

Jazz Piano Improvisation Tutorial

Learn in the Groove!

© 2023 Lachlan Court
Piano Productivity Peace

This resource introduces you to 30 different approaches to improvising over a jazz swing 2-5-1 progression in Bb Concert pitch.

For each idea there is an example phrase written out.

It's recommended you focus on one or two ideas per practice session until you have gained 'effortless mastery',

You don't need to rush through, there is a lot of fun to be had with each technique!

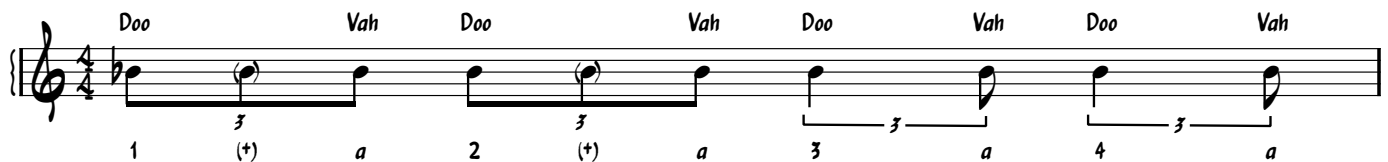
To ensure true mastery adapt techniques to different keys and over repertoire.

This resource follows the improvisation tutorial video found here:

Jazz Swing Improvisation Tutorial (30 Ideas Call and Response with Backing Track)

<https://youtu.be/q3AqShq2lqE>

Swing Groove Subdivision



Musical notation for Swing Groove Subdivision 1. The staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody consists of eighth notes. Above the staff, syllables 'Doo' and 'Vah' are placed over specific notes. Below the staff, numbers 1 through 4 are placed under the first four notes, and 'a' is placed under the eighth notes. There are accents (f) and a plus sign (+) over some notes.

Swing Groove Subdivision

Swing



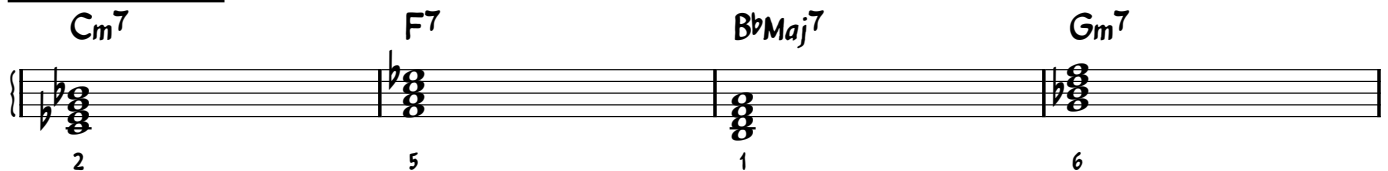
Musical notation for Swing Groove Subdivision 2. The staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody consists of quarter notes. Above the staff, syllables 'Doo' and 'Vah' are placed over specific notes. Below the staff, numbers 1 through 4 are placed under the first four notes, and 'a' is placed under the eighth notes.

The Key Centre



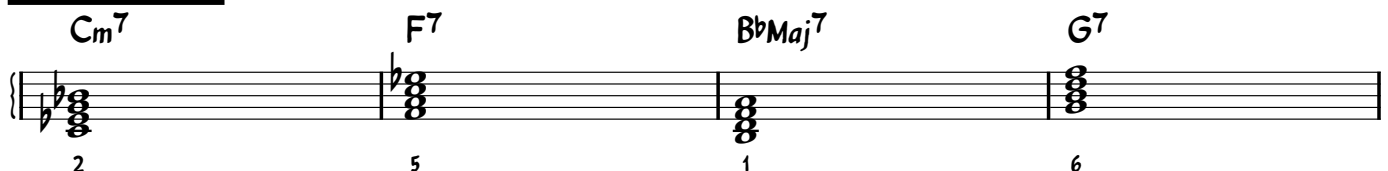
Musical notation for The Key Centre 1. The staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody consists of quarter notes. Below the staff, numbers 1 through 7 are placed under the first seven notes, and '1' is placed under the eighth note.

The Key Centre



Musical notation for The Key Centre 2. The staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody consists of quarter notes. Above the staff, chord symbols Cm7, F7, BbMaj7, and Gm7 are placed over the first four notes. Below the staff, numbers 2, 5, 1, and 6 are placed under the first four notes.

The Key Centre



Musical notation for The Key Centre 3. The staff is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The melody consists of quarter notes. Above the staff, chord symbols Cm7, F7, BbMaj7, and G7 are placed over the first four notes. Below the staff, numbers 2, 5, 1, and 6 are placed under the first four notes.

