

The Modern Jazz Method *For Trombone*

Introduction

Purpose of this book

This purpose of *The Modern Jazz Method* is to offer a well-rounded, systematic approach to practice for the aspiring jazz trombonist. It is not intended to replace the traditional methods, but to supplement and enhance them.

How to use this book

The Modern Jazz Method is divided into four sections:

Scale Patterns

Arpeggios

Intervals

Range builders

Each section consists of 20 exercises.

Each week (or every two weeks) practice like numbered exercises.

For example, in Week 1 practice:

Scale Patterns #1

Arpeggios #1

Intervals #1

Range builder #1

In Week 2 practice:

Scale Patterns #2

Arpeggios #2

Intervals #2

Range builder #2

I recommend that you spend one or two weeks on each set of exercises. It is also recommended that you **memorize** the exercises as soon as you feel comfortable with them.

Many of the exercises in this book are derived from the improvised solos of Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard, Miles Davis, Blue Mitchell and other jazz legends.

The exercises presented in this book are intended as a “stepping stone” for the jazz trombonist so that he may be able to create his own original practice ideas.

“Cyclic Practice”

Cyclic practice is a great way to learn a lick in every key.

Using *Scale Patterns 1* as an example, here’s how it’s done:

Begin with exercise **1A**. Start with the first line in the key of **C**. Repeat until you can play it cleanly and then move to the next line which is one whole step higher in the key of **D**. Repeat until you can play **D** cleanly and then repeat the key of **C** one time. Then add the third line in the key of **Bb**. Repeat until you can play **Bb** cleanly and then play **C** and **D** once and add the next key which is **E**. Continue until you add all the keys in exercise **1A**.

Here’s a breakdown of *Scale Patterns 1A*:

1. C
2. D, C
3. Bb, C, D
4. E, D, C, Bb
5. Ab, Bb, C, D, E
6. F#, E, D, C, Bb, Ab

You have now practiced *Scale Patterns 1A* in 6 keys and are ready for *Scale Patterns 1B*. Practice in the same manner.

Here’s a breakdown of *Scale Patterns 1B*:

1. F
2. G, F
3. Eb, F, G
4. A, G, F, Eb
5. Db, Eb, F, G, A
6. B, Db, Eb, F, G, A

You have now practiced *Scale Patterns 1* in 12 keys.

Cyclic practice should be used on all exercises that say *Cyclic Practice* in the left hand corner of the page.

Articulation, Models & Tempos

Jazz articulation is an integral part of the trombone player's individual style. Your articulation is developed through listening and emulating other jazz trumpet players. The range of articulation in jazz trombone is vast. Some players played very clean and staccato, while others played very smooth and legato. Listen to *everyone* and your articulation will develop naturally.

Some exercises are marked "Swing-jazz articulation" and others are marked "Straight". Some are marked "Swing & Straight" and should be played both ways. As you learn the exercises, you may want to vary the articulation as you develop your own style.

Models are different articulations that are applied to certain exercises.

All models should be practiced daily.

The exercises in this book are of a technical nature and should be practiced slowly at first. Once a good degree of accuracy is obtained, then begin working for speed. The exercises can be played as slow or fast as the student is able.

Videos

Visit www.BolvinMusic.com to watch the three videos associated with this book. Also available are four videos dealing with improvisation that you may find helpful.

Video 1

Eric discusses improvisation and cyclic practice and demonstrates Scale Patterns 6a.

