

The Blues: Harmonic Vocabulary and Progressions

Ted Greene, 1978-05-01

Progression #1:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I7 I7 I7 I7 IV7 IV7 I7 I7 V7 IV7 I7 VI7 II7 V7 or IV7											

1) Each chord in the above progression has a *Companion m7* which is built a 5th higher (than the given chord). Example: C7's companion minor 7 is Gm7. The companion m7 may precede its "companion dominant" or may be "sandwiched" in between it. Examples:

Key of C

1	2	1	2	3	4
Gm9 C9 Gm9 C9 etc. or C9 Gm9 C9 C9 Gm9 C9					

Naturally, extensions can be used according to taste on any chord.

2) Each chord in the above progression may be preceded by a dominant 7th chord whose root is a 1/2 step higher. Examples:

1	2	3
C7/6 Db7/6 C7/6 Db9 C13 etc.		

In jazz swing feel:

Assignment: Make up quite a few variations on progression #1. Consult the "Voicing Centers" below and strive to be melodic (melody is the heart and soul of Blues). The rhythmic feel is open to you, but jazz swing is a good place to start. Consider the performance context to include a bass player.

Try the following procedure:

- 1) Play a version that just has "hip" voicings of the given chords.
- 2) Play a version that adds some 1/2 step dominants.
- 3) Play a version that adds some companion m7's.
- 4) Play a version that uses some of both (1/2 step and companion m7)

Repeat this whole process starting from a new voicing center.

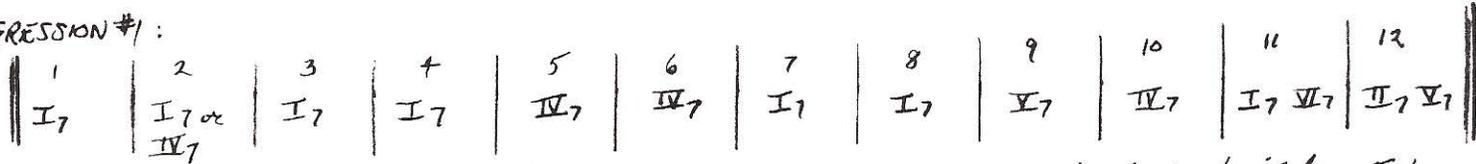
Repeat this whole process but mix up the voicing centers now.

Voicing Centers

Common chord types to apply to progression #1:

- On I7: Group 1 dominants (including the dominant 7th chord itself) |
- Group 2 dominants | 7#9, 13#9 | other chords, Group 4 in passing to IV7.
- On IV7: Group 1, 2, 3 || 7#9, 13#9.
- On V7: Group 1, 2, 4.

PROGRESSION #1:



- ① Each chord in the above progression has a COMPANION m7 which is built a 5th higher (than the given chord) → EXAMPLE: C7's companion m7 is Fm7.
The companion m7 may precede its "companion dominant" or may be "sandwiched" in between it → EXAMPLES:

Key of C || Gm7¹ C9¹ | Gm7² C9² | etc. or || C9¹ Gm7¹ | C9² | C9³ Gm7¹ | C9⁴ |

Naturally, extensions can be used according to taste on any chord.

- ② Each chord in the above progression may be preceded by a dominant 7th chord whose root is a 1/2 step higher. EXAMPLES:

1 2 3
|| C7^b/6 D^b7^b/6 | C7^b/6 D^b9 | C13 etc.

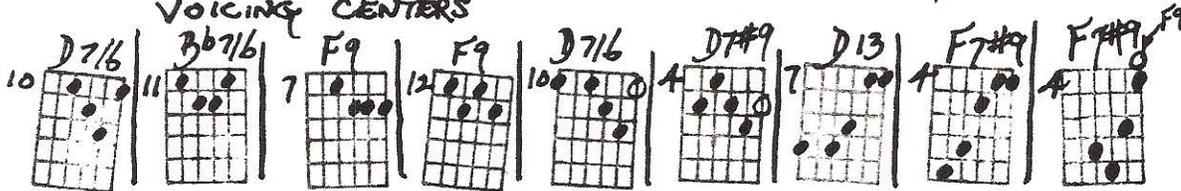
in JAZZ → SWING FEEL

ASSIGNMENT: Make up quite a few variations on progression #1. Consult the "Voicing Centers" below, and strive to be melodic (Melody is the heart & soul of Blues). The rhythmic feel is open to you but jazz swing is a good place to start. Consider the performance context to include a bass player. Try the following procedure:

- ① Play a version that just has "hip" voicings of the given chords.
- ② Play a version that adds some 1/2 step dominants.
- ③ " " " " " " Companion m7's.
- ④ " " " " uses some of both (1/2 st. + comp. m7).

Repeat this whole process starting from a new voicing center.
" " " " but mix up the voicing centers now.

VOICING CENTERS



Common chord types to apply to PROG. #1:

on I₇: GROUP 1 DOMINANTS (including the dom. 7th chord itself) | GROUP 2 Dom.'s | 7#9, 13#9 | Other chords GROUP 4 in passing to IV₇

on IV₇: GROUP 1, 2, 3 | 7#9, 13#9 |

on V₇: GROUP 1, 2, 4