Insights in Jazz

INSIGHTS IN JAZZ
An Inside View of Jazz Standard Chord Progressions
CD Included

John Elliott, March 2010
Leeds International Jazz Conference

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Agenda

- Problem
- Approach
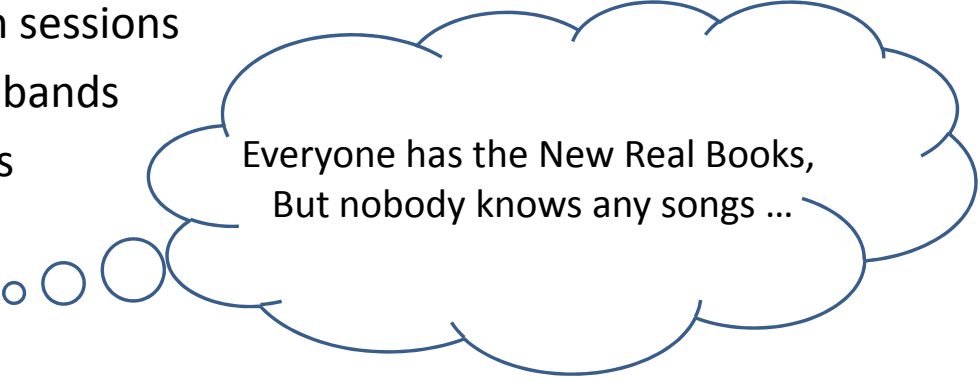- Conclusions

Problem: Scope

- Not
  - How to improvise
  - Why functional harmony works
    - I don't need to know how to spell in order to speak

Barrie Nettles and Richard Graf, *The Chord Scale Theory & Jazz Harmony,* Advance Music, 1997.

Mark Levine, *The Jazz Theory Book*, Sher Music Co, 1995.

Problem: Aural tradition

- 'Hearing' the changes
- Need to know what to expect
  - And where (context!)
- Fewer and fewer:
  - Jam sessions
  - Big bands
  - Gigs

Everyone has the New Real Books,
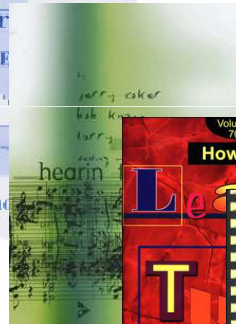But nobody knows any songs …

Problem: History

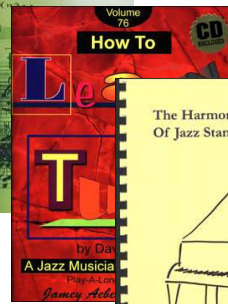Jerry Coker, *Improvising Jazz*, Prentice Hall, 1964.

- Coker, 1964
- Cork, 1981
- Baker, 1997
- Sabatella, 2003
- Elliott, 2009

Conrad Cork, *A New Guide to Harmony with LEGO Bricks*, Tadley Ewing Publications, Revised 2008.
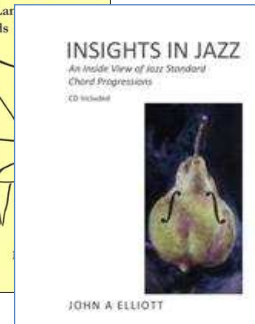http://www.tadleyewing.co.uk/

David Baker, *How to Learn Tunes*, Play-A-Long Recording, vol 76, Jamey Aebersold Jazz, 1997.
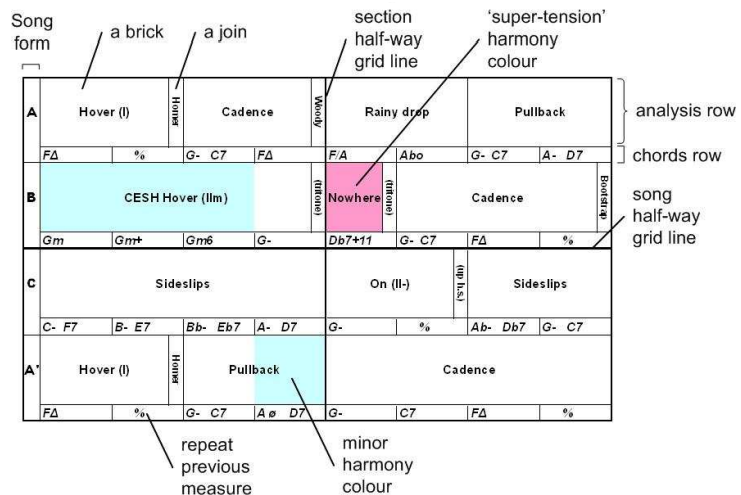
Jerry Coker, Bob Knapp & Larry Vincent, *Hearin' the Changes, dealing with unknown tunes by ear*, Advance Music, 1997.

Marc Sabatella, *The Harmonic Language of Jazz Standards*, Outside Shore Music, 2003.
http://www.outsideshore.com

Approach: Form

- Grigson Grid
- Visual *aide-mémoire*
- Context is king

Lionel Grigson, *A Jazz Chord Book*, 3rd Edition, Jazzwise Publications, 1995.

Simple example

- Form AABA
  - A
    - Pennies Ending
    - Variant
  - B
    - Rhythm bridge
- Launchers

B.80   I Can't Believe that You're in Love ...

