

Chapter 2 – Guide Tones for Comping

To begin your chord studies over this tune, you learn the two most important notes in any chord, the 3rd and 7th.

Guide tones are built with the following interval patterns:

- 7-3
- 3-7

Though small, these shapes outline the sound of any chord, and they're easy to play, a win-win in the woodshed.

Here are pointers to get the most out of these guide tone shapes into your studies.

- Learn 4 bars at a time, memorize these shapes.
- Connect 4 bar phrases when ready to form 16-bar phrases.
- Play the entire study no rhythms.
- Add in rhythms over the backing track.
- Change the picking patterns.
- Sing the top note of each chord as you play it.
- Sing the bottom note of each chord as you play it.
- Mix these shapes with other chord shapes in your playing.

Now that you know how to practice these guide tones, time to take them to the fretboard over Rhythm Changes.

Essential Comping Rhythms

Before you dive into the chord shapes below, start by exploring these three essential jazz rhythms.

Each comping exercise in this course is written in plain rhythms to help you get the chord shapes down quickly.

From there, you can add these rhythms to your comping to expand on those shapes in your studies.

The first rhythm is called the Freddie Green rhythm, as it was used by the late, great comping pianist throughout his career.

Here, you play chords on each beat in the bar to create a steady stream of quarter notes behind the soloist.

To add an extra level of swing to this rhythm, play beats 2 and 4 a little louder than beats 1 and 3.

Have fun digging into this essential rhythm over Rhythm Changes and beyond.

Am⁷ D⁷ G^{major}7

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| A | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| B | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The next rhythm to explore in your comping is the Charleston, which features chords on beat 1 and the & of 2 in each bar.

Check out this rhythm with a metronome, count along to nail it, and then add it to any comping exercise in this eBook.

Am⁷ D⁷ G^{maj7}

T 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3
 A 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4
 B 5 5 4 4 4 4 2 2
 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3

The final rhythm is highly syncopated, meaning it has only up beats, no chords on the 1-2-3-4 of each bar.

As you play chords on the & of 1 and 3 in this example and beyond, use a metronome to avoid rushing your rhythms.

When playing syncopated rhythms such as these, it's easy to rush the beat and get ahead of the band in your comping.

Using a metronome and counting along will help avoid or fix this issue in your comping.

Am⁷ D⁷ G^{maj7}

T 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3
 A 5 5 5 5 4 4 4 4
 B 5 5 4 4 4 4 2 2
 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3

Guide Tone Exercise 1

Here's the first position for the guide tones that you can add to your comping over this tune.

Work the first position, then the second, etc., then blend them together to expand them in your comping.

Have fun as you take your guide tone comping to the next level of your development.

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|
| T | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| A | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | | |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|
| T | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | | |

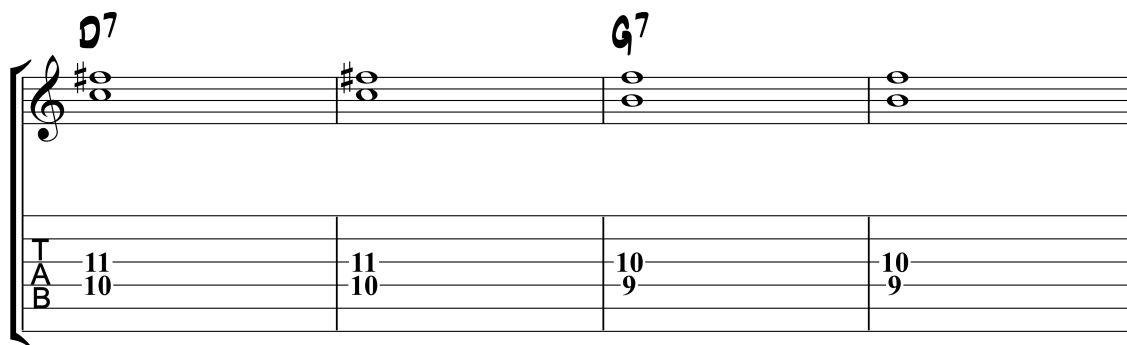
Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|
| T | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| A | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | | |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

