



JAZZ PIANO SCHOOL

Learning Freedom

Lesson 21

Jazz Lesson 21

Technique

1. Jazz Exercise using Half Steps #1

- a. The following exercises were designed to use half step approaches in one phrase. Practice these exercises in all keys. (see figure 21.1 and 21.2)

Figure 21.1



Harmony & Theory

1. Approach Notes

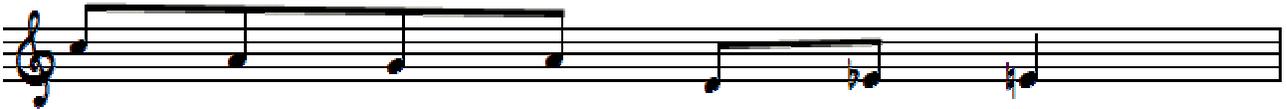
- a. Approach notes are the building blocks to mastering the bebop language. Approach notes lead into chord tones. The bebop language emphasizes chord tones on downbeats. Playing a solo where chord tones only occur on downbeats sounds boring, as would a solo that only uses the bebop scale. This is where approach notes help create color and excitement.
- b. Approach notes connect chord tones together in a way that solidifies the harmony. Add creative rhythmic and melodic concepts to approach notes and you have some great bebop material. There are a number of ways to approach each of the four chord tones. We're going to analyze these different options and how to effectively utilize each one. We will use the chord changes to the standard "Autumn Leaves" to practice approach notes. We will cover half step below approach notes in this lesson.

2. Half Step Approach

- a. **Half Step Below**—To use the half step below approach you will approach a chord tone on a down beat from a half step below. Let's use Cmaj7 as an example chord. The chord tones (1,3,5,7) for CMaj7 are C, E, G, and B. (see figure 21.3)

Or you can end a phrase using an approach note. (See figure 21.7)

Figure 21.7



b. Changing Chord Quality –When the chord quality changes, the approach notes will also change. A C7 chord has the following chord tones: C, E, G, and Bb whereas a CMaj7 chord has a B natural and not a Bb. The half-step below approach notes are the same for the first three chord tones of a C7 and CMaj7 chord, but the approach note for Bb is A. (see figure 21.8)

Figure 21.8



Vocab & Repertoire

2. Solo Piano Series- Part 5 RH Textures & Bass Lines

a. RH Components

i. *Textures* – When playing solo piano, using different textures is a great way to keep your playing fresh and creative. Textures can be combined to create different sounds. If you only play single note melodies when improvising, your solos will sound boring. Look at the list of textures and begin incorporating these techniques into your playing.

1. *Octaves* – Rather than playing single note lines, add an octave to your line so you have two voices. An octave is a powerful interval for building and creating a strong presence. (see figure 21.9)

Figure 21.9



2. *Octaves with LH Chords* – Playing simultaneous octaves in your left and right hand will create a full sound. This technique works best in medium swing pieces because the listener can clearly hear the octaves. (see figure 21.10)

Figure 21.10

Figure 21.10 shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The top staff has three measures labeled 'D-7', 'G7', and 'CMAJ7'. The bottom staff has three measures corresponding to the top staff, each containing a chord. The first measure of the top staff has a melody of eighth notes: D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The first measure of the bottom staff has a chord of D-7. The second measure of the top staff has a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The second measure of the bottom staff has a chord of G7. The third measure of the top staff has a melody of eighth notes: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4. The third measure of the bottom staff has a chord of CMAJ7. The notes in the top staff are written as pairs of eighth notes, one on the staff and one an octave below, representing octaves.

3. *Single note Lines with LH Chords* – Similar to above technique, you can use single note melody lines in your RH while your LH mimics the RH hand rhythms and plays chords. (see figure 21.11)

Figure 21.11

The musical notation for Figure 21.11 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a single-note melody line. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains chords. Above the staves, the chords are labeled: D-7, G7, and CMAJ7. The melody in the right hand consists of eighth and quarter notes, while the left hand plays block chords in a similar rhythmic pattern.

