Jazz Duets

FOR SAXOPHONES

by Gregory W. Yasinitsky

Swing
Bebop
Cool

Hard Bop
Modal Jazz
Fusion

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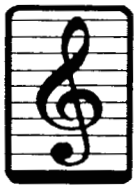

This book contains ten jazz duets for like saxophones, composed in different historical jazz styles, from swing to fusion. These duets are presented in the chronological order in which the styles appeared.

SWING

The swing of the 1930s and 1940s is a vibrant, exciting style with great rhythmic energy. The swing-era also represents the time when jazz was the most popular with the public. In fact, during this period, swing *was* America's popular music. The most influential tenor saxophonists of the swing-era were the hot style Coleman Hawkins and the cool style Lester Young. Other great swing saxophonists include tenor players Ben Webster and Vido Musso, and the great altoist Johnny Hodges and baritone man Harry Carney, both of the sensational Duke Ellington orchestra. An important thing to keep in mind when performing the swing duet *Stompin'* is that swing-era jazz is dance music. The tempo must be right for dancing, not too fast. Another big difference between swing and later styles is the rhythmic conception. The rhythmic emphasis in swing is on the beat. In later styles like bebop the rhythmic phrasing changes and the emphasis moves to the upbeat.

BEBOP

The primary inventors of bebop were trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie and the unparalleled saxophonist Charlie Parker. Other great bebop saxophonists include Sonny Stitt, Jackie McClean, and Phil Woods. The bebop musicians created a style which utilized complicated, tricky melodies and extended harmonies with 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths on the chords. Bebop chord progressions made extensive use of secondary dominant relationships, II V progressions and tritone substitutions. When playing the bebop duets *After Charlie* and *Non-Stop,* try to emulate the style of the master, Charlie Parker.

COOL

Cool jazz is a style which was introduced by Miles Davis with his "Birth of the Cool" recordings of 1949. Another one of the great pioneers of cool jazz was the blind pianist and composer Lennie Tristano. Cool jazz saxophonists play with a mellow, laid-back, relaxed approach. Many of these saxophonists found their inspiration in the playing of the first influential cool saxophonist of the swing era, Lester Young, who was featured in Count Basie's band. The cool saxophonists of the 1950s played with warm, dark sounds. Masters of that period include tenor saxophonist Stan Getz and altoists Lee Konitz and Paul Desmond. The greatest cool players achieve a beauty and elegance rarely matched in jazz. Articulation is often light (no heavy accents) and many players use extra "air" (subtone) in their sounds. Keep these qualities in mind when you perform the two cool duets in this book: *Play it Cool* and *One for Lennie* (for the great saxophonist and composer Lennie Niehaus).

HARD BOP

Hard bop is a style of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Some of best saxophonists to play this style include the master Sonny Rollins and blues drenched players like Gene Ammons and Stanley Turrentine. John Coltrane during his time with Miles Davis was also a hard bop player. Hard bop was a reaction to cool jazz, a style that some found to be too intellectual and non-emotional. Hard bop is hard-swinging and extensively uses melodies and harmonies based on blues and gospel music. Hard bop is hot style jazz, fiery and openly emotional.

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Two of the greatest musicians who helped to establish the hard bop style are the pianist/composer Horace Silver and the late drummer Art Blakey. One of the duets in this book, *Silver and Art,* is dedicated to these two giants. The second hard bop duet, *Three Deuces,* is named after a famous jazz club which thrived during the heyday of 52nd Street in New York. When performing these duets, be sure to use blues inflections when appropriate and to swing the eighth notes hard.

MODAL JAZZ

In 1959, trumpeter Miles Davis recorded his classic album *Kind of Blue.* This record included the tune *So What* which helped to introduce a new style to the musical world, modal jazz. Modal jazz is jazz based on modes or scales. Up to that point jazz had been based on chords and these chords were getting more and more complicated and sophisticated. Modal jazz was a reaction to this complexity. Instead of tunes which changed keys every few beats at rapid tempos, musicians began to experiment with tunes built entirely from one or two scales. The sensational saxophonist John Coltrane, who also played on *Kind of Blue,* became fascinated with modal jazz and became one of the greatest practitioners of the style. *Mr. J.C.* is a duet written as a tribute to this influential artist.

