

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 illustrates a jazz blues chord progression. The first staff shows measures 5-8 with chords F7, C7, E-7, and A7. The second staff shows measures 9-12 with chords D-7, G7, C7, A-7, D-7, and G7. Roman numerals are provided above the second staff for reference: I7, VI-7, II-7, V7.

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-Vsto 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 7th on top, the 6th 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 6th chord.

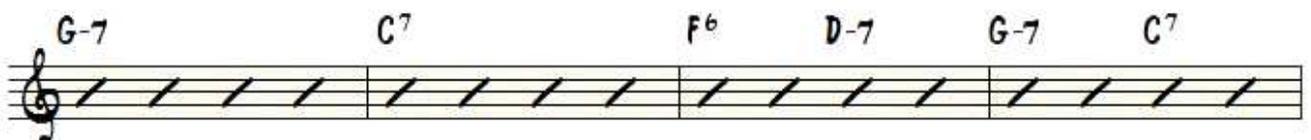
The next traditional target blues chord is a IV7 chord seen in measure 5. This chord is simply approached with a series of ii-Vs that descend in whole steps starting in measure 2. E-7b5 to A7 in measure 2 is the first ii-V, the next ii-V is in measure 3 from D-7 to G7, then finally a ii-V from C-7 to 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 6th chord in measure 11 rather than a dominant chord, (see figure 15.5).

Figure 15.5



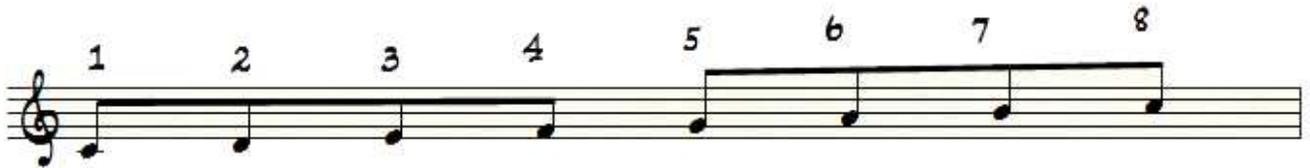
2. Rootless Voicings Structure 1 + Extensions Intro

- 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.

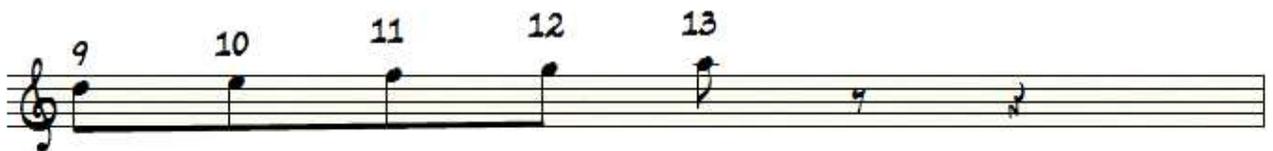
Extensions serve as color tones to your chord and can help make beautiful sounding chords in jazz. Just like we use the degrees of our scale to pick out notes for chords,(i.e. 1, 3, 5, maj7 for a maj7 chord) we also use numbers for extensions. Just as the name suggests, the numbers continue higher than 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



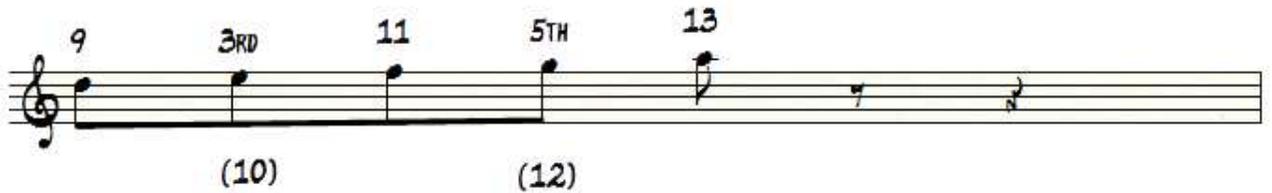
Let's continue to play up the scale and not restart the numbering. This makes our next note (D), number 9 followed by 10 (E), 11(F), 12 (G), and 13 (A), (see figure 15.7).

