



Spelling out the Chords. Melodically

Arpeggios based on closed finger patterns (FFcP) Minor

By Ted Eschliman

Playing chords. Melodically.

Last session, we explored the notion of being able to express the vertical content or chord structure through the horizontal, or melodic. If you haven't seen this already, this article might make much more sense if you read Part 1 before continuing. Check out the archive, "**Spelling out the Chord Melodically: Part 1**"

<http://www.mandolinsessions.com/?p=308>. The mission was to take a common progression and learn to drill it as arpeggios, to beat it into your fingers in all twelve keys (only four positions if you're developing healthy **FFcP** skills), making it an intuitive proficiency that will eventually appear in your soloing and improvisation. If you had the chance to spend some quality time on this the last couple months, you might already be noticing an ability to recognize the "meaty tones" of the music, the chord tones in your fretboard discovery. Patience--this does take some investment of time.

Minor details

The **I, vii7, ii7 V7'** pattern the exercise is not uncommon, it also demonstrates the basic music theory concept of harmonic function, **Tonic**, **Dominant**, and **Dominant Preparation** from a much earlier article we tackled:

(<http://archive.mandolinsessions.com/dec03/ted.html>) where we referred to these crucial chord functions:

Tonic: I

Dominant: V7

Dominant Prep: 'vi7 and/or ii7'

These are all components of the major key, but what do you do with the minor "world?" The function is the same, the pull of dominant to tonic, but some of the actors are different in this play.

Tonic: i (minor)

Dominant: V7 (same)

Dominant Prep: 'VI and/or ii7b5' (major six and flatted fifth two)

You have the **minor 3rd** in the tonic chord, that key-defining ingredient of aesthetic "minor-ness." You also don't stray much in the **Dominant** chord, but where we do deviate is in the "**Prep**" chords to the dominant. We won't go into the spelling of the different minor modes here (**Natural**, **Harmonic**, and **Melodic Minor**) and how they affect the chord construction; let's just say we do a lot of playing around with the **6th** and **7th** scale degree which makes the "**Prep**" chords a bit more vague.

That's okay. This is about jazz after all...

We're going to look at our last session's exercise and introduce a minor variation. We've arbitrarily chosen a **Major Six** chord as the additional partnering **Dominant Prep** chord, and the **m7b5** (based on the two chord) is commonly paired with the **Dominant** chord in any minor key. Play through a few of these measures and see what it sounds like to your ears. Notice we've devised a way to get you through all 12 minor keys via the **Circle of Fifths**:

All keys. All the time.

This is a terrific way to expose yourself to ALL minor keys, and over time you'll also start developing the intuitive sense of chord/harmonic relationships when these become rote. Think of it as musical flashcards, the drilling will plant these into your subconscious, as well as develop a finger or tactile memory. Again, the ability to move about comfortably in all keys will broaden your ability to interpret jazz, as well as other genres of music including classical, pop, Broadway, and Choro.

Break it up.

Don't be trapped by just playing the exercise straight down. Some of the keys will be less familiar to you, especially those wacky enharmonic keys. Of course, if you're thinking closed pattern **FFcP**, you realize that an **Eb minor** chord pattern is only one fret down from an **E minor** and all you're doing is the closed same pattern--one fret down. Attack the fingerings that seem difficult to you with greater repetition, and don't move on until they start to become relatively more comfortable. Think of the entire exercise as something you'll master over weeks and months, not in a couple of days.



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Minor Arpeggios

'im7 VIMaj7 ii7b5 V7'

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Repeat signs are not arbitrary. Repeat the selections within these bars as often as you need to make them comfortable.

Mandolin

Mdn.

Mdn.

Mdn.

Mdn.

Mdn.

With the above chord tones (i7 VIMaj7 ii7b5 V7) think music theory. Engage your brain in analyzing the scale degrees, so when you apply these patterns to improvisation, you're able to consciously define the scale degrees.

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Enharmonic D#m=Ebm

Minor Arpeggios

Mdn. *IM7 (Eb7)* *VIMAs7 (CbMaj7)* *117b5 (Fm7b5)* *V7 (Bb7)*

Enharmonic G#m=Abm

Mdn. *IM7 (G#m7)* *VIMAs7 (EMaj7)* *117b5 (A#m7b5)* *V7 (D#7)*

Enharmonic C#m=Dbm

Mdn. *IM7 (C#m7)* *VIMAs7 (AMaj7)* *117b5 (D#m7b5)* *V7 (G#7)*

Mdn. *IM7 (F#m7)* *VIMAs7 (DMaj7)* *117b5 (G#m7b5)* *V7 (C#7)*

Mdn. *IMAs7 (Bm7)* *VIMAs7 (GMaj7)* *117b5 (C#m7b5)* *V7 (F#7)*

Mdn. *IMAs7 (Em7)* *VIMAs7 (CMaj7)* *117b5 (F#m7b5)* *V7 (B7)*