FUSION

Many wonderful saxophonists played on fusion recordings in the 1970s: Joe Henderson, who is now enjoying a much deserved revival, Grover Washington, Bennie Maupin, Tom Scott and many others. One of the most influential saxophonists of this period was tenor man Michael Brecker who successfully combined elements of Coltrane's style with ideas from rock and rhythm and blues saxophone playing. Another highly successful fusion saxophonist is the sensational alto player David Sandborn who has released a long string of hit recordings. The fusion duet *Fancy Pants* has a sixteenth note groove and it helps to imagine a drummer playing a fusion/rock pattern with a heavy backbeat on two and four while you perform the duet. The sixteenths should be played evenly and short notes in this style are more clipped than they would be when playing one of the other jazz styles. On the other hand, the duet *Fuel Injected* is a funk shuffle. For this duet, the sixteenth notes should be swung.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

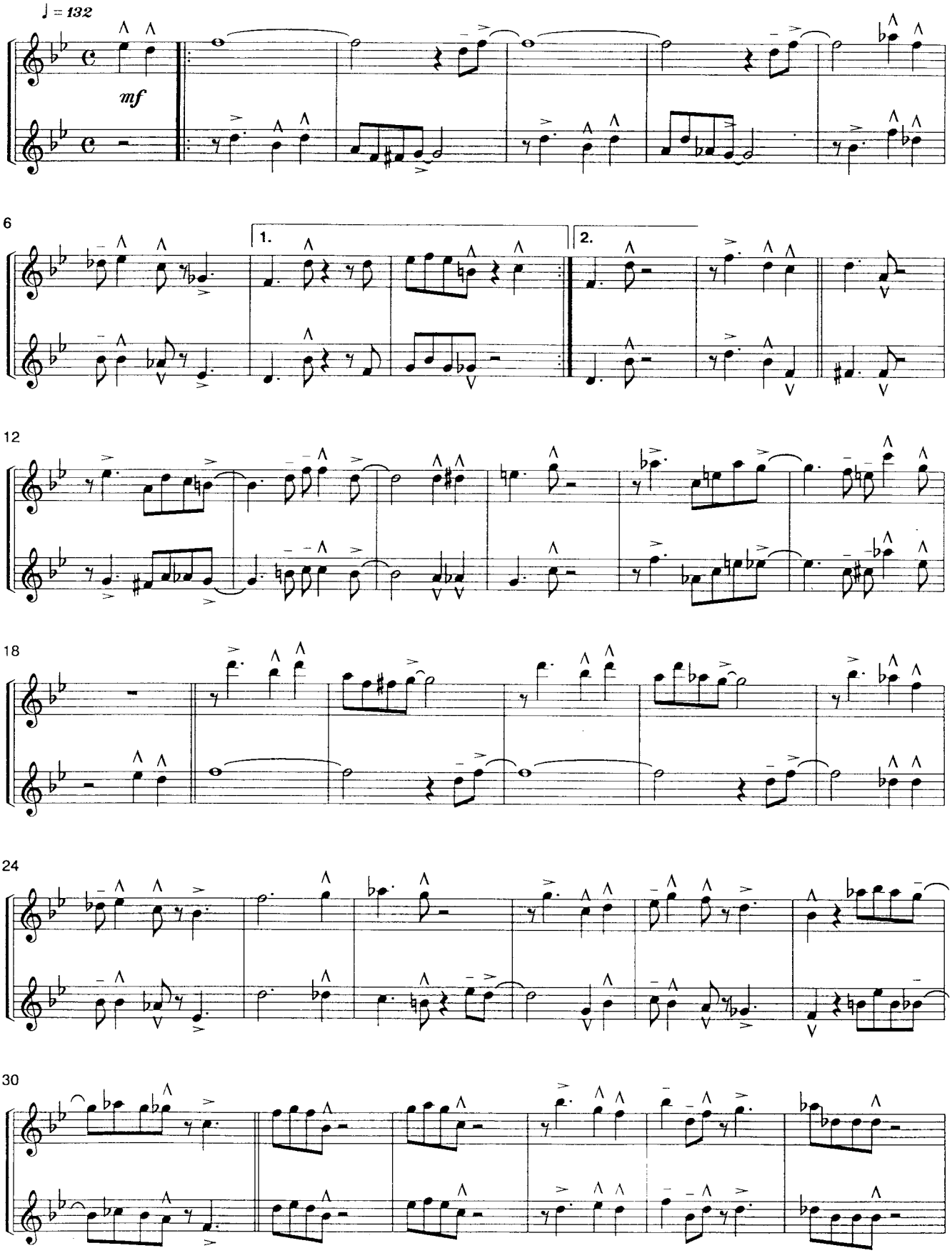
Gregory W. Yasinitsky is Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies at Washington State University in Pullman. He has earned degrees from the Eastman School of Music (DMA) and San Francisco State University (MA and BM). He is a prolific composer with over seventy published musical works. Yasinitsky has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, ASCAP and Meet the Composer West. His music is widely performed throughout the US and Canada, several of his pieces have been released on CD, and he has written music especially for David Liebman, Clark Terry and the USAF "Airmen of Note" big band. As a saxophonist, Yasinitsky has performed with numerous distinguished artists including Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Louis Bellson, Mel Torme, Stan Getz, Lionel Hampton, Manhattan Transfer, and Clark Terry. Additionally, Yasinitsky is Principal Saxophonist with the Spokane Symphony (WA) and has performed as a member of the San Francisco Symphony and San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

