

CHAPTER 4: PARALLAX

Style: Scofield Funk-Fusion | **Key:** Bb Dominant | **Tempo:** 108 BPM | **Time:** 4/4

OVERVIEW

"Angular chromatic lines over dominant vamp—pure Scofield DNA."

Parallax channels John Scofield's signature sound: chromatic approach tones, blues-inflected dominant harmony, and that unmistakable funky edge. The title refers to the shifting perspective created by chromatic voice movement—like viewing an object from slightly different angles. Every note choice creates harmonic "displacement" that resolves just in time.

Playing Tip: Dig in with a slightly dirty tone. This tune needs attitude, not pristine clarity.

THE FORM

32-bar form over dominant vamp:

Section 1 - Intro (Bars 1-8):

Bb7	Bb7	Eb7	F7	
Bb7	Bb7	Eb7	Bb7	

Section 2 - Triad Pair Solo (Bars 9-16):

Bb7	Bb7	Eb7	Bb7	
Gm7	Cm7	F7	Bb7	

Section 3 - Quartal Chord Melody (Bars 17-24):

Bb7	Bb7	Eb7	Gm7	
Eø7	Cm7	F7	Bb7	

Section 4 - Outro (Bars 25-32):

Bb7	Bb7	Eb7	F7	
Bb7	Eb7	Gm7	Bb7	

Key Harmonic Features

1. **Dominant vamp:** Bb7 as the tonal center with chromatic approach
 2. **Blues I-IV:** Bb7 to Eb7 movement creates classic tension
 3. **Chromatic target tones:** G# to G, C# to C, E to Eb throughout
 4. **Quartal structures:** Fourth-based voicings in the chord melody section
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SCALE PALETTE

Chord	Primary Scale	Chromatic Targets
Bb7	Bb Mixolydian	G# → G, E → Eb
Eb7	Eb Mixolydian	C# → C, B → Bb
F7	F Mixolydian / F Altered	F# → F, Gb → F
Gm7	G Dorian	F# → F, C# → D
Cm7	C Dorian	B → Bb, F# → G
Eø7	E Locrian	Eb → E, A → Bb

The Scofield Chromatic Sound

Scofield's language features: - **Half-step approach** from above and below to chord tones - **Tritone substitution** thinking (E7 for Bb7) - **Blues bends** and grace notes - **Rhythmic displacement**—accents on the "and" of beats

TRIAD PAIR VOCABULARY

Chord	Stable Triad	Color Triad	Chromatic Effect
Bb7	Bb Major	C Minor	9th tension, Dorian blend
Bb7	Bb Major	E Major	Tritone sub color (G#)
Eb7	Eb Major	F Minor	9th and 11th extension
F7	F Major	Db Major	b13, altered dominant
Gm7	G Minor	A Minor	Dorian 9th color

Chromatic Cells

Practice these chromatic cells over Bb7:

Cell 1: G# - G - F - D (approach to 6th, down to 3rd)
 Cell 2: E - Eb - D - Bb (approach to 4th, down to root)
 Cell 3: C# - C - Bb - Ab (approach to 9th, chromatic descent)

THE THREE CHORUSES

Chorus 1: Chromatic Lines (Version A)

Concept: Scofield-style chromatic approach to chord tones

- **Bars 1-4:** Eighth-note lines with G# → G and C# → C approaches
- **Bars 5-8:** Descending chromatic lines E → Eb → D → C#
- **Bars 9-12:** Triad pairs with chromatic connectors
- **Bars 13-16:** Build to climax on F7 altered

Dynamic Curve:

mf ——— f ——— ff ——— mf
 Bar 1 Bar 8 Bar 12 Bar 16

Chorus 2: Quartal Voicings (Version B)

Concept: Fourth-based chord melody with chromatic bass movement

- **Quartal stacks:** Bb-Eb-Ab (three fourths)
- **Parallel motion:** Move quartal shapes chromatically
- **Target resolution:** Chromatic movement resolves to strong beats

Quartal Shapes:

Bar	Shape	Notes	Effect
:---:	:---	:---	:---
17	Bb-Eb-G#	Root, 4, #6	Tension stack
18	C-G-D	9, 6, 3	Resolution
19	Eb-Ab-C#	#4, b7, #9	Altered color
20	F-C-G	5, 9, 6	Resolution

Chorus 3: Rhythmic Displacement (Version C)

