



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 20

Jazz Lesson 20

Technique

1. Minor Bebop Scale

- a. Playing minor bebop scales is going to be exactly the same as a dominant bebop scale fingering wise except for the fact that you will play a minor third instead of a major third. This will be a very small switch you will make and shouldn't cause you much trouble.



Harmony & Theory

1. Minor 251 Rootless Voicings

- a. We just finished isolating our major rootless voicings, so what's next? Our Minor 2-5-1 rootless voicings of course! Now that you have a solid understanding of the major rootless voicings the minor 2-5-1 rootless voicings will be easy to learn.

Let's briefly review our minor 2-5-1 harmony. For a minor 2-5-1 in the key of C, our chords would be D-7b5, G7(b9,b13), and C -maj7. We use three different types of minor scales. C natural minor for the II chord, C harmonic minor for the V7(b9,b13) chord, and C melodic minor for the 1 chord. (See figure below)

D-7b5	G7(b9,b13)	C-MAJ7
C NATURAL MINOR (D To D)	C HARMONIC MINOR (G To G)	C MELODIC MINOR (C To C)

We know that chords and scales are connected to each other. When we create our rootless voicings we need to reflect the notes from the scales we are using that fit with the harmonies. Let's start with the II-7b5 chord. In this case the D-7b5.

We use the natural minor scale from the I of the key over the II-7b5. For the major rootless voicings, we use the voicing built from the 3, 5, 7, and 9. Let's do the same thing here. Our D-7b5 scale (mode) is shown below. Let's take the 3, 5, 7, and 9 and stack them together. (See figure below)

II-7b5
C NATURAL MINOR (D To D)

D-7b5 ROOTLESS
 3, 5, 7, b9 STACKED

I'm sure you notice that because of the quality of our chord, the 5 is a b5. There is also a slight difference with the 9 because of the chord scale that connects with the chord. The 9 is now a b9! In order to make this easier I'll state the numbers with the flats so it is easier to tell.

The minor b5 rootless voicing is 3, 5, 7, b9. Let's go to the dominant chord.

For our V7 chord we are using the harmonic minor chord scale from the V to the V. In this case the C harmonic minor from G to G.

Now the major structure for the V7 chord is 7, 9, 3, and 13. Let's see what notes we get when we use the chord scale above with these extensions. (See figure below).

V7 (b9, b13)
C HARMONIC MINOR (G To G)

G7(b9, b13)
 7, b9, 3, b13 STACKED

We got some different extensions don't we? The 9 becomes flat again and so does the 13! So now our chord becomes a G7 (b9, b13) chord! This is great stuff. Our scale will reflect the extensions in our LH perfectly so we are creating a balanced harmonic sound in both hands. The I-maj7 is the last chord.

The I-maj7 takes the melodic minor scale of its own root.

This one isn't quite as exciting as the last two but still creates a great rootless voicing. Our major7th structure is 3, 5, 7, 9 so will use that for the minor major 7th chord. Here is what we get. (See figure below).

I-MAJ7
C MELODIC MINOR

C-MAJ7
3, 5, 7, 9 STACKED

Almost exactly the same as our major7th voicing but because we have a minor third in the voicing mixed with a major 7th it creates a very haunting yet beautiful sound.

So here is the full rootless voicing structure for the key of C minor.

D-7b5 G7(b9,b13) C-MAJ7

3, 5, 7, 9 7, 9, 3, 13 3, 5, 7, 9

In order to get the second rootless voicing structure we take the numbers for structure 2 for the major rootless voicings and use them for the minor voicings. (See figure below)

D-7b5	G7(b9,b13)	C-min7
7, 9, 3, 5	3, b13, 7, 9	7, 9, 3, 5

We will want to learn these voicings in the same manner we learned our major 251 rootless voicings.

2. Minor Bebop Scale

- a. The minor 7th bebop scale is the final bebop scale we have left to learn. The minor bebop scale can be used over the first chord of a 2-5-1 progression. The Dorian scale (figure 20.1), which has a b3 and b7, is the basis for the minor bebop scale.

