LETTER FROM EVANS

Board of Advisors:
Warren Bernhardt
Chuck Israels
Peter H. Larsen

A Quarterly Publication Dedicated to Jazz Pianist

Bill Evans

Win Hinkle, Editor

Summer 1994 ISSN # 1056-4179 Vol. V, No. 4, Price: $5.00

NEWS

■ Just a reminder that this is the last issue until I start publishing again. I have everyone's address on my mailing list and will notify all when *LFE* starts up again.

■ Needs More Research Department. A short blurb in the January 17, 1994 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle* mentions a pianist named **Mark Little** as having studied under Bill Evans. Little has a new CD release on Monarch Records of Palo Alto, California titled *Dream Walkin'*. Little recently performed with a quartet at the New Orleans Room of San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel. He was assisted by Peter Barshay, bass; Alex Murzyn, saxophone; and Curt Moore on drums.

Reminder
This is the last issue for a while

■ The transcription in this issue is the famous "All of You" take from the Village Vanguard series of the first trio. Many thanks to Steve Weidenhoffer for allowing us to reprint it from his dissertation. The version printed here was proof read by a local pianist friend, Franklin D. (Bubba) Kolb. He clarified several areas from Steve's original.

■ I received a call recently from Mike Lang of Verve Records announcing the production of a complete Bill Evans boxed set of all Verve recordings including some previously unreleased material. The set should be released sometime in 1995. Unlike some other major record company execs, Lang seems to be a genuine jazz lover, very approachable, and a fan of Bill Evans. We can look forward to some good listening and research from Verve Records, a division of Polygram.

■ In talking to Judy Bell recently I learned that singer Nancy Marano recently visited TRO checking out some Bill Evans tunes. Marano assembled some great players recently

to make a demo of mostly Bill Evans tunes including my favorite "The Two Lonely People." Among the musicians were pianist Dave Freedman and bassist Steve La Spina. She is looking for a label and I hope we can see a release in the near future. If you haven't had the opportunity to hear her, do it!

CD Review
John McLaughlin
Time Remembered

by Phil Bailey

Verve 314 519 861-2. John McLaughlin, acoustic guitar; The Aighetta Quartet (four acoustic guitarists); Yan Maresz, acoustic bass guitar. 1. "Prologue," 2. "Very Early," 3. "Only Child," 4. "Waltz for Debby," 5. "Homage" (John McLaughlin); 6. "My Bells," 7. "Time Remembered," 8. "Song for Helen," 9. "Turn Out The Stars," 10. "We Will Meet Again," 11. "Epilogue." This album is superior background music. Part of the reason is the psychological association of music played with plucked strings — fine dining with a continental flavor. The tunes are by Bill Evans (except "Homage," written by McLaughlin) but the voicing of the chords is not Evansish — gone are the close voiced inversions with semitone and whole tone intervals. Also the approach is quite classical (McLaughlin is the only player with jazz experience, I think), and tunes that demand swing treatment, like "Peri's Scope," "Funkalero," and "Yet Ne'er Broken" have been passed over in favor of more introspective repertoire. The arrangements take up most of the playing time with brief solos by McLaughin. The playing is very much on a high level, but the album could have had a similar effect with other repertoire. This is a listening experience but not engaging. —PB

I don't know if my old buddy Phil Bailey is trying to provoke me or what but I just have to add an

LETTER FROM EVANS is published four times a year at an annual subscription rate of $20.00 (bulk rate) in the continental United States, $27.00 first class; $27.00 (third class) in Alaska, Hawaii, Canada, and Mexico. The annual rate for Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Rim is $60. The rate in all other countries is $40 (funds in U.S. dollars). Previous issues are available at $7.00 each ($8.50 foreign). **Please allow eight weeks for delivery** The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Publisher/Editor, Win Hinkle, or the Board of Advisors. Letters to the editor are welcome on any subject. Advertising will be accepted from firms that have a product of genuine interest to the Bill Evans enthusiast. A rate card is available on request. Non-commercial sources of Bill Evans materials may present notices for possible inclusion in *LFE*. The final determination of suitability will be made at the sole discretion of the Publisher/Editor. The cover logo, based on a photograph by Jim Marshall, was designed by Mike Ning and is used by permission.

Letter from Evans
Win Hinkle, Editor
2712 Cady Way
Winter Park, FL
32792-4856
U.S.A.
Voice Phone (407) 678-7113
FAX (407) 678-7049

editorial rebuttal since I've heard this album and have a differing opinion.

First, maybe Phil needs to do an objective musical evaluation of the psychological effect of plucked strings. I wonder if the solos of Eddie Gomez and other fine bass players tend to make Phil think of "fine dining with a continental flavor." If Bill Evans happened to have performed once on a harpsichord (where the strings are plucked rather than hammered as in a piano), would his performance also have evoked an appetite for continental cuisine? Phil, I know that when I visited you a few years ago you had two monstrous grand pianos in your studio but you also had a bass leaning against the wall and I think I saw a guitar. I'm sure you are aware that guitarists must voice things a bit differently than pianists. I agree that voicing with half and whole steps are part of the Bill Evans experience, but certainly not a prerequisite for performing his music.

As far as particular tunes demanding particular treatments — surely you aren't demanding that "It Don't Mean a Thing If It Ain't Got That swing." All tunes are fair game for anything in jazz. Ballads can be up tempo, "Giant Steps" and certain other barn burners make nice ballads, and so on. I don't think that the three tunes that you mentioned that McLaughlin omitted, or the ones he included, demand any kind of special treatment other than what the artist deems necessary for his or her personal musical statement.

I would agree with the last three sentences of your review but definitely not the part about background music. McLaughlin has put together a nice tribute. The results may not be satisfying in traditional musical ways, but I find it enjoyable and somewhat engaging. I think that Bill Evans would be the first to agree that music that defies traditional categorization is definitely worthy of musical attention. —WH, Editor.

Back issues are still available
Package of all issues:
USA, Canada, $100
Europe and all other countries, $135.

The Art Pepper Society, organizing secretary, Tabasco Pete Webb, editor of *The NewsPepper* newsletter.

Tabasco Pete Webb, "Los Altos"
34c Dengrove Park,
Canterbury
Kent CT2 0PY, ENGLAND

Interview With Bill Evans

by Francois Postif

This is an interview done by Francois Postif which appeared in Jazz Hot *magazine, issue No. 282, April, 1972. Francois now writes for the French daily newspaper* La Marseillaise. *It also appeared in Francois's book* Les Grandes Interviews de Jazz Hot. *The translation back to English was done by a gentleman I work with at my day job, Jean LaPointe. The original English version is lost. The translation*

The Note

A Newsletter of the
Al Cohn Memorial
Jazz Collection
Dr. Larry Fisher, Chairman
Music Department
East Stroudsburg University
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

from English to French then back to English makes for some peculiar phrases and word choices, but, nevertheless, reveals some very interesting information.

FP: During your last concert at la Maison de la Radio, I got the impression, stronger than before (maybe involuntarily) that your piano style was turning towards sort of a comfortable beauty rather than towards innovation.

BE: It is difficult for a musician to analyze himself, especially in such things that concern questions that escape me totally, like, for example, the sound of the piano itself. I am working on a more theoretical approach. Just what is the beauty of my music in terms of a finished product. You are in a much better position to judge than I am. The quality of the sound is an element that I do not control, maybe because I have never thought about it. Instead I concern myself with theoretical problems of the piano, or the structure of the phrases, of the quality of my musical language. I believe that it is on those questions which a musician should concentrate. These are the most important points. This does not mean that I am not interested in the finished product, on the contrary. But my nature as a musician and the theory of music propels me towards deeper concerns, which impassioned me. I am a builder of churches and it is not possible to build churches if we cannot define their structures. If it is agreeable to us to contemplate a cathedral, we find ourselves in an altogether different situation when it comes to building one. Once it is built, looking at it is nothing more than a question of sensations and personal emotions. As for the concert at the Maison de la Radio, the piano was exceptional and the acoustics were excellent. All the existing conditions combined to satisfy my ear and I let myself play on the sound more than usual. Whenever I find a less than perfect piano and I know it will be difficult to appreciate the sonority, I lean towards the side of precaution and attempt to mask the faults of the instrument.

FP: It must be disagreeable for a pianist to go through an intermediary such as his instrument, when in fact this instrument can from time to time be a bad conduit for his ideas?

BE: That's true, but once you reach a certain point you ignore the quality of the instrument. The piano is the only instrument that does not stick to the skin of the musician. The trumpeter plays his trumpet, the bass player plays his bass and they become one with their instrument, almost married to them. The pianist will find a new lover every night with which he must compose music. This is the first thing he must learn, from the beginning of his career. This problem is constant, even for a pianist who is seasoned and already has made a name for himself. I no longer see *bad* pianos because my personal situation allows me to make them sound good. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all pianists. Many young and upcoming pianists prefer to take an electric piano with them which is inferior to even a bad instrument. What is dangerous about this situation is that they are promoting an instrument that is not worth the effort.

FP: In your last recording engagement with CBS

you used a Steinway and an electric piano by Fender. Were you happy with this recording?

BE: Very satisfied. The recording conditions were excellent. As in most of my recordings it took place in a church which had terrific acoustics. In fact, I recorded albums in churches with Miles Davis, George Russell, Gunther Schuller, and even with Michel Legrand. It's in the studio where I feel very relaxed, like at home. The number one desirable quality of a recording studio is to be able to reproduce the exact sound which is transmitted. Whenever I record, I demand a sound which is as close as possible to reality, very dry without echo. I am very conscious of the sound I want to produce, even to the point of being preoccupied with it. The sound is not the servant of the musical idea. I approach music from the inside, from pure theory and the feeling. This is what is of primary importance, the sound is secondary.

FP: You sometimes write compositions that are so difficult that even you have a hard time interpreting them. I particularly refer to "T.T.T. (Twelve Tone Tune)" in your last recording.

BE: It is in fact very difficult. It is a veritable battle when I play the theme, and two out of three times I come out a loser. But the third time everything comes out easily as if I led a charmed life. The following two times, the battle begins again. This type of piece makes me suffer every time I play it, it puts me in opposition with my technical facility in order to make it creative while making it look easy. In certain parts of the theme, I sometimes have the impression of wrestling and fighting, simply so that something happens. Among the difficult pieces "Unless It's You" (AKA "Orbit") gave us the most problems and is still causing us problems every time we play it. "One For Helen" and especially "Walkin' Up" are difficult pieces. In the rhythmic scheme of things, "Time Remembered" is a very delicate piece in which you need to play with a great velocity, in a slow tempo. But my pieces from our repertoire do not cause me any technical problems anymore. The only real problem left is to unite the physical aspects and psychological aspects together in the interpretation to give it a certain fluidity without the audience being aware of it and the difficult fighting within me. All this is a question of disposition. The wrestling match starts when I don't feel right with the situation. My situation is comparable to that of a speech giver who every night must give a speech on the same subject but make it different every time. Certain nights all goes well, other nights it would be impossible to say a word. In fact it is very important to practice your instrument. A pianist who plays every night in a club improves his ability, even if he does not play well at first, he ends up playing fairly well after a few weeks or a few months. But it is a gamble to predict that you will play well. It has happened to me when I was tired and not in the mood to play or to give the best of myself, while other nights, even though I felt great, my playing was just acceptable. Being acceptable is the professional standard, producing acceptable music. If we don't play above this level we are cheating the listeners.

FP: It seems to me you never touch on this level in your recordings. What I mean is in most of your recordings you place yourself well above the *acceptable* level?

BE: I was particularly spoiled when it comes to my recordings. I have registered over 60 recordings of which 30 were under my name. I especially love the ones I recorded for Riverside: *At the Village Vanguard, Explorations, Waltz for Debby, Fortunate Jazz, Everybody Digs Bill Evans*. I also have a weakness for the sessions at M.O.M.[?] I feel I have progressed with every one of my albums. Maybe it is not evident to the audience who follows my career through my albums, but I know that it is true.

FP: I also believe you are a perfectionist and your work has become much clearer as time has gone by and you have made new albums. Even as your technique shows a certain mastery, your playing is so free. Plus your fingering is always great.

BE: I believe that this is due to my way of thinking.

FP: Looking at your hands, it seems to me that

you do not have the hands of a pianist. Your fingers are not fine but rather rough.

FP: Tonight my hands are normal but at certain times my hands swell, really swell and I can't stand them. This comes from my liver ailment. This is embarrassing to me and limits my movements considerably. But I shouldn't complain. Oscar Peterson has arthritis. Horace Silver has rheumatism. Both suffer. In my case, it is a kind of state which is not painful. The only sure cure for me is rest. When I was younger I played with flat fingers. When we possess a lot of vitality and we have a lot of energy, this method of playing permits you to use your energy effectively. As I matured technically I noticed that my fingers curled when I play. My technique was limited and I couldn't do as much, without considerable effort and thinking about it. It is a more natural position which was used by Mozart, Haydn, and especially Bach. To play Bach, is for a pianist, one of the most rewarding things that there is.