STOMPIN'

Swing

♩ = 132

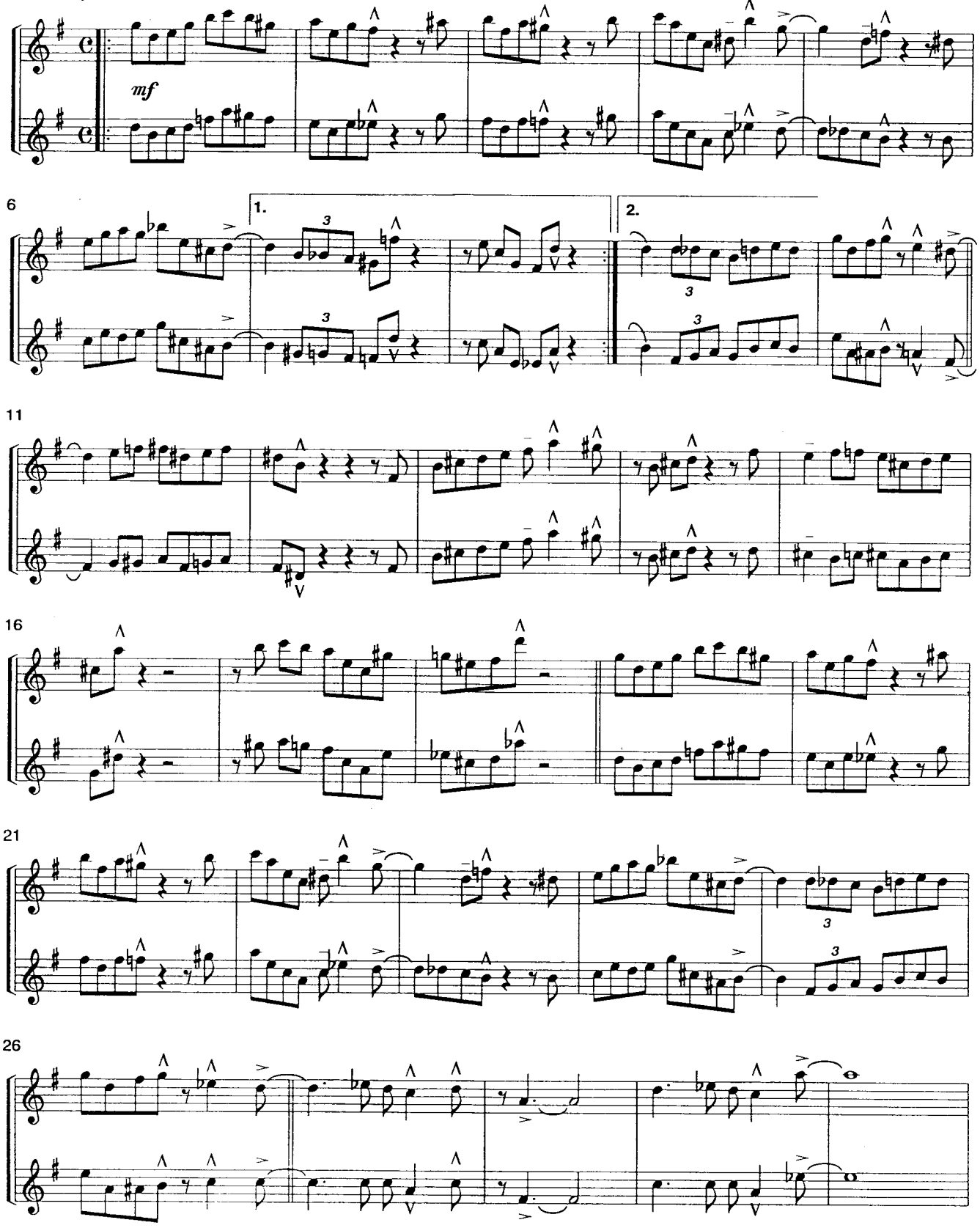
mf



AFTER CHARLIE

Bebop

♩ = 208



NON-STOP

Bebop

