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CHAPTER 1 CHANGE-RUNNING

Definition

Change is a synonym for chord. Running is a synonym for arpeggiating. Hence change-running is a jazz colloquialism for chord-arpeggiating. In terms of creative musical expression, change-running is somewhat superfluous when it occurs in an improvised solo, since the chord is already being sounded and/or implied by members of the rhythm section (piano, guitar, and bass). Nevertheless, change-running frequently occurs in improvised solos, and sometimes in interesting ways. It has at least several possible functions: (1) as a phrase which helps to place the ear of the improviser into the exact structure and sound of a chord, which sometimes insures the effectiveness and accuracy of a more melodic phrase to follow; (2) as a means to learn, during practice, the sound of each chord in a sequence or progression of chords; (3) as pick-up notes into a melodic phrase; (4) as a means to make the sound of a chord clear to an audience; and (5) as a means of communication or reinforcement for other members of the group, in the event that one or more members lose their place in the progression or the form of the tune.

Illustrations

Because of the nature of improvisation, being based upon chord progressions to a large extent, nearly all improvised phrases could be more or less regarded as change-running. However, the purpose of its introduction here is to focus upon phrases which do little more than to arpeggiate the notes of the chord, and even with that restriction the possibilities are endless. Note in the following examples that a change-running phrase does not necessarily begin on the root of the chord, it may omit one or more chord members, and its direction can be ascending or descending or both.



Examples From Recorded Solos

J.J. Johnson, trombone ("Now's The Time")



Freddie Hubbard, trumpet ("Clarence's Place")



Blue Mitchell, trumpet ("Silver's Serenade")



Lee Morgan, trumpet ("Ceora")



George Coleman, tenor saxophone ("Maiden Voyage")



John Coltrane, tenor saxophone ("Trane's Slo Blues")



Hank Mobley, tenor saxophone ("Nica's Dream")



Michael Brecker, tenor saxophone ("Freight Trane")

