

# Progressive Music & Beyond

A discussion with Ivan Bertolla



## Alternative Scale Shape For Minor Pentatonic

I'm sure 90% of readers here play mainly this pattern of the "Minor Pentatonic" scale. Figure 1 shows how you probably play the shape at the moment.

Figure 2 shows an alternative versions of playing this scale in E minor Pentatonic. Why? This shape facilitates the speed of how you play this scales. i.e. 3 notes per string. And as per previous articles I have written you can create a sweep picking pattern on the change. In addition the scale allows you to move/connect more easily into other shapes.

There's Chord Color... And Then There's Even More Chord Color !!!!

Look at the following 2 chord progressions. The first chord progression is a simple descending 7<sup>th</sup> chord progression. Ebmajor 7, Dminor7, C minor 7, F major

Its common and can be heard in hundreds of songs. Now look at the second chord progression.. Unless my ears deceive me have a look at what Christopher Cross done with it in on the classic "Ride Like The Wind". Most composers would have had the bass guitar following the original chord progression.. i.e the tonic of the chord... However Christopher Cross changed the entire color with a different melodic line in the bass.. The overall function now of this chord progression/harmony is completely different... The soundscapes that I hear now are in brackets.. Ebmajor7 (Cminor9), Dminor7 (BbMajor9), Cminor7 (AbMajor9), F major (G7sus4sus2)

Don't you love that last chord?

The point? I wanted to use an example of a song that most people know so you can hear it for yourself... So when writing think about an idea like this whether it's in the bass or spread across different instruments. Think about expanding the spelling of chords, substituting or inverting. Now get that paint brush out. Straight Ahead.

Ivan Bertolla is a Melbourne Based composer/producer/guitar instructor who has released his debut CD worldwide of Cinematic music "Beyond The Skies Eternity". He runs Mastermind Productions and Macleod Guitar School .. Website [www.bertolla.com](http://www.bertolla.com)

