BEBOP
GUITAR IMPROV SERIES

VOLUME 1
Lesson Book
v4.0

RICHIE ZELLON

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ABOUT THE BEBOP GUITAR IMPROV SERIES

Developed over a 10 year period by its author and used as an instructional method in various music schools, *The Bebop Guitar Improv Series* consists of two volumes with multi-media materials. It is intended as a guide to lead both the player with little or no formal improvisation skills, as well as the player who does so exclusively by ear, on the journey to becoming a seasoned jazz improviser. Each volume is comprised of 3 books: the *Lesson Book*, *Workbook*, and *Scale & Arpeggio Book*.

**Volume 1** is devoted to teaching the rudimentary principles of jazz improvisation in theory and practice. It initially focuses on learning how to systematically develop a vocabulary to improvise over chord changes from a guitar-oriented technical perspective. A variety of essential harmonic progressions found in jazz are covered in order of difficulty. Each new progression is taught through a series of short etudes, and gradually introduces one or more of the chord/scales required to improvise over most jazz standards. Various melodic concepts and syncopated rhythms commonly used in the swing/bebop idioms, are covered as well.

**Volume 2** builds on the principles explored in Volume 1 and explores various applications over «Rhythm Changes», as well as standards based on major, minor and extended tonalities. The technical focus is on multi-positional playing using the entire fretboard.

Be sure to check out the [Bebop Guitar Improv Series Online](https://bebopguitar.richiezellon.com)! Featuring 150+ instructional videos, it is the perfect compliment to the book series.

For more info please visit [https://bebopguitar.richiezellon.com](https://bebopguitar.richiezellon.com)

NOTE: This series focuses solely on the development of linear improvisation. A working knowledge of basic 7th chords is presumed throughout, as guitar oriented instruction on their construction is beyond its scope.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richie Zellon, guitarist, composer, and music educator, has held teaching positions as professor of jazz guitar at Florida International University (Miami) the University of South Florida (Tampa) The Music Workshop (Orlando) and his own venue, Miami Jazz Guitar.

With several critically acclaimed recordings under his name, Zellon has recorded and performed with some of the most influential musicians both in the mainstream and Latin jazz genres. Among them, Paquito D’ Rivera, David Leibman, Jerry Bergonzi, Sam Rivers, George Garzone, Danilo Perez, Edward Simon, Jeff Berlin, Abraham Laboriel, Oscar Stagnaro, Alex Acuna and Ignacio Berroa to name a few.

Due to his innovations in the field of jazz and latin music he has been profiled in several important books such as «The Great Jazz Guitarists» by Scott Yanow, «The Jazz Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1900» by Maurice J. Summerfield, «El Diccionario de Latin Jazz» by Nat Chediak, «Caliente: A History of Latin Jazz» by Luc Delanoy and «Jazz Jews» by Michael Gerber.

For almost a decade, he wrote an instructional column for Jazz Improv magazine. In addition to his dedication to mainstream jazz, his ongoing research on the music of various Latin American cultures and their fusion with contemporary music has been a sought after topic by musicians at international clinics and workshops as well.

For more information please visit www.richiezellon.com
INTRODUCTION

WHY «BEBOP» IMPROVISATION?

Some guitarists might ask, why specifically study «bebop» improvisation? For me the answer started to unfold one night back in 1974 at the Keystone Korner, a small jazz club in San Francisco. Between sets I went and sat at the bar next to the featured guitarist. After introducing myself and expressing my admiration for his music, I went on to explain that I had just started studying music at a nearby school and I would very much appreciate his advice on a concerning matter. After he agreed to do so, I shared my confusion regarding how to approach the study of jazz improvisation on guitar. He listened patiently and then replied with a smile, «It’s simple, just start by breaking down every chord and playing it as an arpeggio». Although it didn’t make much sense at the time, I felt I should pay special attention to this seasoned jazz guitarist’s advice. His name by the way was George Benson.

A few years passed and in 1977 I found myself in Boston, half way through my first semester at the Berklee College of Music. Although the harmony and arranging classes were definitely useful, the 30min weekly instruction I received on my instrument left much to be desired. Being told to «use the dorian mode over a II-7 in a major key», or «the mixolydian mode over the V7», wasn’t necessarily teaching me how to come up with any lines in the style of my favorite bebop guitarists. My solos still sounded as if I were just running scales. Sound familiar?

