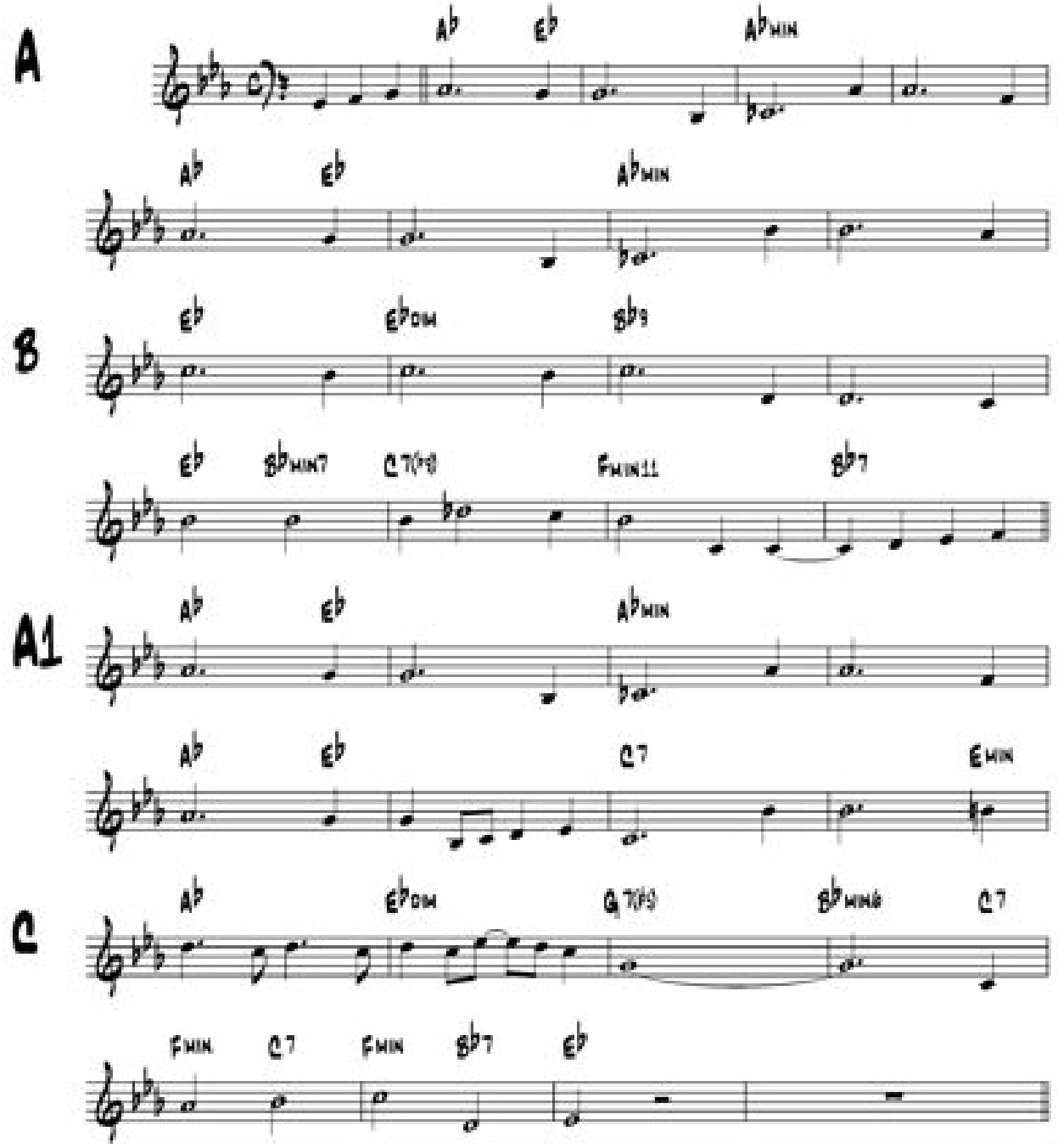
Miles' Styles

Group Concepts for Building and Developing Effective Solos and Performances

Alex Graham

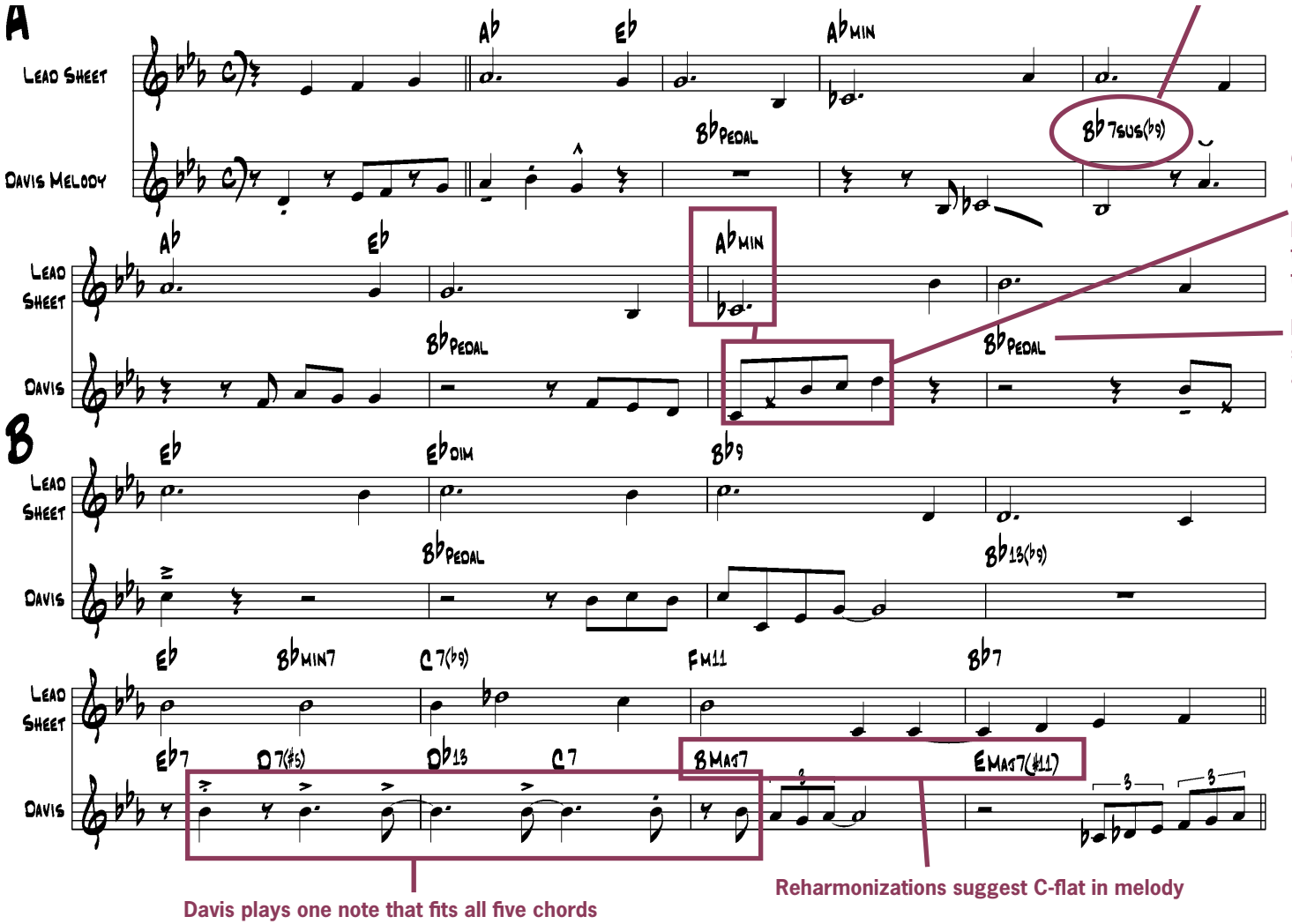
All of You

Cole Porter



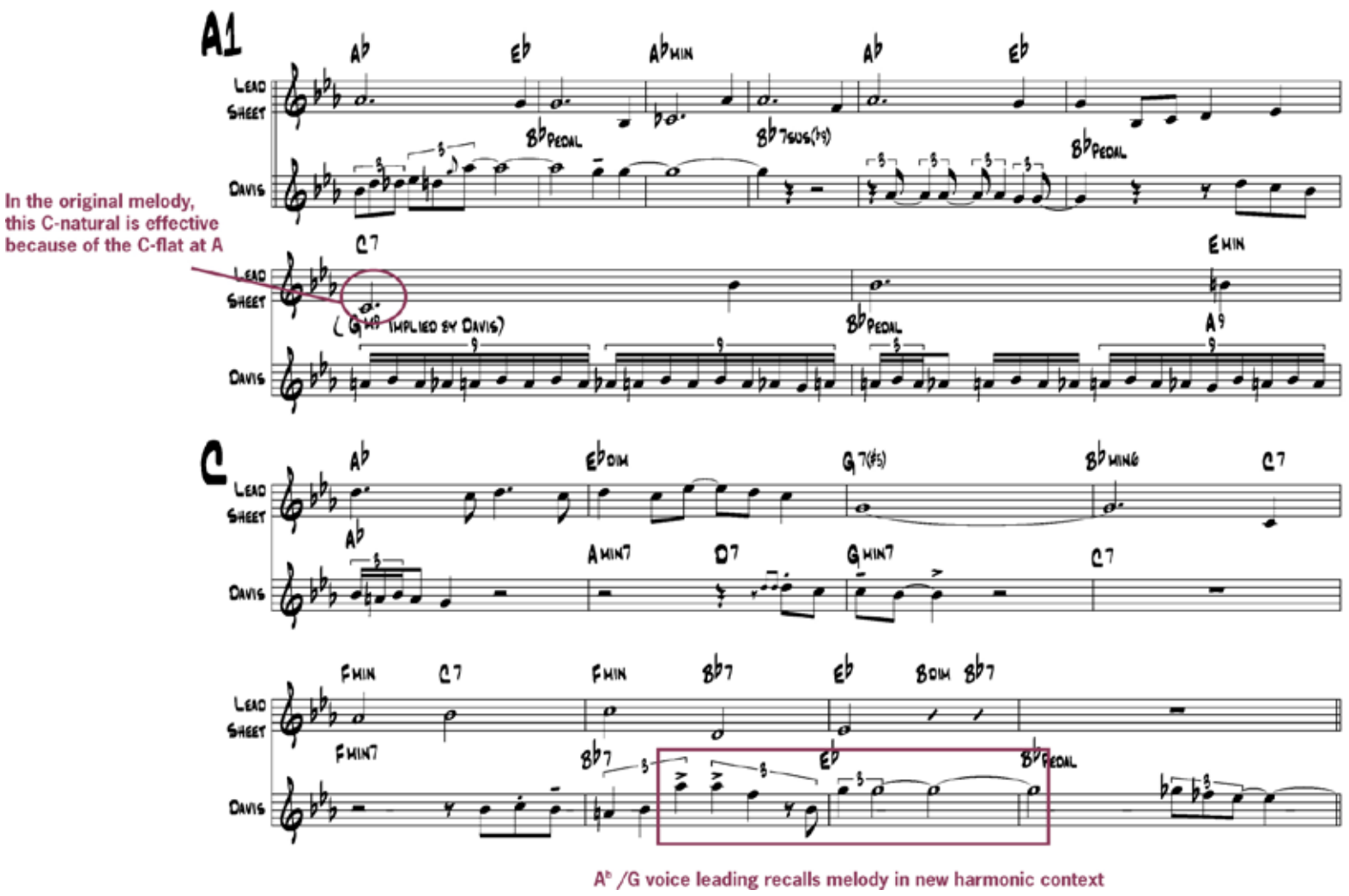
Lead Sheet Compared with Davis Rendition of Melody-Page 1

- Davis fundamentally alters certain aspects of the original melody.



