

# Rhythm Changes

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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# Original Rhythm

Musicians composing and performing in jazz, musical theater, R&B, pop, and other idioms have been influenced by Gershwin's tune "I Got Rhythm." However, it should be noted that the I (or iii), vi, ii, V, I common to the A sections of *rhythm* tunes and the dominant cycle of the bridge are progressions as old as the advent of our diatonic system. Regardless of the influence, *rhythm changes* are a common contrafact in jazz. (A contrafact is a new melody written on a pre-existing chord progression. Since chord progressions cannot be copyrighted, performers often write new melodies over progressions on which they enjoy improvising.) Tunes written over rhythm changes are very common; they were especially so in the Swing and Bebop eras. Charlie Parker has stated that learning blues, rhythm changes, and "Cherokee" in 12 keys will prepare one for almost anything.

*Original Rhythm* is a 32 bar form, AABA. Fundamentally, a two bar I vi | ii V sequence played four times constitutes the A sections. Bars 5-6 in Gershwin's tune are I I<sup>7</sup> | IV iv. This set of chords, with Gershwin's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> bars are the foundation for subsequent contrafacts.

A section:

The A section is shown in two staves of music. The first staff contains four measures with the following chords: Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7. The second staff contains four measures with the following chords: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Eb-7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are represented by slashes on the staff lines.

The b section or *bridge* is a dominant sequence starting on the mediant cycling every two bars.

B section:

The B section is shown in two staves of music. The first staff contains four measures with the following chords: D7, G7, G7, G7. The second staff contains four measures with the following chords: C7, F7, F7, F7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are represented by slashes on the staff lines.

Gershwin's tune carries a two bar extension not often played with rhythm changes contrafacts.

Original Rhythm: *I Got Rhythm* (George Gershwin)

This musical score is for the original rhythm of "I Got Rhythm" by George Gershwin, set in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The score consists of nine staves of music, each containing a single-measure rest followed by a half note. The chords are written above the notes, and some staves include Roman numeral analysis below the notes.

**Staff 1:** Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

**Staff 2:** Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Eb-7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7  
IV, IV7, bVII7, I

**Staff 3:** Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

**Staff 4:** Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Ab7, C-7, F7, Bb6

**Staff 5:** D7, G7

**Staff 6:** C7, F7

**Staff 7:** Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

**Staff 8:** Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Eb-7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

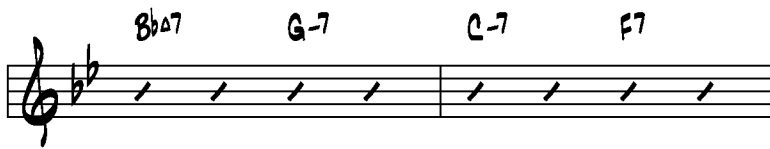
**Staff 9:** Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

# Options

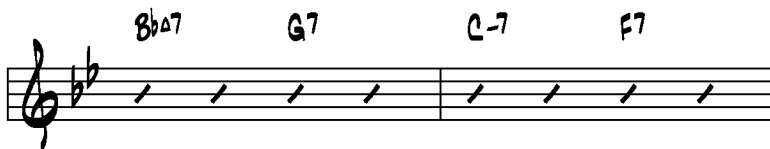
One of the advantages to rhythm changes is its flexibility, similar to the blues—possibilities are extensive. Options for bars 1-2 can be paired with bars 3-4 options, likewise with bar 5, 6, and 7-8. All examples with major 7 chords could use major 6 chords and vice versa; one or the other is usually used consistently throughout the progression.

Set 1: mm. 1-2 options:

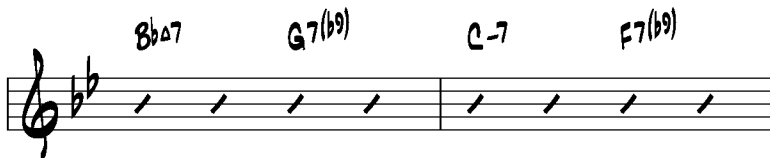
Fundamental I vi ii V



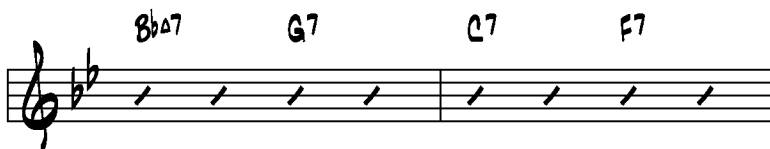
Minor vi changed to VI<sup>7</sup>



VI and V altered



VI, V, and II altered to create a cycle of dominants



Diminished passing chords substituted for vi and V to create a chromatic bass line

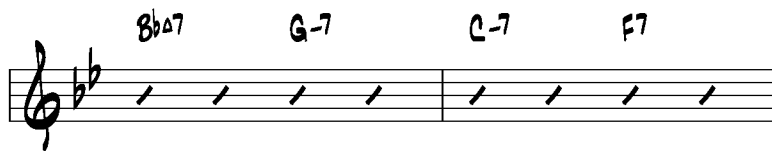


The above progression is usually followed by iii substitute for I in bar 3, thus completing the bass line.

