

Jazz Lesson 9

Technique

1. Arpeggiation of Minor 7th, Dominant 7th and Major7th

- a. In this exercise (figure 9.1) we will take our previous 7th chord arpeggiation exercise, but instead of practicing all of the 7th chords separately we will practice each minor, major, and dominant 7th chord starting from the same note. This will help us learn each chord individually and be able to play them at will.

Figure 9.1

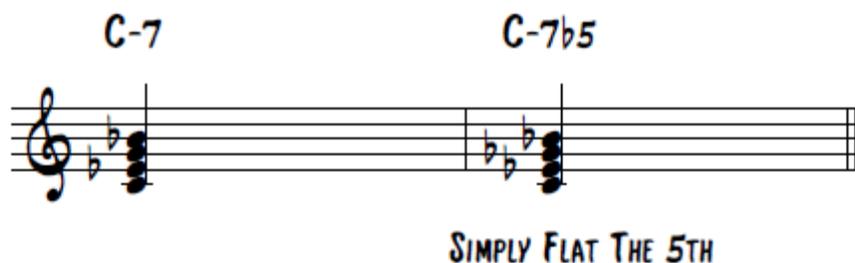


Harmony & Theory

1. Minor 7th b5 Chords

- a. The -7b5 chord takes the regular minor 7th chord one step further. In order to build a -7b5 chord we flat the 5th in our minor 7th chord. Say we take a regular C-7 chord. In order to make this a C-7b5 chord, we take the 5th of the chord which is G and move it down a half step to Gb, (see figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2



You'll begin to see the -7b5 chord come up when studying diatonic harmony, the next theory section. This chord will also be important when we talk about minor harmony later on.

2. Beginner Diatonic harmony Series Part 1

- a. Now that we know our three essential jazz chords we can begin to discuss **diatonic harmony**. Diatonic harmony refers to chords that come from the same key; this means that we are using one major scale to build chords. When we built our first major triad and major 7th chord we used notes from our C major scale. When we built our dominant 7th chord and minor7th chord we didn't talk about the major scale again, we just changed the notes. I'm going to show you how we can build different types of chords using just one major scale. For this example we will use the C major scale.

In order to build a Cmajor7 chord we used the 1st degree, the 3rd degree the 5th degree and the 7th degree of the major scale, (see figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3



Let's build another chord using notes from the C major scale but instead of starting on the 1st degree of the scale let's start on the 2nd degree of the scale, being the note D. When we built the Cmajor7th chord, we started with C and used every other note from the C major scale. Let's use this same process to build a chord starting on the 2nd degree of the scale, note D. If we start with the note D and use every other note from our C major scale and stack them, we now have the notes D, F, A, and C, from bottom to top, (see figure 9.4).

Figure 9.4

START ON D NOW

F A C

(ii-7)
D-7

BUILT OFF THE 2ND DEGREE OF THE SCALE

Does this chord look like a chord you have practiced previously? It should. It is a Dmin7th chord. Dmin7th is a diatonic chord to the key of C because notes from the C major scale were used to build it. In jazz we analyze chords by using roman numerals because the numerals relate to the key we are in. For example in the key of C, we call our Cmajor7th chord, I major7 because it is built from the 1st degree of the C major scale and it is a major 7th chord. Dmin7th starts from the 2nd degree of the C major scale so we call this a ii min 7th chord because it starts on the 2nd degree of the scale and it is a minor 7th chord.

Let's build another chord starting on the 3rd degree of the C major scale, or the note E. We will start with E and build the chord by playing every other note giving us the notes, E, G, B, D. This builds an E-7th, or iii min 7th in the key of C, (see figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5

E G B D

(iii-7)
E-7

START ON E NOW (3RD)

TIP: The numerals for these chords may change depending upon what key you're in. In the key of C, C is the 1st degree of the scale, but in the key of Bb, C serves as the 2nd degree of the Bb scale.

If we continue to build chords from each degree of the scale we end up having built 7 chords total before returning to C again, the top note of our major scale, (see figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6

IMAJ7	ii-7	iii-7	IVMAJ7	V7	vi-7	vii-7 ^{b5}	IMAJ7
CMAJ7	D-7	E-7	FMAJ7	G7	A-7	B-7 ^{b5}	CMAJ7

These 7 chords are all diatonic to the key of C meaning they use notes from the C major scale. If we look at the numerals for the diatonic chord sequence we have this, (see figure 9.7).

