

# MELODIC MINOR HARMONY

TOM LIPPINCOTT

TRADITIONALLY, IN CLASSICAL MUSIC, THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE IS PERFORMED ONE WAY ASCENDING:

AND A DIFFERENT WAY DESCENDING, WHICH CORRESPONDS TO THE NATURAL MINOR SCALE:

IN JAZZ, THIS METHOD IS ABANDONED, AND THE SCALE IS PERFORMED THE SAME WAY DESCENDING AS IT IS ASCENDING. THIS IS BECAUSE THE SCALE IS HARMONIZED TO FORM I, II, III, IV, V, VI, AND VII CHORDS. IF ALL THE NOTES OF BOTH THE ASCENDING AND DESCENDING VERSIONS WERE USED TO GENERATE HARMONIES, THERE WOULD BE SEVERAL CONSECUTIVE HALF STEPS, AND MUCH MAYHEM WOULD ENSUE. SO JAZZ MUSICIANS HAVE TO BECOME COMFORTABLE WITH THE SCALE, MELODICALLY AND HARMONICALLY, AS A SEVEN NOTE SCALE CONTAINING ONLY THE NOTES 1, 2, b3, b4, 5, b6, AND b7. IT'S WORTH NOTING THAT THE SCALE IS LIKE A NATURAL MINOR SCALE BUT WITH b6 AND b7 OR, ALTERNATELY, LIKE A MAJOR SCALE WITH A b3.

THE MAJOR AND HARMONIC MINOR SCALES ARE NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MAJOR AND MINOR KEY CENTERS. THUS, IF A COMPOSITION IS IN THE KEY OF C MAJOR, THE C MAJOR SCALE IS TYPICALLY USED TO FORM MELODIES AND HARMONIES. THE C MAJOR SCALE CAN BE CONSIDERED THE "NATIVE" SCALE TO THAT KEY. IN JAZZ, THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE IS GENERALLY USED IN A DIFFERENT MANNER ALTOGETHER. THERE AREN'T TUNES WRITTEN IN THE "KEY OF C MELODIC MINOR," WHERE CHORDS DERIVED FROM THE "NATIVE" SCALE ARE USED. IN OTHER WORDS, ONE WON'T REALLY SEE A TUNE WRITTEN IN, SAY, C MELODIC MINOR THAT STARTS ON THE I CHORD, THEN GOES TO THE V CHORD, THEN TO THE IV AND SO ON. INSTEAD, THE HARMONIES DERIVED FROM THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE ARE MORE TYPICALLY USED IN PLACE OF THE NORMAL HARMONIES USED IN MAJOR OR MINOR KEY CENTERS, IN A MORE ARBITRARY WAY. THE MELODIC MINOR HARMONIES ARE TYPICALLY USED IN ISOLATION, AS *SUBSTITUTE SOUNDS* FOR THE MORE BASIC HARMONIES IN A MAJOR OR MINOR KEY. THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT JAZZ PERFORMERS, ARRANGERS, AND COMPOSERS CREATE THE INTERESTING AND RICH SOUNDING HARMONIES THAT THE JAZZ STYLE IS KNOWN FOR. THE TECHNIQUE OF SUBSTITUTION CAN BE, AND OFTEN IS, USED BY A SOLOIST OR A COMPER SPONTANEOUSLY IN REAL TIME WITHOUT ADVANCE DISCUSSION WITH THE OTHER PERFORMERS.

TO BEGIN MAKING USE OF THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE AS A DEVICE FOR REHARMONIZING CHORDS FROM MAJOR AND MINOR KEYS, IT'S FIRST NECESSARY TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE ASCENDING, OR "JAZZ," MELODIC MINOR VERSION OF THE SCALE AND THE BASIC HARMONIES THAT ARE DERIVED FROM EACH MODE.

BELOW ARE LISTED THE SEVEN MODES OF THE C "JAZZ" MELODIC MINOR SCALE. FIRST, EACH MODE IS LISTED WITH THE NOTES IN ASCENDING ORDER, WITH EACH NOTE'S FUNCTION LISTED BELOW (CHORD TONES OF 1, 3, 5, AND 7, AND UPPER EXTENSIONS/COLOR TONES OF 9, 11, AND 13). NEXT IS THE BASIC FOUR NOTE SEVENTH CHORD AND ITS COMMONLY USED CHORD SYMBOL.

SCALE/MODE NAME(S) AND ROMAN NUMERAL

RESULTING BASIC 7TH CHORD

5 I: MELODIC MINOR

THE FIRST MODE, OFTEN CONVENIENTLY CALLED "MELODIC MINOR," IS PROBABLY THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD IN ITS USAGE. IT IS COMMONLY USED AS A SUBSTITUTE SOUND FOR TONIC MINOR CHORDS. THUS, IN A II V I PROGRESSION IN C MINOR (DM7b5, G7, CM7), THE C MELODIC MINOR SCALE COULD BE USED OVER THE I CHORD AS AN ALTERNATIVE SOUND TO THE BASIC NATURAL OR HARMONIC MINOR. NOTE THAT THE PLAYER WOULD, IN MOST CASES, ONLY USE THE C MELODIC MINOR OVER THE I CHORD. THE A NATURAL IN THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE WOULD CLASH WITH THE Ab IN THE DM7b5 CHORD. PART OF WHAT MAKES THIS TECHNIQUE EFFECTIVE IS THAT THE PLAYER WOULD CHANGE FROM ONE SOUND TO ANOTHER AS THE CHORDS CHANGE, CREATING MORE COMPLEXITY AND, THEREFORE, HOPEFULLY MORE INTEREST.

