# ODD METERS

HEIN VAN DE GEYN

# Odd Meters

**Hein Van de Geyn**

Hein Van de Geyn / Forms
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ISBN

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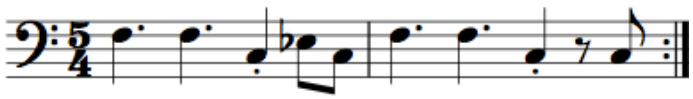
# 1

# Developing an odd inner pulse

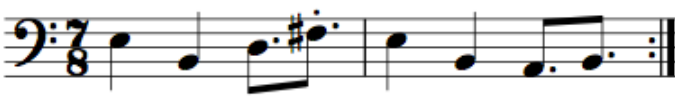
Playing odd meters can be disconcerting to a player with no experience in this field. The conditioning to play in 4 or in 3 is so strong that the body, the phrases that are formed in our musical imagination all have a tendency to pull the player away from the odd meter into an even one.

Of course a meter in 3 is odd as well, yet the big difference is that it is a simple triple meter, meaning that there is still a single regular pulse underneath the subdivision in 3.

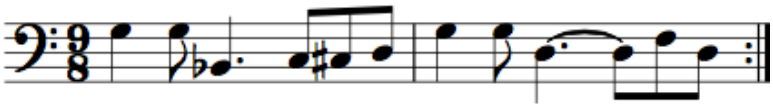
The main concerns are with playing in 5 - where the underlying irregular pulse is a 3 + 2 or sometimes a 2 + 3,

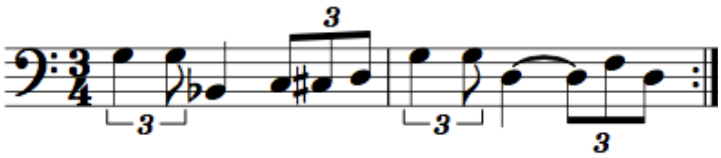


and playing in 7 - mostly played as 2 + 2 + 3, although a different division can be used of course.



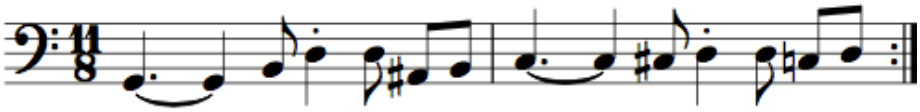
The odd meter of 9 is often a simple meter in 3 with a 3 subdivision; compare to a 12/8 (being a 4/4 with a triplet subdivision).

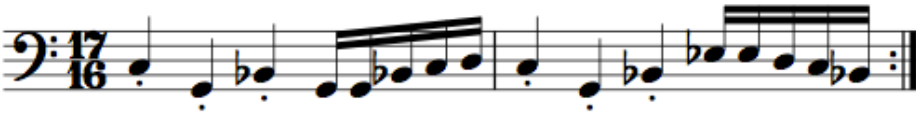


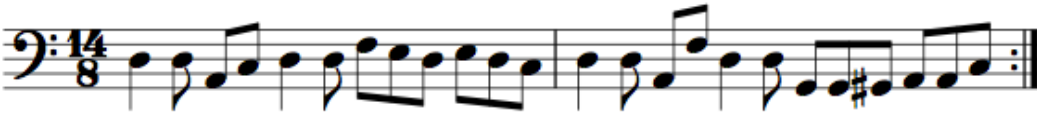


9 can be different though, but then falls in the category of additive meters. In this area all is possible, a 9 can be 5 + 4. An 11/8 can be a 12/8 minus one 8th note. A 17/16 can be a normal 4/4 + one 16th note. Even meters can be made up of intricate rhythmic patterns as well.

I give you some examples of the above compound meters:

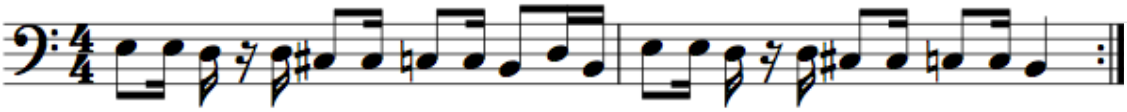




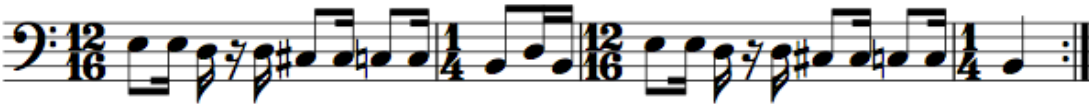


When we build a complex pattern in a very common meter like 4/4 it might be impossible not to escape the inner regularity of the 4/4, and thus perceive accents off the beat as anticipations or delays of those same beats.

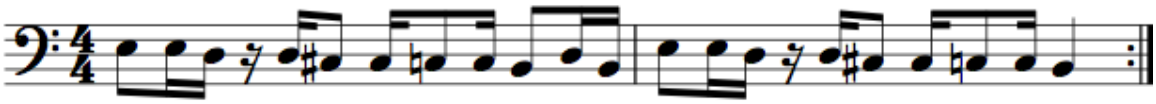
Here something interesting (written badly to try to explain the inner structure):



which indeed can be perceived as:



but can easily and solidly played as:



To manoeuvre through all of the above is a matter of concentration and having the ability to shift rhythmic or metric gears easily.

The normal odd meters of 5 and 7 need to be internalised, so they actually do not rely on concentration and the ability to shift gears; no, they need to become an inner, underlying pulse within the player so he does not have to think about, it and is free to improvise over the harmonic structure in a creative and loose way.

