

Five Ideas from Jimmy Wyble

by David Oakes

The material in this packet comes from taking Jimmy Wyble's compositions out of context and using the ideas as musical vocabulary or "licks". The way that I can best use Jimmy's ideas in my own playing is to go through his etudes looking for ideas that will usually be anywhere from 2 beats to a full measure. I will extract this idea and then find a way to use it in my own playing. I then practice the idea until I can use it like a chord melody type phrase anywhere I want to. My definition of a good lick is a musical phrase that is both melodic and harmonic in nature. (Just about any measure from any Jimmy Wyble composition will qualify). The lick has to be an idea that can be inserted into either standard chord melodies or chord melody improvisation with ease. One thing that I can always rely on is the fact that Jimmy's ideas are real "head turners". I have never used one of his ideas without other guitar players taking notice. The typical response from other musicians to a Jimmy Wyble lick is "What the heck did you just do?" I want to encourage you to buy Jimmy's book, "*The Art of Two Line Improvisation*" and find ideas that you can use in your own chord melodies.

P.S. "*The Art of Two Line Improvisation*" is only available through www.melbay.com website. Please order copies right there at the website. They will print one up and mail it directly to you.

Lick #1: Lick #1 is based off of the 3rd and 7th of a dominant chord. Its resolution is to the 3rd of the tonic chord. This is a perfect one bar dominant run that can be used with ease up and down the neck of the guitar. I found this idea in two places. First in Etude 22 from "*The Art of Two Line Improvisation*" and in the "*Contrapuntal Concepts*" packet also on this website.

The musical notation shows a single staff in 4/4 time. The first measure is a C7 chord with a melodic line starting on the 3rd fret (G4) and moving down to the 7th fret (B3). The second measure continues the melodic line. The third measure is an Fmaj7 chord with a melodic line starting on the 3rd fret (G4) and moving down to the 1st fret (F3). The notation includes fingering numbers (1-5) and dynamics (m, p, i).

Lick #1 application: This is an excerpt from the Jobim tune “A Felicidade”. Play with a Bossa feel.

Lick #1 application #2: Here is the lick in a (II – V7 – I – IV) progression. This idea has an improvised feel that could be used over the changes to “Autumn Leaves”. Play with a swing feel. The entire arrangement is available for download on this page.

Lick #2: Lick #2 is a major lick from Etude 7 from “*The Art of Two Line Improvisation*”. This was the first Wyble idea that I ever learned and used successfully in another arrangement. Jimmy also uses this lick in the lesson on “*Developing Ideas*” in the tune “*You Stepped Out of a Dream*”.

Lick #2 application #1: Here is lick #2 used in the 2nd ending to “Misty”. The first measure of the 2nd line comes from the late great Ted Greene. He loved to back cycle into the Bbm7 chord in the bridge.

Lick #2 application #2: Here the major lick is used in a Bossa version of “*Green Dolphin Street*”. The 3rd and 4th beats of the lick become the melody to the tune.

Lick #3: Lick #3 is an augmented Dominant 7th sound. The chords are moving down in whole steps and the upper voice is a chromatic line moving down the 1st string. This idea appeared in Jimmy's first book "*Classic Country*".

Lick #3 application #1: Here is lick #3 used in the bridge to the standard "*All The Things You Are*". This arrangement uses other ideas from Jimmy as well. Notice how the counterpoint and this lick give the arrangement a keyboard quality.

Lick #3 application #2: Here is lick #3 to manipulate the melody to the tune “*Prelude To A Kiss*”. This time both the chords and the melody move in half steps. Augmented chords moving in half steps in either direction create the sound of a (I – VI – II – V) progression or a (III – VI – II – V) progression. It is easy to hear how these chords and this melody imply the changes to the Ellington standard but it is a back cycle style reharmonization of the original theme.

Chords: $B\flat+9$, $A+9$, $A\flat+9$, $G+9$, $C6/9$, $Fmaj7$

Lick #4: Lick #4 is an altered dominant idea. This has to be one of Jimmy’s favorite sounds as well. He has used it repeatedly in many of his etudes. I also probably use this idea more than any other Wyble sound.

Chords: $E7(\flat 5)$, Am

Dynamic markings: *m*, *a*, *p*, *a*, *p*

Lick #4 application #1: This idea is being used within the context of the tune “*Black Orpheus*”. The top and bottom voice expand outwards to the A minor chord creating very beautiful and melodic voice leading.

Lick #4 application #2: This shows how versatile this idea is. Playing the bridge to the standard “*Girl From Ipanema*”, this idea is a real head turner placed in this spot.

Lick #5: Lick #5 is an minor II – V7 idea. This idea starts with a non harmonic tone placed right on the 1st beat. Then the lines begin to move from there. This lick has a piano like approach in creating lines from these basic chord shapes. Beat 4 of this idea is different every time. I try to choose notes that flow in the context of tune that I am soloing over.

Em7(b5) A7(b9)

m *p* *m* *p* *m* *i*

Lick #5 application #1: This idea is being used within the context of a chord melody improvisation over the tune “Alone Together”.

Dm(6/9) Em7(b5) A7 Dm7 Em7(b5) A7

④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑤ ④ ⑤

Lick #5

Lick #5 application #2: Same lick, different tune, different last notes. Playing over the the standard “It Had To Be You”,

① ② Am11 D9 F#m7(b5) B7(BVII) Em B7 Em7(BV)

④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑤ ⑥ ⑤

Lick #5