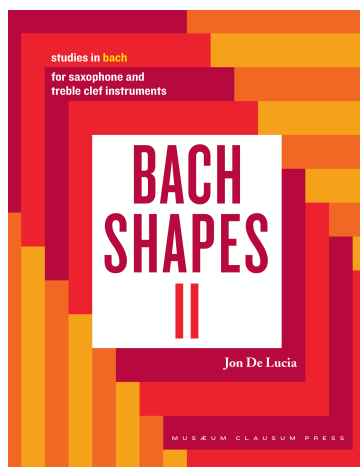




# Bach Shapes: Integrating Bach's Melodic Content Into Your Jazz Improvisation

April 1st, 2023. 10 AM. University of Southern Mississippi.

**Jon De Lucia** will be presenting an approach to integrating the melodic devices of Johann Sebastian Bach into jazz improvisation and technical practice. Using materials from his latest book, *Bach Shapes II*, he will explore circle of fifths patterns from Bach's music and look at lines that navigate Bach's harmony and that of jazz standards. De Lucia has been exploring these connections between Bach and jazz for 12 years, with his groups the Luce Trio and the Jon De Lucia Octet along with his *Bach Shapes* book series.



**Jon De Lucia** is a jazz saxophonist and woodwind doubler in New York City. He has published 3 books in the *Bach Shapes* series, and is currently a full-time Lecturer of Jazz and Pop music at Borough of Manhattan Community College in Tribeca, NYC.

[www.jondelucia.com](http://www.jondelucia.com)

If they think they are doing something new,  
they ought to do what I do every day—  
spend at least two hours every day  
listening to **JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH**  
and, man, it's all there.

If they want to improvise around a theme,  
which is the essence of jazz,  
they should learn from the master.  
He never wastes a note, and he knows where  
every note is going and when to bring it back.

Some of these cats go way out and forget  
where they began or what they started to do.  
**BACH** will clear it up for them.

— **COLEMAN HAWKINS**

# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS HARMONIC SEQUENCES

In this section, we will look at Bach's use of the circle of fifths chord progression. A common device in baroque music, it is relevant to jazz improvisers as the basis to so many standard tunes. The sources for the six sequences on the following pages are as follows:

1. a minor Flute Partita BWV 1013
2. Kroepsch Book II for Clarinet
3. a minor Violin Concerto - Allegro BWV 1041
4. a minor Violin Concerto - Allegro BWV 1041
5. a minor Violin Concerto - Allegro Assai BWV 1041
6. d minor Violin Concerto last mvmt. BWV 1052

As each page is the same chord progression in one key it can be treated as a theme and variations. The final variation should be your own. Use the written material as a springboard to improvise on the progression. I have included numbers on the first page to indicate each notes' relationship to the chord.

The opening sequences, which are similar to the "Fly Me To The Moon" progression, are followed by an etude on the harmony to Jerome Kern's "All The Thing You Are" as well as Joseph Kosma's "Autumn Leaves," two more tunes that make use of this circle of fifths root motion.

After that there is a small section on the circle using only dominant chords, including an etude that is very useful for navigating this progression. You can extract many ideas from this etude, so spend time with each line and analyze what is happening. Playing all of these with chordal accompaniment would be beneficial, singing and playing over the roots or full harmonies.

# Sequences in e minor

Em7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7 C F#m7(b5) B7 Em

Em7 Am7 D7 G C F#m7(b5) B7 Em

Em7 Am7 D7 G

C F#m7(b5) B7 Em

Em7 Am7 D7 Gmaj7

C F#m7(b5) B7 Em Em

Am7 D7 Gmaj7 Cmaj7

F#m7(b5) B7 Em Em

Am7 D7 G C

F#m7(b5) B7 Em

Samba  
♩=120-160

# Feel the Kern

Jon De Lucia

Chords and musical notation across nine staves:

