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2. **Jazz Bass**
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# THE JAZZ DOUBLE BASS ENSEMBLE PLAYING OF REGGIE WORKMAN 1961–1966

BY

EMMA MARIE TAYLOR

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Music
with a concentration in Jazz Performance
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2023

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

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## ABSTRACT

Reggie Workman is an American avant-garde jazz and hard bop double bassist. Although an experienced teacher and composer, Workman is best known for his time performing with John Coltrane and Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. This project documents Workman's jazz bass group playing with three different band leaders and rhythm sections between 1960–1966: John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter, and Art Blakey. This study analyzes five related transcriptions of Workman's playing to assess his jazz bass playing style and technical mannerisms and how these characteristics change and adapt depending upon the ensemble with whom he is playing. In doing so, I establish why Reggie Workman's bass playing is influential and important to today's jazz bass players.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to my advisor, Professor Larry Gray, for his continuous guidance, kindness, and mentorship over the past few years. I also wish to thank the rest of my committee, Professor Joel Spencer, Dr. Maureen Reagan, and Dr. Erik Lund for their support and guidance. Thank you to the entire jazz faculty at UIUC, especially Tito Carrillo and Chip McNeill for their additional mentorship.

I wish to thank my family and friends for their continuous support, and especially my parents for their constant encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank the supporters of Champaign-Urbana's jazz and music scene. I couldn't have asked for a better place to grow as a musician and person and a more supportive group of people to play with and for during the last five years.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BIOGRAPHY

The 1960s was an innovative decade in jazz and a pivotal time for the music. Musicians moved away from the type of improvised lines and phrasing structures used by bebop artists like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie—turning instead to more modal ideas and intricate harmonic structures. Musicians were also inspired by the free jazz movement to create their own styles that differed from their predecessors. The vast contributions by musicians during this time profoundly influenced the direction of jazz, and many new styles emerged.

1959 saw the release a significant body of recordings that served as a precursor for what was to come in the early 1960s. Albums recorded and released between 1959–61 offer a key window into jazz, and Miles Davis and John Coltrane set the tone for these innovations. Miles Davis began a strong partnership with Gil Evans in the late 1940s, recording *Birth of the Cool* in 1949, although not releasing it until 1957. *Birth of the Cool* uses unusual instrumentation, innovative arrangements, and classical music techniques. It's clear that this album was a precursor for what was to come from Davis. After recording *Birth of the Cool*, Davis and Evans continued to develop these concepts, resulting in the release of *Sketches of Spain* in 1960. This recording was a musical fusion of jazz, European classical music, and Spanish folk songs. The Spanish flamenco guitar music that influenced *Sketches of Spain* can be connected to the new modal direction from this period. Davis was at the forefront of modal playing and the changes that were to come in the 1960s. His time with Gil Evans and writing music for *Birth of the Cool* and *Sketches of Spain* inspired Davis to dive into modal music, resulting in the release of *Kind of Blue* in 1959.[1]

[1] Eric Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue: Miles Davis and His Masterpiece* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 21–36.

Regarded as Davis's masterpiece—and the bestselling jazz record of all time—*Kind of Blue* continued Davis's exploration of modal jazz. In a way, this style of playing was a rebellion from the bebop movement—using only a few chords and compelling musicians to improvise over the same chords for a longer period of time; indeed, the modal ideas in *Kind of Blue* changed the way musicians approached the music and marked a departure from the bebop through post-bop era.[2] Davis recruited John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Paul Chambers, Jimmy Cobb, Wynton Kelly, and Bill Evans to play, and their uniquely creative voices helped shape the album. Many of these musicians went on to lead the top bands of the 1960s.

John Coltrane released *Blue Train* in 1958, then recorded *Giant Steps* in 1959 and released it in 1960. Coltrane's compositions and playing approach markedly changed from *Blue Train* to *Giant Steps*, with *Giant Steps* marking the beginning of Coltrane's exploration into his new musical voice. *Giant Steps* features his explorations into third-related chord movements (also known as Coltrane changes). In 1960, Coltrane recorded *Coltrane's Sound*, later releasing it in 1964. This album marked the beginning of Coltrane's prime rhythm section, with Elvin Jones on drums and McCoy Tyner on piano. Steve Davis played bass but was soon replaced by Reggie Workman. Coltrane recorded *Live at the Village Vanguard* in 1961, using both Reggie Workman and Jimmy Garrison on bass.[3] This album was the first with Garrison, Jones, and Tyner, and it set a precedent for what was to come. In 1964, Coltrane recorded *A Love Supreme*, a masterful album that captures the captures the broad scope of changes in jazz during the early 1960s and highlights the musical relationship between Coltrane, Garrison, Jones, and Tyner.

[2] Eric Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue: Miles Davis and His Masterpiece,* 21–36.
[3] Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *The Jazz Book: from New Orleans to Rock and Free Jazz*, (New York: L. Hill, 1974), 63–80.

Ornette Coleman was also leaving his imprint during this time. In 1959, he released *The Shape of Jazz to Come,* and in 1960, recorded *This is Our Music*—both albums using Charlie Haden on bass. These albums illustrate some of the initial inceptions of the free jazz movement. Free jazz developed in the early 1960s in an attempt to break the rules of jazz and create new, experimental sounds. Musicians rejected conventional musical structures like chord progressions, time, and melody. Unusual instruments in jazz groups such as flute, clarinet, and percussion were common in free jazz, and musicians focused more on improvisation and expression of emotion.

At the same time, Bill Evans was making waves with his new trio. He released both *Explorations* and *Sunday at the Village Vanguard* in 1961.[4] Using Scott LaFaro on bass and Paul Motion on drums, Evans was headed in a different direction than Coltrane or Coleman. His music set the standard for conversational trio playing. LaFaro disregarded previous jazz bass rules and guidelines as he went in and out of walking bass lines—using more call and response ideas to move the music along. LaFaro approached the bass as a soloist would and opened the door to new possibilities for jazz bass players.

The early 1960s fostered new styles of jazz and original band leaders emerged, each with an individual sound and unique compositional voice. Modal jazz, free jazz, and conversational playing set the tone for what was to come. Even more, these developments all took place within the same time frame.

Bandleaders Art Blakey, John Coltrane, and Wayne Shorter also released pivotal albums during this period. Operating as composers, bandleaders, and players, their albums combine the hard-bop, post-bop, and modal styles that represent another piece of the 1960s in jazz music.

[4] Joachim-Ernst Berendt, *The Jazz Book: from New Orleans to Rock and Free Jazz*, 63–80.

These recordings have become standards in the jazz world. The masterful players on these albums pushed the envelope of the current jazz sound by moving away from traditional tonal harmonies and extending them—moving toward a style a style focused on openness and interactive playing between band members.

The recordings discussed in this essay are reflective of these developments, and the rhythm sections behind these albums are key factors in creating such remarkable recordings. Transcription and analysis are necessary to help us understand the jazz language and how our predecessors interpreted the music. Students of the music should have a grasp on the history of jazz music in order to play it and honor its tradition. The albums I have chosen to discuss are prime resources for jazz musicians as they continue their studies.

This essay is the first in-depth study of Reggie Workman's jazz bass performance practices. By concentrating on a selection of transcriptions taken from his work with multiple band leaders and rhythm sections, this essay clarifies Reginald Workman's personal sound, style, and unique performance practices by offering a coherent analysis of Workman's performance methodologies and how they differ in each group. This essay will also serve to foster future discussions about Workman's influence and contributions and document a significant figure to jazz bass history.

Readers, especially bassists, will be able to use this document as a tool to help them understand the communication between band members, interpretation of the compositions, improvisation over the chord changes, and the role of the bass in the traditional jazz context—and how Workman brought his own voice and sound in fulfillment of that role. By comparing Workman to other bassists who performance within the same rhythm sections and time frame, this essay will demonstrate what makes Workman's playing unique and how Workman adapted his playing to complement each of these rhythm sections. I will analyze Workman's

transcriptions to show how his musical decisions influenced the compositions and the band's overall sound on these albums.

Reggie Workman's bass lines and improvisational style created a unique musical concept within Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, the John Coltrane Quartet, and the Wayne Shorter Quartet. Looking at Workman's discography and using transcriptions, analysis, and interviews, this essay serves to display Workman's legacy as a bassist and analyze his contributions and his influences, as well as to examine and illuminate his impact on the field of jazz bass playing. In this essay, I will evaluate five recordings featuring Workman's bass accompaniment: "Blues Minor" (*Africa/Brass*), "Footprints" (*Adam's Apple),* "Deluge" (*JuJu*), "Sweet'n'Sour" (*Caravan*), and "Ugetsu" (*Ugetsu*). It is important to mention that Workman is an important, innovative, and strong soloist. However, the focus of this thesis will be limited to his bass accompaniment playing.

Considering the many great bassists in jazz history—Paul Chambers, Ray Brown, Ron Carter, among others—much has been documented and written about them; however, Reggie Workman is overlooked. This project will serve as a way to honor his playing and shine a light on his great legacy. With such a vast and impressive discography, it is undeniable that Workman left a profound influence on generations of jazz musicians to come, and this project serves to show that purpose. The music created on these albums (*Africa/Brass, Ugetsu, Caravan, Adam's Apple, JuJu*) has changed the way we interpret and play jazz music. By analyzing these recordings, I will show how Workman's playing as a bassist within the small jazz ensemble has withstood the test of time.

## BIOGRAPHY

Reginald Workman is a bassist, composer, arranger, and educator. He was born on June 26, 1937, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Workman played the piano and tuba before getting his own upright bass in eighth grade.

Raised in Philadelphia, Workman was exposed to a vibrant jazz scene full of excellent musicians. Workman grew up making music with Archie Schepp and Lee Morgan. His close proximity to such strong musicians led him to often pass by Philly Joe Jones as he walked to school with his bass. Workman has attributed his broad musical thinking and adaptability to spending his childhood in Philadelphia. By his teen years, Workman was playing at the YMCA, town hall, and cabarets for dances and parties. He played R&B, jazz, and many other kinds of music. Workman also had a trio with McCoy Tyner and Eddie Campbell in the late 1950s.[5] It is evident that Philadelphia's vibrant music scene contributed to Workman's musical development.

Throughout 1958, Workman worked with Freddie Cole and Gigi Gryce. In 1961, Workman joined the John Coltrane Quartet, replacing Steve Davis. Workman played on Coltrane's *Live at the Village Vanguard sessions, Newport '63, Live in Stockholm*, and recorded as the second bassist with Art Davis on *Olé Coltrane* and *Africa/Brass*, both recorded in 1961. Workman continued to perform and record with other groups and artists throughout the 1960s such as Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, Wayne Shorter, Lee Morgan, Thelonious Monk, Freddie Hubbard, Max Roach, Gigi Gryce, Benny Golson, Cedar Walton, McCoy Tyner, Elvin Jones, Eric Dolphy, Roy Haynes, Red Garland, James Moody, Booker Little, Jeri Allen, Horace Silver, Curtis Fuller, Pharoa Sanders, and Bobby Hutcherson, among others.[6] Workman became a first-

[5] Richard Scheinin, "2020 NEA Jazz Masters: A Q&A With Reggie Workman," *SFJazz,* August 3, 2020, https://www.sfjazz.org/onthecorner/nea-jazz-masters_qa_reggie-workman/.
[6] Reggie Workman," Reggie Workman, accessed January 11, 2023, https://www.reggieworkmanmusic.com/

call bassist during the 1960s and 1970s due to his ability to play in any style and complement various rhythm sections. In the late 1960s he first became active in music education and remains so today. Workman began teaching at the New Muse Community Museum of Brooklyn—later becoming the director of the music workshop and a member of the faculty at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Long Island University.[7] Workman also helped launch the Collective Black Artists (CBA) in 1970. This group supported services for musicians in New York and served as a vehicle for artist activism.[8]

In the 1980s Workman began leading his own groups such as Top Shelf and the Reggie Workman Ensemble. He continued to freelance and record with many musicians. Workman also began to internationally co-produce fundraising events to benefit interdisciplinary arts organizations.

Workman continues to perform and teach at The New School in New York City. While Workman is equally comfortable playing hard bop or free jazz, today he plays more avant-garde and free music, referring to himself a Sound Scientist. Workman is a 2020 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Fellowship Award and still performs with TRIO 3, a collaborative ensemble he founded in 1998 that includes Andrew Cyrille and Oliver Lake.[9]

Workman was not classically trained. In an interview with the Jake Feinberg show, Workman shares that Art Davis was a mentor to him during his time with Coltrane in 1961. Davis was classically trained and helped Workman with his intonation and technique.[10] Over the

[7] Mark Gardner and Barry Kernfeld, "Workman, Reggie," *Grove Music Online* (2003).
[8] Eric Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz? : African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists (*Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2002), 215.
[9] Workman, "Biography."
[10] Jake Feinburg, "The Reggie Workman Interview," September 16, 2021, YouTube video, 48:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zvb-7u48Pws.

years, Workman utilized the bow more frequently, and many current recordings show him improvising with a bow.

Workman tends to have his upright bass raised higher than most bassists. It appears to be about six inches taller than the average bass height, so his eye line is around the third position of the fingerboard. This allows him to access the middle of the fingerboard and thumb position more easily—as it is closer and permits him to hunch over the shoulders of the bass. Workman tends to play with an open and relaxed hand, and his first finger (index) pulls. He also employs his second finger (alternating index and middle) depending on the feel and tempo of the music. Workman seems very conscious of his right hand and the tone alterations it can produce.

Although Workman's extensive discography shows his range as a bassist and ability to support vastly different rhythm sections, I am limiting my observations of Workman's style to his playing with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, the John Coltrane Quartet, and the Wayne Shorter Quartet.

The 1960s were accompanied by the production of a great quantity and diversity of jazz albums. Releases from 1959— such as *Kind of Blue, The Shape of Jazz to Come, Moanin'*, and *Mingus Ah Um*, just to name a few—served as a sign of was to come. Free jazz emerged, and musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Eric Dolphy, Cecil Taylor, and Sun Ra pushed the boundaries set in the 1940s and 1950s. John Coltrane released *A Love Supreme* and *Impressions*; Herbie Hancock released *Maiden Voyage*; Bill Evans released *Sunday at the Village Vanguard*; and Oscar Peterson released *Night Train*.[11]

[11] Porter, *What Is This Thing Called Jazz? : African American Musicians as Artists, Critics, and Activists,* 199–204.

Workman stayed busy during this time as a sideman, recording the following albums shown below in Table 1.1. [12] Each bandleader created different settings in which Workman could contribute. Their different compositional styles, arrangements, and rhythm sections impacted how and what Workman would provide as a bassist and soloist. Over this period Workman primarily played in three different rhythm section settings. He played with drummers Elvin Jones, Joe Chambers, and Art Blakey, and pianists McCoy Tyner, Herbie Hancock, and Cedar Walton.

Table 1.1: Recordings with Wayne Shorter as bandleader:

| **Year** | **Album** | **Label** | **Band Members** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1964 | *Night Dreamer* | Blue Note | Wayne Shorter (sax), Lee Morgan (trumpet), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums) |
| 1964 | *JuJu* | Blue Note | Wayne Shorter (sax), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums) |
| 1966 | *Adam's Apple* | Blue Note | Wayne Shorter (sax), Herbie Hancock (piano), Joe Chambers (drums) |

Table 1.2: Recordings with John Coltrane as bandleader:

| **Year** | **Album** | **Label** | **Band Members** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1961 | *Olé Coltrane* | Atlantic | John Coltrane (sax), Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Eric Dolphy (flute), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums), Art Davis (bass on Ole, Dahomey Dance, and To Her Ladyship), Workman (bass on Ole, Dahomey Dance, and Aisha) |
| 1961 | *Live in Stockholm* | LeJazz | John Coltrane (sax), Eric Dolphy (flute/alto sax), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums) |
| 1961 | *So Many Things: The European Tour* | Acrobat | John Coltrane (sax), Eric Dolphy (alto sax, bass clarinet, flute), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums) |

[12] Workman, "Discography."

Table 1.2, Continued

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1961 | *The Complete Africa/Brass Sessions* | Impulse! | John Coltrane (sax), Booker Little (trumpet), Julius Watkins (French horn), Bob Northern (French horn), Donald Corrado (French horn) Robert Swisshelm (French horn), Bill Barber (tuba), Pat Patrick (bari sax), McCoy Tyner (piano), Elvin Jones (drums), Art Davis (bass), Paul Chambers (bass) |
| 1961 | *Complete Village Vanguard Recordings* | Impulse! | John Coltrane (sax), Eric Dolphy (bass clarinet, alto sax), McCoy Tyner (piano), Jimmy Garrison (bass), Elvin Jones (drums), Roy Haynes (drums), Garvin Bushnell (contrabassoon), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (oud) |
| 1961–3 | *Live Trane: The European Tours* | Pablo | John Coltrane (sax), Eric Dolphy (alto sax, bass clarinet, flute), McCoy Tyner (piano), Jimmy Garrison (bass), Elvin Jones (drums) |
| 1963 | *Newport '63* | Impulse! | John Coltrane (sax), Eric Dolphy (alto sax), McCoy Tyner (piano), Jimmy Garrison (bass), Roy Haynes (drums) |

Table 1.3: Recordings with Art Blakey as bandleader:

| **Year** | **Album** | **Label** | **Band Members** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1962 | *Caravan* | Riverside | Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Curtis Fuller (trombone), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Art Blakey (drums) |
| 1963 | *Ugetsu* | Riverside | Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Curtis Fuller (trombone), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Art Blakey (drums) |
| 1963 | *Golden Boy* | Colpix | Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Lee Morgan (trumpet) Curtis Fuller (trombone), Julius Watkins (French horn), Bill Barber (tuba), James Spaulding (alto sax), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Charles Davis (bari sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Art Blakey (drums) |
| 1964 | *Free for All* | Blue Note | Freddie Hubbard (trumpet), Curtis Fuller (trombone), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Art Blakey (drums |

Table 1.3, Continued

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1964 | *Indestructible* | Blue Note | Lee Morgan (trumpet), Curtis Fuller (trombone), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Cedar Walton (piano), Art Blakey (drums |
| 1966 | *Buttercorn Lady* | Limelight | Chuck Mangione (trumpet), Frank Mitchell (tenor sax), Keith Jarrett (piano), Art Blakey (drums) |

## CHAPTER 2: HISTORY OF JAZZ BASS

The upright bass[13] was used in many early New Orleans dance bands and ragtime orchestras, however the tuba was the instrument primarily responsible for executing the role of the bass. It wasn't until the late 1920s that the upright bass replaced the tuba in this role. Slap-bass technique was often used initially to help the sound of the bass carry over the volume of the band. During the 1930s the slap-style declined, and players began to play using today's right hand style—pulling the fingers and entire arm in a downward motion.[14]

Players initially played primarily on beats one and three—what would be referred to today as a two-feel. During the Swing era, bassists began walking on every quarter note, playing what is known today as a walking bass line. Walter Page is credited with mastering this walking bass style. He was an instrumental contributor to the Count Basie band in the "All-American Rhythm section" which included Freddie Green on guitar, Jo Jones on drums, and Count Basie on piano. Page was the first bassist to create a sense of swing in bass lines—an approach still used today in the jazz bass world. His lighter sound differed from the thud of previous bassists as he had a strong, articulated sound that could power the big band. His lines were more sophisticated as well—playing each beat evenly and working on balancing his sound against the rest of the rhythm section.

Even as the role and style of bass playing developed, bass features and solos were rare until the 1950s. This remains an issue when compared to other instruments in jazz settings. The bassist's main role is to provide a solid time-feel, sense of groove, and harmonic direction with their bass lines.[15]

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[13] Upright bass goes by many names such as double bass, acoustic bass, string bass, and contrabass. For the purposes of this paper I will be referring to it as upright bass or bass.
[14] Rodney Slatford and Alyn Shipton, "Double Bass," *Grove Music Online*, (2001): Oxford Music Online.
[15] Ibid.

Jimmy Blanton can be credited with developing the bass as a solo voice and demonstrating that bassists can contribute more than just time and feel. During his time with Duke Ellington's band, Blanton was featured as a soloist and used that position to extend the agility and vision of the bass with his melodic solos. He also took Page's quarter note lines and made them more melodic by venturing away from just the root notes and fifths of the chord. Blanton added other notes from the chord and added chromaticism to support the harmony and movement of the changes.

As Page and Blanton developed walking lines, bassists in the 1940s and 1950s—such as Ray Brown, Oscar Pettiford, Paul Chambers, and Charles Mingus—also expanded the role of the bass. These musicians used elements from the Swing era and applied them to not only bebop style, but also cool jazz, hard bop, and modal jazz.[16]

The development of the bass as a feature and solo instrument continued. As each bassist added their own individual style and ventured further up the bass fingerboard to play higher notes, the agility of the musicians also advanced the music. In the right hand, bassists began using two or three fingers and different hand styles to produce lines at faster tempos. Bassists like Charles Mingus, Paul Chambers, and Ray Brown also became more interactive with their bass lines—adding triplets or eighth notes among their quarter note walking lines to add an embellishment or push to the time. These additions were just subtleties though—thrown in occasionally and possibly unnoticeable to those unfamiliar with jazz.[17] For the most part during this time, bassists stuck to what I refer to as the "time line," specifically straight quarter notes for any 4/4 swing tune with rare deviations such as fills, embellishments, or pushes.

