featuring Stella by Starlight* Columbia, COL 467918

[47] Billy Taylor “Jazz Improvisation: The locked-hands style of Milt Buckner” Electronic musician, 2018-06-01, Vol.34 (6), p.42

This technically demanding style brought a very orchestral approach to jazz piano playing often associated with big-band ensemble writing. A prime example of Buckner at his very best can be heard on his album *Play Chords*[48]. His playing on tracks such as "Alec Lovejoy" and "Robbins Nest" encapsulate the locked-hands style with great mastery.

As the locked-hands style evolved, variations to the approach emerged. While Buckner's approach mainly involved Type 1 block chords, pianists such as Red Garland and Oscar Peterson (among many others) often adopted Type 2 block chords as well. While this approach still captured the full sounding 'chord-melody' sound of the style pioneered by Buckner, it also gave the pianist more freedom to explore more complex melodies in the right hand, because of the relative ease of executing octaves versus four-note dense chords. The use of octaves in the right hand also accentuates the melody differently, creating a different tonal colour, in the execution of this style of block chord playing. Fig. 4.4 below illustrates this approach from Red Garland's classic solo on the Thelonious Monk blues "Straight No Chaser".[49] From the Miles Davis album *Milestones.*[50]

This approach utilizes already familiar left-hand rootless voicings (see Fig. 1.2 on page 7) incorporating the 3rd and 7th of the chord combined with colour tones such as a 5th, 9th, or 13th. A desired musical effect is often achieved by combining two relatively simple concepts in such a way as to create an overall sound which is greater than the sum of its parts. The use of the locked hands block chord approach is yet another way to potentially reapply previously studied concepts

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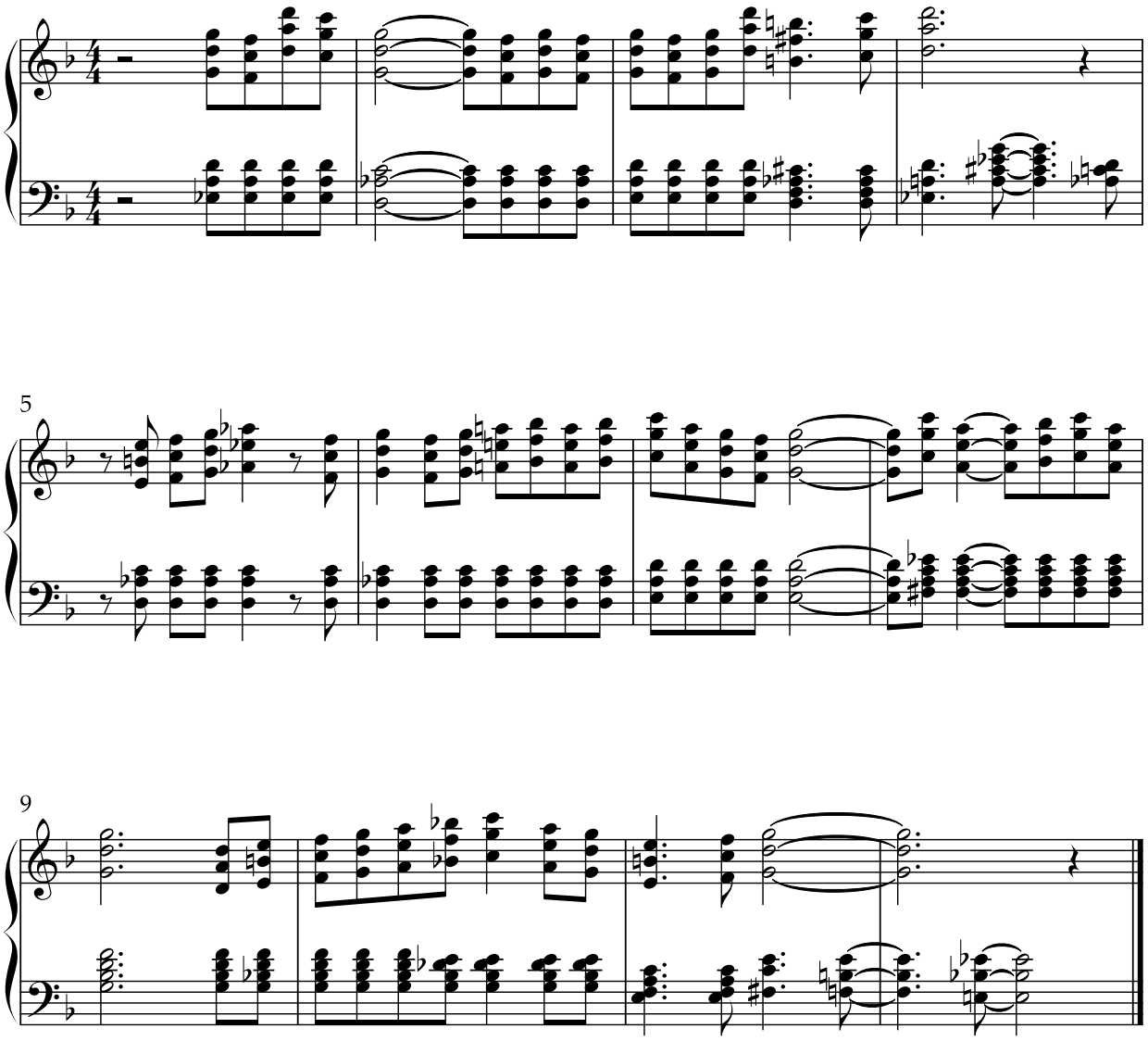
[48] Milt Buckner *Play Chords,* SABA, SB 15 110 ST

[49] Transcription by Adrean Farrugia

[50] Miles Davis *Milestones* Columbia, CL 1193

to create a new and unique sound for the listener. This style of playing has a very rich history in the jazz idiom spanning multiple decades and styles and is still relevant today as a tool for musical expression in composing, improvising and arranging.

Fig. 4.4 Red Garland block chord solo on "Straight No Chaser" 7:30

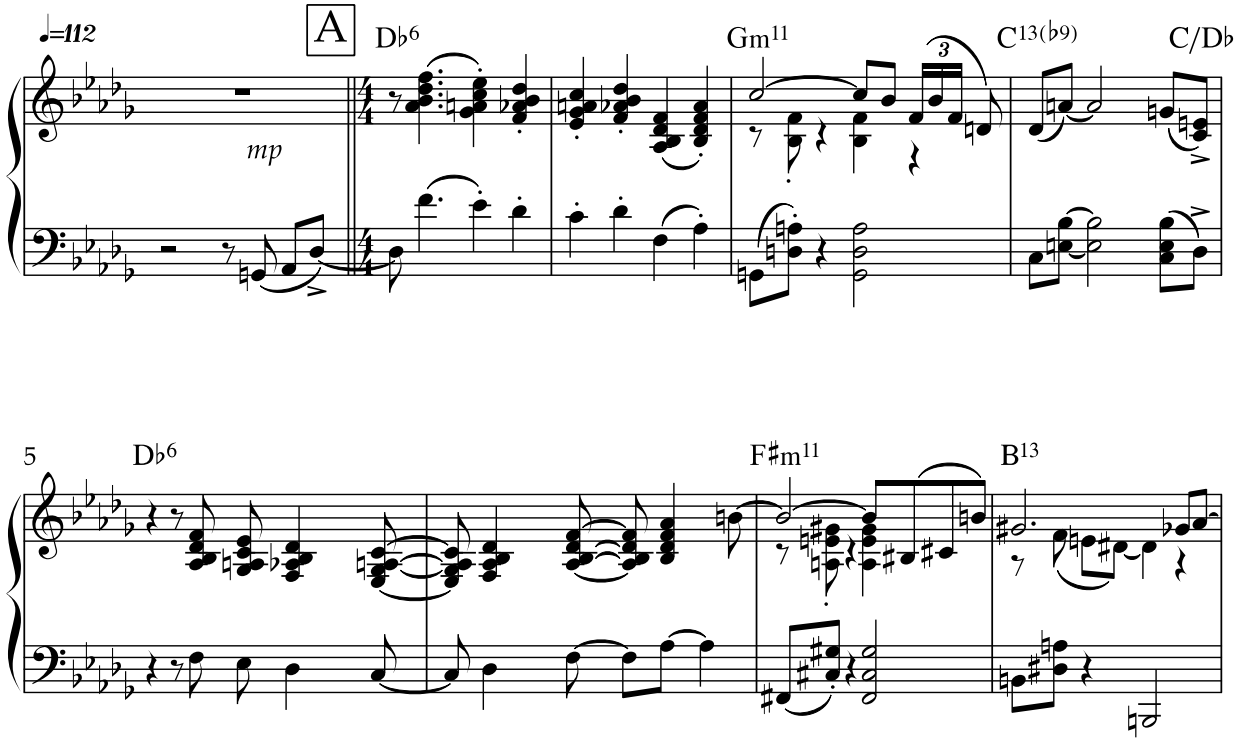


4.3 "Etude #4" Block Chords – Type 1

As discussed earlier in the chapter, three types of block chord playing are used in "Etude #4". The Type 1 approach is considered by many jazz pianists to be a more traditional approach

to the locked-hands style and also one of the more challenging approaches. (See Fig. 4.1 above for reference). I chose the key of Db major to begin the composition so as to require the performer/student to contemplate the integration of all the black keys on the piano in this approach. In the interest of creating a composition that serves as both a vehicle for pedagogical study as well as a performance piece, the block chord approach is interspersed with other solo jazz piano techniques so as to give the performer a sense of how to use the technique in a comprehensive and contextually appropriate way. Fig. 4.5 illustrates measures 1-8 of the etude which alternates between the Type 1 block chord approach and single-note melodies in the right hand with separate chordal accompaniment. This also creates a textural contrast for the listener between the *sound* that locked-hands creates versus the sound of a melody accompanied in a more varied way.

Fig. 4.5 "Etude #4" measures 1-8. Block chords versus single-note melodies



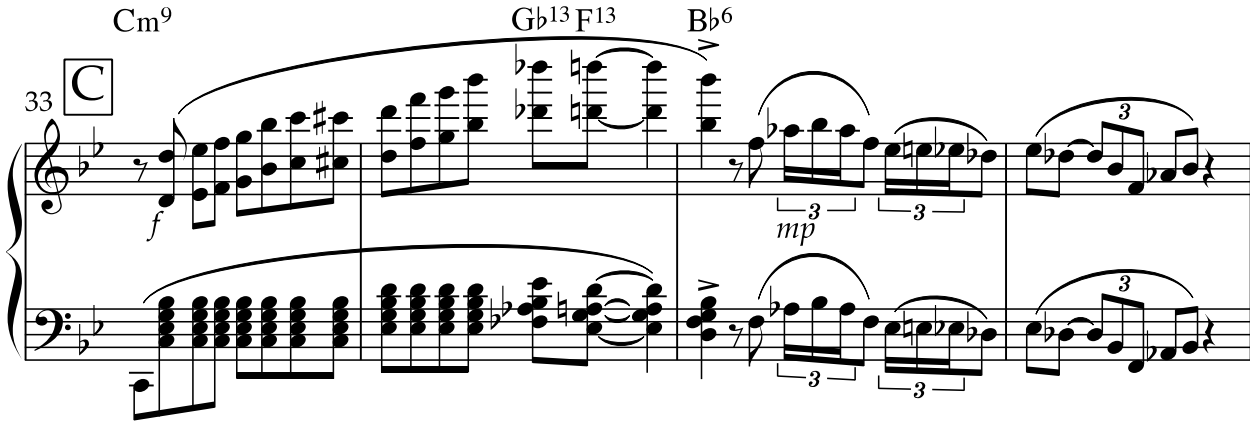
This example alternates between Db6 and C diminished 7th chords in measures 1-2 and 5-6. The Db6 chord is used to harmonize the scale steps 1,3,5 and 6, whereas the C diminished 7th chord is used to harmonize the scale steps 2,4, #5 (chromatic passing tone), and 7 (in the same manner as seen in Fig.4.1). The melodies incorporate both step-wise motion as well as larger leaps such as 3rds and 6ths in order to provide the student/performer with a sense of some of the various ways this technique can be applied. Measures 3-4 and 7-8 provide contrast in both sound and approach for the performer as well as for the listener. This approach is used again in the piece from measures 17-24 at section B, as well as in measures 41-48 at section D where the new key centre of F major is established allowing the performer to explore the same concept in the new context of a different set of scale notes.

4.4 "Etude #4" Block Chords – Types 2 and 3

Section C introduces both a new key centre as well as another approach, Type 2, to block chord 'locked-hands'. The section modulates into the key of Bb Major. The use of a different style of block chording in section C creates a new kind of sonic texture as well as requiring the application of a different technical skillset for the performer. This section also illustrates how various techniques can work in tandem to create different desired effects inside the whole of a piece. While the Buckner-inspired approach to block chords in sections A, B, and D creates an intricate and closed sound in melodic passages utilizing this approach, the block chords in section C, largely inspired by pianists such as Red Garland, Oscar Peterson, and Phineas Newborn Jr. among others, contributes to a more open and powerful sound because of the more spread-out orientation of the right-hand octaves and the full sounding repetitive four-note chords in the left hand.

In line with creating etudes that not only illustrate the fundamental concepts discussed but also integrate them into contextually relevant performance pieces, I chose to offset the grandiosity of these large sounding block chord passages by resolving them to the sudden textural change of single-note melodies in each hand separated by two octaves – an approach used by many jazz pianists to create dynamic range in the music. See Fig. 4.6, measures 33-36 of "Etude #4" for an illustration of this concept in the piece.

Fig. 4.6 block chords Type 2 resolving to 'doubled octaves'

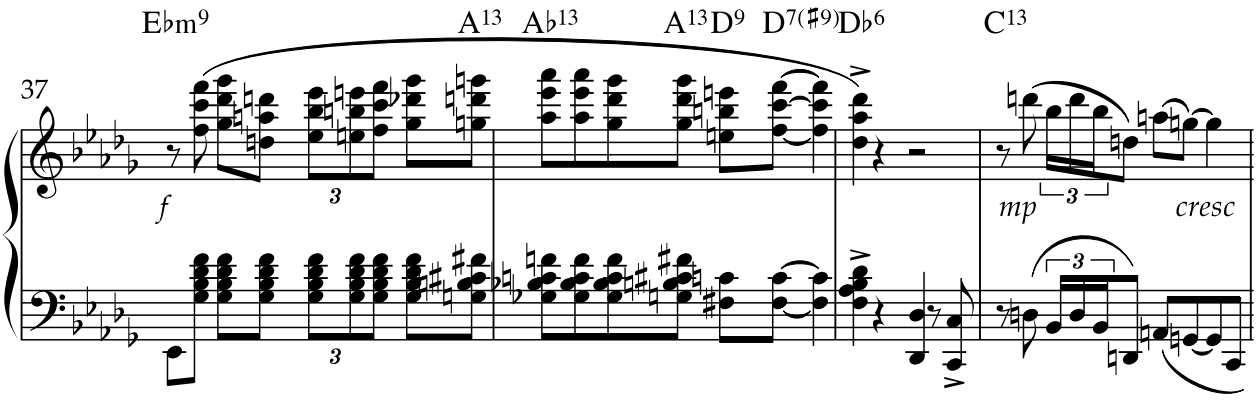


Measures 33-34 employ the block chord technique, outlining a melody over a ii-V-I in Bb Major, and then there is a release of the tension created at measures 35-36 when each hand's part is suddenly reduced to single notes doubling a typical blues-inspired melody which creates a point of resolution.

