Giant Steppes

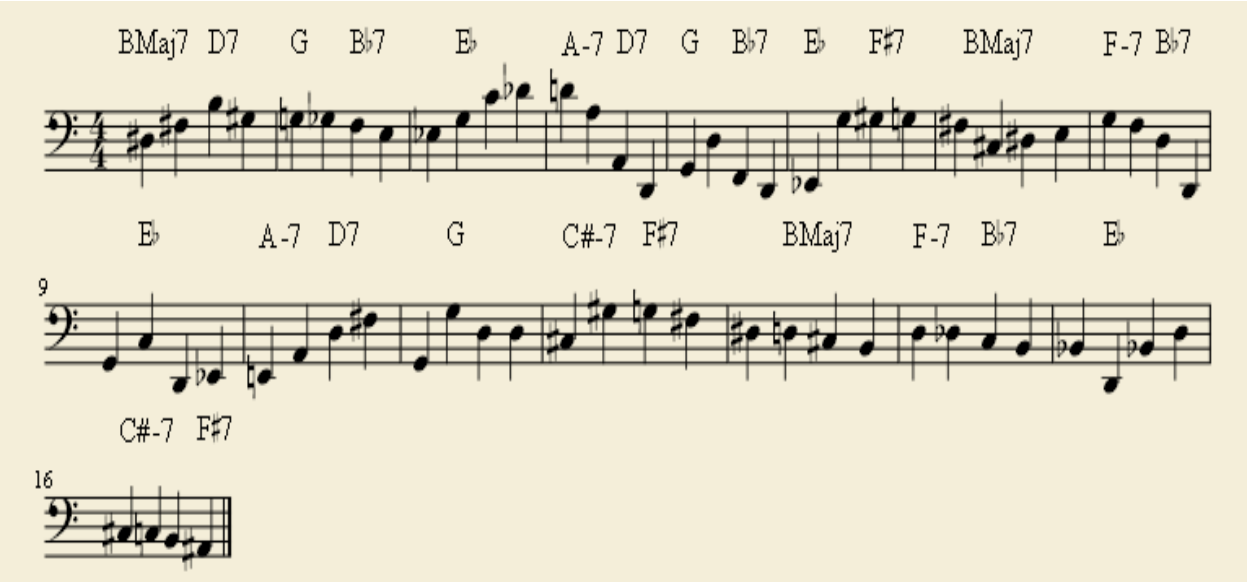
Giant Steps is a "hornado," if you will, a true cyclonic inversion on the bandstand, and before you can develop the lines you need at the speed agreed, as they say, you've got to start with baby steps. Four of them to take right off the bat: 1) lift ideas for walking-bass lines from guitar solos; 2) incorporate the bass's open strings into the lines as a crutch; 3) learn the tune one position at a time, beginning with the low register first; and 4) tune the fourth string down to D (the rationale behind this last idea is outlined in our for-sale text, *A Brief Guide*).

When compiling a playbook of lines and solo ideas, one rich source of material are guitar solos. For example, guitarist Joe Diorio's book *Giant Steps: An In-Depth Study* contains numerous solos and exercises, and we've cannibalized ideas from the very first, *Solo One*. It begins the book and features a just-getting-started level of complexity, but — like all the material in the book — manages to be both guitaristic and packed with horn patterns characteristic of Coltrane. So, at the same time you're able to transfer a lot of the guitar fingerings directly to the bass, as well as make use of percussive and other guitar-like effects available from, or suggested by, those fingerings, you're also producing modern, horn-like phrases — the best of both worlds and one step, as it were, towards forging an individual style.

Notice that for *Solo One* and other solos with strings of running eighth and sixteenth notes, you can cherry-pick the best intervals and most interesting/satisfying moves since, at four notes per measure, you only need to steal half of the notes in the solo for your lines, and conceivably have enough content for *two* walking choruses. In other words, one horn or guitar solo measure = two walking-bass measures! (In principle.)

