

A Lesson From Jimmy Wyble

“Developing Ideas”

by Jimmy Wyble edited by David Oakes

Editor’s note: This material is from a lecture that Jimmy Wyble gave at Musicians Institute on March 13, 2008. Jimmy stood in front the students and in his quiet, unassuming and very polite manner, unloaded a barrage of creative ideas that had the students reeling, reaching for a piece of manuscript paper and trying like crazy to keep up with this 87 year old man. For myself, I was writing and transcribing as hard as I could and I only got about 80% of his ideas, which for the most part were happening in real time. In the packet “Contrapuntal Concepts” after example #11, I noted that this was where the lecture stopped and then the rest of the material was information Jimmy wanted me to add to the packet. On March 13th, Jimmy started with example 12 of that packet and showed how he would change and manipulate that scale pattern. Also, he took the 1st 8 bars of the jazz standard “You Stepped Out of a Dream” and showed how he would develop that phrase. These are the two components of his lecture that I am going to cover in this packet. I have tried to use Jimmy’s words as much as possible. Anything that I add will be under the heading “**Editor’s Note**”. I hope that my additions and observations might give you some extra insight into Jimmy’s style and thought process.

To begin this lesson, we need to start by reviewing the 5 – 1 – 3 – 7 chord scale:

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Developing Ideas

Example #2 is a chord/scale based on the 5 – 1 – 3 – 7 chord scale.

Example #2 is a chord/scale exercise in 6/4 time. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff has four measures with chords Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, and Fmaj7. The second staff has four measures with chords G7, Am7, Bm7(b5), and Cmaj7. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 below the notes. Dynamics 'm' and 'a' are marked under the first two notes of the first measure.

The fingering given is not the only fingering nor would it be the first fingering I might want to play. Always try and find different ways to play these exercises. This will help you to learn the fingerboard as well as improve your sight-reading skills. Example 3 is the same scale with three different fingerings for each measure.

Example #3 is a chord/scale exercise in 6/4 time, showing three different fingerings for each measure. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff has three measures with chord Cmaj7. The second staff has three measures with chord Dm7. The third staff has three measures with chord Em7. Each measure is shown with three different fingerings, indicated by circled numbers 1-4. Dynamics 'm' and 'a' are marked under the first two notes of the first measure. The staves are labeled with 'BIII', 'BV', and 'BV' at the end of each line.

Example 3 continued:

Example 3 continued musical notation showing four systems of music with chords: Fmaj7, G7, Am7, and Bm7(b5). Each system contains a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a bass line with fingerings. The fourth system includes a 'BX' label with a dashed line above it.

Lets find a fingering (Ex. #4) that helps the left hand fall into the chord shape. To do this, we need to have both the upper note and the last note of the scale be with the same fingering as the chord shape. Then only the lower bass notes need to be added.

Example 4 musical notation showing two systems of music with chords: Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, Bm7(b5), and Cmaj7. Each system contains a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a bass line with fingerings.

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The same notes can be played on different string sets. Example 4a below shows the Fmaj7 and the G7 portions of the scale in three different fingerings.

Example 4a shows three different fingerings for the Fmaj7 and G7 scales in 4/4 time. The first row shows Fmaj7 scales with fingerings ③, ②, and ①. The second row shows G7 scales with fingerings ③, ②, and ①. Each scale is shown in three different string sets, with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4 and 0 for natural. The scales are written in treble clef on a single staff.

Editor's note: Jimmy's point here was to encourage the students to always look for different ways to play the same thing. This could be as simple as changing a fingering, or changing a string set. Jimmy always encourages the students to write out their exercises and ideas on manuscript paper. He encourages writing to be part of every practice session. Once the idea is on paper, then it is easy to find different ways to finger the example or even to rewrite the example by changing the voicing or voice leading. Writing down exercises, ideas and arrangements also helps with the students' total musicianship especially in terms of reading and fret-board awareness. This is also why Jimmy prefers not to use tablature. He feels like tab makes a student play the example in a certain place and discourages the freedom to move an idea around the fingerboard.

At this point a student raised his hand and once again asked the same question that is always asked at these seminars. "How can I use this material?" Jimmy's answer was the same once again; "I don't know how you will use it, but let me show you some of my ideas". This is where the magic happened in this particular lecture.

