

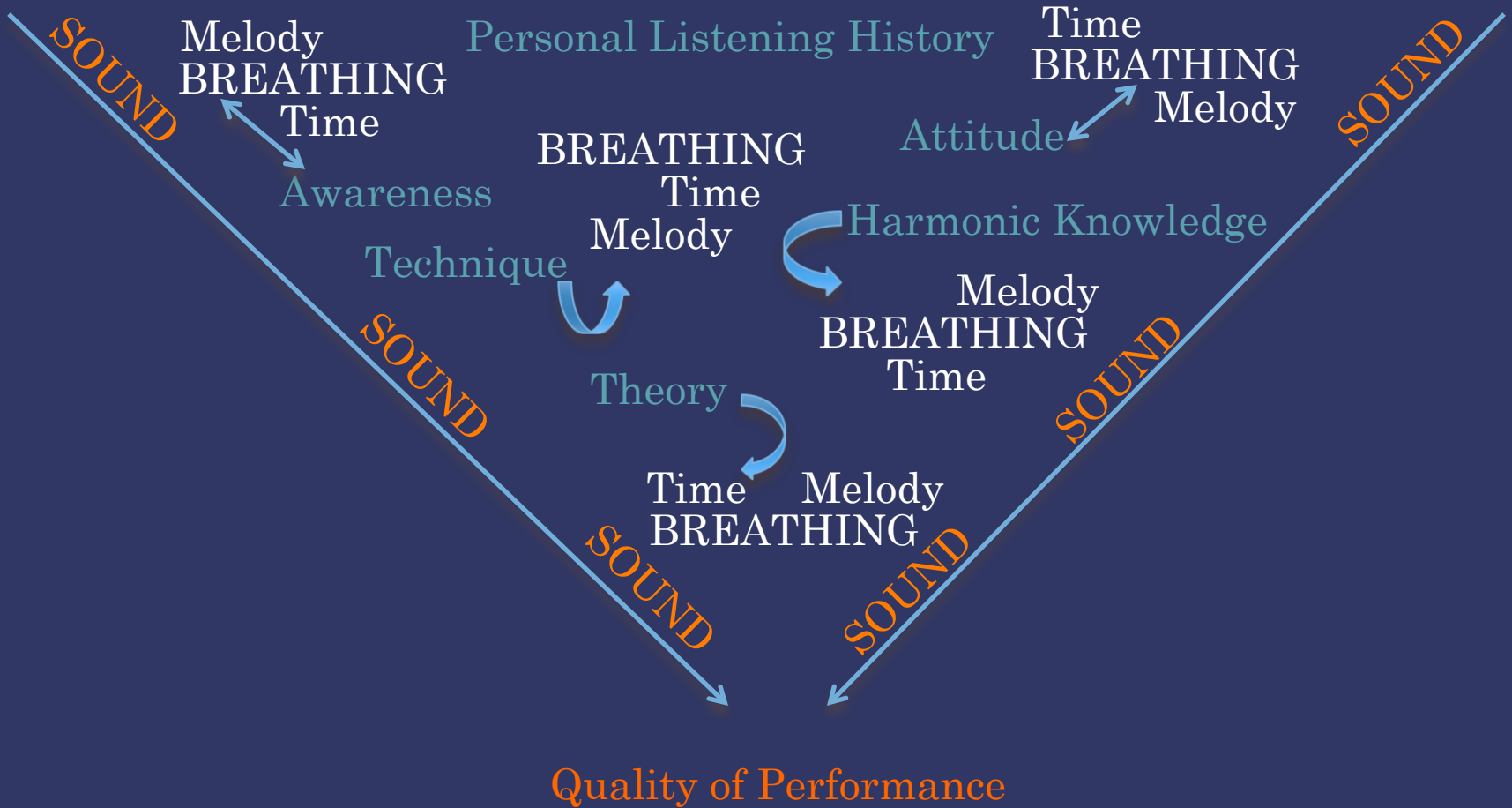
MILWAUKEE JAZZ INSTITUTE

BUILDING BETTER BASS LINES



Bassist Doug Watkins and Drummer Louis Hayes
Recording Horace Silver's album *Six Pieces of Silver*, 1957.

