Latin Jazz Piano Technique

TECHNIQUE

by

OLIGARIO DIAZ

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR
MR. OLEGARIO DIAZ

Mr. Diaz studied at the Berklee College of Music, earning a Bachelor in Composition, and the Manhattan School of Music, and holds a Master in Jazz Studies.

He has performed piano in the New York and West Coast areas with such artists as Tito Puente, Willie Bobo, Celia Cruz, Johnny Pacheco, Willie Colon, José Fajardo, Luiz Ramirez, Afro-Cubans, Mario Bauza Big Band, Paquito de Rivera, Victor Paz, Daniel Ponce and many others. Mr. Diaz still plays in the New York area with many different Latin and Jazz bands.

Introduction

The late 1940s saw the emergence of a new school of drummers who combined many influences. Afro-Cuban and Latin rhythms, imported into the Dizzy Gillespie Band by the late Chano Pozo in 1948 were rapidly taken up. Within a few years their use, previously a rarity and regarded as distracting from the authenticity of jazz, could be detected at one point or another in almost every performance by modern jazz groups. This infusion of Latin rhythms drew the to the periphery of jazz a wealth of previously unfamiliar percussive sounds.

Latin Music is founded on a two-measure rhythm pattern, a formula played on a pair of thick hardwood sticks known as the "claves." This is the continuum of all Cuban music. Authentic mambo melodies are "in clave," that is, their main accents correspond with the accent of this two-measure artery. Fundamentals such as rhumba, mambo, merengue and cha-cha constitute a diversity of accentuations, applied to the subdivision of a four-four measure into eight notes.

The piano plays a very important role in this music, for the chords are broken in continuous homophonic unison. This is called "Montuno-Guajeo" or "tumbao" in the Latin vocabulary. Montunos are usually performed with both hands in unison, left hand coupled with right hand on the octave. Harmony chord structures ar written the same as jazz.

This book will explain to the student how to play Latin rhythms from any particular chord inversion, according to the melody, whether instrumental or vocal. For best results, any individual or class using this book should listen to as much Latin music (both live and recorded) as possible.

Olegario Diaz

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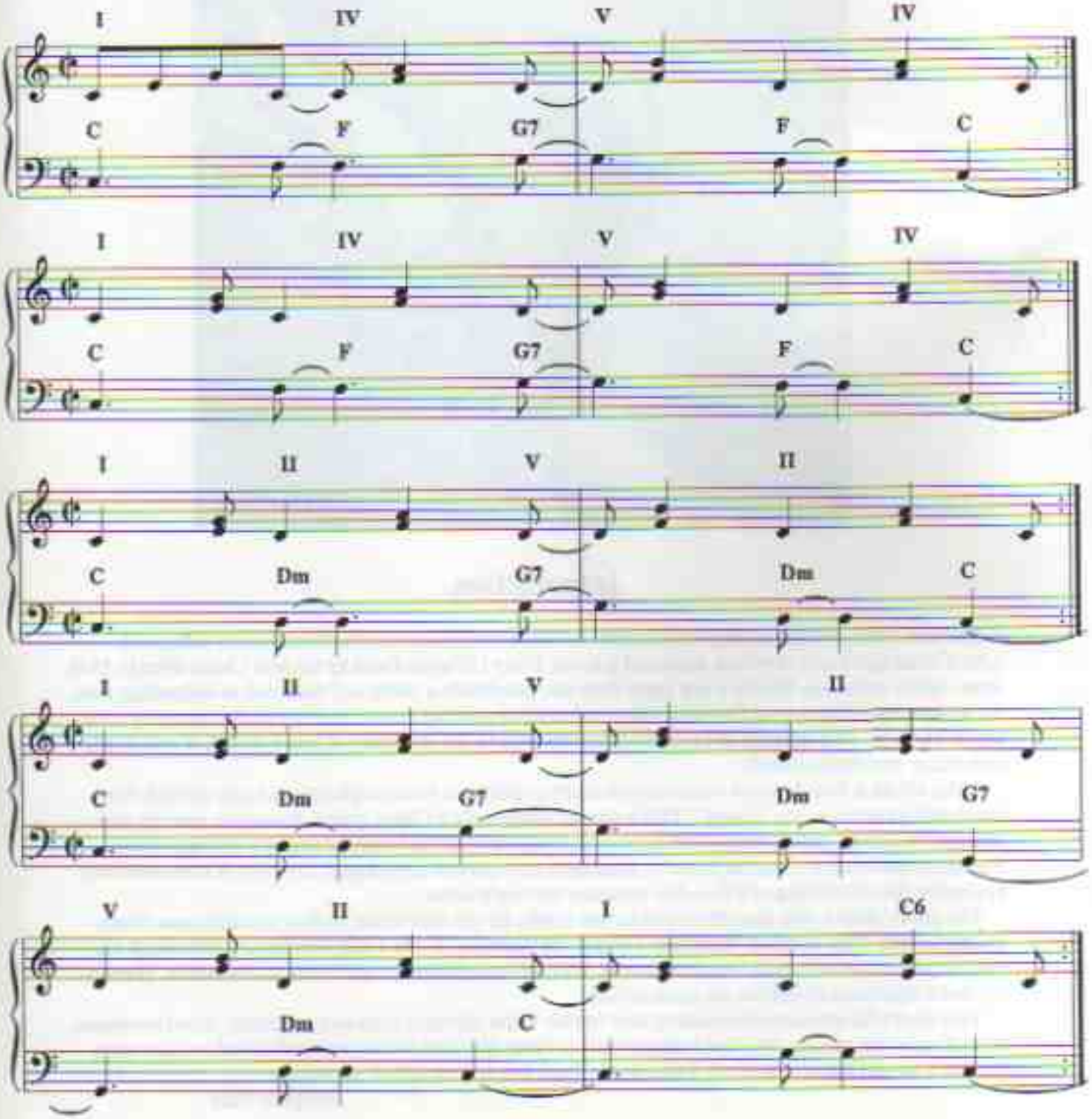
Chapter I

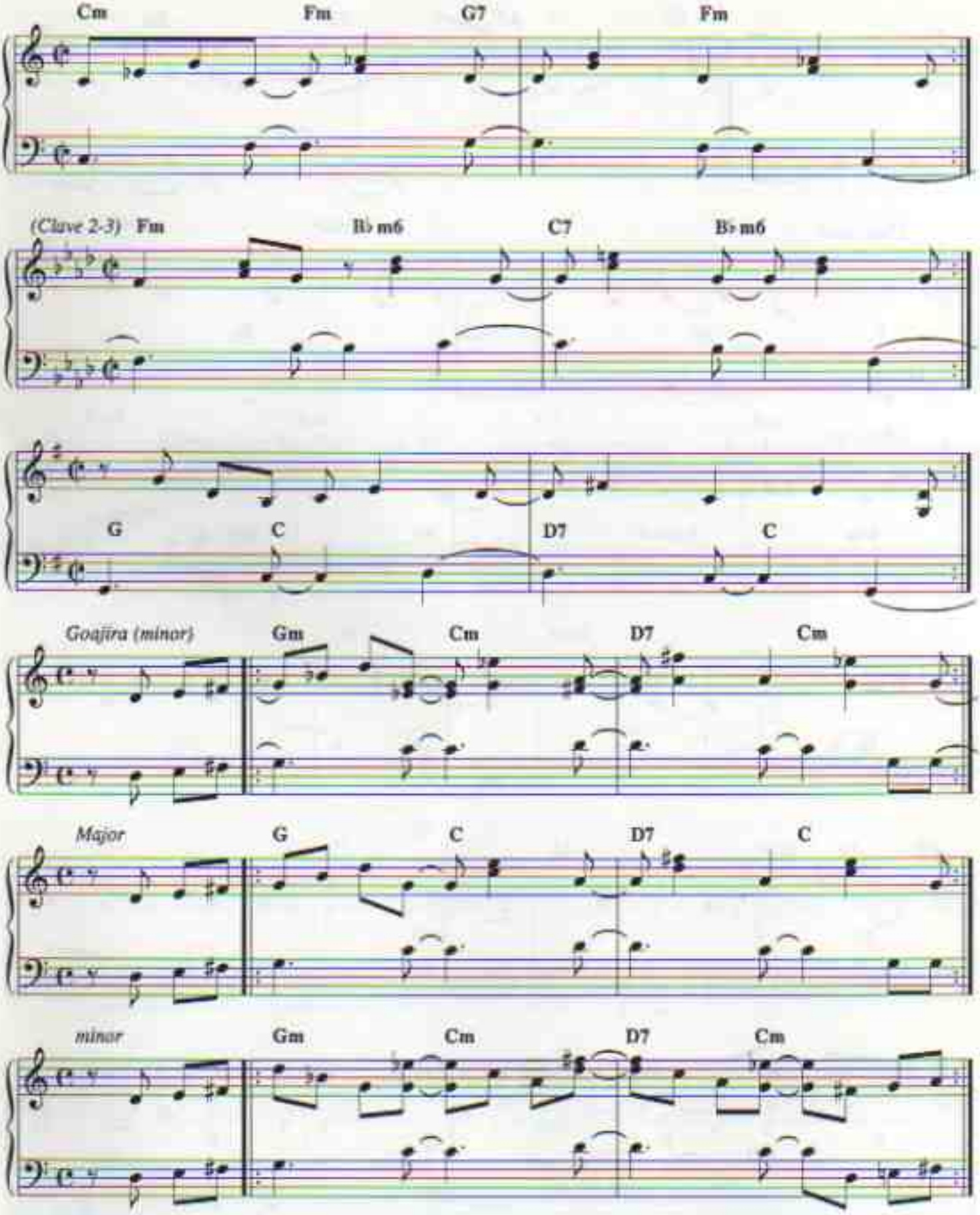
Progressions on the I-IV, V7 Major or I, iim, V7 Minor were commonly played in the 50s by Cuban bands, and is well known as "Son Montuno," "Guijiras," "Charanga Chords," or "Tipico Style."

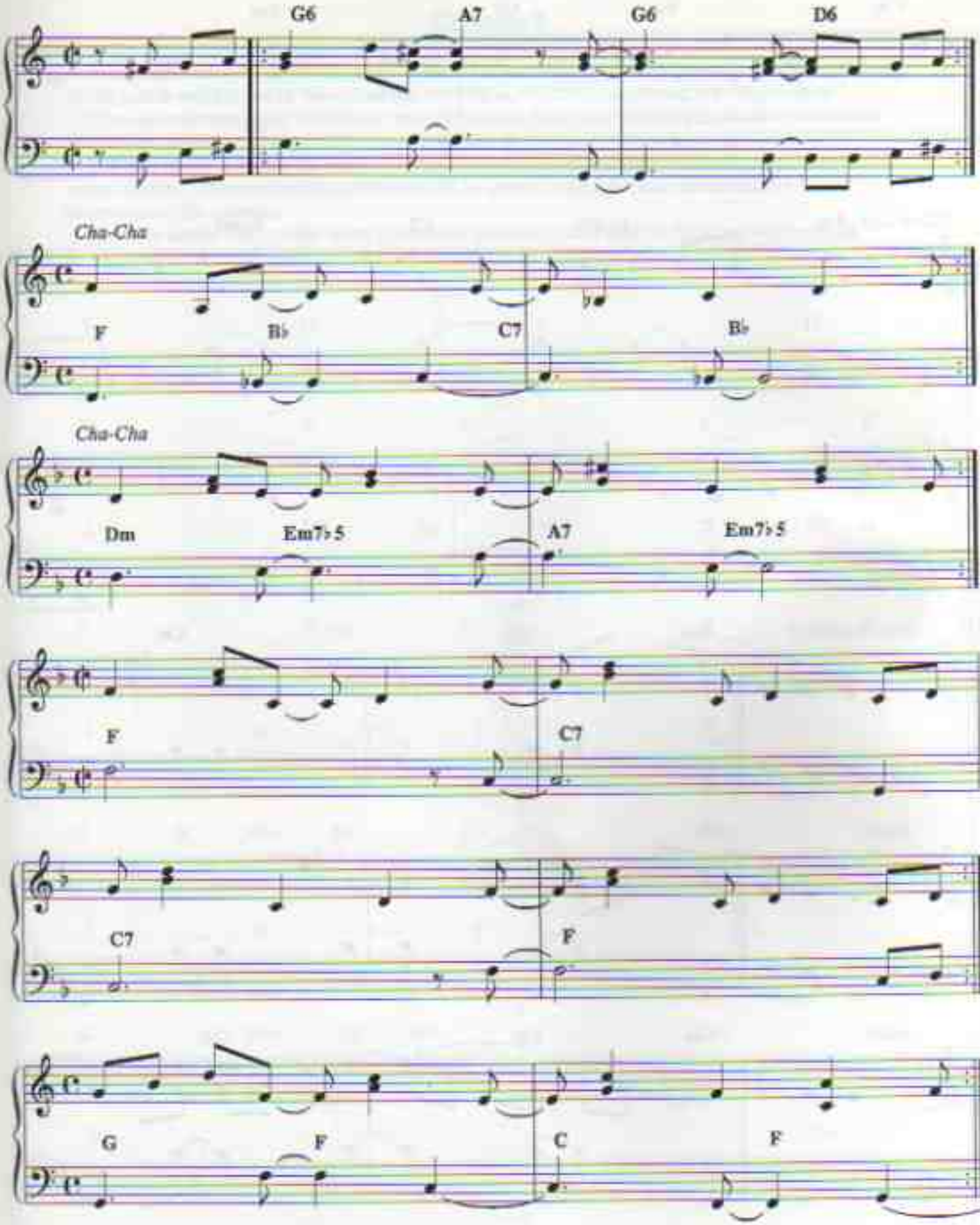
These patterns are playd in major or minor tonalities; right hand will couple unison at the octave with the left hand.

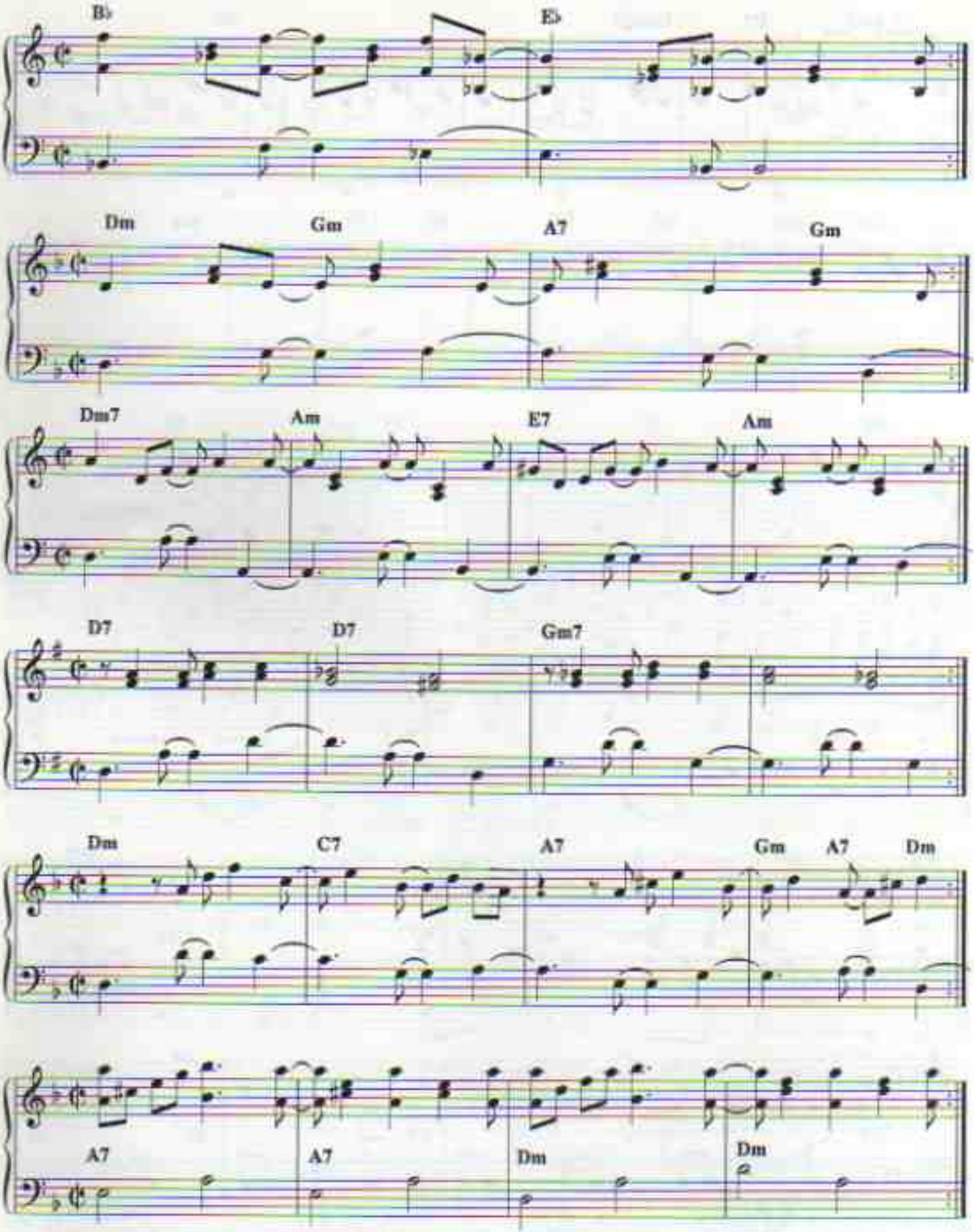
The bass player will play the notes of bass clef. The left hand and right hand will play the same unison at the 8va. These particular exercises should be played in all keys, and memorized for a good knowledge of the material.

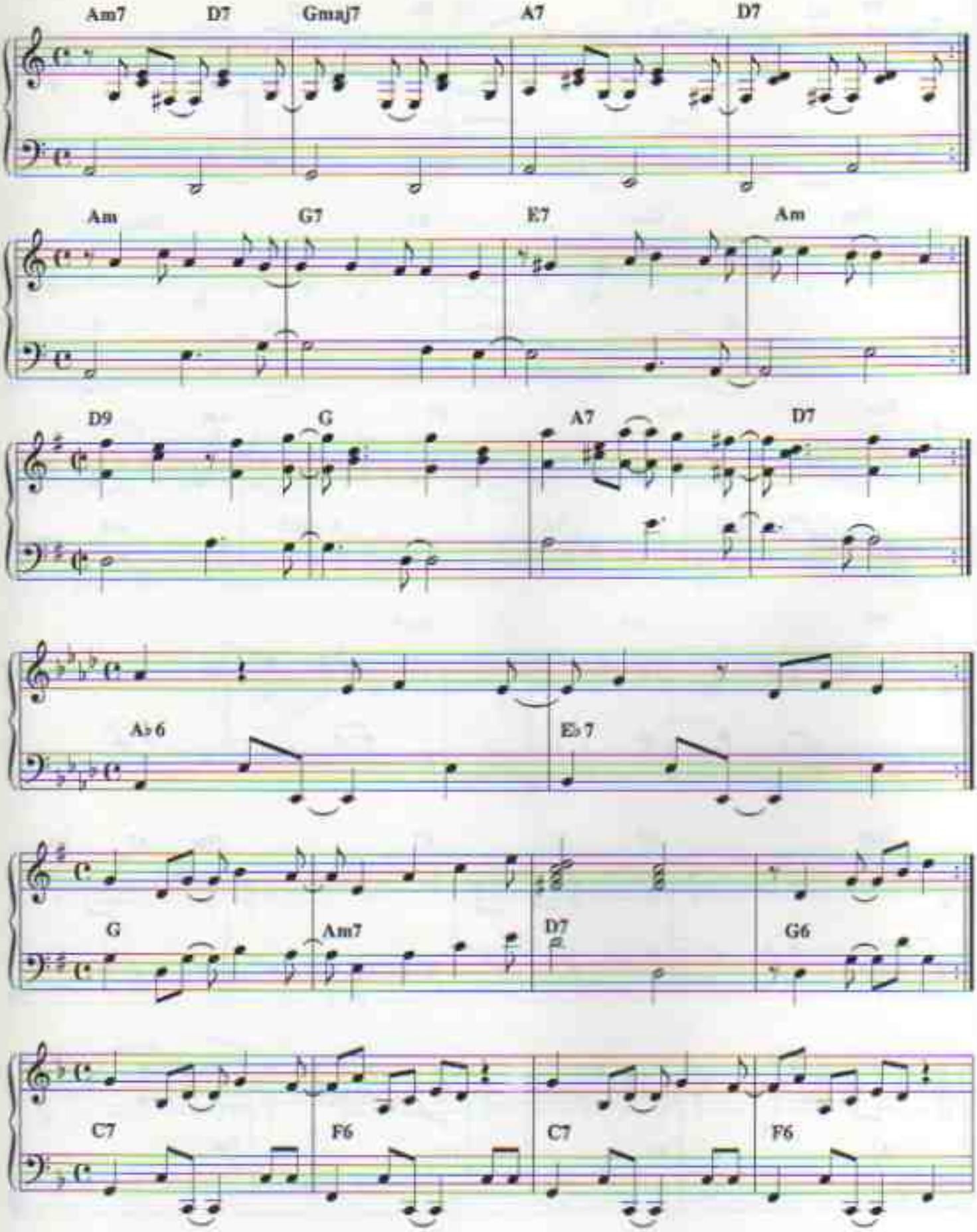
Please be simple and specific when playing the Montuno, otherwise the harmony will be dense.

