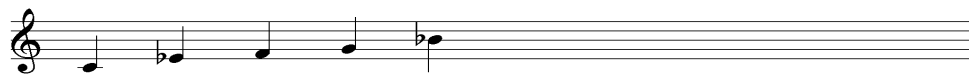


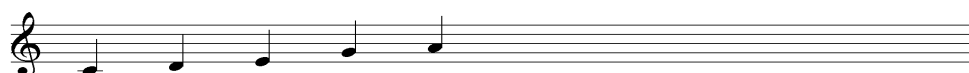
# PART I: PENTATONICS

The basic pentatonic scales are as follows:

## C minor pentatonic



## C major pentatonic

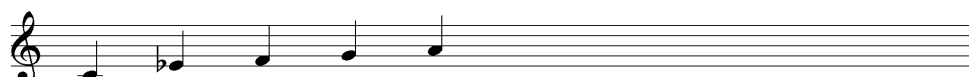


*These two structures are linked by relative major-minor relationship:*

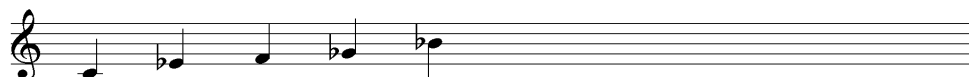
*C minor pentatonic = Eb major pentatonic*

*C major pentatonic = A minor pentatonic*

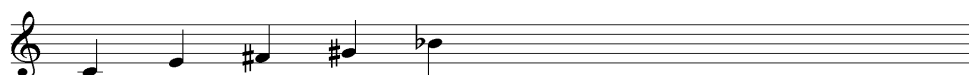
## C minor 6<sup>th</sup> pentatonic



## C half-diminished pentatonic



## C whole-tone pentatonic



## C diminished pentatonic



*The diminished reference is to a C7b9 chord, which expresses the C half-step whole-step diminished scale.*

What follows is a breakdown of which pentatonic scales go with which chord types, along with a few observations and tricks to remembering them.

## A. DORIAN MINOR

The minor flat 7 chord

The ii chord in a ii-V progression

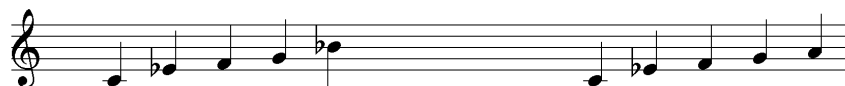
Can also be used as a minor I

A popular tonality for modal tunes as there are no 'avoid' notes

### Cm7

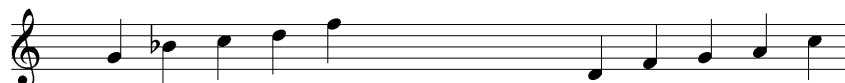
C minor pentatonic

C minor 6<sup>th</sup> pentatonic



G minor pentatonic

D minor pentatonic



A half-diminished pentatonic



Notes:

The roots form a II-V-I-VI pattern in the key of the chord you're playing. Note the pentatonic scale qualities:

Dm PT, Gm PT, Cm PT/Cm6 PT, A $\emptyset$  PT

This chord is the same as Eb $\Delta$ +4 – the relative major\*. You use the same pentatonics over both. Learn them as a pair.

(\* Not Eb Ionian = C Aeolian (classical major and minor) but Eb Lydian = C Dorian)

## B. LYDIAN MAJOR

The major 7 #4 chord

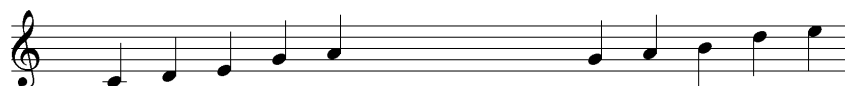
The I chord in a ii-V-I progression

A popular tonality for modal tunes as there are no 'avoid' notes

### C $\Delta$ +4

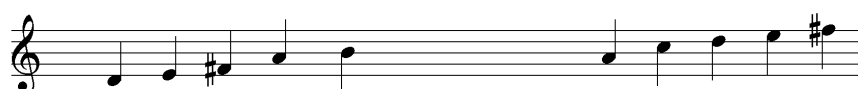
C major pentatonic

G major pentatonic



D major pentatonic

A minor 6<sup>th</sup> pentatonic



F# half-diminished pentatonic



Notes:

The roots form a II-V-I-VI pattern in the key of the chord you're playing. Note the pentatonic scale qualities:

DM PT, GM PT, CM PT, Am 6 PT

Plus a half-diminished chord on the #4 of the key of the chord you're playing.

