

(Book 5.) Lesson 22.

Interchangeable Chord Family Tree

Using an interchangeable chord of any kind is a judgement call.

Tonic Chords

in a Major Key: "C" in Key of C Major

Can be substituted by C6 or Cmaj7 = maj6 or maj7 chord built on the Root

Cmaj9 = Em7 (G6) = min7 chord built on the 3rd of the Tonic chord

The Tonic chord can be substituted as shown above. Keep in mind that the Tonic chord is a mostly "non-active" chord where all of the embellishing notes simply resolve to the non-active tones found in the Tonic chord. If you attempt to take the Tonic tower of thirds past the 9th degree, you will endanger the Tonic sound by creating a tri-tone on top of the original chord. The tri-tone creates a feel of the "Dominant" which is a chord that usually will take a cycle resolution.

Tonic Chords

in a Minor Key: "Cm" in the Key of C Minor

Can usually be replaced by Cm7, Cm6 or Cm(maj7)

Can be replaced by Cm9 = Ebmaj7 = Maj7 chord built on the 3rd of the Tonic minor chord.

Dominant 7th

Chords: "G7" in the Key of C Major or C Minor

The Dominant 7th chord can be and often is replaced and/or represented by a large variety of chords which are derived from the Towers of Thirds interchangeable chord concept.

G7 sus 4 ---- can be represented by Dm7 = minor 7th built on the 5th of G7 (also contains 9th)

G9 ---- represented by Bm7b5 (or Dm6) = min7b5 built on the 3rd of G7 (or min6 built on 5th of G7)

G11 ---- same as G7sus4

G13(sus4) ---- represented by Fmaj7 = maj7 built on the b7th of G7 (also contains 9)

G13 ---- can also be poorly represented by Em7 = min7th built on 13th (Em7 however does not contain the note "F" which is part of the tri-tone in G7)

G7b5 ---- enharmonic to Db7b5

G7b9 ---- represented by Dim7 chord built on 3rd, 5th, b7th, or b9th (B-D-F-Ab dim7 chords)

G7b5b9 ---- represented by Db7 = sometimes referred to as the "tri-tone substitute"

G7(sus4,#5,b9)----represented by Ab6 = maj6 chord built on b9 of G7

Ab6 = Ab-C-Eb-F = b9-sus4-#5-b7 of "G"

G7 (sus4,b9,b13) ----represented by Abmaj7 = maj7 built on b9th of G7.

Abmaj7 = Ab-C-Eb-G = b9, sus4, b13, Root -----highly dissonant

G11(b9) ---- represented by Abm6 = min6 chord built on b9 of G7 (or Fm7b5 = min7b5 on b7 of G7)

Abm6 = Ab-Cb(B)-Eb(D#)-F = b9-3-#5-b7 of G7

G13(sus4,b9)---- represented by Fm(maj7) = min-maj7 built of b7 of G7

Fm(maj7) = F-Ab-C-E = b7-b9-sus4-13 of G7

G9(#11) ---- represented by Dm(maj7) = min-maj7 built on 5th of G7

Dm(maj7) = D-F-A-C# = 5-b7-9-#11 of G7

G7(#5,b9)---- represented by Abm(maj7) = min-maj7 built on b9 of G7

Abm(maj7) = Ab-Cb(B)-Eb(D#)-G = b9-3-#5-R of G7

Admittedly, many of these interchangeable possibilities are not only very dissonant but also difficult to place into a standard piece of music. You may run into an argument about the validity of some of these chords. If you are convinced of their propriety, don't be afraid to use them. Bass players must remember that it is up to them to supply the Root of the G7 chord. Without the bass-root, the interchangeable chords have less chance of surviving scrutiny.