

## BALLADS

There is a strong case for learning jazz by playing ballads. I have come to this conclusion through hearing beginners and perennial-beginners attempting to solo, not knowing where they are going wrong and some of them not even aware that they are doing so.

There is no escape from a very slow tempo - everything is revealed which might be covered up at a quicker tempo. To play quickly you must start off by being able to play slowly. But in the excitement which seems to grip beginners - the trance-like effect of the beat plus the mistaken notion that anything goes and there are no wrong notes - means that they never really get to grip with the basics.

There are several reasons why playing ballads will improve your playing no end. For a chordal instrument, ballads give players an opportunity to find rich chords and to try out different voicings to get different sounds. Once these have become familiar, they can be used at faster tempos. For horn players, developing a good tone is best achieved through playing slowly. Long notes which can be used very effectively at all tempos need to be practiced. Nothing sounds worse than a horn player with a poor tone and with little control over the fullness of the notes. Rhythmically, learning to play at very slow tempos is a big challenge, requiring a lot of accuracy and pin-point timing. This applies to all instruments. There is also a lot of satisfaction derived from playing beautiful ballads, imbibing them with an emotional depth which is not so profound in quicker tempos.

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There are two types of ballads in jazz (pop ballads are a different thing altogether): those with a straight 8s feel and those with a swing feel. Most of them fit into the first category, for example, *My Funny Valentine* and *Skylark*. You can include slow bossa novas like *How insensitive* in this grouping. There are also some which are in slow swing, *Lover Man*, for instance. Some slow 12/8 tunes, such as *Willow Weep for Me* are also in this latter category.

Perhaps the biggest problem in playing jazz on ballads is getting lost, something that even great players can do. Let us assume that the piano (and guitar) are playing the same chords as the bass player and that any horn players also have the same set of chords. A single wrong chord or a bass note which does not fit the chords which everyone is playing can throw everyone at a slow tempo. By slow, I mean less than 100 beats per minute.

Some practical advice. You can count or tap your foot in double-tempo if you can't feel the slow pulse.

Resist the temptation though of pushing it into double-tempo when everyone else wants it to remain at the original tempo.

After the tune has been stated, the tempo may stay the same, or it may do 2 things: go into a *double-tempo feel* in which the new length of the chorus is double the length of the original, so one bar/measure becomes two. This is the usual approach. Tapping your foot may help here as can singing the tune in your head.

Alternatively, it may go into actual double-tempo where the bar/measure remains the same but the whole thing is twice as fast. In written music, the former should have the words *Double-tempo feel* written, whereas in the latter the instruction *Double-tempo* should be stated. Sometimes to make it more obvious the time signature is changed from the previous *common* tempo to *cut-common*. In the case of 12/8 pieces, they can go into double-tempo or into a fast three.

When playing jazz on a ballad work out beforehand what notes are in the chords and which scales can be used over them. Failure to do so will be very obvious as wrong notes in a ballad cannot be disguised.

Don't be too ambitious at first. Concentrate on long notes (quarter-notes/crotchets or longer) which sound good and change the notes when the scales/chords change. Then you can do short runs, arpeggios and patterns which follow the change of chord. Keep it slow.

Once you have got the feeling of how to handle the changes, you can afford to play more notes. Say you have been playing quarter-notes (crotchets) so far, then try and fit some triplet whole-notes. The next stage is playing phrases in eighth-notes (quavers). These will usually be straight rather than swing, but you can try both. Leave lots of space between phrases and pay attention to the note you end each phrase on so that each phrase compliments the preceding one. Listen to the other players and be guided by what they are playing.

After that try phrases of triplet eighth-notes (quavers). See how far you can get through the tune in these different rhythms. Intermingle all the rhythms you have done so far.

Now by increasing this to sixteenth-notes (semiquavers) you will be going into double-tempo. Remember there are four notes to every beat - swing or straight. Increasing this will lead to triplet sixteenth-notes (semi-quavers) giving you 6 notes per beat. You might also like to try 5 notes or 7 notes for every beat. It is worthwhile using a metronome and counting the number of notes until you get it into your head.

Don't be afraid of having the music in front of you. It helps to reinforce the form of the tune and will help you to learn it more quickly.

If you can do it, you can try phrases of demisemiquavers (thirty-second notes) next giving you 8 notes per beat and so on. Mix and match all the different rhythms to give a meaningful solo-line.

Remember that the lines should be legato, generally. Don't let any air in between the notes and don't accent any notes too heavily unless you end up with a double-tempo out and out swing thing.

