



PENTATONIC VOICE LEADING

WITH *NICK CAMPBELL*

COURSE BOOK

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PENTATONIC VOICE LEADING

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Overview



Join Nick Campbell as he dives deep down the rabbit hole of pentatonic scales. We'll cover:

- How to voice lead with different pentatonic shapes.
- How to combine different pentatonic shapes.
- The altered pentatonic scale.
- Bi-tonal pentatonic voice leading over ii-V-I progressions and jazz standards.

Lesson 01

Pentatonic Scales

Minor Pentatonic Scale

For many of you, the **minor pentatonic scale** was likely the first scale you learned on the bass (after perhaps the major scale); it's one of the most common groupings of notes in Western music. You'll find the minor pentatonic scale throughout almost every pop song, many rock and funk riffs, and countless solos.

As its name implies, a pentatonic scale is a *five-note* scale. A *minor* pentatonic scale consists of the Root, $\flat 3$ rd, 4th, 5th, and $\flat 7$ th degrees of a major scale.

Let's take a look at the D Minor Pentatonic Scale:

D Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Dm7 (0:30)

Dm7

Relative to D Major

Examining the notes, we find all chord tones, with one note providing some tension; its sound will have the characteristics of the chord you're playing over. In other words, playing a D Minor Pentatonic over a Dm7 chord will sound like a...Dm7 chord.



"The pentatonic scale is the most natural way we tend to group notes, at least in Western music."

continued →

LESSON 1 (continued)

But an easy and effective way to bring out different qualities of the chord you're playing over is to start the minor pentatonic scale on a different interval of the scale. The most common interval to start on is the **fifth** up from the root*. Over a Dm7, this means playing an *A Minor Pentatonic*:

A Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Dm7 (2:12)

Dm7

5 $\flat 7$ R 9 11 (5) ← Relative to D Major

T 12 10 12 14 12 14

A B

When compared to a regular D Minor Pentatonic, playing the A Minor Pentatonic over a Dm7 gives us the 9th in addition to the 11th, but it also removes the 3rd—giving the impression of playing “around” the tonal center rather than in it. (This approach is popular in R&B songs with minor key vamps.)

Example 01: D Minor Pentatonic Scale Sounds (3:25)

♩ = 90

Dm7

T 10 13 10 12 10 12 10 12 10 10 13 10 12 10 12 12 10 12 10 13 10

A B

Sounds like *D minor*, doesn't it.

continued →

*Also called pentatonic superimposition.
See “Functional Theory for Bassist Vol. II” in the SBL Course Library for additional information.

LESSON 1 (continued)

Let's continue this idea by looking at a soloing idea using just the D Minor Pentatonic Scale:

Example 01 (continued): D Minor Pentatonic Solo (3:52)

♩ = 90

The sheet music is written for guitar in 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a bass staff and a fretboard diagram below it.

System 1: The first staff begins with a **Dm7** chord. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 10-12, 10, 12-14, 10, 12-10, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12-10, 8, 10, 12, 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 10-12, 10. The music includes slurs, vibrato marks, and a triplet of eighth notes.

System 2: The second staff starts with a triplet of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 12, 10, 12, 14, 17, 14, 17, 19, 17, 18-17, 15, 15, 17, 19, 15-17, 12, 12, 10, 12. The music includes slurs, vibrato marks, and a triplet of eighth notes.

System 3: The third staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 17-19, 17, 19, 17, 15, 17-19, 17, 19, 17, 15, 17, 15, 14-15, 17, 15, 16-15, 13, 10, 10, 12, 10, 12, 10. The music includes slurs, vibrato marks, and a triplet of eighth notes.

Straight out of the blues and funk vocabulary. No surprises.

LESSON 1 (continued)

Next, let's compare that sound against the *A Minor Pentatonic* played over the same Dm7 vamp. Notice how the colors brought out by this scale are different:

Example 02: A Minor Pentatonic Scale Sounds (4:33)

♩ = 90
Dm7

The fretboard diagram shows the following fingerings for the left hand (T = thumb, A = index, B = middle):

- Measure 1: 12-15, 12-14, 12-14
- Measure 2: 12-14, 12-14, 12-14, 15-12
- Measure 3: 10-12, 10-12, 14-12, 12-14, 12-14
- Measure 4: 12-14, 12-10, 12-12

The lack of the third gives an emphasis on the 9th and 11th, bringing out the tensions in the Dm7 chord.

