Jazz Lick OF THE Week # 15

"All Blues/Norwegian Wood" - the mixolydian and dorian modes

HARMONIC LOOK

I think many (as I was until recently I'm embarressed to say) always assumed All Blues was just a pretty standard I7 - IV7 etc. In it's pure form (Miles "Kind Of Blue") it didn't go to chord IV at all.

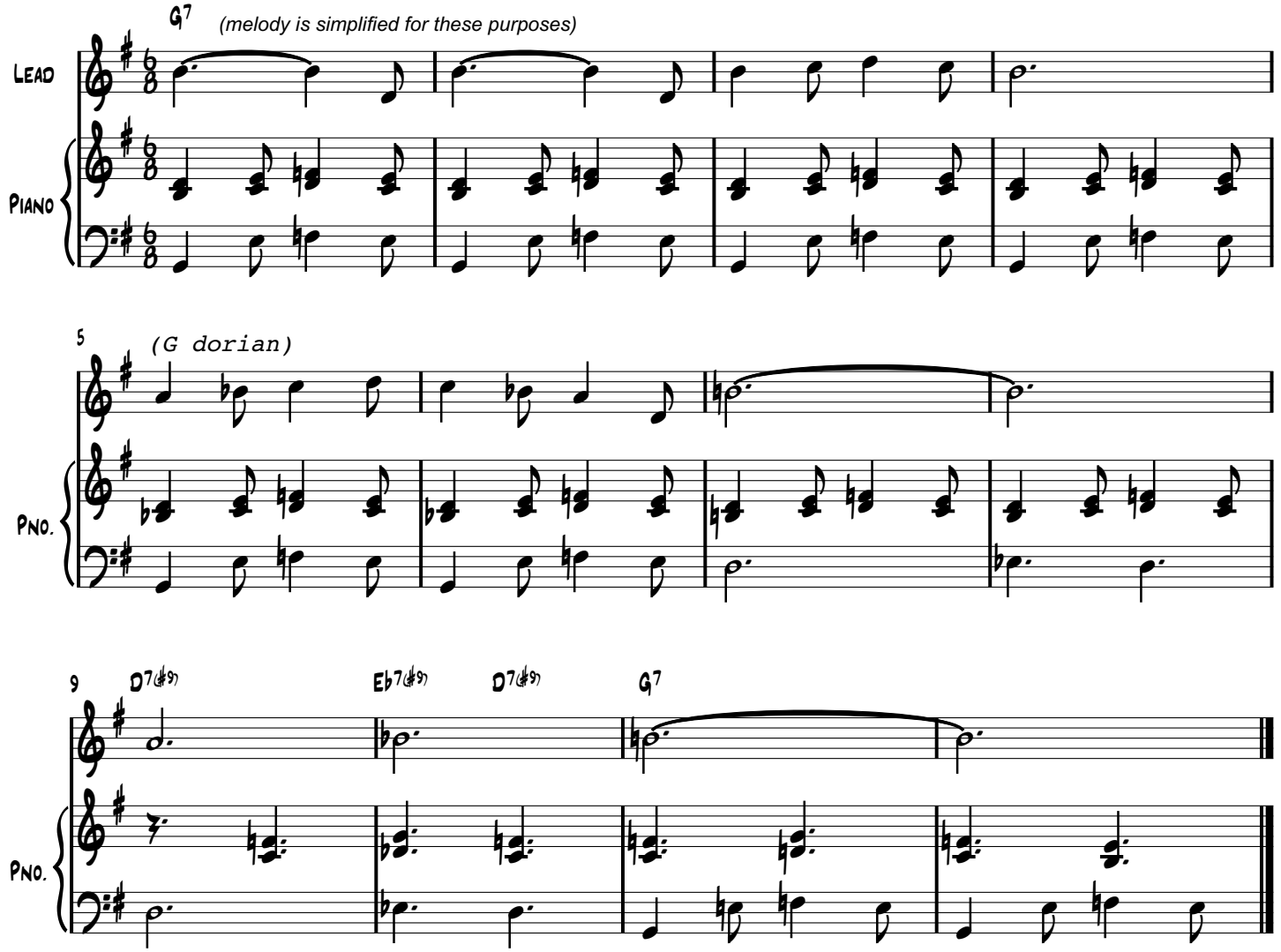
I'm not going to provide a major analysis (I don't actually have one anyway!), but thought many might also be a bit interested.

It also has a bit of a parrallel with Norwegian Wood which I'll show in a moment.

