The Jazz Style Primer

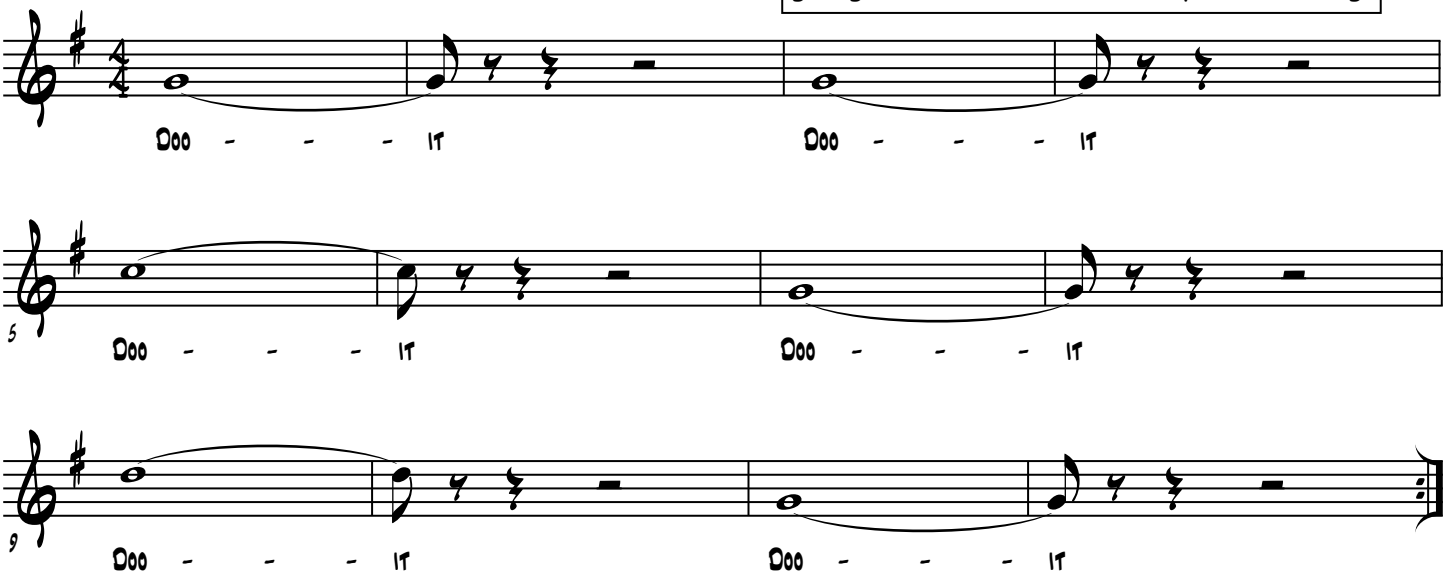
Alto Sax.

A blues based approach to jazz style and improvisation

William Rank

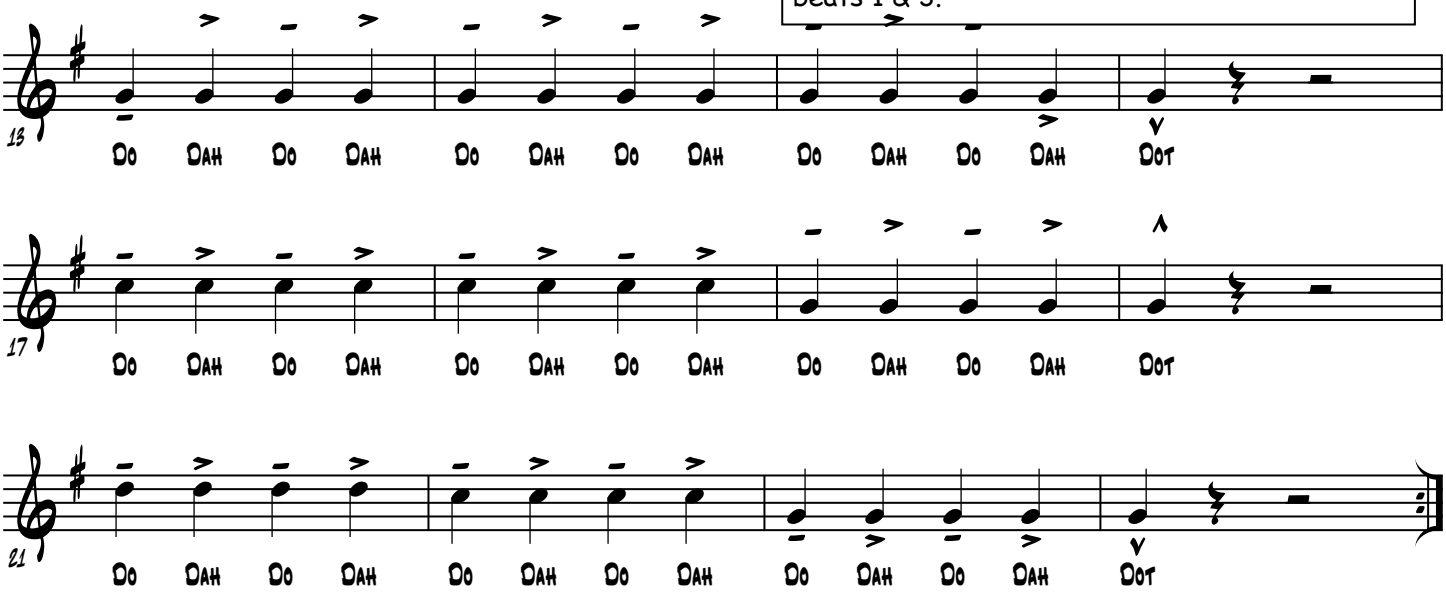
1. The Tongued Cut-off

In jazz music use a tongued cut-off
to articulate the end of the note,
giving the end of the note a rhythmic feeling.



2. Accenting Beats 2 & 4

The accent in most jazz music is on beats 2 & 4,
whereas classical music generally emphasizes
beats 1 & 3.



