

Pentatonic Substitutions



This month **Levi Clay** breathes a breath of fresh air into your pentatonic playing with examples of substitutions in a dorian context.

In this lesson we will take the first steps required to begin to master visualisation of the pentatonic scale. As we develop this skill we should be able to approach non diatonic progressions very easily to create melodies that modulate smoothly from one key to another, a skill that is essential in the fusion genre. We begin today by learning all of the possible substitutions available when playing in a dorian context.

The main problem I have found with students is that they are extremely comfortable

using the minor pentatonic in position one, but get completely lost when breaking out of this position. Most rock players learn to move comfortably all over the neck in Am pentatonic, but if they needed to move to a new key (Em) they would need to move up to the 12th fret (Em pentatonic position 1) to establish their new key comfortably. In an ideal world you should be free to move from one key to another with no restrictions.

The dorian scale is the second mode of the major scale, so in Gmajor



G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,G

The dorian mode is built from the second degree of the scale, so in the key of G we have

Adorian

A,B,C,D,E,F#,G,A

The interval formula for this scale is
R,2,b3,4,5,6,b7

The Aminor pentatonic scale (R,b3,4,5,b7) is

A,C,D,E,G

We all know that the notes of Aminor

pentatonic will fit over a minor7 chord, but Adorian also contains two other pentatonic scales.

E minor (E,G,A,B,D)

B minor (B,D,E,F#,A)

We need to understand how these effect the chord we are playing over, in order to do that you need to learn the intervals created by each scale, and therefore the harmony you imply.

On with the licks!



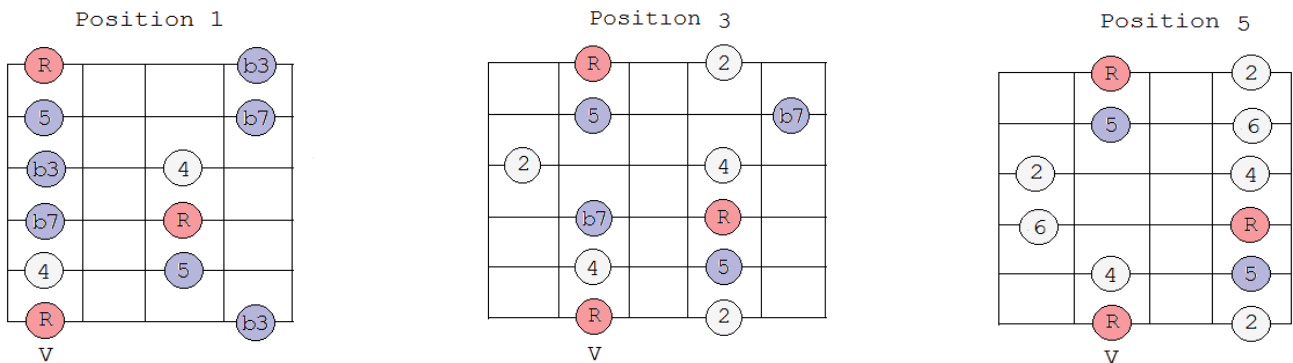
Listening List

The concepts contained in this column can be found on hundreds of artists records, but the best

place to start would be those heavily influenced by jazz music. Try Mike Stern's album "who let the cats out?" or some of Guthrie Govans live work with The Fellowship to spur your creativity.

Exercise 1

Here are the diagrams for A minor, E minor and B minor pentatonic all played at the 5th fret. Their corresponding CAGED position has been written above. You will notice that each scales notes have been analysed in relation to the A root as when we substitute a scale the underlying tonality does not change.



Exercise 2

Here is our first example lick. For the first bar I play a simple Am pentatonic phrase then for harmonic interest I rip through a speedy Em pentatonic line in bar 2 resolving to Am. Note the use of a chromatic approach note (1st note in bar 2) Don't be afraid to embellish lines with simple neighbour note chromaticism.

Em is the easiest substitute to apply as it only adds the 9th to the equation (making Am9)

Am7 (Em)

Exercise 3

As before I open with a simple Am phrase, this is the best way to set up a complicated lick as it clearly states the key centre. From there I move through an Em7 arpeggio (contained within Em pentatonic) then I resolve this to Am position 2. I slide this up to Am position 4 before teasing some Bm pentatonic (also position 4) and resolving to an A.

Bm is much harder to use as its notes are further away from Am (R,2,4,5,6) implying an A13sus sound.

Am Em Am Bm

Exercise 4

This line is a little more complex, moving freely between the 3 scales all in close proximity. After an introductory Am phrase I move quickly to Bm position 5 and slide this up to position 1, this gives us a very open sound as we aren't hitting the b3rd of the chord at all (one of the guide tones). The Am line I play (in position 2) includes some chromatic passing tones, another common "connect the dots" approach common in fusion music. I then take the same idea and move it down to Em (position 4) and let the chromaticism lead me into the open sounding Bm pentatonic. To resolve the tension efficiently I target the b3rd (C) of our underlying Am7 chord

Am Bm Am Em Bm

T
A
B

7 7 7 7 4 7 7 9 7 7 7 10 9 8 9 10 7 8 9 7 9 7 7 10 9 8

P V V V P V sl. H V P H H P H H H V H V H V

Exercise 2

In the opening phrase here I rest on the 6th (a key dorian note), the idea is that I sustain a consonant note that isn't a chord tone then after a flurry of notes I finally give the audience the chord tone they expect.

As before the pentatonic substitution line moves rapidly between the scales, we do this so the listeners ear doesn't take one of your substitutions as the new key centre.

Am Em Am Em Am

T
A
B

9 10 12 9 12 11 12 10 13 12 10 13 12 12 9 12 10 10 8 10 7 8 9 8 10

P P V H V H sl. V V sl.

These are by no means the only licks you can play, I could easily fill 50 pages with similar licks. The ideas presented should (as always) inspire your creativity. I would recommend that any licks you do come up with you should write down so you can come back to them at a later date.

Have fun and I'll see you next issue!