

# Larger Voicings

Using 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-part voicings is an advanced approach to comping, but these voicings generate a rich, full sound and can be used in “random” comping as well. These voicings will inadvertently produce upper-structure triads and upper-structure fourths. As with all other voicing techniques, these give the impression of a somewhat restrictive order of voices. The ultimate goal with all voicing techniques is to create freedom of movement over the keyboard by reshaping or partializing and pianisticizing (see chapter 6) the strict order.

## CREATING LARGER VOICINGS

To create these larger voicings, follow these guidelines:

1. The left hand plays any inversion of chord tones 1, 3, and 7 (i.e., the chord without the 5th).



Fig. 11.1. 1-3-7 Inversion

2. The right hand plays the melody.



Fig. 11.2. Melody in Right Hand

3. Add tensions below the melody.



Fig. 11.3. Tensions

When creating larger voicings, here are some things to avoid:

1. Avoid the 5th unless it is in the melody.



Fig. 11.4. 5th in Melody

2. Avoid doubling a note unless it is in the melody.



Fig. 11.5. Doubling Chord Tones

3. Avoid combining natural and altered functions of the same tension. If a  $\flat 9$  interval results between any two voices, then invert to a major-7th interval, thus reducing the rate of dissonance. For example, do not play  $\flat 5$  with 5,  $\flat 9$  with  $\sharp 9$ ,  $\sharp 9$  with  $\flat 9$ , or  $\flat 13$  with  $\sharp 13$ .



Fig. 11.6. Combining Tensions

4. Avoid the flat-9th interval.

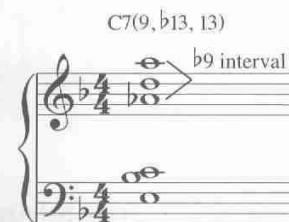


Fig. 11.7. Avoid the Flat-9th Interval

If you have a dominant-7th chord with a sus4, make sure the 3rd is above the sus4 to avoid a flat-9th interval. You can switch the voices of any flat-9th interval to create the less dissonant major 7th interval.

The diagram illustrates three voicings for a dominant-7th chord with a suspended 4th (C7sus4) in 4/4 time. The first voicing, labeled C7sus4, shows a major 7th interval between the 3rd and the suspended 4th. The second voicing, labeled C7(b5, #9, sus4), shows a flat-9th interval between the 3rd and the suspended 4th. The third voicing, also labeled C7(b5, #9, sus4), shows the voices of the flat-9th interval exchanged to create a major 7th interval.

Fig. 11.8. Avoiding the Flat-9th Interval on a Dominant-7th sus4 Chord

Here is an example of a voice-led progression of 6-part voicings.

The notation shows a voice-led progression of 6-part voicings. It starts with D-7, moves to G7, and ends with CMaj7. The voicings are shown in both treble and bass clefs, with fingerings indicated for the bass line.

Fig. 11.9. Voice-Led Progression

## PRACTICE

### Exercise 11.1. 5- and 6-Part Voicings

Practice the following tune, which you can find in appendices A and B, to get a feel for 5- and 6-part voicings.



TRACK 27

#### Perry's Parasol

Ray Santisi

The notation for Perry's Parasol shows two systems of chords and voicings. The first system includes F7, Bb7, A7, Ab7, Db7, and C7. The second system includes F7, Bb7, E7, Eb7, A7, and Ab6. The voicings are shown in both treble and bass clefs.

### Exercise 11.2. Applying Larger Voicings

Use 5-, 6-, 7-, and 8-part voicings on other tunes in appendix A.