

Piano Comping **Savvy** for non-piano players

(If your main axe isn't a keyboard.)



by Michael Lake

Good for you on investing in building your musicianship and improvisation abilities through developing your keyboard comping skills! Being more familiar keys will make you a better musician.

I used the word, *piano* in the name because the word *keyboard* isn't as snappy. Whether you have a 49 key MIDI keyboard, a hammond B-3, a Steinway or vibes, you can make the most of this course. It is not intended to turn you into a great jazz pianist, but rather to give you a basic command of the most visually intuitive musical instrument, the keyboard. Unlike the trumpet, sax or trombone, the keyboard allows you to construct, visualize, and better hear the intricacy of jazz harmony. In the end, you'll hear more and as a result, be a better improviser and musician.

The video is a companion to this eBook. With the video, I'm trying to give you a more personal relationship to the material, hoping that it will motivate and guide you. The eBook contains the written out two, three, and four note voicings and the exercises that will measure and develop your comping fluency.

If you have the skills to dive directly into four note voicings, by all means, focus on the last part of this video and the associated exercises. Realize, however, that the earlier parts of this eBook and video contain some helpful tips on jazz harmony and note choices not included in the latter parts.

Pages four and five contain the voicings I use throughout much of this course. While there is no one way to voice a chord, these have worked well for me and others and will provide you with a great foundation. Page four illustrates the two, three and four notes voicings in a major II-V-I progression. Page five illustrates the various voicings in a minor II-V-I.

Page six contains voicings for the altered chords you will run into most often. Since these chords generally require at least three notes, I have illustrated them in three and four note variations. While chord alterations come in many forms, these four will reflect most of the common altered chords.



The full voicings are written out in every key at the end of each of the three sections. Use the written material as little as you can and strive to depend more on your ear than your eye.

One last thought... This is not primarily a book on theory. There are many available including *The Jazz Harmony Book* by David Berkman and *The Berklee Book of Jazz Harmony* by Joe Mulholland and Tom Hojnacki which I highly recommend. Use these materials to constantly improve your knowledge of the physics (theory) of music.

Those authors might rightly so take issue with some of the generalizations I've made in this book or with some of my chord notations. Keep in mind that this course is meant to improve your comping so that you can have more fun with the keyboard. I've tried to keep things simple in order to get you on your way quickly.

Music and jazz in particular have more exceptions than hard rules. All that matters is that you sound like you want to sound. Hundreds of great books can be found to take your comping skills further yet, so I wish you the best of luck on your journey!

Michael Lake

November, 2017

Chord voicings for a II-V-I progression in C major

The following two, three and four note voicings are built off the start of using only the third and the seventh of each chord. For the three note voicings, either the fifth or ninth are added. For the four note voicings, both the third and ninth can be added or the 11th and 13th as options.

TWO NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MAJ}7

This musical notation shows a II-V-I progression in C major using two-note right hand voicings. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The progression consists of four measures. The first measure is D^{MIN}7, with a right hand voicing of F#4 and C5, and a left hand bass note of D2. The second measure is G⁷, with a right hand voicing of B4 and F#5, and a left hand bass note of G2. The third and fourth measures are C^{MAJ}7, with a right hand voicing of E4 and Bb5, and a left hand bass note of C2. A slur connects the right hand notes of the third and fourth measures, and another slur connects the left hand notes of the third and fourth measures.

THREE NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MAJ}7

This musical notation shows a II-V-I progression in C major using three-note right hand voicings. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The progression consists of four measures. The first measure is D^{MIN}7, with a right hand voicing of F#4, A4, and C5, and a left hand bass note of D2. The second measure is G⁷, with a right hand voicing of B4, D5, and F#5, and a left hand bass note of G2. The third and fourth measures are C^{MAJ}7, with a right hand voicing of E4, G4, and Bb5, and a left hand bass note of C2. A slur connects the right hand notes of the third and fourth measures, and another slur connects the left hand notes of the third and fourth measures.

FOUR NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MAJ}7

This musical notation shows a II-V-I progression in C major using four-note right hand voicings. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The progression consists of four measures. The first measure is D^{MIN}7, with a right hand voicing of F#4, A4, Bb4, and C5, and a left hand bass note of D2. The second measure is G⁷, with a right hand voicing of B4, D5, E5, and F#5, and a left hand bass note of G2. The third and fourth measures are C^{MAJ}7, with a right hand voicing of E4, G4, A4, and Bb5, and a left hand bass note of C2. A slur connects the right hand notes of the third and fourth measures, and another slur connects the left hand notes of the third and fourth measures.

Chord voicings for a II-V-I progression in C minor

As with the progressions on the previous page, each of these build on the previous. Unlike the major II-V-I progressions, the two note voicings do not start with the third and seventh since the character of the half diminished chord is derived from the flat five (Bb). The same is true for the A7 flat 9. The flat nine is the Bb. I have, however, used only the third and the seventh for the D minor 7.

TWO NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

E $\emptyset$ **A7(b9)** **D^{MIN}7**

This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C minor. The first measure contains the E $\emptyset$ chord (Bb and G). The second measure contains the A7(b9) chord (Bb and G#). The third and fourth measures contain the D^{MIN}7 chord (F and C), with a slur connecting the two measures. The bass line consists of a single note, C, in the first measure, followed by a whole note C in the second measure, and a half note C in the third and fourth measures.

THREE NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

E $\emptyset$ **A7(b9)** **D^{MIN}7**

This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C minor. The first measure contains the E $\emptyset$ chord (Bb, G, and Eb). The second measure contains the A7(b9) chord (Bb, G#, and Eb). The third and fourth measures contain the D^{MIN}7 chord (F, C, and Ab), with a slur connecting the two measures. The bass line consists of a single note, C, in the first measure, followed by a whole note C in the second measure, and a half note C in the third and fourth measures.

FOUR NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

E $\emptyset$ **A7(b9)** **D^{MIN}7**

This musical example shows a four-measure progression in C minor. The first measure contains the E $\emptyset$ chord (Bb, G, Eb, and D). The second measure contains the A7(b9) chord (Bb, G#, Eb, and D). The third and fourth measures contain the D^{MIN}7 chord (F, C, Ab, and Bb), with a slur connecting the two measures. The bass line consists of a single note, C, in the first measure, followed by a whole note C in the second measure, and a half note C in the third and fourth measures.

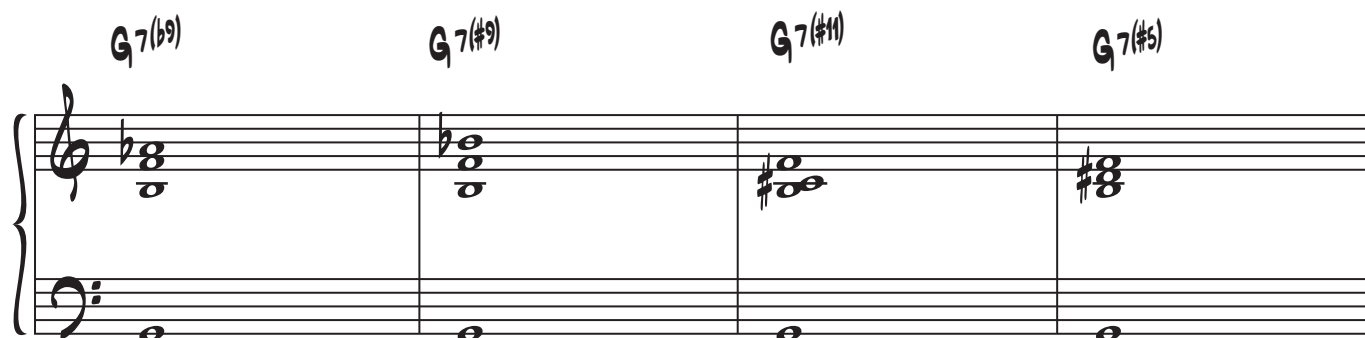
Chord voicings for the most common altered chords

Since altered chords require at least three notes, only the three and four note voicings are included for these common altered chords. Other alterations exist in addition to these four, but these are the most common and are used throughout the examples within this training series.

