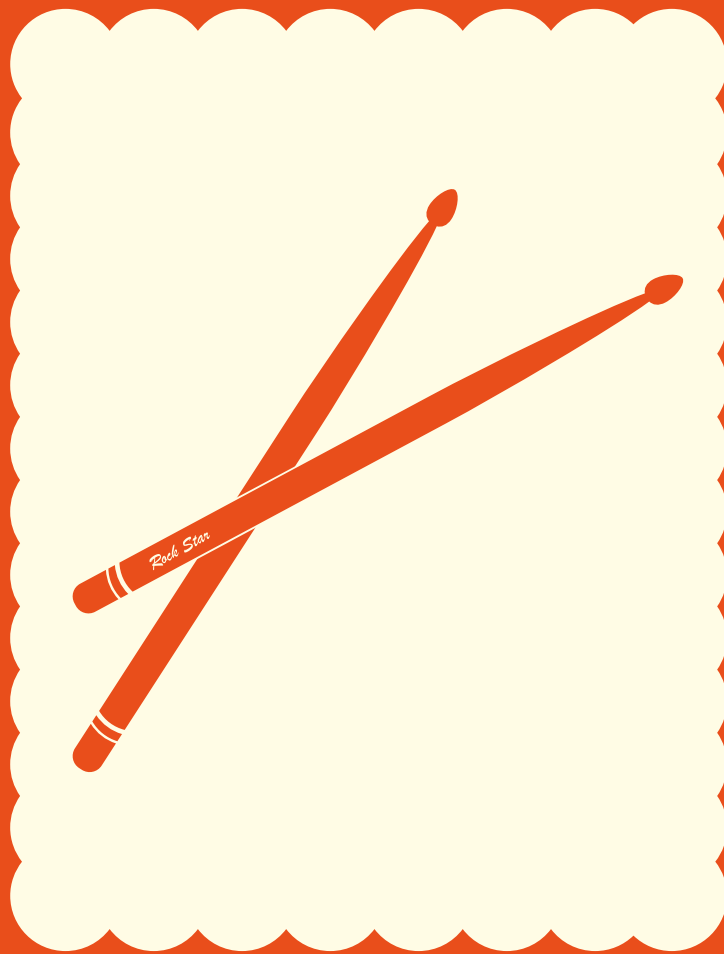


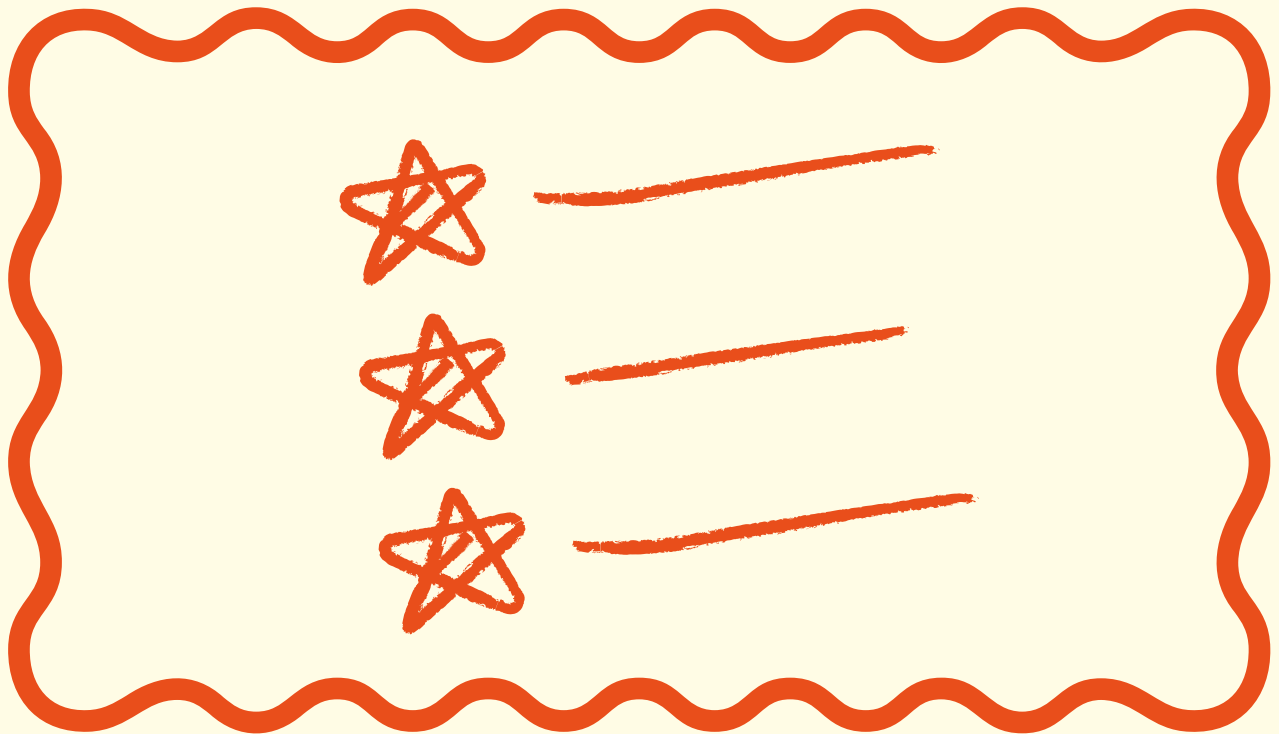
NYJO

***Exploring Rhythm
and Improvisation***



CREATED BY GEORGIA AYEW

Learning Objectives



Develop rhythmic awareness and creativity in improvisation.

Example: In the "One-Note Improvisation" activity, participants will focus on playing a single note while varying rhythms. For instance, they might start with a steady quarter-note pulse and gradually incorporate syncopation or rests to create rhythmic interest.

Use rhythm as a tool for musical expression to show participants the value of rhythm in their playing.

Example: During the "Group Clapping Exercise," participants engage in call-and-response rhythm patterns. By experimenting with accents and dynamics, they will see how rhythm alone can convey emotion and character without melody.

Learn to build and develop rhythmic ideas within an improvisation.

Example: In the "Three-Note Improvisation" activity, participants will take a simple rhythm from the clapping exercise and apply it to three different notes. They can experiment with repeating the rhythm and making slight variations to develop their musical ideas.

Apply rhythmic concepts to create simple phrases over a chord progression.

Example: In the final "Melodic Improvisation" activity, participants will use their learned rhythmic techniques to improvise over a jazz standard. They might start with a short, repeated motif and then modify it slightly to fit the harmony while maintaining rhythmic continuity.



Takeaways for Students:

A deeper understanding of how rhythm can shape and enhance improvisation.

The ability to create engaging musical phrases using only a few notes.

Experience in rhythmic variation, repetition, and development.

