



Jazzadvice.com

VISUALIZATION FOR JAZZ IMPROVISATION

A Guide to Transforming Jazz
Theory Into Practical Knowledge

What's new in Version 3.0?

Version 3.0 of Visualization for Jazz Improvisation is a complete overhaul and expansion of the course. We've added a crucial audio exercise component to the program, as well as added new and expanded chapters. Here's a brief list of what's new in this version:

- Added dozens of audio exercise tracks to practice and drill all the material presented
- Added a new chapter on visualizing scale fragments
- Added a new chapter on visualizing root movement
- Expanded the Welcome to Visualization introduction to clarify the difference between knowing something intellectually versus having an applicable knowledge
- Expanded chapters on Chord Symbols, Chord Tones, Chord Progressions, Language, and Tunes
- Added a ton of diagrams and clarifying material
- Added a new section with exercises on enharmonics
- Added checkpoints to the end of each chapter
- Updated format, design, and layout

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Welcome to Visualization

 Track 1 - Welcome to visualization

The practice of visualization is used by people in all types of professions. Athletes visualize their peak performance before game time, politicians visualize themselves giving great speeches, and surgeons mentally rehearse every aspect of a procedure before operating on a patient.

When you're visualizing, your mind doesn't know that your body is not actually engaging in the real activity. By working directly with your mind, as opposed to first working with your body and then your mind, you are going straight to the source of creativity; in other words, it's much more efficient for the mind to be teaching the body, rather than the body teaching the mind.

As musicians, we can harness the power of visualization to speed up our progress and improve at a faster rate than ever before.

The best part about visualization: **you can do it anywhere**. No horn, no gadgets. Just you.

Visualization and Music

Ok. So you're soloing over a familiar tune and everything is going great. You're feeling good and then all of a sudden, you hesitate for a moment. You think to yourself, "What chord am I on?"

By the time you figure it out, the chord is long gone. When you have to stop and think like that even for a split second, your flow is broken and your playing suffers.

Practicing visualization reduces the time it takes to recall elements of a chord, tune or progression. In time, any mental roadblocks will disappear. Then, when you go to the practice room or the bandstand, you'll be armed with the knowledge and confidence needed to play at your best with no hesitation.

Visualization is WAY more than seeing

In the literal sense, visualization has to do with “seeing,” but in terms of visualizing music it’s so much more than just seeing.

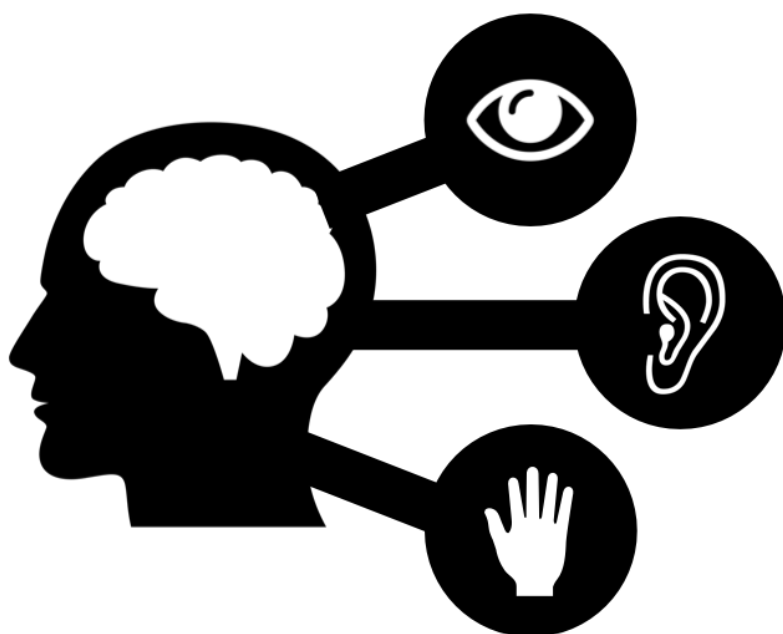
It’s about forging a relationship with the patterns that you will encounter over and over in jazz improvisation, between your mind, fingers, and ear.

This has to do with *how* clearly you see the chord symbols and progressions in your mind, and to what degree you can feel as though you’re playing your instrument when you visualize chord-tones, scale fragments, and language.

Components of visualization

The dictionary defines visualization as the formation of mental images. In terms of visualizing music, this means 3 things -

- **Hearing:** you hear what you're visualizing in your mind
- **Feeling:** you feel as though you're actually playing what you're visualizing in your fingers
- **Seeing:** you see in your mind the chord symbols and/or the notes on a staff that relate to what you're visualizing



What is real applicable theoretical knowledge?

A main theme of this course and the **ONLY** way you'll see a huge amount of improvement using it, is if you understand that intellectually knowing something is very different than internalizing information to the point that you can apply it effortlessly in real-time.

INTELLECT VS INTERNALIZATION

As you go through this course, you may be tempted to think, "I already know that," or "That's way too easy for me." This is exactly the attitude that's holding you back from reaching your true potential. Just because you're familiar with something or it's a simple concept does not mean you have even the slightest mastery over it.

You have an *intellectual* understanding of the information: given time to think and perhaps even multiple attempts you can figure out a chord or a chord-tone, a scale or progression. But knowing something intellectually like this has absolutely no value in jazz improvisation.

