

# Friday Easy Jam with Joe Cribbin

## Handout No.4 - 16-04-2020

### Jazz and the 2-5-1 chord progression

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In this handout we will examine the history and impact of Jazz on culture, what makes Jazz unique and how to play a 2-5-1 chord progression as heard in many Jazz compositions. There's some theory and playing, if you don't play an instrument please read the history and look at the 'Extended Tasks' section.

#### Some History

Jazz has been described as a truly American art form, initially developed by African Americans and influenced by both European harmonic structure with African rhythms and indigenous American influences.

Jazz music sprang from the bars and brothels of American cities like New Orleans in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with artists such as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton.

It was developed in part from ragtime and blues and is often characterized by syncopated rhythms, polyphonic ensemble playing, varying degrees of improvisation, often deliberate deviations of pitch, and the use of original timbres. One of the most significant elements of Jazz is its improvisational nature.

Jazz had a huge impact on society and was widely adopted around the world during the interwar period so much so, this period is sometimes referred to as the 'Jazz age'. During this period hem lines rose women's hair was cut short and many artists were inspired by jazz and jazz musicians. Artists like Piet Mondrian painted 'Broadway Boogie Woogie' which refers directly to a Jazz form.

Jazz has developed into many genres from Dixie Land, Be Bop, Free Jazz, Acid Jazz, Bossa Nova, Gypsy Jazz and swing to name but a few. Jazz has survived throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 21<sup>st</sup> and it continues to influence many artists today such as Norah Jones, Dee Dee Bridgwater, Madeleine Peyroux, Michael Buble, Kamasi Washington.

Jazz continues to grow influence and inspire many artists, and will no doubt be here for a long time to come.

#### Listening

This list is not extensive list, here are some examples of Jazz artists and songs, please search for Jazz artists where you can.

Honey Suckle Rose – Fats Waller

Autumn Leaves – Nat King Cole

Satin Doll – Duke Ellington

Summertime - Billie Holiday

Love is a losing Game - Amy Winehouse

Better get it in your soul - Charlie Mingus

So what- Miles Davis

Moments notice - John Coltrane

A love supreme - John Coltrane

Misty - Ella Fitzgerald

Mack The Knife - Louis Armstrong

Feeling Good - Nina Simone

- **The 2-5-1 ( ii- V- I ) chord progression**

**C major scale notes:** C D E F G A B C

- **Major key chord sequence:** Maj min min Maj Maj min dim

Degree	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
Chord	Cmaj	Dmin	Emin	Fmaj	Gmaj	Amin	Bdim
7 <sup>th</sup> chords	Cmaj7	Dmin7	Emin7	Fmaj7	G7	Amin7	Bm7b5

The 2-5-1 Chord progression is heard in many Jazz songs. The Numbers 2-5-1 refer to the relationship of each chord and the home key or chord that the music resolves to. Each number represents the degree of the scale on which the **chord** is built. In the diagram above you have the notes of the C major scale C D E F G A B C and the chords built on that scale.

In the key of C major the '2' chord is built from the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the C Major Scale. The 2<sup>nd</sup> note of the C Major Scale is 'D' and the chord we would build from that would be D minor. In Jazz that chord would typically be extended to something like D min 7.

The '5' chord is built from the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of the C Major Scale. The 5th note of the C Major Scale is 'G' and the chord we would build from that would be G. In Jazz that chord would typically be extended to something like G7.

The '1' chord is built from the 1st degree of the C Major Scale. The 1<sup>st</sup> note of the C Major Scale is 'C' and the chord we would build from that would be C major. In Jazz that chord would typically be extended to something like C maj7. Typically, the 2-5-1 in a major key would be represented with Roman numerals ii -V - I

So for the 2-5-1 (ii- V-I) progression in the key of C major we have the following sequence **Dm7, G7, C maj7**.

If we spell the notes of these seventh chords out, we get the following:

Dm7 - D-F-A-C

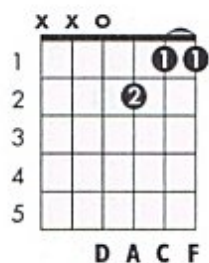
G7 - G-B-D-F

C maj7 - C-E-G-B.

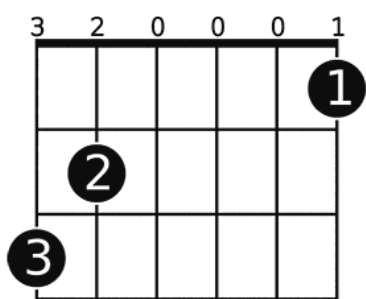
## Task

If you don't play an instrument you can skip to the extended tasks below. Using the instrument of your choice play through the chord 2-5-1 progression below. You can use whole notes to begin with so you can feel where the chords change and once you are familiar with the structure add some more rhythmical elements.

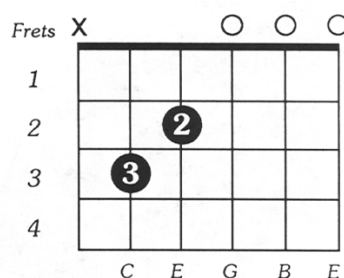
# Dmin7



# G7



# C maj7



## 2 - 5 - 1 ( ii -V- I ) in C major

||: Dmin7 | G7 | Cmaj7 | Cmaj7 :||

## 2 - 5 - 1 ( ii -V- I ) in G major

We can play the 2-5-1 progression in different keys here it is in the key of G Major.

||: A min7 | D7 | Gmaj7 | Gmaj7 :||

Using the instrument of your choice play the chord progression in as many different keys as you can using different inversions of the chords. Try and write your own song around this progression

## Extended Tasks

If you can, listen to a selection of the artists from the listening list above, who is your favourite? Write down why you like this artist. Try to write a lyric in the style of this artist or create your own Jazz lyric.

Find five random objects from your kitchen place them on a table in front of you, look at each one imagine where it comes from the history behind it and how you came to have it. Then write a short lyric about each one, do not censor be fearless and keep going.

Open your window, sit down and close your eyes, sitting quietly for 2 minutes listen carefully to all the different sounds you can hear, from the traffic, birds singing, children playing etc. Let your mind wander freely and imagine the stories behind each one of the sounds you hear and begin to write about them, where they could be going? Where are they coming from? What do they look like? What are they wearing etc. Write a short song about them.