

251 Progressions

1 Emin7 2 A7 3 Dmaj7 4

'Tune Up' by Miles Davis.

5 G7 6 Cmaj7 7 Cmin7

8 F7 9 Bbmaj7 Ebmin11 Ab13 Gmin7

11 Amin7 D7 Gmaj7 12 Amin7 D7 Gmaj7

Major key 251.

Minor key 251.

13 Cmaj7 Dmin7 Emin7 Fmaj7 14 G7 Amin7 Bm7^{b5} Cmaj7 15 Dmin7

I II III IV V VI VII

The diatonic 7th chords of C major. 'Diatonic' means 'belonging to the key'.

The 2 chord must be Minor

IImin7

16 G7 17 Cmaj7 18 19 20 Dmin7 21 G7

The 5 chord must be Dominant

The 1 chord must be Major.

However, jazz pianists would never play the chords in these root positions. Too big a jump between chords.

Instead, we'll simplify, using 3 note voicings.

Root in LH. 3rd & 7th in RH.

V7 Imaj7

22 Cmaj7 23 24 25 Dmin7 26 G7 27 Cmaj7

This is called 'Voice Leading'. Minimises hand movement.

NB. In a 251, the 7th of the chord always falls by a 1/2 step, to become the 3rd of the next chord.

Can also look at this the other way around.

Start with 7th on bottom.

7th (C) drops by 1/2 step, to become 7th of next chord.

Then 7th of G7 (F) drops by 1/2 step, to become 3rd of Cmaj7.

28 29 30

D

Now let's look at a few different keys, starting with D major.

31 32

Dmaj7 Emin7 F#min7 Gmaj7 A7 Bmin7 C#m7b5 Dmaj7

The diatonic 7th chords of D major.

33 34 35

Emin7 A7 Dmaj7 Emin7 A7 Dmaj7

251 in D major.

Now let's turn these into 3-note voicings.

36 37 38

Emin7 A7 Dmaj7

Now with the 3rd on top.

Now key of Bb

39 $B\flat$ maj7 I C min7 II D min7 III $E\flat$ maj7 IV 40 F 7 V G min7 VI A min7 $\flat 5$ VII $B\flat$ maj7

The diatonic 7th chords of $B\flat$ major.

41 C min7 F 7 $B\flat$ maj7 42 C min7 F 7 $B\flat$ maj7

II min7 V7 I maj7

43 C min7 F 7 $B\flat$ maj7 44 45 46

To practise 251s, take it around the Circle of 5ths, to become familiar with all 12 major keys.

Do it both ways, with the 7th on top, then the 3rd on top.

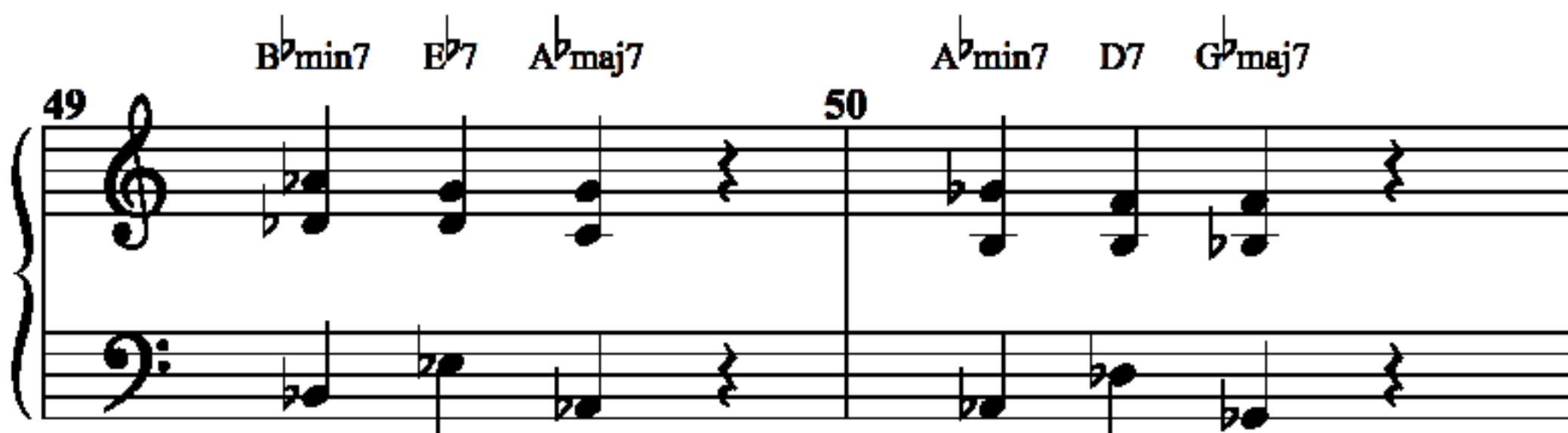
The next exercise is trickier than the first one. But it's good, because it allows you to keep your hands on the keyboard for 6 of the keys.

