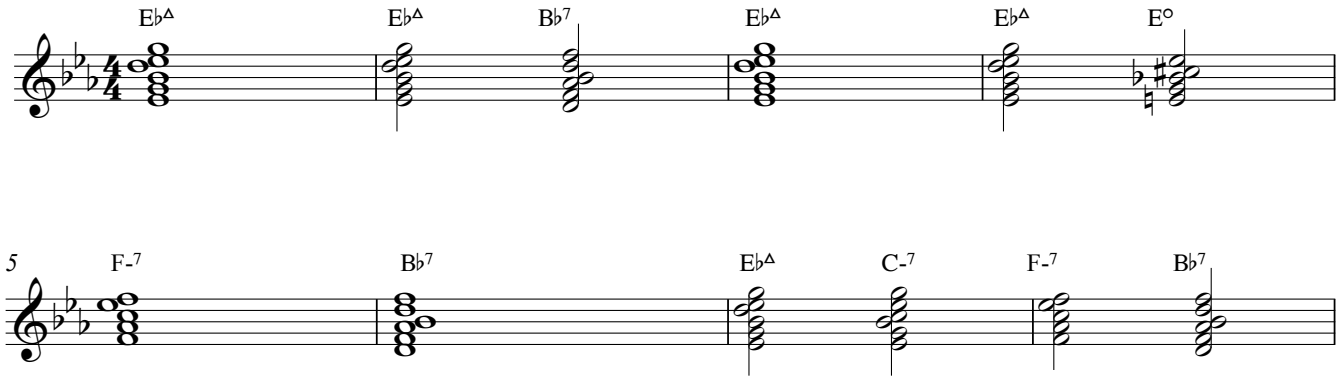
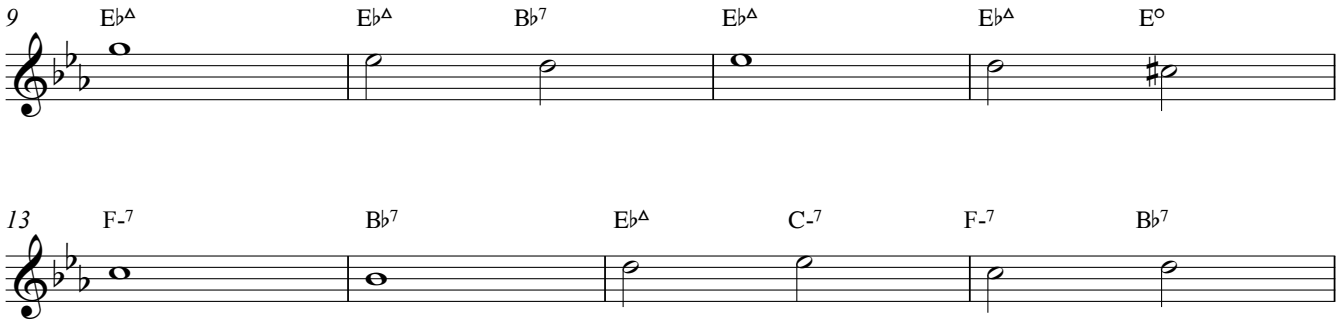
Stompin' At The Savoy - Session 2 (Bb)

