



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

STAGE 0 Lesson Text

Lessons 1-8

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JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 1

Jazz Lesson 1

Technique

1. Major Scales

- a. **Major Scales** are a huge corner stone for improving your technique, learning harmony and theory about jazz, and helping you become a better player overall. You can create any major scale from any starting note using a combination of whole steps and half steps in the following order. From any note, move up a Whole Step, move up another whole step, move up a half step, move up a whole step, move up a whole step, move up a whole step, and finally move up a half step. In short hand the major scale formula looks as follows. W W H W W W H, (see below).



2. Major Scale Exercises Template

- a. For our major scales there is an exercise template you will follow every time we practice our scales and add a new scale. The two scales you will be practicing for this lesson will be the C Major Scale and F Major Scale. Below is the template for the major scales.

With every scale you will perform the following steps below.

1. Right Hand

- a. RH Alone, One Octave, Quarter notes
- b. RH Alone , Two Octaves, Quarter Notes
- c. RH Alone, One Octave, Eighth Notes
- d. RH Alone, Two Octaves Eighth Notes

2. Left Hand

- a. LH Alone, One Octave, Quarter notes
- b. LH Alone, Two Octave, Quarter notes
- c. LH Alone, One Octave, Eighth Notes
- d. LH Alone, Two Octave, Eighth Notes

3. Hands Together

- a. HT, One Octave, Quarter Notes
- b. HT, Two Octaves Eighth Notes

3. Key Signature

- a. The **Key Signature** is going to tell us what notes to make **sharp** or **flat**, in a piece or scale. When we make a note sharp, we are moving up a half step. So if we were to find G# we would find G, then move up a half step, and this gives us G#, (see below).



When we make a note flat we move down a half step from the note. If we were to play a Bb, we would find B then move down a half step to find Bb, (see above).

When we learn our key signatures well, it will help us play our major scales, jazz chords, and all pieces better! For example, if we look at the key signature for our F Major Scale, we see that on the fourth note we are required to play is a Bb, and then the rest of the notes are white notes, (see below).



While playing songs or exercises in the key of F this Bb is going to stay constant because it is part of the F major scale and the key signature for F, therefore we are never going to play a B natural, (unless specified by a natural sign) we are always going to play Bb. The key signature is written at the beginning of pieces to let us know what key we are in. All keys have a certain number of sharps or flats. This way when we see one flat on the B line for example, we automatically know, that we are in the key of F, because the F is the only key with one flat being Bb.

4. *Fingering*

- a. **Fingering** is very important for scales. The fingering for our scales will allow us to play our major scales with ease, and control. You will see fingering on the exercises or pieces listed as small numbers above the notes. (See Figure 9 for C Major scale fingerings. See Major Scale Fingering exercise pdf for all fingerings for all major scales.)



Harmony & Theory

1. *Whole Steps and Half Steps*

- a. Be comfortable with whole steps and half steps will greatly help everything to come. A **Half Step** is going from one tone to the next closest tone up or down. i.e. going up from C to C# or E to F. Also going down from C to B or E to Eb, (see figure below).



A **Whole Step** is going from one tone to another while skipping one in between. i.e. going up from C to D, you have skipped C#, (Db) or going up from E to F#, you have skipped F natural. Also going down from A to G, you have skipped Ab, (G#), or from Eb to Db, you have skipped D natural, (see figure below).



2. Intervals

- a. An **interval** is the distance between two notes. We already learned two intervals in the Technique portion of this lesson called the half step and the whole step. The half step and whole step are the two building blocks we will use to create our other intervals. We will now learn all the names of all the intervals in the major scale, see figure below.

- i. *Half Step* – This interval can also be called a Minor 2nd.
- ii. *Whole Step* – This interval can also be called a Major 2nd.
- iii. *Minor 3rd* – A minor third is built from a whole step and a half step, or 1 ½ steps total.
- iv. *Major 3rd* – A major third is built from a whole step and a whole step, or 2 steps total.
- v. *Perfect Fourth*– A perfect fourth is built from a whole step, whole step, and half step, or 2 ½ steps total..
- vi. *Tritone* – A Tritone is built from a whole step, whole step, and a whole step, or 3 steps total.
- vii. *Perfect Fifth* – A perfect fifth is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, and whole step, or 3 ½ steps total.

- viii. *Minor 6th (Augmented 5th)* – A minor sixth is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 4 steps total.
- ix. *Major 6th* – A major sixth is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, and whole step, or 4 ½ steps total.
- x. *Minor 7th* – A minor 7th is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 5 steps total .
- xi. *Major 7th* – A major 7th is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, and a whole step, or 5 ½ steps total
- xii. *Octave* – An octave is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 6 steps total.



- b. You may notice that you can use different combinations of whole steps and half steps to form intervals. However you chose to count the half steps and whole steps is up to you as long as you come to the total number of steps accurately.

Repertoire

1. Listen to a jazz album

- a. What is the best way for someone to learn a new language? To move to the native country where that language is spoken so that the ear has no choice but to listen to the language and learn it! Learning jazz is exactly like learning a new language. In order to fully grasp all the nuances, you have to listen to the jazz giants of the past and present. Pick any album that you might own or have heard and listen to it as many times as possible until our next lesson. Have fun!

2. Learning Tunes Series Part 1 – How To Learn A Tune And Remember It (6 Step Process)

- a. I hear so many people say “Brenden, I play pieces over and over again but they never seem to stick in my head!” Well that is because you are not actually learning the main components of the piece. You are just playing it. Playing pieces doesn’t help memorize and know it well. You must practice each section of the puzzle and then put together to create the entire tune. What do I mean by this? We will break each piece down into six steps that you will work on individually to learn and memorize the piece so well you will never need the music again. These six steps are the building blocks of every piece. Every step must be treated with equal importance. After completing these steps the piece will be burnt into your memory forever. Take a look at this 4 bar passage below. We will first start with this simple section from a tune called “All The Things You Are” in order to learn our 6 step process.





JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

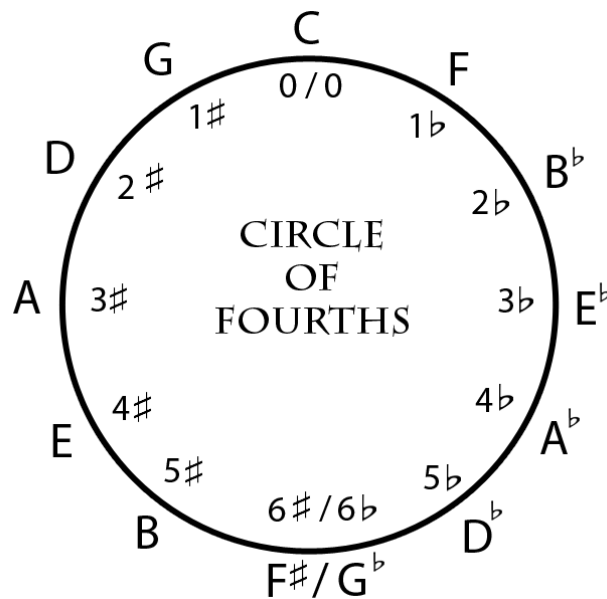
Lesson 2

Jazz Lesson 2

Technique

1. Circle Of Fourths

- a. We are adding keys by following the circle of fourths. We add the new key by taking the previous key and progressing upward by the interval of a fourth. We started in the keys of C and F. From C to F is an interval of a fourth. Now we move from F to the key of B \flat , another fourth, and from B \flat to the key of E \flat . If you look below you will also notice that one flat gets added to every key. C has no sharps or flats, F has one flat, B \flat has two flats, and E \flat has three flats. This pattern continues until we arrive at the key of B which has 5 sharps. We will continue this pattern until we have completed all of the major scales for all the keys. The Circle of Fourths is a great pattern in order to make sure you learn specific exercises in all 12 keys. I will refer to the Circle of Fourths frequently in future lessons.



Harmony & Theory

1. Major Triads

- a. Chords are one of the best parts of jazz. They are the beautiful harmonic foundation that allows for melodies and solos to float over. They are extremely important to understand and master because they serve many purposes in jazz. Knowing jazz harmony and theory will enable you to play any and all types of songs including pop, country, blues, rock, and any style you could imagine.


- b. Traditionally chords have been built in thirds, by stacking major or minor thirds on top of each other. Chords and scales share a close relationship. Every chord can be linked to a scale and vice versa. We will start by using the major scale we just learned in order to build your first chords. Triads, (three note chords) are perfect to start with in order to progress to jazz chords.
- c. Let's build triads for the two major scales you know already, C and F. All major triads are built with three notes from its own respective major scale. We will use the 1st note of the scale, the 3rd note of the scale, and finally the 5th note of the scale. For a C Major triad, the 1st degree of the scale is the note C, but for theory sake we will refer to this as the 1st degree of the scale. Next we will add the 3rd degree of the scale, (also just called the 3rd), being the note E. In order to find the 3rd, start on C and play your C major scale while counting each note you reach 3. C is counted as 1. Finally, we will add the 5th degree of scale, (or the 5th), to complete our C major triad, (see figure 3).

In order to find the major triads for F, Bb, and Eb, simply follow the same steps using the respective major scales for each of the key.

