

Common Harmonic Improvement Concepts

Ted Greene — 1979, October 14

[*Ted's note to himself about teaching this page:*] Show application of all this to tunes! by using your different programs (ex. *All the Way* lead sheet, *Days of Wine and Roses* comping, *Green Dolphin Street*.)

1) Chord Enrichment and Siblings: Any chord may have extensions and/or altered tones *added* to it according to personal taste. Or, some tones in a chord may be *replaced* with extensions or altered tones. Another way of saying all this is: Any chord may be used for any other if they are in the same Chord Family. We might say that any chords in the same family are Siblings.

Also **1a) Chord Abbreviation** (just like the name implies)

2) 1/2 Step Approaches: A) Any chord may be *preceded* by various types of chords whose 'named' roots are a 1/2 step above. Examples: Before Cm7, you might wish to use C#m7/11 or Db9 or Dbmaj7. B) The principle works from below too. Example: Before Cm7, you might try Bm9 or B7/6 or Bmaj7.

3) 5th Approaches ("Back-Cycling"): Any chord may be *preceded* by various types of chords whose roots are a 5th above. Example: You might precede Cmaj9 with G11 or G7+ or Gm9 or even Gmaj7 in certain situations. You might precede C9 with Gm9 or Gm7b5 or G7b9+. You might precede Cm9 with Gm7 or Gm6 or G7+.

-----#s 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 — Common Tone Substitution-----

4) b5 Substitution ("Tritone Subst."): A) Any dominant 7th type chord has strong affinity to other dominant 7th type chords whose roots are a b5th higher, and therefore these chords may substitute (replace) or each other: Example: For E7#9, you might use Bb13 or Bb13#11 (or vice versa).

B) Minor 7th and major type chords may work favorably in this relationship at times.

Example: Given = (Bm7) E7#9 Am7 D11
Subst. = F9 Bb7/6 (Ebmaj7) (Abmaj7), or use Fm9 for the Bm7

The substitute chord may also precede or follow the give chord in this principle.

5) 3rd Substitution: Chords whose roots are a 3rd apart often have some notes in common, sometimes many, and once in awhile, even identical notes. As you may suspect, some substitutions ensue because of this. Some of the more common are listed (in one key only each, to save space).

A) For C major types, try Am7 or Em7 types....or vice versa.

B) For Bm7b5 types, try G dominant 7th types or Dm6 or minor/maj7 types....or vice versa for all these chords.

As above, the substitute chord may precede or follow the given chord in this principle.

6) Common Dominant (and Minor) Substitution: A) Most dominant 7th type chords have strong affinity to m7 types whose root is a 5th higher. These chords are referred to as *Companions* and may be rather freely combined with each other whenever either chord is given.

Example: For 2 measures of D9, try D7 Am7 D9 Am9 D9 Am7 D7
/ / / / / / //

Or for Am7 Dm7, try Am7 D9 Dm7
//// //// // // ////

B) Dominant 7sus types and their companion m7's are virtually identical (compare G7sus and Dm7; G11 and Dm7; G13sus and Dm9), and may *replace* each other.

7) Change of Family (Quality Change): Although much discretion is needed here, you may find quite a few successful situations where you may wish to *replace* a chord with one from a different family. Example: For Am7, try A7#9; for A6 try A7/6 or A13; for Am/9, try Amaj9.

8) Scalewise Approaches: A chord may be *preceded* or *followed* by other chords (often diatonic) in its own key whose roots or bass notes are in ascending or descending scalewise orders.

Example: Given Am7 D7, try Cmaj7 Bm7 Am7 D7b9;
// // / / / /

Or given F Bb you might play Fmaj7 Gm7 Am7 Bbmaj7 or Fmaj7 Gm7 Ab°7 F/A Bbmaj7
//// //// // / / //// / / / / ////

Actually the bass can leap around in the key as well as move in order.

9) Neighbor Tone Approaches: Any chord may be preceded with chords that create attractive moving lines. This concept sometimes overlaps into the **1/2 Step Approach**, but also allows for many other sounds. Many are quality shifts on the same *root*. Ask for examples.

Note: Many of the concepts on this page are often combined or repeated as our studies will show.

