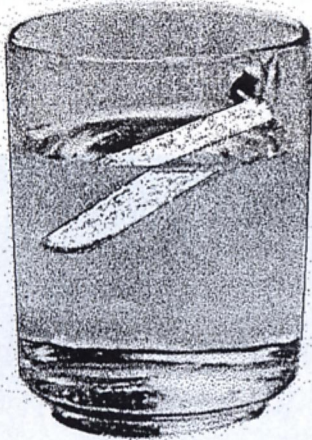


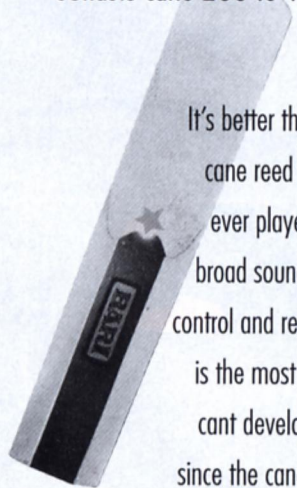
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solo

**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

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.

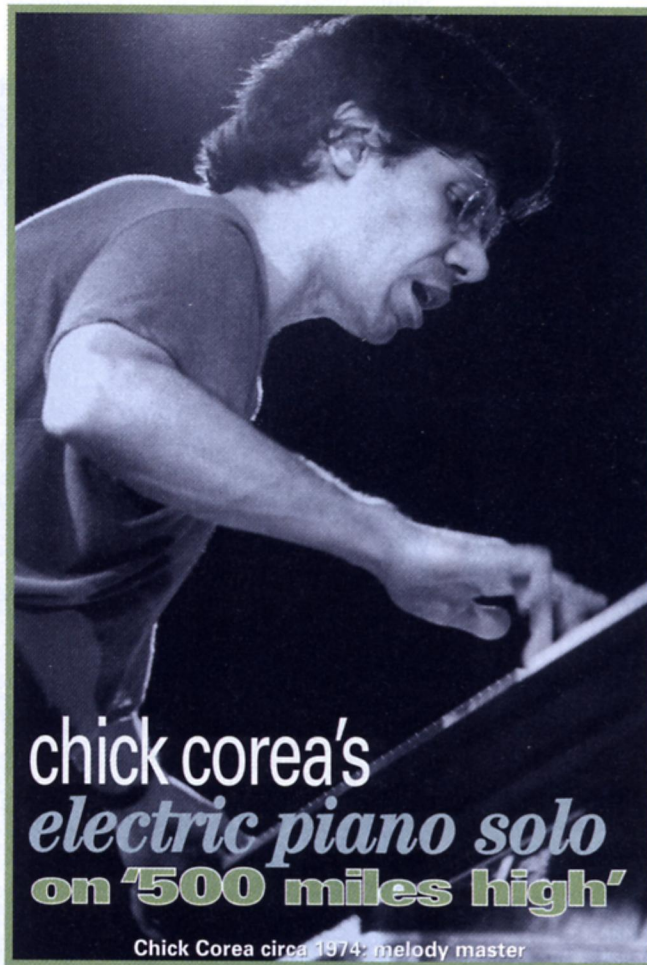
Corea balances the chromaticism and pentatonic lines with clearly arpeggiated chord outlines (bars 7, 14, 23, 24, 42, 45 and 50) as well as with obvious chord/scale combinations. The line in bars 35-36 is based on the dominant diminished scale. The descending sequence in measure 58 is based on the G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

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

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.