Combinations exist consisting of sharp 11 and flat nine, or sharp five and flat nine. Extend your knowledge and proficiency of these more complex altered chords on your own.

THREE NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

Diagram showing four three-note right hand voicings for altered chords, each with a corresponding bass note in the left hand. The chords are G7(b9), G7(#9), G7(#11), and G7(#5).

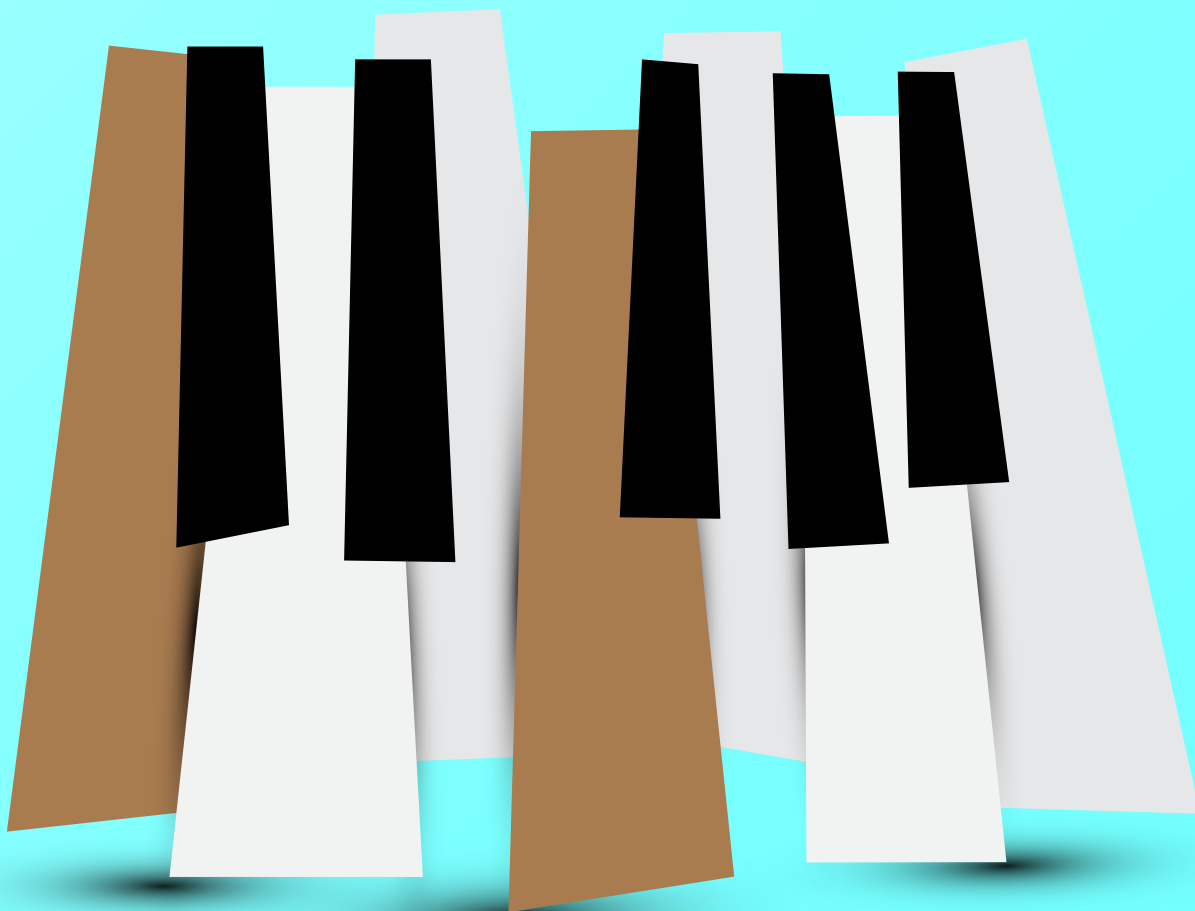


FOUR NOTE RIGHT HAND VOICINGS

Diagram showing four four-note right hand voicings for altered chords, each with a corresponding bass note in the left hand. The chords are G7(b9), G7(#9), G7(#11), and G7(#5).



Lesson One: Two Note Voicings



Begin learning to play jazz chords using the simplest possible voicings. They consist of a root in the left hand and two notes in the right hand.

For purposes of this course, the two notes in the right hand are the third of the chord and the seventh. The third is used to create the distinction between a major and minor triad and the seventh is used to distinguish between a major seventh and a minor seventh. Combined with the root, these two notes will identify a major seventh and a dominant seventh.

The fifth of the chord is not as important as the third and seventh, but will be used in the three and four note voicings in lessons two and three.

The first full chord progression in lesson 1 will be one comprised of chords descending by fourths. This common progression can be found in tunes like *Autumn Leaves* and *Fly me to the Moon*, among others. Sing or play *Autumn Leaves* with the following progression.

Two note voicings for *Autumn Leaves*

Chord progression for *Autumn Leaves* (first system):

- C^{MIN}7**: Root C (left hand), Third E♭ (right hand), Seventh B♭ (right hand).
- F7**: Root F (left hand), Third A♭ (right hand), Seventh C (right hand).
- B♭^{MAJ}7**: Root B♭ (left hand), Third D (right hand), Seventh F (right hand).
- E♭^{MAJ}7**: Root E♭ (left hand), Third G (right hand), Seventh B (right hand).

Chord progression for *Autumn Leaves* (second system):

- A^{mi}7(b9)**: Root A (left hand), Third C (right hand), Seventh G (right hand).
- D7(b9)**: Root D (left hand), Third F (right hand), Seventh C (right hand).
- G^{MIN}7**: Root G (left hand), Third B♭ (right hand), Seventh D (right hand).

Chord progression for *Autumn Leaves* (third system):

- A^{mi}7(b9)**: Root A (left hand), Third C (right hand), Seventh G (right hand).
- D7(b9)**: Root D (left hand), Third F (right hand), Seventh C (right hand).
- G^{MIN}7**: Root G (left hand), Third B♭ (right hand), Seventh D (right hand).

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17

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In the video, I demonstrate by moving up the piano in fifths how the roots of the A section chords of Autumn Leaves travel counter-clockwise around (down) the circle of fifths. (by fourths)

Technically speaking, the harmony of Autumn Leaves does not travel around the circle of fifths since each successive move around the circle reflects a change in key. That demonstration, however, is instructive in showing you root movement so that you can more easily visualize the harmonic movement of this simple tune.

Two note voicings in every key (descending 5ths)

Play through these and watch for your fingers starting to know where to go. Vary your practice by starting in the middle, going backwards, and any other way to more randomly go through the chords.