One evening as the semester was coming to an end, I went down to the «Jazz Workshop», a small club on Boylston Street. It so happened that one of my favorite jazz guitarists was booked there all week. I am referring to Pat Martino, whom I mustered the courage to approach at the end of the night and beg for private lessons. Martino agreed and summoned me to meet him the next day at a nearby motel where he was staying. It was during this eye opening lesson that my understanding of how the guitar’s fretboard is organized, was first revealed. Martino unraveled the mystery of how any arpeggio could be extended and fingered throughout the entire fretboard in a seamless fashion. Finally, I was ready to begin systematically practicing Mr. Benson’s past advice regarding the breaking down of 7th chords into arpeggios! I still however, except occasionally by ear, did not quite understand how to come up with those beautiful flowing lines «a la Wes».

It wasn’t until after graduating from Berklee and pursuing private studies with jazz guru, Charlie Banacos, that I finally understood the connection between bebop and the broken chord arpeggio concept to its fullest. Banacos, who spent the last years of his life as director of jazz studies at the New England Conservatory, observed that a large percentage of the bebop language is based on a vertical approach to improvisation. It consists of arpeggiated chords with various diatonic or chromatic note approaches to its root, third, fifth, and seventh tones.
Upon moving to Florida in the early 90’s, I received more insight into this concept. This first occurred during my private studies with trumpeter Red Rodney, once a member of the Charlie Parker Quintet. Listening to him in his Boyton Beach home, improvise and explain how the bebop players did it, was like hearing it straight from the horse’s mouth! He reinforced the fact that Bird and the rest of his contemporaries were not thinking so much «horizontally», that is in terms of scales, but instead «vertically» using various approach note permutations to the chord tones. During this period, I also had the opportunity to play some gigs with legendary saxophonist Sam Rivers who had recently moved to Orlando. Rivers who belongs to a later generation than Rodney, is associated with further developments in the evolution of jazz, such as the «avant garde» and «modal jazz» movements. However, upon listening to Rivers improvise over a standard, in spite of occasional angular lines and extended use of tonality, the architecture of his solos was for the most part, straight out of the bebop tradition! This holds true for the majority of post-bop jazz musicians. So if you’re still wondering, «why bebop?» — it is safe to conclude that mainstream jazz improvisation as we know it today still has its foundation in the various concepts pioneered during the bebop era. Consequently in the present world of music academia, most institutions featuring a jazz curriculum agree that a solid understanding of these concepts is a prerequisite for the aspiring improvisor.

In the previous paragraphs I have introduced you to my most esteemed mentors and tried to convey in a nutshell, my personal journey in learning jazz improvisation. It is with great pride and joy that through this series of books, I pass on to you what I believe is the essence of the bebop idiom as applied to the guitar. The information contained herein represents the sum of my experience teaching this art for several decades to hundreds of guitarists, both privately as well as in various universities.

The Bebop Guitar Improv Series comprises two volumes. Throughout this first volume I will be using the blues tonality as the primary vehicle to teach the rudimentary principles of jazz improvisation. Four varieties of 12 bar blues are covered in order of difficulty: 1. Traditional Blues, 2. Jazz Blues, 3. Minor Blues, and 4. Bird Blues. Each new progression introduces one or more of the required chord/scales to eventually improvise over most jazz standards.

In Volume 2, I will expand on the information provided here and explore various applications over «Rhythm Changes» as well as major, minor and extended tonalities. In regards to this first volume, the reason I have chosen the blues in contrast to the conventionally used major tonality, is 3-fold in its nature:
1. **HARMONIC SIMPLICITY**

In order to improvise over any typical standard out of «The Great American Songbook», a good command of at least 7 chord families and their associated scales is usually the prerequisite. This is due to the fact that any diatonic major or minor tonality is comprised of 7 different chords and scales. The blues on the other hand, is like a mini tonality that when performing over its traditional harmonic structure (I7-IV7-V7), requires the use of only one scale and one chord type. This enables the student to learn the rudiments of melodic improvisation and apply them to a musical progression at a much quicker pace than if he first had to learn 7 different scales and chord types. It can be an over-whelming experience for many, often resulting in discouragement from pursuing the required study to improvise over a typical major/minor based jazz standard.

