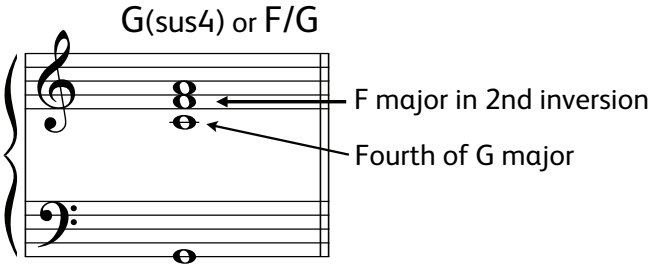
# LCM Exams
# Specimen Jazz Aural Tests: Grade 8

## Sus Chords and Tritone Substitutions

At Grade 8, candidates have to be able to identify sus chords and tritone substitutions. Essentially, the sus chord has a distinctive, unfinished sound and the tritone substitution is a 7th chord based on the flattened 7th of the scale. It therefore sounds like a dominant 7th.

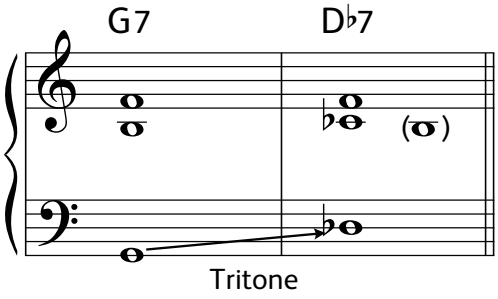
### Sus chords

In a lot of contemporary music the fourth does not resolve. Therefore, the music tends to float along. One of the easiest ways for the jazz pianist to respond to a sus chord is to play the root note in the bass and play the chord of a tone below in second inversion.




### Tritone substitutions

In jazz, tritone substitution is generally the replacement of a dominant 7th chord by the same type of chord a tritone away. Therefore, in the key of C, a V7 (G7) chord could be replaced by a flattened 2nd chord (D♭7).




You will notice that the two chords share two common notes.

You can hear the tritone substitution effect at the close of *Waltz Riff* and *A Hint of Blues* (below).

In the examination you need to distinguish the sound quality only, between the sus chord and the tritone substitution (7th sounding chord).

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## Tests

The examiner will play either a tritone substitution or a sus chord. The examiner will indicate the root.

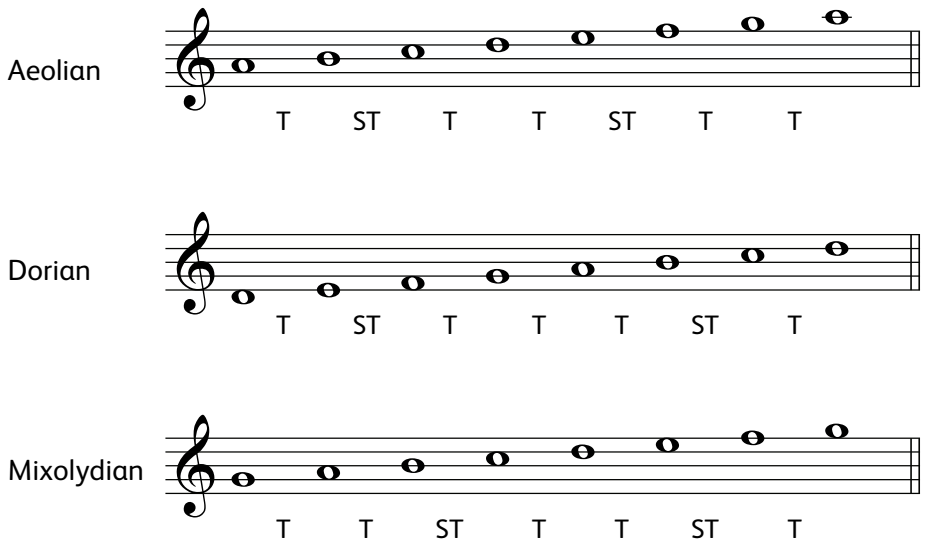
Candidates will be asked to:

1 identify whether it is a tritone substitution or a sus chord. [2 marks]

The examiner will play one of the following modes: Aeolian, Dorian or Mixolydian. Candidates will be asked to:

2(a) name which mode was played. [1 mark]

2(b) describe the interval spelling of the mode (eg. Aeolian is T-ST-T-T-ST-T-T). [1 mark]