*WE BUILD MAJOR TRIADS USING THE 1ST, 3RD, AND 5TH DEGREE OF THE MAJOR SCALE


C MAJOR SCALE

1ST DEGREE 3RD DEGREE 5TH DEGREE **C MAJOR TRIAD**



F MAJOR SCALE

1ST DEGREE 3RD DEGREE 5TH DEGREE **F MAJOR TRIAD**



2. Major Triad Intervals

- a. After building our major triads we can now determine the types of thirds that make up our major third triad. Let's take our C major triad to find out our two intervals. C is the first note in the chord and E is the second so here we have our first interval. Let's count the whole steps and half steps between C and E to determine our interval. From C to D is one whole step, and from D to E is another whole step. Thus, we have two whole steps between C and E. By going back to Lesson 1 if needed and looking at our interval chart we determine that the distance of two whole steps equals a major third, (see figure).

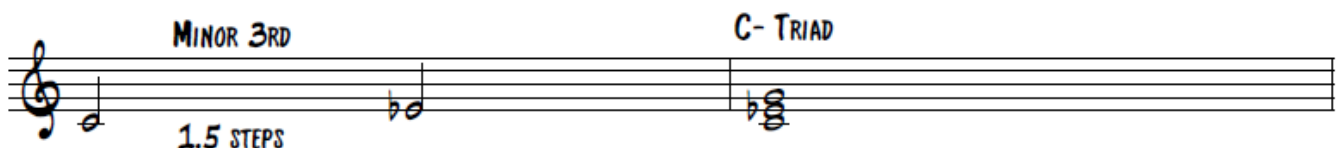


The next interval we have is between notes E and G. Let's count our whole and half steps. From E to F is a half step, and from F to G is a whole step, thus we have 1 whole step and 1 half step. By looking at our chart we see that this is a minor third, (see figure 5).



So our major triad is built by a major third, then a minor third on top.

This is a great time to point out that when the first interval of a chord starts with a major third then our chord will have a major sound and be called major. Likewise when the first interval of our chord starts with a minor 3rd, our chord will have a minor sound and be called minor, (see figure 6).



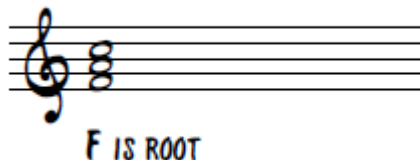
3. *How Major triads are written*

- a. In pop, and jazz charts you will always see major triad chords written as one letter that describes the root of the chord. For example you might see “C”. This mean you would play a C Major triad, C,E or G. Or you will see the letter “F”, which means you would play an F major triad. You might also see “Cmaj”, but this is very rare. You also might see CM, but this is extremely rare as well. Look at the 3 bars below and look at the chord symbols above the measures for an example of this. See figure below.



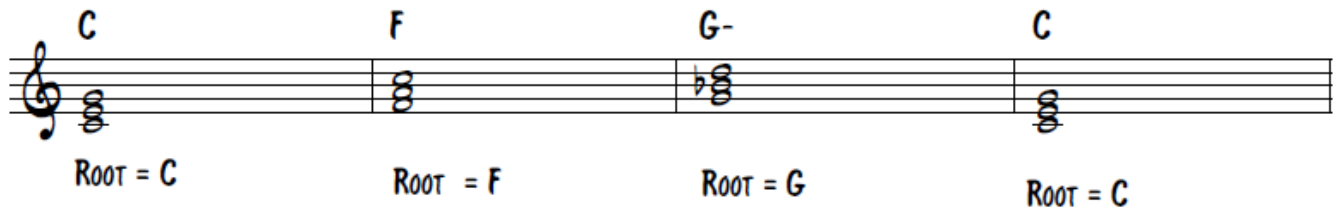
4. *Bass Notes aka. Roots*

- a. A root is a musical term for the bottom or harmonic anchor for a chord that is linked to the name. For example in a C major triad the root is C because it serves as the foundation for the other notes. The root of an F minor triad is, yup you guessed it, F, (see figure5).



Roots are important because they serve as the foundation for which a chord is built upon. Because of this the roots are regularly used as “**Bass Notes**”. Bass notes are often roots, but can be other notes as well, that are played in the extreme lower register of the piano, or any other instrument, such as a Bass. Well it sounds like it would make sense for a bass to play bass...notes... right? This is exactly what they do. A bass player in all your favorite bands is play roots to the chords the majority of the time. He lays down the harmonic

foundation for all other harmonies to be built upon. Let's say a pop piece had the first four chords of C, F, G-, C. Our roots would be C, F, G, and C, (see figure 6).



Pretty easy right? These are the notes the bass player would be playing on the bass. Notice how the root of a G- chord is just the note G even though the chord is minor. Again, the 3rd is the note in a chord that determines whether the chord is major or minor, so we need not worry about the quality of the chord when talking about the roots. All we must know is that the root is the foundation of the chord. When playing by yourself for fun or for friends, often you will not have a bass player to play the roots for you to give you a solid foundation. Do you know what this means? You have to incorporate the roots on the low register of the piano yourself! It is much easier than it seems and you will begin to practice playing bass notes in this lesson.

Repertoire

1. Pop Charts, Forms and Structures

- a. Once you know how to read basic charts you'll be able to play any music you want. All charts have the same basic structure to them. Let's say you go into a music store and pick up an Elton John Book. Most pop charts will typically look similar to this format in which you will see a grand staff with RH and LH written notes. Above the staff you will most likely see guitar tabs for guitar players to play the chords as well as chords notated by symbols and letters like in figure 7. The chords above the music is what we are actually interested in as these are going to give us the harmonies to the piece without spending hours and hours practicing exactly what Elton John originally played. That can be fun but sometimes you want to just sit down and be able to play an artist's pieces with ease. The chords above the music allow us to do that. Playing the chords to the music allows us to

break out of the box that we are put in by the notes on the page. We are able to engage in self expression and that is the most fun part of music.

Piano Man – Billy Joel Excerpt

Moderately

mf

With pedal

1. It's nine o'clock on a Sat-ur-day.

2.-4. (See additional lyrics)

2. How to use the chords with the melody to play any music like a pro.

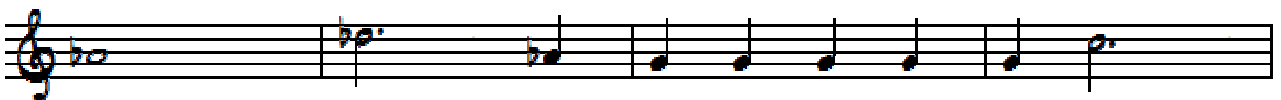
- a. The first step is to distinguish where the melody is. When we play a song our RH will play the melody most of the time while our LH is plays the written chords that are above the grand staff, (see figure 8.).

This way we are not spending hours upon hours perfecting every note. We can actually

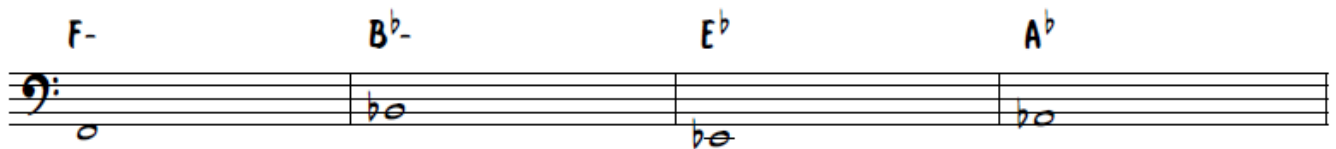
take enjoyment from sitting down at the piano and opening up a music book of our favorite artist. When we put our RH melody with our LH chords, viola! We are now playing the piece in a matter of 2 minutes. But Brenden, I don't know all these chords? Well that's what I'm going to teach you. You already know about major triads from this lesson. There are only a couple more types of chords that you will need to know in order to start sounding like a professional. Just remember, practice hard!

3. *Learning Tunes Series Part 2 – The Formula (Steps 1-2)*

- a. *Step 1 RH Melody* - When Learning RH melodies we want to practice them slowly at first with a metronome going. This will give us a reference of time to use while practicing. The purpose of playing the melody alone is too obviously learn the notes but also to hear the melodic lines isolated without the harmonies. This will help us internalize the melody more so when we're soloing or comping, will still be able to hear the melody going in our heads. The melody is what creates the piece. It should be the main point of reference for any song. We also want to play the melody in different styles as well. Lots of people will just practice the melody in a bebop fashion at one tempo. If you give your brain and muscles more variations to learn from the melodic line will catch on much faster in the beginning and also as you begin to memorize it. We also want to make sure we are practicing in different registers as well. Another thing we want to avoid is getting too comfortable in the middle of the piano. It's amazing what happens when you shift your RH up and octave or two. It's like you're playing the melody for the first time all over again. This is exactly what we want to accomplish so we can familiarize ourselves with all the different and new ways to play a melody. This way we will have learned it so well that there won't be any chance for us to forget it.



