BetterSax

Harmonic Building Blocks

These common chord sequences are used to build countless songs.

ii V I

This is the most commonly used harmonic building block in jazz. Here are some variations you need to be familiar with.

a. **ii V I to the IV chord**

Happens in Misty, There Will Never Be Another You, and countless others.

b. **Back-door ii V**

Can be found in Stella by Starlight, After You've Gone, Cherokee and countless others.

c. ii V (up a minor 3rd)

This fairly common variation works because of the strong relationship between the 3 major triads found inside a diminished scale (all a minor 3rd apart).

Same Chord Quality Moving Up a 4th

The bridge to Rhythm Changes is the most clear example using dominant 7 chords. We also see this with major 7 chords as in Autumn Leaves, or minor 7 chords like in Blue Bossa.

Minor ii V i

Found in Autumn Leaves, Alone Together, Softly as in a Morning Sunrise, and many others.

a. **Minor ii V to the relative minor**
b. **Side door ii V** (also known as the 2nd back door). A minor ii V progression starting on the #iv chord and resolving to I or the minor iii chord. Found in On Green Dolphin St. This I Dig of You, Just Friends and many others.

I vi ii V (The Turnaround)

An extended version of the ii V I. Can be found in How High the Moon, Have You Met Miss Jones, My Shining Hour and countless other tunes.

Dominant II Chord (5 of 5 or Secondary Dominant)

This block is found in countless standards including There Will Never Be Another You, Take the A Train, The Girl From Ipanema and Wave.