Foundations of Bass Playing





BREATHING - the experience of repeatedly feeling your body, noticing tension and letting go; your kinesthetic sense

Melody - your knowledge of the melody of the tune, and how comfortable you are with it; being able to sing it accurately, and play it on the bass in with emotional rhythm

Time – the accuracy, consistency, and feel of your beat; not separate from the emotional rhythm

SOUND – the depth and warmth of your tone, your volume/ projection, your attack/articulation, your intention, etc.

Personal Listening History - all the music you've ever heard

Awareness - your moment to moment ability to listen to what is going on around you; coming to your senses; keeping your eyes and ears open; Miles touching his ear

Attitude - your demeanor on and off the bandstand

Technique - your facility on the instrument: intonation, familiarity with the fingerboard, right hand dexterity, left hand strength and clarity

Harmonic Knowledge – how well you know the changes of the tune. Can you say them? Can you play them? Be very specific

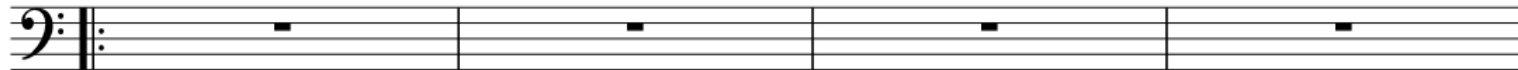
Theory – your general knowledge of functional Western Harmony, and its practical use in jazz



What is the Blues?

- 1) The Blues Form is distinct from the musical genre known as Blues, or the feeling of having the Blues. Blues in jazz typically refers to a specific 12-measure structure that repeats multiple times over the course of a single song.

12 Repeating Bars



5



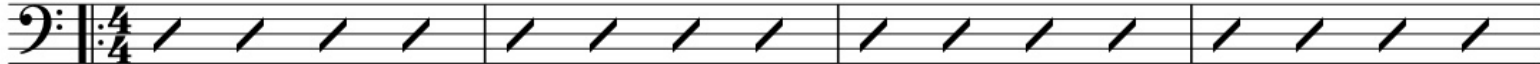
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2) In it's most basic form, the blues contains this essential harmonic structure.
Here, it is in the key of Bb

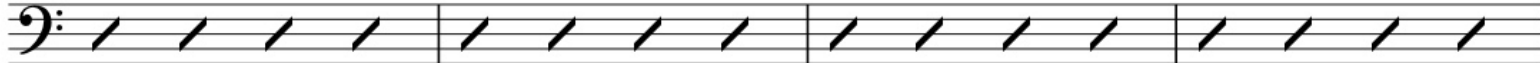
Basic Blues

I7
Bb7



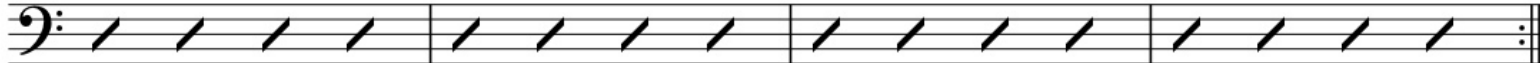
IV7
5 Eb7

I7
Bb7



V7
9 F7

I7
Bb7



3) Here is one of the most commonly used blues progressions, again in Bb. This is a structure that you're likely to find anywhere jazz is played, anywhere in the world.

Blues

I7
Bb7

IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

ii7
Cmi7

V7
F7

I7
Bb7

4) Another common variation:

Blues

17 **I7**
Bb7

18 **IV7**
Eb7

19 **I7**
Bb7

5 **IV7**
Eb7

6 **ivo7**
E°7

7 **I7**
Bb7

8 **iii7** **VI7**
Dmi7 G7

9 **ii7** **V7** **iii7** **VI7** **ii7** **V7**
Cmi7 F7 Dmi7 G7 Cmi7 F7

4) Using the basic form as a template, composers created seemingly endless variations. The blues form allows for an extremely broad range of mood, tempo, rhythmic and harmonic complexity. Here are a few more to become familiar with:

Bessie's Blues

-John Coltrane

The image displays three staves of musical notation for the piece "Bessie's Blues" by John Coltrane. Each staff begins with a bass clef and a repeat sign. The notation consists of four measures per staff, with diagonal slashes representing the rhythmic pattern. Chord symbols are written above the measures in red text.