- a. *Step 2 LH Bass Notes* - Like we learned already our LH Bass notes serve as the bottom of every chord. These are the moving anchors of the harmony. Practicing the bass notes of every song helps you to always remember the progressions of any piece. The bass notes will tell you where the progression is going. When you just practice the chords to a tune there are so many different movements your hands can make to create voicings that you miss the real movements of the progression. The bass notes are the framework for all the chords. It's much easier to know the bass notes well and fill in the harmonies. Usually one can hear if a chord is major, minor, or dominant. If you have practiced the chords and harmonies but haven't practiced your bass notes, I guarantee you'll have a harder time filling in the progression if you begin to forget some changes. Practicing the bass notes is just like practicing the melody and every other step of learning the piece. We want to create as many variations as possible in order to ensure we know the progressions as best as possible. We want to erase any chance of us not know where the next chord is going to be. Will practice the bass notes in different tempos, different styles, different registers, and different feels. If you can come up with more ways to practice the bass notes or any other steps please do so! This will only help you get better.





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Lesson 3

Jazz Lesson 3

Technique

1. Arpeggios

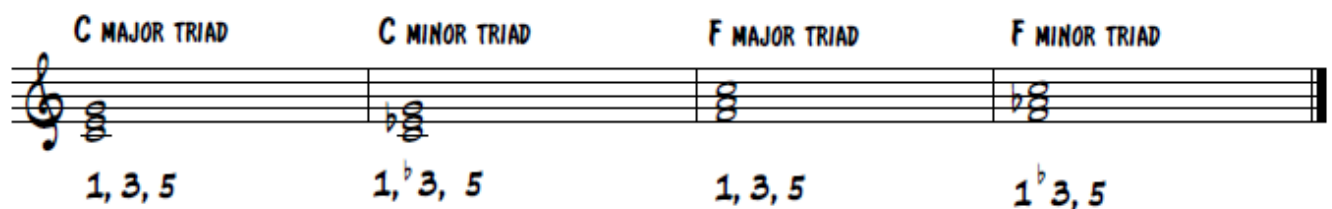
- a. Arpeggios are a great way to work on finger strength, movement, and flexibility of the hand. An arpeggio is a specific way you play a chord or group of notes in a single note pattern going up and down. You played some arpeggios of the major triads in Lesson 1 Practice Exercises. We are going to take this to the next level and add arpeggios as a progressive regiment that we will use for all major triads and other chords in order to improve your technique while assisting you in your harmony and theory knowledge. (See below).



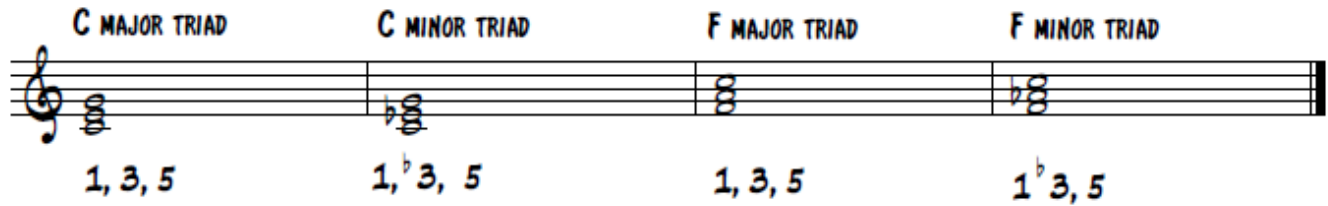
Harmony & Theory

1. Minor Triads

- a. Minor Triads are very similar to major triads except minor triads create a sad or ominous type of sound when played. Just like major triads are built from major scale, minor triads are built using a minor scale. We will get into minor harmony later in the course but for now I would like to show you a similar more effective way to build a minor triad. In order to create a minor triad we take our major triad, let's use C major for example, so we now have the notes C, E, and G, and we simply lower our 3rd, the note E, down a half step, and play the chord again with the new lowered 3rd (see below).



That's it! You now have a Cmin triad. In order to create minor triads from other major chords we simply follow the same process. Let's try to build a F min triad. First, take an F major triad, lower the 3rd by a half step, in this case, move the A, to Ab, and play the chord with the new lowered 3rd. Now we have the notes F, Ab, C, or an F minor triad, (see below).



- b. Unlike major triads which do not have anything written after the letter, minor symbols can be denoted in a couple of different ways. You will see Cminor triad written with a hyphen after the letter as “C-”. You will sometimes see the first three letters of the word minor used after the letter as “Cmin”. You will also just see a lower case “m” after the letter to symbolize a minor triad such as “Cm”. Anyway you end up seeing it though, just remember, they all mean the same thing, to flat the 3rd in the triad.

2. How Minor Triads Are Written

- a. You will see minor triads written a few different ways. The most common is with a hyphen after the letter though. This is most common in jazz and pop fake books. Sometimes you might see a lower case “m” which also means minor. Other times they may write out “min” after the letter for you as an abbreviation for minor. (see below)



Repertoire

1. Learning Tunes Series Part 2–The Formula (Steps 3-4)

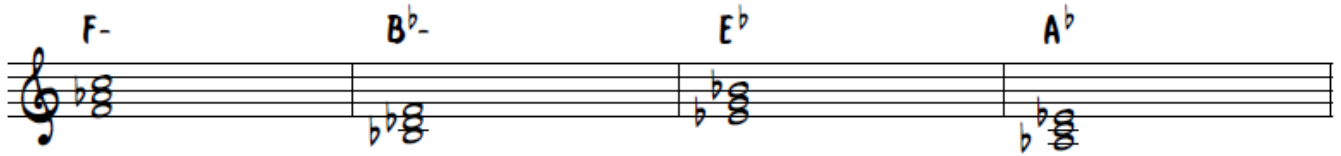
1. Step 3 (RH Melody and bass notes) - Practicing our melody with our bass motion is a necessity in order to learn the melody so you never forget it. By hearing the melody with our bass motion you'll be able to hear how the melody connects to the progression. People forget melodies because they cannot connect them to the changes, not because they're complicated or too confusing. If you can hear how the melodies are matching up with the root motion and progression, you'll never forget it.

- i. This step will really allow you to get inside the inner workings of any chart, (see below).

The musical notation illustrates the connection between the right-hand melody and the left-hand bass motion for a four-measure progression. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody, and the left hand (bass clef) plays the root notes of the chords. The chords are F- (F major), Bb- (Bb major), Eb (Eb major), and Ab (Ab major).

2. Step 4 (LH Chords alone) –This step we actually begin to fill in the qualities of the chords with our LH. We play through the chords with our LH just as if someone was playing the melody with us. Initially we want to keep this simple by playing the chords on all the down beats of every measure. After we have becoming comfortable with all the chords, then we can begin to add rhythmic figures and spice it up. Most people jump straight to playing intricate two-handed voicings with all sorts of color tones. It's no wonder people fail to memorize tunes. They're barely playing the foundation of the chord. By just playing the chord on the down beats in root position, you are playing the bare

essentials of all the harmonies. After we have learned this we can begin to build up from there. Jumping ahead of this step is a sure way to not reach your full potential on any piece. As we play the chords we now start to hear how the melody fits in, (see below).





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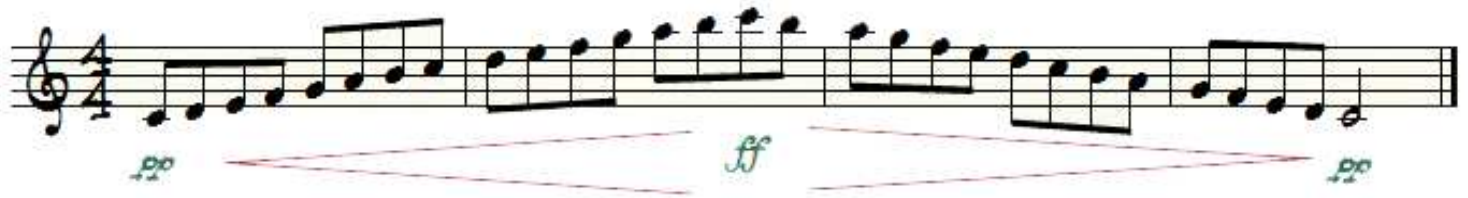
Lesson 4

Jazz Lesson 4

Technique

1. Phrasing

- a. Phrasing is a very important part of technical exercises. If you can get in the habit of working on your phrasing while practicing your tedious exercises than this will translate to your playing. While playing your scales and arpeggios, work on shaping the exercise so it has a clear beginning middle and end by using dynamics and visualization of the checkpoints. For example, when you start a scale, do not think about every note of every beat. Instead think about your initial starting point and where your next target is. This will be at the top of the scale before you come down. When you visualize these two points everything in between flows fluidly without hiccups. Otherwise your scale will sound like a rollercoaster clunking away on the gears to the top. The longer you can feel the phrase, the more fluid motion the scale will contain. Your last target after you have reached the top of your scale would then be at the bottom, so again visualize this as your target. Music in general is highly dependent upon phrasing so it is best to practice this feeling in all your exercises. To work on your phrasing we are going to add dynamics to your scales in the manner shown below. We will start small, grow louder, and then get softer again.





Harmony & Theory



1. Chord Inversions

- a. An inversion of a chord is simply taking the notes that build the chord and arranging them in a different order. A C Major Triad is built from the notes C, E, and G. To play an inversion of this chord, we arrange the notes in a different order. Instead of playing the root, (note C), on the bottom of the chord, let's move it to the top. The triad is now built with the 3rd, (note E), on the bottom, the fifth, (note G), in the middle, and the root, (note C), on top. This structure is called **First Inversion**, (see below).

