Tuned In
April 11, 2008

Sizzling Turnaround Licks

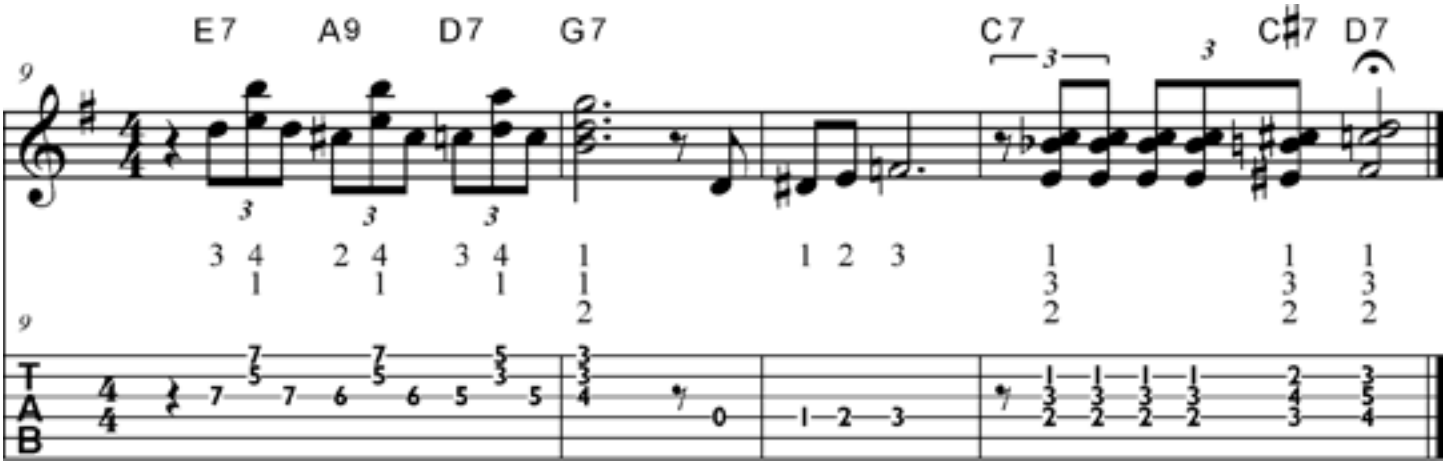
By Jason Kokoszka

Blues musicians, regardless of experience, are always looking for new ways to keep this time-honored form fresh and interesting. One way to breathe life into your blues is to learn hot, new turnaround licks. In this issue, you'll be given a series of turnaround licks that can be easily adapted for use as intros and endings for your favorite blues tunes. For more information on blues turnarounds, check out the Theory Corner for an excerpt of Dennis McCumber's book, *The Total Blues Guitarist*, available through Alfred Publishing.

Below are some turnaround licks for guitar and keyboard. These parts do not make up a larger composition; each lick is intended to stand alone. The chord symbols refer to the harmonic context of each lick. Have fun, and keep boogeying!

Guitar

The first turnaround lick is in the key of G and starts with a descending triplet figure that leads to the I chord, G7. The short single-note phrase beginning in measure 10 brings us to a series of partial chords in meaure 12 that move chromatically from C7 to D7.



