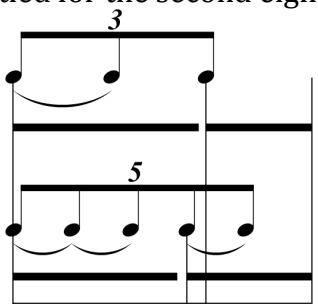
PERFORMANCE

GENERALITIES

THE SWING

In a nut shell, Swing is dividing the beat in 2 uneven parts (in a long-short pattern), and moving the accents from the downbeats (as in classical music) to the upbeats. Thus, one should play and improvise ON EIGHT NOTHES as much as possible

The closest representation to dividing the beat in two uneven parts, would be a TRIPLET, where the first 2 notes are tied together. In reality, the degree of swing varies to almost even notes in very fast tempi. A more accurate representation would be that of a QUINTUPLET, where the first 3 notes are tied to create the first eight note, and the other 2 are tied for the second eight note



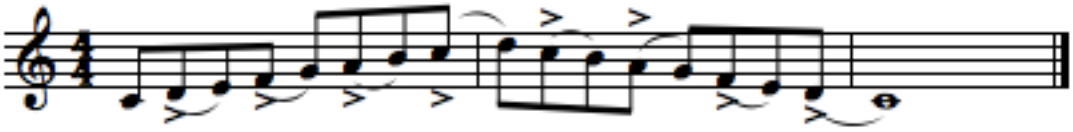
Notation is therefore arbitrary, the term "Swing" in the beginning of the piece is sufficient. Then the swinging eight notes can be written either as:

- triplets (not recommended, hard to read)
- dotted eight + sixteenth (better, but still hard to read)
- straight eight notes (best choice)

THE ACCENTS

Unlike the classical music, the upbeats (the "and"s of the beats) get the accent, especially if it is a syncopation. Although, as a soloist, one can take liberties with the rhythm, it is recommended to keep the beat "with the metronome" in the beginning.

> *Practice swinging scales and accent the upbeats. Go up to the 9th and back, to have a full 2-bars pattern. Use the articulation below:*



ACCOMPANYING IN A GROUP

General remarks:

- don't need to play with both hands all the time…
- … but you should always play chords in the zone around and below middle C
- you don't need to play ALL the changes
- may alternate block / broken chords
- keep it clean and simple

Normally, in the sheet music you might have a chord per measure, or 2 chords in a measure (divided equally). Playing Whole and half notes only is boring.

- rhythmic variations, move the chords around the down-beats
- "pushes" = move the chords an 8th to the left, and accent it, since now it is a syncopation.
- The electric piano, having longer decay in sound, might play more on the downbeats and hold the chords longer

ACCOMPANYING BEHIND THE TUNE

- follow the tune's dynamic accents
- Fills:
    - Rhythmic fills
    - Melodic fills
- Solo behind the tune (keep it for special occasions only…☺)

ACCOMPANYING BEHIND THE SOLO

- try to foresee the soloist dynamic accents and follow them
- Fills: rhythmic fills ok, NO melodic fills

DOUBLE TIME

Sometimes, when improvising in medium/med-slow tempo, the soloist might double the time: in stead of swinging 8ths he is now playing swinging 16ths, for a longer or shorter period of time

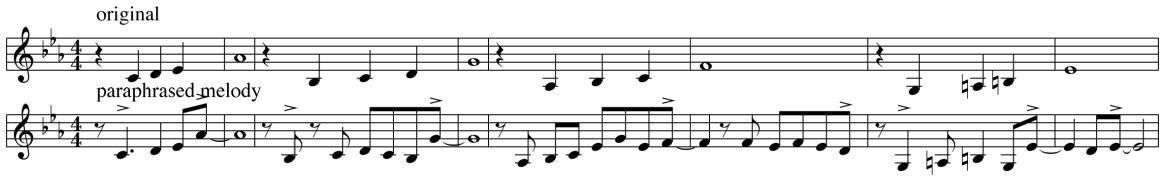
- accompany him in double time (if he started it)
- the whole band may switch to double time, either spontaneously, or as previously agreed upon
- ATTN: the timing of the changes will stay the same