8 II: PHRYGIAN b6

THE SECOND MODE, USUALLY CALLED "PHRYGIAN NATURAL 6TH" BECAUSE OF IT'S SIMILARITY TO THE PHRYGIAN SCALE, IS TYPICALLY ONLY USED IN A LESS TRADITIONAL MODAL CONTEXT. THIS TECHNIQUE WILL BE DISCUSSED BELOW.

11 III: LYDIAN AUGMENTED, LYDIAN #5 E $\flat$  $\Delta$ #5

R     $\flat 9$      $\flat 3$     #11    #5     $\flat 13$      $\flat 7$     R

THE LYDIAN AUGMENTED SCALE FORMS AN INTERESTING SOUNDING CHORD, THE AUGMENTED MAJOR SEVENTH; AN AUGMENTED TRIAD WITH A MAJOR SEVENTH. THIS SOUND CAN BE USED AS A SUBSTITUTE SOUND FOR A MAJOR SEVENTH CHORD, USUALLY THE I OR THE IV CHORD IN A MAJOR KEY. THIS TECHNIQUE CAN CAUSE A FAIRLY RADICAL CHANGE IN THE SOUND AND MOOD, AND THEREFORE CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN WHEN USING IT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE AUGMENTED MAJOR SEVENTH SOUND WAS RARELY IF EVER USED IN JAZZ BEFORE THE 1960S OR SO, AND USING THIS SOUND IN A MORE TRADITIONAL CONTEXT MAY SOUND OUT OF PLACE. AGAIN, A SOLOIST OR COMPER USING THIS SOUND ON A MAJOR SEVENTH CHORD IN THE CONTEXT OF, FOR EXAMPLE, A II V I PROGRESSION IN THE KEY OF E $\flat$  WOULD USUALLY ONLY "SWITCH" TO THE SOUND OVER THE I CHORD. IN THIS EXAMPLE, THEN, A SOLOIST MIGHT SOLO OVER THE II AND THE V PORTION OF THE PROGRESSION (Fm7 AND B $\flat$ 7) USING MORE CONVENTIONAL VOCABULARY, AND THEN CHANGE OVER TO THE E $\flat$  LYDIAN AUGMENTED SOUND OVER THE I CHORD.

14 IV: LYDIAN  $\flat 7$ , LYDIAN DOMINANT, MIXOLYDIAN #11 F7

R     $\flat 9$      $\flat 3$     #11    5     $\flat 13$      $\flat 7$     R

AFTER THE 1ST MODE, THE LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND IS PROBABLY THE NEXT MOST STRAIGHT FORWARD IN IT'S USAGE. THE HARMONIZED SCALE YIELDS A DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD, PLUS THE UPPER EXTENSIONS/COLOR TONES OF 9, #11, AND 13. THIS SOUND DIFFERS BY ONLY ONE NOTE FROM THE BASIC MIXOLYDIAN SOUND, AND SO THE LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND CAN BE USED FAIRLY EASILY AND SUCCESSFULLY ANYWHERE THAT A MIXOLYDIAN SOUND IS NORMALLY USED (I.E., THE V CHORD IN A MAJOR II V I PROGRESSION). IN THE ABOVE CASE, IN A II V I PROGRESSION IN THE KEY OF B $\flat$  MAJOR, A SOLOIST OR COMPER COULD SWITCH OVER TO THE ABOVE SCALE/SOUND FOR THE V CHORD. THE LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND IS ALSO PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE FOR DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORDS THAT ARE NOT USED AS V CHORDS. THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN DEPTH BELOW.

17 V: MIXOLYDIAN  $\flat 6$ , AEOLIAN  $\flat 3$  G7

R     $\flat 9$      $\flat 3$      $\flat 11$     5     $\flat 13/\flat 6$      $\flat 7$     R

THE "MIXO  $\flat 6$ " SOUND IS ANOTHER ONE THAT IS USUALLY ONLY USED IN A MODAL CONTEXT, DISCUSSED BELOW. THE SOUND COULD BE USED ON A V DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD IN MAJOR OR MINOR AS REPRESENTED ABOVE, BUT TENDS TO SOUND SOMEWHAT DATED AND SPECIFIC TO A PARTICULAR STYLISTIC PERIOD, WITH IT'S DISTINCTIVE SOUNDING  $\flat 9/\flat 13$  COLOR TONES. FOR AN EXAMPLE, THINK OF THE OPENING V CHORD FOR "IT HAD TO BE YOU" AS IT'S OFTEN PLAYED AT SOCIETY DANCES.

