

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR JAZZ AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

COURSE SYLLABUS: THEORY & PERFORMANCE 1B - JPER 1212 D

CRN: 1747, 2 Credits

SPRING 2015, Mondays 4:00 PM - 5:50 PM

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Course Description and Overview

Theory & Performance 1B Lab is designed as a course in the fundamental harmonic and melodic language of jazz improvisation. The basic premise is that jazz improvisers need to develop fluency and vocabulary in all keys in order to be able to deal with the wide variety of harmonic situations that arise in modern music. To this end, we will move from key to key each week, traveling around the cycle of fifths. We will start with a review of the diatonic modes of the major scale and their functions in jazz and then proceed to the diatonic modes of the melodic minor scale. We will compare and contrast the two scale families and their uses in modern improvising. We will then conclude with a presentation of two modes of the diminished scale and their uses in jazz.

Learning Outcomes

1. You will understand the differences between the major and melodic minor scale families and become familiar with their names.
2. You will understand the uses of the melodic minor modes in standard chord progressions.
3. You will significantly enhance your fluency playing in the twelve minor keys and will become entirely familiar and comfortable with every key, mentally and physically, with no "blind spots."
4. You will accumulate a useful set of chops-building practice material, some useful general concepts, and some vocabulary.
5. You will understand the two modes of the diminished scale (whole-half for dim7 chords and half-whole for V7b913 chords) and their uses in jazz improvisation.

Evaluation Procedures and Grading Policy

There will be a written midterm and final exam which will consist of questions on the material presented in class. There will also be occasional homework assignments to help reinforce the material. You are expected to have your instrument ready to play at all times during class but remember to keep silent until it is your turn to play. Grades will be based on attendance, class participation, homework assignments and the mid-term and final exams.

Please note that a respectful, positive attitude in class will help your grade considerably and also: no live phones, food (water is ok).