

Recipe – from Wycliffe Gordon

## **Singing Approach to Ear Training for Jazz Improvisation**

### **Ingredients:**

One Song: “**All The Things You Are**”

Primary Recording Device

Secondary Recording Device (may be substituted by using a four track recorder, Zoom, etc.)

Metronome w/Batteries

Chromatic Playing Instrument

Piano (pitch pipe optional)

### **Extra Categories and Song Titles**

Blues (ex. Blue Monk, Sonnymoon for Two)

Ballad (I Can't Get Started, For All We Know)

32-bar song form (How High The Moon, Donna Lee)

### **Instructions:**

1. Set the metronome at quarter note equals 60-80 beats/minutes and leave for entire session.
2. Activate your recording device.
3. Play the melody to “All the Things You Are.” Check to make sure all notes are proper and in tune. Shut off device and rewind. Listen to the recording several times while following the chart. Then attempt to sing the melody from memory. Repeat several times or as needed to complete memorization process.
4. Play the tonic of the chords (also called the root), giving each chord the value suggested by the changes (whole and half notes mostly). Repeat steps above. Listen to recording a few times while reading chart, then attempt to sing along with recording, then without. Repeat as needed to memorize.
5. Play the chord changes on the piano and record for three choruses. Repeat above steps by listening to the recording a few times to “internalize” the sound of the changes. {This where the development of the hearing comes in}. Listen to the recording of the three choruses at least three times. Begin to sing the melody along with the recording of the harmony playing. Repeat three times, then sing the roots of the chords along with the recording three times also.
6. At the piano, play quarter notes of broken chords for each measure spelled out from the tonic to the 7<sup>th</sup> of each chord. This segment should be done in 8 measures at a time. (i.e., Fmin7 =F-Ab-C-Eb) Ex. Section 1: F-Ab-C-Eb/Bb-Db-F-Ab/Eb-G-Bb-Db/Ab-C-Eb-G/Db-F-Ab-C/G-B-D-F/C-E-G-B/ C-E-G-B. Play and record the 8 bars in succession four times. Two times with out sustain pedal and two times with to hear how chords are constructed. After recording, listen to

- this three times then attempt to sing the chord pitches along with recording. Record your voice then listen to the recording of it, checking for accuracy in pitch and intonation. This will really help with hearing the foundation of the chord changes, creating a true sense and understanding of the “sound” from which the improvisation will take place.
7. You are now set to “hear” and “play” through the changes. Set your metronome at a tempo close to the suggested one for the composition (quarter note equals 126-168-ish). Record the chord progression of “All The Things You Are” in its entirety at the chosen tempo and play through for three choruses. Rewind device and press play. Sing the melody through with the recording for the first chorus. On choruses two and three follow your “ear” and sing what you naturally “hear” over the changes, preferably in two bar phrases to begin with. After doing this a few times with the recording, employ your secondary recording device and play the first while singing along and recording. Try for a couple choruses and record each. Wait thirty minutes then sit and listen to recording for thirty minutes. Try to retain what you heard and maybe notate what you sang. This is what and how you naturally hear.
  8. You are now set with a method for developing improvisatory ideas over familiar songs and have a technique from which to learn new tunes.
  9. To further develop this ear training, continue to utilize this concept on other compositions and categories of music (ballad, blues, and 32 bar songs).
  10. To further develop your ability to improvise, begin practicing songs that offer more of a challenge melodically and harmonically (ex. Donna Lee, Ornithology, Blues for Alice) and play/sing through everything utilizing the aforementioned steps [1 through 7]. Where it is applicable, learn the words to songs (especially ballads).
  11. Sing everything!!!! Everything!!!! Everything!!!! It is the voice that gives way to the development of ones “voice” on any instrument.
  12. Repeat steps one through eleven as needed!!!!.