

INTRODUCTION

Jazz Improvisation has been called an accelerated form of composition, because, although it is instantaneous, it draws on the same blend of theoretical techniques and intuitive musical instincts required for composition. It also involves a process similar to everyday conversation. And, as in the most articulate speech, improvisation improves when one's vocabulary is fortified.

That's where *Tons of Runs* can come in handy. It is a compendium of runs, licks, and lines found in the jazz vernacular: a vocabulary enhancer. Jazz melody consists of melodic motifs strung together to form longer phrases. The construction of these motifs is usually based on an underlying harmony. Stated simply, the lines are built on the chords - using chord tones, passing tones, resultant scales and scale-tone chords in every-varying mixtures. Along with this vocabulary, the jazz improviser also adds his or her aural instinct. At any point in an improvised solo, the soloist might play a run familiar to many musicians, which gives the listener as well as the player something to latch onto. This can be followed by a line created on the spot, which can be generated by hand position or on the chord tones and/or scale tones, as a response to something someone else in the band just played, or as divine inspiration. The blend of these elements is what keeps a jazz solo vital and moving forward.

Tons of Runs is a collection of melodic motifs and phrases over a variety of chords and chord qualities. There are major chords, minor chords, half diminished and diminished chords, as well as various alterations. There are also progressions of ii-V-I in major and minor, cyclical progressions, and various cadences. All this is presented in a straight forward fashion, without analysis. As with much in music, analysis can come after the

fact. Of the myriad methods for using this volume, here are some suggestions which you might find useful:

- Leaf through the book from the beginning; when a run catches your ear, zoom in for closer inspection. Analyze it to see various components such as starting and ending notes, how the notes relate to the given chord (i.e., are they scale tones, and if so, what scale), how it uses chord tones, non-chord tones, chromatic tones, chord extensions, and chord alterations.
- Leaf through the book like a magazine, from back to front, then follow the same procedure as above.
- Start from somewhere in between, and go forward or back or skip around.
- Start at the beginning, and follow through to the end. Go at a slow, comfortable pace. Mark your favorites, memorize them, and begin using these in your improvised solos.
- Use the book with a metronome; read through the runs without correcting errors. This can be valuable in increasing your sight reading skills. Start at slow tempos, and increase them gradually.
- Use the table of contents to access runs with specific phrase lengths, chord types and progressions in various categories. Then plug each run into specific chords in tunes.
- You will notice that each run appears in three different keys. The different sonorities will be apparent when you play them. When you come across a run you really like, transpose it to all the other tonal centers. Concentrate on that one run, until you have it down in all keys. Then you will be able to use it in any playing situation.
- Fingering is indicated in the trickiest places. These are merely suggestions; you might

be able to come up with something more comfortable and negotiable that fits your hand and technique. It is an important part of the improvisatory process to be able to finger “on the fly,” simply because improvisation is spontaneous and there is no time to pre-finger any given phrase. Here’s a hint: consider the shape of the run and whether it goes up or down. See how many notes you can play while the hand is in one position.

- You’ll notice that there are more dominant seventh runs than any other type in this collection. Many are based on the symmetric diminished scale (Whole Step-Half Step-Whole Step-Half Step, etc.). You can expand the application of these runs by applying them to major seventh chords (substitute a diminished seventh for the major seventh built on the same root). Apply them also to minor chords (ii in a ii-V progressions) and to half diminished chords (the iib5 in a iib5-V progression).
- You can also expand the application of

many of these runs by applying them to different chords. For example, take a run over C minor 7; play the exact same notes, but over an Ab minor 7. You are now playing out of the tonality, but in a uniform and related manner, not as an arbitrary choice of notes. Use this technique to weave in and out of tonalities; it will give your playing a greater degree of tensions and release.

- Change a note by a half step or a whole step; go up instead of down, displace a rhythm. This will personalize a run, and make it unique to your style.
- If you’ve had little experience in improvisation, take a tune and pick a run for each chord in the tune. Consult the ***Handbook of Chord Substitutions*** for tunes and progressions. Write out a chorus or two in this manner, and you have just “improvised” your first solo!