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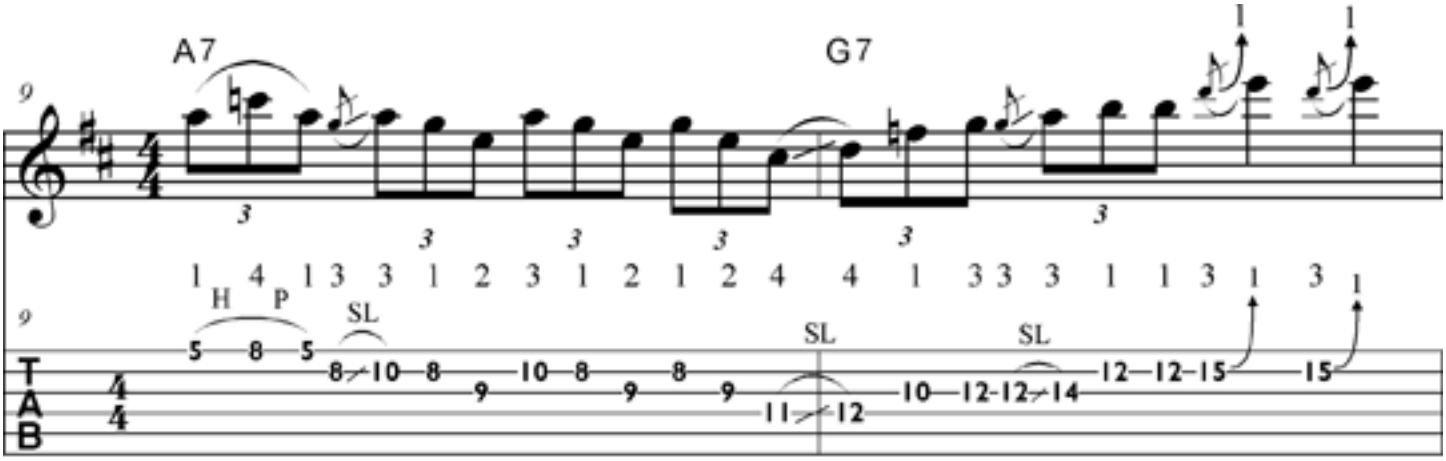
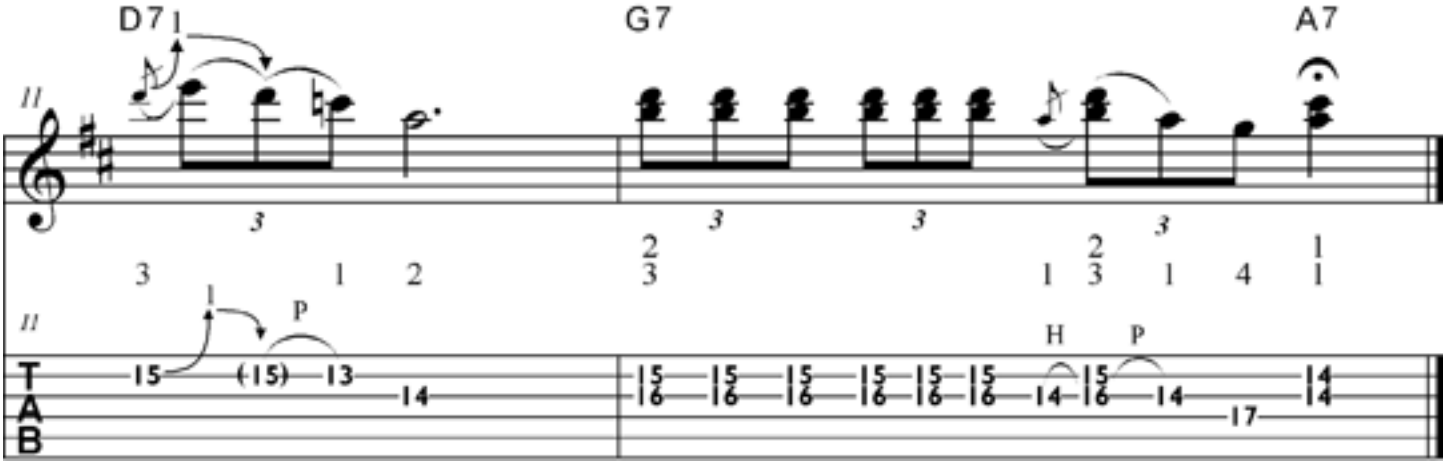
The next guitar lick is in the key of D. Dig into those bends in bars 10 and 11 make them sing! Also watch the grace notes throughout; those subtle touches can add rhythmic momentum that makes this lick spring to life.