Confidence in applying rhythmic ideas to a structured improvisation over a chord progression.

Activity 1 - Warm Up

Group Clapping Exercise - Building Polyrhythm

Objective: Develop rhythmic awareness and listening skills through group work.

Steps:

1. **Call & Response:** One person claps a rhythm, the next person claps it back and then creates a new rhythm for the next person.
2. **Building Layers:** Once everyone has participated, split into small groups and have each group create interlocking rhythms (polyrhythm).
3. **Full Group Exercise (optional):** Each group plays their rhythm simultaneously to make them comfortable with the concept of polyrhythm.



Tips:

- Keep the initial rhythms simple and gradually increase complexity.
- Encourage participants to listen actively before responding.
- If participants struggle to find the pulse, encourage them to step their feet at tempo and keeping their rhythm simple.
- Modify pace depending on the ability levels of the group, full group might work a few sessions in or with participants with prior musical experience but is not necessary.

Activity 2 - Rhythmic Improvisation with Limited Notes

Objective:

Use rhythm as the primary tool for musical expression.

Steps:

One-Note Improvisation: Choose a single note and improvise freely, focusing only on rhythmic variation.

Apply Previous Rhythms: Use rhythms from the clapping exercise as inspiration.

Expand to Three Notes: Gradually add two more notes, maintaining rhythmic creativity.



Tips:

- Encourage repetition and variation to create interest.
- Introduce syncopation, rests, and accents if participants want additional challenges.

Activity 3 - Applying Rhythmic Development in a Solo

Objective:

Integrate learned rhythmic concepts into a structured solo over a standard.

