

Jazz Lesson 5

Technique

1. Natural Minor Scale

- a. Every major scale has a corresponding minor scale that shares the same key signature. For example the corresponding natural minor scale that is associated with the C major scale is A minor. The A natural minor scale has no sharps or flats, thus you simply play all white notes, starting on A and ending on A to generate you're a natural minor scale. The corresponding natural minor of a major scale is always a minor third down from the root of the major scale. A is a minor third down from C. So the natural minor scale for C is Anatural minor, (see below).



We can also change a major scale into a natural minor scale. In order to build a natural minor scale from a major scale we make the 3rd, 6th and 7th flat from our major scale, (see below).



Using the C major scale the 3rd, 6th and 7th will be the notes E, A and B. After we flat these degrees we now have, Eb, Ab and Bb. We now have our C natural minor scale, (see below).



In order to determine the major key that C natural minor shares we can ask ourselves what major key has three flats? Or, since we know the natural minor key is always a minor third down from the major key, we can simply count up a minor third to find the major key. Either way we get the major key of Eb, (see below).

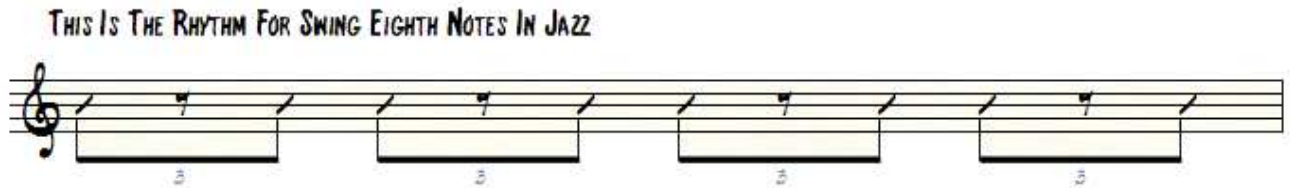


All the notes from the Eb major scale and the C natural minor scale are the same because they use the same key signature yet they both produce extremely different sounds because of their starting and ending points. The natural minor scales are going to be important to know when dealing with minor jazz harmonies that will appear in future lessons.

2. *Swing Eighth notes and the rhythms of jazz*

- a. One of the great things about jazz is the uplifting feeling that it produces in the soul due to the swing feeling that the rhythmic concepts produce. Learning how to swing is probably in the top 3 hardest things to learn in order to play jazz. The piece composed by the great Duke Ellington stated it best, “It Don’t Mean A Thing If It Ain’t Got That Swing.” Probably the most true statement about jazz. If you’re playing isn’t swinging then you aren’t playing jazz. We will start by learning how to swing our eighth notes so that we can

begin to master the rhythmic feeling that must be applied to all of our jazz playing. In classical and jazz eighth notes are written the same, yet when playing jazz you would apply a different rhythmic feel to the swung eighth notes. The swung eighth notes are felt as the first beat of a triplet and the last beat of a triplet, (see below).



So when we see eighth notes in jazz we are actually playing them with a triplet feel style, yet they are simply considered eighth notes in jazz, (see below).



The best way to start out learning the swing eighth note feel is to practice your scales with this feeling using the provided videos. After a couple practice sessions playing eighth notes with this specific triplet note feel will feel natural.