Figure 1

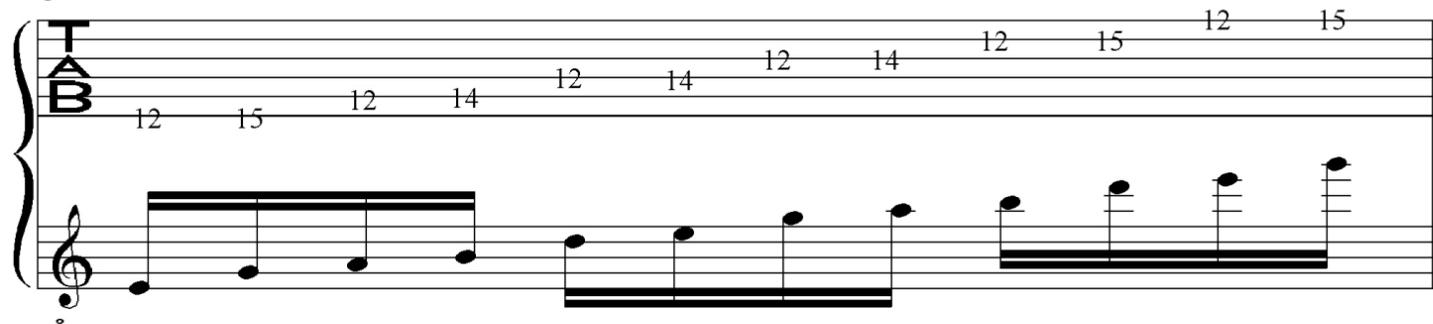


Figure 2

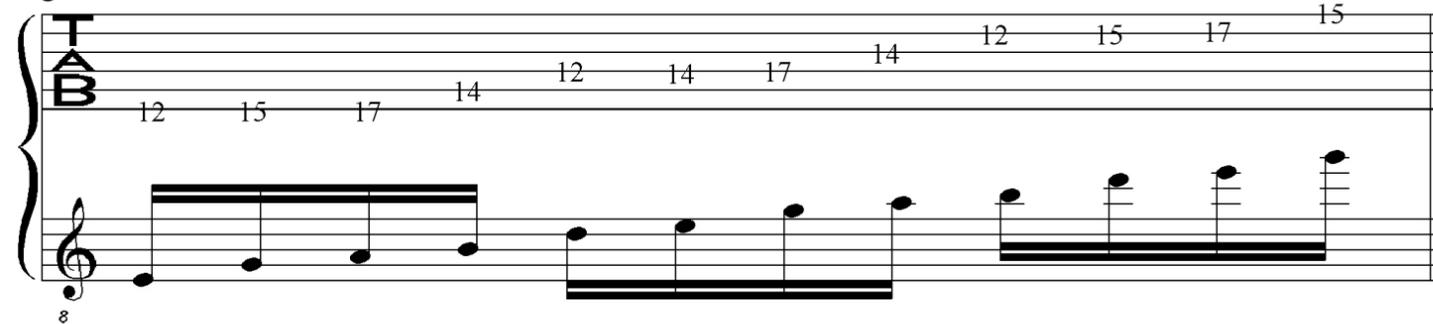


Figure 3

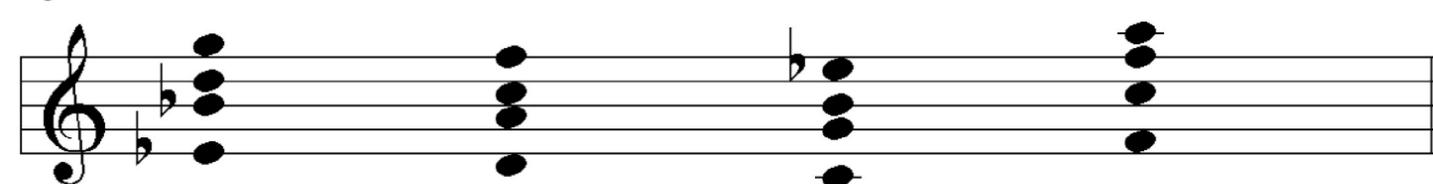
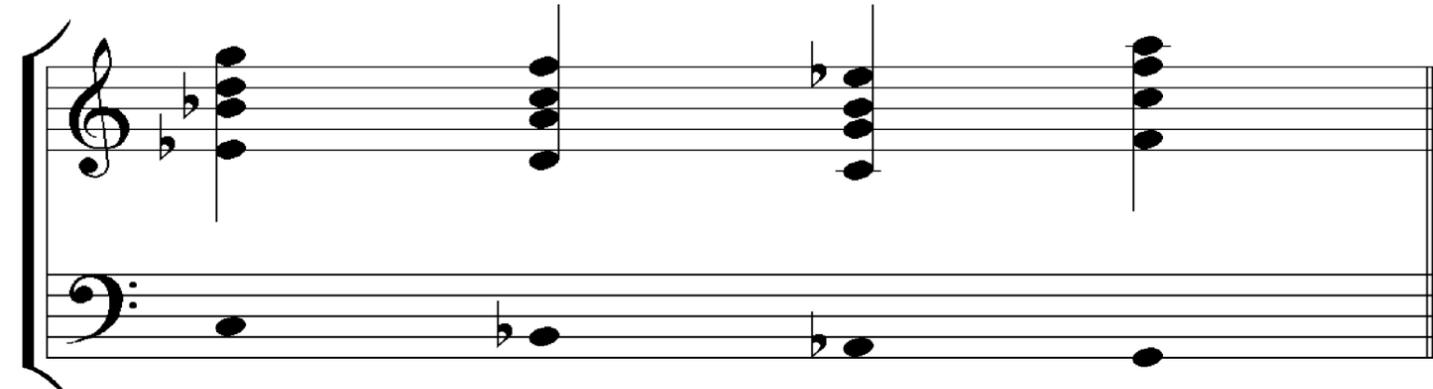


Figure 4



## Rocking The Foundation

Bass guitars with Tony Murray



### Chapter 10: FURTHER AND FURTHER OUT



Ex 1

A choke of grief hard hard tied L, be - yond be - lief, a brok - en man, too tough to cry.

Ex 2

Co - lumn - at - ed ru - ins do - mi - no...

Dm7 Gm7/C C7 Edim F Bb Gm7 F/C C7 D7/C

1 3 1 1 0 1 1 2 3 2 3 0 1 2 3 4 0 3 1 1 0 2 3 2 3 3 2 0 3

5 0 3 2 3 1 3 3 3 3

The lyrics in the examples above, from the song *Surf's Up*, may well mystify the reader. In 1966 the Beach Boys were expected to produce a follow-up to the enormous commercial success of *Good Vibrations*. When Brian Wilson played the new song *Surf's Up* for the group, Mike Love was outraged by the obtuseness of Van Dyke Park's lyrics, especially: 'Columnated ruins domino - what the hell is that?!' This was 'further out' than the most excessive acid-rock of that period. Love was concerned about whether the great mass of Beach Boys fans would continue to buy the group's records, if this was the direction their lyrics were taking. As it turned out, his concern was justified - but

Wilson's musical ambitions were even more of a problem! Artistically, however, the song is a superb marriage of surreal lyrics and an advanced musical idiom, particularly in relation to melody.

Ex 1 shows a sinuous melodic curve of extraordinary eloquence, as graceful as the best of decades of pop music preceding and to follow. Beautiful as the contour itself is, the tune strains against the harmony with exquisite poignancy. The word 'choke' (of grief) is captured in a suspended fourth against the D minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord. The G#-A motif prepares us for a continuous chromatic run from A up to E,

and even this is given a twist by the underlying harmony - the A is heard against a chord already containing five different notes (C-G-Bb-D-F), and the C# clashes with the C in the bass. Finally the chromatic run is topped by a leap of a third to a suspension in the melody before coming to rest on the F of 'cry'.

Ex 2 is another magnificent melodic curve, achieving part of its impact from its outrageously high reach - even in Carl Wilson's glorious falsetto this is a stratospheric gesture. This time the harmony is simple and serene, although it moves elegantly towards the dominant of a different key (from F major to G

major) while remaining anchored on the note C.

When you listen to the song as performed by the Beach Boys, try not to get distracted by the bizarre surface meaning of the words, which is probably incomprehensible by any usual criteria.. The words do however evoke visual imagery which we can allow to work on our minds at the subconscious level. I think the *sound* of these words and this music together can take us way further out than the more obvious psychedelia of this and later periods - the 'windmills of your mind' school of acid-rock cliché.

Tony Murray is a composer and songwriter with BA (Music Major), working in Melbourne. He is currently playing bass with Melbourne group The Glory Boys, whose new EP *More Requests*, including two songs written by Tony, was launched at the Corner Hotel, Richmond on 22 Sept 2004. He can be contacted at: [tonymurray@pacific.net.au](mailto:tonymurray@pacific.net.au)