THE ARTISTRY OF HENRY "RED" ALLEN: HIS STYLISTIC EVOLUTION AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO JAZZ

BY

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Introduction

Throughout the history of jazz, trumpet players have always played a leading role in its stylistic development. This was particularly true in the case of early New Orleans jazz, or "traditional jazz," as many refer to it. As defined by Albert J. McCarthy in his essay *The Re-Emergence of Traditional Jazz*:

> Traditional jazz means, for most critics and fans, the music played by the pioneer New Orleans artists. It conjures up an image of a polyphonic style which utilizes a front line of cornet (or trumpet), trombone, and clarinet, with a rhythm section using three or four of the following instruments—piano, guitar (or banjo), string bass (or tuba), and drums. There may, of course, be variants, for two trumpets might be used, or a saxophone added; but at least there can be little disagreement on the essentials of the style.[1]

New Orleans cornetist Buddy Bolden was the first important figure in the birth of jazz.[2] He was also the first in a long line of great New Orleans jazz cornet (or trumpet) players, a tradition that was continued soon after by players such as Freddie Keppard, Manuel Manetta, Manuel Perez, Bunk Johnson, Joe "King" Oliver, and later, Louis Armstrong.

Henry "Red" Allen was the "last of the great New Orleans trumpeters to emerge during the 1920s"[3] and in many ways, "he was the most advanced of all of them."[4] While highly influenced by Armstrong, Allen proved from an early age that he had his own

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[1] Albert J. McCarthy, "The Re-Emergence of Traditional Jazz," in *Jazz*, ed. Nat Hentoff and Albert J. McCarthy (1959; repr., New York: Da Capo, 1975), 305.

[2] Donald M. Marquis, *In Search of Buddy Bolden: First Man of Jazz* (1978; paperback ed., Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993), 1-9.

[3] Scott Yanow, *Trumpet Kings* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2001),16.

[4] Ibid., 16.

unique voice as an improviser. His style featured spontaneous, or "unpredictable"[5] phrasing, complex rhythms, a high aptitude for melodic variation and embellishment, rubato, fast melismatic passages followed by a single held note, the use of wide intervals such as fourth, fifths, and octaves, contrasting dynamics, and a wide range of extended techniques such as bends, scoops, trills, glissandos, and flutter tonguing.

While Gunther Schuller considered Allen one of the greatest soloists to emerge from the swing era,[6] his later work showed a style that had evolved beyond swing era conventions, incorporating elements of bebop, such as the use of chromatic approach tones and bebop articulation. In a 1965 issue of *Down Beat* magazine, fellow trumpeter Don Ellis gave what might be the most provocative account of Allen's importance:

> I became convinced that Red Allen is the most creative and avant-garde trumpet player in New York. What other trumpet player plays such asymmetrical rhythms and manages to make them swing besides? What other trumpet player plays ideas that may begin as a whisper, rise to a brassy shout and suddenly become a whisper again, with no discernable predictability? Who else has the amazing variety of tonal colors, bends, smears, half-valve effects, rips, glissandos, flutter tonguing, all combined with iron chops and complete control of even the softest, most subtle tone production? What makes all this even more incredible is the fact that he does all this within a "mainstream" context and with a flair for showmanship that appears to keep the squarest entertained.[7]

The above statement forms a compelling argument asserting Henry "Red" Allen's place in and importance to the history of jazz trumpet playing. Yet, despite all this praise, Allen continues to be one of the most unjustly overlooked trumpeters in jazz history. Most jazz trumpet students today have not been sufficiently exposed to his work, and consequently, fail to recognize his significance. Furthermore, few trumpeters currently

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[5] Ibid., 16.

[6] Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era* (1989; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 617-31.

[7] Don Ellis, "Henry 'Red' Allen Is the Most Avant-Garde Trumpet Player In New York City," *Down Beat*, Nov. 4, 1965, 13.

active on the national and international jazz scenes cite Allen as an influence.

While existing sources of jazz history and analysis have not completely ignored Allen's work, most only refer to him briefly or in passing. What has been written specifically about Allen falls into three categories: a) anecdotal: including mostly short essays and interviews; b) biographical: discussing the details of his life but not delving too deeply into the music itself; and c) analytical: focusing specifically on musical details. Very little analysis of Allen's work has been done, however. His solos are not published in transcription books and many of his recordings are difficult to find.

Several anecdotal pieces have been written about Red Allen over the years. Comprised mostly of interviews, articles, and short essays, these pieces provide general biographical details and descriptions of his playing, while also offering a glimpse of Allen's personality. The books *Jazz Talking* by Max Jones, *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* by Martin Williams, and *American Musicians II* by Whitney Balliett include examples of these types of works. Also of note is the previously mentioned 1965 *Down Beat* article by Don Ellis. This article offers a colorful description of Red Allen's playing shortly before his death in 1967. The true significance of this article lies in the fact that it was written not only by a fellow trumpet player, but one of a younger generation who had taken a particularly modern stance in his own approach to jazz music.

From a biographical standpoint, John Chilton has written the most significant and complete work in *Ride, Red, Ride: The Life of Henry "Red" Allen,* providing a detailed account of Allen's life and musical career. While this book offers colorful descriptions of Allen's playing, its focus is biographical, rather than analytical.

Analytical work is limited to one source—Gunther Schuller's book *The Swing Era*—in which he includes a lengthy essay on Allen's music. *The Swing Era* is informative and impeccably written, providing detailed analysis of several solos and offering observations concerning specific characteristics of Allen's style. The essay is limited, however, in that it only examines his recordings up to 1935, leaving out some of his most important work. Schuller himself, at the end of the essay, states:

> In some ways his playing with Coleman Hawkins in 1957 and with Kid Ory in 1959 was the finest of his entire career. What it had lost in some of the early youthful brashness, it had now gained in seasoned maturity.[8]

In most of his recordings from this period, Allen organically integrated elements of his playing that seemed experimental and sometimes forced in the 1930s recordings into a unified conception. Much of this later work featured tunes more closely associated with traditional or New Orleans jazz, which was primarily performed in a polyphonic style. Improvisation was not so much the domain of a single soloist, but more typically occurred collectively, within the context of a group.

Allen chooses to use a more modern approach when performing these "traditional" tunes, however, abandoning the group improvisation and incorporating elements of the bebop language. In his book *Jazz Masters of New Orleans*, Martin Williams states:

> Allen has always been associated with contemporary quasi-Dixieland playing. Good New Orleans-Dixieland is primarily an ensemble style and Red Allen is not an ensemble player. Allen's best melodic lines are perhaps too active and exploratory to be lead parts in an ensemble.[9]

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[8] Schuller, 630.

[9] Martin Williams, *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* (1967; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1978), 256-57.

During this period, Allen plays phrases that clearly illustrate his debt to Louis Armstrong and intermingles them with phrases that evoke Dizzy Gillespie. He appends to this his own free approach to time, rhythm, and phrasing, as well as a broad pallette of tonal colors and effects, seemingly covering the entire history of jazz within the span of one solo. Red Allen's approach to melody was also unique. He could disguise or spontaneously recompose the main melody of a song, as well as incorporate small elements of the song's melody into the body of his solo to unify it with the rest of the tune. These recordings, which Red Allen made later in his career, have yet to receive scholarly attention from an analytical perspective. Gunther Schuller's work in his book *The Swing Era*, because it focuses specifically on Red Allen's importance to that period, offers an incomplete representation of Allen's total contribution to jazz trumpet playing.

Purpose and Methods

This project provides further insight into Henry "Red" Allen's stylistic evolution over the course of his entire career. As with any great jazz artist, Allen's style is a combination of many musical elements, and is in large part influenced by the diverse musical culture of New Orleans during his youth. To gain an understanding of Allen's stylistic vocabulary and unique extended improvisational techniques, it was necessary to study the recordings themselves. I have transcribed sixteen of Allen's solos, highlighting key moments in his stylistic development. Analysis of these solos is based on four main categories: a) melody; b) harmony; c) rhythm and meter; d) articulation, tone, and extended techniques. It was then possible to isolate specific stylistic elements, or techniques, in each category and discuss their usage within a jazz context. Allen's use of

these techniques is illustrated by musical examples taken directly from the transcriptions. Through these methods I hope to shed light on one of the unsung heroes of jazz trumpet and to illustrate why he should be more widely recognized for his contributions.

Biography

In *Trumpet Kings*,[10] Scott Yanow incorrectly lists Henry "Red" Allen's birth date as January 7, 1908. It is John Chilton's book that lists his correct date of birth, January 7, 1906, stating that "from quite early on in his career he (Allen) gave 1908 as his year of birth."[11] Henry James Allen, Jr. was born in Algiers, Louisiana, which, while not located within the New Orleans city limits, is still considered part of its greater vicinity. Allen's father, Henry Allen, Sr., led one of the top New Orleans brass bands, exposing him to music at an early age. Allen began playing trumpet at the age of ten, playing upright alto horn prior to that. He admired many great New Orleans musicians of the time, particularly Joe "King" Oliver and later, Louis Armstrong. Many such musicians came through his father's band, including Armstrong and Sidney Bechet.

Allen, nicknamed "Red" because he was light-skinned and his face got red when he played, began working with his father's brass band first as a type of apprentice, carrying and passing out music in parades, then as a musician. Besides receiving musical instruction and advice from his father, Allen also took lessons from Manuel Manetta and Amos White, as well as learning from the various musicians who came through his father's band. As a teenager in the 1920s, Allen had advanced enough musically to perform with many top New Orleans musicians and bands.

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[10] Yanow, 15.

[11] John Chilton, *Ride, Red, Ride* (London: Continuum, 1999), 2-3.

Allen's first experience playing outside of New Orleans came aboard the *Island Queen*, a steamship sailing up and down the Mississippi River. In April 1927, Allen was invited to join the band of one of his early idols, Joe "King" Oliver, in St. Louis right before the band's first major trip to New York City. That following May, they opened at the Savoy Ballroom opposite Chick Webb's band. By this time in his career, because of dental problems, Oliver wasn't playing much and gave Allen the bulk of the trumpet features. After a series of bad business decisions, the Oliver band began to struggle in New York and gradually broke apart. In June that same year, on Oliver's recommendation, Red Allen made his recording debut with pianist, vocalist, and composer Clarence Williams. Shortly after the recording, lacking steady work, Allen traveled back home to New Orleans. He had been gone only two months.

Allen spent the next few years playing around New Orleans as well as on the *SS Capital*, owned by the Streckfus Steamship Line, under the leadership of bandleader Fate Marable. Many New Orleans musicians worked under Fate Marable at one time or another, including a young Louis Armstrong. In 1929, Allen received three enticing offers. First, he received an offer to record under his own name for Victor records. At that time, record labels were looking to record a "star trumpet soloist" in hopes of tapping into the success Okeh Records enjoyed with Louis Armstrong and his "Hot Five" and "Hot Seven" recordings. The Brunswick label had already recorded trumpeter Jabbo Smith earlier that year with the same goal in mind. In addition to the recording offer, Allen was also asked to join not only Luis Russell's orchestra, but Duke Ellington's as well. He

chose Luis Russell, primarily because several of his New Orleans friends played in Russell's group.

In July 1929, shortly after moving back to New York to join the Russell Orchestra, Allen made his first recordings under his own leadership for Victor Records. These first recordings, made under the name "Henry Allen and His New York Orchestra," were very successful. Allen recorded four tunes in this first session, two of which (*Feeling Drowsy* and *Biff'ly Blues*) are discussed here.

1929 continued to be a big year for Allen, not only with the Russell Orchestra, who provided the backing for Louis Armstrong in a series of recordings, but also as a freelancer, recording with Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton and, in 1930, with his former leader and hero, Joe "King" Oliver. Allen remained with the Luis Russell Orchestra until late 1932, when he joined Charlie Johnson's Band. His tenure with the Johnson Band proved to be short-lived when, in June 1933, he joined the prestigious Fletcher Henderson Orchestra as one of its star soloists, the other being Coleman Hawkins, the legendary tenor saxophonist.

In joining the Henderson Orchestra, Allen was filling a vacancy formerly occupied by Louis Armstrong and, most recently, Rex Stewart. His work with the Henderson Orchestra proved to be some of the most important work of his career. As Chilton explains:

> Henderson had a succession of high-profile jazz trumpeters throughout the 1920s, including Louis Armstrong, Joe Smith, Tommy Ladnier, Bobby Stark and Rex Stewart, each of whom in varying degrees influenced the course of jazz trumpet playing. But it is Red Allen's improvisations on Henderson's recordings that seem to have provided blueprints for (Benny) Goodman's trumpet soloists, Harry James and Ziggy Elman. Their predecessor in Goodman's brass section, Bunny Berigan, had used Louis Armstrong as his main model, but though James and Elman had the greatest admiration for Armstrong's work, the contours of

> their solos on Goodman's versions of the Henderson arrangements owe much more to Red Allen than to Louis Armstrong.[12]

Red Allen's work with the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra is studied in detail by Gunther Schuller in his book *The Swing Era*.[13] Allen remained with the Henderson Orchestra until 1934 when he joined the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, where he would remain until 1937.

While with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, he made a 1935 small-group recording of *Body and Soul* that ranks with the best of his work. While most of his solos in the big band format were, out of necessity, short and to the point, this solo is extended, and its architecture brilliantly conceived. This is particularly evident in Allen's treatment of the tune's theme, which offers melodic and rhythmic variations, interspersed with improvised musical interjections. Some of the original phrases have been completely replaced with new material, often requiring a great deal of technical agility on Allen's part.

A year later (November, 1936), Allen made an appearance on the popular radio show *Saturday Night Swing Club*, in which trumpeter Bunny Berigan led the house band. Along with members of the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, he performed the version of *Body and Soul* recorded the previous year. While the basic blueprint of the earlier recording remains intact, Allen's musical conception and approach had evolved a great deal. In this version, he incorporates much more rubato, placing his musical ideas freely over the time structure created by the rhythm section. This is in contrast to the 1935 version, which remains more metronomically locked in with the rhythm section throughout. This

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[12] Chilton, 74.

[13] Schuller, 623-28.

performance also offers one of the first glimpses of the highly chromatic melismatic figures that are prominent in his later recordings, particularly in his famous 1957 *I Cover the Waterfront* solo. The contrast between the two performances of *Body and Soul*, recorded only a year apart from each other, in many ways mirrors the evolution his style would undergo over the course of the next twenty years.

From 1937 to 1940, Allen was back with the Luis Russell Orchestra which at that time was functioning under Louis Armstrong's name as his backing band. While Allen was still receiving feature spots with the Russell Orchestra, particularly during the opening sets, it was Armstrong that received the bulk of the spotlight. Despite being relegated to a backup role behind Armstrong, Allen continued to make recordings under his own name and as a freelancer with artists such as Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey, Fats Waller, the Teddy Wilson Orchestra (featuring Billie Holiday), James P. Johnson, Lionel Hampton, Jelly Roll Morton (again), and many others.

Beginning in the late 1930s and carrying over into the early 1940s, a New Orleans jazz revival was taking place, making it easier for players who favored older styles to get work. In May 1940, Allen participated in a series of recordings with an all-star septet that included Lil Armstrong, Zutty Singleton, Ed Hall, Pops Foster, Benny Morton, and Bernard Addison. Four tracks were recorded in all, two under Allen's name and two under Singleton's. As stated by Chilton:

> These recordings mark an important crossroad in Red Allen's career. Red knew all about playing lead in a New Orleans band, having served an apprenticeship listening and playing alongside the masters of that difficult art, but by 1940 he was developing a way of playing that belonged to no particular jazz style. On the 1940 sessions, Red could have reverted to an orthodox lead, but by then he was

> not excited by the prospect of fulfilling the set trumpet role that most of the followers of early jazz felt to be an essential part of the small band style.[14]

Allen's decision to finally leave the Louis Armstrong (Luis Russell) Orchestra came when he received an offer through record producer John Hammond to bring a small band into nightclub owner Barney Josephson's Cafe Society Downtown. Henry "Red" Allen's Cafe Society Orchestra began its nine-month residency at the club on November 26, 1940, playing three shows a night. Allen's band continued to play at various New York clubs such as Kelly's Stables, the Village Vanguard, the 181 Club and the Famous Door, in addition to their occasional residencies at the Cafe Society Downtown.

After signing on with Joe Glaser's Associated Booking Corporation, which also represented Louis Armstrong, Allen's group began playing a series of higher profile shows at theaters such as Carnegie Hall and New York's Town Hall, as well as traveling outside New York on a theater tour. Shortly after the tour, Allen had to break up his band for a brief period because of a shortage of bookings. Not long after, he was able to put the group back together for bookings at the Apollo Theater, New York's Gaiety Vaudeville Theater, and beginning in May 1942, a series of residencies at the Ken Club in Boston, Massachusetts, where they featured Sidney Bechet as a special guest.

In August 1942, Red's band, along with Billie Holiday, began a residency at Chicago's Down Beat Room that, aside from a few brief interruptions, would last three years. Allen enjoyed great success at the Down Beat and in the process, helped discover a female singer by the name of Ruth Jones, later to be known as the great Dinah Washington. In August 1945, the band left Chicago for a two month stay at San

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[14] Chilton, 107.

Francisco's Club Savoy before returning to New York for a November engagement at the Onyx Club, which lasted six months until the club closed. Aside from occasional periods of inactivity, Allen's band continued to work through the remainder of the 1940s and into the 1950s in various clubs and theaters in New York, as well as in other major cities around the country, including Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C. and Detroit.

In April 1954, Allen's band began playing at New York's Metropole, alternating sets with traditional and mainstream artists such as trumpeters Jimmy McPartland and Charlie Shavers. Aside from the occasional engagement in another city and tours to Europe, Allen's band continued as the house band at the Metropole until 1965.

The years 1957 through 1959 were particularly good ones for Red Allen. During this time, he made recordings both as a sideman and as a leader, that rank among the best of his career, particularly those made with saxophonist Coleman Hawkins and trombonist Kid Ory. While the 1930s saw Allen experimenting with musical concepts such as octave displacement, asymmetrical phrasing, complex rhythms, and several others that foreshadowed bebop, his ideas occasionally sounded somewhat rehearsed. This was not uncommon for the era. In live performances, the audience often expected to hear the same solos that were played on the recordings, prompting soloists to have at least a general blueprint of their solos. It wasn't until the bebop era that it became standard practice for players to shun predictability and embrace spontaneity. Even then, solos still comprised musical ideas and vocabulary that the player had carefully practiced and labored over.

In contrast to Red Allen's work of the 1930s, the recordings he made from 1957 to 1959 show a style and overall conception that fully integrates not only all the ideas he had been experimenting with throughout the Swing Era, but also ideas that are clearly informed by the bebop school of thought. This willingness to adopt modern concepts into his playing style is in contrast to many early jazz and Swing Era musicians, whose styles remained somewhat static, never embracing the conventions of the bebop language. Allen's ideas no longer sound rehearsed, as they occasionally did in the 1930s, but instead, sound relaxed and conversational, regular patterns of speech in a language that had been refined for close to four decades. In these solos, Allen freely intermingles the past with the present, filtering the entire history of jazz down to one solo. One phrase sounds as if Louis Armstrong might have played it, the next Dizzy Gillespie, yet all the while retaining an overriding character that is unmistakably Henry "Red" Allen. In a 1992 article in *Jazz Journal International*, John Postgate describes Allen's style during this period as follows:

> But Allen's non-conformism sustained his artistic integrity: while staying within the constraints of classical jazz, he honed and refined his personal style during this period into something quite new. He still played his trumpet in an untrained manner, the New Orleans way, with brassy high notes and vocalised low ones. But he no longer bothered to be architectural: his solos did not start gently and build to a climax in the classical manner; they came to resemble monologues, punctuated by rasps, slurs, expletives, and murmurs. They had become a linear examination of, and commentary on, the theme. He would play with the utmost delicacy, distilling the essence of a number into cunning twists of melody, but then, bewilderingly, might switch abruptly from gentle calm to wild brashness and back again within a few bars. Yet the theme was always quite close to the surface. His jazz was baffling to some, but fascinating to those tuned into his language.[15]

[15] John Postgate, "Henry Red Allen," *Jazz Journal International* 45 (March 1992): 6-7.

Most noteworthy of these recordings are the 1957 Allen-led All Stars album *World on a String*, the two Coleman Hawkins-led albums *Dixieland Jazzfest* (1957) and *The Sweet Moods of Jazz* (1958), and a series of recordings with trombonist and traditional jazz legend Kid Ory made in 1959. This project discusses several solos from these recordings.

In 1965 the Metropole changed to a rock-and-roll-friendly format and Red Allen's long-standing residency there came to an end. Shortly after, he began playing regularly at Long Island's Blue Spruce Inn where, that same year, he recorded a live album proving that at age 59 he was still in good form. While his performing schedule slowed down some over the next few years, he remained active, performing at clubs in New York, Washington, D.C. and other cities, along with occasional tours of Europe. On April 17, 1967, Henry "Red" Allen died of pancreatic cancer. He was 61 years old.

CHAPTER TWO

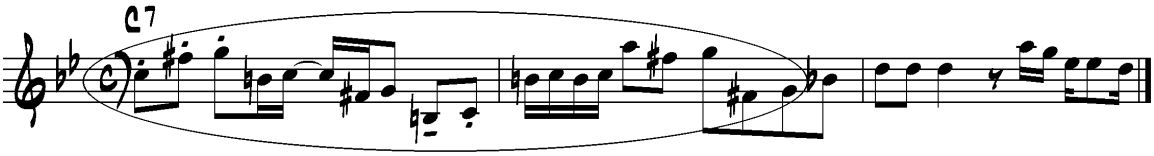
Melody

Intervallic Improvisation, Quick Register Changes, and Octave Displacement

One characteristic element of Red Allen's playing was his affinity for large intervals, quick register changes, and octave displacement. Intervallic improvisation refers to the frequent use of large or wide intervals within an improvised line. Using these intervals as a source of improvisational content, soloists are able to create angular, or jagged melodic contours. For the purpose of this study, any interval of a fourth or larger will be considered a wide interval. Although intervallic improvisation became more common during the bebop era, it was not until the 1960's that players such as pianist McCoy Tyner, saxophonist Eric Dolphy, and trumpet players Freddie Hubbard and Woody Shaw fully exploited this approach.

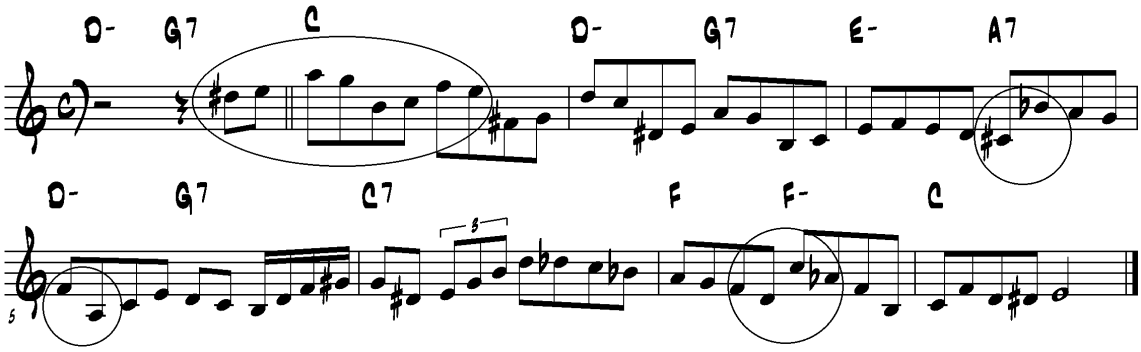
Quick register changes and wide intervals are particularly difficult to execute on brass instruments, especially at fast tempos. Many brass players include interval studies in their regular practice routines to maintain this ability. In his *Hot Five* and *Hot Seven* recordings of the 1920's, Louis Armstrong exhibited a level of technical virtuosity on the trumpet previously unequaled in the realm of jazz, executing quick register changes and wide intervals with ease. In his solo on *Wild Man Blues* (1927), he incorporates intervals of an augmented fourth (C to F#), a minor sixth (G to B), a diminished fifth (G to F#), a major seventh (C to B), a major sixth (C to A), and a minor ninth (G to F#), all within the span of two measures. Also notice the chromatic approaches to the root (C) and the fifth (G) of the chord (example 1).

Example 1. Intervallic improvisation (Louis Armstrong's solo on *Wild Man Blues,* 1927)[16]



As mentioned above, intervallic improvisation became more common with bebop and later styles. In his book *Jazz Styles: A History and Analysis*, Mark Gridley describes the melodic contour of a typical bebop line as "jagged," often with "large intervals between the notes and abrupt changes of direction."[17] The following excerpt from alto saxophonist Charlie Parker's 1946 solo on the tune *Anthropology* is an example of a typical bebop line (example 2). The circled regions highlight Parker's use of wide intervals. Also notice how abruptly and how often the line changes direction.

Example 2. Intervallic Improvisation (Charlie Parker's solo on *Anthropology,* 1946)[18]



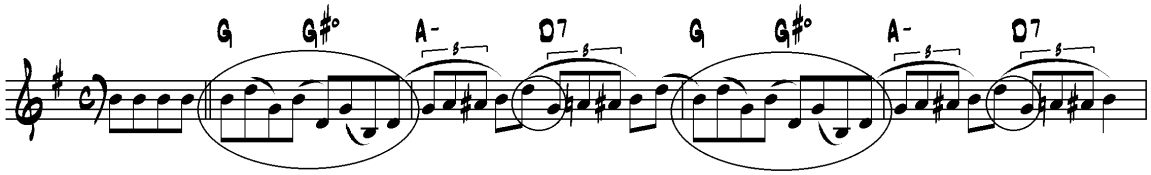
[16] Louis Armstrong, *Great Trumpet Solos of Louis Armstrong*, trans. and ed. Peter Ecklund (New York: Charles Colin, 1995), 14.

[17] Mark C. Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, 4th ed. (Engelwood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 142.

[18] Charlie Parker, *Charlie Parker Omnibook*, trans. Jamey Aebersold and Ken Slone (New York: Atlantic, 1978), 12.

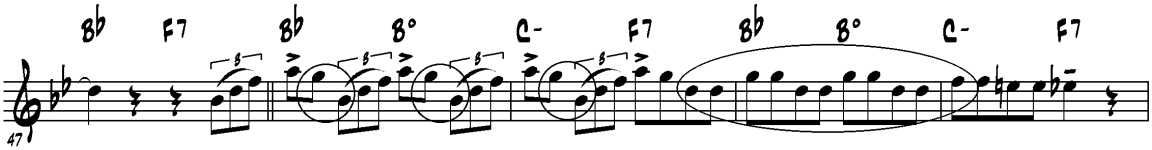
Early in his career, Allen exhibited skill in executing these types of passages. His 1934 solo on the tune *Big John's Special* (example 3) opens with a broken G major arpeggio figure. Notice the angularity of the line as he leaps between the partials of the chord.

Example 3. Intervallic improvisation (*Big John's Special*, 1934)



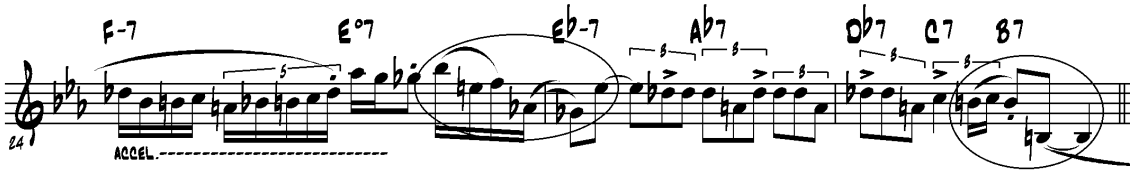
In measures 47-51 of the same solo, Allen uses an ascending repeated arpeggio figure to leap between the middle and high registers. He follows this with a figure that exploits the interval of a perfect fourth (example 4).

Example 4. Quick register changes (*Big John's Special,* 1934)



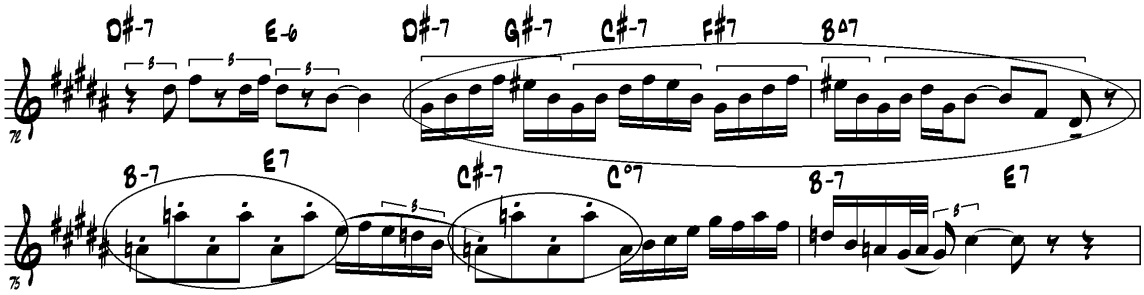
In measures 24-26 of his 1935 solo on *Body and Soul* (example 5), Allen abruptly comes out of a smooth chromatic run with an angular series of notes before ending the phrase with an octave leap down to a low B. The highly intervallic nature of the line allows him to get away with using the harmonically ambiguous notes Db and A on the Ab7 chord of measure 25.

Example 5. Intervallic improvisation and quick register changes (*Body and Soul,* 1935)



Later in the solo, Allen plays a cascading arpeggio figure, rapidly shifting back and forth between the middle and high registers, similar to the above excerpt from *Big John's Special.* He follows this with a series of octave leaps between middle and high A on the trumpet (example 6).

Example 6. Quick register changes and octave leaps (*Body and Soul, 1935)*



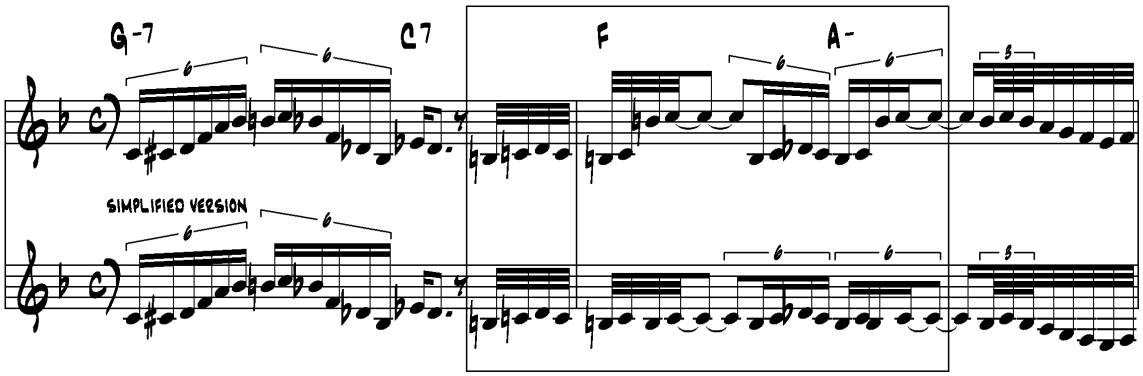
Related to intervallic improvisation, octave displacement is accomplished when a soloist transposes part of an improvised line to a different octave. Through this technique, the soloist is able add interest and complexity to simple melodic ideas by making them more angular.

Octave displacement was particularly well-suited to the angular melodic contours of the bebop style. Many bebop musicians, including saxophonist Charlie Parker and trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie made frequent use of this technique. Another player who favored this technique was trumpeter Clifford Brown. Examples 7-8, excerpted from two different Brown solos, are clear illustrations of how he used this technique within a bebop

context. In these examples, the top staff represents Brown's improvised line, while the bottom staff shows a simplified version.

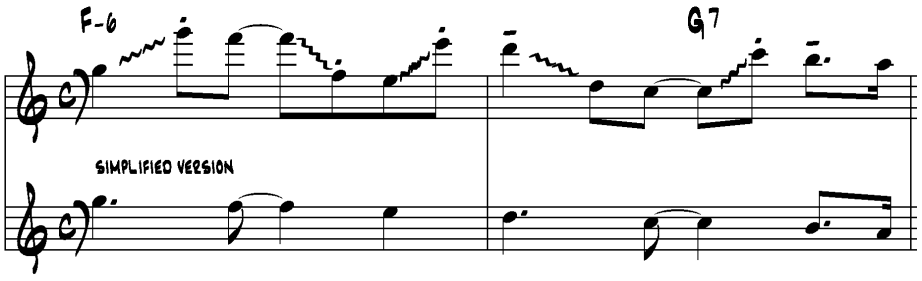
Example 7, excerpted from his solo on the tune *You Go To My Head*, Brown applies octave displacement to a three-note chromatic pattern, surrounding the note C with its upper and lower chromatic neighbor tones (B and Db).

Example 7. Octave displacement in Clifford Brown's solo on *You Go To My Head*, 1955[19]



Brown's 1954 solo on the tune *I've Got You Under My Skin* (example 8), again uses octave displacement to add excitement to what is essentially, just a C major scale descending from the fifth (G).

Example 8. Octave displacement in Clifford Brown's solo on *I've Got You Under My Skin*, 1954[20]



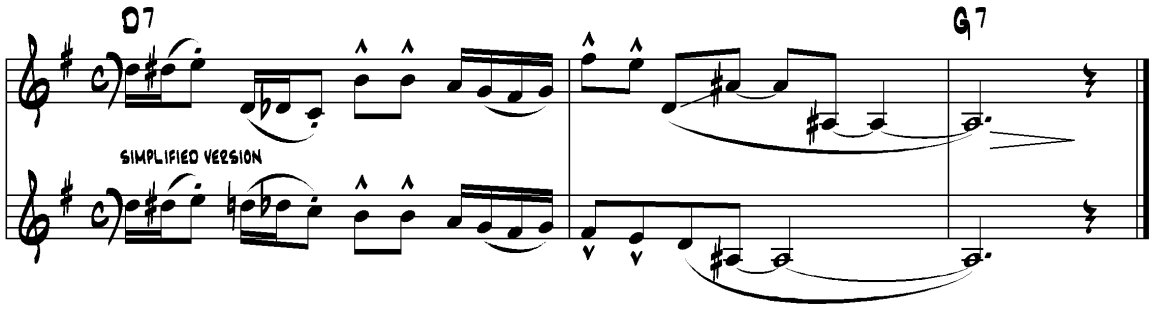
[19] Ibid., 124.

[20] Brown, 134.

In the three above examples, Clifford Brown's ideas are based on the most basic of materials, major and chromatic scale patterns. Through the use of octave displacement, he was able to add complexity and excitement to what otherwise would have been relatively simple lines.

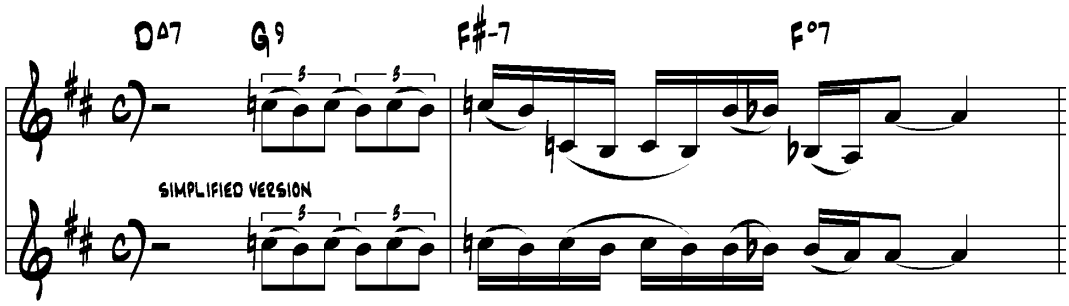
Twenty-five years prior to the Brown examples, Allen was using octave displacement in exactly the same manner. In example 9, from his 1929 recording of *Biff'ly Blues*, Allen applies octave displacement to a descending D mixolydian mode, adding two chromatic passing tones in the first two beats (D# and Db). The line ends on the harmonically striking note A#, which begins as the augmented fifth of the D7 chord, then becoming the minor third (blue note) of the G7 chord.

Example 9. Octave displacement (*Biff'ly Blues* - 1929)



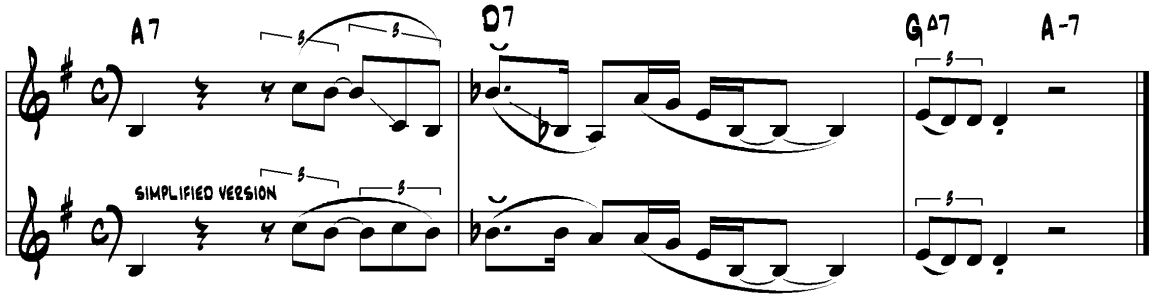
Example 10, from Allen's 1936 live recording of *Body and Soul*, is based on a simple line that descends chromatically from a C to an A. The rhythmic progression from triplets to sixteenth notes adds a feeling of acceleration to the line. Allen applies octave displacement as the line shifts to sixteenth-notes, creating a cascading effect.

Example 10. Octave displacement (*Body and* Soul*,* 1936)



Allen creates a similar effect in his 1957 solo on the tune *I Cover the Waterfront*, again applying octave displacement to a simple figure that descends chromatically from a C to an A (example 11).

Example 11. Octave displacement (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Melodic Embellishment and Variation Techniques

Melodic variation has several different forms. To vary a melody rhythmically, a player can change the rhythm or use augmentation and diminution. The pitches of a melody can also be embellished using ornaments and other devices such as grace notes, passing tones and neighbor tones. In his book *Thinking In Jazz*, Paul Berliner describes other variation techniques employed by jazz musicians:

> Inventive pitch substitutions, and occasional chromatic fills added between consecutive melody pitches, are also common. Additionally, soloists can rephrase

> the melody subtly by anticipating or delaying the entrances of phrases or by lengthening or shortening particular pitches within them.[21]

One of the key elements of Louis Armstrong's genius was his ability to add embellishments and variations to a given melody or idea. This ability allowed him to revisit similar melodic material within the course of a performance, creating unity within his solos without sounding redundant. The same could be said of saxophonist Charlie Parker in the Bebop Era, who seemed to have an endless supply of variations to any given idea.

Like Armstrong and Parker, Allen had a gift for melodic embellishment and variation, which became particularly evident in his later recordings. Allen's approach to melodic embellishment, while heavily influenced by Armstrong, was more adventurous and unpredictable. This was true both from a rhythmic as well as from a melodic standpoint. This adventurousness was more in line with the risk-taking nature of the bebop style.

Allen's use of melodic embellishment and variation is a prominent feature of his 1957 solo on *I Cover the Waterfront*. The first phrase of the melody appears several times throughout the solo; Allen never plays it the same way twice. The top staff of example 12 shows the first two measures of *I Cover the Waterfront* in its original form. The next four staves show Allen's variations on this melody.

