

# TUNE OF THE MONTH CHALLENGE

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# AUTUMN LEAVES





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# about the class

Introducing the tonebase trumpet Tune of the Month Challenge! 🎺🎵

Each month, dive into a new jazz standard with the help of tonebase trumpet lead Ethan Chilton. Together, you'll learn about melody, harmony, form, approaches to improvisation, and much more. To kick off the November 2024 challenge, we present Autumn Leaves, one of the most popular and approachable standards.

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*If you have any corrections, comments, or critiques relating to this workbook, please send them to [ethan@tonebase.co](mailto:ethan@tonebase.co). We strive to deliver the highest quality enrichment experience. Thank you!*

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# Autumn Leaves

Joseph Kosma

**A**

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) 1. E<sup>7</sup>(b13) Am<sup>7</sup>

2. E<sup>7</sup>(b13) Am<sup>7</sup>

**B**

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup>

**C**

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am<sup>7</sup> Ab<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup> Gb<sup>7</sup>

Fmaj<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am

# Autumn Leaves (Analysis)

Joseph Kosma

**A** A minor: ii-V-I to relative major (III) continued root mvt. by fourth

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Fmaj7

$\flat VI^A$

minor ii-V-i

Bm7(b5) 1. E7(b13) Am7

ii V i

2. E7(b13) Am7

V i

**B** minor ii-V-i

Bm7(b5) E7(b9) Am

ii V i

ii-V-I to relative major (III)

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

ii V i

**C** minor ii-V-i chromatic walkdown

Bm7(b5) E7(b9) Am7 Ab7 Gm7 Gb7

ii V i

Fmaj7 E7(b9) Am

$\flat VI^A$  V i

# Autumn Leaves (Chord Tone Arpeggios)

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) 1. E<sup>7</sup>(b13) Am<sup>7</sup>

2. E<sup>7</sup>(b13) Am<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am<sup>7</sup>

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup>

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b5) E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am<sup>7</sup> Ab<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup> Gb<sup>7</sup>

Fmaj<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup>(b9) Am



# Autumn Leaves (Chord-Scales)

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup> Fmaj<sup>7</sup>

D dorian G mixolydian C major F major

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>5</sup>) E<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>13</sup>) Am<sup>7</sup>

A harmonic minor A melodic minor A dorian

E<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>13</sup>) Am<sup>7</sup>

A melodic minor A dorian

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>5</sup>) E<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>9</sup>) Am<sup>7</sup>

A harmonic minor A harmonic minor A dorian

Dm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> Cmaj<sup>7</sup>

D dorian G mixolydian C major

Bm<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>5</sup>) E<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>9</sup>) Am<sup>7</sup> A<sup>b</sup>7 Gm<sup>7</sup> G<sup>b</sup>7

A harmonic minor A harmonic minor A dorian A<sup>b</sup> mixolydian G dorian G<sup>b</sup> mixolydian

Fmaj<sup>7</sup> E<sup>7</sup>(b<sup>9</sup>) Am<sup>7</sup>

F major A harmonic minor A dorian

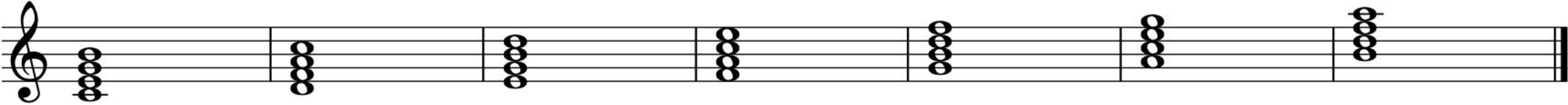
# Useful Theory Before You Begin

Forms in jazz are usually analyzed using letters A, B, C, etc. The form for Autumn Leaves is AABC, telling us there is an A section that occurs twice, and then two distinct sections B and C which each occur once.

## What is a ii-V-I Progression?

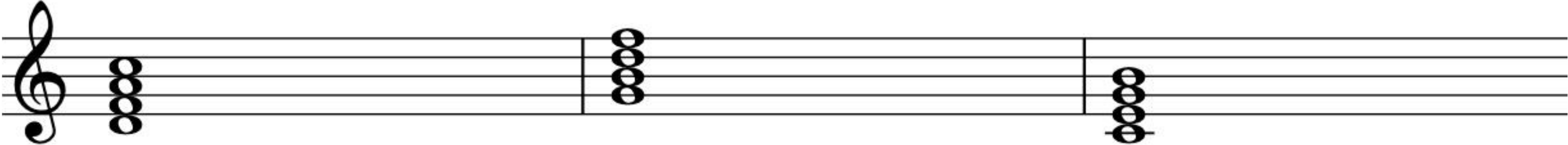
Consider exploring Stuart Mack's Jazz Fundamentals course on tonebase for more on what a ii-V-I progression is. What follows here is a brief explanation.

Begin with a major scale, and assign each note in the scale a numeral from i to vii. Then, stack thirds above each note to form a seventh chord, using only notes from the major scale. These are our diatonic seventh chords. Each chord naturally has a different quality, or pattern of half steps and whole steps between the notes. I and IV are major seventh chords, V is a dominant seventh, while ii, iii, and vi are minor seventh chords. vii is a half-diminished seventh chord.



C major (I)    D minor (ii)    E minor (iii)    F major (IV)    G dominant (V)    A minor (vi)    B half-diminished (vii)

One of the most common chord progressions in jazz is the ii-V-I progression. This is a sequence of chords going from a minor ii, to a dominant V, to a major I. In our analysis of Autumn Leaves, I identified this pattern every time it appears in various keys.

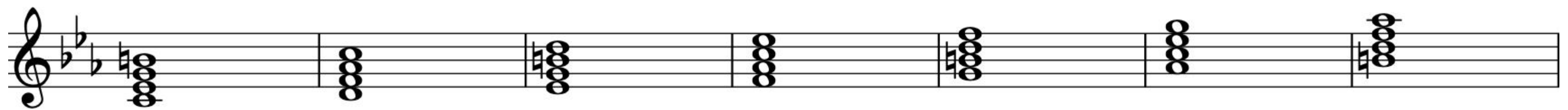


D minor (ii)    G dominant (V)    C major (I)

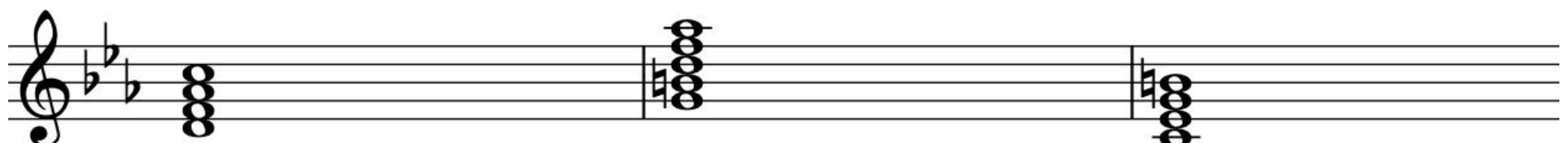


# What is a Minor ii-V-I Progression?

We just looked at the major ii-V-I, or a ii-V-I built from a major scale. Autumn Leaves also includes the minor ii-V-I, which is built from the harmonic minor scale. Below is an engraving showing the qualities of chords built on these scale degrees:



A ii chord in a minor ii-V-I is half diminished, the V is dominant (with a flattened ninth if you choose to go that high), and the i is a minor-major seventh chord. Note where minor ii-V-I progressions occur in Autumn Leaves.



