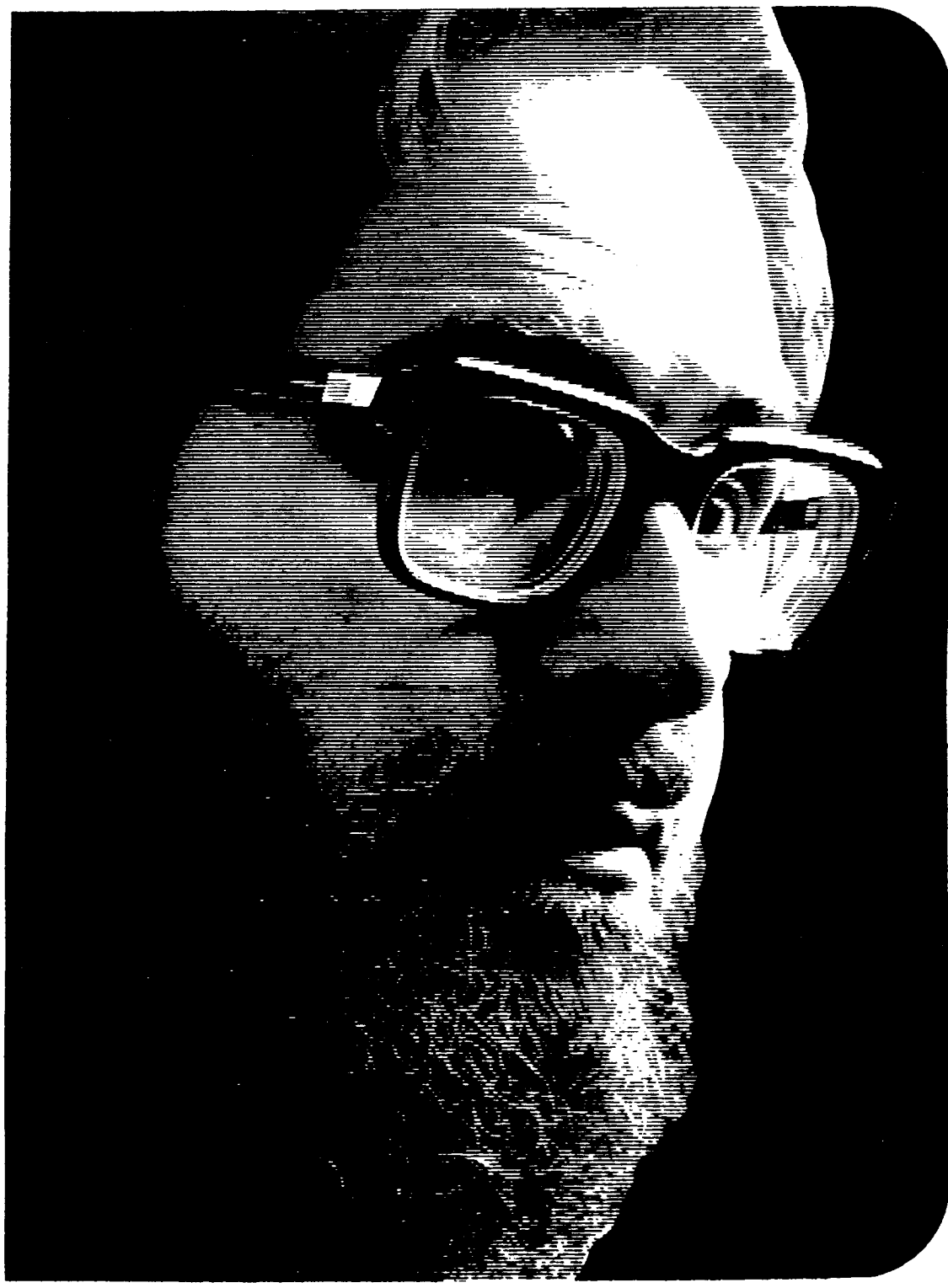
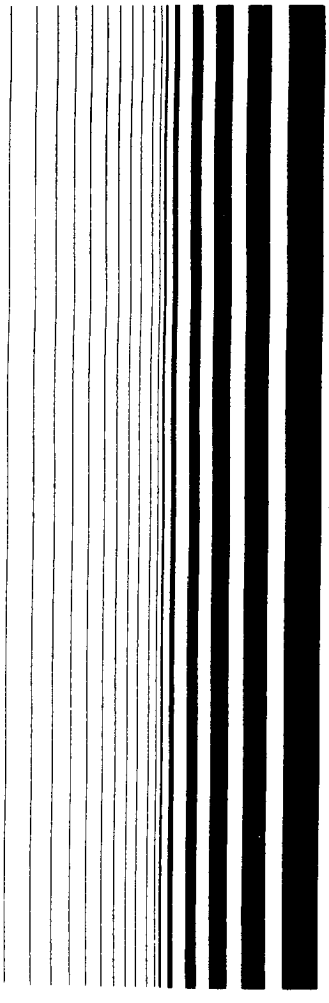
BILL EVANS PLAYS



ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS PLUS **WHO CAN I TURN TO** TRANSCRIBED
NOTE-FOR-NOTE FROM HIS RECORDINGS

TRO

BILL EVANS PLAYS



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Design/Champion Teitler Inc.

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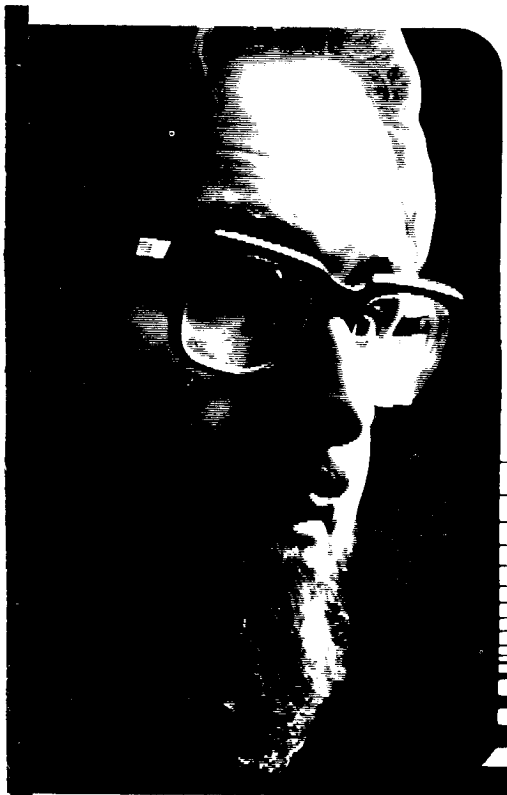


BILL EVANS

ommon man, like the digital computer, is a sum of his experiences — what is put in comes out in some way at ime. The artist is not a common man and, like art, is han the sum of his parts.

e in point: William John Evans, b. Aug. 16, 1929; began o studies at 6, violin at 7, flute at 13; graduated South- Louisiana College, 1950; joined Herbie Fields band, rmy, 1951-54; various playing jobs in New York City, post-graduate study, Mannes College, 1955; first trio rding, 1956; joined Miles Davis Sextet, 1959; formed own late 1959; recipient of several jazz awards, including *Beat* International Jazz Critics Poll and Readers Poll; o NARAS Grammy awards for best jazz album of the *Conversations with Myself* (1964) and *Bill Evans at the ux Jazz Festival* (1968).

w, if you add all that up, you won't get Bill Evans, not if you add the following authoritative statements:

ns is the first genius of the piano since Art Tatum." rd Feather)

. . . the revolution that has come to jazz piano." e Lees)

one of the most influential musicians in jazz today." orgenstern)

hen Bill Evans is in town, one goes not to listen so much worship." (Brian Priestly)

ps what is needed to find all of Bill Evans is some commentary on his work:

th pulse and harmonic movement are immensely slow allads), the middle register chords scrunchily sensuous, cing warm, the texture enveloping; yet through and is introverted quiet the melodic lines float and soar in the treble, insinuate in the tenor range, and oc- nally reverberate in the bass. Evans' ability to make lines 'speak' on the piano is of extraordinary subtlety; ays the sensuousness leads not to passivity but to th. The dance-lilt flows into spring-like song; the in- stibly inventive cross-rhythms and counter melodies are never rebarbative, always supple and in that sense songful. Even when Evans plays quick numbers . . . the rhythmic zest provokes song . . . " (English composer, critic, and historian Wilfrid Mellers, in his book *Music in a New Found Land*)

"Evans has brought piano jazz forward to a new plateau of lyrical beauty. He has a touch of phenomenal gentleness, a fine facility with the pedals for dynamic contrast, and most important of all, an ability to voice chords so ingeniously that the placement of the notes, the question of which notes are doubled, which struck softly and which heavily, may be far more important than the basic identity of the chord." (Leonard Feather, in his revised *The Book of Jazz*)

"When he plays, it is like Hemingway telling a story. Extraneous phrases are rare. The tale is told with the strictest economy, and when it is over, you are tempted to say, 'Of course, it's so simple. Why didn't I think of that.' He is, in essence, a synecdochist, an artist who implies as much as he plays. And moving all his music, coloring every note, is that deep, rhythmic, almost religious feeling that is the seminal force of jazz." (Don Nelsen, in *Down Beat*)

And, if I may, a few abstracts from reviews I've written of Evans' work in the last few years:

"In Evans' music, mind and heart become one. His fine-lace improvisations are webs of finely spun steel — strongly structured but flexible and open to the sun's light. His work, particularly on ballads, slithers through a maze of unexpected twists and turns, revealing a complex mind and staunch heart at play . . . He has the knack of turning over-played tunes into quite personal musical excursions that give the impression that this is the first time he's ever explored the pieces. He exposes new facets that lend such vitality to the tunes that the listener begins to wonder if these are the same tunes he's heard over and over through the years . . . He tenderly unravels the threads that make up the material and then reweaves them into a stunning tapestry of color and movement . . . His voicing of chords (the epitome of clarity) is at the root of his ability to draw so much tonal beauty from his

instrument . . . Evans' fine touch brings a delicate lightness to lush passages that if played with one degree less artistry would be cheap and melodramatic; by measuring and controlling his emotion, Evans turns such passages into art. (He has an uncanny sense of when to pull up on the reins.)"

But maybe we're looking in the wrong places for Bill Evans. He is a man of no mean intellectual ability, an articulate and analytical man, well-read, well-educated. If anyone knows what Bill Evans is all about, it should be Bill Evans. Perhaps if he went all the way back, he might reveal something . . .

"My older brother, Harry, played a big part in influencing me throughout my life," Bill said recently. "He was the first one to take piano lessons, and it was my mimicking him that led to my playing. I always sort of worshipped him. In sports, I always tried to keep up with him, even though he was two years older and very athletically inclined. The same way with piano. He started playing trumpet (our parents made us take a secondary instrument) in a high school rehearsal band and got interested in playing jazz. One day the piano player got the measles; I went to the rehearsal and read the stock arrangement exactly as written — *exactly*, and you know what they're like. I think I was about 12. But this was the thing: though I could play masterpieces on the piano and had a good technique and could play them musically, I couldn't play *My Country 'Tis of Thee* without the music. There was no way I could make music. I'd developed a very good reading ability and was very happy in the pleasure I got from playing great piano pieces.

"Anyway, they decided to keep me. Then one night we were playing *Tuxedo Junction*, and for some reason I got inspired and put in a little blues thing. *Tuxedo Junction* is in B-flat, and I put in a little D-flat, D, F thing, bing! in the right hand. It was such a thrill. It sounded right and good, and it wasn't written, and I had done it. The idea of doing something in music that somebody hadn't thought of opened a whole new world to me."

Evans' interest in jazz stems from that night.

He said that he was fortunate in getting with a group of older players shortly after his dance-band debut. The leader of the older group was Buddy Valentino, but it was bass player George Platt whom Evans names as the man who helped him most at the early stage of the game.

"He knew chord changes very well," Evans recalled, "and understood harmony and wrote arrangements and had the patience of Job, I guess, because he called chord changes to me for a year and a half without ever saying, 'Haven't you learned them yet?' Finally, instead of thinking of them as isolated changes, I worked out the system on which traditional theory is based: I just used numbers—1, 5, 6, and so on—and began to understand how the music was put together.

"Also the band was more of a jazz band than the high school band. I had to play solos. On some of the jobs, the people expected to hear jazz, so I just dived in and tried it. I have recordings from the very beginning that show I was very clear in what I was doing. I've always preferred to play something simple than go all over the keyboard on something I wasn't clear about. Back then, I would stay within the triad."

He told of playing four or five nights a week throughout his high school days (and falling from straight A's in his freshman year to D's in his senior year) and working resort jobs in New Jersey during the summer. In addition to this practical experience, the young musician became deeply immersed in jazz.

"I was buying all the records . . . anybody from Coleman Hawkins to Bud Powell and Dexter Gordon. That was when I first heard Bud, on those Dexter Gordon sides on Savoy. I heard Earl Hines very early and, of course, the King Cole Trio. Nat, I thought, was one of the greatest, and I still do. I think he is probably the most under-rated jazz pianist in the history of jazz.

"I'd play hookey from school and hear all the bands at the Paramount in New York or the Adams in Newark. Or we'd try to sneak in the clubs on 52nd St. with phony draft cards, just to hear some jazz. I got a lot of experience with insight that way.

"Now, in retrospect, I think it was a good thing I didn't have a great aptitude for mimicry, though it made it very difficult for me at the time because I had to work very hard to take things apart. I had to build my whole musical style. I'd abstract musical principles from people I dug, and I'd take their feeling or technique to apply to things the way that I'd built them. But because I had to build them so meticulously, I think, worked out better in the end, because it gave me a complete understanding of everything I was doing."

Evans has been paying learning dues ever since he hit that minor third on *Tuxedo Junction*. He tells of learning to accompany when he was with Herbie Fields, of studying music of all kinds when he was younger, of sitting in with other musicians around the country, of learning to be flexible so he could play with any kind of rhythm section, of doubling between the Fifth Army Band at Ft. Sheridan (in which he played flute and piccolo) and jazz clubs in nearby Chicago (the doubling almost killed him, which teaches one a lot about one's self). He undoubtedly still brings something home each night that he wants to ponder and analyze and perhaps add to his playing arsenal.

Where does it end? Where does he want to go?

"I'd just like to go forward," he answered. "Forward by replacing what I'm doing with something better. And that's the hang-up, you see. The hang-up also is that whatever you try to learn, you learn very fast at first and then the learning gets slower and you're up against an almost impenetrable wall, and the next sixteenth of an inch takes an enormous effort. I'd like to be changing every night, have something absolutely new every night.

"I don't feel I'm cramped by a style; I'm cramped by my own limitations. I'm free to do anything I want with my trio, but I believe in quality — I try to play something that's good, that's a complete product. I might jump out into a new area, a free area, but this doesn't last long, because I have to have something that offers a wider scope emotionally to express myself in.

"I really believe in the language of the popular idiom, the song, and this has come out of not just our culture but all of history, especially the traditional jazz idiom. It's the experience of millions of people and of conditions which are impossible to take into consideration. But I'd rather deal with something as real as that than anything that is merely arbitrary, such as playing without chords, bar lines or form.

"Now, if I could take the feelings and experience I have from this traditional idiom and somehow extend it to another area of expression — whether it's 'free' or not — to continuously progress with it, that I would like to do. I want everything to have roots — and not only that, but that it express something that has esthetic value. I don't want to express just *my* feelings — all my feelings aren't interesting to everybody. My everyday frustrations are not all interesting, and I don't want to hear about anybody else's. I want to put in music something that will enrich somebody. I'm the first one, of course, to be enriched when I discover it, and that's the reason for doing it really.

"My creed for art in general is that it should enrich the soul; it should teach spiritually by showing a person a portion of himself that he would not discover otherwise. It's easy to rediscover part of yourself, but through art you can be shown part of yourself you never knew existed. That's the real mission of art. The artist has to find something within himself that's universal and which he can put into terms that are communicable to other people. The magic of it is that art can communicate this to a person without his realizing it.

"Enrichment, that's the function of music."

Despite Evans' analysis, despite the explanatory attempts of critics, despite the piecing together of data, you will not find Bill Evans on pieces of paper. You will find Bill Evans in his music. Catch him — if you can.

