

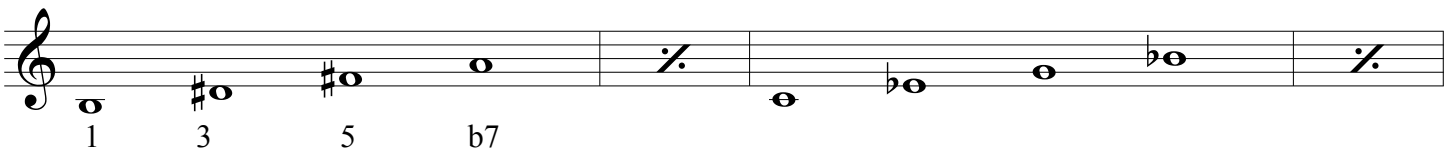
Chord Tones, Chord Scales & Passing Tones

*Masterclass by
Jacam Manricks
www.jacamanricks.com*

One of the things beginning Jazz improvisers struggle with is creating melodies that clearly define the underlying harmony. Basically this boils down to putting the right notes where in relation to the beat. Of course you can use different methods like suspension or delayed resolution to create a higher contrapuntal quality in your music. But first, I always try to make sure I can (if I so choose) really define the underlying harmony and harmonic rhythm with my melodies.

CHORD TONES

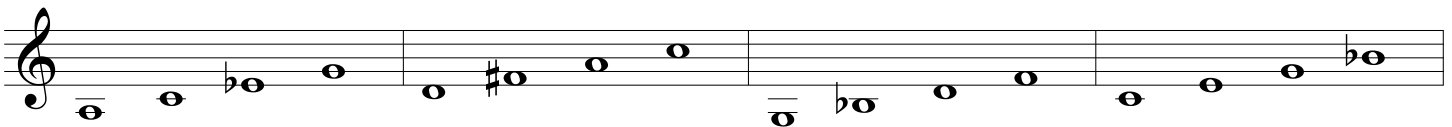
B7(#11) Cmin11



B7(#11) Cmin11



A[∞] D7b9 Gmin7 C7



Cmin9 B7(#11) BbMaj7



Note the angular melodic curve one can achieve with this arpeggiatic approach to melody!

CHORD SCALES

'A chord scale is a set of step wise pitches assigned to a chord symbol to provide a supply of notes compatible with that chord's sound and its tonal or modal function' Ted Pease

Here, I'm going to refer to chord tones as CT and the other notes as non-chord tones (NCT). The chord tones are whole notes and the non-chord tones are quarter notes, for easier recognition.

Non-chord tones can function as **diatonic passing tones** (which move stepwise from and to a chord tone). When the non chord tones function as diatonic passing tones I will refer to them as PT.

The image displays four lines of musical notation, each representing a different chord scale in the key of B-flat major. The notes are written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). Chord tones are marked with a square symbol and non-chord tones with a circle symbol. Bar lines with repeat signs are used to indicate the end of each scale.

Line 1: B7(#11) (B Lydian Dominant) and Cmin11 (C Dorian).
 Notes: B^{CT}, C^{NCT}, D^{CT}, E^{NCT}, F^{CT}, G^{NCT}, A^{CT}, B^{CT}.
 Labels: CT NCT CT NCT CT NCT CT

Line 2: B7(#11) and Cmin11.
 Notes: B^{CT}, C^{NCT}, D^{CT}, E^{NCT}, F^{CT}, G^{NCT}, A^{CT}, B^{CT}.

Line 3: A[∞] (A Locrian), D7b9 (D Mixolydian b9,b13), Gmin7 (G Dorian), and C7 (C Mixolydian).
 Notes: A^{CT}, B^{NCT}, C^{CT}, D^{NCT}, E^{CT}, F^{NCT}, G^{CT}, A^{CT}, B^{NCT}, C^{CT}, D^{NCT}, E^{CT}, F^{NCT}, G^{CT}, A^{CT}, B^{NCT}, C^{CT}.

Line 4: Cmin9, B7(#11), and BbMaj7 (Bb Ionian or Major scale).
 Notes: C^{CT}, D^{NCT}, E^{CT}, F^{NCT}, G^{CT}, A^{NCT}, B^{CT}, C^{NCT}, D^{CT}, E^{NCT}, F^{CT}, G^{NCT}, A^{CT}, B^{NCT}, C^{CT}.

DIATONIC PASSING TONES (PT)

Diatonic Passing Tones – come from the chord's chord scale and move by a Major or min 2nd (stepwise) **from and to** a chord tone.

