

Developing a Motif with Major Pentatonic

In order for a soloist to develop interesting ideas "on the fly", one needs to have enough tools in her/ his tool box. A *motif* is a self contained melodic and rhythmic idea, not just a group of notes. It can be two or three notes or as long as a couple of measures. This short musical idea, can be developed throughout your solo easily especially if it is not too complicated.

To accomplish this you should:

- listen and record Call and Response ideas
- transcribe what we are hearing
- understand melodic phrasing
- How to use a singular motif throughout different chord changes
- Create and record your own musical idea through a 12 bar progression

Exercise:

Write down using only letters, a simple motif and transpose from C to F then G.

Only change pitch along the way to fit the new key.
Stay within each scale as you go.

The HOW:

First try and think about each note of the C Major Pentatonic scale as having a number.

C D E G A C

1 2 3 5 6 1 Let's use Roman numerals though, because that is very common amongst players. I ii iii V VI I

Of course we are using the scale name at the end (C) also.

It's usually pleasing to your ear and the listeners to start the measure and at least end your solo line sometimes on I.

For example Are you Sleeping nursery rhyme motif begins with CDEC CDEC

Besides changing pitches, there are several other ideas that we will cover extensively later, but for now here are some other ideas that help create a simple motif.

Repetition

Variation

Space

Tension and Release (maybe waiting longer before you end on the I)

Now try and transfer Are You Sleeping to a different Major Pentatonic Scales

F Pentatonic is F G A C D F

FGAF FGAF

G Pentatonic is G A B D E G

GABG GABG

Use this technique to not only develop a motif, but be able to transpose it into other chords