

Sweet Georgia Brown

Improvistation Theory

Ab Major Scale

Abmaj7

Electric Bass 1

Electric Bass 2

6 F natural minor; relative minor of Ab Major, good for Fmin7

Fm7

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

11 F Mixolydian = F7

F7

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

16 Bb Mixolydian = Bb7

Bb7

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

If you're comfortable using the scales over the chord changes, now try developing a motif through the different scales. Start with a melody fragment. Think more about the rhythm and worry less about the correct note combination. Try to apply the rhythm over different notes of each scale. Here is an example of a simple improv using the first part of the melody.

F7

42

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

B \flat 7

46

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

E \flat 7

50

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

A \flat maj7 **B \flat m7** **E \flat 7** **A \flat maj7** **Gm7(b5)** **C7**

54

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

This is technically correct, but obviously repetitive. Without any variation the motif gets stale pretty quickly. Now lets add some scale runs along with this motif. I will vary the placement of both the solo melody motif and the scale fragments. It should feel more like an improvised jazz solo

F7

58

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

B \flat 7

62

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

E \flat 7

66

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

A \flat maj7

70

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

The second solo pass sound better, but also has a limited number of options. We are using one motif and scale runs within one octave shapes on the fingerboard. Completely adequate material to work with, but is lacking the next gear to push musically. The next steps would be either;

- add a second octave to the scales
- memorize other melody motifs
- create new motifs/patterns from the scales
- use the chord's arpeggio to isolate stronger melodic lines

As a bass player the last option is probalby the best choice. Isolating the arpeggio (chord tones) is a solid foundation of walking bass lines. Many early bass solos are walking bass lines with added rhythms. Or to put another way, a walking bass line on steroids.

A walking bass line on Sweet Georgia Brown. Especially notice that every beat one has a chord tone. Refer back to the first page of this PDF and the arpeggios at the end of the scales.

F7

74

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

Bb7

78

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

Eb7

82

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

Sweet Georgia Brown

86

A^bmaj7 **B^bm7** **E^b7** **A^bmaj7** **Gm7(b5)** **C7**

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

Now I'm going to take some liberty with this walking bass line and add rhythm. I will add eighth notes and eighth note rests; essentially pulling the contour of this bass line into differing lengths. You will also see added accidentals (chromatic passing notes) and other scale notes being wedged in. The most important thing to see is despite these adjustments the beginning and end of phrases still contains the walking bass line from before.

F7

90

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

B^b7

94

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

E^b7

98

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

Sweet Georgia Brown

7

102

A \flat maj7 **B \flat m7** **E \flat 7** **A \flat maj7** **Gm7(b5)** **C7**

E.B. 1

E.B. 2

The musical score consists of two staves, E.B. 1 and E.B. 2, in a 7/8 time signature. E.B. 1 is a melodic line in the bass clef. E.B. 2 is a bass line with fret numbers (0, 1, 3, 4) and a 7-fret barre. Chord changes are indicated above the staff: A \flat maj7, B \flat m7, E \flat 7, A \flat maj7, Gm7(b5), and C7. The piece ends at measure 102.

This analytical process of scales and motifs can be applied over the rest of the tune. The hard part of improvisation is that it takes practice to improvise well, just like anything else. Your first improv attempts might be rough or lack the feeling you hear on recordings. You may also lack confidence in what you're playing is correct. Another outcome is playing correct notes, but wondering if it was actually musically good or not. The most important thing you can do to help your improvisation as a bass player is to walk bass lines really well. Bass solos do not have to be as complex as other instrument solos. Usually we are expected to keep time for the band while we solo, which is very difficult to do while focusing on improvisation. Put the time in, trust the long term process, and use your ears. Sometimes the first step is recognizing what sounds bad before we can make the good.