

CHAPTER 1 - GETTING STARTED WITH DROP 2

Play Example 1-1 (CD1 Track #1), the first four bars of Kenny Dorham's "Blue Bossa". This is the sound of drop 2.

Ex. 1-1

8va C_{MI}^7 F_{MI}^7

13 12 10 9 8 5 3 14 13

Play Ex. 1-2 (CD1 Track #2), the same four bars of "Blue Bossa", this time with drop 2 tweaked a bit to make it sound more interesting.

Ex. 1-2

8va $C_{MI}^{(MA7)}$ C_{MI}^6 F_{MI}^6

13 12 10 9 7 5 3 14 12

This book covers both the basic version of drop 2, demonstrated in Ex. 1-1 and the more advanced version shown in Ex. 1-2.

Block Chords

The previous fragments are examples of what arrangers and jazz musicians commonly refer to as "block chords". The term refers to having a similarly voiced "block" of harmony under each note of a melody. Notice I said "under each note of a melody". Block chords build the harmony from the top down, rather than from the bass note up, and are usually used in conjunction with another instrument supplying the bass line. This way the melody is the highest, or soprano, voice in the chord. The melody may be the melody of a tune, or part of an improvised solo line, or a background melody accompanying a tune or solo played by someone else.

You need to know at least a little jazz harmony to make sense of this book: chord construction (the notes that make up a given chord), and the II-V-I progression.