Staff	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
1	I7 Eb7	IV7 Ab7	I7 Eb7	
2	5 IV7 Ab7		I7 Eb7	
3	9 V7 Bb7	IV7 Ab7	I7 Eb7	V7 Bb7

All Blues

-Miles Davis

I7
G7



5



IV7/I
9 C7/G



I7
13 G7



V7#9
17 D7(#9)

bVI7#9
Eb7(#9)

V7#9b13
D7(b13)



I7
21 G7



Equinox

-John Coltrane

i7
D \flat mi7

5 *iv7* **G \flat mi7** *i7* **D \flat mi7**

9 *bVI7* **A 7** *V7* **A \flat 7** *i7* **D \flat mi7**

Bird Blues

(aka Blues Going Down, Blues for Alice Changes)

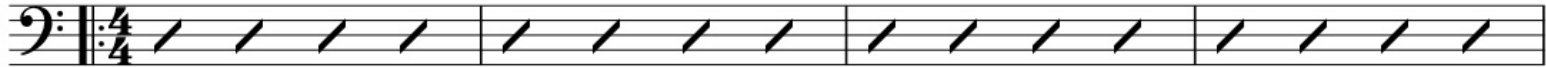
-Charlie Parker

IV

Imaj7
B \flat maj7

vii7b5 *iii7b9*
A mi7(b5) D7(b9)

iii7 *VI7* *ii7* *V7*
Gmi7 C7 Fmi7 B \flat 7



IV7
5 E \flat 7

iv7 *bvii7*
E \flat mi7 A \flat 7

iii7 *VI7*
Dmi7 G7

biii7 *bVI7*
D \flat mi7 G \flat 7

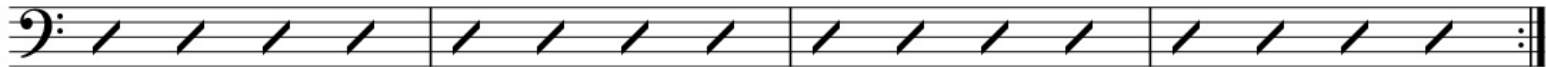


ii7
9 Cmi7

V7
F7

iii7 *VI7*
Dmi7 G7

ii7 *V7*
Cmi7 F7



5) Each of these 4 works contains at least one example of some specific harmonic motion that is found frequently in The American Songbook, and elsewhere in jazz. It is important to recognize these harmonic patterns - to be able to hear them, to be able to play them on the bass, and to be able to name them theoretically.

Bessie's Blues - V to IV to I (bar 9-10): From a Western Harmony perspective, this is nontraditional or backward motion, but it is very frequently used in rock-n-roll, blues (genre), etc.

All Blues - V to bVI to V (bar 17-20): All Blues, Stardust, Very Thought of You,

Equinox - Minor Blues with bVI to V (bar 9-10): You Don't Know What Love Is, You & The Night & The Music, Angel Eyes, In Walked Bud, etc.

Bird Blues - Imaj7 to viimi7b5 to iii7b9 to vi (bar 1-2): I'm Old Fashioned, Embraceable You, Confirmation, Airegin, Never be Another You, etc.

- iv7 to bvii7 to I or iii (bar 6-7): I Remember You, Just Friends, Dewey Square, etc.

- Chromatically descending ii7 V7 sequence (bar 7-10): Stablemates, Along Came Betty, Ask Me Now, Bye-Ya, etc.