This approach is then repeated in a thematic restatement in measures 37-40 when the piece modulates to Db Major, this time however adding a 5th between the octaves in the right hand, creating an even larger-sounding texture. Again, the phrase resolves to single-note melodies in the right and left hands, in the same way as in the preceding phrase at measures 35-36, however this time also facilitating a modulation into a new key for the final section of the piece. See Fig. 4.7. Block chords of this style are best used in a way that is conscious of the

overall dynamic arc of the performance by considering its integration with other techniques to provide balance to the music as a whole. Section C of the etude illustrates such a use of this technique.

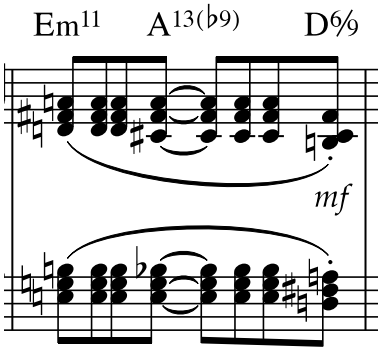
Fig. 4.7 block chords Type 2 resolving to 'doubled octaves' – example 2



The final example of block chords in "Etude #4", referred to here as Type 3, is similar in ways to the Type 2 chords discussed above in that the melody is underpinned by repetitions of a single chord voicing. However instead of adhering to octave melodies in the right hand the melody is now supported by individual chord tones dispersed between both the right and left hands. The melody note is placed on top (in the right hand), and then the notes below are chosen based on the desired chord tones for expressing the chord. As with the other approaches discussed earlier, the locked-hands approach is applied here by executing these chord voicings in rhythmic unison between the right and left hands. This approach is effective in that it allows for an almost unlimited number of options as to how to orchestrate the chord. The improvisor/composer has freedom to choose a variety of ways to distribute the notes in the chord, as long as the melody is on top. Also, because this approach is often used to support repetitive melodies, the harmonic freedom which this approach affords provides a creative and interesting way of supporting melodies which could otherwise potentially sound mundane

without interesting harmonic support. This technique is applied in measures 10, 12, 25, and 49 of the piece. See Fig. 4.8 for an example.

Fig. 4.8 measure 10 "Etude #4" Type 3 block chords



In this example the melody at the top of the block chord is a repetition of the note A, resolving to an F# note over a ii -V -I progression in the key of D major. On its own the melody could be considered relatively simple and even possibly uninteresting. However, the choice of notes underneath creates an interesting harmonic palette which supports the melody notes by including them as part of a colourful and changing larger sound. The first three melody notes are supported underneath by the notes E, G, B, D, F# which in combination form an E minor 11th chord. The next succession of A notes is supported by the notes E, G, Bb, C#, F# which imply an A7 chord with a b9th and a 13th. These changing harmonies underneath the A serve to recontextualize the melody note, which creates an interesting sonic effect as the note repeats. The final melody note of the phrase (F#) is supported by the notes D, F#, A, B, and C# which form a D Maj 7 chord with the added colour note of a 6th. This serves as a point of completion and resolution for the phrase. Unlike the Type 1 and Type 2 block chords, the Type 3 approach deemphasizes accentuating the melody note (both of the previous approaches emphasize the melody through the use of doubled octaves) in favour of integrating the melody note into the

overall harmonic palette which creates yet another approach to block chords with many possibilities.

"Etude #4: Queen's Park Avenue" serves the purpose of illustrating three commonly used methods of applying the fundamental jazz piano concept of block chords 'locked-hands' style. The concepts are illustrated in such a way as to both illustrate the isolated concept clearly and, most importantly, to show the concepts being utilized in a context which reflects a 'real-world' musical application. From a pedagogical perspective, the intention of this etude (and all of the etudes in this collection) is for the student to learn these pieces as vehicles for performance, as well as identifying the individual concepts employed so as to be able to integrate them in future performances in various contexts.

Chapter 5: Etude #5: Allentown

(Concepts for solo piano ballad performance)

5.1 Overview of "Etude #5: Allentown"

"Etude #5: Allentown" is a jazz piano ballad in 4/4 time which is built on a repeating 16-bar form consisting of two 8-bar sections. The composition is designed to give the student/performer a view of three different approaches to jazz ballad-playing in a solo piano style. The chord progression largely focuses on ii-V-I progressions in both major and minor keys so as to maximize the performer's exposure to one the most common ways harmony traditionally moves in jazz, as well as illustrating various ways that compositions move between various key centres. For example, the chord progression in the first eight bars of the etude moves between the key centres D major, B minor, Bb major, and Gb major using various methods of modulation such as pivot chord modulation, parallelism (planning), and modal interchange[51]. The piece also includes a 16-bar solo section with left-hand chord voicings included where the performer has an opportunity to improvise.

The form of the piece is as follows:

- Section A and B: "Basic" ballad approach which states the melody of the piece in single notes in the right hand. The left hand utilizes an approach which incorporates playing the root of the chord followed by the 3rd and 7th.
- Section A1 and B1: "Intermediate" ballad approach. The right-hand melody now also incorporates non-melody notes which complement the main melody as well

[51] Pivot chord modulation involves using a chord that is diatonic in two different keys to pivot between those two keys. Parallelism involves moving between two keys using chords of the same quality and structure. Modal interchange involves borrowing chords from a major key's parallel minor key or vice versa.

as creating counterpoint.[52] The left hand becomes more active and varied rhythmically and harmonically, and also utilizes counterpoint techniques.

- Section A2 and B2: The solo section. The left-hand part is a composed set of rootless chord voicings often complemented by single-note roots. The right-hand part is open for the performer to create an improvisation over the 16-bar form.
- Section A3 and B3: "Advanced" ballad approach. This final version of the composition utilizes a much greater array of right-hand concepts serving to both convey the melody and to develop the harmony of the piece in great detail. The left-hand approach is significantly more active than the intermediate version, incorporating sweeping melodic lines which outline key chord tones as well as generating melodic counterpoint.
- Coda: A short section at the end of the piece in ¾ time which gives closure to the composition.

5.2 Historical Antecedents

The ballad style has long been a staple of the jazz piano lexicon and is often given special attention in a pianist's learning and development due to the many musical possibilities and approaches available for this style of playing.

"Etude #5" focuses on three approaches which capture some of the fundamental elements of ballad playing historically. The first section of the etude, referred to earlier as the basic section, examines an approach which is often referred to as stride playing, where the left hand creates a repetitive quarter-note rhythm alternating between roots on beats one and three and

[52] Counterpoint in music refers to the relationship of two or more notes which are typically harmonically interdependent but independent in rhythm and/or melodic contour.

chord voicings on beats two and four, and the right hand plays the melody of the piece. This approach creates a distinct separation between the two hands where the right hand emphasizes the melody and the left hand serves as the rhythmic accompaniment to that melody.

There is a long history of stride playing in jazz, starting in the ragtime era[53] and moving all the way into the modern era. Today, stride piano is considered as much an *approach* to playing piano as it is an historical style. Players such as Thelonious Monk, Hank Jones, Earl Hines and many others have often incorporated elements of stride playing as a facet of their approach rather than the central aspect of their style, also incorporating various other approaches to their playing. In listening to Thelonious Monk's 1965 release *Solo Monk*[54] for instance, one can hear a clear stride approach on tracks such as "Sweet and Lovely" and in sections of "Everything Happens To Me", whereas on "Ruby, My Dear" from the same album his approach is largely focused on an approach which favours incorporating both hands together in a more 'orchestral' style.

Section's A and B of "Etude #5" utilize a very basic stride approach so as to acclimate the performer to this specific style. This will be discussed at greater length later in the chapter.

As the etude progresses into the second section, referred to as the *intermediate* section, a different approach is explored on the same melodic and harmonic structure. In sections A1 and B1 the approach is largely focused on creating more harmonic content, now often divided between the hands, as well as creating some inner countermelodies in both hands which both complement and contrast the main melody. This approach, in contrast to the stride style of

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[53] The ragtime era is often cited as having enjoyed its peak between the years of 1895-1920 and is best known for the work of pianists Scott Joplin, James P. Johnson, and Jelly Roll Morton.

[54] Thelonious Monk *Solo Monk*, Sony Records, SICP 707

playing, emphasizes the two hands working together in tandem to create a more orchestral approach to the music, with less emphasis on clearly defined roles between the two hands.

Again, this approach has been widely adopted throughout jazz's history, employed by pianists such as Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson, Bud Powell, Bill Evans, Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock and many others. Bud Powell's classic version of "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" from the 1956 album *The Genius of Bud Powell*[55] perfectly illustrates a bebop-era version of this approach where the focus is largely on the two hands working together to create rich tonal colours underneath the melody which is also complemented by inner countermelodies and colourful Art Tatum-inspired right-hand runs. By contrast, the same approach can also be found in a very delicate treatment of the classic ballad "Be My Love" on Keith Jarrett's 1999 release *The Melody at Night, With You.*[56] Although these two recordings are quite different in sound and style, it's valuable to note that both (almost 50 years apart) incorporate the same basic fundamental approach to ballad playing, which shows the wide applicability of this approach.

The third and final approach explored in "Etude #5", referred to here as the *advanced* section, is an approach that I was first consciously exposed to through the playing of the legendary pianist Bill Evans. This approach is defined by the very active use of the left hand, executing underlying countermelodies which serve to create both a colourful harmonic underpinning while also generating a unique melodic counterpoint against the main melody of the piece. In this approach the right hand often captures much of the harmonic material as well as

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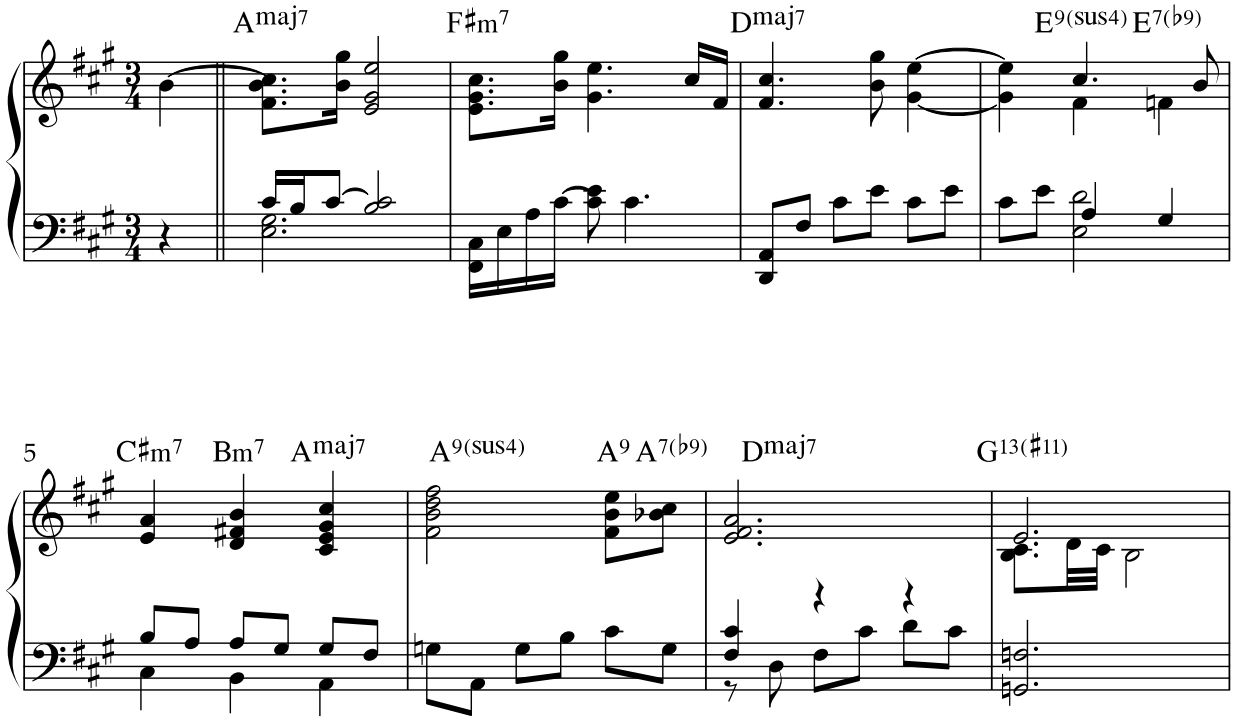
[55] Bud Powell *The Genius of Bud Powell,* Verve Records, 827 901-2

[56] Keith Jarrett *The Melody at Night, With You,* ECM Records, ECM 1675

the melody on top, thus liberating the left hand to play a more melodic role. Fig. 5.1 illustrates a passage from Bill Evans' rendition of the Johnny Mercer/Johnny Mandel classic "Emily"[57]. This is a prime example of this approach in action.

Fig. 5.1 Bill Evans' "Emily" solo piano approach



This approach has also been adopted by such modern Evans-influenced pianists as Herbie Hancock, Keith Jarrett, Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau, and many others. Pianists such as Art Tatum and Earl Hines, who both preceded Evans, also often employed complex left-hand runs in their ballad playing as well. Art Tatum's *The Complete Pablo Solo Masterpieces*[58] is a seven-album set of solo piano excursions which personify the highest level of virtuoso solo piano

[57] Transcribed by Adrean Farrugia from the album Bill Evans Trio *Waltz For Debby (The Complete 1969 Pescara Festival),* Lone Hill Jazz, LHJ10156

[58] Art Tatum *The Complete Pablo Solo Masterpieces,* Pablo Records, 7PACD 4404-2

playing. Tracks such as “Tea for Two” and “In a Sentimental Mood” are examples of the many possibilities present when exploring the left hand in a melodic role in jazz piano.

