

## “ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE” – ALL THREE MINOR 7TH CHORDS, AND MUCH MORE

As of this writing, the second-most recorded standard of all time is “All the Things You Are,” by Jerome Kern. You can look it up on [Jazzstandards.com](http://Jazzstandards.com), which is one of the best resources for information about songs played and recorded by jazz musicians. “All the Things You Are” has a relatively simple, singable melody, which has just the right amount of unpredictability built in, and the chord progression is brilliant in its balance of functional harmony and surprising twists and turns. It has been a source of inspired blowing for four generations of musicians so far. It’s become such a durable vehicle for improvisation because, on the one hand, it can be approached relatively simply, and on the other, there is ample opportunity for a soloist to reinterpret the harmony on the fly without losing the shape of the form.

Our simplest approach to the first 8 bars looks like this:

Key of Ab major

F<sup>-7</sup>                      Bb<sup>-7</sup>                      Eb<sup>7</sup>                      Ab<sup>Δ7</sup>

Key of C major

Db<sup>Δ7</sup>                      D<sup>-7</sup>                      G<sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>Δ7</sup>

With that in mind, we still have to keep our place in the music. The spot that will show whether we are playing the progression with the band, or just reacting to what we hear after the fact, will be the change of key from bar 5 to bar 6. So as we learn to play “All the Things You Are,” one of the first things to do is to find some good lines to make the transition over that bar line.

Here are a few examples:

Db<sup>Δ7</sup>                      D<sup>-7</sup>                      G<sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>Δ7</sup>

Db<sup>Δ7</sup>                      D<sup>-7</sup>                      G<sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>Δ7</sup>

Db<sup>Δ7</sup>                      D<sup>-7</sup>                      G<sup>7</sup>                      C<sup>Δ7</sup>

Try putting on a recording of the tune, or a play-along track, and count through the first four bars. Then play one of these phrases starting in the 5th bar, and see what it feels like to ‘make the changes’ as you pass from the key of Ab into the key of C. Then, our next step toward playing the chords more thoughtfully is to emphasize the chord tones, and find melodies that use them. Here are a few examples from the tradition. Jimmy Heath, from his recording, *On the Trail* (1:15):

That E natural that Jimmy plays in the first bar is not in the key of Ab—we’ll get to an explanation of that in the next section of the book. (In Chapter 10, on melodic minor, if you can’t wait...) Our goal in these ‘setup’ chapters is to understand how the chords and scales fit together, and work together. We’re adding things one at a time, so you don’t get swamped with too many possibilities all at once.

On a record he made with Gigi Gryce, called *Gigi Gryce Quintet/Sextet Vol. 3*, Clifford Brown starts his solo out like this (2:20):

Check out how Clifford adjusts his melody to fit the changes, and how he anticipates the changes by landing on the ‘and’ of 4 in the first and second bars.

Here’s an example where Paul Desmond is clearly treating the F-7 chord as a VI-7. This is from the album *Two of a Mind*, with Gerry Mulligan, and the F-7 chord in question is the first bar after the bridge in Desmond’s first chorus (1:09).

And here’s another example, from Chris Potter’s tour de force solo recording from a master class. This is not a traditionally released recording, but it is widely available on the internet, so I’ll trust you to search it up. The phrase happens at the top of his fifth chorus:

Those examples show the relatively simple approach of staying in the home key over the first five bars of the A section. Now, as we look at the B section let’s see how Dexter Gordon takes some liberties with the changes—improvising with the harmony in real time.