

FORWARD

Too many jazz students fall into the same trap of seeking early gratification in their jazz playing. What I mean by this is that to stay ahead of peers, or to try and feel that they are soloing, or for whatever other reasons, many students will fall for “party tricks” in their playing. These can be the use of range, fast notes, or “space” (alla Miles Davis), before they are ready. The end result is ineffective solos from the listeners’ perspective, and a limited advancement in their playing.

“The Fundamentals” (Medium Level), as the name suggests, aims to provide a solid grounding for the student. It is expected, however, that the student already has a sound knowledge of basic jazz chords and traditional scales.

This publication will not make you into a soloist! (No book can). But it is an effective resource to help you along your journey. There are elements of jazz playing that can be taught, and others than cannot. The latter is achieved through listening, and playing (at your level and not trying to do too much). In this book you will be assisted in your development by:

- Gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of fundamental chord progressions.
- Learning some clichéd jazz lines over these chord progressions to start building a “vocab” of jazz lines.
- Strengthening your instinctive playing knowledge of these chords and patterns.

There is a lot of material in this book. Don’t try and learn it all at once. Take a few elements from one unit, learn them, and then move to another unit. Then come back and learn some more from previous units.

Good luck, and keep an eye on pigletmusic.com for upcoming publications to help you on your journey.

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Bb instruments (treble)

Just to summarize the basics, you will be given a small jazz line, or "motif".

Look at it, and how it fits into the chord. (Don't just play it). Learn it, and then learn it transposed into the other chords provided.

Do this without the backing track until you are comfortable with each line.

*Each backing track is repeated 3 times.

II - V - I's

There's probably not a more important progression to learn than the II V I. (If this sounds a bit foreign to you, I'd suggest backing this up with some jazz harmony reading from Piglet Music's jazz harmony books). In a nutshell though, the II - V is a cadence resolving to the I chord).

In a set of changes of say Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7, many beginner jazz players will look and play over each chord individually. It means that they firstly have to memorize a lot of changes, and their soloing will lose the essence of that set of chords. Over time you will simply see these three chords as a II V I pattern, as one unit instead of three.

So over the next couple of units we will look at some minor lines, some dom7 lines, and then put them together to arrive at the I chord.

* There's a lot of material here. Don't try to learn it all at once. Take your time. Just develop a couple of minor licks first maybe, and then spend some time on the V chord. When you have a couple of II Vs down, come back to this unit and learn some more.

In this unit we have some minor lines, (the II chord) leading to the dom7 chord. (V). (The Dom7 chord is only included so you can have a sense of perspective for the moment. The focus is on the minor).

In exercise A & B the transposed version of the lines are provided just to get you started. Spend time learning them by memory (and ear).

A) TRACK # 1

Em⁷ (II) A⁷ (V) 2 Dm⁷ (II) G⁷ (V) 2

B) TRACK # 1

Em⁷ A⁷ 2 Dm⁷ G⁷ 2

*nb The notes bracketed in exercises B) & C) demonstrate a fairly common bebop pattern. The last note in the brackets is the target note. It is approached from below, above, below, and then the target note.

From now on only the original line will be given. You must then play it in the transposed key.

* Please practice each line over each set of chord changes until you are comfortable before you try it with the backing tracks. Playing it wrong over and over will slow down the process and lead to great frustration!

TRACK # 1

C) Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

Exercises A - C have all effectively been starting on the tonic (even if delayed).
The following exercise starts on the (minor) 3rd.

TRACK # 1

D) Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

And for the last example, this minor pattern begins on the 9th.

TRACK # 1

E) Em⁷ A⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

All of those examples were in the same two keys to give you a certain level of comfort in them. Extend yourself a bit further by playing any of the lines from this unit over the following chord changes. If you then feel able, go to the supplement page for even further extension work. Make sure to learn each different chord separately before trying to put them together.

* As you get comfortable with each line, experiment a bit with the rhythm. Add your own touch by changing the note durations, adding syncopation etc.

TRACK # 2

F) Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Bbm⁷ Eb⁷ Bm⁷ E⁷ Bm⁷ E⁷

Em⁷ A⁷ Em⁷ A⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷ Fm⁷ Bb⁷

TRACK # 3

G) Am⁷ D⁷ Am⁷ D⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷ Dm⁷ G⁷

Gm⁷ C⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷

II - V - I's (continued).

And now to the V chord (V7).

We'll start by quickly reviewing one of the most important jazz scales - the Be Bop scale. The color is created by the maj 7th to the flattened 7th. (see eg 1 & 2)

eg 1

eg 2

In some context:

The image shows three musical examples of the Be Bop scale over a C7 chord. Example 1 (eg 1) shows the scale starting on C4: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. Example 2 (eg 2) shows the scale starting on D4: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The 'In some context' example shows the scale starting on C4: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, with a C7 chord symbol above the first measure.

Here is one of the most cliché'd licks around, but also essential "vocab".

TRACK # 4

A) G7 G7 C7 C7

The image shows a musical lick labeled 'A)' over a G7 chord, followed by four measures of a C7 chord. The lick consists of the notes G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The G7 chord is indicated by a G7 symbol above the first measure, and the C7 chord is indicated by C7 symbols above the subsequent four measures. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the lick and a repeat sign at the end of the C7 section.

And here is the same line, but slightly altered and starting on the third.

TRACK # 4

B) G7 G7 C7 C7

The image shows a musical lick labeled 'B)' over a G7 chord, followed by four measures of a C7 chord. The lick consists of the notes B4, C5, D5, Eb5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The G7 chord is indicated by a G7 symbol above the first measure, and the C7 chord is indicated by C7 symbols above the subsequent four measures. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the lick and a repeat sign at the end of the C7 section.

