

Part I

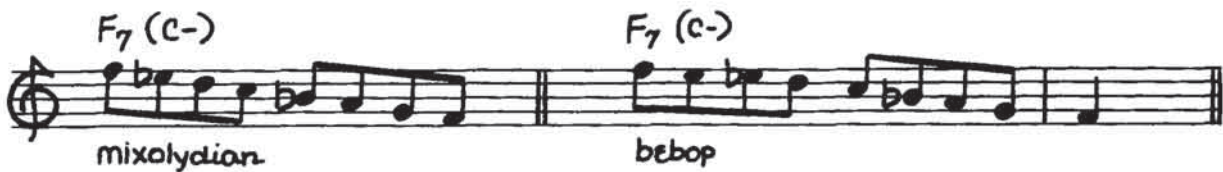
THE BEBOP SCALES

From the early 1920s, jazz musicians attempted to make their improvised lines flow more smoothly by connecting scales and scale tones through the use of chromatic passing tones. In a detailed analysis of more than 500 solos by the acknowledged giants from Louis Armstrong through Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, one is aware, first, of the increased use of scales (as opposed to arpeggios and chord outlines) and then the increasing use of chromaticism within these scales. An unusual fact about this increased chromaticism is that, despite the frequent re-occurrence of certain licks or patterns, no discernible design with regard to how the extra chromatic tones are added emerges. The overall impression is a somewhat arbitrary or random use of chromaticism.

When one listens to the great players from the distant and near past, one of the main things that tends to "date" their playing (aside from technological improvements in recording techniques, changes with regard to harmonic and rhythmic formulae, etc.) is this lack of unanimity with regard to the use of melodic chromaticism.

From his earliest recordings Charlie Parker can be observed groping for a method for making the modes of the major scale sound less awkward and for rendering them more conducive to swing and forward motion. Gradually, in a systematic and logical way, he began using certain scales with added chromatic tones. Dizzy, approaching the scales from an entirely different direction, began utilizing the same techniques for transforming them. These scales became the backbone of all jazz from bebop to modal music.

A study of a large number of representative solos from the bebop era yields a set of very complex governing rules that have now been internalized and are a part of the language of all good players in the bebop and post-bebop tradition. Very simply stated, the added chromatic tones make the scales "come out right." Play a descending mixolydian scale and then play the bebop version of the scale and see how much smoother the second scale moves.



There are a number of reasons why the second scale makes sense. First, in the second scale all of the chord tones are on down beats; and second, the tonic of the scale falls on beat one of each successive measure, and the fifth (C) falls on beat 3.

THE BEBOP DOMINANT SCALE

This scale is spelled 1-2-3-4-5-6-b7- \flat 7-1 and the rules governing its use are given with the dominant seventh chord as the point of reference. The scale is also used on the related minor seventh chord (II) and, under special conditions to be discussed later, on the related half-diminished seventh chord (VII), i.e. the following:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} G- \\ C_7 \\ E\phi \text{ (under special conditions)} \end{array} \right] = C-D-E-F-G-A-B\flat-B \flat C$$

Rules

1. On a dominant seventh chord the scale is reckoned from the root of the chord, i.e., $C_7 = C$ dominant (bebop)
2. On a minor seventh chord the scale is reckoned from the root of the related dominant seventh chord, i.e., $G- = C$ dominant (bebop)