



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

*Learning Freedom*

## STAGE 01 Lesson Text

# Lessons 9-16

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# Lesson 9

# Jazz Lesson 9

## Technique

### *1. Arpeggiation of Minor 7<sup>th</sup>, Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> and Major7<sup>th</sup>*

- a. In this exercise (figure 9.1) we will take our previous 7<sup>th</sup> chord arpeggiation exercise, but instead of practicing all of the 7<sup>th</sup> chords separately we will practice each minor, major, and dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord starting from the same note. This will help us learn each chord individually and be able to play them at will.

*Figure 9.1*

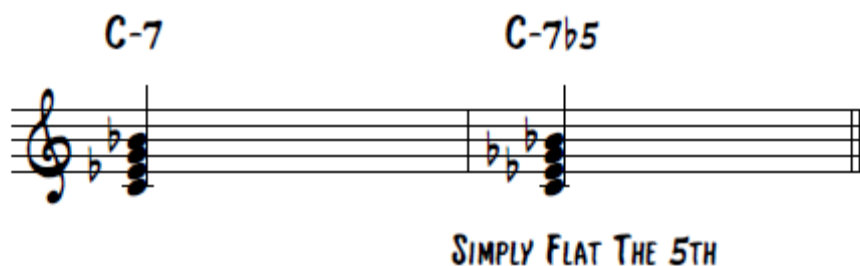


## Harmony & Theory

### *1. Minor 7<sup>th</sup> b5 Chords*

- a. The -7b5 chord takes the regular minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord one step further. In order to build a -7b5 chord we flat the 5<sup>th</sup> in our minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord. Say we take a regular C-7 chord. In order to make this a C-7b5 chord, we take the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord which is G and move it down a half step to Gb, (see figure 9.2).

*Figure 9.2*



You'll begin to see the -7b5 chord come up when studying diatonic harmony, the next theory section. This chord will also be important when we talk about minor harmony later on.

## 2. Beginner Diatonic harmony Series Part 1

- a. Now that we know our three essential jazz chords we can begin to discuss **diatonic harmony**. Diatonic harmony refers to chords that come from the same key; this means that we are using one major scale to build chords. When we built our first major triad and major 7<sup>th</sup> chord we used notes from our C major scale. When we built our dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord and minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord we didn't talk about the major scale again, we just changed the notes. I'm going to show you how we can build different types of chords using just one major scale. For this example we will use the C major scale.

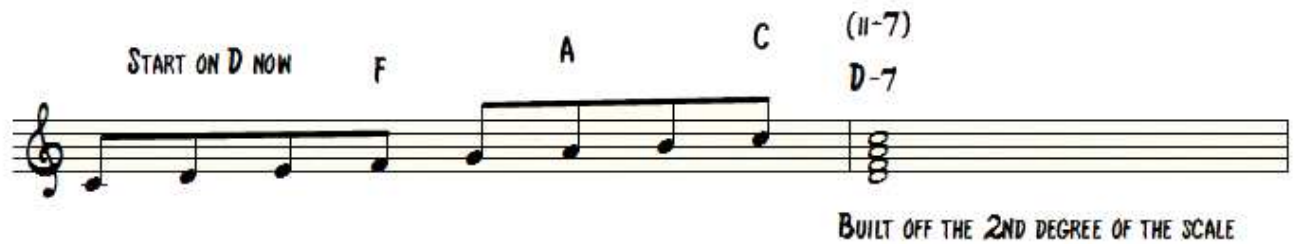
In order to build a Cmajor7 chord we used the 1<sup>st</sup> degree, the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree the 5<sup>th</sup> degree and the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of the major scale, (see figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3



Let's build another chord using notes from the C major scale but instead of starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> degree of the scale let's start on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale, being the note D. When we built the Cmajor7th chord, we started with C and used every other note from the C major scale. Let's use this same process to build a chord starting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale, note D. If we start with the note D and use every other note from our C major scale and stack them, we now have the notes D, F, A, and C, from bottom to top, (see figure 9.4).

Figure 9.4



Does this chord look like a chord you have practiced previously? It should. It is a Dmin7th chord. Dmin7th is a diatonic chord to the key of C because notes from the C major scale were used to build it. In jazz we analyze chords by using roman numerals because the numerals relate to the key we are in. For example in the key of C, we call our Cmajor7th chord, I major7 because it is built from the 1<sup>st</sup> degree of the C major scale and it is a major 7<sup>th</sup> chord. Dmin7th starts from the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the C major scale so we call this a ii min 7th chord because it starts on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale and it is a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord.

Let's build another chord starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree of the C major scale, or the note E. We will start with E and build the chord by playing every other note giving us the notes, E, G, B, D. This builds an E-7<sup>th</sup>, or iii min 7<sup>th</sup> in the key of C, (see figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5



TIP: The numerals for these chords may change depending upon what key you're in. In the key of C, C is the 1<sup>st</sup> degree of the scale, but in the key of Bb, C serves as the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the Bb scale.

If we continue to build chords from each degree of the scale we end up having built 7 chords total before returning to C again, the top note of our major scale, (see figure 9.6).



Figure 9.6



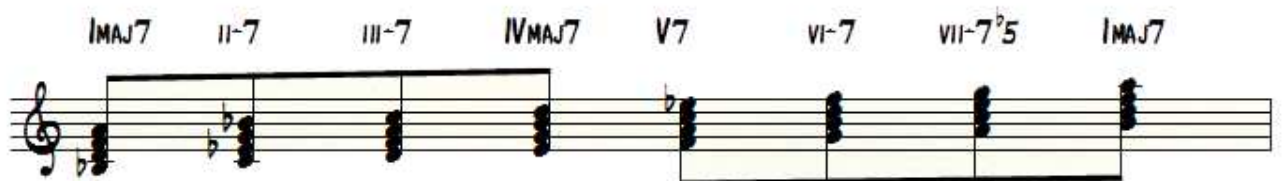
These 7 chords are all diatonic to the key of C meaning they use notes from the C major scale. If we look at the numerals for the diatonic chord sequence we have this, (see figure 9.7).

Figure 9.7



This numeral pattern will stay consistent no matter what key you are in because we are always using notes from the major scale to build the chords. With this being said if we are in the key of Bb, the I chord will always be a I major7th, the ii chord will always be a ii min 7<sup>th</sup> and so on, (see figure 9.8).

Figure 9.8

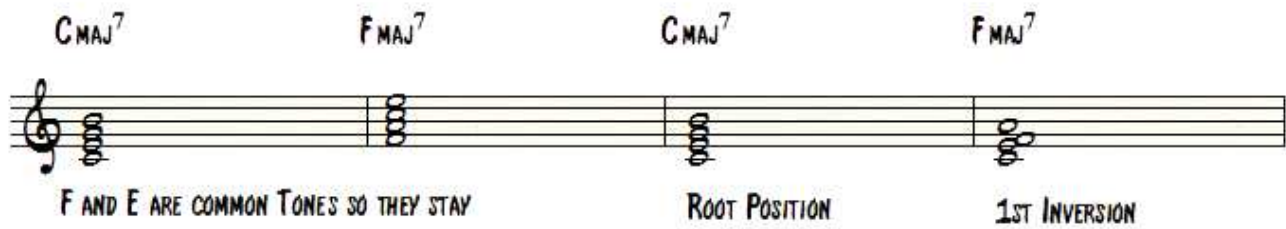


Certain scales used for soloing that correspond with each diatonic chord within a key. When we know the numeral analysis for a chord in a piece, we then know what notes we can use in our RH to solo with! Knowing the perfect harmonic notes to solo with is very helpful, especially when we are trying to create beautiful music.

### 3. Voice Leading 7<sup>th</sup> chords with inversions

- a. Voice leading 7<sup>th</sup> chords follows the same process as voice leading triads except we have one additional note to account for. Let's voice-lead a Cmaj7th chord to an Fmaj7th chord. What is the closest inversion of the Fmaj7th to our root position Cmaj7th chord? By looking at the chords below we can clearly see moving to 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion of our Fmaj7th chord is going to use the least movement possible of all of our chord tones, (see figure 9.9).

Figure 9.9



## Repertoire

### 1. Step 6 – Melody RH, LH plays bass notes and Chords for “Take The A Train”

- a. This is our last step in learning atune. Playing the a RH melody and LH bass notes/chords sounds a lot harder than it is. As you begin to learn the chords well, this step will become very easy for you. We approach this is by alternating between bass notes and chords. This will build our comfort level of switching back and forth with our LH, (see figure 9.10).

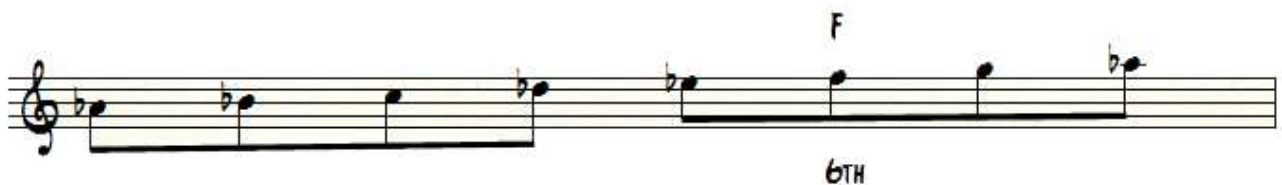
Figure 9.10



## 2. How to analyze chord changes “All The Things You Are”

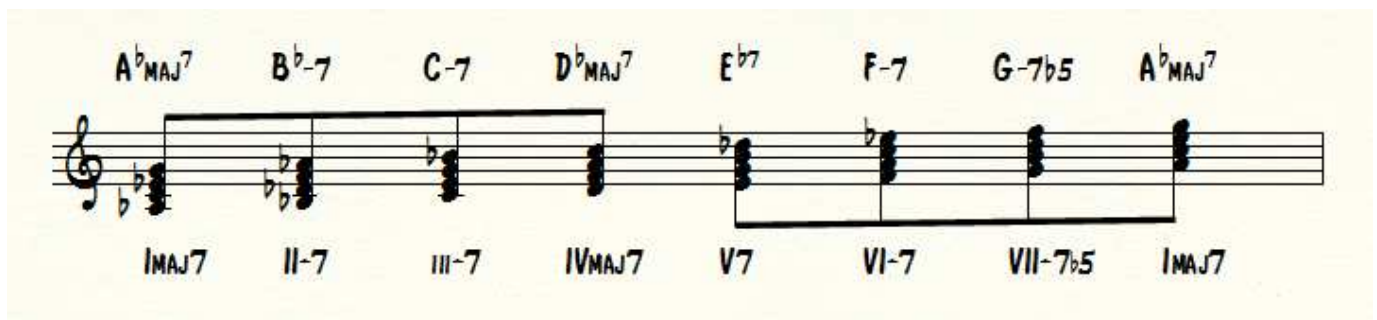
- a. This piece is perfect for learning how to analyze chords because most of the chords are diatonic to the 3 different keys the tune is in. When analyzing a piece we start by looking at the key signature to let us know what key we are starting in. TIP: The key may change throughout the piece so you have to be on the lookout for chords that aren't apart of your original 7 diatonic chords. In this case we start in the key of Ab because there are 4 flats. We know 4 flats come from our Ab major scale. Let's look at our first chord, Fmin7. How would we analyze this chord? Well to start let's see if the note F is in the Ab major scale, (see figure 9.11).

