Week 3 : Watermelon Man

„ Improvising is like opening a wonderful box where everything you take out is always new. You´ll never get bored, because what that that box contains is different ever single time.“

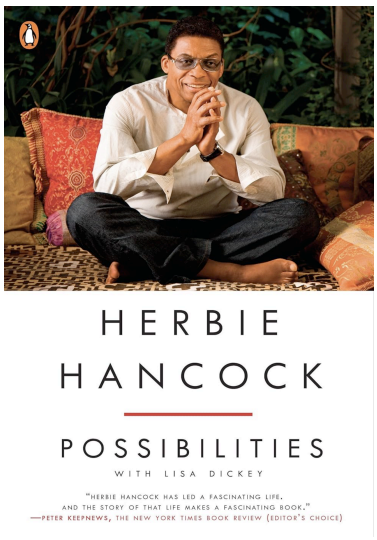
- Herbie Hancock

recommended listening:

1) Herbie Hancock : Watermelon Man *Album: Takin´off* ***1962***
2) Herbie Hancock : Watermelon Man *Album: Head Hunters* **1973**

recommended reading:

Possibilities – Herbie Hancock´s
(jazz auto-biography)

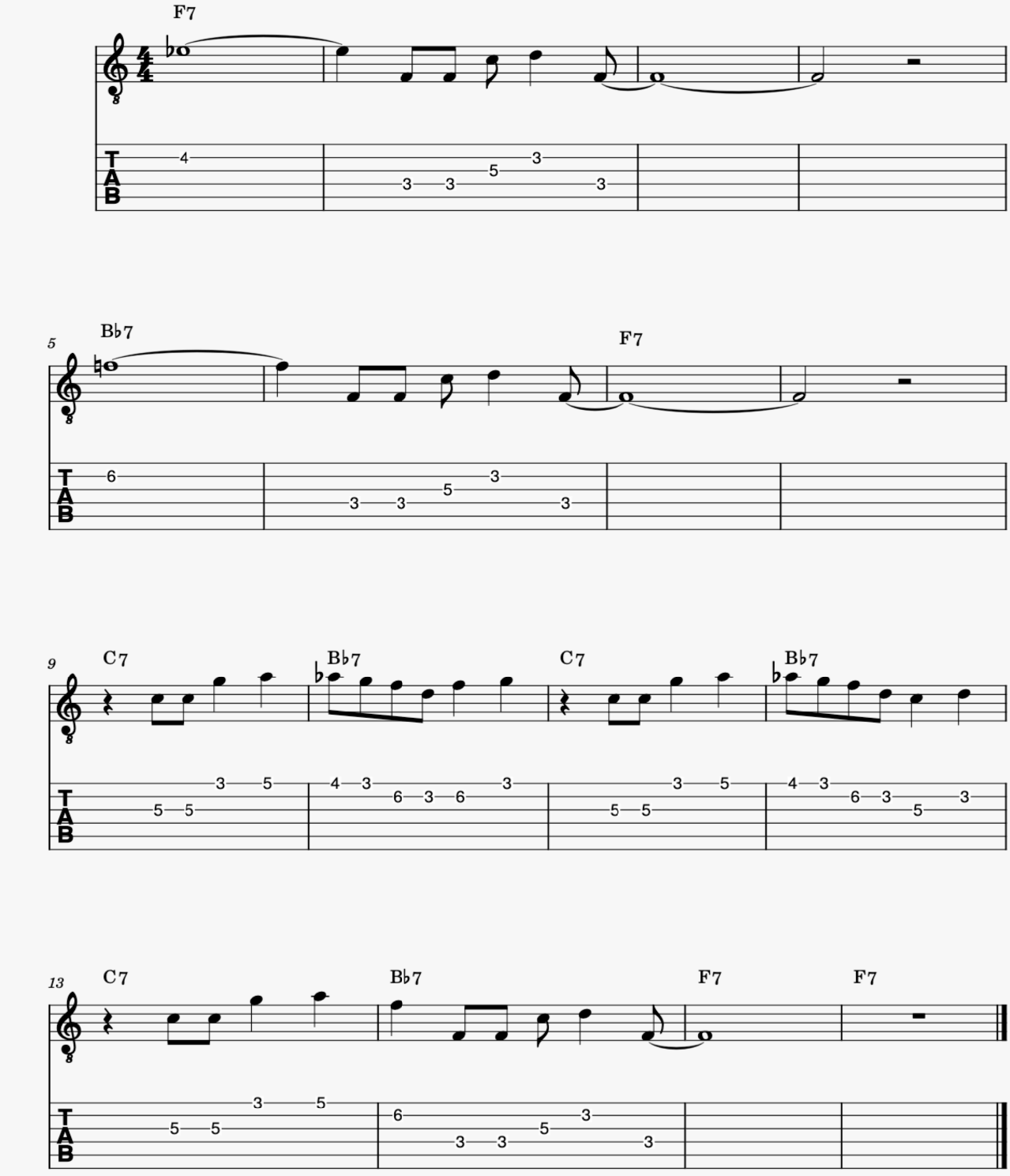


video min: 01:15

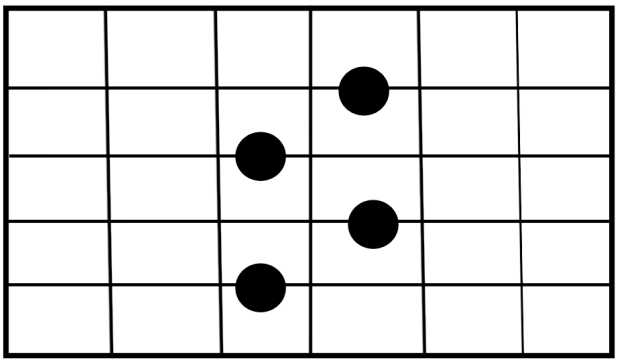
Watermelon Man

Herbie Hancock

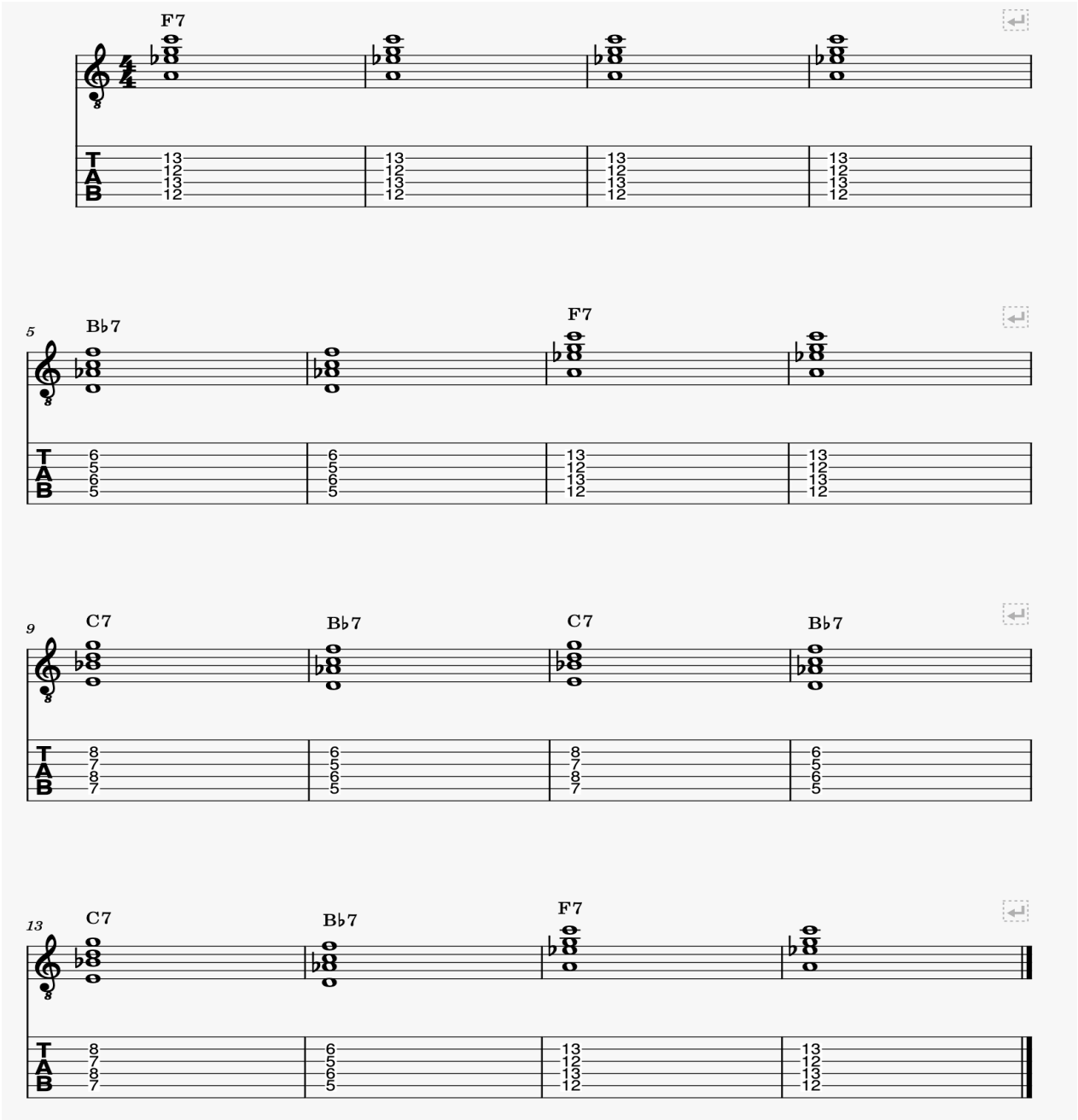
play the melody in the third position



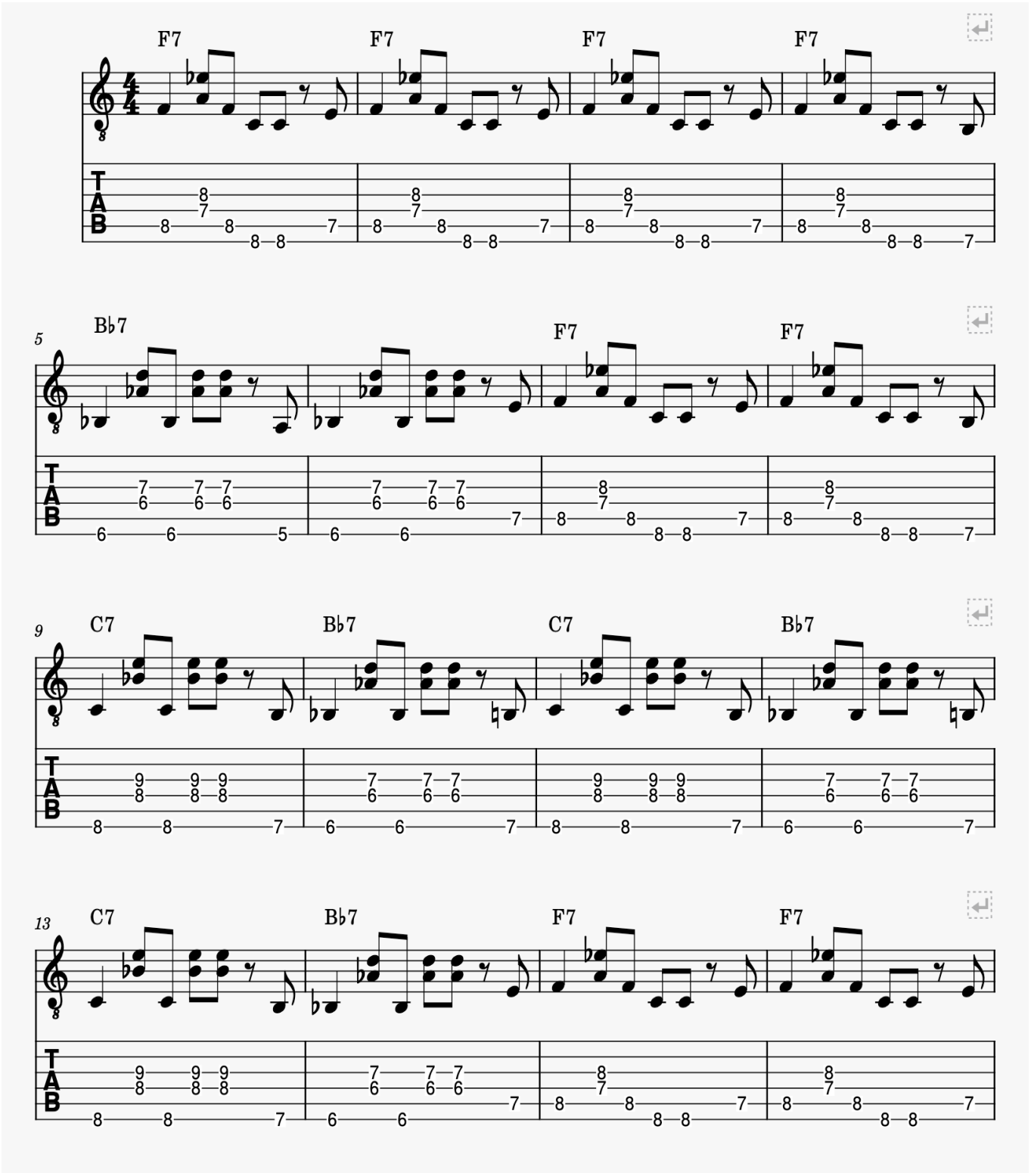
