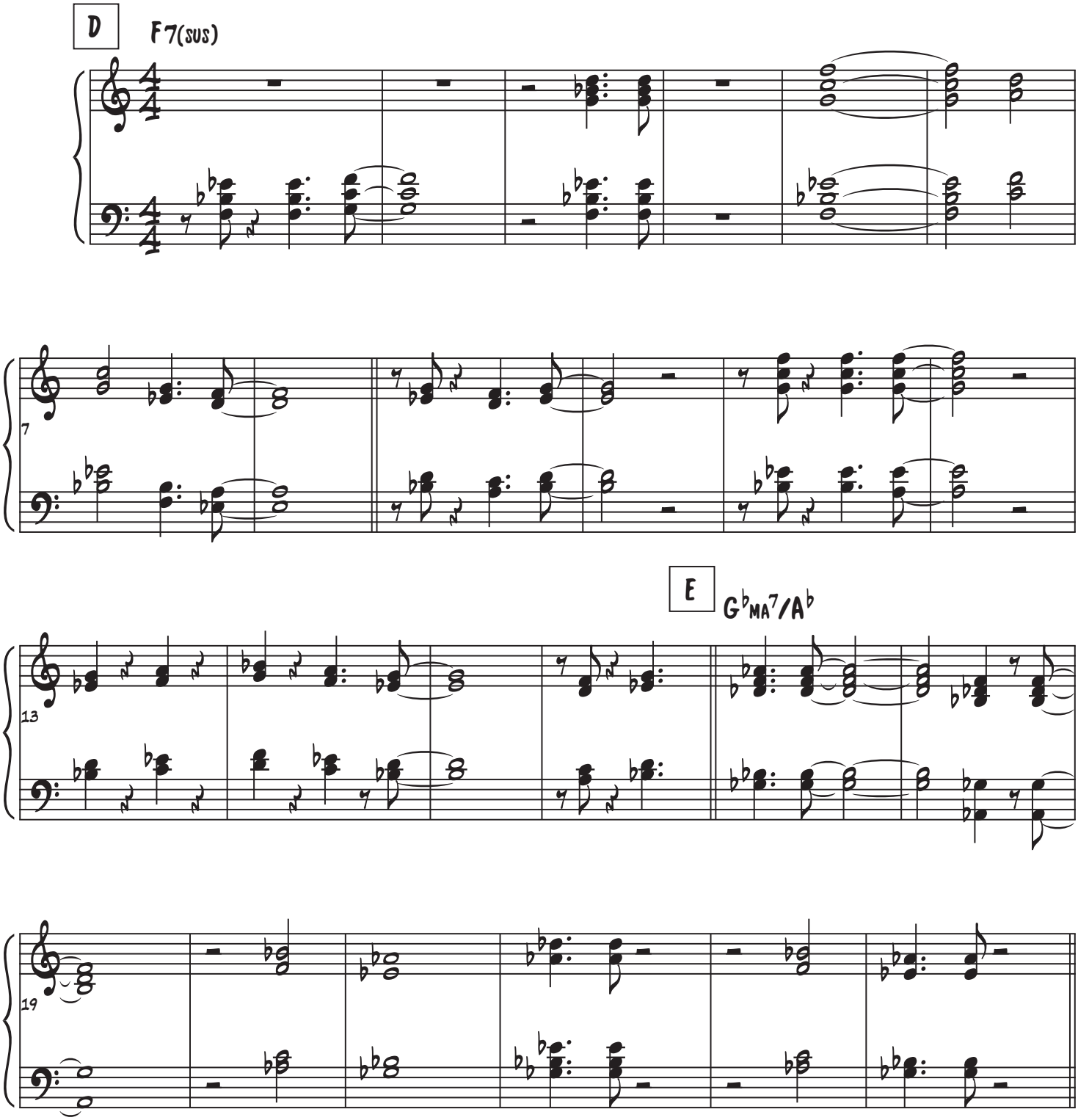
