Jazz Lines Publications

Presents

EASIN' IT

ARRANGED BY FRANK FOSTER

FULL SCORE

JLP-51218

Music by Frank Foster

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EASIN' IT (1960)

One of the nice things about obtaining the Walrus Music Publishing catalog is the opportunity to re-examine and correct the music of major writers (ejazzlines/Jazz Lines Publications acquired Walrus in 2014). Frank Foster is certainly one of them, and I am particularly proud to have the opportunity, along with my esteemed colleague Rob DuBoff, to help get this music 'right' once and for all.

Frank was a personal friend. I first met him when he was teaching at Queens College, where I was a music student in the early-mid 1970s. The college had no jazz department to speak of, although they had one or two people who taught jazz courses. Frank came in to lead the big band and to teach arranging, and I quickly became his assistant. He brought his wonderful music, his incredible talent, and his inspiring teaching ideas to us, and we couldn't get enough. To hear him solo while we accompanied him was simply mind boggling.

Frank had done a lot of musical growing over the years. He was with Count Basie for most of the 1950s through the early 1960s, soloing by himself and with Frank Wess, and contributing important compositions to the Basie book. The band made more money and became famous to the general public playing *Li'l Darlin*' and *Cute*, but the music they loved to play was written by Ernie Wilkins, Thad Jones, Frank Wess, and Foster. Such pieces as *Blues Backstage*, *Down for the Count*, *Easin' It*, *Four-Five-Six* and *Discommotion* became classics, but *Shiny Stockings* became a blockbuster, one of the most requested titles in the Basie book. The arrangement has one of the finest shout choruses ever written for big band. Another blockbuster was *Blues in Hoss' Flat*, originally titled *Blues in Frankie's Flat*, particularly when it was featured in the Jerry Lewis film, *The Errand Boy*.

Foster was mightily influenced by John Coltrane, and when his soloing started to become a bit more 'out' than was comfortable for Basie, Foster was featured less and less. Foster left, free-lanced and started his own big band. He led many different sized groups over the years, and his writing and playing became more and more modern. A major break came when he was invited to lead the Count Basie ghost band. He was thrilled to come back, and added many new pieces to the Basie book; the band recorded two stunning albums with a lot of this new music, and it is evident that Frank's presence added a much needed spark to the band. But eventually, the estate became displeased with what Frank was doing (even though he always wrote in the Basie tradition). Eventually he was replaced.

But Foster never stopped, even when he was felled by a stroke that affected his left side. He lost the ability to play saxophone and was confined to a wheelchair, but he continued to write, mastering Finale. He revisited many of his compositions, reinventing *Didn'You* and others in this series (interestingly, he told me that he'd thrown out the score of *Didn'You* when Basie returned it to him in the 1950s. This 1996 version is far better than the original anyway).

Frank and I kept in touch over the years, and at an IAJE convention in Long Beach a few years before he passed I was able to tell him how important were his contributions to American Music. Interestingly, at that very moment, a student band was playing *Blues in Hoss' Flat* within earshot of our visit, and I pointed that out to him. I said, "That says it all."