C MAJOR TRIAD

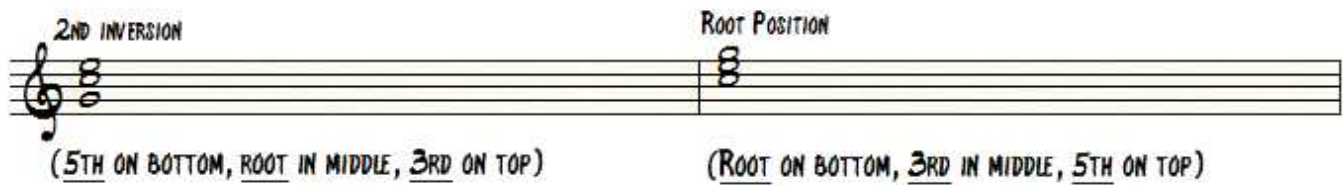
ROOT POSITION  (<u>ROOT</u> ON BOTTOM, <u>3RD</u> IN MIDDLE, <u>5TH</u> ON TOP)	1ST INVERSION  (<u>3RD</u> ON BOTTOM, <u>5TH</u> IN MIDDLE, <u>ROOT</u> ON TOP)
--	--

Now let's rearrange the notes one more time to create **Second Inversion**. When we move the 3rd, (note E), to the top so that our 5th, (note G), is on the bottom, we now have 2nd inversion, (see below).

1ST INVERSION  (<u>3RD</u> ON BOTTOM, <u>5TH</u> IN MIDDLE, <u>ROOT</u> ON TOP)	2ND INVERSION  (<u>5TH</u> ON BOTTOM, <u>ROOT</u> IN MIDDLE, <u>3RD</u> ON TOP)
--	--

Again, let me point out that we continue to use the same notes, yet we are simply rearranging the order of them. At this point, if we now rearrange **Second Inversion** the same way, by taking the bottom note, (note G) and putting it on top of the chord, we wind

up being back at our root position chord, but an octave higher than our initial starting point, (see below.) Using this simple method we can create inversions for any type of chord in all keys!



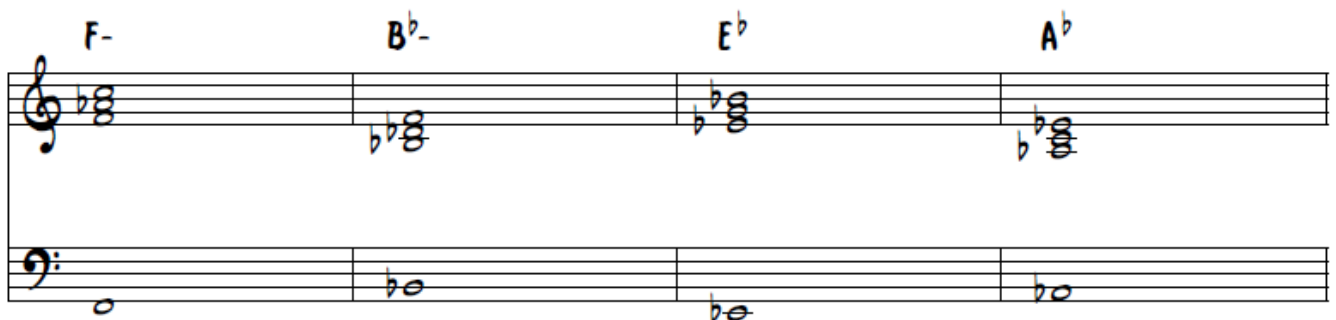
Repertoire

1. Learning Tunes Series Part 2–The Formula (Steps 5-6)

a. Step 5 (Chords and Bass notes together)

At this point we begin to combine our previous exercise together. Playing the harmonies with our RH while playing the bass with our LH serves us many different purposes. We are hearing the harmonies with the root motion which is great for progression recognition. We are also practicing our comping at the same time so if we are to play this tune in a group we will easily be able to move around the harmonies and simply add some two handed voicings. Practicing with the bass also allows us to hear what harmonies and voicings sound the best with the bass in the bottom. Sometimes you will play a voicing that sounds decent in the middle register, but when you add the bass note to the equation, the voicing sounds terrible. By having the bass notes there as well you can begin to hear exactly what the harmonic progressions are going to sound like.

- i.* This is really where we start to hear the essence of the piece. Someone might actually be able to tell what you are playing at this point! (See below).



b. *Step 6 (Melody with Chords)*

This is the most basic way to hear the harmonies with the melody. In this step you want to use root position chords in order to hear the chord built up from the bass. If you are using complicated voicings or inversions, you don't get the true essence of the chord and melody together. As you start to familiarize yourself with the different steps, you can switch to rootless voicings or some other types of voicings you already know. Hearing the melody note against all four of the chord tones is crucial as well to knowing where you are in the tune. This will greatly improve your sense of harmonic placement in the tune as well because you'll be able to imagine the melody while playing the chords.

- i. This will capture enough of a piece to show off your newly learned talents to all your friends. In the future we will work on adding LH bass notes with LH Chords at the same time but not yet! (See below).

The musical notation is presented on a grand staff with two systems. The first system contains the first two measures, and the second system contains the next two measures. In the first measure, the right hand plays a half note F4, and the left hand plays a root position F- chord (F2, C3, F3). In the second measure, the right hand plays a half note Bb4, and the left hand plays a root position Bb- chord (Bb2, F3, Bb3). In the third measure, the right hand plays a half note Eb4, and the left hand plays a root position Eb chord (Eb2, Bb2, Eb3). In the fourth measure, the right hand plays a half note Ab4, and the left hand plays a root position Ab chord (Ab2, F3, Ab3). The key signature has one flat (Bb).

2. *Rhythm*

- a. Rhythms are what bring the music to life. Rhythm is what makes you feel the need to move and groove when listening to your favorite artist. Even with the most advanced harmonic knowledge, without the application of rhythms to a piece it's going to feel like watching paint dry. In our last lesson we talked about the steps to go through in order to learn any piece while memorizing it. Let's add life to the piece by giving it some rhythm instead of just playing whole notes. Let's take the first rhythm shown below and apply it to the following steps for the progression shown below.

- i. RH Chords Alone
- ii. LH Bass notes alone
- iii. RH Chords with LH Bass notes

WE CAN PLAY HALF NOTES AS A RHYTHM FOR OUR DIFFERENT STEPS

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The top staff contains four measures, each with a half note. The notes are C, C, F, and F. Below each half note is its corresponding letter. The bottom staff shows a continuous eighth-note pattern across four measures, represented by diagonal lines.

- b. Great! Now let's do it with the other rhythms. Notice how each one of the three rhythms gives the piece a different feeling. Once you get comfortable with certain rhythmic concepts you'll be able to add and take away rhythms at your leisure.

12 - HALF NOTE WITH TWO QUARTER NOTES

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The staff contains four measures. Each measure starts with a half note, followed by two quarter notes. The notes are C, C, F, and F.

13 TWO QUARTER NOTES WITH A HALF NOTE

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The staff contains four measures. Each measure starts with two quarter notes, followed by a half note. The notes are C, C, F, and F.

14 PULSING QUARTER NOTES

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The staff contains four measures. Each measure contains four quarter notes. The notes are C, C, F, and F.

15 PLAYING ON THE UPBEAT (HARDER)

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time. The staff contains four measures. Each measure starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note. The notes are C, C, F, and F.

- c. Adding the RH Melody while LH is playing a specific rhythmic figure with chords is getting a little more advanced but we will learn how to practice doing this later on in the course.



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 5

Jazz Lesson 5

Technique

1. Natural Minor Scale

- a. Every major scale has a corresponding minor scale that shares the same key signature. For example the corresponding natural minor scale that is associated with the C major scale is A minor. The A natural minor scale has no sharps or flats, thus you simply play all white notes, starting on A and ending on A to generate you're a natural minor scale. The corresponding natural minor of a major scale is always a minor third down from the root of the major scale. A is a minor third down from C. So the natural minor scale for C is A natural minor, (see below).



We can also change a major scale into a natural minor scale. In order to build a natural minor scale from a major scale we make the 3rd, 6th and 7th flat from our major scale, (see below).



Using the C major scale the 3rd, 6th and 7th will be the notes E, A and B. After we flat these degrees we now have, Eb, Ab and Bb. We now have our C natural minor scale, (see below).



In order to determine the major key that C natural minor shares we can ask ourselves what major key has three flats? Or, since we know the natural minor key is always a minor third down from the major key, we can simply count up a minor third to find the major key. Either way we get the major key of Eb, (see below).

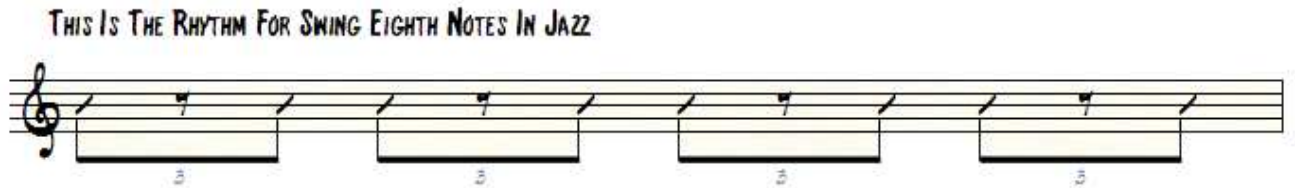


All the notes from the Eb major scale and the C natural minor scale are the same because they use the same key signature yet they both produce extremely different sounds because of their starting and ending points. The natural minor scales are going to be important to know when dealing with minor jazz harmonies that will appear in future lessons.

