

# LINE GAMES

An In-Depth Study of  
Single-Note Lines  
for Guitar

by  
Randy Vincent

SHER MUSIC CO.

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# Introduction

Unlike my previous jazz guitar chord voicings books (*Jazz Guitar Voicings Vol. 1: The Drop 2 Book* and *Three-Note Voicings and Beyond*, both available from Sher Music Co.), this book is a collection of things to practice on the guitar that will help you develop the vocabulary of jazz improvisation while simultaneously developing and maintaining single-note technique. I have included many lines and phrases transcribed from the recordings of several master guitarists (and occasionally saxophonists, trumpeters, and pianists as well) to demonstrate the validity of the concepts behind the exercises given.

The topics roughly follow concepts in the same order as I became aware of them in my own development, but not always. For example, the triad-pair concept in chapter 3 came much later in my own playing, while the pluralities concept from chapter 4 came very early. Of course they don't really happen one after another but are very overlapping.

To use this book you should have some basic knowledge of standard music notation and the ability to find notes anywhere on the guitar. When strings and fingerings are shown, the strings are the numbers inside small circles (above the staff), while the fingers are numbers without circles (below the staff). It's standard guitar fingering, with 1 being the index finger, 2 the middle, 3 the ring, and 4 the "pinky". When there's a straight line between repeated finger numbers, that finger slides along the string it's on to the next note. When there's a bracket below repeated finger numbers, that finger rolls to an adjacent string on the same fret to play the next note. If the roll is to a higher pitched string the roll starts on the finger tip and rolls over to the side of the finger. If the roll is to a lower pitched string the roll starts on the side of the finger and rolls over to the finger tip. Occasionally the notes on the same fret will be on non-adjacent strings, but the technique will be the same. All the fingerings are suggestions only, so if something else works better for you, by all means feel free.

There will be a follow-up volume that will use the the concept of melodic cells to address various fast moving changes, such as quick cycles, turnarounds, Coltrane changes, etc. It will also address playing "outside" of the changes and "free" improvisation as well. The epilogue to this book will introduce these topics with a few examples to get you started.

# About the Author

Randy Vincent has had a long and illustrious career in jazz. He has performed, toured and/or recorded with Dizzy Gillespie, Joe Henderson, Bobby Hutcherson, Bebop And Beyond, The Turtle Island String Quartet, Leny Andrade, Denise Donatelli and many others.

Randy has taught jazz guitar at Sonoma State University since 1981 and has conducted clinics throughout the US and overseas. Some of his more well-known former students include Julian Lage, Dave MacNab, Chris Pimentel, and Liberty Ellmen. He currently teaches at Sonoma State University and privately.

He is the author of two previous Sher Music Co. books, “Jazz Guitar Voicings, Vol.1 - The Drop 2 Book,” and “Three-Note Voicings and Beyond,” both of which have received wide critical acclaim.

He has performed at numerous jazz festivals including the Monterey Jazz Festival and Dizzy Gillespie’s 75th birthday celebration at the Hollywood Bowl, as well as performing regularly with the Santa Rosa Symphony’s Pops Concerts.

A selected discography of Randy’s recordings:

- Randy Vincent - “Nisha’s Dream” and “Mirror Image”
- Bobby Hutcherson - “Ambos Mundos”
- Bebop And Beyond - “Bebop And Beyond Plays Dizzy Gillespie” (featuring Dizzy)  
and “Bebop And Beyond Plays Thelonious Monk” (featuring Joe Henderson)
- Stephanie Ozer - “O Comeco” (featuring Leny Andrade)
- Larry Baskett Trio - “Chalice” and “Poor Boy Blue”
- Mel Graves - “Emotion In Motion”
- Turtle Island String Quartet - “Spider Dreams”
- Peter Welker - “Para Peachy” and “We’ll Be Together Again”
- Welker/Oster Jazz Alliance - “Shining Hour” and “Detour Ahead”
- Vern Thompson - “Passions Of The Heart”, “Sea Of Dreams” and “Convergence”  
(featuring Bob Sheppard, Akira Tana, Tony Dumas and Billy Childs)
- Mike Vax Big Band - “Alternate Route”
- Dave Eshelman’s Garden Big Band - “Milagro’s Journey”
- Steve Puleo - “Smile”
- Deborah Winters - “Lovers After All”

# Chapter 1 - Basic Hexatonic Scales for Jazz Improvisation

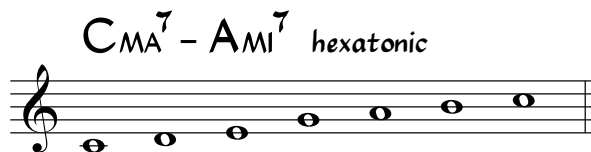
## The Types of Basic Hexatonic Scales

### *Definition of hexatonic scales*

This chapter is primarily about what I'm calling "basic hexatonic scales." Strictly speaking any pitch-collection consisting of six different notes can be called a hexatonic scale. As we'll see in Chapter 3, the term is often used to refer to modern-sounding scales created by combining two major or two minor triads (usually a whole step apart). In this chapter, however, we'll be looking at how to create and use the more traditional-sounding (swing and bebop) hexatonic scales.