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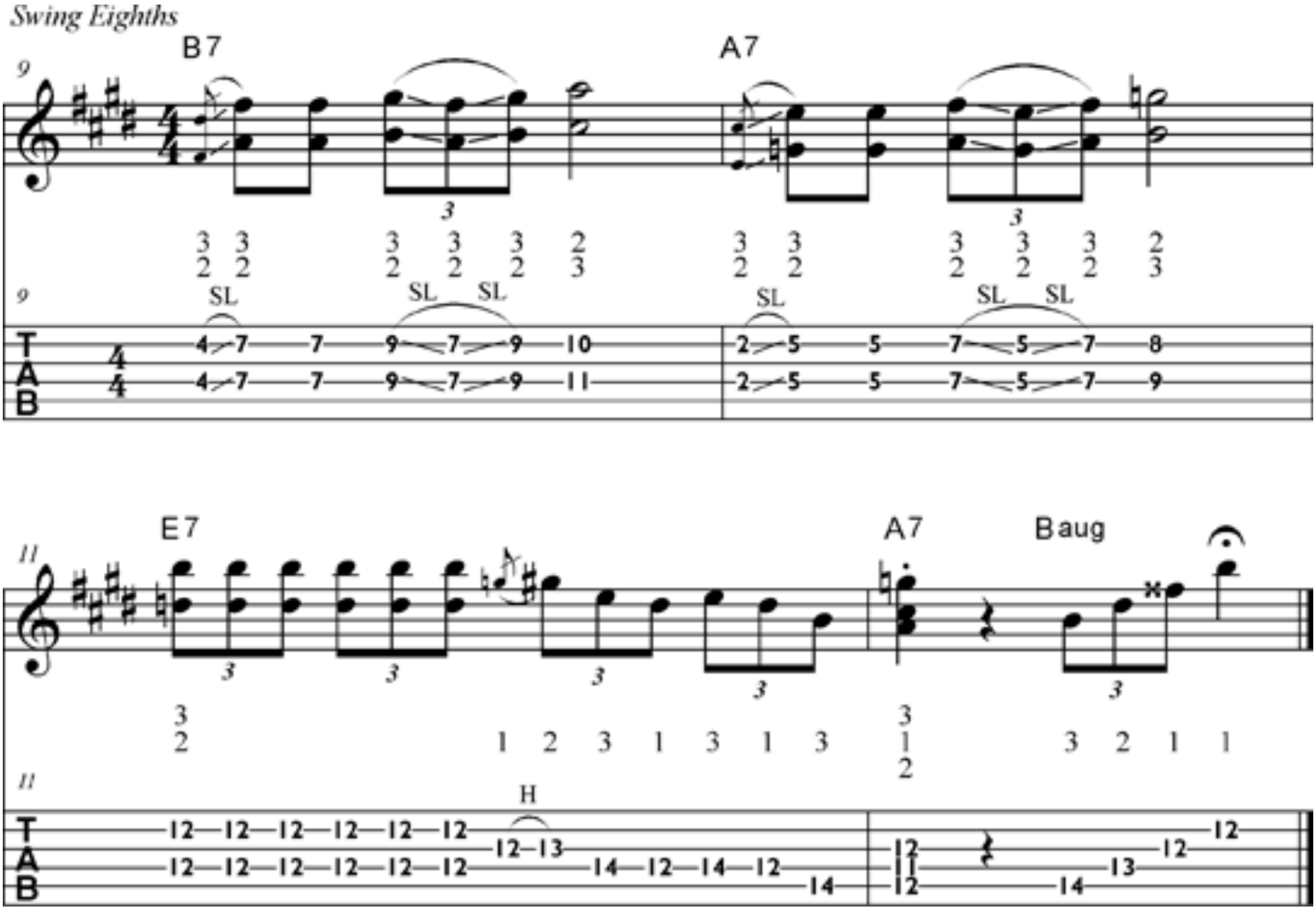
Our final lick is in the key of E and uses double stops throughout. The triplet figure on beat 3 of bars 9 and 10 is played by sliding the same shape over two frets. Notice that the final chord (usually a V7 chord) has been changed to an augmented chord, creating increased harmonic tension which will be resolved at the start of the next chorus.



