

# Introduction To Barry Harris Bebop Line Concepts

The main scale that Barry Harris talks about for line construction is what he calls the "Dominant 7th Scale." It's the same thing as the Mixolydian mode. Since G7 is the V chord in the key of C major, the G7 scale is just the C major scale rotated to have G as the starting point.

G7 C

1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 1

By far, the most common elements of bebop vocabulary are ascending arpeggios and descending scales.

3 Look at the arpeggios you find on the 1, 3, 5, and b7 of the G7 scale.

1 3 5 b7 3 5 b7 2 5 b7 2 4 b7 2 4 6

The chords they make are

5 G7 Bm7b5 Dm7 FMaj7

V7 viim7b5 iim7 IVMaj7

7 In Bebop, it's important to resolve your lines to chord tones (1, 3, 5, or 7) on the beat. When you play a normal 7 note scale, that doesn't work out. Barry teaches these rules for adding extra chromatic tones to your lines in order to make them work out rhythmically.

Dominant 7th rule number 1) If your line starts on a chord tone, add 1 half step between 1 and b7

8 G7

1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3

12

5 4 3 2 1 7 b7 6 5 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 7 b7

Dominant 7th rule number 2) If your line starts on 3, 5, or b7, you can add half steps between 3 and 2, 2 and 1, and 1 and b7

16 G7

3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7

20



b7 6 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1  
Dominant 7 rule number 3) if your line starts on 2, 4, or 6, no half steps are required

22



2 1 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 b7 6 5 4 3

26



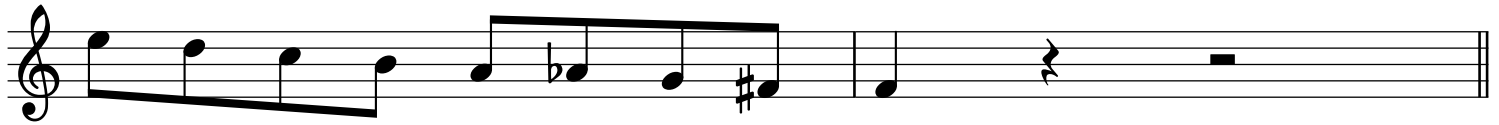
6 5 4 3 2 1 7 6 5  
Dominant 7th rule number 4) if your line starts on 2, 4, or 6, you can add half steps between 2 and 1, and 1 and b7

28



2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 4 3 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5

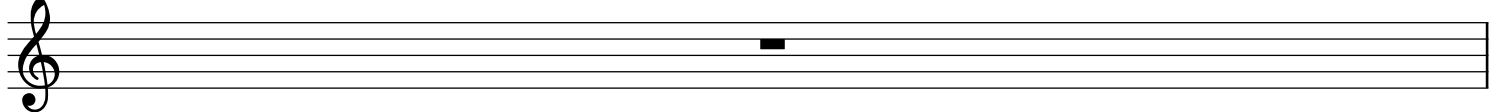
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6 5 4 3 2 b2 1 7 b7

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Note: On Major 7 chords, the rules are all the same, except the half step between 1 and b7 is moved to be between 6 and 5



Now play each of the 4 arpeggios and resolve them down a step into a descending scale using all applicable rules

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1 3 5 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 b7 6 5 1 3 5 b7 6 5 4 3 2 b2 1 7 b7

39



3 5 b7 2 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 3 5 b7 2 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1

43

5 7 2 4 3 2 1 7    b7 6 5 4 3    5 b7 2 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5

47

b7 2 4 6 5 4 3 2 1 7 b7 6 5    b7 2 4 6 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7

51

Also play the arpeggios resolving up a step to a descending scale, with all applicable rules

1 3 5 b7 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1

53

3 5 b7 2 3 2 1 7    b7 6 5 4 3    3 5 b7 2 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5

57

5 b7 2 4 5 4 3 2 1 7 b7 6 5    5 b7 2 4 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7

61

b7 2 4 6 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1 7 b7    b7 2 4 6 b7 6 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1

65

Now try resolving the arpeggios up a third to a descending scale, again, observing all applicable rules

1 3 5 b7 2 1 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1    1 3 5 b7 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3

69

3 5 b7 2 4 3 2 1 b7 6 5 4 3    3 5 b7 2 4 3 2 b2 1 7 b7 6 5

73

5 b7 2 4 6 5 4 3 2 1 b7 6 5      5 b7 2 4 6 5 4 3 2 b2 1 7 b7

77

b7 2 4 6 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1      b7 2 4 6 1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7

