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Static Changes: Major 7ths

August 2011 One Comment



More Three-note chords to supercharge your comping

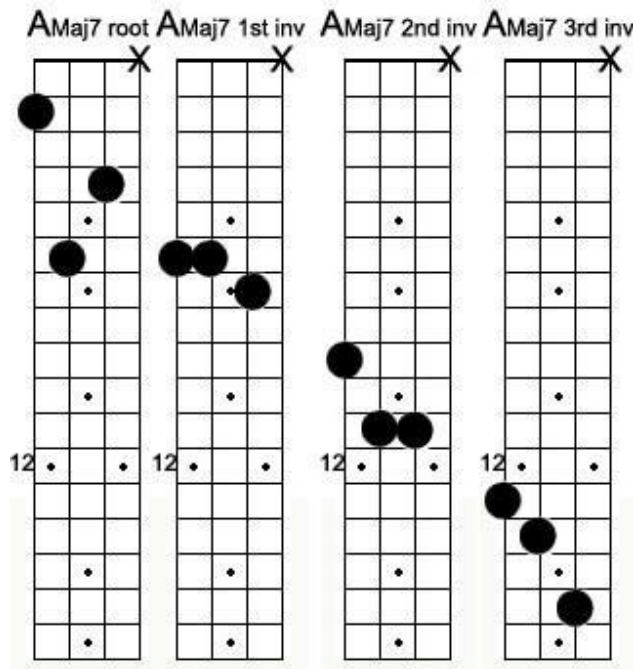
By Ted Eschliman

Three Notes. Sonic completeness

In the last two mandolin sessions articles, we've looked at inversions of **Dominant 7 chords**, using only three notes. <http://www.mandolinsessions.com/?p=809> We hope in your exploration, you've discovered just how complete these notes are, in and of themselves, and as we laid out the four basic combinations, their simplicity has become a useful reality in your own playing, not only in the work you did with "All Blues" but in other situations that call for extended bars of the same **V7 chord**. To review:

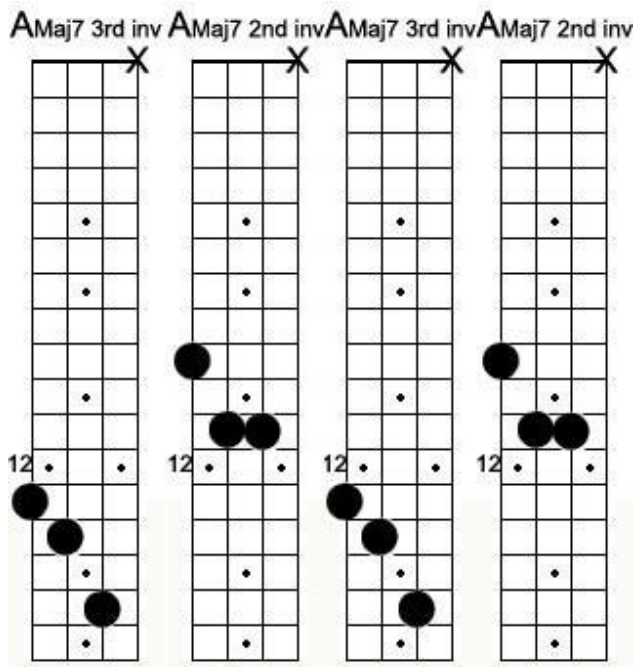
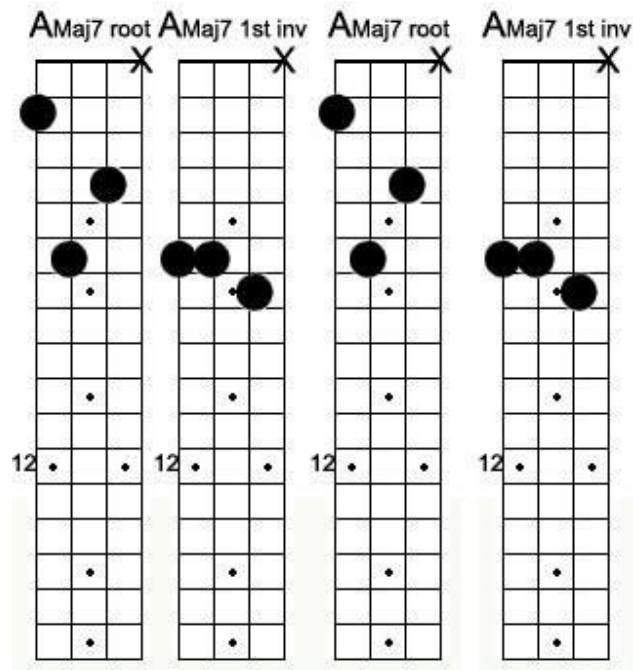
- 1.) There are only four of them! From there, they just repeat up the hypothetically infinite fretboard
- 2.) They are instantly transposable up the neck
- 3.) They are instantly transposable across the strings

