

# Jazz Improvisation

## Extended Approaches

By Cliff Engel

### CMaj7 Arpeggio

1

8 7 10 9 10 9 12 16 12 9 10 9 10 7 8

### Double Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above

3

10 9 7 9 8 7 10 9 12 11 9 11 10 9 12 16 12 9 12 11 9 11 10 9 10 7 10 9 7 9 8

### Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below

5

6 7 9 7 8 7 10 9 8 9 11 9 10 9 12 16 12 9 8 9 11 9 10 9 10 7 6 7 9 7 8

### Single Chromatic Above - Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above

7

9 6 7 9 8 7 10 9 11 8 9 11 10 9 12 16 12 9 11 8 9 11 10 9 10 7 9 6 7 9 8

Single Chromatic Below - Double Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below

9

T  
A  
B

Scalar Above - Single Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above

11

T  
A  
B

Single Chromatic Below - Scalar Above - Single Chromatic Below & Above

13

T  
A  
B

Scalar Above - Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above

15

T  
A  
B

Have you ever wondered how the bebop virtuosos of the 1940's created all of their continuously flowing solo phrases? The bebop masters such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Bud Powell, to name just a few, combined various improvisation techniques including diatonic passing notes and scalar approach notes with non-diatonic double chromatic and single chromatic approach notes to form "extended approaches."

In the early days of jazz, musicians like Louis Armstrong rarely played "outside" the key center and primarily improvised solos based on the melody of a composition along with the chord tones. As time passed and jazz improvisation evolved in the 1930's, more advanced musicians such as Duke Ellington and Count Basie also incorporated the upper extensions of chords, the 9th, 11th, and 13th, in their solos. By the early to mid 1940's, bebop players such as "Bird" and Dizzy took those basic improvisation concepts that their predecessors utilized one step further. Instead of just playing diatonic melodic content, chord tones, and upper extensions, the bebop players began "stretching" their lines and intensifying the very vital element of tension and release (dissonance and consonance) by playing outside the key center with non-diatonic notes before completing their resolutions.

Bebop players played "outside" the key center by simply approaching chord tones with various non-diatonic approach notes. In this lesson's exercises, we will demonstrate different extended approach techniques using a two-octave CMaj7 arpeggio. In the first extended approach, the root note of the CMaj7 arpeggio is approached by a double chromatic approach note from above, single chromatic approach note from below, and then again by a single chromatic approach note from above. The next step of this process is to simply apply this extended approach concept to the third, fifth, and seventh chord tones in a similar fashion.

This exercise is just one of the many possible extended approach note permutations that you can integrate into your improvisations. Below is a list of a few of the other extended approaches I like to use:

Double Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above  
Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below  
Single Chromatic Above - Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above  
Single Chromatic Below - Double Chromatic Above - Single Chromatic Below  
Scalar Above - Single Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above  
Single Chromatic Below - Scalar Above - Single Chromatic Below & Above  
Scalar Above - Double Chromatic Below - Single Chromatic Above

Again, these are just a few of the dozens of extended approach note possibilities. Experiment with many of the other types of extended approaches that combine scalar approaches with chromatic approaches. By delaying the resolution of your phrases to chord tones with extended approaches, you will be able to create more sophisticated solos by playing further outside the chord type and generating a greater sense of tension and release.

After you practice these extended approach note techniques on all of the two-octave Major 7th arpeggios (CMaj7, GMaj7, DMaj7, AMaj7, EMaj7, etc.), you'll want to apply this concept to the following chord types: Cm7, C7, Cm7b5, Cdim7, CmMaj7, C7sus4, CMaj7#5, CMaj7b5, C7#5, and C7b5. Try to practice every example over every chord type and transpose each chord type to every key across the entire range of the fingerboard.

Not only were these exercises used by many of the bebop players, but you'll also hear these extended approaches used extensively in solos by artists such as John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Oscar Peterson, Paul Chambers, Jaco Pastorius, Herbie Hancock, and Wynton Marsalis. If your soloing chops seem to be stuck in a rut or you are searching for a way to add a new sound to your improvised solo phrases, explore some extended approaches.