

4. Chord / Scale Relationships

In the previous chapter, we examined the two chord qualities that have a direct and essential relationship to the diminished scale: the diminished-seventh chord and the dominant-seventh. The whole-half diminished scale, when built on the parallel diminished-seventh chord's root, produces the chord components and extensions shown in Example 27. Beside the chord's root, third, fifth,

Co7

Root 9 3 11 5 b13 7 Maj. 7 Root

Example 27: C Whole-Half Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for Co7

and seventh, the parallel whole-half diminished scale produces the ninth, eleventh, flatted-thirteenth, and major seventh, which, in many contexts, can be considered an extension.

This keyboard pattern or group of notes will produce the same chord components and extensions for three additional diminished-seventh chords: Ebo7, Gbo7, and Ao7. As mentioned, although they each have a different root and different spellings as defined by music theory, they each contain the same four basic tones. Notice, furthermore, that all four of these diminished-seventh chords are a *minor third* apart. This interval defines all of the important connections and relationships in all of the diminished scales and their associated chords.

When this same keyboard pattern or note group begins on B, D, F, and Ab, it produces a half-whole diminished scale. When any of these scales is built on the parallel dominant-seventh chord's root, the scale produces the chord components and extensions shown in Example 28, where B is chosen as the chord's root alongside the parallel half-whole diminished scale. As is the case with the diminished-seventh chord above, this keyboard pattern or group of notes will produce the same chord components and extensions for three additional dominant-seventh chords: D7, F7, and Ab7.

B7

Root b9 #9 3 #11 5 13 7 Root

Example 28: B Half-Whole Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for B7

Another perspective on this chord/scale relationship, one that is often proffered by jazz theorists and pedagogues, is that you can form a whole-half diminished scale a half-step above the

root of the dominant-seventh flatted-ninth chord, producing the same result. If you are more comfortable and familiar with the whole-half diminished scale rather than the half-whole, this may be an important and practical relationship to consider and use.

The C#/Db whole-half diminished scale, the second keyboard pattern discussed in Chapter One, is shown below with its chord tones and extensions (Example 29). Beside C#o7, this scale is also associated with Eo7, Go7, and Bbo7, producing the same chord components.

C#o7

Root 9 3 11 5 b13 7 Maj. 7 Root

Example 29: C# Whole-Half Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for C#o7

When this same diminished scale keyboard pattern begins on C, Eb, F#, or A, it produces a half-whole diminished scale. When any of these scales is built on the parallel dominant-seventh chord's root, the scale produces the chord components and extensions shown in Example 30, where C is chosen as the chord's root alongside the parallel half-whole diminished scale. In a manner similar to the B7 above, this keyboard pattern or group of notes will produce the same chord components and extensions for three additional dominant-seventh flatted-ninth chords: Eb7, F#7, and A7, all a minor third apart.

C7

Root b9 #9 3 #11 5 13 7 Root

Example 30: C Half-Whole Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for C7

Do7

Root 9 3 11 5 b13 7 Maj. 7 Root

Example 31: D Whole-Half Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for Do7

The third and final keyboard pattern discussed in Chapter One, the D whole-half diminished scale, when applied to Do7, produces the chord components shown in Example 31. The C# half-whole diminished scale, when applied to C#7, produces the chord components shown in Example 32.

C#7

Root b9 #9 3 #11 5 13 7 Root

Example 32: C# Half-Whole Diminished Scale With Chord Tones and Extensions for C#7

In summary, using the three whole-half diminished scales presented in this chapter (C, C#, and D), I have outlined the chord tones and extensions that are produced by each scale when it appears alongside the diminished-seventh chord built on the same root. Additionally, using the three half-whole diminished scales above, I have described the chord tones and extensions produced by this scale when it appears alongside the dominant-seventh chord associated with it. To see all twelve whole-half diminished scales and all twelve half-whole diminished scales with their associated diminished-seventh and dominant-seventh chords, see Appendix A and Appendix B.

Practice Tips:

1. Start with a particular primary chord (a diminished-seventh or dominant-seventh), and practice the scale associated with it. The scale can be started from any one of its eight notes. You may want to think of these as eight separate diminished scales, although this may make things a little more complicated. It will, however, allow you to gain facility with starting from any one of its eight scale tones. This is a valuable skill for improvising melodies and harmonies.

2. Play one of the three basic diminished scale keyboard patterns and practice all of the primary chords associated with it.⁵

⁵ Each of the three whole-half diminished scales (or keyboard patterns) referred to in Chapter One has no less than eight primary chords associated with it: four diminished-sevenths and four dominant-sevenths. The C whole-half diminished scale is associated with Co7, Ebo7, Gbo7, Ao7, B7b9, D7b9, F7b9, and Ab7b9. The C# whole-half diminished scale is associated with C#o7, Eo7, Go7, Bbo7, C7b9, Eb7b9, Gb7b9, and A7b9. The D whole-half diminished scale is associated with Do7, Fo7, Abo7, Bo7, C#7b9, E7b9, G7b9, and Bb7b9. As you practice and apply the embedded content examples in the following chapters, you will want to keep in mind the eight primary chords related to the basic diminished scale and the content that is embedded within the scale.