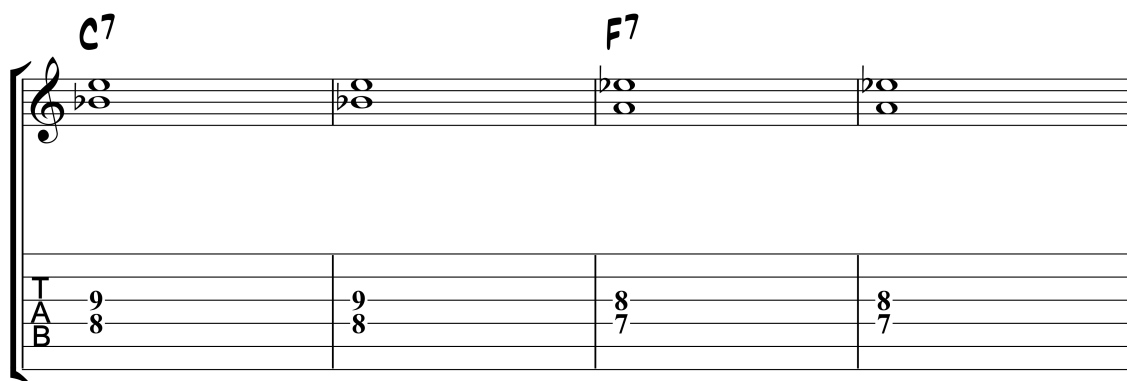
| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | |

D⁷ **G⁷**



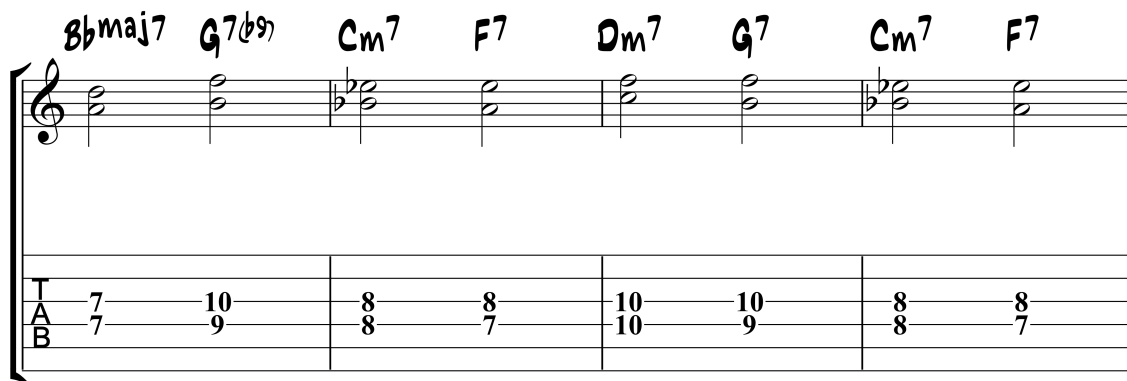
| | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|
| T | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| A | 10 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| B | | | | |

C⁷ **F⁷**



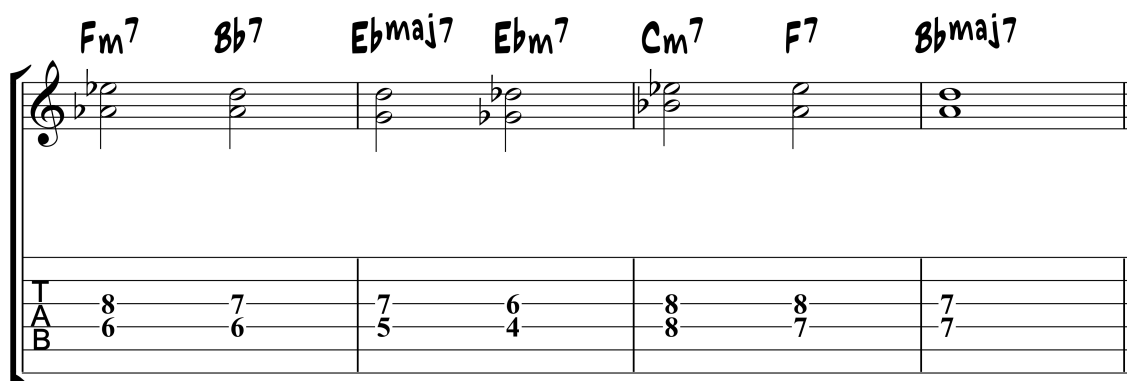
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 9 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| A | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| B | | | | |

Bbmaj⁷ **G⁷b⁹** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Dm⁷** **G⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷**



| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|
| T | 7 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 8 |
| A | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | | |

Fm⁷ **Bb⁷** **Ebmaj⁷** **Ebm⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Bbmaj⁷**



| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| B | | | | | | | |

Guide Tone Exercise 2

You now learn a second position for the guide tones that you can add to your comping over this tune.

Work the first position, then the second, then blend them together to expand them in your comping.

Have fun as you take your guide tone comping to the next level of your development.

