

Harmonic Rhythm Adaptation Principle

All of the examples stated so far work as long as the harmonic rhythm is four beats long where each chord lasts for one bar. Things change when the harmonic rhythm moves faster. When the chords are two beats in duration or a half a bar, we will punctuate the downbeats (beats 1 & 3) with root notes and insert chromatic approach notes above or below the next root note. This is not the only thing you can play, but is the most commonly used device played by all jazz players and most importantly they sound great. Experiment with these combinations:

1). Roots on Beats 1 & 3 with Chromatic Approach Above

Example 1: Roots on Beats 1 & 3 with Chromatic Approach Above. The notation shows a sequence of chords: E⁻⁷, A⁷, D⁻⁷, G⁷, and C^{maj7}. The bass line features root notes on beats 1 and 3, with chromatic approach notes (D, G, C, F, B) on beats 2 and 4.

2). Roots on Beats 1 & 3 with Chromatic Approach Below

Example 2: Roots on Beats 1 & 3 with Chromatic Approach Below. The notation shows a sequence of chords: E⁻⁷, A⁷, D⁻⁷, G⁷, and C^{maj7}. The bass line features root notes on beats 1 and 3, with chromatic approach notes (F, G, C, F, B) on beats 2 and 4.

3). R-Chromatic Above-R-Chromatic Below

Example 3: R-Chromatic Above-R-Chromatic Below. The notation shows a sequence of chords: E⁻⁷, A⁷, D⁻⁷, G⁷, and C^{maj7}. The bass line features root notes on beats 1 and 3, with chromatic approach notes (D, G, C, F, B) on beats 2 and 4.

4). R-Chromatic Below-R-Chromatic Above

Example 4: R-Chromatic Below-R-Chromatic Above. The notation shows a sequence of chords: E⁻⁷, A⁷, D⁻⁷, G⁷, and C^{maj7}. The bass line features root notes on beats 1 and 3, with chromatic approach notes (F, G, C, F, B) on beats 2 and 4.