20 VI: LOCRIAN  $\flat 9$ , LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$  A $\flat$

R     $\flat 9$      $\flat 3$      $\flat 11$      $\flat 5$      $\flat 13$      $\flat 7$     R

THE LOCRIAN  $\flat 9$  (SOMETIMES WRITTEN AS  $\flat 2$ ) SOUND IS A COLORFUL AND USEFUL SOUND FOR HALF DIMINISHED CHORDS. IN FACT, THE NATURAL 9TH IN THE SCALE ELIMINATES THE NORMAL DISSONANCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE STANDARD LOCRIAN SOUND, WHICH HAS A FLATTED NINTH, SO IN THIS CASE, THE MELODIC MINOR "SUBSTITUTE" SOUND IS IN SOME WAYS LESS DISSONANT AND MORE STABLE THAN THE STANDARD LOCRIAN, OR EVEN THE 2ND MODE OF HARMONIC MINOR. IN THE ABOVE CASE, THE SOUND COULD BE INSERTED IN A II V I PROGRESSION G MINOR ( $A\flat 7 \flat 5$ , D7,  $G\flat M7$ ) OVER THE II CHORD. OCCASIONALLY, EVEN IN A MAJOR KEY A HALF DIMINISHED CHORD WILL BE USED AS A II ( $A\flat M7 \flat 5$ , D7,  $G\flat M7$ ). IN THIS CASE, THE LOCRIAN  $\flat 9$  SOUND IS EVEN MORE APT, SINCE THE  $\flat 9$ , B, WILL BECOME THE  $\flat 3$  OF THE  $G\flat M7$  CHORD.

23 VII: ?

2  
 $\flat 9$   
 $\flat 3$   
 $\flat 11$   
 $\flat 5$   
 $\flat 13$   
 $\flat 7$   
 2

THIS MODE IS THE STRANGEST OF ALL IN IT'S "NATURAL" STATE. WE END UP WITH A HALF DIMINISHED CHORD, WITH EXTENSIONS/COLOR TONES OF  $\flat 9$ ,  $\flat 11$ , AND  $\flat 13$ . NOTICE THAT ENHARMONICALLY SPEAKING, A  $\flat 11$  IS THE SAME THING AS A  $\flat 3$ ! SO EVEN THOUGH ON PAPER, THIS LOOKS LIKE A HALF DIMINISHED CHORD, OUR EAR IS GOING TO HEAR THAT IT HAS A MAJOR THIRD. WE CAN RECONCILE THAT BY SWITCHING PLACES BETWEEN THE THIRD AND THE  $\flat 11$ , AND CALL THE  $E\flat$  THE  $\flat 3$ , AND THE  $D\sharp$  A  $\sharp 9$ . WE CAN ALSO CALL THE  $\flat 5$  A  $\sharp 11$ . NOW HERE'S WHAT WE END UP WITH:

26 VII: ALTERED, SUPERLOCRIAN, DIMINISHED WHOLE TONE, IONIAN  $\sharp 1$

2  
 $\flat 9$   
 $\sharp 9$   
 $\flat 3$   
 $\sharp 11$   
 $\flat 13$   
 $\flat 7$   
 2

NOW WE HAVE SOMETHING THAT MAKES A LITTLE MORE SENSE TO OUR EAR: A DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD WITH NO 5TH, BUT WITH FOUR COLOR TONES:  $\flat 9$ ,  $\sharp 9$ ,  $\sharp 11$ , AND  $\flat 13$ . NOTICE THAT THE ACCIDENTALS FOR  $E\flat$  AND F HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO THEIR ENHARMONIC SHARP EQUIVALENTS TO FIT THE NAME OF THEIR FUNCTIONS BETTER. WITH ALL THESE "ALTERED" COLOR TONES, WE END UP WITH A VERY TENSE SOUNDING DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD. AS IT TURNS OUT, A TENSE SOUND FITS A DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD QUITE WELL WHEN IT'S BEING USED AS A V CHORD. AFTER ALL, THE V CHORD'S FUNCTION IS TO SOUND UNRESOLVED, LIKE IT NEEDS TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. WITH ALL THOSE TENSE SOUNDING COLOR TONES, THE  $B7$  CHORD REALLY SOUNDS LIKE IT NEEDS TO RESOLVE TO AN E CHORD. IT CAN RESOLVE TO AN E MAJOR OR AN E MINOR, IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. WHAT DOES MATTER IS THAT WITH ALL THAT EXTRA TENSION, THE RESOLUTION IS GOING TO SOUND EVEN MORE SATISFYING THAN A "VANILLA" V TO I. JAZZ MUSICIANS HAVE USED THIS SOUND TO GREAT EFFECT SINCE THE BEBOP ERA; IN FACT, OF ALL OF THE MELODIC MINOR MODE USES, THIS ONE IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT AND THE MOST COMMON.