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | |
| B | 12 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 13 |
| | 12 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 13 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | |
| B | 13 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 15 | 15 | 13 |
| | 11 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 15 | 14 | 13 |

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | |
| B | 12 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 13 |
| | 12 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 13 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

| | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | |
| B | 13 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 13 |
| | 11 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 12 |

D⁷ **G⁷**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| T | | | |
| A | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| B | 3 | 3 | 2 |

C⁷ **F⁷**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| T | | | |
| A | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| B | 1 | 1 | 0 |

Bbmaj⁷ **G⁷b⁹** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Dm⁷** **G⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | 12 | 15 | 13 | 13 | 15 | 15 | 13 |
| B | 12 | 14 | 13 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 13 |

Fm⁷ **Bb⁷** **Ebmaj⁷** **Ebm⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Bbmaj⁷**

| | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| T | | | | | | |
| A | 13 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 13 |
| B | 11 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 12 |

Guide Tone Exercise 3

You now learn a third position for the guide tones that you can add to your comping over this tune.

Work the first position, then the second, then the third, then blend them together to expand them in your comping.

Have fun as you take your guide tone comping to the next level of your development.

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| A | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 0 | 3 | | | | | | |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| A | | | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 1 | 0 | | | | | | |

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| A | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 0 | 3 | | | | | | |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| A | | | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | |
| B | 1 | 0 | | | | | | |

D⁷ **G⁷**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| A | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| B | | | | |

C⁷ **F⁷**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| A | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| B | | | | |

Bbmaj⁷ **G⁷b⁹** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Dm⁷** **G⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| A | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | | | | | | | | |

Fm⁷ **Bb⁷** **Ebmaj⁷** **Ebm⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Bbmaj⁷**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| A | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| B | | | | | | | |

Guide Tone Exercise 4

Here's the final position for the guide tones that you can add to your comping over this tune.

Work the first position, then the second, then the third, then the fourth, then blend them together to expand them in your comping.

Have fun as you take your guide tone comping to the next level of your development.

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| T | | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | | |
| B | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| | 5 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|
| T | | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | | |
| B | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 |

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|
| T | | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | | |
| B | 7 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| | 5 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|--|
| T | | | | | | | | |
| A | | | | | | | | |
| B | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 7 | |
| | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 5 | |

D⁷ **G⁷**

T A B 10 9 10 9 9 8 9 8

C⁷ **F⁷**

T A B 8 7 8 7 7 6 7 6

Bbmaj⁷ **G⁷b⁹** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Dm⁷** **G⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷**

T A B 7 9 8 8 8 7 6 6 10 9 8 8 8 7 6 6

Fm⁷ **Bb⁷** **Ebmaj⁷** **Ebm⁷** **Cm⁷** **F⁷** **Bbmaj⁷**

T A B 6 6 5 5 5 11 9 8 7 6 6 7 5

Technical Challenge – Guide Tones + 1

After you have the guide tones for Rhythm Changes under your fingers, you can expand on those shapes by adding color notes.

Color notes are non-guide tones that you add on top of the 3rds and 7ths to create new shapes and sound in your comping.

There are two “levels” of color notes when adding them over guide tones.

The first group are the more stable notes, root and 5th.

From there, you have the more colorful group with the 9th, 11th, and 13th.

Start by learning the example below.

Then, when comfortable, change out the color notes for your own choices to expand on this exercise.

Have fun as you learn new shapes, expand on your guide tones comping, and dig deeper into the harmony on this tune.

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | 12 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| B | 12 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 6 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| B | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 |

Bbmaj7 G7(b9) Cm7 F7 Dm7 G7 Cm7 F7

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | 12 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| B | 12 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 6 |

Fm7 Bb7 Ebmaj7 Ebm7 Cm7 F7 Bbmaj7

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 13 |
| T | | | | | | |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 7 |
| B | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 6 |

D7 **G7**

| | | | |
|----|----|----|---|
| 12 | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| T | | | |
| A | 10 | 10 | 9 |
| B | 9 | 9 | 8 |

C7 **F7**

| | | | |
|----|---|---|----|
| 10 | 8 | 8 | 10 |
| T | | | |
| A | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| B | 7 | 7 | 6 |

Bbmaj7 **G7b9** **Cm7** **F7** **Dm7** **G7** **Cm7** **F7**

| | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 13 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| T | | | | | | | |
| A | 12 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| B | 12 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 6 |

Fm7 **Bb7** **Ebmaj7** **Ebm7** **Cm7** **F7** **Bbmaj7**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 13 |
| T | | | | | | |
| A | 6 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 8 | 7 |
| B | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 6 |