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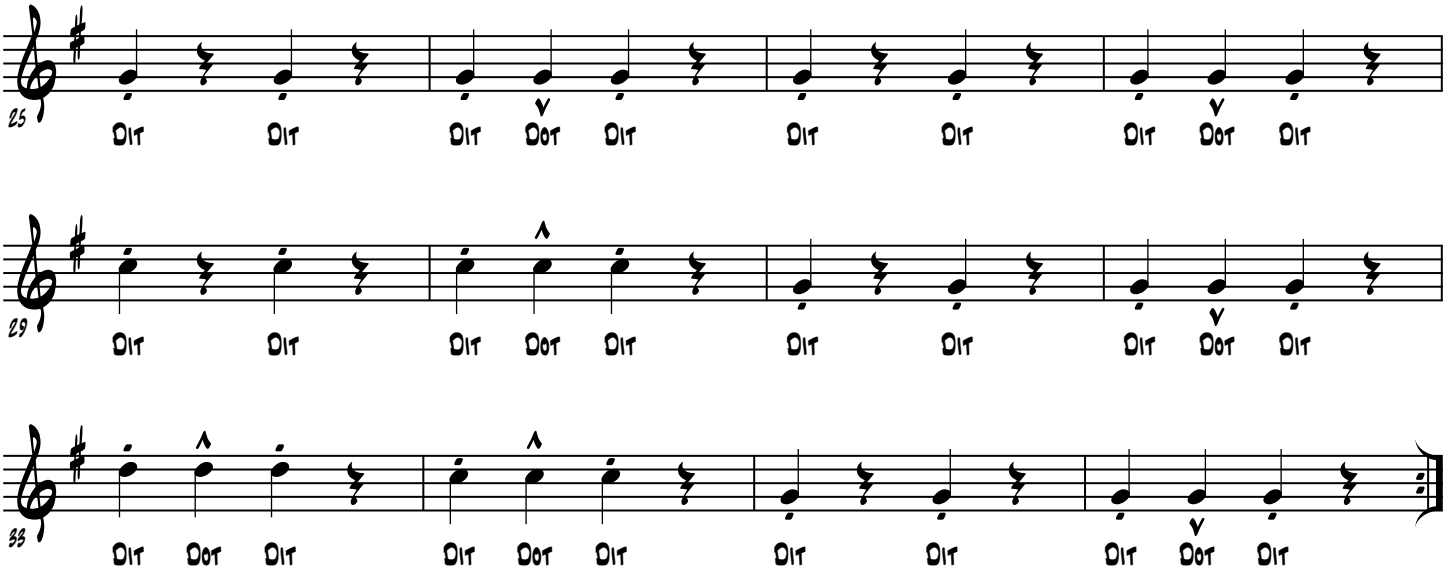
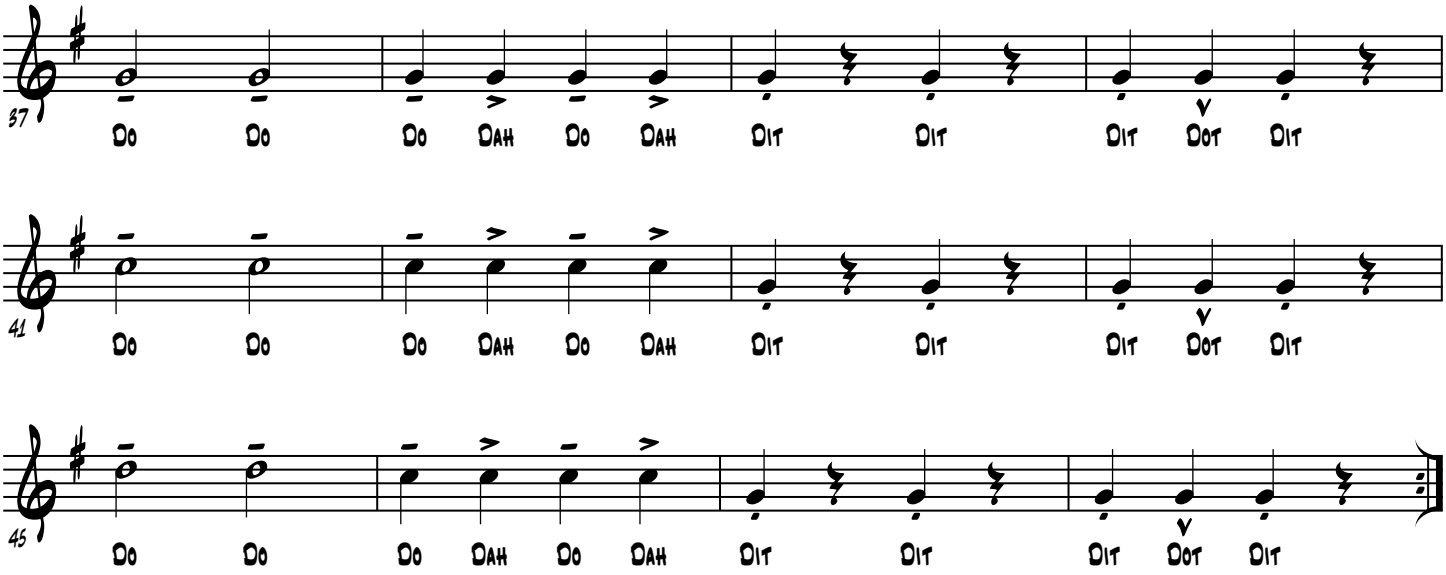
Many quarter notes are played short in jazz. Short un-accented notesare Dit and short accented notes are Dot.