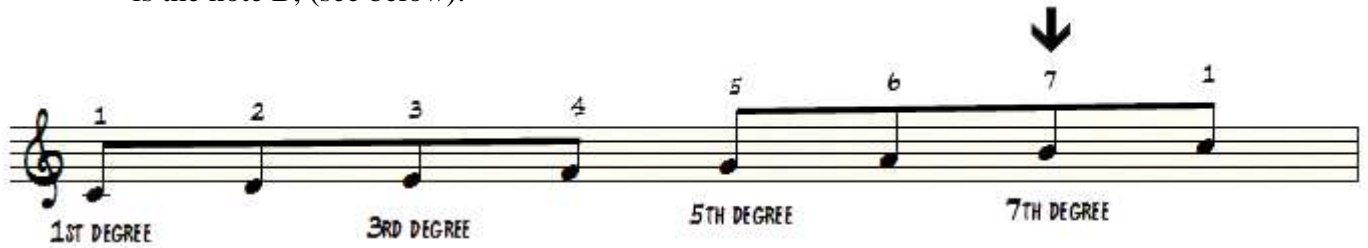
Harmony & Theory

1. Jazz Chord beginner Series Part 1 - Major 7th Chords

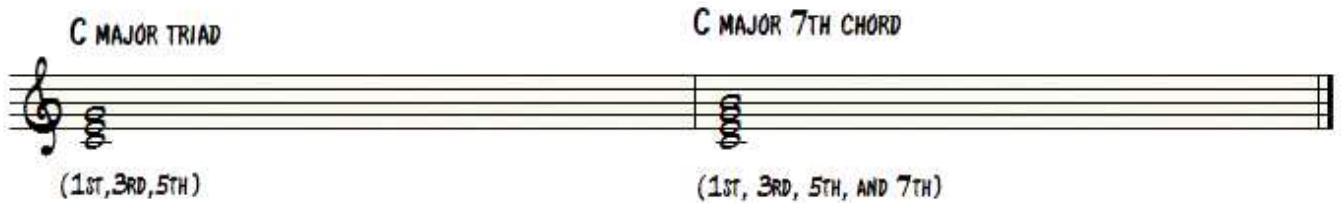
a. Intro

We've talked about using three notes to build a chord called a **Triad**. Now we're going to add one more note so that we are playing chords with four notes instead of three. Adding this fourth note begins to take us deep into Jazz Harmony and Theory. The particular chord we are going to talk about is the **Major 7th** chord. Let's build a Cmaj7th chord right now. When we built a C major triad we used the 1st degree of the scale, (the note C), the 3rd degree of the scale, (the note E), and the 5th degree of the scale, (the note G). When we build our C maj 7th chord, we are simply going to add the 7th degree of our major scale to

our C major triad. If we count up our C major scale we find that the 7th degree of the scale is the note B, (see below).

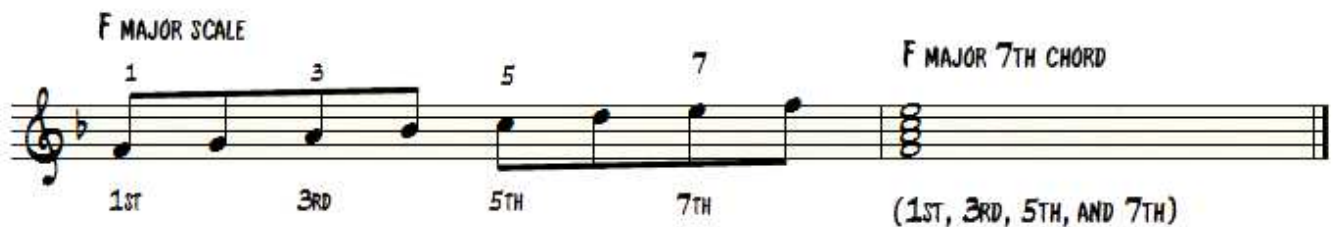


Let's add the seventh degree of our C major scale, (note B), to the top of our C major triad to form our C maj7th chord. We now have the notes C, E, G, B, or the 1st degree, 3rd degree, 5th degree, and the 7th degree, of the major scale, (see below).



In this case the word major in C major 7th refers to the type of 7th we are adding to the chord. We are adding the major 7th degree of our C major scale to the chord.

Just like our triads, when we build our major 7th chords in other keys, we use the corresponding major scales to build our chord. So in order to build a F major 7th chord, we would use the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degree of the F major scale in order to find our chord, (see below).



b. Intervals within a Major 7th chord

- i. Let's take a look at the last interval in our major 7th chord. We already learned the first two intervals within our major triad. To review from the root to the 3rd is a major 3rd; from the 3rd to the 5th is a minor 3rd. Let's find out the interval between the 5th and 7th now. Will use our half step method to count up. In this case our starting note is G, the 5th of a C maj7 chord. From G to A is a whole step and from A to B is another whole step, (see below).



What does this give us a major third; (refer back to our interval chart if you cannot remember). We have a major third at the very top to complete our Major 7th chord. So our intervals within our major chord are as follows. Major 3rd, minor 3rd, major 3rd, (see below).