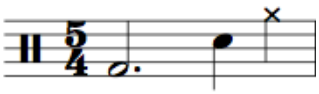
# 2

# Exercises in 5

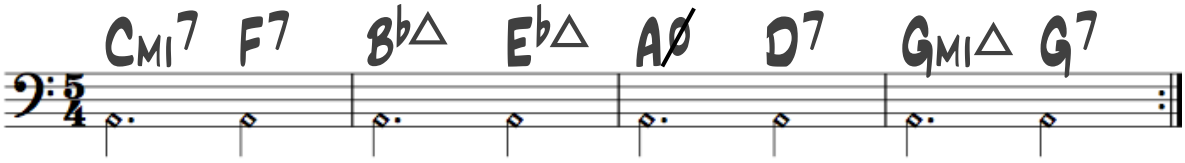
First of all: I advise you to work on 5 for a while, and not mix working on 5 and 7 in the same practising period for a few weeks. The most important way to create an internal image of the 2 main odd meters (5 and 7) is to start playing stuff that will not be in conflict with the inner irregular pulse.

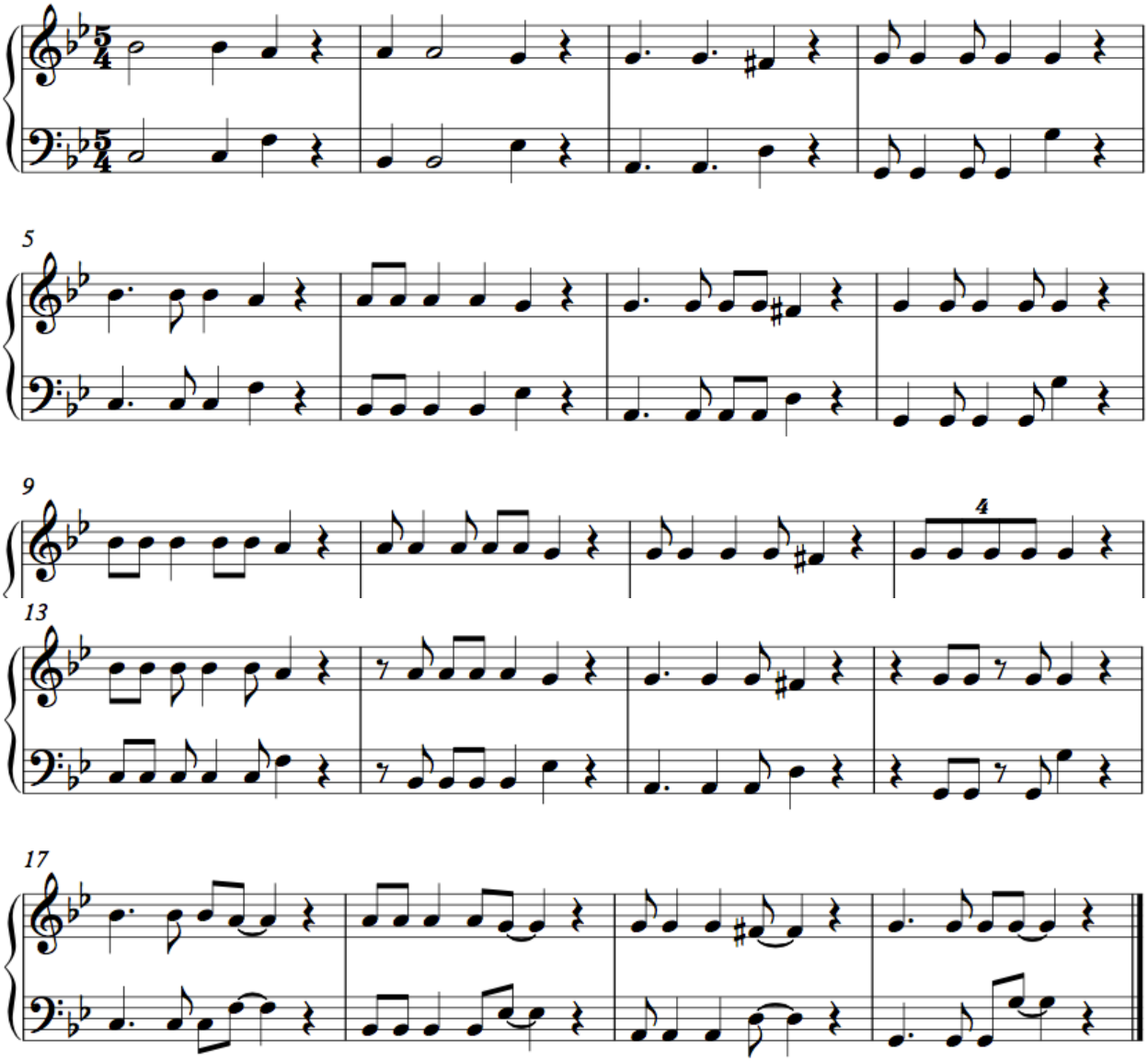
I give you here an exercise in which the basic 5 pulse is clearly exposed, and where you play variations on only the first part of the irregular pulse.

It is hyper important to not use your foot, nor a metronome for these exercises. The goal is that by playing these exercises you will teach your inner feel to accept the odd, irregular pulse. It is essential this inner pulse is not forced through an outer stimulus. If anything, you can program a sequencer or drum machine to play something like this:



I am using a standard harmonic progression with 2 chords per bar. This way the inner ear will slowly get used to the cadence of 3 and 2:

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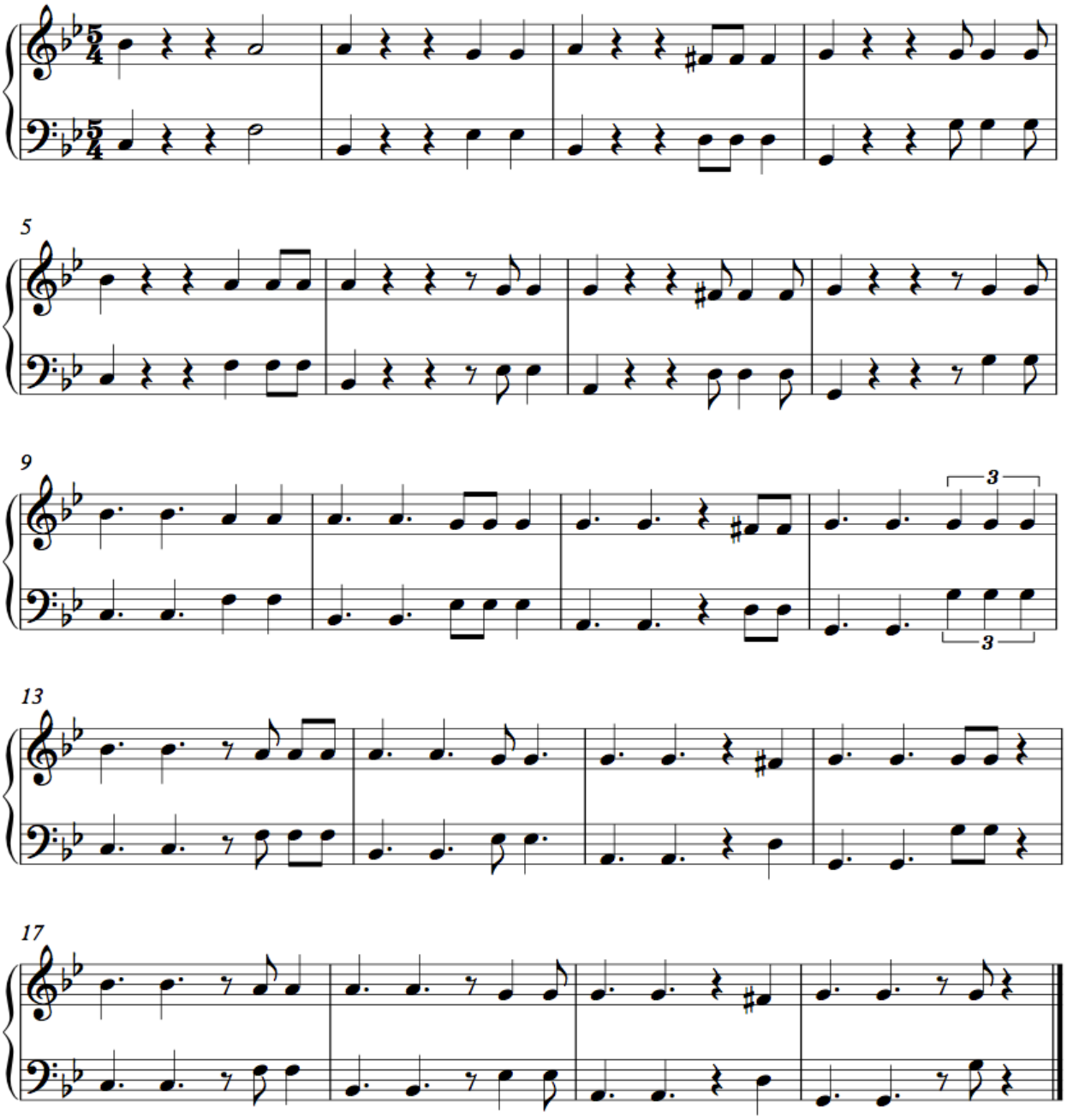
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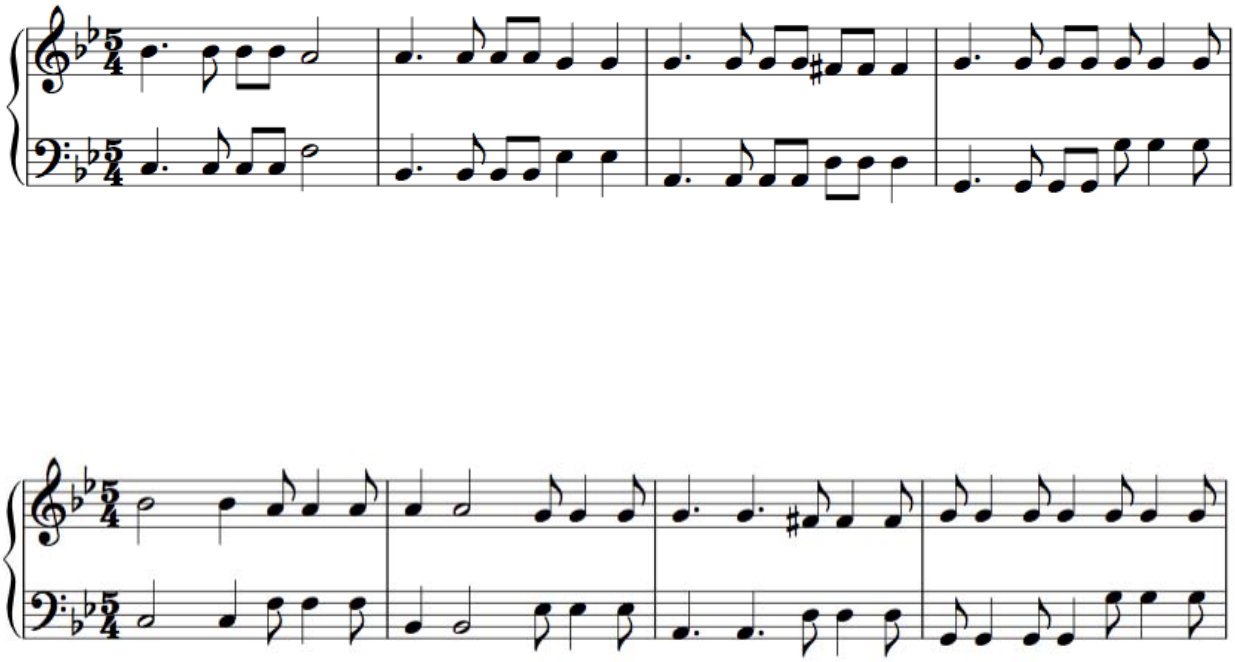

