

Blues

*From Fundamentals of Jazz Improvisation:
What Everybody Thinks You Already Know*

Dr. Mark Watkins
Director of Jazz Studies
Brigham Young University–Idaho

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Background

In the 19th Century, African American males primarily performed Blues. It was sung and usually accompanied by guitar. Many blues singers had some type of disability, albeit not requisite. Forms varied. Inflections, pitch variations (blues notes), and other elements were inherited from field hollers and work songs dating back to the slave era. Blues at this time was primarily in rural areas of the South.

By the 1920's, blues had become common in northern territories and focused in urban communities. Performers were primarily female of African American decent. The 12-bar form had become common. Accompaniment may include piano or a rhythm section of piano, bass, and drum set. Often, other instruments joined.

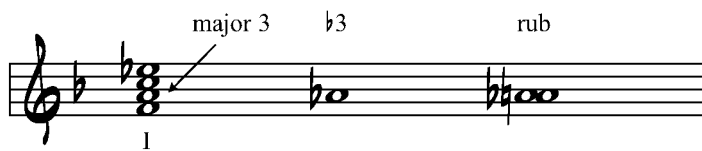
Blues was and sometimes still is a way to deal with life. In a sense it is group psychotherapy. One would sing about one's troubles in order to feel better, sympathy from peers, expression.

Blues Notes

Extended chords were not the norm in the 19th Century. Triads were the mainstay of hymns, gospel music, marching bands, and other styles with dominant 7th chords functioning at cadence points, not as a sound for tonic. The use of a minor 7th over a triad is a unique sound when not functioning in a dominant to tonic resolution context; yet, tonic in the blues as well as subdominant and dominant are all major minor 7th chords. Whether vocal or instrumental, this note may be considered a *blues note* and a contributor to the blues sound.



Probably the most significant of the blues notes is the flat-3. This is so because the 3rd is a functional note, not an extension, color tone, or in any way redundant. Harmonically, the 3rd of tonic is major (excluding *minor blues*). When a minor 3rd is played by an instrumentalist or sung by a singer, a very distinct rub results; rhythm section players hold to the major harmony. If the performer knows and hears, this rub is a wonderfully soulful sound.



By the 1940's the flat-5 had taken its place amongst acceptable non-harmonic tones common to the blues. Sustaining the note is not uncommon but there is a strong tendency to move melodically. Its resolution is either up to the 5th or down to the 4th. Notation of this note is either

flat-5 or sharp-4. Technically, this depends on where it is going, sharp for up or flat for down. Success of the 4th (the flat-5's lower resolution), which rubs against the 3rd, is contextual. This will be discussed further with the *minor pentatonic scale* below.



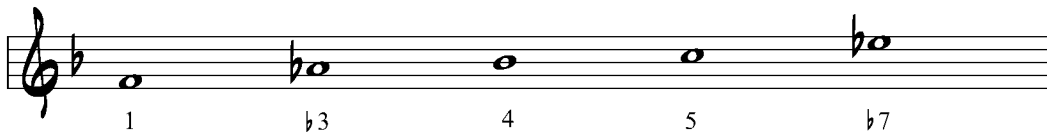
Pentatonics and the Blues

Five note scales used melodically date back to the ancient Greeks. They are known as *pentatonic* scales and are frequent in music from Ireland to Appalachia to China and points between. Any group of five different notes is a pentatonic scale, but two are most used in classical music and jazz: major and minor. The major pentatonic scales is comprised of degrees 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 of the major scale. The minor pentatonic is 1, flat-3, 4, 5, flat-7 starting on the tonic of the blues key. Other ways and means are discussed in the section specific to pentatonics, i.e. relative minor relationship.

Major Pentatonic



Minor Pentatonic



Many blues melodies and improvisations are based on these scales. The flat-3 blues note can be added to the major pentatonic to great effect. The sound of the major pentatonic, especially with its major 6th, harkens to an older generation but is invaluable in many contexts today. Resolution from the flat-3 to the major 3rd is typical. The minor pentatonic already contains the flat-3 and the flat-7. When the flat-5 is added it becomes what is often referred to as *the blues scale*.

Major Pentatonic (with flat-3)



Minor Pentatonic (with flat-5): *The Blues Scale*



Form and Harmony

Twelve measures is the most frequently used length for a blues chorus. There are only three different chords creating its underlying harmonic framework: four measures of tonic, two measures of subdominant, two tonic, two dominant, and two tonic. B-flat and F are the most common concert keys for the blues but are not exclusive; blues can be in any key.

Fundamental Structure

The image shows three staves of music in B-flat major, representing the fundamental structure of a blues chorus. Each staff contains four measures of music, indicated by diagonal slashes. The first staff has a single chord label 'Bb7' above the first measure. The second staff has 'Eb7' above the first measure and 'Bb7' above the third measure. The third staff has 'F7' above the first measure and 'Bb7' above the third measure.

From these chords and their structural placement, many chords can be added or substituted allowing much diversity (see Analysis below and the sections Fundamental Chord Progressions and Substitutions and Turnarounds). Some of the most fundamental options include the following.

ii V in mm. 9-10

Inserting a ii V on top of the structural V chord for mm. 9-10 is probably the most common usage in the blues presently.

The image shows three staves of music in B-flat major, illustrating the ii V substitution. Each staff contains four measures of music, indicated by diagonal slashes. The first staff has a single chord label 'Bb7' above the first measure. The second staff has 'Eb7' above the first measure and 'Bb7' above the third measure. The third staff has 'C-7' above the first measure, 'F7' above the second measure, and 'Bb7' above the third measure.

V IV in mm. 9-10

Three staves of musical notation in G-flat major (one flat). Each staff contains four measures of music, represented by diagonal slashes. Chord symbols are written above the staves: Staff 1: Bb7; Staff 2: Eb7, Bb7; Staff 3: F7, Eb7, Bb7.

Quick Change (m. 2) and Turnaround (m. 12)

A *quick change* is a jump to the subdominant in m. 2. *Turnarounds* are progressions that bring the music back or into a section; in this case, back to the top of the form. Turnarounds vary and can be as simple as the dominant chord below.