4. *RH Melody, jumps down to play chords while LH plays bass notes* –This texture gives the impression that you have more than two hands. This technique is most effective when there is rest in the melody. After you have played the melody line with your RH it jumps down to a lower register (around middle C), to play chords while your LH plays bass notes. This can create a sound that makes the audience think you have a full band accompanying your playing. (see figure 21.12)

Figure 21.12

The musical notation for Figure 21.12 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and shows a melody line that starts in a higher register and then jumps down to a lower register (around middle C) to play chords. The bottom staff is in bass clef and shows bass notes. Above the staves, the chords are labeled: D-7, G7, and CMAJ7. The right hand plays a melody of quarter notes, then rests, then plays chords in a lower register. The left hand plays bass notes in a simple pattern.

5. *RH Fills in between the melody* – A fill is a very short phrase that is played during rest. RH fills are a great addition to a melody. Don't let the fill

distract the listener from the melody. And don't forget to come in with the melody after you play a fill! (see figure 21.13)

Figure 21.13

The musical notation for Figure 21.13 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and contains a melody. The bottom staff is in bass clef and contains a bass line. Above the first measure, the text 'D-7 MELODY' is written. Above the second measure, the text 'G7 FILL' is written. Above the third measure, the text 'CMAJ7 MELODY' is written. The melody in the first measure consists of four quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, and G4. The bass line in the first measure consists of a single quarter note: D3. In the second measure, the melody consists of a sixteenth-note triplet: G4, A4, B4, followed by a quarter note: C5. The bass line consists of a single quarter note: G2. In the third measure, the melody consists of four quarter notes: D4, E4, F4, and G4. The bass line consists of a single quarter note: C3.

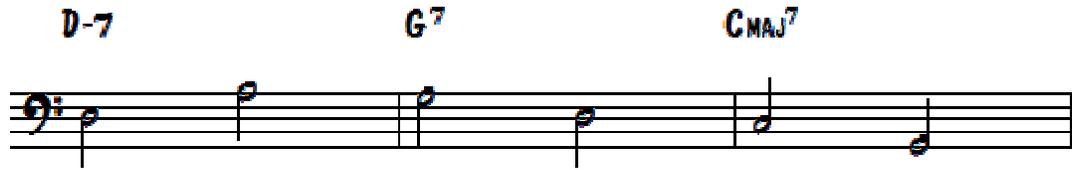
1. *Bass Lines Part 1* –At this point, we've only worked on playing roots in the LH. We want to be able to play a note on every beat of each measure. The first step to creating a bass line is to add one more note within the measure besides the root. In our example, there will be one chord per measure therefore the root will be played on beat 1 and the new note will be played on beat 3. The first two options we have for the new note on beat 3 is either the root an octave above or the root an octave below. (see figures 21.14-21.15)

Figure 21.14

The musical notation for Figure 21.14 consists of a single staff in bass clef. Above the first measure, the text 'D-7' is written. Above the second measure, the text 'G7' is written. Above the third measure, the text 'CMAJ7' is written. The bass line in the first measure consists of a quarter note: D3. In the second measure, the bass line consists of a quarter note: G2. In the third measure, the bass line consists of a quarter note: C3.

The third option is to play the fifth of the chord on beat 3

Figure 21.15



Either of these options work great and the choice is up to you. In the next lesson I will show you how to fill beats 2 and 4 with two new notes.

2. Intermediate Improvisation Series Part 5 – Using approach notes and the dominant bebop scale in your solos

a. **Half Step Approaches In Improvisation** – The half step below approach is primarily used on up-beats. This allows us to approach a chord tone that is on a downbeat.

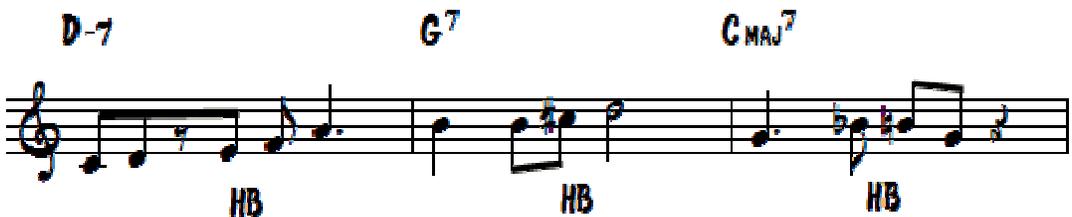
i. *Beat 1* - Here are three examples of a half step below approach on the upbeat of beat 1. (see figure 21.16)

Figure 21.16



Beat 2 - Here are three examples of a half step below approach on the upbeat of beat 2. (See figure 21.17)