2. *Swing Eighth notes and the rhythms of jazz*

- a. One of the great things about jazz is the uplifting feeling that it produces in the soul due to the swing feeling that the rhythmic concepts produce. Learning how to swing is probably in the top 3 hardest things to learn in order to play jazz. The piece composed by the great Duke Ellington stated it best, "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing." Probably the most true statement about jazz. If you're playing isn't swinging then you aren't playing jazz. We will start by learning how to swing our eighth notes so that we can

begin to master the rhythmic feeling that must be applied to all of our jazz playing. In classical and jazz eighth notes are written the same, yet when playing jazz you would apply a different rhythmic feel to the swung eighth notes. The swung eighth notes are felt as the first beat of a triplet and the last beat of a triplet, (see below).



So when we see eighth notes in jazz we are actually playing them with a triplet feel style, yet they are simply considered eighth notes in jazz, (see below).



The best way to start out learning the swing eighth note feel is to practice your scales with this feeling using the provided videos. After a couple practice sessions playing eighth notes with this specific triplet note feel will feel natural.

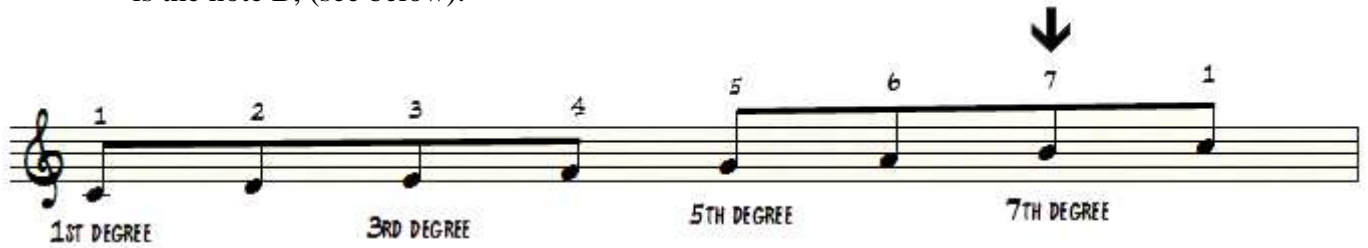
Harmony & Theory

1. Jazz Chord beginner Series Part 1 - Major 7th Chords

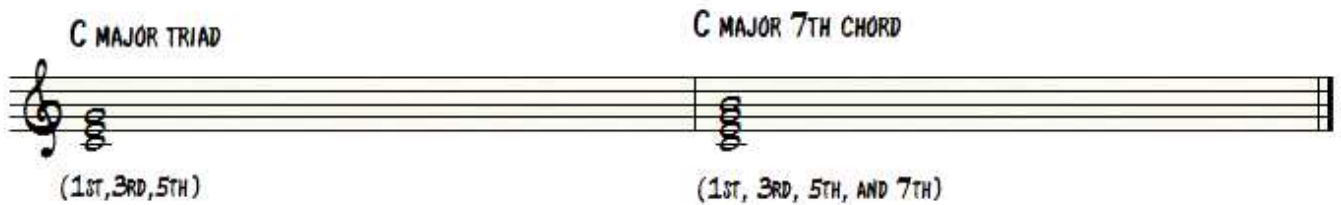
a. Intro

We've talked about using three notes to build a chord called a **Triad**. Now we're going to add one more note so that we are playing chords with four notes instead of three. Adding this fourth note begins to take us deep into Jazz Harmony and Theory. The particular chord we are going to talk about is the **Major 7th** chord. Let's build a Cmaj7th chord right now. When we built a C major triad we used the 1st degree of the scale, (the note C), the 3rd degree of the scale, (the note E), and the 5th degree of the scale, (the note G). When we build our C maj 7th chord, we are simply going to add the 7th degree of our major scale to

our C major triad. If we count up our C major scale we find that the 7th degree of the scale is the note B, (see below).

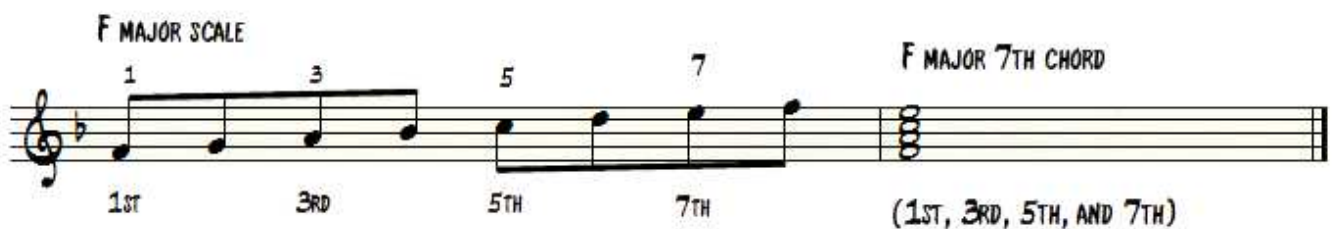


Let's add the seventh degree of our C major scale, (note B), to the top of our C major triad to form our C maj7th chord. We now have the notes C, E, G, B, or the 1st degree, 3rd degree, 5th degree, and the 7th degree, of the major scale, (see below).



In this case the word major in C major 7th refers to the type of 7th we are adding to the chord. We are adding the major 7th degree of our C major scale to the chord.

Just like our triads, when we build our major 7th chords in other keys, we use the corresponding major scales to build our chord. So in order to build a F major 7th chord, we would use the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degree of the F major scale in order to find our chord, (see below).



b. Intervals within a Major 7th chord

- i. Let's take a look at the last interval in our major 7th chord. We already learned the first two intervals within our major triad. To review from the root to the 3rd is a major 3rd; from the 3rd to the 5th is a minor 3rd. Let's find out the interval between the 5th and 7th now. Will use our half step method to count up. In this case our starting note is G, the 5th of a C maj7 chord. From G to A is a whole step and from A to B is another whole step, (see below).



What does this give us a major third; (refer back to our interval chart if you cannot remember). We have a major third at the very top to complete our Major 7th chord. So our intervals within our major chord are as follows. Major 3rd, minor 3rd, major 3rd, (see below).

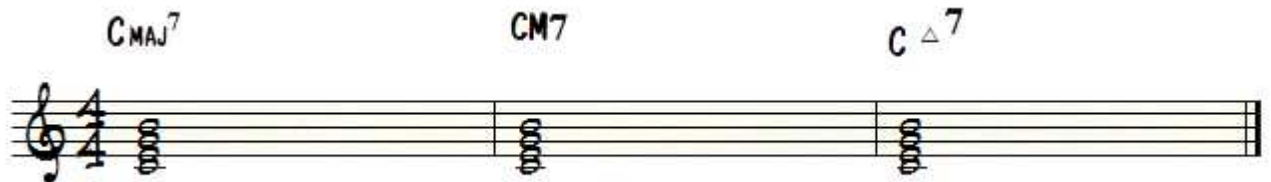


Another good interval to know is the distance between the root and the major 7th which creates the interval of a major 7th. This is easy because the name of the 7th is actually the name of the interval, for good reason. You will see different types of intervals involving the 7th as we get into different types of chords later on.

c. How they're written

- i. Major 7th chords can be written in a number of different ways, more so than major or minor triads. In a major 7th chord the word major is referring to the type of 7th that is on the top of the chord. We already know a chord is major if stated by one letter for instance the chord "C" or "F". When we see a C with a maj7, we can

assume we are using a C triad with a major 7th on top. Without specifying a major 7th on the chord you would see “C7. This is going to be a different type of 7 on top because we have not specified that it is a major 7th. This will be explained in further detail in the upcoming lessons as we get into different types of chords. Look at the following ways below you will see major 7th written in charts, (see below).



