

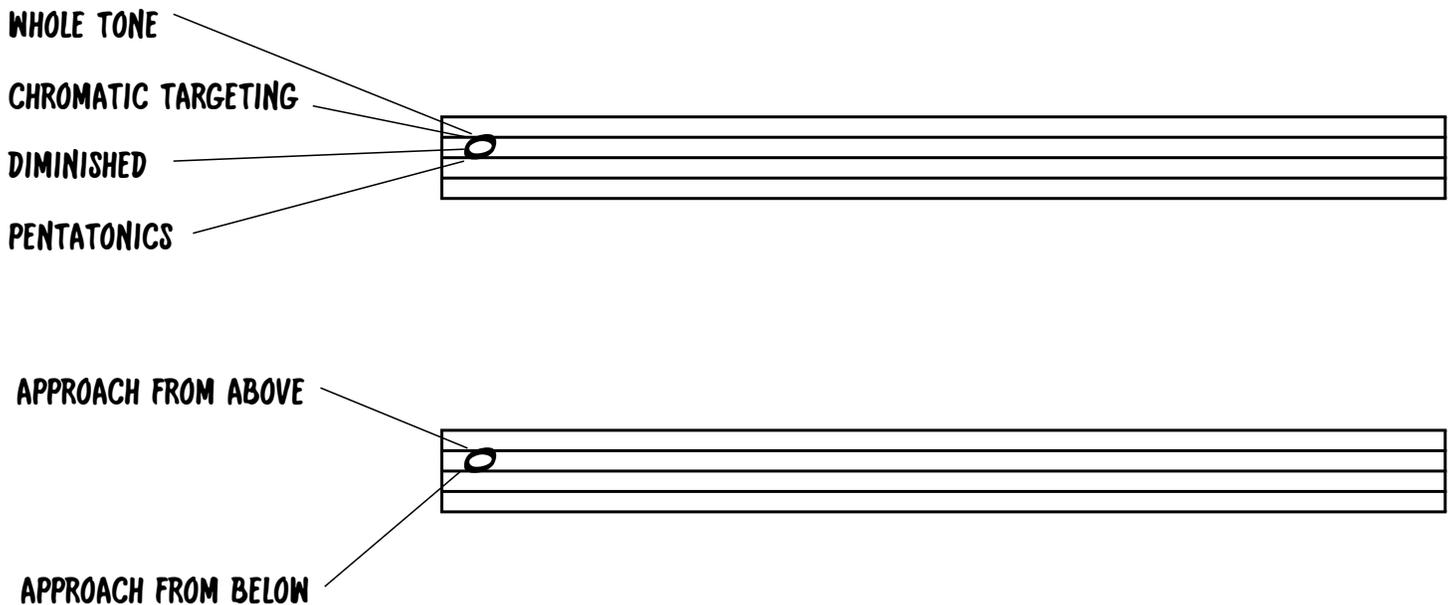


CHAPTER 1

What is Targeting?

Targeting is aiming and moving at a *goal note with purpose*. When improvising, a musician should attempt to convey a message to the audience. Part of the responsibility in delivering that message is to make sure the message is clear with very little rambling. We do this by having distinct targets that we are heading towards. Another analogy would be destination points along a planned road trip (places to refuel, places to eat, etc).

Enclosures, surrounding tones, upper and lower neighbors, etc., mainly define targeting in the academic world. But, I would like to expand your view on targeting.



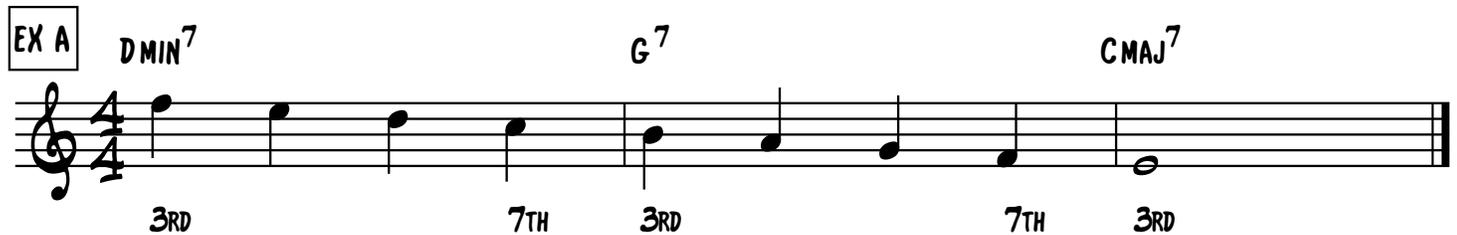
The example above gives you an overview of how I approach targeting and how there are many different ways we can target a note. I am always thinking about, “where am I going and how am I going to get there?” A target can be approached from above or below. This book will uncover some of the different ways that we can get to that targeted note. Music, especially improvisation, is all about moving forward to destination points. We can look at them on the micro level (target points for each measure) or on the macro level (this chorus

will be the climax of the solo). Before we can talk about how we get to a target, we need to look at what makes a good target.

Guide tones, which are the best targets to aim for, are the essential notes that are found within the chord of the moment. These chords are built from the root up, in thirds.



Guide tones are typically referred to as the 3rd and the 7th of the chord. There are many great sources about how to connect guide tones into a moving linear line- also known as Voice Leading (see “Example A” below).



These create great lines that flow from chord to chord and really help define the harmony. In “Example A” above, you will notice three targets (or destination points). The first is the top line “F” in the first measure, the middle line “B” in the second measure and the bottom line “E” in the third measure. In most cases, the targeted note will land on the beginning of a measure. However, to create interest, it is also acceptable to have the targeted note later in the measure to create a delayed resolution.

Great melodic lines do not just target the 3rds and 7ths of chords. Often times they have targeted notes that are the root, the 9th, the 5th, the sharp 11th, etc.



If great melodies utilize these concepts, so should our improvisations. When I am improvising, I expand my choices of guide tones to include at least the skeleton of the chord (root, 3rd, 5th and 7th) and more, if they are available.

There are two traditional ways that you can target a note: diatonically and chromatically. In this book, we will be focusing on chromatic targeting. We can apply these same concepts diatonically, but we need to know which key area (or scale) we are in at that moment. Let us look at one of the most common forms of targeting a note: chromatic targeting.