6

Further Study of Chord Types

Up to this point, we have used only three types of chord structures, the M7, the m7, and the 7 chords. Frequently, for the sake of variety or to harmonize melody notes which are not within one of the preceding chord structures, alternate chords are used. As will be pointed up in Chapter 10, there are three main functional categories of chords, and the three we have taken up so far are the most commonly used chords of each of the families.

In place of a M7, for example, a *M6 chord* may be substituted. The M6 chord is like the M7 in that it uses a major triad for the bottom three notes, but adds the sixth major scale degree instead of the seventh. A CM6, then, would be spelled C, E, G, A.

If the tune used in an improvisation is in a minor key, then it is necessary to learn a type of minor chord, especially to be used as a tonic minor chord, which differs in sound and construction from the m7 chord. There are two basic examples of this tonic minor sound, the *m6 chord* and a *minor chord with a major seventh* (interval), which we will call a *m♯7* or a *m♮7* (depending on whether it is necessary to use a sharp sign or a natural sign to show how the seventh has been raised). A Cm6 chord would be spelled C, E♭, G, A, and the Cm♮7 would be spelled C, E♭, G, B♮ (not B♭, as in the Cm7).

Sometimes a m7 chord may be replaced by a *half-diminished seventh chord* (ø7) which differs from the minor seventh chord only in that the fifth is lowered a half step. A Cø7 chord, instead of being spelled C, E♭, G, B♭ (Cm7), is spelled C, E♭, G♭, B♭.

A $C^{7}_{\flat 5}$ or a C^{7}_{+5} may often be used in place of a C7; they are spelled C, E, G♭, B♭, and C, E, G♯, B♭ respectively, rather than C, E, G, B♭.

All the newly given alternate chords may be used in place of their given and more common chord family member (M7, m7, or 7) quite freely, sometimes depending upon the harmonization of a given melody. A summary of the families is given below.

M7	'Tonic Minor'	m7	7
M7	m6	m7	7
M6	m♯7 or m♮7	ø7	7_{+5}
			$7_{\flat 5}$

Figure 7 shows a summary of the symbol, name, intervallic construction, and an example of each of the chord types included thus far.

Most of the newly added chords, though they belong to families of already learned chords, will require scales different from those given in Chapter 1 for the M7, m7, and 7 chords. It will be remembered that a major scale was used for the M7 chord, a Dorian Mode for m7 chords, and the Mixolydian Mode for the 7 chord, the constructions of which are given in Chapter 1.

The M6 chord will use the same scale as the M7 chord. However, the m6 and m♯7 (or m♮7), depicting the minor mode, will differ from either the M7 or m7 in respect to the scale used with it. The ascending form of the melodic minor scale (see p. 40) may be used with either the m6 or the m♯7 chords, as the scale contains all the notes of those chords. The harmonic minor scale (see p. 40) may accompany the m♯7 chord only, since the lowered sixth degree would conflict with the sixth of the m6 chord.

SYMBOL	NAME	INTERVALS CONTAINED	EXAMPLE
M7	major seventh chord	major third perfect fifth major seventh	CM7
M6	major sixth chord	major third perfect fifth major sixth	CM6
m6	minor sixth chord	minor third perfect fifth major sixth	Cm6
m♮7 or m♯7	minor chord with a major seventh	minor third perfect fifth major seventh	Cm♮7
m7	minor seventh chord	minor third perfect fifth minor seventh	Cm7
ø 7	half-diminished seventh chord	minor third diminished fifth minor seventh	Cø7
7	seventh chord or dominant seventh chord	major third perfect fifth minor seventh	C7
7 +5 or +7	augmented seventh chord	major third augmented fifth minor seventh	C+7
7 ♭5	seventh chord with a diminished fifth	major third diminished fifth minor seventh	C 7 ♭5

FIGURE 7

C melodic minor scale (ascending)

C harmonic minor scale

The scale which best fits the ø7 chord is one which uses the notes of a major scale of a half step up (called Locrian mode), hence a scale on B would use the notes of a C major scale, but starting on B (B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B). This type of scale contains all the notes of a ø7 chord built on the root of the scale.

Locrian Mode on C (D♭ major scale, starting on C)

One appropriate scale fits both the $^{7}_{+5}$ and $^{7}_{\flat 5}$ chords—the *whole-tone scale,* which, as its title suggests, is constructed by using successive whole steps *only*.

C whole-tone scale

A summary of all the types of chords, their families, and their accompanying scales is given below for quick reference.

Chord Family	*Chord*	*Scale*
M7 (Tonic Major)	M7	Major Scale
	M6	Major Scale
Tonic Minor	m6	Ascending Melodic Minor Scale
	m♯7	Ascending Melodic or Harmonic Minor Scales
m7	m7	Dorian Mode*
	ø7	Locrian Mode
7 (Dominant)	7	Mixolydian Mode
	$^{7}_{+5}$	Whole Tone Scale
	$^{7}_{\flat 5}$	Whole Tone Scale

Jazz is a relatively new art whose language and symbols are still in the process of becoming standardized. Consequently, the student of improvisation could easily become confused by encountering unfamiliar symbols found in chord progressions given him by players of another geographical location. Some of the deviations one might expect to encounter are:

M7.....Maj.7, Δ 7
m7.....-7
ø7.....m$^{7}_{\flat 5}$, $^{-7}_{-5}$
M6.....6
7.....x7

Figure 8 shows a new progression to the blues, this one in the minor mode and using some of the chords introduced in this chapter. This should be transposed for the various instruments

* Traditional modal terminology is given because it is unnecessary to coin new terms for an old scale system.

and used as a reference sheet for the next playing session. The scheduling of playing sessions from this point is left to your own discretion. There is no limit to the number of possible sessions, but one should be scheduled at least whenever there is new material to be assimilated.

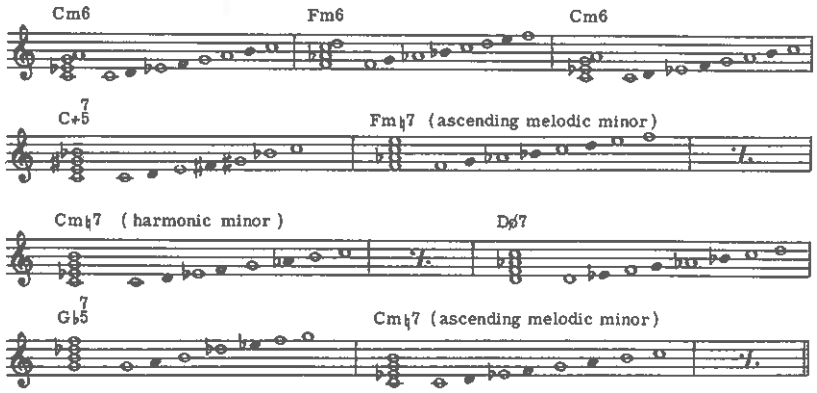

FIGURE 8

projects

1. Write and practice (in arpeggiated form on the instrument) the $^{7}_{+5}$ $^{7}_{\flat 5}$ M6, m6, m♯7, (or m♮7), ø7, +5, ♭5 chords in all keys.
2. Write the melodic minor, harmonic minor, Locrian Mode, and whole-tone scales in all keys. (There are only two whole-tone scales. You will find the others are all repetitions of one or the other.)
3. Above each of the written scales, write the chord root and chord type which can be used in conjunction with the scale.
4. Transpose to all keys and practice the following pattern of scales. Play continuously, stopping only for breath.