In these II-V-I voicings, the following will occur:

- The seventh of the II chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the V chord
- The seventh of the V chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the I chord

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MA}7 G^{MIN}7 C⁷ F^{MA}7

C^{MIN}7 F⁷ B^b^{MA}7 F^{MIN}7 B^b7 E^b^{MA}7

9

B^b^{MIN}7 E^b7 A^b^{MA}7 E^b^{MIN}7 A^b7 D^b^{MA}7

17

A^bMIN7 D^b7 G^bMA7 C[#]MIN7 F[#]7 BMA7

25

F[#]MIN7 B7 EMA7 BMIN7 E7 AMA7

33

E^bMIN7 A7 DMA7 A^bMIN7 D7 GMA7

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Two note voicings in every key (descending 5ths)

Missing chords exercise

I've removed some of the chords in order to help you find them on your own. Feel free to write out the chords if you are not yet able to find them. Use your ear to guide you and determine if you're playing the right chord/voicing. When the II chord is missing, look ahead at the voicing of the V to make sure you're playing the correct inversion that will allow for smooth voice leading to the V. All this will take a bit of time, but you will get it soon as you regularly practice it.

The exercise consists of three systems of musical notation, each with two staves (treble and bass clef) and a series of chords. The chords are written in a shorthand notation above the staves. The first system is in C major, the second in B-flat major, and the third in E-flat major. The chords are arranged in a descending 5th pattern, with some chords missing for the exercise.

System 1 (C Major):

- Chords: D^{MIN}7, G⁷, C^{MA}7, C^{MIN}7, F⁷, B^b^{MA}7
- Notes: Treble clef has two notes per chord. Bass clef has two notes per chord. A slur connects the two notes of the C^{MA}7 chord.

System 2 (B-flat Major):

- Chords: B^b^{MIN}7, E^b7, A^b^{MA}7, A^b^{MIN}7, D^b7, G^b^{MA}7
- Notes: Treble clef has two notes per chord. Bass clef has two notes per chord. A slur connects the two notes of the A^b^{MA}7 chord.

System 3 (E-flat Major):

- Chords: G^b^{MIN}7, B⁷, E^{MA}7, E^{MIN}7, A⁷, D^{MA}7
- Notes: Treble clef has two notes per chord. Bass clef has two notes per chord. A slur connects the two notes of the D^{MA}7 chord.

E^bMIN7 A^b7 D^bMAJ7 C[#]MIN7 F[#]7 BMAJ7

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BMIN7 E7 AMAJ7 AMIN7 D7 GMAJ7

33

GMIN7 C7 FMAJ7 FMIN7 B^b7 E^bMAJ7

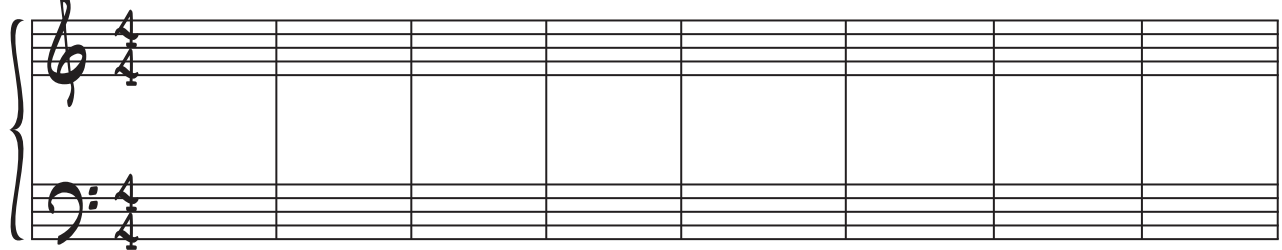
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Two note voicings in every key

No written out voicings

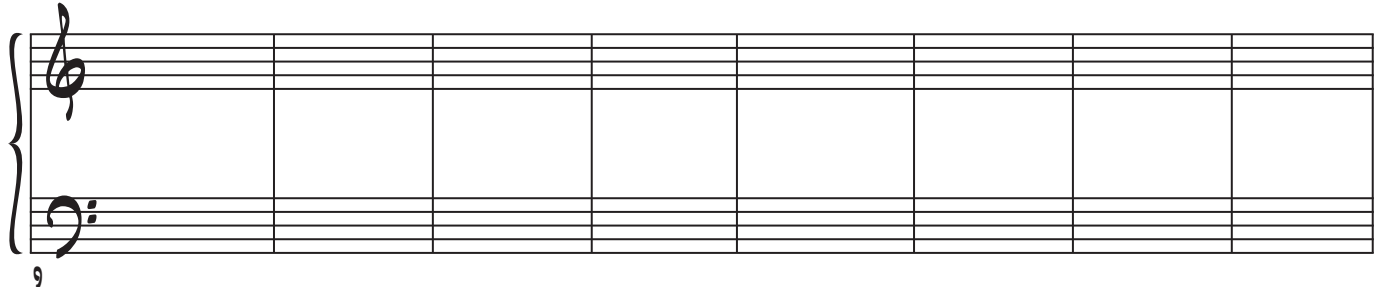
I've now removed all the voicings so that you can find them yourself. If you wish, write them out in the staff. Perhaps lightly so that you can erase them and be back to the blank page once your fingers know the voicings.

D_{MIN}7 G₇ C_{MA}7 F_{MIN}7 B_b7 E_b_{MA}7



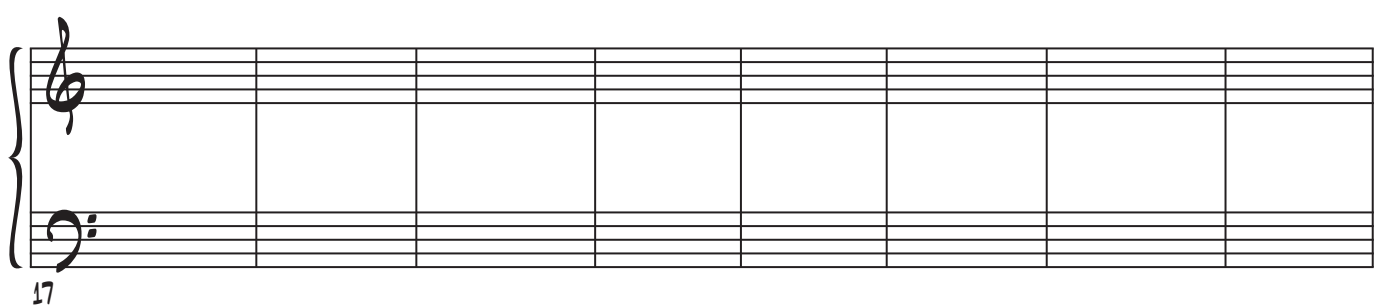
A musical staff with two staves (treble and bass clef) and a brace on the left. The staff is divided into eight measures, each corresponding to a chord label above it. The first measure is marked with a 4/4 time signature.

A_b_{MIN}7 D_b7 G_b_{MA}7 B_{MIN}7 E₇ A_{MA}7



A musical staff with two staves (treble and bass clef) and a brace on the left. The staff is divided into eight measures, each corresponding to a chord label above it. The first measure is marked with a 4/4 time signature. A small number '9' is written below the first measure.

E_b_{MIN}7 A_b7 D_b_{MA}7 F_#_{MIN}7 B₇ E_{MA}7



A musical staff with two staves (treble and bass clef) and a brace on the left. The staff is divided into eight measures, each corresponding to a chord label above it. The first measure is marked with a 4/4 time signature. A small number '17' is written below the first measure.

Handwritten musical notation system 1. It features a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 4/4 time signature. The system consists of six measures, each divided into two staves.

