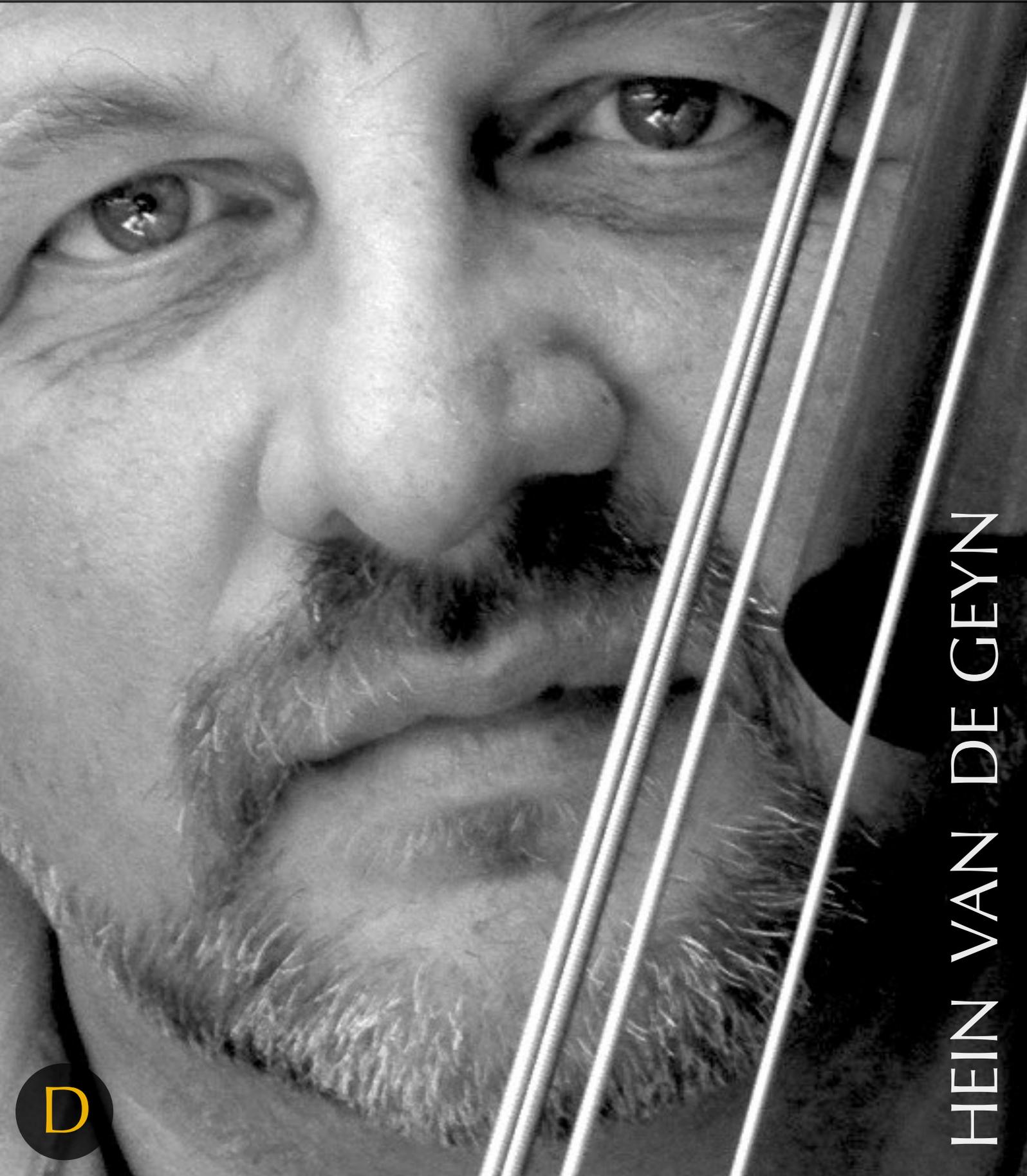


# PRACTISING



HEIN VAN DE GEYN

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# Practising

**Hein Van de Geyn**

Hein Van de Geyn / Forms

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# 1

## Practising as part of learning

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*“You learn to play by playing”*

To learn how to play jazz needs to be seen twofold: we learn by playing - we learn by practising. We all know the guys that just “did” it: started playing and developed to a nice level, seemingly effortless. This underlines the axiom that we can learn to play by just doing it. The strong element that plays a role in this mechanism is the fact that as improvisers, we can choose what we play. If the ear is not ready for an altered scale, if the body is not ready for double-time phrases, we can simply avoid these and play something that sounds and feels natural to us. Playing straight-ahead jazz can be as easy as playing soccer with your friends: you just do it, it gets better by doing it more and more.

Perhaps a prerequisite is that fact that you can play the instrument at least on some kind of level, but that’s it really.

Reading might be an important tool as well. It will make you able to play with other people relatively easy, and it will give you the ability to think music in terms of notes as well - not only sounds that you try to grab.

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It is important to realise that this booklet is meant for musicians that are active as players. People that play their instrument on a certain level; can play a melody, can play a few chorusses over a standard. The subjects might resonate with players that struggle, like so many, to find an entrance into the world of real practising.

I cannot stress enough the importance of learning to play by playing. In the playing process a lot of fundamental abilities come to the surface: keeping time, listening, playing in tune, dynamics, blending. These important elements can be easily overlooked in practising.

The beauty of the above can be that playing might lead to a strong desire to start practising. A desire that comes from the fact you bump into details that are an obstacle. These can be instrumental, they can be harmonic, they might be rhythmic. Practising harmony and phrases so you become better in manoeuvring through certain harmonic progressions; practising your instrument, so the stuff you are playing comes out better or in a wider range; practising rhythm, so you feel more confident rhythmically and start building on top of the obvious.

Once you are a player, on whatever level, it is important to realise that practising and playing need to be in harmony with each other in order for you to grow as a musician. Firstly, once there is a strong inner imagination of how the playing sounds you will benefit so much more from your practising. Secondly, the material you practise needs to be put into context, into the living, breathing, passionate environment of playing in a band. Only then will it become part of your active vocabulary.

# 2

## Isolating the issues

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To realise the enormous mountain of things there are to practise can be overwhelming, to say the least. It can in fact make the evolving player sit at home, full of good intentions, but unable to start taking one cow by the horns, since there is a whole herd staring him in the face. So we often go back to practising the same stuff again; playing along with a few CDs or get so demotivated that we don't practise at all. Turning around in circles: being frustrated with oneself; always saying: "tomorrow I will really start".

It is essential that one realises that the only way to bring order into the chaos is to try to isolate the issues at hand as precisely and concise as possible. Try to see what it is you want to practise, however small an issue, get rid of all superfluous stuff around it and solidify the exercise. You do not have to write down all the notes of the exercise, perhaps just fingerings, or the essential idea. What is important though is to create a piece of paper (digital or not) with this information on it and give the exercise a specific name and/or number. This way it becomes part of your ever growing library of exercises. The exercise being clear and unequivocal.

I give you a few examples:

I want to simply explore the different modes and experience the relationship between them. I simply construct an exercise that goes through the modes that interest me, per key. I play the exercise in a musical way, I put the metronome on 1 and 3, I play mezzo piano, I don't swing, I don't tap my foot, don't nod my head. Inside I experience the notes as a legato and neutral line. I listen, I enjoy, I think about what I am doing. I do it slow, so slow there is no panic, my mind can keep up, my ear has the time to hear. I have no desire to get it done quickly, I just surrender to the task, enjoying the process.

The notes would look like this:

The image displays 18 musical staves, organized into two columns of nine. Each staff contains a sequence of notes, likely representing different modes or exercises for a bass instrument. The notes are written in a simple, clean style on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The first column shows various modes, and the second column shows more complex or chromatic variations of similar modes.

But to write that all down in 12 keys is non-essential. What I actually need is the list of the relevant modes that I want to learn and compare; that's it. I know I will do it in 12 keys or 8 keys (more about that later). So the exercise looks like this now:

<b>064</b>	<b>mode connections</b>	
- - - - -		
- lydian #5	- melodic minor	- locrian
- lydian	- harmonic minor	- minor mixo-lydian
- major	- dorian	- half diminished
- mixo-lydian	- aeolian	- altered
- mixo-lydian #4	- phrygian	- octatonic

But this is *it* though. When I decide to do exercise 064, I do it.

