

How to Improvise, Part 2

Reading Chord Symbols

Steps to Improvising Over Chord Changes

Review from last time:

Scales & Chords

Some songs will give you chord changes. Chord changes show you the form of the song and use chord symbols to show you what chords are being played and when they change.

Examples:

C or CM = "C major"	C E G
C- or Cm = "C minor"	C Eb G
C7 = "C dominant 7" or "C7"	C E G Bb
C6 or C6/9 = "C6" or "C major 6"	C E G A
C-7 or Cm7 = "C minor 7"	C Eb G Bb

Today, we will focus on the 7 (or "dominant 7") chord within the context of a Blues progression.

This is a typical Blues progression:

I⁷	IV⁷	I⁷	%
IV⁷	%	I⁷	%
V⁷	IV⁷	I⁷	%

F Blues

C Instruments:

| F7 | Bb7 | F7 | | ♯ | |

| Bb7 | | ♯ | F7 | | ♯ | |

| C7 | Bb7 | F7 | | ♯ | |

Bb Instruments:

| G7 | C7 | G7 | | ♯ | |

| C7 | | ♯ | G7 | | ♯ | |

| D7 | C7 | G7 | | ♯ | |

Eb Instruments:

| D7 | G7 | D7 | | ♯ | |

| G7 | | ♯ | D7 | | ♯ | |

| A7 | G7 | D7 | | ♯ | |

F Instruments:

| C7 | F7 | C7 | | ♯ | |

| F7 | | ♯ | C7 | | ♯ | |

| G7 | F7 | C7 | | ♯ | |

Let's play through these chords together to make sure you've got the correct pitches. Please make sure your mic is on MUTE.

Now, let's go through a series of exercises to learn how to play and improvise over chords when they change, or "play the changes".

F Blues

Now you know how to read the chord changes, how to keep your place in the form, and how to play the changes.

I like to do these exercises using the 3rd or 7th of the chord on beat 1 as well, and to mix-and-match between these chord tones when the chords change.

I also like to practice incorporating different scale sounds over the 7 chords (Freygish, Whole Tone). Remember the Aebersold Scale tree from last week?

As you get better at improvising and playing the changes, don't forget the things we talked about last week (using your ear to find the melodies in your head, incorporating different scale sounds).

It's OK to BREATHE and LEAVE SPACE. A good way to do this is to take the instrument out of your mouth.

What questions do you have?

To access previous handouts and recordings from previous weeks, visit www.shawngoodmanjazz/music-for-the-mind