

Viola

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 backgrounds.
- 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 violists 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

1 **A** G D G D

5 **A** G D G D G

9 **B** D G D

13 **A** G D G D G

## 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”. All though 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 the first four bars of a piece. The score is written for four instruments: Viola, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Viola part is in the alto clef and features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Guitar part is in the treble clef and consists of a vamp of two chords: a D major chord and a D major chord with a sharp fourth (F#). The Bass part is in the bass clef and starts with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking, playing a simple bass line. The Drums part is in the drum clef and features a complex, syncopated rhythm with many rests and accents.

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 viola using shapes.

The diagram shows three major chords on the viola staff:

- G major:** Root G (3rd string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: III (1st string, 2nd fret), II (2nd string, 2nd fret), I (3rd string, 2nd fret).
- A major:** Root A (2nd string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: III (1st string, 2nd fret), II (2nd string, 2nd fret), I (3rd string, 2nd fret).
- D major:** Root D (4th string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: IV (1st string, 2nd fret), III (2nd string, 2nd fret), II (3rd string, 2nd fret).

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 ones. I’ve put the root note of each chord in (parenthesis):

Major:

The diagram shows three major chords on the viola staff:

- A major:** Root A (1st string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (A), 2nd string, 2nd fret, 3rd string, 2nd fret.
- F major:** Root F (2nd string, 1st fret). Fingerings: (F), 1st string, 1st fret, 3rd string, 1st fret.
- D major:** Root D (4th string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (D), 1st string, 2nd fret, 2nd string, 2nd fret.

Minor:

The diagram shows three minor chords on the viola staff:

- A- (A minor):** Root A (1st string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (A), 2nd string, 2nd fret, 3rd string, 2nd fret.
- F#- (F# minor):** Root F# (2nd string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (F#), 1st string, 2nd fret, 3rd string, 2nd fret.
- D- (D minor):** Root D (4th string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (D), 1st string, 2nd fret, 2nd string, 2nd fret.

Diminished:

The diagram shows three diminished chords on the viola staff:

- B<sup>b</sup>o (Bb diminished):** Root Bb (1st string, 1st fret). Fingerings: (Bb), 2nd string, 1st fret, 3rd string, 1st fret.
- F#o (F# diminished):** Root F# (2nd string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (F#), 1st string, 2nd fret, 3rd string, 2nd fret.
- D- (D diminished):** Root D (4th string, 2nd fret). Fingerings: (D), 1st string, 2nd fret, 2nd string, 2nd fret.



## 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. Heres a list of variations you might see.

- Major: Δ7, 6, 6/9
- Minor: -7, -9, -Δ7
- 7: 7b9, 7#9, 7#11, 7b11
- Diminished: -7b5, ø7, o7
- Suspended: 7sus

It is also important to consider that different composers/arrangers will have different approaches to notating chords. Some 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. Don't limit yourself to what's here, you can change them or make up your own!

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!

## Chord Progression Shapes

Here is a list here of some of my favorite chord progression shapes on viola. I put the key center in (parenthesis)– When you want to apply one of these shapes, find that note on the viola 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 with a circled C below it, labeled 'chords: V7'. The second measure shows a C chord with a circled C below it, labeled 'I'.

### I - IV - V - I in A Major

Musical notation for I - IV - V - I in A Major. The first measure shows an A chord with a circled A below it, labeled 'chords: I'. The second measure shows a D chord with a circled D below it, labeled 'IV'. The third measure shows an E chord with a circled E below it, labeled 'V'. The fourth measure shows an A chord with a circled A below it, labeled '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- chord with a circled D below it, labeled 'chords: i'. The second measure shows an A chord with a circled A below it, labeled 'V'. The third measure shows a D- chord with a circled D below it, labeled 'i'. The fourth measure shows a Bb chord with a circled Bb below it, labeled 'VI'. The fifth measure shows a G- chord with a circled G below it, labeled 'iv'. The sixth measure shows an A chord with a circled A below it, labeled 'V'.