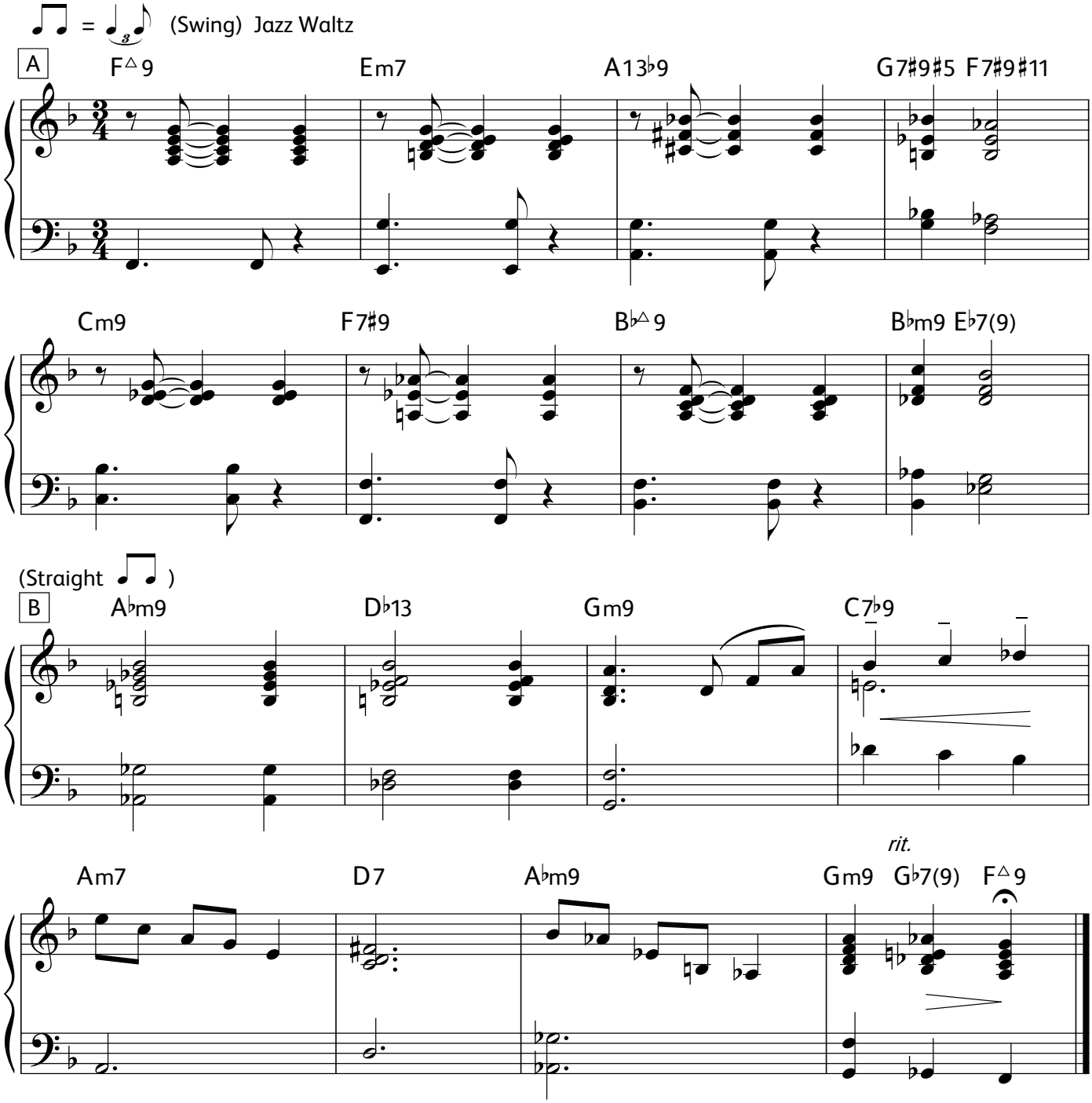

Practise singing or playing the modes. This will help to establish hearing the intervals between the notes in each mode.

3 The examiner will play a piece of music. The candidate will be given a copy of the score which doesn't include phrasing, tempo, articulation, or dynamic markings. Candidates will be asked a selection of the following:

- to name the key;
- to identify modulations;
- to identify intervals, including compound intervals;
- to describe the overall form. These may include ABCA, ABCBA, AABA, ABAB and similar structures;
- to identify changes in style, phrasing, tempo, articulation and/or dynamics, in short passages, of up to 2 bars in length, played by the examiner. [4 marks]

The following are examples relating to Test 3:

# Waltz Riff




**Suggested questions:**

Q. What is the key of the piece?
A. F major.

Q. What is the form of the piece?
A. Binary (AB).

Q. Does it modulate?
A. There is implied modulation at the end of section A. It continues with a 'circle of 5ths' style of movement, resolving on F at the close.

Q. It closes with a tritone substitution G♭7(9) to F△9. What is the interval between the F and G♭ in the bass clef, at the close?
A. Minor 2nd.