IN ORDER TO BEGIN TO EFFECTIVELY USE THESE SOUNDS IN CONTEXT, THE JAZZ STUDENT NEEDS TO BE AS FLUENT AS POSSIBLE WITH THE JAZZ MELODIC MINOR SCALE. IT'S PRETTY IMPORTANT ALSO TO UNDERSTAND THE USE OF EACH OF THE MODES, THE CHORD TYPE, AND THE UPPER EXTENSIONS FOR EACH. HOWEVER, ONE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE, THAT'S UNLIKE THE MAJOR OR HARMONIC MINOR SCALE, IS THAT THERE AREN'T REALLY ANY TENSION POINTS BUILT INTO THE SCALE. IF YOU PLAY EACH OF THE CHORDS LISTED ABOVE FOR EACH MODE, AND PLAY THROUGH EACH NOTE OF THE MODE AGAINST THAT CHORD, YOU'LL NOTICE THAT EACH NOTE SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD AGAINST THE CHORD. FOR THIS REASON, THERE IS A LITTLE MORE LEE-WAY WITH THE NOTES OF THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE; AS LONG AS YOU'RE PLAYING ONE OR MORE OF THE RIGHT SEVEN NOTES OVER THE RIGHT CHORD, YOU PRETTY MUCH CAN'T GO WRONG. ON ONE HAND, THIS FACT CAN MAKE THE SCALE A LITTLE EASIER TO GET A HANDLE ON, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, IT CAN BE TEMPTING TO MINDLESSLY RUN UP AND DOWN THE SCALE WITHOUT REGARD TO HOW EACH NOTE RELATES TO THE CHORD, SINCE ALL THE NOTES SOUND PRETTY GOOD. WITH THIS NOTE OF CAUTION, I'LL INTRODUCE THE NEXT CONCEPT, WHICH CAN BE USED AS A SHORTCUT TO GETTING THE HANG OF WHICH MELODIC MINOR SCALE/MODE TO USE WHEN.

RATHER THAN THINKING OF EACH MODE AS A SEPARATE ENTITY UNTO ITSELF, MANY PLAYERS FIND IT USEFUL TO ASSOCIATE THE PARENT MELODIC MINOR SCALE WITH ALL SEVEN OF THE DIFFERENT MODES. SO WHETHER YOU'RE PLAYING OVER  $C\flat M7$ ,  $B7\text{ALT}$ , OR  $F7\sharp 11$ , YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW "C MELODIC MINOR," RATHER THAN THINKING OF C MELODIC MINOR, B ALTERED, OR F LYDIAN DOMINANT FOR EACH CHORD.

## MELODIC MINOR CHORD/MODE "SHORTCUT" FOR PARENT SCALE

29 **C<sup>M</sup>/MAJ<sup>7</sup>**

MELODIC MINOR FROM ROOT

I M/MAJ<sup>7</sup>      ♮      9      ♭3      11      5      13      ♭7      ♮

32 **D<sup>M</sup>7 (PHRYGIAN ♭6)**

MELODIC MINOR FROM A WHOLE STEP BELOW

II M7      ♭7      ♮      ♭9      ♭3      11      5      ♭6      ♭7

35 **E<sup>b</sup>Δ<sup>#5</sup>**

MELODIC MINOR FROM A MINOR 3RD BELOW

III MAJ7#5      13      ♭7      ♮      9      ♭3      #11      #5      13

38 **F<sup>7</sup> (LYDIAN DOMINANT)**

MELODIC MINOR FROM THE 5TH

IV7      5      13      ♭7      ♮      9      3      11      5

41 **G<sup>7</sup> (MIXO. ♭6)**

MELODIC MINOR FROM THE 4TH (11TH)

V7      11      5      ♭6      ♭7      ♮      9      3      11

44 **A<sup>ø</sup>**

MELODIC MINOR FROM THE ♭3

VI HALF DIM.      ♭3      11      ♭5      ♭13      ♭7      ♮      9      ♭3

47 **B<sup>7</sup> ALT**

MELODIC MINOR A HALF STEP UP FROM ROOT

VII7      ♭9      #9      ♭3      #11      ♭13      ♭7      ♮      ♭9

IN THE PRECEDING EXAMPLE, THEN, EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE SEVEN DIFFERENT CHORDS, THE APPROACH IS TO THINK C MELODIC MINOR OVER EACH ONE. WITH THE "MELODIC MINOR UP A HALF STEP" THINKING, IT BECOMES EASIER TO TRANSFER THIS IDEA TO OTHER KEYS. SO, FOR EXAMPLE, TO FIGURE OUT WHICH SCALE TO PLAY OVER AN F#7ALT CHORD, JUST THINK "MELODIC MINOR UP A HALF STEP," WHICH, IN THIS CASE, IS G MELODIC MINOR. TO FIGURE OUT WHICH SCALE TO PLAY OVER D7 IF YOU WANT A LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND, THINK MELODIC MINOR FROM THE 5TH (OF D7), OR A MELODIC MINOR.

AGAIN, THE ABOVE TECHNIQUE CAN BE A GREAT SHORTCUT TO LEARNING TO USE THE DIFFERENT MELODIC MINOR SOUNDS, BUT THE STUDENT SHOULD NOT USE THAT TECHNIQUE AS A CRUTCH AND NEVER BOTHER BECOMING INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH THE CHORD TONES INVOLVED IN EACH MODE. THIS IS PARTIALLY WHY THE CHORD TONES FOR EACH MODE ARE LISTED BY FUNCTION: C IS THE ROOT OF C MELODIC MINOR, BUT BECOMES THE b7 OF D PHRYGIAN NATURAL SIX, AND SO FORTH.

