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FREE online resources on the Art of Improvisation

# (Piano) Improvisation Technique

by Musilosophy



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*Improvisation* means **real time** composing.....

## **“I know of knowing nothing” ( Socrates )**

**Music is based on harmony**

*Harmony is based on chords and scales*

**Melody and improvisation are based on chords and scales**

*Accompaniment is based on chords and scales*

**Chords are based on scales**

*Scales are based on physics, mathematical principles and musical traditions*

**Musical traditions are based on human perception, technology, economy, history, religion...**

## *SUMMARY*

### *1. Keys*

- ✓ Key awareness
- ✓ Major
- ✓ Minor
- ✓ Scale harmonization

### *2. Chords*

- ✓ Major 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ Minor 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ Half diminished 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ Diminished 7<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ Inversions
- ✓ Chord degrees

### *3. Other scales*

- ✓ Blues
- ✓ Whole tone
- ✓ Diminished
- ✓ Diminished/whole tone
- ✓ Pentatonic

## *4.Melody*

- ✓ Melody building
- ✓ Chordal notes
- ✓ Turning note
- ✓ Passing note
- ✓ Leaning note
- ✓ Delaying note
- ✓ Anticipated note
- ✓ Chromatic note
- ✓ Double leaning note
- ✓ Mixed note
- ✓ “Wrong” notes

## *5.Phrasing*

- ✓ Beginning of phrase
- ✓ Ending of phrase
- ✓ Imitation

## *6.Rhythm*

- ✓ Emphasizing offbeats and upbeats
- ✓ Syncopation
- ✓ Swing
- ✓ Polyrhythmics

## *7.Practice... Practice... Practice...*

- ✓ Generale practice
- ✓ Progressive drills
- ✓ Fundamental drills
- ✓ Greatest piano improvise

## **About improvisation**

- ✓ **Intervals**
  
- ✓ **Improvisation with perfect fourths**
  
- ✓ **Analysis of solos**
  
- ✓ **Lydian chromatic concept**
  
- ✓ **Main chordal progressions**
  
- ✓ **Main used forms**
  
- ✓ **Improvisation tips**
  
- ✓ **Inside, outside**
  
- ✓ **“Free” improvisation**
  
- ✓ **What you have to avoid...**
  
- ✓ **Improvisation goals**

## **About other music subjects**

✓ **COMPOSING**

✓ **EAR TRAINING**

✓ **ARRANGING**

✓ **ANALYSIS**



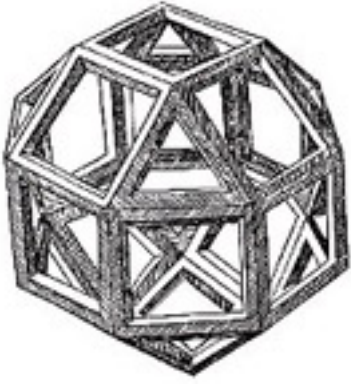
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## Jazz improvisation, music harmony and theory

**MIOP** means Musilosophy Improvisation Open Project.

*"Improvisation means real time composing....."*

*Improvisation means composing new ideas...."*

Music bases on harmony.

Melody and improvisation base on chords and scales.

Accompaniment base on chords and scales too.

Chords base on scales.

Scales base on physic, mathematical principles and music traditions.

Music traditions base on human perception, technology, economy, history, religion.

You need to know the following items to improvise and compose in a right and nice way:

first you have to know all [major and minor scales](#) and relative keys and all chords in every keys. Then you must play [all chord inversions](#) and the [building melody techniques](#).

You have to practice so much so you can play right melodic lines



with [swing](#) and without thinking about scales, rules, keys...

[Phrasing](#) is the following step.

You must learn to begin and finish melodic phrases from every point of measure.

[Ear training](#), transcribing, transposing, voicing, harmonization are other important and fundamental techniques to learn jazz improvisation and composing.

These techniques can give you the skill for express the music you have inside.

Learning jazz improvisation is not simple. The theory and harmonic concepts you have to learn are few and **easy to understand** but the fundamental concept is just one: to learn improvisation you have to play much and practice for a longtime! I used to compare improvisation with **language**. Improvisation is a language, you can express ideas, concepts and emotions and sometimes much deeper than language. So, as well as you have to study and practice a lot to learn English or French or Italian so you have to do the same with music improvisation.

You do not need to understand difficult concepts but without doubts you must **be patient**. Here in this site I offer free resources to learn this art but be patient if my English is not perfect.

## 1. [Music harmony : keys](#)

Key awareness

Major

Minor

Scale harmonization

## 2. [Chord charts](#)

Major 7th

Minor 7th

Dominant 7th

Half diminished 7th

Diminished 7th

Inversions

Chord degrees

## 3. [More music scales](#)

Blues

Whole tone

Diminished

Diminished/whole tone

Pentatonic

## 4. [Melody and improvvisation lesson](#)

Melody building

Chordal notes

Turning note

Passing note

Leaning note

Delaying note

Anticipated note

Chromatic note

Double leaning note

Mixed note

Wrong notes

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More resources on music harmony and jazz improvisation

#### 5. [Musical phrase](#)

Beginning of phrase

Ending of phrase

Imitation

#### 6. [Music rhythm and jazz swing](#)

Emphasizing off beats and upbeats

Syncopation

Swing

Polyrhythmic

#### 7. [Practice and improvisation techniques](#)

General practice

Progressive drills

Fundamental drills

Greatest piano improvisors

If you have troubles to understand what I write, or any concepts I try to explain, send me an email.

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**Music harmony concepts : keys**

## KEY AWARENESS

Scale is a sequence of tones.

It is a base to make music.

The main scales of western music are major and minor scales.

Every scale determines a key, that is a harmonic combination of tones based on that scale.

So, F Major key uses the tones of F Major scale. E minor key uses the tones of E minor scales.

I consider the Blues like a key: for example Bb Blues or Bb minor Blues are like a Major and Minor key type.

You always have to know in which key you are playing in each moment.

Modulation is a change of key.

Each scale or key has its own chords.

They are build on each degree of the scale with harmonization by thirds.

