

Herb Ellis **JAZZ** Guitar Method **RHYTHM SHAPES**

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UNIT ONE: RHYTHM CHANGES

ANALYSIS OF "RHYTHM CHANGES"

Do not jump ahead to the following chapters until you have thoroughly analyzed this progression and can play it smoothly. Avoid the common mistake that many inexperienced guitarists make of underestimating the value of the accompaniment as an effective source for building solos. Until you have a strong understanding and feel for the chord progression, you will needlessly struggle to come up with strong solos for it.

It is important to point out that accompanying other soloists properly is a valuable skill that will expand your performance and work opportunities. What player doesn't like to be associated with musicians that compliment his or her own playing? If you are a great soloist but lack the ability to comp effectively, you are not going to impress or motivate many players to call you again.

RHYTHM CHANGES STRUCTURE

"Rhythm Changes" is 32 bars long. The first eight bar phrase is played twice, followed by an eight bar bridge and then a return to the first eight bars. The first eight bars can be referred to as the A section, and the eight bar bridge as the B section. So the 32 bar verse can be summarized as two eight bar segments arranged in a traditional AABA format.

Basic Changes:

The following table summarizes the chord progression for the 'Basic Changes' progression:

Section	Bar	Chord
A Section (First 8 Bars)	1	B \flat 6
	2	Gm7
	3	Cm7
	4	F9
	5	B \flat 6
	6	Gm7
	7	Cm7
	8	F9
B Section (Bridge)	9	Fm
	10	B \flat 13
	11	E \flat
	12	E \flat m7
	13	B \flat 6
	14	F9
	15	B \flat 6
A Section (Return)	16	B \flat 6
	17	F9
	18	B \flat 6
	19	D7
	20	G7
	21	C7
	22	F7

UNIT TWO: SHAPE 1

SOLOING

It is significantly easier to reference melodic ideas using chord shapes instead of endless scale patterns, modes and arpeggios. This convenient and simple approach allows players to sound more natural and musical. Unfortunately, many aspiring guitarists devote too much time and energy practicing scales in all positions, including all of the unnecessary, awkward and impractical fingerings. Not only is this an inefficient use of practice time, but it usually results in solos that sound like somebody playing scales.

I can not overemphasize how important it is to sing what you play or play what you are singing. You do not have to be a singer. You don't have to sing loudly, or even above your breath. Scatting, as this is sometimes called, directly improves your ability to play what you hear, which in turn, sounds less like someone playing memorized patterns.

SHAPE 1

Chapters 2–5 will begin to give you an idea of how much music lies within a chord shape. Since the chord shapes are movable, the lines you associate with them will be movable as well. You need to establish a routine of transposing every example you learn to the remaining eleven keys.

Shape 1 is shown as a B \flat chord at the third fret. The following diagrams are of Shape 1 followed by its corresponding major scale and arpeggio, and its corresponding dominant 7th scale and arpeggio. Your goal is to be able to instantly *visualize* these shapes as references for your lines. This does not mean that you have to play these scales or arpeggios fast to make them work for you.

B \flat Chord

B \flat Major Arpeggio

B \flat Dominant 7th Scale and Arpeggio