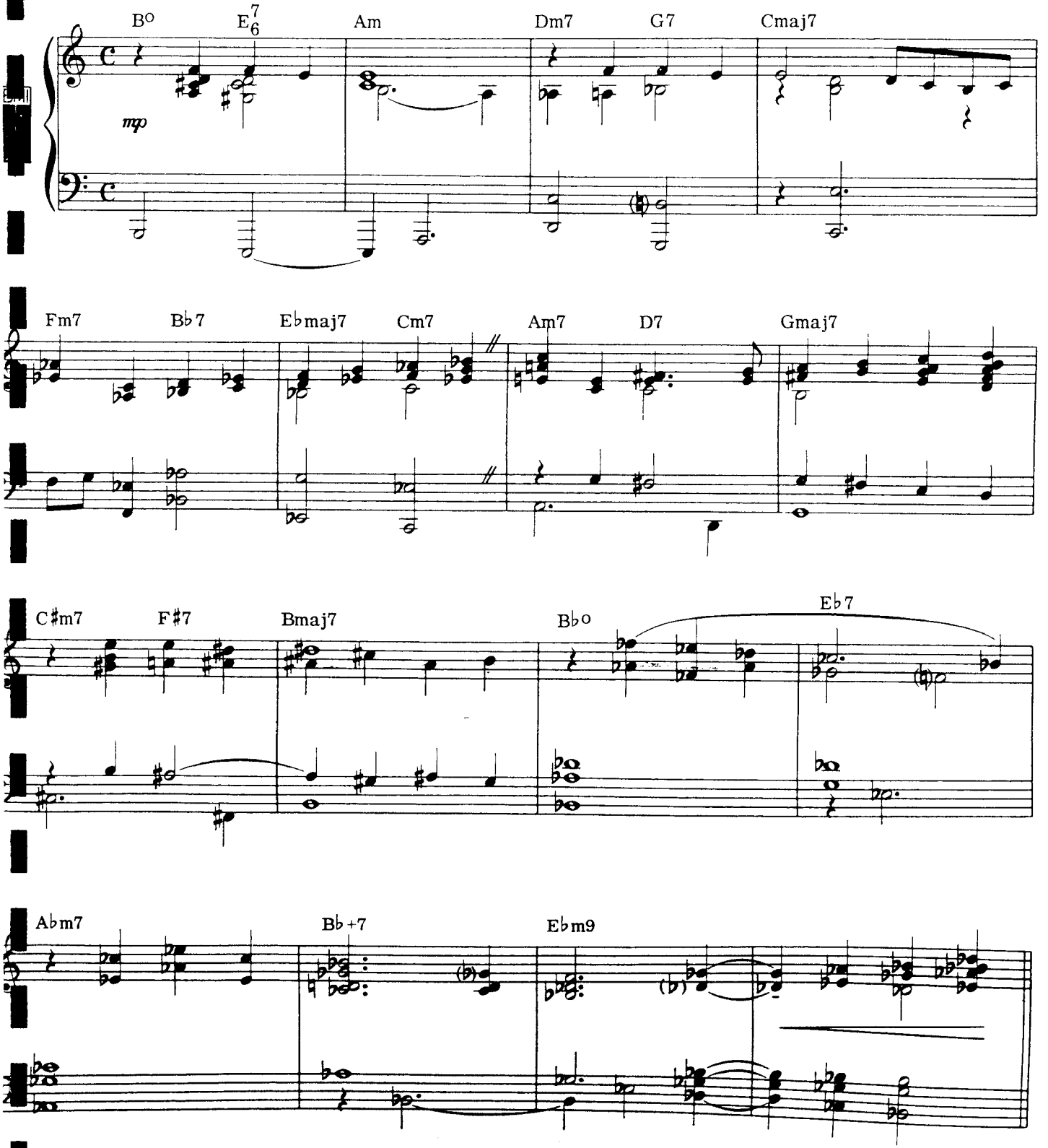
—Don DeMicheal

transcribed from BILL EVANS AT TOWN HALL — Verve 6-8683

TURN OUT THE STARS

Music by
BILL EVANS

Ad lib - Rubato



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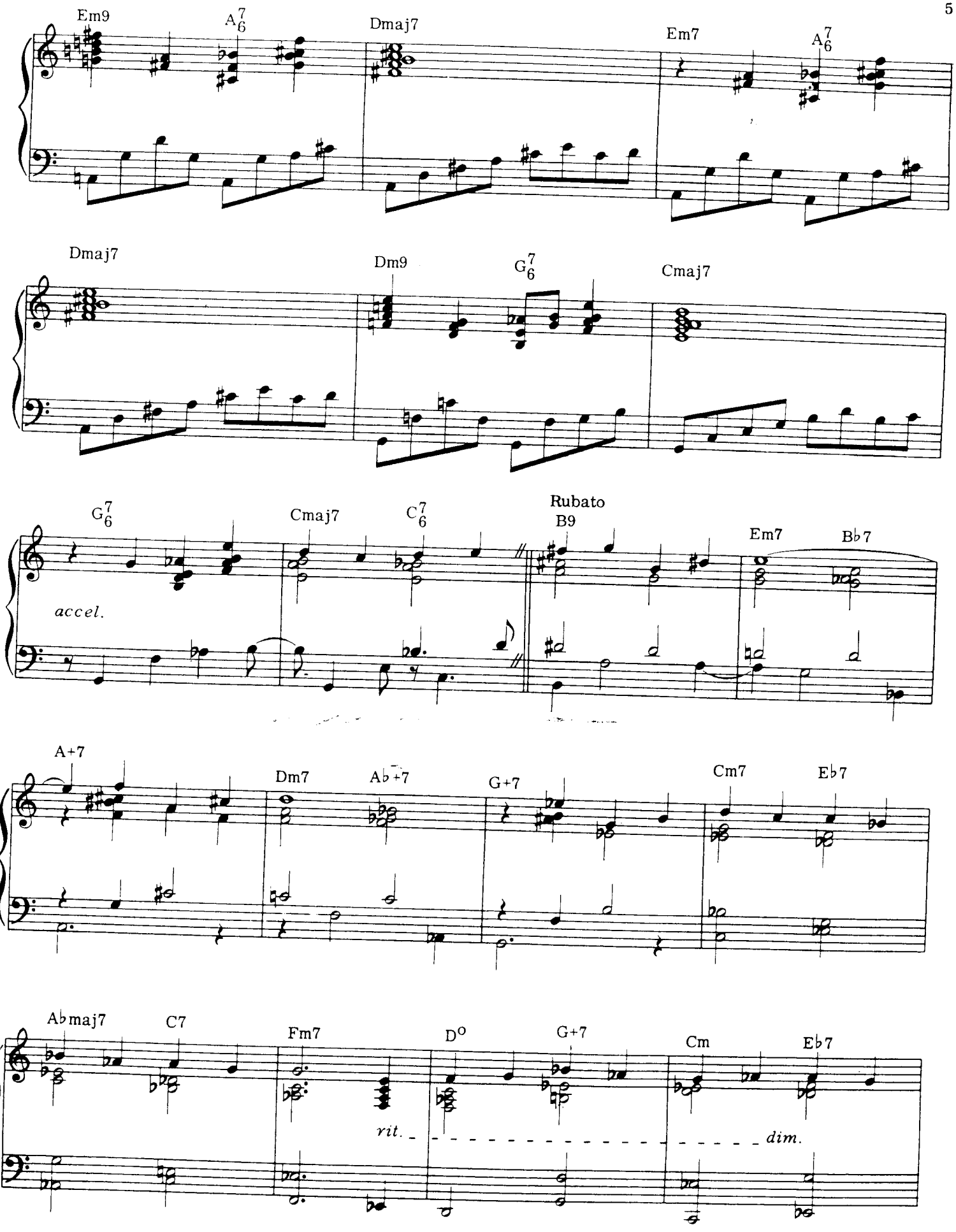
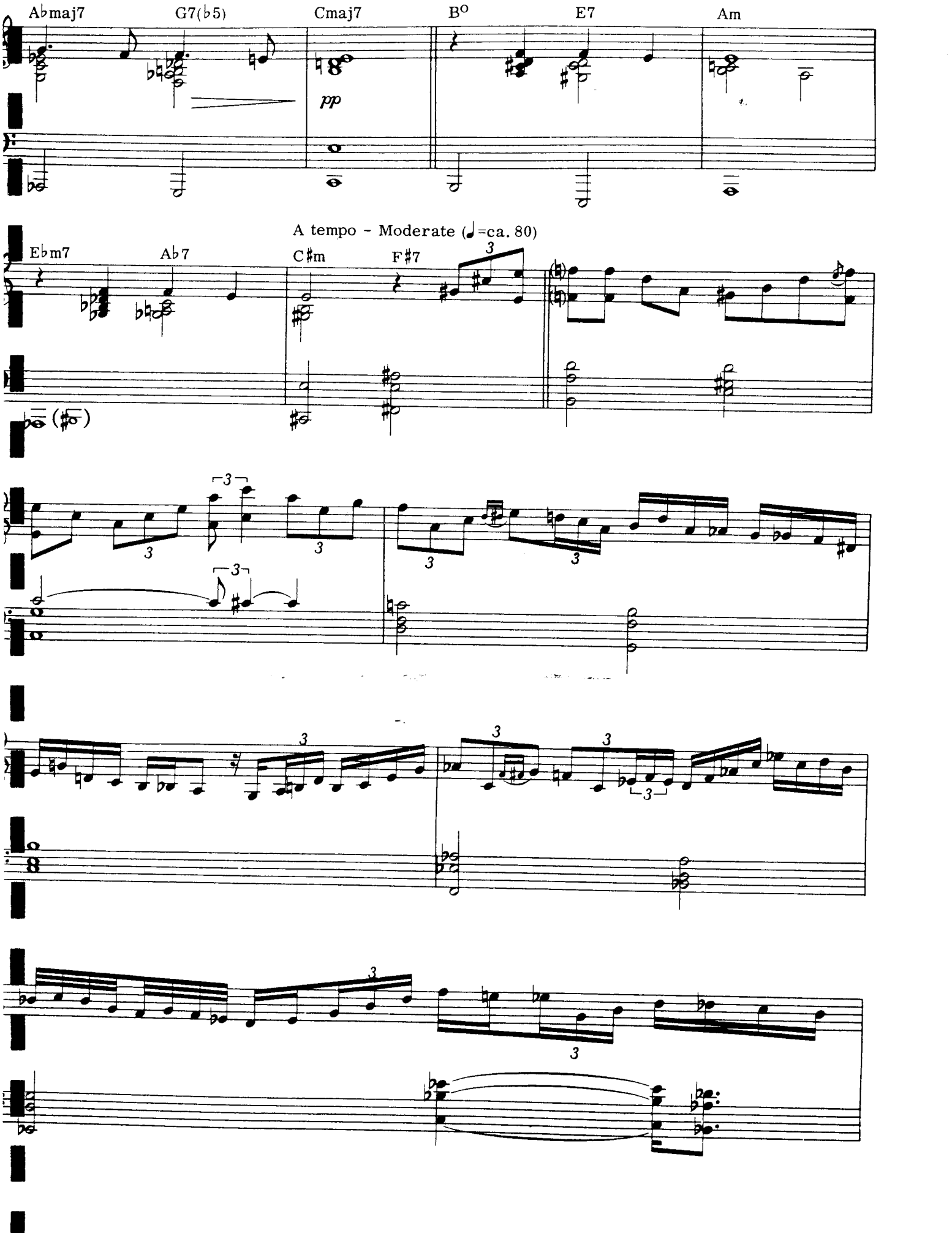
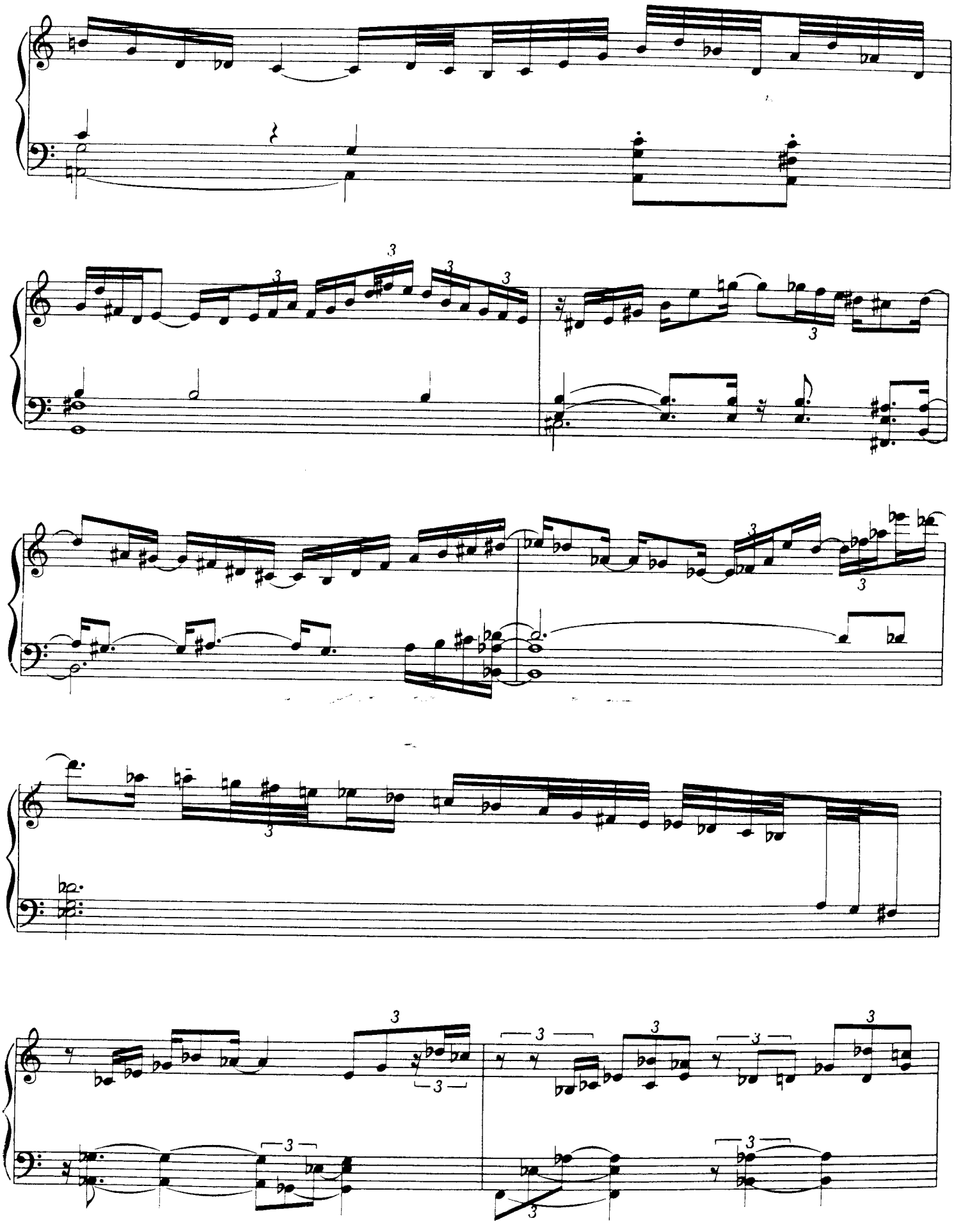
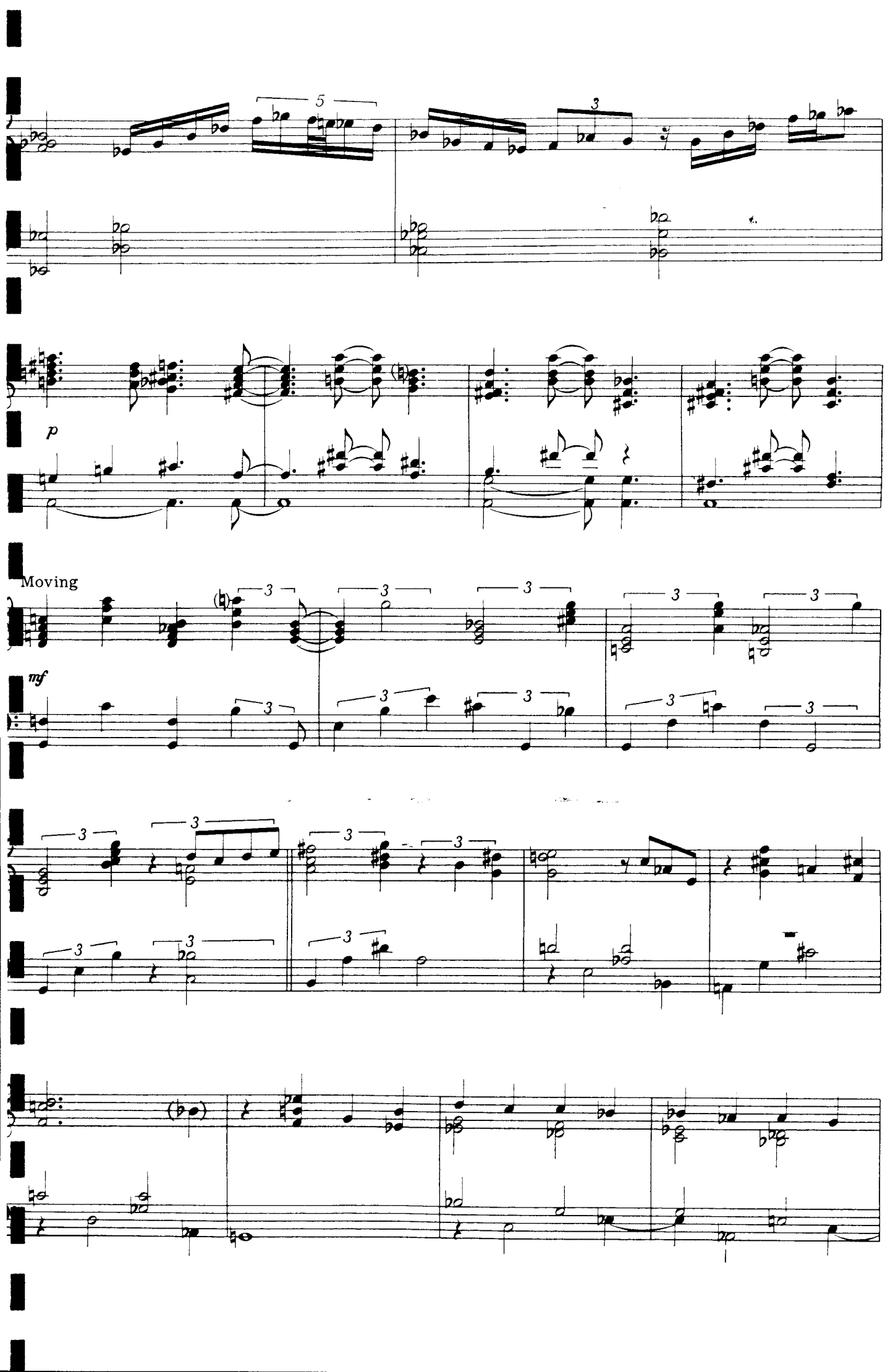
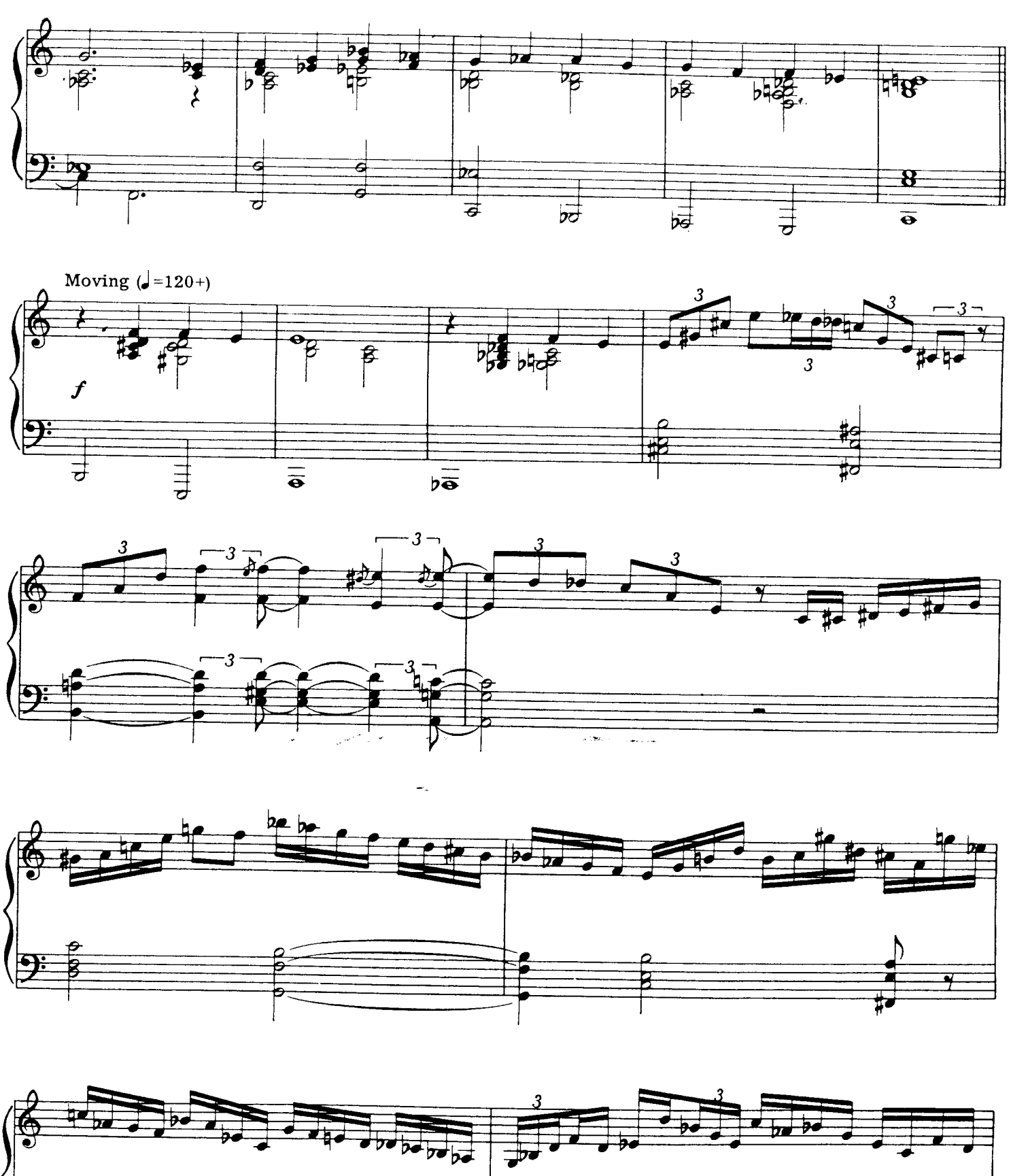
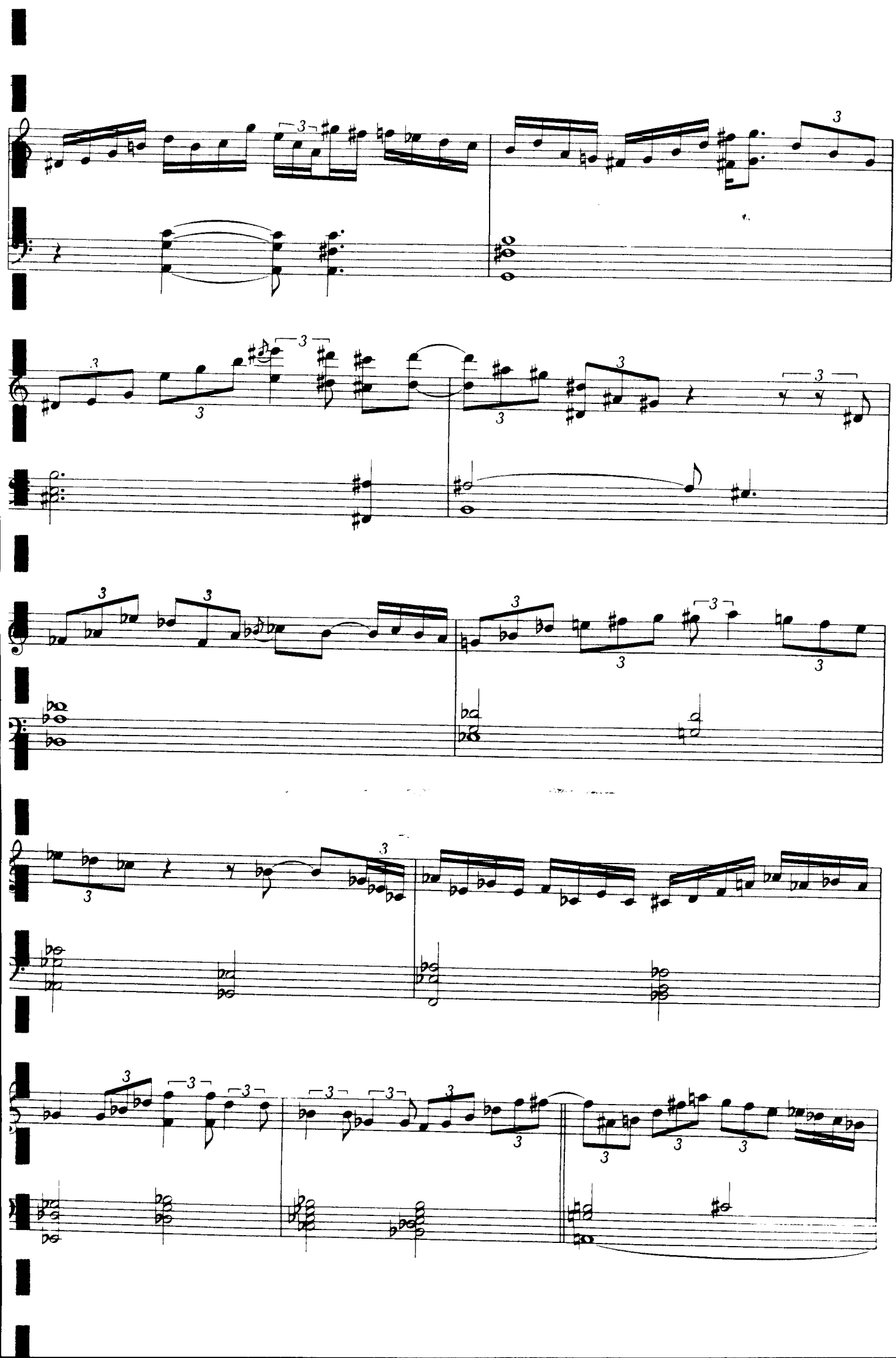