Chick Corea circa 1974: melody master

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 A<sup>b</sup> 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.

by don glanden



1 [A] Em7 Gm7

5 Bbmaj7 Bm7(b5)

8 E7 Am7 F#m7(b5)

12 Fm7 Cm7

16 B7Alt

19 [B] Em7 Gm7

22 Bbmaj7

25 Bm7(b5) E7

27 Am7 F#m7(b5)

30 Fm7 Cm7

34 B7Alt

37 [C] Em7 Gm7

40 Bbmaj7

43 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7

46 F#m7(b5) Fm7

50 Cm7

53 B7Alt Em11 [D]

57 Gm7 Bbmaj7

61 Bm7(b5) E7 Am7 F#m7(b5)

66 Fm7 Cm11

(solo continues)

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CHICK COREA'S ELECTRIC PIANO SOLO ON 500 MILES HIGH  
TRANSCRIBED BY DON GLANDEN

1 **A** Em7 Gm7

5 B<sup>b</sup>maj7 Bm7(<sup>b</sup>5)

8 E7 Am7 F<sup>#</sup>m7(<sup>b</sup>5)

12 Fm7 Cm7

16 B<sup>7</sup>Alt

19 **B** Em7 Gm7

22 B<sup>b</sup>maj7

25 Bm7(<sup>b</sup>5) 26:16 E7 20:12

27 Am7 F<sup>#</sup>m7(<sup>b</sup>5)

30 Fm7 Cm7

34 B<sup>7</sup>Alt

37 **C** Em7 Gm7

40  $B\flat maj^7$

43  $Bm^7(\flat 5)$   $E^7$   $Am^7$

46  $F\sharp m^7(\flat 5)$  12  $Fm^7$  12

50  $Cm^7$  3

53  $B^7 Alt$   $Em^{11}$   $D$

57  $Gm^7$   $B\flat maj^7$

61  $Bm^7(\flat 5)$   $E^7$   $Am^7$   $F\sharp m^7(\flat 5)$

66  $Fm^7$   $Cm^{11}$

71  $B^7 Alt$

# Chick Corea's Electric Piano Solo on 500 Miles High

## Transcription And Analysis by Don Glanden

The recent reissue of the Light as a Feather sessions by Chick Corea and Return to Forever reminds us of how special the chemistry was between Chick, Joe Farrell, Stanley Clarke, Airto Moreira, and Flora Purim. It also reinforces the brilliance of Chick's melodic inventiveness as a composer and improviser.

The 500 Miles High solo presented here is a natural outgrowth of Corea's melodic vocabulary clearly stated on Now He Sings, Now He Sobs (1968), but framed in Return to Forever's unique and fresh approach to playing Latin grooves. This beautifully balanced solo is filled with the language of a modern approach to the improvised line, and sounds as fresh today as it did in 1972 when it was recorded.

Notice Chick's extensive use of pentatonic scales. In the opening statement a C pentatonic fragment in bars 2 and 3 is followed by an F pentatonic in bars 3 and 4 combining two scales closely related to the Gmi7 harmony. Of particular interest is the Ab pentatonic line in bar 8. Here he builds the scale on the third of the E7 altered chord, or on the leading tone of the Ami7, which follows. Other examples of pentatonic scales occur in bars 5 and 6, 9 and 10, 19 through 22, 38, and 42.

Chromaticism is used to great effect in building tension, not only in bars 25 and 26 where whole step relationships ascend chromatically, but also in the extensive use of highly ornamented approach tones and passing tones. Notice the passing tones on beat 3 of bar 23 and the approach tones in bar 31 and 32. Bars 40 and 41 are also filled with similar figures.

Chick balances the chromaticism and pentatonic lines with clearly arpeggiated chord outlines (bars 7, 14, 23, 24, 42, 45, 50) and with obvious chord scale combinations. Notice the beautiful line in bars 35 and 36 based on the dominant diminished scale, and the descending sequence in bar 58 based on the G dorian scale.

Chick's trademark rhythmic sophistication is evident throughout the solo but particularly in bars 46 through 49 where repeated notes sound like single stroke drum rolls and bars 51, 52, 53, 54, 59 and 60 where the dotted eighth note value (created by accents or ties) sets up a polyrhythm against the quarter note pulse. Although the complex density of notes in bars 25, 26 and 46 through 49 require some slight notational approximation, Chick's rhythmic precision and the way his lines "hook up" with Airto's ride cymbal is remarkable throughout the solo.

This wonderfully imaginative example of a balanced, compositional, and exciting use of post bebop vocabulary can be heard on Chick Corea and Return to Forever, Light as a Feather, Verve 314 557 115-2.