Although still possessing a degree of difficulty, the feat of learning to improvise is greatly simplified when starting out with just one scale. Once mastered, additional scales are gradually introduced by changing just one note to the already familiar one. NOTE: Even the so called architects of bebop– Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk–are known to first have mastered applying the new concepts over blues changes before attempting to incorporate them over more complex harmonies.

2. **STRUCTURAL ECONOMY**

Unlike most jazz standards which have a 32 bar structure, the blues form as stated is traditionally comprised of a 12 bar structure. It is obviously easier for the beginning improviser to memorize and thus melodically «navigate» over a 12 bar progression without getting lost, rather than over a full fledged 32 bar piece.

3. **EVOLUTIONARY NATURE**

Last but not least, the blues is a predominant influence of the jazz idiom, especially in its early development. Its rhythmic essence gave birth to the «swing feel» which also helped define mainstream jazz. Its harmonic structure has also gradually evolved throughout jazz history to include all the current developments of each era. Just listen to a recording of Sidney Bechet playing the blues and compare it to one by John Coltrane doing the same several decades later, and this will become evident. Consequently, I have chosen to mirror this evolution to begin our study of improvisation.
SOME IMPORTANT FINAL ADVICE...

I am a firm believer in the concept that jazz improvisation is a language and should be learned and taught as such. Consequently, to become a fluent conversationalist in any language you have to first understand its grammatical components in order to properly diagram a sentence. Yes, it’s true that languages can and should initially be learned by ear, as we naturally do in the early stages of life. However, we will remain at a primitive level of communication if we do not eventually pursue an education. The same holds true in the case of such a sophisticated musical language as jazz. It is one thing to improvise over traditional blues using just 1 pentatonic scale, but a different matter altogether, when it comes to doing so over a 32 measure progression with a dozen moving chords!

We are fortunate to live in a day and age in which the grammar of jazz has evolved and been codified into a teachable language. On the unfortunate side, we also happen to be living in a time when «attention deficit disorder» seems to run rampant in our society and people no longer have the patience to pursue any task that is going to require a long term focus and commitment—that is, unless there is a chance they will be generously compensated down the road. Sadly, this is usually not the case with most art forms. As a result, the internet is filled with books and videos that claim to teach you the «lite and quick» approach to jazz improvisation. This is usually done through a compilation of random riffs and licks, which in spite of providing instant gratification in the form of «fragmented music», fail to bestow the necessary foundation the student requires to evolve into a fluent soloist. So, what am I trying to convey through all of this? Simply that there is no short cut to playing jazz! A brief look into any biography of say—Bird, Miles, Trane, Wes, etc.—will reveal that these legends who are no longer with us spent years studying and practicing this «language», as have all its successful present day practitioners.

In conclusion, any guitarist who is serious about learning to improvise in the jazz idiom should first be aware of the fact that doing so is not a short term commitment. To this effect, please keep in mind that jazz represents the highest pinnacle in the art of improvisation, and can provide you with an ongoing means of creative expression for the rest of your days! Try to savor and enjoy each step of the learning process, and don't worry about the next step until you're actually taking it. The adoption of this mindset is crucial if you want to make progress on this journey. Take your time! Jazz is a lifetime pursuit...

Best Wishes,

Richie Zellon
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LESSON 1
FUNDAMENTALS
HOW TO USE THIS LESSON BOOK

The Bebop Guitar Improv Series - Lesson Book, was designed to be used in conjunction with 2 companion books: Workbook and Scale/Arpeggio Fingerings. The series consists of 5 key sections which as a whole explore the different areas required to develop an improvisational vocabulary in the bebop idiom. Here is a brief description of each one, and in which book they can be found:

The Jazz Etudes (The Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Lesson Book) The etudes, written in both regular notation and tab, are the heart and soul of this method. They serve as models to train the aspiring improviser in utilizing the melodic techniques and rhythms taught in each lesson. They are presented in order of gradual difficulty. For more info see p.26. 

Band in a Box & MP3 files of all the etudes are available for download online. If you have purchased this book you can find the URL on p. 34.

The Scale / Arpeggio Fingerings (The Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Scale & Arpeggio Fingerings). The scales and arpeggio patterns provide the necessary fingerings to properly play all the etudes in the Lesson Book as well as the technical exercises contained in the Workbook.

