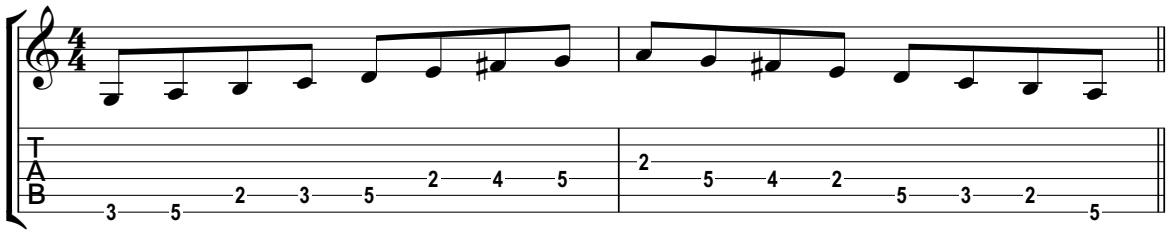
MAJOR LINES

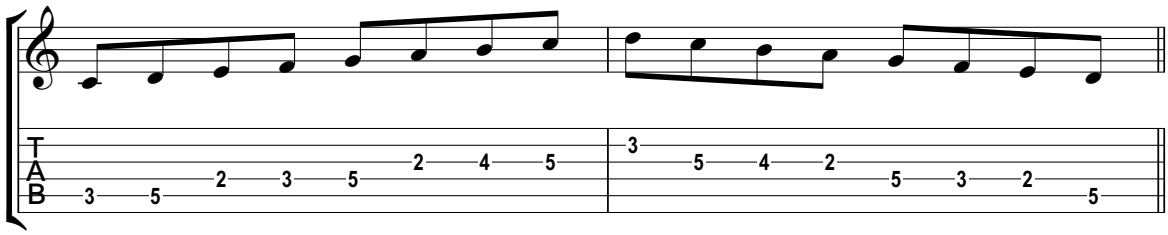
Major Scale. Extended to the 9th degree of the scale.

1

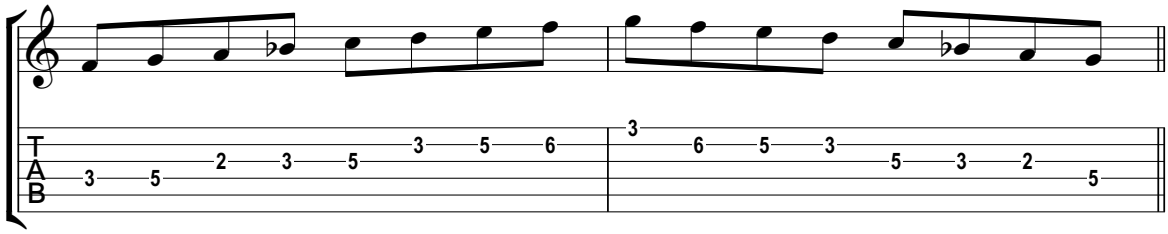
Gmaj7



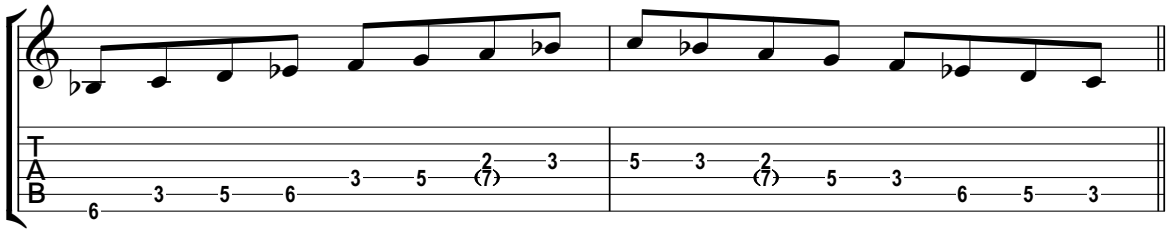
Cmaj7



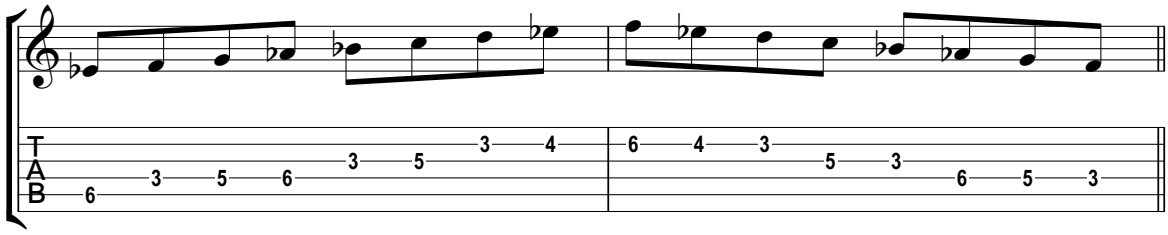
Fmaj7



B♭maj7

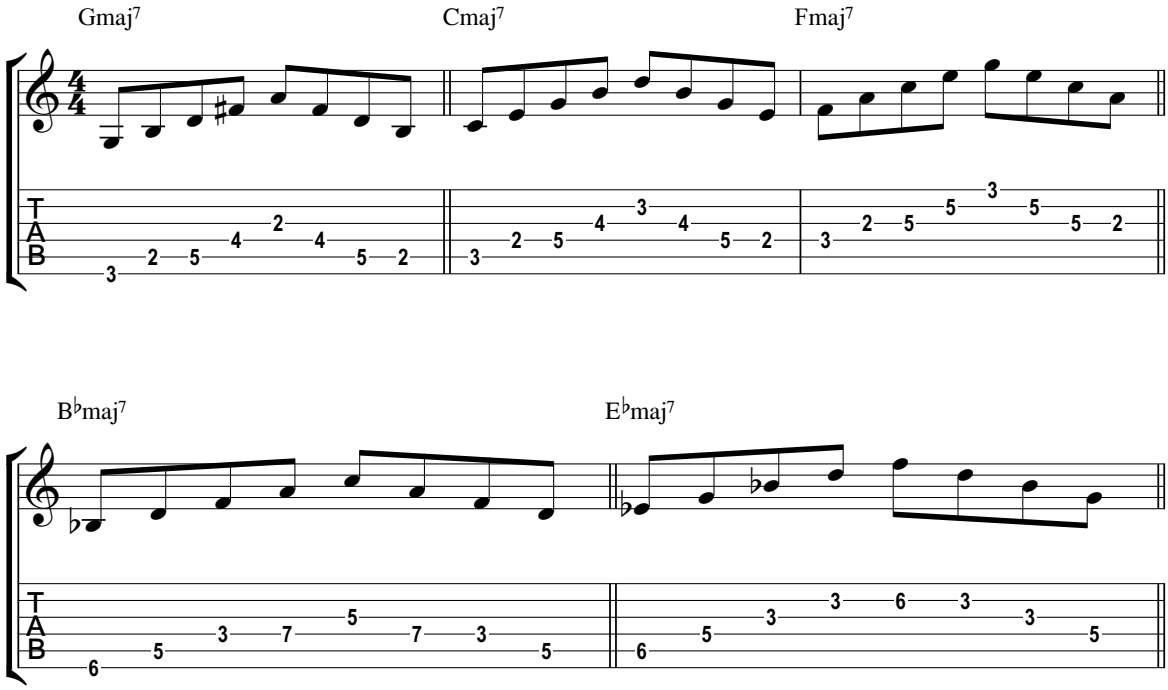


E♭maj7



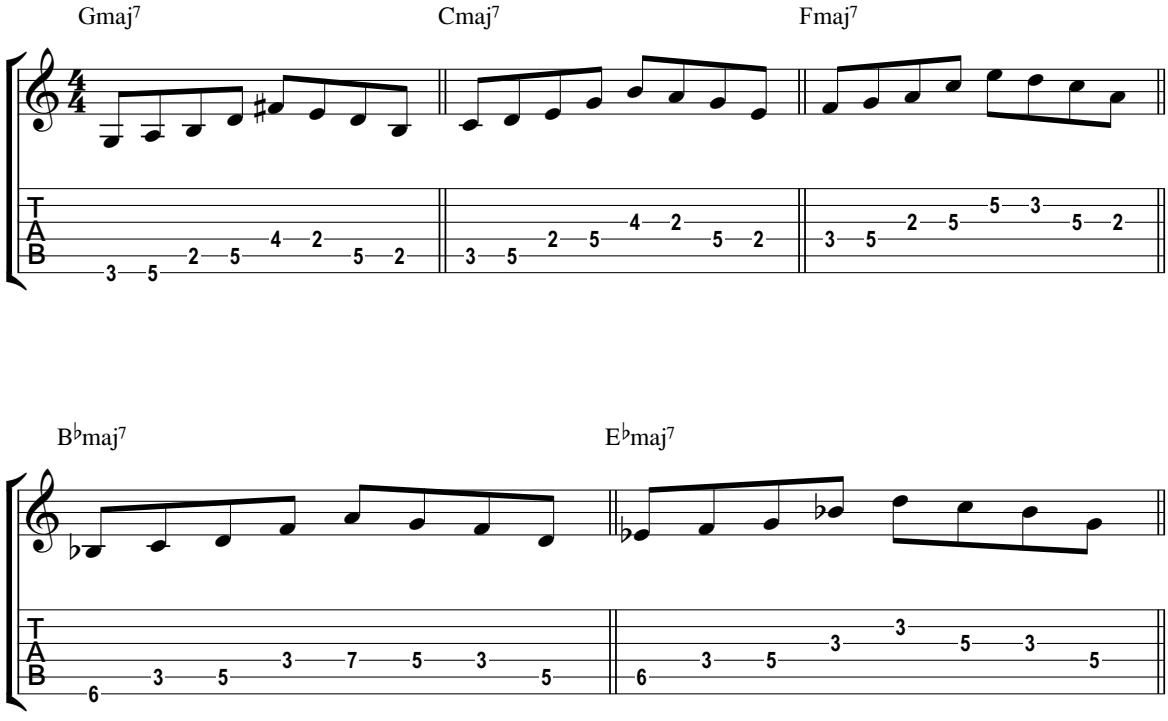
Major Arpeggio. Extended to the 9th degree of the scale.

2



This symmetrical figure is a kind of hybrid scale/arpeggio. It is built from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th steps of the major scale ascending and the 7th, 6th, 5th and 3rd steps descending. Note the absence of the 4th step which is often omitted or raised a semitone in major-based lines to avoid a semitonal clash with the 3rd of the accompanying *chord* (See Example 16).

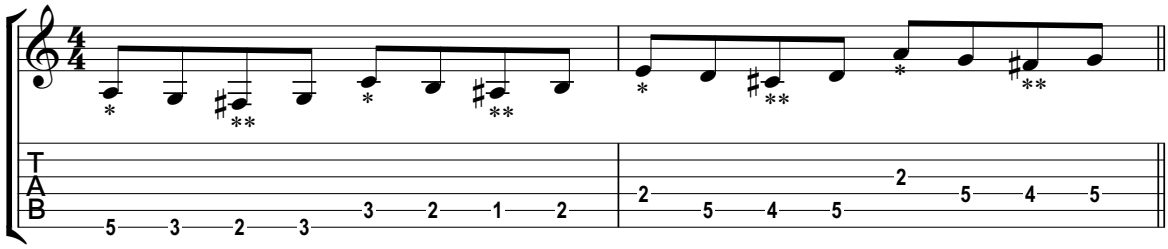
3



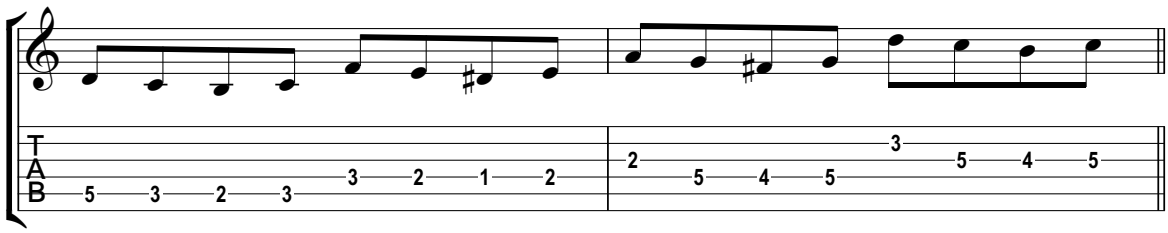
Employed by guitarist Django Reinhardt, pianist Art Tatum and countless others, this phrase incorporates double *neighbour notes* that target each step of the major *triad* creating a pattern known as a *sequence*. Notice how upper neighbour notes (*) are always *diatonic* scale tones whereas each lower neighbour note (**) is situated a semitone below the main tone.

