



Improv 101 & 102 Review and The Three Pillars

Jazz Guitar Improv 103

As usual, before we begin, let's do a short review of what we learned in previous courses. So quickly, in Improv 101 you learned a variety of chord scales and fingerings for them that allowed you to improvise all the technically "correct" notes. I don't like this. That's why I use the quotes. Over typical jazz chords. So we have correct notes over chords and progressions. You also took subsets of those chord scales specifically the main chord tones. So if you recall, arpeggios. One, three, five, and seven. And you improvised with them, as arpeggios.

In these ways you strengthened what we call, the first pillar of improvisation, which is: defining the sandbox in which you're playing at this point you had learned all the technically correct notes to play for the vast majority of jazz standards, and you even began exploring various standards that within the sandbox that you could exploit to create interesting jazz improv vocabulary. So that's the jist of Improv 101. Play "correct" notes. Kind of. In Improv 102, we took all of that a little deeper by drilling down into the specific of each chord scale. You learned that the third and the seventh of each chords scale are called the "guide" tones, and they act as guide posts to target while changing chords, as it happens in the cycle of fourths progressions, or basically 90% of jazz chords, jazz standard progressions.

The seventh of one chord falls very neatly to the third of the next chord. So from there you learned the importance of slotting chord tones on the beat. A Barry Harris method kind of approach for organizing and practicing chord

scales over progressions. Then the Bert Ligon style of approach to outlines that give you ways you can use arpeggios and upper structure arpeggios to connect your chords together. And also some creative uses of pentatonic scales. We did a little bit of that. And all of these approaches were meant to strengthen what we called, the second pillar of improvisation. Which is, connecting chords logically. In particular, by making switches to important chord tones at the point of chord change; that's exactly where the second pillar is.

By now, I believe you should have a pretty good handle on not only the correct notes to play at any moment in a song. Right, you see a chord, like a D minor seven, you know that's a D dorian scale or whatever. But also now you're starting to have a grasp of which of those notes will help you to create a harmonically strong sound and when to play them. It's about timing and in this course we're going to get you acquainted with all aspects of timing for the vocabulary you've already learned. Meaning chord scales, arpeggios, connecting chords, but we'll add this timing phrasing articulation aspect. If you don't remember, pillar number three is all about articulating your lines and our goal, the ultimate aim of pillar three is to take the vocabulary we've internalized with the first two pillars and articulate and improvise better phrases. Ultimately with pillar three, we want the ability. That's what I want to pass on to you.

To start and stop your improv musical phrases at any eighth note subdivision in the bar. So far you've learned patterns that target upon a chord change, usually, beat three and beat one, the strong beats of the bar. Either starting or resolving at those moments. And after drilling these patterns, I'm sure a lot of you must have felt that there has to be more to that. There has to be more to jazz improv than just that; it's not a formula. Well, there it is. It's improv 103 and you'll begin to learn how to create musical phrasing like jazz masters. This is like the last frontier if you want. I want to stress this again. I know it's a lot of talking before we start. So the ultimate aim of the third pillar is to master starting and ending any musical phrase on any eighth note in the bar. This is a very long term goal, taking years of dedicated practice and listening to masters.

So the goal of this course is merely to set you on the right path towards that essential pillar of jazz improv. So, no more talking. I'm done here. Let's dig into the exercises. Let's get started.