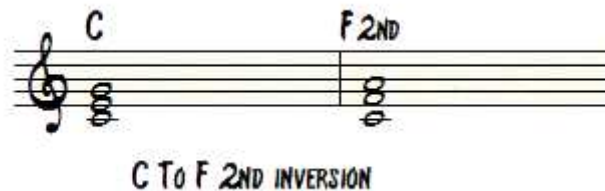
2. Voice Leading Triads

- a. Voicing leading is when harmonies move the smallest distance possible to arrive at their next note. This allows for smooth and uninterrupted movements of all harmonies within a chord. For example, let's say we take the chords C, F, Amin, G and C. We could play all these chords in root position. This will sound okay, but the jumps when moving the chords are going to be very noticeable to the ear. Almost like hiccups. Let's voice lead these chords so each of the chord tones move the least distance possible to get to another chord tone. Let's look at the change between C to F. First we must look at the chord tones of the chord we are on, being C, so we have the notes C, E, and G. Now we must know what chord tones we are going to in order to play a F major triad. The notes within an F triad are F, A, and C. Now at this point we do not necessarily have to play a root position F triad. We can play 1st inversion or 2nd inversion. Whichever structure allows us the least movement from C to F is the structure we will chose. Let's look at the starting tones of C individually now and figure out where we should move them. The root of C is the note C, so which of the three chord tones of F, (F, A, or C) is going to be closest to move to? Well since an F major chord already has the note C in it, we don't have to move our starting note at all. Our C will simply be repeated as we change the other notes. Now let's look at the next chord tone movement within our C chord. This happens to be our 3rd, or the note E. Since we already know the note C from within our F chord notes, (F, A, and C) is taken, we now are left with two options, being the notes F or A. Is the note F or A closest to our note E in our C chord. The note F is closest! This means we will move the note E

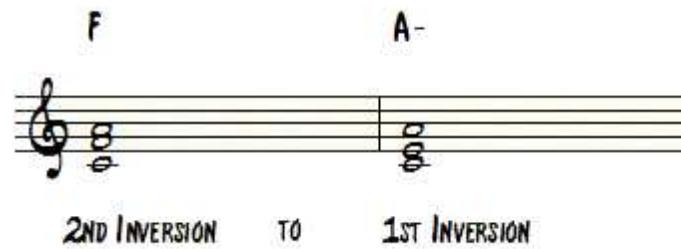
from our C chord to the note F from our F chord. We now have established two out of 3 movements of our voice leading. (TIP: Remember triads only have 3 notes, so there will only be 3 movements. When we begin to voice lead our major 7th chords there will be 4 notes so you will need to account for 4 note movements.) The last note left in our C chord is the 5th, or the note G, and since we only have one remaining note to choose from our F chord, (the note A), we can deduct that the G from our C chord must move to the note A from our F chord. Let's play the individual movements before we play the full chord. C stays the same, E moves to F and G moves to A, (see below) .



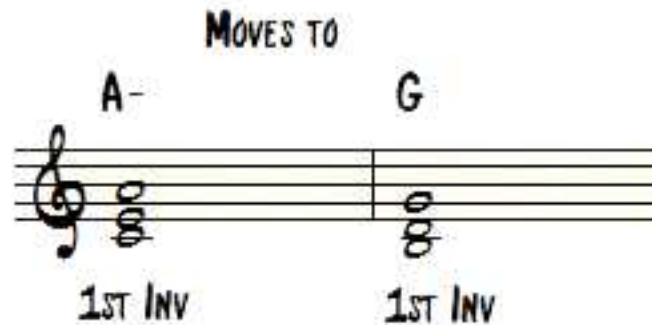
Now let's play them as full chords with the movements of the different harmonies to hear the voice leading, (see below).



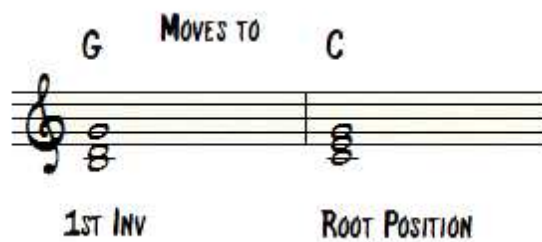
- b. What I've just explained is the systematic approach in order for you to understand what is going on. The easier way to explain voice leading within chords is simply moving a chord to the nearest inversion of the next chord. In the previous example we moved our C root position chord to our F 2nd inversion chord. You want your movements to always be to the closest inversion of the next chord. That is why it is very important to know all your inversions and the notes in them without thinking. This will allow for very easy voice leading movements with your LH. Let's look at the last chords within the series. The chords sequence I initially said was C, F, Amin, G, C. We know our root position C is moving to our 2nd inversion of F. Now we must move to Amin, so what is the closest Amin inversion to our 2nd inversion F chord, (the chord we are currently on). Amin 1st inversion would be closest! (See below).



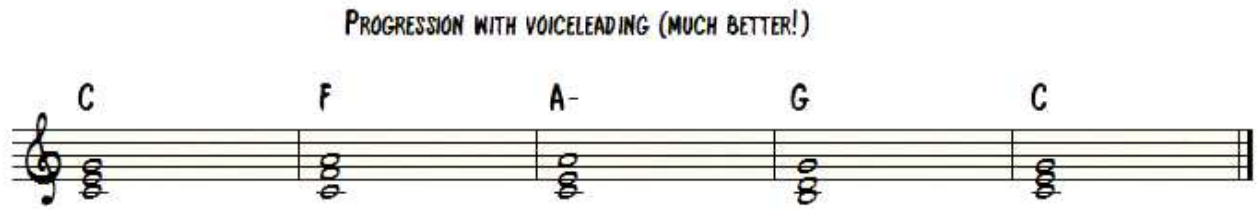
This gives us the least amount of movement within all three of our chord voices. Now let's move to our closest G inversion, which is 1st inversion again, (see below).



Finally we move back to our C root position, (see below).



Play this chord sequence while adding your LH bass notes and compare it to the non voice leading pattern to hear the difference, (see below).



Repertoire

1. Forms & Structures

- a. Jazz pieces take on different structures musicians call **Forms**. Each section of the form is denoted by using letters from the alphabet starting with A. When the section changes we use the next new letter in the alphabet, in this case the letter B. This is usually called “The Bridge.” When sections repeat we simply use the same letter. Each section takes on a specific number of bars. You can think of the form of a piece as a simple roadmap. When musicians talk about the form of a jazz standard you might hear them say , “It’s AABA, or AABC for example.” This is simply talking about the different sections of the piece. Can you hear the different sections in Body And Soul? In a jazz standard the form is played once with the melody, then a soloist will solo over the form multiple times, then the melody is played once more over the form and the piece is ended. Here are suggested tunes for viewing.

1. Body and Soul AABA
2. Pent Up House AB

2. Listen for the Major7th chords and how they sound on any jazz album.

- a. Simply listen to How High The Moon while following along with the chords and see if you can hear the difference between the major 7th chords and all the other types of chords.

Anything you notice? Try listening at least three –six times.

HOW HIGH THE MOON

Chords for 'How High The Moon':

- Staff 1: FMAJ7, GMAJ7, FMAJ7, F-7, B^b7, C7
- Staff 2: E^bMAJ7, A-7, D7, G-7, A-7^b5, D7
- Staff 3: GMAJ7, A-7, D7, B-7, E7, A-7, D7
- Staff 4: GMAJ7, GMAJ7, G-7, C7
- Staff 5: FMAJ7, FMAJ7, F-7, B^b7
- Staff 6: E^bMAJ7, A-7, D7, GMAJ7, A-7, D7
- Staff 7: B-7, E7, A-7, D7, GMAJ7, A-7, D7
- Staff 8: (Ends with a double bar line)

3. *Begin learning Duke Ellington's "Take The "A" Train" using the 6 Step Method. We will begin with step 1 only.*

i. Here are all the steps to keep them fresh in your mind.

1. RH Melody
2. LH Bass Notes
3. RH Melody and LH Bass Notes
4. Chords in both hands
5. RH Chords LH Bass notes
6. RH Melody and LH chords

ii. Take the A-Train RH Melody - The melody is obviously a very important part of any piece. It is the beautiful line that floats above all the harmony. Practicing the melodies to songs in different styles and tempos will help you get inside the harmony better and memorize the melody faster, (see below).





JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 6

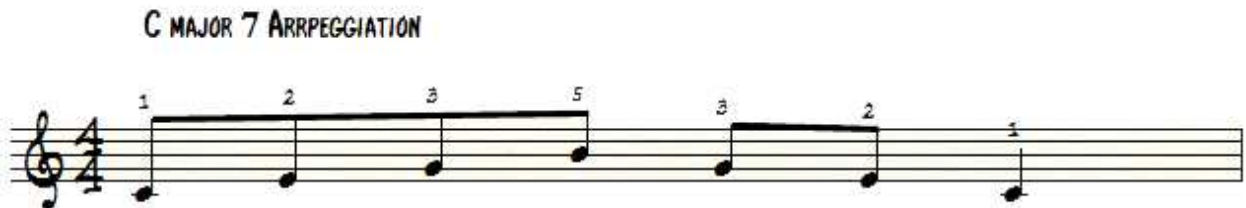
Jazz Lesson 6

Technique

1. Swing 7th Chord Arpeggiation

- a. We have learned what an arpeggiation is in the previous lesson, and practiced arpeggiating triads. We are now going to apply this concept to our 7th chords and make your fingers work a little harder. This exercise will be very beneficial to your improvising as we start to incorporate the chord tones into our solos (It will also help improve your swing feel!).

Figure 6.1



Harmony & Theory

1. Dominant 7th Chords

- a. Dominant 7th chords are fun! Dominant chords open up a lot of possibilities for voicings, extensions and creating interesting chord progressions. Dominant chords are similar to major 7th chords since they start with a major triad.

Let's build a C dominant 7th chord. We have our C major triad, with the notes, C, E, and G, now all we have to do is add our 7th. Notice how in a dominant 7th chord we are no longer saying major 7th. A dominant 7th actually uses a flat 7th on top of our major triad (instead of a major 7th).

