Notes about how jazz tunes work in a session

Firstly, please make sure you have downloaded and read the info sheets "Gypsy Jazz - Session Etiquette" and "Gypsy Jazz - Suitable Instruments". Hard copies of these will also be available in the workshops and sessions.

We do not join several tunes together as you might in a folk session, and we will agree which tune is to be played before starting – don't just 'launch in'! People need to find the chord sequence, lead sheets, etc.

The actual tune is called the 'head', and is played at the beginning and at the end. The middle is where the solos happen, over the same chord sequence as the head.

Chord players need to stick pretty much to the given chord sequence. Avoid open-string 'cowboy' chords, as the ringing of open strings spoils the chunky rhythm of the genre. Bar chords with plenty of damping are OK but can be tiring after a while, which is why rhythm players in this style typically use chords with only 3 or 4 notes, with the other strings damped – this means they can be played with the thumb up on the side of the neck rather than on the back of the neck as you would in bar chords.

The chords themselves

Minor chords are often noted simply by a dash, e.g. **E –** instead of **Em**.

Bb–^{6} means "B flat minor sixth", but you can just play an ordinary Bb minor chord if you don't know how to play any added notes in a chord.

G/B means 'a G chord with a B note in the bass'. It is *not* an alternative chord! If you don't know how to play this inversion, just play a normal G chord.

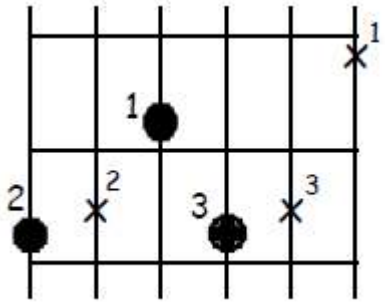
^{o7} means a 'diminished 7th' chord.

$^{ø\ 7}$ means a 'half-diminished' chord (a minor 7th with a flattened 5th)

This chord can also, if it helps, be thought of as a minor chord over a major 6th bass note. To take an example, B half-diminished (**B$^{ø\ 7}$**, aka **B–7^{b5}**) could be thought of as D minor over a B in the bass, **Dm/B** or **D–/B**. If you work it all out, it comes to the same 4 notes: B, F, Ab, C.

Guitarists!

If you just know open chords and bar chords, the new finger shape to get comfortable with *before* the workshop is this one:



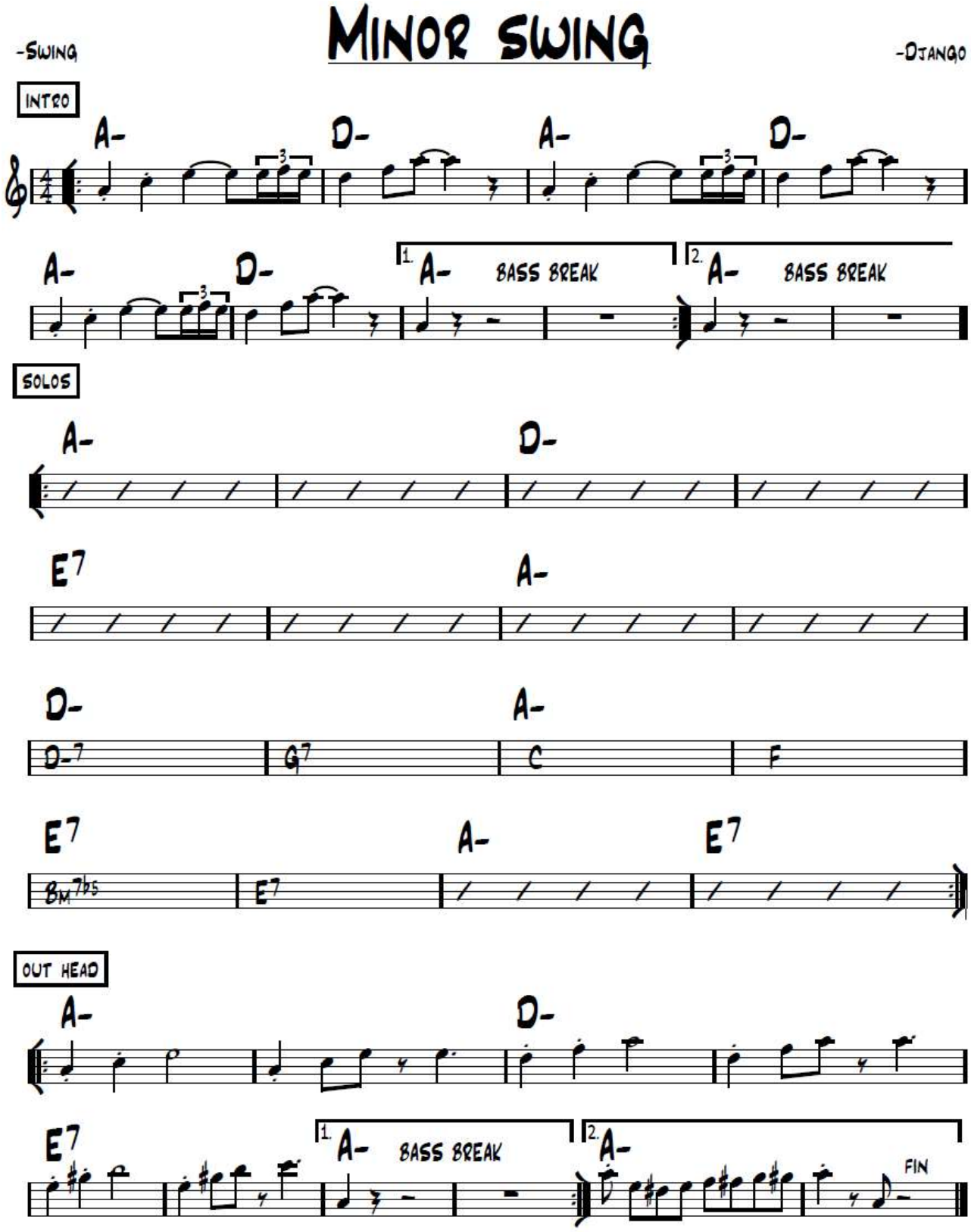
The crosses indicate how other strings are muted by the fingers playing the notes. These fingers must *lean over* to do this muting properly– and if you get it right, you can strum everything without worrying whether unused strings are going to sound by mistake.

Get used to moving it up and down the neck.

You can use this shape to play all 3 chords in the classic tune *Minor Swing* – the 2nd finger is at fret 5 for Am6, move it to fret 10 for Dm6, and fret 7 for the E7. More explanation of this in the rhythm workshop!

This is probably *the* classic Gypsy Jazz tune! But it's unusual in that it doesn't have a standard 'head'. Although related, the 'Intro' and the 'Out Head' are *not* the same.

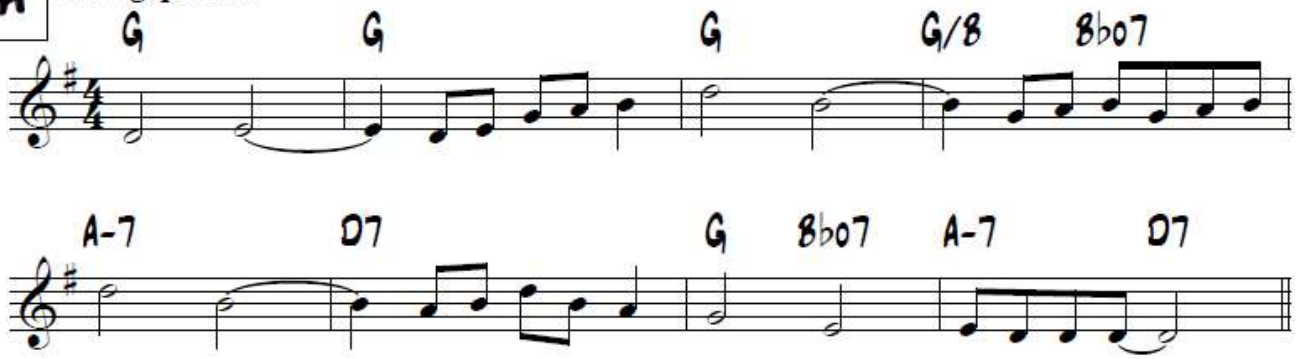
(Also, ignore the optional chords shown here in the second half of the 'Solo' chord sequence.)