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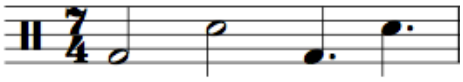
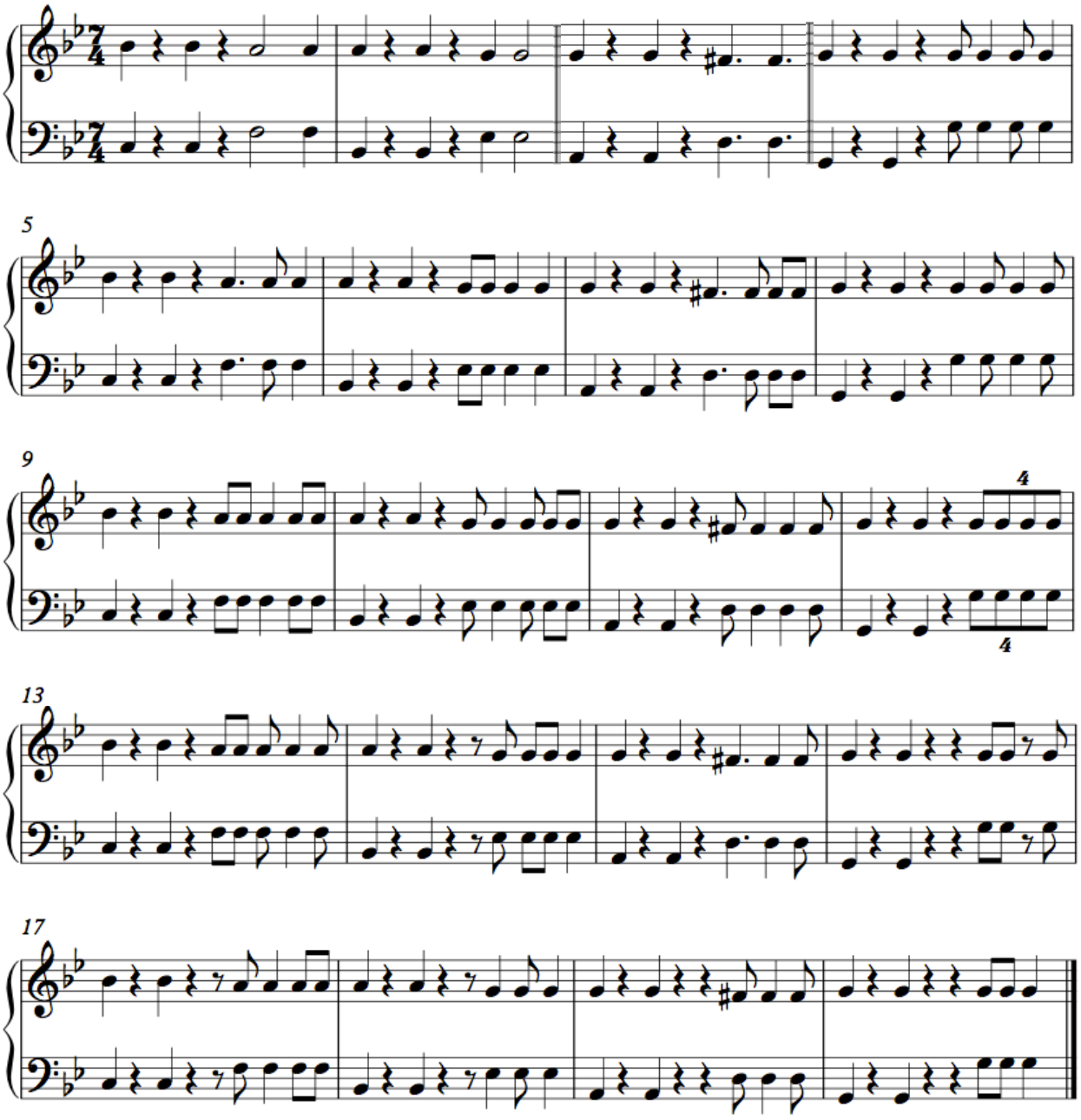
# Exercises in 7

