B♭ Instruments

14 Blues & Funk Etudes

BOB MINTZER

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Bob Mintzer, tenor sax; Russell Ferrante, keyboards;
Jimmy Haslip, bass; William Kennedy, drums
Recorded by Michael Brorby, Brooklyn, New York, and Chuck Loeb, Irvington, New York
Special thanks to Jack Bullock, Larry Clark, and Dave Olsen at Warner Bros. Publications,
to Jim Russ and Will for their impeccable musicianship and dedication, to Michael Brorby and Chuck Loeb for
their beautiful engineering, to my family, Carla and Paul, and to all the funksters out there
who played the music which inspired this book.

Editor: Larry Clark

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II. BLUES SHUFFLE

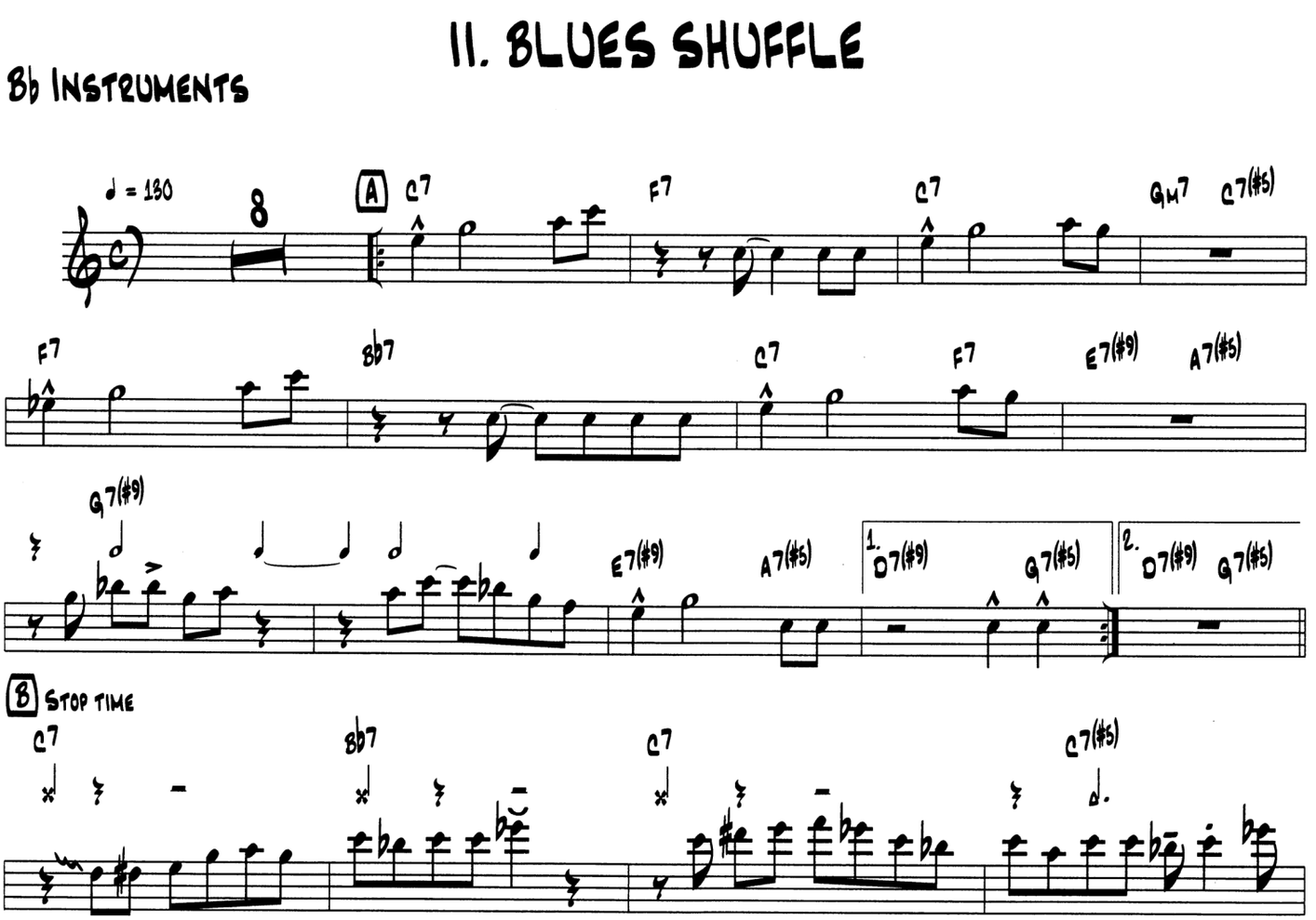
Blues is the foundation of R&B, Jazz, and Funk music. To play any of this music without some understanding of blues would be like trying to build a house without any knowledge of carpentry.

This next etude is a blues line followed by seven choruses of solo. Each chorus of solo takes the listener a little further along the journey and winds up at the seventh chorus with a flurry of 16th notes. The overall vibe is traditional blues. There are a few little chord substitutions and turn-arounds, but mostly we're dealing with simple stuff that swings hard and is to the point.

Letter {B} is the first solo chorus and begins with some stop-time in the rhythm section. Here's an opportunity to make sure your time is good and that those first 4 bars of {B} are played in the right time feel even though the rhythm section is laying-out.

Letter {C} has a reoccurring melody which happens four times with slight variations. This is a nice way to "hook-up" with the rhythm section. A good rhythm section will hear you play the first two bars and then join you in playing that rhythm in the next six bars. This section can wind up sounding like a little "shout chorus" or ensemble passage in a spontaneous way. Also, the listener will enjoy hearing everyone playing this idea together.

Letter {E} has a common variation on the blues chord changes. Play these chords on the piano to become more familiar with them.

Letter {F} is one way of creating a high point and some variety in your solo. I simply sustain the tonic note with a bit of embellishment for the whole chorus. This will create excitement in a very simple and direct way.

Letter {G} goes somewhere totally different. The triplet groupings sets up an unusual kind of swing with some tension and energy in it. This leads nicely to {H}, which moves along rather quickly and creates quite a bit of intensity.
This type of playing needs to be mastered before any of the more modern or advance music can be played properly.