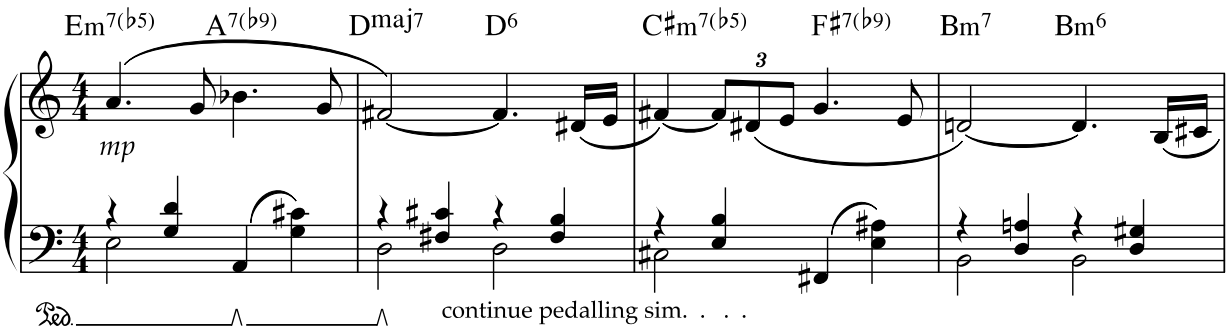
5.3 ‘Basic’ Ballad Approach

There are three repetitions of the main theme of “Etude #5”, each demonstrating different and increasingly advanced approaches. In this first statement of the theme, measures 1 to 16, the melody is established in its purest form by the right hand while the left hand outlines the chord progression using ‘shell’ voicings – chord structures which outline the fundamental root, 3rd, and 7th of the chord.

This approach serves to acclimate the student/performer to the composition in such a way as to bring attention to the central aspects of the piece – the melody and the basic harmony. When interpreting a composition in an improvisational way, it is imperative that the performer has a solid grasp of the basic melody and harmony, as these aspects of the music serve as the foundation upon which all other aspects of the performance will be built.

This basic approach however affords more than just pedagogical benefits. This simple and clear statement of the melody accompanied by a bare-bones harmony also serves to create a very usable approach to performing. The minimal amount of musical material used in this approach creates a sound which conveys clarity as well as providing a starting point for subsequent musical development which serves the overall dynamic arc or ‘plot development’ of the performance. Fig. 5.2 Illustrates the basic ballad approach in “Etude #5”.

Fig. 5.2 "Etude # 5" basic ballad approach, measures 1-4



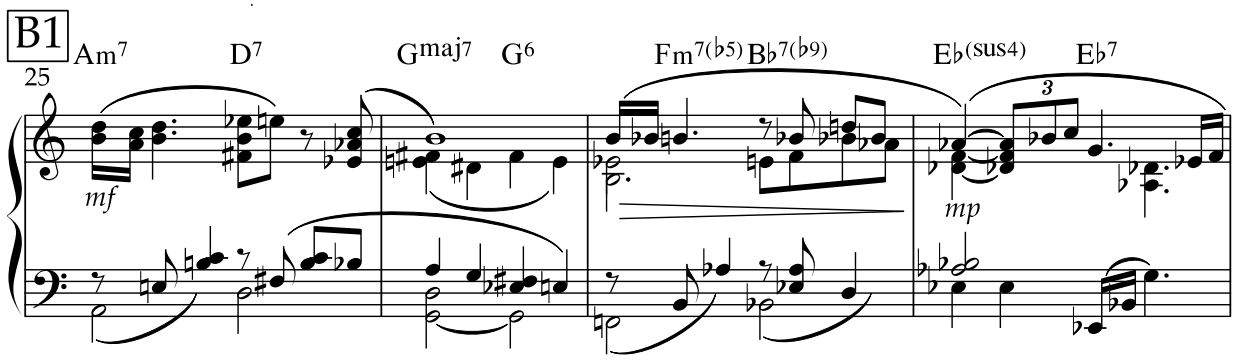
This is an approach which emphasizes melody played in the right hand, with the left hand serving as accompaniment in the stride piano style. The two hands serve distinct roles, with the right hand 'out front' while the left hand plays a supportive role. As we will see later in the piece, these roles can become less distinct and even reversed.

5.4 'Intermediate" Ballad Approach

As the etude progresses into the second iteration of the melody, some key aspects of the piece evolve. The right hand, still outlining the melody on top, now also incorporates various chord tones which create harmonies against this iteration of the melody, as well as countermelodies which create counterpoint against the main melody of the piece. The left hand also strays from the original stride approach becoming more varied in approach, including a broader range of chord tones rather than only 3rds and 7ths, and also incorporating various countermelodies. The combination of these changes in both the right and left hands creates a distinctly different sound underneath the relatively unchanged original melody. The hands now begin to work in tandem creating a more orchestral sound. Fig. 5.3 shows measures 25-28 of the piece from section B1. Both hands are now considerably more active than in the previous statement of the main melody creating a greater variety of tonal colours. Techniques such as the addition of harmonic colour tones in the right hand and diatonic/chromatic countermelodies in

the right and left hands are musical devices which are widely applicable across a broad spectrum of jazz styles and therefore a valuable fundamental concept for study.

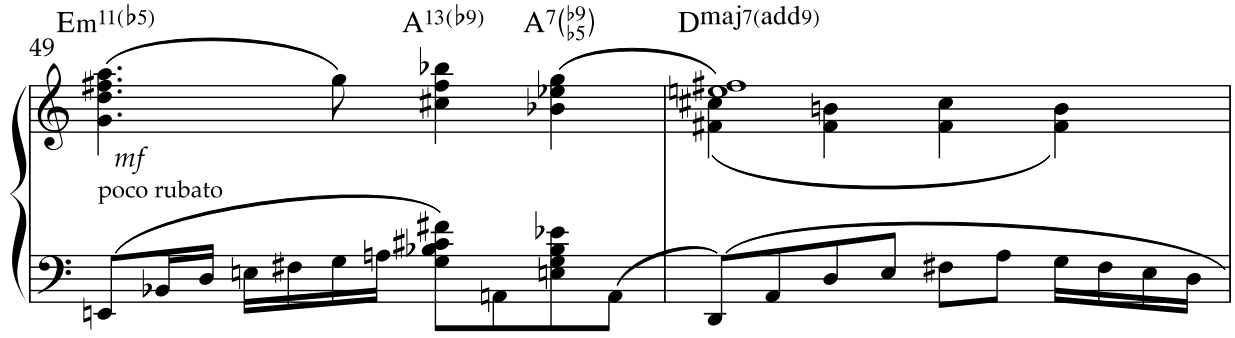
Fig. 5.3 "Etude #5" section B1 illustrating harmonic development and countermelodies



5.5 'Advanced' Ballad Approach

Sections A3 and B3 continue to build upon both the basic and intermediate approaches in a more advanced manner. While elements of stride piano, right-hand harmonic development, and various countermelodies are present, there is also the inclusion of distinct and complex melodic lines (new material) in the left-hand part as well as an even broader harmonic palette being used. It is also noteworthy that the right hand is now largely responsible for executing many of the solid chord voicings while the left hand focuses on playing long melodic lines which create strong countermelodies while strategically arpeggiating important chord tones outlining the harmony at the same time. This section is a strong departure from the original basic stride approach used in sections A and B, involving a greater variety of techniques and greater requirements for technical proficiency and dexterity from the performer; it also demonstrates an approach where the subject matter of the accompanying arrangement is often as much a focal point of the piece as the main melody. Fig. 5.4 illustrates measures 49-50 of the 'advanced' ballad approach in "Etude #5".

Fig. 5.4 'advanced' ballad approach



These two measures illustrate a number of fundamental ballad performance concepts: In measure 49 the right hand utilizes upper triad structures to harmonize the melody. Upper triad structures[59] are major or minor triads used as the top part of a larger chord. In this case a D major triad is used as the top part of an E-7b5 chord. The notes in the triad outline the 7th, 9th and 11th of the chord while also maintaining the quality of a triadic sound. In beats 3 and 4 of the measure an F# major triad and an Eb major triad are used as part of an A7 chord. The F# triad contributes the 3rd, flat 9th, and 13th of the A7 chord, and the Eb triad contributes the flat 9th, sharp 11th, and 7th of the chord. By using these triads in their various inversions, the top note of each triad also serves to outline the melody of the piece. The superimposition of triads over harmonic structures is a distinct sound widely used in jazz music.

In measure 49 the left hand serves several roles: the hand plays a melodic line in the first two beats which serves to create a countermelody against the main melody and to capture key tones which outline and support the underlying harmony. In beats 3 and 4 of the bar, the left hand uses a stride piano technique which aligns four-note chord voicings with the upper triads used in the right hand creating very full sounding seven-note voicings between the hands,

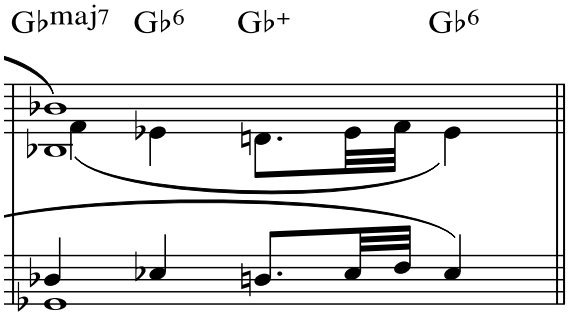
[59] Upper triad structures are three-note triads superimposed over a chord.

counterbalanced by low single bass notes on the upbeats outlining the root of the A7 chord and giving context to the dense seven-note chord voicings.

In measure 50 the right hand plays the melody on top while supporting it with moving chord tones below, creating a sense of harmonic movement overtop a static chord and melody note. The left hand further develops the measure by creating yet another moving countermelody which, again also supports the harmony by targeting key chord tones at strategic moments—namely the root of the chord on beat 1 and the 3rd of the chord on beat 3.

Fig. 5.5 illustrates measure 56 from "Etude #5". This measure incorporates an orchestral approach in ballad playing. Instead of using a 'right hand melody/ left hand accompaniment' approach, a combination of single voices are used to create the melodic and harmonic substance—not unlike monophonic[60] instruments working together in an orchestra. The right hand plays the main melody in octaves, accompanied by an inner countermelody below, while the left hand holds a low root note while also playing an inner countermelody which interacts harmonically with the right hand's inner countermelody. The effect created here is that of four single-note melodies working together.

Fig. 5.5 'orchestral' approach in "Etude #5"



[60] Monophonic in this context refers to musical instruments whose role is to play only one note at a time.

"Etude #5" utilizes a spectrum of interpretation techniques which come together to create a compelling approach to the performance of a jazz ballad as well as providing a number of fundamental concepts and approaches for study as a student of this music. The study of these individual approaches and their integration into practical musical concepts is crucial for any jazz pianist's development as an improvising performer.

CONCLUSION

The journey to learn and master the skills of jazz piano is both a very challenging and rewarding endeavour. Like any other genre of music, to reach a high level of performance requires mastery of the technical considerations of the instrument as well as a deep understanding of the stylistic aspects of the music being played. However, as jazz music hinges largely on the performer's ability to *improvise* as a central aspect of performance, it is also imperative to have a deep understanding of the theoretical concepts involved in this style of music as well as the appropriate contexts and methodologies for their practical application. In writing these five performance etudes for jazz piano it has been my goal through the example of these pieces to provide the student and performer of jazz piano some insights into how some of the fundamental melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and stylistic concepts that make up this music can be applied in a cohesive and appropriate way in performance.

The ultimate goal for the student learning these etudes should be not only to be able to perform them in a compelling and authentic way, but to also be able to intelligently surmise the specific musical devices being used in each piece and to understand their relatedness to one another in a way that allows the student to extract these materials and apply them in various other contexts in their own creative way.

The process of creating these works has also been a valuable learning experience for my own development as a musician and educator. Writing these pieces with the express purpose of incorporating clear illustrations of fundamental concepts while also creating works that are suitable to real-world performance settings was a different approach to composing than I am typically used to. This process was both challenging and rewarding for me as a composer. I also found that the notation of these pieces proved to be complicated at times; it was interesting to

realize that a number of the concepts and techniques used in these pieces fall easily and comfortably under my own fingers (because of years of habitual use) yet proved interesting to conceive of in an organized way on the written page. Having to organize these ideas in a clear and concise way for notation was an engaging endeavour in several cases (sections A3 and B3 of "Etude #5" specifically comes to mind)

In writing these pieces with the aforementioned intent in mind, I've also become aware of some inherent limitations in this approach. Jazz is a very nuanced music, especially in the subtleties of its rhythmic interpretation, and therefore there are aspects of this music that really cannot be accurately conveyed on the written page. This is largely why I chose to focus mainly on the melodic, harmonic, and stylistic aspects of the music in these works. For instance, the term 'swing feel' has many individual interpretations throughout the wide landscape of jazz players globally and historically and it is difficult to settle on a fixed definition of how to play this unique rhythmic feel. When one compares two disparate pianists such as Oscar Peterson and Chick Corea for instance, one might find that there is little resemblance to their own interpretations of how to swing – yet they both *do* swing. Therefore for any student of jazz to gain any true mastery of this music it is important to understand the importance of developing one's ability to listen – it is only through actively listening to these *nuanced* aspects of the music, via recordings and live performances, that any student will ever obtain a real understanding of how to perform jazz.

To restate the words of the great Bill Evans, *"jazz is not so much a style as it is a process of making music."* It is my sincere wish that these five etudes for jazz piano can serve as a stepping-stone for any student and performer seeking to enhance their own understanding of the process that is jazz music.