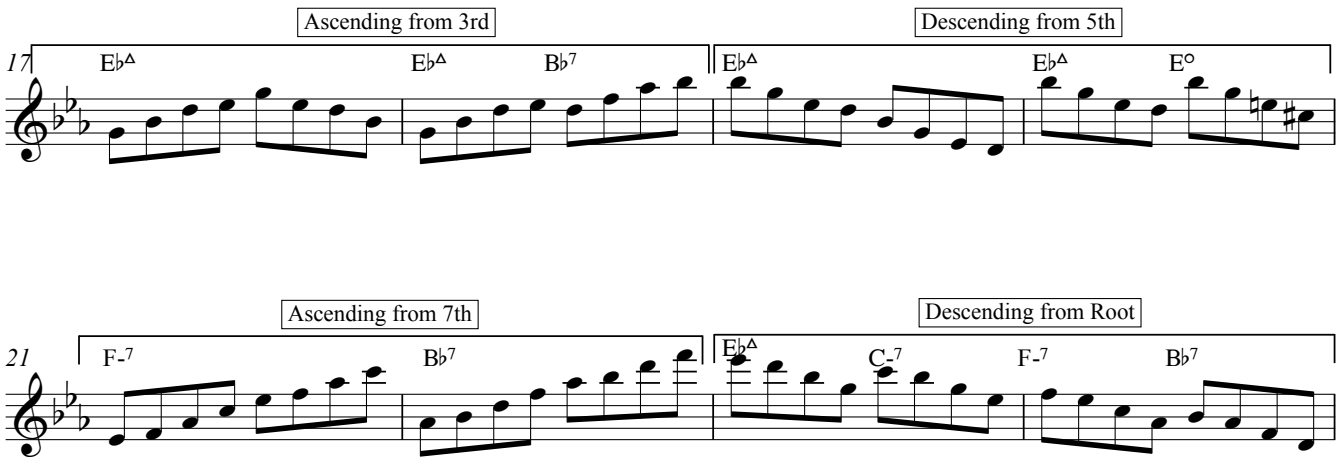
A good way to practice the harmony for this (or any other) tune is to look at the four note arpeggios of each chord. In the example below, I have written out the arpeggios as chords. I have used the staff to limit my range, deliberatley not using any ledger lines. You can try setting smaller or larger range restrictions, to suit your instrument.



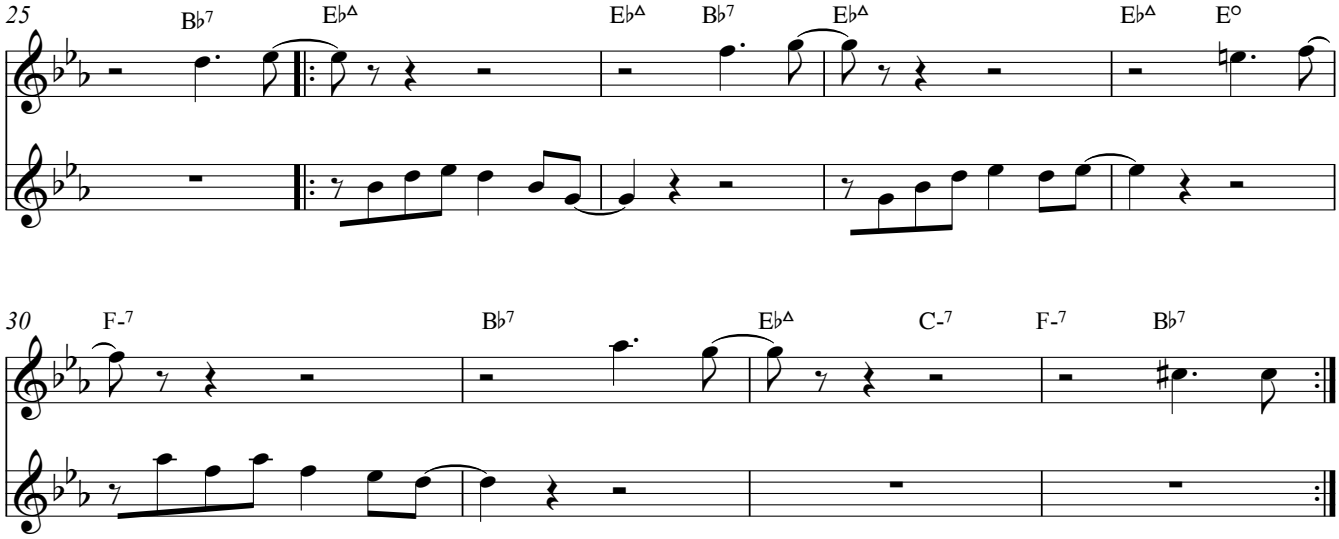
After practising just playing the root, or 3rd or 5th or 7th on each chord, try weaving a pattern through the sequence, playing different degrees of the arpeggio as you move through the form. Try to make this into a coherant melody, without too many large intervals. It's good practice to look for the smallest movements available. You will notice that some movements are descriptive (7th of the V7 chord falling to the 3rd of the I chord) while others are more subtle (Root of the II- chord becoming the 5th of the V7 chord).