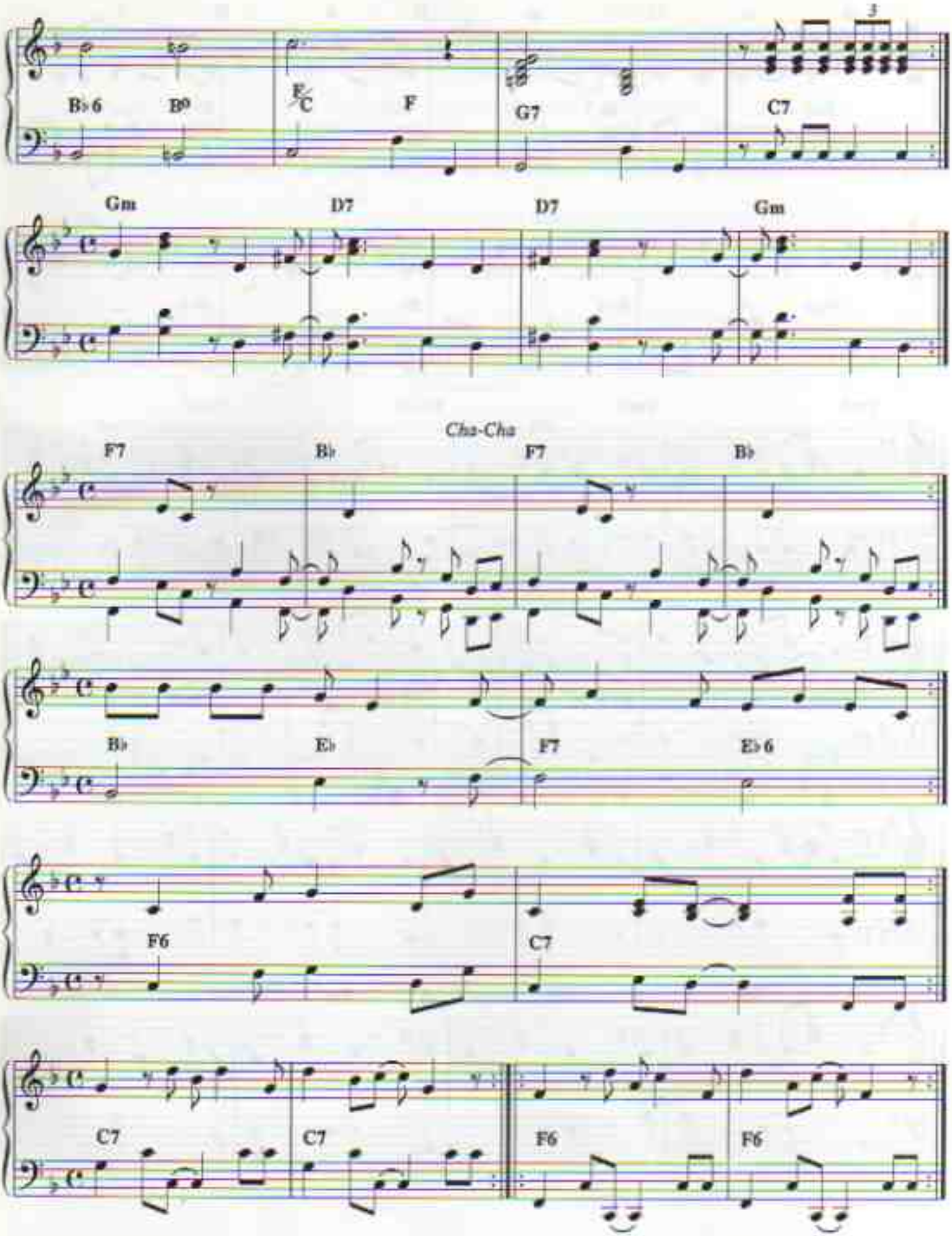


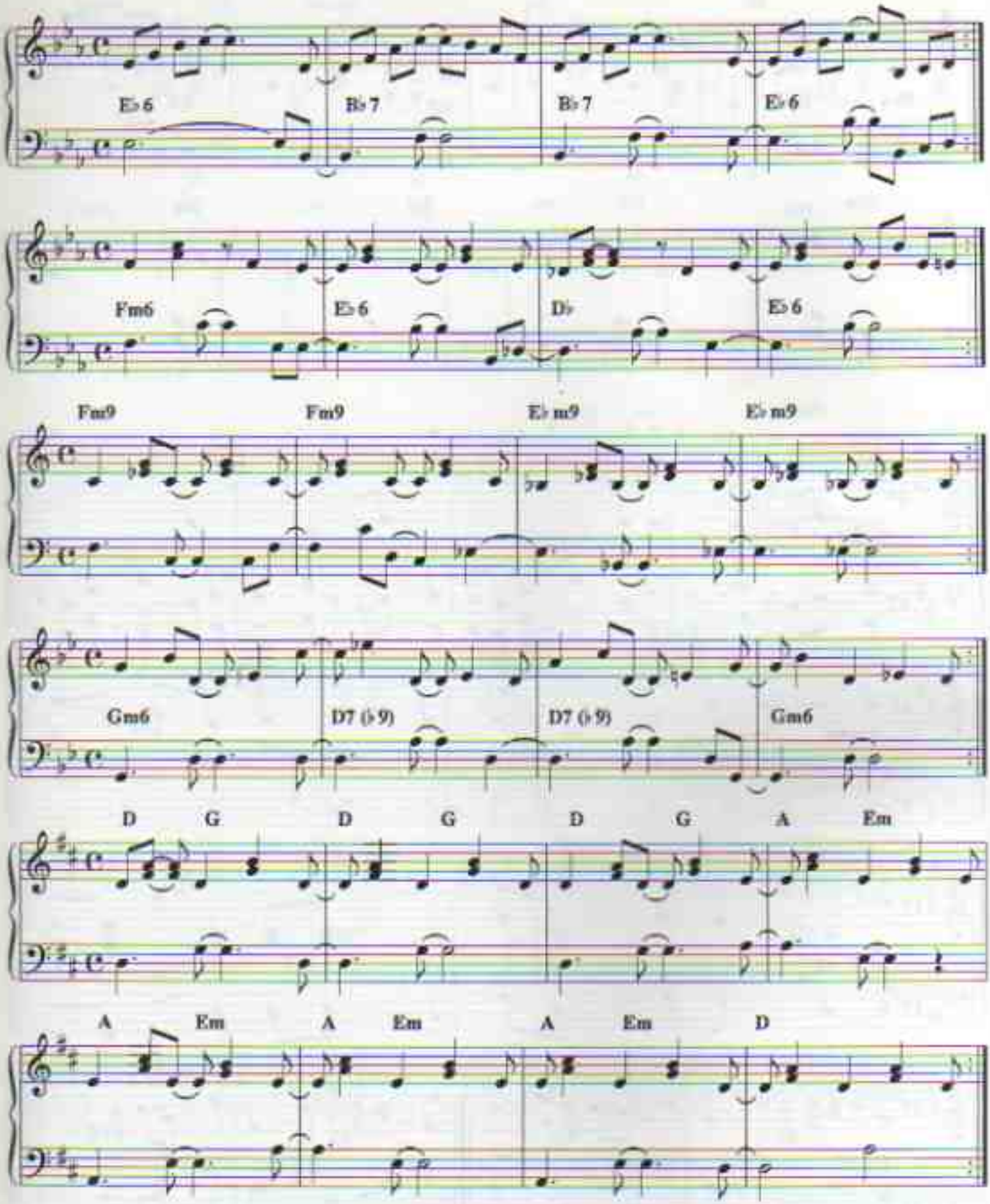

Cm
Fm
G7
Fm
(Clave 2-3) Fm
B♭m6
C7
B♭m6
G
C
D7
C
Goajira (minor)
Gm
Cm
D7
Cm
Major
G
C
D7
C
minor
Gm
Cm
D7
Cm

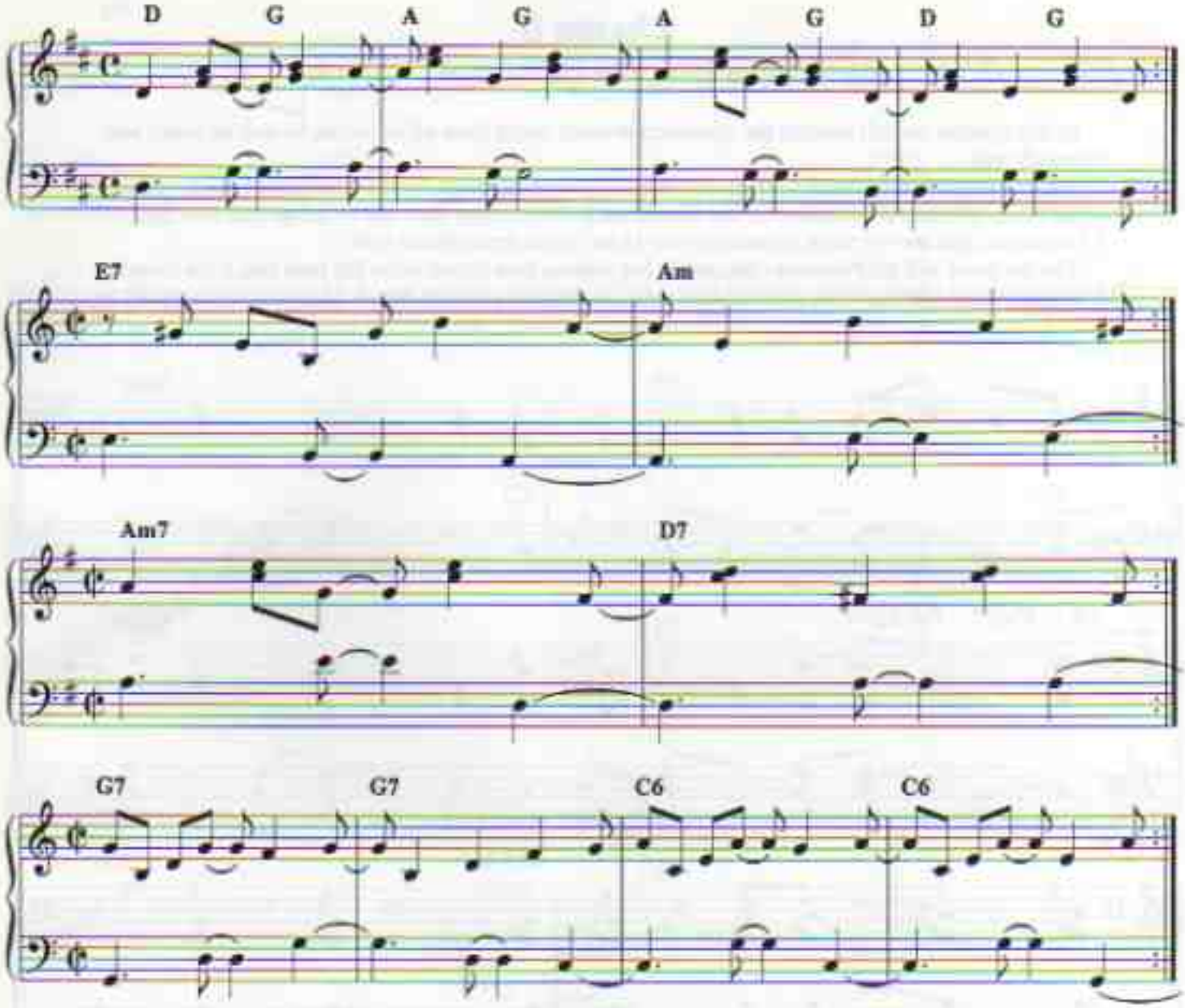

G6
A7
G6
D6
Cha-Cha
F
B♭
C7
B♭
Cha-Cha
Dm
Em7♭5
A7
Em7♭5
F
C7
C7
F
G
F
C
F


B♭
E♭
Dm
Gm
A7
Gm
Dm7
Am
E7
Am
D7
D7
Gm7
Dm
C7
A7
Gm
A7
Dm
A7
A7
Dm
Dm


Am7 D7 Gmaj7 A7 D7
Am G7 E7 Am
D9 G A7 D7
Ab6 Eb7
G Am7 D7 G6
C7 F6 C7 F6


3
B♭6
B♭9
F/C
F
G7
C7
Gm
D7
D7
Gm
Cha-Cha
F7
B♭
F7
B♭
B♭
E♭
F7
E♭6
F6
C7
C7
C7
F6
F6


E♭6
B♭7
B♭7
E♭6
Fm6
E♭6
D♭
E♭6
Fm9
Fm9
E♭m9
E♭m9
Gm6
D7 (♭9)
D7 (♭9)
Gm6
D
G
D
G
D
G
A
Em
A
Em
A
Em
A
Em
D


D G A G A G D G
E7 Am
Am7 D7
G7 G7 C6 C6

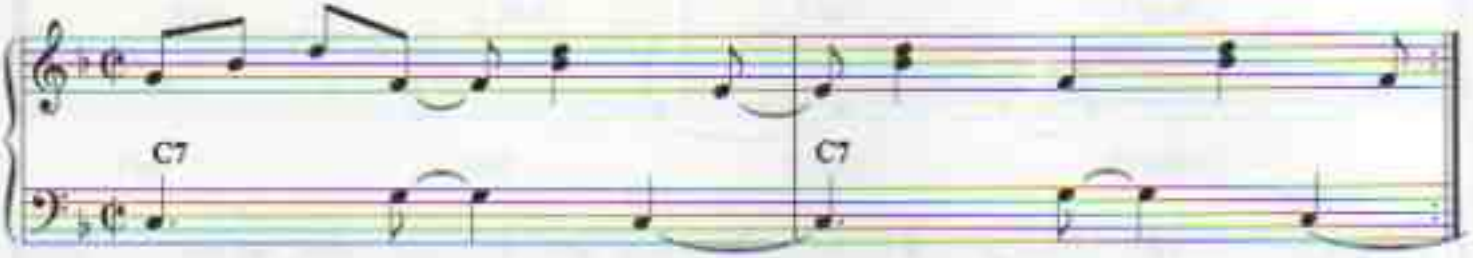
Chapter II
Inversions Over the Dominant 7 Chord

In this chapter we will analyze the dominant seventh chord from all its points, as well as Major and minor chords.

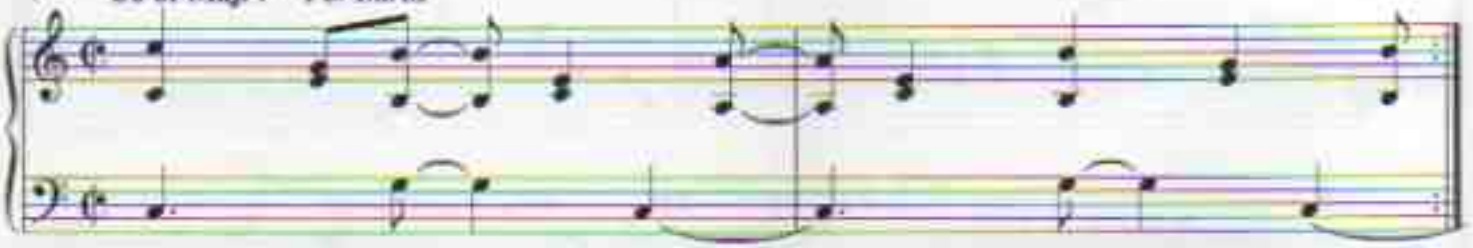
You can play a Latin number just on one dominant chord change, called "Descarga Latina." We will cover many different Montunos over the Dominant 7 chord. Some time can be integrated over the iim7, V7 situation, and we will write Montunos over 12 bar blues structures as well.

The left hand will play same as right hand, 8va unison; bass player plays the bass line. Like Chapter I, be simple and specific when playing, otherwise the harmony will be dense. These exercises should be

