



15 ESSENTIAL JAZZ

ETUDES

WITH GUITAR TABS

15 great jazz solos with backing tracks to help you learn authentic jazz language and take your improvisation to the next level



Brent Vaartstra

15 Essential Jazz Etudes

with Guitar TABS

Brent Vaartstra

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PREFACE

Jazz is its own language, based on the art of improvisation and response.

Think about your everyday encounters: talking with your friends, your family, and your co-workers. In varying degrees, all of your conversations are improvised. You don't plan out every word you are going to say, and you can't fully anticipate how the other person will respond. You may enter a conversation having an idea of what you are going to say, or perhaps even rehearse it. But in the moment, all you can do is express and respond.

I remember when I first started studying jazz. I was listening to all of these amazing artists and recordings. I was getting excited to sound like the jazz musicians I was listening to, but when I was first starting out, I was a far cry from sounding anything like them! I already knew how to play my instrument. You could say I already knew how to "speak", but I didn't know how to speak the jazz dialect. I didn't fully understand how jazz musicians "spoke" or how they expressed their ideas.

When you were in primary school you probably did these sorts of things: reading, writing, and analyzing sentences for better understanding. When learning how to speak the jazz language, you must be immersed in it and listen to it on a regular basis. It's important to be reading sentences and hearing what they sound like as you say them. This constant analysis of the jazz language will allow it to come out naturally in your playing.

These 15 jazz etudes were specifically composed to help you "speak" the jazz language better. I intentionally wrote them to be heavily saturated in bebop language as bebop is the source language of the modern jazz idiom. These etudes will help you learn to navigate chord changes, voice-lead, and enhance melodicism in your solos.

Each etude is based off the chord progression to a common jazz standard. If you read into the titles enough, you may be able to guess what they are. Most of the etudes use eighth notes as a rhythmic basis, as eighth notes and triplet eighths embody the swing feel.

I hope you enjoy this book and get the most you can out of it!

-Brent Vaartstra

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Use these etudes as tools to help you learn jazz language rather than pieces to play verbatim during your solos. The intent of this book is to get these sounds in your ear and associated with your instrument. As a result, your jazz vocabulary will grow and come to you naturally in your own improvisation.

Each etude comes with a play-along to help you practice. The first chorus features a recording of the etude followed by multiple choruses, where you will be able to play the etude by yourself and try your own improvisation. Before you play the etude, listen to the track so that you know how it sounds.

It can be helpful to commit an etude to memory. This will encourage you to internalize the sounds rather than relying on reading the information.

If you particularly like a certain line or phrase within an etude, take it through all 12 keys. I intentionally composed the etudes to provide you with multiple options for what you can play. Taking smaller parts through different keys is a great practice to help you internalize the language, so that it can sneak its way into your playing later.

I suggest working on one etude at a time rather than reading through them one after the other. Set practicing goals based on each etude, and commit yourself to learning a new one every week, two weeks, or month. Learn at your own pace.

This book is a great resource to visit whenever you are in need of musical ideas and a refresher of jazz language.

ALL THESE THINGS

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

F^{MIN}7 **B^bMIN⁷** **B^bMIN⁷** **E^b7** **A^bMAJ⁷**

T
A
B

D^bMAJ⁷ **D^{MIN}7** **G⁷** **C^{MAJ}7**

5

C^{MIN}7 **F^{MIN}7** **F^{MIN}7** **B^b7^{ALT}** **E^bMAJ⁷**

9

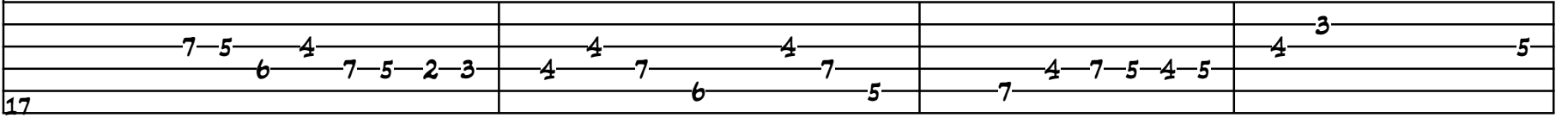
A^bMAJ⁷ **A^{MIN}7** **D⁷** **G^{MAJ}7**

