

Outside - with George Garzone



The notes below derived from accounts of lessons with the great American saxophonist George Garzone. At first glance, Garzone appears to offer a different approach to the prescriptions of the 4 note-groupings and transpositions. Some students emphasise his emphasis on intuition explaining that he has *"listened and played so much tonal music, he does utilize tonal scales and triads, but he doesn't approach the music with any kind of systematic ways. It's all intuitive for him"*.

However, a great deal of practice is required!

Note that the information in this hand-out is based entirely upon recollections from students, posted on the internet. A DVD of George Garzone's "Triadic Chromatic Approach to Improvisation" is now available at:

www.jodyjazz.com/george.garzone.jazz.improvisation.instructional.dvd.html

so buy it...

1 The Triadic Chromatic Approach to Improvisation

Originally devised in order to develop a chromatic approach to improvisation.

- Slowly play **random** arpeggios of triads separated by half steps for example:

GDB BbGbEb EGC DbAF etc...
triad triad triad triad

- Gradually add more half-steps between the triads, for example:
GDB BbAAb AEC# DEbEF F#BD# etc...
triad *chromatic approach* triad *chrom.app* triad
- Do this until there are so many chromatic notes in between that the triads disappear!
- Feel free to play all intervals as you wish... triads are only crutches.

Summary

- 1) Play an inversion of a major triad. Note that splitting octaves is ok, it doesn't have to be high to low or vice versa, so that for a root-position C triad, playing e c g is ok.
- 2) When you arrive at the last note, move up or down a semitone.
- 3) Play an inversion of a different triad, preferably a different inversion.
- 4) Go back to step #2 and repeat until you can't take it any more!
- 5) This exercise to be done with all 4 species of triads: major, minor, diminished, and augmented (note the difficulty in deriving variety from augmented triads, hence the use of splitting octaves and changing direction).

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These exercises are meant to get you to play in a totally random fashion.

In the context of this first exercise, "repeating yourself" means repeating an inversion. In the context of the second exercise (see below), it means repeating an interval (i.e two semitones or two tones in a row).

Exercise #2 (chromatic):

Definition

- Intervals of less than a perfect 4th to be *chromatic*.
- Perfect 4ths (and all higher intervals) are considered *intervallic*.

Objective: To play (in a random fashion), intervals less than a perfect 4th, and not repeat yourself.

Example of a "chromatic" line:

C D B Bb Gb E F A
tone m3rd 1/2 step maj 3rd tone 1/2 step m3rd

Core Concept: For the soloist to outline the changes at the same time as the rhythm section is redundant! Lines generated by the "chromatic approach" provide a harmonic "carpet" that enhance the rhythm section, rather than repeating it.

The combination of the triadic and chromatic approaches enables the improviser to move away from thinking solely about specific notes and towards about **contour** and **overall sound**. For instance, lines derived from the major triad exercise will generate a sound very distinct to lines derived from minor triads, even if at first it might sound like random notes!

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The two exercises are the foundation, with one addition:

Exercise 3: Random Lines Exercise - a way to become comfortable playing outside as well as discovering new and interesting lines.

Objective - find some "other stuff to play":

- 1) Choose a tempo and start to play in a swing feel with no tonal centre.
- 2) Let the rhythmic focus be your guide; that is, play rhythmic phrases typical of jazz phrasing, but with a random choice of notes.
- 3) Throw in some really large intervals. Play any note, the more outrageous the better.
- 4) Record yourself and *see what happens*. There may be some highly musical and personalized notes in there.

By experimenting with intervallic and sequential playing you can eventually develop a vocabulary that will enable you to move from note to note. This is a really spontaneous way to improvise, and results in some pretty wild stuff that you may have never played before."

Once you are comfortable with a high degree of randomness in your playing (of course we can never truly be totally random) you will be able to start introducing small amounts into your soloing.

- 1) **Random factor:** Practice playing lines over changes, as you are playing slip a bar or two of totally random notes in and jump right back to following the chord changes.
- 2) Experiment with just a few beats of randomness.
- 3) As you practice playing 'random' notes be aware of trying to use:
 - a. **Different** intervals
 - b. **Wider** intervals
- 4) **Direction** - an important element of free/outside playing. Experiment with lines while focusing on just this one element – *direction*.
 - a. Don't play more than a few notes without changing direction.

- b. Introduce wider intervals into the mix.
- c. **Don't stop swinging.** If you're swinging really hard the listener will accept these far out lines as being musical. The farther out you go the harder you need to swing. If you mess with the rhythm of a cliché Bebop line it will sound much more outside than a freaked out random line that really swings hard.

The mantra throughout all these exercises is:

"Don't ever repeat yourself".

Tips:

- When you play these exercises, play them in steady time (i.e. all quavers or crotchets)
- Practice very slowly.
- Don't think while you're doing these exercises! Better advice is to practice with conscious tasks in mind before approaching the general idea – thinking then sensing.
- The farther out you go the harder you need to swing
- Accept the fact that if you really focus on not repeating yourself, and not trying to think, these exercises will take some time to develop.

Listening:

Albums

George Garzone

Alone

Four's And Two's

The Fringe In New York

Alex Terrier (w. George Garzone)

Stop Requested

Video

Interview with George Garzone www.artistshousemusic.org/node/5369/218

Chasin' The Trane www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuZLZTkllxg

George Garzone

Have You Met Miss Jones (Four's and Two's: NYC Records)

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Have You Met Miss Jones' by George Garzone. The score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of eight staves of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and dynamic markings like accents (^) and slurs. There are also some specific performance instructions, such as a '3' over a triplet of notes and an 'x' over a note. The key signature is one flat (Bb). The score concludes with a double bar line.

Transcription By: Jeff Ellwood

The image shows a musical score with eight staves of music. The notation is in treble clef and includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks. The second staff has a '8va' marking above a dotted note. The first staff ends with a series of 'x' marks. The music is complex and appears to be a transcription of a piece with intricate melodic lines.

Transcription By: Jeff Ellwood

The image displays a musical score for a single melodic line, transcribed across eight staves. The notation is as follows:

- Staff 1:** A sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals).
- Staff 2:** Begins with a few notes, followed by a section of repeated sixteenth-note patterns marked with 'x'.
- Staff 3:** Continues the melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes and accidentals.
- Staff 4:** Features a triplet of eighth notes and continues with sixteenth-note patterns.
- Staff 5:** Includes a triplet of eighth notes and concludes with a quarter note and a half note.
- Staff 6:** Shows a melodic phrase with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a quarter rest.
- Staff 7:** Continues with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a quarter rest.
- Staff 8:** Final staff with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a double bar line.

Transcription By: Jeff Ellwood