Figure 9.11



F happens to be the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale. We know from our diatonic numeral pattern that every chord built from the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale has to be minor. The F chord is an F-7<sup>th</sup> chord so now we know this is the vi-7 of Ab. If the F chord was a different chord quality such as dominant or major, then we would know the chord was coming from a different key because the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the Ab major scale has to be vi-7. We now write vi-7 above our F-7 to analyze the chord. Continue to analyze the first 6 chords using the diatonic chords beginning on Ab in the chart below, (see figure 9.12).

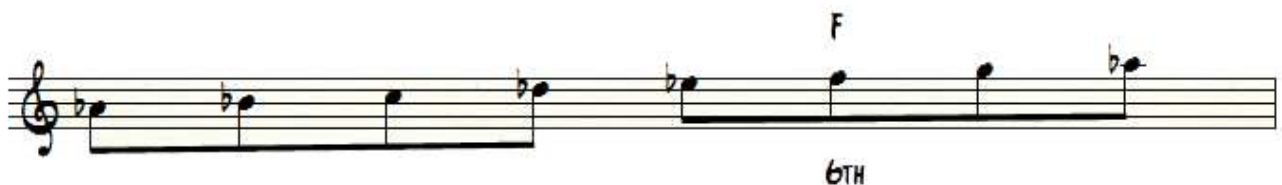
Figure 9.12



### 3. Steps to analyzing a chord change

- a. The first step to analyzing a chord change is to determine what key the song is in. When we analyzed “All The Things You Are”, you determined that the first chord was F-7<sup>th</sup>. From there we determined that the root F was in our Ab major scale, (see figure 9.13)

Figure 9.13



- b. Determine what degree of the scale the root of the chord is. In this case we determined that the note F was the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the Ab major scale by simply counting up the Ab major scale, (see figure 9.14).

Figure 9.14



- c. Determine if the chord on the chart matches the diatonic numeral quality it should be in that key. In this case the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale should be a min7<sup>th</sup> chord, and in fact the F chord is an Fmin7<sup>th</sup> chord. Perfect match! If the chord does not match then it is most likely coming from a different key.

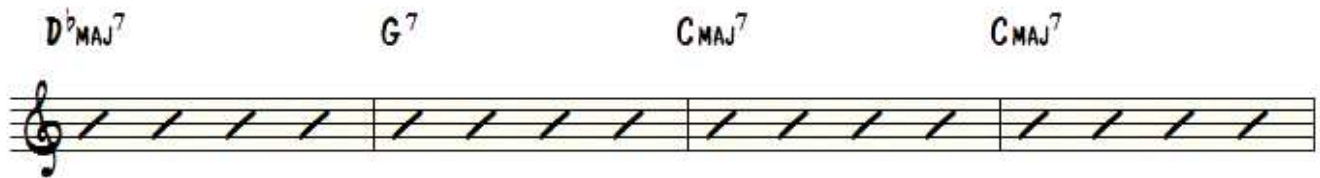
### 4. Key Changes within pieces.

- a. Lots of the time you will see chords move into a different key as the composer felt like a key change would add something different to the piece. Sometimes it is hard to tell when

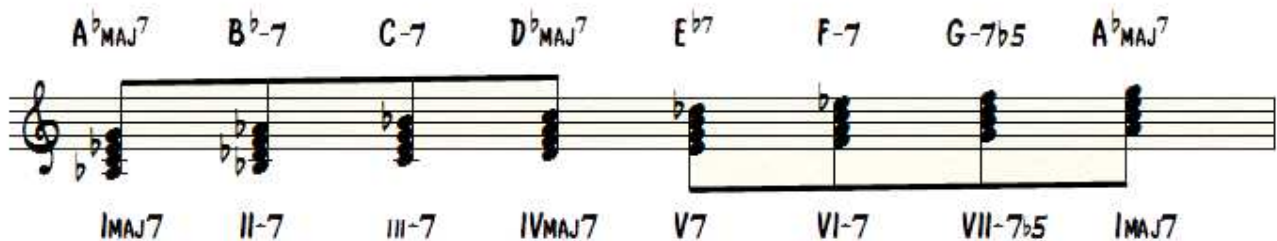


this happens but let me try and help you get started with knowing the difference. Let's go to measure 6 in "All The Things You Are" where chord change is G7, (see figure 9.15).

Figure 9.15

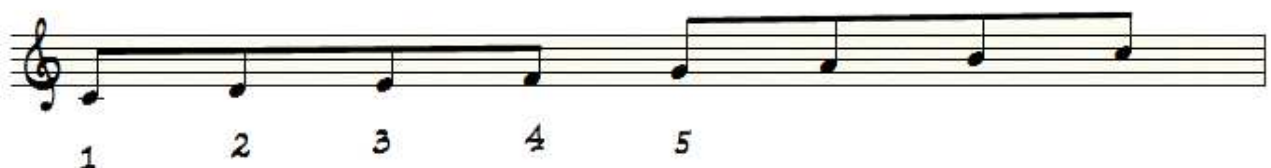


Let's follow the steps we just went over in order to figure out if there's a key change. G is in the A♭ major scale and it is the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale. We know the chord built off the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale should be a -7♭5, but, in this case we have a G dominant7. These do not match! This means the G7 has to be from a different key besides A♭ major, (see figure 9.15).



When attempting to decipher the key, look ahead to the next chord which sometimes gives us a clue. The chord after G7 in "All the things you are" is Cmaj7<sup>th</sup>. Usually in pieces when there is a key change you will see the I chord quickly appear to center the piece in the new key. Could Cmajor7<sup>th</sup> be our new I maj 7<sup>th</sup> chord? Let's check. If C maj 7<sup>th</sup> is our new key center, we would be using chords from the C major scale, this means G7 might be from the key of C. Let's use our steps to check...G certainly does happen to be in the C major scale, and it is the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale, (see figure 9.17).

Figure 9.17



When we look at our diatonic numeral chart (figure 9.18) we see that the chord built on the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale has to be dominant, and in fact, our G7 is dominant!

Figure 9.18



We now know the G7 chord is the V7 in our new key of C. To remind ourselves that the key has changed on the G7 chord we write C and put a circle around it to state there is a new key. Finally we analyze G7 by writing a V7 on top of it and a Ima<sup>j</sup>7<sup>th</sup> over the top of the C maj 7<sup>th</sup> chord.

## 5. *Beginner Improvisation Series Part 1*

1. **Intro**-When listening to great musicians solo, it might seem like you'll never be able to get to their level. As I begin to explain the process it becomes quite easy. The first step to improvising is knowing that your solo and ideas will always stem from the harmonies of the chords. When someone is playing a solo, they are simply connecting certain harmonies of the chords together so it sounds like a fluid motion.
2. **Improv Overview**- There are two improvisation approaches we will begin to work on. The first is improvising with a band, (or the provided tracks). Now, as strange as it may seem this is actually going to be easier than improvising by yourself. Now why's that you ask? When you play with bass and drums they are doing a lot to support you. The bass is holding down the roots, while the drummer is keeping the time for you. When you are improvising by yourself, (solo piano), you are responsible to keep your own rhythm and know all of the root movement! This can get a little overwhelming at first, but with some clearly guided practice techniques I will show you it will become easier. We will be studying both ways to improvise, by yourself or with other musicians.

3. **The First Step - Chord Tones** - You are already learning all the notes to the chords so this should be easy! Working on arpeggios of the chord tones will greatly help you begin to solo as we move into some improvisation exercises in the upcoming lessons. We want to begin experimenting over each type of chord by themselves and begin to sequence these chords. Look at some examples chord tones being used over major 7<sup>th</sup>, dominant 7<sup>th</sup>, and minor7th chords. (see figure 9.19)

*Figure 9.19*





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# Lesson 10



# Jazz Lesson 10

## Technique

### 1. Playing 7<sup>th</sup> chords with different combinations.

- a. Playing seventh chords in different inversions is very important for developing your soloing ability and for creating unique voicings. Before playing chord arpeggios in different inversions, practice diatonic chords by arpeggiating them in this order of chord tones: 1, 3, 5, 7. After you've mastered this, then you can begin using different inversion patterns such as 3, 1, 5, 7 or 5, 1, 3, 7 (see figure 10.1).

Figure 10.1



This will help develop coordination and your brain-finger relationship. Your fingers will get use to going back and forth on the piano instead of strictly up and down.

#### **Brenden's Key Point**

The brain-finger relationship is a very important one for the aspiring pianist. When first learning the piano, this relationship is difficult because you are using your fingers in a new and unique manner. As you become more skilled, this relationship becomes deeper. Exercises like this not only help develop this relationship, but allow it to work on a much deeper level. After some practice, there will be much less brain, and your fingers will act as though they are on autopilot. You'll be able to see a chord and instantly play it (or arpeggiate it!).

## Harmony & Theory

### *1. Modes of the diatonic scales – Beginner Harmony and Theory Series Part 2*

- a. Now that we know the possible diatonic chords within one key we can look at the modes associated with a major scale. **Mode** is a term for scales created when starting on a different degree of a major or minor scale. Confusing? Yes, it very much is!

We will learn all of the modes associated with the C major scale. We'll start in the key of C major with our first diatonic chord, I maj7th, and learn its corresponding mode, (scale). For the Imaj7th scale we are simply going to use the major scale for C major which is the key we are in and identity it as the **Ionian** mode, (see figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2



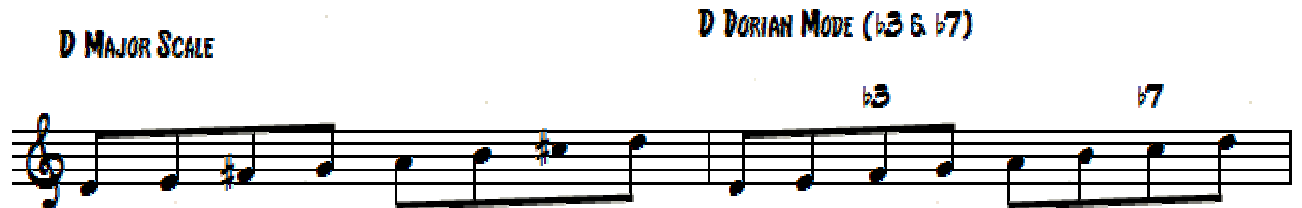
That was easy right!? Now for our ii-7<sup>th</sup> chord, in this case D-7, we simply play our C major scale, but start on D and end an octave above D. We never change any of the notes from our C major scale, we simply change the starting point and ending point in order to better reflect the chord tones of the ii-7th chord. We call the mode starting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale the **Dorian** mode. ( See figure 10.3)

Figure 10.3



Each mode has certain characteristics that separate it from the others. The **Dorian** mode has a b3 and b7. We conclude that it contains a b2 and b7 by comparing the scale to a D

major scale. A D major scale would contain an F# and C#. Since the **Dorian** mode has an F natural and a C natural, we call them b3 and b7. These are just for you to understand right now. You will not need to utilize this information until later in the courses. (See figure 10.4).



