

**JAZZ ACCORDION 101--a practical performance Workshop
by PAUL BETKEN, Jazz Accordionist and Instructor/Host**

General introductory thoughts on the presentation. The educational goals and approach to for practical performance techniques through demonstration. Workshop participants and attendees encouraged to interact with instructor. Limits on what you can learn in a stand-alone workshop.

I. Introductory Remarks:

- A. The basis for my perspective on jazz accordion.
 - 1. How written/academic experience matters
 - 2. The importance of unwritten/field experience
- B. Jazz accordion history
- C. The best in Jazz accordion exemplars:
 - 1. A compare/contrast evaluation of Frank Marocco, Art Van Damme, Gumina, Leon Sash, Matthews
 - 2. The spheres of influence in the regional, national, and world.
 - 3. How style distinguishes each player.
- D. Jazz accordion instruction; its philosophy and teaching sources

II. Basic Steps to Developing your own Style:

(learning skills and techniques for jazz improvisation). Thinking about where you want to go--what is your goal, what is the feel, what is the mode, what is the atmosphere you wish to create?)

- A. Practice:
 - 1. hand training - chords (major, minor, harmonic, chromatic scales, and inversions).
 - 2. developing tempo (timing - metronome use).
 - 3. mental training.
- B. The Lead Sheet:
 - 1. playing from lead sheets with chords, single notes and timing.
 - a. simplifying with chord substitutions--no gospel
 - b. (e.g. Sunny Side of the Street handout)
 - 2. swing, tempo, syncopated rhythm and emotion.
 - 3. personality.
 - 4. performing a lead sheet when you have familiarity with the song.
- C. The Art of Chords, Inversions, scales v. single notes for the lead sheet
 - 1. changing tone colors with chords (the audience's ear?)
 - 2. Thirds, 3rds with octaves, 6ths, open chords, 4th,
 - 3. use of passing chords
 - 4. playing single notes with chords (a mixture but how and why?)
 - 5. lonely single notes?
- D. The Full Sound:
 - 1. Holding and releasing only the important notes of the chord. (legato chordal technique related to the fullness of the genera over all sound to the ear).
 - 2. This technique during performance.

III. Versatility, Modulations, Rhythmic variety, and dance genres

- A. criteria for arranging a balanced set list.
 - 1. song types and styles: standard waltz, standard ballads, contemporary waltzes (some overlap), contemporary ballads, show tunes, swing tunes, jazz tunes, country western, Latin (cha cha, bossa nova, tango, meringue, rumba etc.) Rock (classic, contemporary, modern)
 - 2. changing keys for a medley and number of choruses.
- B. Performing with other musicians
 - 1. backing other musicians (history, progress, experience and chord comping).
 - 2. learning the music two ways (the chord structure and the melody).

IV. Some Fundamentals on Learning how to improvise:

- A. what notes do I play and where do I start [the II (Dm7), V (G7), I maj (C) progression in the key of C.
 - 1. create and start with a simple melody
 - 2. what are "good" melodies? (using complicated music theory in a simplistic way).
- B. Academics (rhythm plus pitch plus melody = song)
 - 1. rhythm (e.g. quarter, half notes)
 - 2. pitch (low to high, high to low e.g. Somewhere Over the Rainbow)
 - 3. are there any "bad" notes and the C scale?
 - a. the good notes in the key of C: "E"(the 3rd) "B" (the 7th) and "D" (the 9th or the 2nd).
 - b. the consonant notes: "C" (the root) and "G" (the 5th).
 - c. the tension note: "F" (the 4th)
- C. Professional Techniques you may not discover by yourself.
 - 1. method books with exercises
 - 2. artistic gifts of a personal craft
 - 3. style tracks and triplets
 - 4. left hand techniques
 - a. chromatic scales
 - b. stride rhythm
 - c. walking bass

IV. JAZZ ACCORDION PERFORMANCE by Paul Betken (with electronic iPad amplified accompaniment) along with commentary on technique, jazz arrangement ideas, and other creative thoughts on compositions from the American songbook

- A. Practical melody and jazz phrase creation demonstration by performance of popular American songbook tunes familiar to jazz musicians.
 - 1. commentary on the how, why, what and where.
 - 2. List of 10 Brilliant Jazz Solos and what you can learn from them.
 - 3. songs with ideas borrowed from Benny Goodman, Dexter Gordon, Chet Baker, Leon Sash.
- B. Bonus Material Handouts:
 - 1. Simple chart showing how to transpose a song into another key.
 - 2. Simple example keyboard chord charts: (for ...Sunny Side of the Street). Examples of a melodic chord modulation phrase and an open chord modulation for the song's bridge.
 - 3. List of 10 Brilliant Jazz Solos and What you can Learn from Them

V. Closing remarks

- A. attendee questions, comments, opinions...
- B. Announcement of instructor's course-related booklet with 10 full jazz accordion arrangements with a CD demonstrating how all arrangements are to be performed and available for purchase.

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