You can recognize key by Clef, chords, melody...

The chords of every key are:

Major Key : D Maj Example

Musical notation for D Major key chords. The staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: Dmaj7, Em7, F#m7, Gmaj7, A7, Bm7, C#m7/A5, and Dmaj7. Roman numerals I through VII are placed below each chord label.

Harmonic Minor Key : D minor example

Musical notation for D Harmonic Minor key chords. The staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are D, E, F, G, A, B, C#, D. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: Dmj7, Em7/A5, F#maj7/A5, Gm7, A7(9), Bmaj7, C#dim7, and Dmj7. Roman numerals I through VII are placed below each chord label.

Natural Minor Key : D minor example

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a diatonic chord progression in D minor. The chords are: Dm7 (I), Em7#5 (II), Fmaj7 (III), Gm7 (IV), Am7 (V), Bbmaj7 (VI), C7 (VII), and Dm7 (I). Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a chord symbol below it.

Melodic Minor Key : D minor example

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a diatonic chord progression in D Melodic Minor. The chords are: Dm7 (I), Em7#5 (II), Fmaj7#5 (III), G7 (IV), A7 (V), Bm7#5 (VI), Cbm7#5 (VII), and Dm7 (I). Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a chord symbol below it.

Transpose and play in all keys!

Practice the analysis and recognition of chords, modulations and keys in classic music,  
jazz, pop songs...

Recognize the chords and then the key they belong to.

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## Music theory and harmony : chords and keys

Remember:

Each chord has not its own scale.

The scale of each chord depends by the **key** in which it is!

This concept is important but I have realized that not many musicians have understood its importance.

For example, they play the D Dorian scale also on a Dmin7 that belongs to Bb key!

In this way they do two terrible mistakes: E instead of Eb and B instead of Bb!

Let us analyze this song:

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with three staves (treble, alto, and bass). The key signature is three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab).

**System 1 (Measures 17-20):**

- Measure 17: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 18: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 19: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 20: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.

Chord symbols below System 1: G7<sup>9</sup> V, Cm7 I, Abmaj7 VI.

**System 2 (Measures 21-24):**

- Measure 21: Treble clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 22: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 23: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 24: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.

Chord symbols below System 2: Abmaj7 VI, Bb7 V, Ebmaj7 I, Cm7 VI.

**System 3 (Measures 25-28):**

- Measure 25: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 26: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 27: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.
- Measure 28: Treble clef has a whole rest. Bass clef has a triplet of eighth notes: G, Bb, Ab.

Chord symbols below System 3: Abmaj7 IV, Bb7 V, Ebmaj7 I.

Key signatures are indicated by dashed lines: "C minor key" for the first system, "C min key" for the second system, and "Eb key" for the third system.

When you improvise on this song you have to use basically the C minor scale (when you are in C minor key) and Eb scale when you are in Eb key.

This is the key concept. But a melody and so an improvisation base above all on chord besides on key.

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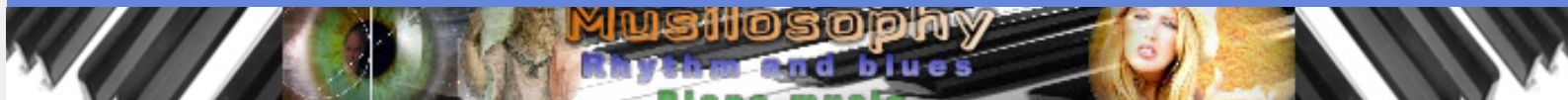
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## How to learn chord charts

### *Chord families*

Every melody and accompaniment bases on a chord.

Melody generally uses the notes of a chord or notes that return to it.

You need to know and play every chord very well to improvise.

The fundamental drill is playing every chord and every inversion of each chord.

I suggest to study five families of chords:

1. Major seventh chord
2. Dominant 7
3. Minor seventh
4. Half-diminished
5. Diminished 7

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### Learn chord charts with inversions : major, dominant

Play every chord : 12 chords X 5 families = 60 chords X 4 inversions = 240 (basic) chords

For example:

1. Major 7th chord : F Maj 7

· Maj 3th + perfect 5th + maj 7th



2. Dominant 7th chord : Bb 7

· Maj 3th + perfect 5th + minor 7th



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Learn other chord charts : minor, halfdiminished, diminished

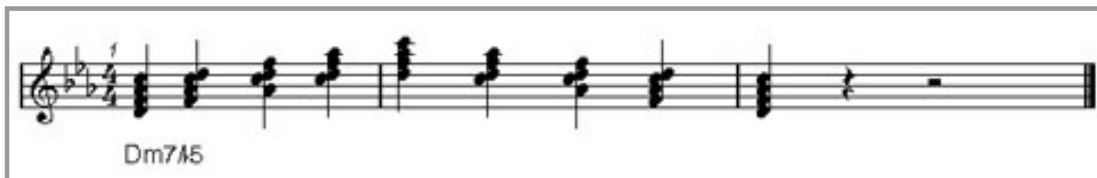
3. Minor 7th chord : Em7

- Minor 3rd + perfect 5th + minor 7th



4. Minor 7th dim 5 (half-diminished) chord : Dm7b5

- Minor 3rd + diminished 5th + minor 7th



5. Diminished seventh chord : C# dim7

- Minor 3rd + diminished 5th + diminished 7th



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## How to learn chord charts online

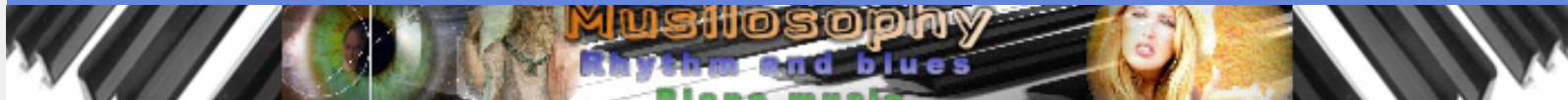
Play every inversion and improvise on a chord using just the chordal notes.

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[Whole tone, altered, pentatonic, diminished scales](#)

Do not become confused!

These scales do not determine a key! Just the blues scale could be a basis for a particular key (Blues).

You can use them above all on dominant seventh chords to enrich or vary the colors of improvisation.

Be careful and always control by ear when you use diminished or whole tone scales because they have notes not belonging to the key.

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### Whole tone scale : Debussy scale

Whole tone scale - It contains only whole tones. I suggest to use it just on the dominant 7th chord. Whole tone scale is used above all in Jazz music. Debussy and Ravel used this scale.

We can simplify and summarize all 12 whole tone scales to just 2 scale types : "A"; whole tone scale and "B"; whole tone scale.

"A"; whole tone scale type



"B"; whole tone scale type



- The other 10 whole tone scales have the same notes of these, but of course, they begin from different tones.

For example, D whole tone scale begins from D and has the same notes of the "A"; whole tone scale, while F whole tone scale begins from F and has the same notes of the "B"; whole tone scale

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## Diminished scales

- It is made only by a sequence of half step (semitone) and whole step (tone). I suggest to use it just on the dominant 7th and diminished 7th chord in a jazz context.

- Each tone has two different diminished scale:

1. Diminished scale beginning with half step
2. Diminished scale beginning with whole step

Also, we can simplify and summarize all 12 diminished scales to just 3 scale types :

"A"; diminished scale, "B"; diminished scale and "C"; diminished scale

"A"; diminished scale type

C, C#, Eb, E, F#, G, A, Bb diminished scale



"B"; diminished scale type



**D, D#, F, F#, G#, A, B, C diminished scale**



"C"; diminished scale type

**E, F, G, G#, Bb, B, C#, D diminished scale**



The other 21 diminished scales have the same notes of these, but of course, they begin from different tones.

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### Diminished-whole tone, altered scale

Diminished-whole tone scale ( also called super locrian or altered scale). I suggest to use it just on the dominant 7th chord in a jazz context.

## DIMINISHED WHOLE TONE SCALE (ALTERED SCALE)

C Diminished/whole tone scale



B Dimi/whole tone



Bb Dim/whole tone



A Dim/whole tone



Ab Dim/whole tone



G Dim/whole tone



Gb Dim/whole tone



F Dim/whole tone



E Dim/whole tone



Eb Dim/whole tone



### D Dim/whole tone



### C# Dim/whole tone



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## Pentatonic scales

Pentatonic scale has just five tones. It is like the major scale but without fourth and seventh degrees.

This a catchy scale and it sounds good on many chords

(Maj seventh , min 7th , 7 )

You can use different pentatonic scales on a chord.

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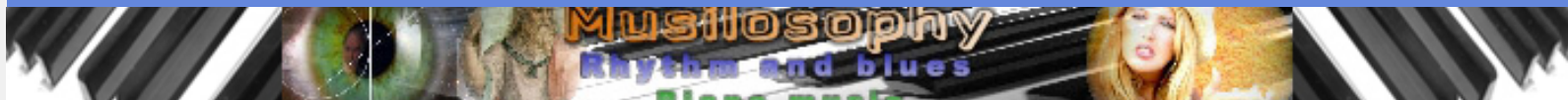
## Learning other scales

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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";

**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**)

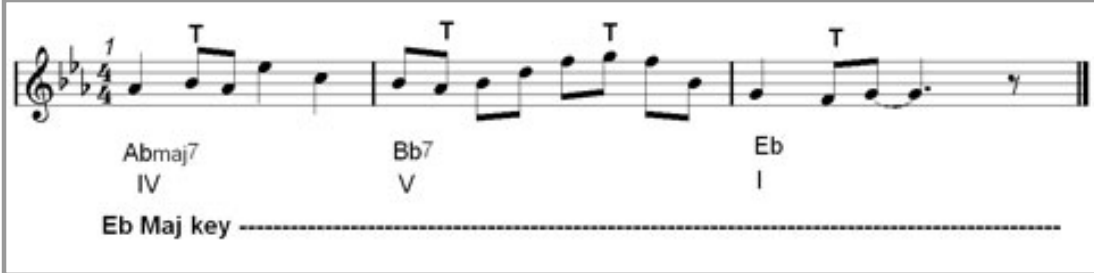
( = chordal note)



A musical staff in 4/4 time, F Major key. The melody consists of the notes: F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4, F4. The first measure has a Gm7 chord (II) with a first finger fingering (1) above the G4 note. The second measure has a C7 chord (V). The third measure has an F chord (I). Below the staff, the text reads "F Maj key" followed by a dashed line.

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)



A musical staff in 4/4 time, Eb Major key. The melody consists of the notes: Eb4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, Ab4, G4, F4, Eb4. The first measure has an Abmaj7 chord (IV) with a first finger fingering (1) above the Ab4 note. The second measure has a Bb7 chord (V). The third measure has an Eb chord (I). Turning notes (T) are indicated above the G4 notes in the first, second, and third measures. Below the staff, the text reads "Eb Maj key" followed by a dashed line.

You have to turn on the note of the chord

3. [Passing](#) note : it is between two chordal notes. ( P = Passing note)

Bbm7 IV      C7b9 V      Fm7 I

F min key -----

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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      Dm7 II      G7 V

C Maj key -----

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)

Em7 I      A7 IV      Em7 I

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)

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)

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 is divided into two sections: D Major key (measures 1-4) and G major key (measures 5-8). Above the staff, various note types are labeled: T, Tt, L, Pl, P, Pp, L, Pl, D, and Pd. Below the staff, chords are indicated: Gmaj7 (IV), A7 (V), Dmaj7 (I), D7 (V), and Gmaj7 (I). A dashed line separates the two key signatures.

For example:

- Passing note of a passing note (also chromatic ) =Pp
- Passing note of a turning note (also chromatic ) =Ptu
- 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 is divided into three sections: A minor key (measures 1-2), E7#9 (measure 3), and A minor key (measures 4-5). Above the staff, note types are labeled: Ld Ld, D, Ld Ld, and Ld Ld. Below the staff, chords are indicated: Bm7/b5 (II), E7#9 (V), and Am7 (I). A dashed line separates the key signatures.

This is a good melodic ornament

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## Music phrasing in jazz improvisation

Practise to end the phrase on the different tones of a chord and to make the action I

propose.

The fundamental element to build a good phrasing is that every phrase must be connected with the previous ones.

1. Remember to vary the **beginning and ending** of a phrase:

The image shows a musical staff in G Major key (one sharp, 4/4 time). The melody consists of three measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled as B, E, B', E', B'', E'', B''', and E'''. Below the staff, the chords are Gmaj7 (I), Cmaj7 (IV), and Gmaj7 (I). A dashed line below the staff indicates the key signature: G Major key.

Practise to begin and to end the phrase in every point of the measure

B = Beginning tone

E = Ending tone

AVOID this bad habit : (Same beginning and ending points )

The image shows a musical staff in E Minor key (no sharps or flats, 4/4 time). The melody consists of three measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled as B, E, B, E, B, and E. Below the staff, the chords are Em7 (I), Am7 (IV), and B7#5 (V). A dashed line below the staff indicates the key signature: E Minor key.

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### Ending of a phrase

Practise to end a phrase on different tones of a chord:

Tone	Effect	Style	Action

1	Rest - Close the phrasing	Rock, Pop You	You have to begin a new phrasing
2	Tension and unbalance	Jazz	You have begin the following phrase from that note
3	Rest and strong determination	Any style	No particular action
4	Tension, unbalance and suspension	Jazz, Blues	Begin from that note and solve it to the tone below
5	Rest and neutral	Any style	No particular action
6	A bit of tension and coloured tone	Jazz, Pop	I suggest to begin the following phrase from that note
7	A bit of tension and determination	Jazz, Blues Pop	No particular action

This aspect is very important

^ TOP

**Music phrase : phrasing development**

^ TOP

Practise to end the phrase on the different tones of a chord and to make the action I propose.

Ab Major key -----

Na = no particular action

T = Tension

Ba = Begin again

S = Solving tone

Another example containing a wrong ending tone ( Tension is not solved or begun again).

The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time, key of B melodic minor. The notation includes a first measure with a triplet of eighth notes (labeled '7' and '3'), followed by a measure with a quarter rest and a quarter note (labeled 'Na'). The second measure has a quarter rest and a quarter note (labeled 'T----- Ba'). The third measure has a quarter rest and a quarter note (labeled 'Error'). The fourth measure has a quarter rest and a quarter note (labeled 'Na'). Below the staff, the chords are listed: Bm7 I, Em7 IV, Bm7 I, Em7 IV, and F#7b9 V. A dashed line indicates the key signature: B melodic minor key.

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Learn music phrasing online

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## Music rhythm concepts in jazz and blues improvisation

When you improvise, you have to emphasize off beats (or upbeats).

There are different kinds of off beats ( upbeats) :

- 1) Quarter notes = emphasize 2th and 4th beat
- 2) Eighth notes = emphasize the even notes ( 2,4,6,8 in 4/4) ( 2,4,6 in 3/4)
- 3) Eighth note triplets = emphasize above all the last note of every triplet
- 4) So on....

A minor key -----

This is one of the most important concept in improvisation and music in general:

**emphasizing off beats** (or upbeats)

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### Exercises to learn music rhythm concepts to improvise

Exercises:

1. Improvise all quarter notes continuously and in the same way:
2. quarter note triplets
3. eighth notes
4. eighth note triplets
5. sixteen notes
6. sixteen note triplets
7. ....

But remember to emphasize off beats always!

**^ TOP**





**Fast**

Em7 I  
F#m7/b5 II  
B7b9 V

E Minor key .....

The goal of these drills is to acquire the habit to emphasize the weakest point of the measure.

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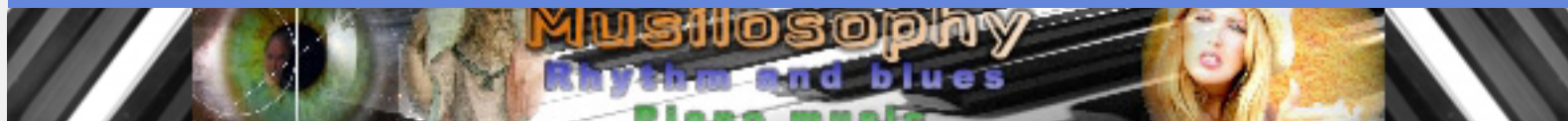
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## Jazz techniques for improvisation

### *General practice*

I suggest these progressive exercises:

Learn all major, minor and ...[blues scales](#)

First play the scales for an octave just with the right hand, then with both hands; play for 2 and 4 octaves with both hands

Learn all [chords](#) of every key

Play the chords of every key with right hand then with both hand

Learn to **analyze** music

Practice to analyze every music style with scores or if you want by ear. Write keys, chord types, degrees of the chords, modulations (key changing) on the scores. Analyze melody and write the harmonic role of every note (Chordal note, turning note, passing note.....).

**Arpeggiate** all chords

Arpeggiate all 7th chords with right hand (but not only) in their four inversions.

Begin to improvise just using the **chordal** notes

Improvise only on a chord and using just the four chordal notes  
( also out of time )

Improvise just using **continuous** eighth notes, eighth-triplet notes, sixteenth notes.

For pianists : improvise on a song using just the four chordal notes, moving the melody up and down the whole keyboard and playing the chord with the left hand. (You have to play this chord around C4 and moving the notes less possible when you change the chord )

Improvise using a [melodic](#) item one at time

Practice a melodic item out of time and just on a chord

Improvise using the suggestions on [musical phrase](#)

Practice a phrasing item out of time and just on a chord

### *Some important considerations*

Mastering these techniques needs many, many hours of playing but it is amusing and you can feel what creating music means.

Besides, these techniques are the same of composing songs or any other music style.

Composing is easier than improvising because you can correct your mistakes.

However I will suggest you some easy techniques to "correct" some [melodic "errors"](#);

Sometimes many new and interesting ideas come from so called harmonic "errors";.

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## Improving jazz techniques

### Ear training

Use this free tool - [Functional ear trainer](#)

### Transcription - Powerful!

Select your best songs or solos and transcribe them on paper using your piano or keyboard, then transpose them in all keys. I think this is the MOST IMPORTANT AND POWERFUL DRILL TO LEARN IMPROVISATION

### Transposing

Transpose some phrases in all keys

### Singing

Sing the notes you are improvising



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## Listening great artists to analyze jazz techniques

### Listening

Every musical style but good music, that is great artists

When you listen to music, analyze it!

### **Piano improvisors**

Listen to these masters of piano improvisation:

Bill Evans

Keith Jarrett

Herbie Hancock

Chick Corea

Ahmad Jamal

Oscar Peterson

Bud Powell

McCoy Tyner

Many others...

### **Improvisors**

Other instruments:

Miles Davis ( Trumpet )

Charlie Parker ( Alto Sax)

John Coltrane ( Tenor Sax )

Pat Metheny ( Guitar )

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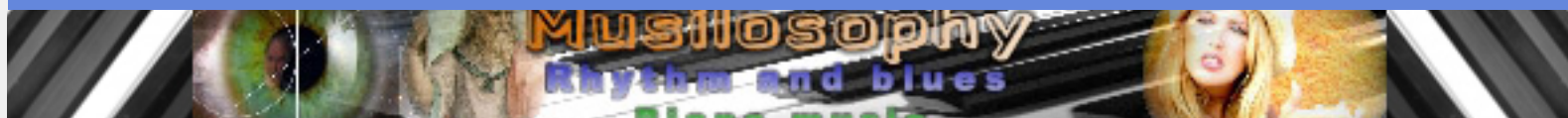
[Resources on the Art of improvisation](#)

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Pop rhythm and blues singer songwriter, pianist and jazz music improvisation resources



**Piano** and **music improvisation** are my passions. I wish to share them with you, offer my music and free resources to learn this magic Art.

Blues, soul, jazz, funk, dance and pop are my favorite styles. I love very much artists as **Ray Charles**, **Alicia Keys**, Steve Wonder,

**Pink Floyd**, Michael Jackson, Eric Clapton, **Santana**, Supertramp and many others. As pianist I grow up listening **Bill Evans**, **Keith Jarrett**, Ahmad Jamal, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock.

I have studied piano by 30 years and I graduated from *Saint Cecilia music Conservatory in Rome*. Now, I teach piano, jazz, music harmony and I am promoting my music on the Web.

^ **TOP**

### Free resources on jazz music improvisation and harmony

Music is expression of emotions.

Creativity, fantasy and originality are the best ways of express them.

**The Art of Improvisation** is the most original and creative language of music.

I am publishing [free resources on jazz improvisation, piano techniques, music harmony and theory](#). I hope you can understand what I write in this site. *My English is not perfect* as you can note. If you have a bit of time you can also correct what I write! I am building other sites about improvisation, **piano techniques** and music harmony and I want to give all I know for free.

If you want help me to develop these resources you can may a donation, but I desire above all you can learn the magic art of improvisation.

I am publishing also other sites about music theory, harmony and

improvisation. ([www.aboutmusictheory.com](http://www.aboutmusictheory.com))



Musilosophy Improvisation Opren Project :



MIOP

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### Piano jazz music improvisation, rhythm and blues and pop albums



#### [Pop soul rhythm and blues album : "Inside"](#)

Inside is a collection of pop songs with rhythm and blues, soul and jazz contaminations. Last year I have recorded this album and now I am promoting it on Internet. You can listen every song clip for free. Three songs of the album has a video: "[The Colour of Your Eyes](#)", "[Other World](#)" and "Inside". If you like the album you can buy it on Itunes, Msn, Yahoo, Rhapsody, Emusic or many others mp3 stores. If you want the compact disk you can order it on CdBaby or ArtistLaunch.



[Piano dance rhythm and blues album " Modern jazz dance"](#)

Piano Fender Rhodes improvisations on rhythm and blues and dance rhythms. New jazz concepts on modal harmony. The album contains a fusion of different styles. I like very much to improvise with electric piano on a dance groove. The bass lines are very simple on a modal harmony.



[Solo piano jazz improvisations : "Piano meditation"](#)

Acoustic piano meditations: totally improvised album. Do you know the greatest living musician? For me he is **Keith Jarrett**, a genius and not only a pianist. His improvisations bring you to the magic, spiritual and mystic sense of music based on **Gurdjieff** 's teaching. In this album I have tried to follow that direction, playing and recording without preparing chords and any other pre-material.

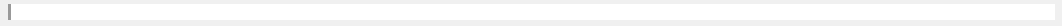
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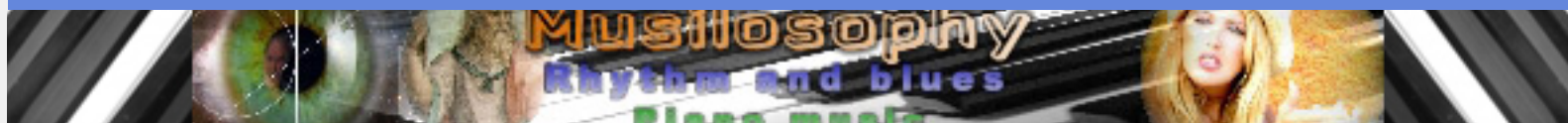
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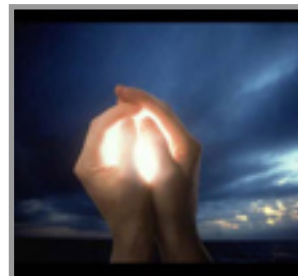
## Pop music videos by Musilosophy



[The Colour of Your Eyes](#)



[Other World](#)



[Inside](#)

Here I propose three **multimedia music videos** from my pop soul album "Inside". "The colour of your eyes" is a funk pop song

with a dance feeling. Other World is a video in which I show how we live in western world and how many people live in the poorest world! Inside is a pop dance song: here I express the joy and beauty of life.

