

Lesson: Metronome - So What

Time: Fall, 1986

Location: Emily's apartment in Manhattan

Description: This lesson covers playing with a metronome, the tune "So What" by Miles Davis and includes a beautiful chord solo of "What are you Doing the Rest of Your Life?"

We start the lesson with me playing an Emily solo over the Bb blues that I had figured out from our last lesson. What strikes me listening to this is that Emily is humming some of the phrases while I play them, which tells me that she's really worked out a lot of these ideas in advance, or else she can tell by my fingering what's about to come next. Or probably both.

We start talking about our last lesson - Guide Tones. I play 3 choruses of a solo she played at my last lesson that I figured out. The solo is over the re-harmonized Bb Blues.

Emily coaches me on developing a really solid rhythm and lists the players who are solid: Wes, Joe Pass, etc.

4:00 - Emily turns on the metronome - note that we synch ourselves so that the metronome is clicking on the 2 and 4 - Emily shows how to get into the groove.

5:00 - we play it again w/ the metronome. I'm still rushing and dragging at the end. Wish I could have a do-over 20 years later! I'd nail it for sure.

6:00 - again. A little better.

7:00 - Emily makes me keep going. She's tougher than my wrestling coach in Junior High school! (But not as tough as my Kung Fu teacher for 15 years - see <http://homepage.mac.com/silatnyc/>)

8:00 - Emily takes a solo. It is briefly interrupted for some reason. Such a classic sound.

9:20 - So this is interesting. Emily plays some octaves and it's the exact same lick that she plays on Gerri's Blues on the Together Album with Larry Coryell! Cool to see how she quotes herself!

11:00 - Emily talks a little about how she sees time as a wave and then talks about how various musicians play in respect to that wave.

11:45 - Emily gives an example of rushing, playing on the beat, and dragging it. "It's a real Art" she says

13:00 - Emily tells me to start focusing on my timing. This didn't sink in enough. If I was smart, I would have bought a metronome and started practising with it regularly. I didn't quite hear that I was rushing and dragging. Now, I'm smarter. Kids - don't let this happen to you!

18:00 - Emily is very encouraging and talks about playing 16th notes over the changes.

19:00 - Emily plays a solo using 16th notes over a really slow metronome beat.

20:00 - She plays a cool Jazz Minor lick that starts on an augmented arpeggio - a Pat Martino kind of approach. Some killer bluesy stuff follows.

22:00 - I ask about when the harmonic minor scale is used.

23:00 - Emily plays a solo version of the tune "So What" with some exceptional soloing

27:00 - She makes a good point in passing - when you use a mode to solo over a chord, you want to emphasize the mode's "characteristic" notes. So if you are playing a D Dorian, even though they are the same notes as a C

Major Scale, you emphasize different notes. A D Dorian's characteristic note is the B natural - the major 6th.

29:00 - a few examples on how to vamp on D minor

29:30 - we play it a bit together.

30:50 - some nice voicings of the D minor vamp Fmaj7#11

32:00 - a discussion and some examples of the Lydian mode -

35:00 - we glance over each mode and give an example of when to use it. The Dorian and Aeolian modes are interchangeable, although Emily remarks that Dorian is more "jazzy". She also mentions that you can use a harmonic minor scale over a minor chord.

37:00 - time for a new song!

38:20 - Emily suggests "What are you doing the Rest of your Life". She plays thru the chord solo she wants to teach me. I never did learn this arrangement, but it is beautiful.

44:00 - excellent advice on how to put together a nice chord solo.

45:00 - Emily goes through the song and shows me her arrangement. See accompanying PDF for the Real Book Scan of the song, including Emily's notes. In the scan, she circles where you play a chord.

Part II

0:50 - Emily took the Real Book chart of "What are you Doing.." and wrote in some chord substitutions and circled some chords. The circles show where the melody and chord are played together and everything else is single melody. So wherever you see a circle in this song, you should be playing a chord which usually has the melody on top.

3:00 - Angela, Emily's next student comes in and says hello. She sits and listens to the rest of my lesson.

5:00 - Note the "B" section where Emily writes in the Pedal.

8:00 - Emily describes one chord voicing as "her pride and joy".

14:00 - Emily's got a little stamp that prints out a block diagram so she can write dots to diagram chords.

14:45 - Emily plays the chord solo one more time.