The Art of Improvisation

Level 1: Starting

… a visual and virtual approach to improvising jazz …

Version 3.1

by Bob Taylor

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As a *Starting Improviser,* you may be new to improvisation, or your solos might be "trapped"
in blues scales or rote playing. What you learn in Level 1 isn't complicated, but it *is essential.*
Here you get a basic foundation in improvisation that will help you *create* instead of *react.*
Even players who have been improvising for years can take advantage of skills taught in Level 1.
Enjoy the journey! And remember to be patient with your progress ...
you're laying the foundation for some great work ahead.

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1A: The Virtual Practice Method

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Using the Virtual Practice Method
- Introducing Flexible Scales
- SHAPE: See, Hear, And Play Expressively
- Naming Intervals
- Hearing and Playing Intervals

Melody ....
Rhythm
Expression
Development
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
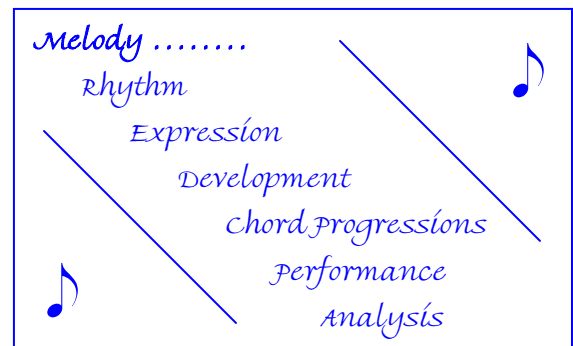
I t all starts here – finding out what to practice and how to practice so you can improvise well. But you don't have to lock yourself in a practice room all day to learn how to improvise. Instead, you can use the Virtual Practice Method (described below) to:

1. Learn how to practice *away* from your instrument, so you can learn improv scales and chords almost anywhere you go, while avoiding "instrument fatigue." This also helps you *see* what you are practicing!

2. Practice each scale and chord in many different ways, so they come alive with improvisation possibilities.

You can use the Virtual Practice Method on almost any exercise in this book. Eventually (in Level Three) you'll use the Virtual Practice Method to memorize chord progressions and actually hear a rhythm section playing in your head while you hum or sing your solos. Sounds amazing? I've done it; it works, and it's fun!

Using the Virtual Practice Method

The Virtual Practice Method for melody works like this:

*Hum (or whistle or sing) each note you hear while moving your fingers or hands just as though you were playing the notes on your instrument.

While humming notes, trumpeters can wiggle three fingers onto the thumb for fingerings; saxophonists can move fingers on a pencil for fingerings; trombonists can move the wrist to each slide position; guitarists or bassists can finger imaginary frets; vocalists can picture notes on a staff; and pianists can touch imaginary keys. The important thing is to *accurately hum each note as you finger it cleanly.*

A. Steps for Virtual Practice

To use the Virtual Practice Method,

1 Choose the scale or arpeggio you want to practice, such as a C Major scale.

2 Choose a comfortable tempo for eighth-notes. Use a metronome if you like.

3 Hum any medium-low starting pitch and think of it as the starting note, such as C. (If you have perfect pitch or have an instrument near, you can find the actual C.) Whatever pitch you pick, treat it as the root.

4 Hum each new pitch in the scale, going up to the octave and back down to the starting pitch. As you hum each pitch, "finger" the notes for your instrument (without your instrument, of course). Keep the tempo steady. If a scale or arpeggio is difficult, slow it down until the pitches and fingerings lock in well.

Now try Exercise A. *Remember, you can link to a Practice Page for play-along tracks (C, Bb, or Eb instruments) for each exercise in this book.*

Exercise A - Virtual Practice for the C Major Scale
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Hum and finger eighth-notes for the C Major scale, at quarter-note = 100. Attack each pitch accurately, with solid rhythm.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Practicing with the Circle of Fourths

The *circle of fourths* is all 12 keys arranged in a circle (or line), with each new key starting a 4th higher than the previous one. Many basic jazz chord progressions are based on the circle of 4ths, making it a vital tool to learn. The chord roots (#1 tones) for the circle of 4ths are:

C   F   Bb   Eb   Ab   Db (C#)   Gb (F#)   B   E   A   D   G   C

Notice that C# Major and Db Major are *enharmonically* the same: they contain the same pitches but are spelled differently (C# = Db, D# = Eb, E# = F, etc.). The keys of F# and Gb are enharmonic, as are Cb and B.

B. Practicing Major Scales

You can use the Virtual Practice Method to practice major scales around the circle of 4ths. First, start on a low pitch for your C, and then follow these steps:

1   Hum or finger the scale up and down (start on any low pitch), pausing on the last note.

2   To *connect* to the first note (root) of the next scale in the circle of fourths (such as from C to F), sing *up 2 whole steps and a half step*. You can check the new root on your instrument at first, but as you get more familiar with connections it won't be necessary.

3   Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the other keys (Bb through G) in the circle of 4ths. If the pitches get too high, drop an octave before starting the next scale.

Exercise B - Humming Major Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Around the circle of 4ths, accurately hum and finger eighth-notes for all 12 major scales, up and down, quarter-note = 100. Test the notes against your instrument if you're not sure of pitch accuracy.
Medium: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Introducing Flexible Scales   W **MORE**

So far you've practiced scales by starting at the bottom, going directly to the top and then coming directly back down. You can discover a whole new world of possibilities by using *flexible scales*. Flexible scales help you create your own ideas for improv melodies, and they help you visualize what you play. Flexible scales:

- Go up and down randomly, changing directions whenever *you* want to
- Can start on *any* note in the scale, not just the first note
- Can use other rhythms besides eighth-notes

C. Using Flexible Major Scales

To use flexible major scales in your virtual practice,

1   Choose a starting pitch, as explained above, such as a C.
2   Go up and down only a *few* notes at a time, instead of the whole scale, humming and fingering. Make the up-and-down movement somewhat random and play the scale pattern as long as you want. For example:

etc.
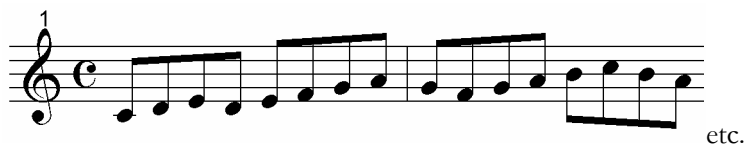
Example C - A flexible C Major scale

MORE ▶ 1 📎 2 📎   TIP: Click number for JPG or double-click paperclip for PDF   📝

This next example starts at the top and winds its way down:

etc.

Example C1 - Another flexible C Major scale

MORE ▶ 1 📎

And this example starts on a note other than C:

etc.

Example C2 - Flexible C Major scale that doesn't start on C

MORE ▶ 1 📎 2 📎 3 📎

You can create *many* useful versions of flexible scales; they're "food for thought" for your solos. Be sure to practice flexible scales in *all* keys, not just C. And remember: whenever you play a flexible scale, you are *actually improvising*! You can practice flexible scales virtually or on your instrument, either way.

Important: As you practice flexible scales, visualize the shape of your scale as you go, so you'll be accurate with your melody.

Exercise C - Humming Flexible Major Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Hum and finger each flexible major scale in the circle of 4ths; quarter-note = 100. Play each note in the scale at least once; pause before each new key. Test the first note of the new key if necessary.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Practicing in All Keys

As you practice flexible scales in all keys, around the circle of fourths, you'll find that some keys are harder to master than others. You can "live" in a key by practicing and playing flexible scales in that key so much it feels like home. Try a whole day of practice in each difficult key. If you'd like more ways to practice flexible scales, see Chapter 1E: *Practice Levels for Flexible Scales.*

SHAPE: See, Hear, And Play Expressively   w MORE

As you work with flexible scales, you'll find many creative ways to shape a melody. To create a melody, you need to see its *shape* as you go. Understanding the SHAPE acronym will help you do this.

Using SHAPE

SHAPE stands for "See, Hear, And Play Expressively." This means you *see* the shape of the flexible scale, then *hear* how it sounds, then *play* what you see and hear. You don't usually see a long ways ahead of where you are – just enough to get you going in the right direction. The vision part of your brain will see where to go next, and the computer part of your brain will turn that vision into notes. That's a terrific and satisfying experience! As you practice this skill over time, your vision-brain and computer-brain will cooperate ever faster and more accurately.

When you "see" a musical shape before you play it, it becomes easier to hear it correctly, because you can sense (see) the right notes to attack. And when you hear a note in your mind, it's a lot easier to play it accurately. When you play the note, especially if you hold on to it a while, you can add some interesting and personal expression to it. A melody based on SHAPE can be powerful or subtle; it works because it's secure

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without being pre-memorized. The more you work on SHAPE, the better your ideas will flow and the better you'll play the melodies you see and hear.

Avoiding PHASE

The *wrong* approach is to use SHAPE backwards, which is PHASE – "Play, Hear, And See Errors." Many improvisers fall into the PHASE trap – they play something, hear it after they play it, and then see (focus on) their errors. This is approach is very limiting – it almost guarantees they will fall back on familiar or memorized material to avoid mistakes. You can almost always tell whether a soloist is using SHAPE or PHASE. *Always use SHAPE in your solos* to help your creativity soar and expand. In time, you'll truly *see it, hear it, and play it*.

D. SHAPE and Flexible Scales

You can use SHAPE to drive your flexible scale practice. Here are some guidelines:

1) See the shape (contour) of each flexible scale in your mind as it unfolds to you. (You may want to close your eyes as you do this so you can concentrate on the mental picture.)

2) See more unusual shapes, even with the simple stepwise motion. For example:

   A) Use longer ascending or descending lines, such as nearly an octave or more than an octave.

   B) Stay in the lower or higher range for a longer time.

   C) Occasionally stay within a three-note or four-note range.

Exercise D – Using SHAPE with Flexible Major Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Hum and finger each flexible major scale in the circle of 4ths; quarter-note = 100. Use suggestions A, B, and C in *SHAPE and Flexible Scales* above.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Naming Intervals

Your first step in creating melodic shapes is recognizing and hearing the basic intervals in an octave. Major scales are built on whole-steps and half-steps, so you should already be familiar with those intervals. Wide intervals take more practice to hear, name, and sing. You can also practice intervals away from your instrument (see *Stepping Between Intervals* below).

E. Interval Types

Each interval fits into one of these types: major (M), minor (m), augmented (A), diminished (d), or perfect (P). The basic intervals are listed below with their abbreviations and their whole-steps and half-steps.

Interval	Abbr.	Whole/Half-Steps
Minor second	m2	1 half-step
Major second	M2	1 whole-step
Minor third	m3	1 whole-step + half-step
Major third	M3	2 whole-steps
Perfect fourth	P4	2 whole-steps + half-step
Augmented 4th	A4	3 whole-steps
Perfect fifth	P5	2 whole-steps + half-step + whole-step
Minor sixth	m6	Perfect fifth plus + half-step
Major sixth	M6	Perfect fifth plus + whole-step
Minor seventh	m7	Octave minus 1 whole-step
Major seventh	M7	Octave minus 1 half-step

The basic intervals in C Major (middle C to the C above it) are shown below:

   The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

M2 M3 P4 P5 M6 M7   M2 m3 P4 P5 M6 m7 etc.

Example E - Basic intervals in C Major

Here are the basic intervals in C Minor (Dorian scale):

M2 m3 P4 P5 M6 m7   m2 m3 P4 P5 m6 m7 etc.

Example E1 - Basic intervals in C Minor

Exercise E - Naming Intervals
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Around the circle of 4ths, quickly name the pitch that's a minor third above the root of each key. Repeat with major thirds.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; name the 4ths, augmented 4ths, and fifths above each root.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium; name the minor sixths, major sixths, minor sevenths, and major sevenths.

Hearing and Playing Intervals   w   MORE

Hearing and playing intervals accurately is essential. It helps you create new ideas accurately and quickly copy or adapt melodic ideas played by your group members. Remember to work on *descending* intervals, too.

F. Stepping Between Intervals

To hear wider intervals such as 4ths, 5ths, and 6ths, hear and sing *each scale tone in between* the lower and upper note of the interval. For example, to sing a major 6th from C to A, sing "C D E F G A." To hear 7ths or 9ths, sing an octave and then a step down or up. Use the key signature of the key you are in. Stepping between intervals takes the guesswork out of wider intervals. It assumes you can accurately hear whole-steps and half-steps in scales.

This skill of using stepped intervals will help you in hearing and memorizing chord progressions, as explained in Chapter 3L: *Learning Standard Tunes.*

Exercise F - Stepping Between Intervals
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Same as Basic for Exerecise E, but play the root and then the stepped intervals up to the pitch.
**Medium*: Same as Medium for Exercise E, using stepped intervals.
***Challenge*: Same as Challenge for Exercise E, using stepped intervals.

You can remember wider intervals (fourths, fifths, sixths, and sevenths) by hearing the *starting interval* from a familiar song, as in the examples below:

P4 — The Eensy, Weensy Spider

A4 — Maria (West Side Story)

P5 — Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

m6 — Black Orpheus

M6 — My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

m7 — Star Trek, original theme

M7 — Christmas Song (notes 1 & 3)

You can build your interval skills by doing these steps:

1) Play a pitch on your instrument and sing it exactly.

2) Using that pitch, sing up or down by the smallest interval that challenges you (half-step, whole-step, minor third, etc.) You can test the interval on your instrument. If you need help locking in a wider interval, refer to *Stepping Between Intervals* above.

3) Repeat steps 1 and 2 for other pitches, using the same interval, until the interval is comfortable.

4) Repeat steps 1 through 3 for the next wider intervals, until you finish sevenths.

Exercise G - Singing Intervals
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Around the circle of 4ths, sing up or down a minor third from each root, then return to each root. Repeat with major thirds.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, but use a fifth. Repeat with augmented fourths.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic, but use a minor sixth. Repeat with major sixths.

Chapter Review

1) The Virtual Practice Method helps you practice away from your instrument and start to see melodies.

2) You can use the circle of 4ths (C F Bb Eb Ab Db F# B E A D G C) to practice scales.

3) Flexible scales can start on any scale note and go up and down at will.

4) You can mix intervals of 3rds and seconds in flexible scales.

5) Use SHAPE - "See, Hear, And Play Expressively."

6) Don't use PHASE – "Play, Hear, and See Errors."

7) "Living in a key" means practicing and playing in that key so much that it feels like home to you.

8) You can practice flexible scales with a live rhythm section or with play-along or other recordings.

1B: Building Chords and Scales

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Understanding Chord Symbols
- Building Major Chords
- Building Lydian Scales
- Building Dominant Chords and Scales
- Building Minor Chords and Scales

Melody ....
Rhythm
Expression
Development
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
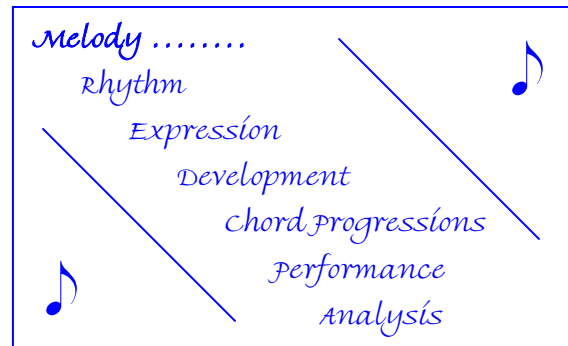
Here's where you learn basic chords and scales for improvisation. Learning chords and scales is an *ongoing process* you can use every day, long after you finish this chapter.

Important: This chapter assumes you already know key signatures for all major and minor keys. If you need help with key signatures, you should review a basic music theory book.

Understanding Chord Symbols

To improvise in jazz tunes, you need to see chord symbols (on the page or in your mind) and decide which arpeggios or scales fit them.

Basic Elements of Chord Symbols

A *chord symbol*, such as CMa7, usually contains three parts:
- A pitch-letter (such as C) to indicate the key
- The chord type: major (Ma) or minor (m). Dominant chords use numbers but omit chord type letters.
- The number that indicates the top note of the chord (6, 7, 9, 11, or 13)

Normally, a chord contains the 1, 3, and 5 notes of the key plus one or more extensions (higher notes in the chord). For example, CMa7 contains the 1, 3, 5, and 7 of C Major (C, E, G, and B), while a CMa9 chord contains the 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 of C Major (C, E, G, B, and D).

There are chord symbols for all the 12 keys, such as C#, D, Eb, E, etc.

Building Major Chords

A major chord has the 1, 3, and 5 degrees of a major scale. A major 7 chord has the 1, 3, 5, and 7; a major 9 chord has the 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9; and a major 6 chord has the 1, 3, 5, and 6.

A. Spelling the 12 Major Chords

The examples below show common major chord symbols you'll see in chord progressions, along with their chord tones, or *arpeggios*. C is the example key used here.

CMa   CMa7   CMa9   CMa6
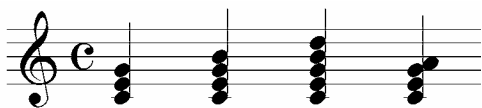
Example A - C Major chord types (arpeggios)

Now try the Exercise below, using the correct key signatures. As you learn arpeggios and scales in *all* 12 keys, you can use them in chord progressions you'll learn.

B. Practicing Major 7 Arpeggios

Flexible arpeggios are the counterpart of flexible scales. Making your arpeggios flexible helps you get out of the rut of straight up-and-down arpeggios. Here's an example of a flexible C Major 7 arpeggio:

Example B - Flexible C Major 7 arpeggio

MORE ▶ 1   2   3

To practice flexible major 7 arpeggios around the circle of 4ths, use the Virtual Practice Method you learned in Chapter 1A. Review it if you need to, then try the Exercise below.