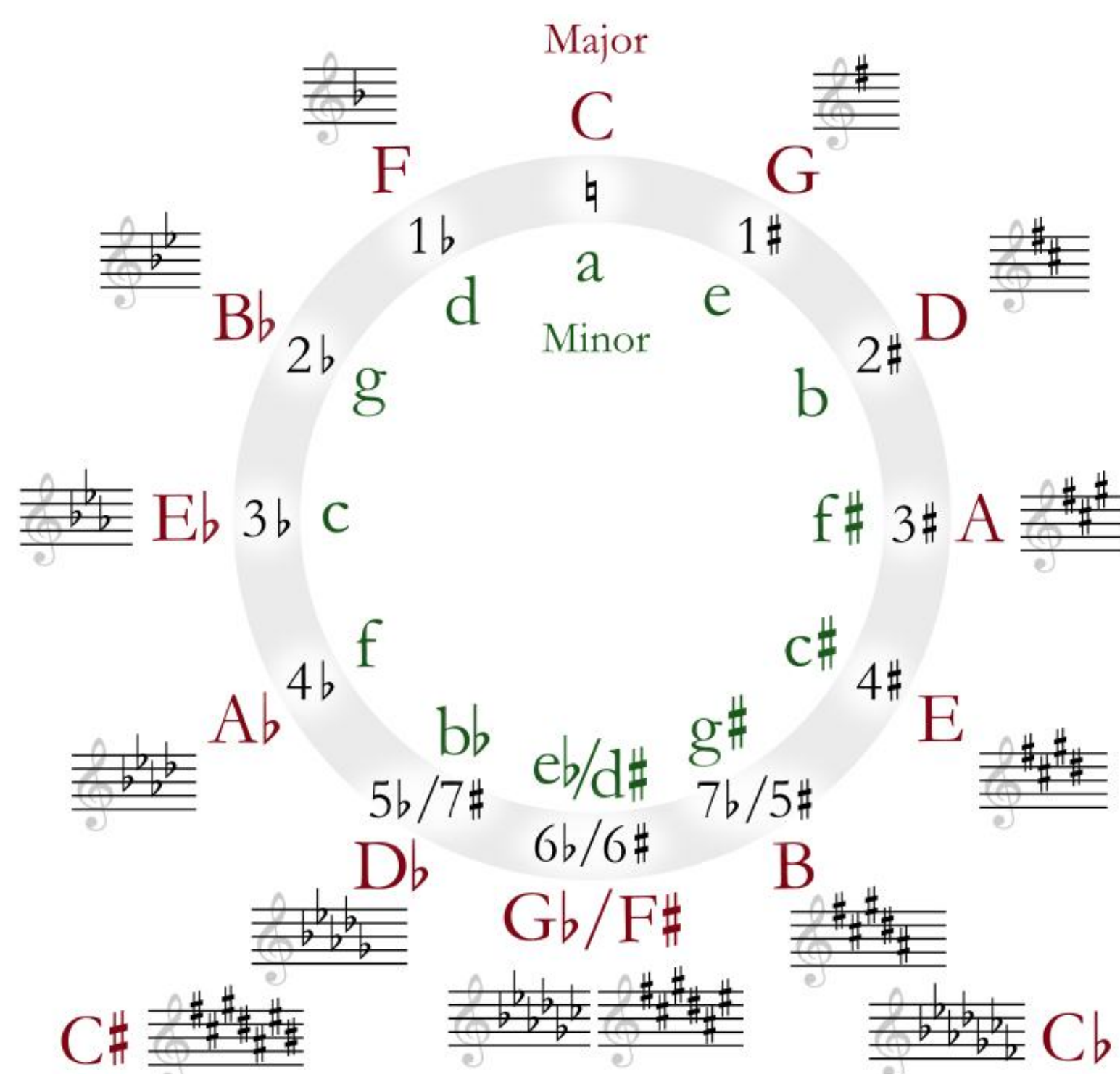
D half-diminished (ii)  
D-7<sup>b</sup>5

G dominant  
with <sup>b</sup>9 (V) G7<sup>b</sup>9

C minor-major (i)

# Circle of Fifths

The circle of fifths is a fundamental concept in music theory. It looks like a wheel, and it shows how keys are related to one another. Moving clockwise, the keys move in perfect fifths (C, G, D, A, etc.) Moving counter-clockwise, the keys move in perfect fourths.