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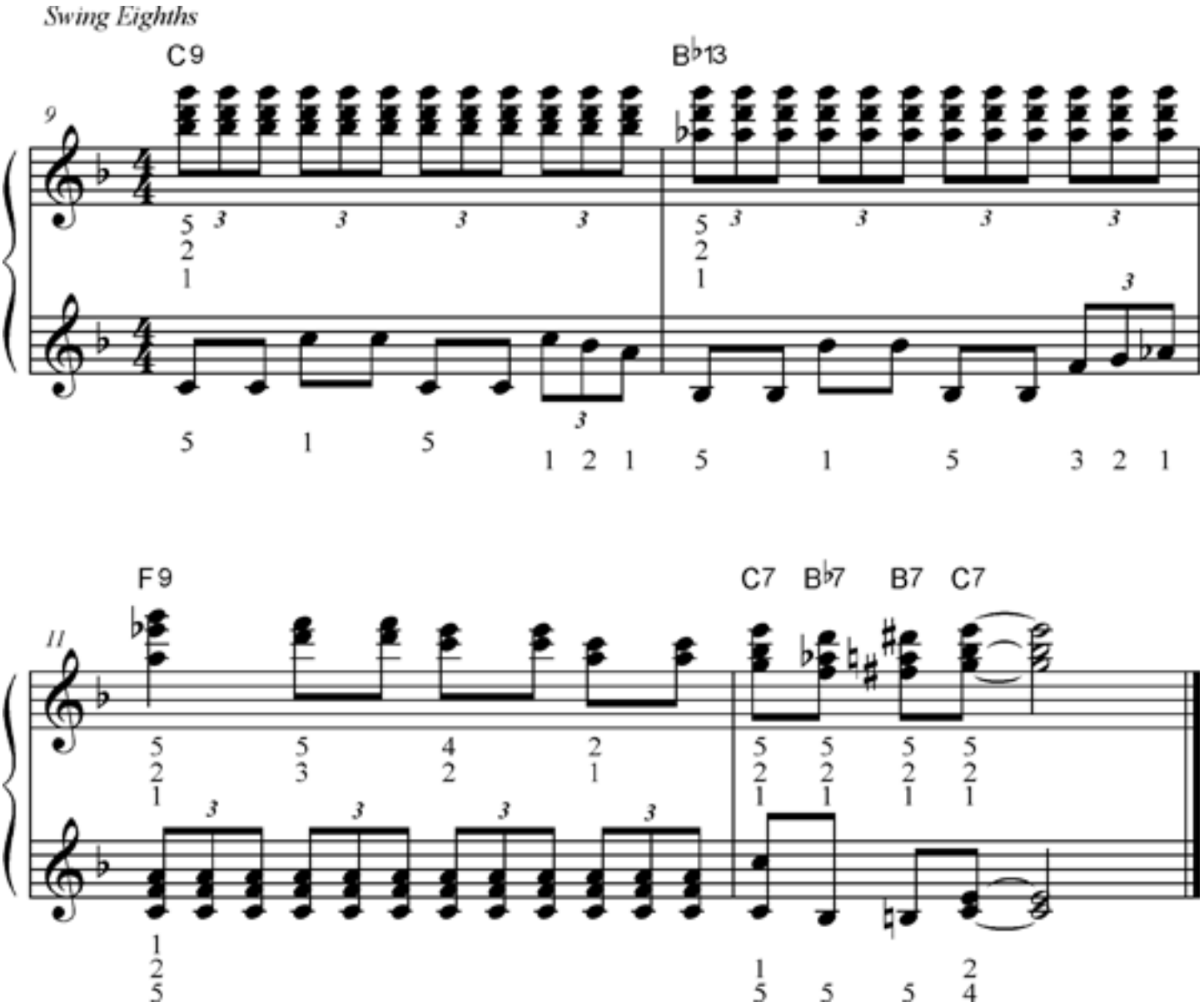
Keyboard

The first lick is in the key of F and adds some alterations to spice up the usual dominant harmonies we might hear in this style. The high G-note in the right hand is repeated until beat 1 of bar 11. Be aware that the left hand is playing in the treble clef to support such right-hand chord voicings more effectively.



