

11: Style Workout

The final chapter of this book brings together everything you've learnt so far. From beginning to improvise with just the blues scale we went on to linking sets of chords together in increasingly complex ways. To achieve this we introduced the main chord types, the modes of the major scale, cadences and the most commonly used chord progressions. Hopefully you are now soloing freely and are beginning to feel the foundations of your own jazz style taking shape.

This chapter has four tunes with different styles that you may encounter in gig situations. As always each tune has a sample solo and analysis of the solo and chord progression to help get you started.

This is a bebop-style tune similar to '52nd Street Blues' from chapter ten. 'Flying With The Bird' is a tribute to **Charlie Parker** and is based on the chord progression of **Gershwin's** 'I Got Rhythm'.

Fig 11 Flying with the Bird

41  13 

Fast Swing **A**

Gma⁷ E7(b⁹) Am⁷ D⁷ Gma⁷ E7(b⁹) Am⁷ D⁷

I VI II V I VI II V

G⁷ C⁷ Bm⁷ E7(b⁹) Am⁷ D⁷ Gma⁷

I7 IV7 III VI II V I

B

B⁷ E⁷

A⁷ D⁷

A

Gma⁷ E7(b⁹) Am⁷ D⁷ Gma⁷ E7(b⁹) Am⁷ D⁷

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G⁷ C⁷ Gma⁷

A 1st chorus

G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷ G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷

G⁷ C⁷ Bm⁷ E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷

A

G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷ G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷

G⁷ C⁷ Gma⁷

B

B⁷ E⁷

A⁷ D⁷

A

G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷ G E7(b9) Am⁷ D⁷

A 2nd chorus

G E7(b9) Am7 D7 G E7(b9) Am7 D7

G7 C7 Bm7 E7(b9) Am7 D7

G E7(b9) Am7 D7 Bm7 E7(b9) Am7 D7

G7 C7 Gma7

B

B7 E7

A7 D7

A

G E7(b9) Am7 D7 G E7(b9) Am7 D7

G7 C7 Gma7

Rhythm Changes

One of the most popular chord progressions in swing and bebop music is that based on the chord changes of 'I Got Rhythm'. The original tune was written by **George Gershwin** in 1930 for the musical 'Girl Crazy' and quickly became a hit. The jazz musicians of the day seized upon 'I Got Rhythm' and it has become a favourite standard for generations of jazz musicians.

The Head

Like many bebop heads 'Flying with the Bird' is based on a short, punchy phrase – remember that the crotchets are played shorter in bebop, think 'Da' rather than 'Laa' for the crotchets in this head. The opening two bars contain the main theme and feature some of the chromatic touches typical of the bebop style – the C sharp (the flattened fifth) adds a bright dissonance to the head, while the B flat to B natural is a bluesy decoration. The second four bars are similar to the first four, acting as an answering phrase.

The second-time-bar ends on the root note (G) and chord I (G major seventh), giving the phrase a strong resolution. The snappy melody at this point also works well as a really tight ending to the tune with the whole band playing it in unison.

The harmony of the 'A' section is diatonic to the key of G. The I-VI-II-V is a turnaround in the key of G – chord VI can be treated as either a diatonic minor seventh chord (entirely fitting the key) or as a seventh chord (creating a cadence to chord II).

The Solo

The sample solo of 'Flying With The Bird' is a typical bebop solo. The two choruses contain many examples of the jazz

The chord progression and 'AABA' structure of 'I Got Rhythm' have become known simply as the '**rhythm changes**' and are the basis for hundreds of jazz tunes including 'Lester Leaps In', 'Oleo' and 'Anthropology' – the theme of the cartoon 'The Flintstones' is also based on the rhythm changes.

The first-time-bar contains a turnaround in a more familiar place – leading the music back to the second 'A' section.

Bar five creates a modulation to chord IV by turning chord I into a seventh chord. Note that chord IV in the rhythm changes is usually played as a seventh rather than a major seventh – look out for the B flats in the solo!

The bridge ('B' section) uses the **cycle of fifths** as its chord progression producing a cyclic set of resolving seventh chords – B7 resolves to E7, to A7, to D7 before the Gmaj7 chord of the last 'A' section breaks the cycle. The melody mirrors the cyclic nature of the chords with a similar phrase tailored to fit the chords.

'Rhythm changes' tunes are usually played at a fast tempo – creating the lively exciting sound associated with swing and bebop. The rhythm and feel are all important, listen to the demonstration track (mp3 track 41) for a guide.

improvisation techniques covered in this book – here are some things to look out for:

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Bebop language

Like all musical styles, bebop has its own characteristics. Learning the features of the style will allow you to become conversant and eventually fluent in the language. The 'rhythm changes' make use of progressions such as II-V-I as well as III-VI-II-V, V-I, I-VI-II-V etc. This partly explains the popularity of the 'rhythm changes' as one improvisational idea can be reused on each of these similar progressions throughout the sequence.

Bars three and four of the second 'A' section of the sample solo (marked as **Example 1**) contain a good example of a bebop line. The quavers (eighth notes) spell out the I-VI7-II-V progression – giving particular emphasis to the chord tones. **Examples 2, 3 and 4** also spell out a similar progression. These three phrases could be learnt as 'licks' that would work on any I-VI-II-V or III-VI-II-V progression.

The Bebop Scale

Introduced in chapter ten, the bebop scale adds a chromatic passing note to the Mixolydian mode to make an even eight-note scale that effectively spells out the seventh chord. Look at **Examples 5, 6 and 7** for uses of the bebop scale.

Syncopation

The rhythmic interest created by off-beat quavers (eighth notes) is a big factor in the bebop sound as

it gives the music a rhythmic drive that is so important to its effectiveness. Always play off-beats with an accent as they will then have more rhythmic impact. Look at **Examples 8, 9, 10, and 11**, these off-beat quavers (eighth notes) are marked as accented – this won't always be the case in other tunes you may come across so try to accent off-beats instinctively.

The Blues

Using the 'blue' notes has been an important recurring theme throughout this book. Flattened thirds and fifths, when used well, always add authenticity and an element of 'cool' to your solos. Bebop often contrasts these 'blue' notes with their un-flattened versions to create chromatic passing notes. **Examples 12, 13, 14 and 15** highlight some uses of 'blue' notes in this solo.

Phrasing

Often at fast tempos, the temptation is to overplay – the adrenaline kicks in and all your ideas may come out at once. The opening of this solo has short conversational phrases punctuated by gaps, this allows both the musicians and the audience to follow the unfolding of the solo and let the phrases have time to register. Answering phrases are an effective way to build a solo – the second chorus begins with a phrase that is then repeated and developed at bar five shown in **Examples 15 and 16**.

Your Solo

The sample solo has introduced you to the rhythm changes sequence. Now use the backing track (CD track 13) to play your own version of 'Flying with the Bird'. The form is: head, two choruses of solo and a final head. This

solo should capture the excitement of bebop in full flight. A great rhythm changes solo can be the highlight of a jazz set as a player 'burns' through the tune. Try to emulate the greats of bebop when you play both the written solo and your own solo.