To sum up, use any window you can find to get into this collection. These runs can stand alone, or can be used as a springboard for your own melodic creations. In any case, there is no substitute for time spent practicing your craft.

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A⁷

Musical staff for A⁷ chord. The melody starts on G4 (fingering 1), moves to A4, B4, C5, then descends to B4, A4, G4 (fingering 2), and ends on F#4.

B^b7

Musical staff for B^b7 chord. The melody starts on Bb4, moves to C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, then descends to F4, E4, D4.

E7

Musical staff for E7 chord. The melody starts on E4, moves to F#4, G4, A4, B4, then descends to A4, G4, F#4, and ends on E4.

D⁹

Musical staff for D⁹ chord. The melody starts on D#4 (fingering 5), moves to E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, then descends to A4, G4, F4, and ends on D4.

E^b9

Musical staff for E^b9 chord. The melody starts on Eb4, moves to F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, then descends to Ab4, G4, F4, and ends on Eb4.

A⁹

Musical staff for A⁹ chord. The melody starts on A#4, moves to B4, C5, D5, E5, then descends to D5, C5, B4, and ends on A4.

for: C⁷ A⁷ E^b7 F[#]7 chords

Musical staff for C⁷, A⁷, E^b7, F[#]7 chords. The melody starts on C4 (fingering 2), moves to D4, E4, F4, G4, then descends to F4, E4, D4, and ends on C4.

for: D^b7 E7 G7 B^b7 chords

Musical staff for D^b7, E7, G7, B^b7 chords. The melody starts on D4, moves to E4, F4, G4, A4, then descends to G4, F4, E4, and ends on D4.

for: D7 F7 A^b7 B7 chords

Musical staff for D7, F7, A^b7, B7 chords. The melody starts on D4 (fingering 1), moves to E4, F4, G4, A4, then descends to G4, F4, E4, and ends on D4.

Amaj⁷

5 1 5 3

Gmaj⁷

B^bmaj⁷

B^bmaj⁷

4 3 1 2 1 2 4 5

D^bmaj⁷

4 2 3 1

Dmaj⁷

4 3 1 2 3 1 3 5

E^bmaj⁷

1 5

E^bmaj⁷

A^bmaj⁷

2 1 2 3 5

Csus⁴

F⁷sus⁴

Bsus⁴

This block contains three staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'Csus⁴' and shows a sequence of notes: C4, E4, G4, A4, G4, E4, C4. The second staff is labeled 'F⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: F4, A4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4. The third staff is labeled 'Bsus⁴' and shows notes: B2, D3, F3, G3, F3, D3, B2.

Gsus⁴

A⁷sus⁴

E⁷sus⁴

This block contains three staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'Gsus⁴' and shows notes: G3, B3, D4, E4, D4, B3, G3. The second staff is labeled 'A⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: A3, C4, E4, F4, E4, C4, A3. The third staff is labeled 'E⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: E3, G3, B3, C4, B3, G3, E3.

F⁷sus⁴

A⁷sus⁴

D⁷sus⁴

This block contains three staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'F⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: F3, A3, C4, D4, C4, A3, F3. The second staff is labeled 'A⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: A3, C4, E4, F4, E4, C4, A3. The third staff is labeled 'D⁷sus⁴' and shows notes: D3, F3, A3, B3, A3, F3, D3.

B^bmaj⁷(9)



D^bmaj⁷(9)



A^bmaj⁷(9)



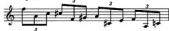
B^bmaj⁷(9)



Dmaj⁷(9)



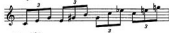
A⁺maj⁷(9)



B^bmaj⁷(9)



C⁺maj⁷(9)



G⁺maj⁷(9)



C/B^b F/A A⁷dim/A^b C/G

D/C G/B Cdim/B^b D/A

E/D^b A/C C⁷dim/B E/B^b

A⁷(C⁷)

B⁷(C⁷)

A⁷(C⁷)

A^b A⁷dim E^b/B^b

A B^bdim E/B

B Cdim F⁷/C⁷