



COURSE SUMMARY

Jazz Improv Primer: Fundamentals for the new improviser

Overview

This is a basic course on jazz improvisation. It is designed for the musician who plays an instrument at least at a fairly moderate level, but who is interested in learning basic improvisation skills. This is a good place to start, if the student is new to jazz. The course will also serve as a very helpful and thorough review of fundamental improvisational concepts, for those who need it. The course delves into common chord progressions that form the foundation of repertoire covered in Jazz Improv I. Through videoconferencing, live chat rooms, and email, the instructor will be able to personally assist each student with the material. PDF worksheets and pre-recorded video lectures will be distributed to the class and readily available for download.

Note regarding pacing and workflow

For those who cannot attend regularly, an online class is an ideal learning solution. All material for all weeks will be available at the beginning of the class cycle. Assignments can be completed and submitted at any time. Choose your own study hours and work at your own pace, if you desire.

Topic 1 - Using balance to create a successful melodic line (minor key)

Improvising on a single scale using musical oppositions, including ascent/descent, high/low, tension/release, varied articulations, velocities, and phrase lengths. Improv track: G minor single chord vamp

Topic 2 - Using balance to create a successful melodic line (major key)

Continued study of improvising on a single scale using musical oppositions, including ascent/descent, high/low, tension/release, varied articulations, velocities, and phrase lengths. Improv track: Bb major single chord vamp

Topic 3 - Creating melodic line over a 2-chord harmonic progression (minor key)

Introduction of modes and scale types, including dorian, melodic, natural and harmonic minor scales, and minor pentatonic and blues scales, in addition to the application of target notes in creating melodic line. Improv track: G minor 2-chord vamp

Topic 4 - Creating melodic line over a 2-chord harmonic progression (major key)

Introduction of major pentatonic, interchanging major and minor modes and continued study of target notes. A more involved study of rhythmic use and motivic development. Improv track: B-flat major 2-chord vamp

Topic 5 - Learning chordal dependence over a II-V-I chord progression (minor key)

Fundamentals of a II-V-I chord progression, including arpeggios, matching scales, and rhythmic considerations. A study of oppositions continues, with further definition and application of target notes that match each harmonic and rhythmic arrival. Improv track: G minor II-V-I progression

Topic 6 - Learning chordal dependence over a II-V-I chord progression (major key)

Continued study of fundamentals of a II-V-I chord progression, including arpeggios, matching scales, and rhythmic considerations. A study of oppositions continues, with further definition and application of target notes that match each harmonic and rhythmic arrival. Improv track: B-flat major II-V-I progression

Topic 7 - Gaining melodic independence over a II-V-I progression (minor key)

A closer examination of melodic and rhythmic options on a II-V-I progression, including the use of melodic and harmonic suspensions, anticipations, and fundamentals chord superimpositions. Improv track: G minor II-V-I chord progression

Topic 8 - Gaining melodic independence over a II-V-I progression (major key)

A closer examination of melodic and rhythmic options on a II-V-I progression, including the use of melodic and harmonic suspensions, anticipations, and fundamentals chord superimpositions. Improv track: B-flat major II-V-I chord progression

Topic 9 - Transposition and Improvisational considerations

An examination of fundamentals of transposition, including technical and artistic considerations when changing keys. Concepts cover ear-training, interval studies, and numerical transference per key. Improv tracks: A minor, C Major, F minor, Eb major chord progressions

Topic 10 - Form and Solo Construction

A final study in soloing over 16-measure AB song forms. Topics include motivic development, “telling a story,” playing multiple choruses, and “dialoguing,” both internally and with other musicians. Improv tracks: F major, A minor

Note: Course details subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.



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