Tutorial 4F: Chord Substitutions

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Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to:

1. Use turnarounds and insert chords
2. Play altered blues progressions
3. Use static playing effectively

Enjoy the learning, and watch for rocks …

Other Tutorials

4A: Soundscapes

4B: Double-Time & Half-Time

4D: More Development

4G: Variations on ii-V-I's

4J: Group Interaction

▶ There are many opportunities to spice up chord progressions. Knowing how and when to do so can give your solos a great harmonic lift. And you'll be able to handle tunes better when you recognize the chord substitutions they use.

Part 1 – Turnarounds/ Inserted Chords

A) What is a turnaround?

   *A *turnaround* is a way to add chords to a progression so you get back to ("turn around" to) a starting place.

   *Turnarounds are often used to add variety in the last two bars of a blues, which are two bars of the I chord, followed by another bar of the I chord when the blues repeats back to the beginning bar.

B) How do I use blues turnarounds?

   *To figure out the chords to add in a blues turnaround, follow the steps below.

   1 In the last two bars, mark these spots as places where you need to add chords:

   • Beat 3 of bar 11

   • Beat 1 of bar 12

   • Beat 3 of bar 12

   In a C blues, the last two bars look like this (the blanks indicate added chords):

| C7 __ | __ __ :|| C7 (bar 1)

2 Find a chord for the last slot. This should be a dominant (V) chord that moves strongly to the C7 (I) chord in bar 1. Good choices are G7 (up a 4th to C7), or Db7 (down 1/2 step to C7), or F#7 (up a #4 to C7). Let's pick G7 for now:

| C7 __ | __ G7 :|| (C7)

3 Find the third chord. It should move strongly to the G7 chord; let's pick Dm7 (up a 4th to G7):

| C7 __ | Dm7 G7 :|| (C7)

4 Find the second chord, moving strongly to Dm; let's pick A7 (up a 4th to Dm7). The turnaround is done.

| C7 A7 | Dm7 G7 :|| (C7)

C) What are some turnaround variations for blues?

   *Below are some common turnarounds for a C blues. They use strong dominant chord movements.

(Part 1 – Turnarounds/Inserted Chords)

1. | C7 A7 | Dm7 Db7 :|| (C7)

2. | C7 Eb7 | Dm7 G7 :|| (C7)

3. | C7 Eb7 | Dm7 Db7 :|| (C7)

4. | C7 A7 | Ab7 G7 :|| (C7)

5. | C7 A7 | Ab7 Db7 :|| (C7)

6. | C7 A7 | Dm7 Db7 :|| (C7)

*You can also use a V-I progression to fill the second and third slots of the turnaround. In this case, there would not be a strong movement from the third to fourth chord, but the other movements are strong.

7. | C7 Db7 | F#Ma7 G7 :|| (C7)

8. | C7 E7 | AMa7 G7 :|| (C7)

9. | C7 F7 | Bbmi7 Db7 :|| (C7)

10. | C7 F#7 | BMa7 G7 :|| (C7)

11. | C7 Bb7 | Ebmi7 Db7 :|| (C7)

*For turnarounds, see the last 2 bars of I Remember Yews, Joysprinkles, Angel-ize, and more in *300 Standards.*

▶ **TRY IT –** <u>Basic:</u> Write a 2-bar turnaround for each key x in the circle of 4ths. <u>Medium:</u> Write two additional 2-bar turnarounds for each key in the circle of 4ths.

B) How do I insert chords?

*You can insert a melodic pattern between harmonically distant chords. Each new sequence of the pattern is based on the next note up or down the scale (chromatic or diatonic). This fills in the gap between two chords that are a third or a fourth apart. In the first example below, the original chords are C7 & F7; the inserted chords are D7, Eb7, and E7, forming a stepwise bridge going up.

*You can also insert one chord between chords that are a third apart (like C between Bb and D) or two chords between chords that are a fourth apart (like C and D between Bb and E).

*In the next example, the original chords are C7 and A7; the inserted chords are B7 and Bb7, which form a chromatic bridge going down.

C7   (B7   Bb7)   A7

▶ **TRY IT –** Around the circle of 4ths, insert chromatic chords between each key.

Part 2 – Using Altered Blues

A) How do I alter a blues?

*You can insert chords in a blues progression, creating an altered blues progression. There are many variations of altered blues, but most variations follow the guidelines of inserting chords and using turnarounds.

*Below are some altered blues progressions in C, with explanations of the inserted chords. The progressions use turnarounds and variations on ii-V-I's.

<u>Variation #1: Bird Blues Variation</u>

This altered blues is called "Bird" blues, because it was often used by Charlie Parker (nicknamed "Bird").

| (1) C7 | (2) Bm7 E7 | (3) Am7 D7 |(4) Gm7 C7 |

| (5) F7 | (6) Fm7 | (7) Em7 | (8) A7 |

| (9) Dm7 |(10) G7 |(11) Em7 A7 |(12) Dm7 G7 ||

Example C - "Bird" blues in C

• Bars 2-4: Goes around the circle of 4ths to get to the F7 in bar 5. From bar 2 to 5, each chord goes up a 4th.

• Bar 6: Switches to minor.

• Bars 7-10: Goes around circle of 4ths to get to G7 in bar 10. The Fm7 in bar 6 moves smoothly to the Em7 in bar 7. (Em7 in bar 7 is also a substitute for CMa7.)

• Bars 11-12: Typical 2-bar turnaround w/ circle of 4ths.