G mixolidian - G A B C D E F G
G dorian - G A Bb C D E F G
G harmonic min -G A Bb C D Eb F# G

Bars 1-4 : Looks pretty standard Blues I7. The subtle mixo side is the absence of any "bluesy" b3. That's not a requirement of a blues tune of course, but it is pretty common.
Bars 5-6: These are the very cool ones! G remains in the bass. First chord is Gmin, with the riff using dorian notes. (Note the only change from the previous bars is the Bb) Very Dorian'ish!
Bars 7-8 : Mixolydian again
Bars 9-10 Both of the triads (D & Eb) are from G harmonic min (maybe i'm trying to milk the uniqueness of the tune, or maybe it's simply chord V with a little tri tone sub embellishment!)
Bars11-12: Mixo to finish.

All Blues - track #1 (Miles)



© Piglet Music 2017

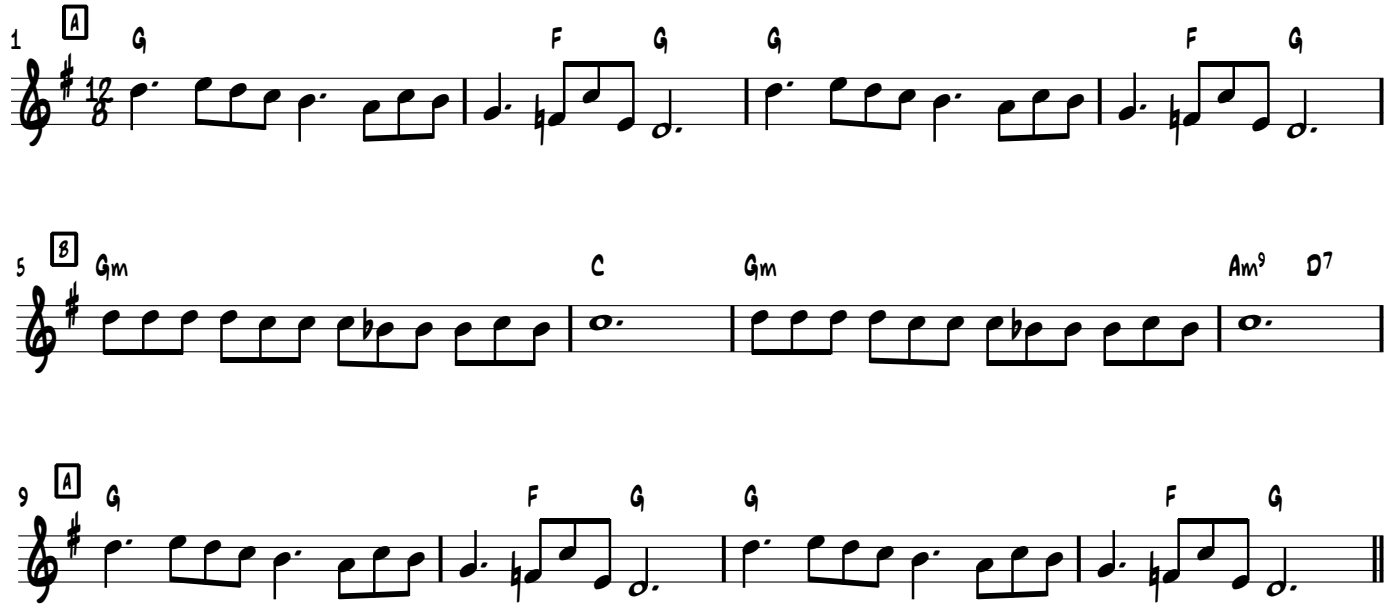
Now lets take a look at Norwegian Wood.

The Beatles apparently had little to no harmonic training, just genius!

G mixolidian - G A B C D E F G
G dorian - G A Bb C D E F G

Bars 1-4 : Melody is very Mixolydian. (Maj 3rd and b7). Doesn't stray from the mode.
The bVII chord re inforces this. This chord is one of the cadence chords of mixo.
Bars 5-7: This establishes the dorian side more than All Blues in that it stays there for 3 bars, and it uses the chord IV (C) which is a Dorian cadence chord. This establishes the dorian side even more.
Bar 8 : This is a tonal II V (not modal) to take us back to G.
Bars 9-12 Return to the opening four bars, and the same mixo characteristics.