[16] Slatford, "Double Bass."
[17] Herb Wong and Paul Simeon, *Jazz on My Mind: Liner Notes, Anecdotes, and Conversations from the 1940s to the 2000s* (New York: McFarland, 2016), 113.

Bassists like Ray Brown and Scott LaFaro are also known for their interactive lines, sometimes leaving the quarter note bass line entirely to respond to their bandmates. LaFaro stepped outside of the "bass role" by completely leaving the lines and offering melodic commentary in response to space left by Bill Evans. His influence on the bass world is entirely unique. Similarly, Ray Brown was very aggressive with his playing. While he was able to give a time line when needed, Brown's lines pushed ahead and he wasn't afraid to leave the quarter note line to execute longer triplet and eighth note ideas.

In order to play over bebop's fast tempos and challenging harmonic movement, bassists became more physically agile and developed new ideas to master the changes. All of these advances paved the way for the music that would come in the 1960s.[18] During this time, some of Reggie Workman's bass colleagues included Ron Carter, Jimmy Garrison, Paul Chambers, Doug Watkins, Bob Cranshaw, and Jymie Merritt. Each of these musicians developed their own unique voice and, as I will demonstrate later in the essay, an original way of playing the distinct music produced during this time. Bassists had to cooperate with their rhythm sections to construct lines that worked in each singular setting and complimented a new style of grooves. Bassists no longer just played the time line, they began to play against the groove of the drummers with whom they worked.

Drummers such as Elvin Jones and Art Blakey changed the way the jazz drum set was played through their cultivated sense of swing, time, polyrhythms, use of dynamics, and timbre—and this profoundly influenced the overall sound of jazz produced in the 1960s. Likewise, bassists Reggie Workman, Ron Carter, Jimmy Garrison, and Richard Davis, among

[18] Mark C. Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1993), 127.

others, responded in creative ways to balance their rhythm section companions and support the soloists.

## CHAPTER 3: WORKMAN'S TIME WITH COLTRANE, BLAKEY, AND SHORTER

The works examined in this essay chronologically begin with Workman's time in John Coltrane's band. Before officially joining Coltrane's group, Workman had spent a lot of time traveling and performing with Coltrane. Coltrane frequented Philadelphia, where Workman lived—so they began crossing paths years before Workman officially joined the band.[19]

While Workman already had an impressive resume by the time he joined Coltrane, he had to bring something new to the table to meet the demands of that band. In an interview with Robert Wagner, Workman commented that the first few performances with Coltrane's band were difficult, powerful, and took so much energy that he would sleep afterwards until the following gig. The experience demanded a drive and output that he had never before experienced. As Workman developed more strength, McCoy Tyner would go to the clubs before the gigs with Workman and teach him what he needed to learn. Workman explained that Coltrane hardly ever told him what to play, rather he expected the band to know what the music was about. Workman concluded that playing with Coltrane was very different than anything he'd experienced, and the output made him stronger—developing the energy it took to meet McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones at the level at which they had arrived. Workman commented, "It took me a long time to develop the strength to mess with a band like that."[20]

The biggest lesson Workman learned from Coltrane was to trust his musical instincts and individual voice on the bass. Workman explains this in an interview with San Francisco Jazz.

[19] Fred Jung, "A Fireside Chat with Reggie Workman," *All About Jazz*, April 16, 2003, https://www.allaboutjazz.com/a-fireside-chat-with-reggie-workman-reggie-workman-by-aaj-staff.
[20] Artists of Jazz, "Mr. Reggie Workman on joining Coltrane's band," directed by Robert Wagner, May 16, 2016, YouTube video, 3:03, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52MAaKo-9-c.

> "And then when John Coltrane came along, he explained to me that I was to be myself. And that was a revelation to me, because here was a big name, a big person in my mind —and in the world's mind—who said, "I hired you because of who you are and what you do, so do it. I'm having a hard enough time playing my instrument, so you figure out how to play your own. And that was a revelation to me. And what I came to realize was you can practice all kinds of technical things. But what you better practice is to be spontaneous and satisfy the needs of that very moment, the needs of the leader of the project, and your own expectations of yourself, because you are your own harshest critic."[21]

In the same interview with San Francisco Jazz, Workman stated that he was with Coltrane until 1961, playing together on and off in New York.

> "And I was delighted and honored to be in the band. It taught me a lot about what can happen with the music. Because I had been working more with people like James Moody, Yusef Lateef, Gigi Gryce and Freddie Cole, people who like their music done the way they do it."[22]

Workman's experience with Coltrane opened up a new style of playing—one where the bandleader trusted Workman's choices and gave him complete free reign.

When asked why he left Coltrane's band, Workman commented:

> "I left the band because my father was dying and I had to leave New York and go back home and take care of my family, number one. Number two, John and the rest of the band was growing very fast and John had decided that he wanted to try another voice in his bass chair. He had been listening to Ornette Coleman, who had Jimmy Garrison in the group and Coleman suggested he try Jimmy and he did. That was a great union. Of course, Jimmy was very compatible with everybody in the band."[23]

After his time with Coltrane, Workman joined Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. In a Podcast interview with Sounds Visual Radio, Workman comments how Art Blakey's energy toward the band and overall concept was quite different than anything he had experienced

[21] Richard Scheinin, "2020 NEA Jazz Masters: A Q&A With Reggie Workman."
[22] Ibid.
[23] Fred Jung, "A Fireside Chat with Reggie Workman."

previously, especially after working with Coltrane. Blakey had specific ideas of how he wanted his group to look, dress, perform, and travel. Blakey was meticulous about the group and a showman. Workman explained that Blakey hired people with an idea for a specific sound, so the band had to respond to whatever that was in that moment. At the same time, those musicians were focusing on developing their own individual sounds and groups.[24]

Unlike Coltrane's expectation that band members bring their own individual sound to the band, Blakey expected his musicians to shape themselves around his playing and ideals. This was a new experience for Workman—performing with someone who didn't give him freedom and instead expected him to fit into a decided musical model.

When asked about his time with Blakey in a podcast with National Endowment for the Arts, Workman shared:

> "It's different—very different also because Art Blakey was a different character than John Coltrane. John Coltrane was the kind of person who, he was busy working on his craft. I'll never forget the time I asked him 'John, well how do you want me to interpret this part of your tune?' And he stopped me and said, 'Listen man, I'm having a hard-enough time playing this saxophone. Don't ask me how you're supposed to play the bass. You figure it out. This is the song, this is the key, and I want you to bring something to the beach besides sand."[25]

Coltrane and Blakey had two different perspectives on running their band, but Workman could respond to both and manage the expectations of each band leader.

[24] "Episode 83: Reggie Workman" interview by Sounds Visual Radio, Podcast audio, 53:47, accessed https://www.soundsvisualradio.com/podcast/sounds-visual-radio-episode-83-reggie-workman/.
[25] Jo Reed, "Reggie Workman," National Endowment for the Arts, February 6, 2020, https://www.arts.gov/honors/jazz/reggie-workman#transcript.

Alan Goldsher writes that Art Blakey was a bebop drummer with a big band attitude.[26] While Blakey maintained time on the ride cymbal and "dropped bombs" with the bass drum, he introduced soloists using heavy press rolls and his crash cymbal—often more freely than other bebop drummers prior—as he played very loudly. Bassists in Blakey's band in turn had to keep metronomic time and stay concentrated to keep the band together as Blakey threw polyrhythmic ideas at them. When it came to playing in Blakey's band, in terms ranging from actual music on the bandstand to how the band members dressed, Blakey was dogmatic—the musicians had to go his way.[27]

Unlike previous bassists in the Messengers band, Workman was less impressionable and joined the band with a fully developed musical style. Alan Goldsher writes that Workman was "the only bassist to truly impose his will onto the Jazz Messengers. Whether it was the tenor of the times or Workman himself, the band adapted to Reggie rather than vice-versa... Truth be told, Reginald Workman was the only Messenger bassist ever to out-Blakey Blakey."[28]

In his article "Buhaina's Bass Brigade: The Bassists of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers," Goldsher analyzes the playing of Blakey's different bassists. He writes about Workman's first recordings with the band.

> "Workman's first two recorded appearances with the group-1962's Caravan and 1963's Ugetsu-highlighted a band in transition. The Timmons-derived funkiness was swapped for a more cutting-edge tenet. Suddenly the solos didn't adhere to the chord changes, and the rhythm section wasn't clinging to the constraints of traditional hard-bop comping. The tricky Hubbard composition "Thermo" sums up the group dichotomy: While Blakey's driving time- keeping is straight out of 1957, Workman is double-stopping, half-noting, and wandering into the upper register. Up front in the mix, his novel walking gives the

[26] Alan Goldsher, "Buhaina's Bass Brigade: The Bassists of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers," *Bass Player*, May 2002, 40.
[27] Goldsher, "Buhaina's Bass Brigade: The Bassists of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers."
[28] Ibid.

band a new, fresh sound without diverging from Messengers tradition. Free for All: as close as Blakey came to avant-garde record. Reggie's influence is deeply felt."[29]

Clearly, Workman's musical contribution to the Jazz Messengers was influential. He was a rock against Blakey's powerful playing, and Workman was continuously playing the entire bass—using double-stops, high and low ranges, and varied rhythmic activity.

During the early 1960s, Workman recorded three albums with Wayne Shorter (*Night Dreamer, JuJu, Adam's Apple*). In two of these albums, McCoy Tyner and Elvin Jones were in the rhythm section and, in the other, Herbie Hancock and Joe Chambers were at the helm. During the recording of these albums, Workman was still a member of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. In 1964, Shorter joined the Miles Davis Quintet; consequently, there is little documented information on Workman's experience with Shorter as a band leader. However, it is worth noting that during the early 1960s, Shorter was honing his composition skills. His compositions featured on the three albums above are noted for their historical significance in the unique way Shorter makes the chords move within his tunes. He uses sequences which had never been common to jazz, and he challenged his band members with these new pieces.[30]

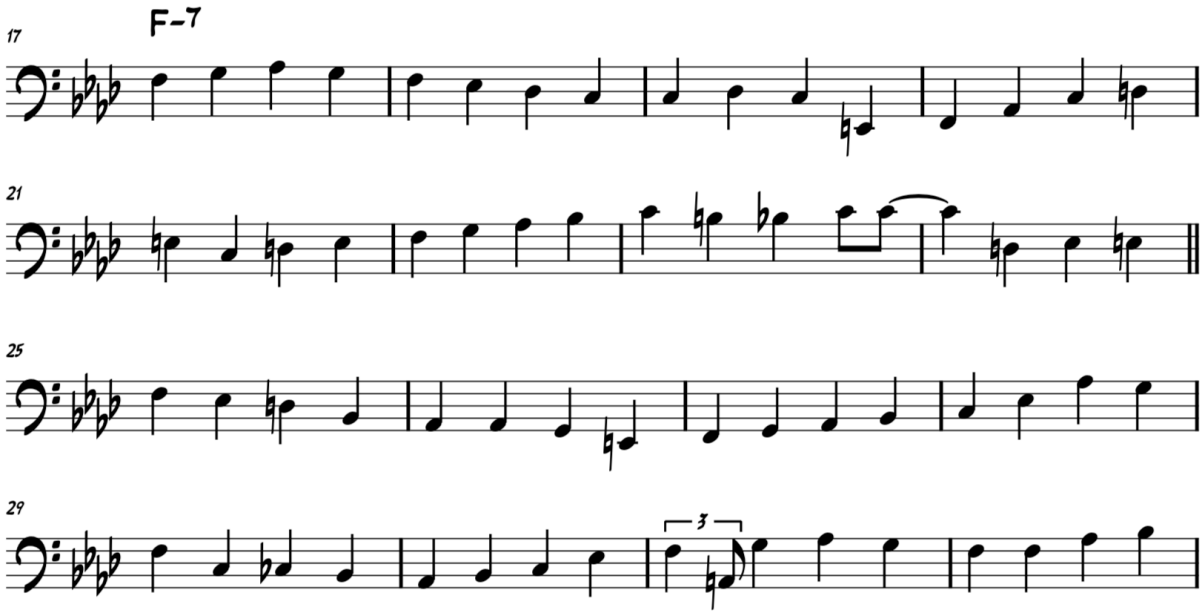
[29] Goldsher, "Buhaina's Bass Brigade: The Bassists of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers."
[30] Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis,* 284.

## CHAPTER 4: TRANSCRIPTIONS

"Blues Minor"

Workman's tenure with John Coltrane demanded a confidence regarding both his personal sound and musicianship. Workman—as recorded on the minor blues titled "Blues Minor," from *Africa/Brass*—includes consistent quarter notes in his rendering of the bass lines. He "stays on the grid" but is capable of leaving it to add triplets and conversational ideas; however, in this recording he maintains the quarter note with occasional triplet percussive taps or triplets with an open string. Workman's lines are well-crafted, and he seems to anticipate the next measure as he plays, creating smooth, linear lines.

Figure 4.1: Workman, mm. 1–32, "Blues Minor"




In the first example, Workman demonstrates steady grid-like quarter note lines that are very linear. (Figure 4.1) Workman doesn't jump around playing wide intervals but instead tends

to move by half and whole steps, with occasional jumps. In measure 19, Workman moves by half steps, followed by a downward sixth to E-natural to then play an F minor arpeggio in measure 20. Figure 4.1 also shows that Workman doesn't always begin new measures with the root note. This is notable because, in this minor blues form, he stays on F minor for up to sixteen consecutive measures. As such, Workman uses other notes from the chord like the thirds and fifths on downbeats. These notes are strong enough to imply the harmony and provide variation from the root on the downbeat. In measure 21 Workman plays an E-natural on beat one—which is not a note included in the F minor-seventh chord (F-7). He plays the third, A-flat on beat one in measures 26 and 30. He plays the fifth, C, on beat one in measures 19, 23, and 24.

Figure 4.2: Workman, mm. 53–56 "Blues Minor"

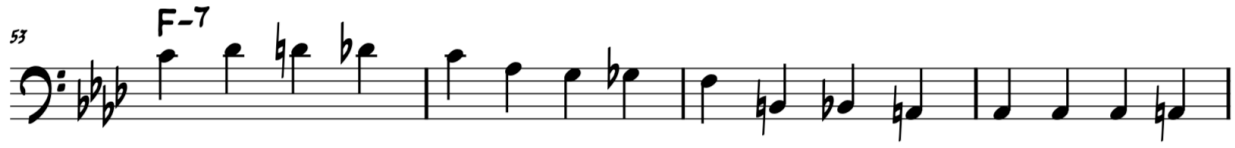
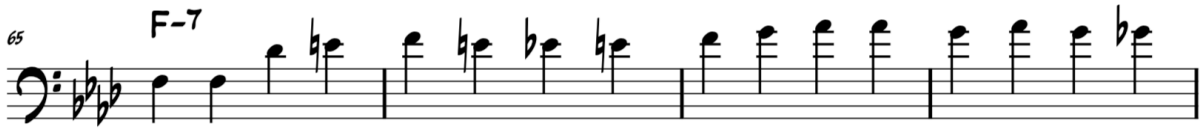


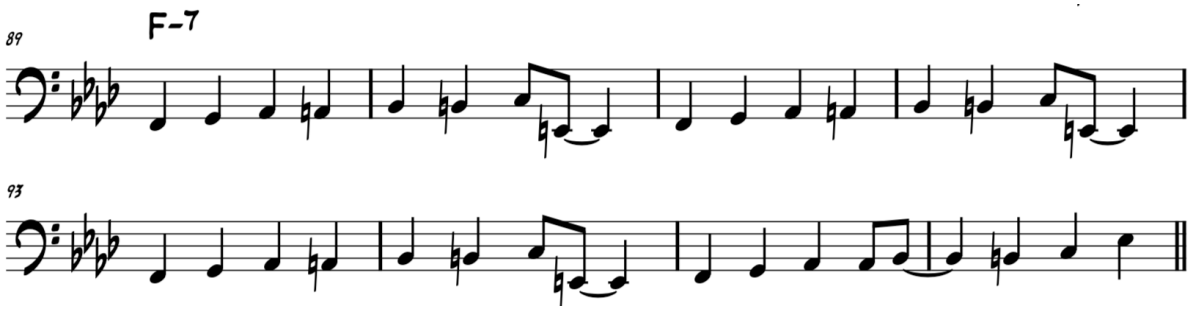

Figure 4.3: Workman, mm. 65–68, "Blues Minor"




Workman is unafraid to repeat notes in many of his lines, shown in Figures 4.2 and 4.3. In Figure 4.2, measure 56, Workman stays on the A-flat (the third of the F-7 chord) for three beats before playing an A-natural to transition into the next measure—which includes the B-flat-

7 chord. Workman repeats notes again in Figure 4.3—playing F twice in measure 65 and A-flat twice in measure 67.

Figure 4.4: Workman, mm. 89–96, “Blues Minor”




Workman goes as far as repeating a two-measure idea three times in a row. In Figure 4.4, Workman repeats his idea utilizing the blues scale starting on measure 89 and repeating it in measures 91 and 93. He begins measures 95 and 96 by using that similar idea but doesn’t play the A-natural (major third). He continues the line in an ascending direction to land on the F3 in measure 97.

Figure 4.5: Workman, mm. 241–244, “Blues Minor”

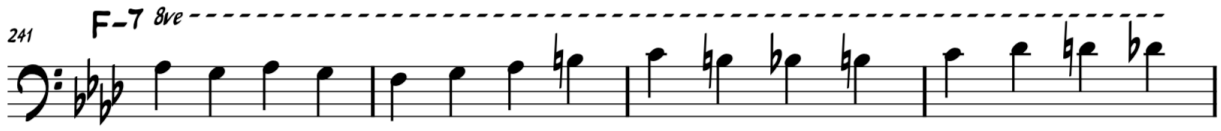
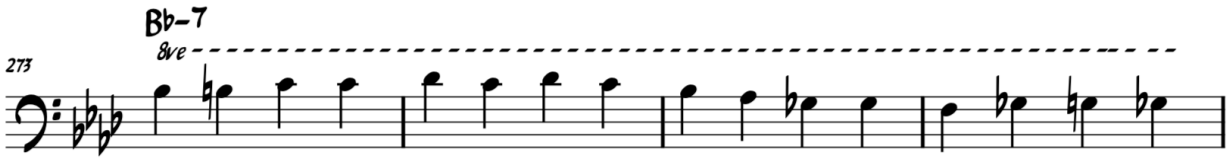


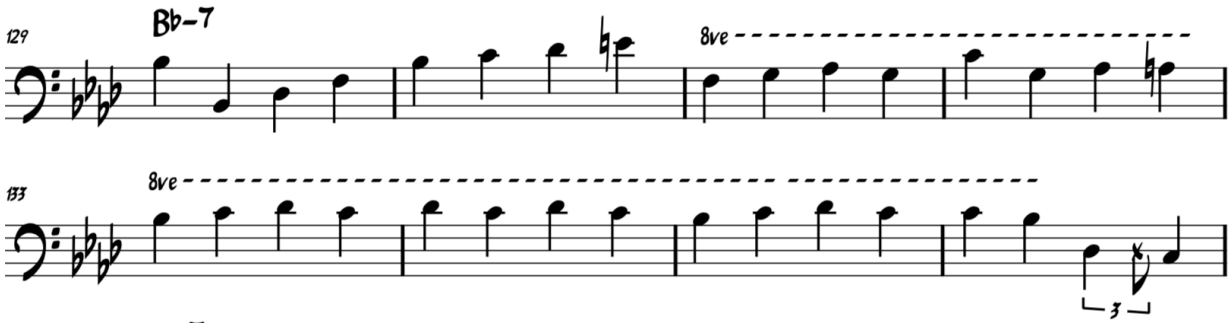
Figure 4.6: Workman, mm. 273–276, “Blues Minor”




As shown in Figure 4.5 and 4.6, Workman uses a lot of chromaticism in his lines. In measures 243–244, Workman is playing over an F-7 chord. He only moves by half steps for these two measures, starting on the fifth of the chord (C), and playing the tritone to the perfect fourth (B-flat) then continuing up the scale to play the fifth, minor sixth, major sixth, and minor sixth again. This chromaticism adds color and tension to the line that is immediately resolved by the notes following it. His use of the minor and major sixth implies both a harmonic minor and major sound. In measures 273 and 274, Workman again moves using half notes. (Figure 4.6) He plays a B-natural that is immediately resolved as he travels to the major second (C) on the next beat.

Workman also demonstrates his agility as he plays quarter note lines in the higher range of the bass. This area of the bass can be challenging, but Workman plays with ease. (Figures 4.5 and 4.6) The same can be observed in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Workman, “Blues Minor,” mm. 129-136




Throughout “Blues Minor” Workman demonstrates his incredible agility on the bass. His lines are played cleanly at a quick tempo—around 214 beats per minute (bpm). Jumping in and out of thumb position—the higher area of the bass fingerboard—is technically challenging on the bass, but Workman easily facilitates these hurdles. In measures 129-131, Workman ascends into the upper range of the bass, known as thumb position. He remains in this position for measures 132-136. This range of the bass is not known to be as powerful as the lower range, but Workman pulls a strong sound with no noticable lack of force from the bass. He effortlessly decends back into the lower range of the bass at the end of measure 136.

