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**TIM RAY:**

I guess first of all I wanted to entertain any questions you might've had about the concert. I know Mark is having you write up some reports. Actually I got an advanced copy of one person's report that had some really interesting comments. One of the comments that this person wrote was about hearing-- trying to listen for the difference between the improvised sections and the written sections.

What was your feeling on that? Did you feel like you had a pretty good sense of when we were improvising and when we were playing written music? Was it a little hard to tell sometimes, right? I actually tell-- we hear that comment a lot, actually. Including from symphony players.

It might have been hard for you to tell, don't think that means anything negative. Like I say, a lot of musicians come up to us afterwards and they go, I don't know what you guys were doing, or how you were blending the composition and the improvisation. And that's, to me, is sort of an affirmation of one of my goals for this group, is to blend composition and improvisation in kind of a seamless way. I mean, it's obviously not seamless, but to make that-- make those lines blurry.

And I think a lot of composers of modern music-- I know Mark Harvey's compositions do somewhat the same thing, as well as of course Greg's. And a lot of people I know sometimes look for that kind of blurry line between composition improvisation. Because it's really all the same thing, right? It's just composition, you write it down. Improvisation is spontaneous, but still it's all kind of the same thing.

The piece that you transcribed from an improvisation, did you play that-- were you playing it exactly how it sounded originally? Or did you kind of reinterpret it? Because it sounded like a real piece.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah, that's--

**GREG HOPKINS:** (LAUGHING) What do you mean by that?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, right.

**GREG HOPKINS:** I know what you mean. I know exactly what you mean.

**TIM RAY:** Sounded like real music, not improvisation. No, I'm teasing. No, that's a good question. That's another one people ask a lot. Yeah, that was, again, that was sort of Eugene's. That was something that he had improvised with a different piano player years ago in this cathedral. Now he talked about it a little bit, I know.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Oh, you're talking about the piano-cello piece.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, the piano-cello piece, right. And as he said, they wrote it out. I mean, they wrote it out. Eugene kind of just memorized his cello part. And his part was pretty much as played, as improvised back however many years ago that was. And then the piano part, they wrote it out and of course, being a jazz player I changed it.

So I mean I basically followed the intent of it, you know, and I played something specific to what was played back then, as according to the music. But then I did some other-- I changed it up a little bit. Made it a little bit more-- gave it a little bit of a personal thing, a personal touch.

But yeah, that's one of the things. I know you weren't here last week when we were doing the thing with diatonic improvisation, but basically that's what that was. It was a whole thing about just improvising in the key of D major.

And Eugene and this guy, Paul Halley, was the pianist, basically did an amazing job of kind of creating this thing. And as you said, it sounded like real music. It sounded like something that could have been composed. It had sections and melody in the cello, melody in the piano, all kinds of variations and accompaniments. And like I said, that was just one of those things that kind of worked out really well

improvisationally and happened to be recorded.

And so that that's why it keeps getting played. But yeah, so I don't know if that answered your question, but that's kind of the genesis of that. So, cool. And then Greg and I--

**GREG HOPKINS:** He probably played the piece though, many times, right?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, yeah. Eugene's played that piece many times.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So it's not improvisation of the moment, it's a creation that he recreates many times over and over and over. So they kind of played it similar each time.

**TIM RAY:** Right, yeah. You know, and sometimes it's funny because we, Greg and I and Mark, are kind of jazz-- you know, what we might call hardcore jazz guys. Who sort of believe in the sanctity of spontaneous improvisation. But actually, if you look back not that long ago in history that happened a lot.

Duke Ellington spans a perfect example. Cootie Williams would take a trumpet solo and Duke would say, I like that, do that solo again. The next thing you know, that Cootie Williams solo becomes part of the book. What started off as an improvisation, or at least largely as an improvisation, became part of the music. So there's a little bit of history even in the jazz world--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Well, a lot of jazz music starts out as improvisation and becomes concrete. Like some of Charlie Parker's tunes. And he would play them the same each time. OK, this is the melody. And they're nothing but, really, improvisations that become part of history.