Em9
A7 6
Dmaj7
Em7
A7 6
Dmaj7
Dm9
G7 6
Cmaj7
G7 6
Cmaj7
C7 6
Rubato
B9
Em7
Bb7
accel.
A+7
Dm7
Ab+7
G+7
Cm7
Eb7
Abmaj7
C7
Fm7
D°
G+7
Cm
Eb7
rit.
dim.

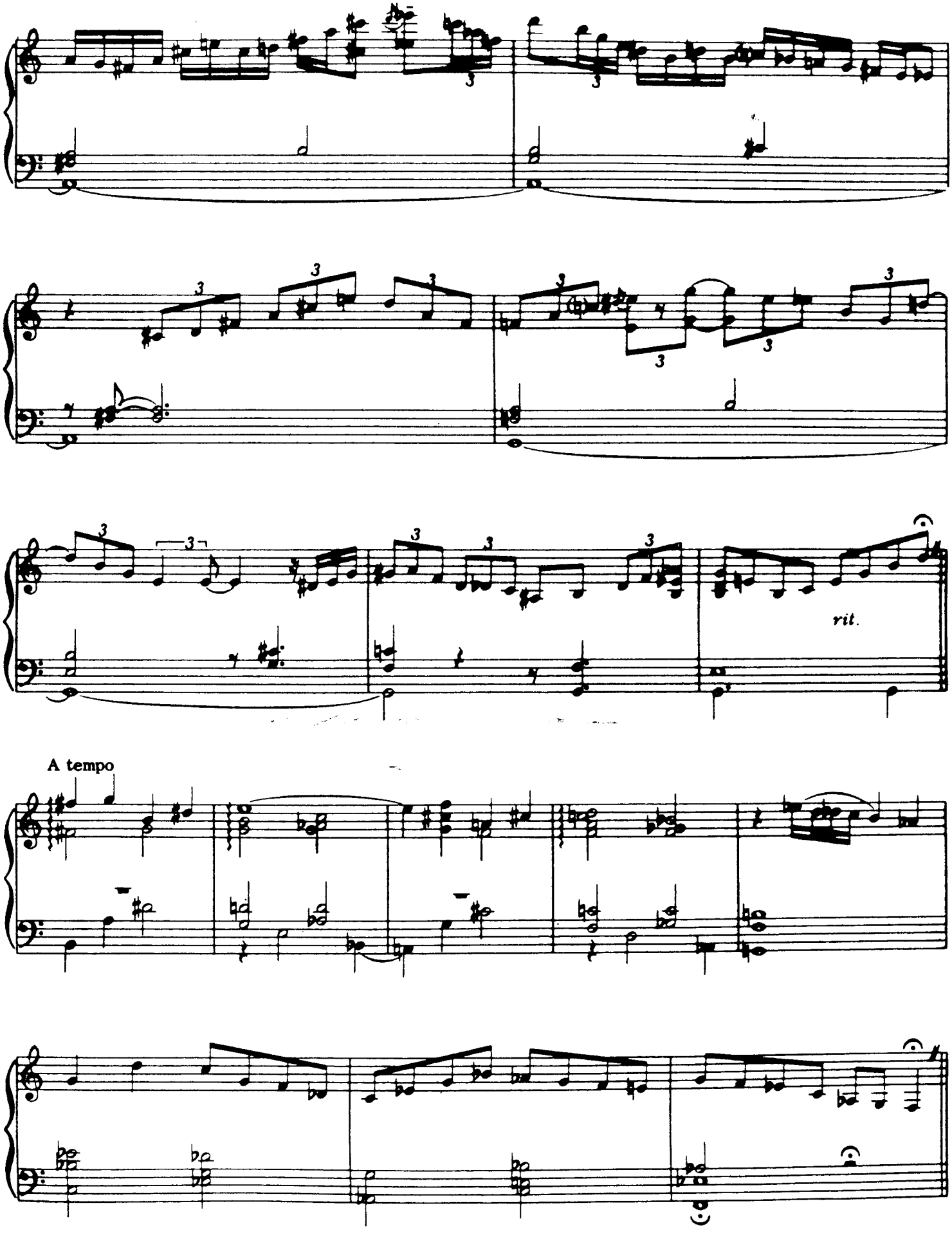

Abmaj7
G7(b5)
Cmaj7
B°
E7
Am
pp
A tempo - Moderate (♩=ca. 80)
Ebm7
Ab7
C#m
F#7

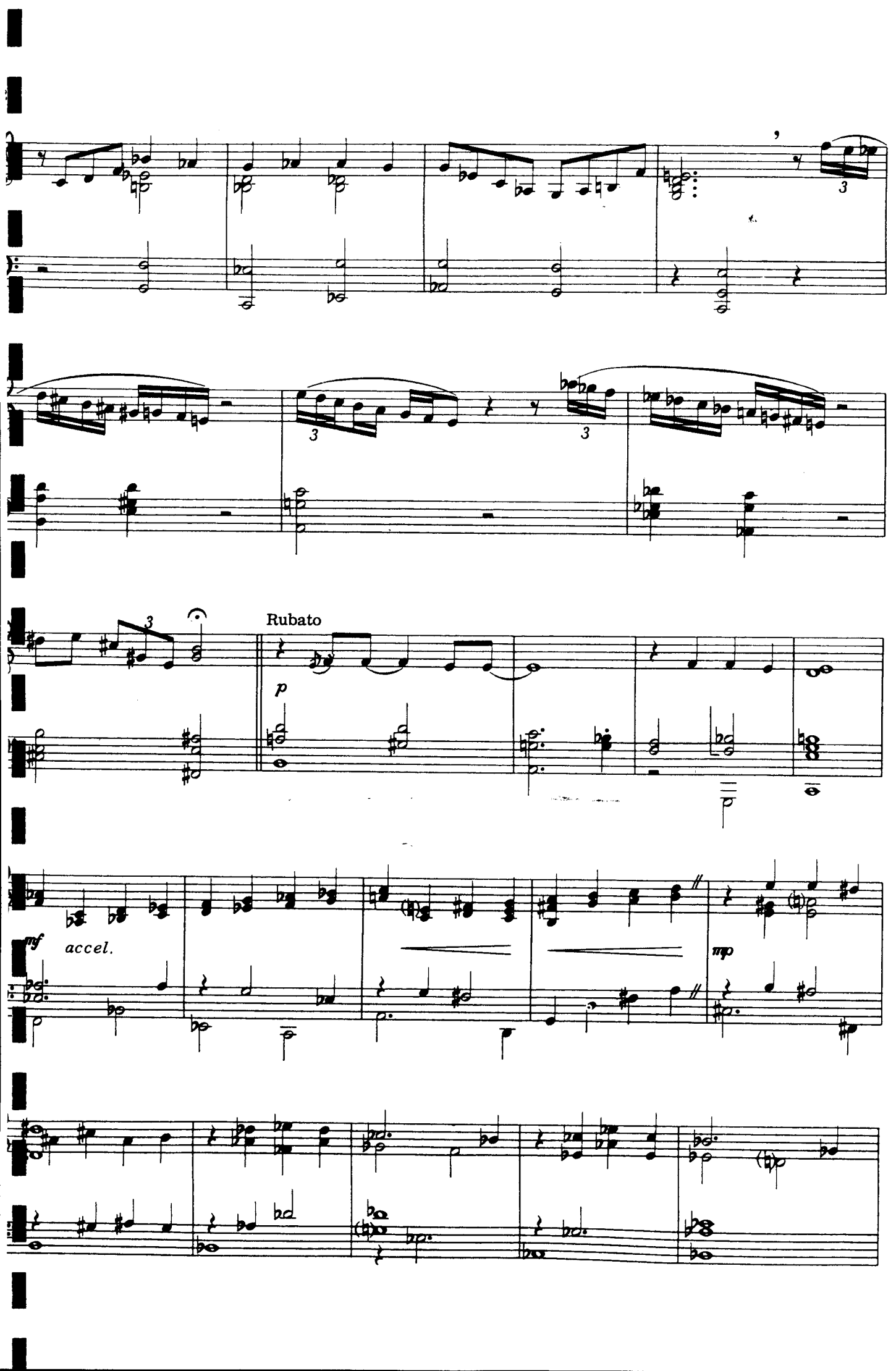


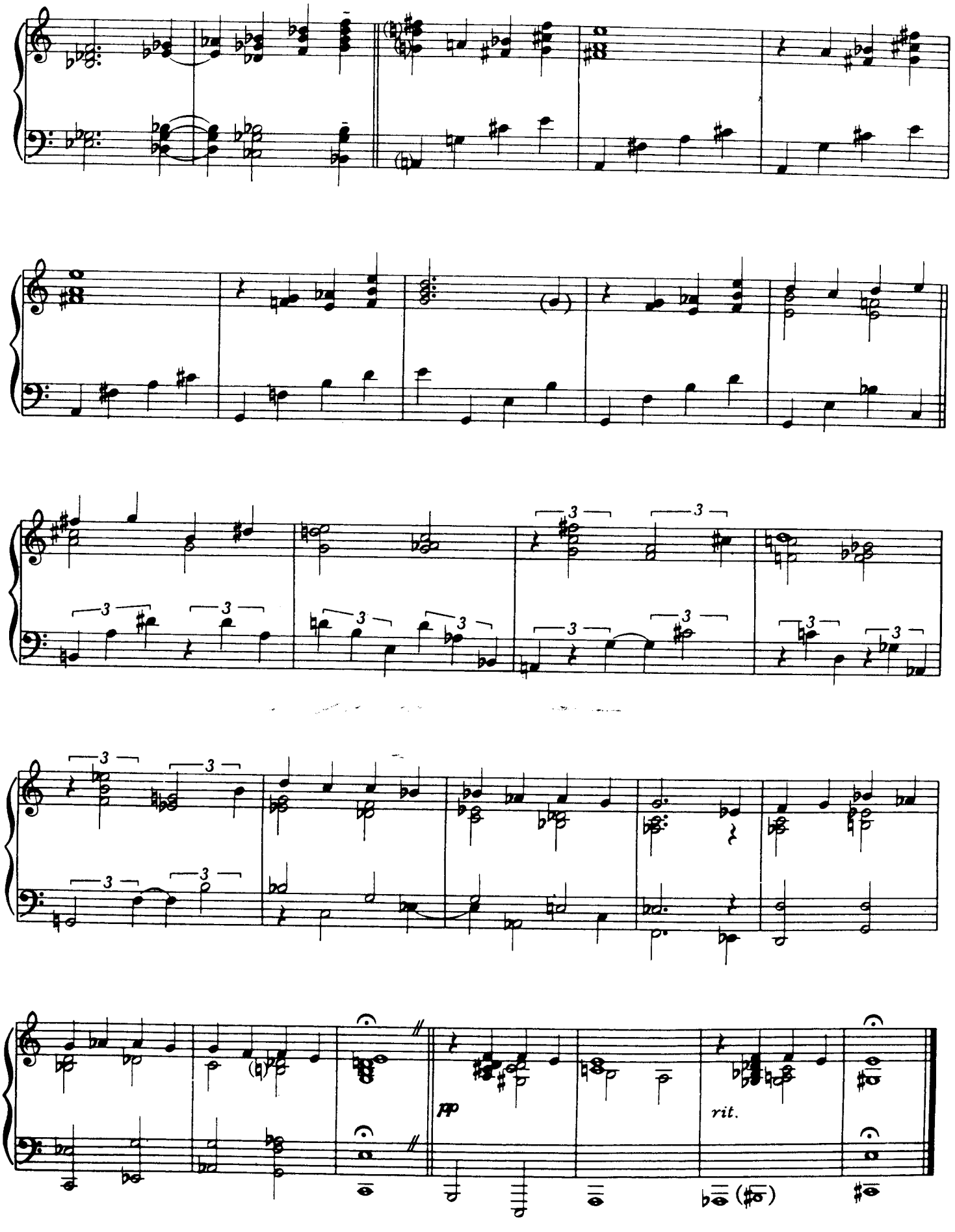

5
3
p
Moving
3
mf


Moving (♩=120+)
f




rit.
A tempo

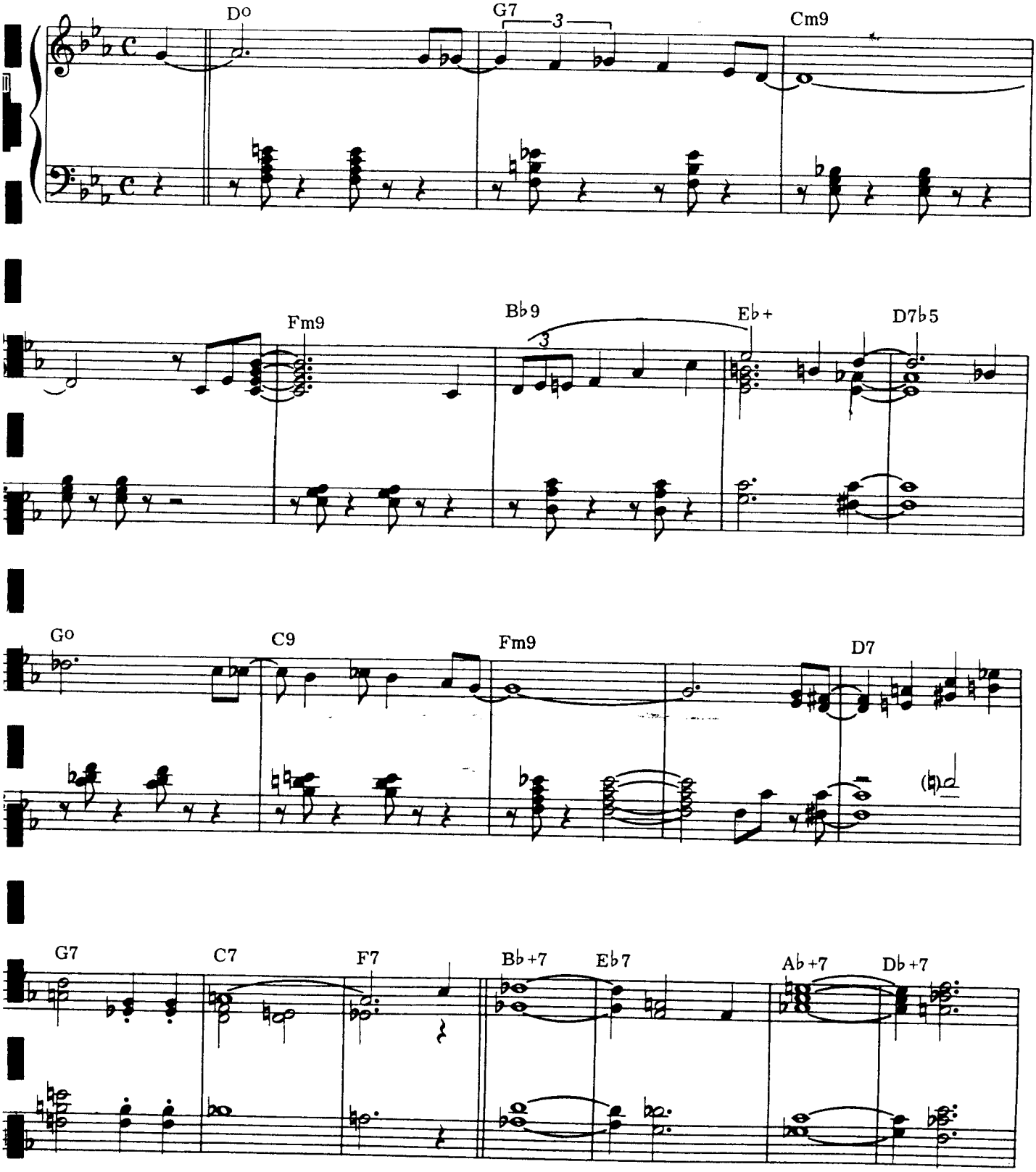

3
3
3
Rubato
p
mf
accel.
mp


pp
rit.

ONE FOR HELEN

Music by
BILL EVANS

Medium bright (♩=ca. 160)



Note: This version was transcribed from tapes of Bill Evans' Town Hall Concert, February 21, 1966. For purposes of comparison, suggested that the advanced piano student listen to the version recorded on BILL EVANS TRIO AT MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL— Verve 6-8762 to hear the way the tune developed.

