

5 NOTE MIXED VOICINGS

FIVE NOTE MIXED VOICINGS are so called because they are constructed of a mix of tertular harmonies (3rds and 7ths) and quartal harmonies (stacked fourths). As a result, these voicings are very flexible and can be used in bebop and hard bop settings as well as modal and contemporary.

Let's start with building a few chords from the 3rd chord factor. You may build MAJOR, DOMINANT, and MINOR chords with the 3rd and 7th tones in the left hand, then add a quartal chord built from the 9th in the right hand.

Cmaj9	Cmaj69	C9	Cm9	Cmin ⁶ ₉
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C7(b9,b13)

Cmaj69

C13

For ALTERED DOMINANTS, you may add a quartal chord from the RAISED 9th (lowered 3rd)

Cmin11

Cmin⁶₉

Now let's build a few chords from the 7th chord factor.

You may build MAJOR and DOMINANT chords with the 7th and 3rd tones in the left hand, then add a quartal chord built from the 6th (13th) in the right hand.

C7(b9,#11,b13)

Cdim

You may build MINOR 7th and MINOR 6/9 chords with the 7th and 3rd tones in the left hand, then add a quartal chord built from the 5th in the right hand.

Cdim

For ALTERED DOMINANTS, you may add a quartal chord from the RAISED 5th (lowered 13th)

Cdim

For DIMINISHED chords:

When building from the 3rd, add the 9th, 11th, and b13th (a diminished triad from the 9th)

When building from the 7th, add the b13th, 9th, and 11th (a diminished triad in 2nd inversion)

Cø9

For HALF DIMINISHED chords, build from the root and b5th

When building from the root, add a quartal chord from the b7th

When building from the b5th, add a quartal chord from the 4th (11th)

After some transposition and experimentation, you will begin to see that some of the voicings have multiple functions. Below is a minor iiø9-V7(alt)-imin6/9 progression using 5 note mixed voicings. You can see that each voicing has multiple uses.

Dø7 G7(b9,b13) Cmin⁶₉

You will also begin to notice after some experimentation that more interesting voicings can be created by alternating and overlapping the left hand chord tones and right hand quartal chords. Below is a variety of options for each chord of a minor iiø9-V7(alt)-imin6/9

Dø7 G7(b9,b13) Cmin⁶₉

Practice the chords in 12 keys and apply them to tunes. Here are a few examples of ii9-V9-I9s in different inversions to get you started. You can see that the sound is full and flexible and the voice leading is very natural, even when including the alterations on the dominant chord

Dm9 G13 Cmaj69 Dm9 G7(b9,b13) Cmaj69