13

A MIN⁷

D^{7(b9)}

G MAJ⁷



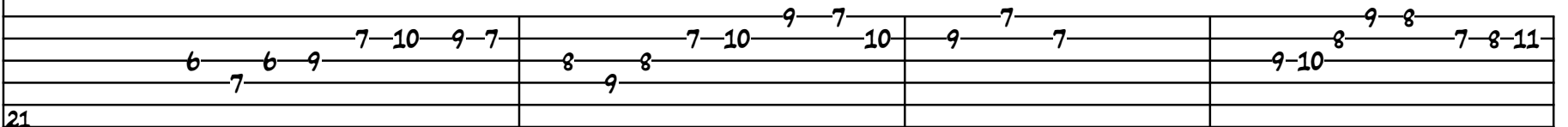
F# MIN⁷

B⁷

E MAJ⁷

G MIN^{7(b5)}

C⁷

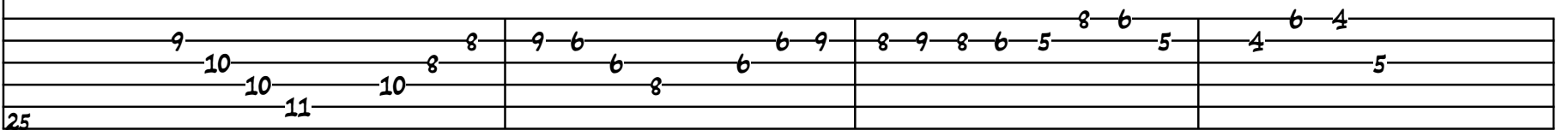


F MIN⁷

B^b MIN⁷

E^b7

A^b MAJ⁷

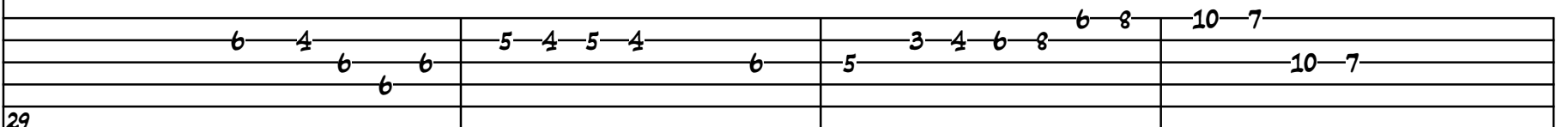


D^b MAJ⁷

D^b MIN⁷

C MIN⁷

B DIM⁷



BEBOP BOSSA

BRENT VAARTSTRA

BOSSA

C MIN⁷ **F MIN⁷**

T
A
B

D MIN^{7(b5)} **G 7(b9)** **C MIN⁷** **C MIN⁶**

5

E^b MIN⁷ **A^b7** **D^b MAJ⁷**

9

D MIN^{7(b5)} **G 7(b9)** **C MIN⁷**

13

C MIN⁷ **F MIN⁷**

17

D MIN^{7(b5)} **A^{b7}** **G⁷** **C MIN⁷**

21

E^b MIN⁷ **A^{b7}** **D^b MAJ⁷**

25

D MIN^{7(b5)} **G^{7ALT}** **C MIN⁹**

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BOP CITY

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

FMAJ⁷ D⁷ GMIN⁷ C⁷ F/A D⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷

T
A
B

B^bMAJ⁷ B^{DIM}⁷ F/C D⁷ GMIN⁷ A^{MIN}⁷ D⁷ GMIN⁷ C⁷

5

FMAJ⁷ D⁷ GMIN⁷ C⁷ F/A D⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷

9

B^bMAJ⁷ B^{DIM}⁷ F/C D⁷ GMIN⁷ C⁷ FMAJ⁷

13

C^{MIN}7 **F⁷** **B^bMAJ⁷**

6 7 6 8 6 5 6 2 3 5 2 5 3 3 5 1 3 7 6

4 5 8 7 8 7 5 3 5 1 3 7 6

17

B^bMIN⁷ **E^b7^{ALT}** **A^bMAJ⁷** **G^{MIN}7** **C⁷**

8 6 9 6 6 9 6 8 7 5 8 6 4 5 4 7 6 5 4 3 3 5 3 2 3 4 2

21

F^{MAJ}7 **D⁷** **G^{MIN}7** **C⁷** **F/A** **D⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