### ii - V - I - vi in G Major

Musical notation for ii - V - I - vi in G Major. The first measure shows an A- chord with a circled A below it, labeled 'chords: ii'. The second measure shows a D7 chord with a circled D below it, labeled 'V7'. The third measure shows a G chord with a circled G below it, labeled 'I'. The fourth measure shows an E- chord with a circled E below it, labeled '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

13

From String Quintet no. 5

Luigi Boccherini

3 **A** D A A D

6 E7 A D E7 A

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

15 **C** D A A D

20 A7 D G A7 D

24 **D** D D7 G

29 G A7 D G A7 D

33 **E** D

38 D G

## Chord Progression Shapes, Continued

## ii - V - I - VI in D Major

Musical notation for the ii - V - I - VI progression in D Major. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The chords are: E-7 (ii), A7 (V7), D (I), and B7 (VI7). The notes are shown as circles on a five-line staff.

chords: ii                      V7                      I                      VI7

## i - iio - V - i in B Minor

Musical notation for the i - iio - V - i progression in B Minor. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The chords are: B- (i), C#o (iio), F# (V), and B- (i). The notes are shown as circles on a five-line 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

Musical notation for the ii - V - I - IV progression in Ab Major followed by the iio - V - i progression in F Minor. The key signature changes from two flats (Bb and Eb) to one flat (Bb). The chords are: Bb-7 (ii), Eb7 (V7), AbΔ7 (I), DbΔ7 (IV), Gø7 (iio), C7 (V7), F- (i), and F7 (I7). The notes are shown as circles on a five-line staff.

chords: ii                      V7                      I                      IV                      iio                      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

Musical notation for the ii - V - I - IV progression in Ab Major followed by the ii - V - I progression in C Major. The key signature changes from two flats (Bb and Eb) to no sharps or flats. The chords are: Bb-7 (ii), Eb7 (V7), AbΔ7 (I), DbΔ7 (IV), D-7 (ii), G7 (V), CΔ7 (I), and CΔ7 (I). The notes are shown as circles on a five-line staff.

chords: ii                      V7                      I                      IV                      ii                      V                      I                      I

## 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 the root of each chord. Once you are comfortable, try playing chord shape patterns. Use any of the ii - V - I shapes provided. 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	%

## Chord Melodies

The next few examples will help contextualize the chord shapes you've learned. Playing the extra notes (other than the top note) of the chords is optional, but think spatially about where the chords are and how they are connected. You might think of the I or i chord as home base, and think of all of the other chords relative to it. Play these slowly, and if any of the examples seem difficult, practice double-stop 6ths up and down that scale.

## Sarabande

George Frideric Handel

The musical notation for the Sarabande is presented in two systems. The first system shows a sequence of chords: D- (i), A7 (V), F (III), C (VII), G- (iv), and D- (i). The second system shows a first ending (1.) with chords Bb7 (VI) and A7 (V), followed by a second ending (2.) with chords Bb7 (VI), A7 (V), and D- (i). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 3/4 time signature. The first ending is marked with a '1.' and the second ending with a '2.'. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

# Waltz no. 15

Johannes Brahms

**A** C F C

chords: I IV I

Detailed description: This block contains the first four measures of the piece. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes. The bass line features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Chords are indicated above the staff: C major (I) at measure 1, F major (IV) at measure 3, and C major (I) at measure 4.

5 A- E- B7 E- E-

vi iii B7 E- E-

Detailed description: This block contains measures 5 through 8. Measure 5 has a first ending bracket over measures 6 and 7. Measure 8 has a second ending bracket. Chords are indicated above the staff: A minor (vi) at measure 5, E minor (iii) at measure 6, B7 at measure 7, and E minor (E-) at measure 8.

**B** G C C7

V I I7

Detailed description: This block contains measures 9 through 12. Chords are indicated above the staff: G major (V) at measure 9, C major (I) at measure 10, and C7 (I7) at measure 12.

13 F D G

IV II V

Detailed description: This block contains measures 13 through 15. Chords are indicated above the staff: F major (IV) at measure 13, D major (II) at measure 14, and G major (V) at measure 15.

**A** C F C

I IV I

Detailed description: This block contains measures 16 through 19. Chords are indicated above the staff: C major (I) at measure 16, F major (IV) at measure 18, and C major (I) at measure 19.

20 A- C G C

vi I V I

Detailed description: This block contains measures 20 through 23. Chords are indicated above the staff: A minor (vi) at measure 20, C major (I) at measure 21, G major (V) at measure 22, and C major (I) at measure 23.



# Passacaglia

BWV 582

Johann Sebastian Bach

The image displays four systems of musical notation for the Passacaglia BWV 582 by Johann Sebastian Bach. Each system consists of a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 3/4 time signature. The music is written in a simple, rhythmic style, primarily using quarter and eighth notes. Above the notes, various chords are annotated with letters and symbols: C-, G, C-, F-, G7, A<sup>b</sup>, D<sup>ø</sup>, G7, D<sup>ø</sup>, C-, D<sup>ø</sup>, C-, A<sup>b</sup>, G, G, C-, C-, G7, E<sup>b</sup>7, F-, G7, D<sup>ø</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>7, G7, D<sup>ø</sup>, C-, D<sup>ø</sup>, C-, F-, G7, and C-. The first system covers measures 1-4, the second system (starting with a measure number '5') covers measures 5-8, the third system (starting with a measure number '9') covers measures 9-12, and the fourth system (starting with a measure number '13') covers measures 13-16. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the fourth system.

