

"Straight, No Chaser" Bill Frisell



By Douglas Baldwin

E=MC². *Boom!* Physics as you know it changes. Thelonious Monk and the tritone substitution. *Bang!* Jazz as you know it changes. Bill Frisell blows away the doors of perception on this Paul Motian tribute to the Einstein of jazz piano. But while it's easy to over-intellectualize Monk's tune, remember that this was a dude who drew from stride, ragtime, and the blues, and who often jumped up from the keys to dance in the middle of a performance. Similarly, Frisell

takes both the oblique road of far-flung reharmonizations and the *straight* road of country- and rock-driven tones and techniques to arrive at his sound—part 1950s Looney Toon soundtrack, part '60s garage band, and *all* new millennium jazz. Be sure to check out the head and original chords of "Straight, No Chaser" [Fig. 1].

LET F7=B7

Frisell's very first chord, the angular F7alt, can be seen as a tritone substitution, the musical equivalent of the formula for the atom

bomb. Here's how to cook it up: When you want some surprising harmonic motion in a chord progression, look to the chord that is a tritone (#4 or b5) away. Alter that chord so that it shares one or more notes with the original, and—*kablooey!*—a musical mushroom cloud appears. In Frisell's hands, the opening F7 becomes F7alt, as he borrows the tritone's root (B), 3rd (D#/Eb), and 13th (G#), while using F7's 3rd (A) as the shared tone (the b7 in B7). The resulting chord can be seen either as an F7 minus the root (F) and 5th (C) and plus the #9 (G#) and #4 (B), or as a B13 with the root (B), 3rd (D#/Eb), 7th (A), and 13th (G#). When the shock waves of pencil scribbling and finger pretzeling subsides, be aware that the melody note (A) above which the chord appears remains intact.

COUNTRY TIME

On the second chord, Frisell signs the harmony with a trademark bend, generating a country-like pedal-steel guitar tone. Many of Monk's "cluster chords" were used

as a way of intimating bent notes, so Frisell's bend makes perfect sense. Use your 4th finger to pull the 2nd string slightly sharp, towards the 1st string. Frisell adds a Monk-approved cluster on the head's final F7#9, too, placing the major 3rd (A) and the #9 (G#) adjacent to each other.

Prior to Einstein, physicists believed that space was a big nothing. Sadly, most jazzers see comping and improvising in the same way, and they simply try to fill the space. Frisell, however, leaves vast stretches of time and space alone, and in doing so says far more with far less. In fact, while comping during the head, he generates sound only about 30 percent of the time. Hoover couldn't

create a sweeter vacuum.

WARPING THE TIME-SPACE CONTINUUM

Frisell's solo comes straight from a '60s-rock jam. Aflame with fuzz, his lines are bluesy and pentatonic with only a passing nod to jazzy chord extensions or chromatic passages. At 2:47, the drum/guitar interplay almost sounds like an outtake from a Grateful Dead jam, as Frisell quotes a blues-rock rhythm cliché before launching into his characteristic atmospheric chord clouds, which he renders with volume-pedal swells. The explosion of collective soloing at 3:17 finds Frisell at his furiest, yet he still sticks to fairly traditional blues and rock note choices. **B**

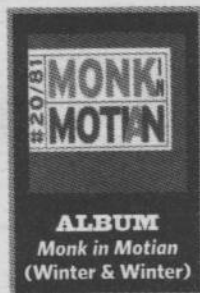


Fig. 1

TONE ZONE

GUITAR 1: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Single-coil/bridge
GAIN: 5
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/5/8
FX: Fuzzbox distortion, volume pedal, digital delay set at 120ms with low feedback

MICHAEL WILSON

STRAIGHT, NO CHASER

As Recorded by Paul Motian (featuring Bill Frisell)
(From the Winter & Winter Recording MONK IN MOTIAN)

Transcribed by Adam Perlmutter

By Thelonious Monk

Head

Fast Jazz ♩ = 128 (♩ = ♩³♩)

Gr. 1 (clean) F7alt B♭13sus4 F7alt B♭13sus4

mf

TAB: 7 9 8 7 | 6 8 8 (8) 1/4 | 7 9 8 (9) 1/4 | 7 9 8 7 1/4 | 6 8 8 6 1/4

F7alt

TAB: 6 8 8 6 | 7 9 8 7 | 7 9 8 7

To Coda

2nd time, Gr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fill 1

C13sus4 F7#9

TAB: 8 10 10 8 | 13 10 13

Rhy. Fill 1
Gr. 1

TAB: 9 11 11 9 1/4

Straight, No Chaser

0:25 Saxophone Solo

1:27 Guitar Solo

64

Bb7
8va

F7
loco

w/ dist.

1 1/4 1/4

Gm7

C7

F7

8va

15-14-15 12-14-15-17 15-17 17-18 15-17-18-20-18-16-15 18 17-20 17 16

loco

Bb7

F7

8va

13 16 1/2 (16) 1/2 (16) 13 16-15-13 15 15 13

Bb7

F7

Am7b5

D7

9 6 6 8-9 8 10 11-10-8-6 7-6-8

Gm7

C7

F7

7 6 8-9-8-6-4 5-4 6 5 4-5 9-8

Straight, No Chaser

B \flat 7 F7

B \flat 7 B \circ 7 F7 Am7 D7

P.M. -----

Gm7 C7 F7

1:57 Saxophone Solo

2:47 Drum/Guitar Solo

F7 B \flat 7 F7

51

dist. off

C7 F7

*vibrato w/ guitar's neck

Straight, No Chaser

Fsus4 **Bb7**

8va --- 7
loco

T.H.

C7 **F7**

3

Harm. ---

Bb7 **F7**

13 16

Bb9sus4 **F7**

let ring ---

let ring ---

C7 **F7**

let ring ---

Straight, No Chaser

3:17 Collective Solo

8va ----- Bb7

F7
loco

dist. on $\frac{1}{2}$

16 (16) 13 16 13

Bb7

8va -----

F7
loco

16 14 15 13 16 15 13 15 13 14 13 14 13 14

C7

1 1/2 1 1

13 14 13 14 13 14 13 14 (14) (14) (14) 13

F7

14 13 10 10 8 13 13 10 10 8 13 10 10 8

Bb7 F7 Bb7

13 10 10 8 13 10 10 8 10 6 7

Straight, No Chaser

F7 C7

grad. bend

Harm. -----|

8 6 8 7 10 10 8 13 7 7

D.C. al Coda
(take repeat)

8va -----| F7 loco

18 14 16 16 14 13 14 14 13 14 15

4:02

⊕ Coda

Free Time

C#13sus4 D7sus4 F7alt

9 11 9 10 12 12 10 13 10 13 13 11 13 11

8va -----| 1/2 let ring Harm. -----|

9 9 9 6 5 5

loco 8va -----| loco 8va

3 0 0 5 5 5 1