

MEL BAY'S

Saxophone Improvising Workbook

BY BILL BAY

Preface

Saxophone Improvising Workbook is an indepth study into the theory which underlies improvisational techniques. Upon completion of this book, the student should have developed both his mental understanding of chords and chord relationships. I do recommend Jazz Saxophone Studies as a required prerequisite to this text. The principles laid down in that book will serve as a solid foundation for the advanced theory work in this volume. Ear training is emphasized throughout. I know of no better way to get into improvising than by training your ear to hear and anticipate chord progressions. I recommend the use of singing. By singing the examples presented in this text, the student will further develop the ear. I also recommend taking up the guitar or another keyboard instrument as a means of developing the ear to hear chord changes. A saxophone player is greatly enhanced if he has a chordal instrument as a second instrument. The guitar seems to be a natural. I know many saxophone players who adapted to the guitar quite easily. In this text, do each part thoroughly. Do not skip any sections and do not rush through the material. Take your time. Master each section thoroughly. Remember, it takes time to train your ear. Upon completion of this book, the student should be quite ready to move into good improvisation ideas. Listen to as many good players as possible. This is how you get ideas. Apply the ideas you hear on records to the principles involved in this text.

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Scale Building

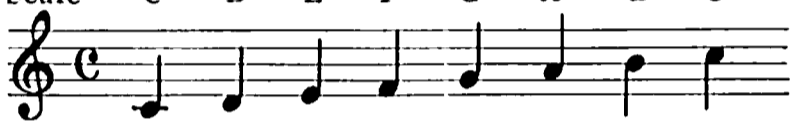
Scales are the foundation on which chords are built. If you can picture a building, think of scales as the foundation on which the building rests; think of chords as the framework which gives the building its structure and strength; and think of improvising as the use of various construction materials, design, landscaping, etc. which gives the building its style. We will begin with the major scale.

Major Scale

A MAJOR SCALE IS A SERIES OF EIGHT NOTES ARRANGED IN A PATTERN OF WHOLE STEPS AND HALF STEPS.

C Major Scale

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



Root 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th Octave

1/2 STEP

1/2 STEP

C to D =	Whole Step
D to E =	Whole Step
E to F =	1/2 Step
F to G =	Whole Step
G to A =	Whole Step
A to B =	Whole Step
B to C =	1/2 Step

TO CONSTRUCT A MAJOR SCALE WE FIRST START WITH THE NAME OF THE SCALE (Frequently called the Root or Tonic). WITH THE C SCALE THIS WOULD BE THE NOTE "C". THE REST OF THE SCALE WOULD FALL IN LINE AS FOLLOWS:


G Major Scale

Scale Tones	Distance From Preceding Note
Root (C)	
2nd (D)	Whole Step
3rd (E)	Whole Step
4th (F)	1/2 Step
5th (G)	Whole Step
6th (A)	Whole Step
7th (B)	Whole Step
Octave (C)	1/2 Step

WITH THE ABOVE FORMULA YOU CAN CONSTRUCT ANY MAJOR SCALE!

TO CONSTRUCT THE G MAJOR SCALE, START WITH THE NOTE G, CONSTRUCT IT AS FOLLOWS:

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	----	---



Root 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th Octave

1/2 Step

1/2 Step

NOTICE THAT IN ORDER TO MAKE OUR FORMULA WORK WITH THE G SCALE WE MUST SHARP (#) THE F. THERE MUST BE A WHOLE STEP BETWEEN THE 6th AND 7th TONES OF THE SCALE. IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A WHOLE STEP BETWEEN E AND F WE MUST SHARP THE F.

Constructing Major Scales

Construct the Major Scale for each key and LABEL THE ROOT, 3RD, and 5TH Tones of each scale. Finally, write the Sharps or Flats found in each Key.