82

Practice all of these patterns in all 12 keys

## The Family Of Four Dominants

Barry teaches that if you take a diminished 7 chord and lower each of the 4 notes by a half step, you wind up with four related dominant 7th chords

83

Bdim7 G7      Bdim7 E7      Bdim7 Db7      Bdim7 Bb7

Let's take a look at the relationship among these chords. G7 is V7 in C. E7 is V in Am, the relative minor. Db7 is the Tritone Substitution for G7. Bb7 is the bVII dominant, also known as the "Backdoor Dominant." You can also see it as V7 of the relative major of the parallel minor (Eb major, relative major of C minor, which is the parallel minor of C major.) It's also the Tritone Substitution for E7

These 4 chords can substitute for one another. If you're a pianist, play G7 in the left hand and play all of the related arpeggio and scale patterns from the family of four dominants over it. If you're not a pianist, sit down and try it at the piano anyway. Also try playing them on your instrument over a G7 backing track

Next, we're going to connect G7 material to material from the family of four dominants. Barry calls this "playing with your brothers and sisters." This is still going to all be played over G7.

89 G7 into Db7

G7:1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2      Db7:5 4 3 b3 2 b2 1 7      b7/G7:3

92 G7 into E7

G7:1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2      E7:3 b3 2 b2 1 7 b7 #6      5/G7:3

95 G7 into Bb7

G7:1 7 b7 6 5 4 3 2 1/Bb7:65 4 3 2 1 b7 6 5/G7:b7

98 There are endless possibilities using different combinations of these basic materials.

<sup>s</sup> Next we're going to apply these ideas over some ii-V-I's. Barry Harris advocates thinking V over both the ii and V,

99 Dm7 G7 CMaj7

102 Dm7 G7 CMaj7

105 Dm7 G7 CMaj7

108 Dm7 G7 CMaj7

You could also think of one of the siblings over the V chord

111 Dm7 G7(Db7) CMaj7

114 Dm7 G7(Bb7) CMaj7

117 Dm7 G7(E7) CMaj7

Now try using some of the siblings over the ii chord too. Notice how in this particular example, resolving back into the I chord, you naturally get what is commonly called a "chromatic enclosure."

120 Dm7(Db7) G7(Db7) CMaj7

He shows us that this same material works over a minor ii-V. In the relative minor (A minor,) the ii-V is Bm7b5 to E7. Bm7b5 is really just 3 5 b7 and 9 (2) of G7. Barry suggests playing G7 to E7, or one of it's siblings, like G7 to Bb7

123 Bm7b5(G7) E7 Am

126 Bm7b5(G7) E7(Bb7) Am

It's also important to every once in a while displace your line by an octave. Barry calls this "pivoting"

129 G7 etc

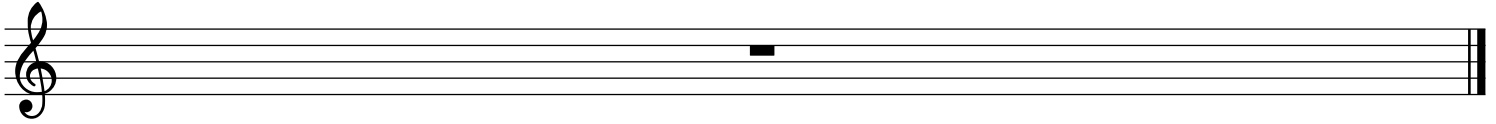
Another very important element of the language is triplets. The first place to learn to play triplets is in your arpeggios.

133 G7

137

Also try starting your line with a turn up and back down in triplets

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Practice as many different combinations as you can think of. Practice them in every key. Really internalize them and sing them. Listen closely to master bebop players like Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, or Barry Harris, and hear how they're utilizing this material. Obviously this is not intended to be a complete listing of every possible element of the vocabulary, but really internalizing these concepts will go a long way towards being able to play this music with confidence and authenticity.

Just as an addendum, I have not personally studied with Dr. Harris, but since discovering his concepts recently, I have watched just about every video available of either him explaining his concepts, or his students explaining his concepts, and I feel like I've got a pretty good grasp on them. In my experience, even after having played jazz for over 15 years, learning about these ideas has made my playing take a quantum leap forward, so whether you're a beginner or a very experienced player, I think there's a lot to learn from this stuff.