4

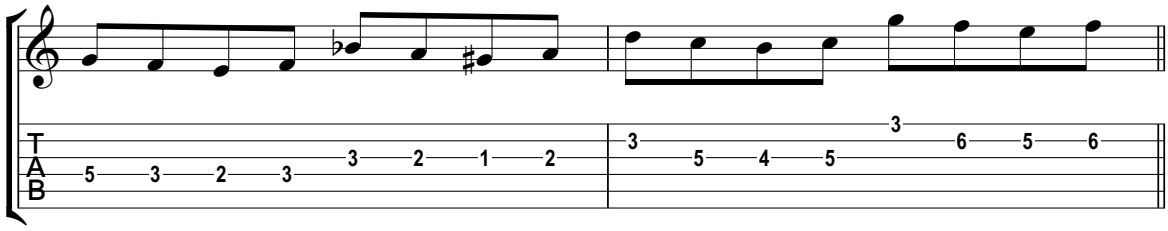
Gmaj7



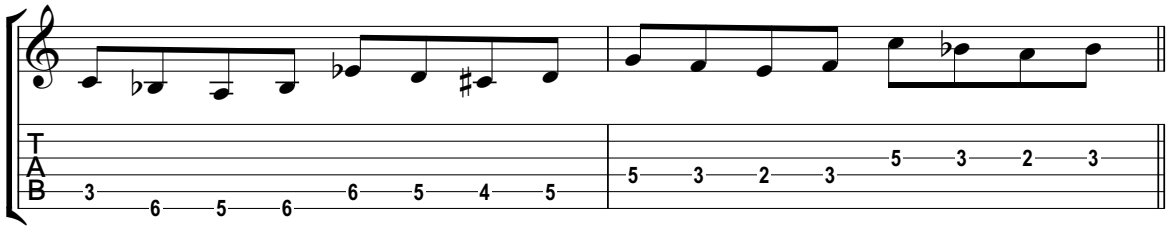
Cmaj7



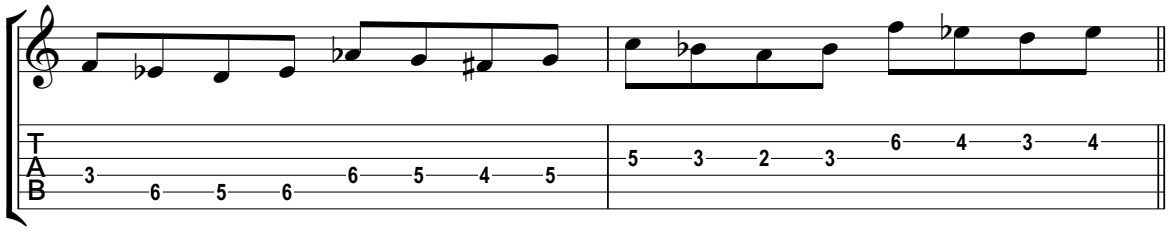
Fmaj7



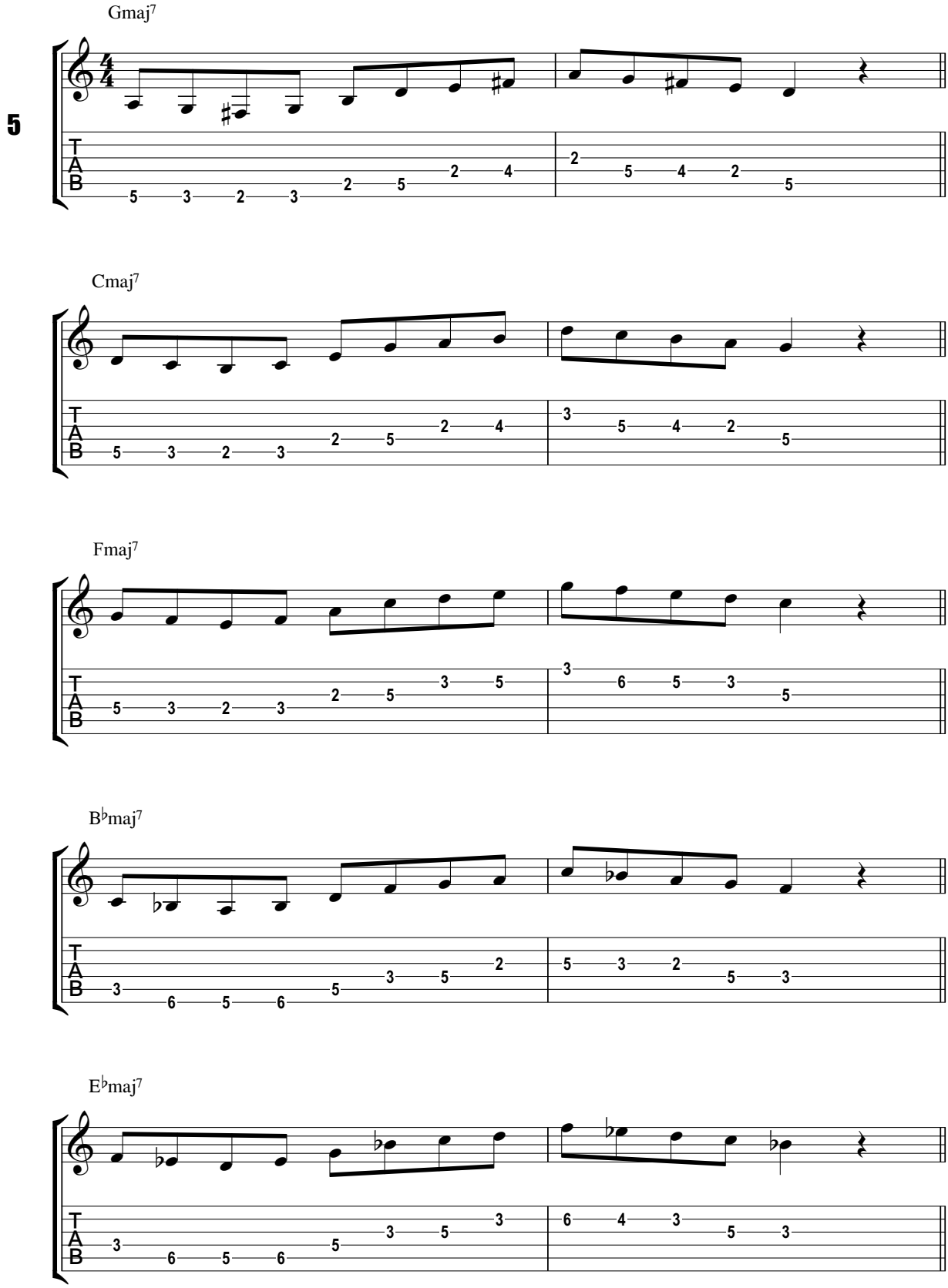
B♭maj7



E♭maj7



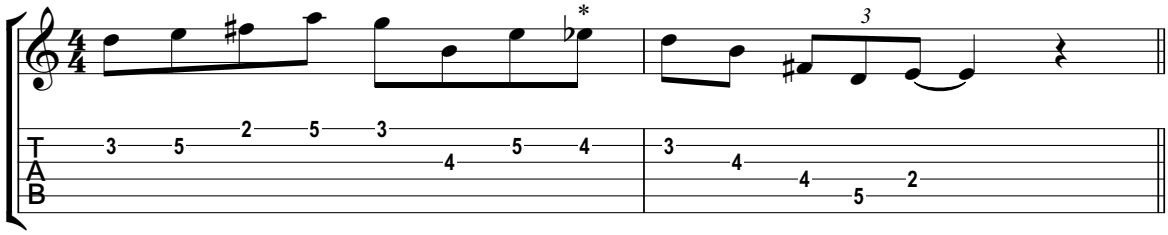
This line combines aspects found in the previous examples.



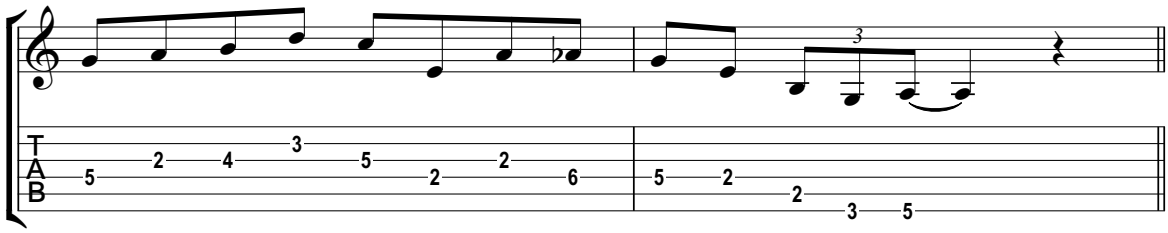
The first four notes of Example 6 are derived from the opening figure in Example 3, shifted up from the tonic to outline the 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th notes of the scale. Note the use of the *passing tone* (*) which adds melodic interest to the line.

