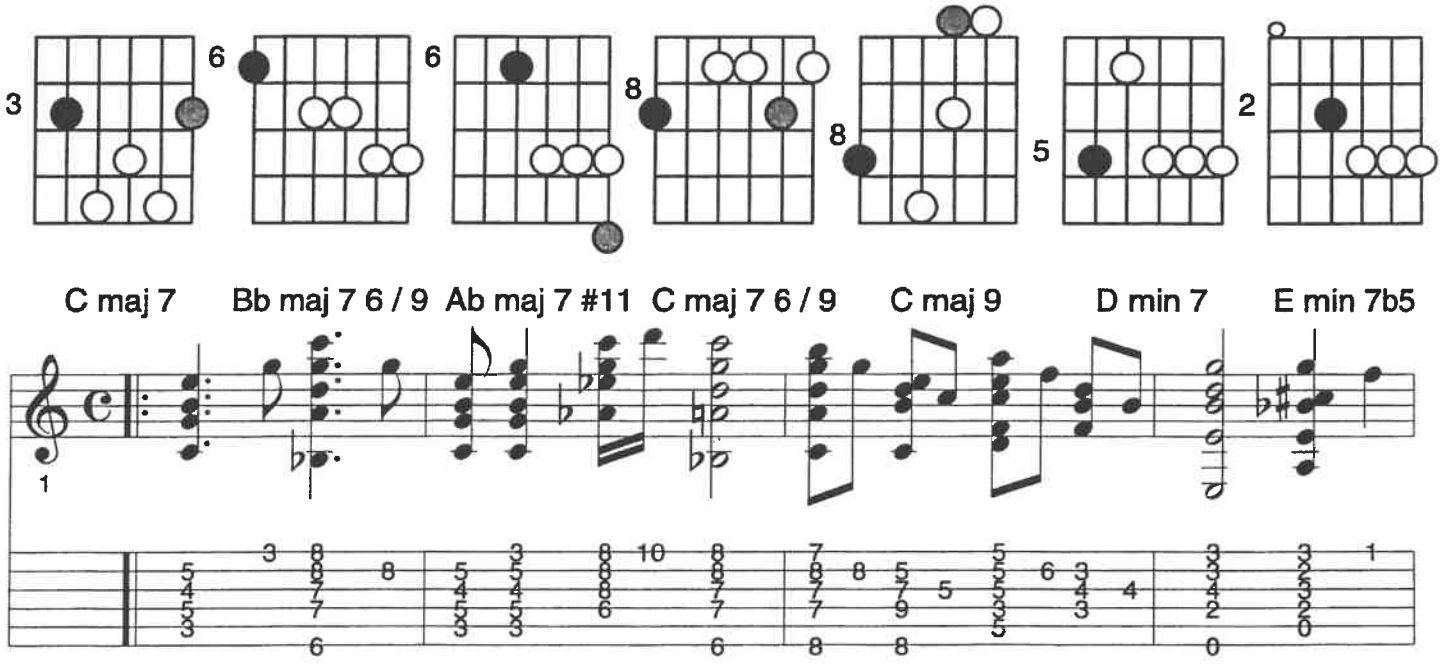
"Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most", written by Tom Wolfe and Fran Landesman in 1955, combines so many good compositional elements it is hard to decide where to begin this discussion. The main theme, based on a first inversion major triad and dotted quarter / eighth note rhythmic figure, provides the basic "cell" that becomes the melodic material for each of the two main structural sections. Each of these two sections are varied through modulations and the use of various key centers creating a rather complex harmonic formula based on the time tested A / A / B / A format. The following arrangement deletes the twelve measure rubato introduction. The chart that this arrangement was derived from is from the lead sheet found in "Real Book" volume two. There are some tricky spots in this arrangement for guitarists and although most of the voicings are pretty common, they are sometimes used in unusual ways.

Measures # 1 through # 4

Opening up on a "C" major seventh chord, "C" being the overall tonic, the first two measures contain the opening melodic motif or antecedent phrase (gl) supported by tonal centers that are a whole step apart. The "Ab" Lydian shape in measure two varies from the original. Measures three and four are basically diatonic and provide the consequent phrase (gl), comprised of an eighth note arppegiated figure. The "A" minor seventh in the original is contained in the "C" major seventh in measure three, i.e., relative minor / major etc., the voicing used may be a bit unusual at first but potentially can become a very solid tonic color. Melodically, the tonality basically alternates from "C" major down to "Bb" major (the "Ab" major chord would for the most part not be used for the soloing choruses). Bar # 3 and # 4 are mainly diatonic until the half diminished chord, where the "Bb" of the "E min 7b5 begins to move us away from "C" major.