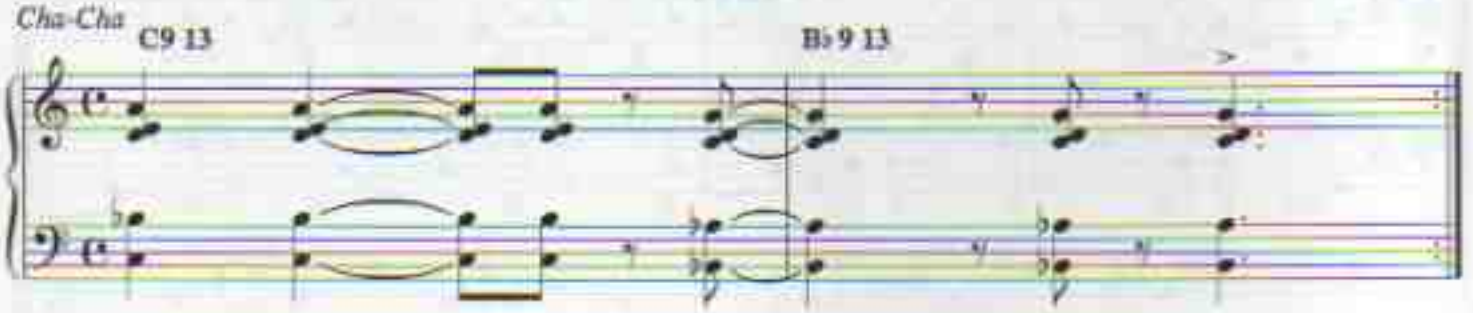
Clave

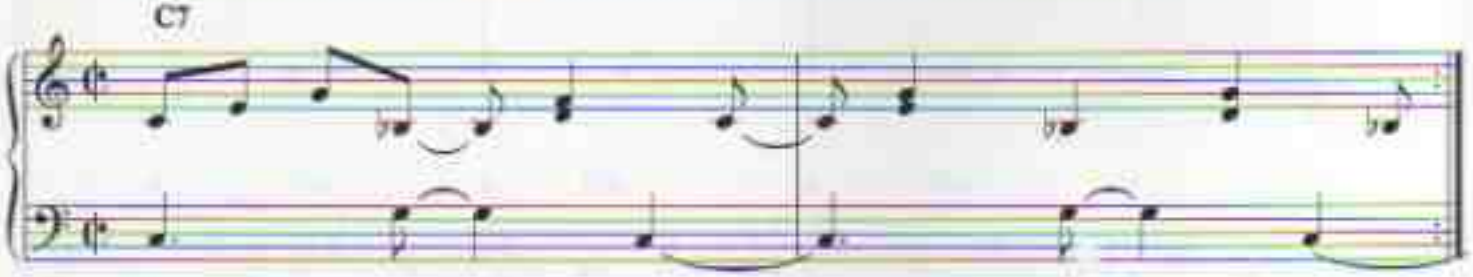


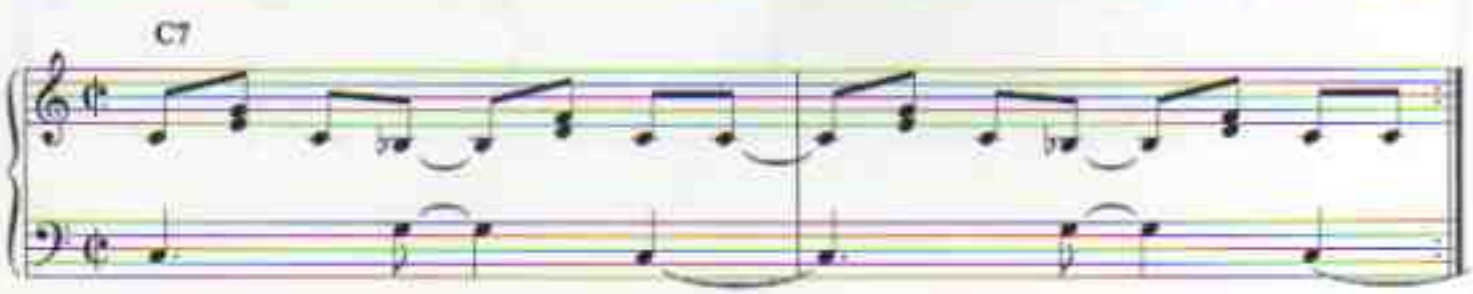
C6 or Maj. 7 *For Intros*

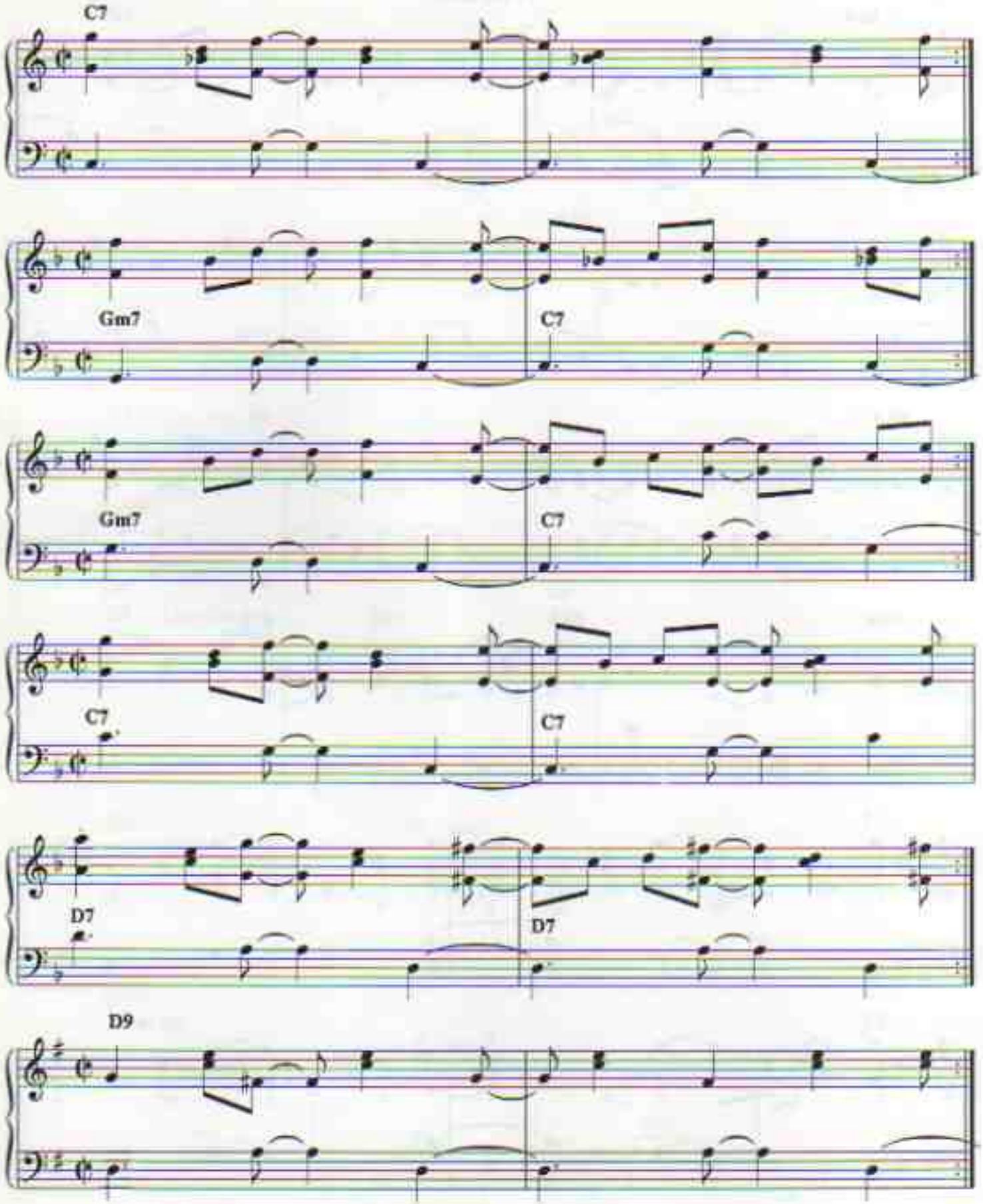


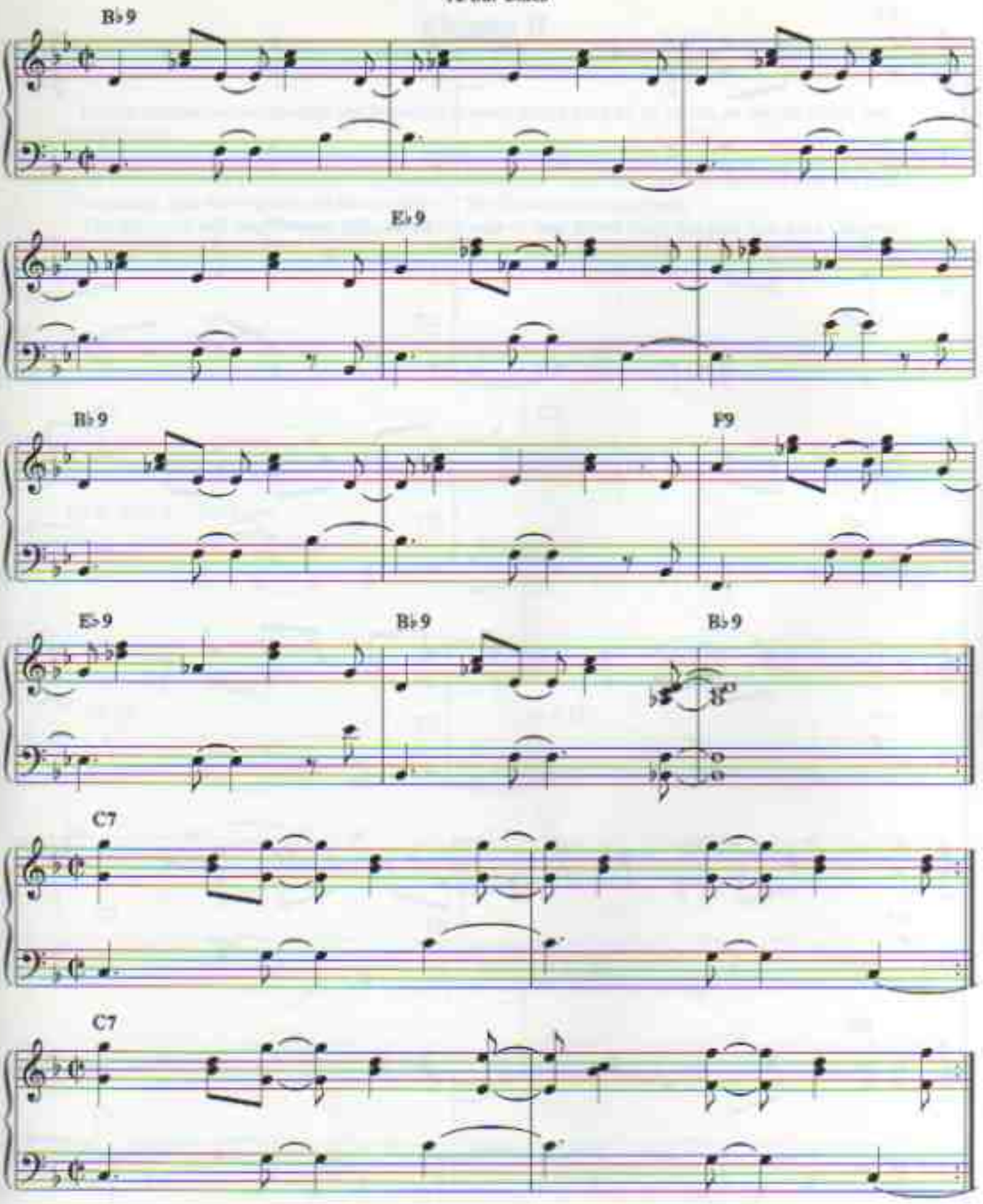
Cha-Cha

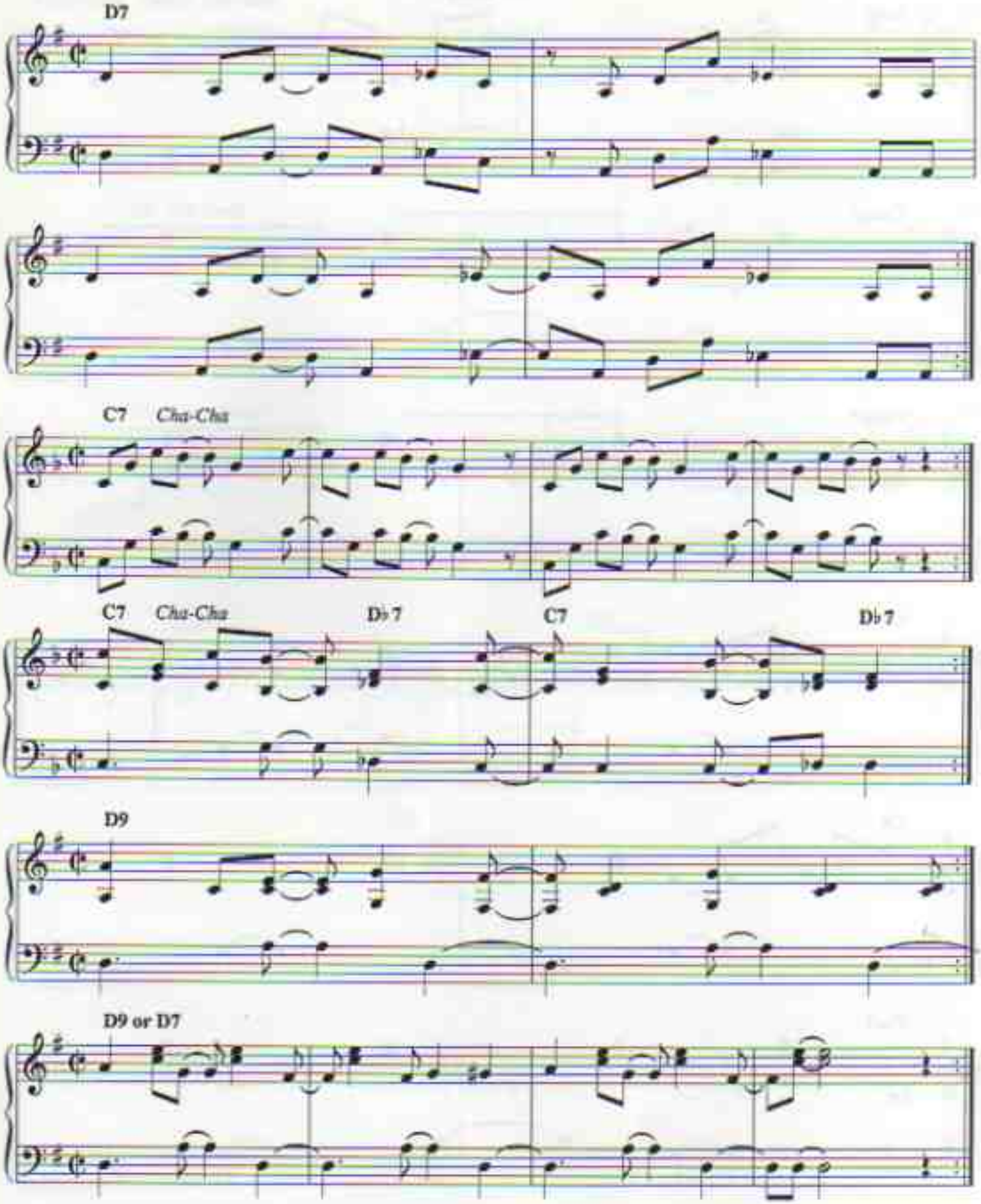


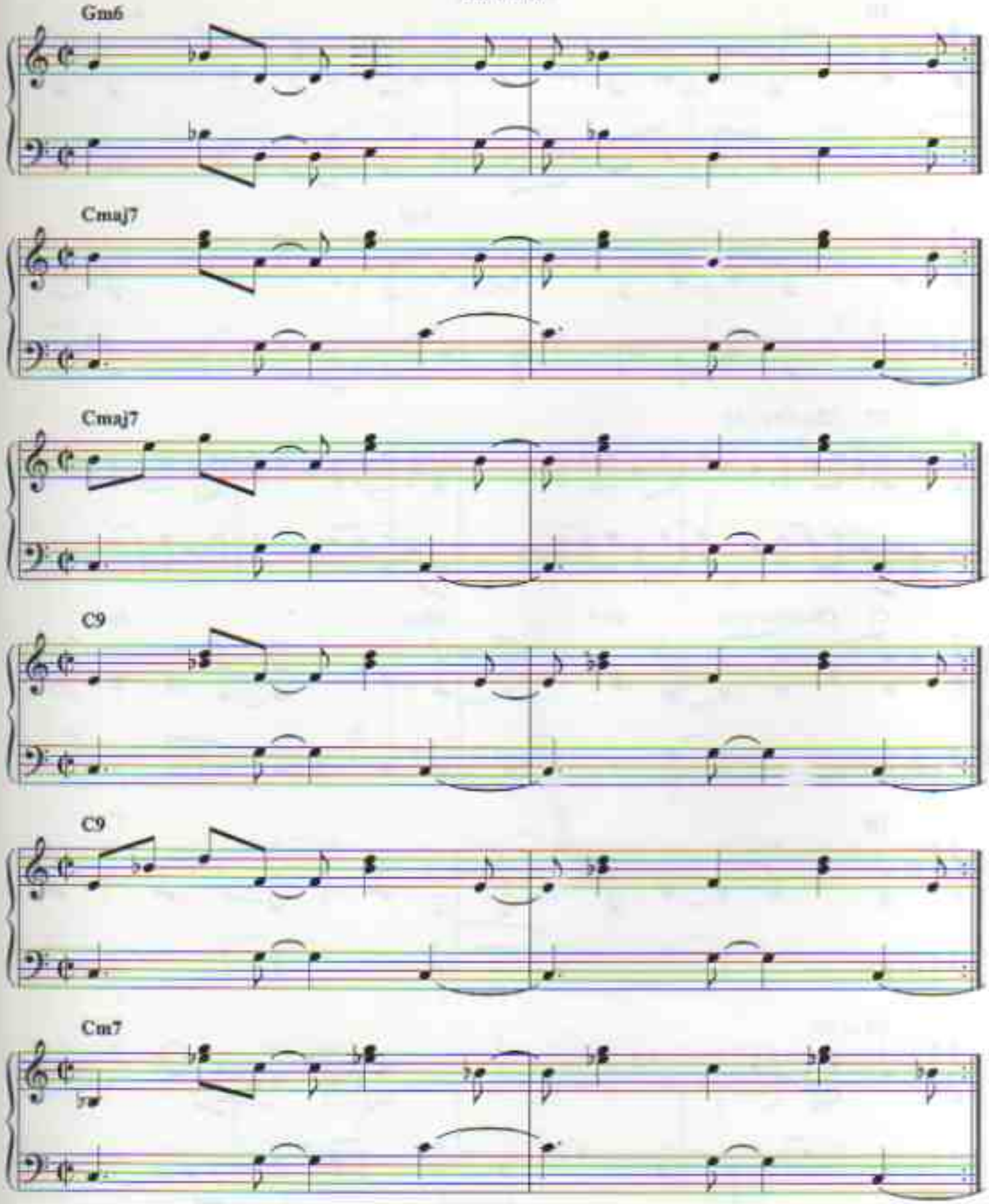


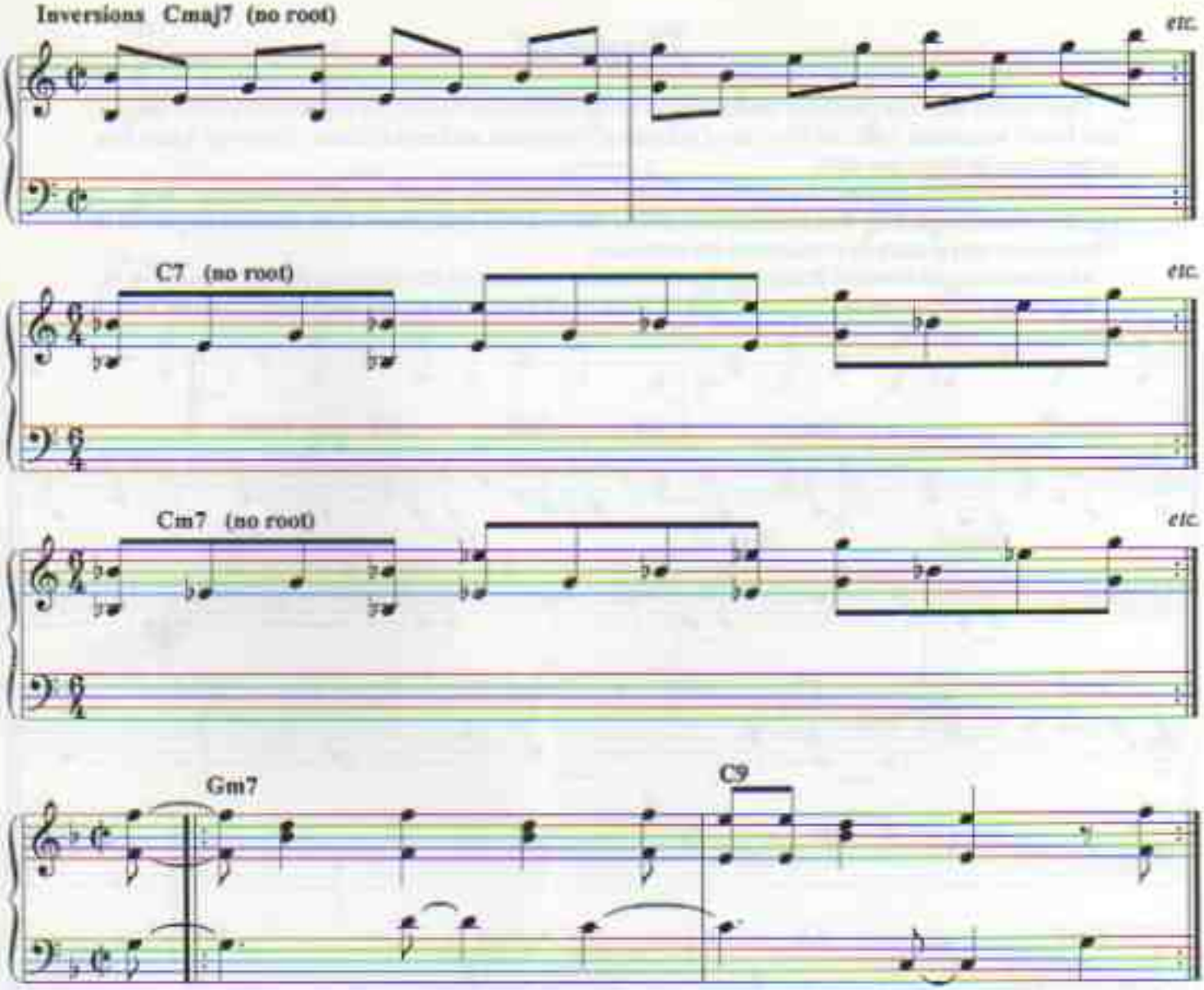



C7
Gm7
C7
Gm7
C7
C7
C7
D7
D7
D9


B♭9
E♭9
B♭9
F9
E♭9
B♭9
B♭9
C7
C7


D7
C7 Cha-Cha
C7 Cha-Cha
D♭7
C7
D♭7
D9
D9 or D7


Gm6
Cmaj7
Cmaj7
C9
C9
Cm7


Inversions Cmaj7 (no root)
etc.
C7 (no root)
etc.
Cm7 (no root)
etc.
Gm7
C9

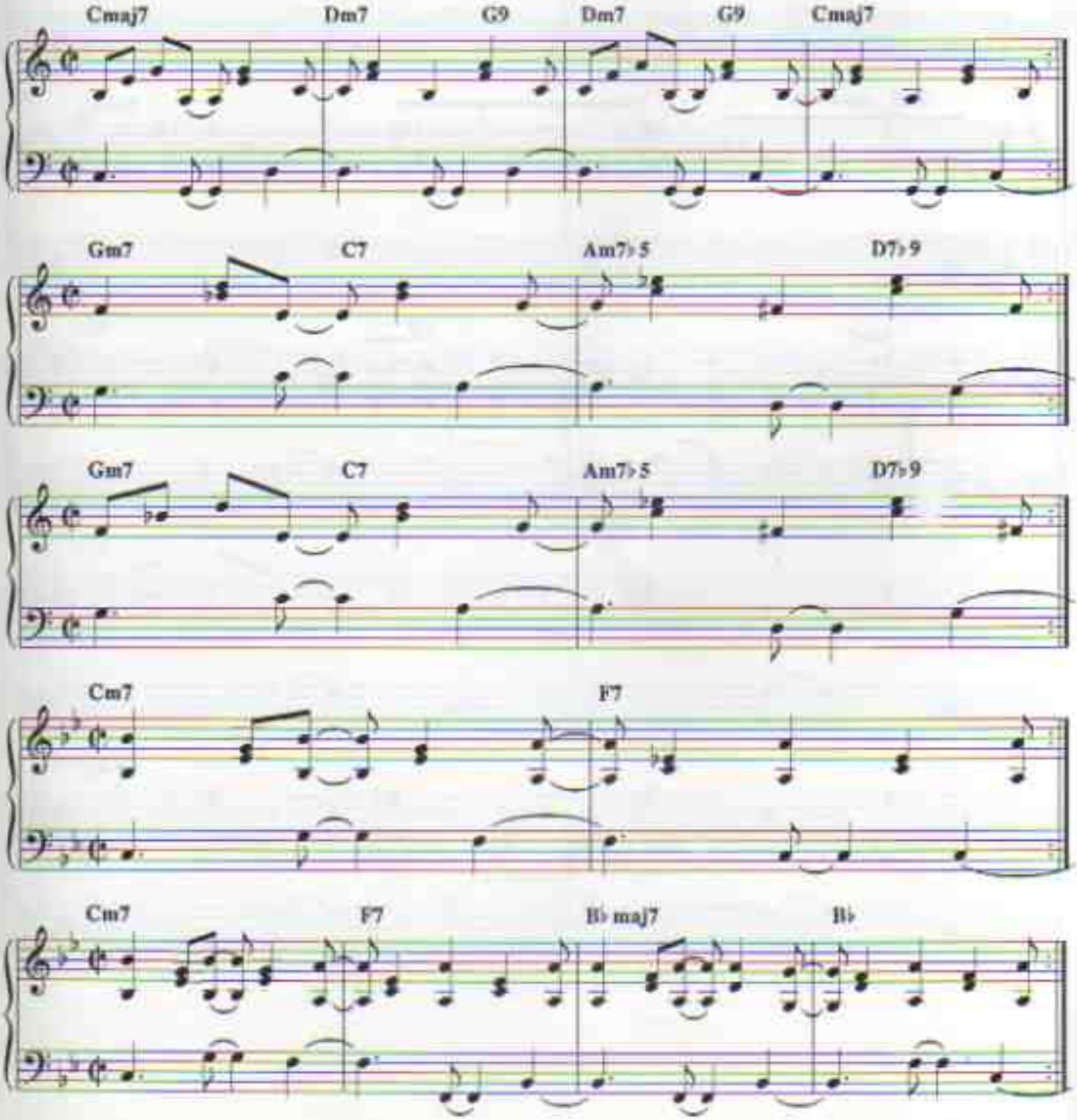
Chapter III

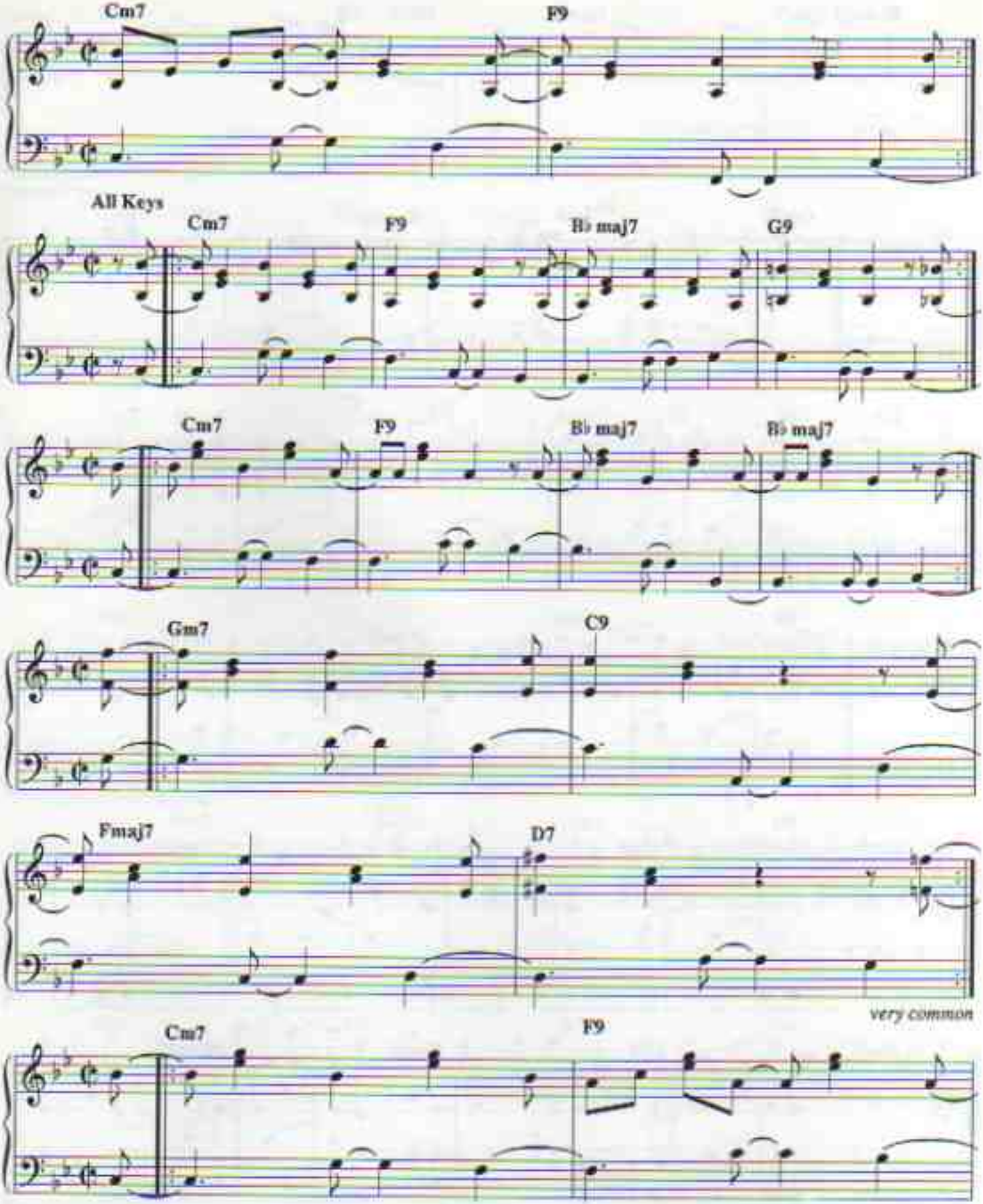