6

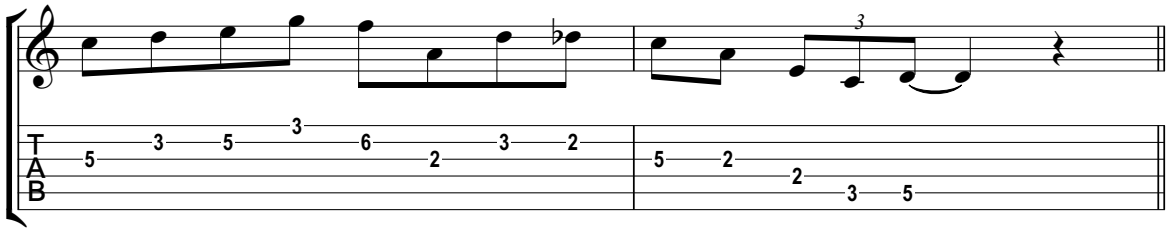
Gmaj7



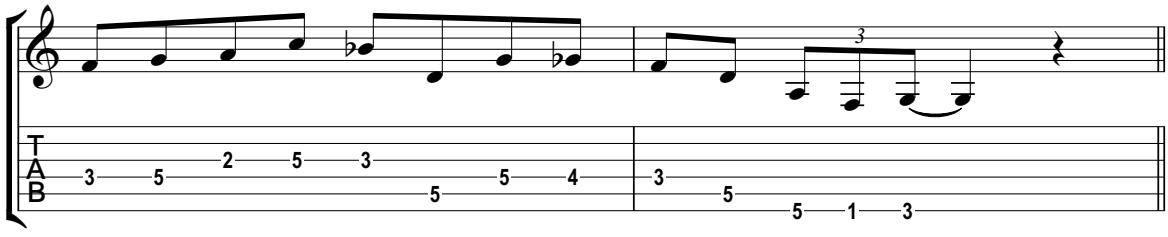
Cmaj7



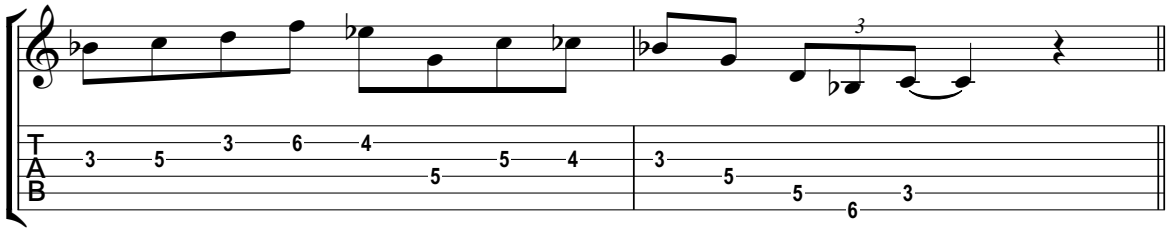
Fmaj7



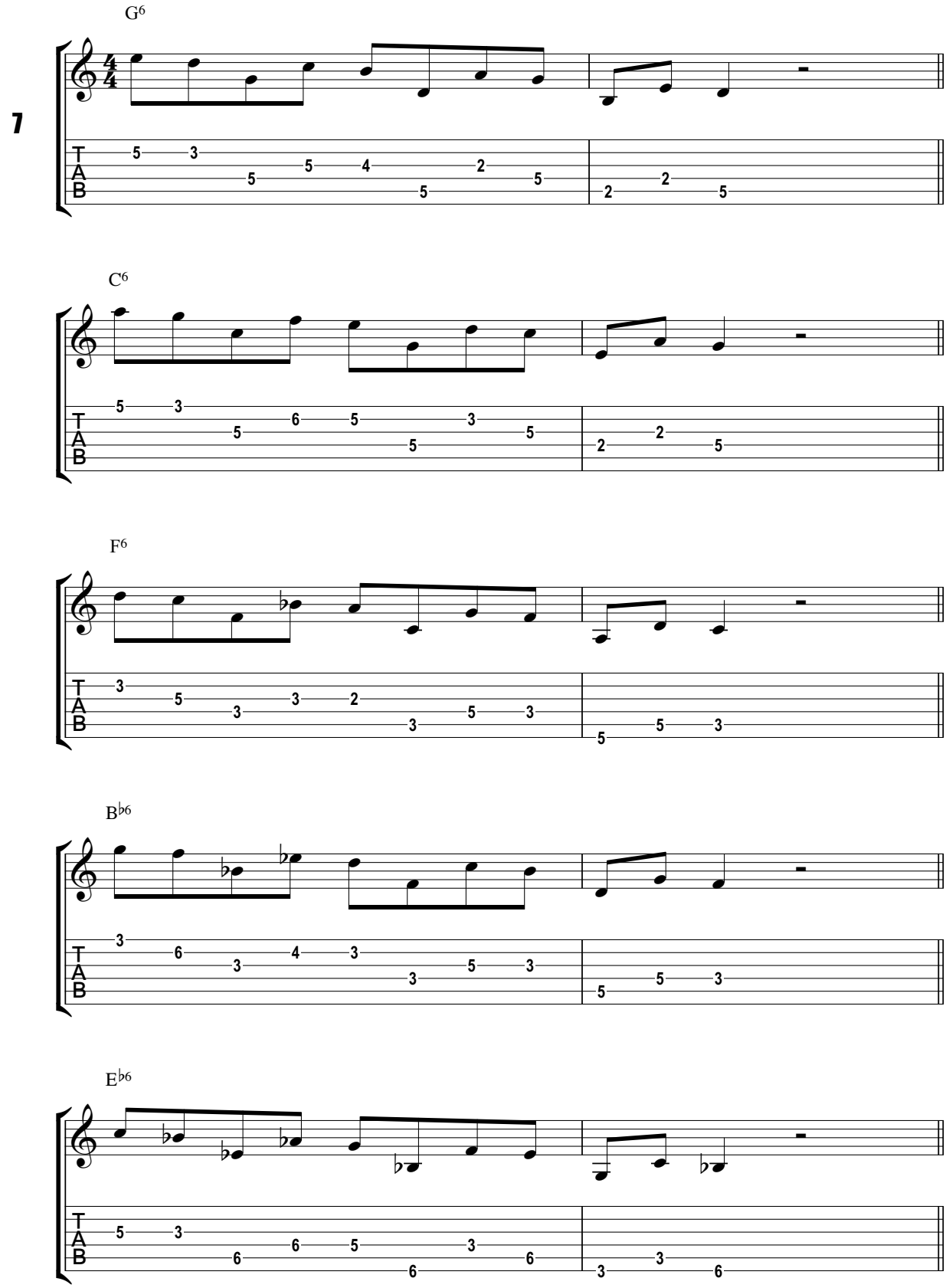
B♭maj7



E♭maj7

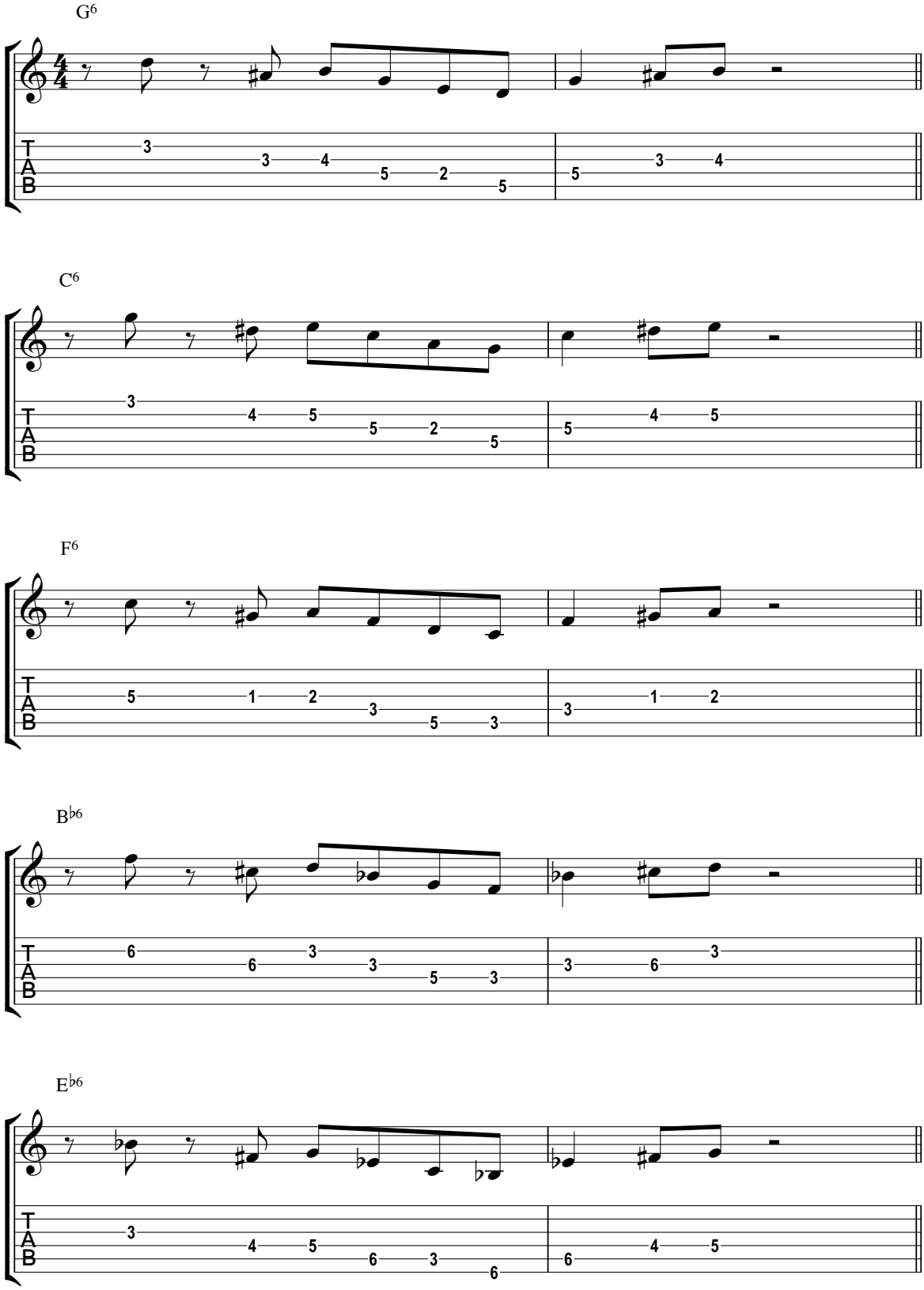


Here's a classic trumpet *lick* from the incomparable Louis Armstrong.

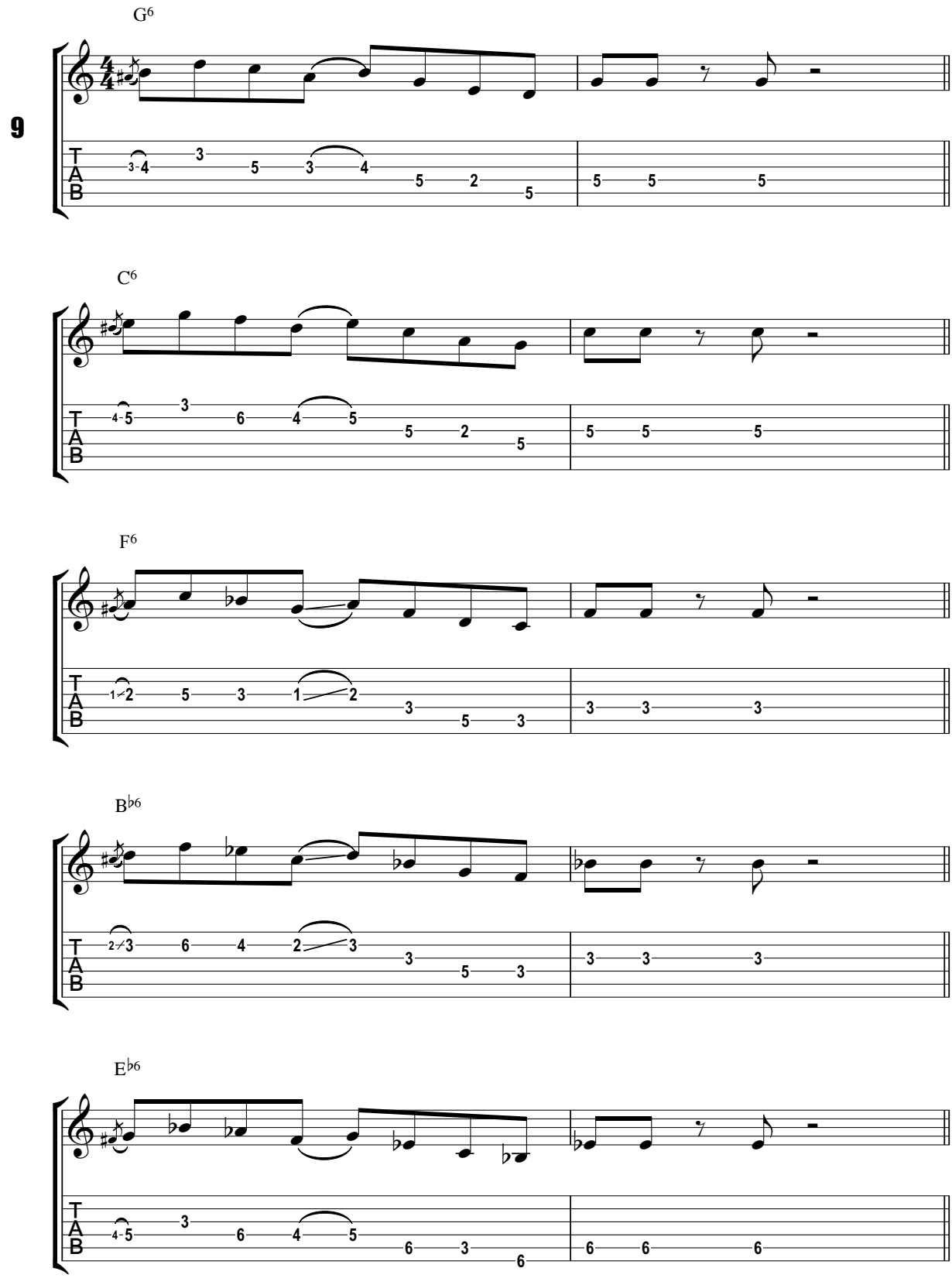


The following two *blues*-based *riffs* can also be played over a *dominant 7th* chord as the 7th step of the scale is not stated. Example 8 is in the Kansas City-style. Bandleader, pianist and master of minimalism Count Basie employed this kind of riff for many of his tunes.

