



## Modal Arpeggios

Last month I gave you an arpeggio exercise based around a chord progression. If you remember the arpeggio was playing the chord that it was related to, i.e. the tonic chord. This month I wanted to expand on arpeggios. Lets ignore rhythm and lets forget about the technical execution and connection of the notes and instead look at creating "color"

Imagine our bass player is playing a low C or a keys player playing a C major drone. Now play arpeggios starting on different notes on the scale of the chord (example: notes on the C major scale). C major, E minor, G major.

### Example 1

You would have noticed something very exciting happening over the C. As you play these different modal arpeggios you are creating a complete new world of color on each one. A completely new sound. And hence the possibility of creating new melodies.

### Example 2

The next example shows how to do modal arpeggios from the one key (In this case G major). Use this one as another technique and warm up exercise and join up each arpeggio into one phrase for each mode. You would have noticed that I have included the 7th in the arpeggios to fit in with the chords noted.. See you next month

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### Example 1

CC Drone or C Major Underneath

C Major Arpeggio

E Minor Arpeggio

G Major Arpeggio

### Example 2

GMaj7 / G Ionian      Am7 / A Dorian

Bm7 / B Phrygian    CMaj7 / C Lydian    D7 / DMixolydian

Em7 / E Aeolian      F#m7b5 / F# Locrian

# Rocking The Foundation

Bass guitars with Tony Murray



## There's Dissonance, And Then There's Dissonance

### Chapter 8

EX. 1      EX. 2      EX. 3

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Caug<sup>9</sup>    Fmin      Cm<sup>7</sup>      F<sup>7</sup>      B<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>      C<sup>13</sup>      F<sup>7</sup>(C<sup>9</sup>)      B<sup>b</sup>13      E<sup>b</sup>7(C<sup>9</sup>)

Caug<sup>9</sup>    Fmin      Cm<sup>7</sup>      F<sup>7</sup>      B<sup>b</sup>ma<sup>7</sup>      C<sup>13</sup>      F<sup>7</sup>(C<sup>9</sup>)      B<sup>b</sup>13      E<sup>b</sup>7(C<sup>9</sup>)

Our three examples above show different types of 'dissonant' chords and different ways of using such chords. The first chord in Ex. 1 is quite a crunch when heard in isolation. There are several clashing intervals contained in it: C-Db, Bb-G# and Bb-C, and the tritone Bb-E. If you play these notes in closed position it sounds like a dissonant cluster. However, when voiced as shown it leads with beautiful logic to the succeeding F minor chord. It is after all an altered dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord and you would expect the Bb-C-E component of it to lead naturally to Ab-C-F. But here the added Db leads to the C and the Ab of the F minor chord is already present as G#, so the altered elements actually enhance the movement towards the tonic F minor. The ear hears this progression as completely natural despite the

bristling chord at the start.

Ex. 2 shows a succession of chords very loosely based on a simple progression. The chords are built of intervals of the fourth, in contrast to the more common principle of chords made up of thirds. The clashing intervals are rather spread out in these voicings so there is little sense of dissonance in the sense referred to above, but by the same token there is less feeling of movement toward a goal. Each chord is more like an entity in itself, a sound for its own sake, and the effect is more decorative than driving. In addition the chords do not relate specifically to the underlying chord pattern, but use the notes of the key of Bb in accordance with their own melodic agenda. The 'dissonance' is still there but seems subtly suggested rather than shouted at the listener.

In Ex 3 a sequence is made up of variations of a particular type of chord, the 'mystic' chord of Russian composer Alexander Scriabin, writing at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chord is quite dissonant in the conventional sense, and could be written as a cluster of notes A-Bb-C-D-E-F#. Our sequence uses different parts of the chord alternately, producing a chain of prickly chords underpinned by a bass line in fifths (which could be continued indefinitely). The charm derives from the chromatically descending upper parts against a clear chordal movement underneath, so that even these dissonant chords can be used in ways the ear can easily grasp.

It is clear from the above that the term 'dissonant' is relative and depends much on the context of its use. While most listeners

would hear the mystic chord as 'dissonant' it is not necessarily unpleasant in context, as Ex. 3 shows. Again, the fourth chords in Ex. 2 are easily understood without trying to relate them to the accompaniment. And any tensions aroused by the pungent opening of Ex. 1 are resolved gracefully onto the tonic chord. Of course, we could just omit the F minor.....

### BIO

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