

Shell Voicings

With the root as a starting point (as a letter name), the "shell", or the 3 and 7, of a chord define it's quality, whether it is major, dominant, minor, or minor with a major seventh. For these exercises, the other chord tones are not considered. Below is an example of both of the possible inversions of the shell, with the third on top and the seventh below, and with the seventh on top and the third below.

CMa9

The next example shows how the quality of the chord changes with the shell, in otherwords, the other three possibilities and their inversions.

C9 **Cmi9** **Cmi9(Maj7)**

Example of a ii - V - I pattern as represented by the shell voicings.

Dmi9 **G9** **CMa9**

1st Inversion

Or...

Dmi9 **G9** **CMa9**

2nd Inversion

Now, we'll use the same shell voicings over the ii - V - I, only now the inversion will change, so that proper voice leading is utilized. Notice that between each change there is only one voice that moves. From the ii to the V, the change lies between the minor 7th and the 3rd, where the change is between the dominant 7th and the 3rd of the Major chord.

| Dmi9 | G9 | CMa9 |
|------|----|------|
| | | |
| | | |

| Dmi9 | G9 | CMa9 |
|------|----|------|
| | | |
| | | |

Application exercise:

| Dmi9 | G9 | CMa9 | Cmi9 | F9 | B \flat Ma9 | B \flat mi9 |
|------|----|------|------|----|---------------|---------------|
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| | | | | | | |

Etc...
(Continue through cycle)