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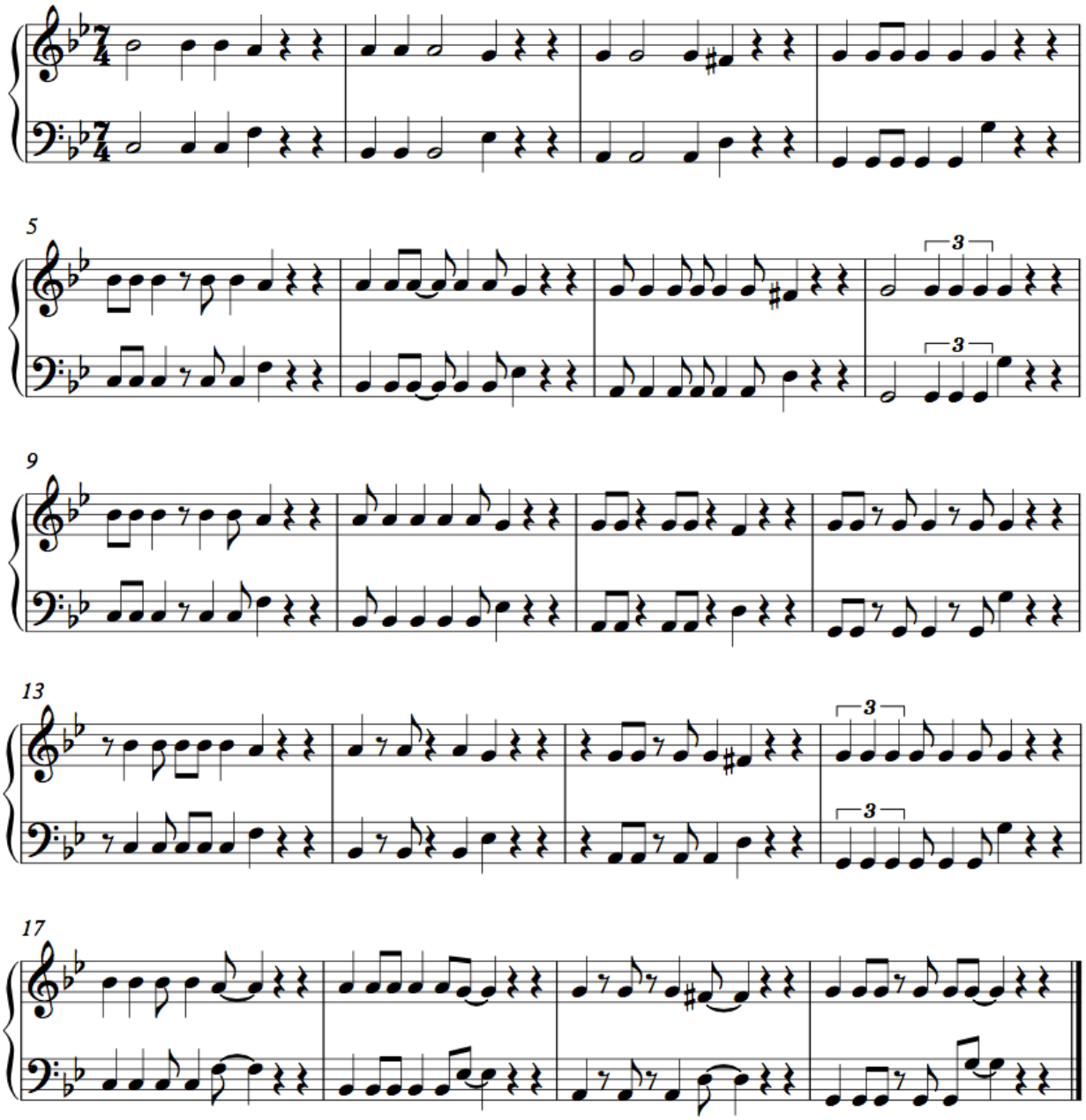
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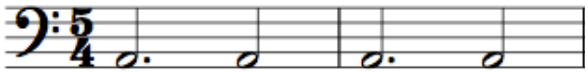
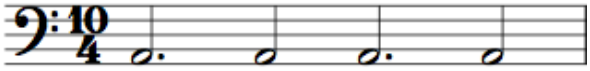
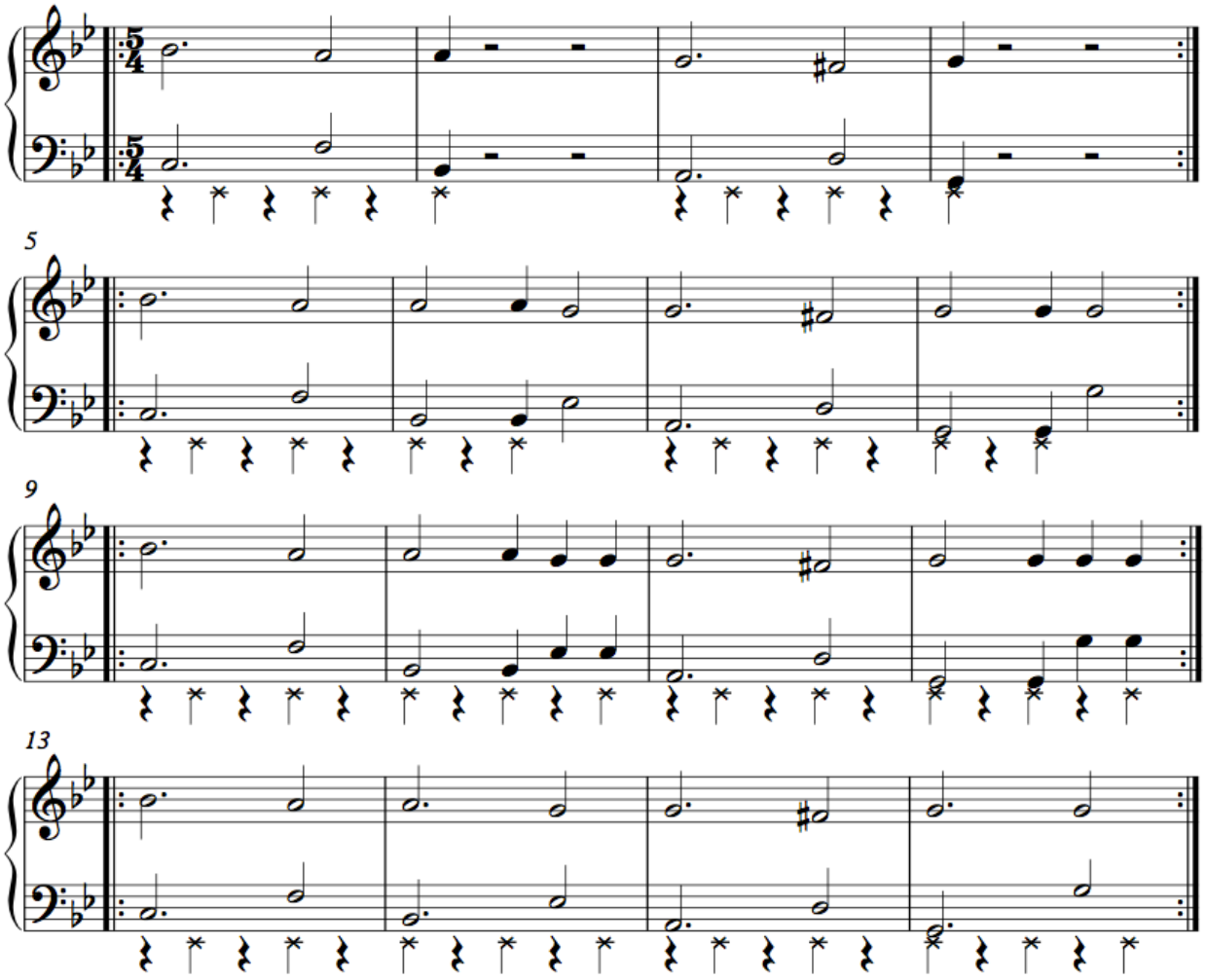
# 4