This type of Montuno contains many harmonic chord changes as we play in the Jazz idiom; iim7, V7 and Imaj7 Montunos from the b7 or b3 of the minor, dominant, and major chord. These are Latin Jazz progressions in Montuno style.

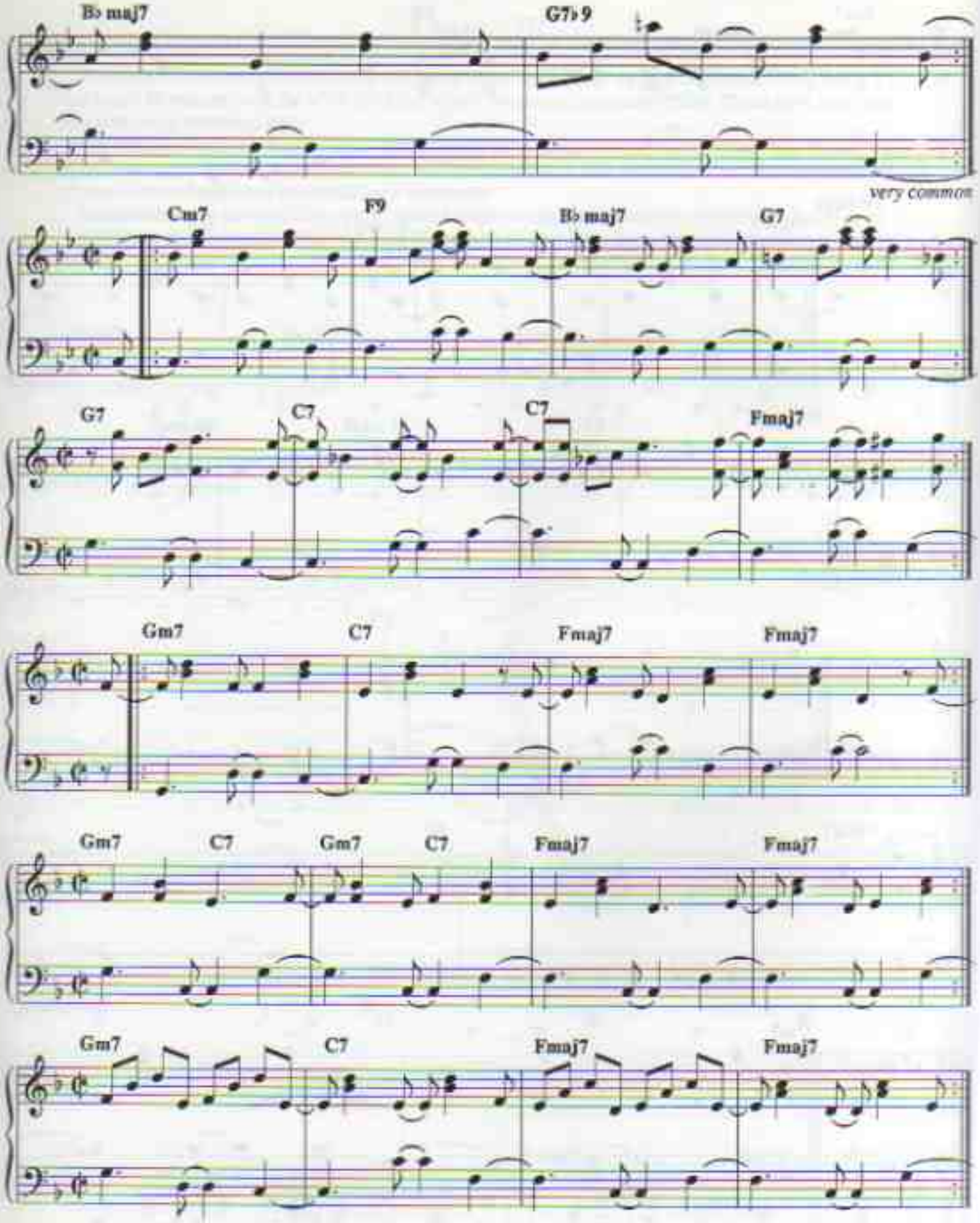
The left hand will play same as right hand, 8va unison; the bass player plays the bass line. These Montunos can be used for Jazz changes and will be called Latin-Jazz piano. They can also be played by vibraphones and guitars in substitution for keyboards.

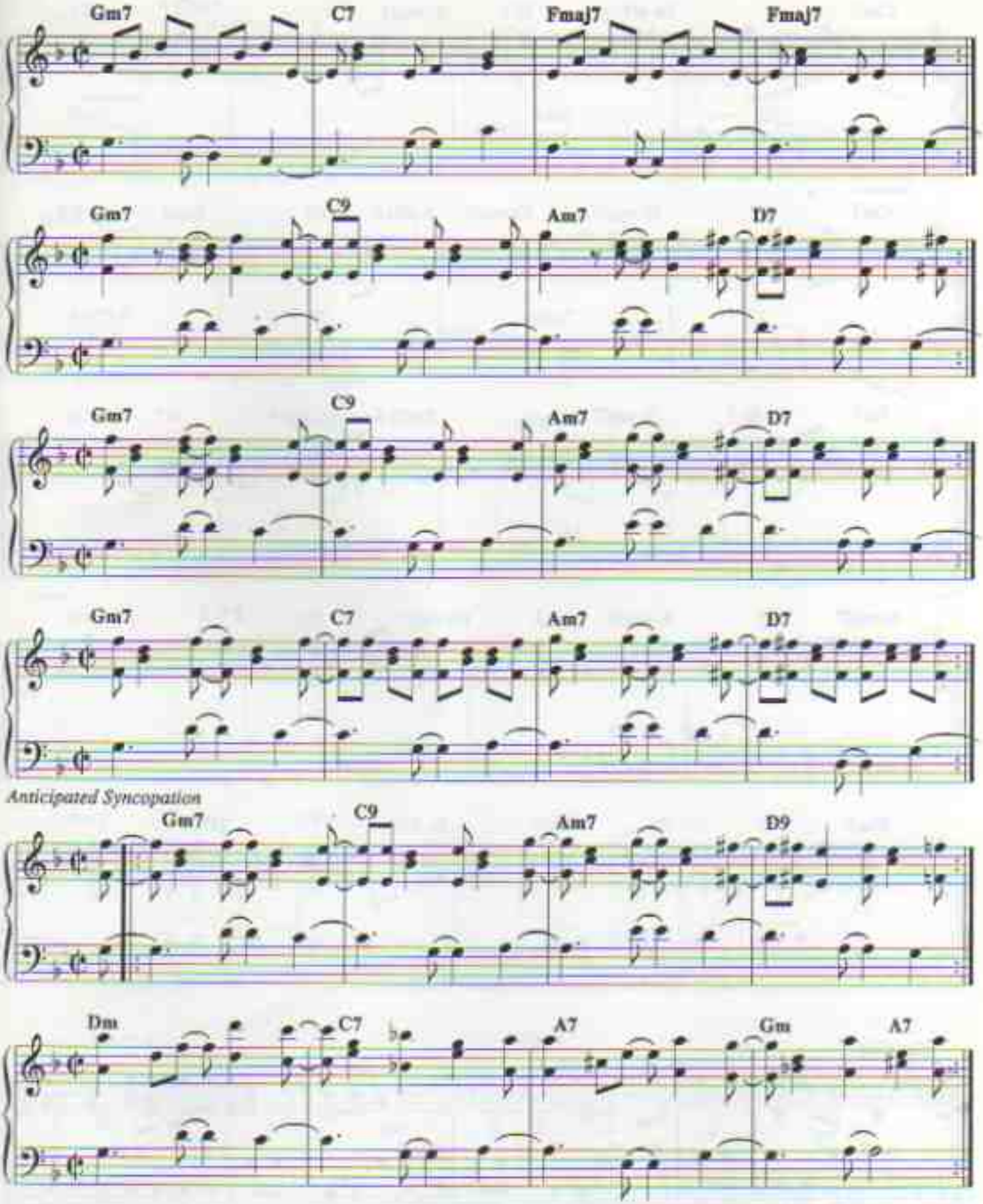
Montunos can be inverted from the b7 and b3 Major or minor of all chords on iim7, V7, Imaj7 or vi.

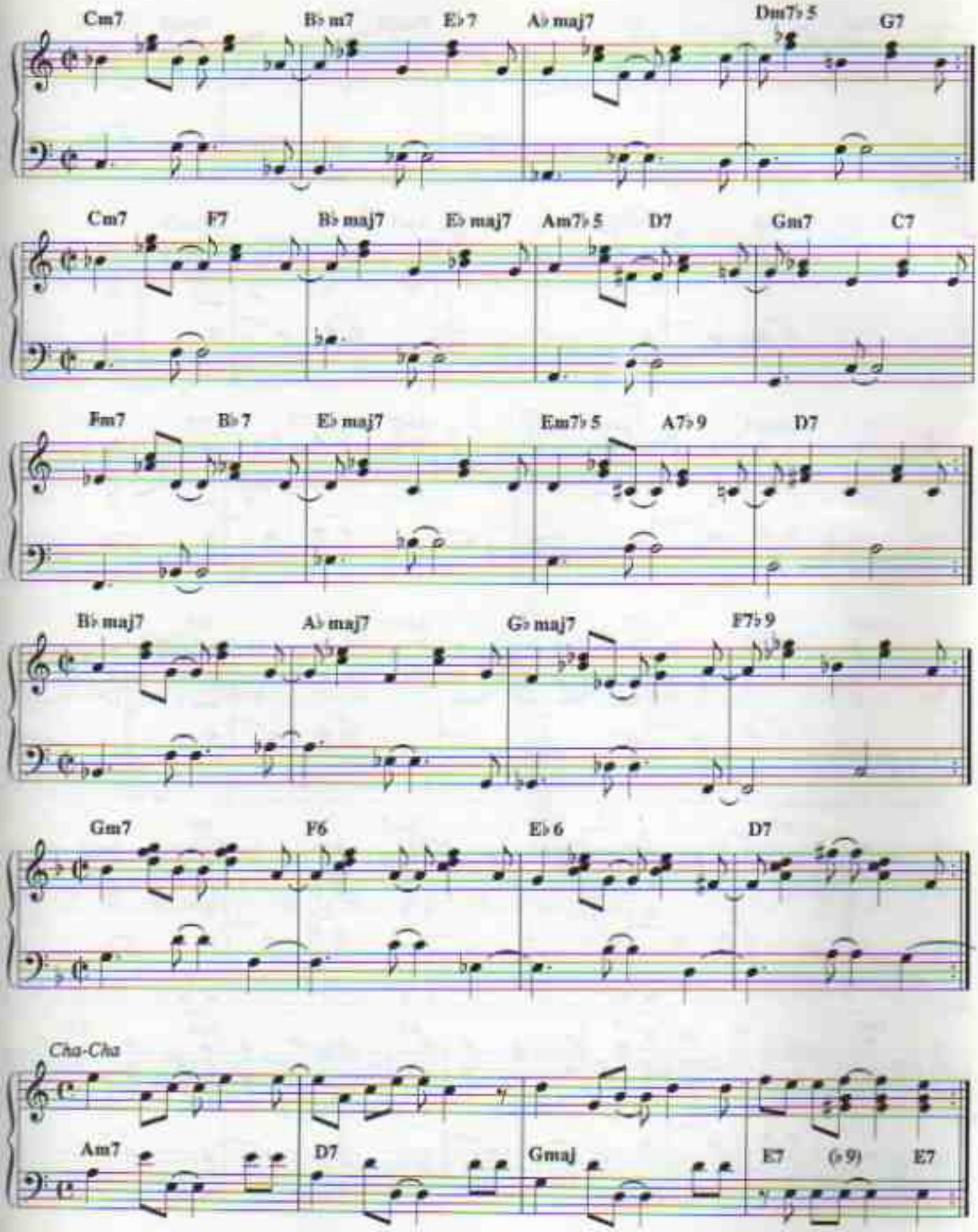
Play these exercises as in Chapters I and II; learn in all keys to be played over chord changes without notes.