3. Dit and Dot

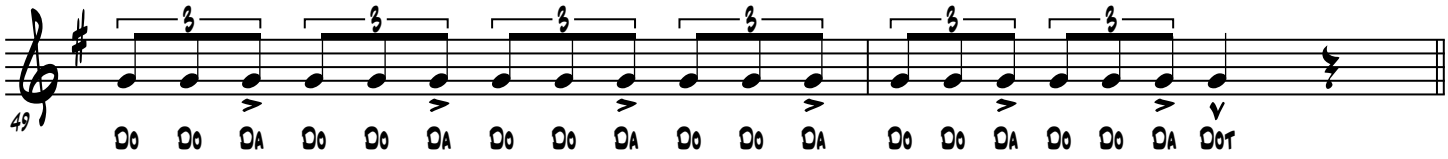


4. Do Dah Dit Dot



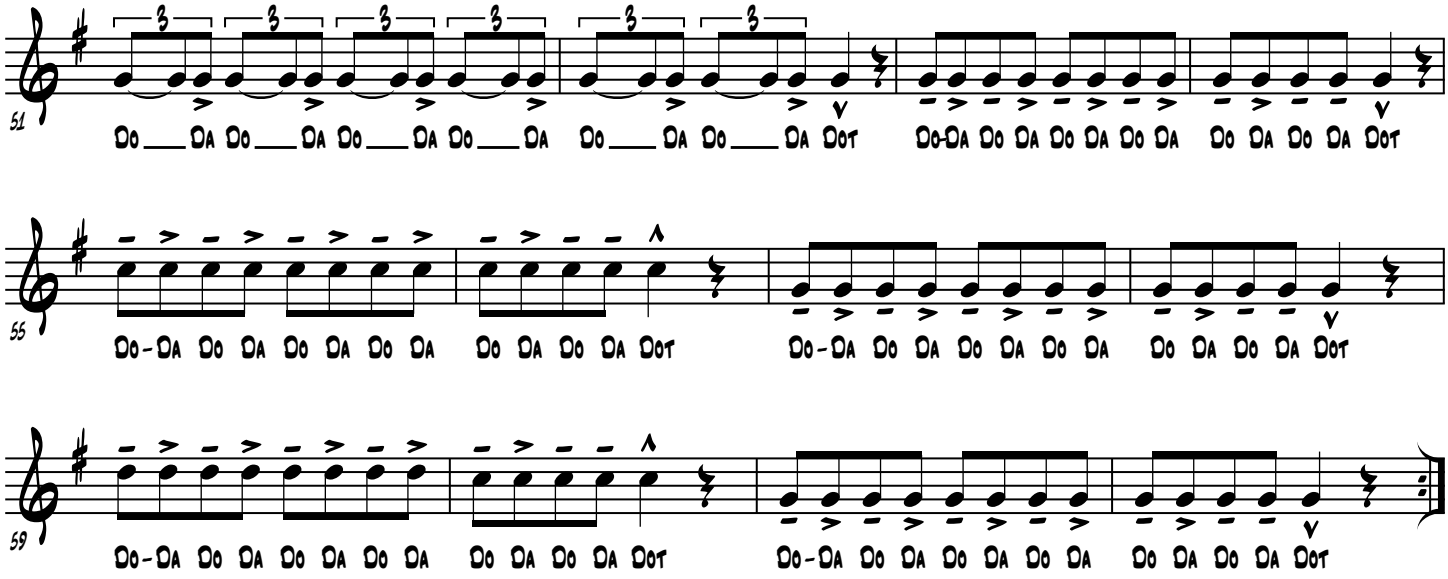
Swing has an underlying triplet feel. Put a slight accent on the last third of the beat.

5. Triplet Feel

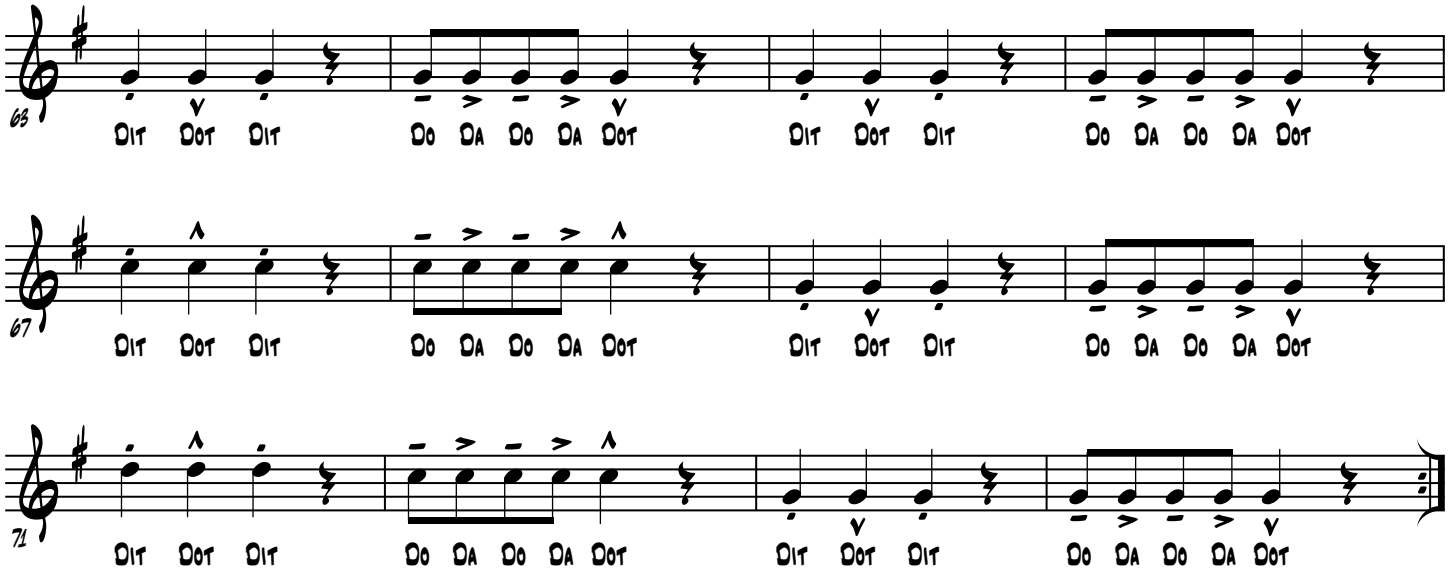


In measures 1 & 2, the first two triplets are tied together to make a quarter note triplet. The rhythm is consistent throughout the entire exercise. Generally this is written as eighth notes, with the last third of the beat slightly accented.

