

LEARNING AND INTERNALIZING A TUNE

(GROOVIN' HIGH by John "Dizzy" Gillespie)

1. Learn the melody and be able to reproduce it accurately without the aid of an instrument. Example 1:

"Groovin' High" (melody and changes)

If the melody is based on an extant set of changes, as is often the case with bebop tunes, learn the original and others with these changes, ie. "Whispering" is the original and "Groovin' High", "On the Bean", "Stumpy", and "SHH!" are compositions based on the same harmonic structure.

Practice singing the melody in all keys, even if it means transposing out of range notes or phrases to different octaves. This will help you build confidence with regard to instrumental line and will enable you to locate pitches and phrases even in uncomfortable range areas. Very often a singer will sing a phrase or note inaccurately even though it is heard correctly simply because of the

inability to place the phrase in that particular voice range. Practice singing scales, arpeggios, chords, patterns, and melodies throughout the entire voice range, changing octaves when necessary in order to correct the aforementioned problem.

Practice singing the melody silently, bringing notes, phrases, and sections to audibility on command, ie. sing silently for four measures, then aloud for four measures; or sing the melody silently, audibilizing random notes of your own choosing. It is helpful to check these audible points with the piano to make sure you're on pitch. As a variation on this exercise, try talking, reading, or engaging in some other unrelated activity while singing silently the melody. Bring the line to audibility on command in the proper place. Practice this exercise during a recorded solo of the tune while an improvisation is in progress, ie. follow a Charlie

Parker improvisation on "Groovin' High", singing on command melodic phrases in their proper place. You should be able to do this accurately with any tune that you really know. To sharpen your abilities along this line, practice starting the melody from any point, ie. sing the 5th and 6th measures instantly and accurately using only the tonic note of the key as a reference. Do this exercise from all points and in different keys.

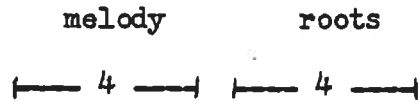
2. Learn to sing the roots to the tune without the aid of an instrument. First sing the roots along with a commercial recording or with a rhythm section; then sing solo. Example 2 (roots). All of these exercises should ultimately be done with the changes and the sound of the changes memorized.

(A) Sing through the root movements in different keys, at different tempos, and with varied meters. (This step is extremely important.)

(B) Sing through the changes, putting leading tones to the roots in the manner of a bass player. Example 2A.

As before, follow the root movement silently, bringing the line to audibility on command. (Continue practicing with recordings while engaging in unrelated activities.)

Now mix the melody and roots, first in a systematized manner, ie.



then randomly mixing the two. Example 2B. Also sing silently with a commercial recording, randomly bringing to audibility either the roots or the melody on command.

3. Following the preceding regimen, now use root-oriented patterns such as 1212, 1231, 1235, 1353, 1313, 1717, 1765, etc. Example 3.

Mix these patterns with other approaches both solo and accompanied. Example 3A.

DO NOT NEGLECT THE SILENT SINGING EXERCISES.

4. Following the preceding steps and instructions, sing seventh chords through the changes. Example 4. As before, do these exercises without instrumental aid. Once comfortable doing these exercises solo, then sing with recordings (Play-alongs and commercial recordings) and with live rhythm sections.

- (A) Sing the chords in their different inversions. Example 4A.
- (B) Invert the chord on a single change. Example 4B.
- (C) Mix the inversions, Example 4C.
- (D) Resolve the chord to the nearest chord tone in the next change. Example 4D.
- (E) Do not neglect descending chord realizations. Example 4E.
- (F) Now mix the exercises as before. Example 4F.

While singing silently, be able to bring to audibility any of the above on command while doing other distracting things.

5. Following the preceding steps and instructions, sing through the changes using the major scale and its derivatives (dorian, mixolydian, locrian). Example 5.

(A) Sing scalar variations. Example 5A.

(B) Sing using quotes based on the major scale. Example 5B.

(C) Sing random scalar melodies. Example 5C.

(D) Sing quotes from bebop tunes, ie. the following:

Example 5D.

|| $\overset{E^b}{\text{---} 2 \text{---}}$ | / / / / | / / / / | $\overset{E^b}{\text{---} 2 \text{---}}$ |
"Moose the Mooch" in E^b "Cool Blues" in G major "Half Nelson" in E^b

|| / / / / | / / / / | ETC.
"Scrapple from the Apple" in F

Now mix the scales with all of the previous exercises. Example 5E.