Video 2

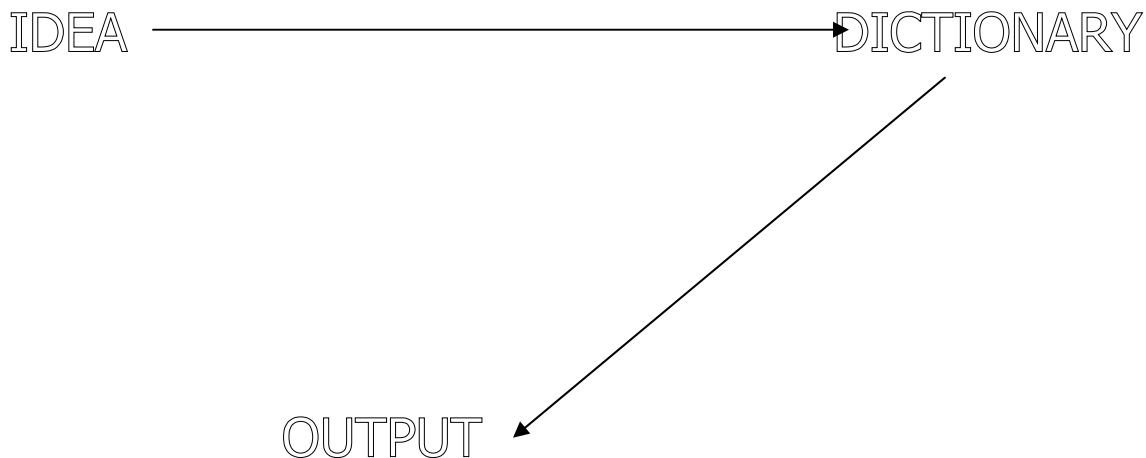
Eric discusses articulation and demonstrates
Arpeggios 6a
Intervals 1
Range Builder 6

Video 3

Eric discusses and demonstrates more advanced techniques including the supplemental exercises.

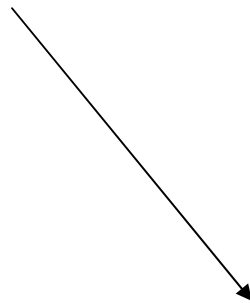
The Brain on improvisation

Learning to improvise is similar to learning a new language. I like to think of the brain in three sections; the idea, the translation and the output. When learning a new language, you first have an “idea” of what you want to say; for example you want to say “I have a friend” in French. Since your “idea” is in English you then stop off at your internal dictionary and find the proper translation. Then you output the final idea; “J’ai un ami”.



Once you have studied enough French, your internal dictionary will be very full and you will not need to stop off there so often and the transition from “idea” to “output” will be seamless.

IDEA



OUTPUT

**DICTIONARY
(full)**

The same philosophy can be applied to learning improvisation; it is, after all, a new “language”. Instead of words though, the musical dictionary or vocabulary consists of scales, arpeggios, licks, motifs, melodic ideas, rhythms and anything else that can influence your musicality. By filling this dictionary, the improviser finds his freedom and is able to express himself without conscientious thought. It is the thorough practice of scales, arpeggios, and intervals, combined with theory, listening and emulation that leads to freedom in improvisation.

Anatomy of an improvised solo

An improvised solo consists basically of three elements:

1. Melodic ideas
2. Licks
3. Space

Jazz musicians tend to spend much of their individual practice time working out licks, as melodies and space tend to be more intuitive and spontaneous. This is where the term “woodshedding” came from.

This is not to say that you can’t practice melodic ideas, in fact I highly suggest that you spend an equal amount of time in these areas:

1. Playing with others (jamming, rehearsing or gigging)
2. Listening live or to recordings
3. Improvising freely
4. Transcribing/playing transcriptions
5. Woodshedding

The Modern Jazz Method is a book for the woodshed, so grab your horn and head on out there!

The hard stuff & the high stuff

Undoubtedly you will find something in this book that is too hard or too high. I know I have! Most of the exercises are patterns that evolve either higher or lower, so go as high as you can comfortably and then stop or continue back down, depending on the exercise. As far as the range studies are concerned, you should go as high as you can. You can make three attempts for the high notes and then rest.

About the author

Eric Bolvin is a professional trumpet player and teacher living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He is the author of “**The Arban Manual**”, “**Tongue Level & Air**” and “**The Really Big Student Songbook**”, all published by Faded Duck Music and available through www.BolvinMusic.com.

Eric has four solo cds and has appeared on hundreds of tracks as a trumpeter and arranger. Eric is editor of the studio/commercial column for the International Trumpet Guild journal.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard and Miles Davis and all the great jazz trumpet players who came before and after.

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