let´s start with the rhythm! If you listen to the recording from 1962 you can hear a sort of boogaloo/ straight eights feel. Here is a simple chord shape:



Herbie uses this voicing a lot in his playing! Use it to play along with the recording. Just play on the **ONE** (simple and relaxed)**.** Just to get the **feel** of this tune. (attention on the record from 1962 : they are playing an **8 bar intro F7**)



Now that we got the feeling in our venes:
how we can play an easy accompaniment on our guitars?
let´s start with the shell voicings and a simple rhythm:
video min: 10:07



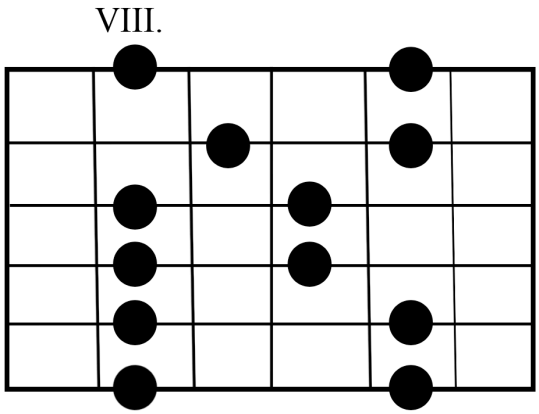
Basically this tune is a blues:

F7 | F7 | F7 | F7 |
Bb7 | Bb7 | F7 | F7 |
C7 | Bb7 | F7 | F7 |

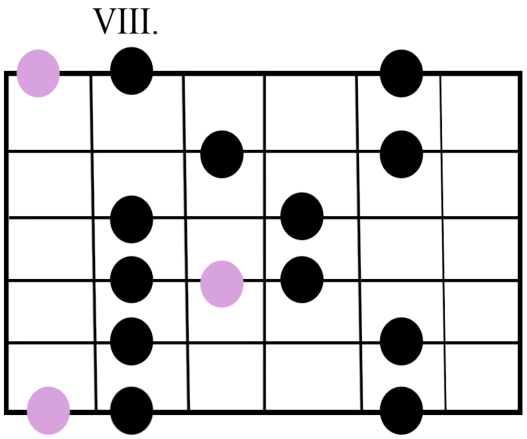
just bar 9+10 get repeated!

