

## Extract of Mike Stern's Solo on Cole Porter's "I Love You"

(Transcribed by Joff England)

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notes and chords are as follows:

- Staff 1: Measures 1-4. Chords: G<sup>ø</sup>7, C7, FΔ, FΔ.
- Staff 2: Measures 5-8. Chords: Gm, C7, FΔ, FΔ, G<sup>ø</sup>7.
- Staff 3: Measures 9-12. Chords: C7, Bm7, E7, AΔ, Bm7, E7.
- Staff 4: Measures 13-16. Chords: AΔ, Gm7, C7, FΔ.
- Staff 5: Measures 17-20. Chords: FΔ, A<sup>ø</sup>7, D7, D7.



Inspired by Mike Stern's belief in the importance of transcribing regularly I've done my own transcription of the opening few bars of his solo on Cole Porter's 'I Love You' from Mike's fabulous release on Atlantic records 'Give and Take'. This first track on the album features him in the company of Jack DeJohnette, (drums) and John Pattituci (bass) and is one of my favourites.

In Example 1 Mike begins by clearly stating an Fmaj 7 tonality over a II V I in the same key.

Ex. 1 G<sup>ø</sup>7 C7

Example 1 shows the first two measures of the solo. The first measure is a whole note G<sup>ø</sup>7 chord, and the second measure is a whole note C7 chord. The notes are G4, Bb4, D5, and F5.

Mike then introduces a tasteful chromatic addition (Ex. 2) anticipating a flat 9 over C7 between bars 5 and 6 (don't forget this tempo is a punishing one, well in excess of 230bpm).

Ex. 2 Gm C7 FΔ

Example 2 shows measures 5 and 6. Measure 5 contains a Gm chord (Bb4, D5, F5) followed by a chromatic line: Gb4, Ab4, Bb4, C5. Measure 6 contains a C7 chord (Eb4, G4, Bb4, C5).

Mike then takes the interval of a 6th (Dflat to Bflat) from measure 5 and uses this as a springboard for a longer line starting at measure 8, which incorporates some imaginative syncopations that drive the momentum of the solo onwards.



In measure 17 Mike states a strong motif and develops this nicely through the next few bars, maintaining a connected narrative, these aren't just disconnected lines and this is something to really aim for in your own playing, see Example 4.



With so many changes occurring quickly in jazz it is very easy to find oneself panicking and grabbing at notes almost randomly, so try to aim for a 'theme and variations' throughout your solo.

When you're next practising take a short phrase, perhaps from the melody of the song you're working on, and hang on to that motif as the chords change, altering the idea to fit the harmony.

This is a real challenge, but ultimately a valuable skill to develop in your playing. It can draw the listener in as you attempt to tell a story through your solo, and all the great players have this ability in bucketloads.

Mike plays so elegantly through these changes and effortlessly builds momentum and interest throughout this short extract, with some great syncopation alongside some real 'in the pocket' swinging 8th notes. His use of the offbeat in the opening few bars is irresistible, particularly from bar 8 onwards where he continually avoids hitting the downbeat. When he finally arrives on the first beat at measure 13 he creates a strong and musically satisfying effect.

I really hope this transcription of Mike Stern's playing inspires you to take some time to analyse and transcribe a favourite solo or extract of your own. As Mike outlines in our interview, playing through your own transcriptions regularly is a great way to absorb the language of jazz and begin to develop finding your own voice, which of course takes time and patience. I've deliberately not put this into guitar TAB to force you to really analyse what's going on here between the melodic and harmonic material. Stick with it, it's well worth the effort. I do hope you have as much fun looking at this solo as I have.

### **Listening Library**

All of Mike Stern's albums showcase his wonderful ability on the instrument. I've listed a few of my current favourites below.

- Give and Take (1999)
- Standards and Other Songs (1992)
- Play (1999) featuring Mike alongside John Scofield and Bill Frisell
- Jigsaw (1989)
- Big Neighbourhood (2009)

- Also check out some of Mike's favourites.
- Joe Pass 'Intercontinental'
- Wes Montgomery 'Smokin' at the Half Note'
- Sonny Rollins 'The Bridge' (featuring Jim Hall)

