



BASS

An End to a Great Summer

by Tom Pieper

Time is flying as I share a couple of resources for your consideration.

Eddie Gomez — *We Will Meet Again* (For Harry)

Eddie Gomez has always been a bassist, band leader, and composer who has inspired fellow musicians and audiences across the globe. After emigrating from Puerto Rico to New York City he began playing bass at age 11, and graduated from Juilliard in 1963. Eddie's career took off when he began working with pianist Bill Evans in 1966 and continued this partnership for 11 more years.

Here is his solo on *We will meet again* (For Harry) on the Bill Evans' *You Must Believe in Spring* LP from 1977. This tune is a great platform to showcase Eddie's fluency and mastery of soloing in the upper registers, and his imaginative phrasing and rhythmic execution. I extended the transcription for one chorus to illustrate how Eddie Gomez masterfully presents the multidimensional role of a bass player in the modern jazz setting: an inventive solo performance, and a supportive bass accompaniment. This chorus is basic yet nuanced with his choice of notes and deliberate use of ties, pedal notes, and hemiolas both subtle and powerful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e95cTQZGrc>

Tchaikovsky — *Danse Trepak*

Here are two bass excerpts that popped up for me in the past few months that I think will be useful for future practice and performances. First off, Instagram is now inundated by many videos and stories, and many musicians are now posting great clips and recordings to demonstrate some incredible playing. Here are two by Blake Hilley (current Juilliard graduate)—check these out before they disappear as the clock is TikTok-ing!

Tchaikovsky's *c) Danse Russe Trepak* from the *Nutcracker* is an excerpt that you will certainly come across in your future, and probably more than once. And even more important than this excerpt is asked

for on auditions, it is really fun to play. Tchaikovsky knew how to orchestrate and required all bass players to join the party in many of his works. Here is a link that showcases the excerpt. Notice he plays this with the German bow, and listen to how great his articulation is as he produces an incredibly precise and clear tone. Different opinions are offered on the value of the two different bows, but when you can make either bow work it really does not matter what you play. I have included fingerings, but I believe his

position and choices of string crossings are even more valuable to consider and adhere to. Follow these suggestions and you will be ready when this comes up. Play the first 3 bars starting on G string and bar 5 & 6 shifting up the D string. Bars 13 and 14 are again on the D string with a string crossing to the G string in measure 15. I like how he includes the conclusion as it reminds us that excerpts often return to bass lines that are more supportive—similar to the role of Eddie Gomez above!

Bill Evans
Solo: Eddie Gomez

For Harry

The musical notation is a handwritten transcription of a bass solo. It is written on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked 'Slo'. The notation includes various chords: C-, D-7b5, G7#11, A-7b5, D7b9, D-7b5, G7#9, F-, and G7. The melody features ties, pedal notes, and hemiolas. There are three triplet markings (3) over the notes in measures 4, 10, and 14. The piece concludes with a final G7 chord.

For Harry (cont)

Trepak

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9howIAC8QHU>

Gershwin — Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is also a great piece to play and be familiar with. There are many sections of this piece requiring you to be alert and deliberate as you provide support in your ensemble, and occasional soli sections with the brass. Because of the fast tempo, this excerpt can be challenging if you're not ready for it. The fingerings and string crossings are the most important strategy to help get you through. Remember you are also doubling with the brass so be kind as to not drown them out.

I spent some time debating about fingerings but do like playing most of the excerpt on the G and D string while shifting with the first finger leading the way. The string crossings are honoring the "going to the lower string with an up-bow rule" which keeps the bow on one balance point instead of two points.

Try playing on the A string in bar 7 as another option and staying in III, II, and IV position across strings as it limits your horizontal length of shifting. Depending on your preferences you may have better success, although I found the G and D string option to work the best as I play on two strings regardless of the distance.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/wMmGEDJJGv0?si=E7Kpi0YG6IIPBBB>

Steve Wonder *I Wish* Bass line

I always think another part of my mission is to make everyone remember all the great bass lines that have been recorded over the years. This one is especially cool because you have two riffs that alternate during the tune and allow you lock-in to the groove. It works on both electric and upright bass and will make you the hit of your section or any party event you have coming up. The bass player on the original tunes his E string down to low E \flat so if you want, play that note up the octave. For all of you with new chromatic extensions you can open the first closer and then have the open E flat ready to go. The second part of this tune outlines the chord changes with some extra chromatic notes for smoothing out the line. Again, this is super fun to play!