8



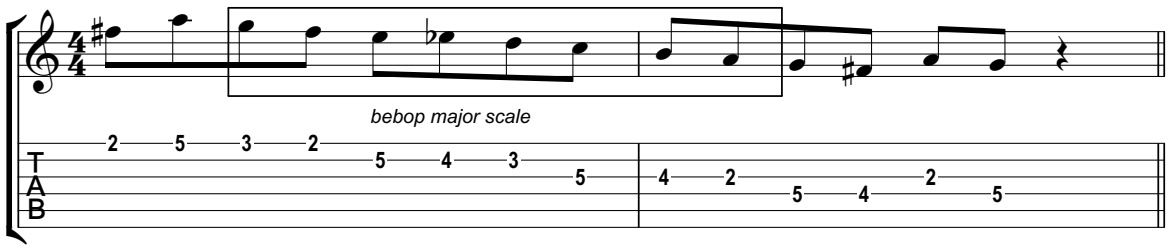
Here's one in the style of the great *swing* guitarist Charlie Christian whose adventurous playing pointed towards *bebop*.



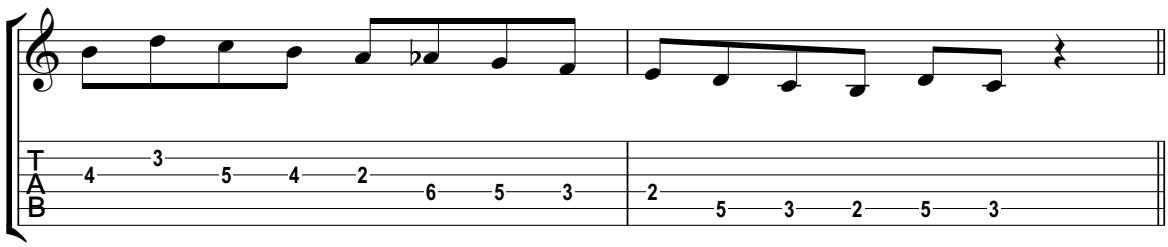
A descending passage built from the *bebop major scale*.

10

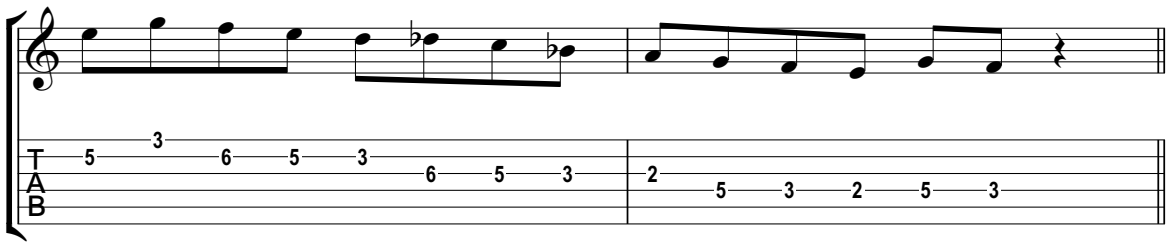
Gmaj7



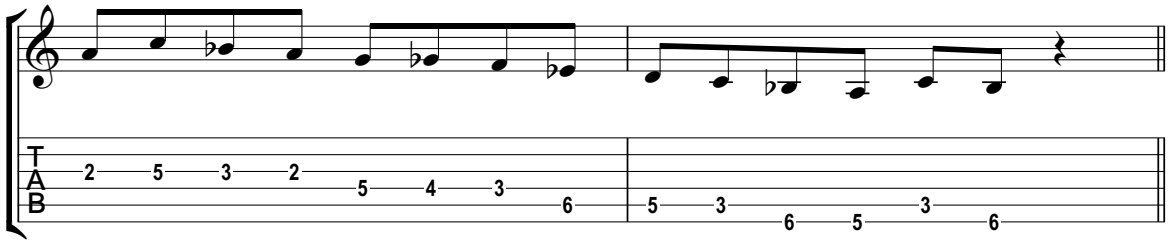
Cmaj7



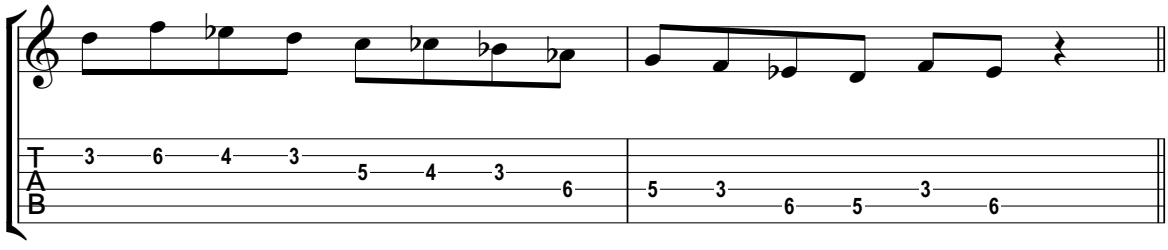
Fmaj7



B♭maj7



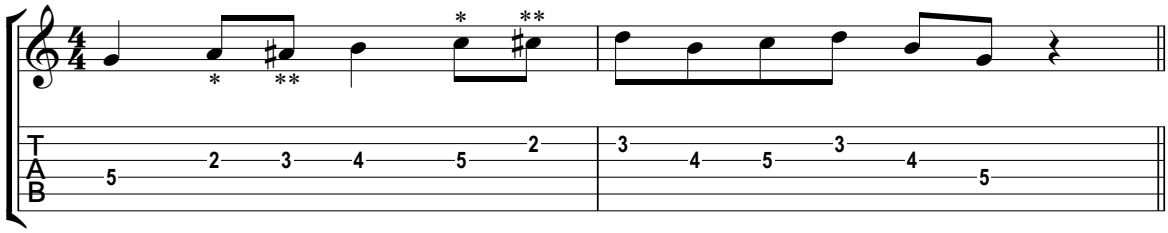
E♭maj7



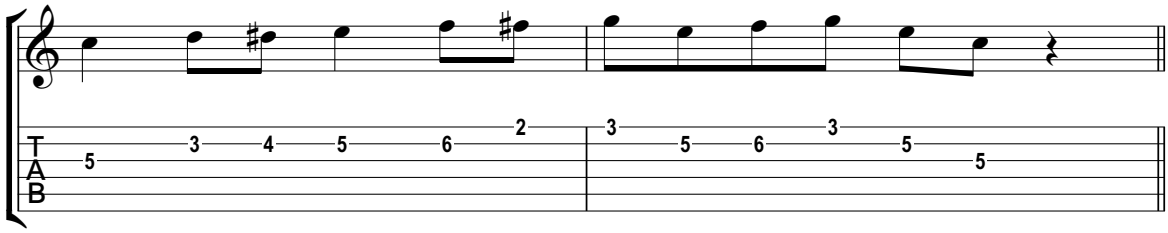
The following three examples are in the style of the highly influential alto saxophonist Charlie 'Bird' Parker. Notice the extensive use of both diatonic (*) and *chromatic* (**) passing tones that marks the ascent in the first of these examples.

11

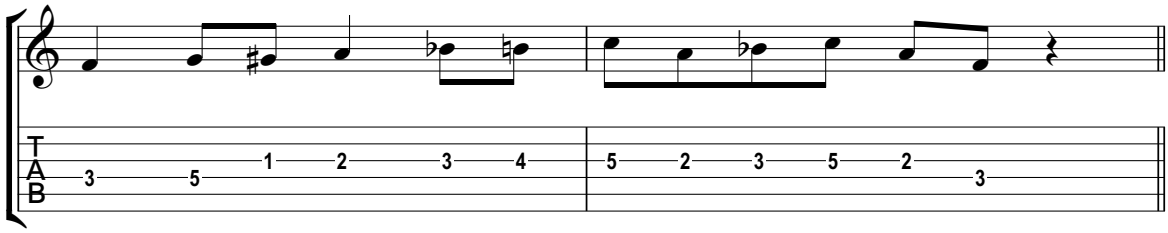
Gmaj7



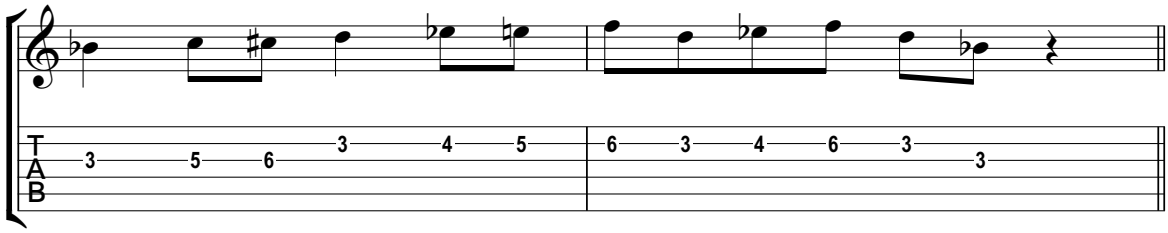
Cmaj7



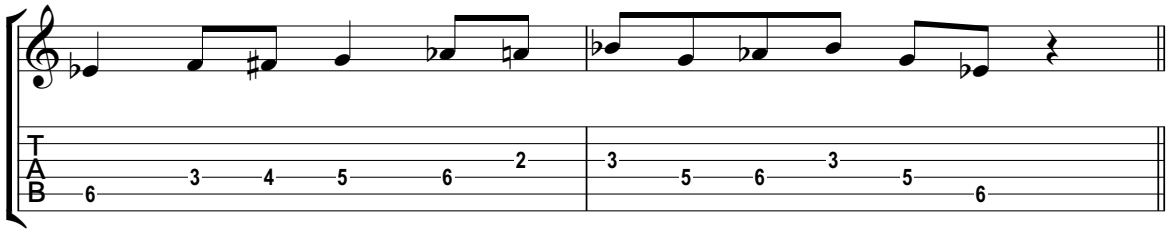
Fmaj7



B♭maj7



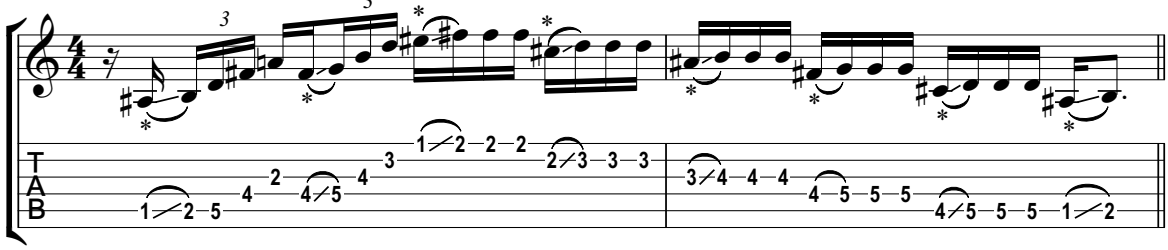
E♭maj7



A sweeping *double-time* line relying heavily upon the use of the *leading tone* (*).