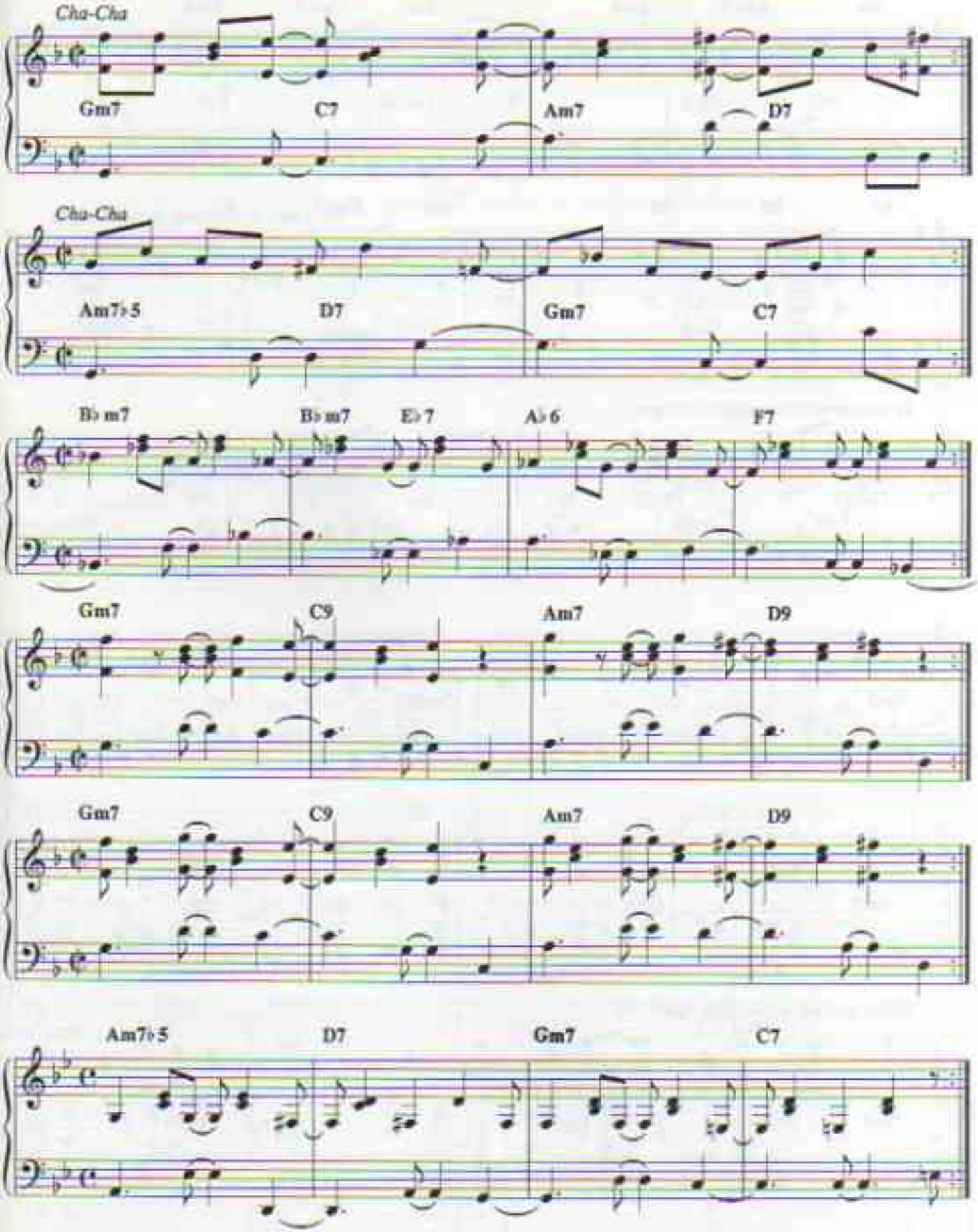



Cm7
F9
All Keys
Cm7
F9
B♭ maj7
G9
Cm7
F9
B♭ maj7
B♭ maj7
Gm7
C9
Fmaj7
D7
very common
Cm7
F9


B♭maj7
G7♭9
very common
Cm7
F9
B♭maj7
G7
G7
C7
C7
Fmaj7
Gm7
C7
Fmaj7
Fmaj7
Gm7
C7
Gm7
C7
Fmaj7
Fmaj7
Gm7
C7
Fmaj7
Fmaj7


Gm7
C7
Fmaj7
Fmaj7
Gm7
C9
Am7
D7
Gm7
C9
Am7
D7
Gm7
C7
Am7
D7
Anticipated Syncopation
Gm7
C9
Am7
D9
Dm
C7
A7
Gm
A7


Cm7
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭maj7
Dm7♭5
G7
Cm7
F7
B♭maj7
E♭maj7
Am7♭5
D7
Gm7
C7
Fm7
B♭7
E♭maj7
Em7♭5
A7♭9
D7
B♭maj7
A♭maj7
G♭maj7
F7♭9
Gm7
F6
E♭6
D7
Cha-Cha
Am7
D7
Gmaj
E7
(♭9)
E7


Cha-Cha
Gm7
C7
Am7
D7
Cha-Cha
Am7♭5
D7
Gm7
C7
B♭m7
B♭m7
E♭7
A♭6
F7
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C9
Am7
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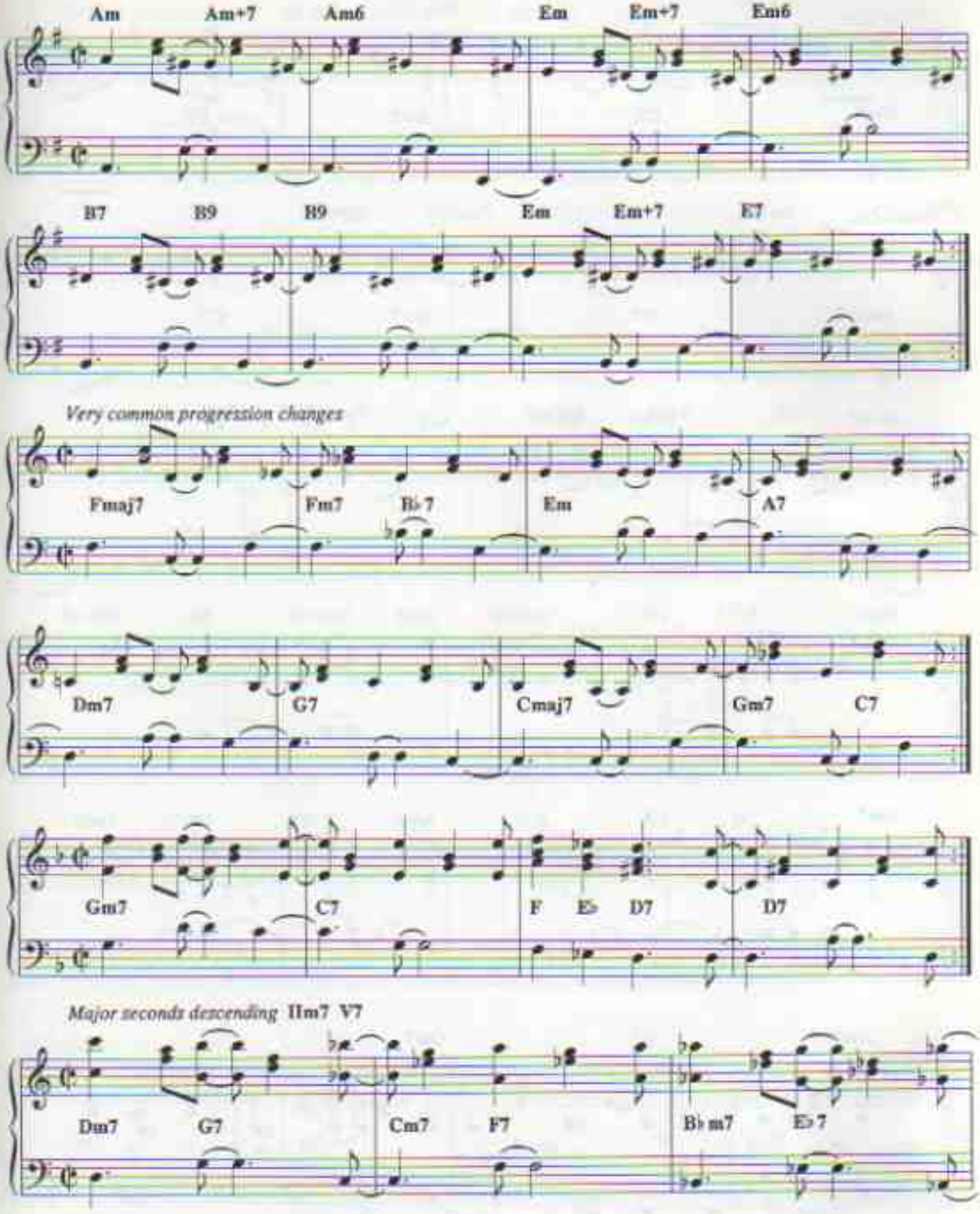
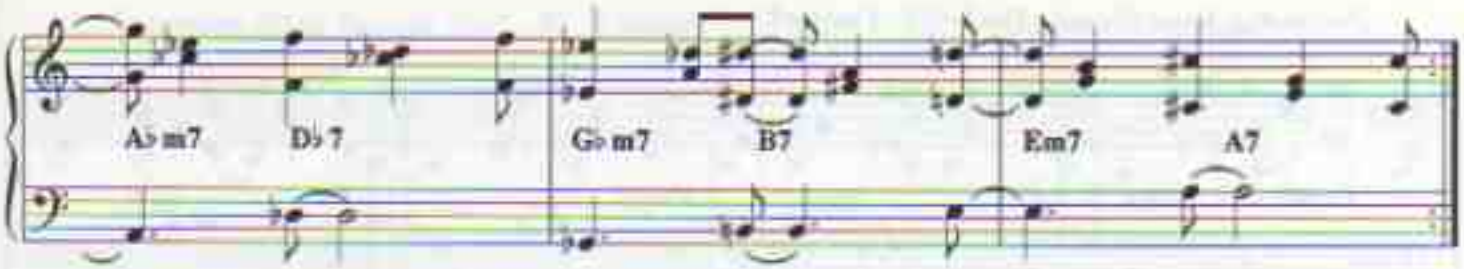
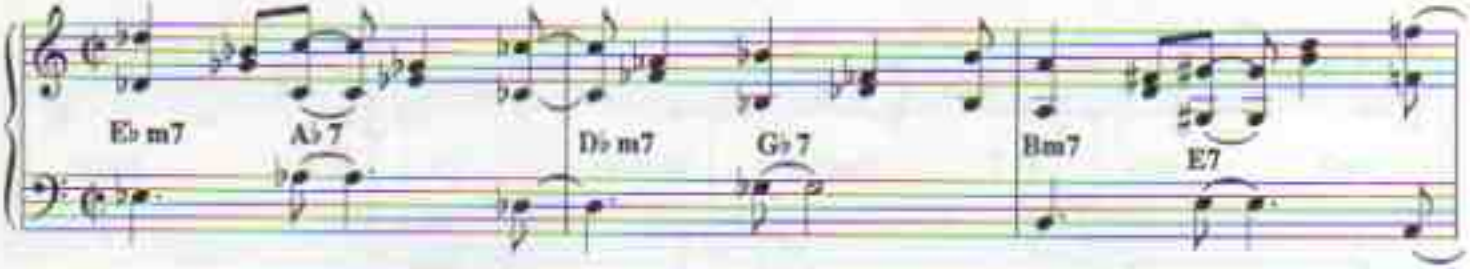
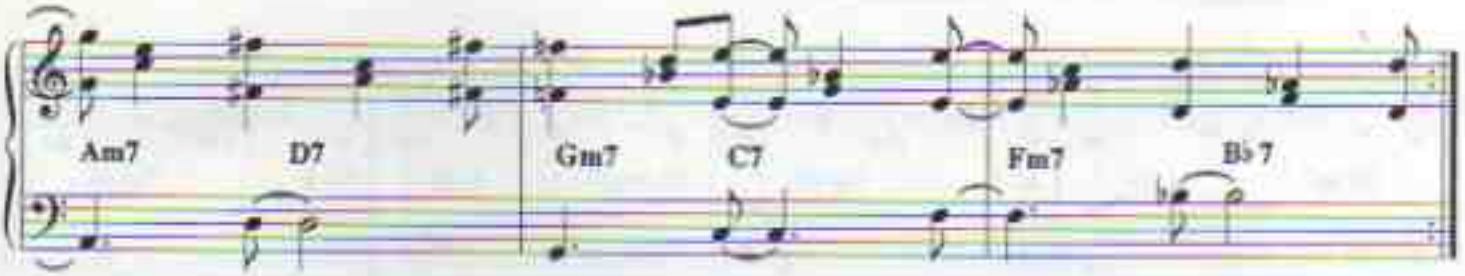
Gm7
C9
Am7
D9
Am7♭5
D7
Gm7
C7


Am Am+7 Am6 Em Em+7 Em6
B7 B9 B9 Em Em+7 E7
Very common progression changes
Fmaj7 Fm7 B♭7 Em A7
Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Gm7 C7
Gm7 C7 F E♭ D7 D7
Major seconds descending IIm7 V7
Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7 B♭m7 E♭7

