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Dorado Schmitt

Quartal Harmony of the Melodic Minor Scale and its Modes

by Gianfranco Continenza

In the last issue I've treated the Quartal Harmony of the Major Scale and its modes (I suggest you read this lesson before approach the new one), as I've told you the Quartal Harmony is a modern and fresh concept to approach the harmony that make you sound more as a pianist. A great alternative to the usual Chord Progressions. It's also nice to use it for Chord Melody arrangements and, of course, for the main thing in Jazz: the improvisation (both in harmonic and melodic way). This time I will treat the Quartal Harmony of the Melodic Minor Scale (1 2 b3 4 5 6 7) in the key of C, exploring different possibilities of voicings and inversions on the fretboard for each of the 7th degrees (I'm adding the 8th degree as a repetition of the 1st degree an octave higher). After you have learned all those voicings with their inversions (in all twelve keys) try to use them over all the 7th modes that come from the fancy Harmony of the Melodic Minor Scale:

I°	Melodic Minor	1 2 b3 4 5 6 7	mi/ma7, mi9/Ma7
II°	Dorian b2	1 b2 b3 4 5 6 b7	sus(b9)
III°	Lydian #5	1 2 3 #4 #5 6 7	Ma7(#5)
IV°	Lydian Dominant	1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7	7(#11), 9(#11), 13(#11)
V°	Mixolydian b6	1 2 3 4 5 b6 b7	sus2(#5)
VI°	Locrian 2	1 2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7	mi7(b5), mi9(b5)
VII°	Altered	1 b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 b7	7(#5#9), 7(b5#9), 7(b5b9)

Next to every scale's formula I'm suggesting you some of my favorite chords to use over each mode. The Melodic Minor Scale it differentiates from the Major Scale by one note: the minor 3rd, that's making the scale completely different in sounds and shapes.

For example over **Fsus(b9)** (1 4 5 b9) we use **F Dorian b2** Scale 1 b2 b3 4 5 6 b7 (II° mode of Eb Melodic Minor) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of Eb Melodic Minor; over **Asus2(#5)** (1 2 4 #5) we use **A Mixolydian b6** Scale 1 2 3 4 5 b6 b7 (V° mode of D Melodic Minor) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of D Melodic Minor or over **Gmi7(b5)** (1 b3 b5 b7) we use **G Locrian 2** Scale 1 2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7 (VI° mode of Bb Melodic Minor) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of Bb Melodic Minor, etc.

On the **example n°1** I harmonized the C Melodic Minor Scale in 4th intervals starting from the root position (on A, D and G strings) so we have two intervals of 4th. Compared to the Major Scale (that has 5 voicings with the same shape: on the II°, III°, V°, VI° and VII° degree) the Melodic Minor Scale has only 3 voicings with the same shape (because of the harmonization of two perfect 4th intervals) on the II°, V° and VI° degree of the scale, it's the same thing for all the other inversions.

On the **example n° 2** we have the 1st inversion of the Quartal Harmony of C Melodic Minor, so we have a voicing with a 4th and a 2nd intervals (on D,G and B strings). Compared to the previous example we get a different sound here. Even if the notes are the same the way we orchestrate them it will make sound differently.

On the **example n° 3** we have the 2nd inversion of the Quartal Harmony of C Melodic Minor and we get a voicing with a 2nd and a 4th intervals (on G,B and high E strings), exactly the opposite intervals of the 1st inversion.

On the **example n° 4** we start again from the root position but this time on the low E, A and D strings and then again we get two intervals of 4th.

On the **example n° 5** we have another position for the 1st inversion of the Quartal Harmony of C Melodic Minor, so we get a voicing with a 4th and a 2nd intervals (on A, D and G strings).

On the **example n° 6** we have the 2nd inversion of the Quartal Harmony of C Melodic Minor and we get a voicing with a 2nd and a 4th intervals (on D, G and B strings).

On the **example n° 7** we start again from the root position but this time on octave higher on G, B and high E strings and then again we get two intervals of 4th.

