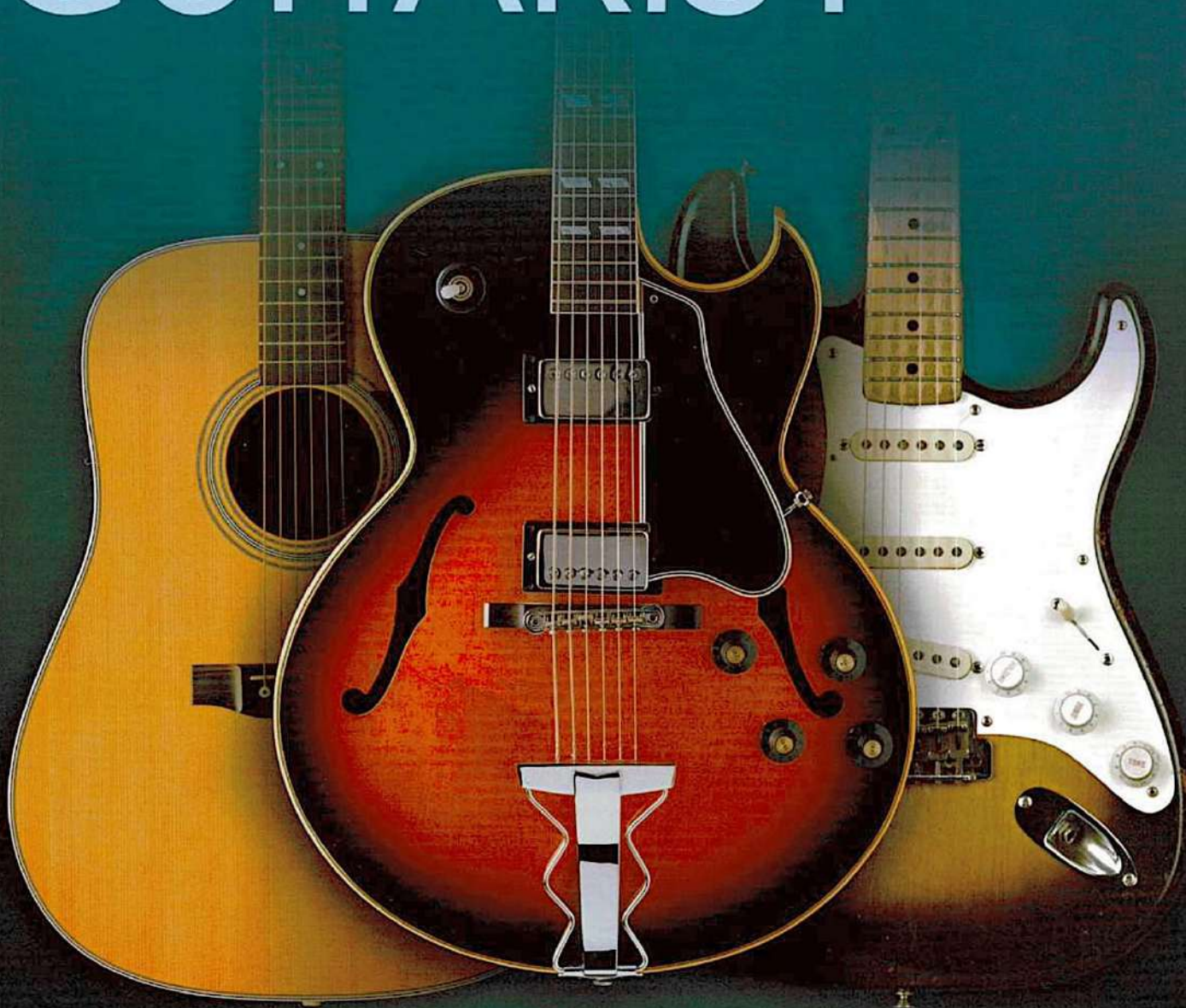




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INTRODUCTION

*"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember;
involve me and I'll understand."*

—Chinese Proverb

This book is full of shapes. You'll see some standard notation, too, but the heavy emphasis is on the visualization of chord shapes. While it may be a relief to be given the green light to use the shapes of chord forms as our tool for learning and memorizing, there will still be theory involved, and reading notation will be part of that. But, yes, you are hereby given permission to use shapes as your tools for the memorization of triads. It's how our brains work anyway, so fighting that process is frustrating and not as necessary as you may have been led to believe. Rather than abandoning the quest for learning notes all over the fretboard, however, you'll see that using visualization methods of learning chord forms around the neck will have the side benefit of reinforcing note locations. That will help your reading!