Three staves of musical notation in G-flat major (one flat). Each staff contains four measures of music, represented by diagonal slashes. Chord symbols are written above the staves: Staff 1: Bb7, Eb7, Bb7; Staff 2: Eb7, Bb7; Staff 3: C-7, F7, Bb7, F7.

Phrases are usually grouped into three, four bar units. Three melodic types are typical: AAB, riff, and through composed. AAB melodies repeat the first phrase but adjust for the subdominant harmony; the third phrase contrasts. Riff blues often state the same melody three times. Through composed tunes have little melodic repetition and cannot be grouped with AAB or riff blues principles. The Analysis section below gives examples of these melodic types.

Non-12 Bar Blues Forms

Eight-bar blues progressions vary considerably. One of the most common is:

8-bar Blues, Example 1:

Other possibilities include:

8-bar Blues, Example 2:

8-bar Blues, Example 3:

8-bar Blues, Example 4:

8-bar Blues, Example 5:

8-bar Blues, Example 6:

Likewise, there are many variants of the 16-bar blues. Most are an extension of some part of the 12-bar form. The following examples are not necessarily in an order of commonality.

16-bar Blues, Example 1:

16-bar Blues, Example 2:

16-bar Blues, Example 2:

Row 1: I, IV, I

Row 2: ii/V, V/IV, I

16-bar Blues, Example 3:

16-bar Blues, Example 3:

Row 1: I, IV, I

Row 2: IV, I, ii/V, V/IV, I

16-bar Blues, Example 4:

16-bar Blues, Example 4:

Row 1: I, IV, I

Row 2: ii/V, V/IV, ii/V, V/IV, I

16-bar Blues, Example 5:

16-bar Blues, Example 5:

Row 1: I, IV, I

Row 2: ii/V, V/IV, ii/V, V/IV, ii/V, V/IV, I

Twenty-four bar blues are extant, often demonstrating the proportions of the 12-bar blues with double durations.

24-bar Blues:

Row 1: I, (I)

Row 2: IV, (IV), I, (I)

Row 3: ii/V, (ii)/(V), V/IV, (V)/(IV), I, (I)

Improvisation

Listening is always the first step towards learning to improvise, listening to great performances. Listening to the underlying harmony and its relation to melodic material is essential. Due to the prevalence of blues notes, one should first become familiar with the primary consonances of the blues progression, the sound of *in*. Care should be taken to hear the rubs created by blues notes as non-harmonic tones. If these non-harmonic pitches are heard as consonances, some of the *soul* is lost. One's ear, ability to discern *in* from *out*, is adversely affected. When a performer is familiar with the consonant sounds of chord tones, blues notes have greater affect. Conversely, if an individual is taught *The Blues Scale*, for example, as their first means to navigate the blues, the dissonant flat-3, 4th, flat-5, and even the soul in the flat-7 can be lost. Their ability to hear consonant/dissonant relationships in other tunes is influenced.

These exercises should be practiced with accompaniment: play the chords on the piano, work with a pianist, use a recorded rhythm section, etc.

Chord Tones (The Sound of IN)

Sing the chord tones. First sing the roots through the form, then the 3^{rds}, 5^{ths}, and 7^{ths}. Sing the chords according to the tune being learned. The example below is the most simple.

The image shows three systems of musical notation for chord tone exercises in F major. Each system consists of two staves. The top staff of each system contains rhythmic slashes, and the bottom staff contains the corresponding chord tones. The first system is for F7, the second for Bb7 and F7, and the third for C7 and F7.

System 1: F7
Rhythmic slashes: / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Chord tones: F (quarter), A (quarter), C (quarter), Eb (quarter), F (quarter), Ab (quarter), C (quarter), Eb (quarter)

System 2: Bb7 and F7
Rhythmic slashes: / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Chord tones: Bb (quarter), D (quarter), F (quarter), Ab (quarter), Bb (quarter), D (quarter), F (quarter), Ab (quarter)

System 3: C7 and F7
Rhythmic slashes: / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Chord tones: C (quarter), Eb (quarter), G (quarter), Bb (quarter), C (quarter), Eb (quarter), G (quarter), Bb (quarter)

Arpeggios

Sing the chord tones arpeggiating in time, quarter notes first, then eighths. The following example uses the ii V option for mm. 9-10.

The image shows three systems of musical notation for arpeggios in B-flat major. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a slash in the treble staff and notes in the bass staff. The first system is for F7, the second for Bb7, and the third for G-7, C7, and F7. The notes are arpeggiated in quarter notes and eighth notes.

Mixolydian Scales

Practice mixolydian scales in time over the changes, still with an accompaniment. Additional methods of applying scales to chord changes is found in Practice Technique #5. The following example adds the *quick change* and simple V *turnaround* and is in the key of B-flat.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for Mixolydian scales in B-flat major. Each system consists of a grand staff with a slash in the treble staff and notes in the bass staff. The first system is for Bb7, Eb7, and Bb7. The second system is for Eb7 and Bb7. The notes are arpeggiated in quarter notes and eighth notes.

Handwritten musical notation for a blues progression in F major. The top staff shows four measures of chords: C-7, F7, Bb7, and F7. The bottom staff shows a corresponding melodic line in eighth notes.

Pentatonics and Blues Scales

Prepare major and parallel minor pentatonics via appropriate Practice Techniques. Major and minor pentatonics apply primarily to tonic chords. The major pentatonic can be used purely as a five note group of melodic choices or with the addition of the minor 3rd.

Three systems of musical notation for pentatonic and blues scale exercises. Each system has a top staff with chords and a bottom staff with notes.

- System 1: F7 chord, notes F, A, C, Eb, G.
- System 2: Bb7 and F7 chords, notes F, Ab, C, Eb, G.
- System 3: C7 and F7 chords, notes F, Ab, C, Eb, G.

Minor pentatonics can be played purely or with an added flat-5 creating *The Blues Scale*. This scale is most often applied to the tonic chords but can be used to *blanket* an entire chorus. Multiple choruses of blanketing can lose melodic and harmonic effect.

Handwritten musical notation for a blues scale exercise in F major. The top staff shows four measures of F7 chords. The bottom staff shows the F blues scale: F, Ab, C, Eb, G, Ab.