Continuing this idea, let's look at some soloing ideas:

Example 02 (continued): A Minor Pentatonic Solo (5:00)

♩ = 90
Dm7

The fretboard diagram shows the following fingerings for the left hand (T = thumb, A = index, B = middle):

- System 1 (Measures 3-4): 10-12, 10-12, 14-12, 17-17, 17-12, 14-14, 14-12, 12-12, 14-14, 0-12, 12-12, 12-10, 12-14, 10-12, 12-12
- System 2 (Measures 5-6): 10-12, 10-12, 14-12, 12-10, 12-14, 12-14, 12-10, 10-12, 14-12, 12-12

continued →

LESSON 1 (continued)

Example 02 (continued):

The musical notation for Example 02 (continued) consists of three systems, each with a bass staff and a corresponding fretboard diagram below it.

- System 1 (Measures 5-6):** The bass staff shows a melodic line starting on a low note, moving up and then down. The fretboard diagram below it shows the fret numbers: (12) 10, 12 10, 10 12, 10 12, 10 8, 5 5, 5 0, 8 5, 0.
- System 2 (Measures 7-8):** The bass staff shows a more complex melodic line with triplets and sixteenth notes. The fretboard diagram shows: 5 7, 5 7, 5 7 9 5 7 5, 7 5, 7 5, 7 5, 7 5, 7 5, 8 5, 5 7, 5 7, 5 7 9 5 7 5, 9 7, 12 9, 14 12, 17 14. There is an *8va* marking above the staff.
- System 3 (Measures 9-10):** The bass staff shows a melodic line with a *loco* section. The fretboard diagram shows: 19/21, 17, 19, 17, 17, 19, 21, 17, 19, 17, 19, 17, 19, 17, 15, 17, 19, 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, 17. There is an *8va* marking above the staff and a *loco* marking above the staff.

While it's not exactly *bi-tonality* (two keys together at the same time), you should hear the parallel differences between the vamp and the melody.

Finally, let's combine the two scales over the vamp into a more "sophisticated" idea. Bassists Thundercat and Jaco Pastorius, for example, used this idea all the time in their playing, seamlessly switching between the two scales.

continued →

LESSON 1 (continued)

Example 03: Combined D Minor and A Minor Pentatonics (6:30)

♩ = 90

Dm7

10 12 10 12 14 10 12 12 9 12 10 10 12 12 10 12 15 12 15 12 14 12 14 12

(12) 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 14 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 13 15 12 15 12 14 13 15

12 15 12 14 12 15 12 14 12 15 12 14 12 15 14 12 15 12 14 12 15 12 14 15 12 14 12 15 12 10

10 10 12 10 12 10 10 12 9 12 10 12 10 10 12 12 10 10 12 12 10 12 10 8 5 8 5 7 5

LESSON 1 (continued)

Example 03 (continued):

9

11

1/4

Notice that you still hear all those ideas as *pentatonic* ideas, but they overlap and bring different colors out of the chord. Pentatonics are also very “sing-able.” Embrace your tendencies to “hear” those pentatonic ideas!



“I sometimes sing when I play bass out of habit... it helps me do ideas.”

Lesson 02

Thinking from the “Top”

As bass players, we’re used to influencing the voice leading from the bottom – “A chord isn’t a chord unless we play the bottom note.” But, if you don’t start at the root, you can overlay different qualities over the chord you’re playing over.

For example, a C major triad (C–E–G) is only a C major triad if the bass is playing a C note; if the bass plays an F, it becomes an Fmaj9(no 3rd) (F–C–E–G) or if the bass plays an A, it’s an Am7 chord (A–C–E–G).

But it’s also possible to change the function of the chord being played over by changing what’s played on *top* on the melody layer. Pentatonics are perfect for achieving this.

Moving up in Fifths

In the next examples, we’ll use a static Cmaj7 vamp to demonstrate how playing from different root notes changes the qualities of the chord you’re playing over. We’ll use the minor pentatonic scales throughout, but keep in mind that relative *major* pentatonic scale contains the same notes, e.g., C Major Pentatonic and A Minor Pentatonic are the same scale.

