

## INTERMEDIATE JAZZ CONCEPTION STUDY GUIDE ADDITIONS (ALTO)

### 1. Splank Street-

#### Tips-

1. Dynamic contrast gives this piece a sense of drama. Observe dynamics closely, maintaining a centered and resonate sound at all volumes.
2. The tempo of this piece is tricky, and can sound stiff if not played with a good, consistent time feel. Keep the music relaxed and swinging.
3. To work on your time, practice scales with a metronome on beats 2 and 4 at slow tempos, trying to be as accurate as possible.
4. Observe how the use of rests “frame” ideas and let them sort of be contemplated by the listener. This also lets the music breathe and gives the rhythm section a chance to interact with the soloist .This is especially apparent in measures 57, 59-61, where Peter Washington plays great bass lines to fill in the rests.
5. Listen closely for slight bends on notes that give the music more personality. When you hear the soloists do a bend, stop the cd and practice that one note, trying to re-create the bend.

#### Listening suggestion-

Count Basie- Frankly Basie

Louis Armstrong- 16 most requested songs

### 2. Melon Island-

#### Tips-

1. This piece has a funky, straight eighth-note feel similar to the pieces on many recordings on the Blue Note record label in the 1960's.
2. Throughout the piece, the F concert minor pentatonic and blues scale are used. In fact, this sound can be used on both the D minor chord and Bflat 7 chord by finding notes that are common to each chord (i.e. D, F, G, Aflat andC ), creating a nice continuity and flow.

#### Measure 26-27

3. As with Splank Street, rests let the piece groove and breathe.
4. Pay close attention to the long-short articulation markings. This gives the lines a more percussive effect, pushing the lines along.

Listening suggestion-

Herbie Hancock-Empyrean Isles  
Wayne Shorter- Adam's Apple

3. Green Fin-

Tips-

1. The use of a pedal on the intro and the first 8 measures of each a section, along With Kenny on brushes creates an airy, ethereal quality. Don't play too aggressively on the soft sections, trying to be as musical as possible. Create a mood!
2. Be crisp and accurate with articulation when playing lines coming out of the pedal as the lines were created to provide contrast and forward motion after the sparser pedal sections.
3. Notice that Peter plays in two after the pedal on the first chorus, and in four after the pedal in the second chorus, going back to the pedal on the tag
4. There are many II-V-I ideas in this etude, many of which use the flat9 sound on the V chord. Pay close attention to the timing of the ideas.

Measure 32

Listening suggestion-

Miles Davis- 58 Miles  
Bill Evans- On Green Dolphin Street

4. St Sonny

Tips-

1. When playing latin-flavored music, try to stay on top of the beat. In other words, don't drag. One way you can practice this is to set the metronome at quarter note = 60. Play quarter notes along with the metronome, trying to be very accurate and playing exactly in time. Then try to play slightly ahead of the beat, and lastly slightly behind the beat. This exercise will help you hear the time more clearly.
2. This etude is very much in the style of Sonny Rollins. Notice that there are many simple, diatonic-type ideas throughout. This gives the solo a nice, melodic quality that resonates in the listener's ear. In fact, until chorus 5, there are only a couple of accidentals.

3. When soloing on these changes, it's possible to improvise using only the concert c major scale. Again, the key is to be melodic and lyrical. You can also play ideas that define the chord changes, as in measures 55-56. Alternating between diatonic ideas and chord tone-based ideas will give your soloing a nice contrast on these type of changes.

4. A few of the ideas are based on riff-like figures (measure 18-25, 37-40) . Riffs are short ideas that are repeated, sometimes with slight variation. They can provide a interesting flow and continuity to a solo.

Listening suggestion-  
Sonny Rollins- Saxophone Colossus  
Cedar Walton-Live at Boomers

## 5. Voyage

Tips-

1. This latin piece is in a more modern, modal style than St. Sonny. All but one chord in the piece uses a dominant sus sound, giving the piece an open, airy feeling. The scale used on a sus chord is the same as the normal dominant 7 chord, which is mixolydian.

2. Make sure to get inside the mood of this piece. Playing too aggressively though out probably will not sound very good. Make the lines sound as smooth as possible.

3. Thematic development is used in this piece. An idea is stated, then developed in the following phrase, as in measures 11-16.

4. In a few places, there are repeated notes in phrases, giving the idea a kind-of insistent feeling. (measure 8-9, 30-31, 42).

Listen suggestion-

Herbie Hancock- Maiden Voyage

## 6. Confirmed-

Tips-

1. This is a very difficult tempo to make feel right. Your articulation must be solid, and the eighth notes need to be relaxed and swinging. As mentioned earlier, practice with a metronome, this time putting the metronome on beats 2 and 4 at half note =66. Play

scales in eighth notes, using jazz articulation explained in the appendix, and be precise as to the placement of each note within the time.

