



Jazz Articles by Bob Taylor
from *The Art of Improvisation, Sightreading Jazz, and More!*
Visual Jazz Web site: <http://www.visual-jazz.com>
E-mail: info@visual-jazz.com

**Article 28:
Anticipation ...**

This material is © 2006 by Bob Taylor, Visual Jazz Publications. All rights reserved – you may download, view, or print this article for personal, non-commercial use only. Any other use, including re-distribution, posting, or modifications requires written permission from the author. You may link to the article on the Visual Jazz site.



Anticipation ...

by Bob Taylor – ©2006 Visual Jazz Publications

Saturday Night Live has produced its share of classic moments over the years. Some of the most enjoyable bits from the Bill Murray / Dan Aykroyd era were the spoofs on television commercials. Who can forget the commercial, where Aykroyd and Gilda Radner hype “Shimmer” as not only an incredible floor wax product, but also a delicious dessert topping? “Mmm, tastes terrific! And just look at that shine ...”

But my favorite commercial sketch was for the fictional beverage “Swill.” Bill Murray touts it as the drink straight from the bottom of Lake Erie. The camera zooms in to show a bottle full of a thick, yellowish liquid, complete with lake debris – pull tabs, dirt, etc. And as he begins to pour that first glass, Swill hovers suspended against gravity, its thick repulsiveness straining to get through the neck of the bottle. Cue the soundtrack ... “Anticipation” by Carly Simon ...

That’s definitely a 10 on the “ewwww” meter!

(For the full transcript of the Saturday Night Live “Swill” sketch, see <http://snltranscripts.jt.org/77/77bswill.phtml>).

Anticipation Types

Now that we’ve sufficiently grossed you out (or maybe not, depending on our drinking habits), let’s go back to that “anticipation” word. It’s one of the most powerful concepts in our experience, and it likewise has an important place in improvisation.

Now that we're sufficiently grossed out (or maybe not, depending on our drinking habits), let's go back to that "anticipation" word. It's one of the most powerful concepts in our experience, and it likewise has an important place in improvisation.

There are two ways to define anticipation:

- 1) Setting up a mood where you want something to happen
- 2) Jumping ahead into something (anticipating it) before it's ready

For this article we'll focus on Type 2, with the technique of *Chord Anticipation*.

Chord Anticipation

Note: The section below is from the Melodic Connections chapter in *The Art of Improvisation*.

Chord Anticipation

Chord anticipation means soloing on the new chord a bit too soon (one, two, or three quarter-note beats before the new chord sounds), to increase tension.

Anticipating Chords

For example, say the first chord is FMa7 and the next chord is AbMa7. You could anticipate the AbMa7 by playing Ab, Bb, C, and Eb while F Ma7 is sounding:



Example G - Anticipated notes of AbMa7, played against FMa7

The anticipated Ab, Bb and Eb in the example above sound tense in FMa7, but when the new chord arrives, they makes sense. (In movies, it's like starting the dialog in a new scene while the old scene's still on the screen). Anticipated notes are usually the resting tones of the new chord.

They outline the new chord clearly while the old chord is still sounding. When the new chord arrives, use melodic resolution to connect to it smoothly. Then when the new chord is sounding, you can stress the new chord's color tones.

So, the idea is to “jump the gun” on the new chord by a few beats, then stay in the new key. The “Type 1” anticipation occurs as the listener waits for the new chord to finally sound, so the “too-soon” notes finally make sense. You’ll hear this technique used in a lot of jazz recordings, at just the right places, by experienced soloists.

Guidelines for Chord Anticipation

Here are a few points to keep in mind when you practice and use chord anticipation:

- Chord anticipation works best when the new chord is in a key that’s sufficiently *different* from the old chord. That’s because most of the anticipation notes should *not* fit in the old chord. If you use chord anticipation on closely related chords (like C to F), the anticipated F-chord notes fit too well with C, so there’s no real contrast.
- For the anticipated notes, try flexible scale segments as well as arpeggios, ascending or descending.
- When you’re in the new chord, get off the “resting tones” you used for anticipating the new chord, and focus more on its color tones.
- With each anticipation group, be sure to include *at least one note* that’s definitely not in the new key. In fact, sometimes you need only play that one “wrong” note and then continue with it in the new key.

For example, suppose we’re moving from C Maj7 to E Maj7 and want to anticipate the E. Although we could anticipate the E Maj7 with a B and an E, that won’t do us much good – the B and E are common to both C Maj7 and E Maj7, so there’s no tension there. But the G# is definitely a good choice – it fits in E Maj7 but *not* in C Maj7. Another good choice for anticipating the E Maj7 would be D#, for the same reasons.

Remember, you can still use a few common tones (like the B and the E in the example above), as long as you include one or more tension notes as well. These tension notes are also known as “non-harmonic tones.” For more information on using and resolving non-harmonic tones in solos, see *The Art of Improvisation*, or see Article 14: *Expanding Your Color Palette*.

Sample Anticipation Notes, Major Keys

The list below shows the best anticipation notes to use when moving from C Major to any other Major chord or key. You can adapt / transpose this so it also works with any starting major key besides C.

Current Key	New Key	Best Anticipation Notes
C	C#	C#, E#, G# (triad) or D#, A#
	D	C#, possibly F#
	Eb	Eb, Ab, Bb
	E	G#, D#
	F	no definite choices – chords closely related
	F#	F#, G#, A#, C#, D#
	G	no definite choices – chords closely related
	Ab	Ab, Bb, Db, Eb,
	A	C#, G#
	Bb	Bb, Eb,
	B	C#, D#, G#, A#

Practice Methods and Sample Tunes

To practice chord anticipation, look for tunes or chord progressions that have modulations to more distant keys. For example, try “Have You Met Miss Jones” or “All the Things You Are”. For starting off, try modal tunes like “Little Sunflower” and “So What” – they give you plenty of advance notice for anticipating the new chord. If you’re ready for a challenge, try anticipation with “Have You Met Miss Jones” or “All the Things You Are.”

Conclusion

One of my improvisation students recently caught hold of the anticipation technique and his eyes lit up as he started using it. Maybe yours will, too!

And finally, one last question ...

I’m curious – would you prefer Shimmer or Swill?