FENDER PLAYERS CLUB JA77-ROCK TRIAD IMPROVISATION

SUBSTITUTION AND SUPERIMPOSITION TECHNIQUES IN TONAL MUSIC

In contemporary music, the use of triads is an important element in improvisation and composition. They are as prevalent as scales, modes, arpeggios, rhythms, and intervallic ideas. Like scales and modes, triads can be substituted in tonal and modal music. They can also be superimposed, creating bitonality or polytonality. Superimposed triads give us synthetic scales such as hexatonic (6 note scales = 2 triads), or nonatonic scales (9 note scales = 3 triads).

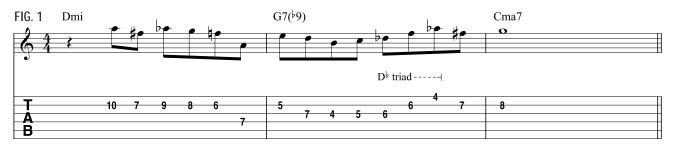
TRIAD SUBSTITUTION

Triad substitution is where one triad is substituted in place of another. One of the most common is flat-five or tri-tone substitution. This is when a triad a flat-fifth degree (tri-tone) away is substituted for a chord. For example: instead of playing a G major triad over a G7 chord, a Db major triad (Db is a flat-fifth away from G) is "substituted."

TRIAD SUPERIMPOSITION

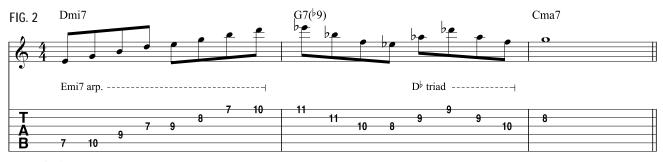
Triad superimposition is where two or more triads are played one after the other, creating a "dispersed scale" effect of bitonality or polytonality. Of course all triads can be substituted or superimposed in both tonal and modal music, either using the single-note approach or voiced in chord form.

FIG. 1 offers an example of tri-tone substitution on the V (G7b9) chord of a II–V–I progression in the key of C major. Notice that over the G7b9 harmony, a Db major triad is substituted in the second half of the measure.



■ AUDIO-Fig.1.mp3

In FIG. 2 we have triad substitution on the II chord, as well as tri-tone substitution on the V chord. Over the Dmi7 (II) harmony, an E minor triad is substituted. Notice that the connecting note (D) creates a full Emi7 arpeggio.



■ AUDIO-Fig.2.mp3

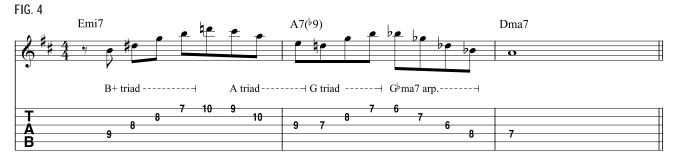
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FIG. 3 is an example of triad superimposition. Over the V chord (A7b9) we find two substitute triads: the first is an Eb major triad (tri-tone sub) followed by a Db major triad. Notice that the Db triad can be seen as a half-step approach to the I chord (Dma7).



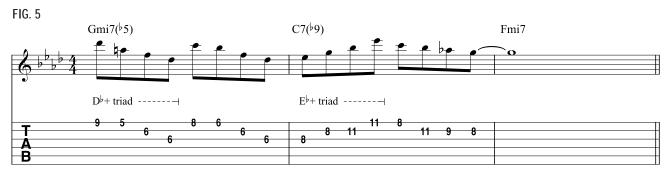
▲ AUDIO-Fig.3.mp3

The next example superimposes two triads over both the II chord (Emi7) and the V chord (A7b9). In the first measure we have an ascending B augmented triad, followed by a descending A major triad that resolves on the downbeat of the V chord measure. The line continues with a climb up a G major triad, and down a Gbma7 arpeggio, finally resolving on the fifth degree of the I chord (Dma7).



▲ AUDIO-Fig.4.mp3

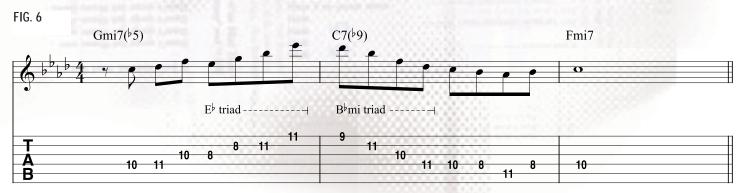
In this minor II–V–I, a Db augmented triad (harmonized from the third degree of the Bb melodic minor scale) is substituted over the II chord (Gmi7b5). An Eb major triad (from the C half-whole diminished scale) is used as a substitution over the V chord (C7b9).



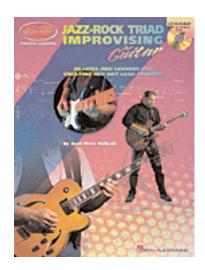
■ AUDIO-Fig.5.mp3

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Here's the same progression, but this time the substitution over the II chord is an Eb triad, from the Ab major scale. A Bb minor triad is used over the V chord, illustrating that Db major is a useful scale for a C altered chord. (Bb minor is the relative minor of Db major.)



▲ AUDIO-Fig.6.mp3



This lesson is from:

Jazz-Rock Triad Improvising for Guitar

by Jean Marc Belkadi.

In this 'private lesson,' MI instructor Jean Marc Belkadi reveals the secrets to creating interesting, over-the-top, red-hot licks and lead phrases!

He covers: modal and tonal usage, triad substitution and superimposition techniques, and much more. The book is in standard notation and tab, and the CD features 50 full-band tracks.

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