

READING CHORD PROGRESSIONS

C Major Scale (CΔ7) D Dorian Scale (D-7) G Dominant Scale (G7) C Major Scale (CΔ7)

C Major: ii7 V7 IΔ7

In jazz, many of the chord progressions are centered around a trio (or more) of chords that move down by fifth, particularly from ii-V-I. This often allows us, essentially, to choose our notes from just one major scale for several measures in a row, simplifying our note selection process. This is also why the Dorian minor (scale built from the second note of a major scale) is far more commonly used than the natural minor scale. Each of the chord tones of these successive chords are found in the main scale (I, or tonic) of the key. We can determine the chord tones by starting on the named root and going up every other note. The above scales and chords show a ii-V-I in the key of C. Take note that there are no notes used from outside of the C major scale. Three more key examples are given below. An excellent exercise is to now write out in similar fashion the other major keys you are likely to encounter. The more that you know readily, the easier your improvising will be.

F Major Scale (FΔ7) G Dorian Scale (G-7) C Dominant Scale (C7) F Major Scale (FΔ7)

F Major: ii7 V7 IΔ7

Bb Major Scale (BbΔ7) C Dorian Scale (C-7) F Dominant Scale (F7) Bb Major Scale (BbΔ7)

Bb Major: ii7 V7 IΔ7

D Major Scale (DΔ7) E Dorian Scale (E-7) A Dominant Scale (A7) D Major Scale (DΔ7)

D Major: ii7 V7 IΔ7