Introduction

The building blocks of all types of music are short fragments, or motives. These motives may be expanded into phrases that express a complete musical idea. In jazz, we call these motives "licks" or "clichés." Sometimes the word "cliché" has a negative connotation, as in "His playing is cliché-ridden!" And, if jazz improvisation is only a series of clichés, this is definitely not good! But all music has its clichés and they are how we recognize jazz, classical, soul, pop and country. In jazz, all artists have their own clichés that make it possible to recognize them individually.

When building a jazz vocabulary, a musician needs a lot of jazz "words." These are motives that are interesting melodically and clearly describe a particular sound or color, such as major, minor, dominant 7th, half-diminished or diminished. These jazz words may be based on arpeggios of a chord or some type of scale motion through the chord. Though it is useful to know the full six-, seven- or eight-note scale that relates to the chord, it is not necessary to use all of the notes to construct motives.

After many years of listening to and playing jazz, I realized that many clichés we all agree sound good come from five-note scales. When these motives are superimposed in the right place on a chord, they zero in on the important part of the sound. This book shows how motives may be developed using only five-note major, minor and diminished scales and how to apply chromatic embellishment to those scales. The "magic" appears when you discover that any motives created from these scales may be superimposed onto a variety of chords with equally good results! When you create a motive based on a five-note minor scale, it may be used 10 different ways. When you use a five-note major scale to create a motive, it may be used 14 different ways!

The various sections of this book discuss and suggest a variety of motives and how to create them. The expansion of motives beyond their five-note range is also dicussed as well as chromatic embellishment. A summary of the applications, or superimpositions, of the motives by chord family and scale type is included.

This book is not the answer to everything concerning jazz improvisation. But, it will help you develop a larger vocabulary of jazz "licks" idiomatic to the music and extremely versatile in their application to chords.

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Denton, Texas
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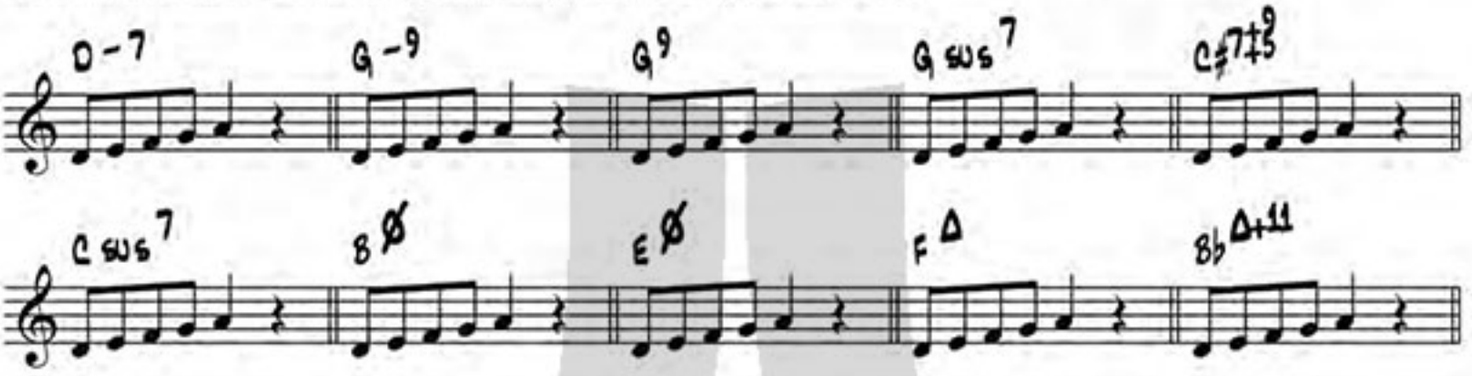
Magic Motives