**“Deluge”**

Workman’s display of agility and range on the bass continues throughout “Deluge,” recorded with the Wayne Shorter Quartet on *JuJu*. Playing with the same rhythm section, Workman’s bass sounds heavier and a little fatter compared to the bass recording on “Blues Minor.” This could be a recording set up, or Workman could have also pulled the string more

due to the slower tempo on “Deluge.” The medium-swing feel leaves Workman with space to depart the quarter note grid and fill the sound with his heavy right hand pull on the string.

Figure 4.8: Workman, mm. 5–8, “Deluge”

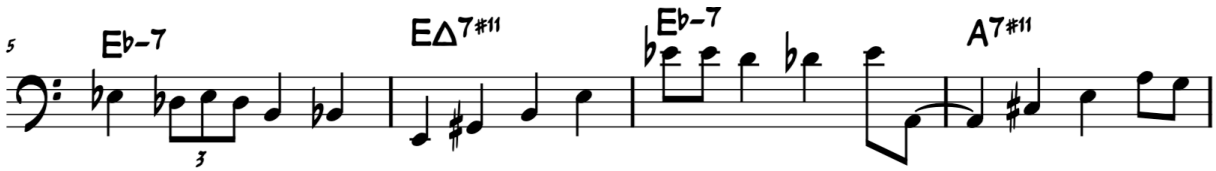
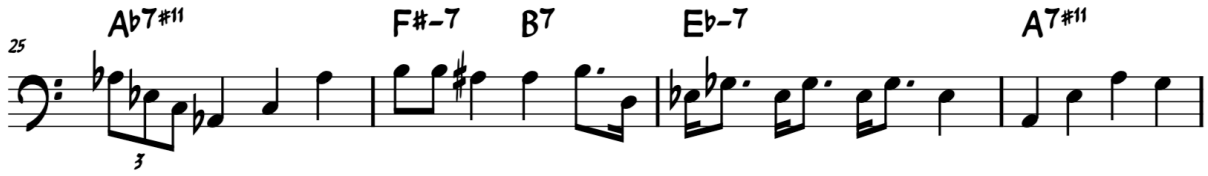



Figure 4.9: Workman, mm. 25–28, “Deluge”

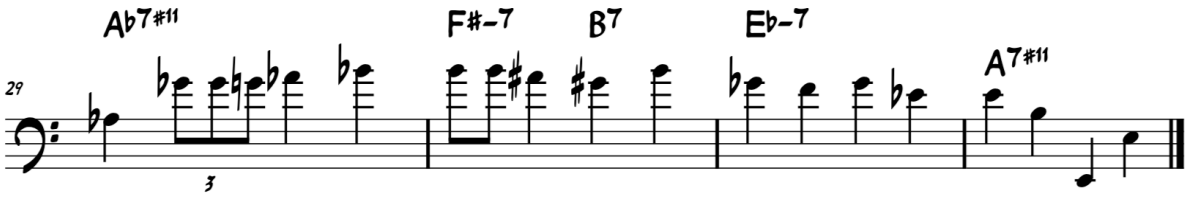



Workman primarily utilizes a quarter note grid for his walking lines throughout “Deluge,” but he is regularly playing triplet and eighth note ideas within the quarter notes. (Figures 4.8 and 4.9) This adds extra energy to his lines and gives them more of a rhythmic pulse. Both of the figures are extracted from Wayne Shorter’s first and second choruses, where Shorter uses a lot of space. The space and medium-swing tempo allow Workman to add in these rhythmic ideas without overstepping anyone in the band.

In Figure 4.9, measure 25, Workman uses a quarter note triplet on a descending arpeggio (A-flat, E-flat, C) on beat one. He then plays two eighth notes on beat one in measure 26 followed by two quarter notes. In measure 27, Workman builds on a repeated sixteenth to dotted eighth note idea. He plays this rhythm three times over the same notes before moving back to the quarter note lines. These rhythmic additions add energy to Elvin Jones’s pulse from the drums.

Workman also demonstrates the use of arpeggios in his bass lines. (Figure 4.8) In measures 6 and 8, Workman plays arpeggios starting on tonic to third, fifth, tonic of that chord. His bass lines on "Deluge" incorporate many arpeggio ideas alongside his use of step-wise motion.

Figure 4.10: Workman, mm. 29–32, "Deluge"




Workman continues to use the entire bass as he plays, demonstrated in Figure 4.10. In measures 29–31, Workman plays in the thumb position area and uses the entire range of the bass. (Figure 4.10)

## "Footprints"

The tune "Footprints"—recorded by Wayne Shorter on *Adam's Apple*—involves a very specific bass line. (Figure 4.11) Workman's ideas on Footprints are all centered around this line. While he ventures out and eventually even walks, the listener can hear the original line as an influence on all of his ideas.

Figure 4.11: Workman, mm. 1–4, “Footprints”

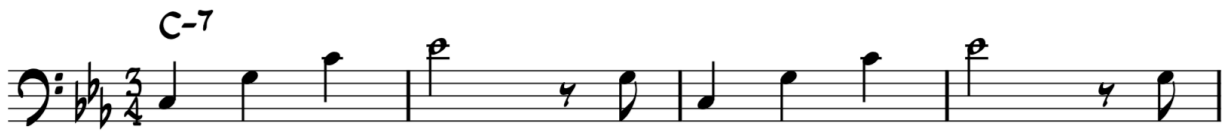



Figure 4.11 demonstrates the bass line used in “Footprints.”

Figure 4.12: Workman, mm. 25–28, “Footprints”

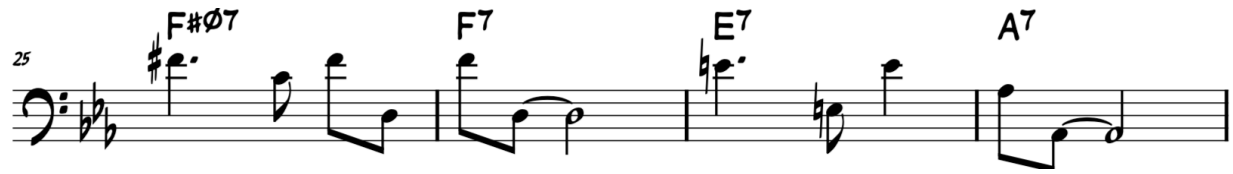
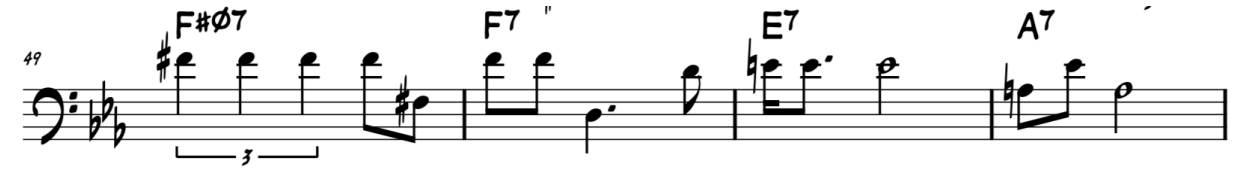



Figure 4.13: Workman, mm. 49–52, “Footprints”




While Workman primarily centers his ideas around the bass line from Figure 4.11, he leaves this melodic phrase during measures 17–20 of the form. Workman uses the four measures of the head that are over F#7b5, F7, E7, and A7 to vary his rhythms and play ideas that involve more than just the original bass line—including the use of dotted quarter notes, triplets, and eighth notes to vary the rhythm.

Figure 4.14: Workman, mm. 93–96, “Footprints”

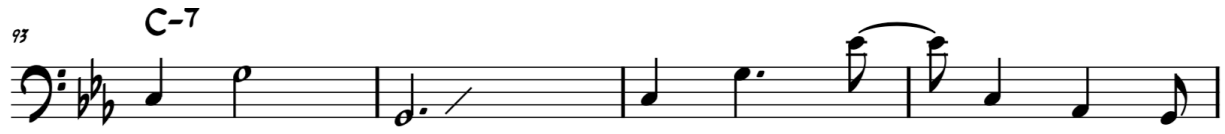



Figure 4.14 displays how Workman maintains the original bass line from Figure 4.11 throughout the recording. While he has varied the line slightly, remnants remain, and Workman continues to stay within the parameters of the bass line just enough to remind the listener that it is there behind everything else. Joe Chambers maintains a solid groove on the drums, allowing Workman to stray from the line and be rhythmically creative.

Figure 4.15: Workman, mm. 81–84, “Footprints”


In Figure 4.15, measures 82 and 84, Workman plays a G and then slides up from that note. This slide is an uncommon gesture for bass players to use during walking accompaniment; however, the slide gesture is a perfect addition to those moments. Measures 82 and 84 offer a percussive moment with a short downbeat followed by the low G sliding up.

Figure 4.16: Workman, mm. 57–68, “Footprints”

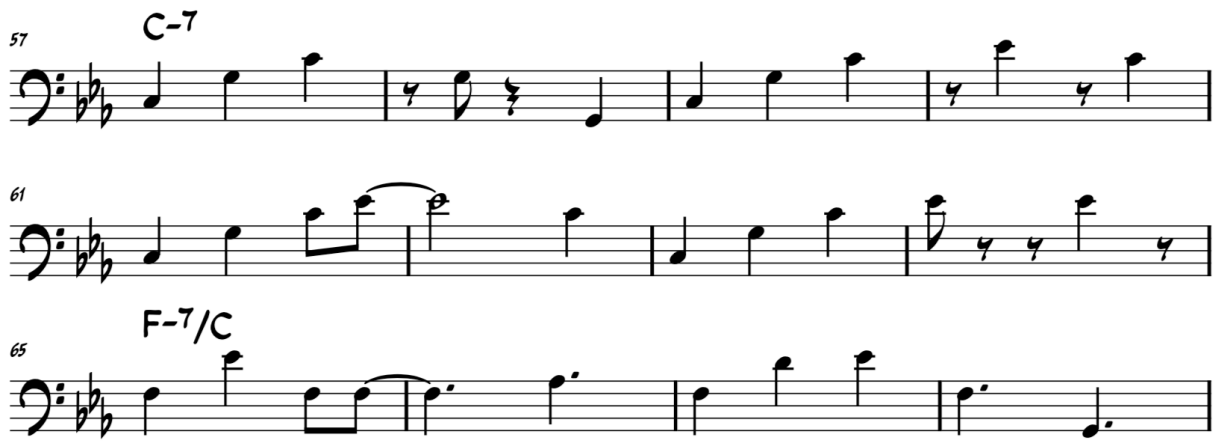
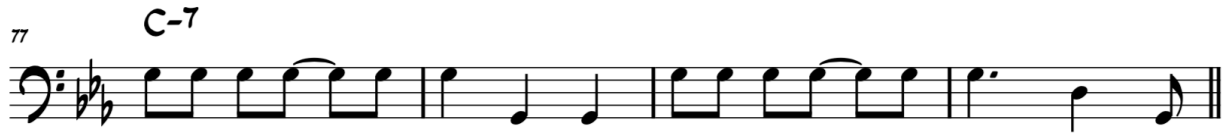


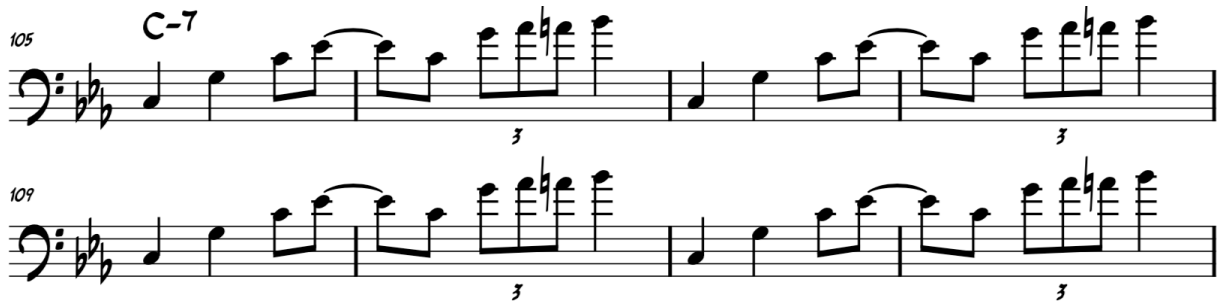

Figure 4.16 showcases a prime example of Workman’s ability to lock in with Joe Chambers and Herbie Hancock. Chambers began hitting on the “and” of beat three, and Workman first acknowledges this in measures 58 and 60 by resting on beat one and instead playing the “and” of beat one. This acts as an answer to Chambers’ hit. In measures 61 and 65, Workman anticipates the downbeat of the following measures by hitting the “and” of beat three with Chambers. This shows Workman’s ability to listen to his rhythm section and adapt to the moment.

Figure 4.17: Workman, mm. 77–80, “Footprints”




In Figure 4.17, Workman’s bass line highlights his ability to lock in with his rhythm section and build energy behind the soloist. He plays eighth notes on the fifth of the chord (C-7) then uses this pedal point and rhythmic idea to build with the piano and drums. He includes Wayne Shorter in this journey—as Shorter is building energy into the start of the next chorus.

Figure 4.18: Workman, mm. 105–112, “Footprints”




As in “Blues Minor,” Workman isn’t afraid to repeat ideas. (Figure 4.18) Workman takes the two-measure motif and repeats it three more times, all played over C-7. While this may read as boring or uncreative, Workman’s delivery of the line fits perfectly alongside Shorter’s solo ideas as the repetition builds into the next chord.

**"Sweet’n’Sour”**

Workman’s approach to “Sweet’n’Sour” recorded with Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers offers an alternative to previously discussed transcriptions. Like “Footprints,” he is in ¾ time, but Workman’s bass lines aren’t as linear as aforementioned examples, and his rhythmic activity varies. He plays most of this tune in a broken jazz waltz feel—walking occasionally. Workman’s musical choices help the flow and keep the energy of the tune moving forward. Figures 4.1 and 4.20 illustrate Workman’s approach to varying the rhythm.

Figure 4.19: Workman, mm. 33–36, “Sweet’n’Sour”

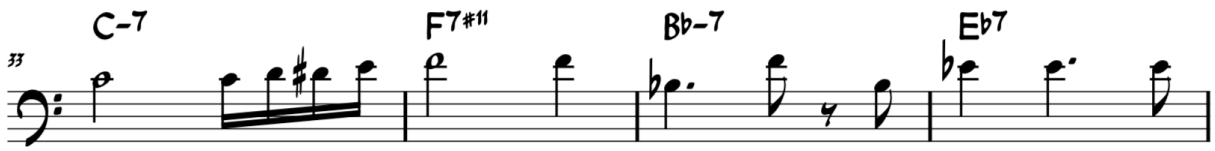


Figure 4.20: Workman, mm. 121–128, “Sweet’n’Sour”

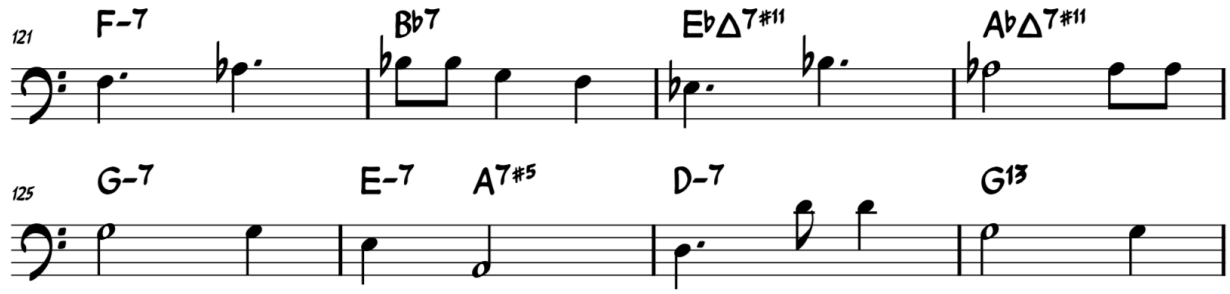



Figure 4.19 shows how Workman gives clear downbeats and chord changes, but his rhythmic activity differs each measure. Blakey’s playing in “Sweet’n’Sour” is not only more rhythmically and dynamically calmer but also generally so compared with other Jazz Messengers recordings, allowing Workman more space to fill rhythmically. In Figure 4.20, measures 121 and 123, Workman plays dotted quarter notes that depart from his previous pattern of hitting beats one and three. While Blakey’s playing may leave more space for Workman, it is still authoritative; however, Workman stands strong in his tempo, drive, rhythmic, and note choices.

Figure 4.21: Workman, mm. 73–76, “Sweet’n’Sour”

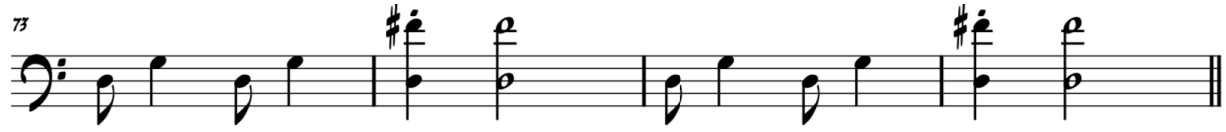
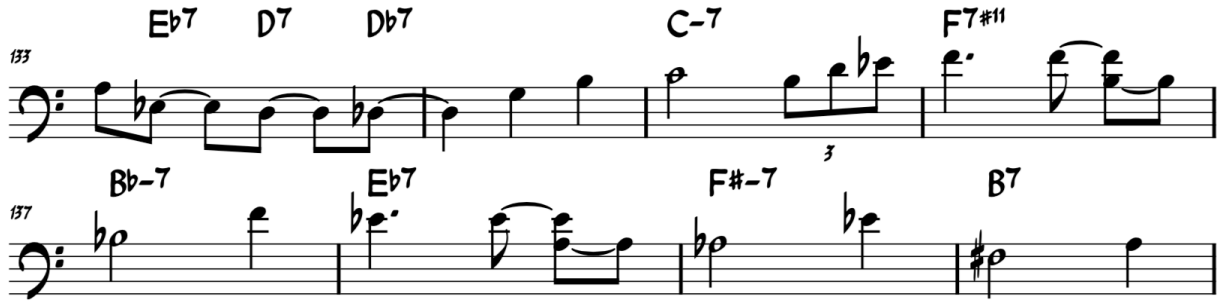


Figure 4.22: Workman, mm. 133–140, “Sweet’n’Sour”



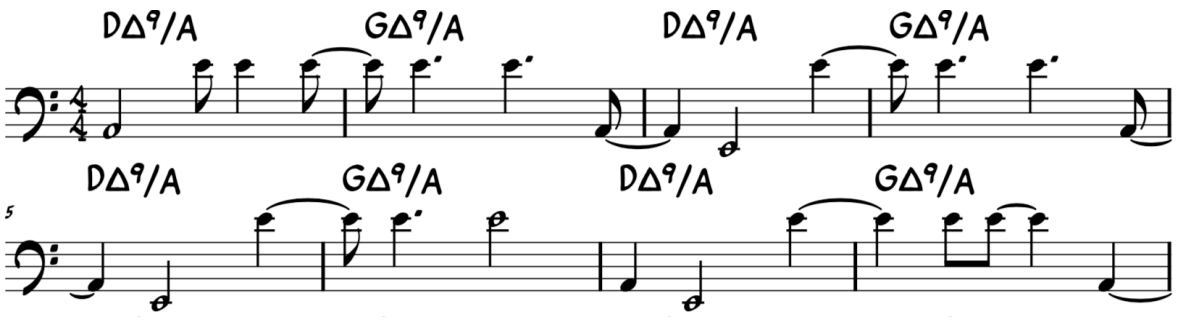

Workman uses many different bass gestures such as hammer-ons and pull-offs in his playing. During a hammer-on, the bassist uses the left hand to push down the string and execute the note—leaving out the right hand pull. A pull-off is similar, but instead the bassist uses the left hand to lift the finger off the string and in turn resonates a new note without pulling the string with the right hand. Another common bass player gesture is the use of double stops. Workman executes double stops as shown in Figures 4.21 and 4.22.

Figure 4.21 shows Workman’s use of the double stop with an open string. In fact, he utilizes the combination of open strings and higher notes on the finger board frequently in his playing. In measures 74 and 76 Workman plays an F# and open string D at the same time, allowing for a musical pause (or breath) between measures 73 and 75 where he’s alternating between something like an open string D to G pedal. Workman uses double stops in measures 136 and 138; these double stops are less direct than those in Example 4.21 because they’re more of a passing tone to the next measure’s downbeat. Workman executes these double stops by leaving his finger for the previous note down a little longer.

