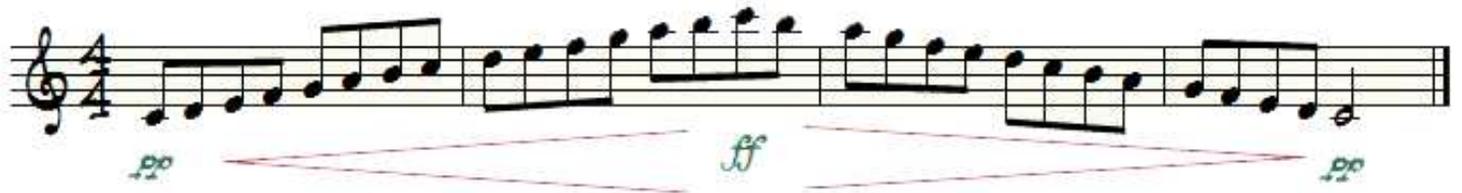


# Jazz Lesson 4

## Technique

### 1. Phrasing

- a. Phrasing is a very important part of technical exercises. If you can get in the habit of working on your phrasing while practicing your tedious exercises than this will translate to your playing. While playing your scales and arpeggios, work on shaping the exercise so it has a clear beginning middle and end by using dynamics and visualization of the checkpoints. For example, when you start a scale, do not think about every note of every beat. Instead think about your initial starting point and where your next target is. This will be at the top of the scale before you come down. When you visualize these two points everything in between flows fluidly without hiccups. Otherwise your scale will sound like a rollercoaster clunking away on the gears to the top. The longer you can feel the phrase, the more fluid motion the scale will contain. Your last target after you have reached the top of your scale would then be at the bottom, so again visualize this as your target. Music in general is highly dependent upon phrasing so it is best to practice this feeling in all your exercises. To work on your phrasing we are going to add dynamics to your scales in the manner shown below. We will start small, grow louder, and then get softer again.



## Harmony & Theory

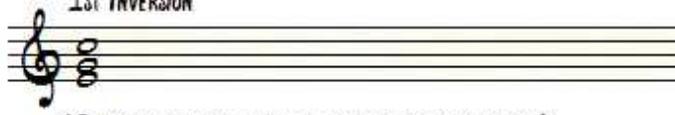
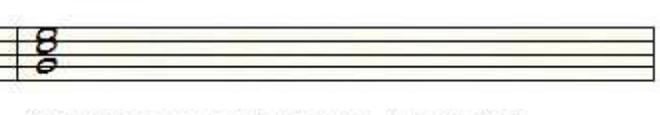
### 1. Chord Inversions

- a. An inversion of a chord is simply taking the notes that build the chord and arranging them in a different order. A C Major Triad is built from the notes C, E, and G. To play an inversion of this chord, we arrange the notes in a different order. Instead of playing the root, (note C), on the bottom of the chord, let's move it to the top. The triad is now built with the 3<sup>rd</sup>, (note E), on the bottom, the fifth, (note G), in the middle, and the root, (note C), on top. This structure is called **First Inversion**, (see below).

C MAJOR TRIAD

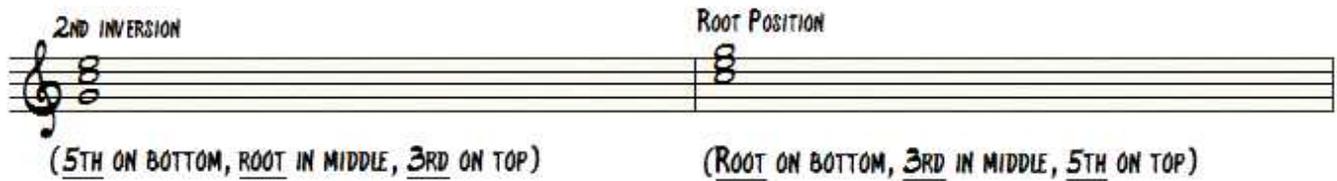
ROOT POSITION	1ST INVERSION
	
(ROOT ON BOTTOM, 3RD IN MIDDLE, 5TH ON TOP)	(3RD ON BOTTOM, 5TH IN MIDDLE, ROOT ON TOP)

Now let's rearrange the notes one more time to create **Second Inversion**. When we move the 3<sup>rd</sup>, (note E), to the top so that our 5<sup>th</sup>, (note G), is on the bottom, we now have 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion, (see below).