Steps:

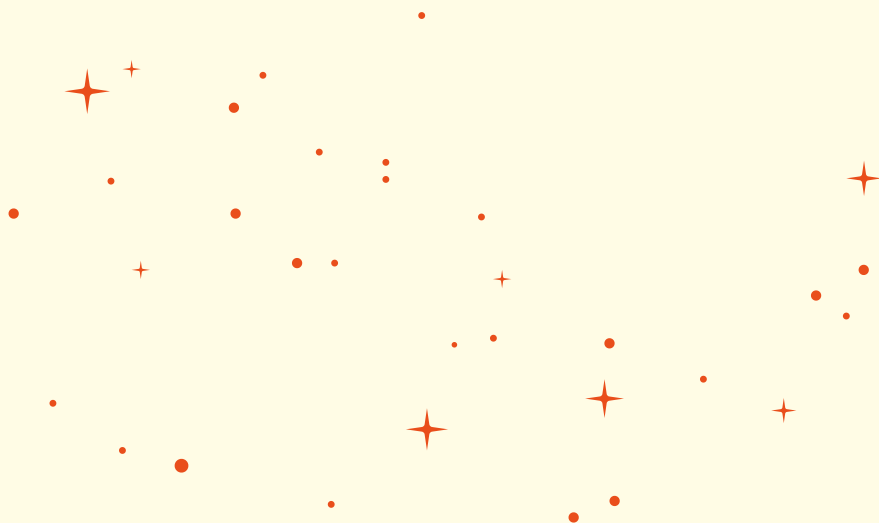
Choose a familiar jazz standard.

Improvise using the rhythmic concepts explored in earlier exercises.

Focus on repetition, development, and interaction with the rhythm section.

Tips:

Start simply and gradually develop ideas.



Mini Quiz



HOW CAN YOU MAKE A ONE-NOTE IMPROVISATION MORE ENGAGING?

- Varying the rhythm and adding syncopation
- Playing the same rhythm over and over
- Ignoring rests and playing continuously

WHY IS RHYTHM IMPORTANT WHEN IMPROVISING WITH ONLY A FEW NOTES?

- It helps create musical interest and variety
- It makes the solo faster
- It allows you to play more notes

HOW CAN YOU DEVELOP A RHYTHMIC IDEA IN IMPROVISATION?

- Repeat and slightly alter the rhythm over time
- Change the rhythm completely with every phrase
- Only use long notes

Answers

Varying the rhythm and adding syncopation, It helps create musical interest and variety, Repeat and slightly alter the rhythm over time

WHAT IS A GOOD WAY TO MAKE YOUR IMPROVISATION MORE MUSICAL?

- Leaving space between phrases and varying rhythm
- Playing continuously without breaks
- Using only one rhythm throughout the solo

HOW CAN THE THREE-NOTE IMPROVISATION HELP WHEN MOVING TO A FULL MELODY?

- It teaches you to focus on rhythm before worrying about complex melodies
- It limits creativity and makes improvisation harder
- It forces you to play in a specific order

WHEN IMPROVISING WITH ONLY ONE NOTE, WHAT SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON THE MOST?

- Changing the note frequently
- Using rhythm to create variation and interest
- Playing as fast as possible

Answers

Leaving space between phrases and varying rhythm, It teaches you to focus on rhythm before worrying about complex melodies, Using rhythm to create variation and interest

Key Words



Rhythm: The pattern of sounds and silences in music. It helps create movement and interest.

Improvisation: Creating music spontaneously without pre-written notes. In this session, we focus on using rhythm as the main tool for improvisation.

Syncopation: Placing accents on unexpected beats or off-beats to create rhythmic variety.

Polyrhythm: Two or more different rhythms played at the same time.

Motif: A short rhythmic or melodic idea that can be repeated and developed in improvisation.

Phrasing: The way musical ideas are shaped and grouped together, similar to sentences in speech.

Call & Response: A musical conversation where one musician plays a rhythm or phrase, and another responds.

Groove: A steady, repeated rhythm that gives music its feel and energy.



If you have any questions about the content within this worksheet, please contact us on projects@nyjo.org.uk.

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