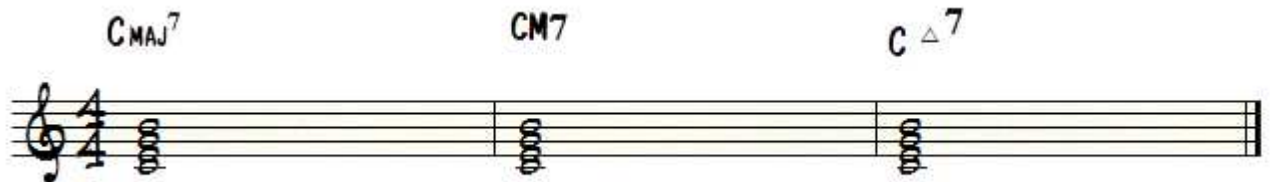


Another good interval to know is the distance between the root and the major 7th which creates the interval of a major 7th. This is easy because the name of the 7th is actually the name of the interval, for good reason. You will see different types of intervals involving the 7th as we get into different types of chords later on.

c. How they're written

- i. Major 7th chords can be written in a number of different ways, more so than major or minor triads. In a major 7th chord the word major is referring to the type of 7th that is on the top of the chord. We already know a chord is major if stated by one letter for instance the chord "C" or "F". When we see a C with a maj7, we can

assume we are using a C triad with a major 7th on top. Without specifying a major 7th on the chord you would see “C7. This is going to be a different type of 7 on top because we have not specified that it is a major 7th. This will be explained in further detail in the upcoming lessons as we get into different types of chords. Look at the following ways below you will see major 7th written in charts, (see below).



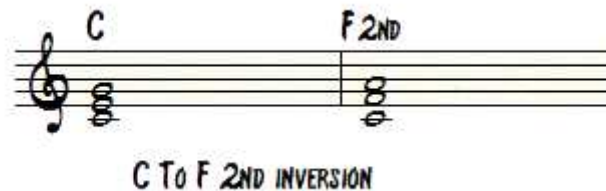
2. Voice Leading Triads

- a. Voicing leading is when harmonies move the smallest distance possible to arrive at their next note. This allows for smooth and uninterrupted movements of all harmonies within a chord. For example, let's say we take the chords C, F, Amin, G and C. We could play all these chords in root position. This will sound okay, but the jumps when moving the chords are going to be very noticeable to the ear. Almost like hiccups. Let's voice lead these chords so each of the chord tones move the least distance possible to get to another chord tone. Let's look at the change between C to F. First we must look at the chord tones of the chord we are on, being C, so we have the notes C, E, and G. Now we must know what chord tones we are going to in order to play a F major triad. The notes within an F triad are F, A, and C. Now at this point we do not necessarily have to play a root position F triad. We can play 1st inversion or 2nd inversion. Whichever structure allows us the least movement from C to F is the structure we will chose. Let's look at the starting tones of C individually now and figure out where we should move them. The root of C is the note C, so which of the three chord tones of F, (F, A, or C) is going to be closest to move to? Well since an F major chord already has the note C in it, we don't have to move our starting note at all. Our C will simply be repeated as we change the other notes. Now let's look at the next chord tone movement within our C chord. This happens to be our 3rd, or the note E. Since we already know the note C from within our F chord notes, (F, A, and C) is taken, we now are left with two options, being the notes F or A. Is the note F or A closest to our note E in our C chord. The note F is closest! This means we will move the note E

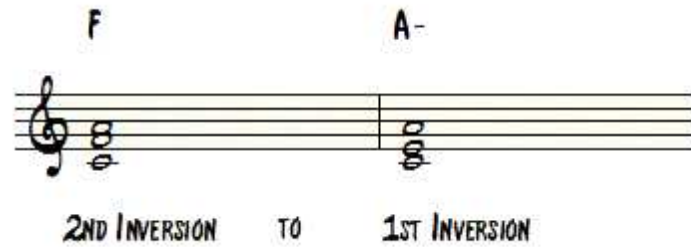
from our C chord to the note F from our F chord. We now have established two out of 3 movements of our voice leading. (TIP: Remember triads only have 3 notes, so there will only be 3 movements. When we begin to voice lead our major 7th chords there will be 4 notes so you will need to account for 4 note movements.) The last note left in our C chord is the 5th, or the note G, and since we only have one remaining note to choose from our F chord, (the note A), we can deduct that the G from our C chord must move to the note A from our F chord. Let's play the individual movements before we play the full chord. C stays the same, E moves to F and G moves to A, (see below) .