LESSON 2 (continued)

To begin with, we'll play the most diatonic pentatonic scale we can over the Cmaj7 chord vamp, the A Minor Pentatonic Scale (C Major Pentatonic Scale):

Example 01: A Minor Pentatonic Scale Sounds (2:19)

♩ = 90
Cmaj7

4

let ring -----

As before, this scale focuses in on the chord tones, and generates a melody you might expect in a pop song. It's the "go to" scale, and it works. But let's go a little deeper by starting our minor pentatonic scale *up a fifth*. Here, that means starting on an E (up a fifth from A), and playing E Minor Pentatonic (G major Pentatonic):

E Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Cmaj7 (3:52)

Cmaj7

3 5 6 7 9 (3) ← Relative to C Major

Now, with respect to the Cmaj7 chord, we add the major seventh and ninth qualities into the mix.

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Let's look at how these different chord qualities are brought out when playing the two minor pentatonic scales over the same underlying chord:

Example 02: A and E Minor Pentatonics Over Cmaj7 (4:20)

♩ = 90

Cmaj7

A Minor Pentatonic →

12 12 15 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 15 12 14 15

E Minor Pentatonic →

12 14 12 14 14 16 14 12 12 14 12 14 14 16 12 14 12 14 16

19 14 16 12 14 15 14 12 14 12 12 13 12 14 12 14 12 10 12 12 14 12 14 16 12 14

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 02 (continued):

We can repeat this idea one more time and move up *another* fifth from the E. The resulting minor pentatonic will be in B: B Minor Pentatonic (D Major Pentatonic):

B Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Cmaj7 (6:11)

Cmaj7

Here, the addition of the #11 reharmonizes the underlying Cmaj7—instead of hearing it as the **I** chord, your ear interprets it more as a **IV** chord. This is a very common idea at the end of many jazz standards that adds a little tension.

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 03: B Minor Pentatonic Over Cmaj7 (6:57)