- Staff 1: Dm<sup>7</sup>, Gm<sup>7</sup>, C<sup>7</sup>, Fmaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 2: Bbmaj<sup>7</sup>, E<sup>7</sup>, Amaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 3: Am<sup>7</sup>, Dm<sup>7</sup>, G<sup>7</sup>, Cmaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 4: Fmaj<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>7</sup>, Emaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 5: F#m<sup>7</sup>, B<sup>7</sup>, Emaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 6: D#m<sup>7</sup>, G#<sup>7</sup>, C#maj<sup>7</sup>, A+7(b9)
- Staff 7: Dm<sup>7</sup>, Gm<sup>7</sup>, C<sup>7</sup>, Fmaj<sup>7</sup>
- Staff 8: Bbmaj<sup>7</sup>, Bbm<sup>7</sup>, Am<sup>7</sup>, G#<sup>o</sup>
- Staff 9: Gm<sup>7</sup>, C<sup>7</sup>, Fmaj<sup>7</sup>, Em<sup>7</sup>(b5) A<sup>7</sup>(b9)

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Swing  
♩=125-150

# Kosmapolitano

Jon De Lucia

The musical score for "Kosmapolitano" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as Swing, with a range of 125-150 beats per minute. The score is composed of eight staves of music, each featuring a specific chord progression and melodic line. The chords are labeled above the staff: Am7, D7, Gmaj7, Cmaj7, F#m7(b5), B7(b9), Em, E7, Am7, D7, Gmaj7, Cmaj7, F#m7(b5), B7(b9), Em6, F#m7(b5), B7(b9), Em, Am7, D7, Gmaj7, Cmaj7, F#m7(b5), B7(b9), Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, F#m7(b5), B7(b9), Em6, Bm7, and E7. The melody is written in a single voice, with various rhythmic values including eighth, quarter, and half notes, as well as rests. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

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# CIRCLE OF FIFTHS PROGRESSION WITH DOMINANT CHORDS

Following the circle of fifths with only dominant chords is also a common baroque technique. Here are a few ideas from Bach's music. Notice how all of them connect from the 7th to the 3rd of the following chord, as we often do in jazz improvisation.

## 1. Brandenburg Concerto V

Chord progression for Brandenburg Concerto V:

C C<sup>7</sup> F F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b7</sup> E<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b7</sup>

3 1 2 4 3 5 1 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 -

A<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b7</sup> D<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b7</sup> F<sup>#</sup> F<sup>#7</sup> B B<sup>7</sup>

3 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 -

E E<sup>7</sup> A A<sup>7</sup> D D<sup>7</sup> G G<sup>7</sup> C

3 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 - 3 7 -

## 2. a minor Flute Partita

Chord progression for a minor Flute Partita:

F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b7</sup> E<sup>b7</sup> A<sup>b7</sup> D<sup>b7</sup> F<sup>#7</sup> B<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> C<sup>7</sup>

3 1 3 7 - 3 1 3 7 - 3 1 3 etc.

F<sup>7</sup> B<sup>b7</sup> E<sup>b7</sup> A<sup>b7</sup> D<sup>b7</sup> F<sup>#7</sup> B<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G

### 3. Harpsichord Concerto in f minor

The musical score consists of three staves of treble clef notation. The first staff contains the following chords and triplets: F<sup>7</sup> (3 5 1), B<sup>b7</sup> (3 1 7 - 3), E<sup>b7</sup> (3 5 1), A<sup>b7</sup> (3 1 7 - 3), D<sup>b7</sup> (3 etc), F<sup>#7</sup> (3), B<sup>7</sup> (3), and E<sup>7</sup> (3). The second staff contains: A<sup>7</sup> (3), D<sup>7</sup> (3), G<sup>7</sup> (3), C<sup>7</sup> (3), F<sup>7</sup> (3), B<sup>b7</sup> (3), E<sup>b7</sup> (3), and A<sup>b7</sup> (3). The third staff contains: D<sup>b7</sup> (3), F<sup>#7</sup> (3), B<sup>7</sup> (3), E<sup>7</sup> (3), A<sup>7</sup> (3), D<sup>7</sup> (3), G<sup>7</sup> (3), C<sup>7</sup> (3), and F (3). The score concludes with a double bar line.





# Exploration in Fifths

Here is an exercise of my own going through a few complete cycles of the dominant progression. You will find use of chromatic approach, bebop scales, augmented chords, diminished chords, and more.