“The primary role of a jazz bassist in a group is to support harmonically and rhythmically, and most importantly, to swing. So, there is no question. You **MUST** practice walking all the time so that your rhythmic pulse is consistently strong. The group you play with will depend on you to do this.” –Rufus Reid



Here are some basic ideas to keep your bass lines clear, strong, and forward moving:

- 1) Build your lines on the chord progression.
- 2) Play the root on the down beat of the measure, 85-ish percent of the time.
- 3) Use Chordal Approach
- 4) Use Scalar Approach
- 5) Use Leading-Tone Approach, Enclosures
- 6) Strong chord tones on beats 1 & 3, leading notes on beats 2 & 4.
- 7) 1-2-3-5 vs. 1-b2-2-3
- 8) The Basics and Beyond: Non-Root Downbeats and when to use them? 7 to 3 resolutions, line clichés, bass lines as melody, etc.

Example 1 – The root is right!
Solid, but static:

The image displays a musical score for a bass line in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is organized into three systems of four measures each. Above the notes, chord symbols are provided in red text. The notes themselves are quarter notes, and the bass clef is indicated at the start of each system.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measure 1: I^7 $B\flat^7$
Measure 2: IV^7 $E\flat^7$
Measure 3: I^7 $B\flat^7$
Measure 4: I^7 $B\flat^7$

System 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: IV^7 $E\flat^7$
Measure 6: IV^7 $E\flat^7$
Measure 7: I^7 $B\flat^7$
Measure 8: I^7 $B\flat^7$

System 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: ii^7 Cmi^7
Measure 10: V^7 F^7
Measure 11: I^7 $B\flat^7$
Measure 12: V^7 F^7

Example 2: Root and 5th –
Solid, static:

The musical notation is written on a single bass staff in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The piece consists of 12 measures. The notes are: Measure 1: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 2: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 3: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 4: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 5: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 6: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 7: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 8: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 9: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 10: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 11: Bb, D, F, Bb; Measure 12: Bb, D, F, Bb. The chord symbols are: Measure 1: I7 Bb7; Measure 2: IV7 Eb7; Measure 3: I7 Bb7; Measure 4: IV7 Eb7; Measure 5: I7 Bb7; Measure 6: V7 F7; Measure 7: ii7 Cmi7; Measure 8: V7 F7; Measure 9: I7 Bb7; Measure 10: V7 F7; Measure 11: I7 Bb7; Measure 12: V7 F7.

Example 3: Root and 3rd –
Solid, more forward direction:

The image displays a musical score in bass clef, 4/4 time, consisting of three staves. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The notation shows a sequence of chords with their roots and thirds indicated by red text above the notes. The notes are quarter notes, and the first staff begins with a repeat sign.

Staff 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measure 1: I^7 Bb7
Measure 2: IV^7 Eb7
Measure 3: I^7 Bb7
Measure 4: I^7 Bb7

Staff 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: IV^7 Eb7
Measure 6: IV^7 Eb7
Measure 7: I^7 Bb7
Measure 8: I^7 Bb7

Staff 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: ii^7 Cmi7
Measure 10: V^7 F7
Measure 11: I^7 Bb7
Measure 12: V^7 F7



'Pound Cake' by Lester Young from the 2009 album Live at Smalls
Albert 'Tootie' Heath (dr); Ben Street (bs); Ethan Iverson (pno)

Ben Street on 'Pound Cake'

From Tootie Heath Trio Live at Smalls November, 2009

Lester Young

G⁷

Piano Intro

7 **C⁷** **G⁷**

11 **D⁷** **G⁷** **D⁷**

15 **G⁷**

19 **C⁷** **G⁷**

23 **D⁷** **G⁷** **D⁷**

27 **G⁷**

31 **C⁷** **G⁷**

35 **D⁷** **G⁷** **D⁷**

2
39 G⁷

Staff 1: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 39-42. Chord: G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

43 C⁷ G⁷

Staff 2: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 43-46. Chords: C⁷, G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

47 D⁷ G⁷ D⁷

Staff 3: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 47-50. Chords: D⁷, G⁷, D⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

51 G⁷

Staff 4: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 51-54. Chord: G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

55 C⁷ G⁷

Staff 5: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 55-58. Chords: C⁷, G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

59 D⁷ G⁷ D⁷

Staff 6: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 59-62. Chords: D⁷, G⁷, D⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

63 G⁷

Staff 7: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 63-66. Chord: G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

67 C⁷ G⁷

Staff 8: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 67-70. Chords: C⁷, G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

71 D⁷ G⁷ D⁷

Staff 9: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 71-74. Chords: D⁷, G⁷, D⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

75 G⁷

Staff 10: Bass clef, 4/4 time. Measures 75-78. Chord: G⁷. Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

Example 4: Strict Chordal Approach

The musical score is written in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The music is a single melodic line with a strict chordal approach. The chords are indicated above the staff in red text.

