

Static Changes: Connecting Chords

More Three-note chords to supercharge your comping

By Ted Eschliman

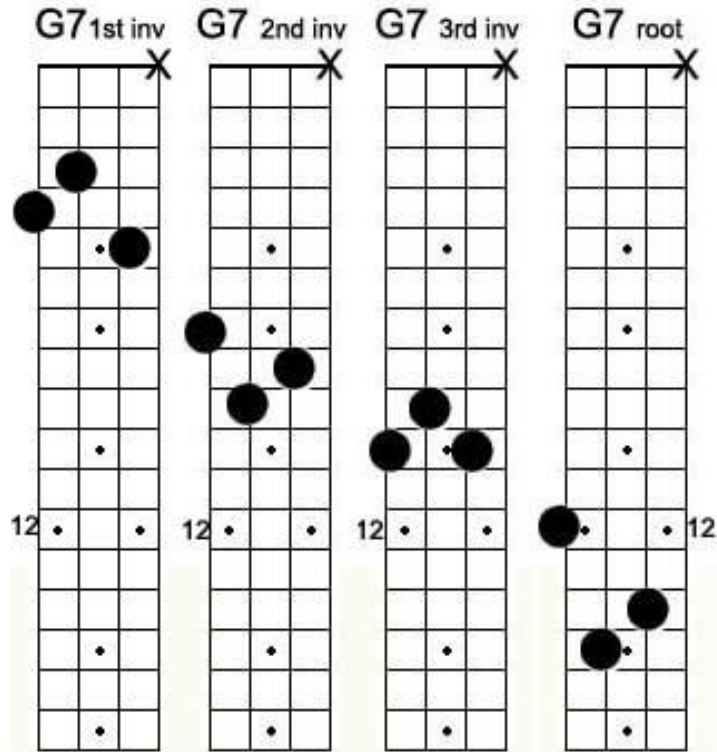


Up the neck

Last time we looked at the "static" changes of a typical **12-bar Blues** progression and explored how we could use inversions of the 3-note chord fingerings to inject a little variety into your comping. <http://www.mandolinsessions.com/?p=809> We laid out the four basic combinations, and, if you recall, we outlined the beauty of their simplicity:

- 1.) There are only four of them! From there, they just repeat up the hypothetically infinite fretboard
- 2.) They are instantly transposable up the neck
- 3.) They are instantly transposable across the strings

We graphed them in the key of **A**, now this time we'll move them down a couple frets and into the **key of G** (*we said "movable," right?*), to prepare you for a little context later, comping for the **Miles Davis** classic, "**All Blues**." Don't let the whole notion of **inversion** labels bog you down. **It's more important you just know there are four of them.** The inversion numbers themselves are more for the music theory geek.

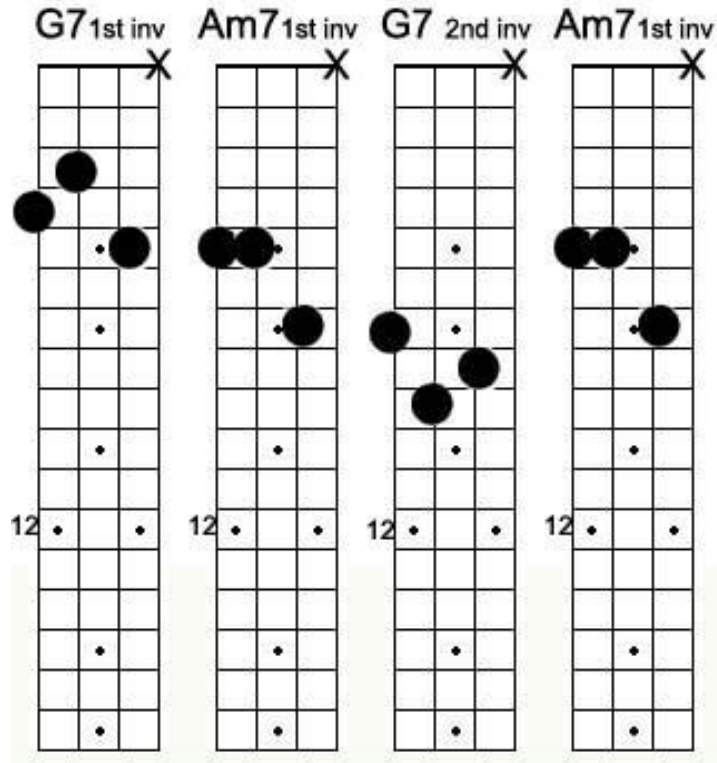


It's great to be able to play these automatically, running them as exercises. Incorporating them as part of your daily warm-up routine will pay off big time, so make sure these become intuitive. You should be able to set your fingers on autopilot.

