

## Chapter 2. Two-Handed Voicings

We now move on to an often-neglected aspect of jazz piano, and that is comping. While left-hand voicings are suited to right-hand soloing or melody, the jazz pianist needs to know how to comp – in other words, accompany other soloists. The *art* or technique of comping is beyond the scope of this book, but, like any aspect of jazz, the best way to learn is by listening. Three recordings that you can learn a lot from in regards to comping, are: Miles Davis' *My Funny Valentine*, with Herbie Hancock on piano, John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*, with McCoy Tyner on piano, and Stan Getz's *Sweet Rain*, featuring Chick Corea on piano.

What *can* be taught here, however, are the basic components of comping, which are two-handed voicings.

To get started, take our standard II-V-I voicings and distribute the voicing over two hands. This is done by taking the second note from the bottom and transposing it up an octave, giving us two notes in each hand (Fig. 16).

Fig. 16

Fig. 16 shows two-handed voicings for Dm7, G7, and C7 chords. The notation is split into two systems. The first system shows Dm7, G7, and C7 chords in two different inversions. The second system shows Am7, D7, and G7 chords in two different inversions. The left hand plays the root and the second note of the chord, while the right hand plays the root and the third note of the chord. The I chord is voiced as a 6/9 chord in each case.

Note that both inversions of our left-hand voicings are shown here, and the I chord is voiced as a 6/9 chord in each case.

To get these 'under your fingers', practice both types of inversions through all keys beginning with the first type in Fig. 17a, and the second type in Fig. 17b.

Fig. 17a

Fig. 17a shows two-handed voicings for Dm7, G7, and C7 chords. The notation is split into two systems. The first system shows Dm7, G7, and C7 chords in two different inversions. The second system shows Gm7, C7, and F7 chords in two different inversions. The left hand plays the root and the second note of the chord, while the right hand plays the root and the third note of the chord. The I chord is voiced as a 6/9 chord in each case.

Fig. 17b

Fig. 17b shows two-handed voicings for Gm7, C7, and F7 chords. The notation is split into two systems. The first system shows Gm7, C7, and F7 chords in two different inversions. The second system shows Dm7, G7, and C7 chords in two different inversions. The left hand plays the root and the second note of the chord, while the right hand plays the root and the third note of the chord. The I chord is voiced as a 6/9 chord in each case.

These voicings can easily be altered to give us minor II-V-I voicings as shown in Fig. 18. Here, as in some of the subsequent two-handed voicings that will be illustrated, the voicing incorporates the natural 9 on the mi7b5 chord. As has been mentioned already, this is a more common tension on the mi7b5 chord, hence its inclusion here. You will find that most soloists will be quite happy with it. However, be prepared to either not play the note at all, or else drop it down to the root, depending on the soloist.