I am no longer a slave to work. I have worked very hard in the past, going up and down scales and repeating endlessly the same exercises. You must play themes, if not the study of piano becomes a nuisance. I started studying when I was 6 years old but I never heard of jazz until I was thirteen years old. Before that I played strictly for my pleasure. I studied, went to a university and obtained diplomas but I never worked towards becoming a classic concert artist because it didn't interest me at all. I am against the idea of spending my life studying a repertoire to become a classical pianist. My brother who is two years older than I, started studying the piano and right away I began amusing myself on the piano by playing by ear, tunes I knew. My parents were not musicians but yet they adored music, and they had the intelligence to have us study other musical instruments as well as the piano. I chose to learn the violin and my brother chose the trumpet. At twelve years old I abandoned the violin because I really massacred it and I began to study the flute and the piccolo, while still continuing to study the piano. I continued to study the flute and the piccolo while in college and while in the Army. I also played the alto sax but I always returned to the piano because I always considered it to be my instrument. I love the piano not only because it is a complete instrument (the organ offers the same possibilities, but does not interest me), it's because the piano, to me, is crystal — crystal that sings, a sound that disperses in the air like a circle of smoke and sometimes becomes beautiful. It is marvelous to sit at your piano and create your own music with your own musical concepts without having the constant worry of being let down by the playing of other musicians.

FP: We have not yet spoken about your accompanying musicians. Eddie Gomez, for example, has been with you for seven years.

BE: Eddie is an excellent bassist. My problem with him is that he does not play exclusively my music as did my other bass players (Scott LaFaro, Chuck Israels). He plays on demand with everyone. He sometimes plays with musicians who's styles have nothing to do with mine — let's say musicians with a very liberal style. On my part, I don't perform any *free* music and I have never listened to any that really satisfied me. It is my belief that only a pianist could create good *free music* because only a pianist

could express what he wants without the help of anyone else. And if this were possible for me, it would be marvelous. But, actually to me, the avant garde is a foreign language.

There could never be a truly *free* group the way it is conceived, this music needs a bass and that nullifies everything. The *free* group, as I conceive it would be the one that starts off with nothing, and would throw itself blindly, without any direction, into a liberal musical. *Free* is really only of the spirit. I would prefer a way to play *free* with rules before starting that would, for example, gradually lead us to a crescendo then fall back to a calmer section, then back up to an energetic level then back to calm. This would certainly be a liberal conception as to what I have heard so far in *free jazz*.

FP: Can we only make good music by obeying certain laws?

BE: Yes, or by discovering new rules but not by eliminating existing rules without replacing them with new ones. You must have discovered by listening to my recordings that *free jazz* is not for me. I am too theory minded for that but I must say that the liberal side, or more specifically the side of liberation of music has interested me. I have done some research in this direction about 12 years ago without taking it too seriously. I needed to relax and because I pursue a large musical experience, I did it for amusement, out of curiosity, but this is really not in my nature. I want to progress with every one of my performances. I want every one of my albums to reach a plateau with a solid base or method. There are things that we cannot do. I do not want to fight with my own human nature. When I play, I please myself and that's the most important thing to me. The music that I am now playing pleases me but it seems that I am in a period where I am not progressing, which bothers me a lot.

FP: As a pianist, you have reached the Hall of Fame (DownBeat) of jazz. Does this mean a lot to you?

BE: A great deal. This makes me very happy because I was voted in by other musicians. It is also good publicity. I was also really happy that my trio came in second place in small group category.

FP: Do you think you are, as this vote implies, a musician's musician?

BE: I hope so. But that is not my goal. I don't live for that. What interests me is my public. I want the people who come to hear me to like me and understand me. When I look at the audience which consists of children up to professional musicians and see some amateur jazz musicians who love other types of jazz better than my music, I am re-assured by their support. Also I attach great importance to personality when I perform and I am always looking for traits that are human. I am like a painter who is being questioned about his painting. He would be obliged to answer in terms of perspective, composition and color, that is to say, description in technical terms. We would probably conclude that only the technical questions interests him. But the moment that he begins painting he will let his feelings explode, what we call in music his feelings, and now it is his human side that will show up in his works. It is exactly the same for me. I think in technical terms, but what I play is human. The feeling, is the base — it must come first. I cannot think technically and *feel* after. In truth it is the opposite that happens. The technical part allows me to express what I feel.

FP: It seems to me it is a stage — I particularly refer to the recordings of Monk where the technique is dispensable.

BE: Monk. The classic recording for Monk to me is the album he recorded for Prestige with Gary Mapp, [Bartz?] Art Blakey and Max Roach. It was eight original compositions, "Bemsha Swing," "Little Rootie Tootie," etc., a wonderful album filled with humorous things. Monk has an extraordinary sense of humor and all his albums reflect that.

FP: Yes, it seems to me that this is what is missing some other musicians.

FP: Are you working on a new album right now?

BE: Yes, it's with George Russell who is presently writing the music. It is a lengthy composition, with my trio, and a large ensemble. I have been

talking about it for a long time with George and the final decision making process will be his.

FP: A trio or a large ensemble, which is best for you?

BE: The trio because of its versatility. I can do things that are appropriate for me. I would love to have a full orchestra behind me for a concert or an album, but not all the time. In reality, my dream is a duo, pianist and bass. But the public wants a drummer, because a good drummer brings a spectacular, more traditional texture that can't be duplicated by piano and bass. I have performed and recorded in a piano/bass duo but I must admit that the results were not conclusive.

FP: Could you not try a format with a trio with a bass and a rhythm guitarist like Freddie Greene?

BE: That's a good idea, but even with a guitarist as perfect as Freddie Greene it's a difficult combination. You have to realize that piano and guitar employ the same register, the same harmony and you risk having harmonic interference. But it is an idea I have had in the back of my mind and I think I will try it someday.

FP: Even with a really good drummer, drums are an instrument too loud for the trio.

BE: A good drummer, let us say Marty Morrell, is, in my opinion, a constant balance problem, and the fact that he is great drummer changes nothing. I often find while playing that the dynamic level has intensified because of the drums — it causes everyone else to play too loudly with less tenderness. The best drummer for a trio in my opinion is Denzel Best. It is very difficult to find a drummer who still knows how to use brushes. The art of using brushes is fast becoming a lost art, and it is less a question of theory as a question of conception. Marty still knows how to use the brushes but in a more modern fashion then Denzel Best. I have yet another reason to complain about drummers. It often happens that I need a certain atmosphere, a certain momentum and the drummer knows exactly how to give me what I need at the necessary moment. Later I find these attributes become a nuisance and we can't get rid of them. This then creates a certain tension which we cannot control and no longer is useful. However I should not complain, I have always had excellent drummers during my career; Paul Motian, Arnold Wise, who stayed a very long time with us and Marty Morrell who is leaving us soon, at the end of this tour or the next.

FP: I have noticed that you keep your musicians a long time...

BE: I believe in stability and I keep my musicians a long time and that's because I do not hire them lightly. I do not hire anyone without being absolutely persuaded of their talents. I also believe with conviction that to keep a group, you must create a choice place for each individual and put each musician in his own element so he can give the best of himself. Sure its happened that I had to make good albums with studio musicians which I didn't know, but this is a rarity. When we go on the road, working with musicians who "feel good" to me is essential. Eddie Gomez is for me a marvelous musician, who knows everything about a bass and I just couldn't say enough about him. The problem I have with him is that I feel I am limiting him by keeping him in the trio. But I know he is ready to follow me if I want to go further than what I am actually doing now. If I can find the time, the 6 months I need to rest, and then change my musical direction somewhat in about a year. I intend to re-think my music, to

enlarge my musical conceptions and to do this I need a period of time without any responsibilities in order to find the right direction.

FP: Last question. Why aren't there any blues in your repertoire?

BE: Its true that we hardly play any blues. When I first started out there were a few blues tunes that we played and we enjoyed them a lot, then we abandoned them throughout the years without any particular reason. We now sometimes play a blues but that is not a primary in our repertoire. The spirit and the feelings of the blues are so present in jazz that even without playing blues, good musicians spend their time "playing the blues." —BE, FP, JL, WH.

Interview with Don Thompson

by Win Hinkle

WH: We're talking with Don Thompson, one of my favorite bass players, who also more recently works as a pianist. I understand that you have listened to Bill Evans throughout his career...

DT: I've been aware of Bill almost as long as I've been playing, I guess. 1961, when I first started playing, I guess it was Bill's original trio, the one with Scott LaFaro, that actually made me want to be a musician and jazz bass player.

WH: You don't look that old.

DT: What year is it? (Laughs) I am that old. Anyhow, I started playing about 1960. That was when I started playing seriously. So those records, "Autumn Leaves" and "What Is This Thing Called Love?" those tracks, that's where I got excited about being a musician, and wanting to play bass and piano, too.

WH: Did you always play piano?

DT: I played piano long before I played bass. I don't remember starting. As long as my memory goes back, I've played the piano.

WH: When did you first hear Bill Evans? And where?

DT: On records back then. Those original records —*Portrait in Jazz*, the two live ones, and *Explorations, Everybody Digs Bill Evans, New Conceptions,* I got all those records. I think there was a Tony Scott record, too, which I heard, but I don't own. He did a bunch of things, I guess. There are things with Miles Davis. If he was on a record, I would just buy it. That went on for a long time, and that was always my fantasy to play bass with him one day, which I never did. I met him a few times and spoke with him, and that was it.

WH: When did you first meet him?

DT: I was living in California, in San Francisco, and Bill was in town a lot. I heard him play. Paul Wharburton was playing bass then. A drummer from San Francisco was playing.

WH: Paul is from Denver.

DT: That's right. I guess he's back there now, as a matter of fact. But I heard that trio. What I remember most about was when they played "My Foolish Heart." I'd been listening to the record for awhile, and I figured I knew exactly how he plays "My Foolish Heart." I could play it on the piano exactly like him. Then of course, when I heard him live, he played it totally differently from that, and it really shot me down. I was devastated. He'd altered the chords. They were bigger chords. There were things happening that weren't on the record. It was a good lesson for me. Then I met him briefly at a party one night, but I was too scared to talk to him. And that was the case almost every time I ever did meet him. I just couldn't think of anything to say to him. He didn't seem like he really wanted to talk. I couldn't really think of anything I had to say to him. I could have said, "Man, you sound great!" I wouldn't even say that. So I basically didn't say anything. Now, I really wish I had, of course, but, that's the way it goes.

WH: Do you play any of his tunes?

DT: Not very often. I have. I've learned a whole bunch of them, but I hardly ever play them on a gig. A couple of times I've played "Very Early" because

I was in a band where it was sort of one of my tunes that I had played in Boss Brass with Rob McConnell's band. So that was a feature tune for me. "My Bells" I played a lot. I used to play "Waltz for Debby," but I never do anymore. "Blue in Green" I played a lot, and "Time Remembered," which is probably my favorite of all. "Laurie," I play that one. But he wrote a whole bunch of tunes and I don't play a lot of them now. I've learned them. I've got the books and I read them through and everything. But I would never go up on a gig and play Bill's tunes.

WH: It's a very personal thing, I guess.
DT: Yes. It is for me. I can't do that. I didn't ask to play "My Bells" or "Very Early" with the Boss Brass. I was flattered that Rob thought I could do it. But it wasn't my idea. It was his idea.
WH: What are you doing on piano now? Do you have a trio you work with?
DT: I don't, actually. I've played piano a lot. I'm in a band with Pat LaBarbera; Pat's brother Joe is playing drums. So we have that band.
WH: Do you work in Toronto with that group?
DT: We're hoping to do more than that, but we worked in Toronto a few times. We have a CD, and we're in the process of getting another one organized. That one's called *JMOG* — jazz men on the go. I know it's kind of silly, isn't it. I don't why we call it that, but that's what it is.
WH: What label is that?
DT: It's on Sackville, John Lawrence's label out of Toronto.
WH: Do you do any teaching?
DT: A lot of teaching. I've been at the Banff Center since 1981.
WH: I've seen a photo of your bass sitting on a chair...?
DT: That's probably Dave Hollensby's bass. When I started Dave was out there then. That's Dave's bass, I'm pretty sure. When that started, he was the head of the program. So I've been out there for a long time. I teach in Toronto at Humber College, York University, and I have some bass students that come to my house from the University of Toronto, also. So, I've got a lot of students. It seems to be what I'm doing more than anything, nowadays.
WH: Teaching piano also?
DT: Mostly piano. Not that many bass students, but I have one bass player that's amazingly good. A young guy, he's only played for two or three years, and he's frighteningly good. I don't know if you know Neil Swainson.
WH: Yes.
DT: This guy's a talent like that. He's that kind of genius mind that automatically plays right. He automatically plays in tune — beautiful notes, beautiful solos in any key, and he's got all kinds of chops and everything.
WH: There's a bass player that comes to mind, that I don't know if he's in the jazz circuit — Edgar Meyer.
DT: Oh yeah. Well, yeah, sure.
WH: He's an incredibly great bassist.
DT: Yes, he is. He's unbelievable.
WH: When you teach piano, do you use any of Bill Evans' recordings or voicings as a model?
DT: Yes, but I don't ever teach anybody what he does. I don't even really know what he does. I've never gone to the trouble to transcribe things. I don't really believe in that, as a matter of fact. I have really strong feelings about that. It's getting more and more that way. I never do that, but still there are only two piano players I ever suggest that anybody really study. Bill is one and Art Tatum is the other. I figure, for me anyhow, the whole thing that's interesting about music is the harmony. I think doing Art Tatum and Bill Evans is everything you would ever want to hear in harmony. Both of them, actually, have played it all.
WH: I wish somebody would release the Art Tatum things on CD and clear up the sound.
DT: The ones I like aren't on CD. Those are the ones that were on Twentieth Century Fox, I think, the Art Tatum Discoveries. I was in Tower Records (Boston) this afternoon looking for them, and of course they're not there. I don't know if they'll ever come out. Those were the ones that I always listened to. But Tatum and Bill Evans...after that, I mean,

well, Hank Jones. But that's what's interesting to me is harmony. I'm not going to sit down and play exactly how Bill played. I couldn't do that. It would take me a long time to tell exactly what he did. But I can form the mental image of his sound. That I can sort of get in my mind, that sound. It's different to everybody, I suppose. But in my mind, I know exactly what it sounds like. Right this minute I can hear the first chord of "Blue in Green." And I could I walk over to the piano and play something that sounds exactly like that. It might not be exactly that, but it would be what I think it is, anyhow. That's what's important--that you have an idea of where he's coming from. Not exactly what he's playing.