1 3 2 3 1 5 3 5 4 5 6 5 5 6 8 8 6 8 8 7 9

25

B^bMAJ⁷ **B^{DIM}7** **F/C** **D⁷** **G^{MIN}7** **C⁷** **F^{MAJ}7**

6 8 6 9 7 6 5 3 5 6 7 4 5 3 4 3 2 3 5 1 3 1

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CABERNET DAYS

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

FMAJ⁷ **E^b7** **A^{MIN}7(b5)** **D⁷(b9)**

T
A
B

G^{MIN}7 **B^bMIN⁷** **E^b7**

5

A^{MIN}7 **D^{MIN}7** **G^{MIN}7** **G^{MIN}7/F**

9

E^{MIN}7(b5) **A⁷** **D^{MIN}7** **G⁷** **G^{MIN}7** **C⁷**

13

FMAJ⁷ **E^b7** **A^{MIN}7** **D^{7(b9)}**

17

G^{MIN}7 **B^bMIN⁷** **E^b7**

21

A^{MIN}7 **D^{MIN}7** **B^{MIN}7(b5)** **B^b7(#11)**

25

A^{MIN}7 **D⁷** **G^{MIN}7** **C⁷** **FMAJ⁷**

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CLEAN ENERGY

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

C^{MIN7} **G^{MIN7}** **C⁷**

T
A
B

F^{MAJ7} **F^{MIN7}** **B^{b7}**

5

E^bMAJ⁷ **E^bMIN⁷** **A^{b7}** **D^bMAJ⁷** **D^{MIN7}(b5)** **G⁷**

9

C^{MIN7} **G^{MIN7}** **C⁷**

13

F MAJ⁷

F MIN⁷

B^{b7}

Musical notation for the first system. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff shows fret numbers: 5, 7, 3, 5, 2, 3, 5, 5, 8, 6, 8, 7, 8, 6, 5, 8, 8, 8, 9, 8, 8, 9, 5. A small number '17' is located at the bottom left of the bass staff.

E^b MAJ⁷

E^b MIN⁷

A^{b7}

D^b MAJ⁷

Musical notation for the second system. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: E4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bass staff shows fret numbers: 8, 6, 8, 8, 6, 8, 7, 6, 8, 6, 3, 6, 3. A small number '21' is located at the bottom left of the bass staff.

D MIN^{7(b5)}

G⁷

C MIN^(MAJ7)

C MIN^(MAJ7)

Musical notation for the third system. The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The bass staff shows fret numbers: 5, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 6, 4, 4, 4, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5. A small number '24' is located at the bottom left of the bass staff.

FALLING LEAVES

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

C_{MIN}⁷ **F⁷** **B^b_{MAJ}⁷** **E^b_{MAJ}⁷**

T
A
B

A_{MIN}^{7(b5)} **D^{7(b9)}** **G_{MIN}⁶**

5

C_{MIN}⁷ **F⁷** **B^b_{MAJ}⁷** **E^b_{MAJ}⁷**

9

A_{MIN}^{7(b5)} **D^{7(b9)}** **G_{MIN}⁷**

13

A_{MIN}^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G_{MIN}⁷

17

C_{MIN}⁷ F⁷ B^b_{MAJ}⁷ E^b_{MAJ}⁷

21

A_{MIN}^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G_{MIN}⁷ C⁷ F_{MIN}⁷ B^b₇

25

A_{MIN}^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G_{MIN}⁷ C⁷

29

I GOT VISION

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

B^b MAJ⁷ G⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷ B^b MAJ⁷ G⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷

T
A
B

B^b MAJ⁷ E^b7 E^{dim}7 DMIN⁷ G⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷

B^b MAJ⁷ E^b7 E^{dim}7 DMIN⁷ G⁷ CMIN⁷ F⁷ B^b MAJ⁷

I GOT VISION

D⁷ **G⁷**

17

C⁷ **F⁷**

21

B^bMAJ⁷ **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷** **D^{MIN}7** **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

25

B^bMAJ⁷ **E^b7** **E^{dim}7** **D^{MIN}7** **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷** **B^bMAJ⁷**

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IT FINALLY HAPPENED

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

E^bMAJ⁷ G^{MIN}7(b5) C⁷(b9) F^{MIN}7 A^{MIN}7(b5) D⁷(b9)

TAB: 8 5-7 | 6 8-7-5 | 8 5 8 7 5 8 6 5 8 4 5 | 6 8 6 7 5 8 7 5 4

E^bMAJ⁷ A^{b7} G^{MIN}7 C⁷(b9)

TAB: 8 8 7 | 6 7 8 6 8 8 | 4 5 8 7 6 8 6 8 | 5 6 5 8 6 5 7

F^{MIN}7 D^{b7} E^bMAJ⁷ D^{MIN}7(b5) G⁷(b9)