**“Ugetsu”**

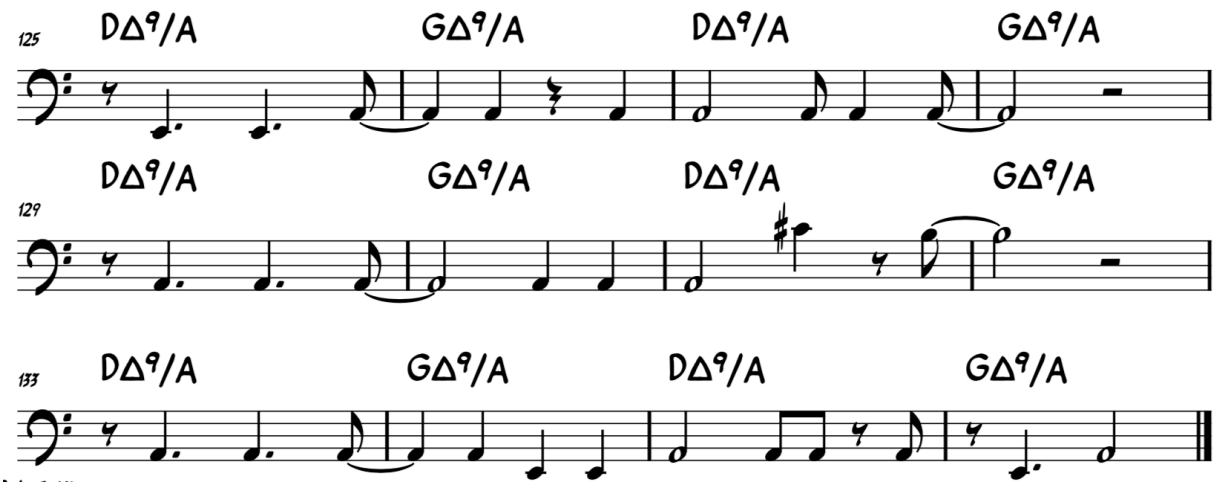
“Ugetsu” is a prime example of Workman’s ability to match Blakey’s forceful drums. The most noticeable example of this is the vamp that occurs in the very opening of the recording and repeats at each chorus. Workman gets creative rhythmically—sometimes playing with Blakey’s hits and sometimes against them. Workman’s bass lines are driving and full of energy.

Figure 4.23: Workman, mm. 1–8, “Ugetsu”




The pedal section that occurs at each chorus is shown in Figures 4.23 and 4.24. The first example showcases the very first occurrence of this pedal, as it begins the tune. Workman’s rhythmic ideas are very creative, playing a lot on the off-beats. For example, in measure 1 he hits the E on the “and” of beat four—later hitting the E on the “and” of one in measure 2. The rhythmic and octave variations in his bass line are a little unsettling, but they fit perfectly with the composition. Blakey plays time and stays out of Workman’s way.

Figure 4.24: Workman, mm. 125–136, “Ugetsu”




As the recording continues, Blakey and Workman get more aggressive during the pedal sections. Figure 4.24 illustrates the same section of the composition as Figure 4.23; however, both Blakey and Workman are making alternate musical decisions when compared to Figure 4.23. Blakey is hitting the bass drum loudly and offering more hits on the cymbals. The energy level is much more aggressive now. Workman’s line has altered itself to match with Blakey’s bass drum pattern—though not always. This is demonstrated in measures 1–3. This pedal section occurs many times throughout the recording, and Workman plays different ideas each time.

Figure 4.25: Workman, mm. 69–72, “Ugetsu”

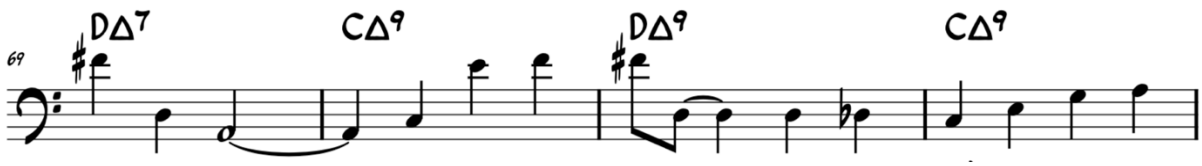
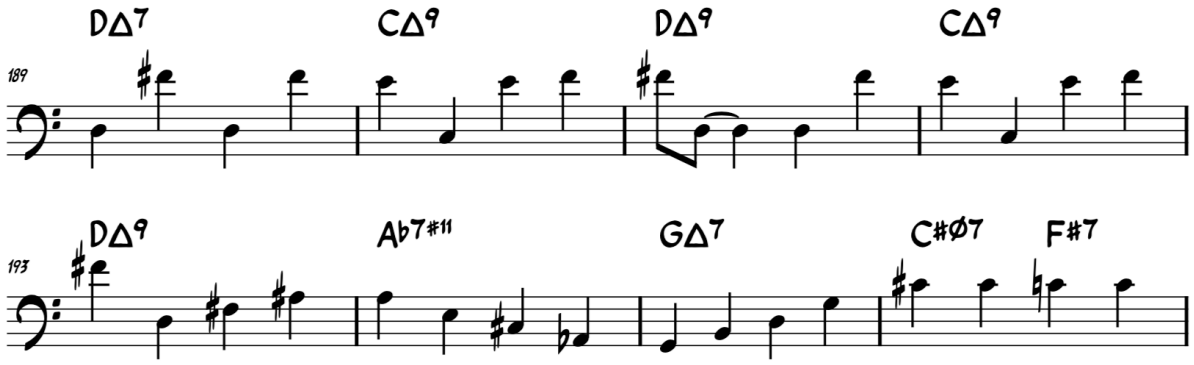


Figure 4.26: Workman, mm. 189–196, “Ugetsu”




Workman uses his open strings on the bass to transition from higher areas of the fingerboard. In measures 69 and 71 of Figure 4.25, Workman plays an F# followed by an open D string. This large interval jump catches the listener’s ear and is distinctive compared to his otherwise linear note choices. It offers a change in the density of the previous texture. Workman continues this theme of large interval leaps in Figure 4.26. In measure 189 Workman alternates between an open D to F#. In measure 190 he continues this theme—but plays an E down to a C. This idea lasts through measures 191 and 192, as well. In measure 191, Workman plays the F# for just an eighth note to then proceed to the open D string. This rhythm plus the large interval downward motion give Workman’s lines a fresh energy and keep the tune moving forward with momentum.

Figure 4.27: Workman, mm. 97–108, “Ugetsu”

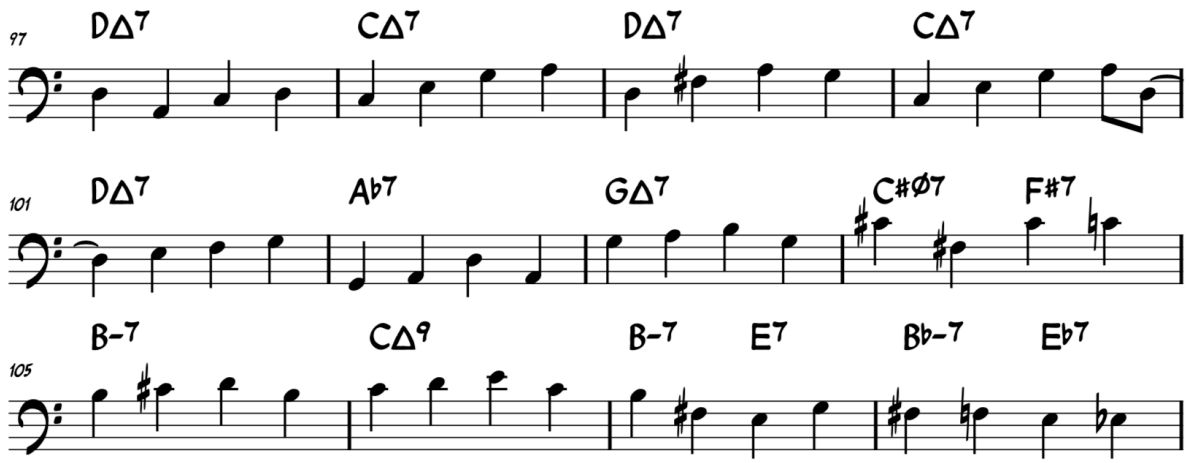



Figure 4.27 reveals Workman’s walking bass line note choices. Like previous transcriptions discussed in this essay, he uses linear choices, chromaticism, and arpeggios. In measures 98 to 100, Workman uses arpeggio ideas. He starts measure 98 playing the tonic, third, fifth of the chord, then ends the measure on the major sixth. In measure 99, Workman similarly plays the tonic, third, and fifth, then travels down to the perfect fourth. When not using arpeggios, Workman typically plays linear lines with notes connected by whole or half steps. This is shown in measures 105–106. Measure 108 demonstrates his use of chromaticism to connect the chord changes.

## CHAPTER 5: CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY

One purpose of this study is to examine Workman's playing chronologically. Just as the essay looks at three different groups and five different albums, it also captures Workman's playing over a six-year time span. (Figure 6.1)

**Figure 5.1**

| **Band Leader** | **Composition** | **Year Recorded** |
|---|---|---|
| John Coltrane | Blues Minor | May/June 1961 |
| Art Blakey | Sweet'n'Sour | October 1962 |
| Art Blakey | Ugetsu | June 1963 |
| Wayne Shorter | Deluge | August 1964 |
| Wayner Shorter | Footprints | February 1966 |

While these five transcription analyses are only a snapshot into the vast amount of playing Workman did from 1961 to 1966, and it is evident that Workman's personal sound and artistic identity had been established prior to his tenure with Coltrane. Each transcription centers around common themes in Workman's playing. In every recording, Workman always plays something different. Each chorus uses varied melodic and rhythmic ideas, and Workman is constantly changing his approach to fit with each musical moment. His ability to serve as a supportive jazz bassist is what makes him such an attractive player.

Another theme throughout is Workman's supportive accompaniment always fitting the spirit of the band he is in. While his playing and ideas remain constant, he adapts to each group

and individual rhythm section. Even though "Footprints" and "Sweet'n'Sour" are both in 3/4 time, Workman approaches each composition in a unique manner. "Sweet'n'Sour" involves more of a jazz waltz feel, and Workman waits for breaks in the chordal development to add walking lines. Even his walking on "Blues Minor" and "Deluge" diverge. In "Blues Minor" the faster tempo and specific personnel lead to Workman playing mostly quarter notes and focusing on time and simplicity. The slower tempo of "Deluge" allows Workman more time to add in triplets and eighth notes in between his quarter note bass lines. While Workman's vocabulary as a jazz bass accompanist stays the same, he adapts to the spirit of the band and its compositions.

Workman's technical mannerisms such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and double-stops also persist in each transcription. His agility on the instrument is shown in every recording. It is evident throughout the years that Workman can play the entire range of the bass easily and his command of the instrument is strong.

## COMPARING RHYTHM SECTIONS

Workman plays with three different rhythm sections in the recordings analyzed. In "Blues Minor" Workman plays with McCoy Tyner on piano and Elvin Jones on drums. This pair is known for their iconic rhythm section playing. Jones is known for his wider conception of the beat and steady yet loose time, filled with rhythmic details.[31] His playing on "Blues Minor" is busy, energetic, and powerful. Workman complements Jones' hits on the snare and bass drum with his driving and connected bass lines. Tyner alternates between short, punchy hits and longer, ringing chords. His clear, open-voiced chords allow for stability against Jones' and

[31] Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis,* 296.

Coltrane's dominant playing. Between the rhythm section and background horn lines, Workman remains steady with his walking lines—keeping everyone together.

"Deluge" features the same rhythm section of Tyner and Jones, but Wayne Shorter is the band leader. The slower tempo allows more fills and activity from the entire rhythm section. Jones stays busy and is constantly filling any space that Shorter leaves on his solo and melody. His playing is very supportive, churning about as Shorter plays and increases the energy. Tyner stays active as well, leaving little blank space. Workman continues to lay down the bass line but is more active than in "Blues Minor." Elvin's playing is innovative in that he brings out the hi-hat in more conversational rather than time-keeping manner. This, in addition to his polyrhythms, contributes to Workman's choice of simpler bass playing.

Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers is also known for its powerful rhythm section. "Ugetsu" and "Sweet'n'Sour" feature Cedar Walton on piano and Art Blakey on drums. Blakey's playing is a staple of the hard bop style. Compared to Jones, Blakey's drumming is easier to follow and more predictable. His vocabulary, while interesting and swinging, is repetitive. This allows Workman to flow in and out of different rhythmic ideas and take more risks. Blakey's orchestration and dynamics guide Workman's choices and serve as an outline for the rhythm section to follow. Walton's piano playing is rhythmic. On "Sweet'n'Sour" he plays a lot of short, repeated hits. This matches well with Workman's swinging jazz waltz feel.

Joe Chambers plays drums and Herbie Hancock plays the piano on "Footprints." Chambers interacts a lot on the cymbal with the soloist. His playing is energetic but less aggressive than that of Blakey or Jones. Chambers, Workman, and Hancock are consistently united as they play. The rhythm section's musical communication regarding dynamics and energy is strongly connected. Chambers cues new musical feels in "Footprints" using press rolls.

This musical alert cues Workman, and they start the new style together. Hancock's playing begins with the bass line with Workman. Later he plays hits off Workman. Hancock's playing is busy and very chordal. In turn, Workman experiments more with rhythmic variation rather than note choice variation.

## CONTEMPORARIES OF WORKMAN

Looking at jazz and its primary bassists from a linear perspective, Paul Chambers, Steve Davis, and Reggie Workman seem to exit the scene for other projects around a similar time. Workman leaves Coltrane's group to be replaced by Jimmy Garrison, who goes on to record groundbreaking albums with Coltrane. Also, at this time, Ron Carter is working with Miles Davis and staying busy as a freelance bassist in the studios. Charlie Haden and Scott LaFaro are two other important bassists, noting Haden's work with Ornette Coleman and Scott LaFaro's legacy with Bill Evans. LaFaro also played with Ornette Coleman. Both Garrison and Carter were seminal figures in groups that helped change jazz, and had crossover playing with the same band leaders and rhythm sections as Workman.

Jimmy Garrison is most known for his playing with Coltrane. Garrison's playing is more imaginative and busier than Workman's. As Coltrane found his sound and the rhythm section with Garrison, Tyner, and Jones became tighter, Garrison had to hold his own against these powerful players. He used rhythms that counter and complement the band, leaving the grid style of walking and favoring interactive rhythms. Garrison used double-stops more frequently than Workman, even strumming his strings at times. Overall, Garrison gave Coltrane's band the push

they needed. Between Jones and Coltrane, Garrison was forced to be innovative with his playing in order to match the new style and sound the band was developing.

Ron Carter replaced Workman in Wayne Shorter's group. His tone is slick and round compared to Workman's heavier and thick bass tone. Carter is known for his swinging foundation and playing toward the front of the beat. Workman's playing, especially on *JuJu*, sits right on the center of the beat. While both Workman and Carter have played "Footprints," each has a different approach. Carter's recording on *Miles Smiles* maintains the bass line throughout the entire recording, changing his rhythms and note ideas on the four measure phrase over F#07, F7, E7, and A7. Both Workman and Carter use this point of the composition to add in alternative ideas, but each does it very differently. Carter treats it as a double or half time feel in two instead of three. Carter also approaches "Footprints" as less of a jazz waltz than Workman. Carter's influence is also felt in Miles Davis's second quintet—with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, and Tony Williams.

Workman's playing isn't as discernibly interactive as bassists like Ray Brown and Scott LaFaro, but one must also consider Workman's desire to align his interactions with the rhythm sections. Since he is playing with such powerful rhythm sections, he in turn plays simpler and steadier ideas to allow the other members of the band that space to fill. He adapts to the spirit of the band.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Workman's malleability persists as he works with different musicians and band leaders. He was adaptable, but also knew how to stand his ground against strong players. Working with Blakey, Workman not only brought an open mind, but also a strong groove that endured against Blakey's powerful feel. In each musical setting, he was open to compromise but maintained his personal sound.

Workman may not appear as an innovative bassist; he did not stray far from the path and contributions that his predecessors made. However, his smooth blend of rhythmic and melodic interjections combined with his traditional walking bass lines is timeless. Workman anticipated the spaces left by his peers and filled them with small, short interjections to compliment everything else around him. His skills on the bass allowed him to effortlessly play in different styles and meters.

Workman is also able to take compositions and transform his bass contributions into melodic ideas that complement the melody and horn players. He is not a bassist who simply plays quarter note walking lines. His playing is adaptable—fitting in with the complex and varied rhythm sections that he played with and reacting in each moment to the band and soloist. His bass parts on the melodies are arrangements in themselves. Workman took these compositions to the next level with his bass playing, weaving in and out of lines with the horns and hits with the rhythm section.

Overall, Reggie Workman teaches listeners how to be a reliable bassist. His excellent feel, time, and musicianship stand out among the sea of bassists. The 1960s were a transitional period, and the recordings discussed in this essay are prime examples of the distinctive

compositions and musical execution of jazz during that time. Workman's agility at the bass and ability to listen and work with diverse musicians and band leaders stands the test of time.

By analyzing and examining choices Workman made as a jazz bassist, these devices and conclusions can inform other jazz bassists how to better interpret their role. Workman's vast discography celebrates his extensive career and, while this essay is only a snapshot in time, Workman had the opportunity to further develop his performance practices and skills while playing with jazz innovators like Art Blakey, John Coltrane, and Wayne Shorter.

Workman's recordings from the early 1960s show listeners how to transform a composition and make linear, grid walking bass lines interesting, groove-oriented, and able to drive the band forward. His playing, while refined, was adaptable for every situation—as was his exceptional ability to listen and respond in the moment. Ultimately, Workman's playing defines that of a great bassist: excellent time and feel, a great groove, and reliable support as a jazz bassist.