# The Foot



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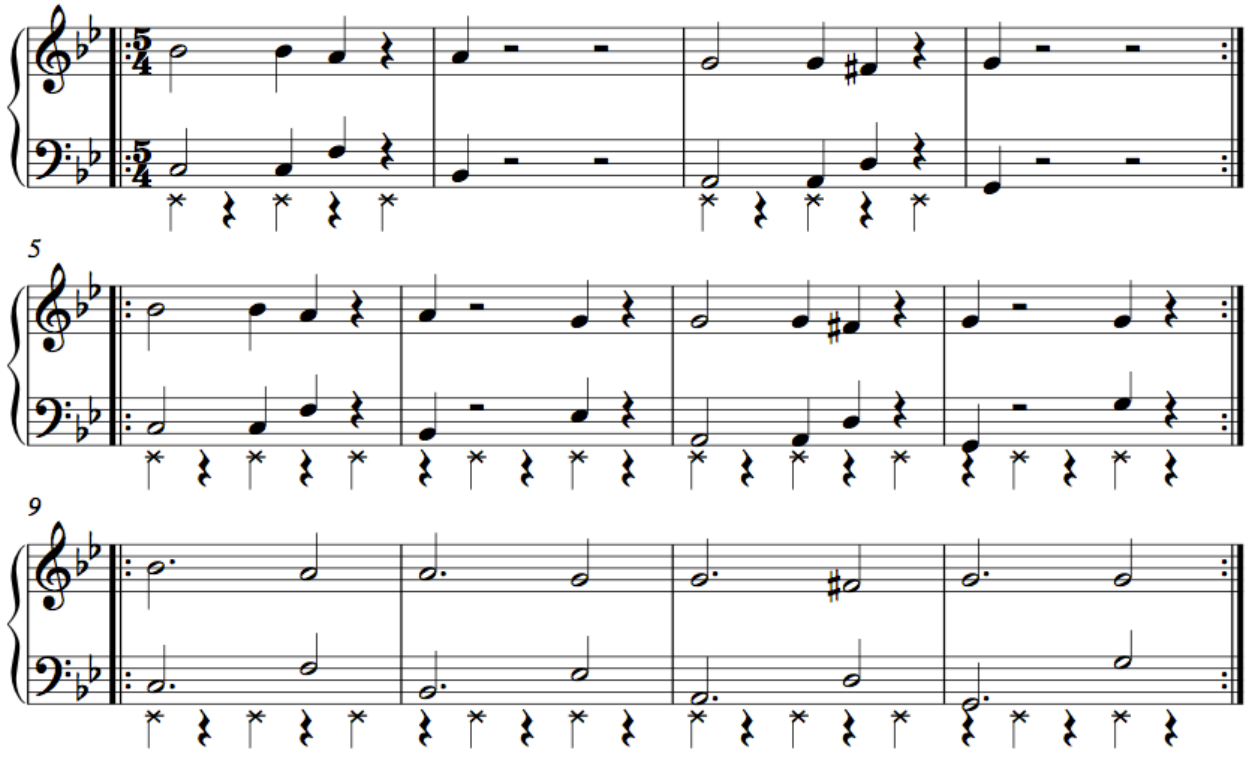
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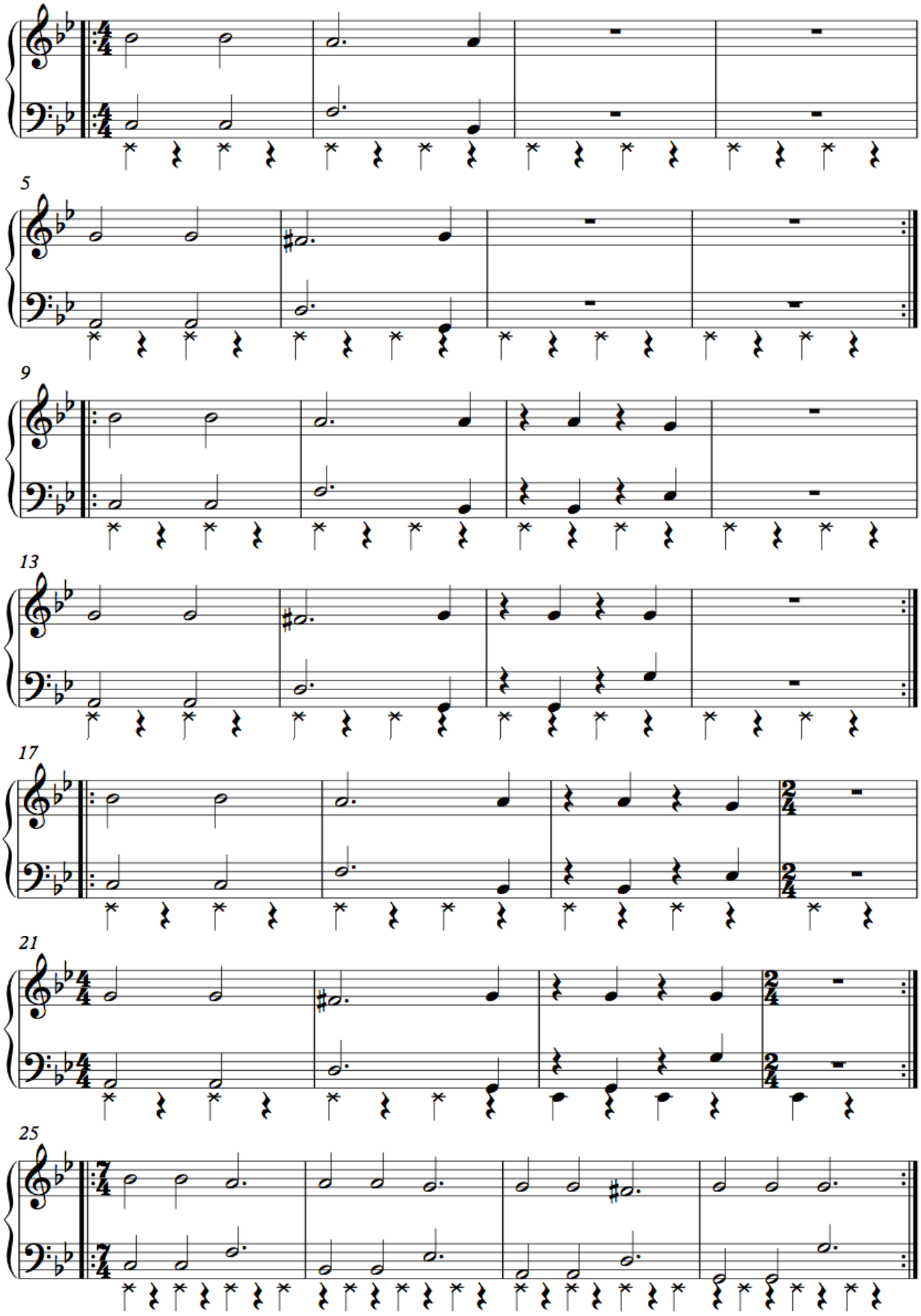
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# 5

