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# Use of Chromatic Tones

For the following two reasons an added chromatic tone should be used when playing eight-note scale patterns.

1. Adding a chromatic note to the eight-note scale will allow for better phrase balance.
2. The added chromatic note will allow for the chord tones of the scale to fall on a strong down beat in the measure

Compare the following examples:

A. **G7**

1 2 3 4 + 1

B. **G7**

Added Note

1 2 3 4 + 1

In Example (A) the last note “G” falls on the “and” of the 4th beat of the measure. This makes the scale sound awkward. The first note “G” falls on the 1st beat, which is a chord tone, but on all the other beats (2, 3, and 4) a non-basic chord tone appears.

In example (B), the last note “G” falls on the 1st beat of the second measure, which gives the phrase proper musical balance. The addition of the chromatic half step in the eight note scale in example (B) solved the problem of not having a chord tone fall on all the down beats. The note “G” is on the 1st beat, the note “F” is now on the 2nd beat, the note “D” falls on the 3rd beat, “B” falls on the 4th beat, and the note “G” falls on the 1st beat of the next measure giving the scale balance.

The chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step should be used in all eighth-note scales. You will find that the  $\frac{1}{2}$  step will appear between two different notes in each scale.

In the Major scale, the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 5th and 6th scale tone while in the Dorian scale the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 3rd and 4th note of the scale. In the Mixolydian or Dominant scale, the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 7th and 8th note of the scale and in the Locrian or half diminished scale the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 5th and 6th note of the scale.

To develop our ear to hear and become comfortable using the added chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps in each of these scales, play them slowly at first. Careful listening while playing these scales will help to develop your ear to hear where the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps fall in the different scales.

### MAJOR SCALE

In the Major scale, the added  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 5th and 6th scale step.

1, 2, 3, 4, (5, #5, 6), 7, 8

**C Maj7**



### DORIAN SCALE

In the Dorian scale, the added  $\frac{1}{2}$  step is used between the 3rd and 4th scale step.

1, 2, (3, #3, 4,) 5, 6, 7, 8

**D min7**





# Major Scales

## With the added $\frac{1}{2}$ Step in a Chromatic Pattern

1A ( Incorrect )

1B ( Correct )

1A ( Incorrect )

1B ( Correct )

C Maj7

C Maj7

3rd

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4 1

Notice Ex.1A in the incorrect playing of the C Major eight-note scale, the note “C” is on the first beat of the measure which is a chord tone. Now look at the 2nd beat, we have the note “A” which is not a chord tone. On the 3rd beat of the measure, we have the note “F” which is not a chord tone and is what is called an avoidance tone. This note should not be played on a strong beat. Another non chordal tone “D” falls on the 4th beat.

The additional problem we create is that the resolution falls on the “up” beat of 4, thus creating an unbalanced scale line.

By comparison, look at Ex. 1B the correct playing of the C Major eight-note scale. The resolution or home tone “C” falls on the downbeat which gives the scale the proper balance. You now have created a scale with all the basic chord tones on each down beat of the measure. The 3rd of the chord, which is the most important note of a chord, now falls on the 4th beat of the measure.

Play the following Major scales to develop your ear to hear the added chromatic tone. Learn to play these scales without reading them from the printed page.

C Maj7

C#Maj7

3rd

# Major Scales

## With the added $\frac{1}{2}$ Step Ascending and Descending Pattern in Minor 3rds

To continue to load up with your experience of playing scales with the added  $\frac{1}{2}$  step over some of the most common chord progressions, you need to practice the following:

Many chord progressions use the interval of a Minor 3rd.

Play the following 12 scale progressions with and without the printed page. This is all about loading up with the sounds necessary to play over a root progression in Minor 3rds.

C Maj7



E $\flat$  Maj7



F# Maj7



A Maj7



C# Maj7





E Maj7



G Maj7



B $\flat$  Maj7



D Maj7



F Maj7



A $\flat$  Maj7



B Maj7



# Locrian (Half-Diminished) Scales

## With the added 1/2 Step in a Chromatic Pattern

1A ( Incorrect )

1B ( Correct )

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1

Notice Ex.1A in the incorrect playing of the B $\emptyset$  eight-note scale, the note “B” is on the first beat of the measure which is a chord tone. Now look at the 2nd beat, we have the note “G” which is not a chord tone. On the 3rd beat of the measure, we have the note “E” which is not a chord tone and a “C” on the 4th beat of the measure.

The additional problem we create is the resolution falls on the “up” beat of 4, thus creating an unbalanced scale line.