Norwegian Wood

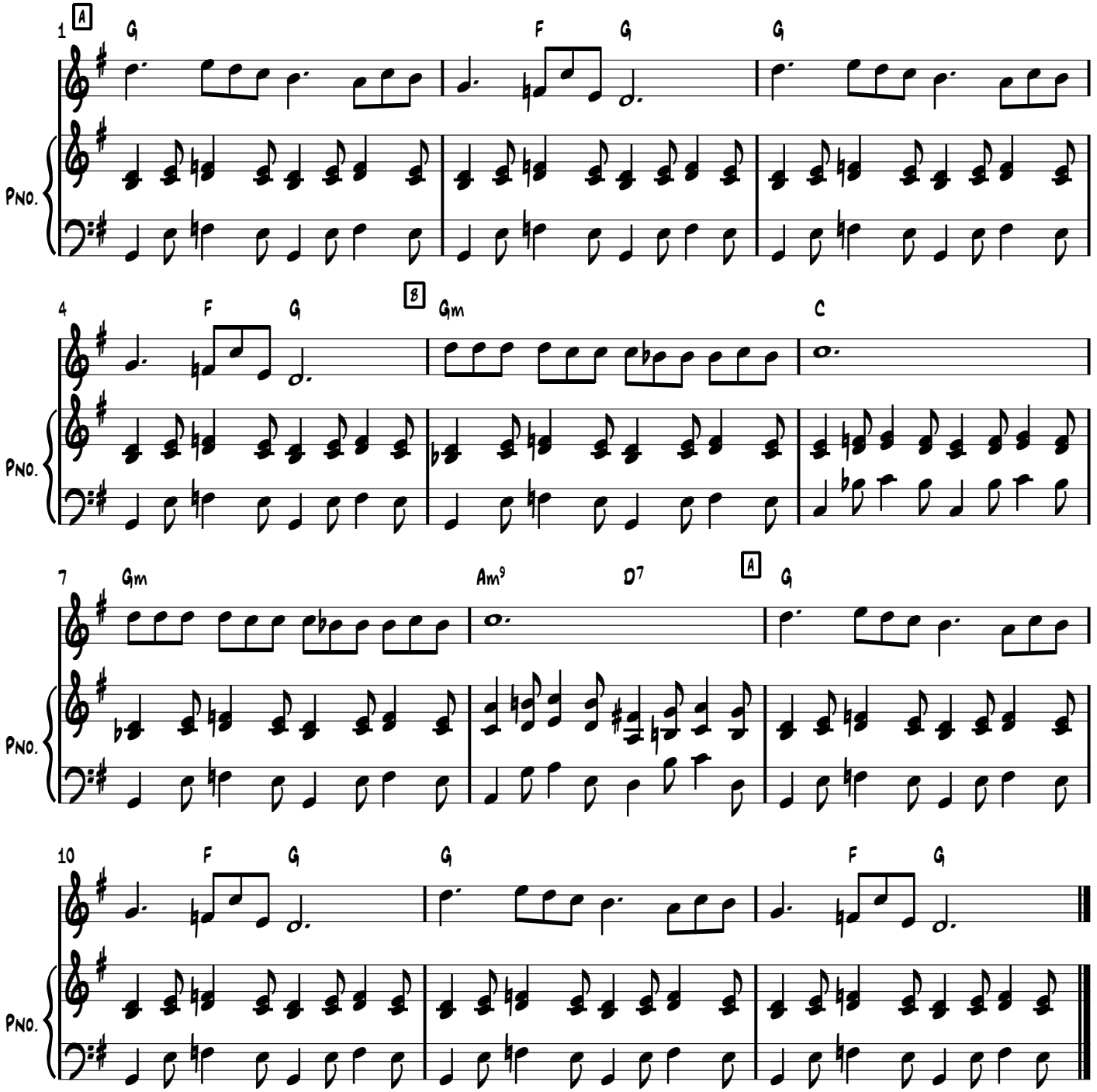


PTO

The comparison!

For a bit of fun (as well as seriousness), here's Norwegian Wood over the All Blues changes (I've preserved the All Blues bass and riff as much as I could).

The most striking comparisons between the two tunes are:
- Both 12 bars (one in 12/8 and one in 6/8 though)
- Both open in mixolydian
- Both use Dorian in bar 5.

It will seem a bit odd time wise, but that's because of the time signature difference. Therefore the backing is "stretched out". (I had to be a bit inventive in bars 6&8, don't pay too much attention to them!)

Norwegian Wood/All Blues - track #3