The Bebop Calisthenics (The Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Workbook). These exercises are carefully structured to work simultaneously at many levels to aid in the development of technical skill, knowledge of the fretboard, reinforce the use of various linear melodic concepts introduced, create an ear-finger connection, and overall help your improvisational skills flourish. For more info see p.15 in the workbook.

The Rhythm Lab (The Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Workbook). This segment of the lessons, will introduce you to the various rhythmic figures that are commonly employed in mainstream jazz, as well as how to best break them down for the purpose of sightreading.

The Rhythm Templates (The Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Lesson Book). These templates consist of different harmonic progressions and rhythms devoid of any notes. They have been programmed to guide you step by step in supplying the missing pitches, using the unique melodic concepts introduced in each lesson. Throughout this procedure you will learn how to systematically develop the mindset necessary to improvise over a given chord progression before attempting to do so in real time. For more info see p.32.

In addition to the 5 specific sections described, towards the end of each lesson a quiz is included so that the student can gauge his/her understanding of all the theoretical concepts introduced so far. This is conveniently followed by an assignment using the «Rhythm Templates» which further tests that understanding through the writing of an original etude.

Throughout each lesson you will find guideposts in the form of shaded boxes such as this one. They will direct you to related assignments in the accompanying books. Please be sure to complete them as each subsequent lesson builds on the skills and information therein.

A detailed checklist of all the assignments has been included in the Appendix of this lesson book for your convenience (see p.118).
A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO TONALITY

Tonality is brought about by a sequence of chords leading to one or more cadences. The New Grove Music Dictionary defines a «cadence» as:

«The conclusion to a phrase, movement or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression or dissonance resolution; the formula on which such a conclusion is based. The cadence is the most effective way of affirming or establishing tonality—or in its broadest sense, modality—of an entire work or the smallest section thereof; it may be said to contain the essence of the melodic (including rhythmic) and harmonic movement, hence of the musical language, that characterizes the style to which it belongs.»

Once a cadence is established, the key becomes the center towards which all diatonic chords gravitate, hence the name «key center». From here on in this series we will use the term diatonic to denote all the notes present in any scale pertaining to a given key or tonality. In contrast, all notes that do not belong to that scale will be referred to as chromatic.

In order to properly understand and improvise over different harmonic progressions, we must first familiarize ourselves with the chords that serve as a foundation for a tonality. Below are the 7 chords that constitute the tonality of C major:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{Imaj7} & \text{IImin7} & \text{IIImin7} & \text{IVmaj7} & \text{V7} & \text{VImin7} & \text{VIImin7b5} \\
\text{Cmaj7} & \text{Dmin7} & \text{E min7} & \text{Fmaj7} & \text{G7} & \text{Amin7} & \text{Bmin7b5} \\
\end{array}
\]

Notice that each chord is built over a degree of the scale and consists exclusively of the notes and alterations (in the case of C major, none) pertaining to this scale. Once again, this is what we imply when using the term «diatonic». For the sake of harmonic analysis, it is customary to identify and label all chords with a roman numeral corresponding to the degree of the tonality they are built upon. This enables us to transpose a progression to any key as well as easily memorize it.

CADENCES AND THE THREE PRIMARY CHORD FUNCTIONS

Most cadences usually consist of anywhere from 2 to 4 chords. In a complete cadence the final chord is the point of rest or conclusion of a harmonic progression. This is referred to as the resolution. Consequently, a cadence in music syntax is the equivalent to a sentence in our spoken language. In like manner, when several cadences are chained together we could say they form a musical paragraph. Through this reasoning it is safe to conclude that cadences are the harmonic «chunks» that make up most pieces of music. Because these cadences reoccur repeatedly in standard jazz pieces, it is in our best interest to practice both chords and melodic ideas within their various categories. In doing so, we are preparing our ears to hear these ideas as well as our hands to execute them in the proper context.
Cadences can be classified as being «weak» or «strong». If using grammatical punctuation as our analogy, a weak cadence is more like a «comma» and conveys the sense of a brief pause. A strong cadence on the other hand, is more like a «period» due to its sense of finality. The strongest cadence consists of the 3 primary chords in a tonality: the IVmaj7 or sub-dominant, the V7 or dominant and the IImaj7 or tonic. When played in that given order (IVmaj7-V7-IImaj7) they constitute what is traditionally known as a perfect cadence (also known as an authentic cadence), since the 3 functional categories are represented. The remaining chords (II, III, VI & VII) each fall into one of the aforementioned 3 categories and are the harmonic basis for diatonic reharmonization. This is summarized below:

1. The IImin7 and VIImin7 have a tonic function and thus can take the place of the IImaj7.
2. The IImin7 has a subdominant function and thus can take the place of the IVmaj7.
3. The VIImin7b5 has a dominant function and thus can take the place of the V7.