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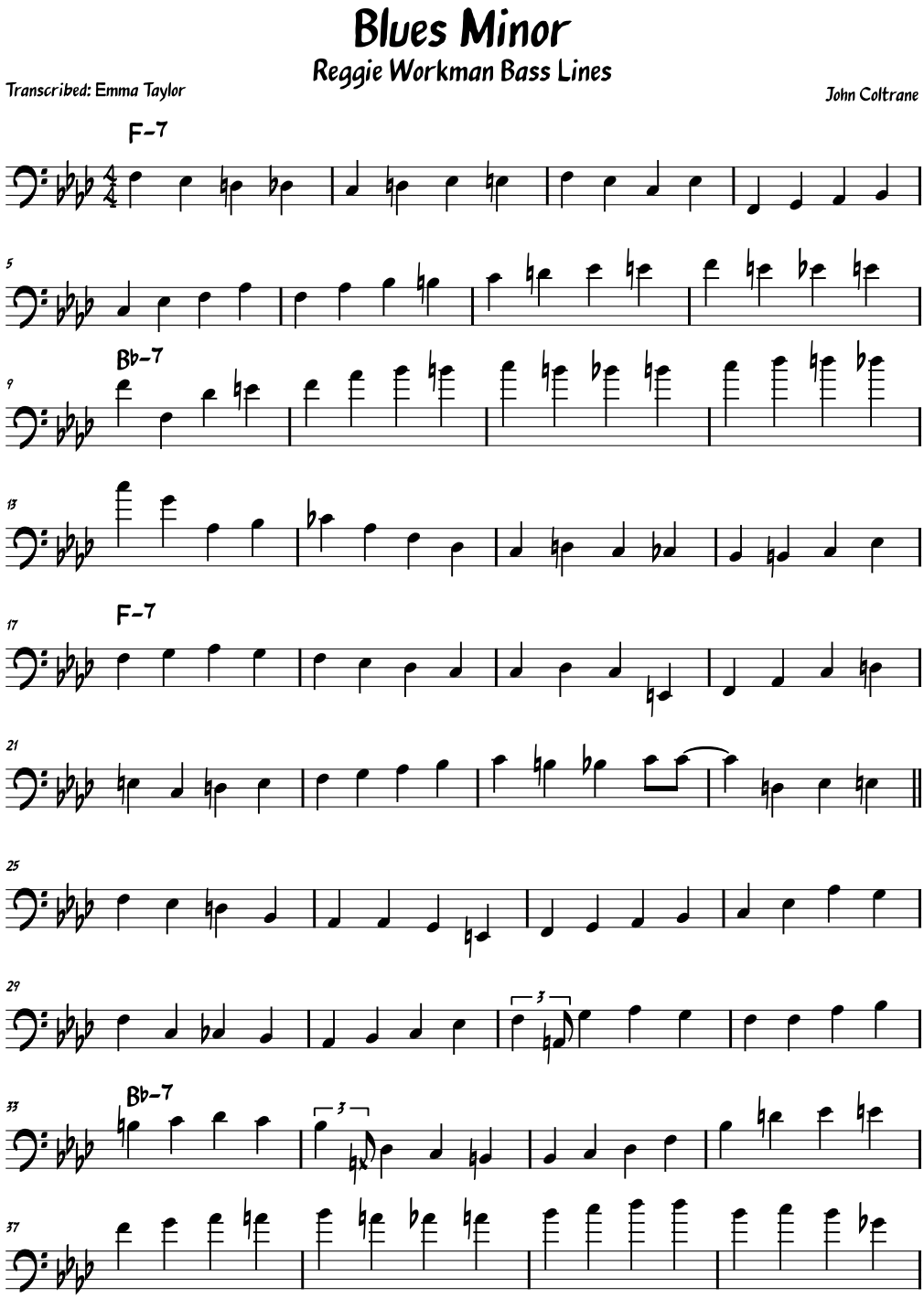
Blues Minor
Reggie Workman Bass Lines
Transcribed: Emma Taylor
John Coltrane
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Bb-7
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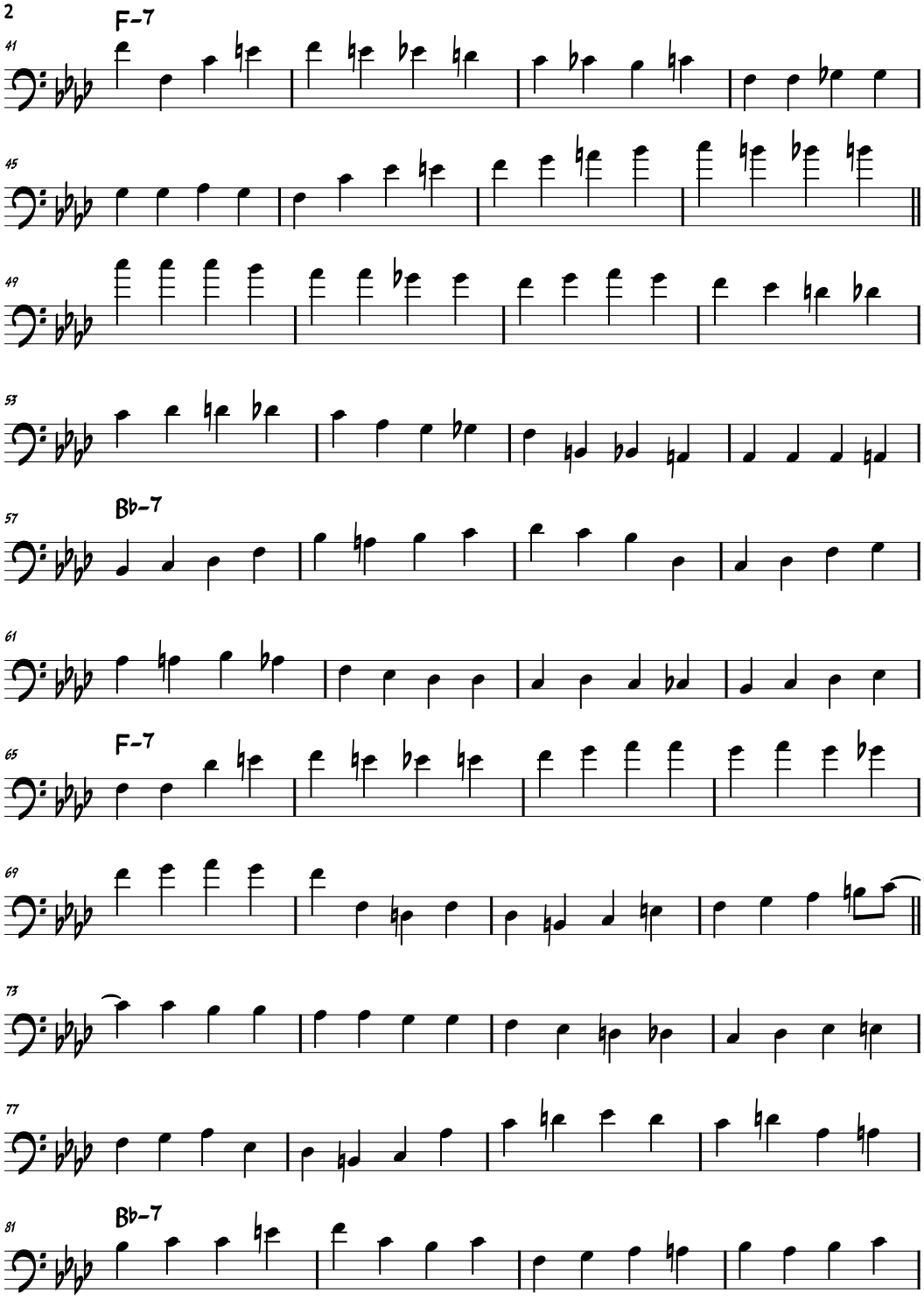
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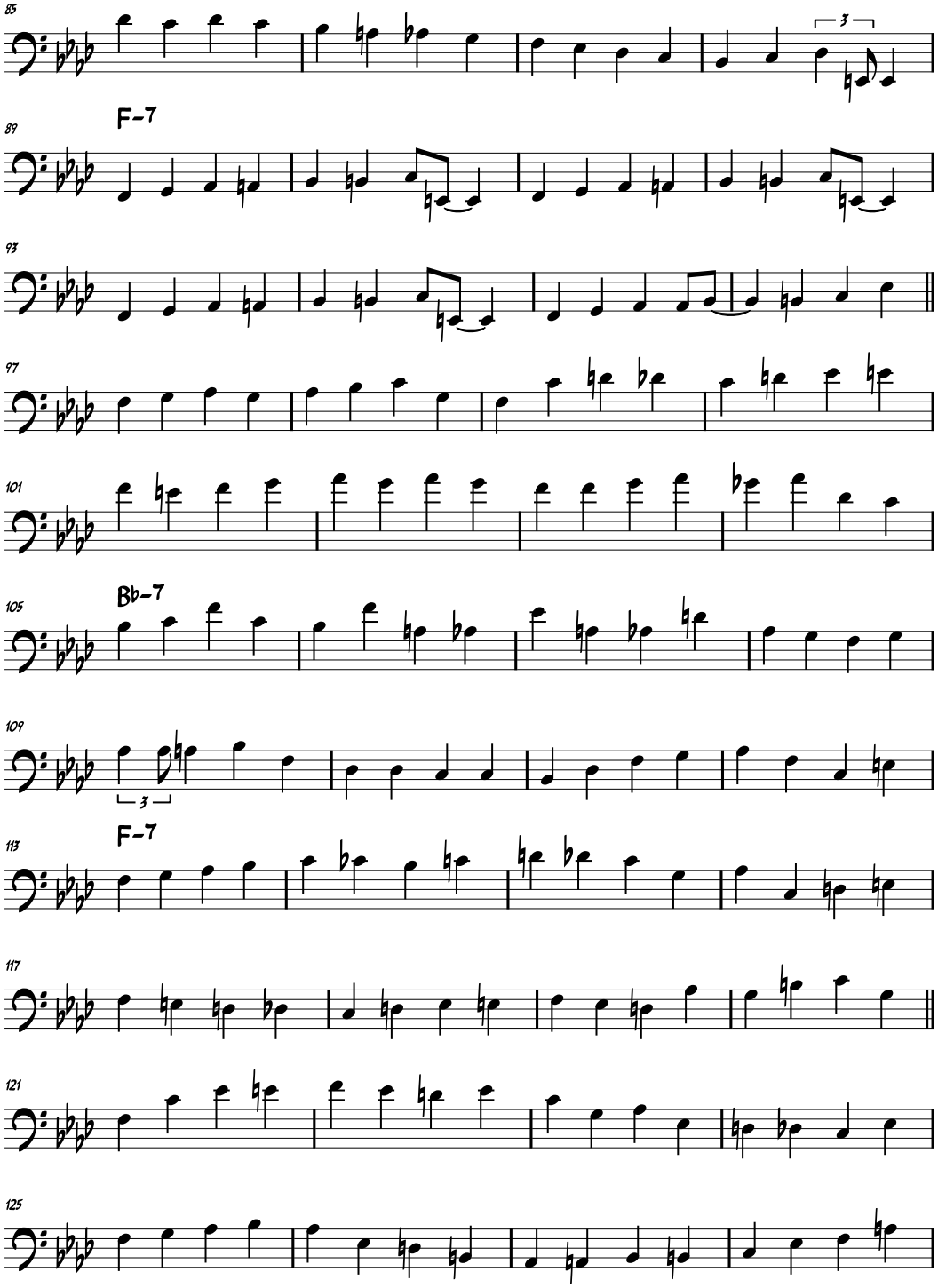
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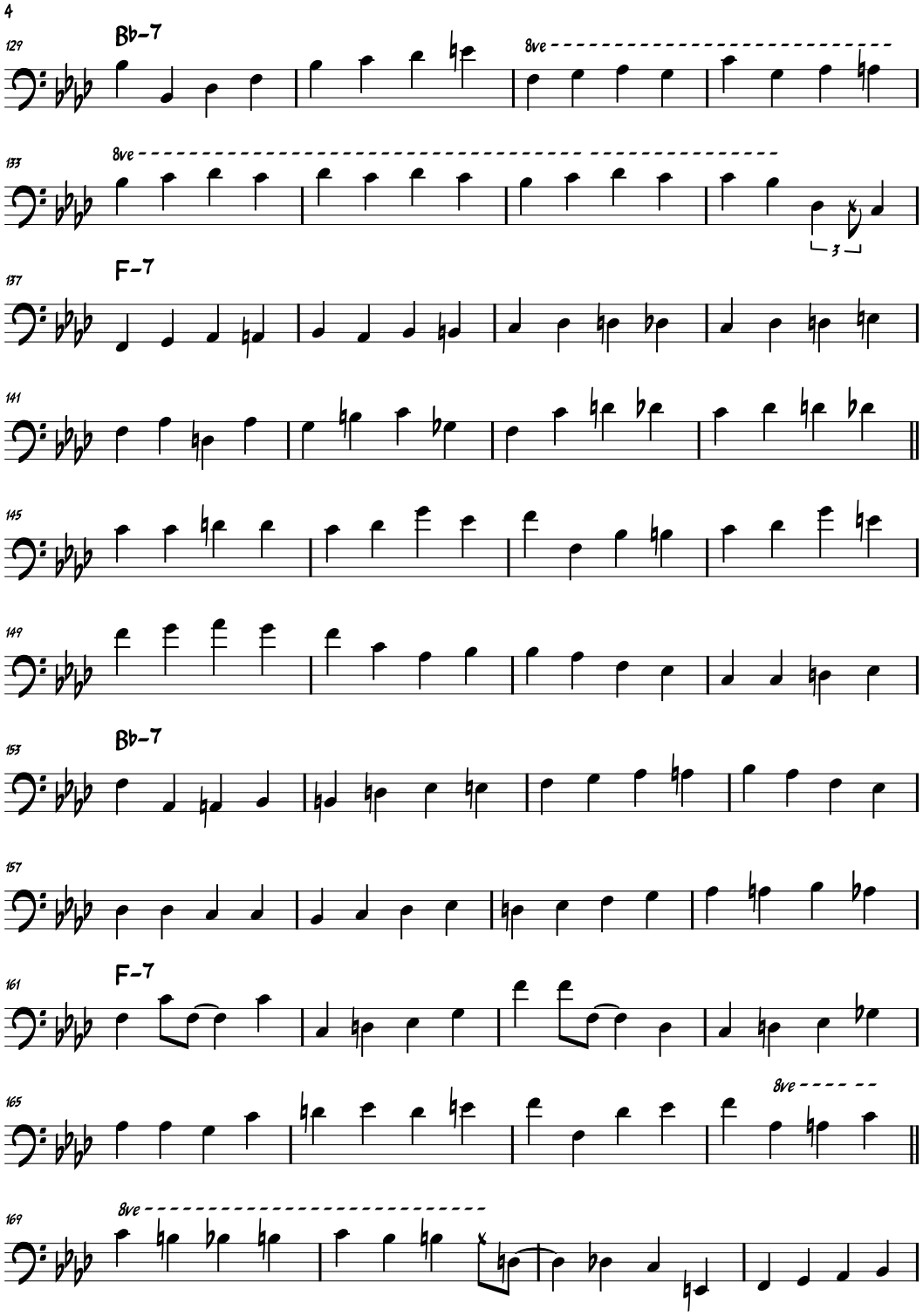