**TIM RAY:** Indeed. And then, the duet that Greg and I did, I made a little comment at the beginning about I didn't know what was going to happen. And it's kind of true, I don't really know what's going to happen. That's one of those moments, which I like to do in our program, and Greg and I have done this a lot over the course of our--

**GREG HOPKINS:** We never decide what tune we're going to play.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, well we don't decide it. I'm happy to have Greg start. And I don't know, did you-- when you started did you know--

**GREG HOPKINS:** I had no idea.

**TIM RAY:** I had a feeling you were--

**GREG HOPKINS:** I was searching around, I was kind of doing a little prelude stuff. Saying, now what do I feel like I want to play here? Well, we just played something in sharp key so I said, we're going to go into flats. Because I wanted to have a different taste. And A-flat came out, OK, well let's-- I know this tune.

And, hey let's play rhythm changes in A-flat, and then we went into the Thelonious Monk tune "Little Rootie Tootie". Which we-- I know that Tim knows and I know. So basically after a little fooling around, OK, let's do that, no problem.

But we had fun with Monk's riffs, so then we really played the composition. And as a composer, I think that's-- I really appreciate that, when an improviser or a soloist plays the composition. Because that's a strong way to approach a improvisation-- playing the musical composition instead of just playing your horn, your instrument. And playing a bunch of licks and making the changes is fine, but what does it all mean related to Mr. Monk's music?

Because I put myself not as so much a soloist, it's not about me as much as it's about how can I interpret his composition. So I'm more like the conduit instead of the focal point. So we had a lot of fun with his riffs.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, we did. And that gets a little bit back to what we were talking about with the assignment, which is this tune of Greg's, [? "Karagassian". ?]

**GREG HOPKINS:** Oh, you have that one?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, you guys all brought it, right? All right, so we're going to start playing in just a second. But the idea, being to-- obviously, get the foundation. In other words, learn the melody, get comfortable with the minor blues progression-- which is what the improvisation is based on-- if you're not already comfortable with that, and then use

some of the motifs in the melody to inform your improvisation.

Use to improvise in the motivic fashion, as much as you can. I mean, you don't-- obviously, no one-- well, I shouldn't say no one. It would be rare to hear an improvisation created completely out of motivic stuff, although I'm sure it's been done.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Sure it is.

**TIM RAY:** Some of my favorite improvisers do that. I mean they don't--

**GREG HOPKINS:** I'm always playing the melody up here. Even when I play a standard tune, I'm on the melody. So then you're never at a loss for what to do. I don't really have to think of something. It's here. Do something with that.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, that's true.

**GREG HOPKINS:** But then what do you do with it? You have to know your compositional techniques. Repetition, sequence, transposition, elongation, augmentation, diminution, transformation, embellishment, all that stuff.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And then sometimes we play stuff, little cannons back and forth. Question and answer, question and answer.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, cool. So, should we jump into this piece? What do we think? Yeah, we've got plenty of time. OK, so [? "Karagassian". ?] I know I suggested maybe we have you guys do some-- you know, pair up to do some improvisations. But maybe just for rehearsal sake, why don't we all play the melody. And we'll see if we're on the same page.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So, as you know this is written for my cat. My late cat [? Karagassian. ?] I wrote the piece probably in 15 minutes. It just came out. Because the cat had so much spirit. And it's all here. You know cats, they're very playful. So this melody's very playful. It's meant to be had a lot of fun with.

**TIM RAY:** Yes, indeed. So yeah, so let's all play the melody. If you guys on guitar want to do some chord changes in the three-four measure you can, or you can just stay with the melody if you want to do that. Let's just do that and see where we're at. And then we'll get into some improv. Do you want to count it off, Greg?

**GREG HOPKINS:** One, two, a one, two, three.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**TIM RAY:** That's a hard one.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

All right. Not bad.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Not bad at all. But the inflection is pretty good. Yeah, it's really soft and distant. And then in the third measure we can clobber that note. Actually, play a different note than E-flat. That's like a crash. One more time. A one, two, a one, two. Yeah, but softer. Much softer. Just touch it. One, two, a one, two. That's it. One, two. Loud. Two, three, four. One, two. So I always put a doit on that. You know what a doit is? Where you fall up? It's a fall up instead of a fall down.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, it's always hard on a piano, right? I usually just [INAUDIBLE] short little--

**GREG HOPKINS:** That's an old term, nobody talks about that stuff anymore. D-O-I-T it's called doit. Doy-eet.

**TIM RAY:** Where are we?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Bar nine. Third line. Two, a one, two, three. Two, three. Three, four. Two, three. Three, four. Good. A two, a one, two. Quiet. Two, three. Yeah, nice. So the fermata would just be for the ending. And then we would go to that three four bar and then go right back to the beginning and start the blues.

