

THE BEBOP SCALE

The bebop scale has been around for a very long time and jazz musicians have used it extensively when playing ii/V7 or ii/V7/I. It is a sound that we sing but beginning improvisers often don't play. It can be played over any quality chord: major, minor, dominant 7th or half-diminished. The scale amounts to adding one note to the existing scale. For example, the note you would add to a G7 scale (or a D-7 scale) would be F#. Now, F# will sound out of place unless you place it on the *up-beat*. We think of each beat as having a *down-beat* and an *up-beat*. In 4/4 time, we will often count out loud like this: one &, two &, three &, four &. The &'s are the *up-beats* and that's where you want to place this added note. It will sound clumsy if you play the added note on a *down-beat*. Here is proper placement of the F#/G♭ over a G7 or D-7 chord/scale:

The circled notes are the extra, added tones. Play these notes on *up-beats*.

(Since D-7 has the same notes as the G7 scale this example will fit over D-7.)

The first staff shows the bebop scale over D-7, G7, and CA chords. The added notes are circled. The second staff shows the bebop scale over D-7, G7, and CA chords. The added notes are circled. The third staff shows the bebop scale over D-7, G7, and CA chords. The added notes are circled.

C Major Scale Using C Bebop Scale (A♭/G# is the added note)

The first staff shows the C Major scale using the C bebop scale. The added notes are circled. The second staff shows the C Major scale using the C bebop scale. The added notes are circled.

BEBOP SCALE CONSTRUCTION

The circled notes are the extra, added tones. Play these notes on *up-beats*.

Major = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (#5) , 6, 7, 1	C D E F G (#5) A B C
Dominant 7th = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, (7) , 1	C D E F G A B♭ (7) C
Minor = 1, 2, b3, (3) , 4, 5, 6, b7, 1	C D E♭ (3) F G A B♭ C
Half-Diminished = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (#5) , 6, 7, 1	C D♭ E♭ F G♭ (#5) A♭ B♭ C

David Baker was one of the first educators to explain this scale and he has several bebop books that can help you to better understand how this important sound has been a staple in the jazz vocabulary. You can find his books from your favorite local music source or visit www.jazzbooks.com for more information.

Also, we publish "Bebop Scales" by Joe Riposo in treble clef (Aebersold product code BEBOP) and bass clef (Aebersold product code BEBOP-BC).