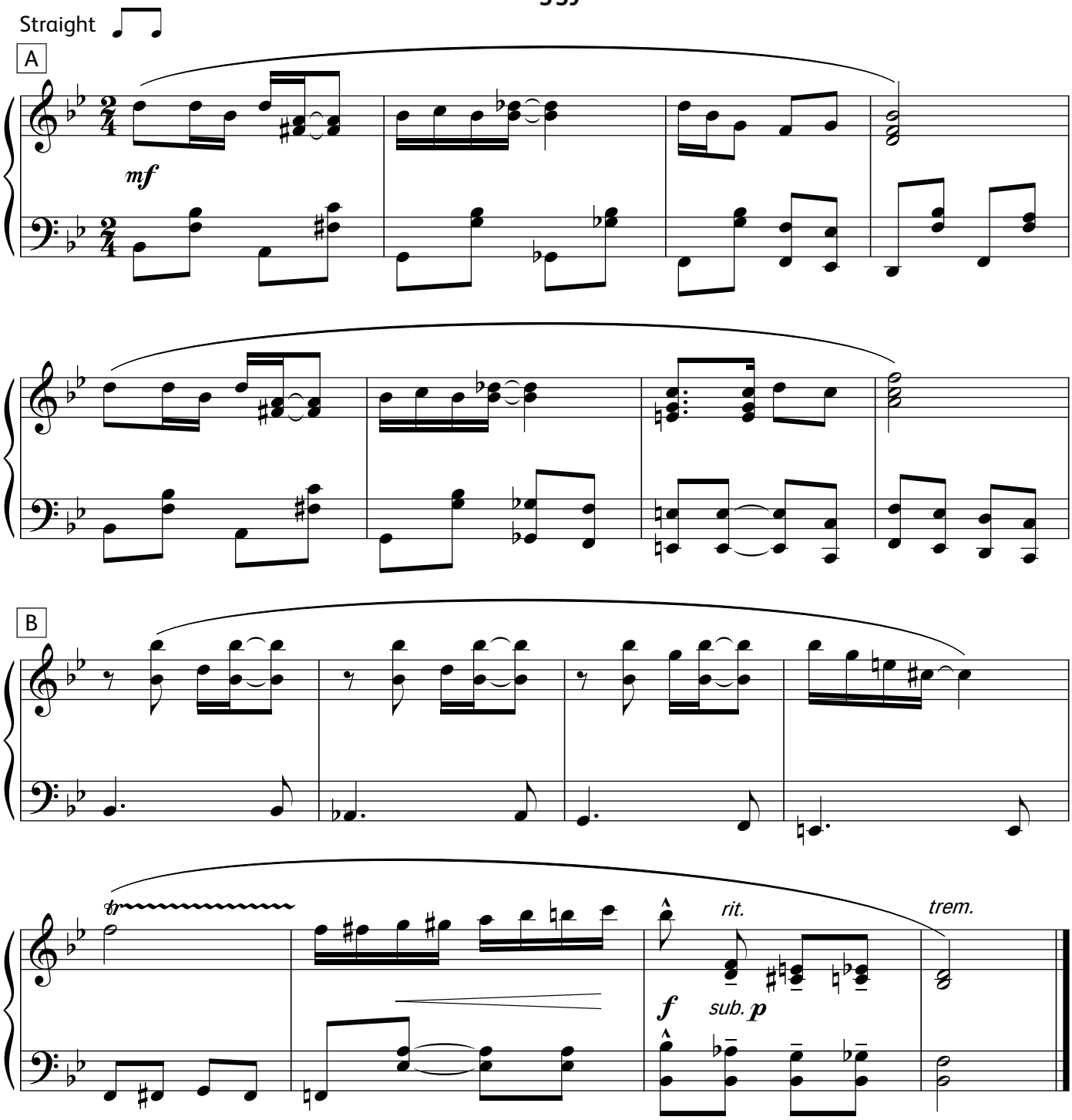
**Suggested variations:**

Bars 1-2:
Change the left hand rhythmic pattern. Thin out the right hand chords.

Bars 13-14:
Play the quavers swung. Add a 'fill' in bar 14.

Bars 15-16:
Play the quavers swung. Replace the G♭7(9) with a dominant 7th (C7).