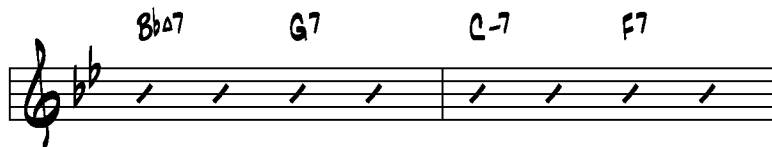


Set 2: mm. 3-4 options:

Fundamental I vi ii V



Minor vi changed to VI<sup>7</sup>



iii substituted for I, creating a cycle of ii Vs



Dominants altered



Set 3: m. 5 options:

Fundamental major I followed by I<sup>7</sup>



Minor v substituting for I, creating a ii V (blues sound on m. 5)



I<sup>7</sup> substituting for major I (blues sound on m. 5)



Set 4: m. 6 options:

Original Rhythm. Moving to IV in m. 6 is reminiscent of the I to IV progression found in the blues.



IV may be major 7 or dominant 7.



VII<sup>7</sup> substituting for iv resolves commonly to I. The IV VII I progression is frequently found in tunes. Progressing from I<sup>7</sup> in m. 5 to Iv<sup>7</sup> and VII<sup>7</sup> in m. 6 is cyclical.



Raised 4<sup>th</sup> root on beat 3 creates a chromatic root progression; when other notes (3, 5, 7) remain constant through the measure a diminished chord results.



Set 5: mm. 7-8 options:

Tonic 6/4 (B-flat over F) completes either a descending or ascending bass line depending on the preceding chords




Same principle with iii substituting for I



Possible bass line 1, descending: (Inversions are not usually indicating as below.)

B $\flat$ 6      B $\flat$ 7/A $\flat$       E $\flat$ 6/G      A $\flat$ 7/G $\flat$       B $\flat$ 6/F



Possible bass line 2, ascending: (Likewise, inversions not always given.)

B $\flat$ 6      B $\flat$ 7/D      E $\flat$ 6      E $\flat$ 7      B $\flat$ 6/F



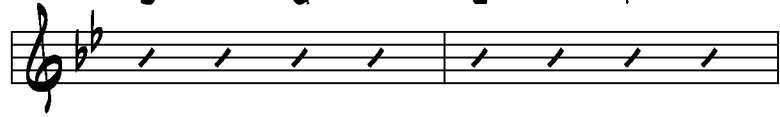
Fundamental I vi ii V return to top of A section

B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7      G-7      C-7      F7




iii may be substituted for I in all mm. 7-8 examples

D-7      G-7      C-7      F7



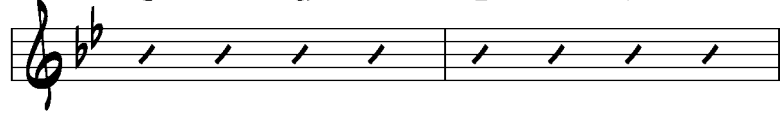
VI<sup>7</sup> substitutes for vi

B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7      G7      C-7      F7



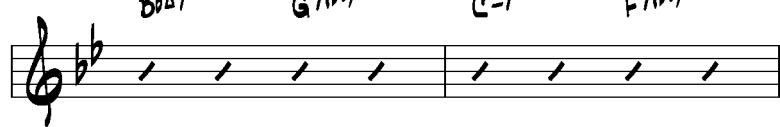
iii substitutes for I, creating a cycle of ii Vs

D-7      G7      C-7      F7



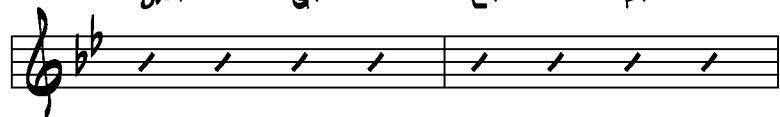
Dominants altered

B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7      G7(b9)      C-7      F7(b9)



II<sup>7</sup> substitutes for ii, creating a cycle of dominants

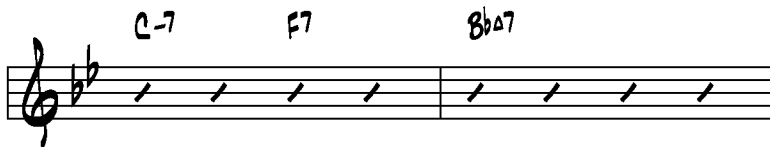
B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 7      G7      C7      F7



Tonic 6/4, V<sup>7</sup> I can conclude 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> A section

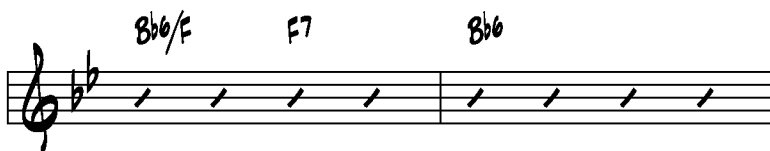


ii V<sup>7</sup> I can conclude 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> A section

