

Index for Equinox lessons.

Lesson: This lesson covers the John Coltrane tune "Equinox" as well as Gerri's Blues (Pat Martino). My initial question was how to approach a song that stays on one chord for a long time. This opened up a discussion on a modal approach or a "cadence" approach to a song.

Date: 1989 or 1990

Location: Emily's apartment at the time.

Part 1:

Lesson starts with Emily tuning up to some very interesting chords.

1:00 We warm up playing Joy Spring

Joel plays the first melody while Emily plays rhythm.

Joel takes the first solo - Emily is very encouraging! Too encouraging actually - she prompts me to take a second solo, which was lost when I accidentally recorded over this section. Unfortunately lost Emily's solo.

3:30 - Emily plays the last melody.

4:20 - Emily emphasizes the timing of the melody in one section.

6:50 - I ask Emily how to approach a song that stays on one chord for a long time, for example, Equinox by John Coltrane (in the Real Book).

9:30 - Emily starts discussing modal chords, e.g. playing an Ebmaj7#11 over a C-7

10:00 - Definition of Modal - "not going to any cadences"

12:00 - Emily talks a little about the "characteristic" notes of a chord, uses the phrygian mode as an example.

13:00 Emily plays some walking bass while I play some different chords

17:00 - modal playing is simpler - e.g. McCoy Tyner

19:00 - Emily switches and starts approaching Equinox with cadences. She begins by throwing in a G7b13 because it is the 5th of C-7 - it "approaches" the C-7. Emily proceeds to re-harmonize Equinox (see the scan of the Real Book chart).

22:15 - Emily plays a beautiful solo over the re-harmonized chords. You can hear how she arpeggiates each chord so you can really feel the changes.

27:00 - Emily talks about approaching a tune modally, indicating that you take all of the chords available in C Minor and mix them up. See the accompanying Modal Additions pdf to see how she takes a C Minor Scale and builds the chords by stacking thirds. So in the Key of C Minor, you get C-7, Dbmaj7, Eb7, F-7, G-7b5, AbMaj7, Bb-7

28:00 - Emily introduces concept of Modal Interchange - substituting different modes, e.g. playing C Phrygian mode (and modal chords) over the C-7.

Part II

Emily starts by spelling out A Aeolian scale and harmonizes it

Emily explains a bit about modal interchange - how composers borrow notes from different modes. I didn't really get it - if you do, email me :-)

3:45 - Emily starts playing over Equinox with all these modal additions - it's really out there. Exactly what I was asking her about! She always nails it!

5:15 - the Cadence approach (see changes in Real Book Scan) - approach every chord from a Dominant chord

6:15 - Emily wrote down which jazz minor scales she uses for improv on the Real Book Equinox chart.

9:30 - Emily plays around over the changes.

11:00 - Emily shows how soloing works the same.

13:30 - Superimposing other chords with arpeggios on top of C Minor. E.G. Emily plays a Bb melody over a C minor.

14:00 - superimpose a Bb Minor over C Minor. Bb minor comes from the phrygian

16:00 - I try playing Bb Minor over C Minor.

17:00 More examples from Emily

20:00 - I ask about Gerri's Blues. The notes are a little confusing because it ends abruptly with "A Harmonic" and then goes right into Gerri's Blues. See the chord diagram of the rootless G7 (8th fret). Pay attention to this chord voicing because it really defines the sound of the tune Gerri's Blues!

23:40 - see the diagram of the two voicings - G7 to G Augmented

25:00 - Emily improvises over Gerri's Blues a little.

27:00 - Emily re-harmonizes Gerri's Blues a little - superimposing Two Five One progressions (see the Gerri's Blues Chart how the re-harmonization is written below the chord)

Part III

1:30 - Emily improves ii V licks over Gerri's blues.

2:20 - Emily indicates that "this is an art that is not being done any more". That line always stuck with me and I always considered myself proud to be part of the tradition.

4:30 - Emily suggests I work out a solo to Gerri's Blues for the next lesson.

5:40 - Emily solos over Gerri's Blues. Some really fine examples at a reasonable tempo.

11:20 - Emily plays the melody of the tune.

We wrap it up. This was my last lesson with Emily and sadly, I would never see her again. In retrospect, this was a monumental lesson and really pulled together all of the concepts we'd been working on over the years. Plus Emily was in a great mood and really open with her playing and teaching.