AN EXAMINATION OF EDDIE LANG'S TECHNIQUE AND TEXTURAL TREATMENT IN THREE SELECTED SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCES

FRANK SALADINO

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ABSTRACT

AN EXAMINATION OF EDDIE LANG'S TECHNIQUE AND TEXTURAL TREATMENT IN THREE SELECTED SOLO GUITAR PERFORMANCES

by

Frank Saladino

Sponsor: Dr. Steve Briody

Many agree that the guitar work of Eddie Lang has had a significant influence with regard to the evolution of jazz guitar. Lang is considered to have been a major innovator due to a unique style consisting of a combination of impressive technical skill, classical elements, advanced harmonic knowledge, and chord voicings not typically used by American-born guitarists during the 1920's. The objective of this study is to provide transcription and analysis of his only known solo guitar recordings: "April Kisses", "A Little Love, A Little Kiss", and Rachmaninoff's "Prelude". There has been a lack of scholarly analysis regarding Lang's techniques on these works, so this examination will aim to provide guitar scholars with a greater understanding of his overall approach in many musical aspects. The study of Lang's treatment regarding voice leading, textural treatment regarding chord voicing and right and left hand technique was discussed in a comprehensive manner.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Bob Hinz, Dr. Kenneth Cook and Dr. David Doig for all of their insight during this process. I would also like to give a special thanks to Dr. Jill Miller-Thorn, and a very special thank you to Dr. Steve Briody. As I felt I could no longer pursue this monumental task, Dr. Briody showed me there was a "light at the end of the tunnel."

I would also like to thank Peter Rogine and Joe Carbone, two of the most influential teachers I ever had. Without them, my love and admiration of jazz would not have originated.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Lisa, who made me realize that I was capable of so much more.

Dedication

For my three sons, Brett, Emanuel and Damian

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List of Terms

1. Conjunct motion – notes move by half or whole step
2. Contrary motion – when notes move in opposite direction
3. Disjunct motion – when notes move in intervals larger than a second
4. Oblique motion – one note remains stationary while the other moves
5. Similar motion – notes move in the same direction but by different intervals
6. Spacing – the registral placement of the elements of a chord, such as close or open position.
7. Texture – the general pattern of sound created by the disposition in time of the elements of a work or passage.
8. Tone color – The character of a sound, as distinct from its pitch. Largely attributed to the relative strengths of the harmonics.
9. Barre – When a single finger, most often the index, holds down more than one string vertically across the guitar neck.
10. Full-Barre – When a single finger holds down all six guitar strings at once.
11. Half-barre – When one finger holds down fewer than six strings at once.

Chapter One-Introduction

The Guitar in the 1920s / Eddie Lang's Influence

The history of the guitar in the United States has been archived by rote through the decades and through the use of audio recordings as evidence. It has been established that a style of music called "the blues" started somewhere in the Mississippi Delta and was passed down by rote; an after effect of freed slaves gaining the ability to express themselves for the first time. It is also known that the banjo had overshadowed the guitar up until 1925, which was the same year Eddie Lang played the guitar in the Mound City Blues Blowers (Lang has been given credit for the transition of banjo players switching to the guitar, after they heard how versatile it was from Lang's performances).[1] Music history resources also mention the fact that Andre Segovia introduced the idea of playing classical guitar within the United States in 1928 with his debut in New York City.

These events, among others, are of great significance as to why the guitar evolved into the popular instrument it is today. Furthermore, in order to showcase the guitar's versatility, there must have been some particularly important musicians serving as a link between classical and blues music in the evolutionary process. Many believe that Lang was especially influential in that role.

Richard Sudhalter states in *Lost Chords*, " In [the] mid 1920's, Eddie stood alone in the use of guitar both as an accompaniment and solo instrument."[2] Fellow guitarist George Van Eps said, "Lang was an excellent harmonist…He knew the fingerboard very

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[1] Eddie Condon, *We Called It Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1992), 105.
[2] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999),134.

well…He was the trailblazer for us all."[3] These statements, among others, do not specify what Lang did that was different relative to other guitarists of that era. This begs the question; how do other guitar players of the 1920's and 30's compare to Lang?

The three solo pieces analyzed for this study showcase all of Lang's talents as described by author James Sallis in *The Guitar in Jazz*:[4]

> Every signature of Lang's style is manifest in the solo pieces: the strong attack and fluent, bluesy lines with intriguing use of smears, glissandi, and hardlike artificial harmonics; unusual intervals, particularly the pianistic tenth and Bix-like parallel ninth; sequences of augmented chords and whole-tone passages; the relaxed, hornlike phrasing…. Lang would periodically tuck the pick away in his palm and perform fingerstyle….[5]

The "bluesy lines" to which Sallis is referring relates to the half-step motion Lang frequently weaves between chord changes. These "bluesy" interludes act as passing tones to new chords. They also signify Lang's influence and respect for the genre, thus linking Lang to the blues.

When Sallis remarks on Lang's "strong attack," he is referring to his picking style. His fast melodic runs are precise, articulate and accurate. The nails on the picking hand soften the attack while his fretted hand provides the "relaxed, horn like" phrasing and "smears and glissandi".

This study will show how Lang uses large intervals to create piano-like chord voicings that accentuate note movement. He sometimes uses unusual intervals, which

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[3] Ibid., 519.

[4] Lang had recorded the original "Eddie's Twister" in 1926, however is accompanied by Author Schutt on piano, and therefore does not qualify as a solo piece. Lang also recorded "Rainbow Dream" in 1928, which he had written for his wife Kittie, although it was never released to the pubic.

[5] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 27.

create awkward chord shapes but are important in creating the lush, thick timbre of the harmonic changes. American guitarists had not heard this technique until Lang's arrival on the music scene.

There has been scholarly research on other jazz guitarists such as Wes Montgomery, Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt, which thoroughly analyzes aspects of their playing styles. Eddie Lang recorded music before all three of them,[6] and was influenced by both American and classical music.

Examining the playing style of other guitarists who were recording at the same time (1927 or earlier) will help solidify what separated their techniques from Lang. Guitarists who fit under the blues genre will not be studied because the blues has a particular style that had already been established before the late 1920s.

The only other guitar player who received equal praise within the same time period is Lonnie Johnson. Blues historian Lawrence Cohn, in his book *Fifty Years of Jazz* Guitar, ranks "Johnson and Lang as…the two major guitar innovators of the 20s…."[7] Although their respective improvisational techniques are very similar; their solo style differs greatly. Whereas Johnson accompanies his improvising with single notes in the bass or moving similar chord shapes laterally, Lang often does not.

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[6] Django's earliest recordings are "Moi Aussi" (9-10/28;mx. 968-A) and "Miss Columbia" (9-10/28; mx. H 966-B) in 1928 (*The Music of Django Reinhardt* by Benjamin Givan, pg. 222). Lang had recorded as early as 1923 with Charlie Kerr's Orchestra. The three solo performance recorded for these studies were in 1927.

[7] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 522.

Ivor Mairants, author of *The Great Jazz Guitarists* states that Johnson influenced Lang.[8] Richard Sudhalter, author of *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915 – 1945* disagrees. Sudhalter states that Lang was already playing the style based on the fact that Lang recorded with Johnson in 1928, a year after he recorded the three solo performances analyzed for this study.[9] Also, Johnson is mostly known for playing solo blues style. His first recording under his own name[10] (1925) was "Mr. Johnson's Blues" (Okeh 8253-78A) and is accompanied by John Arnold on the piano.[11]

Other than author Ivor Mairants, many agree with Sudhalters' argument that Lang was the superior musician of the two, even though Lang played mostly rhythm while Johnson improvised. Stefan Grossman, author of *Early Masters of American Blues Guitar: Lonnie Johnson* states, "…Lang would continue in the rhythm role, supporting Johnson with innovative bass lines, arpeggios, natural and artificial harmonics, and a variety of extended, altered, and inverted chord voicings."[12] Johnson himself admitted to Lang's superiority as a musician; "Lang was the nicest man I ever worked with…. He never argued. He didn't tell me what to do. He would ask me. Then, if everything was

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[8] Ivor Mairants, *The Great Jazz Guitarists* (Great Britain: Sanctuary Publishing Ltd, 2003),16.
[9] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contributions to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999),152.
[10] Stefan Grossman, *Early Masters of American Blues Guitar: Lonnie Johnson* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2007), 6.
[11] Charles Alexander, *Masters of Jazz Guitar: The Story of Players and Their Music* (London: Balafon Books, 1999), 6.
[12] Ibid., 8.

okay, we'd sit down and get to jiving. I've never seen a cat like him since. He could play the guitar better than anyone I know. And I've seen plenty in my day."[13]

Johnson's duet style is very similar to the Lang-Venuti method; borderline blues with jazz elements followed by "hot" solos. Some might assume that these recordings inspired Lang and Venuti (as Ivor Mairants states), however Lang had already established a performing/recording relationship with Joe Venuti in 1925 and their partnership began as teenagers in 1914. Therefore, Lonnie Johnson's group, as well as Lang and Venuti, was just one of many groups performing "hot" jazz.[14]

Johnson's solo work is a bit different from his duet style. Some songs include "To Do This, You Got To Know How" recorded in 1926 and "Untitled Instrumental" in 1927, recorded before or at the same time as the pieces used for this study. Johnson accompanies himself on vocals for many of these early recordings. He uses alternate tunings when recording his solo work in order to make the open strings applicable for accompaniment.[15] These open strings make it easier to play a solo while thumbing an open string because the playing hand is focusing on the melody only, while the picking hand (thumb) is plucking the accompaniment. This technique makes playing the guitar easier because there are no full chords with moving parts. The chords only contain root notes and moving bass lines.

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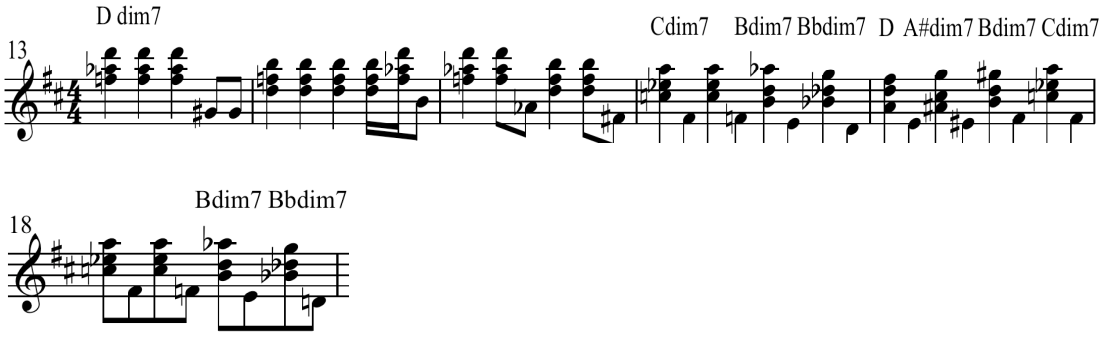
[13] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contributions to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 522.
[14] In *The Oxford Companion to Jazz*, edited by Bill Kirchner, Richard Sudhalter states hot jazz is "a coherent blend of improvisation, rhythmic intensity, emotional involvement, and personalization of style and execution" (149).
[15] Standard tuning, from low to high, is E A D G B E. In many cases Johnson tuned to what is referred to as "Drop D" tuning, D A D G B E. In other instances he used an open chord tuning. For example, an open G tuning could be D G D G B D, thus outlining the notes of a G major chord.

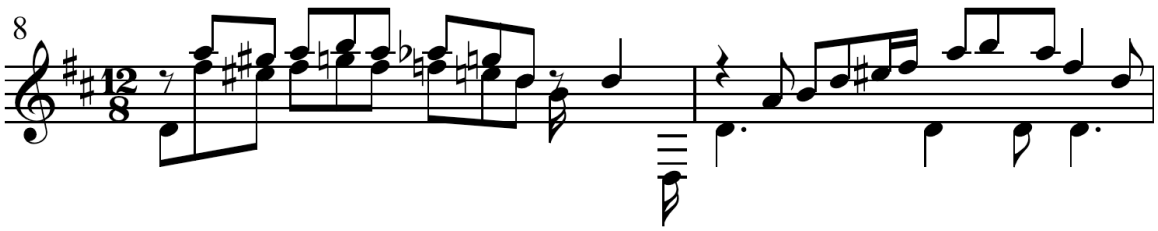
In cases when Johnson does use a full chord, he changes it by simply moving the same chord shape backwards down the guitar neck. This example is from the song "To Do This, You Got To Know How (JSP Records JSP77117A)."[16] We see Johnson moving the diminished chord while maintaining a moving bass line.



Example 1: Lonnie Johnson, "To Do This, You Goy to Know How" Measures thirteen to eighteen

Example 2[17] is from the song "Love Story Blues (Okeh 8282 78A)." It is observed how Johnson uses open strings[18] as bass notes (the note D) while playing major and minor thirds as the melody. Moving thirds around the guitar neck on the B and E strings is relatively simple while plucking an open string with the thumb. Notice in the second measure how he accompanies the melody with open bass notes as well (the low E is tuned down a whole step to D). The melody is completely absent of a full chordal accompaniment.

[16] Stephan Grossman, *Early Masters of American Blues Guitar: Lonnie Johnson* (Van Nuys: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2007) 23-24.
[17] Ibid.,17.
[18] Author Stephan Grossman transcribed the piece in drop D tuning, which is to lower the pitch of the low E string a whole step.



Example 2: Lonnie Johnson, "Love Story Blues", Measures eight and nine

Although small, these examples summarize Johnson's playing technique. He moves similar chord shapes around the guitar neck without a great deal of emphasis on intervallic chord structure or voice leading. He uses them only as accompaniments, not as a form of orchestration technique, as each chord is moved in parallelisms.

It is also important to note Johnson altered the guitar's tuning in order to make it easier to accompany his voice or single line melodies. The three pieces analyzed for this study were done in standard tuning. This means Lang did not use any unorthodox methods to achieve his unique style by tuning any of the open strings to different notes.

Benjamin Givan states in his book *The Music of Django Reihnhardt* "…Lang employs various other fingerings with similar physical demands…."[19] These fingerings enabled Lang to include elements that Johnson did not, such as filling out chords to make his tone fuller and texturally deep. This may be why so many who heard Lang's recordings picked up on the textural depth, even if they could not describe it musically.

Because of his unique textural treatment of chords, Lang could successfully accompany a solo artist, including vocals, much like a piano player. In the last year of

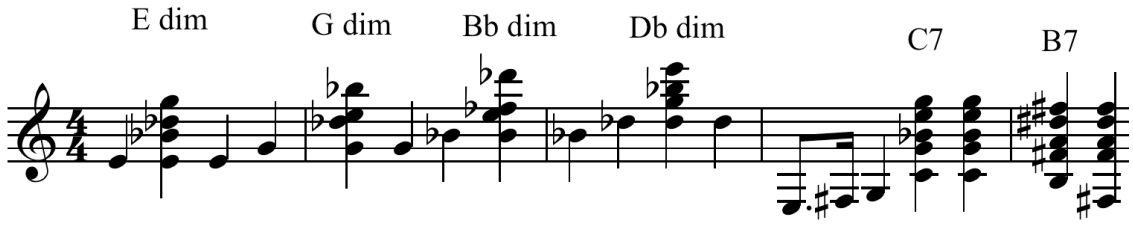
[19] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 18.

his life (1932-33), Lang was the solo accompaniment to Bing Crosby, whom had played with Lang after performing together in Paul Whiteman's group.

Another guitarist who recorded during the same time period as Lang was Nick Lucas. Lucas was known more for his voice than his guitar playing. His style of playing was similar to Lang's in that he used moving bass lines, chords and melody. Most of his solo guitar work is found at the beginning of his vocal accompaniments.

In 1922-23 Lucas recorded two songs accompanied by piano, "Pickin' the Guitar" and "Teasing the Frets (Brunswick 3925 78A)." Although not solo pieces, they showcase Lucas' talent that predate the pieces used for this study by four years. How does Lang compare to Lucas, and what did he do differently? For the purpose of this study, we will use examples from these two pieces to demonstrate the differences.

The first example is the introduction of "Teasing the Frets (Brunswick 2536 78A)."[20]



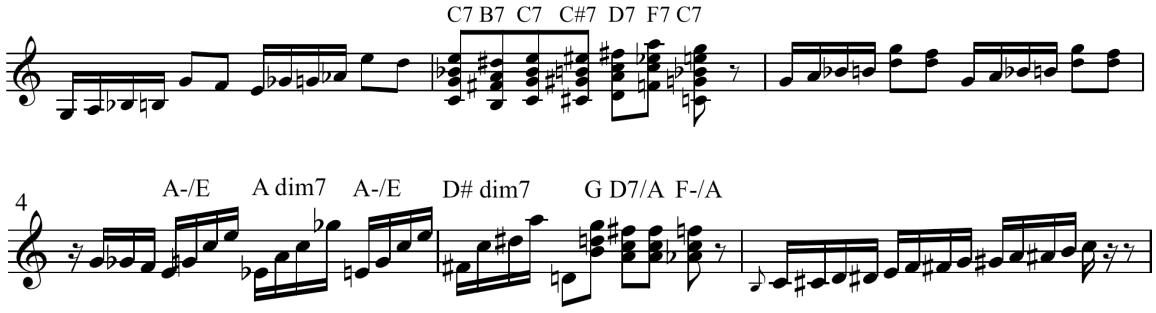
Example 3: Nick Lucas, "Teasing the Frets", Introduction

One can see the moving bass line ascending minor thirds, thus creating the root of the diminished chord. Lucas strums each chord from bottom to top quickly so as not to lose

[20] Because of the tape speed, guitar tuning or poor recording, this piece sounded in-between the keys of Eb and E major. E major was chosen because it is unquestionably the more common key for guitarists (as opposed to Eb).

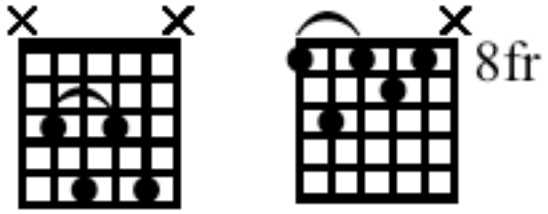
the rhythmic bass line. Before the main melody begins at measure six, he uses the V (B7) to set up the key of E major. This presents a strong example of what differentiates Lang from Lucas; Lucas uses the same chord shape for each diminished chord as well as a barre chord for the C7 and B7. This simplifies the inner harmonic voicing because every note moves in parallel motion.

Nick Lucas demonstrates his fast guitar picking at the introduction of "Pickin' the guitar" :



Example 4: Nick Lucas, "Picking the Guitar", Introduction

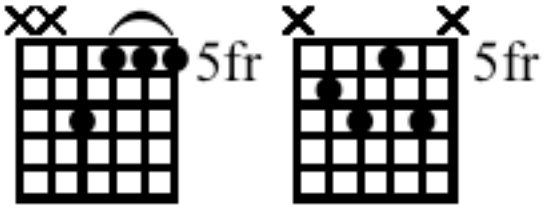
In this example, Lucas plays a very fast melody made mostly of chromatics. When not chromatic, the melody is played by arpeggiated chords, or part of the chord itself. A majority of the chords within this example are barred and simply moved in parallel fashion up or down the guitar neck. The shapes that are used for measure two look like this:



Example 5: Nick Lucas, The two chord shapes Lucas uses for measures two and five

The first shape is used to play the first six chordal eighth notes. The C7 at the end of measure two is re-voiced using the second shape in the diagram. Other than the C7, we see in the notation how the notes move in real parallel motion. These parallelisms are played by moving the first shape from fret to fret. The last chord is not parallel with the previous six, however is played using another barre shape.

The chords used at measure four are standard chord shapes, familiar among guitarists. The A minor/E uses a half barre, while the diminished chord is played in root position:



Example 6: Nick Lucas, The chord shapes Lucas uses for the minor and diminished chords

The first shape is the A minor and the second is the Eb diminished. The F# diminished at measure five is played the same way. Because of the parallel note movement, the note movement between the chords is greatly minimized. This makes the chords act as embellishments rather than an extension of the melody.

What is also noticeable is Lucas does not switch from a pick to finger-picking style. In the recording, the notes and chords are all attacked the same way and there is no variation in volume, thus minimizing dynamics. The lack of dynamics indicate every chord was played using the same manner.

The difference between Lang's playing and Lucas' is glaring: The shapes and/or voicing Lucas uses diminish the overall tonal quality of the chord. The notes sound condensed, simplified and predictable because the chords are strummed and not finger-picked. As this study will examine, on many occasions Lang intervallicaly spaces the notes within chords, minimizing his use of barre or closed chords. This allows a particular voicing to sound spacious and piano-like. As Richard Sudhalter states, " By voicing chords with the melody note on the top, for example, players could execute passages which were melodically attractive and completely harmonized, making the guitar in effect a miniature orchestra. Lang had opened the way…." [21]

Although small, these examples summarize Lucas' playing style. He includes a bass line that leads the listener into each chord, just as Lang uses the bass line in a contrapuntal manner to connect chord progressions. The difference is that the bass is the only way Lucas connects chord progressions, whereas Lang not only used bass notes, but inner voicings of chords to connect harmonic progressions. Lucas often utilized standard

[21] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz, 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 525.

chord shapes and not intricate inversions. He did this because he also had to sing while playing these parts. Since he was known more for his voice, he concentrated less on what he was playing.

There were, of course, other guitarists (other than Nick Lucas and Lonnie Johnson) who were less popular, who arguably could have superceded Lang, but through various circumstances did not. The reason why they are mentioned in this study is to separate their style of playing from Lang's. Edwin McIntosh "Snoozer" Quinn (1906 – 1956) had mentioned he could have rivaled Lang had he taken advantage of his natural talents.[22] He apparently recorded eight tracks in 1925 for Victor records, which were never released and ultimately lost.[23] Any solo work in that recording session would have predated Lang's material by two years.

Instead, Quinn became more of a rhythm guitarist having played with Paul Whiteman at the suggestion of Bix Beiderbecke and Frankie Trumbauer. The fact that Beiderbecke and Trumbauer supported Quinn's talent says volumes about his playing. His accompanying of Whiteman did not last long and he succumbed to playing in unknown bands through the south.[24] Because of the lack of recordings, we may never know how talented Quinn was, or what playing techniques he contributed to solo jazz guitar.

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[22] Charles Alexander, *Masters of Jazz Guitar: The Story of Players and Their Music* (London: Balafon Books, 1999), 9.
[23] Norman Morgan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 36.
[24] Ibid., 37.

Guitarists' inspired by Eddie Lang

It is important to note those who were inspired by Lang, and recognize him as one of their main influences. These include Carl Kress, Dick McDonough and George Van Eps. According to Maurice J. Summerfield, author of *The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1900*, they were "…fans of Lang,[and] continue[d] in his tradition after his death with the evolution of jazz guitar."[25] Summerfield also states "…[Django Reinhardt] virtuoso guitar playing carried to a new and high level the standards of solo jazz guitar playing which had been set by Eddie Lang."[26] He supports this statement by adding "…[Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang] records were to be a major influence on Stephane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt in the early 1930s."[27]

Former student Marty Grosz said, "He was the first, he had to think the whole thing out for himself."[28] By saying "the whole thing," we assume he means how Lang incorporated the chordal textures and lush harmonies that became a signature style of solo jazz guitar today. Grosz and fellow jazz guitarist Eddie Condon had never thought of using the guitar as a solo instrument until they heard Lang's recordings.[29]

Not only did Lang introduce different chordal ideas, he also gave the idea of solo guitar credence. Before Lang, the guitar was second to the banjo, and used only as an accompanying instrument in the United States. The idea that it could be played as a solo instrument was familiar only to those who knew of or could play classical guitar (such as

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[25] Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1900* (United Kingdom: Ashley Mark Publishing Compnay, 1998),14.
[26] Ibid., 14.
[27] Ibid., 213.
[28] Norman Morgan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 28.
[29] Ibid., 28.

Andre Segovia). Lang's admiration for Segovia helped him to prove otherwise, and helped to create the evolutionary bridge linking classical elements to the style we now call solo jazz guitar.

Biographical Information

Salvatore Massaro was born to Italian immigrants in southern Philadelphia. Italians had been migrating to America at a time when thousands of foreigners were looking for a better life in the new world. Instead of settling in New York like many other immigrants, the Massaro family traveled farther south until they settled in Philadelphia.

Salvatore Massaro's year of birth presents some confusion. Two sources list his birth in the year 1904 (*Man with the Blue Guitar* by Herb Shultz and *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* by Norman Morgan). However, many other sources list his birthday as October 2nd, 1902.

Musicians who performed with Massaro suggest that he was born with perfect pitch and a photographic memory.[30] His father crafted banjos and violins in Italy and continued to practice his trade in America, where his son Salvatore began toying around with a shoebox laced with rubber bands as a young boy. Before he could play an instrument, he had to learn how to sing by studying *solfeggio*[31], which is a method that vocalists' use to sight sing. He began playing the violin at age seven, and studied with Professor Luccantonio at nine, where he was taught how to read music as well as understand music theory. He began performing Italian mazurkas and polka's with

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[30] Maurice Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: It's Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1900* (London: Ashley Mark Publishing Company, 1998), 213.
[31] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 21.

childhood friend Joe Venutti[32], who also happened to play violin. At 16 years old, Salvatore performed with a local group in Philadelphia known as the Chuck Granese Trio, and by 18 he was hired to perform with the Charles Kerr Orchestra where he played 4 - and 6-string banjo. This also may have been when he changed his name to Eddie Lang. Research suggests that he chose the name from either a famous basketball or baseball player, and he did so because Italians had a reputation for being day laborers in the early 1920s. Salvatore did not want any prejudice to come his way because of his name, so he changed it to make it sound more American.

By 1923, Lang made the permanent switch to the guitar[33], playing the Gibson L4 model. It was because of Lang that this model of guitar became popular, and also why the arched f-hole guitars became synonymous with jazz guitar.[34] It wasn't until 1924 when Lang began making a name for himself in the Mound City Blue Blowers as a guitarist (In The Great Jazz Guitarists, Ivor Mairants states Eddie Lang picked up the guitar after he was let go by the group, being replaced by a guitarist. However there are photographs of Lang with the Mound City Blue Blowers holding a guitar, and the group already had a banjo player by the name of Jack Bland).[35]

Lang traveled to London for a five-week stint at the Piccadilly hotel with this group. They returned to the U.S in 1925, and recorded the song "McKenzie's Kandy Kids". This piece has been noted by some to be the first true recording of solo jazz

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[32] Charles Alexander, *Masters of Jazz Guitar: The Story of Players and Their Music* (London: Balafon Books, 1999), 7.
[33] Norman Morgan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 24.
[34] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 20.
[35] Ibid., 22.

guitar. Eddie Lang left the Mound City Blue Blowers in mid-1925, looking for "serious" work, and performed with the Jean Goldkette Orchestra as well as doing some freelance recordings with the Boswell Sisters. According to Norman Morgan in The History of the Guitar in Jazz: " Lang's talent and musicality was fast outgrowing the limited repertoire of the Blue Blowers, and with his photographic memory and perfect sense of pitch, he needed more challenging musical surroundings."[36]

In 1926, Eddie Lang made his first recording with childhood friend Joe Venutti, as well as performed and recorded with the Roger Wolfe Kahn Orchestra. He was also a featured soloist with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies. Lang was no stranger to the blues either, as he recorded with famous blues vocalist Bessie Smith. He continued to perform with the Goldkette Orchestra with Bix Beiderbecke and also recorded with Maggie Jones and Jack Pettis. Additionally in 1926, Lang married Kittie Rausch, who was a friend of Bing Crosby and who was a cast member of the Zeigfeld Follies.[37]

The year 1927 proved to be the most productive for Lang. Not only did he continue recording with Red Nichols, Jean Goldkette and Roger Kahn, but he freelanced as well. He recorded with Frank Trumbauer, Miff Mole, Alma Henderson and Wilton Crowley. Okeh records began releasing Venuti – Lang records. Lang performed with Venuti's Blue Four, and also recorded with the Four Instrumental Stars. Because of Lang's talent and knowledge of the guitar, he became the most sought after studio musician from 1927 to 1933[38].

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[36] Norman Morgan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 26.
[37] Ibid., 30.
[38] Ibid., 26.

The year 1928 was another big year for Lang. Benny Goodman, swing musician and clarinet extraordinaire, used Lang as a freelance artist at gigs and on recordings. He recorded with Tom Dorsey, Rude Bloom, Irving Mills, King Oliver and Arthur Schmitt. The most influential recording that he did that year was the ten sides he cut with Lonnie Johnson. Johnson was known as a great blues player. Some research suggests that it was Johnson who influenced Lang[39],and other studies suggest differently.[40] It was a landmark recording, as the two greatest guitar players of that era performed together, and was probably the first time that two guitars were used in a duet.

It was also in 1928 that classical guitar virtuoso Andre Segovia performed in the United States for the first time in New York. Eddie Lang, an admirer of Segovia, was in attendance.[41] Segovia proved that the guitar, albeit classical, could present itself as a solo instrument. Segovia reinforced Lang's belief that the guitar was not simply an accompanying instrument.[42]

In the following years Lang continued freelancing. In 1929 he performed and recorded with bandleader Paul Whiteman, the Venuti Blue Four, Mildred Bailey, Benny Goodman and Bill Rank. He continued playing with Whiteman into the 1930's, as well as with his own group, Lang's All Star Orchestra. His movie debut came in 1930 with Paul Whiteman in The King of Jazz. In 1931, Lang began to accompany Bing Crosby

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[39] Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: It's Evolution. Players and Personalities Since 1900* (London: Ashley Mark Publishing,1998),13.
[40] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press,1999),152.
[41] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 21.
[42] Jeffrey J. Noonan. *The Guitar in America: Victorian Age to Jazz Age* (Mississippi: University of Mississippi Press, 2008), 137.

full time, which he had performed with in Whiteman's Orchestra. That same year Lang recorded with guitarist George Van Eps.

Lang's second appearance in a film came in 1932, accompanying Bing Crosby in The Big Broadcast in 1932. Carl Kress, a guitarist and admirer of Lang, recorded with him on "Feelin'My Way" and "Pickin' My Way." These two songs represent the last time Eddie Lang recorded with another guitarist. Lang's final recording with childhood friend Joe Venuti took place on February 29th, 1933, and his last performance was in front of his hometown crowd in Philadelphia a few weeks before his tragic death on March 26th, 1933.

Lang's throat had been bothering him for a few weeks, and Bing Crosby had suggested that he go to a throat specialist to see what was wrong. The doctor suggested a tonsillectomy. Under anesthesia, Lang developed an embolism and could not regain consciousness.

Eddie Lang's Influence

Documentation suggests Eddie Lang was a significant influence on the jazz guitar style that many emulate today. He is considered to be the first true solo jazz guitarist.

Jack Bland of the Mound City Blue Blowers: " He (Eddie) had the best ear of any musician I ever knew. He could go into another room and hit an 'A' and come back

and play cards for fifteen minutes, and then tune his instrument perfectly. I've seen it happen."[43]

Jazz historian Richard Sudhalter; " What was the origin of Eddie's playing? Some say he acquired it through playing with Lonnie Johnson as 'Blind Willie Dunn' in 1928 – 29. Earlier recordings indicate that Lang already had that ability intact. It was a product of his own sensibility and response to the musical world around him."[44]

"Eddie Lang stood alone in the use of guitar both as an accompaniment and solo instrument."[45]

Fellow guitarist George Van Eps;" Lang was an excellent harmonist. He knew the fingerboard very well, and that big sound you hear on the record-that's no gimmick…He was the trailblazer for all of us."[46]

"He brought to jazz a highly developed technique, his chiming rococo solo lines were super fast – he possessed an harmonic awareness that was much ahead of his time."[47]

"In the few years from 1924 – 1933, Lang laid down the path on which most jazz guitarists of the 1930's and later decades would follow."[48]

Band leader Paul Whiteman; " In my mind Lang was one of the greatest musical geniuses we ever had in the band. I don't know whether he could read or not.

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[43] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 96.
[44] Ibid., 152.
[45] Ibid., 518.
[46] Ibid., 519.
[47] Linear Notes *A History of Jazz Guitar: Hittin' on all Six* (London: Proper Records LTD, 2006).
[48] Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities since 1900* (United Kingdom: Mark Publishing Company, 1998), 213.

No matter how intricate the arraignment, Eddie played it flawlessly the first time without having ever heard it or looking at sheet music. It was as if his music intuitive spirit had read the arranger's mind and knew in advance everything that was going to happen."[49]

Lang student Marty Grosz: "He (Lang) was the first, he had to think the whole thing out for himself."[50]

"Eddie was practically solely responsible for the creation of jazz guitar, for until he brought his intelligence and dexterity to bear, nobody had conceived of the idea of playing guitar in a manner compatible with the demands of jazz solo's. He was the first to make solo guitar recordings."[51]

[49] Norman Morgan *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publications, 1983), 26-27.
[50] Ibid., 28.
[51] Ibid., 29.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature: Significance of Study

Eddie Lang was one of the most important historical figures in the evolution of jazz guitar during the late 1920's until his untimely death in 1933. All historical information in this dissertation was collected using numerous sources. These include; *Lost Chords* (Richard M. Sudhalter; 1999); *The Guitar in Jazz* (James Sallis;1996); *The History of Jazz Guitar* (Norman Mongan; 1983); *The Jazz Guitar: It's Evolution, players and Personalities since 1900* (Maurice J. Summerfield; 1998); *Classic Jazz: Musicians and Recordings that Shaped Jazz, 1895 – 1933* (Scott Yanow; 2001); *The Oxford Companion to Jazz* (ed. Bill Kirchner; 2000).

Lang was mentioned less in other publications. This includes brief historical and/or performance based observations; *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz 1930-1945* (Gunther Schuller: 1989); *A History of Jazz Guitar: Hittin' On All Six* (Compilation audio recording Linear notes by Joop Visser; 2006); *The Great Jazz Guitarists* (Ivor Mairants; 2003); *Masters of Jazz Guitar: The Story of Players and Their Music (*Charles Alexander; 1999); *A New History of Jazz* (Alyn Shipton; 2001); *The History of Jazz* (Ted Gioia; 1997); *The Art, History and Style of Jazz Guitar* (J, Stewart; 1993); *Jazz: A History of America's Music* (Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns; 2000). Two newspaper articles give information about Lang's brief life including the events that led to his unfortunate death. These are *A Tribute to Eddie Lang, Neighborhood Review* (D. Santo; 1956) and *Man with the blue guitar*, *Saturday Evening Post* (H. Shultz; 1958).

Aside from Joe Venutti, the only other musician who knew Lang well was Bing Crosby. Lang toured with Crosby for the last year of his life, after they performed with

the self proclaimed "king of jazz" Paul Whiteman. These biographies offer Crosby's own personal reflections of Lang's personality. They are *Bing Crosby: A Pocket Full of Dreams, The Early Years 1903 – 1940* (G. Giddens; 2001) and *Call Me Lucky: Bing Crosby's Own Story* (P. Martin; 2001).

An excellent resource for recorded performances and their dates is the book *Feeling My Way: A Discography of Eddie Lang* (Raymond F. Mitchell; 2002). It lists every piece Lang ever recorded and with whom. It also gives alternate recorded takes and which ones the record company released to the public.

Few publications contained transcriptions, some with minimal harmonic analysis. These include *Six-String Jazz: Eddie Lang's Original Style Opened the Door to Jazz, Acoustic Guitar,* (T, Marcus; 1999); *Tool Box Heroes – Eddie Lang*, Guitar Player (J. Obrecht; 1989*)*; *Blue guitar: Music by Eddie Lang, as Recorded by Eddie Lang and Robert Johnson*, Acoustic Guitar (M.J. Simmons; 2004); *From Silent Movies to CD: Stephane Grappelli*, Downbeat (S. Stein; 1992). These sources focused more on Lang's improvisation work, primarily with Carl Kress and Lonnie Johnson and do not offer any analysis of his solo technique.

Lang's two method books prove his vast knowledge of music theory and his ability to apply it to the guitar. This helps to support the idea that Lang had the advanced harmonic language to create piano-like voice leading using uncommon chord shapes. The method books are *Eddie Lang's Modern Advanced Guitar Method* and *Fingerboard Harmony for Guitar* (ed. Dave Berend).