^ **TOP**

## Rhythm and blues soul music videos

Two world exists: one is based on hyper-consumption, hyper-nutrition, hyper -waste or in other words "HYPER", the biggest other one in which people literally die of thirst. Being children weaker than adults, they are unfortunately the largest victims of this bad tragedy.

But having someone in a family that is not healthy, who is hungry usually makes the other member try hard to heal him or to feed him. Why then do we, inhabitants of the rich world, not really help our unluckier brother?

Often it happens, but often it doesn't. Consequently many people hide to themselves this less world which needs help; actually it is unable to survive, maybe it is still untimely, maybe the "first world" has been exploiting it for hundreds of years, perhaps for thousands, for its hyper-consumption.

"...give them a piece...a small piece of your bread..."- (**Other World**)

[Help your brothers!](#)

^ **TOP**

## Piano jazz, rhythm and blues and pop albums



### [Pop soul rhythm and blues album : "Inside"](#)

Inside is a collection of pop songs with rhythm and blues, soul and jazz contaminations. It contains 10 songs , of which three are in Italian language. I have mixed "Inside" in my home studio recording (DAW).



### [Piano dance rhythm and blues album " Modern jazz dance"](#)

Fender Rhodes piano improvisations on dance, rhythm and blues rhythmic. This album is a fusion of jazz, dance, funk and blues ideas. I have played electric and acoustic piano too.



### [Solo piano jazz improvisations : "Piano meditation"](#)

I love the style of Keith Jarrett and Bill Evans. For me they are the best jazz pianist. Here, I have recorded acoustic piano meditations: a totally improvised album.

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## Piano blues jazz live videos

In this section I will publish jazz and blues piano live videos with my acoustic grand piano Shimmel. I am building other sites in which I want to publish my piano improvisations and blues vocal scatting.

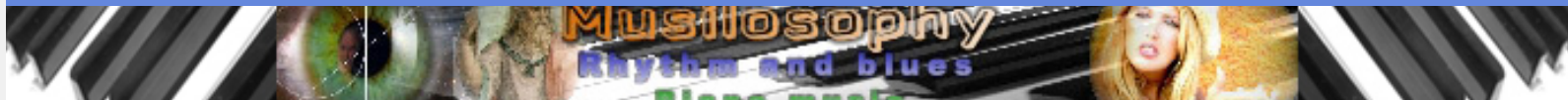


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### [Solo piano jazz improvisations : "Piano meditation"](#)

Acoustic piano meditations: totally improvised album.

## Yahoo! News: Music News

### Cat's Musical Comeback (E! Online)



E! Online - Yusuf Islam is hoping fans will remember him with a smile. And an open wallet.

### Priest Confesses to Madonna Threat (E! Online)



E! Online - A 63-year-old Dutch priest has confessed to calling in a phony bomb threat last week before a pair of Madonna concerts in Amsterdam in a last-ditch effort to stop the singer from staging her mock-crucifixion act, officials said Friday.

### Another Crowe Flies the Coop (E! Online)



E! Online - Apparently being a Black Crowe is too hard to handle for certain members.

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Italian rhythm and blues singer songwriter, jazz pianist



"...I think piano is the most complete music



instrument..."

Piano is like an orchestra you can play with your fingers. The left hand plays accompaniments and gives a rhythmic base to the other hand. You can play melodies, chords or both and you can improvise with the right hand . Sometimes I use to improvise with both hands to create different melodic lines. Mozart and Beethoven used to compose piano sonatas to experiment with orchestral compositions. For these reasons and for many others I think piano is the greatest music instrument.

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Music stores



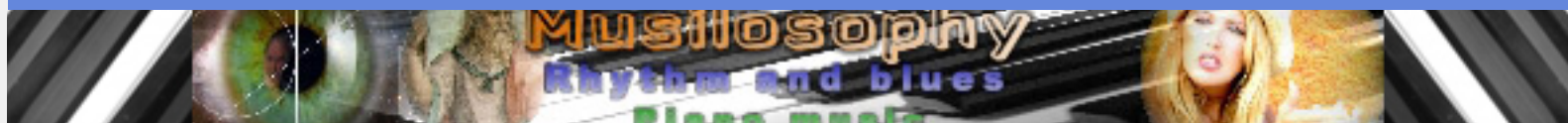
You can buy the mp3s of my music albums at [Itunes](#) and other online mp3 stores. You can order Cd albums at [CdBaby](#) and [ArtistLaunch](#).

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Jazz pianist, pop rhythm and blues singer songwriter : music stores



You can buy the mp3 of **Inside** at [Itunes](#) and other online mp3 stores. You can order **Inside** and **Modern Jazz Dance** Cd albums at [CdBaby](#) and [ArtistLaunch](#). You can buy **Piano Meditation** at [SoundClick](#) as digital download (mp3).

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## Free resources on jazz improvisation and music harmony

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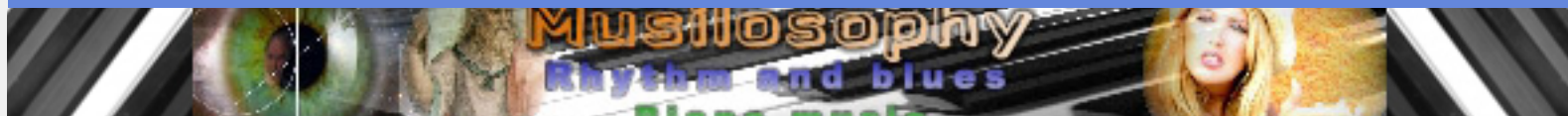
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News about Musilosophy Improvisation Open Project , **MIOP**

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## News

June 2006 : 2th, 3th and 4th position with three songs in Rhythm and blues; 9 and 11th in pop; 9 in blues ArtistLaunch.com charts.