**TIM RAY:** The blues is in four four by the way, and I know the chart's not clear about that. But,

yeah four four blues. For the improv.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah. So the whole ending part is supposed to create this tension, a little angst. With the rhythm, four against three, and then the four goes faster than you think. And then when we start to play the blues form, it relaxes back to regular tempo. So the cat's kind of clawing its way up the curtain. But we don't play-- we don't improvise on that, but you could certainly include the motifs in your improvisations.

**TIM RAY:** Cool.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Should we do it with some solos?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, let's do it with some solos. Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Now, we perform it as a totally conversational piece. There's no accompaniment. Everybody's just soloing at the same time, which is an interesting style which I like. I tend to play a lot less when I'm playing conversationally. Because you want the person to talk back to you. You can't be like some professors who just talk and talk and talk and talk and you can't say anything. OK. Just take notes.

**TIM RAY:** Cool. But you want to-- maybe we'll start with-- well, let's play the melody again. And then, and then maybe we'll do a little bit of soloing. I'll maybe keep the form--

**GREG HOPKINS:** It's going to be tough with this many people to play conversationally.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, well maybe by the end we'll get there. We won't start there, though. But I would like to hear some people kind of pair off. But you want-- maybe we should do, like, individually first.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, I think so. Let's do a chorus each.

**TIM RAY:** Cool, all right.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And will you comp?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, I'll do some comp.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, do some typical comping. Base notes, you play the melody. I mean, all you need really is base and melody. Two parts to have counterpoint. Any two lines could be counterpointal. Then there's conversational. Much more fun than playing alone.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** And we've all-- everybody's assignment was to prepare, right? Some thoughts about how you would treat the motif. So why don't we start there? Then we see how that expands.

**TIM RAY:** Cool.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So, do the melody once and then we'll start. So just go around, you want to go first? We'll go around. We can start there. A one, two.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, all right. Cool. Let's stop there. Nice, all right. Great, it's great to hear all of you play. Excellent, thank you.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So we all played one chorus.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, so we all did one chorus. While I heard a lot of really nice ideas, I didn't hear a whole lot of use of the motifs. Let's look at those real quick.

**GREG HOPKINS:** I heard the first motif a lot.

**TIM RAY:** Did you? OK.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, some of you played that opening, which I did five times. But I transposed it each time. So it kind of created a little line cliché, as we say.

**TIM RAY:** Indeed. Indeed. Right. So that first one, I think we looked at these just briefly last time. Yeah, the first one is a good one to grab. The repeated note, that's a nice one.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Number two, number two. That's funky.

**TIM RAY:** That's pretty funky, yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You could go [PLAYS MUSIC]. You could go [PLAYS MUSIC]. You could go [PLAYS

MUSIC]. You could go [PLAYS MUSIC]. You could go [PLAYS MUSIC]. Just play it, you could do-- yeah, we could do several choruses just on that.

**TIM RAY:** Just on that, I know. And we probably have.

**GREG HOPKINS:** By changing notes, I'm using the rhythmic contours of motif. So, the da da da da, I could do anything I want there.

[PLAYS MUSIC]

Yeah. You could work your way through creating interesting melodies by changing the notes.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely. Do you want to do a little motivic exercise, maybe? We'll go-- we'll do the same thing. We'll go around the--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's just play that motif. Da da da da.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So you can play four notes. One two three four. You can play any intervals, though.

**TIM RAY:** Cool.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Not yet. This is my warm up, Mark, for the day.

[LAUGHTER]

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Pretty good.

**GREG HOPKINS:** It's a good tune to warm up on.

**TIM RAY:** It is. So, you want to do everybody four measures?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's do--

**TIM RAY:** [INAUDIBLE]

Sure. Four bars each.

