How to Incorporate Bebop into Your Improvisation

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Discussion Topics

• Bebop Characteristics & Style
• Scales & Arpeggios
• Exercises & Patterns
• Articulations & Accents
• Listening
Bebop Characteristics & Style

• Developed in the early to mid 1940’s
• Medium to fast tempos
• Rapid chord progressions / changes
• Instrumental “virtuosity”
• Simple to complex harmony - altered chords / substitutions
• Dominant syncopation of rhythms
• New melodies over existing chord changes - Contrafacts
Scales & Arpeggios

- Scales and arpeggios are the building blocks for harmony.
- Use of the half-step interval and rapid arpeggiation are characteristic of bebop playing.
- Because bebop is often played at a fast tempo with rapidly changing chords, it’s crucial to practice your scales and arpeggios in ALL KEYS!
Scales & Arpeggios

- Scales you should be familiar with:
  - Major Scale - Pentatonic: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
  - Minor Scales - Pentatonic: 1, b3, 4, 5, b7; Natural Minor, Dorian Minor, Harmonic Minor, Melodic Minor
  - Dominant Scales - Mixolydian Mode, Bebop Scales, 5th Mode of Harmonic Minor (V7b9), Altered Dominant / Diminished Whole Tone (V7alt, b9#9b13), Dominant Diminished / Diminished starting with a half step (V7b9#9 with #11, 13)
  - Half-diminished scale - min7b5 (7th mode of major scale)
  - Diminished Scale - Starting with a whole step (WHWHWHWHH)
Scales & Arpeggios

- Chords and Arpeggios to work in all keys:
  - Major triad, Maj6/9, Maj7, Maj9, Maj9#11
  - Minor triad, m6/9, m7, m9, m11, minMaj7
  - Dominant 7ths
    - Natural extensions - 9th, 13th (#11 for Lydian sound)
    - Altered extension variations - b9, b9#9, b9#9#5/b13, b9#9#11 w/ 13
  - Half-Diminished - min7b5 (circle slash)
  - Diminished - dim triad, dim7 (° symbol)
  - *Augmented - aug triad, aug maj 7, dom7#5 - *These are more modern sounds but can also be used
How do these scales and arpeggios work in bebop?

• It’s all about the chord tones!
• Playing chord tones on strong beats
• Half-step resolution of notes and lines
• Syncopation of chord tones and non-chord tones
• Using chord tones and arpeggios in a variety of ways: Passing tones, non-chord tones, chromaticism, enclosures, octave displacement
Exercises and Patterns

• There are COUNTLESS exercises and patterns to practice! Search them out or ask your private teacher!

• Having a good foundational knowledge of music theory will assist you in coming up with your own patterns and exercises.

• LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN!
ii-V-I Progression

• One of the most common progressions in the bebop style of music.

• In C: Dm7 - G7 - CMaj7

• There are variations on this progression, but this is a good starting point
ii-V-I Progression

• Ways to practice the ii-V-I progression
  • Arpeggiate the chords in 8th notes for short ii-V’s
    • | D F A C - G B D F | C E G B - % |
    • *Practice this basic arpeggiation in all keys*
ii-V-I Progression

- Ways to practice the ii-V-I progression
  - The “ii” and the “V” chord have a special relationship. We can think of them as a unit.
  - IMPORTANT! - Practice always playing chord tones on down beats (number beats) to really solidify these sounds over these chords in your head.
ii-V-I Progression

• Simple patterns over the ii-V7-I progression (8th notes)

• All examples will be in the key of C: Dm7 - G7 - C

• #1 - Start from the root of the “ii” chord
  • | DFAC - BAGF | E….. |

• #2 - Start from the 3rd of the “ii” chord
  • | FACE - DCBA | G….. |
ii-V-I Progression

- Simple patterns over the ii-V7-I progression (8th notes)
- All examples will be in the key of C: Dm7 - G7 - C
  - #3a - Start from the 5th of the “ii” chord (descending)
    - | AFDC - BAGF | E….. |
  - #3b - Change of direction on the V7
    - | AFDC - BDFA | G…… |
ii-V-I Progression

*We can alter chord tones to account for any changes in harmony: min7b5, altered dominant chords, minor “i” chords.