# Raggy




**Suggested questions:**

Q. What is the form of the piece?
A. Binary (AB).

Q. What is the interval between each note in bar 12 (the diminished 7th)?
A. Minor 3rd.

Q. What is the key of the piece?
A. B♭ major.

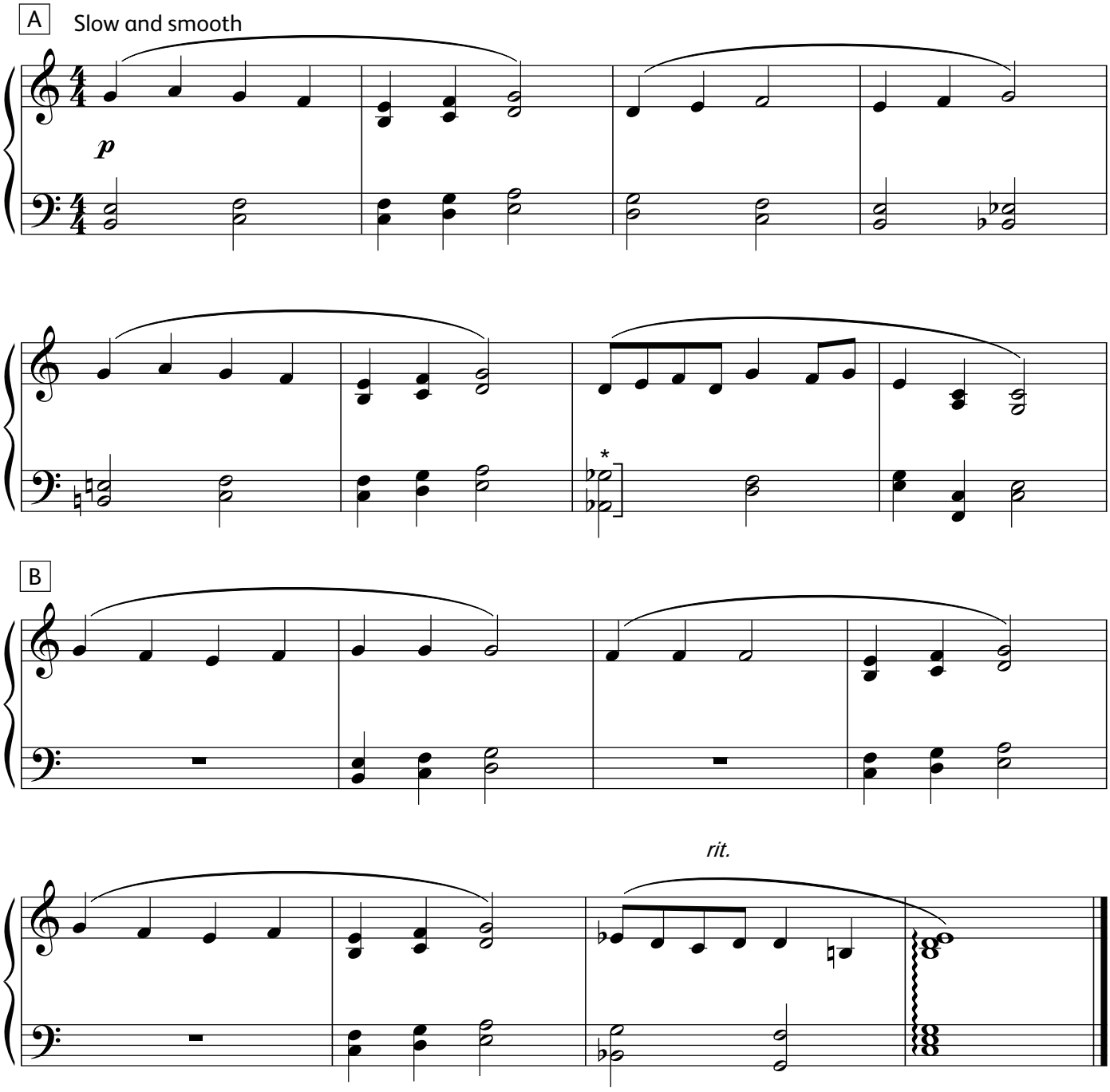
Q. Does it modulate to another key?
A. No.

**Suggested variations:**

Bars 1-2:
Play swung. Play beats 1 and 2 (left hand) in octaves.

Bars 12-13:
Play the diminished 7th as a block chord. Play the right hand in bar 13 as a sustained note rather than a trill.

# So What, It's a Nursery Rhyme




**Suggested questions:**

Q. What is the form of the piece?
A. Binary (AB).

Q. Is there anything noticeable about the chords in the bass clef?
A. Many are 4ths. (This type of structure is often referred to as 'so what' voicing.)

