



Lesson 27 - Comping Behind the Soloist

Jazz Guitar Comping 103

Okay welcome to this section. So that was quite a lot of unrooted comping and drop two chords. Let's have this little interlude, if you haven't already, you should take a little break from all of these drop two's. And this section is the interlude so you won't be learning any new chords, but you'll still learn really relevant things and applications. So we've already spent two and a half courses so Comping 101, 102, and now half of 103 learning different ways of comping chords for the most important progressions in jazz, but we haven't said a word yet on who you're comping for. So remember that the term "comping" is short for accompanying, or accompaniment. And it means that you're providing a harmonic and rhythmic background, or a tapestry for the musician playing or singing the melody. In this case, I'll use the term "soloist" to describe whoever's playing music at the forefront. Be it the melody of the song, or an improvised solo. So generally speaking, comping means that it's best to avoid playing while the soloist is playing. In other words, unless you're playing some kind of predictable repeated rhythm, stay the heck out of the way of the person you're accompanying. And comping can also be thought of saying comp-li-menting, so compliment what the person is doing, don't try to, you know, steal the show. Don't steal the spotlight. So this is important for many reasons, the first being that you are not supposed to be the center of attention. The soloist is. Another reason to not play while the soloist is playing is because you might play notes that clash with the soloists if you're not listening carefully. So this takes attention further away from the soloist in the worst way possible. Instead of supporting him or her, you're actively getting in the way of musical gestures. So how do we go about staying out

of the way of the soloists, while supporting them? Well, the best answer is to listen, and you know don't play anything that goes against the grain. But that's a little vague. Specifically, you want to listen for spaces that you can fill rhythmically with interesting voicings. The dynamic gets more complicated as you play with a band, but the answer is to always listen and choose the right moments as a guitarist you don't always have to be playing so there's this real, like, when in doubt just shut up. If you don't know what to do, it means you shouldn't play anything. So this isn't the only way to comp for a soloist, but it's the safest. I'll talk a little more about this after in the next video. But for now, practice comping for Nathan while he plays the melody to Autumn Leaves, and then he will take a little solo. You can play with any comping technique you've learned, any voicing's fine, and I urge you to re-visit this next lesson multiple times in case you want to practice a new technique along with a solo, or soloist. So just play inbetween the phrases, both during the head, in and out, and when the solo is taking place, and see how you can compliment. Obviously, this is easier for a melody that you know, rather than an improvised solo. But both require you to listen for the right moments so you have to be like a patient photographer in your comping. All right, let's do this.