This book contains exercises that will help you to memorize the shapes of the triads in all of their inversions. Once those shapes become second nature, you'll see that identifying the highest note of each triad inversion will light the way for playing seventh chords (and beyond) in any key. Exercises in voice leading will become a springboard to creating melodies and improvising using the shapes as your guide. Using only the first three strings as a reference, the exercises will show you how to easily flow from one chord to another, whether in a solo or while comping.

We will begin with the basics of triadic theory, build to identifying triad matches with seventh chords, and finally create single-note lines over chord progressions. This book will encourage you to review, get a different perspective on how you see and use chords, and become better equipped to improvise over any set of changes.

The system that this book presents involves seeing the triads within seventh chords and larger structures. It allows for mixing in your already-in-use techniques and strategies for soloing. Integrate scales, arpeggios, quartal playing, your mind's ear—whatever is already working for you. Use this system when you want to play over changes reliably and need a place to start. When it's hard to get a grip on a tonal center for more than a fleeting couple of bars, visualizing triads (as this book illustrates) will add to your vocabulary and musical ideas. Your visual memory will feed you the information when you need it, your mind's ear will respond, and your hands will know what to do.

With practice.

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PART I

Basic Triads

CHAPTER 1

Major Triads

Triads are three-note chords. *Major triads* consist of the interval of a major third from the root and a perfect fifth from the root. That creates a minor third between the third of the chord and the fifth. For example, a C major triad, spelled C-E-G, has a major third between the notes C and E, and a perfect fifth between C and G. That leaves a minor third between the notes E and G.



FIG. 1.1. C Major Triad and Its Intervals: Major third, Minor third, Perfect fifth

In any key, the triad that is built from the first degree of the major scale will be major: R 3 5 is the formula. Two other major triads naturally occur in any major scale: the chords built on the fourth and fifth scale degrees. See the F and G triads in figure 1.2.



FIG. 1.2. F and G Major Triads

F contains the interval of a major third between the notes F and A, and a minor third between the notes A and C. Again, there is a perfect fifth between the lowest and highest notes, F and C. This fits the description of a major triad, but without even analyzing the chord for intervals, you can quickly identify a major triad by seeing that it would be the first chord of its major scale. The notes F, A, and C are the first, third, and fifth notes of an F major scale. Similarly, the notes G, B, and D are the first, third, and fifth notes of a G major scale.

Major triads are known by their characteristically happy sound. Many guitarists learn a handful of major triads very early in their development and can get several simple songs up and running with them: "Skip to My Lou," "On Top of Old Smokey," etc. You'll recognize these chords, often referred to as "cowboy chords" or "campfire chords" because of their common use among acoustic guitarists at sing-alongs. These are all major triads. Using all six strings—or anything more than three strings—and you'll find some of the notes are doubled or tripled.



1

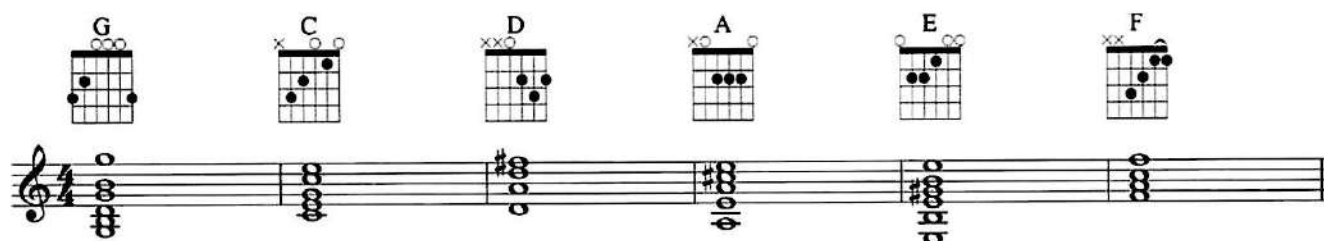


FIG. 1.3. Common Triad Forms

Add barre chords to this collection, and you'll see that the common forms for E and A major triads can be transposed by moving them up or down the neck following the root of the chord around on the sixth string or fifth string, referred to as Root 6 or Root 5.