8^b7 F7

C7 F7

Patterns

Patterns can be practiced as an exercise to be included in an improvisation if its inclusion flows naturally. Place the desired pattern in every possible location (as a drill). Blues pattern will have an element of the blues such as a *Blues Scale* derivative, and flat-3 to major 3rd pair, or some other use of blues notes.

F7 B^b7 F7

B^b7 F7

G-7 C7 F7 C7

Guide Tones

Delineation of the blues structure is made clear by emphasizing notes that are most different between chords. Guide tones may be embellished and need not be directly on bar lines. They generally consist of the 3rds and 7ths of chord, which are the prime notes for chord quality and function.

The image displays three systems of musical notation, each consisting of a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a bass clef staff. The notation focuses on guide tones (3rd and 7th notes) for various chords. The first system shows chords Bb7, Eb7, and Bb7. The second system shows Eb7 and Bb7. The third system shows C-7, F7, Bb7, and F7. The bass staff shows the guide tones for each chord, while the treble staff contains rhythmic slashes indicating a repeating pattern.

Analysis

Basic Blues 1: *C Jam Blues* (Ellington)

Fundamental chord structure: I IV I VI.

Melody: riff. A *riff* is a repeating motive and common to the blues. Riff blues can use the same melody for all three sections of the blues. This three-section form concept is explained below, *Fine and Mellow*.

Basic Blues 2: *Fine and Mellow* (Holliday)

Melody: AAB; Iambic Pentameter

The text is AAB but may have new text for each chorus. Melodic material is AAB throughout but will be varied in several ways. Often, the melody will only adjust a few notes to fit the IV chord with no significant transposition. At other times, the melodic construct is shifted up or down for the second A to fit the IV chord. Interpretive embellishments of both pitch and rhythm are commonly applied. Historically, AAB is called *bar form*.

Iambic Pentameter: 5 stressed syllables on each line. Embellishments may still occur creating uneven numbers of syllables. This iambic pentameter often fits within the first five half notes of each line (i.e. half notes on beats 1 3 1 3 1 of the first three measures).

Harmonically, the structure fits within the I IV I V I pattern outlined above. *Fine and Mellow* adds the IV chord to measure 10 and a V in measure 11. Chord substitutions are further explained in subsequent examples.

One should also notice the prominence of the flat-3 blues note (A-flat) in the melody throughout.

A

A

1 ↓ B^b7 2 3 4 5 ↓ F^b6

man he don't love me, treats me awful mean. He's the

B

1 ↓ C7 2 3 4 5 ↓ F^b6 C7 F^b6

low-est man that I've ever seen. He wears

A

F^b6 B^b7 F^b6 F7

high trim pan, stripes are really yellow. He wears

A

B^b7 F^b6

high trim pan, stripes are really yellow. But when he

B

C7 F^b6 C7 F^b6

starts in to love me, he's so fine and mel-low. Love will

Form continues

F^b6 B^b7 F^b6 F7

make you drink and gamble, make you stay out all night long. Love will

B^b7 F^b6

make you drink and gamble, make you stay out all night long.

C7 F^b6 C7 F^b6

Love will make you do things that you know is wrong. But if you

F6 N.C. 8b7 N.C. F6 F7
 treat me right ba - by, I'll stay home ev - ry day. If you
 8b7 F6
 treat me right ba-by, I'll stay home ev-ry day. But you're so
 C7 F6 C7 F6
 mean to me ba-by, I know you're gon-na drive me a - seen. Love is
 F6 8b7 F6
 just like the fau-cet, it turns off and on.
 8b7 F6 3
 Love is like the fau-cet, it turns off and on. Some-times when you
 C7 F6 C7 F6
 think it's on ba-by, it has turned off and seen.

Substitutions 1: *Blue Seven* (Rollins)

Use of the IV chord in the second measure is common and often added even when it is not included on the score or lead sheet. Some refer to this as the *quick change*.

Moving from the V to the IV in mm. 9-10 is often applied to the blues. In a performance, one might call, "Take it from the five," to insert this substitution if not in the score.

There are many *turnaround* possibilities (see the section Turnarounds). Most players will not leave tonic in m. 12 but will apply a *turnaround*. In this case, V7 suffices.

Melody: riff blues AAB hybrid. Measure 5 is an embellished version of measure 1 and adjusted for IV; the A-flat is appropriate as the flat-7 of IV and the E is the sharp-11, a color creating interest. Riff principles apply to mm. 2-3, 6-7, and 10-11 being identical. B naturals in mm. 3, 7, and 11 are sharp-11 to F7. An A is sounded in m. 8 to parallel the A in m. 1 while the F-sharp is sharp-11 to C in m. 9 as the E in m. 5 is sharp-11 to B-flat. These motivic parallels show the riff principles applied whereas the embellishments and pitch adjustments delineate the A A B form.

Substitutions 2: *Tenor Madness* (Rollins)

Measures 9-10 use what may be the most common formulae: ii V7 instead of V7 for both bars.

This is preceded by a secondary dominant in m. 8: G7 to C minor is V7/ii.

A more extended turnaround is seen in mm. 11-12. G7 to C7 to F7 to B-flat is a cycle of dominants.

Melody: AAB. The last part of A returns as the last part of B. In classical terminology, this might be considered *rounded binary* as follows, ||: A :|| B A'.

A

A

B

Substitutions 3: *Blues for Alice* (Parker)

This analysis will be more clearly understood after study of the sections Fundamental Chord Progressions and Substitutions and Turnarounds.

These changes are often referred to as Bird Blues. An F major in m. 1 (instead of F7) signals the progression.

Starting in m. 2 the chords move in a ii V7 cycle landing on IV in m. 5. The first chord of m. 2 is often half-diminished; this reduces the contrast by keeping the 5th in the key signature. The major 7 from F in m. 1 also makes the transition smoother: major 7th E in m. 1 is the root of E \flat in m. 2.

A somewhat common chord progression is iv flat-VII7 I, i.e. in the key of F: B-flat minor to E-flat 7 to F. In the blues, tonic is returned to in m. 7. Although another substitution principle is incorporated for m. 7 in *Blues for Alice*, the preceding progression assume tonic. B-flat 7 in m. 5 changes modes to B-flat minor in m. 6, which becomes minor iv of a iv flat-VII7 I sequence. Measure 7 lands on A minor instead of F.