Here's the little motif that we looked at in unit 1 (B), but this time in the context of the Dom7 rather than the IImin.

In some context over a 2 bar duration:

G7 G7 C

The image shows a musical motif over a 2-bar duration. The first bar is over a G7 chord and contains the notes G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4. The second bar is over a C chord and contains the notes F4, E4, D4, C4. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the motif.

So try it out over some changes:

C) TRACK # 4

G7 G7 C7 C7

The image shows a musical lick labeled 'C)' over a G7 chord, followed by four measures of a C7 chord. The lick consists of the notes G4, A4, B4, Bb4, A4, G4. The G7 chord is indicated by a G7 symbol above the first measure, and the C7 chord is indicated by C7 symbols above the subsequent four measures. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the lick and a repeat sign at the end of the C7 section.

II - V - I's (continued).

Putting It Together

So we've looked at a few well used jazz lines/segments of jazz lines over a minor chord and a dominant 7th chord in the context of a II V I pattern. But the duration of these patterns will vary, and so will the way you carry out your lines. Over time you will naturally "Mix n match" lines so they can last the duration of the pattern. You can also vary the duration of the actual notes involved, and a good method for this is the use of syncopation.

But this won't happen straight away. Your lines will sound a bit disjointed for a while, but as long as the content is good, your lines will develop into good ones. (There are plenty of people playing long jazz lines with pretty un-interesting content!).

So the point is; keep practicing these little motifs, and gain a real comfort with your chords through practicing them.

So here we'll look at some patterns over four bars, which is probably the most common setting.

This first one may sound a bit "academic", but is a shape used in many be bop lines.

A) TRACK # 8

Em⁷ A⁷ D Em⁷ A⁷ D

II V I

Dm⁷ G⁷ C Dm⁷ G⁷ C

And here's the licks from unit 1 (B), and unit 2 (B) put together.

B) TRACK # 8

Em⁷ A⁷ D Em⁷ A⁷ D

Dm⁷ G⁷ C Dm⁷ G⁷ C

"The minor II - V"

The "first choice" notes when soloing over these chords are derived from the harmonic minor scale. The tensions that are created on the dominant chord have helped to form lines that are some of the most well used, and most colorful in the genre.

Here's the background:

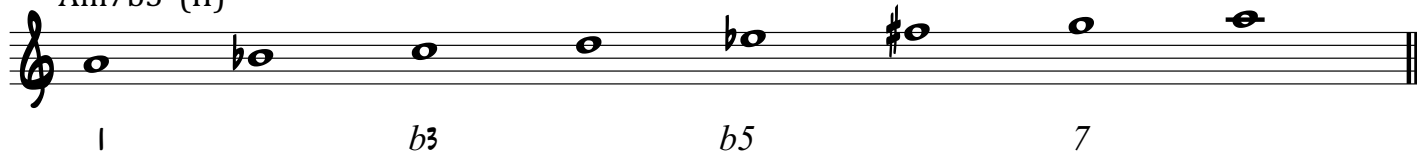
Take a harmonic minor scale of Em.

G harmonic min (I)



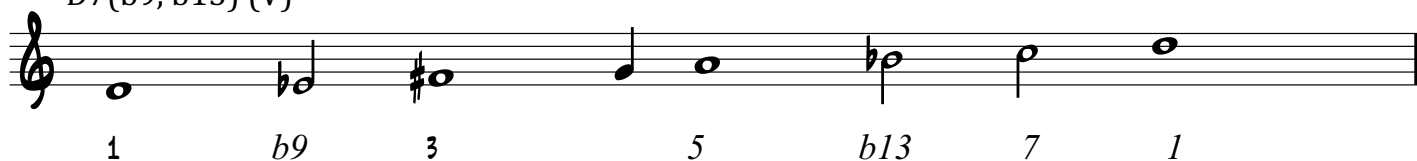
If we write the scale starting on the second degree (the "II" of the progression) we get this.

Am7b5 (II)



If we write the scale starting on the fifth degree we get this:

D7(b9, b13) (V)



*The numbering of notes is a "chord scale" method, highlighting the chord notes, and available tensions. (not a discussion for here, but hopefully displays the tensions that are created.)

So there's a great example of diatonicism at play ie, for a "II V I" going to a minor chord, all of the nice notes are right there in the tonic scale, you just need to play them in a different order!

Well, that's part of it anyway. PTO for some lines!

"Introduction To Dixieland!"

Dixieland soloing generally stays a bit "safer" than be bop, or other more modern styles. But, of course, there is no definite line where one style stops and the other starts. Some players will stay very traditional, others will blend a bit of old and new. That's what makes everyone unique.

Here are a few starting ideas, but bare in mind that this is just an intro to the style!

Arpeggiated patterns are very common on any version of major chord. This little "ditty" will work on a basic major chord (not maj7), or a dom 7 chord.

A) TRACK # 18

Chords: C, A⁷, D⁷, G⁷

As focused on in the beginner book of this series, use of the b3 to 3 goes a long way in Dixie!

B) TRACK # 18

Chords: C, A⁷, D⁷, G⁷

*For more practice on A & B, use **supp H**.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES

A) TRACK # 21

F7 Bb F7 Bb Bb7 Eb Bb7 Eb

A7 D A7 D D7 G D7 G

TRACK # 22

B) C7 F7

Bb7 Eb7

TRACK # 23 (CHEROKEE BRIDGE)

C) Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 C#m7 F#7 Gmaj7

Bbm7 E7 Amaj7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7

TRACK # 24

D) C7 F7

Bb7 Eb7 Ab