**TIM RAY:** What do you think? OK. Just doing that motif. Just the repeated note motif. All right. Why don't you start.

**GREG HOPKINS:** A two, a one, two. Good Nice idea. Yeah. Do another one. You go. One.

**AUDIENCE:** From this [INAUDIBLE]?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah. Flute.

**TIM RAY:** You ready? Yeah, nice.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Next solo.

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah. So we're setting parameters now. You have to use that material and create with that. It's like, I mean we're sculptors, Let's face it, we're just shaping stuff out of these materials.

So sometimes it's really good to limit yourself. That's what an etude is, an etude is always like one idea for the whole page. And the composer of the etude does it in all the different keys so you'll learn it. So it's really good to set the parameters like that I think.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, oh I think so too. I think it's a great way to-- you know, there's all kinds of parameters. You can obviously-- we're doing the little motivic thing with the four notes, but you can, obviously-- there's any number of other motifs you could do that with. You can do set parameters, as far as the range of your instruments, or dynamics, or rhythmic density, you know, do a solo with all quarter notes. Right?

Or do a solo with all quarter note triplets, right? Something like that, that's another great way to kind of expand your range. In other words, expand your range of what you're doing with improvisation. Let's do another one of those. Let's see, what's another good motif to grab?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Bar nine is pretty good. That might be a little hard. Well, the opening motif is good.

**TIM RAY:** Cool. Cool. Yeah, let's do the same thing. Four measures again?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Four measures. We'll do the opening motif. Two, a one, two, three. Nice. Nice. Go ahead. Change direction. Nice.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** OK. So, I mean, how would you practice something like that? Well, let's play that motif. Just those three notes.

OK, let's go up in half steps. So I'm going to sequence it, I'm going to play it in every key. OK, and then we go (PLAYS MUSIC). Yeah. So the first one, D G, D G, D G D. Now, what am I-- I'm hearing in my head, I'm hearing five one five.

So I'm hearing it in the key. Up a half. So an A-flat now. Let's do it in A. A.

Next key. Next key. Next key. Next key. Yeah, good. OK? So then we could (PLAYS MUSIC). You can put it in, and we could do the same thing going down. We could do the motif down. I mean, that's what you do when you practice. You do really mundane-- maybe not mundane, you do really small, little things. I mean, it might take me 10 minutes to really feel comfortable with that, just those intervals going up in sequences like that.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And then you could sequence things four different ways. Let's sequence it in whole steps. Up a whole step, I'm going to go up a whole step each time. Too high? Yeah. So the person is going to be in G then A then B then C-sharp, then E-flat, then F, and then G again. Right?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Can we do that?

**TIM RAY:** Sure.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's just go up. Skip the first note. Now I'm going to sequence just the first measure. Right. That's it. There I go. It's the whole thing, now it's a whole different animal. Now it sounds like a progression, right?

**TIM RAY:** It does. Yeah, absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So that creates it. And we can do it in minor thirds. OK? Let's do that over a G pedal. Yeah, that creates kind of a bluesy feeling. It's like a G diminished chord.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely. Right, yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So now I'm creating counterpoint just with the motif. Then we could do it in major thirds. That's an interesting one too--

**TIM RAY:** It is.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You think?

**TIM RAY:** Oh yeah. Absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** This is-- I learned all this from him.

[LAUGHTER]

Let's do that over a D pedal.

**TIM RAY:** Sure.

**GREG HOPKINS:** One, two. Then we could do cycle four. So we did half steps, whole steps, minor thirds, major thirds, what's the next interval? Above a major third is a perfect fourth. So this is going-- there's going to be 12 of them. This is cycle five, right?

**TIM RAY:** Sure, yeah. Yeah, right. Or you can just--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Now we're going to expand it. We're going to play a minor triad. Instead of just one five, we're going to play one three five. Let's play up and down a minor triad. So we embellished the lick. That's fine. You can add notes whenever you want. Why'd you

do that? I wanted to.

G minor, so now we're going to do cycles, so we're going to go a forth up to C minor, fourth up to F minor, B-flat minor, E-flat minor, A-flat minor, D-flat minor, G-flat minor, B minor, E minor, A minor, D minor, back to G. Slowly. Ready, go.

