

## The Fourth Harmonic Environment

The fourth harmonic environment is very similar to the first harmonic environment. It's another one of the most important scales used in contemporary jazz music.

4 • 5 • 6 • 7 1 • 2 • 3 | 4

### Practice tips

Because the fourth harmonic environment is so similar to the first, a good exercise is to practice improvising in these two harmonic environments back to back. Try selecting a jam track from the first harmonic environment and practice improvising for a while, and then switch to a jam track in the fourth harmonic environment and notice what's different.

I don't mean just the technical difference. What I mean is to notice the creative implications. Notice how the slight difference in the two scales affects your melodic possibilities and even inspires you to improvise in a different way. A melody that might seem obvious to you in the first harmonic environment might not even occur to you in the fourth harmonic environment.

But there will also be new melodic possibilities that will *only* occur to you in the fourth harmonic environment, because they are inspired by the precise collection of sounds that you have available to you here. No other harmonic environment contains exactly these same sounds, so this is the only place where you can discover these melodic possibilities.

Try contrasting the first and fourth harmonic environments in your practicing. I think that will help you notice the subtle difference between the two, which will give you a better appreciation of what's special about each one.

### Using the jam tracks

In the accompanying mp3 jam tracks, the filename tells you where to locate note 4 on your instrument. (Remember to transpose this note for your instrument if you play a transposing instrument.)

For example, the jam track in the key of A indicates that note 4 = D for this track. So you just need to go to the note D on your instrument and imagine this to be your note 4. Then use the tonal map drawing above to construct the rest of the scale.

The jam tracks in this collection let you experience the sounds of each harmonic environment in three very different ways:

**Meditative.** This is the best place to start. The meditative tracks give you lots of space for deep contemplation of the sounds. These tracks are ideal for learning the musical lessons contained in each harmonic environment. Play slowly and listen deeply to each note you play. Think of this activity as your opportunity to get to know the raw materials of your art. Later in the other tracks you can focus on creating music with these sounds. But first you should take the time to really get to know each sound, and the meditative tracks are perfect for that.

**Modern.** The modern tracks allow you to hear each harmonic environment in a style that will be more familiar to you. These tracks will help you discover the beautiful melodic possibilities that each harmonic environment offers you. Use these tracks to practice creating your own music, and embrace the creative challenge of finding your own musical voice within these diverse styles.

**Jazz.** The jazz tracks give you an opportunity to really stretch out and follow your imagination. These tracks provide the ideal supporting environment for more intellectual or abstract modal playing. Use these tracks to push the limits of your playing, both creatively and physically.

## Note about transposing for wind instruments

Remember that not all instruments use the same names for the notes. In the tracks, the key listed for each jam track always refers to the concert key. If you play an instrument that is not in concert key, remember to transpose this key name to the corresponding key on your instrument. (If you're not sure how to do this for your instrument, a quick Google search will lead you to many clear explanations.)