

Scale Summary

Definitions

Parent scale - the scale from which a chord is derived. i.e. C major is the parent scale to the chords Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7 and Bm7b5

Parallel scale - the scale that shares the same root. i.e. C major is the parallel scale to Cmaj7, Cm7, Cm7b5, C7b9, etc.

Major

- How to find it: • Look at the diagrams on the Major Scale page
- When to use it: • On any chord that is derived from a major scale
- Examples: • A C scale can be used with Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7 and Bm7b5
- An F scale can be used with Fmaj7, Gm7, Am7, Bbmaj7, C7, Dm7 and Em7b5

Natural Minor

- How to find it: • Same as Major Scale but what was the 6th scale degree is now the root (natural minor is the 6th mode of major)
- When to use it: • On any chord that is derived from a minor scale
- Examples: • C major is the same as Am and can be used with all of the same chords
- F major is the same as Dm and can be used with all of the same chords

Harmonic Minor

- How to find it: • Take a natural minor scale and raise the scale 7th
- When to use it: • On a minor ii-V or any 7b9 chord, particularly if it functions as III7, VI7 or VII7 in a major key
- On a diminished chord that functions as a dominant
- Examples: • Over Dm7b5 and G7b9 use C harmonic minor
- Over Gm7b5 and C7b9 use F harmonic minor
- In the key of C over E7, A7 or B7 -use the parent harmonic minor scale for each chord (for E7b9 use A harmonic minor)
- Over a C#o7 that goes to Dm, use the parent scale of the C#o7 (D harmonic minor)

Melodic Minor

- How to find it: • Take a major scale and lower the 3rd
- When to use it: • On any min(maj7) chord (Rare)
• On a dominant 9#5 - use the parent scale
- Note: this scale is the same notes as the next 2 scales
- Examples: • Over Cm(maj7) use C melodic minor
• Over G9#5 use C melodic minor

Lydian Dominant

- How to find it: • Same as Melodic Minor but what was the 4th scale degree is now the root (lydian dominant is the 4th mode of melodic minor)
- When to use it: • Over a dominant 7 chord, particularly if it functions as bII7, II7, IV7, or bVII7 in a major key
- Examples: • In the key of C use over Db7, D7, F7 or Bb7 (use the parallel scale for each chord)

Fully Altered

- How to find it: • Same as Melodic Minor but what was the 7th scale degree is now the root (fully altered is the 7th mode of melodic minor)
- When to use it: • Over any dominant chord with altered 5ths and 9ths, or if you just feel like altering 5ths and 9ths (use the parallel scale)
- Examples: • G7b5b9, G7b5#9, G7#5b9 or G7#5#9 all use G fully altered

Whole-step Half-step Diminished

- How to find it: • Alternate whole steps and half steps
- When to use it: • Over diminished chords, particularly those that do not function as dominants
- Examples: • Over Co7 use C whole-step half-step diminished

Half-step Whole-step Diminished

- How to find it: • Alternate half steps and whole steps - same as as whole-step half-step diminished starting on a different note
- When to use it: • Over dominant13b9 chords
- Examples: • Over G13b9 use G half-step whole-step diminished [same as whole-step half-step diminished starting on other basic chord tones (3, 5, 7, or b9)]

Whole Tone

- How to find it: • All whole steps
- When to use it: • Over dominant 9#5
- Examples: • Over G9#5 use whole tone starting on any chord tone