

Cello

Jam

By Spencer Pepke

The train of thought that led to this book set off in 2020 while my spouse, Bella, worked to complete her MFA in Cello Performance at University of California, Irvine. She had taken on the task of Debussy's Cello Sonata as part of her final recital, and being in the height of a global pandemic, I had become her sole accompanist. This was a huge undertaking from me, and with very limited experience playing classical music, the skills I had learned playing rock and jazz had to adapt!

The bulk of my musical knowledge came from (brace yourself) playing in garage punk bands. In my teenage years, my peers and I collaboratively made music with little to no formal approach. We found and invented terminology and systems for understanding music that we heard and played. Now, I hope to pass on the ideas that have been the most helpful to me, both in creating my own music and understanding others'.

Concepts covered in this book:

- How to read and interpret a "lead sheet" in a variety of styles: from swing and samba to baroque!
- How to play in a jam session and improvise as a group with other musicians
- How to interpret chord symbols to play accompaniments and bass lines.
- How to use accents and rhythmic displacement to spice up a melody and create unique phrasing
- How to analyze harmonic progressions for improvisation

This book is for cellists of all skill levels, and has something for everyone. Some of the examples might seem pretty difficult, but don't stress it, try what you can and skip ahead to the next part that seems do-able!

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Chapter 1: Group Improvisation / Impromptu Arrangement

This book sets out to help cellists that have already developed a deal of classical proficiency understand and approach popular styles of music. What I mean here by “popular styles” isn’t about how the music sounds, but rather a set of ideas and attitudes that we take to performing written music. For example, a very skilled classical pianist could sightread a meticulously transcribed jazz solo, and it might sound like jazz, but the way they’re thinking while playing would be very different from the pianist who improvised the solo originally. On the other end, musicians in the time of Bach were expected to be able to improvise, and while what they would’ve played would likely have sounded very baroque, their thinking would be more like how jazz musicians work today. Most popular styles, historical and contemporary, require more interpretive will from performers than what most modern classical pedagogy prepares us for.

Our goal: less music from the sheet, more from the player. To fill in the missing bit, will need to learn to find and understand patterns across many pieces, but first, we will take a look at some very simple written music:

G D D G
 happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you
 G C D G
 happy birthday dear reader, happy birthday to you

This is the kind of notation you’ll probably find if you are looking for the chords to a pop song. You might call it a chord chart. Instead of writing out the melody, we are expected to have already listened to and memorized it. There is also a focus on accompaniment—the chords are a framework to help you find the melody. Even though this may seem rudimentary, we can do a lot with just chords.

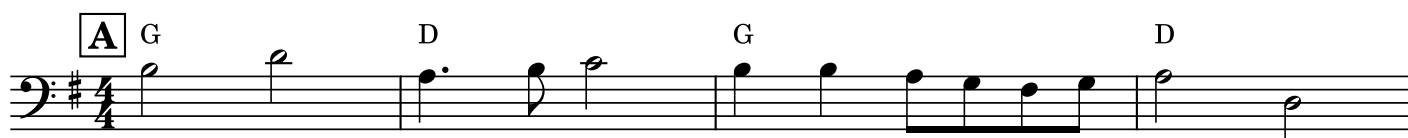
Vivaldi - Intro to Winter

E-	F#dim	%	%
B7	E-	F#dim	E
F7	Fdim	F#sus	B-

But for tunes that we don’t know as well as happy birthday, it helps to have just a little bit of info about the melody. This is where the lead sheet comes in handy.

Berceuse

Franz Schubert



What is a lead sheet?

A lead sheet is a form of music notation that provides usually only a single melody and accompanying chords. Even some very complex pieces can be reduced to this format, and the missing information is filled in by the performer's knowledge of the style that they are performing in. A good lead sheet will also include letters for each section, so you can quickly see where sections repeat and change. As opposed to the classical tradition where most printed parts are different, a band that uses lead sheets might all be looking at the same music. If you have a friend to play with, try playing through a lead sheet together, and take turns accompanying each-other by playing a bass line or chords.

The Conventional Jam Session

Lead sheets are used most commonly in jazz music as a basis for improvisation, where the form of a tune is played through repeatedly several times in a row without stopping. Usually, the melody will be played as written once the first time through. This is known colloquially as “the head”. The next time through, one of the musicians will take an improvised solo based on the chords and/or melody. The chords of a tune by themselves are often referred to as “the changes”. Although this model is most codified in Jazz, it is also common in Country/Bluegrass and other folk music cultures.