Q. What is the interval at * (bar 7)?
A. Minor 7th.

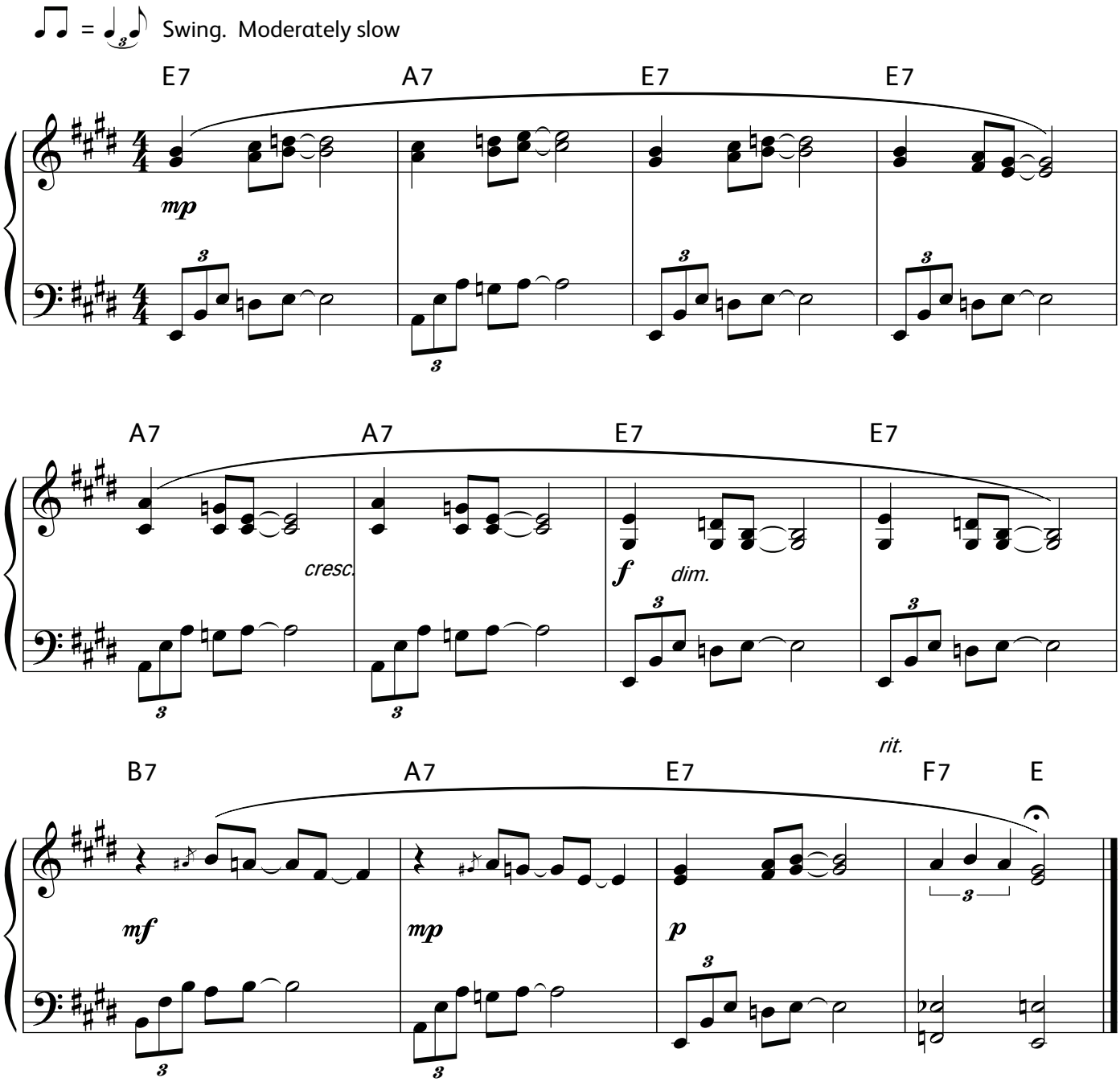
Q. The last chord is based on C major. What intervals have been added to the primary triad?
A. Major 7th and 9th.

**Suggested variations:**

Bars 1-2:
Change the dynamics. Change the rhythm of the right hand notes.

Bars 15-16:
Swing the quavers. Ignore the Rit. Play final bar as a block chord rather than as a spread chord.