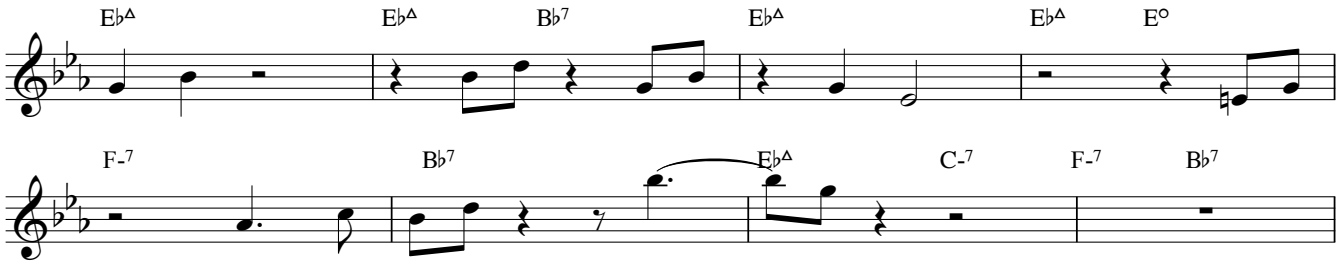
The next step is to increase the density of notes. Try the same thing with crotchets, and then quavers (or any other note value). As the speed increases it may be helpful to practise the arpeggios up and down as quavers, starting on all the different degrees. For example:



I am always looking for ways to hint at the melody during solos. One way to do this is to use the rhythmic and phrasing structure of the melody, but change some (or all) of the notes. The example is notated for two musicians, but it could be played by one. The idea is to keep the same rhythms from the call and response theme, but use the arpeggios we looked at on the previous page.

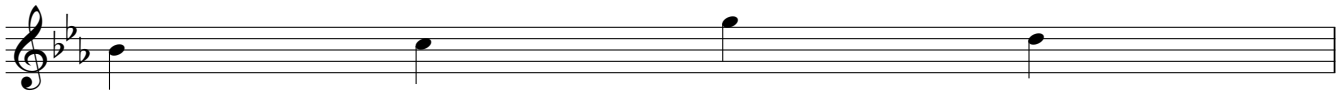
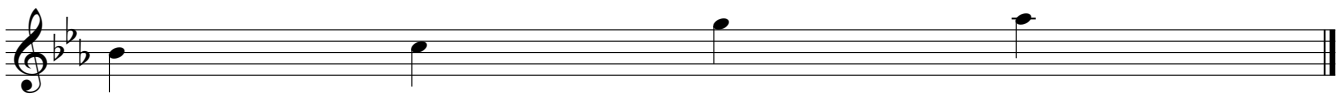


Another way to represent the melody in our improvisation is to use the note groupings from the phrases, but with a different rhythm almost the opposite of the above. The 'call' section of the melody has a very distinct 3rds theme, made up of an ascending 3rd, repeated three times before closing with a descending 3rd. We can use any any intervals we find of a 3rd from the four note arpeggios(or scales if you like) to create the same effect.



The 'answer' phrase from the melody provides us with a new four note cell which we can use over the chord sequence. By reordering the four notes, we can improvise a new melody, which will emphasize the same chord tones, keeping a flavour of the original tune.

Eb Major 7 Cell:



F Minor 7 Cell: