

*You have to pull it off in the end with a climax, or the audience won't get it, and there won't have been a point.*

### **Practicing Climaxes**

You must reach climaxes to get a response from an audience. There are several ways to turn up the heat at the end of solos: You could, for example, play sixteenth-note lines, or use rhythmic chord attacks; but whatever means you choose, a certain amount of drama is called for. Audiences react to strong climaxes towards the solos' conclusions, and they respond to this kind of decisive control. It tells them, *There you have it: The end.*

Most of the time, an improvisation is not mainly comprised of things never before stated. The improvisation is a series of spontaneous decisions as to what, from the great many things you could say, you choose to say at that given moment and what you choose to leave out. Thus, you need in your back pocket much more to say on a tune than you would ever perform in a single performance. This takes practice, judgment, time and experience to develop.

The classic climax is usually reached about two-thirds through the solo (the *golden section*). Withhold your forces at the beginning. It is not enough to play eighth-note lines either, so don't overuse them, and they should be placed squarely on the beat most of the time—neither floating over the beat nor behind the time. Be able to swing by yourself without relying on the bassist and the drummer to do it for you (can't be done, anyway).

*If you only have a couple of convincing choruses to offer, play them and get out: It will have been enough.*

You can practice each of the below devices systematically. Run many choruses in which you concentrate on one device at a time:

1. Place your eighth-notes in the center of the time. Then if you choose to lay back in performance, you know it's your choice, rather than a lack of control.
2. Playing Rhythmic Chord Punctuations.
3. Play Sixteenth-Note Lines placed in the center of the time.
4. Practice the above in sequence:

First Chorus: Play the Head.

Second Chorus: Paraphrase It.

Third Chorus: Play eighth-Note Lines.

Fourth Chorus: Play Sixteenth-Note Lines.

Fifth Chorus: Play strong rhythmic Chord Punctuations throughout the entire chorus (This will get the attention of your drummer—and your audience).

The above is but one solution. Try many different combinations, but each should lead to a strong and unambiguous climax. In the absence of that, what's the point? Tell your story; make your point; get out. Once you are in performance, forget any of these specifics and concentrate on the global climatic flow of the solo, and how it is being reacted to by the rhythm section—and especially the audience.

You can't choose your audience, and no matter what its makeup, you still have to come at them with confidence and attitude—regardless of the circumstance. You need also to pull it off in the end with a climax, or they won't get it, and there won't have been a point to the performance.