♩ = 90

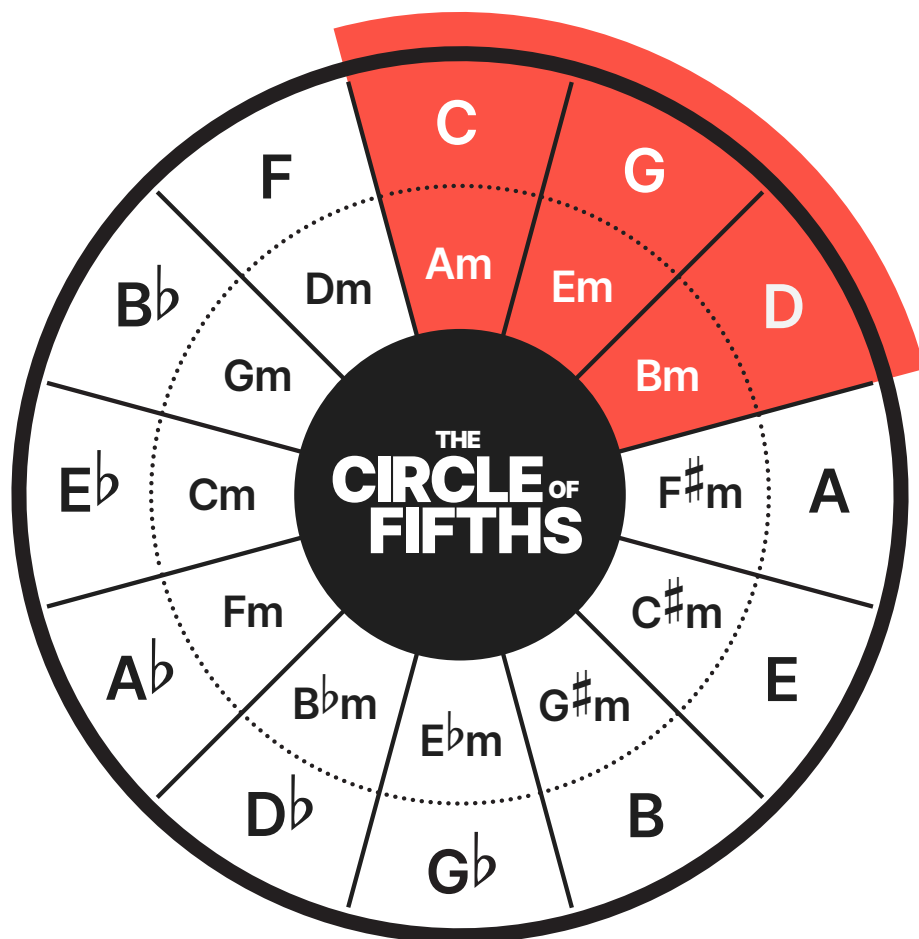
Cmaj7

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 90 bpm. It consists of four systems of music, each with a bass staff and a fretboard diagram. The first system shows a 3-measure phrase with a triplet and a 1/4 note. The second system shows a 4-measure phrase with a 5-measure phrase. The third system shows a 6-measure phrase with a 6-measure phrase. The fourth system shows an 8-measure phrase with a 3-measure phrase. The fretboard diagrams show the positions of the notes on the strings.

Notice how different the simple Cmaj7 vamp sounds underneath this new pentatonic scale; it almost sounds as if it's in a different key. It's a perfect example of influencing the harmony from the "top," rather than the bottom.

LESSON 2 (continued)

Alright then! Let's keep adding fifths! Well, unfortunately, this is the end of the line. Taking a look at the Circle of Fourths/Fifths, we can see that the three minor pentatonic scales we've used (and their associated relative major scales) are closely related:



Each time you go up a fifth, only *one* note in the scale is changed. But once you've gone up a fifth a *third* time, you've strayed too far away from the key center, and the notes just don't have a close enough connection anymore.

Combining Pentatonics

Finally, let's combine all three pentatonic patterns in the same bass line.

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 04: Combined Minor Pentatonics Over Cmaj7 (8:10)

♩ = 90

Cmaj7

5 7 5 7 9 9 7 5 5 7 5 7 4 7 5 7 5 7 5 7

7 5 7 9 7 9 9 10 11 11 11 7 7 7 9 9 7 7 12 12 12 9 9 9

12 12 9 9 12 14 14 14 12 12 12 12 13 14 14 12 14 16 16 14 12 13 12 14 12

(12) 12 14 12 12 14 16 12 14 14 12 14 11 14 12 14 12 14 12 12 14 12 14 12 0

12 14 12 14 14 16 14 16 14 16 14 14 16 14 17 14 16 14 17 14 14 14 12

continued →

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 04 (continued):

10

12

14

16

18

let ring

Lesson 03

Altered Pentatonic Scale

In this lesson, we'll exclusively look at the **Altered Pentatonic Scale**.

The "V" Chord

The **V** chord provides the most *tension* prior to a *resolution* to a root, for example in a **IV-V-I** or **ii-V-I** chord progression/sequence. It's also the easiest place to change the sound to get away from the key center. As a result, there are many ways to improvise over a dominant chord (the V7) on the way to resolving to the root. In jazz music, one popular scale is the **Super Locrian Scale**, also called the **Altered Scale**; it's the seventh mode of the Melodic Minor Scale.

What makes the Altered Scale so versatile when playing over a dominant chord is that it contains the chord tones of that dominant chord (1-3-7), *plus* every alterable tension possible:

G Super Locrian Scale/G Altered Scale (1:26)

G7

Scale Degree	Interval	Fret
1	R	10
2	b9	11
3	#9*	13
4	3	9
5	#11	11
6	b13	13
7	7	10
8	(R)	12

This scale is the same as the **A^b Melodic Minor Scale** when played starting and ending on the A^b. It's a half-major, half-minor scale in that it contains a major sixth and a major seventh, plus a minor third.

continued →

*Recall that B^b=A[#], C^b=B^b, and D^b=C[#]; they're known as **enharmonic equivalents**, meaning they represent the same pitch. For example, the #9 of G is actually A[#], but in the altered scale it's represented by B^b.