Lead Sheet Compared with Davis Rendition of Melody-Page 2

- C-natural in second system is fresh.



Blowing Changes

- Certain chords used in blowing changes would clash if played with original melody.

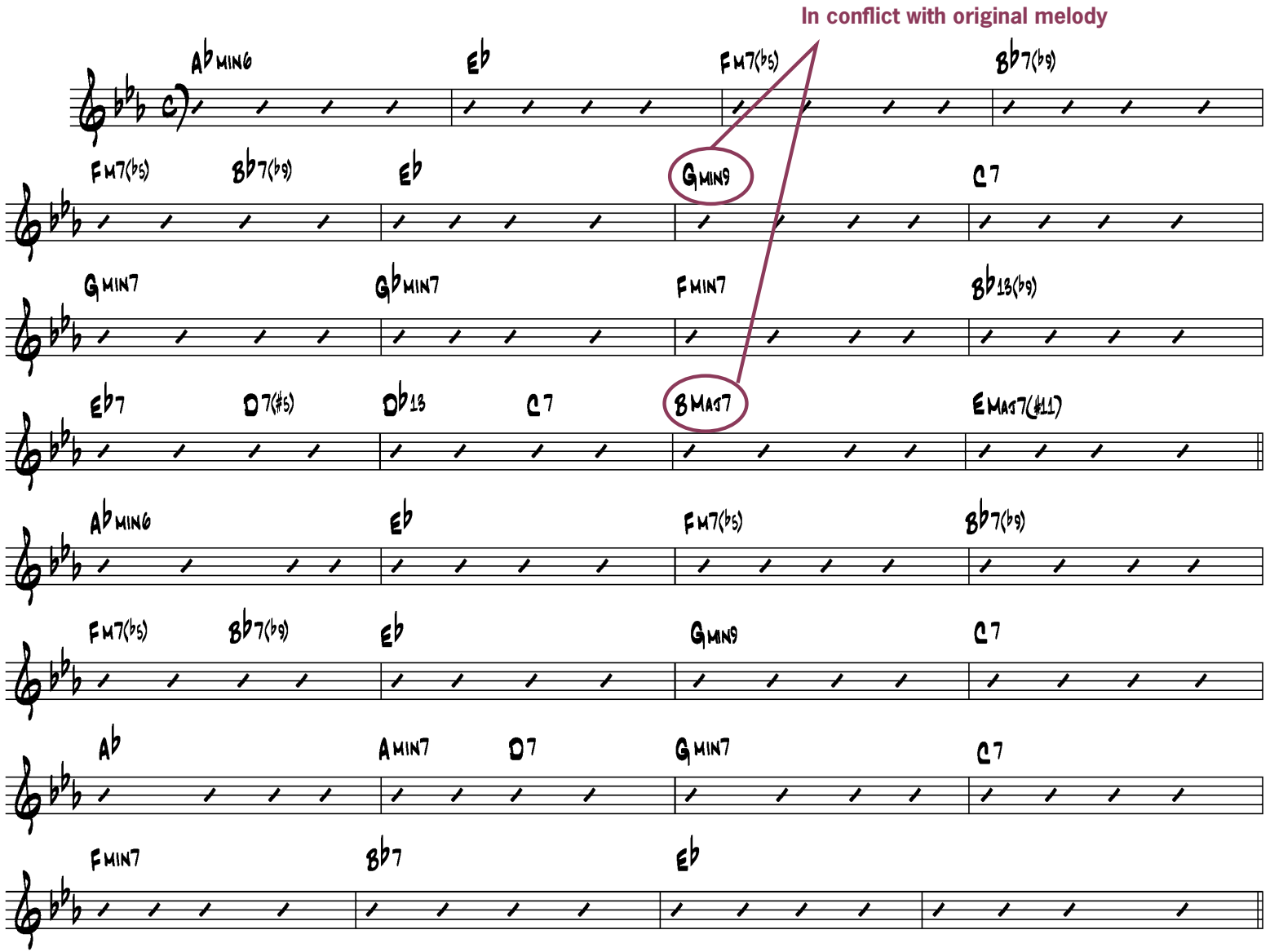
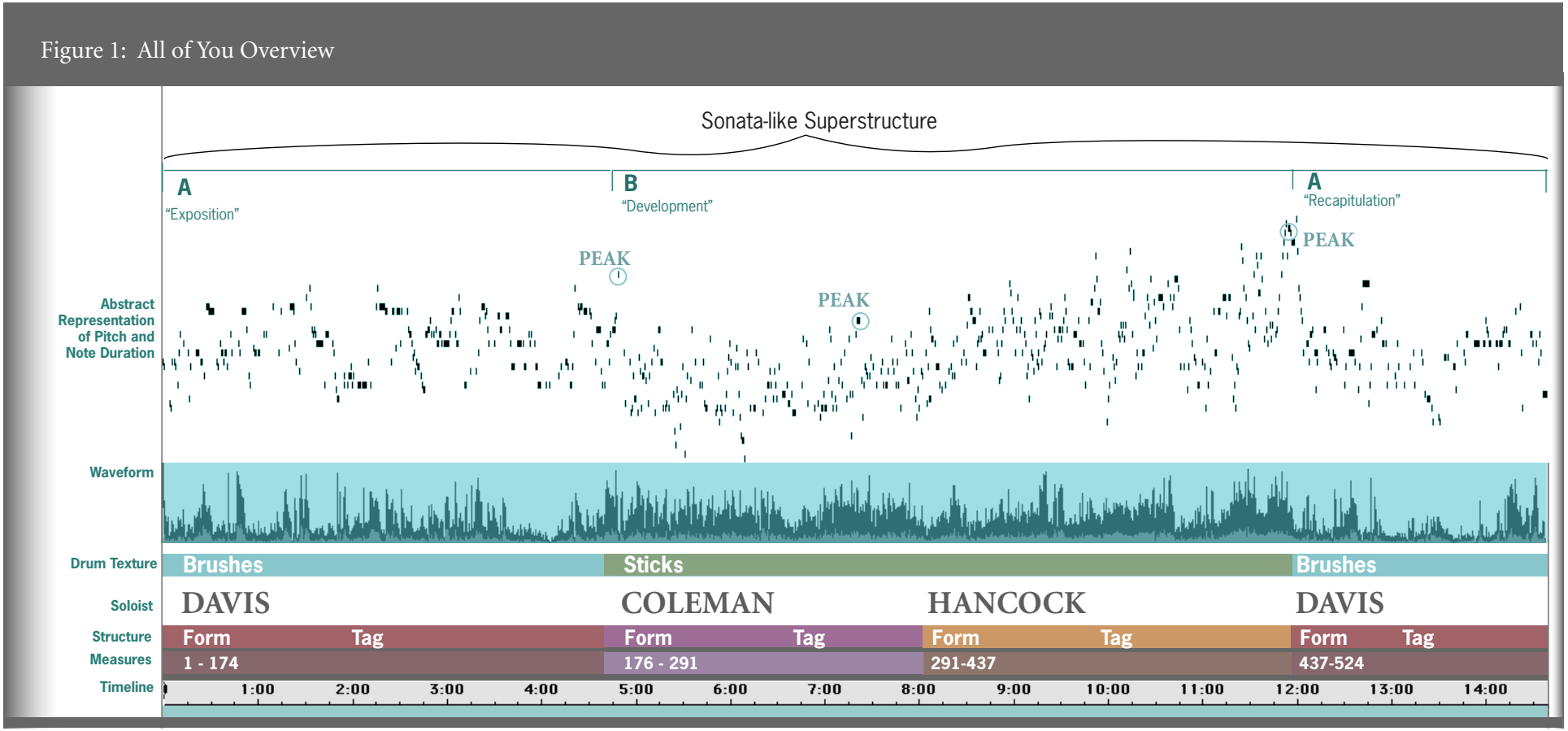
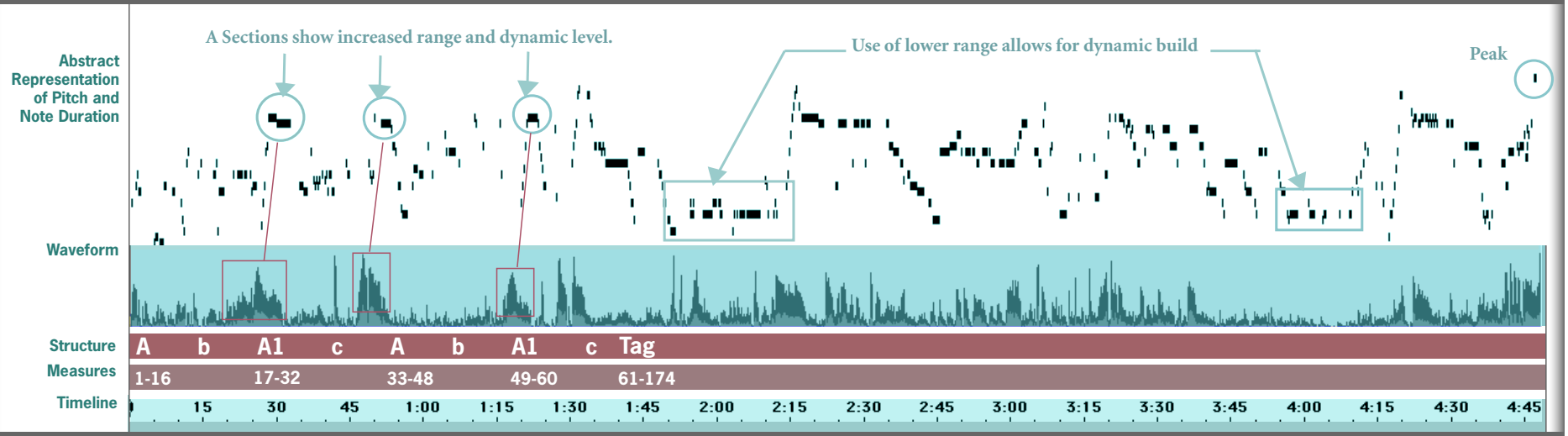