C No Sharps - No Flats

G 1 Sharp - F#

D

A

E

B

F#

F

Bb

Eb

Ab

Db

Gb

Major Chords

A Major Chord is comprised of the Root, 3rd, and 5th tones of a scale. The notes in the C Major chord would be C-E-G. The notes in the G chord are G-B-D.

Write the Notes of the Major Chords and Label as Follows:

Example:

C	Gmajor	D Remember Sharps and Flats

A	E	B
F#	Db	Ab
Eb	Bb	F
G	D	C

Sing And Play

Sing and play the following major chords. *(Sing Root-3rd-5th. Play root on your instrument to check your pitch.)*

C	F	Bb	Eb	Ab	Db	Gb	B
E	A	D	G	C			

Inversions

Inversions are the different ways in which a chord may be written or played; That is to say, a "C" chord may be constructed:

(Root on top)	(3rd on top)	(5th on top)

Melodic Development on Major Chords

In order to really learn to hear chords, it is valuable to experiment with short melodic phrases built on the corresponding scales. Below are several examples. Play and sing them through the various keys. Next, invent your own. Write them down and play and sing them through the keys like the following example.

Example #1

Musical notation for Example #1. The first staff shows a melodic phrase in C major, starting on C4 and moving up stepwise to G4, then down stepwise to C4. The second staff shows a similar phrase in F major, starting on F4 and moving up stepwise to C5, then down stepwise to F4. The third staff shows a phrase in Bb major, starting on Bb4 and moving up stepwise to F5, then down stepwise to Bb4. The fourth staff shows a phrase in Eb major, starting on Eb4 and moving up stepwise to Bb5, then down stepwise to Eb4. The fifth staff shows a phrase in Ab major, starting on Ab4 and moving up stepwise to G5, then down stepwise to Ab4. The sixth staff shows a phrase in Db major, starting on Db4 and moving up stepwise to Ab5, then down stepwise to Db4. The seventh staff shows a phrase in Gb major, starting on Gb4 and moving up stepwise to D6, then down stepwise to Gb4. The eighth staff shows a phrase in B major, starting on B4 and moving up stepwise to G5, then down stepwise to B4. The ninth staff shows a phrase in E major, starting on E4 and moving up stepwise to B5, then down stepwise to E4. The tenth staff shows a phrase in A major, starting on A4 and moving up stepwise to F#5, then down stepwise to A4. The eleventh staff shows a phrase in D major, starting on D4 and moving up stepwise to A5, then down stepwise to D4. The twelfth staff shows a phrase in G major, starting on G4 and moving up stepwise to E5, then down stepwise to G4.

Example #2

Musical notation for Example #2. The first staff shows a melodic phrase in C major, starting on C4 and moving up stepwise to G4, then down stepwise to C4. The second staff shows a similar phrase in F major, starting on F4 and moving up stepwise to C5, then down stepwise to F4. The third staff shows a phrase in Bb major, starting on Bb4 and moving up stepwise to F5, then down stepwise to Bb4. The fourth staff shows a phrase in Eb major, starting on Eb4 and moving up stepwise to Bb5, then down stepwise to Eb4. The fifth staff shows a phrase in Ab major, starting on Ab4 and moving up stepwise to G5, then down stepwise to Ab4. The sixth staff shows a phrase in Db major, starting on Db4 and moving up stepwise to Ab5, then down stepwise to Db4. The seventh staff shows a phrase in Gb major, starting on Gb4 and moving up stepwise to D6, then down stepwise to Gb4. The eighth staff shows a phrase in B major, starting on B4 and moving up stepwise to G5, then down stepwise to B4. The ninth staff shows a phrase in E major, starting on E4 and moving up stepwise to B5, then down stepwise to E4. The tenth staff shows a phrase in A major, starting on A4 and moving up stepwise to F#5, then down stepwise to A4. The eleventh staff shows a phrase in D major, starting on D4 and moving up stepwise to A5, then down stepwise to D4. The twelfth staff shows a phrase in G major, starting on G4 and moving up stepwise to E5, then down stepwise to G4.