Figure 20.1

The only difference between a minor bebop scale and a dominant bebop scale is that the third note is lowered by a half step. Instead of playing the major third, you will play the minor third. The passing tone at the top of the scale in a minor bebop scale is the same as the passing tone in a dominant bebop scale. In the key of C, the passing tone (B) is played in between the flat7th (Bb), and the root (C). The scale degrees for a minor bebop scale are: R-2-b3-4-5-6-b7-7-R. The fingering for the minor bebop scale is the same as the dominant bebop scale. The C minor bebop scale is shown below. (See figure 20.2)

Figure 20.2



We now know all three of our bebop scales. In future chapters we will learn more about connecting scales together and how they are effectively used.

Vocab & Repertoire

1. Solo Piano Series- Part 4 Adding the Root and 5th below the melody

- a. *Using Chord Tones To Fill* – Using chord tones to fill beneath the melody creates rich sounding voicings. We’ve already learned how to harmonize a melody with the shells (3rd and 7th) of the chords. Now all we are going to do is double the root in our LH, or add the 5th. To explain how to do this, we’ll use the first chord (F-) and melody note (Ab) from “All The Things You Are”.

i. Step 1 – Add your shells below the melody

1. Apply shell voicings below the melody when the harmonies are changing. Change the shells if the melody stays on the same note and the harmonies move. (see figure 20.3)

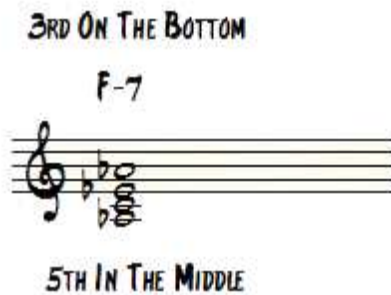
Figure 20.3



ii. Step 2 – Add the 5th between the shells

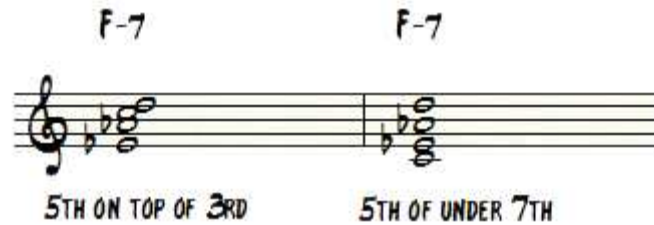
1. Adding the 5th between the shells will give your voicings a fuller sound. If the 3rd is at the bottom of your shell, then the 5th will sit in between the 3rd and 7th. (see figure 20.4)

Figure 20.4



If the 7th is at the bottom of your shell, then the 5th has two options for placement depending on the register of the melody: on top of the 3rd or below the 7th. (see figure 20.5)

Figure 20.5



iii. *Step 3 – Add the root between the shells*

1. Adding the root between shells can create a thick texture. In this option, the root will always be placed directly under the melody note. (see figure 20.26)

Figure 20.26



iv. *Step 4 – Playing 1,3,5,7 below the melody*

1. This step is tricky because we have lots of notes and only 5 fingers. This method is primarily used on ballads because you have more time to readjust your hand because of the slow tempo. If the melody is a chord tone, and you play the other 3 chord tones below it, you will be playing the chord in inversion. In “All The Things You Are”, the melody note is the b3. If we play the root, 7th, and 5th below it, a 2nd chord inversion is created. (see figure 20.27)

Figure 20.27



While your RH is playing these new voicings, your LH will follow the same process we have discussed in previous lessons.

2. Intermediate Improvisation Series Part 4– Combining Melodic & Rhythmic Motifs

- a. When we combine melodic and rhythmic motifs, your solos will be more interesting and have more substance. To incorporate both rhythm and melody into your improvisation start with a short motif. If you enjoy the sound of the melody more so than the rhythm you have created, continue to develop the motif melodically. In the example below, the rhythm isn't ear catching, but the short melody line is interesting. I will take the initial motif and transpose it to fit the chord change. I'll also alter the rhythm. (see example 20.28)

Figure 20.28

MELODICALLY FUN! RHYTHMICALLY NOT!

The figure shows two staves of music. The top staff is titled "MELODICALLY FUN! RHYTHMICALLY NOT!". It features four measures with chords D-7, G7, CMAJ7, and CMAJ7. The melody starts with a short motif of four notes (D4, E4, F4, G4) and then continues with a more complex line. The bottom staff has the same chord changes (D-7, G7, CMAJ7, CMAJ7) but with a different, more rhythmic melody line.

This same principle applies to when your rhythmic motif is more enjoyable than your melodic motif. Play the rhythmic motif throughout your solo, even if the melodic aspect of it isn't as interesting. In the example below, the melody is less interesting than the rhythm. (see example 20.29)

Figure 20.29

RHYTHMICALLY FUN! MELODICALLY EHHH.

