

## DEVICES COMMONLY FOUND IN IMPROVISED SOLOS

### Analysis of Jazz Styles

BEBOP SCALE - The adding of a chromatic step to an otherwise 7-note scale, in order to align metric accents. In major scales the chromatic step occurs between the 5th and 6th degrees, in dorian scales it occurs between 3 and 4, and between the 7th and root of mixolydian scales.

BEBOP LICK - Very closely related to the bebop scale (see above), in that it involves the same added chromatic step. However, the bebop lick is also a very specific melody. The bebop lick on a C7 chord, for example (also a G-7 chord), would be C-B-B<sup>b</sup>-D-A-G. Less frequently it also appears with a C or an F in place of the D.

ENCLOSURE (also referred to as SURROUNDING TONES) - An 'object tone' (consonant member of a chord or scale) approached first from a semi-tone above, then a semi-tone below, then the object tone (similar to upper and lower 'neighboring tones'). Example: an object tone of C appearing in an enclosure would result in a 3-tone series of D<sup>b</sup>-B-C.

BLUES SCALE - (structure: 1, <sup>b</sup>3, 4, <sup>#</sup>4, 5, <sup>b</sup>7) Though specifically developed for use in the conventional 12-bar blues, some players will use only sporadically in the blues (plus the fact that some blues progressions are less than wholly traditional), and players will frequently use the blues scale in a non-blues tune. It is one of the scales frequently chosen for harmonic generalization (see below).

HARMONIC GENERALIZATION - The practice of lumping together several chords (especially closely-related chords, like II-V-I) with one scale. The major scale and the blues scale are most commonly used for this purpose, but scales like harmonic minor and diminished can be expected as well, along with still other possibilities.

CHANGE-RUNNING - The practice of arpeggiating the individual chords of a progression in improvisation, so that little else is occurring (such as definable melodies). A fast harmonic rhythm is usually the reason for such practice, and one can generally expect to find a consistent rhythmic level of 8th notes. Scales can also be a part of change-running.

DIGITAL PATTERNS - Closely related to change-running, digital patterns are small (usually 4-8 notes), well-organized notegroups such as 1-2-3-1, 1-2-3-5, 1-3-5-3, which are used to realize fast-moving chord progressions by transposing the patterns to fit each passing chord. Such patterns are usually practiced aside from and before actual performance.

PENTATONIC SCALES - (structure: 1,2,3,5,6 of a major scale) Most commonly found in modal and blues tunes, but also found with less frequency in other situations. Uncommonly long phrases are often generated by the use of a single pentatonic scale. Side-slips (see below) are often based on pentatonics.

SIDE-SLIPPING (or OUTSIDE PLAYING) - The practice of deliberately leaving the given key, momentarily, and returning. Often the side-slip is to a key or chord that is a half-step higher than the given one, and pentatonic scales are often present. The device is used to create tension and avoid monotony.

UNUSUAL OR SUBSTITUTE SCALES - Under the heading of unusual scales might be synthetic scales (originally-devised), less-common modal scales (i.e. phrygian or locrian), harmonic major, gypsy minor, hindu scales, and all symmetrical scales (chromatic, whole-tone, diminished, augmented). Sometimes a player will substitute one of these scales (or another equally unusual one) for a much simpler, more traditional one.

RESOLUTION OF 7th to 3rd - Refers to the common resolution of the seventh of a -7 chord (like II) to the 3rd of a 7 chord (like V) whose root is a fourth higher (or a fifth lower). For example, the resolution of C to B in a D-7 to G7 progression. Frequently this resolution is present in the melodies and patterns of an improviser.

CESH (Contrapuntal Elaboration of Static Harmony) - A harmonic device in which a chord of long duration has one moving voice to create interest, such as a long-running minor chord in which the root descends in half steps, but the other parts of the chord remain in place. Numerous melodies and patterns have been based on this harmonic device, and frequently a player will superimpose a CESH melody or pattern over a non-CESH HARMONY, ESPECIALLY II-V progressions and tonic (I) minor chords.