Shell Voicings

Cm7 F7 BbMaj7 G7

2 5 1 6

1. Major Scale

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

*Examples are sometimes played an octave higher to create a lighter effect

2. Triplets

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Rhythm ideas

3. Semiquavers

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

1 e + a 2 e + a 1 3 + a 4 e + a 1 2 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

Dm6/G '6 on the 5th'

4. Neighbour Note Turns

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

3 and 4 note turns

5. Crotchet triplets

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

6. Major Pentatonic Scale

Pitch Ideas

6. Major Pentatonic Scale

A good scale for creating memorable, accessible hooks

7. Minor Blues Scale

7. Minor Blues Scale

Mixing the minor blues scale & major pentatonic scale

Modes:

- C DORIAN: 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7
- F MIXOLYDIAN: 1 2 3 4 5 6 b7
- Bb IONIAN: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- G MIXOLYDIAN (b6): 1 2 3 4 5 b6 b7

8. Arpeggios

Learning guide tones (chord tones)

8. Arpeggios

Another arpeggio option is to think in Maj6 and Min6 chords based on the 5th chord note - this outlines the 9 in the chord (The Maj6 chord for Cm7 is build off the b3)

8. Arpeggios

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

9. Pivot Arpeggios

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

10. Diminished 7th Arpeggio

Cm7 (F#dim7) F7(b9) BbΔ7 (G#dim7) G7(b9)

11. Linking Guidetones

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

12. Chromatic Approach

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Chromatic approach into guidetones on strong beats

12. Chromatic Approach

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

13. Bebop Scales

Cm⁷
F⁷
B^bΔ⁷
G⁷

C MINOR BEBOP
F DOMINANT BEBOP
B^b MAJOR BEBOP
G DOMINANT(b⁶) BEBOP

13. Bebop Scales

Cm⁷
F⁷
B^bΔ⁷
G⁷

14. Enclosures

Cm⁷
F⁷
B^bΔ⁷
G⁷

15. Whole Tone Scale

F⁷(#11#5)
G⁷(#11#5)

F WHOLETONE SCALE
G WHOLETONE SCALE

15. Whole Tone Scale

Cm⁷
F⁷
B^bΔ⁷
G⁷

F WHOLETONE SCALE
G WHOLETONE SCALE AUGMENTED TRIADS

16. Harmonic Minor (Bebop) Scale

F⁷
G⁷

B^b HARMONIC MINOR SCALE (F to F)
C HARMONIC MINOR SCALE (G to G)

16. Harmonic Minor (Bebop) Scale

B \flat HARMONIC MINOR BEBOP SCALE C HARMONIC MINOR BEBOP SCALE

17. Altered Scale

F ALTERED SCALE G ALTERED SCALE

17. Altered Scale

F ALTERED SCALE G ALTERED SCALE

18. Diminished Scale

F \sharp DIMINISHED SCALE AKA WHOLE-HALF SCALE OCTATONIC SCALE G \sharp DIMINISHED SCALE AKA WHOLE-HALF SCALE OCTATONIC SCALE

18. Diminished Scale

F \sharp DIMINISHED SCALE G \sharp DIMINISHED SCALE

19. Upper-Structure Triads

F7 UPPER STRUCTURES G7 UPPER STRUCTURES

19. Upper-Structure Triads

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

D MAJOR / F7 E MAJOR / G7

20. Playing Outside

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

E7 MIXOLYDIAN

21. Double Stops

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Texture Ideas

22. Harmonic Intervals

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

3rds and 6ths

23. Octaves

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

24. Melodic comping

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Octaves with notes in middle and played at same time as left hand comp voicing

24. Melodic comping

Bb6 Cdim7 (Dbdim7) Bb6 Ebdim7 (Edim7) Bb6 F#dim7 Bb6 Adim7 Bb6

Harmonising scale with alternating Maj6 and Diminished 7th Chords (Barry Harris)

24. Melodic comping

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Dbdim7 Bb6 Bb6 Cdim7 C#dim7 Cdim7 Cm7 Bbdim7 Bb6 Ab13 G13(#9)

25. Call and Response

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

Mindset Ideas

26. Different Starting Points

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

1 2 3 + 1 2 3 4

Experiment with starting and finishing phrases on different subdivisions of the bar

27. Sequences

Cm7 F7 BbΔ7 G7

28. Finger Patterns

Cm7 F7 BbMaj7 G7

FINGERS: 4 5 2 4 3 4 5 2 4 3 4 5 2 4 3

Other Finger Combinations:
3 4 2 1
4 3 1 2
2 1 4 2 3

29. Start Every Bar on the 3rd of Chord

Musical notation for exercise 29. The staff shows a sequence of four measures with chords Cm7, F7, BbΔ7, and G7. The melody starts on the 3rd of each chord. A triplet of eighth notes is marked in the second measure.

30. Quote Melodies

Musical notation for exercise 30. The staff shows a sequence of four measures, each containing a slash (/) to indicate a quote melody. Above the staff are the chords Cm7, F7, BbΔ7, and G7. To the right of the staff are the titles of the songs: I've got rhythm, Straight no chaser, Oleo, and Perdido.

If you've found value in this free resource, please consider gifting a one-off donation via paypal or YouTube Super Thanks if you are in the position to do so. Links are on the website - any amount is appreciated!

Otherwise liking, sharing, commenting and subscribing on YouTube are all great free ways to contribute.

Many thanks for your support and I hope you find these resources useful :)

Lachlan