Figure 1: All of You Overview



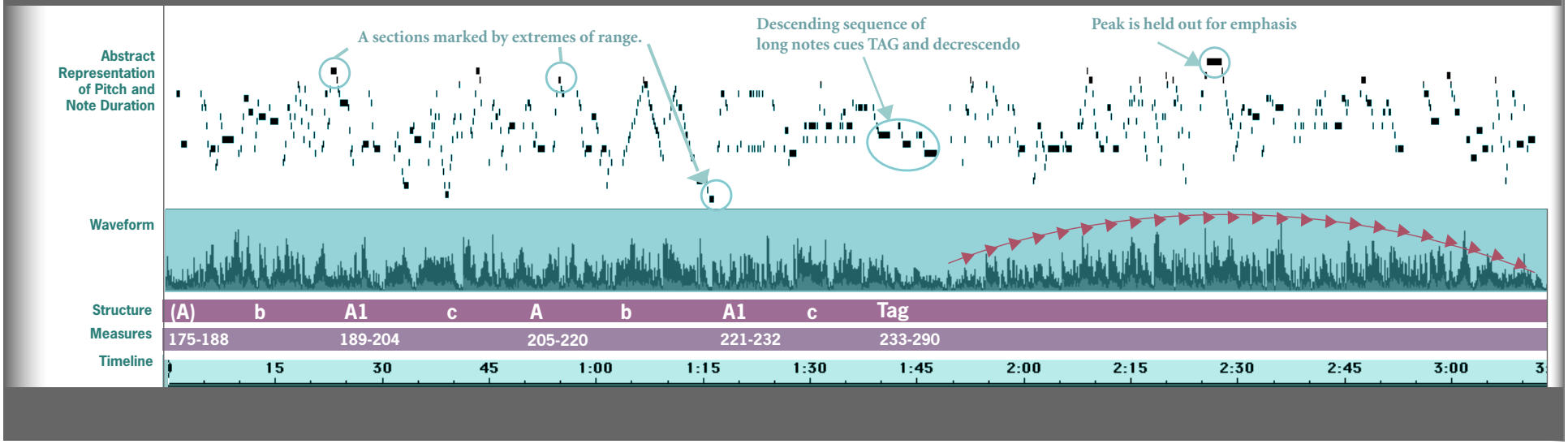
- Notice the A-B-A superstructure outlined by Williams' use of brushes-sticks-brushes.
- Peaks in range are reserved for the ends of the solos and match an increase in dynamics and rhythmic activity.
- The climax of the performance occurs near the end of Hancock's solo, right before Davis' recapitulation of the melody.
- Climaxing at the end of the "development" section is a typical characteristic of classical sonata form.

Figure 2: Davis In Head Plus Solo



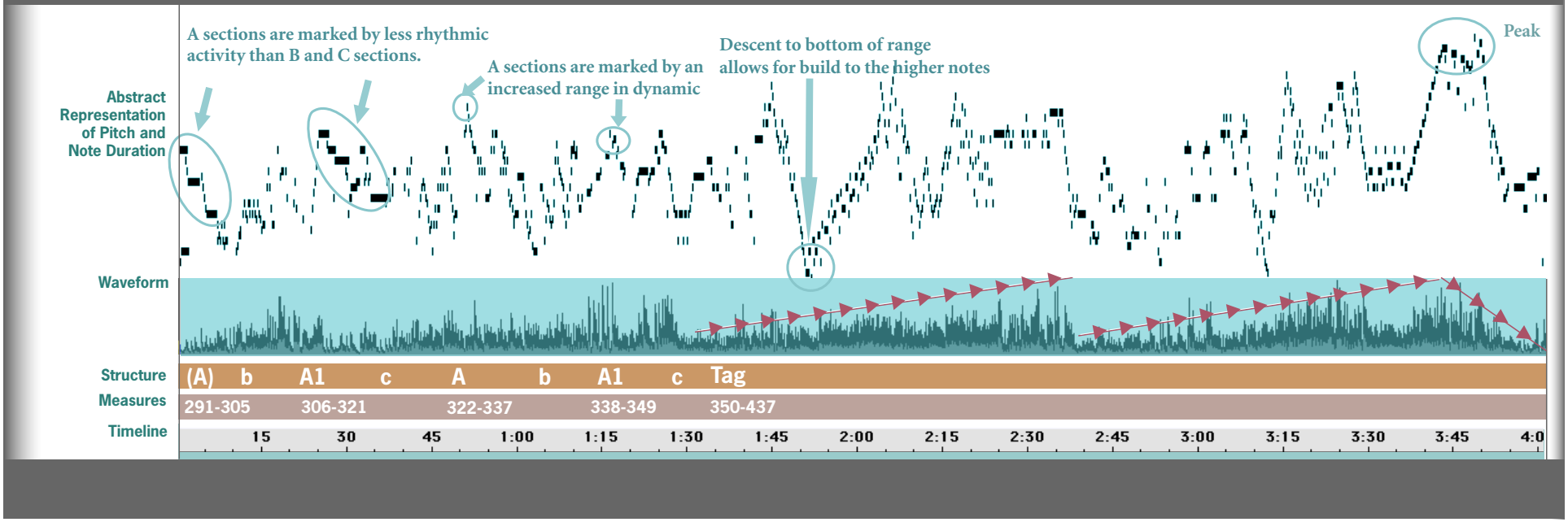
- Davis' approaches to the A sections are marked by an increased range and dynamic level.
- Davis transitions to the Tag section of his solo by playing fewer notes, longer rhythms and by going to the lower part of his range.
- Davis reserves the highest point of his range for the end of his solo, corresponding to a climactic increase in dynamic level.