THE NEXT "SHORT CUT" ALSO INVOLVES PARALLEL THINKING FOR ALL 7 MODES. AS WAS MENTIONED EARLIER, THERE ARE NO REAL SIGNIFICANT TENSION POINTS BUILT INTO THE SCALE; ALL 7 NOTES WILL SOUND PRETTY GOOD OVER ANY OF THE SEVEN DIATONIC CHORDS. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE "MAGIC" SET OF FOUR NOTES THAT VERY EFFECTIVELY CAN BE USED TO IMPLY THE SOUND OF THE ENTIRE SCALE; THE FOUR NOTES OF THE III MAT7#5 CHORD. IN OUR EXAMPLE KEY OF C MELODIC MINOR, THAT WOULD BE Eb MAT7#5. IF WE USE THOSE FOUR NOTES AS AN UPPER STRUCTURE, AND PUT EACH OF THE SEVEN NOTES OF THE SCALE UNDER IT AS BASS NOTES, WE ACTUALLY GET GREAT CHORD VOICINGS FOR EACH OF THE SEVEN DIATONIC MELODIC MINOR CHORDS:

50

NOTICE THAT FOR MODES II AND V THE CHORD SYMBOL CONTAINS AN ABBREVIATION OF THE MODE NAME RATHER THAN THE "BASIC" SEVENTH CHORD SYMBOL. THIS IS DUE TO THE TYPICAL "MODAL" USAGE OF THESE TWO SOUNDS. THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED IN MORE DETAIL BELOW.

FOR COMPING INSTRUMENTS, THE III MAT7#5 UPPER STRUCTURE CAN BE USED TO GOOD EFFECT FOR CHORD VOICINGS, BUT FOR SOLO INSTRUMENTS, THE III MAT7#5 CHORD CAN BE ARPEGGIATED FOR A SIMILAR EFFECT. FOR EXAMPLE, TO GET A GOOD DISTILLATION OF AN F LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND OVER AN F7 CHORD, TRY ARPEGGIATING THE Eb MAT7#5 CHORD. THE SAME TYPE OF THINKING AS IN THE PREVIOUS EXAMPLE COULD BE USED TO BEGIN TO GET COMFORTABLE WITH WHICH ARPEGGIO TO USE WITH WHICH CHORD:

- I M/MAT7: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM b3 OF CHORD
- II PHRYG. b6: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM b9 OF CHORD
- III MAT7#5: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM ROOT OF CHORD
- IV LYDIAN DOM.: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM b7 OF CHORD
- V MIXO. b6: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM b6 OF CHORD
- VI HALF DIM.: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM b5 OF CHORD
- VII ALT. DOM.: MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM 3RD OF CHORD

SO, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR A Cm/MAT7 CHORD, PLAY A MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM THE b3 OF THE CHORD, OR Eb MAT7#5. FOR AN Ab LYDIAN DOMINANT CHORD, PLAY A MAT7#5 ARPEGGIO FROM THE b7 OF THE CHORD, OR Gb MAT7#5.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT CONCEPT IS THAT OF TRITONE SUBSTITUTION BETWEEN THE ALTERED DOMINANT MODE AND THE LYDIAN DOMINANT MODE. IN THE EXAMPLE IN C MELODIC MINOR, THE LYDIAN DOMINANT MODE IS F, AND THE ALTERED DOMINANT MODE IS B. IT IS PRESUMED THAT THE STUDENT IS ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE BASIC CONCEPT OF TRITONE SUBSTITUTION. NOTICE THAT SINCE THE F LYDIAN DOM. AND B ALTERED DOMES ARE EXACTLY A TRITONE APART, AND THEY BOTH FORM DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORDS, THEY WILL BOTH SHARE THE SAME 3RD AND 7TH, ALTHOUGH THE 3RD OF F7 WILL BE THE 7TH OF B7, AND VICE VERSA. NOTE ALSO THAT THE Eb HAS BEEN CHANGED TO A D# ON THE B7 CHORD SINCE IT'S BEING USED AS A MAJOR THIRD. THE TWO NOTES SOUND THE SAME TO THE EAR, HOWEVER.

57

6 THEREFORE, IN A II V I PROGRESSION IN E, THE B ALTERED SOUND COULD BE USED OVER THE V CHORD, BUT THE F LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND COULD ALSO BE USED IN IT'S PLACE. THE PARENT SCALE FOR EITHER HARMONY WOULD BE C MELODIC MINOR, AND FURTHERMORE, EbMA7#5 COULD BE USED QUITE EFFECTIVELY AS AN UPPER STRUCTURE FOR A CHORD VOICING, OR ARPEGGIATED BY A SOLOIST TO IMPLY EITHER OR BOTH SOUNDS. AT THIS POINT, THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE B ALTERED SOUND AND THE F LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND IS GOING TO BE WHICH NOTE THE BASS PLAYER CHOOSES TO PLAY.

