

Jazz Lesson 8

Technique

1. Control

- a. Having control over your notes is vital in order to make the music come to life. This exercise will begin to develop your control and touch of the keys by adding dynamics to a finger pattern. It also will help your coordination as the contained movements within the fingers are slightly more difficult than our previous exercises.

Brenden's Key Point

The great jazz pianist Bill Evans once said, "*It's not what you play, but how you play.*" This statement can be applied across all genres of music. I would rather listen to 5 notes played with passion and soul over a complex, speedy phrase any day. It's the control over your notes that builds great musicians!

You practice this exercise three ways: 1) as softly as possible 2) getting louder as you go up and softer as you come down and 3) finally starting loud and getting softer as you go up, and louder as you come down (see figure 8.1)

Figure 8.1



Harmony & Theory

1. Chord Shells

- a. Chord shells refer to the specific notes of a chord, the 3rd degree and 7th degree. They are referred to as shells because they dictate the quality of the chord. If you change either one of these notes then you directly affect the chord, whether it be major or minor, or a dominant 7th or major 7th. Some of the exercises will have you play the shells of all chords in a piece to hear the essence of the chords and movements of important voices in the chords.

Figure 8.2



2. Inversion of Minor 7th Chords

- a. Inversions of minor 7th chords are done in the same fashion as major 7th and dominant chords. As a reminder, we rearrange the order of the notes in a chord to build different inversions of the chord. (See figure 8.3 for all inversions of a minor 7th chord.)

Figure 8.3

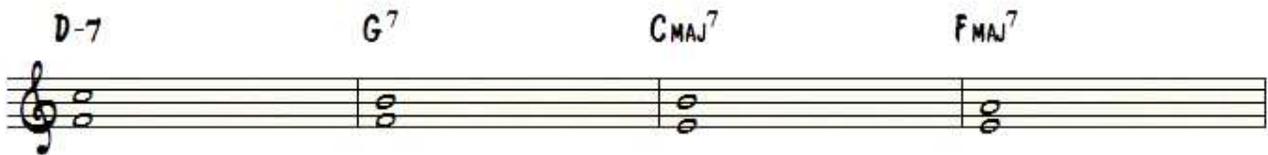


Repertoire

1. *Play shells of the chord progression.*

- a. Playing shells is a great way to hear the important harmonic movements. You get to hear (and see) how all of the harmonies work together. Doing this exercise will help your soloing because you will be able to better comprehend and memorize the harmonic structure of the piece, (see figure 8.4)

Figure 8.4



2. *Take The "A" Train Step 4 - Root Position Chords in LH and RH*

- a. We want to learn the chords and harmonies as intimately as we have learned the melody and bass notes. For this reason we want to practice the harmonies in both hands. They are obviously useful in our LH to play supporting chords, but they are also useful in our RH. We will use chord tones in improvising and create more advanced two-handed voicings from these qualities in the future.

Figure 8.5

Figure 8.5 shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Both staves have four measures. Above each measure on both staves is a chord symbol: CMAJ⁷, CMAJ⁷, D⁷, and D⁷. The notes for each chord are written in root position on both staves.

3. Take The “A” Train Step 5 – Chords RH , Bass notes in LH

- i. Now we want to sync up the RH chords with our LH bass notes. Playing through the chord progressions in this fashion will give us a complete sound of the harmonies in a tune.

Figure 8.6

The figure shows a musical staff with two systems: a treble clef (RH) and a bass clef (LH). Above the treble staff, four chords are indicated: CMAJ7, CMAJ7, D7, and D7. The treble staff contains four chords, each represented by a cluster of notes. The bass staff contains four bass notes, each represented by a single note. The chords and bass notes are aligned vertically, showing the relationship between the right-hand chords and the left-hand bass notes.

4. What is improvisation?

- a. Improvisation is the act of spontaneously generating musical phrases, with the goal of creating melody and expression. There are a number of various improvisation techniques we will learn in this course, but ultimately, expression can be anything YOU want to play, no matter how bad someone might think it sounds. I will provide you with an abundance of tools in order for you to find your own voice you would like to create.