



***THE
SOLOING
CONCEPTS***
OF John Patitucci

COURSE BOOK

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THE SOLOING CONCEPTS OF John Patitucci

Introduction

Bass solos. We all want to play them, right? And we probably all wish we were better at them, too!

In this course, with bass great John Patitucci, you'll learn how to step away from the 'root-centred-ness' of the usual bass player role and really explore melody. You'll learn how you can broaden your vocabulary by listening to the jazz greats like Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, and why relying on pre-arranged patterns and licks is a bad idea. Most importantly, once you've assimilated all this information, you'll be in a great place to start creating your own soloing vocabulary.

Spend some time exploring the video lessons in this course, and then use the TAB and notation from this workbook to help internalize John's approach to soloing.

Meet John Patitucci



A mainstay on the New York session scene, John Pattucci has worked with a huge array of artists in every genre imaginable. At the same time, he's renowned for having one of the most unique voices on both upright and electric bass. As a performer, John has played with jazz luminaries Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Dizzy Gillespie, icons of popular music including John Mayer, Joni Mitchell, Sting and Paul Simon, pioneers of Brazilian music Milton Nascimento, Joao Gilberto, Airtó Moriera and Flora Purim, and as a soloist with the LA Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 2002, John began teaching at The City College of New York and was a Professor of Jazz Studies there for ten years. He has also been involved with the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead program in Washington, D.C. and The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. In 2010, John began his involvement with the Berklee College of Music's Global Jazz Institute, spearheaded by pianist Danilo Pérez.

Lesson 01

Using Rhythmic Variation

In Lesson 01 we're going to see how John bends the rules of melody and rhythm to breathe life into his solos. We start by exploring the classic jazz standard Mr. P.C, which was written and recorded by John Coltrane in 1959 for his album Giant Steps. The song is named in tribute to the bass player Paul Chambers who had accompanied Coltrane for years.

The simple 12 bar blues changes make it a perfect vehicle for testing your ears and experimenting with different techniques that can add variation to the melody. In our first example, John walks through a chorus in D minor. Once we've determined the form, it's time to turn our attention to the melody.

Example 01 The Form

Video - 00:40

Example 01 The Form shows a 12-bar blues in D minor. The notation includes a bass staff with notes and a fretboard diagram below it. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm7, C/D, Dm7, Gm7, Dm7, C/D, Dm7. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the bass line.

Chords: Dm7, C/D, Dm7, Gm7, Dm7, C/D, Dm7

Fretboard Diagram (Bass Line):

0	5	7	8	5	7	4	5	6	7	7	8	9	8	0	7	7	8	5	0	4
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5

5	3	0	1	2	1	0	4	5	X	7	7	5	0	4	0	3	0	1	3
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 01 continued)

9 $B\flat 7$ $A7\flat 9$ $Dm7$ C/D $Dm7$

1 3 0 3 x 1 0 | 2 2 3 4 0 4 | 5 2 0 3 6 7 | 8 7 6

13 $Dm7$ C/D $Dm7$

1 3 0 3 x 1 0 | 2 2 3 4 0 4 | 5 2 0 3 6 7 | 8 7 6

17 $Gm7$ $Dm7$ C/D $Dm7$

1 3 0 3 x 1 0 | 2 2 3 4 0 4 | 5 2 0 3 6 7 | 8 7 6

21 $B\flat 7$ $A7\flat 9$ $Dm7$ C/D $Dm7$

1 3 0 3 x 1 0 | 2 2 3 4 0 4 | 5 2 0 3 6 7 | 8 7 6

Example 02 The Melody

Video - 01:38

$Dm7$ C/D $Dm7$

0 | 5 5 7 7 8 8 5 0 | 5 6 7 5 8 5 8 | 5 (5) 3 5 | 5

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 02 continued)

5

Gm7 Dm7 C/D Dm7

9

Bb7 A7b9 Dm7 C/D Dm7

Once you have the notes under your fingers you can start exploring different ways to transform the melody. In examples 03 and 04, John demonstrates how combining basic variations can give you a staggering number of melodic options and really get the ideas flowing.

Example 03

Video - 02:32

Dm7 C/D Dm7

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 03 continued)

5 Gm7 Dm7 C/D Dm7

9 Bb7 A7b9 Dm7 C/D Dm7

etc.