AN EXAMPLE OF A TUNE WITH THE TRITONE SUBSTITUTION LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND BUILT INTO IT WOULD BE DIZZY GILLESPIE'S *A NIGHT IN TUNISIA*. THE TUNE IS IN D MINOR, AND BEGINS WITH AN Eb7#11 CHORD PROGRESSING TO A D MINOR CHORD. Eb7#11 IMPLIES LYDIAN DOMINANT; THE PARENT SCALE WOULD BE Bb MELODIC MINOR. THE 7TH, OR ALTERED MODE IN Bb MELODIC MINOR WOULD BE A. USING THE ABOVE IDEA, AN A7ALT SOUND COULD BE SUBSTITUTED FOR THE Eb7#11 SOUND. IF THE BASS PLAYER PLAYED AN A INSTEAD OF AN Eb AS A BASS NOTE, AND THE CHORD INSTRUMENT STILL CONTINUED TO PLAY THE Eb7#11 CHORD, THE A7 ALTERED SOUND WOULD RESULT, SUCH IS THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO SOUNDS.

#### THE "MODAL" MODES: II AND V

IT WAS MENTIONED BEFORE THAT THE 2ND AND 5TH MODE OF MELODIC MINOR ARE RARELY USED IN THEIR MORE TRADITIONAL MANNER. THE SECOND MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR IS RARELY USED OVER A Dm7 CHORD, AND THE FIFTH MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR IS RARELY USED OVER A G7 CHORD. HOWEVER, IF WE GO TO THE III MA7#5 UPPER STRUCTURE IDEA, WE GET SOME INTERESTING SOUNDS FOR THOSE TWO MODES. HERE ARE THE TWO UPPER STRUCTURE PLUS BASS NOTES FOR MODES II AND V AGAIN:

59 Eb MA7#5/D (OR D PHRYG.b6)      Eb MA7#5/G (OR G MIXO.b6)

NOTICE THAT MOST OF THE OTHER UPPER STRUCTURE PLUS BASS NOTES SOUND MORE OR LESS LIKE THE BASIC 7TH CHORD, BUT WITH ONE OR MORE COLOR TONES. IN THESE TWO CASES, HOWEVER, A PRETTY "EXOTIC" SOUND RESULTS. THE FIRST CHORD ABOVE DOESN'T REALLY SOUND LIKE ANY KIND OF Dm7 CHORD AND NEITHER DOES THE SECOND CHORD SOUND MUCH LIKE A G7. IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO USE THESE SOUNDS IN A TONAL CONTEXT, BUT THE SOUNDS WOULD BE, AGAIN, PRETTY EXOTIC. IN THE CASE OF EbMA7#5/D, SINCE THERE'S A b9 (Eb) INCLUDED IN THE CHORD, AS WELL AS AN 11TH (G), THIS SOUND OFTEN IS USED IN PLACE OF A DOMINANT 7 SUSPENDED CHORD. THE FLATTED NINTH GIVES AN EXTRA ELEMENT OF TENSION. SO, IN THE ABOVE CASE, THE EbMA7#5/D CHORD COULD BE USED IN PLACE OF A D7 OR D7sus CHORD, AND RESOLVE TO A G MAJOR CHORD. IN THE CASE OF THE EbMA7#5/G CHORD, WE END UP WITH ESSENTIALLY A G MAJOR TRIAD WITH AN ADDED FLAT SIXTH (Eb). THIS SOUND IS SOMETIMES USED IN PLACE OF A MAJOR I CHORD.

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY FOR THESE MORE EXOTIC SOUNDS IS IN A MODAL CONTEXT. IN THIS CASE, THE CHORDS ARE TAKEN OUT OF THEIR NORMAL "FUNCTIONAL" USE AND APPLIED SOMEWHAT MORE RANDOMLY, TO ACHIEVE A MORE COLORISTIC, STATIC EFFECT (AS OPPOSED TO THE MORE TRADITIONAL TENSION TO RESOLUTION EFFECT OF TONAL MUSIC). FOR EXAMPLE, AN ENTIRE COMPOSITION MIGHT BE BASED ON ONE CHORD, THE PHRYGIAN b6 SOUND, OR SEVERAL DIFFERENT SIMILAR TYPES OF CHORDS MOVING IN NON TRADITIONAL WAYS.

#### THE MINOR IV TO I PROGRESSION AND THE LYDIAN DOMINANT SOUND

AFTER THE V TO I PROGRESSION, POSSIBLY THE MOST COMMON PROGRESSION IN MOST STANDARDS AND JAZZ TUNES WOULD BE THE MINOR IV TO I PROGRESSION. IN A MAJOR KEY, THE TENSION PRODUCED BY PLAYING THE IV CHORD AS MINOR (OFTEN JUST AFTER A REGULAR MAJOR IV CHORD) AND RESOLVING TO I MAJOR CAN BE ALMOST AS SATISFYING A RESOLUTION AS A V TO I. FROM ABOUT THE 1950S ONWARD, MANY JAZZ MUSICIANS BEGAN TO SUBSTITUTE THE IV MINOR CHORD WITH A bVII LYDIAN DOMINANT CHORD. NOTICE THAT THE PARENT SCALE OF THE LYDIAN DOMINANT WOULD STILL BE MELODIC MINOR BASED ON THE MINOR IV CHORD. THUS, IN C MAJOR, THIS OLDER STYLE PROGRESSION:

61 F6      Fm6      C

IV MAJOR      IV MINOR      I MAJOR

WILL OFTEN BE PLAYED BY MODERN JAZZ PLAYERS AS:

63 FΔ      Bb7(9#11)      CΔ

IV MAJOR      bVII LYD. DOM. (4TH MODE OF F MELODIC MINOR)      I MAJOR

NOTICE THAT THE Fm6 AND THE Bb7(9#11) CHORDS CONTAIN THREE OF THE SAME NOTES, AND SOUND PRETTY SIMILAR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRESSION. THE UPPER STRUCTURE STAYS VIRTUALLY THE SAME, BUT THE BASS MOVEMENT BECOMES MORE INTERESTING.