2. The symbol indicates a turn. In this case the exact rhythm it would look like this- You add a note above the written one, then return to that note, in a triplet figure.

3. There are many one-measure and two-measure II-V-I ideas in this piece, which is the most common chord progression in jazz. This would be a good piece to memorize, then extract the various ideas and use them on other pieces when you improvise. Notice how the lines are strung together to navigate the chord progression, as in measure 38-45.

4. There are a few ideas that are very typical of Charlie Parker, including measures 39-40, 49-52 and 53-55. Also, even though the two II-V-I ideas on the second bridge (measures 49-56) are almost completely diatonic within the chord changes, they have a nice shape. This demonstrates that you don't necessarily need to have tension notes outside of the key (i.e. altered V chord) to sound interesting.

Listening suggestion-

Charlie Parker- most Verve collections  
Sonny Stitt- Stitt plays Bird

7. Miles Blues

Tips-

1. The melody on this blues strongly emphasizes the #11 sound, giving it a mysterious quality. The scale that is used over this sound is the mixolydian #11.

2. Notice that the melody has many long, sustained notes with little rests. As a contrast, chorus 3 and 4, which are essentially the first two choruses of the solo section, use shorter phrases and long rests. As mentioned in “Slank Street” these rests help to “frame” the ideas, and resonate in the listeners

mind. When practicing improvising, remember to incorporate rests, playing a phrase then purposely resting for up to two full measures.

3. The ideas used throughout this piece are in the style of Miles Davis, and are very melodic and song-like. The ideas are quite diatonic, with no use of passing tones at all within the entire piece. Notice how each idea has important notes within it that create a certain mood. As the chorus unfolds, the ideas subtly shift moods to compliment the idea before, and give the piece a sense of forward motion and meaning.

(Chorus 3)

Listening suggestion-

Miles Davis- Milestones  
Cannonball Adderley- Cannonball and Coltrane

8. Freedom-

Tips-

1. This is a fun, soulful piece that emphasizes the 4<sup>th</sup> interval sound made popular by tenor saxophonist Eddie Harris. Using 4<sup>th</sup>'s, in sequence, is an effective way of getting "outside" of the chord changes, because they create an "open" effect that doesn't necessarily establish a certain key center, as a sequence of 3<sup>rd</sup>'s, for example, might.

Measure 18-19

2. As a contrast to the 4<sup>th</sup> sound, there is extensive use of bluesy ideas. In particular, there are several places within the piece that the tri-tone between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the flat 3<sup>rd</sup> are used in a blues-like context. This produces a nice, bright sounding "edge" to the idea.

Measure 45-46

3. Though the piece is based on only one chord, certain harmonic contrasts prevail within a diatonic realm. Specifically, ideas that shift between the major 3<sup>rd</sup> and minor 3<sup>rd</sup> give the piece an almost blues effect.

Measure 41-48

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Listening suggestion-

Eddie Harris- The in sound + Mean greens (Atlantic/Rhino)

Miles Davis- Miles smiles

## 9. Bird's Ballad-

Tips-

1. The most important thing to keep in mind on a ballad is to be musical. In the end, this is something that must feel deeply, but some specifics can be identified. One of the most important aspects of ballad interpretation is the dynamic shaping of ideas and sustained notes. For example, as a phrase ascends, it is common to get slightly louder, then softer as it descends. Another common trait is to taper the ends of sustained notes. Note-don't overdo dynamic contrast, as this may sound too contrived. Most of what I'm talking about is subtle.

Measure 1-2

2. On the first 4 measures of each of the three A sections, sequence is used. An idea is stated in the first measure of the A section, then repeated with variations in rhythm and harmony. Sequence is an effective way to create a sense of logic and forward motion on a solo, as long as it's musical and not overdone.

3. As on a blues, the blues scale can be used on both the I chord and the IV chord as in measures 5-6, 13-14 and 29-30. On this piece, it's a good place to use it after using ideas that emphasize color tones such as the 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup>.

Measure 5-6

4. Repeating an idea on harmonies that quickly shift up a half step, then back down, is an effective way of navigating these type of chord movements.

Measure 15

Listening suggestion-

Charlie Parker- Dail recordings  
Sonny Rollins- Sonny meets Hawk

10. Trane's Thing-

Tips-

1. This piece is based on John Coltrane's style of playing around 1963. With the exception of one accidental in measure 96, the piece is entirely diatonic, employing folk-like melodies throughout.
2. Three pentatonic scales are the basis for many of the lines. The difference between these scales is one or two notes, which add a slightly different color. Using pentatonic scales that are closely related can produce a kind trance-like effect when soloing.

