

BEGINNING JAZZ IMPROVISATION

One Semester Course

Jason Squinobal

Instructor

APPROXIMATELY 24 LECTURES MEETING TWICE A WEEK

Music Building, Room _____

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Course Description

Jazz Improvisation is an art form that requires many years—some say a lifetime—of serious dedication. This course will provide students with the necessary tools to learn how to improvise. There will be equal emphasis on the development of both melodic and rhythmic improvisation techniques in conjunction with understanding the construction of jazz harmony. There will also be strong emphasis placed on developing aural skills through ear training and transcription exercises.

Prerequisite: students should be proficient on their instruments and have a working knowledge of all twelve major scales

Objectives:

- 1) To develop basic skills and concepts related to improvising in the jazz idiom
- 2) To acquire a basic repertoire of jazz tunes including modal tunes, blues, standards and bebop tunes.
- 3) To learn how to listen effectively to recorded jazz performances and to develop transcription skills

TEXTBOOK: There is no required text for this class; however, students are encouraged to read *Thinking In Jazz: The Infinite Art Of Jazz Improvisation* by Paul F. Berliner

Grading: The course grade will be a composite of class participation (25%), mid-term playing exam (25%), final playing exam (25%) and solo transcription project (25%).

LECTURE #1: Introduction and Orientation

Harmony: Introduction to Modes Part I

Ear Training: Call and response

Assignment: Learn the Melodies to Impressions, Little Sunflower, Au Privave and Billie's bounce?

LECTURE #2: Modal Improvisation #1

Review: Song Melodies

Harmony: Modes Part II/ The One chord

Song Form: AABA (Impressions)

Ear Training: Call and response

Assignment: 1235, 5321, 1325 on all tunes /Jazz Syncopation #1

LECTURE #3: Modal Improvisation #2

Review: 1235, 5321, 1325 on all tunes/Jazz Syncopation #1

Harmony: The Dominant chord: V7

Song Form: ABAB (Little Sunflower)

Transcription: Rhythmic Dictation

Assignment: Dorian scales/Jazz Syncopation #2

LECTURE #4: Modal Improvisation #3

Review: Dorian scales/Jazz Syncopation #2

Harmony: V7-I

Transcription: Rhythms of Miles Davis "So What" Solo-First 8 bars

Assignment: Mixolydian Scales /Jazz Syncopation #3

LECTURE #5: Modal Improvisation #4

Review: Mixolydian Scales/Jazz Syncopation #3

Harmony: ii-V7-I chord Progressions

Transcription: Rhythms of Miles Davis "So What" Solo-Second 8 bars

Assignment: Bebop scales/Jazz Syncopation #4

LECTURE #6: Blues #1 Bb Blues V-IV-I

Review: Bebop scales/Jazz Syncopation #4

Harmony: ninth chords

Song Form: Blues V IV I

Transcription: Rhythms of Miles Davis "So What" Solo-Bridge

Assignment: Out line chord on all tunes/ finish rhythms of Davis solo

LECTURE #7: Blues #2 F Blues V-IV-I

Review: Out line chord on all tunes/ Rhythms of Davis solo

Harmony: Guide Tones- iii-VI-ii-V-I

Song Form: Continue Blues V IV I

Ear Training: Call and Response- Soloist to Rhythm Section

Assignment: Identify Guide Tones on both Blues forms/ Add your own Melody to Miles

Davis' "So What" rhythms- first chorus

LECTURE #8: Blues #3 Bb&F Blues ii V I

Review: Guide Tones/ Davis solo

Harmony: Contiguous ii-Vs

Song Form: Blues ii-V-I

Ear Training: Call and Response- Rhythm Section instrument to Soloist

Assignment: Constant stream of eighth notes Two Bar phrase rest two bars/ Transcribe the melody to Miles Davis' "So What" solo First 16 bars

LECTURE #9: Blues #4 Bb&F Blues iii VI ii V I

Review: Two bar eighth note phrases/ Davis solo

Harmony: Minor ii-V7-i

Song Form: Continue Blues ii-V-I

Ear Training: Creating a dialog with the rhythm section

Assignment: Rhythmic syncopation Two Bar phrases-rest two bars/ Transcribe the melody to Miles Davis' "So What" solo Bridge and last eight bars

LECTURE #10: Bebop Improvisation #1

Review: Two bar syncopated phrases/ Davis solo

Harmony: Continue Minor ii-V-I

Introduction of Bebop Improvisation

Ear Training: Improvising by ear

Assignment: Bebop Vocabulary- lines 1, 2, 3

LECTURE #11: Bebop Improvisation #2

Review: Bebop Vocabulary- lines 1, 2, 3

Harmony: Structure of Bebop Phrasing

Ear Training: Improvising by ear

Assignment: continue Bebop Vocabulary-lines 1, 2, 3

LECTURE #12: Bebop Improvisation #3

Review: Bebop Vocabulary- lines 1, 2, 3

Review for Midterm

Assignment: Prepare for midterm

LECTURE #13: Midterm

MID-TERM EXAM

Assignment: Transcription—Transcribe and perform from memory three choruses of an improvised solo of your choice to be performed at the Final Exam

LECTURE #14: Standards Tunes #1

Review: Bebop Vocabulary, line 1, 2, 3

Solo Analysis: Identify key, song form, number of choruses and climax

Assignment: Autumn Leave, All the things you are, Confirmation, Anthropology:
Melody and Changes

LECTURE #15: Standards Tunes # 2

Review: Melody and Harmony of each new tune
Harmony: Approach Note Systems
Ear Training: Trading fours with the drummer
Assignment: Bebop Vocabulary lines 4,5,6,7

LECTURE #16: Standards Tunes # 3

Review: Bebop Vocabulary lines 4,5,6,7
Harmony: Constructing complete bebop phrases part I
Ear Training: Trading fours with other solo instruments
Assignment: Approach notes for root of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...

LECTURE #17: Standards Tunes # 4

Review: Approach notes for root of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...
Harmony: Constructing complete bebop phrases part II
Ear Training: Call and Response- Soloist to Rhythm Section
Assignment: Approach notes for third of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...

LECTURE #18: Standards Tunes # 5

Review: Approach notes for third of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...
Rhythmic Development: adding triplets to eighth note lines
Ear Training: Improvising by ear—stump the soloist
Assignment: Approach notes for fifth of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...

LECTURE #19: Rhythm Changes #1

Review: Approach notes for third of chords Autumn Leaves, All The Things...
Harmony: Tritone Substitutions
Ear Training: Improvising by ear—stump the soloist
Assignment: Bebop Vocabulary on Anthropology

LECTURE #20: Rhythm Changes # 2

Review: Bebop Vocabulary on Anthropology
Rhythmic Development: hemiola part I
Song Form:
Ear Training: Free Group Improvisation
Assignment: Five Eighth Note thematic development part I

LECTURE #21: Confirmation #1

Review: Five Eighth Note thematic development part I
Harmony: Tritone Substitutions
Ear Training: Free Group Improvisation
Assignment: Bebop Vocabulary on Confirmation

LECTURE #22: Confirmation #2

Review: Bebop Vocabulary on Confirmation

Rhythmic Development: hemiola part II

Ear Training: Free Group Improvisation

Assignment: Five Eighth Note thematic development part II

LECTURE #23: Confirmation #3

Review: Five Eighth Note thematic development part II

Review for Final

Assignment: Prepare for final

LECTURE #24: Review For Final

FINAL EXAM