You may have already thought this through, but you can take the same approach to a song that has multiple measures of the same **Major 7 chord**. Let's take a look at how you can voice this out in the key of **A major**:



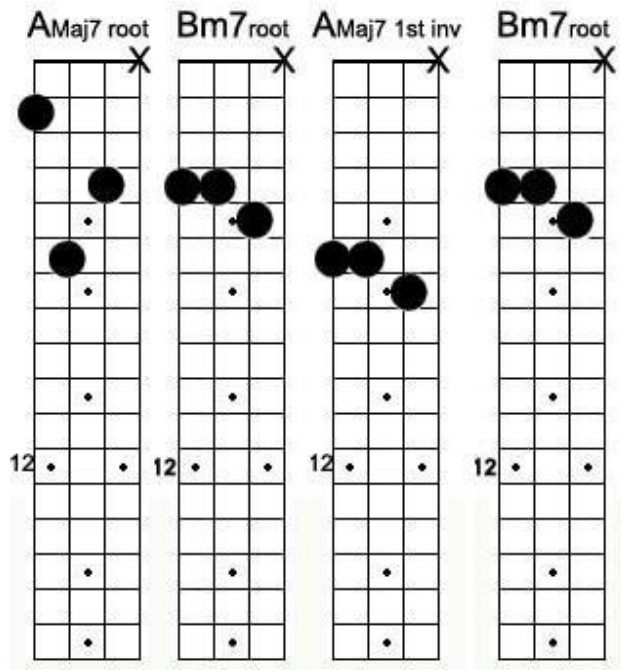
Again, don't let the whole notion of **inversion** labels bog you down. They are actually named for the bottom note in the chord, but it's simply not necessary for you to *think* **root, 1st, 2nd, 3rd inversions**. **It's more important just to remember there are four of them**. The inversion numbers themselves are more for the music theory geek.

Play them a couple at a times at first, maybe 3-4 downstrokes per chord before moving to the next, but get them into your fingers, developing your ability to play these automatically, running them as exercises. You should be able to set your fingers on autopilot. When you become more accomplished, you can play them one right after another, move up and down

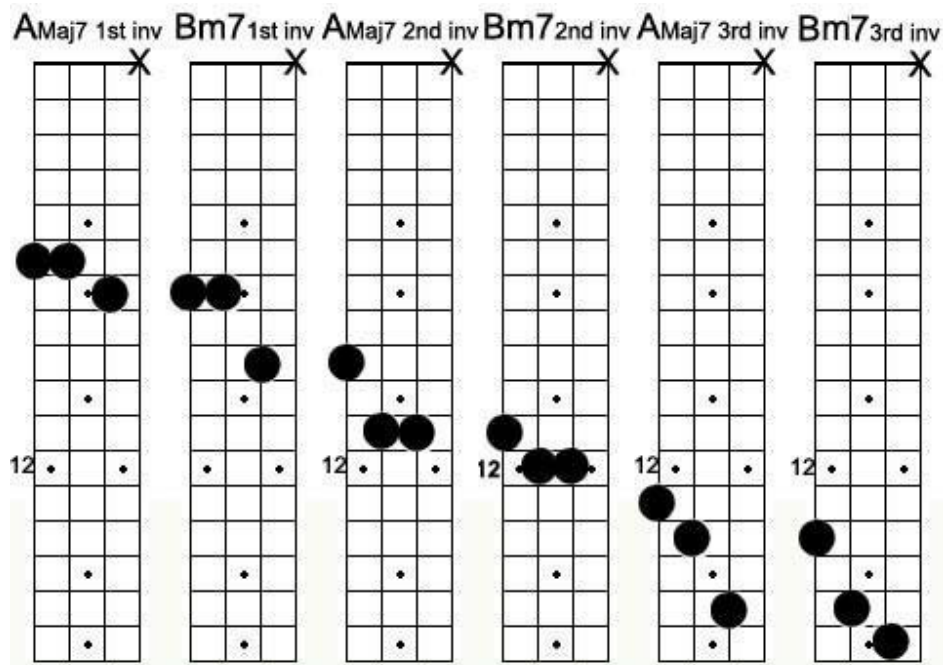


Add fluid

We mentioned this last time. Bouncing around more than 3 frets is not only hard to do, it can be jarring to the ears. It's just not good voice leading, so we're going to add some glue here by inserting passing chords. In the key of **A Major**, we can use a **Bm7** chord (which also contains the same notes as a **D6** chord) to move more gradually. (Attention theory geeks: this is **ii**m7 and **IV**6.) Since these are all in the same key, it works as a benign harmonic change. Try this:



Let's map out the rest of these:

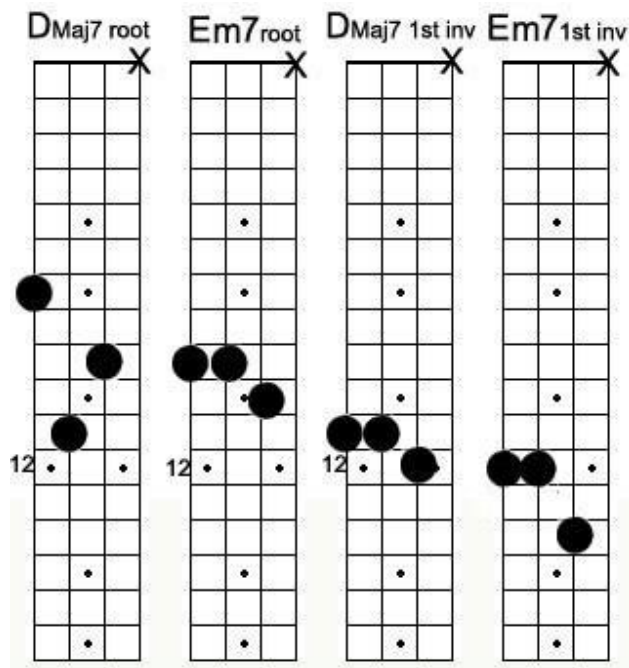
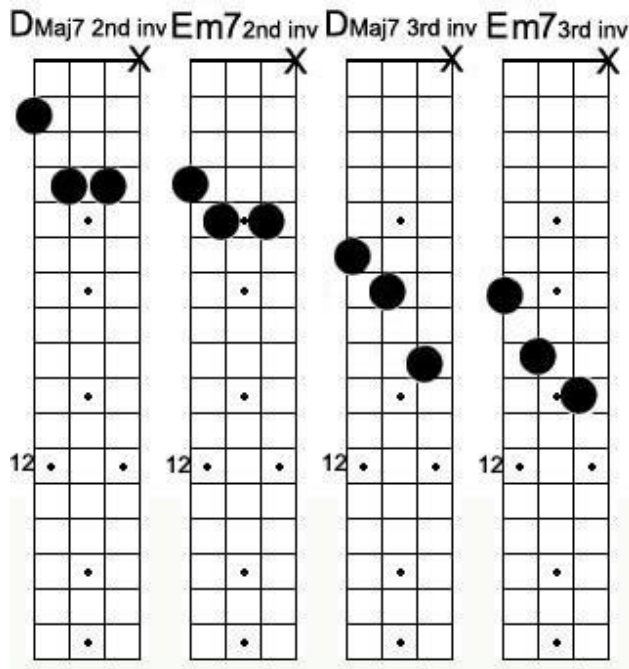


Play through the succession. Observe how smooth chord motion sounds, and you don't really even change the pattern's "**A Major-ness.**" Anytime you see an extended **A Major 7** chord in a leadsheet lasting several measures, you can play this entire pattern. Up and down, up and down. Start with the third 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 **A Major7**.

New key

You should begin to apply this to the other 11 keys, maybe working through the **Circle of Fifths**

(A/E/B/F# etc...) or just chromatically up the fretboard. Even better, find a song that includes extended measures of **Major 7** (or **Major 6**) like "**Mack the Knife**" or "**There Will Never Be Another You**" and run this through its paces. Let's get you started with the **D Major7**:



Simplicity

It's amazing how much potential these 3-note patterns hold. As well as moving them up the fretboard, you can also move them across a string. For comping, the lowest three strings sound the best, though, and it's arguably easier to mute your **E string** with your palm as we've indicated with the "X" on the diagrams. Think about moving the **A Major** and **D Major** up a fret. You have **Bb Major** and **Eb Major** at your finger tips, up one more, it's **B Major** and **E Major**. (That's one third of all your keys already!) How about it? Immediate access to all **12 keys**, simply by moving the same pattern around the fretboard.

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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, many resources available in an e-format. 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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8 October 2011 at 7:56 am

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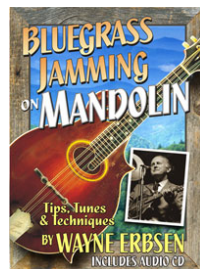
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