

Improvisation Using One Note At A Time

Part 2 – Chords and Patterns

This call builds on the concepts introduced in Part 1 of the call series. You will find it helpful to listen to that call if you have not done so already.

During this call we explore the use of chords and patterns in improvisation keeping these basic guides in mind:

1. Relax
2. Slow down
3. Keep it simple
4. Listen, listen, listen
5. Play just one note at a time
6. Use different rhythms and change the order in which notes are played
7. Use the chord progressions in a tune you already know as the basis for an improvisation, to be changed however you wish.
8. Think musical conversation – chord and answer, chord and answer, etc.
9. Develop freedom in improvising before worrying about pulse tempo and arrhythmic distinctions

For simplicity, everything is demonstrated in the key of C, initially using the Dm (Dorian) triad. On the call, all chords are referred to by the note name of the root for your ease in following the demonstrations. The patterns below can be applied to any chord, whether Major or minor, by using the same intervals relative to the root of your chosen chord.

1. D-F-A (1-3-5 - triad)
2. D-A-D (1-5-8 – open chord)
3. D-F-A-D (1-3-5-8 – full chord)
4. E-F-A-D (2-3-5-8)
5. D-A-F (1-5-10)
6. D-A-D-E-F (1-5-8-9-10) and D-A-F-E-D (1-5-10-9-8)
7. D-A-F-D (1-5-10-8)
8. A-D-D (5-1-8)

Chord progressions included in the demonstrations:

1. Rocking between A using 1-5-10-8 and D using 1-5-10
2. Rocking between G and A using the 5-1-8 pattern with each
3. C-A-F-G-C
4. C-G-A-E-F-C-F-G (based on Pachelbel in C)