Staff 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measure 1: I7 Bb7
Measure 2: IV7 Eb7
Measure 3: I7 Bb7
Measure 4: I7 Bb7

Staff 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: IV7 Eb7
Measure 6: IV7 Eb7
Measure 7: I7 Bb7
Measure 8: I7 Bb7

Staff 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: ii7 Cmi7
Measure 10: V7 F7
Measure 11: I7 Bb7
Measure 12: V7 F7

Example 5: Practical Chordal Approach

17
Bb7

IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

5 IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

9 ii7
Cmi7

V7
F7

I7
Bb7

V7
F7

Roots, Thirds, and Sevenths clearly define the harmony. At times this can be difficult to play on the instrument. It can produce some awkward leaps in the line because it often lacks the step-wise resolution between chords.

...and now, a pause for a word from Bob Cranshaw:

(2:56) “It’s been a great opportunity. I’ve had a ball for 40 some years now, longer than my marriages, Sonny (Rollins) and I have been together...”



(3:38) “...I like sports, so I equate myself as - I’m blocking for Sonny who is a half-back, who is just skilled. He’ll find a place to run through; I don’t care how big a block, whether you go left or right. I enjoy blocking for Sonny! ‘Cause he runs the ball so well! ...It’s always a lot of yards gained when I play with Sonny. He’s a superstar. ...He just keeps growing every time I hear him, everyday. I’m fortunate to be able to be there and listen to Sonny - daily, weekly, monthly, yearly. And it’s a blessing! It’s kept me – I feel the youngness in my life, I don’t feel wiped out as a musician. It’s kept me young. It’s kept me young in spirit... ‘Cause Sonny kicks ass...”

Example 6: Strict Scalar Approach

1 **I7**
Bb7

2 **IV7**
Eb7

3 **I7**
Bb7

5 **IV7**
Eb7

6 **I7**
Bb7

9 **ii7**
Cmi7

10 **V7**
F7

11 **I7**
Bb7

12 **V7**
F7

More forward direction, but problematic – generates repeated notes and frequently places the 4th scale degree on downbeat.

Example 7: Practical Scalar Approach

17
I7
Bb7

IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

5
IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

9
ii7
Cmi7

V7
F7

I7
Bb7

V7
F7

Much better! Still occasionally problematic. It needs the chromatic leading tones to avoid using the 4th scale degree and to make stronger resolutions.

Example 8: Leading-Tone Approach

17
Bb7

IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

5 IV7
Eb7

I7
Bb7

9 ii7
Cmi7

V7
F7

I7
Bb7

V7
F7

Sneaky! And Strong! Clearly defines the changes, provides forward direction, color, and interest. However, excessive chromaticism can be unclear and rapidly out of tune on the bass. So, occasionally use big intervals (chordal approach) to anchor your ears and the pitch.

Example 9: Strict Chromatic Enclosure

1 I^7
 Bb^7

2 IV^7
 Eb^7

3 I^7
 Bb^7

5 IV^7
 Eb^7

6 I^7
 Bb^7

7 (G^7)

9 ii^7
 Cmi^7

10 V^7
 F^7

11 I^7
 Bb^7

12 V^7
 F^7

Strong linear concept! Plenty of forward momentum. It inherently implies alterations to the chords that may or may not be present. Adhering too rigidly to this idea risks some strong clashes with other instruments. Use your ears, and your judgment.