♩ = 208

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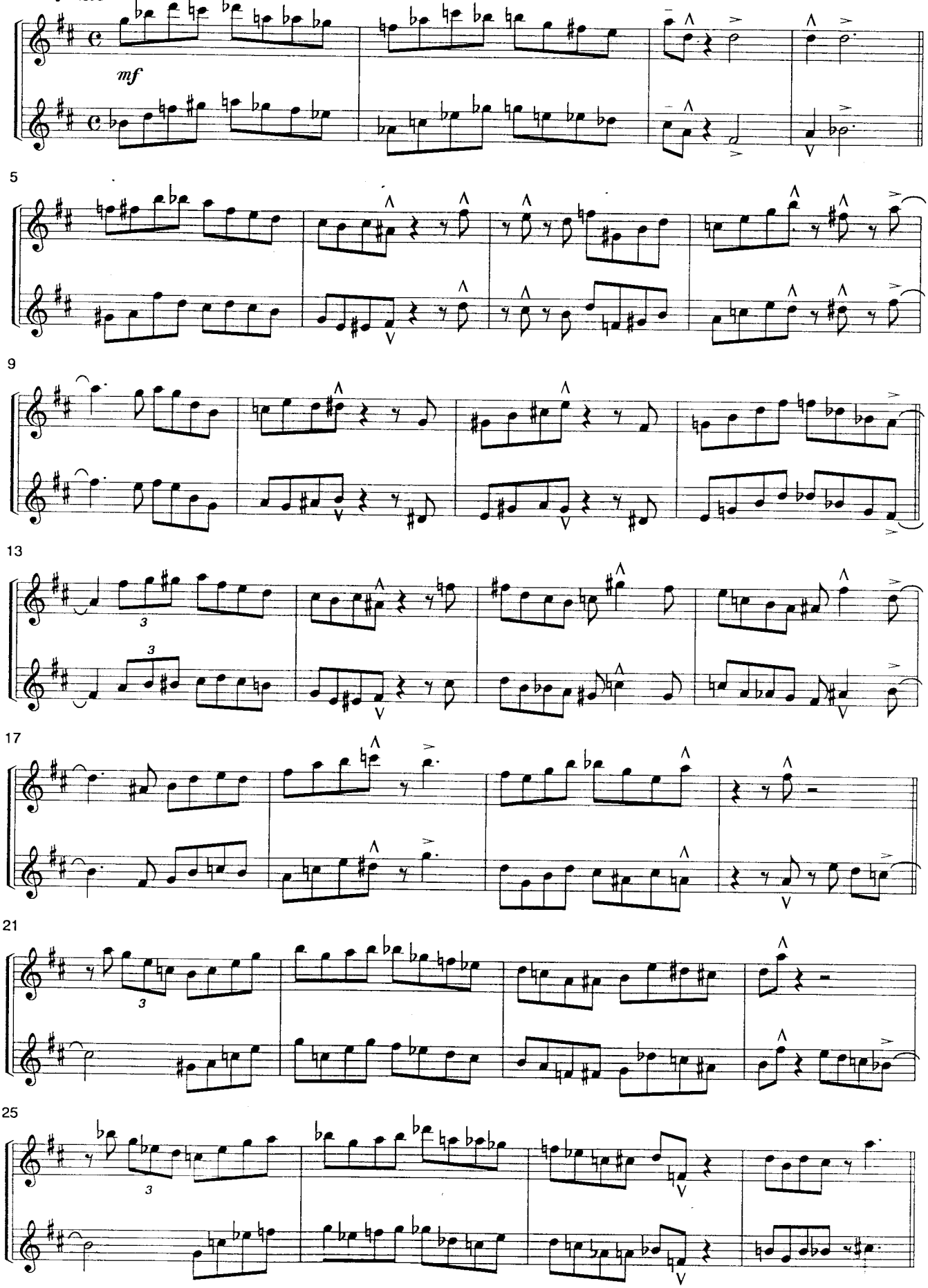
