

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes - Session 2 (Bb)

Session 2 is based on the A section of the piece. As is common in standard compositions, the 2nd time has a slightly different, more resolved ending, reflected in both the harmony and melody. The melody is on the top line, with the root note on the bottom line. I recommend practising both of these separately and in pairs or groups if possible. Try to focus on the line that you are not playing and hear how they connect at various cadence points.

A useful 1st step towards interpreting a melody is to work on ways to manipulate the rhythm. I find it helpful to focus either on anticipating or delaying particular phrases or notes. The example below shows how we can delay the melody, either by a whole beat (Dina Washington makes great use of this in her version) or by half a beat (Harry Belafonte does this a lot in his version).

Most people, myself included find it much more difficult to do the opposite, that is to anticipate the melody rather than delay it. Perhaps for this reason I think it is probably employed less frequently, however it is a very effective technique. You may find it easy to practise anticipation and delay intuitively, without devising a strict exercise, however if it's something you find more difficult, try exercises such as the one below, where I have anticipated the 1st 4 bars by 1 beat, and the 2nd 4 bars bar 1 quaver.

There is of course many more ways we can develop melodic interpretation, but this is a good start. Turning our attention now to the harmonic movement, I suggest dividing the section into 4 separate cadences.

Cadence 1 (bars 1 & 2) is a I VI II V (perhaps the most common sequence in Jazz)

Cadence 2 (bars 3 & 4) is a modulation from I to IV (another very common movement)

Cadence 3 (bars 5 & 6) and Cadence 4 (bars 7 & 8) are both III VI II V sequences. III is a substitution for I and has a very similar function.

This leaves the #IV^o chord as the point of most harmonic interest. It is also the only point at which the melody departs from the home home key. Below I have outlined some alternative ways of describing this cadence.

33 B^o A⁻⁷

35 E^{7(b9#13)} A⁻⁷

37 G^{7(b9#13)} C⁶

39 C^{#7(b9#13)} F^{Δ9}

41 B^{b7(b9#13)} A[∅]

Notice how the root notes of the dominant chords listed above make up a diminished arpeggio, and that in fact these chords are all made up of the same upper structure, but with a different root note. They are all followed by a different version of the III- chord, but where possible the root note has been changed to create a cycle of 4ths movement from the preceding chord. This may appear to be finding complicated ways of describing the same, simple cadence. However I find it helpful to look at this cadence in this way as it is a good trigger for discovering new ways to think about the tension and release between the 2 chords. It also emphasizes the various voice leading options between the chords.