<https://youtu.be/hYKYka-PNt0?si=YvjH23wzJu5nP-Og>

Arpeggios — D major and F# melodic minor:

Lately I have been redoing my work with

Rhapsody in Blue

36

A part

B part

WISH

arpeggios and find these two applications to be helpful. I am playing the R,3,5,7,9 on all the diatonic chords in different scales, for example. I like how this helps open up the chord to higher extensions and helps bass players to move away from the lower part of the chord while soloing. A jazz improviser is always trying to choose a scale that works best with the chord provided. When you extend the chord even further, R,3,5,7,9,11,13, you will have all the notes of the scale corresponding to the chord. Typically, you do not notate all the extensions, usually just up to a melodic note required. Bassists have two personalities, and we always want to consider ways to stretch out our understanding of the harmonies away from the root to other options in any tune. I start with the familiar key of D major and continue to something more challenging, the key of F# melodic minor ascending. Diatonic chords are labeled above and in D major will be familiar. When using F# melodic minor ascending, less familiar chords are found, however these are common in the jazz repertoire.

D major chords

- D major 7 — Major Scale
- E minor 7 — Dorian Mode
- F# minor 7 — Phrygian Mode
- G major 7 — Lydian Mode
- A 7 — Mixolydian Mode
- B minor 7 — Aeolian Mode
- C# minor 7 b5 — Locrian Mode

Melodic Minor Scale

- F# minor #7 — The Tonic minor I
- Chord. F#- Δ7 — Melodic Minor Ascending
- G# minor 7 — Dorian b2
- A major 7 #5 — a III chord with Major 7th, raised 5th, and also raised 4th.
- A Δ7 #5 — Lydian Augmented
- B7 #11 — a IV Dominant Scale with raised 4 — Lydian Dominant
- C# 7 — Mixolydian b6
- D# minor 7 flat 5 — VI Chord in minor key has a 9th a whole step higher than tonic. Locrian Natural 2
- E#-7 b5 — altered or diminished whole tone scale

This is a good key because it stretches my brain to think about all these sharps. First of all, remember that any parent scale can be rethought as different modes, i.e., same collection of notes but starting from a different scale degree. As long as you keep the seven notes in mind, what you might call each mode is less important, except people do use these names to help communicate and navigate chord changes. In melodic minor you will find two obvious Dominant 7 chords (R, major 3, minor 7th) on degree IV and V, and one hidden or subtle Dominant 7 chord on degree VII. The VII contains this hidden Dominant because of the diminished 4th note above the root.

This note is heard as the Major 3 above the tonic and with the minor 7 forms the distinct tritone sound of a Dominant 7 chord. The true 2nd and 3rd are heard as the b9 & #9 and the 5th & 6th are heard as the b5 and b13. Jazz musicians especially find this chord useful because if you take the 5th and make that the root of a chord you create a tritone substitution.

E# A D# = E#7 ... Flip root to B (tritone away) and you get B A D#

$$R\ 3\ 7 \dots R\ 7\ 3 = B7$$

Practice these now and get comfortable with the sound and when

D arpeggios

Play in Common and cut time

you see or hear them in music or a score you will be prepared. As always, pick one or two to practice for a day or so and then pick another key.

I also like to vary the bowing, and you could choose to try as many different bowings as you like. When you become familiar with these keys you can make your next project to be going around the cycle of 4ths (counterclockwise on the circle of 5ths) so you can become acquainted with all keys.

A bonus for you from Jason Heath on bass extensions:

<https://youtu.be/IJUivIHytMA?si=kH5YhJ4CCaaOIGaU>

Enjoy the last few weeks and have a great year ahead. Back to practicing for me!!

Tom Pieper teaches middle school orchestra at Central Middle School in Wayzata, and bass students privately and at MacPhail Center for Music. You can reach him at thomas.pieper@wayzataschools.org, Pieper.thomas@MacPhail.org, Thomas.pieper@yoga@gmail.com.

F# arpeggios

The image displays a series of ten staves of musical notation for F# arpeggios in bass clef, 4/4 time, and key of F# major. The chords and their corresponding notes are:

- F# minor #7:** F#2, A2, C#3, E3
- G#-7:** G#2, B2, D#3, F#3
- A major 7 #5:** A2, C#3, E3, G#3
- B7:** B2, D#3, F#3, A3
- C#7:** C#2, E3, G#3, B3
- D#-7#5:** D#2, F#3, A3, C#4
- E#Alt (F Alt):** E#2, G#3, B3, D#4
- F# minor #7:** F#2, A2, C#3, E3

Below the printed notation are two staves of handwritten musical notation. The first staff shows four chord diagrams for E7, B7, E1, and B1. The E7 diagram shows fingerings 7, 3, 1 on the strings. The B7 diagram shows fingerings 2, 3, 1. The E1 diagram shows fingerings 2, 3, 1. The B1 diagram shows fingerings 2, 3, 1. The second staff shows two whole notes with fingerings 2, 3, 1 and 2, 3, 1, and a bowing direction symbol.