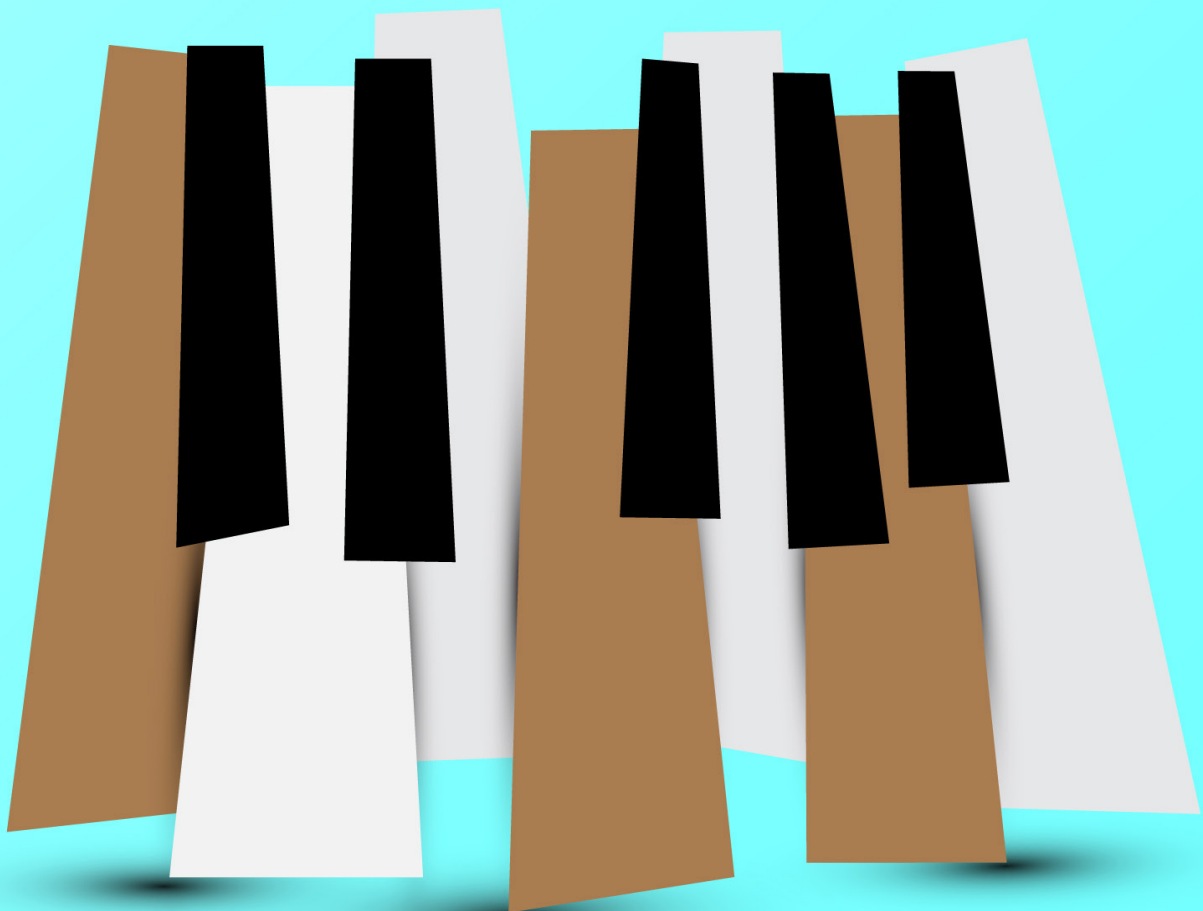
Handwritten musical notation system 2. It features a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 4/4 time signature. The system consists of six measures, each divided into two staves. A small number '7' is written below the first measure of the bass staff.

Handwritten musical notation system 3. It features a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 4/4 time signature. The system consists of six measures, each divided into two staves. A small number '13' is written below the first measure of the bass staff.

Handwritten musical notation system 4. It features a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 4/4 time signature. The system consists of six measures, each divided into two staves. A small number '19' is written below the first measure of the bass staff.

Lesson Two:

Three Note Voicings



Now let's take what you've learned about two note right hand voicings and add one note. Unlike the two note voicings that demand both the third and the seventh, the third note is an optional choice between the fifth and the ninth.

The choice between the fifth and the ninth rests in large part to voiceleading. In order to progress smoothly from the II to the V, the fifth and ninth swap roles in the voicings. Notice:

The 5th of G minor 7 becomes the 9th of C7

G MIN7 C7 F MAJ7

There are many variations of voicings, even with simple three note ones like these. Here is a second variation of the same II-V-I, again with the 9th and the 5th changing roles.

The 5th of the C7 becomes the 9th of F major7

G MIN7 C7 F MAJ7

I actually prefer introducing the 13th of the C7 to add a bit more dissonance over simply playing the third, fifth and seventh. The C7 with the added 13th sounds richer, proving that the fifth is a weaker note.

The 9th of G minor 7 turns into the 13th of C7

G MIN7 C7 F MAJ7

Three note voicings for *Autumn Leaves*

Handwritten chord labels: C_{MIN7} , $F7$, B^b_{MAJ7} , E^b_{MAJ7}

The first system of music is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It consists of four measures. The first measure has a C_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (F, A-flat, B-flat, C) and a whole note C in the left hand. The second measure has an $F7$ chord in the right hand (F, A, C, E-flat) and a whole note F in the left hand. The third measure has a B^b_{MAJ7} chord in the right hand (B-flat, D, F, A) and a whole note B-flat in the left hand. The fourth measure has an E^b_{MAJ7} chord in the right hand (E-flat, G, B-flat, A) and a whole note E-flat in the left hand. A slur connects the right-hand chords across the last two measures.

Handwritten chord labels: $A_{mi7(b5)}$, $D7(b9)$, G_{MIN7}

The second system of music consists of four measures. The first measure has an $A_{mi7(b5)}$ chord in the right hand (A, C, E-flat, G) and a whole note A in the left hand. The second measure has a $D7(b9)$ chord in the right hand (D, F, A, C-sharp) and a whole note D in the left hand. The third measure has a G_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (G, B-flat, D, F) and a whole note G in the left hand. The fourth measure has a G_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (G, B-flat, D, F) and a whole note G in the left hand. A slur connects the right-hand chords across the last two measures. The system ends with a double bar line. A measure number '5' is written below the first measure.

Handwritten chord labels: $A_{mi7(b5)}$, $D7(b9)$, G_{MIN7}

The third system of music consists of four measures. The first measure has an $A_{mi7(b5)}$ chord in the right hand (A, C, E-flat, G) and a whole note A in the left hand. The second measure has a $D7(b9)$ chord in the right hand (D, F, A, C-sharp) and a whole note D in the left hand. The third measure has a G_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (G, B-flat, D, F) and a whole note G in the left hand. The fourth measure has a G_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (G, B-flat, D, F) and a whole note G in the left hand. A slur connects the right-hand chords across the last two measures. The system ends with a double bar line. A measure number '9' is written below the first measure.

Handwritten chord labels: C_{MIN7} , $F7$, B^b_{MAJ7}

The fourth system of music consists of four measures. The first measure has a C_{MIN7} chord in the right hand (F, A-flat, B-flat, C) and a whole note C in the left hand. The second measure has an $F7$ chord in the right hand (F, A, C, E-flat) and a whole note F in the left hand. The third measure has a B^b_{MAJ7} chord in the right hand (B-flat, D, F, A) and a whole note B-flat in the left hand. The fourth measure has a B^b_{MAJ7} chord in the right hand (B-flat, D, F, A) and a whole note B-flat in the left hand. A slur connects the right-hand chords across the last two measures. The system ends with a double bar line. A measure number '13' is written below the first measure.

Handwritten chord labels above the staff: $A_{mi7}(b5)$, $D7(b9)$, G_{MIN7} , G^b7 , F_{MIN7} , $E7$.