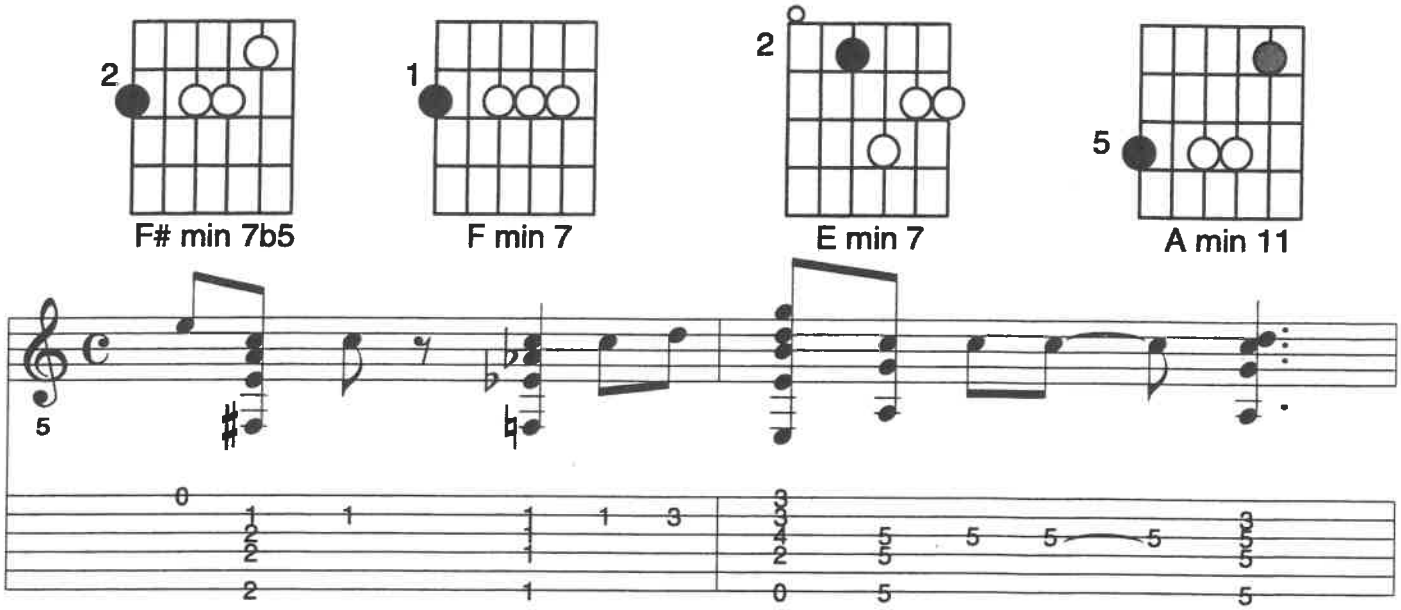


Measures # 5 through # 8

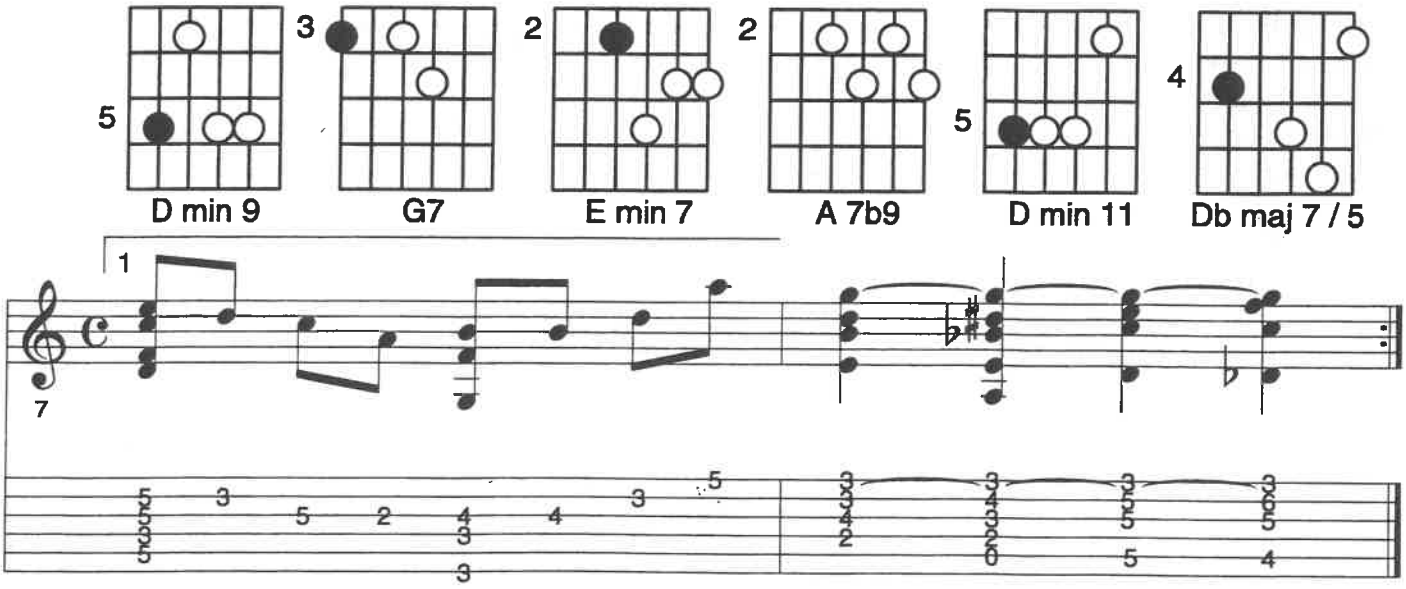
The second four measure phrase, which is presented here in two parts for legibility, opens up on the half diminished chord built on the tritone "F#" and gradual works its way back down towards the tonic via minor Four, a Two / Five of "D" major then Two / Five into "C" major. The last measure finds the melody up one octave from the original and is supported by a Three / Six / Two / Five turnaround (gl) with the common tone "G" in the lead. The Five chord employed is a tritone substitute of a tonic nature flat five.

The repeat sign returns us to the top for the repeat of the "A" section. Solowise, for purely analytical purposes, best to take each chord separately and suggest a possible group of pitches (scale) to create melodic ideas from. The half diminished to me implies Lydian from the flatted fifth, i.e., "C" Lydian or it's parent group of "G" major. The minor Four is seen as a Two chord type thus "Eb" major would be my choice. "E" minor to "A" minor imply "C" major. The Two / Five of "C" major is obvious. The Three / Six / Two / Five is not totally diatonic, although with some alterations it could easily be. As it is presented here, the Three / Six implies "D" major, watch out for the flat nine "Bb", the Two / Five is diatonic then flat Two major, i.e., "Db." With that in mind, why not just arpeggiate the "lot" of them ! Accurate arpeggios always tell the story !

Bars # 5 and #6 below.

