

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Introduction . . . . . 1**  
**Application of Fourths to Chord Changes . . . . . 2**  
**Exercises . . . . . 18**  
**Discography . . . . . 59**

## INTRODUCTION

In the improvisatory style of many well-known jazz artists, the perfect fourth has become an integral part of their harmonic and melodic vocabulary. In an effort to make their music unique from bebop, many post-bop players, such as Jackie Byard and Joe Farrell, began incorporating patterns in perfect fourth intervals into their improvised lines. During this same period in jazz history, many pianists began experimenting with left-hand voicings based on quartal harmony. This technique of integrating fourths into jazz improvisation began perhaps around 1960 and continues to this day.

This book is for the advanced player--the musician who wishes to add yet another harmonic dimension to his improvisations. It can only be a beginning--a tool that opens a door. It is up to the student to walk through that door and explore the contents of the room. Perhaps the most important point a student must remember when using this or any other improvisation method is to *learn it, master it, then forget it. Do not let the "rules" get in the way of your music.*

Mastery of the fourth is extremely difficult. In a conversation with the author, Joe Farrell once said it took him a year of diligent practice before he could successfully apply fourths to his improvisations. Experience has shown the author that rules concerning this interval are not that important. *First be able to play them in exercises.* Once the fingers are capable of execution, the ear and mind will be in a position to dictate their use. When all is said and done, you must play musically and melodically.

This book does not take the place of other, more comprehensive books on jazz improvisation. It is a supplement, another tool to aid and expand the serious student's harmonic and melodic vocabulary. Its purpose is twofold. 1) Most instrumentalists (both jazz and non-jazz) cannot fluently play consecutive fourth intervals. One of the reasons is that most of the music with which students are familiar is based on thirds. In addition, on most instruments, fourths are more difficult to execute than thirds. It is the author's experience that a fluent technique with this interval will greatly help other aspects of the student's technique whether it is in a jazz or a non-jazz context. 2) When fourths are mastered, they can be applied directly to jazz improvisation. For this reason chord changes are provided.

## APPLICATION OF FOURTHS TO CHORD CHANGES

Many recent jazz and jazz/rock compositions use as a harmonic framework a relatively small number of chord changes. Freddie Hubbard's *Straight Life*, Keith Jarrett's *Sorcery*, and *Chameleon* by Herbie Hancock are three examples. This style of composition is in sharp contrast to bebop music, with chord changes every measure or even every two beats. Frequently, composers employ both harmonic elements in their music; that is, a tune harmonized with fast harmonic rhythm but a set of more simple changes reserved for "blowing." Joe Farrell's *Sound Down* is an excellent example.

Soloing over a set of changes with slow harmonic rhythm in a sense frees the improviser, and allows him greater harmonic freedom. It is in this circumstance that patterns in fourths are most useful, or at any rate easiest to handle.

When soloing over a pedal point, a soloist can venture quite far from the chord changes and still sound convincing. In other words, as irrational as it may sound, *you can play about anything you want over a pedal point if you begin and end properly.* In fact, it is very desirable for the soloist under these circumstances to be able to convincingly venture away from the changes. One way to successfully "take it out" is to play chain sequences, more simply called patterns. If a soloist begins with a melodic idea that is compatible with the chord change of that instance, he can continue the pattern without regard to the chords being sounded against it. The pattern, because it maintains its own integrity, will sound correct even though in some instances its notes may be quite dissonant with the chord the rhythm section is playing. It can be carried as far as the soloist wishes, broken and resolved.

As an interesting sidelight, the author, from analyzing numerous transcribed solos, has observed that keyboard players generally play a sequence exactly as it theoretically should be. For instance, if Example 1 was an excerpt from a transcribed solo, it would probably be from a keyboard solo. It is theoretically correct. Because of technical limitations, single line instrumentalists frequently make minor deviations in the pattern of intervals. These slight intervallic deviations are only noticed by the most discerning ear, or by analysis of transcribed solos, and do not detract from the overall solo.

In playing chain sequences, the soloist may choose to play a pattern based on thirds, but he can also play one based on fourths. By using fourths he adds another dimension to his solo--something different, something the post-bebop players of today might play. (Ex. 1, 2, 3, 4.)

Example 1 consists of quartal patterns. Descending fourths in major thirds and ascending fourths on a whole-tone scale.

Example 1.

Rock  $C^{7\#9}$



Example 2 outlines a diminished triad.

Example 2.

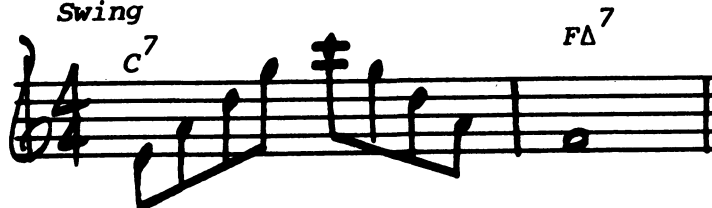
Swing  $C^{7\#9}$



The notes in Example 3 are in complete agreement with the chord, but because of its contour it should be apparent to the reader that melodic fragments of this type cannot be frequently used in a solo. The result would be rather boring to the listener.

Example 3.

Swing



By sliding up a half step above the changes (Ex. 4), a more interesting line is created.