

ALTERATIONS

If you're under the impression that if you don't like something in jazz you just alter it, you're wrong. It's a bit less straight-forward than that. Read on.

ALTERATIONS

Certain notes in each type of chord can be altered. The notes in question are the 5th, the 9th, the 11th and sometimes the 13th.

(The root, 3rd and 7th notes are not altered as they will produce a different type of chord.)

Alterations are shown by the symbols + or # meaning that a note is to be raised by a semitone, and - or \flat meaning that a note is to be lowered by a semitone.

The 2 chord types most affected by alterations are the dominant 7th and the major seventh/major sixth.

1. In a dominant seventh chord the 5th and the 9th can be raised or lowered. Various combinations of these altered notes are often found, eg. $C7(\flat 9-5)$, $C7(\sharp 9-5)$, $C7(\flat 9+5)$, $C7(\sharp 9+5)$, etc. These chord can also be written like this $C7(-9-5)$... or $C7(-9\flat 5)$... The 4 chords are shown below:

$C7(\flat 9-5)$ $C7(\sharp 9-5)$ $C7(\flat 9+5)$ $C7(\sharp 9+5)$

A dominant seventh with altered 9ths and 5ths is often called an altered chord, eg. $C7$ alt.

A dominant seventh chord can also have an unaltered fifth and a sharpened eleventh:

$C7(+11)$
or $C9(+11)$ $C7(\flat 9+11)$ sometimes written thus

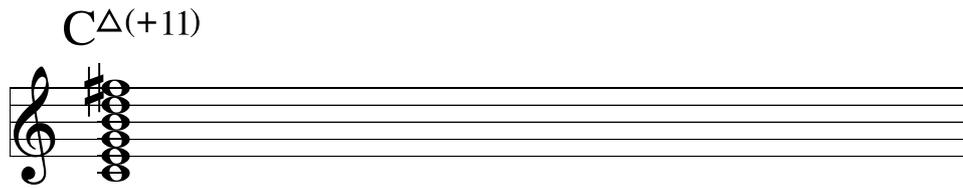
The (+5) is almost never found with a 13th. You will sometimes see that the (+5) is sometimes called a ($\flat 13$).

2. In a major chord the 5th can be altered. A triad with a raised 5th note is called an augmented triad.

A major seventh chord can also have altered fifths:

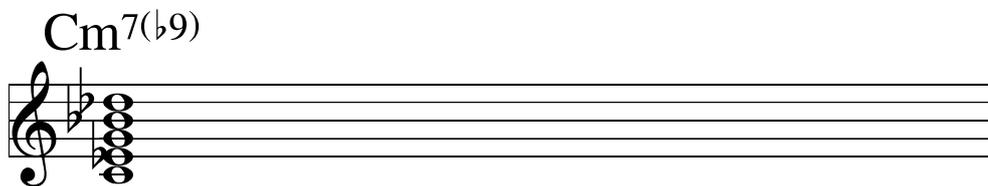
$C\Delta(+5)$ $C\Delta(-5)$

The 11th can also be raised where an unaltered fifth exists:

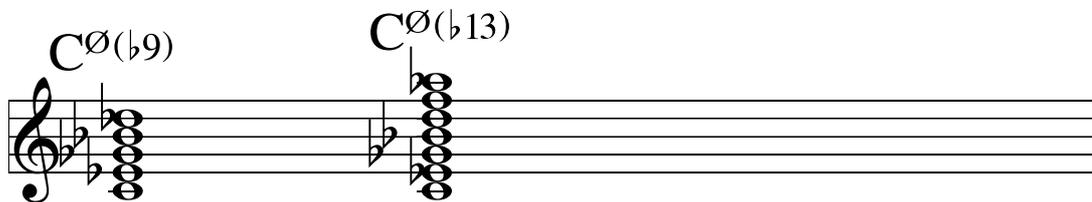


This chord applies to the Lydian mode. It is found when you build an extended chord on the IVth degree of a major scale.

3. Sometimes you will come across a minor seventh chord with a flattened ninth but this is rare. It occurs in the sixth bar of the bossa nove *Corcovado*:



4. A half-diminished chord with a flattened ninth and/or a flattened 13th is also possible:



With all these chords there are many different voicings obtainable.