By comparison, look at Ex. 1B the correct playing of the B $\emptyset$  Locrian scale. The resolution or home tone “B” falls on the first beat of the measure which gives the scale the proper balance. You now have created a scale with all the basic chord tones on each down beat of the measure. The 3rd of the chord, which is the most important note of a chord, now falls on the 3rd beat of the measure.

Play the following Locrian scales to develop your ear to hear the added chromatic tone. Learn to play these scales without reading them from the printed page.

C $\emptyset$   
C $\sharp\emptyset$   
D $\emptyset$

E $\flat$ Ø



A musical staff in treble clef showing the E-flat Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G, A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

EØ



A musical staff in treble clef showing the E Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

FØ



A musical staff in treble clef showing the F Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

F#Ø



A musical staff in treble clef showing the F-sharp Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: F-sharp, G, A, B, C, D, E, F-sharp, G, A, B, C, D, E, F-sharp. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

GØ



A musical staff in treble clef showing the G Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

A $\flat$ Ø



A musical staff in treble clef showing the A-flat Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: A-flat, B, C, D, E, F, G, A-flat, B, C, D, E, F, G, A-flat. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

AØ



A musical staff in treble clef showing the A Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

B $\flat$ Ø



A musical staff in treble clef showing the B-flat Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: B-flat, C, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat, C, D, E, F, G, A, B-flat. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.

BØ



A musical staff in treble clef showing the B Locrian scale with an added half step chromatic pattern. The notes are: B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B. The first six notes are beamed together, and the last two notes are beamed together. A large watermark is visible in the background.



# Summary

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Now that you have played all the written jazz phrases, your ear should be able to hear your own jazz phrases using  $\frac{1}{2}$  step chromatic tones.

As mentioned previously, these are more traditional ways to use the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps but additional chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps can be used between other notes as well. **You need to remember the reason for using the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps is so the chord tones fall on the down beat.**

The more chromatic tones used in a measure, the fewer chord tones will fall on the down beat. This will cause the phrase to have a less harmonic tonal center.

In order to become proficient at using these chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps in your phrases, you need to practice until it becomes an automatic response and not a technique that you have to think about to manufacture a jazz phrase.

Experience is your best teacher so improvise using this concept as often as you can. Each time, try the notes and  $\frac{1}{2}$  steps in a different order and over different chord progressions.

As stated in the beginning of this book, there are two basic reasons for using the chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step when playing eight-note scale patterns:

1. Adding a chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step when playing a eight-note phrase will allow for better phrase balance.
2. The added chromatic  $\frac{1}{2}$  step will allow for the chord tones in the scale or phrases to fall on a strong down beat in the measure.

# About the Author

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JOE RIPOSO (Saxophonist, Composer, Arranger and Jazz Educator) is the Director of Jazz Studies at Syracuse University. The former Director of Music Education for the Liverpool Central School District (31 years) served as past president of the International Association of Jazz Educators (N.Y.S. Unit) and as the North Eastern Division Coordinator for the International Association of Jazz Educators.

Riposo has served as Jazz Coordinator and Clinician for the NY State School Music Association. He is the recipient of the presidential medallion for his leadership and contributions to the New York State School Music Association. Riposo holds the New York State School Music Association certification as a Woodwind Adjudicator and as a State Jazz Adjudicator.

Riposo is also an active performer, having worked in house bands for nationally known artists such as Tony Bennett, Sammy Davis, Jr., Nat King Cole, Ella Fitzgerald and the McGuire Sisters, and others. He has played a special performance with the Woody Herman Band on tour with Jackie Leonard and Tony Bennett. He has also performed in bands for Diane Schuur, Harry Connick Jr. and Natalie Cole. Riposo also conducted jazz ensembles with many renowned guest soloists including Dizzy Gillespie, Phil Woods, Marvin Stamm, Glenn Drewes, Darius Brubeck, Nick Brignola, and Bob Kindred. Riposo appears frequently as clinician, adjudicator, guest conductor and soloist in many jazz festivals throughout the U.S.

He is the composer of numerous published compositions and is the author of *Jazz Improvisation "The Whole-Brain Approach"* and a Recorder Method (1999 by LMI) and a second Recorder Method published by Increase Music. Joe is a contracted writer for Increase Music Publishers, Walrus Music Publishers and Jamey Aebersold Jazz®.

Riposo received the Outstanding Jazz Educators Award from the National Band Association for effective leadership in instrumental music education by developing successful concert and jazz bands in America's schools.

On November 21, 1997, Riposo was inducted into the (SAMMYS) Music Hall of Fame. He was also inducted in the Fine Arts Hall of Fame on June 8, 2003. Riposo is the recipient of the 2008 Jazz Educator of the Year Award presented by CYN Jazz Arts.