12

Gmaj7



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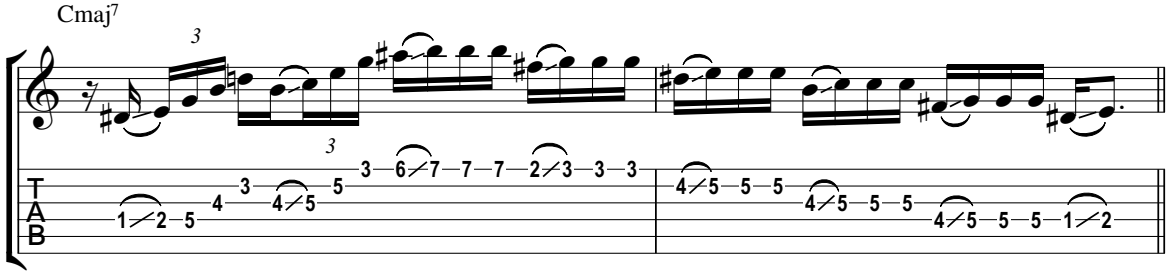
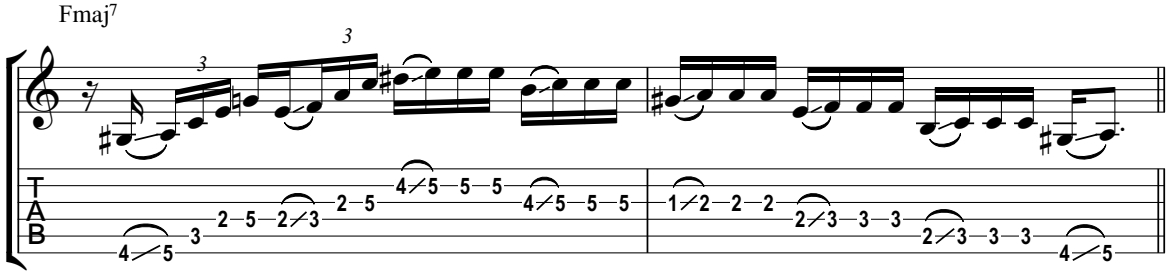
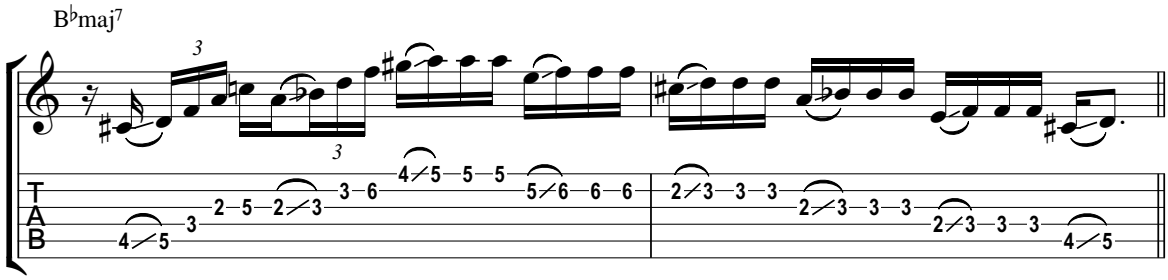


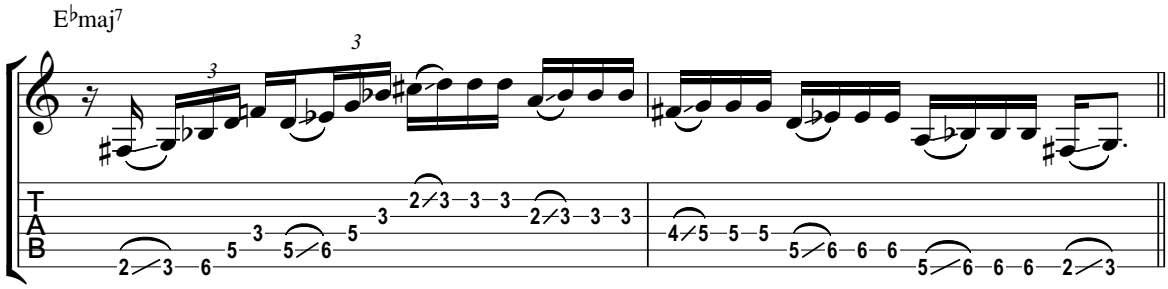
Fmaj7



B♭maj7



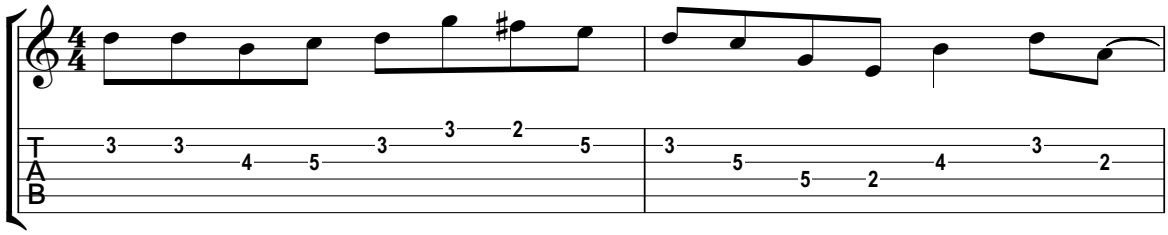
E♭maj7

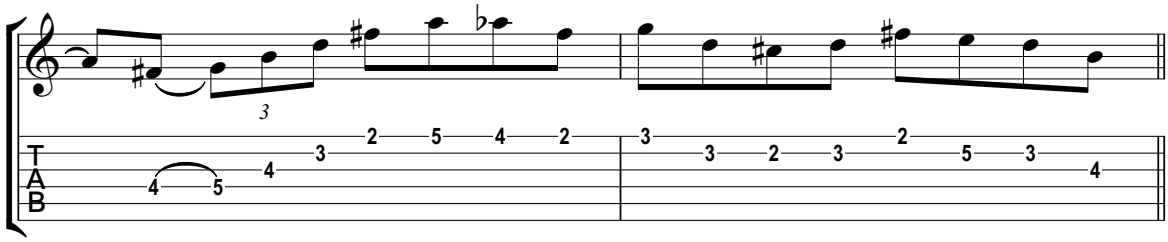


This extended bebop line brings together many of the ideas covered thus far.