Example 10: Diatonic & Chromatic Enclosure

The musical notation is as follows:

- Staff 1: $I7$ $Bb7$ (dia.) $IV7$ $Eb7$ (dia.) $I7$ $Bb7$ (chrom.)
- Staff 2: $IV7$ $Eb7$ (chrom.) $I7$ $Bb7$ (dia.) $(G7)$ (dia.)
- Staff 3: $ii7$ $Cmi7$ (dia.) $V7$ $F7$ (dia.) $I7$ $Bb7$ (chrom.) $V7$ $F7$ (dia.)

Oh, so nice! Still plenty of forward momentum and color. Mixing the diatonic and chromatic enclosures provides more clarity and openness to the quality of the line - at least to my ears. It seems to suggest a willingness to go wherever the soloist might lead!



“...Creativity is more than just being different. Anybody can play weird; that's easy. What's hard is to be as simple as Bach. Making the complicated simple, awesomely simple, that's creativity.

Bach is how buildings got taller.
It's how we got to the moon...”

-Charles Mingus

Charles Mingus at The Five Spot, NYC 1958

Example 11 – Strong chord tones on beats 1 & 3,
leading notes on beats 2 & 4.

The musical notation is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and consists of three staves. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The chords and their leading notes are as follows:

Staff	Beat	Chord	Leading Note
1	1	I7 (Bb7)	Fb
	2	IV7 (Eb7)	Bb
	3	I7 (Bb7)	Fb
5	1	IV7 (Eb7)	Bb
	2	I7 (Bb7)	Fb
	3	(G7)	F
9	1	ii7 (Cmi7)	D
	2	V7 (F7)	E
	3	I7 (Bb7)	Fb
	4	V7 (F7)	E

The first concept that I was first taught in how to build lines – Courtesy of David Parlato

Roots, Thirds, and Sevenths clearly define the harmony. Resolving by ½-step or whole-step after beat 4 is a strong way to approach the next change. Frequently becomes into 1-2-3-5

Example 12 – 1-2-3-5 vs. 1-b2-2-3

The image displays a musical score in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score is divided into three systems of four bars each. Chord symbols and fingerings are written above the notes.

System 1 (Bars 1-4):

- Bar 1: I7 Bb7, fingering 235
- Bar 2: IV7 Eb7, fingering b223
- Bar 3: I7 Bb7, fingering b223
- Bar 4: b223

System 2 (Bars 5-8):

- Bar 5: IV7 Eb7, fingering 235
- Bar 6: 235, * (star symbol)
- Bar 7: I7 Bb7, fingering (G7)
- Bar 8: (G7)

System 3 (Bars 9-12):

- Bar 9: ii7 Cmi7, fingering 235
- Bar 10: V7 F7, fingering 235
- Bar 11: I7 Bb7, fingering b223
- Bar 12: V7 F7

First 4 bars – pretty nice! Bars 5,6,7 are what you may want to avoid: repeated pattern; repeated notes, especially on resolutions between chords. With good planning, these structures can be used to generate easy to play, strong, clear lines.

Pierre Michelot on No Name Blues

(By Earl Bostic, From Bud Powell's 1965 album 'A Portrait of Thelonious')

5

Melody Enters

9 Bb7 Eb7 * Bb7 Eb7 Eo7

15 Bb7 * * Cmi7 F7 Bb7 Gmi7 Cmi7 F7

21 Bb7 Eb7 Bb7 Eb7 Eo7

27 Bb7 Cmi7 F7 Bb7 F7

33 Bb7 b223 Eb7 (Bb7) * Eb7 flat

39 Bb7 Cmi7 F7 * Bb7 F7 * b

45 Bb7 Eb7 Bb7 235 Eb7 *

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a bass line in 4/4 time, key of Bb. The score is divided into measures 5 through 45. It includes various chord changes and melodic lines. Key features include: a 'Melody Enters' box at measure 9; asterisks (*) marking specific notes in measures 9, 15, 33, 39, and 45; a red 'b223' marking in measure 33; a red '(Bb7)' marking in measure 33; a red '235' marking in measure 45; and a 'flat' marking in measure 33. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 45.