Example 04

Video - 03:55

Dm7 C/D

Dm7 Gm7 Dm7 C/D

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 04 continued)

8 **Dm7** **Bb7** **A7b9**

11 **Dm7** **C/D** **Dm7**

15 **C/D** **Dm7** **Gm7**

18 **Dm7** **C/D** **Dm7** **Bb7**

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 04 continued)

22 **A7^b9** **Dm7** **C/D**

24 **Dm7**

27 **C/D** **Dm7** **Gm7**

30 **Dm7** **C/D** **Dm7** **B^b7**

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 04 continued)

34

A7b9 Dm7 C/D

36

Dm7 C/D Dm7

You'll soon discover that the blues scale will satisfy the entire form of Mr P.C.

"Ultimately it gets to the point where you can just hear it," says John. "After you play a line over one chord, you know that you can do it again. Also, I can see the patterns on the instrument, and I can see that those notes fit with each chord."

Example 05 The Blues Scale

Video - 05:48

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 05 continued)

4

5 8 5 6 7 5 7 10 12 13 12 10 7 5 7 6 5 8 5

7

10 8 10 11 12 10 12 10 12 13 12 10 12 10 12 11 10 8 10

10

10 13 10 11 12 10 12 10 12 13 12 10 12 10 12 11 10 13 10

Lesson 02

How to Use Upper Chord Extensions

Bass playing as a rule is very focussed on the root notes of the chords. In this lesson, John demonstrates how to get away from the 'root-centred-ness' of our usual role by using the upper chord extensions, which is something that horn players do a lot. "Instead of getting bogged down in the lower partials of the chord, they'd be up in the 'colour notes' like the 9, the 11 and the 13," says John. "That makes a big difference to how you sound, being able to stay up in there and know where you are – but it requires a thorough knowledge of the neck and using your ear."

Example 01

Video - 01:23

(♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}}$) Dm

let ring ----|

let ring -----|

4

*-----|

T 7 8 9 8 9 0 8 7 10 9 12 9 10 7 0 8 7 10 7 8 9 0 5 7

T 7 8 7 10 8 9 8 7 10 9 8

B 8 7 10 0 8 7 10 0 8 7 10 0 5 7

*Played as straight eighth notes.

continued →

LESSON 2 (Ex. 01 continued)

7

Fretboard diagram for measures 7-9:

7	11	9	12	15	16	12	14	14	13	14	10	12	12
---	----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----

In example 02 we're going to play only on the upbeats. Remember that the basic pulse (where you tap your foot) is the downbeat. It can be a little tricky to get the hang of this feel. Watch your placement of the upbeat and make sure you're not rushing. Practice with a metronome or backing track until it feels in the pocket.

Example 02

Video - 01:51

($\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$) Dm

Fretboard diagram for measures 1-4:

8	7	10	9	12	15	16	12	16	12	9	10	14	9	10	7	6	9
---	---	----	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	----	----	---	----	---	---	---

4

Fretboard diagram for measures 5-8:

10	7	x	5	3	7	5	7	0	5	7	3	4	3	4	3	0	12	12	14	12	10
----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----

continued →

LESSON 2 (Ex. 02 continued)

Example 02 continued. The notation is in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first system (measures 7-9) features a melodic line with eighth notes and a triplet, and a fretboard diagram below with fingerings: 12, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5, 8, 7, 10, 9, 12, 0, 15, 16. The second system (measures 10-12) continues the melodic line with a triplet and a pull-off, and a fretboard diagram with fingerings: 19, 14, 15, 12, 12, 0, 15, 16, 12, 14, 14, X, 12, 11, 10, 9, 10, 7, 7.

In example 03 John emulates the subtle techniques that jazz saxophonists like Charlie Parker and Sonny Rollins would use to create swinging lines. Focus on transferring the details of their phrasing to the bass using slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Example 03

Video - 02:29

Example 03. The notation is in bass clef, 4/4 time. Above the staff is a triplet notation: $(\text{quarter note} = \text{triplet of eighth notes})$ with the chord symbol Dm. The melodic line consists of eighth notes with various accidentals (flats and naturals). The fretboard diagram below shows fingerings: 12, 11, 10, 9, 12, 11, 10, 9, 12, 11, 10, 9, 12, 11, 10, 9, 12, 9, 10, 7, 9, 7, 7, 9, 5, 7, 7, 0.

continued →

LESSON 2 (Ex. 03 continued)

4

8

Gm

9 10 7 8 7 10 10 13 12 10 13 14 17 14 15 12 13

6 5 3 5 5 3 X 5 0 7 8 5 0 7 4 0 5 6 7 0 9 10 12

Detailed description: This block contains two systems of musical notation. The first system starts at measure 4 and the second at measure 8. Both systems are in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first system includes a guitar-specific notation with a 'T' (thumb) and 'B' (bar) indicator. The second system includes a 'Gm' chord marking and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 9. The fretboard diagrams below each system show fingerings for the bass line, with numbers 0-12 for the first system and 9-17 for the second.