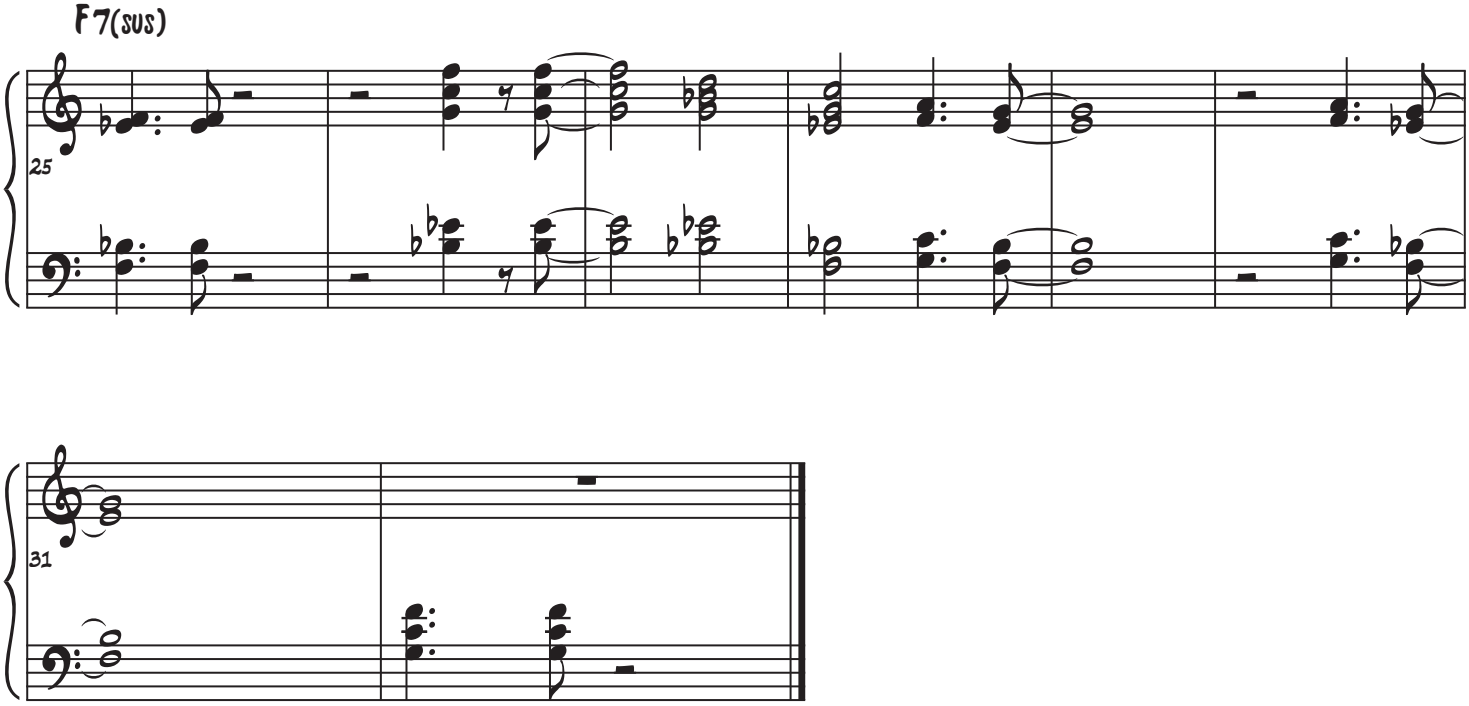
Piano
Sample voicings