For melodic instruments (reeds, brass), "accompaniment" might mean to find a simple line going stepwise up or down, in the harmony, behind the tune. YOU might want to try that too…

PLAYING THE TUNE

- **as written:** since the goal is to "swing", a melody full of 8th notes and syncopations will not require any modifications. This applies to medium to fast tempo tunes, especially be-bop, cool, etc.

- **Melodic Paraphrase:** (similar to ornamental variation of the classical music), uses the pre-existing melody as the basis. The variations may come in rhythm or melodic contour (removing notes as well as adding them), but whatever the change, the original melody should still be recognizable. Melodic paraphrase is often used when playing the tune, to make the statement personal.



Open/Mixed positions voicings

Spread the chord notes and distribute them to both hands, to obtain open positions.

LH: Roots and Fifths, RH: Thirds and Sevenths

Especially good to use when playing the tune; place the tune note on top, as a 3rd note in the right hand. If playing by your own, LH can play down in the great octave register.

- If accompanying, LH will leap to always play the chord in the root position, while RH will go to the closest 3rd and 7th.

LH: Roots and 7ths, or Roots and 3rds

Good for soloing, where the root and one of the 2 important elements of the chord is present

LEFT HAND

- Alternate playing 1-7 ←→ 1-3 following the same rules as with 2nd inv.:
    - If roots of the chord are a 4th apart – SWITCH
    - If they are a 2nd apart – KEEP
    - If they are a 3rd apart – you choose

RIHGHT HAND

- plays the missing chord elements: 3rd or 7th and the 5th.
- improvises
- fills

LH: 3rds and 7ths, or 7ths and 3rds

Very good for soloing, where the bass takes care of the root

LEFT HAND

- Alternate playing 3-7 ←→ 7-3 following the same rules:
    - If roots of the chord are a 4th apart – SWITCH
    - If they are a 2nd apart – KEEP
    - If they are a 3rd apart – you choose

