

Session 3

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

arr R Michael

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.

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It shows the notes of a major scale with numbers 1 through 8 below them. Above the staff are the chords: A-7, D⁷, and GΔ. The notes are: 1 (A), 2 (G), 3 (B), 4 (D), 5 (E), 6 (F#), 7 (C), 1 (A).

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

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It shows the re-arranged chord tones for the 2 5 1 sequence: G, D⁷, G, A-7, D⁷, 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.

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It shows the guide tones for the 2 5 1 sequence: A-7, D⁷, GΔ, A-7, D⁷, GΔ.

"Mhairi's Wedding" using 2 5 1

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It shows the melody for the first half of "Mhairi's Wedding" using the 2 5 1 sequence: GΔ, A-7, D⁷.

A musical staff in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It shows the melody for the second half of "Mhairi's Wedding" using the 2 5 1 sequence: GΔ, A-7, D⁷.

2

GΔ A-7 D⁷

This staff shows three measures of music. The first measure has a GΔ chord, indicated by a treble clef and a sharp sign. The second measure has an A-7 chord, indicated by a bass clef and a bass staff with a 7th note. The third measure has a D7 chord, indicated by a bass clef and a bass staff with a 7th note.

GΔ A-7 D⁷

This staff shows three measures of music. The first measure has a GΔ chord, indicated by a treble clef and a sharp sign. The second measure has an A-7 chord, indicated by a bass clef and a bass staff with a 7th note. The third measure has a D7 chord, indicated by a bass clef and a bass staff with a 7th note.

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

GΔ A-7 B-7 E-7 A-7 D⁷

This staff shows six measures of music. The chords are labeled above the staff: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, and D7. The bass staff shows the harmonic progression: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, and D7.

GΔ A-7 B-7 E-7 A-7 D⁷ GΔ

This staff shows seven measures of music. The chords are labeled above the staff: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, D7, and GΔ. The bass staff shows the harmonic progression: GΔ, A-7, B-7, E-7, A-7, D7, and GΔ.