At a jam, the band plays through the tune, and musicians will take turns soloing, starting and ending as they return to the top of the page. One time through the music is often called a “chorus”. It is not uncommon for one soloist to take multiple choruses of the same solo if the tune is short, but one should always consider whether continuing a solo will serve the music. Sometimes two or more musicians will share a chorus by “trading”. If someone wants to “trade” with you, they will usually say a number of bars (4 or 8 most commonly) and solo for that many bars, at which point you pick up where they left off. Once you’ve played for the same number of bars, the solo will switch back to them, so on and so forth.

Once everyone who wants to solo has taken one, it is time to take “the head” out. Someone might pat their own head to let you know this is what’s happening. The written melody is played one final time and the tune ends.

What I've mentioned so far is the practice that is common when playing with strangers, but where things really get fun is playing with the same people over and over- learning how to improvise as a group and create arrangements on the fly. A more advanced band that has been playing together for a long time might play a tune like this:

- The pianist plays an intro from the last 8 bars of the piece
- The bassist and guitarist go into a “vamp”, where they repeat the first two chords until someone plays the head
- The cellist plays the head while the saxophonist plays little responses to the melody during the rests and long notes
- At the start of the pianist's solo, the drummer changes the style from Latin to double-time swing
- The cellist and guitarist trade, fist 8 bars each, then 4 bars each, then shorter and shorter phrases until they're playing at the same time
- The bassist takes a solo over the vamp from before
- The saxophonist takes a solo over just the first half of the tune
- The pianist gets up and sings the second half of the head out, and they improvise an ending

Musicians who know each other well can orchestrate all of this exciting interplay with just a few words before a tune starts, or they can just do what they feel in the moment and the rest of the musicians can listen and respond!

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Cello, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The music is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The Cello part (bass clef) starts with a grace note on the first beat, followed by a melodic line. The Guitar part (treble clef) has a vamp of two chords: a D major chord and a D major chord with a sharp on the second degree (D#). The Bass part (bass clef) has a walking line starting with a pizzicato instruction. The Drums part (percussion clef) has a simple rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks for cymbals and 'x' marks for snare/drum hits.

The score above is how a Jazz group might play the first four bars of Berceuse from page 5. Each musician spontaneously creates and responds to everyone else, resulting in a very complex product from a simple idea.

1.2: Decoding Chords

Chords, like scales, are just collections of notes. Chords are built by attaching related notes to a “root” note. When you see a chord written, the letter is the “root” and the symbols that come after are the “quality”. The “quality” of a chord depends on the relationship between the “root” and the other notes. To keep from having to do math, we can find chords quickly on the cello using shapes.

Musical notation showing three major chords on a cello staff:

- G major:** Notes G2, B2, D3. Fingerings: III, II, I.
- A major:** Notes A2, C3, E3. Fingerings: III, II, I.
- D major:** Notes D2, F#2, A2. Fingerings: IV, III, II.

In this example, first we play a G major chord with two open strings. Every chord shape you learn is movable! Here we move (some teachers will say “transplant”) the same shape up one step and it becomes an A major, then we move the whole shape down a string and it becomes a D major.

All we need to know is two things: where the root note is, and a shape that forms the quality of chord that we want. We can do the same thing with minor chords, diminished chords and even complicated jazzy chords with lots of extra numbers attached. There are many different shapes for each chord quality— here’s a dictionary of some useful shapes. I’ve put the root note of each chord in (parenthesis):

Major:

Musical notation showing three major chords on a cello staff:

- A major:** Notes A2, C3, E3. Root note A2 is circled in parentheses.
- F major:** Notes F2, A2, C3. Root note F2 is circled in parentheses.
- D major:** Notes D2, F#2, A2. Root note D2 is circled in parentheses.

Minor:

Musical notation showing three minor chords on a cello staff:

- A-:** Notes A2, C3, E3. Root note A2 is circled in parentheses.
- F#-:** Notes F#2, A2, C3. Root note F#2 is circled in parentheses.
- D-:** Notes D2, F#2, A2. Root note D2 is circled in parentheses.

Diminished:

Musical notation showing two diminished chords on a cello staff:

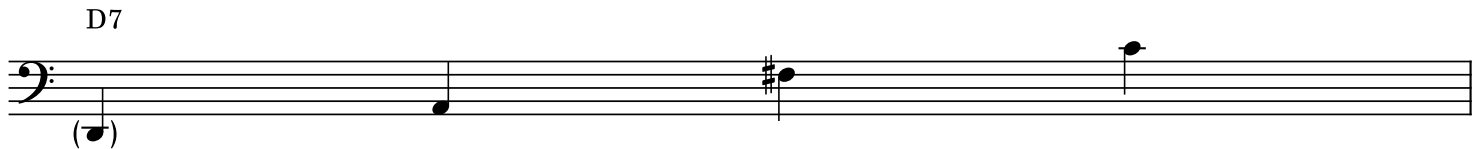
- Bb^o:** Notes Bb2, D3, F3. Root note Bb2 is circled in parentheses.
- F#^o:** Notes F#2, A2, C3. Root note F#2 is circled in parentheses.