**COMMON TYPES OF HARMONIC CADENCES**

**PERFECT CADENCE**
If we keep in mind the principles of diatonic reharmonization under the 3 functional categories previously discussed, we will discover that the perfect cadence often constitutes fifty percent or more of standard jazz progressions! As we noted, the traditional perfect cadence is IV-V-I. Back in the early 20th century many popular composers and jazz musicians began to substitute the IV chord with the II chord which also has a sub-dominant function. As a result the perfect cadence in jazz became II-V-I.

**DECEPTIVE CADENCE**
In many instances the I chord is substituted with the VI or III chords which also share the tonic function. This explains why occasionally a V7 or dominant chord instead of resolving a perfect 5th down to the IImaj7 as expected, resolves to the IImin7 or VIImin7. This is known as a deceptive cadence.

**PLAGAL CADENCE**
A plagal cadence takes place whenever the IV progresses to the I. This is also known as the amen cadence due to its frequent reoccurrence in hymns and gospel music. It is found in blues and many early rock progressions as well.

**HALF CADENCE**
Whenever a cadence ends on the V chord it is called a half cadence. This is most likely the weakest of all cadences since it sounds incomplete. In spite of this, half cadences are common within jazz standards. The opening measures to Duke Ellington’s «Satin Doll» is a good example.
THE BLUES TONALITY

In the previous introduction to how a tonality functions, we examined the chords that constitute a major tonality. Many of the principles discussed are also applicable to other forms of tonality such as those classified as minor or even modal. The blues nonetheless is unique and different in this respect due to the fact that unlike a conventional tonality, its 3 fundamental chords (I7, IV7, V7) are not diatonic to one specific scale. Harmonically speaking, the blues is also unique in that it is comprised of dominant 7 chords over both the I and IV degrees in addition to the V. When employing chords over the remaining degrees, it borrows from either a parallel major or minor tonality (eg. if incorporating a II chord in a C blues, it could borrow a D-7 from a C major tonality.)

FORM

The traditional blues form employs a 12 bar structure and is comprised solely of dominant chords built over the I, IV and V of the key. The tonic (I7) extends for the first 4 measures. Occasionally the sub-dominant (IV7) temporarily occupies the 2nd measure returning to the tonic for the 3rd and 4th measures. This is an optional variation used to break up the static routine of the tonic. However, a definite plagal cadence occupies measures 5 through 8. This takes place whenever the IV progresses to the I. Also known as the «amen» cadence, here we can savor the gospel music roots of the blues. The V7 and IV7 occupy measures 9 and 10 respectively. The 11th and 12th measures constitute the turnaround and are taken up by the I7 and the V7 (which resolves back to the beginning).

```
||: I7   | (IV7)  | I7   | I7   | IV7  | IV7  | I7   | I7   | V7   | IV7  | I7   | V7  :||
measure:      1               2                  3              4              5              6              7              8              9                10           11           12
```

SCALES

Traditional blues musicians have always employed the minor pentatonic scale over the tonic to improvise throughout the entire progression. For instance if playing over C blues, the C minor pentatonic would not only be employed over the I7 (C7) but also over the IV7 (F7) and V7 (G7) chords.

MINOR PENTATONIC

Alternatively when playing over the changes, the mixolydian which can be thought of as a major scale with a lowered 7, is an effective choice for the I7, IV7 and V7. Unlike when using the minor pentatonic, in this instance we need to start a new mixolydian scale over each of the 3 chord’s roots. Our initial lessons will make use of this scale exclusively. Other scales will be gradually introduced as we explore jazzier harmonies.

