

Modern Time

Rhythmic Fundamentals for the Improvising Musician

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**For All Instruments
Over 100 Music Examples
Over 100 Audio Examples
Tab Included For Guitarists**

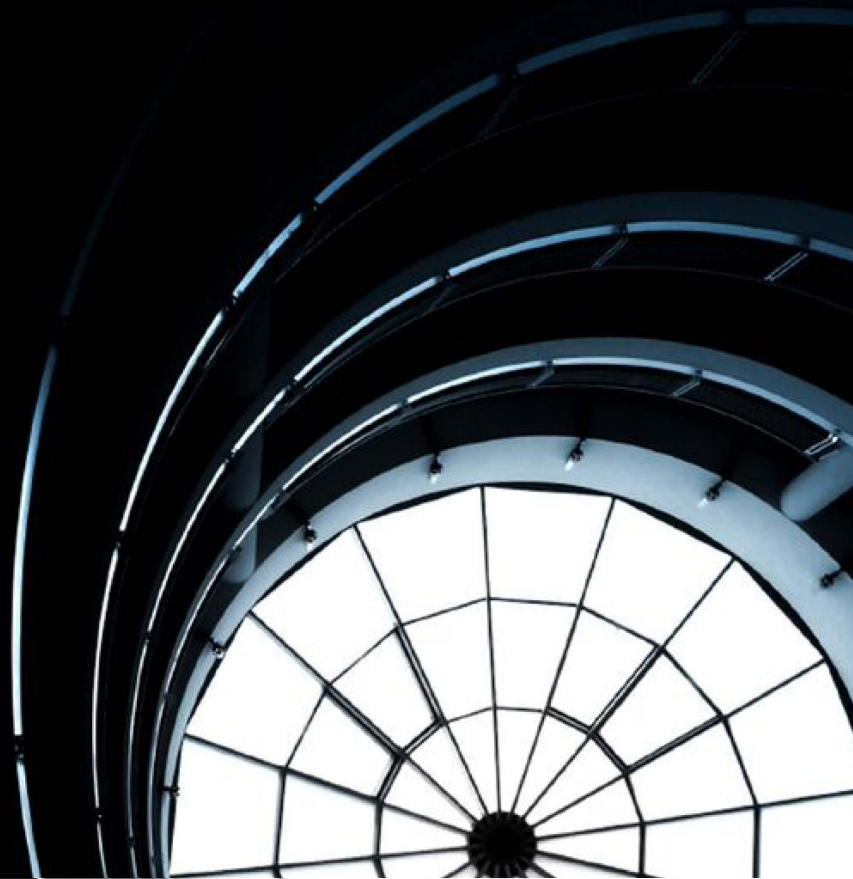


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Developing Rhythmic Motives

As you've learned, you can use different rhythmic durations in combination to create motives that you then use as the basis for your lines and improvisations.

Having a strong command of rhythmic motives will allow you to build a thread of continuity through your improvised phrases.

It'll also allow you to stretch the boundaries of harmony and melody further.

This is because the rhythmic motives act as the glue that holds your lines in place, and guides the audience through your melodic and harmonic explorations.

A big issue that players face in their development is that they often think of harmony and melody as concrete things, such as scales, arpeggios, and chords,

But, when it comes to rhythm, they think of it as an abstract or less concrete thing that can't be practiced in the same way as harmony and melody.

But, this isn't true.

In order to dig deeper into developing rhythm in your playing, the first step in the right direction is to begin to think of rhythm as a concrete thing.

Thinking of different rhythms as no different than scales or arpeggios.

If you do this, you'll be able to manipulate rhythms and use them in the same way that you would to improvise with a C major scale or D7 arpeggio.

In this chapter, you'll learn techniques that you can use to develop rhythmic motives in your playing by using retrograde, pairing, mirroring, and transposition.

All of which are common melodic devices that improvisers use to develop their lines from a harmonic and melodic standpoint, but in this case applied to rhythm.

Note on Rhythms and Practicing

You don't have to have the first section of this book mastered before moving on to these exercises.

If you're still working on developing your rhythmic durations, no problem, just stick to the rhythms you're comfortable with when developing rhythmic motives.

For example, if you're working on whole and half notes in your practice room, use those two rhythms to create and manipulate your rhythmic motives.

As you learn more rhythmic durations, add them into your motivic practice to expand your rhythmic pallet.

As always, it's recommended that you use a metronome for all of these exercises.

As well, since you're going to be exploring these motives in the context of performance situations, practicing with a jam track is highly recommended.

Rhythmic Pairing

The first device that you'll explore in regards to rhythmic motives and development is the concept of rhythmic pairing.

This concept is easy to understand, but might take some time in the practice room to fully work it into your playing.