TAB: 8 6 6 5 8 | 8 8 6 4 8 6 3 | 5 6 5 6 4 3 3 6

C^{MIN}7 F⁷ F^{MIN}7 B^{b7}

TAB: 4 5 5 3 4 3 | 6 2 3 5 7 | 6 5 8 8 6 8 5 6 | 7 6 9 7 6 9 6 7

IT FINALLY HAPPENED

E^bMAJ⁷ E^{dim}7 F^{min}7 F^{#dim}7

8 6 8 6 8 5 8 8 6 9 6 8 10 11 7 8 10 7 7 8 4 5 7 4 7

17

E^bMAJ⁷ A^{b7} G^{min}7(b5) C^{7(b9)}

5 8 5 7 6 8 7 5 6 8 8 6 5 5 6 8 6 5 8 7 5 8 6 5 8 4 5

21

F^{min}7 D^{b7} E^bMAJ⁷ G^{min}7 C^{7ALT}

6 5 8 8 6 9 5 5 6 9 7 11 9 12 11 9 8 11 7 8 6 8 9 7 8 9 5 5

25

F^{min}7 B^{b7ALT} E^bMAJ⁷

8 5 6 8 9 6 8 11 9 7 6 9 7 7 6 9 8

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MILES' MOOD

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

D^{MIN}7

Musical staff for the first system, showing a treble clef, 4/4 time signature, and a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

D^{MIN}7

Fingerings for the first system, showing strings T, A, and B with fret numbers.

D^{MIN}7

Musical staff for the second system, showing a treble clef and a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

D^{MIN}7

Fingerings for the second system, showing strings T, A, and B with fret numbers.

D^{MIN}7

Musical staff for the third system, showing a treble clef and a melodic line with eighth notes and triplets.

Fingerings for the third system, showing strings T, A, and B with fret numbers.

D^{MIN}7

Musical staff for the fourth system, showing a treble clef and a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes.

Fingerings for the fourth system, showing strings T, A, and B with fret numbers.

E^bMIN⁷

6 9 7 8 | 8 6 7 8 | 6 8 6 5 6 8 5 6 8 | 5 6 6 8

17

E^bMIN⁷

8 5 8 6 | 5 6 9 5 | 8 5 6 8 7 6 9 | 8 7 6

21

DMIN⁷

5 6 7 7 6 5 | 7 8 5 4 5 8 7 | 8 5 6 7 6 10 7 8 | 12 10 7

25

DMIN⁷

5 6 7 7 5 7 5 | 4 5 2 3 5 3 | 5 3 2 5 5 3 4 2

29

MINER'S GROOVE

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

F^{MIN}7 **G^{MIN}7(b5)** **C⁷(b9)** **F^{MIN}7** **F⁷(b9)**

B^bMIN7 **G^{MIN}7(b5)** **C⁷(b9)** **F^{MIN}7** **D^{MIN}7(b5)**

D^b7 **C⁷** **F^{MIN}9** **D^{MIN}7(b5)** **G^{MIN}7(b5)** **C⁷(b9)**

F^{MIN}7 **G^{MIN}7(b5)** **C⁷(b9)** **F^{MIN}7** **C^{MIN}7(b5)** **F⁷(b9)**

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MINER'S GROOVE

2

B^bMIN⁷

GMIN^{7(b5)}

C^{7(#9)}

FMIN^(MAJ7)

DMIN^{7(b5)}

17

GMIN^{7(b5)}

C^{7ALT}

FMIN⁷

C⁷

21

FMIN⁷

GMIN^{7(b5)}

C^{7(b9)}

FMIN⁷

CMIN^{7(b5)}

F^{7(b9)}

25

B^bMIN⁷

GMIN^{7(b5)}

C^{7(b9)}

FMIN⁷

B^b7

29

D^b7

C⁷

F⁷

B^b7

33

STELLA

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

E_{MIN}7(b5) **A⁷(b9)** **C_{MIN}7** **F⁷**

T
A
B

F_{MIN}7 **B^b7** **E^bMAJ7** **A^b7**

5

9

FMAJ7 **E_{MIN}7(b5)** **A⁷(b9)** **A_{MIN}7(b5)** **D⁷(b9)**

13

G^{7ALT} **C^{MIN7}**

17

A^{b7(#11)} **B^{bMAJ7}**

21

E^{MIN7(b5)} **A^{7(b9)}** **D^{MIN7(b5)}** **G^{7(b9)}**

25

C^{MIN7(b5)} **F^{7(b9)}** **B^{bMAJ7}**

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SUNNYSIDE

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

CMAJ⁷ E⁷FMAJ⁷BMIN^{7(b5)}E^{7(b9)}

The first system of music is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole note chord CMAJ⁷. The second measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The bass line for this system is shown below the staff with fingerings: 2-1, 5-3-2-3, 2-5-6, 5-7, 3-5, 2-5-3-2-5, 6, 4, 5-3, 5.

