

Musilosophy

Home | Pop music videos | Pop blues jazz albums | Jazz improvisation and harmony | Lingua italiana | HELP and FAQ |

Site menu

- - Blues singer songwriter jazz pianist
- - Pop music videos
- - Pop blues jazz albums
- - Jazz pianist music stores
- - Improvisation : MIOP donation

Improvisation and music harmony : MIOP

- - Learn improvisation technique : introduction
- - Jazz improvisation and music harmony : **summary**
- - Music harmony concepts
- - Chord charts and keys
- - Learn chord charts
- - Major seventh
- - Dominant chord chart
- - Minor seventh chords
- - Half diminished chords
- - Diminished chord
- - Altered, whole tone, pentatonic, diminished scales
- - Blues scales chart
- - Learn blues chords and structures
- - Major blues charts
- - Minor blues
- » Jazz melody and improvisation
- - Jazz phrasing : imitation technique

Jazz melody building in improvisation : chordal, turning, passing notes

This is the most important chapter! In this page I explain how you can build a melody : these "rules" are not only for improvisation but for composing songs and other instrumental or vocal pieces.

I suggest you to learn every item to build melodic lines; they base on classic and jazz harmony and you can improvise or compose easily and correctly by knowing them. I want to specify that knowing and mastering harmonic techniques are not enough to create high artistic value music. Musician has to express emotions, ideas and messages to himself and to the public, besides playing in a right harmonic way.

So an improviser needs:

- **Well trained hands**
- **Learned mind**
- **Open hearth**

When these three faculties are synchronized and in harmony, your improvisations, compositions and your music become magic and have a great emotional power.

Melody is the most powerful and beautiful item of music. It has symmetric, geometric and harmonic rules:

Pay Attention: I mean 1th , 3th, 5th and seventh (**of a chord**) by "CHORDAL NOTE"

- - Music phrasing
 - - Music theory and mistakes
 - - Music rhythm
 - - Swing jazz rhythm
 - - Learn music theory :
polyrhythms
 - - Jazz techniques : practice
 - - Music techniques : coming soon
- articles
- - Art of improvisation project
 - - General improvisation tips
 - - Music studying : general tips



When you improvise or compose, you can use to build a melody these notes: generally they are chordal notes or notes that return on them. So the *fundamental melodic concept* is:

MELODY is based on the [CHORD](#) and on the [KEY](#) in which it is. Here are the most used and important e rules or suggestions to build a melody.

- [Chordal notes](#)
- [Turning note](#)
- [Passing](#)
- [Leaning](#)
- [Delaying](#)
- [Anticipated](#)
- [Chromatic](#)
- [Mixed](#)
- [Double leaning tones](#)

Test every item with your ears! Let me know what you think about!

1. [Notes of the chord](#) - (**Chordal notes**)

(= chordal note)

Musical notation in 4/4 time, F Major key. The melody consists of the following notes: F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). Chord changes are indicated below the staff: Gm7 II (under the first measure), C7 V (under the second measure), and F I (under the third measure). A dashed line below the staff indicates the key signature: F Maj key.

You can use the notes of a chord freely

2. **Turning** note : does not belong to chord but comes from a note of the chord and turn on it. (T = Turning note)

Musical notation in 4/4 time, Eb Major key. The melody consists of the following notes: Eb4 (quarter), Fb4 (quarter), Gb4 (quarter), Ab4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), Ab4 (quarter), Gb4 (quarter), Fb4 (quarter), Eb4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). Chord changes are indicated below the staff: Abmaj7 IV (under the first measure), Bb7 V (under the second measure), and Eb I (under the third measure). Turning notes (T) are marked above the notes: Ab4, Bb4, Ab4, and Eb4. A dashed line below the staff indicates the key signature: Eb Maj key.

You have to turn on the note of the chord

3. **Passing** note : it is between two chordal notes. (P = Passing note)

Bbm7
IV
F min key

C7b9
V

Fm7
I

^ TOP

How to build a jazz melody in improvisation : leaning, delaying, anticipated notes

4. **Leaning** note (Appoggiatura) : it leans on a chordal note (L = Leaning note)

Fmaj7
IV
C Maj key

Dm7
II

G7
V

After a leaning note you have to play the chordal note close to it

5. **Delaying** note (Ritardo) : it delays a chordal note (D = Delaying note)

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of the following notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (half). Chords are indicated below the staff: Em7 (I) for the first measure, A7 (IV) for the second measure, and Em7 (I) for the third measure. Above the staff, letters T, D, P, D, and L are placed above the notes G, A, B, A, and G respectively. A dashed line at the bottom of the staff is labeled "E min key (Melodic/Natural Scale)".

After a delaying note you have to play the straight away below chordal note

The difference between leaning and delaying note is: the first one can go up or down to a chordal note while the second must go down to the straight away below chordal note!

6. **Anticipated** note (Anticipo) : it belongs to the next chord (A = Anticipated note)

1 L A L T A P P

Bbmaj7 Gm7 F7

I VI V

Bb Maj key -----

^ TOP

Jazz melody building in improvisation : chromatic, mixed, double leaning notes

7. **Chromatic** note : it belongs neither chord nor key (C = Chromatic note)

1 Ct L Cp 9b Cp Cl P

Bm7/b5 E7b9 Am7

II V I

A min key -----

I distinguish these cases:

7.1 Chromatic passing note (Cp)

7.2 Chromatic turning note (Ct)

7.3 Chromatic leaning note (Cl)

8. **Mixed** notes : they are a mix or a combination of previous cases:

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of the following notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Above the staff, the notes are labeled with their movement types: T, Tt, T, L, Pl, P, Pp, L, Pl, D, Pd. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: Gmaj7 (IV), A7 (V), Dmaj7 (I), D7 (V), Gmaj7 (I). A dashed line separates the D Major key section (first four measures) from the G major key section (last two measures).

For example:

- Passing note of a passing note (also chromatic) =Pp
- Passing note of a turning note (also chromatic) =Pt
- Turning note of a turning note (also chromatic) =Tt
- Passing note of a delaying note (also chromatic) =Pd
- And so on.....

9. **Double leaning** tones (=Ld)

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of no sharps or flats. The melody consists of the following notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3. Above the staff, the notes are labeled with their movement types: Ld, Ld, D, Ld, Ld, Ld, Ld. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: Bm7/b5 (II), E7#9 (V), Am7 (I). A dashed line indicates the A minor key.

This is a good melodic ornament

[^ TOP](#)

Melodic concepts

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