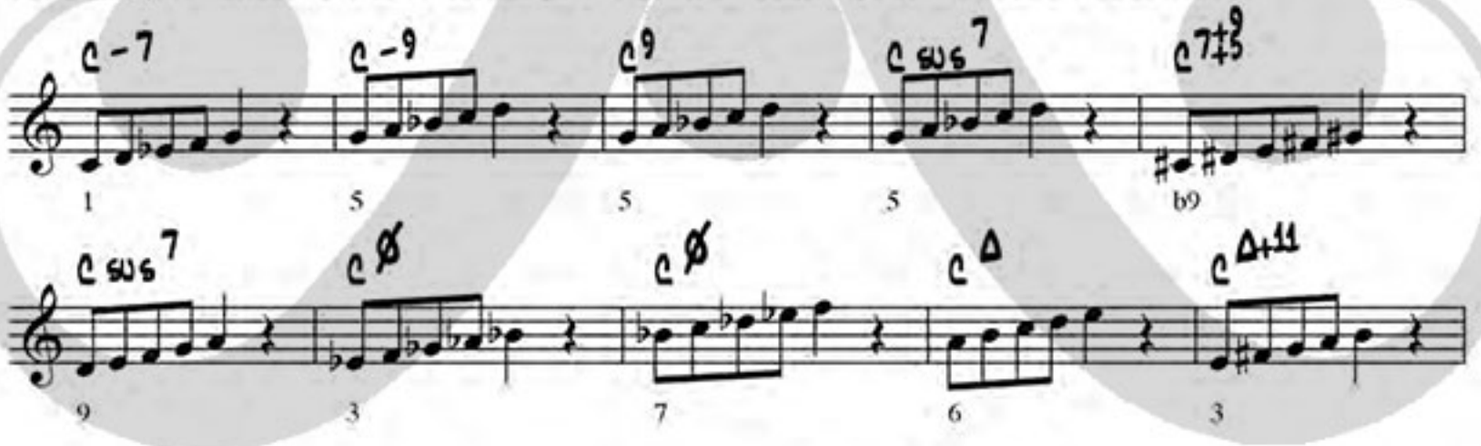
Part 1
Five-Note Minor Scales

1. Applications

Here is a five-note D minor scale shown with chord symbols indicating all of its applications. Note its structure: whole-step, half-step, whole-step, whole-step.



Notice where each five-note scale is located in relation to the chord. It's built on the root or 5th of a minor chord, the 5th of a dominant 7th chord, the b9 of an altered dominant chord, the 5th or 9th of a dominant 7th sus4 chord, the 3rd or 7th of a half-diminished chord, and the 3rd or 6th of a major 7th chord. The next example shows the five-note minor scales transposed to apply to C chords of various types. The chord tone on which the scale is built is shown under the first note.



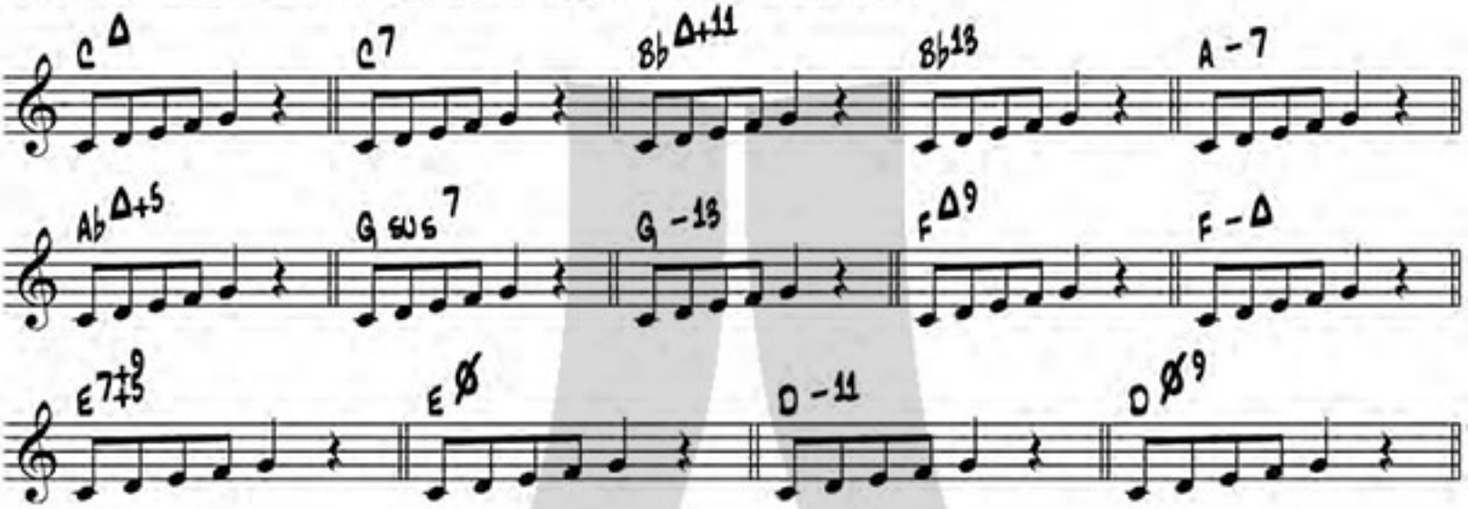
Be sure to play each application of the five-note scales. Play the chord on a keyboard and, if you're not a pianist, hold the sustain pedal down and play the related five-note scale over it on your instrument. I think you will agree that the scale sounds equally good in all locations.

