

# Simple Scalar Descent

Joshua Davis

Here are the first four bars of a 64 bar solo. For now, pay particular attention to the second measure.

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Music descends through scales all the time. There are hundreds of Mozart orchestral excerpts that descend 5 4 3 2 1 in G major. I bet Miles played it several thousand times. What makes the line special? Rhythm. The key to instilling character in this sequence of pitches is rhythm. This rhythm is common in jazz as well as many other types of music. Sinatra and countless others used it. The shape of the line is equally if not more common and has been used in many melodies and improvisations. It seems I've heard "Fly Me to the Moon" interpreted with this rhythm thousands of times.

Consider the two primary components of the motif, the notes played and the rhythm used to play them. The measure in question is simply a common scale fragment played with a common rhythmic motif.

Put the information to use. Use it in an original fashion. Play it over both these harmonies:

What did you use? Try 5 4 3 2 1 in G major, and 5 4 3 2 1 in the B scale from the previous page.

What if the harmonies change every two bars as they did in Ousepian's improvisation? Play a bar rest a bar. Rest a bar play a bar. Space in music is as important as the notes. Remove rests from your favorite phrases and check out how the notes take on an entirely new meaning. Here is a soloing possibility using rests and borrowed ideas:

Flesh out Vardan's first bar. It is just a triad built on 1 3 5 of the scale. Add this to the descending 5 notes you play on B7. You now have vocabulary to use whenever you solo on Gma7 and B7. It happens to work well on G7 and Bma7 too.