Using just the upper extensions of the chord and the Dorian scale, there are quite a few ways to colour the harmony. In example 04 John looks at some of the options you can create from a basic Dm7 and Gm7 voicing.

Example 04

Video - 02:56

Gm

10 13 12 10 14 17 21 17

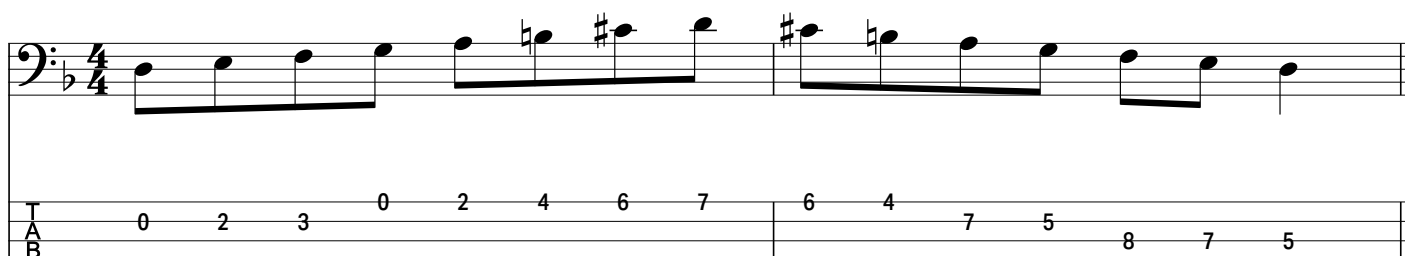
Detailed description: This block shows a single system of musical notation for Example 04. It is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. A 'Gm' chord marking is placed above the staff. The notation features a series of eighth notes followed by a triplet of eighth notes, with a slur over the final two notes. The fretboard diagram below shows fingerings for the bass line, with numbers 10, 13, 12, 10, 14, 17, 21, and 17.

LESSON 2 (continued)

Another great place to start when it comes to minor sounds is the melodic minor scale, which is the go-to tonic minor sound for jazz. If you check out the original John Coltrane solo on Mr PC you will find that it is mostly melodic minor on the tonic chord.

Example 05

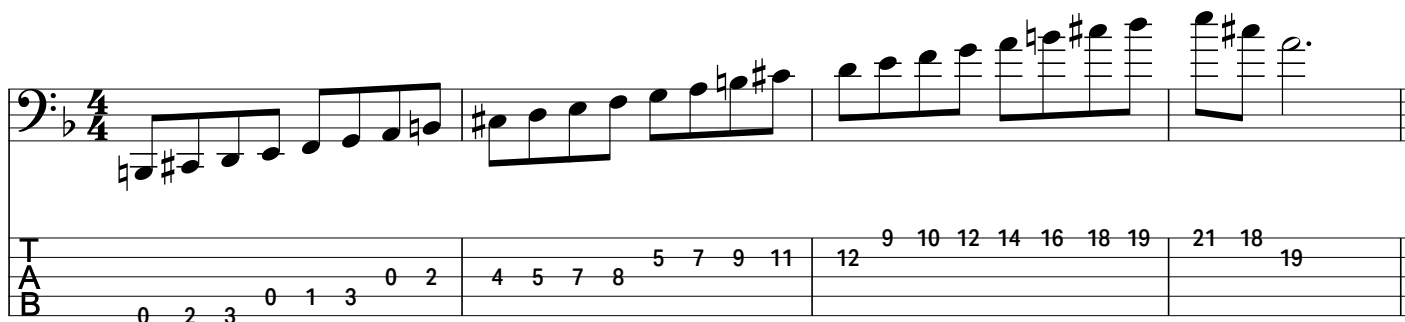
Video - 03:36



Example 05 shows a melodic line in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of two measures. The first measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The second measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with two strings labeled T (Top) and B (Bottom). The fret numbers for the first measure are 0, 2, 3, 0, 2, 4, 6, 7. The fret numbers for the second measure are 6, 4, 7, 5, 8, 7, 5.