Figure 21.17



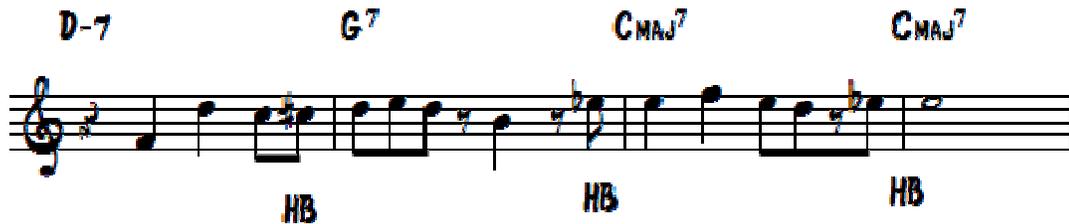
- ii. *Beat 3-* Here are three examples of a half step below approach on the upbeat of beat 3. (see figure 21.18)

Figure 21.18



- iii. *Beat 4-* Here are three examples of a half step below approach on the upbeat of beat 4. (see figure 21.19)

Figure 21.19



Be creative when using the half step below approach. It sounds great and allows you to resolve to chord tones easily.

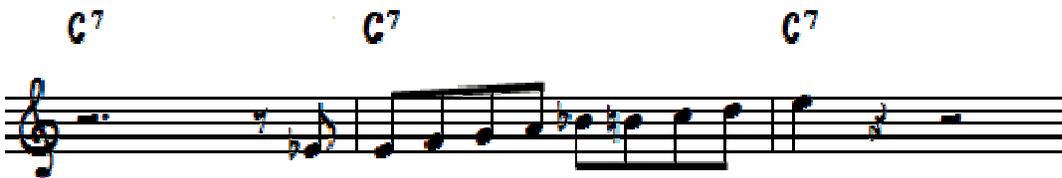
b. **Bebop Scale with approaches** – Approach notes can be used to lead into different chord tones of the bebop scale. Approach notes can be used at the beginning of a bebop scale, to pivot in the middle of the scale, or to end the scale. Look at these examples of combining approach notes with the bebop scale.

i. *Starting the bebop scale* (see figure 21.20 and 21.21)

Figure 21.20



Figure 21.21



ii. *Pivot in the middle*(see figure 21.22-21.23)

Figure 21.22



Figure 21.23



iii. *Ending the scale*(see figure 21.24-21.25)

Figure 21.24



Figure 21.25



- c. **Improvising with approach notes** –Just like any new tool, in order to effectively use approach notes we need to be able to know how they can be used in any scenario. Approach notes can be used to create intricate maneuvers through harmonies. This is exactly what bebop players did! Work hard on all the practice exercises in order to incorporate approach notes into your playing. They will help you take your improvisation to the next level.

3. *Autumn Leaves Series Part 1 Application*

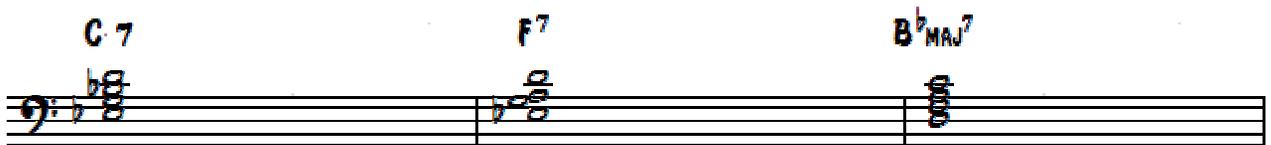
a. *Harmony and Theory*

i. *(See Improv)*

ii. *Voice-leading Rootless Voicings*

iii. In this section, we will apply rootless voicing to jazz standards, starting with “Autumn Leaves”. The first four measures of “Autumn Leaves” follow this chord progression: C-7, F7, Bbmaj7, and Ebmaj7. The first three chords are a 2-5-1 in the key of Bb. To apply rootless voicings to this progression, we can either use structure 1 or structure 2. In order to pick the structure that is going to work the best, look at the register of the melody over the first three measures. If the melody gets too low and overlaps the voicings, then we will use structure 2. In this case, the melody stays in the higher register as the harmonies move so we’ll start with structure 1 in our left hand. C-7 is going to use the 3,5,7,9 rootless voicing, F7 uses 7, 9,3,13 and Bb returns to 3,5,7,9. (see figure 21.26)

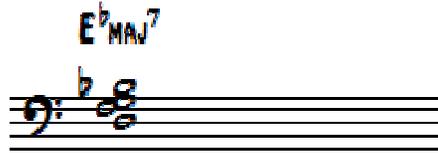
Figure 21.26



*Refer back to lesson 17 if you need to review your rootless voicings!