Figure 3: Coleman Solo



- Coleman's approaches to the A sections are marked by movements to extremes of his range.
- As we will see with Hancock, Coleman's A sections are marked by less rhythmic activity while the b and c sections are marked by more activity.
- Coleman transitions to the Tag section of his solo by playing fewer notes, longer rhythms, a lower dynamic level and by going to the lower part of his range.
- Coleman reserves the highest point of his range for the end of his solo, corresponding to a climactic increase in dynamic level.
- As will be seen with Hancock, Coleman quickly descends from this climax to allow a smooth dynamic transition to the next soloist.

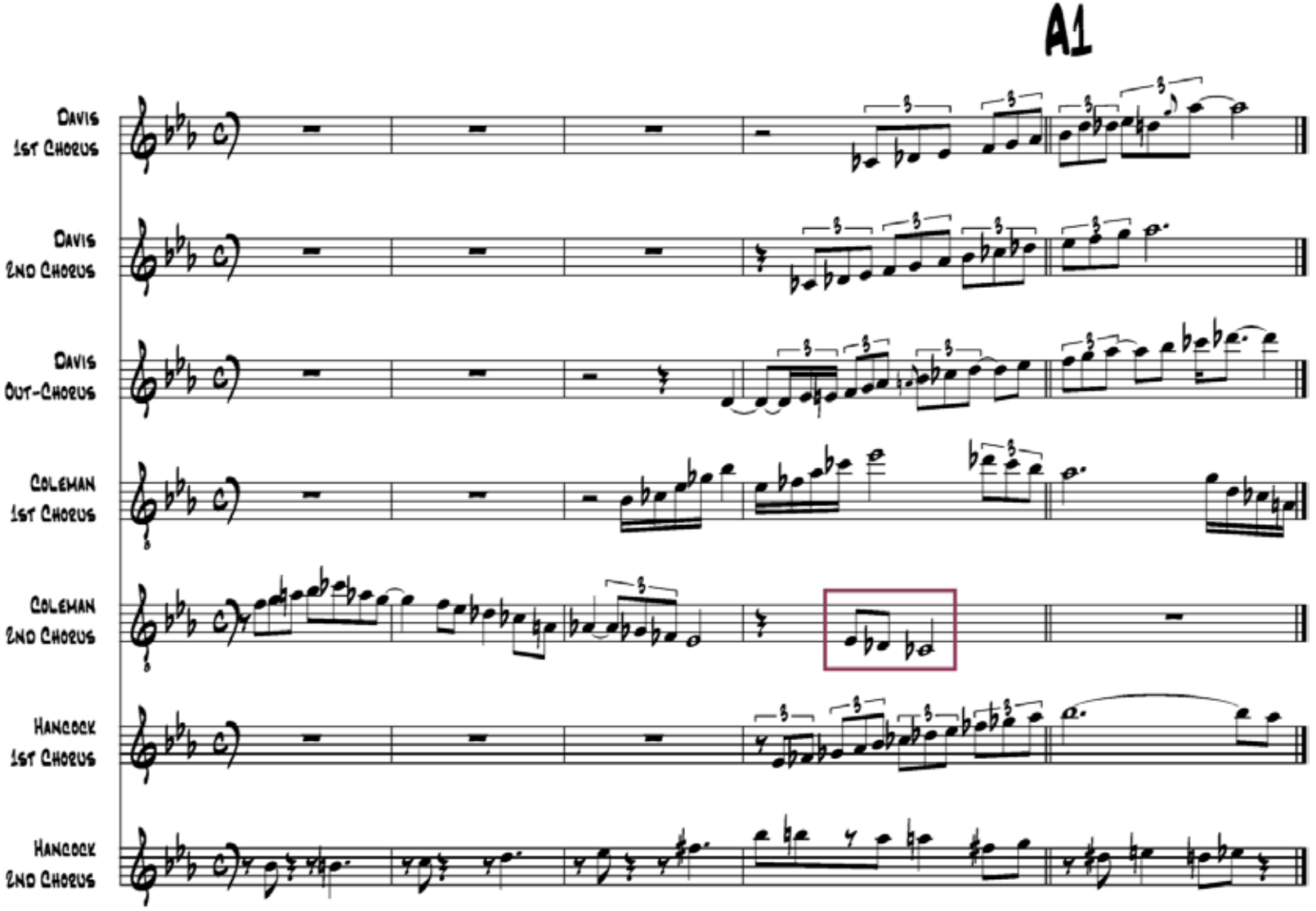
Figure 4: Hancock Solo



- Approaches to the A sections are marked by increased range and dynamic level.
- Hancock builds his solo by playing fewer and less complex rhythms over the form and with increased rhythmic density and complexity over much of the Tag section.
- As seen with Coleman, Hancock's A sections are marked by less rhythmic activity while the b and c sections are marked by more activity.
- Hancock transitions to the Tag section of his solo by playing fewer notes, longer rhythms, a lower dynamic level and by going to the lower part of his range.
- Hancock reserves the highest point of his range for the end of his solo, corresponding to a climactic increase in dynamic level.
- As with Coleman, Hancock quickly descends from this climax to allow a smooth dynamic transition to the next soloist.

