

Creating the Bebop-Dorian Scale

Now let's create the bebop-dorian scale step-by-step. First, let's look at how jazz players typically use the dorian scale. Think of these points as guidelines to follow, which can be mixed and matched in unlimited ways as you create your own phrases!

Dorian Scale Guidelines:

🍎 A general rule is **"skip the 6th tone when ascending the dorian scale"**

number notation examples:

1 ↗ 2-b3-4-5-b7

1 ↗ 2-b3-4-5-b7-2-b3 ↘ 2

1 ↗ 2-b3-4-5-b7-2-4 ↘ 2

🍎 When using the dorian scale in a II-V context, the scale tones that should be put on the beat are the 1, b3, 4 and 6; we'll call these these the **"V7 tones"** (of the dorian scale) because they correspond to the chord tones of the V7 chord the dorian is often used over.

standard notation example:

V7 Chd tones=1, b3, 4, 6 of dorian Keep V7 tones on the beat

Note: We'll look more at keeping the V7 tones on the beat later, after we add the bebop chromatic tone.

🍎 **Diatonic arpeggios work very well with the dorian scale**, especially minor triads and 7ths off the tonic and 5th of the dorian scale, maj 7ths off the b3 and the m7b5 off the 6th. We already saw examples of most of these in the "Just Friends Solo." The arps off the 5th and b3rd give superimposed "m9" and "m11" sounds, and the m7b5 arp off the 6th tone gives a superimposed V9 or IIm6 sound:

Try all the inversions of these arps, and in various combinations with each other. Also, try mixing up arps with the dorian scale:

🍎 A common device used with the dorian scale is **"dorian 3rds."** If you practiced your major scales using 3rds back in the beginning of the section on Diatonic Harmony, you already know this sound (if not, go back and practice your 3rds!). Using sequential 3rd intervals in the dorian scale is one way to "turn" a line, or change line direction. From a phrasing standpoint, the 6th (3rd of V7) is usually placed on a downbeat, though the 5th (also a chord tone, though not a V7 tone) can be emphasized also.

A few number notation examples:

$1 \flat 3 - 5 - \flat 7 \searrow 6 - 4 \nearrow 5 \searrow \flat 3 \nearrow 4 \searrow 2$

$1 \nearrow 2 - \flat 3 - 4 - 5 - \flat 7 \searrow 6 - 4 \nearrow 5$

$2 \searrow 1 - \flat 7 - 6 - 4 \nearrow 5 \searrow \flat 3 \nearrow 4$

$\flat 7 \searrow 5 \nearrow 6 \searrow 4 \nearrow 5$ or $\flat 7 \searrow 5 \nearrow 6$

note: you should generally "slur" into the 6th tone

🍏 Here are some common minor lines. These are not specifically "dorian" in nature, but they go well with the dorian scale:

number notation:

$5 \nearrow 1$ (common minor phrase pickup)

$1 \nearrow 2 - \flat 3 - 4 - 5 \searrow \flat 3 - 2 - 1$ (same phrase as in the number notation intro)

$1 \nearrow 2 - \flat 3 - 4 \searrow 2 - 1 - 6 - 4 \nearrow 5$

$\flat 3 \searrow 2 - 1 - 5$

$4 \searrow \flat 3 - 2 - 5$

$5 \searrow 4 - \flat 3 - 5$

$4 \searrow 2 \nearrow \flat 3 \searrow 5$ or $4 \searrow 2 \nearrow \flat 3 \searrow 5$

Before going on, make sure you internalize these dorian guidelines. Then, play the following sample solo. Note the nice lines created when these guidelines are used in various combinations with each other!

🍏 Sample Dorian Modal Vamp Solo:

Note: This example, and most of the examples to follow, use the A bebop-dorian scale, key of G

Once you've studied this sample solo and understand how the dorian guidelines were used to create it, **experiment on your own and look for as many ways to use these ideas as you can.** This is the crucial step if you ultimately want to use them "on the bandstand." Also, as mentioned in the "How to Practice" section, you'll progress faster (and have more fun) if you practice with accompaniment that really makes you *want to play*, such as high quality CD accompaniment or auto-accompaniment software. Finally, in studying this example and in your own practice, *try to realize how a relatively long, flowing 16 bar solo can easily be created from very short phrases and ideas by simply combining them together.* The only thing you have to supply is your own natural musical intuition. Don't worry if it seems hard at first; your intuition will absolutely develop with regular practice and study.