From the BbMaj7 chord we need to move to a rootless voicing for Ebmaj7. Since EbMaj7 is not part of the 2-5-1 progression, we need to follow different steps to figure out the rootless voicing. To get the smoothest voice leading you must discern which chord tone of the next chord is closest to your pinky. For the BbMaj7 chord, your pinky is on the note A. The nearest chord tone for EbMaj7 is G, so you’ll move your pinky down to G. The structure that is created is 7, 9, 3 and 5. (See figure 21.27)

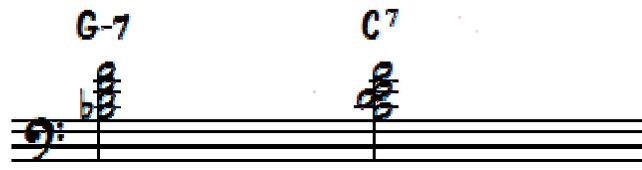
Figure 21.27



Follow this process for all of the pieces we play. Remember to determine which chord tone is closest to your pinky, and then move to that structure for the next chord. Since we haven't learned a rootless voicing for minor 2-5's, we'll skip to the end of "Autumn Leaves". In this section, the song modulates to the key of Eb. These are the steps we will take to determine the rootless voicing structures:

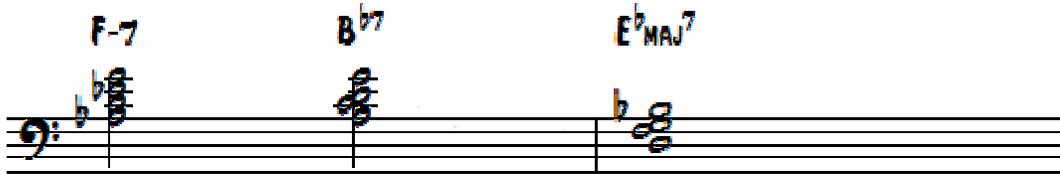
1. Determine if the melody will overlap with either of the rootless voicing structures. The melody stays on a high D, so we can use either structure.
2. Depending upon which structures are available, pick the one you want to use, (either starting on the third or starting on the 7th).
3. After you determine which structure to use, continue to plug in the voicings for the rest of the progression. We'll start on the 3rd of G-7 and play the 3,5,7,9 structure. This gives us the notes Bb, D, F, and A. After the G-7 chord we'll play 7,9,3,5 over C7 giving us the notes Bb, D, E and A (7, 9, 3, 13). (See figure 21.28)

Figure 21.28



Now we must determine whether the 3rd or 7th of the next chord, (F-7) is closest to our pinky, which is now currently on A. The 3rd of F-7 is Ab and the 7th is Eb so we'll move our pinky from A to Ab. (see figure 21.29)

Figure 21.29



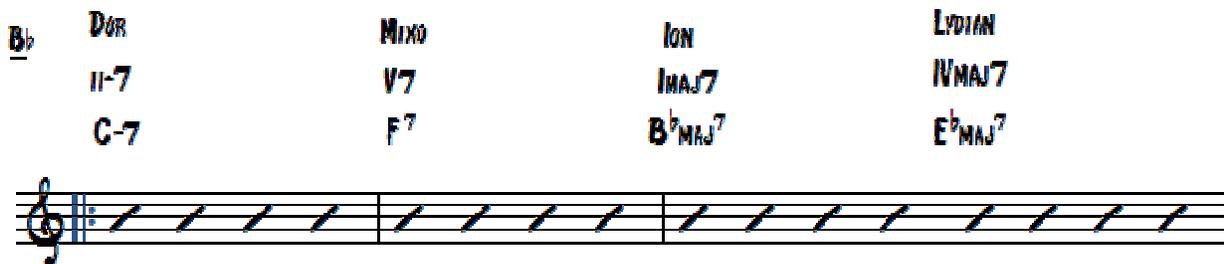
Over the F-7 chord we'll use structure 1, starting on the 3rd of F-7. From there we'll use structure 1 to get to the V7 (B^b7), then to I_{maj}7 (E^bMaj7).