Magic Motives

Part 2
Five-Note Major Scales

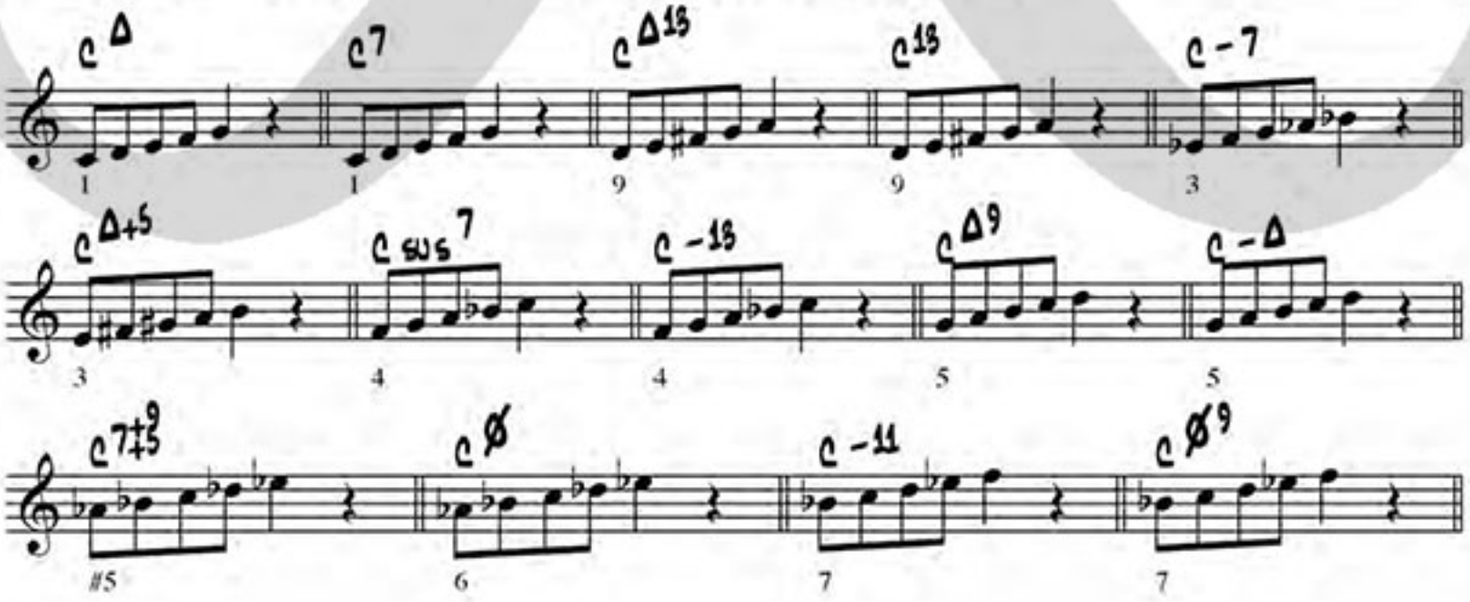
1. Applications

Here is a five-note C major scale shown with chord symbols indicating all of its applications.
Note its structure: whole-step, whole-step, half-step, whole-step.