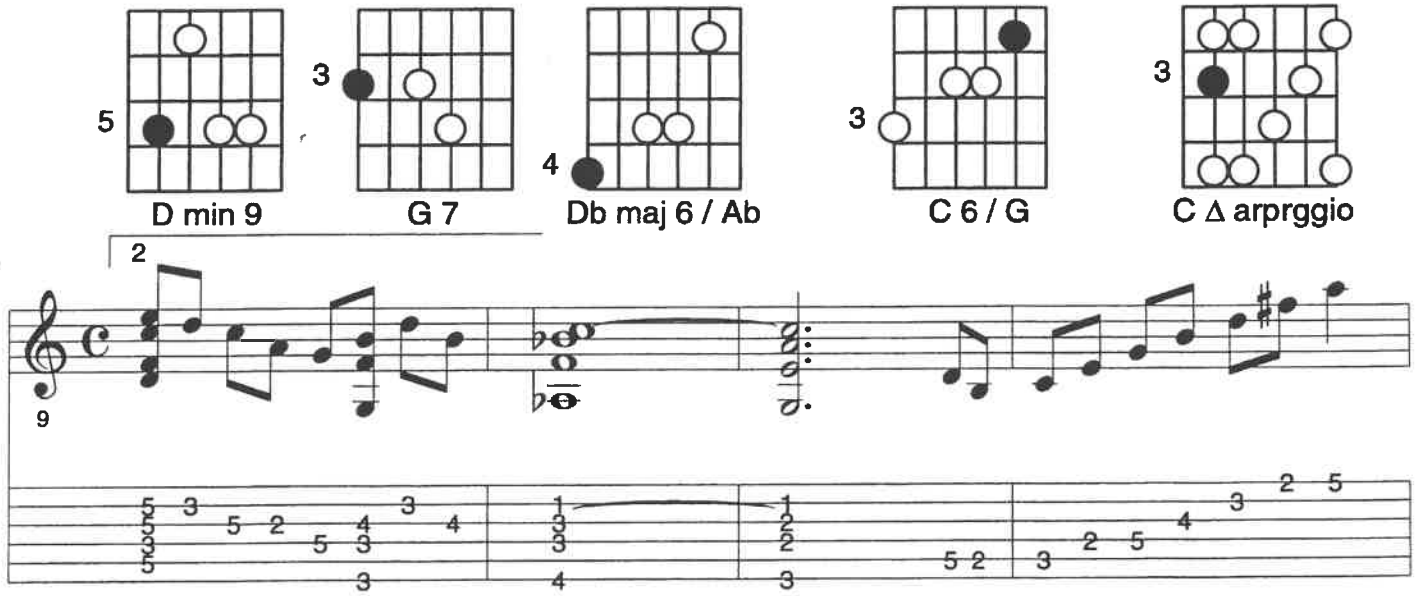


Musical example for bars # 7 and # 8



Measures # 9 through # 12

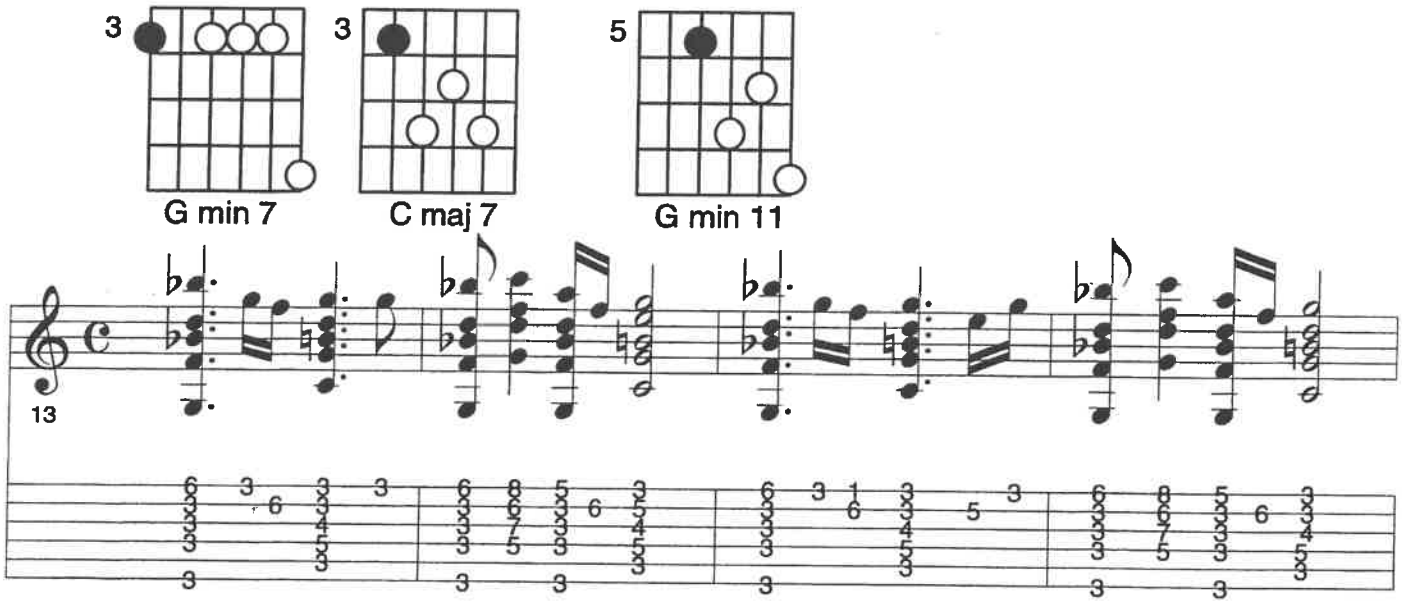
These next four measures contain the second ending and a bit of an extension by way of the delayed resolution to "C" major with the presentation of the "Db" major seventh in second inversion in measure ten, i.e., flat Two. This settles down to the tonic in the next measure in the form of the "C" sixth chord also in second inversion. The written melody pitch is "E" natural in the original, changed here to the tonic to suit my artistic tastes. The arpeggiated figure which follows in bars # 11 and # 12 outline the "C" major tonic tonality up through the thirteen and provides a nice half step lead in to the first melody note of the next section (B), which opens up on a minor Five chord with the minor third, "Bb" in the lead. Solowise, diatonic into flat Two major seventh. The "written" changes omit the flat Two, thus diatonic in "C" major then Two / Five into "G" minor.



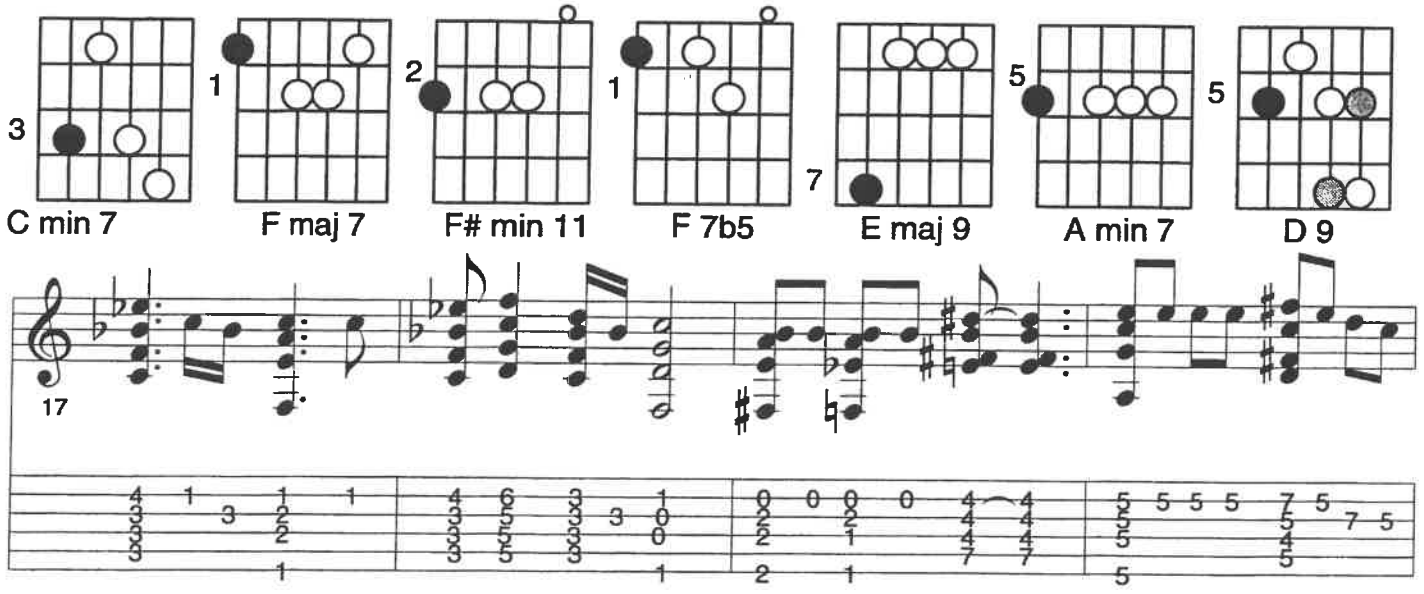
Measures # 13 through # 16 Measure thirteen begins the new section, starting of on "G" minor seventh then resolving to the tonic. This harmonic motion continues throughout these four measures. Use of the barre chord for the "G" minor seventh, executed with the index finger of the left hand, frees up the other digits to execute the melody. This physical situation is also ideal when the minor seventh chord is part of a Two / Five harmonic situation and you are improvising melodies. In performance, I sometimes vary the harmony in that the "G" minor suspended fourth chord is changed to a similar structure as the "G" minor seventh, which is moved up a whole step to support the "C" natural in the melody, i.e., "A" minor seventh in fifth position. Melodically, basically Four, "F" major being the parent scale of "G" minor seventh, to the tonic "C" major.