So far we have identified two modes for the major scale; the first degree (Ionian) and the second degree (dorian). There are 5 remaining modes in the scale. Will continue to use the C major scale as our reference scale but start the scale on the remaining degrees, (see figure 10.4).

Figure 10.4



It's important to remember that each mode uses the same notes from the major scale, they just begin on different degrees. You'll notice that each of these modes sound a little different from each other, and a little different from the major scale. It's amazing how many different sounds we can get just from one scale. Memorizing the names of the modes is the hardest part. Playing them is easy!

### ***Brenden's Key Point - The Low Down On Modes***

Most students I encounter have a real resistance to modes because they can be extremely confusing and hard to apply to their playing. But, I'm simply being as honest as possible when I say this: you can't reach a high level of playing without being able to understand modes and use them in your improvisation. That being said... are modes going through my mind when I solo? Absolutely not. I never think about them anymore. When you're first learning though, modes will be the foundation that will allow you to play the beautiful solos that you've always wanted.

## **Repertoire**

### ***1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 2 – Modes***

#### ***a. Soloing using the modes***

- i. Now that we know the scales that go with the modes what are we supposed to do with them? Well, to start we still want to focus on our chord tones then we can start to add more notes from the modes in order to create smoother flowing lines rather than arpeggios. If you start off trying to think about all the modes as you're soloing your brain will explode. Instead, try thinking about playing your major scale over all the chords but with different starting points. This will allow you to easily conceptualize the mode and be able to play more complex ideas. Remember you can use any of the notes from the major scale, while still trying to focus on the chord tones. You want to begin by landing on chord tones on beat 1 of each new measure. This will ensure you are reflecting the harmonies properly. Use your new found notes from the major scale to try and serve as connecting notes for the chord



tones in order to add fluidity to your solos. (Examples of solo's using the different modes. See figure 10.5)

*Figure 10.5*



*b. Solo Over A-Train Using Chord Tones*

- i. In order to prepare our self to improvise over a tune we want to familiarize ourself with the chord tones to the harmonies. Will do this by practicing arpeggiating the chord tones to all the chords in Take The A Train, (see figure 10.6).

*Figure 10.6*



Before you begin to improvise on any new tune you will want to use this exercise. It will help you grow comfortable with the chord tones much faster.

*c. Improvise Using The Chord Tones*

- i.* Time for the fun part. Take chord tones from each chord and play them in any order you'd like. Begin with simple melodies that you like. There are no particular steps to this so be creative as you want. Remember nothing is wrong. You'll feel a little uneasy in the beginning but you slowly begin to enjoy the freedom that improvising provides. This is a chance for you to express yourself. (See figure 10.7 for chord tone solo example.)

*Figure 10.7*





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# Lesson 11

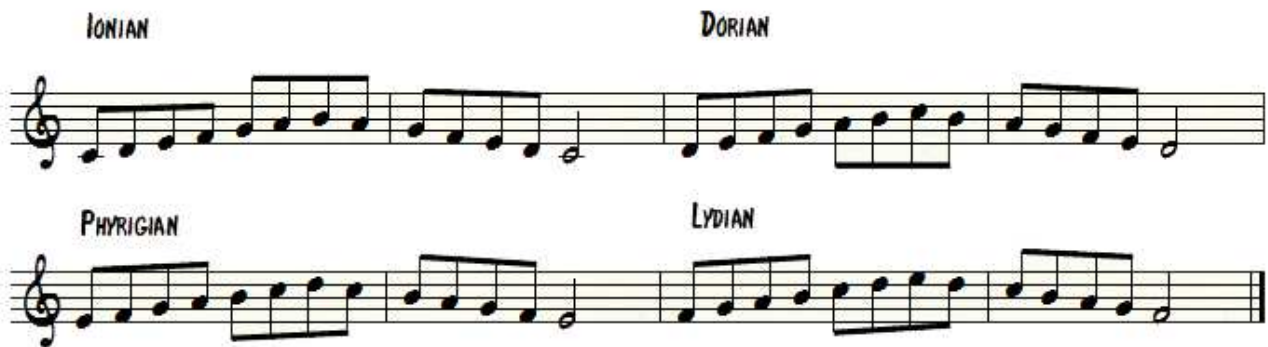
# Jazz Lesson 11

## Technique

### *1. Practicing Diatonic Modes*

- a. When playing modes make sure that you are using a swing feel! It is easy to get wrapped up in boring technique exercises and injected the swing feel can help create more enjoyable exercises. When you can successfully play *any* mode up and down from *any* scale degree you can feel confident in weaving the harmonic changes together through improvisation. We will start with the first of the diatonic modes called the Ionian mode. Play this mode up to the 7<sup>th</sup> then down, then move to the next mode (see figure 11.1).

*Figure 11.1*

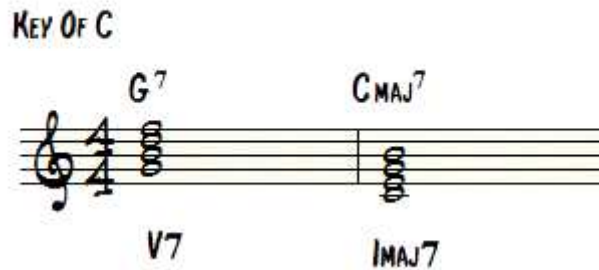


## Harmony & Theory

### *1. Beginner Harmony and Theory Part 3*

- a. We recently discussed the 7 diatonic chords that can be constructed from a major scale. We have yet to talk about how the chords can be used. We will first discuss different resolutions that the chords can create. The first resolution we should discuss is the V7-Imaj7 resolution. This can be any V7 chord from any key resolving to the Imaj7 chord from the same key. For instance, in the key of C the V7 chord would be G7 - I figured that out by counting up to the fifth scale degree of C major. Then G7 would resolve to the Imaj7th chord or in this case, a Cmaj7th chord, (see figure 11.2).

Figure 11.2

V7 TO IMaj7TH RESOLUTIONS

In order to understand this resolution, you need to understand how these chords function. Let's start with the V7 chord. The dominant chord in jazz harmony and theory is considered a very “unstable” chord, meaning it wants to move to another chord. The instability of the chord is caused by the tritone interval that is found between the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree of G7 the note B, and the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of G7, the note F, (see figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3

TRITONE WITHIN DOMINANT 7TH CHORDS

The tritone interval was named the “Devils interval”. This interval is extremely dissonant and unstable. What does instability want to do? It creates tension and wants to be resolved. This is why dominant chords typically move to stable chords; in this case the Imaj7th chord, thus creating the V7-Imaj7 progression.

The Imaj7 is the most stable chord in music. This is in part because it has two perfect fifth intervals. The fifths are found between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup>, being the notes C and G, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup>, being the notes E and B. The Imaj7th chord creates the perfect stability for a V7 chord to resolve to and ease the tension in all the listeners' ears. When analyzing jazz standards you will notice how most of the time, the V7 chord will

resolve to a Imaj7th chord. The comprehension of this progression and more to come only increases your ability to play pieces, solo, comp, and become a better player overall.

## Repertoire

### *1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 3 – Connection of harmonies with chord tones and modes*

- a. We make connections between harmonies by using our modes during the measure and landing on chord tones on beat 1 of each measure. This can get a little over whelming now that we have more note choices with our modes. We must be thinking ahead in order to target a chord tone on beat 1 of the next chord. By using our modes during the measure and landing on chord tones on beat 1 of each measure we can create seamless sounding solos.

For example, when moving from the D-7 to G7, we want to pick a chord tone from the G7 to land on. Let's pick the note B, the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Now we begin improvising from the D-7 and when we get to beat 1 of the G7 we have to land on B. We could just lift our hand and jump to this note, but this will sound very disconnected. Our goal is to connect our line to a target note seamlessly. The two examples below show a disconnected approach, and a smoother one. (see figure 11.3)

*Figure 11.3*

Disconnected

Smooth



the change in harmony, your improvisation will improve. There are not too many V-I resolutions in “A-Train”, but it’s good to start preparing for more in other tunes!



c. *Analyze “Take The A Train” and write out the modes*

- i. Analyzing tunes will help us understand progressions at a higher level. This will allow us to understand the harmonies we’re playing in our solos and make us a better player.

d. *Practicing the modes to a piece*

- i. Practicing modes to the tune you are learning is essential in order for your fingers to grasp the particular notes for each chord. Practice playing the modes in this particular order before we begin to use them to improvise. (see technique section for same details)

1. *RH Modes alone swung to the 7<sup>th</sup>*
2. *RH Modes with LH Bass notes*
3. *RH Modes with LH Chords*





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# Lesson 12

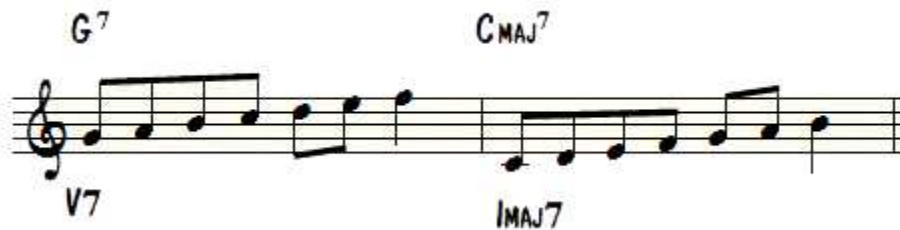
# Jazz Lesson 12

## Technique

### 1. *Playing Modes over 5-1 Resolution*

- a. The V-I resolution is incredibly important. So much so, that practicing V-I resolutions in every key using specific modes will be an important part of your practice routine. This is such a common progression in jazz (and pop...and classical....and country...and most music,) that in order to master soloing you must be able to play each chord's corresponding mode without thinking. We will practice each mode in different ways over the V-I. Here is the basic pattern we will use, (see figure 12.1).

Figure 12.1



## Harmony & Theory

### 1. *The ii-7-V7-I Resolution*

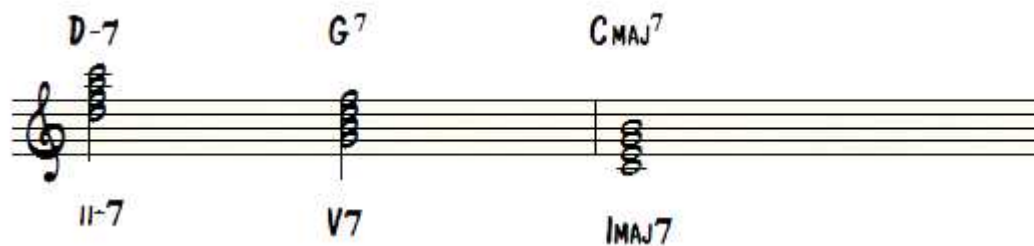
- a. In our last lesson we talked about the V-I resolution. There is another very common resolution that occurs in jazz harmony that includes the ii-7 of a key. A V-I resolution is that of a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> and creates a very strong resolution. If we were to precede the V chord, it makes sense to find a chord that resolves to the V. The most commonly used chord happens to be based on the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale, more commonly referred to as the ii chord, (see figure 12.2).