Write Your Own

Musical notation for Write Your Own. The staff shows a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a C chord symbol above the first measure. The rest of the staff is blank for the student to write their own melodic phrase.

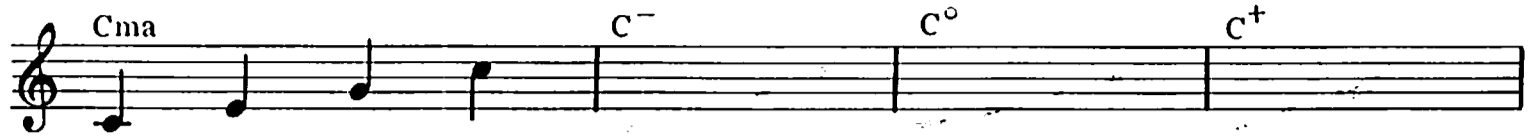
CHORD BUILDING CHART*

<i>Chord Type</i>	<i>Scale Degrees Used</i>	<i>Symbols</i>
Major	Root, 3rd, 5th	Maj
Minor	Root, \flat 3rd, 5th	mi, - , m
Diminished	Root, \flat 3rd, \flat 5th, $\flat\flat$ 7th	dim, °
Augmented	Root, 3rd, #5th	+ , aug.
Dominant Seventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th	dom, 7, 7
Minor Seventh	Root, \flat 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th	-7, min 7
Major Seventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, maj. 7th	M7, ma 7
Major Sixth	Root, 3rd, 5th, 6th	M6, M6, 6
Minor Sixth	Root, \flat 3rd, 5th, 6th	mi 6, -6
Seventh #5th	Root, 3rd, #5th, \flat 7th	7 ^{#5} , 7 ^{#5}
Seventh \flat 5th	Root, 3rd, \flat 5th, \flat 7th	7-5 7 ^{b5}
Major 7th \flat 3rd	Root, \flat 3rd, 5th, maj. 7th	Ma 7 ⁻³
Minor 7th \flat 5th	Root, \flat 3rd, \flat 5th, \flat 7th	mi 7 ⁻⁵ , -7 ^{b5}
Seventh Suspended 4th	Root, 4th, 5th, \flat 7th	7 sus 4
Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, 9th	9
Minor Ninth	Root, \flat 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, 9th	mi 9, -9
Major Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, maj. 7th, 9th	Ma 9
Ninth Augmented 5th	Root, 3rd, #5th, \flat 7th, 9th	9 ^{#5} , 9 ^{#5}
Ninth Flatted 5th	Root, 3rd, \flat 5th, \flat 7th, 9th	9-5, 9 ^{b5}
Seventh \flat 9	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, \flat 9th	7-9, 7 ^{b9}
Augmented Ninth	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, #9th	9 [#] , 7 ⁹
9/6	Root, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 9th	9, 6 add 9
Eleventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, 9th, 11th	11
Augmented Eleventh	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, 9th, #11th	11 [#] , 7 aug 11
Thirteenth	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th	13
Thirteenth \flat 9	Root, 3rd, 5th, \flat 7th, \flat 9th, 11th, 13th	13 ^{b9}
Thirteenth \flat 9 \flat 5	Root, 3rd, \flat 5th, \flat 7th, \flat 9th, 11th, 13th	13 ^{b9b5}
Half Diminished	Root, \flat 3rd, \flat 5th, \flat 7th	Ø

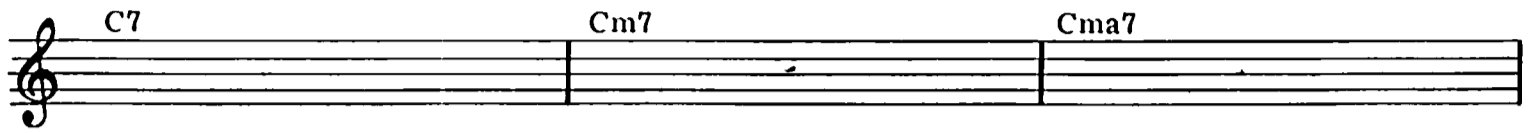
*Note - To arrive at scale degrees above 1 octave. (i.e. 9th, 11th, 13th) continue your scale up 2 octaves and keep numbering. The 2nd scale degree will be the 9th tone as you begin your second octave.

