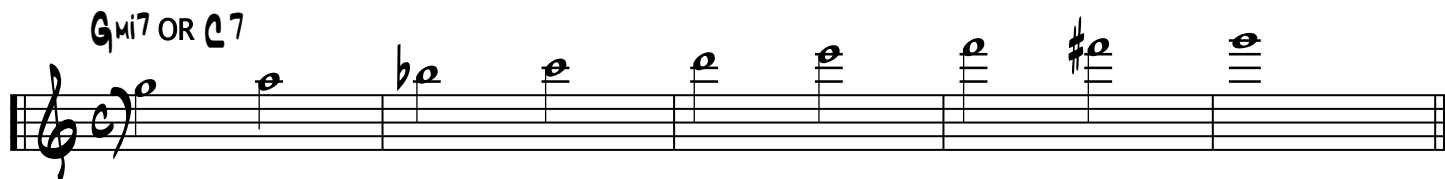


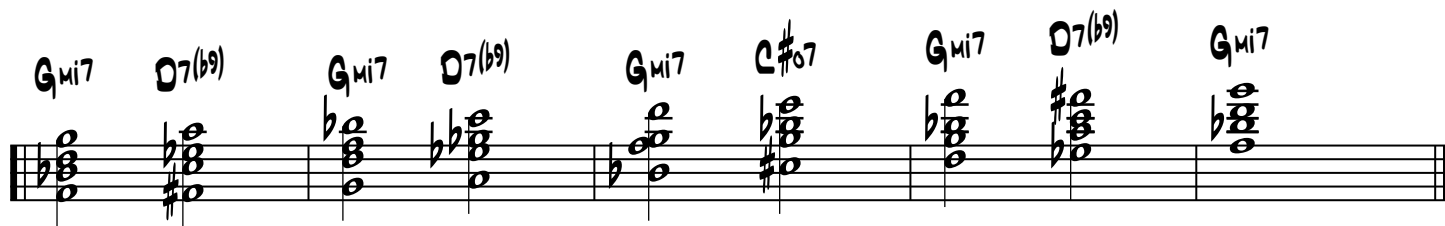
Wes Montgomery Harmonization Techniques

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February 2007

Below is one scale choice that Wes Montgomery incorporates over a minor 7 chord. This particular scale is a Dorian Mode with an added chromatic between the b7 and Root. This is considered a Dorian Bebop Scale, as the added chromatic places the chord tones on the downbeats.



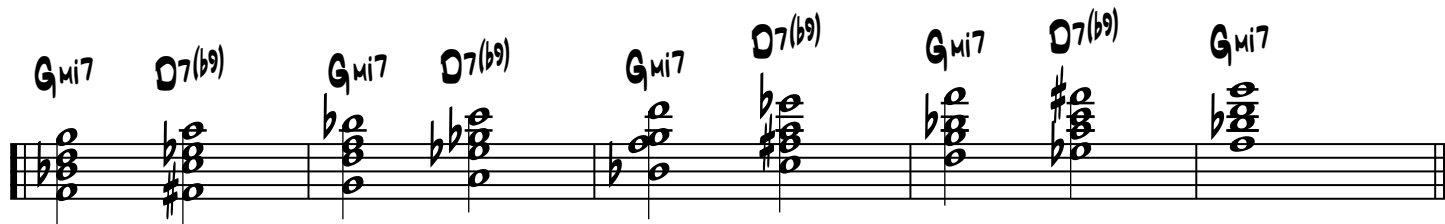
With the consideration that Diminished 7 chord voicings can function as rootless 7 (b9) chords, Wes' harmonization technique employs the use of Tonic/Dominant resolutions. Each chord tone is harmonized as a Tonic function and each non-chord tone is harmonized as a V7 (b9) function. This is a common technique used by arrangers to harmonize melodic lines.