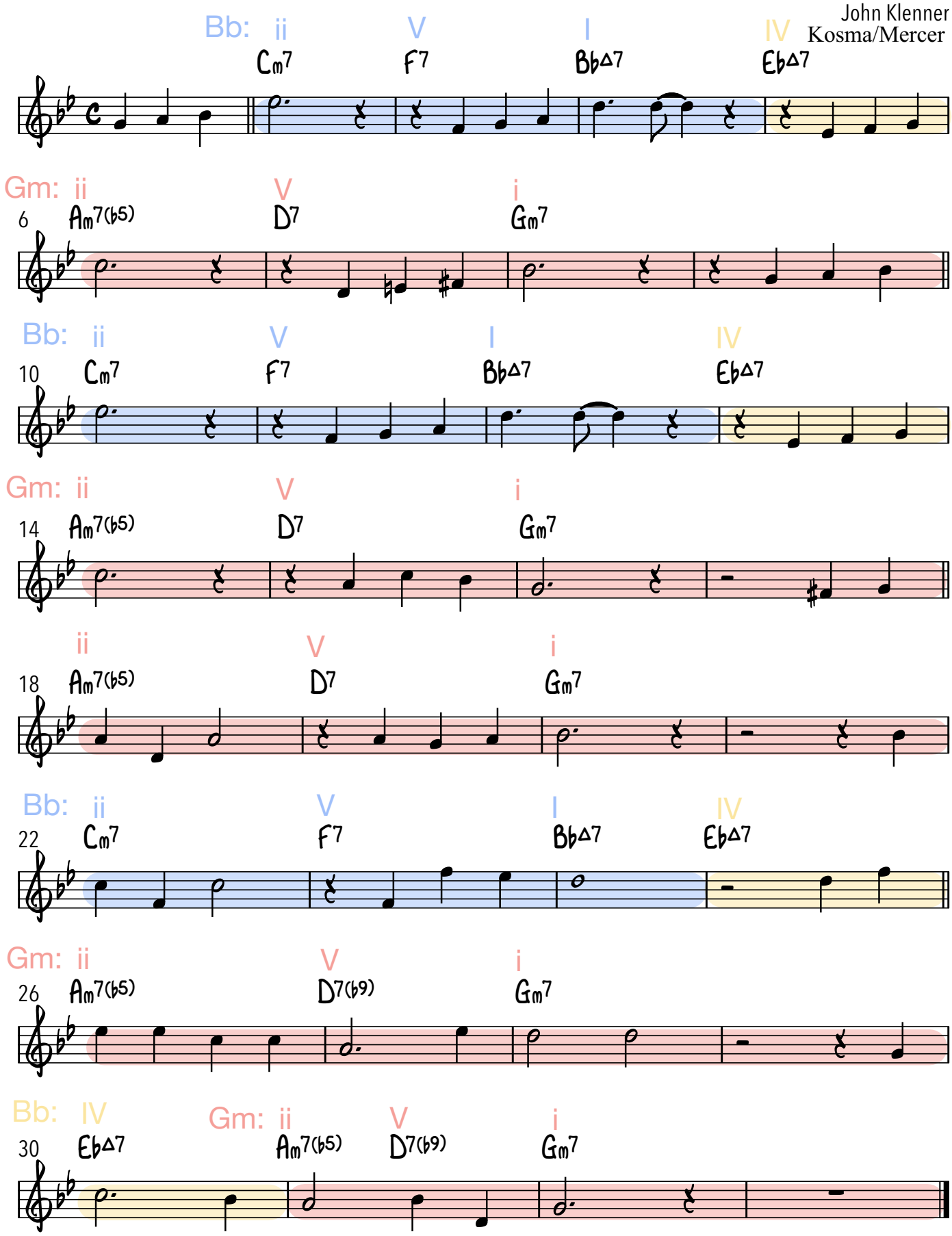
Starting on the IV Chord

Happens often enough to be on our list. Tunes like Just Friends, Love For Sale and After You've Gone.