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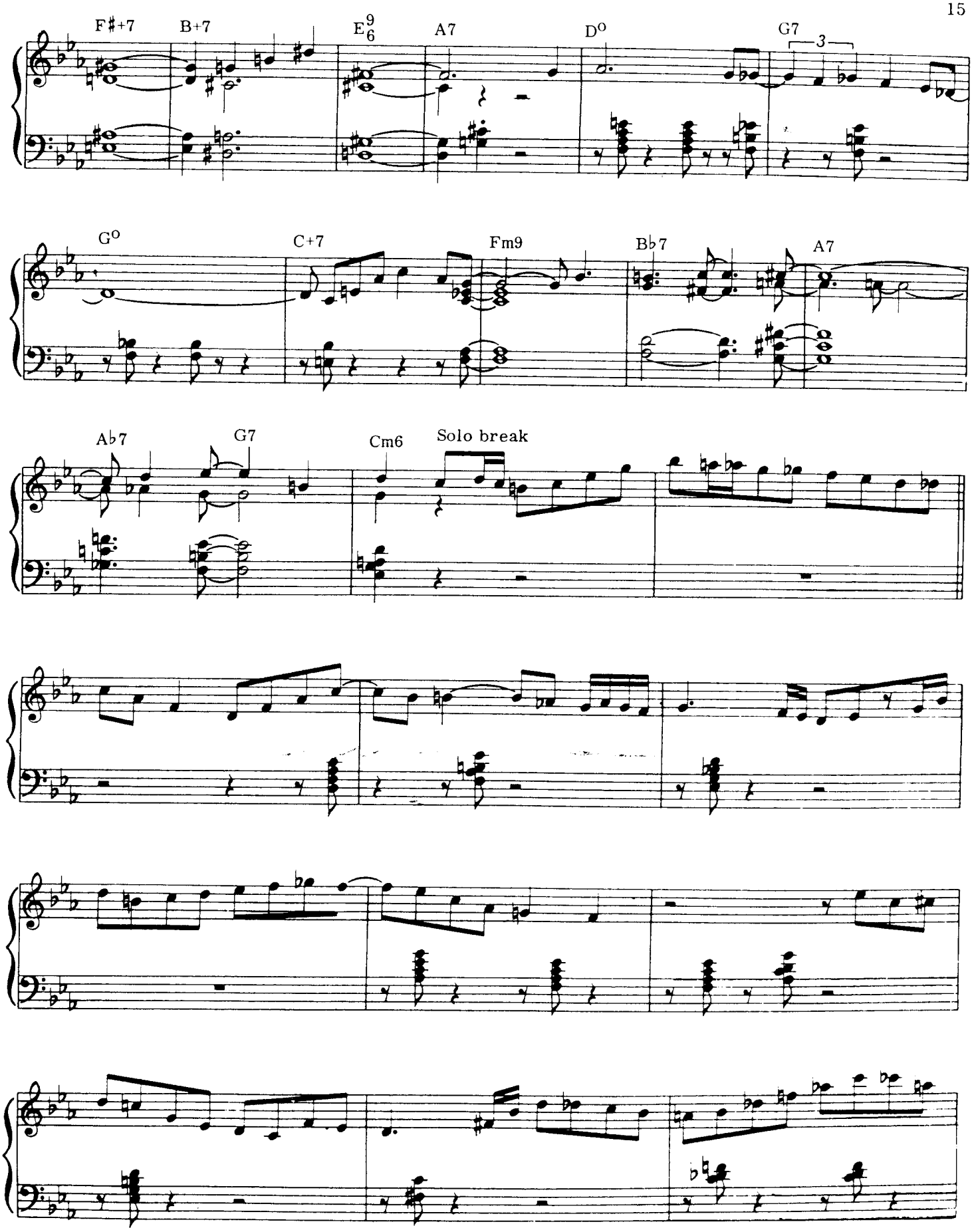
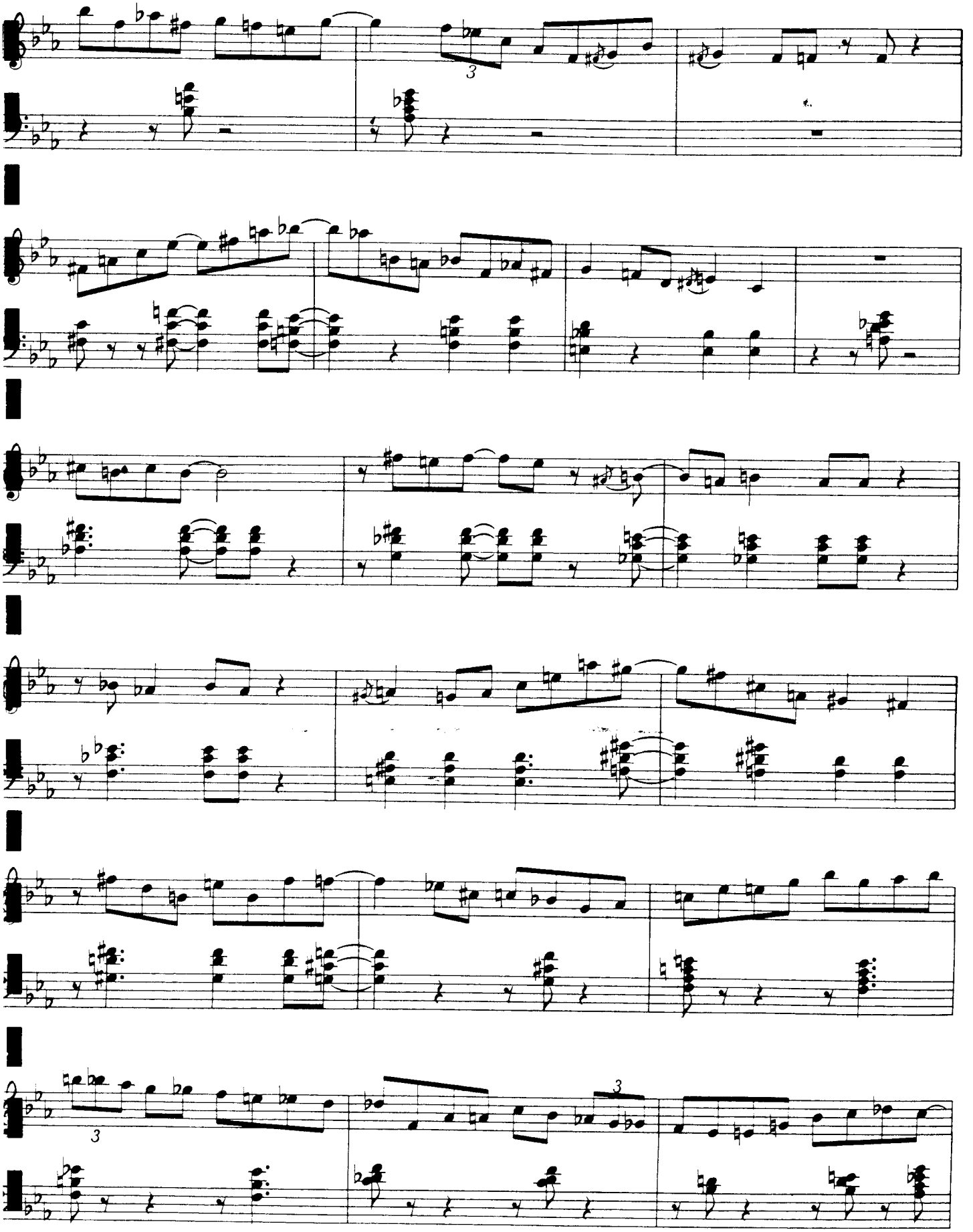
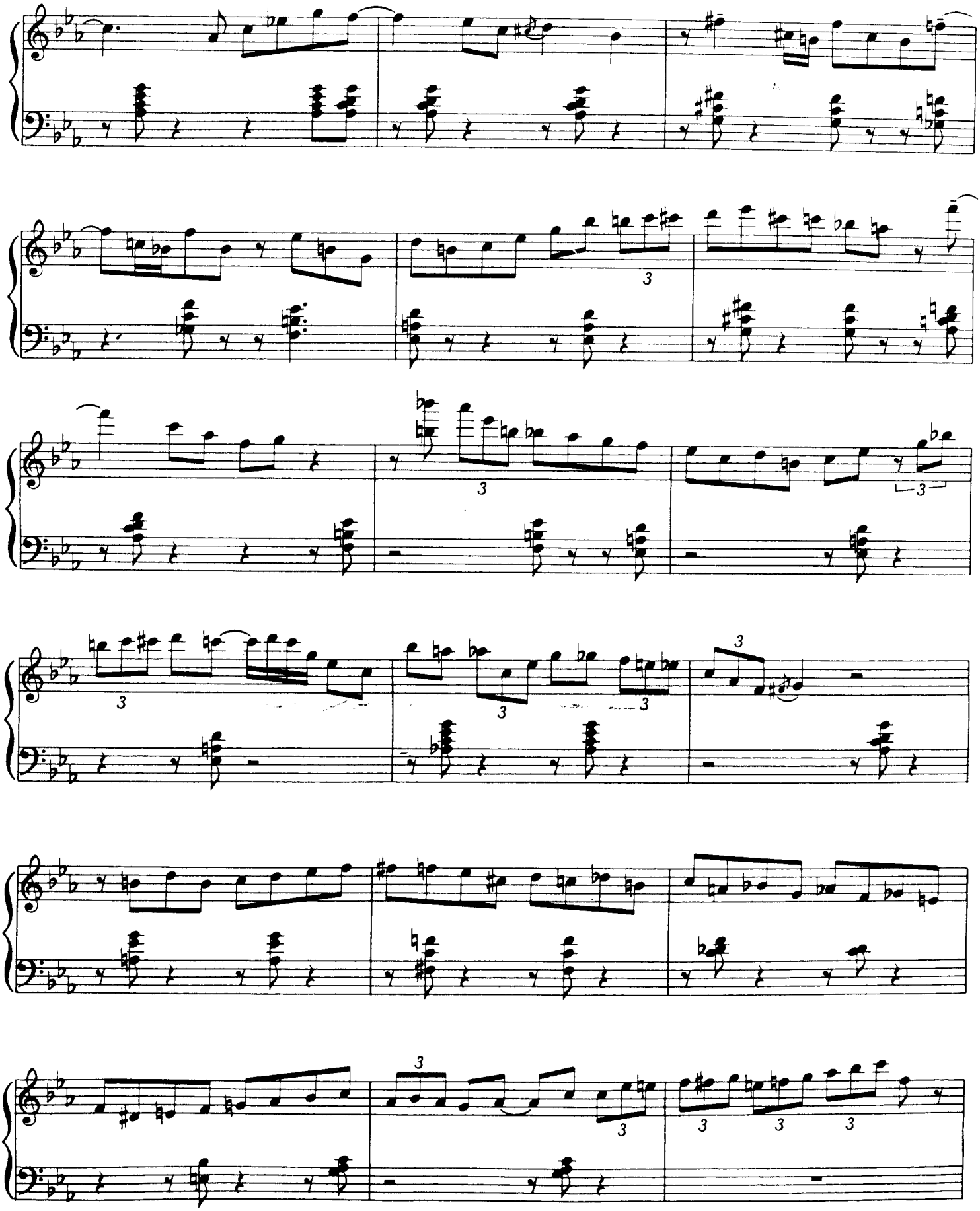
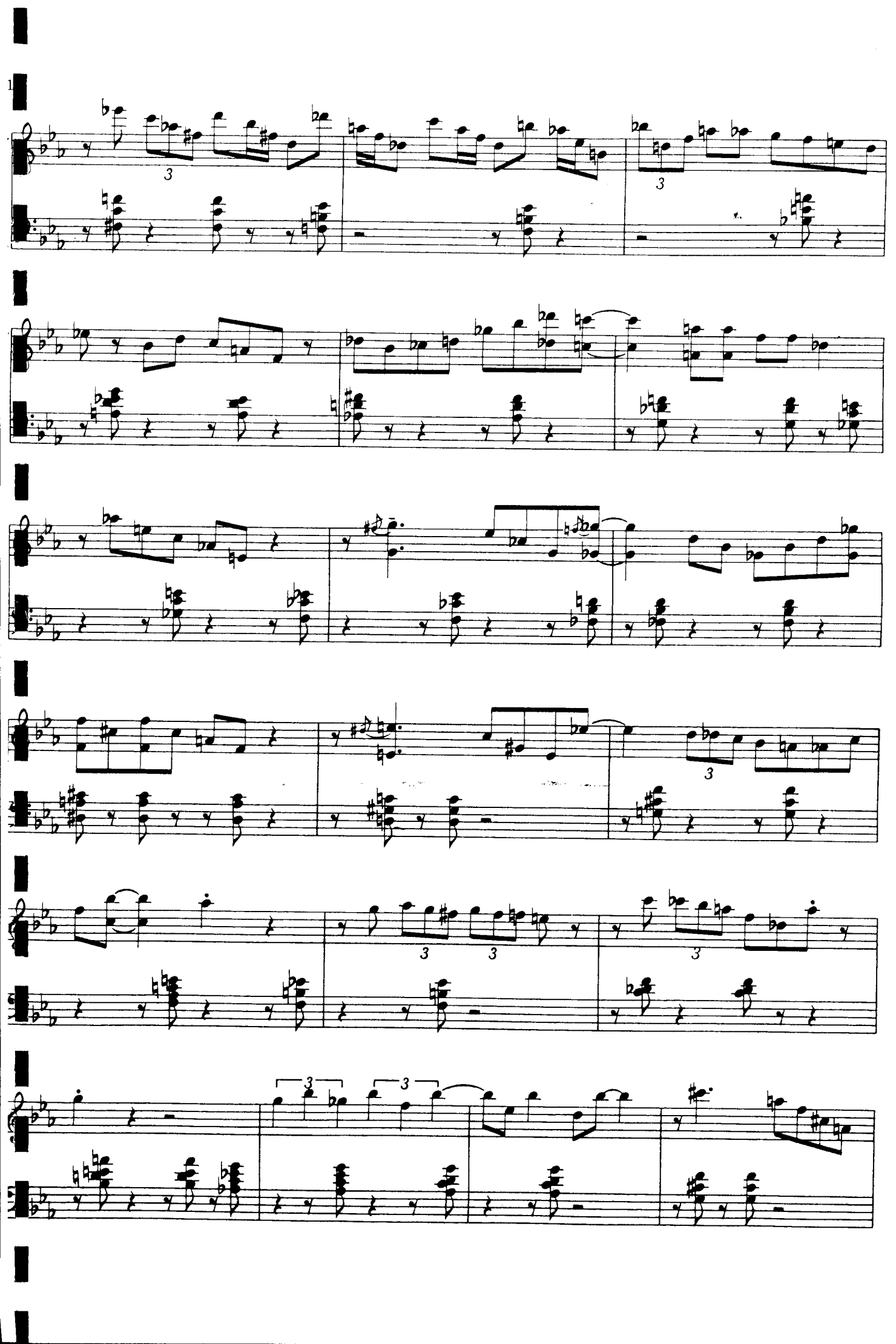
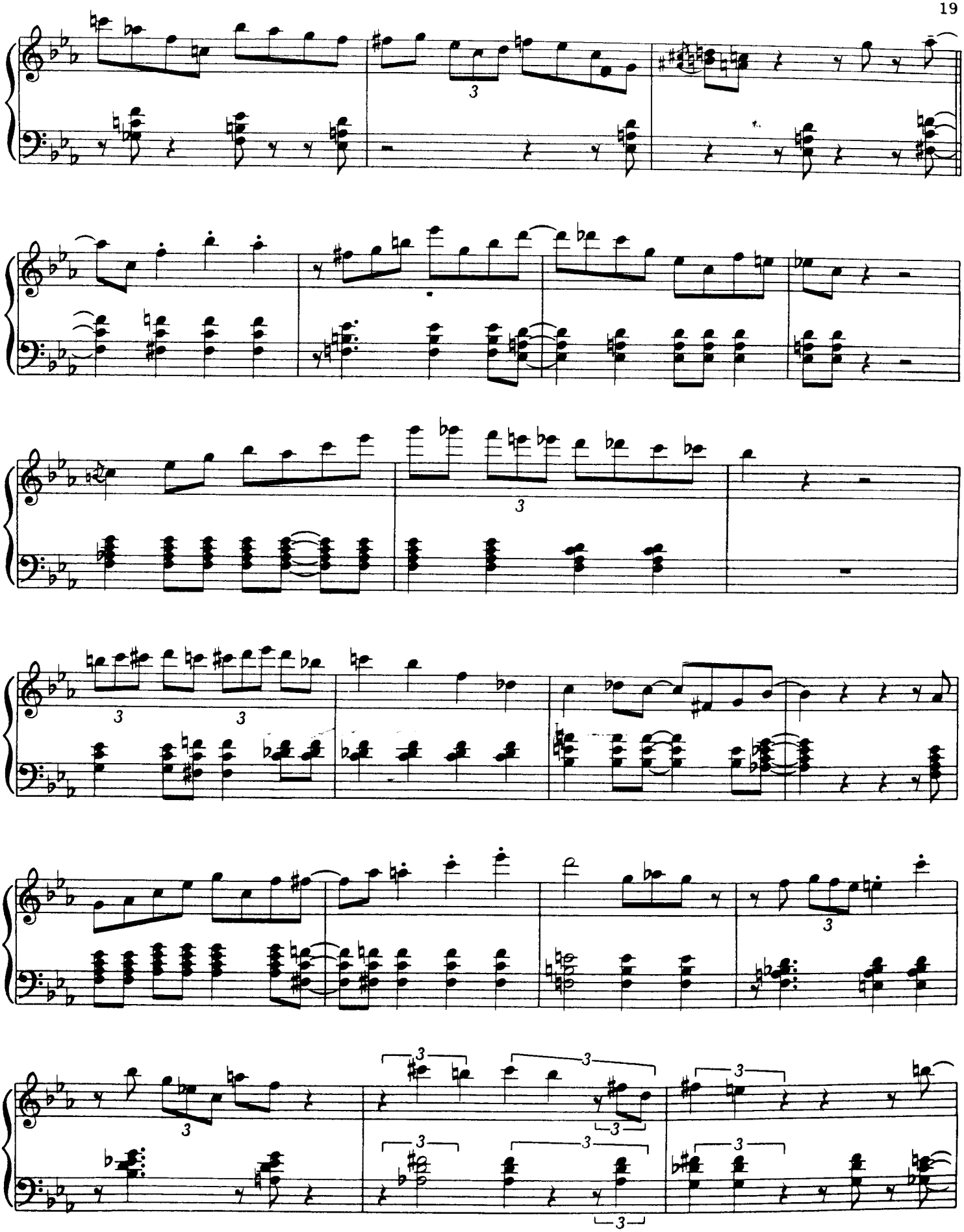
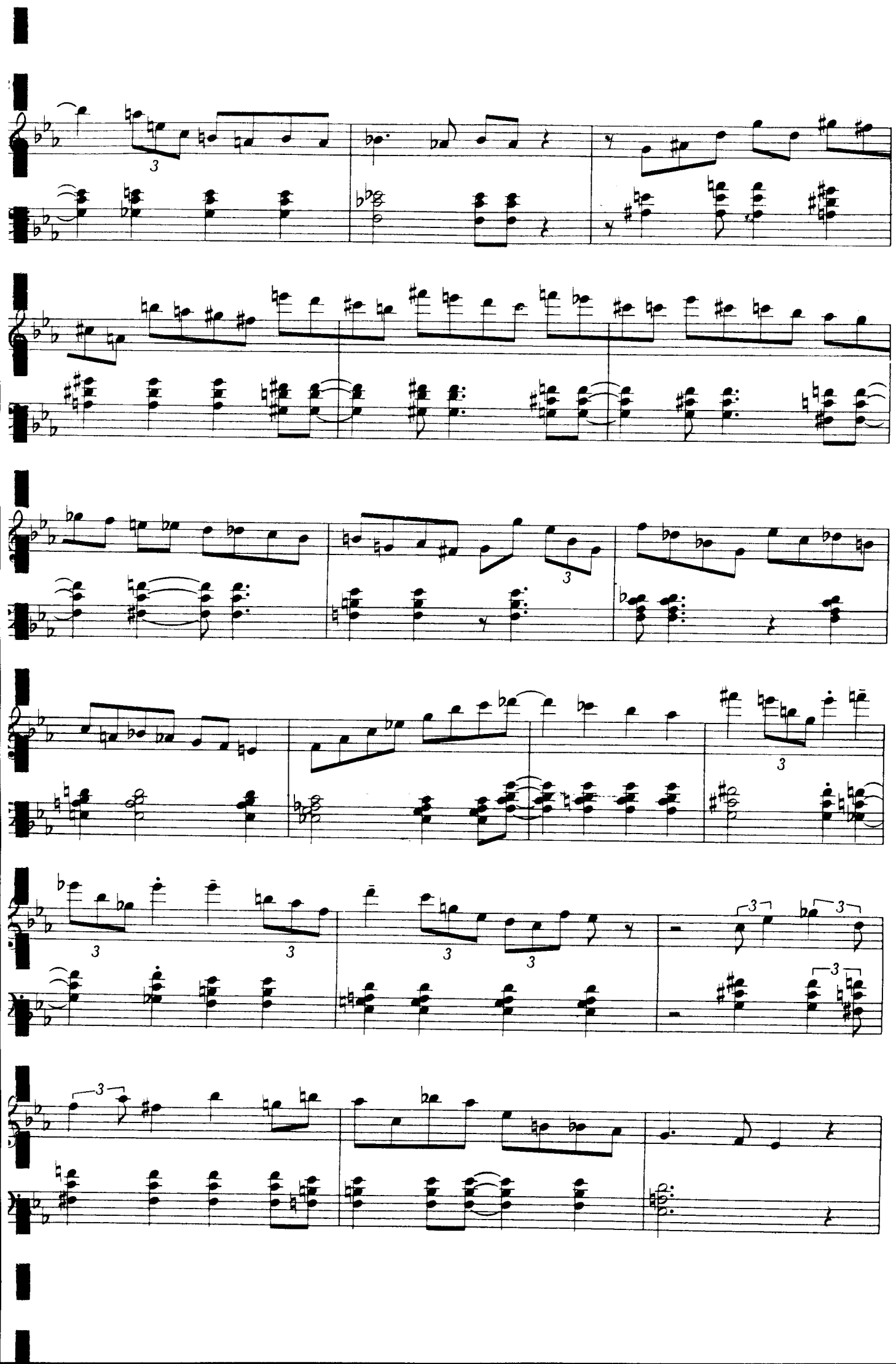