The mediant iii is a successful alternate for tonic in major keys (III in minor). Measure 7 applies this principle and becomes ii of a ii V7 progression. The E-flat 7 of m. 6 to the A minor of m. 7 works not only because of the iii for I substitute but because a *tritone resolution* is a good forward motion sound. The roots E-flat to A are a triton apart.

The next two measures are more easily understood when calculating backwards from m. 10, which will be explained momentarily. Measures 10-11 apply the option seen in *Tenor madness* above. Instead of V7 for both measures, ii V7 is used; in this case, G minor moves to C7.

With G minor explained as a substitute for C7 in m. 10, the preceding bars are clearer. One must understand the concept of *tritone substitution* (see the section Substitutions). This allows a chord a tritone away from the chord in question to substitute: D-flat is a tritone away from G; D-flat can be used instead of G. In *Tenor Madness* above, a secondary dominant was used in m. 8, G7 to C minor. A similar principle is used in *Blues for Alice* but attached to V instead of ii. Given G minor in m. 9 is a substitute for C7 (a ii V7 can substitute for V7 and vice versa in most instances, as above), a secondary dominant of V can be inserted in m. 8 but to C7, the V, instead of the more direct G minor, ii: G7 equals V7 of C or V/V. C7 can be G minor to C7; V7 can be ii V7. So, V/V can be V of ii V or V/iiV. With an imaginary V/V or G7 in m. 8, a tritone substitution can be understood: D-flat is a tritone away from G. Both G7 and D-flat 7 are good resolution to C7; D-flat is used.

Another reason this sounds good is the tritone resolution concept explained above as applied to mm. 6-7. Chords whose roots are a tritone apart can be placed in sequence. The D-flat of m. 8 progresses well to the G minor of m. 9.

The ii V substitute for V is placed in m. 8 turning D-flat 7 into A-flat minor to D-flat 7.

Measure 7 moves to m. 8 by means of the same technique just presented. A-flat minor to D-flat 7 becomes D-flat 7 alone. The dominant of D-flat is A-flat. A tritone away from A-flat is D. Thus, D can be substituted for A-flat. Returning the A-flat minor to m. 8, the D of m. 7 creates a tritone resolution to A-flat. D7 in m. 7 becomes ii V or A minor to D7 and the cycle is back to the A minor substitute for F (iii for I).

Measure 11 starts with the same iii for I, A minor for F substitution and proceeds cyclically. A to D to G to C to F is a circle of 5ths, or cycle, progression. In the key of F, the qualities are iii vi ii V7 I. When vi is altered to become VI7 a cycle of ii V7's is created, as below.

Melody: Through Composed. There are no repeating elements in the manner of a riff blues or AAB form. Notice the note choices in mm. 1, 2, 4, 10, and 11. Measure one has the major 7 of F. The flat-9 of A is in m. 2. When a rest follows an upbeat note, the note will sound on the harmony of the rest beat; thus, the fourth eighth note in m. 4 will be heard on beat three. The C-sharp is the sharp-5 of F. E-flat on C7 is a blues note, m. 10. On major and sometimes on dominant chords, fourths are controversial. In the blues, the fourth scale degree may work when associated with the blues scale of tonic. However, the sustained fourth scale degree (G) of the D7 in m. 11 is not the fourth of tonic. It works because the melodic sequence from mm. 11-12 (and into m. 1) is strong and because tonic in the blues is very powerful, G doesn't conflict with F7 or F major.

The image displays two musical staves with chord progressions and annotations. The top staff shows a sequence of chords: F#7, maj 7, Eb7, A7(b9) b9, D-7, G7, C-7, and F7(#5). Below these are labels for ii V7 cycles: D (ii V7), C (ii V7), and Bb (ii V7). A bracket labeled "cycle of ii V's" spans the D, C, and Bb sections. The bottom staff shows a chromatically descending ii V7 cycle: Bb7 (IV), Eb7 (iv), A-7 (ii), D7 (V7), Ab-7 (ii), and Db7 (V7). Annotations include "tritone resolution" between Eb7/A-7, A-7/D7, and Ab-7/Db7. A bracket labeled "chromatically descending ii V's" spans the A-7, D7, Ab-7, and Db7 section. Additional annotations include "iii sub for I" for A-7, "tritone substitution for Ab (V of Db)" for D7, and "tritone substitution for G (V of C)" for Ab-7.

iii sub for I

turnaround

(blues note) $\flat 3$

4th

ii V7 ii V7

G F

cycle of ii V's

Minor Blues: *Mr. P.C.* (Coltrane)

Minor blues generally use a minor tonic (mm. 1-4, 7-8, and 11-12) and minor subdominant (mm. 5-6). In the place where V is used structurally (mm. 9-10), the quality is not minor; as in a classical minor mode, dominant borrows the major 3rd of the chord (the leading tone of tonic). Often, a minor blues will use some type of chord substitution in the active, dominant functioning area.

Mr. P.C. uses minor for i and iv as explained. Measures 9-10 include a tritone substitution. One of the most common sequences in the blues is ii V in mm. 9-10; this is D minor to G7 in *Mr. P.C.* A tritone away from D is A-flat. Measures 9-10 in *Mr. P.C.* moves from A-flat to G.

Melody: AAB. Like *Tenor Madness*, *Mr. P.C.* has an element of rounded binary with a fragment of A returning at the end of B (compare mm. 3-4, 7-8, and 11-12). Transposition of the mm. 1-2 melody occurs in mm. 5-6 to adjust for the iv chord.

Cmi

i

melody transposed

Fmi Cmi

iv i

Ab7 G+7 Cmi

tritone substitution for D V i

Extended Blues: *Watermelon Man* (Hancock)

A common method of lengthening the form of the blues is by repeating mm. 9-10. *Watermelon Man* does so twice, creating a 16 bar chorus.

Harmonically, chords are kept simple; very unlike *Blues for Alice*. This is typical of the “Funky” style of the late 1950’s and early ‘60’s.

The accompaniment could be labeled an *ostinato* as it is a repetitive vamp.

A harmony line accompanies several spots of melody, originally by tenor saxophone.

