



## The Tritone Substitution

The tritone substitution is a harmonic device which is commonly used in jazz music. In a major II V I chord sequence in C major, the chords would be -

**Dm7 G7 Cmaj7**

If we use a tritone substitution, we replace the V chord (G7) with a dominant 7 chord a tritone (3 tones) away (Db7). The new chord sequence would be -

**Dm7 Db7 Cmaj7**

Using the tritone substitution gives the bass line a chromatic movement and creates opportunities for interesting melodic patterns. We can see why the tritone substitution works effectively by analysing the G7 chord and its replacement, the Db7 chord. In jazz, the V chord in a major II V I sequence is often given extra tension by adding the b9 and #11 extensions. We can see below that the V chord with these extensions has the same notes as its tritone replacement with the same extensions. The corresponding notes are colour coded for clarity.

G7b9#11 - **G** B D **F** Ab C#

Db7b9#11 - Db **F** Ab Cb D **G**