Figure 12.2



The ii chord resolves down a fifth to the V chord, which resolves down another fifth to the I chord. This creates our ii-7 - V7 - Imaj7 progression as shown in figure 12.3.

Figure 12.3



This progression is one of the most common progressions you will find in jazz. It contains all three of the chords we have learned: minor, dominant and major. Let's look at our ii - V - I in the key of C shown above in figure 12.3.

When we play this progression you can instantly hear how the harmonies move in a beautifully intricate way that creates an amazing sound for the ear. When a II - V - I pattern is recognized in a piece we'll mark it by putting parenthesis around the II-V-I. This tells us that these chords are connected in a II - V - I fashion, (see figure 12.4).

Figure 12.4

(D-7      G7      Cmaj7)

The II - V - I is the stepping stone to reharmonization, learning advanced voicings and improving your solos. Familiarizing yourself with all the II - V - I's in every key is a critical step to fully learning the jazz language.

## Repertoire

### *1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 4 – Mental Improvisation Approaches*

#### *a. Thinking rhythmically vs. harmonically*

- i. Harmonically* - Up until now we have covered specific notes to play over harmonies. Your mind will automatically be set in trying to only finding notes that sound good. This is a great way of playing, but it is also a singular approach that just focuses on harmonies. When focusing on harmonies we are being melodically driven, which is great! Take a look at these melodic examples of simple improvisation using chord tones and notes from the modes

*Figure 12.4*



It's important to know that we do not always have to search for new notes and harmonies. We can take three notes and create interesting solos from just those three notes. That brings us to the next mental approach.

- ii. Rhythmically – Rhythm is what jazz is all about. Remember, *it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing*. When thinking rhythmically you will completely flip your mental approach to soloing. You won't feel as anxious because you won't feel the need to play billions of notes. To approach improvisation from a rhythmic perspective, take no more than 4 notes and plug them in to simple rhythms. Look at these examples of some rhythmic approaches you can take to build your solo.

Figure 12.5



b. *Space in your solos*

- i. Space is a vital part of every successful jazz solo. Without space in your solo, your lines will get mushy and blended together. It's as if you are listening to someone speak without punctuation. That would get very boring, very fast. Space serves many purposes in soloing. It gives you time to breathe and allows for creativity; the ability to flow without interruption. It also aids in creating tension and release. Begin systematically adding space to your solo's by following the practice exercises for this section. Look at the two examples comparing a 4 bar solo without space and to a 4 bar solo with space. The example with space is much more musical and pleasant to listen to.

Figure 12.6

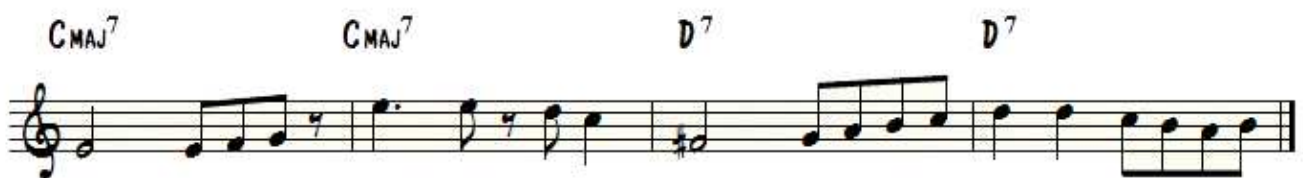


## 2. A-Train

### a. Solo using modes and chord tones over A Train

We can now combine our modes with our chord tones to create improvised melodies. Our focus will be on using chord tones, but we now have more options with our 7-note modes. Start by using the chord tones as cornerstones of your solo, while using some of the notes from the mode to connect the chord tones. We want to always make sure we land on a chord tone on the first beat of every bar. This will establish a solid harmonic line throughout your solo. The notes within the mode will now serve to supply us with scalar motion within our solo, instead of having to skip and jump so much from chord tone to chord tone.

Figure 12.7



### 3. *What are licks?*

- a. **Licks** are the language of jazz. Learning licks is like learning new vocabulary words in another language to help improve your speaking. Once we have learned a new word we can use it however we want in different sentences. We do this with jazz licks as well. By studying and mastering licks, we can put them together, or use bits and pieces of one lick to construct our creativity however we please. The more licks you can initially learn the better. Be careful though, because improvisation is about self-expression. If we are simply playing licks used by previous jazz masters we will sound like a robot. We want to use the licks as a foundation and then add our spin on them, or phrase them with our own personal touch.



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

*Learning Freedom*

# Lesson 13



# Jazz Lesson 13

## Technique

### 1. Modes over ii-7-V7-I

- a. This exercise is very similar to the exercise in the previous lesson over the V-I resolution except we are now adding a ii7 chord to the beginning of the progression. The ii7-V7-I is just as important as the V-I resolution so you should also learn its corresponding modes as well. Working on these progressions will ensure you have the proper facility to solo over any progression you will see in any type of jazz chart or pop chart. See below for beginning exercise modes over a ii7-V7-I, (see figure 13.1).

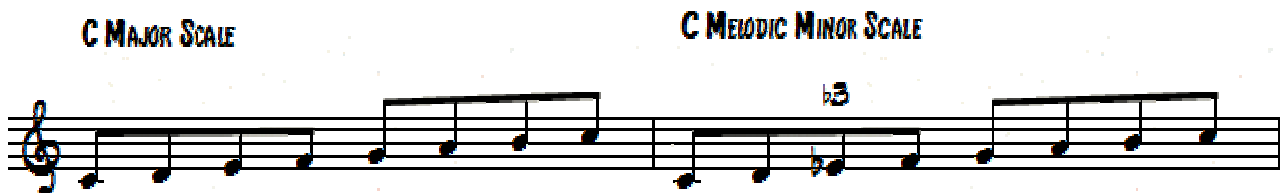
Figure 13.1



### 2. Melodic Minor Scale

- a. In addition to the natural minor scale, the melodic minor scale is just as important to learn and practice. The melodic minor scale is very similar to the major scale with only the third being different. We flatten the third of any major scale to create its subsequent melodic minor scale. For example in the key of C, all we have to do is play an Eb instead of an E to create our C melodic minor scale, (see figure 13.2).

Figure 13.2



### 3. Harmonic Minor

- a. Harmonic minor is the last of the three minor scales we will learn. Harmonic minor is very similar to melodic minor except for one change, which is we flatten the 6<sup>th</sup> scale degree of the melodic minor scale. The flat 6<sup>th</sup> creates a very distinctive sound making this scale a little more recognizable to the ear. The C harmonic scale is shown below, (see figure 13.3).

Figure 13.3



### 5. II-V-I Lick #1



### 6. Eighth-note ornaments

- a. Learning how to integrate ornaments into your soloing will spice up your playing and make it sound elegant and classy. Ornaments can be used throughout your solo. You use them at the start of a line, at the end of line, or when you've practiced them enough you can start to integrate them in the middle of your lines. The first ornament we will learn uses eighth notes and the surrounding notes of the major key you are in. We will use two types of ornaments to embellish the chord tones. We will use the half step *below* the chord tone and the closest chord-scale note *above* the chord tone, (see figure 13.4).

Figure 13.4



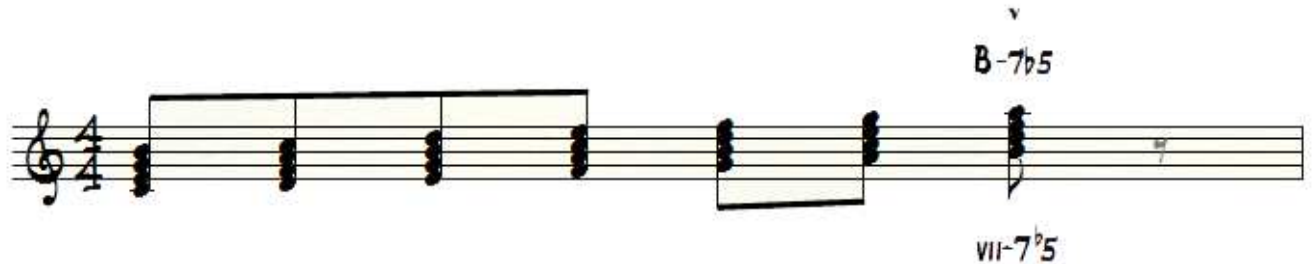
These small embellishments are actually called approach-notes in the bebop language. We will learn more about the approach notes further in the intermediate course.

## Harmony & Theory

### 1. Minor II-V-I using -7b5 and -maj7th chord

- The -7b5 chord is the seventh diatonic chord of a major scale. (see figure 13.5).

Figure 13.5



This chord is built similarly to the -7 chord except the name of the chord, (-7b5) tells us to flatten the fifth. For example, when we see a C-7b5, we start with our C-7 chord and then lower the 5<sup>th</sup> (the note G in this case) by a half step to Gb. The notes of a C-7b5 chord from bottom to top are C, Eb, Gb, and Bb, (see figure 13.6).

Figure 13.6



This chord is most commonly heard in minor diatonic harmony. Since there are different variations of minor scale harmony we will just look at one for now in order to give you an idea of how the -7b5 chord functions.

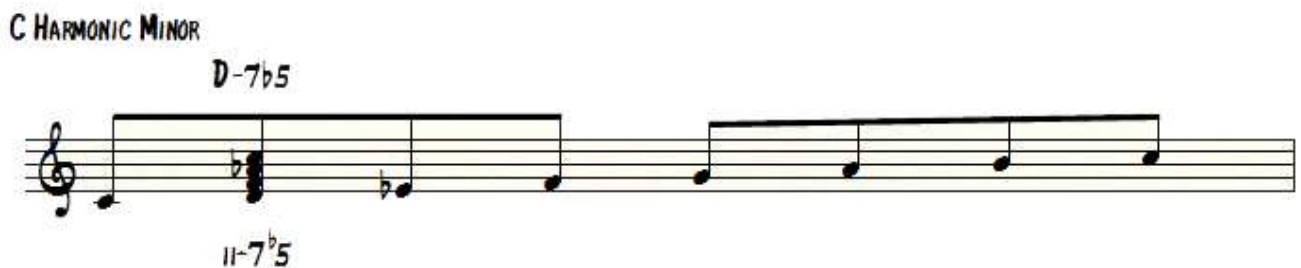
The harmonic minor scale is associated with the -7b5 chord. A harmonic minor scale is very closely related to a major scale with two differences that change the entire sound of the scale. Let's look at a C harmonic minor scale. In order to build a harmonic minor scale, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> degrees of a major scale are lowered. In a C harmonic scale the 3<sup>rd</sup> scale degree, E is lowered to Eb and the 6<sup>th</sup> scale degree, A is lowered to Ab. (see figure 13.7).