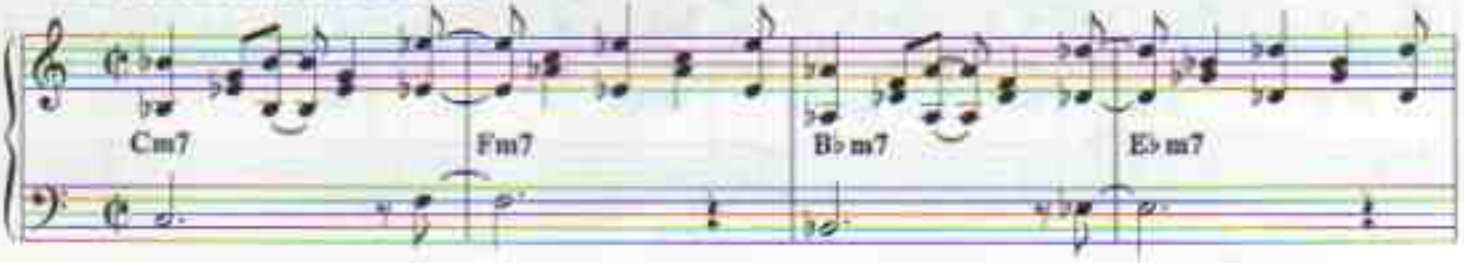


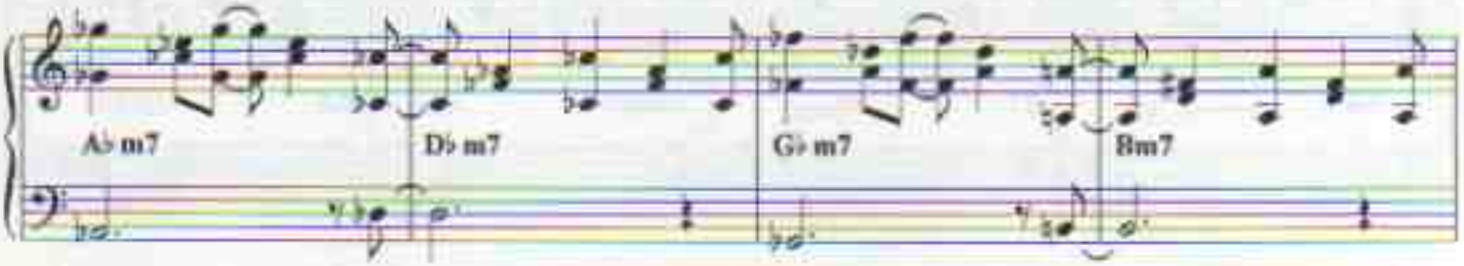
Major seconds descending IIm7 V7

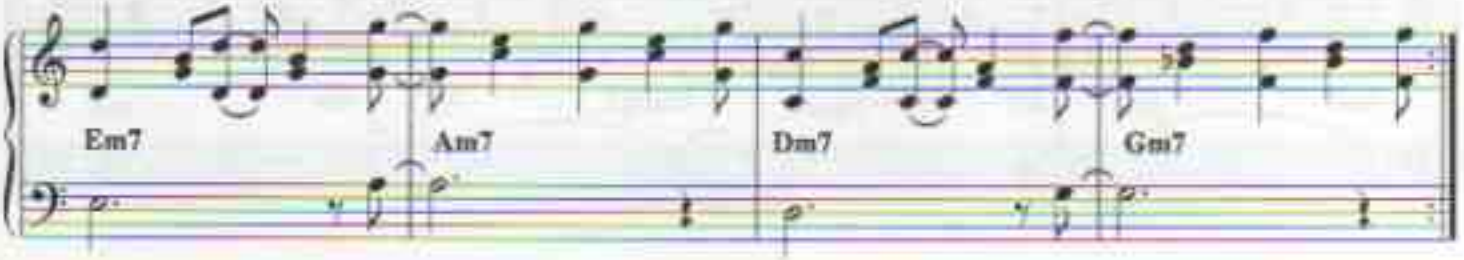




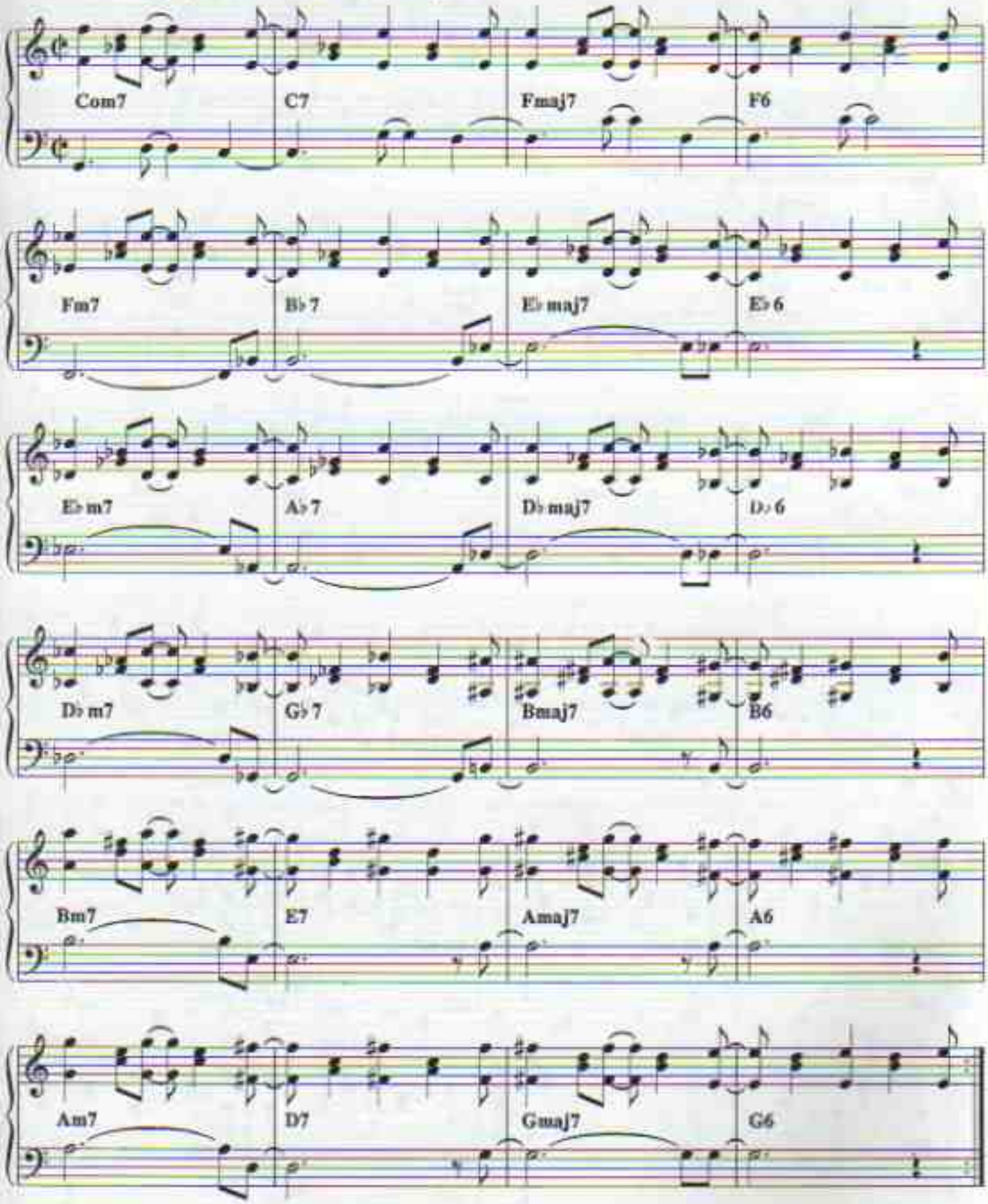
Minor seventh chords around circle



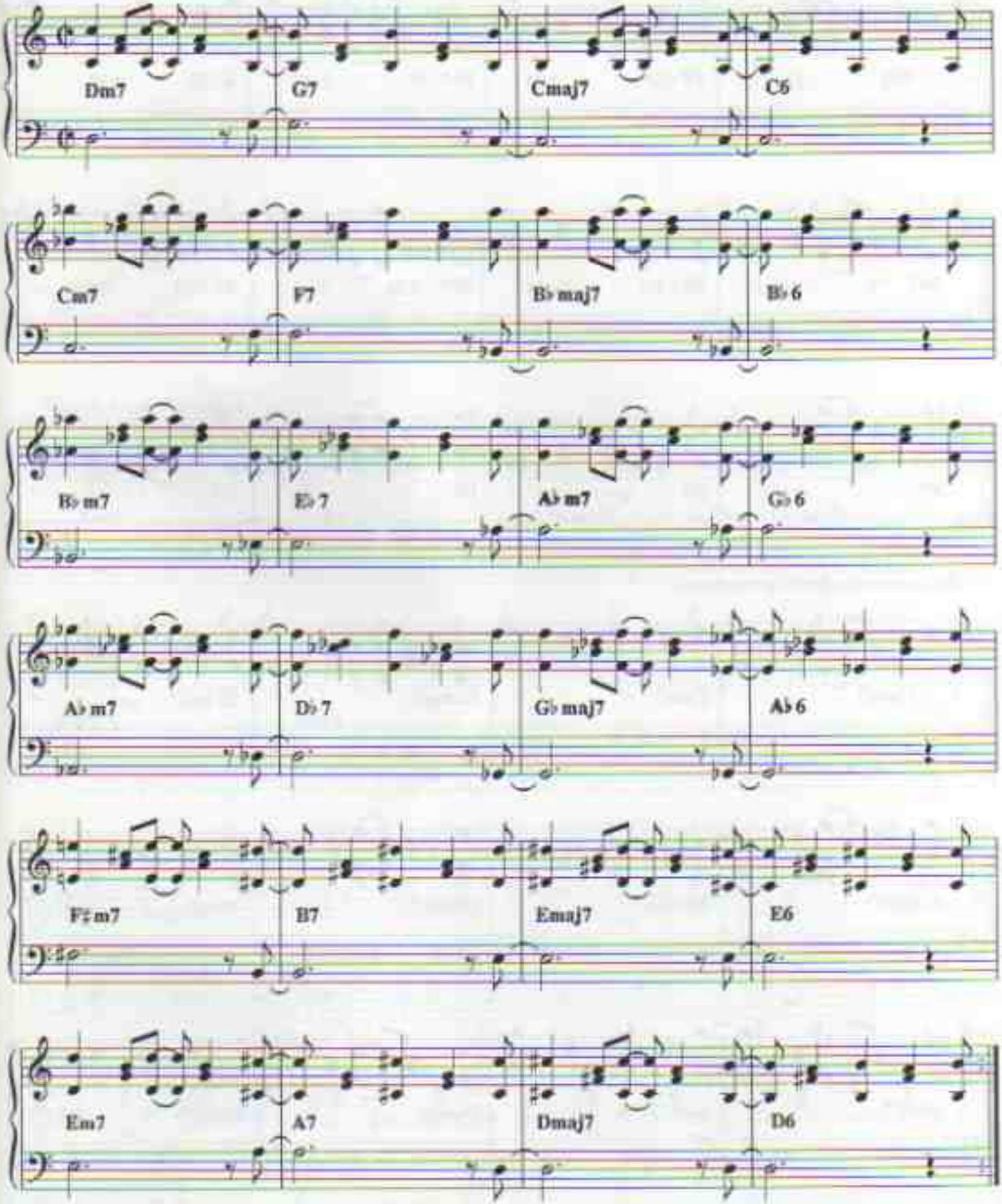




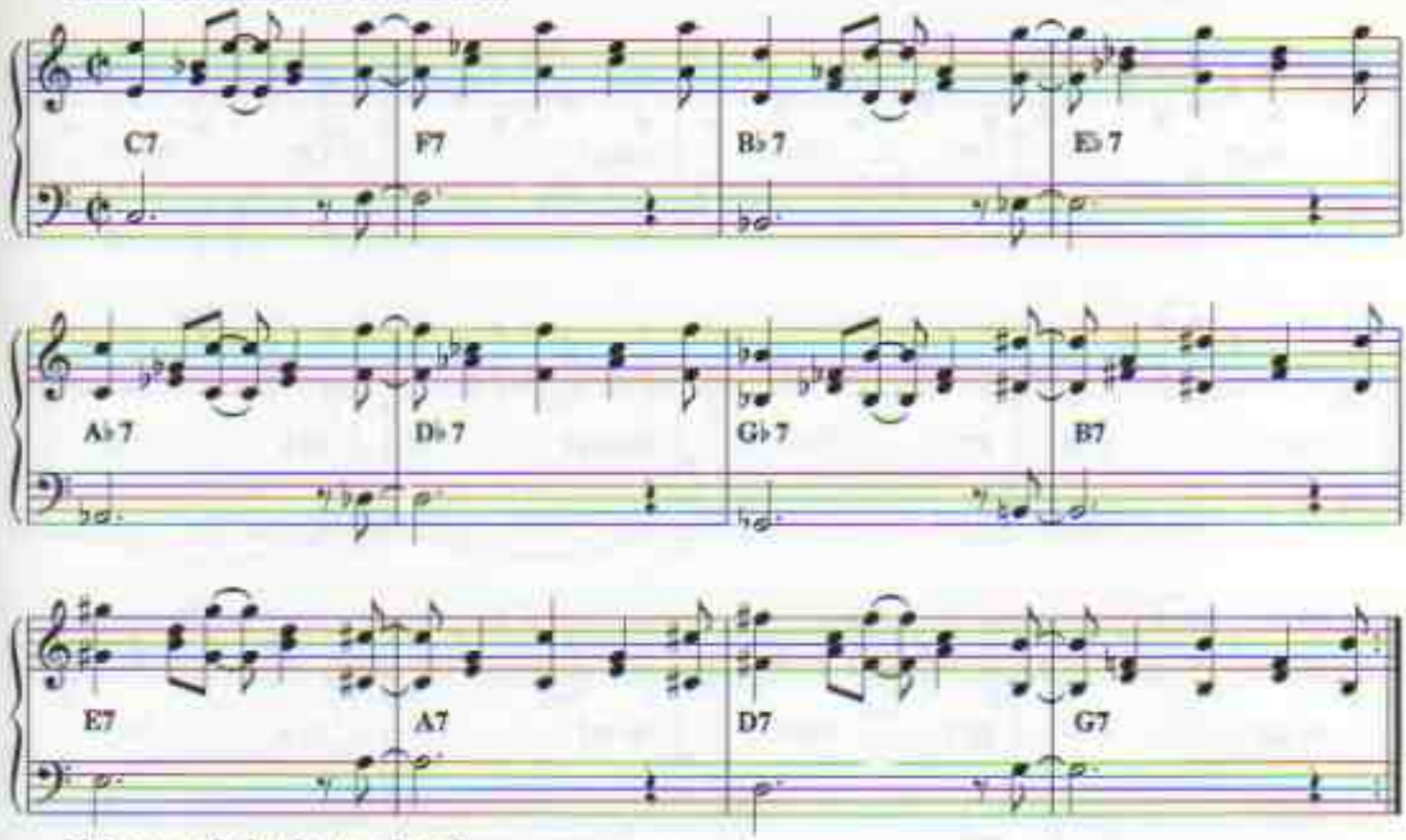
Descending Major Seconds **IIm7 - V7 - I major7**



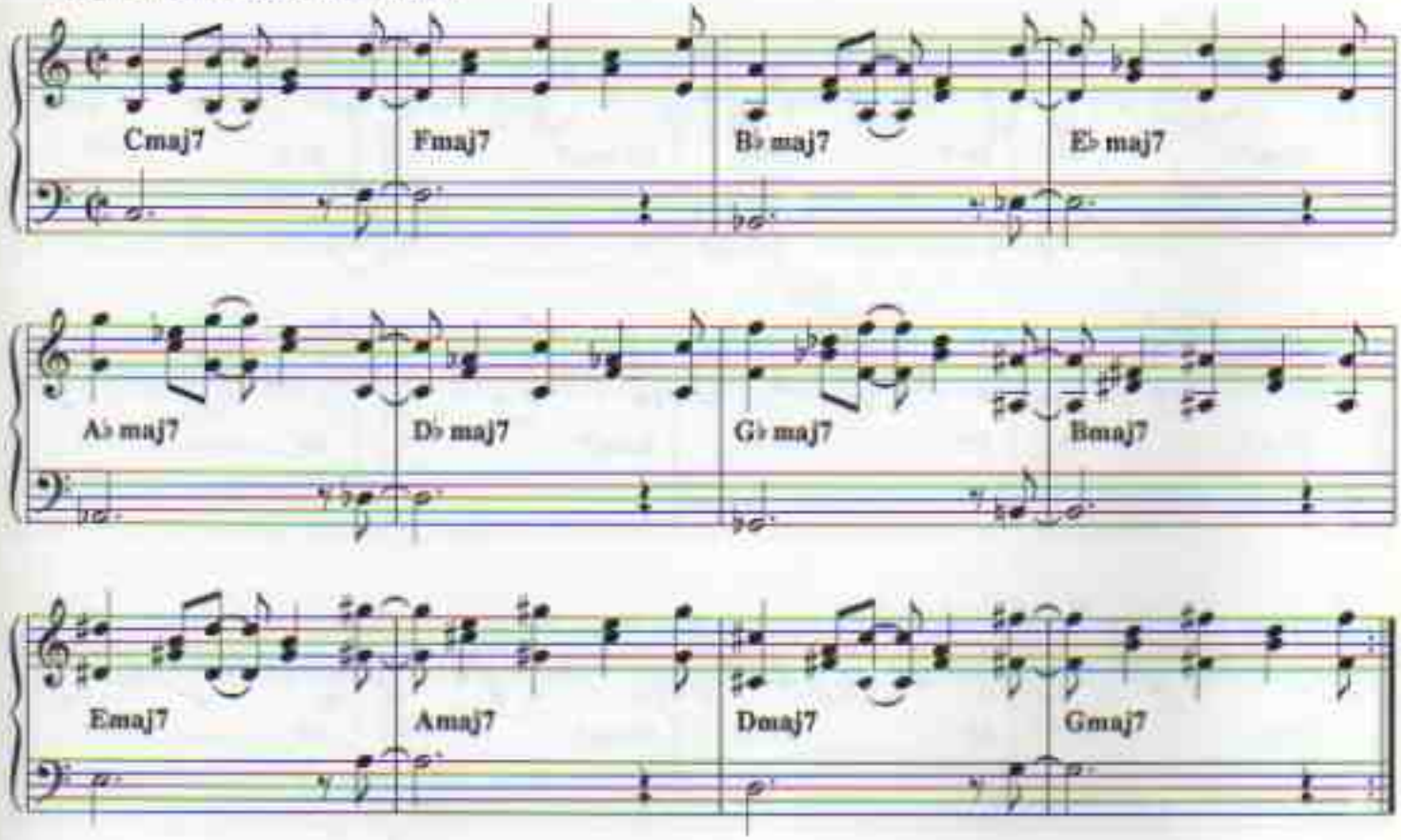
Descending Major Seconds IIm7 - V7 - I major7