2

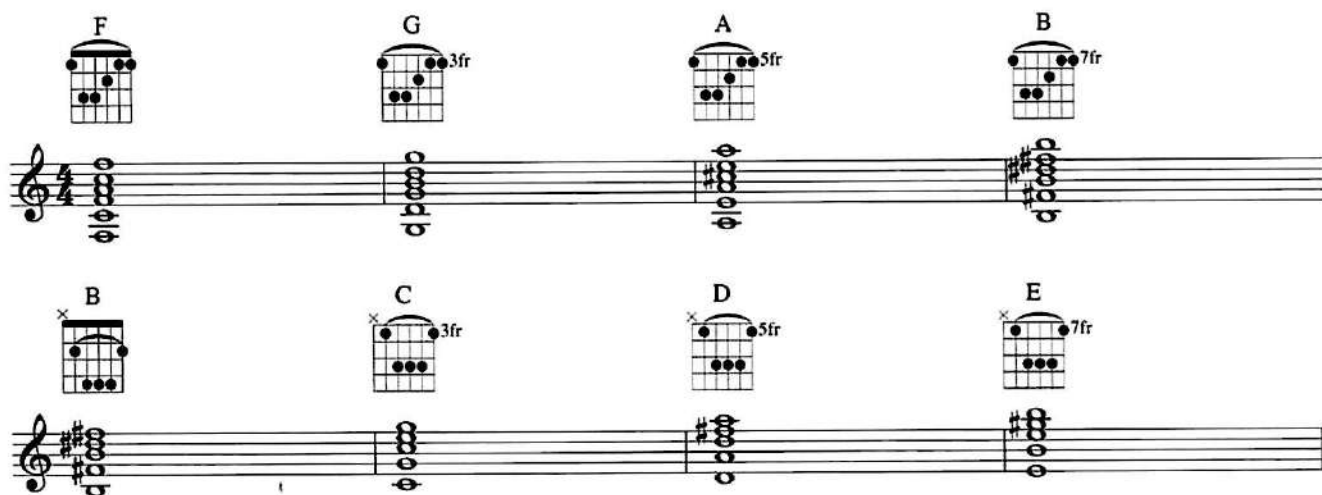


FIG. 1.4. Common Barre Chords, Root 6 and Root 5

If you zoom in to the first three strings of either of these major barre chord types, you'll see the three notes that make up the triad. This C barre chord at the third fret contains a C major triad on the first three strings.

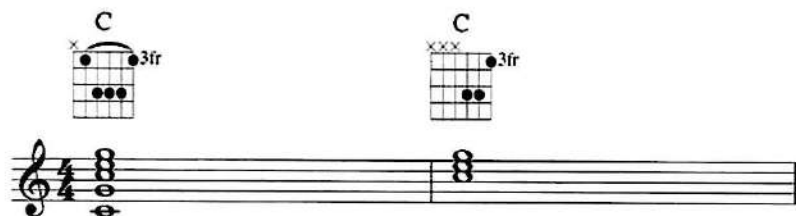


FIG. 1.5. C Barre Chord, C Triad

The F barre chord at the first fret contains the notes of an F major triad on the first three strings.

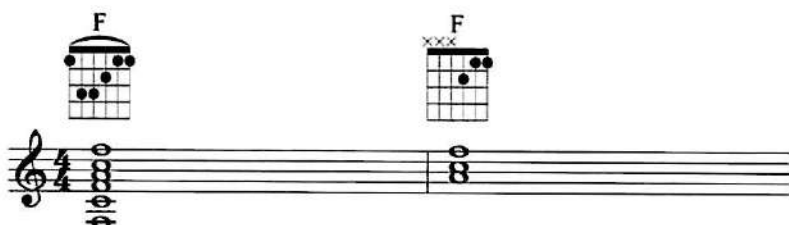


FIG. 1.6. F Barre Chord, F Triad

Inversions of triads refer to the order of the notes in the chord from low to high, including root position (as they occur in the scale), first inversion (third, fifth, and root of chord), and second inversion (fifth, root, and third of chord).

Here are the three inversions of an F major triad:



FIG. 1.7. F Root, First, Second Inversions

Notice that in figure 1.6, the F triad that is on the first three strings has the notes A C F, which is a first inversion F major triad. In figure 1.5, you see a C major triad from the root on the first three strings: C E G. That leaves second inversion for you to recognize in a familiar chord form.

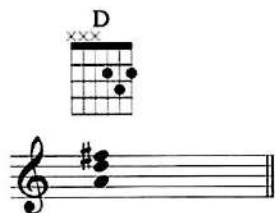


FIG. 1.8. D Second Inversion

Name the notes from low to high on this familiar D triad and see A, D, and F#. That is a second inversion triad since the fifth is in the lowest voice, followed by the root, and then the third on top.