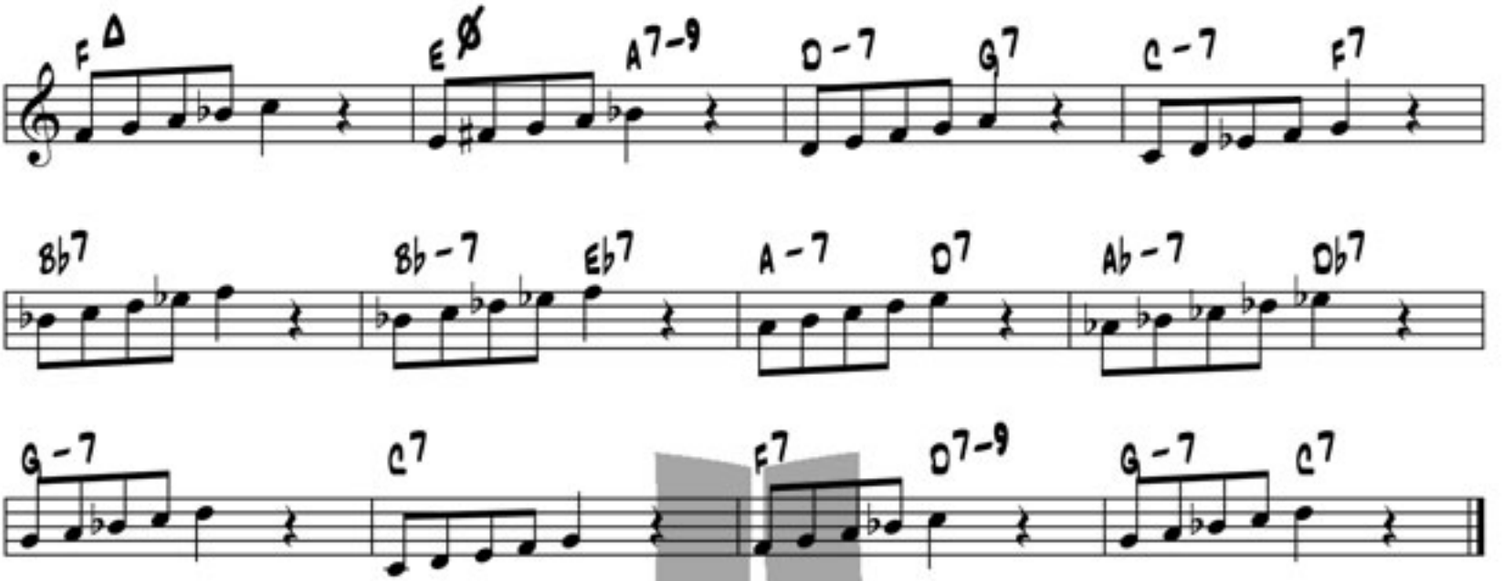
Notice where each five-note scale is located in relation to the chord. It is built on the root, or 9th, of a major 7th or dominant 7th chord; the 3rd of a minor 7th chord, or major 7th #5 chord; the 4th of a dominant 7th sus4, or minor 7th chord; the 5th of a major 7th, or minor #7 chord; the #5 of an altered dominant 7th; the 6th of a half-diminished chord; and the 7th of a minor 7th, or half-diminished 7th.

The next example shows the five-note major scales transposed to apply to C chords of various types.
The chord tone on which the scale is built is shown under the first note.



