

JAZZ HARMONY AND RHYTHM FOR CHOIR NERDS: A CRASH COURSE

JED SCOTT

JED@JEDSCOTT.COM

TW: @JEDSCOTT | IG/FB: @JEDSCOTTMUSIC

Welcome to the session.

I know so many choir conductors who love the music of jazz but feel very hesitant to attempt it - they feel like they don't have the skills or knowledge to interpret it properly.

We're going to outline the approach that a jazz musician might take to looking at vocal jazz repertoire, and give you the tools to feel comfortable interpreting this vital music.

THE NEXT SESSION



I found myself in multiple sessions saying “I could say more, but we don’t have time - that’s for the next session.” That’s what this is.

Like this Ella picture. Backstory - Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown.

FUNDAMENTAL HARMONIC LANGUAGE

SEVENTH CHORDS

The first thing to do is address the fundamental harmonic language. Instead of triads, the basic structure of jazz harmony is the seventh chord.

There are still only three notes we care about: the root, the third, and the seventh. (the 5th doesn't affect the sonority in most cases.)

FIVE SEVENTH CHORDS

- MAJOR SEVENTH CHORD
- DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD
- MINOR SEVENTH CHORD
- HALF-DIMINISHED SEVENTH CHORD = $M7(b5)$
- DIMINISHED SEVENTH CHORD = $7(b9)$

Refresher: there are basic types of seventh chords. (There's a sixth, but it's a special case)

We're going to focus almost exclusively on the first three.

The other two become sub-types of the first three.

ii-V-I

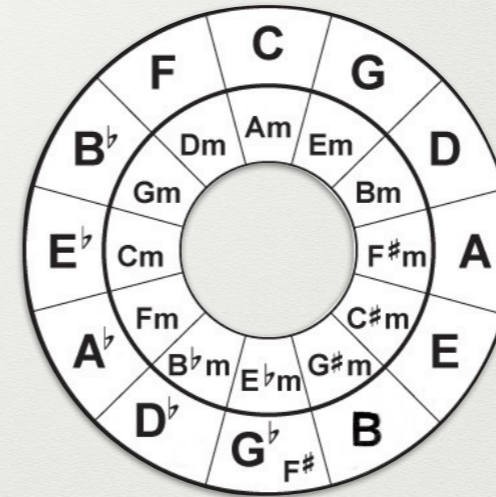
MINOR SEVENTH



DOMINANT SEVENTH



MAJOR SEVENTH

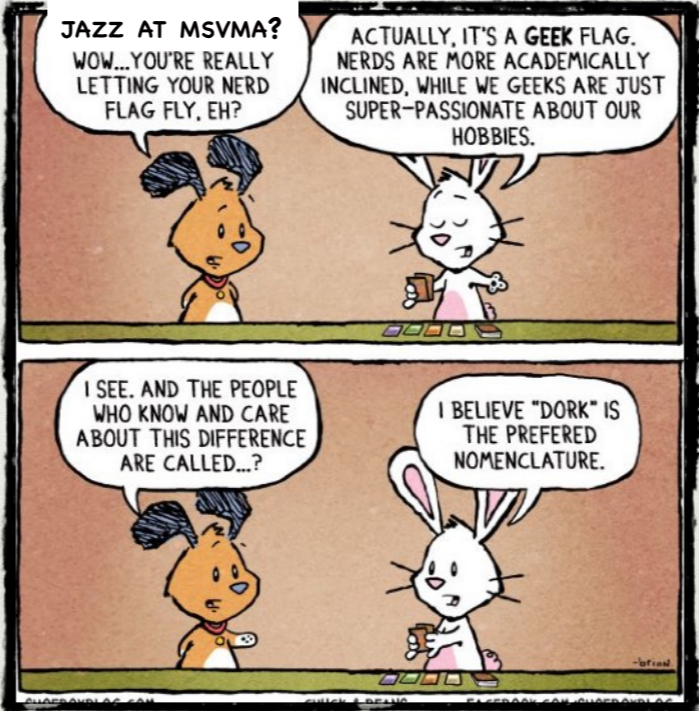


Those three chords usually function in this order.