You now have three different inversions of a major chord to use on the first three strings. Unlike their barre chord versions, these triads use only three strings with a different note of the chord on each string; very efficient. But, similar to barre chords, these chords are moveable.

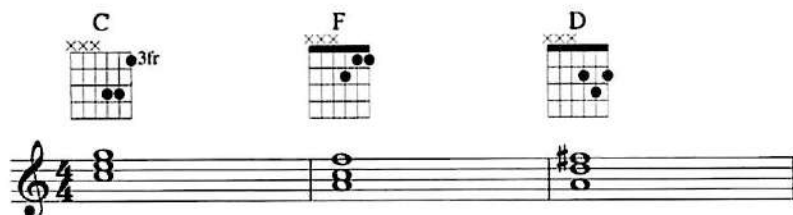


FIG. 1.9. C Root, F First Inversion, D Second Inversion

Identify the notes in each of these major triads as they appear in these chord forms. More importantly, identify how each note functions in the chord; in other words, name the chord tones R, 3, and 5. Pay special attention to the note that falls on the first (E) string. This will be useful information going forward. The answers are below:



FIG. 1.10. Chord Tones

Watch what happens as you move these triad forms up the neck. Take a D major triad up one whole step (two frets) and land on E major. Here's the good part: as you name the notes (B, E, G $\sharp$), you'll discover that the chord tones (5, R, 3) haven't changed from the second inversion D major.

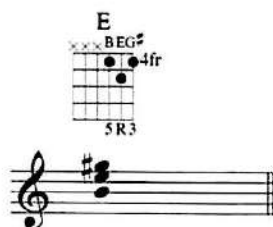


FIG. 1.11. E Major Triad Second Inversion

Go ahead and randomly move the major triads around the neck and identify the names and numbers. Here are a few possibilities:

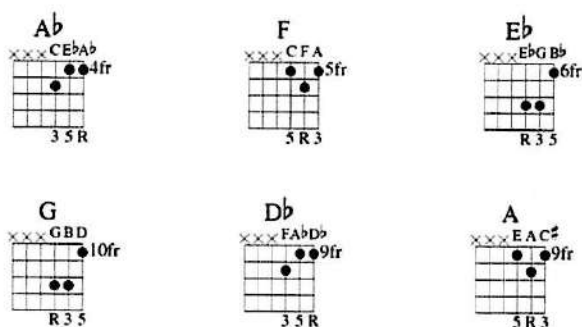


FIG. 1.12. Random Triad Inversions

Notice which note falls on the first string (E) on each root position triad (the fifth), each first inversion triad (the root), and each second inversion triad (the third). You can count on that phenomenon being consistent, which will help you find shortcuts as you navigate the fretboard with this system of following triad shapes using chord tone identification.

CHAPTER 2

Minor Triads

Minor triads contain the interval of a minor third starting on the root and a perfect fifth starting on the root. There is a major third between the third and fifth of the chord, just the opposite of the interval relationship in a major triad. The characteristic sound is “sad,” as compared to the “happy” sounding major triads.

The formula for a minor triad is $R\flat 3 5$. Temporarily, think of the root of the chord as the first note of a major scale. Then flat the third note of that scale (lower it by one-half step), and add the fifth to create a minor triad. Or, more simply, flat the third of any major triad to get a minor triad. This could also be thought of as seeing the root third and fifth from a minor scale as a minor triad. Any major scale naturally contains three minor triads, said to be *diatonic* to the key: the II^{mi} , III^{mi} , and VI^{mi} chords, or triads built on the second, third, and sixth scale degrees without altering any notes in the scale. In the key of C, the three diatonic minor triads are D^{mi} (D F A), E^{mi} (E G B), and A^{mi} (A C E).

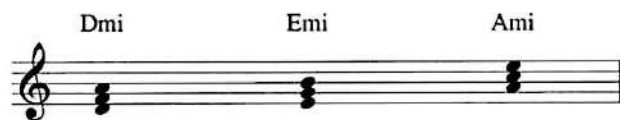


FIG. 2.1. Dmi, Emi, and Ami Triads

Here are a few familiar minor triad chord forms:



7

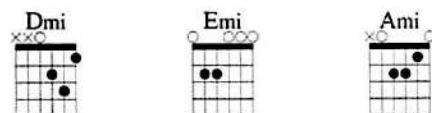


FIG. 2.2. Common Minor Triad Forms

Using the major triad forms on the first three strings from chapter 1, you can make minor triads once you have identified which note is the third of the chord. C from the root becomes Cmi by lowering the E on the second string by one fret, or one-half step, to get to E $\flat$. The first inversion F major triad becomes Fmi by lowering the A on the third string to A $\flat$. The second inversion D major turns to Dmi by lowering the F $\sharp$ on the first string to F natural.