work space / notes

Musical example for bars # 13 through # 16

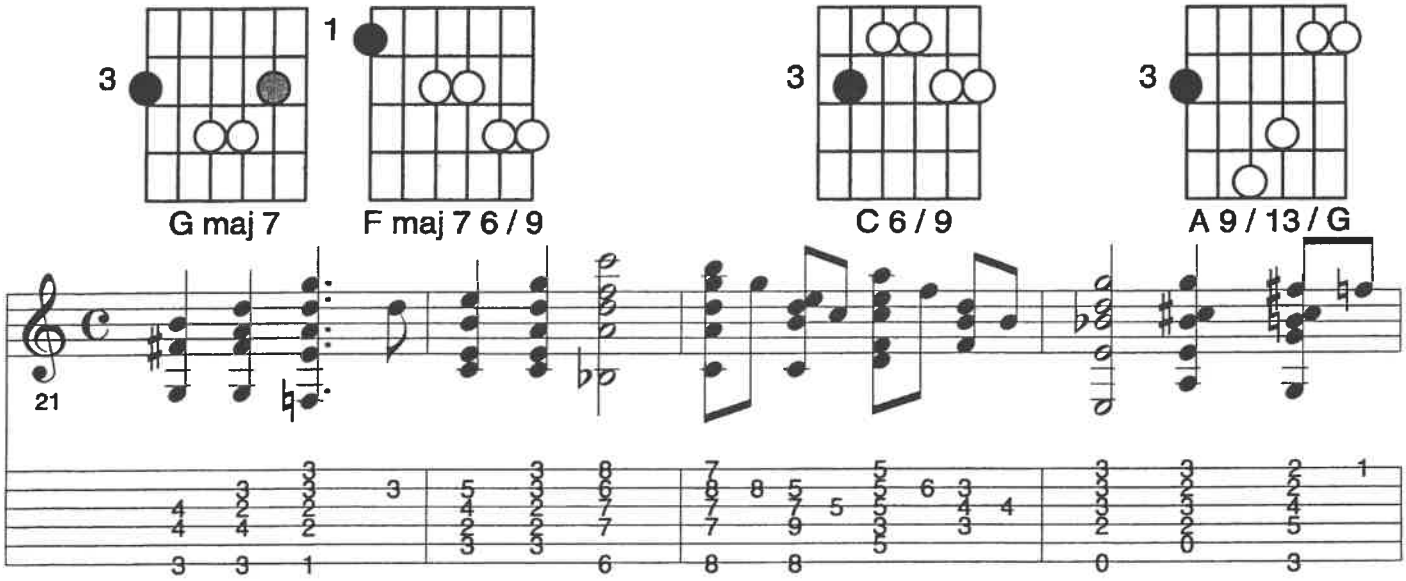


Measures # 17 through # 20 The first two measures of this next four bar phrase are a mirroring of the preceding bars with the minor chord built on Five resolving to One, although this time we've modulated up a fourth, the roots of the chords being "C" to "F." The inclusion of the fourth in the minor voicing helps to provide some variety as does the whole step shift up to "D" minor seventh suspended fourth to accommodate the "F" natural melody pitch in bar # 18. These are variations from the original writing. These measures are pretty dark due to the registration and density of the voicings. This helps to set up the color change that occurs in the next two measures as we modulate briefly to "E" major then to "G" major via the common Two / Five in bar # 20. The passing tones after the dominant of "G" major is struck in bar # 20 are an addition to the original and provide a nice melodic line which resolves to the third scale degree of the "G" major seventh chord in bar # 21. Solowise, I view "C" minor as Two of "Bb" major moving to "F" major. Two / Five into "E" major, where the dominant chord employed in this arrangement is the tritone substitution with a flatted fifth adding a bit of whole tone color, thus basically the "E" major scale with a spice of whole tone from "F" if desired. Two / Five into "G" major utilizing the "G" major scale.



Measures # 21 through # 24

The melodic figure of bar # 21 is identical to the opening motif except that it's tonal center is moved up a perfect fifth, thus back to the melodic material of the A section. Bar # 22 returns us back to tonic "C" major / "Bb" major orientation with the melody somewhat minimized or simplified from it's original presentation in measure two. Bar # 23 is a literal repeat of measure three, the turnaround in bar # 24 finds the dominant chord in third inversion, providing a half step lead in to the first chord of the next four bar phrase. Melodically, "G" major to "F" major then "C" major to "Bb" major. Bar # 23 is diatonic "C" major moving to "Bb" Lydian or "Bb" diminished for the half diminished to flat nine voicings in bar # 24.