MIXOLYDIAN
PHRASING
The use of «call and answer» which consists of a musical statement made by one of the members of the group and echoed by another member (or the group as a whole), is reminiscent of a ritual practiced among many African tribes. This concept is not only present in vocal blues but also in the development of most instrumental blues solos.
INTRODUCING FINGERING PATTERNS 1, 4 & 5

All exercises and etudes in Lessons 1 through 6 of this book will employ Mixolydian fingering patterns: 1, 4 & 5. Initially we will use:

Pattern 1 (root on the 6th str. played with index) whenever playing over the I7 or tonic.
Pattern 4 (root on the 5th str. played with index) whenever playing over the IV7 or sub-dominant.
Pattern 5 (root on the 5th str. played with middle) whenever playing over the V7 or dominant.

ASSIGNMENT I: You are now ready to begin in the companion book:
«Bebop Guitar Improv Series: Scale and Arpeggio Fingerings»

Please read Part I (p. 6–18) and then proceed to Part II, where in the Mixolydian section, you should commit patterns 1, 4 and 5 to memory on your instrument.

It is of crucial importance that you first carefully read and understand «the heptatonic fingering concept» explained in the Scale and Arpeggio Fingerings book (PART I) before proceeding with this study. Please be sure to commit the 3 mixolydian fingering patterns to memory. In doing so:

1. Be able to play each of the scale fingerings, descending from the highest available note on the 1st string down to the lowest one on the 6th string. Most of the playing you will be doing when improvising will start out on the higher register (strings 1, 2 & 3), meaning that you will be required to be very familiar with this area of the scale. This you must accomplish without first having to play the scale starting on the 6th string in order to remember the notes on the high strings. It is therefore suggested that when committing each fingering to memory, you do so from 1st string to 6th string.

2. Be able to play the 7th chord arpeggio (1, 3, 5, b7) derived from each pattern from the highest available note on the 1st string down to the lowest one on the 6th string. The notes that comprise the arpeggio constitute the framework of any melodic line. Throughout this study you will learn that this harmonic structure, even more so than the scale, is the foundation of jazz improvisation.

3. Be able to identify any arpeggio degree on any string within each fingering immediately (1, 3, 5, b7). After you are able to do so, train yourself to be able to identify the remaining scale degrees (2, 4, 6) in the same manner.

NOTE: For the less skilled guitarist, mastering the various fingering patterns can sometimes be a slow and arduous task. This however is a fundamental resource for the aspiring improviser. Therefore, no matter how long it takes, please be sure to master the assignments prescribed on this page before continuing! It is a prerequisite for your successful completion of the upcoming lessons in this study.
GUIDE TONES AND VOICE LEADING

It is our aim to make the melodic transition between chords as smooth as possible when improvising over a given harmonic progression. This is where the concept of voice leading, a procedure generally derived from the principles governing the progression of voice-parts in contrapuntal music, comes into play. In order to learn how to apply voice leading we must first become familiar with guide tones. These are the harmonic tones that best represent the characteristic sound of a given chord. In order of importance they are:

1. 3rds and 7ths. They are the 2 most important tones in defining the overall identity of a chord. We will refer to them as primary guide tones.

2. b5’s, #5’s and upper extensions (9’s, 11’s and 13’s). These add a unique «aural color» to the basic texture of the chord. We will refer to them as secondary guide tones.

3. Roots and perfect 5ths. These are the weakest tones for they fail to convey the underlying chord’s «gender» (ie., major or minor). We will refer to them as hybrid tones.

To learn how to voice lead and consequently construct coherent melodic lines when improvising, we must take the following principles into consideration:

1. At the point of chord change, pick the closest guide tone in order of importance: 3rd or 7th preferably!
2. Try to achieve the smoothest voice leading possible (shortest intervallic amount of movement to the guide tone) prioritizing as follows:
   a. common tones preferably tied (no movement)
   b. minor seconds (half step movement)
   c. major seconds (whole step movement)
   d. minor and major thirds

During improvisation, a good jazz musician subconsciously hears a background guide tone line encompassing the given chord progression. It consists of moving from the guide tone of each chord to the closest guide tone of the next chord. The notes that make up this imaginary line represent the target notes around which the player will improvise.