## A FEW FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT THE MELODIC MINOR MODES

AS WAS MENTIONED EARLIER, BECAUSE THE MELODIC MINOR MODES A) TEND TO BE USED AS SUBSTITUTE SOUNDS FOR STANDARD MAJOR AND MINOR KEY HARMONIES, AND B) BECAUSE THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE DOESN'T HAVE ANY OBVIOUS TENSION POINTS, ONE CAN BE EASY TO BE LULLED INTO USING A "CUT AND PASTE" APPROACH, PLUGGING IN THE APPROPRIATE SCALE OVER A CERTAIN CHORD, AND ENDING THERE. KEEP IN MIND THAT JAZZ IMPROVISATION INVOLVES MUCH MORE THAN JUST SIMPLY PLUGGING IN A PARTICULAR SCALE AT A CERTAIN TIME. IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY USE THE MELODIC MINOR MODES, ONE MUST ALSO HAVE MASTERED THE BASICS OF CONSTRUCTING EFFECTIVE MELODIES, VOICE LEADING FROM CHORD TO CHORD, AND THE OTHER IDIOMATIC ELEMENTS OF THE JAZZ STYLE. BECOMING FLUENT WITH THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE AND LEARNING WHERE TO USE IT IS ONLY ONE SMALL PART OF LEARNING TO BE AN EFFECTIVE JAZZ IMPROVISER. IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT BEFORE STUDENTS ATTEMPT TO MASTER THE INTRICACIES OF THE MELODIC MINOR MODES, THEY HAVE A SOLID BACKGROUND IN THINGS LIKE IMPROVISING WITH A GOOD SWING FEEL, USE OF IDIOMATIC SHADING DEVICES, IMPROVISING EFFECTIVELY ON CHORD TONES AND GUIDE TONES, AND USE OF APPROACH AND TARGET NOTES.

ALSO, STUDENTS SOMETIMES GET CONFUSED ABOUT THE USE OF SUBSTITUTE HARMONIES IN JAZZ IMPROVISATION. EXPERIENCED JAZZ SOLOISTS AND/OR COMPOSERS WILL BE CONSTANTLY EDITING AND AMENDING THE MUSIC THEY ARE PLAYING ON THE FLY, BASED ON INTERACTION WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AND/OR THEIR OWN MOOD AND TASTE. IF YOU ARE SOLOING OVER A II V I AND THE COMPING INSTRUMENT IS PLAYING "VANILLA" CHORD CHANGES, THAT DOESN'T AUTOMATICALLY MEAN YOU CAN'T UTILIZE MELODIC MINOR SOUNDS OR OTHER REHARMONIZATION TECHNIQUES. IF THE MELODIC LINE YOU PLAY IS STRONG ENOUGH TO STAND ON ITS OWN, IT WILL TRANSCEND ANY MOMENTARY DISSONANCES OR "WRONG NOTES" THAT MAY HAPPEN BECAUSE THE PIANO PLAYER PLAYED A NATURAL 9TH AND YOU PLAYED A FLATTED 9TH. DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPERIMENT, HAVE FUN, AND TRY NEW SOUNDS. ONE OF THE GREAT THINGS ABOUT JAZZ IS THAT THE PREVIOUS SUGGESTION DOESN'T NEED TO BE RESTRICTED TO THE PRACTICE ROOM OR THE REHEARSAL HALL. WITH A LITTLE EXPERIENCE, YOU CAN LEARN TO EXPERIMENT, TRY NEW SOUNDS, AND (GASP) EVEN HAVE FUN WHILE YOU ARE PERFORMING FOR AN AUDIENCE. IN FACT, THAT SENSE OF JOYFUL EXPERIMENTATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE JAZZ TRADITION. SOME OF THE GREATEST MOMENTS IN THE MUSIC HAVE HAPPENED WHEN IMAGINATIVE MUSICIANS IN THE MIDST OF A PERFORMANCE HAVE THOUGHT "I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I TRIED PLAYING *THIS*..."

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF USES OF THE DIFFERENT MELODIC MINOR MODES AS THEY MIGHT BE APPLIED IN REAL SITUATIONS.