Suspended:

9



Dominant 7th:



All of these chord shapes have each of their notes exactly once, and have one note per string. This makes them very versatile, but neither of those things are important for using chords. Pay attention to what is the same and what changes between different chord qualities with the same root. Try to play parts of the chords in isolation to see what notes feel important, and what parts you can leave out.

Most of the time, we will only need to hear the melody and the root be able to hear the chords of a tune. This is because the context of the notes before and after help our brain fill in what makes sense based on patterns of music we've heard before. This happens even if we don't understand what these patterns are!

Fancy Chords:



You will often see longer chord names, like EΔ7 or D7b9. 90% of the time, we can consider these as different flavors of the chords we've gone over already. The numbers tell you which extra notes to add in to give a chord a more particular feeling without changing its function. You can always simplify a chord to one of the qualities you know, and you can also experiment with adding notes to chords to see what sounds good. Here's a list of some of the variations you might see:

Major: Δ7, 6, 6/9, M7, Maj7

Minor: -7, -9, -Δ7, m7, min7

7: 7b9, 7#9, 7#11, 11, 13

Diminished: -7b5, ø7, o7, min7b5

Suspended: 7sus

Augmented: 7b13

It is also important to consider that different composers/arrangers will have different approaches to notating chords. Some also include embellishments and turn-arounds, while others leave this up to the player. Two charts for the same piece may look very different, and it is up to the performer to listen while playing and decide what they think is important. The next section will help us with this.

1.3: Chords in Context

In most music, chords follow predictable patterns as they change, diverging from and returning to a state of balance. Just like how we can use the same shape to make a major chord with any root, the patterns of chord relationships are the same no matter what key we play in. To see these patterns, we have to have a way to talk about the relationships between chords that doesn't rely on scales or note names.

Every note in a key can be the root of its own chord, which is represented by a roman numeral. Some of these chords are much more useful than others, though. The most common chord relationship is the "V" (five). It has a strong pull back to the "I" (one). It's root is always one fifth above the tonic's (up one string; or down one string and up two half-steps). Here is a simple I - V - I chord progression in C major.

chords: I V I

We can build more chords on other notes in the key. We (usually) decide what chord quality to use by checking what matches the notes in the key. Here we play I - vi - ii - V in C major. This is a very common chord progression in pop and doo-wop.

Note on roman numerals: since roman numerals are also used to denote what string a note is on, roman numeral chord progressions in this book will be clearly marked "chords".

chords: I vi ii V

We can do the same thing in minor keys! Here is a i - iv - V - i in G minor.

chords: i iv V i

You might've noticed that the V chord in that last example uses an F#. That's not in G minor! Absolutely, not! Composers often use notes and chords that are outside of the key to create a strong feeling. The V chord is such a powerful force to move us down a fifth that we see it in all sorts of strange places. We can make it even stronger by adding one note, the note two half steps below its root, to form a V7 chord. The V7 chord is such a powerful sound that most any 7 chord we use ends up working like a V chord, pushing us down a fifth.

Here, I7 pushes us to IV.

chords: I I7 IV I

It's also very common to see ii chords turned into II7 and vi chords turned into VI7.

chords: I VI7 II7 V7

In the last example, we can see this little two note shape sliding down, one half step at a time. We can play the same chords using just those two notes at a time! If we have another person playing the bass note, it is better to play chords without the root so that the sound stays clear.

Now we can start to learn and reuse shapes for entire chord progressions. Instead of having to think about the shape for each chord as you read a chart, you can find a starting point be prepared to play the shapes for the chords that are related to it.

General tips about playing chords:

- When playing with others, be subtle. Make sure you support, not distract from the melody.
- If chord changes are happening fast, don't worry about playing all of them. You can rest, or if no one is playing bass, play just roots.
- Pay attention to range. If the melody is low, choose higher shapes, if the melody is high, choose lower shapes.
- Try to play your chords with a rhythm that brings out the melody.
- When in doubt, or if something doesn't feel right: do less!

Here is a list here of some of my favorite chord progression shapes on cello. I put the key center in (parenthesis)– When you want to apply one of these shapes, find that note on the cello and think of that as your anchor.

V - I in C Major

Musical notation for V - I in C Major. The first measure shows a G7 chord (G-B-F-A) with the key center C circled in parentheses above it. The second measure shows a C major chord (C-E-G) with the key center C circled in parentheses above it. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: V7 and I.