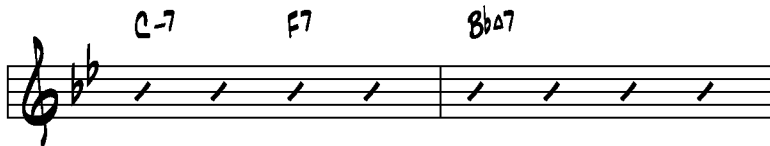


Set 6: mm. 15-16 options: m. 16 or mm. 15-16 usually end on tonic. This final cadence helps conclude 2<sup>nd</sup> A section melodic material and facilitates a colorful chromatic mediant contrast to the bridge.

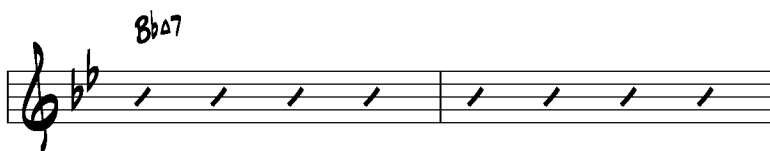
As above, tonic 6/4, V<sup>7</sup> I can conclude 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> A section



As above, ii V<sup>7</sup> I can conclude 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> A section



Tonic is often held for both mm. 15 and 16



All examples of B section (bridge) harmonic sequences can utilize altered dominants.



Bridge 1:

Fundamental cycle of dominant harmonies starting on the chromatic mediant (dominant chord built on 3<sup>rd</sup> scale degree of tonic)

Bridge 1 musical notation (two staves, four measures each):

- Staff 1: D7, G7
- Staff 2: C7, F7

Bridge 2:

ii V<sup>7</sup> substituted for V<sup>7</sup>

Bridge 2 musical notation (two staves, four measures each):

- Staff 1: Ami7, D7, Dmi7, G7
- Staff 2: Gmi7, C7, Cmi7, F7

Bridge 3:

ii V<sup>7</sup> substituted for V<sup>7</sup> in mm. 17-18 and 21-22, creating a sequence of ii V<sup>7</sup> Is in mm. 17-20 and 21-24

Bridge 3 musical notation (two staves, four measures each):

- Staff 1: Ami7, D7, G7
- Staff 2: Gmi7, C7, F7

Bridge 4:

Tritone substitutions in mm. 19-20 and 23-24 create a descending chromatic sequence

Two staves of music in B-flat major. The first staff shows measures 19-20 with a D7 chord above measure 19 and a D-flat7 chord above measure 20. The second staff shows measures 23-24 with a C7 chord above measure 23 and a C-flat7 chord above measure 24. All measures contain a rhythmic pattern of four eighth notes.

Bridge 5:

Tritone substitutions in mm. 17-18 and 21-22 create a descending chromatic sequence

Two staves of music in B-flat major. The first staff shows measures 17-18 with an A-flat7 chord above measure 17 and a G7 chord above measure 18. The second staff shows measures 21-22 with a G-flat7 chord above measure 21 and an F7 chord above measure 22. All measures contain a rhythmic pattern of four eighth notes.

The last A section of rhythm changes is usually identical to the 1<sup>st</sup> A section. Final choruses often use the 2<sup>nd</sup> A section to end.

The following grid demonstrates the possibilities of the above examples, which are not all inclusive; many more possibilities exist.

Practically any group from Set 1 can be combined with any group from Set 2. Any group from Set 2 can be combined with any group from Set 3, Set 3 to 4, and 4 to 5.

First A section:

	Set 1: mm. 1-2		Set 2: mm. 3-4		Set 3: m. 5	Set 4: m. 6	Set 5: mm. 7-8	
1	B $\flat$	G-	C-	F7	B $\flat$	G-	C-	F7
2	B $\flat$	G7	C-	F7	B $\flat$	G7	C-	F7
3	B $\flat$	G7(b9)	C-	F7(b9)	B $\flat$ 7	E $\flat$ 7	A $\flat$ 7	B $\flat$
4	B $\flat$	G7	C7	F7	B $\flat$	G7	C7	F7
5	B $\flat$	B $\flat$ 7	C-	C $\sharp$ 7	D-	G7	C-	F7
6							B $\flat$ /F	F7
7							C-	F7

Second A section:

	Set 1: mm. 1-2		Set 2: mm. 3-4		Set 3: m. 5	Set 4: m. 6	Set 5: mm. 7-8	
1	B $\flat$	G-	C-	F $\sharp$	B $\flat$	G $\flat$	B $\flat$ /F	F $\sharp$
2	B $\flat$	G $\sharp$	C-	F $\sharp$	F-	B $\flat$	C-	F $\sharp$
3	B $\flat$	G $\sharp$ (b $\sharp$ )	C-	F $\sharp$ (b $\sharp$ )	B $\flat$	G $\sharp$ (b $\sharp$ )	B $\flat$	
4	B $\flat$	G $\sharp$	C $\sharp$	F $\sharp$		B $\flat$	G $\sharp$	
5			D-	G $\sharp$	C-	F $\sharp$		

Any Bridge set can be combined with any A section.