F7 | F7 | F7 | F7 |
Bb7 | Bb7 | F7 | F7 |
C7 | Bb7 | C7 | Bb7 |
C7 | Bb7 | F7 | F7

so be careful – especially at the end of bar 14! there are two more bars of F7 :)
for playing the blues we can use the minor pentatonic. There are 5 patterns for the minor pentatonic. **Today** let´s just focus on **one** position for the F minor pentatonic.

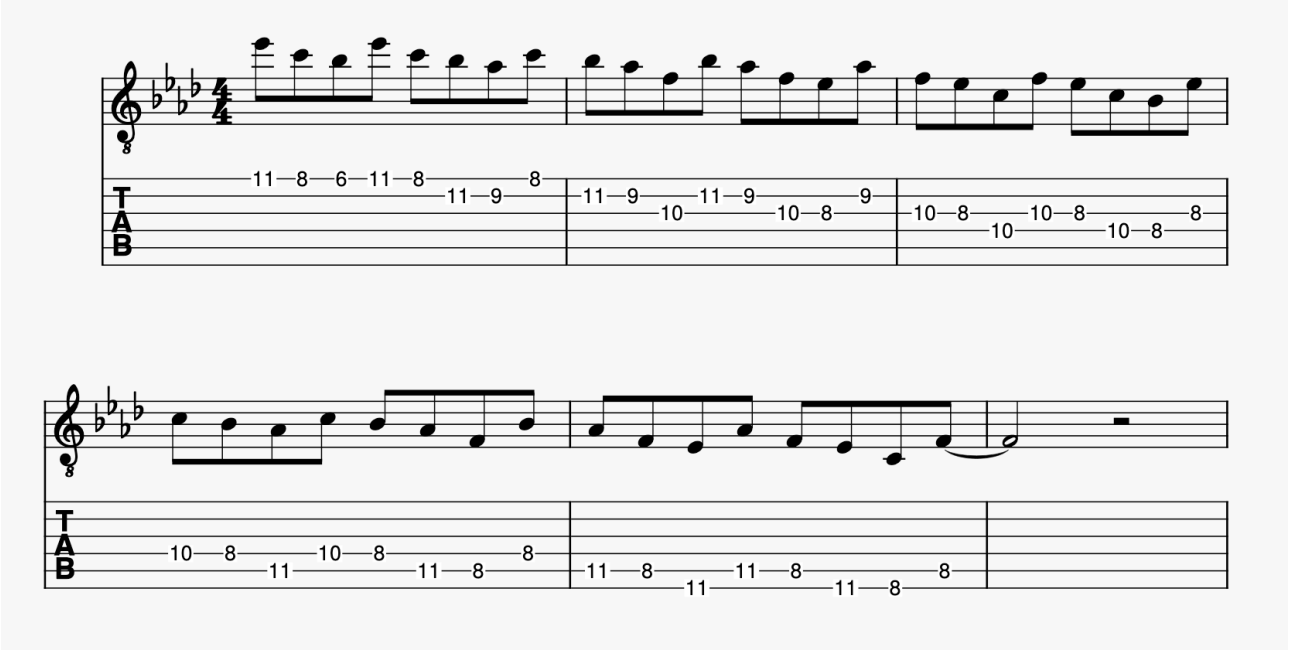


just add one note to the F minor pentatonic– the b5 (b) – that´s the blues scale:



can you see the
all the 'b´s' – OCTAVES!!

