

Jazz Etude #2

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Diminished Scale

The Diminished scale is what we call a Symmetrical scale and it exists in two versions, Half/Whole and Whole/Half. The **W/H** works over **fully diminished 7th** chords and the **H/W** works over **dominant 7th** chords that include $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, 13 and $\sharp 11$. Both these scales are symmetrical because they are constructed by alternating half steps and whole steps. The diminished scale is unique in that it never resolves, which most other scales do.

G7

1 $\flat 9$ $\sharp 9$ 3 $\sharp 11$ 5 13 7

Gdim

Since there are only three different diminished chords, there are only three different diminished scales. Of all the different scales, the diminished is perhaps the most fun, gratifying and easy scale to learn. This etude is constructed in a symmetrical fashion. It will help you to play the diminished scales ascending and descending. It will also give you practice in minor 7th chord arpeggios.

Practice Hints

1. Work out a fingering that works well for you.
2. Practice the etude in different tempos. Start slow and don't speed up the tempo until you are sure about all the notes. Use a metronome.
3. When you are comfortable with the voicings, try to be more rhythmic with your left hand.
4. Make it musical. Try to play with a nice relaxed swing feel.
5. Analyze the etude and locate the 13th $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$ and $\sharp 11$ scale degrees.

Dorian

Dmin7

Half/Whole Diminished Scale

G13 ($\flat 9$ $\sharp 9$ $\sharp 11$)

Major Scale (Ionian)

CMaj7

C

Dmin7 G13(b9) C⁶ C⁶

This system is in C major. The first measure has a Dmin7 chord. The second measure has a G13(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have a C⁶ chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

F

Gmin7 C7(b9) FMaj7 FMaj7

This system is in F major. The first measure has a Gmin7 chord. The second measure has a C7(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have an FMaj7 chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

B \flat

Cmin9 F13(b9) B \flat ⁶ B \flat ⁶

This system is in B \flat major. The first measure has a Cmin9 chord. The second measure has an F13(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have a B \flat ⁶ chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

E \flat

Fmin9 B \flat 13(b9) E \flat ⁶ E \flat ⁶

This system is in E \flat major. The first measure has an Fmin9 chord. The second measure has a B \flat 13(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have an E \flat ⁶ chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

A \flat

B \flat min9 E \flat 13(b9) A \flat Maj7 A \flat Maj7

This system is in A \flat major. The first measure has a B \flat min9 chord. The second measure has an E \flat 13(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have an A \flat Maj7 chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

D \flat

E \flat min9 A \flat 13(b9) D \flat Maj9 D \flat Maj9

This system is in D \flat major. The first measure has an E \flat min9 chord. The second measure has an A \flat 13(b9) chord. The third and fourth measures have a D \flat Maj9 chord. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

G

Abmin7 Db7(b9) GbMaj7 GbMaj7

B

C#min9 F#13(b9) B⁶ B⁶

E

F#min7 B13(b9) E⁶ E⁶

A

Bmin9 E7(b9) AMaj7 AMaj7

D

Emin7 A13(b9) DMaj9 DMaj9

G

Amin7 D7(b9) GMaj7 GMaj7