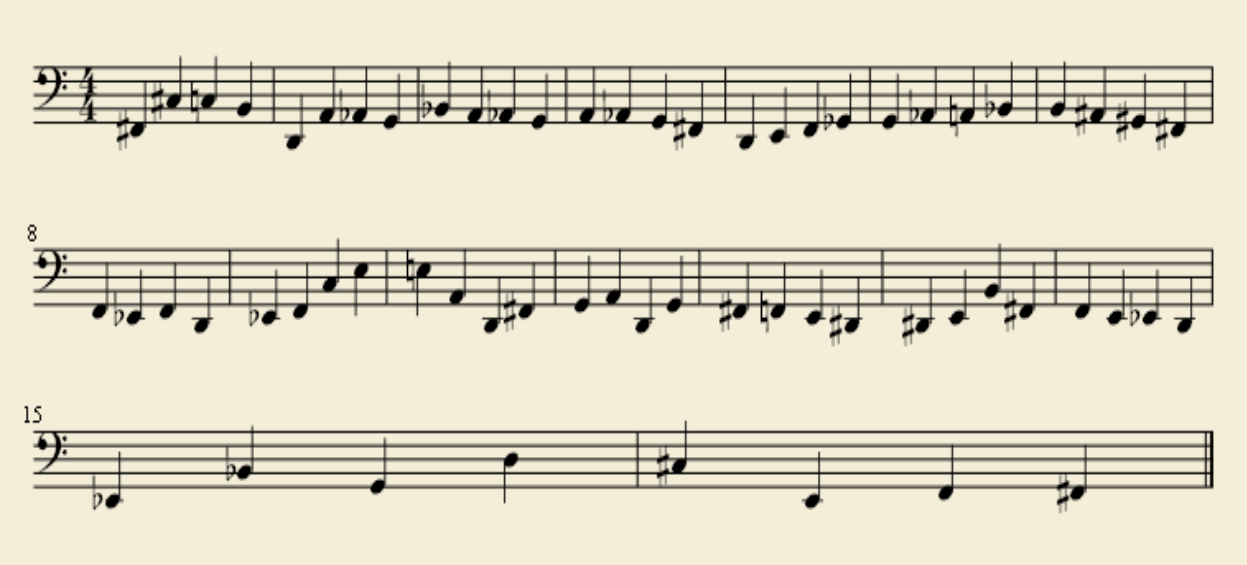
1 Open season on open strings

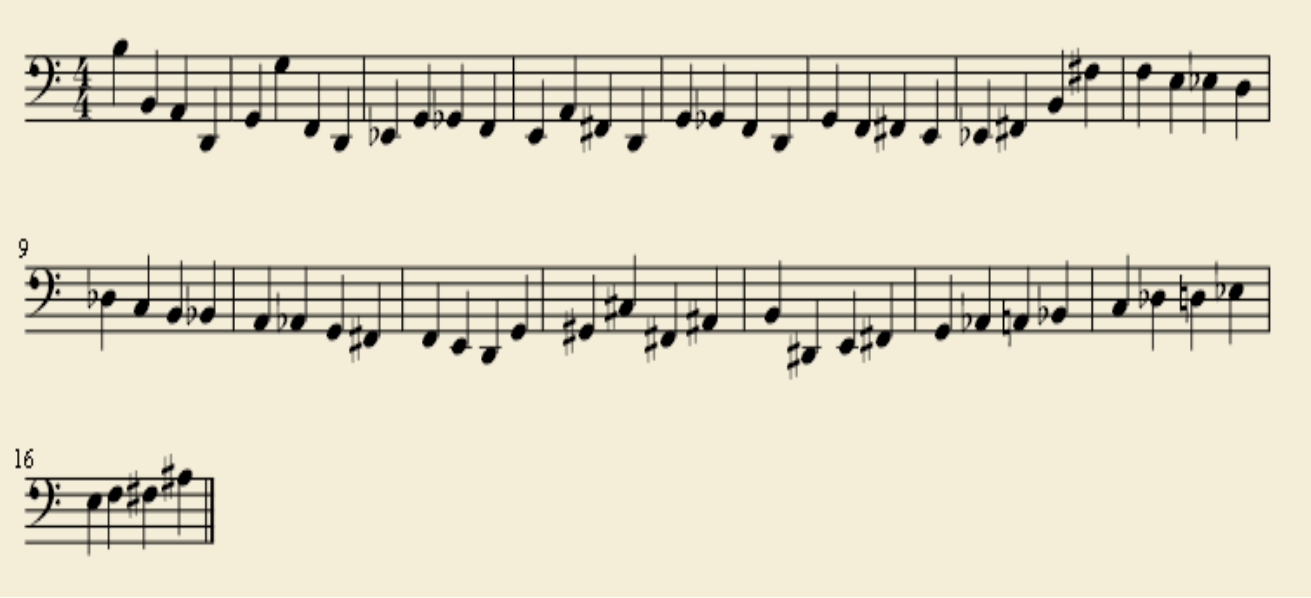
Giant Steps is a horn chauvinist's delight and the *Grand Hotel* of jazz tunes. For the intermediate-level bassist, if you're mining the guitar repertoire for lines, it's not a sin to utilize the bass's open strings, as in this example:

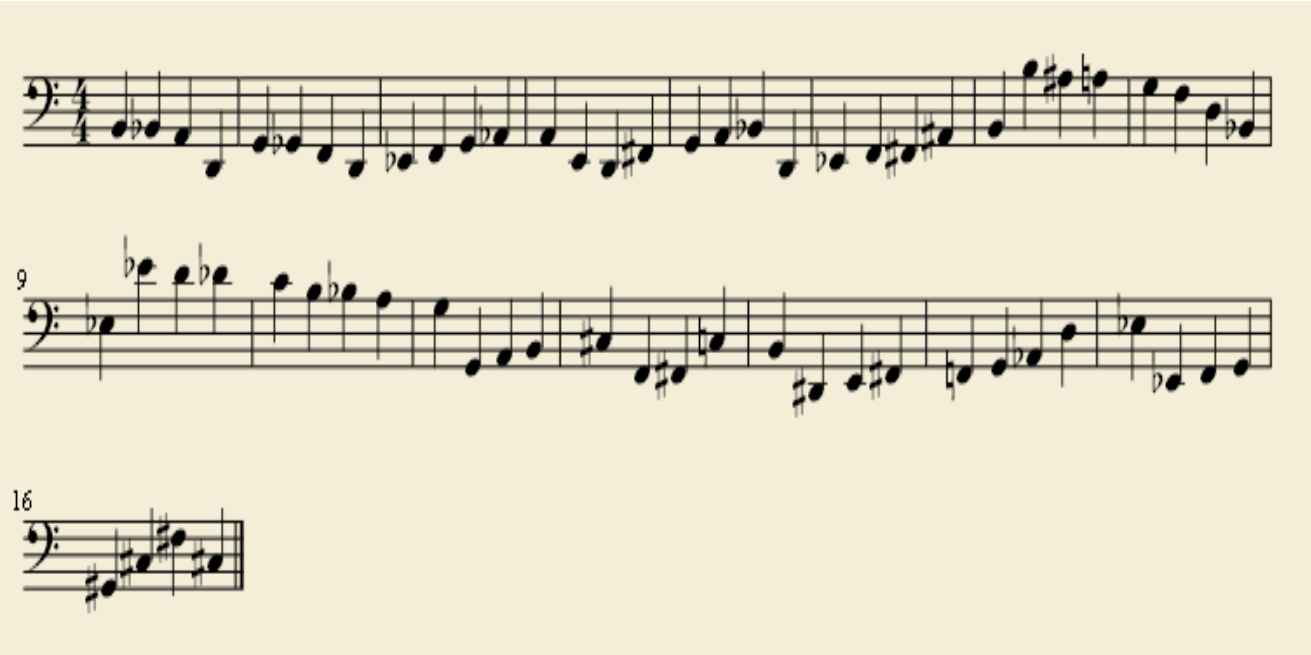


2 Get down and stay down

We’re partial to learning *Giant Steps* one position at a time, beginning with the lower end. See where tuning the fourth string down to D comes in handy? Another way to be different!



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