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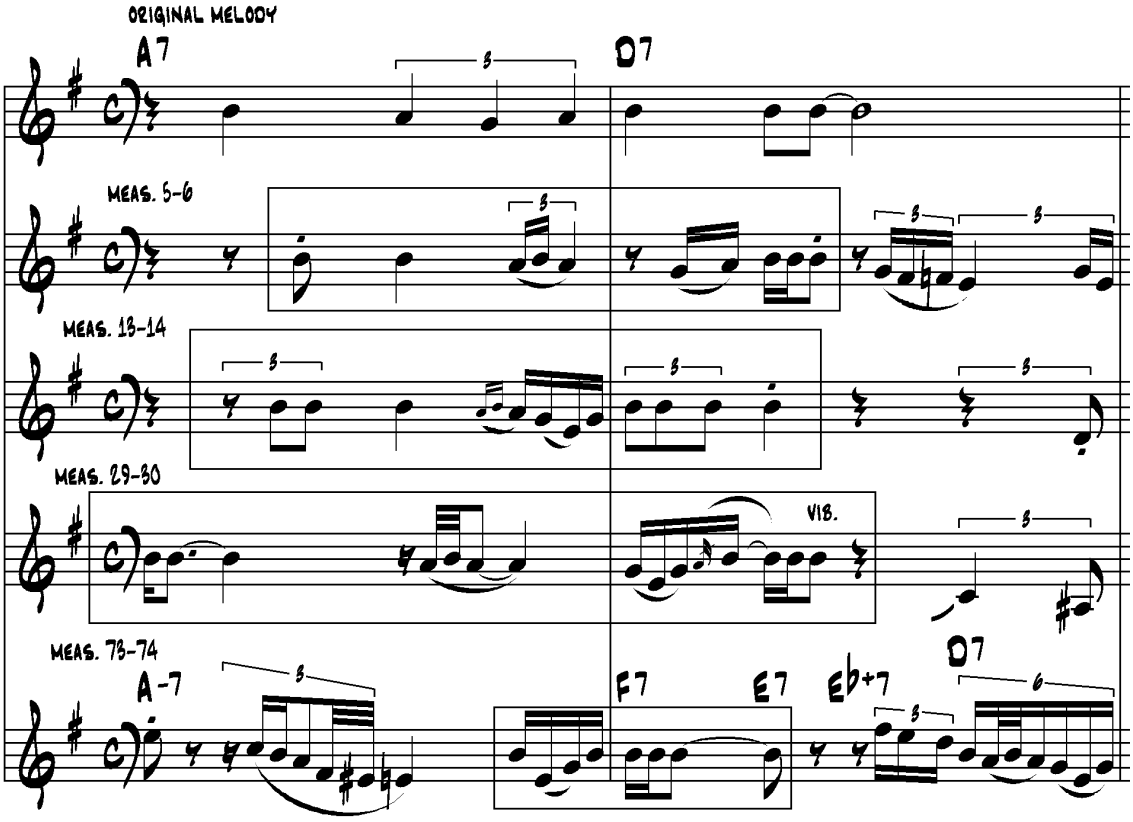
[21] Paul Berliner, *Thinking In Jazz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 69.

Example 12. Melodic embellishment and variation techniques (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Melodic Reconstruction

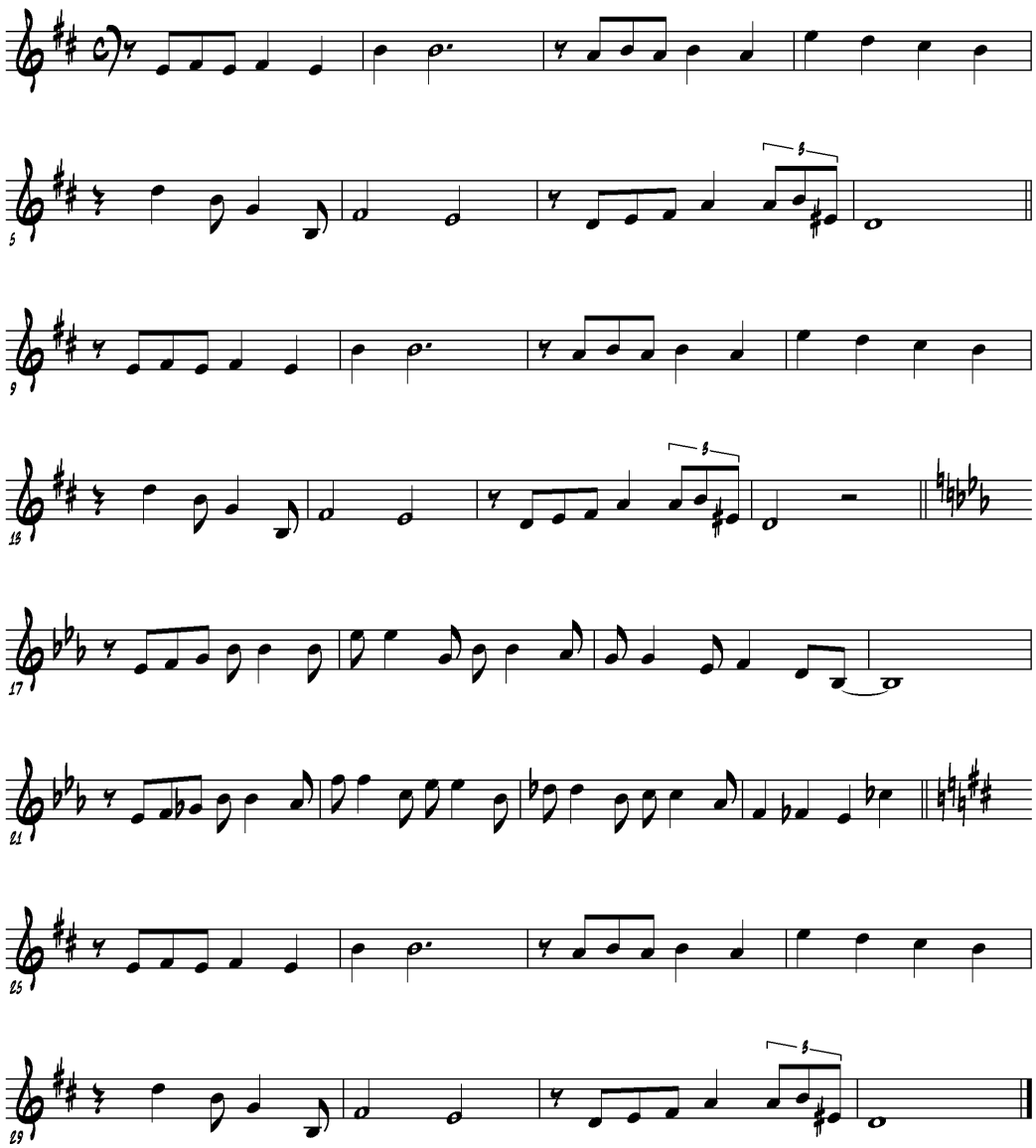
When interpreting a song's melody, it is common for jazz musicians to use variation techniques like those discussed above to personalize their renditions. Songs with slower tempos offer the soloists more rhythmic freedom, allowing them further opportunity to add their own improvised commentaries on the melody. This often leads them to stray from the original melody altogether. This type of "melodic reconstruction" is also described by Paul Berliner in *Thinking In Jazz*:

> During some renditions of ballads and blues, soloists preserve the melody's characteristic shape throughout by limiting themselves to minor embellishments and periodic improvised commentaries. Such performances blur the distinction between the melody's presentation and the improvised solo.[22]

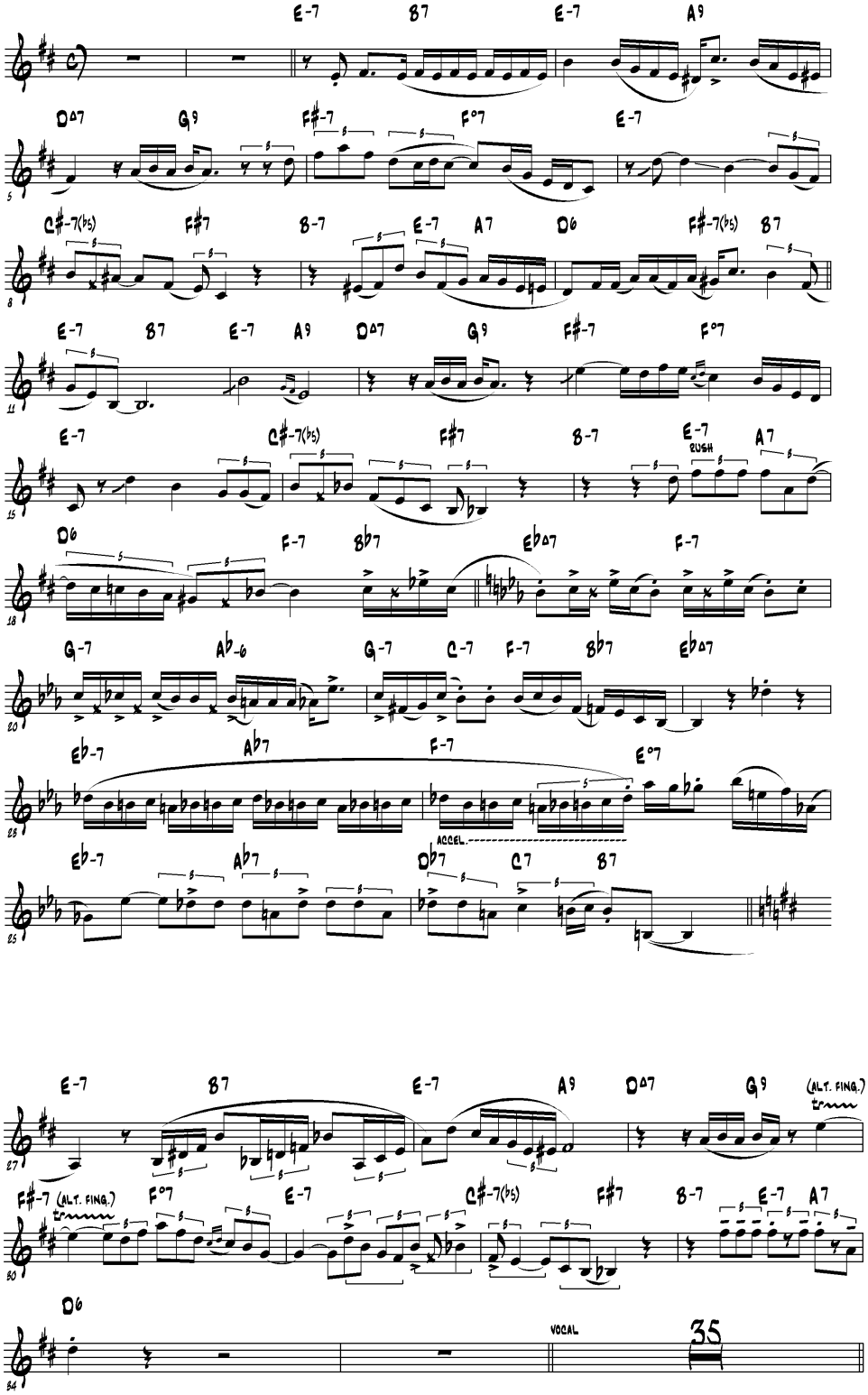
[22] Berliner, 172.

One of the most famous recordings in all of jazz history is the 1959 Coleman Hawkins recording of *Body and Soul.* In this recording, only the first few bars allude to the actual melody of the song; the rest is new material. While this became more common with bebop and later styles, it was virtually absent in the Swing Era. A few years prior to the Hawkins recording, Red Allen puts his talent for melodic reconstruction on display in his 1935 and 1936 recordings of *Body and Soul*. In these recordings, Allen states the melody with only minor embellishments part of the time, heavily disguises it at others, and completely replaces it with new material in yet other instances. A comparison of Allen's statement of melody in his 1935 recording of *Body and Soul* with a more traditional, straightforward rendition of the song (Examples 13a-b) reveals these techniques.

Example 13a. *Body and Soul* - standard version



Example 13b. *Body and Soul* - Red Allen's 1935 version

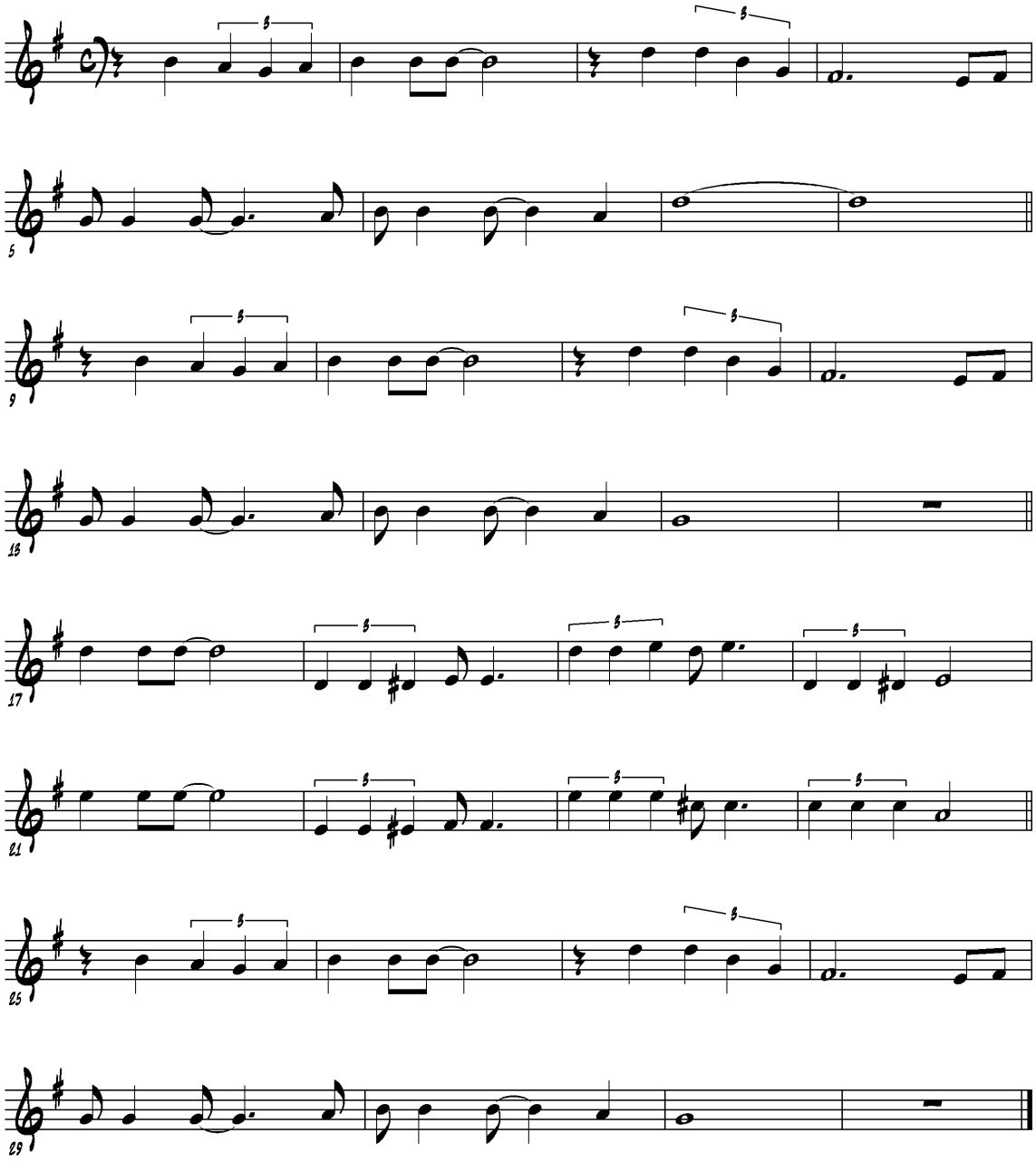


Allen makes even more widespread use of this technique in his recordings from the late 1950s. His reconstruction of the melody to *I Cover the Waterfront* (1957) is masterful, employing highly complex rhythms, an elastic sense of tempo, variations on tonal color, melodic ornaments, pitch and articulation embellishments, and chromatic melismas (Examples 14a-b). In his book *The Swing Era*, Gunther Schuller praises Allen's *I Cover the Waterfront* solo:

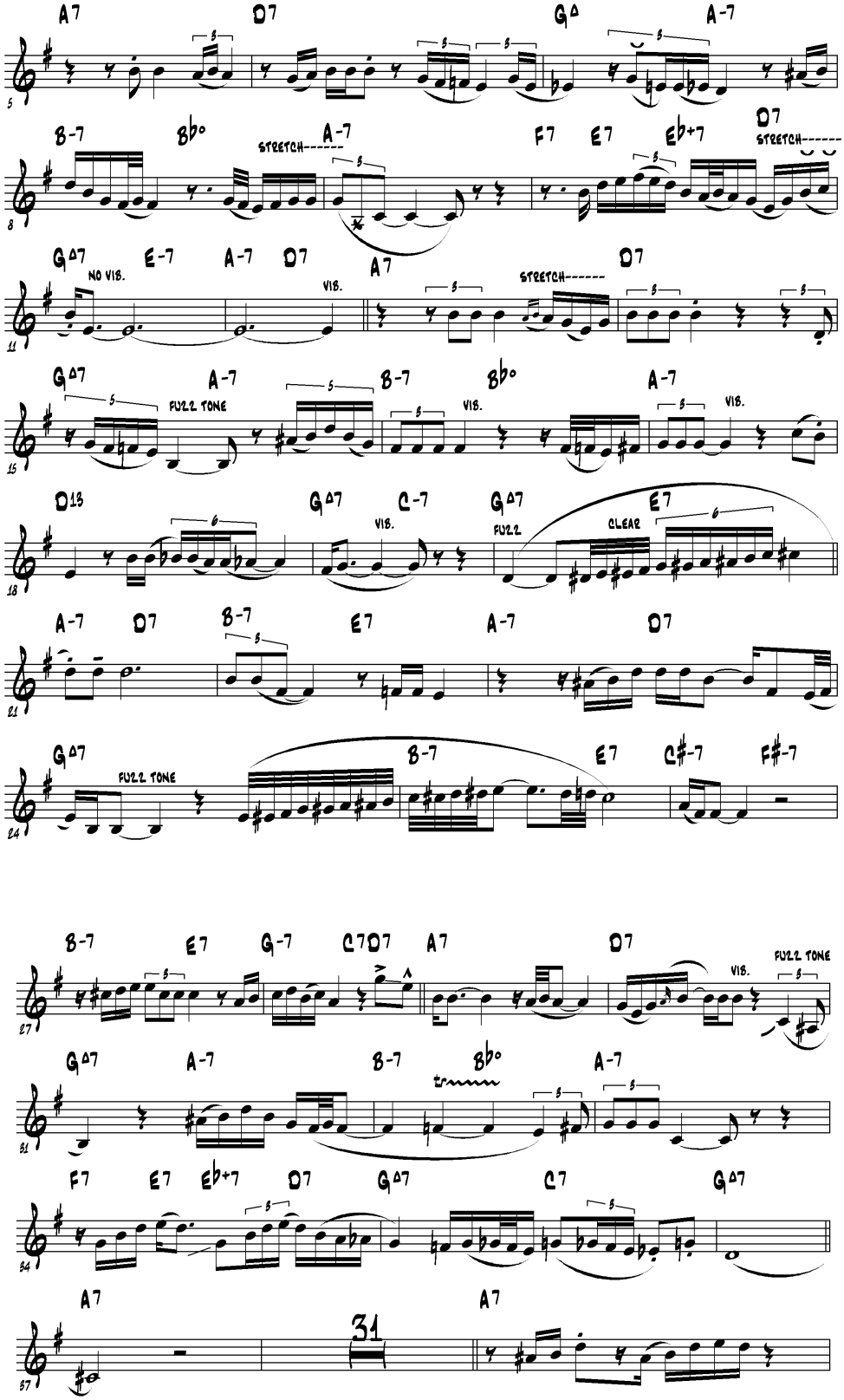
> ...one of the most magnificent extended trumpet solos of that or any other period. It brims with interesting bold, contrasting ideas, draws continually upon his lively creative imagination, is alternately gently ruminative and passionately expressive, and is played with a new rich, husky, breathy, singing tone.[23]

[23] Schuller, 630.

Example 14a. *I Cover the Waterfront* - standard version



Example 14b. *I Cover the Waterfront* - Red Allen's 1957 version



Harmony

Nonharmonic Tones and Dissonance

One of the hallmarks of bebop harmony was the liberal use of nonharmonic tones, also known as playing "outside" of the harmony. As defined by *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, nonharmonic tones are "dissonant tones understood as embellishing otherwise consonant harmonies; also embellishing tones."[24] Nonharmonic tones add interest to a melody by introducing dissonance, which then resolves to consonance, creating points of harmonic tension and release. Referring to them as "non-chord tones," Paul Berliner discusses their application within a jazz context:

> Non-chord tones, as implied above, present different liabilities, depending on their placement within melodies and their relationship to underlying chords. Within a vocabulary pattern that spans chord tones, the passing motion of intermittent dissonant pitches can add interesting harmonic color to the solo. Even a stretch of dissonant pitches can serve as a dramatic tension-building device before resolving to a chord tone. If the same pitches are redistributed within a figure, however—with non-chord tones assuming prominent positions of emphasis without resolution—they can create the displeasing effect of wrong notes.[25]

The advancement of harmonic practices that happened from the Classical to the Romantic eras of Western classical music is analogous to what took place from the swing era to the bebop era in jazz. As the jazz evolved, dissonance and its consequent resolution became an increasingly prominent feature of the music's harmonic vocabulary. Chromatically altering the fifth scale degree by raising or lowering it a half step, as well as using the upper extensions of chords such as sevenths, ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths, became standard practice. It was also common to chromatically alter the

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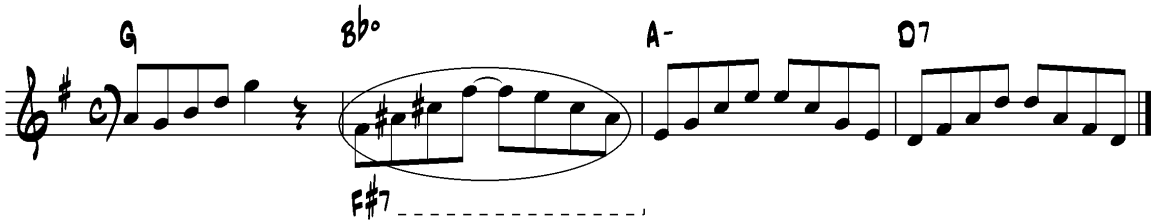
[24] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Nonharmonic tones."

[25] Berliner, 251.

upper extensions of chords by raising or lowering them a half step (b9, #9, #11, b13). Another practice common to the Bebop Era was chord substitution, the act of substituting one chord for another as a means to create harmonic tension.

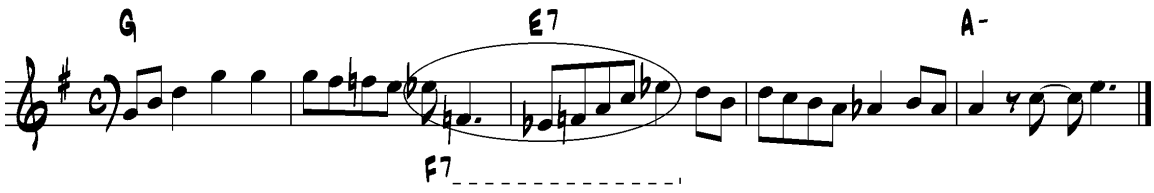
In the 1930s, only a small handful of improvisers were actively experimenting with greater amounts of dissonance in their solos. Saxophonist Coleman Hawkins was one of the primary figures advancing jazz harmonic language towards bebop. Example 15, an excerpt from his 1939 solo on the song *My Buddy*, clearly shows Hawkins substituting an F#7 chord for the Bb diminished chord.

Example 15. Chord substitution in Coleman Hawkins' 1939 solo on My Buddy (transcribed by Scott DeVeaux)[26]



In example 16, from the same solo, Hawkins substitutes an F7 chord for both the G major chord and the E7 chord that follows.

Example 16. Chord substitution in Coleman Hawkins' 1939 solo on *My Buddy*[27]

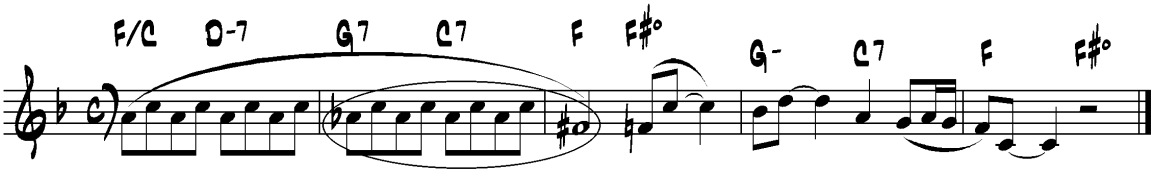


[26] Scott DeVeaux, *The Birth of Bebop: A Social and Musical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 96.

[27] DeVeaux, 97.

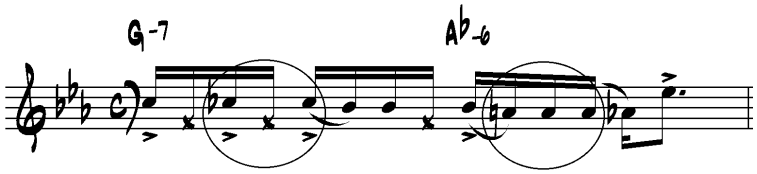
One manner in which Allen employed nonharmonic tones was as chromatic passing tones. The first three measures of the following excerpt, from Allen's 1933 solo on the song *Nagasaki*, shows chromatic movement from an A down to an F (skipping the G). Upon hearing, the repeated Ab's played over the G7 and C7 chords, and the F# played over the F major chord sound like wrong notes until their delayed resolution on the note F (example 17).

Example 17. Chromatic passing tones (*Nagasaki*, 1933)

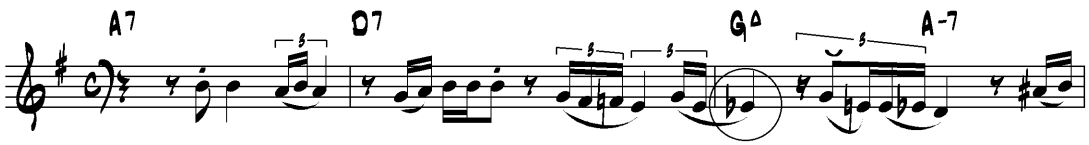


The examples below (examples 18a-d) show instances in which Allen uses nonharmonic tones in the same manner. In each occurrence, the nonharmonic tones are striking and clearly sound outside of the harmony.

Example 18a. Chromatic passing tones (*Body and Soul*, 1935)

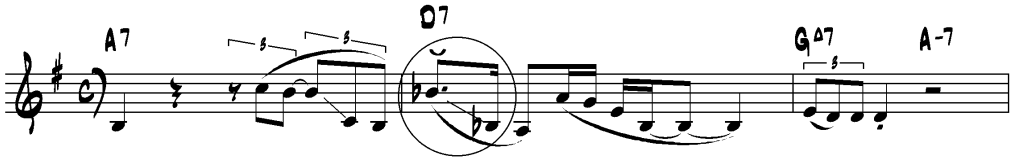


Example 18b. Chromatic passing tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



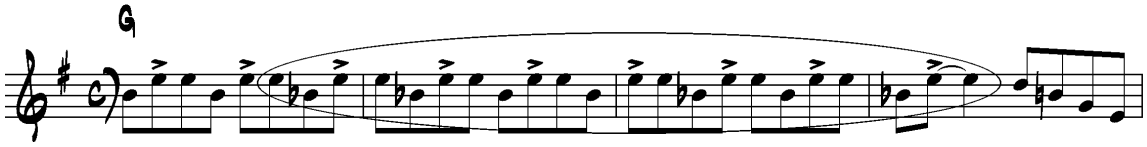
Example 18c. Chromatic passing tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)

Example 18d. Chromatic passing tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



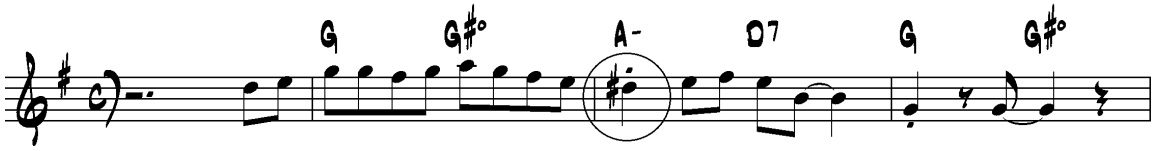
In example 19, from his 1930 solo on the song *Louisiana Swing*, Allen repeatedly plays a flat third (Bb) over a G major chord. While the Bb could be analyzed as a blue note, in this instance it is not played within the context of a blues line. Instead, the Bb is played in conjunction with the note E, forming the interval of a tritone (augmented fourth/diminished fifth). Allen's emphasis on the flat third, as well as his consecutive repetitions of the tritone interval, creates harmonic tension that is not released until the descending E minor arpeggio at the end of the excerpt.

Example 19. Nonharmonic tones (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930)



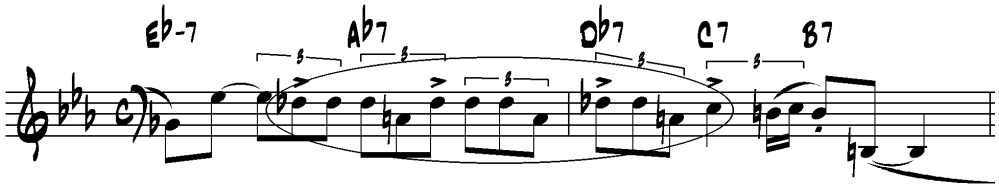
Example 20, from Allen's 1934 solo on *Big John's Special*, is a simple phrase based on the G major scale. On beat one of the third measure, however, Allen lands on the raised fifth scale degree (D#) of the G major scale, which he then resolves up a half step to the sixth scale degree (E). The D# could also be analyzed as augmented fourth of the A minor chord, resolving to the fifth (E).

Example 20. Nonharmonic tones (*Big John's Special*, 1934)



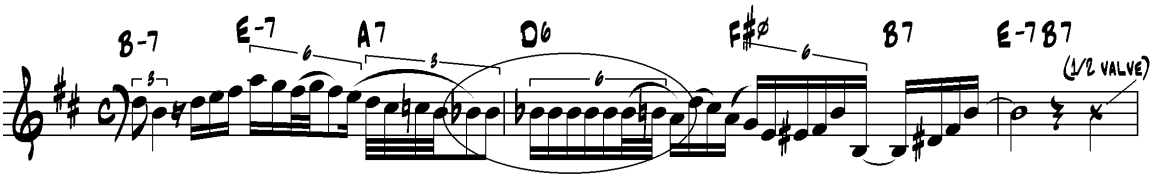
Example 21, from Allen's 1935 recording of Body and Soul, is similar in approach to example 14. The circled area highlights a four note intervallic figure (three Dbs descending to an A) that is repeated three times. The interval between the Db and the A could either be analyzed as a diminished fourth or as a major third. Either way, these notes sound particularly dissonant when Allen plays them over the Ab7 chord as the fourth (Db) and the flat ninth (A).

Example 21. Nonharmonic tones (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



One year later, in his 1936 live recording of *Body and Soul* (example 22), Allen leans heavily on the flatted sixth (Bb) of a D6 chord before resolving it down the the fifth of the chord (A).

Example 22. Nonharmonic tones (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



In a passage from his 1965 *Lover Come Back To Me* solo, Allen incorporates an altered dominant chord. As defined by *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, an altered chord is "a chord in which one or more pitches has been altered by an accidental and thus does not belong to the scale of the operative key."[28] In example 23, the D7 chord is functioning as a dominant chord in the key of G minor. According to the key signature, the D7 chord should have a lowered ninth (Eb) and a lowered thirteenth (Bb). In this instance however, Allen plays the notes E natural and B natural, raising them by a half step. The emphasis Allen gives to these notes by placing them on strong beats in the measure makes them stand out all the more.

Example 23. Nonharmonic tones (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)

Chord Substitution

As previously mentioned, chord substitution, an important element in the harmonic language of bebop, was another method improvisers used to add chromaticism to their lines. Paul Berliner describes chord substitution in his book *Thinking In Jazz*:

> The artist also has the option of substituting a new chord with a different root for the original chord. Chords can usually serve as effective replacements for one another when they are closely enough related through common tones to perform the same function within the piece's structure, preserving "essential lines of the original progression."[29]

[28] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Altered chord."

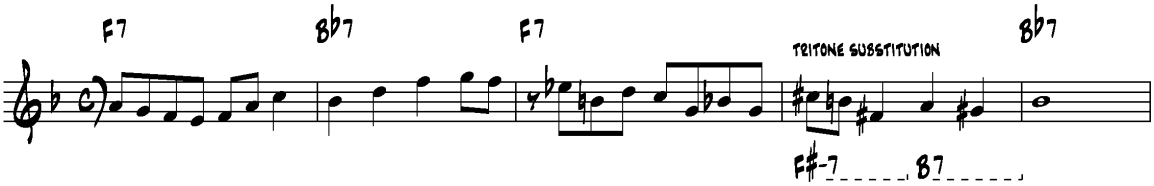
[29] Berliner, 84.

Berliner also discusses another form of chord substitution which he refers to as "harmonic insertion:"

> ...adding connecting chords between those in the original progression. As for embellishing chords, harmonic insertion chords are commonly used to break up the static harmony of a piece's form, but they accomplish this through more radical movements away from the structural chords.[30]

One of the most common forms of chromatic substitution used by jazz musicians is the tritone substitution, or substituting one dominant seventh chord for another whose root is a tritone away. Trumpeter Freddie Hubbard uses tritone substitution in the fourth measure of his 1966 solo on Duke Pearson's blues *Ready Rudy* (example 24), playing a pattern that clearly outlines the progression F# minor to B7 (a ii-V progression in the key of E). The root of the B7 chord is a tritone away from the root of the F7 chord being played by the rhythm section.

Example 24. Tritone substitution in Freddie Hubbard's 1966 solo on *Ready Rudy* (transcribed by Mark Levine)[31]



Allen employs a similar technique in his 1935 studio version of *Body and Soul* (example 25a). In this example, he plays three consecutive ascending arpeggio figures, each beginning a half step lower than the previous (B major–Bb major–A major). Allen's use of truncated note values results in a process known as diminution, or "the division of

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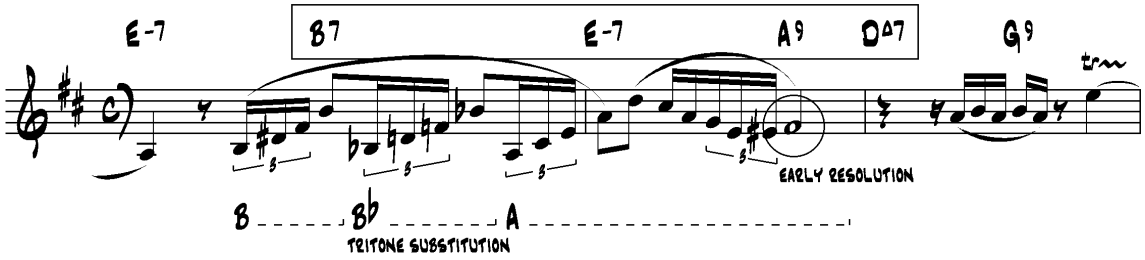
[30] Ibid., 84-5.

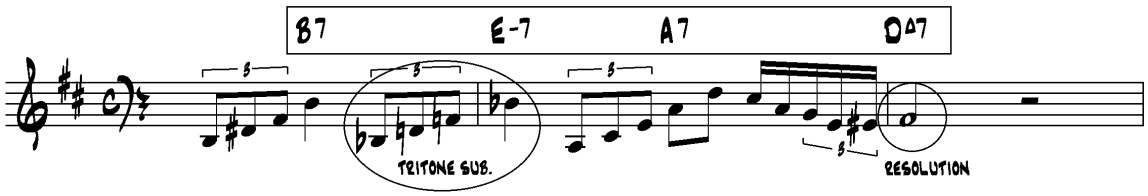
[31] Mark Levine, *The Jazz theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music, 1995), 265.

the notes of a melody into shorter ones for the purpose of ornamentation,"[32] causing the melodic line to be out of sync with the underlying harmony and come to an early resolution. Example 25b shows a simplified version of this passage. Several of the note values have been augmented in order to bring the melodic line back in sync with the chord progression, eliminating the early resolution. This example shows the Bb major arpeggio functioning as a tritone substitution for the E minor seventh chord. For this to be an example of tritone substitution in a true bebop context, the E minor chord would have to be a dominant chord. The Bb major arpeggio could also be analyzed as a chromatic passing chord, as if Allen were dragging the B7 chord down chromatically into the A7 chord. Whether analyzed as a tritone substitution or as a passing chord, this approach was not common among improvisers in 1935, and the effect is striking.

Example 25a. Chord substitution (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



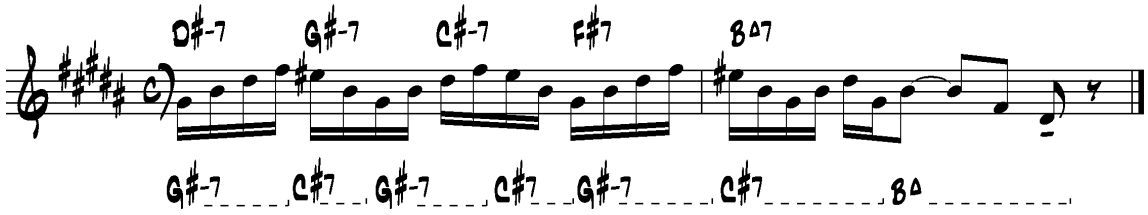
Example 25b. Chord substitution, simplified version (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



[32] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Diminution."

A different type of chord substitution happens later in the solo. In this passage, Allen plays a repeated six note figure that clearly outlines the progression G# minor to C#7, arpeggiating up the the minor chord (G#-B-D#-F#) and down through the third (E#) and seventh (B) of the dominant chord (example 26). Allen superimposes this figure over the progression D# minor seven/G# minor seven/C# minor seven/F#7/B major seven.

Example 26. Chord substitution (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



Chromatic Melismas

Defined by *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, a melisma is: "A group of more than a few notes sung to a single syllable, especially in liturgical chant. They may consist of as many as several dozen notes."[33] Allen would often employ similar devices in his solos, letting fly flurries of notes that, as quoted by Scott Yanow earlier, were "sometimes only abstractly connected to the beat,"[34] but somehow always knew exactly when to come out of them. These melismatic figures were often derived either from the chromatic scale, or from a major or minor scale with chromatic notes thrown in. Functioning as a sort of glue in the musical fabric, these devices often linked surrounding material in different registers or octaves (examples 27a-e).

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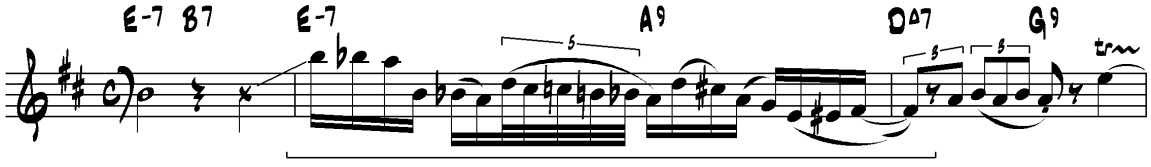
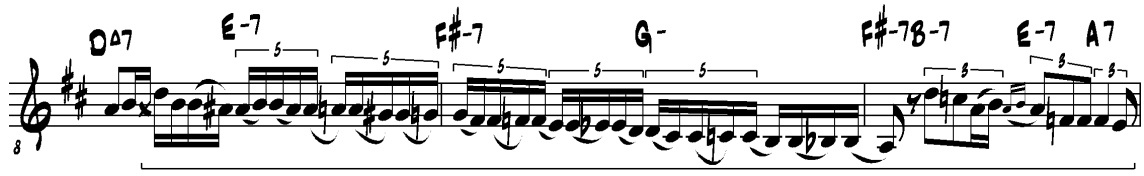
[33] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Melisma."

[34] Yanow, 16.