Alto c minor, g minor and c minor 6 pentatonic scales



3. Eighth notes in this style of playing are normally played a little bit more straight. This makes them sound slightly more modern, but they still have to swing. Listen to Coltrane and his pianist McCoy Tyner, during the period mentioned, to hear exactly where this style of playing developed.

4. Notice that there are many rests within this piece. Since the energy level of the piece in general, and the rhythm section in particular, is quite energetic, it's important not to get too excited as a soloist when playing in this style. Doing so often can lead to loss of control. The rests employed in the piece help to keep the music relaxed and let the rhythm section interact (a good example being Kenny Washington's fill in measure 64).

Listening suggestion-

John Coltrane- Live at Birdland

John Coltrane- Coltrane (Impulse)

11. You need not

Tips-

1. Contrasting to the eighth notes in Trane's Thing, the eighth notes on this piece are a bit more swung. Note- these are subtle differences. Don't make them too exaggerated or they will sound corny or out of context. Practice this line using jazz articulation.

M 39-40

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2. Both bridges (measure 25-32 and 57-64) exclusively use the tritone interval (inverted on the second bridge) This gives the bridge a off-center feeling, and is an effective way to get through the quickly moving chords of the last 4 measures of each bridge.

Listening suggestion-

Thelonious Monk- Genius of Modern Music Vol 1  
Miles Davis- Steamin'

12. Things-

Tips-

1. As mentioned in the "Confirmed" tips, this tempo requires a relaxed, yet precise, time feel, along with very precise articulation.
2. Notice how the 4<sup>th</sup> idea over the chord in measure 21 connects well to the chords in measure 22, even though the tonal centers are a ½ step apart.

Measures 21-22

3. The ideas in measures 29 and 30 are a tritone apart, which is a common way to alter the V chord and still have good melodic content.

Measure 29-30

4. In measures 45-67, the ideas trade with the drums, first doing 4's, then 2's. Listen closely to what Kenny plays, trying to hear the logic of the rhythms he plays. At the same time, count in your head, and be precise about where your next entrance is.

Charlie Parker- Dail sessions  
Dizzy Gillespie-Groovin High

13. Days ago-

Tips-

1. This tempo is fairly up, so try to stay on top of the time, not playing too hard. When playing faster tempos, the eighth-note length become more even, and articulation is less pronounced.

2. The ideas in measures 17-20 are the same phrase going down in half steps while the chords are moving around the cycle of 4ths. The ideas are using the concept of tritone substitution, where the chords implied are F#7-F7-E7-Eb7 instead of F#7-B7-E7-A7.

3. When on the I minor chord in choruses 3 and 4 (the solo-type section) there is a strong emphasis of the natural 13. This give the ideas a bit more intensity, largely due to the tritone interval between in and the minor 3<sup>rd</sup>.

measure 36-37

measure 51-52

measure 55-56

Listening suggestion-

Sonny Stitt Plays- Roost Records

Charles Mingus- Mingus Three

14. Stellar-

Tips-

1. This interpretation of a classic standard is in the style of Miles Davis' band in the early 1960's with George Coleman, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams. The ideas are especially similar to George Coleman's, with clear melodic content, interesting altered V7 ideas and use of the 4<sup>th</sup> interval.

2. One very nice sound is to use the #2 on the locrian sound, as in measure 25 and measure 27. It sounds quite bright and fresh on a chord that usually sounds dark (half diminished)

(Measure 25-27)

3. There are two classic ideas that are used on altered V7 chords that are worth learning in every key. Altering the V7 chord brings tension and color to a line, creating a sense of forward motion.

Measure 17-18

Measure 48

Listening suggestion-

Miles Davis- My Funny Valentine

Ella Fitzgerald- Clap Hands, Here comes Charlie

15. Night eyes-

Tips-

1. The most difficult thing about this etude is the transition from latin to swing. The tendency is to rush the swing feel, especially on eighth notes (i.e. measure 25) Practice this transition by setting the metronome at half note =96 and working on the passage from measure 21-28. Keeping in mind not to exaggerate, The latin eighth notes are a bit more straight, while the swing notes have a little bit more swing and lift to them.

2. The ideas in measures 17-20 use the notes in what is known as the “So What” voicing, which were used by Bill Evans on that tune. They have an open sound using the 4<sup>th</sup> interval at the bottom, with a third at the top.

Measure 17-20

3. The tag uses the III-VI-II-V turnaound, which is a very typical way to extend the form of a song, either as an interlude (as in “Green Fin”) or as a tag at the end of a piece. The tag here is a relatively short time, but you could use this type of progression and extend it on a gig indefinitely, cueing the last chord in end the piece.

Listening suggestions-

John Coltrane- Coltrane’s Sound  
Sonny Rollins- The Quartets (RCA)