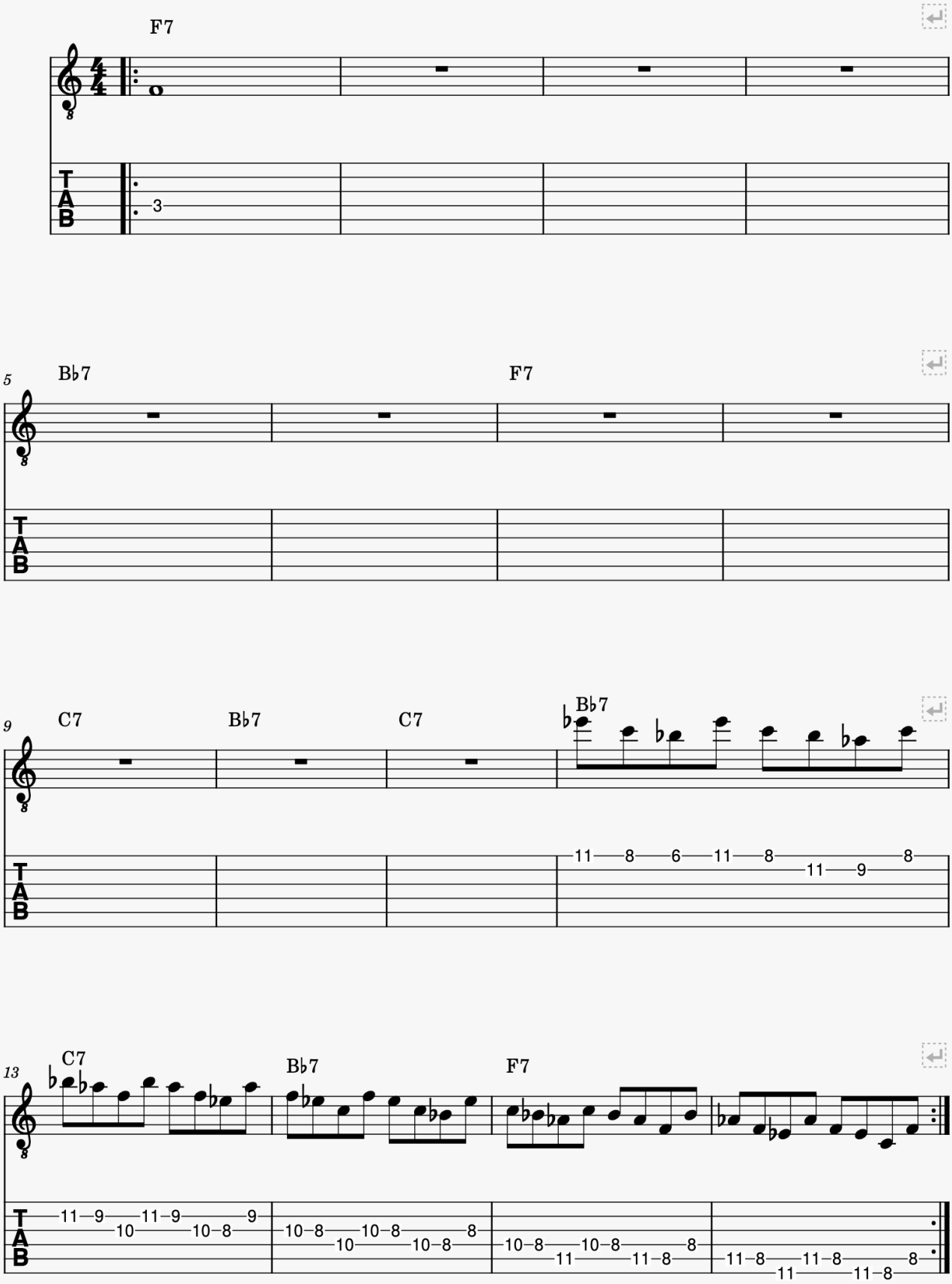
1) you know, sometimes if i run out of ideas on a tune i just start practicing the scale (s) that i need in this tune. And i really love scale patterns, or sequences because they are really a source of fresh ideas. Here is pattern for the F minor pentatonic.



let´s play it over our jam track! **VIDEO: min 17: 01**
That works out pretty cool – BUT i really always check out WHERE the line/ pattern i am playing ends! And this one ends in bar 5, there is nothing wrong with it, but maybe it would be really nice if if would end in bar 1!! right!
So we would have to start in bar 12 → next page!