F♯+7
B+7
E9/6
A7
D°
G7
3
G°
C+7
Fm9
B♭7
A7
A♭7
G7
Cm6
Solo break

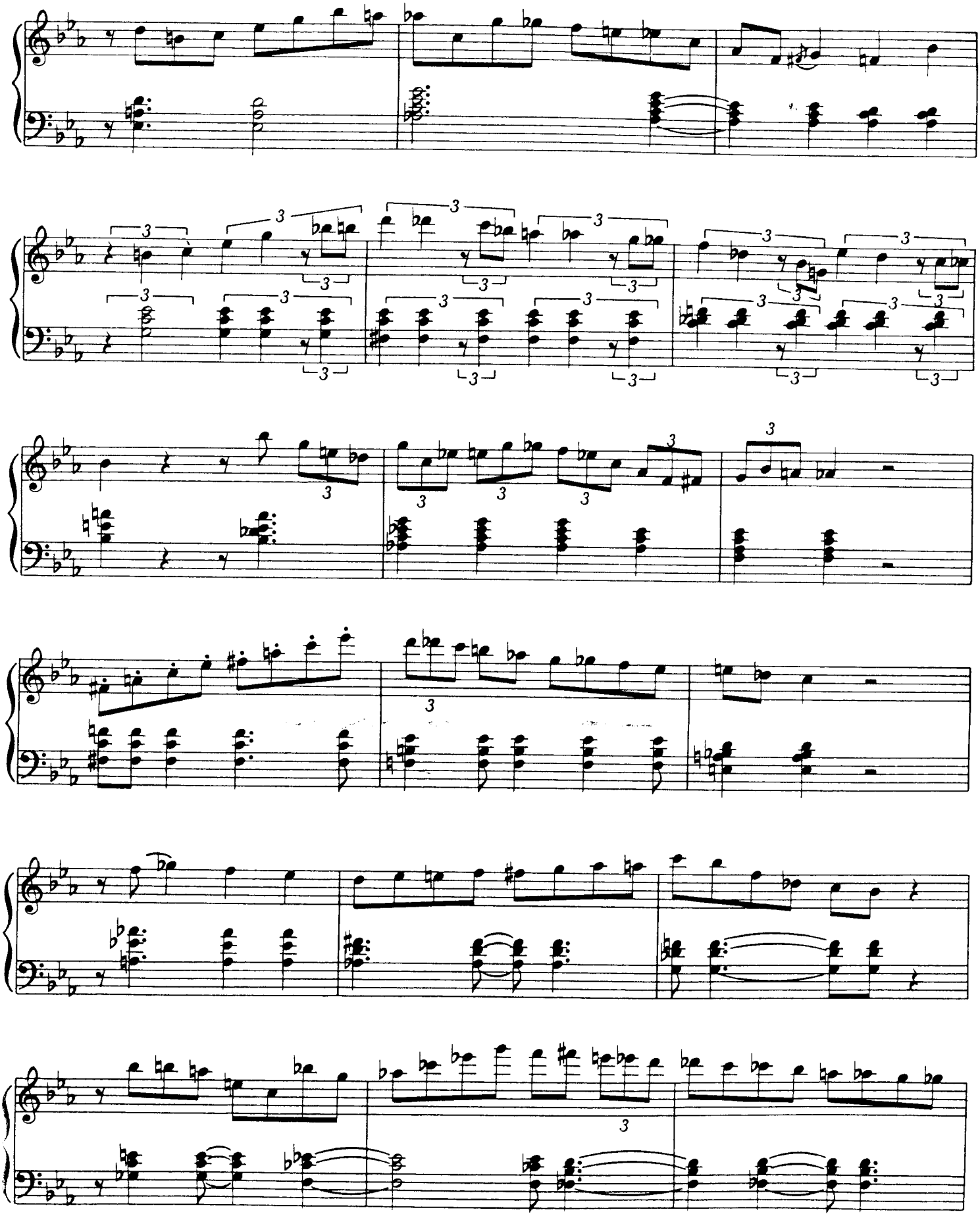


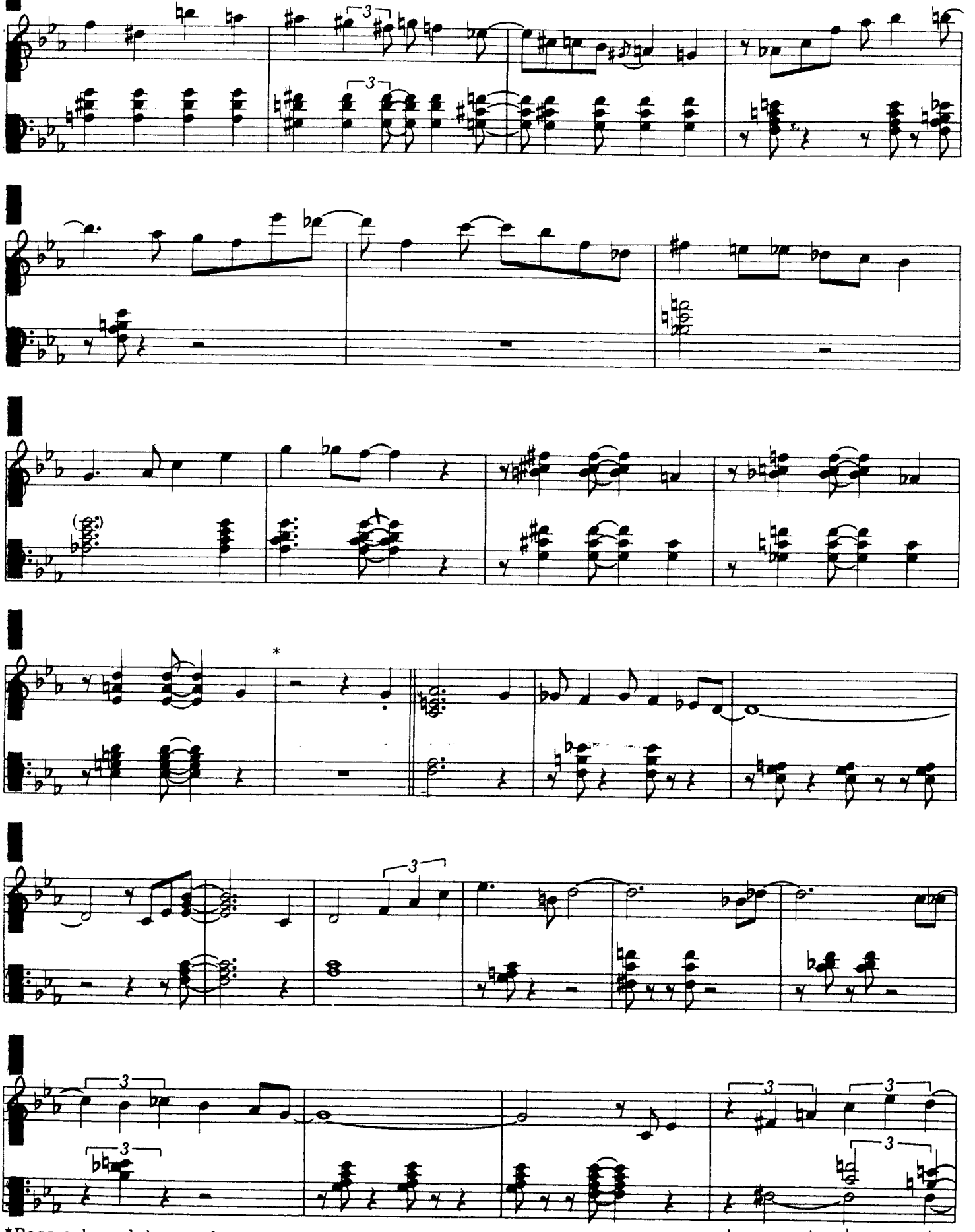




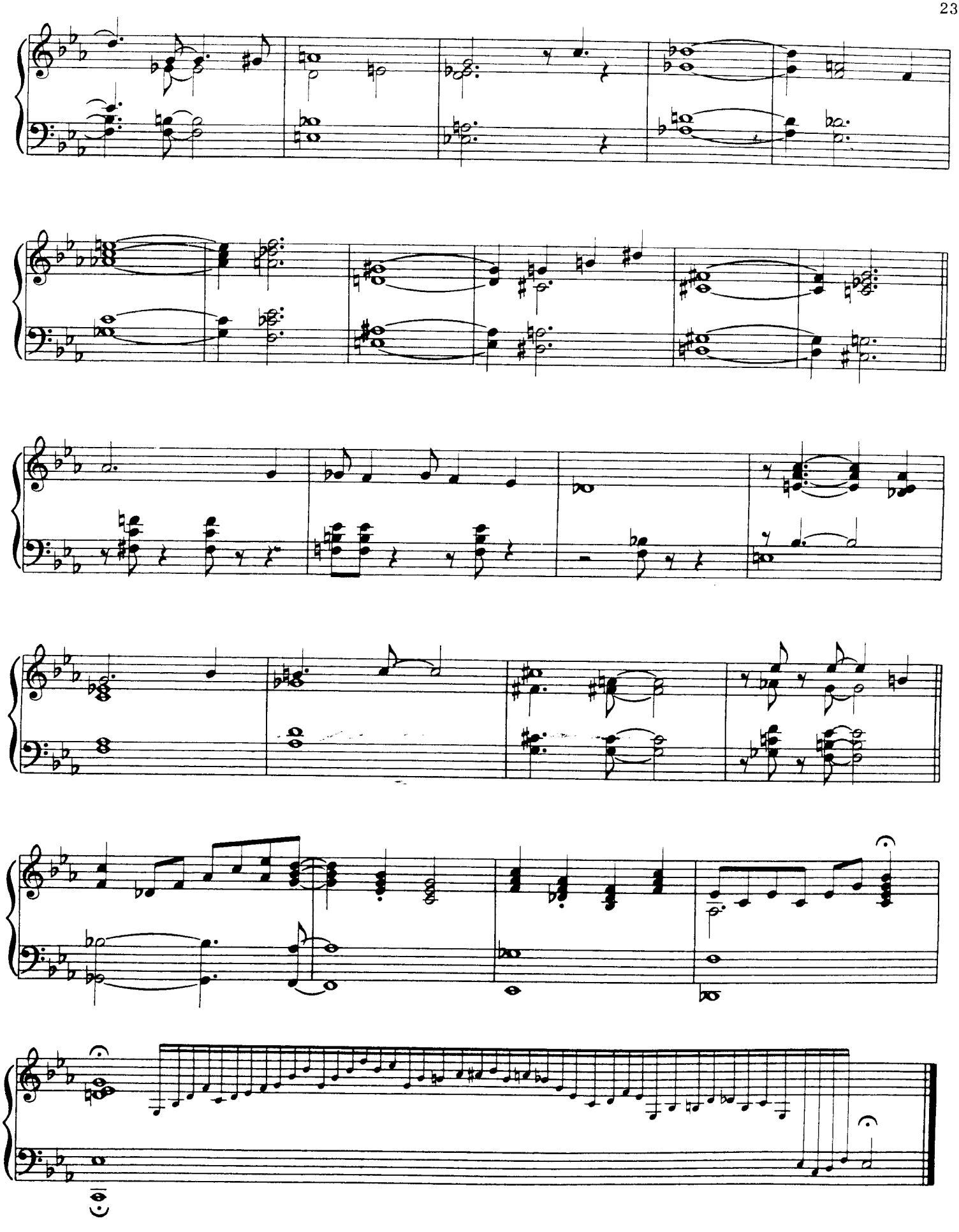








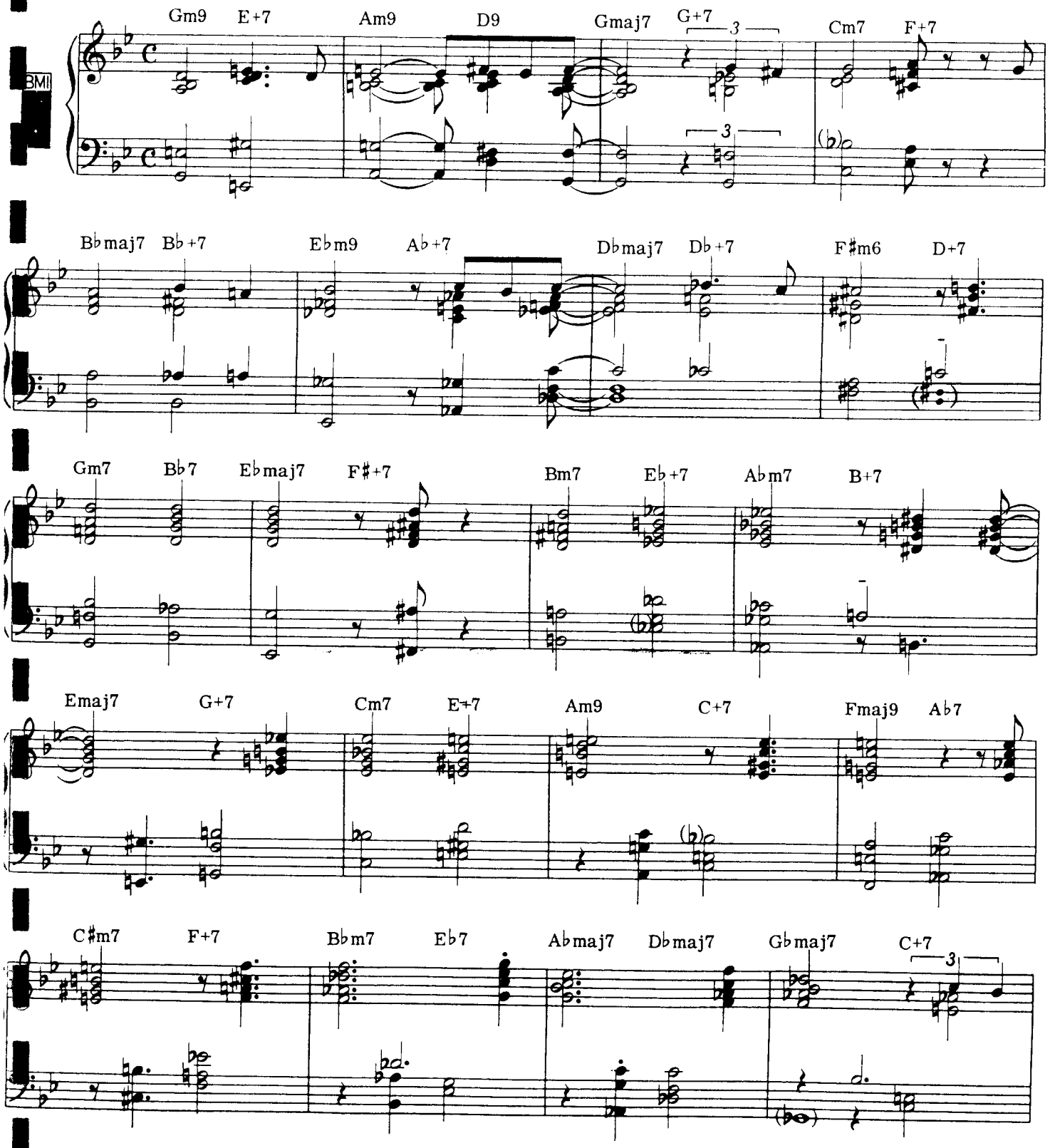
*Bass solo and drum solo omitted.



transcribed from SIMPLE MATTER OF CONVICTION — Verve 6-8675 under title Unless It's You