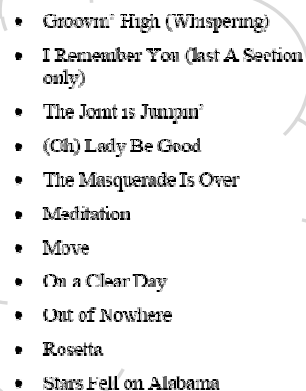| A | Pennies Ending (Somewhere variant) | | | | | | | Bootstrap | To ... |
F6	Bb7	CΔ	D7	D-	G7	CΔ		G- C7
A	Pennies Ending (Somewhere variant)								
F6	Bb7	CΔ	D7	D-	G7	CΔ		%
B	Rhythm Bridge							Dogleg	To ...
B-	E7	E-	D7	A-	D7	D- G7		G- C7
A	Pennies Ending (Somewhere variant)							Bootstrap	To ...
F6	Bb7	CΔ	D7	D-	G7	CΔ		(G- C7)

Remembering *April*

- Unusual symmetry
  - Form ABA!
  - Joins
    - Enter and exit bridge with *Highjumps*
    - Inside bridge use *Sidewinders*

B.93   I'll Remember April

| | Hover On | | Hover Off (IV7) | | CESH Hover On | | | Homer |
A	GΔ	%	C7+11	%	G-	Gm+	Gm6	Gm+
	Pullback							Highjump
	Aø	D7	Bø	E7	A-	D7	GΔ	%
B	Dropback							Sidewinder
	C-	F7	Bb	D- G7	C-	F7	BbΔ	%
	Cadence				Sidewinder	Cadence		Highjump	Launcher
	A-	D7	GΔ	%	F#-	B7	EΔ	A- D7
	Hover On		Hover Off (IV7)		CESH Hover On			Homer
A	GΔ	%	C7+11	%	G-	Gm+	Gm6	Gm+
	Pullback							
	Aø	D7	Bø	E7	A-	D7	GΔ	%

Approach: Bricks

- Removes ambiguity in chord changes
  - Analysis decides where the bricks lie
- Makes you robust to substitution
  - Families of bricks
    - *To IV n Back*
    - *On-Off-On + Dropback*
  - Meta view
    - You know where you are going
    - You can relax, knowing you'll not get lost
    - Your solos will make sense

- Groovin' High (Whispering)
- I Remember You (last A Section only)
- The Joint is Jumpin'
- (Oh) Lady Be Good
- The Masquerade Is Over
- Meditation
- Move
- On a Clear Day
- Out of Nowhere
- Rosetta
- Stars Fell on Alabama

Approach: Joins

- 12 'joins' given names
- Context is king
  - Frequency analysis
- Example sequence
  - New Horizon x2; Bauble
    - How High The Moon
    - Laura
    - Tune Up
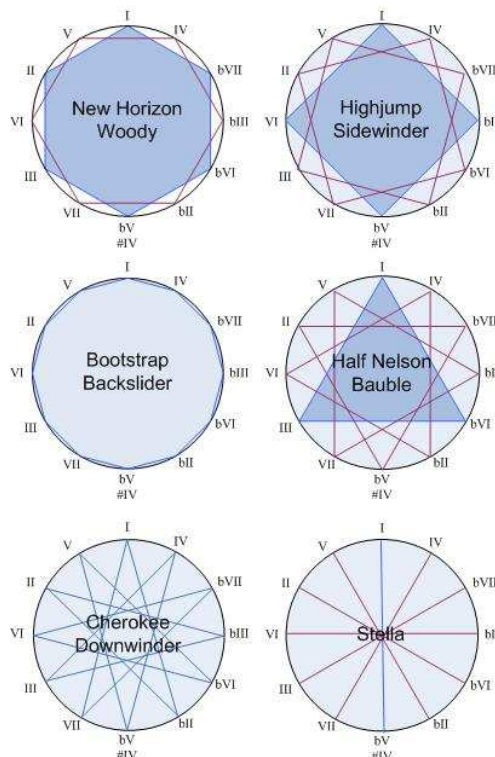
Pop quiz

- Learning *the repertoire* at light speed
  - What links these songs together?

Don't Go To Strangers;
Honeysuckle Rose;
I'm Confessin';
On the Sunny Side o...eet;
Santa Claus is Co... Town;
Satin Doll;
September i... in;
That's All...
Woody ...

HONEYSUCKLE BRIDGE

Tea for Two;
You Don't Know What Love is
(bridge);
All The Things You Are;
Anything Goes;
Baubles Bangles an...s;
Bernie's Tune;
Between the D... the Deep
Blue Sea;
Cry Me a ...ridge);
Gone V... Wind;
How ... You;
I'... ...u;
...s You Porgy;
I Remember You (bridge);
If I Had You;
I'm Old Fashioned;
Like Someone In Love;
Moonlight In Vermont;

'BAUBLE' TO KEY III

- Alice in Wonderland
- Bauble, Bangles and Beads (last ... measures)
- Body and Soul (bridge)
- Bye-Bye Blackbird
- Ceora
- Cute
- Everything ... ...o Me
- Fly me ... ...on
- I I ...
- ... Care
- ... Remember April
- Let it Snow
- L'il Darlin'
- Lullaby of Birdland

7-CHORD PULLBACK

Conclusions: Some Objections

- Why all these crazy names for things I already know?
  - Coker and Roman numerals
  - Brevity is the thing
- What use is this for modern jazz?
  - Clears the decks
  - System is open to extensions

Conclusions: How to use

- Play
  - More meaningful solos in any key
- Compose
  - Know the standard solutions
  - Avoid them or use them!
- Teach

Manhattan School of Music NYC
Jazz Student Handbook 2006-2007 (http://www.msmnyc.edu).

Conclusions: For more information

- www.dropback.co.uk
  - Method
  - Free downloads
  - Podcasts
  - e-book
- Google Group
  - http://groups.google.com/group/LEGO-bricks?hl=en
  - Free downloads
  - Join the discussion!