Wow! This can be pretty tough! You need to know exacty where you are in the form and in the bar. Start by counting out loud (1,2,3,4 for each measure and move your finger across the lead sheet accordingly)

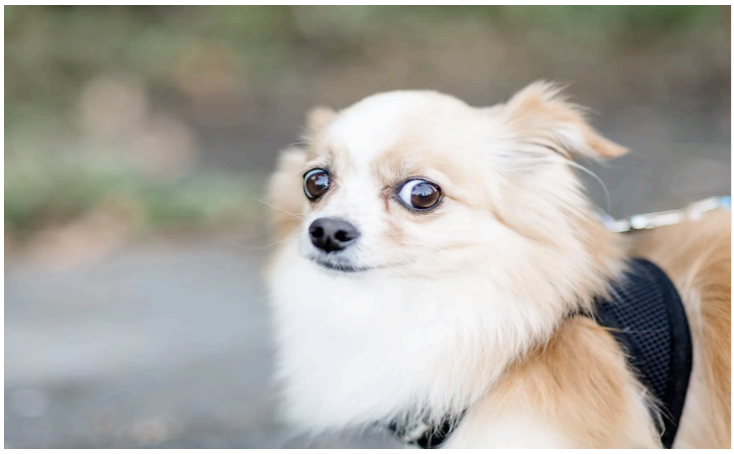
2) let´s improvise using the F blues scale in bar 1 to 11 and then try to play your pattern


F7
Bb7
F7
C7
Bb7
C7
Bb7
C7
Bb7
F7

hope you had a lot of fun checking out this improvisational exercise. I am sure you all heard the term „ playing over the changes“. And if we are using the bluesscale/minoo pentatonic on this tune we are playing over some changes (the F7,Bb7 and C7 chord) but we are not playing the changes. and that´s ok! More than ok! that´s what you do if you play a bluesy improvisation – and it will come in handy on more advanced jazz standards later too!

BUT for now let´s start to practice **playing the changes**
video: 22:37

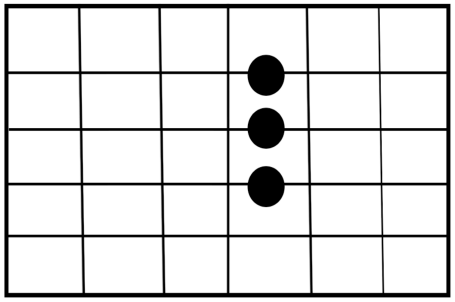
don´t be afraid! You can do it!
we´ll really take it step by step!



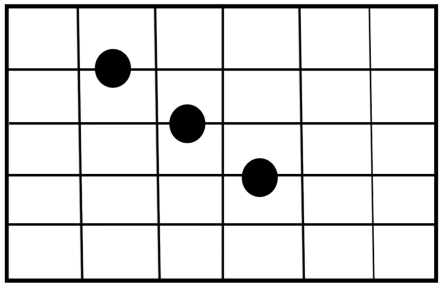
We´ll start with: **TRIADS!!!**

1) let´s play those triads over the form: (video min: 25:52)

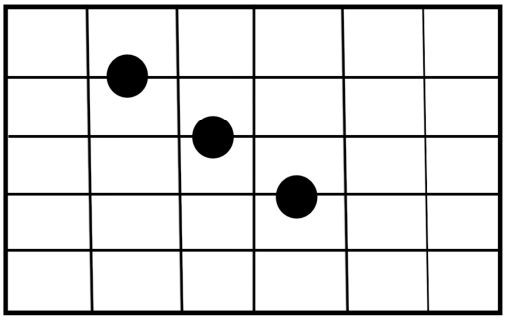
F VIII.

