

Contrast Method Example Topics, Parameters and Exercises

Topic	Parameters	Basic Exercise	Advanced Exercise
Range	Wide, Narrow, Medium	One phrase with a narrow range, less than an octave REST, then one phrase with a wide range greater than two octaves.	Each phrase has a specific interval range that must be adhered to, for example, one phrase inside of a 4th, one inside of a 10th.
Speed	Slow, Medium, Fast	One phrase using only long note durations relative to the tempo such as half notes REST, then one phrase using very short note durations such as 1/16th notes.	Combining specific note durations in a phrase, begin with half notes, then play triplets and 1/16th notes in one phrase. Create second and third phrase forms.
Harmonic Accuracy	Inside, Outside, Upperstructure	One phrase completely inside the chord changes REST, one phrase completely outside the chord changes, utilizing superimposition	Starting inside and ending outside and the inverse. Using the Upper structure tensions and playing very specific superimpositions such as superimposing Coltrane changes or melodic minor scale on every chord.
Phrase Length	Long, Short, Medium	One long phrase, lasting more than 8 bars REST then one short phrase lasting less than two bars	Add medium phrase lasting 3-7 bars. Then become very specific about the phrase lengths, playing one phrase for 4.5 bars, next for 9 beats etc.
Melodic Shape	Chromatic, Wide Intervals	One phrase consisting of exclusively whole steps and half steps REST, one phrase consisting of intervals larger than a 5th	Be very specific about which intervals. One phrase using only half steps, one using only 9ths for example.
Density	Sparse, Dense	One phrase with very little activity, REST, one phrase with lots of activity	Begin sparse and end dense, combine with other topics
Time	In time, out of time, metric modulation	One phrase in time, REST, one phrase in a different time (metric modulation)	Add a completely out of time phrase (Free time) into the mix.

Keep in mind as you become more accomplished with any given topic, the topics can be combined to create ever more challenging exercises. The ultimate goal of practicing improvisation in this way is that by constantly listening to yourself, you will find elements of originality that can be isolated, focused on and perfected.