RIGHT HAND

- plays the missing Roots and 5ths, inverting if necessary
- improvises
- fills

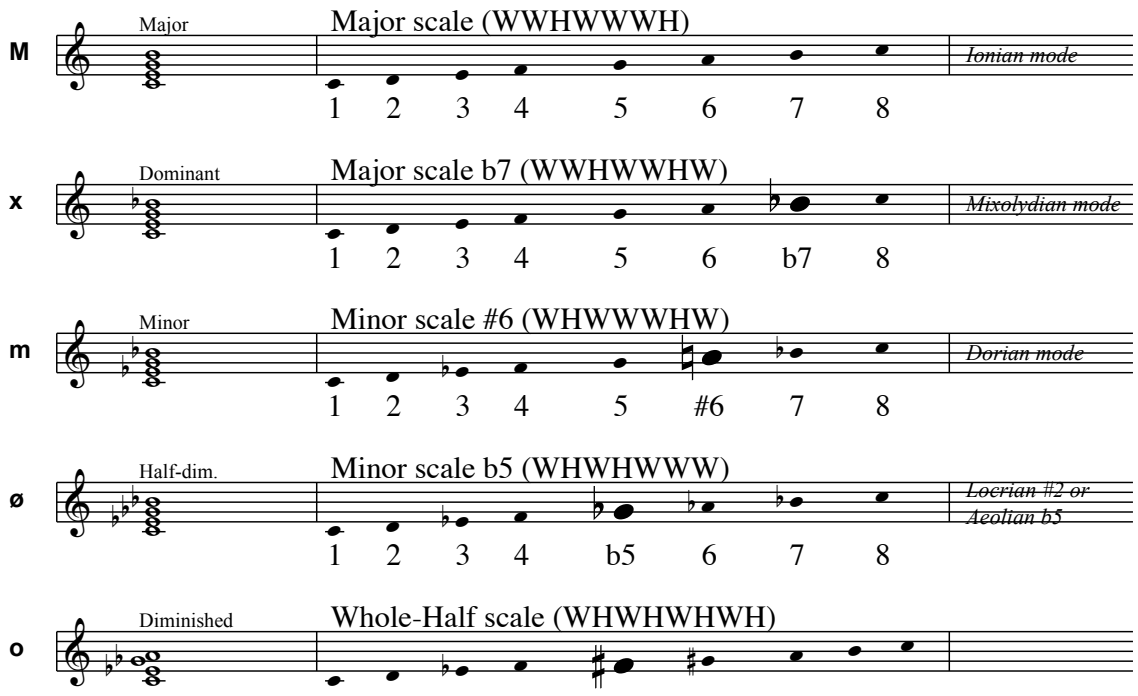
IMPROVISING

<u>THE TONES POOL</u> - SCALES

Associating Scales with Chords, gives the opportunity to safely use other notes than chord notes in improvisation.

The idea behind it, is based on filling in the missing notes between the chord notes, to create a scale. Some of these scales resemble the old middle ages church modes, and might be called by that name. (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, Locrian)

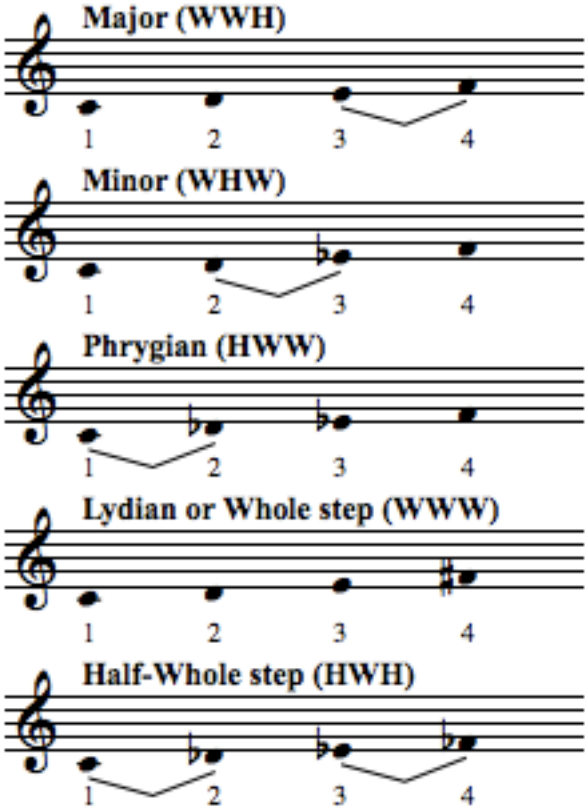
Several scales can be constructed for each type of chord, some chromatic tones can be incorporated too (blue notes), but, to start with, we are going to strictly use the scales below:



If the chord contains a modified note, (#5, b5), then the scale can be deducted by choosing the best sounding of the Non-Chords tones. Ex: for a Dominant #5 or b5 chord, the whole tone scale can be played.