The musical score is written in F major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first two systems feature a repetitive bass line (vamp) in the bass clef and a melody in the treble clef. The third system shows a different bass line with a saxophone melody and harmonic accompaniment. The fourth system returns to the repetitive bass line with a saxophone melody and harmonic accompaniment. Chord symbols are placed above the treble clef staves, and Roman numerals are placed below the bass clef staves. The word "harmony" is written above the treble clef staves in the second, third, and fourth systems.

System 1: Treble clef has F7 chord symbol. Bass clef has Roman numeral I. Treble clef has "harmony" label. Treble clef notes: F4, A4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef notes: F2, C3, F3, C3, F3, C3, F3, C3.

System 2: Treble clef has Bb7 chord symbol. Bass clef has Roman numeral IV. Treble clef has "harmony" label. Treble clef notes: Bb4, D5, F5, Eb5, D5, C5. Bass clef notes: Bb2, F3, Bb3, F3, Bb3, F3, Bb3, F3.

System 3: Treble clef has C7 chord symbol. Bass clef has Roman numeral V. Treble clef has "harmony" label. Treble clef notes: C4, E4, G4, Bb4, A4, G4. Bass clef notes: C3, G2, C3, G2, C3, G2, C3, G2.

System 4: Treble clef has C7 chord symbol. Bass clef has Roman numeral I. Treble clef has "harmony" label. Treble clef notes: C4, E4, G4, Bb4, A4, G4. Bass clef notes: C3, G2, C3, G2, C3, G2, C3, G2.

Tune List

Early/Traditional Blues	Jazz Blues	Riff Blues	Minor Blues	Non-12 Bar Blues
All Right, Ok, You Win Back at the Chicken Shack C.C. Rider Empty Bed Blues Fine and Mellow Green Onions I'm Tore Down Memphis Blues Pine Top Boogie Pride and Joy Royal Garden Blues Searchin' for a Woman Shake, Rattle, 'n' Roll St. Louis Blues Sweet Home Chicago Stormy Monday T-Bone Shuffle West End Blues	Afro Blue After Hours All Blues Bessie's Blues Black Coffee (ballad) Blowin' the Blues Away Blue Bolivar Blues Blue Trane Blues Connotation Blues for Philly Joe Blues for Stephanie Blues March Blues on the Corner Cedar's Blues Chasin' the Trane Chicken, The (fusion) Chitlins con Carne (Latin/fusion) Comin' Home Baby Cool Struttin' Cousin Mary Decision Doodlin' Eye of the Hurricane (Hancock, V.S.O.P.) Filthy McNasty Five Spot After Dark Freddie the Freeloader Gingerbread Boy Gotham City Israel Jodie Grind, The Jumpin' with Symphony Sid (swing) Matrix Missile Blues Mr. Day No Line Nutville One for Daddy 'O Red Top Route 66 (swing) Sack O' Woe Sandu Señor Blues (Latin) Stolen Moments Teenie's Blues Thrill is Gone, The (blues) Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West Vierd Blues Walkin' When Will the Blues Leave	Bags Groove Bemsha Swing Bessie's Blues Blue 'n' Boogie Blue Monk Blue Seven Blues by Five Blues in the Closet Blues Walk, The Bud's Blues C Jam Blues Centerpiece Champ, The Cool Blues Dig Dis Freddie Freeloader Misterioso Night Train No Blues (Pfrancin') Now's the Time Sonnymoon for Two Speedball Spontaneous Combustion Tenor Madness Things Ain't What They Used to Be	Big P Birk's Works Equinox Footprints Hassan's Dream Mr. P.C. Señor Blues Why Don't You Do Right?	C.C. Rider [old] (16) Close to You (16) CRS Craft (8) Get a Haircut (8) Heartbreak Hotel (8) I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man (16) Key to the Highway (8) Let's Dance (16) Mustang Sally (24) Oh, Pretty Woman (16) Sidewinder (24) Travelin' Blues (16) Walking by Myself (8) Watermelon Man (16)) Worried Life Blues (8)
			Blues w/Bridge	
			Locomotion Unit 7 Someone Else is Sleepin' In Bikini Scotch and Water Word, The (Beatles) The Ballad Of John And Yoko (Beatles) I Can Help (Billy Swan) I'm On Fire (Bruce Springsteen)	
		Bebop Blues		
		Au Privave Barbados Billie's Bounce Birdlike Bloomdido Blues for Alice Buzzy (Charlie Parker) Cheryl Chi Chi Continental Cookin' at the Sippin' at Bells Cool Blues Dance of the Infidels Mohawk Now's the Time Ool ya coo Parker's Mood Relaxin' at Camarillo Straight, No Chaser Twisted Wee Dot Yabada Ool Ya (Dizzy Gillespie)		

Worksheet Packet #7: Blues

Scale

Write all scales up to the root and down.
Do not use key signatures.
Include accidentals ascending and descending.

In practice the blues scale can start on the tonic of the tune and the tonic of the scale: key of the piece is B-flat, B-flat blues scale used. Or, the blues scale can start on the 6th of the key of the piece: tune in B-flat, G blues scale used. In the former situation, the scale can be used only on the tonic chord delineating the differences of IV, ii, and V; or, the scale can blanket the form. In the later situation, the scale is usually only used on tonic.

Chord Progressions

Write chord voicings as in the example given.
Keep voicings centered around middle C.
Play all chords on the piano, listen, become familiar with the sound of the blues voicings.

Two worksheets are provided. These examples demonstrate two different voicings and two variations of the blues progression. Voicings and progressions are interchangeable. They represent only a small sample of blues voicings and chord substitutions.

Patterns

Several examples are given with the chord most appropriate to the pattern included.
Find two patterns that are specific to the quality (major). Sources might include a transcription, a jazz improvisation textbook, Aebersold play-a-long series, a book on jazz patterns such as Jerry Coker's *Pattern for Jazz*, a reputable professional (i.e. Aaron Miller, Ryan Nielsen, Mark Watkins, Jay Lawrence, Keith Phillips, Justin Nielsen, or a visiting guest).
Include the appropriate chord symbol and pattern source.
Add patterns to the log to increase vocabulary.

Scale

Example:

Musical notation for a scale in C minor. The scale is written in two staves: the first staff is in treble clef and the second in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The ascending scale is: C4, Db4, Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5. The descending scale is: C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, Eb4, Db4, C4.

