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BY PETER DENEFF & BRENT EDSTROM

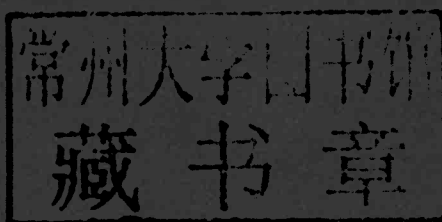
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BY PETER DENEFF & BRENT EDSTROM



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CORPORATION

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In Australia Contact:
Hal Leonard Australia Pty. Ltd.
4 Lentara Court
Cheltenham, Victoria, 3192 Australia
Email: ausadmin@halleonard.com.au

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In Australia Contact:
Hal Leonard Australia Pty. Ltd.
4 Lentara Court
Cheltenham, Victoria, 3192 Australia
Email: ausadmin@halleonard.com.au

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LESSON #1:

ADVENTURES IN RHYTHM - CARRYING OVER THE BAR

Just as we can use harmony to create excitement and tension, we can also use rhythm to generate interesting ideas. The idea of “playing with the time” is commonplace in the percussion world. Many of the rhythmic devices used by percussionists can be applied to the piano as well. One of these concepts is the technique of **repeating a rhythmic phrase over the bar**. This differs from the concept of “phrasing over the bar,” which is the practice of starting a phrase in the middle of a bar and carrying through the bar line. Instead, this has to do with taking a phrase that doesn’t fit evenly into a bar and repeating it over and over, starting on a different beat each time.

One of the most common ways of performing this is by repeating a three-beat phrase over a 4/4 bar. Notice how the phrase starts on beat 1, then 4, then 3, then 2, etc.

EXAMPLE 1

TRACK 1
0:00
CD 1

Musical notation for Example 1, showing a piano accompaniment in 4/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic phrase of eighth notes with triplet markings, starting on beat 1, then beat 4, then beat 3, and then beat 2. The left hand provides a bass line with chords A7, Dm, F7, and Bb7.

Similarly, one can create two- or four-bar phrases when playing in 3/4.

EXAMPLE 2

TRACK 1
0:16
CD 1

Musical notation for Example 2, showing a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time. The right hand features a rhythmic phrase of eighth notes with triplet markings, starting on beat 1, then beat 2, then beat 3, and then beat 1. The left hand provides a bass line with chords Fmaj7, Gm7, Am7, Bbmaj7, C7, and Fmaj7.

Try some odd phrasings.

EXAMPLE 3



(♩ = ♪♭♭♭)

It's also fun to play phrases containing smaller values like eighth notes or 16th notes.

EXAMPLE 4



(♩ = ♪♭♭♭)

When practicing these, try to maintain the 4/4 pulse in your mind while keeping the repeating phrase going. It is very important not to lose count.

LESSON #2:

ADVENTURES IN RHYTHM - TRIPLETS

Triplets can be challenging to perform, but are an essential tool in an improviser's rhythmic toolbox. Triplets, being the most common tuplet, are a typical rhythm found in bebop phrasing.

EXAMPLE 1

TRACK 2 0:00

CD 1

Fmaj7 D7b9 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

Gm7 A7 Dm

To practice interpreting triplets accurately, try playing the following scale exercise with a metronome.

EXAMPLE 2

TRACK 2 0:18

CD 1

You can try changing the note values; for instance, quarter, triplet, 16th, eighth, or any combination. Also, try to play all your major and minor scales in this manner for extra practice.

EXAMPLE 3

TRACK 2 0:26

CD 1



Continue in the same manner, playing triplets (three octaves) and 16th notes (four octaves), as demonstrated on Track 2.

Arpeggiated triads or other motives can be played using triplets and can provide tension and excitement to your solo.

EXAMPLE 4

TRACK 2
0:52

CD 1

Gm7 Am7 Bbmaj7 C7 Dm11

Triplets can also be used to obscure the rhythm and carry over the bar. This can be done by phrasing the triplets in groups of four, for example.

EXAMPLE 5

TRACK 2
1:02

CD 1

Dsus Ebsus Fsus Gsus Absus Bbsus Csus

In a Latin jazz style, alternating left- and right-hand chords can be played with triplets. Triplets must be performed accurately in order to be effective so make sure you always practice with a metronome.

EXAMPLE 6

TRACK 2
1:05

CD 1

Cm G7 Cm

LESSON #3:

ALTERED DOMINANT SCALE

Improvisers are constantly looking for new scales and sounds to play over jazz chord progressions. The more scales one has at their disposal, the more material they have to work with when improvising. Often, the scales are non-diatonic, that is, they are not based on the major scale or any of its modes. Such is the case with the **altered dominant scale**. This scale is usually played over an altered V or V7 chord.

EXAMPLE 1

TRACK 3
0:00

Musical notation for Example 1. The scale is G-B \flat -A-B-A-B-G. The bass line shows the G7(b9) chord structure.

