



Vision Music's "Good Vibes Jazz Solos"

by Mark Stefani

Language Tips

When you analyze any good jazz solo, look specifically for key language elements. For "playing through changes" in this genre, these would include long and short II-V licks. Examples: Dm7 to G7, Cm7 to F7, Fm7 to Bb7, or any pair of like chords with the same interval distance, either four beats apiece or two beats apiece. Mastery of the II-V progression is essential to your overall success in negotiating jazz changes, so try using the same licks in other keys and with other tunes. Experiment!

Understand the blues language beyond simple minor pentatonic licks. Major blues sounds (i.e. licks featuring motion between the minor and major 3rds - Eb to E in the key of C) are absolutely *critical* for harnessing the power of blues in jazz music.

Practical Advice

- Learn basic scale forms, modes, and arpeggios, but practice them minimally when compared with core language (licks, melodies, etc). Use the scales only as a basic frame of reference for practicing the real thing. Play solid jazz and blues licks in all possible playing positions, octaves, and keys on the fingerboard.
- Transcribe (learn by ear - written or not) on a regular basis. Be sure to listen to and learn from players of all instruments, because jazz involves a universal language that transcends the guitar. Arrange model solos to help apply your acquired vocabulary and to break down chord progressions of tunes related to the genre.
- Improvise and play the blues every day to keep the feeling in your music. And last but not least, only practice something that you would actually play for someone!