When creating melodies with diatonic passing tones the important thing to do (and this takes a lot of practice at first) is to place the chord tones in a way that most clearly define the harmonic rhythm.

When first practicing passing tones I used 2 four note formulas: CT PT CT CT or CT CT PT CT played as quarternotes.

CT PT CT CT with Quarter Notes Using Chord Scales

B7(#11) (B Lydian Dominant) Cmin11 (C Dorian)

1 2 3 5
CT PT CT CT etc..

CT CT PT CT with Quarter Notes Using Chord Scales

B7(#11) Cmin11

5 3 2 1
CT CT PT CT etc..

DIATONIC PASSING TONES AS 8TH NOTES

When using diatonic passing tones as eighth notes place the chord tones on the beat and the passing tones off the beat.

CT PT CT CT with Eighth Notes Using Chord Scales

B7(#11) Cmin11

The musical notation shows two measures. The first measure is for B7(#11) and the second for Cmin11. Each measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: a quarter note chord tone (on the beat), an eighth note passing tone (off the beat), a quarter note chord tone (on the beat), and another eighth note passing tone (off the beat). The notes are: B7(#11) (B, D#, F#, A) and Cmin11 (C, Eb, F, Ab).

CT PT CT CT - CT PT CT CT etc.

CT CT PT CT with Eighth Notes Using Chord Scales

B7(#11) Cmin11

The musical notation shows two measures. The first measure is for B7(#11) and the second for Cmin11. Each measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: a quarter note chord tone (on the beat), a quarter note chord tone (on the beat), an eighth note passing tone (off the beat), and a quarter note chord tone (on the beat). The notes are: B7(#11) (B, D#, F#, A) and Cmin11 (C, Eb, F, Ab).

CT CT PT CT - CT CT PT CT etc..

BEBOP SCALES AND CHROMATIC PASSING TONES (CPT)

Bebop scales are useful when trying to create extended linear melodies while clearly defining a given harmony. Because they have 8 notes, unlike most major or minor scales, they resolve neatly in relation to the beat when played across the bar line. (Demonstration with Ebmaj walking medium tempo)

There are two main scales degrees where Chromatic Passing Tones occur in bebop scales:

- **on the Maj 7th** for chords that have a minor 7th, like V7 or ii7, iii7, vi7 or vii7 (b5)
- **and on the #5th** for chords that have a tonic quality like I Maj and min 6th or 6/9 chords, and IV Maj lydian chords. In this case we treat the 6th scale degree as a CT instead of the Maj 7th.

Again, it's important in the early stages of practicing this to place the Chord Tones on the beat and the Passing Tones off the beat. **Start your bebop scales from a chord tone on the beat or** (even better in my opinion) **start from a non-chord tone off the beat.**

Starting On The Beat

B7(#11) B7 Mixolydian #11 Bebop Scale Cmin11 C Dorian Bebop Scale

49

CPT Maj7 CPT Maj7

Starting Off The Beat

Can give your lines a greater sense of forward momentum

B7(#11) Cmin11

53

NCT 9th CPT Maj7 NCT 9th CPT Maj7

Superimposing Harmonies with Bebop Scales

Below is a C#7 Mixolydian b13 bebop scale superimposed on a B7 chord and a D minor Phrygian bebop scale superimposed on a C min11 chord.

Note that the notes occurring on the beat outline the chord extension tones (9th, 11th, 13th) of each chord. Highlighting chord extension tones like this adds color to the music by creating accessible dissonances with the chord's lower structure tones (root, 3rd, 5th, 7th). (Compare sound of root bebop with superimposed)

B7(#11) C#7 Mixolydian b13 Bebop Scale Cmin11 D Phrygian Bebop Scale

57


CPT CPT

Superimpose Harmonies with Bebop Scales

Try the related Phrygian bebop scales on Major chords to highlight the 9th chord extension tone.

E_b Maj9 (G Phrygian Bebop)

61




CPT

Try V7 Mixolydian bebop scales from the 2nd scale degree of Major chords for a lydian sound

E_b Maj#11 (F Mixolydian Bebop)

63




CPT

Try V7 Mixolydian b13 bebop scales from the 2nd scale degree of V7 chords for a lydian dominant sound

E_b 13#11 (F Mixolydian b13 Bebop)

65




CPT

Try V7 Mixolydian b13 bebop scales from the 5th scale degree of tonic minor chords for a min Maj7th sound

C min69 (G Mixolydian b13 Bebop)

67



CPT

Try V7 Mixolydian b13 bebop scales from the b6th scale degree of altered V7 chords

E_b 7alt (B Mixolydian b13 Bebop)

69



CPT