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APPENDIX: Five Performance Etudes for Jazz Piano

Etude #1: Bud's Bop

Etude #2: Theme for William Evans

Etude #3: Blues for McCoy

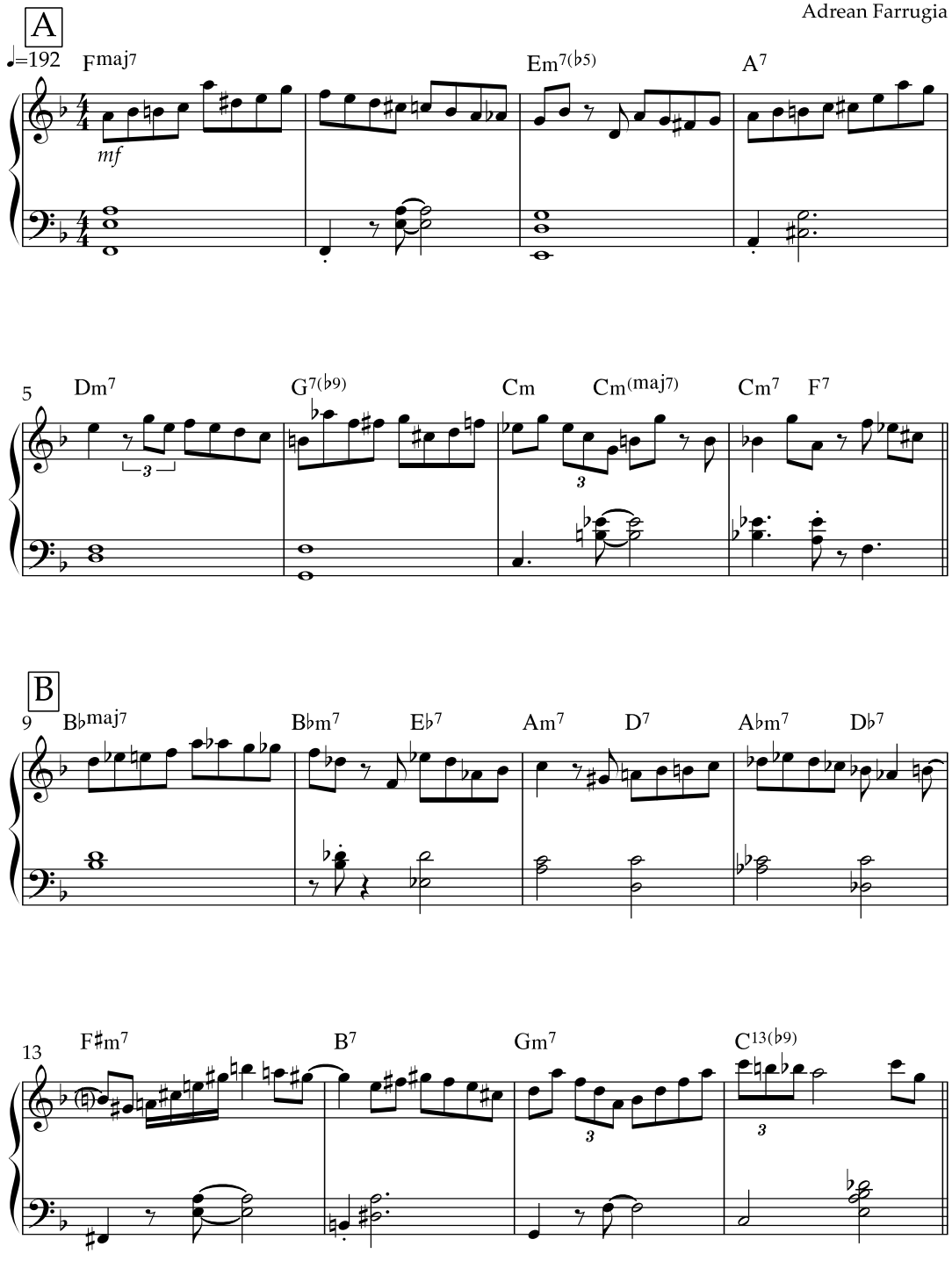
Etude #4: Queen's Park Avenue

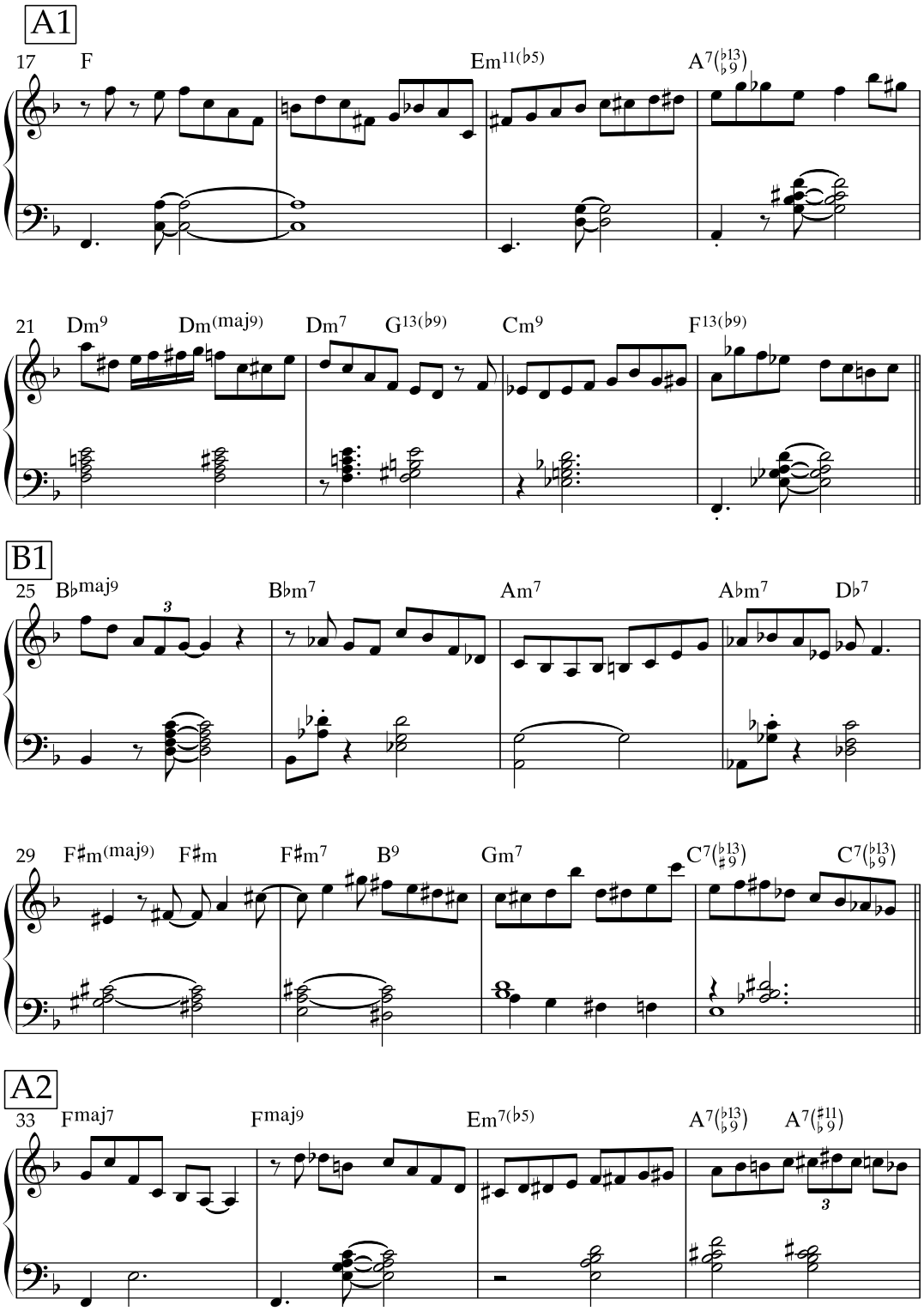
Etude #5: Allentown

with a swing feel

Etude #1: Bud's Bop

Adrean Farrugia

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Dm9
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Dm7
G13(♭9)
Cm9
F13(♭9)
B1
25
B♭maj9
B♭m7
Am7
A♭m7
D♭7
29
F♯m(maj9)
F♯m
F♯m7
B9
Gm7
C7(♭13 ♯9)
C7(♭13 ♭9)
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Fmaj7
Fmaj9
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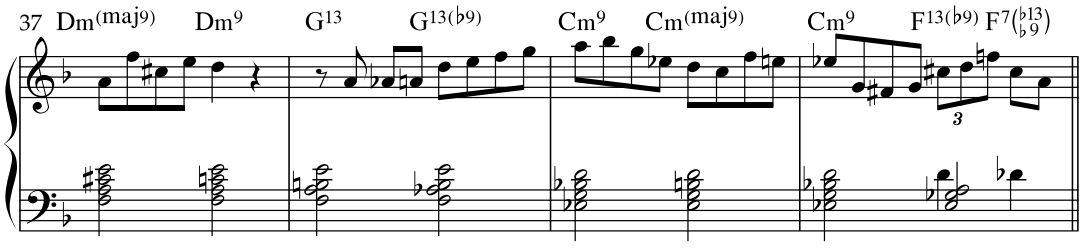
A7(♭13 ♭9)
A7(♯11 ♭9)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G13
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Cm9
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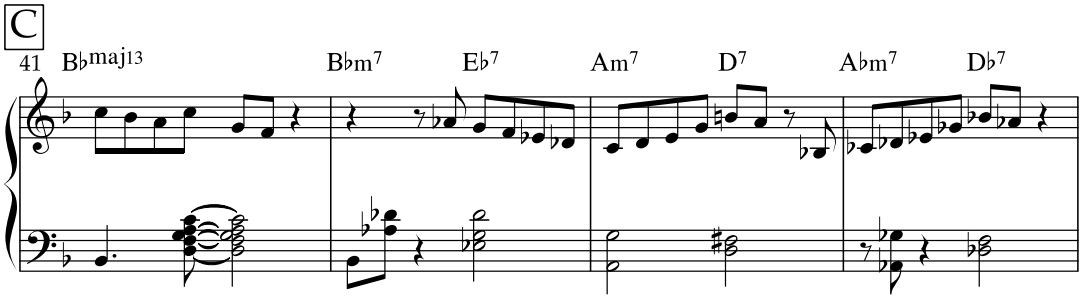
F7(♭13 ♭9)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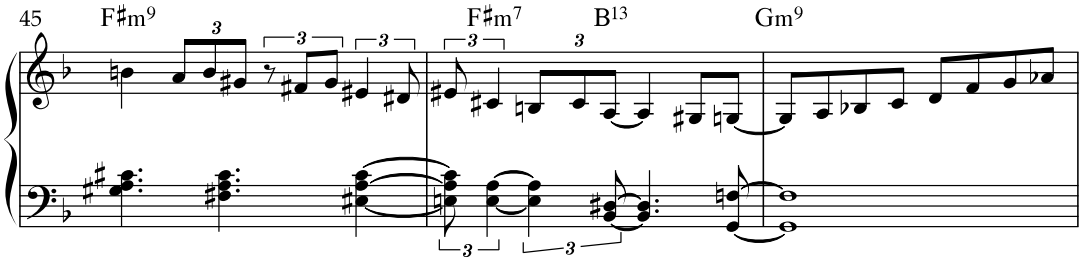
Am7
D7
A♭m7
D♭7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B13
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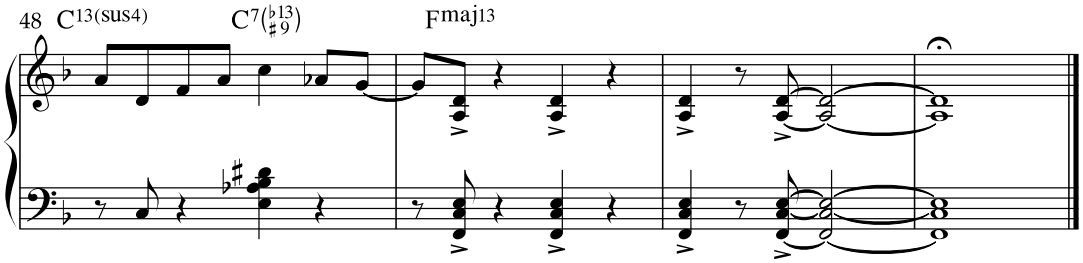
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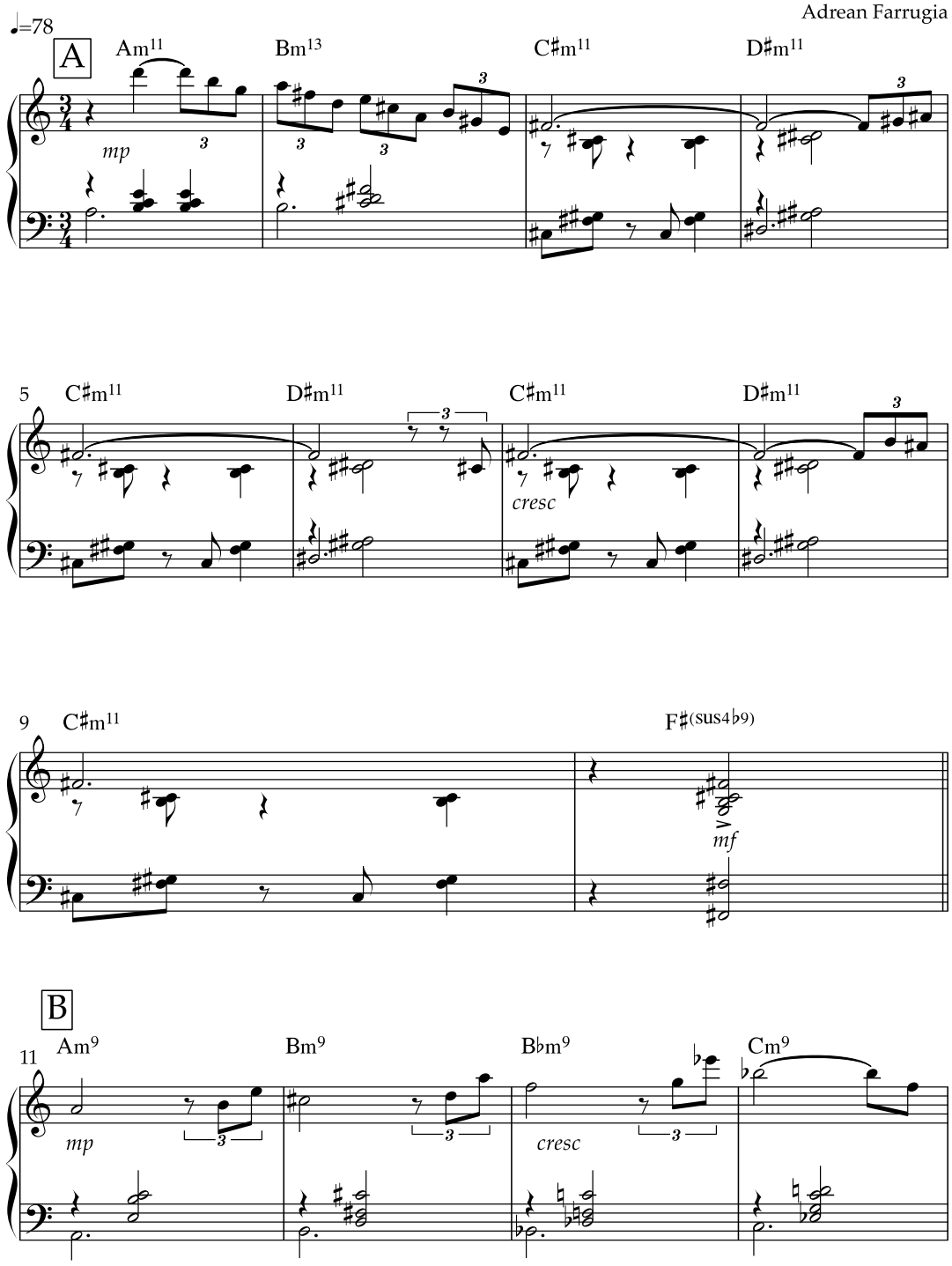
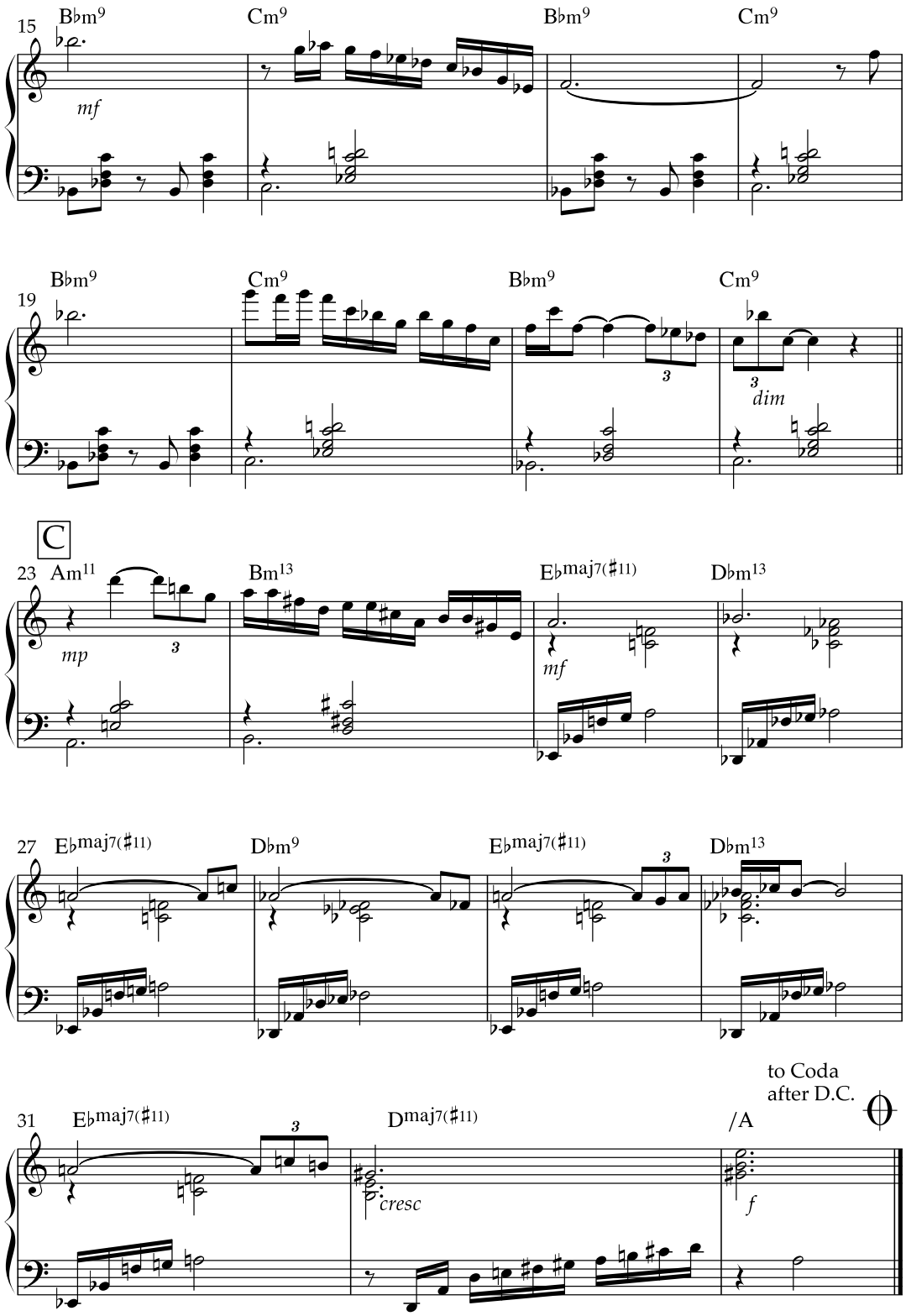
C7(♭13 ♯9)
Fmaj13