6. Eighth Notes

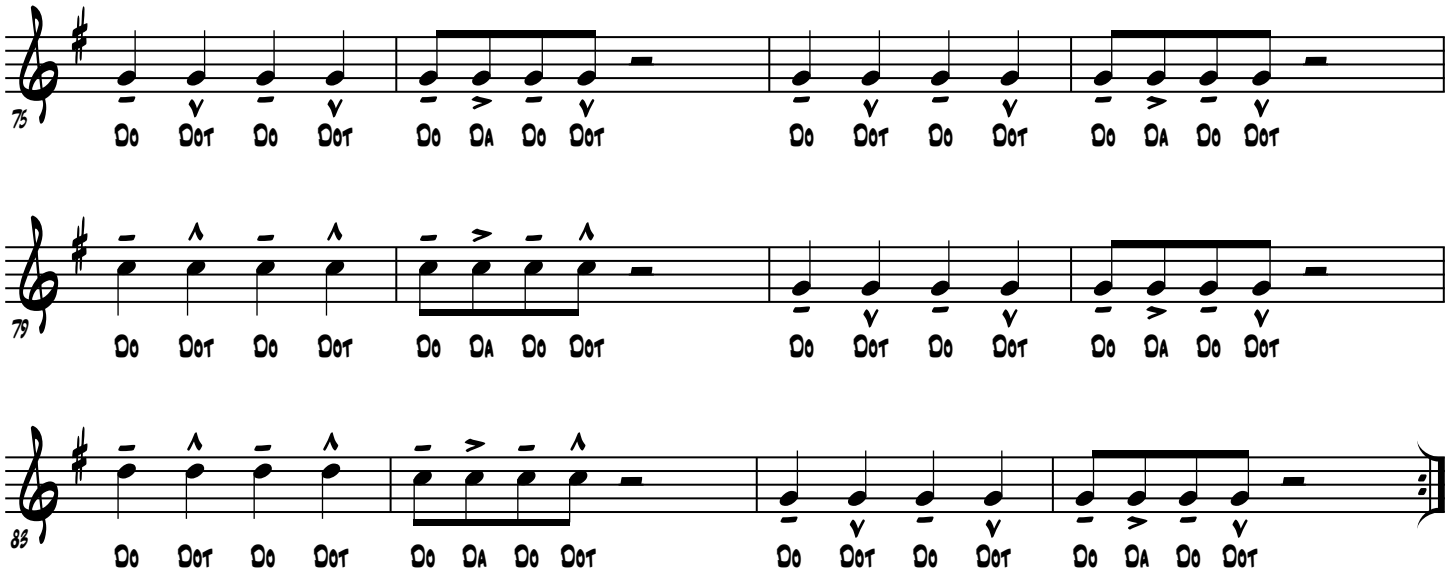


7. Quarters and Eighths



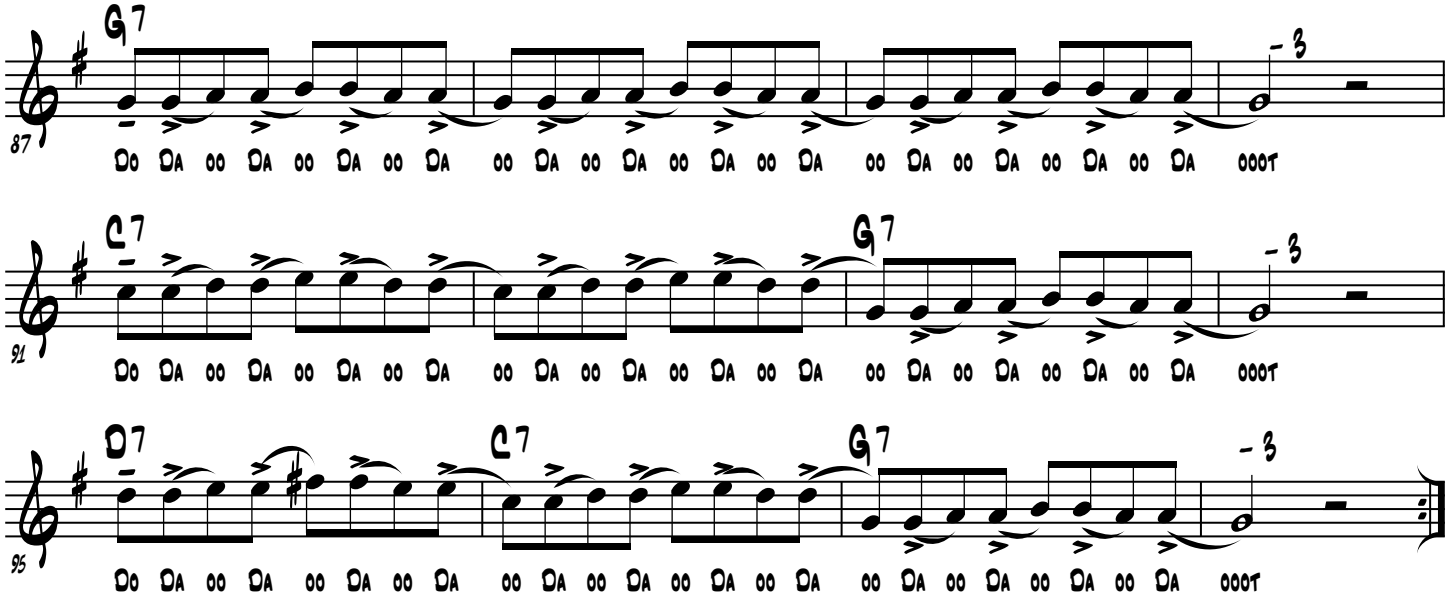
Jazz Rules: Eighth Notes followed by rests are played short!

8. More Quarters and Eighths

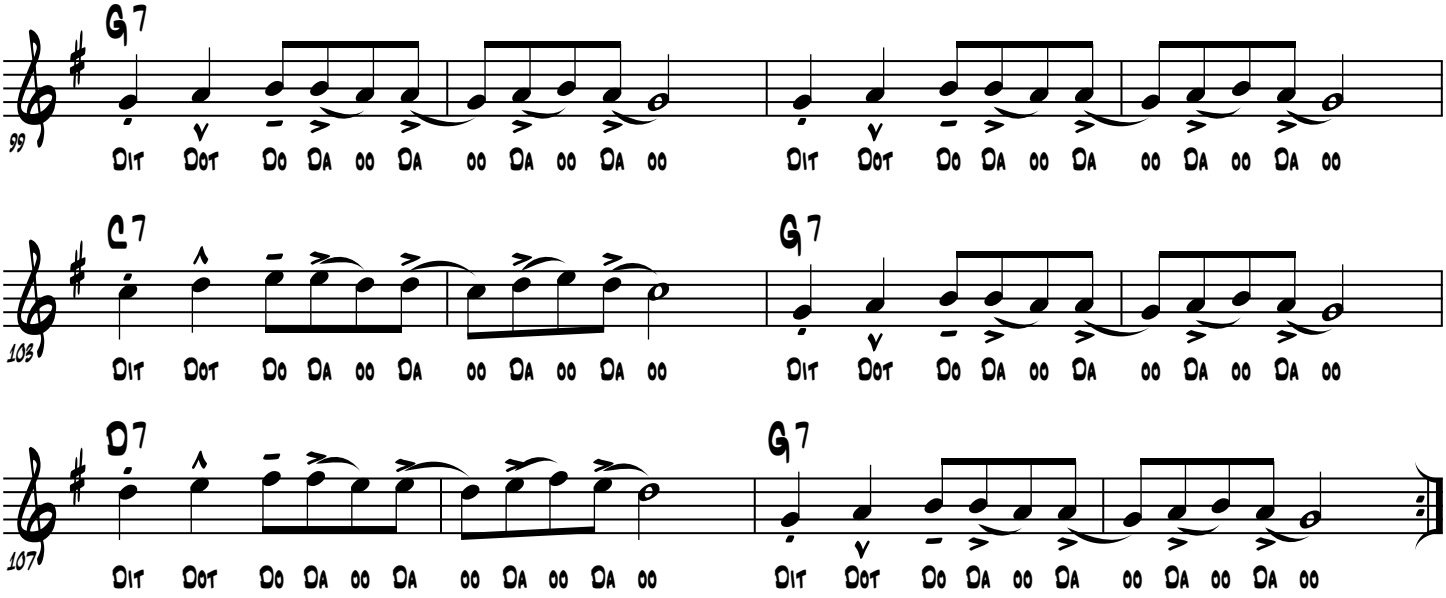


To create a more fluid style, jazzers use a technique called "back accent tonguing". Legato tongue the downbeat if it's articulated, and slur the off beats into the downbeat.

