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 progres-

sion (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.

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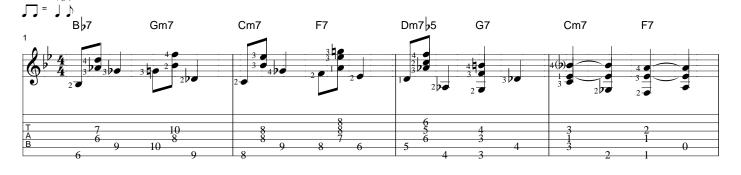
Another way to play the opening chord is to barre the 6th fret with your 1st finger, fretting the *D* note with your 2nd finger. In measure 4, two-note chords are held for two beats while the bass keeps moving. Measure 5 features a barre at the 1st fret, after which you shift to the fifth position to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



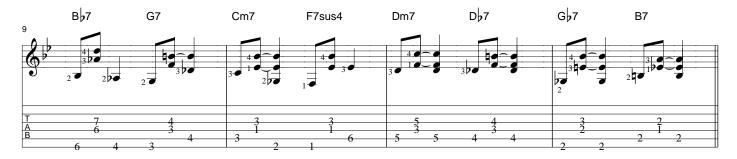
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chord acts as a passing harmony.

Measure 10 has another shift. Here, you jump from the first-position *F* bass note to the E_{μ} 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: $D \not\sim 7$ is substituted for *G7*, *G \not\sim 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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