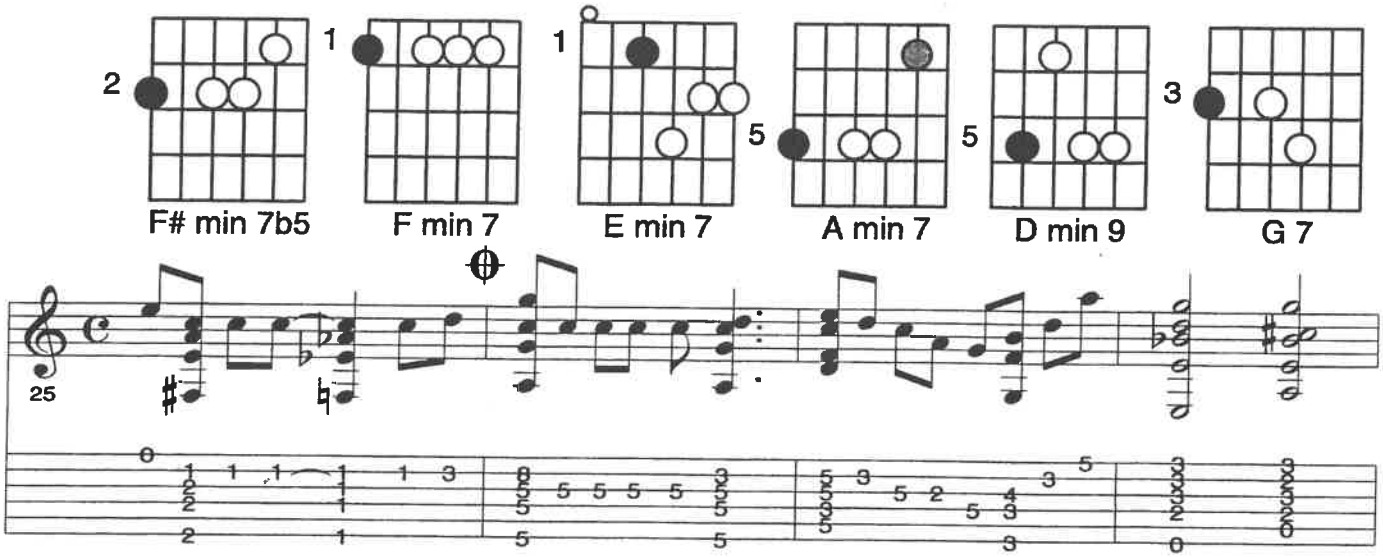


Measures # 25 through # 28

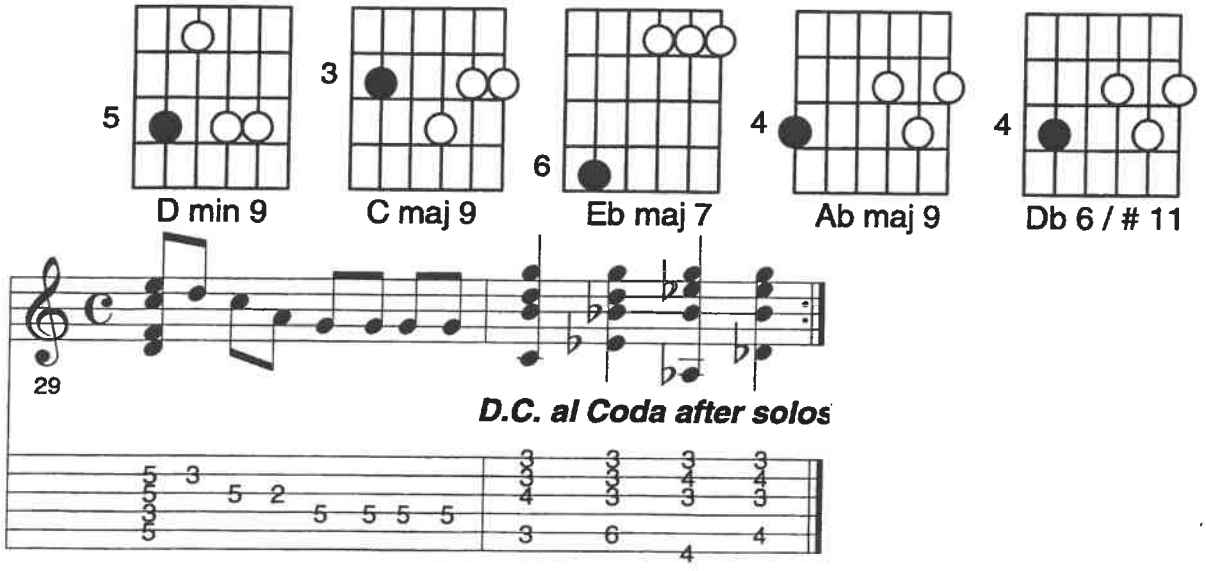
This four bar phrase starts out identically as it's previous presentation originally found in bar # 5, which eventually contained the first ending. Starting out on the half diminished chord built on the tritone of "C" major, the harmony of this phrase, which supports the identical melody of bar # 5, gradually works itself back to the tonic "C" major via sharp Four, minor Four then Six to Five of Five, or Two / Five In "G" major. Note coda symbol here in bar # 26. Moving to Two / Five in bar # 27, which supports identical melodic material as in bar # 7, the third presentation of the A section is enlarged by two measures to include the Three half diminished to Six dominant seventh flat nine motion in bar # 28 (look for the these chord diagrams / shapes back in the example starting at measure # 7). Solowise, as previously stated, perhaps look at each chord individually, properly arpeggiating each of the harmonies in turn would surely be one approach.

work space / notes

Musical example for bars # 25 through # 28

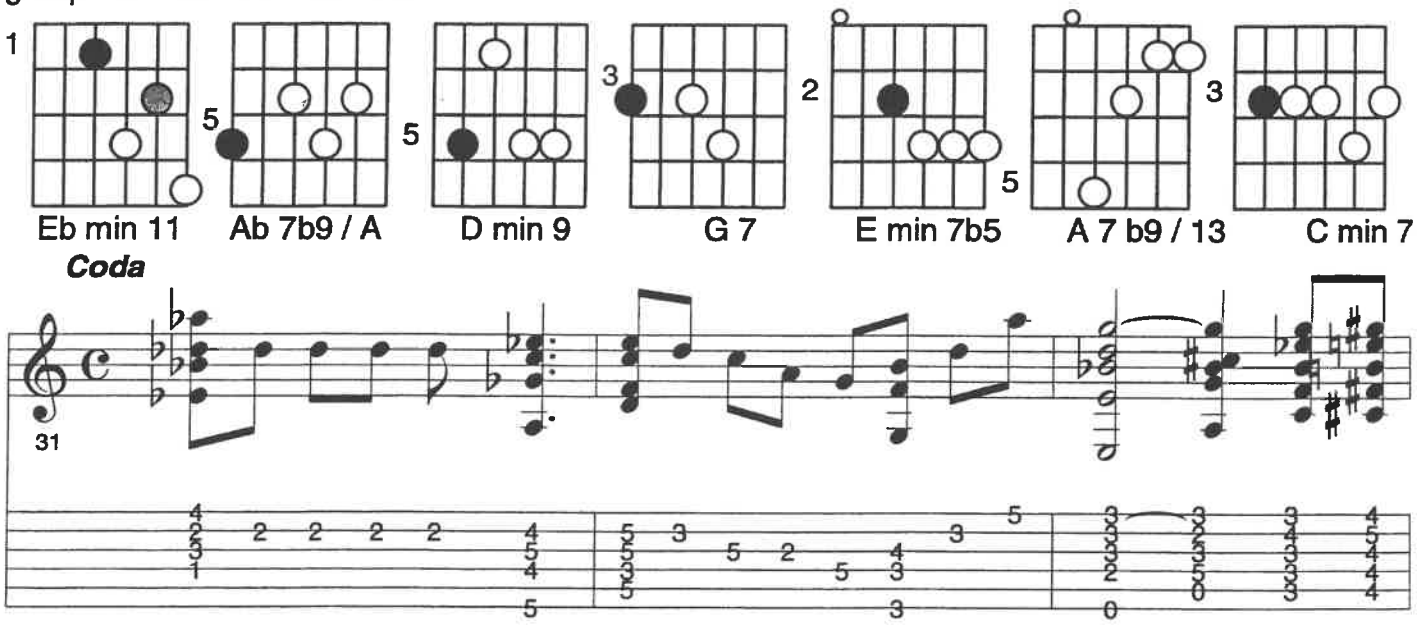


Measures # 29 through # 30 These two bars close out this last A section and return us to the top for soloing. Starting out on Two, the melody changes in that once the fifth scale degree is reached, the melody holds this pitch while retaining the original rhythm.
Bar # 30 is the turnaround returning the tune to the top. This turnaround is simply a series of tonic type chords that moves from the tonic up a minor third then down a perfect fifth then up a perfect fourth. The melody is shifted up one octave from the original and becomes a common tone throughout these voicings. This turnaround is added by the author, substituting for the tonic to flat Seven of the original. Solowise, Two / Five in "C" major then move through each of the tonic type chords utilizing the root of each chord as it's tonal center.