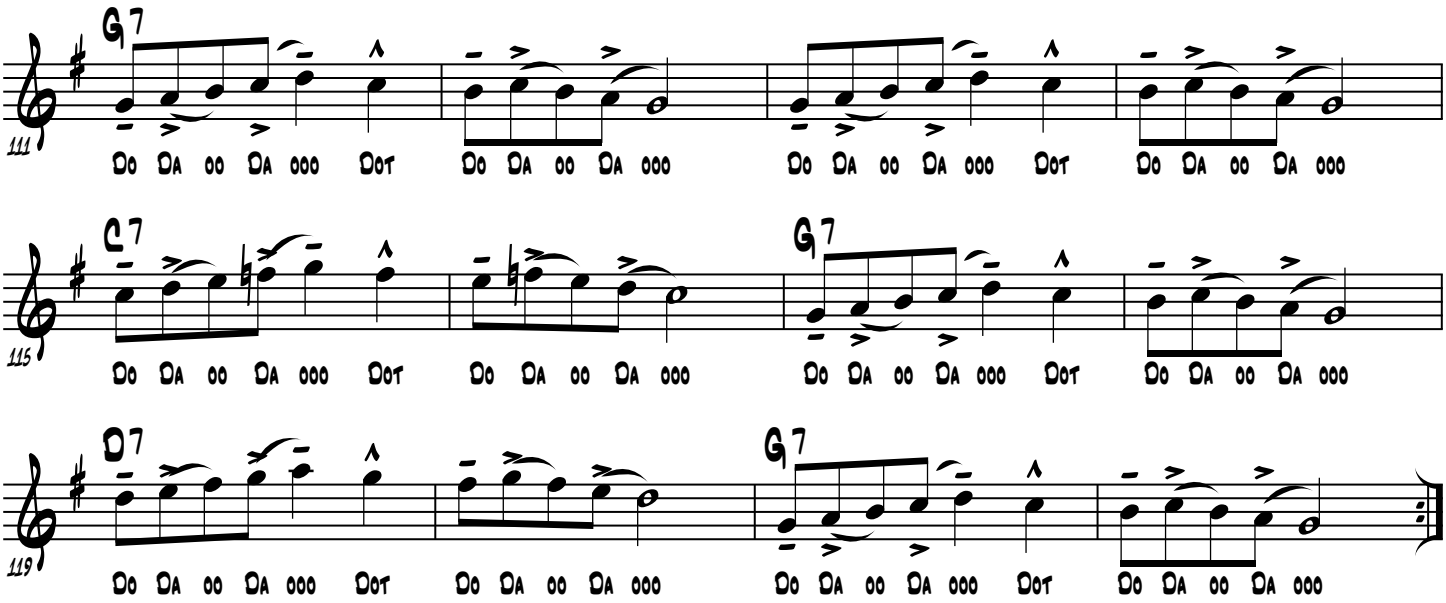
9. Back-Accent Tonguing



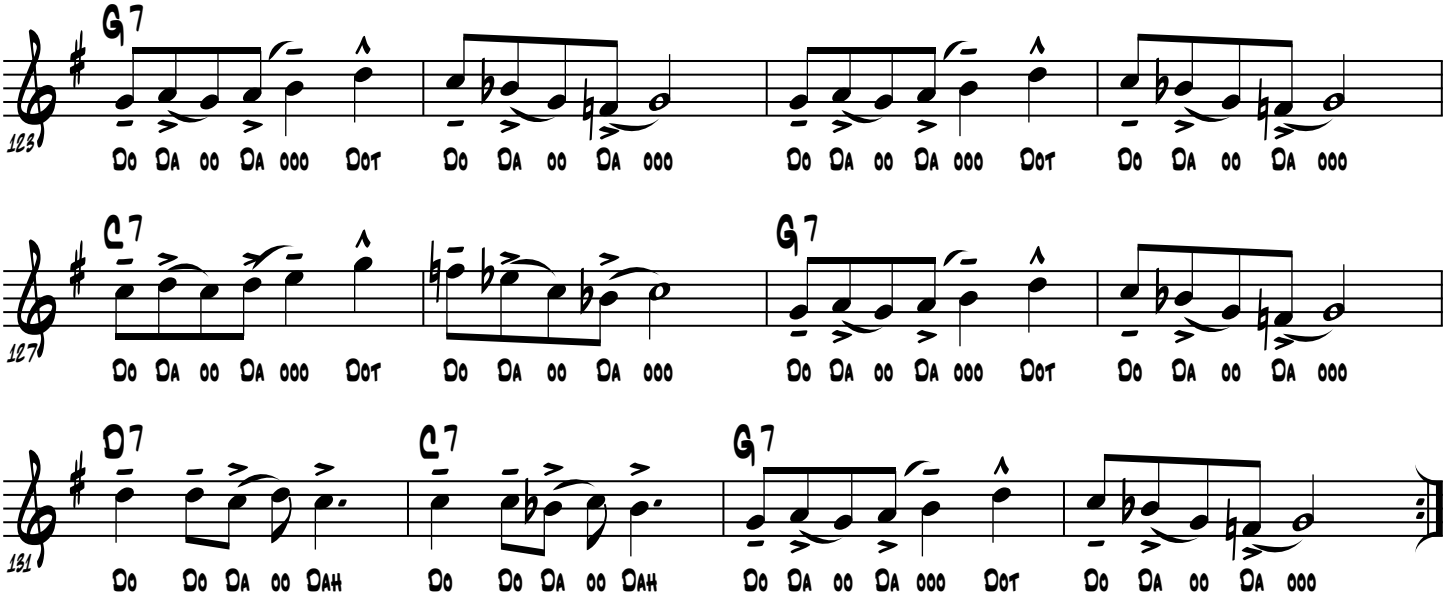
10. Moving Around



11. Swinging Free

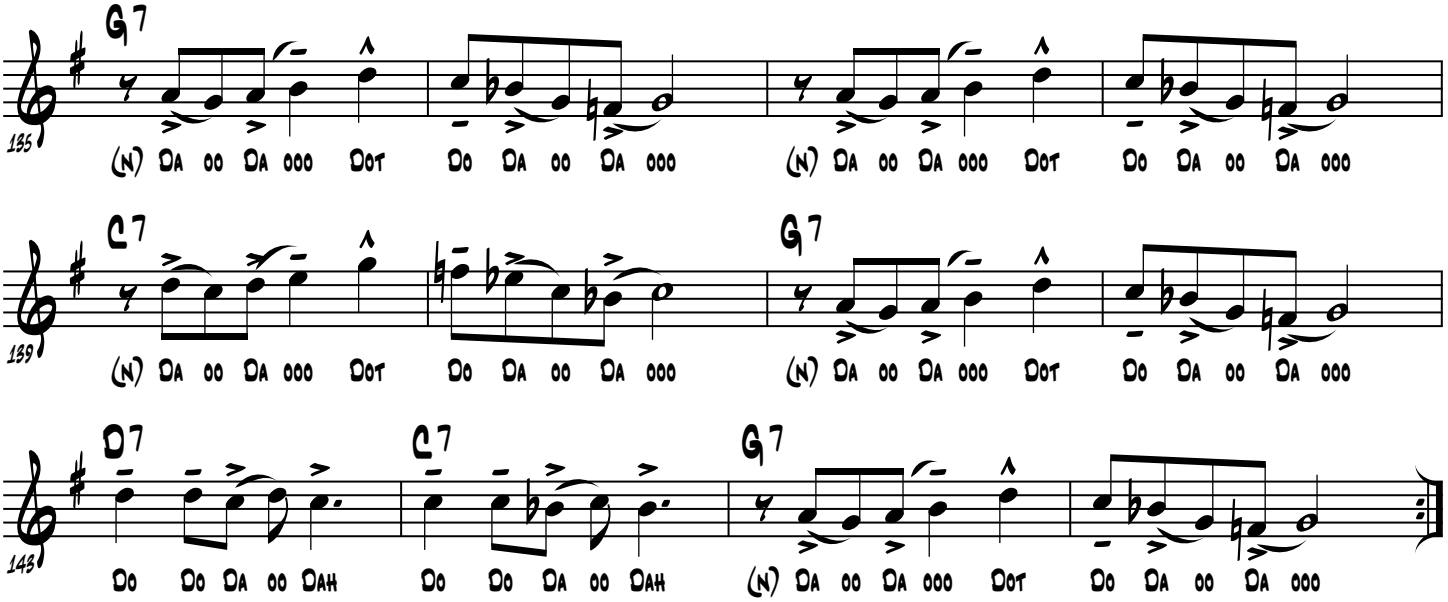


