

Smooth Talkin'

(as heard on Present Tense CD "Smooth Talkin'")

written by:
Richard Frank & Ronnie Kaufman

♩ = 116
Quasi-Funk Groove

(DRUM PICKUP)

Cmi^{add9} solo fills

Fmi⁶

2

A

Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶ Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶

5 sfz mf

Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶ Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶

9 sfz mf

Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶ Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶

13 sfz mf

Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶ Cmi^{add9} Fmi⁶

17 sfz

B

A^{b6} B^{b6} Gmi⁷ Cmi B^b A^{b6} Gmi

21 mp

A^{b6} B^{b6} Cmi⁷ Dmi^{7(b5)}

25

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This system contains the first four measures of the piece. It features three staves: a top staff with a drum pickup pattern, a middle staff with piano accompaniment, and a bottom staff with bass line. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mp* and chord symbols *Cmi^{add9}* and *Fmi⁶*. The bottom staff has a '2' above the bar line, indicating a second ending.

A

Pno melody 8va

This system contains measures 5 through 8. It features three staves. The top staff has a piano melody with dynamic markings *sfz* and *mf*. The middle staff has piano accompaniment with chord symbols *Cmi^{add9}* and *Fmi⁶*. The bottom staff has a bass line. The system ends with a '2' above the bar line, indicating a second ending.

This system contains measures 9 through 12. It features three staves. The top staff has a piano melody with dynamic markings *sfz* and *mf*, and a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure. The middle staff has piano accompaniment with chord symbols *Cmi^{add9}* and *Fmi⁶*. The bottom staff has a bass line. The system ends with a '2' above the bar line, indicating a second ending.

Smooth Talkin' - Present Tense - Teaching Guidelines

Genre: JAZZ

Style: GROOVE JAZZ

World Region: North America

Country: United States

Overview: "Smooth Talkin'" is a fun and engaging challenge at any level from middle school to advanced and beyond. This two-section composition creates a rhythm section that conveys a bounce and energy without too many notes or technical challenges. A clear and rhythmic melody gives way to a solo section with solid chord changes to play for learning and for just plain fun! Eric Marienthal's solo will give students a clinic on how to improvise in the "pocket," as well as how to cleverly develop motivic ideas. It's a rock/funk/R&B spirited groove with unlimited possibilities for emerging soloists.

Unique Teaching Elements: This song is particularly good for the following:

- Interval leaps up to an octave in the melody
- Eighth-note syncopation
- Use of chord tones in the melody, and articulation as a defining element
- i-iv chord changes for improvisation, with a scale-focused chord progression in the bridge

Style: This two section tune is all about the groove. "Smooth Talkin'" has a fresh, contemporary sound, not unlike that of Jeff Kashiwa and Dave Koz. Each instrument adds to the overall groove by playing a simple repeating pattern that interlocks with the others. There's room here for multiple guitarists or keyboardists to create plenty of textures and layers. Keep it simple, or let it develop into something complex, but always insist on playing "tight" and in the pocket (you can say this over and over again to reinforce listening).

Structure: Intro – an open 4-bar groove can be extended with a soloist adding fills.

A – m5 – m20 – "A" melodic statement. Keeping the energy up should be the goal. With an alternating 2-chord harmonic structure, this entire section emphasizes the tonic key of C minor by continuing the progression from the introduction. A syncopated eighth note pattern is introduced that uses ties over the barline.

B – m21 – m36 – "B" melodic statement. This is a sustained contrasting feel, so have students work to keep the energy up and not fade. Be sure the bassist emphasizes the 8th note offbeat. This section uses a much faster harmonic rhythm that drives the motion and direction of the section. Try using different instruments to emphasize different moments (i.e. a harmon mute on trumpet for a color change).

C – m37 – m40 – 4-bar breakdown between drummer and soloist. Section returns to the original chord progression, allowing the soloists to improvise over a familiar, safe pattern. Solo is then open. Cue D.S. to potentially continue solo over B.

Coda – m41– Open drum/percussion groove/solos (optional, but it can also be opened up extensively in many creative ways).

D – m45 – m52 – Restatement of the "A" melody, but only 8 bars. (Present Tense tells us they actually play all of A and B live and jump to m55 as a "button" ending).

Melody: Playing the syncopated melodic figures can require some finesse, especially if the melody is to be played in unison by multiple players. Have the students listen to the reference recording for the essence of the saxophone's interpretation as a way of helping students work towards their own interpretation. Point out the accents, the use of dynamics within each phrase, and the attacks on each pitch. Have students learn the whole melody, though, notice that the melody contains harmonized chordal hits. Emphasize the top note until learned, then feel free to divide up the chord tones to other players.

The melody at letter B is designed to contrast the A melody and "floats" above the groove. If you want further contrast to the previous section, try experimenting with different instrument combinations. If the students listen for articulations, it will help bring the music off the page, particularly when it comes to note length and phrasing. Note the bass line is a counter melody to the main melody. Emphasis (solo) that call and response.

Harmony: The first section of the tune (m. 1 – letter B) is a simple movement based on C minor as the tonal center. That second section moves to Ab with a 16-bar harmonic progression that builds tension to the unison rhythmic figure. Soloists may experiment with targeting the tonal contrast between the first minor section and the second section in major.

Rhythm: The rhythms in this chart can be more challenging to read than to play. Have students focus on the basic pulse of the quarter note groove with a strongly felt 8th-note subdivision. Have students move their bodies, nod their heads, and have fun with the physical aspect of playing. The melodic instruments will need to focus on executing the syncopated phrases, though everyone gets in on the 8th-note groove at measures 34-36. Auxiliary percussion is greatly encouraged in this tune.

Improvisation/Theory: It is strongly suggested to keep referencing the recording and imitating great ideas. Students may be surprised at how simple some of the ideas are, with the main difference being confidence. Eric Marienthal is ripping on this tune. In this style he's one of the best. By playing diatonically in C minor and emphasizing chord tones and syncopations, students can learn what notes and rhythms sound good in each section, as well as gain a better understanding of the types of rhythms that are typical of this style. The melody itself can be used as a starting point to lead the soloist to unexpected new territory. Have another instrument play the B melody behind the soloist, as the soloist needs to listen to and work with this extra layer.