The following is another scale choice that Wes Montgomery incorporates over a minor 7 chord. This particular scale is an Aeolian Mode with an added chromatic between the b7 and Root. This is considered a Aeolian Bebop Scale, as the added chromatic places the chord tones on the downbeats. This scale choice is a little more "correct" in that each non-chord tone belongs to the V7 (b9). The Eb in this scale is more "inside" the harmony than the E natural in the Dorian Bebop Scale above.



This is the Aeolian Bebop Scale harmonized:



The Scale choice Wes frequently uses for V7 chords is the Half/Whole Diminished Scale. This scale includes the $b9$, $\#9$, and $\#11$. In the following example, each scale tone is harmonized with a Diminished 7 chord voicing.

$C7_{ALT}$

The following scale is the Major Bebop Scale. This scale choice puts a chromatic between the 5th and 6th scale degrees of a Major Scale. This puts the R, 3rd, 5th and 6th scale degrees on the downbeats.

$F\Delta 7$

Wes harmonizes this scale in the same fashion as the minor 7 chord. He creates a Tonic/Dominant harmony, going back and forth between I Major 7 and V7 ($b9$) chords. For the following harmonization I have harmonized several of the Major 7 chords as MA 6/9 chords. This voicing is a very traditional substitute for Major 7 chords and is used quite a bit by Wes Montgomery.

$F_{MA6/9}$ $C7(b9)$ $F\Delta 7$ $C7(b9)$ $F_{MA6/9}$ $C7(b9)$ $F_{MA6/9}$ $C7(b9)$ $F_{MA6/9}$

One could also harmonize these Major 7 chords with standard "Drop 2" inversions...

$F\Delta 7$ $C7(b9)$ $F\Delta 7$ $C7(b9)$ $F\Delta 7$ $C7(b9)$ $F_{MA6/9}$ $C7(b9)$ $F\Delta 7$

Wes will also harmonize the "C" note in this scale with an A minor 7 "Drop 2" voicing creating an F Ma9 sound... You can also harmonize the "A" note with an F6 voicing!

$F\Delta 9$ $F6$

So, in a ii-7/V7alt/I Ma7 progression Wes will use either Dorian Bebop Scale or Aeolian Bebop Scale for the ii-7 chord, Half/Whole Diminished Scale for the V7alt chord, and Major Bebop Scale for the I Ma7 chord.

The first staff shows two measures of music. The first measure is labeled Gmi7 and contains a melodic line starting on G4, moving through A4, Bb4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, and ending on a whole note G5. The second measure is also labeled Gmi7 and contains a melodic line starting on G4, moving through A4, Bb4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, and ending on a whole note G5.

The second staff shows two measures of music. The first measure is labeled C7ALT and contains a melodic line starting on C4, moving through D4, Eb4, E4, F4, G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, and ending on a whole note C5. The second measure is labeled FΔ7 and contains a melodic line starting on F4, moving through G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, and ending on a whole note F5.

Now, if we take these scale harmonization techniques and apply them to some "Jazz Lines" we can come up with some very cool sounds. And, it gives the immediate sound of Wes Montgomery! So, let's harmonize a few melodic ii-7/V7alt/I Ma7 ideas.

The staff shows a sequence of chord voicings. From left to right: Gmi7, D7(b9), Gmi7, D7(b9), C7ALT, FMA6/9, C7(b9), F6, C7(b9), and FMA6/9. Each chord is represented by a specific voicing on a piano keyboard.

***In the above example I used an F6 voicing to harmonize the "A" melody note for the F Ma7. The reason I used this was to create motion from the "E" in the C7 (b9) moving to the "D" in the F6 chord. Otherwise the note would have repeated and been less effective as a moving harmonized line. This is a personal choice and either voicing for the "A" note would sound fine.

As a general rule Wes harmonized non-scale tones, or chromatic passing tones, with the same voicing as the targeted scale tone. The example below typifies a bluesy type of idea that Wes would have played and harmonized. The diminished voicing used to harmonize "Db" is the same voicing used in the targeted "C" scale tone.