A source of valuable information, which also supports the hypothesis of this thesis, is the book written by Benjamin Marx Givan: *Django Reinhardt's Style and*

Improvisational Process. This studys' focus is on many aspects of Django Reinhardt's performing technique. One particularly important aspect is how he managed to play chords considering the fact that two of his fingers had been fused together due to a fire in a caravan. Lang is mentioned briefly in a chapter which Givan compares Django's playing style to Lang's. Django had recorded a version of "A Little Love, A Little Kiss" in 1937. Gavin states:

> From a technical standpoint, Lang's earlier version serves as a stark reminder that Reinhardt's disability was, despite his adaptability, indeed considerable. A majority of the chords containing four or more notes which Lang employed would-as far as can be determined from the preceding discussion- have been impossible for Reinhardt to have played. In purely musical terms, the result is that Lang much more frequently played chords containing intervals of less than a major third between adjacent notes. Since a guitar's strings are tuned in perfect fourths, with the single exception of the major third between the G- and B-strings, in order to create intervals smaller than the interval between any two adjacent open strings the performer's wrist must be heavily supinated, enabling a given string to be stopped at a higher fret than that of the adjacent (higher) string…Lang employs various other fingerings with similar physical demands….[52]

Givan's quote supports the hypothesis of this dissertation that Lang used unique chord shapes to attain specific note movement, whether contrary, parallel or otherwise. The review of literature also shows that there has been very little scholarly research completed on Eddie Lang's performing technique.

The three pieces selected for this study were chosen because they are Lang's only known recorded solo work. They showcase specific techniques and textural treatment of his solo playing style. This study will provide unprecedented transcription work and

[52] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 18.

analysis of these pieces, with the aim of gaining a better understanding of not just what he played, but how he played it.

Chapter Three

Transcriptions

These three pieces were transcribed by listening to them through computer monitors and occasionally headphones. The notation was entered into a Macintosh computer using the music software program Sibelius 4.0. The original transcription for "April Kisses" by David Berend was not used in this study due to a significant number of audible differences between the audio recording and Berend's transcription. When all three transcriptions were completed, they were sent to Dr. Steve Briody for further editing.

A Little Love, A Little Kiss

French Folk Melody "Un Peu d' Amour"

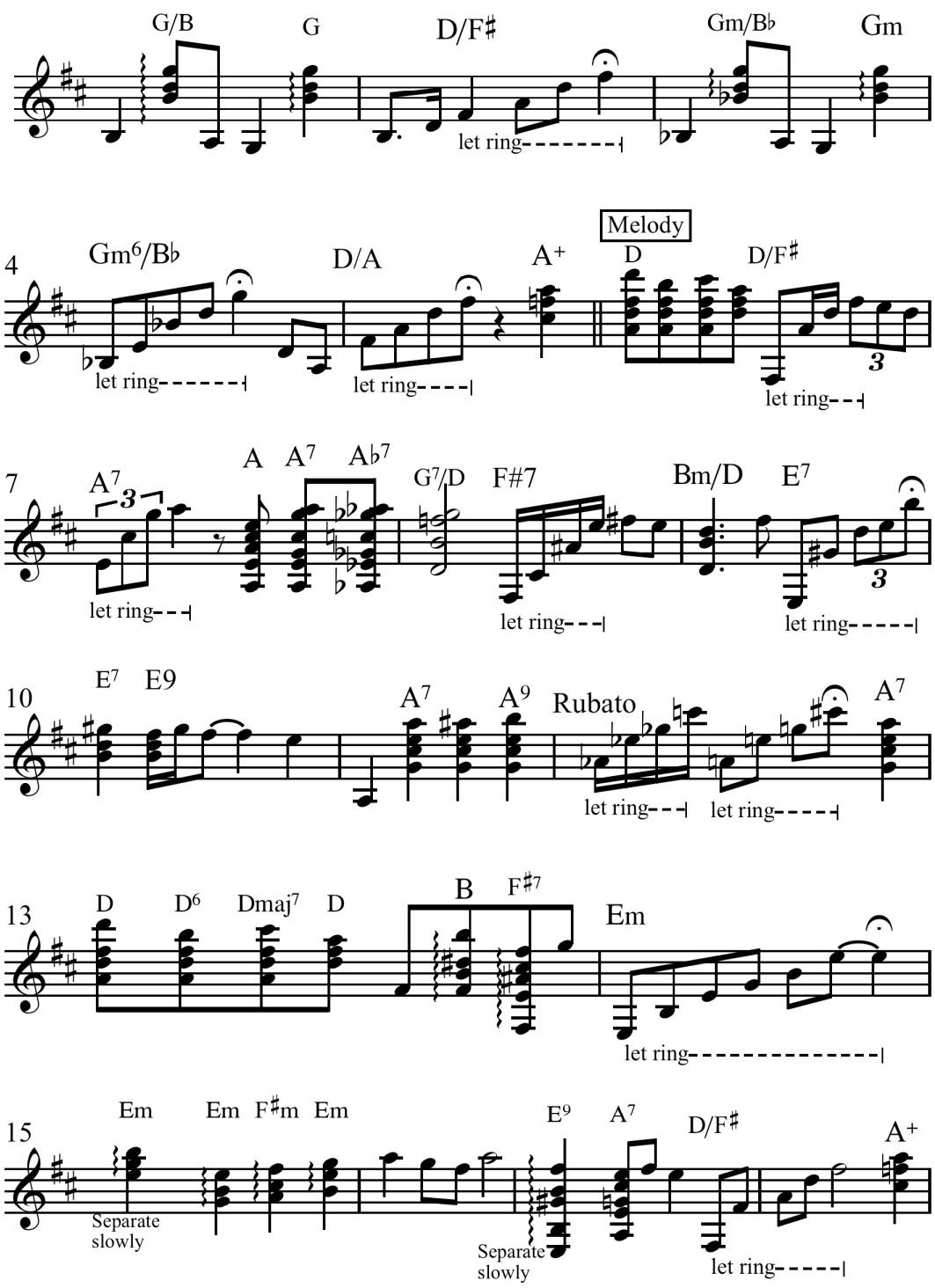
As recorded by Eddie Lang

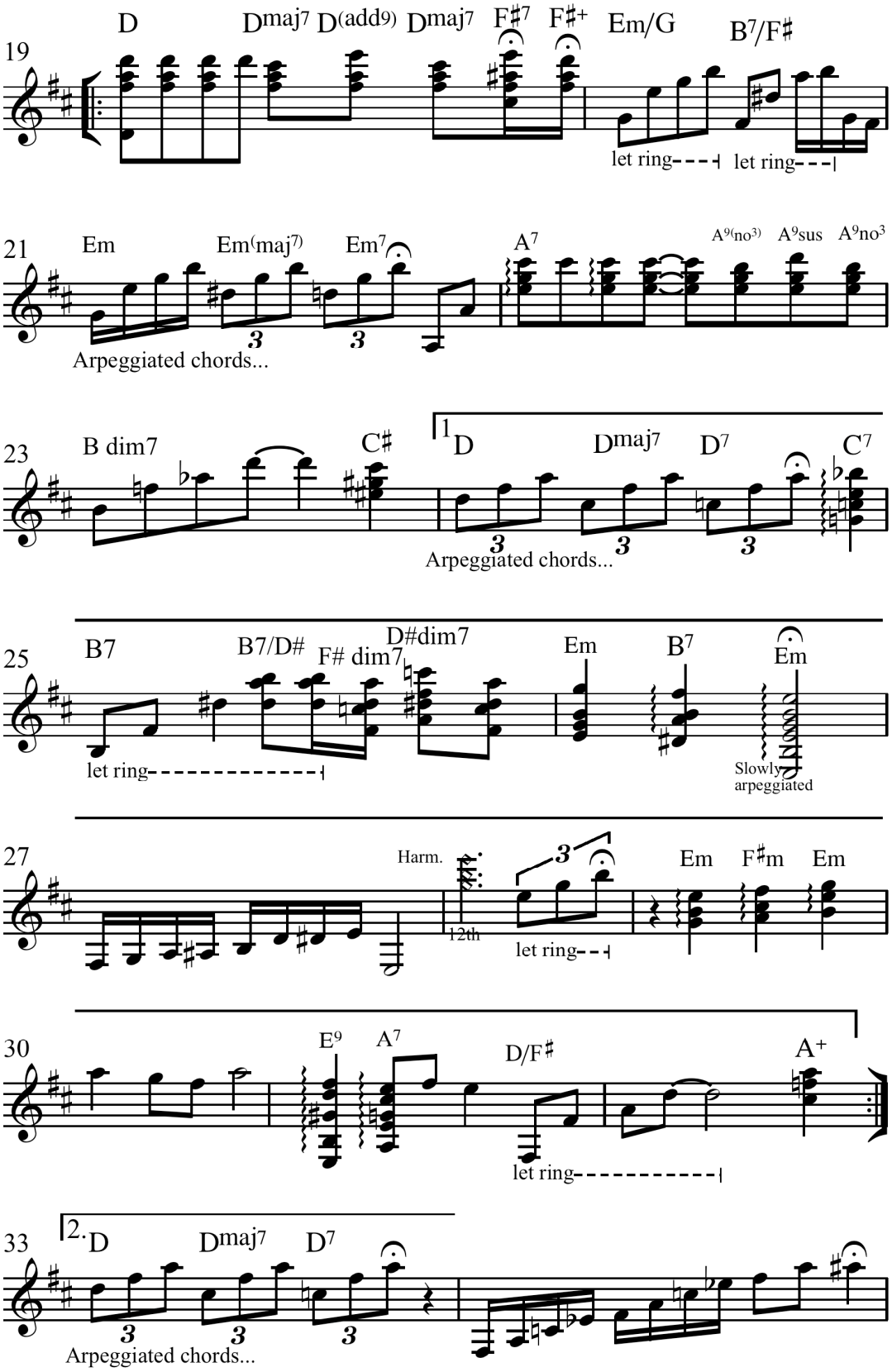
(May 28, 1927)

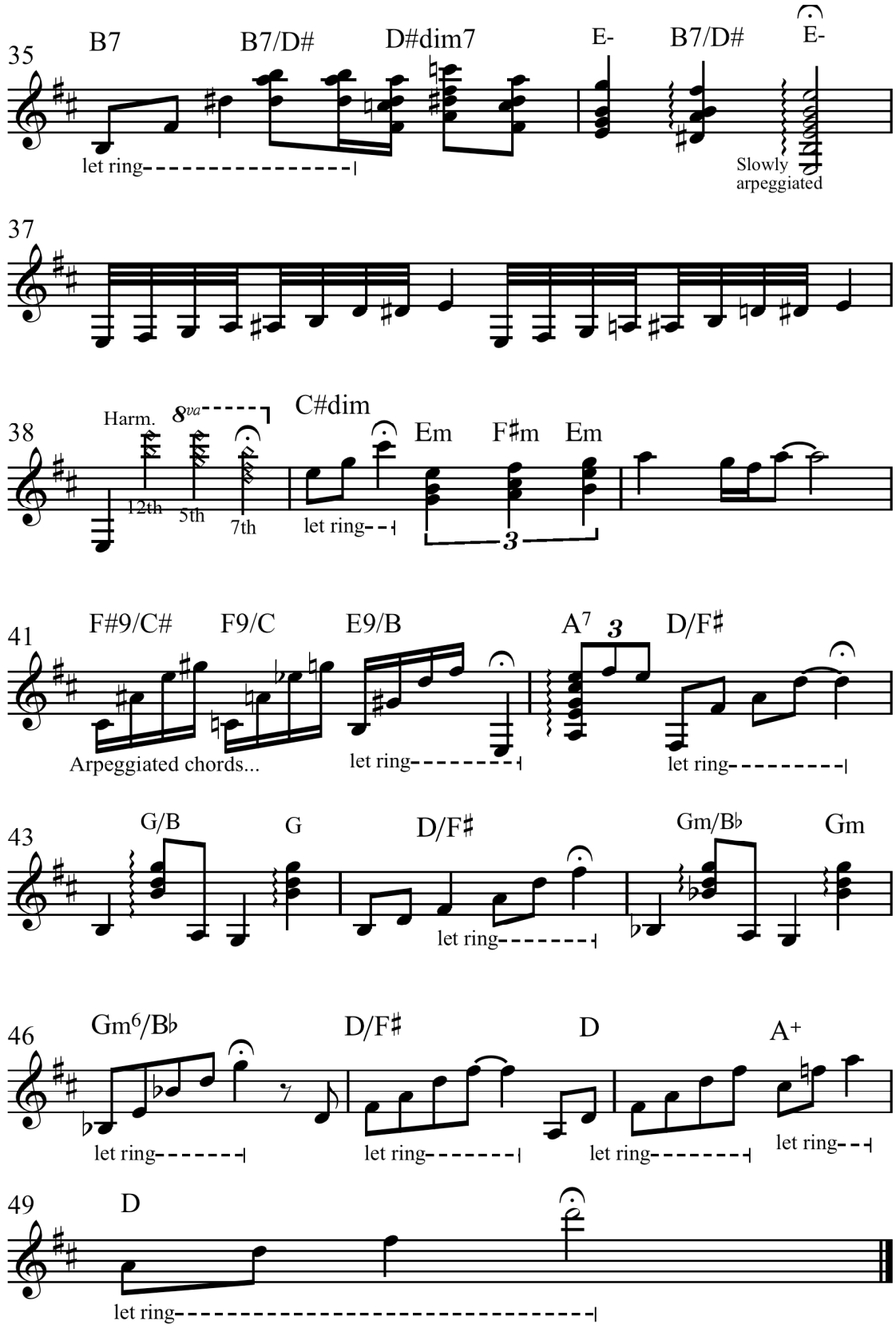
Eddie Lang

Introduction

Rubato



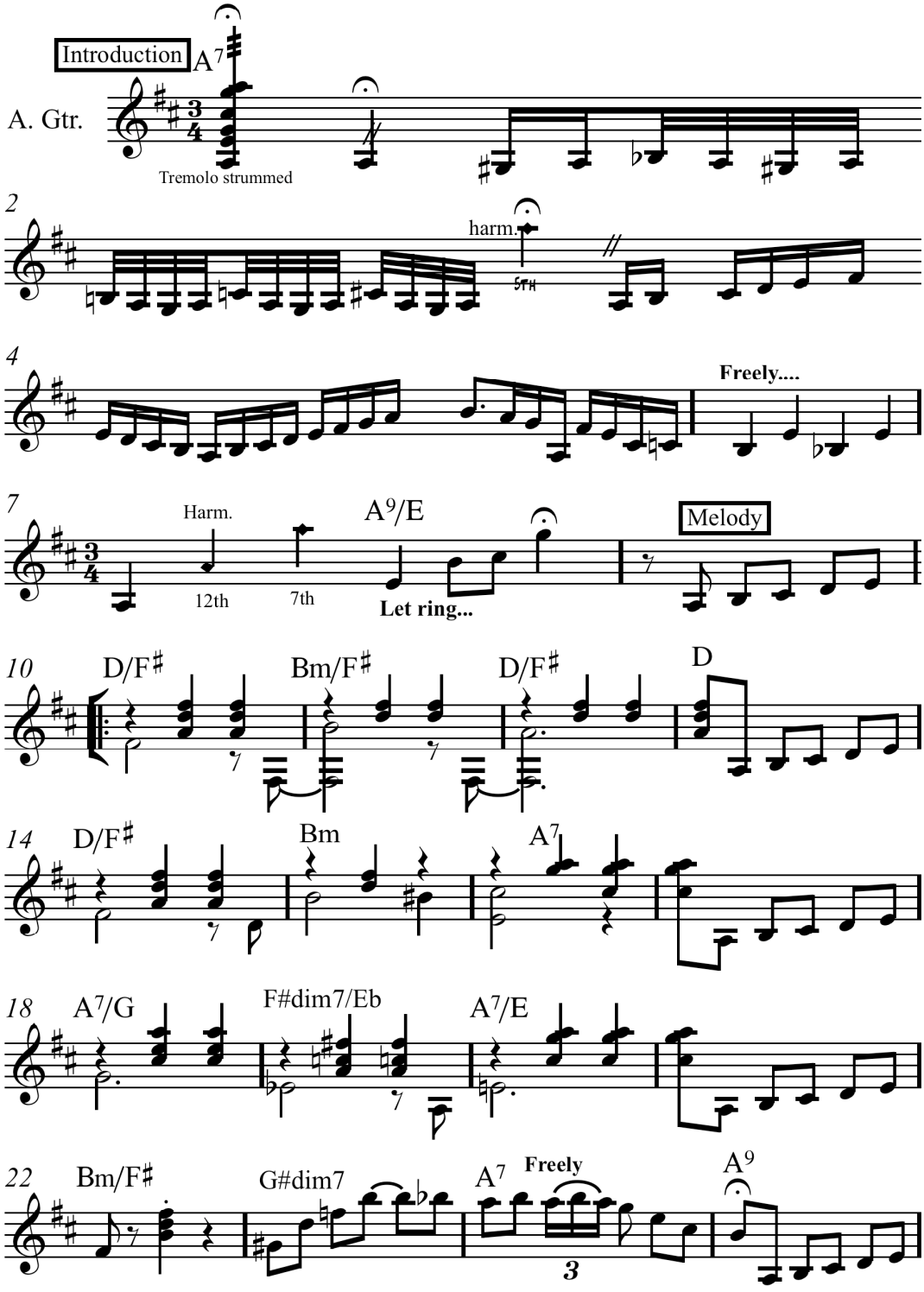

19
D
Dmaj7
D(add9)
Dmaj7
F♯7
F♯+
Em/G
B7/F♯
let ring
let ring
21
Em
Em(maj7)
Em7
A7
A9(no3)
A9sus
A9no3
Arpeggiated chords...
23
B dim7
C♯
1.
D
Dmaj7
D7
C7
Arpeggiated chords...
25
B7
B7/D♯
F♯ dim7
D♯dim7
Em
B7
Em
let ring
Slowly
arpeggiated
27
Harm.
12th
let ring
Em
F♯m
Em
30
E9
A7
D/F♯
A+
let ring
33
2.
D
Dmaj7
D7
Arpeggiated chords...

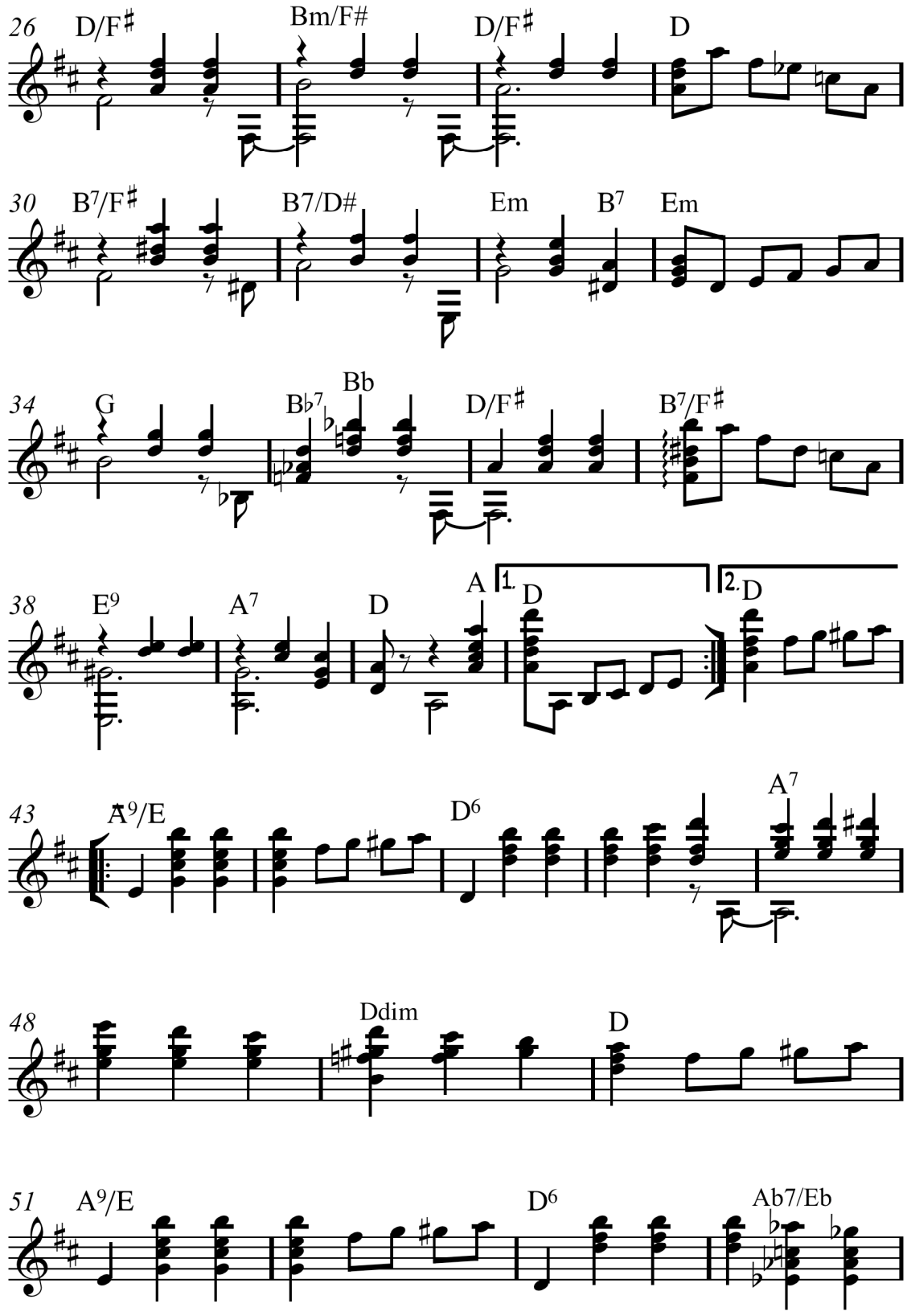

35
B7
B7/D#
D#dim7
E-
B7/D#
E-
let ring
Slowly
arpeggiated
37
38
Harm.
8va
C#dim
Em
F♯m
Em
12th
5th
7th
let ring
3
41
F#9/C#
F9/C
E9/B
A7
3
D/F♯
Arpeggiated chords...
let ring
let ring
43
G/B
G
D/F♯
Gm/B♭
Gm
let ring
46
Gm6/B♭
D/F♯
D
A+
let ring
let ring
let ring
let ring
49
D
let ring

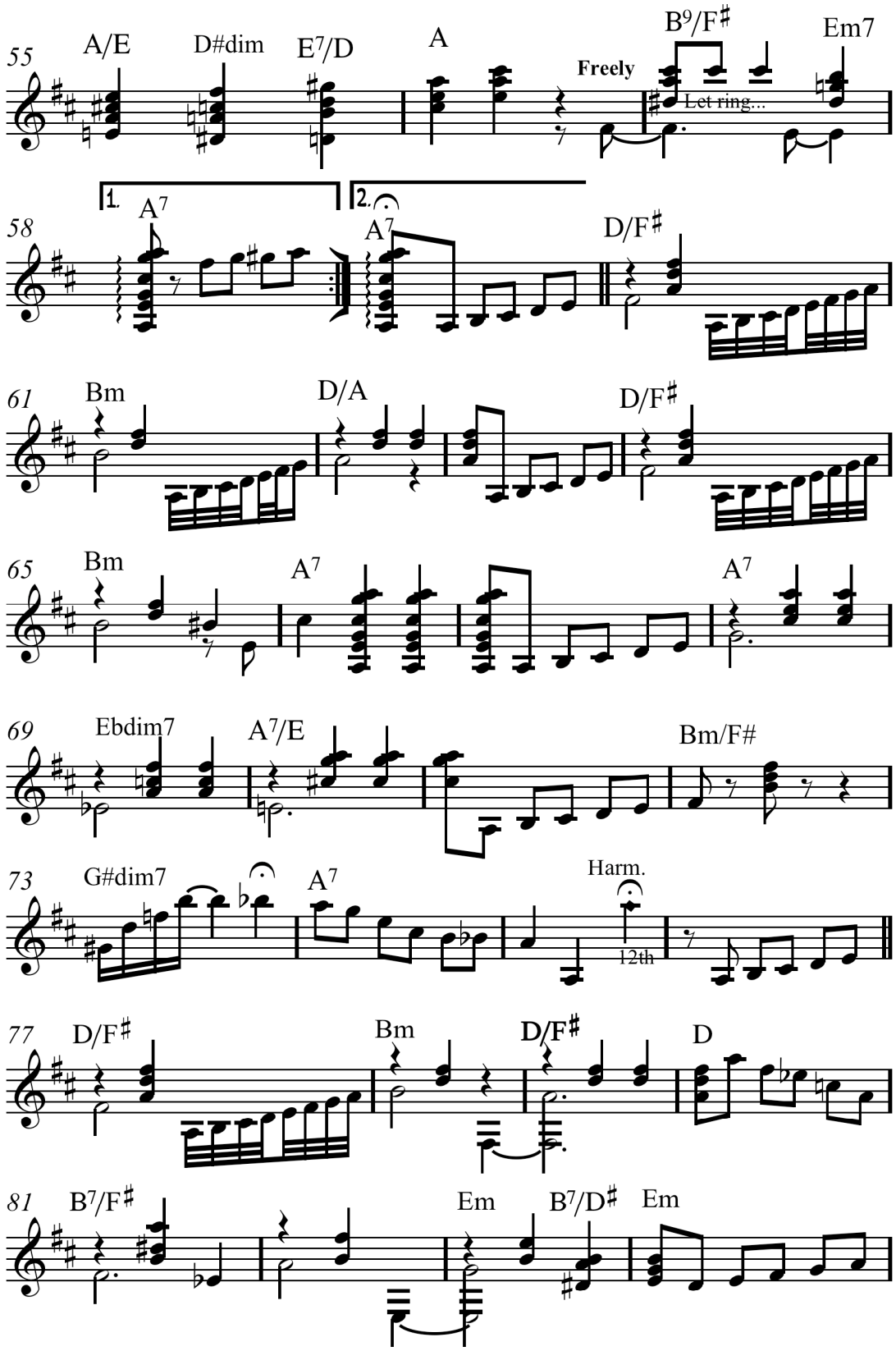
April Kisses

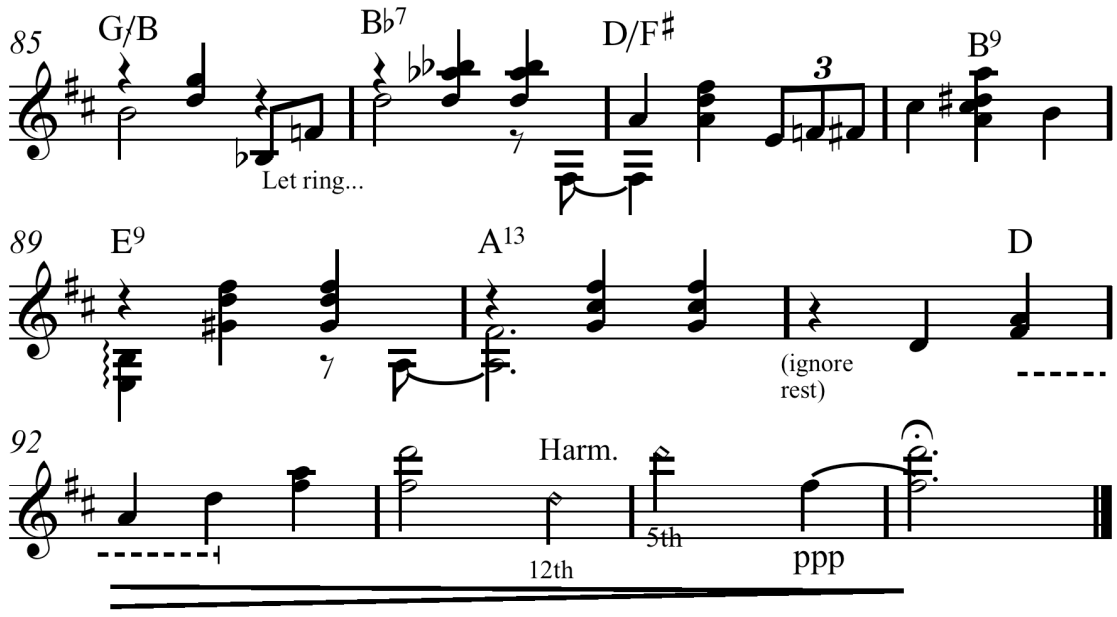
Composed by Eddie Lang
As recorded by Eddie Lang
(April 1, 1927)

Eddie Lang




26
D/F♯
Bm/F#
D/F♯
D
30
B7/F♯
B7/D#
Em
B7
Em
34
G
B♭7
Bb
D/F♯
B7/F♯
38
E9
A7
D
A
1.
D
2.
D
43
A9/E
D6
A7
48
Ddim
D
51
A9/E
D6
Ab7/Eb

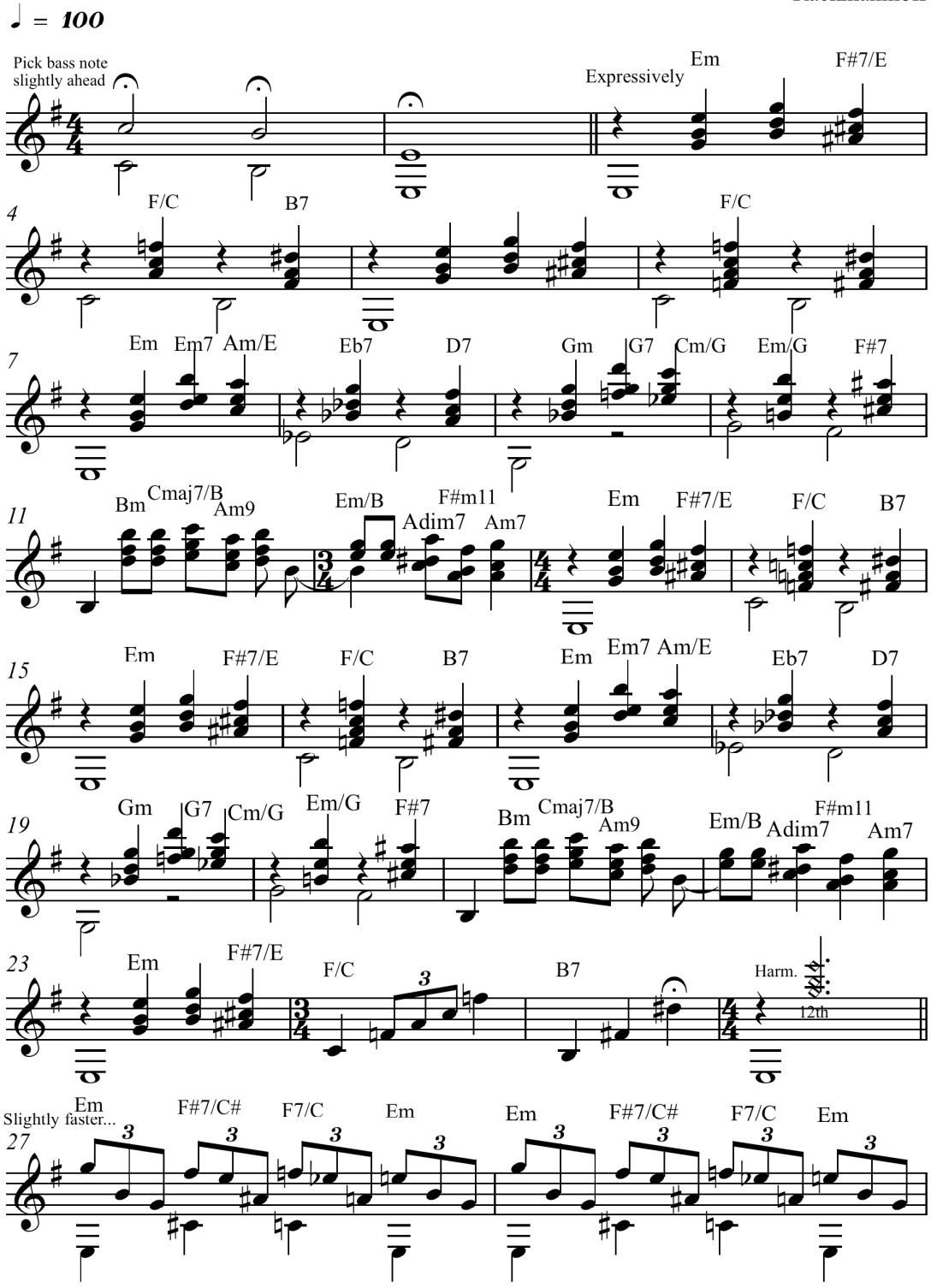

55
A/E
D#dim
E7/D
A
Freely
B9/F♯
Let ring...
Em7
58
1.
A7
2.
A7
D/F♯
61
Bm
D/A
D/F♯
65
Bm
A7
A7
69
Ebdim7
A7/E
Bm/F#
73
G#dim7
A7
Harm.
12th
77
D/F♯
Bm
D/F♯
D
81
B7/F♯
Em
B7/D♯
Em

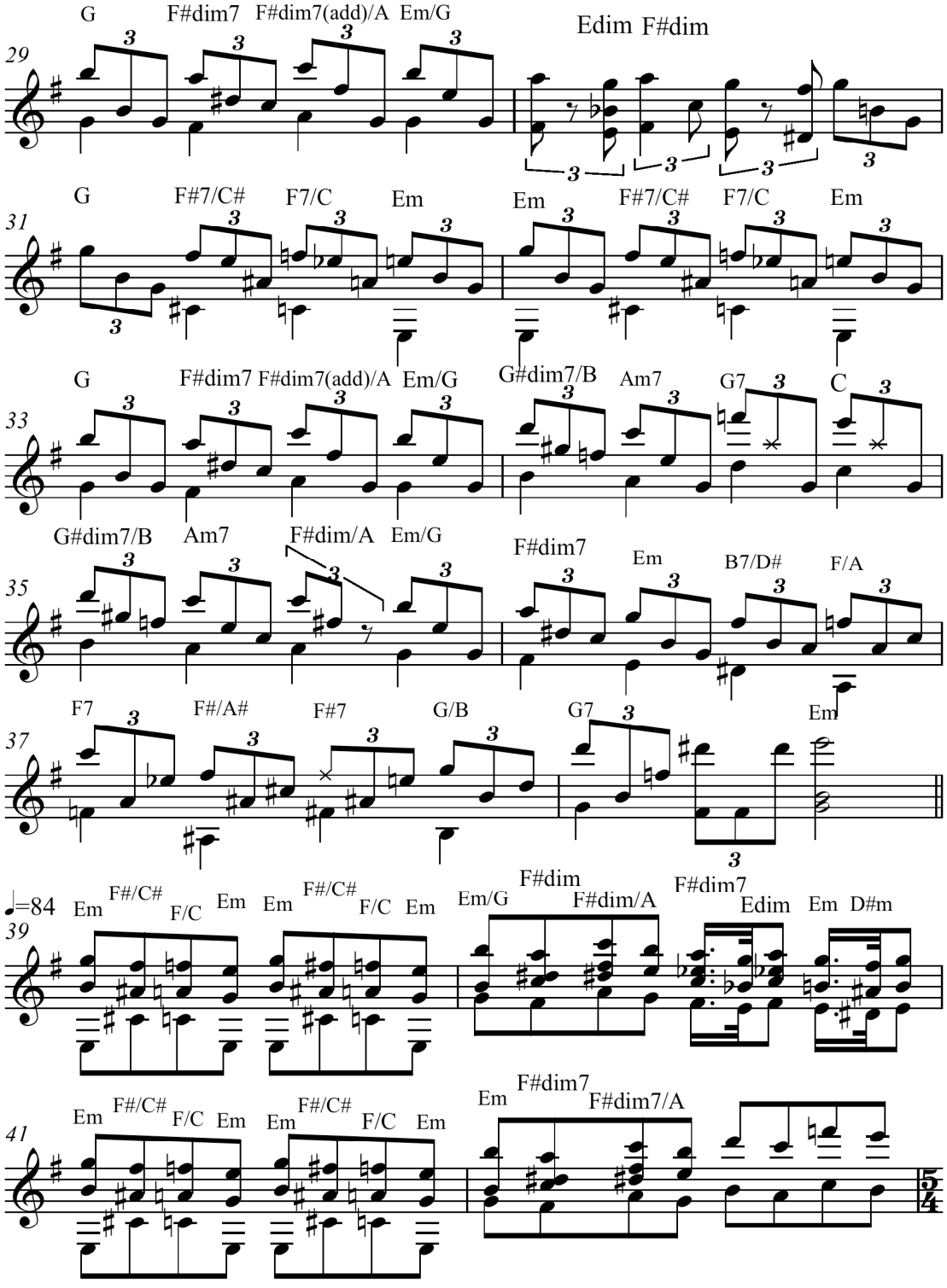

85
G/B
B♭7
D/F♯
B9
3
Let ring...
89
E9
A13
D
(ignore
rest)
92
Harm.
5th
12th
ppp

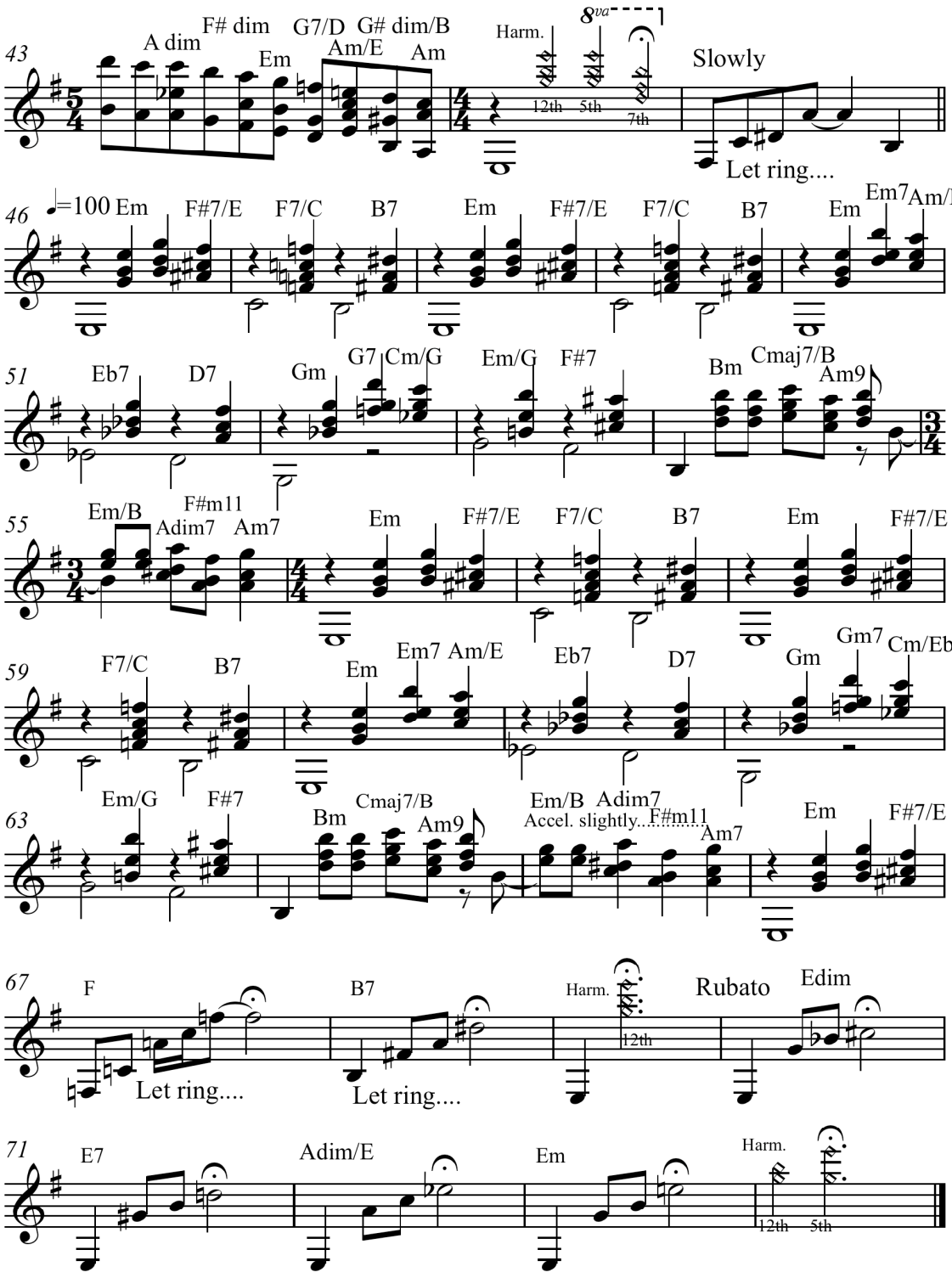
Prelude (Opus 3, no. 2)

