

APPLIED JAZZ CLINIC



Lesson Plan

Three Jazz Blues Structures

Summary

1. **Subject(s):** Simple Blues, Jazz Blues, “Bird” Blues
2. **Topic or Unit of Study:** Common Song Forms for Jazz Improvisation
3. **Grade/Level:** 9th Grade Jazz Band Student and above
4. **Objective:** a.) The construction of chords includes the same notes as scales except rather than proceeding stepwise, chords proceed by intervals of thirds (line note to line note, space note to space note). b.) Using the notes of each chord in time with the music will produce a coherent improvisation. c.) Using the notes of each chord in combination with the notes of the implied scale in time will produce a coherent improvisation. d.) Recognizing what chord symbols represent the 1, 4, and 5 chords of a Blues Key. e.) Recognizing what scales is implied by the ii7-V7 progressions in the progression. f.) Reinforce that proficiency in the performance of major scales is essential to coherent improvisation skills and understanding of Song Form structures used in Jazz music.
5. **Time Allotment:** 1-hour or more of class period time to introduce and practice the lesson during the clinic. Multiple practice sessions to mastery of the material toward useful performance and compositional applications by students.

Implementation

Learning Context

Have your students learned everything they need to know in order to complete this lesson? This might be a good time to review some previous clinic lessons like Major Tetrachords, Harmonic Minor Scale in Jazz and basic intervals so that they feel prepared to learn something exciting and new!

Procedure

a. Anticipatory Set

Did you know that most rock and popular music uses some form of the simple blues chord progression? It's true. The jazz versions of the blues add supplemental chords that progress to strategic points in the 12-bar-blues progression, notably the 5th and 8th measures. The "Bird" blues is also known as a "back cycle" blues because a series of ii7-V7 cycles are inserted in the fourth, third and second measures specifically, giving the overall sound of the progression a flavor that seems different than a simple blues.

b. Direct Instruction

Hand out parts. Have students play their respective written part for each 12-measure segment of the "Applied Clinic" handout. Flute and Clarinet parts are included. Take note that chords are written in an ascending manner, but can also be played in the various inversions as well as descending - doing this adds to improvisational variety.

c. Guided Practice

Using the "Applied Clinic" handout target problem areas and new information for the students and isolate specific measures to play repetitively toward mastery.

d. Check for Understanding

Ask lots of questions throughout your lesson to make sure that your students are feeling comfortable with all of this exciting new information. Note that this is very involved applied music theory subject matter relative to the normal course of study in most school music programs. Some students will not grasp the entirety of the clinic in one class period.

- e. Independent Practice
- f. Closing

This is the perfect opportunity to open up the class for a group discussion. Ask your students questions that help them realize the importance of today's lesson with questions like, "how will you use this information in your performance of blues and improvisation?"

Differentiated Instruction

Try to keep in mind that children learn in many different ways. By consciously thinking about this, you'll be able to use different teaching techniques to reach as many children as possible in your classroom!

- a. Visual Learners
- b. Auditory Learners
- c. Kinesthetic Learners
- d. ESL Students
- e. At-risk Students
- f. Advanced Learners

Materials & Resources

When choosing supplementary materials and resources for your lesson plan (books, videos, etc.), try to put yourself in the shoes of your students. Find resources that ENHANCE your lesson and make your instruction an inviting learning experience for your class!

- a. Instructional Materials: "Applied Clinic" handout
- b. Resources: White Board, Chalk Board, Access to YouTube Videos, etc.

Assessment

It must be understood by both teachers and students that jazz improvisation is a continual learning process that involves applied abilities on a particular musical instrument. The ability to perform all major scales is essential. Students who have problems with materials covered in this clinic will find out their weaknesses as musicians and know what to practice. Weaknesses will become strengths. Encourage students to employ - Practice. Patience. Persistence.