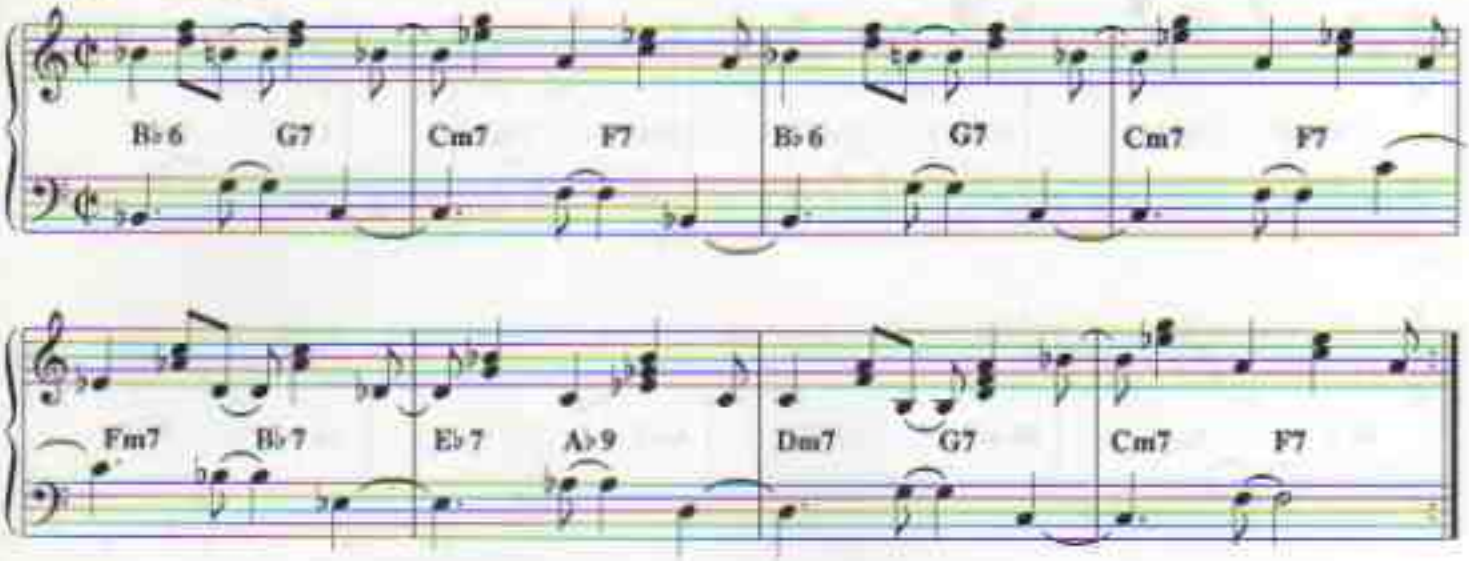
Dominant seventh chords around circle



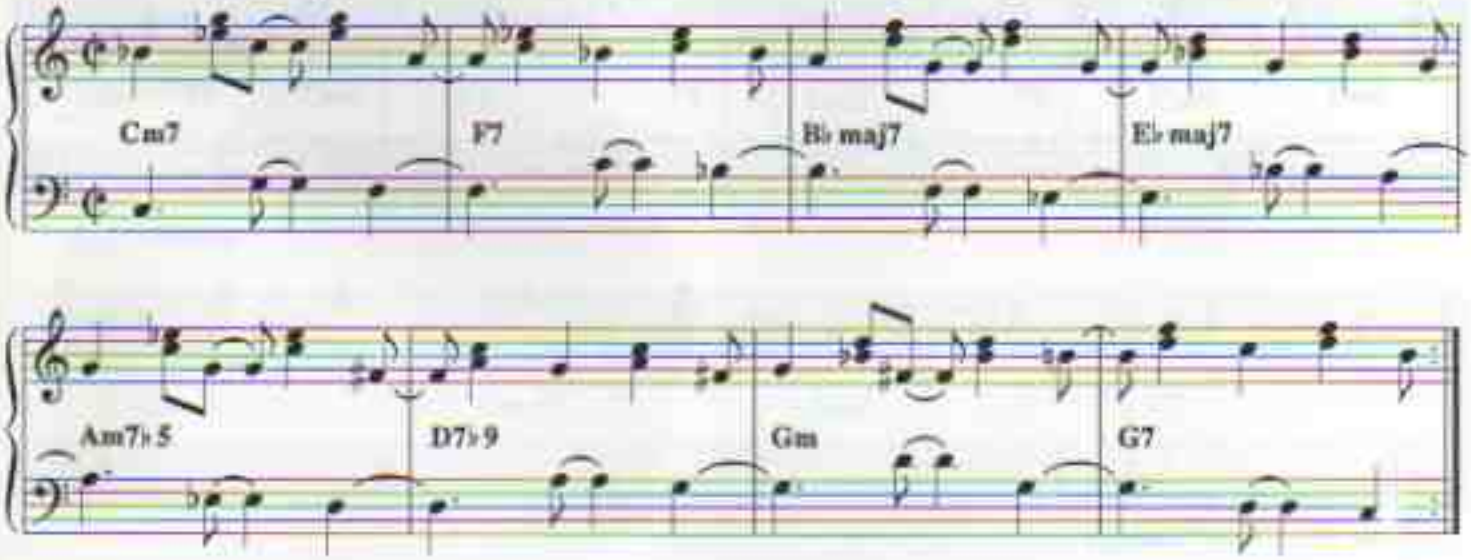
Major seventh chords around circle



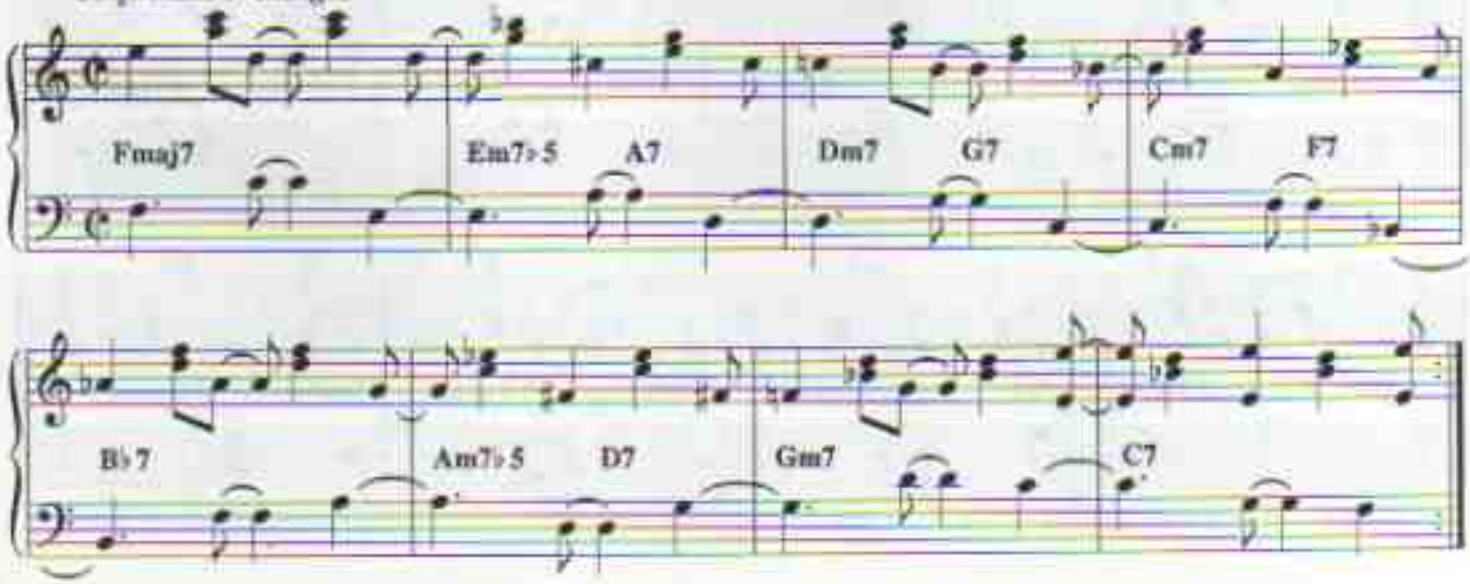
Rhythm changes



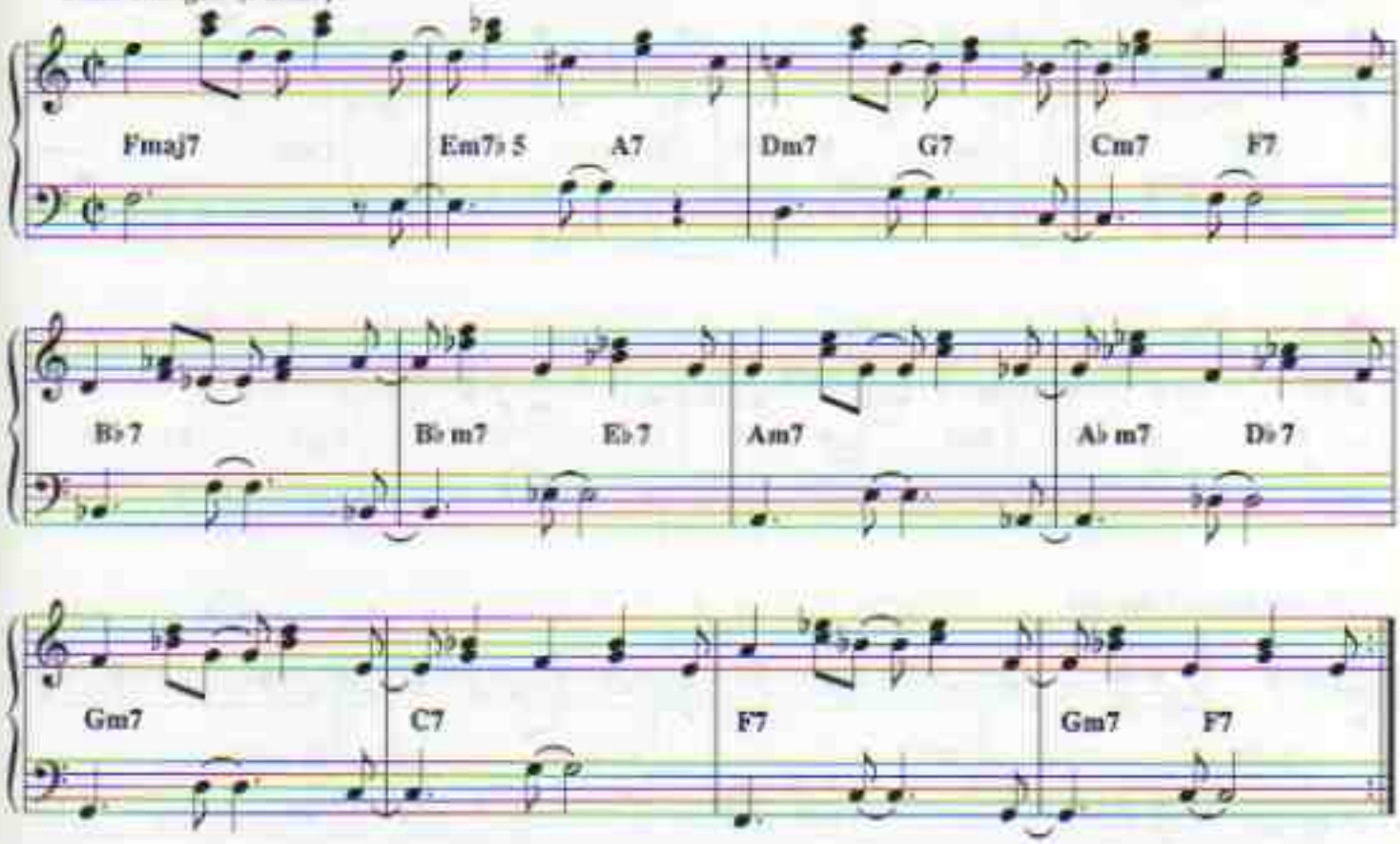
"Autum Leaves" changes



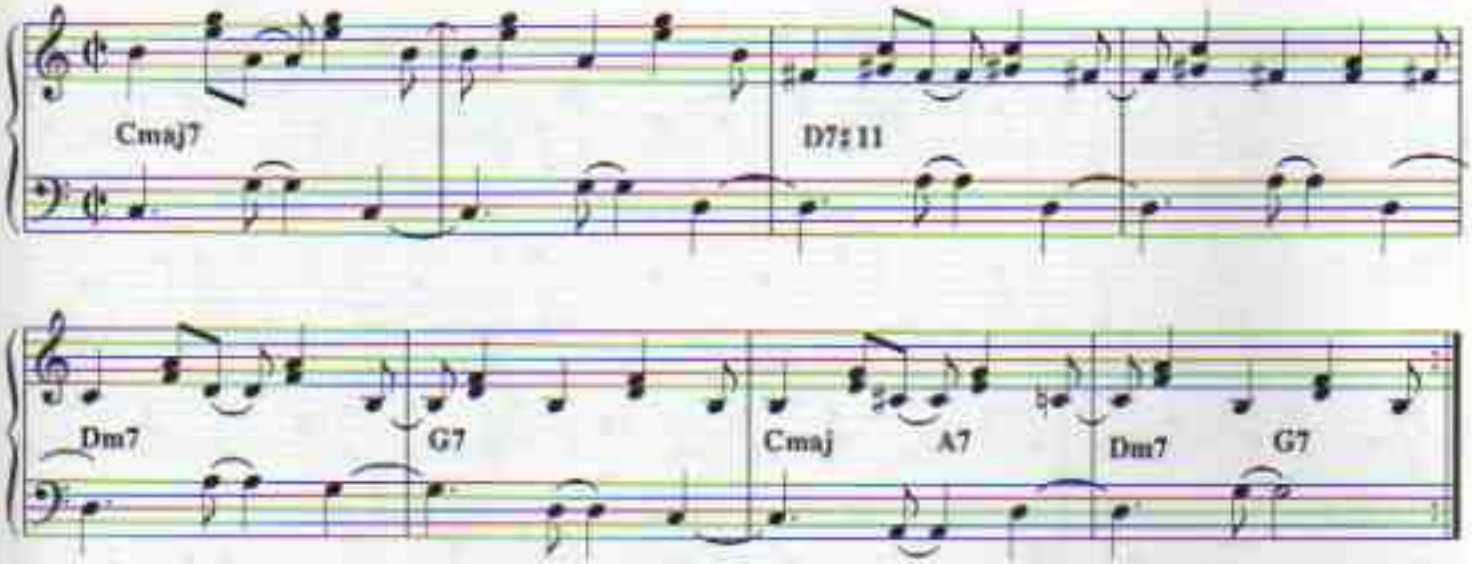
"Confirmation" changes



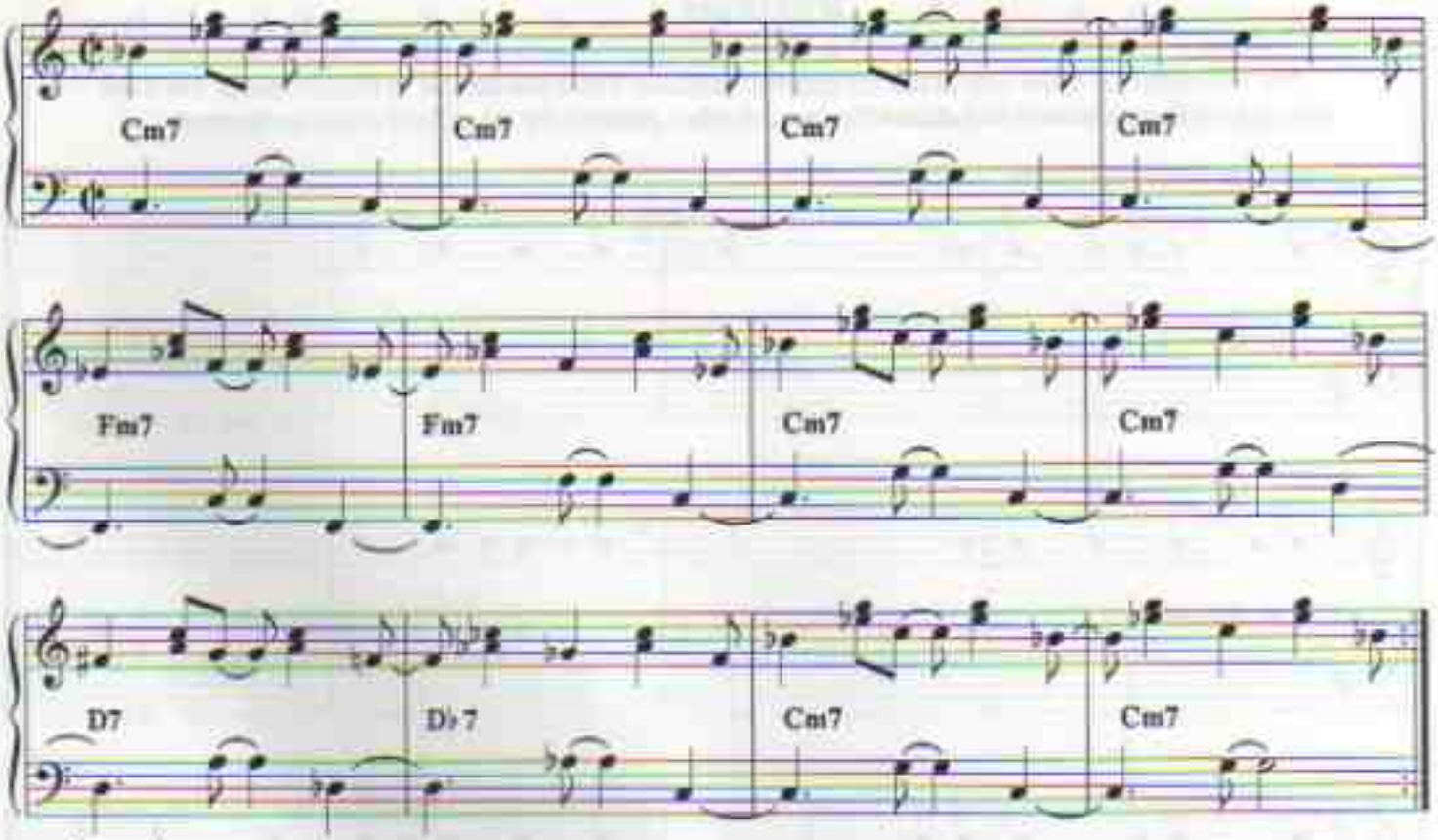
Blues changes (Parker)



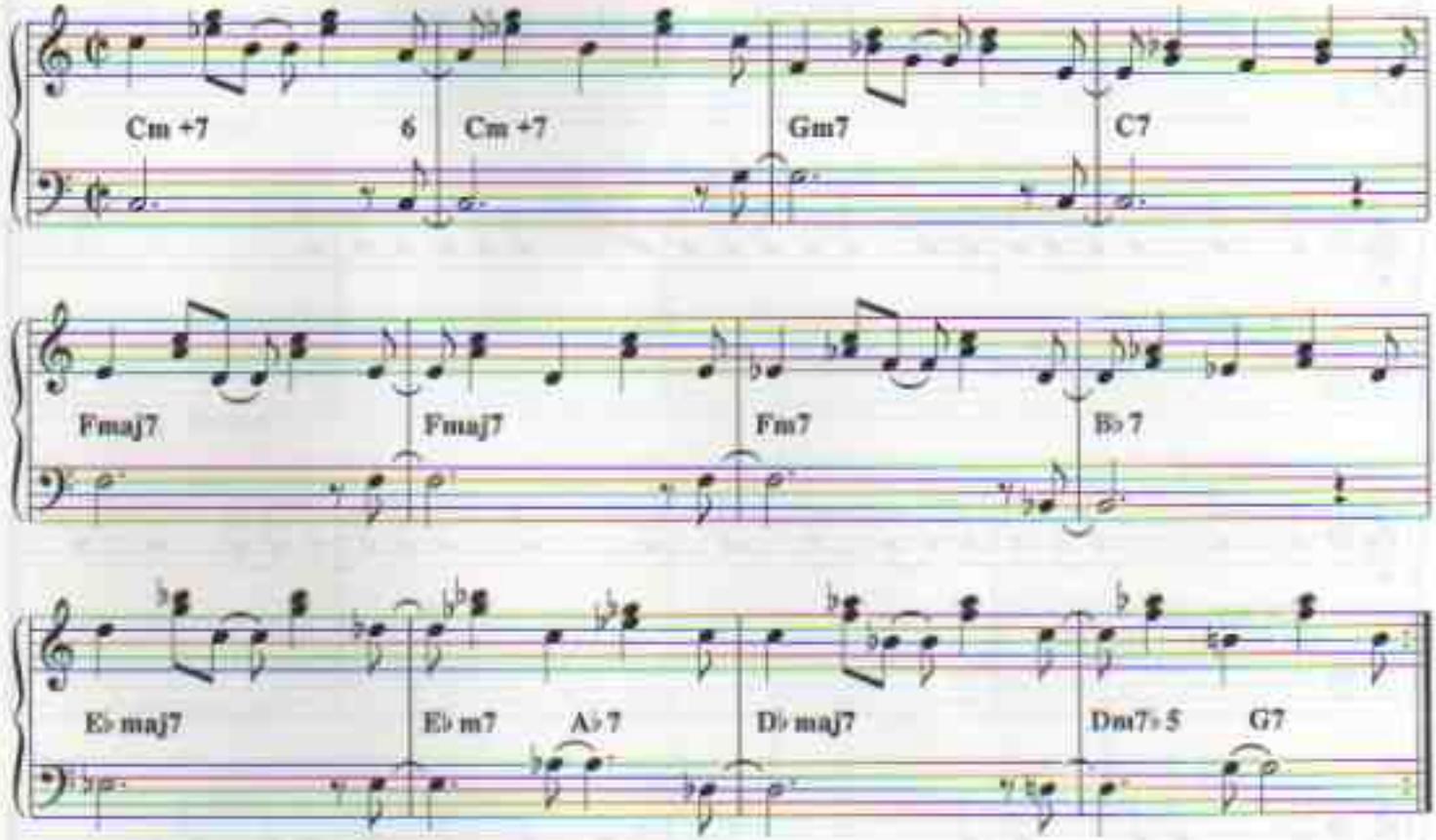
"Take the A Train" changes



Minor Blues changes



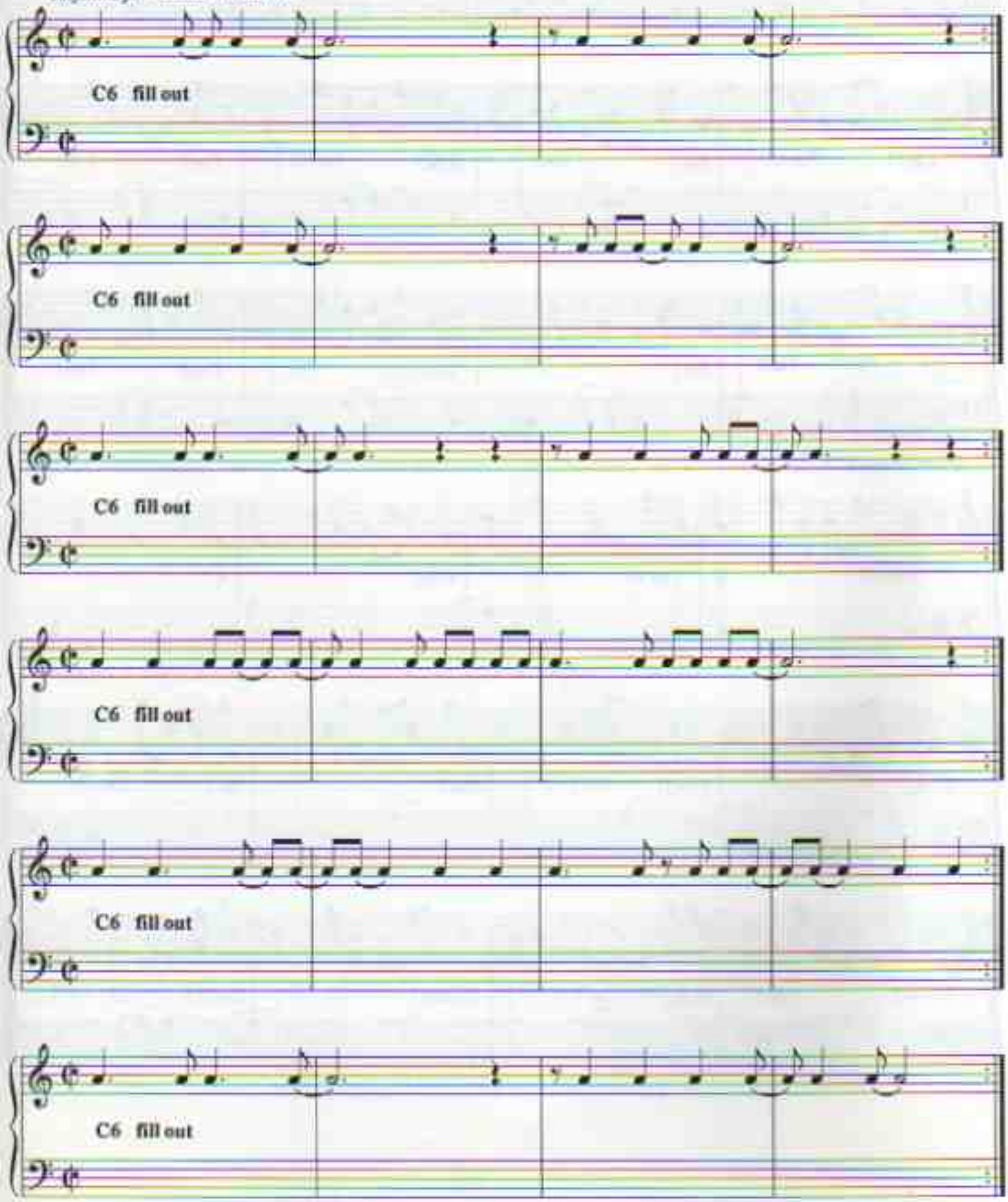
Solar changes



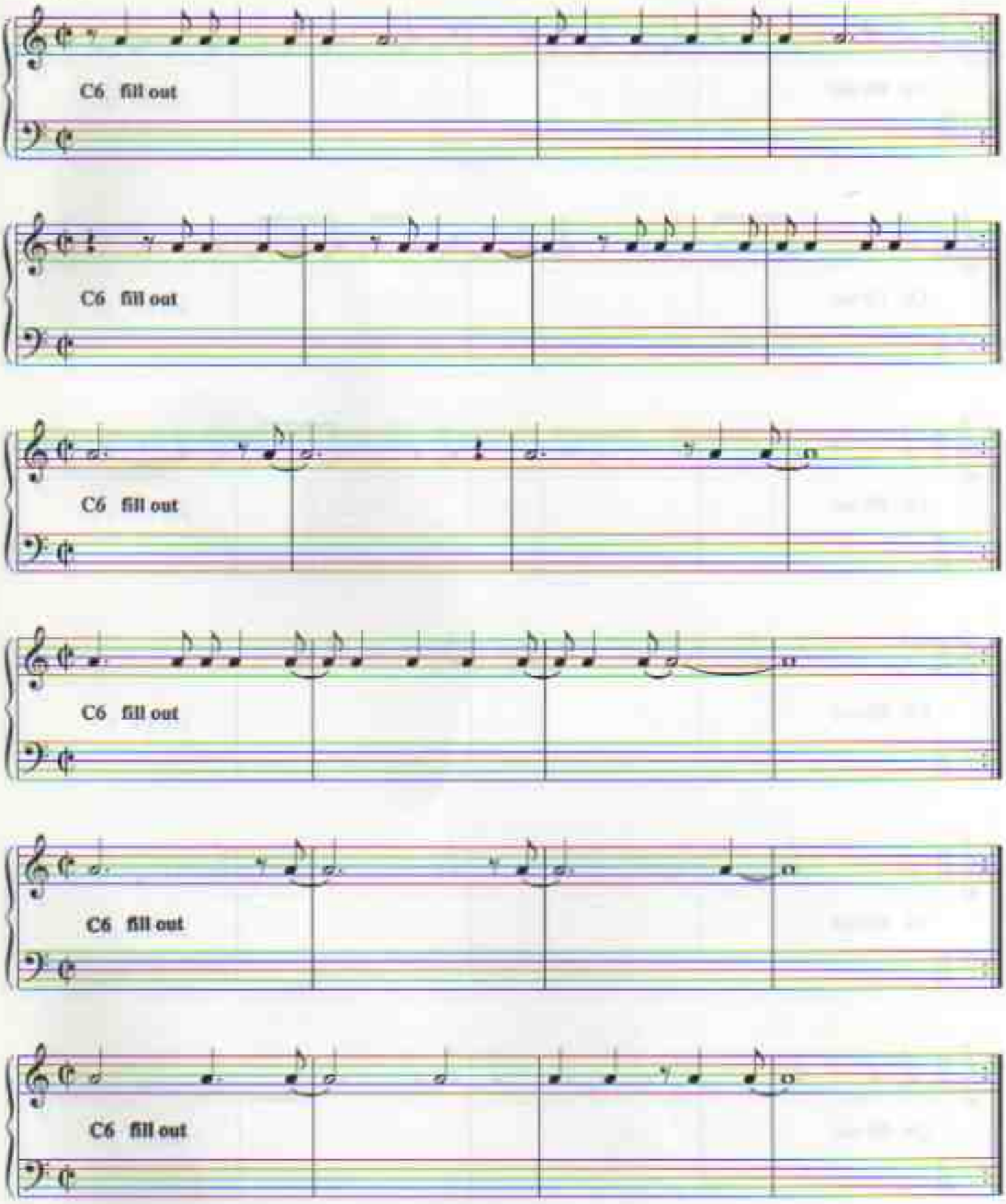
Chapter IV
Rhythms

We will comp the same way as the rhythm will indicate. These are similar to the jazz comp, but there are many different accents to indicate the basic rhythm patterns for the style of music performed.