I - IV - V - I in A Major

Musical notation for I - IV - V - I in A Major. The first measure shows an A major chord (A-C#-E) with the key center A circled in parentheses above it. The second measure shows a D major chord (D-F#-A) with the key center D circled in parentheses above it. The third measure shows an E major chord (E-G#-B) with the key center E circled in parentheses above it. The fourth measure shows an A major chord (A-C#-E) with the key center A circled in parentheses above it. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: I, IV, V, I.

i - V - i and VI - iv - V in D Minor

Musical notation for i - V - i and VI - iv - V in D Minor. The first measure shows a D minor chord (D-F-A) with the key center D circled in parentheses above it. The second measure shows an A major chord (A-C#-E) with the key center A circled in parentheses above it. The third measure shows a D minor chord (D-F-A) with the key center D circled in parentheses above it. The fourth measure shows a Bb major chord (Bb-D-F) with the key center Bb circled in parentheses above it. The fifth measure shows a G major chord (G-B-D) with the key center G circled in parentheses above it. The sixth measure shows an A major chord (A-C#-E) with the key center A circled in parentheses above it. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: i, V, i, VI, iv, V.

ii - V - I - vi in G Major

Musical notation for ii - V - I - vi in G Major. The first measure shows an A major chord (A-C#-E) with the key center A circled in parentheses above it. The second measure shows a D7 major chord (D-F#-A-C) with the key center D circled in parentheses above it. The third measure shows a G major chord (G-B-D) with the key center G circled in parentheses above it. The fourth measure shows an E major chord (E-G#-B) with the key center E circled in parentheses above it. Below the staff, the chords are labeled: ii, V7, I, vi.

Analysis Exercise: Boccherini Minuet

Try to use what you've learned about chord progressions to understand what is happening in the piece on the next page. Have a friend play the melody, and accompany them by playing the chords. You may want to start with just the root at first and play more complicated patterns when you are comfortable.

As a bonus listening exercise, the person playing the melody should play the sections in a random order. As the accompanist, see if you can play the right section just by hearing what they play in the first bar!

Minuet

From Boccherini's String Quartet

6 **A** D A A D

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 1-5. Chords: D, A, A, D.

6 E7 A D E7 A

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 6-9. Chords: E7, A, D, E7, A.

10 **B** A D- A D- A D- A

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 10-14. Chords: A, D-, A, D-, A, D-, A.

15 **C** D A A D

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 15-19. Chords: D, A, A, D.

20 A7 D G A7 D

Musical staff 5: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 20-23. Chords: A7, D, G, A7, D.

24 **D** D D7 G

Musical staff 6: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 24-28. Chords: D, D7, G.

29 G A7 D G A7 D

Musical staff 7: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 29-32. Chords: G, A7, D, G, A7, D.

33 **E** D

Musical staff 8: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 33-37. Chord: D.

38 D G

Musical staff 9: Bass clef, 6/8 time signature, key of D major. Measures 38-41. Chords: D, G.

Chord Progression Shapes, Continued

ii - V - I - VI in D Major

Chord progression in D Major: ii (E-7), V7 (A7), I (D), VI7 (B7). The notation shows the bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The chords are represented by whole notes on a staff.

chords: ii V7 I VI7

i - iio - V - i in B Minor

Chord progression in B Minor: i (B-), iio (C#o), V (F#), i (B-). The notation shows the bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The chords are represented by whole notes on a staff.

chords: i iio V i

When we change keys in the middle of a piece, it is called modulating. In the next example, we modulate from a key to the minor key that has the same notes. The last chord pushes us back to the major key.

ii - V - I - IV in Ab Major followed by iio - V - i in F Minor

Chord progression: ii (Bb-7), V7 (Eb7), I (AbΔ7), IV (DbΔ7) in Ab Major; iiio (Gø7), V7 (C7), i (F-), I7 (F7) in F Minor. The notation shows the bass clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). A double bar line separates the two key signatures. Brackets below the staff group the chords into their respective key signatures.

chords: ii V7 I IV iiio V7 i I7

In this example, we modulate from Ab Major to C Major by using the notes that are shared by DbΔ7 and D-7.

ii - V - I - IV in Ab Major followed by ii - V - I in C Major

Chord progression: ii (Bb-7), V7 (Eb7), I (AbΔ7), IV (DbΔ7) in Ab Major; ii (D-7), V (G7), I (CΔ7) in C Major. The notation shows the bass clef with a key signature of three flats (Bb, Eb, Ab). A double bar line separates the two key signatures. Brackets below the staff group the chords into their respective key signatures.

chords: ii V7 I IV ii V I

Here are two common Latin rhythmic patterns to use to create a bass line. The first is a basic Brazilian pattern derived from Samba and the second is a Cuban style that would be at home in most Latin Jazz settings. These patterns are endlessly variable, and the best way to get a better understanding of a style is to search for and listen to recordings. Notice how we can anticipate the chord change by playing a note from the chord that is coming up just before the downbeat.