[Following: Bud Powell, Franco Manzecchi \(dr\), and Pierre Michelot in November 1959 at the Blue Note, Paris.](#)
Photo by Andre Sas

2

51 Bb^7 Cmi^7 F^7 $b223$ Bb^7 F^7 *

57 Bb^7 * Eb^7 * Bb^7 Eb^7 *

63 Bb^7 * * Cmi^7 F^7 $b223$ Bb^7

69 Bb^7 Eb^7 * Bb^7 Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$

75 Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 Bb^7

81 Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 * Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$

87 Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 * Bb^7 Cmi^7 F^7

93 Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$

99 Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 Bb^7

Detailed description: The image shows a bass line with ten staves of music. Each staff begins with a measure number (51, 57, 63, 69, 75, 81, 87, 93, 99) and is followed by a series of chords. Some chords have a red asterisk (*) above them. The chords are: Bb^7 , Cmi^7 , F^7 , $b223$, Bb^7 , F^7 , Bb^7 * Eb^7 * Bb^7 Eb^7 *, Bb^7 * * Cmi^7 F^7 $b223$ Bb^7 , Bb^7 Eb^7 * Bb^7 Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$, Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 * Bb^7 , Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 * Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$, Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 * Bb^7 Cmi^7 F^7 , Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 Eb^7 $E^{\circ 7}$, and Bb^7 * Cmi^7 F^7 Bb^7 . The music is written in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some triplets indicated by a '3' below the notes in the final staff.



Example 13: One way to use Non-Root Downbeats – Note 3rds or 7ths on beat 1, Leading Resolutions by ½-step, Root used later in measure, General linear shape, Hills and Valleys, etc.

Chord symbols above the staff:

- Measure 1: $I7$ $Bb7$
- Measure 2: $IV7$ $Eb7$
- Measure 3: $I7$ $Bb7$
- Measure 4: $IV7$ $Eb7$
- Measure 5: $I7$ $Bb7$
- Measure 6: $ii7$ $Cmi7$
- Measure 7: $V7$ $F7$
- Measure 8: $I7$ $Bb7$
- Measure 9: $V7$ $F7$
- Measure 10: $V7$ $F7$

Example 14: A Sample Line

The musical score consists of three staves of bass clef music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The first staff begins with a repeat sign and contains four measures. The second staff starts at measure 5 and contains four measures. The third staff starts at measure 9 and contains four measures, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. Chord annotations are placed above the notes in red text.

Staff 1 (Measures 1-4):
Measure 1: I7 Bb7
Measure 2: IV7 Eb7
Measure 3: I7 Bb7
Measure 4: I7 Bb7

Staff 2 (Measures 5-8):
Measure 5: IV7 Eb7
Measure 6: I7 Bb7
Measure 7: I7 Bb7
Measure 8: (G7)

Staff 3 (Measures 9-12):
Measure 9: ii7 Cmi7
Measure 10: V7 F7
Measure 11: I7 Bb7
Measure 12: V7 F7

Use *your* ears. Make melodies in time, breathe.



'Blue 7' from Saxophone Colossus 1956

Sonny Rollins (tnr)

Tommy Flanagan (pno)

Doug Watkins (bs)

Max Roach (dr)

Doug Watkins on Blue 7

(Album: Sonny Rollins, Saxophone Colossus on Prestige, 1956)

Chord changes: Bb7 Eb7 Bb7

5 Eb7 Bb7

9 F7 Eb7 Bb7 F7

13 Bb7 Eb7 Bb7

17 Eb7 Bb7

21 F7 Eb7 Bb7 F7

25 Melody Enters Bb7 Eb7 Bb7

29 Eb7 Bb7

33 F7 Eb7 Bb7

Detailed description: This is a musical score for a bass line in 4/4 time, written in the key of B-flat major (two flats). The score consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a key signature change from one flat to two flats and a time signature change to 4/4. Above the first three measures are the chords Bb7, Eb7, and Bb7. The second staff has Eb7 above the first measure and Bb7 above the second measure. The third staff has F7 above the first measure, Eb7 above the second, Bb7 above the third, and F7 above the fourth. The fourth staff has Bb7 above the first measure, Eb7 above the second, and Bb7 above the third. The fifth staff has Eb7 above the first measure and Bb7 above the second. The sixth staff has F7 above the first measure, Eb7 above the second, Bb7 above the third, and F7 above the fourth. The seventh staff has a box labeled 'Melody Enters' above the first measure, with Bb7 below it, Eb7 above the second, and Bb7 above the third. The eighth staff has Eb7 above the first measure and Bb7 above the second. The ninth staff has F7 above the first measure, Eb7 above the second, and Bb7 above the third. The music is written in bass clef with various rhythmic patterns including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Tenor Solo Begins