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 01: G Altered Scale Over G7 (2:40)

♩ = 90
G7

3

8va-----

loco

5

6

6

6

6

12

11 10 10

12

11 10 10

let ring-----

12

11 10 10

continued →

LESSON 3 (continued)

Notice how, with all those tensions, there's no real resolution; it really gets away from the tonal center. But there's a *full* release if you do resolve back to the I chord. For example:



"[Playing the Altered Scale], you get 'maximum distance' away from the key center, and when it resolves, there's a full release."

$\text{♩} = 90$

G7 C

V chord (tension) → I chord (release)

T 10 11 13 14 11 13 10 12 9 10

A B

The Altered Pentatonic Scale

Most melodies we're used to hearing tend to come from some sort of *pentatonic* scale. The Melodic Minor/Super Locrian/Altered Scale by itself is more complicated, and its sound doesn't necessarily feel "natural" when played. But looking at the scale, you can find a pentatonic scale "buried in the details"—if we start on the $\sharp 9$ of the Super Locrian scale and play a minor pentatonic, we hit all the tensions of that scale, but it omits the Root and the third. In fact, this is also the B^b Minor Pentatonic Scale:

G Altered Pentatonic/ B^b Minor Pentatonic Scale (5:03)

G7

$\sharp 9$ $\sharp 11$ $b13$ $b7$ $b9$ ($\sharp 9$) ← Relative to G Major

T 13 11 13 15 13 15

A B

continued →

LESSON 3 (continued)

When this altered pentatonic is played over an altered dominant chord, a *bi-tonality*, or parallel voice-leading idea becomes clear because of the many tensions in the scale. Here, you'll hear a B^b Minor melody played over a G7 sound that ultimately resolves to a C Major chord!

Let's look at the scale in action. First here's just the scale itself:

Example 02: B^b Minor Pentatonic Scale Over G7 (6:05)

$\text{♩} = 90$
G7

Next, let's look at the scale in a more extended context:

Example 02 (continued): (6:27)

G7



"Super gritty, super angular, every note is tense."

"But because it's grouped in a pattern that's familiar, it doesn't feel like it's coming out of nowhere."

continued →

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 02 (continued):

7

8

9

11

13

1/4

1

1/4

LESSON 3 (continued)

Do you notice that if you remove the G7 context, these are all just funky lines you're likely used to hearing? But with that G7 hovering above, it changes how the notes are actually heard: there's a distinction between the pentatonic part and the dominant G7 chord, yet you hear them simultaneously. Notice, too, that this Altered Pentatonic Scale sounds different than the Super Locrian Scale.



"The pentatonic groupings of melodies comes really naturally to us; you'll think of things in a much less restrained way than if you're trying to force your fingers to learn a pattern."

Lesson 04

Playing Over a ii–V–I

Do you like puzzles? We've reached the point where we'll now fit everything together—playing the pentatonic shapes detailed in Lessons 01–03 over a chord progression, specifically a ii–V–I progression in C Major.

We'll *voice lead* them through the changes, creating a parallel structure between the melodies and the chords themselves, or in other words, **pentatonic voice lead**.

Pentatonic Voice Leading

Most of us are familiar with changing the scale or mode we're playing to accommodate a change in the underlying chord, for example playing a Dorian Scale over a **ii** chord or a Mixolydian Scale over a **V** chord. Pentatonic voice leading is much the same, except rather than changing the mode or scale, we'll now take the different pentatonic shapes and use them on each chord differently. While the chord progression is moving in fourths counter-clockwise around the Circle of Fifths (Dm–G7–C, or **ii–V–I**), we'll be able to create different "root" motion by voice leading with the pentatonic scales.

Let's revisit what we've already discussed. In Lesson 01, we used the idea of going up a fifth from the **ii** chord and playing a minor pentatonic:

A Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Dm7 (1:44)

Dm7

5 $\flat 7$ R 9 11 (5) ← Relative to D Major

12 10 12 14 12 14

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

In Lesson 03, we used the Altered Pentatonic Scale over the **V**, which is a minor pentatonic scale that starts a *minor third up* from the root:

G Altered Pentatonic/B^b Minor Pentatonic Scale

G7

#9 #11 b13 b7 b9 (#9) ← Relative to G Major

T 13 11 13 15 13 15

A B

Notice that the altered pentatonic is the same pentatonic pattern as the first example, just moved **up one fret**.