Write, Sing, And Play

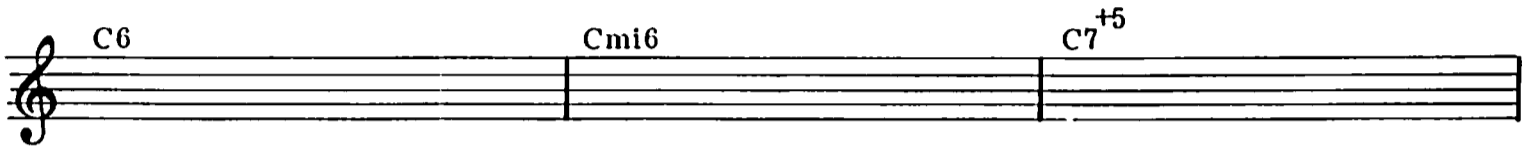
Cma C⁻ C^o C⁺



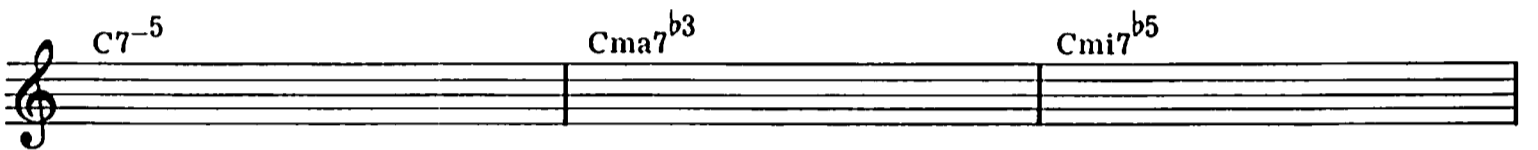
C7 Cm7 Cma7



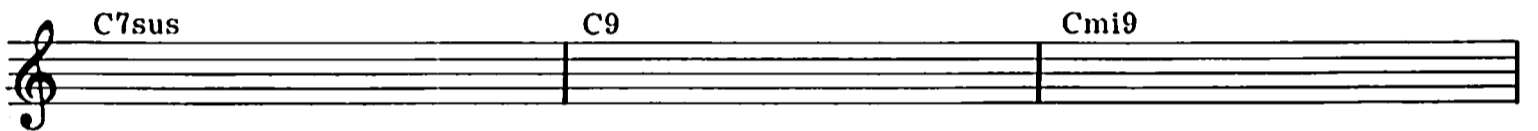
C6 Cmi6 C7⁺⁵



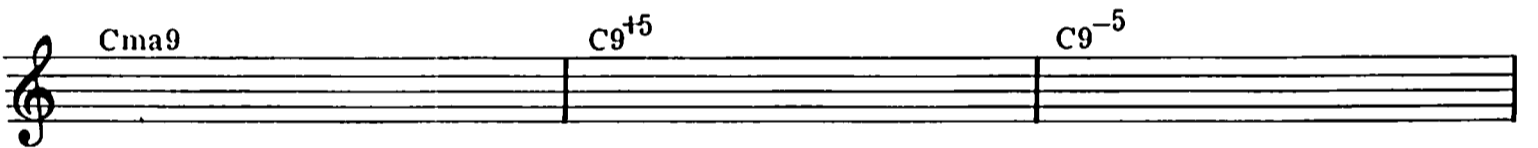
C7⁻⁵ Cma7^{b3} Cmi7^{b5}



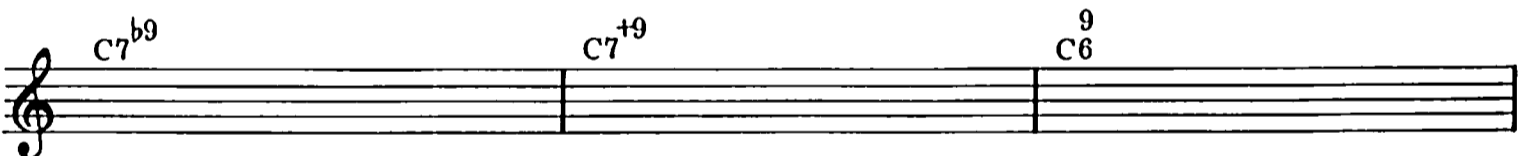
C7sus C9 Cmi9



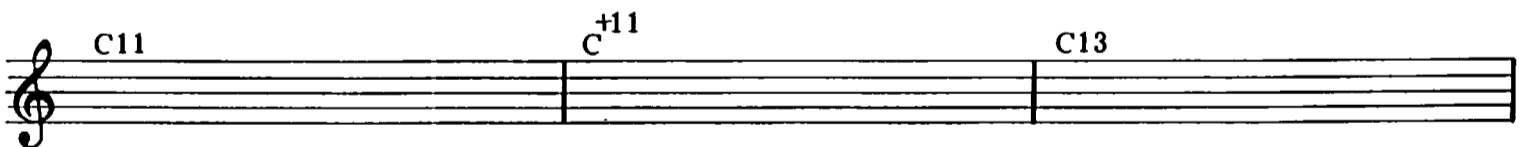
Cma9 C9⁺⁵ C9⁻⁵



C7^{b9} C7⁺⁹ C6⁹



C11 C⁺¹¹ C13



C13^{b9} C13⁻⁹⁻⁵

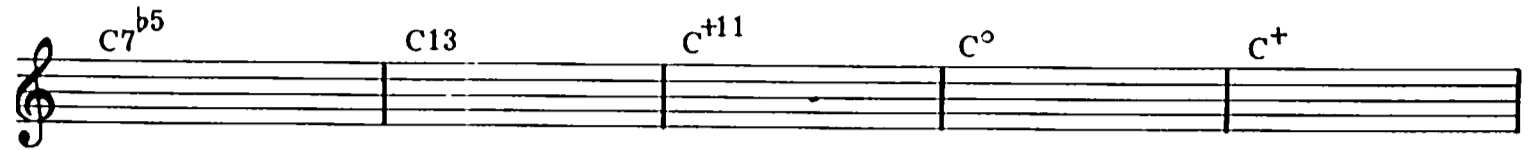


Write and Sing The Following Chords

Cma7 C9 C7sus C7⁺⁹



C7^{b5} C13 C⁺¹¹ C^o C⁺



C9⁺⁵ Cmi7 Cma7^{b3} Cmi7^{b5}



C13⁻⁹ Cmi9 Cma9 C13⁻⁹⁻⁵



Cm6 C⁺ C11 C6⁹



Fma9 Bb7 E13^{b9b5} G9



Ab^o G⁺ Db9⁻⁵ B+11



Gb13 Am6 F#m C#7



B9⁺⁵ Bb6⁹ E7sus Ebm7^{b5}



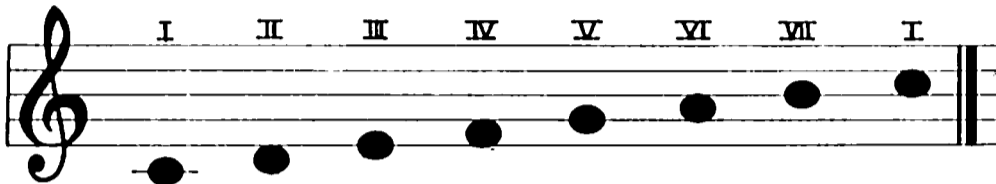
Fma7^{b3} D11 Gb7⁺⁹ Db6



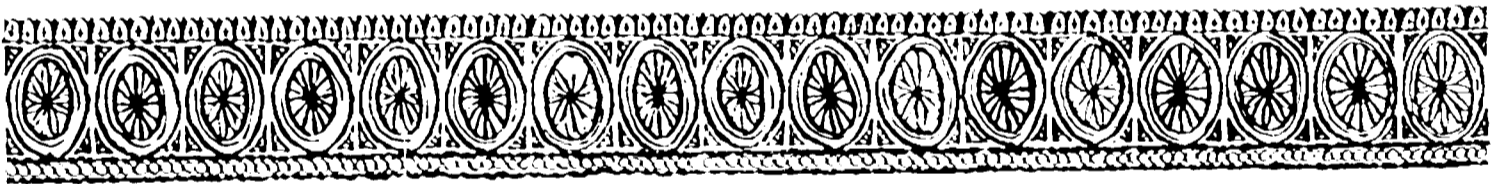
Scale Relationships

In order to understand, analyze and play chord progressions, you need to learn what chords are built on the various scale degrees of a given key.

Scale Degrees (Key of C)