Building Lydian Scales   w MORE

The Lydian scale is just like a major scale, except the 4th note is sharped. The Lydian scale is a good alternate choice for soloing on a major chord; the sharp 4th adds melodic "color."

C. Spelling The 12 Lydian Scales

The C and Ab Lydian scales are shown below. In some keys, sharping the 4 changes a natural to a sharp; in other keys it changes a flat to a natural.

```
1  2  3  #4  5  6  7  8                    1   2   3  #4  5  6  7  8
```


Example C - C Lydian scale   Example C1 - Ab Lydian scale

▶ MORE 1

Exercise C - Spelling Lydian Scales

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Lydian scale, then for the other Lydian scales around the circle of 4ths. Try to complete all spellings in 60 seconds or less.
**Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 Lydian scales, from *top to botto*m, in 1 minute or less.
***Challenge: Quickly pick a major key (such as C#). Then name the sharp-4 pitch. For example, the #4 of C# would be G. Do this in all keys.

D. Practicing Flexible Lydian Scales

You can practice flexible Lydian scales around the circle of 4ths, using the Virtual Practice Method. Here's one of the many possible flexible Lydian scales you could create:

Example D - Flexible C Lydian scale

Exercise D - Humming Flexible Lydian Scales

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible Lydian scales, around the circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 100.
**Medium: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Building Dominant Chords and Scales

A dominant chord has the same 1, 3, and 5 as a major chord, but its 7 is *flatted*. Dominant chord symbols always have a pitch letter *directly followed* by a number, such as C7 (not CMa7). The major 6 chords are exceptions: for example, C6 is actually CMa6, a major chord. Dominant chords usually resolve to major or minor chords.

E. Spelling the 12 Dominant 7 Chords

The examples below show some common *dominant* chord symbols you'll see in chord progressions, along with their chord tones, or arpeggios (C is the example key.)

Example E - C Dominant chord symbols and arpeggios

Exercise E - Spelling Dominant 7 Arpeggios

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Spell the pitches for the C dominant 7 arpeggio, then for the other 11 dominant 7 arpeggios, around the circle of 4ths. Try for a best time under 45 seconds.
**Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 dominant 7 arpeggios, from *top to bottom* of each.
***Challenge: Quickly pick a dominant arpeggio key (such as F#). Then name the flat-7 pitch. For example, the b7 of F# is E. Do this in all keys.

F. Practicing Dominant 7 Chords

You can practice dominant 7 arpeggios around the circle of 4ths, using the Virtual Practice Method. For more ideas, see Chapter 1E: *Practice Levels for Flexible Scales*.

Exercise F - Humming Flexible Dominant 7 Arpeggios
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible dominant 7 arpeggios, around the circle of 4ths, at quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

G. Spelling the 12 Mixolydian Scales

A basic scale to use with a dominant chord is the *Mixolydian* scale (from the Greek Mixolydian mode). It's just like major except it has a flatted 7. The C Mixolydian and A Mixolydian scales are shown below.

1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 8   1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 8

Example G - C Mixolydian scale (b7)   Example G1 - A Mixolydian scale (b7)

► MORE 1

Exercise G - Spelling Mixolydian Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Mixolydian scale, then for the other Mixolydian scales around the circle of 4ths. Try for a best time under 60 seconds.
**Medium*: Quickly pick a number from 1 to b7 and a dominant key (such as 2, key of F#). Then name the pitch that correctly fits (the 2 of F# would be G#).

H. Practicing Flexible Mixolydian Scales

You can practice flexible Mixolydian scales around the circle of fourths, using the Virtual Practice Method. See Chapter 1E: *Practice Levels for Flexible Scales* for more ideas.

Exercise H - Humming Flexible Mixolydian Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all flexible Mixolydian scales, around the circle of 4ths, at quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

  The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

Building Minor Chords and Scales

A minor chord is like a major chord but with a flatted third. In minor chords that contain a 7, the 7 is also usually flatted. A minor chord can use "min" or "mi" or "m" or even a minus sign; in this book we use "m" (such as Cm7).

J. Spelling the 12 Minor 7 Chords

The examples below show common *minor* chord symbols you'll see in chord progressions, along with their chord tones (C is the example key).

Cm7   Cm9   Cm6   CmN7 (b natural)
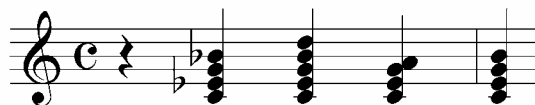
Example J - Minor chords and arpeggios

In Exercise J below, be sure to flat both the 3 and 7 in each minor arpeggio.

Exercise J - Spelling Minor 7 Arpeggios
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Minor 7 chord, then for the other minor 7 chords around the circle of 4ths. Try for a time of 45 seconds or less.
**Medium*: Spell the pitches for all 12 minor 7 chords, *top to bottom* (45 seconds or less).
***Challenge*: Quickly pick a minor arpeggio key (such as F). Then name the flat-3 pitch. For example, the b3 of F would be Ab. Do this in all keys.

K. Practicing Minor 7 Chords

You can practice minor 7 chords with the circle of 4ths, using the Virtual Practice Method. For additional ideas, see Chapter 1E: *Practice Levels for Flexible Scales*.

Exercise K - Humming Flexible Minor 7 Chords
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible minor 7 arpeggios, around the circle of 4ths, at quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same Basic; quarter-note = 180.

L. Spelling the 12 Dorian Scales

The Dorian scale is a basic minor scale for improvisation. It comes from the Greek Dorian mode. Its pitches are the same as major, except for a b3 and a b7.

1   2   b3   4   5   6 b7   8   1   2   b3   4   5   6 b7   8

Example L - C Dorian scale   Example L1 - E Dorian scale

► MORE 1 📎

Exercise L - Spelling Dorian Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Dorian scale, then for the other 11 Dorian scales around the circle of 4ths; 60 sec. or less.
**Medium*: Pick a number from 1 to b7 and a minor key. Name the pitch that fits. For example, the 4 of Bbm is Eb. Do this in all keys.

M. Practicing Flexible Dorian Scales

You can practice flexible Dorian scales around the circle of 4ths, using the Virtual Practice Method. For more ideas, see Chapter 1E: *Practice Levels for Flexible Scales*.

Exercise M - Humming Flexible Dorian Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible Dorian scales, around the circle of 4ths, at quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Chapter Review

1) A chord symbol indicates the key and type of the chord, as well as the top note used in the chord.

2) Common major chords are the major 7, major 6, and major 9.

3) The Lydian scale is like a major scale with a sharp 4th.

4) Common dominant chords are the dominant 7 (C7) and dominant 9 (C9).

5) The Mixolydian scale, used with a dominant chord, is like a major scale with a flat 7.

6) Common minor chords are minor 7 (Cm7), minor 6 (Cm6), and minor 9 (Cm9).

7) The Dorian scale, used with minor chords, is like a major scale with a flat 3 and a flat 7.

Expressions

*Imagination is more important than knowledge, for knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand. *Albert Einstein*
*See some good picture -- in nature; if possible; or on canvas hear a page of the best music; or read a great poem every day. You will always find a free half hour for one or the other; and at the end of the year your mind will shine with such an accumulation of jewels as will astonish even yourself. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*
*Good habits are as easy to form as bad ones. *Tim McCarver*
*Produce great pumpkins, the pies will follow later. *Anon*
*'Tis the mind that makes the body rich. *William Shakespeare*
*I light my candle from their torches. *Robert Burton*
*Words differently arranged have a different meaning, and meanings differently arranged have a different effect. *Pascal*
*The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said. *Peter F. Drucker*
*No man can do anything well who does not esteem his work to be important. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*
*A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring. *Alexander Pope*
*Is not life a hundred times too short for us to bore ourselves? *Friedrich Nietzsche*
*The greatest pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do. *Walter Bagehot*

1C: Melodic Color

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Color Tones
- Handling the Fourth Degree
- Finding Color Tones in Written Music
- Soloing with Color Tones

Melody ....
Rhythm
Expression
Development
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
♪
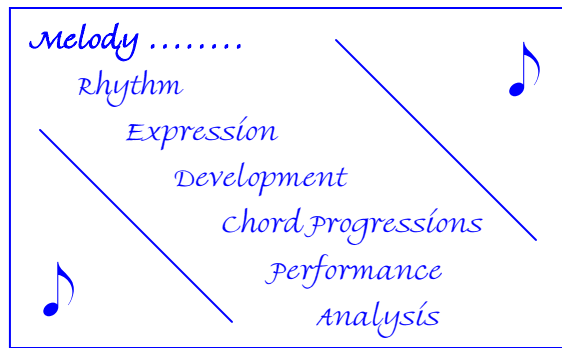
Inside the scales and chords you've been learning are notes that can add color and interest to your improvisation. In this chapter you'll discover those notes and learn how and when to use them. Once you master color notes in C Major, you can apply them in all other major and minor keys.

Note: The examples in this book assume that a CMa7 chord is sounding unless otherwise indicated.

Color Tones

Each scale has *resting* tones (1, 3, and 5) that sound relaxing, and *color* tones that sound more tense. In major, dominant, and minor scales, color tones are always the 2, 4, 6, and 7 of the scale.

A. Naming the Color Tones

Color tones for a C Major scale are:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

C **D** E **F** G **A** **B** C

For a C dominant (Mixolydian) scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7   8

C **D** E **F** G **A** **Bb** C

For a C minor (Dorian) scale:

1 2 3   4 5 6 7   8

C **D** Eb **F** G **A** **Bb** C

In classical and other types of music, you emphasize the resting tones and pass over the color tones to reach the resting tones. But in jazz you often do the reverse: you emphasize color tones to prolong musical tension.

Exercise A - Naming Color Tones
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: In each major scale in the circle of 4ths, name the color tone pitches (2, 4, 6, and 7).
**Medium:* Same as Basic, for each Mixolydian scale.
***Challenge:* Same as Basic, for each Dorian scale.

B. Emphasizing Color Tones

To emphasize a note, you can play it on a downbeat or hold it longer. The first example below emphasizes resting tones; the second example emphasizes color tones and is much more colorful than the first:

1   2   3   1   5   4   3   5   1

Example B - Melody: resting tones emphasized - not colorful

2   3   6   5 #4 6   2   1   7

Example B - Melody: color tones emphasized - more colorful

It's generally good to emphasize color tones in solos. You may have to "unlearn" the natural tendency to rely on resting tones in solo melodies. If you play 1, 3, 5 arpeggios too often in solos, you over-emphasize resting tones, and your solos may sound boring.

Exception: On faster tunes where chords and keys change quickly, emphasizing the resting (chord) tones makes the chord structure easier to hear.

Exercise B - Emphasizing Color Tones
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Around the circle of 4ths, play each flexible 8th-note Lydian scale at quarter note = 100, with fermatas on color tones but not on resting tones.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, quarter note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic, quarter note = 180.

C. Using Color Intervals

In a *color interval* both notes are color tones, sometimes with a fairly wide skip. For emphasis, you can hold the second note of the color interval. Here are the color intervals in C Major (upward skips):

D to F# (2-#4); F# to A or B (#4 to 6 or 7); B to D (7-2); A to D (6-2); D to A or B (2-6 or 7).

You can transpose these intervals to all other keys in major, minor, and dominant, and reverse the skips. Here's an example of several color intervals:

2 – 7,   2 – 6, #4 –3, #4 --7

Example C - Melody: color tone skips

MORE ▶ 1

Exercise C - Using Color Intervals
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Play all the color intervals (upwards skips) in the key of C.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; use downward skips.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; go through all keys in the circle of 4ths (upwards skips).

Handling the Fourth Degree

The natural 4th degree is a color tone that sometimes needs to be treated specially. Guidelines for doing this are explained below.

D. Handling the 4th in Major and Dominant

When you emphasize the natural fourth degree of a major or dominant scale, it doesn't sound very good; the 4 conflicts with the 3 of the current major chord. (The fourth sounds like the root of next chord in the circle of fourths, a dominant resolution.) To fix this problem, you can play the fourth and then the third, such as F to E in C Major. Or, you can *sharp* the fourth (as in the Lydian scale) so the fourth doesn't need to resolve.

For example:

Example D - Resolving the 4 to the 3   Example D1 - Sharp 4, not resolved

You can also *delay* the resolution of the natural fourth, such as 4 to 2 to 3, or 4 to 5 to 3.

Example D2 - Delayed resolutions of 4 to 3

But if the natural 4 in a major or dominant key is part of a minor arpeggio (such as D F A C), you don't need to resolve the 4 to 3; in that case the 4 helps to outline a minor chord.

Exercise D - Resolving 4ths in Major and Dominant Keys
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: In each major scale around the circle of 4ths, name the fourth degree and two different ways to resolve each fourth. For example, in C Major, F is the fourth; it can resolve to E, or first to D then to E.
**Medium*: Play each flexible major scale and pause on each 3, then resolve it to the 4.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, but use 4-2-3 and 4-5-3 resolutions.

Suspended Chords

A suspended chord (sus) is usually one where the 4th is substituted for the 3rd, such as Csus (major) or C7sus (dominant). On these chords you emphasize the natural 4th, not the 3rd.

Unlike classical music, jazz often prolongs suspended chords or leaves them unresolved. An example of a suspended chord melody is shown below. For examples of flexible scales to play over suspended chords, see *Pentatonic Scales* in Chapter 2A: *More Scales*.

Example D3 - Suspended chord melody   MORE ▶ 1 🔗 2 🔗 3 🔗

Handling the 4th Degree in Minor

In minor, the natural 4th degree is *fine* to emphasize, unlike major or dominant. Some players avoid the fourth in minor, mistakenly thinking it's like the fourth in major. Don't neglect the fourth in your minor-key solos; use it to add welcome color. The example below emphasizes the natural 4th in minor:

Example D1 - Emphasizing the 4th degree in minor

Finding Color Tones in Written Music

In written jazz tunes you can look for color tones and see how the 4th degree is handled. You can also study these elements in a *transcribed solo*, which is the written version of an improvised solo.

E. Color Tones in Transcribed Solos

The Art of Improvisation has transcribed solos from the BRIDJJ CD "Beat the Rats" in Chapter 2L, Chapter 3N, and Chapter 4K. The Exercise below helps you study some of these solos for color tones; you can also look for color tones in any other transcribed solos.

> **Exercise E - Color Tones in Transcribed Solos**
> Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__
>
> *Basic*: In the guitar solo for "Where's Waldis" (Chapter 3N), find all the color tones (2, #4, 6, 7) that are emphasized (held notes, starting notes, or ending notes).
> *Medium*: Same as Basic; use the trumpet solo for "Where's Waldis." Also note all 4 to 3 resolutions.
> *Challenge*: Same as Medium; select any other solo in Chapter 2L or Chapter 3N.

Soloing with Color Tones

Now that you've learned about color tones in major, dominant, and minor scales, you can work on emphasizing those color tones in your solos.

Soloing with Color Tones and Flexible Scales

Here are the steps to follow to emphasize color tones in flexible scales:

1   Choose a practice progression from one of the Practice Pages to play along with.
2   Study the chords and decide which flexible scale works with each chord.
3   Play a flexible scale on each chord.
4   To emphasize color tones, play them as longer values (quarter-note, dotted quarter, half-note), or use color intervals.

With practice you'll be able to find and emphasize color tones to add interest to your solos.

Chapter Review

1) Use color tones (2, #4 or 4, 6, and 7) to increase tension and resting tones (1, 3 or b3, and 5) to create relaxation.

2) Color tones are the same places (2, 4, 6, and 7) for major, dominant, and minor chords.

3) In color intervals, both notes are color notes, and the skip is usually a wide one.

4) In major or dominant keys, the 4th degree should usually be resolved to the 3rd, or sharped (#4th). The resolution can also be delayed.

5) In minor keys (or in minor arpeggios that occur in major or dominant keys), the 4th degree doesn't need to be resolved.

6) You can study written music, including transcribed solos, to see how color tones are used and how the 4th degree is handled.

1D: Rhythmic Variety
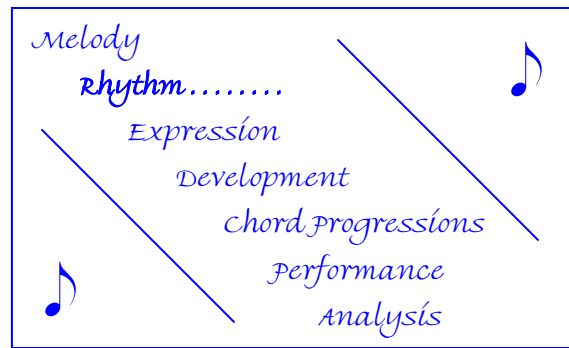
In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Latin, Fusion, and Swing Styles
- Using Offbeats
- Mixing Offbeats and Downbeats
- Playing Interesting Rhythms
- Using Rhythmic Combinations
- Virtual Practice Method for Rhythms

Melody

Rhythm........

Expression

Development

Chord Progressions

Performance

Analysis

For many improvisers, rhythms and rhythmic styles are undeveloped country. That's a tragedy, because rhythm is really at the heart of jazz and improvisation. Rhythms don't have to be complicated to be effective. You can make rhythmic progress in your solos just by learning to handle simple combinations of offbeats and triplets. Listening to the basic rhythmic styles in jazz gives you a solid foundation for solos.