Be sure to continue silent practice as before !!!

6. Sing guide tones through the changes. Explanatory note:

Guide tones are pitches which resolve in such a way as to indicate the underlying harmonic motion, ie. in a major chord, sing 7 to 6; in a minor (II) chord, sing $b7$ to 6; in a dominant (V_7) chord, sing 4 to 3 (Treat a \emptyset chord as a II and O_7 and augmented chords as Vs.) Example 6.

Before attempting this exercise, simplify all changes making them II, V, or I.

Follow all of the previous instructions.

(A) Practice variants of the guide tone formula. Example 6A.

(B) Mix the techniques as before. Example 6B.

Be sure and practice all techniques alone, with recordings, with other singers/players, and with a rhythm section.

(C) While it is not as crucial, practice singing the 9th, 3rd, 5th, etc. through the chords. (See Advanced Improvisation

* * by David Baker, ^{vol. I} chapter 6.) Example 6C.

7. Sing through the changes using the bebop scales and their variants. Example 7. (Refer to the scale sheet at the conclusion of this chapter.)

(A) Follow all of the previous instructions.

(B) Mix all the previous techniques systematically and randomly. Example 7A.

With the acquisition of the bebop scales your improvisations should be taking on a great degree of sophistication enabling you to improvise lengthy imaginative solos with or without accompaniment.

8. Now we will explore the tune itself as the source of improvisational materials. "Groovin' High" consists of three two-measure II V_7 patterns used sequentially and a simple figure based on the interval of a 3rd.

The first pattern, in sequential form, occurs in measures 3-4, 7-8, 11-12, 19-20, 23-24, and 27-28. Example 8.

The second pattern occurs in measures ~~13-14~~ ^{13-14 and 15-16}, ~~15 & 16~~

 also sequenced. Example 8A.

The third pattern occurs in measures 29 and 30 and is also sequenced. Example 8B.

The remainder of the tune consists of a simple 8th note pattern based on a minor 3rd in measures 1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 21-22 and a major third in measures 9-10 and 25-26. Example 8C.

Now, leaving the major chords (E^b) silent, sing through the changes using pattern #1 on all II V₇ situations. Example 8D.

Next sing through the changes using pattern #2 on all of the II V₇ situations. Example 8E.

Since the diminished chord is implied in the second measure of the pattern, practice some of the following variants: Example 8F.

Sing pattern #3 on all of the II V₇ situations. Example 8G. Again, since the pattern implies a diminished scale, try some of the following variants: Example 8H.

Next try mixing the patterns randomly on the changes.

Using scales in broken 3rds will also imply the tune itself.

Example 8I.

All of the above patterns should be practiced observing previous instructions, ie. singing silently, singing solo, etc.

Now mix all of the preceding techniques. Example 8J.

It is absolutely essential that you do these exercises with recordings, rhythm section, and especially solo.