12. Before Thirteen

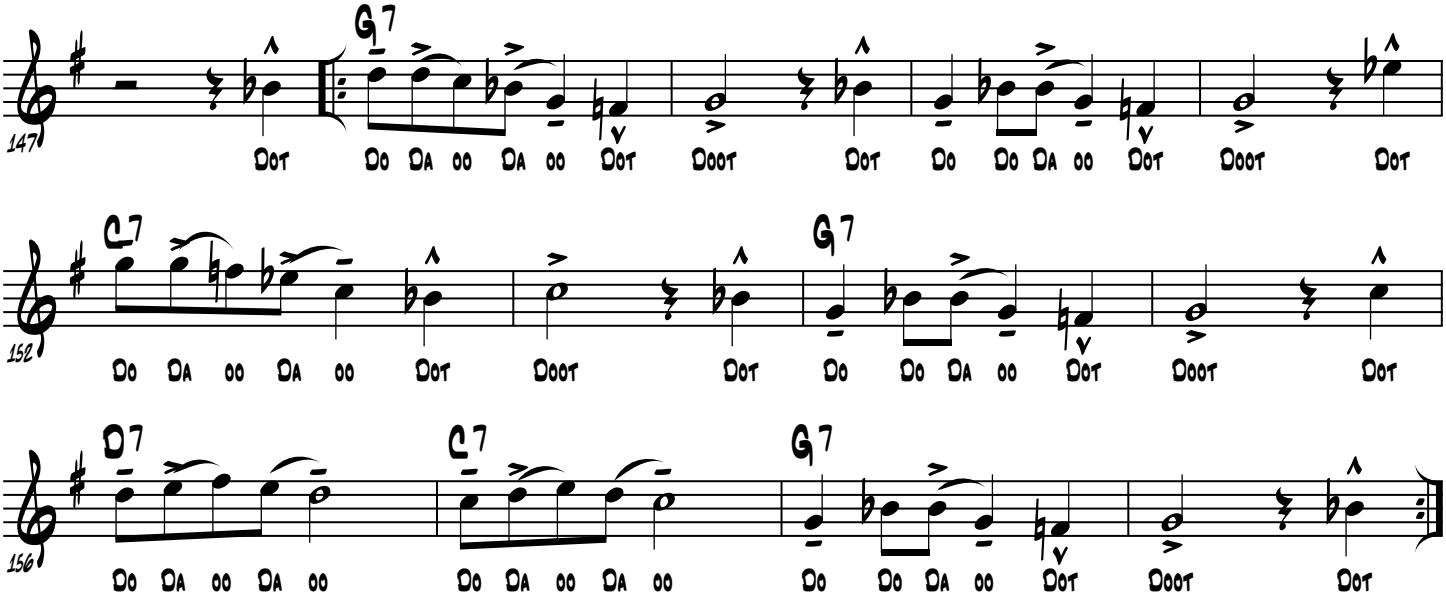


Entering on the And of the beat is a little confusing. If you have a rest on the downbeat, think "n".