Figure 13.7



We can build a chord off of each degree of the harmonic minor scale; however we will only look at three chords: -7b5, V7, and I-maj7. The chord built off of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of our harmonic minor scale gives us the -7b5 chord. We start with D and build up in thirds, using the notes from our C Harmonic Minor Scale giving us D, F, Ab, and C, (see figure 13.8).

Figure 13.8



So, in harmonic minor theory, our ii chord is a -7b5 chord. Now let's build a chord off of the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale, or the note G. By using notes from the C harmonic minor scale we can build a G7 chord, whose notes include: G, B, D, and F. I'm sure you recognize this chord as our standard G dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord. Now let's build the I chord off of the C

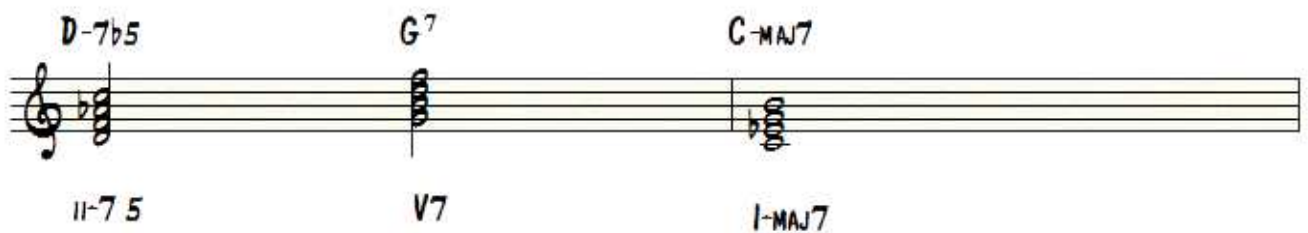
note. The following notes: C, Eb, G, and B natural on top form a c minor seventh chord, (see figure 13.9).

Figure 13.9



This chord is called a minor major7th chord. It contains a minor triad with a major 7<sup>th</sup> on top. When we put all three of these chords together we form a *minorii-V-I* progression, (see figure 13.10).

Figure 13.10



## 2. Blues Series part 1

- a. What is the blues? The blues is a simple 12 bar progression that, in its most basic form, uses the I dominant7th chord, the IV dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord and the V dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord. There are many variations of the blues which we will learn, but the underlying structure stays constant. The blues contains many harmonic progressions that are common in many jazz standards.

The chords within a blues don't fall within one key because they are all dominant chords, but we still refer to the key of the blues by the first chord. So if the first chord of the blues

progression is Bb, this would be the key of your blues. Here are sample changes to a simple blues written by Thelonius Monk. (see Figure 13.11)

Figure 13.11

The figure displays three staves of musical notation, each representing a different chord progression for a blues in Bb. Each staff consists of four measures, with slanted lines indicating the melody. The chord changes are indicated by Roman numerals and chord symbols above the staves.

- Staff 1:**
  - Measure 1: I B<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 2: IV E<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 3: I B<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 4: I B<sup>b</sup>7
- Staff 2:**
  - Measure 1: IV E<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 2: IV E<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 3: I B<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 4: I B<sup>b</sup>7
- Staff 3:**
  - Measure 1: V F7
  - Measure 2: IV E<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 3: I B<sup>b</sup>7
  - Measure 4: V F7

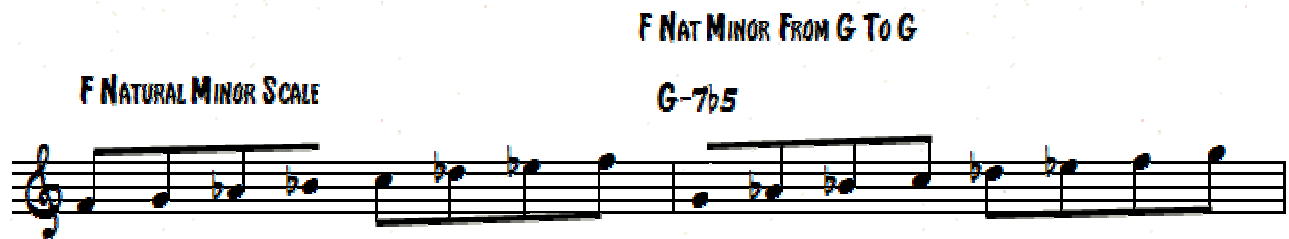
## Repertoire

### *1. New Piece – What Is This Thing Called Love (minor ii-V-I)*

- a. Learn the piece “What Is This Thing Called Love” following the step by step process.

Notice the use of the minor II-V- I at the beginning of the first 4 bars. We would simply analyze this as a minor II-V-I coming from the key of F minor. In order to solo over these chords we will play our F natural minor scale from G to G over the ii-7b5 chord, (see figure 13.12).

*Figure 13.12*



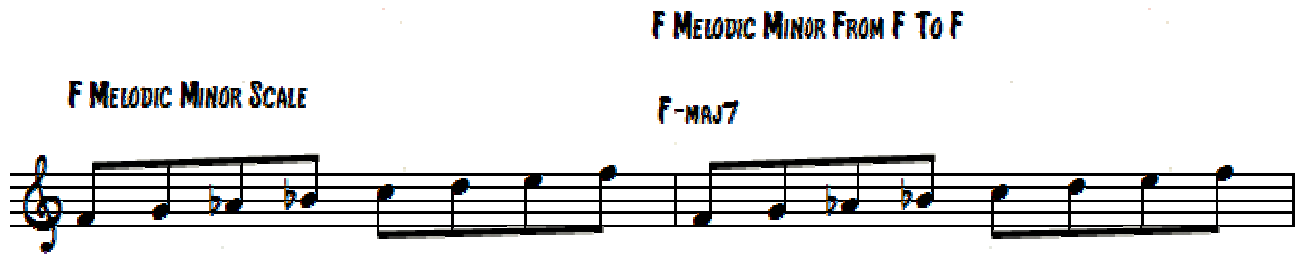
Then we will play our F harmonic minor scale from C to C over the V7 chord, (see figure 13.13)

*Figure 13.13*



Finally, we play our G melodic minor scale over the I-maj7 chord, (see figure 13.14).

Figure 13.14



We still want to target chord tones and use the notes from the corresponding modes in order to build our solo over these harmonies. Note that we follow the same principles as our major modes by starting each minor scale on the root of the chord. So in this case with “What is this thing called love” we are playing our various F minor scales with different starting and ending points.

## 2. *Beginner Improvisation Series Part 5 – Advanced integration of rhythms and licks*

- a. Rhythms - As we talked about previously, without rhythms, music and improvisation would be as boring as watching paint dry. Let’s forget about our note selection for a second and focus on spicing up our rhythmic selection of our solos. Most beginners tend to only play quarter note and eighth notes when first starting out. The faster we can start to incorporate different rhythmic concepts into our playing the better we will sound. The first rhythmic values we want to stress are eighth notes and quarter notes. The second rhythmic concept we want to apply are triplets. Triplets are an amazing tool to use and sound great when incorporated into solos. After triplets we will move to sixteenth notes. By practicing these rhythms in our solo we are going to develop a lot of varying textures that will keep our solo interesting! Below are a few examples of different rhythms you can apply to your solos over aii-V-I progression, (see figure 13.15).



Figure 13.15



### 3. Learning language through licks (Seen In Technique Section)

- a. We recently talked about licks and how they are used in jazz. We want to take the licks we learn and integrate them into our improvisation. Even if it's just one measure of the lick. When you see aii-V-I in our new tune, "What Is This Thing Called Love", try to incorporate this new lick into your solo, (see figure 13.16).

Figure 13.16



#### 4. Learning the Blues

- a. Learning the blues is a lot of fun partly because of how simple the chord changes are. Look at the template below for the blues and begin following the 6 step learning tune process.

We will start with a simple melody called “Blue Monk” written by Thelonius Monk.

Figure 13.17

**BLUE MONK** THELONIOUS MONK

The musical score for "Blue Monk" is presented in three staves. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major). The chord progression is as follows:

- Staff 1: B<sup>b</sup>7, E<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>7
- Staff 2: E<sup>b</sup>7, E<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>7, B<sup>b</sup>7
- Staff 3: F7, (E<sup>b</sup>7), B<sup>b</sup>7, (F7)



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

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# Lesson 14

# Jazz Lesson 14

## Technique

### 1. 2-5-1 Lick #2

- a. By learning difficult jazz licks your fingers will start to develop a sense for the structures of jazz lines; how your fingers move around the piano. Many of the most popular jazz melodies contain lots of jazz vocabulary. “Donna Lee” is a very technically demanding piece, a lot can be gained simply by practicing the melody. The melody requires certain jazz piano techniques, many of which you will frequently be using in your own playing. Follow the exercise guidelines on how to practice the melody specifically, (see figure 14.1).

Figure 14.1



### 2. Triplet Ornaments

We practiced eighth note ornaments last lesson. In this lesson we learn how to use triplet ornaments. Since the swing feel is based off triplets, learning this exercise will serve you very well in developing the right feel for your playing. The ornament begins with our triplet figure then ends with an eighth note resolution, (see figure 14.2).

Figure 14.2



## Harmony & Theory

### *1. Blues Part 2 - Soloing over the blues*

- a. Soloing over the blues can be very simple. There are easy methods that fit very well and make you instantly sound like a professional. The first tool we will use is the blues scale. This is a unique sounding scale that you should listen for when listening to jazz. The blues scale consists of the following degrees: 1, b3, 4, #4, 5, b7, and 1 on top. Below is a C blues scale, (see figure 14.3).

*Figure 14.3*



That's it! Using this we can start to play a variety of amazing sounding licks over the blues or jazz standards that don't use a blues form. This blues scale should be created starting on the root of the key that the blues is in. . For example, if the blues you're playing is in Bb then you use the Bb blues scale to improvise. There are two different ways to use this scale so it relates to the chords in the blues: 1) is horizontal improvisation and 2) is vertical improvisation.

As you saw last week, there are three different chords in a blues. For a blues in the key of C, we have C7, F7 and G7. A **horizontal** approach to soloing means using one scale that will fit over many chords in a linear fashion so you don't have to think about changing scales. With a horizontal approach you can use the C blues scale to solo over the entire blues, even over the F7 and G7 chords. This will sound great even though not all of the notes from the blues scale are found in those chords!

When thinking **vertically** with harmony, instead of one scale for the entire blues we now use the corresponding blues scale for each chord. This means we will have three different blues scales for the three different chords in a blues. In the key of C we would have our C blues scale, F blues scale, and G blues scale, (see figure 14.4).