C F

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

Bb Eb

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

Ab G#

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

Db C#

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

Gb F#

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

B E

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

A D

An empty musical staff with a double bar line, used for practicing the scale.

G

An empty musical staff, used for practicing the scale.

Progression 1

8b

8b9 Eb13 Bb9 F13 Eb13 Bb9

Eb

Ab

Db/C# (either enharmonic)

G \flat /C \sharp

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature is G \flat /C \sharp .

B

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature is B.

E

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature is E.

A

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The key signature is A.

D

A musical staff system for a grand piano, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The letter 'D' is written above the treble clef. The staff is empty, indicating a whole rest for the entire duration.

G

A musical staff system for a grand piano, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The letter 'G' is written above the treble clef. The staff is empty, indicating a whole rest for the entire duration.

C

A musical staff system for a grand piano, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The letter 'C' is written above the treble clef. The staff is empty, indicating a whole rest for the entire duration.

F

A musical staff system for a grand piano, consisting of a treble clef and a bass clef. The treble clef is on the top staff and the bass clef is on the bottom staff. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The letter 'F' is written above the treble clef. The staff is empty, indicating a whole rest for the entire duration.

Progression 2

Bb

Chords: Bb13, Eb9, Bb13, Eb9, Bb13, C-9, F9, Bb13, F9

Eb

Ab

Db/C# (either enharmonic)

G \flat /C \sharp

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The top staff has a treble clef and a sharp sign on the C line. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a sharp sign on the C line. The entire system is enclosed in a double bar line at the end.

B

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The top staff has a treble clef and a sharp sign on the B line. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a sharp sign on the B line. The entire system is enclosed in a double bar line at the end.

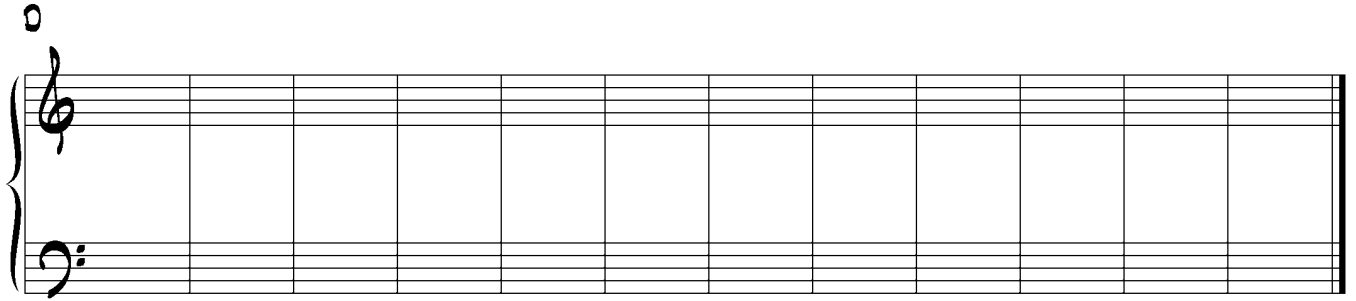
E

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The top staff has a treble clef and a sharp sign on the E line. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a sharp sign on the E line. The entire system is enclosed in a double bar line at the end.

A

A musical staff system consisting of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a brace on the left. The staff is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines. The top staff has a treble clef and a sharp sign on the A line. The bottom staff has a bass clef and a sharp sign on the A line. The entire system is enclosed in a double bar line at the end.

D



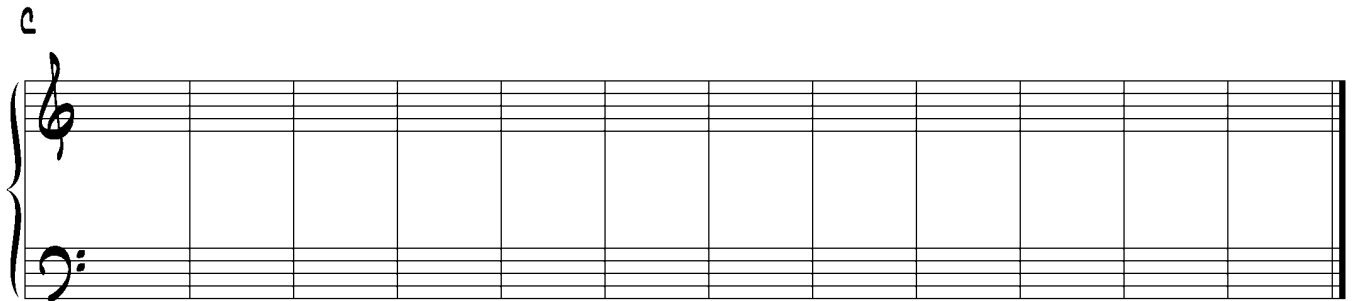
A musical staff system for the key of D major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble clef staff has a sharp sign (F#) on the first line. The bass clef staff has a sharp sign (C#) on the second line. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines.

G



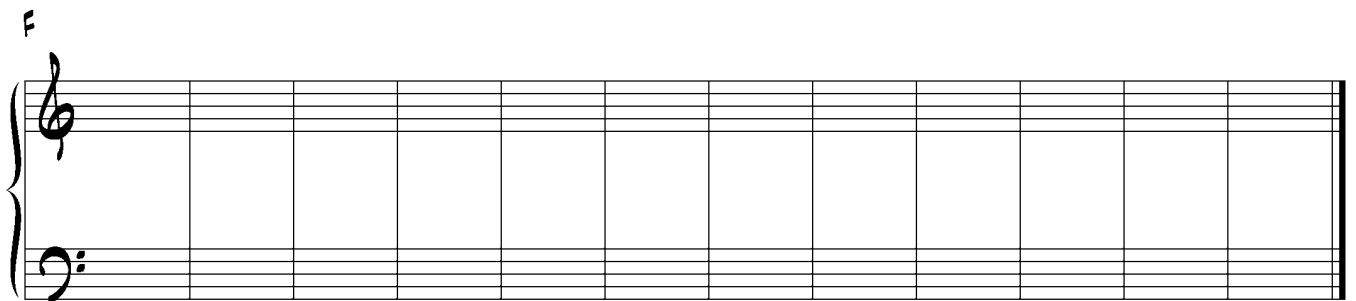
A musical staff system for the key of G major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble clef staff has a sharp sign (F#) on the first line. The bass clef staff has a sharp sign (C#) on the second line. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines.

