

Session 3

Understanding the 2 5 1 Chord sequence and Guide Tones (Bass Clef Instruments)

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So far the two tunes we have used for improvisation have used just the basic chord changes. However, any tune will sound more colourful and interesting by using the 2 5 1 Chord Sequence where appropriate.
 If every note of a major scale is given a number and on that number a series of thirds are stacked, then the chord on 2 will be a Minor 7th, 5 a dominant, and 1 a Major 7th.

Musical notation showing a 2-5-1 chord sequence in bass clef. The scale is G major (one sharp). Chords are A-7, D7, and GΔ. Notes are numbered 1-7.

So nowbecomes.....and if we re-arrange (ie "voice") the chord tones

Musical notation showing chord tones for G, D7, G, A-7, D7, and GΔ.

We have all the "voices" moving to the nearest note of the next chord, the most important of which are the 3rds and 7ths - Guide Tones.

Musical notation showing voice leading for the 2-5-1 sequence: A-7, D7, GΔ, A-7, D7, GΔ.

"Mhairi's Wedding" using 2 5 1

Musical notation for "Mhairi's Wedding" using 2-5-1 sequence. Chords: GΔ, A-7, D7.

Musical notation for "Mhairi's Wedding" using 2-5-1 sequence. Chords: GΔ, A-7, D7.

First system of musical notation for 'The Wheels on the Bus'. It consists of two staves in G major (one sharp). The top staff contains a melody of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bottom staff contains a bass line of chords: GΔ, A-7, and D7. The system spans four measures.

Second system of musical notation for 'The Wheels on the Bus'. It consists of two staves in G major. The top staff continues the melody: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bottom staff contains chords: GΔ, A-7, and D7. The system spans four measures and ends with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature.

"The Wheels on the Bus" using 2 5 1 (and in bar 2 Chord 3 and 6)

Third system of musical notation for 'The Wheels on the Bus'. It consists of two staves in G major, 4/4 time. The top staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bottom staff contains chords: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, and D7. The system spans six measures.

Fourth system of musical notation for 'The Wheels on the Bus'. It consists of two staves in G major, 4/4 time. The top staff contains a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The bottom staff contains chords: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, D7, and GΔ. The system spans seven measures and ends with a double bar line.