Jeff Sultanof
December 2014

JLP-51218

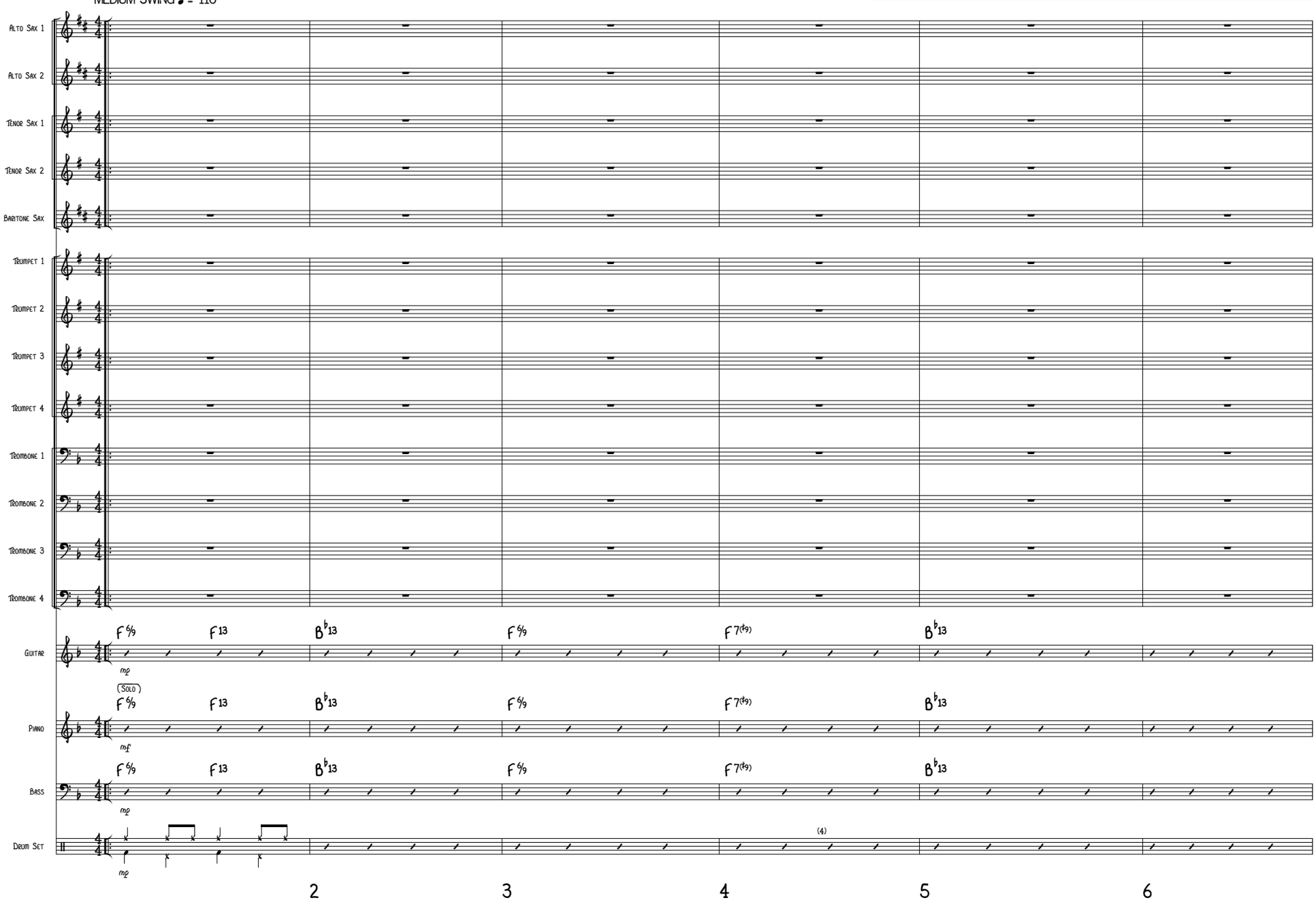
EASIN' IT

RECORDED BY COUNT BASIE

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

MUSIC BY FRANK FOSTER
ARRANGED BY FRANK FOSTER
PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY JEFFREY SULTANOF AND ROB DUBOFF

