

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 6th scale degree of the melodic minor scale. The flat 6th 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



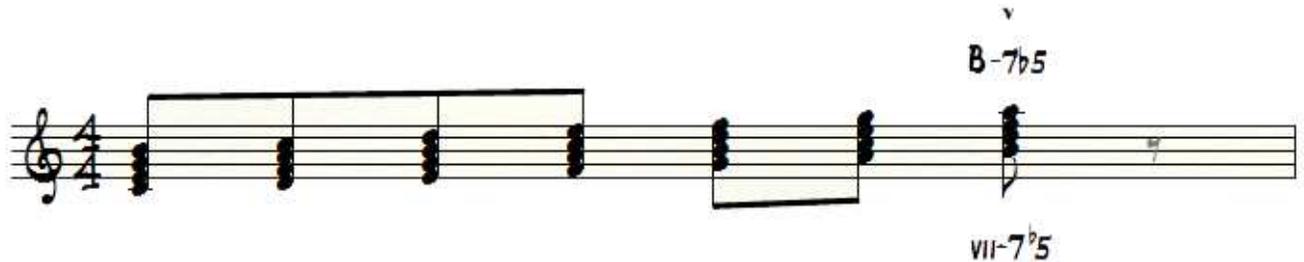
These small embellishments are actually called approach-notes in the bebop language. We will learn more about the approach notes further in the intermediate course.

Harmony & Theory

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

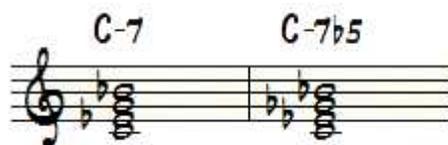
- a. The -7b5 chord is the seventh diatonic chord of a major scale. (see figure 13.5).

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 5th (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).

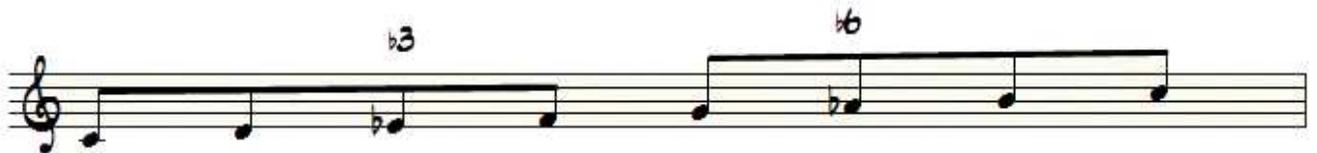
Figure 13.6



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.

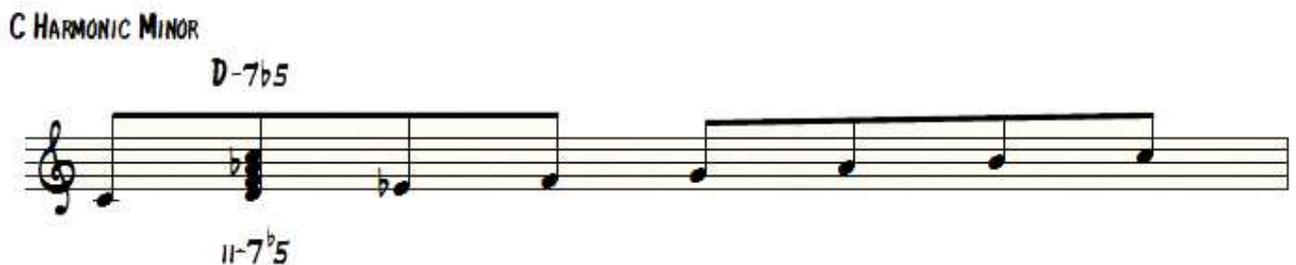
The harmonic minor scale is associated with the -7b5 chord. A harmonic minor scale is very closely related to a major scale with two differences that change the entire sound of the scale. Let's look at a C harmonic minor scale. In order to build a harmonic minor scale, the 3rd and 6th degrees of a major scale are lowered. In a C harmonic scale the 3rd scale degree, E is lowered to Eb and the 6th 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 2nd 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 5th 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 7th 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

C HARMONIC MINOR

C-MAJ7

I-MAJ7

This chord is called a minor major7th chord. It contains a minor triad with a major 7th 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

D-7^{b5} G⁷ C-MAJ7

II-7 5 V7 I-MAJ7

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 7th chord and the V dominant 7th 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. The staves are arranged vertically. Each staff contains four measures, with the melody represented by slanted lines. The chords for each measure are as follows:

- Staff 1: I B^b7, IV E^b7, I B^b7, I B^b7
- Staff 2: IV E^b7, IV E^b7, I B^b7, I B^b7
- Staff 3: V F7, IV E^b7, I B^b7, 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

F NAT MINOR FROM G TO G

F NATURAL MINOR SCALE **G-7^b5**

The figure shows a single staff of music in treble clef. The first four measures represent the F natural minor scale starting on G. The notes are G, A, Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G. The first two measures are marked with a slur and labeled 'F NATURAL MINOR SCALE'. The last two measures are marked with a slur and labeled 'G-7b5'. The notes in the last two measures are G, Ab, Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G.

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

Figure 13.13

F HAR MINOR SCALE FROM C TO C

F HARMONIC MINOR SCALE **C⁷**

The figure shows a single staff of music in treble clef. The first four measures represent the F harmonic minor scale starting on C. The notes are C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, C. The first two measures are marked with a slur and labeled 'F HARMONIC MINOR SCALE'. The last two measures are marked with a slur and labeled 'C7'. The notes in the last two measures are C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, C.

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

Figure 13.14

F MELODIC MINOR FROM F TO F

F MELODIC MINOR SCALE **F-MAJ7**

The image shows a single staff of music in treble clef. The first measure contains the F Melodic Minor Scale, starting on F4 and ending on F5. The second measure contains the F-Maj7 chord, represented by a whole note F4, a half note A4, a half note C5, and a whole note F5.

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

Figure 13.15 consists of four staves of musical notation in G minor. Each staff contains three measures of music. The first measure of each staff is labeled with the chord C-7, the second with F7, and the third with B^bMAJ7. The notation includes various melodic lines, slurs, and triplets, demonstrating different ways to play these chords and their resolutions.

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

Figure 13.16 shows a single staff of musical notation in G minor, divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled D-7, the second G7, and the third C MAJ7. The notation includes a triplet in the first measure and various melodic lines, demonstrating a specific lick used in the context of the aii-V-I progression.

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 G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The first staff contains four measures with chords B^b7, E^b7, B^b7, and B^b7. The second staff contains four measures with chords E^b7, E^o7, B^b7, and B^b7. The third staff contains four measures with chords F⁷, (E^b7), B^b7, and (F⁷). The melody is written in treble clef and includes various note values and rests.