13. And of One

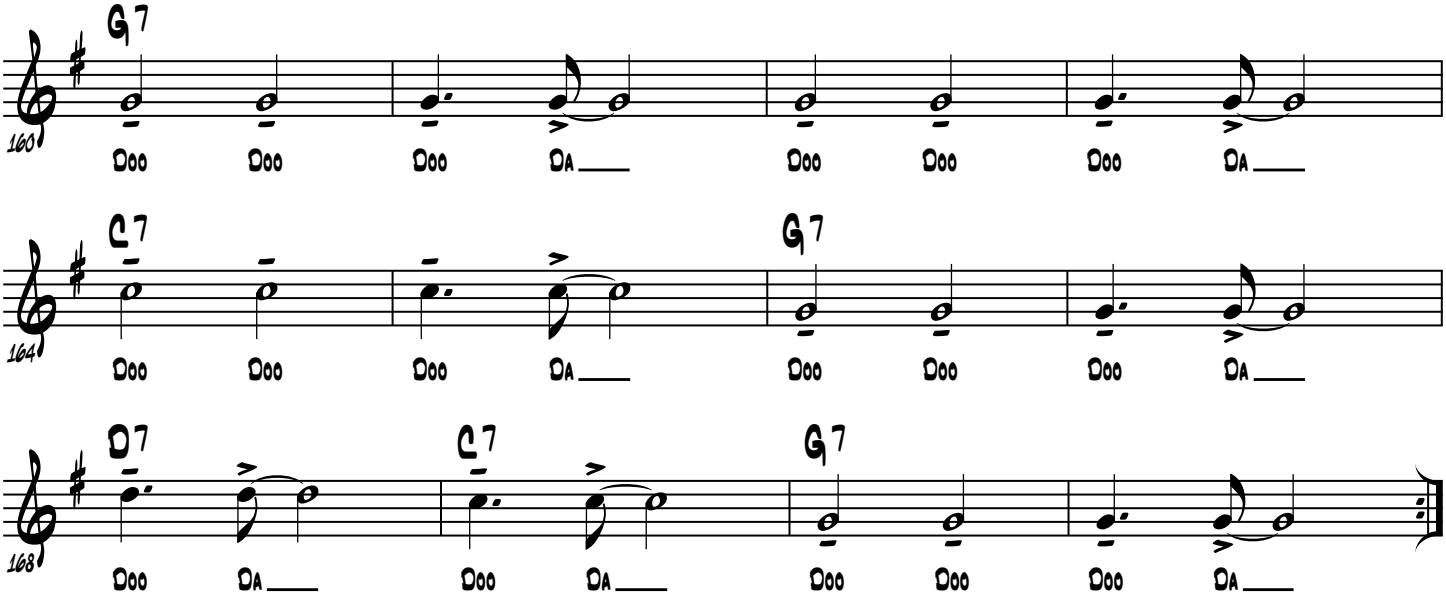


14. Quarter Til One



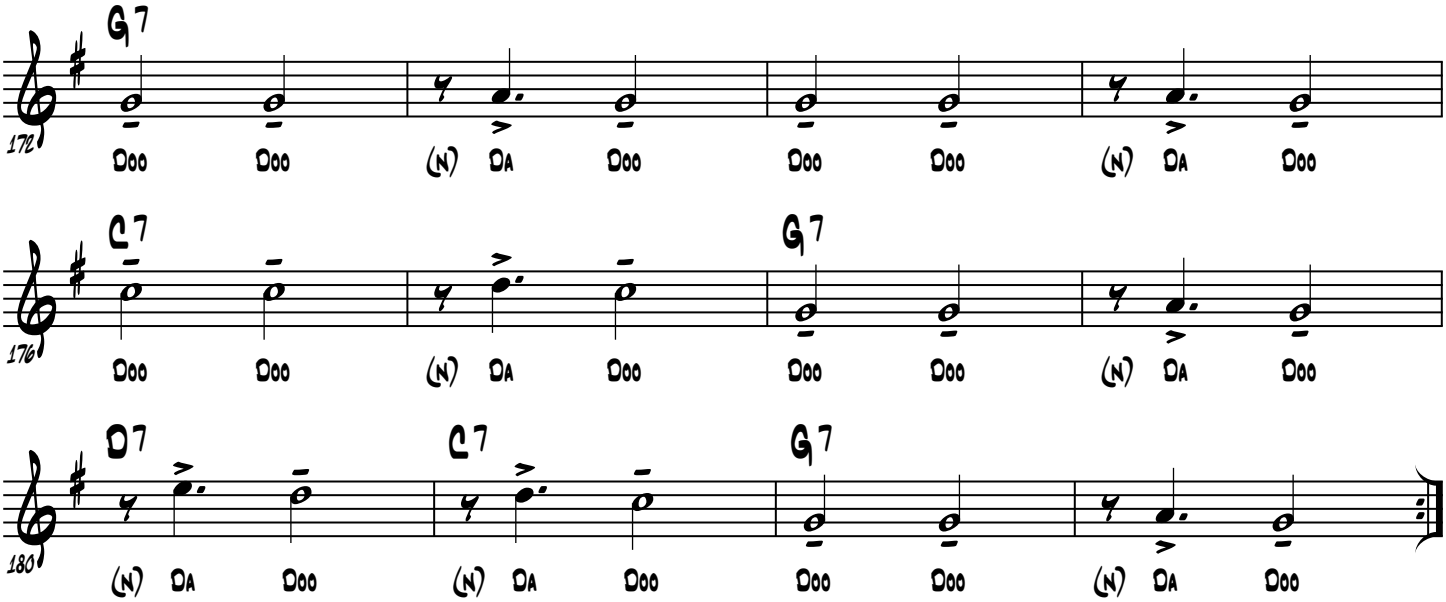
To create syncopation, one method that jazzers tend to use is anticipation. Keep the "doo-dle-da" triplet feel in your head to be sure that you don't rush the anticipation.

15. Syncopation by Anticipation

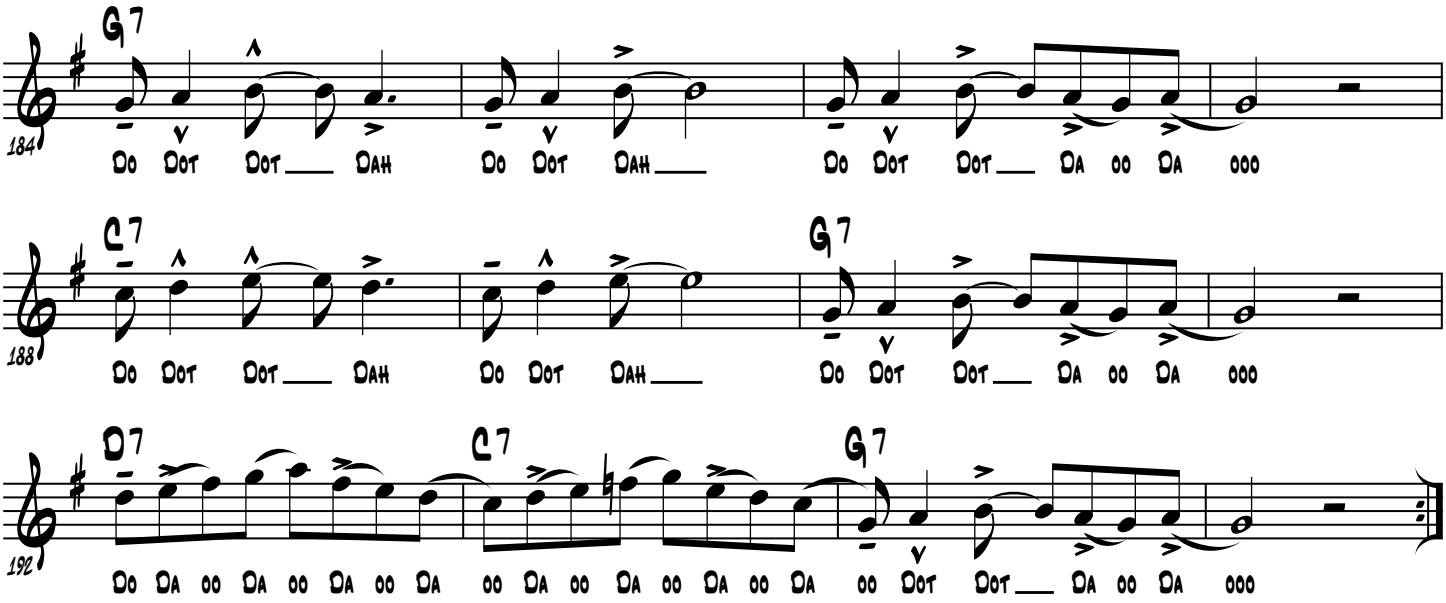


Another method of syncopation is to delay an entrance.
This is usually accomplished by adding a rest on the downbeat.