I do the whole thing, I do it in one tempo, I do not panic, I make no mistakes, I smile and apply my motto: “café, soleil, banane” - meaning: coffee, sun, smile. This represents the fact that I am grateful being allowed doing what I love to do most: practise music, my instrument; the sun is shining; the rest of the world is busy with mails, phone, computers and admin and saying: “yes boss, no boss” - and I am allowed to spend my whole day on this - on this fantastic process of growing as a musician and as an instrumentalist. And I do it in a way that is non-frustrating, non intimidating, non-competitive. It gives me a smile on my face to be in this space - the “banane” as the French say. The sun is shining, a cup of coffee on the table. I feel blessed.

Practising



etc. etc.

026 upper structure triads (major)



on C7ALT: Ab and Gb triad



- both shapes
- descend / ascend
- start on all points

## Practising

## Practising

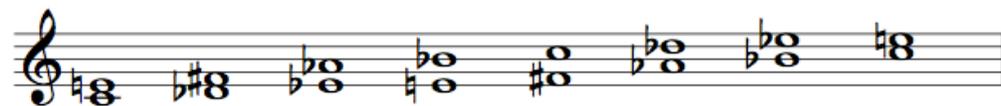
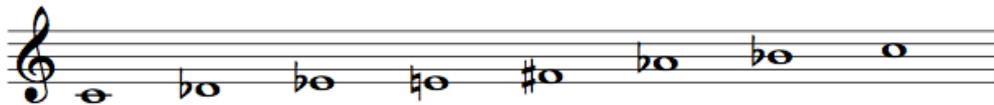
# 3

## Mastery

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## Practising

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074

altered in fourths

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- up-up
- up-down
- down-up
- down-down

3rd - 4th - 4th - b5th - b5th - 4th - 4th - 3rd

# 4

## Log book

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## Practising

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	jun 03	jun 04	jun 05	jun 06	jun 07	jun 08	jun 09	jun 10	jun 11	jun 12
ex. 001	52	54	58	58	mama's birthday	56	60	62	62	64
ex. 002	42	44	44	X		42	48	50	54	58
ex. 003	60 (8)	64 (8)	68 (8)	70 (8)		66	66	64	70	74
ex. 006	54	56	X	X	mama's birthday	54	60	66	X	64
ex. 007	half 42	half 45	half 50	2nd half 44		2nd half 50	48	52	52	X
ex. 012	54	58	X	X	mom's birthday	52	56	60	64	68
ex. 014	72	72	78	X		X	74	74	80	82
ex. 064	66	X	X	X	walking R.B.	X	64	68	70	70
walking R.B.	half 90	half 96	2nd half 90	X		90	92	X	X	94
ex. 075	X	54	54	54	mom's birthday	X	X	52	56	56
solo P.C.	1-8: 52	1-8: 58	9-16: 50	9-16: 52		X	50	X	54	54
ex. 082	X	X	66	68		68	X	74	72	76

## Practising

# 5

## Methods

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## Practising

## Practising

*about the author:*

HEIN VAN DE GEYN (The Netherlands - 1956) has played Jazz professionally ever since he finished his studies at the conservatories of Tilburg and Rotterdam. He lived in the US for several years, working with John Abercrombie, Larry Schneider, Tony Bennett, Larry Vuckovich and many others.

After his return to Europe he has been establishing himself as one of the most sought after bass players in Europe. Hein's playing can be heard on some 100 recordings. He has been the bass player with Philip Catherine since 1985 and recorded 9 CD's with him. In 1987 he toured and recorded in Japan with Chet Baker. Hein was also the bassist on the last concert of Chet Baker in Rotterdam in 1988. This was also the year Hein started to play with, and arrange for Dee Dee Bridgewater, with whom he has been performing at most of the important festivals and stages in Europe (Montreux, Antibes, Vienne, Berlin, Northsea, London ...) as well as in the USA (Carnegie Hall, Village Vanguard, Montreal, Newport Festival...) and Japan (Keystone Corner, Blue Note). After three albums and numerous tours and performances Hein and Dee Dee's paths separated in 1996 since Hein wanted to pursue his own career as a leader and producer.