Concept: Off-beat accents and syncopated phrasing

The Scofield Accent Pattern: - Accent the "and" of beats 2 and 4 - Ghost notes on downbeats - Long notes land on weak beats, short notes on strong beats

Texture Map:

Section	Rhythm Feel	Accent Pattern
Bars 25-26	Syncopated eighths	& of 2, & of 4
Bars 27-28	Triplet feel	Middle triplet accent
Bars 29-30	Long tones	Whole notes on "&"
Bars 31-32	Resolution	Strong downbeat ending

VOICING REFERENCE

Dominant Voicings

Bb7:	6-x-6-7-6-x (shell with 9)
Bb7#9:	6-x-6-7-7-x (Hendrix chord)
Eb7:	x-6-5-6-8-x (drop 2 inversion)
F7alt:	x-8-7-8-9-x (altered tensions)

Quartal Voicings

Bb quartal: 6-x-7-7-x-x (Bb-Eb-Ab)
C quartal: 8-x-9-9-x-x (C-F-Bb)
Eb quartal: x-6-7-7-x-x (Eb-Ab-Db)

Chromatic Approach Voicings

G#-G slide: 4-x-4-4-x-x → 3-x-3-3-x-x
E-Eb slide: x-7-6-7-x-x → x-6-5-6-x-x

TECHNIQUE: CHROMATIC APPROACH

The Half-Step Approach

1. Identify the chord tone target (root, 3rd, 5th, 7th)
2. Approach from a half step above or below
3. Resolve on a strong beat (or the "&" for Scofield feel)
4. Use grace notes for blues flavor

Approach Patterns

- **Above approach:** C# → C, G# → G, E → Eb
- **Below approach:** A → Bb, Db → D, Gb → G
- **Enclosure:** C# - A - Bb (above, below, target)

Practice Exercise

| Bb7 (target: D) |
Approach from above: Eb - D
Approach from below: C# - D
Enclosure: Eb - C# - D (above - below - target)

PRACTICE ROUTINE

Week 1: Chromatic Targets

- [] Practice chromatic approach to each chord tone of Bb7
- [] Drill the G# → G and E → Eb movements
- [] Learn Version A at 80 BPM

Week 2: Triad Pairs

- [] Master Bb/Cm and Eb/Fm triad pairs
- [] Practice tritone substitution: E major over Bb7
- [] Work on Version B with quartal shapes

Week 3: Rhythmic Feel

- [] Practice accenting the "&" of beats
- [] Drill syncopated eighth-note patterns
- [] Learn Version C with proper feel

Week 4: Integration

- [] Play through all three choruses
- [] Add your own chromatic approach ideas
- [] Record and evaluate for "Scofield-ness"

LISTENING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **John Scofield** — *A Go Go* (funky chromatic mastery)
 2. **John Scofield** — *Uberjam* (modern Sco sound)
 3. **John Scofield** — *Blue Matter* (classic trio with chromatic lines)
 4. **Pat Metheny** — *Question and Answer* (chromatic language)
 5. **Miles Davis** — *Star People* (Scofield's chromatic vocabulary in context)
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TONE TIPS

For Parallax: - **Slight overdrive**: Edge-of-breakup, not fully distorted - **Compression**: Light, for sustain on chromatic lines - **Chorus**: Optional, very subtle - **EQ**: Mid-forward, slight scoop in low-mids for clarity

COMMON PITFALLS

1. **Resolving too early**: Let chromatic tension hang before resolving
 2. **Losing the beat**: Chromatic lines must still groove
 3. **Too clean**: This tune needs grit and attitude
 4. **Ignoring dynamics**: Build and release throughout
 5. **Overcomplicating**: Sometimes one chromatic note is enough
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THE PARALLAX CONCEPT

The title refers to multiple perspectives: 1. **Harmonic:** The same chord (Bb7) viewed through different chromatic lenses 2. **Melodic:** Target notes approached from multiple angles 3. **Rhythmic:** The same phrase felt from different beat positions 4. **Tonal:** Dominant sound that never quite resolves

When playing this piece, imagine shifting your viewpoint slightly with each phrase—same destination, different path.

SELF-EVALUATION

- [] Are my chromatic approaches resolving convincingly?
 - [] Does the tune groove despite the chromaticism?
 - [] Am I accenting the weak beats properly?
 - [] Can I hear the blues underneath all the extensions?
 - [] Does it sound like Scofield, not just chromatic exercises?
 - [] Is there attitude in my playing?
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← **Orbit** | **Next: First Light** →