AMIN⁷ D⁷ DMIN⁷ G⁷ CMAJ⁷ DMIN⁷ G⁷

The second system of music is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole note chord AMIN⁷. The second measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The bass line for this system is shown below the staff with fingerings: 5-2-2, 5, 2, 5, 4, 2, 5-3, 5, 5, 6, 7, 8, 5, 5, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5-8-10.

CMAJ⁷ E⁷FMAJ⁷BMIN^{7(b5)}E^{7(b9)}

The third system of music is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole note chord CMAJ⁷. The second measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The bass line for this system is shown below the staff with fingerings: 8, 5, 5, 5, 5, 8, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 9, 10, 9, 10, 11, 12, 10, 13, 12, 10, 8, 9, 10, 7, 10.

AMIN⁷ D⁷ DMIN⁷ G⁷ CMAJ⁷

The fourth system of music is in 4/4 time and consists of five measures. The first measure is a whole note chord AMIN⁷. The second measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The bass line for this system is shown below the staff with fingerings: 12, 10, 9, 8, 8, 9, 11, 12, 11, 10, 11, 12, 10, 10, 13, 12, 10, 13, 10, 11, 9, 11, 9, 11, 9, 8, 10, 9, 9, 8, 8, 9, 10, 9, 9, 10.

G^{MIN7} C⁷ F^{MAJ7} B^{MIN7(b5)} E^{7(b9)}

A^{MIN7} D⁷ D^{MIN7} G⁷

C^{MAJ7} E⁷ F^{MAJ7} B^{MIN7(b5)} E^{7(b9)}

A^{MIN7} D^{7(#11)} D^{MIN7} G⁷ C C^{7(#11)}

TAKE HALF

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

CMAJ⁷ **E⁷**

T
A
B

A⁷ **D^{MIN}⁷**

5

E⁷ **A^{MIN}⁷**

9

D⁷ **D^{MIN}⁷** **G⁷ALT**

13

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CMAJ⁷ **E⁷**

17

A⁷ **A⁷ALT** **D^{MIN}7**

21

FMAJ⁷ **F^{MIN}7** **B^{b7}** **E^{MIN}7** **A⁷**

25

D^{MIN}7 **G⁷** **CMAJ⁷**

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VAGABOND BLUES

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

B^b7 **E^b7** **B^b7**

T
A
B

E^b7 **E^{DIM}7** **B^b7** **G⁷**

5

C^{MIN}7 **F⁷** **B^b7** **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

9

B^b7 **E^b7** **B^b7**

13

E^b7 **E^{DIM}7** **B^b7** **G⁷**

17

C^{MIN}7 **F⁷** **B^b7** **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

21

B^b7 **E^b7** **B^b7**

25

E^b7 **E^{DIM}7** **B^b7** **G⁷**

29

C MIN⁷ F⁷ B^{b7} B⁹ B^{b9}

33 6 8 7 8 6 5 7 7 8 7 8 8 7 8 6 5

WHITE'S WALTZ

BRENT VAARTSTRA

SWING

B^bMAJ⁷ **D⁷ALT** **E^bMAJ⁷** **G⁷(#5)**

T
A
B

C^{MIN}7 **G⁷(#5)** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

5

D^{MIN}7 **C[#]DIM⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

9

D^{MIN}7 **C[#]DIM⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

13

B^bMAJ⁷ **D⁷** **E^bMAJ⁷** **G⁷(#5)**

17

C^{MIN}7 **G⁷(#5)** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷**

21

F^{MIN}7 **B^{b7}** **E^bMAJ⁷** **E^{DIM}7**

25

B^bMAJ⁷ **G⁷** **C^{MIN}7** **F⁷ALT** **B^bMAJ⁷**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



BRENT VAARTSTRA

is a professional jazz guitarist and educator living in New York City. He is one of the head writers and editors for www.learnjazzstandards.com which he co-owns and operates. Brent actively performs in the New York metropolitan area and is the author of the Hal Leonard publication “500 Jazz Licks”. To learn more, visit www.brentvaartstra.com.