COMMON MELODIC OUTLINES
USING LINES from BACH in JAZZ IMPROVISATION
Bert Ligon | sc.edu/music/jazz

BACH: Sonata No. 1 in G minor, Presto

BACH: Suite No. 1, Minuet II

Bach: Partita No. 3, Gavotte en Rondeau

Bach: Partita No. 3, Bourrée

Common Melodic Outlines from BACH

– 1 –
Bach: Partita No. 3, Gigue

Idea without passing tones
(same line as Gavotte)

Bach: Partita III, Gigue

Henri Vieuxtemps: Elegie (for viola), op. 30

Elegie idea without neighbor tones
Three basic patterns (outlines) emerge from these Bach examples which are very useful to jazz improvisers.

Outline No. 1 begins on the 3rd of one chord and moves down the scale to the 3rd of the next. Bach embellished this basic idea using 3-5-7-9 arpeggios.

Outline No. 1

Outline No. 1 with 3-5-7-9 arpeggio

Outline No. 2 begins with an ascending arpeggio, then the 7th resolves to the 3rd of the next chord.

Outline No. 2

Outline No. 2 with passing tones

Outline No. 3 begins with a descending arpeggio, then the 7th resolves to the 3rd of the next chord.

Outline No. 3 followed by a 3-5-7-9 arpeggio
APPLICATIONS to STANDARD JAZZ PROGRESSION

BACH: Sonata No. 1, Outline No. 1 applied to standard jazz progression, swing style.

\[ \text{Gm7} \quad \text{C7} \quad \text{Fmaj7} \quad \text{Bbma7} \]

\[ \text{Eø7} \quad \text{A7} \quad \text{Dm} \]

Bach: Partita III, Gigue Outline No. 1 with the 3-5-7-9 arpeggio applied to standard jazz progression, swing style.

\[ \text{Gm7} \quad \text{C7} \quad \text{Fmaj7} \quad \text{Bbma7} \]

\[ \text{Eø7} \quad \text{A7} \quad \text{Dm} \]
Several Bach Outline No. 1 ideas combined, NT pattern from Vieuxtemps added at the end.

Outline No. 2 begins with an ascending arpeggio, then the 7th resolves to the 3rd of the next chord.

Outline No. 2 applied to standard jazz progression
Outline No. 2 with passing tones applied to standard jazz progression

Outline No. 3 and 3-5-7-9 arpeggios applied to standard jazz progression
Neighbor tone patterns applied to Major and Minor arpeggios. Upper neighbor tones are usually diatonic, lower neighbor tones, or leading tones are usually chromatic.
Neighbor tone patterns applied to Outline No. 1 over standard jazz progression. Each 3rd is approached with its upper and lower neighbor tone.

Neighbor tone patterns applied to Outline No. 3 over standard jazz progression. Several chord tones are approached with upper and lower neighbor tones.