Take note of how the melodies in each of these examples connect chord tones. To create our own melodies to chord progressions, we can use the chord shapes we know as a scaffold, and connect them using surrounding notes. These connective notes can be from the key of the piece, from a scale that matches the chord, or they can be chromatic. We won't go into depth on this idea here, because the decisions that we make in this regard are highly dependent on both the style we're playing in and our own personal expression of that style. Regardless, we should prioritize using our ear to make decisions instead of over systematizing.

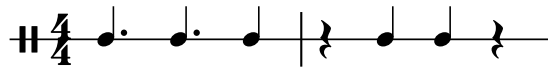
## Chapter 2: Applying Style

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

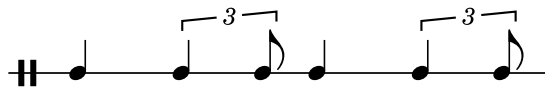
One of the most useful first steps we can take to learning a style is to understand its core groove. The rhythm that makes a groove might be played on bass or percussion, or it might depend on a complex interplay between multiple instruments. It may be very different from the rhythms that are played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

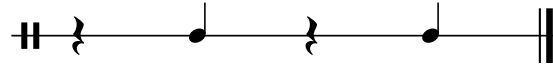
Another example of a deceptive rhythm is Swing. Often, arrangers will define swing as this:



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



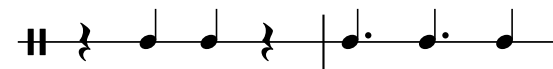
If we want to swing, for instance, we can listen to a few different recordings of swing while clapping or tapping our foot on 2 and 4 along with the hi-hat cymbal. Then when we want to use that style, we can put on a metronome. Instead of hearing the metronome as every beat, we set it to half speed and 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 alterations!

### Long Long Ago

(Swing)

Thomas Haynes Bayly

The musical notation for 'Long Long Ago' is presented in two staves. The first staff shows the melody in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on a grand staff with a treble clef. The first three measures are marked with chord symbols: G, D, and G. The second staff shows the same melody with the same chord symbols. The melody consists of quarter notes and eighth notes, with some notes being accented or syncopated.

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 4/4 time, key of D major. 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 illustrating polyrhythms. The first staff is in 12/8 time and shows a sequence of eighth notes with accents. The second staff is in 4/4 time and shows a sequence of 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.

Musical notation for a 4/4 time signature, showing a sequence of quarter notes.

The rhythm in the first measure has a swung 4 feel

Musical notation for a 3/4 time signature, showing a sequence of quarter notes.

The rhythm at C has a swung 3 feel

# Sicilienne

(Bembe / 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 Bbø7 F-7 Bbsus Bb7 Bbø7 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

The musical notation for 'Swinging Twinkle' is presented in three lines of bass clef notation, 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are quarter notes, with accents (>) placed over the first note of each measure. Chords are indicated above the notes: DΔ7, B7, E-7, A7, E-7, A7, DΔ7 in the first line; DΔ7, B7, E-7, A7, F#-7, B7, E-7, A7 in the second line; and DΔ7, B7, E-7, A7, E-7, A7, DΔ7 in the third line. The melody consists of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together in pairs.

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.

The musical notation for the Bach arrangement of 'Swinging Twinkle' is presented in a single line of bass clef notation, 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are quarter notes, with accents (>) placed over the first note of each measure. The melody consists of quarter notes, with some notes beamed together in pairs.

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 G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are the treble clef part, and the last two are the bass clef part. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo/style is marked '(Swing)'. The piece is by Johann Sebastian Bach. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: G, A-, D7, A-, D7, G, E-, A-, D7, E-7, E-, A7, D7.

# Mango Walk

(Afro-Caribbean)

Traditional

Musical score for 'Mango Walk' in G major, 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves. The first two staves are the treble clef part, and the last two are the bass clef part. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The tempo/style is marked '(Afro-Caribbean)'. The piece is Traditional. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: D, A, D, D, A, D, D, A, D, D, A, 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 six staves, each with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, often grouped in pairs. Ghost notes are indicated by an 'X' above the notehead. Chords are labeled above the staves: DΔ7, F#7, B-7, D7, G, D, E7, A7, D, D, D7, G, B7, E-7, A7, D, B7, E-7, A7, and 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.