SCORE



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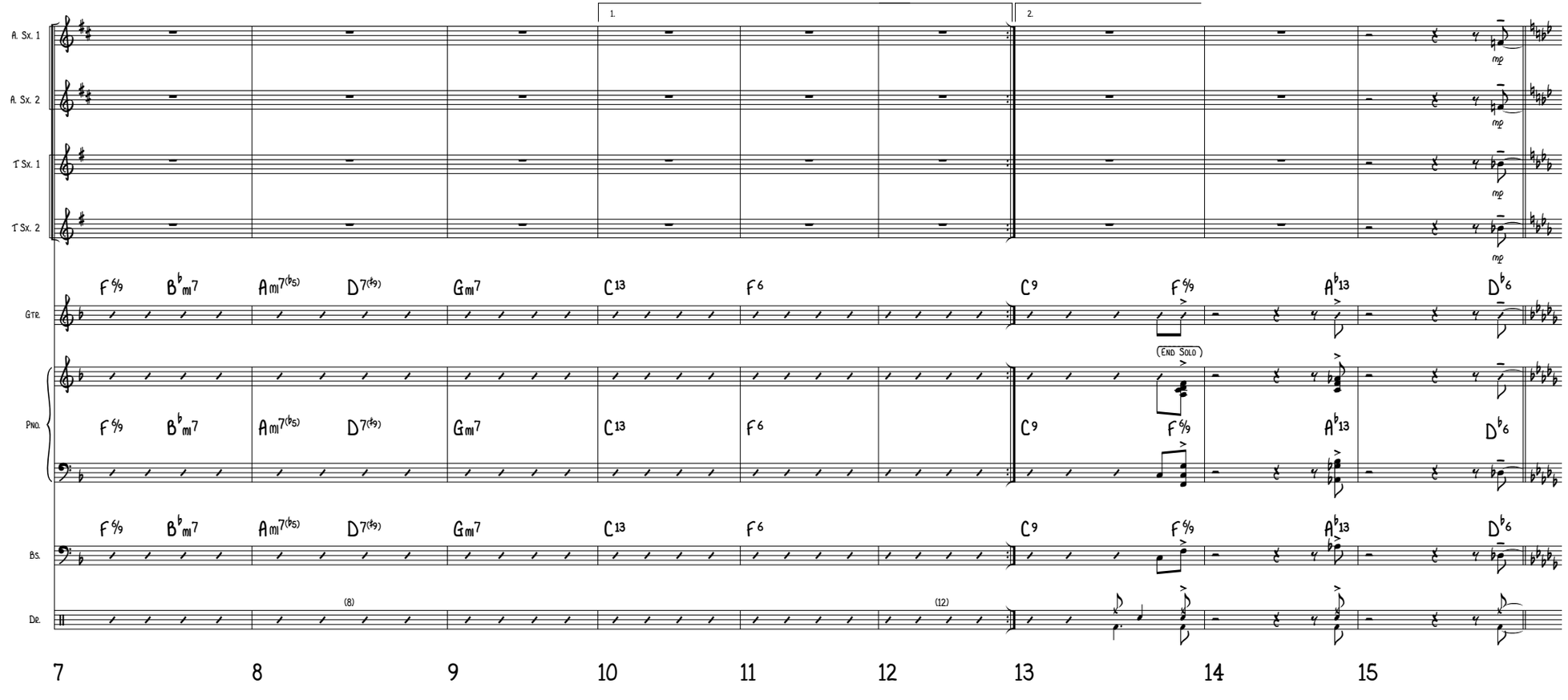

EASIN' IT

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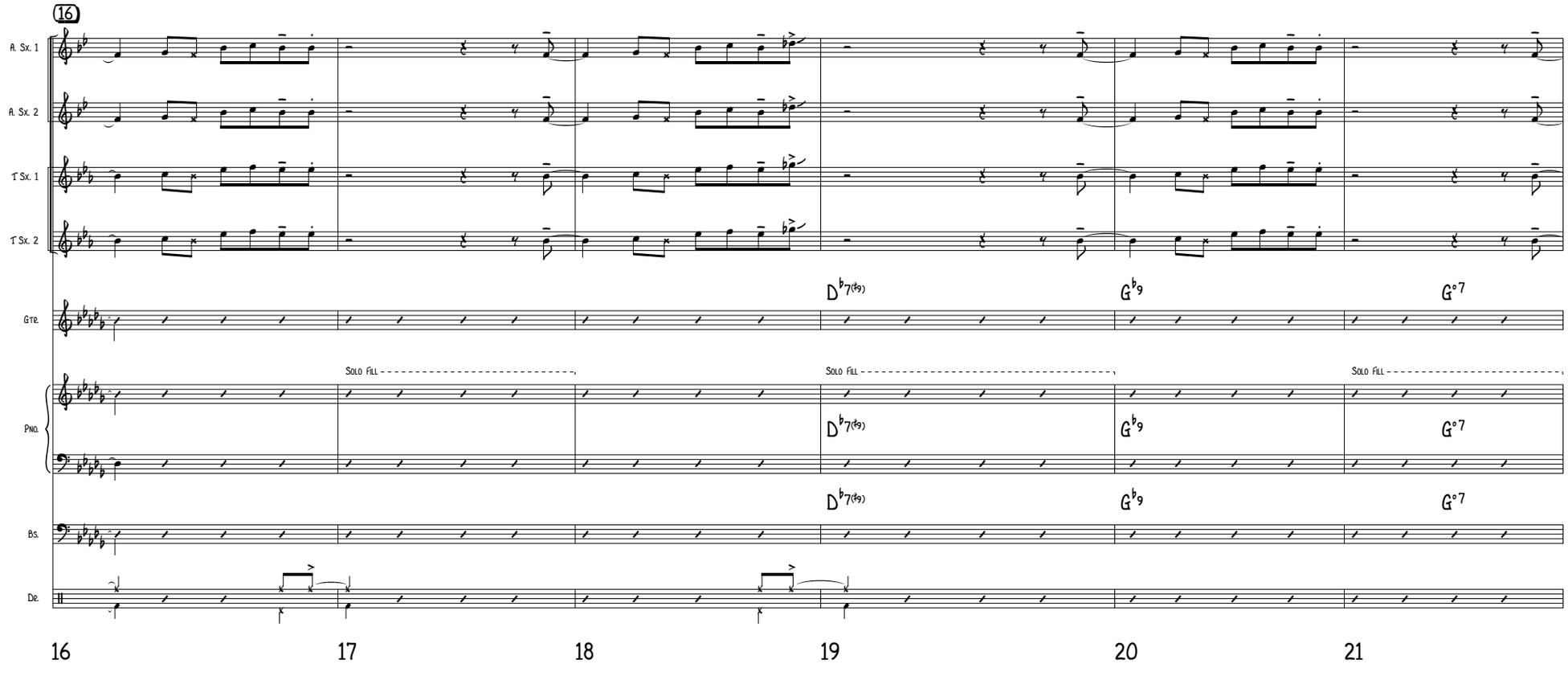

