

Improvisations (Book 3)

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CHAPTER 8

Turnarounds

A *turnaround* is a short phrase, commonly a two- or four-measure progression, designed to add harmonic motion and avoid resolution to the tonic. It can be used to extend an ending. It can also be used between solos or sections of *vamp* or *interlude* before going back to the top of the form.

Turnarounds are an excellent type of vehicle to practice new improvisation concepts. It will allow you to understand diatonic harmony, using chords that represent the various harmonic functions.


We'll start practicing a turnaround in the key of C major. In this case, the subdominant IIImi7 precedes the dominant V7 chord. This creates what we call a IIImi7-V7 relationship:

IIImi7-V7 (Dm7-G7)

The IIImi7-V7 turnaround is a very common progression in jazz, as you will see in further examples. Turnaround chords are often marked with parentheses to show that they are used optionally, only when the form repeats.

This next turnaround also showcases the use of a secondary dominant (function) chord, which is the VIImi7 chord becoming a dominant to IIImi7 . It *doesn't* resolve, which creates that sense of turnaround—a cycle that avoids or delays the resolution to the tonic.

IIImi7-V7/IIImi7 (Em7 A7)



EXERCISE 8.1. TURNAROUND PROGRESSION

Practice the turnaround progression below.

1. Play and sing the bass line.
2. Sing the arpeggios while playing the bass line.
3. Improvise over the line.
4. Then try to sing the chord scales.

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