So now I'm going to take that same idea and do it in whole steps. And so on. It's all just grunt work. But that's what Coltrane did. He used to practice in his apartment eight hours a day. Eight hours a day just on these-- what he was playing. He made up his own etudes. Yeah, he did. Which is what all the good-- all the great players do.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely. I mean, certainly--

**GREG HOPKINS:** This is the model. This is the model. This has dozens of ideas.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, and certainly that's the idea of any kind of work on improvisation. You know, when you're sitting alone at home thinking, you know, because everyone always says, well I don't know how to practice improvisation.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, what should I do? Oh, I'm going to play my scales every day. OK, that's fine.

**TIM RAY:** Because it's spontaneous.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You got make goals, a set of goals. And we can tell you what goals, what projects to work on.

**TIM RAY:** But yeah. But a lot of it's just about coming up with stuff like this. Obviously, as Greg said, we can tell you stuff or you could go buy books that have patterns and stuff like that. And that's all great, but sometimes it's just about what we're doing, which is like, OK, let's try that. Now let's try it up a fourth. And let's find this little two bar thing.

I mean, if you want to get more difficult you can find something even in a tune like this. Something that's a little more difficult and try that in all 12 keys.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's do bar 17, you know.

[LAUGHTER]

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, right. No, I'm not going to try it.

**GREG HOPKINS:** That's a-- basically it's this a B-flat lick. Yeah, that was my idea, I want to go from B-flat to B-flat with some kind of maybe 12 tone idea, I don't know what it is.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, so that's, as Greg says, a lot of just sitting alone at home work that's, I think, that's really helpful. All the great players did it. They all spent 10,000 hours. Is that the current idea?

**GREG HOPKINS:** I do the same thing. I do the same thing with my scales. How do you practice your scales? Well, you do them in intervals.

I mean, what is a melody? Let's define melody. This is a good place to do it. Let's have a real technical definition of melody. Anybody, what is melody? First thing that comes into your head. What's the melody?

**AUDIENCE:** Whatever you'd sing after you're done listening to it.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, whatever you hear-- what did you say?

**AUDIENCE:** Whatever you would sing after you were done listening to it.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Good, yeah, whatever you'd sing. You're a melody player, violin, you're all melody players. Yeah. You guys, too. What's melody to you?

**AUDIENCE:** It's kind of the song--

**GREG HOPKINS:** It's the song, very good.

**AUDIENCE:** [INAUDIBLE]

**GREG HOPKINS:** Many people say that. It's the main idea. It's the meaning.

Technically, is this music? No, this is paper with ink on it. This is graph paper. This

is graph paper. Pitch goes up and down, time goes that way. This is not music.

It's only music when you realize it, when you play it. So, the better you are at creating intervals, the better you'll be at melody playing. A melody is a series of intervals in some kind of rhythm. So if I play-- that's the sixth. So six down, fourth up, third up, minor sixth down, half step up, half step, half step.

That's what a melody is, it's a series of intervals, that's all. In some kind of time, right? Every melody-- that's a third, and then a fourth. Another third, second second, major seventh. So, when we're playing our scales, right?

That's all the same scale, I just played different intervals. I'll play the scale in seconds, I'll play the scale in thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and sevenths. Let's play G melodic minor. No, G-natural minor.

Good, yeah, up and down. One note in the top. Go. Now play it in thirds. Now play it in fourths, slowly. Now in fifths.

Nice. Sixth is really pretty. Sevenths is even more diverse, a little obtuse, maybe? Yeah. Octaves. Ninths. I mean, you could expand it even further.

**TIM RAY:** Sure.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You do that, right?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You've got to learn your intervals.

**TIM RAY:** Of course. Yeah, absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And also inherent in the scale is diatonic triads and diatonic seventh chords. Do you do that in class?

**GUEST SPEAKER:** We haven't done that. Have you done that with Tom?

**GREG HOPKINS:** Yeah, play up all the triads in the G minor scale.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, well, right. If you're doing natural minor.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's do that. It's just building blocks. This is the building blocks of melody and harmony.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, that's true.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And then as you study each scale, each scale is different. Each scale has characteristic notes that make it function different than other scales. That's what makes the scales different, is the different notes. And how the architecture of the scale works and draws things together. So, I mean that's what we study when we practice.

