

Principles of “outside” improvisation

If you continue to check out lines by Tyner and Brecker along with lines by other players using similar approaches such as Jerry Bergonzi, Hal Galper, Woody Shaw, Larry Young, David Liebman, Joe Diorio, John Scofield and Mike Stern, you’ll find that cells and cell combinations can be “side-slipped” up or down a half-step and back, or moved up or down chromatically, or up or down in whole-steps, or up or down in minor 3rds, or up or down in major 3rds, or up or down in 4ths, or up or down in tritones. Combinations of these also occur, such as down a major 3rd followed by down a minor 3rd, or up a minor 3rd followed by up or down a half-step. They can start in and go out and back in, or start out and go in and back out, or start in and go out, or start out and go in. The inside-outside-inside scheme is the easiest to hear and understand, so most of our examples will use that scheme. For a thorough explanation of the theory behind outside improvisation, see *The Jazz Theory Book* by Mark Levine. In general, simple cells without chromatic embellishments work best, including lines from hexatonic scales and hexatonic triad-pairs, and lines derived from basic pentatonic scales are especially effective.

“Side-slipping”

The term “side-slipping” usually refers to playing out by going up or down a half-step from the chord you’re soloing on, so it’s an easy way (especially on guitar) to get introduced to outside improvisation. Actually, one of the chromatic embellishment cells we’ve already been using a lot can be re-analyzed as a side-slip.

Ex.4-5 is the familiar cell, starting on the major 7th of Cmi7 and resolving to the root after using a double-chromatic approach from above and a return to the half-step below.



Ex.4-6 shows the same line re-written using a C# instead of a Db, making it a simple 1-b3-2-1 cell on Bmi7, down a half-step from the C. The Bmi7 chord symbol is for analysis only.



Ex.4-7 shows a typical line using the cell inside of a Cmi7 line similar to how we’ve already used it.



If side-slipping can be down or *up* a half-step, we should be able to use the same 1-b3-2-1 cell from C#mi7, up a half-step, as well. Ex.4-8 shows the same line, but with the Bmi7 cell replaced with the C#mi7 cell.

