

THE DOMINANT 7th TREE of SCALE CHOICES

The two most important notes in any scale are the 3rd and 7th. They tell the listener what the quality is and indicate the harmonic motion. The **3rd** tells us if it's major or minor. The **7th** tells whether the sound is stable (doesn't want to move to another chord) or if it wants to move on to a chord of resolution. Dominants typically want to resolve to a chord up a perfect 4th (C7 wants to resolve to F, F-, F7 etc.). The **root** or tonic is taken for granted. If it wasn't there we wouldn't be able to identify the sound.

Any of these scales (qualities/sounds/sonorities) may be played when a dominant 7th chord/scale RESOLVES to a chord/scale whose ROOT lies a perfect 4th (5 half-steps) above the root of the dominant 7th chord.

EXAMPLE: || C7 | C7 | F | F | Ab7 | Ab7 | Db- | Db- ||
Embellish the measures with these chords: C7 and Ab7

The altered tones are in **bold type**. Those tones usually resolve by *half-step* to a scale or chord tone. This amounts to **tension then release**. It's a natural occurrence in music. The 3rd's and 7th's are underlined.

SCALES

- 1. DOM.7th** = C7 = C D E F G A Bb C
This is the basic dominant 7th sound. Be careful how you treat the 4th tone. Use it as a passing tone.
- 2. BEBOP** = C7 = C D E F G A Bb **B** C
Play B natural as a passing tone. It should always appear on an upbeat never on the downbeat.
- 3. LYDIAN DOM.** = C7#4 = C D E **F#** G A Bb C
The #4 was/is a favorite note. It used to be called a b5.
- 4. WHOLE-TONE** = C7+ = C D E **F#** **G#** Bb C
This scale only has 6 tones. It is a symmetrical scale used often in cartoon music and by DeBussy and Ravel. [**Has a #4 and #5**]
- 5. DIMINISHED** = C7b9 = C **Db** **D#** E **F#** G A Bb C
This scale has 8 different tones. It is symmetrical and is also used in cartoon music. Michael Brecker is a master of this scale sound. [**Has a b9, #9 and #4**]
- 6. DIM. WHOLE-TONE** = C7+9 = C **Db** **D#** E **F#** **G#** Bb C
This scale has four altered tones which help create tension. [**Has a b9, #9, #4 and #5**]
- 7. SPANISH or JEWISH SCALE** = C7 (b9) = C **Db** E F G **Ab** Bb C
This scale is used often when playing in a minor key. It's the same as F harmonic minor. [**Has a b9 and b6**]
- 8. CHROMATIC SCALE** = C7 = C **C#** D **D#** E F **F#** G **G#** A **A#** B C
(the Musical Alphabet) C **Db** D **Eb** E F **Gb** G **Ab** A **Bb** B C

Any time there is a dominant 7th, you may want to experiment with these scales. The proper use of these various scales is part of what makes jazz so appealing. Endless variety in the hands of a master makes beautiful music. Don't be afraid to try these sounds. It may take some time for your ears to become accustomed to the sound and the fingerings. The book called *Patterns For Jazz* (Aebersold product code "P-T" for treble clef instruments, "P-B" for bass clef) lists jazz phrases based on many of the scales above.