The **example n° 8** is a way to approach the harmonic improvisation using the Quartal Harmony of the Melodic Minor Scale over a Modal Chord Progressions from a part of the song "Dusting The Time" (a composition of mine from my last Album "Face The Truth"- ESC Records). I'm mixing up different kind of voicings (root position, 1st and 2nd inversions). In the

1st measure we have **Gsus(b9)** (1 4 5 b9) over that chord we use **G Dorian b2** Scale 1 b2 b3 4 5 6 b7 (II^o mode of F Melodic Minor), so we can play the Quartal Harmony in the key of F Melodic Minor; in the 2nd measure we have **Emi7(b5)** (1 b3 b5 b7) we use **E Locrian 2** Scale 1 2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7 (VI^o mode of G Melodic Minor), so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of G Melodic Minor; in the 3rd measure we have **A13(#11)** (1 3 5 b7 #11 13) over that chord we use **A Lydian Dominant** Scale 1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7 (IV^o mode of E Melodic Minor) and we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of E Melodic Minor; in the 4th measure we have **Dmi6/9** (1 b3 5 6 9) over that chord we use **D Melodic Minor** Scale 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 (a modern alternative to the D Dorian Scale 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7 II^o mode of C Major) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of D Melodic Minor; in the 5th measure we have **GbMa7(#5)** (1 3 #5 7) over that chord we use **Gb Lydian #5** Scale 1 2 3 #4 #5 6 7 (III^o mode of Eb Melodic Minor) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of Eb Melodic Minor and finally in the 6th measure we have **A7(#5#9)** (1 3 #5 b7 #9) and over it we use **A Altered** Scale 1 b2 b3 b4 b5 b6 b7 (VII^o mode of Bb Melodic Minor) so we play the Quartal Harmony in the key of Bb Melodic Minor.

I know those are very difficult things to play in a comfortably way, it takes time. I suggest you to practice them slowly, just take one harmonization of the Quartal Harmony of the Melodic Minor Scale per day and transpose it in all twelve keys, then try to improvise with it, both: in harmonic and melodic way. You can download the audio version of this lesson from my web site: www.gianfrancocontinenza.com I'll be back soon with a new lesson of Quartal Harmony. I wish you all the best!

Gianfranco Continenza

Quartal Harmony of C Melodic Minor Scale

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

Ex 1

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
4	5	7	8	10	12	14	16
5	5	6	8	10	12	13	15
5	5	6	8	10	12	14	15

Ex 2

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
1	3	4	6	8	10	12	13
4	5	7	8	10	12	14	16
5	5	7	9	10	12	13	15

Ex 3

I II III IV V VI VII VIII

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

4 5 7 8 10 12 14 16

Ex 4

I II III IV V VI VII VIII

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

8 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

8 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Ex 5

I II III IV V VI VII VIII

5 7 8 10 12 14 16 17

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

8 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Ex 6

I II III IV V VI VII VIII

6 8 10 12 13 15 16 18

5 7 8 10 12 14 16 17

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Ex 7

Ex 7 shows a sequence of eight fretboard diagrams for the guitar, labeled I through VIII. Each diagram is a six-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The diagrams are arranged in two rows of four. The fret numbers for each diagram are: I (7, 6, 5), II (8, 8, 7), III (10, 10, 8), IV (11, 12, 10), V (13, 13, 12), VI (15, 15, 14), VII (17, 16, 16), and VIII (19, 18, 17). The diagrams illustrate a chromatic scale of triads moving up the fretboard.

Ex 8 Gsus(b9)

Ex 8 consists of two parts. The first part is labeled Gsus(b9) and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 10, 9, 12, 8, 8, 10, 6, 6, 9, 9, 10, 11, 15, 15, 13, 13, 15, 11, 14, 10, 10, 8, 8, 7, 7. The second part is labeled Emi7(b5) and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F#). The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 8, 11, 11, 14, 13, 12, 10, 10, 8, 8, 7, 7.

A13(#11)

Dmi69

This section contains two parts. The first part is labeled A13(#11) and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F#). The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 5, 5, 6, 8, 5, 7, 5, 4, 6, 6, 8, 8, 11, 7, 7, 9. The second part is labeled Dmi69 and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F#). The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 6, 6, 6, 8, 6, 6, 4, 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 4, 4, 7, 7.

GbMa7(#5)

A7(#5#9)

This section contains two parts. The first part is labeled GbMa7(#5) and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb). The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 7, 6, 6, 3, 3, 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 4, 4, 2, 2, 4, 4. The second part is labeled A7(#5#9) and shows a melodic line in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The fretboard diagram below it shows the following fret numbers: 1, 1, 5, 5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 2, 2.