b. *Vocab*

i. *Analysis*

1. "Autumn Leaves" is a popular standard that should be added to your repertoire. The tonality of this piece switches between major and minor. E^b is the major key, and the relative minor is G-7. G- will be the basis of our analysis. In the first four measures there is a diatonic progression from the relative major key of G minor, B^b major. The progression is C-7, F7, B^bmaj7, and E^bmaj7. The roman numeral analysis is ii-7, V7, I_{maj}7, IV_{maj}7. (see figure 21.30)

Figure 21.30



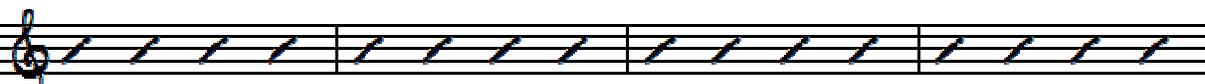
After this progression, the tonality changes from B^b Major to G minor. We can tell the tonality changes to minor because of the minor 2-5-1 in measures 5-8. The A-

7b5 is the ii-7b5, the D7 is the V7 chord, and the G-maj is the I-maj chord. In some real books you might see a G-7 chord rather than a G-Maj7 chord. I prefer the – Maj7 sound. This section repeats and then we move to the bridge. The chords to the bridge are the same as the A section, just rearranged slightly. (see figure 21.31-21.32)

Figure 21.31

G-	G NAT MIN ii-7b5 A-7b5	G HAR MIN V7:9:13 D7 b9,b 13	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7
				
	G NAT MIN ii-7b5 A-7b5	G HAR MIN V7:9:13 D7 b9,b 13	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7
				
Bb	DOR ii-7 C-7	MIXO V7 F7	ION I MAJ7 Bb MAJ7	LYDIAN IV MAJ7 Eb MAJ7
				

Figure 21.32

G NAT MIN ii-7b5 A-7b5	G HAR MIN V7:9:13 D7	F DOR ii-7 G-7	MIXO V7 C7	Eb DOR ii-7 F-7	MIXO V7 Bb7
					
ION I MAJ7 Eb MAJ7	G HAR MIN V7:9:13 D7	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7	G MEL MIN I-MAJ7 G-MAJ7		
					

Solo Piano Series- Part 5 RH Textures & Bass Lines

b. *RH Components*

i. *Textures.*

1. *Octaves* (see figure 21.33)

Figure 21.33

Figure 21.33 shows a single treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats. The melody consists of eighth-note octaves. The chords are labeled as C-7, F7, B^b MAJ7, and E^b MAJ7.

2. *Octaves with LH Chords* (see figure 21.34)

Figure 21.34

Figure 21.34 shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The treble staff has eighth-note octaves. The bass staff has chords. The chords are labeled as A-7^b5, D⁷, G-MAJ7, and G-MAJ7.

3. *Single note Lines with LH Chords* (see figure 21.35)

Figure 21.35

Figure 21.35 shows a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The treble staff has single notes. The bass staff has chords. The chords are labeled as A-7^b5, D⁷, G-7, C⁷, F-7, and B^b7.

4. *RH Melody, jumps to play chords with LH bass notes* (see figure 21.36)

Figure 21.36

Musical notation for Figure 21.36. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef. The right hand (RH) melody consists of quarter notes: C4, D4, Eb4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The left hand (LH) bass notes are: C3, Eb3, F3, Bb2. Chords are indicated above the staff: C-7 (measures 1-2), F7 (measures 3-4), and BbMAJ7 (measures 5-6). A box highlights the RH notes G3, F3, E3, D3, C3 in measure 4.