# In Practice

*about the author*:

HEIN VAN DE GEYN (The Netherlands - 1956) has played Jazz professionally ever since he finished his studies at the conservatories of Tilburg and Rotterdam. He lived in the US for several years, working with John Abercrombie, Larry Schneider, Tony Bennett, Larry Vuckovich and many others.

After his return to Europe he has been establishing himself as one of the most sought after bass players in Europe. Hein's playing can be heard on some 100 recordings. He has been the bass player with Philip Catherine since 1985 and recorded 9 CD's with him. In 1987 he toured and recorded in Japan with Chet Baker. Hein was also the bassist on the last concert of Chet Baker in Rotterdam in 1988. This was also the year Hein started to play with, and arrange for Dee Dee Bridgewater, with whom he has been performing at most of the important festivals and stages in Europe (Montreux, Antibes, Vienne, Berlin, Northsea, London ....) as well as in the USA (Carnegie Hall, Village Vanguard, Montreal, Newport Festival...) and Japan (Keystone Corner, Blue Note). After three albums and numerous tours and performances Hein and Dee Dee's paths separated in 1996 since Hein wanted to pursue his own career as a leader and producer.

In July 1990 Hein made the first album under his own name, a duo with Lee Konitz. Several tours followed. In 1994 he created his group BASELINE with John Abercrombie and Joe LaBarbara. This group recorded several albums and toured all over Europe.

1994 was also the year in which Hein co-founded the jazz label Challenge Records, for which he produced a number of successful recordings. Four of them received an Edison (Dutch Grammy) for best Jazz recording of the year.

In 1996 Hein became the head of the bass section in the Jazz department of the royal conservatory in The Hague. In this year he also was awarded the prestigious Prins Bernhard Foundation Music Prize. He received this prize for his importance in the development of European Jazz as well as for his stimulating role as mentor and producer of many young musicians in Holland.

In 1998 Hein received the Bird Award of the Northsea Jazz Festival. In this year he was also elected as "Best European Acoustic Bass Player" by a referendum of the Belgian radios RTBF and VRT.

During a sabbatical period spent in South Africa in 2001/2002 Hein started writing his "Comprehensive Bass Method". This extensive method on bass playing (950 pages) became available in 2007 and is slowly becoming the standard work for the double bass worldwide.

From 2008 to 2010 Hein was the artistic manager of the Rotterdam Jazz Academy and was leading this internationally orientated school with great flair and enthusiasm.

In 2010 Hein decided to basically stop his travelling career as a performing bassist and moved with his family to South Africa to run a guest house, and dedicate his life to writing and education. He is a lecturer at the university of Cape Town (UCT).

Hein has performed with many artists over the years. To name a few: Chet Baker - Freddie Hubbard - Roy Hargrove - Woody Shaw - Kenny Wheeler - Tom Harrell - Nat Adderley - Abbey Lincoln - Meredith d'Ambrosio - Marlena Shaw - Tony Bennett - Mark Murphy - Jack DeJohnette - Ed Thigpen - Joe Labarbera - Elliot Zigmund - Peter Erskinew - Idris Muhammad - Billy Hart - John Abercrombie - Tal Farlow - Larry Coryell - Dave Pike - Toots Thielemans - Hank Jones - Tommy Flanagan - Michel Petrucciani - Enrico Pieranunzi - Barry Harris - Horace Silver - Junior Mance - Walter Davis Jr. - Tete Montoliu - Horace Parlan - Jacki Byard - Slide Hampton - Bob Brookmeyer - Joe Lovano - Lee Konitz - Johnny Griffin - Benny Golson - Red Holloway - Charlie Rouse - Bobby Watson - Lew Tabackin - Gary Bartz - Archie Shepp - Rick Margitza - Charlie Mariano...

*all the subjects in this series are covered in "Comprehensive Bass Method"*
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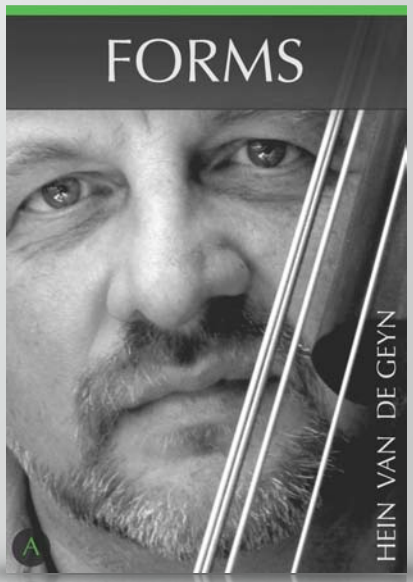