Brazilian Bossa Nova

Cuban Son Montuno

Here are examples of bass lines for a very common jazz chord progression in two different keys. The first two examples use a shifting shape, which is advantageous because it allows us to quickly move between keys (transpose), but the second is far more difficult to play in tune because of constant shifting. By shifting the pattern up or down the neck, the first pattern can be used in any key from C to F, and the second any key from G to Bb.

Here is the same example as the last, but with an alternate fingering. Because of the open strings, the shape can't be freely transposed, so it is only useful in a few keys, but is easier to tune because it has no shifts.

Walking Bass

Jazz starts to get more complex as we introduce chromaticism and more chord tones to play what is called walking bass.

Chromatic passing tones, from above or below

Using inversion to create neat lines

Using scales with chromatic passing tones to create direction

Some general pointers for playing a walking bass line:

- Try to play notes from the chord on the downbeat
- Prioritize supplying a rhythmic pulse for your group. It is better to play bad notes with good timing.
- “Mark” the form: players sometimes rely on the bass to hear where in the music the group is. Make it clear when section changes happen, especially when the form repeats.

Harmony Exercise: Circle of Fourths

Practice the sequence of chords in multiple ways. In this format, each rectangle is a bar, and % means to repeat the last bar. First, just play a simple bass line. Once you are comfortable, try playing chord shape patterns or creating a walking bass line. Once you understand the pattern, try the same thing starting on A-. This exercise will help you become comfortable in all 12 keys.

D-	G7	C	%	C-	F7	Bb	%
Bb-	Eb7	Ab	%	Ab-	Db7	Gb	%
F#-	B7	E	%	E-	A7	D	%

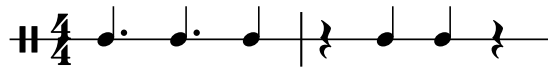
Chapter 2: Applying Style

In this chapter, we will attempt to add style to our melodic playing and accompaniment. A knowledgeable player or group can make one tune sound like 20 by manipulating rhythms and articulation, and by adding, removing, and bending notes. The changes you make will depend on the style you're playing, and the best way to understand a style is through careful and repeated listening. You likely already have a pretty good understanding of several styles if you listen to a lot of music! What is included here is in no way an exhaustive guide to style, but more a jumping off point on how to approach learning any style.

Groove is in the Heart

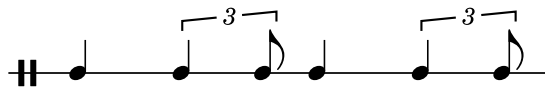
One of the most useful first steps we can take to learning a style is to understand its core groove. The rhythm that makes a groove might be played on bass or percussion, or it might depend on a complex interplay between multiple instruments. It may be very different from the rhythms that are played by the melody instruments in the style, but crucially, it is the part that makes you dance or bob your head.

3 - 2 Son Clave



The problem with teaching this concept of groove on paper, though, is that so much of what makes us dance is in the little details that can never fully be written down. Take the rhythm above for example. I've titled it 3-2 Son Clave, which is a pattern from Cuba played on a wood block. But if I play the same rhythm but imagine it in the context of Rock and Roll, it will be the Bo Diddley Beat! Even if I ask 5 people from different cultural backgrounds to clap this rhythm as written, they will still all be different in some way.

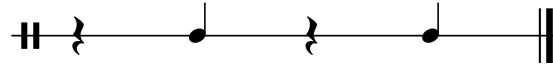
Another example of a deceptive rhythm is Swing. Often, arrangers will define swing as this:



But that's only an approximation. In reality, there is such a huge variation in how swing displaces beats that depends on tempo, the players, and the phrase. We should always be careful not to oversimplify elements of a style, first so that we pay respect to the culture that style comes from, and second so that we don't sound like a robot.

We can try to solve this problem of differences by simplifying even further. If we want a really well developed groove, we should listen to a style extensively while marking the strongest beats. This is a good place to take note of an important difference between playing classical and popular styles: almost all popular music styles are derived from African Rhythms. Opposed to European Classical music, where the strongest beat is commonly the first in the bar, these rhythms have their strongest beats on both 2 and 4 or just 3. Nothing makes as much a difference to playing a good Samba or Reggae as a strong thump in the middle of the bar!