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Handwritten chord labels above the staff: E^b_{MAJ7} , $D7(\#9)$, G_{MIN7} .

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Next, let's apply your new-found knowledge of three note voicings to another set of changes. The following is the chord progression to the well-known ballad *Laura*.

This progression contains many of the changes of Autumn Leaves including a minor II-V, altered chords and a new chord permutation: an F minor over Bb in bar 11. It's actually a simple chord. Just play an F minor triad with an Bb in the bass—aka Bb9 sus.

Three note voicings for *Laura*

Handwritten musical score for "Three note voicings for *Laura*". The score is in B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of piano accompaniment, each showing a treble and bass staff with three-note chords and single notes. Chord symbols are written above the treble staff.

System 1 (Measures 1-5):

- Measure 1: E7(#9)
- Measure 2: A min7
- Measure 3: D7(b9)
- Measure 4: G maj7 C7(#11)
- Measure 5: B min7 A min7

System 2 (Measures 6-9):

- Measure 6: G min7
- Measure 7: C7(b9)
- Measure 8: F maj7 Bb7(#11)
- Measure 9: A min7 G min7

System 3 (Measures 10-13):

- Measure 10: F min7
- Measure 11: F min/Bb
- Measure 12: Bb7(b9)
- Measure 13: Eb maj7

System 4 (Measures 14-17):

- Measure 14: Aø
- Measure 15: D7(b9)
- Measure 16: D7(b9)
- Measure 17: B min7
- Measure 18: E7(#9)

2.

F^{MIN}7 F^{MIN}/E^b D^ø G⁷(b9) A^b A^{MIN}7 D⁷(#11)

18

E^b^{MIN}7 A^b7 D^{MIN} G⁷ C^{MAJ}7 B^ø E⁷(#9)

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Three note voicings in every key

(II-V-I in ascending 4ths)

Just as you did with the two note voicings, play through these and watch for your fingers starting to know where to land. Vary your practice by staring in the middle, going backwards, and any other way to more randomly go through the chords.

In these II-V-I voicings, the following will occur:

- The seventh of the II chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the V chord
- The seventh of the V chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the I chord
- The ninth of the V chord drops one step to become the fifth of the I chord
- The seventh of the V chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the I chord

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MAJ}7 G^{MIN}7 C⁷ F^{MAJ}7

C^{MIN}7 F⁷ B^b^{MAJ}7 F^{MIN}7 B^b7 E^b^{MAJ}7

B^b^{MIN}7 E^b7 A^b^{MAJ}7 E^b^{MIN}7 A^b7 D^b^{MAJ}7

A^b_{MIN7} D^b7 G^b_{MAJ7} $C^{\#}_{MIN7}$ $F^{\#7}$ B_{MAJ7}

25

$F^{\#}_{MIN7}$ $B7$ E_{MAJ7} B_{MIN7} $E7$ A_{MAJ7}

33

E_{MIN7} $A7$ D_{MAJ7} A_{MIN7} $D7$ G_{MAJ7}

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Three note voicings in every key

(minor II-V-I in ascending 2nds)

As we saw in the changes to Autumn Leaves, the half diminished is an important chord. While it not necessary, I like to follow the half diminished chord with an altered seventh. Because the flat five of the half diminished is the same note as the flat nine of the V chord, I often use seventh chords with a flat nine as the V in a minor II-V-I.

I have written out two inversions of these voicings: one on this page and the other on the following page.

In these II-V-I voicings, the following will occur:

- The seventh of the II chord drops 1/2 step to become the minor third of the V chord
- The flat ninth of the V chord drops 1/2 step to become the fifth of the I chord
- The seventh of the V chord drops one step to become the minor third of the I chord

The image displays three systems of musical notation, each representing a minor II-V-I progression in a different key. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clef) with three-note voicings for the II, V, and I chords. Chord symbols are written above and below the staff.

System 1 (Top): A δ , D7(b9), G MIN7 , G δ , C7(b9), F MIN7 . The bass line starts on G and moves up by half steps: G, A, B, C, D, E, F.

System 2 (Middle): F δ , Bb7(b9), Eb MIN7 , Eb δ , Ab7(b9), Db MIN7 . The bass line starts on F and moves up by half steps: F, G, Ab, Bb, C, Db, Eb.

System 3 (Bottom): C δ , F#7(b9), B MIN7 , B δ , E7(b9), A MIN7 . The bass line starts on C and moves up by half steps: C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, B.

Page number 17 is visible at the bottom left of the third system.

$B\flat\delta$ $E\flat 7(b9)$ $A\flat_{MIN}7$ $A\flat\delta$ $D\flat 7(b9)$ $G\flat_{MIN}7$

25

$F\#\delta$ $B 7(b9)$ $E_{MIN}7$ $E\delta$ $A 7(b9)$ $D_{MIN}7$

35

$D\delta$ $G 7(b9)$ $C_{MIN}7$ $C\delta$ $F 7(b9)$ $B\flat_{MIN}7$

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Three note voicings in every key

(II-V-I in descending 2nds) Missing chords exercise

As I did in the two note section, I've removed some of the chords in order to help you find them on your own. Feel free to write out the chords if you are not yet able to find them. Use your ear to guide you and determine if you're playing the right chord/voicing. When the II chord is missing, look ahead at the voicing of the V to make sure you're playing the correct inversion that will allow for smooth voice leading to the V and the I.

Remember that the seventh of the II drops by 1/2 step to become the third of the V. The ninth of the V chord drops a whole step to become the fifth of the I and the seventh of the V drops a half step to become the third of the I.

