

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CHORD-SCALE RELATIONSHIPS

A chord-scale is a scale that suits a particular chord. Making chord-to-scale relationships in your mind quickly is an important part of improvisation - whether it be a bass line, a melody or a chord voicing. Chord-scales therefore are not just theoretically useful; they need to be absorbed into the subconscious and technically mastered in order to be applied successfully in practical situations. Chapters 8 (Motivic Development) and 10 (Ear Training) offer some strategies that further address this goal. For further reading on chord-scales, there are plenty of theory and aural books which focus on the topic. (See the Bibliography.)

Figure 7-1 is a chart of 3-, 4-, and 5-note chords. There are 38 popular chords listed. This should serve as a handy reference for how the six main triad types are built into 4- and 5-note chords.

Note that sometimes these chords also go by different names. For example Dom.7 (#5) is also called Aug.7 or even +7 occasionally. Chords built on the Maj.b5 triad type may often treat the b5 as a #4. Though these notes are enharmonically equivalent, they may require different scale treatments. This is because 7-note scales require one note per degree, meaning a #4 leaves the option for a perfect (natural) 5th degree, whereas a b5 does not.

I have suggested chord-scales for these popular chords in Figure 7-2. These scales are not exhaustive, but are a recommended starting point. For example, the phrygian mode could be applied to a Min.7 chord. I have just suggested a maximum of three effective alternative scales per chord. Of course, the use of modes, scales with less than seven notes, synthetic scales, and chromaticism makes for a large range of choices in reality.

I should also point out that scales, like chords, can also go by different names. Here are some of the alternative names for the chord-scales used in Figure 7-2:

ALTERNATIVE NAMES FOR CHORD-SCALES		
Chord Scale	Modal Name	Alternative Name
"Spanish Gypsy"	harmonic minor mode 5	
"Altered"	melodic minor mode 7	
locrian $\flat 2$	melodic minor mode 6	
locrian $\flat 6$	harmonic minor mode 2	
lydian $\flat 7$	melodic minor mode 4	lydian dominant
lydian #5	melodic minor mode 3	lydian augmented
ionian #5	harmonic minor mode 3	

Triads	6th & 7th Chords	9th Chords
<b>Major</b>	<b>Maj. 6</b>	<b>Maj. 6/9</b>
	<b>Dom. 7</b>	<b>Dom. 9</b> <b>Dom. 7 (b9)</b> <b>Dom. 7 (#9)</b>
	<b>Maj. 7</b>	<b>Maj. 9</b>
<b>Minor</b>	<b>Min. 6</b> <b>Min. 7</b> <b>Min. (Maj.7)</b>	<b>Min. 6/9</b> <b>Min. 9</b> <b>Min. (Maj.9)</b>
	<b>Diminished</b>	<b>Min. 9 (b5)</b> <b>Min. 7 (b5, b9)</b>
	<b>Augmented</b>	<b>Dom.9 (#5)</b> <b>Dom.7 (#5 #9)</b> <b>Dom.7 (#5 b9)</b> <b>Maj.9 (#5)</b>
<b>Major b5</b>	<b>Dom. 7 (b5)</b>	<b>Dom. 7 (b5 b9)</b> <b>Dom. 9 (b5)</b> <b>Dom. 7 (b5 #9)</b>
	<b>Maj. 7 (b5)</b>	<b>Maj. 9 (b5)</b>
<b>Suspended</b>	<b>Dom. 7 (Sus 4)</b>	<b>Dom. 9 (Sus 4)</b>

Figure 7-1: Chart of 3-, 4-, and 5-note chords