

BAG'S GROOVE F BLUES

MILT JACKSON
(LESSON BY BEN PORTNER)

Moving on from the previous lesson "C Jam Blues," Bag's Groove is a 12 bar blues composed by Vibraphonist Milt Jackson. The chords are similar to "C Jam Blues," except the chords have been transposed from the key of C to the key of F. (Fun Fact, Milt Jackson's nickname was "Bags" because after playing jam sessions all night he would have large bags under his eyes.)

We're going to approach the song the same way we did with "C Jam Blues." First we'll work on the melody in the right hand with the chords in root position in the left hand.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of 12 measures. The key signature has one flat (Bb). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the chords are written in the bass clef in root position. Measure numbers 6 and 11 are indicated at the start of their respective lines.

Measures 1-4: F7, Bb7, F7, F7

Measures 5-8: Bb7, Bb7, F7, F7, Gm7

Measures 9-12: C7, F7, F7, F7, Bb7

Chord progressions (left hand):

- Measures 1-2: FACEb
- Measures 3-4: BbDFAb
- Measures 5-6: BbDFAb
- Measures 7-8: FACEb
- Measures 9-10: FACEb
- Measures 11-12: BbDFAb

Melody notes (right hand):

- Measure 1: F
- Measure 2: C
- Measure 3: Bb Ab
- Measure 4: Bb Ab F Ab F Eb
- Measure 5: F Eb
- Measure 6: F Eb
- Measure 7: F Eb
- Measure 8: F Eb
- Measure 9: F C
- Measure 10: Bb Ab
- Measure 11: Bb Ab F Ab F Eb F Eb
- Measure 12: C F Eb C Eb C Bb C Bb Ab

F7 F7 Bb7 Bb7 F7

16 Bb Ab C F Eb C Eb C Bb C Bb Ab Bb Ab

FACEb FACEb BbDFAb BbDFAb FACEb

F7 Gm7 C7 F7 F7

21 C F Eb C Eb C Bb C Bb Ab Bb Ab

FACEb GBbDF CEGBb FACEb FACEb

Practice the melody with the chords until you feel comfortable playing with a metronome or recording. Since improvisation makes up most of the composition let's go over the scales to use on each chord. If you struggle with the mixolydian or dorian scales, go back to the previous lessons to work on these scales separately.

F7 uses an F7 Mixolydian Scale.

F7

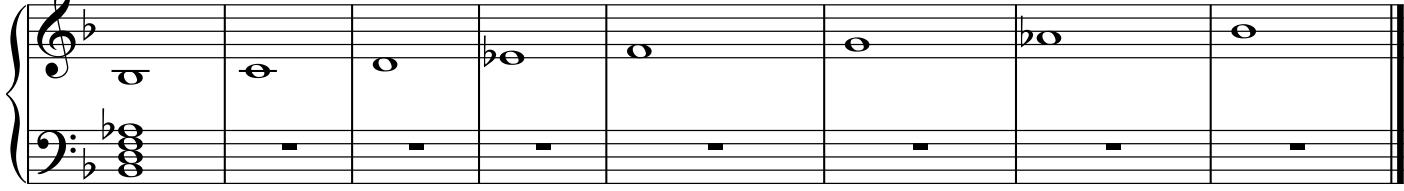
26 F G A Bb C D Eb F

FACEb

Bb7 uses a Bb7 Mixolydian scale.

Bb⁷

34 Bb C D Eb F G Ab Bb



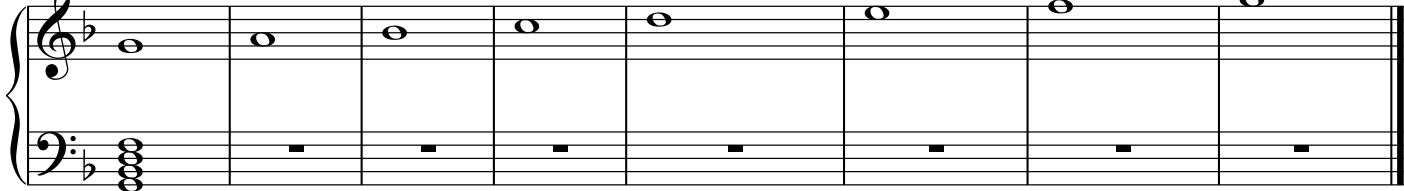
BbDFAb

Detailed description: This block contains a musical score for a Bb7 chord progression. It starts at measure 34. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The melody in the treble clef consists of half notes: Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb. The bass line in the bass clef consists of whole rests in all measures. The chord formula BbDFAb is written below the first measure.