The easiest way to find the “dominant 7th” is to find the major 7th and lower it. What I mean by this is we will find our major 7th degree of our major scale, in this case it happens to be the note B natural. Now that we have our major 7th we are simply going to flat this note. If we do this to the note B natural we now have the note Bb, (see figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2



Let's put the note Bb on top of our major triad, (see figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3



Now we have constructed a C dominant 7th chord (written as C7). When we use the flat 7 in chords, it is noted as just “7” without any major sign. This applies to any chord that has a lowered seventh (such as any dominant chord, or a minor chord that has a lowered 7th).

2. Intervals Within Dominant 7th chords.

- a. Intervals within a dominant 7th chord are similar to major 7th chords because we start off with a major triad. *(Review the intervals within a major 7th chord if you need a refresher).* The distance from the root to the flat 7th will be a new interval for us. If you refer back to the interval section, you will discover that this interval is called a minor 7th. Even though interval is defined as minor, we do not identify any part of the chord as being minor. Be sure to not get these mixed up!

Tip: I like to think about the 7th on top as a flat 7. This way I do not confuse my minor from my major chords!

Figure 6.4



3. How Dominant Chords are written charts.

- a. You will see dominant chords simply stated as C7, or Cdom7, or even C dominant7, (very rarely though), (see figure 6.5).

Figure 6.5

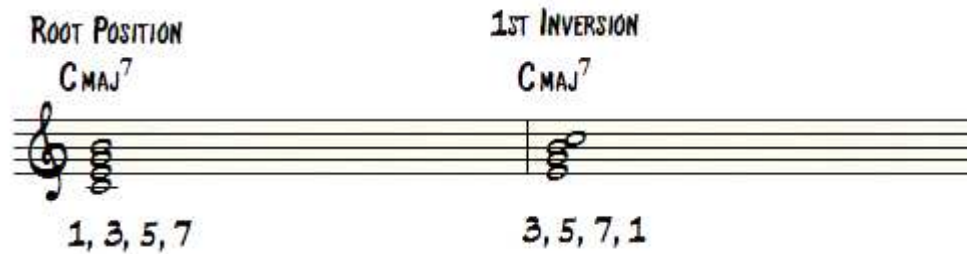


4. Inversions of Major 7th Chords

- a. We learned about inversions last week and applied this concept to our triads. This week we will learn the inversions of our major 7th chord.

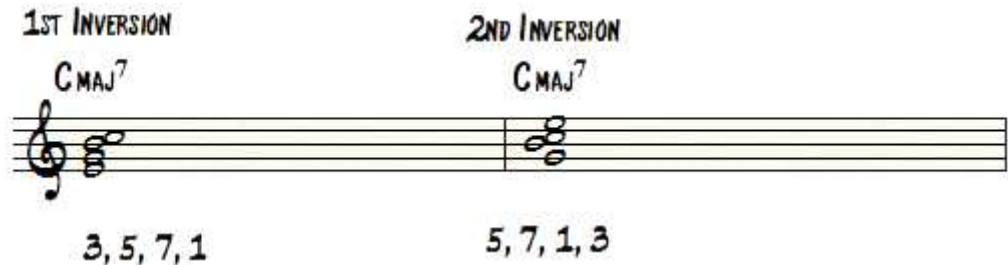
An inversion of a major 7th chord works exactly the same way as it did with our triad except now we have four notes. To create our 1st inversion from our C Triad we took the root, (note C) and moved it on top of the 5th, (note G). We will still move the root on top of the chord but since there are 4 notes now we must move the root on top of the 7th, (note B). This creates our 1st inversion with four notes being the 3rd, 5th, 7th and root on top. Or by notes we have E, G, B, C, (See figure 6.6)

Figure 6.6



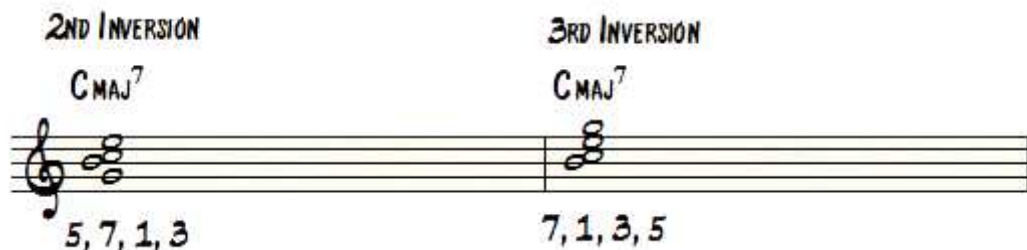
We follow the same steps to create our 2nd inversion. We take our new bottom note which is the 3rd, (note E), and move it to the top. From bottom to top we now have the 5th, 7th, root, and the 3rd. Or by notes we have, G, B, C, E, (see figure 6.7).

Figure 6.7



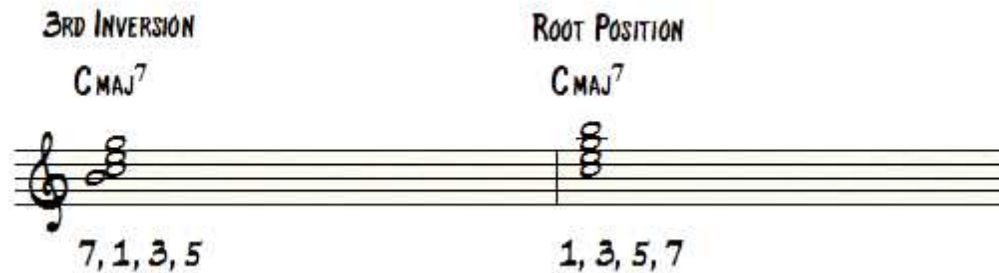
Since we have four notes now to work with we will have one last inversion before coming around to root position again. This will be third inversion. I'm guessing you know what to do by now, but if not let me tell you. We take our current bottom note, the 5th, (note G), and move it to the top. From bottom to top we now have, the 7th, root, 3rd, and 5th, or by notes we have, B, C, E, G, (see figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8



Now if we are to take our 7th, (note B), and move it to the top we end up back at root position once again, (see figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9



These inversions will be very helpful when we start learning voicings for LH as well as when we start soloing with chord tones.

Repertoire

1. LH Bass Notes to Take The “A” train. (Step 2)

- a) Play the bass notes and listen for the root motion. Playing the bass notes alone will give you a great sense of the structure of any piece. Try to hear the melody over top as you play the bass notes, (see figure 6.10)

Figure 6.10



2. Dominant chords in Blues

- a. Dominant chords are the primary chords used in the blues. See if you can hear the difference between the major 7th chords in the suggested standards and the dominant

chords, (flat 7 on top) in the provided blues track called “Blue Monk”. It’ll be hard at first to hear but they are quite distinguishable as your ear starts to improve.

Figure 6.11

BLUE MONK

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Blue Monk". It consists of three staves, each containing four measures of music. The notes are represented by diagonal lines, indicating a focus on the harmonic structure. Above each staff, a series of chords are listed, corresponding to the measures. The first staff has chords B^{b7}, E^{b7}, B^{b7}, and B^{b7}. The second staff has chords E^{b7}, E^{b7}, B^{b7}, and B^{b7}. The third staff has chords F⁷, E^{b7}, B^{b7}, and F⁷. The first measure of the third staff is marked with a '5' and the second with a '9', likely indicating fingerings or specific voicings. The time signature is 4/4, indicated by the '4' over the first staff.

Chord progression for Figure 6.11:

Staff	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4
1	B ^{b7}	E ^{b7}	B ^{b7}	B ^{b7}
2	E ^{b7}	E ^{b7}	B ^{b7}	B ^{b7}
3	F ⁷	E ^{b7}	B ^{b7}	F ⁷



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 7

Jazz Lesson 7

Technique

1. *Ascending and Descending 4 note scales*

- a. This is a great exercise to help build endurance, speed, and control, while learning your scales. With the 4-note scale we are going to play the first 4 notes of any scale, move to the 2nd note of the scale and play the next four notes. Repeat this pattern until you reach an octave from where you began. (See figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1



This pattern will be the same coming down, (see figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2



Harmony & Theory

1. *Minor 7th Chords*

- a. The intervals used in Minor 7th chords are similar to dominant chords, but in a different order. Instead of starting with a major triad as we did with our dominant chord, we are

going to start with a minor triad, then add a flattened 7th - the same type of 7th we used in our dominant 7th chord, (see figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3



We now have a minor triad on the bottom with a flat 7 on top. This is the set of intervals used in a Minor 7th chord.

2. Intervals Within a Minor 7th Chord.

- Two intervals change in a minor 7th chord. The 3rd is lowered in this chord which means the intervals between the root and the third changes, and our interval between the 3rd and the fifth changes. Intervals in this chord consist of a minor 3rd, major third, and minor third. (See figure 7.4)

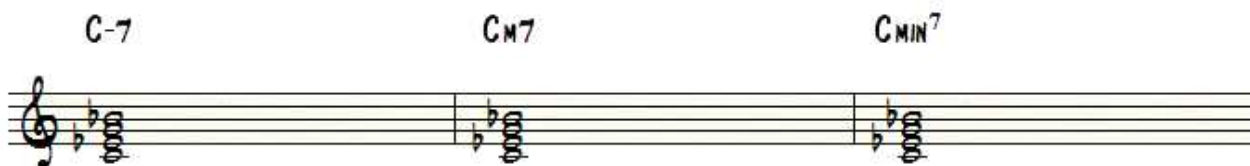
Figure 7.4



3. How Minor 7th chords are written

- You will see a minor 7th chord written the same way as a minor triad with the exception of the 7th added to it which implies adding the flat 7 to the triad. (See figure 7.5).