## Chapter 3: Embellishment

In certain styles, adding in extra notes to embellish a melody is a part of interpretation. In classical music, we are used to seeing ornaments in written music. We might use the same kind of ornaments in other styles, but we can also make more drastic embellishments.



We can add in a scalar approach to start a phrase, or we can jump to chord tones mid-phrase. We can also use notes outside of the key as passing tones.



This example is a riff on Go Tell Aunt Rhody. We use notes outside of the key to approach chord tones.

- C approaches C#, the 3rd of A
- C approaches B, the 5th of E
- D# approaches E, the 5th of A

More importantly than any rule is how the chromatic notes serve the phrase. Virtually any note can work in the right context, and feeling when to use a note is a part of getting comfortable with improvisation. As a jumping off point, experiment with using the minor third and flat fifth as passing tones in a major key.

## 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

The musical notation for 'Down Home Blues' is written in 4/4 time. It consists of three lines of music. The first line starts with a C chord and contains four measures of music. The second line starts with an F chord and contains four measures. The third line starts with a G7 chord and contains four measures. The notation includes various blues techniques such as slides, bends, and chromatic passing tones.

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.

# I Ain't Got Nobody

Spencer Williams

**A** F $\Delta$ 7 G7 F $\Delta$ 7 D7 G-7 C7 F $\Delta$ 7 D7 G-7 C7

5 **A** F $\Delta$ 7 G7 G7 C7

9 **B** F7 Bb7 G7 C7

13 **A** F $\Delta$ 7 G7 F $\Delta$ 7 D7 G-7 C7 F $\Delta$ 7 D7 G-7 C7

## 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 work well on the viola:

chords: VI                      ii                      V

chords: iio                      3                      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

Musical staff 1: Gavotte, measures 1-5. Chords: C, G7.

Musical staff 2: Gavotte, measures 6-10. Chords: C, D7, G7.

Musical staff 3: Gavotte, measures 11-15. Chords: G7, C7.

Musical staff 4: Gavotte, measures 16-20. Chords: F, (F#o), C, G7, C.



# Red River Valley

33

Traditional

6

10

14

# Has Been Blues

Spencer Pepke

6

10

## Rondeau in D minor

"Lully's Gavotte"

Marin Marais

**A** D- A7 D- B $\flat$  G- A7

5 D- A7 D- A7 D-

9 **B** F C7 F B $\flat$  A7

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

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

# Swan Lake

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

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

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

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

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

## Humoresque

Antonín Dvořák

**A**

GΔ7 G7 C7 C#o G E-7 A-7 D7

5 GΔ7 G7 C7 C#o GΔ7 E-7 A-7 D7 GΔ7

9 **B** GΔ7 G7 C7 E7 A-7 D7 GΔ7 D7

13 GΔ7 G7 C7 E7 A-7 D7 B7 E7 A7 D7

17 **A** GΔ7 G7 C7 C#o G E-7 A-7 D7

21 G G7 C7 C#o G E-7 A-7 D7 GΔ7

# Andante

from Cello Sonata no. 1

Felix Mendelssohn

Musical staff 1: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature, key signature of one flat. Chords: D7, G-, Eb7, D7.

Musical staff 2: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature, key signature of one flat. Chords: D7, G-, Eb7, D7, G-.

Musical staff 3: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature, key signature of one flat. Chords: G-, Bb7, Eb, F7.

Musical staff 4: Bass clef, 3/4 time signature, key signature of one flat. Chords: Bb, Bb7, Eb, Aø, D7, G-.

# The Swan

From Carnival of the Animals

Camille Saint-Saëns

1 G A-

5 A- D7 G

9 G C#o F#7

13 B- F#7 B-

17 G Bbo A- D7

21 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



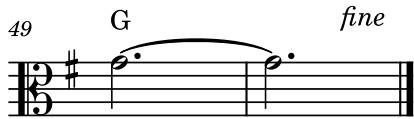
41 A-7 G A-7



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. 2. D-7

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

14 C7 F $\Delta$ 7 C7 F $\Delta$ 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

## Valse de l'adieu

Frédéric Chopin

**A** B $\flat$ -7 Eo7 Ao B $\flat$ -

6 B $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$

10 **A** B $\flat$ -7 Eo Ao B $\flat$ -7

14 B $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$

18 **B** C D $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$

22 C F E $\flat$  A $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7

26 **A** B $\flat$ -7 Eo7 Ao B $\flat$ -

30 B $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$  E $\flat$ 7 A $\flat$