Abyssinia

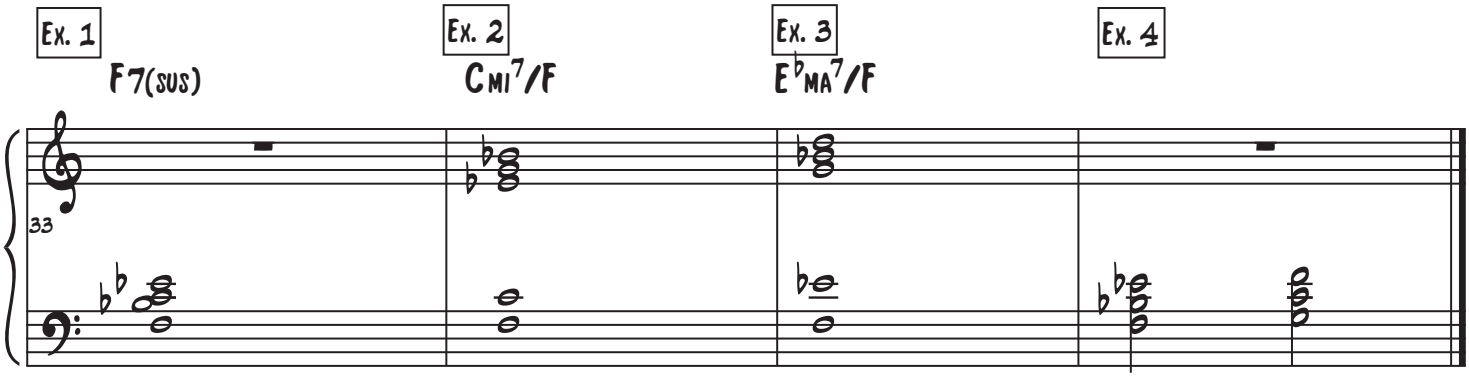
Mike Dana



Feel free to vary these at will. I'd rather you use this sheet as an inspiration instead of a specific part. Look at the theory stuff on P. 2, and figure out WHY these sound good.



The theory behind these voicings



Ex. 1: the basic chord, a dominant 7 with the 4 in place of the 3 (the "sus" 4)

Ex. 2: A cool trick is to think of this as a "Slash chord"(a chord over a different bass note.) In this case, use a min. 7 chord rooted a 5th above the dom. chord root. If you know your ii-Vs (and you should!!) it's the same as the ii over the V bass. In either case, it's Cmi7 over the F bass.

Ex. 3: If you know your relative majors and minors (and you should!!) you can be even cooler by using the relative major 7 of the ii chord...in this case using E♭Ma7 (instead of Cmi7) over the F bass.

Ex. 4: Quartal harmony refers to chords buil in intervals of a perfect 4th. Sometimes we chest a little and sneak in a non-fourth because it sounds good.

See why theory is so important! :)

Guitar
Alt. solo part

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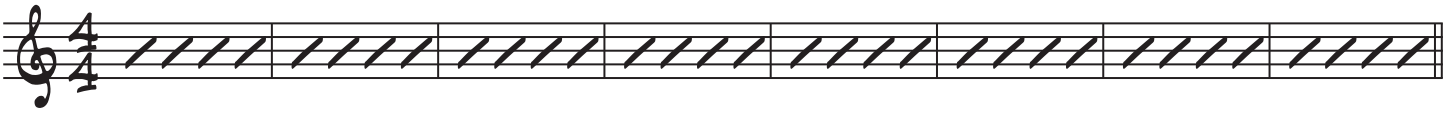
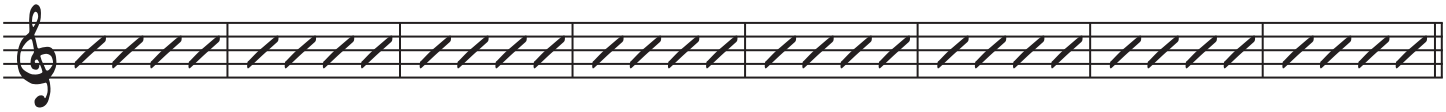
D F7(sus)



F7(sus)

E $G^{\flat}MA^{7}/A^{\flat}$



F7(sus)

Comping Tips

Dominant 7 (sus) chords are "selled" this way: 1 4 5 ♭7. The 4 replaces the 3 of the normal dom. 7. But...regular sus chords can get kind of boring, especially when the chords don't move around a lot. What to do? Theory to the rescue!

Tip #1: what's the 5 of the sus chord? (for F7, it's C.) Substitue a mi7 chord on that note over the "real" rool (F.) So, for F7(sus) play Cmi7/F. It's the ccoler relative of the same family :)

Tip #2: Know your relative majors/minors? Good! The rel. maj. of Cmi is E. So, you could also play E♭ MA7/F. Even cooler that #1! Note that the root of this new MA7 chord is both a) built on the ♭7 of the original dominant, and b) found a whole step lower than he original dominant.

Tip #3: Very often, I omit the bass notes (keeps it cleaner, and stays out of the way of piano & bass.) So, you can think of F7(sus) as a Cmi7 or and E♭MA7 over an F (just leave out the F!) (Remember, don't play bass notes on the lower strings!)

Tip #4: Mix 'em up! It's boring to hear 16 bars of the same chord, so find all the Cmi7 and E♭MA7 voicing you can, and move things around. Also, when comping, mix up long and short notes, and on- and off-the-beat notes. See the "Comping Tips" PDF.

Tip #5: In general, it's not a good idea to have multiple players comping. Gets too cluttered, and distracts from the soloist. I think it's best to hace, say, guitar comp for the tenor solo, piano for the trumpet, etc. I also rarely comp for a piano solo (that's what their left hand is for!)