This chord is the same as Am7 (Dorian) – the relative minor\*. You use the same pentatonics over both. Learn them as a pair. In the Am7 context, the C $\Delta$ +4 pentatonic scales are the same as:

Bm PT, Em PT, Am PT/Am 6 PT, F# $\emptyset$  PT

Lydian (#4) is always an option on a major chord. But if you don't want the Lydian alteration, just play C and G major pentatonics. The roots form a V-I in the key of the chord you're playing.

(\* Not C Ionian = A Aeolian (classical major and minor) but C Lydian = A Dorian)

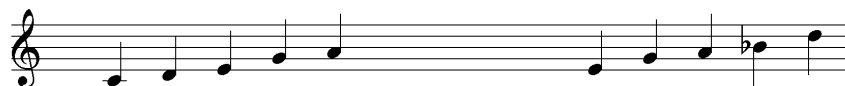
## C. MIXOLYDIAN DOMINANT

The V chord in a ii-V progression  
The plainest possible vanilla dominant

### C7

C major pentatonic

E half-diminished pentatonic



G minor 6 pentatonic



Notes:

*The roots form a I-III-V pattern in the key of the chord you're playing. Note the pentatonic scale qualities:*

*CM PT, E $\emptyset$  PT, Gm6 PT*

## D. HALF-DIMINISHED, ALTERED DOMINANT, TONIC MINOR, LYDIAN DOMINANT

The four most used chords from melodic minor harmony.

Half-diminished, altered dominant and tonic minor form the minor ii-V-I (*but not from the same melodic minor key*)

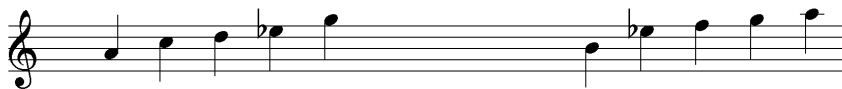
Lydian dominant is a common secondary dominant substitution

Altered dominant and Lydian dominant are the same chord/scale over roots a tritone apart

### A $\emptyset$ / B7alt / C $\Delta$ / F7+11

A half-diminished pentatonic

B whole-tone pentatonic

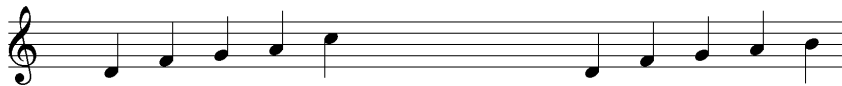


C minor 6<sup>th</sup> pentatonic



D minor pentatonic

D minor 6<sup>th</sup> pentatonic



Notes:

The roots form a I-II-bIII-IV pattern from the root of the half-diminished chord\*. The pentatonic chord qualities of the first three go in the order of a minor ii-V-I – half-diminished, whole-tone, minor 6<sup>th</sup>.

B7alt and F7+11 are exactly the same thing, just over roots a tritone apart. Think of them as two sides of the same coin.

The key to remembering Dorian and Lydian pentatonics was II-V-I-VI. The thinking in melodic minor is ABCD. It's best to learn the chords from each melodic minor key as a group.

Incidentally, Eb $\Delta$ #5 is also part of the same melodic minor family. This chord type is not terribly common and is best investigated in isolation later.

Note that the minor ii-V-I takes chords from three different melodic minor keys:

D $\emptyset$  (from F melodic minor)

G7alt (from Ab melodic minor)

C $\Delta$  (from C melodic minor)

It may (or not!) be helpful to note that the roots of the parent melodic minor keys form a minor triad leading up to the final tonic.