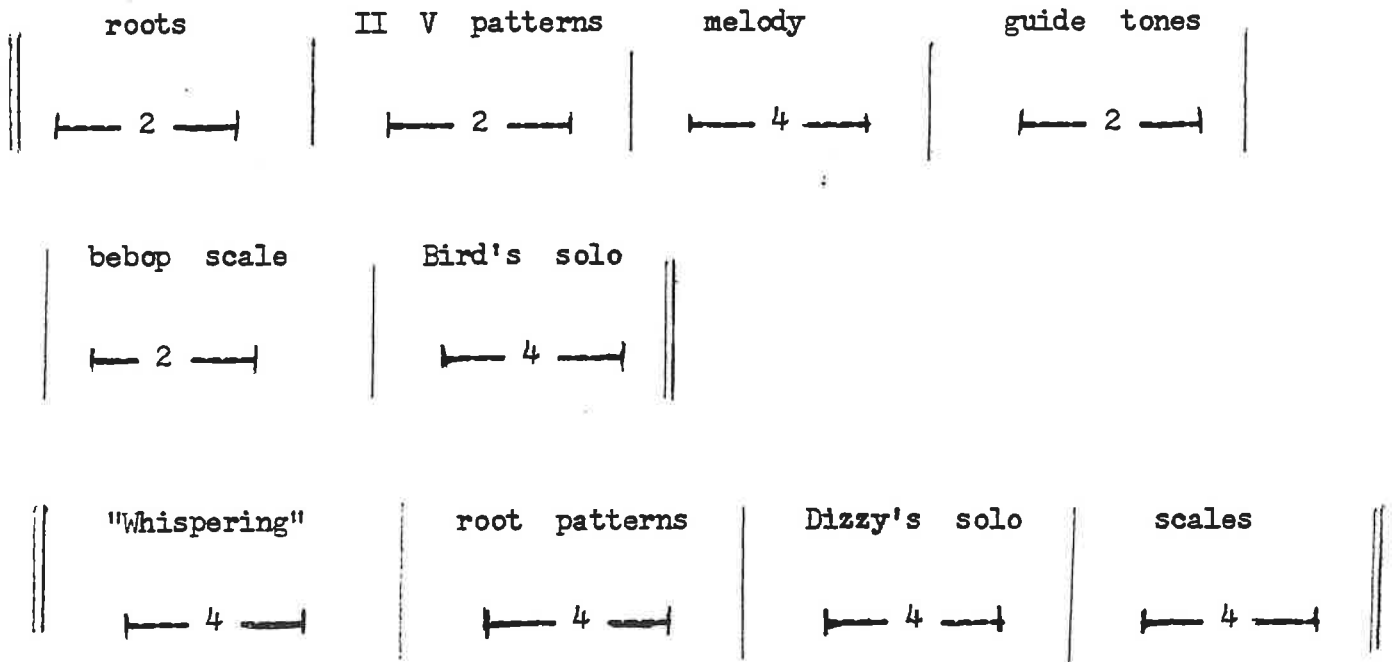
9. Sing through the changes using other II V₇ patterns, melodic patterns, scalar configurations culled from other bebop tunes, your favorite players, pattern books, etc. On the other hand the patterns from "Groovin' High" should be utilized in the performance of other tunes, solo and accompanied.

10. As soon as facility permits, begin transcribing solos by Bird, Dizzy, Bud Powell, et al from any of the many available versions of "Groovin' High." Do not write the solos down, rather learn them by rote. You may have to work some of the solos at half speed in order to hear them and perfect them. After you have sharpened your hearing, you might want to read from some of the various transcription books in order to verify your notes.

As with the material from "Groovin' High", excerpt II V₇ patterns and melodic patterns and transfer them to various parts of the tune.

Practice singing the solos with the recordings, with Play-along records and tapes, with a live rhythm section, and especially solo.

Now go back to the mixing techniques, ie.



Also practice in the following manner:

(improvised material)

E^b | E^b | A- | D₇ | E^b | E^b | G- | C₇

(Bird's solo)

C- | F₇ | F- | B^b₇ | G- | C₇ | F- | B^b₇ ||

improvise

|-----4-----|

Bird's solo

|-----4-----|

improvise

|-----2-----|

Bird's solo

|-----2-----|

improvise

|-----2-----|

Bird's solo

|-----2-----|

Now improvise on the changes, deciding what to sing as you move along rather than predetermining what materials will be used. When you have internalized the tune to this degree, then go back and add altered chords and scales to the mix. Example 9.

While it will not be necessary or even possible to approach even every bebop tune with this degree of thoroughness, you will grow at an unprecedented rate of speed if over the next six months or a year you internalize the following thirty tunes in the prescribed manner. Very quickly you'll find yourself in the enviable (even among the best horn players) position of being able to initiate ideas and directions rather than simply reacting to environmental conditions. (List of bebop tunes follows this chapter.)

For further practice choose familiar tunes from a fake book, sheet music, or some other source and use these tunes to develop the ability to improvise on changes at sight. It is essential that you develop the ability to hear changes in your head before improvising. Example 10. Sing the guide tones through the changes, then the roots, etc.

Your ultimate goal should be the memorization and internalization of the listed tunes using the comprehensive method described for "Groovin' High."

The tunes on the list were all chosen because they each contain several melodic/harmonic patterns which have endured over the years and still enjoy high currency among today's jazz musicians. The patterns contained in these tunes comprise a substantial portion of the language of every important jazz player since the ascendancy of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. In addition to the raw material contained in these tunes, each of the tunes is still played frequently and each makes considerable technical demands.