B7 E7(b9) A7 D7 G7 C7 F9 Bb7

Eb7 Ab13 Db9 F#7 B7(b9) E7 A7(b9) D7

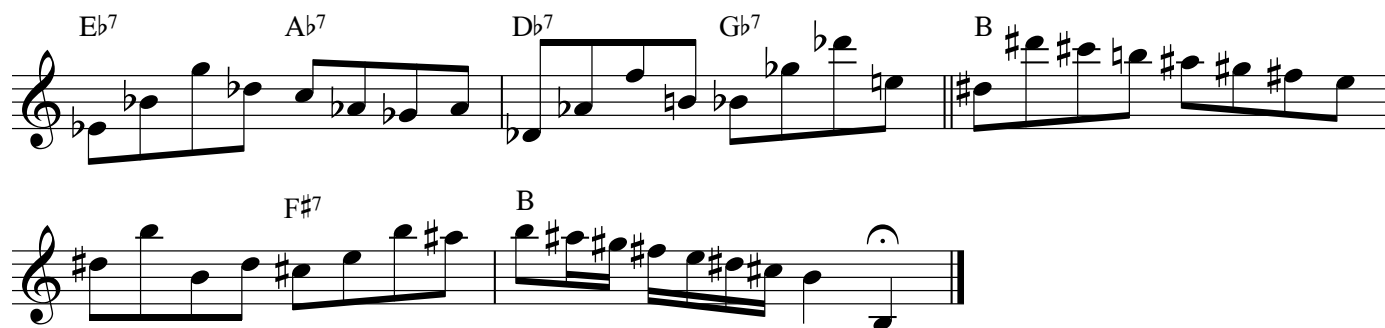
G7 C7 F9 Bb7 Eb7 Ab7 Db7 F#7

B9 E+7(b9) A7 D7 G7 C7 F7 Bb7

Eb7 Ab7 Db7 F#7 B7 E7 A7 D7

G7 C7 F7 Bb7 Eb7(b9) Ab7(b9) Db7(b9) Gb7(b9)

B7(b9) E7(b9) A7(b9) D7(b9) G7(b9) C7(b9) F7 Bb7



# Cello Suite No. 4: Prelude

The image displays a musical score for the Prelude of Cello Suite No. 4. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. The music consists of a single melodic line with various chordal textures. Annotations above the staff indicate specific chords and their changes throughout the piece.

Chord annotations include:

- Staff 1:  $E\flat$ ,  $E\flat 7$
- Staff 2:  $A\flat$ ,  $B\flat 7$
- Staff 3:  $E\flat$ ,  $/D$ ,  $Cm$ ,  $/B\flat$
- Staff 4:  $F 7$ ,  $B\flat$ ,  $B\flat m$
- Staff 5:  $E\flat 7$ ,  $A\flat$ ,  $/G$
- Staff 6:  $G 7(\flat 13)$ ,  $Fm$ ,  $G 7(\flat 9)$ ,  $Fm$
- Staff 7:  $G 7(\flat 9)$ ,  $Cm$
- Staff 8:  $C 7$ ,  $Fm$

Chord symbols for the first piece:

- Staff 1: C7(b9), Fm, /Eb
- Staff 2: Bb7, Eb
- Staff 3: Eb°7, Cm, F#°7
- Staff 4: Gm, /F, /Eb, /D, C#°, D7

Penciling in chord symbols is a great way to see how the notes relate harmonically.

Another great example comes from the a minor Flute Partita, here:

Chord symbols for the second piece:

- Staff 1: C, C7
- Staff 2: A7(b9), Dm, E7
- Staff 3: Am, B7(b9), Em

Now let's take that basic shape and try and put it through a standard set of changes, in this case, Ray Noble's "Cherokee." If you want to play this study with a jazz backing track, play the 16ths as 8ths.

## Cherokee

**A**

Section A consists of four staves of music. The first staff is labeled with a G chord. The second staff is labeled with C and Cm chords. The third staff is labeled with G and A7 chords. The fourth staff is labeled with Am7, E7(b9), Am7, and D7 chords. The music is written in treble clef and features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.

**B**

Section B consists of two staves of music. The first staff is labeled with G and G7 chords. The second staff is labeled with C and Cm chords. The music is written in treble clef and features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes.



C Cm

G A<sup>7</sup>

Am<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> G

Notice that the inversion I start with for each section will determine the voice leading, resulting in slightly different sequences each time. The key is to do this on the fly, hearing the connections and taking your time to figure out the best way to navigate the changes. In fact, you may want to start just by connecting triads through a tune.