Figure 15.7



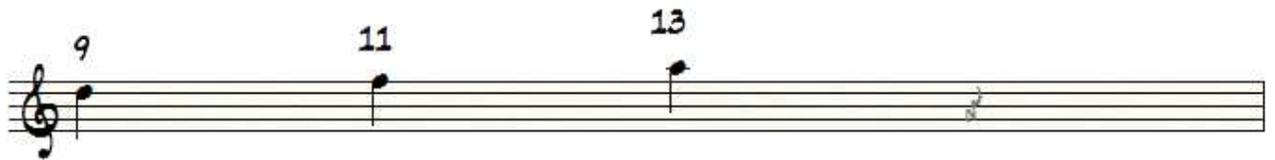
Extensions 10 (E), and 12 (G), are also known as the 3rd and 5th of the chord, (see Figure 15.8).

Figure 15.8



Let's stick to calling these notes the 3rd and 5th 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 6th scale degree).

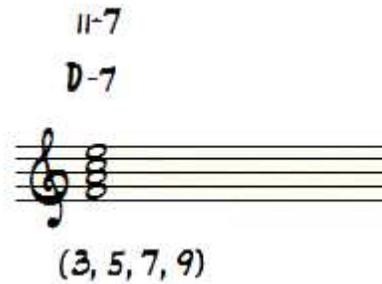
IMPORTANT: The extensions are based off of the root. In the examples I presented the note "C" as the root. When we use a D-7 chord, the note "D" is our new root. This would make extensions 9, 11, and 13 the notes E, G, and B. (see figure 15.10)

Figure 15.10

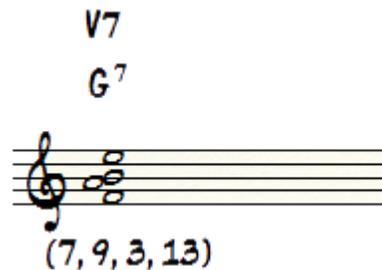


We learn more about extensions in the intermediate and advanced lessons. Our rootless voicings are meant to move through a ii-V-I, but over time you will learn how to isolate each voicing. Let's start with aii-V-I in the Key of C, so we have the chords D-7, G7, and Cmaj7. Our first structure over the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

Figure 15.11

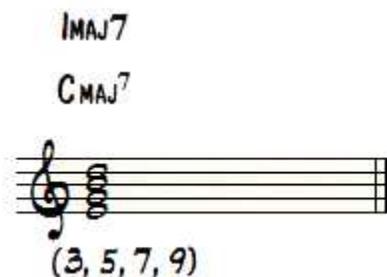


Our next structure is over the V7 chord or the G7 chord in this case and we use the degrees, 7, 9, 3, 13, (see figure 15.12) .



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

ii-7 CHORD	V7 CHORD	Imaj7 CHORD
D-7	G ⁷	CMAJ ⁷
		
(3, 5, 7, 9)	(7, 9, 3, 13)	(3, 5, 7, 9)

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



- iii. Slide to intervals- When we combine steps one and two we get a great texture that can be used in your solos, (see figure 15.17).

Figure 15.17



- iv. Octaves RH, with Chords LH – Using octaves in your RH combined with your LH voicings is a great way to build a solo and create a dynamic texture., (see figure 15.18)

Figure 15.18



- 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

The image shows a musical score for a piano exercise. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the melody and a bass clef staff for the bass line. The melody is written in a single line with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The bass line is written in a single line with a key signature of two flats. The bass line consists of block chords that change with the melody. The chord symbols above the staff are F-7, Bb-7, Eb7, and Ab MAJ7. The melody is a simple line of notes, and the bass line is a series of chords that provide harmonic support.

- 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

