

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 embarrassed 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 B \flat C D E F G
G harmonic min - G A B \flat C D E \flat F \sharp 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 B \flat) Very Dorian'ish!

Bars 7-8 : Mixolydian again

Bars 9-10 Both of the triads (D & E \flat) 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)

LEAD

PIANO

G⁷ (melody is simplified for these purposes)

Detailed description: This block shows the first four bars of the piece. The lead part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 8/8. It features a melodic line with a long note in the first bar, followed by eighth notes and a quarter note. The piano accompaniment is in grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and a chordal accompaniment in the right hand.

PNO.

5 (G dorian)

Detailed description: This block shows bars 5 and 6. The lead part continues with eighth notes and a long note. The piano accompaniment maintains the eighth-note bass line and chordal accompaniment, with a change in the right-hand chords to reflect the G Dorian mode.

PNO.

9 D⁷(F \sharp) E \flat 7(F \sharp) D⁷(F \sharp) G⁷

Detailed description: This block shows bars 9 and 10. The lead part has a long note in bar 9 and a quarter note in bar 10. The piano accompaniment features a more complex chordal accompaniment in the right hand, with specific chords indicated above the staff: D7(F#), Eb7(F#), D7(F#), and G7.

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 B \flat 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

1 A G F G G F G

5 B G m C G m Am 9 D 7

9 A G F G G F G

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

1 **A** G F G G

4 F G **B** Gm C

7 Gm Am⁹ D⁷ **A** G

10 F G G F G