TRI-TONE SUBSTITUTION - A harmonic substitution of a chord or chords which are a tri-tone (3 whole steps, or an augmented 4th, or a diminished 5th) away from the given chord, such as substituting D<sup>b</sup>7 for a G7, or even A<sup>b</sup>-7 D<sup>b</sup>7 for D-7 G7. An Improviser does not necessarily wait for the substitution to be present in the accompaniment before using it.

LEAPS FROM THE 3rd TO A <sup>b</sup>9th - Melodically, it is extremely common for an improviser to play the 3rd of a dominant seventh chord, then move directly or indirectly (by including the 5th and/or 7th en route) to the lowered 9th. Such motion permeates much of the linear substance of a solo, especially on VI7 chords, and one will find about as many instances of the 3rd moving down (3 half steps down) to the lowered 9th as the instances in which an upward motion is used.

"CRY ME A RIVER" LICK - A phrase which derives from a standard tune of the same name. In its original context, the melody descended as follows: 9, 8(1), 5, <sup>b</sup>3, 2, 1 (over a tonic minor chord). Although improvisers use the phrase in this same setting sometimes, it is even more common to find them using the same melodic intervals in a different harmonic setting, as follows: +9, <sup>b</sup>9, +5, 3, +9, <sup>b</sup>9 (still descending) over a dominant seventh chord with an augmented 5th and augmented 9th added.

"GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN" LICK - Like the "Cry Me a River" lick, a phrase which derives from a standard tune of the same name ("Gone But Not Forgotten"). It is nearly always used over a minor chord, using the digital formula, 9 (or 2) - <sup>b</sup>3- #7 - 9 - 1 - 5. Example: against C-, the phrase would be D-E<sup>b</sup>-B-D-C-G.

ANGULARITY - The use of uncommonly wide intervals in improvisation, very pronounced in players like John Coltrane, Eric Dolphy, Thelonious Monk, Woody Shaw, Benny Wallace, etc.

SEQUENCES - Re-use of same or similar pattern or melody over several successive changes of harmony.

QUOTES - Melodic fragments of other tunes or solos, woven into an improvisation, sometimes as a humorous touch, sometimes simply because the improviser hears that the quote is based on the same harmonic setting as what he presently faces. In a few instances, players have used quotes to be programmatic or to make a socio-political comment.

SHIFTING OF BAR-LINE - The delaying or anticipating of the harmonic or rhythm progress (especially the former) so that it is occurring (seemingly) in the wrong place. It is a deliberate (usually) and temporary distortion of the meter and/or bar structure.

INADVERTENT REPETITION - The unintentional reiteration of a phrase within the same solo, often occurring at the same spot within a successive chorus or repeated section (and nearly always on the same chord root and chord-type), therefore separated from its first occurrence by a considerable length of time. If the phrase is reiterated immediately after the first occurrence, then it is probably deliberate rather than accidental. Inadvertent repetition usually indicates that the phrase is a personal cliché, or simply reinforces the notion that all players are prone to hearing the same phrase at certain points within the tune's progression (a natural aural phenomenon).

ERROR - An obvious mistake on the part of the improviser, yet dangerous for the inexperienced student analyzer to cite. If the given chord, for example, is C-, and the player plays an E-natural, or the chord is a C 7 and the player plays a B-natural, it is relatively safe to assume an error. However, the analyzer must also consider other possibilities first, such as substitute chords, bar-line shifts, or 'blue notes' (<sup>b</sup>3, <sup>b</sup>5, or <sup>b</sup>7), for example. It could even be a side-slip (or outside playing). In any event, be cautious about labelling a suspected error, then look for possible causes, such as split notes, hitting wrong harmonics on a brass instrument, memory lapses, getting finger-tied, forgetting to repeat a section, etc., all of which can happen to anyone, which in itself is a lesson to the analyzer.