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MA}7 C^{MIN}7 F⁷ B^b^{MA}7

B^b^{MIN}7 E^b7 A^b^{MA}7 A^b^{MIN}7 D^b7 G^b^{MA}7

F[#]^{MIN}7 B⁷ E^{MA}7 E^{MIN}7 A⁷ D^{MA}7

E^bMIN7 A^b7 D^bMAJ7 C[#]MIN7 F[#]7 BMAJ7

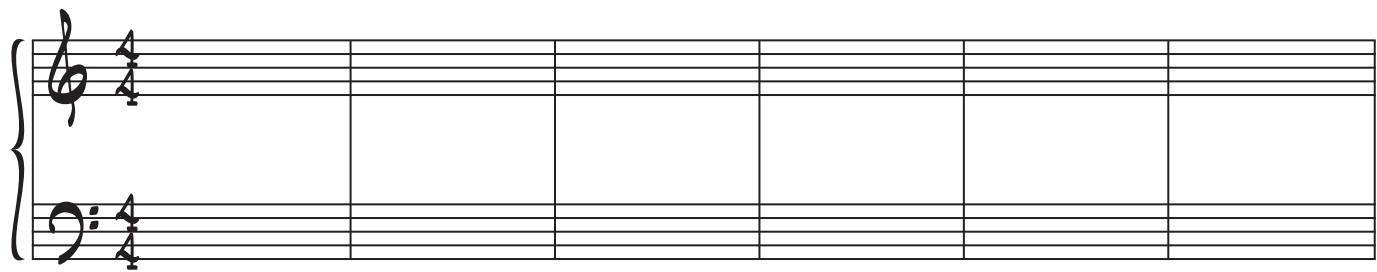
25

BMIN7 E7 AMAJ7 AMIN7 D7 GMAJ7

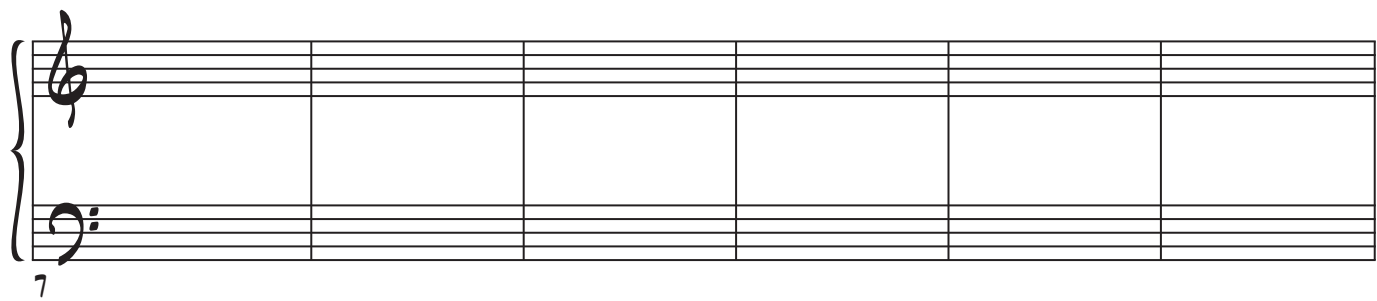
33

GMIN7 C7 FMAJ7 FMIN7 B^b7 E^bMAJ7

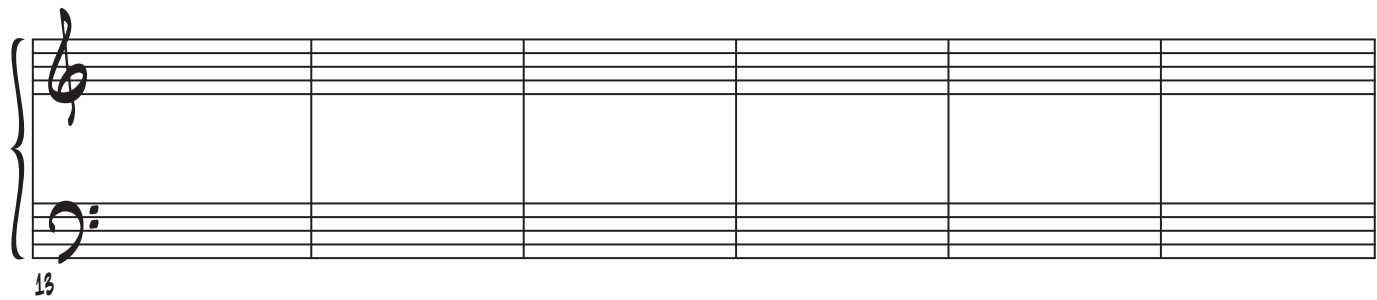
41



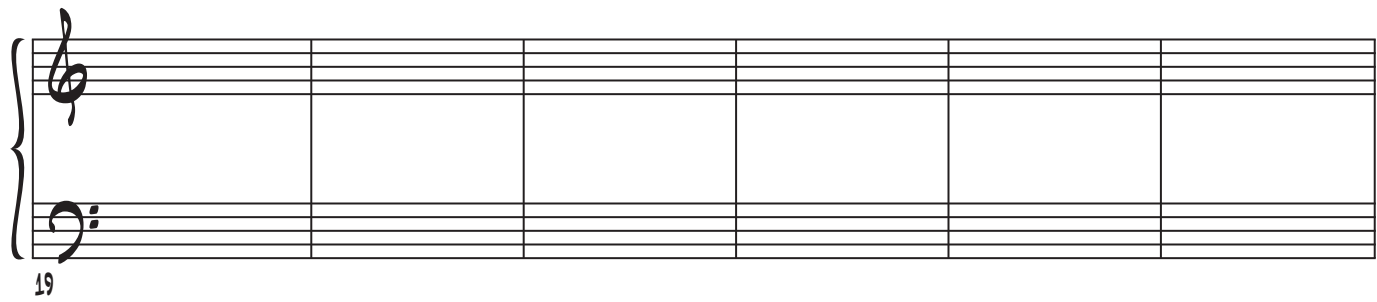
A blank musical staff system consisting of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. The system is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines.



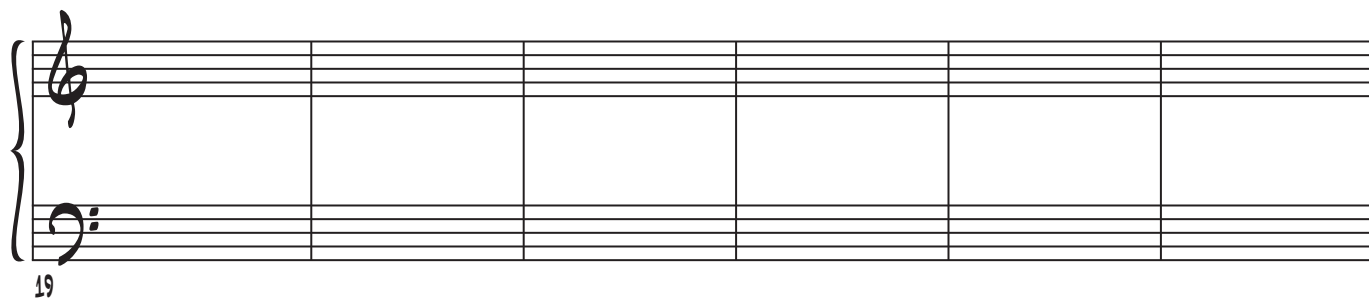
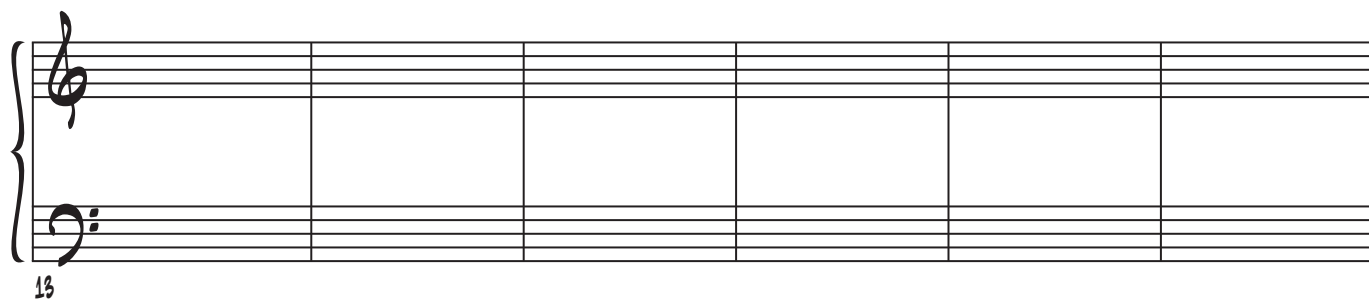
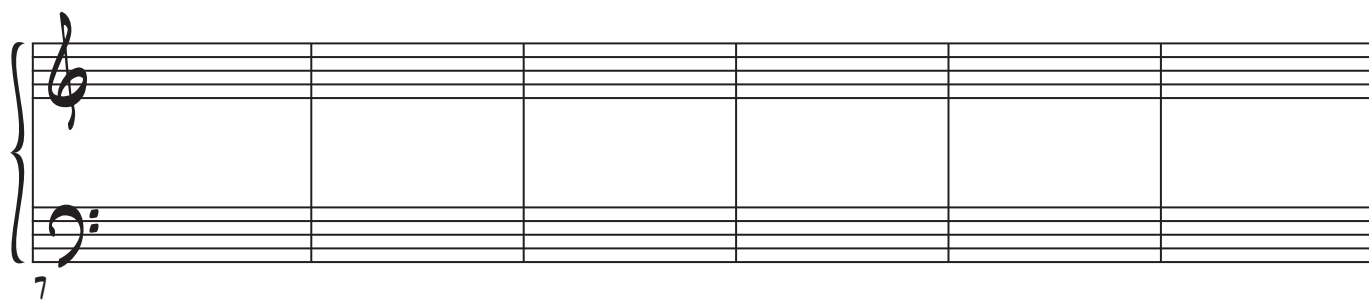
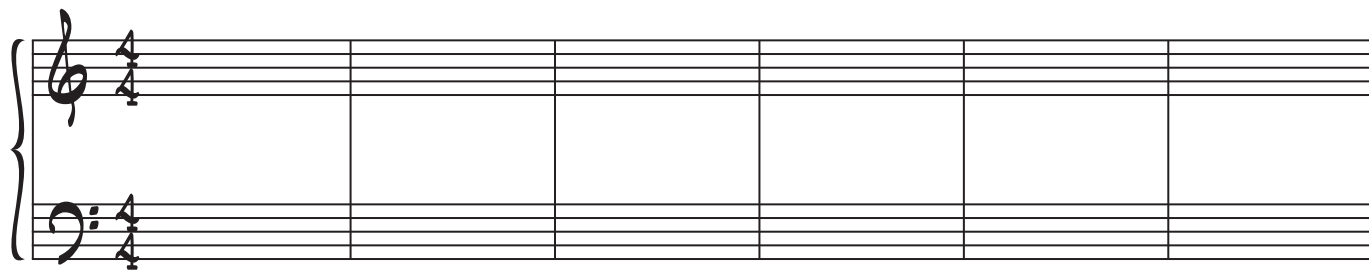
A blank musical staff system consisting of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. The system is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. A small number '7' is positioned below the first measure of the bottom staff.



