

## **Phil Woods and Cherokee**

Jeff Rzepiela, Presenter

Phil Woods was known as a consummate musician and keeper of the bebop flame throughout his long career. The influence of Charlie Parker on Woods's development is clear and was acknowledged by Woods in several interviews. In particular, Woods stated the only Charlie Parker solo that he transcribed in its entirety and committed to paper was Parker's timeless solo on "Ko-ko." "Ko-ko" is based on the harmonic chord progression of "Cherokee," the up-tempo tune with its difficult bridge that was a jam session favorite and provided a means of demonstrating an improviser's technical prowess.

Woods recorded Cherokee or tunes based on Cherokee's chord progression several times throughout his long career. The first recording was in 1955 and the last was in 2003, spanning a large portion of Woods's recorded legacy. This presentation will examine transcriptions of seven solos based on Cherokee. The majority of the solos feature Woods on his usual alto saxophone, but one solo includes a solo on soprano saxophone, which Woods featured in the 1970's. Additionally, while Cherokee is typically played in 4/4 meter at a fast tempo, one version at a more relaxed tempo in 3/4 meter will be examined.

Each solo demonstrates Woods's mastery of the bebop language, including such devices as approach notes, ii-V patterns and tritone substitution. Throughout the examination of the seven solos, the development of Woods's improvisation style over the course of his 50+ year recording career and the seminal influence of Parker's "Ko-ko" solo will be highlighted.