Having gone through this, you can now approach a medium-tempo number as if it were a ballad and adopt the same procedure.

Fast numbers can also have the same treatment but here it is more useful to tap your foot in half-tempo. This helps to prevent you crossing the beat. Obviously you can't double up the tempo but you can still try different rhythms and deviations from the eighth-note lines using longer notes.

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You might have spotted a problem. Because the emphasis in ballads is on lush chords, many ballads have an abundance of chord changes. So to start off with you need to hunt around for tunes with very few changes to get around. To help you I've written a little tune (*Try Me*) you can practice on. You can play it at about 100bpm or slower.

When you have got the hang of this one, try the more difficult one - *You Can Do It*. Any other ballad will now be easy for you!

# Try Me

scales  
concert C  
C $\Delta$ 9

F  
B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9

C  
C $\Delta$   
E

C  
Am $^9$

straight 8s  
Paul Busby  
PRS

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: C, F, C, C. A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is marked with a '3'.

C  
Dm $^{11}$

Fm  
Fm $\Delta$   
G

C  
C $\Delta$ 9

Fm  
B $\flat$ 13+11

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: C, Fm, C, Fm. A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is marked with a '3'.

E $\flat$   
E $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9

A $\flat$   
D $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9

E $\flat$   
Cm $^9$

E $\flat$   
A $\flat$  $\Delta$

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , E $\flat$ . A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is marked with a '3'.

E $\flat$   
Fm $^{11}$

A $\flat$   
D $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9

E $\flat$   
D $\emptyset$

A $\flat$ m  
G7-9-5

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ m. A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is marked with a '3'.

C  
C $\Delta$ 9

Fm  
B $\flat$ 13+11

C  
Am $^9$

D $\flat$   
E $\flat$ m $^9$   
A $\flat$

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: C, Fm, C, D $\flat$ . Triplet markings (3) are present over the first and last measures.

C  
Dm $^9$

Fm  
E7-9-5

F  
E $\emptyset$   
A

A $\flat$ m  
F $\emptyset$

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: C, Fm, F, A $\flat$ m. Triplet markings (3) are present over the first and last measures.

C  
Dm $^9$   
G

A $\flat$   
D $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9

C  
C $\Delta$ 9

E $\flat$  A $\flat$ m  
A $\flat$  $\Delta$ +11 G7-9+5

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. Chords: C, A $\flat$ , C, E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ m. A triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) is marked with a '3'.

# Try Me

scales C  
concert C $\Delta$ 9

straight 8s  
Paul Busby  
PRS

C F C C $\Delta$  E C Am<sup>9</sup>

C Fm C Fm Dm<sup>11</sup> Fm $\Delta$  G C $\Delta$ 9 Bb<sup>13+11</sup>

Eb Ab Eb Eb Eb $\Delta$ 9 Db $\Delta$ 9 Cm<sup>9</sup> Ab $\Delta$

Eb Fm<sup>11</sup> Ab Db $\Delta$ 9 Eb D $\emptyset$  Abm G7-9-5

C Fm C Db Ebm<sup>9</sup> C $\Delta$ 9 Bb<sup>13+11</sup> Am<sup>9</sup> Ab

C Fm F Abm Dm<sup>9</sup> E7-9-5 E $\emptyset$  A F $\emptyset$

C Ab C Eb Abm Dm<sup>9</sup> Db $\Delta$ 9 C $\Delta$ 9 Ab $\Delta$ +11 G7-9+5

Tenors 8va where necessary

# Try Me

straight 8s  
Paul Busby  
PRS

scales *D*  
Bb pitch *DΔ9*

*G*  
*CΔ9*

*D*  
*DΔ*  
*F#*

*D*  
*Bm9*

*D* *Gm* *D* *Gm*  
*Em11* *GmΔ* *DΔ9* *C13+11*  
*A*

*F* *Bb* *F* *F*  
*FΔ9* *E♭Δ9* *Dm9* *B♭Δ*

*F* *Bb* *F* *Bbm*  
*Gm11* *E♭Δ9* *E∅* *A7-9-5*

*D* *Gm* *D* *E♭*  
*DΔ9* *C13+11* *Bm9* *Fm9*  
*B♭*

*D* *Gm* *G* *Bbm*  
*Em9* *F#7-9-5* *F#∅* *G∅*  
*B*

*D* *Bb* *D* *F* *Bbm*  
*Em9* *E♭Δ9* *DΔ9* *B♭Δ+11* *A7-9+5*  
*A*

# Try Me

straight 8s  
Paul Busby  
PRS

scales A Eb pitch A $\Delta$ 9 A D G $\Delta$ 9 A A $\Delta$  C# A F#m9

A Bm11 Dm Dm $\Delta$  E A A $\Delta$ 9 Dm G13+11

C C $\Delta$ 9 F B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9 C Am9 C F $\Delta$