Rhythms for Bossa and Samba



Bossa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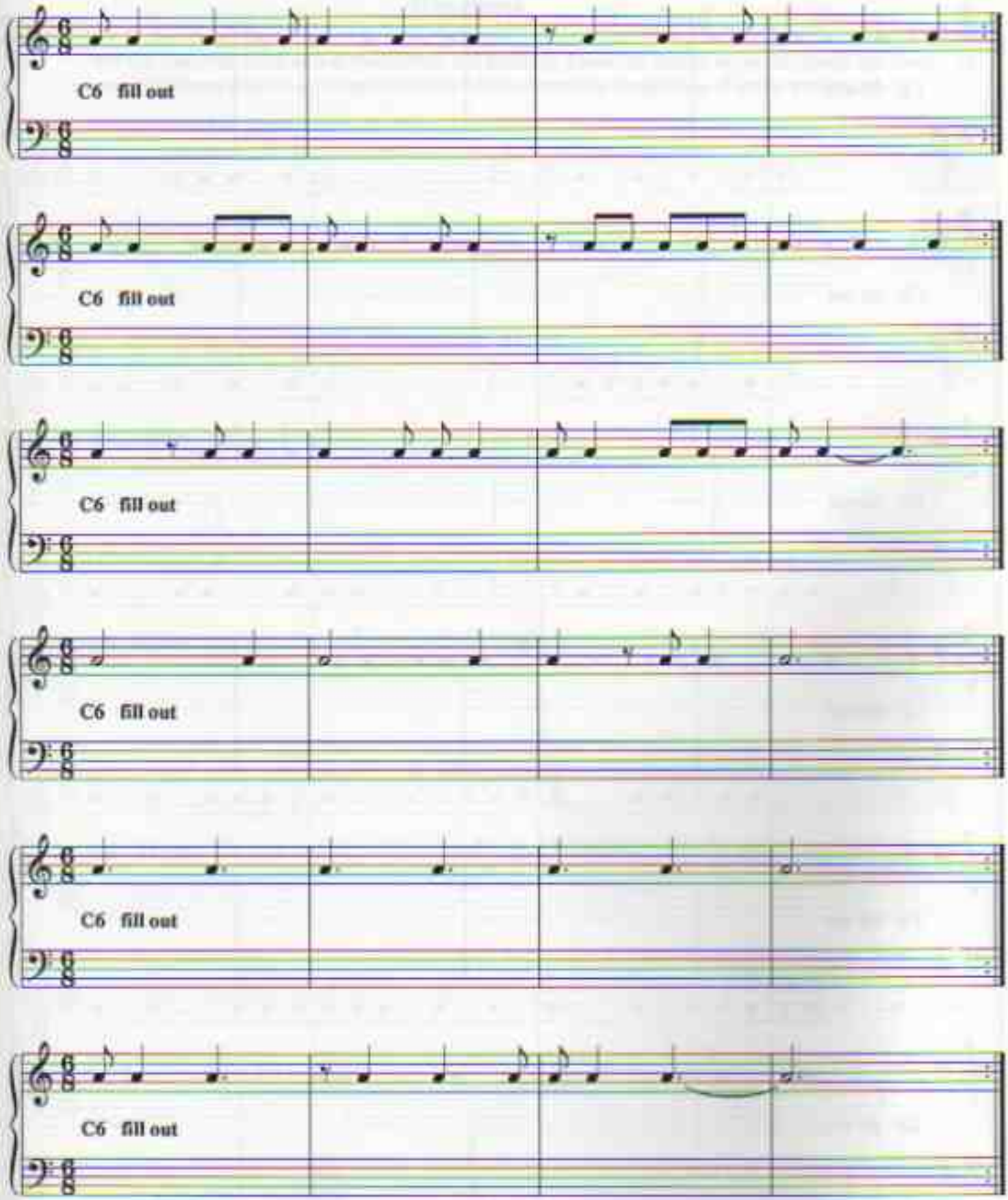
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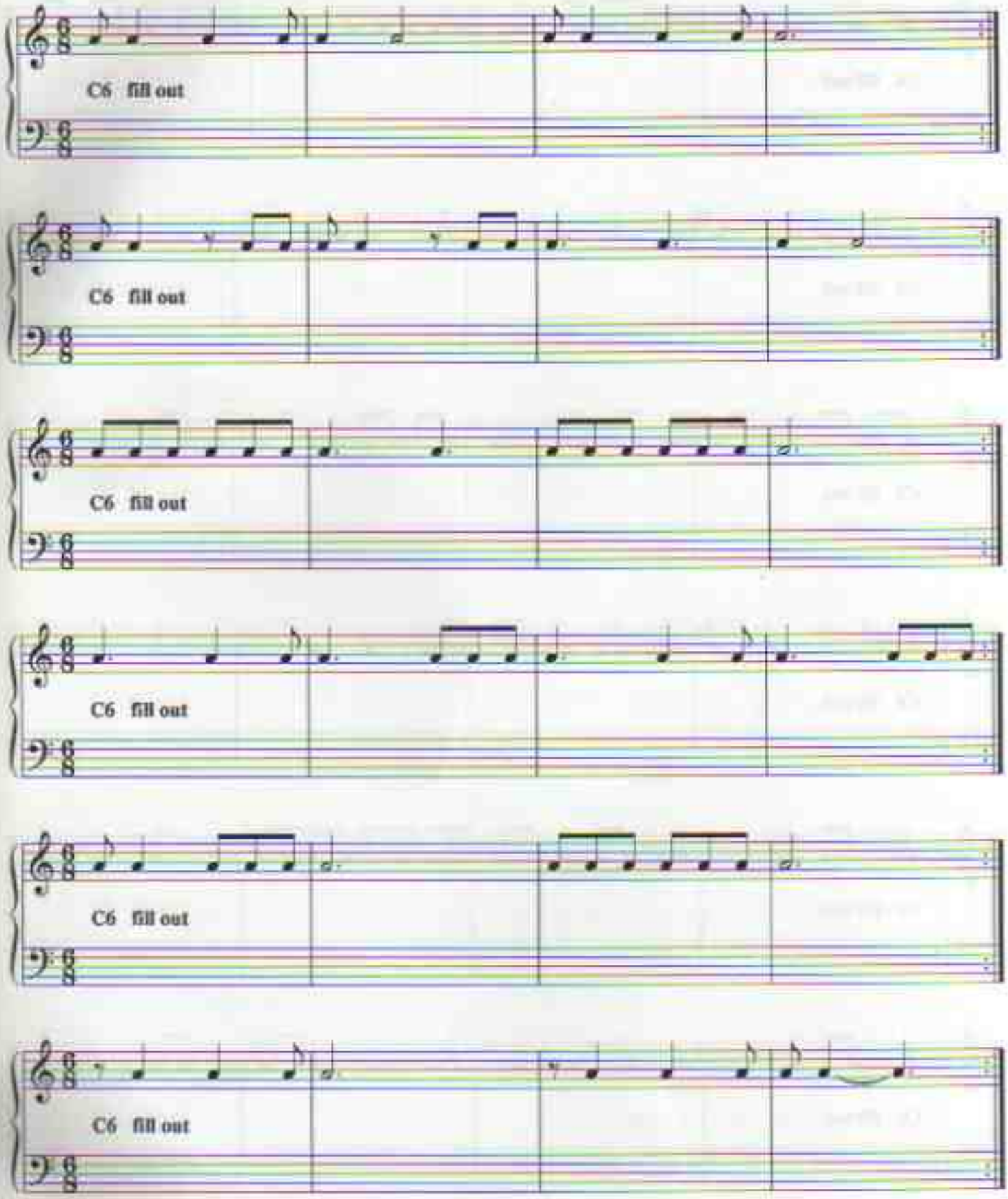
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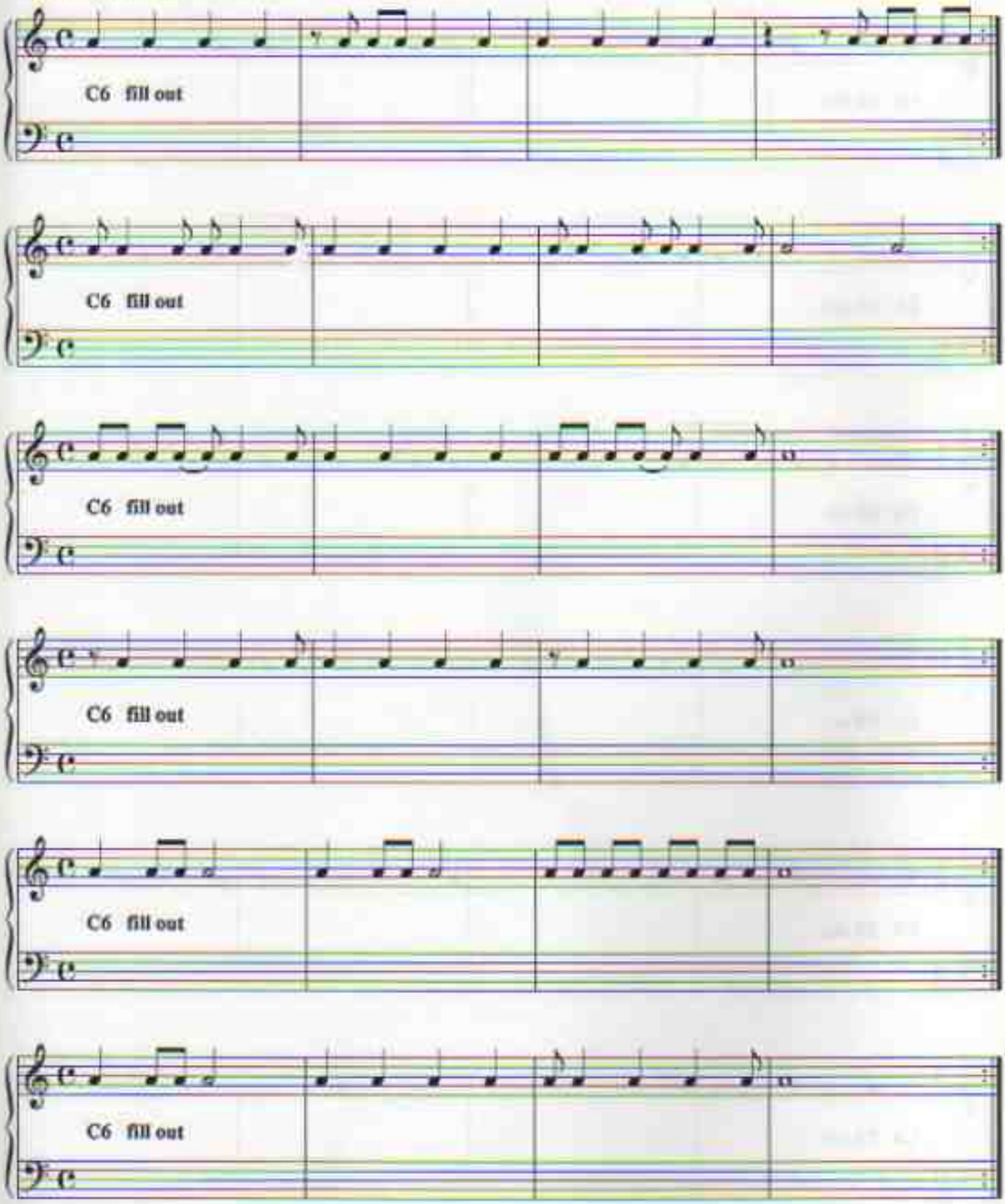
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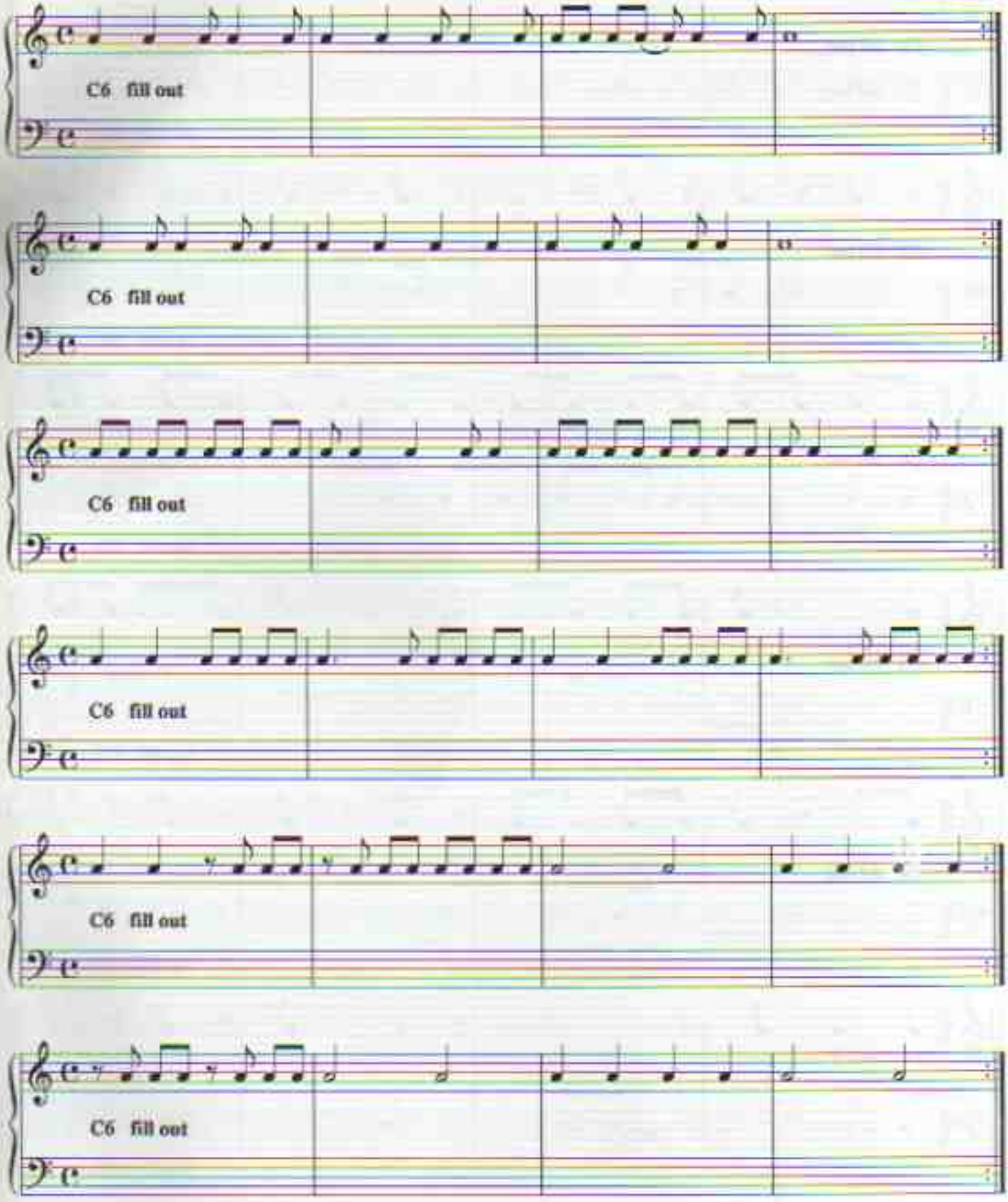
Tango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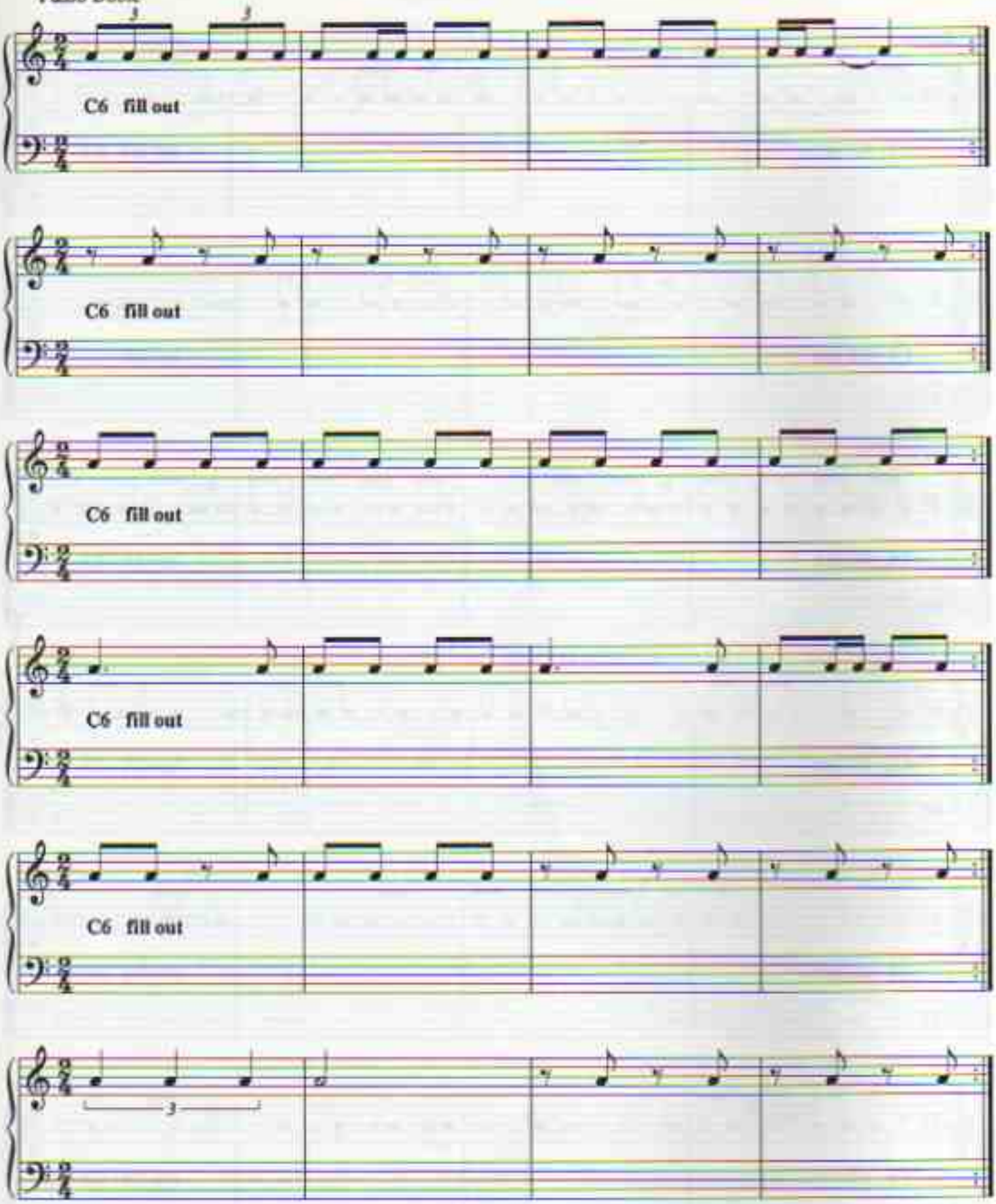
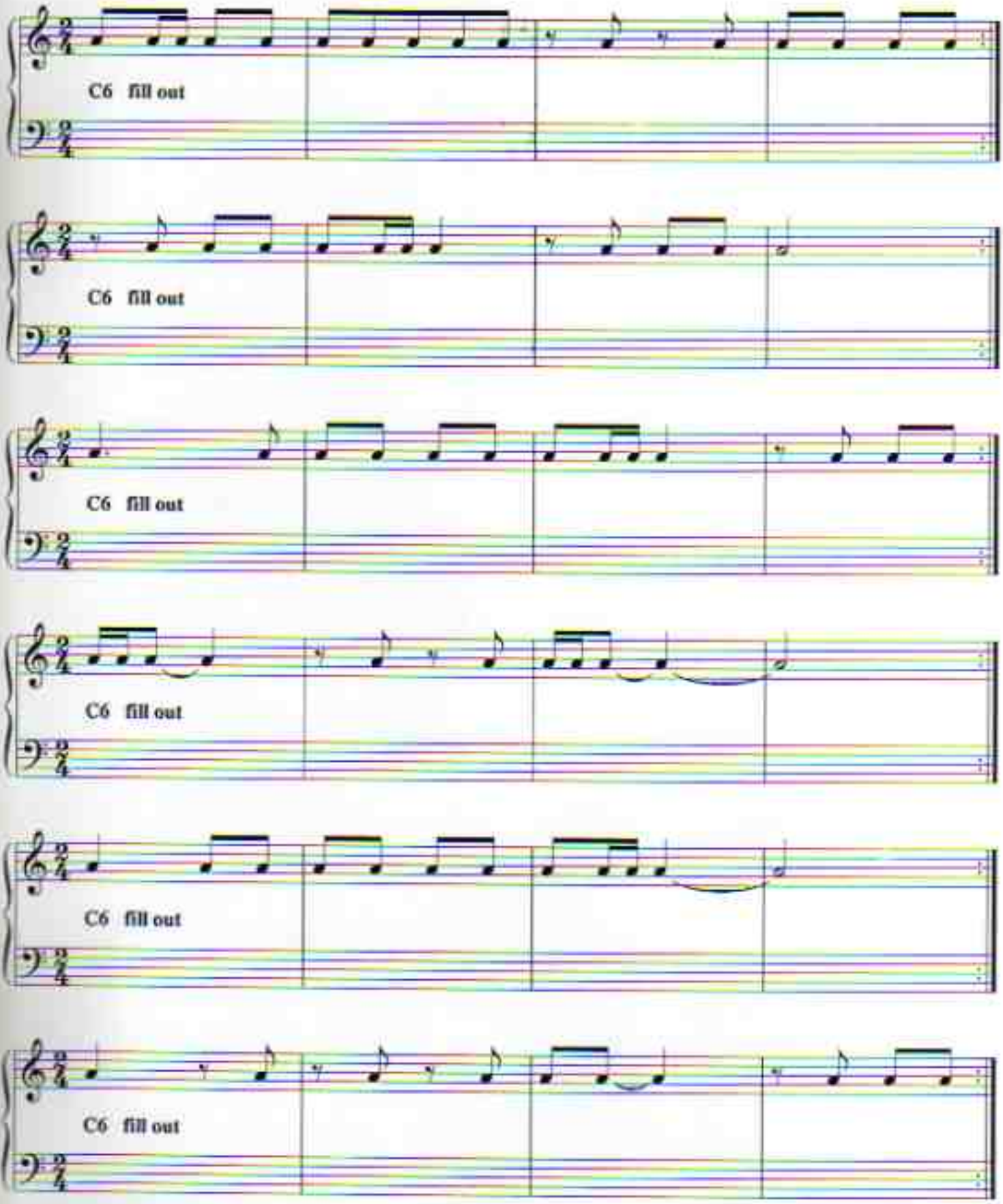
Passo Doble



Passo Doble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