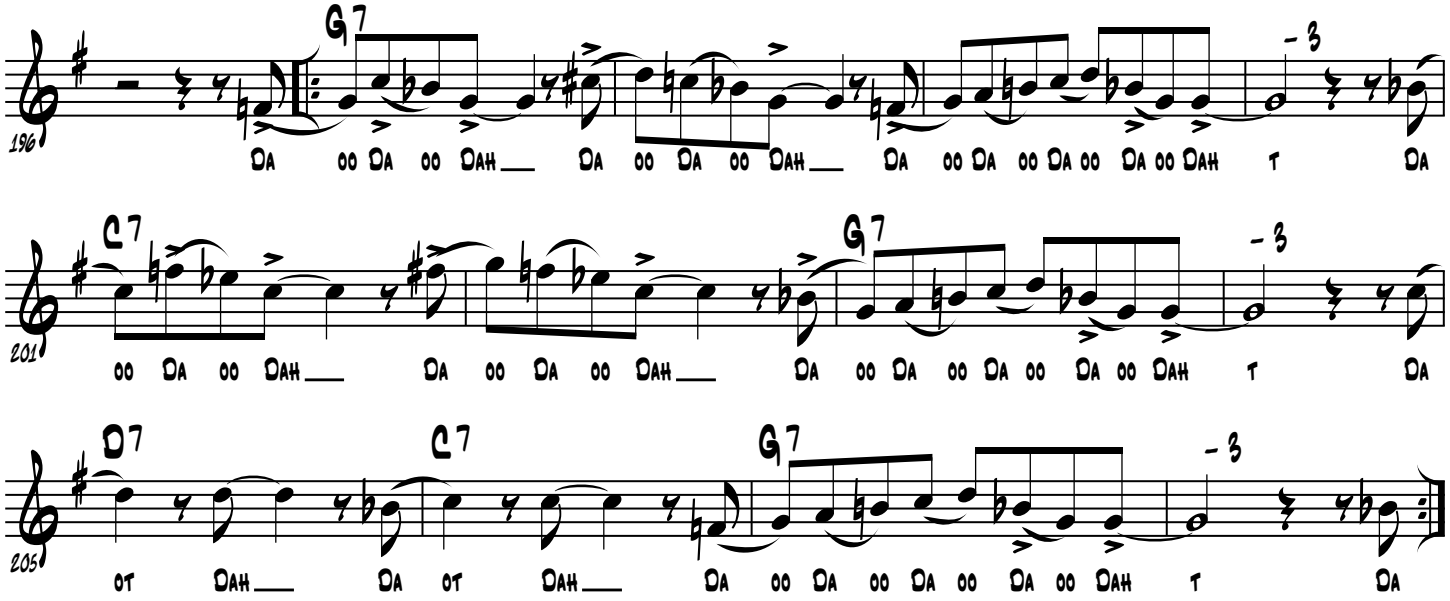
16. Syncopation by Delay

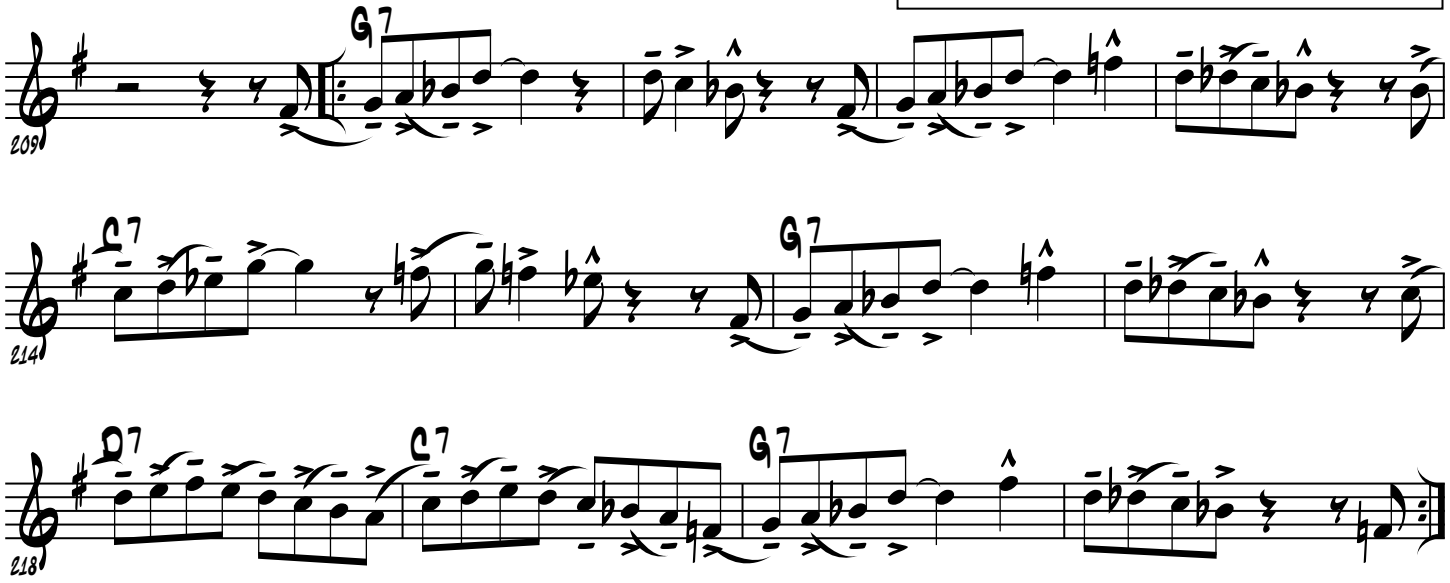


17. Repetitive Syncopation



18. Pick-up Game



19. Green Light Go!

Apply ALL the style rules covered so far.
Write in your syllables, Sing and Play!