

The Five Jazz-Chord Types Video Lesson Introduction

The most important lesson to begin with for learning to play by chord concept is the Five Jazz Chord Types video lesson. Understanding how to make the five basic jazz chords (four-note seventh chords) and play them from any given note, is fundamental to your evolving understanding of playing piano by chord concept and for playing from a fakebook. Once you understand how the five basic chord qualities are made, you can use them to harmonize melodies in various ways when reading from a fakebook.

We do not use the five basic jazz chords in their root position to play from fakebooks.

It is very important to stress that we do not use the five basic jazz chords in their root position to play from fakebooks. A common mistake that beginning chord concept students make is to play chords in the left hand and a single melody note in the right hand. Playing in this manner creates a non-musical and amateurish sound. After you learn the five basic jazz chords then the lessons that follow will show you two fundamental ways to use them to create pleasing, simple cocktail type piano arrangements.

The two common ways of using the basic chords to harmonize melody are:

1. Dividing the chords into open voicings and placing under melody.*
2. Matching the correct jazz-chord inversion to melody in the right hand.

The goal is to learn how to make each of the five jazz-chord types on every one of the twelve tones in music, sixty chords in all. While that is the goal, it is not necessary to learn all sixty chords right away in order to begin applying them to your playing. As long as you understand how each of the five chord qualities can be made, and get them comfortably under your fingers, then you can start working with the Open Voicings Study*. Those lessons show how to convert them to open voiced chords to support melody lines in fakebooks, focusing on one song and one set of chords at a time.

Why do we learn the five basic jazz chords in root position?

The reason we need to understand and learn the five basic jazz chords in root position first (Four-note chords of the seventh) is so we can then manipulate them in various ways to harmonize melody lines, make fill and play solos. But it is essential to have a firm understanding of the chords in their root positions first so that when you manipulate them you can always refer them back to their root position so as to not lose track of the chord notes that you are re-arranging. The better you know them in root position then the easier it will be for you to invert them and play them as open-voiced chords to harmonize melody lines

*These lessons are on the website. (GlenRoseJazz.com)

Anecdotally yours...

I remember back when I was a young hot-shot-wanna-be, jazz pianist just starting out with jazz in junior college. I was working along side my dad in the 20th Century Fox studios music department where he was in charge of editing and writing out by hand all the music for the studio, orchestra recording sessions. One of his colleagues with us there was a brilliant studio rehearsal pianist. One day I got up the nerve to ask him for some jazz piano pointers. He said sure and wrote out a lesson for me with all the 5 basic-jazz chords and told me to learn them in all inversions and to arpeggiate them in a few octaves. I was incredibly disappointed but was polite and thanked him. I couldn't believe how square this supposed great professional tip was. I thought, "Hey, this isn't jazz, this is just basic stuff anyone who has studied classical piano can do."

I pretty much ignored the advice and went back to my hot-shot playing pursuits. But it kept gnawing at me as time went by. Could I do this simple, basic square stuff he showed me? The answer was no. Well, I couldn't let that stand. I might as well learn the stupid stuff just to prove how useless it was. Well, I think you can guess the moral of this story. There was never a more important lesson that I ever learned. My playing started to really blossom after I mastered them. (took a long, long time by the way) it filled in a tremendous gap in my musicianship. It's really like learning the alphabet. Once you have command over these basic chords everything evolves out of them for your playing, arranging/composition and overall musicianship.

Admittedly the 5 basic jazz-chords aren't very exciting sounding. The more hip, sophisticated sounding jazz chords that give you the formulas for making all your 9,11 and 13 chords with all their alteration possibilities and that real cool, jazz sound are what we call the "rootless" jazz chord voicings (often called the Bill Evans chords). They are studied in the Rootless Jazz Chords video. They literally extend beyond the 5-basic jazz chords. They can be learned concurrently anytime you want to get into them and I suggest not putting it off because you'll sound like you are really playing jazz immediately when you learn them in even one key. But the 5-basic jazz chords are the real common stuff you will need for your creative right-hand improvisations while you play those hip rootless chords in your left-hand.

The 5 basic jazz- chords are really the basic fundamentals of not only jazz chords but of all types of western music. Classical to Rock. But you will need to learn ways to make them sound more musical.

When you sit down to study and work on tunes, try to spend a little time running through them just like you do with the tunes you are working on. Eventually they will get easier and easier and you'll feel the power of them creeping into your playing.

Invert...

After you nail them all down in root positions the next step is to be able to invert the 4-note basic voicing into all four inversions easily. It all takes time but just keep working on them. They will give you so many things that will improve your overall musicianship and playing abilities.

Root position: 1-3-5-7

First inversion: 3-5-7-1

Second inversion: 5-7-1-3

Third inversion: 7-1-3-5

1. Improvisation.

When you have command of all the inversions as chords and arpeggios up and down you can make fluid melodic lines in your improvisations. A good exercise in this direction is to improvise over a set of changes or an entire song and try to use only the basic 5 jazz-chords arpeggiated in some fashion. This is what jazz players call "chord outlining. You'll sound very melodic. This is opposed to improvising with scales over chords.