*Figure 14.4*

The notes from these scales would be used over their relative chord. We will start off practicing with a horizontal approach and then also use the vertical approach once we become comfortable with all of the blues scales.

## 2. *Beginner Bass Lines, 5ths and octaves*

- a. Bass lines are important for a piano player to be able to compose especially when playing solo piano because there is no bass player present. We have been practicing the roots to all of our pieces and this in fact is the first step to learning great sounding bass lines. Most people think that bass players can pretty much play any notes as long as they're keeping steady time, when in fact, the bass player plays a major role in the harmonic changes of a piece. It is important to start with the roots as your focal point in order to create a solid harmonic anchor for the changes. We have talked about the relation of the fifth to the chord already so you won't be surprised as we begin to add in the fifths to bass note lines. We will continue to use the root motion by playing all the roots on beat one, but now we'll add the option of going to the fifth of the chord on beat 3 and then to the root of the next chord, (see figure 14.5).

*Figure 14.5*

We can also start moving the root you are currently on up or down an octave on beat 3 instead of holding the same root for 4 beats, (see figure 14.6).

*Figure 14.6*

This creates movement within our bass while at the same time allowing us to hold down a solid harmonic foundation for our chords, melodies, and solo's to play over. Mastering these first two steps will immediately advance your playing to the next level and make you sound ten times better than everyone misusing notes in their bass lines. Remember, it's always better to play something simple and correct, then fancy and incorrect!

## Repertoire

### *1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 6–Motif building and Improv Story Telling*

- a. A **motif** is a short phrase that can help your soloing. Motifs can be **melodic** or **rhythmic** or even a combination of both depending upon how advance you get. Motif's are found everywhere in great jazz musician's solos. The sooner you can grasp this concept the faster you will be transported to the top. This will instantly improve your playing when applied correctly. Soloing is telling a story. When telling a story we tend to build off the last sentence and take our audience to certain places of emotion through tension and release. This is exactly what we want to do with our solos.

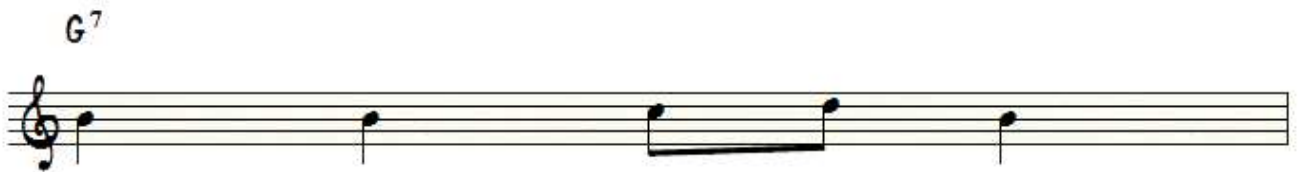
- b. **Melodic** – Melodic motifs deal with the notes you are playing in your solo. Melodic motifs are very easy to conceptualize but hard to apply. A good understanding of the modes and harmony are required to get this one right. Let's take a 2-5-1 for example. Say we play the following figure over the ii-7 chord, (see figure 14.7)

*Figure 14.7*



In order to build a melodic motif off of this figure we are going to transpose the phrase from D-7 to G7 and keep the same rhythm. Look at the following example of a motif applied to the V7 chord used from our first solo phrase over the ii-7 chord, (see figure 14.8)

*Figure 14.8*



We can then build a similar melodic motif over the I chord using the same steps, (see figure 14.9).

*Figure 14.9*





Melodic motifs can be used on any chord change within a piece.

- i. **Rhythmic** – Rhythmic motifs are similar to melodic motifs except they are not transposed as exactly in terms of melody from one measure to the next. Look at the following rhythmic motif over the same ii-V-I we used in the first example. Instead of following a melodic pattern we now create rhythmic patterns to build off of as our chord changes move by, see figure (14.10).

*Figure 14.10*





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# Lesson 15

# Jazz Lesson 15

## Technique

### 1. Sixteenth note ornaments

- a. Sixteenth-note ornaments are an extension to the eighth-note and triplet ornaments we've already covered. Sixteenth notes will require a lot of speed, control, and dexterity within the finger in order to sound good. When played with ease and in the right situation, these ornaments can add a lot to your solo. See below for a sixteenth note ornament around the Cmaj7 chord tones, (see figure 15.1).

Figure 15.1



## Harmony & Theory

### 1. Blues Part 3

- a. Blues Variations – As I mentioned, the blues can take on many different variations. The **traditional blues** structure we looked at last week is a bare bones format for the blues. Two different types of blues that are slightly more complicated are the **Jazz Blues**, and a **“Bird” Blues**, (named after Charlie Parker’s variation of the blues). Let’s start with the jazz blues.
  - i. Jazz Blues – This structure is still very similar to a traditional blues, but we begin to add more diatonic chords. Let’s look at the first 4 bars of a jazz blues in the key of C, (see figure 15.2).

Figure 15.2



This progression starts with the I dominant chord, which stays the same for the first three bars. In bar four, a 2-5 progression (G-7 to C7) is added to lead into the IV7(F7) in bar 5. This adds a little bit more jazz harmony to the blues instead of simply jumping to the IV7 chord.

The next eight measures have a few more changes to them. We stay on the IV chord for measures 5-6 then move back to the I7 chord in measure 7 (C7). Rather than landing on the V7 chord in measure 9, as we would in a traditional blues, a jazz blues throws in a ii-7 V7 progression in measures 9 and 10 (D-7 to G7). We lead into the progression with another ii-V progression in measure 8 (E-7 to A7). Measures 5-12 of the jazz blues are shown below in figure 15.3.

*Figure 15.3*

Figure 15.3 shows the chord progression for measures 5-12 of a jazz blues. The progression is as follows:

| Measure | Chord  |
|---------|--|
| 5       | F <sup>7</sup>                               |
| 6       | F <sup>7</sup>                               |
| 7       | C <sup>7</sup>                               |
| 8       | E-7, A <sup>7</sup>                          |
| 9       | D-7  |
| 10      | G <sup>7</sup>                               |
| 11      | C <sup>7</sup> (I <sup>7</sup> ), A-7 (VI-7) |
| 12      | D-7 (II-7), G <sup>7</sup> (V <sup>7</sup> ) |

The final difference between jazz and traditional blues is the turnaround in the last two measures. Using roman numeral analysis the turnaround looks like this: I-VI7-ii-7-V7. This is a traditional jazz turnaround that is mostly used at the end of pieces.

- ii. Bird Blues – The changes to a bird blues can be found in Charlie Parker’s composition “Blues For Alice”. This blues is in F. There are a few variations of a bird blues, but we will use this composition as our main example. A bird blues uses a lot more ii-V to approach the traditional target blues chords. Let’s look at the first four bars of the bird blues, (see Figure 15.4).

Figure 15.4



In the first measure of the “bird blues” you’ll notice the first chord is F6. Most of the time a bird blues will start with a 6th chord, rather than a dominant 7th chord. A 6th chord has the same structure as a dominant chord, with a major triad on the bottom, but instead of using a dominant 7<sup>th</sup> on top, the 6<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale is used instead. The notes from bottom to top for an F6 chord are: F,A,C,D. A dominant chord can still be used, but you’ll most often use a 6<sup>th</sup> chord.

The next traditional target blues chord is a IV7 chord seen in measure 5. This chord is simply approached with a series of ii-Vs that descend in whole steps starting in measure 2. E-7b5 to A7 in measure 2 is the first ii-V, the next ii-V is in measure 3 from D-7 to G7, then finally a ii-V from C-7 to F7 in measure 4.

Figure 15.5

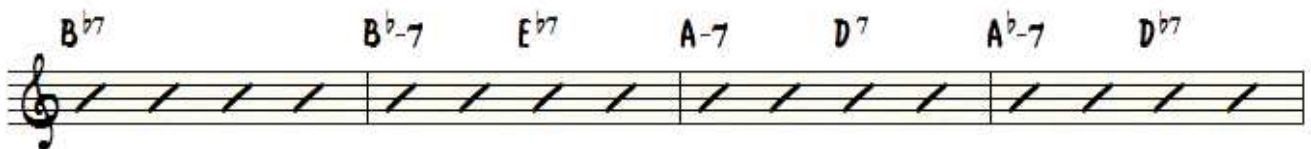
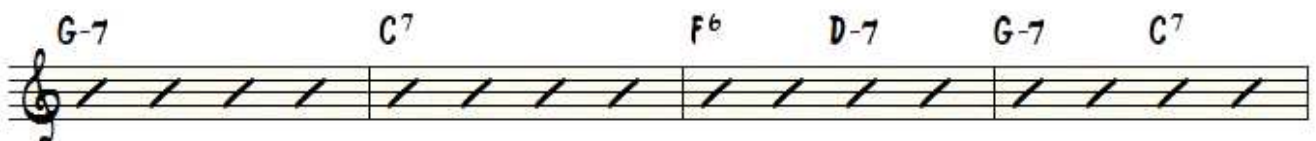


Figure 15.5 shows measures 5-8 of a bird blues. In measure 5 we continue the same process of adding ii-Vs to approach our next target chord, which is the ii-7 in measure 9. The ii-Vs beginning in measure 6 descend chromatically from Bb-7 to Eb7, A-7 to D7, and finally Ab-7 to Db7. We analyze the theory behind these chords in our intermediate lessons. The chord progression for the last four bars of a bird blues are the exact same as the last four bars of a jazz blues except for the replacement of a 6<sup>th</sup> chord in measure 11 rather than a dominant chord, (see figure 15.5).

Figure 15.5



## 2. Rootless Voicings Structure 1 + Extensions Intro

- a. Rootless voicings are titled so because they do not include the root. These voicings are essential for jazz piano because they allow you to add colors to your chords while keeping the root separate for you to play in the bass register of the piano. There are two beginning structures to learn and we will look at Structure 1 in this lesson.

Extensions are a term for notes added to a chord above the 1,3,5,7 chord structure.

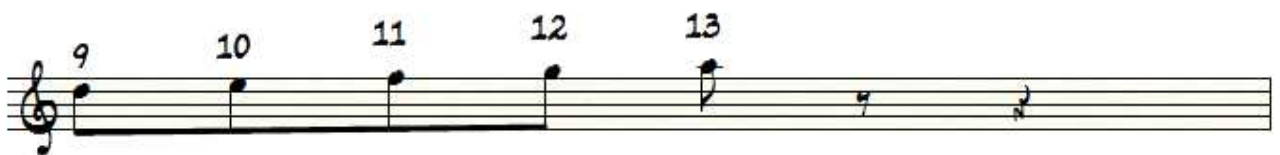
Extensions serve as color tones to your chord and can help make beautiful sounding chords in jazz. Just like we use the degrees of our scale to pick out notes for chords,( i.e. 1, 3, 5, maj7 for a maj7 chord) we also use numbers for extensions. Just as the name suggests, the numbers continue higher than that of our major scale. Let's look at some extensions in the key of C. When we count the notes of our C major scale we end up back at C and will number it as 8, (see figure 15.6).