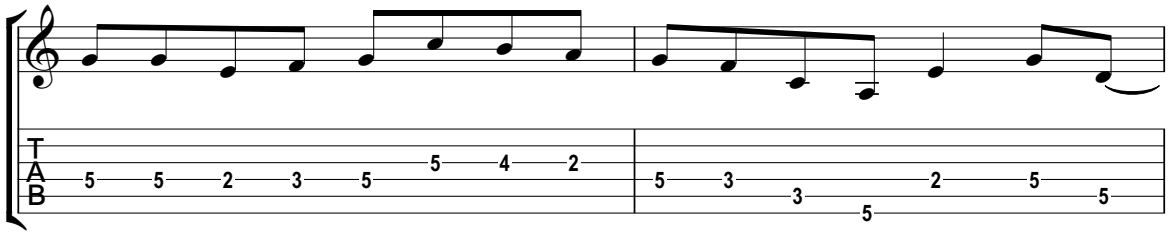
Gmaj7

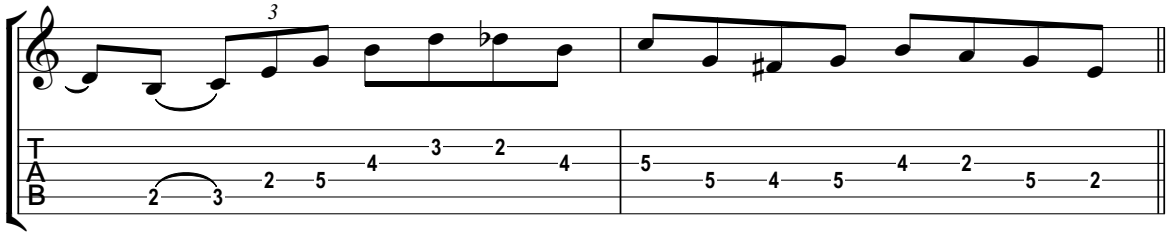
13



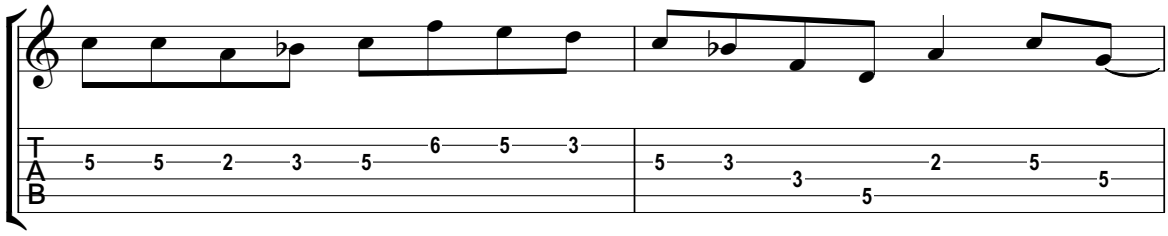


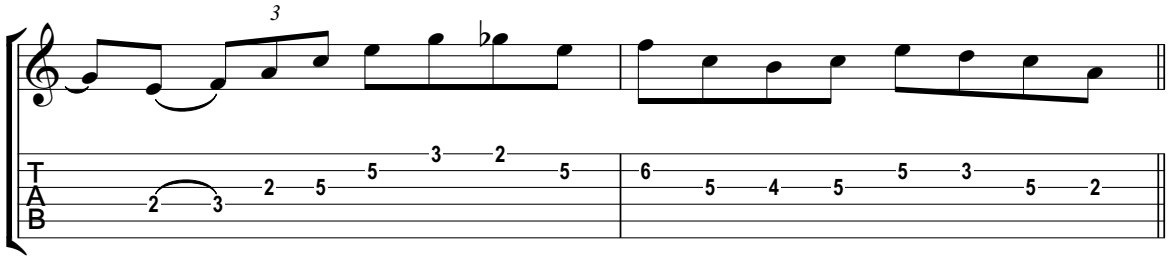
Cmaj7





Fmaj7

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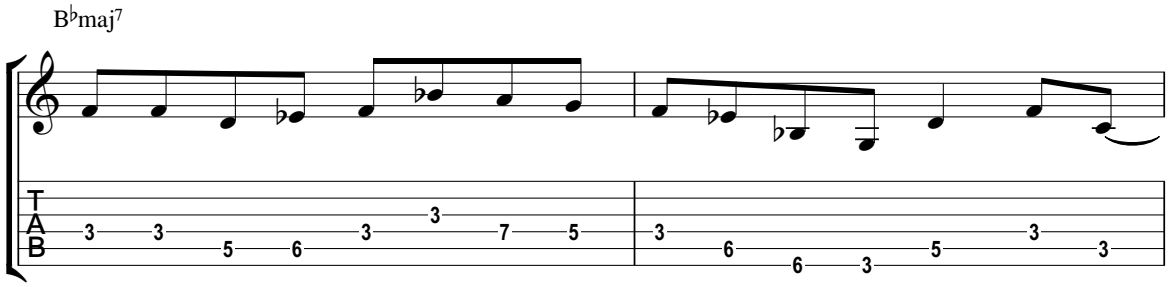
B♭maj7
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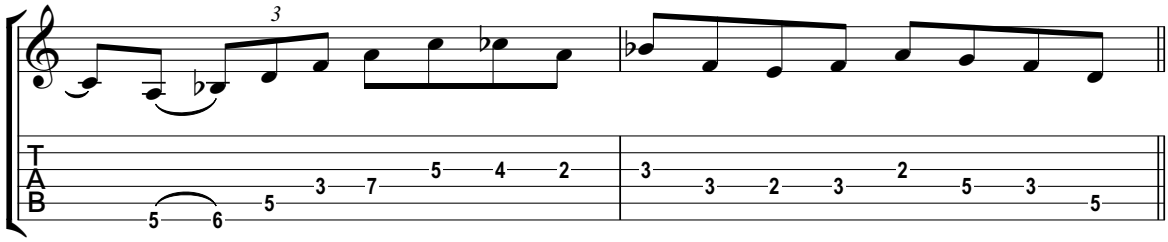
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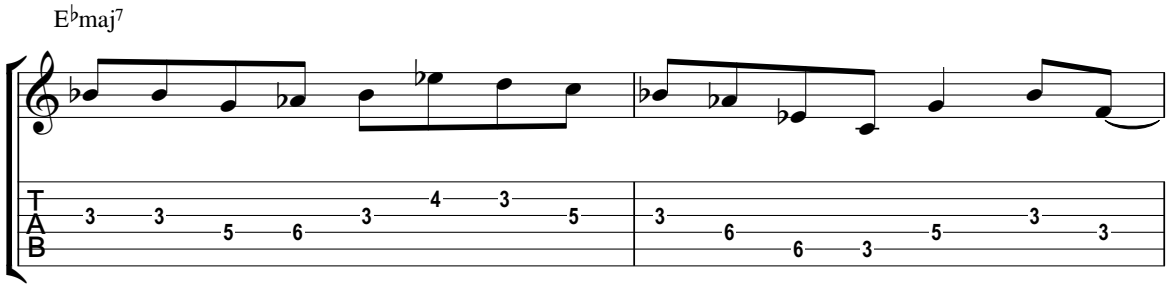
E♭maj7
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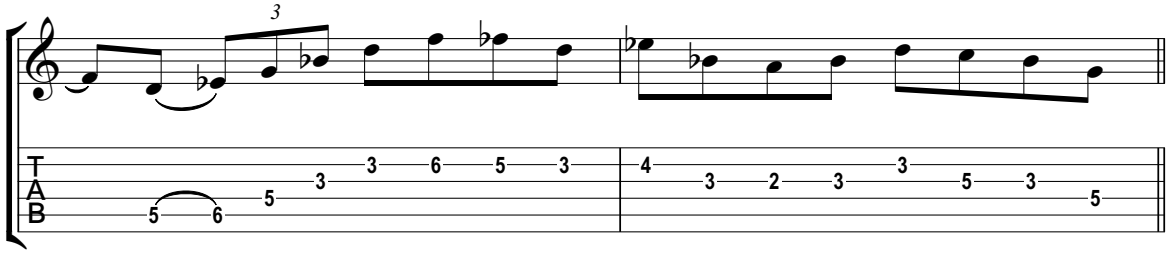
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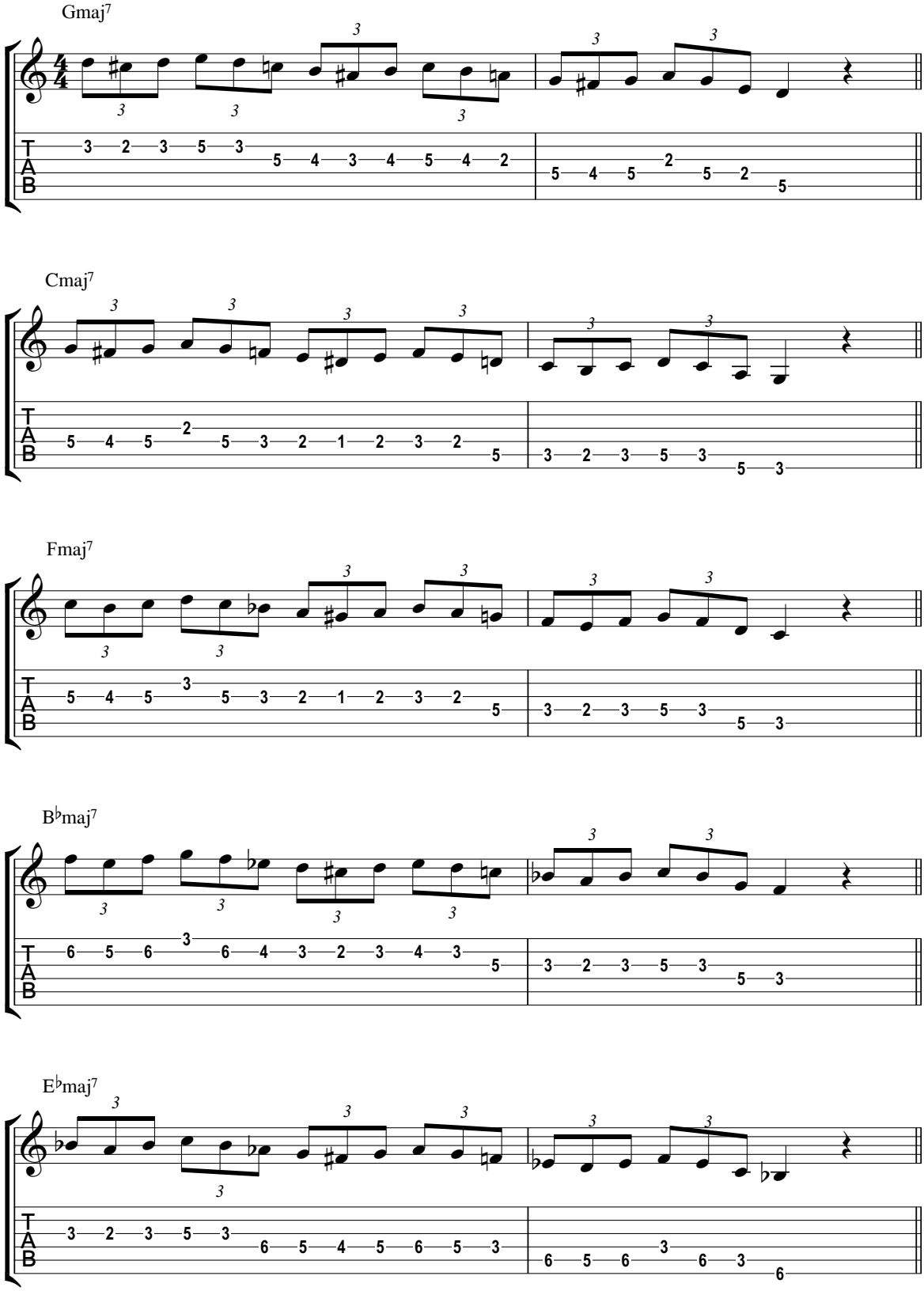
The following two descending sequential patterns were favoured by the supreme tenor saxophonist John Coltrane. The figure in Example 14 was most likely borrowed from trumpet master Dizzy Gillespie.

14

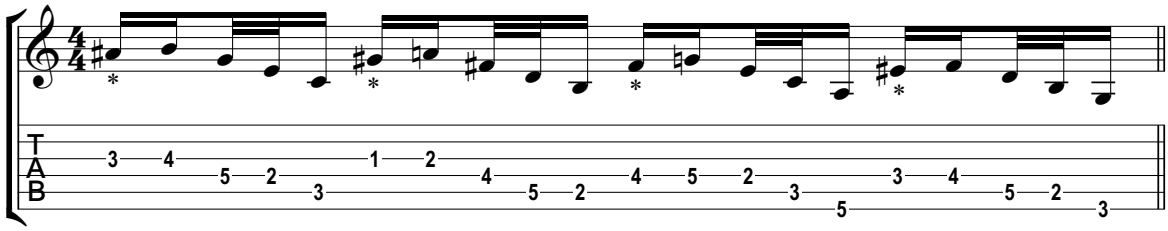


Descending arpeggios built upon the IV, III, II and I steps of the major scale are each prefaced by a leading tone (*).

15

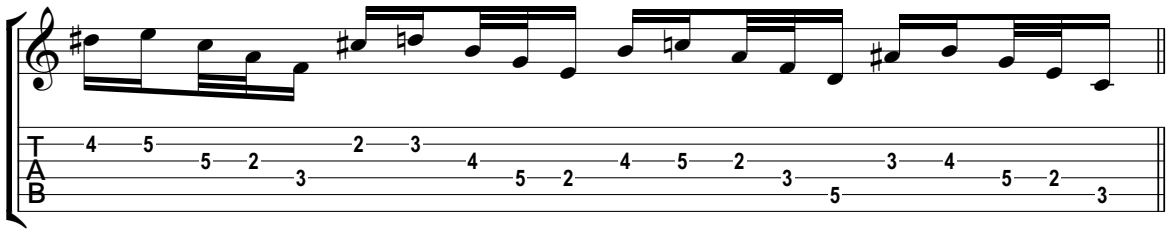
Gmaj7

(Cmaj7 Bm7 Am7 Gmaj7)



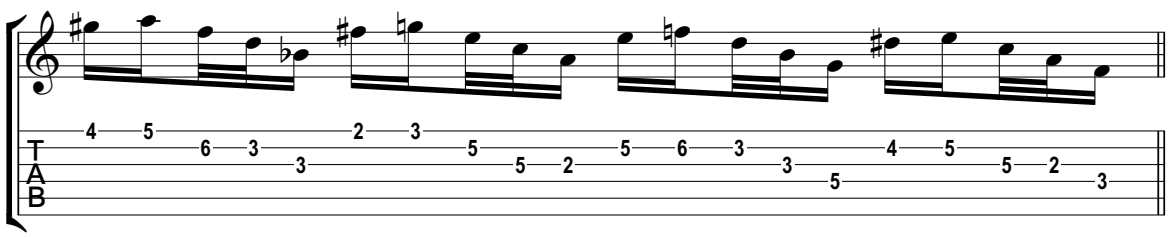
Cmaj7

(Fmaj7 Em7 Dm7 Cmaj7)



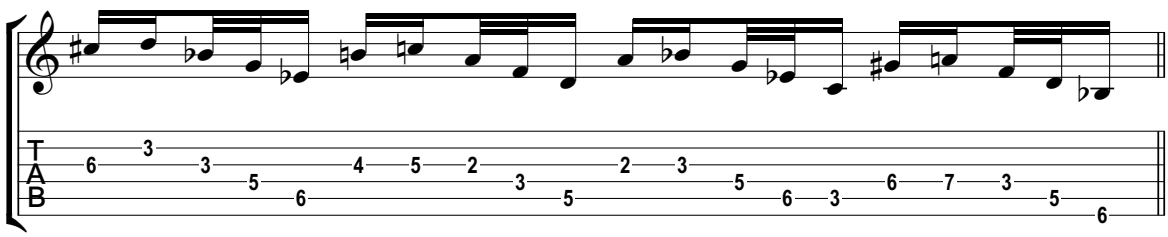
Fmaj7

(B♭maj7 Am7 Gm7 Fmaj7)



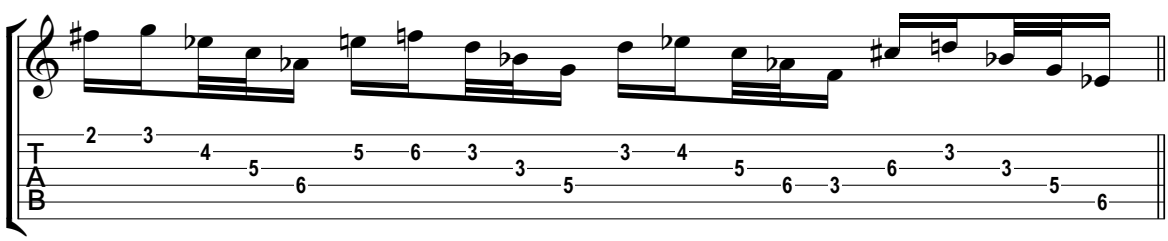
B♭maj7

(E♭maj7 Dm7 Cm7 B♭maj7)



E♭maj7

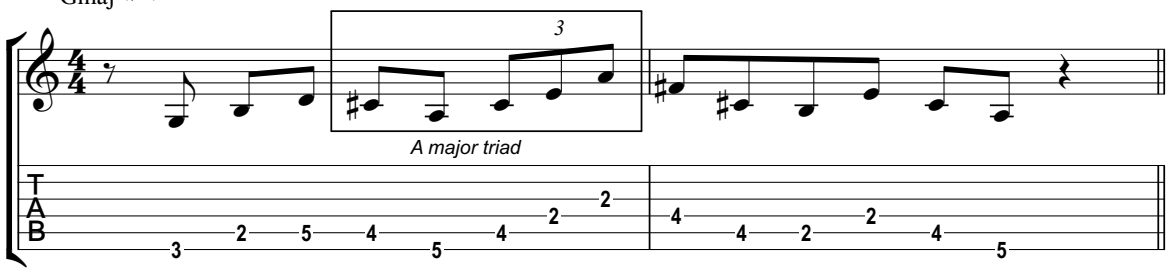
(A♭maj7 Gm7 Fm7 E♭maj7)



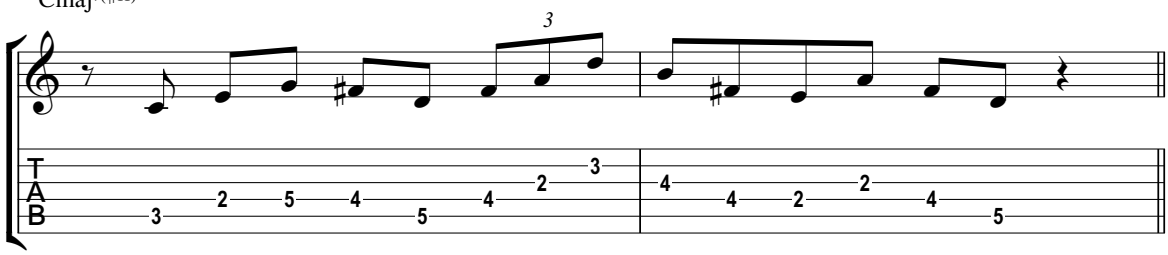
A common *chord substitution* for the *major 7th* chord in modern jazz is a major 7th with a sharpened 11th (also written as ♯4 or ♭5). To effectively solo over this chord, most players choose the *lydian mode*. Note the A major *triad* in the second half of bar 1 which adds the 9th (A), ♯11 (C♯) and 13th (E) to the underlying G major 7th.