In July 1990 Hein made the first album under his own name, a duo with Lee Konitz. Several tours followed. In 1994 he created his group BASELINE with John Abercrombie and Joe LaBarbara. This group recorded several albums and toured all over Europe.

1994 was also the year in which Hein co-founded the jazz label Challenge Records, for which he produced a number of successful recordings. Four of them received an Edison (Dutch Grammy) for best Jazz recording of the year.

In 1996 Hein became the head of the bass section in the Jazz department of the royal conservatory in The Hague. In this year he also was awarded the prestigious Prins Bernhard Foundation Music Prize. He received this prize for his importance in the development of European Jazz as well as for his stimulating role as mentor and producer of many young musicians in Holland.

In 1998 Hein received the Bird Award of the Northsea Jazz Festival. In this year he was also elected as "Best European Acoustic Bass Player" by a referendum of the Belgian radios RTBF and VRT.

During a sabbatical period spent in South Africa in 2001/2002 Hein started writing his "Comprehensive Bass Method". This extensive method on bass playing (950 pages) became available in 2007 and is slowly becoming the standard work for the double bass worldwide.

From 2008 to 2010 Hein was the artistic manager of the Rotterdam Jazz Academy and was leading this internationally orientated school with great flair and enthusiasm.

In 2010 Hein decided to basically stop his travelling career as a performing bassist and moved with his family to South Africa to run a guest house, and dedicate his life to writing and education. He is a lecturer at the university of Cape Town (UCT).

Hein has performed with many artists over the years. To name a few: Chet Baker - Freddie Hubbard - Roy Hargrove - Woody Shaw - Kenny Wheeler - Tom Harrell - Nat Adderley - Abbey Lincoln - Meredith d'Ambrosio - Marlena Shaw - Tony Bennett - Mark Murphy - Jack DeJohnette - Ed Thigpen - Joe Labarbera - Elliot Zigmund - Peter Erskine - Idris Muhammad - Billy Hart - John Abercrombie - Tal Farlow - Larry Coryell - Dave Pike - Toots Thielemans - Hank Jones - Tommy Flanagan - Michel Petrucciani - Enrico Pieranunzi - Barry Harris - Horace Silver - Junior Mance - Walter Davis Jr. - Tete Montoliu - Horace Parlan - Jacki Byard - Slide Hampton - Bob Brookmeyer - Joe Lovano - Lee Konitz - Johnny Griffin - Benny Golson - Red Holloway - Charlie Rouse - Bobby Watson - Lew Tabackin - Gary Bartz - Archie Shepp - Rick Margitza - Charlie Mariano...

*all the subjects in this series are covered in “Comprehensive Bass Method”  
available - world wide - through: [www.comprehensivebassmethod.com](http://www.comprehensivebassmethod.com)*





# FORMS



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# MOLL DUR



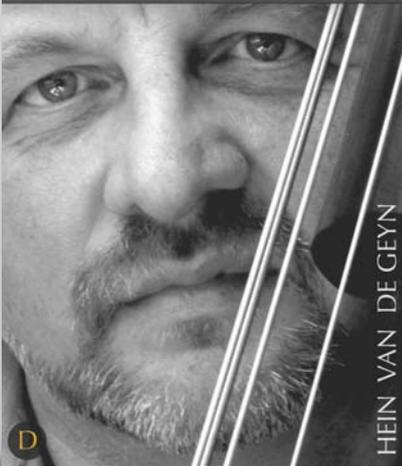
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# ODD METERS



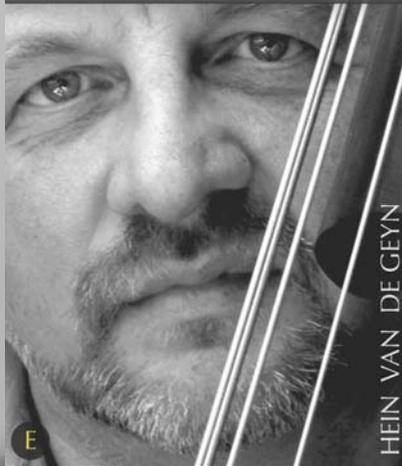
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# IN-OUT THUMB



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# WORK ON A TUNE



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# DOMINANTS



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# DIMINISHED



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# SLASH CHORDS



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