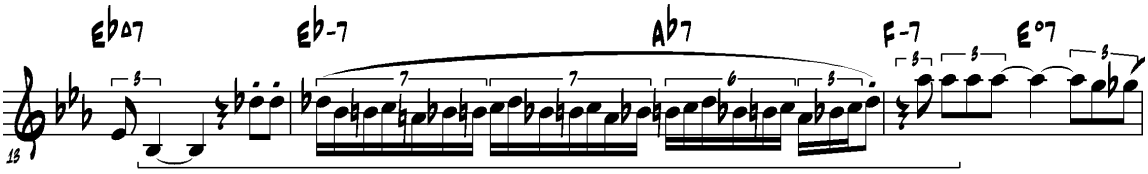
Example 27a. Chromatic melismas (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



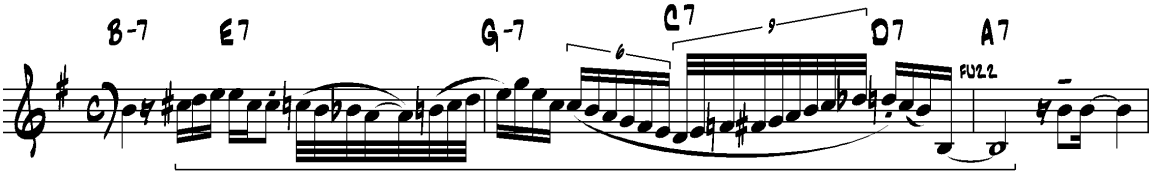
Example 27b. Chromatic melismas (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



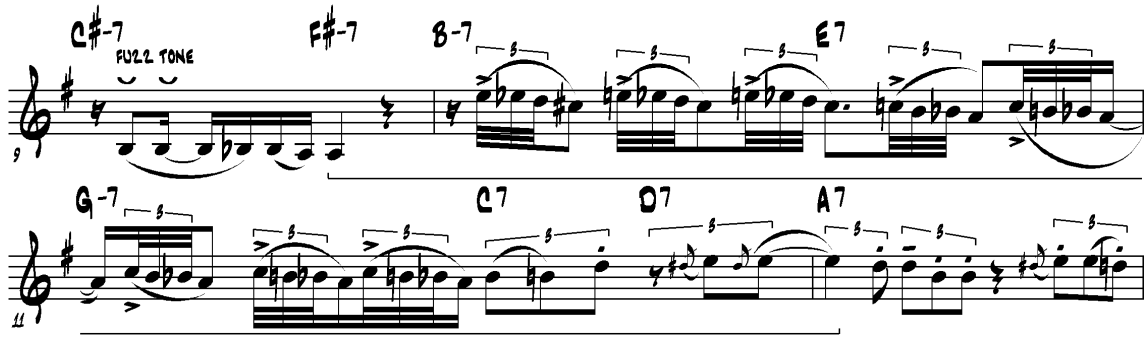
Example 27c. Chromatic melismas (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



Example 27d. Chromatic melismas (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Example 27e. Chromatic melismas (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Chromatic Approach Tones

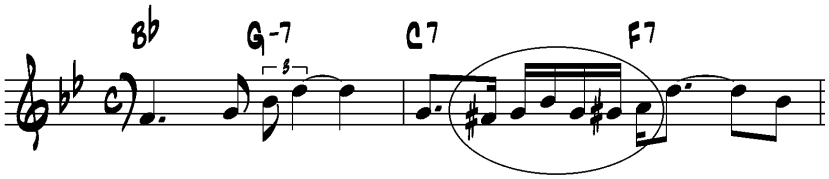
One common characteristic of the bebop language is the use of chromatic approach tones. As described by Bert Ligon (Director of Jazz Studies at The University of South Carolina):

> Chromatic approaches usually involve a diatonic note and a chromatically altered note leading to an essential tone. It may begin with the diatonic tone followed by the chromatic tone as a passing tone into the essential tone, or it may begin with the chromatic tone then a diatonic neighbor tone leading to the essential tone. The chromaticism adds color to the lines and rhythmic interest with the additional pitches. The target notes often occur on strong beats in the measure. Target notes may be encircled by chromatic approaches from above and below.[35]

Chromatic approach tones also help to more clearly define changes in the underlying harmony.

While chromatic approach tones were not fully integrated into the jazz harmonic language until the bebop era, Louis Armstrong set a precedent for their use in the 1920's. In example 28, from Armstrong's 1927 solo on *Wild Man Blues*, the notes Bb, G, and G# are chromatic approach tones encircling the third of the F7 chord (A).

Example 28. Chromatic approach tones in Louis Armstrong's 1927 solo on *Wild Man Blues* (transcribed by Peter Ecklund)[36]



Example 29, from Charlie Parker's 1946 solo on *Confirmation*, illustrates how chromatic approach tones were used in a bebop context. The notes C, A, and A# are

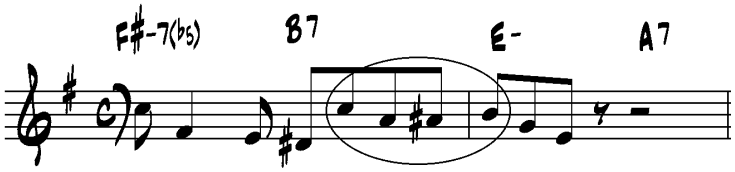
---

[35] Bert Ligon, *Connecting Chords With Linear Harmony* (Lebanon, IN: Houston Pub., 1996), 13.

[36] Armstrong, 14.

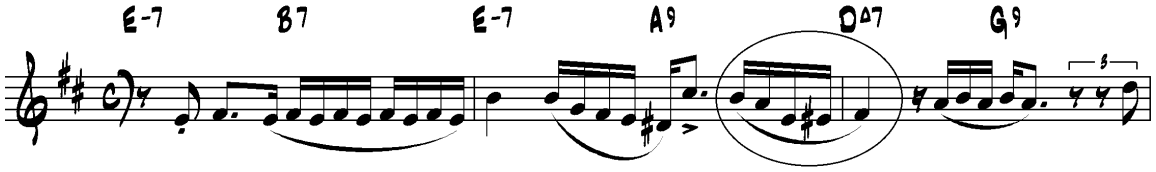
chromatic approach tones encircling the fifth of the E minor chord (B). Upon comparing the Parker example to the Armstrong example, is it evident that both are using this device in exactly the same manner.

Example 29. Chromatic approach tones in Charlie Parker's 1946 solo on *Confirmation*[37]



Most likely inspired by Armstrong, Allen embraced the use of chromatic approach tones early in his career, as the following passage (example 30) from his 1935 solo on *Body and Soul* illustrates.

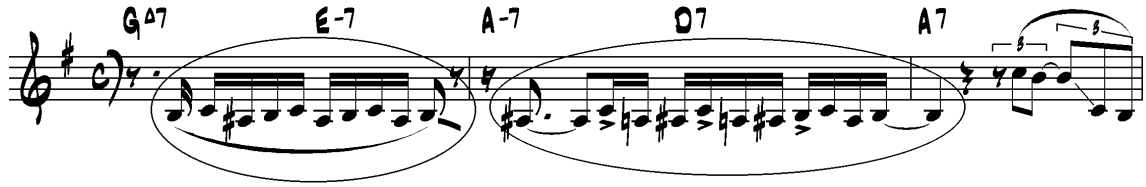
Example 30. Chromatic approach tones (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



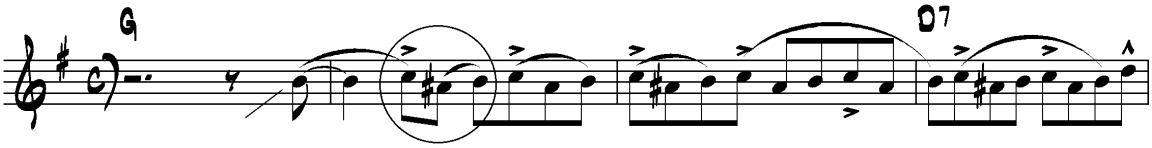
Throughout Allen's recordings from 1957-1959, as well as his work in the 1960s, he makes frequent use of chromatic approach tones, illustrating that, while he never fully embraced the bebop style, certain elements of its vocabulary had clearly embedded themselves into his own (Examples 31a-e).

[37] Parker, 2.

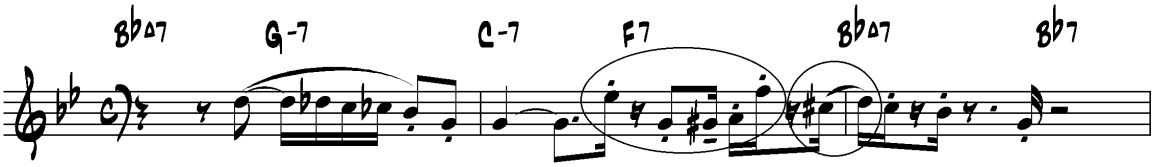
Example 31a. Chromatic approach tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



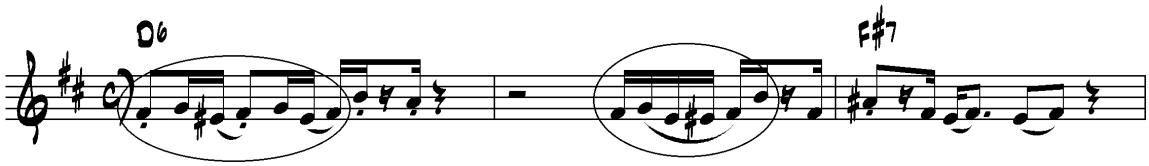
Example 31b. Chromatic approach tones (*When the Saints Go Marching In*, 1957)



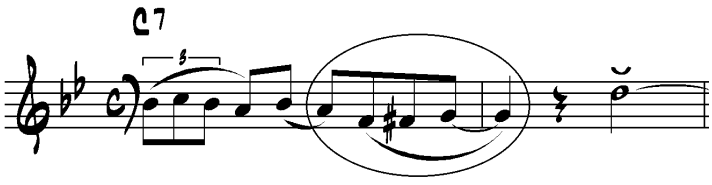
Example 31c. Chromatic approach tones (*Mean To Me*, 1958)



Example 31d. Chromatic approach tones (*All of Me*, 1958)



Example 31e. Chromatic approach tones (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



Allen's use of this technique is significant. As mentioned earlier, most players from his generation never embraced the conventions of bebop. While many of these players continued to perform at a high level, they chose to do so within the context of early jazz and Swing era styles. The fact that Allen was using this technique in the 1950s

clearly shows an evolution beyond Swing era styles. Even more significant is the fact that he had already begun to use this technique in the 1930's, well before the advent of bebop.

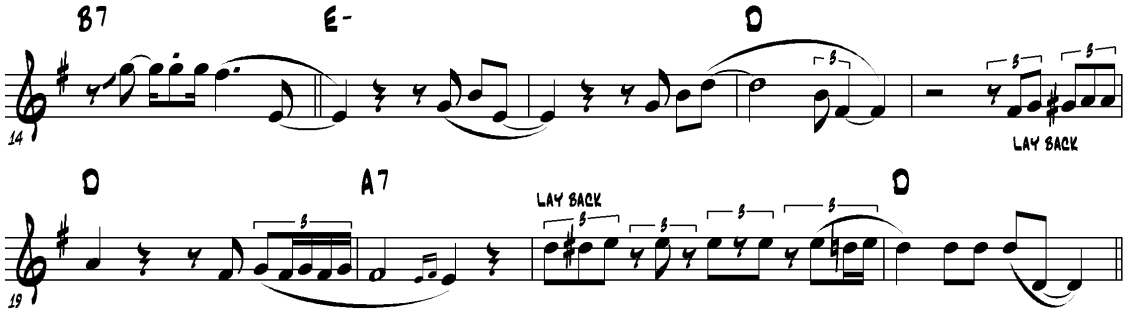
Rhythm, Tempo, and Meter

Rubato

Rubato, or, "the practice of altering the relationship among written note-values and making the established pulse flexible by accelerating and slowing down the tempo,"[38] is a technique often employed by jazz musicians to add expression to their improvisations. In *Thinking In Jazz*, Berliner states: "Veterans can assert their interpretation of the beat with minute shifts in emphasis, creating variations in the time feeling."[39]

The solos in Allen's earliest recordings feature occasional hints of rubato. In measures 18-22 of *Biff'ly Blues*, he opens and closes the passage with triplet figures that lay back behind the beat (Example 32).

Example 32. Rubato (*Biff'ly Blues*, 1929)

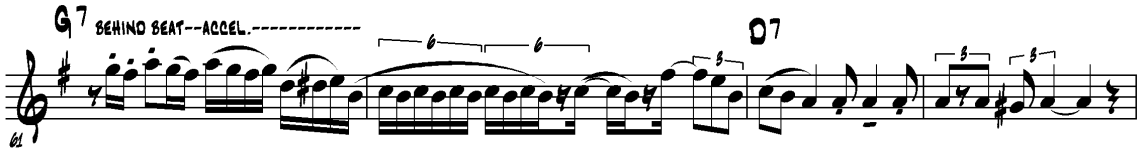


[38] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Rubato."

[39] Berliner, 150.

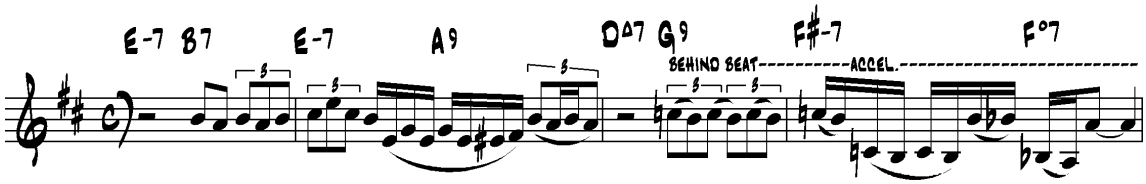
In measure 61 (also *Biff'ly Blues*), Allen begins with sixteenth notes played behind the beat, speeding them up to the pace of the sextuplets in the next measure (Example 33).

Example 33. Rubato (*Biff'ly Blues*, 1929)



Allen uses a similar approach in the first four measures of his 1936 solo on *Body and Soul*. In measures three and four of example 34, Allen begins by playing behind the beat, then accelerates to bring the phrase back in sync with the tempo.

Example 34. Rubato (*Body and Soul*, 1936)

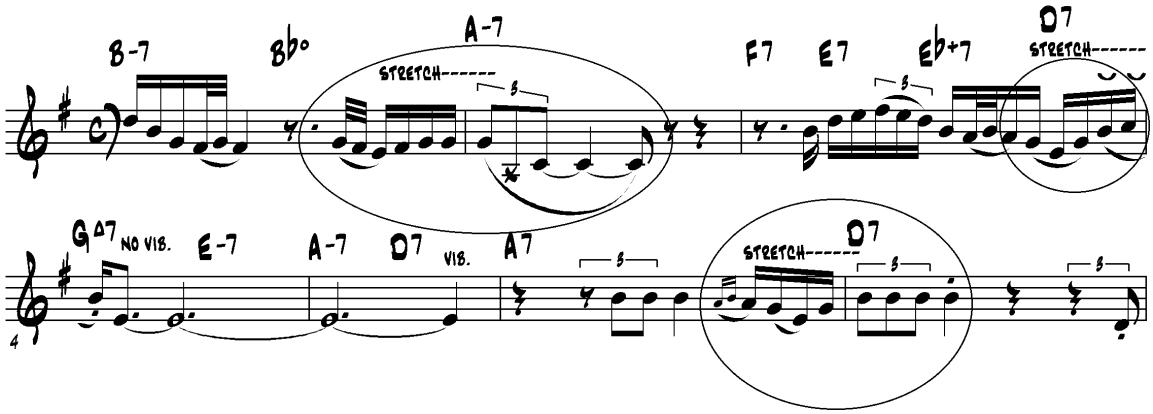


As Allen's style continued to evolve, his use of rubato became more widespread. The recordings he made in the last decade of his life (1957-1967) are evidence that his internal sense of time had evolved to such a high level that he often seemed to play both in and out of tempo simultaneously, particularly when executing his chromatic melismas (see previous above 27a-e).

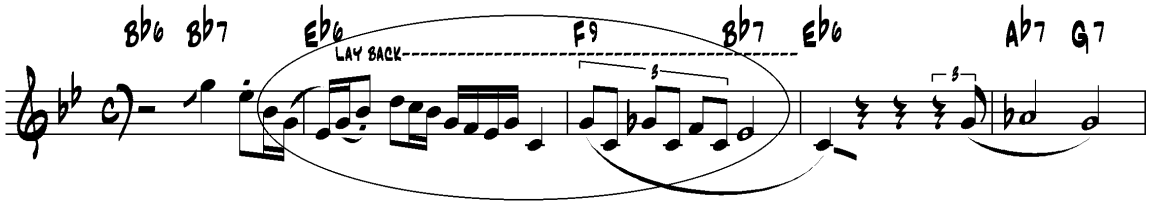
In examples 35a-b, Allen's stretching of the tempo is more extreme than in the above examples from *Biff'ly Blues* and *Body and Soul* (examples 32-34). Rather than accelerating to bring his behind-the-beat phrases back in sync with the tempo, as he does

in examples 31 and 32, Allen allows these phrases to end behind the beat, following each with either a rest or a long tone.

Example 35a. Rubato (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Example 35b. Rubato (*Mean To Me*, 1958)



Irregular Note Groupings and Shifting Subdivisions

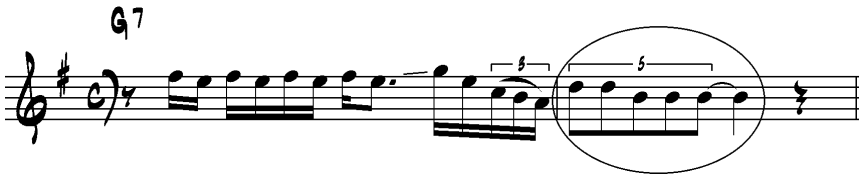
Allen's improvised lines did not always fit neatly within the number of beats into which he was trying to squeeze them. This often led to irregular note groupings such as quintuplets and septuplets, as well as frequent thirty-second note figures, giving his lines a greater feeling of spontaneity. A detailed description of this process is offered by Berliner in *Thinking In Jazz*:

> The beat takes on a tangible quality and serves as a referent for understanding the mathematical relationships among the elemental components of jazz phrases. Typically, artists interpret the components as subdivisions and multiples of the beat, an interpretation that aids artists in creating and applying their patterns whether envisioned in sound alone or in the diagrammatic representations of rhythmic values familiar to them from theory manuals. Lennie Tristano directed students to formulate new phrases by dividing the beat

> symmetrically into patterns of eighth notes, sixteenth notes and thirty second notes, and asymmetrically in any number of different ways. These were common practices for John Coltrane, who at times favored "uneven groups like fives and sevens."[40]

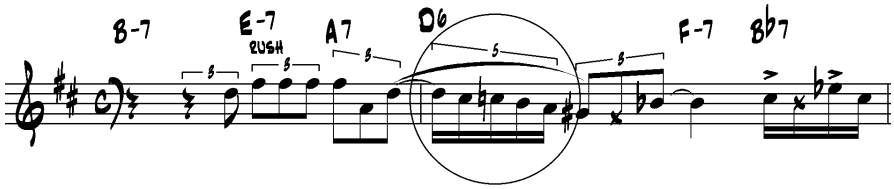
This technique was rarely used among jazz trumpeters, particularly those associated with traditional jazz, as was Allen. Below are several examples illustrating Allen's use of irregular note groupings. In example 36, from his 1929 solo on *Biff'ly Blues*, Allen groups five eighth notes over two beats.

Example 36. Irregular note groupings (*Biff'ly Blues*, 1929)

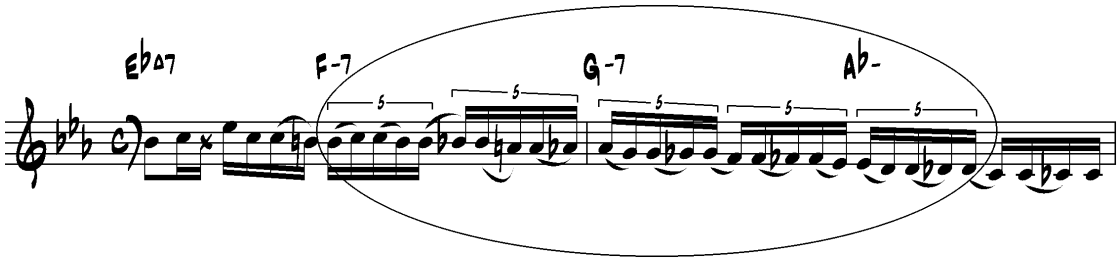


It was particularly common for Allen to group five or seven notes into one beat (examples 37a-g).

Example 37a. Five-note groupings (*Body and Soul*, 1935)

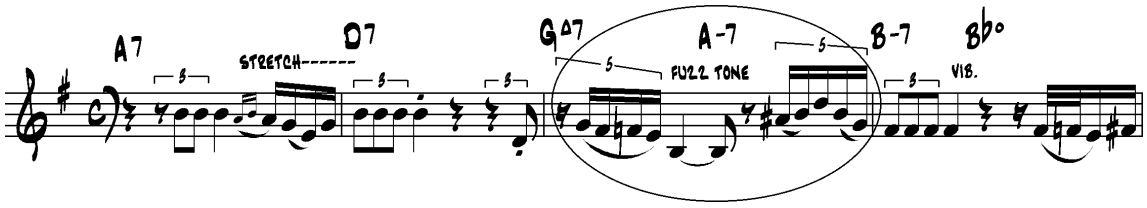


Example 37b. Five-note groupings (*Body and Soul*, 1936)

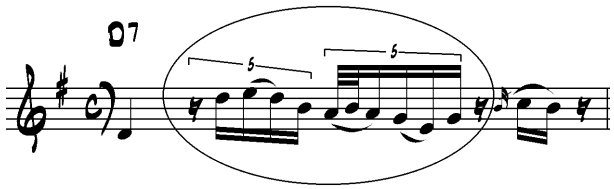


[40] Berliner, 152.

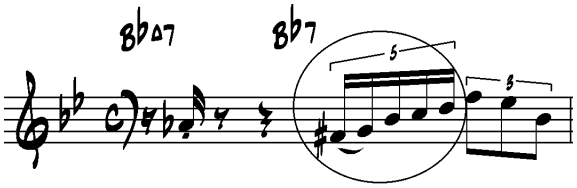
Example 37c. Five-note groupings (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1936)



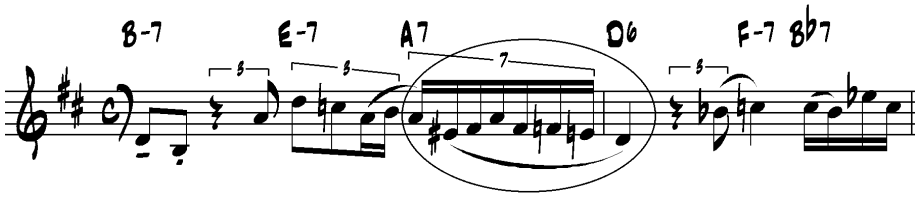
Example 37d. Five-note groupings (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1936)



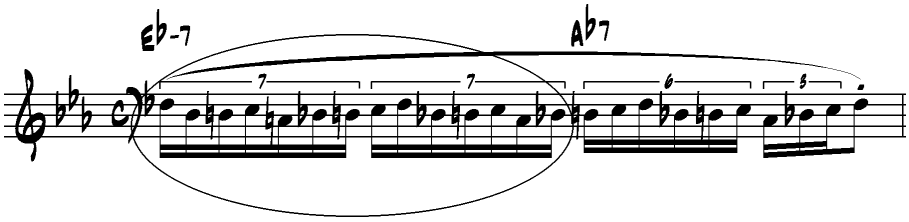
Example 37e. Five-note groupings (*Mean To Me*, 1938)



Example 37f. Seven-note groupings (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



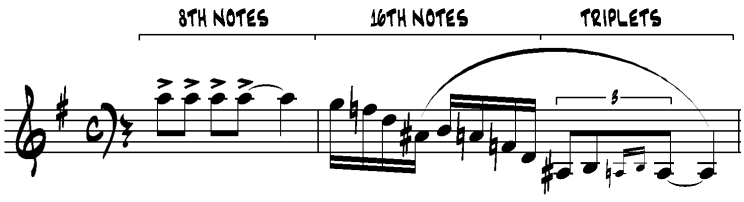
Example 37g. Seven-note groupings (*Mean To Me*, 1938)



Allen was also very adept at moving freely between eighth-note, triplet, sixteenth-note, and sextuplet subdivisions. He would sometimes employ this technique to create

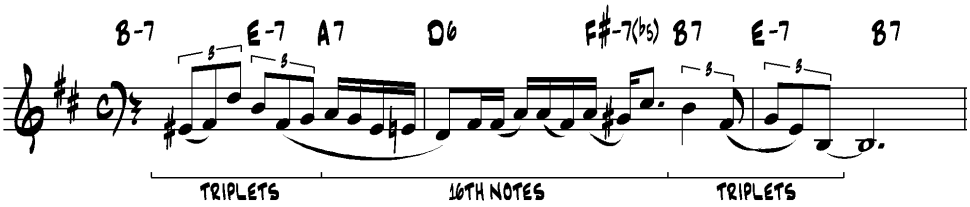
notated accelerandos and ritards. In measures 57-58 of *Biff'ly Blues*, he moves from eighth notes to sixteenth notes, and then to triplets, creating the effect of the line speeding up and then slowing back down (Example 38).

Example 38. Shifting subdivisions (*Biff'ly Blues*, 1929)



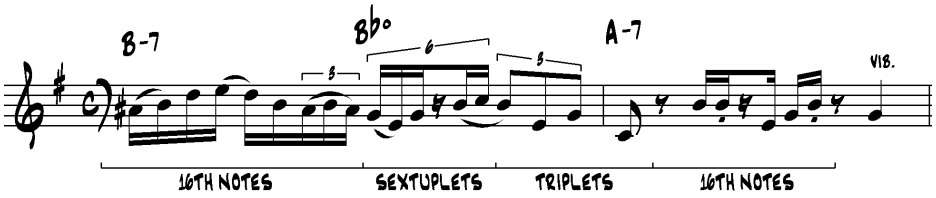
He uses the same technique in measures 9-11 of the studio version of *Body and Soul* (1935), this time moving from triplets to sixteenth notes, then back to triplets (Example 39).

Example 39. Shifting subdivisions (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



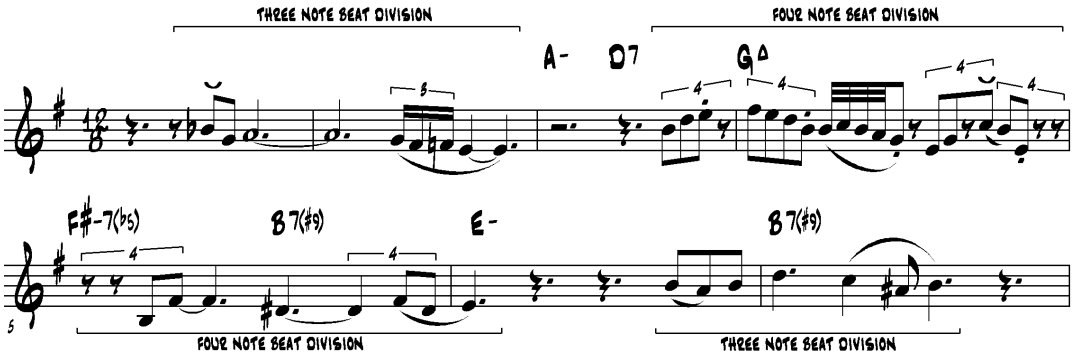
In measures 112-13 of *I Cover the Waterfront*, Allen begins in sixteenth notes, speeds up to sextuplets, then cuts the pace in half, switching to a basic triplet subdivision, before finally settling back into sixteenth notes (Example 40).

Example 40. Shifting subdivisions (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



While the above examples show Allen using this technique within the context of duple meter (4/4), in his recording of *Summertime* from 1958, he demonstrates this technique within the context of triple meter (12/8) to create the effect of shifting meters. In measures 30-36, he shifts from a three-note division of the beat—implied by the 12/8 meter—to a four-note division of the beat, creating the feeling of a duple meter, before finally shifting back to the triplet feel (Example 41).

Example 41. Shifting subdivisions (*Summertime*, 1958)



Syncopation and Metric Superimposition

Jazz music is based on a foundation of swing, which, in turn, is based in large part on the concept of syncopation. Syncopation, as defined by *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, is "a momentary contradiction of the prevailing meter or pulse."[41] In *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, Mark Gridley offers a more in-depth explanation for how syncopation relates specifically to jazz and the creation of the swing feeling:

> One important element in jazz swing feeling is the preponderance of syncopated rhythmic figures. Syncopation often takes the form of accenting notes that occur just before or just after a beat. In this way, you might wish to think of syncopation as being off-beat accenting, or the occurrence of stress where it is least expected. Jazz swing feeling requires precisely such off-beat accents. The tension generated by members of a band tugging at opposite sides of the beat is essential to jazz swing feeling. Because rhythm is a matter of timing, we must

[41] *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, 4th ed., s.v. "Syncopation."

> remember that a player's degree of swing feeling is tied to the success with which he times his syncopations. This means that when a player's quality of swing feeling is appraised, tone quality, note selection, and melodic imagination are all secondary to his sense of timing.[42]

The emergence of bebop elevated the art of syncopation to a much higher level. The rhythms in a typical bebop improvisation, as described by Gridley, were "quick and unpredictable, with more syncopation than any music previously common in Europe or America."[43]

Syncopation in bebop lines often took the form of polymetric invention or, metric superimposition. Berliner describes this practice:

> In its most basic form, polymetric invention creates a recurring cycle of rhythmic counterpoint. Within the same time span, the basic beats of different meters cross over one another, creating syncopation and temporarily increasing the music's rhythmic instability and tension. They then coincide with one another, resolving the tension.[44]

This technique was not new to bebop, however, it had been previously exploited by Louis Armstrong. In example 42, from his 1927 solo on *Struttin With Some Barbeque*, Armstrong superimposes a 3/4 meter over the 4/4 of the composition.

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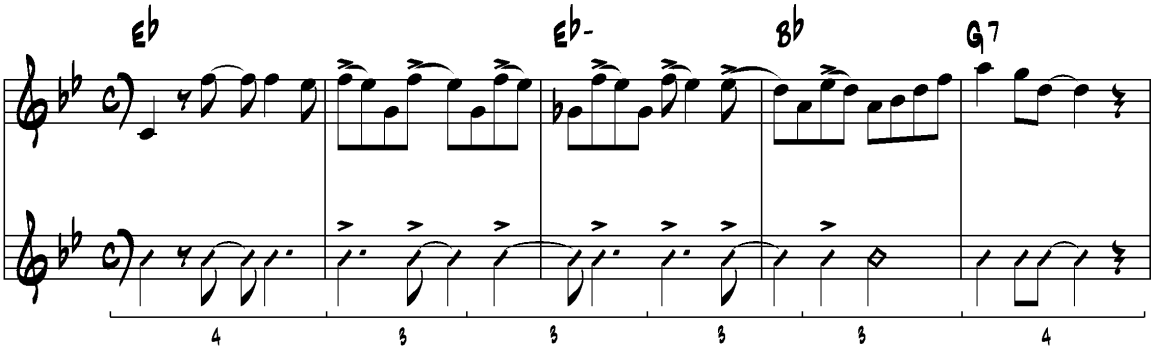
[42] Gridley, 6.

[43] Gridley, 142.

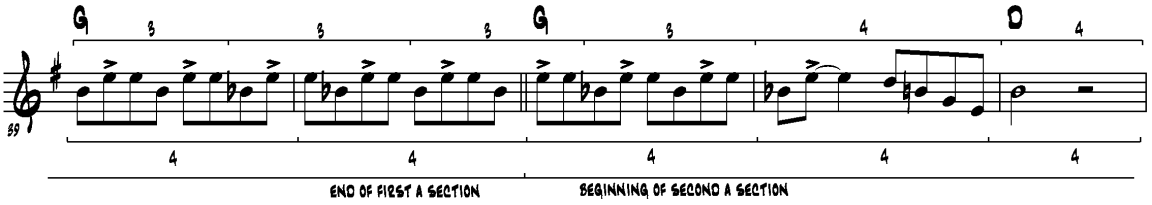
[44] Berliner, 153.

Example 42. Metric superimposition in Louis Armstrong's 1927 solo on *Struttin With Some Barbeque* [45]



Despite the precedent set by Armstrong, metric superimposition was an advanced rhythmic concept for improvisers in the 1930's. Once again exhibiting his ability to assimilate the innovations set forth by Armstrong, Allen incorporates this technique in his 1930 solo on *Louisiana Swing* (example 43), superimposing a 3/4 time signature over the 4/4 played by the rhythm section. This phrase effectively blurs the distinction between the first two A sections of the song.

Example 43. Metric Superimposition (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930, m. 39-43)

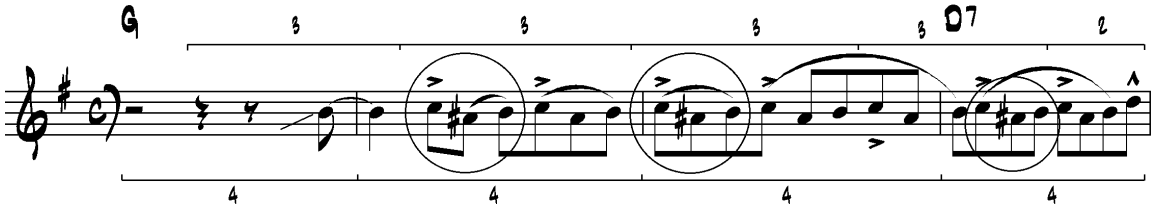


In the 1957 Coleman Hawkins recording of *When the Saints Go Marching In*, Allen applies modern bebop techniques to a tune typically associated with early jazz and Dixieland styles (example 44). This line could have just as easily been played by Dizzy Gillespie or Charlie Parker, complete with its upper and lower neighbor tones

[45] Armstrong, 19.

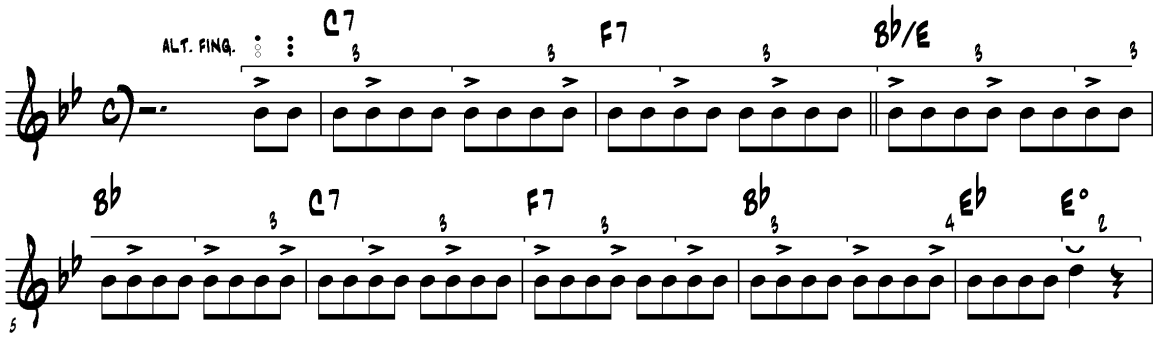
surrounding the third (B) (chromatic approach tones), as well as another three over four metric superimposition.

Example 44. Metric superimposition (*When the Saints Go Marching In*, 1957)



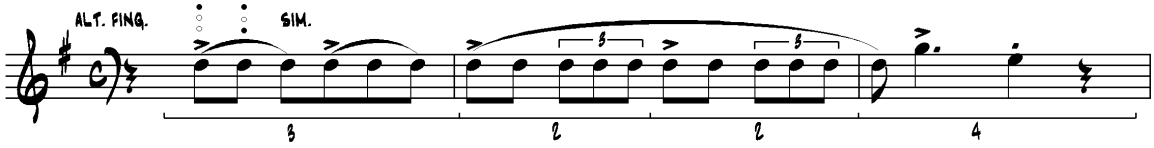
Allen's live recording of the song *Lover Come Back To Me*, made two years before his death, is also heavily informed by the bebop school of thought. In example 45, Allen plays a series of straight eighth-notes on Bb, strategically placing accents to set up another three over four metric superimposition. Due to the bright tempo, Allen plays the entire passage slurred, moving back and forth between the regular fingering and the alternate fingering. This method creates a tremolo-type effect and displays yet another of Allen's unique characteristics, which is described in further detail below.

Example 45. Metric superimposition with alternate fingerings (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



The above example is particularly reminiscent of Dizzy Gillespie. In example 46, from a 1961 performance of his composition *Salt Peanuts*, Gillespie employs similar techniques of metric superimposition and alternate fingerings.

Example 46. Metric superimposition with alternate fingerings in Dizzy Gillespie's 1961 solo on *Salt Peanuts*[46]

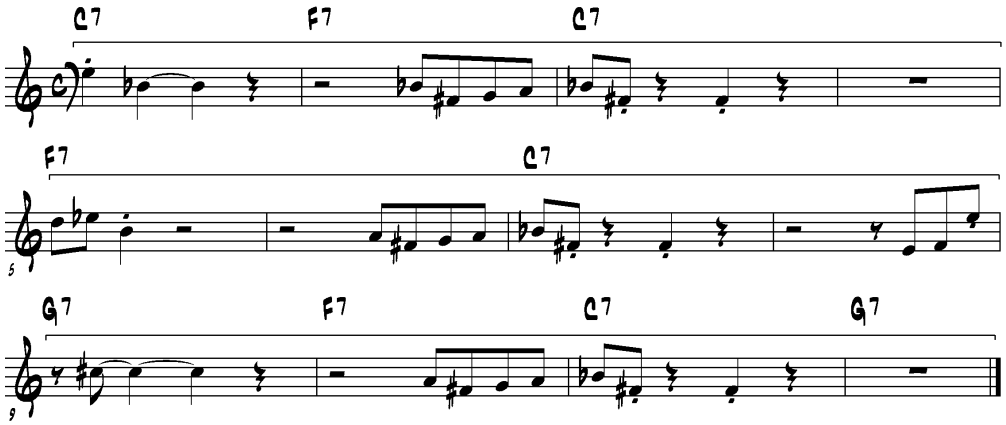


Asymmetrical Phrasing

In the 1920s and 1930s, it was common for improvisers to structure their solos in two- and four-bar phrases, conforming to the underlying symmetry of forms such as the blues and thirty-two bar song forms.

The formal structure of the blues typically consists of a twelve measure progression that is repeated continuously. These twelve measures are divided into three four-bar phrases. The Sonny Rollins composition *Blue Seven* (example 47) is a good example of a typical twelve-bar blues structure. The brackets in this example illustrate each of the four-bar phrases.

