

Misunderstandings about “Jazz” Chords:

Many guitar players assume that jazz guitarists play chords with lots of notes in them. This may be the case when filling out on a very slow ballad accompanying a solo singer with Shearing-esque chords. But, for good rhythmic, clear comping especially in an ensemble, simple 2 note voicing’s are the order of the day.

ii V7 I as many guitar players might play it

Musical notation for a ii V7 I progression (Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷) in 4/4 time. The notation shows a complex voicing for each chord, with many notes in the right hand. The guitar tablature below shows fingerings for each chord: Dm⁷ (5-6-7-5-3-3), G⁷ (3-4-3-3-3-3), and Cmaj⁷ (3-5-4-5-3-3).

ii V7 I as a Jazz Guitarist will play and understand it

Musical notation for a ii V7 I progression (Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷) in 4/4 time. The notation shows simple two-note voicings for each chord. The guitar tablature below shows fingerings for each chord: Dm⁷ (5-3), G⁷ (4-3), and Cmaj⁷ (5-2).

EXAMPLE: Simple 2 note ii V7 I guitar fingering.

Not only does this 2 note comp have clarity [Avoids all muddiness] but it can be repeated and sequenced all over the fingerboard with the cycle of 4th's, 5ths, minor 3rds etc. And, It's a lot easier to play these sequences rhythmically.

Musical notation for a 2-note ii V7 I guitar comping sequence in 2/4 time. The notation is presented in two staves: a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The treble clef staff shows the notes for each chord: Dm⁷ (D, F, A), G⁷ (G, B, D), Cmaj⁷ (C, E, G, B), Em⁷ (E, G, B, D), A⁷ (A, C, E, G), and Dmaj⁷ (D, F, A, C). The guitar tablature staff shows the fret numbers for each note: Dm⁷ (5, 3), G⁷ (4, 3), Cmaj⁷ (5, 2), Em⁷ (7, 5), A⁷ (6, 5), and Dmaj⁷ (7, 4).

Minor Version: iim7b5 V7 i [minor] by changing one note

Musical notation for a minor version of the 2-note ii V7 I guitar comping sequence in 4/4 time. The notation is presented in two staves: a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The treble clef staff shows the notes for each chord: Dm^{7b5} (D, F, Ab, C), G⁷ (G, B, D), and Cm (C, Eb, G). The guitar tablature staff shows the fret numbers for each note: Dm^{7b5} (5, 3), G⁷ (4, 3), and Cm (5, 1).

"Dominant" Example by changing one note:

We can also apply this cadence to the I as Dominant 7th

Musical notation for a cadence in 2/4 time. The progression consists of six chords: Dm⁷, G⁷, C⁷, Em⁷, A⁷, and D⁷. The notation includes a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers.

Why implied 2 note harmony works

In jazz ii V7 I's in all sort of variations crop up all over the place. The under pinning 2 note "Implied" harmony cuts out all complications and leaves space for the bass [or other instruments] to add their part. This way no-one gets in each others way, and there is harmonic and rhythmic clarity

Musical notation for a cadence in 4/4 time. The progression consists of four chords: A⁷, Amaj⁷, A⁺, and D. The notation includes a treble clef staff with notes and a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers.

More V I Simple 2 Note Voicing's.

Below, we see basic V to I's. Notice that these are moving in the cycle of 4ths. Again the tonic chord could be Maj7 or Dom7. The interval of a Major 3rd can imply either chord.

2/4

8

E⁷ A D⁷ G C⁷ F

T 2/4

A 7-6 6-7 5-4 4-5 3-2 2-3

B 4

In this next example we can see that the V to I cycle of 4ths is definitely moving/resolving in Dominant 7ths.

2/4

8

A⁷ D⁷ G⁷ C⁷ F⁷ B^{b7}

T 2/4

A 6-5 5-4 4-3 3-2 2-1 1-0

B 4

VARIATION: With minor/major 3rd lick approach

2/4

E⁷ A⁷ D⁷ G⁷ C⁷ F⁷ B^b

TAB 2/4

LASTLY:

To Finish with we have a 2 note voiced Blues: This also employs the 13 and 13#9 for colour and Maj/min 3rd lick, BUT, this is to be used sparingly as it will muddy and clutter the other instruments otherwise.

4/4

A⁷ D⁷ A⁷ A¹³ A^{13#9} D⁷ E^b dim A⁷ F^{#7} B⁷ E⁷

TAB 4/4

A⁷ F^{#7} B⁷ E⁷

TAB 4/4