Let's take the first 8 bars of the song "You Stepped Out of a Dream" and let's see what we can do with it. Below is the original melody and changes:

Since the melody of this tune revolves around the 3rd of the chord, Example 5 harmonizes this melody with the 1 – 5 – 7 – 3 voicing.

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Editor's Note: Jimmy chose these places to play these chords in example 5 (shown on page 5). I think that he chose those spots simply because he wanted to make sure that the students in the class were able to follow him easily. I am quite sure that if he played this exercise the next day, he would have chosen different fingerings. He also played the Abmaj7 chord at the 6th fret using all four fingers and no bar.

We can add some chords based off of the 5 – 1 – 3 – 7 voicing as some fill chords. See example 6) The first altered chord in the C and the Db bars is a 5 – 1 - 3 – 7 voicing with a lowered 5th and 3rd. This creates a diminished sound that resolves into a 5 – 1 – 3 – 6 voicing.

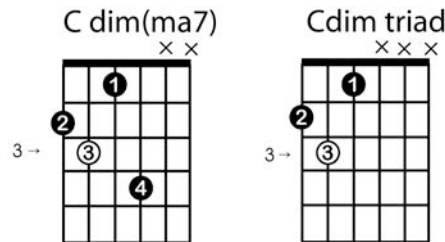
Example 6 shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff contains the following chords: Cmaj7, Cdim(ma7), C6, Dbmaj7, Dbdim(ma7), and Db6. The second staff contains: Cm7, Bmi7(#5), Bbm6, Am7, Abmaj7, Abdim(ma7), and Ab6. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-5.

The dim(ma7) voicing might look and sound like a voicing that is in many jazz guitar players harmonic vocabulary - the 13b9 voicing. Below are several common voicings of the D13b9 voicing that use the exact same notes as our chord.

Diagram illustrating four guitar chord voicings for D13(b9) that share the same notes as Cmaj7 with a lowered 3rd and 5th. The first voicing is labeled "Cma7 with a lowered 3rd and 5th". The other three are labeled "D13(b9)". A box above them states "Same notes as the Cma7 with a lowered 3rd and 5th Just different voicings and analysis".

Editor's Note: Sid Jacobs offered some insight into the correct analysis of this diminished chord. The lower three notes of the chord are a diminished triad with a major 7th on top. This is a very standard sound that likes to resolve back into the I chord. This is a move that a lot of musicians use to delay the resolution of the I chord. This move also creates a very classical voice

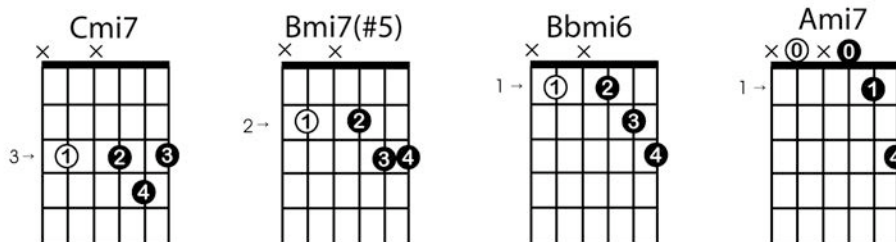
leading where the lowered 5th and 3rd resolve upward into the major chord. The top voice is usually a tone from the diminished scale such as the 7th as in this chord or a 9th. This is a very common move in standards. One place that comes to mind is the Jobim classic “Corcovado”. In that example, the Fdim with a major 7th in the melody resolves to a F6 chord with a 6th in the melody. Exactly the same move that Jimmy used in Example 6. The D13(b9) voicings are also C diminished voicings that all harmonize with the diminished scale. This chord is often misspelled but the sound is unmistakable.



Back to Jimmy:

Finally, I always look to voice leading as the most important element in the actual analysis. The voice leading from Cdim(ma7) to C6 contains two lower voices moving up a half step while the top voice moves down a whole step. Always listen and be aware of how chords voice lead. I will listen very carefully to a chord and hear it as individual voices rather than as a chord stack. This ability comes from practicing chord scales and listening very carefully to how each voice moves through the scale.

