

THE BEBOP SCALES (DOMINANT AND MAJOR)

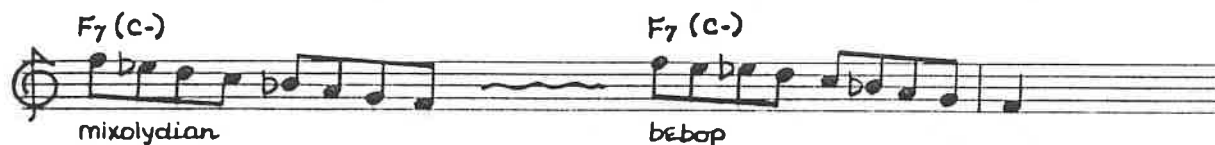
From the early twenties jazz musicians attempted to make their improvised lines flow more smoothly by connecting scales and scale tones through the use of chromatic passing tones. In a detailed analysis of more than 500 solos by the acknowledged giants from Armstrong through Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, one is aware, first, of the increased use of scales (as opposed to arpeggios and chord outlines) and then the increasing use of chromaticism within these scales. An unusual fact about this increased chromaticism is that, despite the frequent re-occurrence of certain licks or patterns, no discernible design with regard to how the extra chromatic tones are added emerges. The overall impression is a somewhat arbitrary or random use of chromaticism.

When one listens to the great players from the distant and near past, one of the main things that tends to "date" their playing (aside from technological improvements in recording techniques, changes with regard to harmonic and rhythmic formulae, etc.) is this lack of unanimity with regard to the use of melodic chromaticism.

From his earliest recordings Charlie Parker can be observed groping for a method for making the modes of the major scale sound less awkward and for rendering them more conducive to swing and forward motion. Gradually, in a systematic and logical way, he began using certain scales with added chromatic tones. Dizzy, approaching the scales from an entirely different direction, began utilizing the same techniques for transforming them. These scales became the backbone of all jazz from bebop to modal music.

A study of a large number of representative solos from the bebop era yields a set of very complex governing rules that have now been internalized and are a part of the language of all good players in the bebop and post-bebop tradition.

Very simply stated, the added chromatic tones make the scales "come out right." Play a descending mixolydian scale and then play the bebop version of the scale and see how much smoother the second scale moves.



There are a number of reasons why the second scale makes more sense. First, in the second scale all of the chord tones are on down beats; and second, the tonic of the scale falls on beat one of each successive measure.

THE BEBOP DOMINANT SCALE

This scale is spelled 1-2-3-4-5-6-b7- \flat 7-1 and the rules governing its use are given with the dominant seventh chord as the point of reference. The scale is also used on the related minor seventh chord (II) and, under special conditions to be discussed later, also on the related half diminished seventh chord (VII), i.e. the following:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} G- \\ C_7 \\ E\phi \text{ (under special conditions)} \end{array} \right] = C-D-E-F-G-A-B\flat-B\flat-C$$

- RULES:**
1. On a dominant seventh chord the scale is reckoned from the root of the chord, i.e., $C_7 = C$ dominant (bebop)
 2. On a minor seventh chord the scale is reckoned from the root of the related dominant seventh chord, i.e., $G- = C$ dominant (bebop)
 3. When conditions dictate the use of this scale on a half diminished chord its starting point is reckoned from the root of the related dominant seventh chord, i.e., $E\phi = C$ dominant (bebop)
 4. The scale usually moves in basic eighth note patterns.
 5. In pure form the scale invariably starts on a down beat.
 6. In pure form the scale starts on a chord tone (1, 3, 5, or b7) of the dominant seventh chord.

7. Most often the descending form of the scale is used.
8. As long as the scale starts on a chord tone, the line may ascend in a scalar fashion and return the same way.

9. The line may also descend, then ascend in scalar fashion.

10. When the line starts on the 3rd, it may descend chromatically to the 6th, i.e. the following:

or ascend and then descend chromatically from the 3rd, i.e. the following:

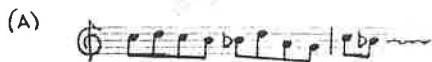
ENDINGS

The endings of phrases are very important, and two particular endings appear with great frequency:

(1)

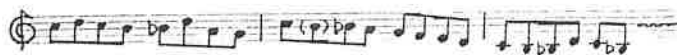
(2)

More often than not phrases end on the upbeat of beats one or three, as in the following examples:

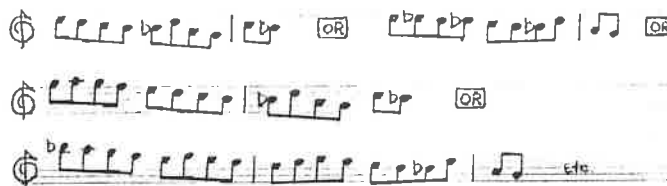


The line should use whichever of the two endings make this possible. Eventually the player will make this choice intuitively.

