

FOREWARD

I once chatted with a very prominent jazz musician who stated that he didn't believe in practicing jazz! I don't agree with this, but there are a few exceptions such as geniuses like himself.

He plays great jazz because he has grown up listening to it, and these influences come out naturally when he plays.

Us "mere mortals" also have what we have listened to locked away in our subconscious, but how do we draw it out? (But first and foremost, we must have listened to stuff, and lots of it!!).

Don't ever believe that any jazz player is totally unique and can be responsible for "inventing" a style. Michael Brecker's modern style would have been assisted by extensive listening to the likes of Coltrane, and Parker. Parker and Coltrane would've continued on from the 40's style of the likes of Johnny Hodges and Benny Carter. They would've been influenced by the advancements of Coleman Hawkins, who probably grew up listening to Sidney Bechet. Bechet would've grown up with Dixieland, of which players themselves grew up with marches and so on. My point is, don't try and "re-invent the wheel"!

Do what the greats have done for the last hundred years - take some licks that you like, play them over and over, and then develop them to make them your own.

Now that seems easy when you put it like that, but it isn't. If it were, everyone that put their hand to jazz would be amazing. It takes a structured and disciplined practice method.

"Jazz Improv - The Fundamentals" is a method that will point you in the right direction. It is designed firstly to take away the "mystery" of some common chord changes, and then to give you a comfort and working knowledge of them. On the book's completion (assuming the guidelines below have been followed), you should be able to solo comfortably around the 12 bar blues in two keys, and be somewhat prepared if you are confronted with other improv situations. Just be mindful that this is a start to jazz playing - don't feel ready to take on the world just yet!

Jazz players talk of a "vocab", which is their own built up library of jazz licks that they use for soloing. We won't be starting with Coltrane licks, nor Bechet. We will be using small "motifs" to get you used to some of the building blocks of jazz lines, and have you play them over various chord changes to start to build your vocab, as well as to develop your knowledge of chords, and the use of your ear. These lines will develop throughout this series of books. There are also exercises requiring you to play nothing but notes from the chord in a solo. This is a proven method to improve accuracy by the soloist. Then there are some small lines to learn for a bit of fun, and also to load into your subconscious for down the track.

Please follow these guidelines to achieve the most from this method:

- Practice at least 25-30 min. per day. (on top of at least a good warm up and some technique!)
- Repetition is vital. Even when you've got it down, keep doing it.
- Don't leave a unit behind once you've moved on. Keep coming back to the old ones to reinforce them into the back of the mind, which will help the ideas come out in your soloing later.
- Once you are comfortable with the exercises, don't be afraid to modify the patterns rhythmically, or to add a few notes to the end. (But not too much!) This is how you start to make them "yours".
- Take note of the articulation provided. Style is as important as the lines that you are playing.
- Take advantage of the supplement pages at the end of the book. These are to challenge the brain a bit further by using the lines over some additional chords.
- Be patient. Too many players rush their development and it shows. Stick to the method and trust in it!

UNIT 1

C INSTRUMENTS (TREBLE)

WELCOME TO "JAZZ IMPROV- THE FUNDAMENTALS"
MOST OF THE UNITS WILL COMPRISE OF THREE SECTIONS.

IN THE FIRST, A SHORT LINE WILL BE GIVEN, AND YOU MUST PLAY THE SAME PATTERN, BUT TRANSPOSED ACCORDINGLY FOR THE GIVEN CHORD CHANGES. IE IF THE "LICK" STARTS ON THE 3RD ON A F7 CHORD (A), THEN ON A Bb7 CHORD YOU WILL START ON IT'S 3RD (D) ETC.

(IN EXERCISE 1 (A) THE TRANSPOSED LINE IS GIVEN WITH THE SCALE DEGREES INDICATED ABOVE)

IT IS IMPORTANT TO PLAY THE LINES OVER AND OVER, EVEN WHEN YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE GOT IT. THEY MUST WORK THEIR WAY INTO YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS.

IN THE SECOND, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO IMPROVISE ON ONLY THE NOTES IN THE CHORD.

WHILST THIS MAY FEEL RATHER UNMUSICAL, AND THE STUDENT MAY WELL QUESTION HOW THIS RELATES TO IMPROV, IT IS A RECOGNISED METHOD BY SOME OF THE MOST ADVANCED INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD. GOOD IMPROVISED SOLOS ARE VERY ACCURATE, AND THE SOLOISTS ARE WELL AWARE OF THE CHORDS THAT THEY ARE PLAYING OVER. THIS EXERCISE WILL IMPROVE THAT ACCURACY.

THE 3RD SECTION IS JUST FOR A BIT OF FUN, AND TO "IMPLANT" INTO THE SUBCONSCIOUS A FEW MORE ADVANCED LINES (SOME ARE BORROWED FROM THE GREATS). PAY ATTENTION ALSO TO THE ARTICULATION SO AS TO START DEVELOPING A JAZZ FEEL.

SO LETS GET STARTED!

1. PLAY THE FOLLOWING LINES OVER THE CHORD CHANGES.

WE WILL BE CONCENTRATING ON HEARING THE 3RD OF THE CHORD, AND USING IT IN CONJUNCTION OF THE FLAT 3RD. ONCE YOUVE GOT THE ORIGINAL LINE DOWN, AVOID READING THE NOTES (SO THAT YOU ARE USING YOUR EAR!).

* WHEN YOU FEEL THAT YOU'VE GOT IT, KEEP ON DOING IT OVER AND OVER!

(JAZZ LINES SHOULD BE ABLE TO COME WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT THEM)

*NB BACKING TRACKS ARE ALL 3x THROUGH.

A) TRACK # 1

B) TRACK # 1

C) TRACK # 2

2. IMPROVISE USING NOTHING BUT DEGREES 1,3,5,7 OF THE FOLLOWING CHORD PROGRESSION.

(IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH ALL THE NOTES AT FIRST, JUST AIM FOR 2 NOTES PER CHORD, THEN 3, AND THEN ALL 4.)

USE RHYTHM FOR MUSICAL INTEREST.

**THIS MAY FEEL FRUSTRATING, AND NOT MUCH LIKE IMPROVISING, BUT IT WILL IMPROVE YOUR ACCURACY!*

TRACK # 3

B \flat 7



E \flat 7



F7



3. LEARN AND MEMORIZE THE FOLLOWING LINE. (PAY ATTENTION TO THE ARTICULATIONS)

* CAREFUL NOT TO "OVER SWING" THE QUAVERS. LET THE ACCENTS ADD THE GROOVE.