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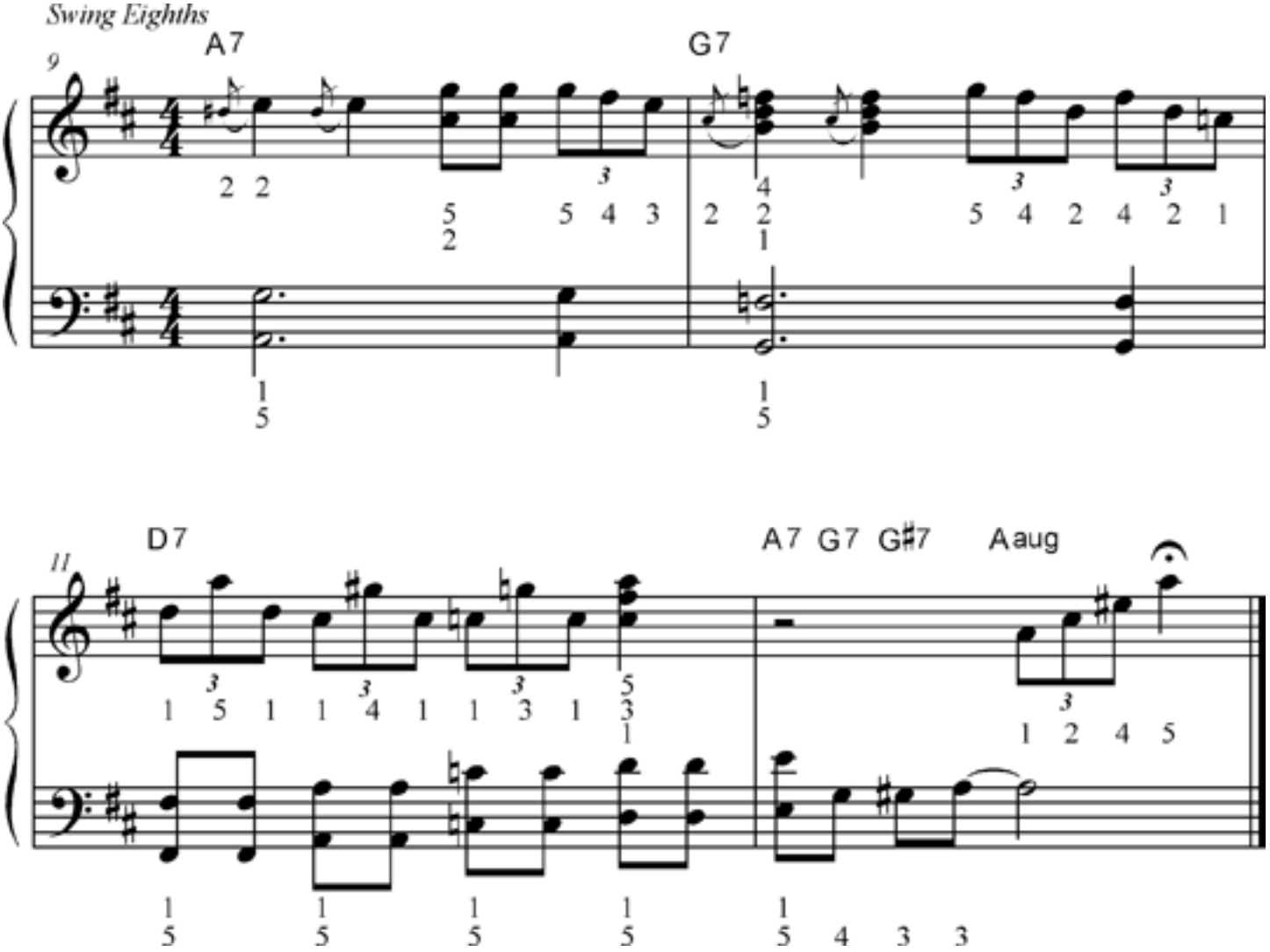
Next, we'll play a lick in D that will feature more single-note playing in the right hand. The grace notes in bars 9 and 10 give a good bluesy feel to these phrases. In bar 11, the two hands move in contrary motion and the lick ends on Aaug, the augmented V chord.