As Recorded by Eddie Lang
(May 28, 1927)

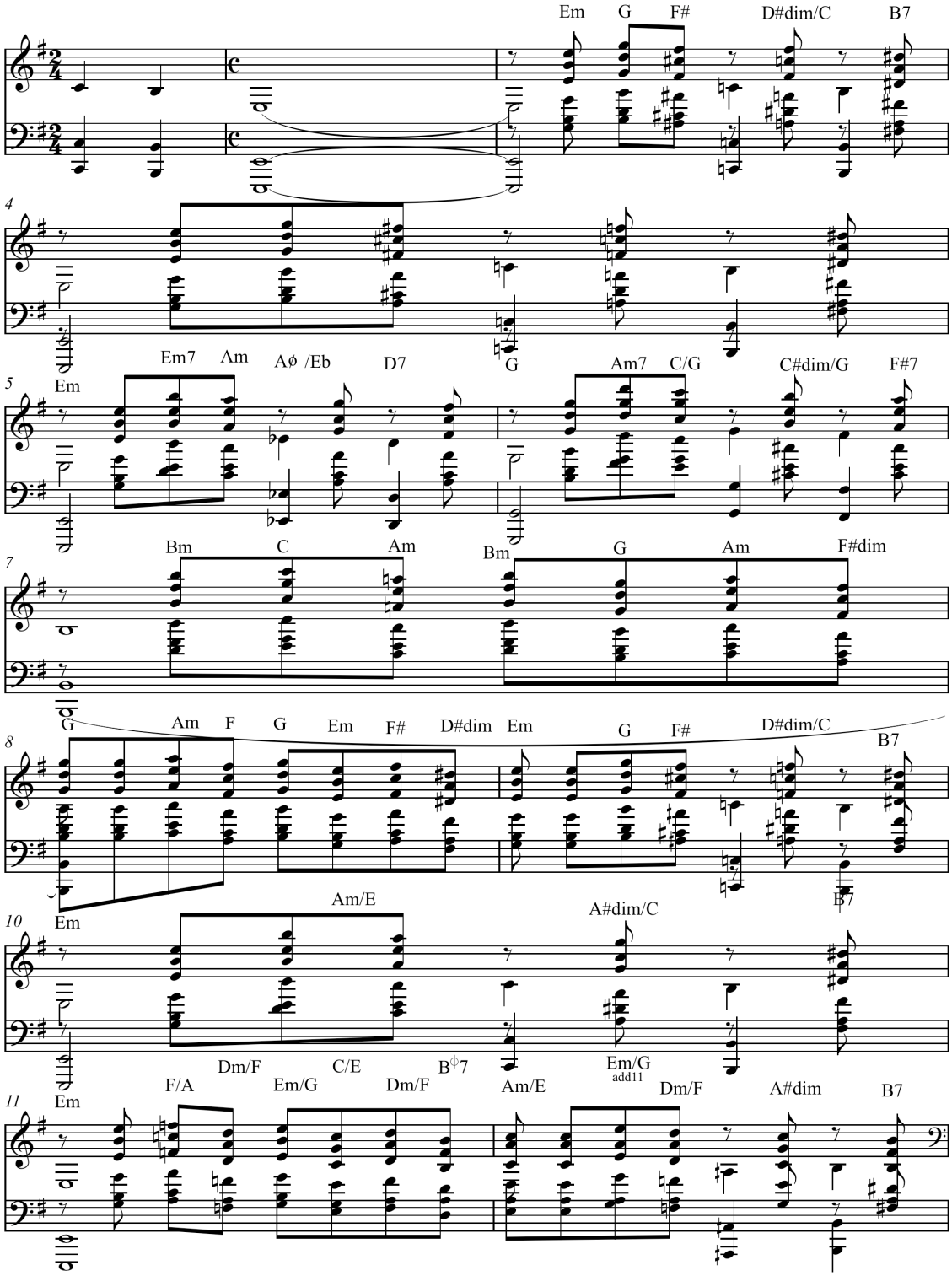
Rachmaninoff

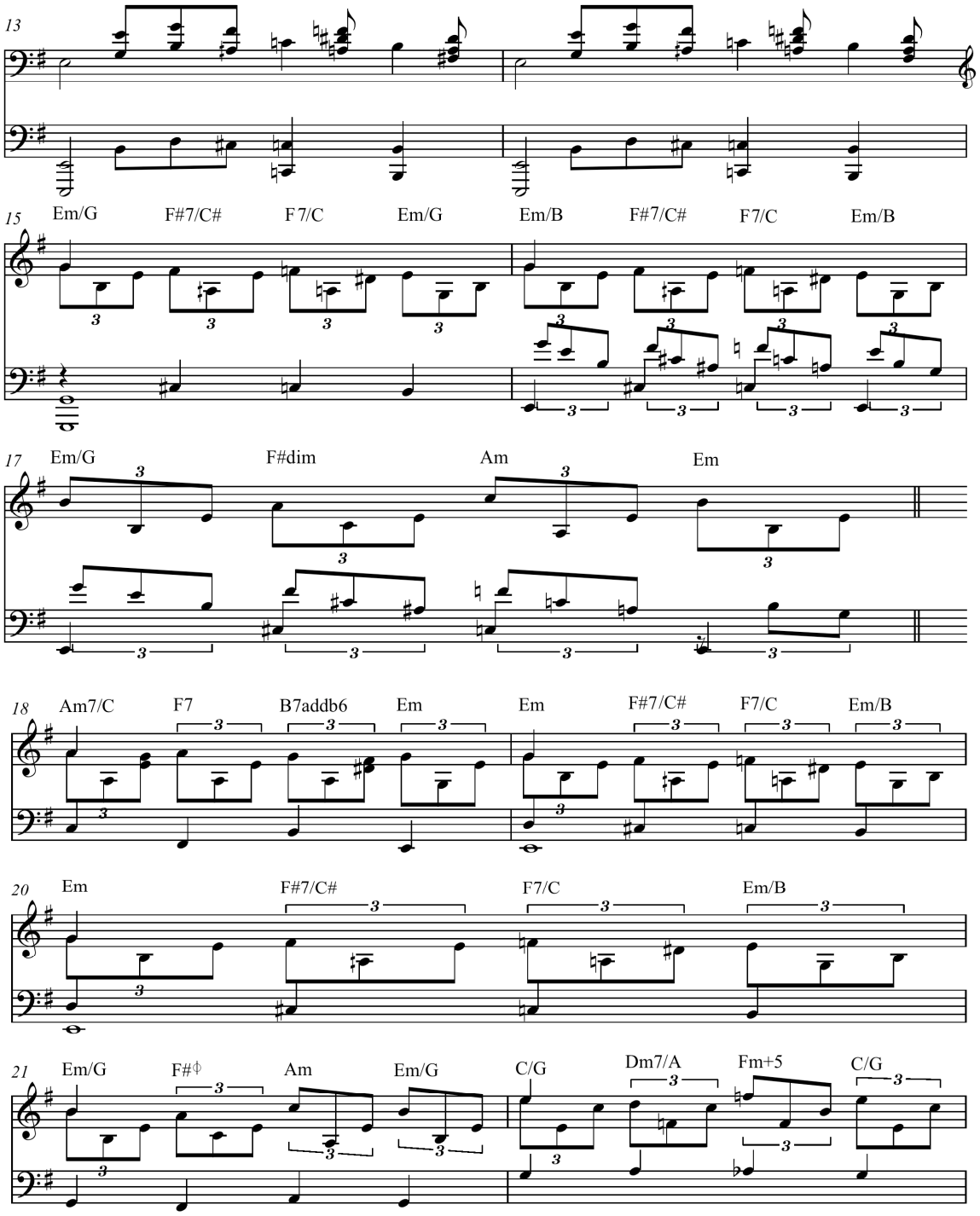


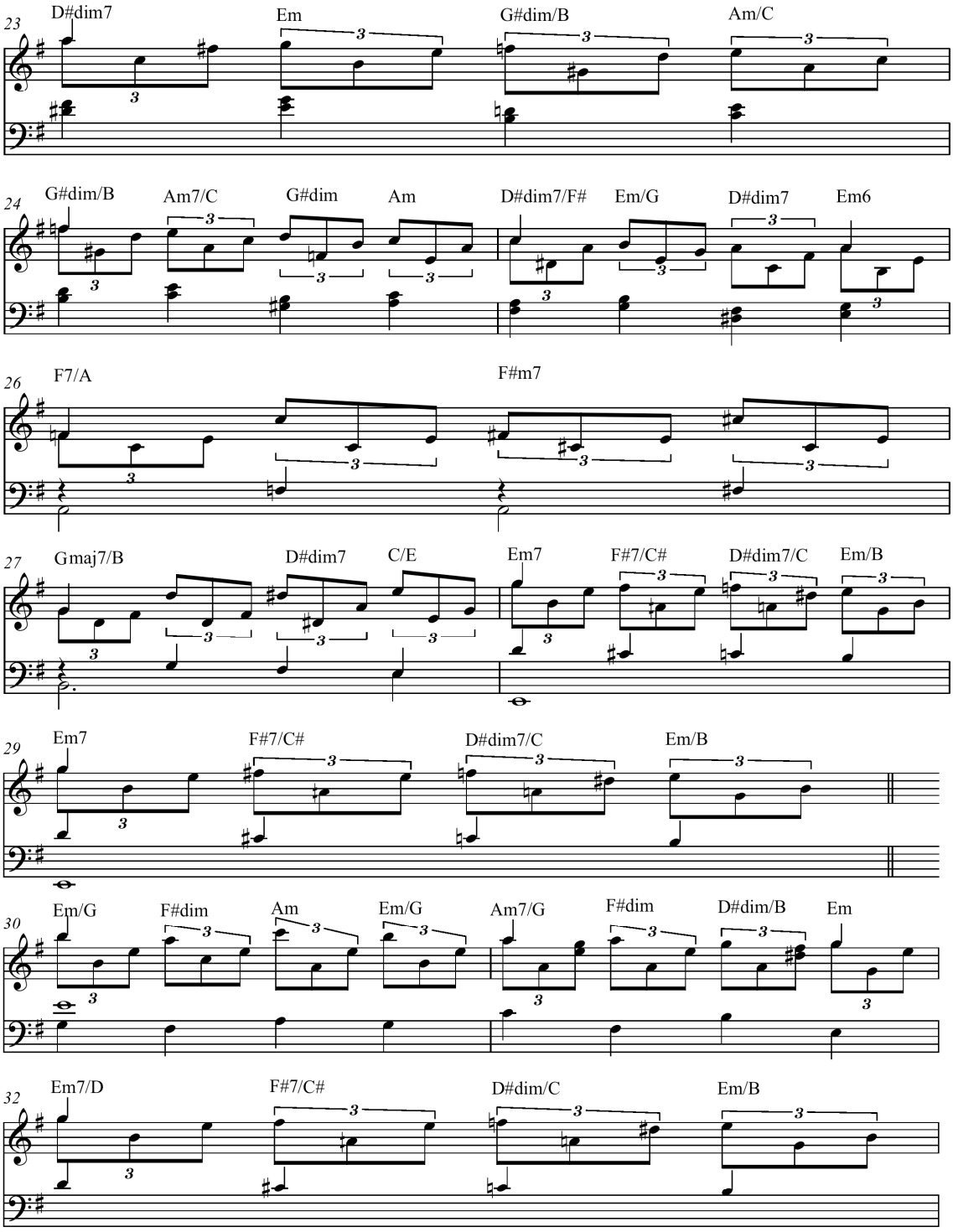

G F#dim7 F#dim7(add)/A Em/G
Edim F#dim
29
G F#7/C# F7/C Em
Em F#7/C# F7/C Em
31
G F#dim7 F#dim7(add)/A Em/G
G#dim7/B Am7 G7 C
33
G#dim7/B Am7 F#dim/A Em/G
F#dim7 Em B7/D# F/A
35
F7 F#/A# F#7 G/B
G7 Em
37
♩=84 Em F#/C# F/C Em Em F#/C# F/C Em
Em/G F#dim F#dim/A F#dim7 Edim Em D#m
39
Em F#/C# F/C Em Em F#/C# F/C Em
Em F#dim7 F#dim7/A
41

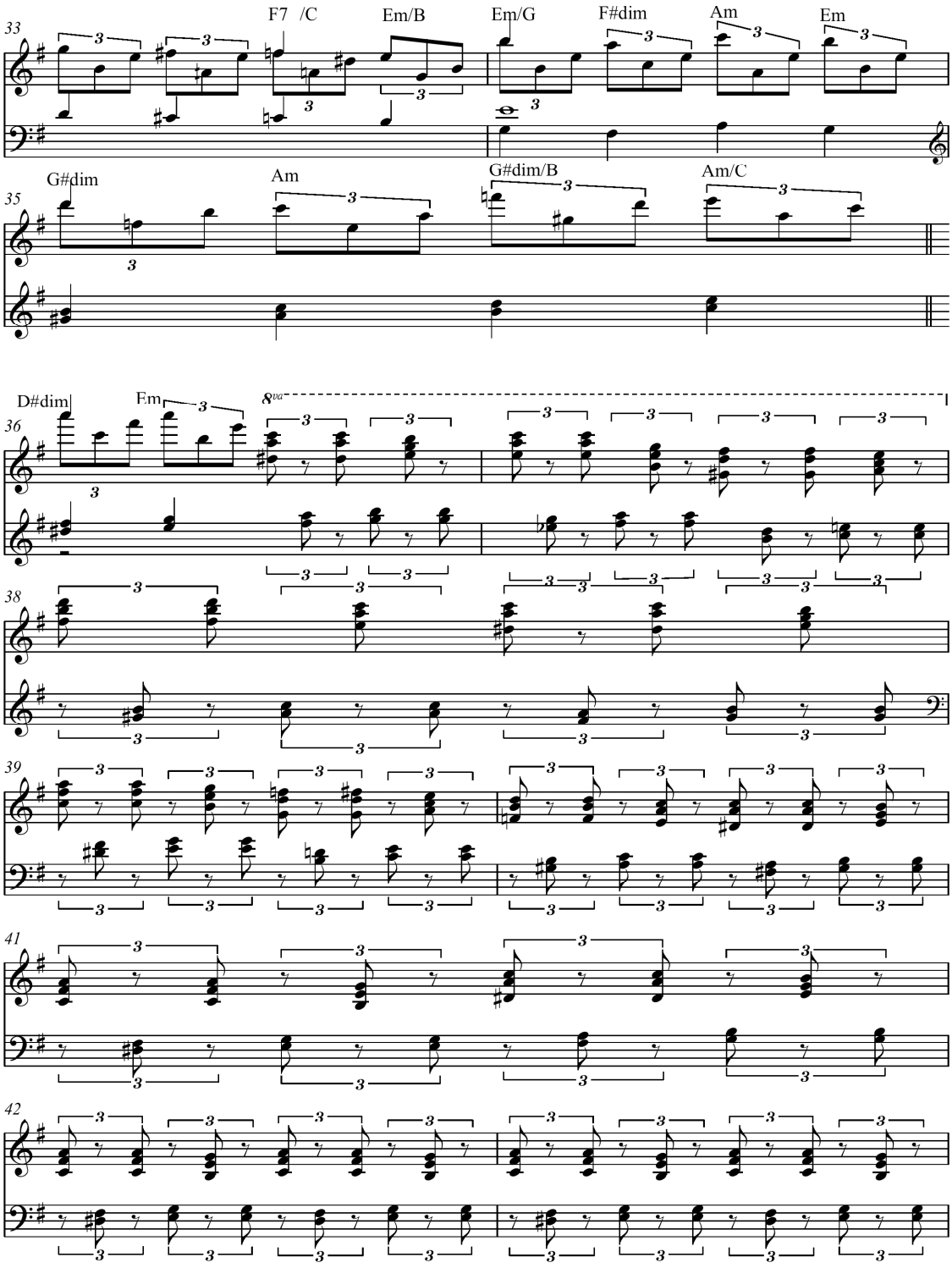

43
A dim
F# dim
Em
G7/D
Am/E
G# dim/B
Am
Harm.
8va
12th
5th
7th
Slowly
Let ring....
46
♩=100 Em
F#7/E
F7/C
B7
Em
F#7/E
F7/C
B7
Em
Em7
Am/E
51
Eb7
D7
Gm
G7
Cm/G
Em/G
F#7
Bm
Cmaj7/B
Am9
55
Em/B
F#m11
Adim7
Am7
Em
F#7/E
F7/C
B7
Em
F#7/E
59
F7/C
B7
Em
Em7
Am/E
Eb7
D7
Gm
Gm7
Cm/Eb
63
Em/G
F#7
Bm
Cmaj7/B
Am9
Em/B
Adim7
Accel. slightly...
F#m11
Am7
Em
F#7/E
67
F
Let ring....
B7
Let ring....
Harm.
12th
Rubato
Edim
71
E7
Adim/E
Em
Harm.
12th
5th

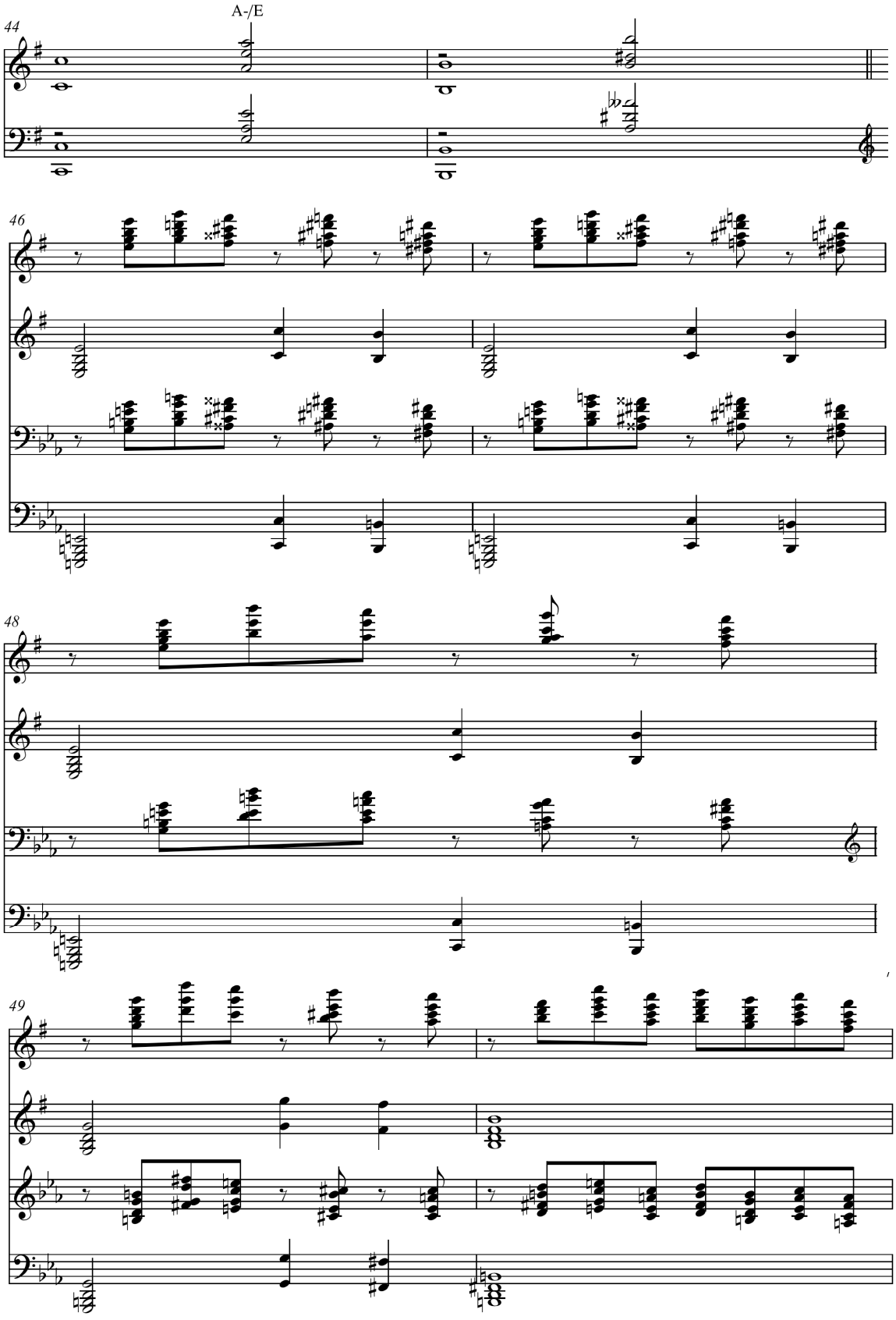
Rachmaninoff Prelude in C# Minor (Transposed to E Minor)

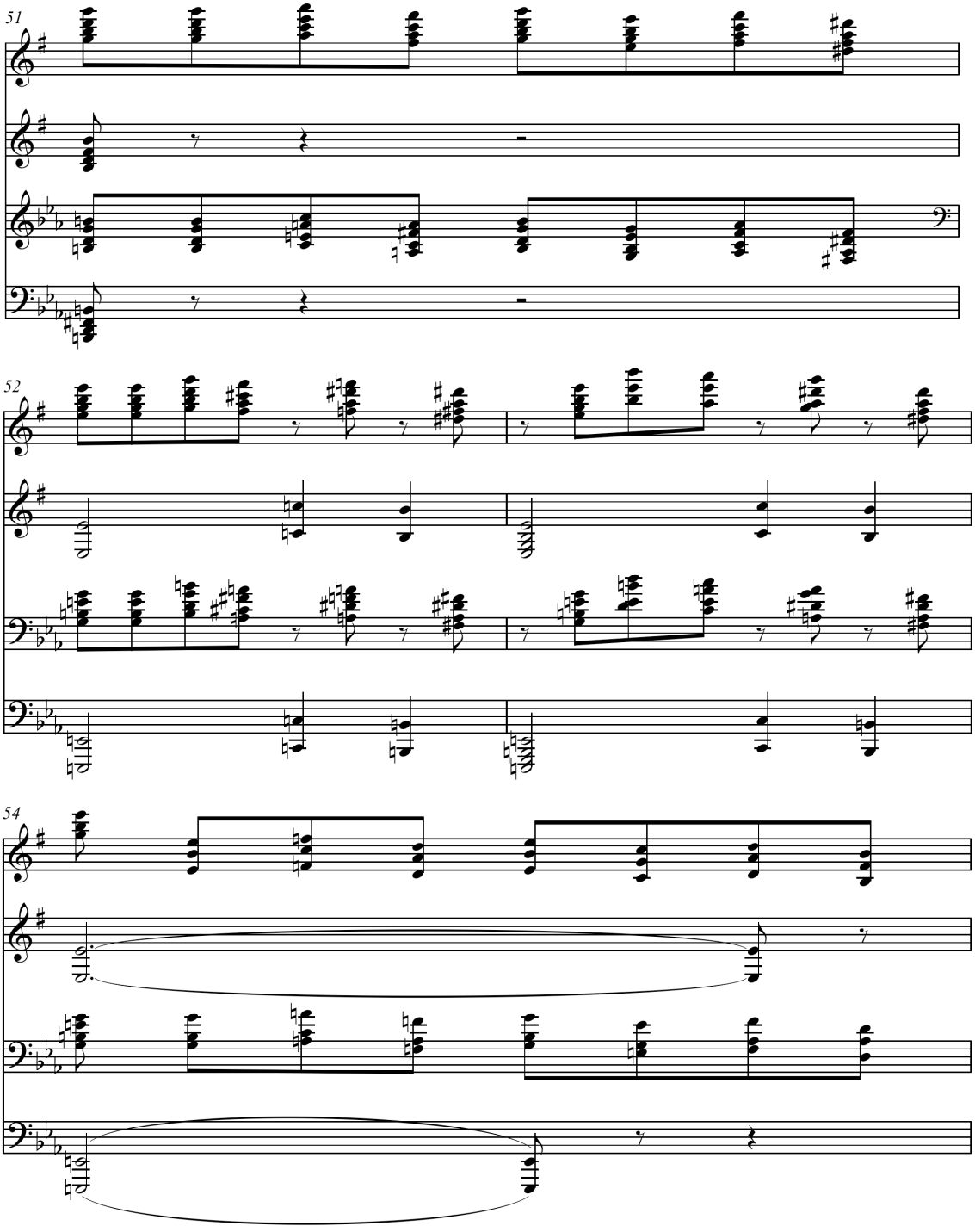


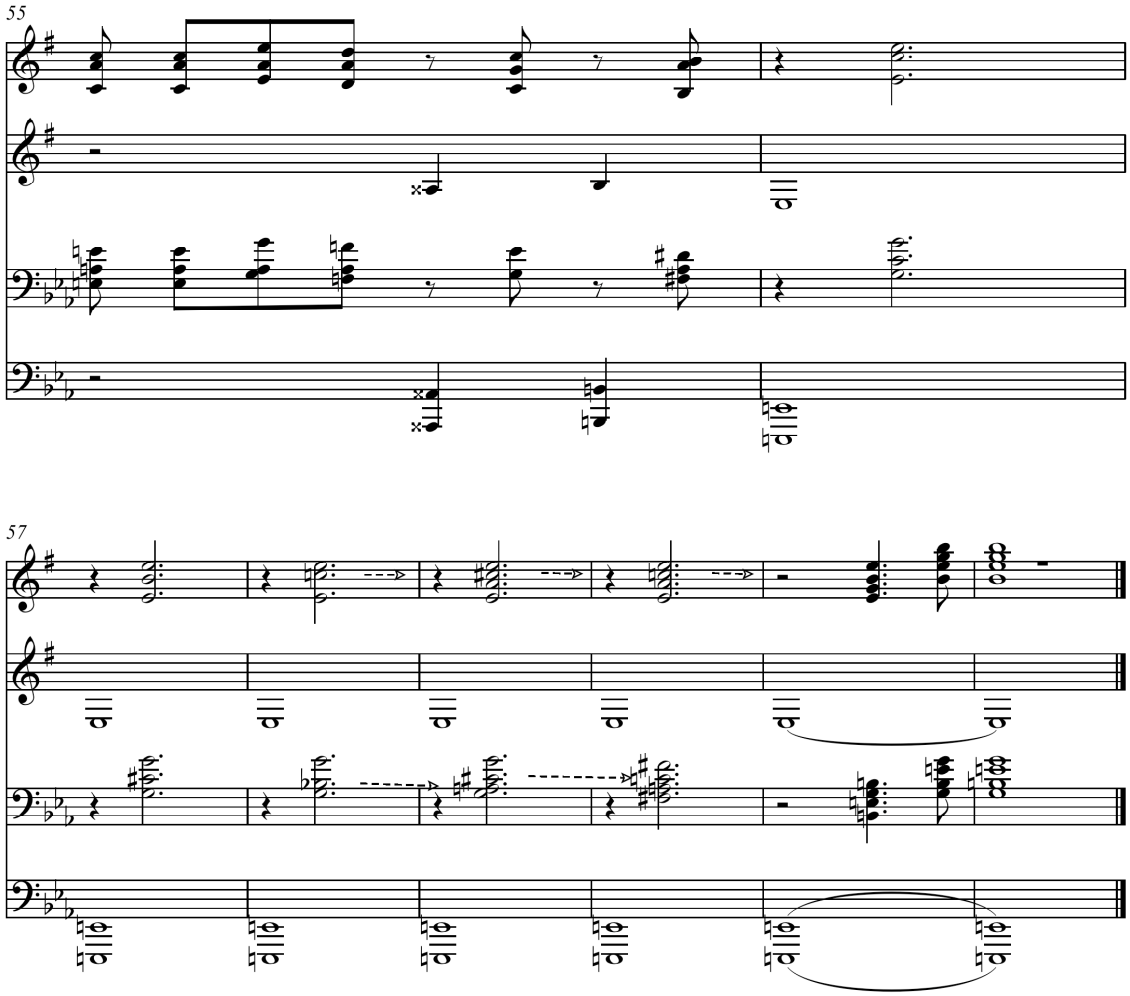

13
15
Em/G
F#7/C#
F 7/C
Em/G
Em/B
F#7/C#
F 7/C
Em/B
17
Em/G
F#dim
Am
Em
18
Am7/C
F7
B7addb6
Em
Em
F#7/C#
F7/C
Em/B
20
Em
F#7/C#
F7/C
Em/B
21
Em/G
F#ϕ
Am
Em/G
C/G
Dm7/A
Fm+5
C/G


23
D#dim7
Em
G#dim/B
Am/C
24
G#dim/B
Am7/C
G#dim
Am
D#dim7/F#
Em/G
D#dim7
Em6
26
F7/A
F#m7
27
Gmaj7/B
D#dim7
C/E
Em7
F#7/C#
D#dim7/C
Em/B
29
Em7
F#7/C#
D#dim7/C
Em/B
30
Em/G
F#dim
Am
Em/G
Am7/G
F#dim
D#dim/B
Em
32
Em7/D
F#7/C#
D#dim/C
Em/B


33
F7 /C
Em/B
Em/G
F#dim
Am
Em
35
G#dim
Am
G#dim/B
Am/C
36
D#dim
Em
8va
38
39
41
42


A-/E
44
46
48
49


51
52
54


55
57

Chapter Four

Analysis of "A Little Love, A Little Kiss"

Eddie Lang's "A Little Love, A Little Kiss" was originally recorded on May 28th, 1927. Two recordings were made that day, however Okeh records rejected both. Lang recorded the song two more times on June 9th, 1927. The latter was accepted and released by Okeh.[54]

Benjamin Givan states in his book *The Music of Django Reinhardt* "Lang much more frequently played chords containing intervals of less than a major third between adjacent notes…."[55] Richard Sudhalter remarked, "…[Lang] possessed a harmonic awareness that was much ahead of his time"[56] and Michael John Simmons, " …[Lang] developed a style of lush chords…."[57] Lang's unique chord inversions and elaborate chord fingerings made this possible as this examination will demonstrate.

This style of music, considered "hot jazz" in the late 1920s, used half-step movement to unify certain chord progressions that otherwise might sound unusual. Lang takes full advantage of this. Half-step movement,[58] borrowed from the blues tradition, is a large part of his technique.

The introduction is played with a slight rubato. Lang strums each chord from the lowest note to the highest, giving equal preference for every pitch. It is by this strumming method (either with a guitar pick or fingered) that we can accurately gauge the

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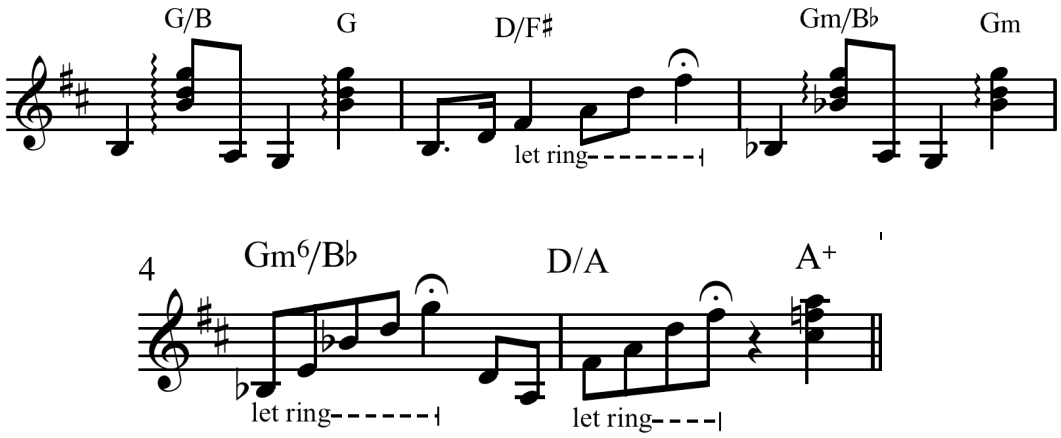
[54] Raymond F. Mitchell, *Feeling My Way: A Discography of the Recordings of Eddie Lang 1923-1933* (London: private publisher, 2002), 55.
[55] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 18.
[56] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945* (New York:Oxford University Press, 1999), 525.
[57] Michael J. Simmons, *Acoustic Guitar* (volume 15, issue143, November 2004),102.
[58] The half-step movement referred to here is the movement between a minor to major third, augmented fourth to a perfect fifth, or minor seventh to a major seventh.

intervallic voicing to show the complexity of certain chords and *how* Lang moved from chord to chord.

Lang begins with the note B, the third of a G major chord, descending diatonically to the note G in measure one:



Example 7: Measures one to five

This simple progression places emphasis on the moving bass line and is broken up by inflections of the higher timbre of the G chord. Lang plays the notes D and G with either a half-barre or with the middle and ring finger. There are easier ways to play this particular voicing by using open strings.