I'll practice scales and I'll try to really get the meaning out of the scale. This scale, natural minor, is-- Yeah, I mean there's certain things that make that scale work, right?

**TIM RAY:** Sure, absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Flat sixth, right?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, yeah. Absolutely.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So if I'm playing a natural minor, I immediately know that the flat sixth is a real strong note. Let's just play a natural-- we'll play a natural minor just for a minute.

**TIM RAY:** Sure.

**GREG HOPKINS:** G, so it'll be like C minor, right? Another chord?

**TIM RAY:** Right, yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So one, two, a one, two, three. Yeah.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, all right.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So you're using D seven?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, I used D seven.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Oh, you used D seven, OK.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, I threw that in. Which is not technically part--

**GUEST SPEAKER:** We did this with [INAUDIBLE], and so you're already talking [INAUDIBLE].

**GREG HOPKINS:** This is aeolian mode. It's called the aeolian mode. Let's just play G minor C minor.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** One bar each. One two three four--

I think modes is a great way to start learning harmony.

**TIM RAY:** Absolutely, yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Because there's only one note, really, that's really strong. So here were playing G minor for a bar and C minor for a bar. G minor, C minor. What's the note that changes the most?

When you play the C minor it's going to be the E-flat. The E-flat. So the G minor has a D in it, right? In then you go to C minor.

[SINGS NOTE]

So that's the meaning of aeolian.

**TIM RAY:** Absolutely, yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** You could play E-flat major, would be a good chord too, I think. Let's play a bar each, G minor and C minor. Let's start over here, guitar. One, a two, a one, two, three, four. Good. Yeah.

Yeah, OK. Got the idea? Yeah, that's good. I mean that's really good for your ear. Now I'm really working on a small slice of harmonic information that I could put to use. Now you played D seven before, what scale would that be?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, right? So, D seven has got what note in it--

**GREG HOPKINS:** What note does D seven have?

**TIM RAY:** --that doesn't belong in the aeolian--

**GREG HOPKINS:** That's different.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, right. You played it, Chris. F-sharp, right?

**GREG HOPKINS:** F-sharp. Yeah. So that's kind of like G-- now we've got to learn G harmonic minor scale. Which has that very interesting augmented second interval. Gives it an exotic, Middle Eastern or Detroit flavor. Let's play harmonic minor. One, two, three. Let's play the triads in harmonic minor-- slowly. One, two-- Yeah. The three chord's very interesting, augmented chord. And the four chord is still minor. So it's similar to aeolian but it has the much preferred leading tone, the F-sharp.

**TIM RAY:** Yes, indeed.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Just for fun, now let's play G minor for a bar and D seven flat nine for a bar. What do you think?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Flute first. Nah, I'll start. Two, a one, two, three-- Yeah, yeah, nice.

Yeah, and so on. It's another small slice of harmony but it's different than the first one. So you practice that and you practice it, and then it sinks in your ear. Because this is nothing but ear training.

All this is just ear training so you can pick your flavors. OK, I want this flavor, I want that color, that mood, that sound. Then there's melodic minor. Yeah, because when you play a minor key you don't just play one scale, we mix four or five minor scales together. And if I play a certain note, he'll hear it and play the voicing behind me, or whatever.

**TIM RAY:** Exactly. That's where listening comes into play. Listening to the person you're with.

**GREG HOPKINS:** When Wayne Shorter was in the Army he used to spend a month on one scale. He would practice the key of D-flat for months. He'd play every tune he knew in D-flat. He'd practice the scales, he'd practice the chords, he'd play rhythm changes, blues, everything in one key.

And Coltrane did the same thing. All the guys that practiced. I have a tape of Clifford Brown practicing the bridge to "Cherokee" for an hour. And you know he did it every day. Played with his mute.

**TIM RAY:** Cool. So I also wanted to get back to-- and this great information, certainly-- I wanted to get back the idea of having you guys pair up a little bit. And maybe try it without me doing the accompaniment, which of course is about listening, as I was saying just a second ago, listening to who you're with. Without the accompaniment it becomes-- what becomes more important?

This is like as Greg and I and Eugene were doing with the song, where we were all kind of soloing at the same time. That's what I want to try to get you guys to do a little bit. And what aspect of music becomes more important in that situation. Something we haven't really talked about yet today.

