

The primacy of the melody

About Andy Middleton's book "Melodic Improvising" - a new presentation

"I find that I play most melodically when I stop trying to be in control of what's happening musically and not let my feelings trick me into forcing an event, a lick or anything. I allow my 'time feel' to adjust and I try to let my ears dictate melodic lines that are appropriate to the style."

This brief reflection on the improvisational design of a melody line alone is worth buying this book, which the American saxophonist and composer Andy Middleton, who has been living and teaching in Vienna for many years, published in 2005 with Advance Music (Schott Verlag, Mainz) ver public. And although "Melodic Improvising" has been around for a few years, it is presented here again.

In 10 chapters he deals competently, practically and extensively with the topic of the melodic development of a solo in the context of jazz improvisation. Beginning with the analysis of a motif development as we know it from the theory of composition, through the specific stylistic peculiarities such as the chromatic approach and cadential resolution, for example in bebop, it also deals with interval-oriented playing or improvisation with rhythmic cells in a more contemporary modal environment . Indeed, Middleton considers and treats all aspects of this subject in a comprehensive yet well-structured manner. Everything has been thought of: from a list of the most important families of scales (parent scales) to audio samples with the enclosed CD (one would solve this differently today) and exemplary compositions of his own, which he uses to demonstrate the various aspects of melodic improvisation via the most diverse harmonic and rhythmic parameters. Jazz-historical cross-references and references, recommendations of exemplary recordings of all instruments used in jazz practice, listing and recommendations of relevant standards as well as further specialist literature (David Liebman, Ron Miller and many others) still show him today as a highly competent teacher and one of the most distinguished artistic personalities of his generation (See also his recordings for Intuition Records (Schott Music & Media) with Ralph Towner and Dave Holland, among others.

Certain things remain timeless in music. This book has stood the test of time and is as relevant today as it was 17 years ago. Warmest recommendation!

Prof. Heinrich von Kalnein (*University of Art Graz, Institute for Jazz*)