A blank musical staff system consisting of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. The system is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. A small number '13' is positioned below the first measure of the bottom staff.



A blank musical staff system consisting of two staves joined by a brace on the left. The top staff is in treble clef. The bottom staff is in bass clef. The system is divided into six measures by vertical bar lines. A small number '19' is positioned below the first measure of the bottom staff.



Lesson Three

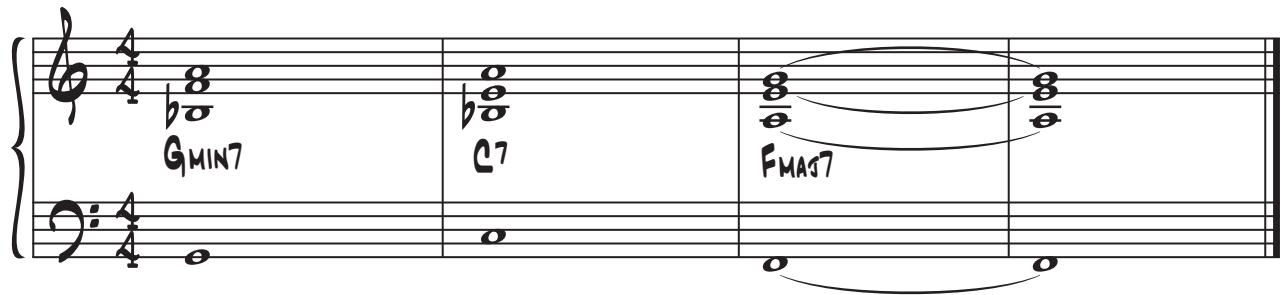
Four Note Voicings



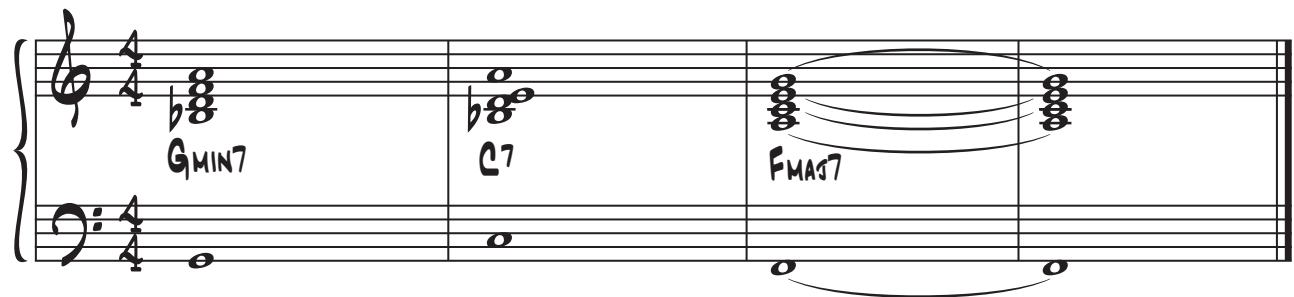
Last but certainly not least, are the four note voicings. These are the richest of the bunch because of the added note. This note can be either the fifth, the ninth, the 11th or the 13th, depending on which of these 1. is missing from the three note voicing, 2. leads to good voice leading, and 3. adds the desired color to the voicing. Again, there is no one right voicing. I sometimes play the 13th because it adds a nice color. Consider the three note C7 below. Hear the difference between the three notes as written and playing it with the G on top rather than the A? It's richer with the A.

I generally play the four note voicing when I comp, mainly because that's what I've grown up playing and because it has the richest chordal color. In creating this book, the two and three note voicings seemed odd to play because I'm so used to the four note voicings.

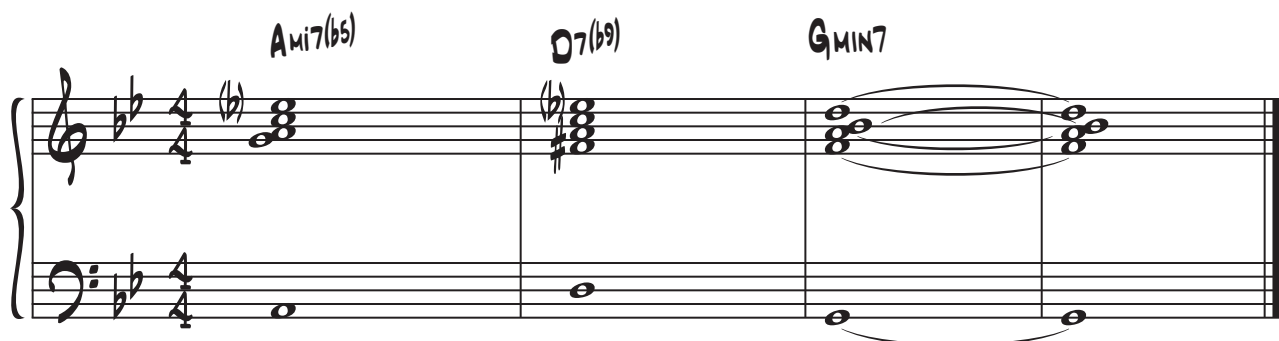
So instead of this:



We add the D to the Gmin7 and the C7, and add the C to the Fmaj7.



With four note voicings I break my rule about not doubling in one type of chord: the half diminished (II b5). I usually double the root because the ninth may be too dissonant. The 11th and 13th tend to change the basic sound of the half diminished too much. So for Autumn Leaves four note voicings, I'll play:



Four note voicings for *Autumn Leaves*

Chord progression: C^{MIN}7, F⁷, B^b_{MAJ}7, E^b_{MAJ}7

Chord progression: A^{mi}7(b5), D⁷(b9), G^{MIN}7

Chord progression: A^{mi}7(b5), D⁷(b9), G^{MIN}7

Chord progression: C^{MIN}7, F⁷, B^b_{MAJ}7

17

Ami7(b5) D7(b9) GMIN7 Gb7 FMIN7 E7

21

Ebmaj7 D7 GMIN7

Four note voicings for *Laura*

Handwritten musical score for "Four note voicings for *Laura*". The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats).