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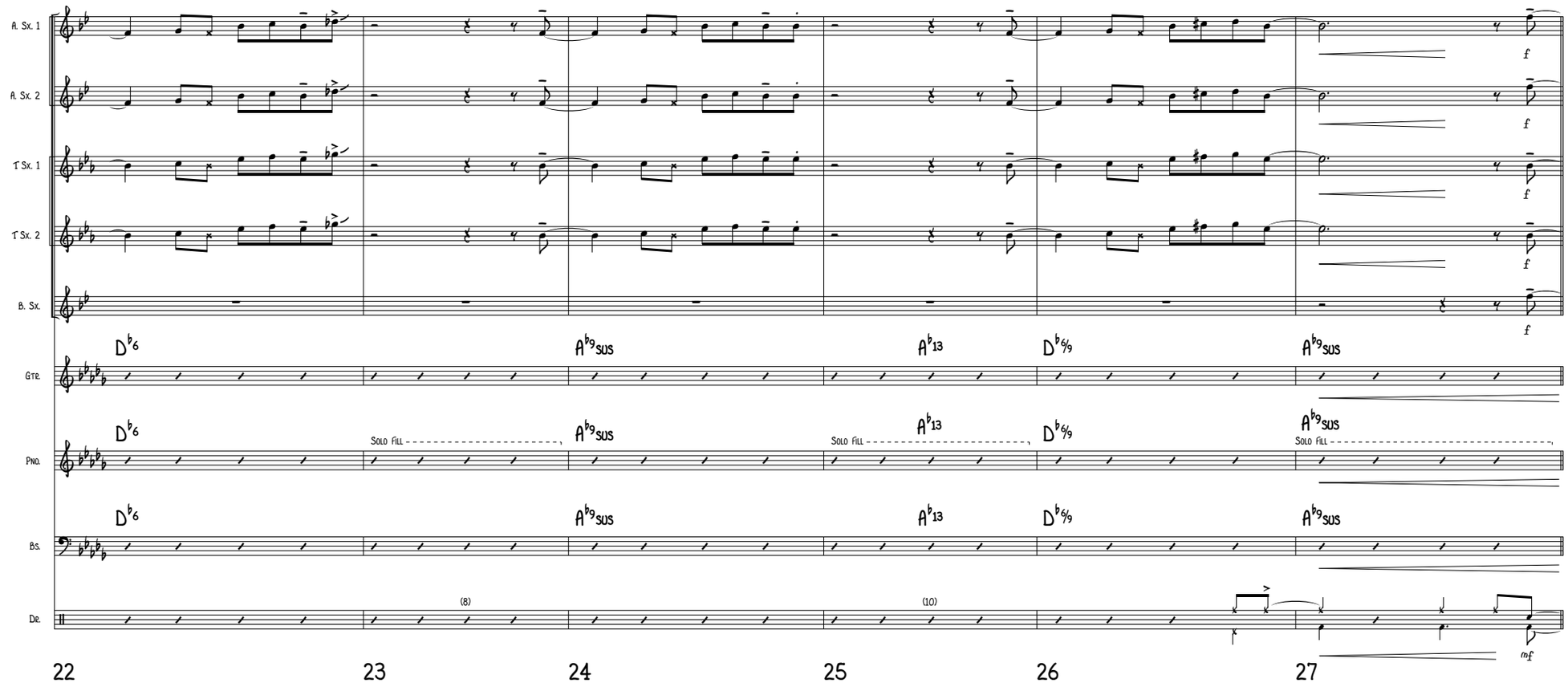

