

IMPROVISATION EXERCISES TO TARGET CHORD TONES

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These exercises are developed to target primary chords (1-3-5-7). We pick a chord tones to target and approach that note with scale motion.

Below 1-3-5-7 of a C major chord is targeted. We use scale motion ascending and descending

Notice that the primary chord tone fall on the downbeat. The scale must approach the primary note on the beat before.

C^{MAJ7}

1 3 5 7 7 5 3

Now the same thing must be done for Dominant 7 chords. (1-3-5-b7)

C⁷

1 3 5 7 7 5 3

Now minor chords (1-b3-5-b7)

C^{mi7}

1 3 5 7 7 5 3

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Finally: Minor 7 flat5 (1-b3-b5-b7). This is the most difficult exercise because we don't usually understand what scale to play over this chord. The 3 previous chords are borrowed from a Major scale.

CMaj7=C major scale

C7=5th mode of F major scale

Cmi7=2nd mode of a Bb major scale

Minor 7b5 chords are borrowed from a Harmonic Minor scale. Harmonic Minor is a major scale with b3 & b6



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Just like Cmi7 is the 2nd mode from Bb major. Cmi7b5 is the 2nd mode of Bb harmonic minor. See Bb harmonic minor scale written above

C_{MIN}7^(b5)

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We also come across Dominant 7 chords with altered tensions. Example C7b9b13.

For this exercise we are going to use F7b9b13 instead of a C7b9b13. This is because F7b9b13 is related to the Cmi7b5 chord and use the same Bb harmonic minor scale.

$F7(\flat 9)$

³³ Look at the notes in the exercise above and compare it to the Bb harmonic minor scale on the previous page. You will see all the notes are the same. So for Dom7b9b13 chords, use a harmonic minor scale from the 4th degree (F7b9b13=Bb harmonic minor)

We will now apply our exercises to the blues. The **root** of the chord will be targeted and will be approached by ascending scale motion. *Note: the scale motion always uses the notes from the chord/scale that is leading to*

C^7 F^7 C^7 C^7

41 F^7 F^7 C^7 $A^7(\flat 9)$ D harmonic minor

46 Dm^7 G^7 C^7 G^7

Same exercise, but now approaching the 3rd's of the chord

C⁷ F⁷ C⁷ C⁷

54 F⁷ F⁷ C⁷ A⁷(^{b9})_(^{b13}) D Harmonic Minor

59 D^{MIN}⁷ G⁷ C⁷ G⁷

After all the exercises have been practiced, one can now try the exercise on a blues, but now randomly mix up the target notes.

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These exercises can be applied to any tunes besides the blues. One must first practice the basic exercises on a tune before mixing of the exercises.

One cannot improvise on a tune unless they can hear the harmony. These studies are designed to develop the hear of any chord progression.

Here is the same concept applied to the tune **Autumn Leaves**

CMI⁷ F⁷ B^bMAJ⁷ E^bMA⁷(^{#11}) A^{MI}N⁷(^{b5}) D⁷(^{b9}/_{b13}) GMI⁷ G⁷(^{b9}/_{b13})

To the 3rds (G harmonic Minor)

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CMI⁷ F⁷ B^bMAJ⁷ E^bMA⁷(^{#11}) A^{MI}N⁷(^{b5}) D⁷(^{b9}/_{b13}) GMI⁷ GMI⁷

To the 7ths (G harmonic Minor)

89

A^{MI}N⁷(^{b5}) D⁷(^{b9}/_{b13}) GMI⁷ GMI⁷ CMI⁷ F⁷ B^bMAJ⁷ E^bMA⁷(^{#11})

Mixing them up

97

A^{MI}N⁷(^{b5}) D⁷(^{b9}/_{b13}) GMI⁷ C⁷ FMI⁷ B^b7 E^bMA⁷(^{#11}) A^{MI}N⁷(^{b5}) D⁷(^{b9}/_{b13}) GMI⁷ G⁷(^{b9}/_{b13})

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