Charlie's Party
Scales

Dan Haerle



Charlie's Party
Solo

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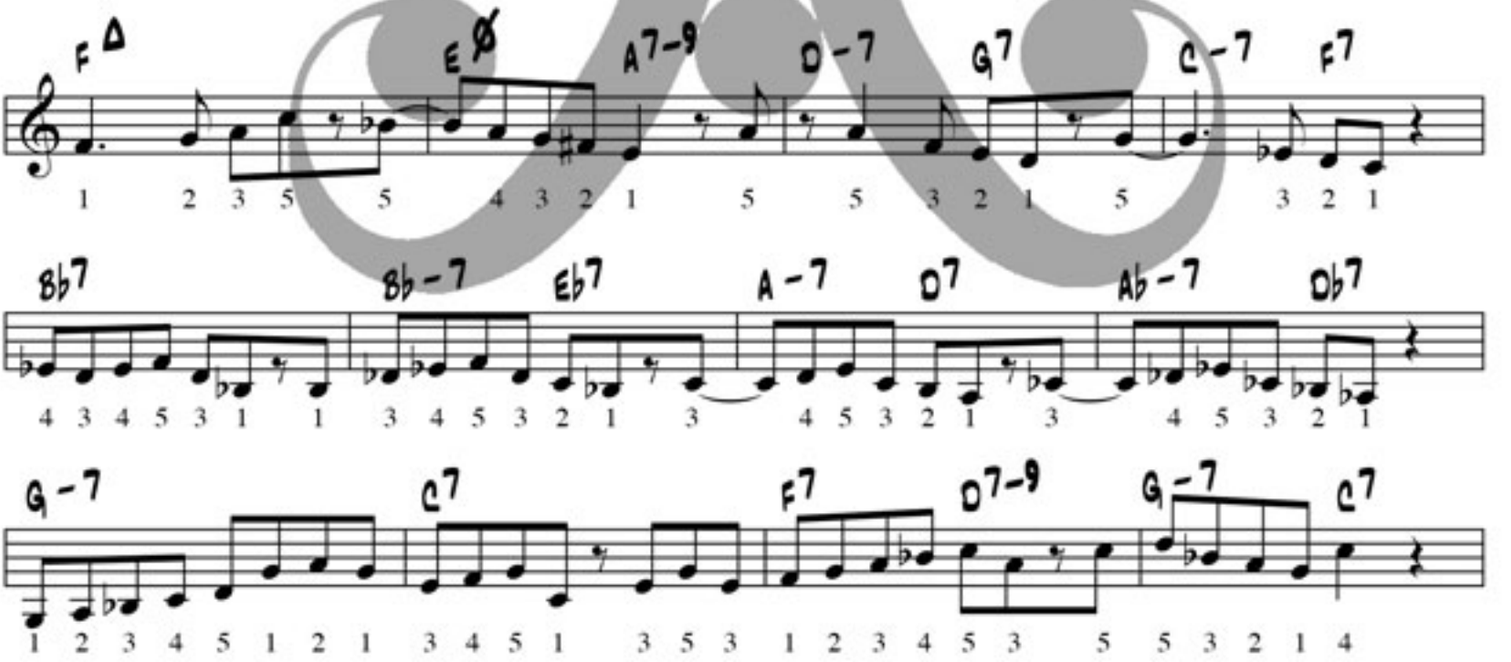
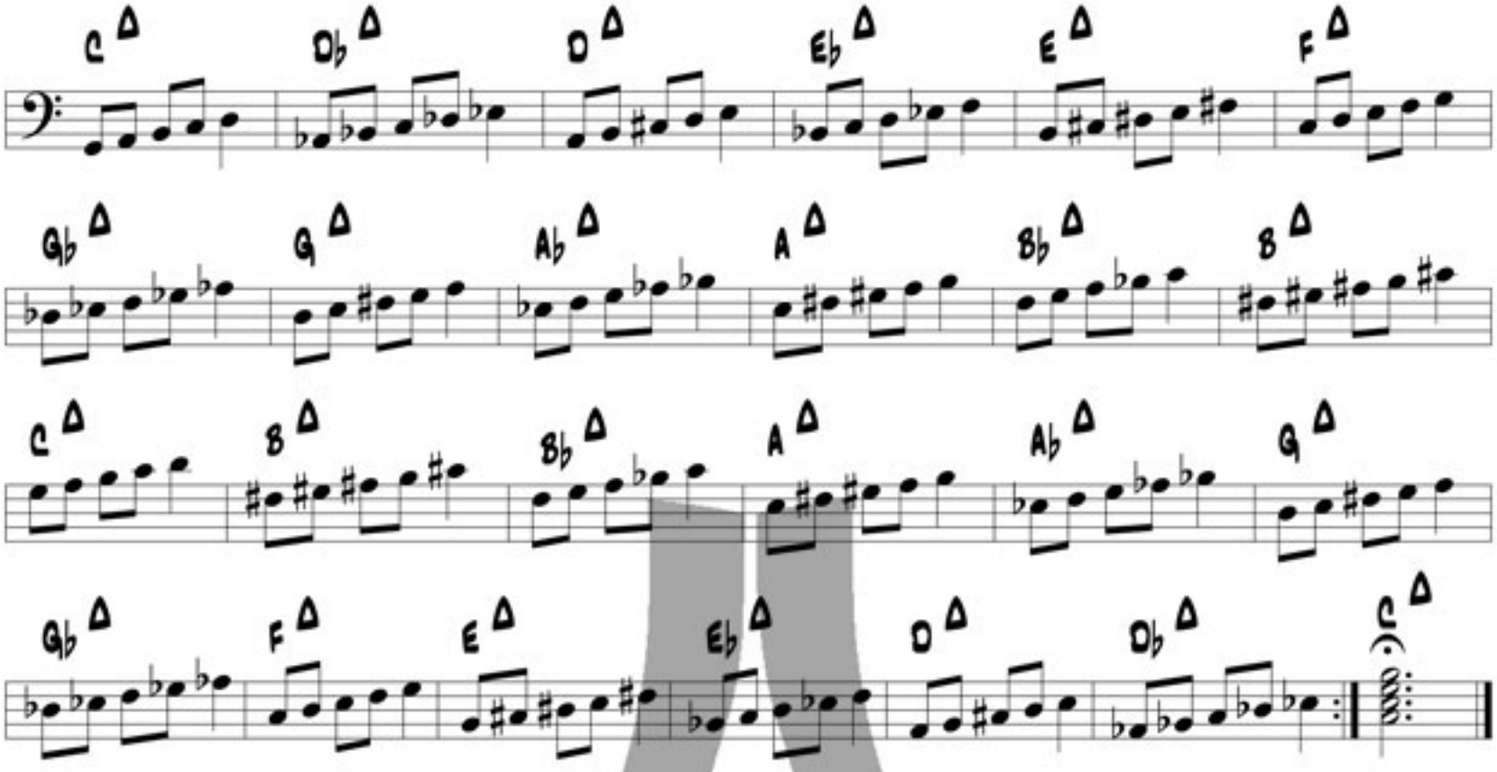


MAJOR – 1 bar each
Chromatically up then down (5 times)

Track 14



MINOR – 2 bars each
Chromatically up then down (2 times)

Track 15