Bridge:

D $\sharp$		G $\sharp$		C $\sharp$		F $\sharp$	
A-	D $\sharp$	D-	G $\sharp$	G-	C $\sharp$	C-	F $\sharp$
A-	D $\sharp$	G $\sharp$		G-	C $\sharp$	F $\sharp$	
D $\sharp$		D $\flat$		C $\sharp$		C $\flat$	
A $\flat$		G $\sharp$		G $\flat$		F $\sharp$	
D $\sharp$ ALT		G $\sharp$ ALT		C $\sharp$ ALT		F $\sharp$ ALT	

Last A section:

Same as First A section when repeating to top of form. Same as Second A section when ending.

## Examples

Original Rhythm: *I Got Rhythm* (George Gershwin)

Swing: *Lester Leaps In* (Lester Young)

Swing: *Cottontail* [progression 1] (Duke Ellington)

Swing: *Cottontail* [progression 2] (Duke Ellington)

Bebop: *Anthropology* (Charlie Parker)

Bebop: *Wee/Allen's Alley* (Denzil Best)

Song Book: *Blue Moon* (Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart)

Hard Bop: *Oleo* [progression 1] (Sonny Rollins)

Hard Bop: *Oleo* [progression 2] (Sonny Rollins)

Hard Bop: *The Theme* (Miles Davis)

Hard bop/Contemporary: *The Eternal Triangle* (Sonny Stitt)

Contemporary: *Third Rail* (Michael Brecker)

Original Rhythm: *I Got Rhythm* (George Gershwin)

The musical score is written for piano in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notation includes various chords and rhythmic patterns. The second staff contains a key signature change to one flat (B-flat major) and includes Roman numerals IV, IV7, bVII7, and I. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

Chords and Roman numerals shown in the score:

- Staff 1: Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7
- Staff 2: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Eb-7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7
- Staff 3: Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7
- Staff 4: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Ab7, C-7, F7, Bb6
- Staff 5: D7, G7
- Staff 6: C7, F7
- Staff 7: Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7
- Staff 8: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Eb-7, Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7
- Staff 9: Bb6, G-7, C-7, F7

Swing: *Cottontail* [progression 1] (Duke Ellington)

The image displays a musical score for guitar, organized into eight horizontal staves. The first six staves feature melodic lines with various chords (Bb6, Cm7, F7, Eb6, Ab7) and a key signature of two flats. The seventh and eighth staves contain rhythmic patterns with chords (D7, G7, C7, F7).

Swing: *Cottontail* [progression 2] (Duke Ellington)

Handwritten musical score for "Cottontail" progression 2 by Duke Ellington. The score is written on ten staves in B-flat major (two flats). The notation includes various chords and melodic lines.

**Staff 1:** Chords: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7.

**Staff 2:** Chords: Bbmaj7(#11), Bb6, Bb7/D, Eb6, Eoi7, Bb6/F, G7(#5), Gmi7, Cmi7, F7(#5), F7.

**Staff 3:** Chords: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7.

**Staff 4:** Chords: Bbmaj7(#11), Bb6, Bb7/D, Eb6, Eoi7, Bb6/F, G7(#5), Gmi7, C7, F7, Bb6.

**Staff 5:** Chords: D7, G7. Includes triplet markings.

**Staff 6:** Chords: C7, F7.

**Staff 7:** Chords: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7.

**Staff 8:** Chords: Bbmaj7(#11), Bb6, Bb7/D, Eb6, Eoi7, Bb6/F, G7(#5), Gmi7, C7, F7, Bb6.

The image displays a musical score for guitar, written in B-flat major (two flats: B-flat and E-flat). The score is organized into nine staves, each representing a different musical part. The first staff shows a melody line with eighth and quarter notes. The second through fifth staves show a bass line with whole and half notes, often accompanied by a single bass note. The sixth staff is a drum part, indicated by diagonal slashes. The seventh staff shows a bass line with eighth and quarter notes. The eighth and ninth staves show a bass line with whole and half notes, often accompanied by a single bass note. Chord symbols are placed above the staves, indicating the harmony. The chords include B-flat major (Bb6), G7, C7, F7, D7, and B-flat major (Bb6). The key signature is B-flat major, and the time signature is 4/4.



Bebop: *Anthropology* (Charlie Parker)

This musical score for "Anthropology" by Charlie Parker is written in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of ten staves of music, each featuring complex bebop rhythms and a variety of chord changes. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and triplet markings. The chords are labeled above the staff lines, indicating the harmonic structure of the piece.