This is especially the case when you begin to explore longer, more complex rhythmic motives in your solos.

Rhythmic pairing is the act of creating a short rhythmic-motive, that you then pair with itself, in order to create a longer rhythmic idea.

This concept can also be created with two separate motives and by pairing two variations of a single rhythmic idea, which will be explored later in this chapter.

Here's a simple rhythmic motive, two beats, that has been paired with itself to create a longer, one-bar idea.

The original idea was comprised of a quarter note followed by two eighth notes, filling up the first two beats of the measure.

Then, that motive was repeated in the second half of the bar to create a longer line that is now four beats in length.

You can start by playing this rhythm on any note, even open strings is fine.

Audio Example 42



Practicing

You'll begin by practicing rhythmic pairing by applying it to a technical item, such as a scale or arpeggio, as well as within the context of an improvisation.

Here's an example of how this motive would be applied to a C major scale.

Feel free to use rhythmic motives to practice any scales and arpeggios.

As well, you can use rhythmic motives to practice technical permutations such as scales in 3rds, 4ths, triads through scales, and scale patterns in all 12 keys.

Audio Example 43

The image shows a musical example for Audio Example 43. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (C major). The melody is: C4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter). Above the staff is the chord symbol 'Cmaj7'. Below the staff is a guitar TAB with two systems. The first system has two lines: the top line has fret numbers 8, 10, 7, 8, 10, 7; the bottom line has fret numbers 9, 10, 7, 9, 10, 8. The second system has two lines: the top line has fret numbers 10, 7, 8; the bottom line is empty.

You can also practice rhythmic pairing by using improvisation, over a static chord, chord progression, or entire tune.

The concept remains the same, choose a motive and then pair it up with itself to form a longer idea.

Here's an example of an improvised line over a ii-V-I in the key of F major, using the same motive from the previous example.

There's a backing track included so you can begin to solo over these changes using this, or any, rhythmic motive as the basis for your lines.

Backing Track 10

Audio Example 44

The image shows a musical example for Audio Example 44. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (F major). The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter). Above the staff are the chord symbols 'Gm7', 'C7', and 'Fmaj7'. Below the staff is a guitar TAB with four systems. The first system has two lines: the top line has fret numbers 8, 7, 6, 5, 7, 8; the bottom line has fret numbers 7, 7, 6, 5, 9, 8. The second system has two lines: the top line has fret numbers 7, 5; the bottom line has fret numbers 8, 7, 5, 7. The third system has two lines: the top line has fret numbers 8, 7, 5, 7, 4, 7; the bottom line has fret numbers 7, 8.

When you practice in this fashion, the goal is to continuously use the rhythmic motive throughout your solo.

But, that doesn't mean you have to continuously play notes.

You can build rhythmic motives that incorporate rests in order to break things up, as well as use rests to mark your phrasing when soloing.

Here's an example of an improvised line over that same chord progression.

In this case, you're going to use a rhythmic motive, quarter note-eighth note rest-two sixteenth notes, that incorporate space into your ideas.

Audio Example 45

The musical notation for Audio Example 45 consists of a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one flat. The melody is written in a single staff with a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests. Above the staff, the chords Gm7, C7, and Fmaj7 are indicated. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with six lines, showing fret numbers (5, 8, 7, 6, 7, 6, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 8, 7, 5, 5, 6, 8, 5, 5, 7, 5, 8, 7) and a bridge pickup indicator (T, A, B) on the first line.

You can also apply rhythmic pairing to other time signatures besides 4/4.

In the following example, you'll find an improvised line over the first eight bars of the Brazilian standard "Corcovado."

It uses the original motive from the previous example, quarter-two eighth notes, but feel free to use any motive you wish in the practice room.

As well, here's a backing track for this chord progression that you can use to improvise over with this, or any, rhythmic motive.

Backing Track 11

Audio Example 46

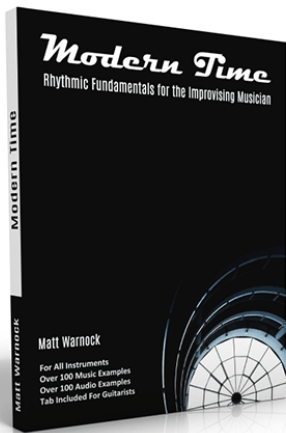
Am⁷ Ab^{o7}

Gm⁷ C⁷ Fmaj⁷

As you can see, the two beat motive now filled up an entire bar of 2/4, and so when it was paired, the second occurrence falls within the entire second bar.

This causes the idea to become a bit hidden, as each bar sounds the same.

So, in order to develop things further, you can begin to check out a second rhythmic device with your motives, rhythmic retrograde.



Click [here](#) to buy the full version of Modern Time - Guide to Jazz Guitar Rhythm