Latin, Fusion, and Swing Styles

The essential jazz styles are *latin*, *fusion*, and *swing*.

Latin Style

Latin rhythms usually have even (straight) 8th-notes, and most consecutive notes are legato. Examples of latin styles are bossa nova, samba, and guajira. Some of the outstanding latin style players include Tito Puente, Arturo Sandoval, Clare Fischer, Chick Corea, and Gonzalo Rubalcava. For more on latin rhythms and styles, see Chapter 3D: *Latin and Fusion Styles*. On the BRIDJJ CD, listen to "Where's Waldis?" (samba).

Fusion Style

Fusion is a combination of styles, such as jazz, rock, blues, latin, swing, etc. There are many outstanding fusion players, such as Michael Brecker, John McLaughlin, Miles Davis, Allan Holdsworth, and Chick Corea. See also Chapter 3D: *Latin and Fusion Styles*. On the BRIDJJ CD, listen to "Beat the Rats" (fusion of latin and rock), "Barney Meets Godzilla" (alternate swing and rock), and "Tastes Like Chicken" (fusion of country, swing, rock, and classical).

Swing Style

Swing is a rhythmic style where eighth-notes are played *unevenly*, and legato and staccato notes are varied. Experts in the swing style include many of the greats of jazz, such as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, Bill Evans, and Wynton Marsalis. Swing rhythms and styles are discussed in Chapter 2C: *Swing Rhythms*.

On the BRIDJJ CD, listen to "Deja Blue" and "Precious Caboose."

Using Offbeats

Offbeats add tension to a rhythm, just as color tones add tension to a melody. In 4/4 time, the offbeat quarter-note beats are 2 and 4. Offbeat eighth-notes are *between* the quarter-note beats. With triplets, the offbeat notes are the second and third notes of each triplet group.

In the example below, offbeat quarters, eighths, and triplets are double-underlined.
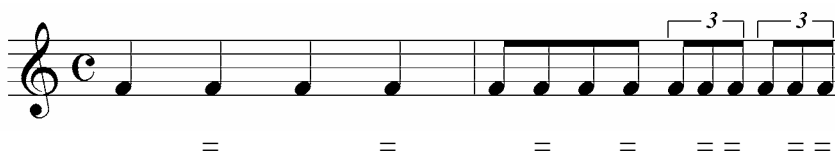
Example 1 - Offbeat quarters; offbeat 8ths; offbeat 8th triplets

A. Emphasizing Offbeats

It's not enough just to *play* an offbeat; you also need to make it *stand out*. Besides accenting an offbeat, you can emphasize it in these ways:

1) Rest just before the offbeat you want to emphasize (first example below).

2) Tie the offbeat into the next downbeat. This eliminates the attack on the next downbeat so the offbeat stands out more.

Example A - Offbeat notes after rests

Example A1 - Ties into downbeats

MORE ▶ 1 📎 2 📎 _

MORE ▶ 1 📎 2 📎

Learn to emphasize offbeats in your solos. Some soloists *always* start their solo phrases on beat 1, the most "boring" beat. When you enjoy and master offbeats, your solos become more colorful and interesting.

A true story – one of the best "offbeat" things that ever happened to me was having a brother who is jazz drummer. He would constantly practice independent coordination exercises in the next room, hands and feet all doing different things on the drum set. I was daily exposed to countless combinations of offbeats and triplets in the swing style, and that had a deep effect on how I see and hear rhythms in my own improvisations.

Exercise A - Emphasizing Offbeats
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Write or play a two-measure melody with quarter-rests on beat 1 or 3 in each bar. Do this again with 8th-rests on 1, 2, 3, or 4.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; use tied eighth-notes from "4-and" into 1, "1-and" into 2, "2-and" into 3, or "3-and" into 4.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; use ties to downbeats instead of using rests.

Mixing Offbeats and Downbeats

Playing *consecutive offbeats* adds even more rhythmic tension. Consecutive offbeats include:

- Half-notes (tied quarter-notes) on beats 2 and 4, or beats 1½ and 3½.
- Quarter-note values (tied 8th-notes) *between* beats.

B. Consecutive Offbeats: Half-Notes

Offbeat half-note values can be used in faster tunes for variety. The example below uses consecutive offbeat half-notes on beats 2 and 4, with ties across bars. In the third bar it returns to downbeats.

Example B - Consecutive half-note offbeats

MORE ᴜ 1 📎

If you shift the half-note values one eighth-note sooner, then the values fall just before beats 3 and 1, written as eighth-notes tied to dotted quarter-notes. These rhythms also work well in medium-tempo tunes:

Example B1 - Consecutive half-note offbeats (8th-notes tied to dotted quarters)

MORE ▶ 1

Or you can start the half-note values just after beat 1 and on beat 2½:
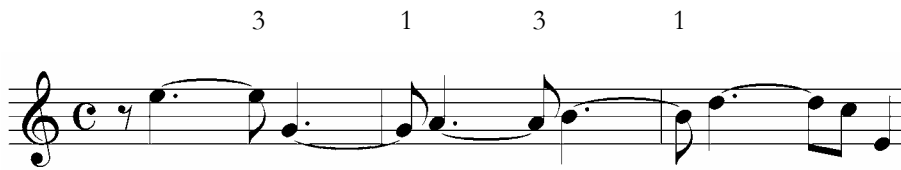
Example B2 - Consecutive half-note offbeats, starting on 1 1/2

You can try consecutive offbeat half-note values in flexible scales or chords. For more details on how to shift rhythmic values, see *Displacing Motifs* in Chapter 3H: *Rhythmic Development*.

Exercise B - Consecutive Half-note Offbeats
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__ ( )

Basic: Play a two-measure melody with half-note values on beat 1 or 3 in each bar.
Medium: Same as Basic; hide beat 1 or 3 using tied quarter-notes from 4 to 1 or from 2 to 3 Repeat the exercise with tied eighth-notes from "4-and" into 1, "1-and" into 2, "2-and" into 3, or "3-and" into 4.
Challenge: In a longer melody, combine quarter-note offbeats after rests with eighth-note offbeat after rests. Repeat the exercise with ties to *downbeats* not rests.

C. Consecutive Offbeats: Quarter-Notes

It takes practice to play offbeat quarter-note values cleanly, but they provide lots of rhythmic energy. Below are C Major scales with consecutive offbeats:

Example C - C Major scale, offbeats starting *before* beat one

Example C1 - C Major scale, offbeats starting *after* beat one

You can play consecutive offbeat quarter-note values in the flexible scales or arpeggios that you practice. Here is an example of a flexible scale built on offbeat quarter notes:

Example C2 - C Major flexible scale based on offbeat quarter-notes   MORE ▶ 1

D. Shifting: Downbeats and Offbeats

When you play several consecutive offbeats and then return to downbeats, those downbeats sound more interesting. Switching from consecutive offbeats to consecutive downbeats is a time-honored technique used by many great improvisers.

To shift from consecutive offbeats to a downbeat, add a note that's *half the value* of the consecutive notes. If the offbeats are half-notes, add a quarter-note; if the offbeats are quarter-notes, add an 8th-note.

You can switch back to offbeats in a similar way, by adding a single half-value note. In the example below, downbeats are indicated by d, and offbeats are o. The first 8th-note (underlined) shifts the quarter-notes off the beat; the second 8th-note (underlined) shifts quarter-note values back to downbeats.

d   d   d   = o   o   o   o   = d   d

Example D – Downbeats (d) switching to offbeats (o), returning to downbeats

MORE ▶ 1 2 3

Playing Interesting Rhythms   w   MORE

You can use a variety of rhythms in your flexible scales to bring them closer to true improvisation. Some basic ideas for creating interesting rhythms are:

- Alternate between shorter and longer note values to emphasize offbeats.
- Use triplets (quarter-note or eighth-note types).
- Mix triplets with ties and rests.

E. Shorter and Longer Values

Alternating shorter and longer rhythmic values is a good approach to finding interesting rhythms, especially when the longer notes come on the offbeats (between the beats or on beats 2 or 4).

The first example below uses quarter-notes on beats 2 and 4 as the longer rhythmic values. The second example uses half-notes on beat 2 as the longer values. The third example uses dotted-quarters on beats 1 1/2 and 3 1/2 as the longer values.

Example E - Offbeat quarters (beats 2 and 4)

MORE ► 1

Example E1 - Offbeat half-notes (beat 2)

MORE ► 1   2

Example E2 - Dotted quarter-notes on offbeats

MORE ► 1

Exercise E - Alternating Shorter and Longer Values

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Repeat a rhythm of two 8ths and a quarter-note in a long flexible scale, at quarter-note = 120.
**Medium*: Repeat a rhythm of two 8ths and a half-note in a long flexible scale, at quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Repeat a rhythm of 8th-note / dotted quarter-note in a flexible scale, at quarter-note = 180.

F. Using Triplets

Quarter-note triplets and eighth-note triplets can add welcome variety to your rhythms. The example below shows triplets interspersed with eighth-notes.

Example F - Eighth-notes with quarter-note triplets

MORE ► 1   2

There are thousands of combinations of triplet rhythms and ties you can play in any key. Try them out in your flexible scales and visualize them in your improvisation. Also, see the Rhythm Exercises in *Sightreading Jazz* for many more examples of triplet rhythms.

Exercise F - Using Triplet Rhythms

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Mix 8th-notes and quarter-note triplets in a long flexible scale, at quarter-note = 120.
**Mediu*m: Mix eighth-notes with 8th-note triplets in a long flexible scale, at quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Mix eighth-notes, quarter-note triplets, eighth-note triplets in flexible scales; quarter-note = 144.

G. Using Triplets with Ties and Rests

One of the most interesting rhythmic approaches is using tied triplets that emphasize offbeats. These rhythms take practice to play smoothly, but they're well worth the effort to become skilled with them.

Example G - Quarter-note triplets with ties
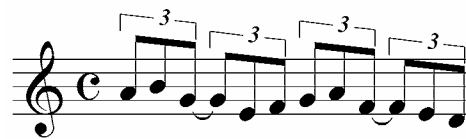
MORE ▶ 1

Example G1 - Eighth-note triplets with ties

MORE ▶ 1
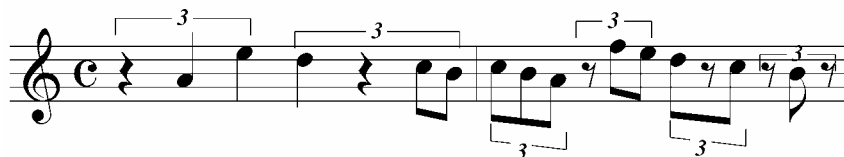
Example G2 - Triplets with rests
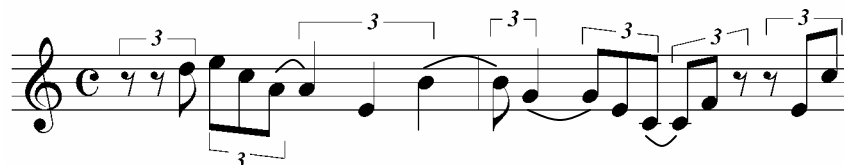
Example G3 - Triplets with ties and rests

For more examples of triplets, ties, and rests, see Rhythm Exercises in *Sightreading Jazz.*

Exercise G - Using Triplets with Ties and Rests
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Basic Exercise F; add a few ties to triplets and a few triplet rests.
**Medium*: Same as Medium Exercise F; add a few ties to triplets and a few triplet rests.
***Challenge*: Same as Challenge Exercise F; add a few ties to triplets and a few triplet rests.

Using Rhythmic Combinations   w MORE

H. Ideas for Rhythmic Combinations

You can *combine* the interesting rhythms you have worked with so far. When you combine these rhythms with flexible scales, you can create very interesting melody lines.

Here are some of the interesting rhythms you've learned in this chapter:

- Offbeat half-notes (beats 2 and 4)
- Offbeat 8ths tied to dotted quarters (before beats 1 and 3)
- Offbeat quarter-notes (between the beats)
- 8th-notes and dotted quarters
- Quarter-note triplets, also with ties and rests
- Eighth-note triplets, also with ties and rests

Below are some rhythms with combinations of 8th-note triplets and quarter-note triplets. You can use and adapt them as rhythmic ideas for your solos. For thousands of possible rhythm examples, see *Sightreading Jazz.*

Example H

Example H1
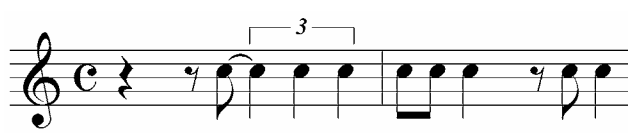
Example H2

Example H3
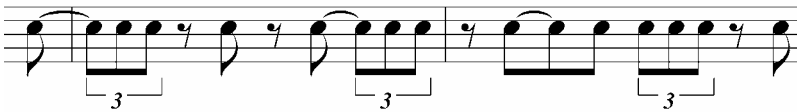
Example H4
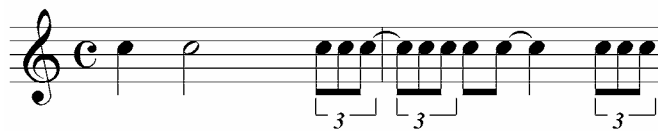
Example H5

Example H6

Exercise H - Using Rhythmic Combinations
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Write several 2-bar examples that combine any of these: offbeat half-notes, offbeat quarters, offbeat eighths tied to dotted quarters, mixed eighths and dotted quarters, or triplets.
**Medium*: Play the Basic examples you wrote in a flexible scale, at quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, at quarter-note = 180.

Virtual Practice Method for Rhythms

Besides reading printed rhythms, you need to *see* and *practice* rhythms away from your instrument. The Virtual Practice Method for rhythms helps you do this. Here are the steps to follow to get started:

1) In your mind's eye, *see* a one-bar rhythm with offbeats, ties, triplets, etc. It's not necessary to see every note and mark, but you should have the basic picture firmly in mind. If you have trouble seeing the rhythm, write it down. See also *Visualizing Rhythms* below.

2) Tap a pulse of constant quarters (foot or finger) at a slow-to-medium tempo.

3) Hear a percussion group (latin) or a rhythm section (swing) in the background. Repeat the same background in your mind for each bar.

4) As you hear the background and tap along, sing or hum the rhythm once perfectly (one repeated pitch).

5) Repeat the rhythm and the background, gradually speeding up the taps.

6) Add your own pitches to the rhythm; vary the pitches each time you repeat the rhythm.

7) Once you're comfortable with the rhythm, change to a new one or try a 2-bar rhythm.

As you use the Virtual Practice Method to work on rhythms, your rhythmic skills will sharpen, and you'll create and enjoy many more rhythmic ideas. Use Virtual Practice for melody *and* rhythms!

Rhythmic Precision: Thinking Like a Drummer

Most jazz soloists need to think more like good jazz drummers in order to be more precise *and* creative with rhythms. I was fortunate to grow up with a brother who incessantly practiced independent coordination exercises for drum set in the next room in our house. I discovered there is a world of rhythmic possibilities, if I could just combine rhythmic imagination and precision. I also discovered that most improvisers give far less attention to rhythmic detail than drummers do, but great improvisers are very solid rhythmically.

I found that rhythmic imagination and precision unlocked the door to *rhythmic development* in my solos, where I could take musical ideas and vary them both rhythmically and melodically. (See also Chapter 3H: *Rhythmic Development*.) Once I entered the land of rhythmic development, there was no going back; I found it was far superior to the land of endless eighth-notes and scale-running.

J. Visualizing Rhythms

As you visualize rhythms, you can use these suggestions:

1) See the start of each measure as a solid vertical bar line (every 4 beats in 4/4) and know where it fits in your rhythm.

2) Picure thin, light vertical lines in each measure over beats 2, 3, and 4.

3) Assign each note in the rhythm its proper role as a downbeat (a thin line through it) or offbeat or internal triplet (between the lines).

Even though you may not see exactly where beats 2, 3, and 4 are in your rhythm, you must always be able to sense which notes are downbeats and which are offbeats.

4) Long values feel more "inflated" and full; short values have bursts of energy.

Exercise J - Using Virtual Practice for Rhythms
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Use the Virtual Practice for Rhythms on several rhythms with quarter-notes, 8th-notes and 8th-rests.
Medium: Same as Basic; add quarter-note triplets.
Challenge: Same as Basic; add 8th-note triplets and rests.

Chapter Review

1) Essential jazz styles are latin, fusion, and swing.

2) To emphasize an offbeat, you can accent it, or rest just before the offbeat you want to emphasize, or tie the offbeat into the next downbeat.

3) To switch between downbeats and offbeats, insert a note half the value of the consecutive notes.

4) Interesting rhythms include short/long note combinations and triplet values.

5) In triplet groups you can use rests and ties.

6) You can use the Virtual Practice Method to strengthen your rhythmic skills and ideas.

1E: Practice Levels for Flexible Scales

There are seven basic levels of practice for each flexible scale, each slightly more difficult in nature. As you progress through each level, you bridge the gap between flexible scale and full improvisation.

The seven levels are listed below:

1. Steps (Chapter 1A)
2. Steps, hold color notes (Chapter 1C)
3. Steps and new rhythms (Chapter 1D)
4. Steps and 3rd skips (Chapter 2B)
5. Steps, 3rds, new rhythms
6. Steps and wider intervals (Chapter 2B)
7. Steps, wider intervals, and new rhythms

Note that Level 7 is very much like good, solid improvisation!

