Study Method – Repertoire and Improvisation

The goal of this method is to promote honest self-examination in the practice of learning jazz repertoire on the double bass. Several concepts are crucial to this method:

- The two major aspects of any study of improvisation are the concepts of **conception** and **execution**. Conception is defined as the ability to conceive something worth playing, and execution is defined as the ability to successfully execute the ideas conceived on the instrument. Acceptance of the relationship of these two central ideas is crucial to the success of the method.

- The true test of conception will be defined by the ability to sing ideas with regard to pitch, rhythm, and articulation. If a student cannot sing an idea in tune, in rhythm, and with a personal sense of phrasing and articulation, there is no point in moving on to the execution stage.

- The true test of execution is defined not by any artificial standard of "perfection", but rather by the ability of the student to produce a recorded version of the material in question that represents the highest level that the student is able to perform at that particular point in his or her musical growth. This requires both patience and honesty on the part of both student and instructor. Once a piece is recorded to the satisfaction of both parties, new material is chosen.

Preliminary Studies (before recording - from memory and with a metronome):

1) Sing the melody.
2) Sing the root motion of the chord changes.
3) Sing a complete bass line.
4) Sing the melody while playing a simple "one" or "two feel" bass line.
5) Sing the melody while playing a complete bass line.
6) Sing an improvised line over the changes.
7) Sing an improvised line while playing a simple "one" or "two feel" bass line.

Execution Studies – Recording (from memory and with a metronome):

1) Play the melody in the lower octave.
2) Play a "two-feel" bass line (optional).
3) Play a regular (inside) walking line or straight 8ths line.
4) Play a walking line that stretches the harmony a bit.
5) Play two-note shell voicings that represent the changes.
6) Play an improvised chorus that references the melody at regular intervals.
7) Play an improvised chorus that references the changes only.
8) Play the melody in the upper 8ve when possible/feasible.