ORBIT

Music by
BILL EVANS



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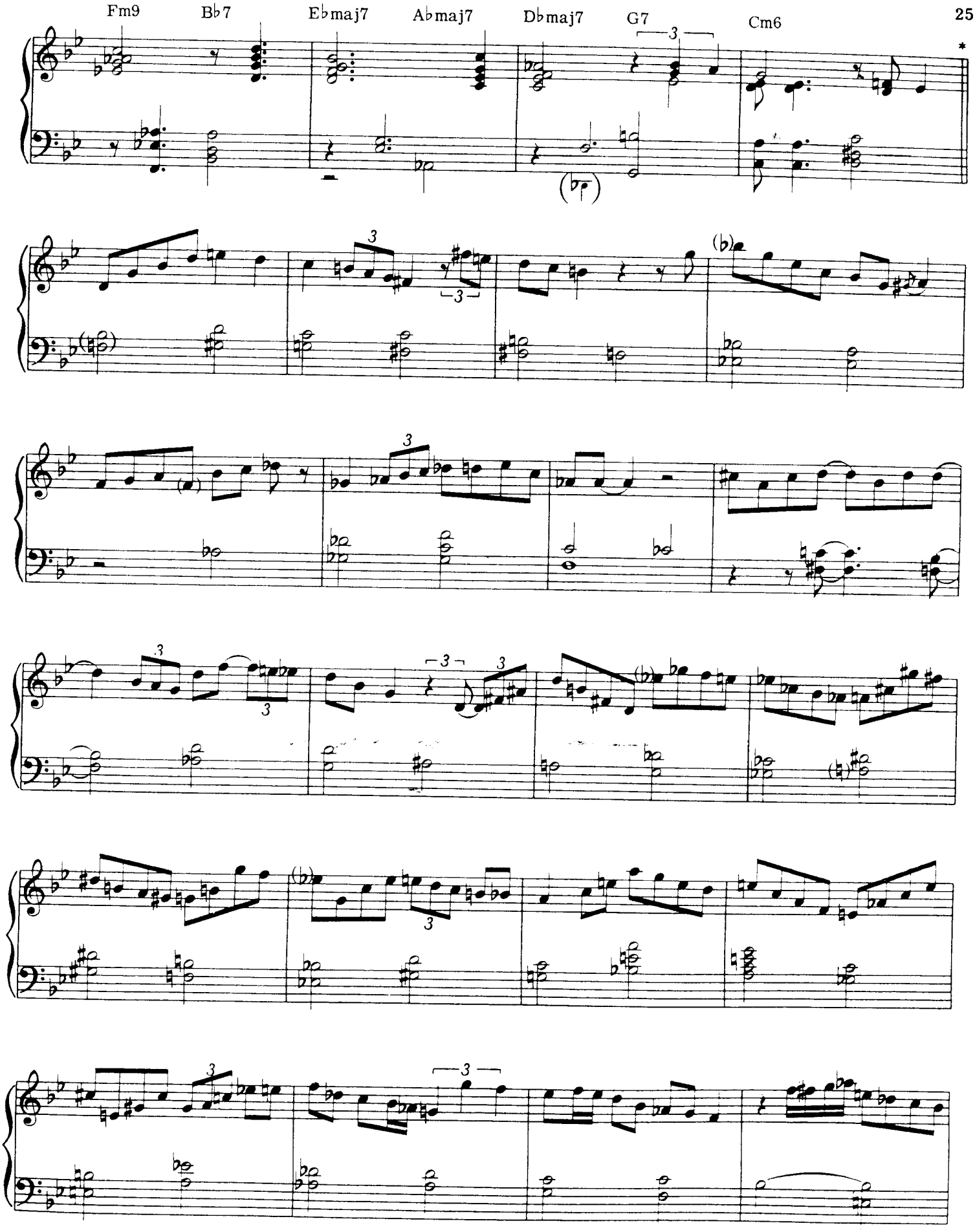
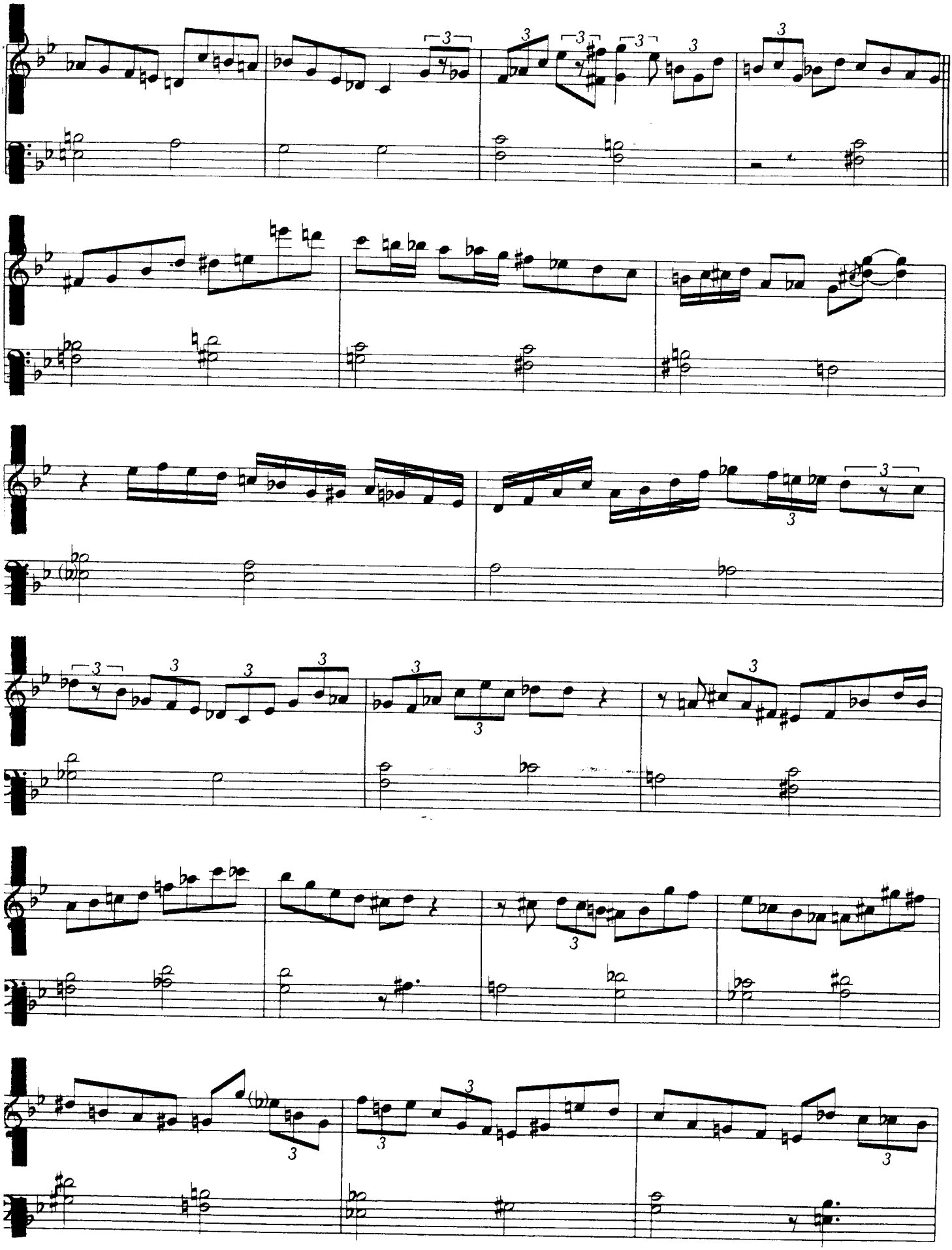
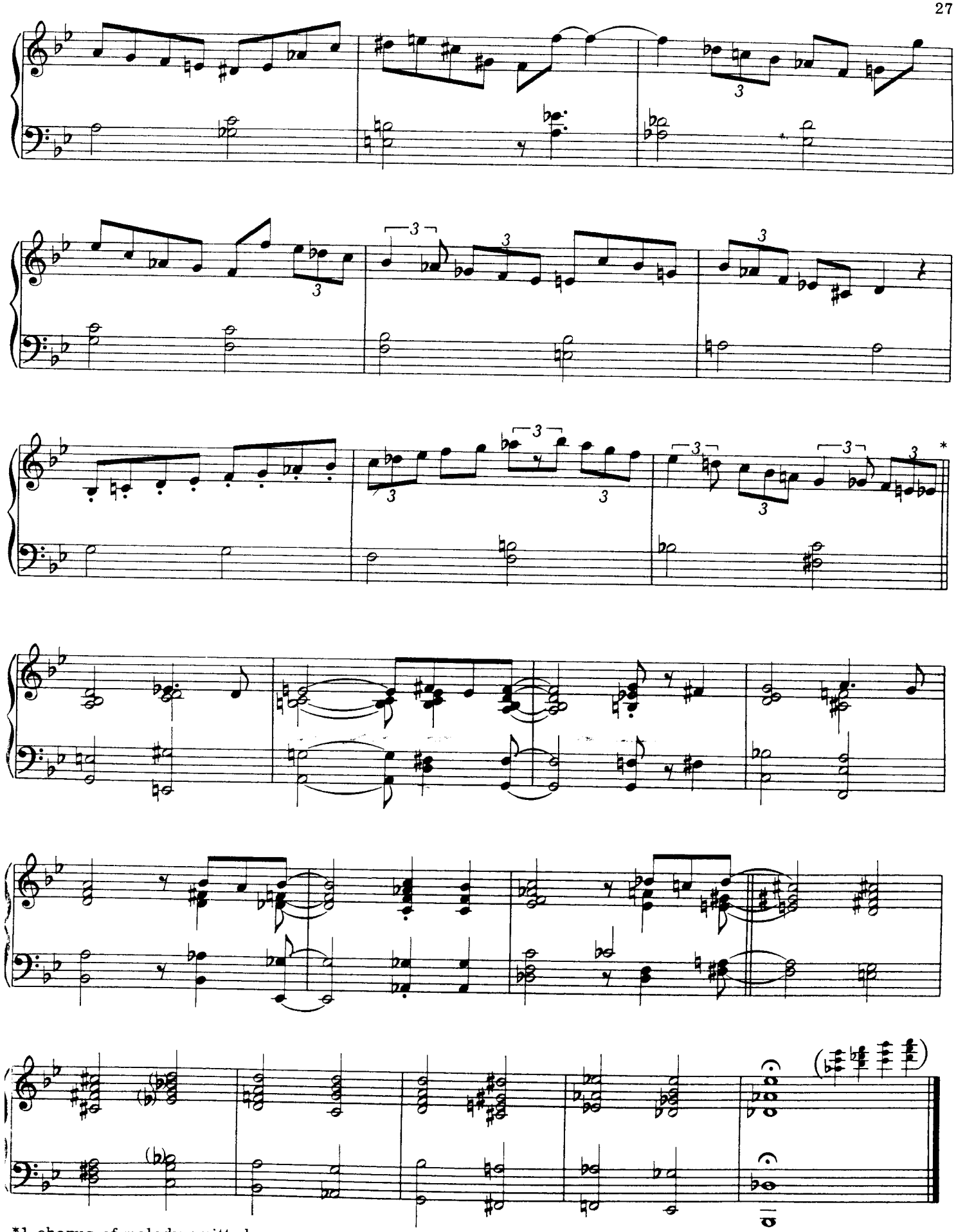


*Bass solo omitted.



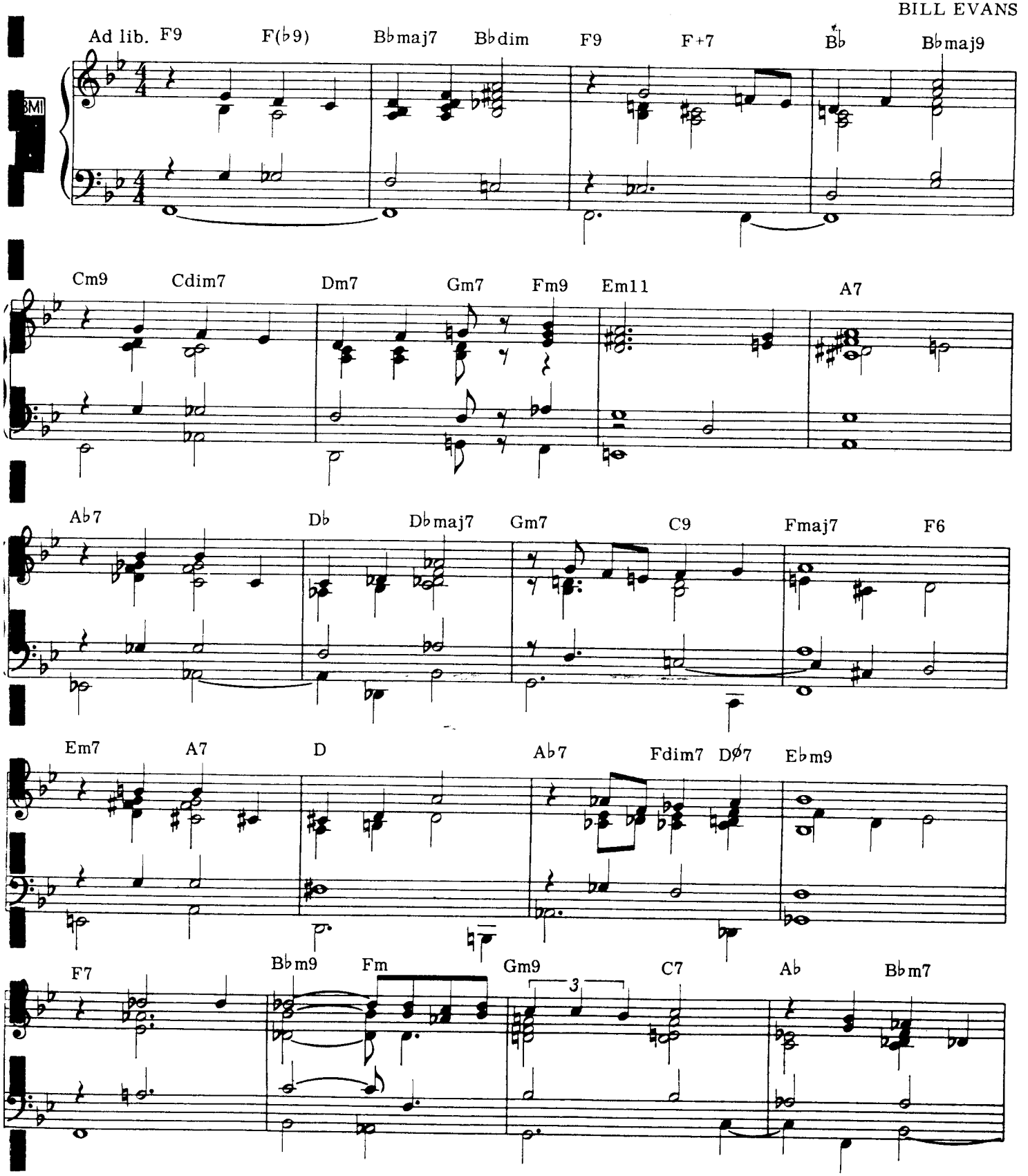


*1 chorus of melody omitted.