# A Hint of Blues




**Suggested questions:**

Q. What is the key of the piece?
A. E major.

Q. What is the form of the piece?
A. 12-bar blues.

Q. What is the interval between the first two notes in the right hand (G♯ / B)?
A. Minor 3rd.

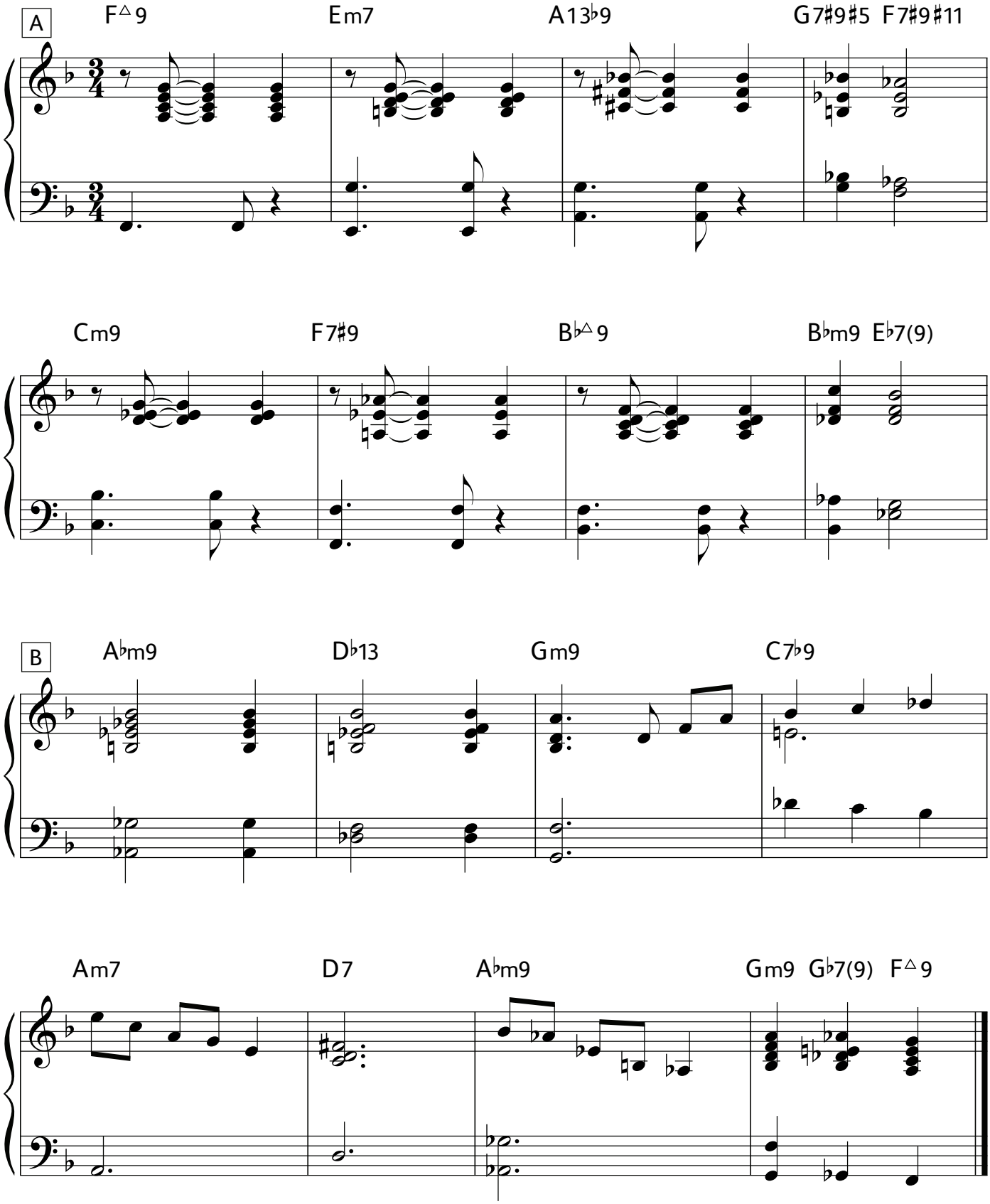
**Suggested variations:**

Bars 1-2:
