

'YOU'D BE SO NICE' MELODY

Words and
Arranged

Performance Notes

'You'd be so Nice to Come Home to'

Long a favorite vehicle for improvisation for Jazzers and Gypsy Jazzers alike. It's shifting light and dark harmony, beautiful melody and lyrics make it a real stand out. In order to really make progress towards becoming a better Gypsy Jazz or Jazz player, it's important to break down the pieces that you want to play. I probably used to think that it all sort of happened by magic, that you just got inspired and practiced and studied and then you'd go out and be amazing, [of course it doesn't work quite like that in real life!] If you do this long enough you can see what gives players problems and what helps to work thru the pitfalls.

I have found that breaking songs like this down a great help.

I hope that some of these concepts and strategies will help you and I think that you'll see that a lot of the ideas can be applied to other songs. As I've said many times really knowing the melody and changes, and being able to navigate the changes is really important.

[The melody ties all the changes together of course].

That means that if someone were listening to you soloing on the piece by yourself, they ought to be able to hear the changes.

[You've probably heard this before, but it's worth repeating].

One of the most common problems that I hear in beginning players is not really being able to run the changes well.

Now on to the piece;

I've seen it published in Fmi and Gmi, Ami is a good key for guitar of course, so I used that.

First off, it's fairly common for players to use one of changes for melody and slightly different chord changes for soloing.

[A lot of times this isn't mentioned in the sheet music or chord chart/grid. A good teacher can help you with this sort of thing].

I think I've seen more bad changes for this song than many others, [probably because there are a lot of possibilities, and a lot of unschooled players posting on the internet!]

For example, in measures 29-30

the changes that fit the melody are D7-D7b9 - G7+5-G7, two beats each. The melody descends in 1/2 steps from 'E' natural-'Eb'- held for two beats over the G7 [making it a #5], then moving to 'D' natural before resolving to a C natural. Most straight-ahead players would likely play a measure of D9 and a bar of G7, or a bar of D9 followed by Dmi7-G7 two beats each. [I've heard players use D7-Db7, one meas. each, which works because Db7 is the tritone substitution for G7]. You can get ideas about this from hearing what other players do, [which BTW, is better than just going to the internet and printing out the 1st set of changes that you see!] It's important to listen and try different changes so that you can find what works best.

I'd add that the only way to really become a better player is by spending time really listening to and transcribing the solos of the greats. Not just Gypsy Jazzers, and not just guitarists. [For that matter, listen to some vocal versions as well].

The changes to the beginning of the piece are pretty simple, basically Ami with a ii-V leading back to A minor where the harmonic center rests for 2 bars, followed by a ii-V7-1 in Fmaj. It then works its way back to Ami in bars 9,10 and 11. [You could basically think of the harmony in bars 9-11 as the V7 of Ami, which is E7. The dark 'Gypsy Dominant' E7b9 sound fits well here], [Keep in mind that a Bmi7b5 is very close to an E7b9, [think F dim chord over an 'E' bass note].

If you leave out the E bass note, the main difference in the two changes are the A natural, [7th], of the ii chord which moves to the G#, which is 3rd of the E7 chord. [G#-A natural are the leading tone to the tonic of the key of A minor, which shows up in the melody and in the solo study quite a bit]. [See examples after melody].

The harmony at bars 11-14 can be tricky, kind of a bluesy sound where the b5 of the key is introduced to the melody. I usually play A minor for bar 12, Ami6 or F#mi7b5, [an inversion of Ami6] for bar 13 and, F7 or F9 for bar 14, followed by Bmi7b5 and E7 for 15 and 16.

[The original change for bar 14 is a B7, probably not commonly used for the melody or solos]. The 2nd half of the piece, [starting at bar 17], is pretty much the same as the 1st half, [the melody at 20-24 slightly different than the 1st statement, in rhythm and pitch. [This moves towards the penultimate and ending parts of the tune, less static period than the 1st time, and the rhythm is different because the words are. The quarter note triplets at bar 20 are part of the phrase 'und-er an August Moon, burning above.' Yet another reason to learn the lyrics to the songs that you play!]

