



# IMPROVISING

Playing what you want to hear



SUPRISE

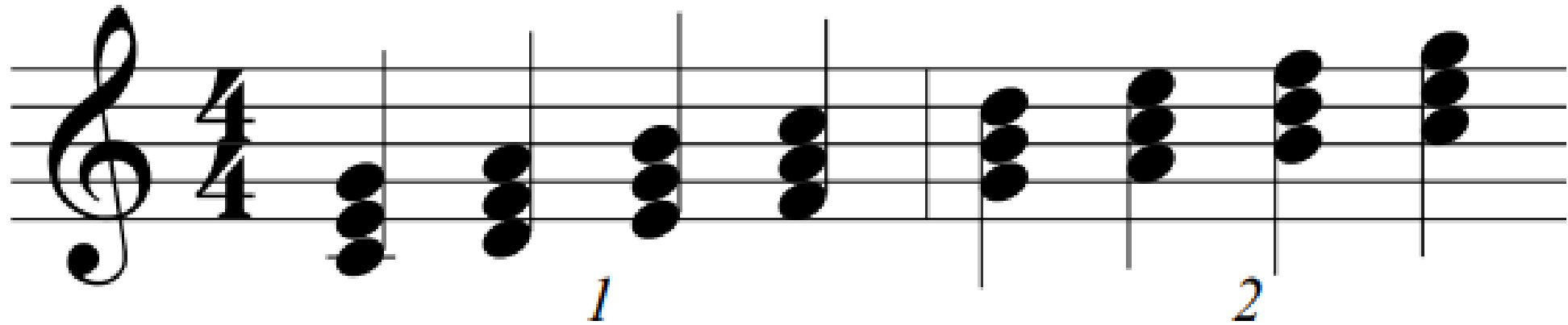
# Surprising your listener, by being in control

- How do you sound?
- Are you comfortable with time and space?
- How flexible are you in your thinking and execution?
- How well can you hear and repeat an idea?
- Can you play the four types of triad in any key?
- Being honest about your strengths and weaknesses allows you to assess your level of control.
- The more control you have over the mechanics the more effort you can put towards your creative expression.

# Thinking as a “Scientist” by experimenting and creating regardless of outcome.

- Approach practice as 3 separate spheres
  - Learning - new material
  - Refinement - getting comfortable
  - Performance - Sharing that material
- IN each of these modicums work to experiment but have a plan and approach.
- The more you limit your choices the more creative you can be within your limitations.
- Make practice a GAME that is a CHALLENGE where you feel GOOD/fulfilled when you OWN the ABILITY.

C Dm Em F G Am B<sup>°</sup> C



ESTABLISHING A FOUNDATION

# Tension and release

- There are no wrong notes in jazz, but there are wrong resolutions.
- What are some ideas that might reflect tension and release regarding:

Range

Tempo

Linear vs angular

Harmony

Melody

# Drone pitches

- Playing along with a drone is a great way to practice balance and blend without others.
- Fit "inside" the sound of the drone, blend with the drone, be the drone...
- Practice playing phrases with the drone. Start and end on the drone pitch.
- Experiment with Tension (against drone) and release (with drone)
- Listen to the sound of different notes against the drone, If tense, where do they want to go?

# Build a foundation

- Harmonic/Melodic
  - Know all your major scales/chords
  - Learn how to see this information as a bigger picture chord/ key relationship rather than a formula for building each.
- Are you comfortable with moving within the circle of fourths up or down, moving by half step, and moving in thirds?
- Can you play a simple idea in all 12 keys?
- Rhythmic
  - Can you make a repeated rhythm feel good and consistent?
  - Can you alternate meter
  - Can you put a single accurate note on a specific subdivision?
  - Can you change subdivisions easily?
  - Can you repeat a complex rhythm upon hearing it?
  - Can you clap basic polyrhythms?



# Limiting yourself to Rhythm (to help you play melodically)

- Play the same 1 or two bar rhythm through a whole chorus of the blues
- Play a 1 bar rhythm and leave a measure of rest
- Play a whole chorus of quarter notes
- Play a whole chorus of 8<sup>th</sup> notes

# Limiting yourself to pitch (Melody/harmony) to help improvise rhythm

- Take a simple pitch idea (e.g. ii-V I pattern), and change the rhythm ensuring you resolve the same way and use the same pitch set.
- Play a condensed version with the rhythms, keep the resolutions at the right time.
- Play a version with rests, but keep the resolutions.
- Delay or approach your resolutions.

# Ideas in all 12 keys

- Take simple melodic ideas and play them in all 12 major keys.
- Get comfortable with scales so that you can think in scale degrees.
- Try making your own idea and transposing through the key centers.

# Play alongs

- Mapping tonal harmony - a great indepth learning and play along tool on iOS, you can edit and make your own songs.
- Ireal book pro - available on multiple platforms, a good play along with editing as well.
- YouTube - Lots of potential, but quality differs along with
- Jamey Abersold - the standard, worthwhile, you can record these and change the pitch on the computer if you wanted....
- Play alongs can be a useful tool, especially for experimentation when you don't have a rhythm section.

# Transcription

- You'll get out what you put in. It'll be hard at first but its worth it. The spoon turns into a shovel, that turns into tiller, than a bulldozer...
- Learn by ear first, save writing it down for the end. Emulate everything you enjoy about their sound, inflection, intention, phrasing, etc...
- If you get stuck on a pitch, pick a random note and play your chromatic scale up or down one octave to find it.
- Don't feel the need to do the whole transcription, if you feel intimidated. Pick one or two ideas you really like and learn them. Then mine them for how they're used in context. Try experimenting with the limiting concepts discussed earlier.