

John McLaughlin

York. Even though they're not primarily derived from Indian music, both recordings have related features worth noting. Our primary focus will be McLaughlin's improvising in an odd time signature with relatively complex tonalities.

Ex. 1 profiles the intro to "Follow" from the *JFQ* version. First, let's deal with the 11/8 time signature (a non-traditional Indian meter that was brought into vogue by Ravi Shankar). To concentrate on your playing instead of your counting in an odd time signature, you need to find a relaxed way to feel it. Instead of counting beats one through eleven at tempo and eventually passing out for lack of air, try counting the first eight beats as quarter-notes at half tempo, and then the final three as eighth-notes at regular tempo, like this: "1, 2, 3, 4, 1-2-3." Or you might count all the eighth-notes like this: "1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 1-2-3."

Now let's look at the chord vamp in the first measure. These voicings are reminiscent of those Bill Evans introduced on the Miles Davis standard "So What" and those of Herbie Hancock on "Maiden Voyage." One way to get a handle on them is to think of the *Bm11* and *C#m11* as substitutes for the I chord (*E*) in the Mixolydian mode. Both chords contain notes from the parent scale and from various extensions of an *E7* chord: The *Bm11* is like an *E7* with a *sus4* and a 9, and the *C#m11* has the 6th and 9th scale degrees in the bass and an *E* triad on top.

Other chord subs help expand the tonality of "Follow" and keep things fresh. In measures 3 and 4, the *Gsus4* to *D* change implies the key of *G*, and the chords work as tritone and relative major subs for *C#m* and *Bm* respectively. The *D* to *A* change in measure 4 makes sense as a quick move to the IV chord in *E*, with the "V of the IV" (*D*) as a lead-in.

Ex. 2 shows a two-octave fingering for *E* Mixolydian. Keep in mind that John was not overly concerned with theoretical issues, as he made clear in an Aug. '78 *Guitar Player* interview: "It's not really essential that you know the names of the various modes and scales you play. What is important is that you hear their

Ex. 1

ca. 184
Elec. gr.

Bm11/E *C#m11/E* *Bm11/E* *C#m11/E*

let ring

Bm11/E *Gsus4 D* *Bm11/E* *D A*

Ex. 2

E Mixolydian

Scale degrees: 3 4 5 6 b7 1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 1 2 3 4 5

4 5 7 4 5 7 4 6 7 4 6 7 5 7 4 5 7

Ex. 3

Em11 *Dm11*

Ex. 4 *E11* or *Bm11/E*

Ex. 5

Harmonized E Mixolydian

Amaj7add4 *C#m11* *E11* *G#dim7add4*

Bm11 *Dmaj7#11* *F#m11* *Amaj7add4*

Chord degrees: I ii iii IV V vi vi° I

0 2 4 5 7 9 10 12

2 3 4 6 7 9 11 14

0 2 4 5 7 9 11 12