The roots follow the circle of fifths, so we end up with a progression like Dmi7 - G7 - Cma7

This is the three-chord progression that's at the root of jazz harmony. We'll come back to ii-V-I's in a few minutes, but for now let's talk about one of my favorite topics: nomenclature.

NOMENCLATURE



There...fixed it.

NOMENCLATURE

CHORD TYPE	ACCEPTABLE	PREFERRED	UNACCEPTABLE
MINOR	MIN7, -7	M17	M7, 7
DOMINANT		7	MM7
MAJOR	MA7, Δ7	MA7	M7

You should know ALL of these, but I strongly urge you to use the preferred in all of your own work.

With one exception, any time you have just a number it means it's a dominant-type seventh chord.

Why should you know them all? While in grad school in Miami I worked as a copyist for an old-school Hollywood orchestrator, writing band parts for a new musical based on Harry Warren tunes. He used the crossed style of 7 and I would have copied all the chords wrong if I hadn't known. I personally use crossed sevens 100% of the time EXCEPT when I'm writing out chord changes.

EXTENSIONS

- NUMBERS BELOW SEVEN = STRUCTURAL
- NUMBERS ABOVE SEVEN = COLOR

In all cases, if you use a number below seven, it is structural to the function of the chord.

If you use a number above seven, it adds color to the chord but doesn't alter its primary function.

EXTENSIONS - DOMINANT

CHORD TYPE	ALTERATIONS OF THE ROOT	ALTERATIONS OF THE FIFTH	OTHER
DIATONIC	G9	G13	
CHROMATIC	G7(b9) G7(#9)	G7(b13) G7(#11)	G7ALT

We'll start with dominant extensions because they have the most expansive options.

Note - this means that a dominant seventh chord can include ten of the twelve chromatic notes.
(Only exceptions - FA and TI). We can easily structure chords with as many as seven distinct notes.

EXTENSIONS - DOMINANT

NUMBERS IMPLY ALL LOWER DIATONIC

CHORD TONES AND EXTENSIONS

- **G13** IMPLIES A 9
- **G9** DOES NOT IMPLY A 13

So now you know what the difference is between a G6 and a G13 - and why you would use one or the other! Or a G9 and a G2.

EXTENSIONS - DOMINANT

USE HIGHEST UNALTERED EXTENSION AS NUMBER FOR CHORD

- G9(b13)
- G13(#11)
- G13(b9)

EXTENSIONS - DOMINANT

EXTENSIONS CAN BE COMBINED FOR MAXIMUM FUN!

- G9(b13)
- G13(#11)
- G13(b9)
- G7 (^{#9}_{b9})
- G7ALT (b9, #9, #11, b13)

DOMINANT - TRITONE SUBSTITUTION

- FUNCTIONAL NOTES: 3RD AND SEVENTH
- ROOT: 2 POSSIBLE
- TRITONE SUB: COOOOOL
- ALT CHORD = DIATONIC TRITONE SUB

What is the 3rd and seventh of a C7 chord? (E, Bb)

What other dominant chord has those notes as 3rd and 7th, enharmonically? (Gb)

So we can substitute the root a tritone away for any dominant seventh chord, ever.

Note: the TT sub of a diatonic 13 chord is an alt chord.

(C13 includes R, 9, 5, 13. With Gb root they become #11, b13, b9, #9)

EXTENSIONS - MINOR

CHORD TYPE	ALTERATIONS OF THE ROOT	ALTERATIONS OF THE FIFTH	OTHER
DIATONIC	Dmi9	Dmi13	Dmi6 Dmi11
CHROMATIC			Dmi7(b5) Dmi(MA7)

Minor seventh chord extensions

Note - our minor scale is not Aeolian but Dorian (think ii chord - built on RE) so the Dmi6 chord has a major 6th. Dmi(b6) is not commonly used in functional jazz harmony.