**Staff 1:** Chords: Bb6, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, C7, F7.

**Staff 2:** Chords: Bb7, Eb6, Ebma6, Dmi7, G7, Cm7, F7.

**Staff 3:** Chords: Bb6, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, C7, F7.

**Staff 4:** Chords: Bb7, Eb6, Ebma6, Dmi7, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6.

**Staff 5:** Chords: D7, G7.

**Staff 6:** Chords: C7, F7.

**Staff 7:** Chords: Bb6, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, C7, F7.

**Staff 8:** Chords: Bb7, Eb6, Ebma6, Dmi7, G7, Cm7, F7, Bb6.

Bebop: *Wee/Allen's Alley* (Denzil Best)

INTRO/ENDING NC 12 (DRUMS PLAY TIME)

F BASS Eb BASS FINE (ON REPEAT)

Bb6 Gmi7 Cmi7 F7 Dmi7 G7 Cmi7 F7

Bb6 Bb7 Eb6 Eb7 Bb6/F F7 Bb6

Bb6 Gmi7 Cmi7 F7 Dmi7 G7 Cmi7 F7

Bb6 Bb7 Eb6 Eb7 Bb6/F F7 Bb6

D7 G7

C7 F7

Bb6 Gmi7 Cmi7 F7 Dmi7 G7 Cmi7 F7

Bb6 Bb7 Eb6 Eb7 Bb6/F F7 Bb6

SOLO ON FORM (RHYTHM CHANGES). AFTER SOLOS D.S., PLAY HEAD THEN D.C. AL FINE (REPEAT)

Song Book: *Blue Moon* (Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart)

The musical score for "Blue Moon" is presented in B-flat major, indicated by two flat symbols (B-flat and E-flat) at the beginning of each staff. The score consists of eight staves of music, each with handwritten chord symbols above the notes. The chords are as follows:

- Staff 1: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7
- Staff 2: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7
- Staff 3: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7
- Staff 4: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , A $\flat$ -, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C7(#9)
- Staff 5: F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C7, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , A7(#11)
- Staff 6: A $\flat$ -, D $\flat$ 7, G $\flat$  $\Delta$ , B $\flat$  $\Delta$ /F, C-/F F7, F-/B $\flat$
- Staff 7: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7
- Staff 8: E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F-, B $\flat$ 7

Hard Bop: *Oleo* [progression 1] (Sonny Rollins)

The musical score for 'Oleo' progression 1 by Sonny Rollins is presented across ten staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first five staves contain melodic lines with various chords indicated above them. The sixth and seventh staves are empty staves with slash marks, indicating improvisation or a specific rhythmic pattern. The eighth and ninth staves repeat the melodic lines from the first and second staves, respectively. The tenth staff is an empty staff with slash marks.

Chords indicated above the staves:

- Staff 1: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7
- Staff 2: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Ebmaj6, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7
- Staff 3: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7
- Staff 4: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Ebmaj6, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Bb6
- Staff 5: D7, G7
- Staff 6: C7, F7
- Staff 8: Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Bb6, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7
- Staff 9: Bb6, Bb7, Eb6, Ebmaj6, Dmi7, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Bb6

Hard Bop: *Oleo* [progression 2] (Sonny Rollins)

The musical score is organized into two systems, each consisting of a piano staff (top) and a guitar staff (bottom). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The piano staves contain a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the guitar staves contain a rhythmic line with eighth notes and rests. Chord notations are placed above the notes in the piano staves and above the rests in the guitar staves.

**System 1:**

- Piano Staff:** Chords are BbΔ7, BΔ7, C-7, C#Δ7, D-7, G7(#9), C-7, and F7(#9).
- Guitar Staff:** Chords are F-7/BbΔ7, Bb7/#9, EbΔ7, EΔ7, D-7/BbΔ7, G7(#9)/G7, C7/C-7, and F7(#9)/F7.

**System 2:**

- Piano Staff:** Chords are BbΔ7, BΔ7, C-7, C#Δ7, D-7, G7(#9), C-7, and F7(#9).
- Guitar Staff:** Chords are F-7/BbΔ7, Bb7/#9, EbΔ7, EΔ7, BbΔ7, and G7.

**System 3:**

- Piano Staff:** Chords are D7 and G7.
- Guitar Staff:** Chords are C7 and F7.

**System 4:**

- Piano Staff:** Chords are BbΔ7, BΔ7, C-7, C#Δ7, D-7, G7(#9)/G7, C-7, and F7(#9)/F7.
- Guitar Staff:** Chords are F-7/BbΔ7, Bb7/#9, EbΔ7, EΔ7, BbΔ7, G7, C7, and F7.

Hard Bop: *The Theme* (Miles Davis)

The musical score for "The Theme" by Miles Davis is presented in ten staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The melody is written in eighth and quarter notes, with triplet markings (3) over the final notes of several phrases. Chords are indicated above the staff: Bb7, Bb7, C-7, C#o7, D-7, G7(b9), C-7, and F7(b9). The second staff continues the melody with chords Bb7, Eb7, Eo7, Bb7/F, G7(b9), C-7, and F7(b9). The third staff repeats the first staff's melody and chords. The fourth staff continues the melody with chords Bb7, Eb7, Eo7, Bb7/F, and Bb7. The fifth staff is a whole rest for the melody, with chords D7 and G7 indicated above. The sixth staff is a whole rest for the melody, with chords C7 and F7 indicated above. The seventh staff repeats the first staff's melody and chords. The eighth staff continues the melody with chords Bb7, Eb7, Eo7, Bb7/F, G7(b9), C-7, and F7(b9).