The 2nd line of example 6 is a descending voicing from the Cmi7 chord is simply moving the lower three voices down chromatically from the first chord. The top note “G” stays in place.



You can analyze these chord movements several different ways. The Cmi7 chord could be a Eb6 chord or a Eb triad with a C in the bass. Bmi7(#5) could be a passing chord. Ami7 is a b5 sub for Eb7. These chords could also be implying a back cycle III - VI - II - V into the key of Ab major. I tend to look at these chords as descending voices moving chromatically down in 1/2 steps.

Editor’s Note: The idea of chord scales with voice leading and moving voices ties in with the “Lesson From Jimmy Wyble” packet that I posted earlier this year. Please cross reference these packets for similar information. Remember that these lectures come from the same quarter and Jimmy as a teacher always tries to keep streams of thought continuing from week to week.

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Example 7 adds some scales to fill between the melody notes. The descending chords in the 2nd line are with a different fingering with the top note starting on the 2nd string. Always look for different ways to play the same thing. The scales are derived from our lesson from last week. (See the packet on Scales and Arpeggios)

Example 7 consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff starts with a box labeled '7'. Above the staff are chord voicings: Cmaj7, Cdim(ma7), C6, D♭maj7, D♭dim(ma7), and D♭6. The music features scale runs with fingerings (1-4, 2-4, 3-4) and circled numbers 2, 3, and 4. The second staff has chord voicings: Cm7, Bmi7(#5), B♭m6, Am7, and A♭maj7. It includes scale runs with fingerings (1-3, 2-3, 3-4, 1-2, 1-3, 1) and circled numbers 4, 3, and 2. A dashed line with a circled 6 is at the bottom of the second staff.

We can also use the harmonized scale. Example 8 shows a (5 – 3 – 6) chord scale that I think of as an alteration or variation of our 5 – 1 – 3 – 7 voicing. The 2nd line B♭ minor chord uses a similar idea that I used in Etude 7 from “*The Art of Two Line Improvisation*”. Notice that I played the A♭ chord on a different string set than before.

Example 8 consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff starts with a box labeled '8'. Above the staff are chord voicings: Cmaj7, C6, Dm6, Em6, F6, D♭maj7, D♭6, E♭m6, Fm6, and G♭6. The music features scale runs with fingerings (1-2, 1-2, 3-2, 1-4, 2-3, 1-1, 2-3, 3-2) and circled numbers 2, 3, 4, and 6. The second staff has chord voicings: B♭m6, E♭9, A♭maj7, A♭dim(ma7), and A♭6. It includes scale runs with fingerings (1-3, 1-4, 1-4, 1-2, 1-4, 1) and circled numbers 3, 4, 5, and 6. A dashed line with a circled 6 is at the bottom of the second staff.

While we are on the subject of etude 7, example 9 uses several ideas from this etude. The sequence in the major 7th chords and the 2 line idea over the Eb9 chord.

Slightly out of time. . . poco rubato

9

Cmaj7 D^bmaj7 Swing

B^bm⁶ E⁹ E^b9 A^bmaj⁷

Etude 10 uses another major 7th sequence. Notice the three chord shapes going across the neck. Cma7/G – Cma9 – C triad, The Bbm6 to the Eb9 measures use some of the scale techniques that we have used in past units both “Scales and Arpeggios” and “Contrapuntal Concepts”.

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Cmaj7 D^bmaj7

B^bm⁶ E^b7 A^bmaj⁷

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Editor's Note: This section based on the first 8 bars of "You Stepped Out of a Dream" took all of about 30 minutes. These ideas came fast and furious. I wish that I had brought a recorder with me, so I am relying on my memory to complete these short examples. I didn't get all of the ideas. I had to add some of my ideas to some of the phrases just to fill out the 8 bars but I know that Jimmy's main idea for each example is correct and intact. If you think that something doesn't sound like Jimmy, you are probably correct in assuming that I must have added to a bar or two in that example. Jimmy was looking for a way to tie all of this material together with the students that had been in this class. This was the last class of the quarter and Jimmy will be back at it in April for a new quarter and a new group of students. Hopefully, so will I. I have enjoyed assisting him in those classes.

I have heard from many people that have downloaded this material. If you haven't yet, please take a moment to write me and let me know how you are doing with this material.