For practice purposes virtually all of the changes to the tunes on the list can be found on one of the various Play-along records/tapes. Search

- (1) The Aebersold Series
 - (2) Ray Ricker Series
 - (3) Dave Baker Advanced Improvisation Tape
 - (4) Jerry Coker's Complete Method for Improvisation Tape.
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EX. 1

GROOVIN' HIGH

John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie

Handwritten musical score for "Groovin' High" by John Birks "Dizzy" Gillespie. The score consists of seven staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and various chord symbols. The first staff has a double bar line and repeat dots. The second staff has a first ending bracket. The sixth staff has a second ending bracket. The seventh staff ends with a double bar line.

Chord symbols: Eb, A-, D7, Eb, G-, C7, C-, F7, F-, Bb7, 1st G-, C7, F-, Bb7, 2nd F-, Bb7, Ab, Db, Eb.

Three empty musical staves.

EX. 2

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7 Eb Eb G- C7

EX. 2A

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7 Eb

approach from 1/2 step below

OR

approach from 1/2 step above

OR

approach from one step above

EX. 23

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7

Chords: Eb Eb G- C7

melody etc.

OR

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7

etc.

EX. 3

EX. 3

Chords: Eb Eb A-

Fingerings: 1 2 1 2 1 1 2 3 2 1 1 2 b3 2 1

Chords: D7 Eb Eb G-

Fingerings: 1 3 5 3 1 1 2 3 5 1 1 7 1 7 1

EX. 3A

EX. 3A

(MELODY) Eb Eb A- D7

(ROOTS)

(MELODY) Eb Eb G- C7

(ROOT PATTERNS)

EX. 4

EX. 4

Chords: Eb Eb A-

Chords: D7 Eb

EX. 4A

EX. 4A

Chords: Eb Eb A-

Chords: D7

EX. 5E

Ex. 5E musical notation. Staff 1: Eb (scale) Eb. Staff 2: A- (melody) D7 Eb (roots) Eb. Staff 3: G- (chords) C7 etc.

EX. 6

Ex. 6 musical notation. Staff 1: Eb Eb A- D7 Eb Eb. Staff 2: G- C7 (C-) F7 F- Eb7 etc.

EX. 6A

Ex. 6A musical notation. Staff 1: Eb Eb A- D7. Staff 2: Eb Eb G- C7 etc.

EX. 7A

Handwritten musical notation for Exercise 7A, consisting of four staves. The first staff contains a melody line with notes and rests, labeled with **E^b (melody)** and **A- (bebop scale)**. The second staff shows a bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **D₇**, **E^b (roots)**, **E^b**, and **G- (scale)**. The third staff continues the bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **C₇**, **C- (bebop scale)**, and **F₇ (root pattern)**. The fourth staff shows a bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **F- (guide tones)** and **B^b₇**, followed by the text etc.

EX. 8

Handwritten musical notation for Exercise 8, consisting of three staves. The first staff contains a melody line with notes and rests, labeled with **A-** and **D₇**. The second staff shows a bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **G-** and **C₇**. The third staff continues the bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **F-** and **B^b₇**.

EX. 8A

Handwritten musical notation for Exercise 8A, consisting of two staves. The first staff contains a melody line with notes and rests, labeled with **G-** and **C₇**. The second staff shows a bass line with notes and rests, labeled with **F-** and **B^b₇**.

EX. 8E

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7 (omit turn)
Chords: Eb Eb G- C7
Chords: C- F7 F-
Chords: Bb7 etc.

EX. 8F

Chords: A- D7 (b9)
Chords: A- D7 (b9)
Chords: A- D7 (b9)

EX. 8G

Chords: Eb Eb A- D7 (C-)
Eb Eb G- C7 (Bb-)
C- F7 (Eb-) F-
Bb7 etc.

EX. 8H

Chords: A- D7

EX. 8I

Chords: Eb Eb A-

EX. 9J Eb (bebop scale) Eb A- (bebop scale)

D7 Eb (scale)

G- (guide tones) C7 C- (melody) F7

F- (roots) Bb7 G- (melody) C7

EX. 9 Eb Eb A-

D7 #3 EbΔ+4

G- (C7 b9) F7 +5 (C-)

Etc.

EX. 10 E- A7 C- F7 F- Bb7

Eb Ab7 Bb Etc. or the roots, etc.