gently swinging
jazz waltz

Etude #2: Theme For William Evans

Adrean Farrugia

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Cm9
B♭m9
Cm9
mf
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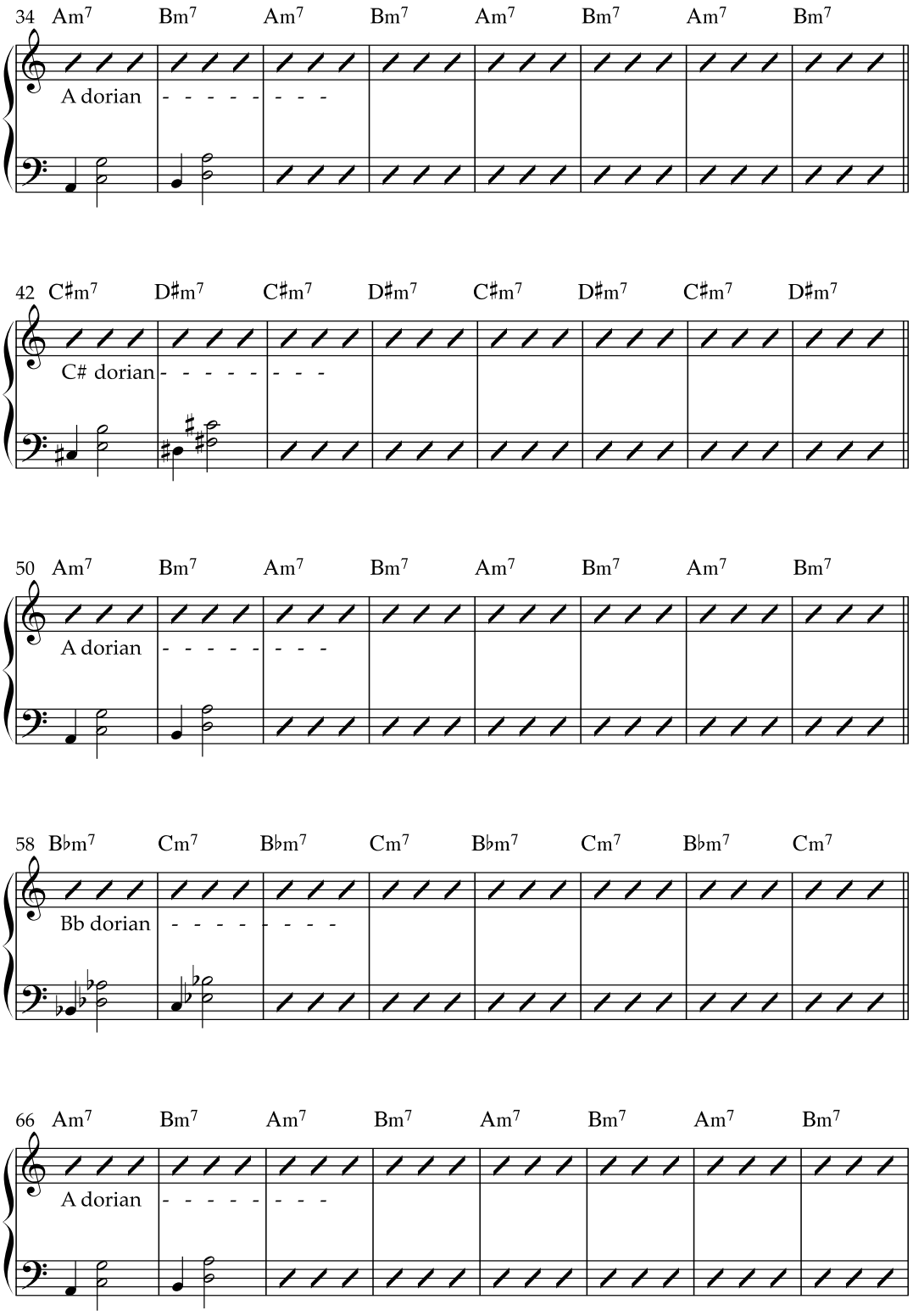
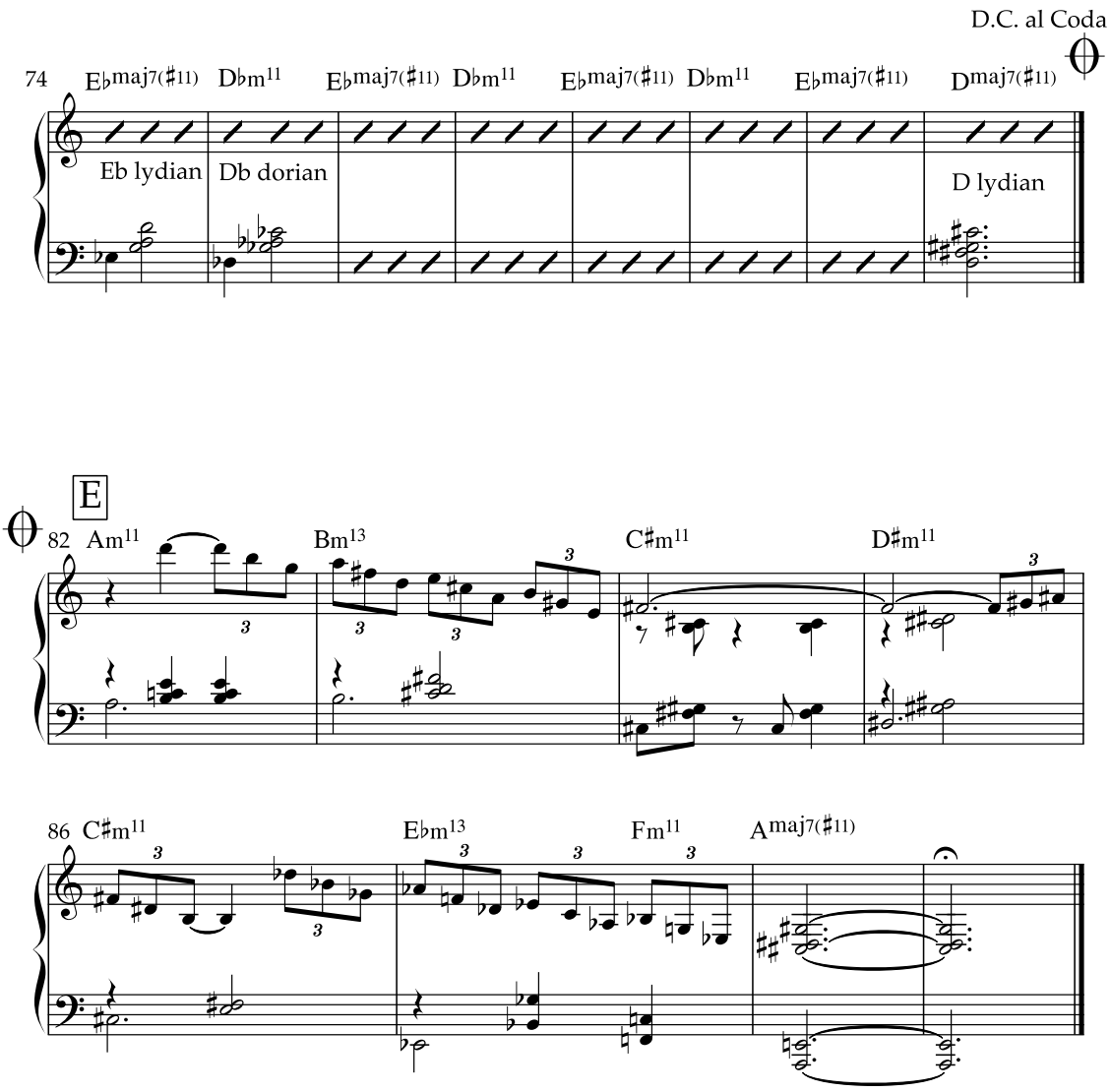
Cm9
B♭m9
Cm9
3
3
dim
C
23
Am11
Bm13
E♭maj7(♯11)
D♭m13
mp
3
mf
27
E♭maj7(♯11)
D♭m9
E♭maj7(♯11)
D♭m13
3
31
E♭maj7(♯11)
3
Dmaj7(♯11)
/A
to Coda
after D.C.
cresc
f