June 2006 : musilosophy.com rebuilding with CSS

May 2006 : Section on the art of improvisation

March 2006: musilosophy.com restyling

February 2006 : "The Colour of Your Eyes", "Other World" and "Inside" Video published on musilosophy.com

January 2006 : "Modern Jazz Dance", rhythm and blues album recordings and mix

December 2005 : www.musilosophy.com site published

December 2005 : "Inside", pop album printed and published on Cdbaby.com and Tower Records Label

November 2005 : "Crystal White Piano Quartet" ,piano jazz dance Album recordings and mix

October 2005 : "Piano Meditation" piano solo album recordings and mix

September 2005 : "Inside", pop album mix

August 2005 : "Inside" pop album recordings

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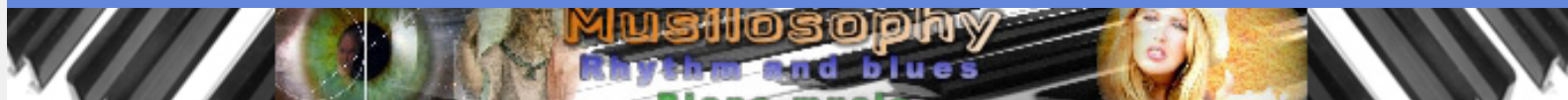
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Musilosophy's links



[123musicstars.com](http://123musicstars.com) - The popular music guide

[MaximumMusician.com](http://MaximumMusician.com). Showing guitarists where to find the best free guitar info, how to turn their practicing into playing, and how to build maximum musical motivation. Downloads, tabs, articles, and more.





**Your worldwide resource for musical instrument strings!**  
◆ **Banjo** ◆ **Bass** ◆ **Guitar** ◆ **Fiddle** ◆ **Mandolin**

[Music link exchange](#)

[Artistopia - The Ultimate Music and Artist Resource](#)

Artistopia is the first company that delivers a clear, potent, and qualified strategy for independent music artists and music industry professionals to come together under one roof and speak one language - potential success!

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## Major seventh chord charts : structures

This chord is on the :

- I and IV (#4) degree of the Major scale
- III (#5) of the harmonic and melodic minor scale
- III and VI (#4) degree of the natural minor scale

#4 = augmented 4th

#5 = augmented 5th

In this page there are major chords in all keys and in 4 inversions

Play these chords in the whole keyboard (More than an octave)

Play them with both hands

Arpeggiate the chords as I show in the videos

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## Major 7 chord charts : inversions



Watch in this [video](#) how to study **major seventh chords** and their inversions



Here I explain how to play their arpeggios

Here is the major seventh chord chart. In this major seventh chord chart the chord is on the first degree of major scale (In the first staff there is an error in the key signature because F major key has Bb)

# MAJOR 7th CHORD

( For example I ,IV in Major key )

The image displays 12 staves of musical notation for Major 7th chords in 4/4 time. Each staff shows the chord in its root position and its first, second, and third inversions. The chords are: Fmaj7, Emaj7, Ebmaj7, Dmaj7, Dbmaj7, Cmaj7, Bmaj7, Bbmaj7, Amaj7, Abmaj7, Gmaj7, and Gbmaj7. Fingering numbers (1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29, 33) are indicated above the notes in the first inversion of each chord. The notation includes treble clefs, key signatures, and chord symbols below the staves.

PLAY them many, many times!

It is important because melody is built using chord's notes.

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### Harmonic and perceptive considerations on major seventh chord

The **major seventh chord** gives to the listener a sense of spatial opening. It is in other words a solar, gladden and ample chord. It gives often a sense of rest, reassurance, and stasis, above all using simply the major triad. The major seventh note, instead, creates a strong movement of sonorous opening, creating in the music a light. This chord harmonically is above all a first degree in the major key, but sometimes a fourth degree in major key. You have to be much careful to distinguish if a major chord is an I or IV degree because base on this you have to change, obviously, the scale to use over it. For example, if there is F sharp in the key signature and you have in your song a CMaj7 chord, it is IV and not I degree. Therefore you have to use the G major and NOT C major scale.

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## Learn jazz piano improvisation technique

*"I know to know nothing"* (Socrates)

Hullo,

welcome to this site about The Art of Improvisation.

I dedicate these pages to all musicians who love creating or composing in real time their own music.

I come from Italy, and I have some difficulties to write in English but my passion for Improvisation is great and I want to create a free Open Project about this Art. I prey you to help me to correct the errors of these pages sending me an email with the corrections.

If you have any opinion, technique, article, review, or other material about Improvisation, please send me an email and I will publish it.

Many teachers I have had and many manuals I have read about **jazz improvisation** do not explain clearly how to build a melody. They say just:

"...Use this scale on this chord..." or "...On this chord you can play these scales...".

But how to improvise? How must I use these notes?

They respond: "...Use your fantasy, your ear, your imagination and study many patters..."

Well! I agree. Fantasy, imagination and ear are fundamental to improvise but are general, confuse, not clear concepts.

Jazz has not invented melody and improvisation; good melodies have clear mathematical and geometric rules.

If you know these rules you improvise or compose music much better and easily.

They base on many centuries of music development and the greatest composers and improvisers use them.







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## General music studying tips

Music is one of the vastest and most difficult art

*Main subjects*

### ear training

Ear training is training the ear with exercises aimed to the awareness of what we are listening to, developing relative pitch, absolute pitch, the arrangements and orchestration analysis, analysis of the frequency balancing and of instruments between themselves..

Relative pitch is the ability to recognize sounds with one or more reference notes.

Perfect (absolute) pitch is ability to recognize sound from their "color".

### reading

It is learning to read the score in a fast way, at first sight (sight reading)

### theory

It is learning solfeggio and above all harmony knowledge, getting ability of syntactic, formal and stylistic analysis of every song. Getting the awareness of what is played. for example it is knowing tonality, chord, understanding how melody or accompaniment, pedal, progressions, modulations have built on

## **interpretation**

Listening executions and famous musicians' recordings, studying a song mechanism well and setting every author in his stylistic framework

## **improvisation**

That is getting to learn theory and practise of improvising. For example transcribing by ear solos or songs and transposing them in all 12 keys.

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## **Music studying**

### **composing**

That is getting to learn harmony, theory and different ways of composing.

