

Sonnymoon For Two - Session 1 (Concert)

This is a 12 bar blues composition. Before getting into the melodic and harmonic detail of the piece, I suggest getting familiar with the melodic rhythm. By internalising the rhythm of the melody, we are able to explore some of the polyrhythms implied within it. These exercises help to improve our rhythmic accuracy, expand our rhythmic vocab and help us understand how this short, repeated phrase is so effective.

The first step is to clap the rhythm as shown below. Remember that the quavers are swung. It's helpful to do this along with a recording. I find it easier to do while singing the melody too.

Step 1: Clapping the rhythm. The notation shows a 4/4 time signature with a 7-measure rest, followed by a melody line with eighth notes and a triplet of eighth notes. The rhythm is indicated by vertical lines below the staff.

Step 2 is to clap the rhythm as above, while stamping the crotchet pulse:

Step 2: Clapping the rhythm as above, while stamping the crotchet pulse. The notation shows two staves: the top staff has the melody and the bottom staff has vertical lines representing the crotchet pulse.

Step 3 is to clap the rhythm as above, while stamping on 2 and 4:

Step 3: Clapping the rhythm as above, while stamping on 2 and 4. The notation shows two staves: the top staff has the melody and the bottom staff has vertical lines representing the stamping on beats 2 and 4.

Step 4 is to sing the rhythm as above (with the melody notes as shown), while stamping on 2 and 4 and clapping only on 1:

Step 4: Singing the rhythm as above (with the melody notes as shown), while stamping on 2 and 4 and clapping only on 1. The notation shows three staves: the top staff has the melody with chords (Bb7, Eb7, Bb7), the middle staff has the stamping, and the bottom staff has the clapping.

Now using the lead sheet below, try improvising over the full 12 bars, using only the rhythm of the melody, but notes from the chords shown.

Lead sheet for the 12-bar blues. The notation shows three staves of music with chords and the melody line. The chords are Bb7, Eb7, Bb7, Bb7, Eb7, Eo, Bb7, G7, C-, F7, Bb, G7, C-, F7.