47 D min7 G 7 C maj7 48 C min7 F 7 $B\flat$ maj7

At the 1 chord, turn it minor, by dropping the 3rd & 7th.

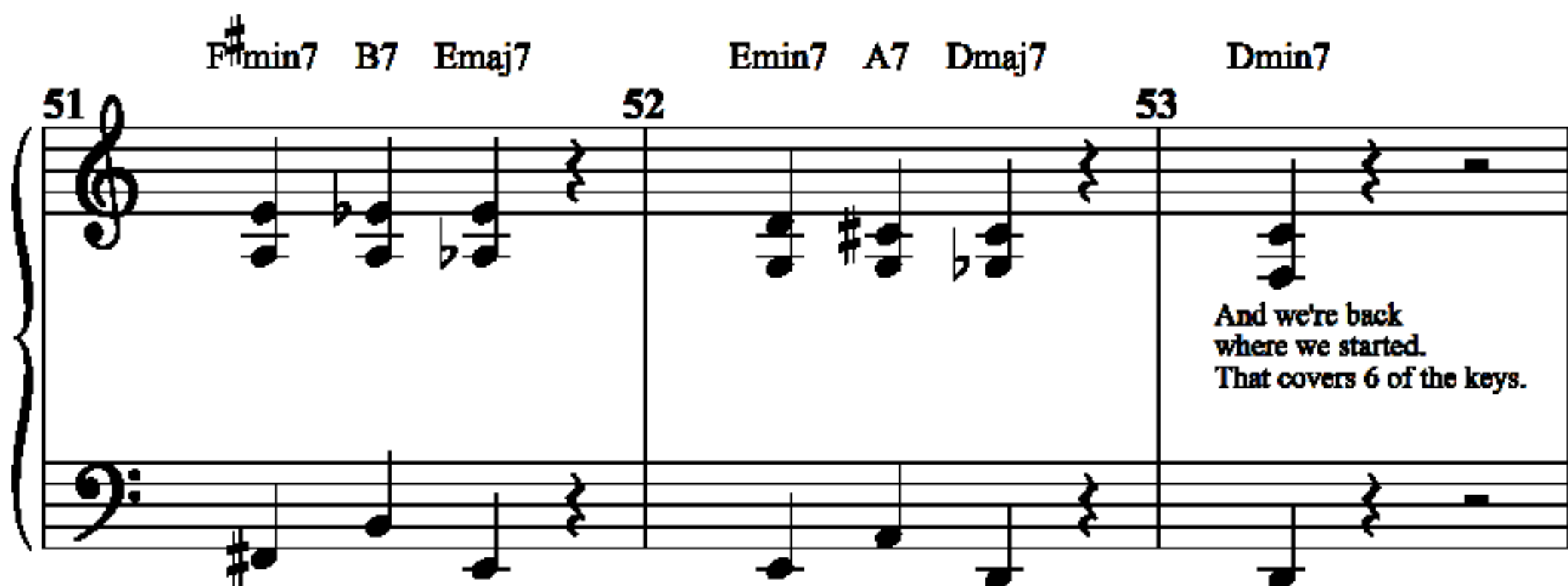
That takes us to C min, the 251 in $B\flat$.

49 $B^b\text{min}7$ E^b7 $A^b\text{maj}7$ 50 $A^b\text{min}7$ $D7$ $G^b\text{maj}7$



