

Compound Chords

$E7/C$

The COMPOUND CHORD symbol is most useful to describe highly altered chords. By definition, the symbol to the left of the diagonal slash line designates a chord; the letter to the right of the slash indicates a single note, the bass.

CONFIGURATION: $E7/C$ D^b7/C^b

(Referred to as: "E-SEVENTH WITH A C BASS" and "D-FLAT SEVENTH WITH A G-FLAT BASS")

No pretense is made that the COMPOUND CHORD has academic validity. For example, in the expression, "E-SEVENTH WITH A C BASS", the symbol E7 has no standing as the dominant 7th of the key of A. In this case, E7 merely means that the chord consists of an E, G-sharp, B and D, reading upward. The bass note, C, is not necessarily related to the key of F in the dominant sense, so "E7TH WITH A C BASS" is its own being.

EXAMPLES

$C+9(MA7) = E7/C$

$C+(MA7) = E7/C$

$E7/C = E7/C$

$E7/C = E7/C$

$C11(OMIT2) = Gm7/C$

$Cm7(b9) = Eb7/C$

$Cm9(b5) = Ebm7(MA7)/C$

$Cm7(b9) = Ebm7/C$

$G7sus(b9) = Fm7/G$

$G13sus(b9) = Dm7(b9)/G$

The preceding examples, chords chosen at random, should serve to outline the method of converting complex chords to COMPOUND CHORDS by using simple harmonic analysis. It is apparent that at times these complexities are irreducible; in such cases the chord should be written out.

Use of the COMPOUND CHORD symbol need not be confined to five-and six-part structures. It may also be used for triads, inversions and pedal points:

TRIADS

B/C G#/A F/G \flat

INVERSIONS

E/G \sharp E/G E/D

PEDAL POINT

C D \flat /C D/C E \flat 7/C D%/C

Referring to the first chord example at the top of the page (B/C), and translating it into a more conventional symbol, B/C becomes a C MINOR WITH A MAJOR 7TH AND A FLAT 5TH, which at first glance is not readily recognizable for what it is, a B MAJOR TRIAD WITH A C BASS.

$C_{m1} (M7 \flat 5) = B/C$

This again illustrates the serviceability of the COMPOUND CHORD symbol.

UNACCEPTABLE:

G/B Bass A \flat (E \flat Bass) D \flat A \flat B \flat

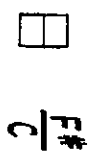
Polytonal Chords

F \sharp / $\frac{C}{\flat}$

F \sharp TRIAD [F \sharp G \sharp A \sharp] C TRIAD

This familiar six-part POLYTONAL CHORD achieved recognition as the so-called "PETROUCHKA CHORD" of Stravinsky.

CONFIGURATION:



Note that the symbol uses a horizontal line to separate its elements and is referred to (using the above) as "F-SHARP OVER C", meaning there are two chord structures, one above the other.

A POLYTONAL symbol can in many cases serve to clarify the identity of complex, highly altered six-and seven-part chords. (Again, as with COMPOUND CHORDS, we cite the academic disclaimer and repeat that irreducible complexities should be written out.)

EXAMPLES

$C7(\sharp 9) = \frac{F\sharp}{C}$

$C7(\sharp 9) = \frac{E\flat_{MI}}{C}$

$E\flat_{MI}$

$CMA^7(\sharp 11) = \frac{B}{C}$

$CMI^7(\sharp 11) = \frac{G^b}{CMI} \text{ OR } \frac{F\#}{CMI}$

$CMA^7(\sharp 11) = \frac{BMA^7}{C} \text{ OR } \frac{D\#MI^7}{CMA^7}$

$GMA^7(\sharp 11) = \frac{A}{GMA^7} \text{ OR } \frac{F\#MI^7}{G}$

$G^7(b9) = \frac{A^b}{G^7} \text{ OR } \frac{FMI(MA^7)}{G}$

The foregoing examples demonstrate the greater readability of the POLY-TONAL symbol compared to a highly altered chord symbol. The same principles of harmonic analysis hold here as set forth earlier, especially in the chapter on COMPOUND CHORDS.

Chapter 12 Miscellany

Fourth Chords

C^4

CONFIGURATIONS: C^4 $F\#^4$

FOURTH CHORDS consist of perfect 4ths stacked on each other. The practical limit is five voices, after which dissonance presents itself.

Analysis by thirds shows that the five-note example of C^4 shown above is merely an expanded inversion of an A-FLAT 6/9 CHORD WITH A C BASS.

These structures are only of passing interest and should be fully written out with the actual notes to clearly indicate the context, which generally is a maximum of four voices, especially for guitar.

By and large, a shorthand symbol for the FOURTH CHORD tells us very little and is impractical.

Omitted Notes

For greatest clarity, chords with omitted notes are best written out.

$E^b(OMIT 3) \quad D(OMIT 3) \quad D^7(OMIT 3) \quad D^b7(OMIT 3)$

$E^bMI(OMIT 5) \quad DMI(OMIT 5) \quad DMI^7(OMIT 5) \quad D^bMI^7(OMIT 5)$