

Soloing: by Jamey Aebersold

1. Keep your place - don't get lost. If you do get lost LISTEN to the rhythm section. The drummer will often give a little crash at the beginning of new sections. If you hit a note that is not what you intended, move it up or down a half-step and you'll probably be back in the scale (or chord). Remember, jazz music usually moves in two, four and eight bar phrases. You're never far from a new phrase beginning.

2. Play right notes. This really means play the notes you hear in your head...the notes you would sing with your mouth. Having the scales and chords in front of you on a piece of paper is merely a guide. They don't provide the actual music that's going to be played. THAT comes from YOUR imagination. If you've got the scales, chords, and chord/scale progression MEMORIZED it provides courage to your imagination and allows you to operate from a more creative natural basis. It allows you to take some chances. It helps remove FEAR.

3. Using REPETITION and SEQUENCE is natural in music. It's found in all types and styles of music. The novice improviser often feels that if they repeat an idea, everyone knows they are going to repeat it, so why do it; plus it's not original enough for your EGO so you don't play it. WRONG! The listener needs to hear some repetition and sequence or else they can't remember anything you play. Repetition and Sequence are the glue that holds solos together. The usual number of times something is repeated depends on you but the average is 2 or 3 and then your mind will tell you when to repeat and/or when to use sequence. It's a part of the way we hear music played by others.

4. CHORD TONES (the 1, 3, 5, & 7 of a scale) are great notes to begin and end a phrase with. Just sing a phrase and see if you don't follow this simple rule. Our ears HEAR chord tones first so it's natural to begin and end there. Plus, it gives us and the listener what we're listening for - *harmonic stability*.

5. SOUND: Be sure that you are getting a good, full sound on your instrument (or voice). Don't let the scales and chords or the progression or tempo intimidate you. Sound is foremost and is the FIRST thing a person latches onto when you sing or play. It leaves a lasting impression. So, be yourself and let your voice or instrument ring out. It's the main ingredient of your musical personality.

6. LISTENING: There's no way anyone is going to play jazz or improvise well without **listening** to those musicians who have come before. Through listening alone you can find ALL the answers. Each musician is a result of what they have listened to. It's easy to determine who people have listened to by listening to them play. We all tend to use imitation and it's good to do this. Some feel that if they listen to others they'll just sound like them. This is not true but your ego will try to convince you it's true. The ego hates competition or what it perceives to be competition. Don't let it fool you. If no one listened to anyone else, why play music? Music is for everyone and truly is a Universal Language.

7. Everyone has the ability to improvise - from the youngest child to the senior citizen. You have to have desire and set aside time to work at it until moving your fingers becomes automatic and the distance between your mind and fingers grows smaller and smaller to where you think an idea and your fingers are already playing it. It's not magic. If it is, then magic equals hard work and perseverance. When asked, "What is the greatest obstacle to enlightenment?" the Buddha replied, "Laziness." *I agree!*

THINGS THAT CREATE INTEREST WHEN SOLOING

REPETITION	BLUES SCALE USAGE
SEQUENCE	TENSION & RELEASE
DYNAMICS - Loud & Soft	MOTIFS
RANGE - TESSITURA - High, Low, Middle register	KNOW WHERE CHORD TONES ARE: Tones 1, 3, 5, and 7
ACCENTS	WIND PLAYERS - SUPPORT YOUR SOUND/TONE
HELD NOTES	CHORD OR SCALE PASSAGES
REST - SILENCE	TRILLS, GLISSANDOS, SWOOPS, VIBRATO, STACCATO, etc.
RHYTHMIC VARIATION	EMPHASIZE PRETTY NOTES: 7ths, 9ths, and #4ths,
VARIETY - But not too much!	ALWAYS TRY TO BUILD YOUR SOLO. MAKE IT GO SOMEWHERE.

NOTE: Don't try to play everything you know in one solo. Take your time and plan ahead. Try to visualize your solo with ups and downs, fast sections and slow sections, loud and soft passages, tension and release sections. Aim at overall Tension-Release to your solo. Listen to jazz masters on recordings to get ideas and to wet your imagination. Music is for ears.

STARTING A PHRASE OR MELODY

1. At what part of your instrument will you begin your idea? Middle register, high, low?
2. How do you want to begin? Slowly, with held notes and use of space/rest? Quickly, with lots-of attention, motion, visibility? Moderately so as to suggest a searching mood?
3. What note of scale or chord do you want to begin with?
4. Once you be-in, do you want to ascend, descend, or stay in one general area, register?
5. Do you want to use pick-ups ... one, or more? If so, make sure they lead to the first strong beat!
6. Once you've begun your phrase, how long are you prepared to maintain your continuity, thoughts, ideas? One measure, two, four, eight? Have you thought of it?
7. What rhythm are you going to initially play? Does your mind already "HEAR" the notes/pitches in rhythm? Can you actually play them? Remember, your first phrase represents the first several words or idea of a sentence. Think clearly before you begin.
8. Chord tones (1, 3, 5, 7) are good notes to begin a phrases with. Know where they are on your instrument. 0
9. Is your initial idea coming from your mind or is it something that your fingers have picked out?
10. Windplayers ... be sure you've taken a good breath BEFORE you start each phrase. You need to SUPPORT the tone in order that it may effectively carry your musical thoughts to the mind of another.

PICK-UPS: The most used pickups are half-step, leading tone pickups such as: 7 to 1, #2 to 3, #4 to 5, 4 to 3. Some wholestep leading tones are: 2 to 1, 6 to 5. In a MINOR KEY we use: 4 to b3, 5 to 4, 2 to 1, b7 to 1 or 1 to b7, 5 to 6, 6 to maj.7th, 1 to 2, You can also use one chord tone to another such as 3 to 5, 7 to 5, 3 to 1, 1 to 3, 7 to 9 or 9 to 7. You can also use phrases such as 5, 6, 7, to 1; 5, 7, 9, to 1; b3, 3, 5, 6, to 1. The rhythm that you choose is also very important in making the pick-ups sound like they are LEADING TO the first DOWNBEAT.