

CHAPTER 6

CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Chords are simply the notes of a scale played together. The key notes of most chords are 1,3,5 and 7

The other notes, the 2 (or 9), 4 (or 11), 6 (or 13) can be, and preferably are, added to these key notes to create a more colourful harmony. But that's for later.

The C Major Scale harmonized to the 7th

| Chord Name | Formula | Chord Tones |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| CM7 | 1,3,5,7 | C E G B |
| Dm7 | 1,b3,5,b7 | D F A C |
| Em7 | 1,b3,5,b7 | E G B D |
| FM7 | 1,3,5,7 | F A C E |
| G7 | 1,3,5,b7 | G B D F |
| Am7 | 1,b3,5,b7 | A C E G |
| Bm7b5 | 1,b3,b5,b7 | B D F A |

You should learn these formulas and corresponding chord tones by heart !!!

All 3 chord families are represented

The major chord family (CM7, FM7)

The minor chord family (Dm7, Em7, Am7, Bm7b5)

The dominant chord family (G7)

Let's have a look at the following chord progression. It has the same ground as the one I used in chapter 5 which is a blues progression. All the chords belong to the dominant or minor family.

| C7 | F7 | C7 | C7 | F7 | F7 |
|-----------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| $\frac{4}{4}$ | | | | | |
| $\frac{4}{4}$ a | a | a | a | a | a |
| | | | | | |

| C7 | C7 | Dm7 | G7 | C7 | C7 |
|----|----|-----|----|----|----|
| | | | | | |
| a | a | c | a | a | a |
| | | | | | |

CHORD TONES/ CHORD SHAPES /SCALES

IMPORTANT ! We will make things easy and more contemporary sounding by just using the notes of the C Major Scale (CDEFGABC) of which one or more notes will be flattened or sharpened according to the chord tones.

e.g F7 = F A C Eb --) only E changes into Eb.

The scale will be F G A B C D Eb F. The B natural is a #4 or augmented 4th which creates an interesting modern sound. I recommend these scales with a #4 in it but there are of course several other scale possibilities.

C7

Formula = 1,3,5,b7 The chord notes may be taken in any order and eventually you may leave out the 5th.

Chord notes = C E G Bb

You can use a lot of scales but I like to keep things simple. Only the B becomes a Bb

Play C D E F G A Bb.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| c | a | | | | | | | | |
| b | b | | | | | | a | (b) | d |
| c | a | (a) | c | (e) | a | (c) | | | |
| a | a | | | | | | | | |

F7

Formula = 1,3,5,b7

Chord notes = F A C Eb

Scale : Just use the C Major scale notes and change the E to Eb. The B stays natural, which is a #4 , this interval creates an interesting contemporary colour. And it is easy to remember !

Play F G A B C D Eb F

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| f | b | | | | | | | | |
| b | a | | | (a) | c | (d) | a | (b) | d |
| a | a | (a) | c | | | | | | |

Dm7

Formula = 1,b3,5,b7

Chord notes = D F A C

Scale : No accidentals

Play D E F G A B C D

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | b3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| d | c | | | | | | | | |
| d | d | | | | | | a | (d) | a |
| e | c | (c) | e | (a) | c | (a) | c | | |

G7

Formula = 1,3,5,b7

Chord notes = G B D F

Scale : No accidentals

Play G A B C D E F G

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| a | e | | | | | | | | |
| a | a | | a | (c) | d | (a) | c | (d) | a |
| a | a | (c) | | | | | | | |

Let's practise on the Blues progression

Remember on C7 you play a Bb instead of a B , on F7 you play an Eb instead of an E.

Create dyads. You may use the chordshape tones as a starting point or any other notes from the scale.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| C7 | F7 | C7 | C7 | F7 | F7 |
| C D E F G A B \flat C | F G A B C D E \flat F | C D E F G A B \flat C | D E F G A B \flat C | F G A B C D E \flat F | F G A B C D E \flat F |
| | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| C7 | C7 | Dm7 | G7 | C7 | C7 |
| C D E F G A B \flat C | C D E F G A B \flat C | D E F G A B C D | G A B C D E F G | C D E F G A B \flat C | C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |

Here an there add a note into the middle voice from the respective scales.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| C7 | F7 | C7 | C7 | F7 | F7 |
| C D E F G A B \flat C | F G A B C D E \flat F | C D E F G A B \flat C | D E F G A B \flat C | F G A B C D E \flat F | F G A B C D E \flat F |
| | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>b</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| C7 | C7 | Dm7 | G7 | C7 | C7 |
| C D E F G A B \flat C | C D E F G A B \flat C | D E F G A B C D | G A B C D E F G | C D E F G A B \flat C | C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>f</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>e</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |

Improvise a melodic line in the upper voice.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>f</i> | <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>b</i> <i>b</i> <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> | <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>c</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> | <i>a</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> | <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Dm7 D E F G A B C D | G7 G A B C D E F G | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>b</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |

Example 2

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> | <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>b</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> | <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> | <i>g</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> |
| <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>b</i> | <i>b</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | F7 F G A B C D E \flat F | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>c</i> <i>b</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>b</i> <i>d</i> | <i>a</i> <i>f</i> <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> | <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>c</i> | <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>c</i> <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|-------------------------------|
| Dm7 D E F G A B C D | G7 G A B C D E F G | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C | C7 C D E F G A B \flat C |
| | | | |
| <i>a</i> <i>c</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>c</i> <i>a</i> | <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>e</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> | <i>g</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> <i>d</i> | <i>c</i> <i>a</i> <i>c</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>b</i> <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |
| <i>c</i> <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> <i>a</i> |

Your turn

Try to play all three steps (add a top line, a middle voice and a melodic line) on the spot. If this is too difficult just go through the three steps separately.

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

F7
F G A B C D E \flat F

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| | | | |

F7
F G A B C D E \flat F

F7
F G A B C D E \flat F

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| | | | |

Dm7
D E F G A B C D

G7
G A B C D E F G

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

C7
C D E F G A B \flat C

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> |
| | | | |

Another Chord Progression

| CM7 | Dm7 | Cm7 | Gm7 | FM7 | D7 | EbM7 | CM7 |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>d</i> | <i>a</i> |

Let's have a look at the chords and the scale we can use

CM7

Formula = 1,3,5,7 (the M7 is a half step below the root !)

Chord notes = C E G B (no accidentals !)

Scale :

Play C D E F G A B C

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | M7 | 1 |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>a</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | <i>c</i> | | | | <i>a</i> | <i>(c)</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(c)</i> | <i>d</i> |
| <i>c</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(a)</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>(e)</i> | | | | | |

Cm7

Formula = 1,b3,5,b7 (the b7 is a whole step below the root !)

Chord notes = C Eb G Bb (The E becomes an Eb ; the B becomes a Bb)

Scale :

Play C D Eb F G A Bb C

| | | 1 | 2 | b3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>b</i> | <i>a</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>b</i> | <i>b</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>c</i> | | | | | <i>a</i> | <i>(c)</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(b)</i> | <i>d</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(a)</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>(d)</i> | | | | | |

Gm7

Formula = 1,b3,5,b7

Chord notes = G Bb D F Play a Bb instead of a B

Scale :

Play G A Bb C D E F G

| | | 1 | 2 | b3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | b7 | 1 |
|----------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>g</i> | <i>d</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>b</i> | <i>a</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(c)</i> | <i>a</i> | <i>(b)</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>(a)</i> | <i>c</i> | <i>(d)</i> | <i>a</i> |
| <i>a</i> | <i>a</i> | | | | | | | | |

FM7

Formula = 1,3,5,7 (the M7 is a half step below the root !)

Chord notes = F A C E (no accidentals !)

Scale : Just use the CM scale notes, the B stays natural. It's a #4 which creates a beautiful contemporary sound and it's easy to play

Play F G A B C D E F

D7

Formula = 1,3,5,7

Chord notes = D F# A C The F becomes an F#

Scale :

Play D E F# G A B C D

EbM7

Formula = 1,3,5,7

Chord notes = Eb G Bb D The B becomes a Bb

Scale :

Play Eb F G A Bb C D Eb Play an A natural, a #4 thus creating an interesting contemporary colour.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <p>CM7</p> <p>C D E F G A B C</p> | <p>Dm7</p> <p>D E F G A B C</p> | <p>Cm7</p> <p>C D Eb F G A Bb C</p> | <p>Gm7</p> <p>G A Bb C D E F G</p> |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| FM7 | D7 | EbM7 | CM7 |
| FGABCDEF | DF#GABCD | EbFGABbCDEb | CDEFGABC |

Your turn

| | | | |
|----------|---------|------------|-----------|
| CM7 | Dm7 | Cm7 | Gm7 |
| CDEFGABC | DEFGABC | CDEbFGABbC | GABbCDEFG |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| FM7 | D7 | EbM7 | CM7 |
| FGABCDEF | DF#GABCD | EbFGABbCDEb | CDEFGABC |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|