TETRACHORDS

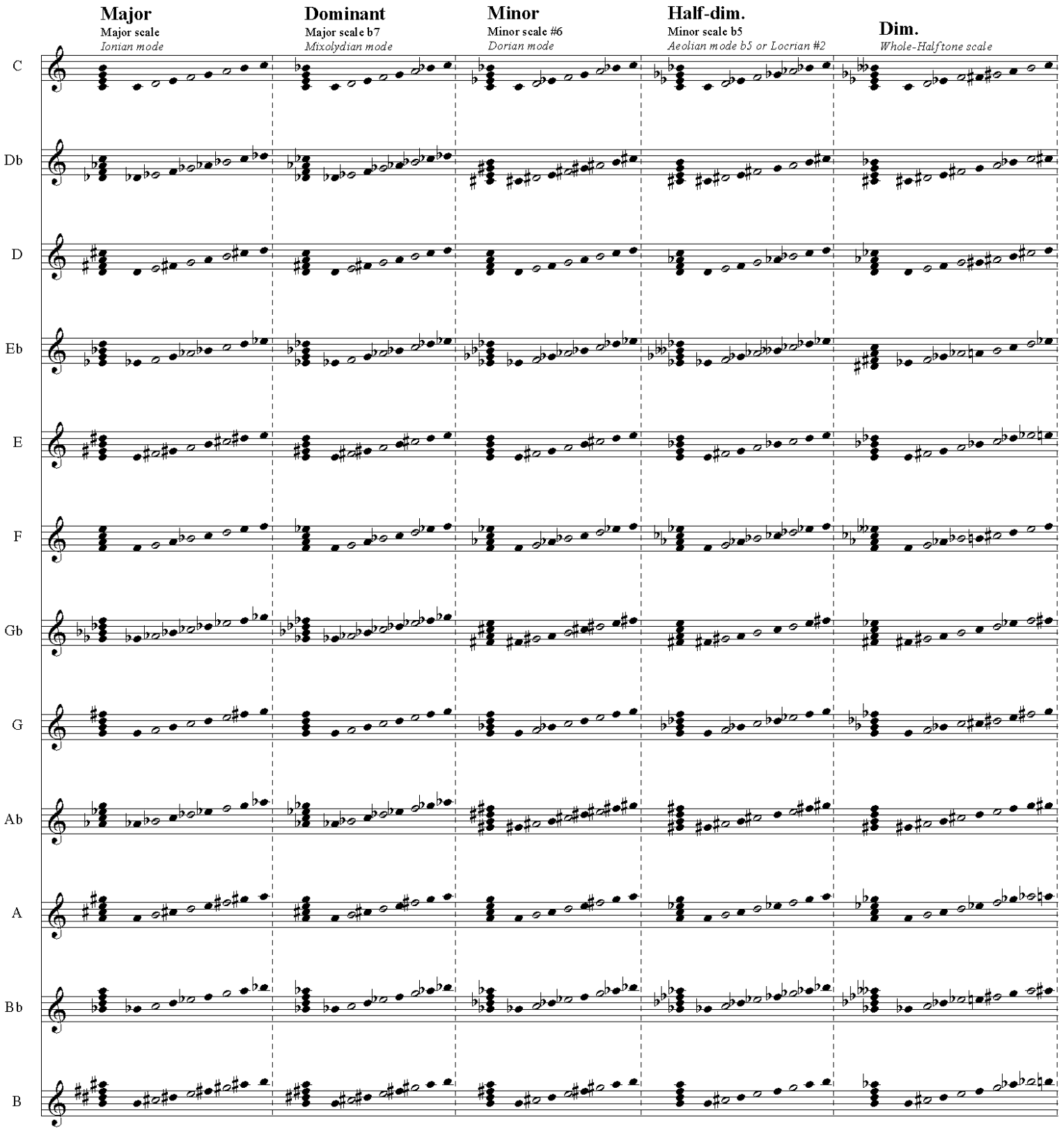
Scales might be easier to learn if they are related to TETRACHORDS. Any succession of 4 different notes can form a tetrachord. Here are the ones used in our scales:



Tetrachords are put together with either a Whole Step, Half Step or common note in-between

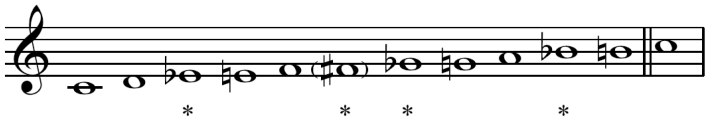
SCALE/MODE	Lower Tetrachord	In-between	Upper Tetrachord
Major	Major	W	Major
Mixolydian	Major	W	Minor
Dorian	Minor	W	Minor
Half-diminished	Minor	H	Lydian
Diminished	Minor	H	Minor
Whole-Tone	Lydian	=	Lydian

