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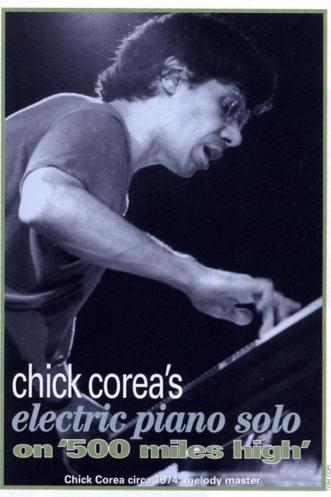


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woodshed

Chick Corea's electric piano solo on "500 Miles High" is a natural outgrowth of his melodic vocabulary. Recently reissued on Return To Forever's *Light As A Feather* (Verve), Corea's solo is framed in the group's fresh approach to Latin grooves and



filled with the language of a modern approach to improvised lines, reinforcing the pianist's melodic inventiveness as a composer and improviser.

Corea makes extensive use of pentatonic scales. He combines two scales closely related to the Gm7 harmony in the opening statement by playing a C pentatonic fragment in bars 2 and 3 followed by an F pentatonic in measures 3 and 4. Note the Ab pentatonic line in bar 8. Corea builds the scale on the third of the E7 altered chord, the leading tone of the Am7 chord that follows. Other examples of pentatonic scales occur in measures 5–6, 9–10, 19–22, 38 and 42.

Corea uses chromaticism to build tension in bars 25 and 26, where whole-step relationships ascend chromatically and ornamented approach tones and passing tones are used extensively. Note the passing tones on beat three of measure 23 and

the approach tones in bars 31 and 32. Measures 40 and 41 also contain similar figures.

Corea balances the chromaticism and pentatonic lines with clearly arpeggiated chord outlines (bars 7, 14, 23, 24, 42, 45 and 50) as well as with obvious chord/scale combinations. The line in bars 35-36 is based on the dominant diminished scale. descending sequence in measure 58 is based on the G dorian scale.

Corea's trademark rhythmic sophistication is evident throughout the solo, particularly in bars 46-49, where repeated notes sound like single-stroke drum rolls. In measures

51–54 and 59–60, the dotted eighth-note value created by accents and ties sets up a polyrhythm against the quarter-note pulse. Although the complex density of notes in bars 25–26 and 46–49 requires some notational approximation, Corea's rhythmic precision and the way his lines hook up with Airto Moreira's ride cymbal are remarkable.

Corea's solo represents an imaginative, balanced and compositional use of post-bebop vocabulary.

Don Glanden is an assistant professor at University of the Arts in Philadelphia. His second CD, *Only Believe*, is available on Cadence Jazz Records. Glanden has performed with Ernie Watts and Donald Byrd.

by don glanden