

# George's Path Through Improvisation

## “How to Get Started” Checklist

### Basic Set-Up

- 1) **Install Software** (See “Software Guide”)
- 2) **Print Basic Course** (See “Print & Binder Assembly Guide”)
- 3) **Go to the Practice Station and download the first two Combo tracks: “GP001MPS & GP001TBO”**  
(To download Combo track - Left-click on the desired Combo track then click the “Download” button.)  
(To listen to streaming lessons - Right-click on the lesson title, for example: *First Lesson - Part I*, then click on the word “Instruction” in the drop-down box to start the lesson.)

### First Lesson - Part I

Everyone needs to start with the *First Lesson - Part I* which presents *Pentatonic Etude #1*. This is where we learn the basic principles of improvisation and the “three-step” approach that we use throughout the course. How you move forward from there depends on your needs and goals.

#### **I. If you have no immediate plans to become part of a jazz ensemble:**

- 1) I suggest that you learn the Pentatonic and Blues Etudes in Part I and apply the “three step method” to all of them. That is: to first get the feel of the scale....learn how to phrase with the Melody and Phrase Study track ...and then move on to free soloing ...with the Track with Background Only. There’s no need to rush through them....take time to get the feel of the various styles. I’m sure that you’ll have particular favorites that you’ll keep going back to.
- 2) You can then move forward to Part II . Go to the Practice Station’s instruction column and listen to the *First Scale Building Lesson* and *Introduction to Part II* to get started. As you move through those studies ....you’ll learn to read jazz rhythms and style as well as learning to improvise with each of the 36 basic jazz scales.
- 3) If you’d like to move further into the study of improvisation...go to Part III and learn to improvise over jazz standard chord progressions. Start with *First Lesson- Part III*.

#### **II. If you do have immediate plans to join a jazz ensemble:**

- 1) I suggest that after taking the *First Lesson-Part I* you set aside the rest of the Pentatonic Etudes for now and move on to the Blues Etudes. Listen to the *Blues Scale Lesson* in the instruction column and begin with Blues Etude # 1 on page 10.
- 2) At the same time you need to begin working with the Rhythm Studies in Part II. Go to the Practice Station’s instruction column and listen to the *First Scale Building Lesson* and *Introduction to Part II* and then begin to practice the Rhythm Studies one-at-a-time. The *Count-Out* tracks in the instruction column will also be very helpful in learning to read jazz rhythms.
- 3) You will also need to memorize all of the *seventh* scales that are written out on pages 18w & 18x and then use them to build *minor seventh* and *major seventh* scales as explained in the *First Scale Building Lesson*. You are going to need to get familiar with Chord symbols, therefore your daily warm-up should include going to the *Chord Symbols Only* pages and playing through a daily set of scales - one day, all twelve of the 7<sup>th</sup> scales... the next day, all twelve of the m7<sup>th</sup>s .... the third day, all of the maj7<sup>th</sup>s..... then back to the 7<sup>th</sup>s again on the fourth day and so on. You’ll eventually learn to respond to these chord symbols with the speed of a jazz pianist or guitar player.

#### **III. If you already are in a jazz ensemble and need to improvise over chord changes:**

- 1) I suggest doing everything in the previous category (II) to develop your ability to phrase and free solo with single scales.
- 2) Next you should go to GP055 and take the *Advanced Scale Building Lesson* in the instruction column and learn how to easily build most of your jazz scales with the same principles learned in the *First Scale Building Lesson* at the beginning of Part II.
- 3) Finally go to GP057 and take the *First lesson- Part III* and move forward from there.

I will be posting more practice hints in the “miscellaneous” column of the Practice Station. Be on the lookout for them.