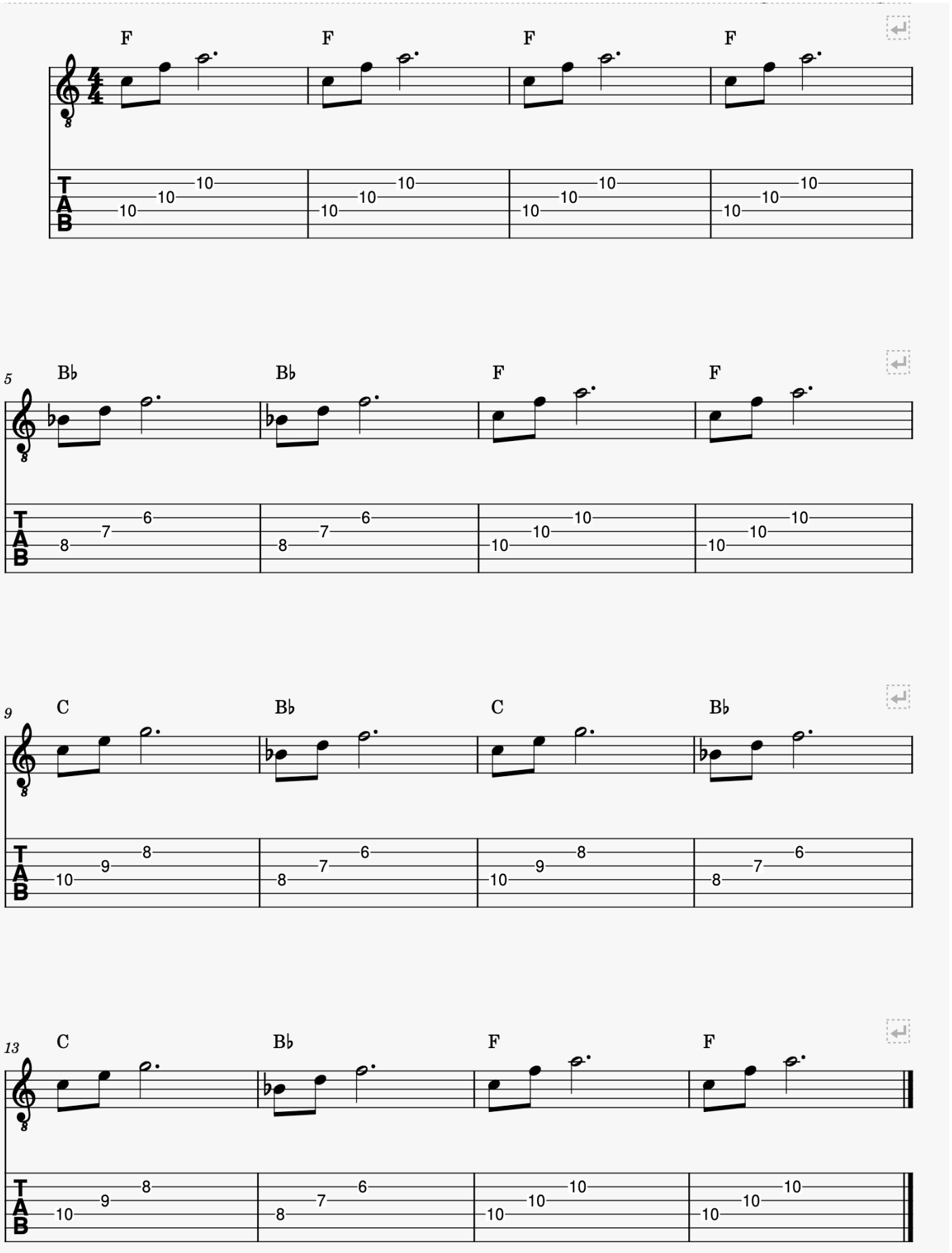


Bb VI.



C VIII.




F F F F
5
B♭ B♭ F F
9
C B♭ C B♭
13
C B♭ F F