SHOW APPLICATION OF ALL THIS TO TUNE'S I by using your different programs (EX: ALL THE WAY LEAD SHEET)
COMMON HARMONIC IMPROVEMENT CONCEPTS

DATE OF WORK: 10-14-79
 COMPILED BY: Ted Greene
 GREEN DOLPHIN ST.

① **CHORD ENRICHMENT & SIBLINGS**: Any chord may have extensions &or altered tones added to it, according to personal taste. Or, some tones in a chord may be replaced with extensions or altered tones. Another way of saying all this is: Any chord may be used for any other if they are in the same CHORD FAMILY. We might say that any chords in the same family are SIBLINGS. also (a) CHORD ABBREVIATION (JUST LIKE THE NAME IMPLIES)

② **1/2 STEP APPROACHES**: Any chord may be preceded by various types of chords whose named roots are a 1/2 step above. Examples:
 Before Cm7, you might wish to use C#m7/11 or Db9 or DbA7.
 B) The principle works from below too. EX: Before Cm7, you might try Bm9 or B7/6 or B47

③ **5TH APPROACHES ("BACK-CYCLING")**: Any chord may be preceded by various types of chords whose roots are a 5th above. EX: You might precede CA9 with F11 or G7+ or Fm9 or even G47 in certain situations. You might precede C9 with Gm9 or Gm7b5 or G7b9+. You might precede Cm9 with Gm7 or Gm6 or G7+.

④ **65TH SUBSTITUTION ("TRITONE SUBST.")**: Any dom. 7th type chord has strong affinity to other dom. 7th type chords whose roots are a 65th higher, and therefore these chords may substitute (replace) for each other. EX: For E7#9, you might use Bb13 or Bb13#11 (or vice versa).

B) Minor 7th & Major type chords may work favorably in this relationship at times. EX: GIVEN: Bm7, E7#9, Am7, D11
 the subst. chord may also precede SUBST.: F9, Bb7/6 (Eba7), Aba7; or use Fm9 for the Bm7 or follow the given chord in this principle.

⑤ **3RD SUBSTITUTION**: Chords whose roots are a 3rd apart often have some notes in common, sometimes many, and once in awhile, even identical notes. As you may suspect, some substitutions ensue because of this. Some of the more common are listed (in one key only each, to save space).

- A) For C Major types, try Am7 or Em7 types or VICE VERSA
- B) For Bm7b5 types, try G DOM. 7 types or Dm6 or mA7 types or VICE VERSA for all these chords

⑥ **COMPANION DOMINANT (and minor) SUBSTITUTION**: Most dom. 7th type chords have strong affinity to m7 types whose root is a 5th higher. These chords are referred to as COMPANIONS and may be rather freely combined with each other whenever either chord is given. EX: For 2 measures of D9, try D7, Am7, D9, Am9, D9, Am7, D7. Or for Am7, Dm7, try Am7, D9, Dm7

B) Dom. 7 sus types and their companion m7's are virtually identical, (compare: G7sus + Dm7; G11 + Dm7; G13sus + Dm9), and may replace each other.

⑦ **CHANGE OF FAMILY (QUALITY CHANGE)**: Although much discretion is needed here, you may find quite a few successful situations where you may wish to replace a chord with one from a different family. EX: For Am7, try A7#9; for A6 try A7/6 or A13; for Am19, try AA9.

⑧ **SCALEWISE APPROACHES**: A chord may be preceded or followed by other chords (often DIATONIC) in its own key whose roots or bass notes are in ascending or descending scalewise order. EX: Given Am7, D7, try CA7, Bm7, Am7, D7b9; or given F, Bb, you might play FA7, Gm7, Am7, Bba7 or FA7, Gm7, Ab07, FA, Bba7. Actually, the base can leap around in the key as well as move in order.

⑨ **NEIGHBOR TONE APPROACHES**: Any chord may be preceded with chords that create attractive moving lines. This concept sometimes overlaps into the 1/2 step approach, but also allows for many other sounds. Many are quality shifts on the same root. Ask for examples.

COMMON TONE SUBSTITUTION

SCALEWISE

NOTE -> MANY OF THE CONCEPTS ON THIS PAGE ARE OFTEN COMBINED OR REPEATED as our studies will show.