16

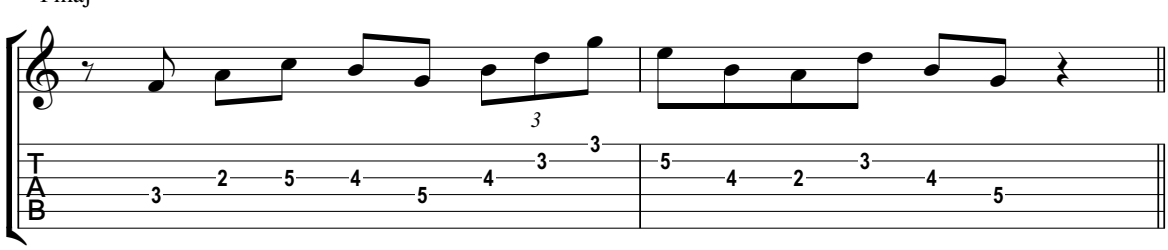
Gmaj7(♯11)



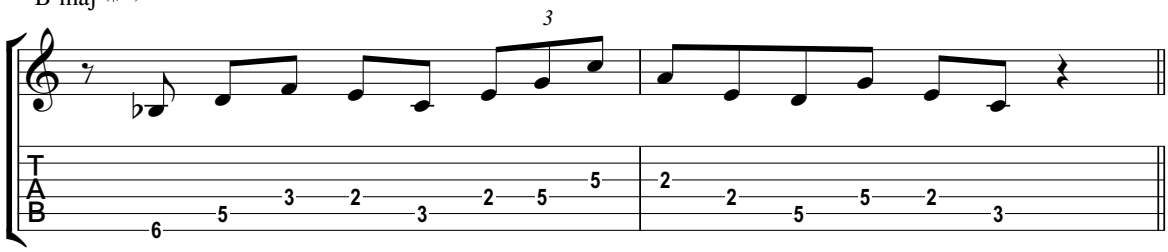
Cmaj7(♯11)



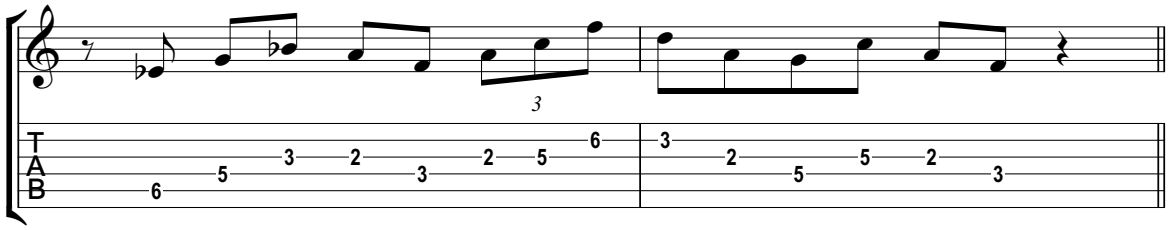
Fmaj7(♯11)



B♭maj7(♯11)



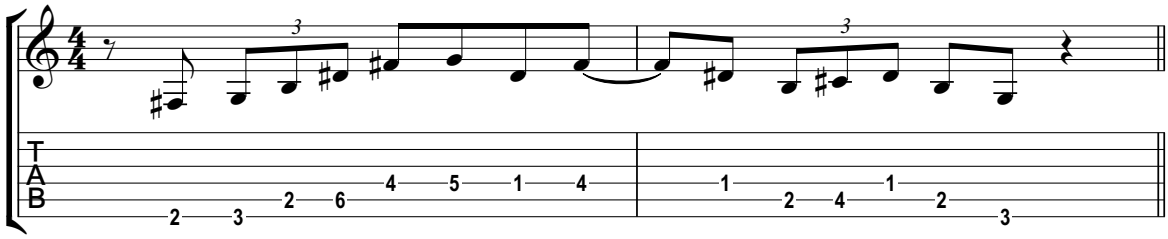
E♭maj7(♯11)



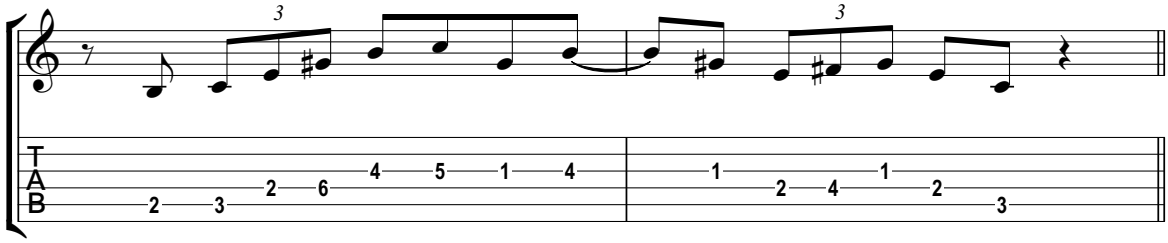
The following two examples highlight another substitute for the major 7th chord: the major 7th with a sharpened 5th (also written as ♭13). Example 17 draws its notes from the *lydian augmented mode.*

17

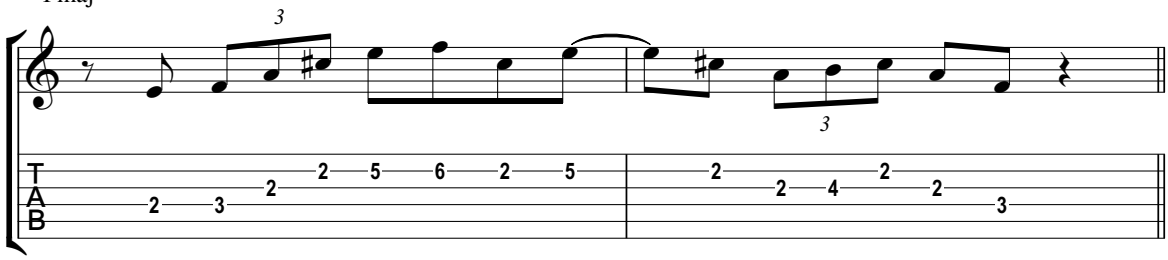
Gmaj7(♯5)



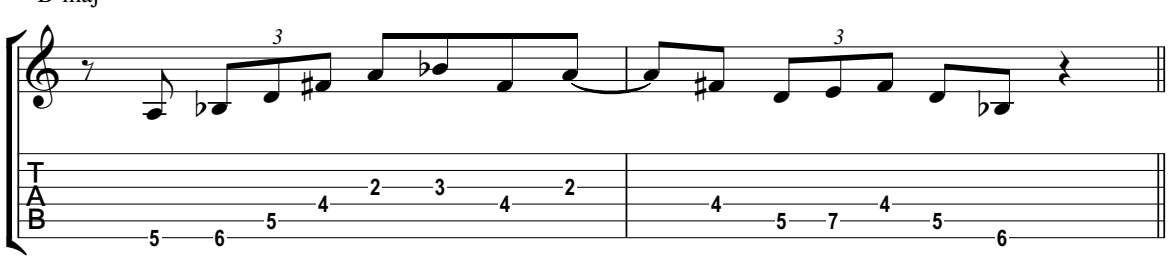
Cmaj7(♯5)



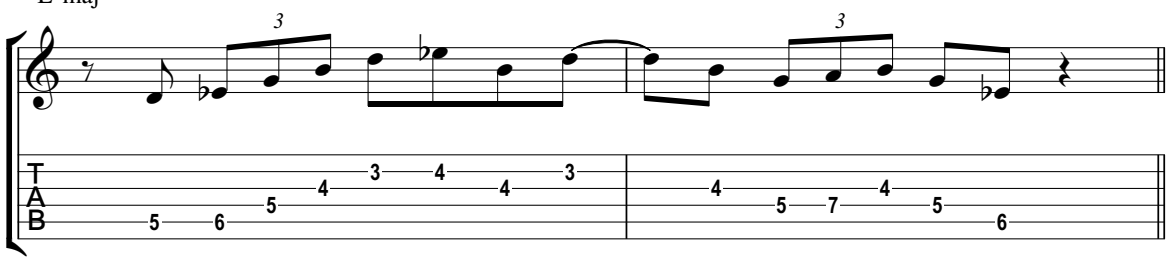
Fmaj7(♯5)



B♭maj7(♯5)



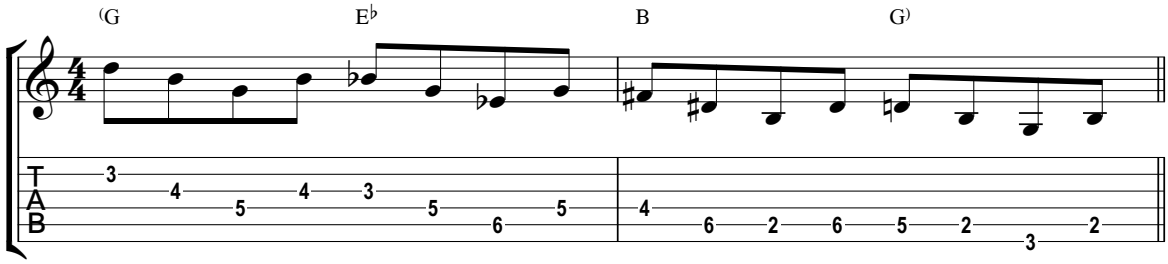
E♭maj7(♯5)



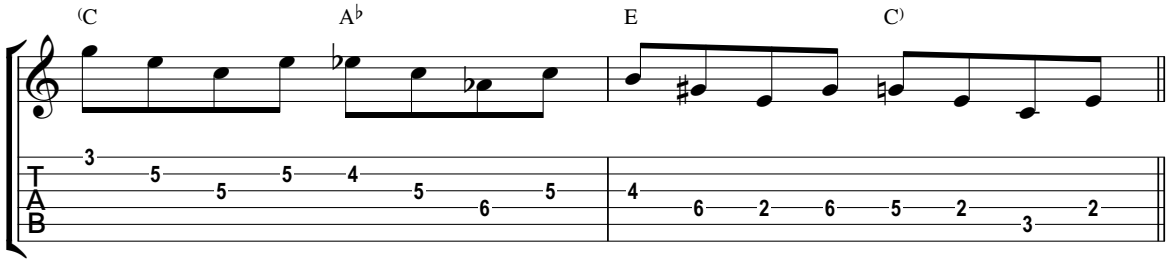
Example 18 employs the *augmented scale* exclusively and is a sequence composed of major triads stated a major 3rd away from each other.