Figure 9.7

IMAJ7	ii-7	iii-7	IVMAJ7	V7	vi-7	vii-7 ^{b5}	IMAJ7
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This numeral pattern will stay consistent no matter what key you are in because we are always using notes from the major scale to build the chords. With this being said if we are in the key of Bb, the I chord will always be a I major7th, the ii chord will always be a ii min 7th and so on, (see figure 9.8).

Figure 9.8

IMAJ7	ii-7	iii-7	IVMAJ7	V7	vi-7	vii-7 ^{b5}	IMAJ7
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Certain scales used for soloing that correspond with each diatonic chord within a key. When we know the numeral analysis for a chord in a piece, we then know what notes we can use in our RH to solo with! Knowing the perfect harmonic notes to solo with is very helpful, especially when we are trying to create beautiful music.

3. Voice Leading 7th chords with inversions

- a. Voice leading 7th chords follows the same process as voice leading triads except we have one additional note to account for. Let's voice-lead a Cmaj7th chord to an Fmaj7th chord. What is the closest inversion of the Fmaj7th to our root position Cmaj7th chord? By looking at the chords below we can clearly see moving to 2nd inversion of our Fmaj7th chord is going to use the least movement possible of all of our chord tones, (see figure 9.9).

Figure 9.9

The diagram illustrates the voice leading between Cmaj7 and Fmaj7. It shows four chord positions on a single staff:

- CMAJ⁷** (Root Position): C4, E4, G4, Bb4
- FMAJ⁷** (Root Position): F4, A4, C5, Eb5
- CMAJ⁷** (Root Position): C4, E4, G4, Bb4
- FMAJ⁷** (1st Inversion): F4, C5, Eb5, A4

Annotations below the staff indicate: "F AND E ARE COMMON TONES SO THEY STAY" (pointing to the F and E notes in the first and second chords) and "ROOT POSITION" and "1ST INVERSION" (pointing to the respective chord positions).

Repertoire

1. Step 6 – Melody RH, LH plays bass notes and Chords for “Take The A Train”

- a. This is our last step in learning atune. Playing the a RH melody and LH bass notes/chords sounds a lot harder than it is. As you begin to learn the chords well, this step will become very easy for you. We approach this is by alternating between bass notes and chords. This will build our comfort level of switching back and forth with our LH, (see figure 9.10).

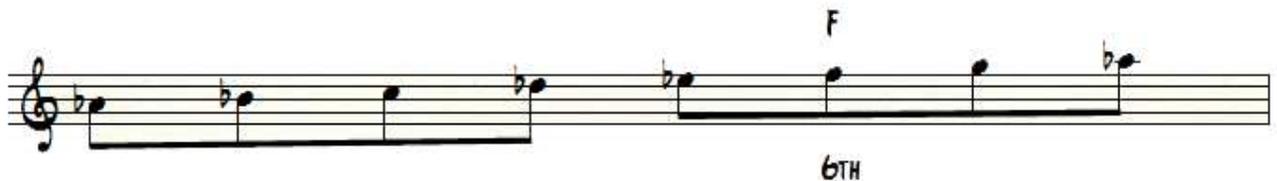
Figure 9.10

The notation shows a four-measure phrase. The right hand (RH) plays the melody: C4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Eb5 (quarter), G5 (quarter), F5 (quarter), E5 (quarter), D5 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). The left hand (LH) plays bass notes and chords: C4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Eb5 (quarter), F4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Eb5 (quarter), F4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), Eb5 (quarter), F4 (quarter), C5 (quarter).

2. How to analyze chord changes “All The Things You Are”

- a. This piece is perfect for learning how to analyze chords because most of the chords are diatonic to the 3 different keys the tune is in. When analyzing a piece we start by looking at the key signature to let us know what key we are starting in. TIP: The key may change throughout the piece so you have to be on the lookout for chords that aren't apart of your original 7 diatonic chords. In this case we start in the key of Ab because there are 4 flats. We know 4 flats come from our Ab major scale. Let's look at our first chord, Fmin7. How would we analyze this chord? Well to start let's see if the note F is in the Ab major scale, (see figure 9.11).

Figure 9.11



F happens to be the 6th degree of the scale. We know from our diatonic numeral pattern that every chord built from the 6th degree of the scale has to be minor. The F chord is an F-7th chord so now we know this is the vi-7 of Ab. If the F chord was a different chord quality such as dominant or major, then we would know the chord was coming from a different key because the 6th degree of the Ab major scale has to be vi-7. We now write vi-7 above our F-7 to analyze the chord. Continue to analyze the first 6 chords using the diatonic chords beginning on Ab in the chart below, (see figure 9.12).