60 Scales for the 60 Chords System

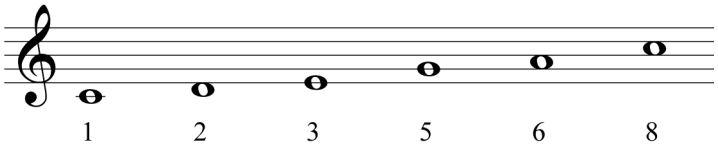


ALTERNATIVE SCALES

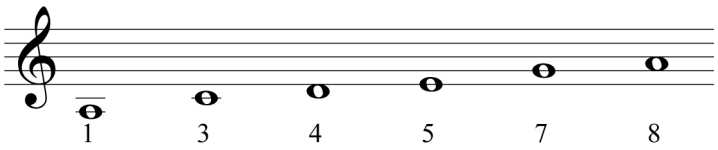
Add blue notes to the scales: #2(b3), #4(b5), #6(b7)
Treat them as Non-Chord Tones, resolving ½ step up or down



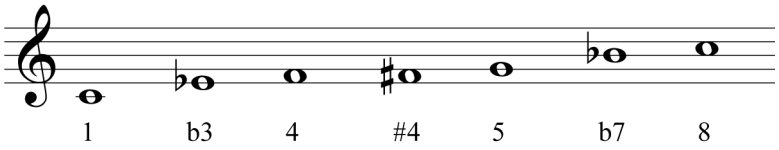
Major Pentatonic (=Major scale omitting the 4th and the 7th)
can be used for M, or X type of chords, since the 7th is not present. Blue notes can be added here as well



Minor pentatonic (= minor scale omitting the 2nd and the 6th)
Following the rules of relative scales, starting a major pentatonic on its 6th degree will result in a minor pentatonic:



Blues scale – a minor pentatonic with an added #4



"HYPERSCALES" – find the common notes in the scales for a chord progression, and make a "hyperscale" that spans over several chords.

- Ex: in a ii – V – I progression, the dorian for ii, mixolydian for V and Major for I, share the same notes, so one can think of only one scale when improvising on that chord progression.
- For the blues, is especially efficient to use the same (minor) blues scale over ALL the changes, even if the tune itself goes in a major key.

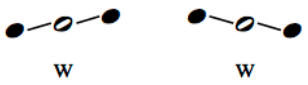
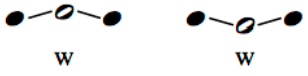
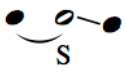
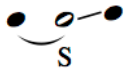
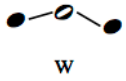
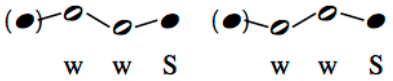
RELATING SCALE NOTES TO CHORDS - NON-CHORD TONES

Non-Chord Tone (NCT) = a note in the melodic line that is not a member of the chord. They create interest by being dissonant, some require preparation, ALL require resolution (resolving). Sometimes the note starts as being a chord tone, but then the chord underneath changes and it makes the note a NCT.

can be either:
- diatonic (on tonality/scale notes)
- chromatic (notes not belonging to the tonality

Non-Chord Tones can occur
- on Strong beats (or subdivisions of beats)
- on Weak beats (or subdivisions)

Legend:
- ● - chord tone
- ○ - non-chord tone
- S - strong beat
- w - weak beat

NTC (and abbrev.)	Approached by	Left by	Example
Passing Tones[1] (PT)	Step	Step in same direction	
Neighbor Tone (NT)	Step	Step in opposite direction	
Suspension (SUS)	Same tone, held	Step down	 prep / dissonance / resolution
Retardation[2] (RET)	Same tone, held	Step up	
Appoggiatura (APP)	Leap	Step	
Escape Tone (ET)	Step	Leap in opposite direction	
Changing Tones[3] (CT) or Neighbor group or Cambiata	??	Setp	
Anticipation (ANT)	Step or leap	Same tone[4]	
Pedal point (ped)			

