

# 15 Stylistic Elements for the Advanced Jazz Pianist

We'll define the term "stylistic element" to mean any repeated patterning of notes used for a series of consecutive measures during an improvisation. A stylistic element can be, for example, a way to break up the notes of LH chords to create a specific texture or rhythm, a specific way for the hands to answer each other during improvising, and the like. A basic difference in stylistic elements I'd like to mention right off the bat is in the rhythmic dimension of the elements. The rhythms we will be exploring tonight will be of 2 types, either Direct rhythms or Implied rhythms. A direct rhythm is any rhythm where the quarter note pulse of the music is clearly stated. An example of this type of rhythm would be a walking bassline or a 4 to the bar LH comping pattern. An implied rhythm refers to a rhythm that is partially defined but open-ended. In this case the pulse of the music is implied but not clearly stated. An example of this type of rhythm would be, for example, a half time bassline or the famous doorknob LH figure that we'll get into later. There is a further discussion of the direct and implied rhythms in the Grateful Dead/Dark Star master class you can find on YT.

## Elements

- Chorale – direct rhythm, chorus sound, primary note of 4 (lowest note) spells counter-melody vs. chord sequence
- Oompah – direct rhythm, bottom note is primary counter-melody, top note secondary melody
- Comping in the Crax – vary placement of chords placed where the RH line breathes
- Doorknob – top 3 notes, bottom note sequence, close 4 or tenths, 2/2 or 3/1
- 4/bar, beginning and advanced – beginning- same chord for 4 beats, advanced – changes voicings every 2 beats
- LH blow – improv in LH, chords in RH. Generate physical motion from elbow or shoulder
- Oct Blow – one or 2 octaves apart, generate tone from legs/feet
- Contrapuntal Lines – start with full LH improv alone, then add simple RH improv.
- LH comping rhythms – 1-2 strikes/measure, on-beat/off/beat combination nice
- Double Arpeggios – top note of RH and LH arpeggios a 10th apart, descending/ascending melodic patterns following changes
- Faux Stride – 2 level LH accompaniment, lowest layer octaves- 5ths, close four; upper layer close 4. Vary rhythms.
- Rodeo – LH pattern - 1 -high 5 -low5 -high5
- Slurs – slide off a chromatic approach note to intended note in lines or chords. Black to white w/same finger, white-black switch fingers. Often done at highest point in line
- Trading fours between the Hands – can also trade 2's and 1's
- RH line/LH compers in unison – use syncopated simple rhythms, the same in both hands

## Putting it together – Improv flow on There will never be another you

Concept- to create a complete improv flow on the changes of Another You using and varying stylistic elements. Some organizational concepts:

- Start with less motion/intensity
- Vary implied/direct rhythms
- Build speed/intensity as you go
- Create short performance arc composed of 3-5 shorter arcs
- Use melody and interludes to break up improve
- Vary emotional content of the short arcs – Funny to intense, joyful to static, etc.

You may enjoy 16 other in-depth master classes on YT and Ustream under my name; they include Lennie Tristano, Bill Evans, Oscar Peterson, Charlie Parker, Liberace, a walking bassline clinic, the Marx Brothers, Eric Dolphy, the Grateful Dead, Frank Zappa, Bruce Hornsby, and others. If you have any questions, comments, complaints, or tomatoes you may reach me at [dave@davefrankjazz.com](mailto:dave@davefrankjazz.com).