



## CLASSIC COLUMN

# Walking Bass Lines

BY LARRY CORYELL



BEING ABLE TO comp and play bass lines at the same time is a very handy skill to have. This column deals with *rhythm changes*, a progression (based on George Gershwin's "I Got Rhythm") that centers on the patterns I-VI-II-V and III-VI-II-V. Although the fingerings below work for me, they're not carved in stone. When I'm in "bass-line comp" mode, I put down the pick and

use just my thumb and fingers. Now let's look at the music.

Another way to play the opening chord is to barre the 6th fret with your 1st finger, fretting the *D* note with your 2nd finger. In measure 4, two-note chords are held for two beats while the bass keeps moving. Measure 5 features a barre at the 1st fret, after which you shift to the fifth position to play *Bb/D*. Notice that the *Bb* chord in bar 7 does not have a root—this is because the line is moving upward chromatically, and the



1  $\text{r}^3 \text{r}$

**B $\flat$ 7 Gm7 Cm7 F7 Dm7 $\flat$ 5 G7 Cm7 F7**

5 **B $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ /D E $\flat$ 7 Edim7 B $\flat$  G7 Cm7 F7**

9 **B $\flat$ 7 G7 Cm7 F7sus4 Dm7 D $\flat$ 7 G $\flat$ 7 B7**

chord acts as a passing harmony.

Measure 10 has another shift. Here, you jump from the first-position *F* bass note to the *E♭* at the 6th fret, fifth string, putting you in position for the subsequent *Dm7* chord. Measure 11 features some chord substitu-

tions to end the exercise: *D♭7* is substituted for *G7*, *G♭7* for *Cm7*, and *B7* replaces *F7*.

Rhythm changes usually include a standard bridge—the B section—that, in the key of *B♭*, consists of two bars each of *D7*, *G7*, *C7*, and *F7*. To complete the progression

as it's normally played, play what's written here—the A section—twice, play the bridge that I just described, and then play the first part one more time. This is referred to as an AABA form. *Originally published in the August '88 GP.*



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