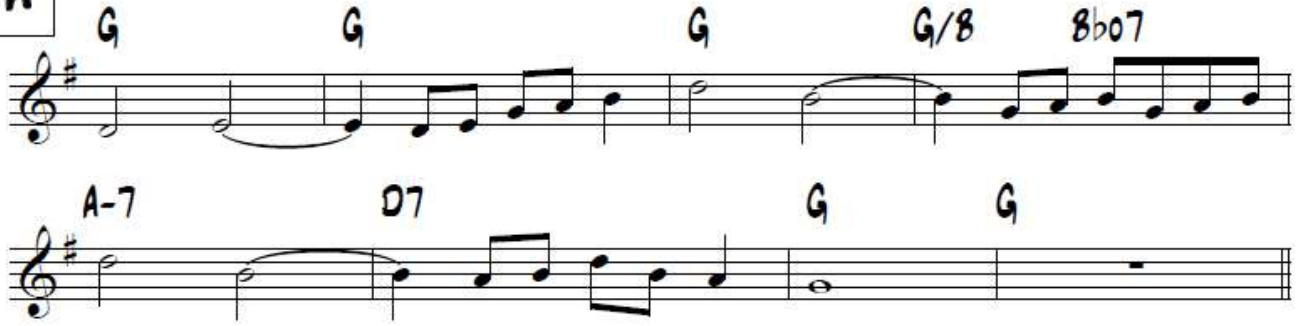
DINAH

HARRY AKST, 1925

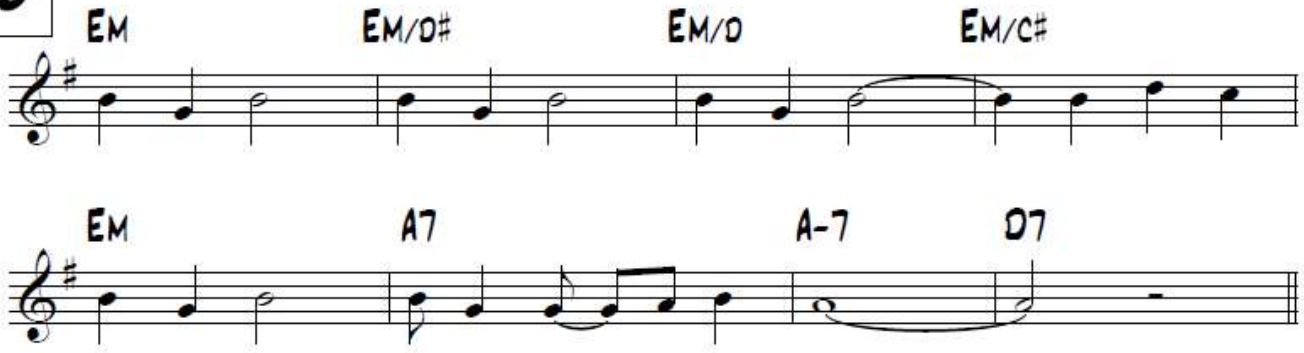
A **Swung quavers**



A



B



