

Building Your Memory Using Loops

Below is a passage that Seamus Blake played over the bridge of Invitation. Throughout the line he uses a similar diatonic pattern however instead of playing the same pattern the entire time, he alters it with precise variations as the line rises which create a suspenseful elevation as the bridge carries on.

This passage can be found here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD5x4T2aehE> at the 4:00 mark

Transcribing and committing a line like this to memory may seem challenging at first because there is a lot involved in these 18 bars, however, there are some simple steps you can take in order to assure that you will be able to get from the beginning to the end without fail every time.

Step 1: Make a conscious effort to avoid writing anything down until you have memorized it. This is one of the most challenging but rewarding parts about transcribing. Memorizing first guarantees internalization.

Step 2: Break the line down into digestible material. By looping small, memorizable parts of the line, you are guaranteed effective practice when it comes to playing parts of the line with 100% accuracy. If you have trouble hearing some of the notes or rhythms, use computer software like 'Transcribe' or 'The Amazing Slow Downer'

-Lets start with the first 2 measures:

23 -Once you have the notes AND the rhythms solid, move on to the next two measures:

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-It is important to note that memorizing the rhythms and what beat the notes you are playing fall on dramatically increases your ability to play the segment accurately.

Step 3: Take the small pieces you memorize and put them together to make a loop of a larger piece of memorized material. Repeat this loop slowly in time until its comfortable and easy to play.

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Step 4: Build a new piece of 'larger' material by piecing together two more small segments.

-Look at the next part of the passage at measure 5 of the bridge. Create a loop for those 2 measures:

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-Again, repeat this until it feels natural and then move on to isolating the next two measures:

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33 -Now repeat step 3 with these two segments to create a new larger loop for yourself:



Step 5: Piece large loops together to make an even larger loop.

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By now it should be relatively clear which steps you should take to complete your memorization of this passage. The main challenge with memorization/transcription is organizing the material you are working on into smaller and easily understandable pieces of information that you can put together and use in a meaningful way. Creating simple loops is a very useful way to unlock your potential and greatly increase your ability to remember large amounts of material in less time.