

Course name: *Elements of the Jazz Language*

Understanding and applying eighteen elements contained in jazz improvisations as defined by Jerry Coker. These include: digital & scalar/chordal patterns, 7-3 resolution, 3-b9, bebop scale, enclosure, CESH, quotes, 'Cry Me A River' 'Gone But Not Forgotten' and BeBop licks, tri-tone substitution, back door ii V7, chromaticism and more.

Live, interactive classes where students submit recordings for comments.

Instructor: [Mike Tracy](#)

Type of Class:

- Live Zoom meetings with comments and discussion.
- All classes will be recorded and archived for those who could not participate live and for those wishing to review.

Target audience:

- Open to all musicians. Any instrument. Any skill level (except absolute instrument beginner). Students should be able to read music and have basic command of the instrument.
- Limited to 15 to 20 participants per level/class.

Level:

- While intended for Intermediate to Advanced and Experienced musicians, anyone interested in jazz would benefit.
- Class can be adapted to individual level.

Course length and frequency:

- Each class will meet weekly for 8 weeks
- Session length will be between 60 to 75 minutes depending on activity and discussion.
- All classes will be live and those live sessions will be recorded:
 - Recordings will remain available for one month for those who cannot attend the live sessions and for review by all.

Course description:

Elements of the Jazz Language course will help to understand, hear and apply Jazz Language. The course will help you to:

- Recognize musical language use by master jazz improvisers, composers and arrangers.
- Enhance your aural skills, helping you recognize and apply a variety of commonly used Elements:
 - Harmonic progressions: ii V7 and variants, Back Door ii V7, tri-tone substitution and more.
 - Melodic ideas: digital, BeBop, Cry Me A River and Gone But Not Forgotten licks, enclosure, sequence, quotes, chromaticism, side slipping, outside playing and more.
- All examples and exercises will be applied to material from the jazz idiom (tunes you know or should know), thus helping to expand your knowledge of tunes/repertoire.
- Strengthen your knowledge of melodic, harmonic and rhythmic formula.
- Improvise confidently and in a musical, jazz-like manner.
- Experience different styles and approaches to improvisation.
- Help you listen to others and yourself better, hearing the overall product while being able to focus on details.
- Develop effective personal practice habits that work for you.
- Be able to realistically assess your progress.

Class:

- I recommend acquiring a copy of:
Jerry Coker's – Elements of the Jazz Language for the Developing Improviser.
- The class will focus on one/two Elements for two weeks.
- Strategies for how to practice and apply Elements will be demonstrated.
- Being able to apply Elements of the Jazz Language via improvisation will be encouraged.
- I will select a blues and four/five tunes that the class will focus on.
 - The class will universally work on a selected tune for two weeks.
 - Class is encouraged to record their work and send to me for review weekly.
 - I will comment, offer suggestions and return.
- In class we will:
 - Discuss various Elements of the Jazz Language, one/two Elements per session.
 - In class we will discuss ways to approach and apply in practice and performance.
 - We will find recordings by others to listen to and study.
 - We will practice selected Elements in session.
- Outside of class:
 - You will record yourself playing/demonstrating selected Elements. Typically the melody and two to four choruses, more if you feel the spirit.
 - I will record my observations and suggestions as I listen to you play and send you my remarks.
 - Students will be selected to perform either live or I can play the recording you sent (without my remarks) for the class where we can all reflect upon your playing. All will be done in a constructive, respectful manner.
 - You then have the following week to work on material that would enhance your playing, hopefully applying my suggestions and others from the class and make another recording for me to review and return.
- Class is limited to 15 to 20 so that as many as possible can play for each other each session for comments – mine and from other students.
- You will use play-along or backing tracks that are available on YouTube or ones you already have, like Jamey's many excellent ones. I can help you find ones on YouTube if needed.
- I will be providing PDFs with practice material and suggestions. I will also offer recorded examples that are available on YouTube.
- I will be giving you 'quizzes' from time to time to challenge your skills. Trust me, the quizzes will not hurt but be quite helpful.

Ideally you will attend class or view the recordings every week so that you can progress consistently. I understand that you might not be able to make each class or that you were not part of the 20 to sign up in time. That's OK, I will record and each class will be available – and I encourage you to send your recorded material for comments.

No guarantee but it has been my experience that you will grow musically and as an improviser and jazz musician. You can anticipate:

- A more secure knowledge of jazz language – scale/chord application, harmonic progressions and rhythmic variety.
- How to successfully learn and apply more complex harmony in a tune.
- How to improvise in a jazz-like manner appropriate to the tune and style.
- How to memorize efficiently.
- How to establish an effective practice routine.