

What Happens When The Key Changes

1. “Weaving Through Keys” Chart and chord/scale relationships

WEAVING THROUGH KEYS

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♩ = 100

Chord progressions shown in the notation:

- Staff 1: F# | B | A#MIN | D#MIN
- Staff 2: E | C#MIN | B | A | G#MIN
- Staff 3: G | C | BMIN | EMIN
- Staff 4: F | DMIN | G
- Staff 5: F | C

**These key changes may seem intimidating, but if we compare this to a basic 12-bar blues, the latter would be much harder to solo over — we only change scales/arpeggio shapes every 4 bars here:*

- in the key of F#, we play the modes of F# major
- in the key of E, we play the modes of E major
- in the key of G, we play the modes of G major
- in the key of C, we play the modes of C major

2. Voice-lead (Don't butcher the chord transitions)

- Reminder: voice-leading is when you approach a chord tone from one or two semitones away, in either direction.
- It's super important to make sure that you voice lead well when the key changes.
- When you do this correctly, it doesn't even sound like the key is changing — the transition should be very smooth.
- You don't always have to voice-lead using chord tones from the first chord, but I highly recommend that you land on a chord tone for the next chord.

3. Importance of arpeggios

- You can construct a solo entirely from arpeggios and passing tones — that’s all you need to outline the chord changes well (as long as the voice-leading is good too).
- See analysis of this solo in the video:

Weaving Through Keys

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Standard tuning

♩ = 100

The sheet music is presented in five systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tab staff. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100. The piece is in 4/4 time. The chords are indicated above the staff: F# (measures 1-2), B (measures 2-3), A#m (measures 3-4), D#m (measures 4-5), E (measures 5-6), C#m (measures 6-7), B (measures 7-8), A (measures 8-9), G#m (measures 9-10), G (measures 10-11), C (measures 11-12), Bm (measures 12-13), Em (measures 13-14), F (measures 14-15), Dm (measures 15-16), F (measures 16-17), C (measures 17-18), and G (measures 18-19). The guitar tab shows the fret numbers for each note.

- Arpeggio shapes outline chord changes extremely well, far better than scales. They’re also arguably easier because there are fewer notes.

Conclusion:

1. You know what key each section of the solo is in, which means you can play the modes of that key and successfully improvise a solo. This is one approach.
2. The second and superior approach is to improvise mainly using arpeggios with some passing notes here and there.
3. Whatever approach you choose to go with, make sure you voice-lead well. If you don't pay attention to voice-leading, an instructor will know. It'll be painfully obvious because you'll sound like a hyper noob.

Practice Routine:

1. Film a video improvising over the "Weaving Through Keys" backing track. Post it in the group and title it "Weaving Through Keys: Take 1".
2. Get feedback on your solo and make the necessary adjustments. Then film another improvisation to post in the group and title the video "Weaving Through Keys: Take X".
3. Repeat this process until you get bored with the backing track and/or reach a point of diminishing returns.

When can I move on?

I've said it before and I'll say it again: if you want to be a great improviser, lessons like this are where you should be spending most of your time. So, I recommend you spend a couple weeks improvising over this track and getting feedback, until you reach a point of diminishing returns. Perhaps ever after that you can return to this track later when you get better and take another swing at it.

Why am I doing this?

Because these lessons and this sort of practice is what makes you a great improviser!