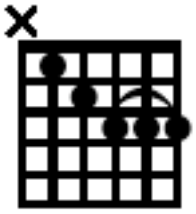
The bass line acts as the main melody and gives the piece a sense of rhythmic movement. In some instances, the bass line/melody weaves its way into the chord itself, as in measure two. The bass line ascends on beats one and two, while Lang slowly arpeggiates the D-major chord in first inversion on the last two beats.

Measures three and four modulate to the parallel minor. The G minor 6/Bb chord at measure four thickens the overall tone of the piece because of the lowered fifth between the first two notes (Bb and E natural). Since the chord is arpeggiated, the

dissonance becomes apparent in the recording. Had Lang strummed the chord faster, the interval may have been smothered to some degree by the other notes.

The chord shape places the emphasis on the melody in the bass by doubling the note Bb:

Gm6/Bb

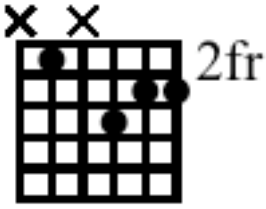


Bb, E, Bb, D, G

Example 8: Fretboard diagram, Measure four, Beats one to three

When compared to the G/B chord that opens the piece, the fingering is quite different. Here Lang plays the note B on the A string with his index finger, and the note B an octave higher on the G string is played with his pinky. Meanwhile, the note D on the B string is played with his middle finger and the high G with his ring finger:

G/B

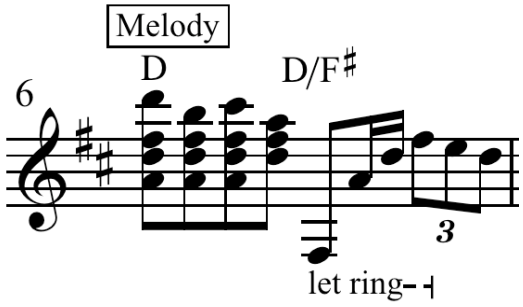


B, B, D, G

Example 9: Fretboard diagram, Measure one, Beat one and two

Both chords contain a doubled bass note and maintain the notes D and G as the upper voicing. As mentioned earlier, there are easier ways to play both chords. The G major chord can easily be played by taking advantage of the open G, B and D strings, as well as the G minor chord (aside from the open B string). One assumption as to why Lang does not use these forms could possibly be the movement from B to Bb. Perhaps Lang doubled those notes in both chords to make the half step movement noticeable in the recording when he modulated from key of G major to G minor.

The main melody from the French Folk song "Un Peu d'Amour" begins at measure six. Lang places it in the top voice of the first D chord by using his first finger to barre the D, G, B and E strings while his pinky plays the melody in the top voice:

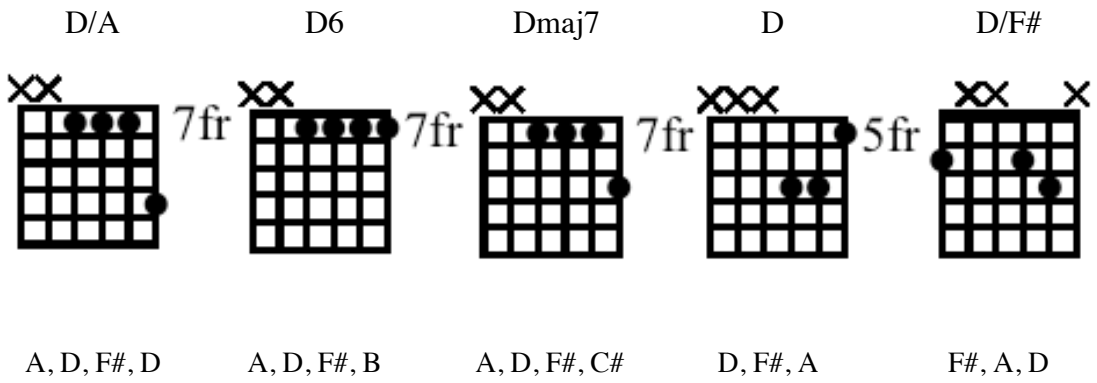


Example 10: Measure six

Use of the barre makes playing chords easier and frees the other fingers to play something else; in this instance the melody in the top voice. Although an easy technique, moving the barre greatly limits interesting voice leading, as this creates parallel motion.[59] In this instance, however, the barre is used as an important tool in creating oblique motion.

[59] moving a barre around without changing any fingers, whether a full or half-barre creates perfect parallel fourth motion on all the strings except G and B, which create major thirds.

Author Richard Sudhalter stated in his book *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945*, "…[Lang used] unusual intervals, particularly the pianistic tenth and Bix-like parallel ninth…." [60] This is evident in measure six in the first two beats of the D major chord when Lang incorporates these large intervals. If we look at the bass note A and the first melodic note D, we see the interval of an eleventh. The bass and melody then move to a ninth (bass note A: melody note B) and then a tenth (bass note A: melody note C#). This technique is a large part of his solo style, stretching the range of the instrument in order for it to sound like a "mini orchestra."



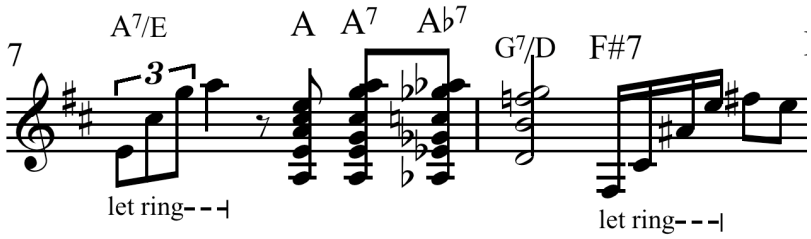
Example 11: Fretboard diagram, Measure six, Beats one to three

It should be noted in the fretboard diagram above that Lang barred the seventh fret with his first finger and played the melody with his pinky or ring finger. This allows him to maintain the harmony underneath the moving melodic line. Lang also ends the measure with two different voicings of the D major chord; the first in root position and the second in first inversion. He opens up the voicing between the two chords most

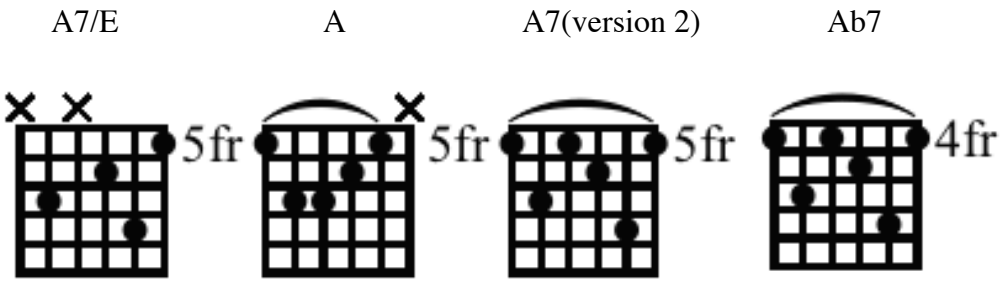
[60] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 27.

likely because the first two beats use a condensed voicing, being restricted by the barre and also the closed voicing of the D major chord. When inverted, the low F# in the last chord separates the notes, thus opening the range of the presentation.

Measure seven and eight show Lang's variety of chord shapes and hidden half-step movement:



Example 12: Measures seven and eight



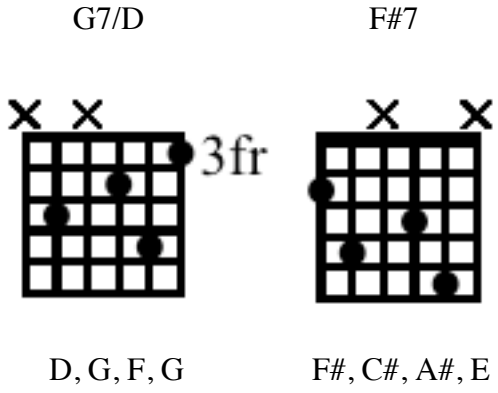
Example 13: Fretboard diagram, Measure seven

The A7/E chord at measure seven looks unusual because of the four notes in the diagram, though it is most likely barred the entire fifth fret, plucking those specific notes with his right hand. This is also an indication that he may have finger-picked this section,

supporting statements made in chapter one that he was able to switch from a guitar pick to finger-picking style effortlessly.

Lang then "pulls in" the voicing from the A7/E chord to an A major chord by moving certain notes inward and keeping common tones. For example, the notes C# and E stay as the common tone while the note G descends to E. This closes the voicing which Lang plays by barring the fifth fret. He adds the high note G in the A7 chord on the last beat, creating a major second interval between the top two voices. This supports the statement made by Benjamin Givan that Lang "played chords containing intervals of less than a major third." [61] He then moves this shape backwards by a half-step to play the Ab7 chord.

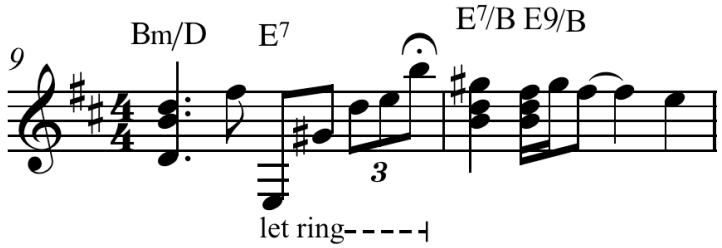
As the Ab7 moves to G7/D chord, Lang opens up the overall timbre by playing notes further apart intervalically, yet uses the same chord shape. This is accomplished by finger-picking the chord, placing the emphasis on particular notes rather than strumming the entire chord with a guitar pick.



Example 14: Fretboard diagram, Measure eight, Beats one to three

[61] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 18.

This technique is probably what people heard, such as Richard Sudhalter when he stated that Lang "…[made] the guitar in effect a miniature orchestra." [62] This is the same manner in which a classical guitar player would play certain notes of a chord, rather than strum the entire six notes. The selection of note voicing is just as important to the orchestration of the piece. As mentioned in chapter one, guitar players such as Lonnie Johnson and Nick Lucas strummed entire chords using common chord shapes, keeping the melody and accompaniment separate, whereas Lang chose to combine the two.[63] Lang does not use the barre in measures nine and ten, preferring triads:

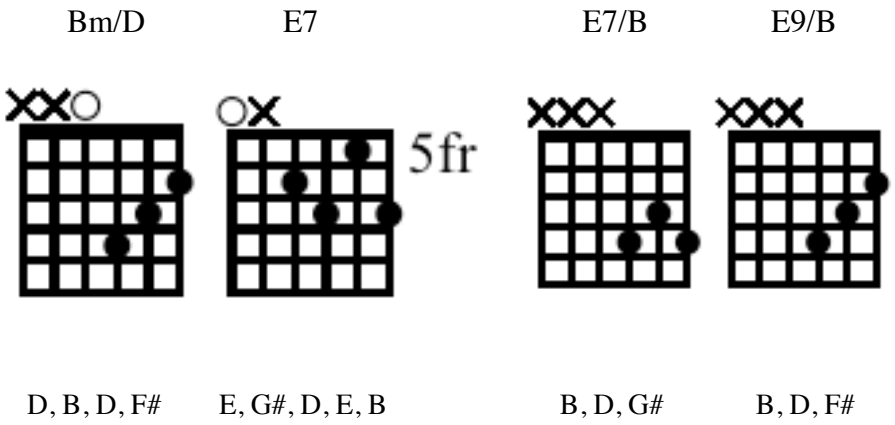


Example 15: Measures nine and ten

Other than the E7 chord on beats three and four of measure nine, Lang uses triads. Because these chords are played on the higher strings, the overall timbre becomes brighter (other than the open E string).

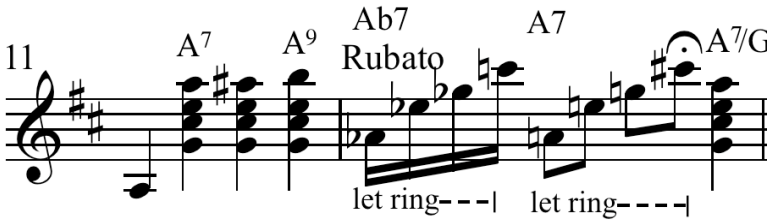
[62] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contributions to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 525.
[63] Classical guitar players had been using this technique in Europe long before Lang, however it is important to separate Lang as an American-born guitarist, having been introduced to the classical guitar playing world through his admiration of Andre Segovia.

In addition to the change in timbre, Lang also uses a completely different set of chord shapes:



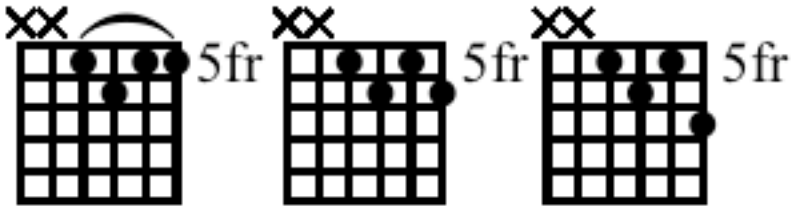
Example 16:Fretboard diagram, Measures nine and ten

By measure eleven, Lang returns to the use of the barre, first observed at measure five, to create oblique motion between the harmony and melody:



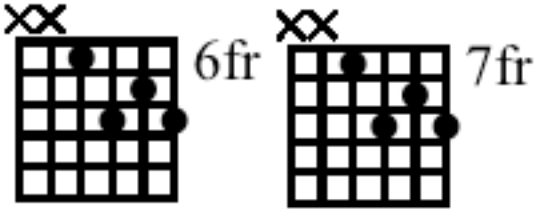
Example 17: Measures eleven and twelve

A7 A7 (2nd version) A9



G, C#, E, A G, C#, E, A# G, C#, E, B

Ab7 A7



Ab, Eb, Gb, C A, E, G, C#

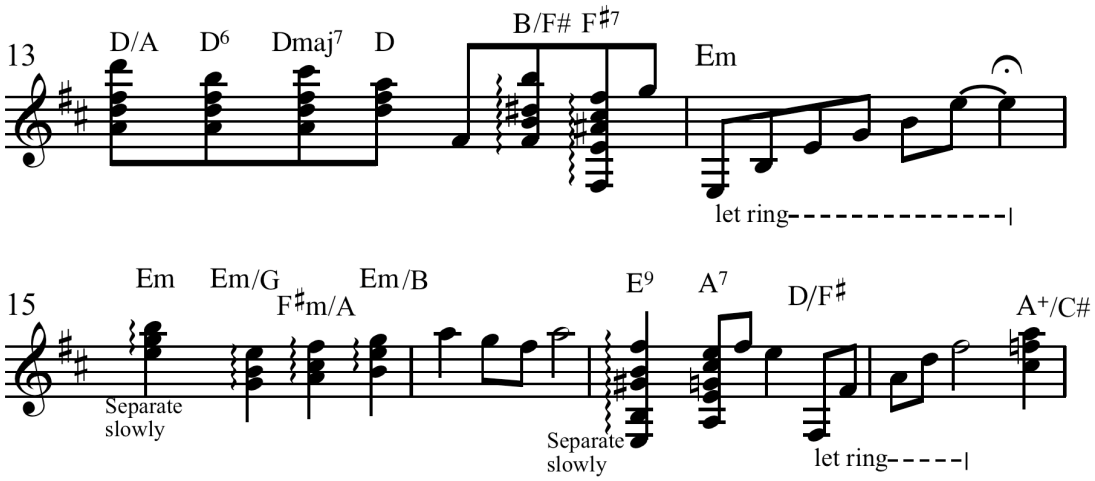
Example 18: Fretboard diagram, Measures eleven and twelve

In the case of the A7 chord at measure eleven (example eighteen), it is not played with a straight barre as seen at measure five, but a barre holding down the D, G, B and E strings with the middle finger playing the third of the chord. Lang has to change his fingerings in order to play the A7/G chord (2nd version), and then stretch his pinky to reach the high note B for the last chord on beat four. Measure twelve features the same chord shape for the Ab7 and A7 chords, which Lang simply moves up from the sixth to seventh fret.

Lang uses the half-step to connect the chord progression in these two measures. This is done through the melody in the top voice ascending by half-step; A-A#-B-C-C#.

He maintains the oblique motion at measure eleven while the ascending melody takes the emphasis off of the parallelisms at measure twelve.

Measures thirteen through seventeen concludes the A section:

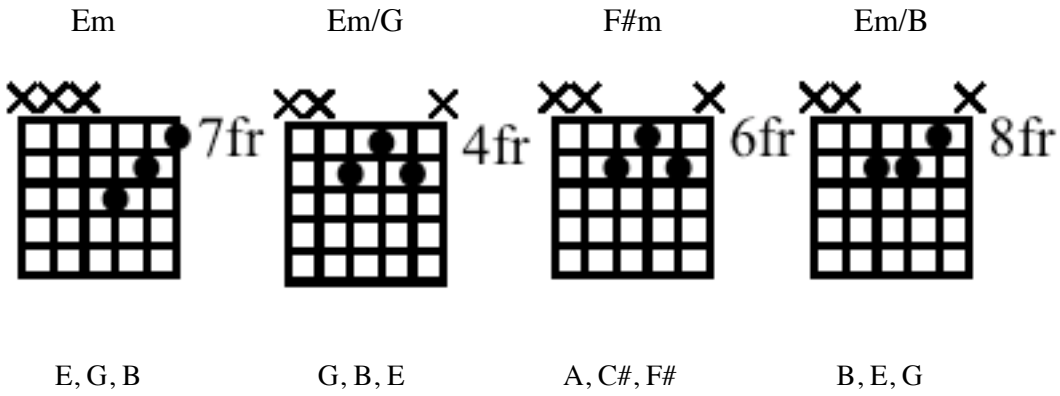


Example 19: Measures thirteen to eighteen

Lang begins measure thirteen with a repeat of measure five. For the last two beats of measure thirteen, he changes the progression by playing the B and F#7 chords before resolving to the E minor chord for two measures. Both are played with a barre using the index finger. The melodic idea played at measure five repeats here by dropping a minor or major third; D - B and C# - A. This melody then ascends a whole-step to B, down a fourth to F# and up a half-step to the note G. This melody ends at measure fourteen with an arpeggiation of the E minor chord, voiced in open position.

Measure fifteen extends the end of the A section with inverted triads. This study has seen this type of contrasting voice leading before at measure seven through ten. Lang

first plays thick, condensed chords (measure thirteen) and brightens the timbre with higher voiced chords.

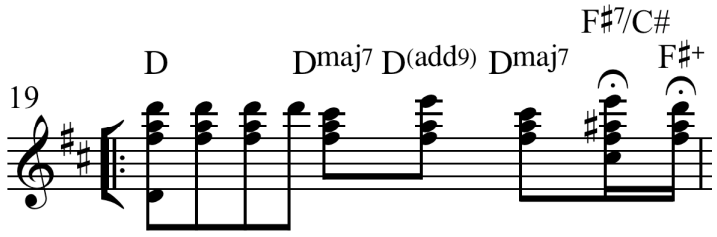


Example 20: Fretboard diagram, Measure fifteen

The diagram illustrates Lang's use of the higher register of the instrument. He inverts the E minor chord three different ways in order to maintain the ascending motion on the last three beats. These chords are played slower, with a slight stagger. This makes the cadence sound light and airy, putting a definitive ending on this section. He extends the cadence slightly with brief melody at measure sixteen before playing the V of V (E9), then the V (A7) before resolving to the tonic.

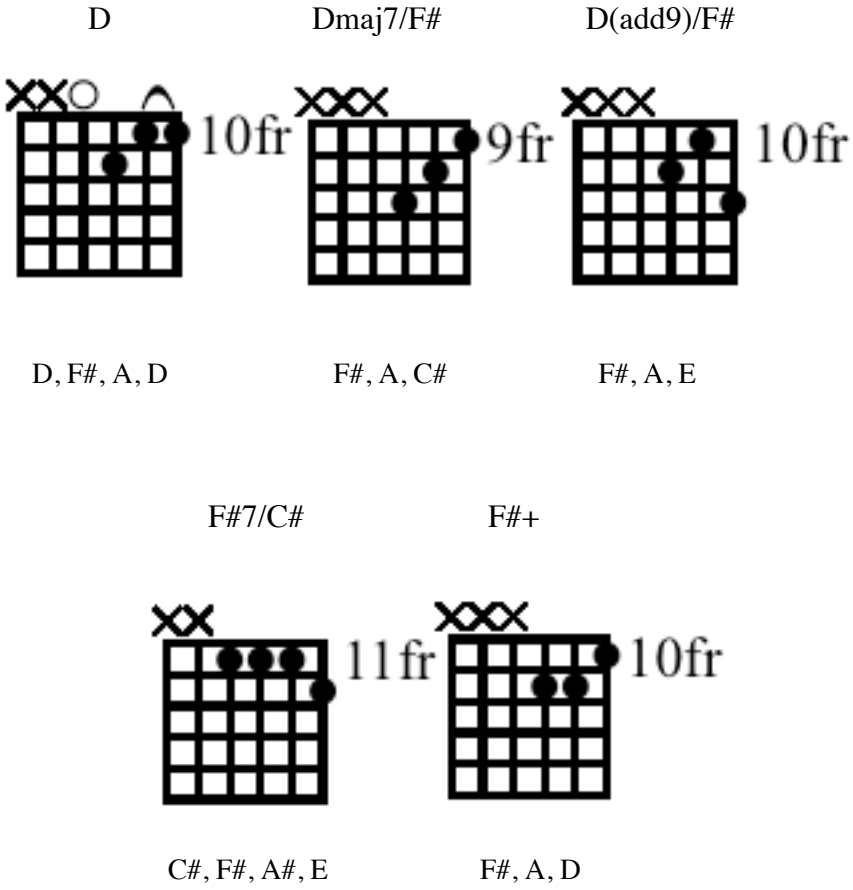
The E9 and A7 chords are played as open position chords, returning to the thicker, fuller voicing, a stark contrast of the previous two measures. The D major is played as a barre, thus officially ending the A section.

The B section begins at measure nineteen:



Example 21: Measure nineteen

Lang creates oblique motion again at the end of measure nineteen in order to bring out the melody, changing the chord to F#+ on the last beat:



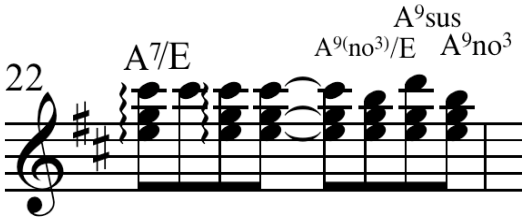
Example 22: Fretboard diagram, Measure nineteen

. Looking at the diagram, one will notice that Lang plays these chords much higher on the guitar than any other section of the piece. This results in a distinct timbre change in this section of the piece. The higher tessitura also allows the melody to reach a climax to some extent.

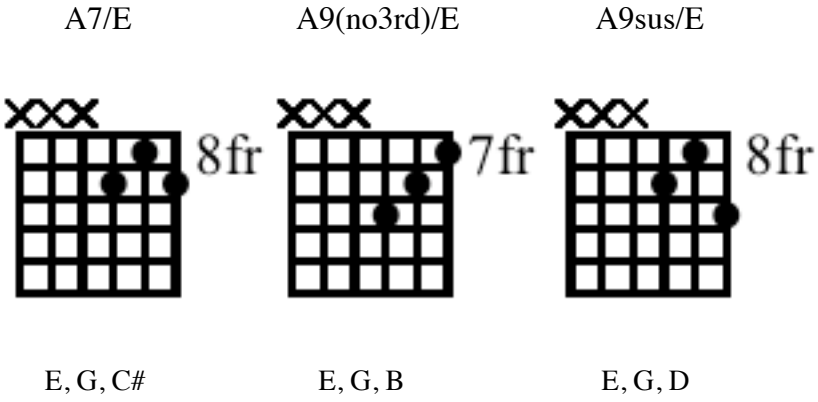
This section is also played aggressively and with considerable attack, which means he may have used a guitar pick. It is logical that he would because the notes are so high. Lang would have to play them with force in order for the sound to be adequately amplified by the recording devices of that time period.

In order to keep the notes F# and A in the three D major chords, each shape requires a different fingering. The first D chord shape was most likely played with a barre at the tenth fret on the B and E strings while the middle finger plays the note F#. The D(add9) features the ring finger on the F# and the middle on the note A. The last D major chord has the middle finger playing the F# and index playing the A. This is unlike measure six, where he simply barred the seventh fret and let his pinky or ring finger play the entire melody. This shows how important keeping the harmonic structure of the chord was to Lang. He then uses the note A of the D chord as a segue to the F#7 chord by making it the raised third, again linking them in a progression through half-step motion.

This same motivic idea found at measure five, thirteen and nineteen, repeats at measure twenty-two. As in measure nineteen, each chord shape must be played differently in order to maintain the harmony under the melodic line.

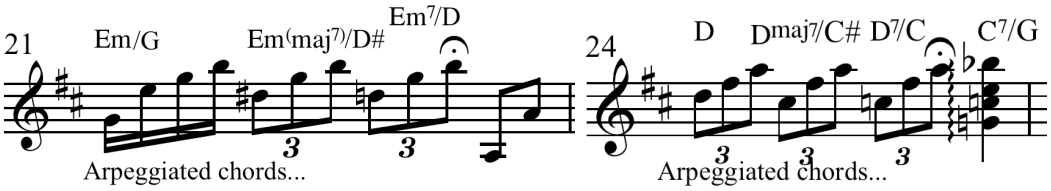


Example 23: Measure twenty-three



Example 24: Fretboard diagram, Measure twenty-three

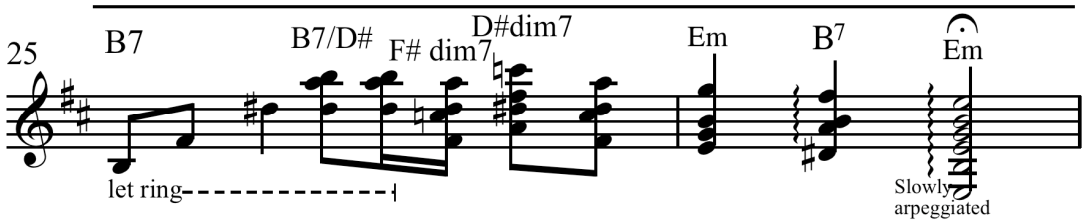
More half-step movement occurs in measures twenty-one and twenty-four, slightly hidden within the arpeggios. As the upper voicing remains the same, the root note of the main chord descends by half-sep to the major seven and then to the lowered seventh.



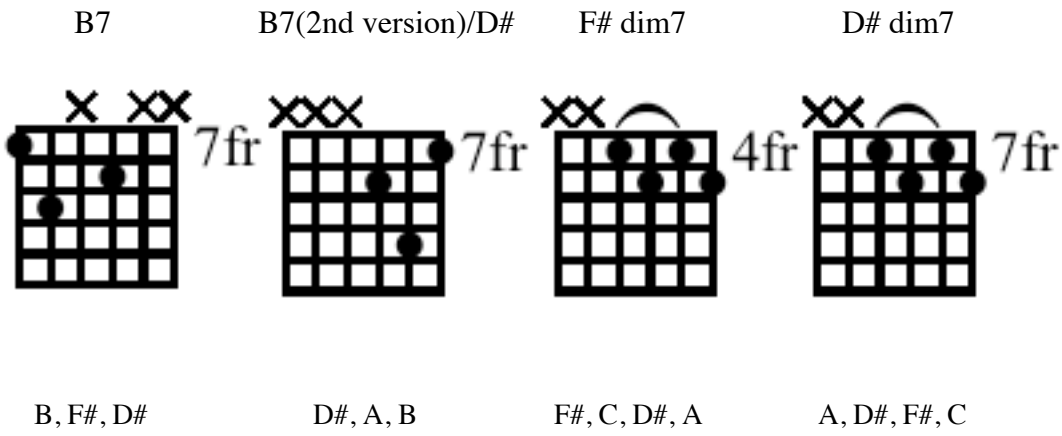
Example 25: Measures twenty-one and twenty-four

At measure twenty-one, the note E of the first Em/G chord drops to a D# and then to D. In measure twenty-four, the note D of the first D major chord drops to a C# and then to C natural. As mentioned in chapter one, author James Sallis refers to Lang's "bluesy lines." [64] These half-step melodic interludes are more examples of Lang's use of his blues influence and how he incorporates it into his own style of solo guitar.

Measure twenty-five resumes the melodic motif found at measure nineteen and twenty-two, this time as part of B7, F# and D# dim 7 chords, where he returns to the thick, lush chords:[65]



Example 26: Measures twenty-five and twenty-six

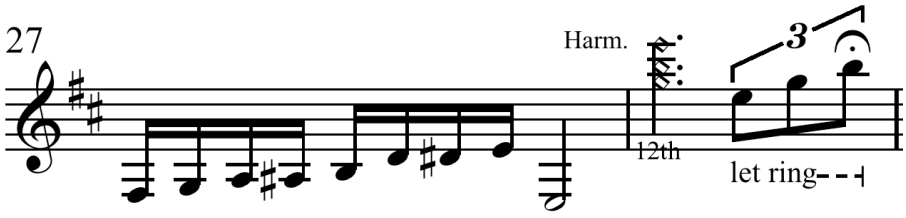


Example 27: Fretboard diagram, Measure Twenty-five

[64] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 27.
[65] As noted by Michael John Simmons in chapter one.

Note the two different inversions of the B7 chord indicated in example twenty. Lang likely barred the seventh fret, meaning both B7 chords are played using the same shape. The chords are set apart in this example to show how selective he was at choosing notes. The first B7 chord is arpeggiated and the second one is played as a chord. Instead of strumming it together, he uses it as a build up to the melodic motif, using the first half of the chord as the arpeggio and the second half as the melody/harmony. He finger-picks the first three notes[66] and strums the bottom three with a pick, creating two different chord voicings, thus opening up the timbre.

Measure twenty-seven begins the conclusion of the first ending that eventually finishes the same way as the A section (with the light, airy E minor chords and small melody first seen at measure fifteen). The difference in this ending is how he adds two of his signature techniques; natural harmonics and fast runs:



Example 28: Measures twenty-seven and twenty-eight

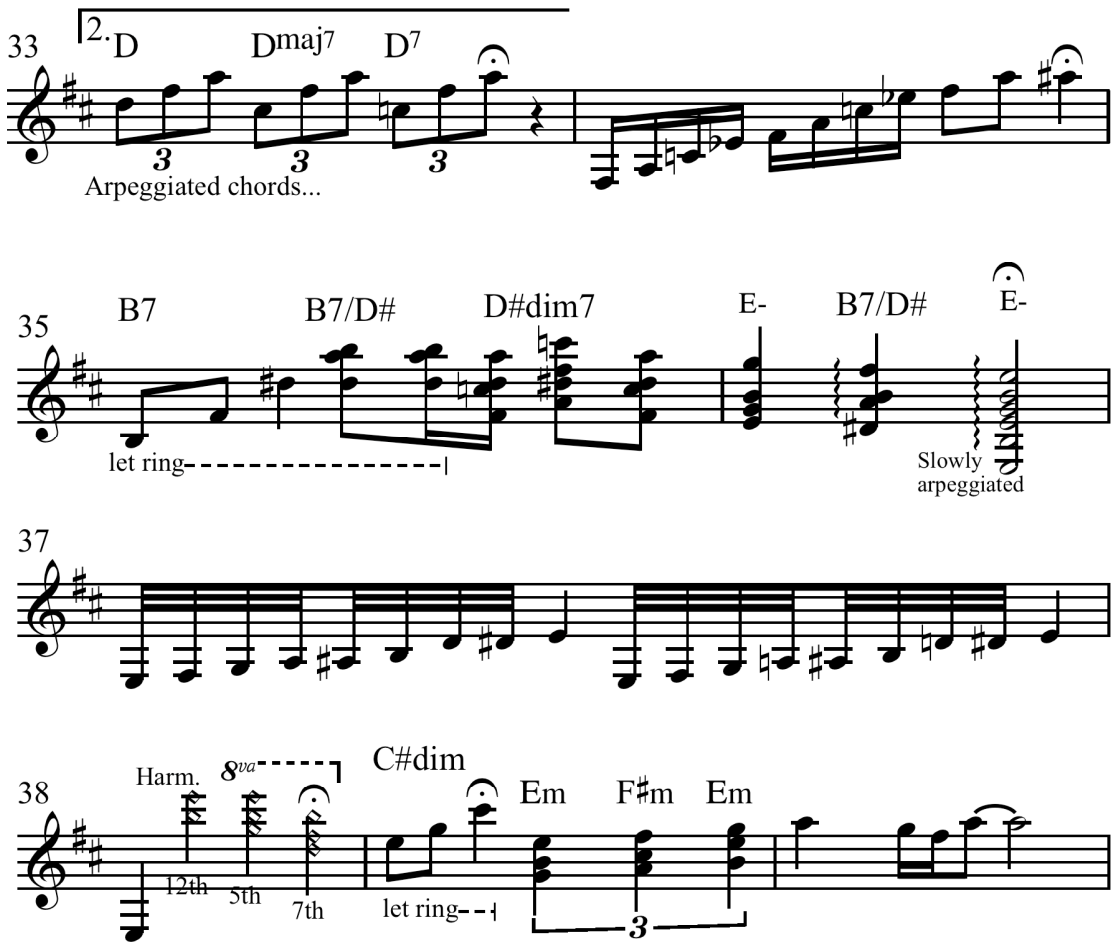
Lang begins this with a fast sixteenth note run based on the diminished scale. It is played with remarkable speed, accuracy and articulation. This indicates Lang used a guitar pick because of the strong accented notes. He finishes this phrase by using natural harmonics, played at the twelfth fret of the G, B, and D strings. He uses this technique

[66] This is assumed because he skips the D string, yet plays the higher note D# on the G string.

often, as will be seen in "April Kisses" and "Prelude" when approaching endings of sections or pieces in general.[67]

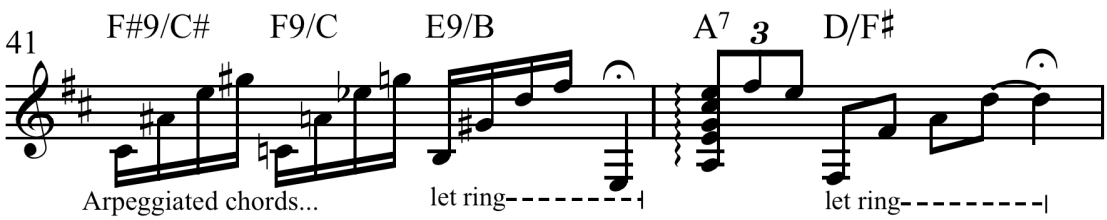
The second ending begins with Lang's half-step motive first observed at measure twenty-four, followed by another fast diminished run. Lang follows this phrase with a thirty-second note E minor scale that he plays twice, from lowest to highest at measure thirty-seven. Lastly, before the familiar cadence, he adds three different versions of natural harmonics, found at the twelfth, fifth and seventh frets:

[67] Lang may have been one of the first to utilize natural harmonics in this manner. He may have exploited it due to the Gibson L4 semi-hollow body guitar that he played. The guitar's unique build gave natural harmonics excellent resonance, and since Lang was also one of the first guitarists to record using a microphone, the natural harmonics could easily have been picked up within the microphone's electronics.