WH: Anything you'd like to add about Bill Evans?

DT: Just that I wish I'd gotten to know him. It's a terrible loss. I couldn't believe it when I heard that he'd died. It was devastating. There have been two or three people that have been lost that have affected me like that. Glenn Gould. When Glenn Gould died, I was messed up for years. I just couldn't believe it. I still can't, actually. I've got every video and every record he's ever done. It's hard to believe that those guys aren't around anymore. You'll never see them. And when Bill died it was the same thing. I can remember when Stravinsky died. I thought, oh man, how can that be?

WH: Pleasure talking to you.

Interview With Bill Dobbins

by Win Hinkle

WH: I'm talking with Bill Dobbins at the International Association of Jazz Educators' Convention in Boston. It's January 15, 1994. Bill, you've done a lot of research on many pianists. You are a beautiful jazz pianist in your own right. How does Bill Evans fit into the overall picture of things? In 25 words or less!

BD: One of the main ways in which I think of Bill Evans' music — it ranks with a handful of the most articulate pianists in jazz, which would include people like Duke Ellington, Teddy Wilson, Thelonious Monk, Hank Jones. If you think in terms of contemporary people, somebody like Clare Fischer and Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea. The thing that I think best typifies Bill's music, and the thing that I think attracted me to it most strongly in the beginning, was that he perfectly balances the intellectual and emotional sides of music. Because there's so much there intellectually, in terms of how logical everything is. The voicing, the harmonies, the motific development, the improvisation and the way things are related to the original melody or the theme of whatever song he's playing. That's really balanced with a really deep emotional aspect in the music. His great sound on the piano and the way his expressive qualities on the instrument are combined with his choices in terms of harmonic vocabulary, texture and mood and all of those things.

WH: Harmonic vocabulary. I remember you mentioned yesterday in a lecture that Bill was one of several pianists that uses a subdominant function. Could you explain that a little bit? I didn't quite understand that.

BD: A lot of jazz piano, and a lot of jazz in general seems to be dominated by this formula of ii-V-I, so that if a person's in the key of E-flat, for example, they're always using Fminor, some form of B-flat7, E-flat. Maybe the Fminor is half-diminished instead of minor, or maybe they change it to a dominant so it becomes V (F7) of V, but just basic functions that are used all the time by classical composers, for example, in the key of E-flat, instead of using Fminor7, they get to B-flat7 using A-flat major 7. Or, A-flat minor 7, which is a different color. And some of these basic harmonic relationships are found all the time in classical music. Since Bill was so knowledgeable about that, he uses those things really frequently, and much more than people might think. They make the harmonic progressions, even in a basic tonal piece of music, seem a lot more interesting and less predictable than if your number of

choices is more limited, which it is with a lot of otherwise, very interesting jazz musicians.

WH: Do you think that's more of a western music influence as opposed to an African music influence? Or, can you really call a bebop ii-V formula African?

BD: It really comes out that all harmony in jazz comes from European music. Because European music from about 1700 to 1900 or so, is the only music in the world anywhere in which a really sophisticated system of harmony has developed. Most other musics around the world are focused more primarily on melody and rhythm. And, the only exceptions to that really are the harmonies that result from the superimposition of melodies that come from blues, on top of harmonies that come from European classical music. And, it's those things which especially Duke Ellington was so cognizant of. Those are the things that really bring new, fresh combinations. So often when you hear really lush or interesting harmonic sounds in a jazz piece, whether it's a piano piece or a big band piece or some other instrumentation, it's often not really the harmonies themselves which make it sound like jazz rather than classical music. It's the way in which the instruments are being played. The kind of tone quality and use of vibrato and so on, that the horn players are using. To a lesser extent, but still to a very audible extent, the way the people are playing the piano in terms of articulation and touch and things of that nature. The main exception to that is when you come across a sonority that involves using the blues scale. For example, in Ellington's little piano solo in "Blue Serge" from... this is already back in 1941. It's in the key of C minor, and at the end of his piano solo, when he plays G7 augmented to C minor 9, the melody that he's playing on top of that is the flat V in the key of the music, which is a blue note. If you're in the key of C minor, it would be G-flat resolving to F. But he plays the G-flat on the G7 augmented chord. So it's actually the major seventh on top of the dominant chord, resolving to the eleventh of the C minor chord. But because the melody of that is so clearly from the blues scale in the key of the music, it sounds perfectly justified to the ears. And that's one example of the combination of blues melody and chromatic harmony that you would never find in European music.

WH: There is a great Johnny Mandel tune, new to me, that you played this morning. Where can I get a lead sheet of it?

BD: I know where you can get a lead sheet of it. They just published a Johnny Mandel songbook. It's really great. It's got all the songs everybody knows, and a few I'm sure most people don't know. Actually, I learned it through Gene Bertoncini, this guitarist I play with. He's been frequently in Rochester. Sometimes we do concerts out of town in other places together. And he was playing it. He gave me a lead sheet. I don't know where he got the lead sheet. It had all the correct chords and the lyrics and everything. But then when I got the Johnny Mandel songbook, I noticed that the music in there was in a different key. The music I got from Gene was in G minor and the version in the songbook is in F minor.

WH: The way you demonstrated it the other day reminded me of one of Bill's tunes. But he used some of the same chords, especially at the end.

BD: Yes, I know — I can't remember the title of it.

WH: That was nice. As far as Bill's development, it looks like to me when you listen to early Bill that he wasn't especially in a strong bebop urge. Especially listening to the Miles Davis sides.

BD: And the "New Jazz Conceptions."

WH: And it switched to more of a melodic conception. Any thoughts about that?

BD: Well, I think what it has more to do with focusing on a very strong kind of thematic development in the solos. And I don't think that's something that has to do so much with style per se. It's just that you find, again, a very small handful of great jazz soloists that really focus on that. But the majority don't seem to; for whatever reason I'm not really sure. If I would think of jazz soloists that have that strong sense of thematic development in other styles, people who come to mind right away would be people like Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins,

Lester Young. I mentioned Thelonious Monk before. It's interesting that even though Monk played the piano differently from Bill Evans, one of the things that they shared was this clear sense of thematic development. Each solo is like a little composition, and not just a collection of scales and arpeggios that happen to be based on the chord progression. And another modern player that's thought of a lot that way, too, is Sonny Rollins, the saxophonist; Miles Davis, of course. It sort of narrows down the list of really great improvisers if you think of maybe two different things. One, just thematic development in its own right in terms of when you get to the improvisation almost as each thing is played, it seems to have some connection to what was played just before and what's being played just after. Then the second thing, what connection is there, if any, between the improvisation and the melody of the song that's being played?

WH: To me, that's the essence of music, really. Finding a personal statement by someone in traditional musical values which is thematic development. If you can hear where the improvisation came from, you can hear some kind of method to it, as opposed to going in many aimless directions.

BD: To me, it's also another way in which you can get the audience involved in the musical process. Because when that kind of logical thematic development is going on in the improvising, then besides emotional and sound element of the music, you're also communicating with them on another level. They are, whether they realize it or not (and in many cases they don't have the formal musical education) are hearing some of that logic in the music and it's getting them involved in sort of hearing or guessing where the music's going next. It's an interesting way to follow the performance.

WH: It's more sophisticated. That's probably the one element that separates the sophisticated audience from the unsophisticated. Bill talked about the universal mind in people, and I think that's what he was trying to get a hold of. I wonder what he would think now about the course of jazz. Are there fewer jazz players trying to reach people on that level, or has it stayed the same? I heard the Lynn Arriel Trio last night. They went in that direction. That was the only performances that has so far at this convention, in my ears. Have you heard them?

BD: No. I haven't gotten a chance to. I wish I could have heard that. I think it's probably a question at that level of playing, of dedication to that kind of integrity. It's probably always been a relatively rare thing. It probably will remain that way. In any art form there's always the general stuff, the majority; and then there's the real cream, the really highest quality. I think you'd probably find that in just about any art form. If you look in classical music, the vast majority of classical music is not nearly as interesting as the best compositions of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Chopin, and so on. When you get into their work too, every piece is not equally great. I've always thought that trying to search for the highest level of quality in anything like that is a very positive rather than a negative thing. The fact that I may realize that certain performances or certain players are maybe not as musically interesting as certain other performances or recordings or certain other players, doesn't involve the fact that I may realize that it doesn't at all denigrate the music of those people. It enables me to really appreciate the best that there is in a much clearer way than I would be able to otherwise. I think quality is still always out there. You really have to look for it.

WH: I assume you're about my age...?

BD: Forty-six.

WH: Yep. Did you hear Bill? And how many times did you hear him?

BD: I heard Bill three really memorable times I can think of. The first time was at the Montreux Festival in 1970 when they recorded the *Montreux II* record. I was there with the Kent State University Big Band. We had been invited to perform at the festival. We played there with Art Farmer. That was the first time that I heard Bill Evans in person. It made a really big impression. I found out later that it was recorded in one of the more interesting recordings of that particular period. The second time

was when we had Bill come to Eastman. This was in the late '70s. When did Bill die?

WH: 1980.

BD: It must have been '78 or '76. I didn't think I'd known Chuck [Israels] that long.

WH: Was Chuck Israels playing? Or Marc Johnson?

BD: What happened was that this was right toward the end of the trio with Eddie Gomez and Elliot Zigmund and Bill was coming with that trio. But just a couple days before the concert was supposed to take place, he was going to be at Eastman for a couple days and do some clinic sessions, discussions with the students and play and comment and so on. But just a couple days before the concert was supposed to take place, his mother died. So we had to reschedule the concert. Fortunately, we had an open date in the theater a week or ten days later. But because we had to change the date, Eddie Gomez had a recording date in California, so he couldn't make it. We just found out, fortunately, that Chuck Israels was available. He was still living in New York at the time, and he agreed to come up and do the concert. Bill agreed to go ahead and do the concert because since he had played with Chuck for such a long period, he knew everything would be OK. So that was the second time, and that was really great because it gave me an opportunity to hear him comment on students' playing. His comments were very helpful, positive and encouraging, but very perceptive, too. You could really tell that he was really hearing what it was that they were doing. That he heard the influences of interesting and strong music where that was evident. And also heard things that they could do to strengthen or improve what they were doing, which was very helpful. That was the first opportunity when I got a chance to play for Bill, too. And he was very kind about my playing, and we had a couple very interesting conversations. It was nice to get to know him a little bit at that time, and I wasn't surprised at all to find that his ability to talk about music and express how he thought about it or how he perceived what other people were doing was as articulate and concise as his music was. The last time was, I think for me, probably the most memorable performance. One of the things that I find when I hear piano trio so often is that the sound leaves so much to be desired if it isn't in a big hall, especially if drums are involved. Drums often will overshadow what the pianist is doing. In the concert at Eastman, unfortunately, there was a little too much drum sound and not quite enough piano. The last time I heard Bill Evans perform was also in Rochester at a community college called Nazareth College just outside of town in their concert series. They had Bill Evans and Eddie Gomez in duo concert. This was after Elliot had left, and Bill was looking for another drummer. I think it was just before that period when he was playing with Philly Joe again, before the last trio. But it was just Bill Evans and Eddie Gomez and that was just fantastic because with piano and bass you could hear every nuance. I'll really remember that concert.

WH: I've experienced similar things with different ups in different trios, even in Bill's trios. Sometimes Bill wanted a lot, he wanted a strong search power. It's a hard thing to judge because the listeners are listening to the chords, the subtlety.

BD: I think one of the things that all points up is how exceptional Paul Motian is. If you not only listen to the records with Paul earlier on, but even if you go and hear Paul today. He hasn't changed a bit. He's one of those few drummers — Joe Hunt's another one who we heard playing here. There are a few drummers out there like that who can be as creative as you want to be, but at a dynamic level that really balances with everything. It's a pretty rare thing.

WH: Joe Hunt was surprising. The first time I heard him was the day before yesterday.

BD: Joe is terrific.

WH: He can play as soft, smooth, with power, and maintain that as long as needed.