18

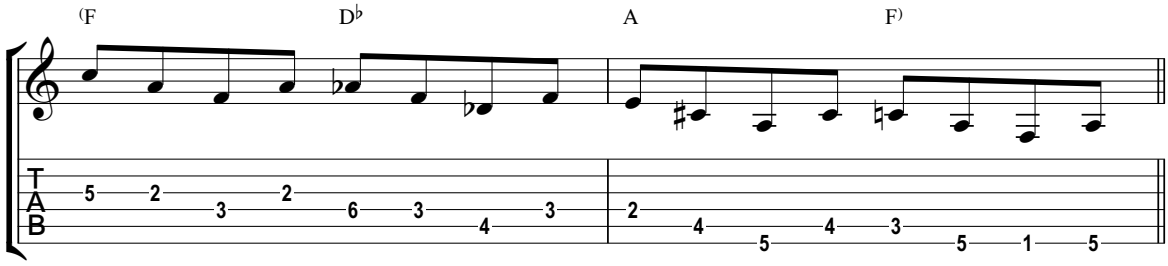
Gmaj7(♯5)



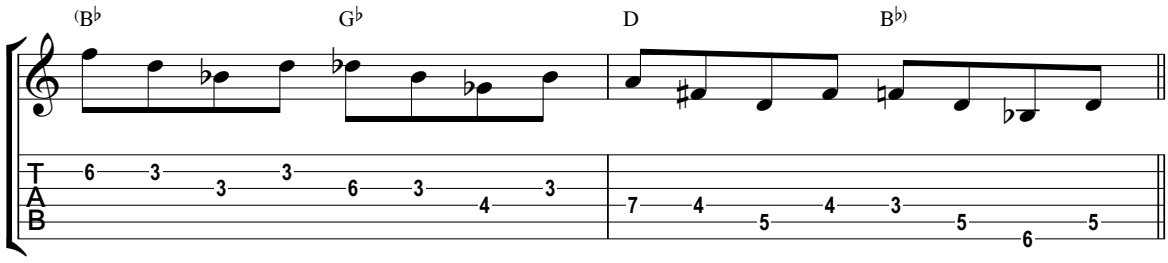
Cmaj7(♯5)



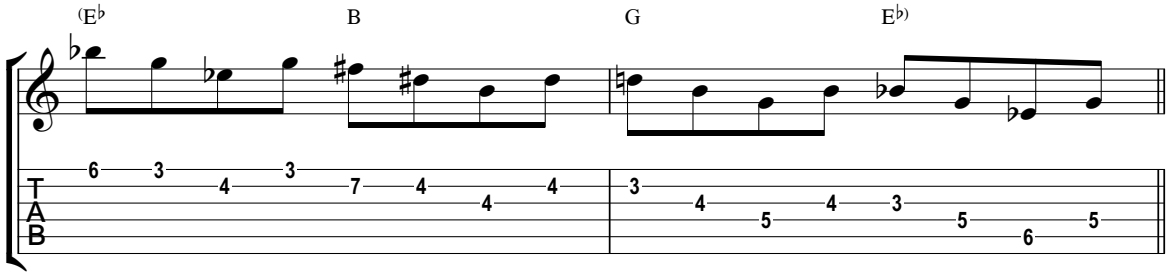
Fmaj7(♯5)



B♭maj7(♯5)



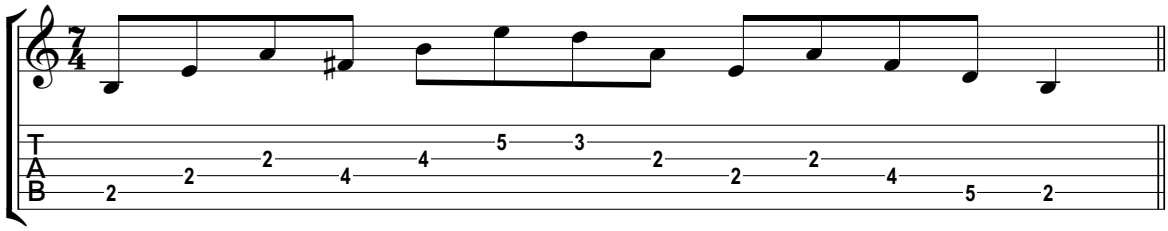
E♭maj7(♯5)



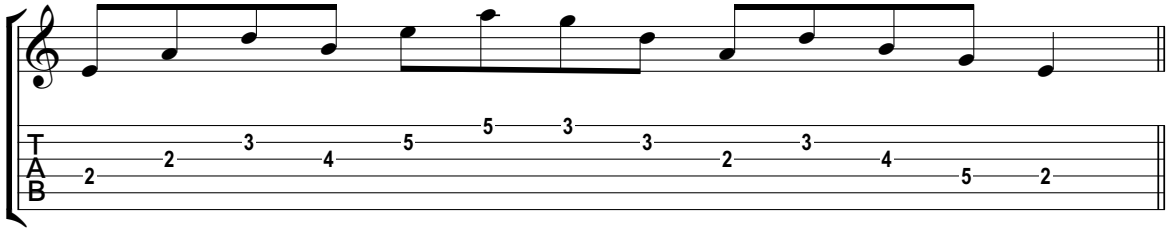
The tonally ambiguous nature of this example is derived from its concentration upon the *interval* of the fourth rather than the conventional third. Fourth-based lines are a common feature of the post-bebop language; the pianist McCoy Tyner and guitarist Joe Diorio have made particularly distinctive use of this interval. Note the irregular *time signature*, prevalent in much modern jazz.

19

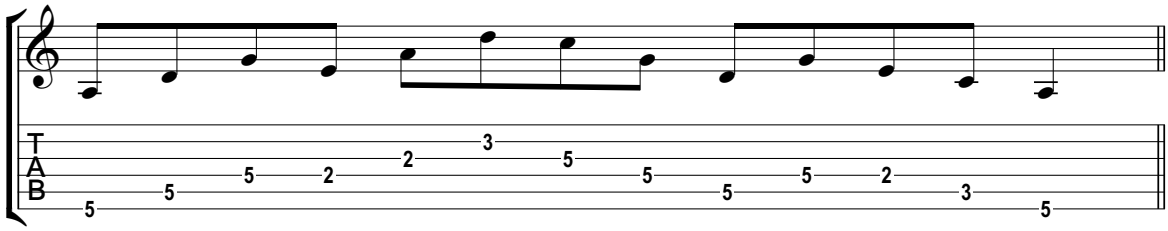
G6/9



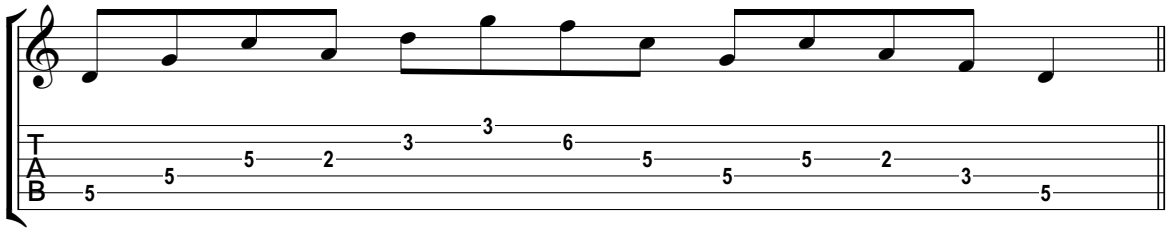
C6/9



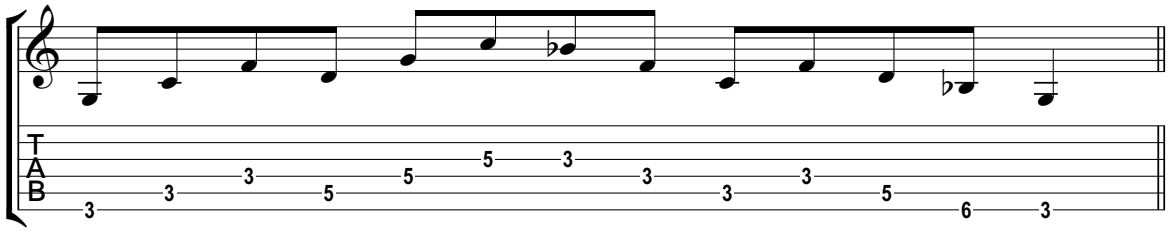
F6/9



B♭6/9



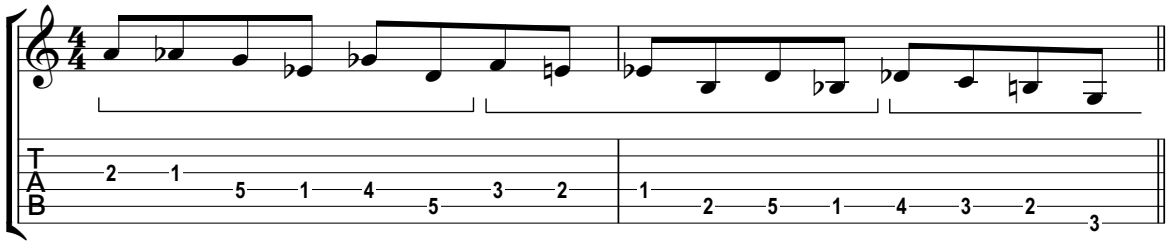
E♭6/9



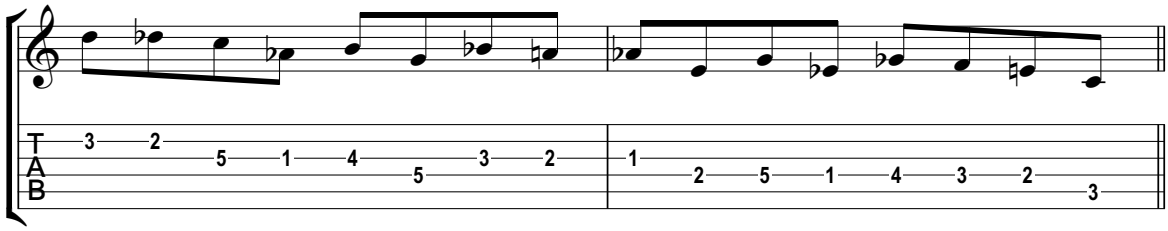
This highly chromatic line in the style of guitarist Pat Metheny reveals an oblique relationship to the background *harmony*. Taking their cue from alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman and other *free jazz* artists, many contemporary players interpret *changes* in a liberated manner that often emphasises unity of *motif* and intervallic contour.

20

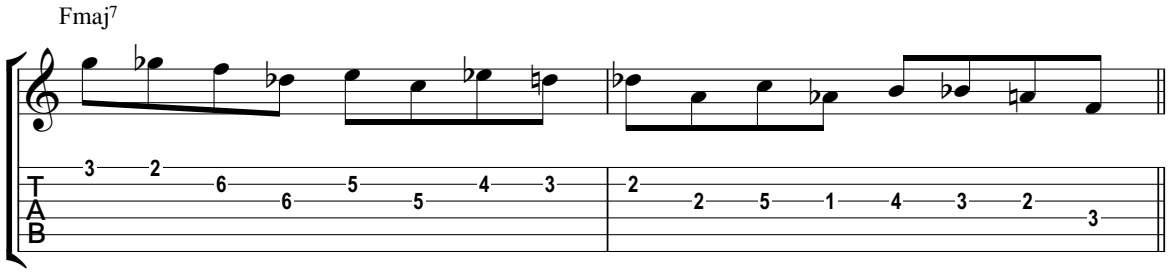
Gmaj7



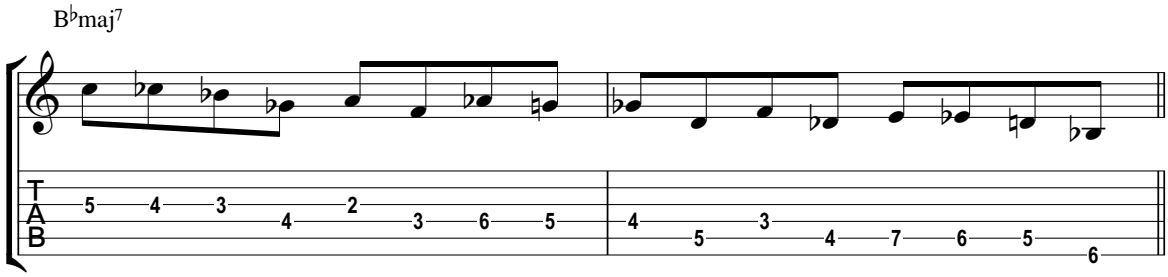
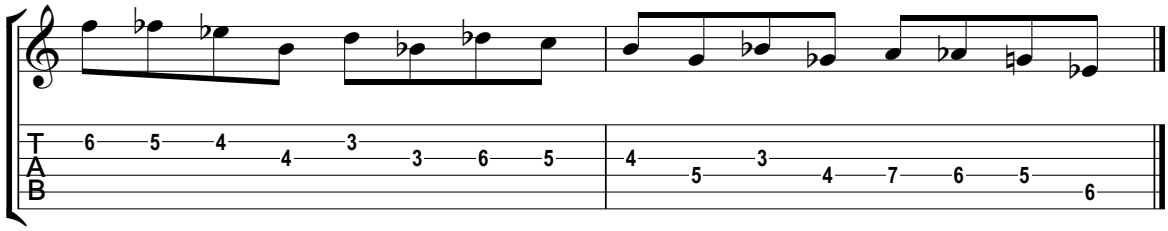
Cmaj7



Fmaj7



B♭maj7



E♭maj7