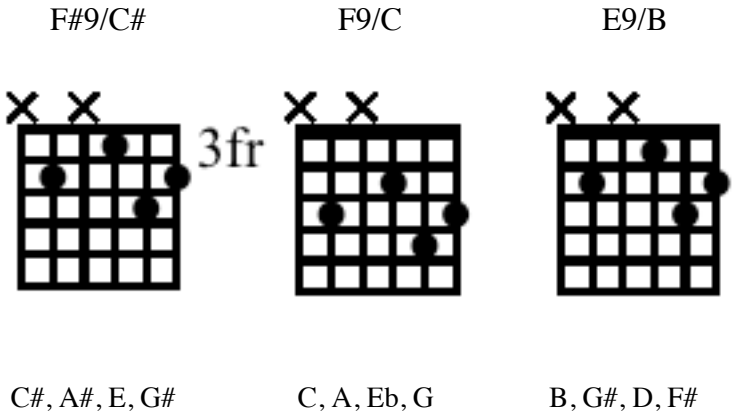


Example 29: Measures thirty-three to forty

Before the return of the A section, Lang adds another half-step idea at measure forty-one. Lang plays the same chord and moves backward, descending by half step. This brief progression contains parallelisms between all chords. This is unusual for Lang. As seen in other examples, he alters one or two notes when changing chords to avoid having every note moving in parallel motion:



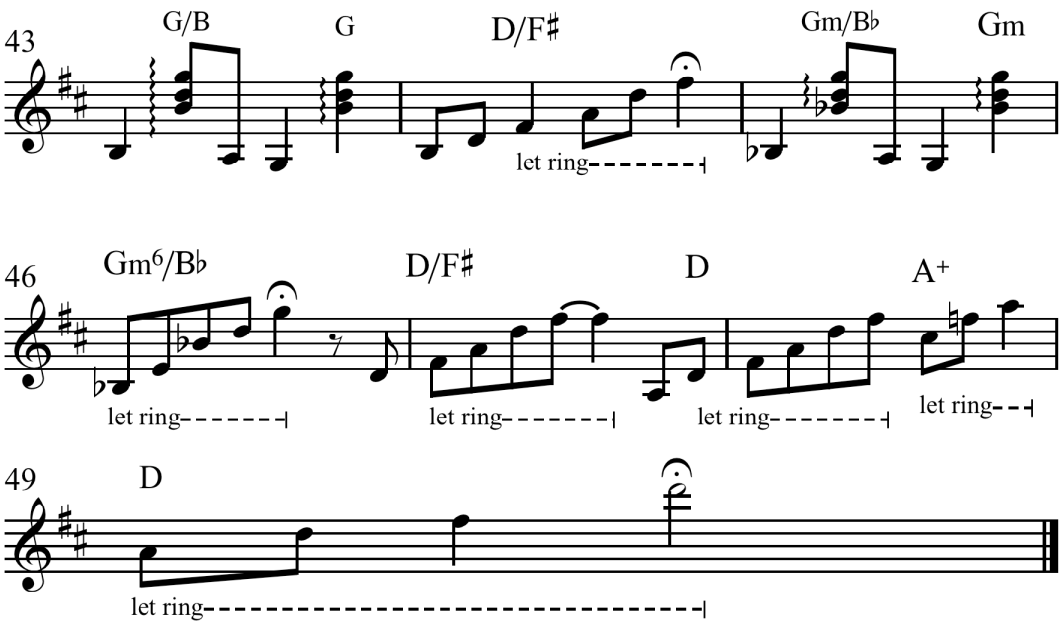
Example 30: Measure s forty-one and forty-two



Example 31: Fretboard diagram, Measure forty-one, Beats one to three

The F#9/C# chord requires some contortion of the fretted hand. Lang most likely played it with his middle finger on the A string, index on the G-string, pinky on the B string and ring finger on the high E string. Because of the difficulty, one can understand why he decides to move the shape rather than voice a different chord. Although Lang could have opted for a chord with an easier fingering, he chose to use the sound of each chords' ninth in the top voice.

The introduction repeats at measure forty-three, thus ending the piece at measure forty-nine:



Example 32: Measures forty-three to forty-nine

As the musical notation shows, Lang uses the same chord progression found at the introduction. The arpeggios begin in the lower register of the guitar, and by measure forty-eight, the A augmented chord brings the melody note up to the high A. He ends the piece on a high D, located at the tenth fret of the high E string. This is another example of how he uses the range of the guitar to stretch the timbral palette of the listener.

As this piece demonstrated, Lang's choice of chords varied greatly because of his extensive knowledge of the fingerboard. He was able to combine variations of inversions to create a colorful timbre and overall tone. His blues influence is found in the use of the half-step, which he so carefully weaved into his chordal phrasing. In essence, he showed what was harmonically and timbrally possible on the guitar, demonstrating how versatile it could be.

Chapter Five

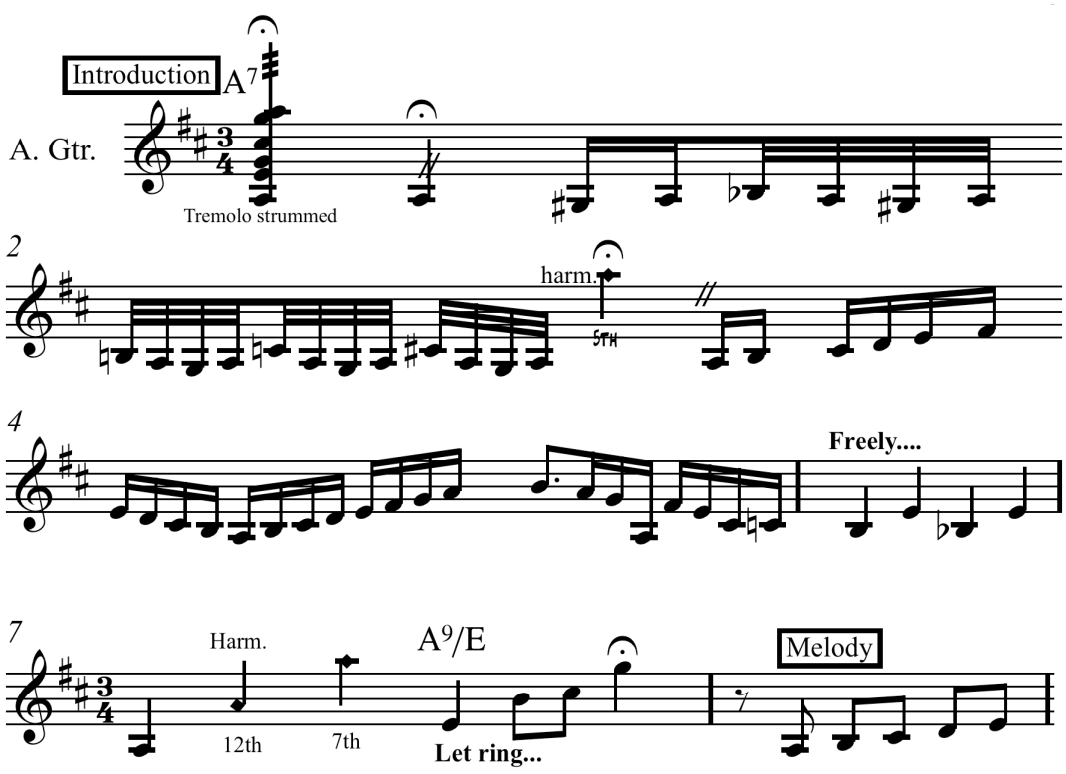
Analysis of "April Kisses"

Eddie Lang recorded "April Kisses" on April 1st, 1927.[68] The manuscript by David Berend (1933) was used as a template for this study. Berends' transcription is not completely accurate to the original recording. The one provided in this dissertation is the only known accurate transcription to date.

Upon listening to the piece, it sounds as if a pianist is playing along with Lang. Raymond F Mitchell, who spent approximately twenty-five years compiling the book *Feeling My Way: A discography of the recordings of Eddie Lang 1923-1933*, states Lang recorded this piece alone. There may have been an unknown pianist in the same room playing along with him, but certainly not accompanying him. Therefore this piece should be viewed as one of Lang's solo pieces.

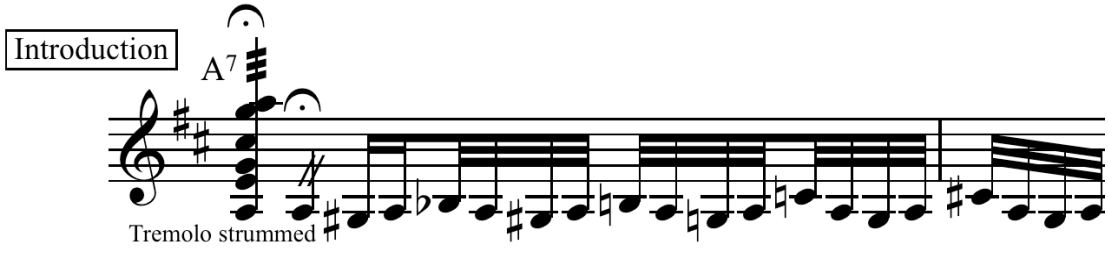
The introduction emphasizes the fast right hand picking technique Lang displayed in "A Little Love, A Little Kiss." He plays through a thirty second-note run with incredible speed and articulation:

[68] Raymond F. Mitchell, *Feeling My Way: A Discography of the Recordings of Eddie Lang 1923-1933* (London: private publisher, 2002), 42.



Example 33 : introduction to measure eight

Within the first run Lang features target notes ascending in half-steps. If we look closely at the run, Lang is building a chromatic line, starting on the A (as the first note of a four note grouping) and working up by half-step to the C# (Example 34):



Example 34: Measure two

As observed in “A Little Love, A Little Kiss,” half-step movement is a large part of Lang’s technique. This is evident in the opening chromatic run at measures one and two. The melodic run is intended to create the escalating half-step movement to D major, which Lang arrives to at measure ten.

Lang includes another half-step based phrase at measure six that leads into measure seven. The bass note descends from B-Bb-A while maintaining the note E in-between notes. This leads to the A dominant ninth/E chord at the end of measure seven.

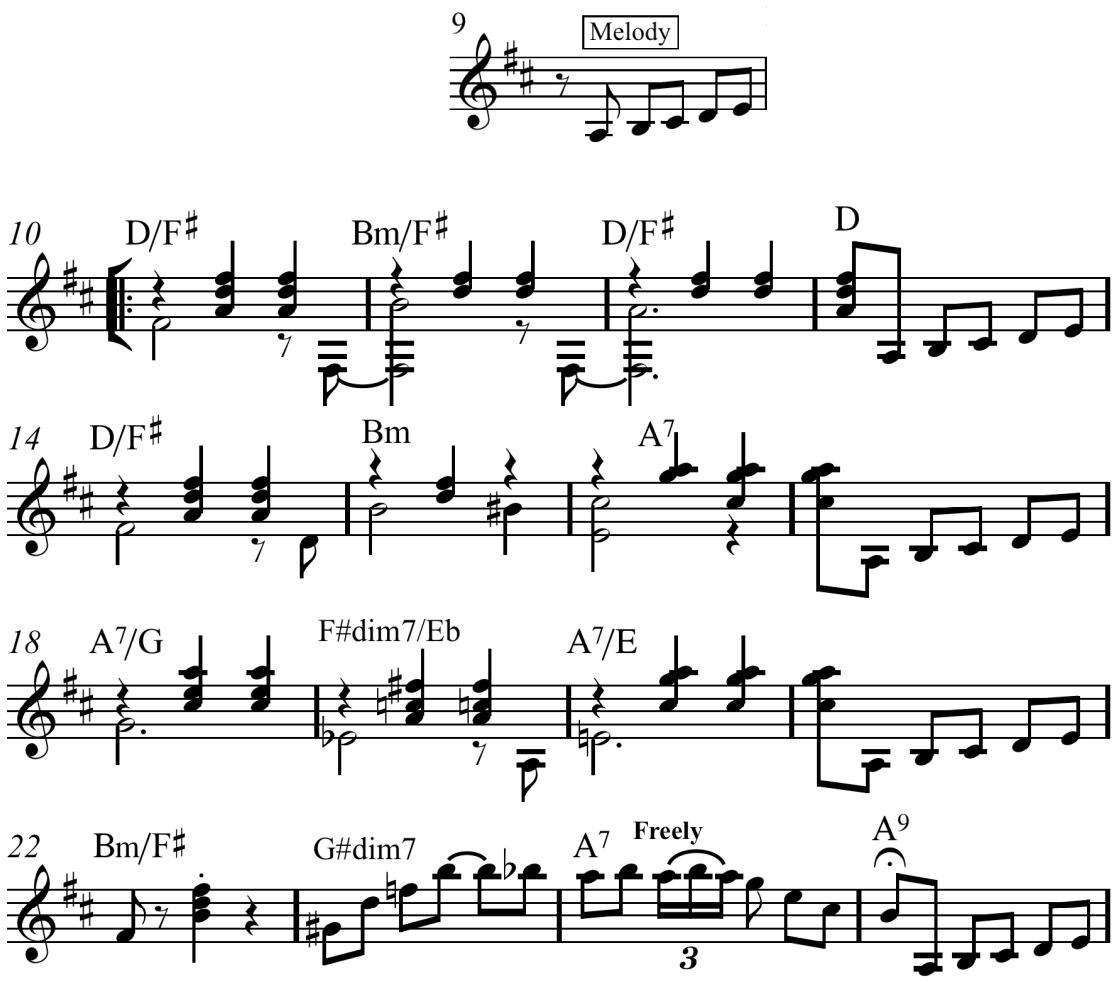
Also observed in “A Little Love, A Little Kiss,” Lang uses natural harmonics to end a phrase or cadenza. In this case, Lang plays the natural harmonic A in measure seven to end the first solo. He uses this particular natural harmonic to set up the dominant chord.

The A section begins at measure nine with a diatonic melody starting on the note A. This bass line also acts as the main melody of the piece. An interesting contrast from “A Little Love, A Little Kiss” is that the melody was in the top voice while being supported by the chords underneath. In “April Kisses” the melody is underneath the accompaniment.

It is clear in the recording that he plays the melodic bass line with a guitar pick because the accent of each note is precise and acute. The chords that follow in the 3/4 “ Oom-pah-pah” pattern are weaker, which indicate he may have played these by rolling a finger across the rest of the strings with the back of a finger nail while holding the pick between his thumb and pointer finger.

In many cases, the majority of the notes within the chord or chord progression stay the same as the bass note changes the inflection:

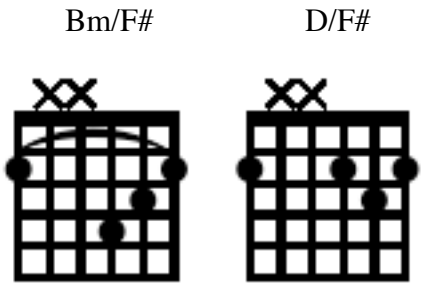
A section



Example 35: Measures nine through twenty-six

The bass line/melody begins at measure nine, accompanied by the chord above it. The diatonic melody leads up to the note F#, which is why Lang voices the D major chord in first inversion. He also plays the low F# slightly before each chord. The low F# leaves a large interval of an eleventh between the bass and melody in the B minor chord at measure eleven, and a tenth the D major chord at measure twelve. The large interval is

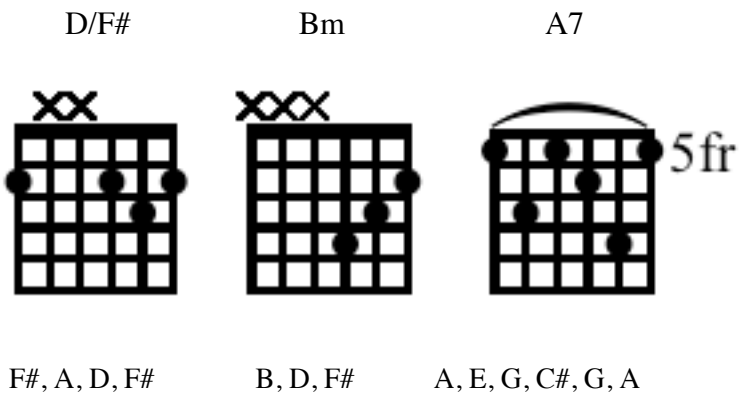
part of his technique separating the bass, chords and melody, in essence trying to make it sound like two guitars instead of one.



Example 36: Fretboard diagram, Measures ten and eleven

Looking at the fretboard diagram, Lang must barre the Bm/F# chord in order to maintain the low and high F#. His ring finger holds the note B while his middle holds the note D. He simply removes his ring finger for the D/F# for the note B to move to an A. This is another example of how Lang is intent on playing certain notes and having them move in a particular direction.

Lang changes the chord voicing the second time through the piece. This time he eliminates the low F#, instead placing it an octave higher. This enables him to create a moving bass line using his ring finger.

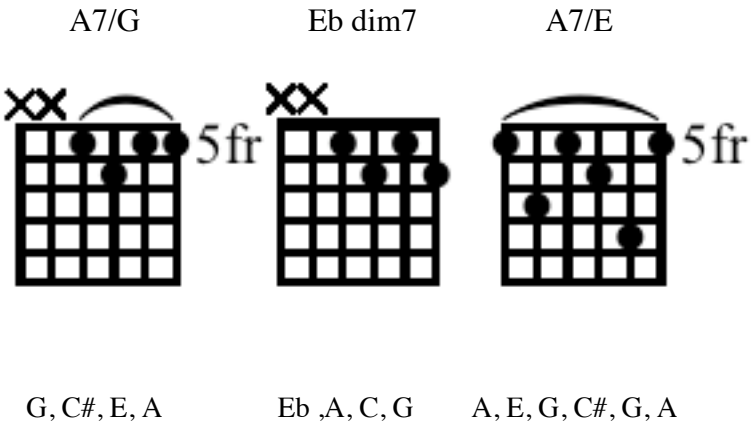


Example 37: Fretboard diagram, Measures fourteen through sixteen

Looking at the diagram, one observes three distinct chord voicings. The D major chord at measure fourteen is voiced here with the note F# an octave higher than before, and the B minor chord is voiced in root position. He returns to the same A7 chord with which he began the piece, with the exception he does not strum the chord, rather finger-picks selective notes of the chord.

Lang creates half-step movement from measures fifteen to sixteen as the root of the B minor chord moves by half-step to the note B# on beat three of measure fifteen. The note B# then moves up a half-step to C#, becoming the third of the A7 chord. Although brief, the half-step changes the melody enough to stand out in the recording.

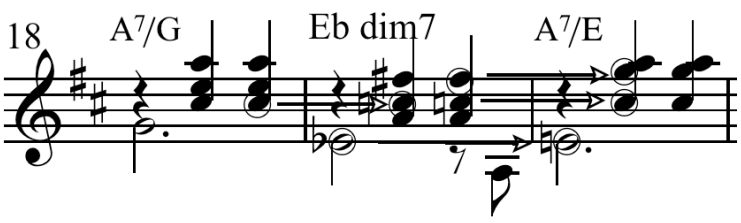
The third time the diatonic melody is introduced at measure seventeen, it is followed by a completely different chord progression. Instead of a D major chord, B minor and A7, it moves to an A7/G, followed by Eb diminished and A7/E chords.



Example 38: Fretboard diagram, Measures eighteen through twenty

Within these three chords is half-step movement that unifies the harmonic progression. This movement is not created by sliding a chord shape up or down the neck, but by three different shapes. As the A7 chord moves to Eb dim 7, the note C# of A7 moves to the note C natural at measure nineteen. These notes are inside of both chords, and somewhat hidden by the outside voices. The bass note Eb, although broken up by the open A string for a half beat, moves by half-step to the note E of a newly voiced A7 chord at measure twenty. Additionally, the C natural moves back to C#, and the note F# in the top voice of Eb diminished ascends to G, the lowered seventh of A7

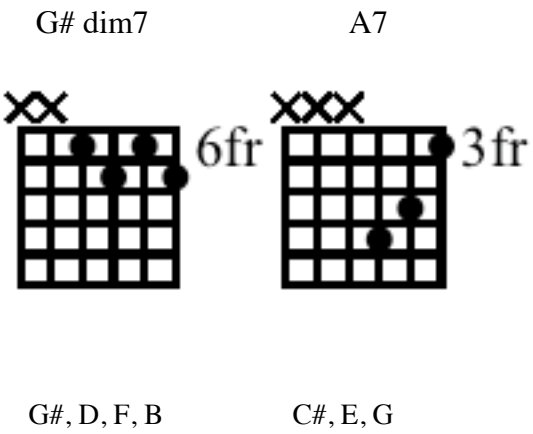
:



Example 39:Measures eighteen through twenty

After the fourth diatonic melody, the progression returns to B minor/F# chord at measure twenty-two. Measures twenty-three and four is a turnaround to get back to the A

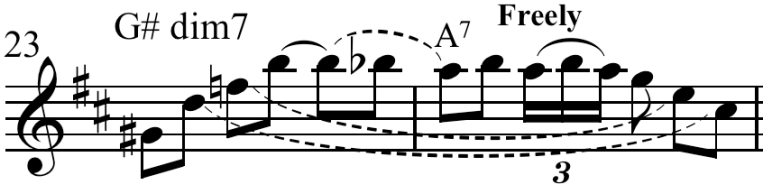
section; Lang accomplished this by arpeggiating a G# diminished 7 chord at measure twenty-two with a half-step descent in the melody at twenty-three:



Example 40: Fretboard diagram, Measures twenty-three and twenty-four

Lang uses a familiar shape with the diminished chord (same as the Eb dim 7 at measure nineteen). The note B in the top voice is where he descends by half-step: B-Bb-A. He trills the note A and then plays an A7 arpeggio backwards. This is the turnaround for the repeated melody at measure twenty-five.

We also see half-step movement hidden within the arpeggio, combining the two chords by using the note Bb:

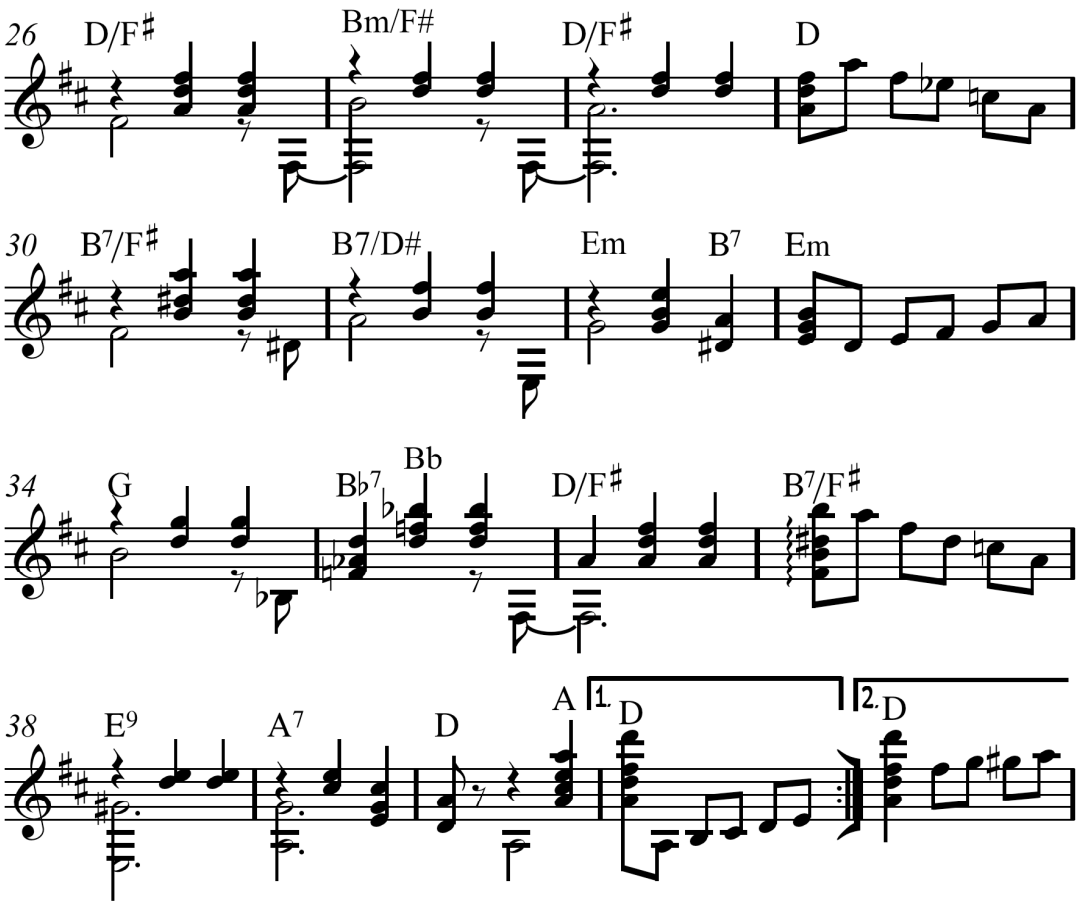


Example 41: Measures twenty-three and twenty-four

Besides the descending half-step movement in the top melody between measures twenty-three and four (B-Bb-A), there is also the note F of the G# dim 7 resolving to the

note E of A7 chord, and the note D resolving to the C#. Some may consider this a stretch of the imagination, or an over-analysis. How can one *not* come to the conclusion this was done intentionally, considering all the evidence we have seen thus far showcasing how Lang links chords by half-step movement?

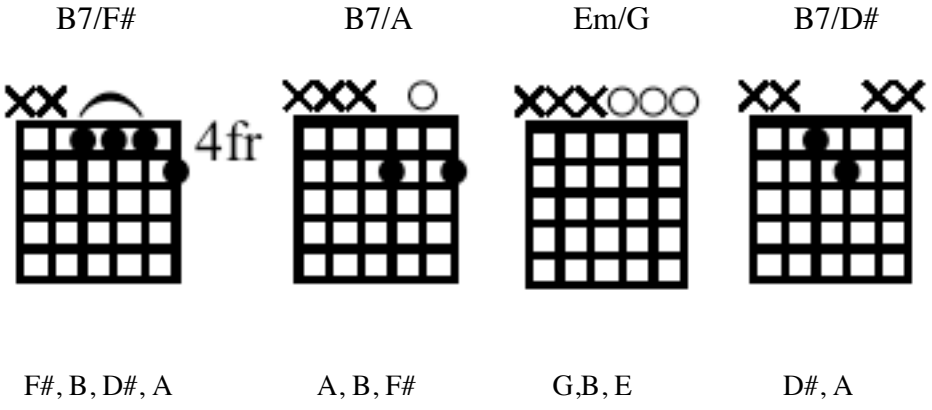
Measures twenty-five through twenty-eight repeat the same melodic and harmonic ideas found at measures nine through twelve (repeat of the A section). Instead of repeating the diatonic melody again at the end of measure twenty-nine, Lang plays a descending F7 arpeggio. This breaks the monotony of overusing the same melodic pattern presented in the first A section:



Example 42: Measures twenty-six to Forty-two

Lang changes the progression the second time through, introducing the listener to new harmonic concepts. At measure thirty, we see the familiar B7/F# chord. This changes at measure thirty-one, where the chord is now B7/D#. Notice how the note D# is absent from the chord at measure thirty-one. Instead, he uses the D# as the bass note prior to the measure, which leaps up to the note A. This dissonant leap resolves once Lang plays the remainder of the chord, but for half a beat creates a moment of tension.

The same idea is followed at measure thirty-two, minus the tension of the bass note. Lang introduces the E minor chord first, with the root note from the previous measure. The E minor is subtle, however broken up on beat three, just for a moment with another B7 chord, before quickly moving back to E minor. In this measure, Lang uses the half-step movement of the notes E and D# to create brief moments of tension. These notes are not close together, but major seventh intervals apart.

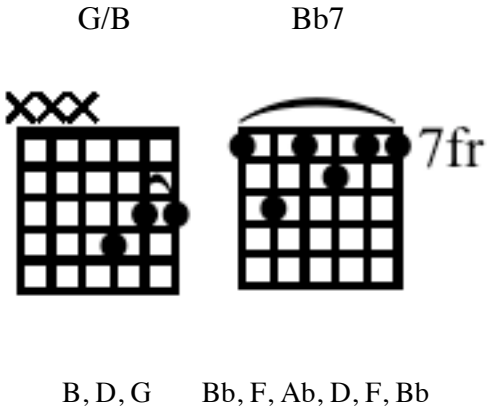


Example 43: Fretboard diagram, Measures thirty through thirty-three

Worthy of mention is Lang's use of a variety of shapes to build his chords, even the B7/F# is not the same as the chord used in measure twenty-two (see chapter seven).

There are no similar shapes here. The only half-barre is with the B7/F# that he only uses once. What opens up the timbre in the next few chords is the use of open strings, which serves to increase the sustain of these simultaneities.

Measures thirty-three and four continue in this similar pattern. Lang plays a G/B with a closed voicing (tonally contrasting measures thirty-two and three), and then introduces a Bb7 at thirty-five. This chord is also introduced an eighth-note early, but without the tritone.

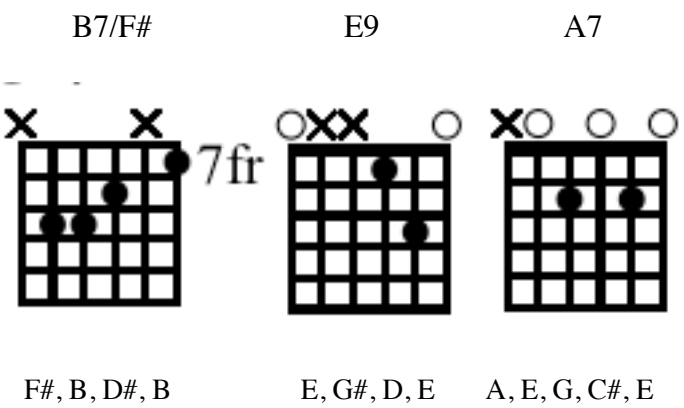


Example 44: Fretboard diagram, Measures thirty-four and thirty-five

In the fretboard diagram, one observes the closed voicing of the G/B chord at measure thirty-four, which does not use open strings. Lang barres the Bb7 chord at the sixth fret of measure thirty-five. He separates the chord by playing the lower register on the first beat and then the upper register on beats two and three. By dividing the chord, Lang is thinking more like a pianist and trying to create interesting tonal colors.

Lang returns to the D/F# chord briefly at measure thirty-six, and voices a B7/F# chord in a higher register than previously seen at measure thirty-seven. This if followed

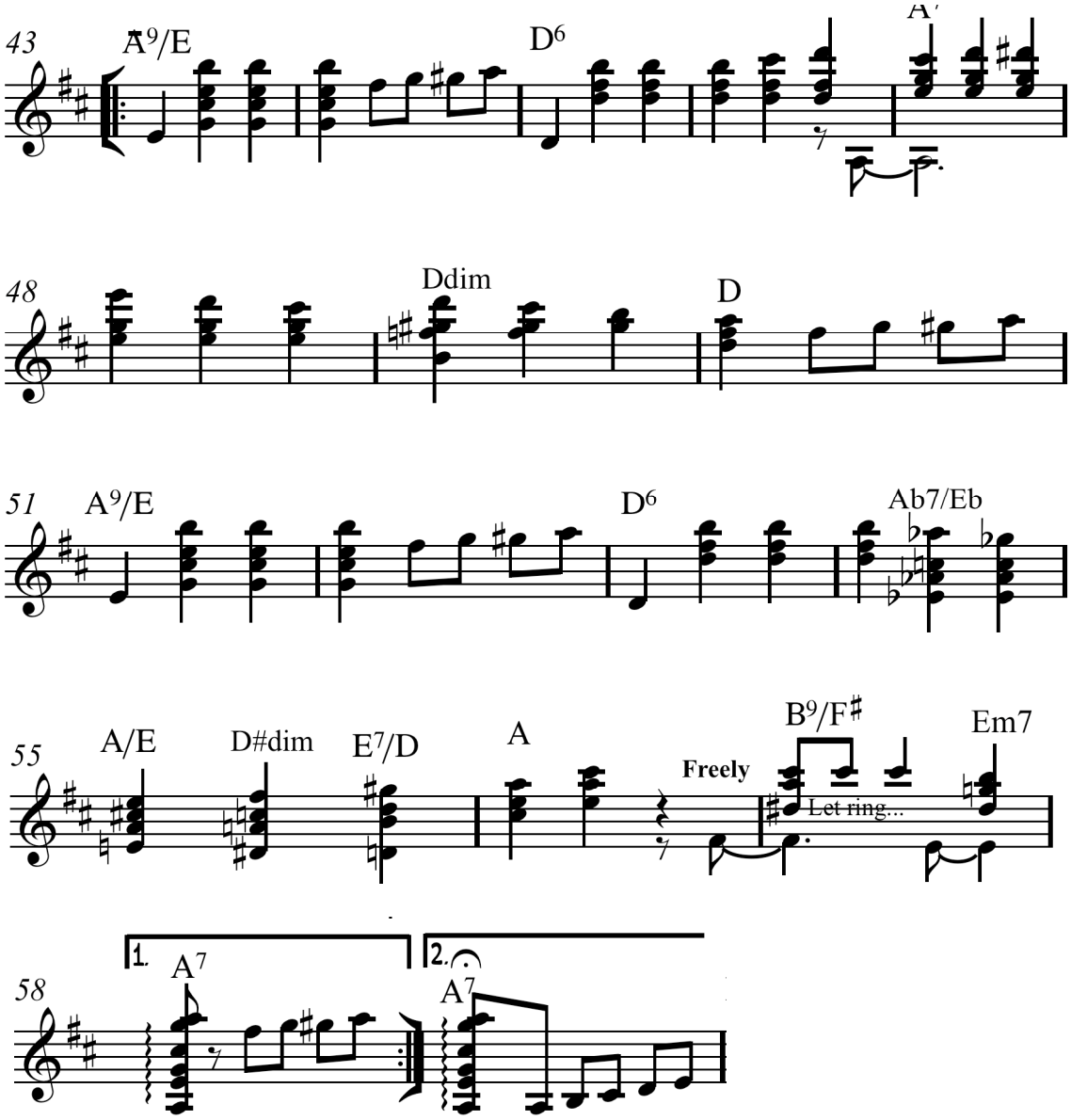
by a D7 descending arpeggio, again contrasting the ascending diatonic melody seen in the first A section. Measure thirty-eight features an unusual voicing of an E9 chord:



Example 45: Fretboard diagram, Measures thirty-seven through thirty-nine

Lang barred the B7/F# at the seventh fret and finger-picked those specific notes. The E9 is also finger-picked, and although unusual, appears logical after examining the A7 shape. Lang creates half-step movement between the G# and D of the E9, and the G natural and C# of the A7. He creates descending tritones moving in parallel motion, using the dissonance as a way to get to A7.

The first ending returns using the diatonic melody in the bass, while the second ending uses a half-step melody to introduce the B section of the piece, leading to the note B that begins the melody at measure forty-three. This half-step melodic interlude acts as a small break between chords (Example 46):



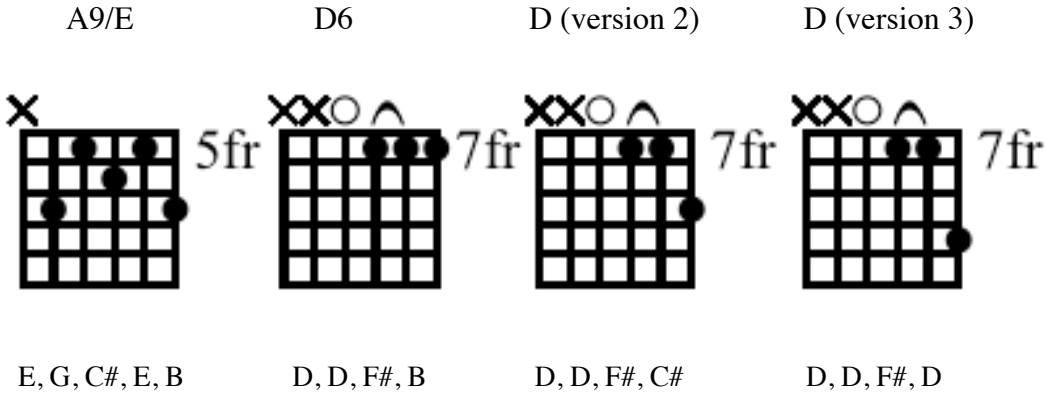
Example 46: Measures forty-three through fifty-nine (B section)

A significant portion of the B section is made up of the V and I chord of D major. Lang takes the liberty of altering them with chord qualities such as sixths, ninths, or

diminished. This makes an otherwise simple chord progression more vibrant, adding color tones to brighten (or diminish) the overall sound.

It is worth noting the similarities between the B sections of "A Little Love, A Little Kiss" and "April Kisses." The melody of both pieces begins with a repeated note in the top voice, both melodies ascend, and both use the higher register of the guitar. These techniques are tendencies concerning Lang's textural treatment.

This B section begins with an A9/E chord broken up by a small half-step melody. This moves to the D6, voiced smaller, thus condensing the chord. This is done as a contrasting technique to expand the chord in the next measure as the melody ascends, making it much more noticeable.

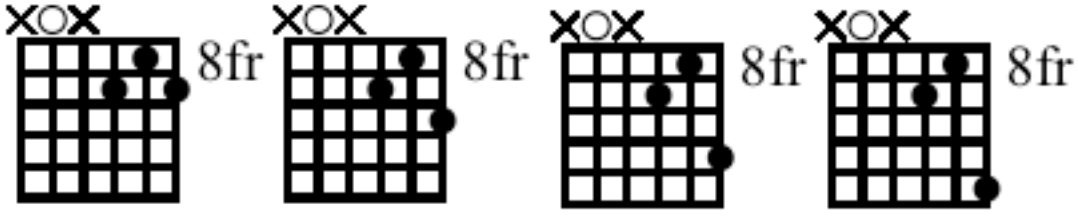


Example 47: Fretboard diagram, Measures forty-three, forty-five and forty-six

Lang uses a half-barre for the A9/E and the D6 chords. He maintains the barre in the D6 as the melody ascends. This is a technique he used, as seen in "A Little Love, A Little Kiss" to maintain the harmony beneath an ascending melody, thus creating oblique motion. The use of the open D string provides additional density to the chord, allowing it to act as a drone and sustain throughout.

