

Take The A Train - Session 3 (Bass Clef)

In session 3, I am looking for ways in which we can develop material which can help us reflect the melody in our improvisation. Aside from the ever applicable devices of interpretation and a augmentation of the melody its self, there are a number of devices in this melody which can be isolated and applied as improving techniques.

One strongly identifiable feature of this melody is the use of the 6th interval, as highlighted below:

C D7#11

Ascending major 6th Descending major 6th Descending minor 6th

D- G7 C

5 Descending major 6th Ascending major 6th Descending major 6th

A great practice task to help make use of this interval in our improvisation is to play the two scales we identified in session 1 in these intervals, both ascending and descending. This is shown below:

9 C major - Ascending 6ths

13 D Lydian Dominant - Ascending 6ths

17 C major - Descending 6ths

21 D Lydian Dominant - Descending 6ths

The melody in bars 6 and 7 make use of a pattern which alternates ascending and descending 6ths through the scale. This idea is extended through the opening 4 bars below:

25 C

27 D⁷#11

To develop this idea further, there are a number of ways in which the melody decorates, disguises and approaches the use of the 6th interval. One such device is the chromatic descending approach, playing two notes, one a scale tone above, and one a semitone above the target note before playing the target note and then ascending a 6th. This forms a four note 'cell' or 'lick' based on the last four notes of bar 6. This pattern is shown below, transposed through both the I major and II⁷#11 Scales:

I major - Ascending 6ths with two note approach

29

31

II Lydian Dominant - Ascending 6ths with two note approach

33

35