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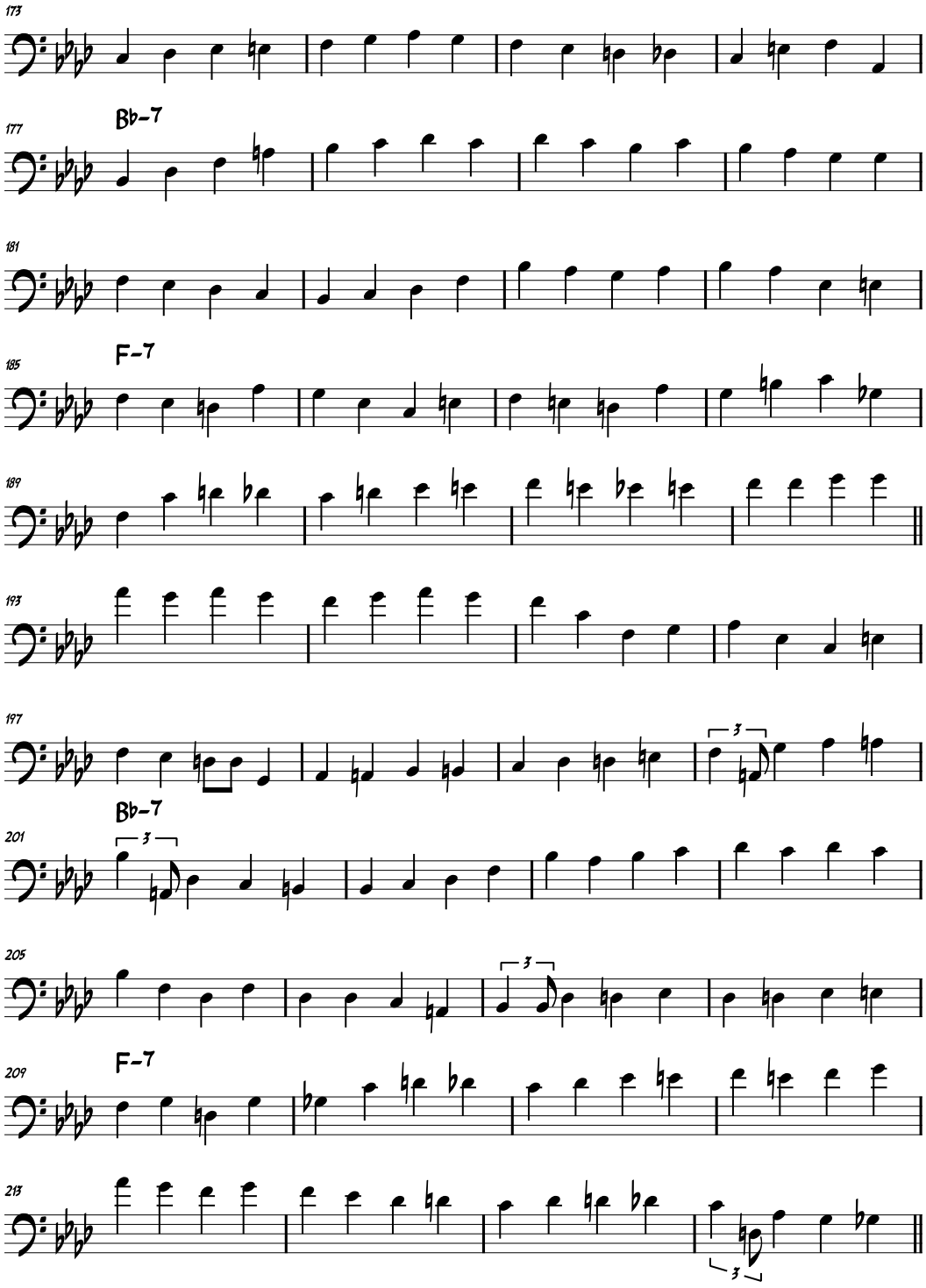
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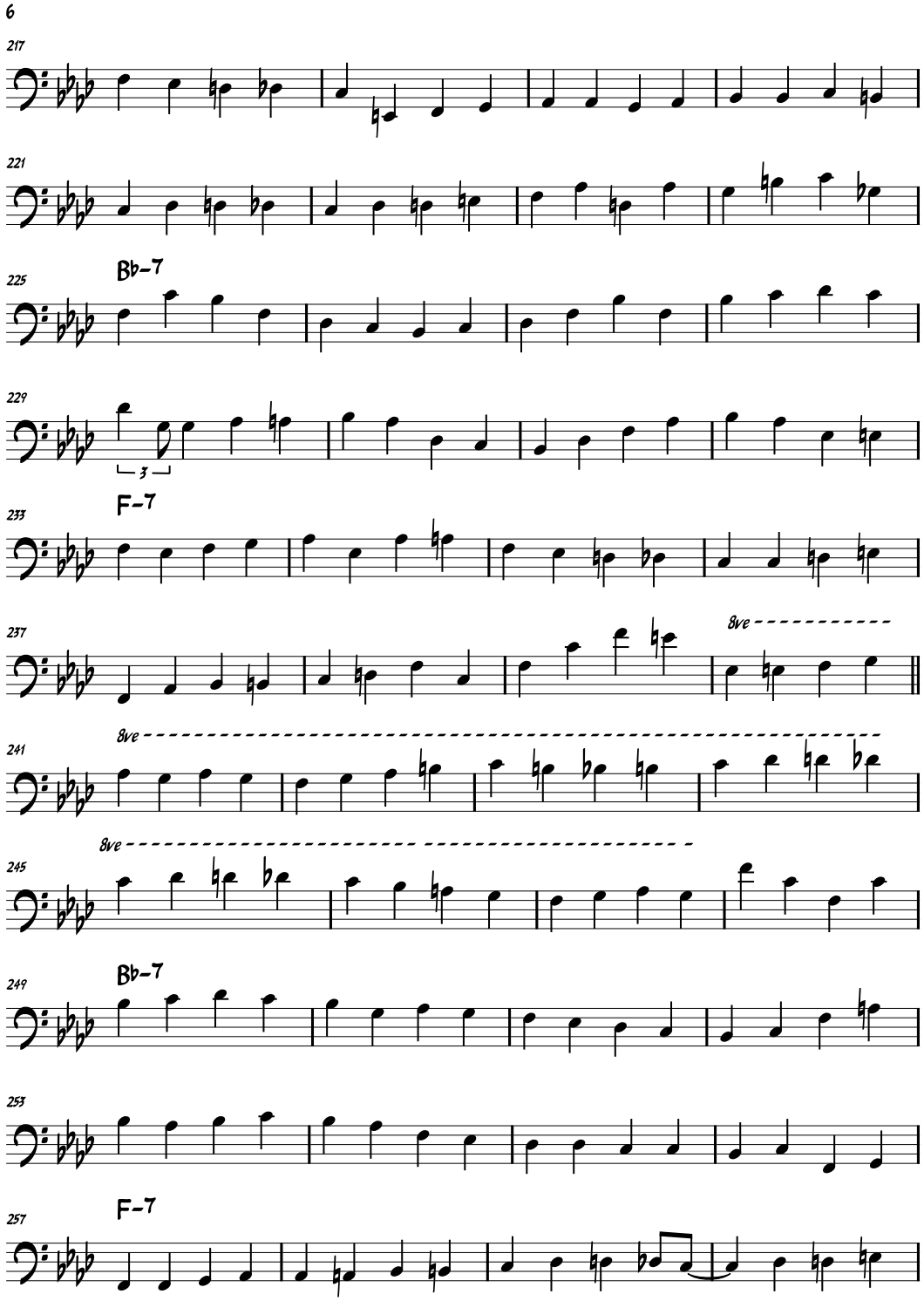
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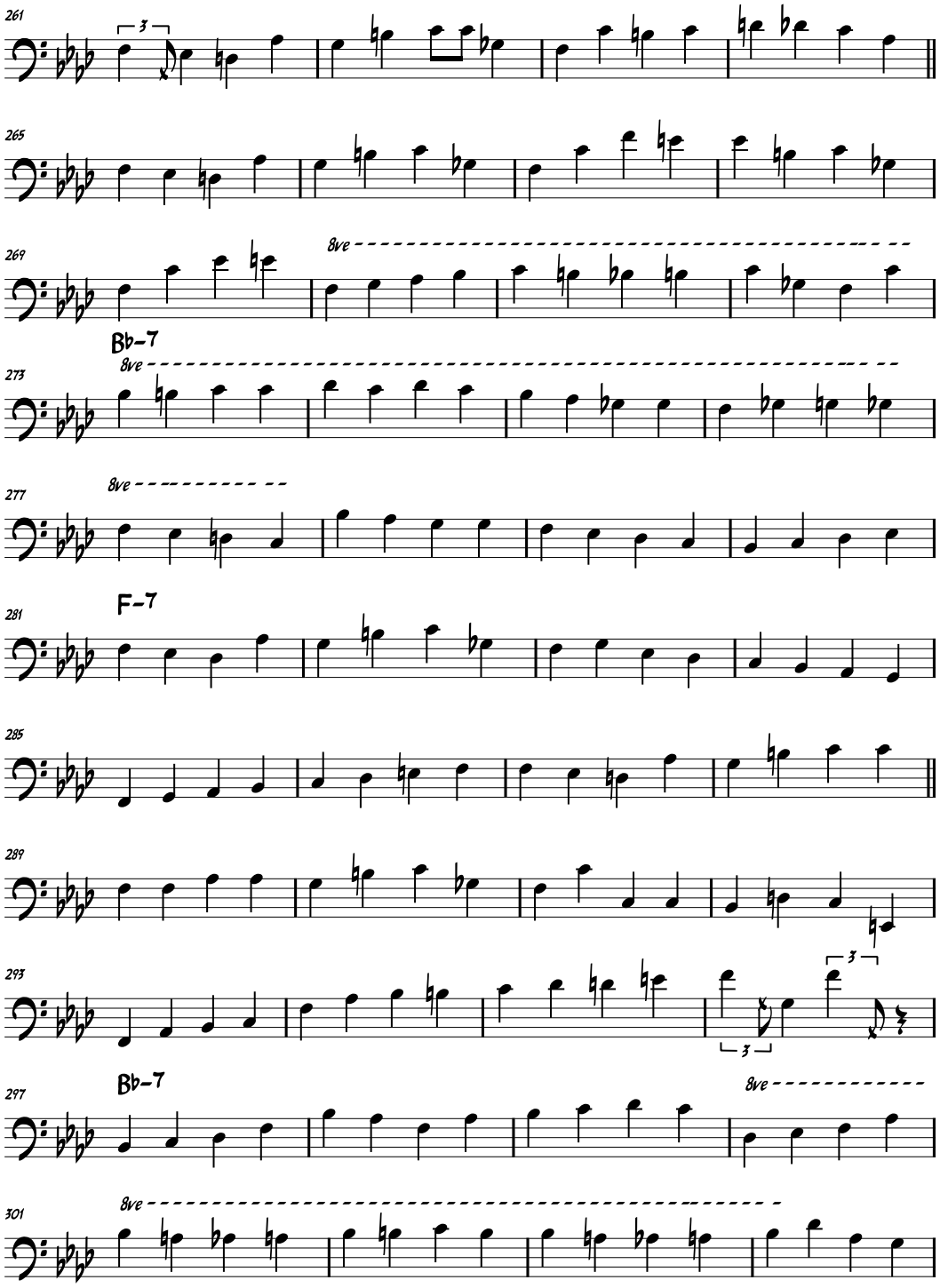
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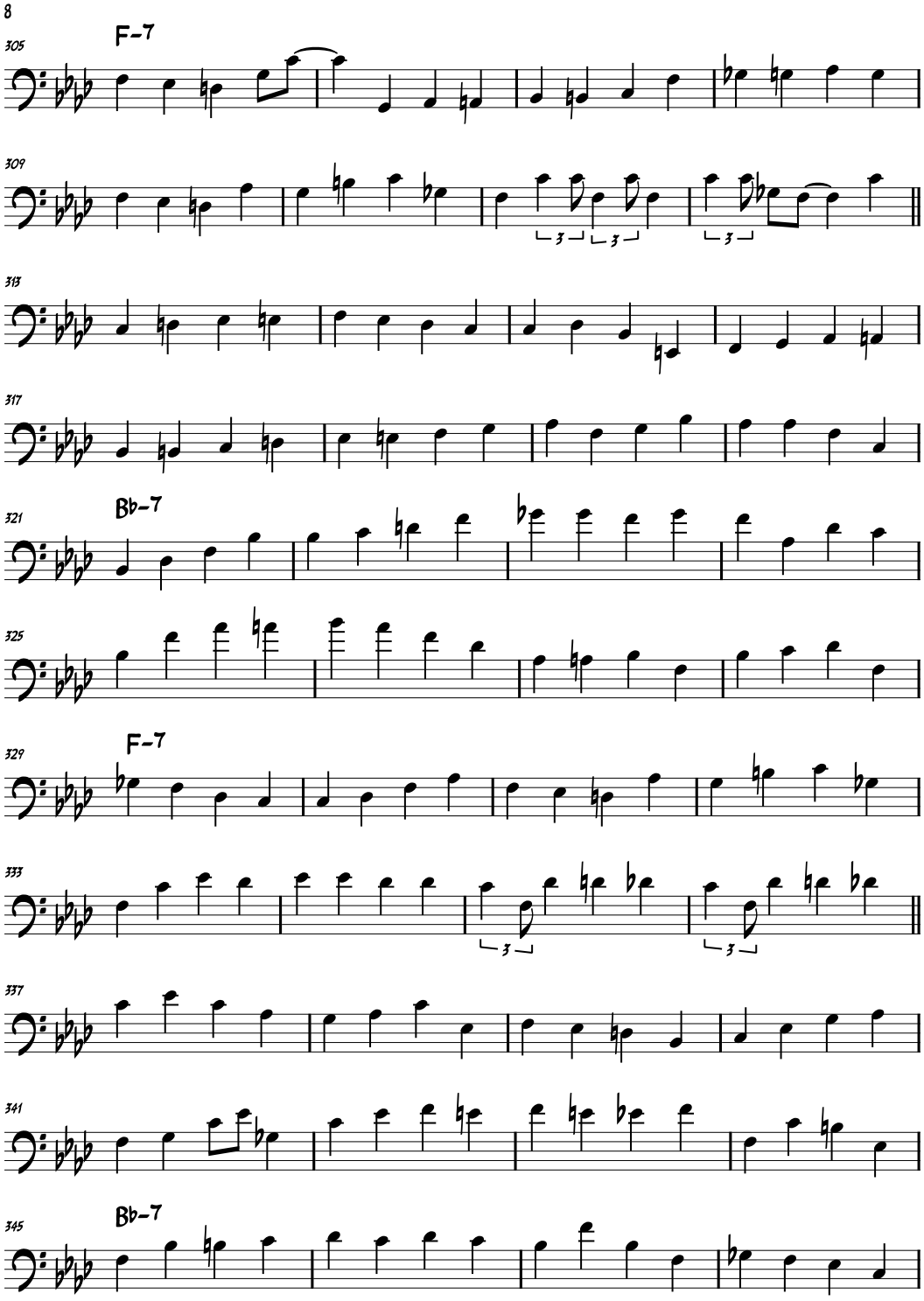
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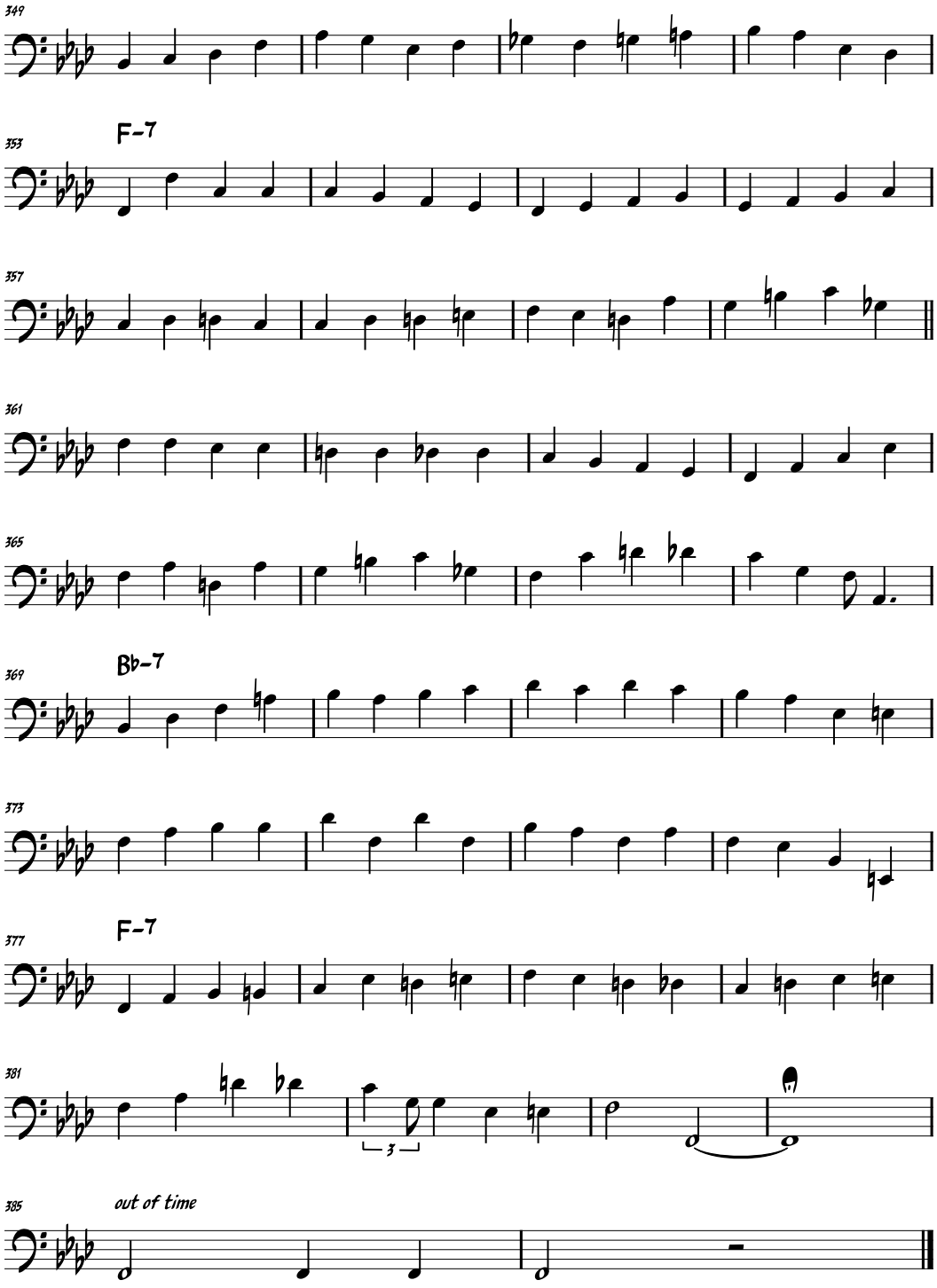
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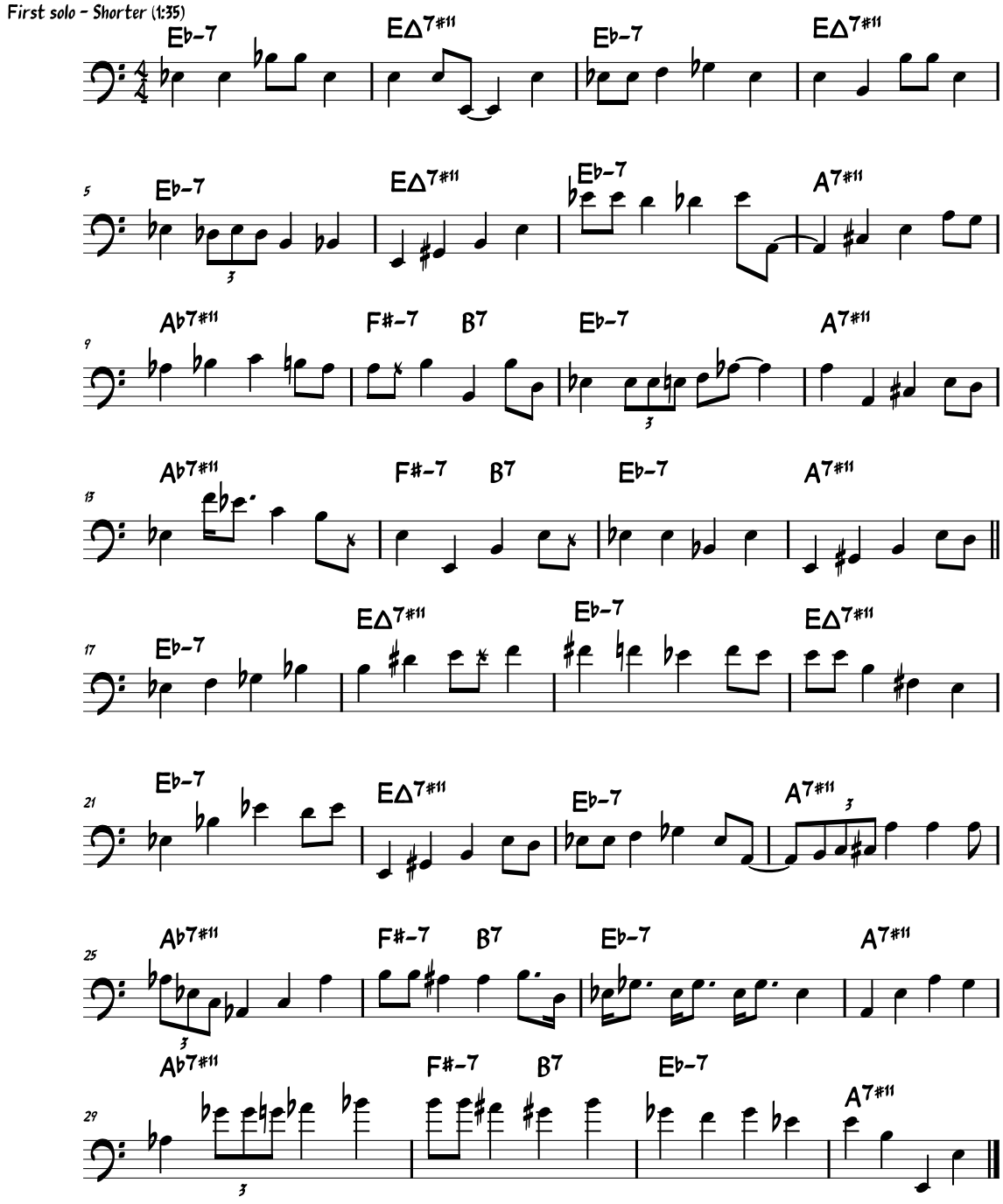
# Deluge