This melody reaches its peak with the A7 chord at measure forty-seven. Lang ascends to high E note (on the twelfth fret) by adding half-step movement beginning with the high C#, escalating to D-D# and finally ending on E before descending diatonically back to C#.

A7 A7 continued….



A, E, G, C# A, E, G, D A, E, G, D# A, E, G, E

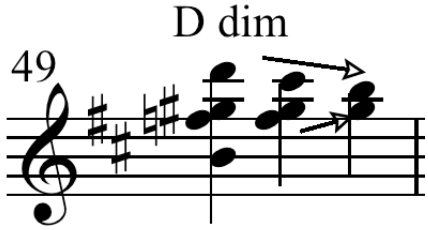
Example 48: Fretboard diagram, Measures forty-seven and forty-eight

In this example, one notices a different way Lang maintains oblique motion without using a barre. This makes playing the chord more difficult because it requires some stretching of the fretted hand. Lang played the note E with his middle finger and the note G with his index finger. His pinky is playing the ascending melodic line. As seen in the last chord diagram, his pinky is stretched to the twelfth fret in order to play the high E, while maintaining the minor third interval as the harmony underneath.

This technique is much more demanding than holding down several strings with a barre. A barre allows a guitarist to swing his wrist, bringing it closer to the guitar neck in order to stretch the pinky more easily. Holding on two notes with two different fingers, as in this case, acts as an anchor, making it very difficult to move the wrist in order to

stretch the pinky. This example supports Benjamin Givan's theory when he states Lang played many chords with a "supinated wrist."[69]

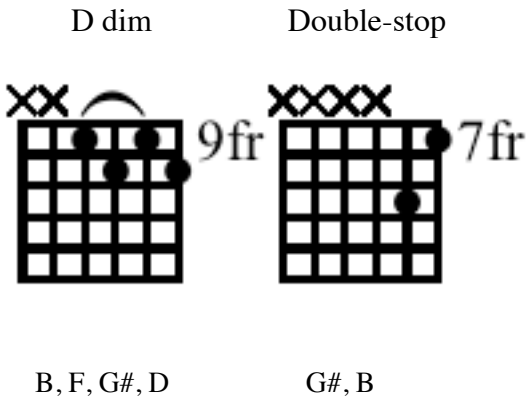
This melody continues to descend through a D dim chord. One observes from the notation below how the notes are moving inward, creating contrary motion:



Example 49: Measure forty-nine

The example above appears more like piano notation, as opposed to common guitar voicings. Although the note G# remains in the chord the entire time, the F natural on beat two sounds as though it becomes the G# on beat three because of the contrary motion of the chords moving inward. This type of orchestration is not accidental. It is carefully thought out and one reason Lang is set apart from other American guitarists of that era. Lang accomplishes the contrary motion by using two different chord shapes.

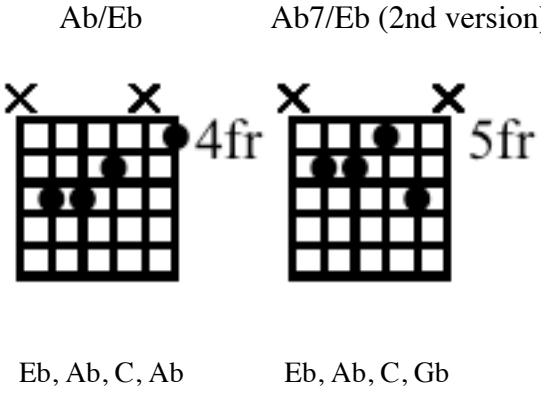
[69] Benjamin Givan, *The Music of Django Reinhardt* (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 18.



Example 50: Fretboard diagram, measure forty-nine

In the above example, Lang employs the technique of shrinking a larger chord down into a smaller one. This is done by finger-picking the full chord on beat one, selecting a smaller sample of notes on beat two, until finally focusing on the minor third on beat three.

Measures fifty-one to fifty-three repeat the material from forty-three to forty-five. Lang ends this repeated section with a cluster of thick, condensed chords. It begins with the descending melody in the Ab/Eb chord at measure fifty-four. This is accomplished by altering a barre chord by placing the pinky on the B string.

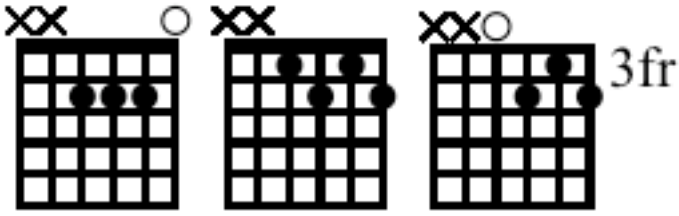


Example 51: Fretboard diagram, Measure fifty-four

In both examples Lang barres the fourth fret with his index finger. However, it is important to see the notes of the chord he chooses to play, rather than strum the full chord. Since the intention was to create the descending melodic line, he plays the same chord accompaniment (Eb, Ab, and C) while moving the Ab to Gb.

The melody begins to ascend again at measure fifty-five. The chord shapes stay as a four-note cluster with the exception of the E7/D chord that contains the interval of a major sixth between the bass and tenor notes.

A/E D# dim E7/D



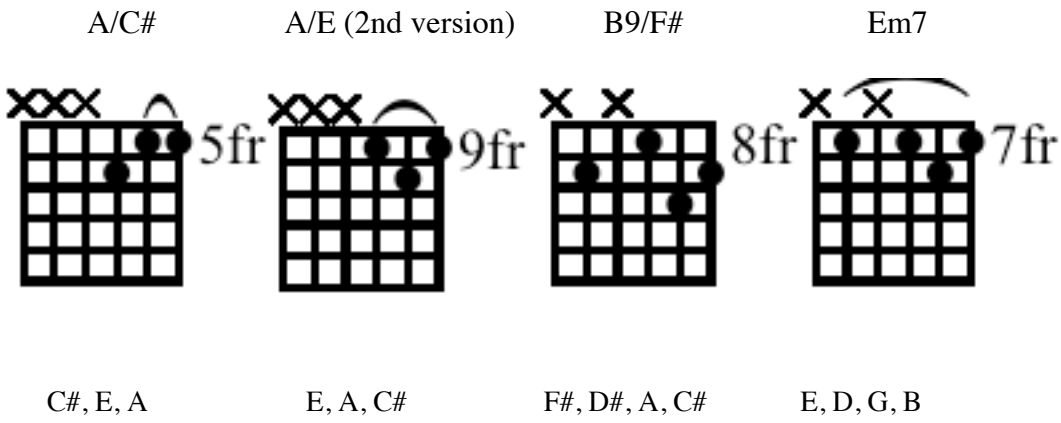
E, A, C#, E D#, A, C, F# D, B, D, G#

Example 52: fretboard diagram, Measure fifty-five

Lang stays within the first two frets with A/E and D# dim, which is why the chords sound in a tight manner. In order to play the subsequent ascending melodic line he moves beyond the third fret. This brightens the overall timbre, also because he takes advantage of the open D string.

To contrast the dense sounding chords, Lang creates a more open sound by using inverted triads of A major at measure fifty-six, voiced high on the guitar neck. This

lightens up the fast rhythmic movement Lang has built, allowing the B section to pause and breathe.



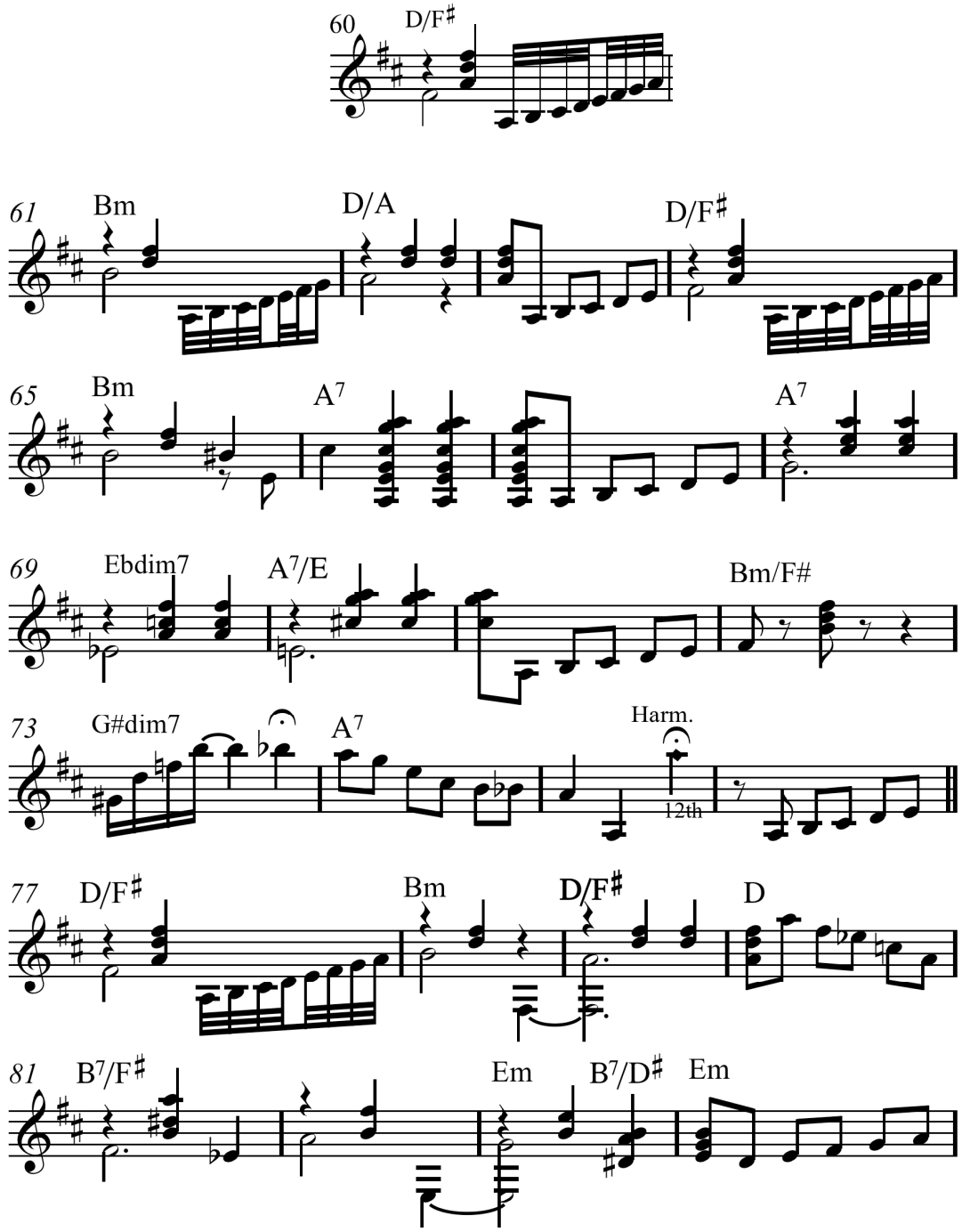
Example 53: Fretboard diagram, Measures fifty-six and fifty-seven

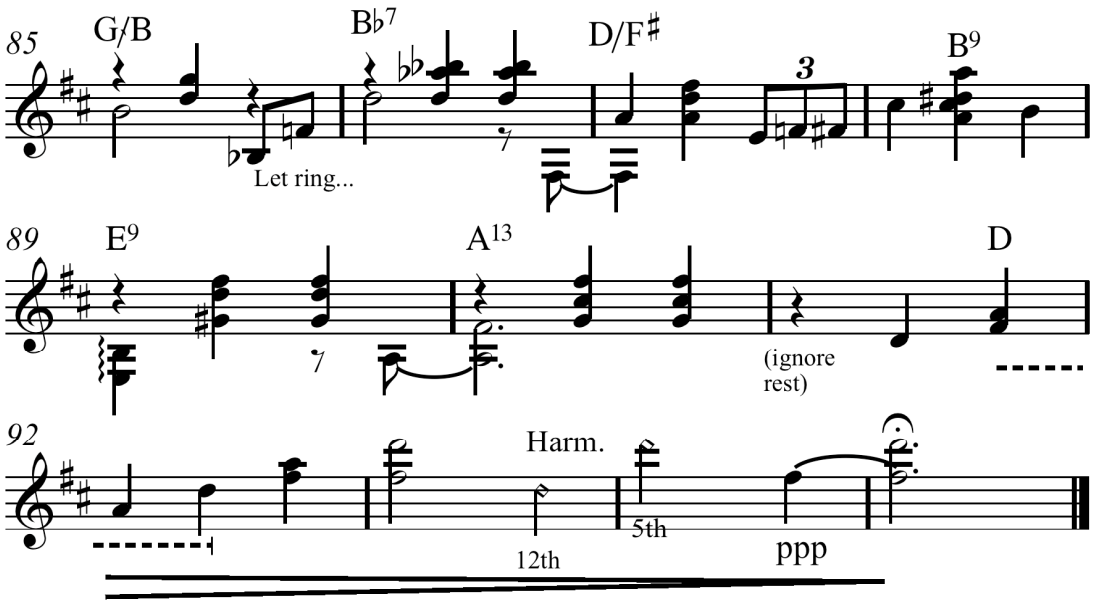
Looking at example fifty-three, the A major chord is voiced two different ways, once in first inversion and once in second. This supports the idea that Lang was intent on playing specific notes; he could have just played the A/C# twice before moving to the B9/F#. In order to create note movement and a "piano-like" arrangement, he chose to voice the same chord two different ways.

The B9/F# chord is spread vertically across the neck, using a combination of high and middle notes to specify bass, chord and melody. The E7 chord is played with a barre across the seventh fret. Lang does not strum the entire chord, instead selects notes to separate the bass, chords and melody to go along with the B7/F# chord. This makes the notes independent, as seen in earlier examples.

The A section begins again at measure sixty. Instead of utilizing the same chord from the first A section, Lang rapidly plays a figure based on the A mixolydian scale. As

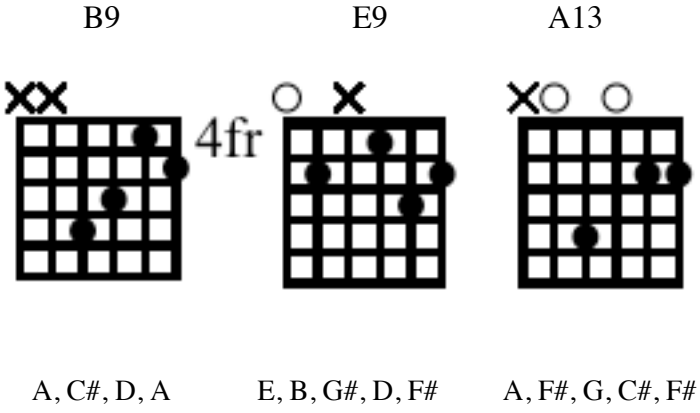
demonstrated in “A Little Love, A Little Kiss,” this showcases his rapid right hand picking style; acute, accurate and precise. Other than the fast run, his playing features the same material as the first A section, including the harmonic progression:





Example 54: Measures sixty through ninety ninety-five (return of the A section)

Lang begins to change the chords slightly as he approaches the coda. This begins at measure eighty-eight with the B9 chord moving to E9, then to A13 and finally to D major.



Example 55: Fretboard diagram, Measures eighty-eight through ninety

In example fifty-five there are three distinct shapes for each chord. The B9 chord requires an unusual fingering. Lang played the note A with his pinky on the D string, the C# with his ring finger on the G string, the D# with his index finger on the B string, and the A with his middle finger on the E string. Lang successfully plays the minor second interval (C# and D) with this uncommon fingering.

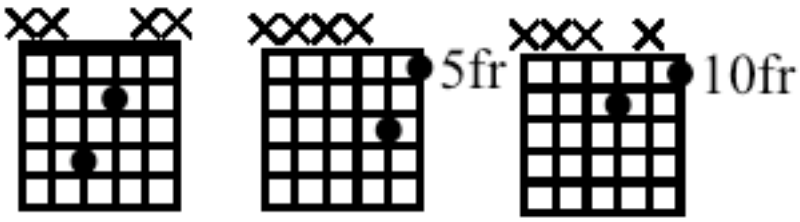
He follows this chord with an E9 chord. This is played with the middle finger playing the B on the A string, index finger playing the G# on the G string, pinky playing the D on the B string, and ring finger on the F# on the E string.

Finally he plays the A13 chord, which takes advantage of the open A and G string. The second fret must use a half-barre while the ring finger or pinky play the F# on the D string. In order to make sure the open G string can be heard, it cannot be blocked by the ring finger or pinky. This means he must have had to push his wrist out from underneath the neck in order to create an adequate arch on the finger playing the F#.

This complex explanation is necessary to understand the difficult fingering needed to successfully execute these three chords. There are easier ways to play all three chords. So why did Lang choose these? We may never know the absolute answer, but it could possibly be due to the color tones he created by adding the ninth and thirteenth, in a sense creating a colorful landscape of sound with a single instrument.

The piece ends with a sustained series of D chords or arpeggios for the last four measures. These chords are also broken up by Lang's trademark natural harmonic technique, which he plays in a variety of ways.

D D(2nd version) D(3rd version)



F#, A F#, A F#, D

Example 56: Fretboard diagram, Measures ninety-one to ninety-three

Lang uses the higher range of the guitar in this example to show of its versatility. Just as in "A Little Love, A Little Kiss," Lang ends on the high D, located at the tenth fret of the E string. The harmonics in-between the last two double-stops serve to add ambience to the overall timbre.

As seen in "A Little Love, A Little Kiss", Lang uses certain techniques over again. This is evident in his use of chord shapes that provide the opportunity for interesting linear note movement. He varies chord shapes; using smaller chords with minimal intervallic distances between notes to larger, spacious chords. His use of half-step motion is evident in creating seamless connections within chord progressions was relatively new during this period.

Lang also displayed his virtuosity by playing fast diatonic, diminished and chromatic scales with precise, accurate picking. His use of natural harmonics were also unique, taking advantage of the semi-hollow body Gibson's L4. The recording methods of the late1920s and early 1930s, primitive by today's standards, were able to pick up the sound of the greater sustain the Gibson L4 produced.

Chapter Six

Analysis of "Prelude"

Eddie Lang recorded "Prelude in C# Minor" by Sergio Rachmaninoff on May 28th, 1927.[70] Many historians theorize that Lang was able to transcribe the piece by ear from listening to a recording, as it has been noted he was a poor sight-reader.[71] This would have been possible because there were recordings of "Prelude in C# minor" available before1927. Ampico piano rolls released a version of "Prelude in C# minor" in 1919. Rachmaninoff himself recorded the "Prelude in C# minor" for Edison records in April of 1919, and again for Victor records in October of 1921.[72]

Lang transposed the "Prelude in C# minor" to the key of E minor. He did this in order to make the piece easier to play. Standard guitar tuning, from lowest to highest is E-A-D-G-B-E. With the exception of the A and D strings, the tuning spells an E minor chord, thus making E minor an easy key to perform in. He presumably memorized it in the original key and then transposed it. This could not have been an easy task considering how many times he likely listened to the piece in order to get his transcription as accurate as possible. Some who knew Lang assumed he had perfect pitch, which would have made the task of transcribing much easier.[73] Nevertheless, it must have been a monumental undertaking.

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[70] Raymond F Mitchell, *Feeling My Way: A discography of the recordings of Eddie Lang 1923-1933* (London: private publisher, 2002), 52.
[71] Richard M. Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1999), 96.
[72] Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (London: Contimuum, 2006), 390 – 392.
[73] Richard M. Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press,1999), 96.

This piece is included in this study for two reasons; the first is that it is one of only three known solo recordings of Eddie Lang. Secondly, there are elements found within Rachmaninoff's piece that are part of Lang's technique, primarily the use of half-step movement.

It is interesting to note how Lang incorporated Rachmaninoff's harmonic movement and the various treatments and alterations he employed. This piece also serves as an indication that Lang had familiarized himself with classical music, aside from his admiration of classical guitarist Andre Segovia. Because he actively listened to forms of classical music, it is possible he had knowledge of classical theory elements, most importantly elements concerning voice leading.

In the book *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* author Max Harrison states that Rachmaninoff wrote with the intention of covering all keys with the use of the half-step, which gives the music "greater depth of feeling, diversity of expression…as the main points."[74] Because of this, the "Prelude in C# Minor" comes across as very dark and depressing, almost schizophrenic. Rachmaninoff accomplishes this by arriving on the root mostly by half-step. This technique invokes the emotion of "falling,." Lang does his best to emulate the "madness" of the piece within the guitars limitations.

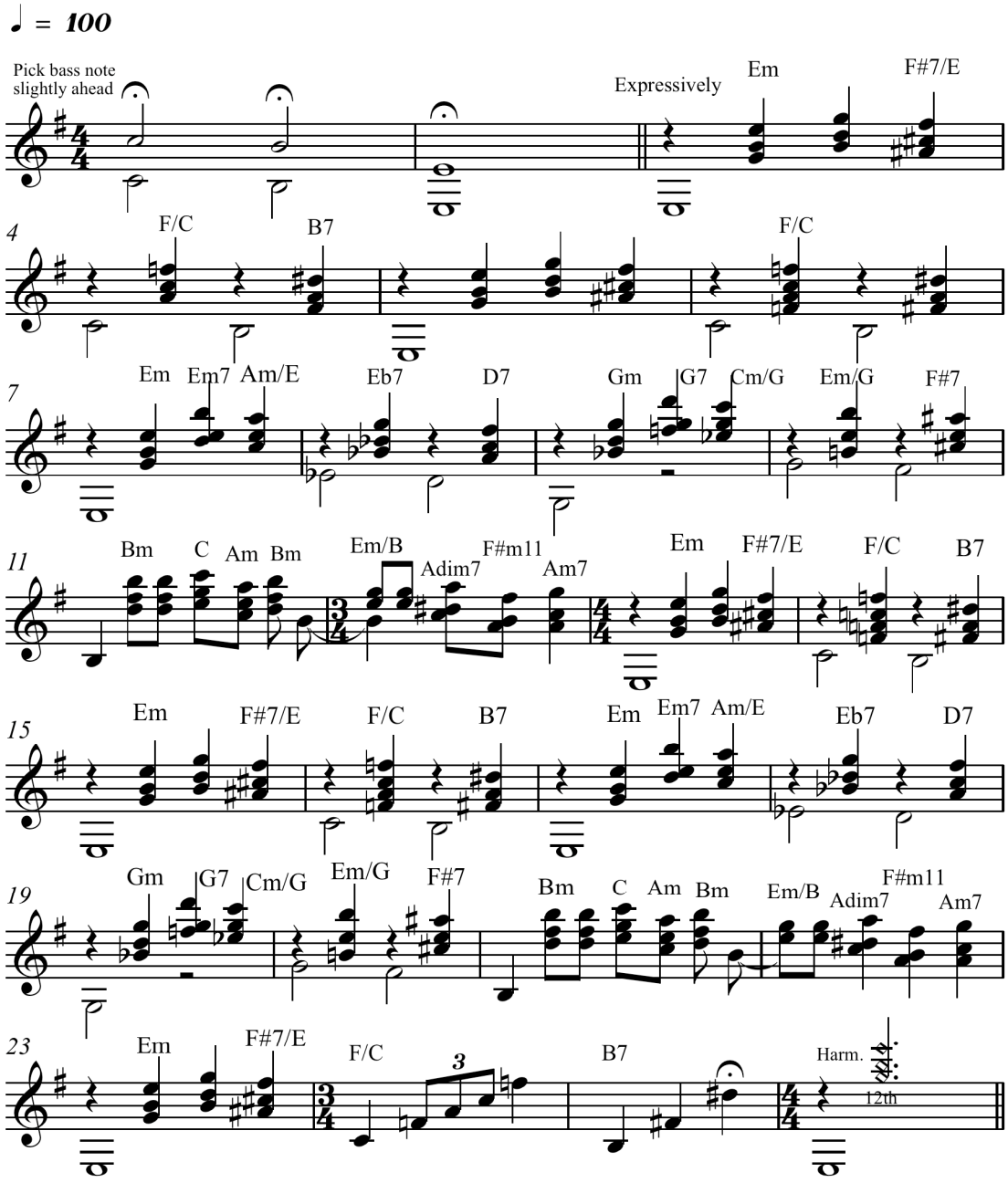
The difference between this piece and "April Kisses " and "A Little Love, A Little Kiss" is the half-step movement, forcing Lang to play chords using parallel motion as opposed to the contrary voice leading. The parallelisms we observed in the other

[74]Max Harrison, *Rachmaninoff: Life, Works, Recordings* (London: Continuum, 2006), 112.

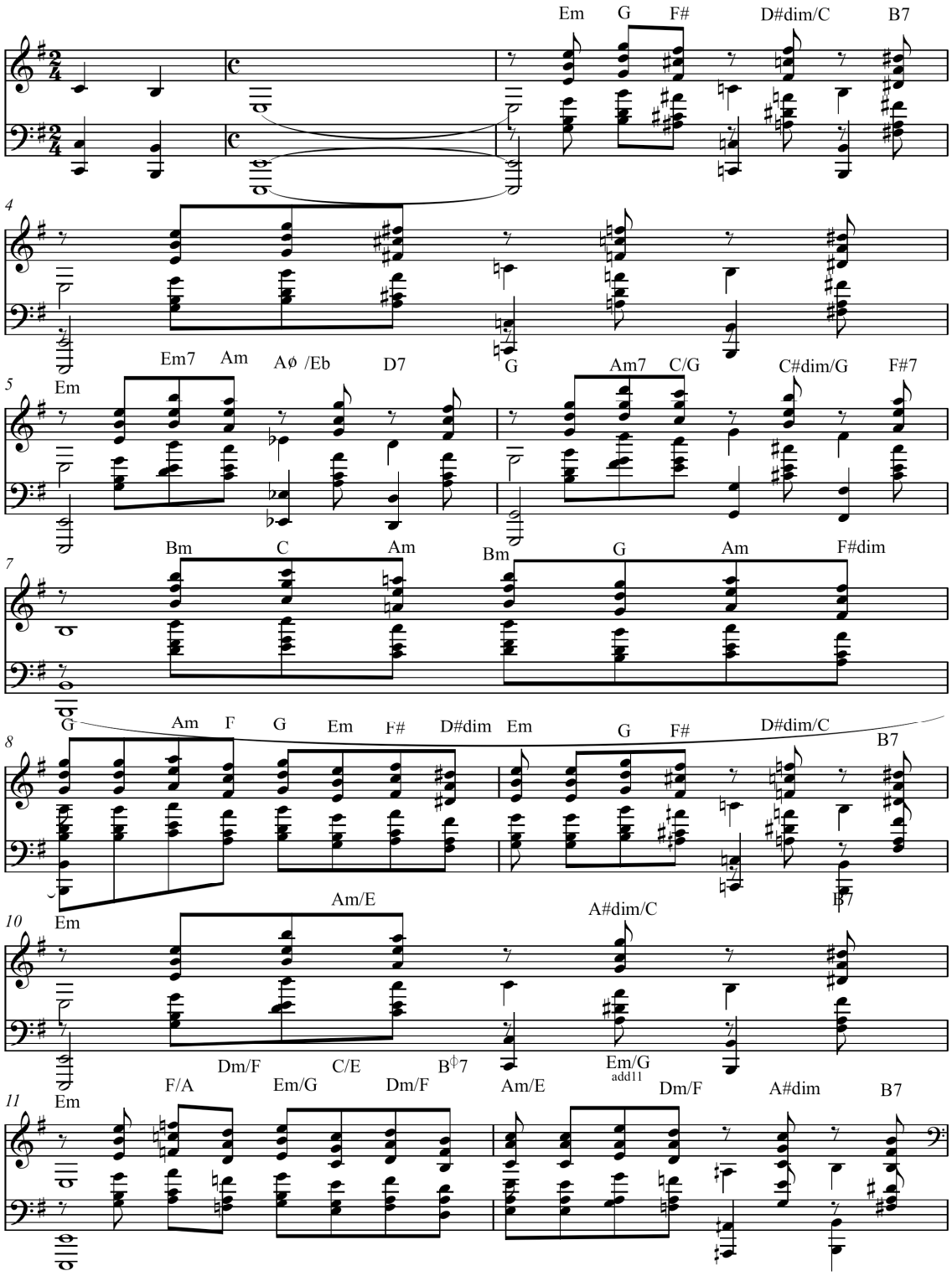
pieces were limited, with a few exceptions. In this piece, the parallelisms involve a majority of the voices.

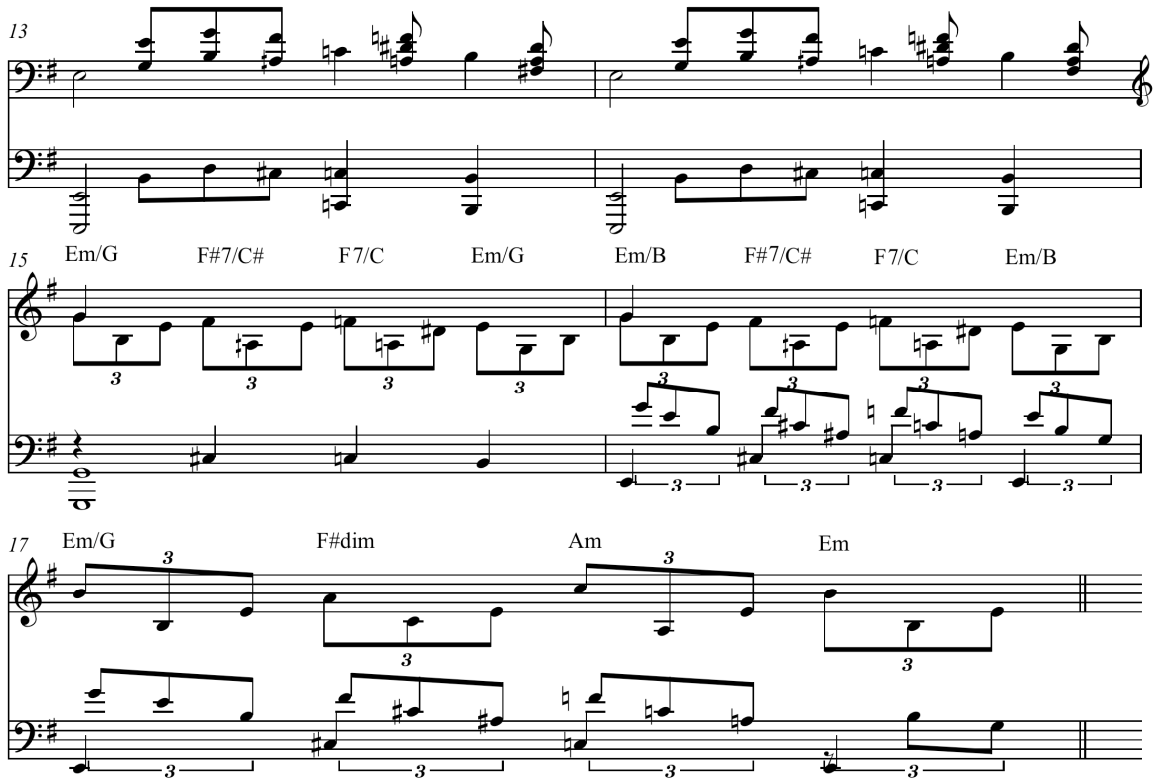
Lang does an admirable job to emulate the harmony Rachmaninoff uses, however he occasionally needs to re-voice chords in order to avoid doublings, while including the crucial notes of each chord. Lang avoids octaves, except when absolutely necessary. It would have been almost impossible for Lang to play an octave and major or minor thirds at the same time because it would require unusual contortions of the fretted hand. Instead, Lang inverted chords in order to accurately imitate the necessary harmonic and melodic ideas. This objective forces him to stray from his normal technique and instead use parallel motion. Although it takes away from the wide sound Rachmaninoff produces in his recording, it enables Lang to successfully execute the piece.

Lang begins with a slightly faster tempo than the Rachmaninoff piano roll recording released in 1919. It is also clear that he uses a guitar pick for the A section. This can be determined because one can hear Lang slightly drag the pick down the strings for the opening of the piece (played in octaves). This helps to set the dynamic mood: slow and melancholy. Lang successfully emulates the descending octaves, harmonic progression, and parallel half- step movement.



Example 57: Eddie Lang, Intro through measure twenty-six, A section

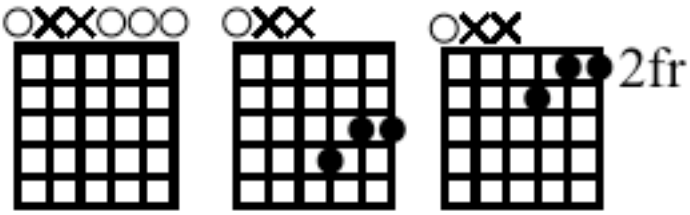

Em G F# D#dim/C B7
4
Em7 Am Aø /Eb D7 G Am7 C/G C#dim/G F#7
5
Em
Bm C Am Bm G Am F#dim
7
G Am F G Em F# D#dim Em G F# D#dim/C B7
8
Em Am/E A#dim/C
10
Dm/F C/E B♭7 Em/G add11
F/A Em/G Dm/F Am/E Dm/F A#dim B7
11
Em



Example 58: Sergio Rachmaninoff, Intro to measure seventeen, A section

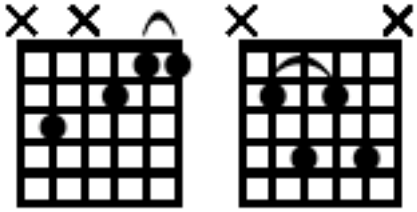
In comparing the harmonic structure of both A sections, one will notice Rachmaninoff use a different type of half-step motion to return to E minor chord in the main motif at measure three: Em-G-F#-D# dimininshed-B7. He avoids the F major chord, instead plays the D# diminished and then B7. Lang goes back by half-step from the F# - F – B7 chords, avoiding the D# diminished completely. Harmonically it is easier because Lang uses the same shape to move from F# to F, and then plays a standard barre chord for the B7.

Em Em (2nd version) F#7/E



E, G, B, E E, B, D, G E, A#, C#, F#

F/C B7



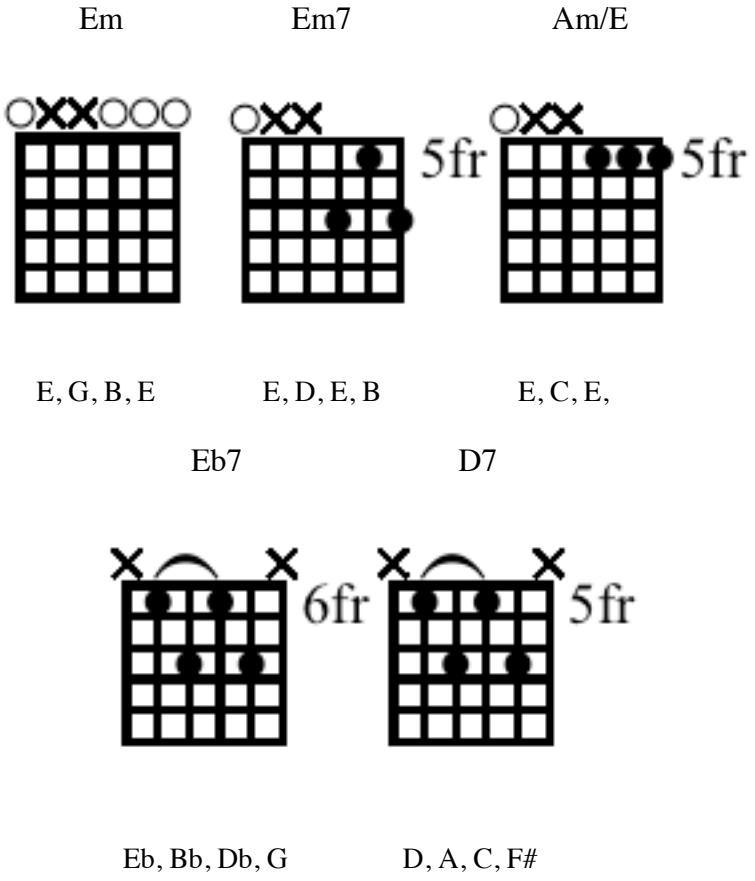
C, A, C, F B, F#, A ,D#

Example 59: Fretboard diagram, measures three and four

Note the two different inversions of E minor at measure two. The F#/E is the same shape as the second version of the E minor chord except moved to the second fret. The F/C involves a challenging fingering. In order to keep the half-step movement in the bass (with the B7), Lang needs to place a finger on the note C, located at the third fret of the A string. This note is either played by the ring finger or pinky. This is taxing on the wrist, because the first fret is using a half-barre to hold down the C and F on the B and E strings. At the same time, the middle finger holds down the A on the G string. In order to create the proper arc without blocking the higher strings, the wrist must be bent in towards the body. This results in discomfort for the typical guitarist. On beat two, Lang

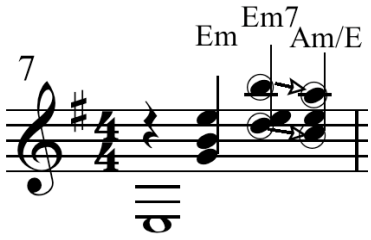
switches to the B7, playing the bass note first, followed by the chord. The B7 is a standard shape, requiring a barre on the second fret with the index finger.