Here the mi6 is different than the mi13 because of what the 13 implies - the 7, especially.

the mi11 chord is different than the #11 in the dominant chord, because the 11 isn't really an alteration of the fifth, it's its own color.

EXTENSIONS - MAJOR

CHORD TYPE	ALTERATIONS OF THE ROOT	ALTERATIONS OF THE FIFTH	OTHER
DIATONIC	CMA9	CMA13	C6 (!!)
CHROMATIC		CMA7(#11)	

Major seventh chord extensions

Cma7(#11) typically functions as a bitonal chord - add the 9 and the 13 - Cma13(#11) and you have a D major triad over a Cma7.

QUICKLY

SUS CHORDS

G7(SUS4), CMA7(SUS4)

SLASH CHORDS

G7/B, CMA7/E, F/G

suspended chords work just as you'd expect - fourth is by far the most common.

slash chords are mostly functional but they don't have to be. You can have a non-chord tone under a functional chord.

ii-V-I PART 2

HARMONIC CENTERS

We think of jazz standards as having multiple key centers. Jazz musicians look for ii-V's and ii-V-I's as ways to see the structure of the piece. It's a sort of harmonic Schenkerian analysis.

SATIN DOLL

DUKE ELLINGTON &

BILLY STRAYORN (1953)

26

SATIN DOLL - DUKE ELLINGTON
JOHNNY MERCER
BILLY STRAYORN

gig-a-rette hold - er which wig we, o - ver her shoul - der,
Ba-by, shall we go out skip-pin'?, cape-pil, a - ni - go,
she digs me, Out cat - tin', that sat - in doll..
you're flip - pin', speaks let - in, that sat - in doll..
she's
no-bod-y's fool, so I'm play - ing it cool, as can be. I'll
give it a whirl, but I ain't for no girl, catch-ing me. Switch-ar-oo-ney.
Tel-ephone num - bers well you know, do-ing my thum - bes with u - no,
and that 'n', my sat - in doll. FINE

Copyright © 1953 (Renewed 1980) and Assigned to Famous Music, Inc. All Music Corp.
and Tempo Music, Inc. All Music Rights Corporation in the U.S.A.
Rights for the world outside the U.S.A. Controlled by Tempo Music, Inc. All Music Rights Corporation

2101
-DUKE ELLINGTON/
JOHNNY MERCER/
BILLY STRAYHORN

SATIN DOLL

(MED.)

1: ii-V-I-VI7

2: ii-V-I-VI7

3: ii-V-I-VI7

4: ii-V-I-VI7

5: ii-V-I-VI7

6: ii-V-I-VI7

7: I-VI7 - ii7

8: ii-V-I-VI7

(RETURN TO MEASURE 1)

First, here's how we might analyze the A section in standard harmonic analysis.

Now here's how a jazzer is going to look at the A section of Satin Doll.

Be sure to note the overall analysis: ii-V-I in C, with much digression.

Note the second chord in m.6 - Db7. It's a tritone substitution for what? G7, which is the V in the home key - finally getting us home in m.7.

HOW HIGH THE MOON

MORGAN LEWIS &

NANCY HAMILTON (1940)

117
HOW HIGH THE MOON - MORGAN LEWIS / NANCY HAMILTON

Some-where there's no - sic, how faint the tune! Some-where there's
heav - en, how high the moon! There is no
moon a - bove when love is far - a-way too, 'til it comes
true that you love me as I love you. Some-where there's
no - sic, it's where you are. Some-where there's
heav - en, how near, how far! The dark - est
night would shine if you would come to me soon. Oh - til you
will, how still my heart, how high the moon! FINE (Some-where there's)

Copyright © 1940 by Chappell & Co.
Copyright Renewed

Some-where there's mu - sic, how faint the tune! Some-where there's
 heav - en, how high the moon! There is no
 moon a - bove when love is far_ a-way too, 'til_ it comes
 true that you love me as I love you. Some-where there's

1: I IN G	2: I IN G	3: II IN F	4: V IN F
5: I IN F	6: I IN F	7: II IN E-FLAT	8: V IN E-FLAT
9: I IN E-FLAT	10: II -V IN G MINOR	11: I IN G MINOR	12: II -V IN G MINOR
13: I IN G (!)	14: II -V IN G	15: II -V IN A	16: II -V IN G

Here's how a jazzer is going to look at the first section of "How High The Moon."