Swing Hi-Hat Pattern



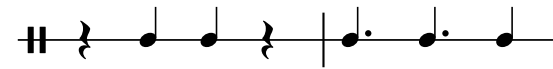
If we want to swing, for instance, we can listen to a few different recordings of swing while clapping or tapping our foot on 2 and 4 along with the hi-hat cymbal. Then when we want to use that style, we can put on a metronome. Instead of hearing the metronome as every beat, we set it to half speed and think of it as just 2 and 4 (make sure neither beat is accented by the metronome). The metronome acts as a scaffold that we can use to remember the feeling of swing while we practice applying it to our instrument.

Tresillo



For many Latin styles we might instead use a tresillo as a similar scaffold, or we can use a clave pattern specific to that style. Some metronomes let us build patterns to use, but we can also look up rhythm only backing tracks, or teach a friend play it with us.

2 - 3 Son Clave



Brazilian Clave



Samba "Partido Alto"



In the next few sections, we will explore a few of the specific elements that contribute to groove.

2.2: Syncopation

Syncopation is the displacement of rhythm from the beat or metric pulse. Part of any style is what kind of syncopation are used and where. If we want to play a tune in a new style we can find spots in the melody and push them earlier or later to get a desired feel. Beyond just achieving a style, this is a great way to personalize a phrase. Remember that all of the examples in this book are jumping off points to demonstrate concepts, you should experiment with making your own changes!

Long Long Ago

(Swing)

Thomas Haynes Bayly

The musical notation for 'Long Long Ago' is presented in two staves. Both staves are in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The first staff has chords G, D, and G written above it. The second staff also has chords G, D, and G written above it. The melody is: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half).

We don't have to change a lot to make a big difference. In this first example, focus on the anticipated feeling from playing some of the notes 1/8th note early. It is best to practice this example with a metronome playing 2 and 4. Start off slow (half note = 60 bpm) and feel how playing the syncopated note earlier or later changes the way the melody feels. If you can feel it swinging, try stepping up the speed to 120 bpm.

Rhythm Exercise: Feeling the “And”

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef, key of D major, 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of eighth notes and quarter notes. The second staff shows a sequence of quarter notes and eighth notes. The third staff shows a sequence of quarter notes and eighth notes with rests.

Polyrhythms

In Jazz and Afro-Latin styles, syncopation often involves “polyrhythm”: the overlapping of two or more different metric pulses. In polyrhythmic music, there are multiple pulses that you can alternate between. One way to think of this is that there are multiple ways to “feel” the same meter.

Two staves of musical notation. The first staff is in 12/8 time and shows six eighth notes with accents on the first and fifth notes. The second staff is in 4/4 time and shows four quarter notes.

The version of Sicilienne by Maria Theresia von Paradis on the next page is arranged to highlight a 3 against 2 polyrhythm. Note: if the last line is too high, return to the top of the chart after measure 18.

A single staff of musical notation in 4/4 time showing a swung 4 feel rhythm: quarter, quarter, eighth-beam eighth, quarter.

The rhythm in the first measure has a swung 4 feel

A single staff of musical notation in 3/4 time showing a swung 3 feel rhythm: quarter, eighth rest, eighth note, eighth-beam eighth, eighth note.

The rhythm at C has a swung 3 feel

Sicilienne

(Afro-Cuban)

Maria Theresia von Paradis

A EbΔ7 Fø7 EbΔ7 Fø7 EbΔ7 Fø7 EbΔ7

5 EbΔ7 Fø7 EbΔ7 G7

7 G7 C-7 G7 C-7 Db G7 C-7

11 **B** EbΔ7 C-7 F-7 Bb7 EbΔ7 C-7 F-7 Bb7

15 **C** F-7 Bb7 EbΔ7 AbΔ7 Dø7 G7 AbΔ7 Bb7

19 Bbo7 F-7 Bbsus Bb7 Bbo7 F-7 Bbsus Bb7 EbΔ7 *fine*

2.3: Accentuation

Our next tool for styling melodic phrases is accentuation. We can accent notes normally by playing them slightly louder than the rest of the phrase, but we can also accent notes by manipulating note lengths. In the exercises in this section, try to exaggerate the markings as much as possible.

Swinging Twinkle

(Up-Tempo Swing)

Traditional

Syncopation and accents work together, and where we place either depends on how we want to express a phrase. There is no right way—it is always a creative choice, but we can learn how to feel the difference that it makes. In this first example, we emphasize the syncopation in the second bar of each line. Recall that the “scaffold” for a swing groove is beats 2 and 4. If we have that in mind while playing, there is a tension created in measure two when we play a note on the end of beat two. By playing a strong note on 4, we resolve that tension. In the Bach arrangement on the next page, we leave the tension unresolved to create an angular feel.