Another part where there's a lot of different changes is bars 25-26, where the song goes from an F# diminished to C Major, [relative major]. Some players use F# dim to E minor, or B7 to Eminor. If you take a minute and play through the above choices, you'll see that they are pretty similar. [An Emi with a 'C' in the bass is a CMajor7]. Bars 27-28 may seem a bit tricky too, with a few harmonic choices. Basically it's either Bmi7b5-E7, 2 beats each to Ami, or E7 for four beats to Ami. [You could think Fdim, Bdim, etc. to Ami if that helps]. If you've done your rote memorization homework regarding Gypsy Dominant substitutions, then you'll be fine. Keep in mind that it won't happen by magic if you haven't really ingrained the concepts and sounds, and where your hands should be, etc, then you'll have some trouble.

You don't have time to think about what you should do in the heat of the moment. [Mark Levine covers this topic quite well in 'The Jazz Piano Book,' Sher Music. I have the 1st two books, and they are filled with useful concepts, useful for any player].

The song ends in 'C' [the relative Major, basically going from Dark to light, since it starts in 'A' Minor]. A good way to help to learn to build interesting solos on a tune like this is to start with memorizing the melody. When you sing or hum it over the changes, you'll get a good feel for where the piece is moving and where it's at rest.

It usually sounds good to bring out the dissonant harmonic points, and you can play less when they resolve. If you follow the melody of the song, [even unconsciously], you will get a good idea of where to begin and end your phrases. [Knowing where to let the music breathe]. It's probably easier for a horn player to develop good phrasing than a guitarist, since we can pick a zillion notes without taking a breath, and we've all heard that done! [If you look at solos by Charlie Parker or Django you'll see how well they use space. You can usually say more with less].

You can use harmonic generalization at parts where the tune hovers around the V7, and by the same token you can think of bars 12-14 and basically playing in the key of A minor and avoiding the 'E' natural for the F7 chord in bar 14, and of course the Eb suggests a 'A' blues sound. You want to be able to play off of all the chord shapes of course and also review the 5th mode of the Harmonic minor scale, if you

need to, [see notes after the melody]. Work out some nice ideas for the break after the melody leading to the solo. Having some ideas of what can be played there will go a long way towards avoiding freezing up or stumbling. If you've done your homework then you'll be fine. Please feel free to email me with any questions, and good luck!

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Recommended listening;

Biel Ballester Trio 'Gypsy Jazz Live in London

Philly Sax great Larry McKenna from the CD "Profiles"

Am Bm7^b5 E7 Am Gm9

1 Gtr I

5 7 8 7 5 4 5 5 (5) 4 5 5

C7 Fmaj7 F6 Bm7^b5 E7 Bm7^b5 E7 Am

7 3 5 3 5 (5) 7 5 6 4 5 4 7 10 7 8 10 11

F#m7^b5 F7 Bm7^b5 E7 Am Bm7^b5 E7

14 12 8 11 8 7 7 7 5 7 8 7 5 4

Am Gm9 C7 Fmaj7add6 F#°

20 5 5 (5) 5 6 8 5 8 5 8 5 5 7 (7) 5 6 10

Cmaj7 Bm7^b5 E7^b9 Am D9 D7^b9 G9+5 G9 C6add9 Bm7^b5 E7

27 8 10 7 10 8 10 8 10 12 11 (11) 10 8 (8)

34

Bm7⁷5 E7⁷9 Bm7⁷5 E7 Bm7⁷5 E7

root postion inversion 'A' harmonic minor, E-E

T 5 4 etc. 7 7
A 6 6 6 6 6 6
B 9 9 9 9 7 6

(0)

7 8 6 7 9 10 7 9

38

C Bm7⁷5 E7⁷9 Am

'A' harm. minor, B-B solo break

T 15 14 13 12 15 13 12 14 13
A 0 2 3 1 2 6 7 9 15 14 12 15 14 12 11 12
B 2 3 7 8 5 7 8

41

another solo break example, same changes

T 1 3 1 0 3 1 0 2 1
A 3 1 0 3 1 3 2 0 3 2
B 3 2 0 3 2 0