Good Voicings

One of the cardinal rules in effective voice leading on the mandolin, even in chording, is in general you **should avoid jumping more than three frets when you do change chords**. The above block is fun to bounce around but frankly, it's just not very efficient for the fingers. It's also not terribly smooth on the ears, either.

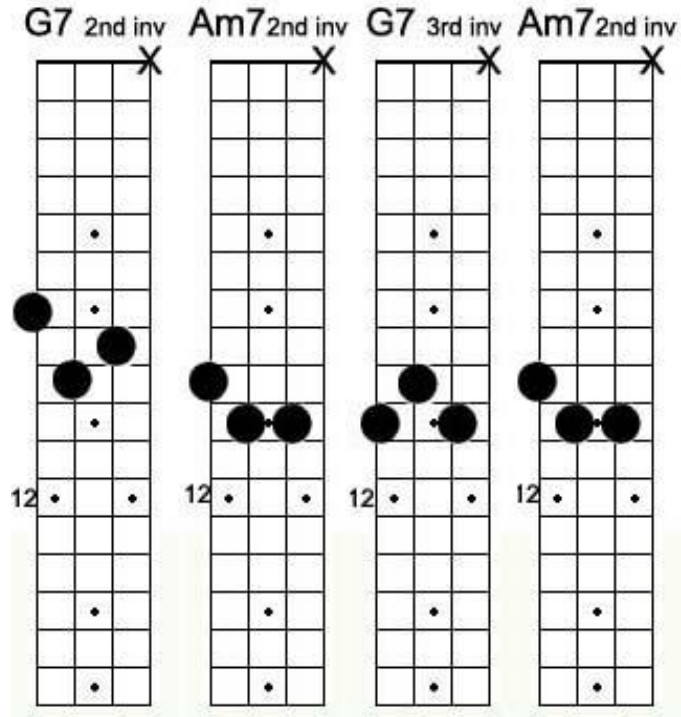
As in melodic "**passing tones**" that make linear connections between chord tones, chords progressions themselves can have "**passing chords**." You can play the same chord functionally by using the above different inversions, but a better effect is to inject the **diatonic chords** (chords based on the notes) of the scale that occur in between. We'll take the **G7** above, but add some connective tissue with inversions of the **Am7** chord:



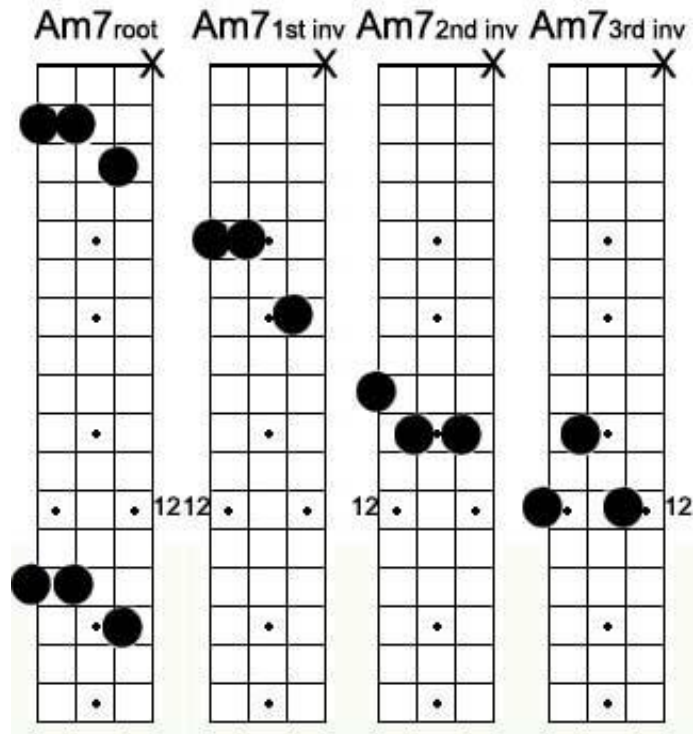
Play through these. Observe how smooth this sounds, and you don't really even change the pattern's "**G7-ness**." Anytime you see an extended **G7** chord in a leadsheet lasting several measures, you can play this entire pattern. Up and down, Up and down. Start with the third chord instead of the first, play two to a bar, one every beat, double it up, no matter what you do, you maintain the integrity of the harmonic structure of **G7**.