Hard Bop/Contemporary: *The Eternal Triangle* (Sonny Stitt)

The musical score for "The Eternal Triangle" by Sonny Stitt is presented in 8 staves of music. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various chords and a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 1:** Chords: Bb, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7. The melody starts with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 2:** Chords: Fmi7, Bb7, Eb7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7. The melody continues with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 3:** Chords: Bb, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7. The melody starts with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 4:** Chords: Fmi7, Bb7, Eb7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7, Bb. The melody continues with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 5:** Chords: Bmi7, E7, Bbmi7, Eb7. The melody continues with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 6:** Chords: Ami7, D7, Abmi7, Db7, Gmi7, C7, F#mi7, B7. The melody continues with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 7:** Chords: Bb, Gmi7, Cmi7, F7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7. The melody starts with a 3-measure rest.

**Staff 8:** Chords: Fmi7, Bb7, Eb7, Dmi7, G7, Cmi7, F7, Bb. The melody continues with a 3-measure rest.

Contemporary: *Third Rail* (Michael Brecker)

The musical score for "Third Rail" by Michael Brecker is presented across eight staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The notation includes various chords and melodic lines with triplets.

**Staff 1:** Chords: B $\flat$  $\Delta$ , G7(#9), C-, F7, B $\flat$ 7, G7, C-, F7. Triplets are present in the first and fifth measures.

**Staff 2:** Chords: F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , A $\flat$ 7, D-, G7, C-, F7. A triplet is present in the second measure.

**Staff 3:** Chords: B $\flat$  $\Delta$ , G7(#9), C-, F7, B $\flat$ 7, G7, C-, F7. Triplets are present in the first and fifth measures.

**Staff 4:** Chords: F-, B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , A $\flat$ 7, C-, F7, B $\flat$  $\Delta$ . A triplet is present in the second measure.

**Staff 5:** Chords: B-, E7, B $\flat$ -, E $\flat$ 7. This staff features a complex melodic line with many accidentals.

**Staff 6:** Chords: A-, D7, A $\flat$ -, D $\flat$ 7, G-, C7, F $\sharp$ -, B7. This staff features a complex melodic line with many accidentals.

**Staff 7:** Chords: B $\flat$  $\Delta$ , G7(#9), C-, F7, B $\flat$ 7, G7, C-, F7. Triplets are present in the first and fifth measures.

**Staff 8:** Chords: B $\flat$  $\Delta$ , B $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$  $\Delta$ , A $\flat$ 7, B $\flat$  $\Delta$ , C-, F7. A triplet is present in the second measure.



# Improvising on Rhythm Changes

There are two contrasting ways to improvise on the A sections of rhythm changes: change running and blanketing. These ways are often combined in a single improvised solo. The bridge can be played diatonically but lends itself to alterations.

## Change Running

1. Patterns standard to one-measure ii V progressions work well when the vi chord is made VI<sup>7</sup>, thus forming a iii VI<sup>7</sup> ii V<sup>7</sup> cycle (cycle of ii V<sup>7</sup>s: D- G<sup>7</sup> | C- F<sup>7</sup>).

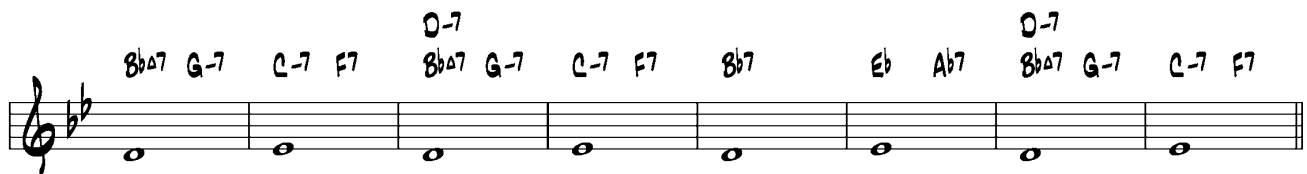
ii V<sup>7</sup> Cycle Example 1:



ii V<sup>7</sup> Cycle Example 2:



2. One can give the impression of chord specificity by emphasizing the notes that are most different. All eight measures can alternate between D and E-flat as guide tones.



## Blanketing

There are two ways to think about blanketing: all eight bars of the A section or in various parts, as below.