Figure 15.6



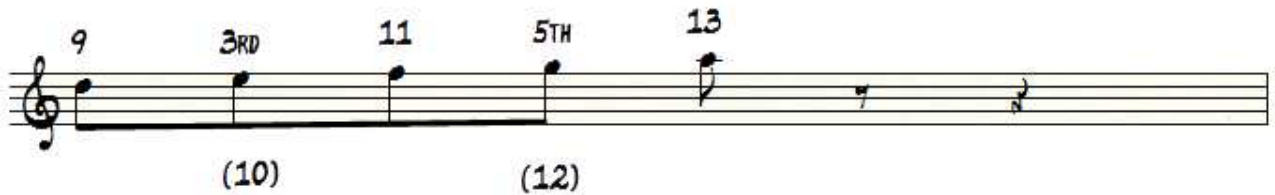
Let's continue to play up the scale and not restart the numbering. This makes our next note (D), number 9 followed by 10 (E), 11 (F), 12 (G), and 13 (A), (see figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7



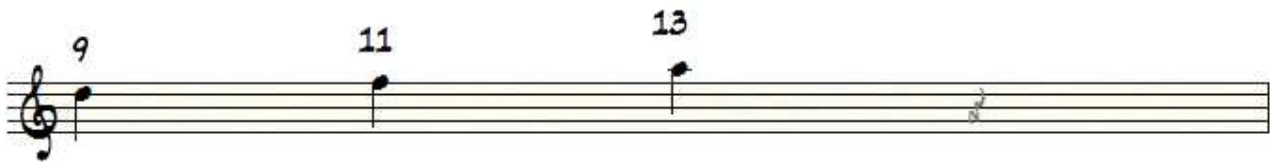
Extensions 10 (E), and 12 (G), are also known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord, (see Figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8



Let's stick to calling these notes the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> to differentiate our new extensions. This leaves us with 9, 11, and 13, (see figure 15.9).

Figure 15.9



There are lots of different types of extensions, but for the purpose of the rootless voicings we will only be using the 9th (the second scale degree), and 13th (the 6<sup>th</sup> scale degree).

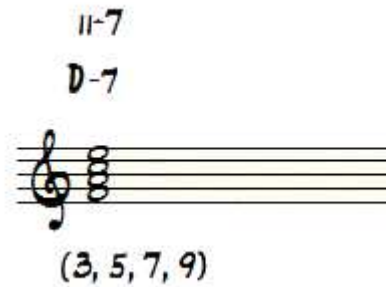
IMPORTANT: The extensions are based off of the root. In the examples I presented the note "C" as the root. When we use a D-7 chord, the note "D" is our new root. This would make extensions 9, 11, and 13 the notes E, G, and B. (see figure 15.10)

Figure 15.10

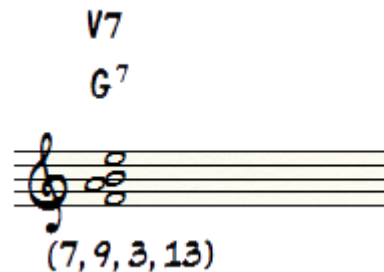


We learn more about extensions in the intermediate and advanced lessons. Our rootless voicings are meant to move through a ii-V-I, but over time you will learn how to isolate each voicing. Let's start with aii-V-I in the Key of C, so we have the chords D-7, G7, and Cmaj7. Our first structure over the ii-7 chord will be the degrees, 3, 5, 7, and 9, (see figure 15.11).

*Figure 15.11*

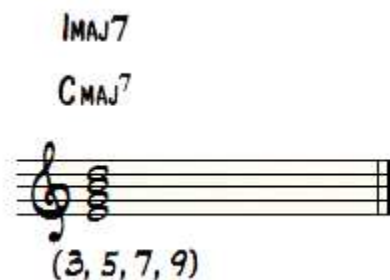


Our next structure is over the V7 chord or the G7 chord in this case and we use the degrees, 7, 9, 3, 13, (see figure 15.12) .



From here, our next structure is over Imaj7 and we use the same degrees that we used over our ii-7 chord, being 3, 5, 7, 9, (see figure 15.13).

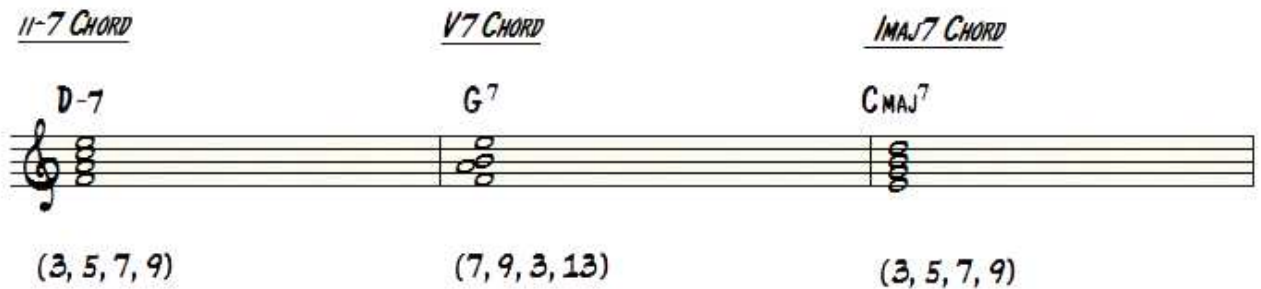
*Figure 15.13*





When moving from the ii-7 chord to the V7 chord only one note moved: C moved to B. Then when moving from the V7 chord to the I maj7 chord, B stayed the same while the rest of the notes moved, (see figure 15.14).

Figure 15.14



By adding these right hand voicings to your repertoire you are opening up lots of new possibilities for jazz harmony while also challenging yourself technically.

## Vocab & Repertoire

### *1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 7–Texture&Contrast Integration*

- a. Improvising Textures – There are lots of different simple, yet effective techniques that you can use to expand your improvising. Play around with these methods and see what you create.
  - i. Slides – Sliding to note is when we play two notes back to back with barely any space in between. This is a great way to add some spice to your solo. Sliding up to a note is common, but sliding down can sound great as well. You can slide up to black notes or white notes. See what you like the best! (see figure 15.15).

Figure 15.15



- ii. Two notes at a time – People forget for some reason that they can play more than one note at a time on the piano. This is a great way to add a different texture to your playing. Experiment with any type of interval you want, (see figure 15.16).

*Figure 15.16*



- v. One note rhythms with LH voicings—Locking the rhythms of your RH lines with your LH voicings as you play your line is a great texture that Bill Evans used frequently. It creates very nice tension and release especially when you incorporate some dynamics. While your RH solo's your LH simply plays its voicing with every note your RH plays. You have to get use to your LH comping so fast but after a couple of minutes of practicing it becomes very easy. ( See Figure15.19)

Figure 15.19



- vi. Change the register you play in – This is a very simple yet effective technique. I see lots of pianist play within one octave on the entire piano. While this sounds good for a little while, you have 88 keys available to you. You should use them all. Try playing your solos down on the bass notes with your RH. You don't always have to have your LH comping all the time. Your RH can serve as the melodic conduit to connect the chords together without the harmonies. Just make sure you are playing within the chords by hitting chord tones.

## 2. LH Comping Part 1

- a. As we dive into more complicated voicings, your LH is going to be more and more important. Practicing comping through chord progressions of jazz standards and II-V-Is with just your LH while attempting different rhythmic patterns will be very beneficial for developing you LH. In the beginning you will find it difficult to coordinate your RH as it plays melodies or solos while your LH comps voicings. In order to build a strong

foundation with your left hand we will start by comping constant rhythmic figures throughout the entirety of a piece. (See figure 15.20).

*Figure 15.20*



Once you become comfortable with the LH alone. Repeat this pattern as you play the melody and solo. Use the other rhythms below to begin to make a rhythmic palate for your RH to play over, (see figure 15.21).

*Figure 15.21*





JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

*Learning Freedom*

# Lesson 16

# Jazz Lesson 16

## Technique

### 1. Learning Technique Through Tunes

- a. Many of my students are looking for technical exercises to improve their playing. Once they've reached a certain level, I like to give them technically hard jazz standards to practice. Technically demanding standards will help you understand the jazz language, and improve your technique! Below is an excerpt from "Joy Spring" with fingerings marked for you to practice.

Figure 16.1



## Harmony & Theory

### 1. Blues Series Part 4 Styles and Solo Techniques

- a. Styles - There are lots of different jazz styles that have their own unique take on the blues. In this section we will cover **boogie-woogie** and **stride**.
  - i. Boogie-woogie –Boogie-woogie (or just boogie) is a style of jazz that emphasizes LH playing. The LH repeats an eighth note pattern in the bass register that continues over the form while the RH is free to play melodies and solo. There are two LH patterns that I will show you. The first pattern involves the root, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> of each chord. The root remains the same for each chord, but the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> are interchanged every beat. Look at the figure below for the pattern over the first chord in a C blues, (see figure 16.2).

Figure 16.2



This pattern is simply transposed to the IV chord and played in the same manner, (see figure 16.3).

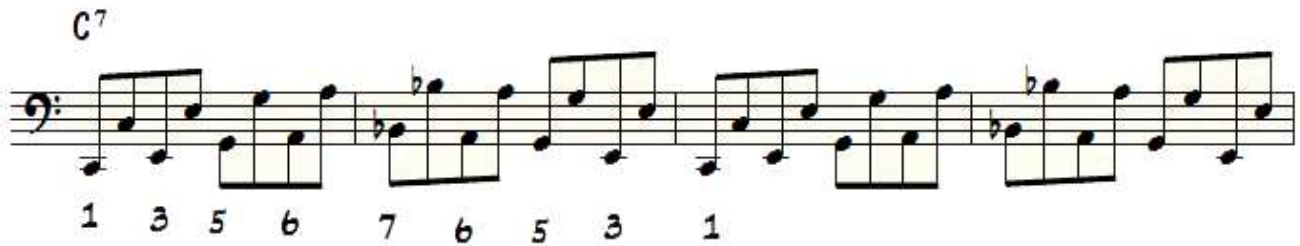
*Figure 16.3*



As your LH continues to play this pattern your RH can solo or play the melody.

The second LH pattern is two measures long and involves continuous broken octaves. It moves from the third to the fifth, to the sixth, and finally to the seventh. From the seventh it comes down by step down to the C then repeats itself (see figure 16.4).

*Figure 16.4*



Like our first pattern, it stays constant throughout the blues form and is used as a palate for the RH to play over top of.

- ii. Stride –The stride piano style predates the boogie-woogie style by a few years. The use of a stride LH can be used over any pieces, but it works very well over a blues. With stride, the LH also plays a pattern that remains constant throughout the blues form. We start by playing the root of the chord on beat one, then jumping up to play the actual chord however you choose, (root position, or an inversion, or a

rootless voicing), we then jump back down to fifth of the chord on beat 3, and finally back up to the chord on beat 4. So there is a 4-step process for every measure. Root then chord, then fifth, then chord, giving us four beats total, (see figure 16.4).