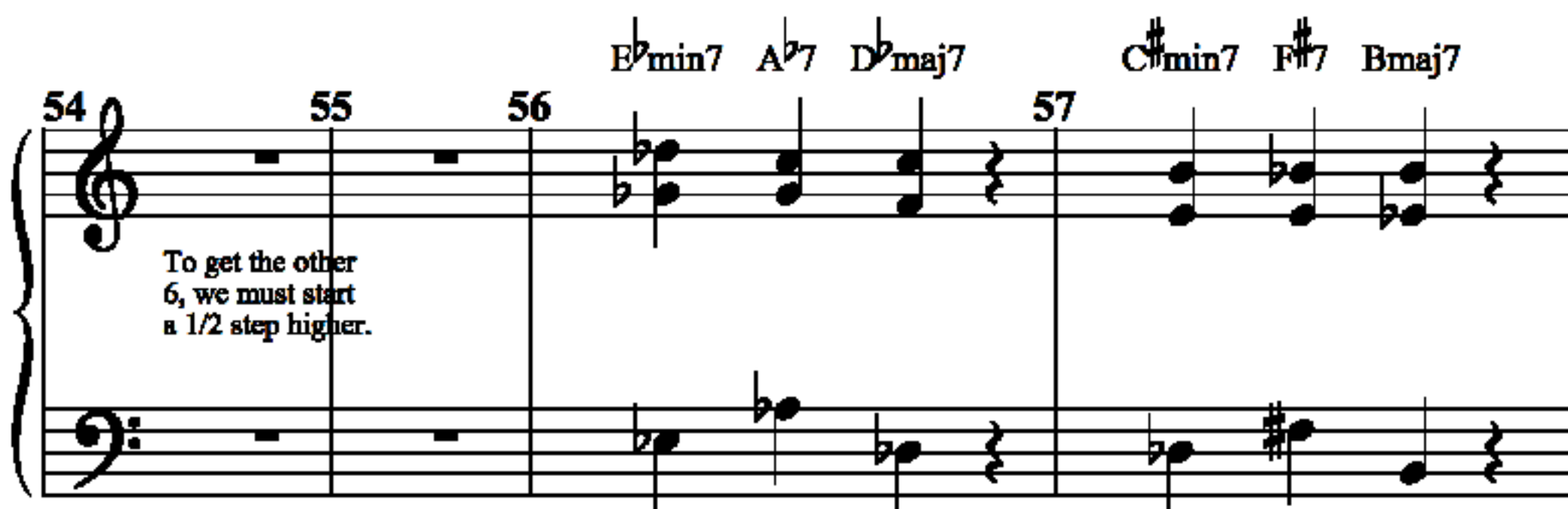
51 $F^\#\text{min}7$ $B7$ $E\text{maj}7$ 52 $E\text{min}7$ $A7$ $D\text{maj}7$ 53 $D\text{min}7$

And we're back
where we started.
That covers 6 of the keys.

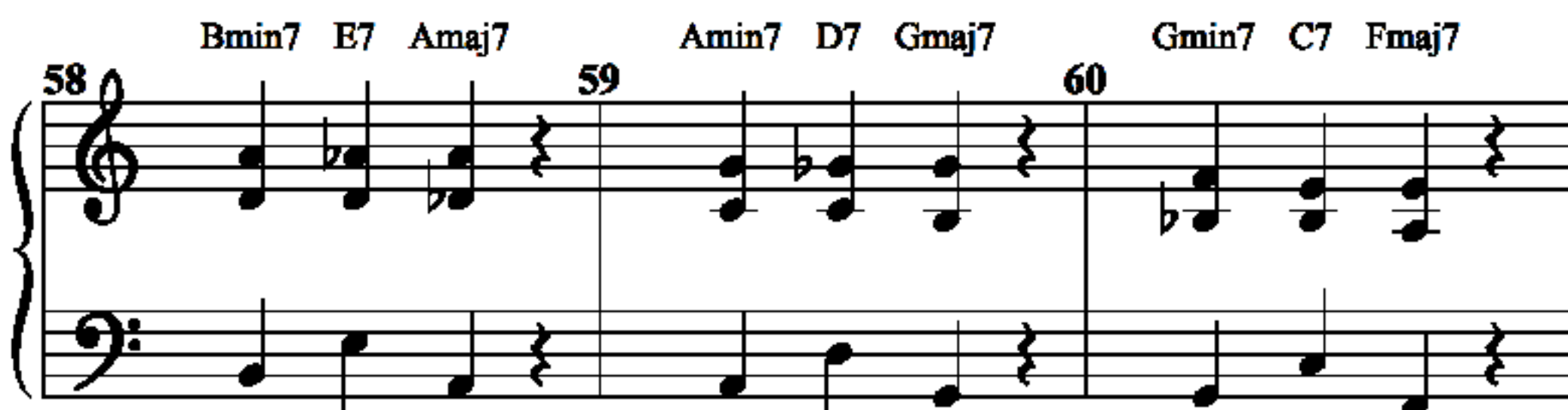


54 55 56 $E^b\text{min}7$ A^b7 $D^b\text{maj}7$ 57 $C^\#\text{min}7$ $F^\#7$ $B\text{maj}7$

To get the other
6, we must start
a 1/2 step higher.



58 $B\text{min}7$ $E7$ $A\text{maj}7$ 59 $A\text{min}7$ $D7$ $G\text{maj}7$ 60 $G\text{min}7$ $C7$ $F\text{maj}7$



61 62

Fmin7 B7 E $\flat$ maj7 E $\flat$ min7 A $\flat$ 7 D $\flat$ maj7

And we're back
where we started.

The image shows a musical score for two measures, 61 and 62. Measure 61 features a treble staff with a whole note chord of F4, A4, C5 (Fmin7) and a bass staff with a whole note chord of B2, D3, F3 (B7). Measure 62 features a treble staff with a whole note chord of E4, G4, B4 (Ebmaj7) and a bass staff with a whole note chord of E3, G3, B3 (Ebmin7). The lyrics 'And we're back where we started.' are written in the right margin of measure 62.