For example, the Cmaj7-Ami7 hexatonic shown below (ex.1-A) contains the same six notes as the traditional G "Scottish hexatonic scale" (ex.1-B) and can be analyzed as the triad-pair of G major and A minor (ex.1-C), but generally isn't broken up that way in this chapter. Instead, you'll see that it's more useful to think of it as composed of three two-note "cells" (ex.1-D) that can be manipulated in various ways to create many great-sounding lines.

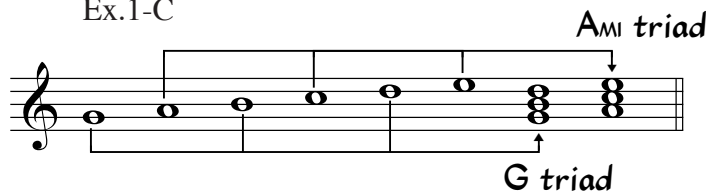
Ex.1-A



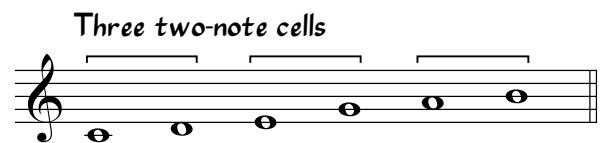
Ex. 1-B



Ex.1-C



Ex. 1-D



The types of hexatonics examined in this chapter will primarily be:

First, the maj7 (root, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and maj7th of major) and its relative minor (root, 2nd, mi3rd, 4th, 5th, and mi7th), as in Ex. 1-A above.

This scale is applied to maj7, mi7, and 7sus chords.

Secondly, the mi-maj7 (root, 2nd, mi3rd, 5th, 6th, and maj7th), also sometimes called "melodic minor hexatonic," which is applied to maj7#5, mi-maj7, mi7b5, 7susb9, and 7alt chords.

### *Some actual examples of hexatonic improvisation on mi7 chords*

Play ex.1-1, taken from an early recording by Joe Pass.



This is a clear example of using a six-note, or *hexatonic* scale to create a line over a mi7 chord. If you're thinking it's just a melody he heard derived from Ab dorian, well, that may be true in that I never heard or read Joe himself refer to hexatonic scales (or dorian mode either), but he sure used them a lot and included many examples in his own books. As evidence play ex. 1-2 and ex.1-3 from the same recording. Pure hexatonic.

Ex.1-2

F<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup><sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

Ex.1-3

F<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup><sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

Of course hexatonics are used by many other players as well. For instance listen to ex.1-4 from a Pat Martino recording. Then check out ex.1-5 through ex.1-8 (on the next page), all from Wes Montgomery.

Ex.1-4

D<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

Ex.1-5

D<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

Ex.1-6

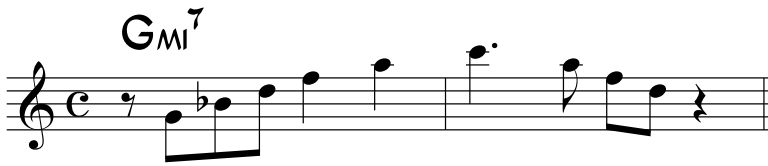
C<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

Ex.1-7

E<sub>Mi</sub><sup>7</sup>

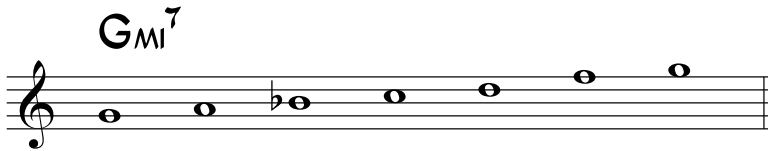


Ex.1-8

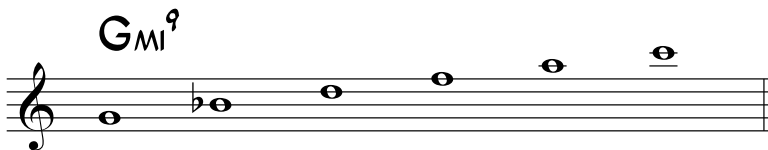


In ex.1-8 Wes has spread the hexatonic out into a Gmi11 arpeggio. Ex.1-9 shows the basic Gmi7 hexatonic scale that Wes is using in ex.1-8, while ex.1-10 shows it as an arpeggio, the way Wes actually played it.