Example 47. Twelve-bar blues structure (*Blue Seven*, by Sonny Rollins)[47]

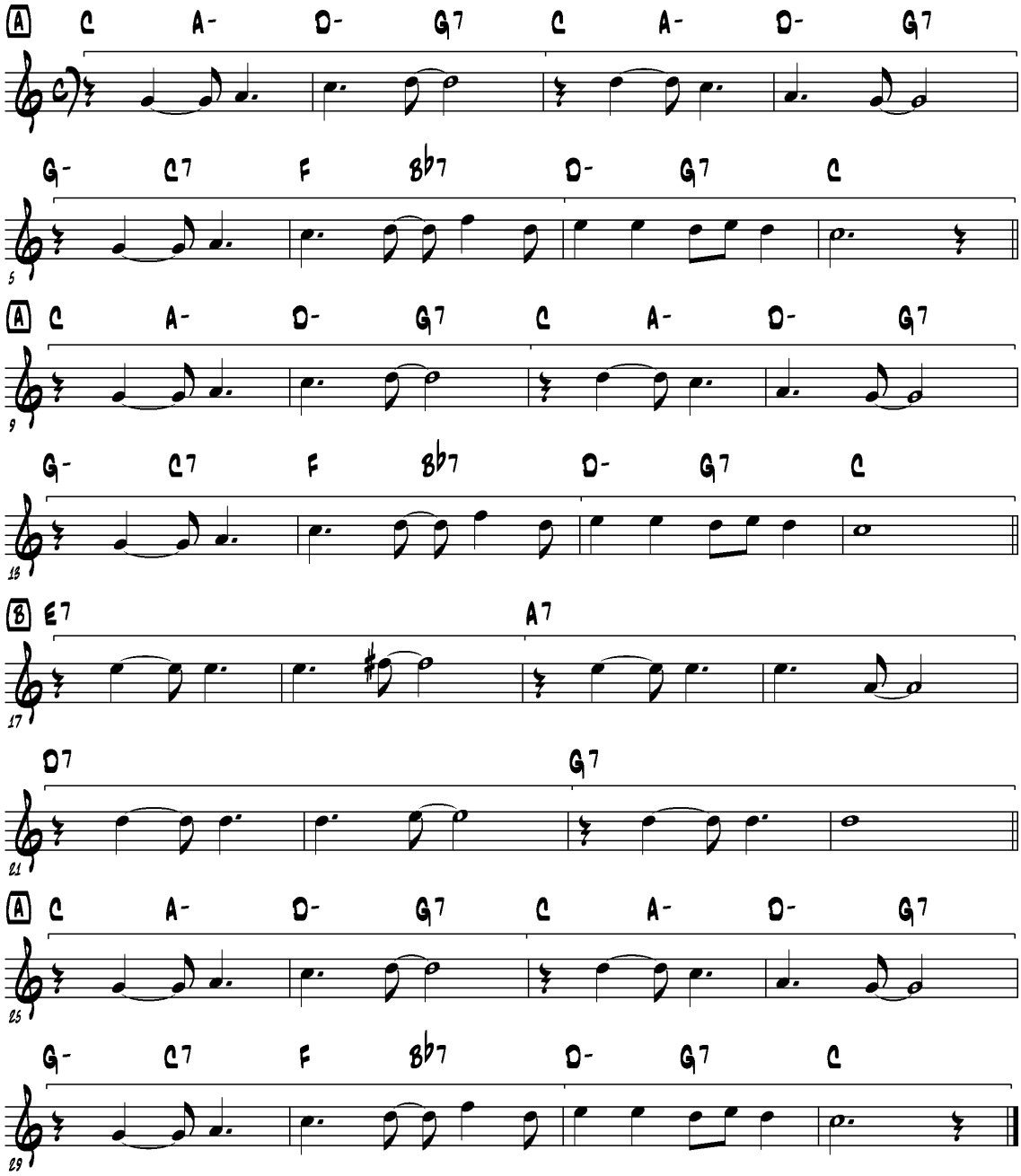


[46] Dizzy Gillespie, *An Electrifying Evening With the Dizzy Gillespie Quintet*, Verve 314557544-2, 1961; reissue CD, 1999.

[47] Jamey Aebersold, *A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation, Vol. 8: Sonny Rollins* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1976), 11.

Most popular show tunes of the day had a thirty-two measure formal structure which was divided into four sections, each consisting of eight measures. The most common harmonic/thematic scheme was AABA, often referred to as *song form*. In this model, the A sections generally repeat the same harmonic and melodic material, while the B section, or *bridge*, provides contrast. Variations on this basic thirty-two bar scheme include AABA', ABAB, ABAC, AABC, etc. Along with the twelve-bar blues, George and Ira Gershwin's composition *I Got Rhythm* is one of the most common harmonic progressions in jazz, and has been used as a model for countless tunes. Following an AABA thematic scheme, this composition is an example of a typical thirty-two bar song form. Example 48 illustrates the symmetrical nature of *I Got Rhythm*'s formal scheme. Each eight-bar section is clearly indicated (AABA), while the brackets illustrate the division of the composition into two-bar phrases.

Example 48. Thirty-two bar song form (*I Got Rhythm*, by George and Ira Gershwin)[48]



As jazz progressed through the swing era towards bebop, musicians increasingly began to structure their improvisations in a way that opposed this underlying symmetry, playing phrases that did not fit neatly within the two-, four-, and eight-bar sections of the

[48] Jamey Aebersold, *A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation, Vol. 51: Night and Day* (New Albany, IN: Jamey Aebersold, 1991), 22.

composition. *Asymmetrical phrasing*, as it is referred to by many jazz musicians, is described by Paul Berliner in his book *Thinking In Jazz*:

> Because the foundational harmonic blocks of many pieces are square, made up of regular repeating two-, four-, and eight-bar phrases, improvisers evaluate solos as being square, in a pejorative sense, when their patterns consistently coincide with the composition's harmonic blocks. By altering the design of phrases within a progression, varying their spans, and, at times, superimposing secondary meters on those of the piece, mature artists can obscure the formal elements that guide their inventions in much the same way as the architect, in designing an impressive structure, obscures its underpinnings.[49]

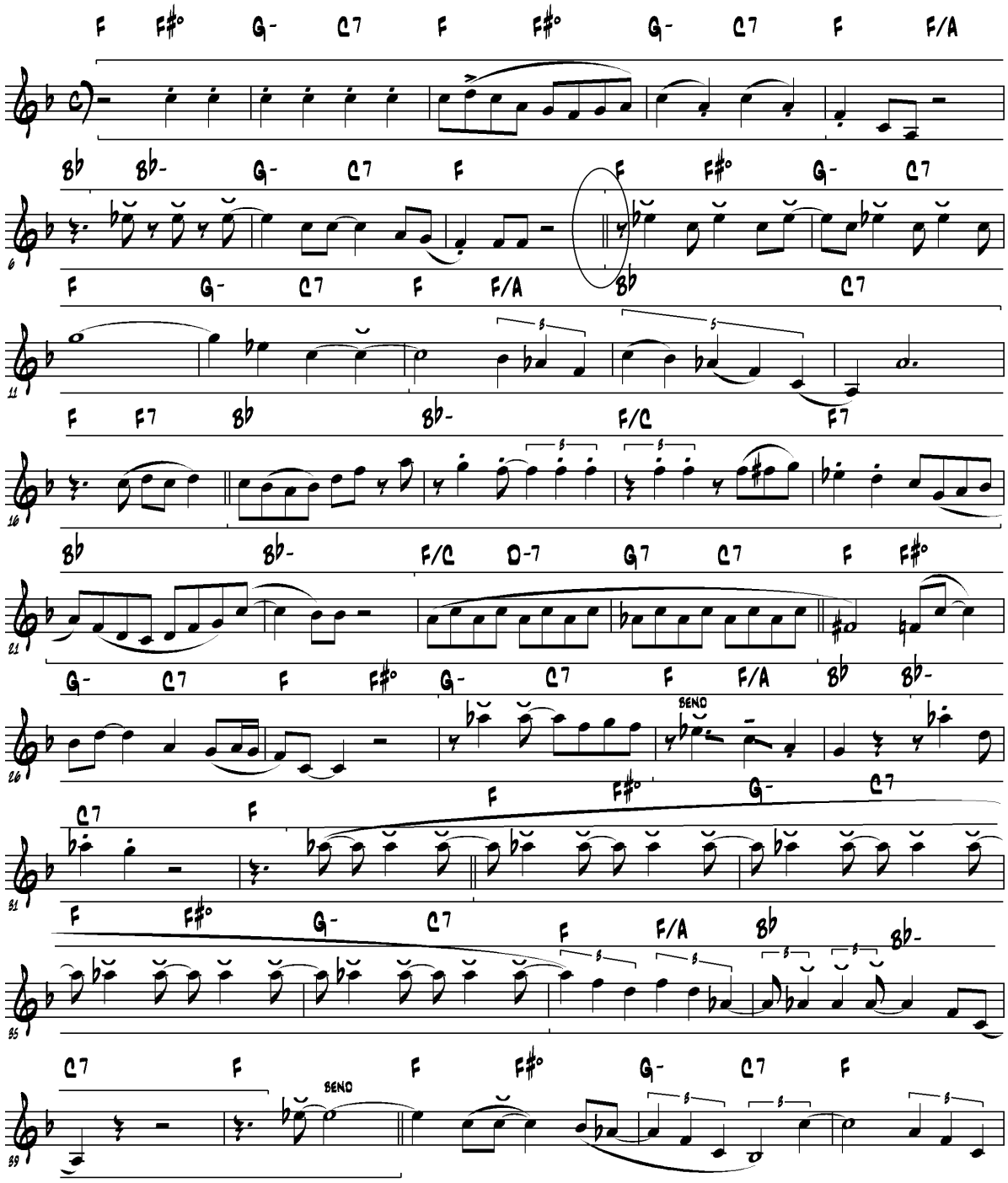
This type of asymmetrical phrasing was evident in Allen's playing throughout his entire career, as indicated by Schuller when describing Allen's "ability early on to break out of the confinement of two- and four-bar phrasing, in general to break the tyranny of the bar line, a matter that was otherwise not fully resolved by jazz players until well into the bop era."[50]

Example 49, from Allen's 1933 solo on *Nagasaki*, illustrates the differences between his phrase structure and the four-bar phrase structure of the tune. In this example, the brackets above each stave indicate where Allen's phrases begin and end, while the lower brackets indicate the tune's phrase structure. In this example, Allen's phrases align with the phrase structure of the tune in only one instance: measure nine (circled).

[49] Berliner, 245-46.

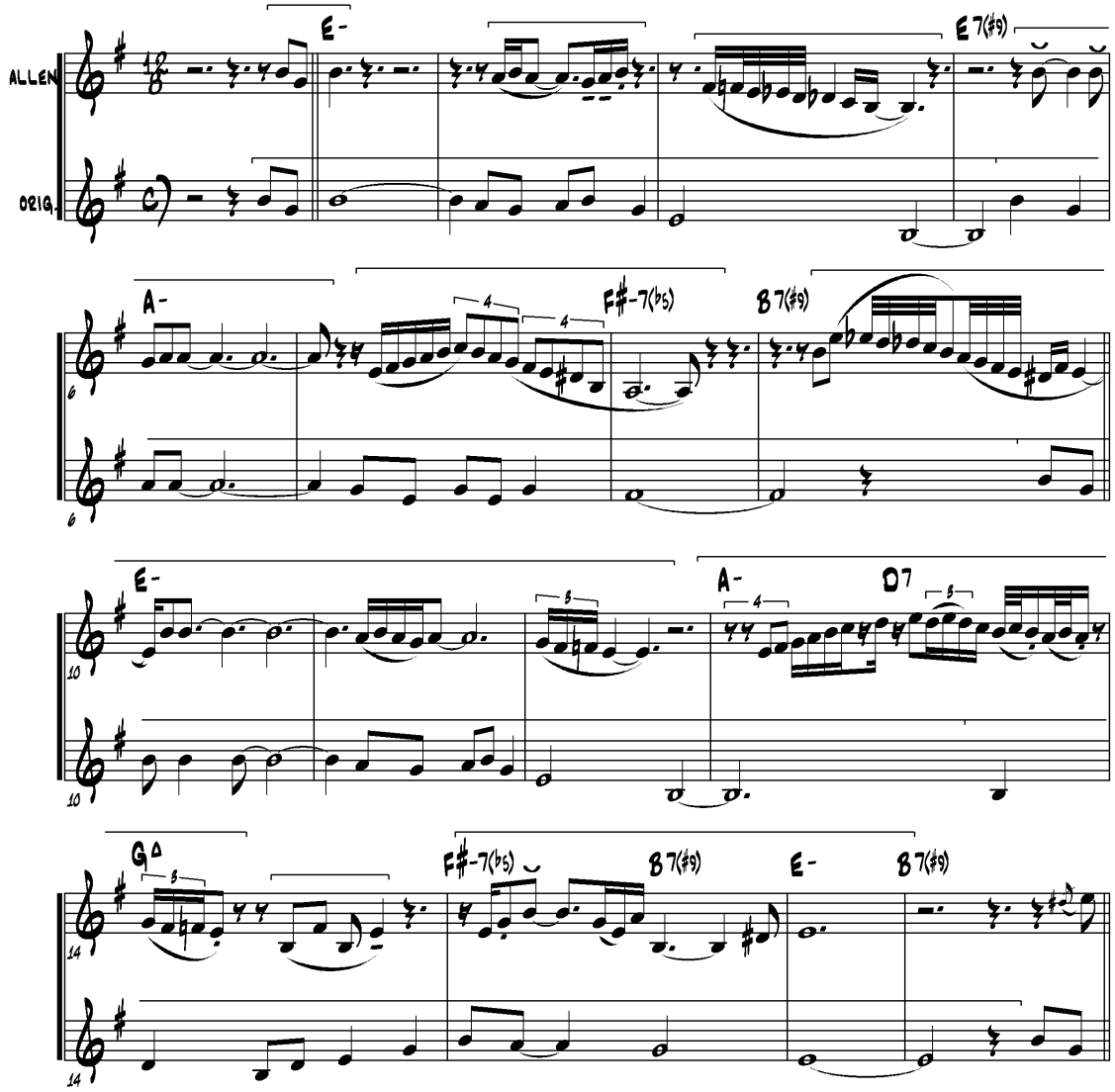
[50] Schuller, 624.

Example 49. Asymmetrical phrasing (*Nagasaki*, 1933)



Allen's use of asymmetrical phrasing became more prominent later in his career, as is evidenced by his solo on the 1958 Coleman Hawkins recording of *Summertime,* which is highly spontaneous and unpredictable in its phrasing. Example 50 compares a typical rendering of the original melody to *Summertime* with Allen's version. The sixteen measures of the original melody are divided into four equal phrases. In Allen's version, phrases one and two are fragmented into segments, each growing progressively in length. Allen begins phrase three early, leaving the end of the phrase unfinished. Phrase four also begins early and, like phrases one and two, is fragmented. The individual phrases are played in a rhythmically spontaneous manner, beginning and ending unpredictably. Allen alternates between longer and shorter note lengths, adding to the tension and release by speeding up and slowing down the rhythm. In this example, the standard four-bar phrases of the original melody to *Summertime* are indicated by brackets (lower stave). The brackets over Allen's version (upper stave) illustrate the segmented nature of his phrasing, and indicate the points in which his phrases cross over the phrase markers of the original melody.

Example 50. Asymmetrical phrasing (*Summertime*, 1958)



CHAPTER THREE

Extended Techniques

Another important element of Red Allen's style was his spontaneous and unpredictable ability to alter both attack and tone color. Joe "King" Oliver's influence likely contributed to Allen's use of these techniques in his playing. Oliver was well-known for his ability to create a multitude of different tonal colors and effects on his instrument, both with and without mutes.

These characteristics also appear in Duke Ellington's "jungle style" as early as the late 1920s. Most historians concur that Ellington's development of this style was influenced by Oliver's impact on Ellington brassmen Bubber Miley (trumpet) and later, Cootie Williams (trumpet) and "Tricky" Sam Nanton (trombone). As mentioned earlier, Oliver was one of Allen's childhood heroes, and later, was his employer. Joe "King" Oliver's playing was unquestionably a huge source of inspiration for Red Allen.

In *Thinking In Jazz*, Paul Berliner describes the different types of articulatory and timbral embellishments used by jazz improvisers:

> With masterful control, players maintain uniform tonal quality and even articulation at times. At other times, they create interest along a melody's contour by coloring it with myriad tonal effects. They may forcefully exaggerate or repress the use of vibrato and dramatically change articulation patterns. At one moment, they may emphasize slurring, at another, tonguing. Moreover, they employ different tonguing syllables to create varied mixtures of light and heavy accents, sometimes swallowing or "ghosting" pitches so that they are, by gradations, more felt than heard. Alternatively, to increase the complexity of tone, improvisers can sing or growl through instruments, tinting and thickening their sounds. Other techniques include scooping into a pitch, bending within a pitch or between pitches, and falling off, or concluding a pitch with a short, downward glissando. Yet others are the shake, a rapid lip trill between pitches a whole step or larger interval apart; the flare or rip-up, a rough, rapid gliss that lightly touches all the harmonics between the initial pitch and target pitch; and the doit, an extended rip whose sound trails off toward an indefinite pitch.[51]

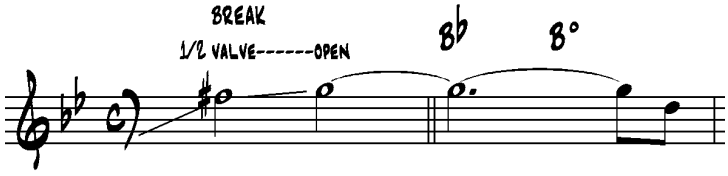
[51] Berliner, 67-8.

Don Ellis places particular emphasis on this characteristic in Allen's playing when he asks, "Who else has the amazing variety of tonal colors, bends, smears, half-valve effects, rips, glissandos, flutter tonguing?"[52] Ellis also states, "...no one has a wider scope of effects to draw upon."[53] These are bold statements coming from a musician who experimented with odd meters, quarter-tones, and electronics in his music.

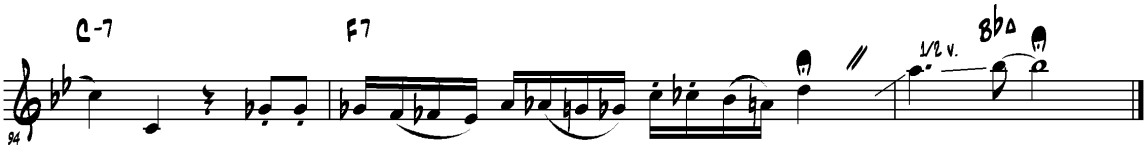
Half-Valved and Ghosted Notes

A common practice among jazz trumpet players is to alter a note's tone by pressing the valves only part of the way down—also called the "half-valve" position—which gives the note a muted effect. Red Allen used this device to great effect, particularly as a way to begin or end a solo, preceding either the tune's first or last note with a half-valved note on the same pitch or from a half step below. The sudden dynamic contrast in sound, created by the shift from the half-valve and full-valve positions, generates a climactic start or finish to a solo (Examples 51a-c).

Example 51a. Half-valved note starting a solo (*Happy as the Day is Long*, 1934)



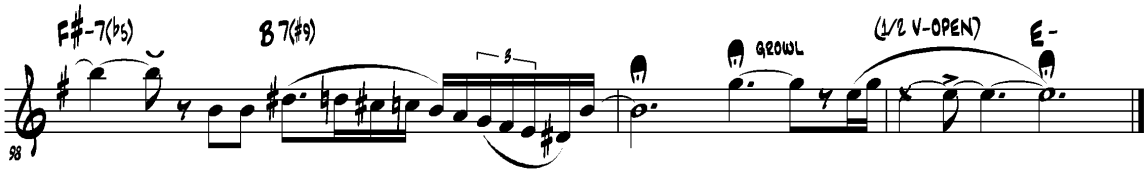
Example 51b. Half-valved note ending a tune (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



[52] Don Ellis, "Henry 'Red' Allen Is the Most Avant-Garde Trumpet Player In New York City," *Down Beat*, Nov. 4, 1965, 13.

[53] Ibid., 13.

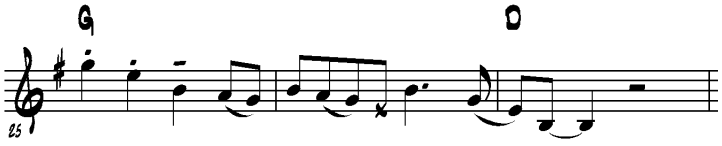
Example 51c. Half-valved note ending a tune (*Summertime*, 1958)



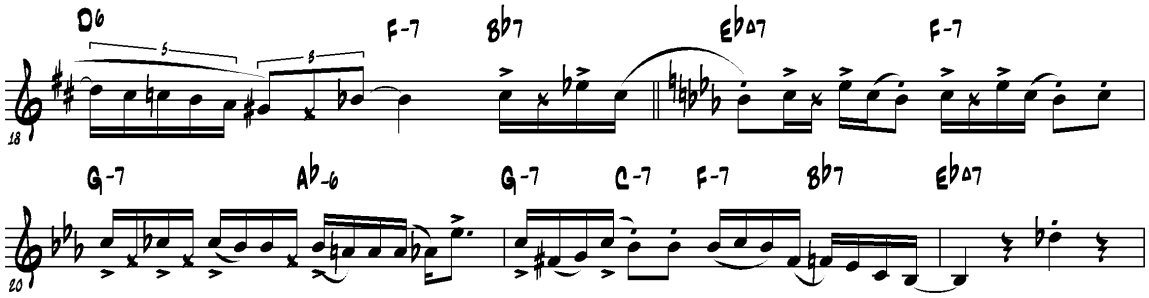
Another device jazz trumpeters often use to de-emphasize or mute the sound of a note is "ghosting" notes. Ghosted notes, which usually occur within the context of a rhythmic figure, are purposefully de-emphasized or "swallowed," often to the point of silence, while the notes on either side of them are accented. The ghosted notes function as rhythmic placeholders within the improvised line, much in the same way as rests do, while adding greater emphasis to the notes around them.

The practice of ghosting notes became more prominent with the rise of bebop. As improvised lines became faster and more complex, ghosting was a way players could place greater emphasis on certain notes. This added to the swing feeling by creating unpredictable patterns of accented and unaccented notes, and simultaneously made the line easier to play. Evidence of ghosted notes appears in Red Allen's recorded output as early as 1930, although he was likely using them prior to that (Examples 52a-c, ghosted notes indicated by an "x" in place of the note head).

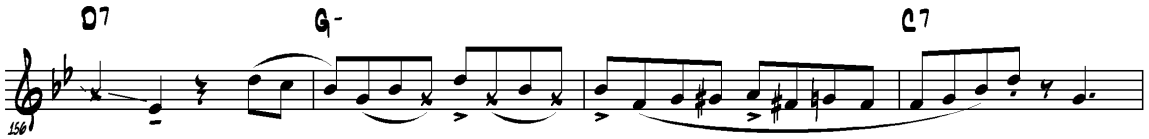
Example 52a. Ghosted note (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930)



Example 52b. Ghosted notes (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



Example 52c. Ghosted notes (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



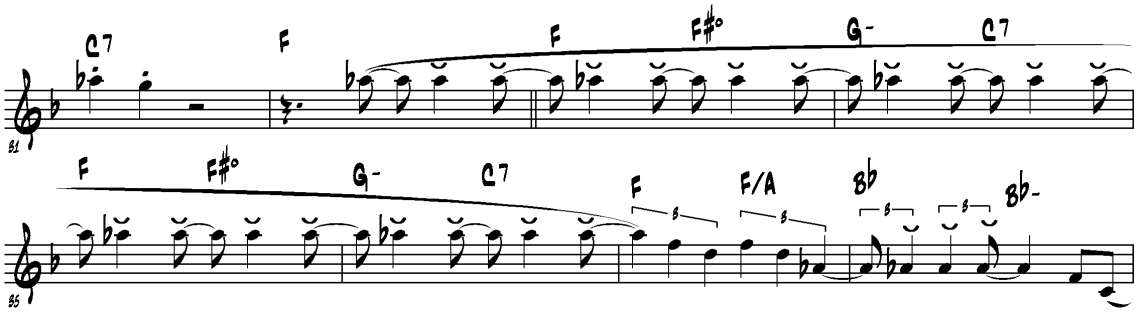
Vocal Inflections

Throughout the history of jazz, trumpet players (and players of wind instruments in general) have often used a wide variety of techniques and nuances to add a more human or vocal quality to their improvisations. Many great improvisers have refined these vocal inflections to a high level of artistry, each with their own unique approach. This approach often becomes one of the most defining characteristics of a player's style, making them instantly recognizable to the educated listener.

As indicated earlier by Don Ellis, Red Allen is one such artist. It is probable that Allen's manner of approaching or attacking notes by "scooping" into them was a major influence on trumpeter Clark Terry. Terry's style is widely recognized as one of the most easily identifiable in all of jazz and is so unique that it is often difficult to identify specific influences on his playing. Comparing Clark Terry's style with Red Allen's style (particularly from the late 1950s) reveals moments where the players sound almost identical.

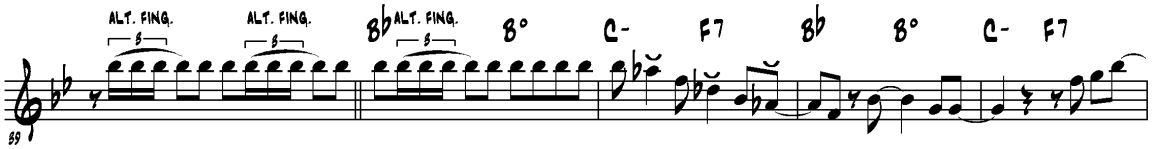
Allen used vocal inflections in a variety of different manners, sometimes changing the shape of notes by scooping or bending the pitch of them slightly up or down. In his 1933 solo on *Nagasaki*, Allen plays four measures of consecutive syncopated quarter notes on a high Ab, scooping the beginning of each one, followed by an arpeggio figure descending an octave to more scooped quarter notes, before ending the phrase with another descending arpeggio figure (Example 53).

Example 53. Scooped notes (*Nagasaki*, 1933)



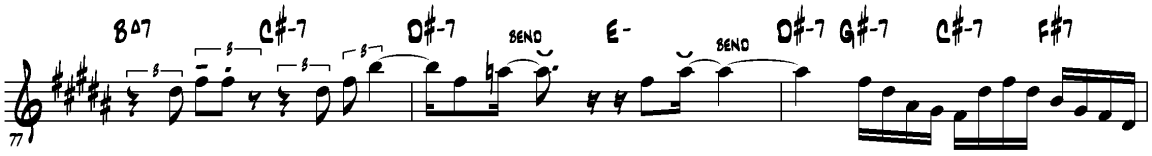
In his 1934 solo on *Big John's Special*, Allen descends down a blues figure, bending the blue notes Ab and Db (Example 54).

Example 54. Bent blue notes (*Big John's Special,* 1934)



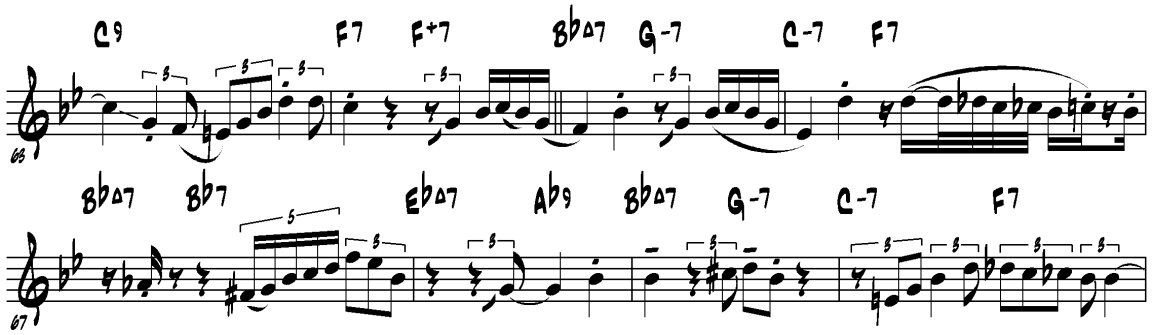
Allen's 1936 live recording of *Body and Soul* features an even more dramatic effect as he bends down the two high As, creating a sound similar to a "crying" or "moaning" effect (Example 55).

Example 55. Bent notes (*Body and Soul,* 1936)



In his solo on the 1958 Coleman Hawkins recording of *Mean to Me,* Allen plays several phrases that sound almost identical in style to that of Clark Terry, highlighting the similarities between the two artists mentioned earlier. The way Allen playfully bends the C down to a G in measure 63 and scoops the Gs in measures 64, 65, and 68 are particularly relevant (Example 56).

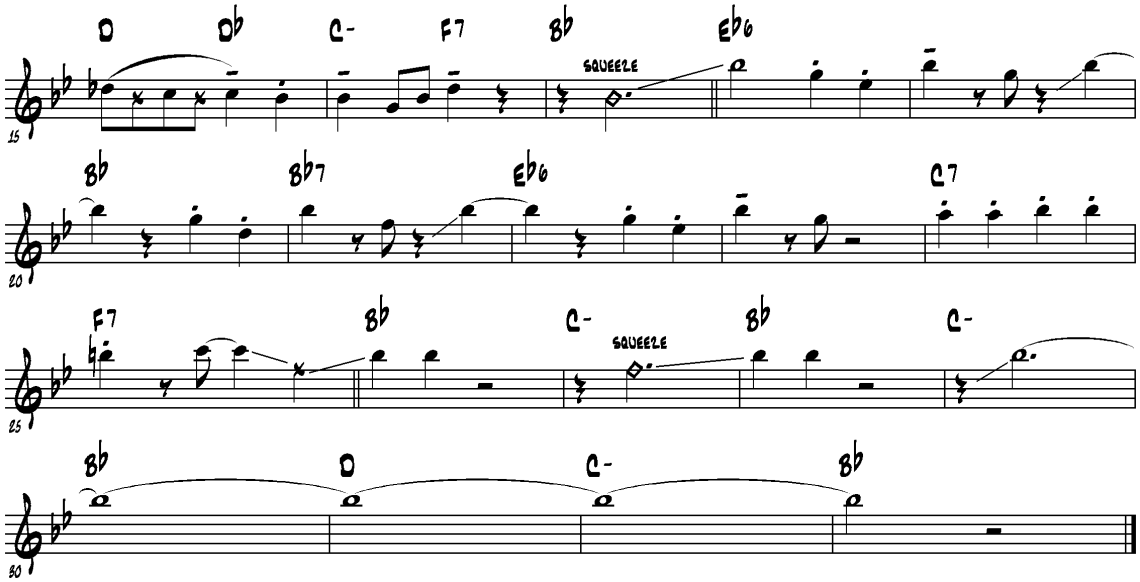
Example 56. Scooped and bent notes (*Mean to Me*, 1958)



Allen also had a wide vocabulary of different types of glissandos, using them to create dramatic gestures such as “smears,” “rips,” and “squeezes.” Allen’s 1934 solo on *Happy as the Day Is Long* has many half-valve glissandos, smears, and squeezes (Example 57). The squeezes in this passage are indicated by a note with a diamond-shaped note-head, indicating a half-valve note, followed by a half-valve glissando up to a high Bb. Allen approaches some of the high Bbs in this passage using half-valve glissandos without the squeezed note before them, creating a similar but slightly different effect. In measures 25-6, Allen smears from a high C down to a half-valve F, before

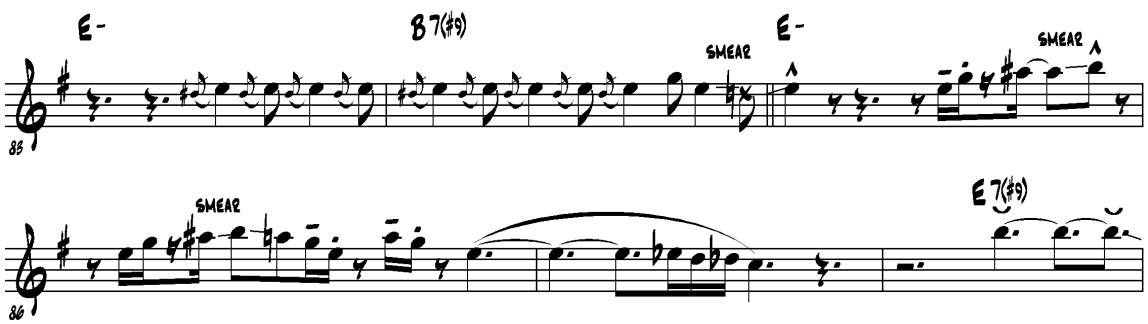
smearing back up to a high Bb. This passage in particular exhibits Allen's debt to Louis Armstrong.

Example 57. Half-valve glissandos, smears, and squeezes (*Happy as the Day Is Long*, 1934)



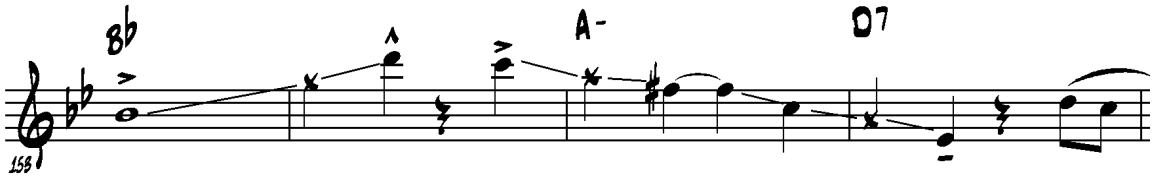
Allen's solo on the 1958 Coleman Hawkins recording of *Summertime* contains a slightly different example of a smear (Example 58). In measure 85, he smears from a high A# up a half step to a high B. In the next measure he repeats this smear, then smears back down a whole step to an A. In both instances, the distinction between the smeared notes is blurred, creating the effect of a single note pulled in different directions.

Example 58. Smeared notes (*Summertime*, 1958)



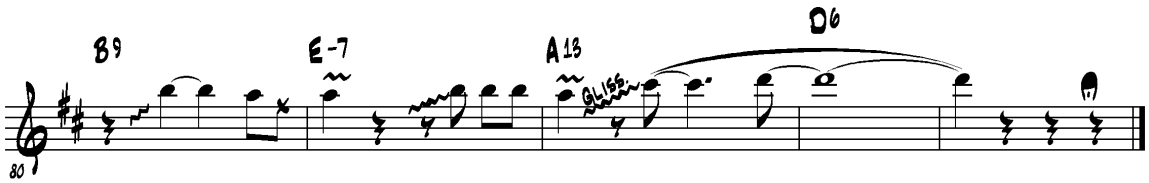
A particularly extreme example of the smear technique appears in Allen's 1965 recording of the tune *Lover Come Back To Me.* Example 59 features him sliding all over the instrument, covering a two-octave range.

Example 59. Smears (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



At the end of the 1958 Coleman Hawkins recording of the tune *All of Me*, Allen uses another type of glissando, often called a "rip" (Example 60). When performing this type of glissando, the player rips up to a note by quickly passing through the various partials on a specific fingering, creating a jagged-sounding glissando, analogous to the effect of dragging one's fingers across the keyboard of a piano.

Example 60. Rips (*All of Me*, 1958)



Flutter-Tongues, Growls and Fuzz Tones

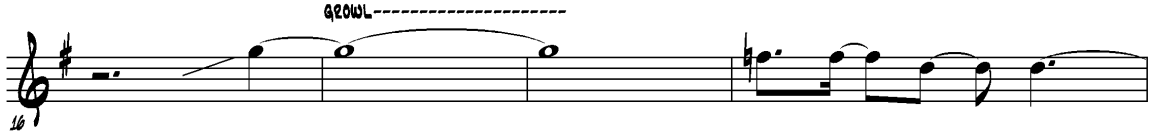
As mentioned earlier, jazz trumpet players have a long history of using effects that modify tone. In addition to the previously mentioned examples from Joe "King" Oliver and the members of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, cornet player Nick LaRocca and other members of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band experiment with animal sounds on their instruments in what most consider the first jazz recording in history: the 1917 recording

of the tune *Livery Stable Blues*. Clark Terry continued this tradition, becoming famous for his ability to alter his tone using the plunger mute. In modern times, trumpeter Wynton Marsalis in particular continues to explore and expand upon these techniques.

Despite the early precedent for these techniques, Red Allen's use of tone modification techniques did not become widespread in his recorded work until the 1950s. Instead of using mutes to alter tone, Allen more often tended to use techniques such as flutter-tonguing, growling, and what I refer to as "fuzz tones."

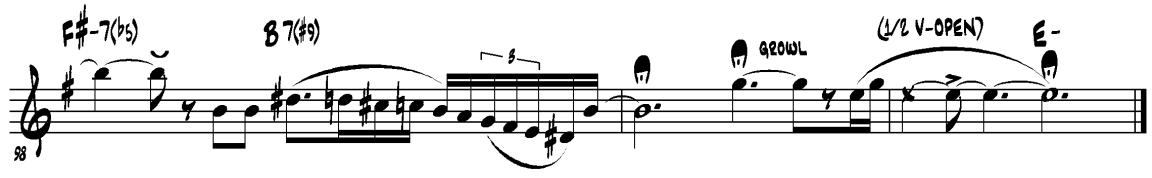
To execute the growl technique one generates a guttural sound in the throat while playing, producing a rough, "gritty" tone quality. Near the beginning of the 1957 recording of *When the Saints Go Marching In,* Red Allen produces this effect, growling on a sustained high G for two measures (Example 61).

Example 61. Growl (*When the Saints Go Marching In*, 1957)



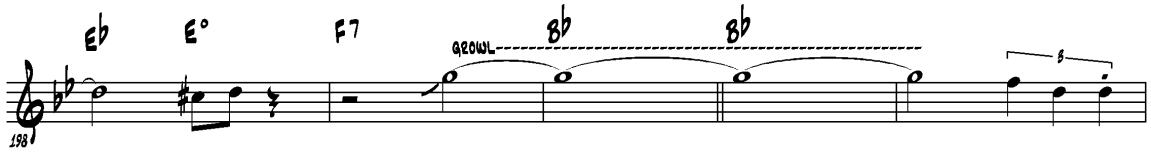
In the 1958 recording of *Summertime,* Allen executes this same effect at the end of the tune, also on a sustained high G (Example 62).

Example 62. Growl (*Summertime*, 1958)



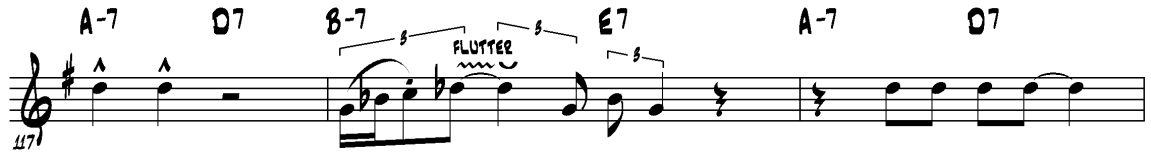
The effect appears yet again in Allen's 1965 recording of *Lover Come Back To Me*, where he growls once again on a high G, crossing over four bar lines in the process (Example 63).

Example 63. Growl (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



Similar to the growl, one achieves the flutter-tongue by rapidly rolling the tongue against the upper palate while playing, which produces a vibrating tone quality. In measure 118 of Allen's 1957 recording of *I Cover the Waterfront,* he adds flutter-tongue to the already colorful blue note Db, giving it an extra feeling of angst (Example 64). In contrast, the utter simplicity of the measures before and after further enhance this effect.

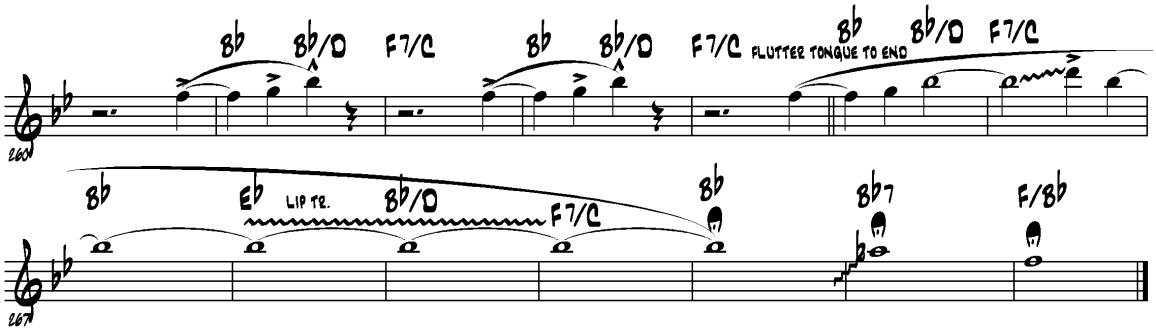
Example 64. Flutter-tongue (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



An even more stunning example of this effect comes at the exciting conclusion to Allen's 1965 recording of *Lover Come Back To Me*. In measure 260, he sets up a simple three-note figure ending on high Bb, repeating it twice. In measure 264, he repeats the figure again, this time adding flutter-tongue. Allen follows the high Bb with a rip up to high D, then back down to Bb, which he then sustains for five more measures, adding a lip trill while still continuing to flutter-tongue (Example 65). Sustaining a flutter-tongue in the upper register of the trumpet for seven measures is no small feat in itself; the

addition of the lip trill makes this passage even more impressive, especially when considering that Allen was nearly sixty years old at the time.