And In Lesson 02, instead of the major key (C) we started with the relative minor key (A Minor, or the **vi**), then went up a fifth to the E (**iii**), and then up another fifth to the B (**vii**), and played a a minor pentatonic from that note:

B Minor Pentatonic Played Over a Cmaj7 (2:37)

Cmaj7

7 9 3 #11 13 (7) ← Relative to C Major

T 14 17 14 16 14 16

A B

As before, note that this minor pentatonic is (essentially) the same pentatonic pattern as the altered pentatonic, just *again* moved up one fret.

Let's put those puzzle pieces together...

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 01: Combined Pentatonics Over a ii-V-I (3:18)

♩ = 90

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

A Minor Pentatonic → **B^b Minor Pentatonic** → **B Minor Pentatonic** →

Dm7

G7 Cmaj7

B^b Minor Pentatonic → **B Minor Pentatonic** →

Dm7

A Minor Pentatonic →

P.M. ---|

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 01 (continued):

G7

10

B^b Minor Pentatonic →

15 13 15 13 16 13 13 15 13 16 13 13 16 13 15

Cmaj7

11

B Minor Pentatonic →

13 16 14 16 14 17 14 14 16 14 16 19 16 19 16 16 14 16 17 14

Dm7

12

A Minor Pentatonic →

14 16 14 16 14 17 14 14 16 14 16 14 17 14 14 17 14 17 19

G7

14

B^b Minor Pentatonic →

15 18 15 18 15 18 15 18 15 18 15 18 15 18

Cmaj7

15

B Minor Pentatonic →

14 16 14 17 14 14 16 17 14 14 12 12 14 12 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 10 7 10 7

LESSON 4 (continued)

Notes:

- Parallel voice leading by half steps in the melody.
- With each change of pentatonic scale, you change the function of the chord.
- The chord “colors” are a result of the different scales moving in parallel directions, not the underlying vamp itself.



“This version of pentatonic voice leading... has this added element of the bi-tonality of the three minor scales moving up chromatically in half steps against the ii-V-I. But you also have fourth and fifth patterns in the scales that transpose up by half steps really nicely.

And, you can use ‘normal’ melodies since they’re all just pentatonic scales.”

Let’s take a look at another way to combine these pentatonic shapes:

Example 02: Combined Pentatonics Over a ii-V-I (6:42)

♩ = 90

Dm7 **G7**

Cmaj7

3

continued →

Example 02 (continued):

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LESSON 4 (continued)

But, there are other ways we can put the puzzle pieces together besides moving chromatically from A → B^b → B. *You get to choose which scales you want to use and how you want to voice lead.* For example, we can still use the A Minor Pentatonic over the Dm7 (the **ii** chord) and the B^b Minor Pentatonic over the G7 (the **V** chord). But for the Cmaj7 (the **I** chord), perhaps instead resolve back down to A to make the resolution more diatonic:

Example 03: Combined Pentatonics Over a ii-V-I (7:46)

♩ = 90

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

5

7

Cmaj7

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 03 (continued):

Dm7 **G7**

9

7 5 7 9 5 | 8 6 8 10 6 8 9 8

Cmaj7

11

7 9 7 9 7 10 7 9 7 9 7 | 7 10 7 9 11 7 9 7 9 7 7 9 7

Dm7 **G7**

13

7 5 7 5 7 5 8 5 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 | 8 6 10 8 13 10 15 13 18 15 18 15

Cmaj7

15

19 20 21 19 17 19 19 17 15 17 15 15 15 15 | 15 17 15



"The options with [pentatonics] are really endless.

Putting together your different answers to this puzzle voice-leading question—'How would I get through these chord changes if I could only use pentatonic shapes?'—is what makes them fun."

Lesson 05

Playing Over Standards

“Green Dolphin Street”

Certain songs lend themselves to the use of pentatonic voice leading quite well, and in this lesson we’ll demonstrate this idea over the Bridge section of the 1947 classic “(On) Green Dolphin Street,” which was popularized by Miles Davis and is a must-know jazz standard.

