

Lesson: Walking Bass - Subdominant Minors

Time: Spring, 1985 - 2nd Lesson. We are at her parents house and Emily is locked out. I believe we started the lesson in the car - I may have picked her up in Manhattan and taken her to her folk's house in New Jersey. Since we're locked out, we have our lesson in the porch next to her house.

Quality is a little rough to start, but hang in there, it improves and there's some good material covered.

Before the recording begins, Emily is explaining to me the concept of Subdominant minors. She explains it a bit on this tape, but what she essentially explained is that every key has four subdominant minor notes - the b2, b3, b6 and b7. So you can basically play any chord that has any one or more of these subdominant minor notes and it may work. This is a technique for understanding how to add chords to a progression or re-harmonization that are "outside" of the key. Take the example of Cmaj7 to Ebmaj7. Eb is the farthest thing from the key of C, but it sounds good because Eb is the b3, therefore, it is a subdominant minor chord. Moreover, you can change it from maj7 to minor7 and it will still sound good. Not all subdominant minor chords sound equally good. Some are stronger and more useful than others, for example, the IV minor chord (e.g. Cmaj7 --> F-7). In the key of C, the IV chord or F should be a major chord. But the F minor chord has a Bb in it, which is one of the subdominant minor notes of C. Again, any chord with a Bb in it is a candidate! This technique is extremely useful for building chord solos, which we do a little of in this lesson, and also for composition.

00:00 - I've been practising the Jazz Minors from my first lesson, but I'm stuck in a rut and playing the same patterns over and over. This Recording starts out with Emily giving me a few tips on how to vary my use of the jazz minor.

2:00 We then quickly move on to the Bb Blues with walking Bass line.

2:30 - Forget about positioning when doing the walking bass line.

3:00 - Emily plays through her re-harmonized version of the Bb Blues/

3:30 - Emily plays Bb Blues with walking bass line.

4:00 - Play the roots on the first beat and then play chromatically.

4:30 - How to use Jazz minors over blues.

7:00 - Emily plays the first few measures and explains a little about the re-harmonization, e.g. throwing in ii-V-I progressions

8:00 - Emily gives a few examples of soloing over the Blues pattern and then writes it out.

18:00 - I slog my way through the chart she's written out.

21:00 - Emily plays the Bb Blues with walking bass as she's written it out so that I have an example. First slow, then fast, with modification or two.

22:00 - Emily throws in a nice ii-V progression and shows me the voicings she's using.

25:00 D7b9b5

28:00 - We turn back to our discussion on subdominant minors. Emily defines what a subdominant minor chord is. In the key of C, the subdominant minor notes are Db, Eb, Ab or Bb is a subdominant minor chord.

29:00 - some examples of chord progressions that have subdominant minor chords.

30:30 - some nice major 7 voicings. Try Cmaj7 Ebmaj7 Abmaj7 Dbmaj7 Cmaj7 instead of a turnaround.

31:00 - how would subdominant minor chord changes work in a tune like Four? Emily explains.

32:15 - an example of a subdominant minor turnaround in Four.

37:00 - Emily turns to the tune "A Foggy Day" and starts showing how she can re-harmonize it using Subdominant minor chords.

38:00 - in building a chord solo to Foggy Day, Emily takes the note in the melody and then finds a subdominant minor chord with that note in it, usually on the top so that it brings out the melody.

39:30 - the IV minor chord is a good subdominant minor chord.

41:00 - assignment - re-write A Foggy Day and add 3 subdominant minor chords.

this chart is missing - she had written the Bb Blues w/ walking bass, the 2-5-1 chord voicings, and the subdom minor example that goes Cmaj7 Ebmaj7 Abmaj7 Dbmaj7 Cmaj7