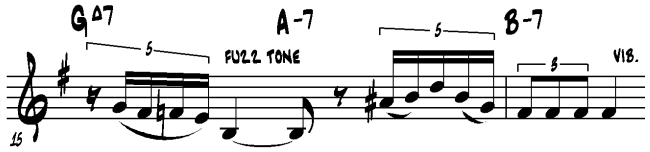
Example 65. Flutter-tongue and lip trill (*Lover Come Back To Me*, 1965)



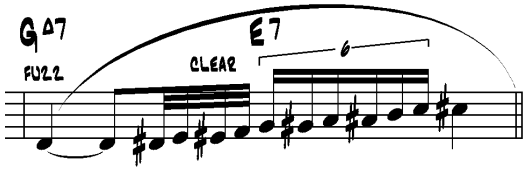
Another tone-modification approach jazz trumpeters occasionally use is to purposefully allow the tone to come out of focus, producing a "breathy" or "airy" tone and giving it a more intimate quality. This type of tone production was particularly prominent in trumpeter Chet Baker's playing. In Red Allen's 1957 recording of *I Cover the Waterfront*, he takes this approach to the extreme, producing what I call "fuzz tones." Allen's fuzz tones are very distinctive, and often sound more like a tenor saxophone or trombone than a trumpet. My experiences and research have revealed these fuzz tones to be unique to Allen; with the exception of Wynton Marsalis, I have never heard another trumpet player even come close to producing the same effect.

In measures 15, 20, 24, and 30-31 of *I Cover the Waterfront*, Allen offers small glimpses of this effect, hinting at what is to come (Example 66a-d). A particular item of note is how the fuzz tones affect only the notes below the staff.

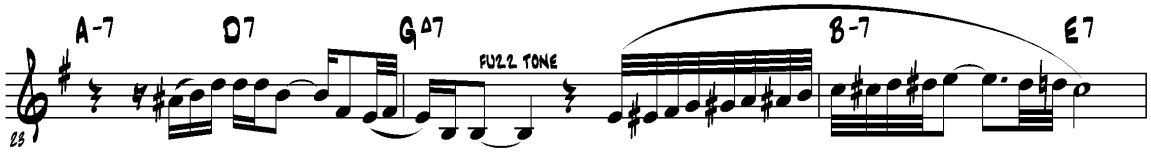
Example 66a. Fuzz tone (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



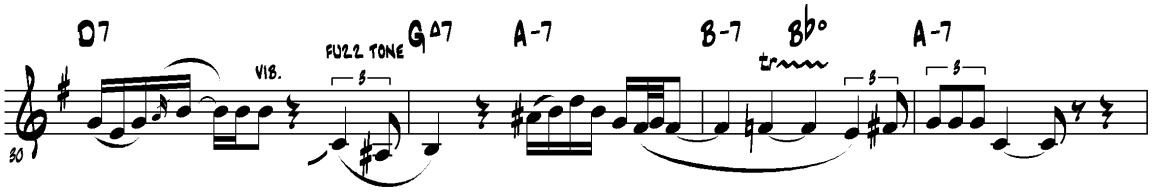
Example 66b. Fuzz tone (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Example 66c. Fuzz tone (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)

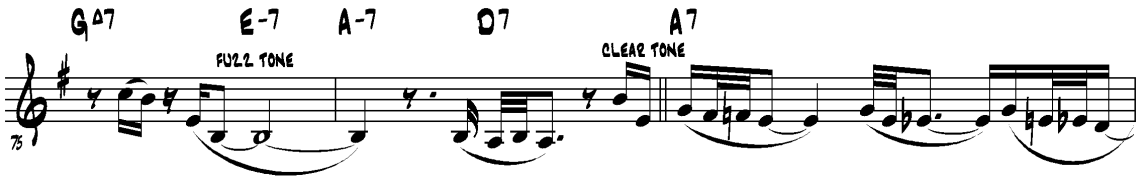


Example 66d. Fuzz tone (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



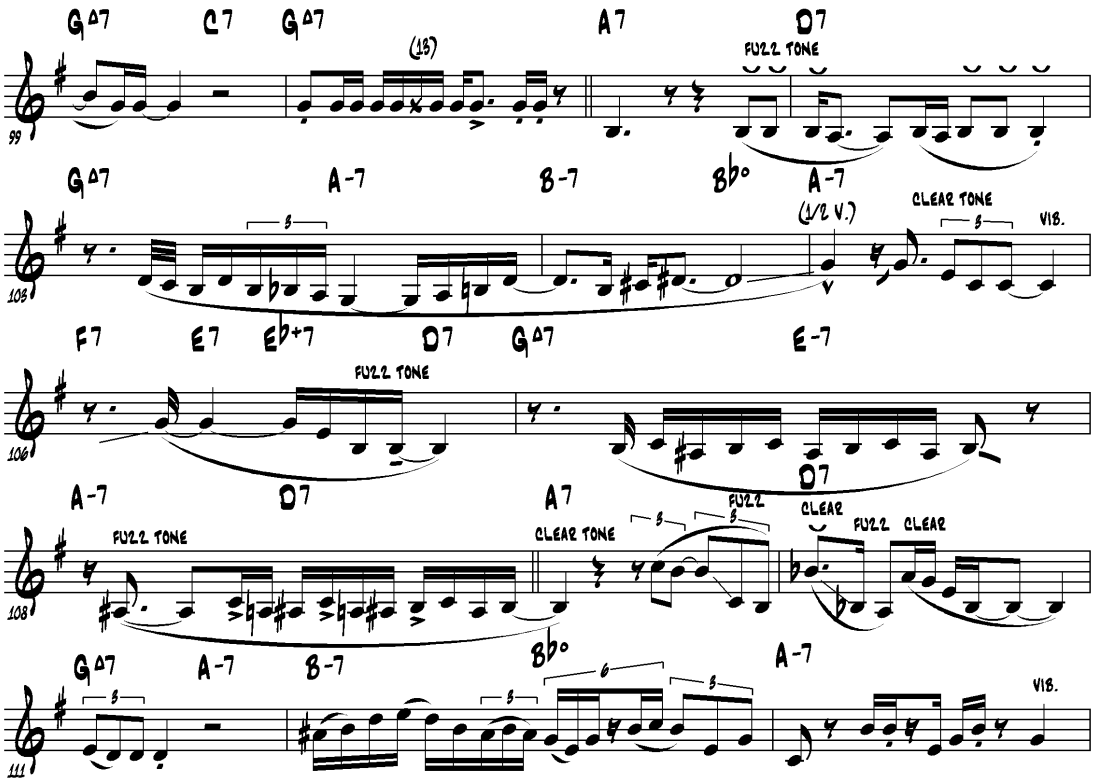
The first extended example of Allen using fuzz tones happens in measures 75 and 76 of *I Cover the Waterfront*, in which he sustains the effect for six beats (Example 67). Again, Allen relegates the fuzz tones to notes that fall below the staff, reverting to his regular, or "clear" tone the moment the line jumps back up into the staff.

Example 67. Fuzz tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



By using fuzz tones on the notes below the staff and clear tones on the notes in the staff, Allen essentially creates two distinct voices engaged in dialog. The extraordinary result sounds almost as if two different musicians are exchanging musical ideas. The most stunning example of this effect happens in measures 100-111 (Example 68). Clark Terry is famous for producing a similar effect using a trumpet and a flugelhorn, one in each hand; Red Allen does it on one horn. What makes this passage even more remarkable is that Allen also incorporates several of the other effects and techniques this chapter discusses. In addition to the fuzz tone/clear tone dialog, the passage includes scoops, falls, bends, smears, half-valve glissandos, ghosted notes, highly syncopated accent patterns, and chromatic approach tones, all within a twelve-measure span.

Example 68. Fuzz tone/clear tone dialog in conjunction with scoops, falls, bends, smears, half-valve glissandos, ghosted notes, highly syncopated accent patterns, and chromatic approach tones (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



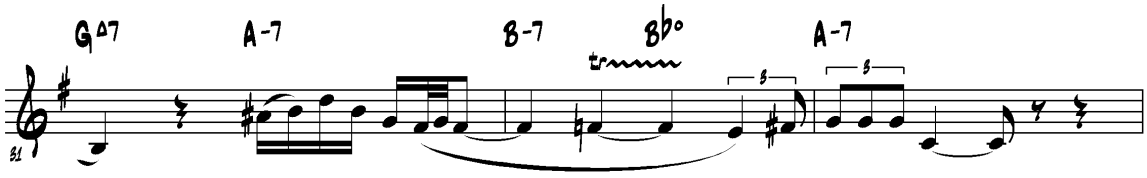
Trills, Shakes, and Alternate Fingerings

Throughout the history of music, musicians of all genres have used trills to create the effect of rapid oscillation between one or more notes. Trumpet players' use of trills dates as far back as the Baroque era. In the twentieth century, jazz trumpeters expanded the variety of ways they could execute trills. Examples of the various types of trills used in jazz include fingered trills, lip trills, shakes, and alternate finger trills (or tremolos). Red Allen used them all.

Of the four trill varieties jazz trumpeters use, the standard fingered trill is the one Allen employed the least. Despite his seeming preference for the other three trill

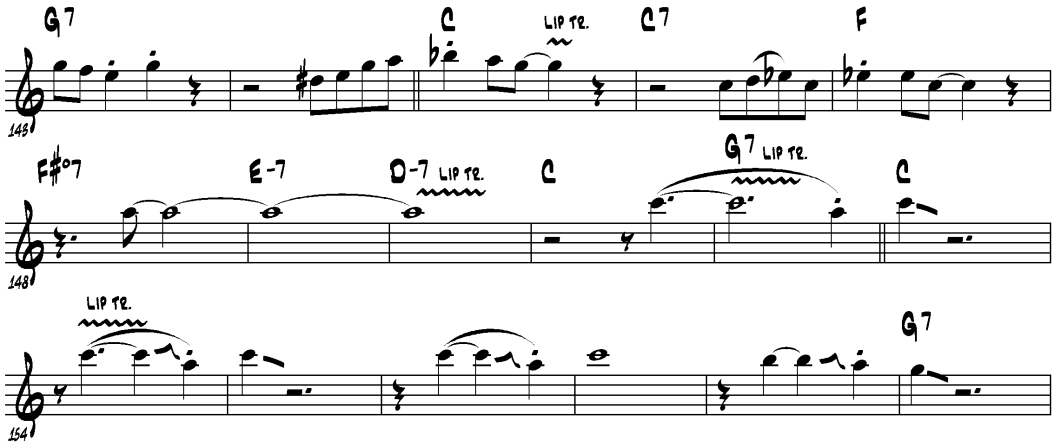
varieties, Allen did occasionally use fingered trills, as he demonstrates in example 69, from his 1957 recording of *I Cover the Waterfront*.

Example 69. Fingered trill (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



The lip trill is the oldest type of trumpet trill, dating from a time before the invention of the modern valve. Contrary to its name, executing a lip trill does not actually involve lip movement. Instead, it is performed by anchoring the tip of the tongue behind the lower front teeth and rapidly moving it up and down. The resulting quick shifts in air speed produce two distinct alternating notes. Louis Armstrong was famous for his lip trills, inspiring countless jazz trumpet players who followed in his path. Red Allen's later recordings featured this technique more often than earlier ones. The lip trill is probably the most difficult of the four different trill varieties to execute on the trumpet. Allen may not have fully developed this technique until later in his career, which might explain its absence in his early work. Nonetheless, Allen did eventually develop this technique and used it to great effect, as the passages near the end of the 1957 Coleman Hawkins recording of the classic early-jazz tune *When the Saints Go Marching In* demonstrate (Example 70).

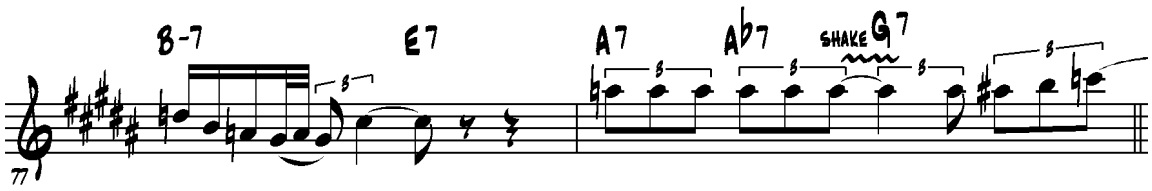
Example 70. Lip trills (*When the Saints Go Marching In*, 1957)



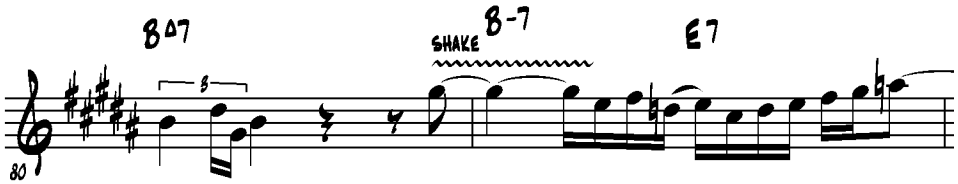
Another type of trill jazz trumpet players often use is the "shake." Like the lip trill, Louis Armstrong first made shakes in jazz popular in the 1920s. During the 1930s, following Armstrong's lead, Swing Era players made shakes standard practice, with entire big-band trumpet sections executing them in unison. The practice of shaking a note is unique to brass instruments; one achieves it by quickly (but gently) rocking the horn back and forth on the embouchure. As the instrument pulls slightly away from the embouchure, mouthpiece pressure on the lips decreases, which in turn causes the note to fall. When the instrument returns to its original position, the note jumps back up. Rapidly executing these two actions in sequence produces a raw type of trill effect.

As indicated above, the shake was a necessary tool in the Swing Era trumpet player's repertoire. Both Red Allen's 1935 and 1936 versions of *Body and Soul* include examples of shakes (Examples 71a-b).

Example 71a. Shake (*Body and Soul*, 1935)



Example 71b. Shake (*Body and Soul*, 1936)



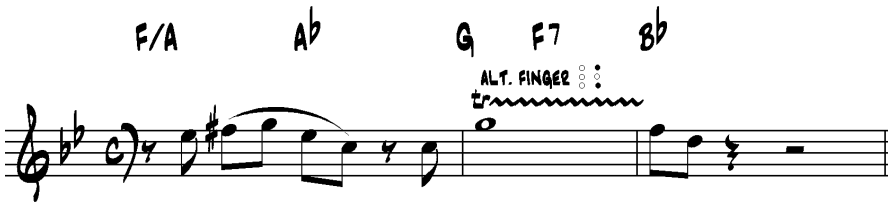
The type of trill Red Allen used most often was probably the alternate-finger trill. To execute alternate-finger trills, one rapidly alternates back and forth between a note's regular fingering and alternate fingering, creating a tremolo-like effect. While the pitch in this type of trill does not change, it is shaded microtonally. This technique is described by Berliner:

> From such studied observation, horn players learn to alternate fingerings and valve or key combinations that, however unconventional by the norms of classical music performance practice, enable improvisers to execute intricate jazz figures that are otherwise awkward or impossible to perform. They may have further use as well, making it possible for students to assimilate idiomatic improvised passages by performers of other instruments that are not easily translated onto their own. Moreover, alternate fingerings can serve as rhythmic articulation devices for repeated pitches or tremelos, and produce diverse timbral and microtonal effects, some with speechlike inflections.[54]

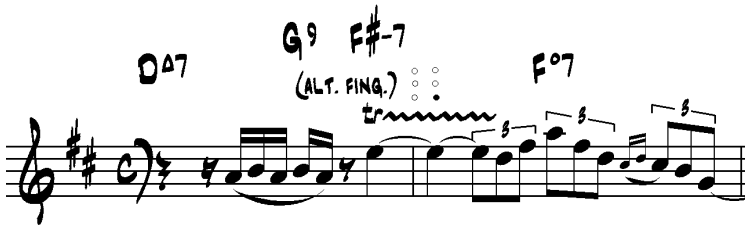
As mentioned above, Allen was particularly fond of this type of trill and used it throughout his career (Examples 72a-c).

[54] Berliner, 107.

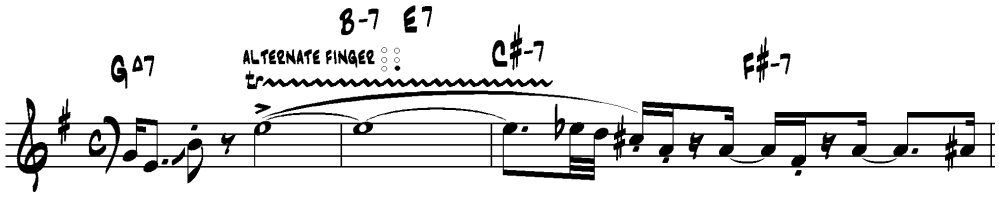
Example 72a. Alternate finger trill (*Panama*, 1930)



Example 72b. Alternate finger trill (*Body and Soul*, 1935)

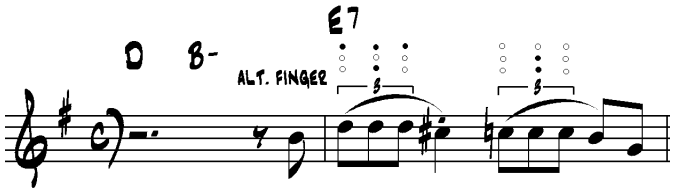


Example 72c. Alternate finger trill (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)

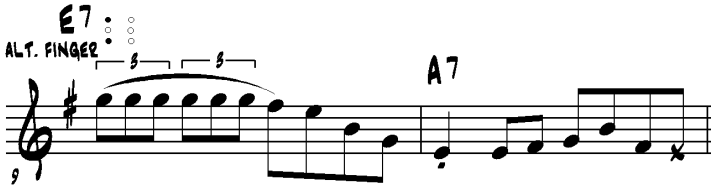


Jazz trumpet players have also used alternate fingerings as parts of repeated-note figures. Allen's use of this technique was widespread throughout his entire career and dates back to some of his earliest recordings, as evidenced in his 1930 solo on *Louisiana Swing* (Examples 73a-b).

Example 73a. Alternate fingerings in repeated-note figures (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930)

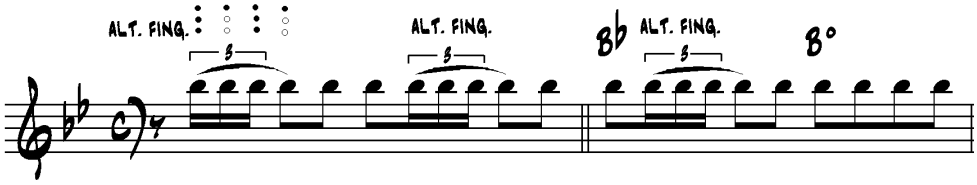


Example 73b. Alternate fingerings in repeated-note figure (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930)



In the explosive entrance to his second solo on the 1934 recording of *Big John's Special* by the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, Allen uses alternate fingerings on rapidly reiterated high Bbs in the manner of grace notes, generating much excitement in the process (Example 74).

Example 74. Alternate fingerings (*Big John's Special,* 1934)



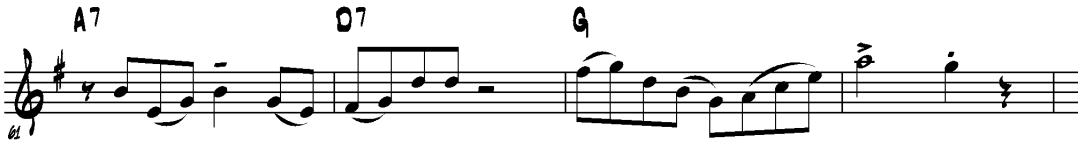
Bebop Articulation

During the Bebop Era, it became customary for trumpet players to use a form of articulation characterized by a mixture of tongued and slurred notes. In its most common form, the player, while performing an eighth-note line, tongues the upbeats and slurs into the downbeats. At faster tempos, it was customary for players to group several notes together under one slur, often re-articulating when the improvised line took a leap or

change of direction. This style of articulation is often referred to as "bebop articulation." Naturally, the tongued notes in bebop articulation tend to sound more accented than the slurred notes. These accents play a major role in generating rhythmic momentum for the improvised line, as well as contributing to the general swing feel.

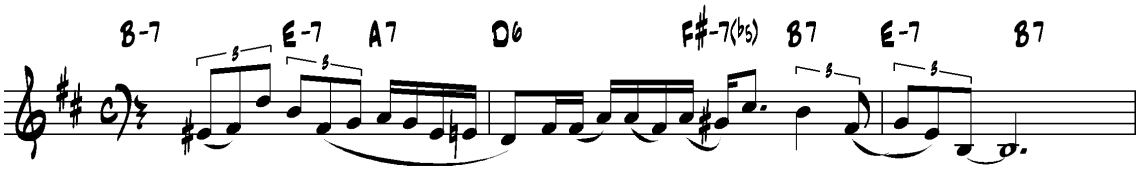
Red Allen began using this technique early in his career. Hints of bebop articulation began to appear in his solos as early as 1930 (Examples 75).

Example 75. Bebop articulation (*Louisiana* Swing*,* 1930)

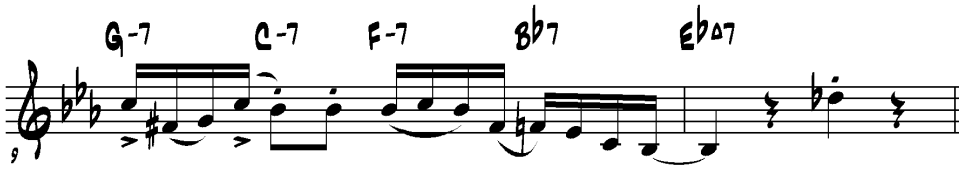


By 1935, Allen's use of this technique had moved further in the direction of a "true" bebop articulation. In his solo on *Body and Soul*, he demonstrates this unpredictable articulation pattern and avoids tonguing on the downbeat (Example 76a-b).

Example 76a. Bebop articulation (*Body and* Soul*,* 1935)

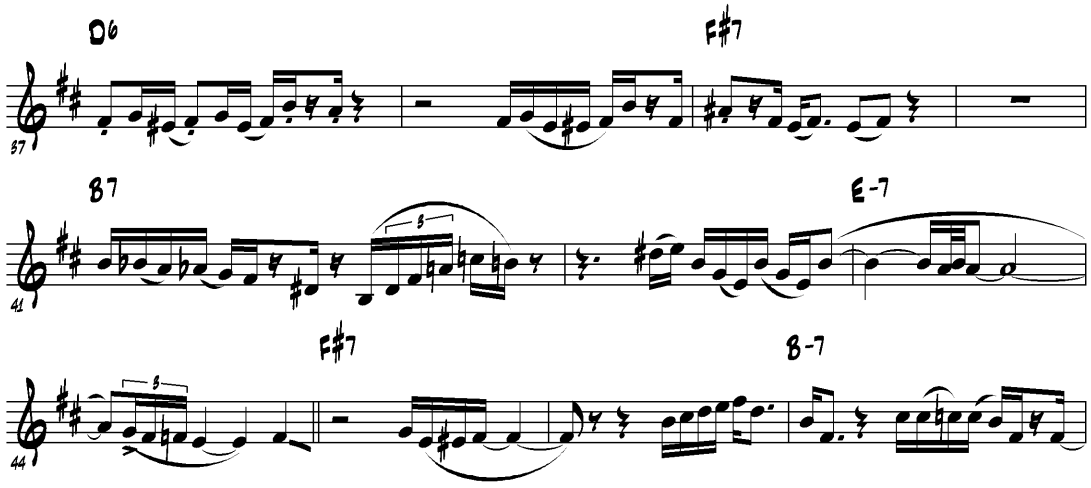


Example 76b. Bebop articulation (*Body and* Soul*,* 1935)



total conception. Throughout his entire solo on the 1958 Coleman Hawkins recording of *All of Me*, he plays lines that are clearly bebop in nature (Example 77).

Example 77. Bebop articulation (*All of Me*, 1958)



While Red Allen often incorporated elements of the bebop style into his own, it is important to remember that he never completely moved in that direction. The New Orleans, Louis Armstrong, and swing influences are still evident in Allen's playing; bebop simply offered him a greater range of possibilities to choose from when determining how to best express his musical ideas.

Grace Notes

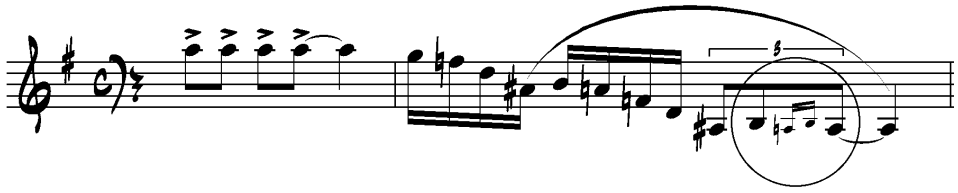
Allen's improvised lines often included grace notes, which were employed both as melodic embellishments and as articulatory embellishments. Paul Berliner discusses the ways in which jazz musicians typically use grace notes:

> A player can append grace notes to the melody's important pitches, articulating both pitches clearly, or, for variety, draw them out to produce a smear or dwa-oo effect. Some routinely favor the use of a single ascending chromatic grace note at the beginnings of phrases, but others use the same embellishment only sparingly

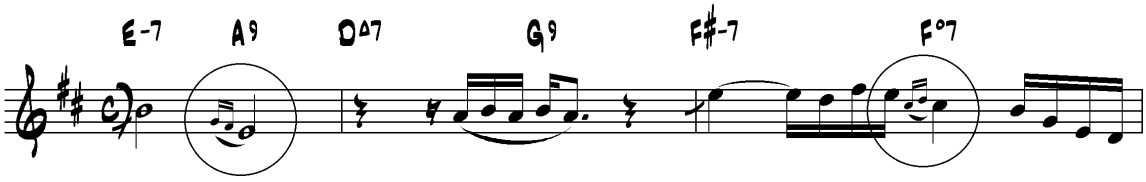
> or favor descending grace notes. Many players use an eighth-note upper mordent between a pitch and the adjacent scale degree.[55]

Allen's use of grace notes as melodic embellishments is illustrated in examples 78a-c. In examples 79a-c, Allen uses grace notes as articulatory embellishments.

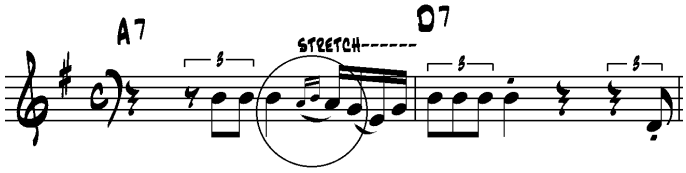
Example 78a. Grace notes as melodic embellishments (*Biff'ly Blues*, 1929)



Example 78b. Grace notes as melodic embellishments (*Body and Soul*, 1935)

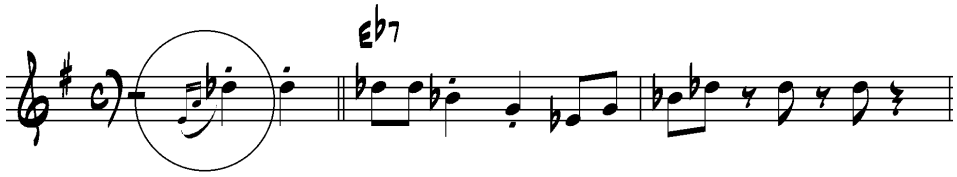


Example 78c. Grace notes as melodic embellishments (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)

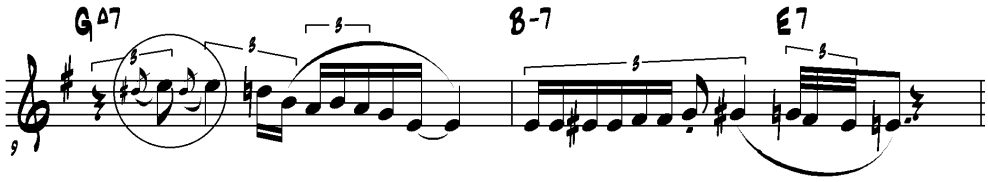


[55] Berliner, 69.

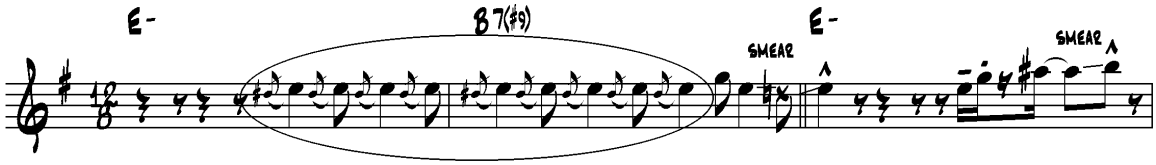
Example 79a. Grace notes as articulatory embellishments (*Louisiana Swing*, 1930)



Example 79b. Grace notes as articulatory embellishments (*I Cover the Waterfront*, 1957)



Example 79c. Grace notes as articulatory embellishments (*Summertime*, 1958)



EPILOGUE

Henry "Red" Allen proved in his earliest recordings that he was a musician with a fresh approach, one who was ahead of his time, and one who was not afraid to step out on a limb and experiment with new ideas. His work through the 1930s with the Luis Russell Orchestra, the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, and the Mills Blue Rhythm Band was highly innovative and inspired many trumpet players throughout the Swing Era, including Harry James, Ziggy Elman, and Bobby Hackett. Allen likely made at least a minor imprint on Roy Eldridge as well, despite Eldridge's reluctance to admit it. During the 1930s, Allen helped introduce several musical concepts that were revolutionary for the time. Techniques such as octave displacement, asymmetrical phrasing, irregular note-groupings, bebop articulation, chromatic approach tones, and many others, would not become commonplace until the bebop revolution of the 1940s.

Even if Allen's contributions ended here, they would qualify him as one of the major links in the jazz trumpet lineage; however, they extended far beyond his early career. Unlike many Early Jazz and Swing era musicians whose styles ceased to evolve beyond the Swing Era, Allen's style continued to progress throughout his entire career. Enthusiastically incorporating elements of modern styles such as bebop, he freely mixed these with elements of earlier styles to create a comprehensive visionary style – the entire history of jazz bundled in one package.

The recordings Allen made from 1957 to 1959, including his own classic All-Stars album *World On A String*, as well as sideman dates with Coleman Hawkins and Kid Ory, clearly illustrate this evolution. These recordings highlight a fully matured playing style

that had evolved greatly from his work in the 1930s. During the late 1950s and beyond, Allen experimented with concepts such as tone modification, a free, rubato-like approach to tempo and phrasing, and highly creative interpretations of song melodies in which he embellished, disguised, and often recomposed original melodies.

When describing Allen's 1957 recording of the song *I Cover the Waterfront,* as well as a recording Allen made with Kid Ory of the song *I Got Rhythm*, Gunther Schuller states:

> If in this performance he can sound at times like a richly endowed Bobby Hackett or a wise, matured Miles Davis, or like a fluent Joe Newman or a dashing Dizzy Gillespie, it is again a tribute to the largeness of his original talent in that, by just a little extension in this or that direction, as the years passed, Allen could embrace other styles without really ever going outside of himself.[56]

In conclusion, Henry "Red" Allen was a musician who continually transcended style throughout his career. His willingness to embrace modern styles and ability to interweave them effortlessly with earlier styles establish him as a unique figure who is difficult to emulate. This inimitability likely contributes to the fact that few trumpet players after the birth of bebop exhibit recognizable signs of Allen's influence. Although this trend continues to the present day, Henry "Red" Allen is clearly a musician who merits the attention of present-day jazz scholars and students of the trumpet. His contributions to trumpet playing and to jazz itself accord him an esteemed position within the pantheon of all-time greats.

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56 Schuller, 630-1.

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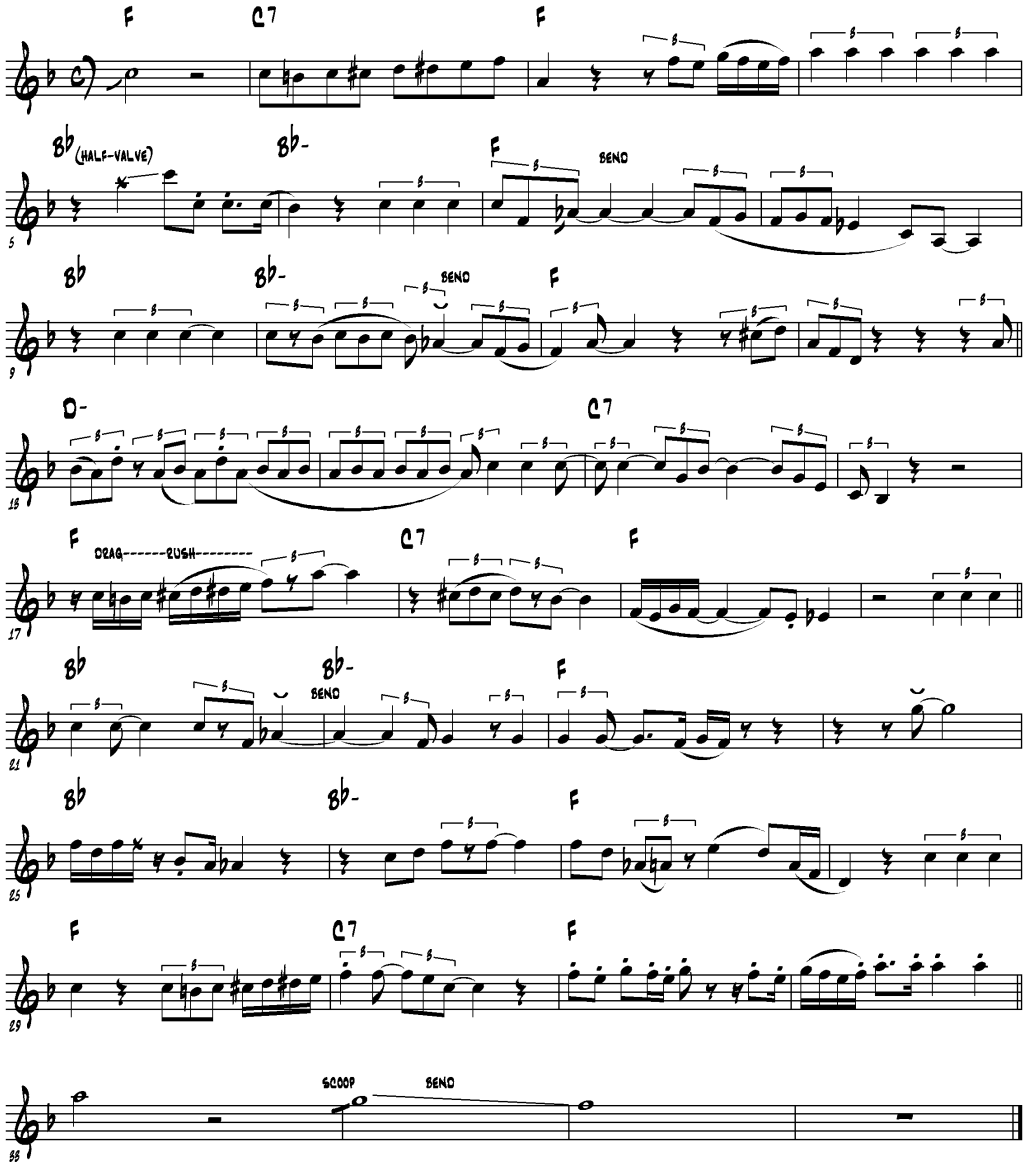
APPENDIX A:

Complete Transcriptions

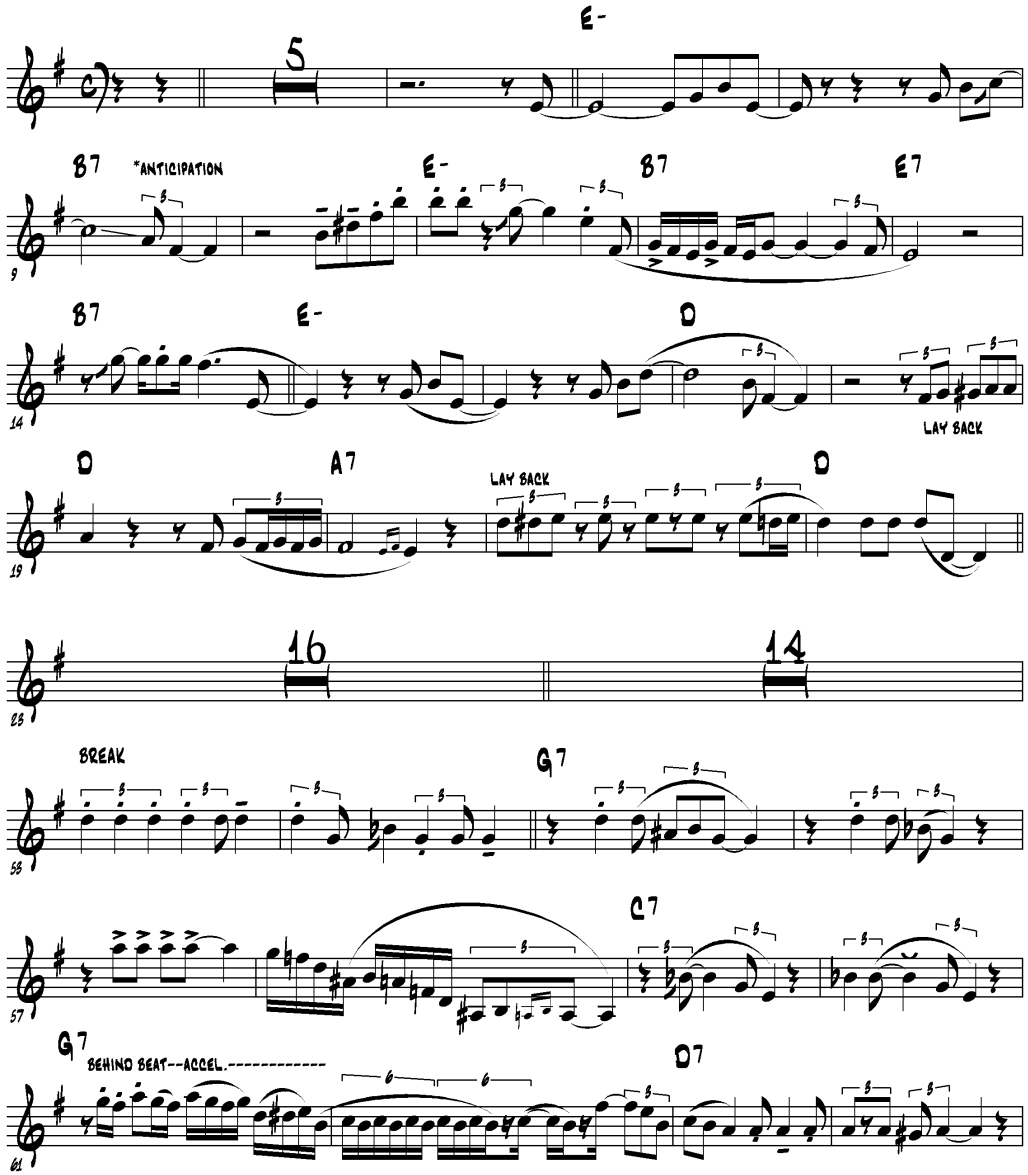
All solos transcribed by Shane Pitsch
as played by Henry "Red" Allen and transposed for Bb trumpet.