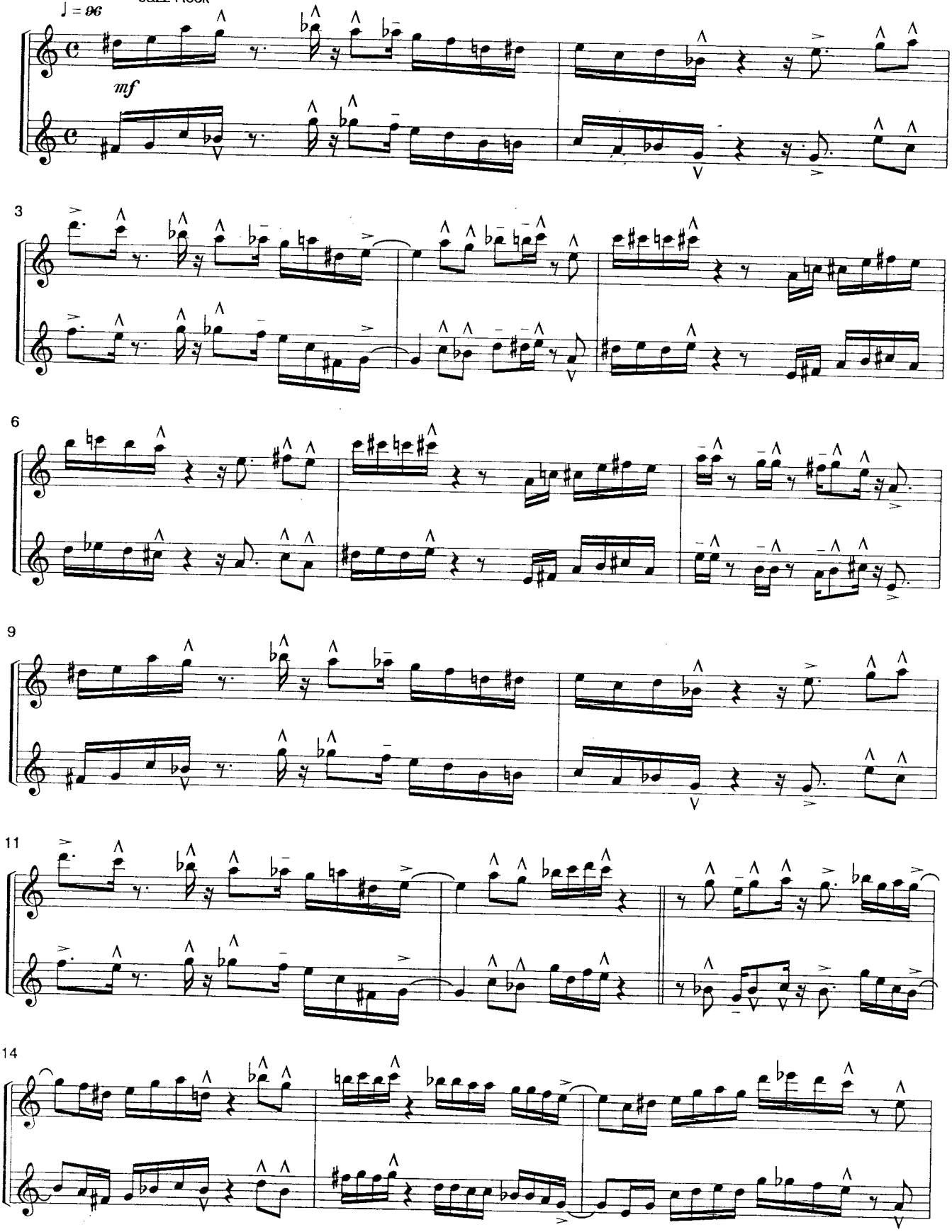


FANCY PANTS

Fusion

Jazz Rock

♩ = 96

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