C Dm11 F B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9 C B $\emptyset$  Fm E7-9-5

A A $\Delta$ 9 Dm G13+11 A F#m9 Cm9 F

A Bm9 Dm, C#7-9-5 D C# $\emptyset$  F# Fm D $\emptyset$

A Bm9 E F B $\flat$  $\Delta$ 9 A A $\Delta$ 9 Dm Fm, F $\Delta$ +11 E7-9+5

# YOU CAN DO IT

concert

ballad  
Paul Busby  
PRS

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). It consists of two main sections: a 'concert' section and a 'solos' section. The concert section is divided into two systems of four staves each. The first system contains the first two staves, and the second system contains the last two staves. The solos section is also divided into two systems of four staves each. The first system contains the first two staves, and the second system contains the last two staves. The score includes various guitar chords such as EbΔ, BΔ+11, Ab9+11, E13-9+11, E/Bb, Eb°add D,F, Abm7, Cm9, AbΔ-5, F13-5, D7-9+5, G13-9+11, G7-9+5, D/C, C2/Bb, Em11, A13+11, Am7/D, D7-9-5, GΔ9/B, Fm7/Bb, Em7/A, A7-9-5, AbΔ-5, E7+9+5, F9+11, Abm9, Bb7sus4, and E6/Bb. Triplet markings are present throughout the score. The solos section begins with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a '1st x only' instruction. The concert section ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a 'fine' instruction. The solos section ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a 'last x cadenza on last chord, then DC al fine' instruction.

last x cadenza on last chord, then DC al fine

# YOU CAN DO IT

ballad  
Paul Busby  
PRS

concert

$E\flat\Delta$   $B\Delta+11$   $A\flat9+11$   $E13-9+11$

$E\flat\Delta$   $E/B\flat$   $E\flat\circ$  add D,F  $A\flat m7$   $D\flat$

$Cm9$   $A\flat\Delta-5$   $F13-5$   $D7-9+5$

$G13-9+11$   $G7-9+5$   $D/C$   $C2/B\flat$   $Em11$   $A13+11$   $Am7$   $D7-9-5$

$G\Delta9$   $B$   $Fm7$   $B\flat$   $Em7$   $A$   $A7-9-5$   $A\flat\Delta-5$   $E7+9+5$

$E\flat\Delta$   $F9+11$   $A\flat m9$   $B\flat7sus4$   $E6$   $B\flat$

solos

$E\flat\Delta$  *fine*  $B\Delta+11$   $A\flat9+11$   $E13-9+11$

1st x only

$E\flat\Delta$   $E/B\flat$   $E\flat\circ$  add D,F  $A\flat m7$   $D\flat$

$Cm9$   $A\flat\Delta-5$   $F13-5$   $D7-9+5$

$G13-9+11$   $G7-9+5$   $D/C$   $C2/B\flat$   $Em11$   $A13+11$   $Am7$   $D7-9-5$

$G\Delta9$   $B$   $Fm7$   $B\flat$   $Em7$   $A$   $A7-9-5$   $A\flat\Delta-5$   $E7+9+5$

$E\flat\Delta$   $F9+11$   $A\flat m9$   $B\flat7sus4$   $E6$   $B\flat$

last x cadenza on last chord, then DC al fine



# YOU CAN DO IT

chords above  
scales in italics

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*E $\flat$*       *B $\Delta$ +11*  
*F $\sharp$*       *A $\flat$ 9+11*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *E $^{13-9+11}$*   
*Bm*

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*B $\flat$*       *E*  
*B $\flat$*   
*Bm*      *E $\flat$  $^\circ$*   
*E $\flat$ o*      *A $\flat$ m7*  
*G $\flat$*       *D $\flat$*

*Cm9*  
*B $\flat$*       *A $\flat$  $\Delta$ -5*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *F $^{13-5}$*   
*Cm*      *D7-9+5*  
*E $\flat$ m*

