

## Lead Sheet Notation

1. Return graded homework, take attendance and take questions about K/P Workbook Ex. 3-3 A.
2. **Lead Sheet Notation**

### EXAMPLE:

Sonny Rollins, *St. Thomas*

Score: pdf (Lead Sheet transcription available on course Web site)

Recording: MUSC 115 CD Track 6<sup>1</sup>

- Use the lead sheet for St. Thomas to introduce lead-sheet notation. Unlike a classical “score”, lead sheets are not “fixed” forms of notation. Rather, they are often loose transcriptions of popular recordings.
- Compare and contrast contemporary lead-sheet notation w/ Baroque figured-bass notation.

### 3. Elements of a Lead Sheet

- The **melody** is conveniently notated on the staff in an easy-to-read octave, clef, etc.
  - The **changes**, or chord symbols (**lead-sheet symbols**), gives the basic harmonic framework (progression) for the piece above the melody staff.
  - Rhythm: a general rhythmic/stylistic/tempo designation usually appears at the outset (e.g., Ballad, Bossa, Calypso, Fast Swing, etc.)
  - Phrasing and articulation usually included. Dynamics are usually not included.
  - Lyrics (where appropriate)
- etc.

#### Optional elements:

- + Introduction
  - + Interlude (material between sections)
  - + Coda (ending material)
- etc.

“...musicians create magic with these few symbols.”

Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Available to students on the course Web site. See Online Course Listening.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book* (Petaluma, CA: Sher Music Co., 1995).

#### 4. Lead-Sheet Symbols and Key

- Unlike figured bass and roman numerals (to be discussed later in Ch. 4), lead-symbols are NOT tied to the prevailing key. As Levine 1995 puts it: “the key signature of a lead sheet only affects the melody of the tune, not the chord symbols.” This makes them ideal for describing pieces that change key and/or are highly chromatic.
- In jazz, a lead sheet approximately notates the **head**: the main part of a composition that is played by the ensemble at the beginning and end of the composition. Introductions, interludes, codas, etc. are usually present in the recording. Members of the ensemble take **solos** that usually follow form/harmonic progression presented in the lead-sheet notation. Each time through the form is called a *solo chorus*.

#### 5. Lead-Sheet Symbols (pp. K/P 49-50; Appendix B Lead-Sheet Symbols, pp. 595-96)

- Introduce the lead-sheet symbols for the four triad qualities (M, m, A, d).
- Introduce the five common seventh chords qualities (MM, Mm, mm, dm, and dd).
- Introduce the **added sixth**, an added-tone triad, which calls for an added M6 above the root.
- Introduce the “m7(b5)” symbol, which is equivalent to a half-diminished seventh symbol.
- Introduce **slash chord** notation, where a bass note other than the root is indicated as follows: C/E, C/G, etc.

##### TRIADS

Quality*	Lead Sheet Symbol**
M	C
m	Cm
A	C <sup>+</sup>
d	C <sup>o</sup>

##### SEVENTH CHORDS

Quality*	Lead Sheet Symbol**
Mm	C <sup>7</sup>
MM	C <sup>maj7</sup>
mm	Cm <sup>7</sup>
dm	C <sup>ø7</sup> or C <sup>-7(b5)</sup>
dd	C <sup>o7</sup>

\* - See K/P 6/e, Appendix B *Lead-Sheet Symbols*.

\*\* - For a chord whose root is C.

**Exercise:** With lead sheet in hand, play Sonny Rollins's *St. Thomas* for the class. Then discuss how the ensemble turns the lead sheet into a "composition."

*St. Thomas* by Sonny Rollins  
Sonny Rollins (tenor sax), Tommy Flanagan, piano; Doug Watkins (bass); Max Roach drums; (6:50).

For example, ask the class: What's the role of improvisation in this work? What's the role of the tenor sax? What's the role of the piano? What's the role of the bass? What's the role of the drums? What's the form of the head?<sup>3</sup>

In the hoStudents have to spell the chords

Here is the recording's form in case you want to discuss it:

**Introduction** (16 bars, drums)

**Head** (16 bars, 2x):w

**Solos**

Tenor sax solo<sup>4</sup>

Drum solo<sup>5</sup>

Tenor sax solo (again)

Piano solo

**Head** (16 bars, 2x)

## HOMEWORK

1. Bain Worksheet 3-1 (pdf)
2. Read Recognizing Chords in Various Textures, pp. 52-55.

## MATERIALS

1. St. Thomas Lead Sheet (pdf)
2. Bain Worksheet 3-1 (pdf)
3. MUSC 115 CD Track 6

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<sup>3</sup> 16 bars: a a b a'; 4 + 4 + 4 (2+2) + 4

<sup>4</sup> A link to a transcription of Sonny Rollins's solo by Jeff Ellwood is available via the course Web site.

<sup>5</sup> Notice that the drummer carefully follows/articulates the form.