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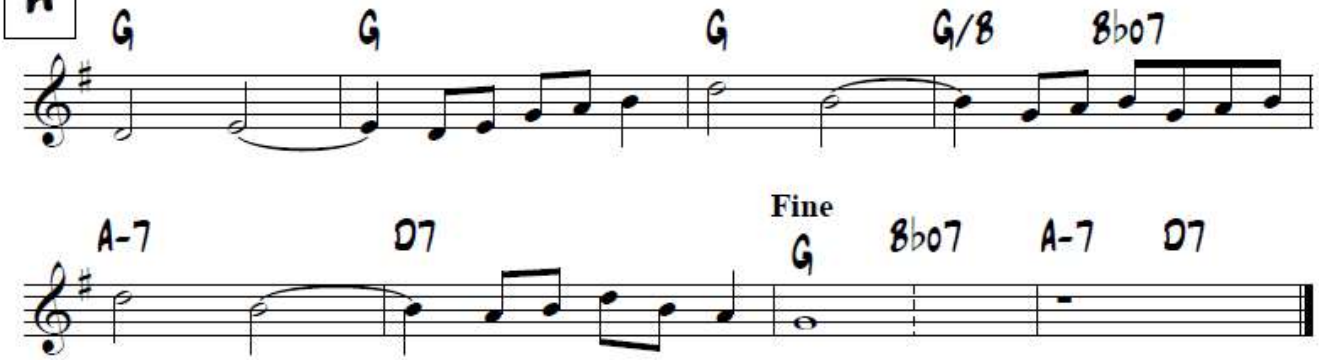
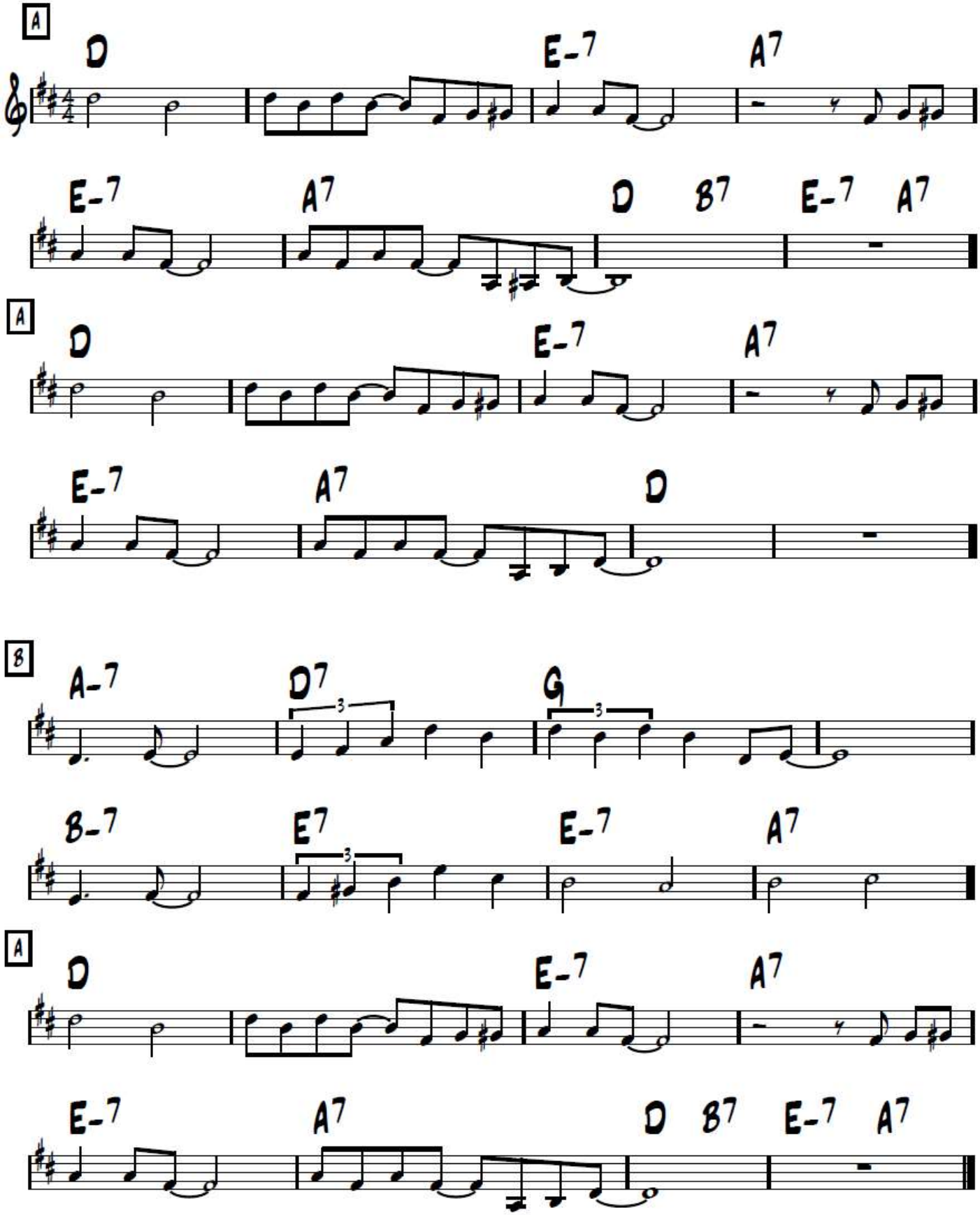