Bass

Alt. ideas for solo section

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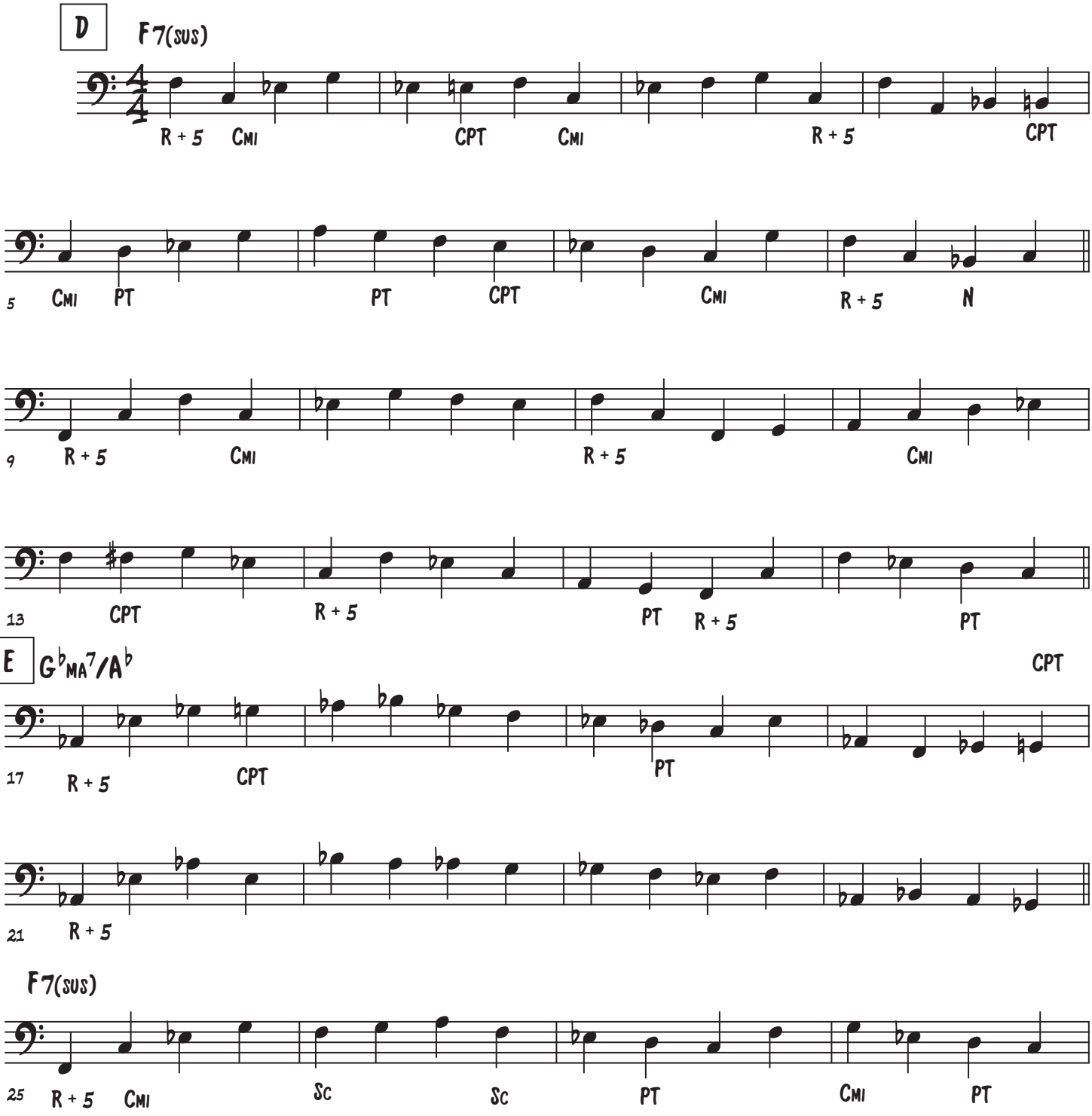

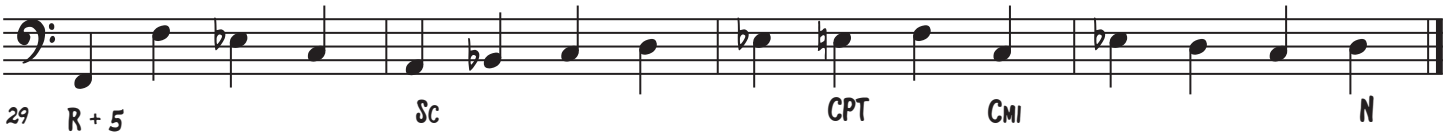

Building Walking Bass Lines in Modal Tunes

Chords like F7(sus) are dominant 7 in nature, meaning that the 7th of the scale is lowered (in this case, E is now E♭.) This chord is closely related to Cmi7/F (a "slash" chord.) So, sometimes it's cool to borrow that Cmi sound for a bit, but always returning "home", to F. (In the future, the trick is to borrow the min. 7 chord built on the 5th note of the actual chord, so, Cmi over F.)