1ST INVERSION	2ND INVERSION
	
(3RD ON BOTTOM, 5TH IN MIDDLE, ROOT ON TOP)	(5TH ON BOTTOM, ROOT IN MIDDLE, 3RD ON TOP)

Again, let me point out that we continue to use the same notes, yet we are simply rearranging the order of them. At this point, if we now rearrange **Second Inversion** the same way, by taking the bottom note, (note G) and putting it on top of the chord, we wind

up being back at our root position chord, but an octave higher than our initial starting point, (see below.) Using this simple method we can create inversions for any type of chord in all keys!



## Repertoire

### 1. Learning Tunes Series Part 2–The Formula (Steps 5-6)

#### a. Step 5 (Chords and Bass notes together)

At this point we begin to combine our previous exercise together. Playing the harmonies with our RH while playing the bass with our LH serves us many different purposes. We are hearing the harmonies with the root motion which is great for progression recognition. We are also practicing our comping at the same time so if we are to play this tune in a group we will easily be able to move around the harmonies and simply add some two handed voicings. Practicing with the bass also allows us to hear what harmonies and voicings sound the best with the bass in the bottom. Sometimes you will play a voicing that sounds decent in the middle register, but when you add the bass note to the equation, the voicing sounds terrible. By having the bass notes there as well you can begin to hear exactly what the harmonic progressions are going to sound like.

- i. This is really where we start to hear the essence of the piece. Someone might actually be able to tell what you are playing at this point! (See below).



b. *Step 6 (Melody with Chords)*

This is the most basic way to hear the harmonies with the melody. In this step you want to use root position chords in order to hear the chord built up from the bass. If you are using complicated voicings or inversions, you don't get the true essence of the chord and melody together. As you start to familiarize yourself with the different steps, you can switch to rootless voicings or some other types of voicings you already know. Hearing the melody note against all four of the chord tones is crucial as well to knowing where you are in the tune. This will greatly improve your sense of harmonic placement in the tune as well because you'll be able to imagine the melody while playing the chords.

- i. This will capture enough of a piece to show off your newly learned talents to all your friends. In the future we will work on adding LH bass notes with LH Chords at the same time but not yet! (See below).

## 2. *Rhythm*

- a. Rhythms are what bring the music to life. Rhythm is what makes you feel the need to move and groove when listening to your favorite artist. Even with the most advanced harmonic knowledge, without the application of rhythms to a piece it's going to feel like watching paint dry. In our last lesson we talked about the steps to go through in order to learn any piece while memorizing it. Let's add life to the piece by giving it some rhythm instead of just playing whole notes. Let's take the first rhythm shown below and apply it to the following steps for the progression shown below.

- i. RH Chords Alone
- ii. LH Bass notes alone
- iii. RH Chords with LH Bass notes

### WE CAN PLAY HALF NOTES AS A RHYTHM FOR OUR DIFFERENT STEPS

C C F F

- b. Great! Now let's do it with the other rhythms. Notice how each one of the three rhythms gives the piece a different feeling. Once you get comfortable with certain rhythmic concepts you'll be able to add and take away rhythms at your leisure.

#### ♩2 - HALF NOTE WITH TWO QUARTER NOTES

5

#### ♩3 TWO QUARTER NOTES WITH A HALF NOTE

9

#### ♩4 PULSING QUARTER NOTES

13

#### ♩5 PLAYING ON THE UPBEAT (HARDER)

17

- c. Adding the RH Melody while LH is playing a specific rhythmic figure with chords is getting a little more advanced but we will learn how to practice doing this later on in the course.