The scale is called "altered" because it contains a $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, $\sharp 11$, and $\flat 13$.

EXAMPLE 2

TRACK 3
0:06

Musical notation for Example 2. The scale is G-B \flat -A-B-A-B-G. The bass line shows the G7(b9) chord structure. Chord alterations are indicated above the notes: $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, $\sharp 11$, and $\flat 13$.

All scale tones do not need to be used and some interesting lines can be created because of this.

EXAMPLE 3

TRACK 3
0:11

Musical notation for Example 3. The scale is G-B \flat -A-B-A-B-G. The bass line shows the G7(b9) chord structure. Chord alterations are indicated above the notes: $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, $\sharp 11$, and $\flat 13$. The progression includes: G7(b9), Cm7, C7(#9), Fm7, F7, Bbm7, Bb7, and Ebmaj7.

Play through the following lines. Pick your favorites and learn in 12 keys. Try to use the altered scale in your own improvisations on your favorite tunes.

EXAMPLE 4



(♩ = ♪³)

G7b13 C7b9 Fmaj7

C7#9 Fmaj7

B7 Em7 A7 Dm7

LESSON #4:

ARPEGGIATING THROUGH THE CHANGES

The ability to navigate through the chord changes of a given tune is one of the most elemental skills a jazz improviser must develop. Even before one is able to create cohesive melodies over the harmonic structure, they must be able to conceptualize the form and chordal scheme. An effective way to approach this is simply to arpeggiate through the changes in time.

First, try to arpeggiate through the following passages using the scale tones 1, 3, 5, 7.

EXAMPLE 1

TRACK 4 0:00 (♩ = ♩³)

CD 1

Am7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

Fmaj7 Bm7b5 E7 Am7

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 A7

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

Next, let's try using the scale tones 3, 5, 7, 9.

EXAMPLE 2

TRACK 4 0:30 (♩ = ♩³)

CD 1

Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

Descending whole-note scale

Bbmaj7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

Now play a combination of the two.

EXAMPLE 3

TRACK 4
0:42
CD 1

(♩ = $\frac{3}{8}$)

Gm7 C7 Fmaj7 Gm7 A7 Bbmaj7 C7 Fmaj7

For an added challenge, we can try 16th notes and eighth-note triplets.

EXAMPLE 4

TRACK 4
0:57
CD 1

Dm7 Gm7 Fmaj7 Em7 F#m7 Gmaj7 A7 Dmaj7

Try arpeggiating through your own favorite jazz tunes.

LESSON #5:

BILL EVANS VOICINGS

Bill Evans (1929–1980) was a great jazz pianist and an innovator in the style. His playing style has been studied and imitated by innumerable pianists over the past 50 years. Although Evans was a prolific composer and improviser, his left-hand comping style has always been of particular interest to jazz pianists. Pianists predating him had played similar voicings, but Evans codified the vocabulary of jazz piano harmony.

The voicings that Bill Evans put into common practice were essentially rootless 7th or 9th chords in first or third inversion.

They can be played in the right hand with the bass note in the left, solo piano style.

They can also be played in the left hand, leaving the right hand free to play melodic lines or colorful chord tones in the higher register.

EXAMPLE 1

TRACK 5
0:00

Cmaj7

CD 1

EXAMPLE 2

TRACK 5
0:09

Dm7

CD 1

EXAMPLE 3

TRACK 5
0:19

Dm11

CD 1

The voicings need not contain all four tones (3, 5, 7, 9). Begin by practicing ii-V-I progressions using only the root, 3rd, and 7th.

Next try adding a 9th and 5th.

EXAMPLE 4

TRACK 5
0:27

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

CD 1

EXAMPLE 5

TRACK 5
0:40

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

CD 1

Lastly, add all four upper tones.

EXAMPLE 6

TRACK 5
0:52

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

CD 1

The voicings can be practiced in all keys by playing ii-V-I progressions in descending whole steps and descending half steps starting in both first inversion and third inversion. These voicings are an essential skill for the jazz pianist. Practice them diligently and thoroughly until they can be played effortlessly and rapidly.

DESCENDING WHOLE STEPS

TRACK 5

1:04

CD 1

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 C#m7 F#7 Bmaj7 Bm7 E7 Amaj7

8vb

Am7 D7 Gmaj7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7 Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7

(8vb)

C#m7 F#7 Bmaj7 Bm7 E7 Amaj7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 Gm7 C7 Fmaj7

(8vb)

DESCENDING HALF STEPS

TRACK 5

1:46

CD 1

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Em7 A7 Dmaj7 Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

8vb

C#m7 F#7 Bmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7 Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Em7 A7 Dmaj7

(8vb)

Ebm7 Ab7 Dbmaj7 Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 C#m7 F#7 Bmaj7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

(8vb)