The example below demonstrates a guide tone line comprised of half notes over a 2-bar major cadence. Notice the smooth voice leading consisting of minor seconds and common tones.
The following example demonstrates a guide tone line comprised of half tones, this time over a 4-bar progression. This is also referred to as the *arpeggio framework*. Notice the use of 3rds in the first 2 measures as a means to establish a wider range in the line. If you play it on your instrument you will be able to hear how it suggests the intended harmonic progression.

![Musical notation image]

When a good jazz soloist is left unaccompanied you will often hear the chord changes implied in his lines. As previously mentioned, this is due to the fact that an imaginary guide tone line constitutes the framework of his improvisation. To further illustrate this concept let us examine the following excerpt of a solo. You’ll notice that the guide tones at the beginning of each chord change are labeled. If you go back and compare those guide notes to those that make up the previous example, you’ll soon realize that they are identical.

![Musical notation image]

The above example demonstrates how a guide tone line can serve as a springboard to create a phrase that sounds unified even though it is moving through several chord changes. For the seasoned improviser this happens at the subconscious level, however the novice should be prepared to spend some time internalizing the rudiments of this process. Doing so will facilitate the creation of well constructed melodic lines when improvising over any number of chord changes.

**MELODIC CONTOUR**

The subtleties regarding the overall range and direction of a melodic line, is another important concept any student of improvisation should become familiar with. To get a better grasp of this, if you trace a line across all the note heads in the previous example you will be able to see what is referred to as the *melodic contour*. Here are 3 definitions that best describe this concept:

1: The pattern of ascending and descending pitch changes in a melody.
2: The shape—in highs and lows—of a melody.
3: An image that represents a melody just heard.

A good melodic contour will look like a series of smooth waves or slopes which gradually ascend and descend. This is the trademark of a solo that covers a broad register and features smooth voice leading.

**ASSIGNMENT 2:** You are now ready to begin the Preparatory Exercises on p. 6-14 of the *«Bebop Guitar Improv Series VOL. 1 : Workbook»*
INTRODUCING INTERVALLIC SCRIPT

Throughout this study we will often work with a notational system occasionally referred to as intervallic script. Before proceeding to teach you this system, I want to make it clear that it is in no way meant to be a substitute for traditional music notation. The main purpose of intervallic script is to serve as a system of staffless notation, to analyze and memorize melodic phrases in numerical formulas that can easily be recalled, transposed and applied to any key as improvisational vocabulary. In addition it has proven to be an invaluable system in training the mind to visualize the components of a scale and their melodic function in relationship to a given chord. This is a crucial resource when we improvise, due to the fact that it is much more practical to think in transposable numerical patterns rather than actual notes.

Here are the 5 basic principles you need to know to get started in reading and writing intervallic script:

1. Notes are represented numerically as scale degrees. The chord they are related to is in turn represented by its harmonic function in roman numerals (ie. II-7, V7, etc.).

2. Vertical arrows (↑ ↓) indicate the ascending or descending direction of the next pitch if it lies outside the current octave.

3. All scale degrees that are not preceded by a vertical arrow are within the same octave as the previous scale degree. The following example illustrates the principles described so far:

   \[ I_7 \]
   \[ \text{[b7-5-1↑2-1]} \]

   can translate to :

   \[
   \begin{array}{c}
   \text{I}_7 \\
   \text{[b7-5-1↑2-1]}
   \end{array}
   \]

4. Horizontal arrows are employed to indicate the resolution direction of an approach tone to its target. In the case of chromatic tones (ch) not diatonic to the current scale, to further facilitate the understanding of their exact location, a small enharmonic scale degree in parenthesis can be placed after each chromatic approach. In the following example we have 2 consecutive chromatic notes, both resolving to the 5. Without their corresponding arrows it would require guesswork to determine which one resolves down and which one up to the 5. Therefore a \( ch \) will always indicate that the chromatic note resolves a half step down to its target, while a \( ch \) will indicate that it should resolve a half step up.

   \[ I_7 \]
   \[ \text{[3- ch- ch- 5]} \]

   can translate to :

   \[
   \begin{array}{c}
   \text{I}_7 \\
   \text{[3- ch- ch- 5]}
   \end{array}
   \]

5. To further facilitate the use of intervallic script on guitar, the scale fingering pattern will be indicated under the roman numeral that denotes the harmonic function of each measure. In addition, a circle containing the string that the scale degree is to be played on will be placed at the beginning of each measure that introduces a chord change.