BD: Joe was in a small group that I was involved in that went to Spain for a few weeks in the early '80s with Steve Brown, Wallace Roney and Jerry Nyewood and Todd Coolman. We played quite a few concerts and played in some clubs during that

tour, and did some seminars with young music students. This one place where we were giving a workshop for four or five days we had jam sessions. Right above the place where we were teaching there was a club. We'd go up there with the students and have jam sessions in the evenings. They had this horrible piano. It was one of those uprights that no matter how hard you tried to bang the thing, you just couldn't get any sound. When it came time for the piano solos, Joe didn't lay out, but he had no trouble hearing what I was playing. That really amazed me.

WH: From a trio perspective, going to the last trio with Marc Johnson and Joe LaBarbera, it's kind of hard for me to assess that period because musically there are some fascinating directions but also, there is also the strong possibility that part of it could be drug-directed on Bill's part. You hear the rushing and the constant pushing ahead. It's hard for me as a bass player to understand. But yet in my last interview with Joe LaBarbera, Joe talked a little about it. Joe said Bill said, "Yes I'm rushing, and I want you to go with me." I'm trying to understand the directions he was going in. I can understand it from a musical perspective. The treatments he would give to some of the standards towards the end like "My Romance" where he would have a palette of different influences and different ways to interpret the tune. Maybe the tune was being heard on three or four levels or more at the same time, swapping back and forth, time-wise. In the particular performance I thinking of the performance at Ronnie Scott's on the Dreyfus label. It's a great performance and it's really the epitome of that tune. You can really follow the development of all the ways he played "My Romance" and it's the version to end all versions. The rushing and playing on top of the time and the frantic quality is actually part of it and it works. How do you feel about that?

BD: I think there are musically interesting things in all the different periods. Music, whether they like it or not, is a reflection of people's personalities, and who they are or what they are, as much as it is the expression of a certain style or development of a certain piece of music. That was Bill's personality. That was what he was at the time. I personally feel like there's a little more depth in things in which there's an element of control. So, just in terms of purely musical things, I tend to prefer the performances where, even though there's a lot of intensity, it's an intensity that's still really within the tempo of the tune and something that feels like there's some musical control behind it. But I don't find those other performances, especially if they have a lot of interesting musical content, that much less worthwhile. It's just that those performances definitely reflect where Bill was at the time. How he was thinking about things and whatever internal or external problems he was dealing with. That always is going to come out in the music.

WH: I feel the same way about the control and trying to examine that in terms of my own perspective. And see if it's a white influence or a European influence, because there's some part of jazz, I don't see how the majority of jazz that I'm hearing now doesn't seem to hold forth. If there is an uncontrolled, unbridled sense to things that I'm hearing now.

BD: I don't think it's a white or European thing. If you listen to a lot of African music, it's the epitome of control. That stuff is so natural to them because they come up doing it from infancy. It's just as natural to them as walking down the street or carrying on a conversation with somebody. So, I don't think it's necessarily that. I think in any musical tradition or style, you can find people that are doing things in a way that seems very natural and has an easy flow to it, even if there's a lot of excitement and bombast going on. But you can also find even in classical music, for example, there are a lot of performances of Horowitz that are the epitome of control. For people that really like classical music, that really wouldn't be their cup of tea, either. They would prefer somebody who could play those pieces and have just as much excitement without it feeling like it's sort of running away. The same thing is true in other traditions of improvisation like in Indian music. I have heard many concerts of South and North Indian music. The master musi-

cians there, those pieces are tremendously exciting when they get ready to come to the conclusion. There's something in the structure of those pieces often in which the expression of tempos, each one is faster than the preceding on, you very rarely get the feeling that the players are really out of control of what they're doing. Again, you get back to balance. It's a good balance between letting go and hanging on. It's another kind of balance like I was talking about in relation to Bill Evans' music. The thing I really find that's so attractive is this balance between the intellectual and the emotional part.

WH: Which Bill Evans tunes were you exposed to first in your career? I know that you are a pianist. This is hard to ask of a pianist sometimes because you're approaching any tune as developing yourself, but you hear Bill Evans compositions. Which ones did you hear in the beginning.

BD: The records that I got involved in first were the ones with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian. The first ones that I started dealing with were "Waltz for Debby" and "Peri's Scope," and "Thirty-four Skiddoo." Then stuff from the Town Hall record. Especially "Turn Out The Stars" and I loved that solo suite in solo memory of his father. "Time Remembered" and the stuff from the *Bill Evans Album* on Columbia. Those pieces that go through all the keys. I love playing those, "Sugar Plum" and "Comrade Conrad" and the "Twelve Tone Tunes." I got involved in Bill Evans heavily around the mid 1970s. It was funny. It took me a long time to realize how special Bill Evans' music really was. But then once I got into it, it really had such a profound influence on me. I think most people when they hear me play, that's one of the things that almost everybody mentions is that they definitely hear the influence of Bill. It's something that you can really be identified with, marked by that. Ellington is another one. There are certain musicians in jazz that once you get really heavily into them, it's almost impossible to avoid having a noticeable trace of that influence because it's such powerful music.

WH: I don't necessarily hear Bill. I hear your own thing. I hear a very good natural harmonic sensitive approach. That's a part of Bill Evans, yes, but it's part of your playing. It's still something very personal.

BD: Well that's good. I'm glad you hear that. There's a balance there, too. I think one of the great things about being involved in a tradition is that you realize fairly early on that whatever you're dealing with musically, it's not something that any one person sort of made up one day. There are so many myths. You talk about pro-jazz folklore. Charlie Parker, for example, the vocabulary that Charlie Parker used. He didn't make any of that stuff up. All those phrases, all those melodies, they were all around. He collected them together and heard how they could be used to communicate musically in a certain way that was a little different from anybody else. You could say the same thing about Bill Evans, that the way he way heard the classical music that he was influenced by — whether it was Bach or the impressionistic composers, his connection with the tradition of American popular song — these were all things that were around. But the way he heard that they could go together and be used with a really interesting creative musical vocabulary, that's where the individuality comes from. The way you put things together and the emotional aspect that you're trying to communicate, which is going to be hopefully a little different for everybody. Because everybody's a little different that way.

WH: I personally have not been involved in jazz education. I have gotten out of it. I taught bass at the University of North Florida for awhile. Now I feel very strongly that we're preparing a lot of students for careers that don't exist — if we do actually prepare for careers in music. I've gotten into a lot of trouble telling people as a music educator that they're probably not going to find a living in this, but I want them to learn as much as they can for their own enjoyment. They don't look realistically at making a living. I was wondering how you treat that as Chairman of Eastman. That's another whole ball of wax, of course, because it's a conservatory of international proportions and scope. Eastman is still in a situation where it draws the very best. Is there

room for that now? How do you feel about jazz education now?

BD: I think you just have to say that you're going to make room for things. Just to give you a few examples. When I started college at Kent State University, they didn't have any jazz program. We weren't allowed to play jazz in the school. So if my attitude had been "let's be realistic" we never would have had a jazz band. There were guys that started at the school the same time that I did and they were going to have a big band whether anybody liked it or not. So we persisted and persevered. It was a great workshop situation, because they didn't have a lot of the published arrangements that we do now. A few of us started writing so we'd have some material to play. We looked for every opportunity to perform that we could. It was a big university, so they had a lot of student dormitories. So, we got engaged by the students to do informal concerts in the dormitories and student lounges whenever a function came up like a big university event or a dance or a parents' weekend or something. We tried to find out who the student activities' people were, to see if they would hire the band to play for the dance or whatever the function was. Within a couple of years the music school got so embarrassed at getting letters from the president of the university or the dean of fine arts saying, "Oh, we heard your jazz ensemble at such-and-such event and they were so great. You must be so proud of them," that they made it an accredited course. So I try to be realistic but idealistic at the same time. The thing that we tell the students at Eastman is, "nobody's going to call you up someday and you're going to have a job and you're going to be working all the time. You have to go around and beat the bushes and drum things up for yourself." On the other hand, if you just approach what you're going to do with your future in terms of what you perceive as being out there, then you're really limiting yourself. You're just sort of looking for some pre-cut slot that you can be dropped into and OK, this is sort of following the path of least resistance. And it's my feeling that the really creative people in whatever area — whether it's music or anything else — what they need to be trying to do as much as possible is making their own spot. That doesn't mean that you're going to be able to do everything you want to do right away, but when you get out of school, if you.... Of course you have to be able to make a living. In the beginning it might be doing something outside of music, some kind of a day job, or whatever. If at every point you're trying as much as you can to take advantage of every opportunity to use more and more of your time to do what you're really interested in, and less and less to do whatever it is that you're having to do that's maybe not so interesting, it's possible to develop a kind of, to develop your own niche. I think that's a much more useful way to look at things. I mean I agree with you that really the most important function of music education, and we tell the students this at Eastman, especially at the stage that we're at in the United States, music education is going to be more for developing a future audience for music than providing all the people that are in music school with jobs. But that's a very worthwhile function in itself, because if we want to have creative music in the future, we need to develop and build an audience. But on the other hand, people that have a good music education who are very highly skilled musicians, I think they should really approach things in terms of trying to make as many opportunities for themselves as they can, instead of settling for what the realistic situation is. Trying to stick to their idealism as much as they can, but at the same time realize that they've got to be taking every opportunity they can to play in situations where people can hear them, might be able to do them some good. To take every opportunity to play any kind of gigs that they can or make any kind of connections with people that can help them in their musical endeavors. If they're pretty industrious that way, I think there's a lot more reason to be optimistic than a lot people think.

WH: That's a good answer. Thanks. —WH

Transcription Notes "All of You"

by Steve Weidenhofer

The first transcribed solo is taken from the album *Sunday at the Village Vanguard* which was recorded on June 25, 1961, at the jazz night club of that name in New York. Bassist Scott LaFaro and drummer Paul Motian complete the trio. The form of this thirty-two measure Cole Porter composition resembles a binary structure (ABA'C) containing four consecutive phrases each eight measures long. The trio plays the original statement of the piece with Evans only occasionally hinting at the melody. He begins his solo by emphasizing the dominant G with three pick-up notes. LaFaro responds -by playing a dominant pedal through the first three measures. Indeed, the dominant pedal idea occurs to a greater or lesser degree each time the A section returns.

Short two and three measure melodic figures characterize Evans' solo in this piece. In each section of the first statement of the form he connects several of these figures to form phrases. The first A section contains triadic figures superimposed upon the underlying harmony which, together with the dominant pedal, creates considerable tension. The idea for these triadic figures seems to emanate from LaFaro in measure four as he plays two eighth notes (F and Ab) on the downbeat which is immediately imitated by Evans and expanded into triads.

The melodic segments contained in the B section all display balanced ascending and descending motion. Each figure begins with at least one triplet as the line ascends. In the middle segment (measures thirteen and fourteen) the eight-note triplet is rhythmically expanded into two quarter-note triplets, the first of which is accented by the use of octaves. The highest sounding pitches, which are emphasized on strong beats in each of the three segments, form a descending chromatic line: G in measure ten, F# in measure thirteen, F in measure fourteen, and E in measure fifteen. While all three segments are related, the last two are particularly similar through the use of sequential treatment.

The second A section for the first statement of the form begins in measure seventeen with a two measure figure in ascending and descending motion. This time, however, a sixteenth-note triplet appears as the line descends. In the first four measure phrase of the solo, beginning in measure nineteen, Evans emphasizes a short ascending chromatic figure within the interval of a major third in the middle measures of the phrase. Quarter-note, eighth-note and sixteenth-note triplets are all utilized in this phrase. This section closes in measures twenty-three and twenty-four with an ascending scalar line beginning and ending on the pitch A. This pitch is significant as it is the dominant pedal note of the underlying harmonic progression EO-A7 which resolves to Dmin7 in the following measure.

Evans exploits a descending eighth-note triplet figure in the four measure phrase beginning in measure twenty-five by contracting and expanding the intervals within each triplet. Although the motion is generally downward, he uses subtle changes of direction to provide interest as the line unfolds. These changes of direction or deflections, as they will be referred to in this document, are simply one note interruptions in the opposite direction of the general motion of the line. The phrase beginning in measure twenty-nine is the only one in the solo so far that demonstrates a continuous flow of eighth notes. This line, which closes the first iteration of the form, opens with an ascending chordal arpeggio followed by a short descending chromatic figure. Through the use of deflections Evans continues the downward tendency of the phrase and brings it to a close in measure thirty-one.

The second statement of the form opens similarly to the first with a pick-up measure containing the interval of a perfect fourth (G to C). At this point, however, Evans changes the texture through the use of thirds in the right hand. In the highly syncopated phrase that follows, he expands the interval to perfect fourths in measure thirty-four, perfect fifths in

measure thirty-five, sixths and tri-tones in measures thirty-six through thirty-eight, and finally triads for the final measures of the A section.

Evans then returns to the idea of short two measure figures or phrases in the B section of this iteration. The underlying staccato chordal punctuation contribute to the forward momentum of the solo by being struck on the unaccented portions of the beats. The contour of the first three figures is relatively balanced between ascending and descending motion. In the initial segment, beginning in measure forty-one, Evans' uses Bb as a sort of structural tone which tends to control the overall pitch range of the line. In measure forty-three, however, he immediately displays ascending motion up to an octave by way of chordal arpeggiation. This is followed in measure forty-five with a similar figure which ascends even higher by extending the arpeggio another third. The close relationship between these three figures is made more acute by the fact that they all begin in the same part of their respective measures.

Evans moves back to a thicker right hand texture in the passage beginning at the end of measure forty-seven.