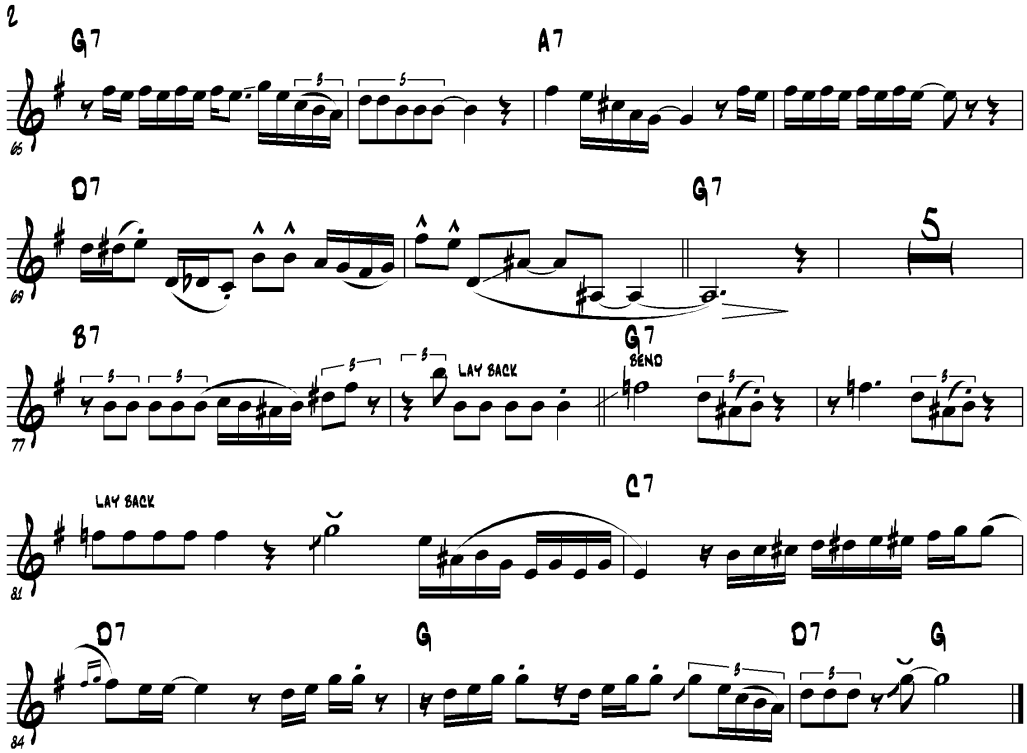
Transcription **Page**

FEELING DROWSY

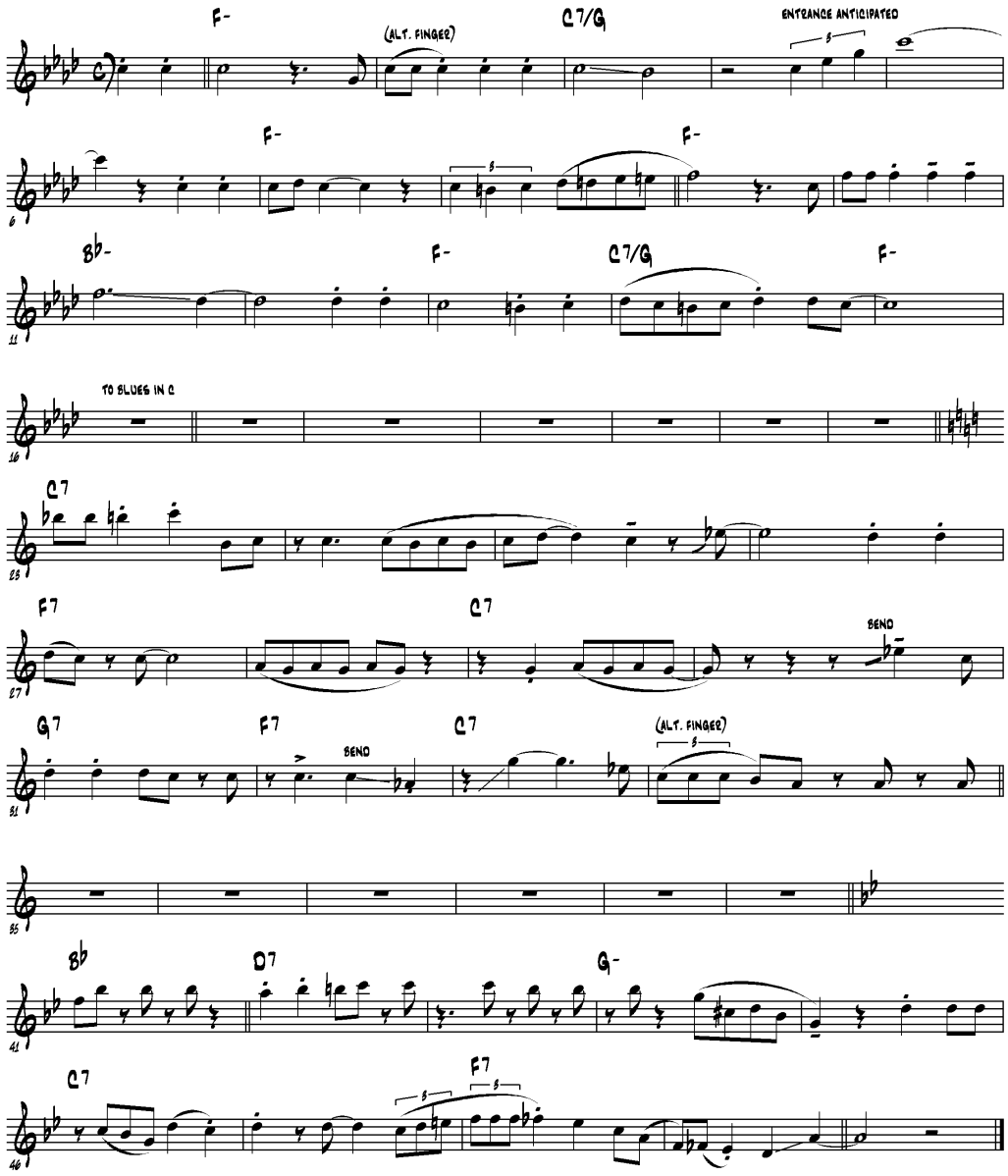


BIFF'LY BLUES

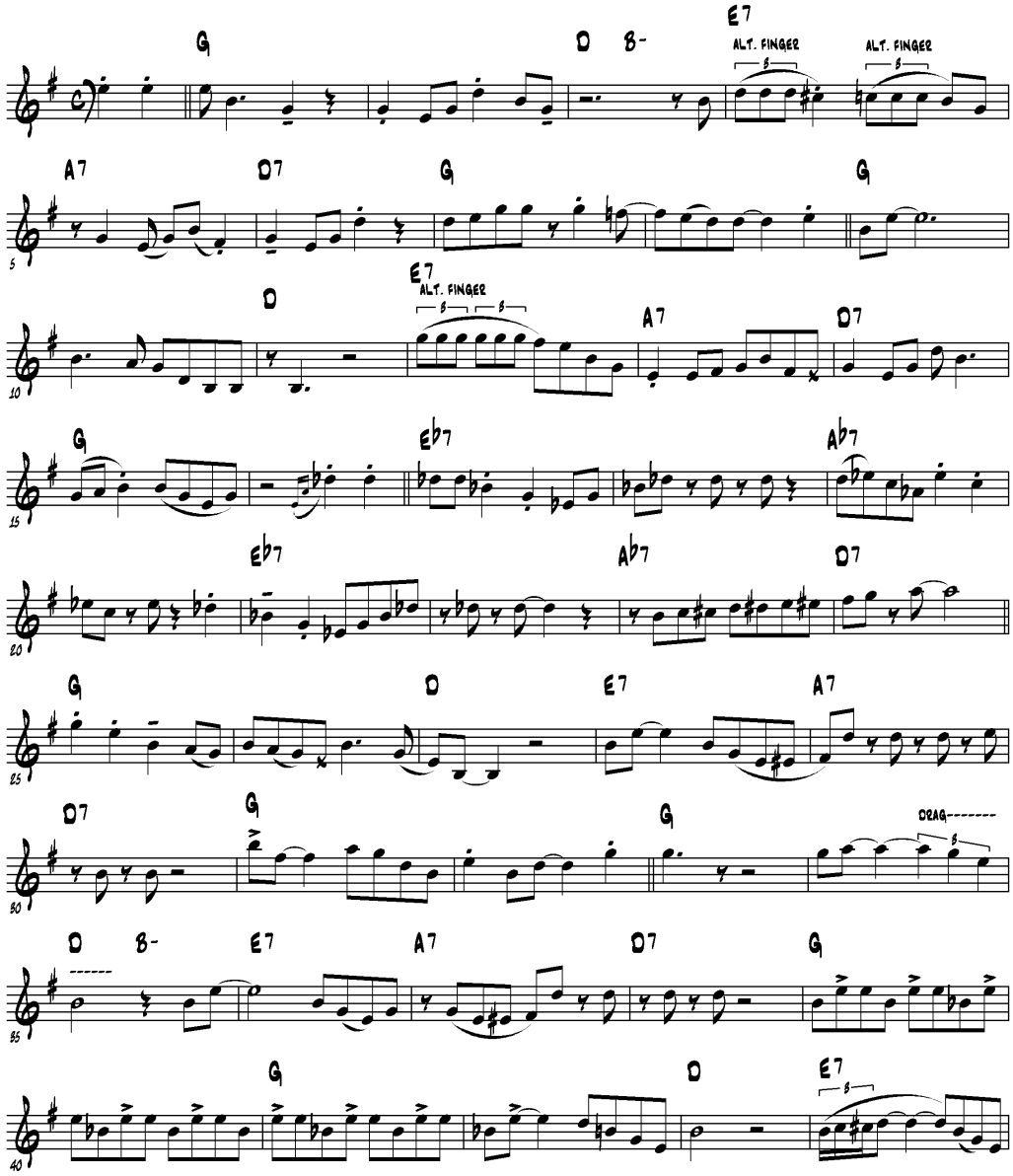


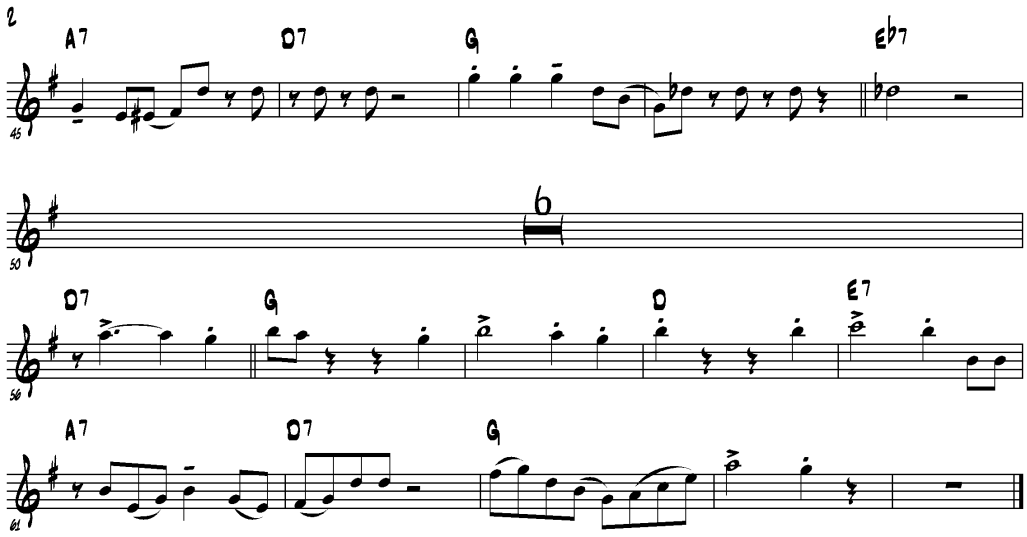

2
G7
A7
65
D7
G7
5
69
B7
LAY BACK
G7
SEND
77
LAY BACK
C7
81
D7
G
D7
G
84

SUGAR HILL FUNCTION

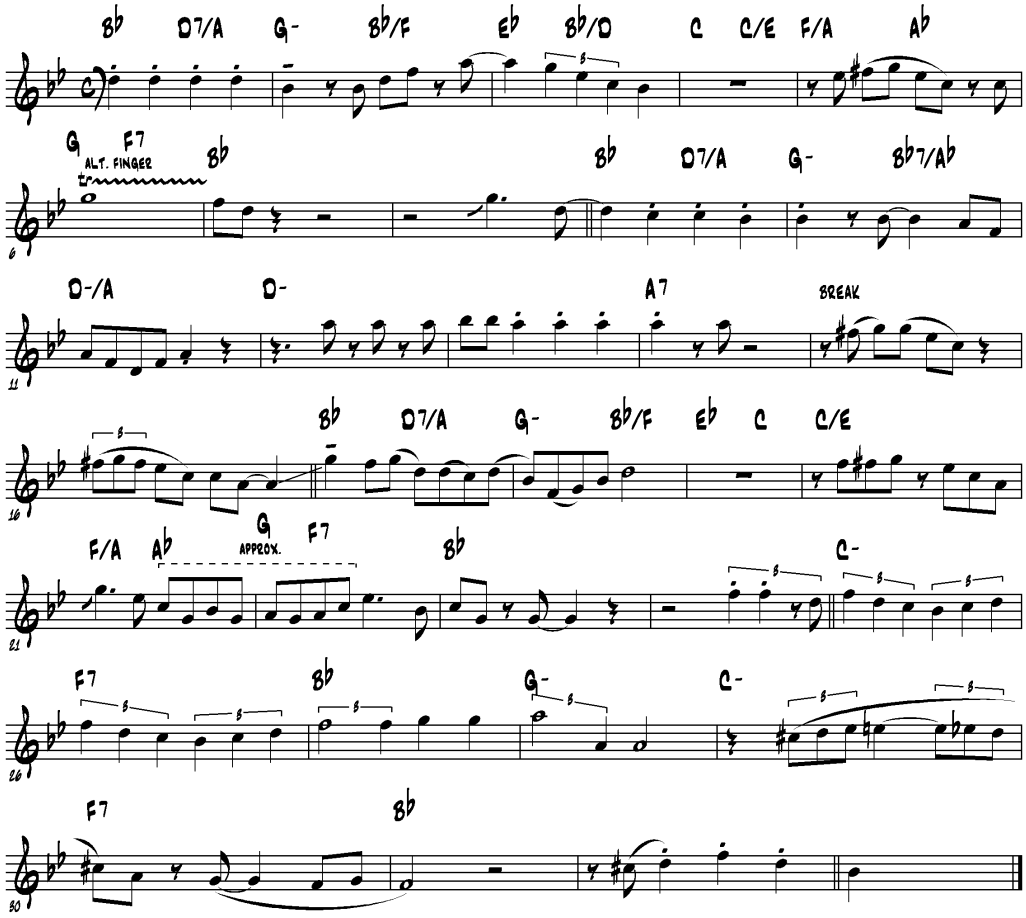


LOUISIANA SWING

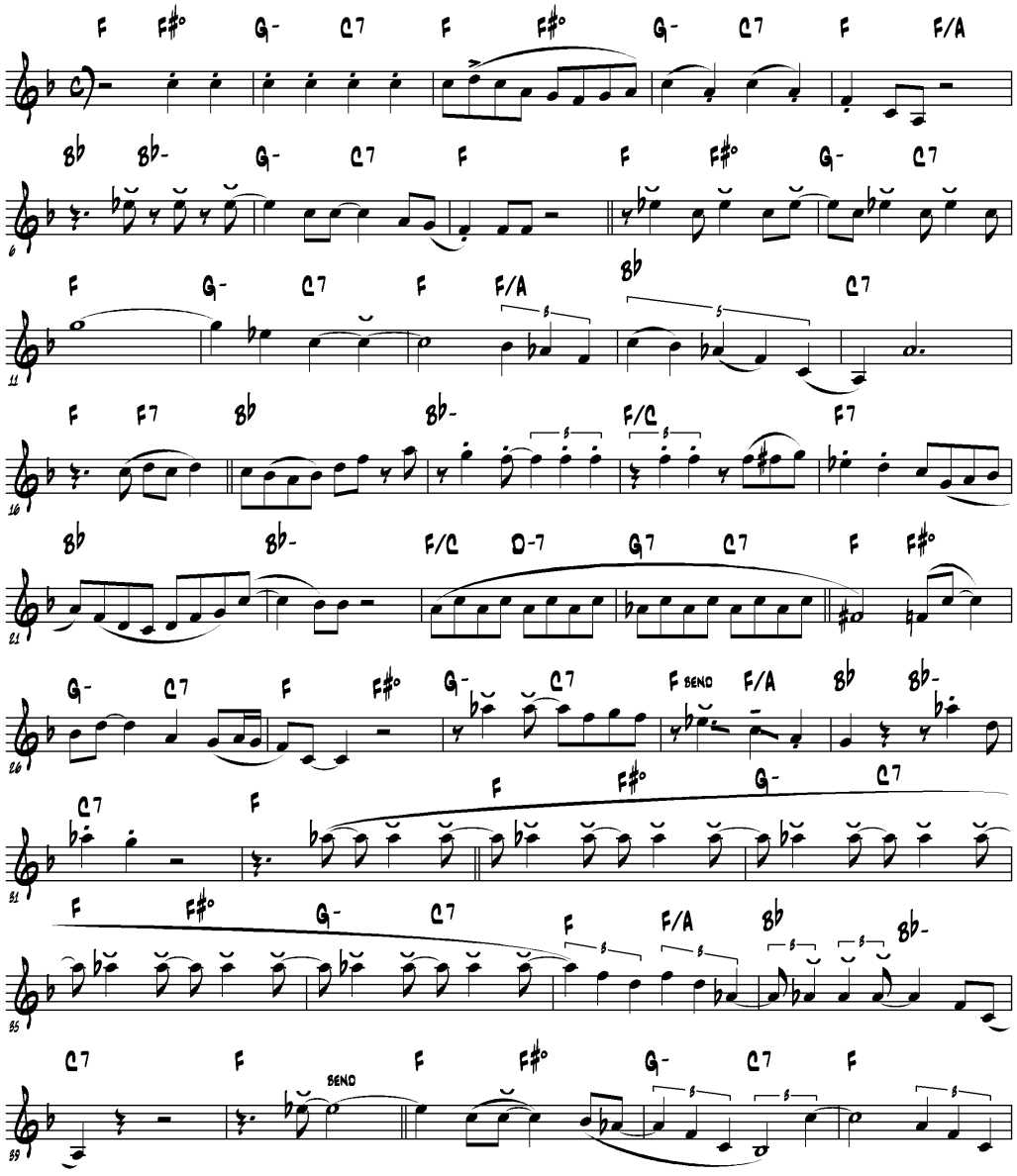


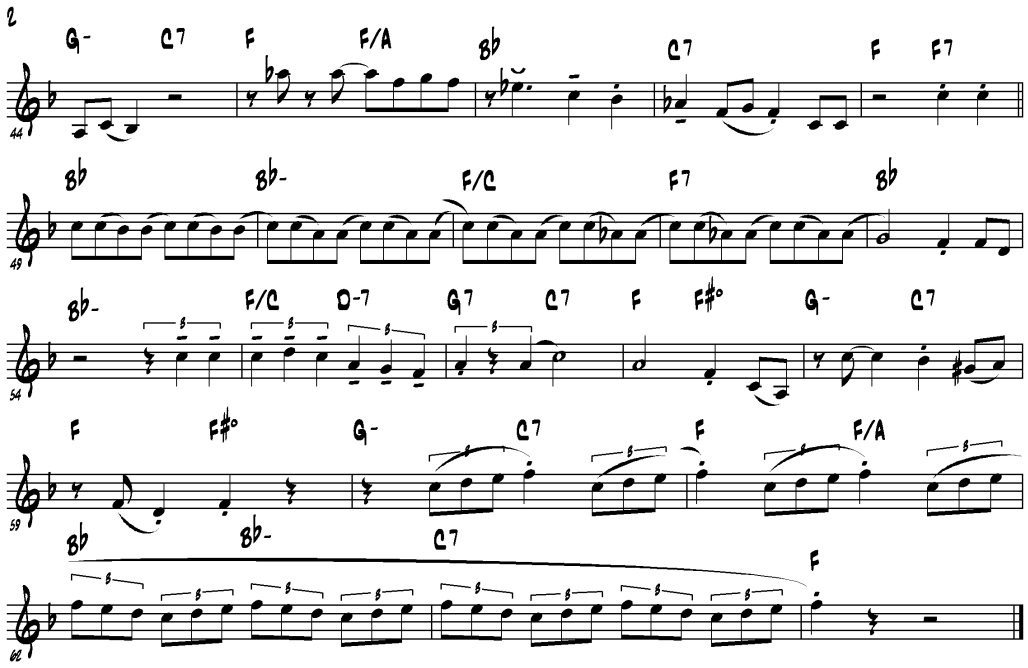

2
A7
D7
G
Eb7
45
50
6
D7
G
D
E7
56
A7
D7
G
61

PANAMA

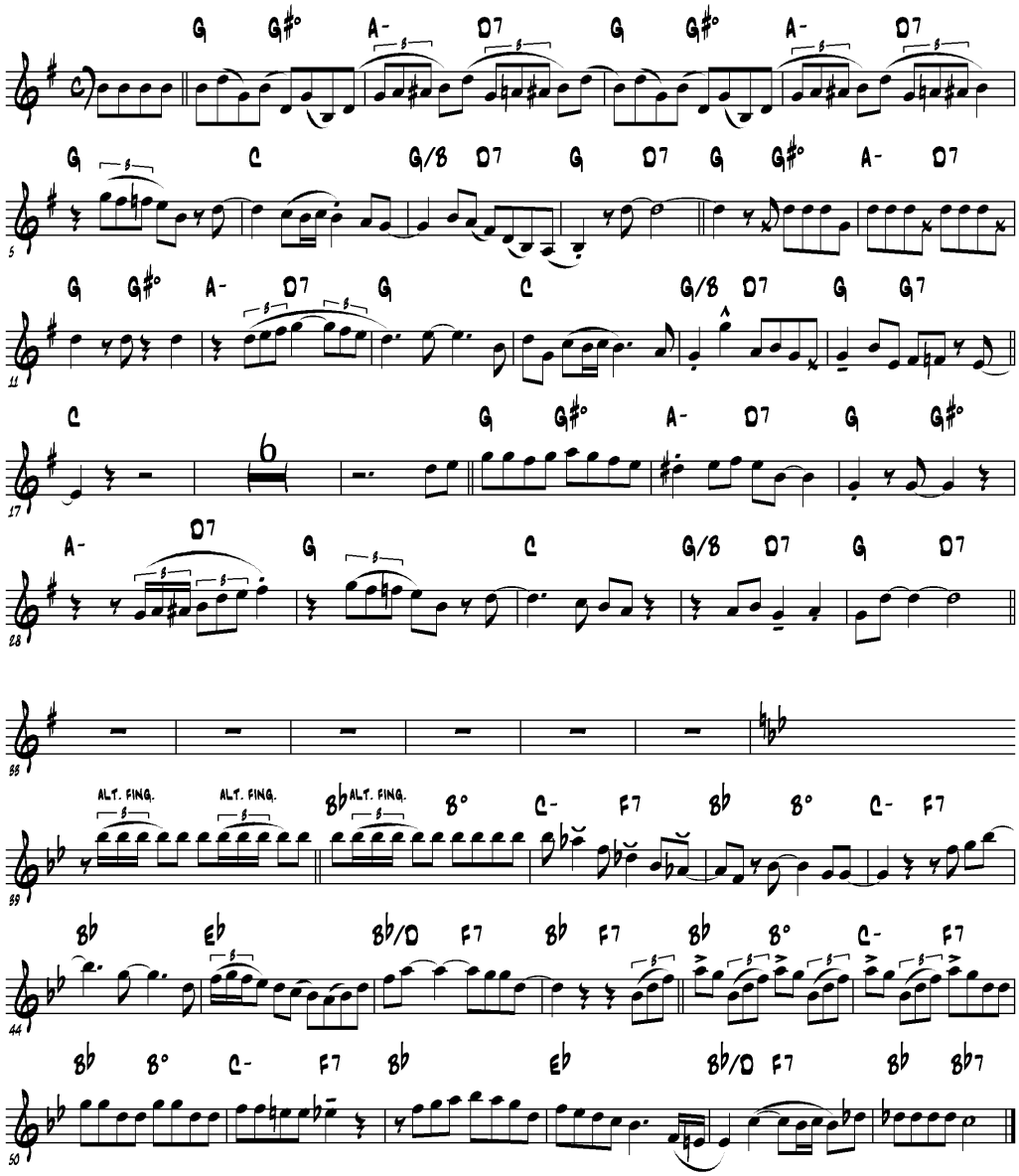

B♭ D7/A G- B♭/F E♭ B♭/D C C/E F/A A♭
G F7
ALT. FINGER
B♭ B♭ D7/A G- B♭7/A♭
D-/A D- A7
BREAK
B♭ D7/A G- B♭/F E♭ C C/E
F/A A♭ G F7
APPROX.
B♭ C-
F7 B♭ G- C-
F7 B♭

NAGASAKI

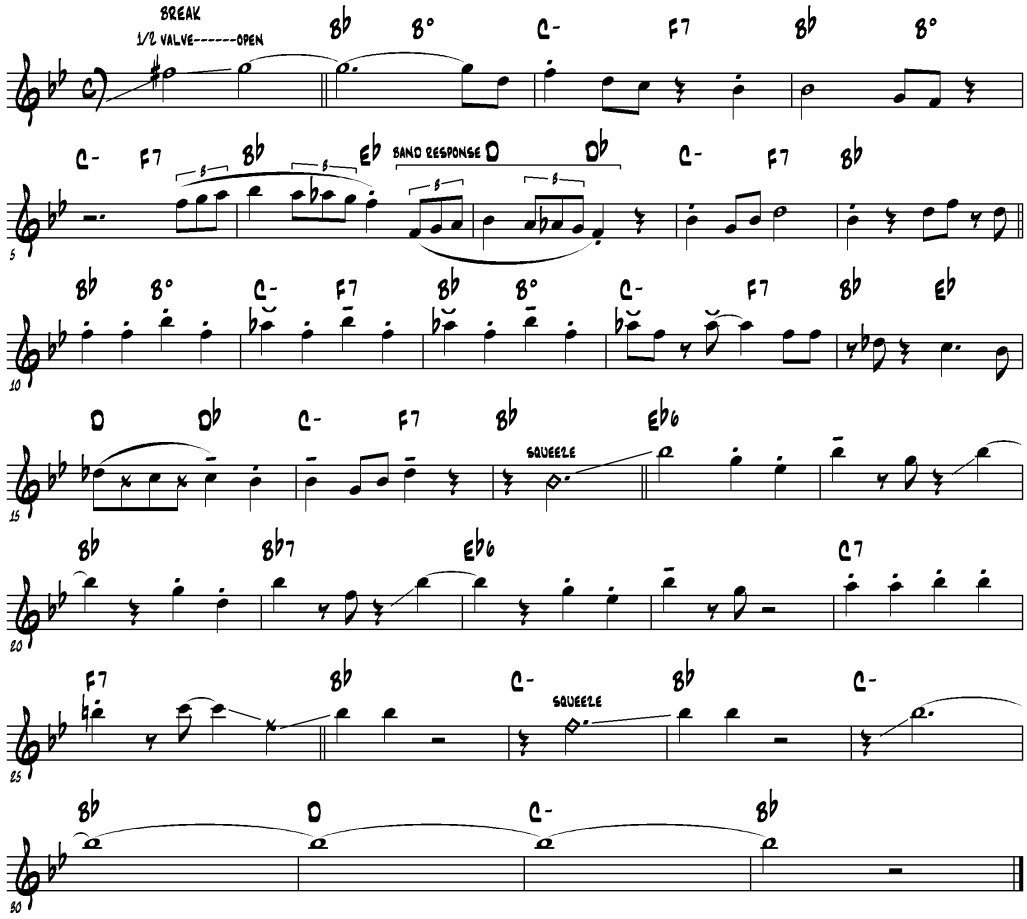

F F#° G- C7 F F#° G- C7 F F/A
B♭ B♭- G- C7 F F F#° G- C7
F G- C7 F F/A B♭ C7
F F7 B♭ B♭- F/C F7
B♭ B♭- F/C D-7 G7 C7 F F#°
G- C7 F F#° G- C7 F SEND F/A B♭ B♭-
C7 F F F#° G- C7
F F#° G- C7 F F/A B♭ B♭-
C7 F SEND F F F#° G- C7 F


2
G- C7 F F/A Bb C7 F F7
44
Bb Bb- F/C F7 Bb
49
Bb- F/C D-7 G7 C7 F F#° G- C7
54
F F#° G- C7 F F/A
59
Bb Bb- C7 F
62

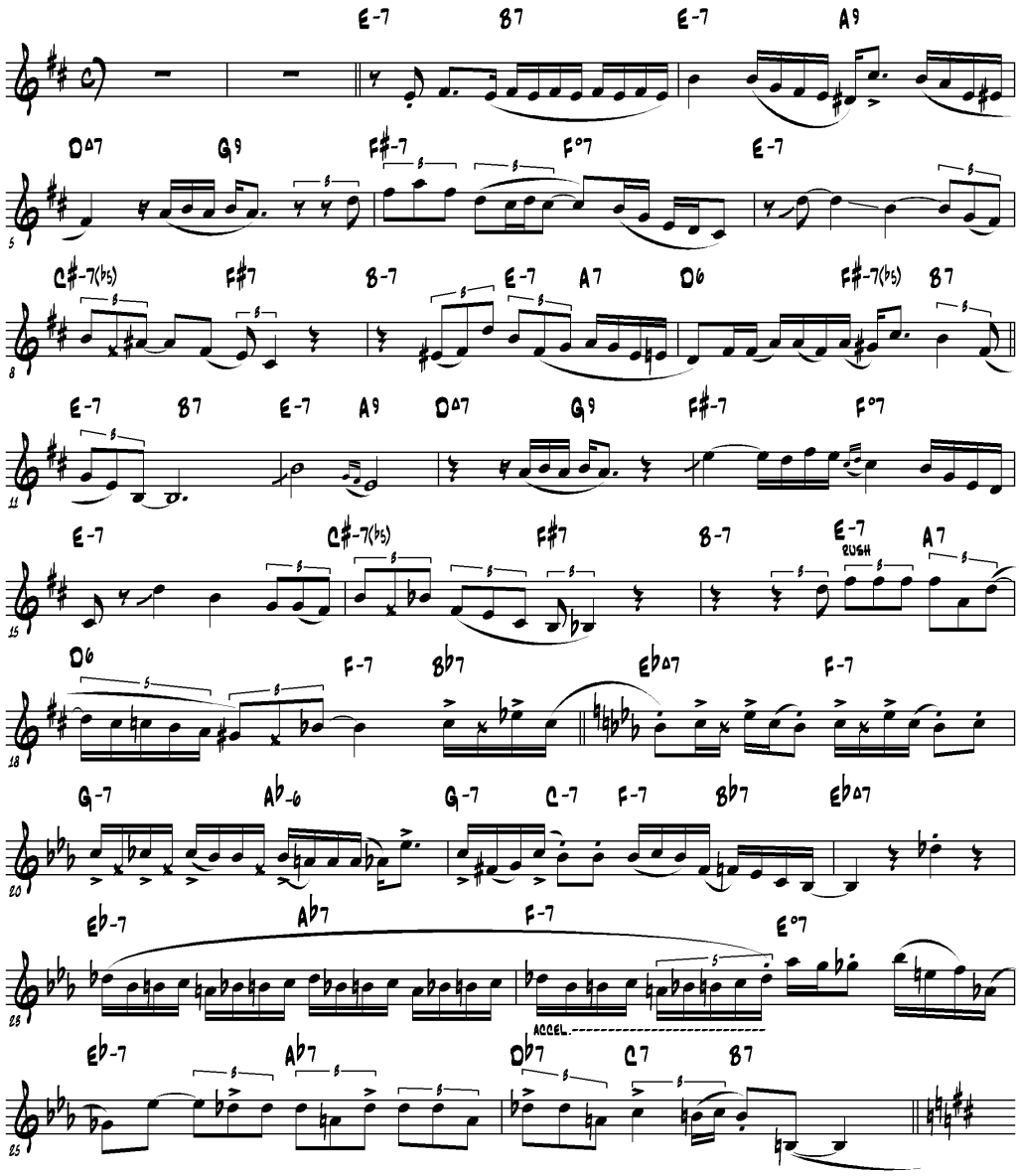
BIG JOHN'S SPECIAL

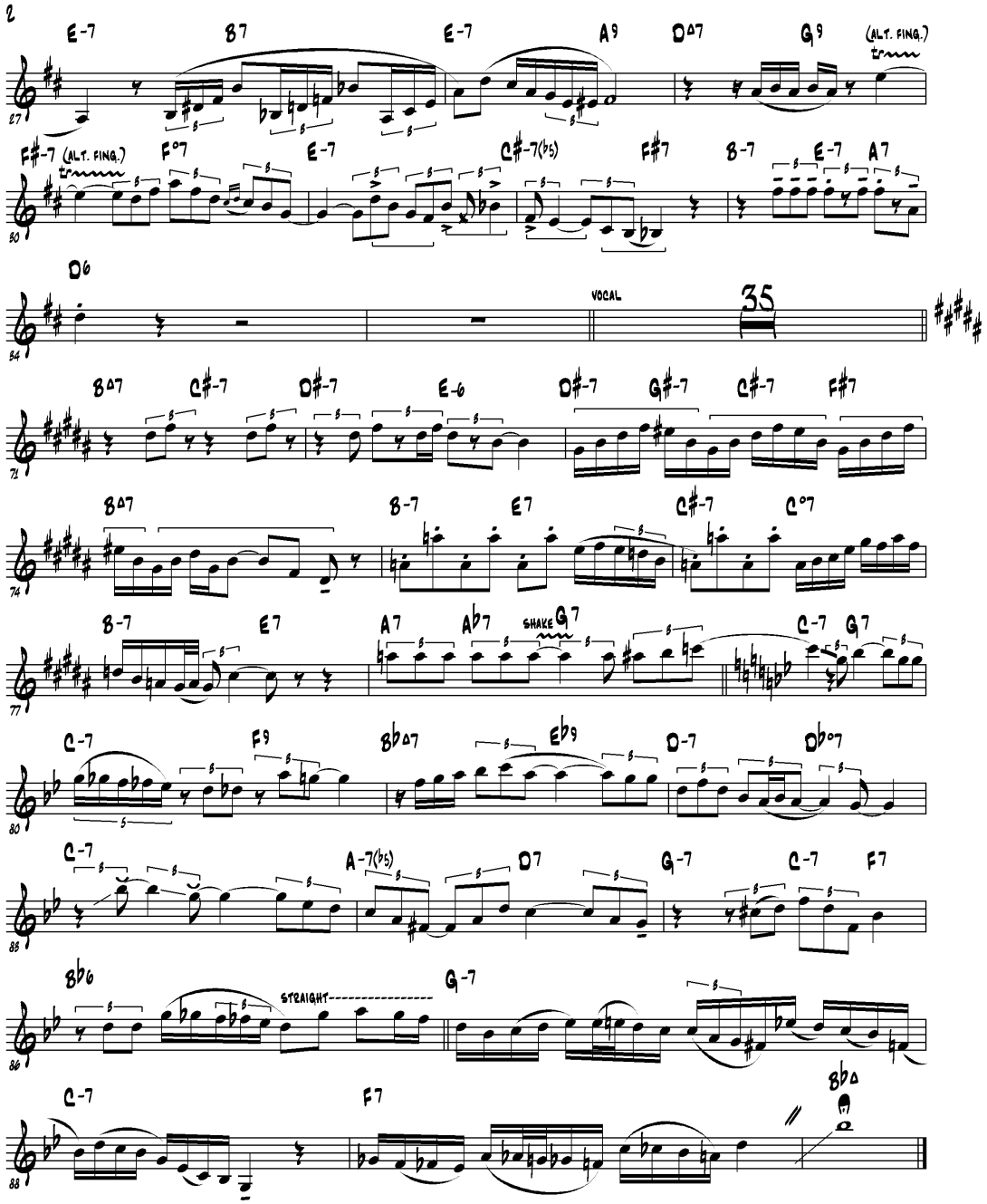


HAPPY AS THE DAY IS LONG

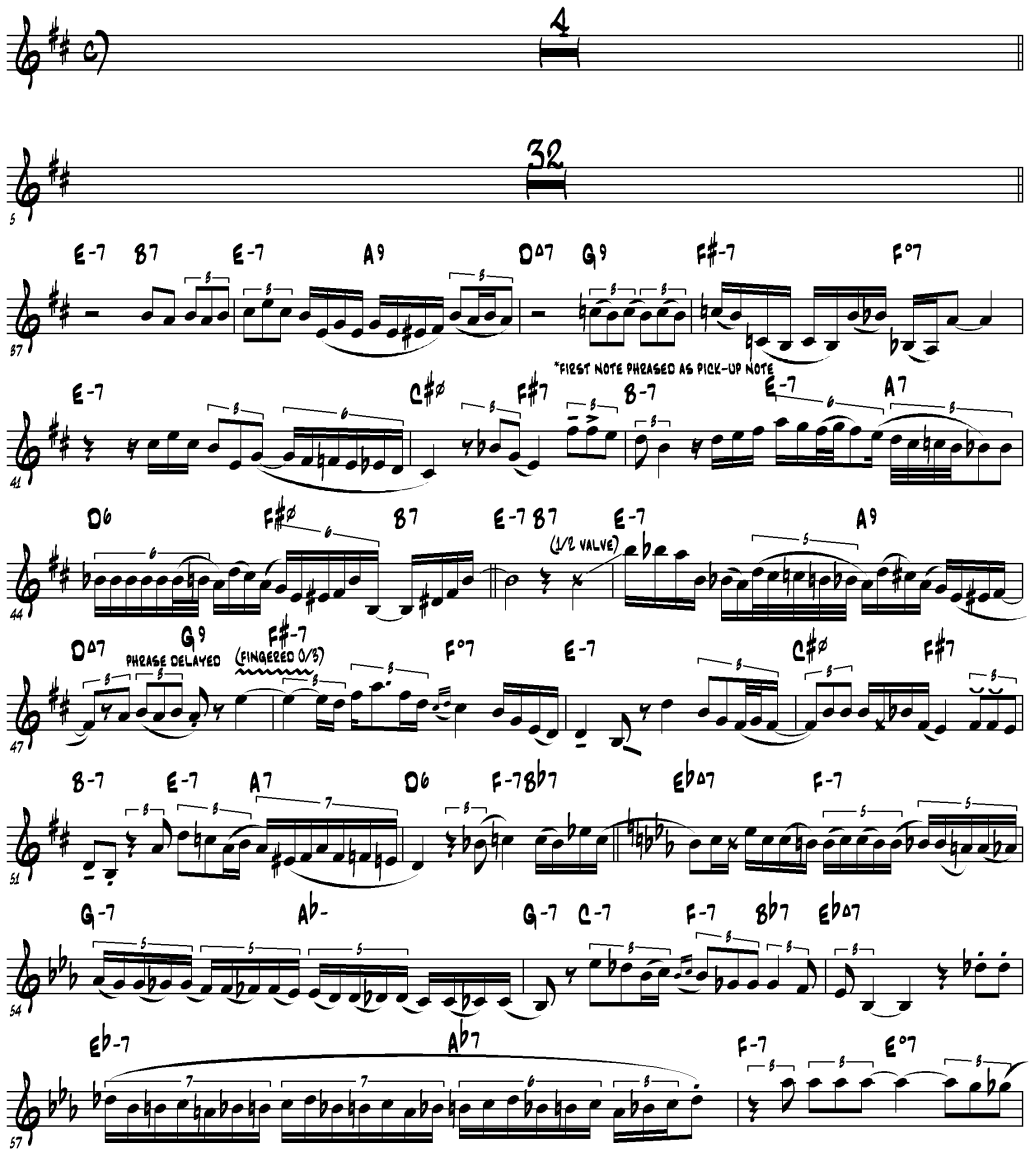


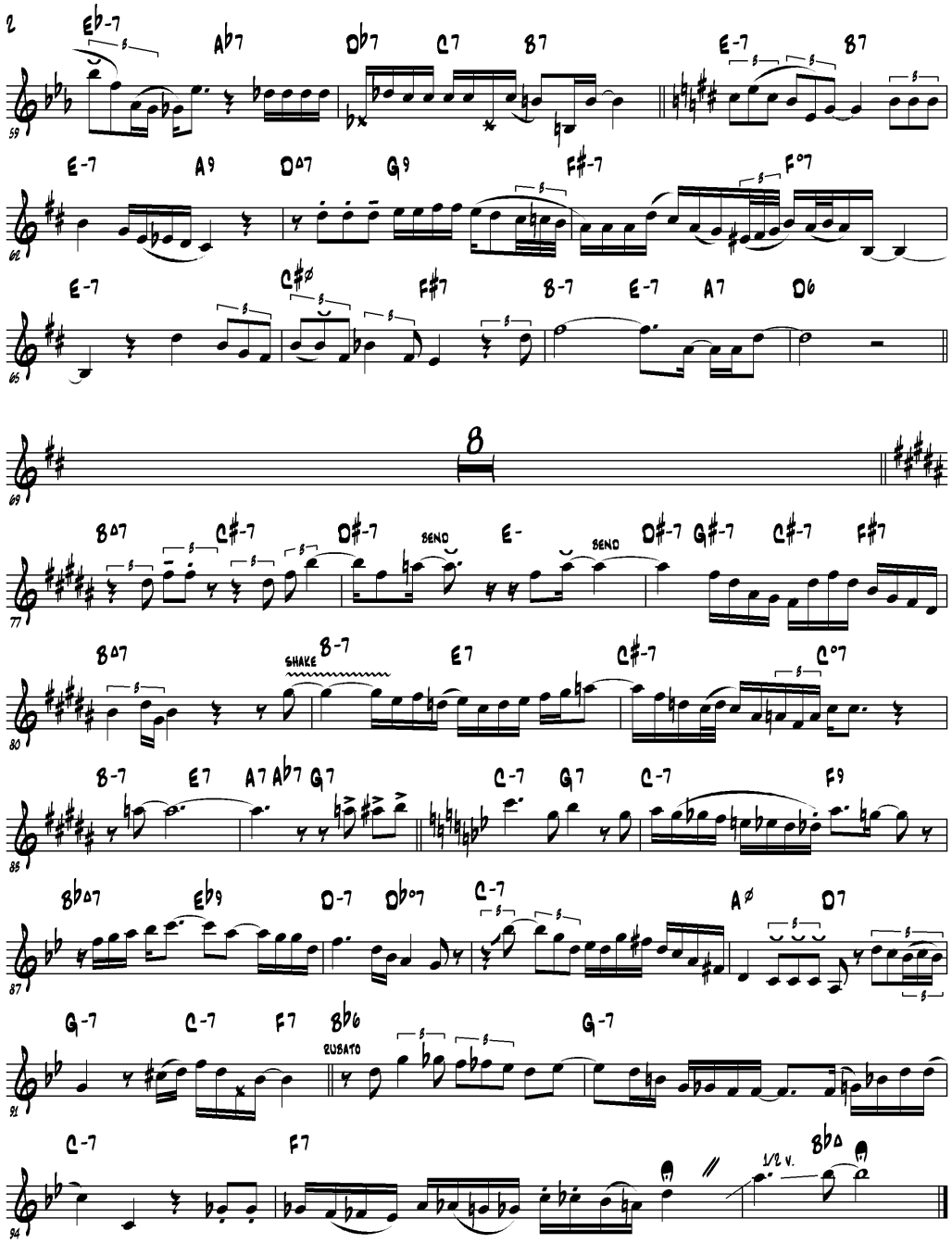
BODY AND SOUL (1935)