**GREG HOPKINS:** So let's have flute, sax, and guitar.

**TIM RAY:** What I was getting at was rhythm, right? Again, getting back to the idea that we're all time keepers, right. I mean, when you hear somebody like Greg who is a great improviser, his rhythmic ideas are very clear. His rhythmic ideas are very clear, and if he does something intentionally that's a little less clear, he follows it up with something that's more clear so that the people around him know where the beats are, right? So that's another thing that's really important to work on and I know we did a little thing with rhythm with Eugene last time.

**AUDIENCE:** So are we doing an accompaniment solo type thing or more like a conversational?

**TIM RAY:** I think we should try doing like a conversational--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Conversation. So nobody's really comping, you're all playing your own ideas. I'm leaving space for other people's ideas.

**TIM RAY:** Right. So what we'll do is maybe have you guys play. You're all improvising again, leaving space, conversing. I'll do a baseline for 12 bars and then I'll drop and you guys keep going. OK? So this will be improv.

We're not going to do the melody, just starting right with the improv. Feel free to throw in some motivic stuff, some of the things Greg was talking about in terms of the scales, obviously G minor scale can figure prominently in this. OK, so here we go. Right at the top of the improv. One, a two, a one, two, three--

**GREG HOPKINS:** One more? One more. Not bad. That was good.

**TIM RAY:** That was good. Everybody feel where the time was, right? Felt pretty secure to me. And then listening, really nice. One of the motifs we haven't touched on, which is the quarter note triplets, right? Quarter note triplets are tricky, because that's against the feeling of duple. Against the feeling of two and four, which is-- any song in four four, most songs tend to spend most of their time either quarter notes, eighth notes.

Any kind of triplet feeling is sort of against that. So when there's not accompaniment, you have to be really careful to-- I mean I'm not saying don't play them, I think they're great-- but just be really careful to articulate where your landing them. Because that's usually the thing that gets rushed or dragged and that sometimes can send you--

**GREG HOPKINS:** And sometimes if somebody's playing quarter note triplets, maybe the other person would play quarter notes against that. Just to be obstinate, or to have that counterpoint so I can tell that they're really triplets. I mean, sometimes you don't want to use mimicry too much. If somebody plays an idea, don't just play the same idea back.

Play something different. If I say hello, you don't say hello. Well, I guess you do. What's your name? What's your name? Yeah, you have to have an answer.

So let's do a flute, guitar, and violin.

**TIM RAY:** We'll do the same thing. I'll start off with the baseline and then I'll drop out. But you guys keep going. OK, here we go. One, a two, a one, two, three, four--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Not bad, yeah it was good.

**TIM RAY:** OK, nice. So-- oh no, go ahead.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Same as before, nice use of the motifs. Sometimes I'll just play the melody. And Tim and Eugene will play around it, and sometimes Tim will quote some of the melody.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, absolutely. A couple things to just be careful of, I know you guys are, to some degree, kind of hanging on to the rhythm. I know, which is, of course, what we all do in this situation. You're like, sometimes you're kind of white knuckling the beats instead of just kind of letting it flow. And I think sometimes when that happens, you start to lose a little bit of linear flow. I felt like there was a lot of root improvisation based on the roots going on.

**GREG HOPKINS:** It was a little block style.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, right. And again, it's not to say that if you did it again you might do something entirely different. But it's just one thing to be aware of, right? And this is one of these situations where you try it again and you say, OK I'm going to not focus on the root so much I'm going to try to do more linear stuff, more scales. Maybe focus on the third or the fifth, or just, like I said, be a little bit more free with what you're doing. So, again it's nice stuff.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's do flute and piano, and you get another chance.

**TIM RAY:** All right. Same thing. One, two, a one, two, three, four--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Bang! OK, you stopped before the end. We're still playing the fourth. We're still playing 12 bar forms, right? Did they stop before the end?

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, we--

**GREG HOPKINS:** Or maybe it was just really good use of space.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah. It's either that or you owe us three measures. I don't know. We'll come back and collect next year.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let me show you-- here's an interesting way to practice. This is going to be a revolving trio. I'm going to start with you three, OK. Then you're going to drop out, you're going to join in, and then you're going to drop out, then you're going to join in. Then you're going to-- whatever three people.

