



Dave Frank School of Jazz

In-person in NYC or Skype lessons worldwide

FREE AT LAST - PLAYING OUTSIDE THE CHANGES

In this advanced master class we will explore various ways of improvising melodic lines that go outside of the chord changes. We'll use a basic 1-4-5 blues progression and look at 4 different ways to approach this more advanced way of playing. The general concept in playing lines outside the changes is to suspend the underlying chord progression as a basis for linear improvisation for a period of time, improvising during the suspended measures using a different superimposed concept, mode or progression.

The reason that playing outside the changes can work lies in the definition of MUSIC as a logical series of ordered tones. What we call the changes of a tune can simply be thought of as a way we as jazz musicians have been conditioned to expect this logic to function. As long as what we superimpose over the original changes has a definite alternate musical logic, we can be free to play inside and outside of the changes however we like.

Improvising outside of the changes is a vast subject, in this class we'll look at a few alternate musical logics we can superimpose over a basic blues progression.

1) Using Cycled Patterns

A cycled pattern is a short melodic phrase (often 2-4 notes) that is imitated repeatedly ascending and/or descending in pre-determined intervals, called CYCLES. The common cycles used are:

- a) cycle 2 – ascending or descending minor or major 2nds
- b) cycle 3 - ascending or descending minor or major 3rds

Improvising in this way, you can suspend the chord progression and improvise instead using a cycle 2 or 3 pattern for as long as you like (often 4 or more measures), and then return to improvising over the changes. The variation of improvising over the changes, then using a pattern, then coming back to the changes sounds REALLY COOL:) You can explore infinite ways of using variously created patterns and intervallic movements to create a wide palette of crazy sounds. You dig?

Modal Assignment

In this concept, you can assign various modes to a chord or series of chords and improvise over the modes instead of the changes for a period of time. The choices of the assigned modes can include the Greek modes, common jazz modes (the altered dominant, Lydian dominant, etc.), self-created scales, etc. Improvising in this way, attention is commonly paid to the degree of tension of the assigned mode relative to the original progression, or the distance of the assigned mode to the preceding chord.

3) Use of Ambiguous Scales

In this concept, you can suspend the underlying chord sequence and improvise using ambiguous scales for as long as desired. Make sure to create melodic phrases when improvising using ambiguous scales. The ambiguous scales used may or may not have a relationship to the underlying changes.

Some scales to use include:

- a) Whole-Tone Scale
- b) Diminished Scale
- c) Invented scales

2) Chord Extension/Diminution

Using this concept, you can change the chord sequence by adding or subtracting beats to any of the chords. The basic way to extend or diminish chords is to increase or decrease the number of beats of a chord while keeping the underlying sequence intact. A more advanced way to play is to break the original chord sequence by extending or diminishing chords any way you choose! As long as you can create a melodic line over the new sequence, it may work.

Try this at home, chow for now amigos!

PATTERNS

cycle min 2 cycle maj 2



cycle min 3 cycle major 3



cycle min 2 - C D^b E^b

cycle maj 2 - C D E F[#]

cycle min 3 - C E^b G^b A

cycle maj 3 - C E G[#]

MODAL ASSIGNMENT

F₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ | F₇ |

f mixolydian →

B^b₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ | F₇ |

G^b phrygian

F mixolydian

C₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ | F₇ |

D^b lydian | E^b mixolydian | F mixolydian |

Carta

AMBIGUOUS SCALES

WHOLE-TONE = C D E F# G# A# C

DIMINISHED = C D E^b F G^b A^b B C

CHORD EXTENSION

F₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ | F₇ |

B^b₇ | B^b₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ |

C₇ | B^b₇ | F₇ | F₇ ||