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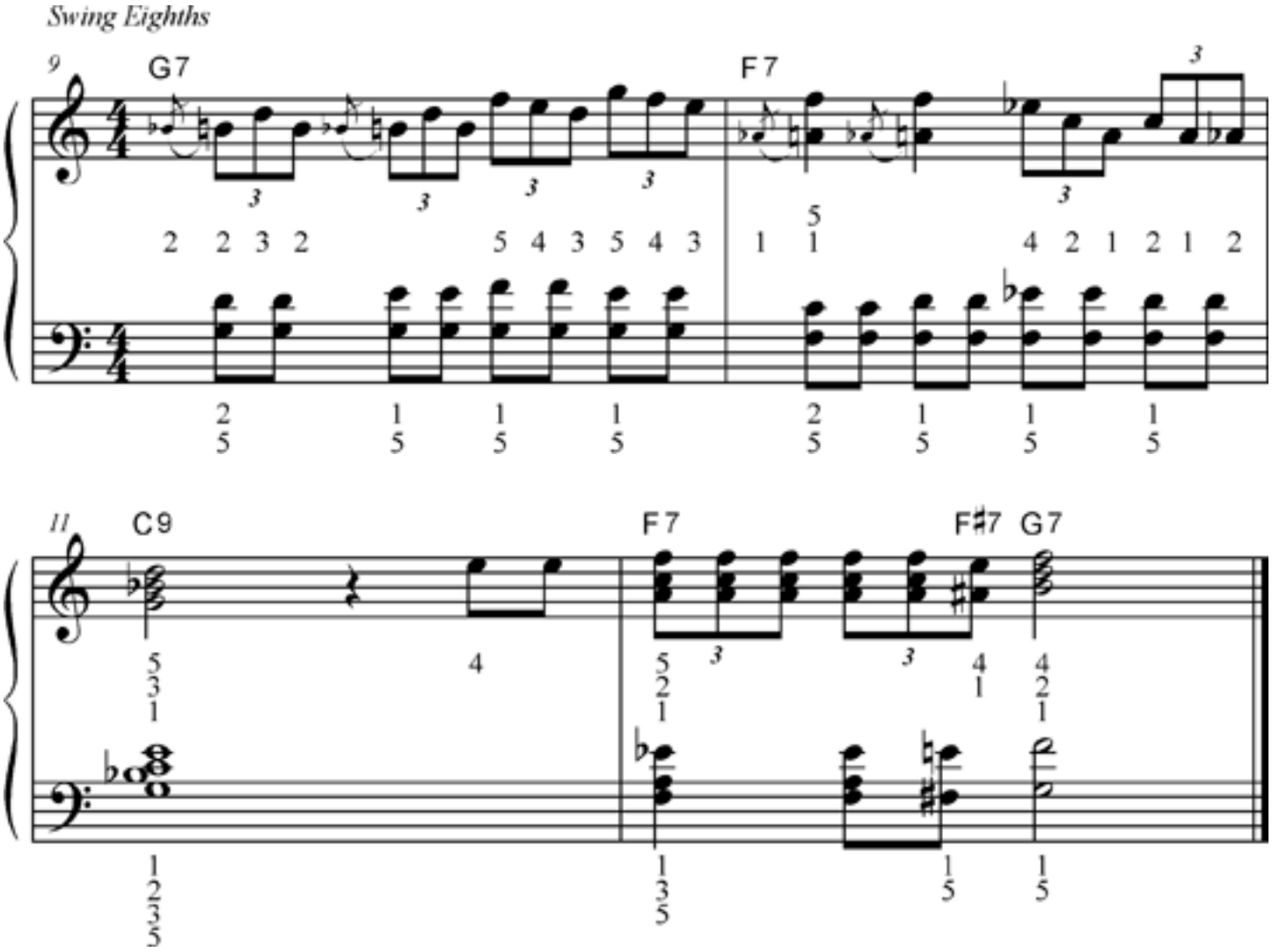
Finally, we'll play a lick in C. Again, the grace notes in the right-hand part are essential to giving this phrase a bluesy feel. The left hand plays a common boogie figure in bars 9 and 10 and adds some contrasting voicings and rhythms before the end.



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Conclusion

For more information on turnarounds, be sure to check out the Theory Corner section of this newsletter for even more examples that'll make you shine at the next jam session!

If you liked this excerpt, order Dennis McCumber's book, *The Total Blues Guitarist*, at www.alfred.com. In addition, be sure to check out his blues guitar lessons at www.WorkshopLive.com today!

To learn more about blues turnarounds, guitarists should check out the blues lessons "Turnarounds," "Theory of 6ths," "Soloing with 3rds and 6ths" and "Riff-Based Blues with 9-Chord Turnarounds," taught by Dennis McCumber, David Boye and Scott A. Smith.

Keyboardists will enjoy the Adult Refresher lesson "Why Am I Blue: Blues Scales and Progressions," taught by Leo Marchildon and Andrea Amos.

Keep wailin' on those blues—see you soon!

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