And no base line. A one, two, a one, two, three, four--

OK.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, all right.

**GREG HOPKINS:** To you? Yeah. It's a nice way to practice and then you don't-- everyone's not jamming in your ear, and again you're setting parameters. We're going to have three people playing or two people playing.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah. Yeah, you guys are doing a great job. I mean, I can tell--

**GREG HOPKINS:** You're keeping the form and your ideas are clear.

**TIM RAY:** Very nice. And again, hearing some of the motifs come into play, that's very cool.

**GREG HOPKINS:** I'm thrilled.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, I--

**GREG HOPKINS:** [? Karagassian ?] will be very happy.

**TIM RAY:** I know we're getting close to out of time. Are there any questions about some of this stuff we've been talking about, scales, modes?

**GREG HOPKINS:** I need to stress what Tim said before. Melodies and harmonies are fine, but the most important thing in this music is rhythm. Rhythm. Rhythm.

It's like location in real estate. Rhythm. Rhythm. You could play any note, it doesn't matter, if it's in the right time and it swings, people will buy it.

**TIM RAY:** That's true.

**GREG HOPKINS:** It's absolutely true. It's a rhythmic art form. Came from dancing.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, that's true.

**GREG HOPKINS:** I do an analogy my class. Let me just get to the board right behind you for one second. Chalk, mighty chalk. Harmony. We study all this harmony. I'm going to give it an H that big. But I'm a melody guy, so melody is more important. But rhythm is-- and actually it should go to the top of the building to under the basement, and make an R out to Mass Ave and back.

**TIM RAY:** Very cool, thank you. That's-- I would agree with the that.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Rhythm is--

**TIM RAY:** So work on rhythm.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Sometimes I just play one note.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, I know.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Let's play a minimalistic chorus, just me and you.

**TIM RAY:** OK.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Two, a one, two, three-- Yeah, so we left a lot of space, but when we came in with the rhythms, they were very strong that time. So sometimes I think I'm playing like a melodic drummer. I want to lay that melody down so people know right where it is. And sometimes I don't, sometimes I'll float.

**TIM RAY:** Right. And I think most of the good players did that. They'd float for awhile and then they'd lock it in with something really specific. That's one of things I work on with some of my students. Play a phrase, it floats, and then play something that really

locks in. So that you know the difference, you can hear the difference, and you can feel the difference in your hands as to what the different-- whatever your instrument is.

So you can feel the difference, how it affects the music and how it affects your improvisation. So, yeah that's another great-- there's all these exercises, etudes, whatever you want to call them, for improvisations which are great to do.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Transcribing is really good, because you can't really notate jazz rhythms. You can write the notes down, but you can't notate how they're playing them. So you've got to listen. And now copy Miles' articulation, or Clifford Brown's articulation, or whoever, Chet Baker.

Because they would all play a little differently, but-- it's all the tongue. It's all articulation. Because it's wind instruments, I mean that's where a lot of the language comes from. And piano.

**TIM RAY:** But even with piano or guitar, still, the articulation makes all the difference. You could do a whole solo just based on two notes. And be somewhat interesting.

I mean, it's not going to be super interesting, but just two notes with articulation and strong rhythms, you can make an interesting solo. Like I say, on any instrument. I think that's true. Drummers do it. That's how they solo. It's all about how they hit the thing. They don't have 88 keys to play with, they've just got four drums and a couple symbols.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And for the wind instruments it's really just a matter of slurring and tonguing. Some short notes, some long notes, some slurred notes in the middle. You've got to tongue but it can't be-- you can't tongue too hard or it sounds too much like a classical. It's got to have the funkiness and looseness of the swing.

So yeah, working on your articulation is very important. That's what we do, right?

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Unfortunately I think we have to wrap because it's the end of the period.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Is it 3 o'clock already?

**GUEST SPEAKER:** It's 3:30.

**GREG HOPKINS:** It's 3:30? I'm going to get a ticket.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** So let's give a round of applause for Greg.

**GREG HOPKINS:** Thank you. Yeah, good play.

**TIM RAY:** Yeah, nice play.

**GREG HOPKINS:** And have no fear. Have no fear. Play whatever you want. And try and hear it.