

Improvising on a Jazz Standard: “So What/Impressions” using Chordal Tones with Eugene Shapiro

Grades 10 - 12

Students will be taught how to improvise on a Jazz Standard “So What/Impressions” using chordal tones, such as root (1), 3rd, 5th, and 7th rather than using scales. Other concepts such as use of space, repetition, call and response, and use of rhythms will be discussed.

Materials: Instrument of choice

The Lesson:

1. Introduce the “So What/Impressions” by Jazz artists Miles Davis and John Coltrane.
2. Discuss jazz improvisation, identifying a very easy, melodic, and fun way of improvising using chordal tones (notes of root/1, 3rd, 5th, 7th, etc.) to improvise over the tune's chord progression.
3. Identify each chord of the tune and tell the students which notes they can play and how to practice them.
4. Demonstrate this approach by playing it on guitar with a backup track.
5. comp for the students watching the video, so they can play along with me using this new chordal approach.
6. Describe and demonstrate the techniques of repetition, call and response, and use of space while improvising.
7. Review tune and this new approach.

Connection to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for the Fine Arts

- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic work and ideas.
- Performing: Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation.

MU:Cr1.1.EV Compose and improvise musical ideas for a variety of purposes and contexts.

MU:Cr2.1.EV Select and develop composed and improvised ideas into draft musical works organized for a variety of purposes and contexts.

MU:Pr4.3.EV Demonstrate how understanding the style, genre, and context of a varied repertoire of music informs prepared and improvised performances as well as performers’ technical skill to connect with the audience.

MU:Pr5.1.EV Develop, apply, and refine appropriate rehearsal strategies to address individual and ensemble challenges in a varied repertoire of music.

Connection to Literacy: active listening, comprehension, communicating, thinking, making connections, expressing ideas

Resources: Band-in-a-Box software

About the Artist

Eugene Shapiro

Eugene Shapiro is a Jazz guitarist, bandleader, composer, arranger, and educator. He is a Nevada Arts Council teaching artist, as well as a The Smith Center teaching artist. He has released three albums with his Jazz Quartet the *Shapiro Project*, the latest album "Planet X" was released in 2019. Eugene has been an Adjunct Music Faculty member at College of Southern Nevada (CSN) since 2000.

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artists in schools + communities

Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster

The Nevada Arts Council Teaching Artist Roster is an online resource for schools, organizations and communities seeking to engage teaching artists. Roster artists are experienced in collaborating with schools and communities to conduct arts learning and cultural experiences in, through and about the arts.

Explore the roster at <https://www.nvartscouncil.org/rosters/teaching-artists/>