Coda **Measures # 31 through # 33**

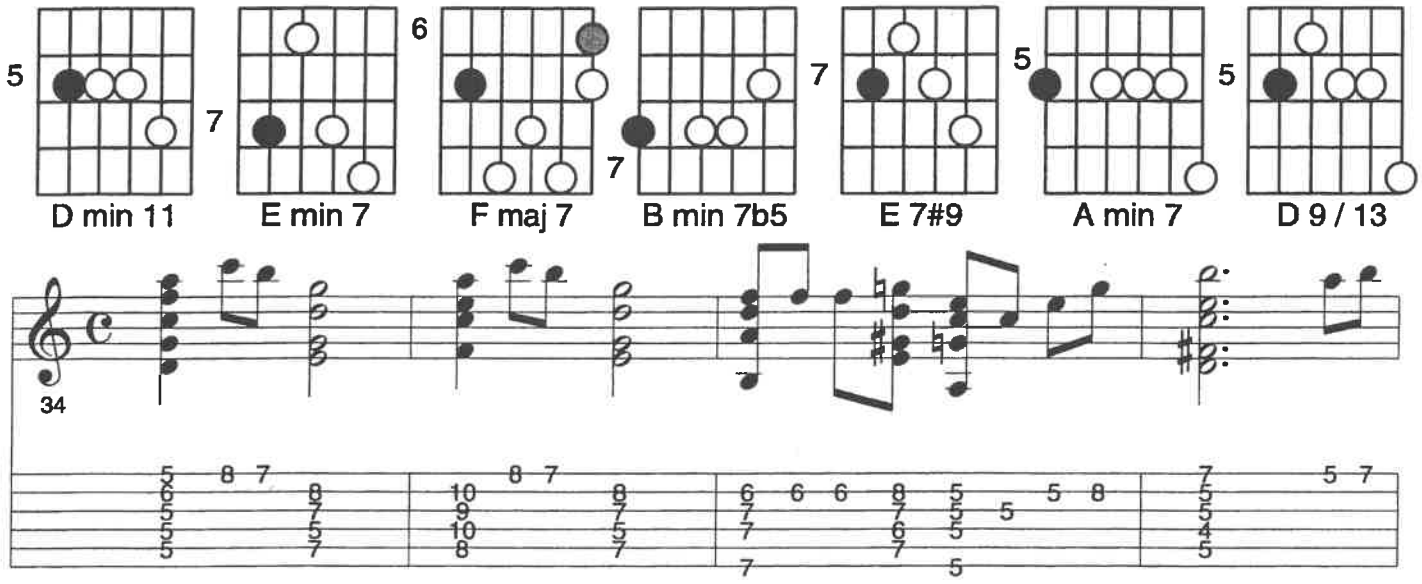
The coda starts out by emulating the phrase it replaces with the melody pitch shifted up a half step and supported by a Two chord, moving the tonality temporarily up a half step to "Db." The Two chord is followed by it's dominant seventh flat nine (Ab) before returning back to the original tonic of "C" major via it's own Two chord. Melodically we see the same phrase over this Two / Five harmony as in bars # 7 and # 26, as is the motion to the half diminished Three chord moving to Six dominant seventh flat nine. Beat four of bar # 33 is an embellishment to the original and provides the chromatic ascent back to Two of the tonic key, setting up the "closing" theme which starts in bar # 34. Solowise, definitely make the half step shift up to "Db" major then back down to "C" for the Two / Five. The half diminished to flat nine generally implies either the Lydian or diminished group from flat five / flat nine.



Measures # 34 through # 37

These next four measures build toward the apex of this arrangement by simply moving from the diatonic Two to Three, up to Four and back to Three, followed by a double Two / Five which ends with a pair of eighth notes that I use to set up the climax by placement, dynamics and articulation. The voicings utilized in this grouping below are pretty straightforward. The "B" natural over the "F" major seventh chord in bar # 30 I execute simply by sliding the barre finger (index) of the left hand down, if you choose to support this "B' natural with what is left of the "F" major seventh, a very cool color emerges. The double Two / Five is in reality a Three / Six Two / Five in "G" major, the Five chord of which somewhat "surprisingly" resolves to Four of the original tonic, which contains the climax pitch, this being the high "C" on beat one of bar # 38, in the next group of measures. The voicing "E" 7#9 replaces the original written "Bb" 13 in bar # 36. Solowise, basically diatonic until the Three / Six Two / Five turnaround, which implies "G" major. The half diminished Three chord utilizes the "F" natural as the melody note, obviously not diatonic to "G" major. As discussed before, the changes for the solo sections are generally a bit more "vanilla" (gl) than the actual changes of the arrangement, reducing restrictions on the soloist. With this in mind, the bass motion and overall chord quality lead me to choose "G" major as the parent scale for this group of chords (bars #36 and # 37).