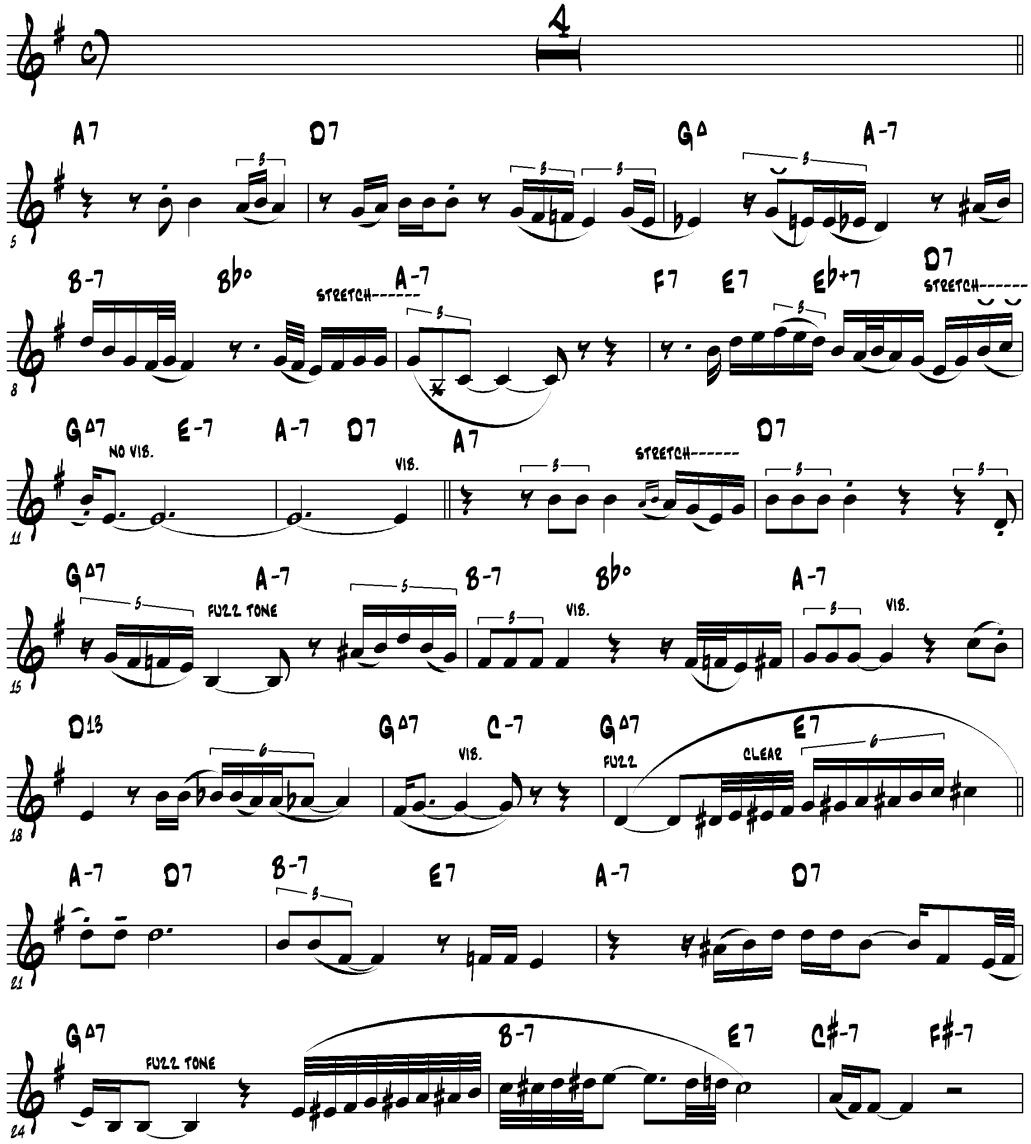

2
E-7
B7
E-7
A9
D∆7
G9
(ALT. FING.)
F#-7 (ALT. FING.)
F°7
E-7
C#-7(♭5)
F#7
B-7
E-7
A7
D6
VOCAL
35
B∆7
C#-7
D#-7
E-6
D#-7
G#-7
C#-7
F#7
B∆7
B-7
E7
C#-7
C°7
B-7
E7
A7
A♭7
SHAKE
G7
C-7
G7
C-7
F9
B♭∆7
E♭9
D-7
D♭°7
C-7
A-7(♭5)
D7
G-7
C-7
F7
B♭6
STRAIGHT
G-7
C-7
F7
B♭∆

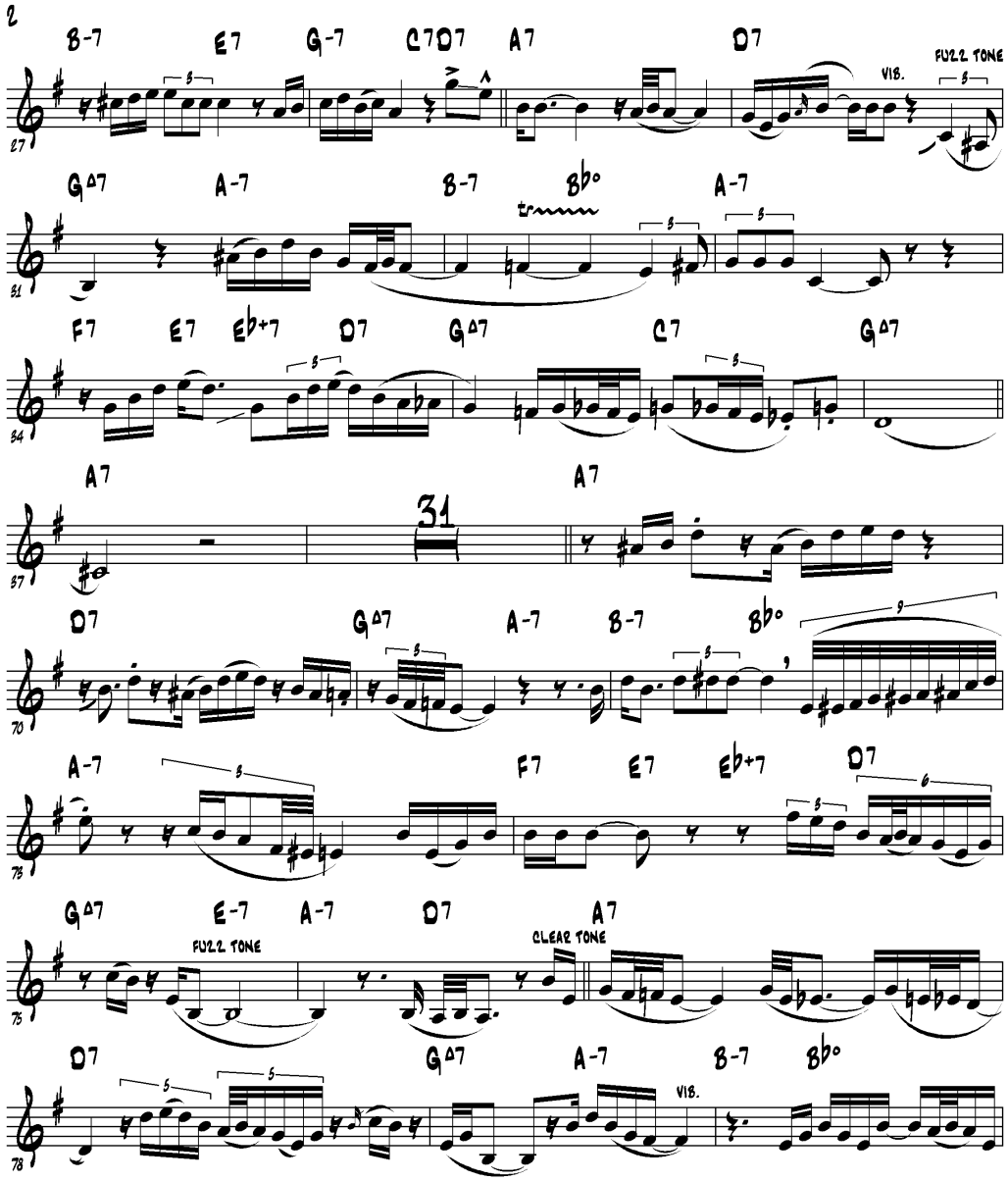
BODY AND SOUL (1930)

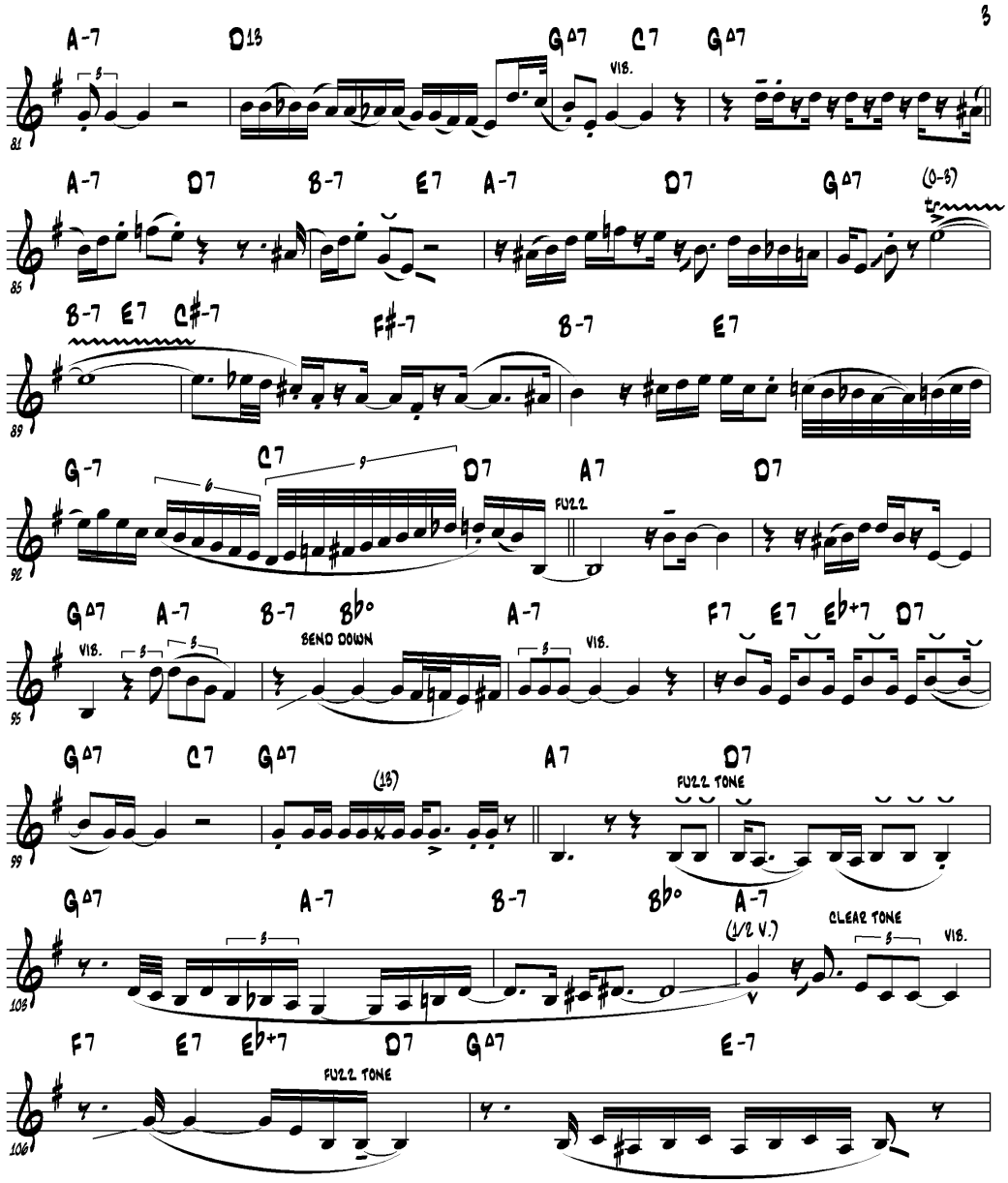


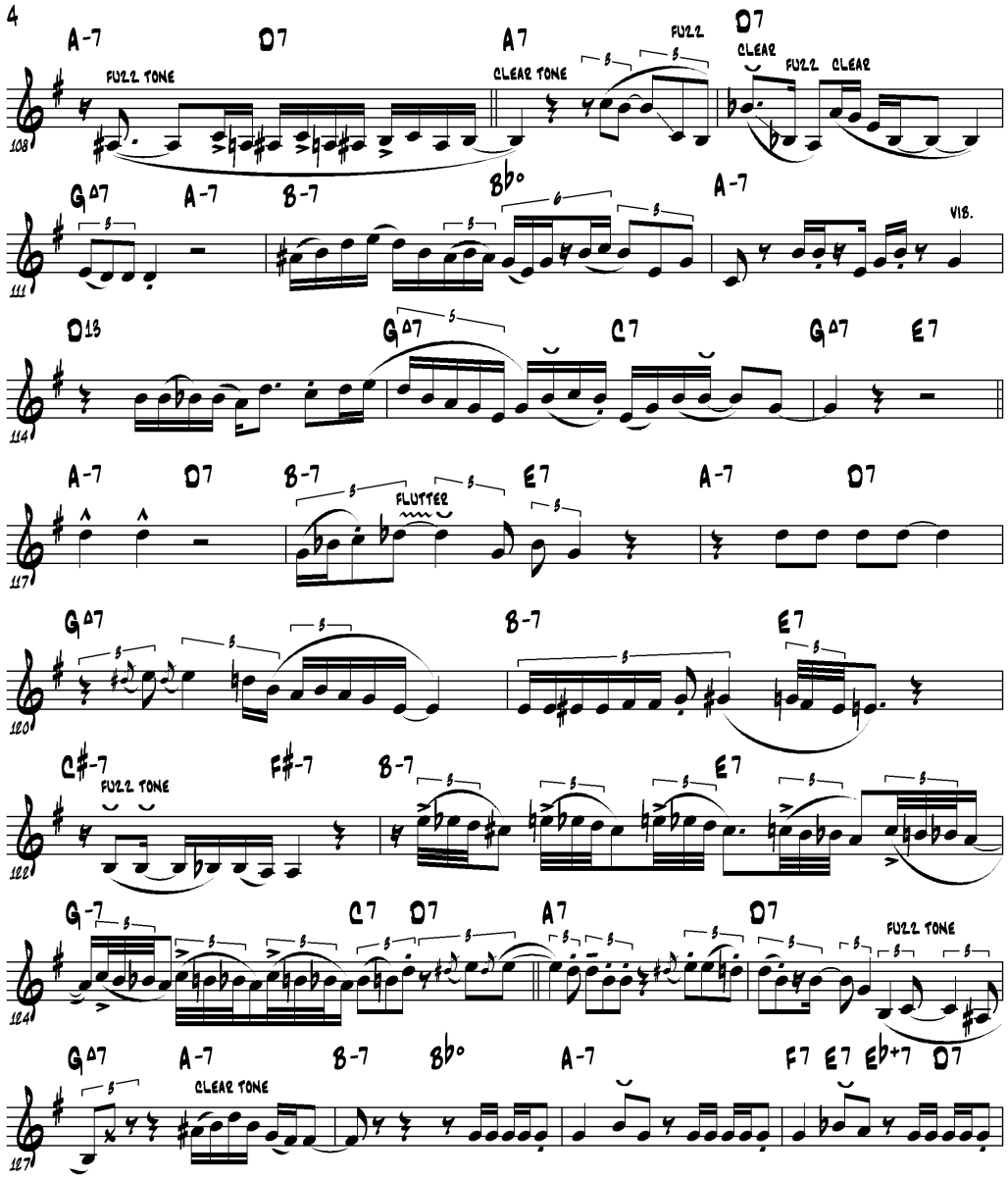

2
59
Eb-7
Ab7
Db7
C7
B7
E-7
B7
62
E-7
A9
D∆7
G9
F#-7
F°7
65
E-7
C#ø
F#7
B-7
E-7
A7
D6
69
8
77
B∆7
C#-7
D#-7
SEND
E-
SEND
D#-7
G#-7
C#-7
F#7
80
B∆7
SHAKE
B-7
E7
C#-7
C°7
85
B-7
E7
A7
Ab7
G7
C-7
G7
C-7
F9
87
Bb∆7
Eb9
D-7
Db°7
C-7
A ø
D7
91
G-7
C-7
F7
8b6
RUBATO
G-7
94
C-7
F7
8b∆
1/2 V.

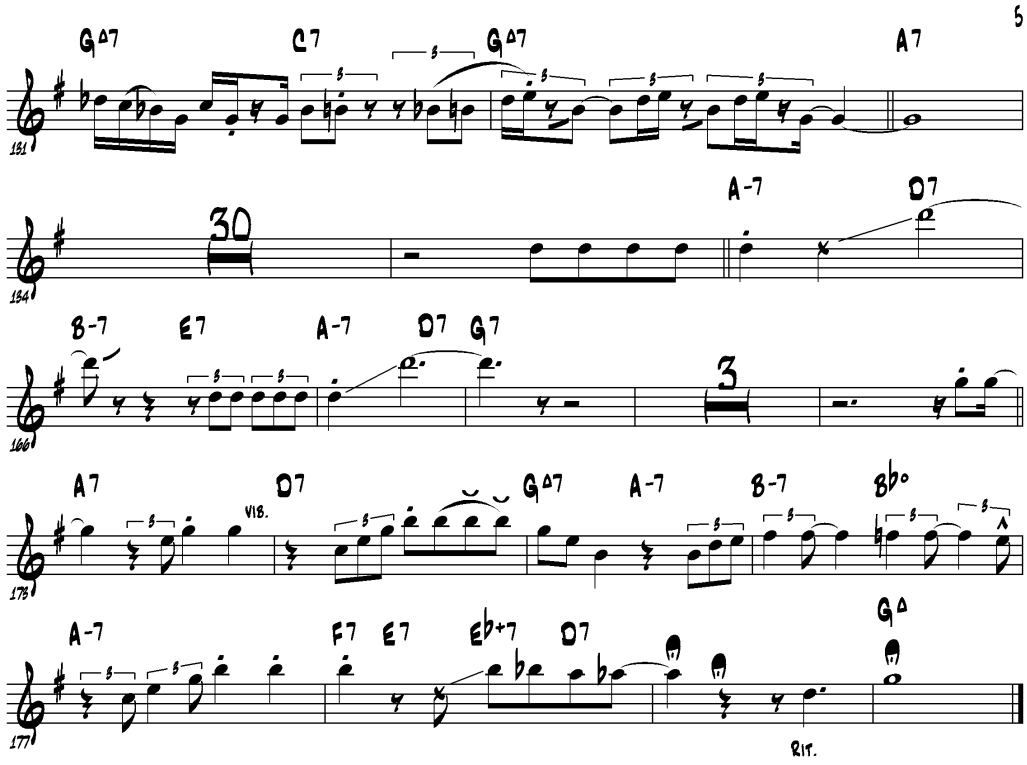
I COVER THE WATERFRONT



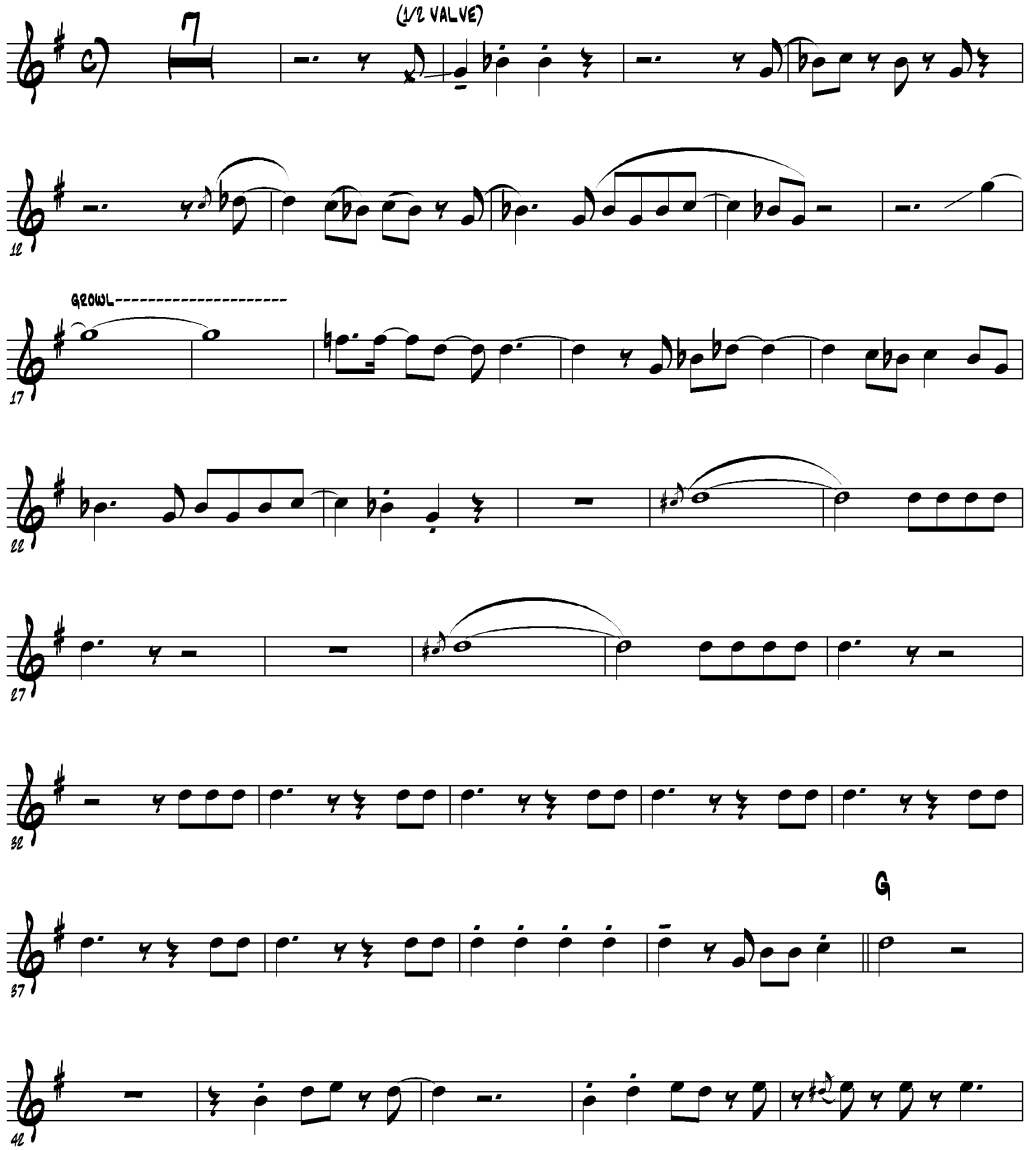

2
B-7
E7
G-7
C7D7
A7
D7
FUZZ TONE
VIB.
27
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
A-7
31
F7
E7
Eb+7
D7
GΔ7
C7
GΔ7
34
A7
A7
37
31
D7
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
70
A-7
F7
E7
Eb+7
D7
73
GΔ7
E-7
A-7
D7
A7
FUZZ TONE
CLEAR TONE
75
D7
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
VIB.
78

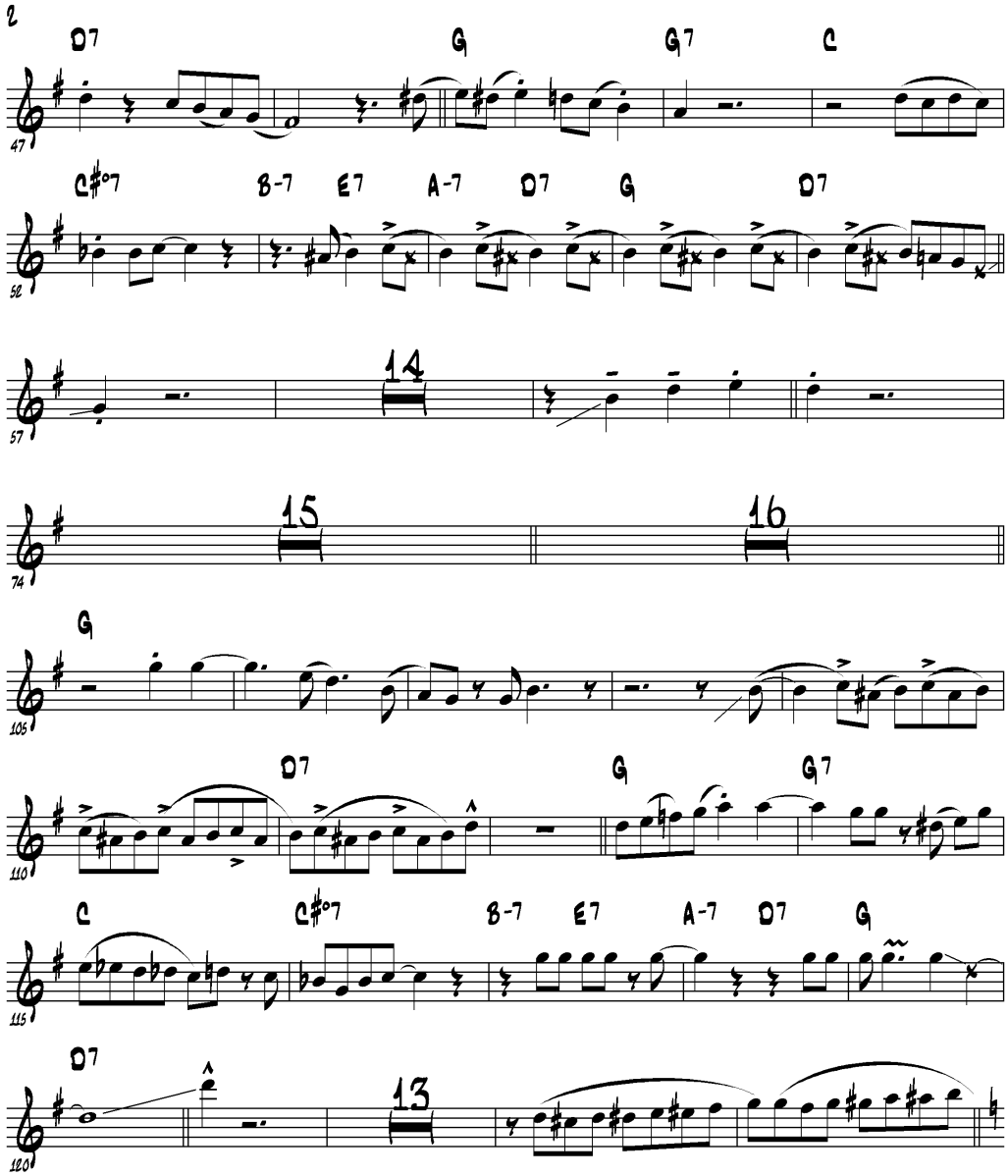

A-7
D13
GΔ7
C7
GΔ7
VIB.
A-7
D7
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
GΔ7
(0-5)
B-7
E7
C#-7
F#-7
B-7
E7
G-7
C7
D7
A7
D7
FUZZ
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
A-7
F7
E7
Eb+7
D7
VIB.
SEND DOWN
VIB.
GΔ7
C7
GΔ7
(15)
A7
D7
FUZZ TONE
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
A-7
(1/2 V.)
CLEAR TONE
VIB.
F7
E7
Eb+7
D7
GΔ7
E-7
FUZZ TONE

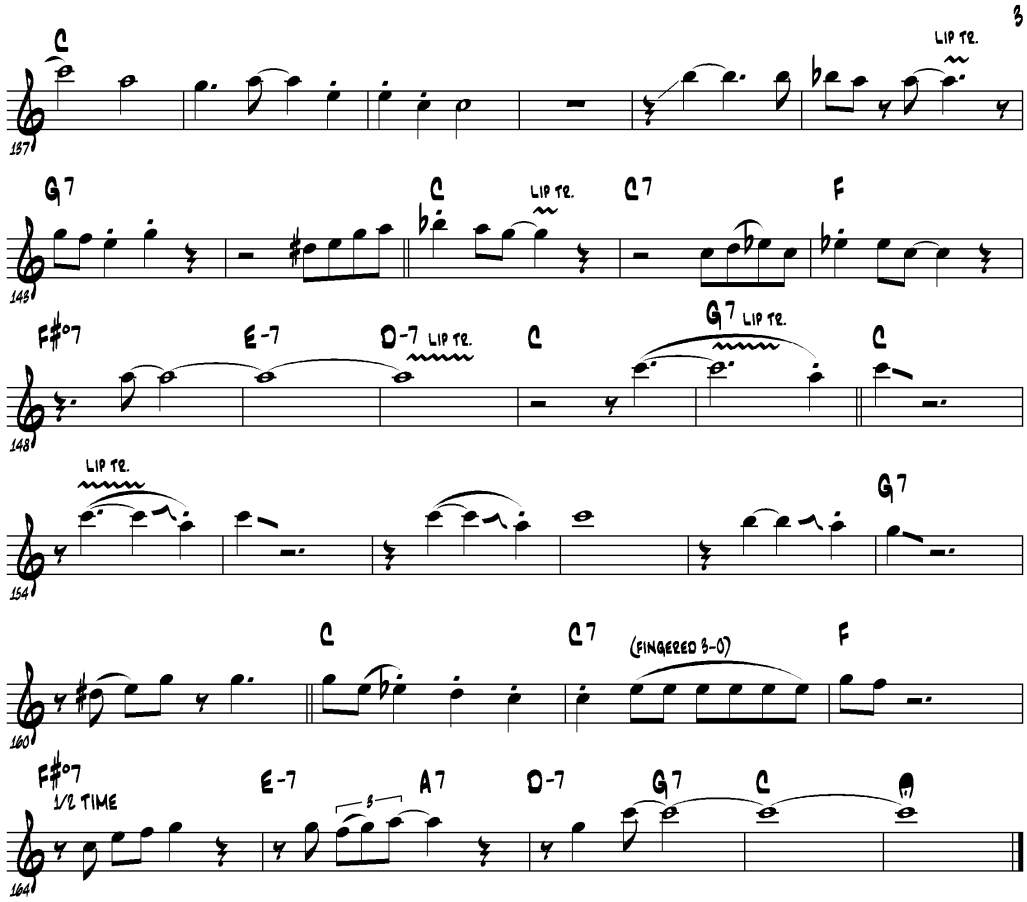

4
A-7
D7
A7
FUZZ TONE
CLEAR TONE
FUZZ
D7
CLEAR
FUZZ
CLEAR
108
G△7
A-7
B-7
B♭°
A-7
VIB.
111
D13
G△7
C7
G△7
E7
114
A-7
D7
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
FLUTTER
117
G△7
B-7
E7
120
C♯-7
F♯-7
B-7
E7
FUZZ TONE
122
G-7
C7
D7
A7
D7
FUZZ TONE
124
G△7
A-7
B-7
B♭°
A-7
F7
E7
E♭+7
D7
CLEAR TONE
127


5
GΔ7
C7
GΔ7
A7
131
30
A-7
D7
154
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
G7
160
3
A7
D7
GΔ7
A-7
B-7
Bb°
VIB.
178
A-7
F7
E7
Eb+7
D7
GΔ
177
Rit.