Example 1: Blanketing all eight with major or pentatonics.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 Eb Ab7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Scales: B $\flat$  Major OR pentatonics B $\flat$  Major Pentatonic B Minor Pentatonic

Example 2: Blanketing all eight with blues.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 D-7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 Eb Ab7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Scales: OR

Example 3: Split, four bars of Major, four bars of Blues.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 Eb Ab7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Scales: B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics B $\flat$  Blues Scale OR above G Blues Scale

Example 3: Four bars of Major, two bars of Blues, two bars of Major.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 Eb Ab7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Scales: B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics B $\flat$  Blues Scale OR above G Blues Scale B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics

## Combinations

Example 1: Blanketing, change running into 2<sup>nd</sup> A.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$  A $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Labels: B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics B $\flat$  Blues Scale OR above G Blues Scale Change Running: any pattern

Example 2: Blanketing, change running into m. 5.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$  A $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 7 G-7 C-7 F7

Labels: B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics Change Running: any pattern B $\flat$  Blues Scale OR above G Blues Scale B $\flat$  Major OR above pentatonics

Example 3: Change Running 2<sup>nd</sup> A, mm. 1-2 over *jazz rhythm*, Blanketing mm. 3-4, Running m. 6 into tonic B-flat before bridge.

Chords: B $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ 7 C-7 C $\sharp$ o7 D-7 G-7 C-7 F7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$  Eo7 B $\flat$ 7/F7 B $\flat$ 7

Labels: Change Running: Jazz Rhythm B $\flat$  Major B $\flat$  Blues Change Running B $\flat$  Major

## Bridge

Blanketing is generally not appropriate for the bridge of rhythm changes, although some examples do exist. One should improvise in a chord specific manner. Simple mixolydian scales work, as do altered chords/scales. Altered scales can be successful whether or not the harmony includes altered pitches.

The following chart shows a few possibilities:

# Rhythm Changes Bridge

## Tone Color Choices

	D7	G7	C7	F7
Major Pentatonic				
Minor Pentatonic (on 6th)				
Mixolydian				
Lydian Dominant				
Diminished (1/2-step)				
Whole-Tone				
Altered (Dim/WT Super Locrian)				
Blues (on maj. pent.)				
Blues (on min. pent.)				