Musical example for bars # 34 through # 37

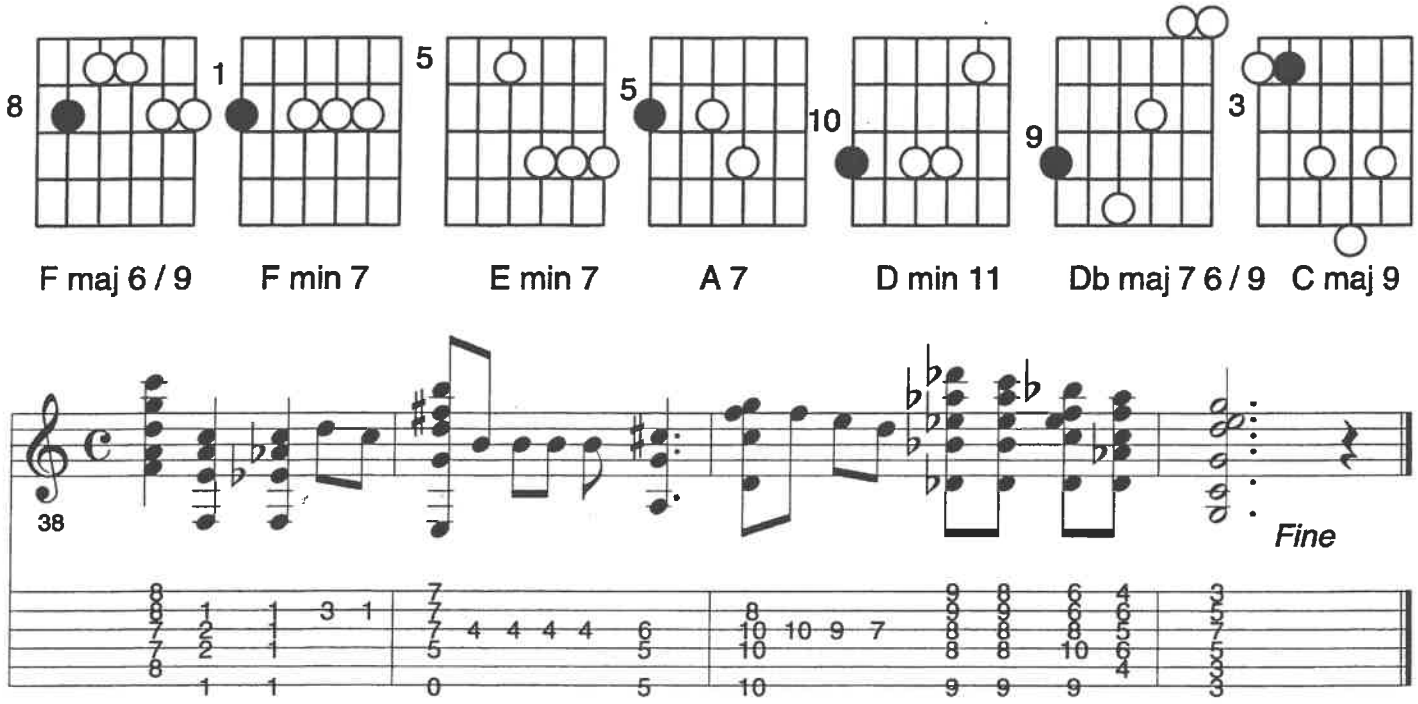


Measures # 38 through # 41

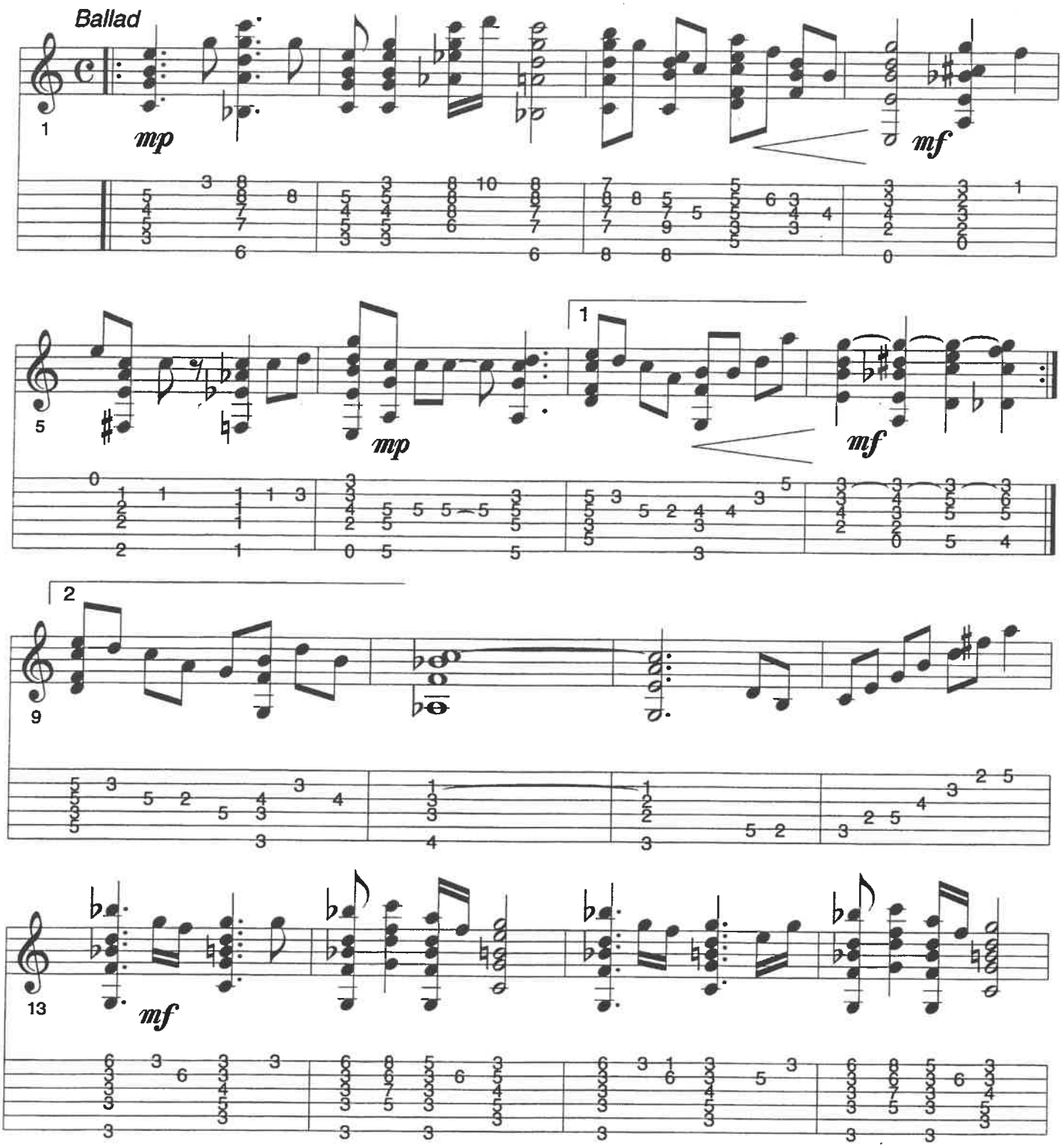
This first chord in bar # 38 I use as the focal point for climaxing this arrangement. The voicing utilized in this arrangement is changed from the original writing in that a tonic type chord built on Fourth of the tonic replaces a Two type chord, needless to say, these chords are very close. The use of Four allows for a stronger cadential motion for the close of this arrangement. This entire four measure phrase basically starts on Four and works its way back to One via Three / Six in bar # 39, then Two / Flat Two major seven in bar # 40 before settling down to One in bar # 41. Bar # 38 utilizes an octave shift down in the melody, which kind of drops the bottom out of things, creating a nice space for the shifting to minor Four, this is as written in the original. Bar # 39 is Three / Six where the Six takes on dominant characteristics and bar # 40 is the Two / flat Two major seven. These last few voicings can be a bit cumbersome, I generally play them with a gradual retarding of the time, creating a clear and settled space for the resolution to the tonic color. Melodically, basically diatonic, the Three / Six could easily be viewed as Two / Five in "D", due to the presence of the "C#" in the dominant chord. Again, definitely make the half step adjustment up to "Db" before settling in back to "C" major. Note, another possibility for the "climax" is to hold the high "C" as a common tone from this point onward, voicing all of the following chords with "C" in the lead, eventually coming to rest on the flat Two, leaving the "written" statement of the last phrase for the out (gl) chorus.