Figure 9.12

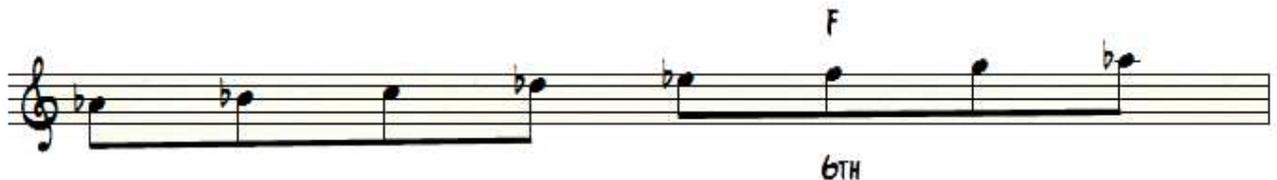
A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The staff shows the first eight diatonic chords in the Ab major scale, each with its chord symbol above and its Roman numeral analysis below. The chords and their analyses are:

- I MAJ7: Ab MAJ7
- II-7: Bb-7
- III-7: C-7
- IV MAJ7: Db MAJ7
- V7: Eb7
- VI-7: F-7
- VII-7b5: G-7b5
- I MAJ7: Ab MAJ7

3. Steps to analyzing a chord change

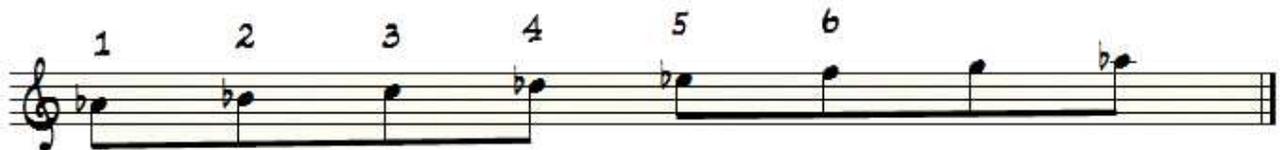
- a. The first step to analyzing a chord change is to determine what key the song is in. When we analyzed “All The Things You Are”, you determined that the first chord was F-7th. From there we determined that the root F was in our Ab major scale, (see figure 9.13)

Figure 9.13



- b. Determine what degree of the scale the root of the chord is. In this case we determined that the note F was the 6th degree of the Ab major scale by simply counting up the Ab major scale, (see figure 9.14).

Figure 9.14



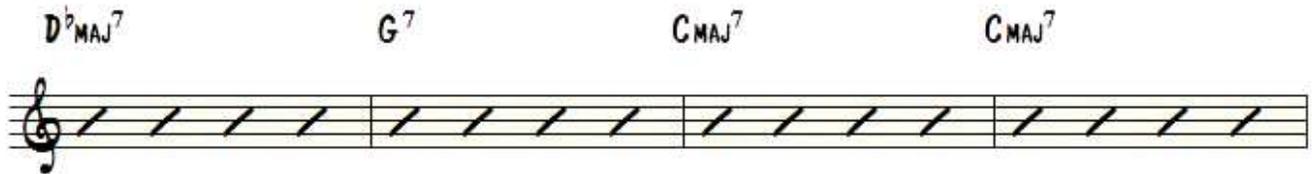
- c. Determine if the chord on the chart matches the diatonic numeral quality it should be in that key. In this case the 6th degree of the scale should be a min7th chord, and in fact the F chord is an Fmin7th chord. Perfect match! If the chord does not match then it is most likely coming from a different key.

4. Key Changes within pieces.

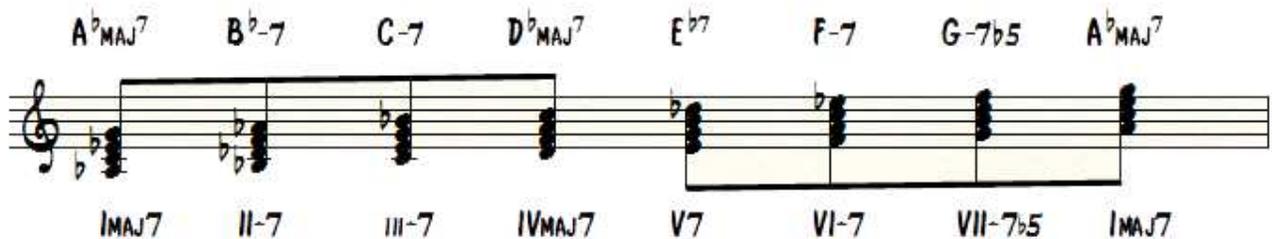
- a. Lots of the time you will see chords move into a different key as the composer felt like a key change would add something different to the piece. Sometimes it is hard to tell when

this happens but let me try and help you get started with knowing the difference. Let's go to measure 6 in "All The Things You Are" where chord change is G7, (see figure 9.15).

