

## Sevenths - Voicings

Every new skill is helped with each preceding skill... before I teach voicings, students would typically have passed off, thirds, triads, tenths and sevenths.

### Sevenths

I will present to the student two assumptions for all chords:

1. All **Triads** are assumed to be **Major** unless notated.
2. All **Sevenths** are assumed to be a **minor seventh interval**, unless notated.

So there isn't any confusion, I explain the difference between a mi7 chord and a mi7 interval. The student is familiar with Maj 3<sup>rd</sup> and min 3<sup>rd</sup> ... I then teach them the theory, that in a Major interval, the top note is always in the scale of the bottom, but not in reverse.

Example: Cmaj3 (interval)... C & E... (E is in the scale of C, but C is not in the scale of E)  
Cmaj7 (interval)... C & B (B is in the scale of C, but C is not in the scale of B)

To create a minor interval, you lower the top tone of a Major interval down ½ step.

Example: C minor third, C & Eb (top note has been lowered by ½ step)  
C minor seventh C & Bb (top note has been lowered by ½ step)

I would then test the student with examples

Is the “Maj” referring to the Triad or to the Seventh?

Is the “min” referring to the Triad or to the Seventh?

What is the formula for C7?

CMaj7 = C Major Triad, C Major seventh  
Cmi7 = C minor Triad, C minor seventh  
C7 = C Major Triad, C minor seventh

It would be redundant for you to say... this is a C Major, Major Seventh, or this is a C minor, minor seventh.. a musician might understand, but it isn't necessary. You would only need to say: CMaj7, Cmi7.

I then typically show them around 10 different types of seventh chords... The only three that we actually practice around the circle of fourths would be: **Major 7<sup>th</sup>, minor 7<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> (Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>).**

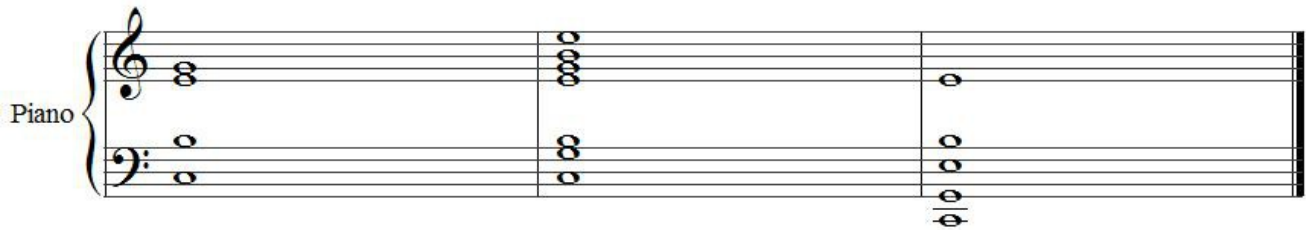
Some of the 7<sup>th</sup> chords:

C7	C half dim 7 <sup>th</sup>
C mi7	C dim7
C Maj7	C Aug7
C mi,Maj7	C Aug, Maj7
C dim, Maj7	C7b5

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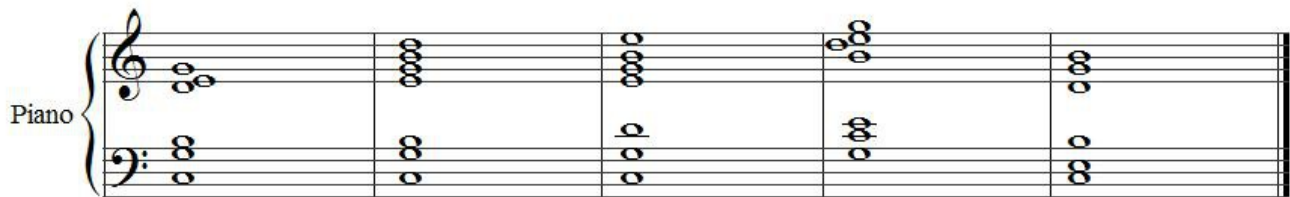
Here are a few voicings you might like to try. The first row are the Maj7 (Major Seventh) voicings, the second are the Maj9 (Major Ninth) voicings. Again, be sure the student has already learned the Maj 7<sup>th</sup>, mi7<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> chords around the Circle.

Students would need to practice these until they can pass them off in 12 seconds. It can take quite some time...



Piano

Diagram showing three piano voicings for Major 7th chords. The first row shows the treble clef with two notes (root and major 7th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The second row shows the treble clef with four notes (root, major 3rd, major 7th, and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The third row shows the treble clef with two notes (root and major 7th) and the bass clef with three notes (root, major 7th, and major 9th).



Piano

Diagram showing five piano voicings for Major 9th chords. The first row shows the treble clef with two notes (root and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The second row shows the treble clef with four notes (root, major 3rd, major 7th, and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The third row shows the treble clef with four notes (root, major 3rd, major 7th, and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The fourth row shows the treble clef with four notes (root, major 3rd, major 7th, and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th). The fifth row shows the treble clef with two notes (root and major 9th) and the bass clef with two notes (root and major 7th).

Once they have learned these sets, I would then add 11ths, 13ths and Altered Chords. Approximately three chords a set.

There are hundreds of voicings available, but realistically, they only need a handful. Look for voicings in the music you are playing. You can find some beautiful chords and progressions. Jot them down, then consider learning them around the Circle.

If I ever become bored with my playing, I only need to discover a new way to play a chord, or run or other technique. I will often hear students complaining that there songs all sound the same. As they continue to develop new ways of playing chords, scales, patterns, licks, fills, grooves, arpeggios, etc. there playing will always feel fresh and exciting.

After a bit of time, your students (and yourself) will have an arsenal of tools that can be applied to any tune or arrangement.