

SELECTING THE CELTIC BACKUP SECTION THAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU

At ZF 2008, for the first time, Celtic Backup will be offered in two sections suited to differing levels of facility. Celtic Backup I is for students without substantial prior experience at improvised accompaniment and teaches this fundamental skill. Celtic Backup II is for students who have already taken Vol. I, and who wish to develop more sophisticated skills at improvising counterpoint and variation, and at learning tunes on the fly.

The following outlines describe the prerequisite skills and the goals typically expected in Vol. I and Vol. II. Based upon these outlines, students are encouraged to make a realistic self-appraisal in deciding if CB is for them. However, there will also be time during the Monday class for demonstration, feedback, and any advisable re-assignment. Below you will find the fundamental skill sets which participants in the two sections of Celtic Backup should already grasp, and those they can expect to develop.

Celtic Backup I prerequisite skills:

- Facility with single-note playing in all positions in the keys of C, G, D, A, and E (and the modes thereof)
- Ability to play back simple 3- to 4-note melodies, countermelodies, and bass lines, upon hearing and in the context of tunes-playing

Goals:

- Develop ability to hear, and improvise chords to, implied harmonies of Celtic tunes
- Develop ability to improvise and employ drones, bass lines, and simple 2- and 3-note countermelodies in a harmonically and stylistically appropriate manner.

Celtic Backup II prerequisite skills:

- Physical dexterity sufficient to play single-note Celtic tune-types at performance tempi (reels at half-note = 60-80 bpm)

- Ability to play back demonstrated melodies, primary chords (I, IV, V, bVII), and arpeggios, upon hearing and in the context of tunes-playing

Goals:

- Develop ability to hear more complex or modal chord changes and their substitutions
- Develop ability to improvise and employ complex contrapuntal parts a la Irvine, Lunny, Finn
- Develop ability to employ melodic variation in accompaniment and tune-playing
- Sharpen ability to employ cross- and polyrhythms
- Sharpen ability to learn tunes by ear and on-the-fly, at session tempos