## Reggie Workman Bass Lines

Transcribed by Emma Taylor

Wayne Shorter

First solo - Shorter (1:35)

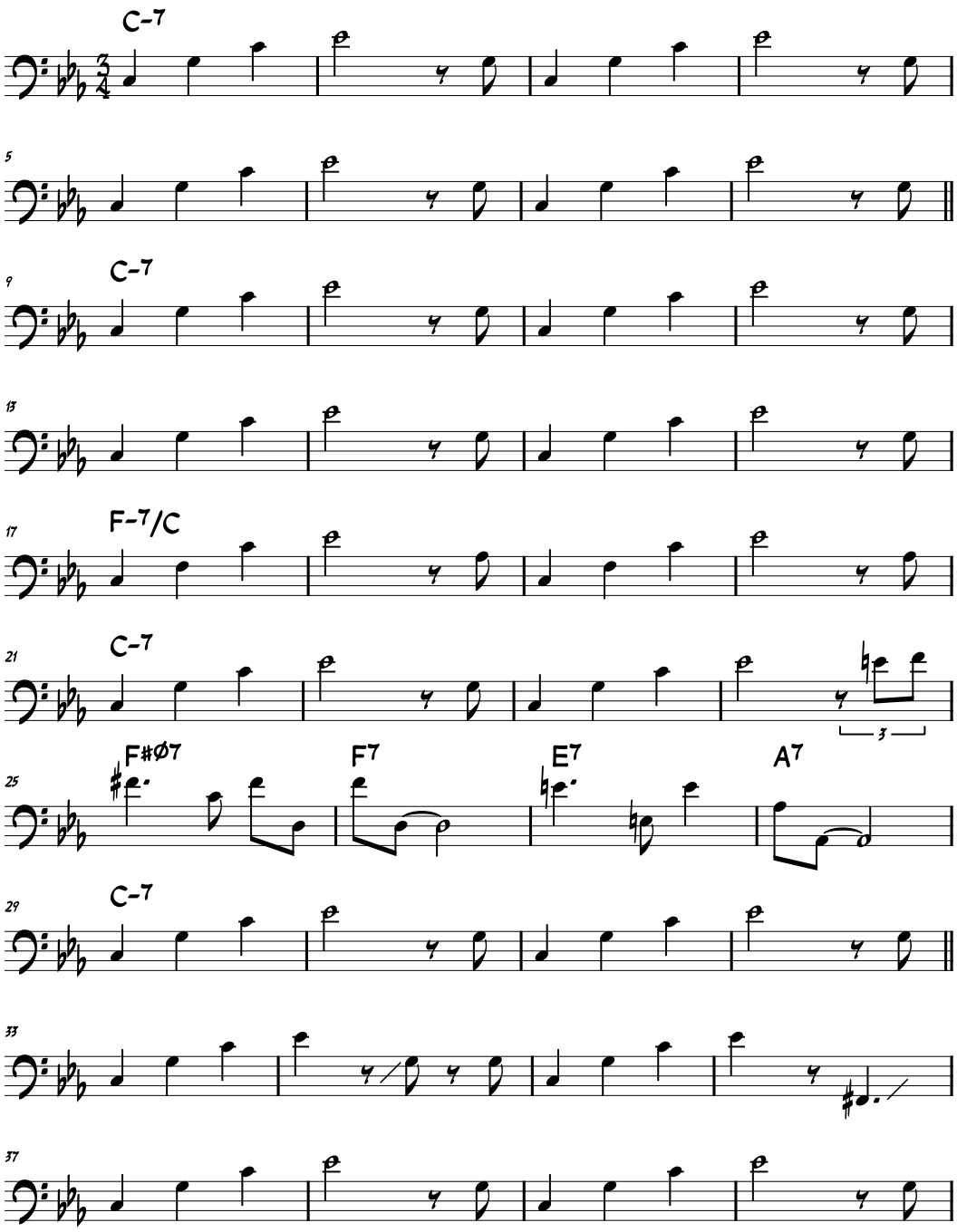


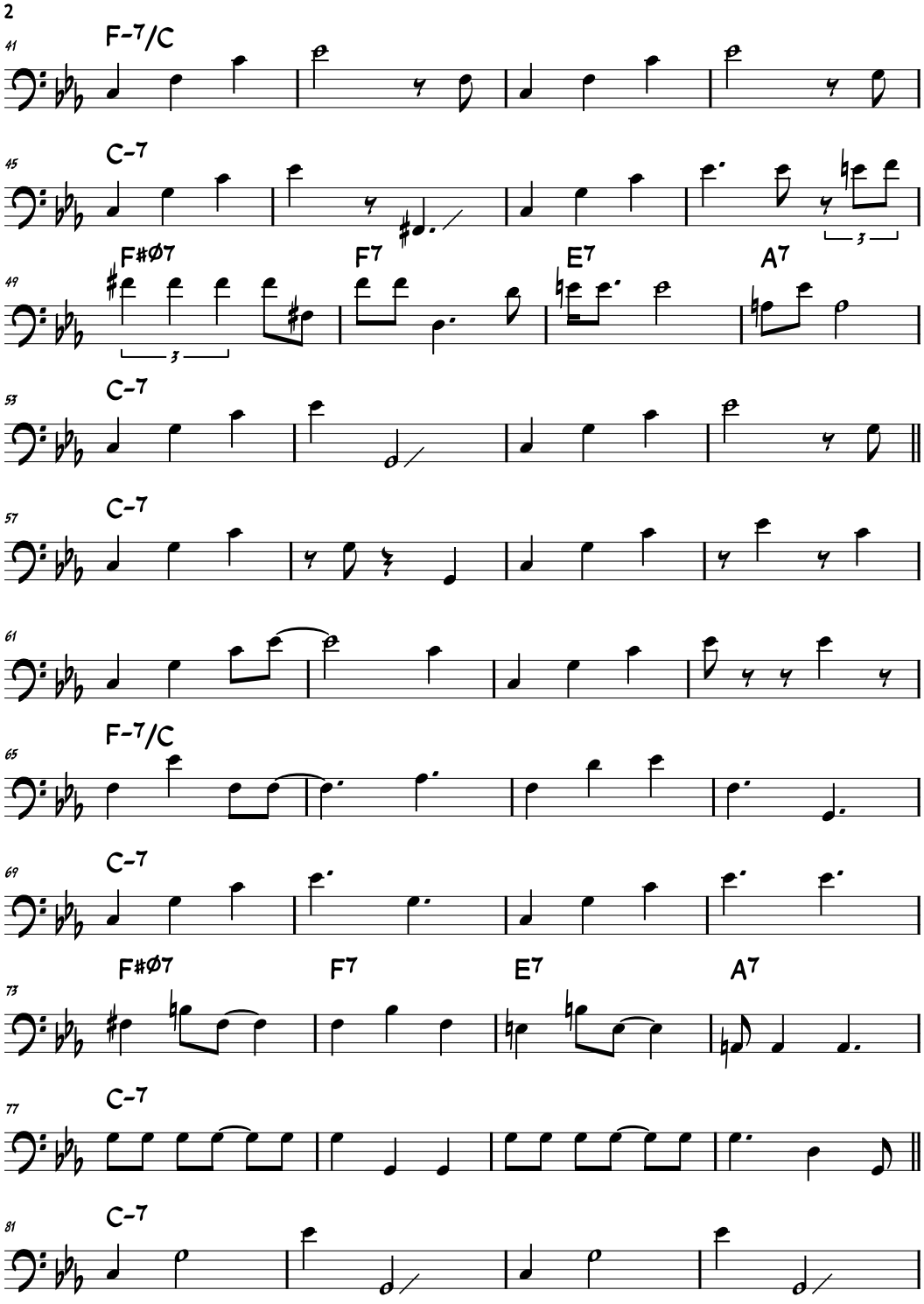
# Footprints

## Reggie Workman Bass Lines

Transcribed by Emma Taylor

Cedar Walton

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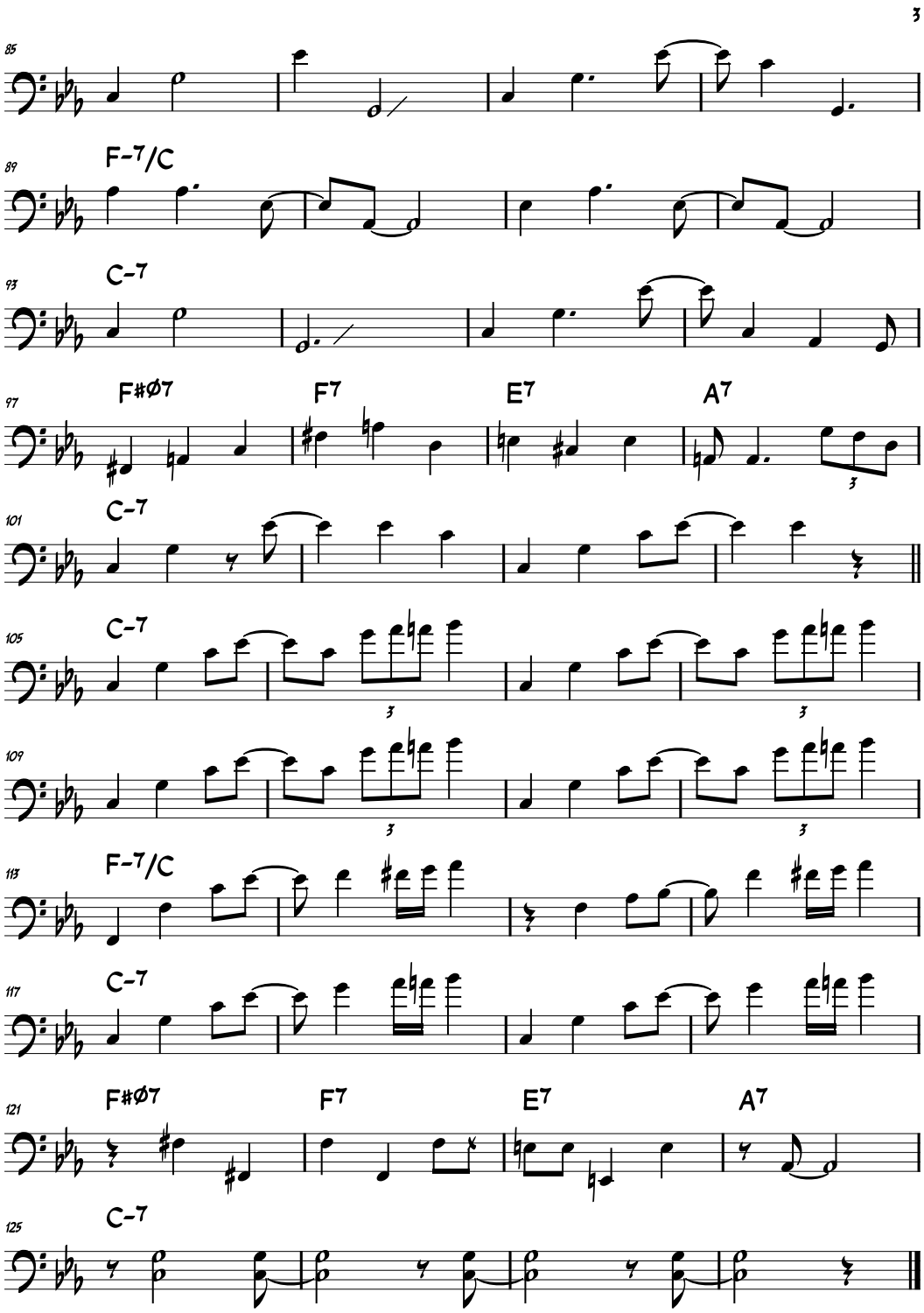
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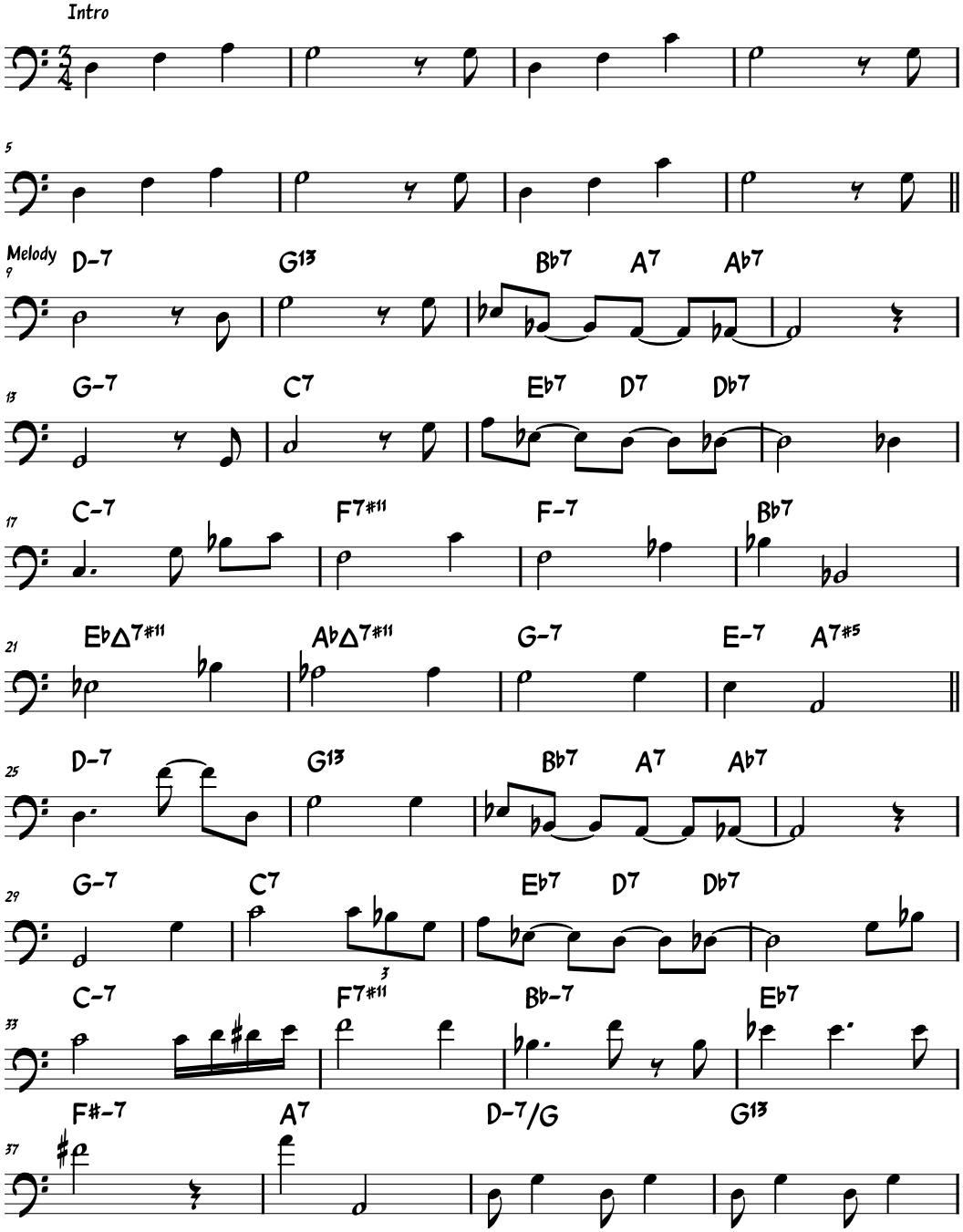
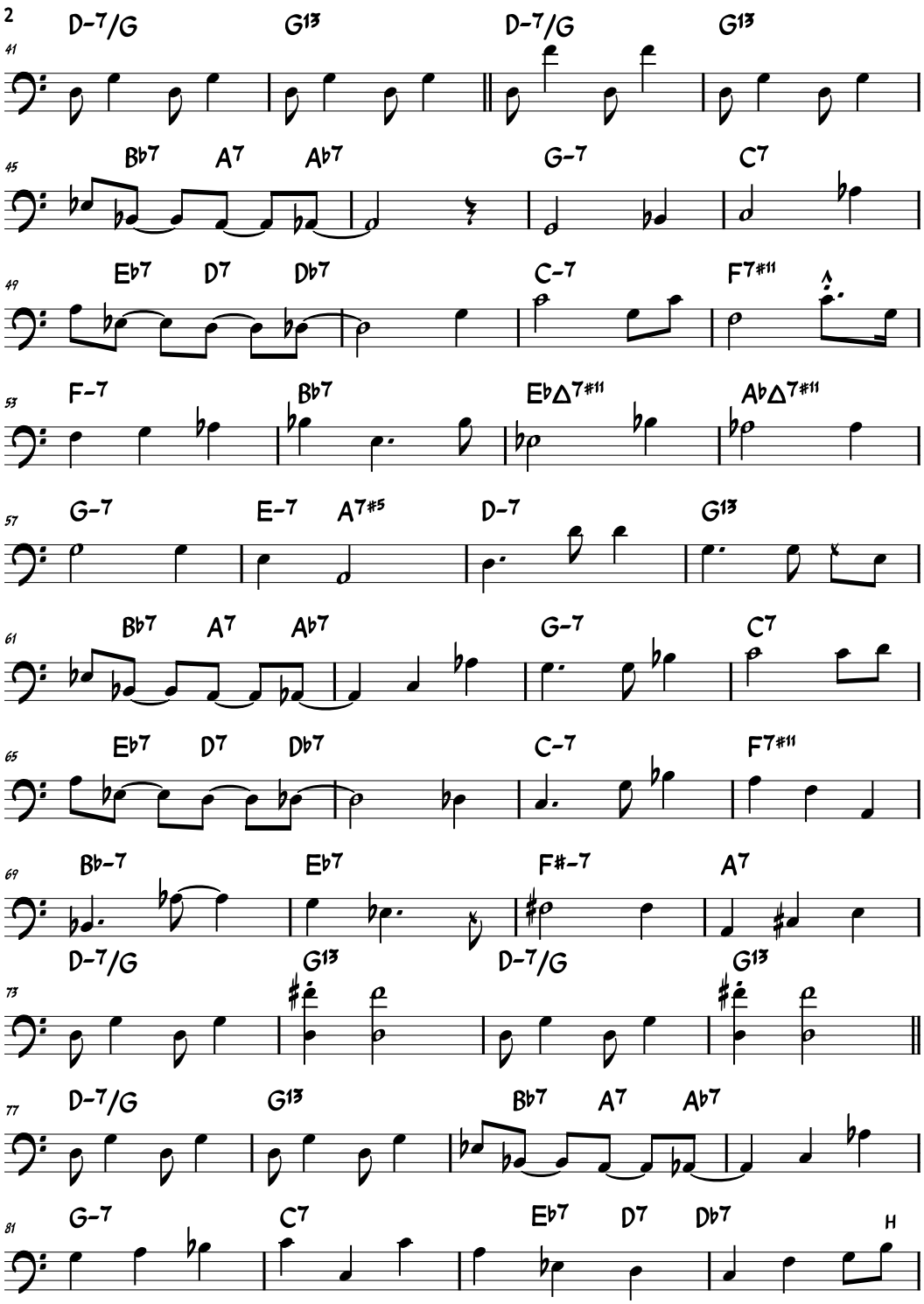
# Sweet'n'Sour

## Reggie Workman Bass Lines

Transcribed by Emma Taylor

Wayne Shorter

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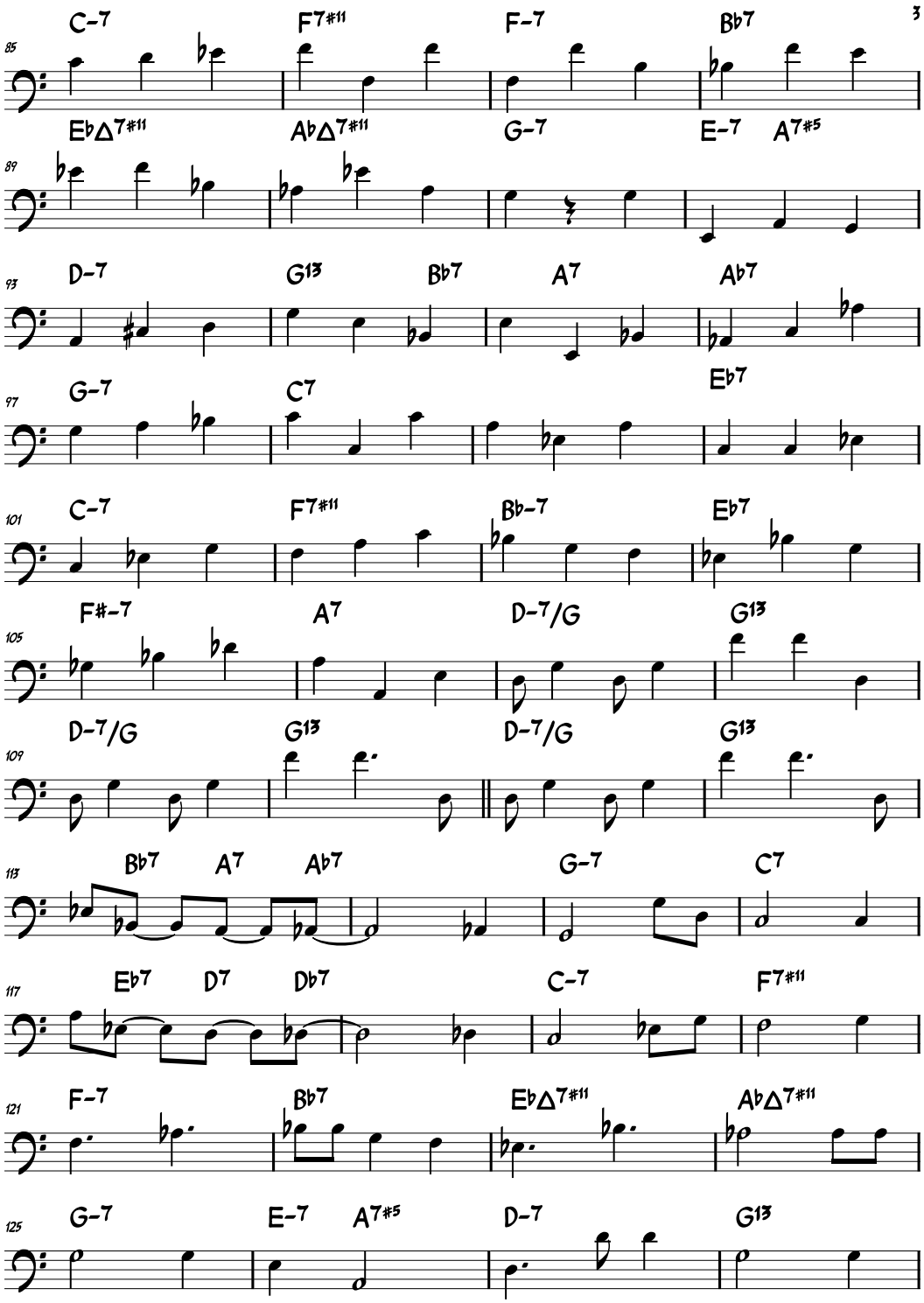
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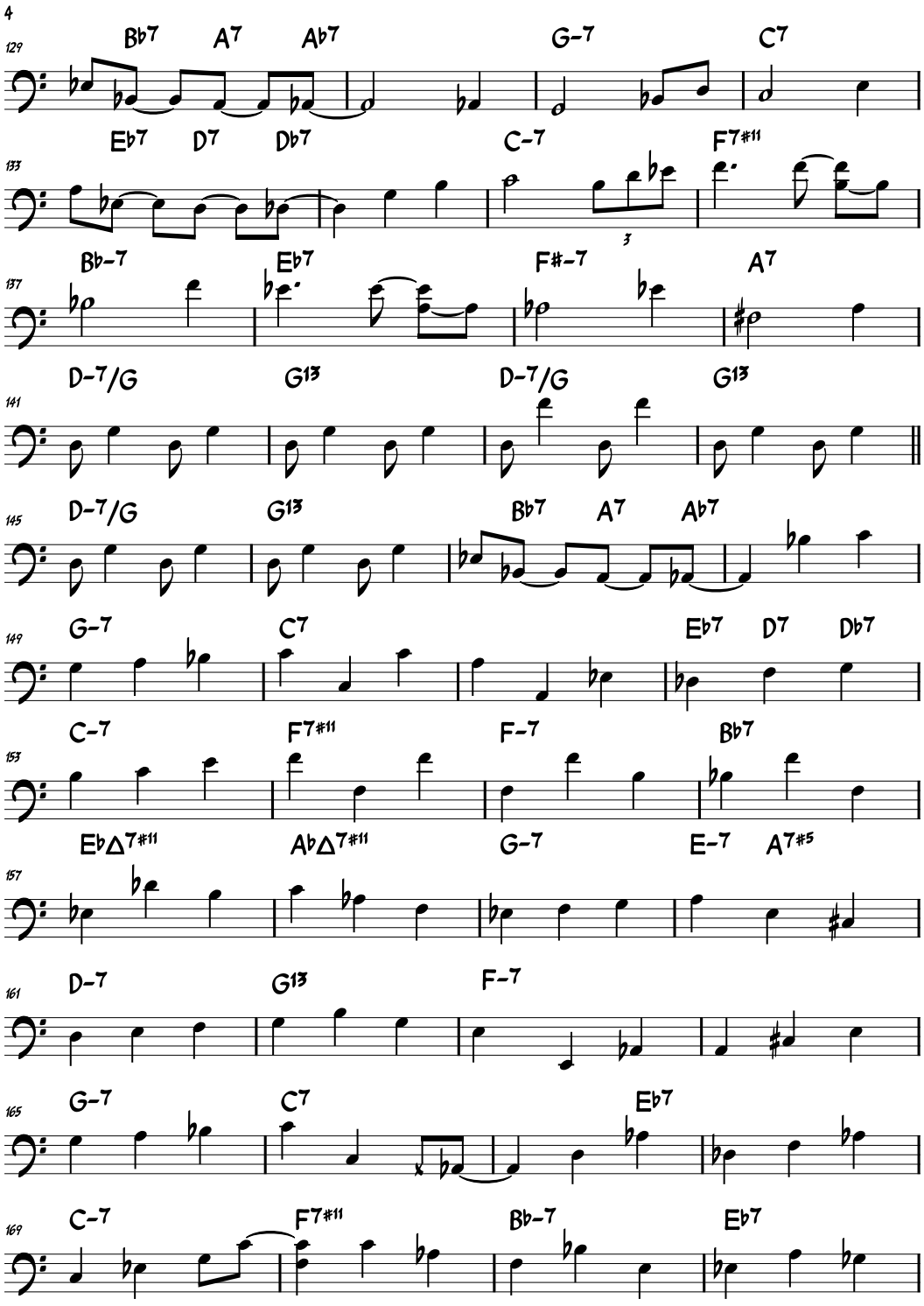
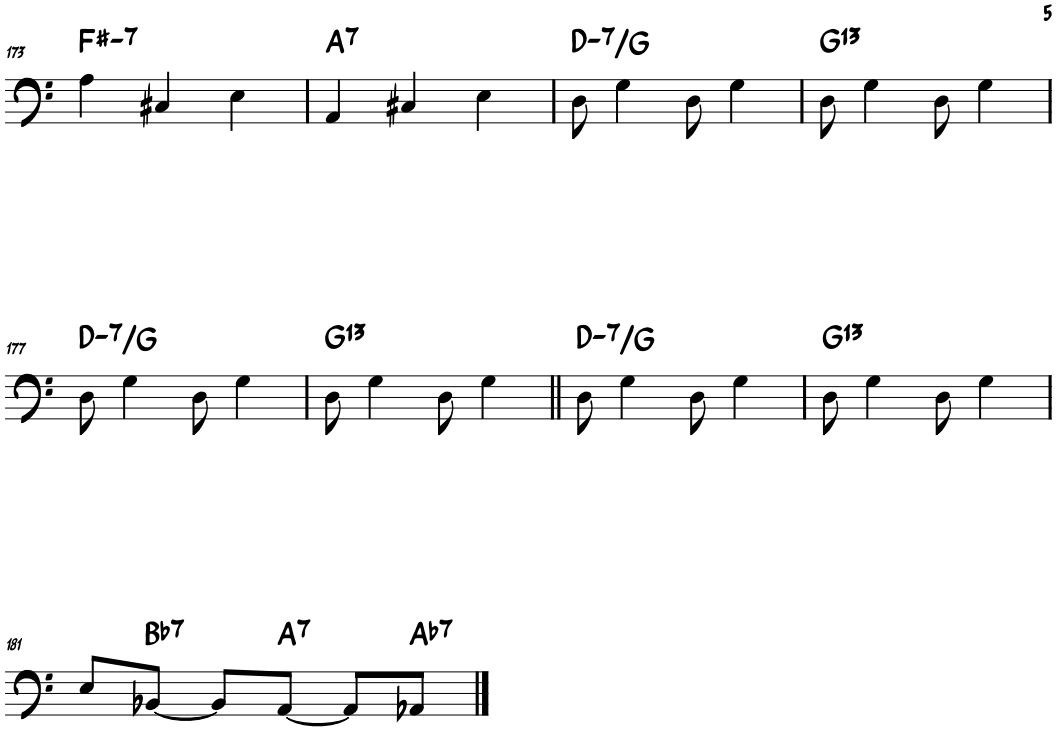
E-7
A7#5
D-7
G13


4
129
B♭7 A7 A♭7 G-7 C7
E♭7 D7 D♭7 C-7 F7#11
133
3
B♭-7 E♭7 F#-7 A7
137
D-7/G G13 D-7/G G13
141
D-7/G G13 B♭7 A7 A♭7
145
G-7 C7 E♭7 D7 D♭7
149
C-7 F7#11 F-7 B♭7
153
E♭Δ7#11 A♭Δ7#11 G-7 E-7 A7#5
157
D-7 G13 F-7
161
G-7 C7 E♭7
165
C-7 F7#11 B♭-7 E♭7
169

