

Voice-Leading within Chords:

Over the time that I've spent exploring Horace Silver's "Ecaroh", I've come to appreciate the opportunities it offers me to find and incorporate new concepts into my playing, particularly in the area of the Diminished 7th chord and its widely diverse applications. This overview is meant to offer some basics that one could use and expand on in the hope of perhaps discovering things to play in ways not previously considered. I hope to soon be setting up a lesson "hot line" that'll deal with more specific approaches, but in the meantime, I'll simply try to open a door or two.

The long 'intro' that sets up the actual tune uses essentially dom7th chords that feature 'diminished' characteristics: added b9ths and in this case, #9ths (b10s ?**!&%). They move in parallel 'blocks' through a repeated intervallic formula that leads downward. To the guitar player, playing this is quite straightforward; find a suitable 'grip' and follow the sequence; in this case: one semi-tone up followed by three down:

(roots optional)

Finding an alternative way to voice or play the G7#9 chord creates a way to disrupt this parallel motion, and generate more interest within the moving 'voices' of the chords. Replacing the 'F' in the G7 chord with a 'D' for example accomplishes two things: it creates a new arrival point for the 'E' (from the F#7 chord) which has now fallen "contrary" to the other voices, and it anticipates its own arrival as part of the E7, again while the others fall; one voice remains stationary as others move - aka: "oblique motion". If it is allowed to sustain as the others move, then this aspect of orchestration becomes more pronounced, and lest we forget - remains *playable*. (I find it a strange coincidence that voice-leading master Ed Bickert is known to have listened to the Stan Kenton band, probably many times.)

F#7#9 G7#9 E+7#9