2. Block chords.

You want ultimate flexibility for putting a melody on top of the basic chord anywhere, anytime. You always want to be able to make a four note block chord in your right hand for any and all of the 5 basic jazz chords in any and all inversions. Then, if you double the top note of the chord that is in right-hand at any time (the melody note) with your left hand, thusly playing it on top of the chord and on the bottom (an octave melody with chord in between) you have a basic "Shearing block" chord formula.

3. Arpeggios

You want to be able to arpeggiate the chords in most inversions with just your right hand and with hand-over-hand arpeggios as well. I say most inversions because not all inversions (or root positions) fit under the hand well for making arpeggios. I talk a lot about this in the Cocktail Runs and Arpeggios video and give you as many professional tips and viewpoints that I know on making arpeggios and not have them sound square. (square being the opposite of hip!)

4. Composition and arranging

If you get into composition and/or arranging for orchestra or big band you need to know the 5 basic-jazz chords just as well as you need to know your A-B-C's if you are writing a novel. Your musical color palette will be full of possibilities if you have them all at your command effortlessly.

These very basic 5-jazz chords are the staples of jazz and cocktail playing. I hope you get into them and start making them work for you.

Glen

Video Lesson Contents

The Five Jazz Chord Types -Part One

00:04 Opening title and new introduction begins.

I made this lesson several years before. I re-edited and updated it and included a new introduction that you will be greeted with first. Then you will see a difference in the video as the old introduction begins and the part of the original video lesson begins.

2:57 Old title from original lesson begins here. 5x12=60

Introduction

5:00 Building major 7 chords

6:28 The Five Basic Jazz Chord Types

1. CMaj7
2. C dominant 7
3. Cm7
4. Cm7b5
5. Cdim7

7:42 Practice by going down in whole steps

A. This is a learning tool to organize your practice. If you want to study and learn all of the 60 chords this is a recommended method but not the only one. It's very easy to get lost and disoriented in the practice so going down in whole steps while helps keep your study organized helping to keep your place and remember which chords you have studied.

B. Explanation of what whole tone scales are.

C. Demonstration, playing thru all the 5 chord types descending thru the whole-tone scale. This covers half of the jazz chords.

D. Add rhythms to the exercise to make the practice more enjoyable

E. Arpeggiate the chords for practice. This creates a classical sound

11:20 Musical exercise for practicing in whole step Practice with 6/8 rhythm in the right hand (or any rhythm)

This creates a classical sound and make practice more interesting Practice while going down in whole steps. Use the pedal to make a smoother blending of the chords

14:35 Practice with arpeggiated chords (Classical sound)

Another way to make practicing and learning the chords more enjoyable.

16:21 Use the other whole tone scale to play the other six sets of chords

18:35 Play the chords in both hands

practice playing the chords hand-over-hand. Helps to train both hands and creates a pleasant harp like effect

22:13 Talk about why we are learning these chords.

22:33 Open-voices chords under melody.

22:44 Excerpt from to Playing from a Fake book lessons. Danny Boy (Key of F).

25:40 Talk after open voicings under melody demonstration.

26:28 Title: Continue to second half of this lesson (Part 2) where we explore ways to help Get familiar with the five jazz chord types in root position.

The Five Jazz Chord Types – Part Two

26:37 First goal: Learn all of the basic chords

27:03 “Chords for chords sake: The enjoyment of the sound of chords by themselves.

28:37 Recite the five jazz chord types. Learn to say all of the chord types in order

Maj7 - Dom7 - m7 - m7b5 - dim

29:16 Maj 7 practice – Practice major 7 chords going down in whole steps.

33:28 Look for chords with similar hand formations

33:49 White note chords that that have the same hand formations

Am7 – Dm7 – Em7

36:02 Cm7 and Fm7 are made with the same hand formations.

White-black-white-black. **Cm7– Fm7**

37:07 C#m7 and F#m7 are made with the same hand formations.

White-black-white-black. **C#m7– F#m7**

38:43 C#m7 Roll the chords

39:33 Ebm7–All black notes

40:24 Amaj7– Dmaj7– Emaj7 made with the same hand formations.

White-black-white-black.

41:54 Dominant chords (**C7– F7**) with the same hand formations

white– white– white– black

43:01 Dominant chords (**A7– D7**) with the same hand formations

white– black– white – white

44:07 Practice with the organization of descending whole steps

49:52 The diminished chords

52:44 Inverting diminished chords

56:02 Minor7b5 (m7b5) jazz shorthand=∅

60:04 Once again... The purpose for learning these basic is to learn how to use them for reading from a fakebook.

60:48 End of lesson. Proceed to the ***Open-Voicings*** lessons or the

“Matching Inversions to Melody” lessons to begin applying the five jazz types to playing from a fakebook.

The five chord types are:

Chord qualities	Jazz shorthand for chord names
Major 7	$\Delta 7$
Dominant 7	7
Minor 7	m7 (or a dash “ - “ is often used to denote m7
Minor 7(b5)	m7 \emptyset (or simply \emptyset)
Diminished	o