

Soloing with extensions over chords – (Minor Extensions)

Using upper extensions to solo over is a lot of fun. They create a great sound that doesn't require much thought to use. With simple concepts such as this we can now focus more on expression than having to worry about using our brains. I was recently at the Monterey Jazz Festival for students and saw a product that was advertised as allowing anybody to immediately sound good while improvising. The man was selling cards that told you specific notes to play over chords. Can you guess what notes were on these cards? Different sets of upper structure triads he had selected. I would hear him trying to sell his product by saying "All you have to do is play these notes and you will sound like a professional jazz musician!" If only it was that easy. Even though he was selling a quick un-educational jazz product, he did have a certain point telling people to play the notes of upper structure triads. So how do we do it?

Do you remember when you were first learning how to solo using chord tones? The concept is exactly the same. Instead of using the chord tones, we are using the upper structure tones in order to solo. Even though there are only three different notes in a triad I like to add on the octave on top to create a full four note chord. This gives us one more option to use. When using our upper structure triads to solo it doesn't mean we just need to use these notes. We can use connecting notes from the chord scale in order to connect the triad. If you are only using the three notes you will be creating a more focused triadic sound, but it doesn't mean that is all you need to use. See below.

C-7

11 9, 11 13, 13 13 13 11, 9 9 13, 11 11, 9, 11 13, 9

As always remember our goal with these tools is to build a house,
(create music), not use the tools just for the sake of using them.