



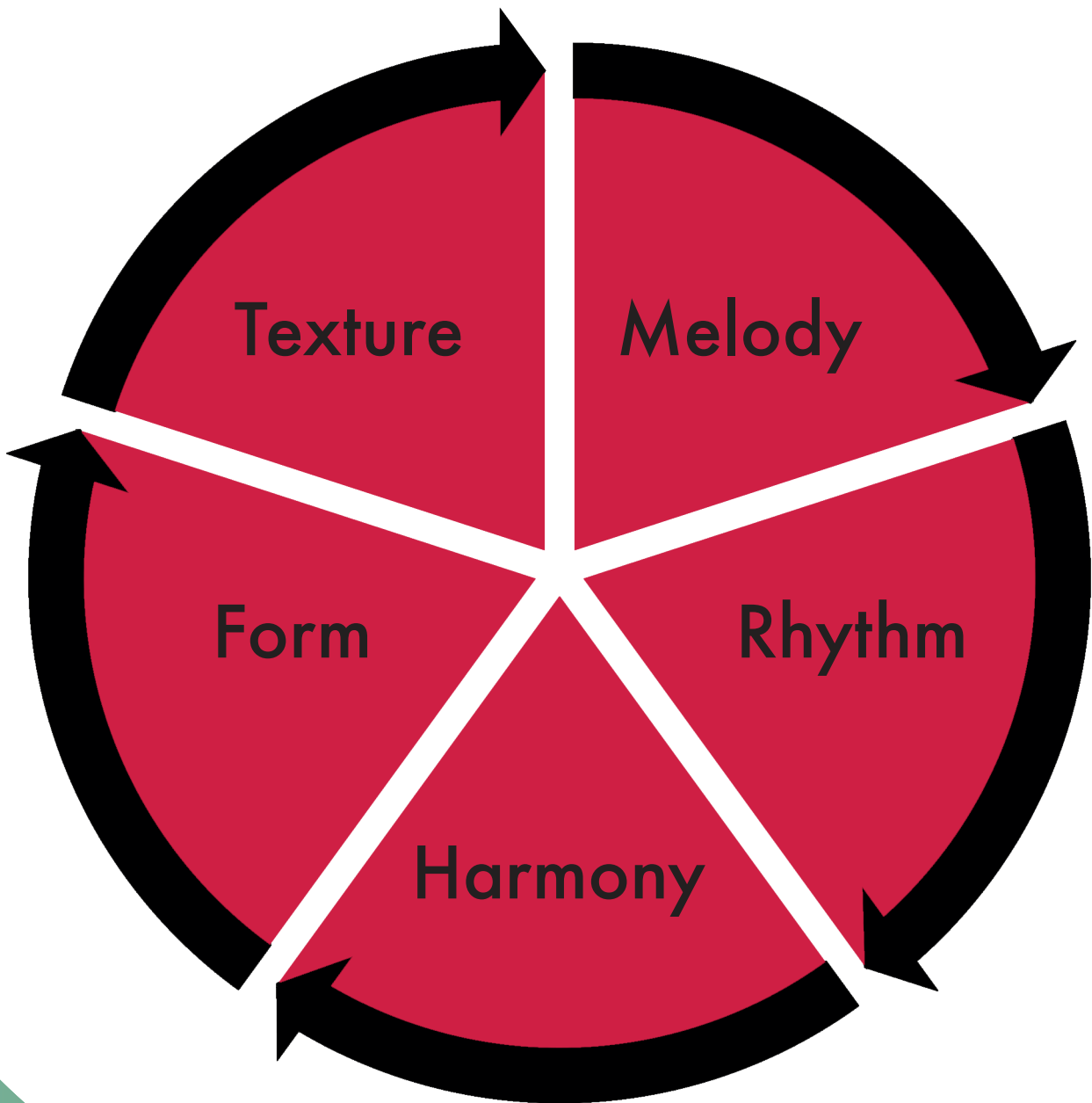
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R O Y A L
C O L L E G E
O F M U S I C
London

RCM SPARKS - Writing a 12 Bar Blues
with RCM Jazz Professor Mark Armstrong



Watch

Click here to watch the accompanying Writing a 12 bar blue video presented by Mark Armstrong.



Rhythm Exercises: grooves

Swing feel:

Voice $\frac{4}{4}$: Doo - dul - AH Doo - dul - AH Doo - dul - AH Doo - dul - AH

Hands (Clap/Tap/Click) $\frac{4}{4}$:

Foot (heel) $\frac{4}{4}$:

Straight feel (Rock/Latin):

Voice $\frac{4}{4}$: Chi - KA Chi - KA Chi - KA Chi - KA

Hands $\frac{4}{4}$:

Foot $\frac{4}{4}$:

Rhythmic Placement

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. Above the staff, the first and third notes are labeled 'Strong', and the second and fourth notes are labeled 'Weak'. Below the staff, the first and third notes are labeled 'Abrupt', and the second and fourth notes are labeled 'Push'. A fermata is placed over the final note.

Effect of rhythmic displacement:

2

1. Perdido (Juan Tizol)

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. There are rests after the second and fourth notes.

6

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. There is a triplet of eighth notes over the fifth, sixth, and seventh notes.

10

2. Four (Miles Davis)

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. There are rests after the second and fourth notes.

15

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. There are rests after the second and fourth notes.

20

A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The notes are: quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter, quarter. There are rests after the second and fourth notes.