Lastly let's work on the 2-5-1 at the end of the form, Gmin7 and C7

Gm⁷

42 G A Bb C D E F G

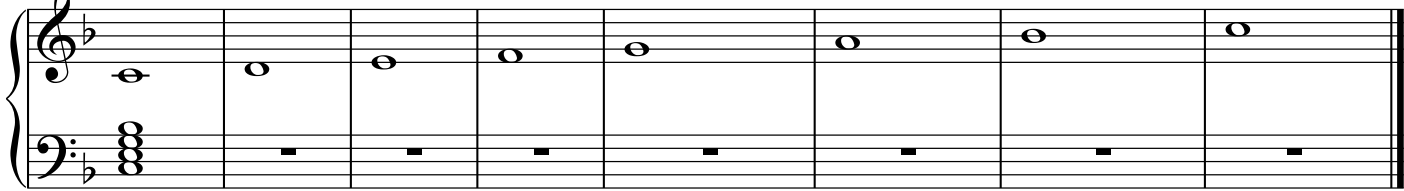


GBbDF

Detailed description: This block contains a musical score for a Gm7 chord progression. It starts at measure 42. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The melody in the treble clef consists of half notes: G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G. The bass line in the bass clef consists of whole rests in all measures. The chord formula GBbDF is written below the first measure.

C⁷

50 C D E F G A Bb C



CEGBb

Detailed description: This block contains a musical score for a C7 chord progression. It starts at measure 50. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The melody in the treble clef consists of half notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C. The bass line in the bass clef consists of whole rests in all measures. The chord formula CEGBb is written below the first measure.

Lastly, we'll look at the F blues scale. The melody centers around this scale and is a great way to come up with ideas for improvising. Refer back to pentatonic and blues scales in the curriculum if you struggle with this scale.

58 F Ab Bb B C Eb F

Now that you've gotten used to root position voicings let's take a look at some better sounding non root position voicings. First we'll start with F7

F⁷

65

EbA EbAD EbGAD ADEb ADEbG

Next is Bb⁷

Bb⁷

70

DAb DGAb DGAbC AbCD AbCDG

Lastly is the 2-5-1 leading back in to F7. Gmin7 to C7

75

Musical notation for exercise 75, showing a 2-5-1 voicing sequence in the left hand. The notation consists of five measures, each with a specific voicing indicated by a chord symbol below it.

FABbD EABbD EbGAD BbDFA BbDEA ADEbG

For more 2-5-1 options refer back to the 2-5-1 voicings exercise in the curriculum.

After practicing these voicings in the left hand, now try playing the melody along with the rootless voicings. Once you are comfortable playing the melody and voicings, practice soloing over the form using the scales discussed earlier. It is recommended that the student listen to and transcribe solos of master players to work on vocabulary, rhythm and phrasing.

79

Musical notation for exercise 79, showing a melody line and rootless voicings. The notation consists of five measures, each with a specific voicing indicated by a chord symbol below it. Above the staff, the following chord symbols are written: F7, Bb7, F7, F7, Bb7. Above the melody line, the following notes are written: C, Bb Ab, Bb Ab F Ab F Eb, F Eb, F, C, Bb Ab.

EbGAD DGA bC EbGAD EbGAD DGA bC

85

Musical notation for exercise 85, showing a melody line and rootless voicings. The notation consists of five measures, each with a specific voicing indicated by a chord symbol below it. Above the staff, the following chord symbols are written: Bb7, F7, F7, Gm7, C7. Above the melody line, the following notes are written: Bb Ab F Ab F Eb, F Eb, F, C, Bb Ab, Bb Ab F Ab F Eb.

DGA bC EbGAD EbGAD FABbD EABbD

90

F⁷ F⁷ F⁷ B^b7 F⁷

F Eb C F Eb C Eb C B^b C B^b A^b B^b A^b

E^bGAD E^bGAD E^bGAD DGA^bC E^bGAD

95

F⁷ B^b7 B^b7 F⁷

C F Eb C Eb C B^b C B^b A^b B^b A^b

E^bGAD DGA^bC DGA^bC E^bGAD

99

F⁷ G^m7 F⁷

C F Eb C Eb C B^b C B^b A^b B^b A^b

E^bGAD F A B^b D E A B^b D E^bGAD E^bGAD