Note: m.15 ii-V with a tritone substitution.

It's worth mentioning that we haven't looked at other the primary form you'll see in jazz: the 12-bar blues. This doesn't have the same functional harmonic approach - in its simplest form, it's I, IV, V - but as early as the '40s, when Charlie Parker was writing blues tunes, he would reharmonize those three basic chords to get extended strings of ii-Vs. (Known as Bird Blues).

JAZZ PIANO IN ONE SLIDE

1. LH ROOT, 2-NOTE RH
2. LH ROOT, 4-NOTE RH
3. ROOT/FIFTH BASS LINE
4. STEPWISE BASS LINE

The image shows four musical examples of ii-V-I progressions in D minor, each with a circled number indicating the technique:

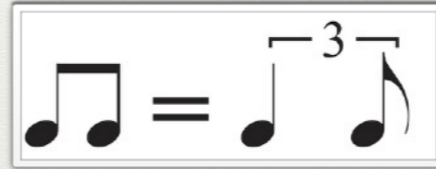
- 1. LH ROOT, 2-NOTE RH:** Shows a Dm7 chord (root in bass, 2-note triad in treble), a G7 chord (root in bass, 2-note triad in treble), and a Cma7 chord (root in bass, 2-note triad in treble).
- 2. LH ROOT, 4-NOTE RH:** Shows a Dm9 chord (root in bass, 4-note triad in treble), a G13 chord (root in bass, 4-note triad in treble), and a Cma9 chord (root in bass, 4-note triad in treble).
- 3. ROOT/FIFTH BASS LINE:** Shows a Dm7 chord (root and fifth in bass), a G7 chord (root and fifth in bass), and a Cma7 chord (root and fifth in bass).
- 4. STEPWISE BASS LINE:** Shows a Dm7 chord (root and fifth in bass), a G7 chord (root and fifth in bass), and a Cma7 chord (root and fifth in bass), with a stepwise bass line connecting the roots of the chords.

If you can master these four ii-V-I skills in all twelve keys, you'll be able to effectively play easily 80% of the patterns you see in vocal jazz literature.

SWING RHYTHM - THE 3 U'S

- UPBEAT ACCENT (MACRO)

- UNEVEN 8THS



- UPBEAT ACCENT (MICRO)

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

- ARTICULATIONS
- SOLO VS ENSEMBLE
- RELATIVE FREEDOM FROM SCORE
- AURAL TRADITION

1. articulations can be notated or not.
2. You're going to have a different approach depending on the size of ensemble. Take 6 can be more individual, e.g.
3. Don't feel like the score has all the answers. If you want to depart from the score for a stylistic addition, trust your musical instincts. Every arranger I know encourages that.
4. This is an aural tradition. Listen, listen, listen!

RESOURCES

- JAZZ ARRANGING TECHNIQUES (GARY LINDSAY)
WWW.LINDSDAYJAZZ.COM
- DARCY JAMES ARGUE'S CHORD SYMBOL GUIDELINES
WWW.JEDSCOTT.COM/ARGUECHORDS/
- JAZZ PIANO HANDBOOK (MICHELE WEIR)
WWW.MICHMUSIC.COM
- THE JAZZ HARMONY RETREAT (JEREMY FOX)
WWW.THEJAZZHARMONYRETREAT.COM

THANK YOU!

YOU'RE OFFICIALLY NOW A VOCAL JAZZ NERD.

QUESTIONS?

JED SCOTT

JED@JEDSCOTT.COM

TW: @JEDSCOTT | IG/FB: @JEDSCOTTMUSIC

Welcome to the session.

We're going to outline the approach that a jazz musician might take to looking at vocal jazz repertoire, and give you the tools to feel comfortable interpreting this vital music.