



"Your potential exists within... let it shine."

Open Yourself Up To The Possibilities

by David Longo

An oyster produces a pearl by responding to unfamiliar matter that enters its shell. Nature has endowed the little mollusk with a special natural talent for taking the unknown and turning it into a treasure for all to be in awe of...

Hmmmm, seems nature has endowed people with the same talent, though perhaps in a different way... the main point here is this: the more unfamiliar territory you are willing to open yourself up to, the more you will realize the potential that already exists within you.

With respect to learning new piano playing concepts, there's no doubt that this holds true - and it applies in so many ways.

Let's look at one today:

While we're on the subject of "opening yourself" to possibilities, I'd like to shed some light on a piano chord topic that many beginning to intermediate players don't seem to open themselves up to...

Open Chord Voicings

What is an "open" chord voicing anyway? Well, to bring this into light, let's first take a look at what a "closed" one is. Let's take a look at a very basic type of 7th chord and how people are first introduced to it....

We will look at Cmaj7 chord (pronounced "C major seventh") in "closed" position:



The chord tones in the Cmaj7 chord, as you can see from the illustration above, are C, E, G, B. You will notice that these chord tones are as close together as they can possibly be - in other words, in between them, you won't see another C, E, G, or B. This is pretty easy to see, yes? Great!

Unfortunately, many aspiring pianists, once they learn a basic chord like this, don't explore additional possibilities. This is sometimes due to the fact that they are not exposed to people or other resources that can get them to "think outside the box." But you're here, so let's take advantage of that right now!

Okay, let's take that closed chord voicing and "open" it up...

The 1-7-3-5 Open Chord Voicing ("The Oyster!")

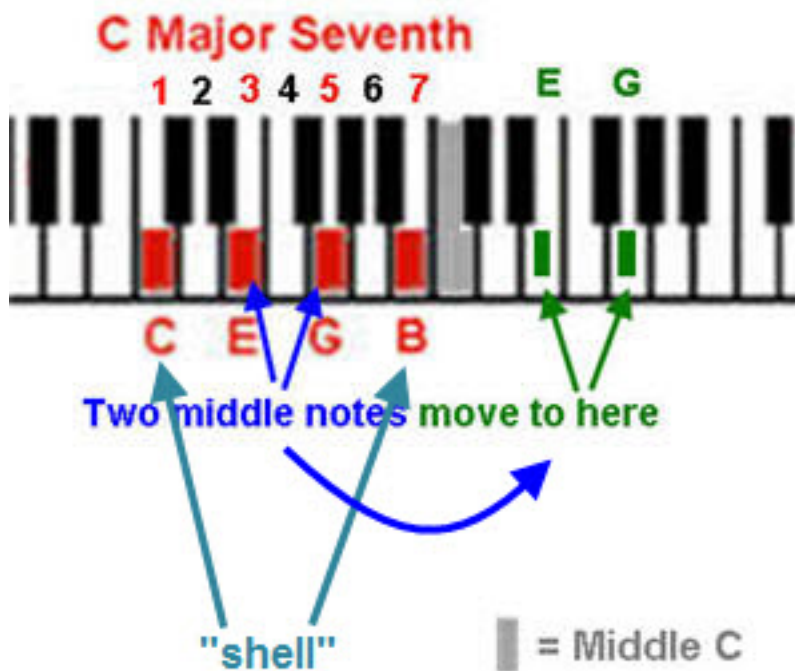
There are many ways to open this chord up... today, let's look at one in particular that I think is most appropriate since I like to refer to this open chord voicing as "The Oyster!"

Okay, let's do it:

Take a look at the two outer chord tones, namely the "C" and "B"... much like the outer part of an oyster has a shell consisting of two parts, we can think of this combination of two chord tones as a "shell" in its own right:



Play this "shell" - the "C" and "B" - with your left hand only, using the pinkie and thumb of your left hand. This leaves us with the "middle" chord tones, the "E" and "G" (we could think of them as the "pearl"). Let's take that "E" and "G" and move them both up one octave. In other words we are playing the "E" and "G" one octave higher, above the "C" and "B" as shown here:



(The "E" and "G" can be played with either the "thumb and index finger" or "thumb and middle finger" of your right hand)

The resulting chord voicing, as we are now playing it, is shown here:

C Major Seventh (Open Position)



This chord voicing is said to be "open" because you will now notice that in between some of the chord tones, there actually are chord tones of the same name not being played... in between the "C" and "B" that we are playing with the left hand, we have an "E" and "G" that we are not playing. Also, in between the "B" and "E" that we are playing, we have a "C" that we are not playing.

Now you know how to create an open chord voicing!

Go ahead and play this open chord voicing and listen! Now play the original "closed" chord that we started with - go back and forth and compare! Each is a version of the same chord, Cmaj7.

Which is better? The truth is that they both have their place. In different musical environments, each could be considered a more preferred choice. It will depend on several factors... the most important of these factors is your personal taste as a pianist! You see, as a piano stylist, you want choices. The more choices you have, the more creative you can be. Like an artist, the more "colors" you have and the more skilled you become at "mixing" those colors, the more interesting your renditions!

You see, when you "open" your mind up to learning more and more about "open" chord voicings, you open yourself up to a whole world of colorful sounds that you otherwise would have missed - don't let that happen! Just sitting at a piano keyboard and experimenting and playing different possibilities provides a sense of satisfaction that can only be described by the person who engages himself or herself... it's a lot of fun! And this is only the beginning for you...

The open chord voicing that we have just experienced is actually taken a step further in Lesson #1 of my popular piano chord program [ProProach](#). Actually, that particular lesson is FREE, so go ahead and experience it for yourself! I had tons of fun creating that program... and talk about open chord voicings! We really do have a ball with them! The program is presented in an informal yet educational format... you will receive textual explanations as you have seen here but also will receive a supportive video demonstration of each and every lesson. Within weeks,

you will sound like a different player at those keys!

For those of you already taking advantage of ProProach, my Coach Me program offers you the opportunity to get one-on-one coaching with me directly... talk about fun!

Friend, within you is potential that is just begging to be make itself known. Whatever level you are at - whether you at an early beginner level with little or no experience or a seasoned player looking to enhance your current skills - there is more of yourself to explore and more of your potential to be set in motion. Please make some kind of commitment to yourself today to begin making it happen for yourself!

And PLEASE remember...

Always...

ALWAYS...

PLAY WITH PASSION!

Musically,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dale".