

ALLAN HOLDSWORTH

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Part I

Scales for Improvising

In this section, Allan discusses the scales he finds most useful for improvisation. It is important that once you become familiar with these scale fingerings that you begin to explore them for all of the chords contained within each. You can do this by building chords from each scale tone.

In most respects Allan is self-taught. He began his exploration of scales by working out various scale patterns and then experimenting with each of their permutations, discarding those with more than four consecutive semi-tones (half-steps). He then analyzed the scales to find the chords contained within them (more on Allan's approach to harmony in Part II).

The following scales will be covered in this section. Although there are many more scales than presented here, these are the most useful. The scales are named in relation to the chord forms and chord tones they imply.

Seven Note Scales:

- Scale #1) C Major/D Minor/G7
- Scale #2) D Minor (maj7) - (D Melodic Minor)
- Scale #3) A Minor (maj7, $\flat 6$) - (A Harmonic Minor)
- Scale #4) A Minor (maj7, $\sharp 4$) - (E Harmonic Major)
- Scale #14) C Dominant ($\sharp 9$)

Added Tone "Jazz" Scales (Eight notes):

- Scale #6) B \flat Jazz Major (add $\sharp 5$)
- Scale #7) C Jazz Dominant (add $\sharp 7$)
- Scale #8) B Jazz Minor (add $\flat 7$)
- Scale #9) A Jazz Minor (add $\flat 6$)
- Scale #11) D \flat Jazz Minor (add $\sharp 11$)

Added Tone "Jazz" Scales (Nine notes):

- Scale #12) C Jazz Dominant (add $\flat 3$ and $\sharp 7$)
- Scale #13) C Jazz Major (add $\flat 3$ and $\flat 6$)

Symmetrical Scales:

- Scale #5) G \sharp Diminished - 1/2, 1, 1/2, 1, 1/2, 1, etc.
- Scale #10) Symmetrical - 1/2, 1/2, 1 1/2, 1/2, 1, etc.
- Scale #15) Whole Tone - 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, etc.

Scale #3: A minor (maj7, $\flat 6$)

Allan refers to this scale as A minor (maj7, $\flat 6$). You can see at this point that Allan names scales by their interval relationships. This scale is often called A harmonic minor. It is built on the interval sequence: 1-1/2-1-1-1/2-1 and 1/2-1/2, and contains the notes: A B C D E F G \sharp A.

Scale tones: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ $\sharp 7$ 8

Some of the more common chords derived from this scale are: Am9($\sharp 7$) and E7($\flat 9$, $\sharp 5$). (Available extensions are shown in parenthesis)

Am9($\sharp 7$)

E7($\flat 9$, $\sharp 5$)

Scale Diagram:

III V VII IX XII XV XVII