Please note that in examples #2 and #A the extra half step between the tonic and b7 has been omitted. The rule governing this situation is as follows: if the line is ending, use a whole step as in examples #2 and #A; if the line is to continue, use the half step as usual, as in the following example:



Practice the different endings starting on other chord tones, as in the following examples:



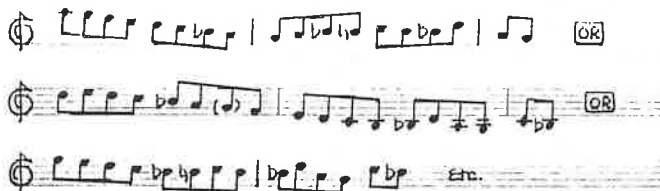
STARTING THE SCALE ON NON-CHORD TONES

When starting the scale on a non-chord tone many options exist. Some of the most frequently used ones follow:

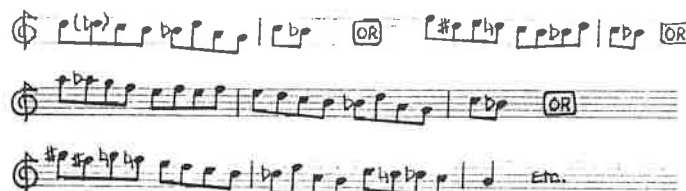
1. Use the scale without the extra half step, as in the following examples:



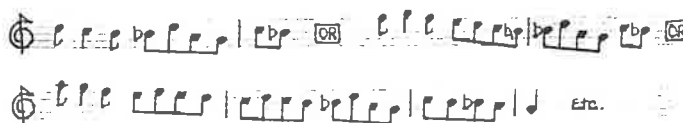
2. Use the scale without the extra half step until you reach the b7, at which time balance is restored and the previous rules are once more operative, as in the following examples:



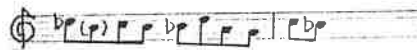
3. Insert a half step before the first chord tone you come to, as in the following examples:



4. Syncopate the first chord tone you come to, as in the following examples:



5. From the b2 approach the tonic from a half step below, as in the following example:



6. From the b3 approach the 3rd from a half step above, as in the following example:



7. From the #4 descend chromatically to the 3rd, as in the following example:



8. From the b6 approach the 5th from a half step below or ascend chromatically to the b7, as in the following examples:



9. When the line starts with a chord tone on an upbeat, all of the preceding eight non-chord tone rules are operative since it places a non-chord tone on a down beat.

10. Generally, move by step, half step, or skip until a chord tone occurs on a down beat. All of the preceding examples exemplify this rule.

EXTENDING THE BEBOP LINE

The bebop dominant scale may be extended through the use of a number of techniques which are a part of the common language of all good players. Some of the more common ones follow:

1. Upon arrival on the b7 the line may ascend along a major seventh chord, allowing for extension or change of direction, as in the following examples:



2. Upon arrival on the 3rd, 5th, or b7th, the line may proceed along the outline of the diminished chord containing that note, as in the following example (the diminished chord usually sets up a modulation);



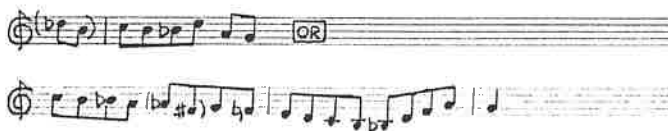
Examples A and B may be combined with examples C through H, as in the following example:



3. The bebop line may be extended through the use of what I shall hereafter refer to as deflection. When leaving the 5th of the scale, the line may be deflected in the manner of the following examples (make sure that when the line resumes its descent the 5th is on a down beat):



4. The bebop line may be extended by embellishing the root or the 5th of the chord. This is accomplished by delaying the arrival of the chord tone by inserting the notes one half step above and one half step below the tone in question, as in the following examples:



If the line originates from the 3rd or the b7 rule #4 remains operative, as in the following examples:



If the 3rd is to be embellished within a line, start on the b5, as in the following example:



Or skip from the 4th and return by half step, as in the following example:



These techniques for extending lines are particularly useful in modal situations (as in example #I, which follows), in double time passages where more material is needed to fill the same number of measures (as in example #J, which follows), and simply for variety.