*G $^{13-9+11}$*   
*A $\flat$ o*      *G7-9+5*  
*A $\flat$ m*

*D*  
*C*  
*G*      *C2*  
*B $\flat$*   
*F*

*Em11*  
*D*      *A $^{13+11}$*   
*Em*

*A $\flat$ m7*  
*D*  
*G*      *D7-9-5*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *G $\Delta$ 9*  
*B*  
*G*      *Fm7*  
*B $\flat$*   
*E $\flat$*

*Em7*  
*A*  
*D*      *A7-9-5*  
*B $\flat$ m*      *A $\flat$  $\Delta$ -5*  
*E $\flat$*       *E7+9+5*  
*Fm*

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*B $\flat$*       *F9+11*  
*Cm*      *A $\flat$ m7*  
*G $\flat$*

*B $\flat$ 7sus4*  
*E $\flat$*       *E6*  
*B $\flat$*  on beat 4  
*B*

# YOU CAN DO IT

chords above  
scales in italics

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*E $\flat$*       *B $\Delta$ +11*  
*F $\sharp$*       *A $\flat$ 9+11*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *E<sup>13-9+11</sup>*  
*Bm*

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*B $\flat$*       *E*  
*B $\flat$*       *Bm*      *E $\flat$  $\circ$*   
*E $\flat$ o*      *A $\flat$ m7*  
*G $\flat$*       *D $\flat$*

*Cm9*  
*B $\flat$*       *A $\flat$  $\Delta$ -5*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *F<sup>13-5</sup>*  
*Cm*      *D7-9+5*  
*E $\flat$ m*

*G<sup>13-9+11</sup>*  
*A $\flat$ o*      *G7-9+5*  
*A $\flat$ m*

*D*  
*C*  
*G*      *C2*  
*B $\flat$*   
*F*

*Em11*  
*D*      *A<sup>13+11</sup>*  
*Em*

*A $\flat$ m7*  
*D*  
*G*      *D7-9-5*  
*E $\flat$ m*      *G $\Delta$ 9*  
*B*      *Fm7*  
*B $\flat$*   
*E $\flat$*

*Em7*  
*A*  
*D*      *A7-9-5*  
*B $\flat$ m*      *A $\flat$  $\Delta$ -5*  
*E $\flat$*       *E7+9+5*  
*Fm*

*E $\flat$  $\Delta$*   
*B $\flat$*       *F9+11*  
*Cm*      *A $\flat$ m7*  
*G $\flat$*

*B $\flat$ 7sus4*  
*E $\flat$*       *E6*  
*B $\flat$*  on beat 4  
*B*

# YOU CAN DO IT

ballad  
Paul Busby  
PRS

Bb pitch

$F\Delta$   $D\flat\Delta+11$   $B\flat9+11$   $G\flat13-9+11$   
 $F\Delta$   $G\flat/C$   $F\circ\text{add E,G}$   $B\flat m7/E\flat$   
 $Dm9$   $B\flat\Delta-5$   $G13-5$   $E7-9+5$   
 $A13-9+11$   $A7-9+5$   $E/D$   $D2/C$   $F\sharp m11$   $B13+11$   $Bm7/E$   $E7-9-5$   
 $A\Delta9/C\sharp$   $Gm7/C$   $F\sharp m7/B$   $B7-9-5$   $B\flat\Delta-5$   $G\flat7+9+5$   
 $F\Delta$   $G9+11$   $B\flat m9$   $C7sus4$   $G\flat6/C$

*solos*  $F\Delta$  *fine*  $D\flat\Delta+11$   $B\flat9+11$   $G\flat13-9+11$   
*1st x only*  
 $F\Delta$   $G\flat/C$   $F\circ\text{add E,G}$   $B\flat m7/E\flat$   
 $Dm9$   $B\flat\Delta-5$   $G13-5$   $E7-9+5$   
 $A13-9+11$   $A7-9+5$   $E/D$   $D2/C$   $F\sharp m11$   $B13+11$   $Bm7/E$   $E7-9-5$   
 $A\Delta9/C\sharp$   $Gm7/C$   $F\sharp m7/B$   $B7-9-5$   $B\flat\Delta-5$   $G\flat7+9+5$   
 $F\Delta$   $G9+11$   $B\flat m9$   $C7sus4$   $G\flat6/C$