C Jam Blues

Swing ♩=c132

Ellington

12-bar blues in C major. Chords: C⁷, F⁷, C⁷, F⁷, C⁷, Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁷ (Fine).

2 blues scales for improvising over the 12-bar blues in F: the sweet "Down a minor 3rd" one & the home-key, "Dirty" one

"Sweet" D min blues scale: D, E, F, G, A, B^b, C

"Dirty" F min blues scale: F, G, A^b, B^b, C, D

N.B. A is *maj 3rd* of F, so be careful on chord IV (B^b7), where A^b is a safer bet...

"Got that swing" Blues

Swing ♩ = c. 100-120

Mark Armstrong & Alexander L'Estrange

1 F7 Bb7 F7 F7

Doo(t) doo-ba doo-ba doo(t) doo - da(t) ba-doo-da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo-dow___

5 Bb7 Bb7 F7 F7

Ba doo-ba doo-ba doo(t) doo - da(t) ba-doo-da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo-dow___

9 C7 Bb7 F7 F7

Doo(t) doo-wah doo - da(t) ba-doo-da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo-dow___

"Got that swing" Blues (bonus "dirty blues scale for variety or harmony)

1 F7 Bb7 F7 F7

Doo(t) doo-ba doo-ba doo(t) doo - da(t) ba-doo da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo dow___

5 Bb7 Bb7 F7 F7

Ba doo-ba doo-ba doo(t) doo - da(t) ba-doo da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo dow___

9 C7 Bb7 F7 F7

Doo(t) doo-wah doo - da(t) ba-doo-da___ doo-ba doo-ba doo-dow___

Blues Harmony

Basic shape Inverted, more resonant voicing 5th is not vital

F⁶ F⁷

This block shows two musical examples in 4/4 time. The first example, labeled 'Basic shape', shows an F6 chord in the treble clef (F, A, C, E, F) and a bass line with a single F note. The second example, labeled 'Inverted, more resonant voicing', shows an inverted F7 chord in the treble clef (F, C, E, A) and a bass line with a single F note. The third example, labeled '5th is not vital', shows an F7 chord in the treble clef (F, A, C, E, G) with the 5th (C) circled, and a bass line with a single F note.

Inversions allow better voice leading ('guide tones')

3 F⁷ B^b7 C⁷ F⁶

I IV V I

This block shows a 3-measure progression in 4/4 time. The first measure has an inverted F7 chord (F, C, E, A) in the treble and an F note in the bass. The second measure has an inverted Bb7 chord (Bb, F, Ab, Eb) in the treble and a Bb note in the bass. The third measure has an inverted C7 chord (C, F, Ab, Eb) in the treble and a C note in the bass. The fourth measure has an inverted F6 chord (F, A, C, E, F) in the treble and an F note in the bass. Roman numerals I, IV, V, and I are written below the bass line.

Adding extensions adds richness: 'diatonic' extensions:

4 F⁹ B^b13 C⁷ F^{6/9}

I IV V I

This block shows a 4-measure progression in 4/4 time. The first measure has an F9 chord (F, A, C, E, G, Bb) in the treble and an F note in the bass. The second measure has a Bb13 chord (Bb, F, Ab, Eb, G, Bb) in the treble and a Bb note in the bass. The third measure has a C7 chord (C, F, Ab, Eb, G) in the treble and a C note in the bass. The fourth measure has an F6/9 chord (F, A, C, E, G, Bb) in the treble and an F note in the bass. Roman numerals I, IV, V, and I are written below the bass line.

'Non-diatonic' extensions add more colour and tension:

5 F7(#9) B^b13 C7(b13) F^{6/9}

I IV V I

This block shows a 5-measure progression in 4/4 time. The first measure has an F7(#9) chord (F, A, C, E, G, Bb, #9) in the treble and an F note in the bass. The second measure has a Bb13 chord (Bb, F, Ab, Eb, G, Bb) in the treble and a Bb note in the bass. The third measure has a C7(b13) chord (C, F, Ab, Eb, G, b13) in the treble and a C note in the bass. The fourth measure has an F6/9 chord (F, A, C, E, G, Bb) in the treble and an F note in the bass. Roman numerals I, IV, V, and I are written below the bass line.

Basic Blues Groove and Voicing

'On-off' riff creates groove with steady bass

Optional move to IV in bar 2...

F⁷ B^b7 F⁷ F⁷

Note chromatic passing note ideas...

5 B^b7 F⁷

9 C⁷ (V-IV and IIm7-V also work in bars 9-10) F⁷

Bag's Groove

16.
MED. UP
(BLUES)

BAGS' GROOVE

MILT JACKSON

Handwritten musical score for "Bags' Groove" by Milt Jackson. The score is written on seven staves in 4/4 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and various chords. The chords are: F, (Bb7), F7, Bb7, Gmi7, C7, F, Gmi7, C7, F, Bb7, F, Gmi7, C7, F. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

MILT JACKSON - BLUE NOTE BLP-5011

Blue N Boogie

RHYTHM

BLUE N BOOGIE

MED UP

BRUSHES

5

9

11

13

DRUMS ONLY

Blue N Boogie (cont.)

2

17 HEAD RHYTHM

17

Bb6

21

21

Eb7

Bb6

25 (FINE)

25

Cm7

F7

Bb6

(FINE)

29 SOLOS

29

11

11

41 HORN BREAK

41

45 SOLOS CONTINUE

45

7

7

PLAY HEAD ON D.S.