C



A musical staff system for the key of C major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Both staves are empty. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines.

F



A musical staff system for the key of F major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble clef staff has a flat sign (Bb) on the second line. The bass clef staff has a flat sign (Eb) on the third line. The system is divided into 12 measures by vertical bar lines.

Patterns (treble)

Examples:

Patterns (bass)

Examples:

Example 1: Bass clef, C7 chord, 3/4 time signature. Pattern 1: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Pattern 2: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

Example 2: Bass clef, C7 chord, 4/4 time signature. Pattern 1: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. Pattern 2: Quarter notes G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Empty bass staff with clef and bar line.

Analysis and Application (treble)

Exercise 1: For each excerpt complete the following tasks:

1. Notate the scale or scales utilized, include the chord symbol
2. Provide examples of prime chromatic usages
3. Circle all blues notes

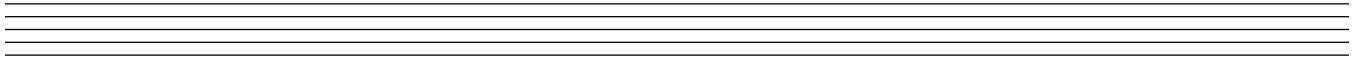
Excerpt 1: David Sanborn, *Snakes*

Scale(s)

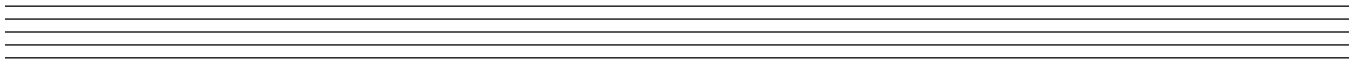
Chromaticism Examples

Excerpt 2: Nicholas Payton, *Whoopin' Blues*

Scale(s)



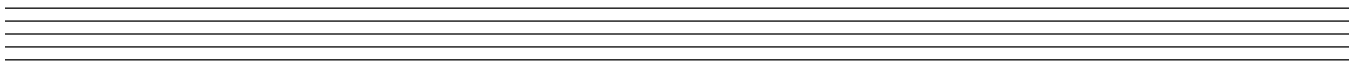
Chromaticism Examples



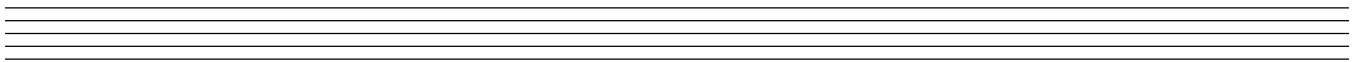
Excerpt 3: Nat Adderley, *Work Song*

Musical notation for Excerpt 3: Nat Adderley, *Work Song*. The first staff shows a melodic line starting with an A-7 chord. The second staff continues the melody with E7 and A-7 chords, including a chromatic alteration marked with an asterisk.

Scale(s)



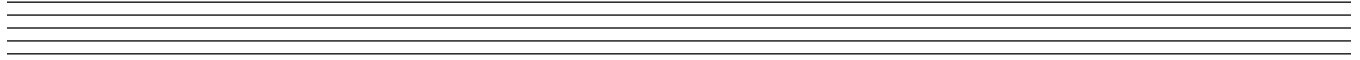
Chromaticism Examples



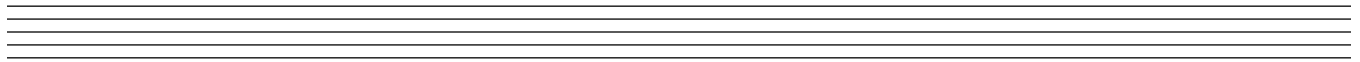
Excerpt 4: Dexter Gordon, *Watermelon Man*

Musical notation for Excerpt 4: Dexter Gordon, *Watermelon Man*. The first staff shows a melodic line with G7 and C7 chords. The second staff continues the melody with G7, D7, and C7 chords. The third staff shows a melodic line with D7, C7, and G7 chords, including a triplet.

Scale(s)



Chromaticism Examples



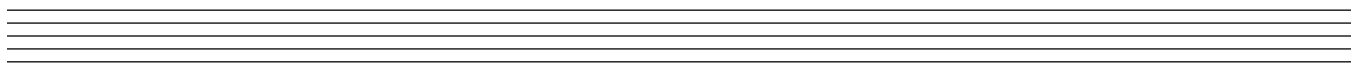
Excerpt 5: Sonny Clark, *Cool Struttin'*

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the excerpt 'Cool Struttin' by Sonny Clark. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains a chord symbol 'F7'. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with several triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes). The second staff continues the melody, featuring a key signature change to one flat (Bb) indicated by a 'Bb7' chord symbol. This section includes more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth notes and triplets.

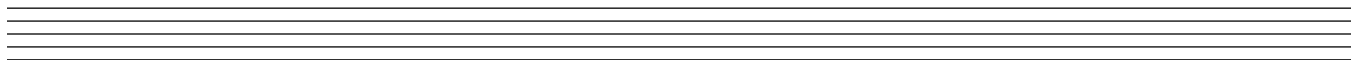
Scale(s)



Chromaticism Examples



Exercise 2: Compose a blues motif that could successfully be used in an improvisation.