One reason that ii-V-I progressions occur so often is that the root pitches of these chords follow the circle of fifths. If we take a ii-V-I in C, we have the root notes D, G, and C. We can find these notes on the circle of fifths if we start on D and move counter-clockwise (going “down” a fifth). Harmonic progressions that move down a fifth, or up a fourth, tend to feel as if they have forward momentum. Take this passage from Autumn Leaves, and notice how the roots of these six chords move up in fourths, or down in fifths (B, E, A, D, G, C):

The image displays two musical staves in treble clef, illustrating harmonic progressions from the song "Autumn Leaves".

The first staff is labeled "B minor ii-V-i" in red. It shows a progression of three chords: Bm7(b5) (labeled "ii"), E7(b9) (labeled "V"), and Am (labeled "i"). The notes are: Bm7(b5) (B, D, F, A), E7(b9) (E, G, B, D, F), and Am (A, C, E). The notes are connected by a slur, indicating they are part of a single melodic line.

The second staff is labeled "ii-V-I to relative major (III)" in blue. It shows a progression of three chords: Dm7 (labeled "ii"), G7 (labeled "V"), and Cmaj7 (labeled "i"). The notes are: Dm7 (D, F, A, C), G7 (G, B, D, F), and Cmaj7 (C, E, G, B). The notes are connected by a slur, indicating they are part of a single melodic line.

## How to Learn Autumn Leaves

This composition is usually played as a medium swing tune, though it can also be heard frequently as a ballad.

### Step 1: Learn the Melody

To ensure you never forget this melody again, follow this process:

- Listen to it - dozens of times in different version
- Sing it - away from the instrument
- Play it - on your instrument dozens of times!
- *Repeat as long as it takes!*

Use the following parameters to help you personalize the melody:

- time
- ornamentation
- articulation
- vibrato
- rubato
- improvisation

## Step 2: Learn the Changes

First, reference the **Analysis** on page 2. Study the progression and attempt to memorize the sequence of chords using Roman Numerals. Listen to the piece many times to internalize the sound of the progression. Practice with your instrument by playing through just the roots in time, and attempt to do so by memory.

Move on to the **Chord Tone Arpeggios** on page 3. These are the 1, 3, 5, and 7 of every chord, and they are very important in defining the sound of each chord. Attempt to play these by memory, thinking not of the individual pitches but of the harmonic movement.

Finally, on page 4, play through the **Chord Scales**. Play through these in and out of time, memorizing the sound of each chord. Chord scales in this piece are fairly simple. Minor seventh chords use the dorian mode, dominant sevenths use the mixolydian mode, and major sevenths use the major or Ionian mode.

The only other chord types to explain are contained within the minor ii-V-I. Since the ii and V chords are derived from the harmonic minor scale, jazz musicians typically play the harmonic minor scale of the i over both the ii and the V. This means that over B-7<sup>b</sup>5 and E7<sup>b</sup>9, we play the notes of A harmonic minor. Note that when E7 does not have a <sup>b</sup>9, we play mixolydian, as if it were a regular dominant chord.



## Step 3: Practice

Take lots of choruses of solo, trying many different concepts! Begin with all the processes in Step 2. Then, there are three concepts you can try to implement over the tune:

- **Beginner:** Groove and Swing
  - Pick one or two notes for each chord, and try to swing your butt off!
- **Intermediate:** Enclosures
  - Review the concept of Enclosures from the video lesson and try to implement these into your playing.
- **Advanced:** Play triplets
  - To vary your rhythmic sound, practice playing quarter-note and eighth-note triplets over this tune.

## Final Steps

Listen to Ethan's improvisation over Autumn Leaves on the forum. Using the backing track audio on the forums, record and post your own solo choruses over Autumn Leaves!

**[Click here to return to the Tune of the Month forum page and get started!](#)**