Using 7b9 and Diminished Chords over V

Modern Guitar Harmony

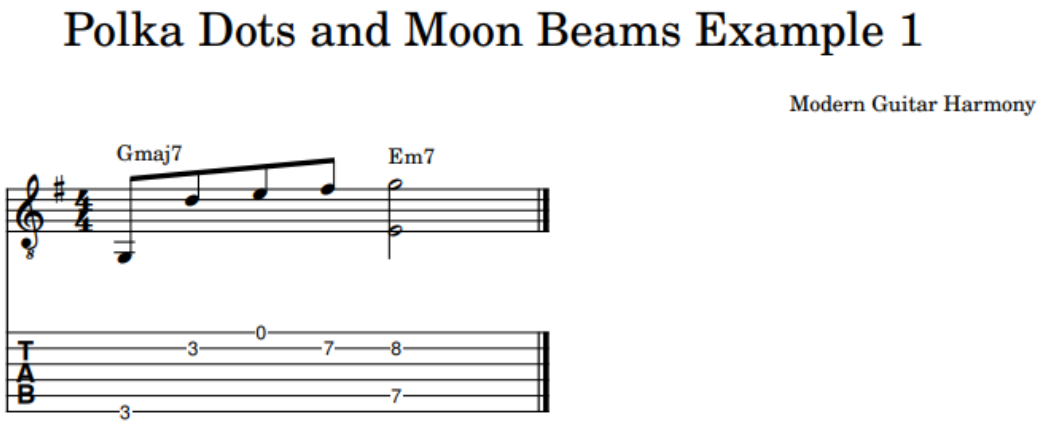
A great way to beautify your playing is to use 7b9 or diminished chords as subs for the vanilla V7 chord.

The 7b9 chord is an altered chord and provides more tension than the standard dominant 7 chord.

The diminished chord also contains the b9. It also contains the leading tone of the target chord.

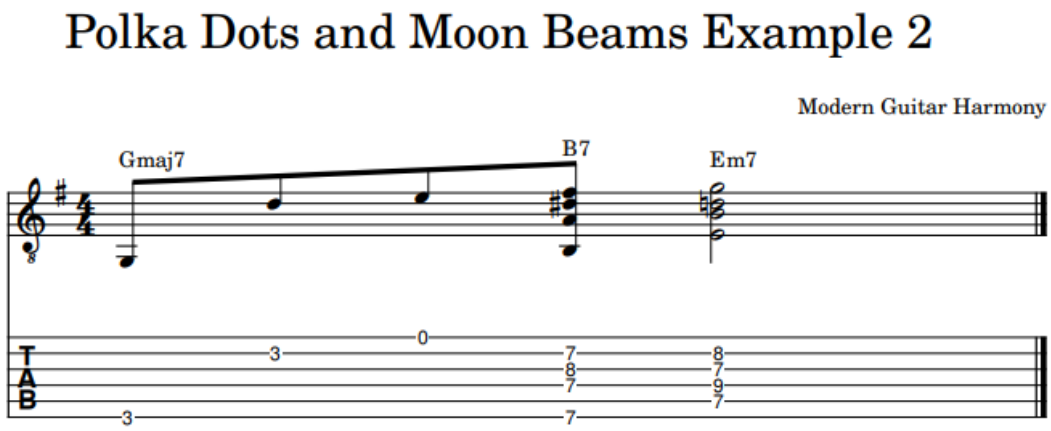
Let's have a look at Polka Dots and Moon Beams.

The standard chords and melody are as follows.

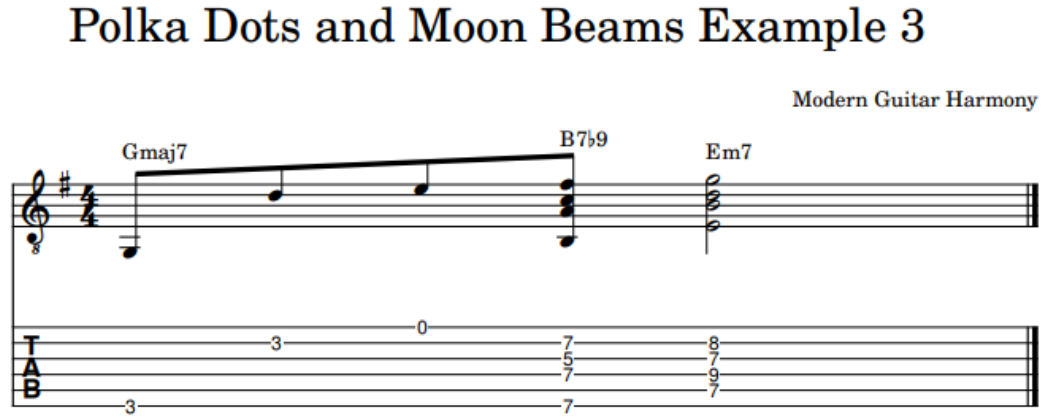


You can steal from classical guitar pedogagy and play the E melody note as an open string. This gives you time to move to the chords which will fall on melody notes F# and G.

As mentioned in the video, you can harmonize the F# melody note with a standard B7 chord as B7 is the V chord of Em.



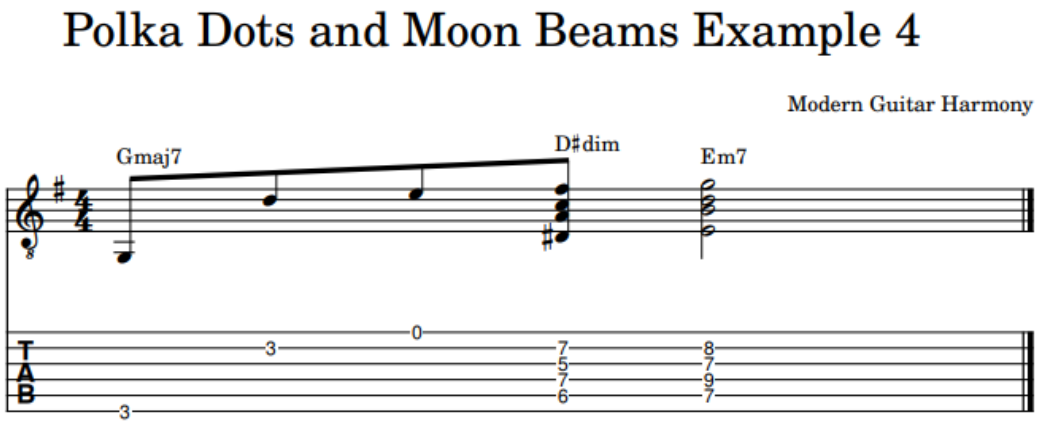
This sounds good and works nicely. However you can certainly make this cadence more beautiful by playing a B7(b9) chord in place of the B7.



Doesn't that sound much better? The C in the middle voice adds dissonance which needs to be resolved.

From now on, instead of playing a vanilla dominant 7 chord as the V chord, try playing a 7(b9) chord instead. In most cases this will sound much better.

You can make this cadence sound even more beautiful by playing the 3rd of B7(b9) in the bass.



The 3rd of B is D# which happens to be the leading tone of the Em chord.

By placing the 3rd in the bass you are now playing a diminished chord. You can hear on the video how much better than a B7 the D# diminished chord sounds.

Try it yourself!

Sounds great doesn't it?

As always thank you for your support,

Marc

MGH
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