

Just Jazz Guitar

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Modern Jazz Lines and Octave Dispersion Concept

by Gianfranco Continenza

After my Quartal Harmony lessons that have appeared in past issues of JJG, mostly used as an idea for the Harmonic Improvisation, today I will show you some modern lines and ideas for the Melodic Improvisation. On these lines are involved different technique like the Octave Dispersion, the Chromatic Passing Tones, the Wide Intervals, the Superimposing Scales, the String Skipping, etc.

Ex 1. This is a regular Blues Scale (1 b3 4 #4 5 b7) played over F13(#9) (1 3 5 b7 #9 13) with the Octave Dispersion. This is a technique I developed in the early 90's, while I was attending the Musicians Institute in Hollywood, with the great guitar master Don Mock. The notes of the scale are in ascending order but following a particular octave disposition. Just think in groups of five notes: I'm playing the first two notes in the original scale range and the next one up an octave, then one note back on the original scale range and the next one an octave higher, etc. So in this example we will have F Ab on the original range, Bb an octave higher, B on the original range and then C up an octave. Do the same process for the next groups of five notes, etc. Just make the reverse process for the descending scale line. The sound that comes out is very modern and unusual, completely different from the scale just played straight in the original range. Try to apply this technique to all different types of scales.

Ex 2. This is a line I used on "Labyrinth Of Mirrors", a composition of mine from my first Album "The Past Inside The Present" - ESC Records 2008. I'm using C Whole Tone Scale (1 2 3 #4 #5 b7) still played with the Octave Dispersion technique (same process we used on Ex 1). The Whole Tone Scale is creating music tension that release over FMa13 (1 3 5 7 9 13).

Ex 3. It's a II V I progression in the key of C Major if we think as a Tonal approach, but here we are thinking of it as a Modal approach. Over Dmi9 (1 b3 5 b7 9) I'm using D Dorian Scale (1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7) the 2nd mode of C Major. Over G13(b9) (1 3 5 b7 b9 13) I'm using G Dominant Diminished Scale (1 b2 #2 3 #4 5 6 b7), this is an eighth notes Scale played with the Octave Dispersion technique (same process we used on Ex 1). Over CMa7(#11) (1 3 5 7 #11) I'm using B Minor Pentatonic Scale (1 b3 4 5 b7) as a Pentatonic Substitution (Superimposing) for C Lydian Scale (1 2 3 #4 5 6 7) the 4th mode of G Major, so over CMa7(#11) this Minor Pentatonic Scale will generate these intervals (7 2 3 #4 6).

Ex 4. Here we have a II V I progression in the key of C Minor but we are still thinking of it as a Modal approach. Over Dmi7(b5) (1 b3 b5 b7) I'm using D Locrian 2 Scale (1 2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7) the 6th mode of F Melodic Minor. Over G7(b9) (1 3 5 b7 b9) I'm using G Diminished Arpeggio (1 b3 b5 bb7) adding the #9 and over Cmi9/Ma7 (1 b3 5 7 9) I'm using C Melodic Minor Scale (1 2 b3 4 5 6 7).

Ex 5. It's another II V I progression in the key of Eb Major, we are still thinking of it as a Modal approach but this time I'm using the Pentatonic Substitution concept (Superimposing) over each chord. Over Fmi11 (1 b3 5 b7 9 11) I'm using C Minor Pentatonic Scale (1 b3 4 5 b7) as a Pentatonic Substitution for F Dorian Scale (1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7) the 2nd mode of Eb Major, so over Fmi11 this Minor Pentatonic Scale will generate these intervals (5 b7 1 2 4). Over Bb7(#5#9) (1 3 #5 b7 #9) I'm using Db Minor Pentatonic Scale (1 b3 4 5 b7) as a Pentatonic Substitution for Bb Altered Scale (1 b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 b7) the 7th mode of B Melodic Minor, so over Bb7(#5#9) this Minor Pentatonic Scale will generate these intervals (#2 #4 #5 b7 b2). Over EbMa9(#11) (1 3 5 7 9 #11) I'm using D Minor Pentatonic Scale (1 b3 4 5 b7) as a Pentatonic Substitution for Eb Lydian Scale (1 2 3 #4 5 6 7) the 4th mode of Bb Major, so over EbMa9(#11) this Minor Pentatonic Scale will generate these intervals (7 2 3 #4 6). This line is mostly played with intervals of 5th taken on the same string so you will have a big stretching to play. As you can see we have three Minor Pentatonic Scales that move chromatically from C to D, try to use this Pentatonic Substitution concept over every II V I progression and you will have a different and modern sound.

Ex 6. This is a line taken from the theme of "Dusting The Time" a composition of mine from my second Album "Face The Truth" - ESC Records 2010. I played this line in unison with the great Jazz saxophonist Bob Mintzer. This is an interesting idea to use as a phrasing for the outside playing over F7(#9) (1 3 5 b7 #9), mixing chromatic lines that move mostly with intervals of 4th and 5th. Try to use it over other types of chords.

Ex 7. This line is taken from my solo of "One Word", an old composition of John McLaughlin that I arranged for the ESC Records CD Tribute to Mahavishnu Orchestra: "Mahavishnu Re-Defined vol. 1". Over C9(#11) (1 3 5 b7 9 #11) I'm using C Lydian Dominant Scale (1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7) the 4th mode of G Melodic Minor. I'm using wide intervals with combination of 5th and 4th, the sound that comes out is very modern and fresh.

Ex 8. It's a bebop line over A7(#5#9) (1 3 #5 b7 #9), I'm using A Altered Scale (1 b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 b7) the 7th mode of Bb Melodic Minor.

Ex 9. It's a classic bebop line played over Dmi7 (1 b3 5 b7) or G13 (1 3 5 b7 9 11 13). If we use it over Dmi7 we have D Dorian Scale (1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7) the 2nd mode of C Major, if we use it over G13 we have G Mixolydian Scale (1 2 3 4 5 6 b7) the 5th mode of C Major. On this line I added some chromatic passing tones.

I hope this lesson will be helpful to improve your creativity for the improvisation. I suggest to learn from the lines instead of just learning the lines. Try to apply these phrasings over all types of chords and move them in all 12 keys, changing the chord tones of the new type of chord chosen. I'll be back soon with new lessons.

Have fun,

Gianfranco Continenza

Modern Jazz Lines and Octave Dispersion Concept

download the Audio version from Gianfranco's web site
www.gianfrancocontinenza.com

Ex 1

F13(#9)

3 1 9 12 13 12

1 4 2 6 8 8 10 13 13 10

9 1 3 4 3 2 1 1

8 8 6 2 4

Ex 2

C7(b5) FMa13

9 8 8 12 10 8 11 10 9 10 9 12 8

8 10 8 7 8 7 10 12 9

Ex 3

Dmi9 G13(b9) CMa7(#11)

5 7 5 7 3 4 7 5 4 3 5 3 7 7 5 4 4 7 7 7

5 3 7 7 5 7 3 4 7 5 4 3 5 3 7 7 5 4 4 7 7 7

Ex 4

Dmi7(b5) G7(b9) Cmi9Ma7

Ex 5

Fmi11 Bb7(#5#9) EbMa9(#11)

Ex 6

G7(#9)

Ex 7

C9(#11)

10 12 11 11 13 14 12 12

Ex 8

A7(#5#9)

Ex 9

Dmi7 or G13