last x cadenza on last chord, then DC al fine

Bb pitch

# YOU CAN DO IT

chords above  
scales in italics

*F* *DbΔ+11* *Bb<sup>9+11</sup>* *Gb<sup>13-9+11</sup>*

*F* *Ab* *Fm* *Dbm*

*FΔ* *Gb/C* *F°* *Bbm<sup>7</sup>*

*C* *Dbm* *Fo* *Ab Eb*

*Dm<sup>9</sup>* *BbΔ-5* *G<sup>13-5</sup>* *E<sup>7-9+5</sup>*

*C* *Fm* *Dm* *Fm*

*A<sup>13-9+11</sup>* *B<sup>7-9+5</sup>*

*Bbo* *Bbm*

*E/D* *D<sup>2</sup>/C*

*A* *G*

*F#m<sup>11</sup>* *B<sup>13+11</sup>*

*E* *F#m*

*Bm<sup>7</sup>* *E<sup>7-9-5</sup>* *AΔ<sup>9</sup>* *Gm<sup>7</sup>*

*A* *Fm* *A* *C*

*F#m<sup>7</sup>* *B<sup>7-9-5</sup>* *BbΔ-5* *Gb<sup>7+9+5</sup>*

*B* *Cm* *F* *Gm*

*FΔ* *G<sup>9+11</sup>* *Bbm<sup>7</sup>*

*C* *Dm* *Ab*

*C<sup>7sus4</sup>* *Gb<sup>6</sup>*

*F* *C on beat 4*

*Db*

# YOU CAN DO IT

ballad  
Paul Busby  
PRS

Eb pitch C $\Delta$

The main musical score consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time. It features a melodic line with triplets and a bass line with various chords. The chords are: C $\Delta$ , A $\flat$  $\Delta$ +11, F9+11, D $\flat$ 13-9+11, C $\Delta$ , D $\flat$ /G, C $\circ$  add B,D, Fm7/B $\flat$ , Am9, F $\Delta$ -5, D13-5, B7-9+5, E13-9+11, E7-9+5, B/A, A $\flat$ 2/G, C $\sharp$ m11, F $\sharp$ 13+11, F $\sharp$ m7/B, B7-9-5, E $\Delta$ 9/G $\sharp$ , Dm7/G, C $\sharp$ m7/F $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ 7-9-5, F $\Delta$ -5, D $\flat$ 7+9+5, C $\Delta$ , D9+11, Fm9, G7sus4, D $\flat$ 6/G.

solos

The solo section consists of five staves of music, each containing four measures of rhythmic patterns (diagonal lines) and chord changes. The chords are: C $\Delta$ , A $\flat$  $\Delta$ +11, F9+11, D $\flat$ 13-9+11, C $\Delta$ , D $\flat$ /G, C $\circ$  add B,D, Fm7/B $\flat$ , Am9, F $\Delta$ -5, D13-5, B7-9+5, E13-9+11, E7-9+5, B/A, A $\flat$ 2/G, C $\sharp$ m11, F $\sharp$ 13+11, F $\sharp$ m7/B, B7-9-5, E $\Delta$ 9/G $\sharp$ , Dm7/G, C $\sharp$ m7/F $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ 7-9-5, F $\Delta$ -5, D $\flat$ 7+9+5, C $\Delta$ , D9+11, Fm9, G7sus4, D $\flat$ 6/G.

last x cadenza on last chord, then DC al fine

Eb pitch

# YOU CAN DO IT

chords above  
scales in italics

$C^{\Delta}$   $A\flat^{\Delta+11}$   $F9+11$   $D\flat^{13-9+11}$   
*C* *Eb* *Cm,* *Abm*

$C^{\Delta}$   $D\flat/G$   $C^{\circ}$   $B\flat m7$   
*G* *Abm* *Co* *Eb*

$A m^9$   $F^{\Delta-5}$   $D^{13-5}$   $B7-9+5$   
*G* *Cm* *Am* *Cm*

$E^{13-9+11}$   $E7-9+5$   
*Fo* *Fm*

$B/A$   $A^2/G$   
*E* *D*

$D\flat m^{11}$   $F\sharp^{13+11}$   
*B* *C\sharp m*

$F\sharp m7$   $B7-9-5$   $E^{\Delta 9}$   $Dm7$   
*B* *Cm* *E* *C*

$D\flat m7$   $G\flat7-9-5$   $F^{\Delta-5}$   $D\flat7+9+5$   
*B* *Gm* *C* *Dm*

$C^{\Delta}$   $D9+11$   $Fm7$   
*G* *Am* *Eb*

$G7sus4$   $G\flat6/G$  on beat 4  
*C* *Ab*