5. *Fills in between the melody* (see figure 21.37)

Figure 21.37

Musical notation for Figure 21.37. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. The right hand (RH) melody consists of quarter notes: C4, D4, Eb4, C4, Bb3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The left hand (LH) bass notes are: C3, Eb3, F3, Bb2. Chords are indicated above the staff: C-7 (measures 1-2), F7 (measures 3-4), and BbMAJ7 (measures 5-6). The RH melody includes eighth-note fills between the main notes.

c. *Bass Lines Part 1*

i. *Octaves* (see figure 21.38)

Figure 21.38

Musical notation for Figure 21.38. The top staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 2/4 time signature. The bottom staff is also in bass clef. The top staff shows octaves for chords: C-7 (C3, Eb3), F7 (F3, Ab3), BbMAJ7 (Bb2, D3), and EbMAJ7 (Eb2, G2). The bottom staff shows octaves for chords: A-7b5 (A2, C3), D7 (D2, F3), G-MAJ7 (G2, B2), and G-MAJ7 (G2, B2).

ii. *Fifths* (see figure 21.39)

Figure 21.39

Figure 21.39 shows two musical staves in bass clef. The first staff contains four chords: C-7, F7, B^bMAJ7, and E^bMAJ7. The second staff contains four chords: A-7^b5, D7, G-MAJ7, and G-MAJ7. Each chord is represented by a pair of notes on a five-line staff.

4. *Improvisation – Using approach notes in your solos*

- i. *Half Step Approaches In AL* - Half step approaches can be used in a variety of ways. Use them to start lines, end lines, or as connecting tones in the middle of an eighth-note run.

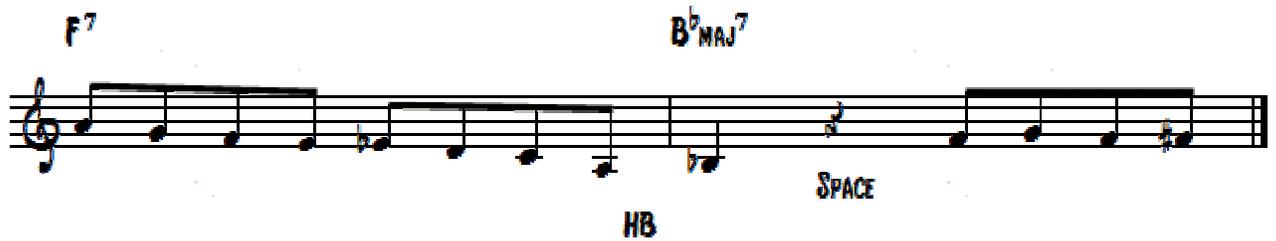
Let's use approach notes in "Autumn Leaves". The first chord in "Autumn leaves" is C-7. We can use the half step approach to approach any chord tone to start our solo off. In the example below, I approached the root with a half step below approach beginning on the upbeat of beat 4. Once I've landed on the root I continue up the C Dorian mode until I reach the 7th of C-7 (the note B^b). From B^b, I added in another half step approach from below in order to land on the 3rd of F (the note A). (see figure 21.40)

Figure 21.40

Figure 21.40 shows a musical staff in treble clef. It starts with a C-7 chord. The melody begins with a half-step approach (HB) to the root of F7 (the note A). The melody then continues up the C Dorian mode until it reaches the 7th of C-7 (the note B^b). From B^b, it adds another half-step approach (HB) from below to land on the 3rd of F (the note A). The approach is labeled 'HB' at three points: before the root, before the 7th of C-7 (B^b), and before the 3rd of F (A).

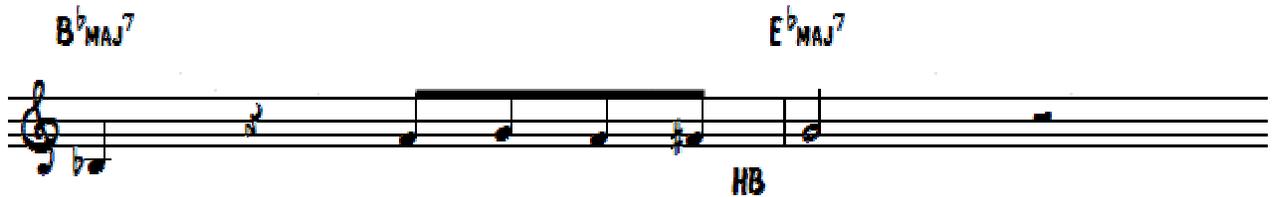
From A, I moved downward using the bebop scale and inserted a passing tone between F and Eb. Once I get to the 5th of the F7 chord, the note C, I approached the root of the Bb chord with a half step below approach. (see figure 21.41)

Figure 21.41



From here, I added a quarter note rest to break up my line. (see figure 21.42)

Figure 21.42



You can use these half step approaches in any manner you would like. All you need to do is be creative! (See figure 21.43)

Figure 21.43