(Part 2 – Using Altered Blues)

Variation #2: Altered Minor Blues

*This minor blues has several ii-V's and a turnaround.

(1) Cm	(2) Dm7b5 G7	(3) Cm	(4) Gm7 C7
(5) Fm7	(6) Fm7 Bb7	(7) EbMa7	(8) Ebm7 Ab7
(9) Dm7b5	(10) Db7+9	(11) Cm7 A7b9	(12) Ab7 G7	

• Bar 4: ii-V-i to Fm7 in bar 5.

• Bars 6 - 7: ii-V-I to EbMa7.

• Bars 8 - 9: ii-V in key of DbMa, but bar 9 is Dm. The V chord (Ab7) moves up a #4th to the Dm7b5.

• Bars 9 -11: A tritone substitution (ii-bII-I) in minor.

• Bars 11 -12: 2-bar turnaround with downward chromatic movement from A7b9 to G7. The Ab7 remains dominant for variety.

Variation #3: Another Altered Minor Blues

*This minor blues uses a long chain around the circle of fourths, starting in bar 6.

(1) Cm	(2) Dm7b5 G7	(3) Cm	(4) F#7
(5) Fm7	(6) Em7 A7	(7) Dm7 G7	(8) Cm7 F7
(9) Bbm7 Eb7	(10) Abm7 Db7	(11) Cm7	(12) F#7	

• Bar 4: #4 chord (F#7) resolves down a half-step to the minor iv chord in bar 5.

• Bars 6 - 10: Long chain of ii-V's, starting down a half-step from the minor iv, ending at the minor i chord in bar 11.

• Bar 12: Simple turnaround of one chord: the #4 that resolves to the minor i chord in bar 1. The F#7 was also used in bar 4, a similar location.

Variation #4: Another Bird Blues

*This blues starts on the bii, starting a long chain.

(1) C#m7 F#7	(2) Bm7 E7	(3) Am7 D7	(4) Gm7 C7
(5) F7	(6) Fm7 Bb7	(7) EbMa7	(8) Ebm7 Ab7
(9) DbMa7	(10) Dbm7 Gb7	(11) CMa7 Bb7	(12) EbMa7 Ab7	

• Bars 1 - 4: Goes in 4ths from bar 1. The starting C#m7 is an interesting contrast to the original C7.

• Bars 6 - 7: Switches to F minor, then uses a ii-V-I to go to Eb Major.

(Part 2 – Using Altered Blues)

• Bars 8 - 9: To Eb minor, then uses a ii-V-I to go to Db Major (like taking bars 6 and 7 down a step).

• Bars 10-11: Switches to Db minor, then uses an altered ii-V-I (Dbm7 to Gb7 to CMa7) to get back to C Major. The CMa7 in bar 11 and the F7 in bar 5 give us the clues that this blues is actually in C.

• Bars 11-12: A 2-bar turnaround designed to get to the C#m7 in bar 1. It goes around the circle of 4ths from Bb to C# (same as Db).

▶ **TRY IT –** <u>Basic</u>: Transpose the chords for Variation #1 into two different keys. <u>Medium</u>: Transpose the chords for Variations #2 and 3 into another key. <u>Challenge</u>: Write your own variation of Bird Blues.

Part 3 – Static Playing

A) What is static playing?   MORE

*Some tunes or solos suggest an open feeling – perhaps a single chord vamp or a blues. That's when static playing can help. In static playing, you avoid outlining ii-V-Is in your solo to reduce the harmonic energy.

*Using ii-V-Is is somewhat like creating harmonic "tides" of push and pull in the music. When you eliminate the ii-V-I's, the focus shifts towards your rhythms, expression, and development. In static playing you can still use a few non-harmonic tones and even play outside a little, as long as you don't imply ii-V-Is. Staying away from ii-V-Is eliminates that "tidal pull" of harmony.

*Here are some examples of note patterns to avoid in static playing (in C Major):

D-F-A-B-G (ii-V); D-B-G-C (V-I); F-E (4 to 3, like G7 to C)

▶ **TRY IT –** <u>Basic</u>: Create a static melody of eighth-notes in each major key around the circle of 4ths. <u>Medium</u>: Do the same in all dominant and minor keys.

That's all for Tutorial 4F!

Next is the Quiz –to get started, go to the next page.

QUIZ – 4F: Chord Substitutions

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Maj6 arpeggio if you're right. If you miss 2 or less, you pass the Tutorial! Or, click Back 🔵 to review the Tutorial before taking the Quiz.

1) A blues turnaround

A) has 2 chords   B) is filled in from last to first   C) modulates to a new key at the end   D) none of these

2) What chord would best fill in: C7 __ AbMaj7 Db7?

A) Em7   B) Eb7   C) GMa7   D) E7

3) In static playing you would usually avoid

A) ii-V   B) V-I   C) 4-3   D) all of these

4) Which would not be a good way to complete the turnaround of FMaj D7 __ C7?

A) E7   B) Gm7   C) Db7   D) they are all good

5) Inserted chords usually

A) form a chromatic bridge   B) make the harmony more complex   C) use melodic patterns   D) all of these

6) You would not insert one or more chords if the original progression

A) moves up a fourth   B) moves up a third   C) moves down a third   D) moves chromatically

7) Which variation of the blues in this chapter has the most intervals of a 4th?

A) #1   B) #2   C) #3   D) #4

8) The bar in an altered blues that's usually the same as its counterpart in a regular blues is bar

A) 1   B) 5   C) 8   D) 12

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