

Analysis Of Yardbird Suite:

This is one of the great Charlie Parker bebop tunes and has several avenues for learning some important material that will serve you well in the bebop lexicon.

The form is a standard AABA that is so common in tunes of this nature. Slight differences appear in the final cadence of the A sections, but they are basically the same throughout providing for a nice structure.

The tune is in the key of C concert and we see many ii-v progressions both resolving and non-resolving.

The A sections rely heavily on the iii-VI-ii-V progression. We see the tune start on the I chord and then move into a non-resolving ii-V in Eb. Instead of resolving to Eb it moves into a iii-VI progression to complete the first 4 measure phrase. It then moves into a ii-V progression that utilizes the V of V instead of the minor ii chord. Then, instead of resolving to I, the tune moves into a quick iii-VI-ii-V progression leading us into the second A section.

The second A section does resolve in bar 15 to the I chord setting us up for the bridge.

The bridge moves strongly to the key of E minor but it is deceiving. We think the key is going to change but the bridge really just functions as a way to get back to the final A section. It kind of piddles around the iii-VI-ii-V progression through and then moves strongly back the key of C Major.

The final a section is exactly the same as the second A section.

This tune gives great opportunities to explore some of the most important progressions in bebop. Particularly the iii-VI-ii-V. Spend time with this tune and you'll see it pay off almost immediately. You should consider learning this tune in a couple of different keys for maximum benefit. The melody is also very melodic and somewhat tough for most instruments.

Have fun!