The figure shows two staves of music. The top staff is titled "RHYTHMICALLY FUN! MELODICALLY EHHH.". It features four measures with chords D-7, G7, CMAJ7, and CMAJ7. The melody is simple and less interesting, while the rhythm is more complex and rhythmic. The bottom staff has the same chord changes (D-7, G7, CMAJ7, CMAJ7) but with a different, more rhythmic melody line.

3. “Blues For Alice” – Application

a. *Harmony and Theory*

- i. *Minor Bebop Scale* –The minor bebop scale is most effective when there is more than one measure of a minor chord, or you are in a minor key. If you are constantly switching between the minor bebop scale, dominant bebop scale, and the major 6th bebop scale, your solos won’t be coherent. Look for chords in minor pieces or progressions that stay on a minor chord for a couple of measures in order to effectively use this scale. This example of demonstrates how to use the minor 7th bebop scale over a minor blues. (see example 20.30)

Figure 20.30



b. *Vocab*

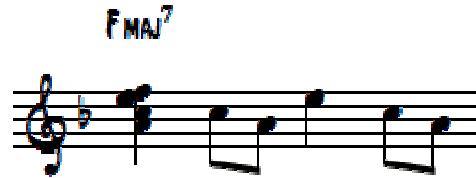
- i. *RH Components - Harmonizing the Melody - Adding Chord Tones with shells*

The next step to harmonizing below the melody with shells is to add chord tones to the voicing. This could either be the root or the 5th. The melody in “Blues For Alice” has a lot of eighth-note movement so we won’t be harmonizing every note. This technique will mostly be used for slow to medium tempo songs that have simple melodies. In “Blues For Alice” harmonize quarter notes on beats 1 and 3. It’s unnecessary to harmonize every note in this particular song.

The first melody note in “Blues for Alice” is F and the first chord is Fmaj7. The chord tones for Fmaj7 are F, A, C, and E. Since the melody note is the root of

the chord, we have to add the 7th (E), 5th (C), and the 3rd (A) to have a complete voicing. (see figure 20.31)

Figure 20.32



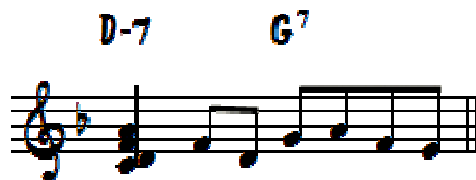
The next quarter note is an E on beat 3 of measure one. Since E is a shell note, we will add the root (F), 5th(C), and the 3rd (A) below the melody. (see figure 20.33)

Figure 20.33



The next opportunity we have to harmonize using shells and chord tones is on beat 1 of measure 3. The melody note is A and the chord is D-7. Since the melody note is the 5th, we'll add the 3rd, root, and 7th below the melody note. (see figure 20.34)

Figure 20.34



That's it! To harmonize the rest of the song you would look for quarter notes on beats one and three and add in the missing chord tones below the melody.

4. *Intermediate Improvisation Series Part 4– Combining Melodic & Rhythmic Motifs*

- a. Combining melodic and rhythmic motifs can be overwhelming. Your first instinct might be to play all of the ideas you have in your head all at once. As we have discussed in previous lessons, the best way to start combining rhythm and melody is to start with a short and simple idea. As you venture into conceptualizing both ideas at once, continue to build off an idea until you can tie it into a brand new idea.

Brenden’s Key Point: The biggest problem I hear when I listen to jazz musicians is that they let go of ideas too quickly. It’s similar to when you start talking about your car problems, then immediately launching into how excited you are about a new movie without finishing your initial thought. Try using an idea for 8 measures, then continue to use it for a full chorus, then throughout an entire solo. Let the idea lead you. Here’s an example of a solo that combines melodic and rhythmic motifs. (see figure 20.35)

Figure 20.35

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains a melodic line with notes and rests, and the second staff contains a rhythmic line with notes and rests. Chord symbols are placed above and below the staves to indicate the harmonic context.

Chord symbols above the first staff: FMAJ⁷, E-7B5, A⁷, D-7, G⁷, C-7, F⁷

Chord symbols below the second staff: B^{b7}, B^{b-7}, E^{b7}, A-7, D⁷, A^{b-7}, D^{b7}