Alternatively, we could alter our twinkle melody to fit a Cuban groove. Notice how we manipulate the end of two that is found in the tresillo rhythm.

Korte Lebe

Cantate BWV 207

(Swing)

Johann Sebastian Bach

Musical score for 'Korte Lebe' in bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves contain the main melody with various ornaments and slurs. The third and fourth staves provide harmonic accompaniment with chords and bass notes. Chord labels above the notes include G, A-, D7, A-, D7, E-7, E-, A7, and D7.

Mango Walk

(Afro-Caribbean)

Traditional

Musical score for 'Mango Walk' in bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves contain the main melody with many accents and slurs. The third and fourth staves provide harmonic accompaniment with chords and bass notes. Chord labels above the notes include D, A, and D.

Ghost Notes

Ghost notes are heavily muted and shortened notes that we play before or after another note to accent it. Sometimes we play ghost notes as an actual note, and sometimes as more of a percussive sound. Try to play them really subtly, so that we barely notice them, but pay attention to the affect they have on regular notes. Here we start by ghosting the open strings. Ghost notes are notated here as X's

The musical score consists of five staves of bass guitar notation in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. Each staff contains a sequence of notes with 'X' marks above them indicating ghost notes. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The chord symbols above the staves are: Staff 1: DΔ7, F#7, B-7, D7; Staff 2: G, D, E7, A7, D; Staff 3: D, D7, G, B7; Staff 4: E-7, A7; Staff 5: D, B7, E-7, A7, D.

When we want to play them more as a percussive sound, we release hand pressure so that the note we're fingering doesn't sound, but not so much that we hear the open string. We also want to avoid harmonics. Start with pizzicato to get the hand pressure right, then try getting a similar sound with spiccato bowing. To change the tone, experiment with bow position and speed.

3.2: The Blues

The Blues is an African American song form that has been very influential to all American music, but especially Jazz and Country. Some think of it as primarily a poetic form, others as a harmonic progression, but the aspect of it that we will discuss here its expressive melodies. Blues is originally a vocal tradition, and it takes some of its patterns from speech. Think of how the pitch of your voice bends while you speak a sentence, especially at the beginning and end of certain words. We mimic the voice by sliding into and out of notes on our instrument. Try the example bellow slowly and with subtle slides at first.

Down Home Blues

Tom Delaney

Having a grasp on the blues as a style will give you another way to spice up your playing in most Jazz, Country, Rock, and Pop music. Just use slides in moderation– they have the strongest effect when used sparingly. The arrangement on the next page uses interspersed chromatic passing tones and bends that are informed by the blues.

Blues chord progressions: you will notice that most tunes bearing the name “Blues” have related chord progressions. The most standard of these is a 12 bar progression that goes between I, IV, and V, but there are endless variations and exceptions, especially with minor key blues.

C	F	C	%
F	%	C	%
G	F	C	%

Blues melodic playing feels most at home in this sort of setting, but with experience it can be used anywhere.

3.3: Licks

When we are playing melodically, whether embellishing a melody or taking a fully improvised solo, we can use licks. Licks are memorable short fragments of melody that we learn to hear in the conventional harmonic patterns of music. These fragments might be sourced from popular tunes, or they might be from a memorable solo that you heard. Playing recognizable licks, or “quotes”, is a great way to impress an audience. Licks don’t have to be recognizable though, you can even create your own licks!

Improvisers often call their collection of licks their “vocab”. To add something to our vocab, first we need to practice it repeatedly in different keys and learn how the lick functions harmonically. Most licks work over very common patterns, like the chord change between V and I. To find this function, we can either return back to the source material and hear what context the lick happens in, or experiment with playing it in different progressions to see what sounds right to us. Then when we hear the harmony that reminds us of our lick, we are ready to play it!

Here are a couple of licks that I love to play:

B7 E-7 A7
 chords: VI ii V

Cø7 F7 Bb-7
 chords: iio V i

Although licks are predominantly used in Jazz and Country Music, we can take licks from any style of music and also use licks in any style of music. I recently saw a bassist quote Bach at a Jazz jam, and the crowd went nuts!

Chapter 4: Charts a la Carte; or; Lead Sheets, Neat

Unlike most of the stylized music that we have seen so far, the charts that follow are slightly simplified versions of how their melodies are traditionally performed. Some of them have been shortened to a form that repeats well, and some keys have been adjusted to allow for group play with other string instruments. Try applying what you have learned about changing melodies with syncopation, accents, and by adding or removing notes. Play through a piece multiple times in a row, and switch between playing the melody, playing accompaniment, and improvising.