Movin' on up...

Here's where this gets good. You can start this on another inversion. Use the next inversion of the connecting **Am7**:

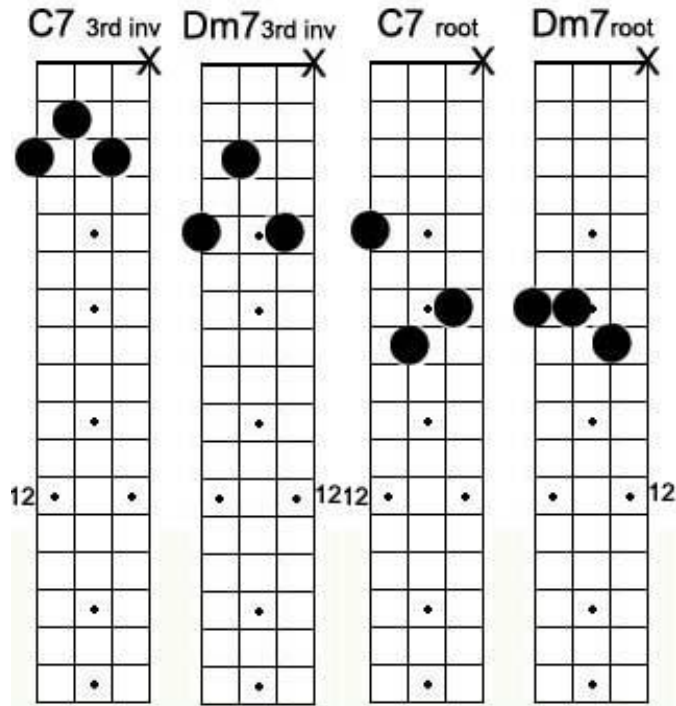


For reference, here are the other inversions of the **Am7**. Your mission is to learn these so you can splice them and connect up the **four G7 inversions** you already know:



New key

Take it to the next step and change keys. Here's a good start for **C7**:



All Blues

Here's where we want to bring this concept home. In the definitive jazz treasure "**All Blues**" most of the entire song is **G7** and **C7**. Taking the above patterns and the ability to expand your **3-note V7 chords** will broaden your comping exponentially. Have some fun with this!

$\frac{3}{4}$ G7		/:		/:		/:	
G7		/:		/:		/:	
C7		/:		/:		/:	
G7		/:		/:		/:	
D7#9		/:		E7#9		D7#9	
G7		/:		/:		/:	

Here's a MIDI track from jazz guru **Mark Wilson**, who has contributed some great articles on the **JazzMando** site you'll want to check out. (Link for Mark Wilson <http://jazzmando.com/mt-search.cgi?IncludeBlogs=1&IncludeBlogs=3&IncludeBlogs=4&search=Mark+Wilson&search.x=0&search.y=0&search=Search>)

Sound Link: <http://jazzmando.com/sound/ALLBLUES.MID>

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By the way, if you ever want a title summary of all the **JazzMandology** topics (over three dozen, now!) here's a page that lists them: http://jazzmando.com/mandolin_sessions.shtml. There's a lot to uncover there, and **Mel Bay Publishing** has brought these all to you for free. Share them with your **Facebook** and **Twitter** friends. In case you are completely new to the **FFcP** concept referred to in previous **Jazz Mandology** articles, here's a good primer on the JazzMando site:

http://jazzmando.com/ffcp_studies.shtml

Take a few moments to check out the wealth of inexpensive resources you can buy at Mel Bay Express or better, through your local Mel Bay dealer. If you enjoyed this article, do us a favor and click on the fifth star. (We love job security.) Leave comments.



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