Miles Davis recorded this song in the key of E^b Major, but we’ll instead use the key of C Major for simplicity’s sake. Let’s look at the chord progression in the Bridge:

Bridge Section of “Green Dolphin Street” (1:00)

Bridge
 ♩ = 90

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

5 Fm7 B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ maj7

The first three chords should look familiar: it’s the **ii-V-I** in C Major we’ve been discussing in each of the lessons so far, allowing us to use the ideas we’ve already covered: play a minor pentatonic starting a fifth above the **ii** chord, then move the shape up one half step each time the chord changes (i.e., A, B $\flat$, and B Minor Pentatonic.)

The next three chords are *another ii-V-I* around the E^b Major key center (the $\flat$ III). We can again use the same idea; the resulting minor pentatonic scales are C, D $\flat$ and D Minor Pentatonic, meaning we can continue moving up one half step again with each chord change. The pentatonic voice leading structure works the *entire* time.

continued →

LESSON 5 (continued)

Example 01: “Green Dolphin Street” Bridge—Pentatonic Shapes (2:23)

♩ = 178

Dm7 **G7** **Cmaj7**

14 12 14 12 15 12 | 15 13 15 13 16 13 | 16 14 16 14 17 14 | 17 14 16 17 14

Fm7 **Bb7**

15 18 15 17 15 17 15 18 15 | 16 19 16 18 18 16 18 16 18

Ebmaj7 **Cmaj7**

17 18 19 17 19 17 15 17 15 | 17 18 15 16 18 17 15 | 14 { 16 14 15 } let ring

This same basic pentatonic shape gets moved up one half step with each chord change...and the voice leading all makes sense.

LESSON 5 (continued)

Next, let's look at a more detailed example again using just the minor pentatonic shapes:

Example 02: "Green Dolphin Street" Bridge—Pentatonic Solo (3:25)

♩ = 90

Dm7 **G7**

Cmaj7

Fm7

Bb7

Ebmaj7 **Db°**

The score consists of five systems of music, each with a bass staff and a guitar fretboard diagram below it. The systems are labeled with chords: Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, Fm7, Bb7, Ebmaj7, and Db°. The fretboard diagrams show fingerings for the left hand, with numbers 1-5 indicating fingers and 'x' indicating a natural harmonic. The bass staff shows the melody with various musical notations including slurs, ties, and accidentals.

LESSON 5 (continued)

Our pentatonic voice leading idea here allows us to play just one minor pentatonic shape, moving up a half-step with each chord change*:

The diagrams show the following scales and chords:

- 12fr:** A Minor Pentatonic over Dm7
- 13fr:** Bb Minor Pentatonic over G7
- 14fr:** B Minor Pentatonic over Cmaj7
- 15fr:** C Minor Pentatonic over Fm7
- 16fr:** Db Minor Pentatonic over Bb7
- 17fr:** D Minor Pentatonic over Ebmaj7

○ = Pentatonic Root



"Even though the sound is super tense and super dissonant, the voice leading actually all works correctly. And because it's organized in a sort of familiar pattern, it's anchored to something."

There's something about playing through chord changes: you want the things that you're doing that layer more complicated sounds on top of them to still voice lead properly on their own...

It adds a level of clarity to your playing that is a lot more mature than just moving things around in half steps without thinking about where they're going."

*Although the shape for the D Minor Pentatonic is different as played in the example, the notes are identical to those played when using the same shape for the others shown. Since it's so high up on the neck, we've avoided going past the 19th fret.

LESSON 5 (continued)

Remember, pentatonic voice leading is just *one* “word” in your bass vocabulary; you can use others, too, such as bebop. Here’s one last example blending a few “words”:

Example 03: “Green Dolphin Street” Bridge—Extended Vocabulary (7:02)

$\text{♩} = 90$

Dm7 **G7**

Cmaj7

Fm7 **Bb7**

Ebmaj7

continued →

LESSON 5 (continued)

Example 03 (continued):

9 **Dm7** **G7**

11 **Cmaj7**

13 **Fm7** **Bb7**

15 **Ebmaj7**

etc.

(The remainder of the solo is left for you to enjoy.)



"[In the last example,] you hear [pentatonic voice leading] as a 'spice' in very key places. It gives you a feeling of fully 'outside' the chord, but still connected to it in some way.

There's this really angular quality that you really do feel like you're in a different key for a second, but because it's still connected to the harmony you can integrate it more smoothly into your normal improvising vocabulary."