D Improvise SOLO




D.C. al Coda
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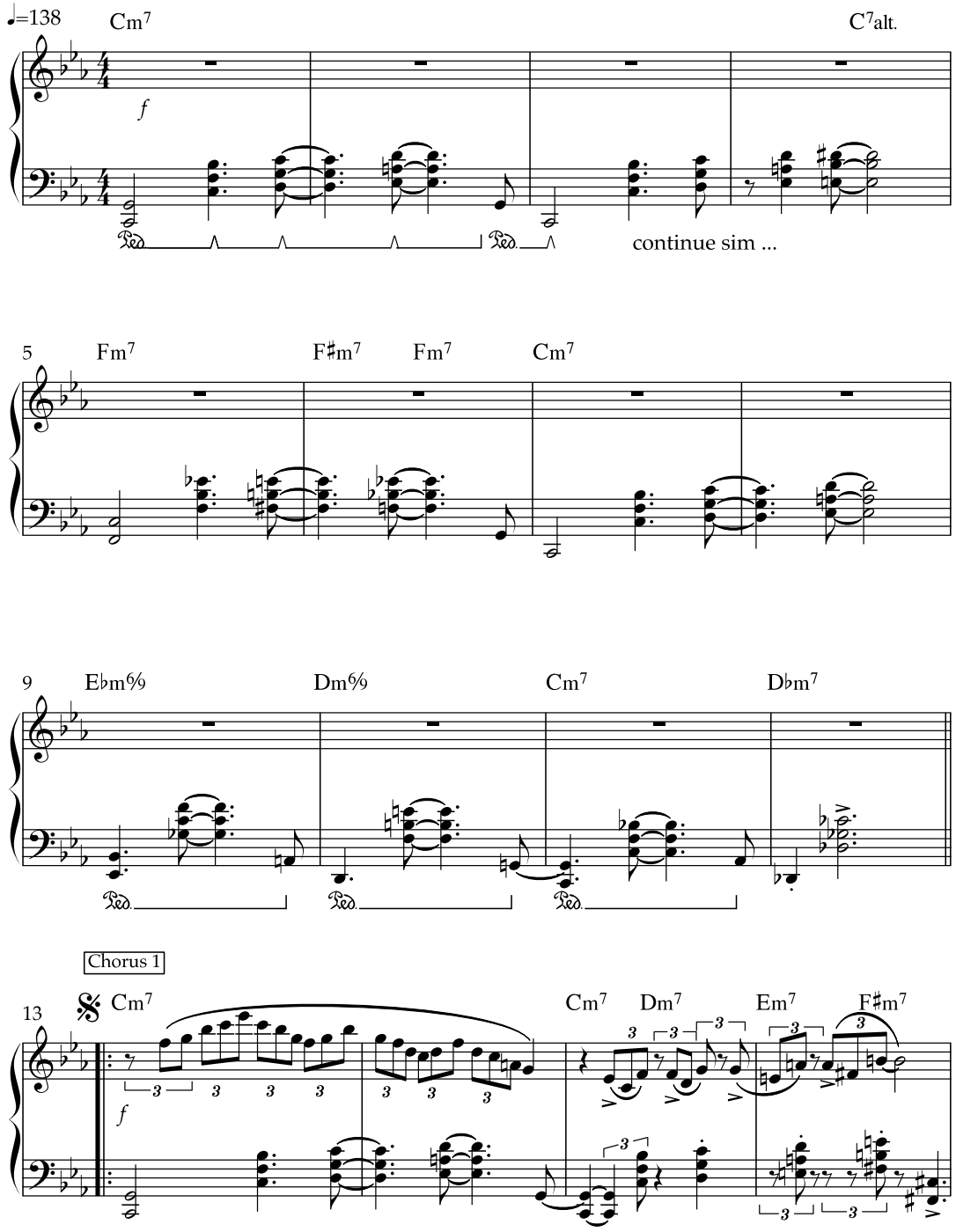
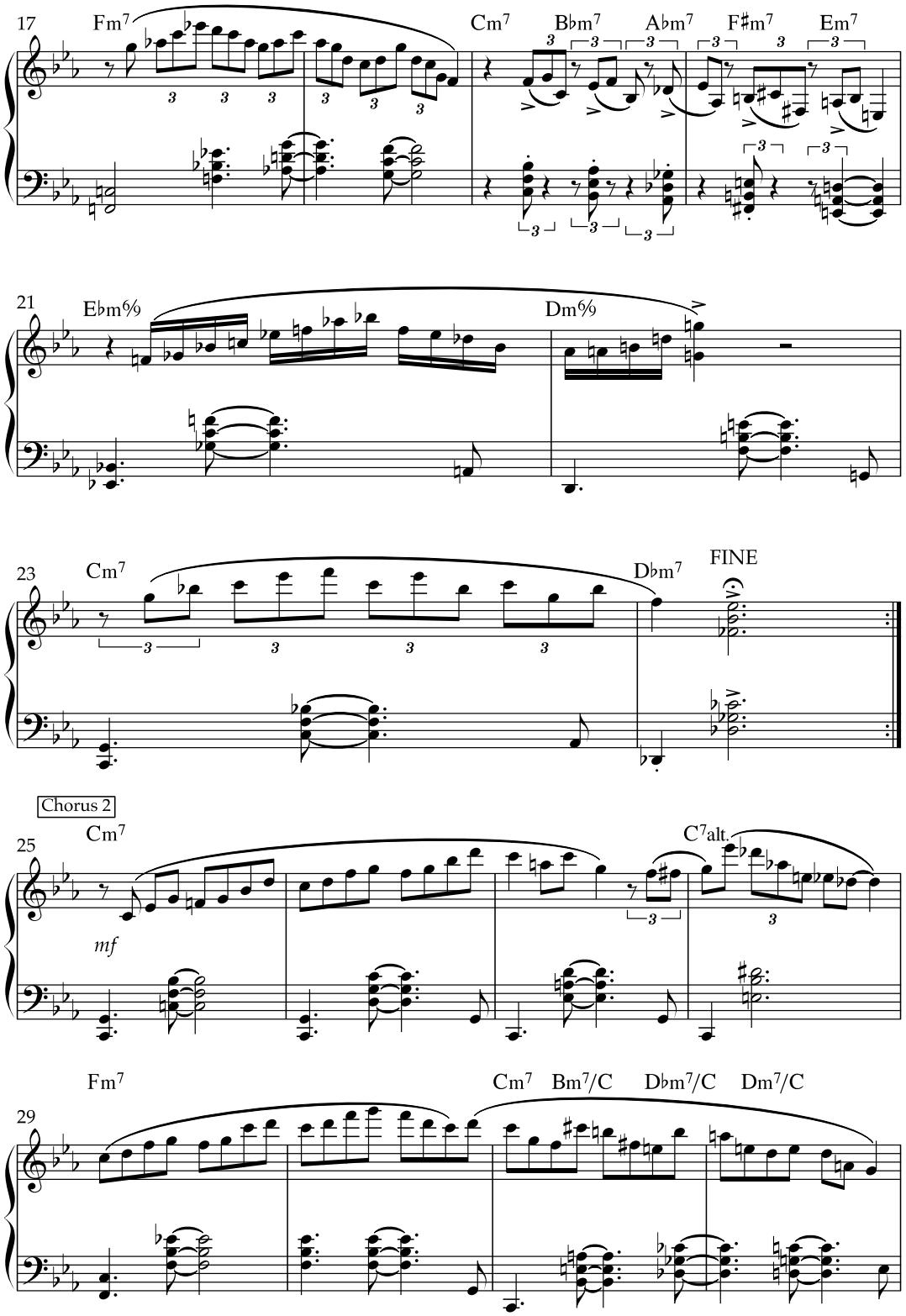
D♭m11
E♭maj7(♯11)
D♭m11
E♭maj7(♯11)
D♭m11
E♭maj7(♯11)
Dmaj7(♯11)
Eb lydian
Db dorian
D lydian
E
82
Am11
Bm13
C♯m11
D♯m11
86
C♯m11
E♭m13
Fm11
Amaj7(♯11)

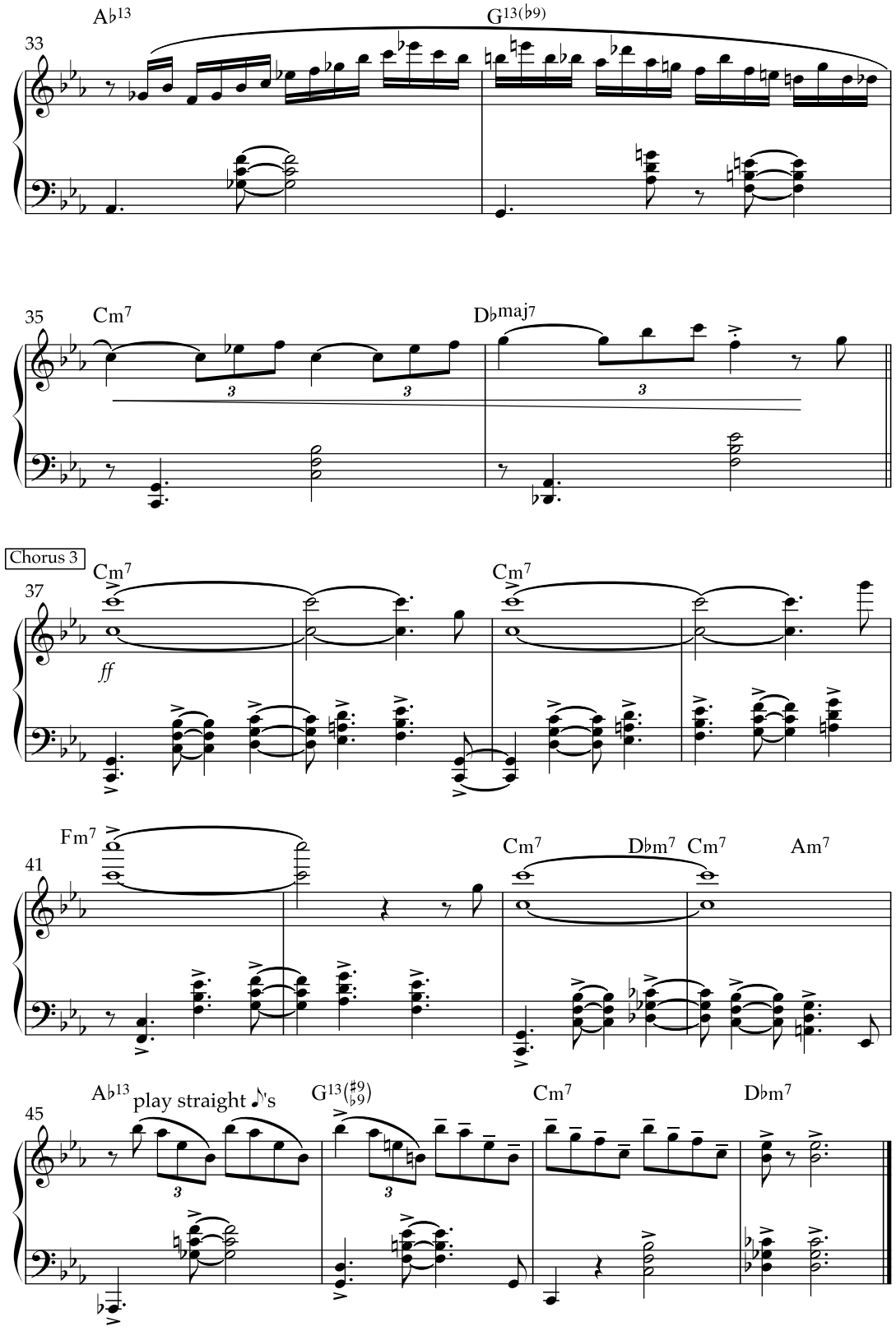
Etude #3: Blues for McCoy

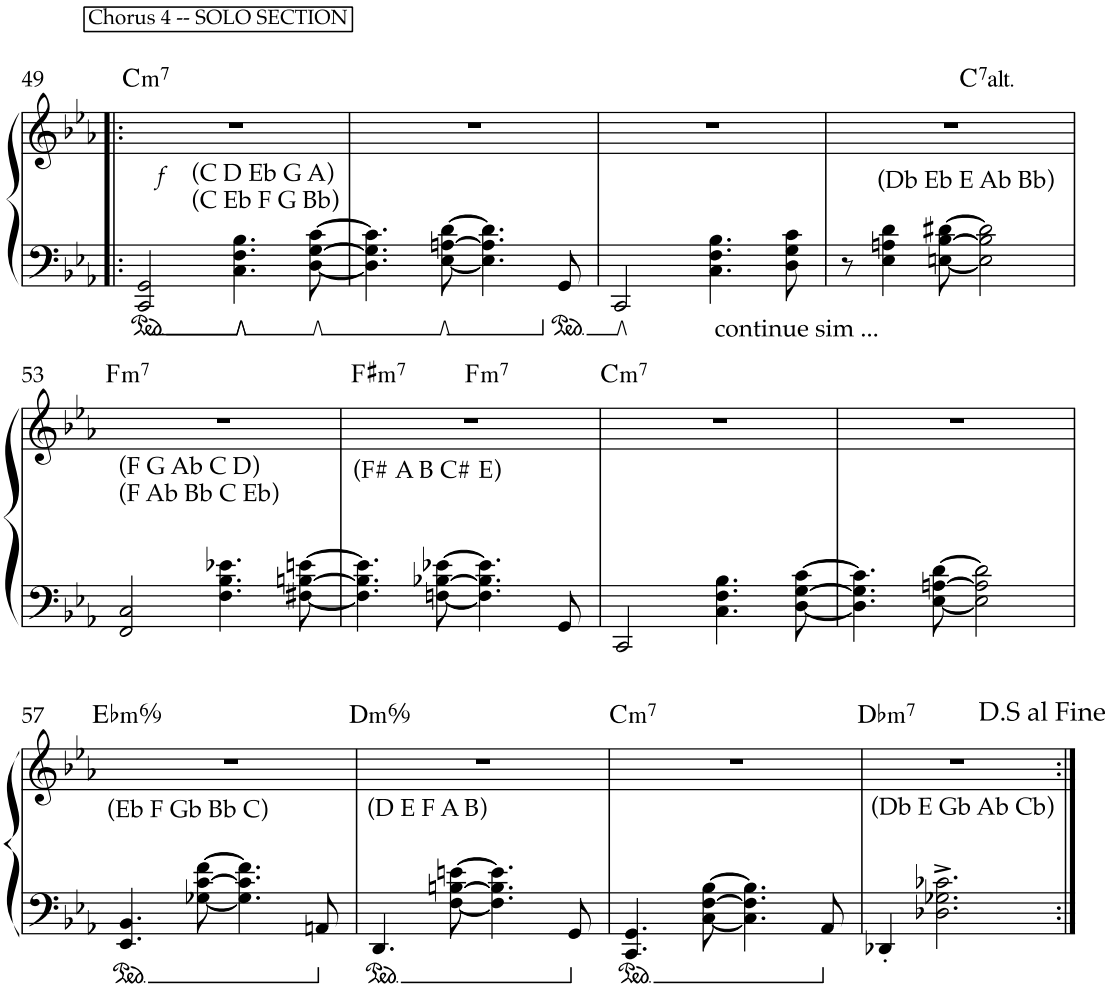
INTRODUCTION

Adrean Farrugia




17
Fm7
Cm7
B♭m7
A♭m7
F♯m7
Em7
21
E♭m6/9
Dm6/9
23
Cm7
D♭m7
FINE
Chorus 2
25
Cm7
C7alt.
mf
29
Fm7
Cm7
Bm7/C
D♭m7/C
Dm7/C

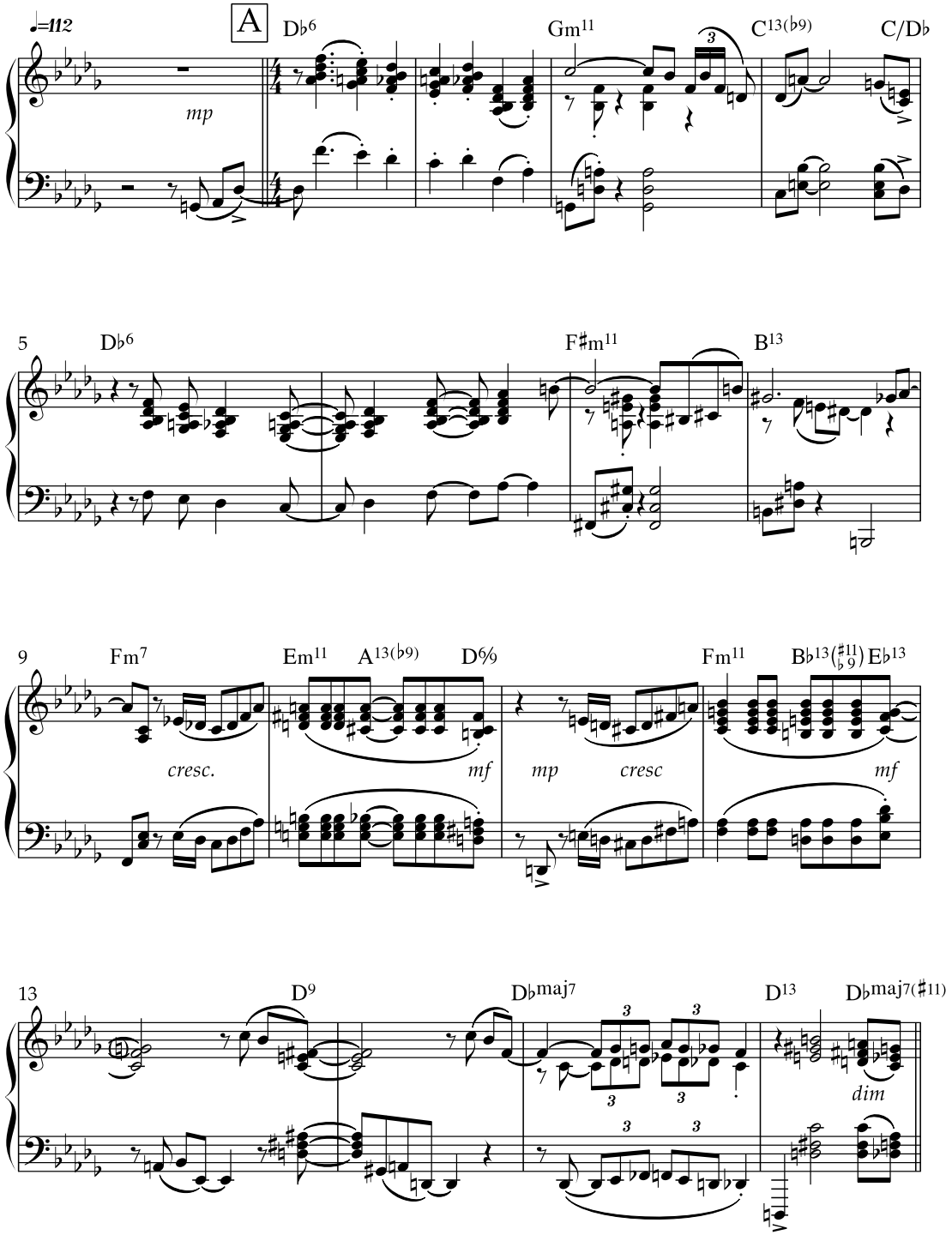

A♭13
G13(♭9)
33
35
Cm7
D♭maj7
Chorus 3
37
Cm7
Cm7
ff
Fm7
41
Cm7
D♭m7
Cm7
Am7
A♭13
play straight ♪'s
G13(♯9/♭9)
45
Cm7
D♭m7