Gavotte

François-Joseph Gossec



Red River Valley

Traditional

1 G D G

6 G D

10 G G7 C

14 D G

Has Been Blues

Spencer Pepke

A7

6 D7 A7

10 E7 D7 A7 E7

Rondeau in D minor

"Lully's Gavotte"

Marin Marais

A D- A7 D- Bb G- A7

Staff 1: Bass clef, D minor key signature, common time. Measures 1-4. Chords: D- (m1), A7 (m2), D- (m3), Bb (m4), G- (m5), A7 (m6).

5 D- A7 D- A7 D-

Staff 2: Bass clef, D minor key signature, common time. Measures 5-8. Chords: D- (m5), A7 (m6), D- (m7), A7 (m8), D- (m9). Ends with a repeat sign.

9 **B** F C7 F Bb A7

Staff 3: Bass clef, D minor key signature, common time. Measures 9-12. Chords: F (m9), C7 (m10), F (m11), Bb (m12), A7 (m13).

13 A7 D- A7 D- G- A7 D-

Staff 4: Bass clef, D minor key signature, common time. Measures 13-16. Chords: A7 (m13), D- (m14), A7 (m15), D- (m16), G- (m17), A7 (m18), D- (m19).

17 **A** D- A7 D- G- A7 D-

Staff 5: Bass clef, D minor key signature, common time. Measures 17-20. Chords: D- (m17), A7 (m18), D- (m19), G- (m20), A7 (m21), D- (m22).

Swan Lake

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

A B- G7 B- B- G7 F#7 B- F#7

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 1-4. Chords: B-, G7, B-, B-, G7, F#7, B-, F#7.

5 B- G7 B- B- G7 F#7 B-

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 5-8. Chords: B-, G7, B-, B-, G7, F#7, B-.

9 **B** A7 F#-7 D7 E-7 G7 C#7 F#7

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 9-12. Chords: A7, F#-7, D7, E-7, G7, C#7, F#7.

13 A7 F#-7 D7 E-7 G7 C F#7 C#7 F#7

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, 4/4 time signature. Measures 13-16. Chords: A7, F#-7, D7, E-7, G7, C, F#7, C#7, F#7.

Humoresque

Antonín Dvořák

A DΔ7 D7 G7 G#o D B-7 E-7 A7

5 DΔ7 D7 G7 G#o DΔ7 B-7 E-7 A7 DΔ7

9 **B** DΔ7 D7 G7 B7 E-7 A7 DΔ7 A7

13 DΔ7 D7 G7 B7 E-7 A7 F#7 B7 E7 A7

17 **A** DΔ7 D7 G7 G#o D B-7 E-7 A7

21 D D7 G7 G#o D B-7 E-7 A7 DΔ7

Andante

from Cello Sonata no. 1

Felix Mendelssohn

Musical notation for measures 1-4. Chords: D7, G-, Eb7, D7.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Chords: D7, G-, Eb7, D7, G-.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. Chords: G-, Bb7, Eb, F7.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. Chords: Bb, Bb7, Eb, Aø, D7, G-.

The Swan

From Carnival of the Animals

Camille Saint-Saëns

5 4

G A-

5 4

A- D7 G

9 4

G C#o F#7

13 4

B- F#7 B-

17 4

G Bbo A- D7

21 4

D-7 Abo G-7 C7

25 FΔ7 A- D A-

29 F A7 D-7 D7

33 G A-

37 A- D7 G E7

41 A-7 G A-7

45 G A-7 D7

49 G fine

After You've Gone

Turner Layton

A DΔ7 D-7 AΔ7 F#7

5 **B** B7 E7 AΔ7 A7

9 **A** DΔ7 D-7 AΔ7 F#7

13 **C** B-7 F#7 B-7 G#o7 AΔ7 G#o7 F#-7 D#o7

17 AΔ7 F#7 B-7 E7 AΔ7 A7

La Cinquantaine

41

Jean Gabriel-Marie

A D-7 E \emptyset 7 A7 \flat 9 D-7 E \emptyset 7 A7 \flat 9

5 D-7 G-7 A7 **1.** D-7 **2.** D-7

10 **B** D7 G-7 D7 G-7

14 C7 F Δ 7 C7 F Δ 7

18 **C** A7 D-7 A7 D-7

22 A7 D-7 A7 D-7 A7

26 **A** D-7 E \emptyset 7 A7 \flat 9 D-7 E \emptyset 7 A7 \flat 9

30 D-7 G-7 D-7 G-7 A7 D-7

