

KEYBOARD TECHNIQUES



by Cheryl Seppala



ADVANCED CHORDS

If you have been studying the twelve major scales and the ten break chord formulas presented in the last two issues, you have laid the necessary foundation for learning some of those mysterious "advanced" chords. There are hundreds of songs that can be played with just three chords, hundreds of others can be reasonably reduced to contain just simple major, minor and seventh chords. But if you wish to develop the skills necessary to play more sophisticated harmonies, more formulas are in order.

When you listen to the music of a fine theatre organist, you generally do not hear him "sit" on the same chord for more than a couple of beats. There always seems to be a fluent harmonic movement going on behind the melody. Some lucky organists have the innate ability to create all this beautiful moving harmony totally by ear. Chances are, they may not even be aware of what chords they are playing. But the rest of us must learn the rules for forming these modern, advanced chords. Then, through experimentation we learn how to apply them to a melody.

Let us first study the various types of ninth chords. As you recall, the major scale has only eight notes, with the eighth being the same as the first note. It would follow then, that the ninth is the same as the second. A simple way to find any ninth chord is to think of the seventh chord and raise the root one whole-step. For example, G7 = G B D F, but G9 = A B D F. Note there is no root (G) in a G9 chord. The root is played only in the pedal, not in the chord. At this point, we should mention that ninth chords are often played in this order: Root in the pedal, with third, seventh and ninth as the chord. The fifth is often omitted to give the chord a more modern, open sound.

Try using ninth chords not only where they are indicated on the music, but also as a substitute for a seventh chord, always remembering not to force their use where they might clash with the melody.

There are many variations on the basic

ninth chord. In all types of ninths, the root is played only in the pedal.

Ninth (9)	1	3	5	7b	9
Minor 9 (m9)	1	3b	5	7b	9
Major 9 (maj9)	1	3	5	7	9
Seventh b9 (7 b9)	1	3	5	7b	9b
Seventh #9 (7 #9)	1	3	5	7b	9#

The eleventh chord is built on the seventh chord with the addition of the ninth and eleventh. The 11 is the same as the 4. For example, C11 = C E G Bb D F. To make this six-note chord readily playable: play the root in the pedal, omit the third, and play the 5 7b 9 11 as the chord. In other words, play the minor seventh chord built on the fifth. Examples: G11 = Dm7/G pedal, F11 = Cm7/F pedal. Eleventh chords often precede the dominant seventh chord before it resolves to the tonic.

If you want two handfuls of notes, try a thirteenth chord. It is based on the seventh chord with the 9, 11 and 13 added. (9, 11, 13 = 2, 4, 6). The formula reads, 1, 3, 5, 7b, 9, 11, 13. Usually, you hear the 13 chord with a sharpened 11.

If you are looking for a final chord that will really attract attention, try the 13 (#11) with the root added on top in the right hand. This is sometimes called a 15th chord. This chord takes eight fingers and two hands to play. The formula: 1 3 5 7b 9 11# 13 15. Or as a shortcut, play the seventh chord built on the root in the left hand, think one whole-step up from the root and play the seventh chord built on that note in the right hand. Both must be in root position and the root must be in the pedal. Example: C15 = C E G Bb D F# A C. This is a great way to end a song when you really want to show off!

The thirteenth chord is often reduced to its most important notes to make it practical to play and pretty to hear. Use the root in the pedal, and the 7b 9 and 13.

Another type of chord that creates movement in the accompaniment is the suspended chord. In a suspended 4 chord, you play the root, fourth and fifth of the scale, and resolve

the fourth to the third, making it a major triad. Example: Csus 4 = C F G resolving to C E G. In the suspended 2 chord, you play the second, third and fifth of the scale, and resolve the second to the root, again forming a regular major triad. Csus 2 = D E G resolving to C E G.

Suspensions may remind you of hymns, almost resembling an "Amen." But they form the foundation for many modern tunes as well.

Remember, 9, 11 and 13 chords all start with the seventh and are all possible substitutes for a seventh chord. But, never force their use when they clash with the melody or do not enhance the overall harmonic development of the selection.

This is a great deal of material to digest in one lesson, so may I suggest that you practice applying these new formulas to a different scale every week. Also try putting these new chords to use in a familiar song to see if you enjoy the effect. Truly some people prefer the uncluttered sound of the ten basic types of chords. That's fine too! Our goal is simply to shed a little light on the "mystery" chords: 9, 11, 13 and sus. With a little open-minded study, you may even learn to like the sound of them! □

CONVENTION PROGRAM UPDATE

The 1986 Convention Committee would like to advise members that the 3/21 Wurlitzer at the Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts may not be completed by Convention time. If the instrument is not in acceptable concert playing condition, the Sunday night Opening Concert by Walt Strony will be moved to the Byrd Theatre and the Thursday morning concert by Chris Elliott will be moved to The Mosque. Should the above changes be necessary, the Carpenter Center will host an Open House on Tuesday, July 8, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. for all ATOS members who may wish to tour this spectacular facility.

On Tuesday, July 8, prior to the 8:30 p.m. concert at the Byrd Theatre, we have arranged with The Jefferson Sheraton Hotel to hold a no-host cocktail reception at this newly-restored turn-of-the-century hotel. Great care has been taken to closely restore this enchanting hotel to its original stately glory, as The Jefferson is in both the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmark Register. Bus shuttle service will begin at 5:30 p.m. and, if you wish, dinner reservations may be made with the Jefferson Sheraton. □