-Swing

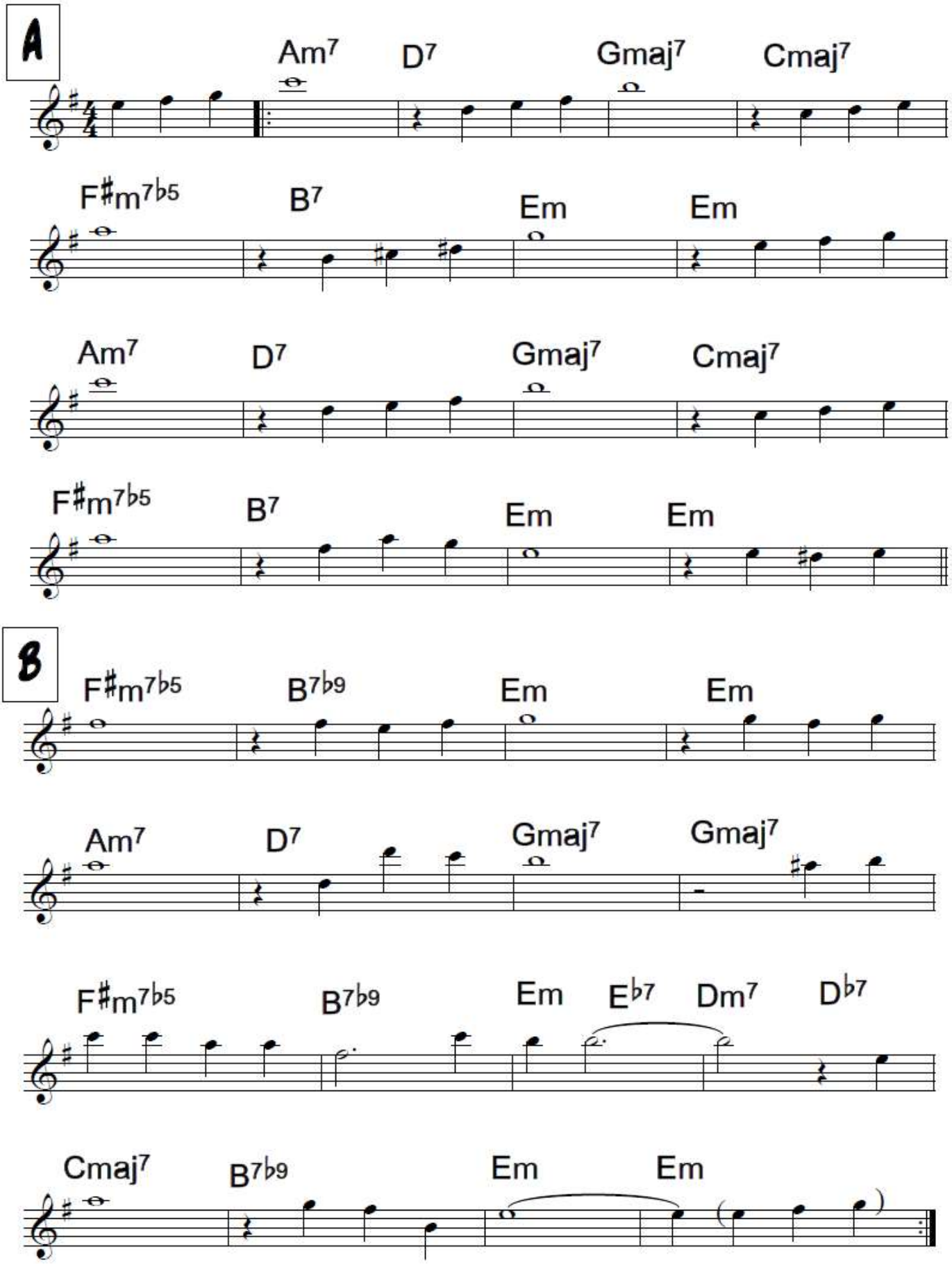
Coquette

-Green. Kahn. Lombardo 1928

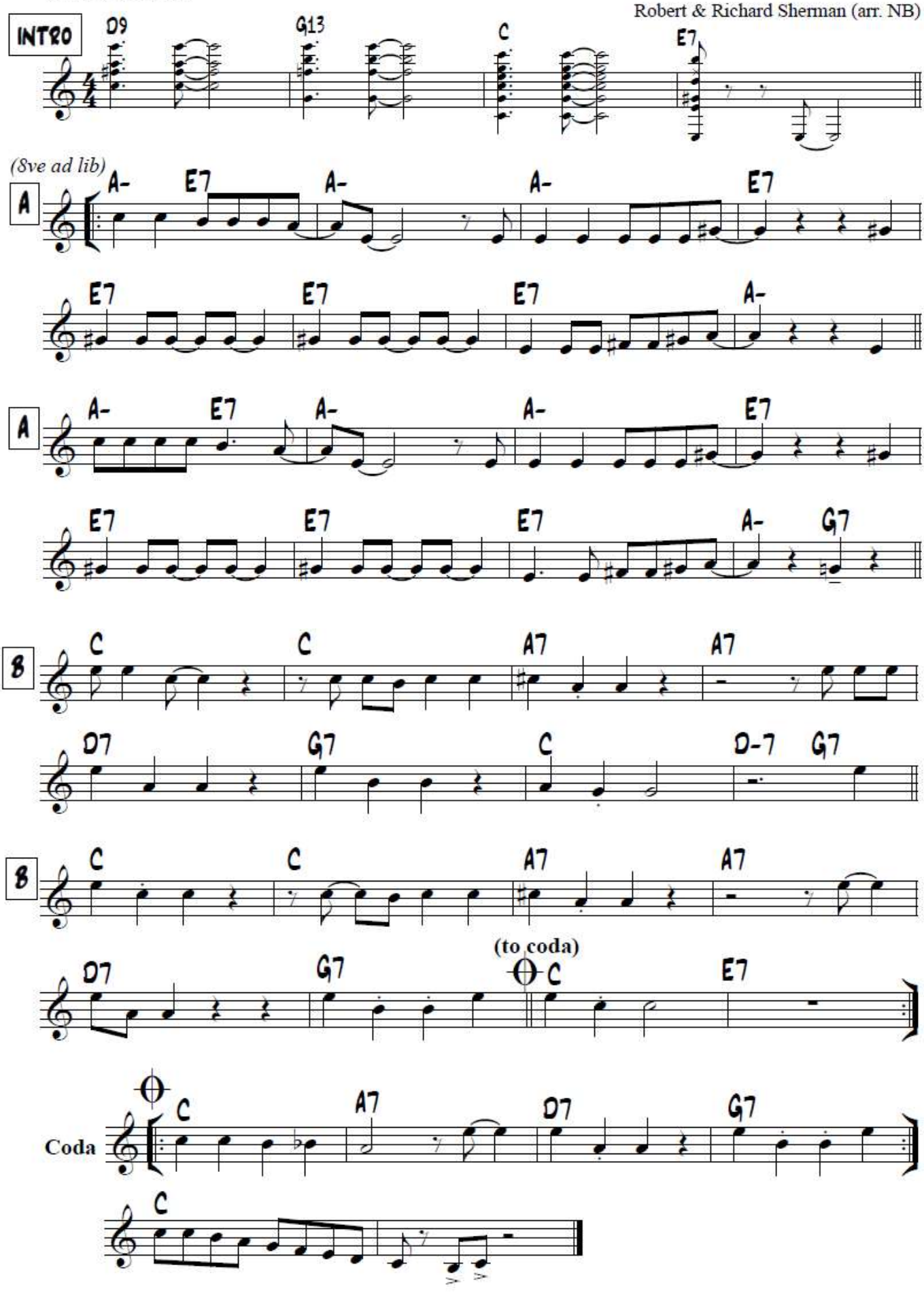


Autumn Leaves

Joseph Kosma
(Lyrics : Jacques Prévert)



King of the Swingers

(Swung quavers)

Robert & Richard Sherman (arr. NB)