Ex.1-9



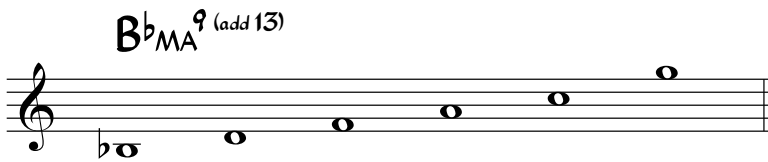
Ex.1-10



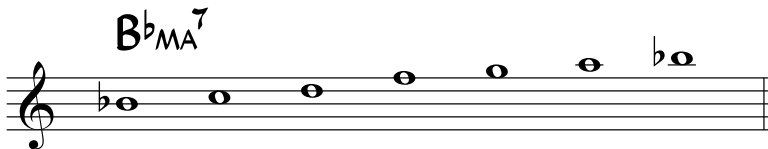
***Hexatonic scale for maj7 chords***

Ex.1-11 shows an arpeggio for a Bbmaj9 chord with a 13th added. Bb is the relative major of G minor, and this arpeggio contains the same notes as the Gmi11 arpeggio. From this we can derive a Bb major hexatonic scale, shown in ex.1-12. It has the same notes as the Gmi7 hexatonic scale shown in ex.1-9.

Ex.1-11



Ex.1-12

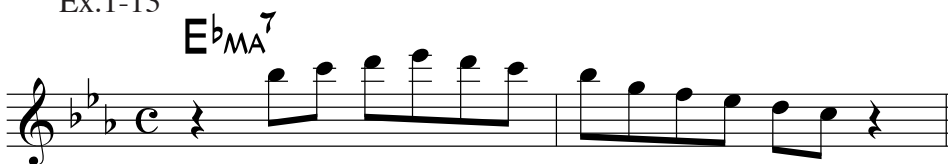


The major hexatonic scale can be thought of in different ways. I originally conceived of it as a major scale with the potentially dangerous 4th step removed, making improvisation easier on major chords. Joe Diorio viewed it as a relative minor pentatonic with an added 9th. My former student Julian Lage reports that saxophonist Dayna Stephens thinks of mixing a maj7 arpeggio with a major pentatonic scale.

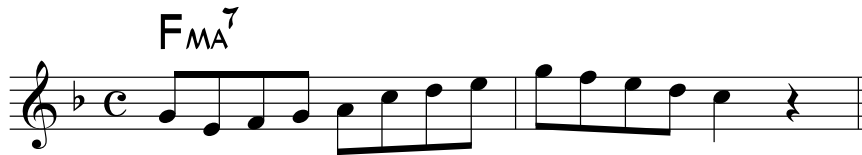
***Some actual examples of hexatonic improv on maj7 chords***

Play ex.1-13 and ex.1-14. These are from Joe Pass recordings showing him using the major hexatonic scale to create lines over maj7 chords.

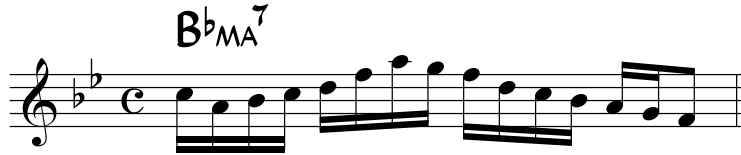
Ex.1-13



Ex.1-14



Now play ex.1-15 from Pat Martino.



Also try ex.1-16 from Wes Montgomery.

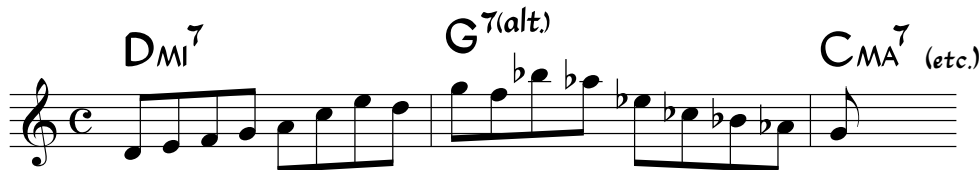


***Some actual examples of hexatonic improv on altered dominant chords***

Wes also provides us with ex.1-17 showing a hexatonic line over an altered dominant chord (if you're unclear about what altered chords are, check out *The Jazz Theory Book* by Mark Levine from Sher Music Co.). Our previous Maj13-relative mi11 hexatonic scale does not really fit the altered sound, so Wes shows us a new combination that really does fit.



Play ex.1-18 from Joe Pass. This is a classic II-V-I line that uses the mi7 hexatonic on the II chord and the altered dominant hexatonic on the V chord.



Ex.1-19 and ex.1-20 are from Joe Pass recordings showing altered hexatonics resolving to minor chords.

Ex.1-19