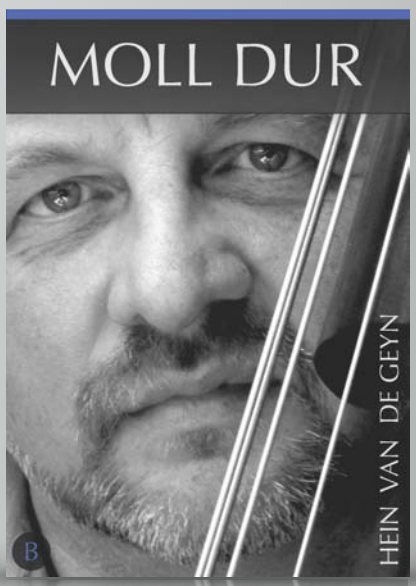


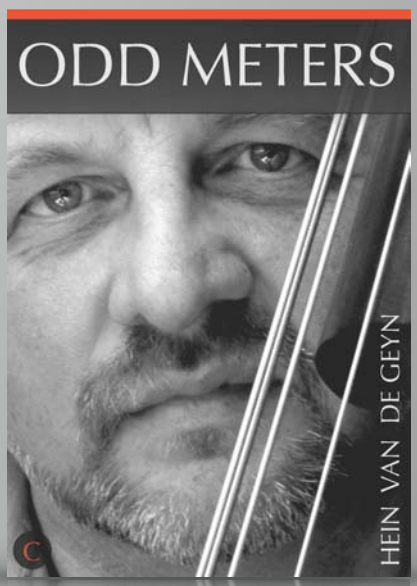


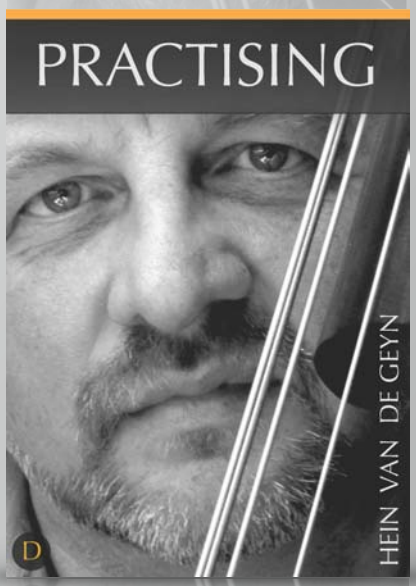


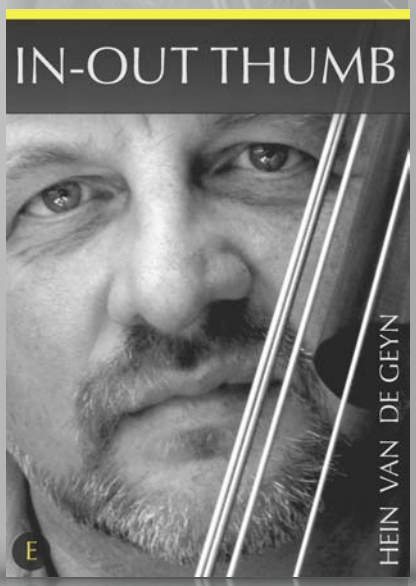


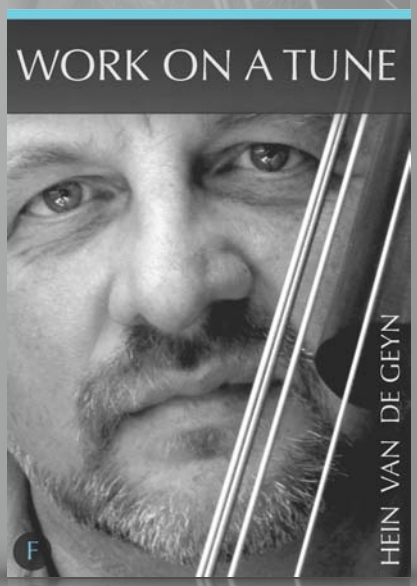


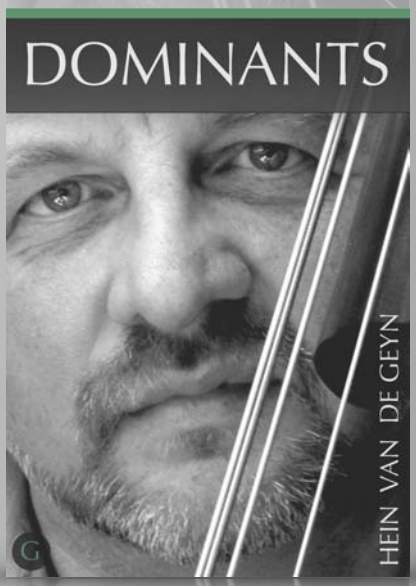


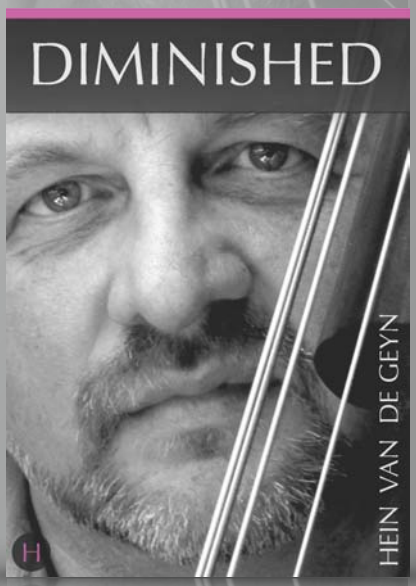


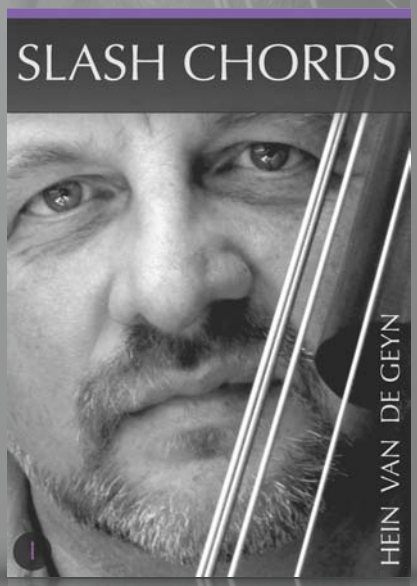


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