Practice Strategies   ᴡ MORE

There are several strategies you can use to progress through the practice levels with flexible scales:

- Stay with one flexible scale and move through various practice levels.
- Go through all keys (circle of fourths) in one level at a time.
- Randomly pick a key and a practice level for a flexible scale.
- For new rhythms, use the techniques you learned in Chapter 1D: *Rhythmic Variety*.
- Use longer ascending or descending lines, such as nearly an octave or more than an octave.
- Stay in the lower or higher range for a longer time.
- Occasionally stay within a three-note or four-note range.

Important: Whatever strategy you choose, be sure to cover all keys with major, Lydian, Mixolydian, Dorian, blues, pentatonic, and other scales. See Chapter 2A for additional scales to practice.

The Seven Practice Levels

The 7 Practice Levels for flexible scales are described below. Remember that you can use Virtual Practice to cover these levels without an instrument.

Level 1: Steps   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

This stepwise method is what you learned in Chapter 1A – you simply move up and down the flexible scale by single steps. Use this as your first approach to flexible scales. For example:

Level 1 Example

Level 1 Exercise (same as Exercise D in Chapter 1A)
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Hum and finger each flexible major scale in the circle of 4ths; quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Level 2: Steps, Hold Color Notes

This is like Level 2, except that every so often you pause on (hold out) a color note (2, 4 or #4, 6, or 7) then continue with the flexible scale. Review the color notes for the scale before you begin. For example:
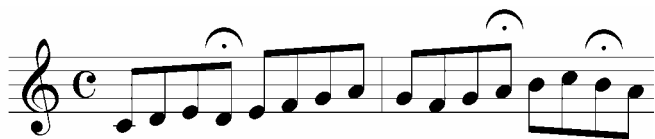
Level 2 Example

Level 2 Exercise

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Basic for Level 1, quarter-note = 100. Hold occasional color notes and continue.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Level 3: Steps and New Rhythms

For example:

To explore different rhythms, you can use any of these ideas:

1) Change some eighth-notes to quarter-notes or rests.
2) Change some eighth-notes to dotted quarter-notes.
3) Change some eighth-notes to eighth-rests.
4) Insert quarter-note triplets occasionally.
5) Insert eighth-note triplets occasionally.

Here are some sample C Major flexible scales with alternate rhythms:

Level 3, Example A – C Major flexible scale with alternate rhythms
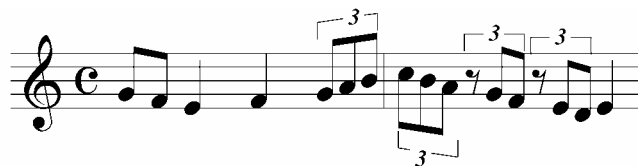
Level 3, Example B – Another C Major flexible scale with alternate rhythms

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Level 3 Exercise

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Basic for Level 1. Add other rhythms (quarters, triplets, dotted quarters, etc.).
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

    The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

Level 4: Steps and 3rd Skips   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

In this level you use alternate using whole-steps, half-steps, and *thirds* (two whole-steps, or a whole-step + half-step) in flexible scales. For example:
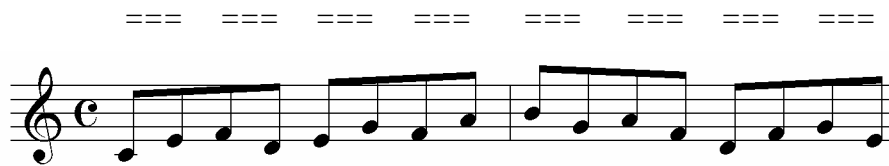
Level 4 Example

Level 4 Exercise
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Basic for Level 1, using some thirds, at quarter-note = 100.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Level 5: Steps, 3rd Skips, New Rhythms   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

This level is just like Level 4, except that you add new rhythms to the flexible scales.

Level 5 Exercise
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Basic for Level 6; add other rhythms (quarters, triplets, dotted quarters, etc.).
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 144.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Level 6: Steps and Wider Intervals   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

Practicing wider intervals in your flexible scales helps you hear new pitches more accurately. *Sightreading Jazz* has thousands of written flexible-scale exercises, many with wider intervals. As you practice wide-interval flexible scales, they will sometimes contain flexible arpeggios. For example:

Level 6, Example A (6th, 4th, 5th, 4th)
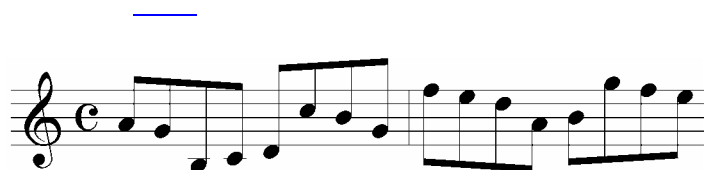
Level 6, Example A1 (6th, 7th, 7th, 4th, 6th)

Level 7: Steps, Wider Intervals, New Rhythms   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

This level is just like Level 6, except that you add new rhythms as well as pause on color notes and hold them.

Here are some C Major flexible scales with wider intervals *and* alternate rhythms. You can also pause on color notes and hold them, then continue on.
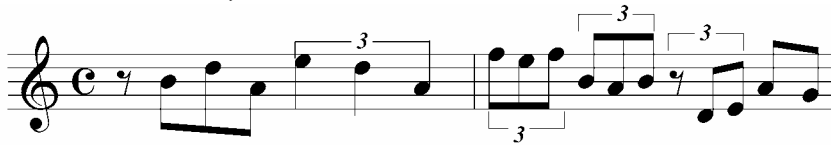
Level 10, Example A – C Major flexible scale with wider intervals and alternate rhythms
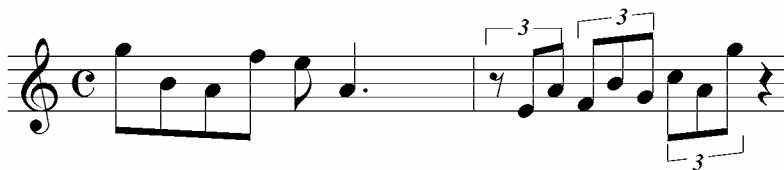
Level 10, Example B – Another C Major flexible scale with wider intervals and alternate rhythms

The Next Step: Adding Non-Harmonic Tones   ♪ HEAR SAMPLE

You can add non-harmonic tones to your flexible scales, for a richer sound at any practice level. Non-harmonic tones are explained in Chapter 3A: *More Melodic Color*. Here are a few examples of non-harmonic tones in flexible scales, at different practice levels. (The non-harmonic tones in major are b2, b3, b6 and b7.)

Example A – Adding non-harmonic tones to Level 1 C Major flexible scale

Example B – Adding non-harmonic tones to Level 3 C Major flexible scale (new rhythms)

Example C – Adding non-harmonic tones to Level 5 C Major flexible scale (3rd skips)

1F: Using Expression

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- The Role of Expression
- The Role of Expression
- Using SHAPE for Expressions
- Using Dynamics
- Varying Accents and Articulations

Melody
Rhythm
Expression……..
Development
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
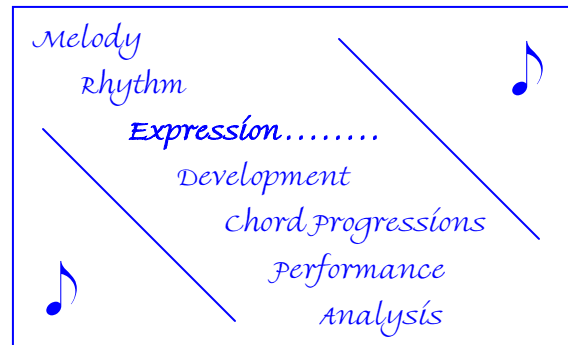
Expression is the art of *how* you play notes in your solos, using dynamics, accents, articulations, etc. The "E" in SHAPE is "expressively" – the right expression in your melodies can make a big difference in your solos. This chapter deals specifically with dynamics, accents, and articulations. Special effects, another type of expression, are discussed in Chapter 4C: *Special Effects*.

The Role of Expression

Emotion is the subjective fire that triggers expression; *expression* is how you translate the emotion into musical elements. Even though musical expression might seem very subjective, you can treat the *basic elements* of expression objectively. For example, you can identify dynamics, accents, and articulations in solos. Still, there so many different *ways* to use and combine these basic elements that your expression does become more personal. What's important is to recognize and use expression well to enhance your solos.

Most improvisers get so caught up searching for the next pitches that they don't *express* the pitches they're playing. Don't fall into that trap – slow your ideas down enough so you can see them well and express them well.

Sound and Technique

Your personal expression depends on your control over your own *sound* and *technique*. Any weaknesses you have in these areas can limit the kinds of expression you use. With better control of your instrument, the pitches and rhythms come easier so you can focus more on adding expression effectively. For more ideas on sound and technique in solos, see Chapter 1M: *Analyzing Solos*.

The Range of Expression

When you use expression, consider these points:

1) *How dramatic or frequent is the expression*? Expression should be subtle, not overdone.

2) *How wide should the variation be*? You can get many degrees of expression without going to extremes, but occasionally extremes are called for.

3) *When does expression work best*? Expression needs to stand out. It's usually more effective when it's unexpected, but it can sometimes be effective when it's expected.

#1: Subtle and Occasional

We can compare expression to spices in meals. With the right spices in the right amounts, the meal can taste much better. In a solo, expression shouldn't be overdone or it will lose its flavor. Slower tunes allow more subtle and more frequent expression, while faster tunes need more dramatic but less frequent expression. Silence helps expression stand out more.

#2: Varied

You need a wide *variety* of dynamics, articulations, and accents. You should:
- Use a wider range of accents and articulations, from gentle to strong.
- Watch the overall dynamics in your band. You can help the others get louder or softer by the solo ideas you play. When you allow softer dynamics you open a wider range of expression; with louder dynamics, the subtler effects are lost.

#3: Well-Timed

When you use expression is almost as important as the kind of expression you use. There are many timing possibilities; your task is to select the right kind of expression at just the right moment. Listening to jazz recordings can give you helpful ideas in this area.

Sometimes you can add expression to a note or two that are isolated before and after by longer rests. This makes the expression you use really stand out. Be sure you have something effective to say, and don't overuse this approach.

Using SHAPE for Expression

SHAPE (See, Hear and Play Expressively) is the key to unlocking good expression. When you can see your musical shapes unfolding, and when you are confident with your sound and technique, you can reliably choose the best notes for expression. Expression can make the notes prettier, rougher, stronger, fainter, or unusual in some way. In a visual way, adding expression is something like this:

- Prettier = vibrato, trills, (see Chapter 2E: *Embellishments*), color notes held longer
- Rougher = harsher attacks, flatter or sharper pitch
- Stronger or fainter = louder or softer (or half-sounds)
- Unusual = special effects (see Chapter 4C: *Special Effects*)

So you can polish and paint notes, or scratch them up, or hammer or squish them – whatever comes to mind that makes the idea better, as long as it's not overdone.

Using Dynamics

Some players use little or no range in their dynamics – it's all "medium loud." Instead, try frequent but slight dynamic variations in melodies to open a world of dynamic possibilities.

A. Dynamic Variety

By habit, we play louder as we go higher, and softer as we go lower. Below are some suggestions for making dynamics more varied and less predictable. Reverse the normal dynamics: crescendo going down, decrescendo going up.

- Crescendo or decrescendo as you hold a pitch or repeat a pitch several times.
- Play whisper-soft. Balance with the rhythm section and pause before the soft passage.
- Insert occasional louder, accented notes in the middle of a softer passage.
- Use "terraced" dynamics: play a musical idea softly then repeat it louder, or vice versa.

Here are two points to keep in mind about dynamics when you playing with a group:

Your group needs to be sensitive to the dynamic changes of each soloist.

As a soloist, make dynamic shifts where they make sense – don't suddenly go to extremes and expect the group to read your mind.

You may want to give some visual cues if you want the group to follow the direction you're heading in with dynamics.

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Exercise A - Using Dynamics

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: On a flexible scale, crescendo as you go down and decrescendo as you go up.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; crescendo or decrescendo as you hold or repeat a pitch in the scale.
***Challenge*: On a flexible scale, play suddenly softer; or insert a few accented notes in a softer passage.

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Varying Accents and Articulations   MORE

Accents and articulations are often neglected or poorly handled in expression. If your solos have little variety in accents or articulation, you're probably just searching for "newer and better" pitches to play. Here are some common problems with accents and articulations, along with solutions:

Problem 1: It's hard enough *choosing* pitches without worrying about accents & articulations.
Solution: Choose fewer pitches and express them better so the listener enjoys them more.

Problem 2: I can't use accents or articulations when pitches and rhythms aren't locking in.
Solution: Practice scales and intervals in *all* keys; practice offbeat rhythms in all styles.

Problem 3: At medium or fast speeds, notes crack when I use articulations or accents.
Solution: Improve your sound production, technique, and articulation ability on your instrument. Also, work on your ear training so you can accurately hear and sing the notes you're trying to play.

B. Using Accents

Below are some suggestions for using accents effectively. (See also *Swing Accent Guidelines* in Chapter 2C: *Swing Rhythm*s.)

- Practice a wide variety of accents, from "ghosted" (lightly played) notes to very strong accents.
- Randomly accent a repeated pitch for several bars.
- While repeating a group of notes, accent one or two notes strongly, or vary which notes are accented.

There are many ways to effectively use accents in your melodies; try your own variations.

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Exercise B - Using Accents

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: On a flexible scale, "ghost" some notes.
**Medium*: Randomly accent notes in a flexible scale.
***Challenge*: Combine the Basic and Medium exercises.

</div>

C. Using Articulations

In jazz the basic approach is to play notes legato (full value). To use expression in articulations, try any of the following ideas:

- Play occasional notes staccato. Chapter 2C: *Swing Rhythms* explains more about articulations in the swing style.

- Adjust the length of any staccato note, from very short to almost full value. These variations are subtle but important.

- Vary between slurs (smooth) and attacks.

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Exercise C - Using Articulations

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

Basic: On any flexible scale, select one or two notes per bar to play staccato.
Medium: On any flexible scale, see how many ways you can articulate the notes.

</div>

Chapter Review

1) Expression is how you translate emotion into musical elements.

2) The basic elements of expression can be described and learned.

3) Your ability to use expression depends on your control of sound and technique.

4) Effective expression is usually subtle and occasional, varied and well-timed.

5) Common tools of expression are dynamics, accents, and articulations.

Expressions

*However skillful an artist may be, and however perfect his technique, if he unhappily has nothing to tell us, his work is valueless. *Jacques Maritain*
*The object of art is to crystallize emotion into thought, and then fix it in form. *Delsarte*
*Would that we could at once paint with the eyes! -- In the long way from the eye through the arm to the pencil, how much is lost! *Lessing*
*There are many great truths which we do not deny, and which nevertheless we do not fully believe. *J.W. Alexander*
*Some books are to be tasted; others swallowed; and some few to be chewed and digested. *Bacon*
*Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimension*s. Oliver Wendell Holmes*
*All experience is an arch, to build upon. *Henry Adams*

1G: Developing with Motifs and Phrases

In this chapter you'll learn:

- About Development
- Creating a Motif
- Varying a Motif
- Creating Phrases
- How to End Phrases
- Eliminating Phrase Barriers
- Development Exercises, Level 1

Melody
Rhythm
Expression
Development….
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
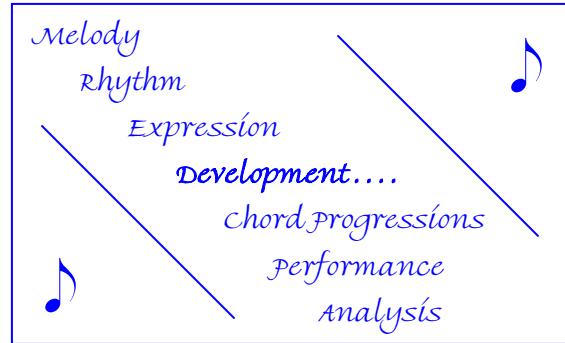
Development is the art of creating and varying *motifs* (short musical ideas) so your solos build logically and emotionally. This chapter helps you create and develop motifs and phrases in solos. Once you experience the joy of development, you won't settle for less.

When you listen to recorded jazz solos, identify the artists that use development well. Finding good development in recorded solos can be very satisfying. This and later chapters help you develop ideas using many of their techniques.

About Development

Developing musical ideas is at the heart of almost every kind of music. Unfortunately, some soloists think that because improvisation offers so much freedom, development is too limiting or doesn't really matter. Nothing could be more wrong. Development is a great, often unexplored territory that can add a world of interest to your solos.

Too many jazz soloists are technique-strong and development-weak. To be a complete jazz soloist, you must know how to effectively develop motifs and phrases in solos.

The Classical Connection

Development in jazz has close parallels to development in classical music. Let's look at an example of development in a classical piece – Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5 in C Minor*. First Beethoven states a motif, then he varies it (down a step diatonically). After that, he develops the motif to build phrases.

motif ------   varied motif

original motif, extended ---------

Example 1 - Development in Beethoven's 5th symphony

Of course, composers have the advantage of *writing* motifs and developments, revising them until they're just right. As jazz soloists, we create and develop music in *real time*, doing our best without revisions. A composer might have the time to create more logical or perhaps more beautiful phrases than the improviser, but the

improviser works in the "moment of time," with its creative possibilities and challenges. Development is an essential skill for both improvisers and composers.