Minor “ii/V” progression: Dm7b5 - G7b9 - Cm7

#1 - DFAbC - BAbGF | Eb….. |
#2 - FAbCEb - DCBAb | G….. |
#3a - AbFDC - BAbGF | Eb….. |
#3b - AbFDC - BDFAb | G….. |
ii-V-I Progression

- These are just starter patterns that will instantly help your improvisations sound more like bebop

- Here are a few scalar patterns:
  - 1, 2, 3, 5 - 1, 2, 3, 5 - 1, 2, 3, 5 on each chord
    - DEFA - GABD - CDEG
    - Descending scale in the key from the root, 3rd, 5th, or 7th of the “ii” chord
      - DCBA - GFED - C
      - FEDC - BAGF - E
      - AGFE - DCBA - G
      - CBAG - FEDC - B
Bebop Scale (Dom7)

• The “Bebop” Scale is a descending scale built from the Dominant 7th Scale (Mixolydian)

• Adds a half-step between the root and the 7th of the dominant scale

• G7 Bebop Scale - G, Gb, F, E, D, C, B, A, G

• We can play this entire scale over the “ii-V” unit in the progression or over a full measure of the “V7” chord.
Bebop Scale (Dom7)

- This scale can be played in its entirety starting from the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th of the V7 chord.
- Using the G7 scale
  - From the root - G, Gb, F, E, D, C, B, A, G
  - From the 3rd - B, A, G, Gb, F, E, D, C, B
  - From the 5th - D, C, B, A, G, Gb, F, E, D
  - From the 7th - F, E, D, C, B, A, G, Gb, F
Bebop Scale (Dom7)

• Variation #1 - No Half-Steps if you start from the 2nd, 4th, or 6th of the V7 chord
  • From the 2nd - A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G
  • From the 4th - C, B, A, G, F, E, D, C, B
  • From the 6th - E, D, C, B, A, G, F, E, D
Bebop Scale (Dom7)

• Variation #1a - Add 2 half-steps between the 2nd and the root, and the root and the 7th
  • From the 2nd - A, Ab, G, Gb, F, E, D, C, B
  • From the 4th - C, B, A, Ab, G, Gb, F, E, D
  • From the 6th - E, D, C, B, A, Ab, G, Gb, F*
    • *This does not end on a chord tone for the major scale. (Appoggiatura)
Bebop Scale (Dom7)

- Variation #2 - Add 3 half-steps: between the 3rd and the 2nd, 2nd and root, and root and 7th when starting on the 3rd, 5th, or 7th of the V7 chord

- From the 3rd - B, Bb, A, Ab, G, Gb, F, E, D
- From the 5th - D, C, B, Bb, A, Ab, G, Gb, F*
- From the 7th - F, E, D, C, B, Bb, A, Ab, G

*This does not end on a chord tone for the major scale. (Appoggiatura)
Bebop Scale (Major)

- The Bebop scale can be applied to the major 7, major 6, or maj 9 chords.

- C major bebop descending - add a half-step between the 6th and the 5th of the scale.
  - C, B, A, Ab, G, F, E, D, C

- We can do this starting from the 3rd and the 5th of the scales as well.
  - From the 3rd - E, D, C, B, A, Ab, G, F, E
  - From the 5th - G, F, E, D, C, B, A, Ab, G
Bebop Scale (Major)

For the major scale, we can add half-steps in between tones as long as we continue to keep chord tones on strong beats.