This line initially ascends in scalar fashion with single notes, but then is expanded into thirds and finally evolves into second inversion triads in measure forty-nine. It is at this point that the A section returns and, through this thicker texture, reminds the listener of the opening of this statement of the form. The two four-measure phrases in this section are each rhythmically and melodically cohesive. Both phrases have a two measure arsis and thesis which are almost rhythmically identical to each other. In the first phrase beginning in measure forty-nine, Evans exploits the use of second inversion triads. He moves away from this texture at the end of the second phrase through the use of thirds, in measure fifty-six, providing a kind of transition into the simpler note texture which follows.

Evans concludes the second iteration with a phrase which spans the entire last eight measures of the form. Once again, the contour of the line is balanced through almost equal amounts of ascending and descending motion. The apex of the phrase is reached in measure sixty after a highly syncopated ascending line. As the line descends, Evans expands on the quarter-note triplet by further subdividing the last note of the triplet in measures sixty-one and sixty-two. This rhythmic device, coupled with deflections which effect the overall motion, give the phrase a sense of urgency as it descends. A two measure extension closes the phrase in measure sixty-four.

The first A section of the third statement of the form is characterized once again by short melodic segments. The first two are related by contour and also by the fact that Evans begins both with ascending motion up to a ninth above the respective starting pitches. He uses a triplet figure in measure sixty-six to accelerate the descent of the line in the first segment and a sixteenth-note triplet to generate upward motion in the second. Beginning in measure sixty-nine, Evans links together four melodic fragments each one measure long. Cohesiveness is maintained in these measures as he uses the second fragment to create sequence. This material closes the opening section of this iteration.

Material from the previous figures is developed in the opening measure of the B section, beginning in measure seventy-three. Evans combines the rhythmic figure ( ) from measure sixty-nine and the interval of a minor third from measure seventy to form a motive which is treated sequentially in a four measure phrase. He continues the development of these ideas in the following four measures by using similar melodic and rhythmic devices initially found in measure seventy, and combining segments in a kind of paired imitation format. In measures seventy-seven and seventy-eight, each segment begins and ends with an ascending third. In the following two measures descending motion is predominant in both figures. Evans begins and ends these last four measures with similar pitches (the accidentals accommodate the underlying harmony).

In the A' section Evans continues his use of short melodically related segments to form a four meas-

ure phrase (measures eight-one through eighty-four). Continuity is maintained through the exploitation of the interval of a third and by similar rhythmic patterns. The triplet figures enhance both upward and downward motion. This particular phrase begins and ends on the same pitch, Ab. Evans closes the section by developing the triplet idea in the next four measures as they appear in sixteenth, eighth, and quarter note values. The ritardando effect of quarter note triplets in measures eighty-six through eighty-eight is made more acute through the chordal punctuation of the left hand.

In measure eighty-nine, Evans begins to close the third statement of the form by recalling arpeggiated ascending eighth-note motion found in the opening measures of this iteration. After a brief chromatic descending line, he displays short melodic statements, in measures ninety-one and ninety-two, reminiscent of those found earlier in the iteration. The last eight measures seem to be a kind of recapitulation of motific ideas as Evans utilizes both the interval of a third and the triplet figure in this material.

The fourth statement of the form begins, in measure ninety-seven, with a figure that is quite similar to that which opened the previous iteration. This time, however, it is raised to a higher pitch and the downward triplet is truncated into sixteenth-notes. Evans follows this opening figure by pairing two similar melodic segments that complete the phrase in measure one-hundred. In the final four measure phrase of the A section, a descending quarter-note triplet is followed by an ascending scalar line in eighth-note triplets. This prepares for further usage of triplet figures in the first phrase of the B section beginning in measure one-hundred-five. Evans once again subdivides the last quarter note of the triplet giving the line impetus as it moves forward to its conclusion in measure one-hundred-eight. A four measure phrase, comprised mainly of eighth notes in balanced ascending and descending motion, concludes this section. This particular line begins and ends around the same pitch, G, and shows Evans' craft for melodic balance.

Evans brings the solo to a close in the final sixteen measures by thickening the texture in the right hand and slowing down the overall motion through longer note durations and a high degree of syncopation. This thicker texture was first manifested in a similar way in the second iteration of the form. Conversely, the first and third statements contain all single note lines. This represents another example of Evans' sense of musical balance and helps give the solo a feeling of continuity.

As stated earlier, Evans only hints at the melody when the trio first presents the form of the piece. Perhaps part of the reason for this is that the harmony he uses is, in some respects, quite different from that usually found in various lead sheets. Evans exploits the use of a dominant pedal in the first six measures of both A and A' sections in the original statement of the form as well as in all of the improvisational iterations. The feeling of tension is caused by the use of a Dbmaj7 or Abmaj7 over the dominant G pedal tone. The tension is then released, in the following measure, by either a Cmaj7 or G7. During the course of the improvisation, Evans sometimes interchanges or substitute chords in the "tension" measures. The first example is found in the fifth measure of the solo. The left hand chord structure could be interpreted as either a G7 (b13,b9) or a Db7 substitution for a Dbmaj7. This same structure is found in the previous measure where, according to the original statement of the piece, a G7 should appear. The tri-tone relationship is made more acute by the fact that Evans is arpeggiating a Db major triad in the right hand in these measures. Similar circumstances exist in measures seventeen, twenty-one, thirty-seven, forty-nine, fifty-three, sixty-nine, and eighty-five of the solo.

In measure eighty-one, Evans replaces the Dbmaj7, in one of the "tension" measures, with an Abmaj7. The fact that both of these structures have common tones and that the Abmaj7 is functioning as a kind of secondary V of V makes this chord substitution very smooth. Two other chord substitutions exist in this solo. The dominant function of a F#O7 in measure ninety is replaced with a chro-

matically altered E7 which leads, in the following two measures, to LaFaro's dominant pedal tone over the progression EO-A7. Finally, in the last cadential formula of the second iteration, Evans flats the fifth of the Dmin7 in measure sixty-one, transforming the structure to a half-diminished chord. The alteration of a dominant seventh chord through harmonic extension or by chromatic alteration is not unusual in the jazz idiom nor is it highly significant since the practice is almost commonplace. However, replacing minor seventh chords with half-diminished structures is more unusual. Evans seems to be using this kind of substitution to create a more colorful sound which, in turn, leads to greater melodic potentials for the improviser.

Rhymically the left hand accompaniment is balanced between longer more sustained sounds and shorter punctuations. As the solo progresses the left hand becomes more active and sometimes duplicates the rhythm found in the right hand. This suggests the chord paralleling style of George Shearing which was described earlier in the document. With the exception of the last iteration where Evans improvises chordally in the last sixteen measures, he is fairly consistent in using the same inversion with similar harmonic elements form statement to statement. An illustration of the types of inversions Evans uses in each iteration is show below:

Statement	I	II	III	IV
First Inversion	6	4	4	7
Second Inversion	3	2	5	2
Third Inversion	16	18	18	23
Root Position	5	8	4	6

In this particular solo, Evans often superimposes triads above the underlying harmonic structures which suggest alterations within the harmony. For example, in measure fourteen of the solo, a Bb minor triad is arppeggiated above a harmonic structure of A7 (b13). The Bb suggests the chromatic alteration of a flatted ninth in the harmonic scheme although it is not present in the left hand structure. These triadic superimpositions are devices used by many jazz musicians, providing a wealth of melodic material for the improviser.

Another characteristic of the solo is Evans' melodic use of the unaltered ninth on top of a half-diminished chord by including the unaltered ninth in the left hand structure as in measure twenty-four.

Book Review

Concepts for ***Bass Soloing***

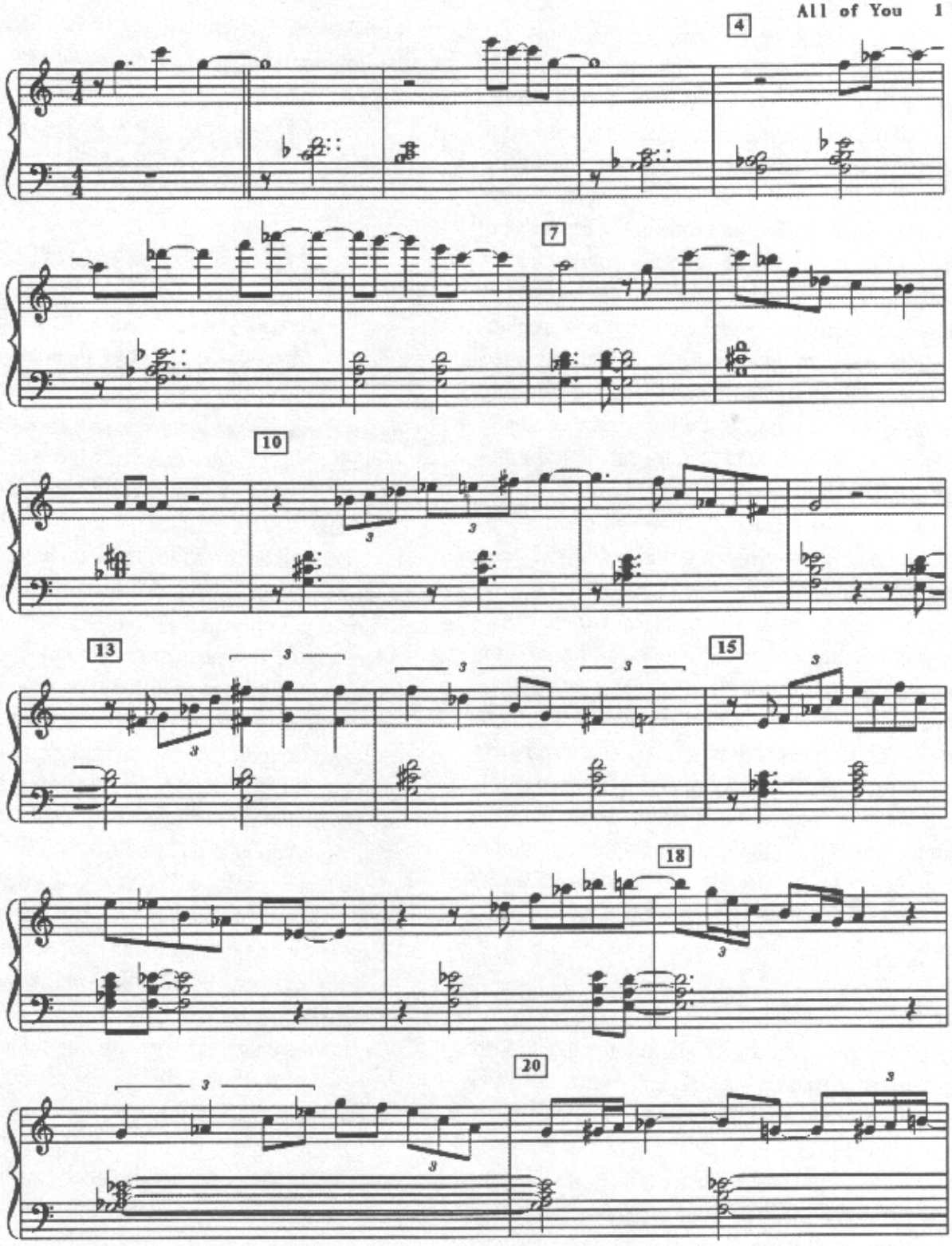
by Chuck Sher and Marc Johnson

Includes two cassette tapes of Marc Johnson soloing on each exercise. Sher Music Co. P.O. Box 445, Petaluma, CA 94953. $24.00. ISBN 1-883217-00-8.

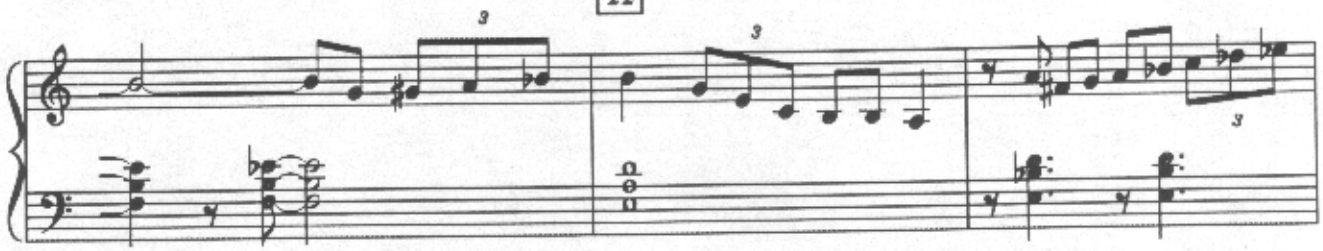
Chuck Sher and Marc Johnson have put together a practice book, necessary for all bass players who want to enlarge their soloing concepts and chops. Marc plays effortlessly through many of the exercises, even handling the most difficult ones with the greatest of ease. The first thing that I like about the book is the different melodic directions it seems to take. Playing through these exercises will broaden you melodic scope, rhythm approaches, and vocabulary. Then, as you would do with all good books of this type, put it down and forget it when you solo. If everything works correctly, you should notice some welcome new directions and melodic material in your soloing.

This is a book about soloing, not about the meat and potatoes of ensemble bass playing. If you are ever fortunate enough to play with like-minded musicians in a duo or trio situation then, of course, your soloing chops will carry over into the ensemble —the way jazz should be played.

