

Transcription of Jaco Pastorius' Bass Solo on "Used To Be A Cha Cha" From His Debut CD

By: Lucas Pickford

Jaco's debut CD burst onto the musical scene in 1976. It completely revolutionized not only what could be done on the electric bass but it also revolutionized the role a bass could play in a band. Jaco showed us the bass could not only be the groove & time keeper, but it could also be the melody instrument, a percussion instrument, and a dazzling solo voice that was as compelling as any sax or piano solo.

In this tune "Used To Be A Cha Cha", a fast double time feel samba, Jaco really showcases his deft melodic lines, his machine gun like sixteenth note runs, along with a total command of his instrument both technically and harmonically to create a tour de force of modern jazz improvisation.

The solo section to this tune has only six chords that repeat in a twelve Bar form. The solo section looks like this:

The image shows a musical transcription of a twelve-bar solo section for electric bass. The notation is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a C-clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first bar is marked with a 'C' in a box and a Dmi9 chord. The second bar has a Cmi9 chord. The third bar has an A13(b9) chord. The fourth bar has an A13(b9) chord. The fifth bar has a Bb7(#5 #9) chord. The sixth bar has an Eb9(#11) chord. The seventh bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The eighth bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The ninth bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The tenth bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The eleventh bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The twelfth bar has a Cmaj7(#11) chord. The notation includes various musical symbols such as accidentals, stems, beams, and slurs. There are also some handwritten annotations like '(b)' and '(#)'.

The chord scales that fit these six chords are as follows:

1. Dmi9 takes D Dorian - D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D
2. Cmi9 take C Dorian - C-D Eb-F-G-A-Bb-C
3. A13(b9) takes A Symmetric Diminished - A -Bb C-C#-Eb-E-F#-G-A
4. Bb7(#5 #9) takes Bb Altered Dominant Scale -Bb-B-Db-D-E-F#-Ab-Bb
5. Cmaj7 (#11) takes C Lydian -C-D-E-F#-A-B-C
6. Eb9(#11) takes Eb Lydian Dominant Scale - Eb-F-G-A-Bb-C-Db-Eb

I'll have more on chord scales in the future, but for now, go through Jaco's solo and see how he utilizes these scales. Also look for pentatonic patterns as well, another favorite device of Jaco's. Come up with your own fingerings, it's best if you find the fingerings that work best for you. I'll be back in the next issue with another challenging solo. Until then this should keep you busy."

Jaco Pastorius' Solo on Used To Be A Cha – Cha

The image displays a musical score for a solo on the piece "Used To Be A Cha-Cha" by Jaco Pastorius. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of ten staves of music. The notation is highly technical, featuring complex rhythmic patterns, triplets, and various articulations. Several measures are marked with "vib" (vibrato) above the notes. The score includes numerous accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and dynamic markings. The overall style is characteristic of the fusion jazz genre, showcasing intricate fingerwork and a strong sense of groove.

This image shows a handwritten musical score for a string instrument, consisting of six staves of music. The notation is dense and includes various musical symbols and markings:

- Staff 1:** Features a series of eighth-note patterns with slurs and accents.
- Staff 2:** Continues the eighth-note patterns, including a triplet of eighth notes.
- Staff 3:** Shows a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a slur and a vibrato marking (*vib*) above a note.
- Staff 4:** Contains more eighth-note runs, with multiple instances of the vibrato marking (*vib*) above notes.
- Staff 5:** Includes eighth-note patterns with some notes marked with an 'x', possibly indicating a specific performance technique or a correction.
- Staff 6:** The final staff, showing a concluding phrase with a slur and a vibrato marking (*vib*).

The score is written in a single system, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 2/4. The handwriting is clear and professional.