Measure seven in Lang's transcription imitates measure five of Rachmaninoff's chord progression. Harmonically, Lang plays the same progression for the first part of the measure: Em, Em7 and Am. Rachmaninoff follows the Am with an A half-diminished 7/ Eb in the bass. Lang uses the Eb of the chord and substitutes an Eb7 chord(the tritone substitute of A). The Eb7 shares the common tone Eb and G with A half-diminished 7. Both chords resolve to D7 at the end of the measure, with the strong half-step motion in the bass. Rachmaninoff does all this in one measure, where Lang fits it into two.



Example 60: Fretboard diagram, Measures seven and eight

Whereas Rachmaninoff uses real parallelisms throughout this piece, Lang tries to unify certain chords through voice leading. He creates parallel sixths between the Em7 and Am chord, while maintaining the note E as the common tone:



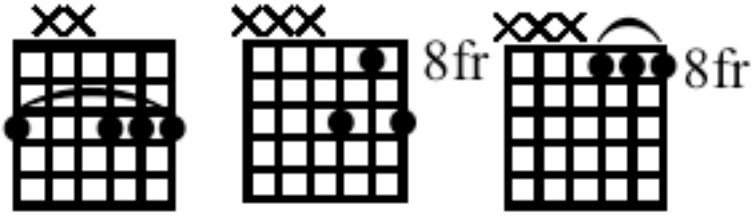
Example 61: Measure seven

Lang uses two different chord shapes in order to accomplish this. This may have been his way of interjecting some of his own personal technique into this post-romantic piece. He does use parallelisms between the Eb7 and D7, simply moving the same chord down a half-step.

Measures nine through twelve (Lang) imitates the main idea of measures six through nine (Rachmaninoff). Rachmaninoff cycles through a few different keys, and Lang does his best to imitate those keys. In this section, Lang chooses to depart from using the identical progression. Despite this departure, Lang does provide a "basic outline" of the original.

Measure nine uses the same harmonic idea as seven, including the parallel sixths between Gm7 and Cm/Eb chords while maintaining the common tone G.

Gm G7 Cm/Eb

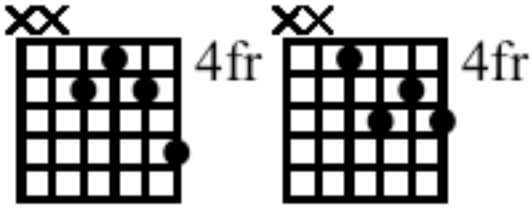


G, Bb, D, G F, G, D Eb, G, C

Example 62: Fretboard diagram, Measure nine

The above diagram illustrates how Lang used the same chord shapes at measure seven. He also uses a full barre for the G minor chord by barring the entire third fret with his index finger. He does not strum the entire chord, which indicates he was either finger-picking or holding the guitar pick between his thumb and index while plucking the remaining notes with his other three fingers.

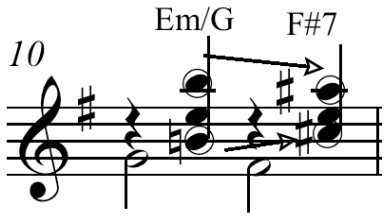
Em/G F#7



G, B, E, B F#, C#, E, A#

Example 63: Fretboard diagram, Measure ten

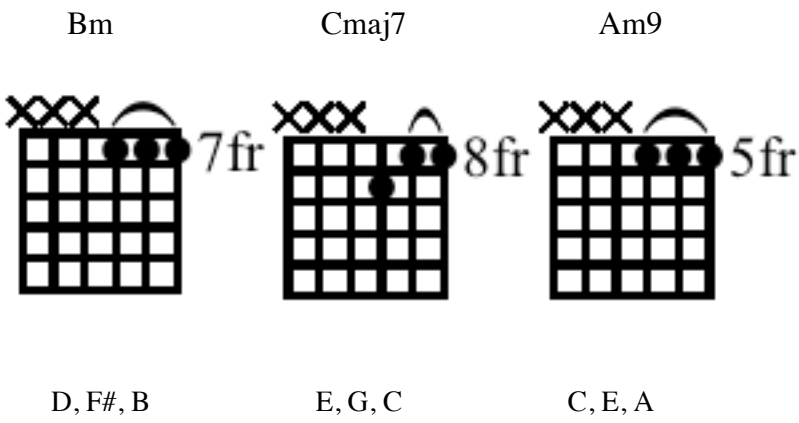
This is a prime example showing how Lang creates contrary motion. The diagram below examines the measure by itself:



Example 64: Measure ten

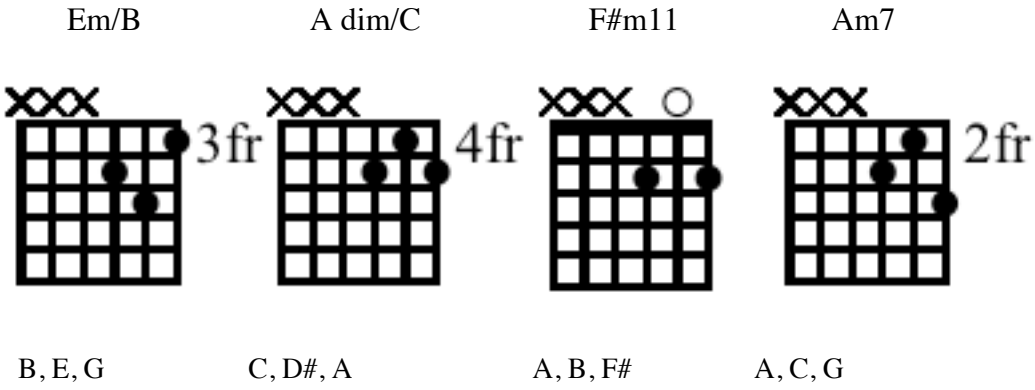
Note the melody descending by half-step: B- A#, while the tenor moves up: B-C#. Lang keeps the common tone E, while the bass moves down by half-step G-F#, creating parallel thirds (tenths) with the melody. The chord shapes Lang uses make this movement possible. The shape used for the F#7 chord is familiar to guitarists, but the Em/G chord is uncommon. Lang planned these particular shapes for the purpose of creating contrary voice leading. He certainly did not get the idea from the Rachmaninoff score, which does not create contrary voice leading during that section.

Measure eleven is a stark contrast from measure ten, as Lang uses a half-barre to create the parallel harmony and melody. This is closer to the style of the piece because the barre can mimic the sharp, abrasive sounds. This was accomplished by either strumming the chord with a guitar pick or the back of a finger-nail.



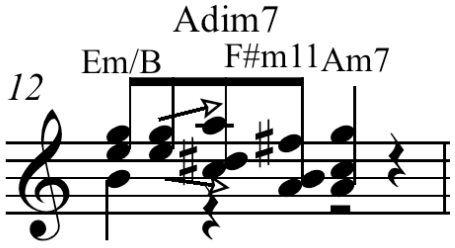
Example 65: Fretboard diagram, Measure eleven

Lang returns to creating contrary and oblique motion by measure twelve. This is observed between the Em/B to A diminished/C, and F#m11 to Am7.



Example 66: fretboard diagram, Measure twelve

The contrary voice leading is clear by taking a closer look at the score:

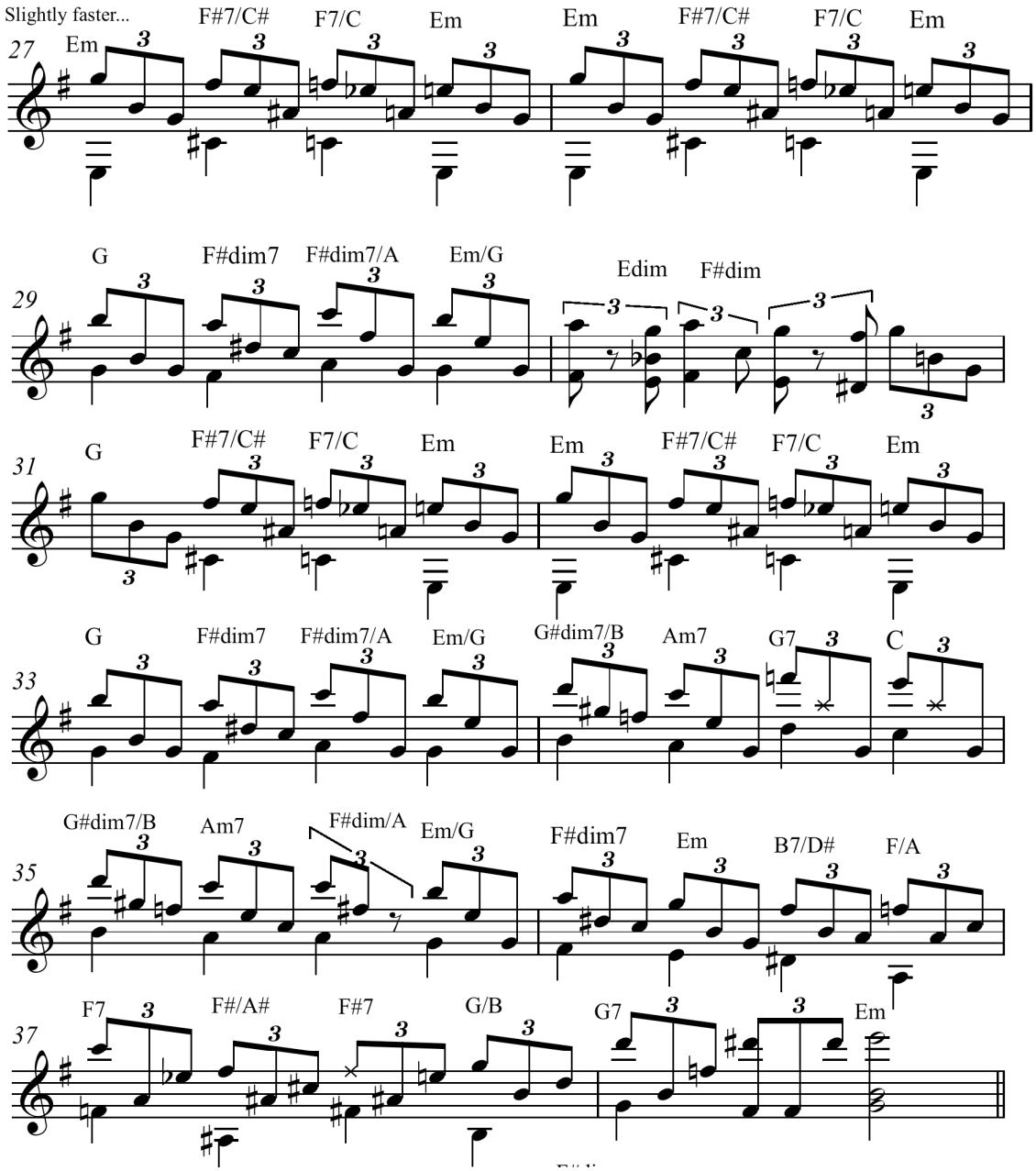


Example 67: Measure twelve

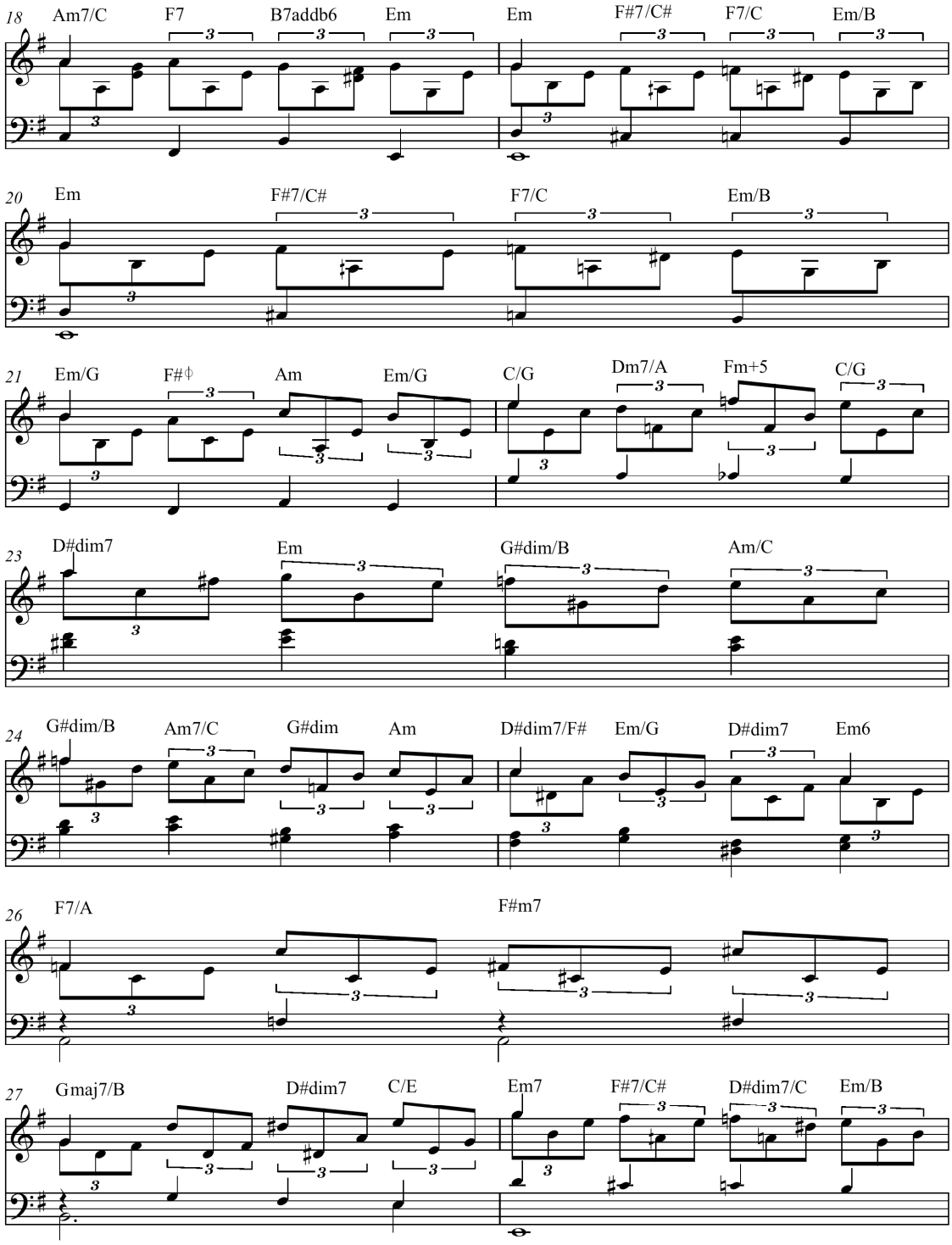
The notes E and G of the Em/B chord move outward, becoming the lowered fifth (D#) and root (A) of the A dim 7 chord. The oblique motion happens when the F#m11 moves to Am7 chord. The common tone stays the same (A) in the bass, while the alto note B ascends to C.

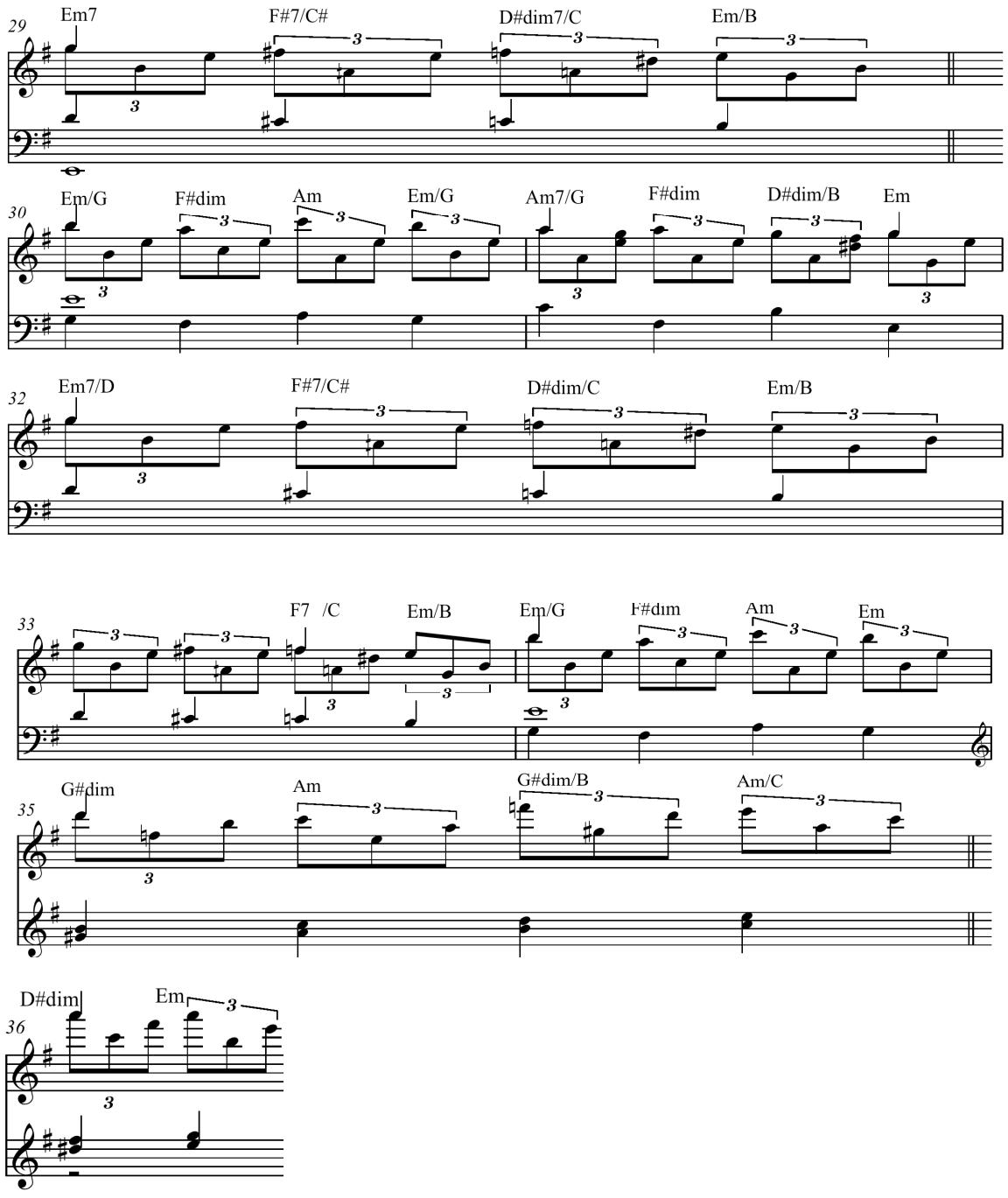
After the repeat of the melody, Lang creates a small cadenza from measures twenty-four to twenty-six. He uses the same chord shape first seen at measure six (F/C) and measure four (B7). The difference is that he arpeggiates the chords slowly, rather than strumming them. As usual, at the end the cadenza he returns to one of his signature techniques, the natural harmonics, which he plays at measure twenty-six.

The B section begins for Lang at measure twenty-seven, where the corresponding Rachmaninoff piece is at measure fifteen. Lang performs a series of arpeggiated chords beginning on E minor, moving to F# and descending chromatically back to E.



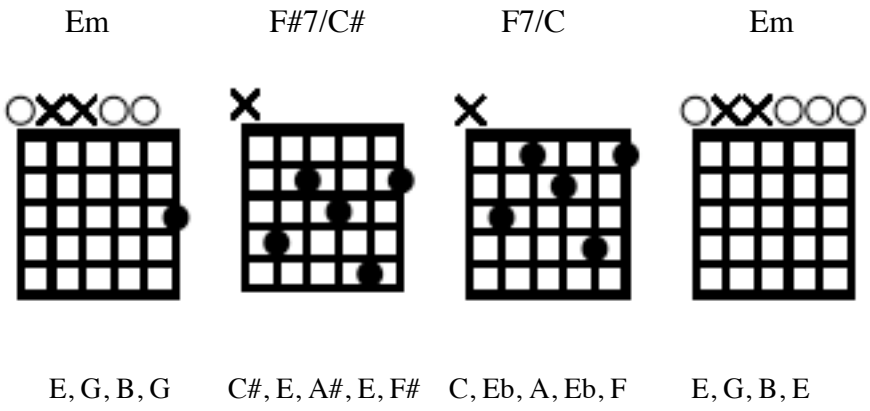
Example 68: Eddie Lang, measures twenty-seven through thirty-eight, B section


18
Am7/C
F7
B7addb6
Em
Em
F#7/C#
F7/C
Em/B
20
Em
F#7/C#
F7/C
Em/B
21
Em/G
F#ϕ
Am
Em/G
C/G
Dm7/A
Fm+5
C/G
23
D#dim7
Em
G#dim/B
Am/C
24
G#dim/B
Am7/C
G#dim
Am
D#dim7/F#
Em/G
D#dim7
Em6
26
F7/A
F#m7
27
Gmaj7/B
D#dim7
C/E
Em7
F#7/C#
D#dim7/C
Em/B



Example 69: Sergio Rachmaninoff, Measures eighteen through thirty-six, B section

Lang plays the descending half-steps using the following shapes:

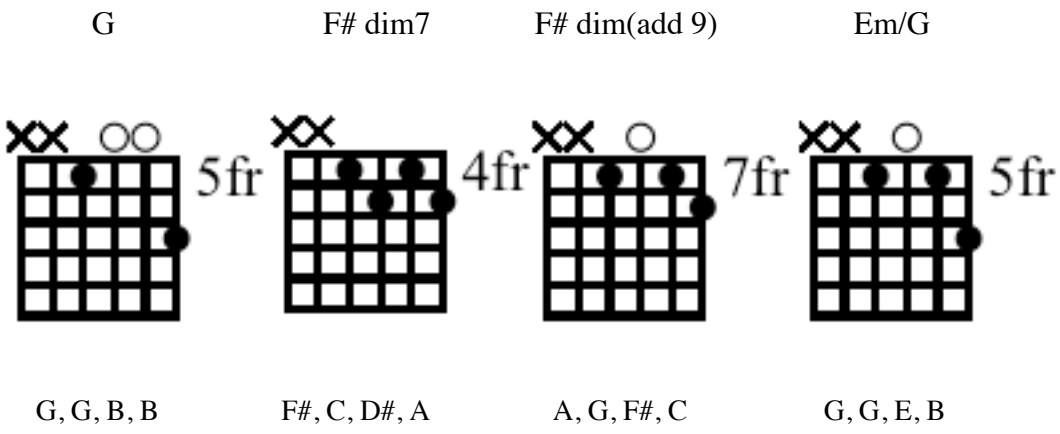


Example 70: Fretboard diagram, Measure twenty-seven

Lang's transposition of the piece to E minor allows him to make use of the guitar's open strings. The note G in the melody is played in the first chord, which is located at the third fret of the high E string. He then barres the second fret to play the F#7/C# chord. He picks the bass note and melody with his thumb and ring finger, then plays the note on the B string with his middle finger (M), and the note on the G string with his index finger (I). This finger-picking technique displays the proper classical technique, possibly learned from listening to Andre Segovia.

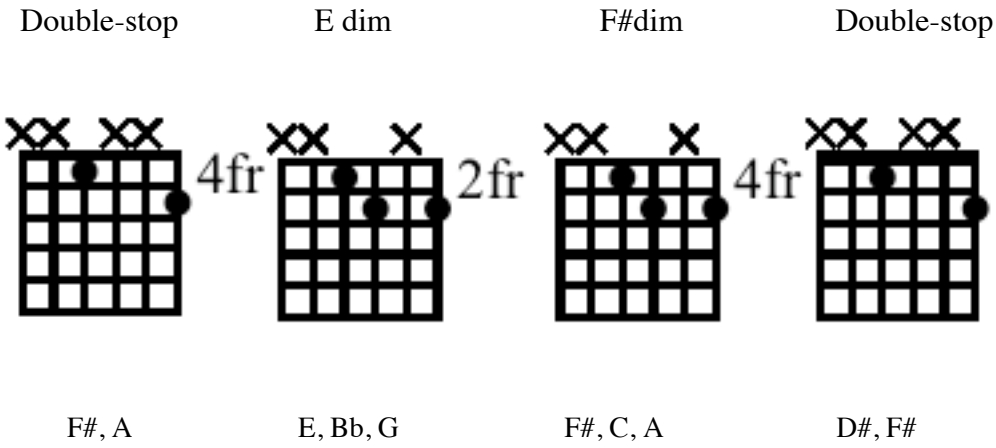
Because this piece involves a considerable amount of half-step movement, moving barre or similar chord shapes up or down the neck is unavoidable. In order to recreate the dark dynamic created by Rachmaninoff's use of half-steps, Lang must oblige by moving the same shape for the F#7/C# back a fret to play the F7/C chord.

At measure twenty-nine the melody and progression slightly change. Instead of the descending half-step melody, it descends by whole-step, jumps up a minor third and back a whole-step: B-A-C-B.



Example 71: Fretboard diagram, Measure twenty-nine

Here Lang uses a series of different shapes, taking advantage of the open strings. These new voicings (as in the F# dim 7 and Em/G) are important because he uses similar shapes at measure thirty and forty-two/three to create double stops with large intervals. This supports the statement made by James Sallis of his "unusual intervals."[75]



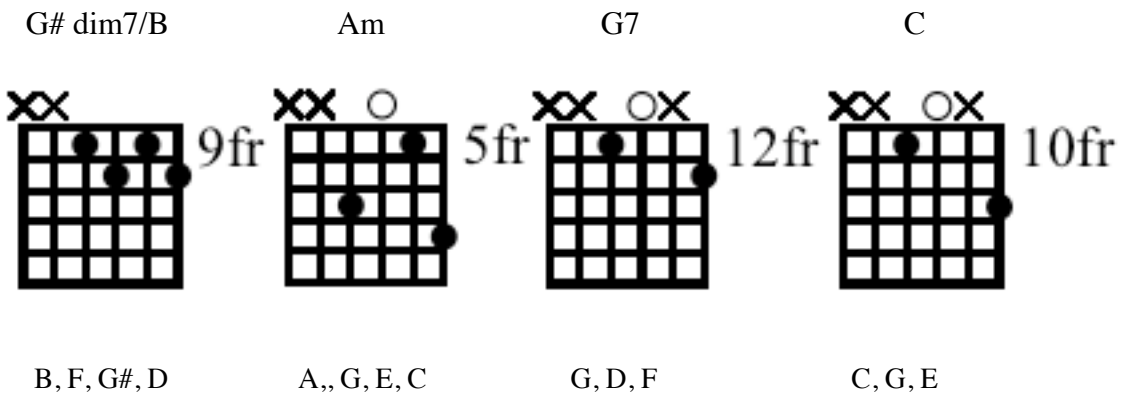
Example 72: fretboard diagram, Measure thirty

[75] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 21.

Note that in the first and last shape, Lang makes the harmonic choice of playing two notes. It is possible that Lang intended to play a chord, as the two middle diagrams suggest. Perhaps the poor audio recording of the late 1920s did not pick up the notes in the rest of the chord, or since this was a live recording, the concept of editing did not exist. Perhaps he flubbed the finger-picking and missed the notes completely. It is the belief of this researcher that he intended to play double stops, because he repeats a similar motivic idea at measure forty-two and three. If it had indeed been a mistake, either on his part or the recording, those latter measures would have consisted of all chords.

The large intervals create an open space within the music. While a majority of "Prelude" uses half-steps, the change in this progression opens up the overall dark character, even if only for a moment. Lang does this in both "April Kisses" and "A Little Love, A Little Kiss." He changes from closed to open voiced chords to change the overall texture.

Measure thirty-four introduces a new progression and higher melody (measures thirty-one to thirty-three feature a repeat of twenty-seven through twenty-nine). The melody is similar to measure twenty-nine. Lang brings the melody up to an F (beat three), located at the thirteenth fret of the high E string. In order to execute this within a tight space he has to adjust his fingers, squeezing them in-between the frets in order to play the notes clearly.



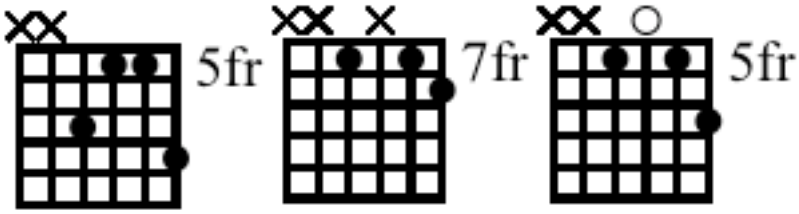
Example 73: Fretboard diagram, Measure thirty-four

The G# dim 7 is a shape examined earlier in the study. The G7 and C chords involve the same intervallic idea seen at measure thirty. These large intervals are broken up with an open string between them. From a textural standpoint, the open string fills the empty space in-between, giving the bass and melody harmonic support.

The series of double-stops appear often in this piece, and may have been intended to be full chords. As discussed earlier, perhaps Lang made a few recording mistakes and missed the note intended to be in the middle of the bass and melody. This is one possible explanation as to why this shape sometimes includes an extra note and other times does not.

Rachmaninoff doubled and sometimes tripled notes within a chord voicing. This gave the piece an effect of having harsher, angrier sounds. The thought process must have been difficult for Lang, as he had to determine where and how to play the necessary notes without dramatically diminishing any of the music's character. The example below demonstrates this concept.

Am F# dim/A Em/G



A, C, E, C A, F#, C G, G, E, B

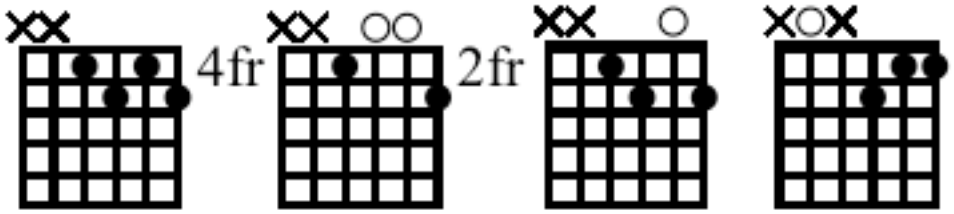
Example 74: Fretboard diagram, Measure thirty-five

The voicings of these three chords are not common shapes among guitarists. Lang chooses to barre the fifth fret with his index finger, play the note C on the D string with his ring finger, and the high C with his pinky. The F# dim chord maintains the bass and melodic notes (A and C), replacing the five of Am (E) to the root (F#). This example shows how selective Lang had to be in determining what notes to play between chord shapes.

Lang returns to using a similar chord shape for the F# dim that begins measure thirty-six. He uses this voicing because the melody begins moving down by step, until the last two notes by half-step (A-G-F#-F natural). These shapes are tighter and more condensed than the spacious voicings at measure thirty-five.

Between measures thirty-six and eight, more chord voicing variety is apparent. Lang uses the voicing with large intervallic leaps between the bass and melody and open strings along with more common voicings, such as the F7 at thirty-seven and G7 at thirty-eight. We also see a return of the G/B (last chord at measure thirty-seven) he used at the beginning of "A Little Love, A Little Kiss."