- Var. #1 - From the root
  - C, B, A, Ab, G, F, E, Eb, D
- Var. #2 - From the 3rd
  - E, Eb, D, Db, C, B, A, Ab, G
- Var. #3 - From the 5th
  - G, F, E, Eb, D, Db, C, B, A
Enclosures

- Enclosures are very common in bebop
  - Playing notes above and below the “goal” note to delay the resolution
  - Example: C major
    - Simple: D, B, C* (used leading to a Cmaj7)
    - Var: Db, B, C*
    - Adding on: E, D, Db, B, C*; or Eb, D, Db, B, C
  - You can work these out on your own, or you can find these by transcribing bebop players.
Articulations & Accents

- Bebop articulations are characterized by the syncopation of accents.
- At fast tempos and for fast lines, 8th notes are typically slurred, or lightly articulated.
- The “jazz articulation” may also be used: Tongue/slur - tongue/accent upbeats and slur to the downbeats.
- Saxophonists - The “muffle” tongue is also a jazz technique used to “muffle” one note or a group of notes to give emphasis to the notes that occur after it/them. (Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane)
Articulations & Accents

• Syncopation in horn improvisations also come from listening to how the drummer is accenting and playing “hits”

• Listen to the rhythm section in bebop groups and how they accent to see/hear how those accents are picked up by the horn players and vice versa.

• IMPORTANT!!!! Transcribe not only lines and melodies, but articulations, inflections, accents, and sound quality. This is the ONLY WAY that you can authentically learn and play the bebop style!!!
Bebop Musicians

- Alto Saxophone - Charlie Parker, Cannonball Adderley, Sonny Stitt, Lee Konitz, Paul Desmond (cool jazz), Phill Woods, Sonny Criss, Charles McPherson, Lou Donaldson, Frank Morgan

- Tenor Saxophone - Dexter Gordon, Don Byas, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, Lester Young/Coleman Hawkins (early), Sonny Stitt, Lucky Thompson, Stan Getz, Hank Mobley, Charlie Rouse, Benny Golson, Johnny Griffin, Frank Foster, Gene Ammons

- Baritone Saxophone - Gerry Mulligan, Pepper Adams, Leo Parker, Serge Chaloff, Cecil Payne, Jerome Richardson, Bill Perkins, Sahib Shihab
Bebop Musicians

• Trumpet - Clifford Brown, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Lee Morgan, Kenny Dorham, Harry “Sweets” Eddison, Howard McGhee, Fats Navarro, Clark Terry, Freddie Hubbard, Nat Adderley, Jon Faddis, Art Farmer, Ira Sullivan

• Trombone - J.J. Johnson, Bill Watrous, Kai Winding, Frank Rosolino, Curtis Fuller, Slide Hampton, Conrad Herwig, Bob Brookmeyer, Bob Curnow, Delfeayo Marsalis
Bebop Musicians

• Piano - Bud Powell, Barry Harris, Thelonius Monk, Oscar Peterson, George Shearing, Lennie Tristano, Tommy Flanagan, Marian McPartland, Al Haig, Horace Silver, Hank Jones, Duke Jordan, Wynton Kelly

• Guitar - Charlie Christian, Herb Ellis, Kenny Burrell, Barney Kessel, Joe Pass, Jimmy Raney
Bebop Musicians

- Bass - Ray Brown, Charles Mingus, Oscar Pettiford, Percy Heath, Scott LaFaro, Paul Chambers, Tommy Potter, Niels-Hennig Ørsted Pederson

Summary

• Know the bebop style and characteristics

• Understanding of basic to intermediate harmony
  • Scales, Chords, Arpeggios, Functional Harmony (ii-V7-I)

• Learn some digital patterns and exercises that “fit” the chords; i.e. playing chord tones on downbeats

• Learn jazz articulations through listening
  • Syncopation of accents, listen to rhythm section
  • Transcribe not just the notes! Articulations, inflections, accents, sound.

• LISTEN!!! LISTEN!!! LISTEN!!!