### **arranging**

It is studying and analyzing in theory but above all in a direct way by ear, considering the structures and the orchestration of different musical forms

### **singing**

That is studying vocal basis and using song as a help in learning all the other instruments

### **sound engineering**

Studying acoustic and recording rudiments, hard disk recording knowledge and ability to arrange a live performance

### **listening**

That is listening to all musical styles with critical and analytic sense

### **music history**

That is getting to learn styles, forms and authors and above all listening to their music

### **something else**

That is getting to know everything which can enrich one's own musical culture, such as computing, dancing, learning science, technology, philosophy, analyzing life style and above all caring about one's own life style.

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## How to study music

I suggest to study more topics as possible: harmony, improvisation, ear training, arranging, composing and so on. Try to follow your passion and what you like more to study in day. Do not force your study too much.

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## Music general considerations and music improvisation tips

Improvising is composing in real-time. Here are some considerations and thoughts about musical improvisation analysis. At the end of this page there are important and helpful tips about music improvisation.

**Harmonic features** about musical improvisation: there are different ways in improvising more or less similar to the harmony of the song on which it is made.

- In **pop** and **classical music** (Mozart, Chopin, and many other ones also improvised in the days going by musicians improvise inside harmony, chords and tonality.
- Improvising in **blues** is freer, it is based on the scale or blues tonality, but much more using chromatics and ornaments.
- In **jazz** solos there are different degrees of freedom, according to the Jazz styles.

In Traditional Jazz (Dixieland) improvisation is based above all on the notes of chords and tonalities.

Swing : it is based on their chords and tonalities using major, minor, diminished, pentatonic, blues scales.

- be-bop - It is based on a frequent use of non chordal notes (9°, 11°, 13 °), chromatics, harmonics substitutions and particulars (whole tone, diminished-whole tone scales)

- modal Jazz - It is based on one or two modes (ancient scales, not major or minor but for example Dorian, Phrygian...)
- free-Jazz - It is based on extempore interaction between musicians, often following datum points. In this style improvising becomes completely free
- Also in **funky** music there is a frequent use of notes out of chord and tonality, but without disturbing harmony.
- In **ethnic** music improvising is based on pentatonic scales or typical modes of a particular region (for example Arabian or Indian music)
- In **rock** solos are usually inside harmony, change of chords and tonalities, and often follow pentatonic and blues scales.

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## General concepts on music improvisation

### ***Rhythmic features*** of music improvisation

The rhythmic style in improvising suits the song rhythmic.

- In **ragtime** syncopations, upbeat accents and anticipations are being used so much.
- In **swing** (jazz, blues, soul, rock and roll....and so on) a sort of rhythmic sliding is created triplets quarters and eights are played stressing upbeat notes.
- In **Latin** and **ethnic** music improvisations often create polyrhythm, syncopations, figurations of dotted notes and anticipations
- In **rock** and in **pop** the shortest solos are rhythmically expressed, stressing upbeat with many anticipations and

syncopations.



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## General music improvisation tips

Improvising is just like speaking, composing, singing, meditating...

For a good improvisation (that is harmonic and rhythmic practice) it is necessary:

- To respect the tonal sense of the song and consequently the listener
- To always have the reference or **tonal barycentre** of the song in improvising

That is :

- Always knowing which is general **key** of the song and its possible changes during its development (modulations)
- In getting out of the key, following determinate expedients in order not to "traumatize" the listener's ear (playing notes out of the key on upbeat or by passing and making them solve on the closest tonal notes)
- **Emphasize upbeats** (off beats) in order to give rhythmic thickness and groove
- Playing downbeats very quietly



- Following **chord changes** in an exact way
- **Varying phrasing**
- Creating catchy melodies, as if they were pop song **themes**
- Giving a correct **geometrical** and **spatial balancing** to phrasing: in other words distributing phrasing on all the instrumental register in a regular way without exaggerating on a register instead of another one (in a general meaning)
- Thinking of the inner **melody symmetry** (balancing)
- Using **all the 12 notes** in a suitable way, above all in jazz and in styles deriving from it

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### Other music improvisation tips

Here are other important tips for a correct improvisation

- **Not repeating** already played phrases
- Avoiding **unnecessary** virtuosities
- **Listening** to musicians you are playing with and interacting with them, with the audience and with yourself
- **Feeling** your emotions and translating them in the improvisation phrasing
- Being as **lucid** as possible, avoiding drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, coffee and everything which can distort your natural consciousness
- Not repressing anxiety, fear or other emotions you are feeling during improvisation, but **living** them being good or bad.



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## The Art of Improvisation : Open Project , MIOP

**MIOP** : *Musilosophy Improvisation Open Project.*



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Anything about Improvisation

I will publish your material but it must respect copyright laws

Thank You very much!

*Peace in the World!*



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### Online resources on the art of improvisation

I have the dream to build some sites to explain music theory, harmony, composing, improvisation and other topics about music. I wish to create free resources in which everyone, in any part of the world, can easily understand and study this magic art.

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## Music techniques : coming soon articles

I really wish to write in a few months about the main subjects concerning music learning: theory, music harmony, improvisation, composition, harmonic analysis and excerpts melody, ear training, orchestration or songs arrangement. I hope to have enough time.

Other articles about piano and improvisation techniques

The left hand of the pianist

Melody harmonization with right hand (Piano technique)

Improvisation with perfect fourth techniques

Improvising by triads

Intervals

Analysis of solos

Lydian chromatic concept

Modal jazz

Main chordal progressions (Chord changes)

Main used forms

### Other coming soon music techniques articles

In order to improvise properly, a musician must be complete. He has to get to know the right abilities in every field of music. Practicing with a own instrument is not sufficient. He must have a very developed and trained ear music-history culture, profound theoretical harmony knowledge.

- Inside, outside
- "Free" improvisation
- What you have to avoid
- Improvisation goals

*About other music techniques:*

- Composing
- Ear training
- Arranging
- Music analysis

### Learn to improvise online

I write all this because I like to teach, to help people in my own small way and I also like, by egotism, to show what I have so much to learn too. My dream was to have a perfect pitch that is learning to recognize notes and chords just by ear. I have been working many years to this aim and I obtained a 1000% ear improvement but, unfortunately, I was not able to have a perfect pitch a I regret a little. I have published other sites about music harmony and jazz

piano too.

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