

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary jazz players have roots in tradition but at the same time they continually look for new techniques to vary their improvisation. While recognizing the components of Bebop, Swing, Dixieland and Black spiritual music in jazz today, the contemporary player also needs to be familiar with more recent innovations in jazz harmony. An important mainstay of modern jazz is the music of John Coltrane.

The objective of this book is to help jazz instrumentalists better understand some of Coltrane's music. Having studied this interpretation and analysis of Coltrane's technique, the aspiring improviser can hopefully begin to incorporate some of "Trane's" techniques into his or her own playing. While this book will be of particular interest to saxophonists, it is intended for all instrumentalists. A basic assumption made by the authors is that the reader has an understanding of fundamental theoretical concepts used in jazz. If there is a question about terminology please refer to a comprehensive jazz theory book such as: *The Jazz Language*¹ by Dan Haerle. In addition, the following tracks in the *Jamey Aebersold Play-Along Series* are very valuable for putting the information in this book to use:

Volume 16: Turnarounds, Cycles and II-V7's

Turnaround Number 3, Coltrane Changes, Coltrane Blues, Guess What Key I'm In

Volumes 27 and 28: John Coltrane

26-2, Giant Steps, Countdown

Volume 68: Giant Steps

Giant Steps in all twelve keys

Volume 75: Countdown To Giant Steps

Giant Steps, Countdown, and other tunes broken down into workable sections

The authors strongly suggest that the recordings given in the discography be seriously studied in conjunction with this book.

KEYS, TONICS AND TONICIZATION

As an important preface, let us review some basic elements common to most jazz and standard tunes. Most tunes (excluding "free pieces"), can usually be analyzed to be in a particular key. During the course of a tune, the chord progression may venture, or modulate, from its original key to a different key, but most often it returns to the tonic. While this is a typical example, there are, of course, many exceptions. Some tunes begin in one key and end in another, but for the purpose of this discussion, we will examine tunes that start and end in the same key.

The key of a tune is usually referred to as the **tonic**. As mentioned above, a tune may begin in one key but briefly modulate to another key. When this occurs the chord progression is said to **tonicize** the foreign key. Therefore, to tonicize is to establish a key as tonic for a short duration. This tonicization is appropriately called by some, "the key of the moment." A tune may have one or more of these tonicizations (or keys of the moment), before returning to the original tonic key (assuming, as we generally will, that it returns to the tonic key). A typical chord progression to a standard or jazz tune is given on the following page. (Ex. 1)

¹ Haerle, Dan. *The Jazz Language*. Hialeah, FL; Studio 224, 1980.

Satellite is a composition by Coltrane based on the standard tune *How High the Moon* by Morgan Lewis. On the recorded version there is no piano; simply a trio of tenor saxophone, bass and drums. The last four measures are expanded into an eight bar tag on D7sus. Note that like Coltrane's arrangement of *But Not for Me*, *Satellite* also has a descending whole tone bass line. (Ex. 16)

Example 16. Cycles used in *Satellite*

measures 5-8
21-24



measures 1-4
13-19



Example 16a. Comparison of the first twelve measures of the chord progressions to *How High the Moon* and *Satellite*

How High The Moon

G Gmi⁷ C⁷ F

Satellite

G B^{b7}/F E^b F^{#7}/C[#] B D⁷/A Gmi⁷ C⁷ F A^{b7}/E^b D^b E⁷/B

1 2 3 4 5 6

Fmi B^{b7} E^b Ami⁷ D⁷ Gmi Ami⁷ D⁷

A C⁷/G Fmi⁷ B^{b7} E^b Ami⁷ D⁷ Gmi Ami⁷ D⁷

7 8 9 10 11 12

All Keys Ascending in Whole Steps

Select other exercises and apply them in the same manner.

The exercise consists of ten staves of music, each with a key signature and a sequence of chords. The chords are:

- Staff 1: C, E^b7 , A^b , B^7 , E, G^7 , C
- Staff 2: D, F^7 , B^b , D^b7 , $F^\#$, A^7 , D
- Staff 3: E, G^7 , C, E^b7 , A^b , B^7 , E
- Staff 4: G^b , A^7 , D, F^7 , B^b , D^b7 , G^b
- Staff 5: A^b , B^7 , E, G^7 , C, E^b7 , A^b
- Staff 6: B^b , D^b7 , G^b , A^7 , D, F^7 , B^b7
- Staff 7: B, D^7 , G, B^b7 , E^b , $F^\#7$, B
- Staff 8: D^b , E^7 , A, C^7 , F, A^b7 , D^b
- Staff 9: E^b , G^b7 , B, D^7 , G, B^b7 , E^b
- Staff 10: F, A^b7 , D^b , E^7 , A, C^7 , F

The following chords are listed below the staves:

- Staff 11: G, B^b7 , E^b , $F^\#7$, B, D^7 , G
- Staff 12: A, C^7 , F, A^b7 , D^b , E^7 , A