System 1:

- Chords: E7(#9), A⁺MIN7, D7(b9), G⁺MAJ7 C7(#11), B⁺MIN7 A⁺MIN7

System 2:

- Chords: G⁺MIN7, C7(b9), F⁺MAJ7 B⁺7(#11), A⁺MIN7 G⁺MIN7

System 3:

- Chords: F⁺MIN7, F⁺MIN/B^b, B⁺7(b9), E^bMAJ7

System 4:

- Chords: A⁺x, D7(b9), D7(b9), D7(b9), B⁺MIN7, E7(#9)

The score includes measure numbers 6, 10, and 14. The final measure of the fourth system is a double bar line.

2.
 F^{MIN}7 F^{MIN}/E^b D^ø G7(b9) A^b A^{MIN}7 D7(#11)

18

E^b MIN7 A^b7 D^{MIN} G7 C^{MAJ}7 B^ø E7(#9)

22

Four note voicings for *All the Things You Are*

Four note voicings for *All the Things You Are*

System 1: Fmin7, Bbm7, Eb7, Abmaj7

System 2: Dbmaj7, Dmin7, G7, Cmaj7

System 3: Cmin7, Fmin7, Bb7, Ebmaj7

System 4: Abmaj7, Amin7, D7(b9), Gmaj7

Measure numbers: 5, 9, 13

A^{MIN}7 D⁷(b9) G^{MAJ}7

17

F^{#MIN}7 B⁷(#9) E^{MAJ}7 C⁷(#9)

21

F^{MIN}7 B^{bMIN}7 E^{b7} A^{bMAJ}7

25

D^{bMAJ}7 D^{bMIN}7 C^{MIN}7 B^{MIN}7

29

B^{bMIN}7 E^{b7}(#9) A^{bMAJ}7

33

Four note voicings in every key

II-V-I in ascending 4ths

Here are the four note voicings in their II-V-I patterns in all 12 keys. Each cycle moves up a fourth. Practice the in order, backwards and at random spots.

In the II-V-I voicings on this page and on pages 41 and 42, the following will occur:

- The seventh of the II chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the V chord
- The ninth of the V chord drops one step to become the fifth of the I chord
- The seventh of the V chord drops 1/2 step to become the third of the I chord
- The 13th of the V chord becomes the third of the I chord

D^{MIN}7 G⁷ C^{MAJ}7 G^{MIN}7 C⁷ F^{MAJ}7

C^{MIN}7 F⁷ B^b^{MAJ}7 F^{MIN}7 B^b7 E^b^{MAJ}7

B^b^{MIN}7 E^b7 A^b^{MAJ}7 E^b^{MIN}7 A^b7 D^b^{MAJ}7

A^b_{MIN7} D^b7 G^b_{MAJ7} $C^{\#}_{MIN7}$ $F^{\#7}$ B_{MAJ7}

25

$F^{\#}_{MIN7}$ $B7$ E_{MAJ7} B_{MIN7} $E7$ A_{MAJ7}

33

E_{MIN7} $A7$ D_{MAJ7} A_{MIN7} $D7$ G_{MAJ7}

41

Four note voicings in every key - second voicing

II-V-I in descending 2nds

With four note voicings, we have additional options including inversions. You can adjust the placement of notes in order to play voicings higher or lower on the keyboard. You can also achieve different colors with your comping. The following II-V-I sequences begin with the thumb on the minor third of the II chord. The series descends by a whole down. In other words, the II of this series begins on the same root as the previous I.

Chord sequence: D^{MIN}7, G⁷, C^{MA}7, C^{MIN}7, F⁷, B^b^{MA}7

Chord sequence: B^b^{MIN}7, E^b7, A^b^{MA}7, A^b^{MIN}7, D^b7, G^b^{MA}7

Chord sequence: F[#]^{MIN}7, B⁷, E^{MA}7, E^{MIN}7, A⁷, D^{MA}7

E^b_{MIN7} A^b7 D^b_{MAJ7} $C^{\#}_{MIN7}$ $F^{\#7}$ B_{MAJ7}

25 33 41

B_{MIN7} $E7$ A_{MAJ7} A_{MIN7} $D7$ G_{MAJ7}

33 41 49

G_{MIN7} $C7$ F_{MAJ7} F_{MIN7} B^b7 E^b_{MAJ7}

41 49 57

Sharp nines in every key

In the video, I mentioned that my “trick” for remembering the seventh chord with a sharp nine is to play a dominant seventh chord a tri-tone away from the chord’s root. In other words, for an E 7#9, I would play the Bb7 over E in the bass. Now, in fact, that’s actually a sharp nine plus a sharp 5 since the ninth of the dominant seventh is the sharp five of the chord’s root. I’ve notated it as such below. Simply move that ninth of the right hand voicing down one half step to play the natural fifth of the resulting chord.

Like other examples throughout this eBook, I have been less than perfectly accurate with enharmonic equivalent notes. In other word, I assume you (like me) find it easier to read G than F double sharp, or D rather than C double sharp!

First system of musical notation showing four chords in 4/4 time. The treble clef contains the chord voicings, and the bass clef contains the root notes. The chords are labeled above the staff: C7(#9), F7(#9), Bb7(#9), and Eb7(#9). An annotation 'sharp fifths' with arrows points to the sharp fifth notes (F# and Bb) in the first two chords.

Second system of musical notation showing four chords in 4/4 time. The treble clef contains the chord voicings, and the bass clef contains the root notes. The chords are labeled above the staff: Ab7(#9), Db7(#9), F#7(#9), and B7(#9). A small '5' is written below the first measure.

Third system of musical notation showing four chords in 4/4 time. The treble clef contains the chord voicings, and the bass clef contains the root notes. The chords are labeled above the staff: E7(#9), A7(#9), D7(#9), and G7(#9). A small '9' is written below the first measure.

Four note voicings in every key

(II-V-I in descending 2nds) *Missing chords exercise*

As I did in the other two sections, I've removed some of the chords in order to help you find them on your own. Feel free to write out the chords if you are not yet able to find them. Use your ear to guide you and determine if you're playing the right chord/voicing. When the II chord is missing, look ahead at the voicing of the V to make sure you're playing the correct inversion that will allow for smooth voice leading to the V and the I.

D^{MIN7} G⁷ C^{MAJ7} C^{MIN7} F⁷ B^b^{MAJ7}

B^b^{MIN7} E^b⁷ A^b^{MAJ7} A^b^{MIN7} D^b⁷ G^b^{MAJ7}

F[#]^{MIN7} B⁷ E^{MAJ7} E^{MAJ7} E^{MIN7} A⁷ D^{MAJ7}

E^bMIN7 A^b7 D^bMAJ7 C[#]MIN7 F[#]7 BMAJ7 BMAJ7

25

BMIN7 E7 AMAJ7 AMAJ7 AMIN7 D7 GMAJ7

33

GMIN7 C7 FMAJ7 FMIN7 B^b7 E^bMAJ7

41

Blank musical staff system with treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time signature, and a brace on the left.

Blank musical staff system with treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time signature, and a brace on the left. The system is marked with a 7 below the first measure.

Blank musical staff system with treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time signature, and a brace on the left. The system is marked with a 13 below the first measure.

Blank musical staff system with treble and bass clefs, 4/4 time signature, and a brace on the left. The system is marked with a 19 below the first measure.