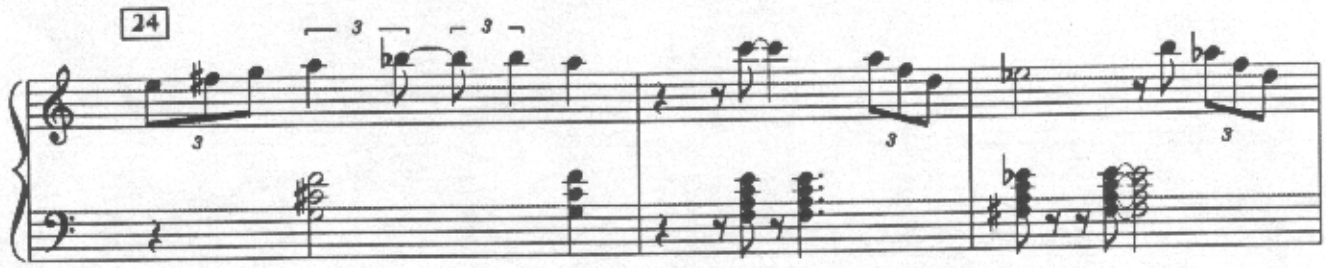
Chuck Sher is to commended again for creating another work-of-art educational material. This book and accompanying tapes also give more insight into the fascinating mind and musical experiences of Marc Johnson. I only wish that players like Eddie Gomez, George Mraz, Edgar Meyer, and Neils Henning Orsted-Peterson could , or would, also contribute to a similar type project. —WH



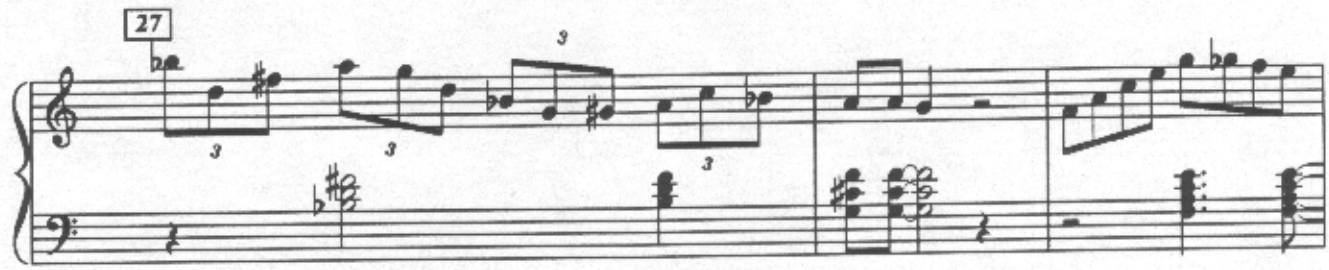
22



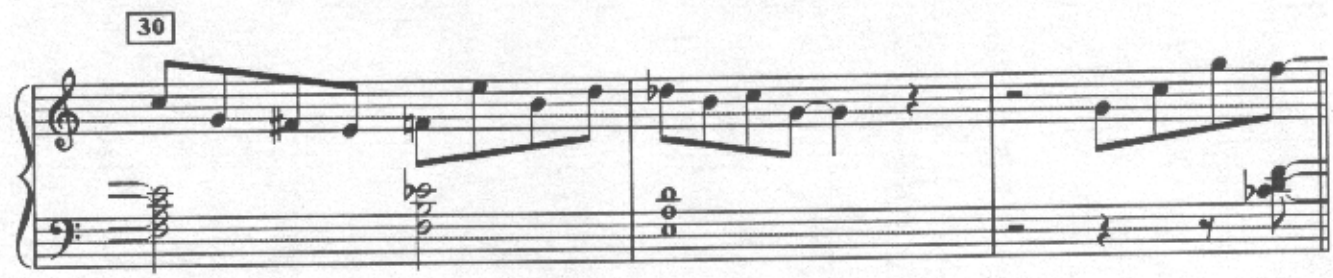
24



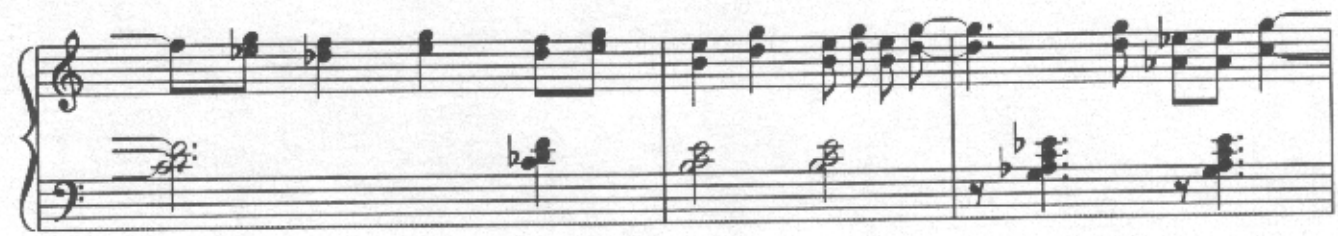
27



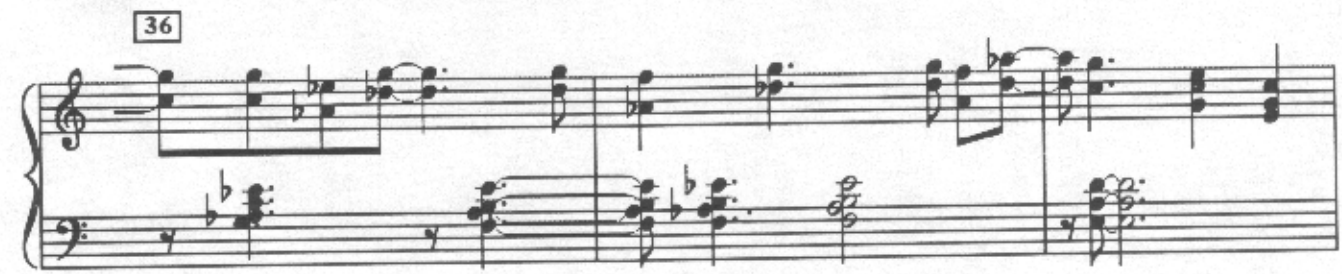
30

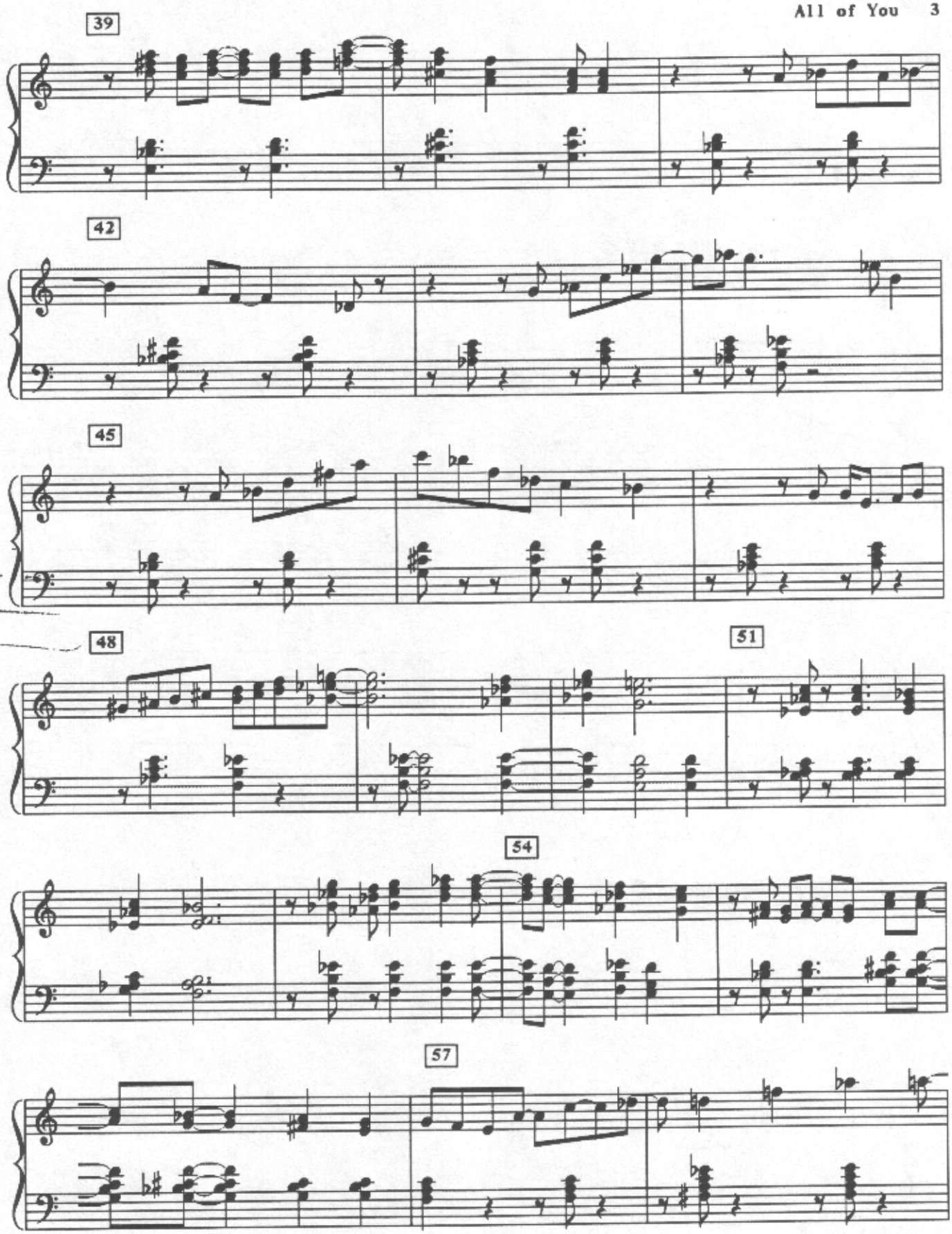


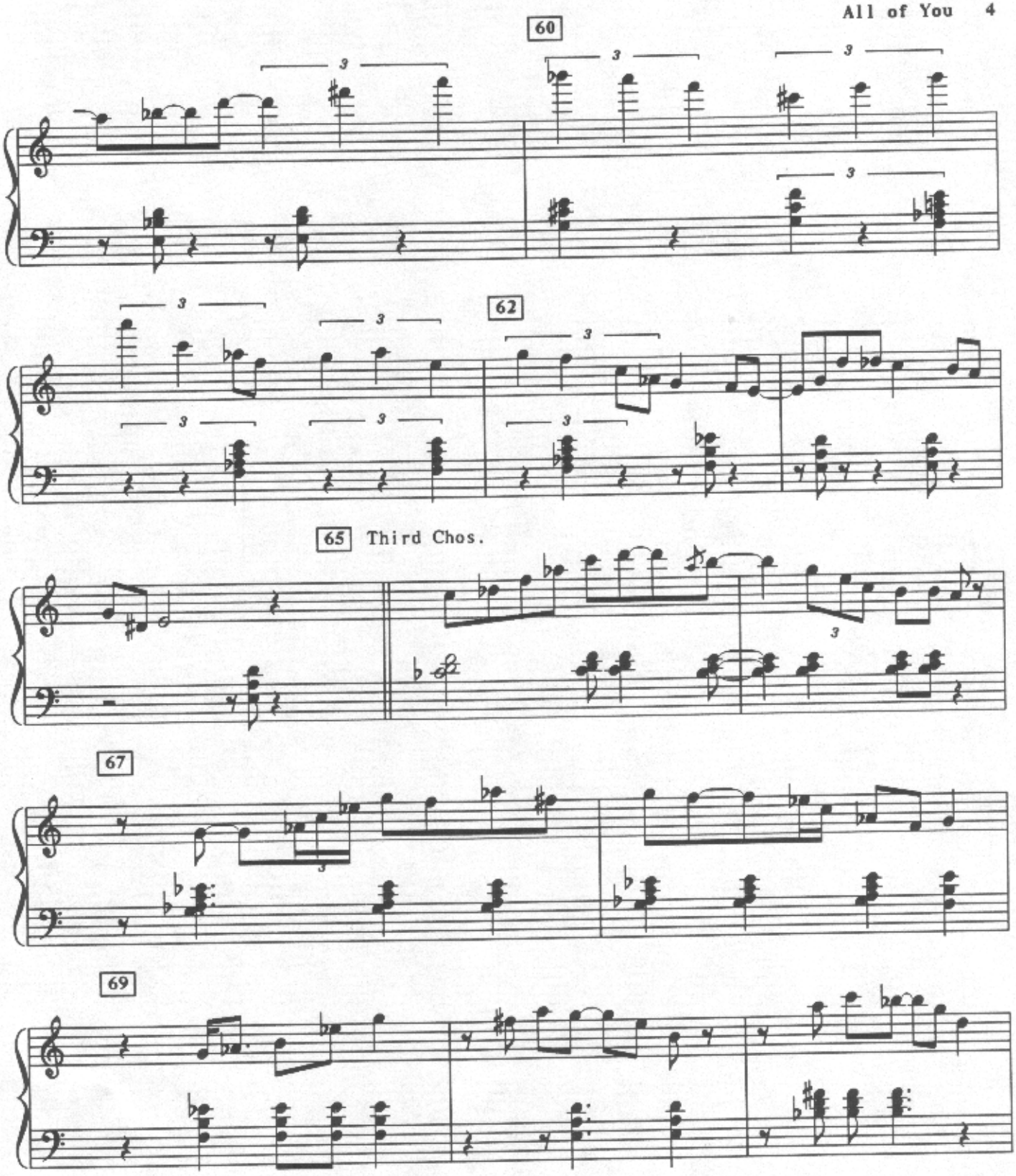
33 Second Chos.