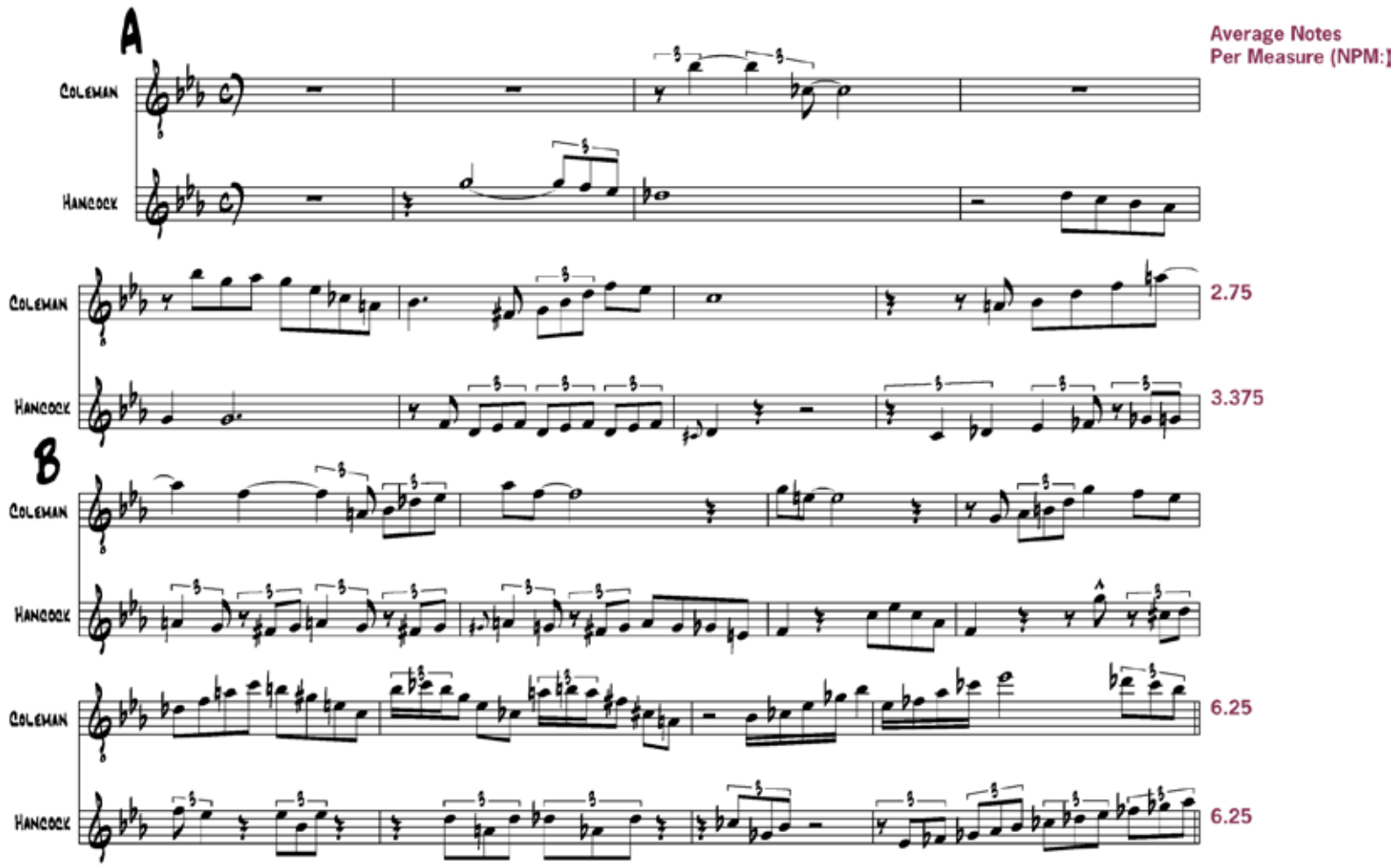
All of You High Range A1 Comparison

- Coleman provides contrast by going to the lowest point of his solo during his second chorus.



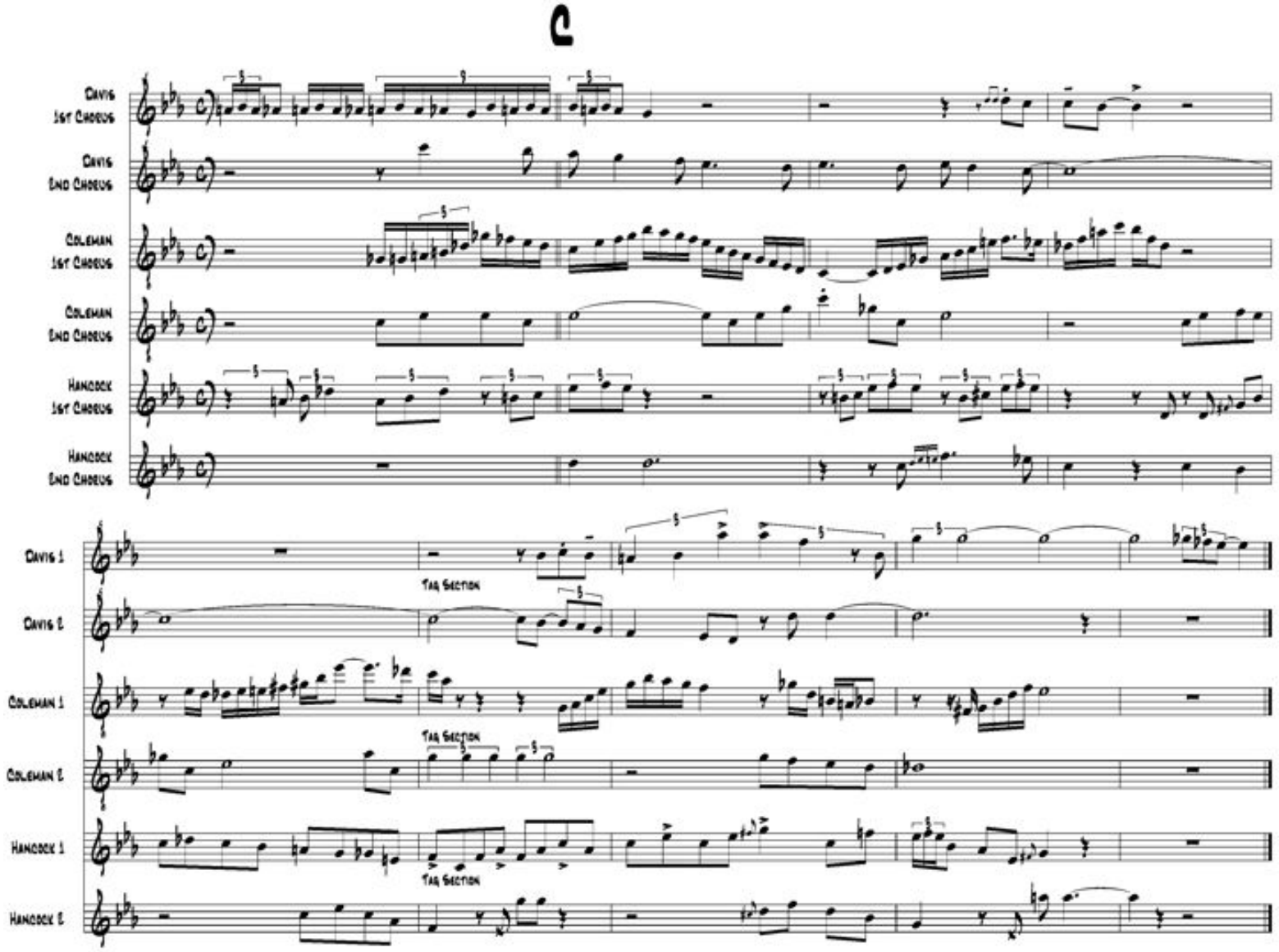
First Chorus Coleman Hancock Comparison Page 1

- The average amount of rhythmic activity increases significantly from A to B.



C-Section Comparison

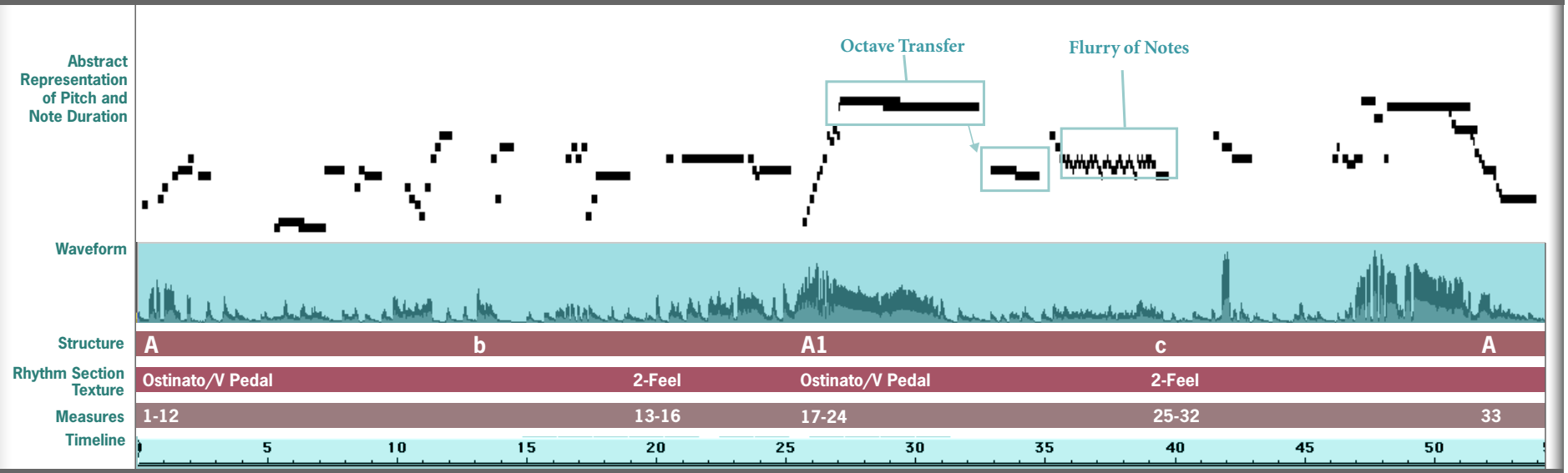
- We find a decrease in activity when we compare letter C of the second chorus with letter C of the first chorus