Analysis and Application (bass)

Exercise 1: For each excerpt complete the following tasks:

1. Notate the scale or scales utilized, include the chord symbol
2. Provide examples of prime chromatic usages
3. Circle all blues notes

Excerpt 1: David Sanborn, *Snakes*

Chord symbol: E-7

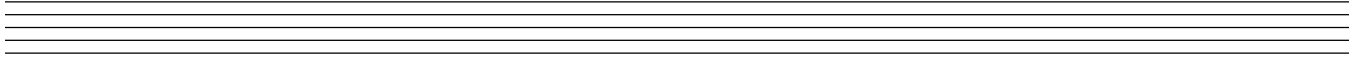
Scale(s)

Chromaticism Examples

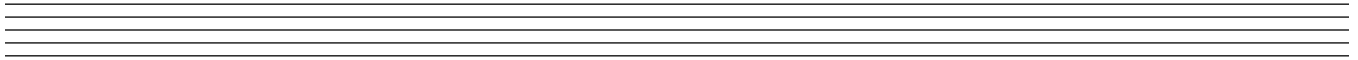
Excerpt 2: Nicholas Payton, *Whoopin' Blues*

Chord symbol: G7

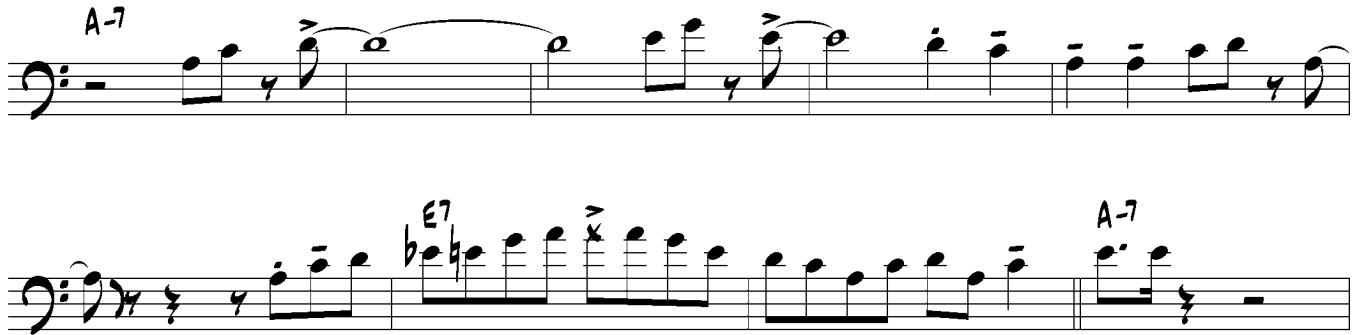
Scale(s)



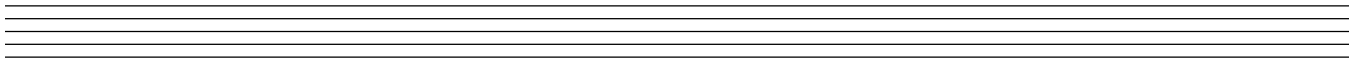
Chromaticism Examples



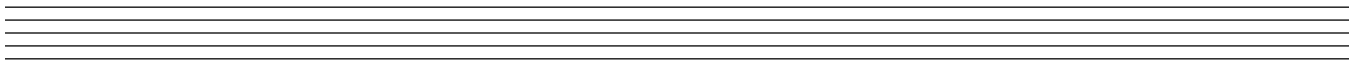
Excerpt 3: Nat Adderley, *Work Song*



Scale(s)



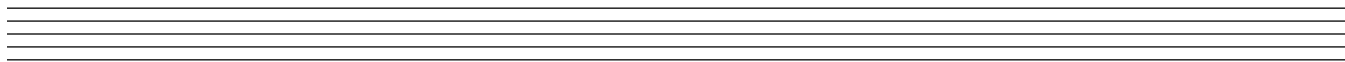
Chromaticism Examples



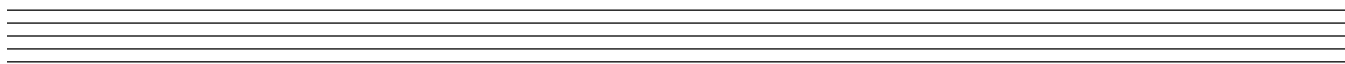
Excerpt 4: Dexter Gordon, *Watermelon Man*



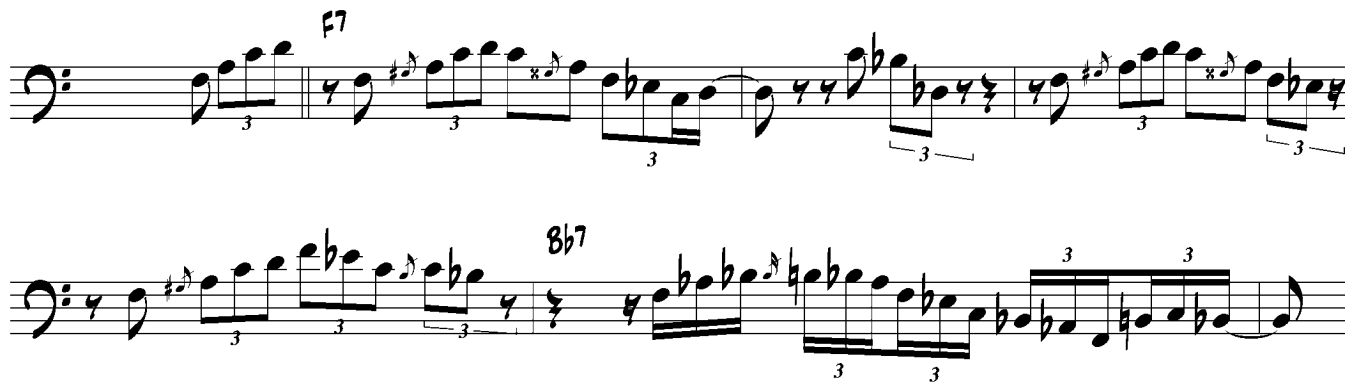
Scale(s)



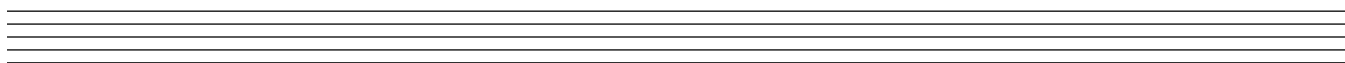
Chromaticism Examples



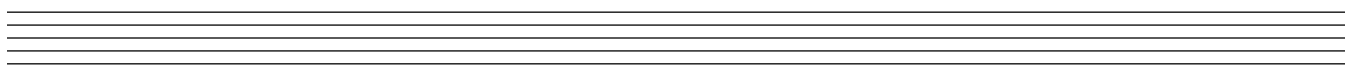
Excerpt 5: Sonny Clark, *Cool Struttin'*



Scale(s)



Chromaticism Examples



Exercise 2: Compose a blues motif that could successfully be used in an improvisation.

