

Jazz Composition

Creating Melodies with Chord Tones (CT)

Manricks MUS198

Chord Tones are the notes in the chord arpeggio: ie - for C Major 7 the chord tones would be the root, 3rd, 5th and M7th (CEGB). When using chord tones exclusively to create melodies there are no parts of the beat you would tend to avoid, as with the use of **passing tones**.

Exclusively using chord tones helps define harmony and involves the use of **skips** (melodic movement in 3rds) and/or **leaps** (melodic movement in 4ths or wider intervals) more often than **stepwise motion** (melodic movement in 2nds)

Common Tendencies with Leaps and Skips - Usually leaps are followed by a move in the opposite direction. Consecutive leaps or a leap and a skip combined in the same direction usually don't exceed an octave in range.

CMaj7

CMaj;
Chord/Scale Degree 7 CT 1 CT 3 CT 5 CT 7 CT 1 CT 5

CMaj;
Chord/Scale Degree 5 CT 3 CT 1 CT M7 CT 5

Exercise - In the below 4 bar melody write chord/scale degrees (ie-1, 3, 5, M7) for each pitch similar to the way demonstrated above. Note the melody is exclusively made up of chord tones.

CMaj7

CMaj _____

Below is the same melody used at the top of the page but with new chords. Note the melody is still exclusively made up of Chord Tones, except where?

CMaj7 Amin AbMaj7 G13b9

C Maj: 7 1 3 5 Amin: 9 3 AbMaj:M7 G7: 7

Exercise - write chord/scale degrees below each pitch of the following melody.

C6: _____ Amin: _____ Dmin7: _____ G7: _____

Jazz Composition

- 2 **Exercise** - Write melodies to the chord progressions below using Chord Tones exclusively. Try to keep in mind the common tendencies with regard to leaps and skips in the same direction and vary the contour of your melodies (melodic curve). Refer to a syllabus of Jazz chord symbols first if you do not know every chord tone of every chord below. (Any of the 'New Real Books' has a chord syllabus in the introduction and/or Ken Pullig's 'Modern Jazz Voicings' Chapter 4 *Chord Scales* is a great source for understanding jazz harmony).

When writing melodies avoid putting the root on the beat when the chord has a Major 7th; e.g. Maj7th or minMaj7th chords. If the chord has a major 7th and the root is sustained in the melody, or on a strong beat, make the chord a 6th chord instead; i.e. Maj6th or min6th chord. This will avoid creating a min2nd or min9th clash between the Maj7th of the chord and the root melody tone, allowing melodies to resonate clearer. In general I try not to write the root in the melody much anyway because it is the least most colorful tone. And, I also try to allow at least a third between the top two notes (i.e. melody tone and top note of the chord voicing or other harmony part) unless writing less conventionally; i.e. texturally with clusters etc).

FMaj7C7

A blank musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F major). The staff is divided into two measures. The first measure is labeled with the chord symbol 'FMaj7' and the second measure with 'C7'. The staff is currently empty for the student to write a melody.

Amin7D7GMaj7

A blank musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F# major). The staff is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled with 'Amin7', the second with 'D7', and the third with 'GMaj7'. The staff is currently empty for the student to write a melody.

Emin6B7b9Emin(Maj7)

A blank musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F# major). The staff is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled with 'Emin6', the second with 'B7b9', and the third with 'Emin(Maj7)'. The staff is currently empty for the student to write a melody.

This is a minor 7th chord with b5

B^øE7b9Amin6

A blank musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (F major). The staff is divided into three measures. The first measure is labeled with 'B^ø', the second with 'E7b9', and the third with 'Amin6'. The staff is currently empty for the student to write a melody.

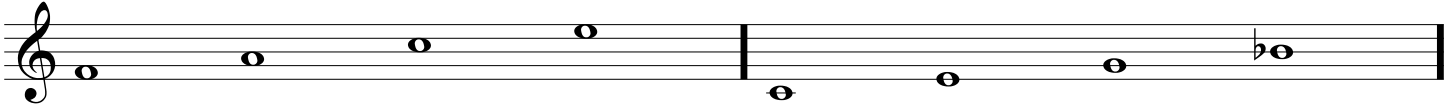
BbMaj6Gmin7Cmin7F7BbMaj7

A blank musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb major). The staff is divided into five measures. The first measure is labeled with 'BbMaj6', the second with 'Gmin7', the third with 'Cmin7', the fourth with 'F7', and the fifth with 'BbMaj7'. The staff is currently empty for the student to write a melody.

CHORD TONES - FOR EXERCISES

F Maj 7

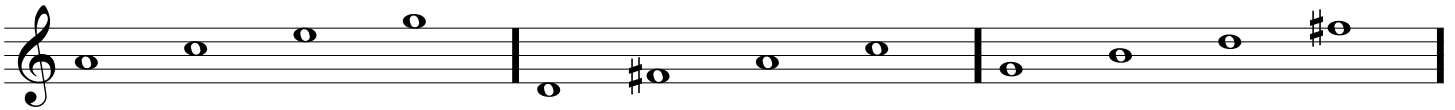
C7



A min7

D7

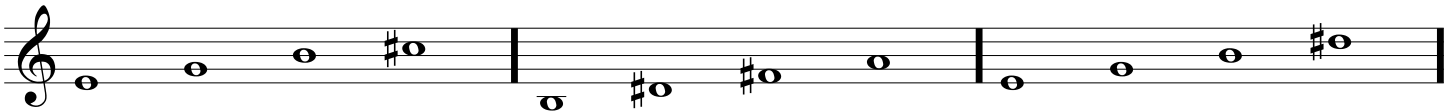
G Maj7



E min6

B7

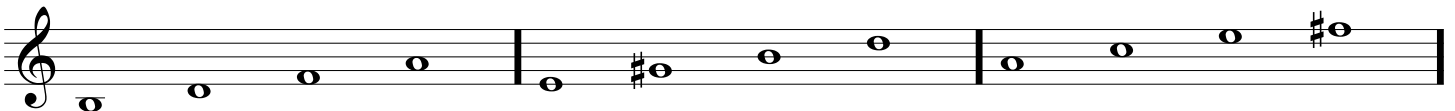
E min(Maj7)



B ø

E7

A min6



Bb6

G min7

C min7

F7