Summary of Similarities Between the Soloists

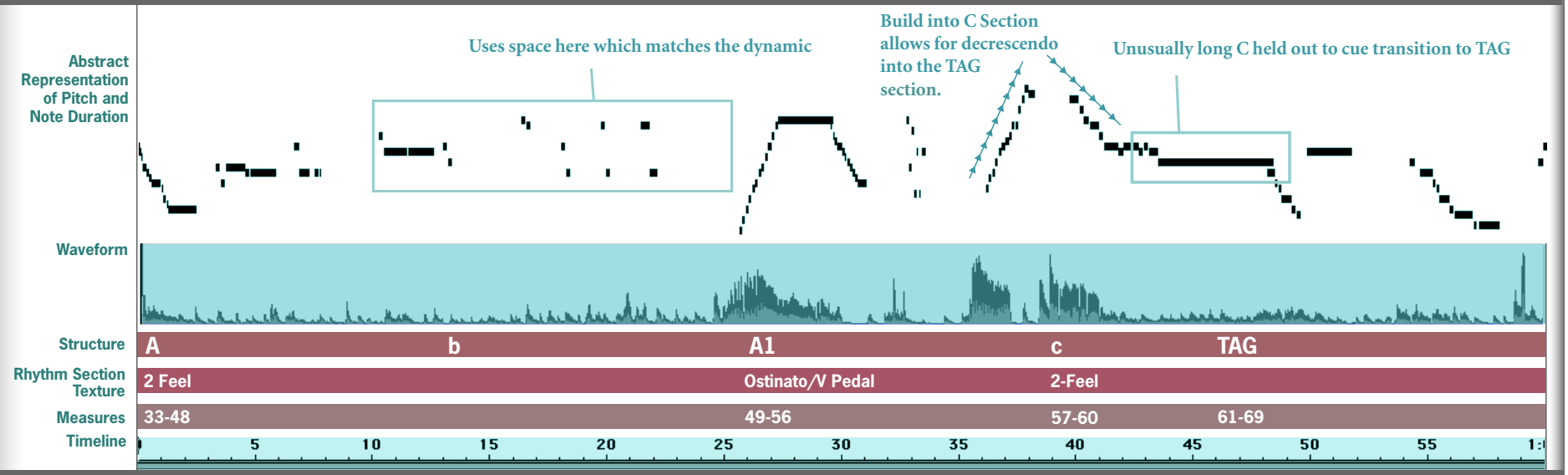
- We find numerous instances of dynamic, rhythmic and range intensification that delineates key points in the form. This proves to be particularly true in the main form of the piece, especially when approaching the A sections.
- We find that the A sections are marked by less rhythmic activity and that the b and c sections contain more rhythmic activity.
- We notice that all three soloists transition to the Tag section of their solos by playing fewer notes, longer rhythms and by going to lower parts of their range.
- We see that all three soloists have reserved the highest point of their range for the ends of their solos, always corresponding to the dynamic peak of their solos.
- Both Coleman and Hancock quickly descend from the climax of their solos to allow a smooth dynamic transition to the next soloist.

Figure 5: Davis' First Chorus Melody



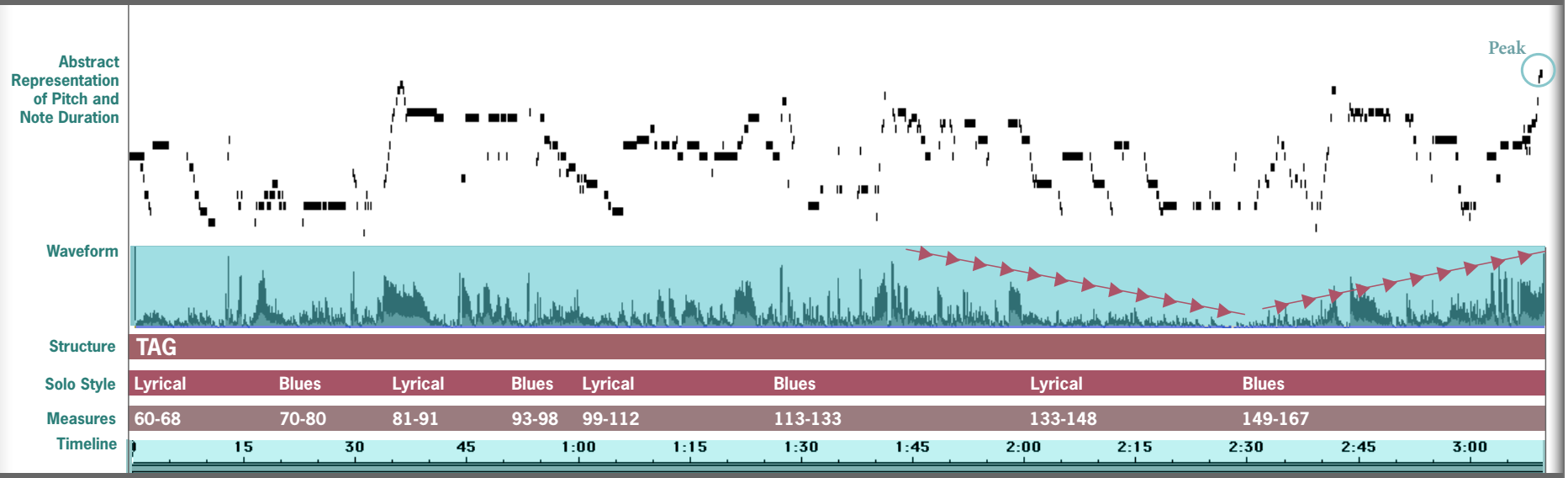
- As seen with Coleman and Hancock, we find range intensification and dynamic build from the B and C-sections into the A sections.
- Downward octave transfer helps cue decrease in dynamics.
- Flurry of notes creates rhythmic instability that is resolved at the C-section when the rhythm section goes into a 2-feel pattern.

Figure 6: Davis' First Chorus Solo



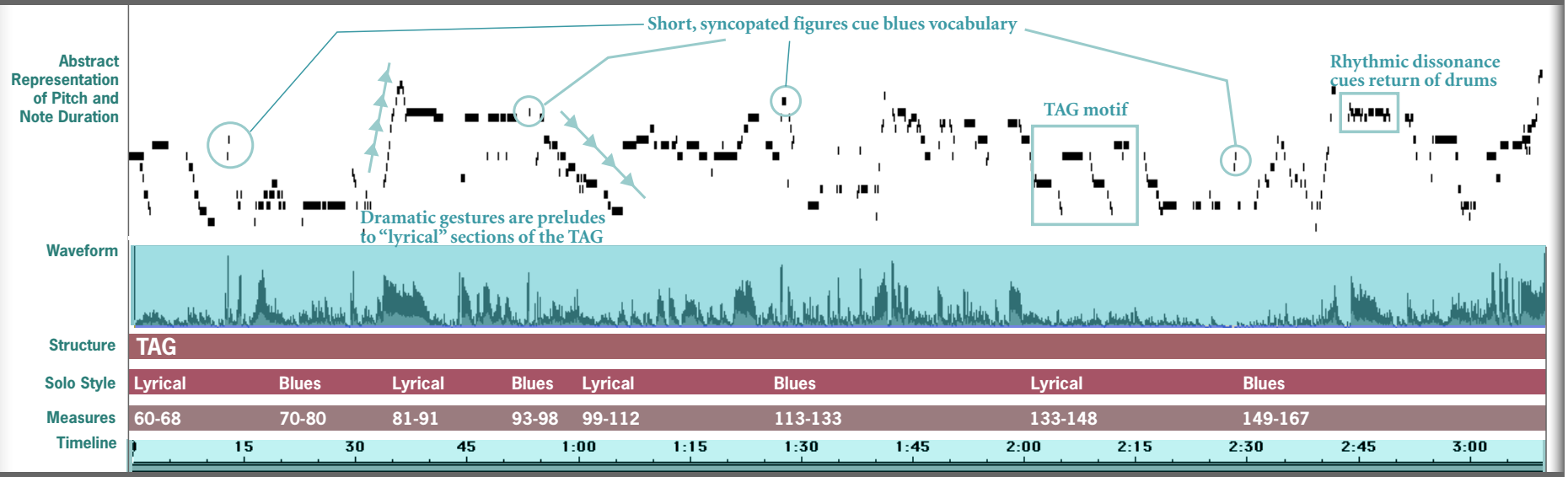
- Davis uses space here matching the dynamic.
- Once again, Davis builds into the A1 section.
- In contrast to the in-head, Davis also builds into the c section which allows for a decrescendo into the Tag section.
- The unusually long C is a rhetorical device that indicates a transition to the Tag section of Davis' solo.

Figure 7a: Davis TAG Section



- The final minute of the Tag section shows a marked decrease in dynamic level and range.
- By deliberately decreasing the dynamic and range, it allows room to build into an exciting final climax which Davis has been teasing us with his entire solo.