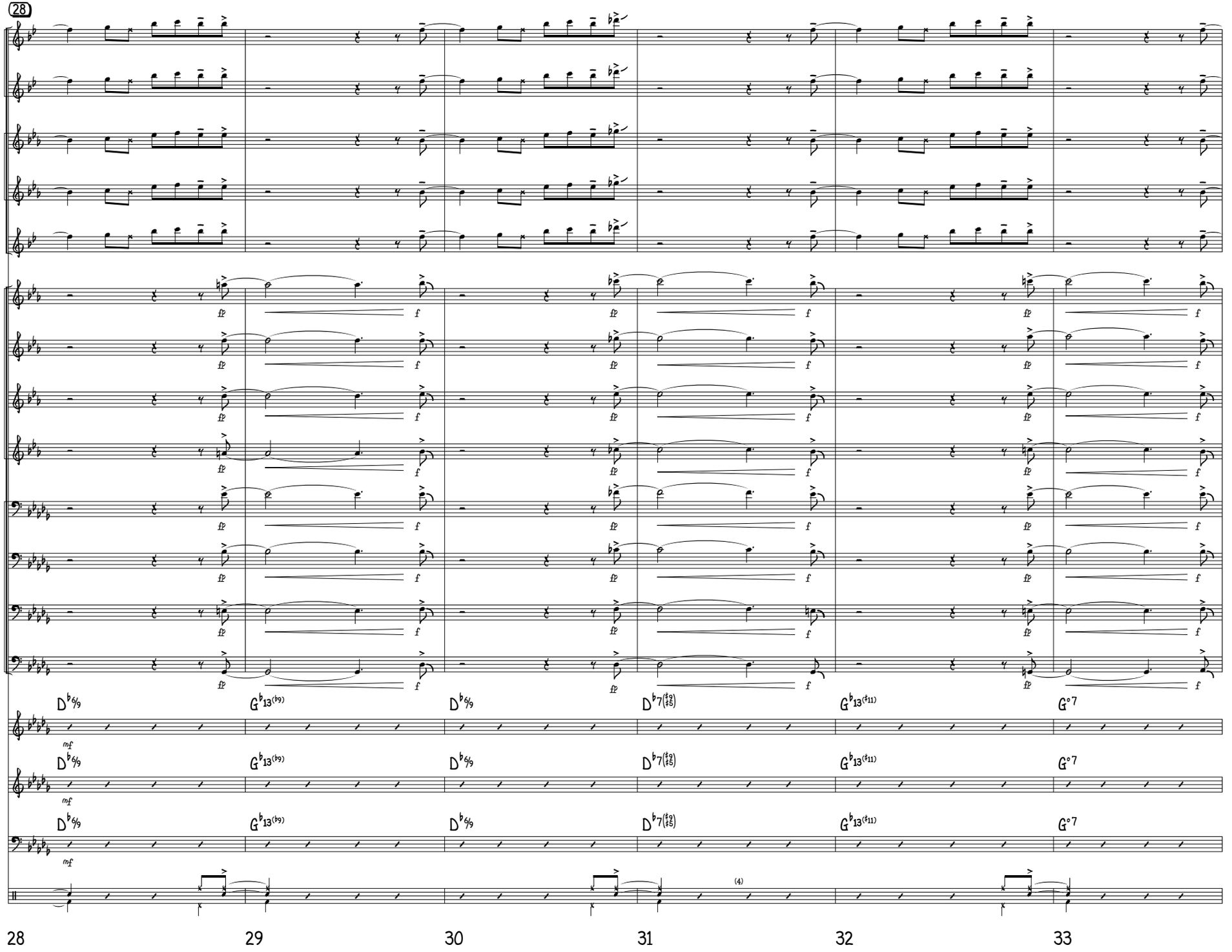
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G♭13(♭9)
D♭6/9
D♭7(♯9/♯5)
G♭13(♯11)
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