COMBINING THE TONES INTO MELODIES

The improvisation is composition "on the spot". Although not as strict or thoughtout as a written composition, it should still follow the rules of development that a composed piece would. It has "motives" – small musical ideas that develop into "phrases", which develops into the gesture of the whole solo.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS NOT <u>WHAT</u> NOTES YOU ARE USING, BUT <u>HOW</u> YOU USE THEM – how do they develop in motives, phrases and ultimately the whole solo

THE MOTIVE

<u>Melodic</u> contour of a motive

- Arch (first up then down)
 - \circ Symmetrical
 - Asymmetrical
- Inverted Arch (first down then up)
 - Symmetrical
 - Asymmetrical
- Ascending (going up)
- Descending (going down)
- Stationary

Metric contour of a motive

Some theoreticians⁵ classify motives by their relationship with the meter, around the DOWNBEAT (crusis) of a measure. The strong (or relatively strong) beat is always present. What is before that is called "anacrusis" (UPBEAT, pick-up), what is after is "metacrusis" (feminine ending). There are three possible combinations, around the downbeat, represented here by the bar line:

Anacrusis \rightarrow | Crusis | Crusis \rightarrow Metacrusis Anacrusis \rightarrow | Crusis \rightarrow Metacrusis

Try different combinations of Melodic and Metric contour motives.

THE PHRASE

Development of motives into phrases

- Repetition
- Sequence
- Augmentation / Diminution
 - of INTERVALS using bigger/smaller intervals
 - of TIME using larger/smaller note values
 - of MOTIVE itself adding/subtracting notes

⁵ Hugo Riemann (1849-1919), German musicologist

- Inversion (upside down), Retrograde (backwards), Retrograde-Inversion
- Ornamental variation similar to Paraphrase, at the motive level
- Hemiola conflict of time signature's metric accents with the motive's accents

PATTERNS (or "licks) = a motive or phrase that fits a certain chord, or a chord progression. Patterns are usually constructed on popular chord progressions like II-V-I, and should be practiced in all the keys. They can be than used in the improvisation process as "fillers" between one (original) musical idea and another.

Examples of simple patterns that work on any chord:

Ascending	Descending
1235	5431
3457	7653
56723	32175

ELASTIC PHRASES – original tune's phrases vs. improvisation phrases

Most of the Jazz tunes (Standards) follow the classical composition in generating a PERIOD composed by 2 X 4-bar phrases, being in the relationship of ANTECEDENT and CONSEQUENT (Question and Answer). When improvising, the phrases become elastic and fluid, some shorter, some longer, contradicting the original tune's phrases, which are still hinted by the underlying harmonic changes.



Improvisation exercises by pre-designed contour

THE CONTOUR OF THE SOLO

Just like the melodic contour of the motive, the whole improvisation can be shaped in one of 5 forms. Most common is the asymmetrical arch form, where the culmination occurs close to the end. Another common shape is ascending.

It is common for a soloist to end the improvisation one note (the downbeat) in the next soloist's chorus