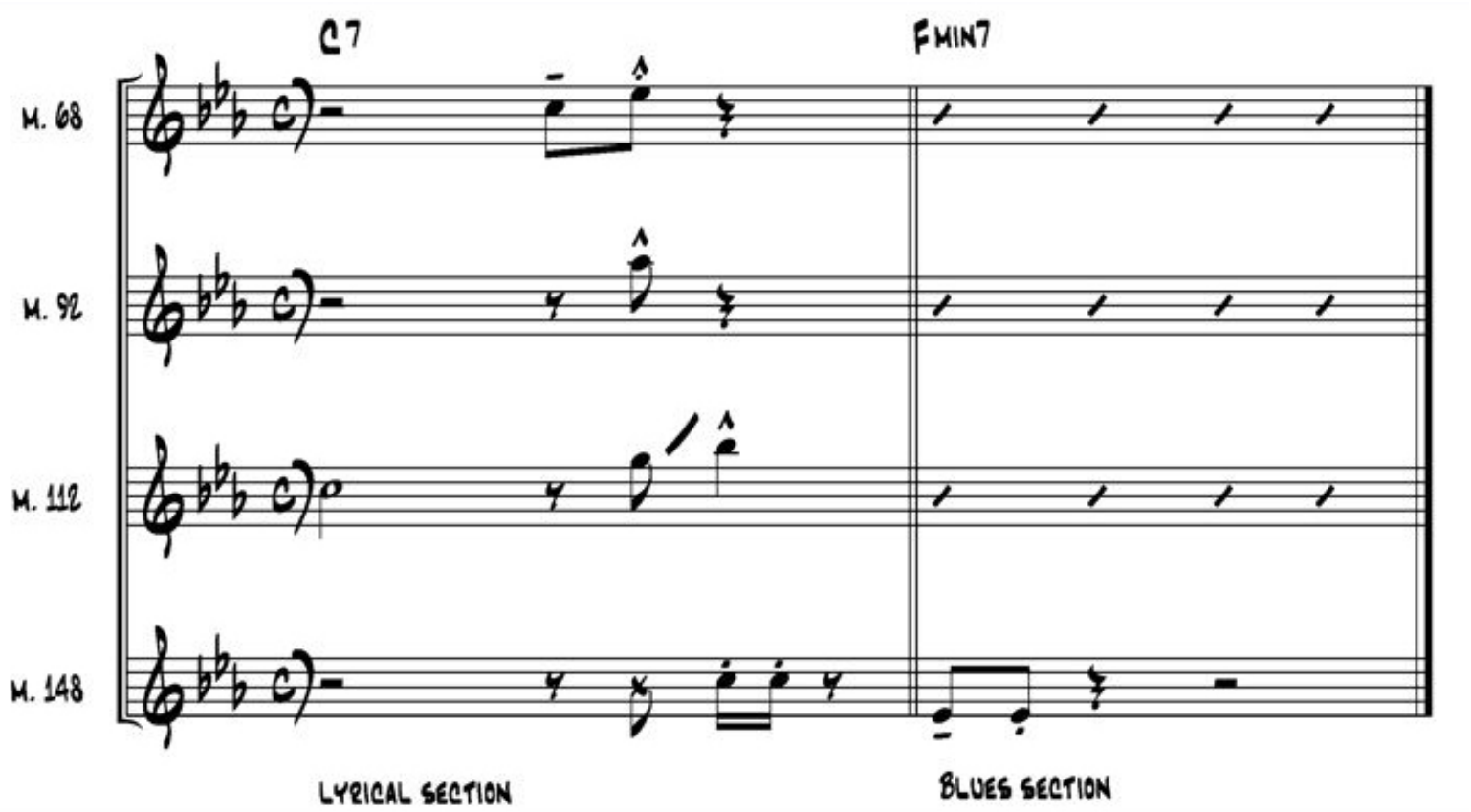
Figure 7b: Davis TAG Section



- Davis alternates between playing in a more lyrical style with playing in a more syncopated/articulated style that is rich in blues vocabulary.
- Davis cues "blues" sections with short, syncopated eighth-note figures played as pickups to the repeated four-bar phrase.
- Davis transitions from "blues" sections into "lyrical" sections with dramatic upward or downward gestures.
- He also uses a recurring "Tag Motif" to cue the lyrical portions of the Tag Section.
- The rhythm section reacts to these style alternations in a complimentary way.

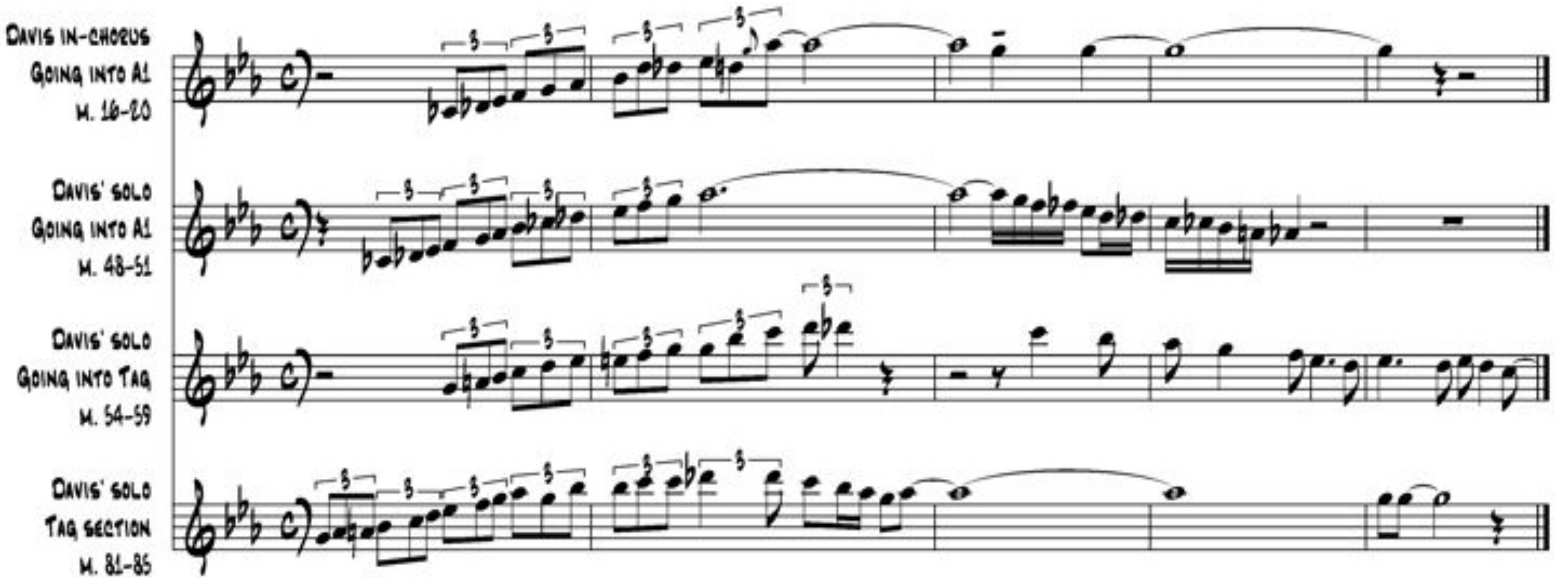
Davis' Cues More Syncopation/Blues Vocabulary

- These dramatic cues instantly propel the group into new stylistic textures.



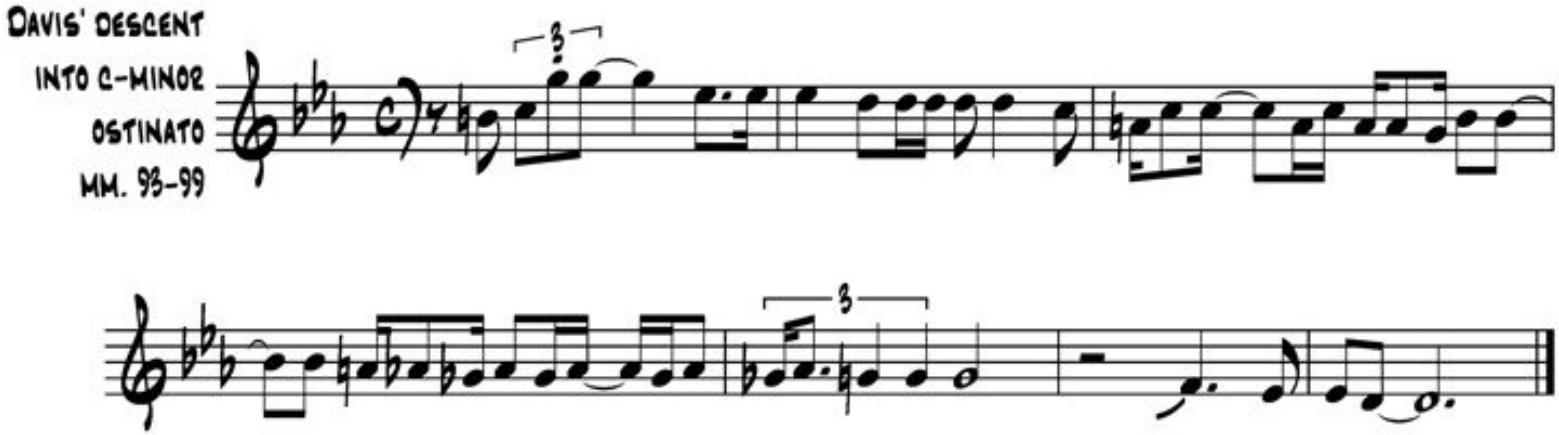
Davis' Upward Gestures

- Davis' upward gestures are often a prelude to an impending lyrical section.