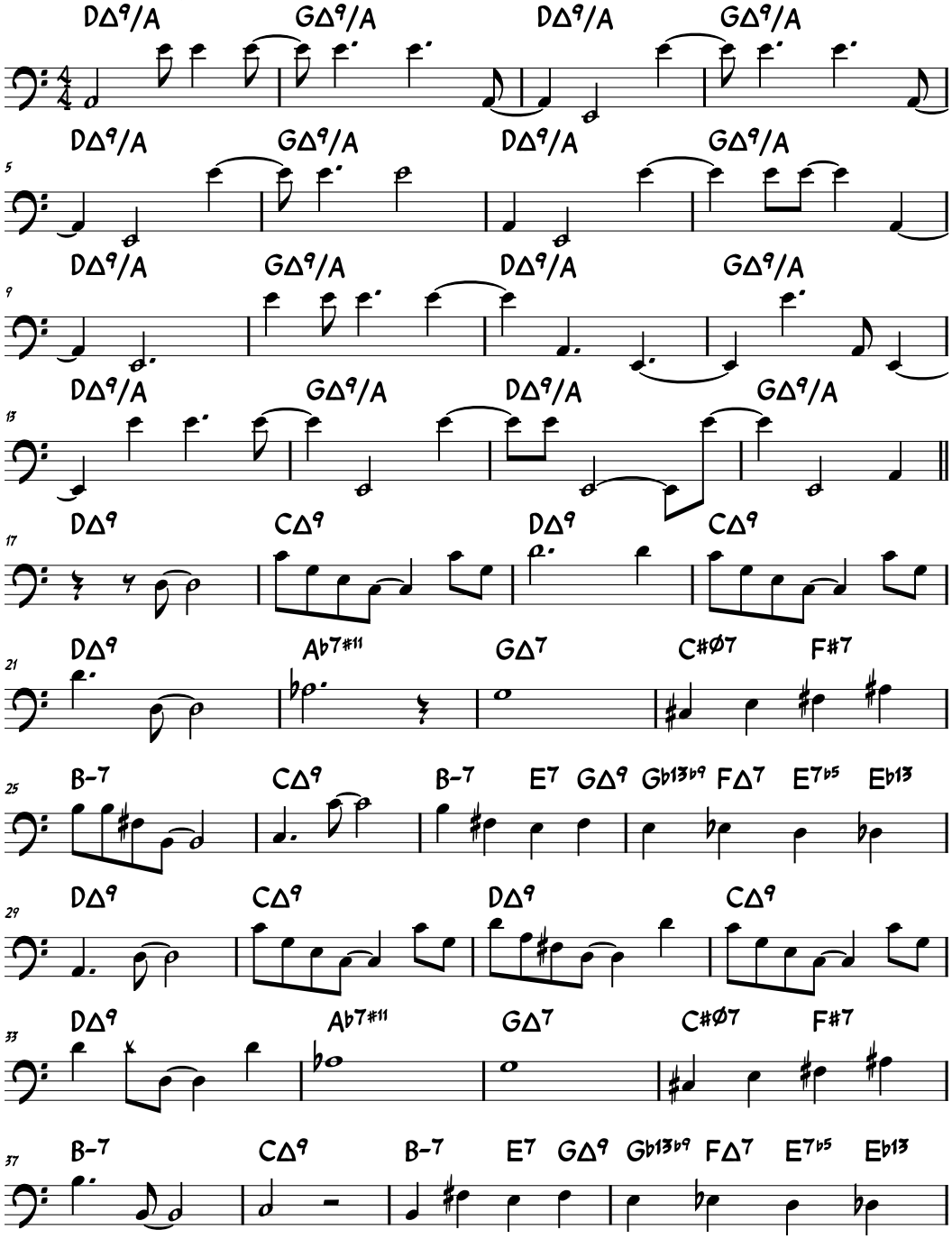

173
F#-7
A7
D-7/G
G13
177
D-7/G
G13
D-7/G
G13
181
Bb7
A7
Ab7

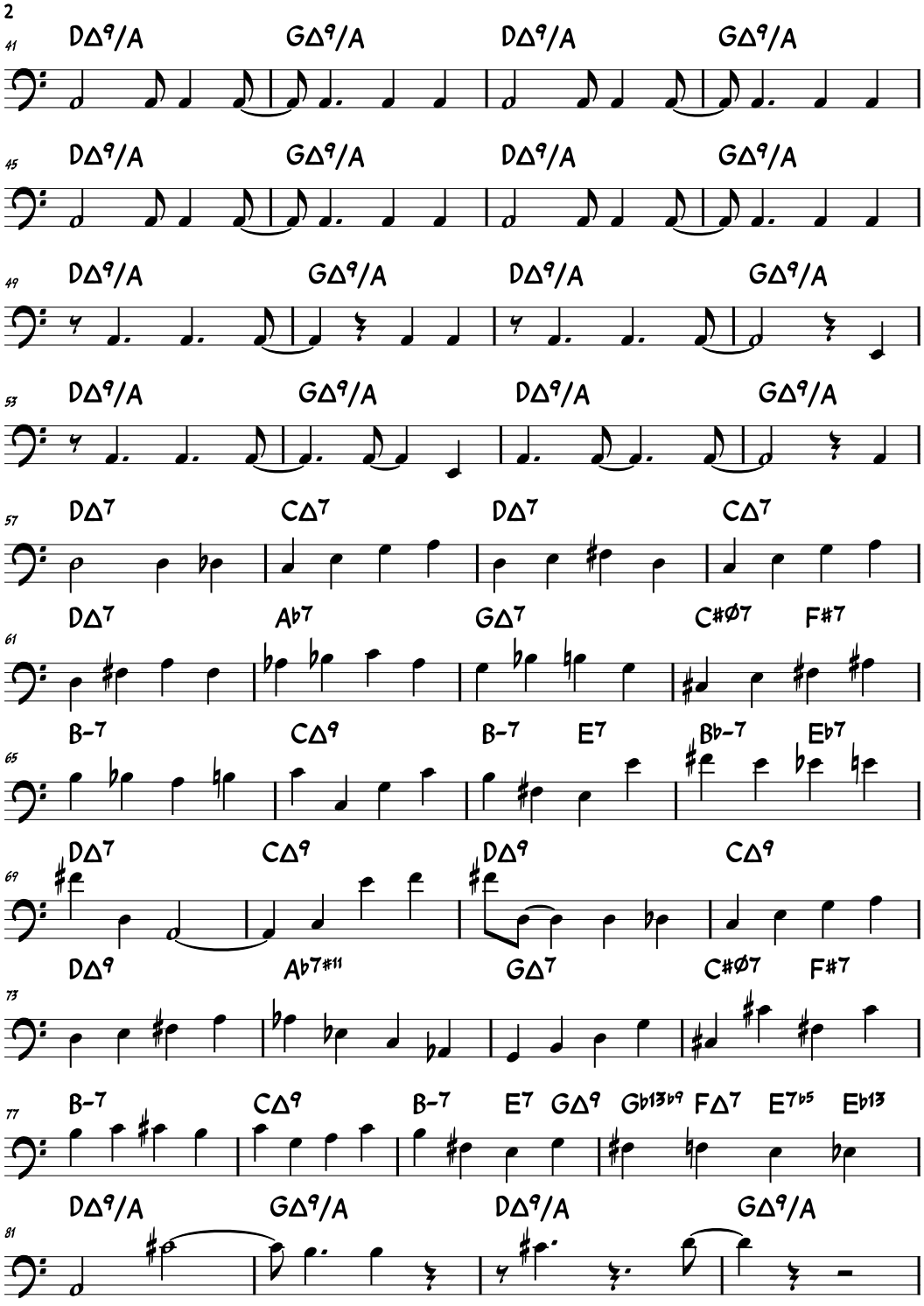
# Ugetsu

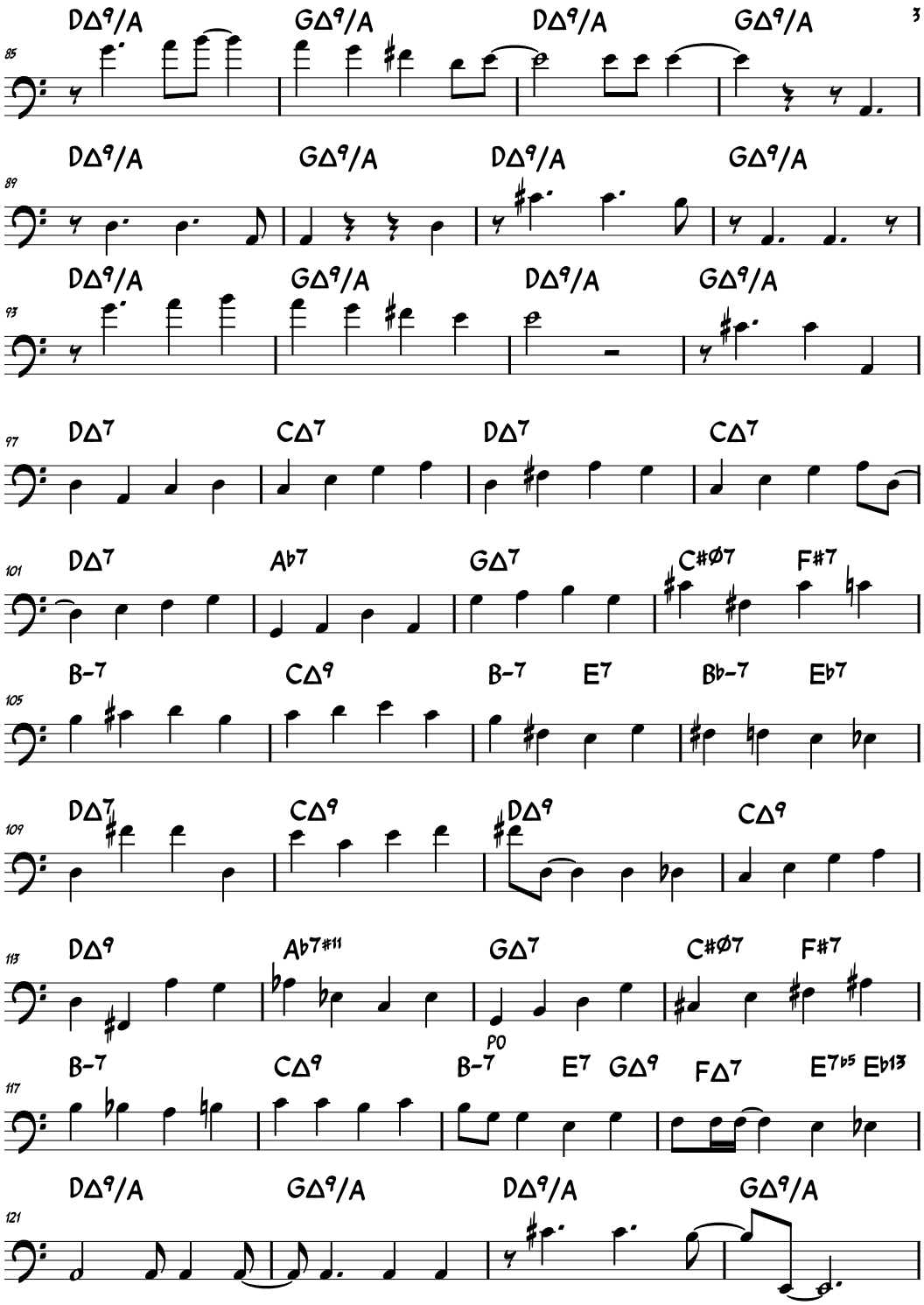
## Reggie Workman Bass Lines

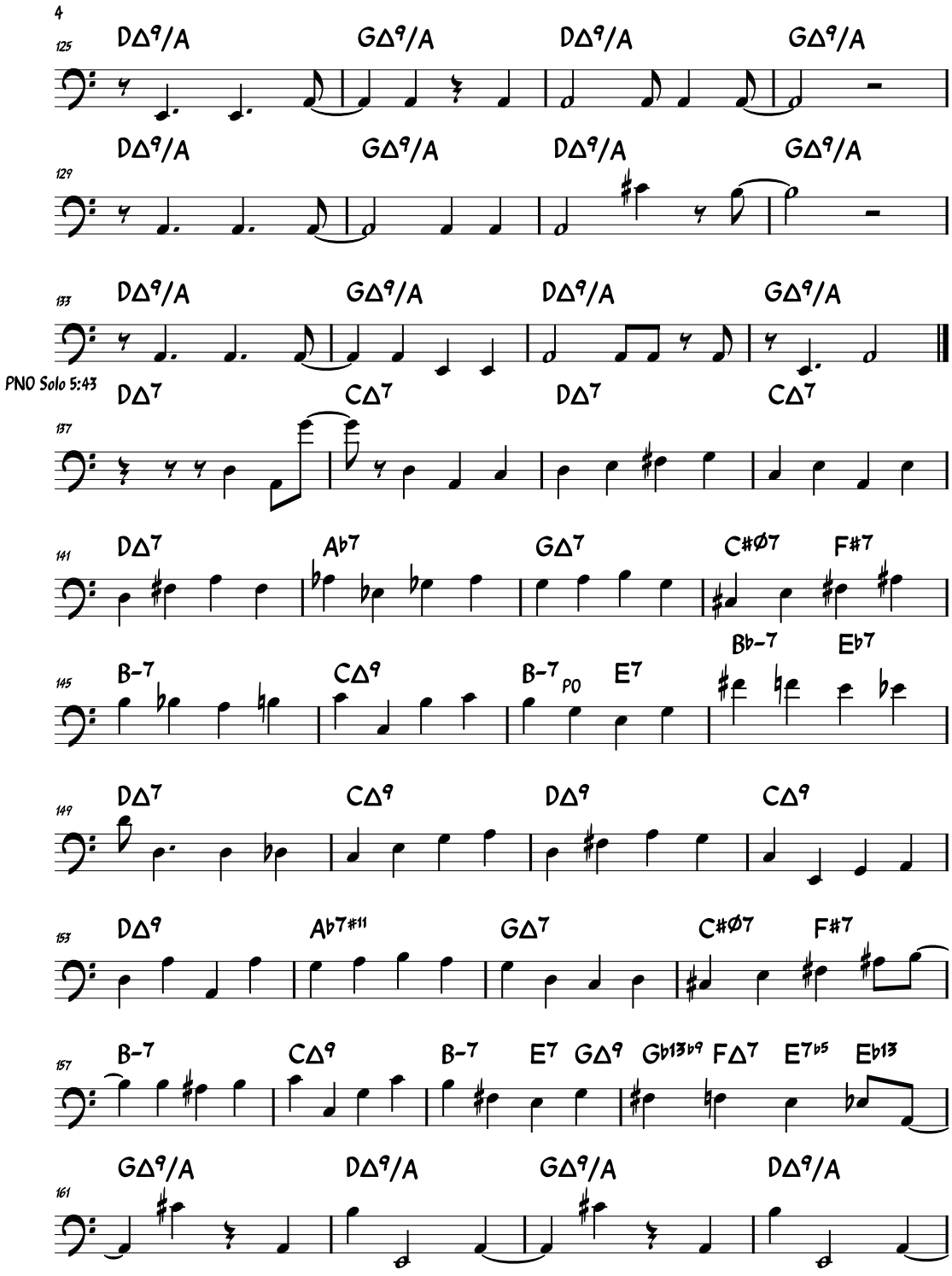
Transcribed by Emma Taylor

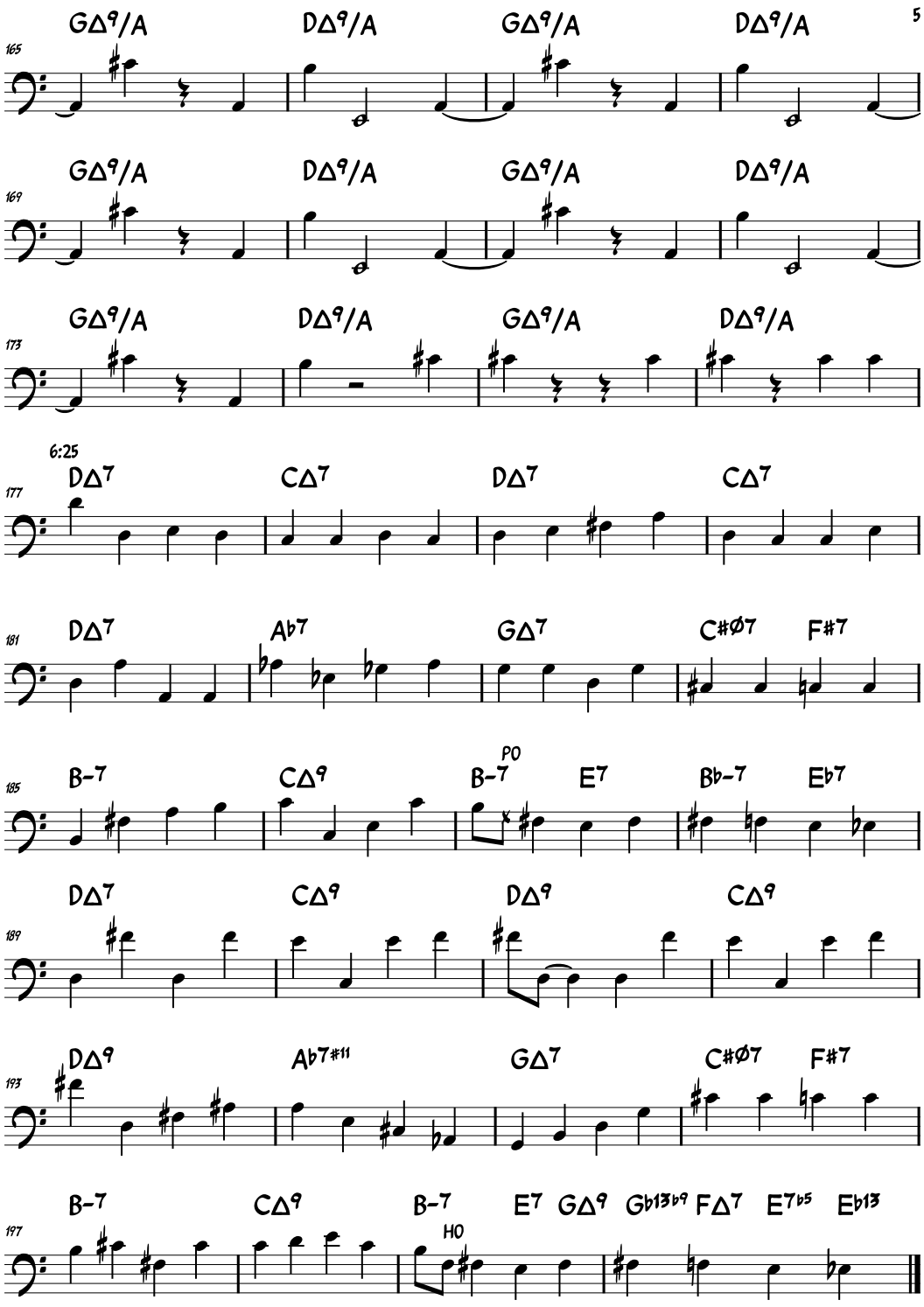
Cedar Walton




2
41
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
45
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
49
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
53
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
57
DΔ7 CΔ7 DΔ7 CΔ7
61
DΔ7 Ab7 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
65
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 E7 Bb-7 Eb7
69
DΔ7 CΔ9 DΔ9 CΔ9
73
DΔ9 Ab7#11 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
77
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 E7 GΔ9 Gb13b9 FΔ7 E7b5 Eb13
81
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A


3
85
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
89
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
93
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A
97
DΔ7 CΔ7 DΔ7 CΔ7
101
DΔ7 Ab7 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
105
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 E7 Bb-7 Eb7
109
DΔ7 CΔ9 DΔ9 CΔ9
113
DΔ9 Ab7#11 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
P0
117
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 E7 GΔ9 FΔ7 E7b5 Eb13
121
DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A


4
125
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
129
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
133
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
PNO Solo 5:43
137
DΔ7
CΔ7
DΔ7
CΔ7
141
DΔ7
A♭7
GΔ7
C#Ø7
F#7
145
B-7
CΔ9
B-7
PO
E7
B♭-7
E♭7
149
DΔ7
CΔ9
DΔ9
CΔ9
153
DΔ9
A♭7#11
GΔ7
C#Ø7
F#7
157
B-7
CΔ9
B-7
E7
GΔ9
G♭13♭9
FΔ7
E7♭5
E♭13
161
GΔ9/A
DΔ9/A
GΔ9/A
DΔ9/A


GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A 5
165
GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A
169
GΔ9/A DΔ9/A GΔ9/A DΔ9/A
173
6:25
DΔ7 CΔ7 DΔ7 CΔ7
177
DΔ7 Ab7 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
181
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 PO E7 Bb-7 Eb7
185
DΔ7 CΔ9 DΔ9 CΔ9
189
DΔ9 Ab7#11 GΔ7 C#Ø7 F#7
193
B-7 CΔ9 B-7 HO E7 GΔ9 Gb13b9 FΔ7 E7b5 Eb13
197