Example 06

Video - 04:18



Example 06 shows a melodic line in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody consists of four measures. The first measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The second measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The third measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. The fourth measure contains the notes Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb. Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with two strings labeled T (Top) and B (Bottom). The fret numbers for the first measure are 0, 2, 3, 0, 1, 3, 0, 2. The fret numbers for the second measure are 4, 5, 7, 8, 5, 7, 9, 11. The fret numbers for the third measure are 12, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19. The fret numbers for the fourth measure are 21, 18, 19.

Lesson 03

The Genius of John Coltrane

From his time in the Miles Davis Quintet to his groundbreaking performances as a bandleader, John Coltrane played a major role in some of the most important recordings in jazz history. Revered for his mastery of the jazz language, 'Trane,' as he was known to his peers, is someone that everyone should look up to and study.

In this lesson, we're going to take a closer look at some of Coltrane's musical lines – the notes and rhythms – but also focus on transferring the details of his phrasing and articulations to the bass guitar.

Example 01

Video - 00:26

Dm

The musical notation for Example 01 is in D minor, 4/4 time. The melodic line consists of the following notes: D4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), F#5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), A5 (quarter), B5 (quarter), C6 (quarter), D6 (quarter). The fretboard diagram below the staff shows the positions of these notes on the strings: 7, 9, 6, 7, 6, 9, 8, 7, 8, 5, 5, 7.

Lesson 04

Bebop Vocabulary

One of the most defining eras of jazz was the bebop era. This is a time period in the 1940's when pioneers like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie innovated a playing style that included a more virtuosic approach. One of the advantages of transcribing bebop tunes is that you can get ideas from the great soloists on other instruments, and hear ideas that can become part of your own vocabulary.

Get familiar with some of the shapes and intervals that John demonstrates in this lesson and then start to allow your ear to govern your note choices, rather than just playing patterns. The idea is to get away from anything that sounds predictable – to keep the ideas flowing – and that requires a thorough knowledge of the neck.

Example 01

Video - 00:17

Em7 A7 Dmaj7

let ring -----

14 12 9 11 9 9 12 9 12 0 11 15 16 14 0

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 02

Video - 01:17

Example 02 musical notation (bass line, 4/4 time, key of D major). Chords: Em7, A7, Dmaj7. Fingering: 14 12 9 11 9 9 | 7 9 7 9 7 9 | 6 13 14 11 | 9 10 11 0 0. Includes "let ring -" instruction.

Example 03

Video - 02:22

Example 03 musical notation (bass line, 4/4 time, key of D major). Chords: Em7, F7, Bbmaj7, Eb7. Fingering: 17 15 14 | 14 12 14 | 13 14 17 14 12 | 14 12 14 12 14 | 11 14. Includes "let ring" instruction.

Example 04

Video - 03:06

Example 04 musical notation (bass line, 4/4 time, key of D major). Chords: Em7, A7, Dmaj7. Fingering: 15 16 12 11 14 12 9 12 | 10 11 10 11 10 6 | 8 9 8 7 6 9 8 7 6 0. Includes "let ring" instruction.

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 05

Video - 04:29

Em7 A7 Dmaj7

15 16 19 18 16 19 18 17 17 16 19 17 16 16 18 14

Lesson 05

Jazz Articulation

The most efficient way to learn phrasing and articulation from studying bebop themes is to really dig into the way that they're played. Especially if you can find small fragments that you can make variations of and turn into new vocabulary. In this lesson, we're going to dig deeper into some of the melodic techniques that we've covered throughout this course. There are a few things that are very typical to bebop that you can break down and use as a way to create your own licks.

"Eventually you won't even need to think about it," says John. "You'll know the shapes, you'll know the sounds and you'll know what works. And then wherever you're going you just have to know how it adjusts to the next chord."

