

(Book 3) Lesson 37b.

Three Part Dominant Seventh Chords (cont'd)

There are a variety of shortcuts to the thought process that is involved in playing the three part Dominant 7th chord. One might compare the fingerings in respect to three part major triads. (A four part triad is a paradox but can occur in a situation where one of the notes of the triad is duplicated in a higher or lower octave.)

Root Position 3 part V7 and Root Pos Major triad	First Inv 3 part V7 and First Inv Maj triad	Second Inv 3 part V7 and 2nd Inv Maj triad	Third Inv 3 part V7 and Root Pos Maj triad
b7 replaces 5th	b7 replaces 5th	b7 replaces Root	b7 replaces Root

Notice the similarity in the physical chord fingering shapes. The above demonstration is comparing the A7 three part chord to the A Major triad using the G-B-E strings.

Root Position V7 and Root Pos Maj Triad	First Inv V7 and First Inv Maj Triad	Second Inv V7 and Sec Inv Maj Triad	Third Inv V7 and Root Pos Maj Triad
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Here is a comparison of the E7 three part chord and the E Major triads using the D-G-B strings.

Aside from learning to form and play the three part Dominant 7th chords, it is also important to be able to think the key of the Dominant 7th chord.

Example:

A7 = Dominant 7th chord in the Key of D Major. Key signature contains "two sharps".

General spelling of A7 = A-C-E-G. Specific Spelling = A-C#-E-G.

(If you used the key signature of "A" major, the specific spelling would be A-C#-E-G# which is an Amaj7 chord)

Remember that the Dominant 7th chord is built on the Dominant (V) note of any major key.

E7 = Dom7 chord in the Key of A Major. Key signature contains "three sharps".

General spelling = E-G-B-E. Specific Spelling = E-G#-B-D. (E7=V chord in A major)

When thinking the inversions of the chords, spell the chord in four parts but omit the appropriate note for that inversion.

Example: C7 = V7 chord in Key of F (one flat in key signature)

Root Position = C-E-(omit G)-Bb (Root-3rd-[omit 5th]-flat 7th)

First Inversion = E-(omit G)-Bb-C (3rd-[omit 5th]-flat 7th-Root)

Second Inv = G-Bb-(omit Root)-E (5th-b7th-[omit Root]-3rd)

Third Inversion = Bb-(omit Root)-E-G (b7th-[omit Root]-3rd-5th)

Although this process may seem tedious at first, with several weeks of concentrated effort, you should find it reasonably doable. It is very important to be aware of what notes you are playing in any chord. This will become even more evident as you proceed with the study of chords and harmonization techniques.