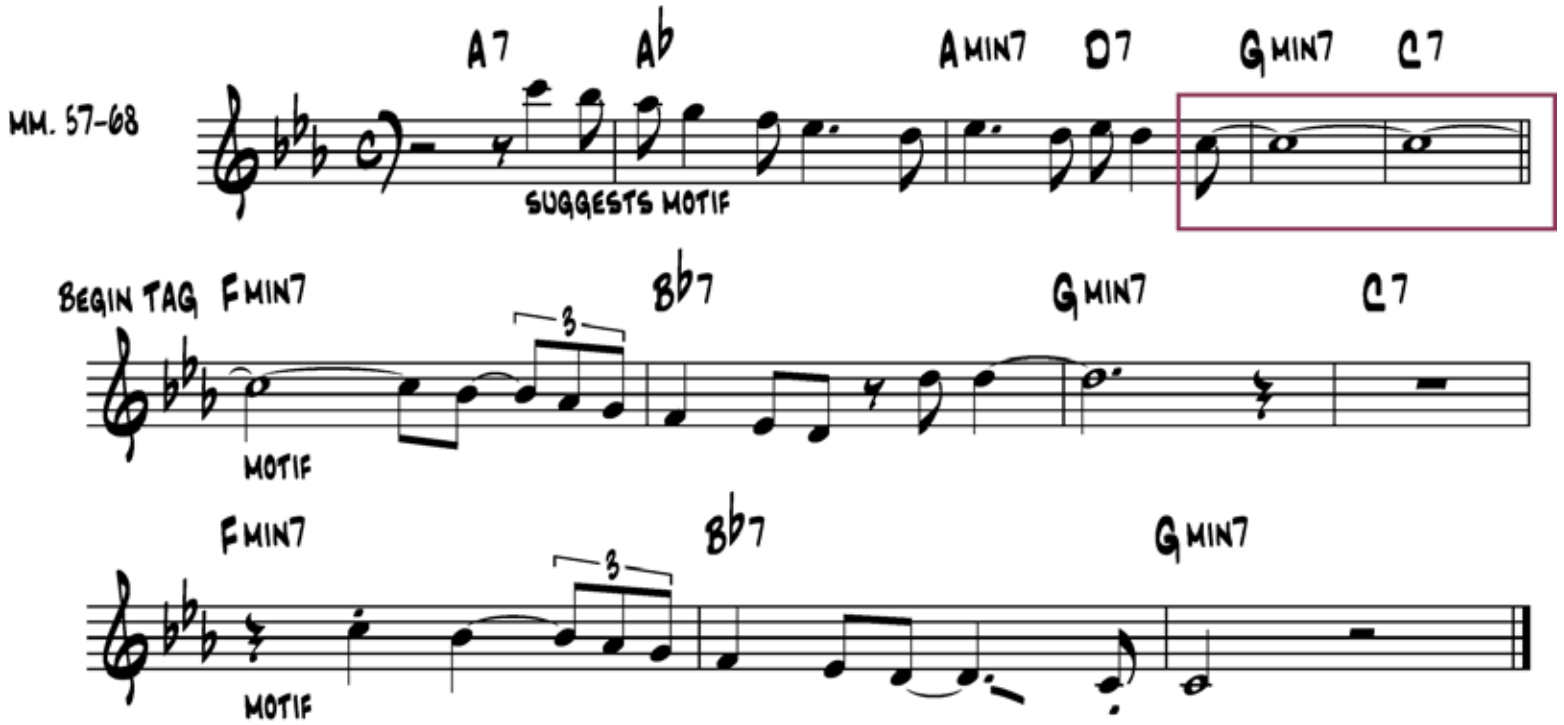
Davis' Descent Into C-minor Ostinato

- The descent in range here helps the group to transition to the lyrical style.



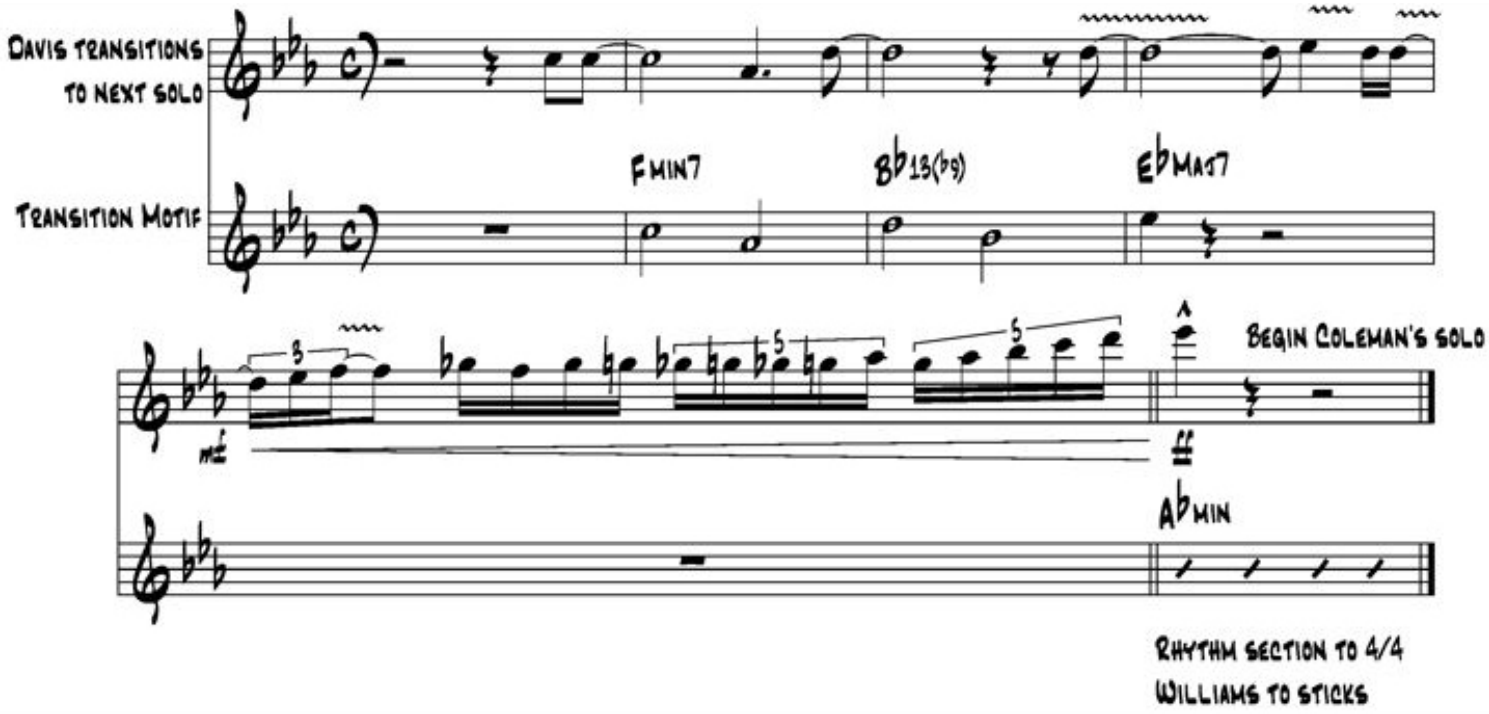
TAG Motif

- This motif functions well as a clearly defined, 4-bar phrase.



Davis Transitions to Coleman Solo

- Davis teases the listener with unfulfilled upward gestures throughout his solo with the final payoff arriving at the very end.



Performance Goals

- For the sake of outlining a larger "superstructure", the drummer should play brushes for the in-head, first soloist and out-head and use sticks during the middle solos.
- Soloists should think more melodically over the A sections with the rhythm section players playing with more simplicity. Increased activity, range and dynamics in the b and c sections should be used to create momentum into the A sections.
- Soloists should play two choruses on the form making sure to reduce the dynamic to effectively transition to the Tag section at the end of their second chorus. Rhythm section players should look for this and help with this transition.
- Soloists should reserve their highest dynamic and range for late in their solos thus building to an effective climax.
- After the soloists peak, they should reduce their dynamic and range to effectively transition to the next soloist.