Excuses for Not Developing

Here are some common excuses used for neglecting development in solos:

1) "I need to impress the audience right away; there's no time for development."

2) "I have no idea how to develop ideas."

3) "I want freedom, not structure."

Solution #1: Unless your solo is only a few bars long, there's always time to develop ideas. Think of how you listen to your friend in a conversation: do you enjoy hearing whatever pops into the person's head, or would you rather hear thoughts that make sense and build to a point? As the improviser, you have the "floor" in the conversation, so it's up to you to use the time wisely. With practice, development will help you play *fewer notes* that make *more sense*, a plus for any listener.

Solution #2: This book explains basic tools for developing improvisation ideas. These tools are surprisingly similar between jazz and classical styles. Once you learn the tools, apply them thoughtfully and creatively, but don't overuse them. They should help you develop ideas, not dominate ideas. If you handle the tools properly, they will serve you well.

Solution #3: More freedom comes knowing how to *handle* structure than from ignoring structure. This is related to SHAPE – when you accurately see the shape (structure) of a musical idea, it leads to new ideas and variations.

Creating a Motif

The first step in development is creating *motifs* (short musical ideas). You can vary the motifs in many ways, helping your ideas grow and take shape.

A. Motif Examples

Below are some examples of simple motifs.

| Example A - Simple motif | Example A1 - Another simple motif |

By using flexible scales with alternate rhythms and skips, you've already created motifs. Now it's a process of isolating them and focusing on their development. When you create a motif, remember these points:

1 Accurately hear the first pitch of your motif before you play it; then place the note securely in the rhythmic spot where you want it to be.

2 Select the pitches and rhythm for your motif.

3 Keep your first motifs somewhat simple. Later, you can join motifs together (see *Creating Phrases* below) or play longer and more complex motifs.

4 Emphasize color tones and interesting rhythms.

Motifs from Tune Melodies

A great source for motifs is in the jazz tune melody itself. You can adapt or copy the closing motif of the tune melody and use it as the first motif in your solo. You can also use any interesting motif in the tune melody anywhere in your solo. The motifs you borrow can be varied and developed. For more on development tools, see Chapter 2F: *Melodic Development*.

Exercise A - Creating Motifs

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Write down a simple motif and play it. Find a motif in printed music and play it.
**Medium: Play a simple motif, then write it down.
***Challenge: Find an interesting motif in a recorded piece, then write it and play it.

Varying a Motif

Too much repetition of a motif sounds boring, but playing too many different motifs too soon can confuse the listener. Getting a good balance between repetition and contrast is the key. Many players *avoid* any kind of repetition, thinking that more variety is more interest. That's the wrong answer: they throw away good motifs after playing them just once. Instead, try different *degrees* of variation, each with its own advantages.

Degrees of Variation

The basic degrees of variation are described below.

- *Exact repetition (no variation)* is best when the motif has strong interest, such as color tones or offbeat rhythms. One or two repetitions is fine; occasionally you can build energy with many repetitions.

- *Slight variation* is subtle, gradual development. Although slight variation may not seem like an interesting concept, it's actually very powerful when used well. Most improvisers neglect slight variation in favor of more variation.

- *More variation* creates more melodic variety and develops the motif somewhat faster. This technique dominates some players' development; it should be used carefully.

- *Complete variation* (starting a new motif). This gives you a fresh start for a new motif and development. This is like starting a new paragraph of musical thought.

In this example, bar 2 varies slightly; bar 3 varies more:

Original motif   Slight variation   More variation

MORE ▶ 1 □ 2 □ 3 □

In your solos, work for a balance between slight, more, and complete variation.

B. Varying Motifs

Several ways to vary motifs are these:

- Change the end of the motif. The end of the motif is usually the easiest the easiest part to remember, because it's followed by silence.

- Change a wider interval (usually surrounded by steps) by expanding it or shrinking it. (See *Expanding Intervals* and *Shrinking Intervals* in Chapter 2F: *Melodic Development*.)

- Add an articulation or accent that stands out, such as a single staccato note.
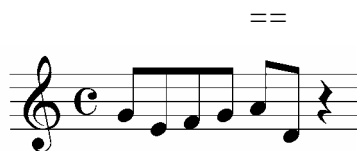
Example B - Original motif   Example B1 - Varying the ending

MORE ▶ 1 □

==
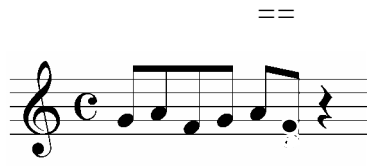
Example B2 - Varying an interval

Example B3 - Varying articulation on the first note

For more ideas on changing motifs, see Chapter 2F: *Melodic Development*.

Exercise B - Varying Motifs

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Play a 1-bar motif, then vary it slightly.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; vary the motif with more contrast.
***Challenge*: Play a 2-bar motif and vary it twice, each time differently, with slight or more contrast.

C. Developing Earlier Motifs   w   MORE

You can also develop all or part of an *earlier* motif, such as one you played several bars before. This technique is very effective, but it's usually neglected because we tend to throw away ideas that are more than one bar old. Too often we *forget* what we just played; this can seriously limit our solo development. I often think that a "little man with a broom" comes along in our brain, trying to erase anything more than one measure old. Don't let him do it!

You should constantly *visualize* and remember your contours, rhythms, and pitches. Then when you play something interesting, you'll remember and develop it. That's where practice with SHAPE is very valuable.

The examples below show some ways to develop earlier motifs. In these examples, the motif and its development are more than one bar apart:

=========   ===========

Example C – "Earlier motif"   Developing the earlier motif

=====   =====
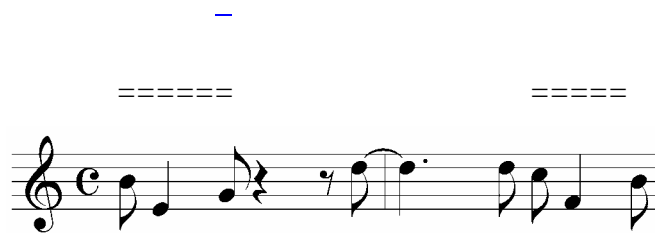
Example C1 – Another example of developing an earlier motif   MORE u   1 2 3

Exercise C - Developing Earlier Motifs

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Write 2 motifs, then vary the first one.
**Medium*: Play 2 motifs, then vary the first one.
***Challenge*: Play 3 motifs, then vary the first one.

Music phrases are like phrases or sentences in writing. When you construct intelligent phrases in your solo, you tell a musical story; the phrases lend organization. This helps you avoid wandering around musically, and it gives you some guideposts to work with in constructing your solo. It also helps your listeners follow where your solo is going.

D. Phrase Types

Besides being a single, long motif, a phrase can be:

- *Similar, separate* motifs, with a short rest after each
- A group of *joined* motifs; each end on a longer note

Each motif below has a similar shape. This helps the motifs fit together in the phrase.
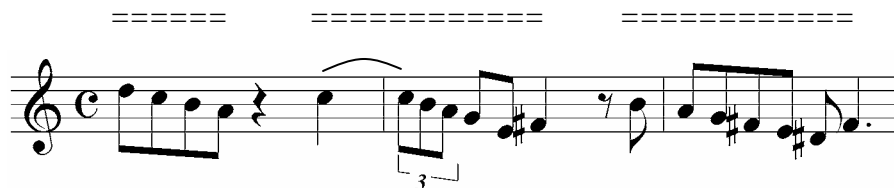
Example D -Phrase of separate but similar motifs
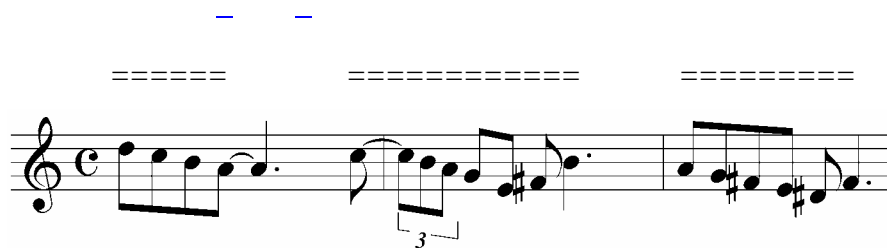
Example D1 -Phrase of joined motifs

Exercise D - Recognizing Phrases
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

Basic: In any printed solo in Chapter 2L or Chapter 3N, find these 3 phrase types if they exist: long motifs; similar but separate motifs; and a group of joined motifs.
Medium: In any printed solo in Chapter 2L or Chapter 3N, mark the phrase types for the entire solo.

E. Connecting Motifs

To smoothly connect motifs in a phrase, you can begin the next motif on a note that's on or near the ending note of the first motif. The ending and beginning notes "dovetail" together.

The example below shows this, using two connected motifs, a half-step apart.

End, motif 1 -- Start of motif 2
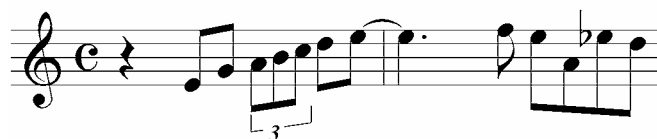
Example E - Motifs that dovetail

You can also start the 2nd motif an *octave, seventh,* or *ninth* above or below the end of the first one. An octave sounds a lot like starting on the same note; a ninth sounds like an octave plus a step:

End, motif 1 - Start, motif 2
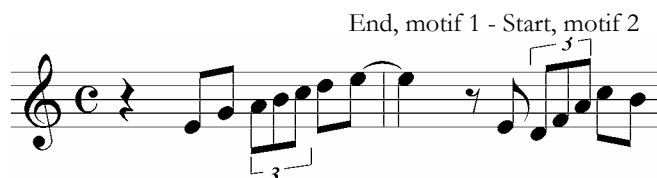
Example E1 - Motifs that dovetail: octave skip

MORE ▶ 1

End, motif 1 - Start, motif 2

Example E2 - Motifs that dovetail: seventh skip

MORE ▶ 1

End, motif 1 - Start, motif 2

Example E3 - Motifs that dovetail: ninth skip

MORE ▶ 1

You should vary the amount of rest between any two motifs; don't always start the next motif two beats after the previous one ends, for example.

Exercise E - Connecting Motifs
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Write two motifs that connect by half- or whole-step, up or down.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; connect by an octave.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; connect by a ninth.

How to End Phrases   MORE

Your phrases should vary in length, ending in different spots in the bar. Make some phrases shorter than comfortable and some longer. Phrases should grow from simple to complex as your solo progresses.

Remember that the end of a phrase or motif creates a lasting impression; the silence after lets the listener reflect on what you just played. Ending a phrase looks easy on paper, but too often we end phrases weakly – the rhythm or pitch of the last note is not secure, or there are too many notes in the phrase. Ending a motif or phrase cleanly is like making a clean landing in gymnastics or finishing a fast break in basketball.

F. Ways to End Phrases

Here are some ideas to help you plan and end phrases:

1) Think ahead. Clearly visualize the *end* of your phrase so it comes off cleanly.

2) Try ending with a staccato note, or a longer note with expression (vibrato, etc.), or a well-defined rhythm. Your last note should be as secure in pitch and rhythm as your first note.

3) Try to vary *where* in the bar you end the phrase.

   The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

4) End before you're forced to end. Don't end a phrase just because you're out of breath, energy, or ideas; end when the music says it should end.

The worst habit is ending each motif near a barline and starting the next motif right away, as in this example:

Example F - Bad habit: Ending every motif near a bar line

Instead, vary where you end your motifs, as in this example.

Example F1 - Good habit: Ending motifs in a variety of places

---

Exercise F - Ending Phrases
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

*Basic: Choose a a beat or offbeat in the second bar of two measures; play a motif that ends at that spot.
**Medium: Write and play simple motifs, varying where in the bar you end each motif.

Economizing

When you closely analyze the notes you play in a motif or phrase, you may find extra "baggage" notes – notes that are easy to play but don't really add to the strength of the idea. To eliminate baggage, play shorter and stronger motifs, keeping SHAPE in mind. For examples of note economy, listen to Miles Davis' solos on the *Kind of Blue* and *Somethin' Else* CDs.

Dealing with Silence

A proper amount of silence in a solo is important, because it focuses attention on your ideas. Some soloists feel they should fill up every available moment with notes and not waste time resting. This leads to "urban sprawl" in solos – overcrowded, old and tired ideas, with little room to breathe. Good attention to silence can help you use SHAPE to get the most from your musical ideas. It also gives a rhythm section time to interact with your ideas, creating a musical dialog. Before you work for dense, intense, and packed-to-the-gills solos, work for carefully balanced solos with breathing room and craftsmanship. (See also Chapter 4A: *Soundscape*s.)

Eliminating Phrase Barriers

Sometimes when you create phrases, you hit a mental barrier, and your ideas seem to crash. Below are some common problems that create phrase barriers, along with solutions.

Problem 1: I keep stopping at new barlines.
Solution: Play *through* barlines. Stop just after beat one or in the middle of a bar, not always at the end of a bar.

Problem 2: A chord symbol changes while I'm in the middle of a phrase.
Solution: You'll learn about how to connect between chord symbols in Chapter 3B: *Melodic Connection*s. The contours and rhythms of your phrase shouldn't be controlled by the chords; the chords should naturally fit into your phrases.

Problem 3: I can play complex ideas in easy keys, but I have to play simple ideas in the harder keys.
Solution: Spend extra time on scales and arpeggios in the more difficult keys. Try developing a simple idea (fewer/slower notes) from easy chords to harder chords. Ideas can get prematurely complicated in easy keys.

Problem 4: I run out of breath or make a mistake.
Solution: Shorten some motifs. Horn players can work on breath control to play longer phrases. If you make a mistake, don't just stop; maybe you can use the "wrong" note as part of your next idea.

Development Exercises, Level 1

The exercises below help you practice what you've learned about variations and phrase connections. For more practice, you can create and develop your own motifs on separate sheets of music paper.

Motif 1

Original motif   Slight variation
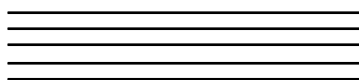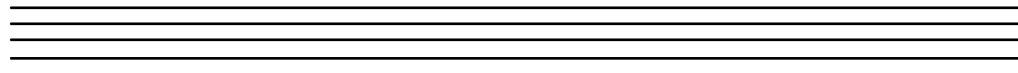
More variation   Connect to a new motif

Motif 2

Original motif   Slight variation

More variation   Connect to a new motif

Motif 3

Original motif   Slight variation
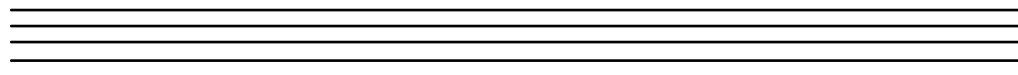
More variation   Connect to a new motif

Chapter Review

1) Development is the art of repeating or varying motifs to build ideas in a solo. There are parallels between classical development and development in jazz improvisation.

2) A motif is a group of consecutive notes forming a short musical idea.

3) A motif can be repeated, changed a little, changed more, or completely changed.

4) In a motif, it's easiest to remember the ending, wide intervals, articulations, or accents.

5) A phrase is a group of one or more separate or joined motifs.

6) To smoothly connect motifs, start the next motif on the same pitch, a step above or below, or a ninth above or below the end of the previous phrase.

7) Use a variety of phrase lengths; don't always end phrases in the same spots.

8) Economizing on phrases and eliminating phrase barriers helps you create more interesting melodies.

1H: Customizing Tune Melodies

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Balancing the Degrees of Variation
- Development Tools
- Using the Tune Melody in the Solo

Melody
Rhythm
Expression
Development….
Chord Progressions
Performance
Analysis
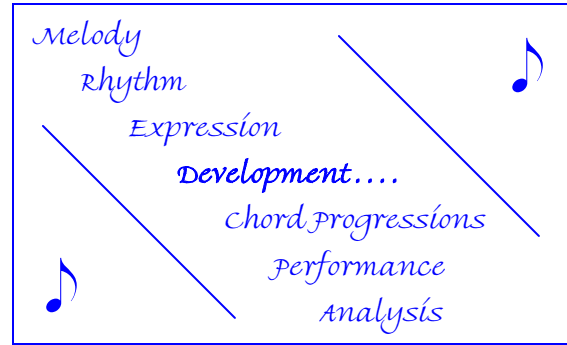
One of the best improvisation skills you can gain is the ability to embellish and customize the melody of a tune so it becomes your own. When you learn to do that artfully, the line between original melody and improvisation becomes blurred, and you have a springboard into effective solo ideas.

Unfortunately, I often hear improvisers who use the following approach: they play the original melody of the tune exactly as written, with little expression, and then launch into a solo that bears little or no resemblance to the melody or even character of the tune. Unless the tune is very complicated, taking an extreme approach like that loses so much opportunity for development and expression.

Instead, learn to become skillful at the art of embellishing tune melodies and making them your own.

Balancing the Degrees of Variation

Another problem – when some players discover they can vary and develop a tune melody, they immediately go to extreme variations. As you consider ways to develop your tune melody, remember the degrees of variation discussed in Chapter 1G:

- No variation – play certain notes of the melody as written

- Slight variation – use development tools sparingly to add small original touches to the melody

- More variation – use development tools to change the melody more noticeably. This degree has lots of breadth, from moderate changes to dramatic changes.

- Complete variation – add fills or improvise in certain sections of the melody.

These degrees of variation give you lots of room to craft your changes to the melody and develop ideas.

Development Tools

When you develop or alter a tune melody, there are basic development tools you can rely on. Some of these tools are listed below, along with the chapters in *The Art of Improvisation* where you can read more about them.