Concert Key instruments

Autumn Leaves

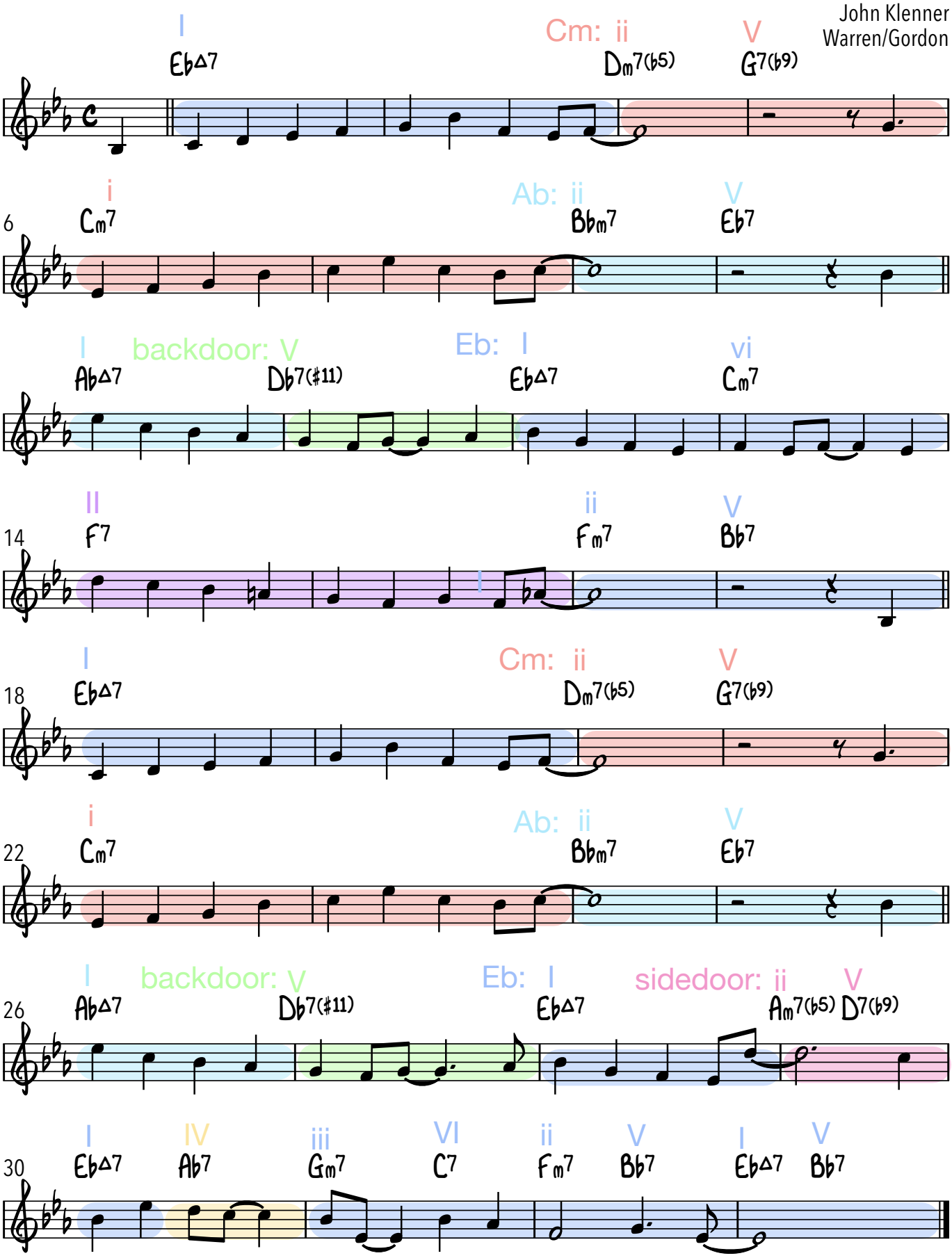
John Klenner
Kosma/Mercer



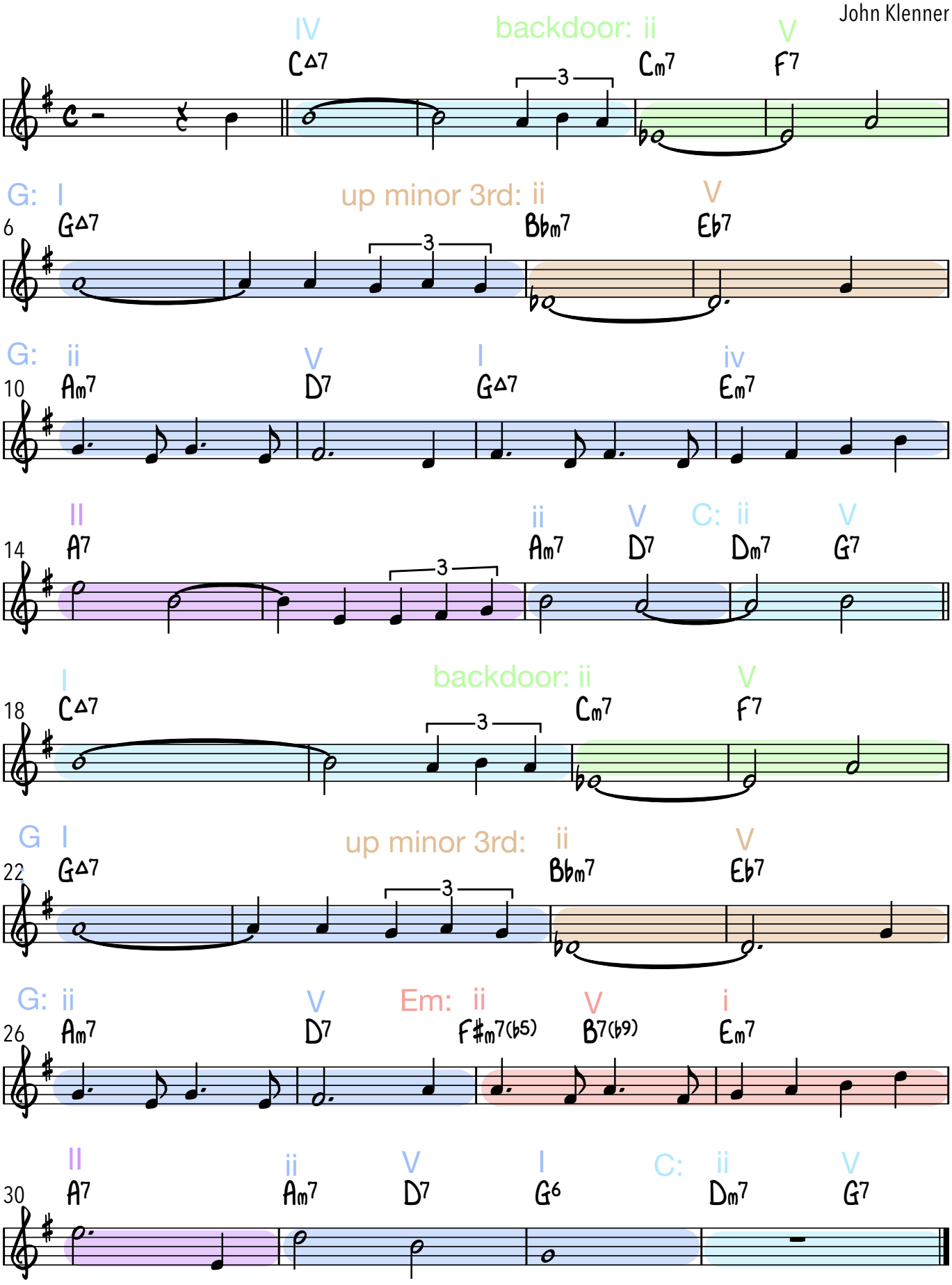
Concert Key instruments

There Will Never Be Another You

John Klenner
Warren/Gordon



Concert Key instruments

Just Friends

John Klenner