

# Learn to Play from Chord Charts



**Yuko Maruyama, MM, MPIA**  
[www.yukomaruyama.com](http://www.yukomaruyama.com)

2019 MTAC Convention • Hyatt Regency Santa Clara on Monday, July 1, 2019 at 4:00 PM • Grand Ballroom H

**Presentation Summary:** Chord chart notation is an abbreviated form of notation designed for the rhythm section instruments such as piano, guitar, bass and drums. This type of notation is widely used in jazz as well as in various genres of popular music today. A chord chart gives basic information about a song, and how to play it is up to the musician who interprets the chart. This presentation covers some of the basic rules, techniques and ideas to approach the chord charts and how to apply them to the performance of the songs.

**About the Presenter:** Yuko Maruyama is a pianist-composer-arranger from Tokyo, Japan. She holds a Master’s degree in Jazz Studies from USC. A Kawai Pianos recording and performing artist, Yuko has toured the U.S. with her acclaimed 2002 album, “In Tone Nation,” which was the premiere jazz recording of the all-hand-crafted Shigeru Kawai concert grand piano from Japan. Yuko’s most recent album project, “Piano Bento,” includes original compositions and arrangements, and showcases her innovative keyboard instrumentations. Yuko teaches jazz improvisation on all instruments, directs jazz ensembles, and coaches instrumentalists and vocalists in various styles of popular music at her San Diego studio.

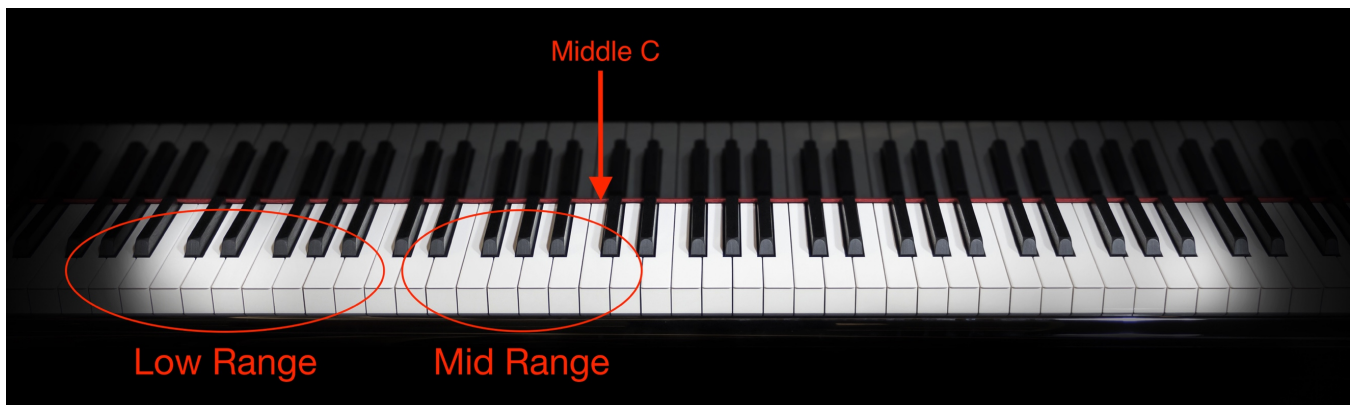
## ◆ Chord Symbol Examples

Triads (3 notes)	7 <sup>th</sup> Chords (4-note chords)	w/Extensions (more than 4 notes)	w/Extensions (more than 4 notes)
C [major]	C <sup>7</sup> [dominant] C <sup>6</sup> [major]	C <sup>9</sup> [dominant]	C <sup>7(b9)</sup>
C <sup>m</sup> (C <sup>-</sup> or C <sup>min</sup> )	C <sup>m7</sup> (C <sup>-7</sup> or C <sup>min7</sup> ), C <sup>m6</sup>	C <sup>6/9</sup> [major]	C <sup>maj7(#11)</sup>
C <sup>o</sup> (C <sup>dim</sup> )	C <sup>maj7</sup> (C <sup>Δ</sup> )	C <sup>Δ9</sup> [major]	C <sup>7alt</sup> [#9, b13]
C <sup>+</sup> (C <sup>aug</sup> )	C <sup>∅</sup>	C <sup>13</sup> [dominant]	C <sup>m7(11)</sup>

The root of the chord is always expressed with uppercase letters.

Inversions are notated with slash chords. Example: D<sup>7</sup>/C - chord (D<sup>7</sup>) on the left; bass note (C) on the right

## ◆ Basic Range of the Piano



## ◆ Ideas & Suggestions for Playing from Chord Charts

1. RH – Melody/LH – Root Position Chord
2. RH – Fill in 3<sup>rd</sup>/LH – R-5, R in 8<sup>ve</sup>, R-5-R, Keep the beat
3. RH – Harmonize melody 3<sup>rd</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> below/LH – Repeated or arpeggiated
4. RH – Fill in triad inversions, add I-IV-I chords
5. RH – Improvise w scale tones, fill w chord tones
6. Blues: RH – Improvise w Blues Scale/LH – Rootless 4-note chord voicing
7. Stride Style: LH – R & 5 on beat 1 & 3, chord on beat 2 & 4
8. Jazz Chord Voicing Exercises: LH – ii-V-I exercises in all 12 keys

## ◆ Recommended Fake Books

The Real Book: 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (Hal Leonard)  
 The New Real Book, vol. 1 & 2 (Sher Music Co.)  
 The Real Easy Book, Level 1 (Sher Music Co.)

## ◆ Backing Track App

iReal Pro (irealpro.com)