Figure 9.15

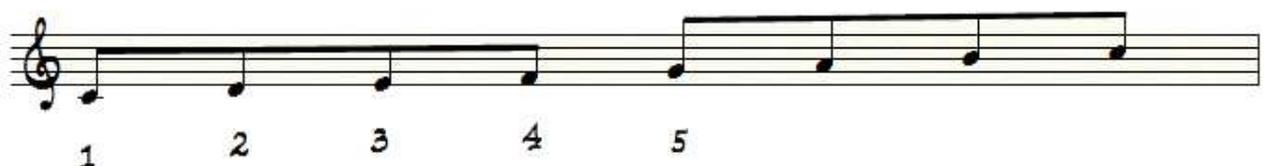


Let's follow the steps we just went over in order to figure out if there's a key change. G is in the A^b major scale and it is the 7th degree of the scale. We know the chord built off the 7th degree of the scale should be a -7^b5, but, in this case we have a G dominant7. These do not match! This means the G7 has to be from a different key besides A^b major, (see figure 9.15).



When attempting to decipher the key, look ahead to the next chord which sometimes gives us a clue. The chord after G7 in "All the things you are" is Cmaj7th. Usually in pieces when there is a key change you will see the I chord quickly appear to center the piece in the new key. Could Cmajor7th be our new I maj 7th chord? Let's check. If C maj 7th is our new key center, we would be using chords from the C major scale, this means G7 might be from the key of C. Let's use our steps to check...G certainly does happen to be in the C major scale, and it is the 5th degree of the scale, (see figure 9.17).

Figure 9.17



When we look at our diatonic numeral chart (figure 9.18) we see that the chord built on the 5th degree of the scale has to be dominant, and in fact, our G7 is dominant!

Figure 9.18

I MAJ7	II-7	III-7	IV MAJ7	V7	VI-7	VII-7 ^b 5	I MAJ7
C MAJ ⁷	D-7	E-7	F MAJ ⁷	G ⁷	A-7	B-7 ^b 5	C MAJ ⁷

We now know the G7 chord is the V7 in our new key of C. To remind ourselves that the key has changed on the G7 chord we write C and put a circle around it to state there is a new key. Finally we analyze G7 by writing a V7 on top of it and a I maj 7th over the top of the C maj 7th chord.

5. *Beginner Improvisation Series Part 1*

1. **Intro**-When listening to great musicians solo, it might seem like you'll never be able to get to their level. As I begin to explain the process it becomes quite easy. The first step to improvising is knowing that your solo and ideas will always stem from the harmonies of the chords. When someone is playing a solo, they are simply connecting certain harmonies of the chords together so it sounds like a fluid motion.
2. **Improv Overview**- There are two improvisation approaches we will begin to work on. The first is improvising with a band, (or the provided tracks). Now, as strange as it may seem this is actually going to be easier than improvising by yourself. Now why's that you ask? When you play with bass and drums they are doing a lot to support you. The bass is holding down the roots, while the drummer is keeping the time for you. When you are improvising by yourself, (solo piano), you are responsible to keep your own rhythm and know all of the root movement! This can get a little overwhelming at first, but with some clearly guided practice techniques I will show you it will become easier. We will be studying both ways to improvise, by yourself or with other musicians.

3. **The First Step - Chord Tones** - You are already learning all the notes to the chords so this should be easy! Working on arpeggios of the chord tones will greatly help you begin to solo as we move into some improvisation exercises in the upcoming lessons. We want to begin experimenting over each type of chord by themselves and begin to sequence these chords. Look at some examples chord tones being used over major 7th, dominant 7th, and minor7th chords. (see figure 9.19)

Figure 9.19

The figure displays three musical staves, each representing a different chord type. Each staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff is labeled 'CMAJ7' and shows an arpeggio of the major 7th chord (C-E-G-B). The second staff is labeled 'C7' and shows an arpeggio of the dominant 7th chord (C-E-G-Bb). The third staff is labeled 'C-7' and shows an arpeggio of the minor 7th chord (C-Eb-G-Bb). Each arpeggio is played over a four-measure phrase, with the notes of the chord being the primary focus of the exercise.