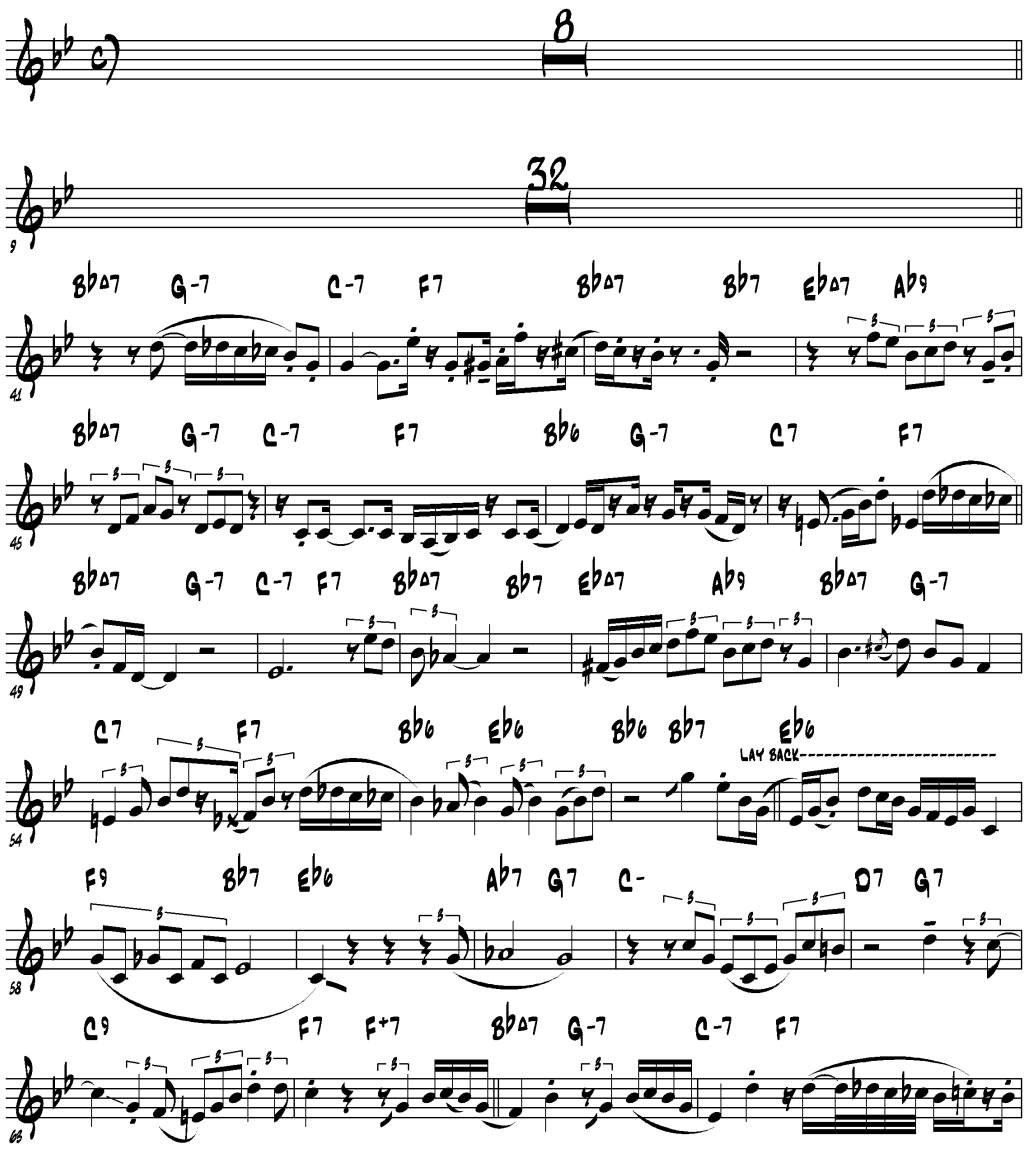
WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

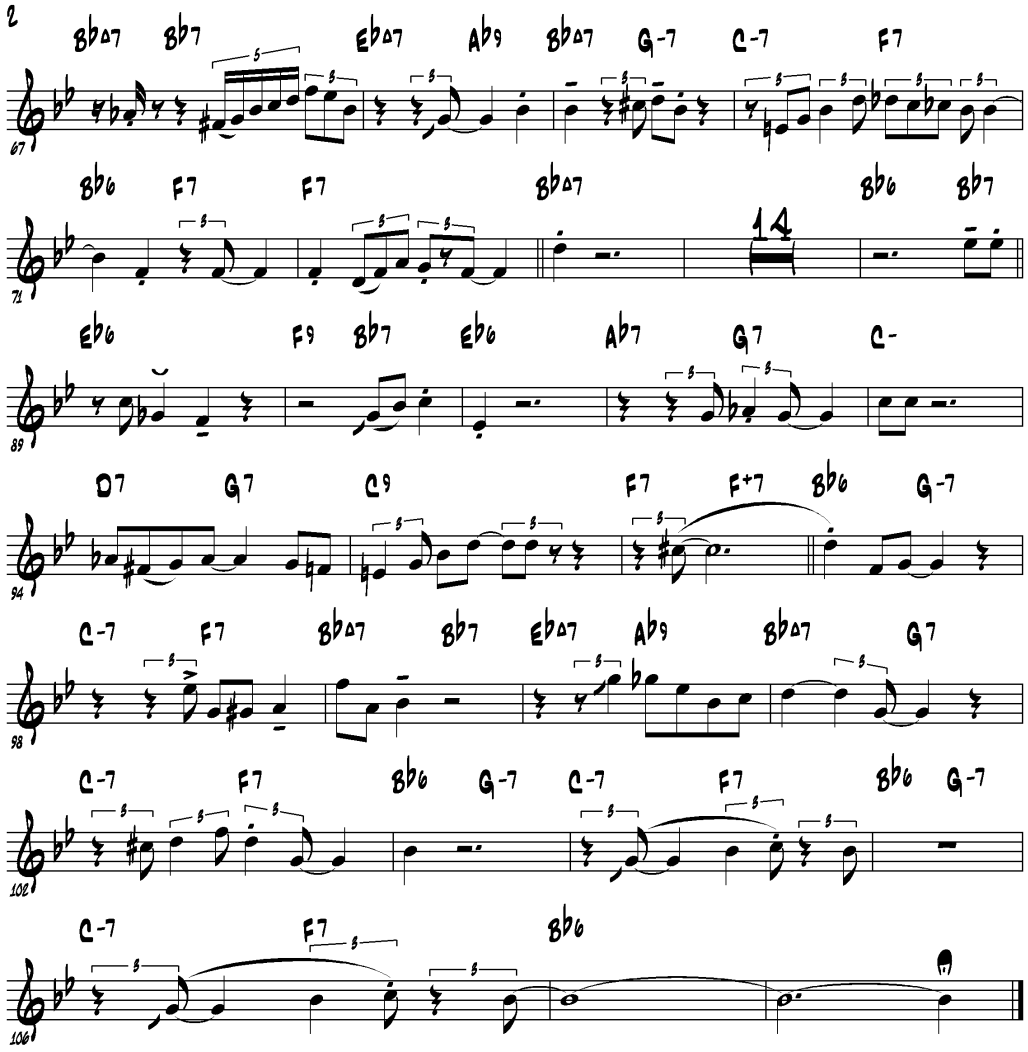



2
D7
G
G7
C
47
C♯°7
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
G
D7
52
14
57
15
16
74
G
105
D7
G
G7
110
C
C♯°7
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
G
115
D7
13
120

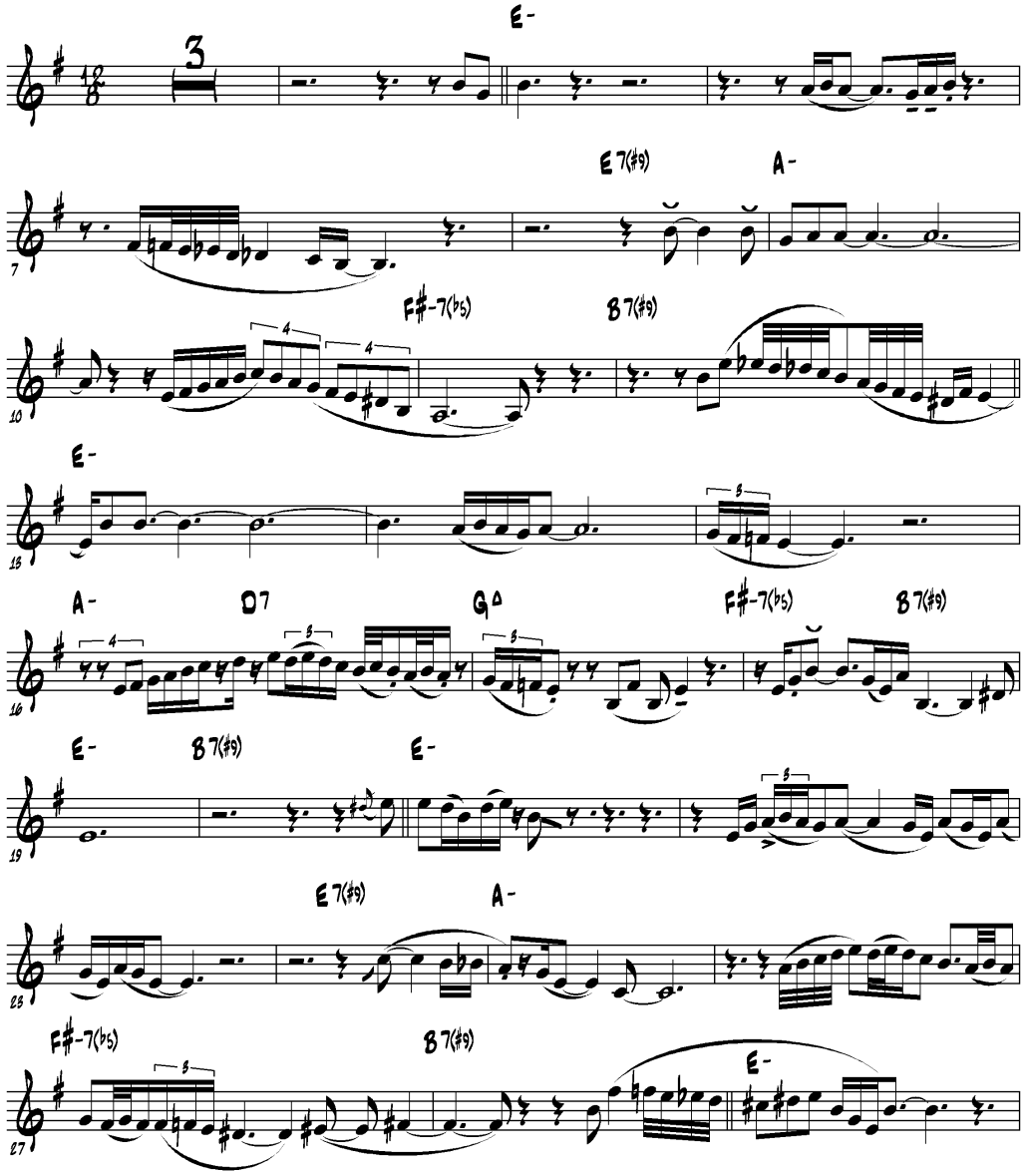

3
C
LIP TR.
137
G7
C
LIP TR.
C7
F
143
F#°7
E-7
D-7 LIP TR.
C
G7 LIP TR.
C
148
LIP TR.
G7
154
C
C7
(FINGERED 3-0)
F
160
F#°7
1/2 TIME
E-7
A7
D-7
G7
C
164

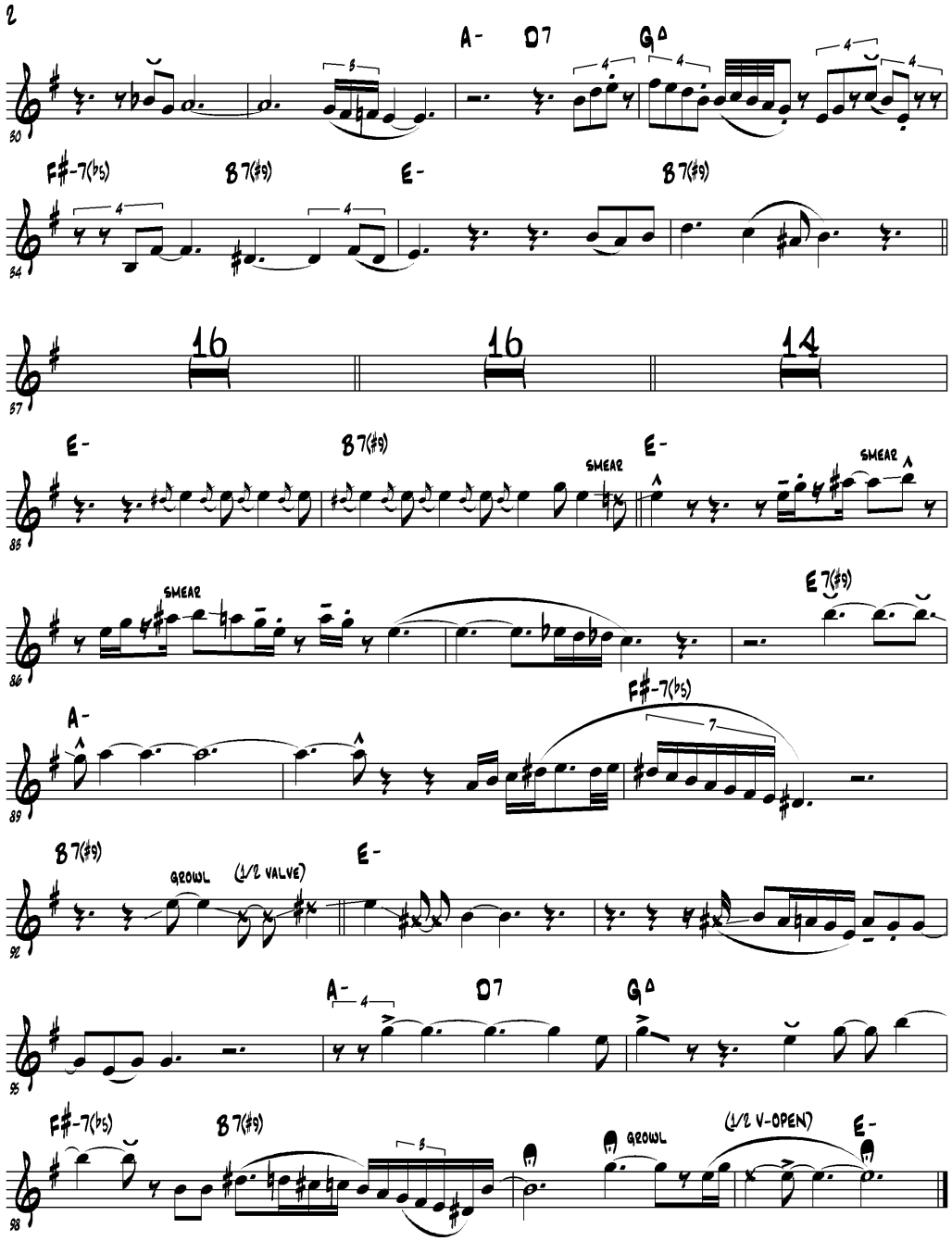
MEAN TO ME


8
32
BbΔ7 G-7 C-7 F7 BbΔ7 Bb7 EbΔ7 Ab9
BbΔ7 G-7 C-7 F7 Bb6 G-7 C7 F7
BbΔ7 G-7 C-7 F7 BbΔ7 Bb7 EbΔ7 Ab9 BbΔ7 G-7
C7 F7 Bb6 Eb6 Bb6 Bb7 Eb6
LAY BACK----------
F9 Bb7 Eb6 Ab7 G7 C- D7 G7
C9 F7 F+7 BbΔ7 G-7 C-7 F7

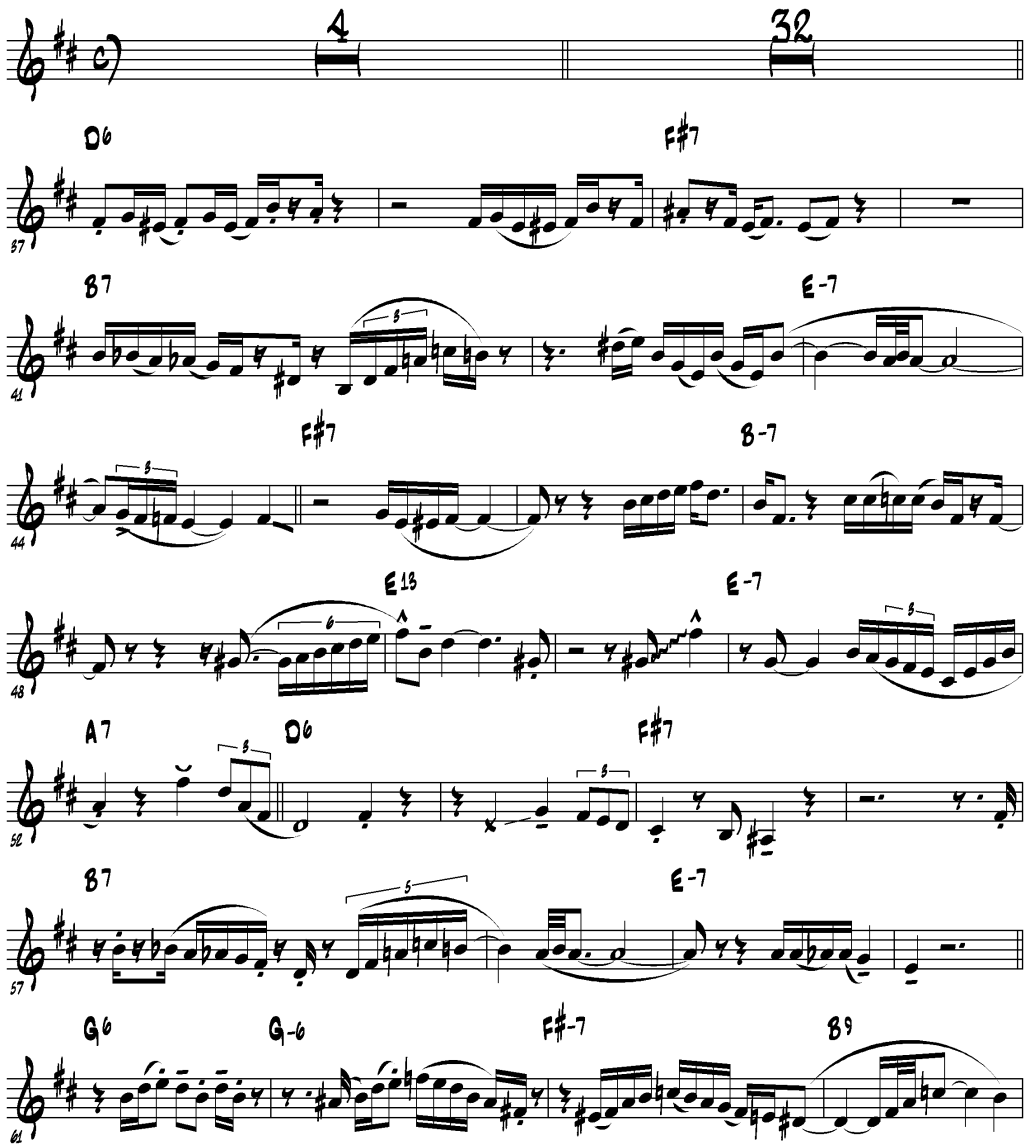

2
B♭Δ7 B♭7 E♭Δ7 A♭9 B♭Δ7 G-7 C-7 F7
67
B♭6 F7 F7 B♭Δ7 B♭6 B♭7
14
71
E♭6 F9 B♭7 E♭6 A♭7 G7 C-
89
D7 G7 C9 F7 F+7 B♭6 G-7
94
C-7 F7 B♭Δ7 B♭7 E♭Δ7 A♭9 B♭Δ7 G7
98
C-7 F7 B♭6 G-7 C-7 F7 B♭6 G-7
102
C-7 F7 B♭6
106

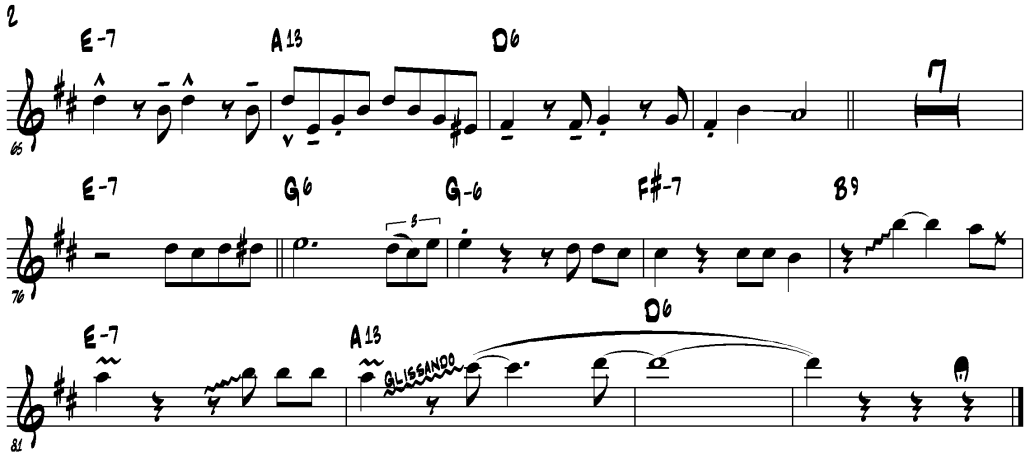
SUMMERTIME



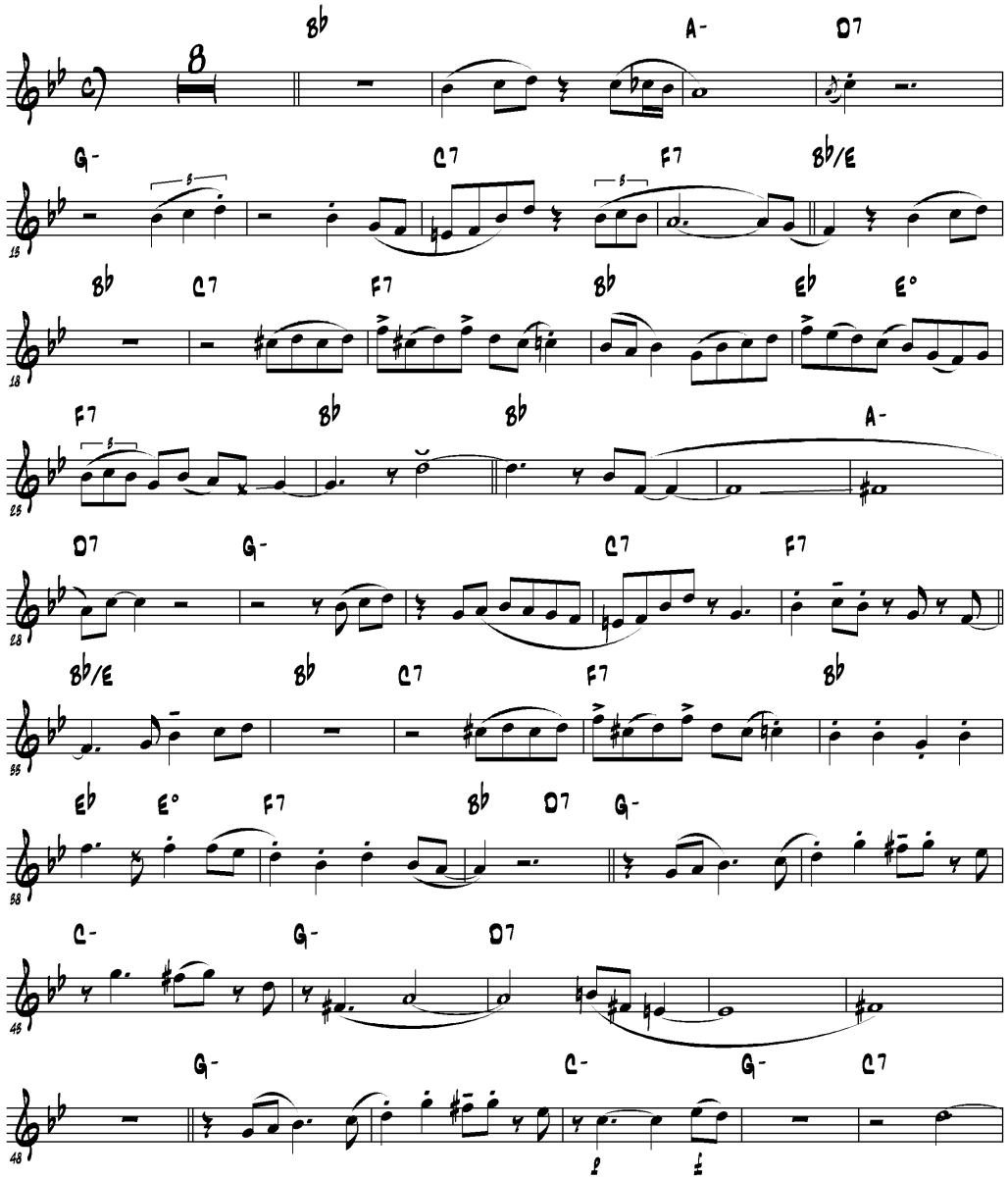

2
A- D7 GΔ
F#-7(♭5) B7(♯9) E- B7(♯9)
16 16 14
E- B7(♯9) E-
SMEAR SMEAR
SMEAR E7(♯9)
A- F#-7(♭5)
B7(♯9) E-
GROWL (1/2 VALVE)
A- D7 GΔ
F#-7(♭5) B7(♯9)
GROWL (1/2 V-OPEN) E-

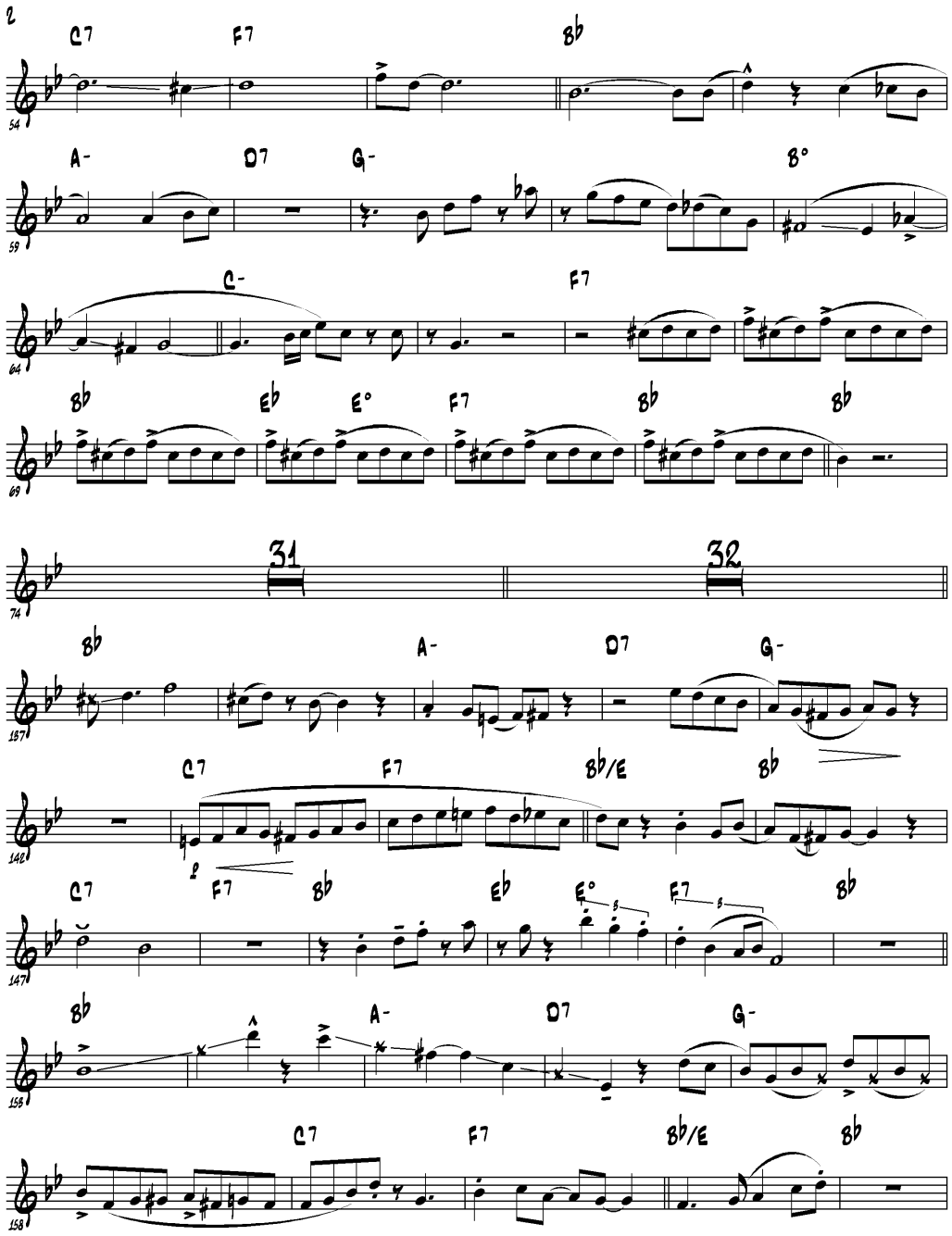
ALL OF ME

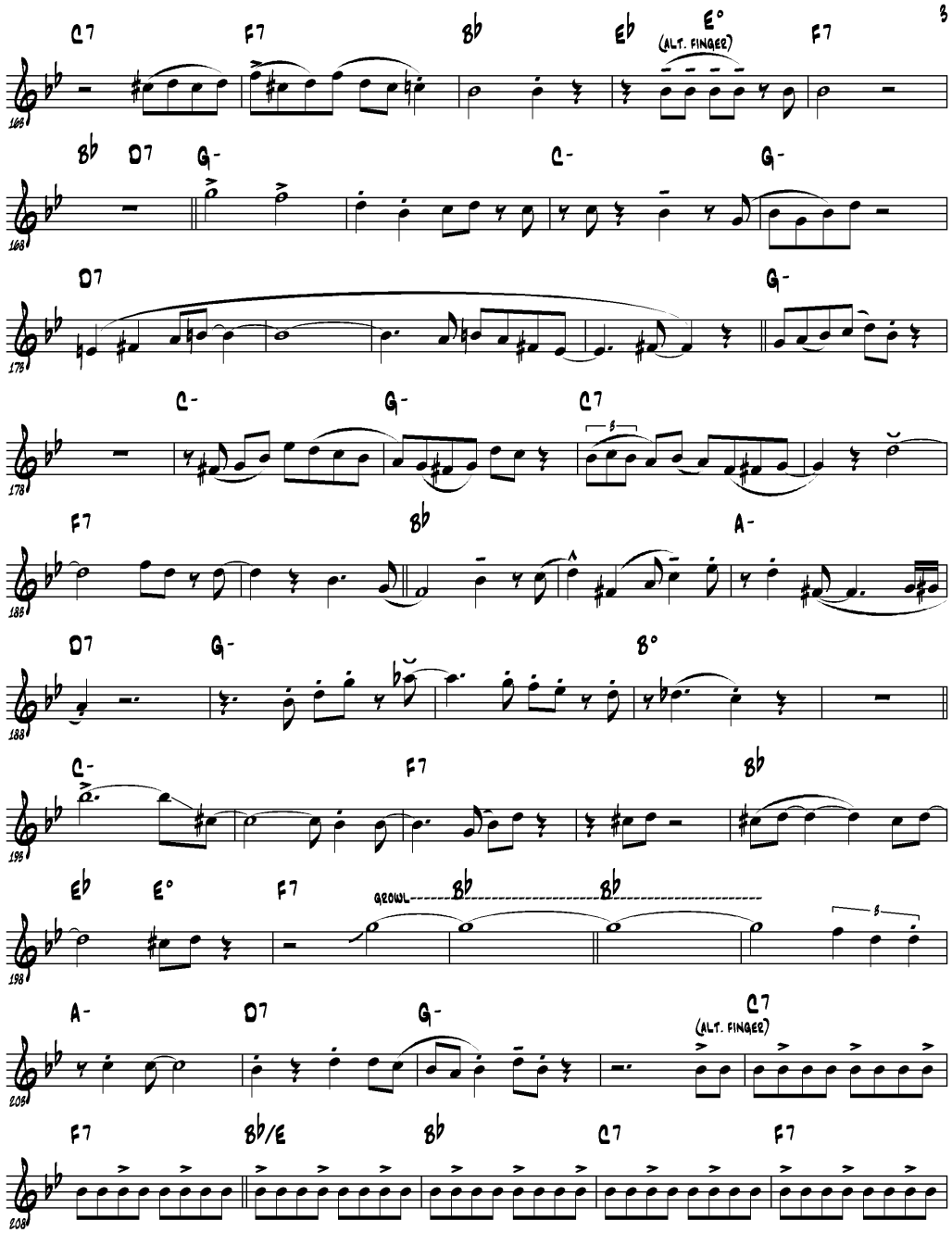

4
32
D6
F#7
57
B7
E-7
41
F#7
B-7
44
E13
E-7
48
A7
D6
F#7
52
B7
E-7
57
G6
G-6
F#-7
B9
61

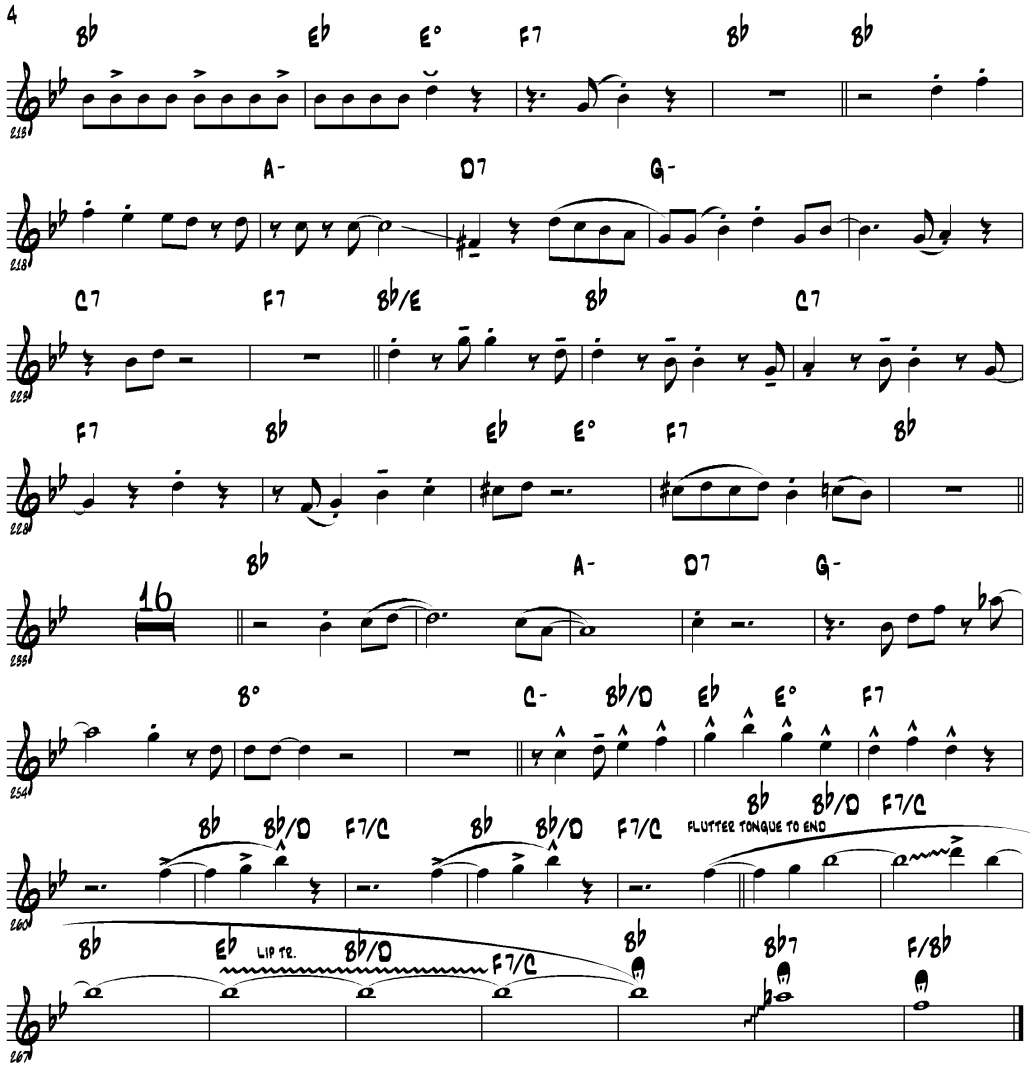

2
E-7
A13
D6
7
E-7
G6
G-6
F#-7
B9
E-7
A13
D6
GLISSANDO

LOVER COME BACK TO ME




2
C7
F7
B♭
54
A-
D7
G-
B°
59
C-
F7
64
B♭
E♭
E°
F7
B♭
B♭
69
31
32
74
B♭
A-
D7
G-
137
C7
F7
B♭/E
B♭
142
f
C7
F7
B♭
E♭
E°
F7
B♭
147
B♭
A-
D7
G-
153
C7
F7
B♭/E
B♭
158


C7
F7
B♭
E♭
E°
(ALT. FINGER)
F7
3
168
B♭
D7
G-
C-
G-
168
D7
G-
178
C-
G-
C7
178
F7
B♭
A-
188
D7
G-
8°
188
C-
F7
B♭
198
E♭
E°
F7
GROWL
B♭
B♭
198
A-
D7
G-
C7
(ALT. FINGER)
208
F7
B♭/E
B♭
C7
F7
208


4
B♭
E♭
E°
F7
B♭
B♭
A-
D7
G-
C7
F7
B♭/E
B♭
C7
F7
B♭
E♭
E°
F7
B♭
B♭
A-
D7
G-
16
8°
C-
B♭/D
E♭
E°
F7
B♭
B♭/D
F7/C
B♭
B♭/D
F7/C
FLUTTER TONGUE TO END
B♭
B♭/D
F7/C
B♭
B♭7
F/B♭
E♭
LIP TR.

APPENDIX B:

Selected Discography

Compilations Released Under Red Allen's Name

Most of Red Allen's important work from 1929 through the early 1950s is chronicled in various compilation reissues. The five listed below are the most comprehensive issued under Allen's own name:

Henry "Red" Allen, *Henry "Red" Allen and His New York Orchestra 1929-1930*. JSP, 2001.

The complete Victor recordings made between 1929 and 1930 on two cds, including alternate takes.

Henry "Red" Allen, *Henry "Red" Allen and the Mills Blue Rhythm Band*. Zim, 1982.

Single LP compilation featuring Allen's work with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band.

Henry "Red" Allen, *The Dynamic Trumpet*. Jazz Archives, 2000.

Single CD compilation covering the years 1929-1946. Also includes recordings made under his own name with Luis Russell, King Oliver, Spike Hughes, Coleman Hawkins, Horace Henderson, and Sidney Bechet.

Henry "Red" Allen, *Ride, Red, Ride*. AVS Living Era, 2000.

Single CD compilation, includes recordings made up to 1946, highlighting his work with Luis Russell, Fletcher Henderson, the Mills Blue Rhythm Band, Billie Holiday, James P. Johnson, Coleman Hawkins, and Sidney Bechet.

Henry "Red" Allen, *Quadromania*. Membran, 2005.

Four-CD compilation covering the years 1932-1952, highlighting Allen's work with Pee Wee Russell, Eddie Condon, Fats Waller, Tommy Dorsey, Edmond Hall, J.C. Higgenbotham and Willie "The Lion" Smith, and others.

Henry “Red” Allen, *Dr. Jazz, Vol. 9*. Storyville, 1995.

> Single CD compilation highlighting recordings made by Allen from 1951-1952 with Willie “The Lion” Smith and Buster Bailey.

Compilations Released Under Other Leaders’ Names

Much of Allen’s important early work is also chronicled in compilations issued under the names of other leaders. Highlights from his early work with Luis Russell, Fletcher Henderson, Coleman Hawkins and Jelly Roll Morton can be found in the compilations listed below:

Luis Russell, *The Luis Russell Story (1929-1934)*. Challenge, 2000.

Fletcher Henderson, *Wrappin’ It Up*. ABM, 2000.

Fletcher Henderson, *Ken Burns Jazz*. Columbia/Legacy, 2000.

Fletcher Henderson, *Tidal Wave: The Original Decca Recordings*. GRP, 1994.

Coleman Hawkins, *The Essential Sides Remastered 1929-1939*. JSP, 2006.

Jelly Roll Morton, *Jelly Roll Morton: 1926-1930*. JSP, 2000.

Bunny Berigan, *All Star Broadcasts (Live)*. Soundcraft, 1999.

> Compilation of radio broadcasts hosted by Bunny Berigan, includes Red Allen’s 1936 live recording of *Body and Soul*.

1957 - 1959

Some of Red Allen’s best work was recorded between the years 1957 and 1959. In these recordings, Allen’s style is fully matured, as he has absorbed lessons learned from a lifetime of musical experience spanning nearly the entire history of jazz. The listings below represent the best of Red Allen’s work during this period:

Henry “Red” Allen, *World on a String*. RCA, 1991.
The classic 1957 Red Allen All Stars album with Coleman Hawkins.

Coleman Hawkins and Red Allen, *Standards and Warhorses*. Jass Records, 1987.

Originally issued by Coleman Hawkins as *Dixieland Jazzfest* in 1957 and *The Sweet Moods of Jazz* in 1958.

Kid Ory and Red Allen, *We've Got Rhythm*. Verve, 1959.

Also issued as double album *Henry Red and the Kid* on British label Metro.

Kid Ory and Red Allen, *Kid Ory and Red Allen in Denmark*. Storyville, 1998.
Originally recorded in 1959.

1960-1966

The listings below are good representations of Allen's later work, spanning the years 1960-1966:

Henry “Red” Allen, *Red Allen Plays King Oliver*. Verve, 1960.

Henry “Red” Allen Quartet, *Live at the London House Chicago, September 15-22, 1961*. Fanfare, 1978.

Henry “Red” Allen and Joe Newman, *The Hot Trumpets of Henry “Red” Allen and Joe Newman.* Prestige, 1999.

The title of this CD is slightly misleading. This is not a recording made by Allen and Newman together, but actually two separate albums combined into one CD. The Allen tracks were originally issued in 1962 as *Mr. Allen*, on Prestige/ Swingville.

Henry “Red” Allen, *Feeling Good*. Columbia, 1965.

Henry “Red” Allen, *Henry “Red” Allen and His Quartet, Live 1965*. Storyville, 2008.

Pee Wee Russell and Henry “Red” Allen, *The College Concert of Pee Wee Russell and Henry “Red” Allen*. Impulse, 1966.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Cameron Shane Pitsch was born in Ellsworth, Maine, on July 11, 1971. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994 with a Bachelor's degree in Trumpet Performance with a jazz emphasis. In 1996, he completed a Master of Music in Trumpet Performance at Eastern Illinois University, where he worked as a teaching assistant in the jazz department. That same year, he moved to Champaign, Illinois, where he began his doctoral studies in trumpet performance and literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he also worked as a teaching assistant in the jazz department.

In summer, 2002, he moved back to Austin, Texas, where he currently resides. Since moving back to Austin, he has worked extensively as a teacher and clinician in both trumpet and jazz. In 2003, he helped found the Austin Jazz Project, an intensive summer jazz improvisation workshop for middle-school and high-school students, which is now in its seventh year.

As a professional musician, he has performed in a wide variety of settings, including classical, jazz, latin, funk, rock, soul, and country, appearing with artists as diverse as Willie Nelson, The Drifters, Sam Moore, and Maria Schneider. After completing his DMA, Mr. Pitsch will continue his pursuits as a performer and educator in the greater Austin area.