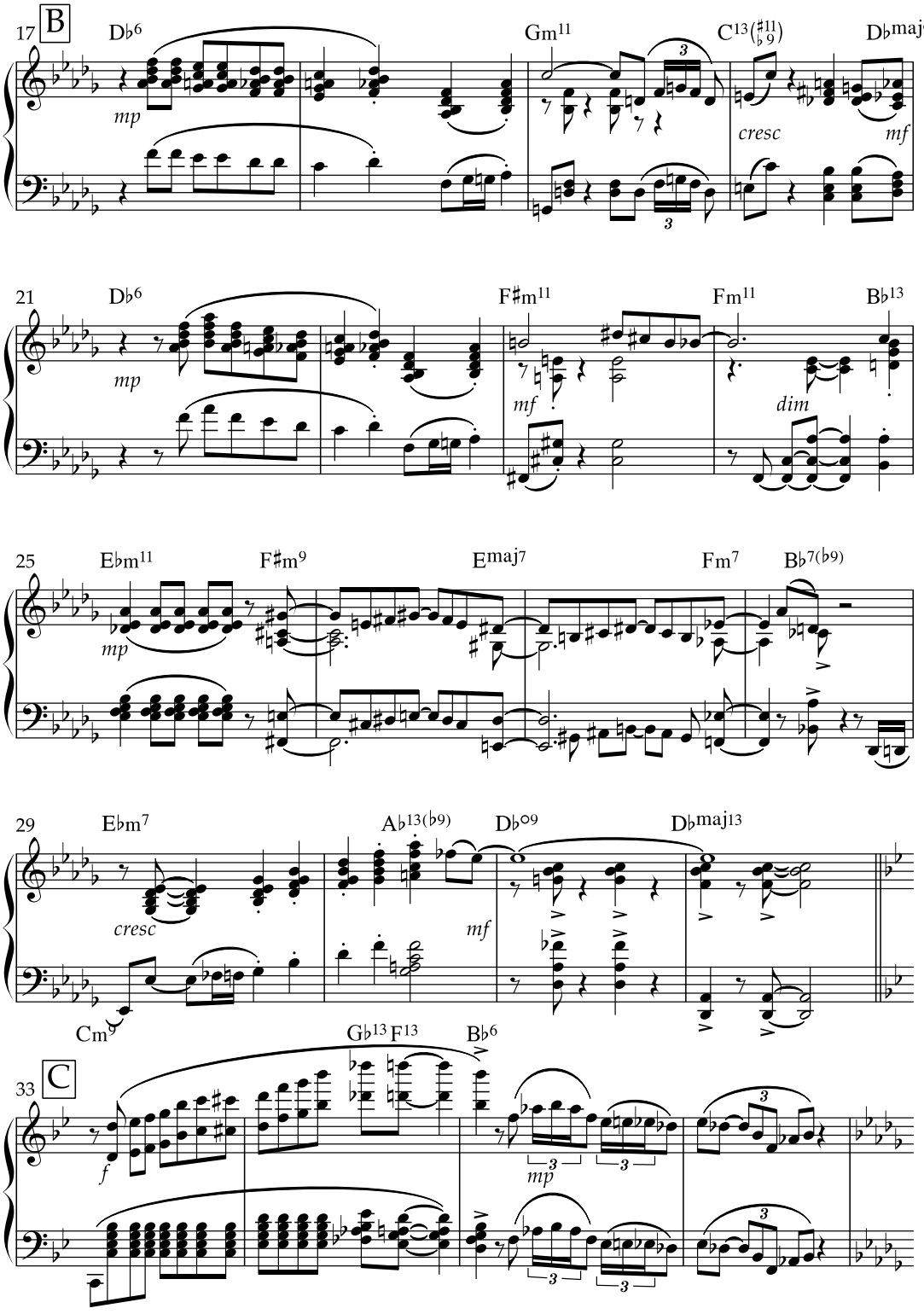

Chorus 4 -- SOLO SECTION
49
Cm7
C7alt.
f
(C D Eb G A)
(C Eb F G Bb)
(Db Eb E Ab Bb)
continue sim ...
53
Fm7
F♯m7
Fm7
Cm7
(F G Ab C D)
(F Ab Bb C Eb)
(F# A B C# E)
57
E♭m6/9
Dm6/9
Cm7
D♭m7
D.S al Fine
(Eb F Gb Bb C)
(D E F A B)
(Db E Gb Ab Cb)

