

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, $\sharp 4$, 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

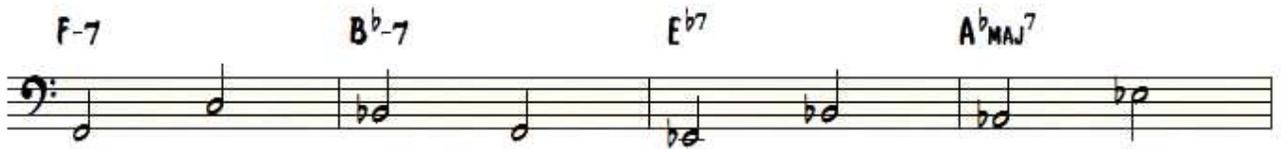


The notes from these scales would be used over their relative chord. We will start off practicing with a horizontal approach and then also use the vertical approach once we become comfortable with all of the blues scales.

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.

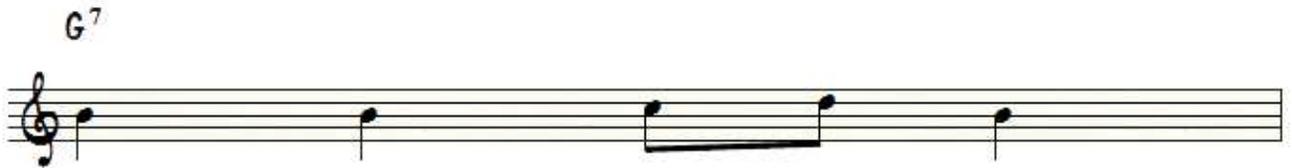
- b. **Melodic** – Melodic motifs deal with the notes you are playing in your solo. Melodic motifs are very easy to conceptualize but hard to apply. A good understanding of the modes and harmony are required to get this one right. Let's take a 2-5-1 for example. Say we play the following figure over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