# Rhythm Changes Tune List

52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme (Thelonius Monk)	One Bass Hit (Dizzy Gillespie)	Dizzy Atmosphere [different bridge] (Dizzy Gillespie)
Ah-Leu-Cha (Miles Davis)	Opp-Bop-Sha-Bam (Dizzy Gillespie)	Doin' the Bow Wow [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole Trio)
Almost (David Baker)	Oscar for Treadwell, An (Dizzy Gillespie)	Eb [different bridge] (perf. by Nat Cole Trio)
Anthropology/Thrivin' From a Riff (Charlie Parker/Dizzy Gillespie)	Ow (Charlie Greenlea)	Eternal Triangle [different bridge] (Sonny Stitt)
Apple Honey (Woody Herman)	Passport (Charlie Parker)	Father Knickerbopper [different bridge] (Tiny Kahn)
Bop Kick (Nat King Cole)	Pogo Stick Bounce (Eden Ahbez)	Five Brothers [different bridge] (Gerry Mulligan)
Boppin' a Riff (Sonny Stitt)	Raid the Joint (Erskine Hawkins)	Flying Home [different bridge] (Lionel Hampton and Benny Goodman)
Brown Gold (Art Pepper)	Red Cross (Charlie Parker)	For Hecklers Only [different bridge] (Ray Brown/Gil Fuller)
Bud's Bubble (Bud Powell)	Rhythm in a Riff (Billy Eckstine)	Good Bait [different bridge] (Tadd Dameron)
Call the Police (Nat King Cole)	Rhythm Sam (Nat King Cole)	Hip Hip Hooray [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole Trio)
Calling Dr. Jazz (Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis)	Rhythm-a-ning (Thelonius Monk)	Hit That Jive Jack [different bridge] (Skeets Tolbert)
Celerity (Charlie Parker)	Salt Peanuts (Dizzy Gillespie)	Hoy Soy [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole)
Chant of the Groove (Coleman Hawkins)	Seven Come Eleven (Charlie Christian)	I Was Doin' Alright [different bridge] (George Gershwin)
Chasin' the Bird (Charlie Parker)	Shag (Sidney Bechet)	I'm Boppin' Too [different bridge] (Lorraine Gillespie)
Cheers (Charlie Parker)	Shaw 'Nuff (Dizzy Gillespie)	Jam Man [A section altered] (Marty Greene)
Constellation (Charlie Parker)	Shoo Shoo Baby (Phil Moore)	Jumpin' with the Mop [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole)
Coolie Rini (Howard McGhee)	Solid Potato Salad (DePaul/Prince/Raye)	Kim [A section altered] (Charlie Parker)
Coppin' the Bop (J.J. Johnson)	Sonnyside (Sonny Stitt)	Lollypop [different bridge] (Shorty Rogers/Terry Gibbs)
Cottontail (Duke Ellington)	Squatty Roo (Johnny Hodges)	Manteca, solo changes [different bridge] Dizzy Gillespie)
Delerium (Tadd Dameron)	Stay On It (Tadd Dameron)	Merry-Go-Round [different bridge] (Charlie Parker)
Dexter's Deck (Dexter Gordon)	Steeplechase (Charlie Parker)	Move [different bridge] (Denzil Best)
Dexterity (Charlie Parker)	Straighten Up and Fly Right (Nat King Cole)	Professor Bop (Babs Gonzales)
Don't Be That Way (Edgar Sampson)	Street Beat, The (C. Thompson / Robert Mellin)	Room 608 [different bridge] (Horace Silver)
Dorothy (Howard McGhee)	Strictly Confidential (Bud Powell)	Scotch'n' with the Soda [different bridge] (W. Jack Riley)
Dot's Groovy (Jack Montrose)	Swedish Schnapps (Charlie Shavers)	Serpent's Tooth, The [different bridge] (Miles Davis)
Down for the Double (Freddie Green)	Swing Spring (J.J. Johnson)	Settin' the Pace [different bridge] (Dexter Gordon)
Duel, The (Dexter Gordon)	Swingin' with Diane (Art Pepper)	Smokey Joe [different bridge] (Van Phillips/Emil Ascher)
Eb Pob (Fats Navarro/Leo Parker)	Syntax (J.J. Johnson)	So Sorry Please [different bridge] (Bud Powell)
Everything's Cool (Bud Powell)	Ta-de-ah (Nat King Cole)	Stop the Red Light's On [different bridge] (Taps Miller)
Fat Girl (Fats Navarro)	Theme, The (Miles Davis)	Swingin' for Busy [different bridge] (Sonny Rollins)
Father Steps In (Dixon/Randall/Hines/Fox)	Thriving from a Riff/Anthropology (Charlie Parker)	Symphonette [different bridge] (Tad Dameron)
Flintstones, The (Hoyt Curtin)	Tiptoe (Thad Jones)	T'ain't What Cha Do [different bridge] (Sy Oliver)
Fox Hunt (J.J. Johnson)	Turnpike (J.J. Johnson)	Take 'em [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole Trio)
Goin' to Minton's (Fats Navarro)	Wail (Bud Powell)	Third Rail [different bridge] (Michael Brecker)
Good Queen Bess (Duke Ellington)	Webb City (Bud Powell)	Tuxedo Junction [different bridge] (Erskine Hawkins/Buddy Feyne/William Johnson/Julian Dash)
Goof and I, The (Al Cohn)	Wee/Allen's Alley (Dizzy Gillespie)	Wiggly Walk [different bridge] (Jacobs/Oppenheim/Palmer)
Hamp's Paws (Hampton Hawes)	Who's Who (Art Farmer)	
Harlem Swing (Nat King Cole)	Wire Brush Stomp (Gene Krupa)	
Hollerin' and Screamin' (Eddie Davis)	XYZ (Budd Johnson)	
I Got Rhythm (George Gershwin)	Yeah Man (J. Russel Robinson)	
I'm an Errand Boy for Rhythm (Nat King Cole)		
In Walked Horace (J.J. Johnson)	Altered Rhythm Changes	
Jay Jay (J.J. Johnson)	Air Mail Special [different bridge] (Benny Goodman/Jimmy Mundy/Charlie Christian)	
Jaybird (J.J. Johnson)	Bop City [different bridge] (Kai Winding)	
Jeep is Jumpin', The (Duke Ellington)	Boperation [different bridge] (Fats Navarro/Howard McGhee)	
Jug Handle (Gene Ammons)	Brownie Speaks [A section altered] (Clifford Brown)	
Juggernaut (Gene Ammons)	Chase, The [different bridge] (Dexter Gordon)	
Juggin' Around (Frank Foster)	Christmas Eve [different bridge] (Slide Hampton)	
Jumpin' at the Woodside (Count Basie)	Compulsion [different bridge] (Miles Davis)	
Lemon Drop (George Wallington)	Could Ja [different bridge] (Carey/Fischer)	
Lester Leaps In (Lester Young)	Crazyology [A sections altered] (Benny Harris)	
Lila Mae (Nat King Cole)	CTA [A sections altered, different bridge] (Jimmy Heath)	
Little Man on the White Keys, The (Nat Cole)	Dexter Digs In [different bridge] (Dexter Gordon)	
Love You Madly (Duke Ellington)	Dexter's Cuttin' Out [different bridge] (Dexter Gordon)	
Miss Thing (Count Basie)	Dixie Jamboree [different bridge] (perf. by Nat King Cole Trio)	
Moody Speaks (James Moody/Dave Burns)		
Moody's Got Rhythm (James Moody)		
Moose the Mooche (Charlie Parker)		
Mop, Mop (Gaillard/Stewart/Tatum)		
Newk's Fadeway (Sonny Rollins)		
No Moe (different bridge) (Sonny Rollins)		
Northwest Passage (Herman/Jackson/Burns)		
O Go Mo (Sonny Rollins)		
Oleo (Sonny Rollins)		
On the Scene (Gillespie/Fuller/Roberts)		