- Adding expression to the melody (Chapters 1F and 2E)

- Adding notes to the end of the melody (Chapter 2F)

- Omitting notes (Chapter 2F)

- Changing pitches or intervals (Chapter 2F)

- Changing the rhythms or timing (Chapters 3H and 5D)

Each of these methods is briefly described below in terms of tune development. For more details on each technique, see the corresponding chapter. As you use these tools, be sure *not to overdo any one tool*, or your tune melody will be weakened.

Adding Expression

The easiest places to add expression to a melody are while holding a longer note or at the end of a phrase. Here are some ideas to try:

- Add vibrato
- Change dynamics
- Add embellishments, such as trills and grace notes
- Change articulations, ranging from very short to full value
- Use special effects (see Chapter 4C) such as bends, hammering, slides, growls, etc.

Adding Notes to the End of a Phrase

The end of a phrase may be marked by a rest, or it may be at the end of a longer note. Here are some guidelines for adding notes to the end of a melody phrase:

- To start, add just a note or two – then progress to adding more notes
- Reuse some of the pitches you just played in the notes that you add
- Use a definite shape with the notes you add, such as descending, ascending, or a short contour pattern

Omitting Notes

Omitting notes from the end of a well-known melody can leave the audience in (hopefully) pleasant suspense. Start by omitting one or two notes at the end, then try shortening your phrase until it has just enough of the original melody left to be recognizable. Chick Corea's version of "Autumn Leaflets" (not the real title) on the Akoustic Band CD stops after the first four notes, and he never does play the rest of the missing melody.

Changing Pitches or Intervals

When you change pitches and intervals, use care so the melody is still somewhat recognizable. Just one changed note here and there can be a welcome variation in the melody. Be sure the changed pitches are attacked securely and in tune so they don't just sound like mistakes. Here are some ideas:

- Expand or shrink a wide interval (a fourth or more) in the melody
- Miss a note by a half-step
- Miss a note by an octave or more

Changing the Rhythms or Timing

With practice, you can stretch out or shorten rhythms, and you can use rubato to gradually slow down or speed up on the tempo. As you do this, keep these points in mind:

- Always be definite and in control with your altered rhythms or timing so it sounds planned
- When you speed up, be prepared for the extra silence, or be ready to add or repeat notes to fill in the extra space
- When you slow down, be prepared to leave out a few notes in the current phrase. Or, you can hurry the next phrase a bit to compensate.

Using the Tune Melody in a Solo

You can use parts of the original tune melody in your solo. If done well, this can strengthen the ties between the melody and your solo. Here are some guidelines in using the tune melody in your solo:

- Use short segments of the melody, such as a few notes at the beginning or an interesting part in the middle

- Use more variation in the solo version of the melody so it doesn't sound like a direct quote

- Try partial quotes (see Chapter 4D: *More Development* for ideas)

Chapter Review

1) Customizing a tune melody helps you create your own version of the tune.

2) Use a balance of the four degrees of variation (none, slight, more, complete) to add interest to how you customize the tune melody.

3) Common development tools for customizing tune melodies are:

- Adding expression to the melody

- Adding notes to the end of the melody

- Omitting notes

- Changing pitches or intervals

- Changing the rhythms or timing

4) You can use parts of the original tune melody in your improvised solo.

1J: Chords, Keys, and Progressions

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Chords in Major Keys
- Recognizing Keys in Chord Progressions
- The Basic Blues
- Using Blues Scales
- ii-V-I Progressions
- Simplifying Chord Progressions

Melody
Rhythm
Expression
Development
….chord progressions
Performance
Analysis
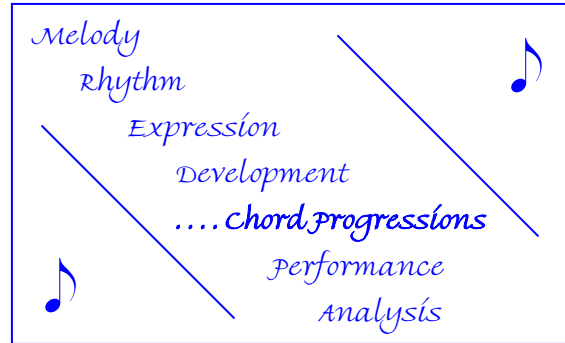
A chord progression is a series of chords, the harmonic backbone that runs through a tune. A progression can be divided into smaller parts, each of which is a smaller chord progression. As you handle different chord progressions, you can apply what you've learned about melody, rhythm, expression, and development, no matter what the chords are.

To work with chord progressions you need to:

- Understand how Roman numerals work in a key.
- Recognize the chords in a key.
- Know how to simplify chords within a key.

Chords in Major Keys

Each key contains seven diatonic chords, one for each of the seven tones of the major scale. We can label these chords with *Roman numerals* to show how the chords relate to each other in the key. For example, the chord built on the first note (root) of a major key is I, the chord built on the second degree is ii, etc., up to vii for the 7th degree. Uppercase Roman numerals (such as I) are used for major or dominant chords, while lowercase Roman numerals (such as ii) are used for minor chords.

A. Using Roman Numerals in a Key

The example below shows chords built on each scale tone of C Major, along with the corresponding Roman numerals. The vii chord is *diminished*, which means it is a 1 b3 b5 chord (the ° indicates diminished).

CMa7	Dmi7	Emi7	FMa7	G7	Am7	B°7
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°

Example A - Roman numerals for chords in C Major

The first line of the example below shows a typical chord progression in C Major; the second line shows the same chord progression in the key of E Major; the third line shows the Roman numerals for each.

CMa7	Am7	Dm7	G7	CMa7	||
(EMa7	C#m7	F#m7	B7	EMa7)	||
I	vi	ii	V	I	

Example A1 - A chord progression in C Major and E Major

Try It #1: Using Roman Numerals

Write Roman numerals for these progressions: #1 is in G Major; #2 is in E Major. Answers are in *Chapter Review*.

1. GMa7 |Em7 |Am7 |D7 |Bm7

2. G#m7 |C#m7 |F#m7 |B7 |EMa7

Exercise A - Using Roman Numerals

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

****Basic*: Choose any short tune from *300 Standard Tunes*; write Roman numerals for the chords.
***Medium*: Same as Basic; choose a longer tune.

Recognizing Keys in Chord Progressions

When you learn a new chord progression you need to recognize what *key* the progression is in. This helps you simplify the progression and hear chord relationships. Sometimes it's easy to find the key in a progression. With more complicated chord progressions that modulate (change keys), there may be multiple keys.

B. Tips for Recognizing Keys

Here are some tips for recognizing the key in a chord progression that doesn't modulate:

- Check the key signature in the tune, if any; it usually indicates the home key.
- Find a major chord and see if it's the I chord. If it's not, it may be the IV chord.
- Look for a minor chord to see if it's a ii chord. If it's not, it may be the vi chord.
- Remember that some chords have enharmonic equivalents: Cb = B, Db = C#, D# = Eb, Gb = F#, and G# = Ab. For example, Dbm – Gb7 – CbMaj7 is the same as C#m – F#7 – BMaj7. Learning to see enharmonic equivalents helps you recognize keys faster and simplify progressions more easily.

Try It #2: Recognizing Keys

Name the likely key for each chord progression below. Answers are in *Chapter Review*.

1) Em7 Am7 |Dm7 G7 |CMa

2) BbMa7 |Gm7 Cm7 |F7

Exercise B - Recognizing Keys

Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( )

****Basic*: Choose any short tune from *300 Standard Tunes*; name the likely key for the tune.
***Medium*: Same as Basic; choose a longer tune.

The Basic Blues

The 12-bar blues is one of the most common, essential chord progressions in jazz. To be a good improviser, you must master the basic blues and its variations.

C. Blues Structure

There are many variations of the 12-bar blues. A common version is shown below in the key of C, with Roman numerals below each measure.

| C7 | | F7 | | C7 | | C7 | | (Section 1)
| I | IV | I | I |

| F7 | | F7 | | C7 | | C7 | | (Section 2)
| IV | IV | I | I |

| G7 | | G7 | | C7 | | C7 | || (Section 3)
| V | V | I | I |

Example C - Basic 12-bar blues progression with Roman numerals

The blues is divided into three sections of four bars each. In the example above, section 1 is mostly the root chord (I). Section 2 begins on the IV chord (F7 in C blues). *The IV chord is an important anchor point in the blues structure*; almost all blues have a IV chord in bar 5. Section 3 begins on the V and resolves to the I chord.

Visualizing and memorizing these three sections of the basic blues helps you stay with the chords and create better solos. The blues form is 12 bars, not 16, so it may take you a while to adjust to the length if you're new to the blues.

Exercise C - Blues Progressions in All Keys
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__
*Basic: Write chord progressions for blues in each of these keys: Eb, Bb, F, C, and G.
**Medium: Same as Basic, in the keys of D, A, E, and B.
***Challenge: Same as Basic, in the keys of F#, C#, and Ab.

Using Blues Scales

The *blues scale* is useful in blues progressions as well as dominant or minor chords. The same blues scale can be used for an *entire* blues progression; for example, a C blues scale works for all chords in a C blues progression. But don't overuse the blues scale; some improvisers rely on it so much they can do little else. You should use flexible, creative blues scales.

D. Spelling the 12 Blues Scales

Compared to major, the blues scale pitches are 1, b3, 4, #4, 5, and b7 (6 different pitches). Two blues scale examples are shown below; the Exercise spells blues scales in all 12 keys.

1   b3   4   #4   5   b7   8   1   b3   4   #4   5   b7   8
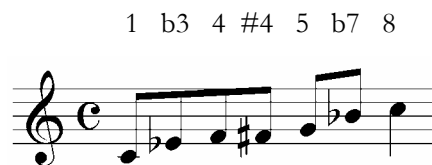
Example D - C blues scale

Example D1 - F blues scale

► MORE 1

Exercise D - Spelling Blues Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__
*Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Blues scale, then for the other blues scales around the circle of fourths.
**Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 blues scales, from *top to bottom* of each scale.

E. Practicing Flexible Blues Scales

You can practice flexible blues scales around the circle of 4ths. As do, add your own skips and rhythmic variations; that will greatly increase the variety of what you can play in a blues tune.

Some sample blues variations are shown below (key of C):

5 b7 #4 4

Example E - Blues idea #1

b7 b3 b7 5 #4

Example E1 - Blues idea #2

1 #4 b7 b3

Example E2 - Blues idea #3

b3 b7 1 #4 b7 b3 5 b7

Example E3 - Blues idea #4

MORE ▶ 1 📎 2 📎 3 📎

Exercise E - Humming Blues Scales
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Hum/finger eighth-notes for all 12 flexible blues scales, around the circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 100.
Start with the notes directly from bottom to top, then add flexible scale variations.
**Medium*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 150.
***Challenge*: Same as Basic; quarter-note = 180.

Avoiding Common Blues Scale Problems

Here are some tips to avoid blues scales problems:

- Don't overuse the blues scale in dominant chords; use Mixolydian and pentatonic, too.

- Don't hold out the natural 4 too often; resolve it to the b3 or go up to the #4.

- Don't emphasize the following *home key* notes: #4 against the IV or V (F# against F7 or G7); 1 against the V (C against G7); and b7 against the IV (Bb against F7).

ii–V–I Progressions

The ii-V-I progression is one of the most important chord progressions. When you hear and master ii-V-I progressions, you unlock the door to soloing over many standard jazz tunes, such as the 300 Standards.

F. Building a ii–V–I Progression

The V to I is the basic "dominant to tonic" resolution; it goes up a fourth, which is a strong chord movement. So when you use a ii-V-I progression, the chords move up by a fourth *twice* – from the ii to the V, and from the V to the I (such as Dmi to G7 to CMa7 in the key of C). (Chapter 3K: *Dominant Alterations* discusses ii-V-i's in *minor* keys.)

A ii-V-I progression often occurs in one of these ways:

- One bar per chord, such as: |Dm7 |G7 |CMa7

- The ii and V in one bar : |Dm7 G7 |CMa7

The ii is often a minor 7 chord, so it's really a ii7 (we'll just call it a ii). Sometimes the ii is a II7 (dominant 7); then it works like the ii chord but with more energy.

  The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

G. Prefacing a ii–V–I

You can insert a vi chord before a ii-V-I, making a vi-ii-V-I progression. The vi moves up to the ii by a fourth, so there are three 4th-movements in a row: vi-ii, ii-V, and V-I. To make an even longer chain of 4ths, you can use a iii-vi-ii-v-I (3-6-2-5-1) or vii-iii-ii-V-I (7-3-6-2-5-1). That progression actually sounds better with every other chord as a dominant, such as:

CMa7	B7	|Em7	A7	|Dm7	G7	|CMa7
I	VII7	|iii	VI7	|ii	V	|I

Example G - ii-V-I with a preface of VII7-iii-VI7

H. Focusing on the 3 and 7

A good way to outline the chords in a ii-V-I without playing the complete arpeggios is to emphasize the 3 or 7 of the chords. The 3 defines the chord type (major or minor), and the 7 defines the chord quality. The examples below show the basic ways to navigate ii-V-I chords in C Major by using the 3 and 7 as whole-notes. Notice that the 3 and 7 pitches move from chord to chord by half-steps; you'll learn more about this in Chapter 3B: *Melodic Connections*. You can add your own rhythmic ideas, keeping the 3 or 7 as the first note of each measure.
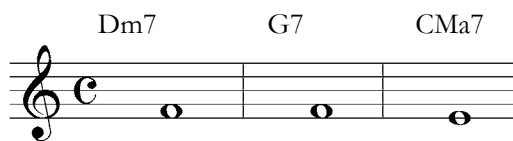
Example H – ii-V-I with 3,7,3
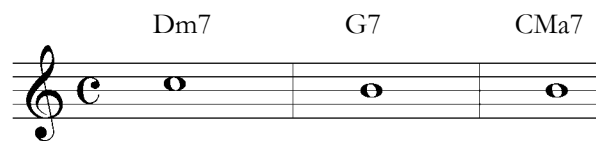
Example H1 – ii-V-I with 7,3,7

Simplifying Chord Progressions

When you see several consecutive chords belonging to the *same key*, you can improvise on all of them with a *single scale*. For example, Dm7 and CMa7 belong to the key of C Major, so they share notes. A C Major scale works for *both* the chords. This means fewer chords to worry about, so you navigate the progression more easily.

However, simplifying progressions does have some disadvantages. When you simplify, you miss some of the more colorful tones, like the raised 7th of the ii chord (C# in D minor), or the #4 of the I chord, or dominant alterations (explained in Chapter 3K: *Dominant Alterations*).

J. Practice for Simplifying Chords

In the first example below, all the chords belong to the key of C, so the notes of a C Major scale can be used for the entire progression. In the second example, all the chords belong to the key of E, so an E Major scale works for the entire progression.

CMa7	Am7	Dm7	G7	CMa7
I	vi	ii	V	I

> Example J - Chord progression in C – use a C Major flexible scale for the entire progression

EMa7	AMa7	F#m7	B7	EMa7
I	IV	ii	V	I

> Example J1 - Chord progression in E – use an E Major flexible scale for the entire progression

You can also play a single flexible scale across all three chords in a ii-V-I progression. For example, with a Dmi to G7 to CMa7 progression, you can play just C Major (the I chord scale), or just D Dorian (the ii chord scale), or just G Mixolydian (the V chord scale). The most common choices to use across the ii-V-I are the I scale or the ii scale.

For more examples, see Chapter 1K: *Simplified Chord Progressions, 300 Standards*.

Exercise J - Simplifying Chord Progressions
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Find one scale that fits all these chords: CMa7 Dm7 G7 CMa7
**Medium*: Same as Basic; use AMa7, Bm7, C#m7, F#m7
***Challenge*: Choose one of the 30 Standard Tunes; simplify 2 or more of the progressions.

Chapter Review

1) You can use Roman numerals to designate how each chord belongs to a key.

2) Three ways to recognize the key of a chord progression are:

   A) Check the key signature of the tune.

   B) Look for a major chord that might be the I chord or IV chord.

   C) Look for a minor chord that might start the ii-V-I of the key.

3) Chords that belong to a single key can be simplified by playing a I scale over them all.

4) Simplifying chords too often may lose color tones or limit harmonic strength in solos.

Answers for Try-It Exercise #1:   1) I – vi – ii – V – iii   2) iii – vi – ii – V – I
Answers for Try-It Exercise #2:   1) C Major   2) Bb Major

1K: Simplified Progressions, 300 Standards

This chapter illustrates some opportunities for simplifying chord progressions in standard tunes.

Simplifying progressions helps you get oriented in basic keys so you can follow the chord progressions more easily. For details on how to simplify chord progressions, see Chapter 1J.

In the examples below, the chords from the original progression are on each top line (such as 1), and the simplified chords are on each underneath line (such as 1a). In most cases,

- ii-V-I's have been converted to I's

- Other supplemental chords in a key, such as iii and vi, may be dropped

- Dominant alterations have been dropped.