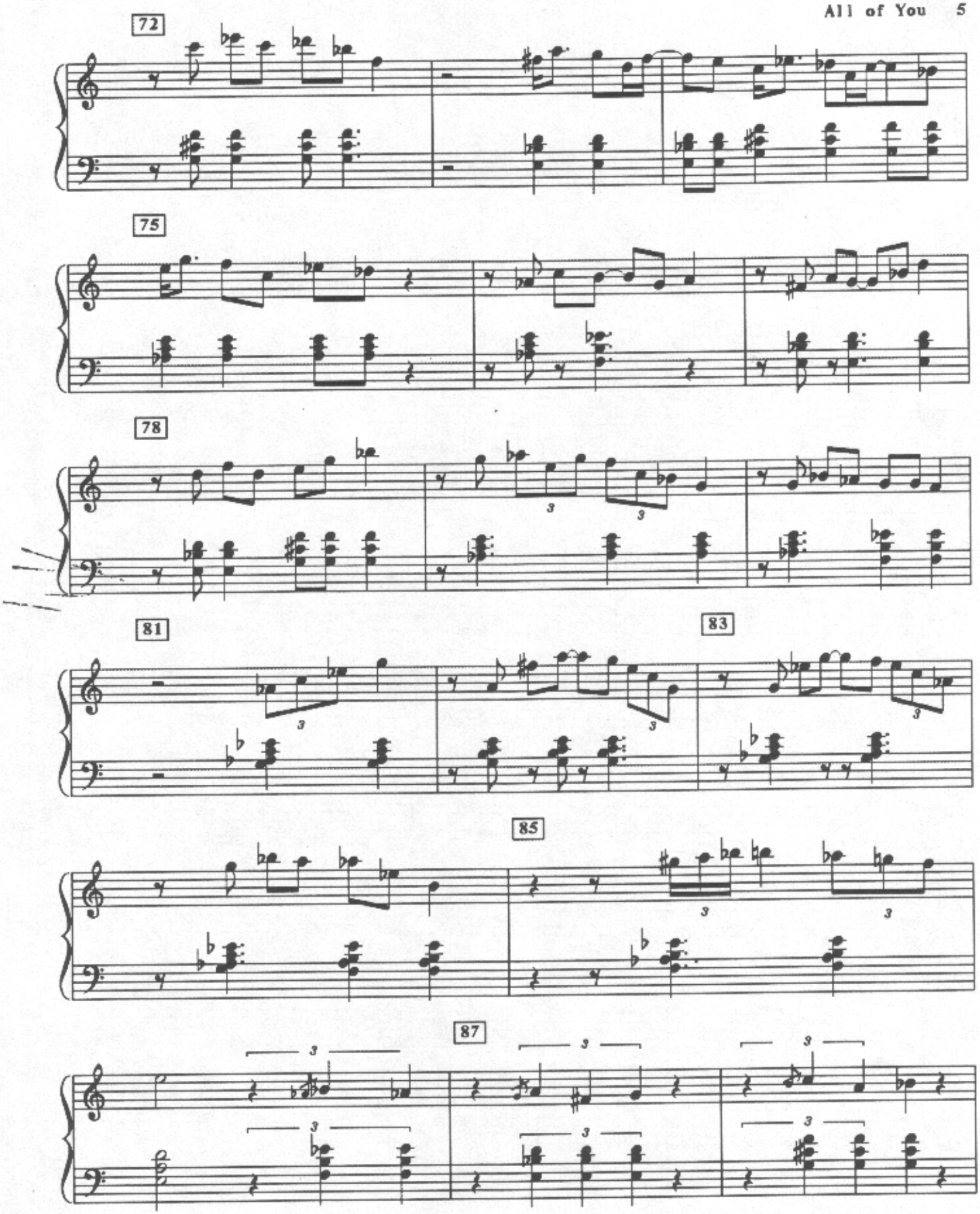


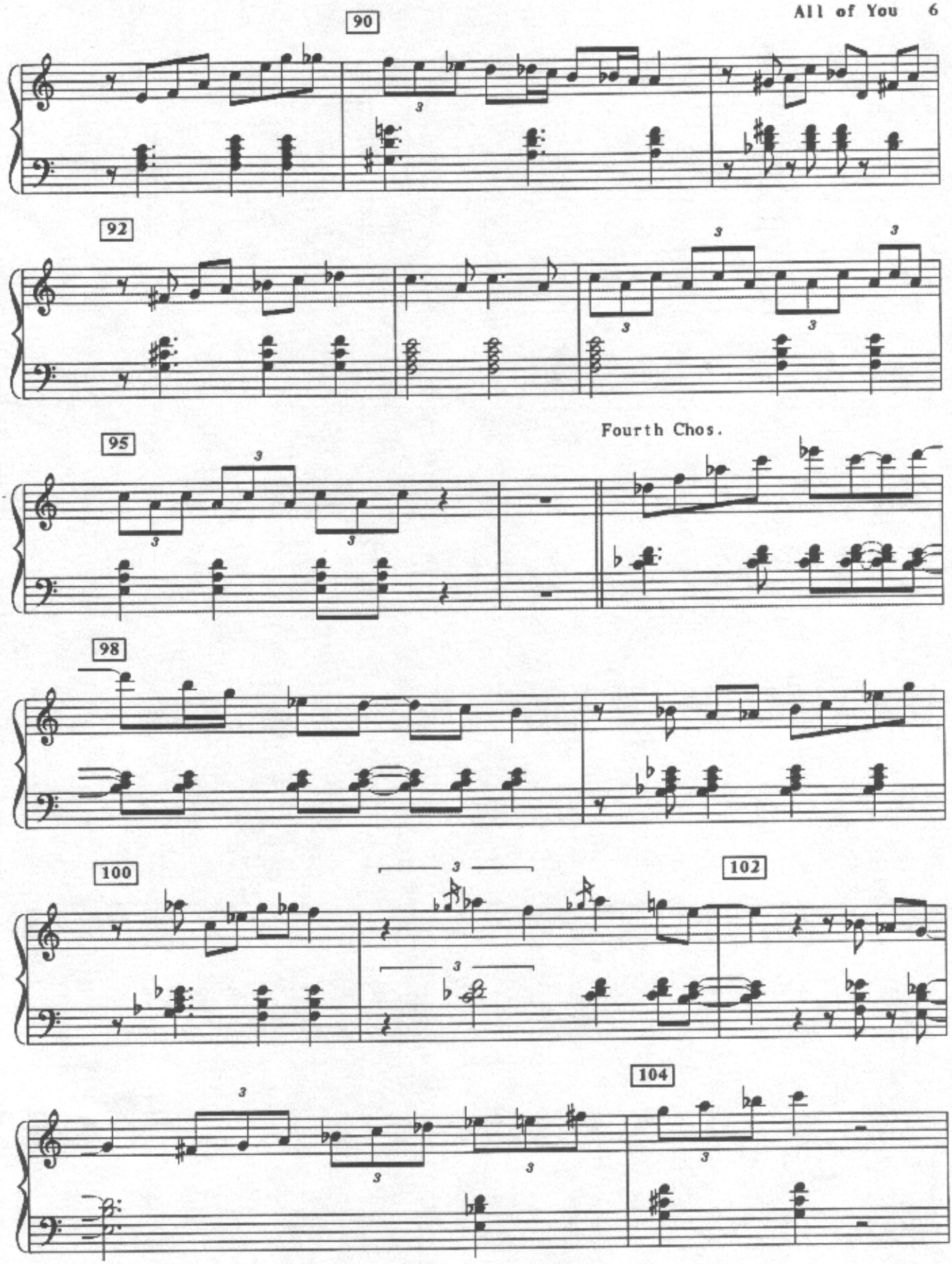
36

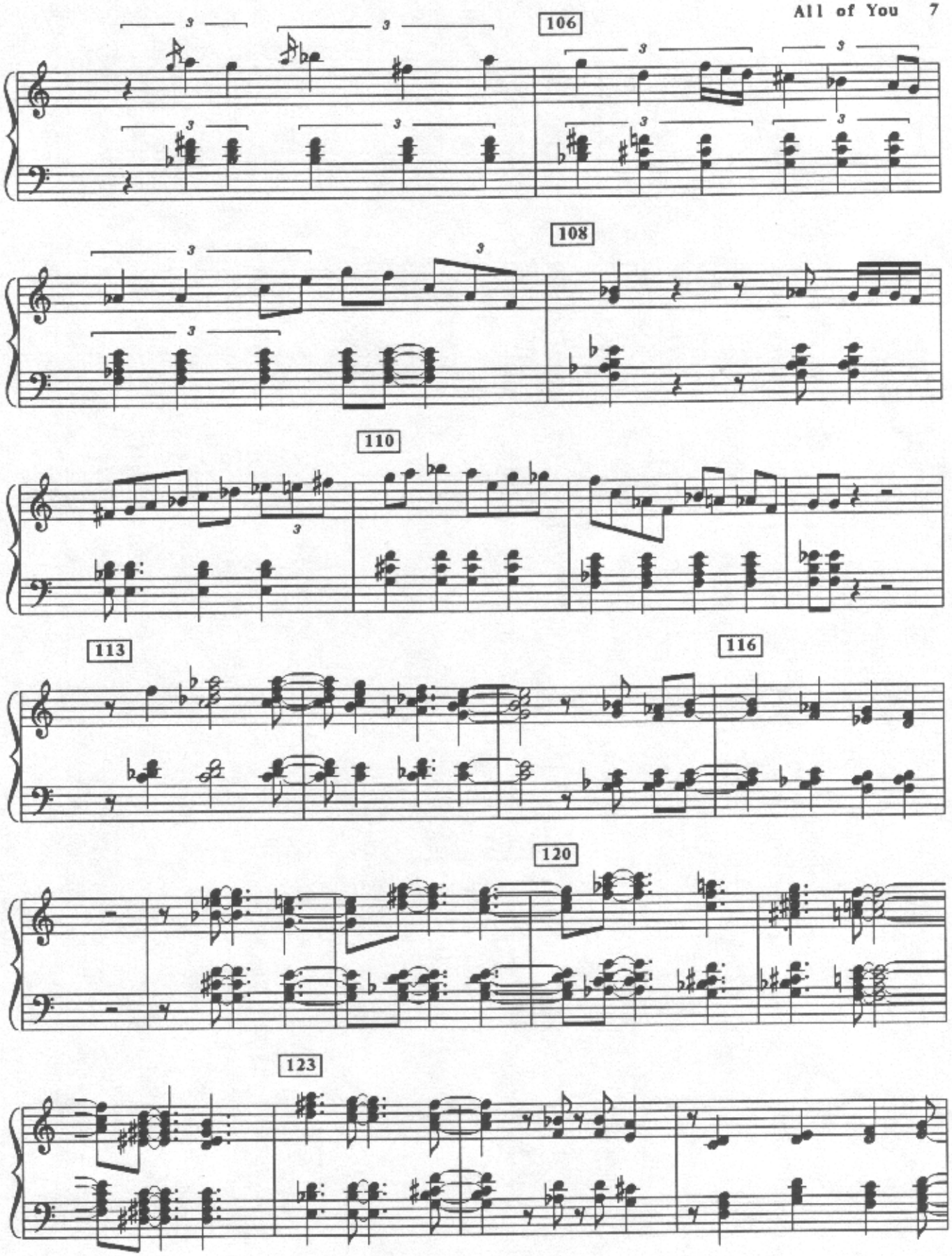



39
42
45
48
51
54
57


60
62
65 Third Chos.
67
69

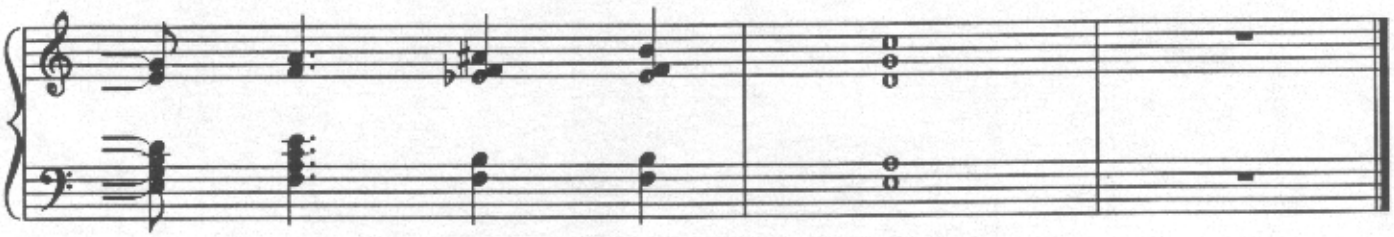

72
75
78
81
83
85
87

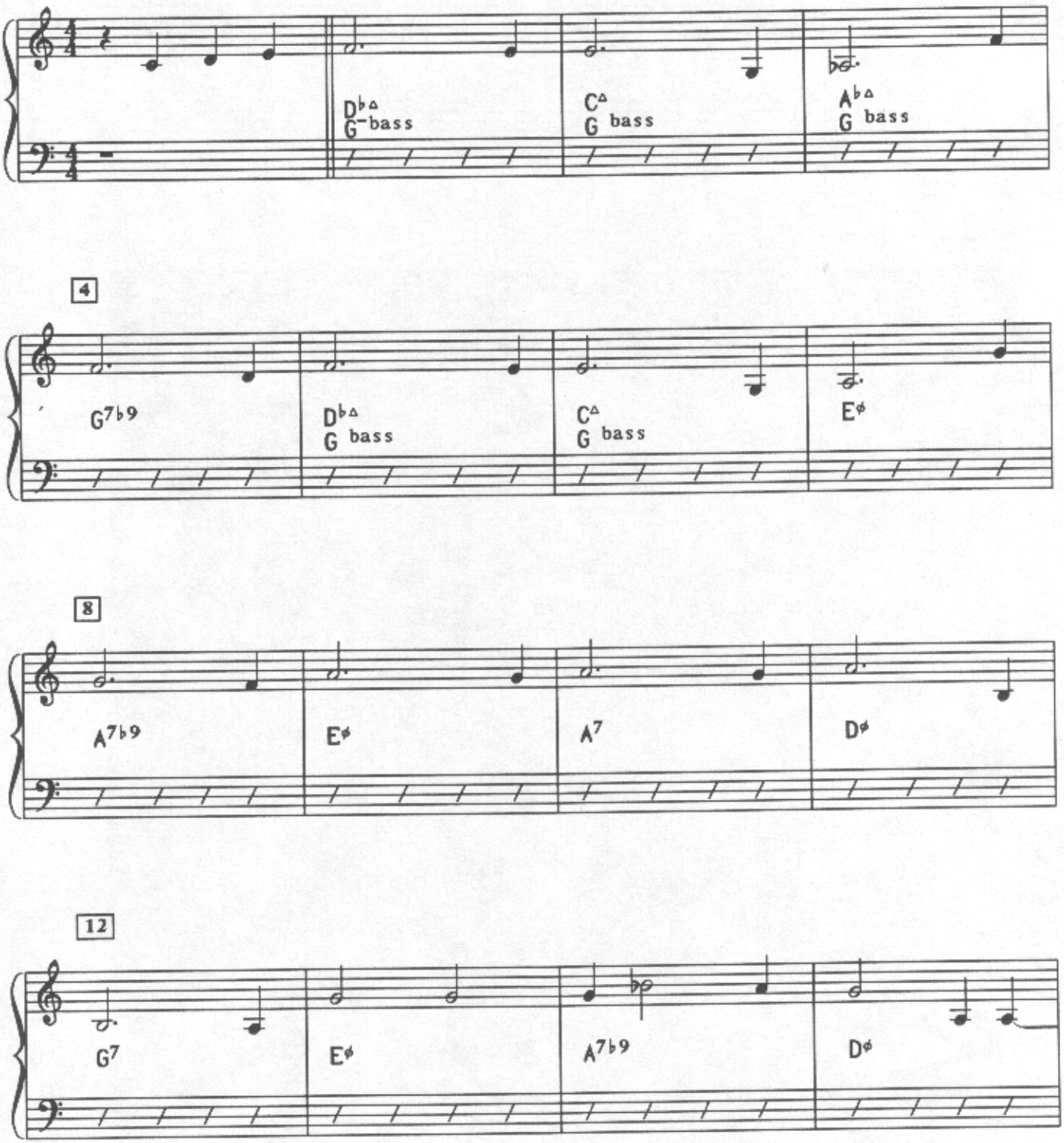

90
92
95
Fourth Chos.
98
100
102
104


106
108
110
113
116
120
123

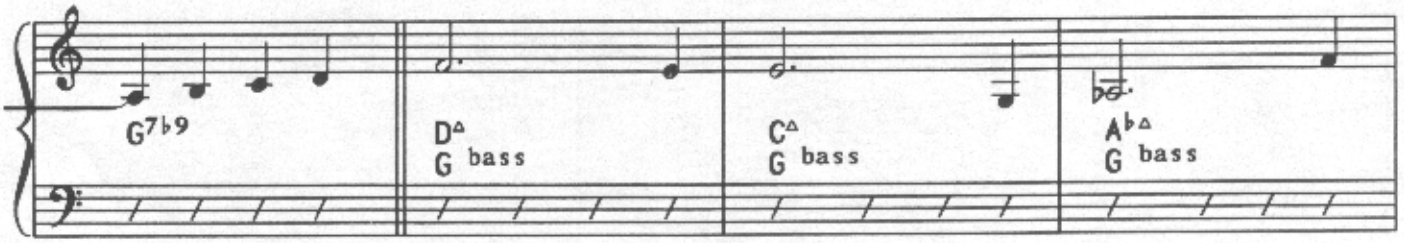
126

All of You 8

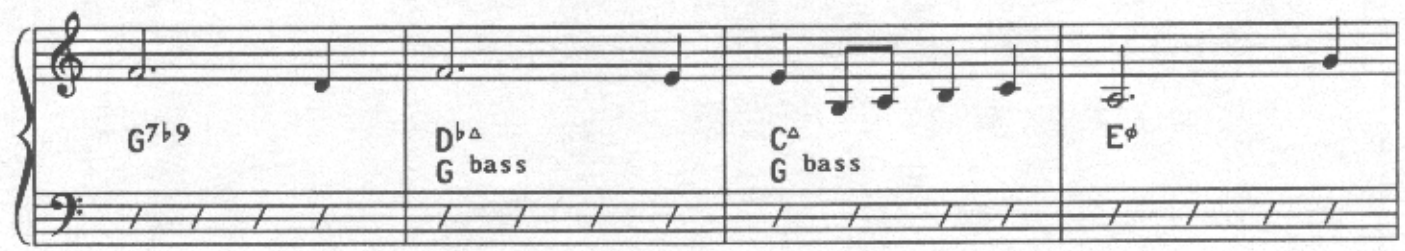



D♭Δ