Play the bass clef arpeggios in a downward pattern. Change the rising 3rds in the treble clef to falling 3rds (ie. starting on B / D in the 1st bar).

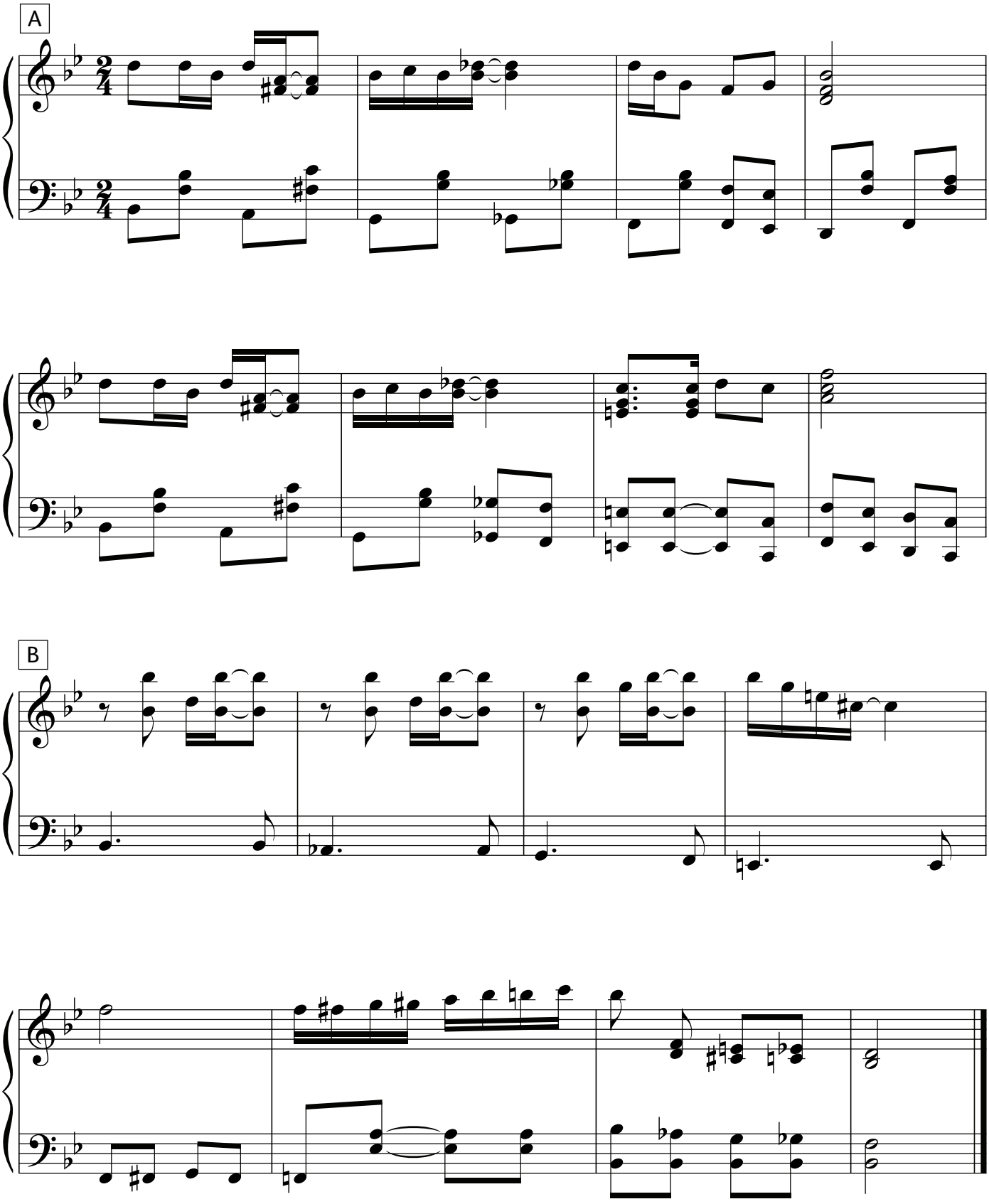
Bars 11-12:
Ignore the Rit. Replace the F7 (tritone substitution) with a dominant 7th (B7).