Air-Again

```
(1)     Fm            | C7+9       | Fm        | F7              |
(1a)    Fm            | •/•        | •/•       | •/•             |
        |1 -------------------------------
(2)     Bbm           | F7         | Bbm       | Bbm             |
(2a)    Bbm           | •/•        | •/•       | •/•             |

(3)     Bbm           | Dm    G7   | CMa7      | Dbm   F#7       |
(3a)    Bbm           | CMa7       | •/•       | BMa             |

(4)     BMa7          | Cm    F7   | BbMa7     | •/•             |
(4a)    BMa7          | BbMa       | •/•       | •/•             |

(5)     Bbm           | Eb7        | AbMa7     | Gm7b5 C7+9   : ||
(5a)    AbMa          | •/•        | •/•       | C7           : ||
        |2 -------------------------------
(6)     Bbm           | Eb7        | Cm7b5     | F7+9            |
(6a)    AbMa          | •/•        | •/•       | F7              |

(7)     Bbm           | Eb7        | AbMa      | Gm7b5 C7+9   ||
(7a)    AbMa          | •/•        | •/•       | C7           ||
```

Blues Set

```
(1)     BbMa7       | •/•          | Am7b5    | D7          |
(1a)    BbMa7       | •/•          | Gm       | •/•         |

(2)     Gm          | C7           | Fm       | Bb7         ||
(2a)    Gm          | •/•          | EbMa7    | •/•         ||

(3)     EbMa7       | •/•          | Ebm      | Ab7         |
(3a)    EbMa7       | •/•          | DbMa7    | •/•         |

(4)     DbMa7       | •/•          | Dbm      | Gb7         ||
(4a)    DbMa7       | •/•          | BMa7     | •/•         ||

(5)     BMa7        | •/•          | Cm       | F7          |
(5a)    BMa7        | •/•          | BbMa     | •/•         |

(6)     Dm          | Dbm          | Cm       | F7          ||
(6a)    BbMa7       | •/•          | •/•      | •/•         ||
```


But Not for Mia

```
(1)     G7          | Gm7    C7    | FMa      | Dm7         |
(1a)    FMa         | •/•          | •/•      | •/•         |

(2)     Gm      G7  | Gm7    C7    | FMa      | Cm7    F7   |
(2a)    FMa         | •/•          | •/•      | F7          ||

                                  |1 ---------------------------------------
(3)     BbMa7       | Bbm7   Eb7   | FMa7     | •/•         |
(3a)    BbMa7       | •/•          | FMa7     | •/•         |

(4)     Dm7         | G7           | Gm7      | C7          : ||
(4a)    FMa         | •/•          | •/•      | •/•         ||

                                  |2 ---------------------------------------
(5)     BbMa7       | Bbm7   Eb7   | FMa7     | Dm7         |
(5a)    BbMa7       | •/•          | FMa7     | •/•         |

(6)     Gm7         | C7           | FMa      | •/•         ||
(6a)    FMa         | •/•          | •/•      | •/•         ||
```

  The Art of Improvisation, Level 1

Cherry Key

```
(1)    BbMa6        | •/•            | Fm         | Bb7        |
(1a)   BbMa6        | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        |

(2)    EbMa6        | •/•            | Ab7        | •/•        |
(2a)   EbMa6        | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        |

(3)    BbMa6        | •/•            | C7         | •/•        |
(3a)   BbMa7        | •/•            | C7         | •/•        |
```

```
| 1 -----------------------------
(4)    Cm           | G7+9           | Cm         | F7+9       : ||
(4a)   BbMa         | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        : ||

|2 ---------------------------------------                      Fin
(5)    BbMa7  Cm    | F7             | BbMa6      | •/•         ||
(5a)   BbMa7        | •/•            | •/•        | •/•         ||

(6)    C#m          | F#7            | BMa6       | •/•        |
(6a)   BMa          | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        |

(7)    Bm           | E7             | AMa6       | •/•        |
(7a)   AMa          | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        |

(8)    Am           | D7             | GMa6       | •/•        |
(8a)   GMa          | •/•            | •/•        | •/•        |

(9)    Gm           | C7             | Cm         | F7          ||
(9a)   FMa          | •/•            | •/•        | F7          ||
                                                  DC—2e
```

Giant Stops

```
(1)    BMa    D7    | GMa   Bb7     | EbMa       | Am    D7   |
(1a)   BMa    GMa   | •/•   EbMa    | •/•        | GMa        |

(2)    GMa    Bb7   | EbMa  F#7     | BMa        | Fm    Bb7   ||
(2a)   GMa    EbMa  | •/•   BMa     | •/•        | EbMa        ||

(3)    EbMa         | Am7   D7      | GMa        | C#m   F#7  |
(3a)   •/•          | GMa           | •/•        | BMa        |

(4)    BMa          | Fm7   Bb7     | EbMa       | C#m   F#7  : ||
(4a)   •/•          | EbMa          | •/•        | BMa         ||
```

I Could Write a Booklet

```
(1)     EbMa   C7    | Fm     Bb7   | EbMa        | Fm7    Bb7    |
(1a)    EbMa         | •/•          | •/•         | •/•           |

(2)     EbMa         | Cm           | Fm          | Dm7b5  G7+9   |
(2a)    EbMa         | •/•          | •/•         | G7            ||

                                     |1 -------------------------------------
(3)     Cm           | •/•          | Am7b5 D7+9  | G7            |
(3a)    Cm           | •/•          | •/•         | •/•           |

(4)     C7           | Cm     F7    | Fm          | Bb7         : ||
(4a)    C7           | Cm           | EbMa        | •/•         : ||

                                     |2 -------------------------------------
(5)                                  | Bbm Eb7     | F#Ma  Db7     |
(5a)                                 | Eb7         | F#Ma          |

(6)     EbMa C7b9    | Fm     Bb7   | EbMa        | Fm     Bb7    ||
(6a)    EbMa         | •/•          | •/•         | •/•           ||
```


I Got Arrythmia

```
(1)     BbMa         | Cm     F7    | BbMa        | Cm     F7     |
(1a)    BbMa         | •/•          | •/•         | •/•           |

                                     |1 -------------------------------------
(2)     BbMa   Bb7   | EbMa E°      | BbMa  Gm    | Cm     F7   : ||
(2a)    •/•          | •/•          | •/•         | •/•         : ||

                                     |2 -------------------------------------
(3)                                  | BbMa        | •/•           |
(3a)                                 | •/•         | •/•           |

(4)     D7           | •/•          | G7          | •/•           |
(4a)    D7           | •/•          | G7          | •/•           |

(5)     C7           | •/•          | F7          | •/•           ||
(5a)    C7           | •/•          | F7          | •/•           ||
```

1L: The Jazz Group

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Group Performance Skills
- Rhythm Section Roles
- The Tune Melody

Melody
Rhythm
Expression
Development
Chord Progressions
Performance....
Analysis
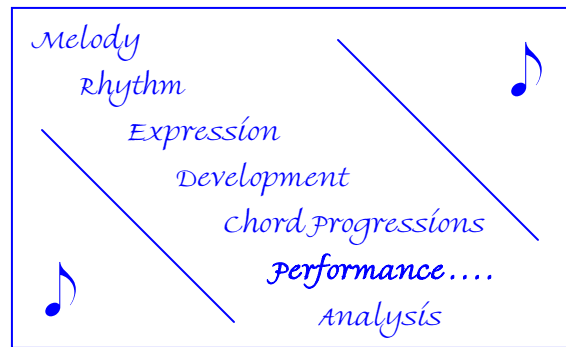
Note: This chapter discusses basic skills and roles necessary in an improvising jazz group. For more details on skills and techniques, see Chapter 1N: *Rhythm Section Techniques*.

Regardless of what instrument you play, you should understand the basic role of each type of instrument in a jazz group. This helps you support each member in the group and solve musical problems that arise.

This chapter assumes a basic group of a horn, a chord instrument (keyboards or guitar), a bass, and drums. Many other combinations are possible; each places different demands on the players. For more on playing in different group sizes, see Chapter 4J: *Group Interaction*.

Group Performance Skills

The musical success of your jazz group depends on how well the players:

- Play solidly in time
- Use balance and dynamics
- Read and interpret chords
- Work with styles and rhythmic ideas
- Interact and use teamwork

Each individual in the group has his own responsibility (see *Rhythm Section Roles* below).

Time

Although most people think it's the drummer's job to keep time in the group, it's really *everyone's* job. From the opening count-off to the end of the tune, the time should remain stable in the group. To improve the overall sense of time in your group, try these exercises:

1) One person counts off a tempo (with or without a silent metronome). Everyone silently counts an agreed-upon number of bars and comes in together on the downbeat, with no visual cues. This helps the group get a common sense of tempo.

2) While you play a tune together, be suddenly silent for a few pre-determined bars, then re-enter together in tempo. Hear your part and the time during the silence.

3) Have a soloist play a 2-bar or 4-bar solo break, with the rhythm section entering in time after the break.

Balance and Dynamics

Problems with group dynamics and balance can be annoying, but they're usually easy to fix.

- Get a good sound check before each rehearsal and performance. A poorly balanced group seldom plays good dynamics in tunes..

- Always be aware of your own volume as you play.

- Vary your dynamics to create expression.

- Don't overplay, and don't fill every available space. Part of the beauty of jazz is changing musical textures.

Chord Reading

Everyone in the group should be comfortable reading and playing the chord symbols in the tune. So far we've discussed major, dominant, and minor chords; in later chapters you'll learn about other chord types such as diminished and altered dominants. Your group should be able to *act* on the chords rather than *reacting* to them. Keyboard and guitar players playing together should coordinate chord playing to avoid conflicts in rhythms and voicings.

Styles and Rhythmic Ideas

Each player should master the basic styles of swing and latin, as well as ballad, rock, and fusion. Listening to recordings of these styles is essential (see Chapter 2C: *Swing Rhythms* and Chapter 3D: *Fusion and Latin Styles*).

Your group should also be alive with rhythmic ideas that feed group interaction and teamwork. For more details on doing this, see Chapter 1D: *Rhythmic Variety*, Chapter 2D: *Three and Four*, and Chapter 3H: *Rhythmic Development*.

Interaction and Teamwork

As your group creates motifs and rhythms, each player should listen carefully to how these ideas influence the music being played. You can copy, change, or just hear any interesting idea played in the group. Don't overdo imitation – keep it subtle and flexible.

With practice, your group can become much more than just a group of people playing the same tune. Teamwork in a jazz group teaches communication, leadership, and a balance of risk and safety. For more on interacting musically, see Chapter 4J: *Group Interaction*.

Rhythm Section Roles

Each individual should understand his or her role very well and the other roles in the group reasonably well. Individual roles in a rhythm section are the chords, the bass, and the drums.

The Chords

Here are some basic issues chord players in a group should consider:

- *Voicings* usually leave out the root (the bass usually plays it).
- *Chord comping* should use interesting rhythms (see Chapter 1D: *Rhythmic Variety*).
- *Fills* should be simple, complementing the soloist's ideas.
- *Sound and silence* should be well-balanced.

The Bass

In the swing style, bass lines use a "walking" pattern of mostly quarter-notes. The root is played on the downbeat of each chord, and the other beats are usually chord arpeggios. The last beat before a new chord can be a whole-step or half-step away from the root of that chord. (For ideas on connecting chords, see Chapter 3B: *Melodic Connections*.)

Swing bass lines can grow to be quite artful, including offbeats, color tones, triplets, wide intervals, 3 against 4, etc. They can also revolve around half-notes (half-time) or eighth-notes (double-time), or even use a wide range of rhythms ("running bass").

In fusion, latin, and ballads, the bass plays rhythmic figures that revolve around the root of the chord. For more ideas, see Chapter 3D: *Fusion and Latin Styles*.

The Drums

Once the group has a solid sense of time, the drummer should be free to play offbeats, triplets, and other rhythmic figures to energize the music. The drummer should also use a range of sound colors, mixing drum

and cymbal sounds. When the group trades solos, or after a drum solo, the time and the entrances should be solid.

The Tune Melody

The horn player, if there is one, typically plays the tune melody, but rhythm section players (chords or bass) may join in or occasionally may take over the melody. If you're the melody player, keep these points in mind:

- *Balance*: Make sure your melody can be heard just above the rest of the group.

- *Memorization*: Whenever possible, memorize the melody so you can play it freely; you can still keep a copy of the music handy for reference. Memorizing the tune lets you focus on the group sound, as well as changing a few pitches in your melody for variety.

- *Rhythms*: Your rhythms should be solid and accurate. If the tune has easier rhythms, you can take a few liberties with them (see Chapter 1D: *Rhythmic Variety* for ideas).

- *Expression*: A few well-timed changes in dynamics, articulations, and accents can boost the expression level in the melody, especially in slower tunes.

The tune melody can give you some development ideas for your improvised solo later on. (See also *Handling the Tune Melody* in Chapter 2K: *Preparing Concert Material*.)

Tune Melodies on the BRIDJJ CD

The tune melodies on the BRIDJJ CD "Beat the Rats" were played anywhere from note-for-note to fairly loose, compared to the original sheet music:

- *Note-for-note*: The complex melodies in "Deja Blue" and "Tastes Like Chicken" are played as written.

- *Slight variations*: "Beat the Rats" has a few trills added; "Precious Caboose" has a few grace notes; and "Where's Waldis" has almost three bars of the second-time melody replaced by a long trumpet glissando. "Barney Meets Godzilla" and Three and Me" are mostly note for note, except that both tunes have improv fills embedded in the melody.

- *More variations*: "I Think I'll Keep Her" is a ballad with grace notes, flexible rhythms, and some improvised pitches not on the original lead sheet.

## Chapter Review

1) Important skills in a jazz group are time, balance and dynamics, chord reading, styles and rhythmic ideas, and interaction and teamwork.

2) The basic rhythm section roles are chords, bass, and drums.

3) The tune melody player should get a good dynamic balance with the other players and demonstrate imagination in pitches, rhythms, and expression when playing the melody.

1M: Analyzing Solos

In this chapter you'll learn about:

- Evaluating Your Own Solos
- Four Goals for Improving Your Solos
- Analyzing Other Artists' Solos
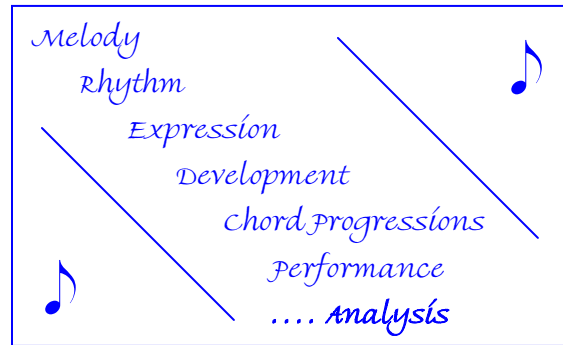
It's tough to solo in a "vacuum" – you need accurate *feedback* about your solos on a regular basis. It's nice to have a teacher or friend listen to you and offer advice, but usually you're on your own for improvements. This chapter helps you analyze and improve your own solos.

Note: Chapter 2L: *Analyzing Written Solos* offers tips on analyzing written (transcribed) solos. Chapter 4A: *Soundscapes* discusses ways to analyze your solos for intensity, texture, density, etc.

Evaluating Your Own Solos   w   MORE

To effectively analyze your own solos, you need to record them on tape while you practice or perform. Even *thinking* about recording yourself can be uncomfortable at first, but a recorded solo gives you a better picture of how well you're soloing.

Creating, Then Criticizing

There are two separate processes you need to follow: first, you need to freely create as you improvise; then you need to constructively criticize what you hear on the recording.

These processes must be *separated* in your mind; don't be critical as you create, and be specific and helpful with the criticisms. Was the problem seeing the shape or playing it?

Why something was strong or weak? *Four Goals for Improving Your Solos* shows you how to do this.

Four Goals for Improving Your Solos

To improve your solos, set your own objectives in one or more of the areas below, or review the *Exercises for Level 1* section for ideas:

- *Melody*: Choose pitches that fit the current chord or scale and include color tones.

- *Rhythm*: Combine downbeats and offbeats into interesting rhythms. Keep the time secure.

- *Expression*: Combine dynamics, accents, and articulations occasionally and effectively.

- *Development*: Create and vary short motifs.

You can also use any of the concepts you've learned in the text so far. It's best to focus on just a few objectives at a time.

Important: As you retry a solo for improvements, don't memorize and play the same solo again. Instead, see new motifs or phrases, carefully noting problems and your solutions. Then find new ways to use what you learned in your next solo.

A. Practicing for Melody

1   Choose a basic chord progression to solo against.
2   Concentrate on melody. Play *one* solo chorus and record it. Choose pitches that fit the chords and scales, use SHAPE, and emphasize color tones from time to time.

3   Listen carefully to the recorded solo and give yourself a score from 1 to 10 in each of these areas:

- Sound quality
- Playing in tune
- Accuracy of attacks on pitches
- Notes that fit the chords
- Use of color tones

Exercise A - Practicing for Melody
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Using a play-along tune in an easy key on your Practice Page, fit the chords and scales and use color tones.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, but use a harder key.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, but use a progression that changes chords.

Important: As you learn melodic techniques in later chapters (scales, fills, patterns, connections, outside playing, etc.) include them in your melody analysis.

B. Practicing for Rhythm

Use the steps in *Practicing for Melody* above, concentrating on *rhythm*. Choose rhythms that:

- Are secure and accurate
- Mix downbeats and offbeats effectively
- Get a balance between longer and shorter values.

Identify any weak rhythmic spots in your recording and play over them again to improve the solo. Remember: the idea isn't to memorize a perfect solution, but to see how to improve *this particular solo*.

As you practice with a recording or live group, always be aware of how well you're staying with the tempo. Avoid slowing down or speeding up in your rhythms.

Also remember what you learned while practicing for melody. When you practice for rhythm, your rhythms will depend on good melodic note choices.

