

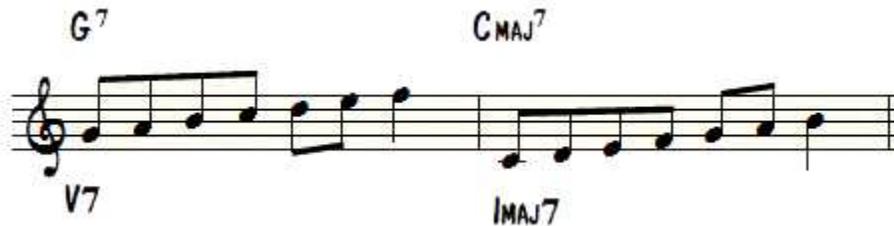
Jazz Lesson 12

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*

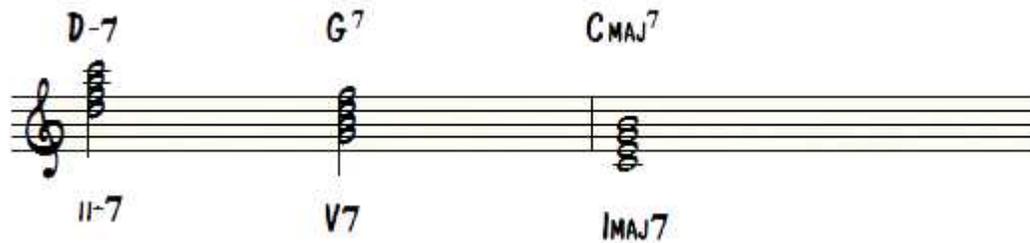
- a. In our last lesson we talked about the V-I resolution. There is another very common resolution that occurs in jazz harmony that includes the ii-7 of a key. A V-I resolution is that of a perfect 5th and creates a very strong resolution. If we were to precede the V chord, it makes sense to find a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

The figure displays three staves of musical notation in treble clef, each representing a different harmonic context for improvisation. The first staff is labeled 'CMAJ7' and shows a melodic line starting on C4, moving up stepwise to G4, then down stepwise to C4. The second staff is labeled 'D-7' and shows a melodic line starting on D4, moving up stepwise to A4, then down stepwise to D4. The third staff is labeled 'E-7' and shows a melodic line starting on E4, moving up stepwise to B4, then down stepwise to E4. Each staff contains four measures of music, with the final note of each staff being a whole note chord tone (C, D, or E respectively).

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

Figure 12.5 shows three musical staves illustrating rhythmic approaches for different chords. Each staff is in treble clef and 2/4 time.

- CMAJ⁷**: The first staff shows a 4-measure phrase with eighth-note patterns. Measure 1: C4, E4, G4, A4. Measure 2: B4, C5, B4, A4. Measure 3: G4, F4, E4, D4. Measure 4: C4, E4, G4, A4.
- D-7**: The second staff shows a 4-measure phrase with dotted quarter and eighth-note patterns. Measure 1: D4, quarter rest. Measure 2: D4, quarter rest. Measure 3: D4, eighth note, E4, eighth note. Measure 4: D4, eighth note, E4, eighth note.
- E-7**: The third staff shows a 4-measure phrase with eighth-note patterns. Measure 1: E4, quarter note, G4, quarter note. Measure 2: E4, quarter note, G4, quarter note. Measure 3: E4, quarter note, G4, quarter note. Measure 4: E4, quarter note, G4, quarter note.

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

Figure 12.6 shows two musical staves. The first staff contains a continuous eighth-note melody. Above the staff, the chords are labeled: CMAJ⁷, D-7, G⁷, and CMAJ⁷. The second staff shows a sparse melody with rests, emphasizing the chord tones. Above the staff, the chords are labeled: CMAJ⁷, D-7, G⁷, and CMAJ⁷.

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

Figure 12.7 shows a musical staff with a sequence of chords and a corresponding melodic line. The chords are labeled: CMAJ⁷, CMAJ⁷, D⁷, and D⁷. The melody starts with a quarter note on the first beat of each bar, emphasizing the chord tones.

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.