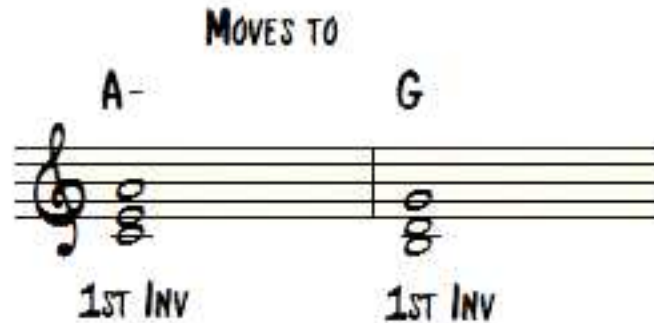
Now let's play them as full chords with the movements of the different harmonies to hear the voice leading, (see below).



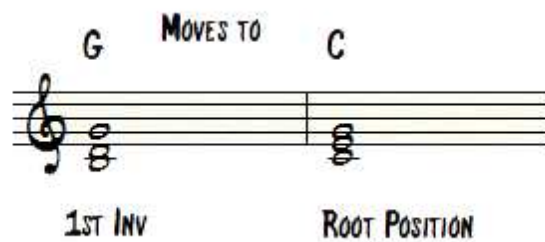
- b. What I've just explained is the systematic approach in order for you to understand what is going on. The easier way to explain voice leading within chords is simply moving a chord to the nearest inversion of the next chord. In the previous example we moved our C root position chord to our F 2nd inversion chord. You want your movements to always be to the closest inversion of the next chord. That is why it is very important to know all your inversions and the notes in them without thinking. This will allow for very easy voice leading movements with your LH. Let's look at the last chords within the series. The chords sequence I initially said was C, F, Amin, G, C. We know our root position C is moving to our 2nd inversion of F. Now we must move to Amin, so what is the closest Amin inversion to our 2nd inversion F chord, (the chord we are currently on). Amin 1st inversion would be closest! (See below).



This gives us the least amount of movement within all three of our chord voices. Now let's move to our closest G inversion, which is 1st inversion again, (see below).



Finally we move back to our C root position, (see below).



Play this chord sequence while adding your LH bass notes and compare it to the non voice leading pattern to hear the difference, (see below).



Repertoire

1. Forms & Structures

- a. Jazz pieces take on different structures musicians call **Forms**. Each section of the form is denoted by using letters from the alphabet starting with A. When the section changes we use the next new letter in the alphabet, in this case the letter B. This is usually called “The Bridge.” When sections repeat we simply use the same letter. Each section takes on a specific number of bars. You can think of the form of a piece as a simple roadmap. When musicians talk about the form of a jazz standard you might hear them say , “It’s AABA, or AABC for example.” This is simply talking about the different sections of the piece. Can you hear the different sections in Body And Soul? In a jazz standard the form is played once with the melody, then a soloist will solo over the form multiple times, then the melody is played once more over the form and the piece is ended. Here are suggested tunes for viewing.

1. Body and Soul AABA
2. Pent Up House AB

2. Listen for the Major7th chords and how they sound on any jazz album.

- a. Simply listen to How High The Moon while following along with the chords and see if you can hear the difference between the major 7th chords and all the other types of chords. Anything you notice? Try listening at least three –six times.

HOW HIGH THE MOON

The musical score for "How High The Moon" is presented in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of eight staves of music, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29 indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. Chord progressions are written above the notes on each staff. The chords are: FMAJ7, GMAJ7, F-7, Bb7, EbMAJ7, A-7, D7, G-7, A-7b5, D7, GMAJ7, A-7, D7, B-7, E7, A-7, D7, GMAJ7, GMAJ7, G-7, C7, FMAJ7, FMAJ7, F-7, Bb7, EbMAJ7, A-7, D7, GMAJ7, A-7, D7, B-7, E7, A-7, D7, GMAJ7, A-7, D7.

3. *Begin learning Duke Ellington's "Take The "A" Train" using the 6 Step Method. We will begin with step 1 only.*

i. Here are all the steps to keep them fresh in your mind.

1. RH Melody
2. LH Bass Notes
3. RH Melody and LH Bass Notes
4. Chords in both hands
5. RH Chords LH Bass notes
6. RH Melody and LH chords

ii. Take the A-Train RH Melody - The melody is obviously a very important part of any piece. It is the beautiful line that floats above all the harmony. Practicing the melodies to songs in different styles and tempos will help you get inside the harmony better and memorize the melody faster, (see below).