G- bass
CΔ
G bass
A♭Δ
G bass
4
G7♭9
D♭Δ
G bass
CΔ
G bass
Eø
8
A7♭9
Eø
A7
Dø
12
G7
Eø
A7♭9
Dø

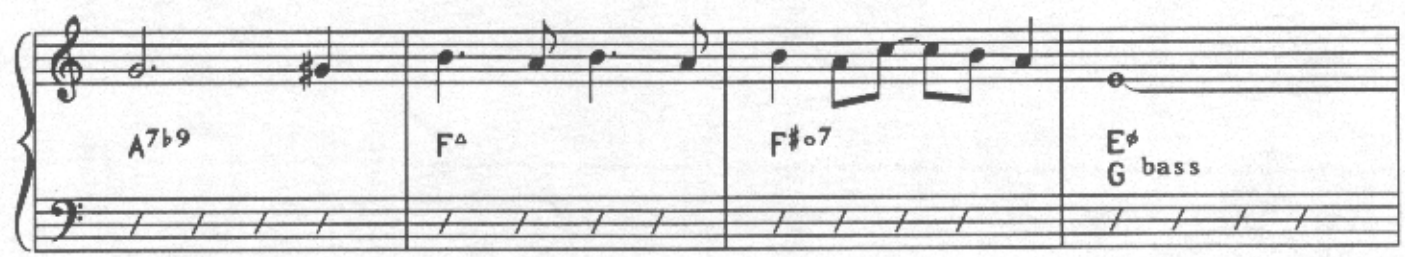
16


G7♭9
D△
G bass
C△
G bass
A♭△
G bass

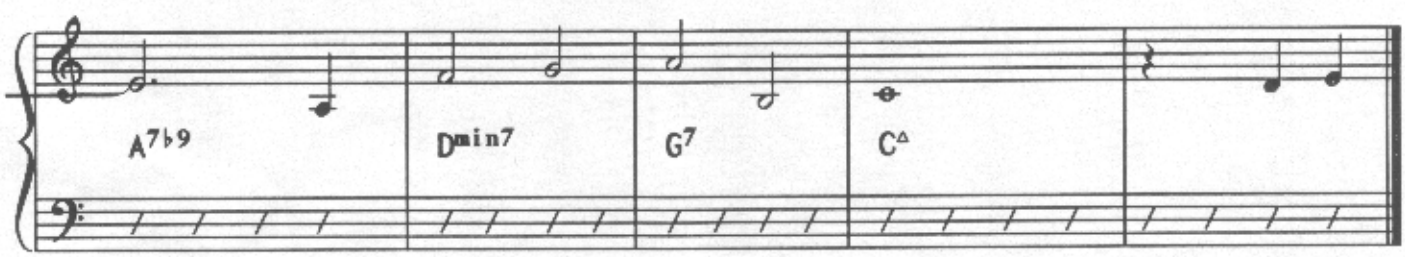
20

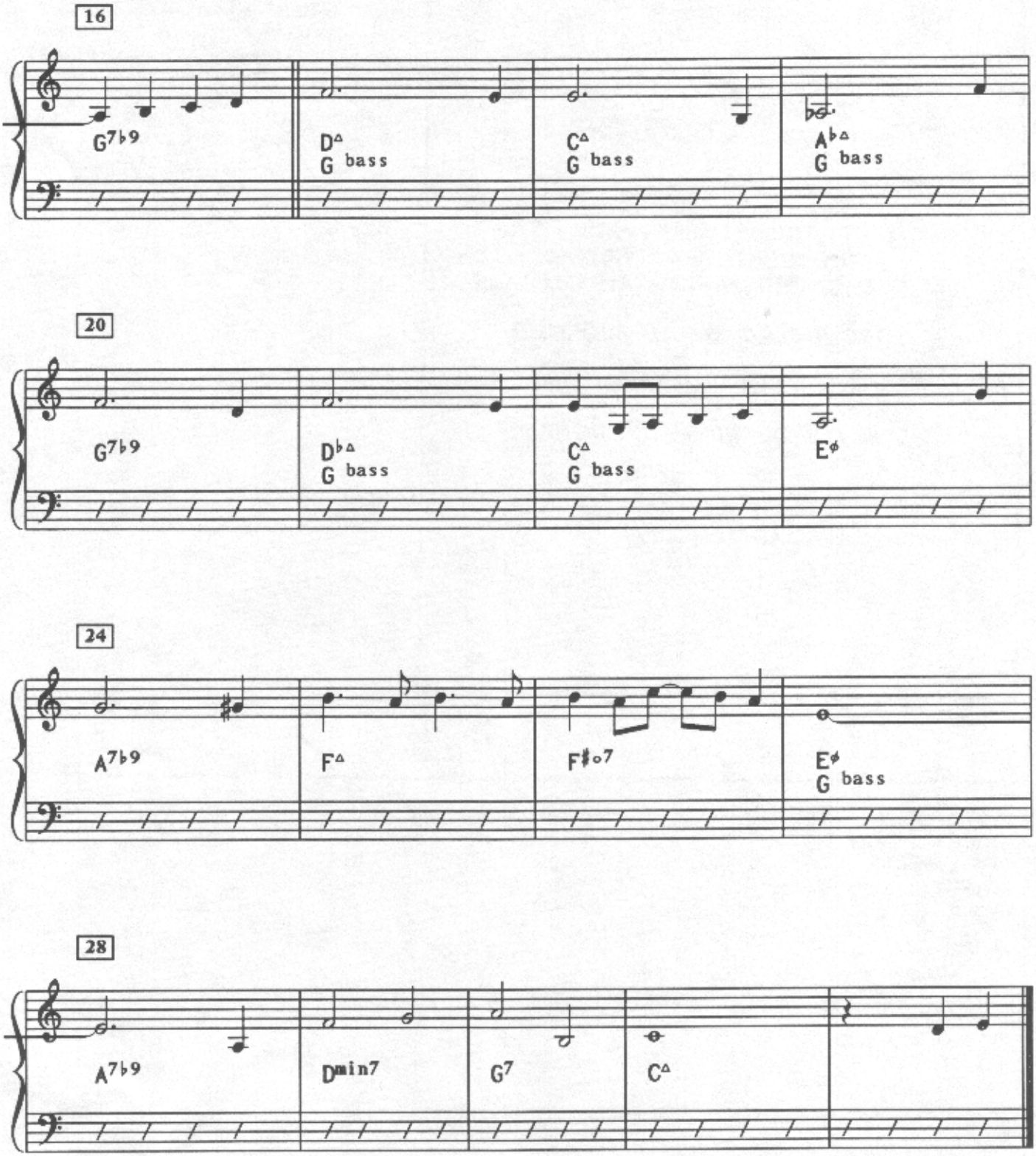

G7♭9
D♭△
G bass
C△
G bass
Eø

24


A7♭9
F△
F♯o7
Eø
G bass

28


A7♭9
Dmin7
G7
C△


16
G7♭9
D△
G bass
C△
G bass
A♭△
G bass
20
G7♭9
D♭△
G bass
C△
G bass
Eø
24
A7♭9
F△
F♯o7
Eø
G bass
28
A7♭9
Dmin7
G7
C△