

Improvisation Tips

See file "Warm_Like_Us_leadsheet.pdf"

The chord progression of "Warm Like Us" is based on the three-tonic system used by John Coltrane in "Giant Steps," and also in the bridge of "Have You Met Miss Jones?" The three key centers, E, A-flat, and C, are each a tritone apart. They divide the octave into three equal parts. Because of this, any one of these keys can serve as a starting or ending point for a song, and the keys can be combined in any order while maintaining a sense of harmonic balance.

It's possible to improvise over the chords to this song using only three major scales: E, A-flat, and C. You'll see from the chord-scale analysis that harmonically the B7 chord near the end is the V7 of E, but can also be heard as VII7 in C, so another possible chord-scale, B Mixolydian Flat 9 Flat 13, is also available at that point. Given the speed with which the chords move, it's usually best to just play C major on the Cmaj7 chord, moving smoothly into E major on the B7 chord.

For soloing, players can try connecting scales by common tones or step-wise motion. For example, the F-sharp of the F#m7 chord can move to the F-natural of the Dm7 chord. For inexperienced improvisers, it might be helpful to write out a few of these connecting points, and practice improvising simple lines that use scales and arpeggios that link with these connecting points.