

Soloing Over a Dominant 7th Chord

Tired of playing the same worn out pentatonic licks? Open up some new sounds by viewing 7th chords in a different way. Seventh chords, also called "dominant 7th" chords, like C7, F7, or Eb7, are everywhere in guitar music, so learning to solo over them is a skill that is golden!

This lesson covers the mixolydian mode and how it can be used over a dominant 7th chord to get some great sounds. Grab your guitar and let's get started!

Mixolydian Madness

Dominant 7th chords like an F7 or Ab7 use the formula 1-3-5-b7. So, for example, a C7 would have the tones C-E-G-Bb, which correspond to the 1-3-5-b7 tones of a C major scale.

Dominant 7th chords can also be viewed by how they function harmonically. In our example, a C7 can also be thought of as the V7 (five) chord in the key of F. So, an F major scale would work perfectly well over a C7 chord.

If you play an F major scale but start on the C note, you get a unique sounding combination of notes called the Mixolydian Mode.

C7

F Major Scale
(starting & ending on C - the 5th step of the F scale)

T
A
B

3 0 2 3 0 2 3 1

Playing Tip

Playing in the Mixolydian mode is a great way to solo over any dominant 7th chord.

Soloing Practice

You need to do a bit of musical math in order to determine what scale to use over a particular chord. Ask yourself, "In what key does this dominant 7th chord appear as the V7 (five) chord?"

For example, to solo over an E7, ask yourself, "What key has an E7 as the V chord?" The answer is the key of A. In the key of A, the E7 appears as the five chord.

Another simple way to calculate this is to count 4 steps up from the dominant 7th chord.

So, over an E7 chord, you can play anything in the key of A, provided you emphasize the tones in the E7 chord.

Practice soloing over dominant 7th chords using the mixolydian scale. You'll be amazed at how easy it is to get a "bluesy" sound.

For great sounding practice tracks check out <http://www.coffeebreakgrooves.com>. These are 15 minute long practice tracks over a defined chord progression. This gives you plenty of time to work out soloing ideas over a great sounding track.

For an in-depth lesson on Modes, check out the Skills House lesson called [Guitar Modes: An Easier Way](#).

For step-by-step quality guitar instruction check out the award winning Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar course at www.LearnAndMaster.com and the lessons section at www.gibson.com for all the help you need to become the player you want to be!



Steve Krenz

*As an educator, Steve is best known for the top-selling guitar instruction course, **Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar** that received the 2011 Acoustic Guitar Magazine Player's Choice Award for Best Instructional Material. As a professional guitarist in Nashville, Steve's broad playing experience includes playing guitar with a symphony orchestra, to jazz big bands, to performing with numerous Grammy-winning artists like Donna Summer, Michael W. Smith, Bryan White, The Fifth Dimension, Israel Houghton, Tommy Sims and American Idol finalist Melinda Doolittle.*

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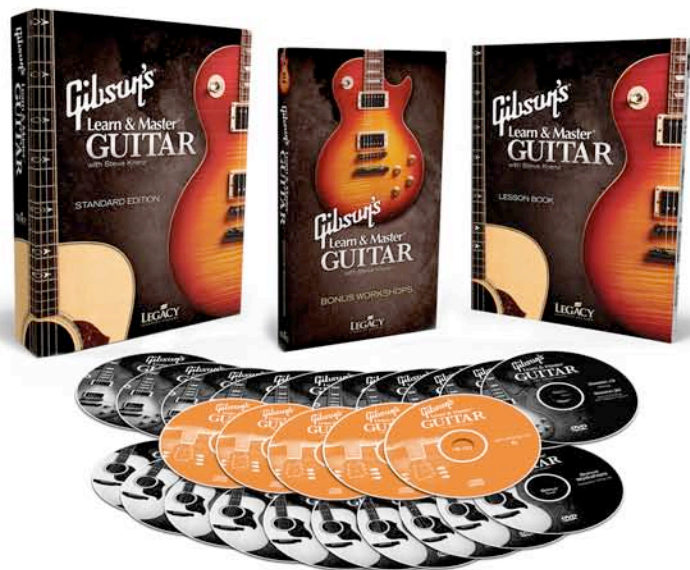
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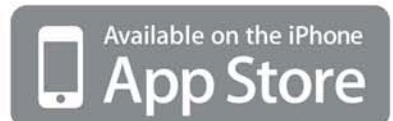
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