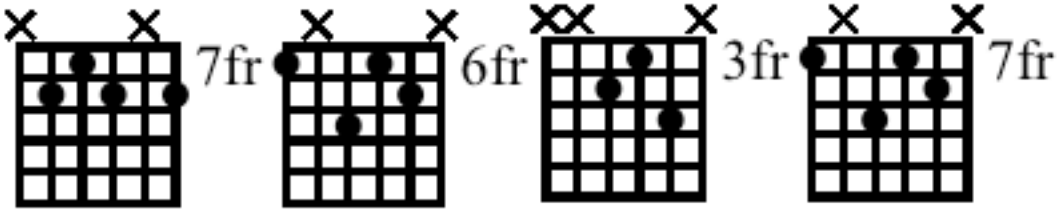
F# dim7 Em B7/D# F/A



F#, C, D#, A E, G, B, G D#, A, B, F# A, A, C, F

Example 75: Fretboard diagram, Measure thirty-six

F7 F#/A# F#7 G/B



F, A, Eb, C A#, A#, C#, F# F#, A#, E B, B, D, G

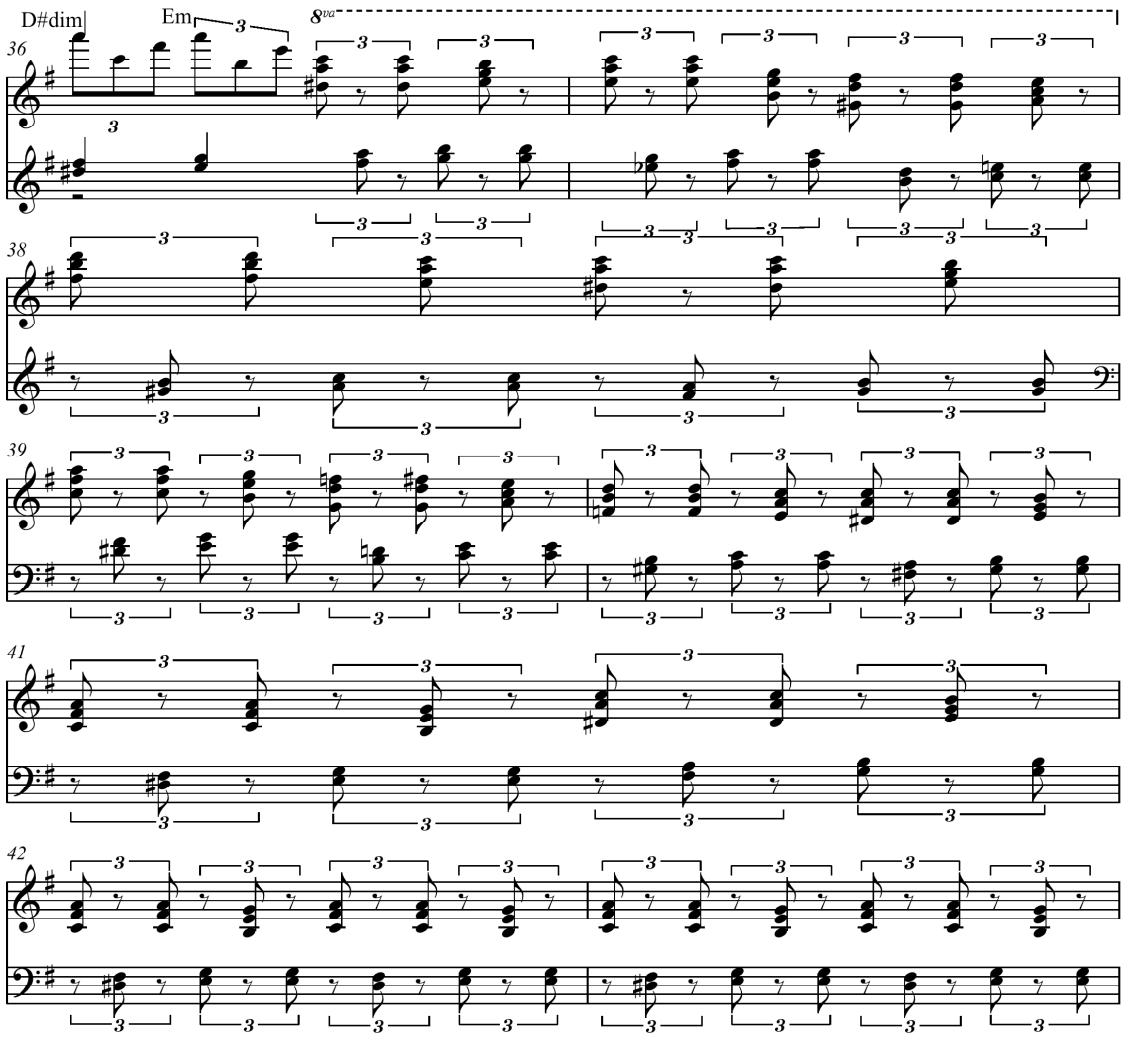
Example 76: Fretboard diagram, Measure thirty-seven

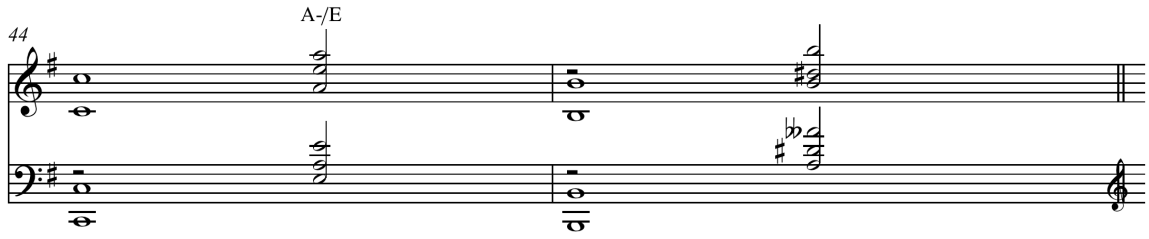
G7 Double-stop Em

G, B, F, D F#, D# G, B, E

Example 77: Fretboard diagram, measure thirty-eight

Lang excludes measures thirty-six (last two beats) to measure forty-three of Rachmaninoff's original. Here, Rachmaninoff plays a series of triplets incredibly fast. Perhaps Lang determined this section would not translate well to the guitar, or maybe he simply wanted to eliminate the section. Below are the measures Lang excludes:



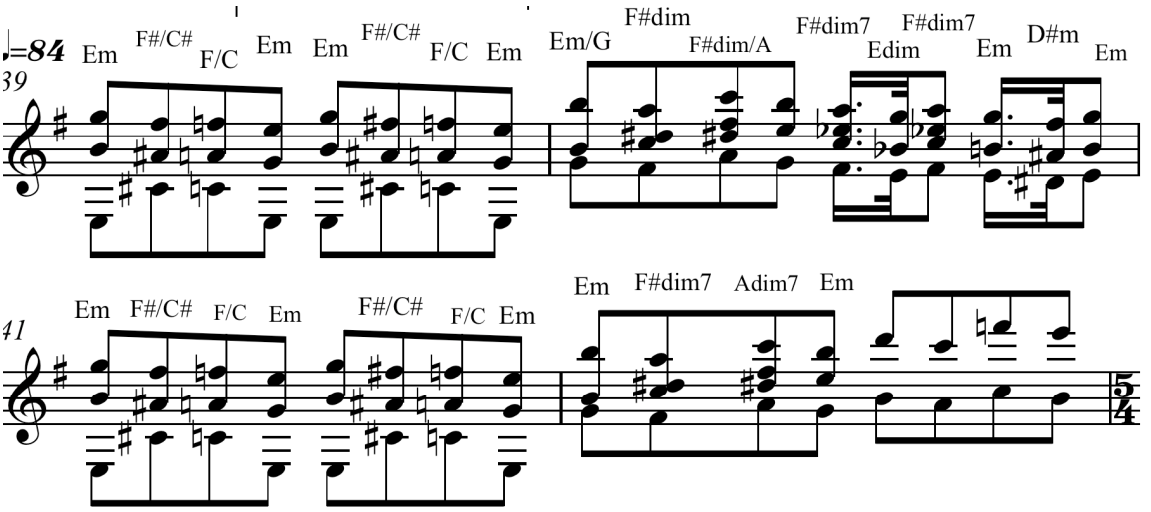


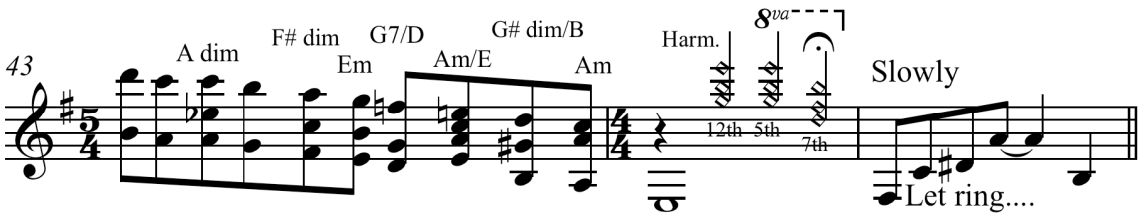
Example 78: Sergio Rachmaninoff, Measures thirty-six to Forty-five

Excluded from Lang's score

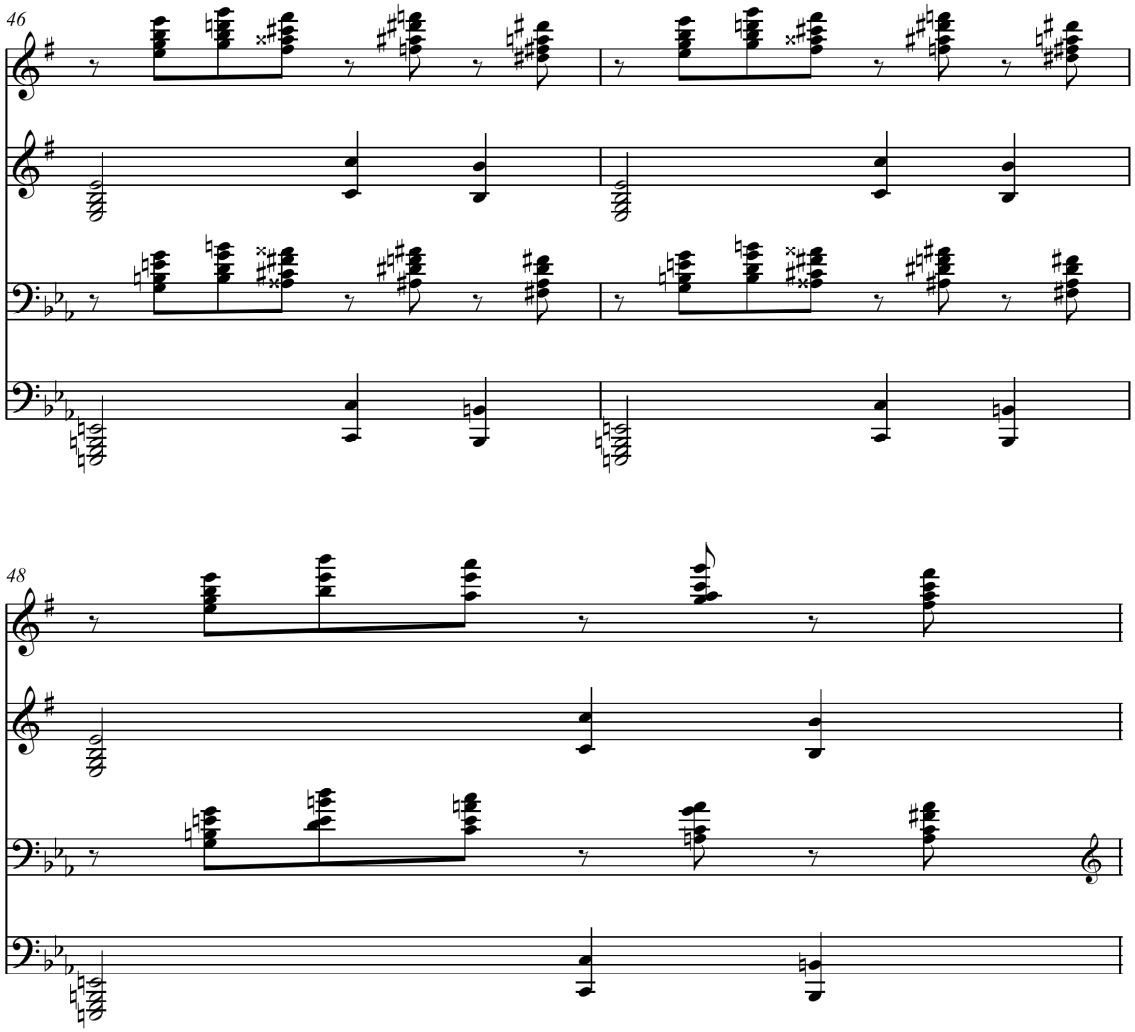
Although Lang does not include this section, he does add a brief cadence at measure thirty-eight with the E minor chord which Rachmaninoff does at measure forty-five (Example sixty-eight).

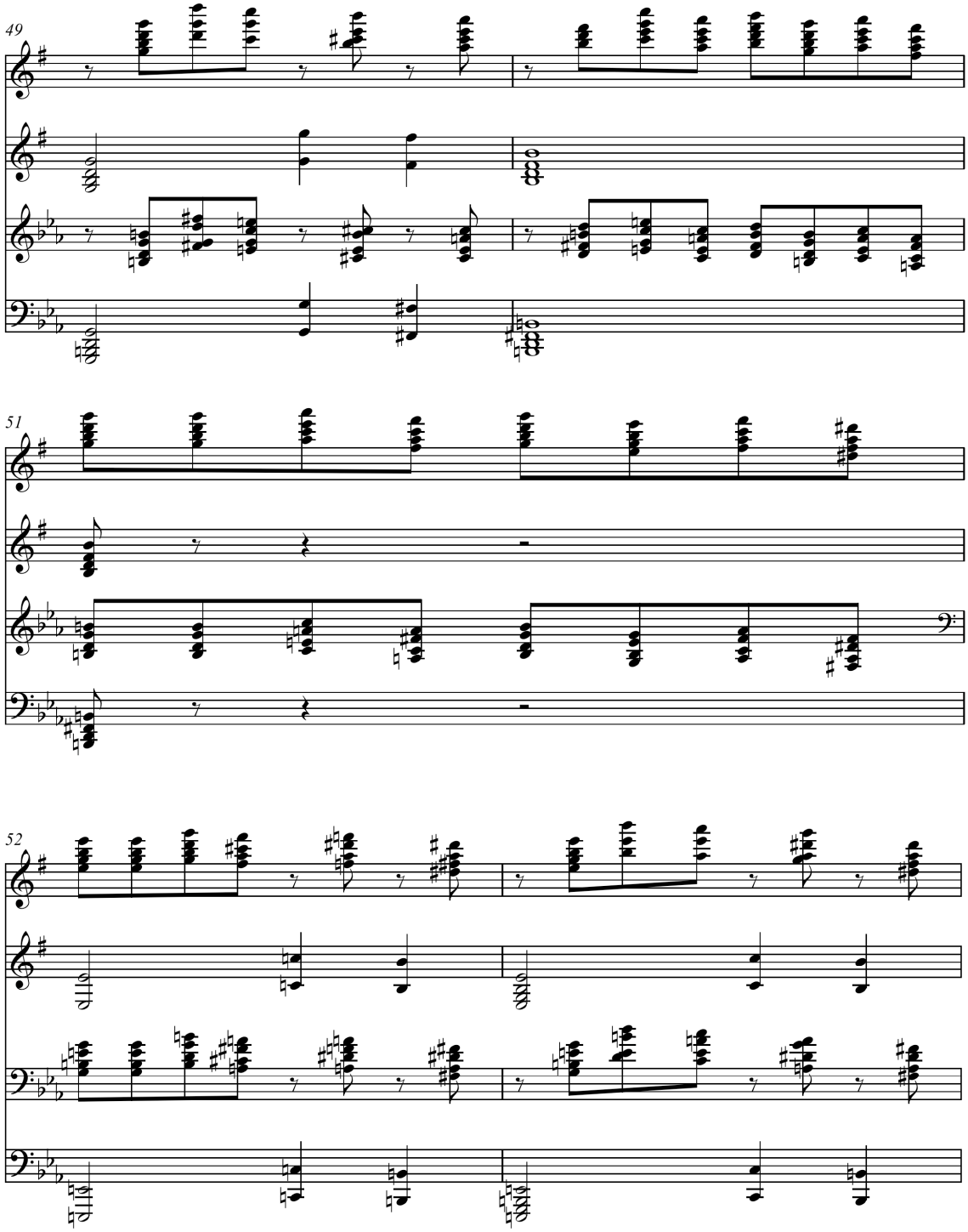
At measure forty-six, Rachmaninoff plays remarkably dense chords in both hands. This piano-like technique, combined with the huge chord voicing. The chord progression is similar to measure twenty-seven, instead strummed as full, powerful chords. He ends this section with a dramatic descent beginning with the high F (located at the thirteenth fret).

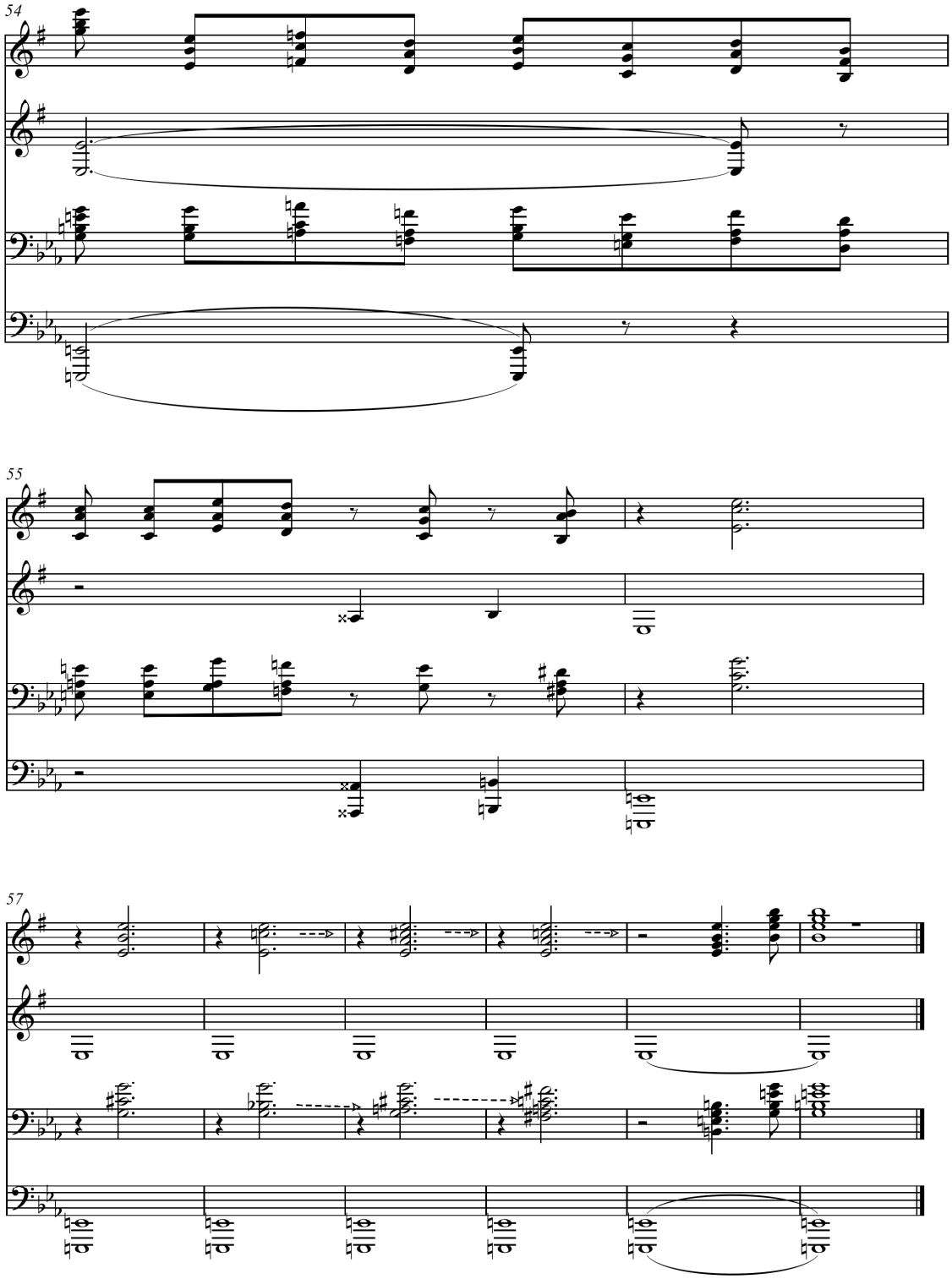




Example 79: Eddie Lang, Measures thirty-nine through forty-five



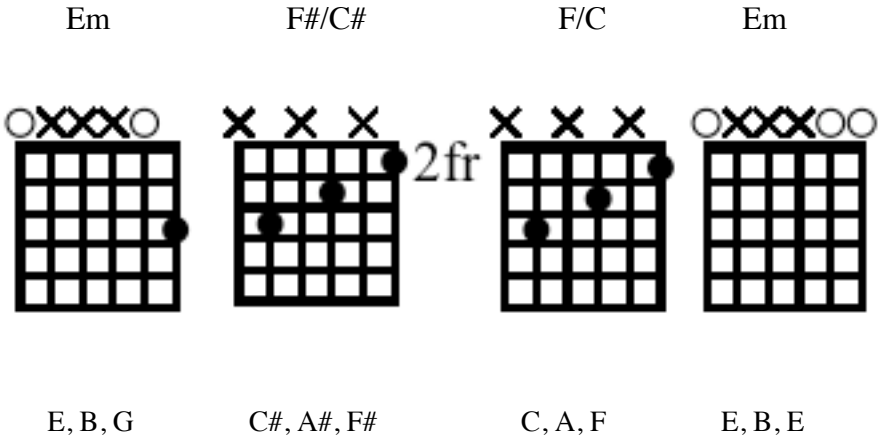

49
51
52



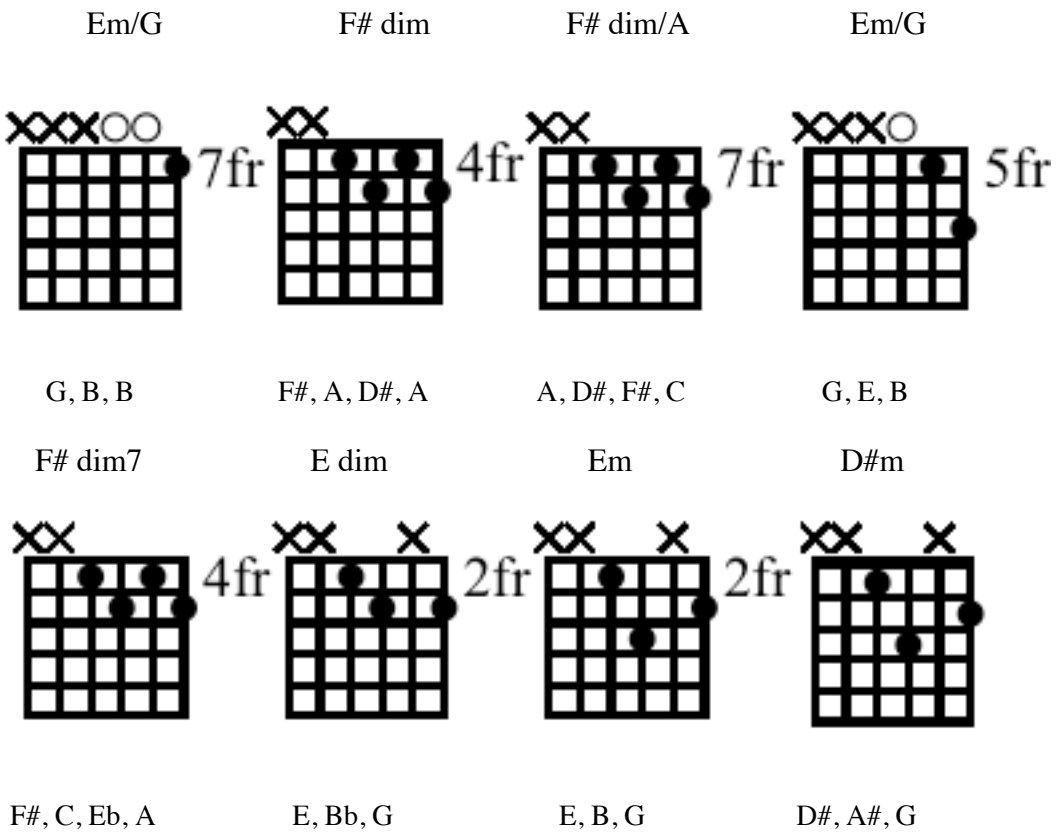
Example 80: Sergio Rachmaninoff, Measures forty-six through sixty-two

Rachmaninoff repeats the initial melody, then proceeds to a coda, letting the piece slowly conclude. Lang makes neither of these choices, instead using the chords from the beginning of the B section and then returns to the A section at measure forty-six. Lang once again utilizes one of his signature techniques to the end of the B section by using natural harmonics.

By looking at the fretboard diagram, one will notice a new variety of voicings used.



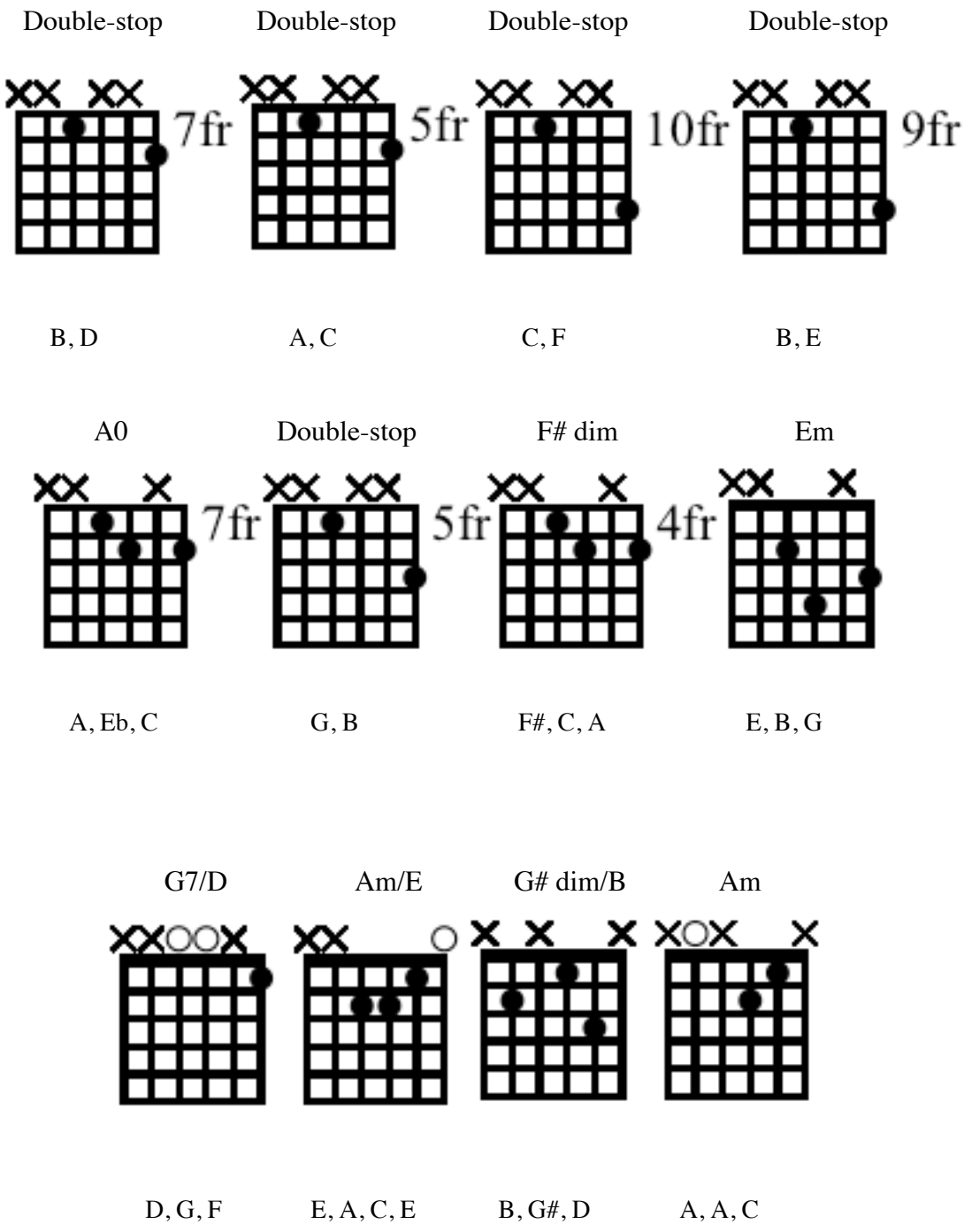
Example 81: Fretboard diagram, Measure thirty-nine



Example 82: Fretboard diagram, Measure forty

In this section, there are similar shapes between chords, such as the diminished and the last Em and D# minor chords. Any complex or interesting voice leading techniques are lost because of the harsh strumming. It is also not the intent, as chord shaping functions to emulate the chaotic environment Rachmaninoff creates.

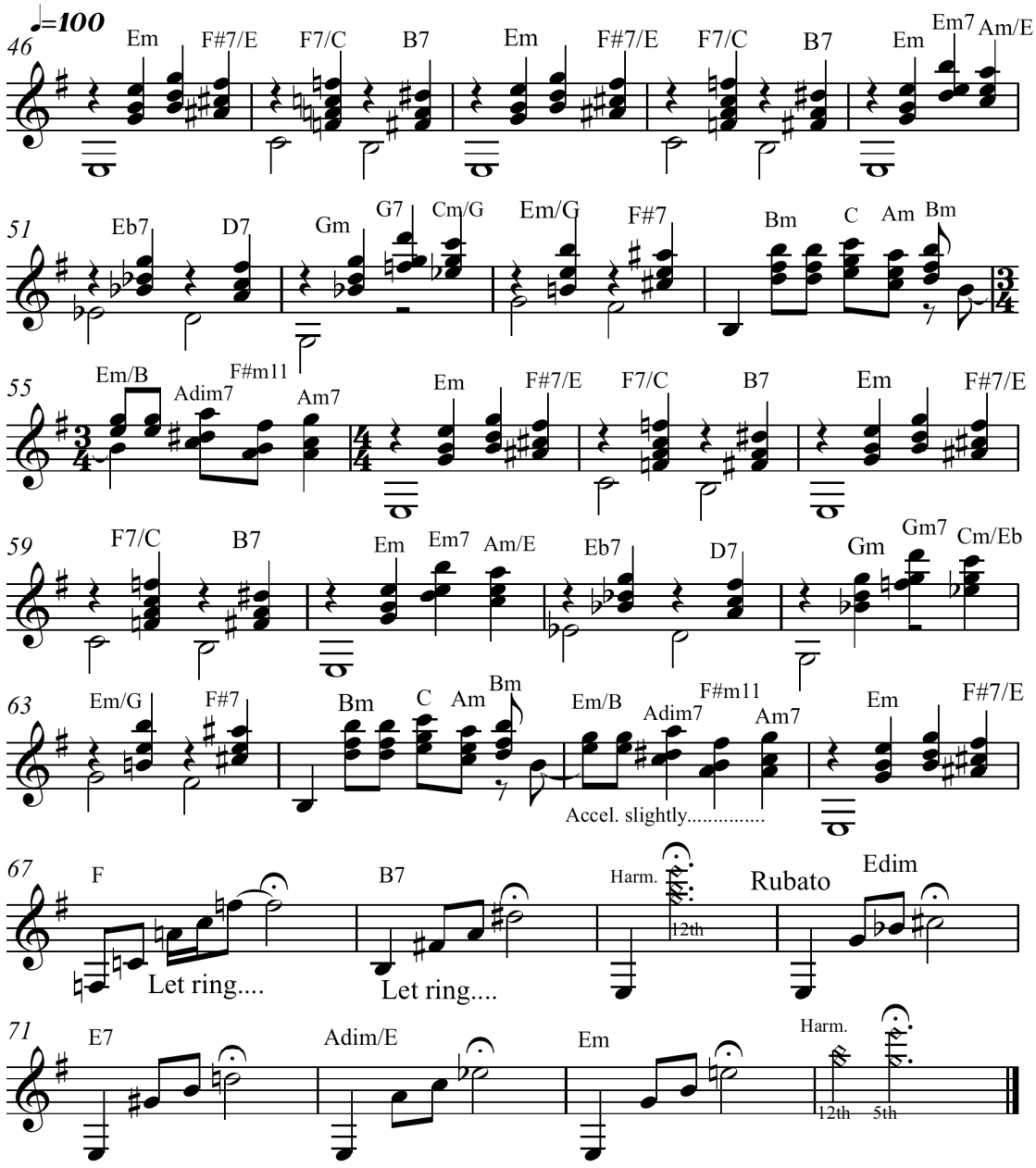
The descent of the double-stops at measure forty-two and three, which are sometimes broken up by chords (whether intentional or unintentional) is noteworthy in that Lang does not use the same shape and move it backwards. This would have made the passages far easier to execute. Instead, he chooses to play multiple variations of voicings, creating textures and timbres not common for the guitar of the era, once again proving the versatility of the instrument as well as his imaginative approach.



Example 83: Fretboard diagram, Measures forty-two and forty-three

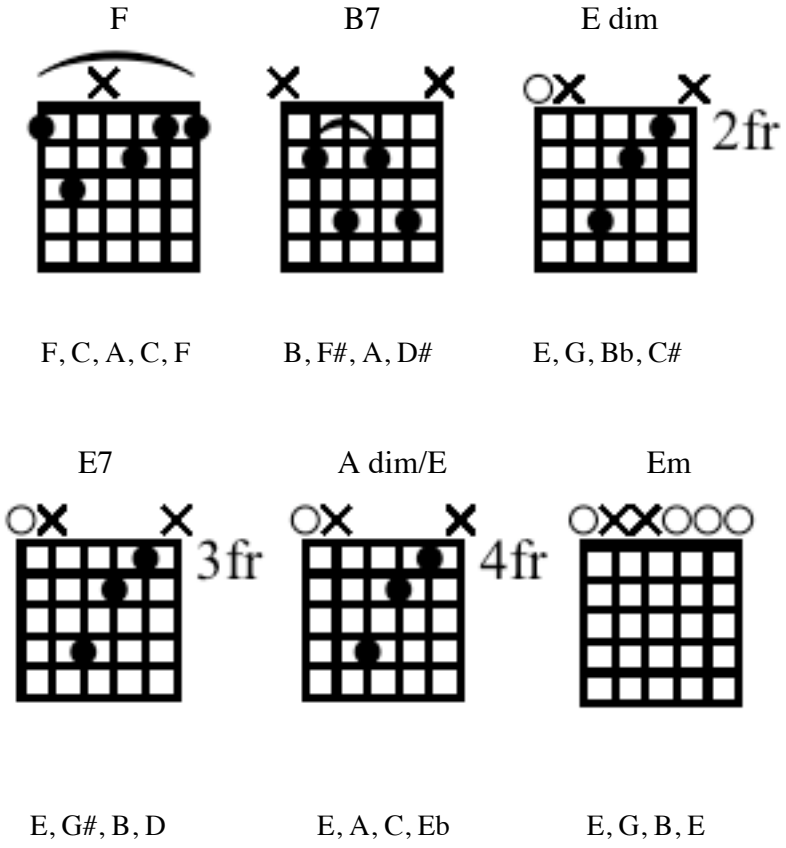
Within the first four shapes we note large intervallic leaps between the bass and melody. Each voicing requires a different fingering. As the descent continues, Lang sometimes

plays a full chord until the descent ends on A minor. His progression then resolves to E minor at measure forty-four, adding his natural harmonic technique at the end of this section. Measure forty-three is an arpeggiated F# dim chord, which leads back to the A section beginning at measure forty-six:



Example 84: Eddie Lang, Measures forty-six through seventy-four, Return of the A section

Lang extends the coda similar to how Rachmaninoff does by playing variations of chords against the open E drone. He presents a sequence of chords, which feature the top voice descending in half-steps starting with the note C# in measure seventy. This moves by half-step to D at seventy-one, then Eb at seventy-two. This resolves to the root of E minor at seventy-three. Lang ends the piece with natural harmonics at seventy-four.



Example 85: Fretboard diagram, Measures sixty-seven through seventy-three

These voicings for the F and B7 chords are typical chord shapes that require a full or half barre. The E dim, E7 and A dim/E are voiced as triads, each one containing intervals of minor thirds, which he moves the chord up by fret. This creates real parallelisms on all

three chords, although the chord shape is a bit uncomfortable to play. He concludes by playing an E minor chord consisting of all open strings.

Although European classical guitarists had been playing music in this fashion for years, a majority of American-born guitarists were not familiar with this style of playing.[76] Lang may have wanted to learn how to play this piece because he clearly heard the half-step movement Rachmaninoff created in the harmonic structure. Playing this difficult piece may have been a way for him to separate himself as a musician from other American guitarists. Author James Sallis in his book *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* mentions fellow guitarist Roy Smeck as saying, "He [Lang] was in a class by himself. He was so far ahead of everybody. He was playing Rachmaninoff's ' Prelude' when everyone else was trying to pick out melodies."[77] This quote shows the impact Lang had on fellow guitarists of that era.

This piece also serves as evidence that Lang's technique and textural treatment overlapped genres. Included is his use of fast melodic runs and natural harmonics found at the end of phrases or cadences. Also evident is his use of large intervals, perhaps used to create brighter tone colors. These things, among others, separated his style of playing from other American-born guitarists of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

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[76] James Sallis, ed. *The Guitar in Jazz: An Anthology* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 22-23.
[77] Ibid., 20.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to showcase how Lang incorporated a unique style of technique and textural treatment into his solo guitar style. This was demonstrated by analyzing three of his only known recorded solo pieces, as identified by Raymond F Mitchell in his book *Feeling My Way: A Discography of the recordings of Eddie Lang 1923 -1933*.

It is important to note classical guitar technique had developed in European countries long before Lang picked up a guitar. That is why it is significant to recognize Segovia's influence of Lang's style of playing solo guitar. It is just as important to give blues music credence. Lang played blues music very well, as demonstrated by his recorded performances with blues guitarist Lonnie Johnson and blues vocalist Bessie Smith. Therefore, it can be assumed Lang played a hybrid of both styles.

Through analysis of both "April Kisses" and "A Little Love, A Little Kiss", this study notes Lang's use of a variety of techniques. He uses various types of motion to create interesting types of tonal effects. This movement creates open and closed chord voicing to expand the tonal color of the guitar. Lang pays careful attention to avoiding parallelisms whenever possible because they limit the tonal color.

He weaves half step motion between chords in order to unify harmonic progressions. This is accomplished by inverting chords, which was a relatively new idea for that time period in American guitar music.

Through this unprecedented analysis, this study discovered and examined various types of note movement he used, such as contrary and oblique motion. This style of

voice leading is difficult to accomplish on the guitar because it forces the guitarist to think more like a pianist. Whereas many guitarists would rather play standard chord shapes or block chords, Lang inverts them or adds unusual intervallic voicing, which allows him to create the desired voice leading unique to this style.

Two musical ideas that were part of Lang's personal technique are the use of natural harmonics and the presentation of fast melodic passages. These were mostly found at the end of phrases or cadences. They prepared the listener for either a new melodic idea or a definitive ending.

The visual representation of the chord chart demonstrated the difficulty of some fingerings that required some contortion of the chording hand. These shapes allowed Lang to focus not only on the melody, but voicing within the chord itself. The inversions allowed him to create unique note movement between chords, thus making his distinctive style of orchestration possible.

These techniques validate what others have said about Lang. Jazz historian and author Richard Suldhalter stated "…players could execute passages which were melodically attractive and completely harmonized, making the guitar in effect a mini orchestra. Lang had opened the way…."[78] Gunther Schuller stated in *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz 1930 – 1945*, "Guitar was not only used as a rhythmic instrument, but found its' voice in melody through Lonnie Johnson, Dick McDonough, and above all, Eddie Lang."[79] Norman Mongan mentioned in *The History of the Guitar*

[78] Richard Sudhalter, *Lost Chords: White Musicians and Their Contribution to Jazz 1915 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 525.
[79] Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era: The Development of Jazz 1930 – 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 226.

in Jazz that "…Lang used the guitar as a solo voice. His vision of the instrument's new role[80] triumphed over his successors' in the 1930s."[81]

Many profound statements have been made regarding Eddie Lang's contribution to the solo guitar style, but not enough research has been completed to show *how* he played what he did. There has been a lack of scholarly analysis on Lang's playing style, with some exceptions. More study of Lang's playing technique needs to be done. This analysis hopes to set in motion further studies of his style of guitar playing, as well as his tremendous output of single-line work.

[80] Replacing the banjo and also being recognized as a solo instrument
[81] Norman Mongan, *The History of the Guitar in Jazz* (New York: Oak Publication, 1983), 28.

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