

IMPROVISATION BASICS

Most beginning improvisers use too many ideas in a solo instead of developing a few simple ideas. Using short melodic phrases, elaborate on them using the following concepts:

REPETITION - probably one of the most basic yet effective ideas is to simply repeat a phrase. The repeat can be made exactly, or with slight adjustments to fit a different harmony. The repeated idea can also be moved around rhythmically to fall on different beats in successive measures.

ALTER PHRASES - alter repeated phrases rhythmically by shortening or lengthening the value of the notes. Changes can be very subtle or quite extensive.

TRANSPOSITION - take a melodic phrase and transpose it when changing to new harmonies.

SEQUENCING - combining the basic concepts of repetition and transposition is the idea behind sequencing; the melodic phrase is repeated at different pitch levels usually moving up or down a step.