


# CONTENTS

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<b>ABOUT THE RECORDINGS / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>FUNDAMENTALS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
The 12-Bar Blues.....	8
Rhythm Changes.....	10
The II-V-I.....	14
<b>“RUN FOR YOUR LIFE”: A Study of Rhythm Changes</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Harmonic and Melodic Analysis.....	17
<b>DEVELOPING THE WALKING BASS LINE</b> .....	<b>24</b>
The Modes.....	25
Altered Harmony Using the Chromatic Scale.....	26
Pentatonic Scales (5-Note Scales).....	27
Rhythmic Choices.....	32
Walking Through the Bridge.....	36
<b>ALTERED VARIATIONS OF RHYTHM CHANGES</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Bebop Scales.....	38
New Harmonic Ideas for Altered Progressions.....	39
Walking Bass Lines for Altered Forms.....	40
Scales for Dominant 7th Chords.....	43
Diminished and Chromatic Scale Study.....	44
Melodic Use of the Diminished Scale: “Boomtown”.....	48
Altering the Harmony for Composition.....	49
Expanding Melodic Soloing Possibilities with the Dorian Mode.....	50
Modal Ideas for the Bridge of Rhythm Changes.....	52
Practice with Chordal Arpeggios.....	53
<b>“GALILEO”: Ideas on the Major Scale Inspired by Jaco Pastorius</b> .....	<b>54</b>
<b>“GABRIELA ROSE”</b> .....	<b>56</b>
Melodic and Harmonic Analysis of "Gabriela Rose".....	58
<b>THE WHEEL OF IMPROVISATION</b> .....	<b>62</b>

# ABOUT THE RECORDINGS

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This icon  above a music example indicates that a FREE recording is available. All the recordings for this book can be downloaded from Alfred-Music.com by typing the following link into a web browser:

**<http://alfred-music.com/MI/00-33580.zip>**

Save the file to your hard drive, then double-click and follow your computer's prompts to extract the mp3s and a PDF with more information about the recordings.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Improvising requires focused observation on some very fine points of study as well as dedication and commitment to your instrument. In my opinion, it involves improving your musicianship and constantly raising your bar of musical knowledge as well as finding a spiritual path that leads you to a connection between your passion and your heart. This will help you to inject your personality into your playing, creating a voice of some sort, and allow your spirituality to enter the music, which then gives the music a deeper expression! Extremely vital to this equation is your technical knowledge of music, which is much like learning a new language. The study of this language will allow you to communicate your emotions freely, and the more articulate you are, the clearer your audience will hear you. This is our goal to strive for in playing music. And you will realize that it is a gift!

**Preparation and study** are very important to reaching goals. Learning chord changes and song forms is a great way to prepare for playing music openly and for expanding your options. Doing so also opens the door to being comfortable with harmony and melody as it supports, strengthens, and builds confidence in your ability to improvise. The study of harmony is vast—actually, it's an infinite study. Studying everything that comes your way is essential to the growth of your musical vocabulary and also widens your scope of understanding music in general.

Study all you possibly can at your own pace. It is very important to **pay attention to your own learning pace**. Please don't be impatient. **Studying slow and methodically is actually preferred**. This will increase your ability to expand your musical boundaries. In the long run, with study and preparation, you will become more proficient and qualified to handle any musical situation. As a student in music, this direction will improve your self-motivation and continually build confidence within, creating a hunger to continue to progress and grow. This is something I feel is extremely important for perpetuating any type of career in music—from composers and arrangers to technicians, performers, and producers.

The **study and practice of composition** is also important and helpful in many ways. There are various approaches to composition. In the study of harmony, this can be another all-important tool for improving as a musician, adding another dimension and bringing an insightful element to your musicianship. Composing can open the door to writing in a stream-of-consciousness state and will be a very important factor in finding ideas that are unique.

For example...

# Run for Your Life

As Performed by the Yellowjackets

mp3 13

By BOB MINTZER

A1

F7 D7 G7 C7 A7 D7 Gm7 C7

5 Cm7 F7 Bb7 Bdim C7 D7 G7 C7

A2

9 F7 D7 G7 Abdim A7 D7 G7 C7

13 F7 A7 Bb7 Bdim C7 F7

B

17 Em7 A7 D7

21 G7 Gm7 C7

A3

25 F7 G7 C7 A7 D7 G7 C7

29 F7 A7 Bb7 Bdim C7

# Altered Harmony Using the Chromatic Scale

## THE CHROMATIC SCALE

Another application for designing a walking bass line is found in altering the harmony and looking at the substitution chords. Here are a few ways that the harmony is altered using the chromatic scale, and how we can build a walking bass line with this interesting sound.

### Chromatic Scale on F



Check out the next example. You have the option of altering the first two bars of the phrase by using the chromatic scale: from F, the tonic note; to F#, which is the major 3rd of the D7 chord; then to G, which is the root of the II chord (G7); to a G#, which is the major 3rd of an E7 chord. E7 substitutes for the C7 and leads to the A7 chord perfectly, thus creating additional harmony with a V-to-I chord relationship, all by using the chromatic scale. Bars 6 and 7 have a built-in chromatic movement that's all part of this same scale.

**mp3** 16

## CHROMATIC NON-HARMONIC TONES

Notes that are moved in a chromatic fashion create altered harmonic values to chords and scales. This chromatic altering can also be utilized in improvisation to create tension and dissonance in an improvised solo. We can look at this chromatic movement as interesting passing tones—or a bridging—between diatonic structure and movement. These notes are called *non-harmonic tones* and create infinite options to any improvisation.

One rule of thumb is to provide essential intervallic notes on a strong beat, meaning the *downbeats*, of the chords in cadence. This helps to strongly suggest the existing harmony in resolution, giving the improvisation balance and confirming the harmonic structure. But even this rule has its breaking point because of the rhythmic and melodic open options in altering the melodic phrases. This, of course, can give the improvisation more personality and a unique twist. Please keep these thoughts in mind. With exploration, you can then experiment to find your voice—your personal expression.

Check out the exercise below. Study Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. Notice the first two notes of each phrase and that this progression has a built-in harmonic structure that can be chromatically altered.

**mp3** 17