### MODE I: C MELODIC MINOR OVER I MINOR

STANDARD

65  $D^{\circ}$   $G^7$   $Cm^7$

C NATURAL MINOR

WITH MELODIC MINOR

69  $D^{\circ}$   $G^7$   $Cm^7$

C MELODIC

### MODE II: D PHRYGIAN $\flat 6$ OVER $V^7$ SUS

STANDARD

73  $D^7$ SUS  $G^{\Delta}$

D MIXOLYDIAN

WITH PHRYGIAN  $\flat 6$

75  $D^7$ SUS (IMPLIES  $D^7$ SUS $\flat 9$  $\flat 13$ )  $G^{\Delta}$

D PHRYGIAN  $\flat 6$   
(2ND MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

MODE III: E $\flat$  LYDIAN #5 (3RD MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR) OVER I MAJOR

STANDARD

77 F $M^7$  B $b^7$  E $b^{\Delta}$

WITH LYDIAN #5

81 F $M^7$  B $b^7$  E $b^{\Delta}$

E $b$  MAJOR (IONIAN)

E $b$  LYDIAN #5 (3RD MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

MODE IV: F LYDIAN DOMINANT OVER V $^7$ , b $II^7$ , AND b $VI^7$

1. OVER V $^7$ :

STANDARD

85 F $^7$  B $b^{\Delta}$

F MIXOLYDIAN

WITH LYDIAN DOMINANT

87 F $^7$  B $b^{\Delta}$

F LYDIAN DOMINANT  
(4TH MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

2. OVER b $II^7$  (TRITONE SUB FOR V)

STANDARD

89 F $^7$  E $^{\Delta}$  (OR E $M^7$ )

F MIXOLYDIAN

WITH LYDIAN DOMINANT

91 F $^7$  E $^{\Delta}$  (OR E $M^7$ )

F LYDIAN DOMINANT  
(4TH MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

3. OVER  $\flat VII^7$  (SUB FOR IV MINOR)

STANDARD

93  $F^7$  (SUB FOR  $C^M$ )  $G^\Delta$

F MIXOLYDIAN (C DORIAN)-----

WITH LYDIAN DOMINANT

95  $F^7$   $G^\Delta$

F LYDIAN DOMINANT-----  
(4TH MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

MODE V: G MIXO  $\flat 6$  OVER  $I^M A^7$

---

STANDARD

97  $A^M7$   $D^7$   $G^\Delta$

G MAJOR (IONIAN)-----

WITH MIXOLYDIAN  $\flat 6$

100  $A^M7$   $D^7$   $G^\Delta$

G MIXOLYDIAN  $\flat 6$ -----  
(5TH MODE OF C MELODIC MINOR)

MODE VI: A LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$  OVER II HALF DIMINISHED IN MAJOR AND MINOR

---

STANDARD

103  $A^\circ$   $D^7$   $G^\Delta$

A LOCRIAN-----

WITH LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$

106  $A^\circ$   $D^7$   $G^\Delta$

A LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$ -----  
(6TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

STANDARD

109  $A^{\circ}$   $D7b9$   $G_M7$

A LOCRIAN-----

WITH LOCRIAN  $b2$

112  $A^{\circ}$   $D7b9$   $G_M7$

A LOCRIAN  $b2$ -----  
(6TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

MODE VII:  $B$  ALTERED OVER  $V7$  IN MAJOR AND MINOR

---

STANDARD

115  $F\#_M7$   $B7$   $E^{\Delta}$

B MIXOLYDIAN-----

WITH ALTERED

118  $F\#_M7$   $B7$   $E^{\Delta}$

B ALTERED-----  
(7TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

STANDARD

121  $F\#^{\circ}$   $B7b9$   $E_M7$

E HARMONIC MINOR-----

WITH ALTERED

124  $F\#^{\circ}$   $B7b9$   $E_M7$

B ALTERED-----  
(7TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

COMBINATION OF F# LOCRIAN:2 AND B ALTERED OVER II HALF DIMINISHED - V7 IN MAJOR AND MINOR

---

127 **F# $\emptyset$**  **B<sup>7</sup>ALT\*** **E $\Delta$**

F# LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$ -----  
(6TH MODE A MELODIC MINOR)

B ALTERED-----  
(7TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

130 **F# $\emptyset$**  **B<sup>7</sup>ALT\*** **E $M^7$**

F# LOCRIAN  $\flat 2$ -----  
(6TH MODE A MELODIC MINOR)

B ALTERED-----  
(7TH MODE C MELODIC MINOR)

\*NOTICE THE "B<sup>7</sup>ALT" CHORD SYMBOL. THIS IS USED TO INDICATE TO BOTH THE COMPER AS WELL AS TO THE SOLOIST THAT THE ALTERED SCALE SOUND IS TO BE USED. THE COMPER COULD PLAY THE BASIC SHELL VOICING OF 2, 3,  $\flat 7$ , PLUS ANY COMBINATION OF THE ALTERED UPPER EXTENSIONS  $\flat 9$ , #9, #11 AND  $\flat 13$ . ALTHOUGH JAZZ PLAYERS WILL OFTEN PLAY THE ALTERED SOUND ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT OVER ANY V7 CHORD, SOMETIMES AN ARRANGER OR COMPOSER WILL SPECIFICALLY WANT THAT SOUND, AND WILL USUALLY INDICATE IT WITH THE ABOVE CHORD SYMBOL.

USE OF THE AUGMENTED MAJ.7 UPPER STRUCTURE OVER A II V I IN MINOR

---

133 **F# $\emptyset$**  **B<sup>7</sup>ALT** **E $M$ /MAJ<sup>7</sup>**

CMAJ7#5 (III CHORD OF A MELODIC MINOR)

E $\flat$ MAJ7#5 (III CHORD OF C MELODIC MINOR)

GMAJ7#5 (III CHORD OF E MELODIC MINOR)