

Bass Runs, Thirds, Tenths, and Contrary Motion

Dr. Glen Newton, July 13, 2004

Goals

Strengthen the listener's appreciation of the chord progression by the use of bass runs.

Help other instrumentalists anticipate the next chord in unfamiliar songs.

Bass Runs

Bass runs with 4 beats per measure

No change in chord:

Up a 4th or down a 5th:

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Up a 5th or down a 4th:

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Up a major 3rd:

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Down a minor 3rd:

When you have several choices, pick the one that fits best with the melody. *Example: Blue Water Line, measures 5 and 13. The last note of the melody in bar 5 is a C, which clashes with a B in the bass, but the last note of the melody in bar 13 is an A (in a descending line), which is okay with the B in the bass.*

When the melody stays on one note, create interest with a bass run. *Example: Blue Water Line, measure 22 and other places.*

Choose the bass notes to make a smooth ascending or descending line. *Example: Blue Water Line, measure 9, F# is a better choice than D for the bass note.*

Bass runs with 3 beats per measure

No change in chord:

Down a 5th:

Others: Same as with 4 beats, but omit 2nd beat.

Runs in Thirds and Tenths

A tenth is just a third plus an octave.

Thirds: Tenths: Coordinate with the string bass player!

Contrary Motion

Try to make the bass run go the opposite direction from the melody. Play two lines on the guitar going in opposite directions. *Examples: Blue Water Line, measures 6, 12, 14, 22, and 26.*

Blue Water Line

accompaniment by Glen Newton
7/13/04

Guitar

The score is divided into six systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a guitar line (treble clef).
System 1: Measures 1-6. Chords: C, C, C7, F, C. Tablature: 3 3 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 3 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 0 | 3 3 0 2.
System 2: Measures 7-12. Chords: C, D7, G7, C, C7. Tablature: 3 2 | 0 3 | 2 0 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 3 | 3 1 0 3.
System 3: Measures 13-18. Chords: F, C, C, F, G7, C. Tablature: 1 0 2 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 2 | 0 3 | 1 3 | 3 3 0 2.
System 4: Measures 19-24. Chords: C, C. Tablature: 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 2 | 0 3.
System 5: Measures 25-30. Chords: D7, G7, C, C7, F, C. Tablature: 2 0 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 3 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 0 | 3 3 0 2.
System 6: Measures 31-36. Chords: C, Am7, Dm7, G7, C1, C2. Tablature: 3 2 | 0 0 | 0 3 | 3 3 0 2 | 3 3 3 | 3 3 3.

Blue Water Line

illustration of bass runs with
thirds, tenths, and contrary motion

accompaniment by Glen Newton
7/13/04

Guitar

The sheet music is organized into six systems, each consisting of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff, and fret numbers are placed below the bass staff. The music is in 4/4 time and features a variety of bass line techniques including thirds, tenths, and contrary motion.

System 1 (Measures 1-6): Chords: C, C, C7, F, C. Bass line starts with a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3) and continues with various rhythmic patterns.

System 2 (Measures 7-12): Chords: C, D7, G7, C, C7. Bass line includes a triplet of eighth notes (3, 2, 3) and a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3).

System 3 (Measures 13-18): Chords: F, C, C, F, G7, C. Bass line features a triplet of eighth notes (2, 1, 3) and a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3).

System 4 (Measures 19-24): Chords: C, C. Bass line includes a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3) and a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3).

System 5 (Measures 25-30): Chords: D7, G7, C, C7, F, C. Bass line features a triplet of eighth notes (2, 0, 2) and a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3).

System 6 (Measures 31-36): Chords: C, Am7, Dm7, G7, C1., C2. Bass line includes a triplet of eighth notes (3, 2, 2) and a triplet of eighth notes (3, 3, 3).