Exercise B - Practicing for Rhythm
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Exercise A Basic. Use secure, accurate rhythms; mix downbeats and offbeats; balance longer and shorter note values.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, but use a harder key.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, but use a progression that changes chords.

Important: As you learn rhythmic techniques in later chapters (swing, 3 against 4, rhythmic development, etc.) include them in your rhythmic analysis.

C. Practicing for Expression

To concentrate on *expression,* pay close attention to:

- Dynamic range and changing dynamics
- Accents
- Articulations
- Control of sound and technique

Identify any spots in your recording where the notes or phrases sound somewhat stiff or dull; these might be good spots to add a little expression. Remember: the idea isn't to memorize a perfect solution, but to improve *this solo*. Also, remember and apply what you learned while practicing for rhythm and melody.

About Sound and Technique

An important part of expression is your control over *sound* and *technique*. Here are some areas to consider:

- *Clear tone*. Your tone doesn't have to be classically beautiful, but it should be secure and in tune.

- *Clear attacks*. Each attack should be coordinated with air (for wind players) and fingers/hands. The attacks can range from smooth slurs to hard accents.

- *Flexibility and strength*. You need enough flexibility of air, fingers, etc. to make the music flow easily, and enough strength to support higher, faster, or louder passages.

A good classical foundation in sound and technique can be very helpful. However, remember that jazz uses different vibrato, more exaggerated expression, and a looser rhythmic feel compared to classical music.

Your choice of instrument and equipment (reeds, mouthpiece, strings, amps, etc) can also make a big difference in your overall sound. Find the combination that gives you the best quality and ease of sound.

Exercise C - Practicing for Expression
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Exercise B Basic. Vary dynamics, accents, and articulations in the solo.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, but use a harder key.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, but use a progression that changes chords.

D. Practicing for Development

To practice *development*, follow these steps:

- Control the start, end, and length of each motif.
- Move from slight contrast to more contrast.
- Connect some motifs into phrases.
- Vary where phrases end in the bar.

Identify any weak development spots in your recording and improve them. Also remember what you learned while practicing for melody and rhythm. The developments you use will depend on good melodic and rhythmic note choices.

Exercise D - Practicing for Development
Basic __/__/__ ( ) Medium __/__/__ ( ) Challenge __/__/__

Basic: Same as Exercise C Basic. Control the start, end, and length of each motif; move from slight contrast to more contrast; connect some motifs into phrases; and vary where phrases end in the bar.
**Medium*: Same as Basic, but use a harder key.
***Challenge*: Same as Medium, but use a progression that changes chords.

Important: As you learn development techniques in later chapters (phrases, expanding and shrinking intervals, rhythmic development, etc.) include them in your analysis when you practice for development.

Analyzing Other Artists' Solos

You can use the concepts in this chapter to analyze solos of other jazz improvisers, whether live, on audio, or on video. See also Art of the Artists on the CD-ROM. As you listen to their solos, ask yourself:

1) *Why did they play what they did?* Does it make good sense in the context of the solo? Are they developing ideas, or are they just wandering through the music?

2) *What motifs and phrases were particularly interesting and why?* Check out their use of color tones, contours, small or large variations, etc.

3) *Are chords and flexible scales used well?* Does the performer know where he/she is in the progression?

4) *Is the solo rhythmically alive?* Are rhythms secure and interesting? Is there rhythmic interaction in the group?

5) *How would you play it differently?* Often you can identify a phrase or idea that doesn't come off cleanly or effectively. Try to sing, hum, or visualize the notes that you would use to improve it.

Chapter Review

1) You can improve your solos in melody, rhythm, expression, and development.

2) Record your solos and listen to them to find strengths and weaknesses.

3) Your melodies should fit the chords, using color tones when appropriate.

4) Your rhythms should be secure, should mix downbeats and offbeats, and should use variety.

5) Your expression should use dynamics, accents, and articulations with imagination and taste, with a secure foundation in sound and technique.

6) Your developments should use secure motifs that move from slight contrast to more contrast.

7) When you listen to other artists' solos, analyze their overall use of musical elements.

Expressions

*Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. *Henry David Thoreau*
*Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon 'em. *Shakespeare*
*It takes two to speak the truth -- one to speak, and another to hear. *Henry David Thoreau*
*Many can argue; not many converse. *Bronson Alcott*
*It is better to have less thunder in the mouth and more lightning in the hand. *Cheyenne Chief*
*Grasp the subject, the words will follow. *Cato*
*A man that has a taste of music, painting, or architecture, is like one that has another sense, when compared with such as have no relish of those arts. *Joseph Addison*
*It is no great thing to be humble when you are brought low, but to be humble when you are praised is a great attainment. *St. Bernard*
*You would be surprised at the number of years it took me to see clearly what some of the problems were which had to be solved ... looking back, I think it was more difficult to see what the problems were than to solve them. *Charles Darwin*

1N: Rhythm Section Techniques

This chapter is an introduction to the basic techniques needed in the jazz rhythm section for playing tunes and accompanying solos. It covers these topics:

- Chord Techniques
- Bass Techniques
- Drumset Techniques
- Variety and Interaction

For more information on chord, bass, or drumset techniques, refer to published study methods for those instruments, at a local music store or on the Internet.

Chord Techniques

Below are some basic ideas for playing chords in a rhythm section.

A. Chord Inversions

When you comp (play) chords, you should generally leave out the root note – the bass player usually plays it somewhere in the measure. This means that you should play chord *inversions*, which shift the group of notes in the chord up or down. Inversions have the 3, 7, or 5 on the bottom, instead of the 1. Examples of a Major 7 chord are shown below (inversions also work the same for minor and dominant chords):

CMa7
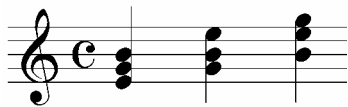
3,5,7   5,7,3   7,3,5   b3,5,b7   5,b7,b3   7,b3,5

Example A - Major 7 chord inversions   Example A1 - Minor 7 chord inversions

B. Chord Voicings for Left Hand

A chord *voicing* is a chord inversion played in one or both hands. Here are some left-hand voicings for a ii-V-I progression with smooth movement between notes (a 9 is used on the dominant chord):
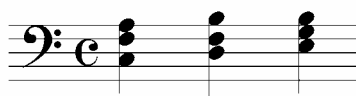
Dm7   G7   CMa7   Dm7   G7   CMa7

3,5,7   7,9,3   3,5,7   7,3,5   5,7,3   3,5,7

Examples B and B1 - 3-note voicings, C Major ii-V-I

You can also voice chords with four notes:

Dm7   G7   CMa7   Dm7   G7   CMa7

3,5,7,9 7,9,3,6 3,5,7,9   7,2,3,5 3,5,7,9 7,1,3,5

Examples B2 and B3 - 4-note voicings for ii-V-I in C Major

Or, you can voice chords by stacking intervals of *fourths*. This gives a more open but less directional sound.

CMa7   Dm7   CMa7   CMa7   G7   G7

Example B4 - Voicings in fourths in C Major

By using voicings in just the left hand, your right hand is free to rest, add fill notes, or solo. This is a more flexible and useful approach to chording.

C. Chord Voicings for Two Hands

When you voice chords in both hands, be sure you don't just copy the left-hand voicings to the right hand. Instead, work for a full sound of unduplicated notes. You can drop one or more notes in the chord an octave.

Dm7   CMa7

Example C - 2-hand voicings in D Minor   Example C1 - 2-hand voicings in C Major

Keyboard and Guitar Styles on the BRIDJJ CD

Here are some of the chord styles played by the piano and guitar on the BRIDJJ CD:

- *Deja Blue*: Overdubbed guitar comping (two guitars with different sound settings). Harmonic "pings" in the melody (along with bass). Rhythm-and-blues note bends in the guitar solo.

- *Beat the Rats*: Synthesizer "bed" (sustained background) behind melodies. Keyboard alternates between melody and background. Guitar solo has a very edgy sound.

- *I Think I'll Keep Her*: Guitar sustain with pedal effects. Guitar and keyboards balance comping.

- *Tastes Like Chicken*: Nylon-string, jazz guitar sounds.
- *Barney Meets Godzilla*: Guitar occassionally shifts comping rhythms. Acoustic piano sound. Rock guitar sound in solo.

- *Three and Me*: Floating 3/4 figures throughout.
- *Precious Caboose*: Keyboard plays wild figure in octaves on the interludes. Keyboard and guitar switch off comping during solos; interesting textures are created.

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- *Where's Waldis*: Nylon-string guitar sound throughout; montuno melody in guitar and keyboard behind drum solo.

Note: In a rhythm section w/ 2 chord players, make sure they cooperate, not compete (see *Precious Caboose* above).

Bass Techniques

D. Building a Walking Bass Line

The walking bass line is the backbone for swing rhythms. Here are some basic guidelines for walking bass lines:

1) Use mostly quarter-notes that emphasize the 1, 3, and 5 of the current chord.

2) Play the 1 on the downbeat of most new measures, especially when there's a new chord.

3) Play the 5 or another connecting note on beat 4 of most measures. Connecting tones are up or down a whole-step or half-step.

CMa7

Example D - Walking bass line; 1 (root) on each beat 1, and 5 (dominant) on each beat 4

The example below connects to each new chord from a half-step above or below the new root.

Dm7   G7   CMa7

Example D1 - Walking bass line that connects by half-steps

For variety, you can occasionally use other rhythms in the bass line:

C7   F7   C7

Example D2 - Walking bass line with other rhythms

Fusion bass lines are much freer with rhythms; they use many combinations of 16th-notes, 8th-notes, and rests. The example below is an active fusion bass line; some fusion bass rhythms are less active but still interesting.

Cm7

Example D3 - Fusion bass line

For examples of fusion bass lines, listen to the bass part in the funk solos of *Barney Meets Godzilla* on the BRIDJJ CD.

Bass Styles on the BRIDJJ CD

Here are some of the bass styles on the BRIDJJ CD:

- *Deja Blue*: Ñanigo (12/8 pattern) in the introduction. Staccato punches, walking bass, double-time walking, and harmonic "pings" in the melody (along with guitar).

- Walking bass behind solos.

- *Beat the Rats*: Written figures behind the melody; "partido alto" figures (see Chapter 3D: *Fusion and Latin Styles*) behind solos.

- *I Think I'll Keep Her*: Easy ballad playing with some pop/rock figures behind the melody. Inventive fills with triplets and other rhythms behind solos.

- *Tastes Like Chicken*: Country-western bass patterns with some twists.

- *Barney Meets Godzilla*: Dotted-quarter figures in introduction; walking bass, ñanigo, and figures in the melody; walking and funk behind solos.

- *Three and Me*: Floating 3/4 figures (4 against 3) throughout.

- *Precious Caboose*: "Insane" and normal figures in the introduction, after solos, and in the ending; walking bass in the rest of the tune.

- *Where's Waldis*: Samba (latin style), some walking bass in the melody.

Drumset Techniques

If you're new to jazz drumming, here are some basic points to keep in mind as you play time behind a solo:

1) Your playing should be enough to define rhythms and styles, but light enough to stay flexible and creative.

2) Keep your rhythms and fills oriented to *offbeats*, not downbeats. This is especially important in swing.

3) Emphasize your cymbal work, but go lightly on the snare and especially light on the bass drum. "Feather" the bass drum so it's *felt* more than heard.
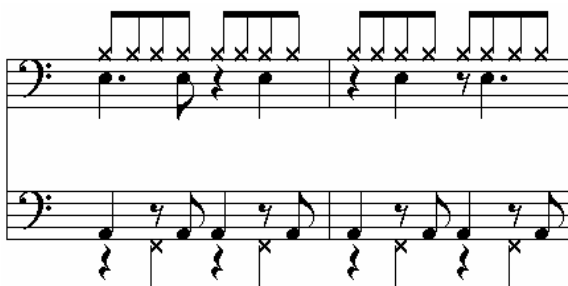
E. Basic Drum Styles

Here are some basic rhythmic styles and rhythms. Line 1=ride cymbal; 2=snare; 3=bass drum; 4=hi-hat.
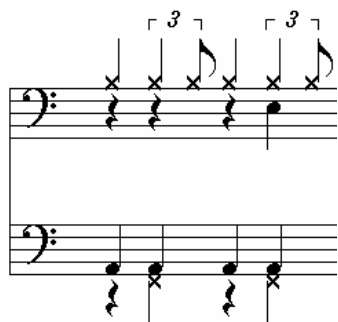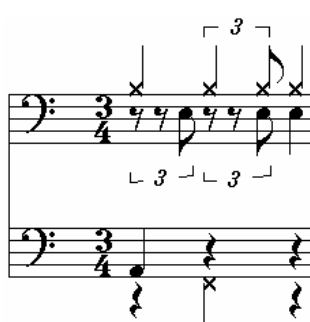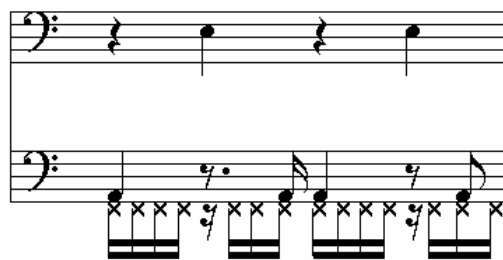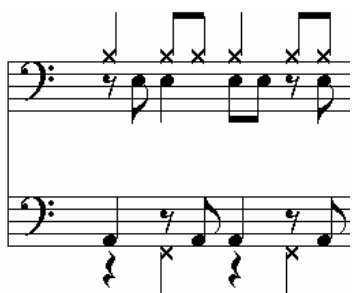

Example E - 4/4 Swing: Example E1 - Waltz (3/4 Swing)

Example E2 - Bossa nova (latin)   Example E3 - Samba (latin)

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Example E4 - Jazz-Rock

Jazz ballad style uses a two-hand brush tremolo on snare (occasional cymbal), with no bass drum, and with the hi-hat closed on beats 2 and 4.

Drum Styles on the BRIDJJ CD

Here are some of the drum styles on the BRIDJJ CD:

- *Deja Blue*: Ñanigo (12/8 pattern) in the introduction; staccato punches, regular & double-time swing in the melody; swing & fills behind solos; cymbal colors and decrescendo after last solo; strong fill into ñanigo.
- *Beat the Rats*: Written figures behind the melody; loud rim shot; wild fills on ending vamp.
- *I Think I'll Keep Her*: Extensive cymbal work.
- *Barney Meets Godzilla*: Free solo in introduction.
- *Three and Me*: Floating 3/4 figures throughout.
- *Precious Caboose*: Insane and normal figures in introduction and ending; mix of floating and driving swing backgrounds.

- *Where's Waldis*: Samba, with solo over montuno (Chapter 3D: *Fusion and Latin Styles*).

Variety and Interaction

Once your group masters the basic jazz styles, the next challenge is to use variety and interaction to create a *conversational* background behind the soloist.

Individual Variety

Each individual player should become an expert at using variety to keep his/her part interesting. Below are some methods to try (see also Chapter 4C: *Special Effects*).

- *Bass*: Repeat a rhythmic figure every bar or two bars; use "pedal" (repeat the same pitch for several bars); play fills at the ends of phrases; try offbeat attacks and ties across barlines; use effects such as slides, twangs, and chords.

- *Chords*: Use any of the bass methods above, with piano effects such as tremolo, block chords, and clusters; use rhythmic variety in chord comping; play single-note motifs; alternate quickly between hands.

- *Drums*: Use cymbal variety; try "long" notes (rolls); use fills and unusual patterns; alternate sticks, brushes, hands; hit different parts of the drum set.

Group Variety

Some effective ways to get variety as a group are:

- *Switching textures (amount of people playing and how heavily they play)*. This is probably the biggest area to explore. Use any combination of all, some, or no players behind solos. Use dynamic contrast well in your group, and switch between lighter and heavier techniques.

- *Using vamps (repeating a short set of chords)*. These are most effective in intros or endings, but they can also be played on modal tunes (few chord changes).

- *Using unified rhythms*. When one player starts an interesting rhythm pattern, the other players can imitate it for a short while (don't overuse this).

Interaction: Rhythm Section and Soloist

Rhythm section players can generate some good ideas behind a soloist, coming from rhythms, pitches, or both. The basic goals are:

1) Exchange ideas within the rhythm section

2) Exchange ideas between the rhythm section and the soloist,

3) Support but not overpower the soloist.

The basic interaction methods are:

- *Copy* a short idea that someone else played.
- *Adapt* (change) the idea.
- *Support* the idea (repeat a different idea that complements the original idea).

The key to this is finding and using the *interesting* parts of the idea you hear. Those parts can be a single note (F#) or a rhythmic placement (the "and" of 4), or a few notes of the idea, or the whole idea. Then you can use melodic and rhythmic development to carry the idea further. As you interact, keep it under control and interesting so the soloist is always motivated.

For more ideas on group variety, see Chapter 4J: *Group Interaction* and Chapter 5E: *Rhythmic Pulses*.

Chapter Review

1) A chord inversion, or voicing, usually leaves out the root and shifts the other notes in the chord.

2) Chord voicings typically have three or four notes built on thirds or fourths.

3) Walking bass lines use mostly quarter-notes, emphasize the 1 or 5 on downbeats, and use connecting tones to get to roots of new chords.

4) Drummers should emphasize offbeats in swing and generally play lighter on the snare and bass than on the cymbals.

5) A chord inversion usually leaves out the root and shifts the other notes in the chord.

6) Each rhythm section player should work for individual variety and group variety behind the soloist.

7) The rhythm section should work for to support and interact with the soloist.