Other things used in creating good bass lines (these are marked in the part):

Roots and fifths (R + 5)
Scales (Sc)
Neighbor tones (N)
Passing tones (PT)
Chromatic Passing Tones (CPT)
Using the C minor sound (Cmi)

Drums
Alt. solo part

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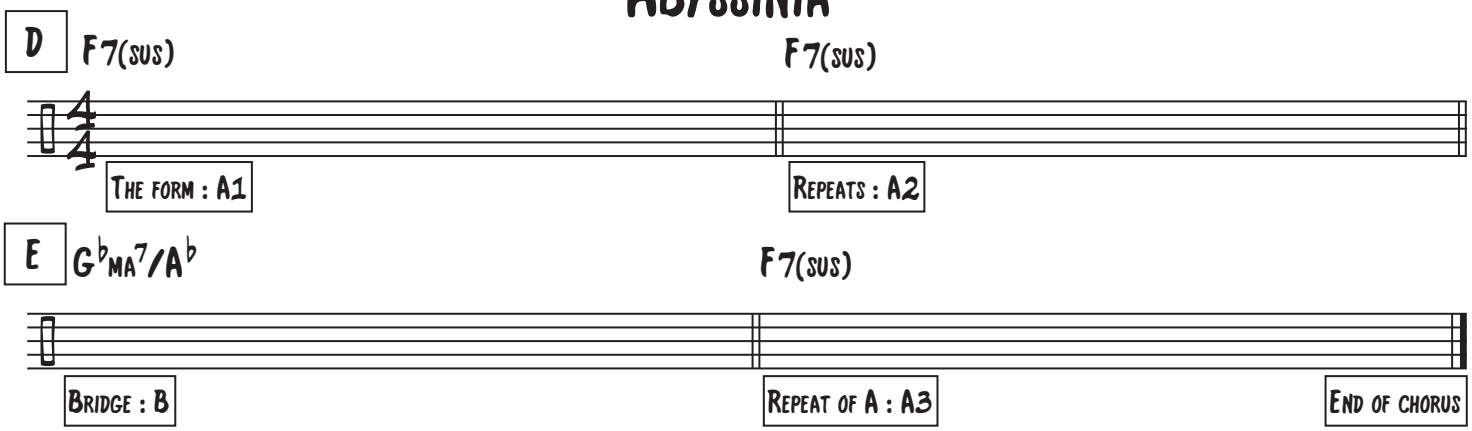

Tips for Drummers

Hey, I hope you are not feeling cheated! When the bass is walking, drums usually loosen up, playing time of course, but responding to the soloist, creating tension/release, and helping to shape the arc of the solo. Here are some things to consider:

Tip #1: Define the form. This tune is AABA. Yes, it's 32 bars, but it's also four 4-bar phrases. Use fills to help us feel that.

Tip #2: Announce the important stuff. In a modal tune, it can be easy to get lost in the form (all those "a"s...) So, that makes the bridge (the "B" section" important. So is your fill at the end of the last "A" section--the next thing is a new chorus! And, at the end of soloist X's solo, you need to announce soloist Y (and Z...) OR the return to the top. Make your fills match the importance of what's coming up next.

Tip #3: Be the thermostat. Help control the "heat" of the solo. Sure, the soloist will lead the way, but the rest of the band will follow the intensitiy of the drums most of the time.

Tip #4: Don't be wallpaper. Meaning, avoid playing a specific pattern. After a while, it just becomes a blur. Plus, how can you respond to the soloist that way!

Tip #5: Think like a composer. Shouldn't the solo section as a whole have an arc or shape? You can do a lot to help with that! So, watch the spang spang-a-lang, OK? :)

Tip #6: Very often the kick and snare are too loud, and the hat not loud enough. Talk to your director, see what they think.