[1] A passing tone occurring on a strong beat can be seen as an appoggiatura.
[2] Retardation is actually a Suspension resolving in the other direction
[3] Can also be regarded as an ET followed by APP
[4] Anticipation left by leap is also called a "free anticipation"

COMBINING THE TONES INTO MELODIES

The improvisation is composition "on the spot". Although not as strict or thought-out 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 **WHAT** NOTES YOU ARE USING, BUT **HOW** YOU USE THEM – how do they develop in motives, phrases and ultimately the whole solo

THE MOTIVE

Melodic contour of a motive

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

Metric contour of a motive

Some theoreticians[5] 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 → | Crusis
| Crusis → Metacrusis
Anacrusis → | Crusis → 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

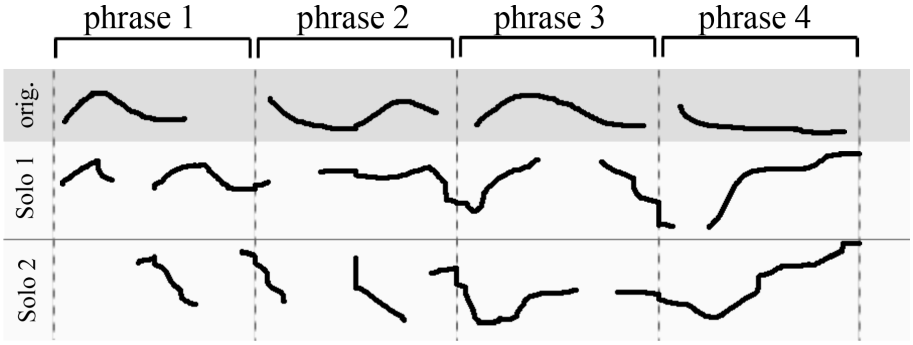
PATTERNS (or "licks) = a motive or phrase that fits a certain chord, or a chord progression. Patterns are usually constructed on popular chord progressions like II-V-I, and should be practiced in all the keys. They can be than used in the improvisation process as "fillers" between one (original) musical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

Examples of simple patterns that work on any chord:

Ascending	Descending
1 2 3 5	**5 4 3 1**
3 4 5 7	**7 6 5 3**
5 6 7 2 3	**3 2 1 7 5**

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

PRACTICE WORKFLOW FOR PIANISTS

YOUR NEW "LIFE STYLE" WILL INCLUDE:

- play Hanon (!!) every day
- play chords by Random sheet
- play chords + scales by Random sheet
- do sight reading
- do ear training exercises
- listen to your favorite jazz performers and write down ideas that you like (or whole solos…)

LEARNING A TUNE

1) Besides the tune lead sheet, use a manuscript paper as a second page
2) Might be useful to copy the melody on the second page first
3) Convert chords to functions (on the second sheet), "fixing" changes if necessary (see previous section)
4) On the second page, write down the chords (LH) and the scales (RH)
5) Play the Tune alone (RH)
6) Play the Changes alone (LH)
    a. In block chords
    b. With 1-7 ←→ 1-3
    c. With 3-7 ←→ 7-3
7) Play the Tune with Chords:
    a. With block chords
    b. With 1-7 ←→ 1-3
    c. With 3-7 ←→ 7-3
8) Prepare for solo
    a. Play the Chords with arpeggios on 2 octaves (at least)
    b. Play the Chords with scales
    c. Improvise in Free Tempo, try to fit your favorite patterns on the chords
9) Play with accompaniment (iReal b or Band in a Box)
    a. Play melody only, paraphrasing if fit
    b. Improvise RH with the track
    c. Turn off the piano track in the accompaniment and do it all…