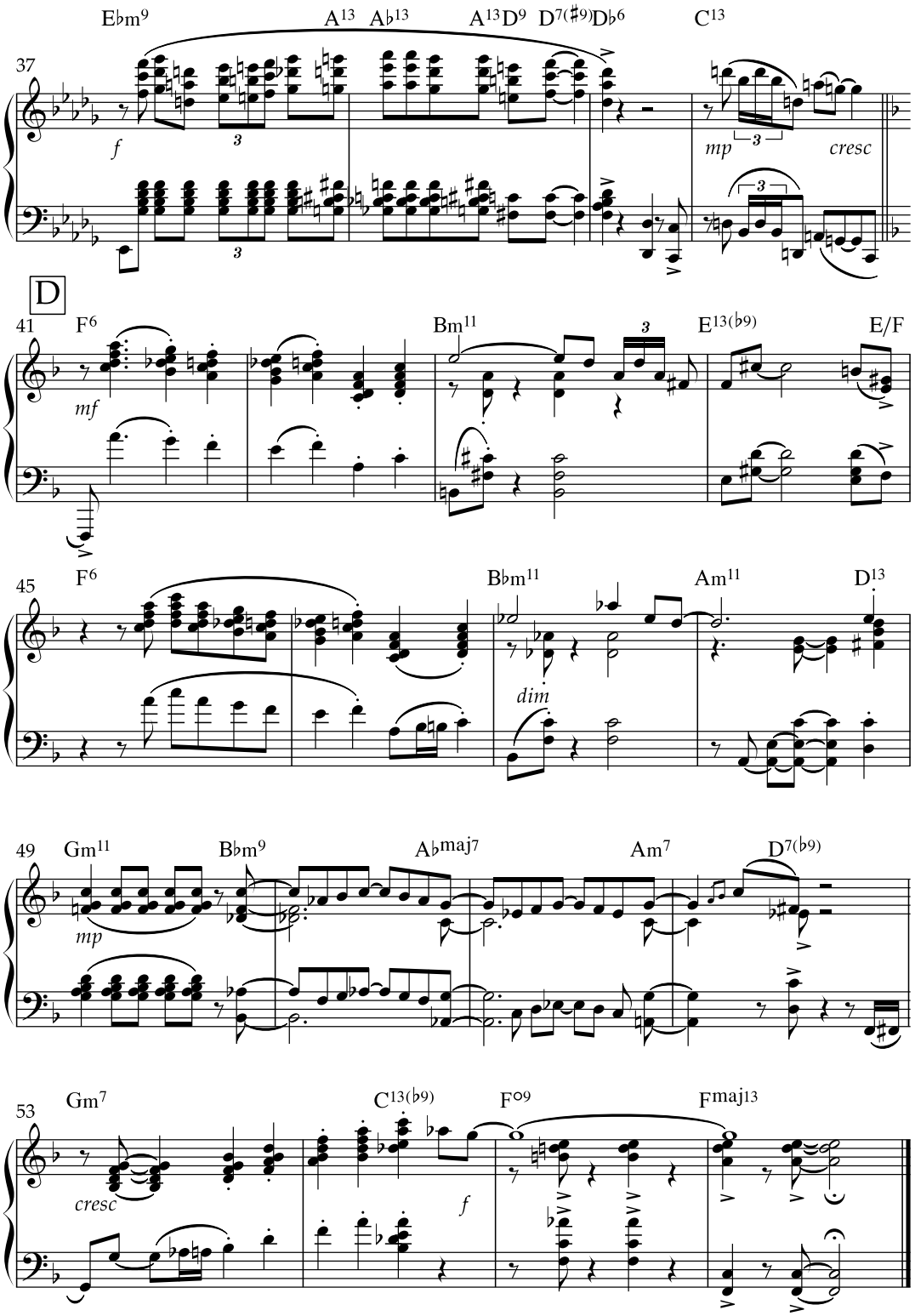
Etude #4: Queen's Park Avenue

Swing

Adrean Farrugia

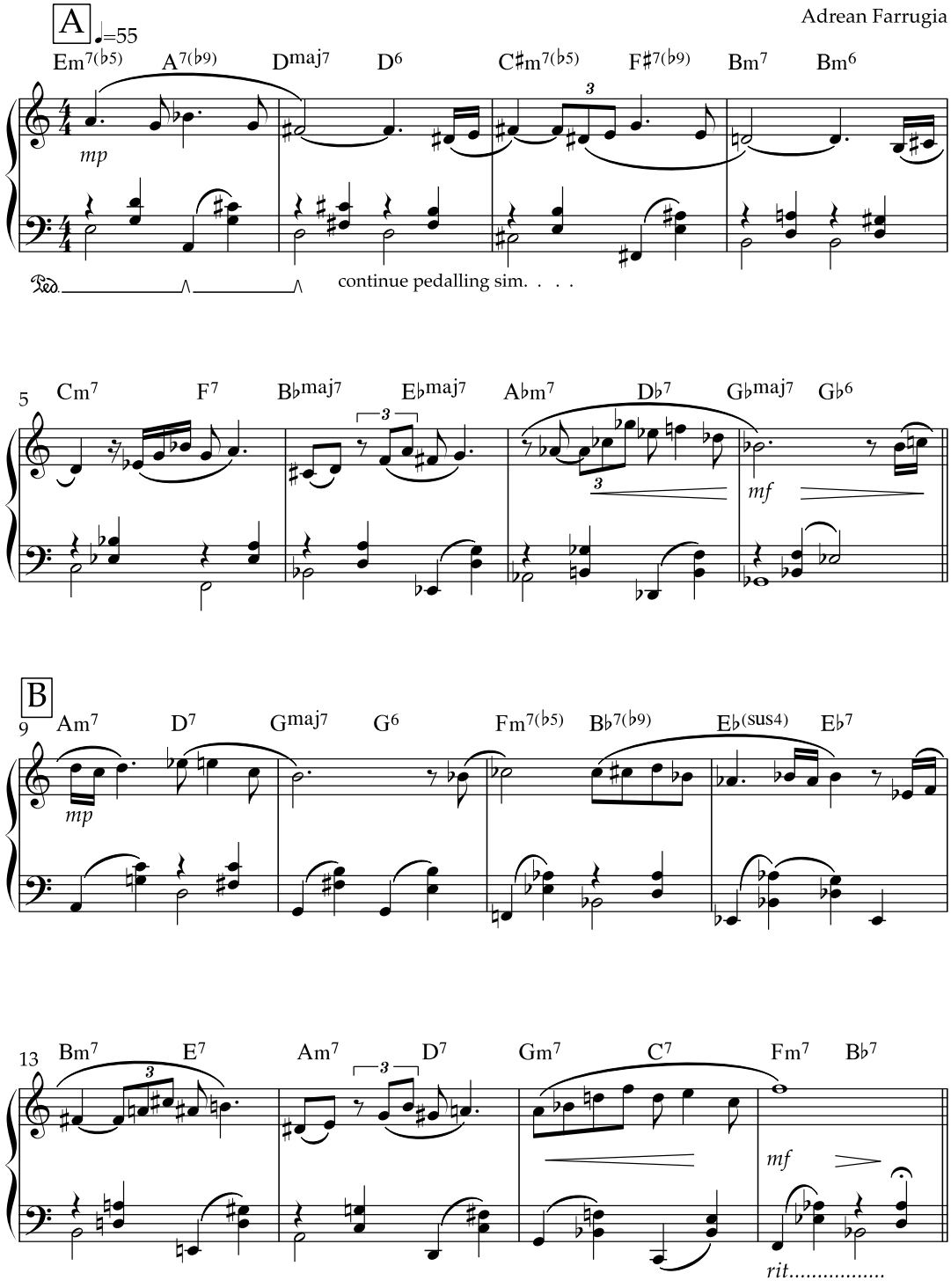


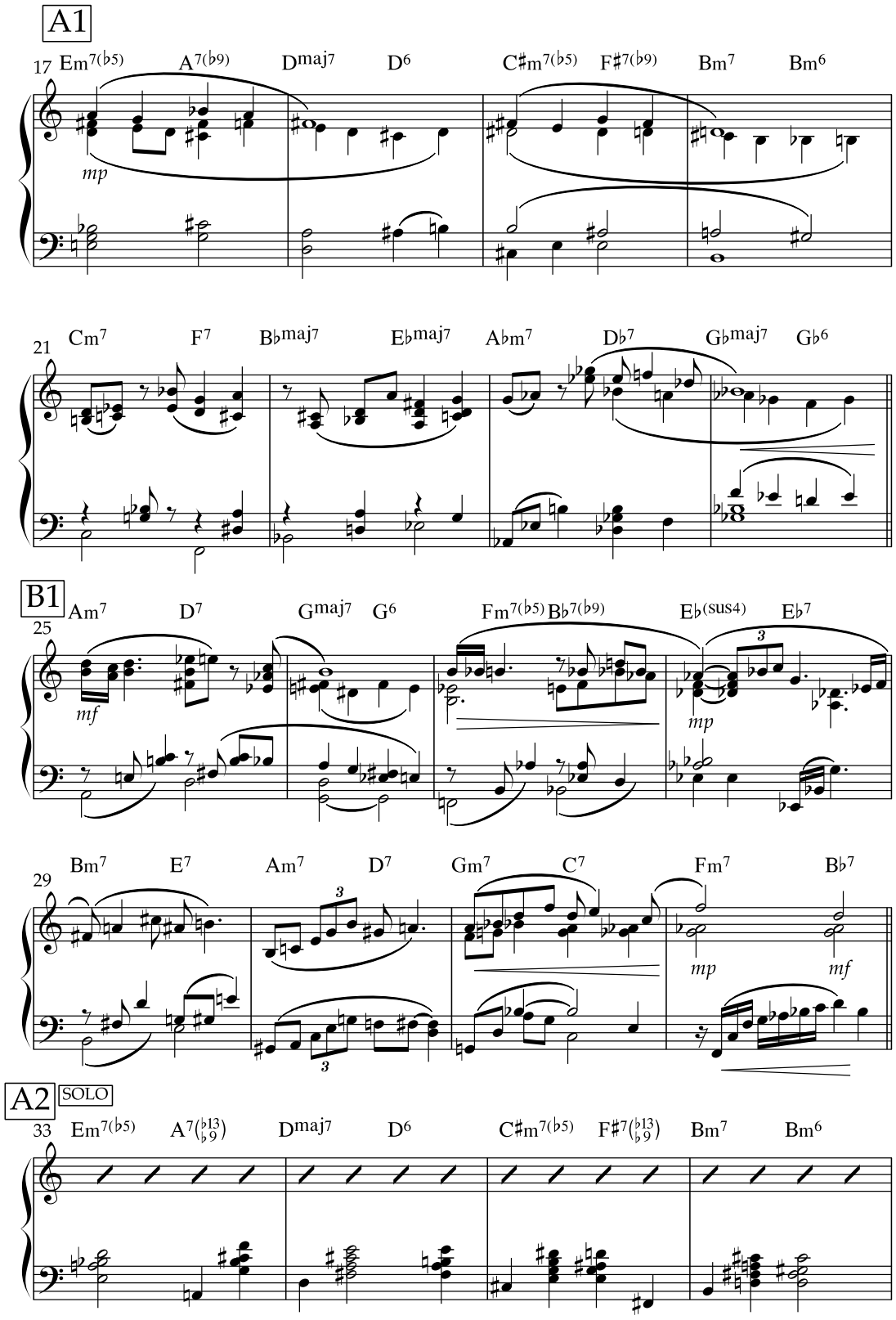

17
B
D♭6
Gm11
C13(♯11♭9)
D♭maj9
mp
cresc
mf
21
D♭6
F♯m11
Fm11
B♭13
mp
mf
dim
25
E♭m11
F♯m9
Emaj7
Fm7
B♭7(♭9)
mp
29
E♭m7
A♭13(♭9)
D♭o9
D♭maj13
cresc
mf
Cm9
G♭13
F13
B♭6
33
C
f
mp

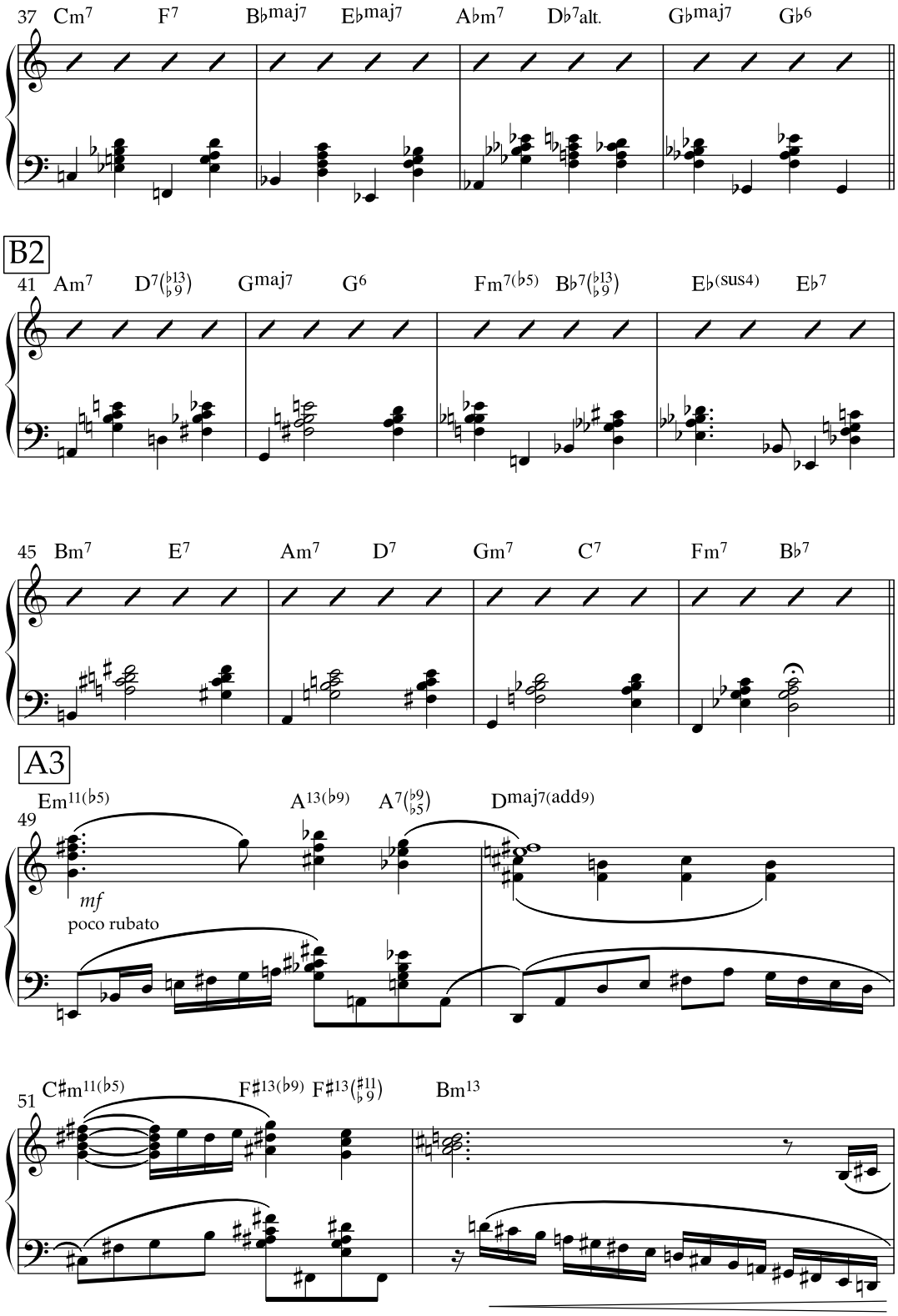

E♭m9
A13
A♭13
A13D9
D7(♯9)D♭6
C13
37
f
mp
cresc
D
41
F6
mf
Bm11
E13(♭9)
E/F
45
F6
B♭m11
Am11
D13
dim
49
Gm11
B♭m9
A♭maj7
Am7
D7(♭9)
mp
53
Gm7
C13(♭9)
F°9
Fmaj13
cresc
f

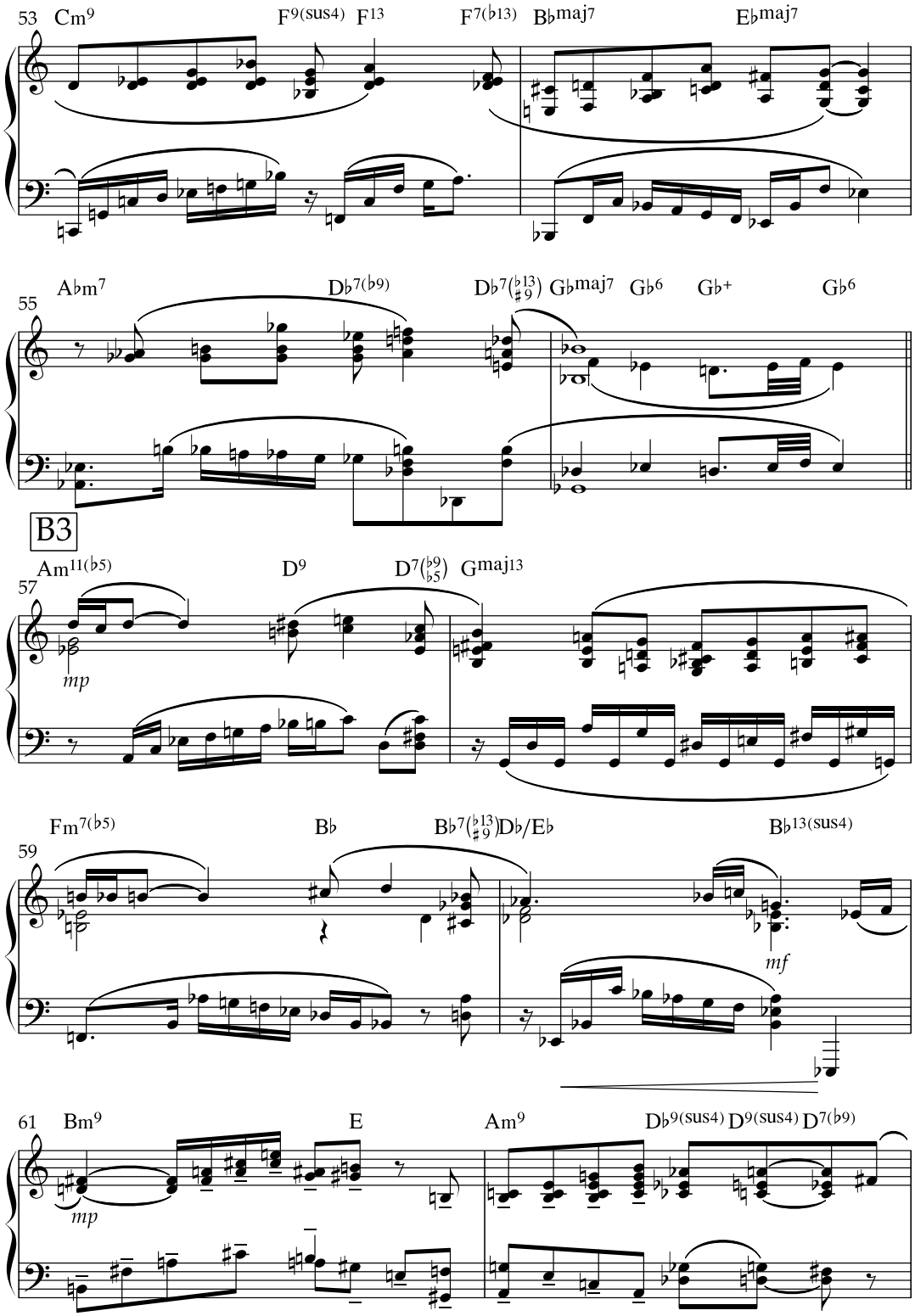
Etude #5: Allentown

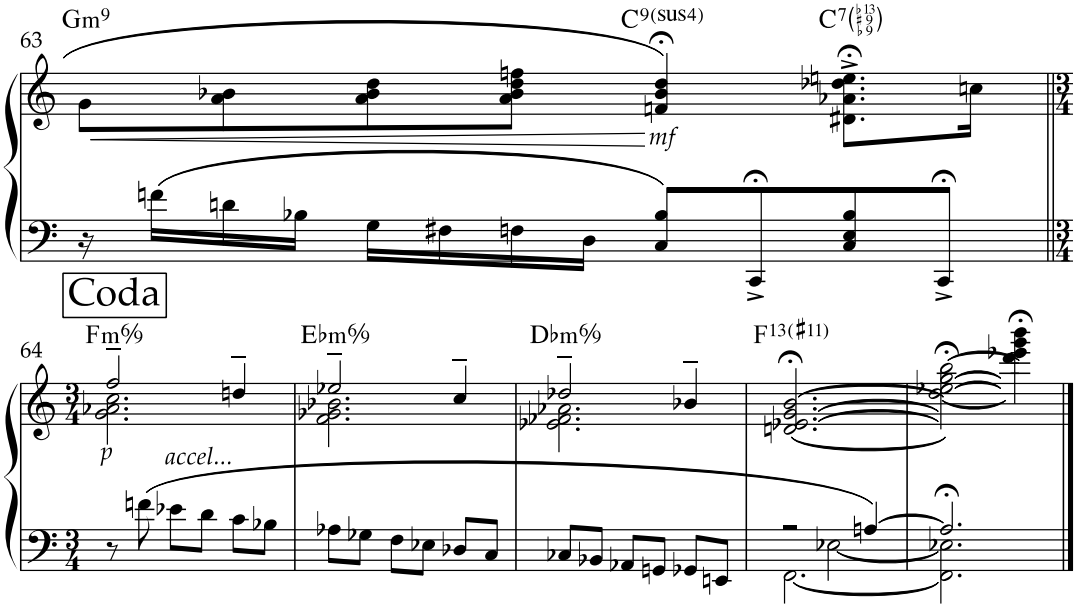
Adrean Farrugia




A1
17
Em7(♭5)
A7(♭9)
Dmaj7
D6
C♯m7(♭5)
F♯7(♭9)
Bm7
Bm6
mp
21
Cm7
F7
B♭maj7
E♭maj7
A♭m7
D♭7
G♭maj7
G♭6
B1
25
Am7
D7
Gmaj7
G6
Fm7(♭5)
B♭7(♭9)
E♭(sus4)
E♭7
mf
mp
29
Bm7
E7
Am7
D7
Gm7
C7
Fm7
B♭7
mp
mf
A2
SOLO
33
Em7(♭5)
A7(♭13 ♭9)
Dmaj7
D6
C♯m7(♭5)
F♯7(♭13 ♭9)
Bm7
Bm6


37 Cm7 F7 B♭maj7 E♭maj7 A♭m7 D♭7alt. G♭maj7 G♭6
B2
41 Am7 D7(♭13 ♭9) Gmaj7 G6 Fm7(♭5) B♭7(♭13 ♭9) E♭(sus4) E♭7
45 Bm7 E7 Am7 D7 Gm7 C7 Fm7 B♭7
A3
49 Em11(♭5) A13(♭9) A7(♭9 ♭5) Dmaj7(add9)
mf
poco rubato
51 C♯m11(♭5) F♯13(♭9) F♯13(♯11 ♭9) Bm13


53
Cm9
F9(sus4)
F13
F7(♭13)
B♭maj7
E♭maj7
55
A♭m7
D♭7(♭9)
D♭7(♭13/♯9)
G♭maj7
G♭6
G♭+
G♭6
B3
57
Am11(♭5)
D9
D7(♭9/♭5)
Gmaj13
mp
59
Fm7(♭5)
B♭
B♭7(♭13/♯9)
D♭/E♭
B♭13(sus4)
mf
61
Bm9
E
Am9
D♭9(sus4)
D9(sus4)
D7(♭9)
mp


Gm9
C9(sus4)
C7(♭13 ♯9 ♭9)
63
mf
Coda
Fm⅋
E♭m⅋
D♭m⅋
F13(♯11)
64
p
accel...