

ACTIVITY FOUR: Solfegging the Jazz Solo

63 On Audio track 63, listen to me translate the “la, la, la’s” into meaningful solfege syllables. Before singing along with me, it might be helpful to first write in the solfege syllables on the rhythmic template provided below. (This template was originally used as a reading activity in Chapter 7.) I’ve also included chord symbols to the template so you can associate the melodic notes with the harmony. Remember, Miles is often “playing over the changes,” so knowing the chords up front gives you a head start. Ready, read, sing!

The musical notation consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are written on a treble clef staff. Above the notes are chord symbols. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the first measure of the first staff. The notes are: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), Bb5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter). The chord symbols are: CMaj7, D7, E7, D7, CMaj7, D7, E7, A7(b9), D, D/C, Bb7, A7(b9), D7, G7, CMaj7, G7, CMaj7, D7, E7, D7, CMaj7, D7, E7, A7(b9), D, D/C, Bb7, A7(b9), D7, G7, CMaj7.

Tip: I’m singing in the key of C, though Miles’ original solo was played in the key of F major. I had to transpose the key in order to sing the solo in my comfortable vocal range. We’ll talk more about transposition in Activity Six.

ACTIVITY FIVE: Analyzing the Solo

Now, write the 16-bar solo in the key of C; it’s your job to translate the solfege syllables into the actual key of C because copyright laws forbid me to do it (can’t publish this book from the jailhouse!). Take the time to analyze Miles’ solo (exercising the 50% “brain-training” of ear training). Consider—at times his solo might relate to the melody, to the sound of the overall key, or to the individual chord changes. Also pay attention to how he develops his ideas, using repetition along the way. A good thing is worth repeating...