For example, here is “All of Me” in root position triads, key of A Major for alto sax, just the first 16 bars.

The musical notation is presented in three staves, each containing six measures. The key signature is A Major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The notation uses a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are primarily quarter and eighth notes, often beamed together. Above each staff, specific triads are labeled for the first, third, and fifth measures.

**Staff 1:**

- Measure 1: A<sup>maj7</sup>
- Measure 3: C<sup>#7</sup>
- Measure 5: F<sup>#7</sup>

**Staff 2:**

- Measure 1: B<sup>m</sup>
- Measure 3: C<sup>#7</sup>
- Measure 5: F<sup>#m</sup>

**Staff 3:**

- Measure 1: B<sup>7</sup>
- Measure 3: B<sup>m7</sup>
- Measure 5: E<sup>7</sup>



Then here is same section, with voice leading. This means I'm finding the closest inversion to the chord I am currently on, with as many common tones and as little large movement as possible. The results are more musical. I can't stress enough how much singing and playing this exercise improved my ears and ability to hear harmony.

The image displays three staves of musical notation, each representing a different section of a voice leading exercise. The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#).

- Staff 1:** Contains three measures. The first measure is labeled **Amaj7** and contains the notes A4, C#5, E5, and G#5. The second measure is labeled **C#7** and contains the notes C#5, E5, G#5, and B5. The third measure is labeled **F#7** and contains the notes F#5, A5, C#6, and E6.
- Staff 2:** Contains three measures. The first measure is labeled **Bm** and contains the notes B4, D5, F#5, and A5. The second measure is labeled **C#7** and contains the notes C#5, E5, G#5, and B5. The third measure is labeled **F#m** and contains the notes F#5, A5, C#6, and E6.
- Staff 3:** Contains three measures. The first measure is labeled **B7** and contains the notes B4, D5, F#5, and A5. The second measure is labeled **Bm7** and contains the notes B4, D5, F#5, and A5. The third measure is labeled **E7** and contains the notes E5, G#5, B5, and D6.

The next step is to take a Bach-type pattern through the tune, incorporating voice leading. Make sure to play this lightly, and focusing on time with a metronome. Make music out of it!

The image displays a musical exercise in A major, consisting of four staves of music. Each staff contains a continuous eighth-note pattern. The exercise is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, with chord changes indicated by labels above the staves. The chords and their positions are as follows:

- Staff 1: A<sup>maj</sup>7 (measures 1-2), C<sup>#</sup>7 (measures 3-4)
- Staff 2: F<sup>#</sup>7 (measures 1-2), B<sup>m</sup> (measures 3-4)
- Staff 3: C<sup>#</sup>7 (measures 1-2), F<sup>#m</sup> (measures 3-4)
- Staff 4: B<sup>7</sup> (measures 1-2), B<sup>m</sup>7 (measures 3-4), E<sup>7</sup> (measures 5-6)



Now try your own. Below I have given five different shapes from Bach's music that I would encourage you to try and take through a tune of your choice.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

# Bach Shapes I, II and the Bach Shapes Etudes

## Available in Print and Digital

"Jazz musicians have naturally gravitated towards the music of JS Bach for years, so a book like this one has been a long time coming. Jon has done a wonderful job capturing various snapshots of Bach's seemingly infinite musical language, organizing these shapes in a setting that could be very useful to improvisers. A truly interesting and enjoyable book that will hopefully lead to more volumes in the future."

–**Miguel Zenon**, International Touring Artist

"A valuable tool for students who would like a refreshing change from regular forms of scale exercises. The challenging intervals and ranges would give any serious player a good workout! Thank you for this wonderful addition to our study materials!"

–**Kenneth Tse**, Professor at University of Iowa, President of the Comite International de Saxophone

"Jon De Lucia has created a compelling set of new studies, combining intrinsic musical elements with precise technical challenges in the tradition of the best etudes. Rather than targeting classical, jazz or pop saxophonists, these studies focus on issues of interval, intonation and musical phrase making in ways that are central to any style. Thanks for new stuff to practice and teach with!"

–**Andrew Stermann**, NYC Freelancer, Phillip Glass Ensemble, Teacher

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