ALT. DOM.
7#9 | MALNEY

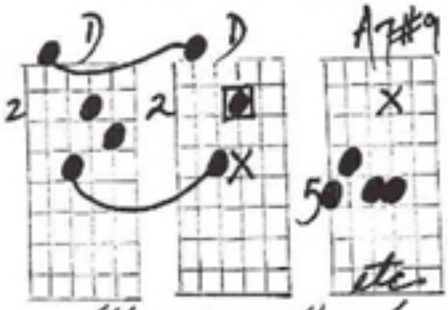
LEARNING TO USE ALTERED DOMINANTS on ONE DEGREE AT A TIME

5-27-86
©Jal Malney

We're going to work with the 7#9 chord for awhile, seeing how its inherent color is sometimes softened, sometimes sharpened, and sometimes pretty much left alone, all according to which degree of a key it is used on (this will become clear as we go). Let's start with the bluesier sounding ones in the context of a major key:

① Key of Ab — Ab — Eb7#9 — Key of C — C — G7#9 — Key of D — D — A7#9 — D7 — G9 — G9

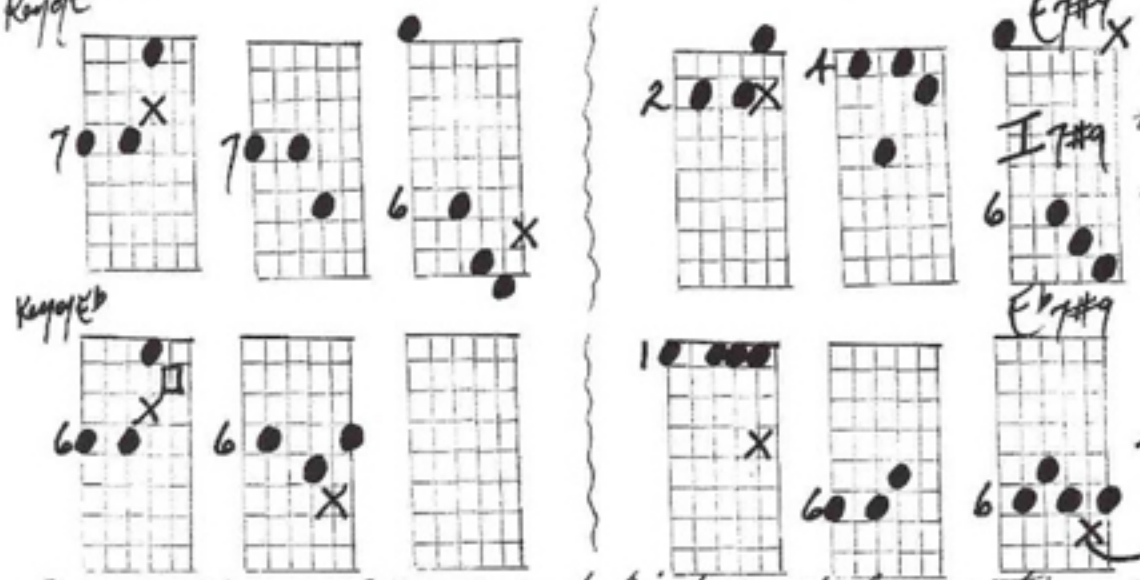
7#9 on V7 — And in another key — And another



The I 7#9 is so bluesy + cool (warm?). If you want to hear this kind of color coming into its own in American musical life, try listening to the 'Rhapsody in Blue' by George Gershwin, the composer who is so associated with this sound that all one need do is play a little passage like any of the above in a roomful of musical people and inevitably someone is likely to utter his name.

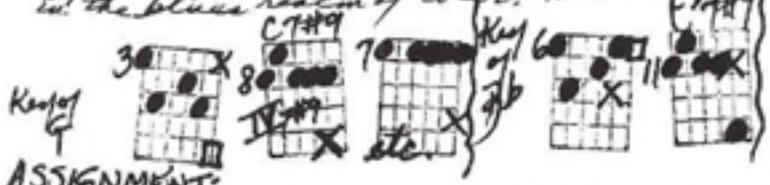
② Similar in effect is the I 7#9. Compare the following 2 examples:

Key of C — Key of Eb

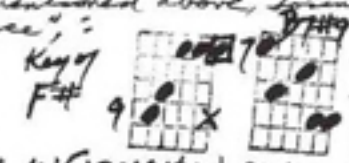


Is there any doubt that if there is any such thing as Blues Harmony, you're in there when you give I 7#9 the call (?). Let's hear one more comparison:

③ Using 7#9's on IV can sound kind of weird sometimes. But when this mating of quality (7#9) and degree (IV) does work, the effect as with I7#9 + I7#9 seems to be in the blues realm of color. Here are some examples showing how bluesy the IV7#9 can be:



Here's an example of IV7#9, as mentioned above, something weird or kind of "out of place": at least to my ears.



Suggestion: Be very cautious in using IV 7#9 when the #9 tone is in the soprano.

ASSIGNMENT: DO YOUR BEST TO STORE THE GENERAL &/OR SPECIFIC INFORMATION PRESENTED ON THIS PAGE DEEP INTO YOUR MUSICAL SELF. Make up variations if you feel like.