



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 17

Lesson 17

Technique

1. *Technique Overview*

- a. This course will begin with a review of some of the beginner technique exercises. I want to make sure that we view some of the beginner exercises to ensure that we are on the right path before working on more difficult exercises. Most of the exercises we will do in the Intermediate section will focus on playing rather than technique building although the technique lessons from the beginning lessons will still be valuable practice components for developing speed and dexterity.

2. *Scales*

- a. Knowing your major and minor scales is a necessity to play well. The majority of jazz harmony and theory is derived from scales. By practicing scales you will increase control in each key. This control will allow you to maneuver your fingers more fluidly for soloing, and improve dexterity. At the intermediate level I have included all major scales with specific practice instructions for you to follow along with in the practice videos. These instructions include different tempos and octaves for you to switch between. Work on playing notes evenly within each scale and tempo.

3. *Swing 2-5-1's*

- a. In this exercise we will play the diatonic modes of a 2-5-1 in different directions. The purpose of this exercise is to increase your familiarity with 2-5-1's in all keys, as well as to develop control of your swing feel in your RH. (see figure 17.1)

Figure 17.1



Harmony & Theory

1. *Bebop and the Bebop Scale Intro*

- a. Bebop was an influential era in jazz. A plethora of great jazz musicians changed the way jazz was played. Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Bud Powell are just a few of these influential musicians. We're going to study specific nuances contained in the language of bebop, where and why certain lines are played, and how they relate to the harmony.
- b. *The Dominant Bebop Scale*– The premise of bebop is the idea that chord tones fall on down beats. Over a C7 chord, we would want any chord tones (C, E, G, and Bb) to fall on beats 1, 2, 3 or 4. Now, we add connecting notes in between, but as long as a chord tone is played on a downbeat you will create a bebop inspired line. The bebop scale was designed as a variation of the scales we already know. For example, let's look at the C7 Mixolydian mode. If we look at the scale going up, we notice that the chord tones in the first octave all fall on downbeats (see figure 17.3).

Figure 17.3



If we continue past the first octave, the non-chord tones (D, F, and A) fall on down beats. (See figure 17.4).

Figure 17.4



In order to correct this problem, a "Passing Tone" was added between the 7th degree of the scale and the 1. The 7th degree is the note Bb and the 1 is the note C so the passing tone would be the note B natural. The new scale is below (see figure 17.5).

Figure 17.5



The mixolydian scale with the extra passing tone is known as a "Dominant Bebop Scale". With this scale we are not limited to just one octave and can play fluidly through all octaves (see figure 17.6).

Figure 17.6



Vocal & Repertoire

1. Solo Piano Series Part 1 – LH Role in Solo Piano

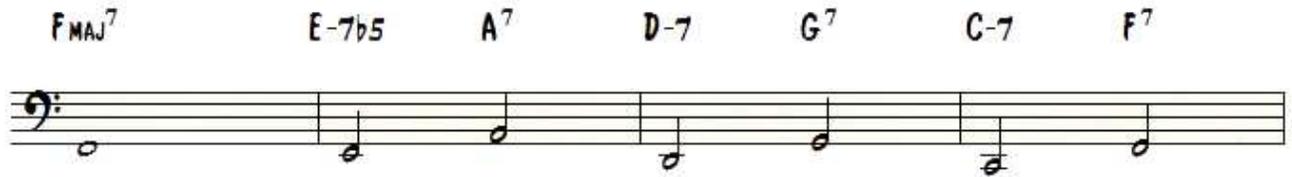
a. LH Components

The LH in solo piano plays roots and serves as a foundation for the RH. The LH is responsible for the bass notes, and the main harmonies within the written chords (usually the root, 3rd and 7th). We will add harmonies from the LH to the RH in future chapters, but for now the root, 3rd, and 7th, must be played somehow between both hands. At first the LH can be overwhelming, but once you

understand its top function, it is simpler. A lot of the times, the tempo and register of a tune will dictate your best LH option. Here are some common LH approaches:

1. Only bass notes – When just playing bass notes, your RH needs to add 3 +7 under the melody if your LH is going to use this option. (figure 17.8)

Figure 17.8



2. Bass note then shells - This method is great for medium swing tunes. It allows you to cover the bass and harmonies at the same time. It is a little tricky at first but it'll come very easy with a little practice (see figure 17.8)

Figure 17.9



3. Bass note then full chord – Just as we jumped to our shells in the previous step, we can also jump to a full chord. This chord can be an inversion or rootless voicing.



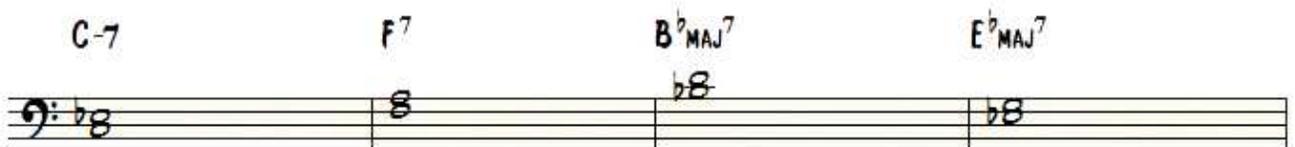
4. Root and 7th – This is an easier way to add bass notes. I named a root in this example only because when we use the root and 7th, our LH will be just below the middle register. When we play one bass note, we will play this note in the low end of the piano. If we play the 1 +7 in that low end it will sound muddy. (*Note. RH has to include the 3rd underneath the melody when your LH is playing 1+7 to account for 1, 7, and 3). See Figure 17.10

Figure 17.10



5. Root and 3rd – Playing the root and third is a similar way to add in bass notes but again with this step we need to stay below the middle register for the two notes to blend. The lower we get, the worse this will sound. (*Note. The RH has to account for the 7th when your LH is using this option). See Figure 17.11

Figure 17.11



6. Root and 3rd, (a tenth apart) – This is a great way to voice the root and 3rd option, as a tenth. This gives a nice spread of the voices and will work great when we add the RH to this combination (see Figure 17.12)

Figure 17.12



2. Intermediate Improvisation Series Part 1 – Melodies, Chord Tones, and Connections

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to focus on connecting chord tones as you begin to develop your improvisation skills. This is the only way you will truly be able to create flowing lines through the harmonies instead of just “floating over” the top of them. Great soloists get deep inside the chord changes by using their knowledge of chord tones and how to connect them. In all your 2-5-1s you should be able to target any chord tone (1, 3, 5, and 7) for any of the three chords. This is exactly what we will be practicing. Take a look at the following examples that target the 3rd, 5th and 7th in a 2-5-1. (See Figure 17.13 and 17.14)

a. Targeting 3rds

Figure 17.13

Figure 17.13 shows a musical staff in G major illustrating targeting the 3rd of each chord in a 2-5-1 progression. The chords are D-7, G⁷, CMAJ⁷, and CMAJ⁷. The melody targets the 3rd of each chord: D (3rd), G (3rd), C (3rd), and C (3rd).

c. Targeting at random

Figure 17.14

Figure 17.14 shows a musical staff in G major illustrating targeting at random. The chords are D-7, G⁷, CMAJ⁷, and CMAJ⁷. The melody targets various chord tones: D (7th), G (7th), C (3rd), and C (Root).

3. Analysis – “Blues for Alice”

“Blues” for Alice” is a variation of the blues. It uses a harmonic progression called “Parker Changes”, created by Charlie Parker to be used as a substitute over the blues form. In the first four measures we have the following progression: Fmaj, E-7b5 to A7, D-7 to G7, C-7 to F7. (See figure 17.15)

Figure 17.15

IMAJ7	D-	ii-7b5	V7	C	ii-7	V7	Bb	ii-7	V7
FMAJ7	E-7b5	A7	D-7	G7	C-7	F7			
IONIAN	D NAT MIN		D HAR MIN	DOR	MIXO	DOR	MIXO		

I strongly recommend you first look for 2-5 relationships in all the pieces you analyze. Since this a very strong relationship in jazz you will begin to notice this progress in lots of tunes. In this case, measures 2, 3 and 4 all have 2-5s leading down in whole steps. In the second measure we have a E-7b5 going to A7 (which are connected as a minor ii to v). D-7 to G7 is another 2-5 from the key of C. C-7 to F7, is another 2-5 from the key of Bb. Landing on Bb is important because when we are playing a blues, the fifth bar should always be a 4th away from the root. In this case, Bb is the fourth of F so we meet the “blues” criteria.

For the IV dominant chord we could use the mixolydian mode from Eb since Bb7 comes from Eb. Even though we analyze the Bb7 with a roman numeral IV (because it is the 4 in the key of F), the fact it is a dominant chord implies that it is from the Mixolydian mode and we should know its origins to effectively play over it. Knowing that Mixolydian is the 5th mode, means we can count backwards from Bb to find its origins – in this case Eb. (See figure 17.16).

Figure 17.16

	A^b		G		G^b	
$IV7$	$ii-7$	$V7$	$ii-7$	$V7$	$ii-7$	$V7$
B^b7	B^b-7	E^b7	$A-7$	$D7$	A^b-7	D^b7

MIXO DOR MIXO DOR MIXO DOR MIXO

After measure 5 we have more 2-5s that descend in half steps on the 6th, 7th and 8th, measures. Measure 6 is Bb-7 to Eb7 (from the key of Ab). Measure 7 is A-7 to D7 (from the key of G). Measure 8 is Ab-7 to Db7 (from the key of Gb).

In measure 9 we have a G-7 chord which is the ii-7 of F. In measure 10 there is a C7, (the 5 of F), which finally resolves to F in measure 11. The last two measures are a classic I-VI-II-V turn-around. (See figure 17.17).

Figure 17.17

F					
$ii-7$	$V7$	$I7$	$vi-7$	$ii-7$	$V7$
$G-7$	$C7$	$F7$	$D-7$	$G-7$	$C7$

1. Blues For Alice Application

a. Harmony And Theory

- i. **Dominant Bebop Scale**– It is hard to know how or when to apply the bebop scale to a piece. With any scale or mode we can always use the full octave or, just bits and pieces of it. That’s the best part of jazz, you can use these scales and modes however you like! We’ll look at a couple of different ways you can use this.

Our first opportunity to use the dominant bebop scale comes in the third measure when our D-7 to G7 2-5 appears. We can use the dominant bebop scale over dominant chords (even over the ii-7 chord that the dominant chord is connected to!). In this case let's start the bebop scale on the root G and come down using eighth notes until we get to measure 4. (See figure 17.18)

Figure 17.18



After four beats, we end on the note A of our G7 dominant bebop scale. We now see a new dominant chord in the fourth measure (F7). So how do we switch? We simply jump and land on the root of the F7 chord. So will begin our new F7 dominant bebop scale on the root and come up this time over the C-7 to F7 chords. (See figure 17.19)

Figure 17.19



As we continue upward I'm going to stop the scale on beat 4 and end on the note Eb, Our next dominant chord is Bb7. By starting the bebop scale on different chord tones will be able to connect into the next scale. For now, we will jump to the root of the next dominant chord. In this case, we will jump from the Eb back down to the Bb. For this chord we'll use two movements within the scale to create a little more harmonic color. This time we will move up and down with the scale. As we start on Bb let's move up to the 3rd then down until our next measure. (See figure 17.20)

Figure 17.20



As you can hear, this adds a totally different sound than running up or down the scale. The motion adds a little variety. Let's continue to use up and down motion in the next couple measure as well.

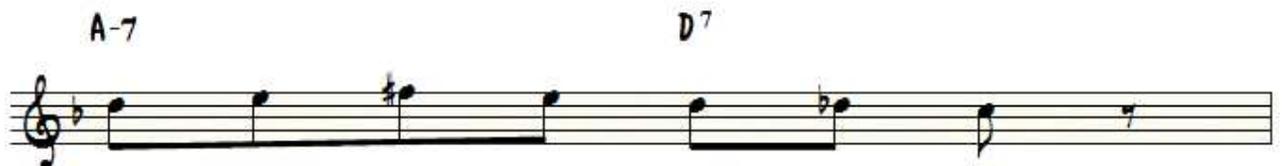
Our next 2-5 is Bb-7 to Eb7 so we will use the Eb7 dominant bebop scale over this measure. We'll jump from the G from the previous measure to Eb and begin going downward, using our passing tone immediately. Let's go back up and reuse our passing tone until we hit the next measure. (See figure 17.21)