Work space / notes

Musical example for bars # 38 through # 41



Work space / notes


Ballad
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2
13
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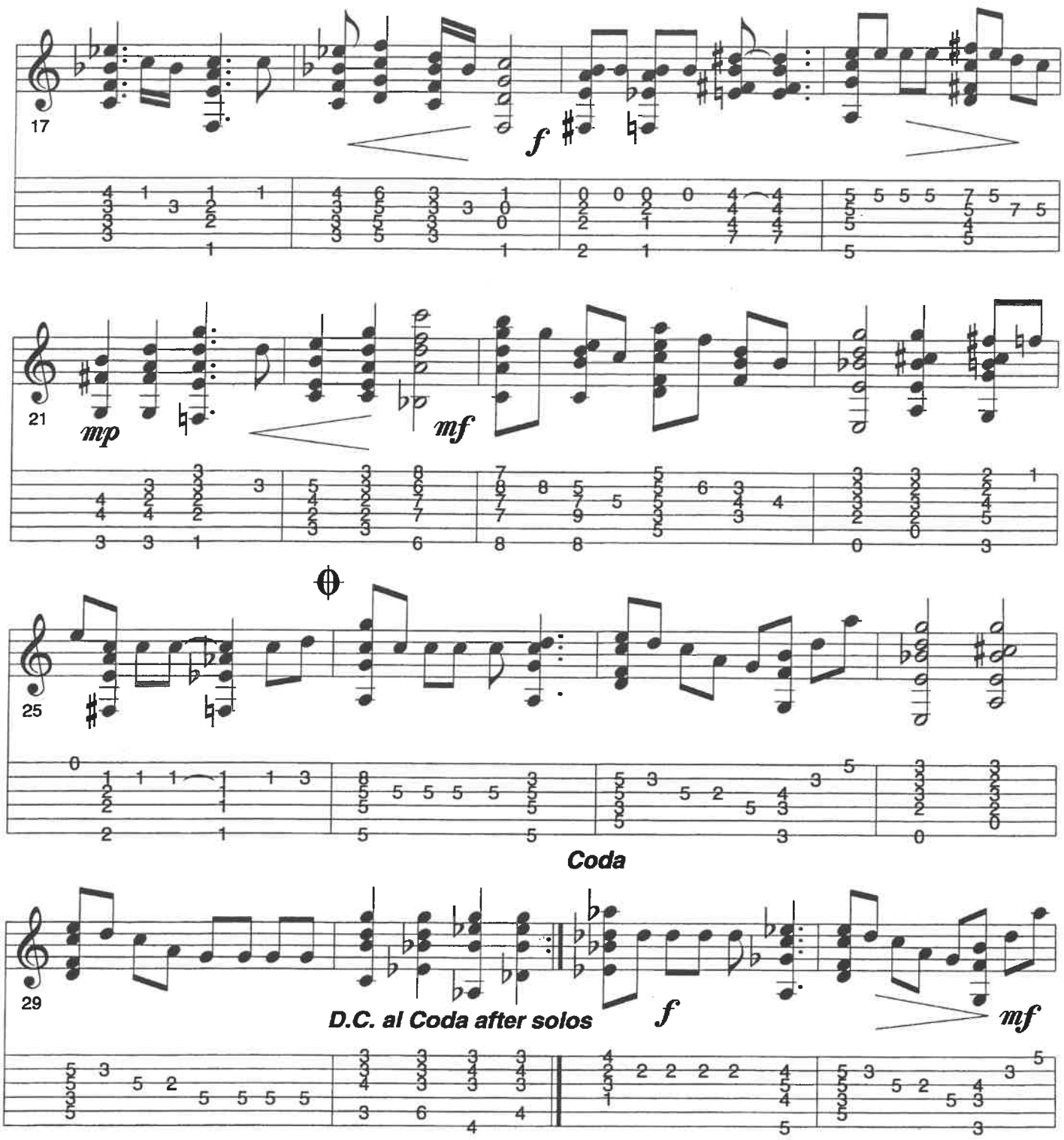
17
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21
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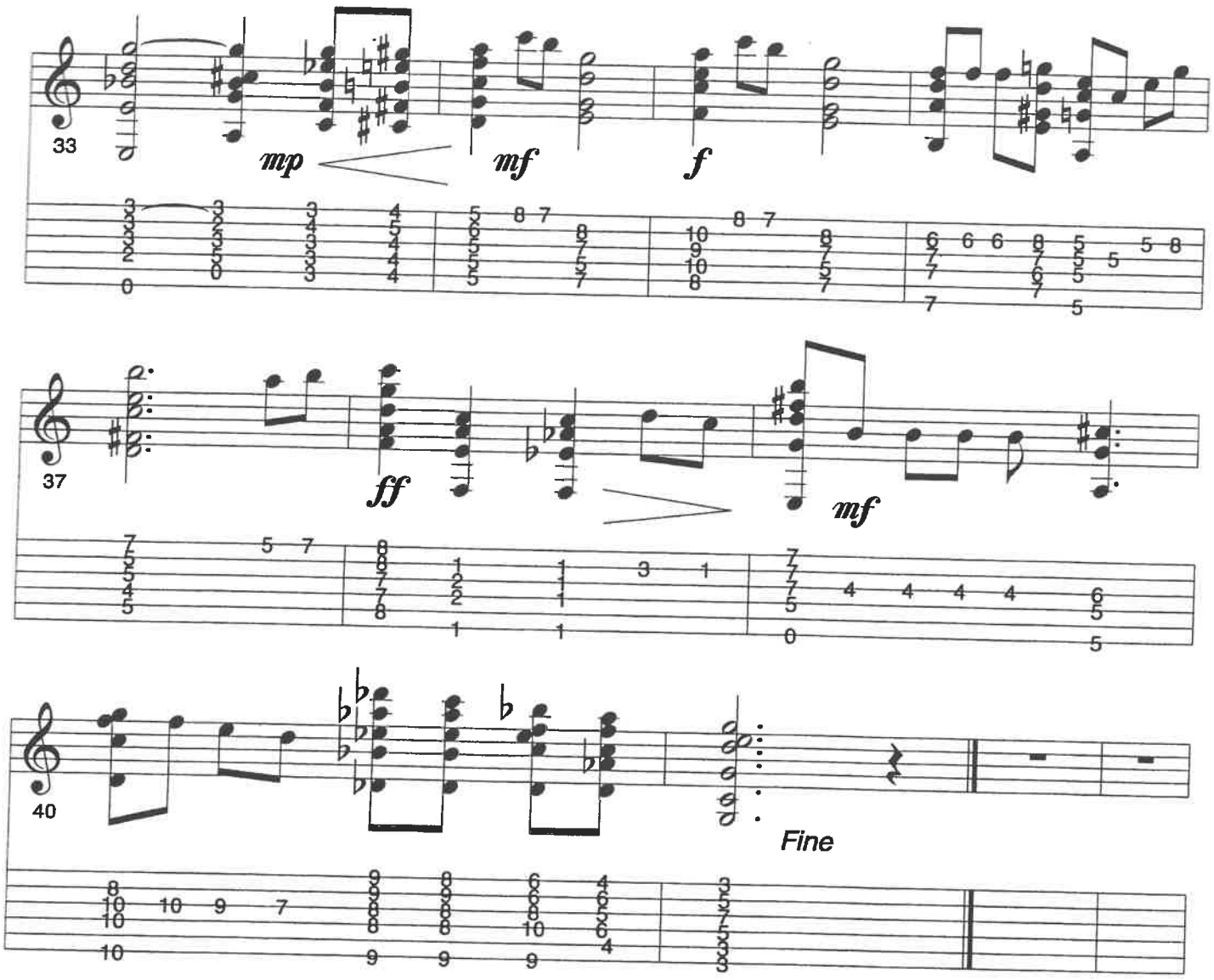
mf
25
Coda
29
D.C. al Coda after solos
f
mf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