transcribed from SIMPLE MATTER OF CONVICTION — Verve 6-8675

ONLY CHILD

Music by
BILL EVANS



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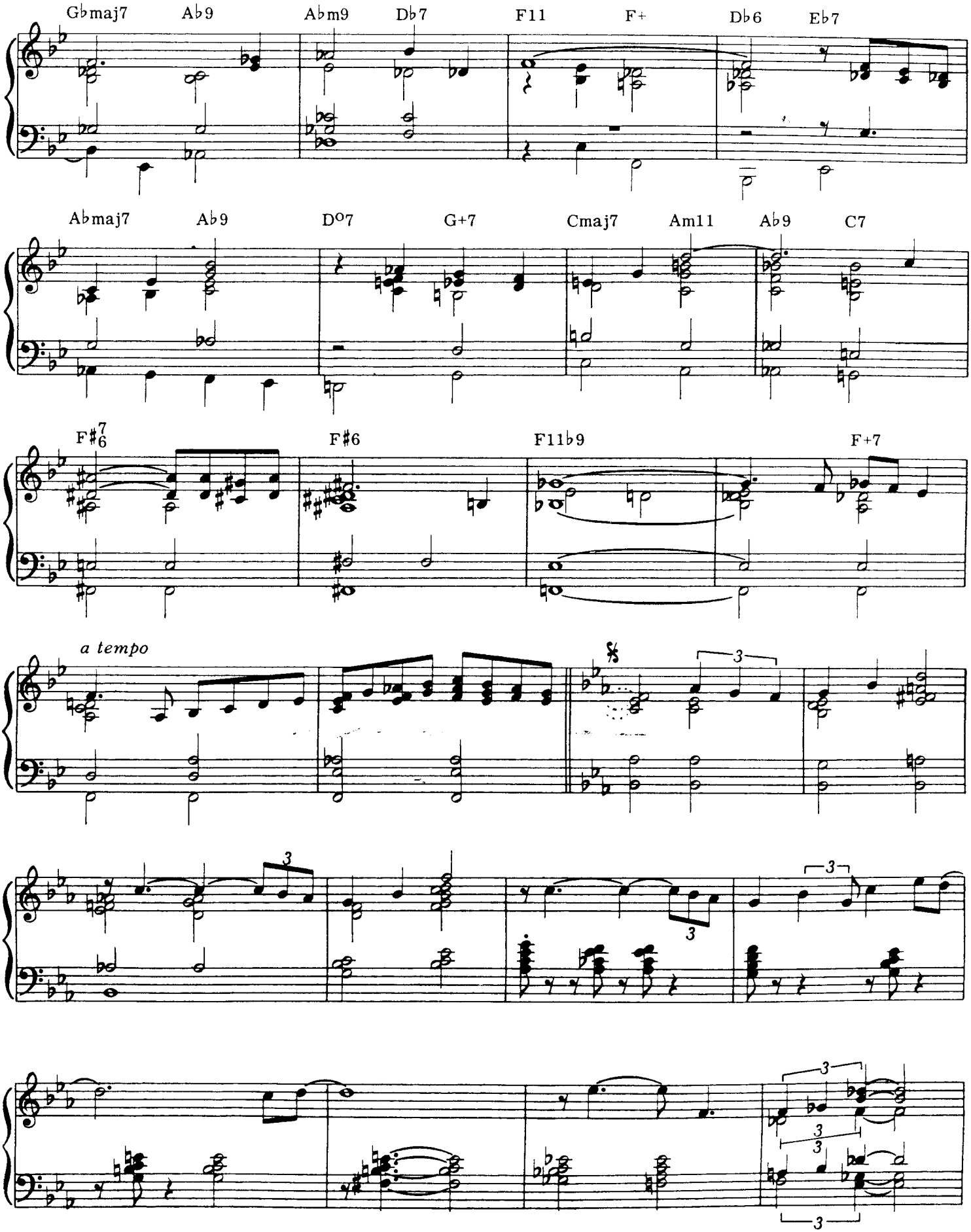
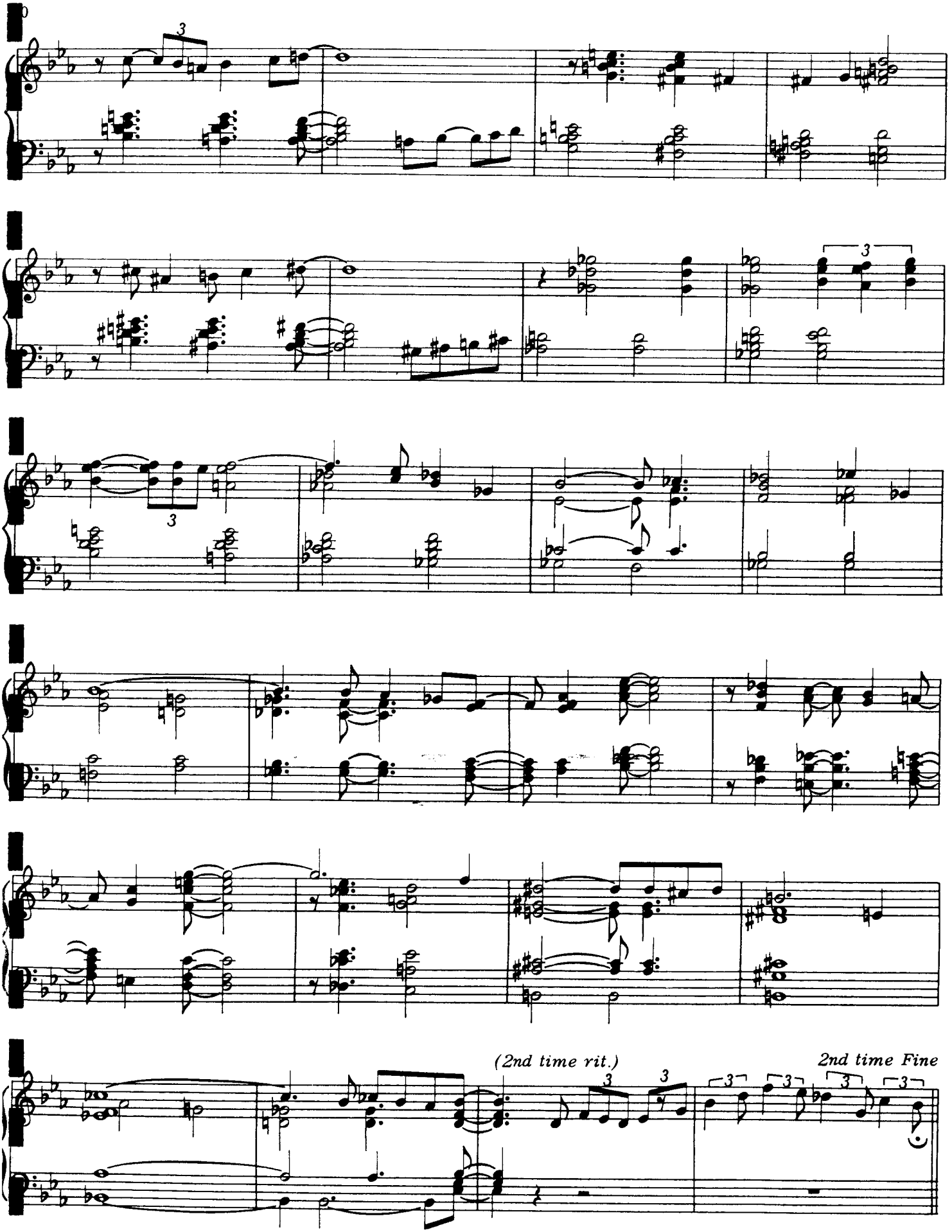
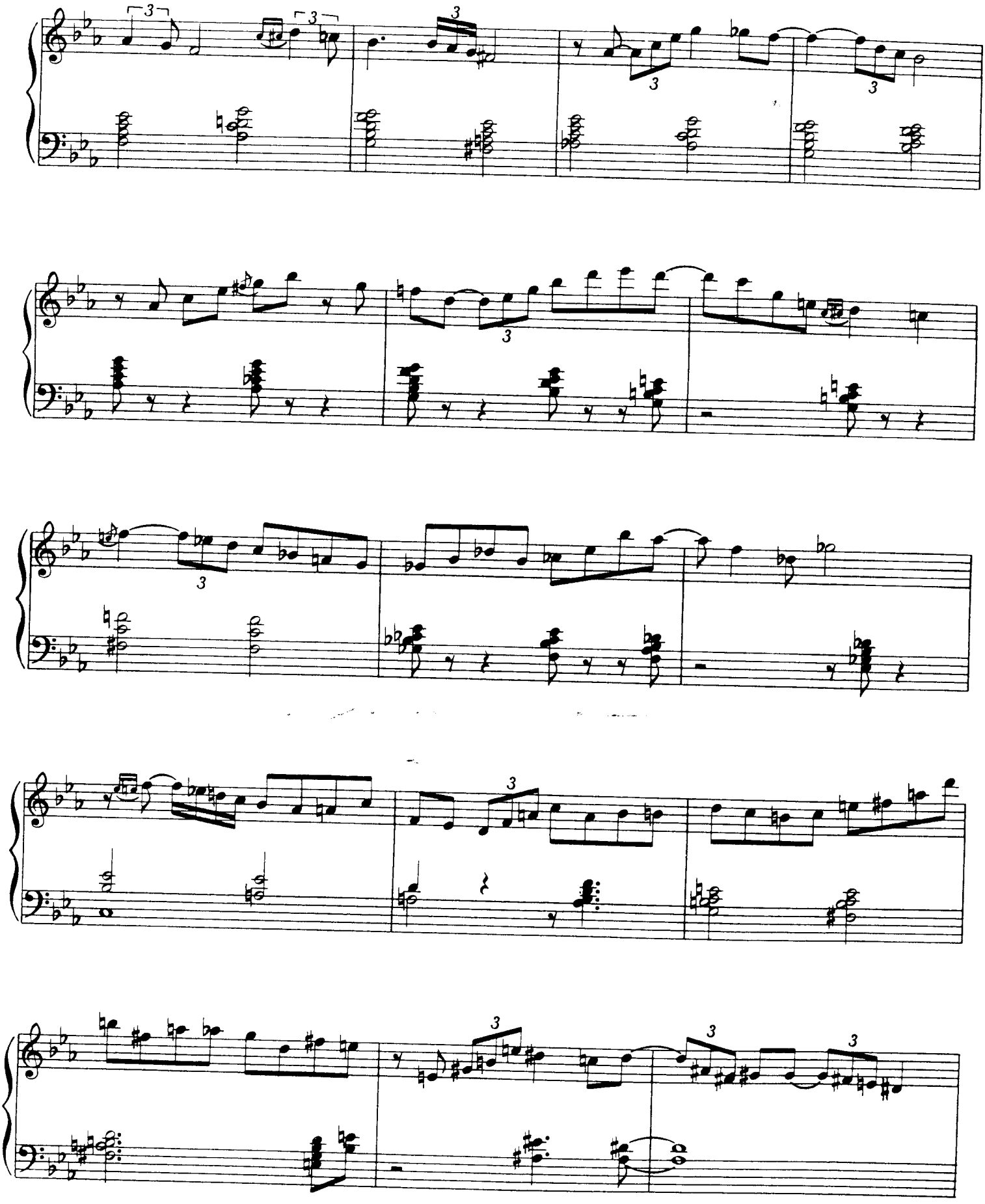
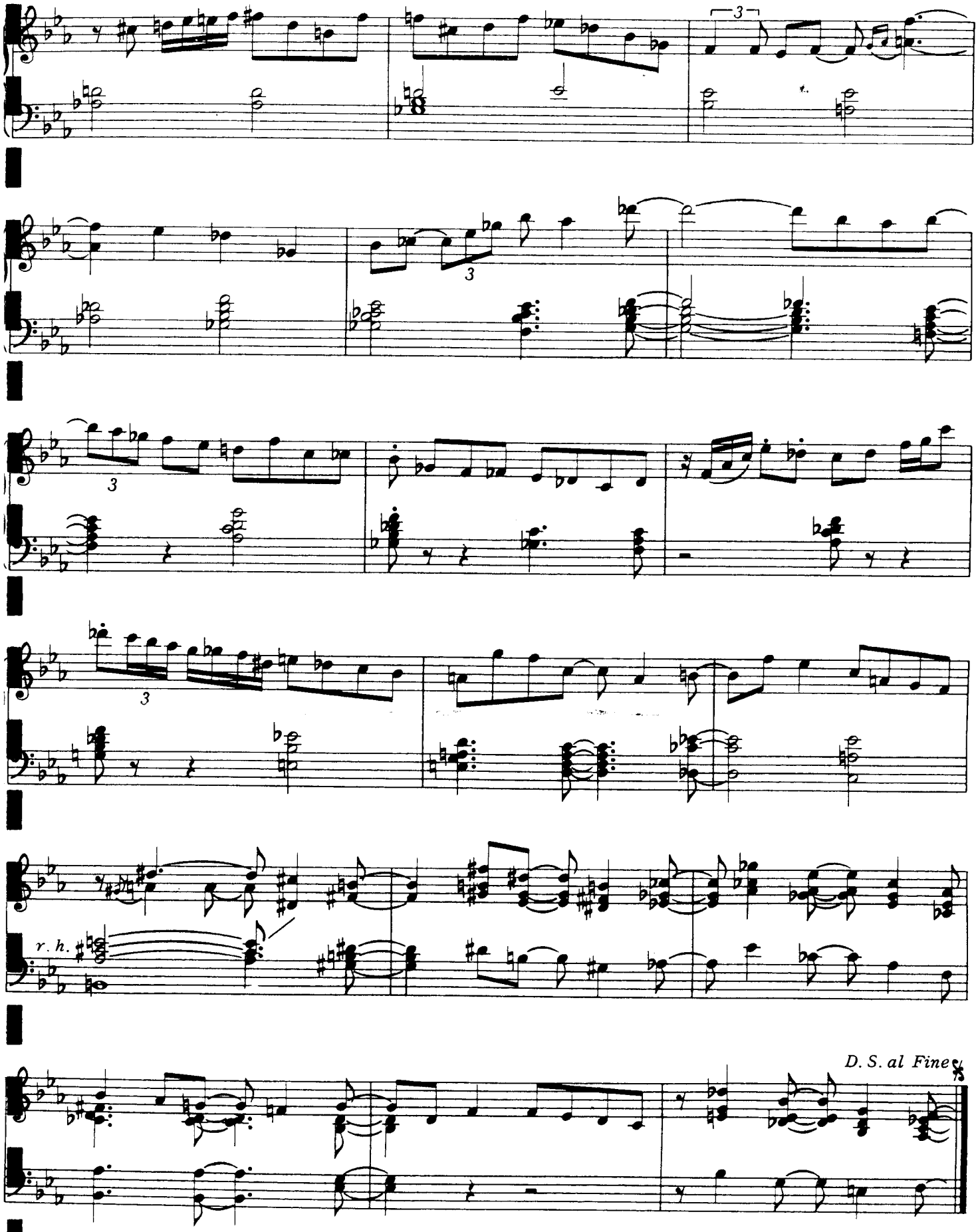

Gbmaj7
Ab9
Abm9
Db7
F11
F+
Db6
Eb7
Abmaj7
Ab9
D°7
G+7
Cmaj7
Am11
Ab9
C7
F#7 6
F#6
F11b9
F+7
a tempo
3
3
3
3
3
3
3


(2nd time rit.)
2nd time Fine



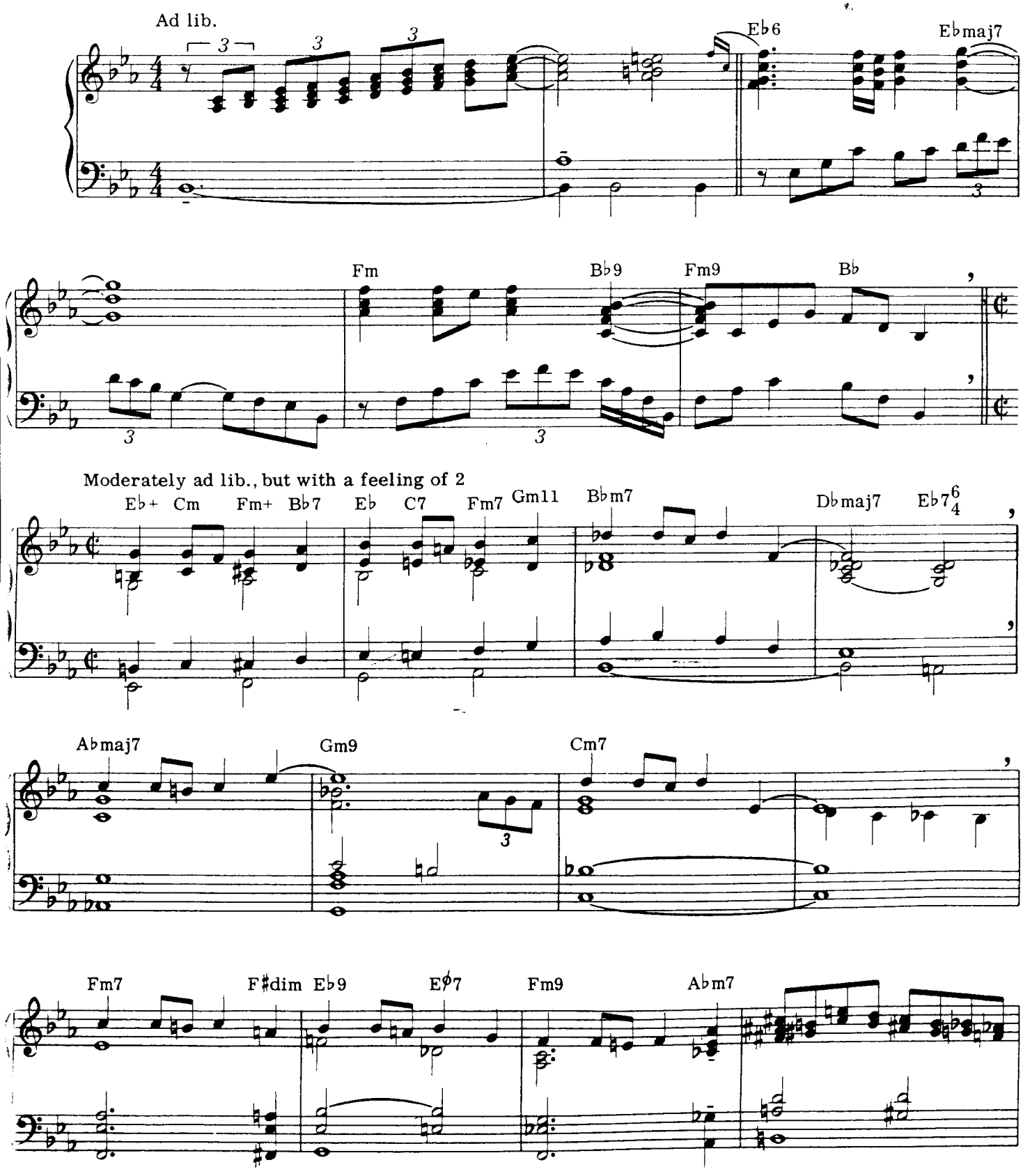

3
3
3
3
r. h.
D. S. al Fine

transcribed from BILL EVANS AT TOWN HALL — Verve 6-8683
from the David Merrick-Bernard Delfont production "THE ROAR OF THE GREASEPAINT-The Smell Of The Crowd"

WHO CAN I TURN TO
(When Nobody Needs Me)