The information within these pages is only worth anything if it's *completely* internalized. It's an all or nothing game. There's no grey-area due to the real-time nature of jazz improvisation.

And be careful of skipping over things that seem "too simple." Everything builds on what came before it, and things will get quite difficult later, so make sure you master each exercise and move on when they're easy for you and require zero thought.

TURNING AN INTELLECTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF THEORY INTO USEFUL KNOWLEDGE

When we first start to improvise, we immediately are introduced to dozens of scales and relationships and over time, these scales and relationships make more sense. But, even though they make more sense, they still don't produce *the results* we desire.

They don't produce great results because the information is not internalized.

To transform your understanding of theory into useful knowledge you must transcend all mental shortcuts to the point where every piece of theoretical information is etched into your mind in an accessible way.

YOU are your instrument

When you play music, no matter what style, *you* are actually the instrument. The physical object you play that you call your instrument is merely an amplification of your thought, what you hear in your mind, your skill, and movement. **The more you can operate independently of an instrument, the better musician you will be.**

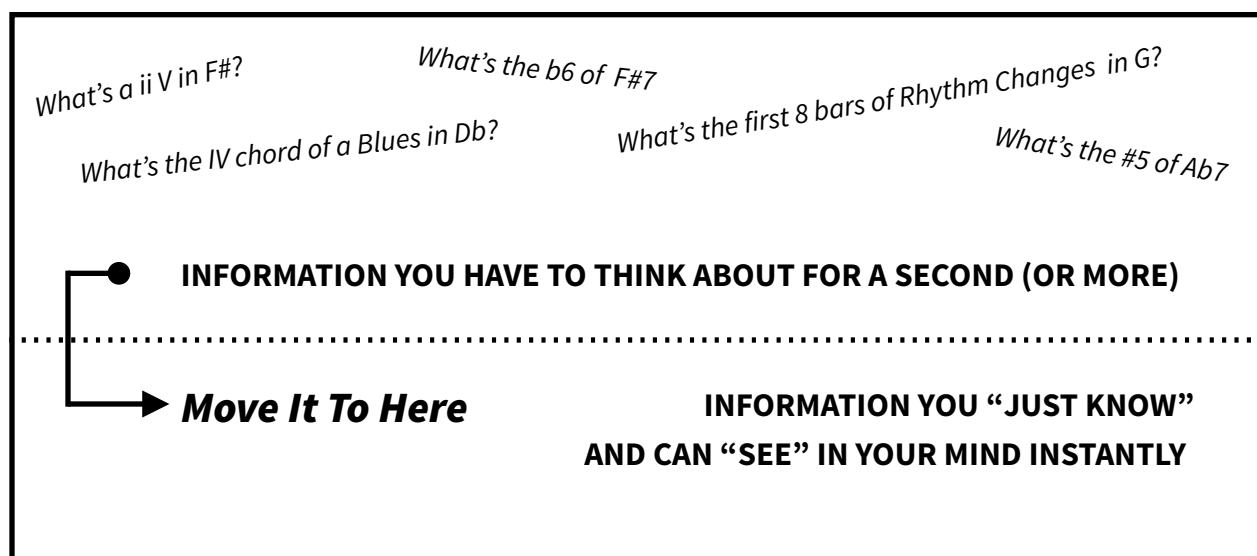
Transcending mental shortcuts and gaining effortless mental access

Many people use mental shortcuts, even if for a split second:

- to figure out what notes to play over a chord, or what notes are in a scale
- to determine how to alter or change chords
- to figure out what chords are in a progression
- to determine how to alter or change chord progressions

The reality is, for a jazz improviser, there's no time to think of shortcuts, or even if you don't use any mental shortcuts, to have even an ounce of your mental effort spent on thinking about chords, chord-tones, progressions, or anything theory related. **To play with freedom and creativity, you need Instant and effortless mental access to every part of a chord, chord progression, scale, language, or tune you want to play.**

The way to achieve this goal is to visualize the information over and over until it moves to a different layer of your brain where you store information that you “just know,” like what the color red looks like, your phone number, or your best friend's name.



The power of repetition and The benefits of slow practice

We're looking to attain real-applicable knowledge: information that can consistently and easily be applied without thought in the right circumstance.

Automatic, effortless, instant application, and the only way to get there is through drilling the exercises over and over. Repetition is the key.

The other key is slow practice. Mulgrew Miller used to tell us all the time to slow down... that slow practice was the key to everything. The secret. That's why when you get into the audio exercises, you'll start slowly and you'll see the most benefit from spending time with these tracks and they will actually lay the foundation for you to think on a much faster level.

A note about the format

Some pages have a TON of information and exercises packed into a small space, for example, when an exercise tells you to repeat a previous exercise with 10 different chord-tones, well that's the equivalent of 10 more exercises. Realize that just because the directions are simple and fit into a small space that there's a lot there to complete and master. The pages with checkboxes to complete things are meant to take quite some time to complete. Remember to only move on when you feel like the skill you're working on becomes easy.

Also, **some chapters use audio tracks from previous chapters**, so do not be alarmed that a couple chapters have no audio tracks of their own besides the intro track, and that the tracks you're using are from another lesson.

The never-ending journey

The information in the book is presented in a linear way, however, the reality is that you'll be learning, re-learning, and strengthening this information throughout your entire life. There is no end. No finish line. No final goal. It can always be better. And the better it gets, the better you will become.

This concludes the preview of
Visualization for Jazz Improvisation

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