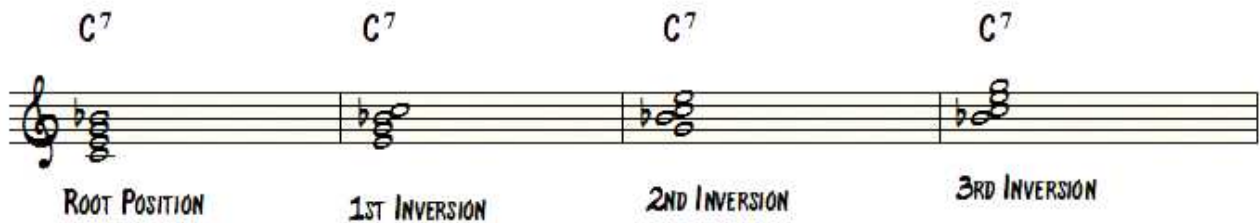
Figure 7.5



4. Dominant Inversions

- a. Inversions of dominant chords are built exactly the same as our inversions of major7th chords. We are simply going to rearrange the notes of our dominant chord to form the different types of inversions. (See figure 7.6 for all examples of Dominant chord inversion).

Figure 7.6



Repertoire

1. LH Bass Notes with Melody for Take The “A” Train (Step 3)

- a. Jazz piano begins to get slightly complicated when we start playing bass notes with the melody, but don’t worry. With a little bit of practice you’ll have this going in no time!

Figure 7.7



2. Listen to the minor 7th chords in the provided tracks below.

- a. Follow along with the changes and listen to the minor 7th chords in Wayne Shorter's "Footprints". See if you hear the difference between major 7th chords, dominant chords, and minor 7th chords. Listen carefully. They all have a very distinct sound. (see example of Footprints changes, Figure 7.8)

FOOTPRINTS

The musical score for Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" is presented in 3/4 time. The score consists of six staves of music, with chord changes indicated above the notes. The first staff (measures 1-4) features C-7 chords. The second staff (measures 5-8) features F-7 chords. The third staff (measures 9-12) features C-7 chords. The fourth staff (measures 13-16) features D7 and D^b7 chords. The fifth staff (measures 17-20) features C-7 chords. The sixth staff (measures 21-24) features C-7 chords. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb).

Chord changes indicated above the staff:

- Measures 1-4: C-7
- Measures 5-8: F-7
- Measures 9-12: C-7
- Measures 13-16: D7, D^b7
- Measures 17-20: C-7
- Measures 21-24: C-7



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 8

Jazz Lesson 8

Technique

1. Control

- a. Having control over your notes is vital in order to make the music come to life. This exercise will begin to develop your control and touch of the keys by adding dynamics to a finger pattern. It also will help your coordination as the contained movements within the fingers are slightly more difficult than our previous exercises.

Brenden's Key Point

The great jazz pianist Bill Evans once said, "*It's not what you play, but how you play.*" This statement can be applied across all genres of music. I would rather listen to 5 notes played with passion and soul over a complex, speedy phrase any day. It's the control over your notes that builds great musicians!

You practice this exercise three ways: 1) as softly as possible 2) getting louder as you go up and softer as you come down and 3) finally starting loud and getting softer as you go up, and louder as you come down (see figure 8.1)

Figure 8.1



Harmony & Theory

1. Chord Shells

- a. Chord shells refer to the specific notes of a chord, the 3rd degree and 7th degree. They are referred to as shells because they dictate the quality of the chord. If you change either one of these notes then you directly affect the chord, whether it be major or minor, or a dominant 7th or major 7th. Some of the exercises will have you play the shells of all chords in a piece to hear the essence of the chords and movements of important voices in the chords.

Figure 8.2



2. Inversion of Minor 7th Chords

- a. Inversions of minor 7th chords are done in the same fashion as major 7th and dominant chords. As a reminder, we rearrange the order of the notes in a chord to build different inversions of the chord. (See figure 8.3 for all inversions of a minor 7th chord.)

Figure 8.3

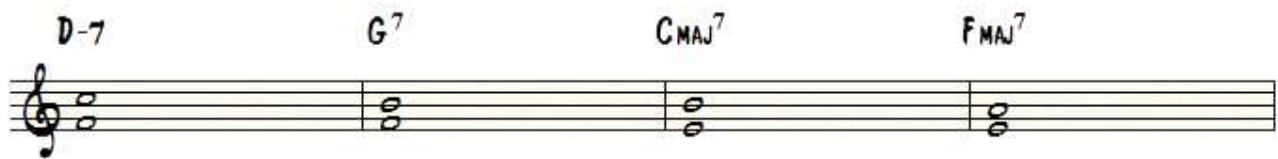


Repertoire

1. Play shells of the chord progression.

- a. Playing shells is a great way to hear the important harmonic movements. You get to hear (and see) how all of the harmonies work together. Doing this exercise will help your soloing because you will be able to better comprehend and memorize the harmonic structure of the piece, (see figure 8.4)

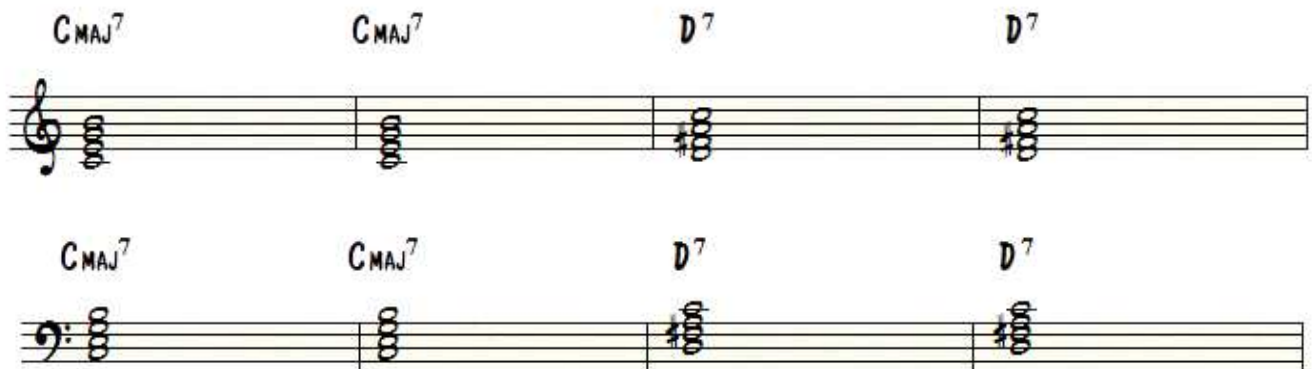
Figure 8.4



2. Take The “A” Train Step 4 - Root Position Chords in LH and RH

- a. We want to learn the chords and harmonies as intimately as we have learned the melody and bass notes. For this reason we want to practice the harmonies in both hands. They are obviously useful in our LH to play supporting chords, but they are also useful in our RH. We will use chord tones in improvising and create more advanced two-handed voicings from these qualities in the future.

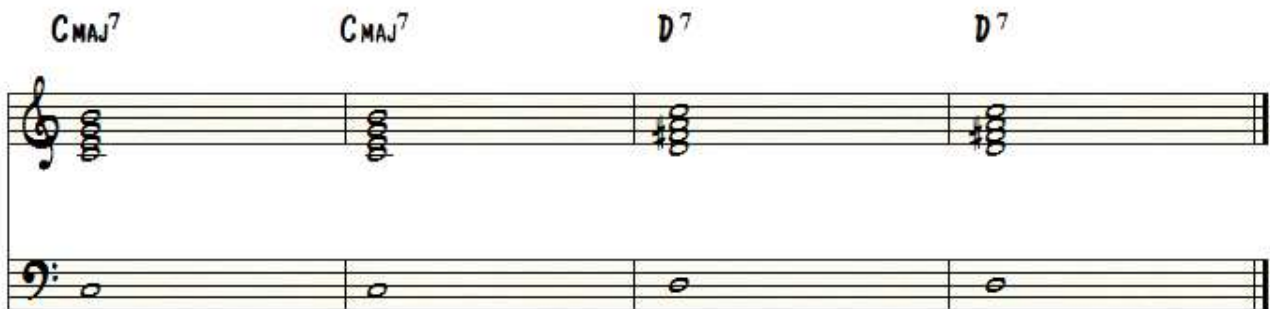
Figure 8.5



3. Take The “A” Train Step 5 – Chords RH , Bass notes in LH

- i. Now we want to sync up the RH chords with our LH bass notes. Playing through the chord progressions in this fashion will give us a complete sound of the harmonies in a tune.

Figure 8.6



4. What is improvisation?

- a. Improvisation is the act of spontaneously generating musical phrases, with the goal of creating melody and expression. There are a number of various improvisation techniques we will learn in this course, but ultimately, expression can be anything YOU want to play, no matter how bad someone might think it sounds. I will provide you with an abundance of tools in order for you to find your own voice you would like to create.