# Candidate Copies

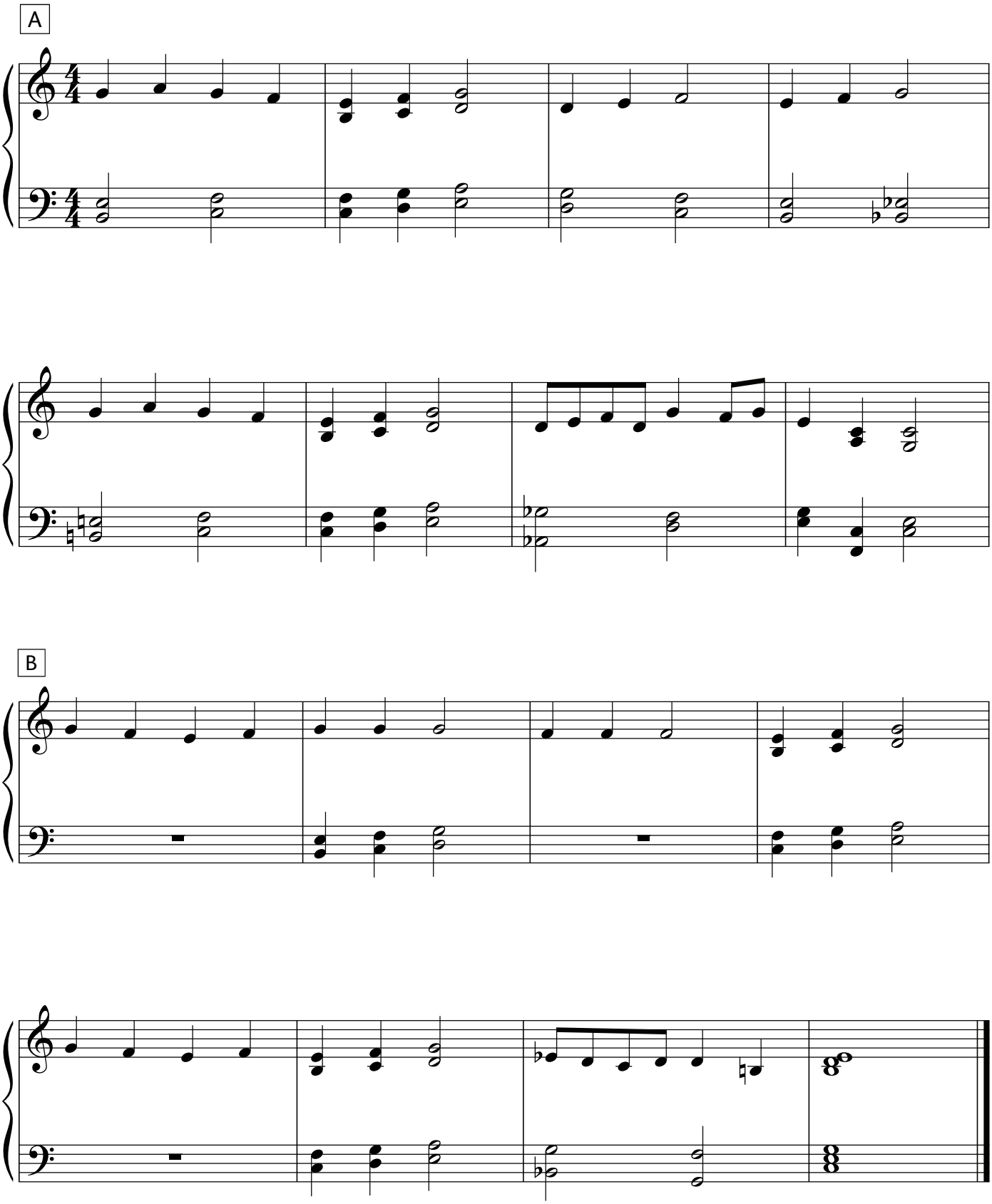
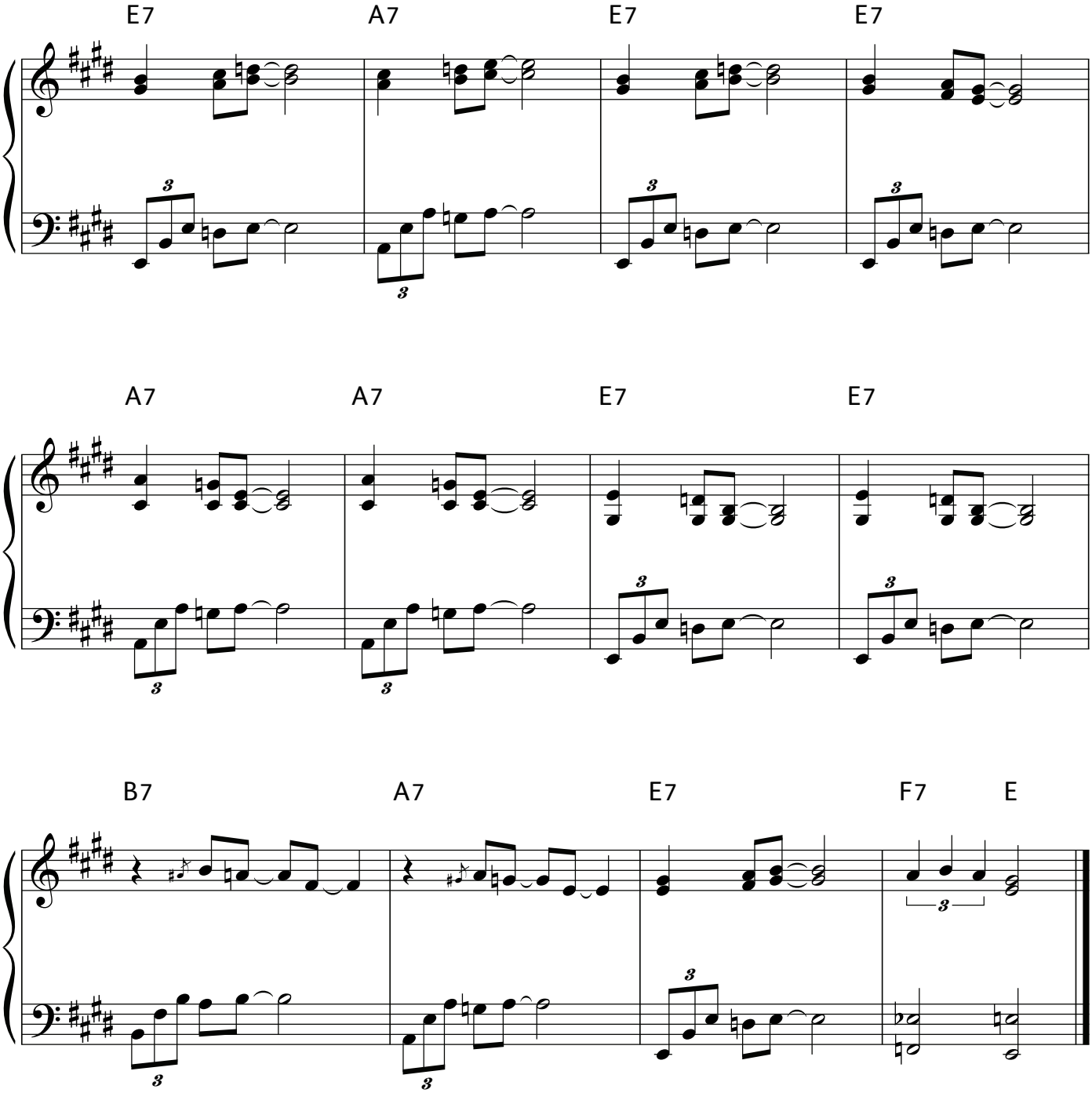
## Waltz Riff



# Raggy



# So What, It's a Nursery Rhyme



# A Hint of Blues