

The combo gig is coming up! Here are our three main responsibilities (plus a bonus list!).

But first, here's usually what happens in a jazz combo. On any given tune, people play:

1. (optional) intro
 2. "Head" (melody) (sometimes twice if it's a short form like the blues)
 3. Most everyone improvises over the form
 4. "Head" again (twice, if it was twice the first time)
 5. outro/ending
-

Three (+more!) responsibilities:

1. Accompanying the melody and soloists ("comping")
 - a. De-mystifying the hieroglyphics
 - b. What IS hip? (with apologies to Tower of Power)
 - i. Voicings
 - ii. Rhythm guidelines...paralysis of choice!
 1. Lots of "ands", less "downbeats" (triplet mental subdivision, doo-dle-uh)
 2. Healthy mix of long and short notes
 3. Extra melody-like notes
 4. Let's write out a few sample rhythms
 - c. Technique
 - i. Thick, even handed
 - ii. We articulate, too! (dotted quarter and longer are held out, quarters and shorter are short/accented)
 - d. How do we think of voicings "on the fly?"
 - i. No magic bullets, but...
 - ii. Scales need to be automatic
 - iii. Look for patterns and easy half-step motions
2. Soloing/improvising
 - a. General Improvisation stuff:
 - i. Notes/Scales
 1. Beginning: Major pentatonic with a flat 3 (there are many scales!)
 2. Guide Tones
 - ii. Phrasing/style
 1. Countable phrases
 2. Articulation
 - b. Piano specific stuff:

- i. For now, RH melody and LH comp harmony
 - ii. Strive for, at least, guide tones with LH
 - iii. Two LH roles
 - 1. Play along with RH
 - 2. Play opposite of RH (like call and response)
 - 3. Ultimately, a mix
 - c. Transcribe a few licks
- 3. Melody
 - a. Know it!
 - i. At the very least, be able to sing it
 - ii. At best, be able to play it
 - iii. It will affect how you comp
- 4. Bonus List
 - a. Listen outside of rehearsals/performances!
 - i. **LIVE MUSIC** -- The Des Moines Big Band, Noce, CJC Jam Sessions, others!
 - ii. **Recordings** -- Herbie Hancock, Art Tatum, Bud Powell, Chick Corea, Wynton Kelly, Benny Green, Bill Evans, Thelonius Monk, Duke Ellington, Lennie Tristano, McCoy Tyner, Horace Silver, Keith Jarrett, Kenny Kirkland, Marcus Roberts, Oscar Peterson, Tommy Flanagan, Red Garland, Hal Galper, Gene Harris, Joe Zawinul, Ahmad Jamal, Lyle Mays...and many more! *Develop a favorite player or two!*
 - b. Listen **INSIDE** of rehearsals/performances!
 - i. Listen so well that you could, at any moment, sing back what other person in the group played
 - c. Further Resources:
 - i. The Jazz Piano Book by Mark Levine
 - ii. The Jazz Theory book by Mark Levine
 - iii. Voicings for Jazz Keyboard by Frank Mantooth
 - d. What's Next?
 - i. Transcribe (some of) Wynton Kelly's solo on "Freddie Freeloader" on the album Kind of Blue.
 - ii. Transcribe Red Garland. Other players are awesome, too, but sometimes a little note-ier than you might want on your first transcription.