(\* Or more strictly, VI-VII-I-II in the melodic minor key. I-II-bIII-IV from the lowest is probably easier to internalise)

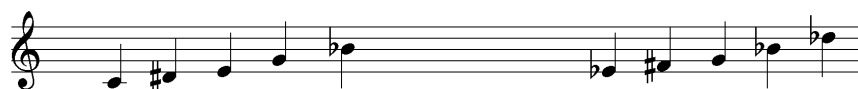
## E. DOMINANT 7b9

Common alteration to the dominant in a V-I context  
Implies the half-step whole-step diminished scale

### C7b9 / Eb7b / F#7b9 / A7b9

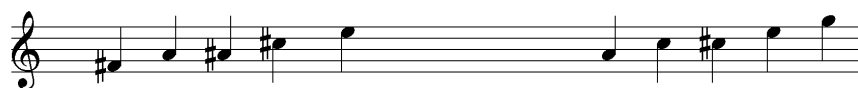
C diminished pentatonic

Eb diminished pentatonic



F# diminished pentatonic

A diminished pentatonic



Notes:

*The roots ascend a diminished chord.*

*C7b9, Eb7b9, F#7b9 and A7b9 are the same thing, just over different roots. Learn them as a family.*

*The diminished pentatonic is formed by lowering the fourth on a minor pentatonic. But you may find it easier to think of as a major 7<sup>th</sup> chord with added #9 (or b3rd)*

*Perhaps more so than the other pentatonic sets, these yield best results when used mixed up together in combination*

## F. SUS DOMINANT

The dominant 7 (Mixolydian) chord but with the natural fourth promoted from an 'avoid' note to a desired chord tone

Can function as a V chord, but the V sus chord contains a ii-V progression in a single chord – C7sus and Gm7/C are the same thing.

A popular tonality in its own right for modal tunes as no 'avoid' notes

### C7sus

Play the same pentatonics as for Gm7 or

C sus pentatonic



Notes:

*The sus pentatonic is formed by raising the 3<sup>rd</sup> on a minor pentatonic. If you compare Cm PT and C sus PT you can see that soloing on a sus chord can be a bit like 'majorising' a minor 11<sup>th</sup> chord.*

*When using the pentatonics from the associated ii chord (Gm7 in this case), Gm PT is probably the most useful sound as it emphasises what you might call the sus chord tones: root, natural 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.*

*Some people reckon that in a sus chord the fourth replaces the third, so you don't play the third. Common practice doesn't bear this out.*

## G. SUSb9 DOMINANT

Usually functions as a V chord.

The V susb9 chord can be seen as a minor ii-V progression in a single chord, so C7susb9 = GØ/C. In this interpretation the susb9 is the minor version of the sus. Phrygian or Locrian modes can also be played over a susb9

### C7susb9

Play the same pentatonics as for GØ

or

Play the same pentatonics as for Bb Dorian minor (for Phrygian sound)

Or

Play the same pentatonics as for Eb Dorian minor (for Locrian sound)

*Notes:*

*What you might call the susb9 chord tones are: root, b9, natural 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. The 3<sup>rd</sup> will be minor 98% of the time (unless you want a Spanish Phrygian sound). This leaves the 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>:*

*Natural 5<sup>th</sup>, natural 13<sup>th</sup> gives you the related half-diminished chord (Gh)*

*Natural 5<sup>th</sup>, b13<sup>th</sup> gives you the Phrygian sound (same as Bb Dorian)*

*b5<sup>th</sup>, b13<sup>th</sup> gives you the Locrian sound (same as Eb Dorian)*

*(For completeness' sake, b5<sup>th</sup>, natural 13<sup>th</sup> would give you the second mode of Bb harmonic minor – another Spanish/Eastern-sounding scale. I haven't heard this used in a susb9 context)*

*To recap, for Phrygian play the same as Dorian minor a step down and for Locrian play the same as for Dorian minor a minor third up.*

*Tricky stuff, I know, but we're right at the outer limits here...*