Thus, the II^m chord in the key of C would be D^m. The V⁷ chord in the key of G would be D⁷. The III^{m7} chord in the key of D would be F^{#m7}.



Write the answers to the following questions
and spell out the appropriate chords.

1. The IMA^{\flat} chord in the key of D^{\flat} is _____.
2. $\text{VI}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat}$ in key of A is _____.
3. $\text{V}^{\flat 9}$ in key of G is _____.
4. $\text{III}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat}$ in key of C is _____.
5. Vm^{\flat} in key of D is _____.
6. $\text{VI}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat}$ in key of B is _____.
7. $\text{IV}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat 9}$ in key of B is _____.
8. $\text{IV}^{\flat 7+5}$ in key of G is _____.
9. IM^{\flat} in key of F^{\sharp} is _____.
10. $\text{IV}^{\flat}\text{Ma}^{\flat 7}$ in key of F is _____.
11. $\text{II}^{\flat}\text{mi}^{\flat 7}$ in key of A is _____.
12. $\text{VII}^{\flat 9}$ in key of C is _____.
13. $\flat\text{Vm}^{\flat 7}$ in key of G is _____.
14. $\flat\text{III}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat 7}$ in key of E is _____.
15. $\text{IV}^{\flat}\text{Ma}^{\flat 9}$ in key of A is _____.
16. $\text{V}^{\flat 7}$ add 6 in key of E is _____.
17. $\text{II}^{\flat 11}$ in key of G is _____.
18. $\text{VI}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat 7}$ in key of F is _____.
19. $\flat\text{IV}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat 7}$ in key of C is _____.
20. $\text{V}^{\flat 7+5}$ in key of E is _____.
21. $\text{III}^{\flat}\text{m}$ in key of A is _____.
22. $\flat\text{III}^{\flat}\text{m}$ in key of G is _____.
23. $\text{II}^{\flat 7}$ in key of D is _____.
24. $\text{II}^{\flat 6}$ in key of B is _____.
25. $\text{IV}^{\flat}\text{m}^{\flat 6}$ in key of D is _____.
26. $\text{II}^{\flat}\text{ma}^{\flat 7}$ in key of B is _____.
27. $\text{V}^{\flat}\text{mi}^{\flat 7}$ in key of E is _____.
28. $\text{VI}^{\flat}\text{mi}^{\flat 7}$ in key of A is _____.
29. $\text{III}^{\flat}\text{mi}^{\flat 7}$ in key of E is _____.