Example 01

Video - 01:27

[illegible]

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 01 continued)

7 **Dm** **A7**

3

(2) 0 3 2 X 6 7 5 8 7 5 1 5 1 3 1 3 0

10 **Dm** **Harm.**

5 3 0 2 3 4 0 1 2 2 0 2 3 3 1 3 12

13 **Dm**

12 12 14 11 12 14 15 12 13 14 15 13 14 10 11 12 13 14 (14) 15 12

16

(12) 12 13 14 17 15 17 15 17 14 12 15 14 X 10 11 9

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 01 continued)

19

Dm

A7

(9) 10 9 12 10 9 X 11 12 10 13 12 10 13 17 13 15 13 15 0

22

Dm

17 15 0 14 15 16 0 12 14 14 12 14 15 15 13 15

LESSON 5 (continued)

Example 02

Video - 03:08

(♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}}$)
Dm

4

Gm

7

Dm

A7

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 02 continued)

10

Dm

17 15 X 14 15 16 0 13 14 14 12 14 15 15 13 15 0

13

12 12 14 11 12 14 15 12 13 14 15 13 14 15 11 12 13 14 15 12 14

16

Gm

13 14 12 13 14 17 15 17 15 17 12 15 12 14 12 15 14 X 10 12 11 9

19

Dm

A7

(9) 12 10 9 X 18 19 17 20 19 17 13 17 13 13 15 13 15 13 0

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 02 continued)

22

Dm

17 15 0 14 15 16 0 12 14 14 12 14

T A B

24

10 10 8 10 12 12 10 12 14 14 12 14

T A B

LESSON 5 (continued)

Example 03

Video - 04:26

($\text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩}$)

Dm

4

Gm

7

Dm

A7

Harm.

T
A
B

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

10

Dm

T 17 15 0 14 15 16 0 12 14 14 12 14 15 15 13 15 0

A 16

B

13

T 12 12 14 11 12 14 15 12 13 14 15 13 14 15 11 12 13 14 15 14 12

A

B

16

Gm

T (12) 13 14 18 15 17 15 12 15 14 12 15 14 0 15 11 14

A

B

19

Dm A7

T (14) 12 15 14 12 11 12 10 13 12 10 13 17 13 15 13 15 12 0

A

B

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

22

Dm

T 17 15 0 14 15 16 0 12 14 14 12 14 10 10 8 10
A
B

25

T 13 14 13 14 12 15 12 13 0 11 14 12 10 12 10 9 10 12 11 12 0
A
B

28

Gm

T 10 12 9 12 11 12 9 11 12 9 10 12 9 10 7 8 0 10 8 7
A
B

31

Dm A7

T 7 8 7 10 9 7 10 9 5 6 5 8 7 5 8 7 13 17 13 15 12 15 12 14 11 15
A
B

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

34 **Dm**

37

40 **Gm**

43 **Dm**

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

45 **A7**

T 12 13 14 12 14 15 12 13 17 14 15 12 16 12 13 12 15 10 12 10 0 13 14 12 10 12
B

47 **Dm**

T 12 10 12 12 10 8 10 7 8 0 9 7 10 8 7 10 8 9 12 9 12 12 12
B

50

T 10 12 9 0 9 12 12 12 10 12 9 12 8 0 13 14 17 15
B

53 **Gm** **Dm**

T 14 19 15 16 14 16 17 14 15 17 18 14 14 16 15 14 12 14 12 15 13 12 15
B

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

56

A7

59

Dm

62

65

Gm

Dm

17 19 17 15 14 17 15 14 13 17 13 15 12 15 12 X 17 18 14 15 16 15 14 16

12 X 13 14 13 14 12 14 14 12 20 21 19 17 16

(16) 14 17 15 14 20 21 19 17 16 14 18 19 17

15 17 15 14 14 12 14 12 10 12 10 9 12 11 9 10 9 8 10 7 8 9 7 0 10 8 12

continued →

LESSON 5 (Ex. 03 continued)

68

A7

71

Dm

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Course Summary

One of the key skills in becoming a great soloist is understanding the language of a particular song or style. And there's no better classroom in which to learn these core skills than in this course. Begin by replicating some of the ideas and patterns that John explores, and don't be afraid to integrate this material into your own solos. This will help make them a permanent part of your own musical vocabulary.

Strive to explore the upper extensions of chords, using techniques like hammer-ons, slides and pull-offs. Your bag of tricks is the go-to material that you can use as building blocks whenever you solo. And remember that the more you play, the easier it will become to create and learn solos by ear.

"Assimilating all this information is not something that happens overnight, but it doesn't have to be so mysterious either," says John. "It just takes some hard work. Start simple, and enjoy it!"