The staff shows a single measure of music labeled Gmi7. The melodic line starts on G4, moves through Ab4, Bb4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, and ends on a whole note G5. The chords are Gmi7, Abmi7, Bbmi7, Bmi7, Cmi7, Dmi7, Emi7, F#mi7, and Gmi7.

Another technique employed by Montgomery was the use of a Diminished 7 chord voicing to harmonize an entire line. Because of the strength within the melodic idea, the ear will not necessarily hear these diminished chords as being wrong, or outside the harmony. Wes would sometimes harmonize entire lines with Diminished 7 chord voicings and only use a voicing within the harmony on the final targeted melodic note.

Here is the previous example harmonized strictly with Diminished 7 chord voicings. Only the final "G" melody note is harmonized with a standard "Drop 2" G mi7 voicing.

Musical notation showing a line of music in G minor, harmonized with Diminished 7 chords. The melody starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G, a quarter note A, a quarter note B, a quarter note C, a quarter note D, a quarter note E, and a quarter note F. The final G note is harmonized with a standard Drop 2 G mi7 voicing.

Here is another example including non-scale tones, or chromatic passing tones. I have used the same voicing in the chromatic passing tone as the targeted chord voicing.

Musical notation showing a line of music in G minor, including non-scale tones or chromatic passing tones. The chords are G mi7, F# mi7, G mi7, F o7, F# o7, A o7, G mi7, F# o7, C 7(b9), and F Ma b9. The melody includes chromatic passing tones between the chords.

Here is a ii-7/V7/I Ma7 chordal example from my transcription of Wes' solo on "Jingles." Wes uses "Drop 2" chord voicings for the G mi7, makes use of Diminished 7 chord voicings and Half/Whole Diminished scale on C7alt, and uses A mi7 to harmonize the 5th scale degree of F Ma7. Wes finishes with a standard "Drop 2" F Ma7 voicing.

Musical notation showing a ii-7/V7/I Ma7 chordal example. The chords are G mi7, C 13, C 7ALT, F A9, and F o7. The melody includes chromatic passing tones between the chords.

The only scale choice we have not discussed up to this point is the Dominant Bebop Scale. This scale is the same as a Mixolydian Mode with an added chromatic between the b7 and Root. This Dominant Bebop Scale is played over an un-altered 7th chord.

G7 OR Dmi7

Harmonizing the Dominant Bebop Scale is the same as the previous scale harmonizations. Wes creates a Tonic/Dominant harmony. In this case the tonic is a Dominant 7th chord and the Dominant is a 7 (b9) chord. The Diminished 7 chord voicing is still in use for the 7 (b9) chords. The "E" note in the scale takes us out of the Tonic/Dominant area momentarily, but it still works because the melody note takes precedence over the harmonization of the melody note. You could use an "Eb" note if you like to retain the integrity of the Tonic/Dominant harmony.

A very typical type of pattern incorporating the Diminished 7 voicings would be to move in the interval of a minor 3rd, creating a 7 (b9) arpeggio. Below is an example.

Another Example:

Below is the melody for the bridge of "Lullaby of Birdland." The first example is the melody with the chord changes written above the melody.

The second example is the same melody harmonized in the Wes Montgomery Style.

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Notice that for the 7 (b9) chords the dim.7 chord voicing was used exclusively to harmonize the 5, b6, ♯6, and b7. Essentially what is happening here is that the chord tones of 5 and b7 are harmonized with dim.7 voicings, and the b6 and ♯6 are considered chromatic approach notes moving to the b7!

The melody over the Bb-7 chord contains two chord tones, the b3 and R, so we can harmonize those notes with Drop 2 voicings. The AbMaj7 also has the 3rd in the melody so a standard Drop 2 voicing is also appropriate.

The last 2 chords in the bridge are harmonized with modified Drop 2 voicings.

The first chord is a Gmi7(b5) with the 11th in the melody, so just take a standard Gmi7(b5) voicing and make the 11th the top melody note. The C7(b9) has the root in the melody, so a dim.7 voicing will not work in this situation. So, take a Gdim.7 voicing, which typically has Bb in the melody and play the C melody note over that voicing.