Piano Arrangement by Bill Evans

By LESLIE BRICUSSE and ANTHONY NEWLEY



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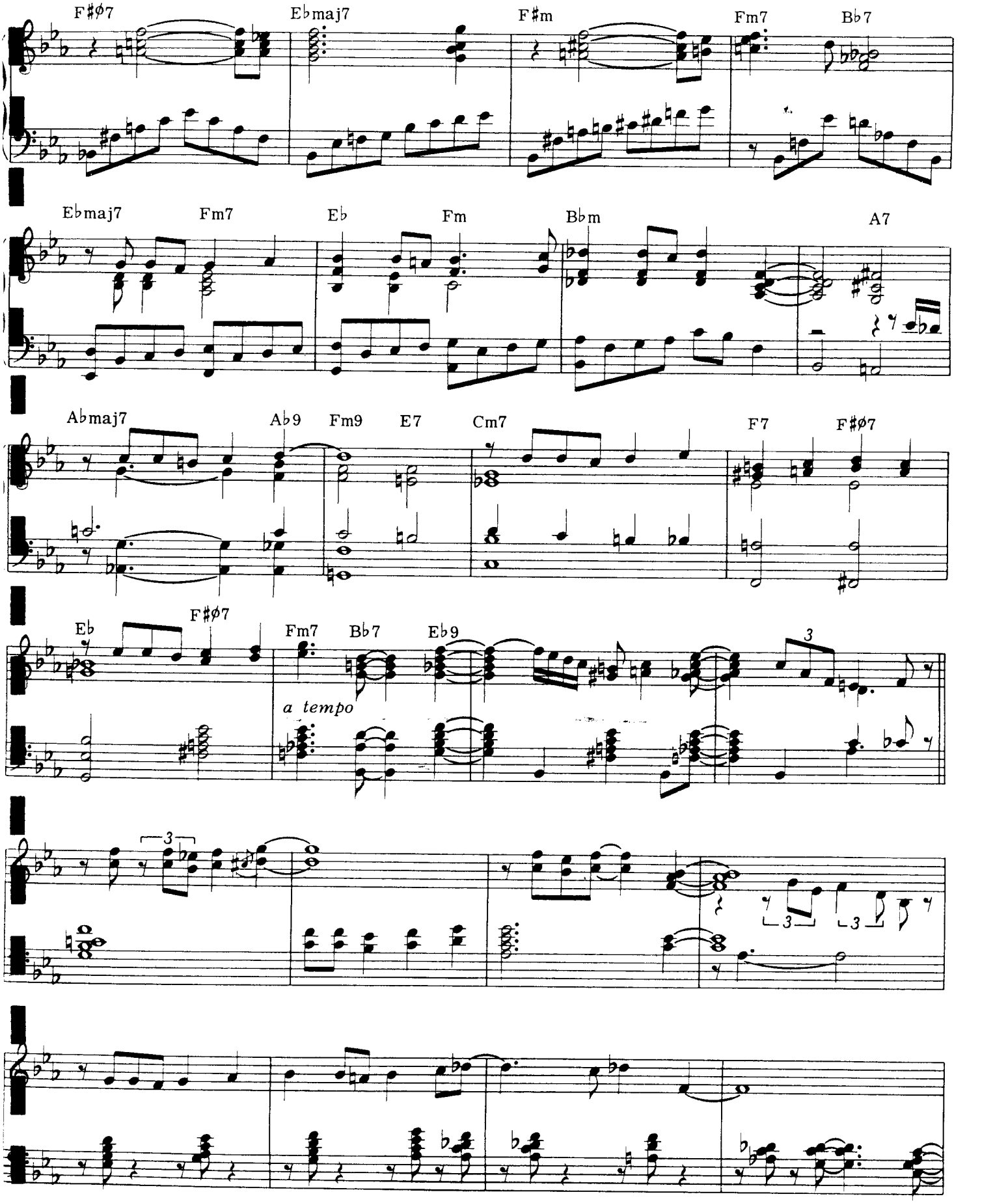
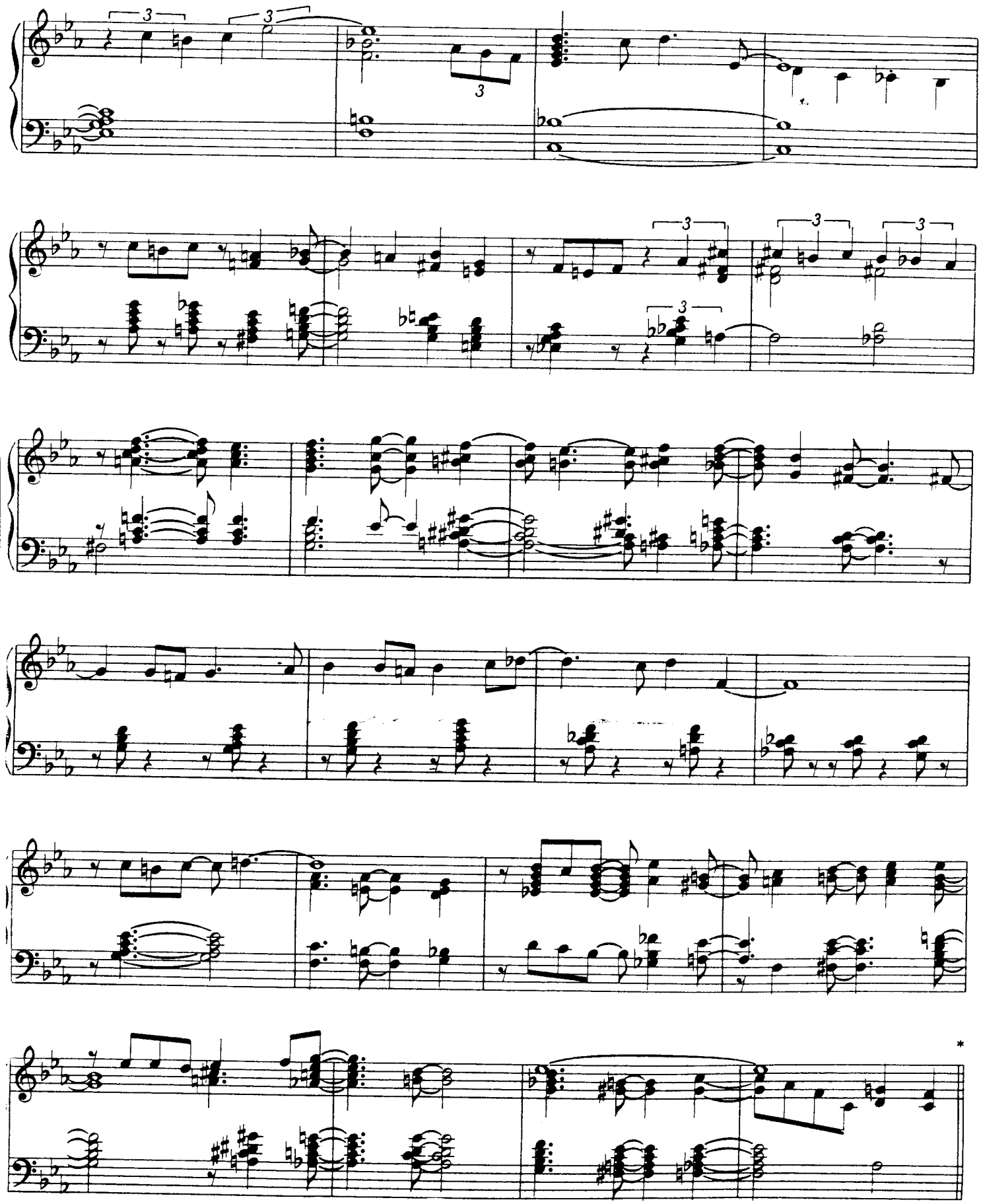
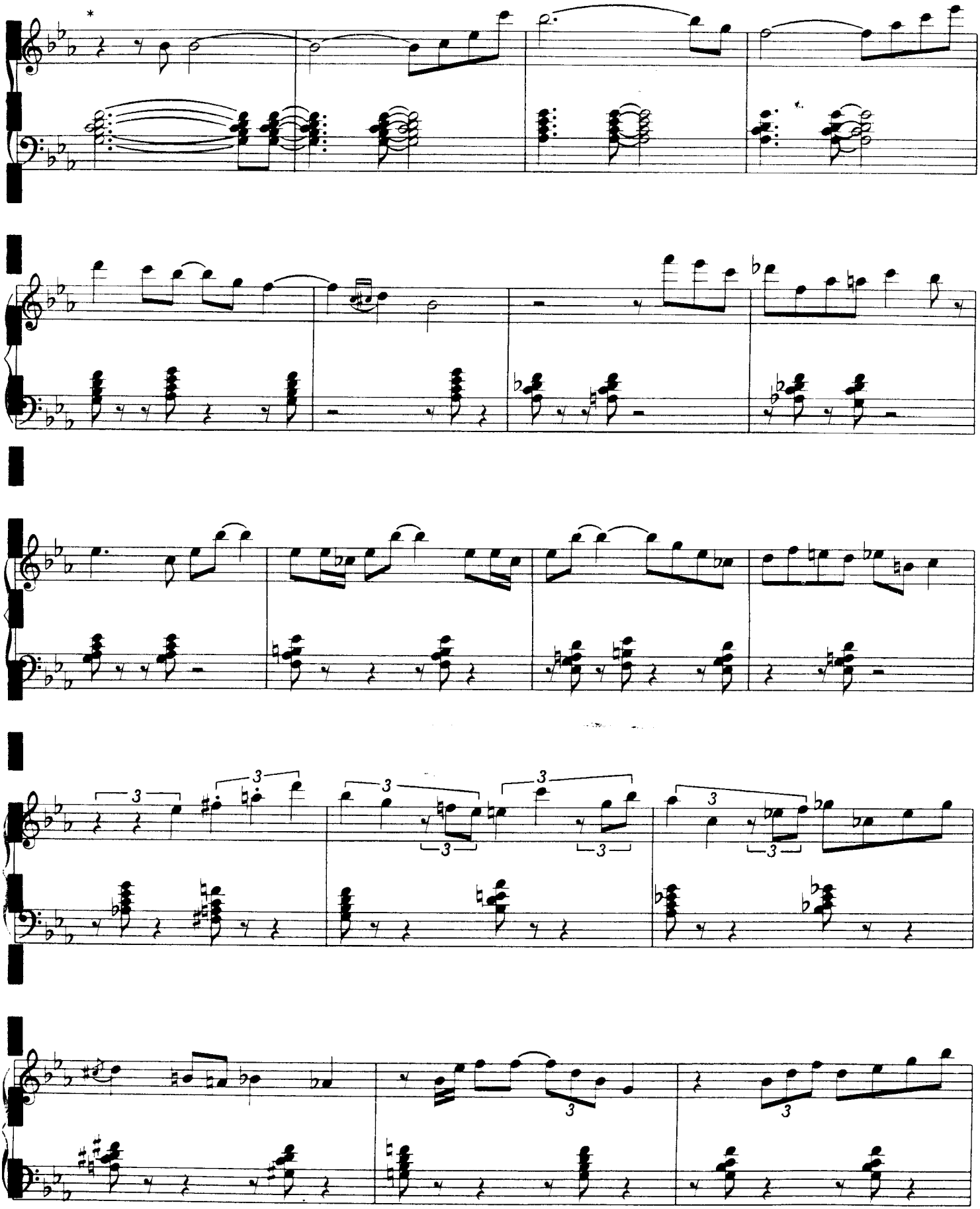
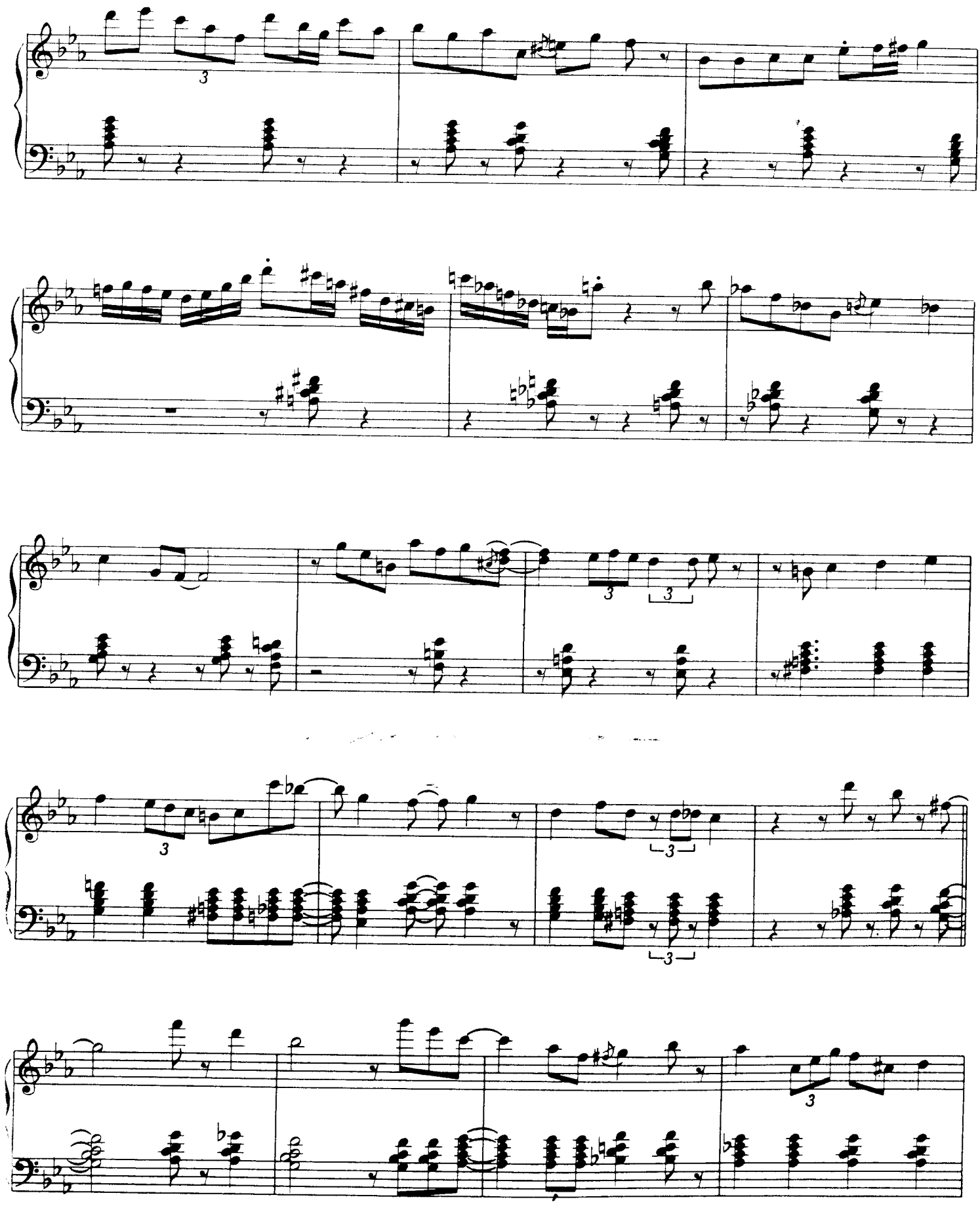

F#ø7
Ebmaj7
F#m
Fm7
Bb7
Ebmaj7
Fm7
Eb
Fm
Bbm
A7
Abmaj7
Ab9
Fm9
E7
Cm7
F7
F#ø7
Eb
F#ø7
Fm7
Bb7
Eb9
3
a tempo
3
3
3

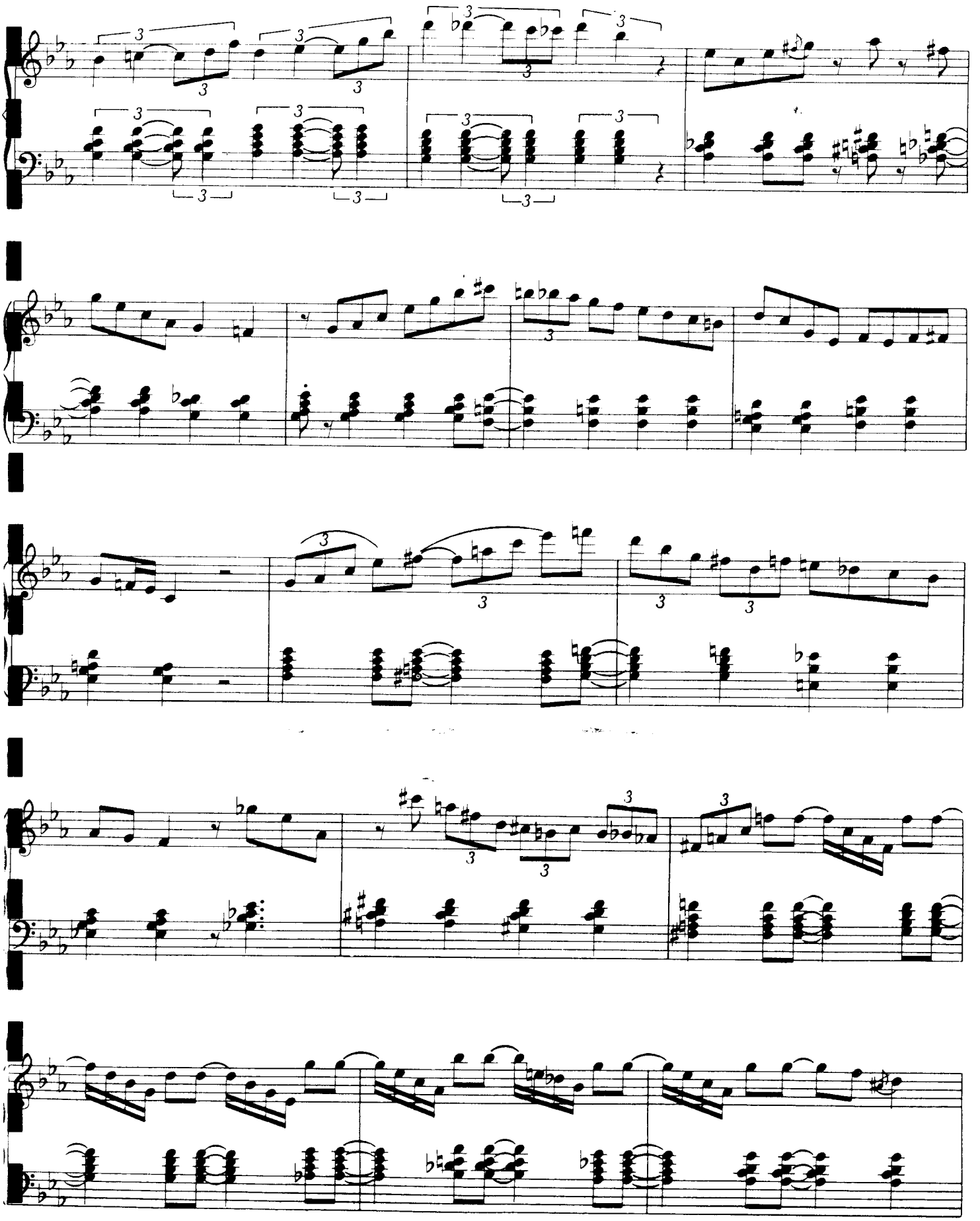


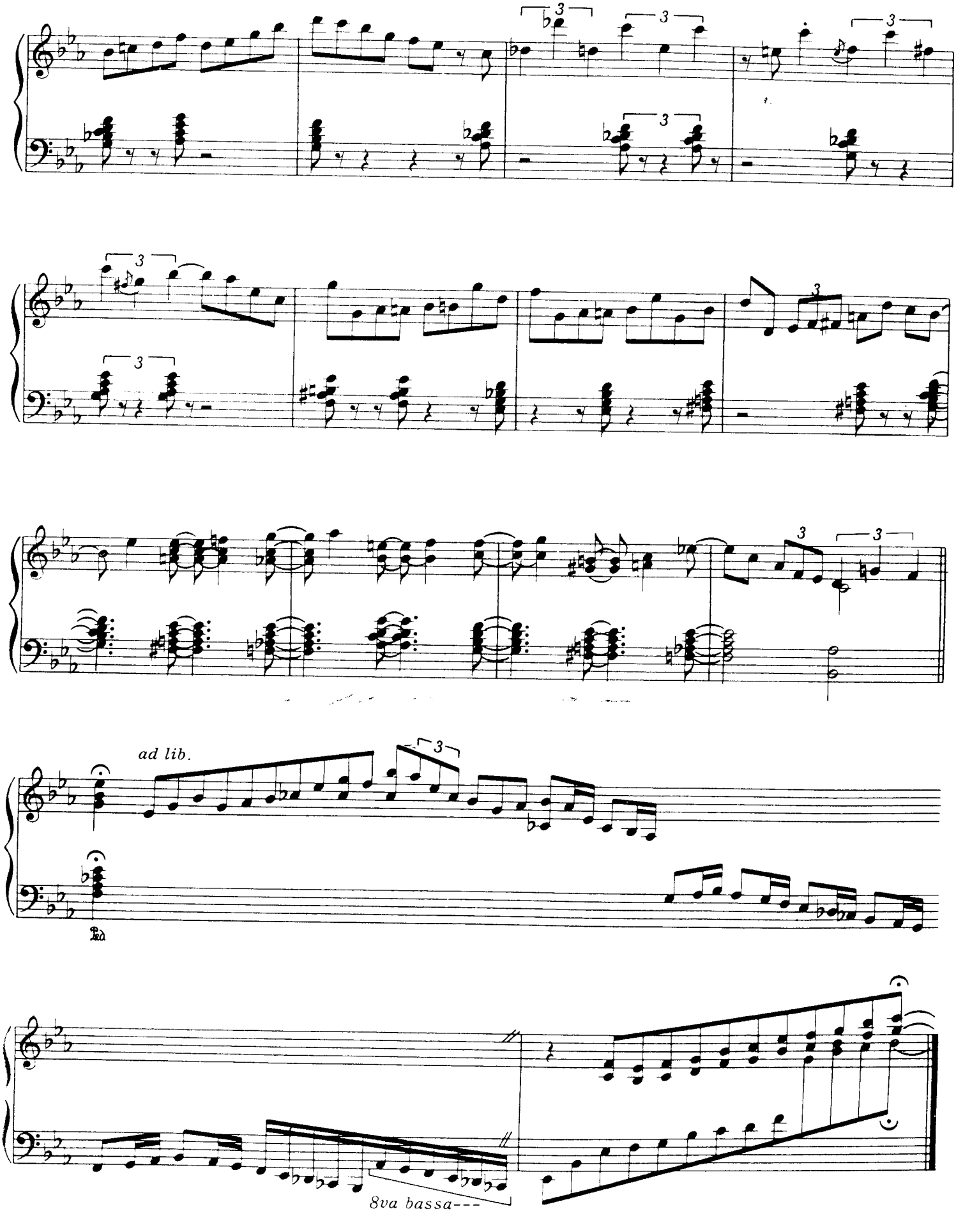
*Bass solo omitted.



*Bass solo omitted.

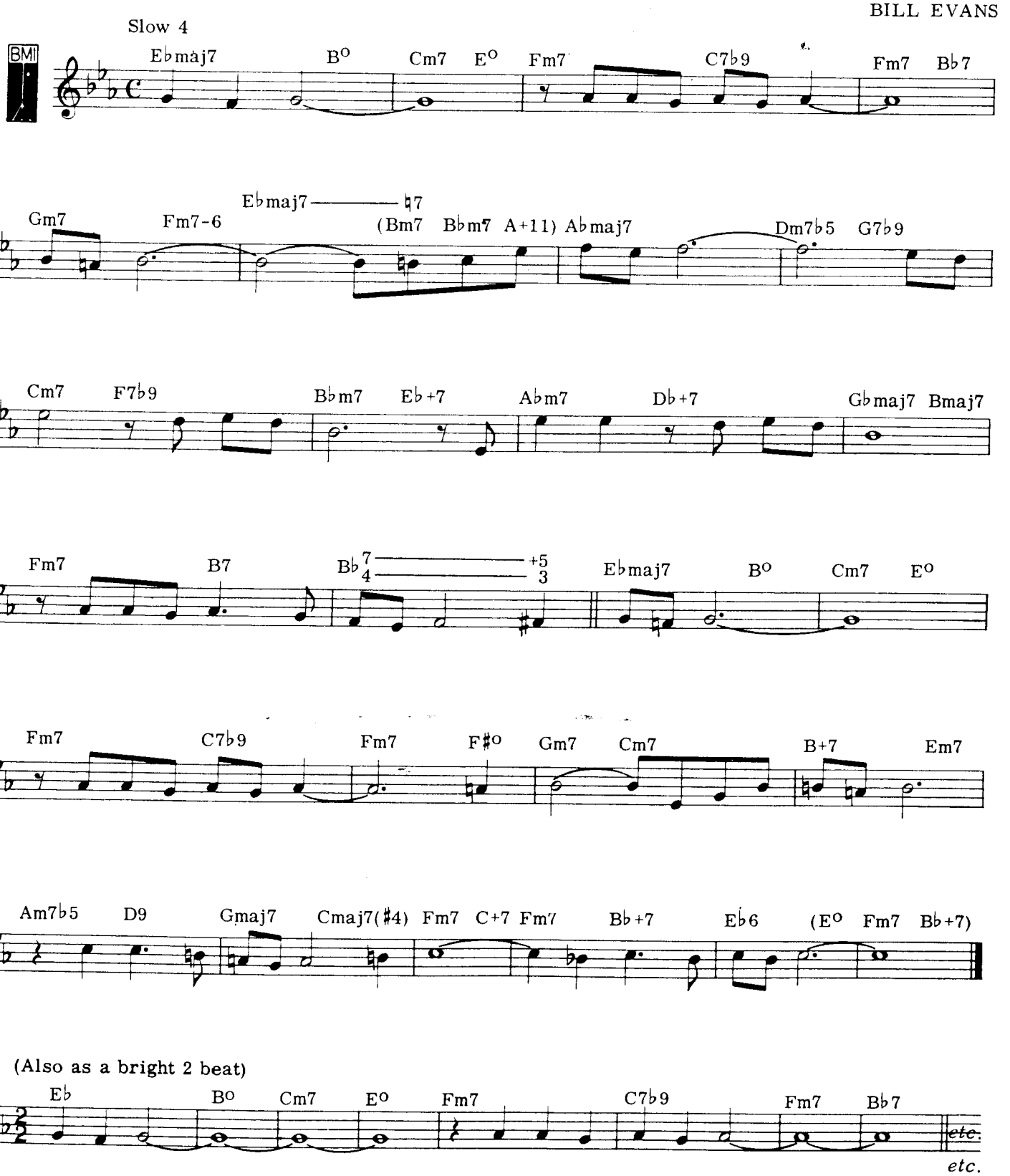





ad lib.
8va bassa---

FUNNY MAN

Music by
BILL EVANS



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