2
37 Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7

41 Eb^7 Bb^7

45 F^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 F^7

49 Bb^7 (Eb^7) Bb^7

53 Eb^7 Bb^7

57 F^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 F^7

61 Bb^7 Eb^7 Bb^7

65 Eb^7 Bb^7

69 F^7 Eb^7 Bb^7 F^7

The image shows a tenor solo musical score in bass clef. It consists of nine staves of music, each with a measure number and chord changes indicated above the staff. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The chords are: Bb^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 , Bb^7 , (Eb^7), Bb^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 , Bb^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 , Eb^7 , Bb^7 , F^7 . The music is written in a simple, melodic style with eighth and quarter notes.



From “Time & Money: New Poems”
by William Matthews, 1995

You have to pick up The Bass, as
Mingus called
his, with audible capitals, and
think of the slow years
the wood spent as a tree, which
might well have been
enough for wood, and think of the
skill the bassmaker
carried without great thought of it
from home
to the shop and back for decades,
and know
what bassists before you have
played, and know
how much of this is stored in The
Bass like energy
in a spring and know how much
you must coax out.
How easy it would be, instead, to
pull a sword
from a stone. But what’s inside The
Bass wants out.



Outlining and Rhythm-Talk

Excerpt from ‘The Emotional Rhythm of Sophia Rosoff’ by Sarah Deming:

Abby Whiteside’s way of finding the music was to outline first. She had students play only selected notes of a piece, following the musical and rhythmic highlights.

“Outlining creates a musical statement that the composer heard,” Rosoff explains. “It gives you shape and direction, a sense of the whole, which is greater than the sum of its parts.” In order to coordinate breath with music, Rosoff expanded upon outlining by adding “rhythm talk,” in which the player speaks a repeated word such as “little.”

“It changed the way I feel rhythm in jazz,” says Michael Kanan. “For years I was struggling with trying to get a propulsive sense of swing. When I started doing rhythm talk, suddenly it felt much easier to play anything I wanted. She also had me dance, putting my feet on the first and third beat and my hands on the second and fourth. That has to do with big bands, because in early swing bands the bass would play on one and three and the piano, guitar and high hat would play on two and four. So you are representing the whole rhythm section. Then I would just hear the harmony in my head and sing the melody. I was representing the whole piece of music in my body, just by singing and dancing.”

The prominent jazz pianist and composer Fred Hersch has studied with Rosoff for thirty years. When asked to explain why Rosoff attracts so much jazz talent, Hersch says, “It’s the emphasis on rhythm. The classical players love her, but she is so different from what they’ve been trained in – fingers, strength, power. Also, Sophia has never been a self-promoter, never affiliated herself with a conservatory. She always stresses that it’s not a technique or a method. It’s all about connection.”

Hersch finds outlining particularly relevant to the jazz player, and he teaches it to his own students at the Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory of Music. “Jazz is outlining,” he says. “The chord changes are your outline. I tell my students that the changes are a glass bowl, transparent yet solid, and you can put rocks or water or goldfish in the bowl. It will look different depending on what you put in it, but it will not change its shape – just as the form of the tune will retain its essential characteristics. Sophia’s been an influence in terms of letting the student make a mess, letting them hang out in uncertainty for a while. There’s not one right way to outline, just as there’s not one right way to play ‘Autumn Leaves.’”



Oscar Peterson on Piano
Ray Brown on Bass
Ed Thigpen on Drums
'C Jam Blues' – Duke Ellington
Live in Denmark, 1964.