Figure 17.21



The next 2-5 is A-7 to D7. The last note we end with in our Eb7 bebop scale is Ab. We will jump up from Ab to D above and begin going up the scale to F# (the 3rd), and come back down and stop on C on beat 4, (the 7th of D7) . (See figure 17.22)

Figure 17.22



Our next 2-5 is Ab-7 to Db7. We are a half step away from the root which is easy because will simply move up to Db to start our Db7 dominant bebop scale. Let's stop on beat 4 again as we come down which is the note F. (see figure 17.23)

Figure 17.23



We have now moved through these abrupt, one measure 2-5's and now are at the final 4 measures. There are a lot of opportunities from measures 9-10 to use our bebop scale. The chords are G-7 for one full bar and C7 for one full bar. This means we can use our C7 bebop scale over the ii-7 chord, (the G-7) and over the V7 chord, (the C7 chord).

We ended our last bebop scale on F so will jump down to C on beat 1 of our G-7 chord. From here let's go up to the third (the note E), and continue down to the fifth (the note G). As we hit G the harmony changes to the C7 chord. On beat 1 of the C7 chord we will move upward from G until we reach the 3rd of C7 (the note E). This is the downbeat of beat 4. (See figure 17.23).

Figure 17.23



In this case I'll add a small resolution in order to get back to the F of our Imaj6 chord. As we ended on E from our last bebop scale, I'll move to the note G then come down to hit F on beat 1 of the next measure. (See figure 17.24)

b. Vocab

1. LH Solo Piano Role In Blues For Alice

c. LH Components

Here are examples of how to utilize our LH components in Blues For Alice. Obviously not all of these examples are our best choice. For example, I wouldn't recommend playing all thirds, but I did want to show you that all of these can be utilized with each other. You might play bass notes for two measures, and then go to tenths in the next, then to bass note and shells. Mix it up. It's a lot of tools to choose from. The more you can keep it switch it up the better it will be.

Figure 17.26

1. Just bass notes –

FMAJ⁷ E-7^b5 A⁷ D-7 G⁷ C-7 F⁷

Figure 17.27

2. Bass note then shells -

FMAJ⁷ E-7^b5 A⁷ D-7 G⁷ C-7 F⁷

Figure 17.28

3. Bass note then full chord –

FMAJ⁷ E-7^b5 A⁷ D-7 G⁷ C-7 F⁷

Figure 17.29

4. Root and 7th-

Musical notation for Figure 17.29, showing chords FMA7, E-7b5, A7, D-7, G7, C-7, and F7. The notes shown are the root and the 7th of each chord.

Figure 17.30

5. Root and 3rd

Musical notation for Figure 17.30, showing chords FMA7, E-7b5, A7, D-7, G7, C-7, and F7. The notes shown are the root and the 3rd of each chord.

Figure 17.31

6. Root and 3rd (tenth)

Musical notation for Figure 17.31, showing chords FMA7, E-7b5, A7, D-7, G7, C-7, and F7. The notes shown are the root and the 3rd of each chord, presented in two rows.

Figure 17.33

8. Root + 7th to Root + 3rd (tenth) Combination –

Musical notation for Figure 17.33, showing chords FMA7, E-7b5, A7, D-7, G7, C-7, and F7. The notes shown are the root and the 7th of each chord.

2. Improvisation – Melodies, Chord Tones and Connections

- a. In this lesson I discussed the importance of starting, landing and using chord tones in your solos. Chord tones are your harmonic anchors and will help your solo sound good! If you're *NOT* starting on chord tones and you are *NOT* landing on chord tones, your solo's are going to sound "out", and not pleasing to the ear.

The first step to using chord tones effectively is to use them to create melodies within your solo. By melodies I mean simple lines that even a child could sing back to you if you played them. I know you want to play fast burning lines, but without starting with simple melodies as your foundation, your fast lines won't sound good.

Look at the example below of a simple melody over the first four bars to "Blues for Alice". (See figure 17.34)

Figure 17.34

