

IGOR SARDI

LEARNING

WALKING BASS

**PROGRESSIVE COURSE TO
IMPROVE THIS TECHNIQUE**



- **FUNCTIONAL HARMONY**
- **CHORDAL AND SCALAR WALKING**
- **ANALYSIS OF THE MASTERS OF THIS TECHNIQUE**
- **RHYTHMIC VARIATIONS AND EMBELLISHMENTS**
- **MAIN HARMONIC SEQUENCES**
- **COMPOSITION OF OWN LINES**
- **AUDIO EXAMPLES AND BACKING TRACKS**
- **INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS**

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Chapter 1: What is Walking Bass

Walking bass refers to the typical jazz accompaniment of the double bass (or electric bass) with the scansion of quarters (mostly), and the creation of an extemporaneous counterpoint line that follows the harmony of the song, or even defines it. When we refer to walking on the piano, on the other hand, we mean the left hand progression, also used in genres such as boogie-woogie, Rock and Roll, etc., in which each note on the bass is (generally) repeated an octave above, in octave time. In Walking, the musician generally plays the root of the chord on the first movement of each bar (but often also the third and fifth), which is usually in 4/4. Also on the third movement, the characteristic notes of the chord predominate: root, third, fifth and seventh. On the other hand, on the 'weak' tempos (second and fourth movements), almost all the other notes of the chord in question are generally played: ninths, elevenths and thirteenth. The so-called chromatic approach notes are also particularly useful. They create a pleasant effect by 'arriving' at the root (or indeed the third or fifth) of the next chord, chromatically, i.e. by playing a note one semitone above or below. In order for the accompaniment in Walking to work well, it must be as smooth as possible, so we try to avoid excessive intervals between two consecutive notes. There are of course endless variations, both rhythmic and harmonic, and each musician develops his or her own way and style of accompaniment over time.

For us bass players (or double bass players), listening is, in my opinion, of vital importance. In fact, in my opinion, the first excellent exercise is precisely that of listening as much as possible to the walking lines of the 'masters' of the sector, that is to say, those musicians who have recorded thousands and thousands of pieces with their way of playing this type of accompaniment. I will list a few names, inviting you to learn more about each of them.

Double Bass Players:

Ron Carter
Ray Brown
Paul Chambers
Dave Holland
Charles Mingus
Charlie Haden
Oscar Pettiford

Even in Italy we have had, and have, absolute masters of the jazz. I will mention a few, of course the list would be much, much longer:

Massimo Moriconi
Enrico Fazio
Attilio Zanchi
Carlo Loffredo

Chapter 8 (p.2) Cordal walking on minor II - V - I

♩ = 90

Using only Root and Fifth of each chord

EX 155

Etc.

Em7(♯5) A7(♯9) Dm7

Using only Root and Third of each chord

EX 156

Etc.

Am7(♯5) D7(♯9) Gm7

Using only Root Third and Fifth of each chord

♩ = 110

EX 157

Etc.

Dm7(♯5) G7(♯9) Cm7

Using only Third and Fifth of each chord

EX 158

Etc.

Gm7(♯5) C7(♯9) Fm7

Adding the Seventh

EX 159

Etc.

Cm7(♯5) F7(♯9) B♭m7

Chapter 9 Chromatic approach notes

Notes one semitone below the 'arrival' note

EX 163

Etc.

Em7 *A7* *Dmaj7*

Bass

Notes one semitone above the 'arrival' note

EX 164

Etc.

Em7 *A7* *Dmaj7*

Mixing the two chromatic approaches

EX 165

Etc.

Bm7 *E7* *Amaj7*

On minor I - V - I

EX 166

Etc.

Bm7(b5) *E7(b9)* *Am7*

On simple Blues in Bb

EX 167

Bb7

E7 *Bb7*

Chapter 16 Exercise on associating a scale with each chord

♩ = 120

Playing scales in an ascending sense (the harmonic sequence is 'random')

EX 206

Gmaj7 Cm(maj7)

G.Major C.Harm.minor

T A B 3 0 2 3 0 2 4 5 | 3 0 1 3 0 1 4 5

F7 B°7

F.Mixolydian Bb.Diminished

T A B 1 3 0 1 3 0 1 3 | 1 2 4 0 2 4 0 3

E♭m7(♯5) A♭7(♯11)

Eb.Locrian Ab.Lydian(b7)

T A B 6 7 4 6 7 4 6 8 | 4 6 8 5 6 8 4 6

D♯maj7(♯5,♯11) G♯m6

Db.Lydian(♯5) Gb.Dorian

T A B 4 6 3 5 2 3 5 6 | 2 4 0 2 4 1 2 4

Bmaj7(♯11) *Continue you.. E7(♯9) Am13 D7sus4 G7(♯9,♯5,♯13)

B.Lydian

T A B 2 4 6 3 4 6 3 4

Cmaj11 C°7 Dm11(♯13) E♭6

E♭6/9 Fm6/9 F♯7sus2 Gadd9

Autumn Leaves (Ron Carter's Bass Line)

Bass line by Ron Carter

Miles Davis

From Live At The Plugged Nickel

Music by Johnny Mercer, Jacques Prevert, Joseph Kosma

EX 208

A Theme

D. Bass

Chord symbols: Cm7, F7, Bb7, Eb7, A^o, D7b9, Gm, Cm7, F7, Bb7, Eb7, A^o, D7b9, Gm, A^o, Gm, D7b9, Gm, Cm7, F7, Bbmaj7, Eb7, A^o, D7b9, Gm7, C7, F7, Bb6, A^o, D7b9, Gm.

8va -----

B Miles solo

Chord symbols: Cm7, F7, Bb7, Eb7, A^o, D7b9, Gm, Cm7, Gm, F7, Bb7, Eb7.

8va -----

Chapter 18: Composing One's Lines

We have reached the final chapter of this journey, it is time to compose our accompaniments!

I advise you to always start simple, both at the level of songs on which to write the first lines, and at the level of walking. Don't include all the notions you have studied straight away, add something a little at a time.

This will help you not to leave out any aspect, and to gain more and more confidence, starting with slower speeds, and then working your way up to faster rhythms.

Experiment, have fun trying everything you can think of, listen as much as possible to the great masters of our instrument, and above all, transcribe and analyse!

Below is the transcription of some of the rounds I wrote, if you like, take a cue, but the aim must always be to create something of your own!

Compose your own lines

♩ = 130



Walking with chordal approach

EX 215 - Major II - V - I using root - third - fifth and seventh (example in B) etc.

Chords: C#m7, F#7, Bmaj7, 8va

EX 216 - Major II - V - I using third - fifth - seventh and root (example in D \flat) etc.

Chords: E \flat m7, A \flat 7, D \flat maj7, 8va

EX 217 - Major II - V - I using fifth - seventh - ninth and third (example in B \flat) etc.

Chords: C \flat m7, F7, B \flat maj7, 8va

EX 218 - Major II - V - I adding chromatic approach notes of the next chord (example in A) etc.

Chords: Bm7, E7, Amaj7, 8va

Chords: Bm7, E7, Amaj7, 15ma, etc.