Figure 16.4



*b. Soloing Scales for RH*

- i. Mixolydian – The mixolydian scale is similar to a major scale, but has a lowered seventh tone. It is the main chord scale you would use to play over a blues because the blues consists of all dominant chords. Let's say we are playing a traditional blues in the key of F. Our three dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords are F7, Bb7, and C7. Each V7 chord has a Imaj7 chord it belongs too. Bb7 is the V7 chord in the key of Ebmaj, and C7 is the V7 chord in the key of Fmaj. To play a C mixolydian scale, take a C major scale and lower the seventh, which is Bb. Another way to conceptualize the C mixolydian scale is an F major scale starting and ending on C. This can get slightly confusing at first but once you start to practice and play the blues more, it will come more naturally.

Figure 16.5



- ii. Blues Scale – The blues scale is the traditional scale used over the blues, which we talked about previously. Let's say we are playing a blues in the key of C, we can



use our C blues scale over any of the chords. We can also use the blues scale that goes with each dominant chord in the form. So in this instance we would use the C blues scale over C7, the F blues scale over F7 and the G blues scale over G7, (see figure 16.6).

Figure 16.6



- iii. Major 6<sup>th</sup> blues scale – The major 6<sup>th</sup> blues scale is a variation of the standard blues form. The notes are exactly the same as a regular blues scale with the exception of the sixth note. In a major 6<sup>th</sup> blues scale you substitute the 6<sup>th</sup> note is the 6<sup>th</sup> scale degree rather than the b7, (see figure 16.7). A major 6<sup>th</sup> blues scale can also be used over major 7<sup>th</sup> chords in any piece. Play the regular blues scale and then the Major 6<sup>th</sup> blues scale. Notice the differences in sound.

Figure 16.7



## 2. Rootless Voicings Structure 2

- a. Structure 2 of our rootless voicings is similar to structure 1, but with some different extensions and movements. Let's start with the first voicing over our ii-7 chord in the key

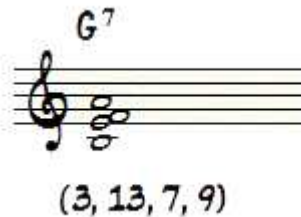
of C, which is D-7. This first voicing is stacked with the following degrees of the chord, the 7<sup>th</sup> on the bottom (note C), then the 9<sup>th</sup> (note E), the 3<sup>rd</sup> (note F), and finally the 5<sup>th</sup> (note A). This is our -7 structure we will use over the ii-7 chord, (see figure 16.8).

*Figure 16.8*



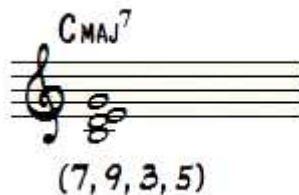
Our next structure is built over the dominant chord, or in this case our G7 chord. Built from the bottom up, our structure consists of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, (note B), the 13<sup>th</sup> (note E), the 7<sup>th</sup> (note F), and finally the 9<sup>th</sup> (note A), (see figure 16.9).

*Figure 16.9*



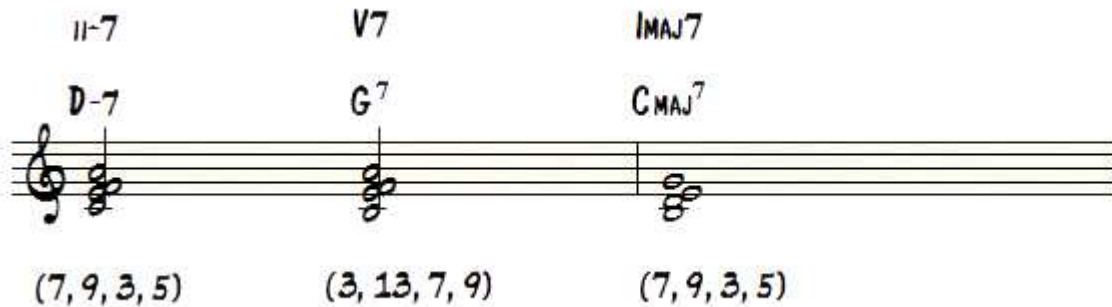
This rootless voicing is over a Imaj7 chord, Cmaj7. As with the first sequence, the last chord in the ii-V-I takes the same format as the 1<sup>st</sup> chord. This gives us the degrees: 7,9,3,5 just as we played over the ii-7 chord in this sequence, (see figure 16.10)

*Figure 16.10*



This completes our 2<sup>nd</sup> rootless voicing sequence, (see figure 16.11).

Figure 16.11



## Vocab & Repertoire

### *1. Beginner Improvisation Series Part 8 – LH Comping while soloing*

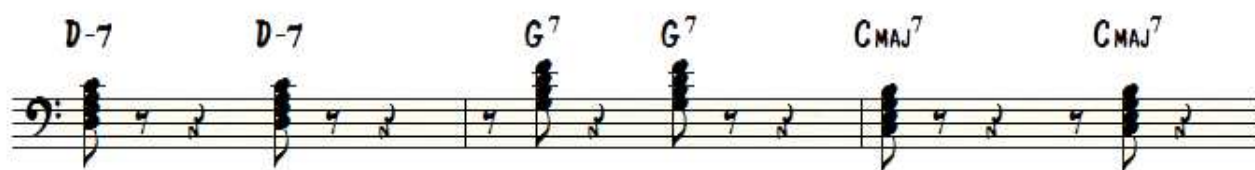
- a. There are a few different steps for integrating your LH into your solo. A lot of people simply put their LH on autopilot while they solo, but I would like to get you away from that train of thought. When utilized correctly, your LH can make or break your playing. It can control and emphasize all the harmonies and add value to your RH. We want to make sure we are practicing control over our LH while our RH solos. Through the practice of the following techniques you will get used to placing your LH harmonies where it can support your RH improvisation.
  - i. During RH – When your LH is comping, make sure it is not interfering with whatever you're playing. One way to do this is by keeping your left hand playing simple. Only play whole notes over each chord. Play short rhythms or use a repeated rhythmic comp that does not change (see figures 16.12-16.14).

Figure 16.12

1. Holding Harmonies (playing whole notes)



2. Short rhythms



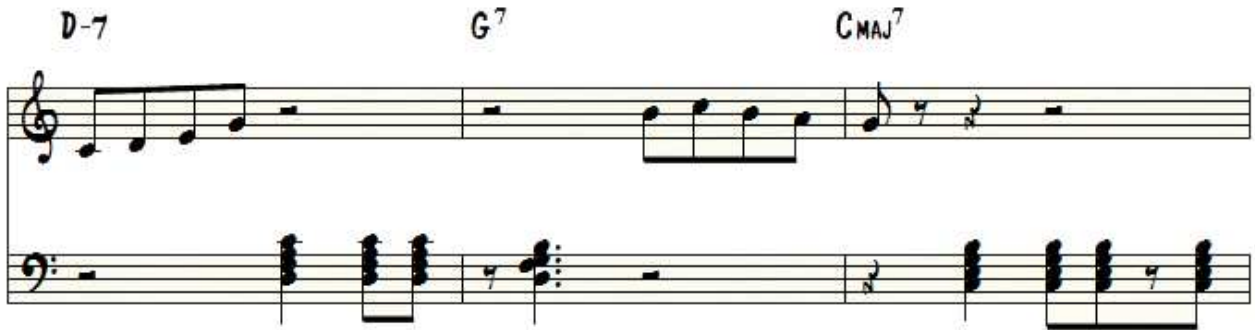
3. Consistent Rhythmic Comp



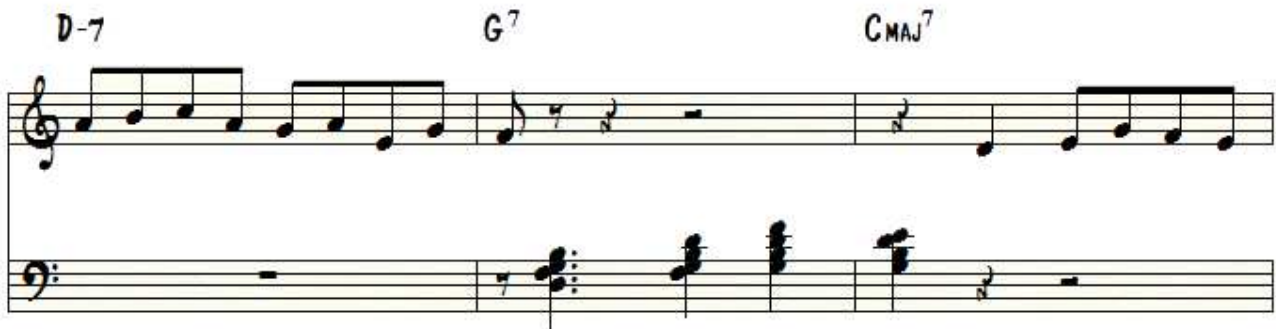
- ii. In the space – The other way to have your LH comp is by playing in the space that your RH leaves, (or should leave). This is great because it will actually help your RH learn to leave space for your LH hand to react. In the space we can do anything you want with your LH. It's your LH's time to shine!

*Figure 16.13*

1. Rhythms in RH Space



2. Movements of harmonies



### 3. Long space or short space

The image displays two musical staves, each with a treble and bass clef, illustrating improvisation exercises. The first staff shows a sequence of chords: D-7, G7, and CMAJ7. The second staff shows a sequence of chords: D-7, G7, and CMAJ7. Both staves have notes and chords written on the lines.

- iii. RH and LH should work together – Your RH and LH should be having a conversation with each other as you play. Sometimes your LH will not have much to say, other times your RH may not have much to say. Either way you can work on going back and forth in a conversation style manner. Remember, if you’ve forgotten your LH is playing, then it is probably on auto-pilot and that is not what we want to happen.
- b. The final step of our improv series involves a couple of steps, which I will address separately.
  - i. Be simple – Bill Evans said it best, “It’s not what you play, it’s how you play”. This could be the most important statement ever said about music. Whenever you’re playing make it a habit to play simple, but with beauty and swing.
  - ii. Explore - Exploration is an amazing thing in jazz. The great living masters are still exploring this music even in their old age. Your journey will never stop. Explore as much as possible during your practice, rehearsals, performances, and any other time

you have the opportunity. The greatest discoveries in the world came through the process of exploration. It will help you develop your playing faster than most things.

- iii.* Make Mistakes – Never be afraid to make mistakes while playing. Making mistakes is what will continue to progress your playing. Otherwise you'll end up playing all the material you already know over and over again.
- iv.* Swing – The great Duke Ellington made a profound statement in the title of one of his compositions, "It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing". If your lines are not in the pocket and do not swing then they are meaningless in jazz. Take advantage of space if you have nothing to play so your lines can have meaning and a strong rhythmic purpose.