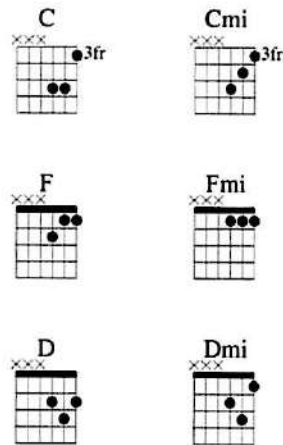


FIG. 2.3. Three-String Minor Triad Forms

As you did in chapter 1, identify which chord tone is on the high E string for your reference point in maneuvering around the neck. True to their major counterparts, the minor triads have the following high notes on the first string:

- Cmi root: G
- Fmi first inversion: F
- Dmi second inversion: F.

That is the fifth, the root, and the flat third, respectively.

Go ahead and move those minor triads around the fretboard randomly, and identify the notes and chord tones that fall on the first string.

Here are some examples:

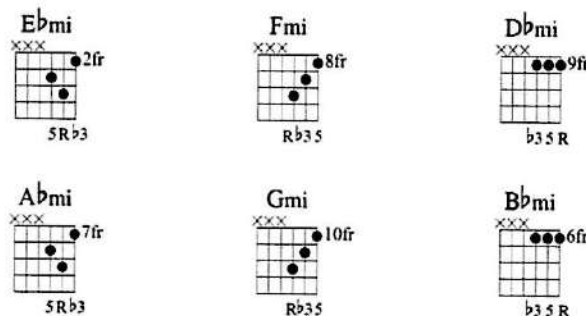


FIG. 2.4. Random Minor Triads with their Chord Tones

CHAPTER 3

Diminished Triads

Diminished triads contain two minor third intervals and a diminished fifth interval from the root to the fifth of the chord. The formula for diminished triads is $R \flat 3 \flat 5$. One diminished triad occurs diatonically in a major scale: the triad built from the seventh degree of a major scale (B from a C major scale) is a diminished triad, shown in figure 3.1.



FIG. 3.1. B° Triad

The notes B D F spell a diminished triad, fitting the formula of $R \flat 3 \flat 5$. Using a B major scale as a reference to the chord construction, you'll see that D and F are both sharp in the key of B, making D and F natural the flat 3 and flat 5, respectively.

While diminished 7 chords are more commonly used in popular music and jazz, we will make good use of diminished triads and their higher purpose throughout this book.

Here are some forms for playing diminished triads using only three strings at a time:

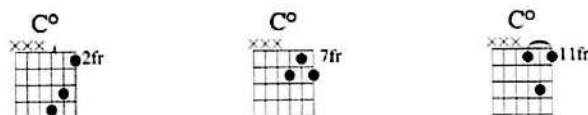


FIG. 3.2. Diminished Triad Forms on the First Three Strings

The sound of diminished chords is notably full of tension. As an exercise to get quick at these chord forms and to get your ears involved in their distinctive sound, practice these examples in resolving the B° to the C triads in figure 3.3.



11

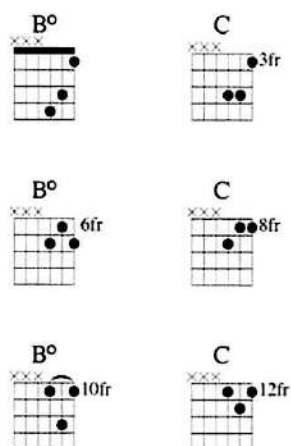


FIG. 3.3. B° to C

Focus again on the first three strings and make a note of which chord tone falls on the first string of each inversion of a diminished triad. B° from the root has F or $\flat 5$ as the high note, B° first inversion has B or root on top, and B° second inversion has D or $\flat 3$ on top.

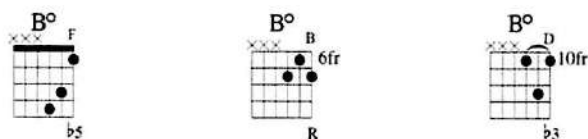
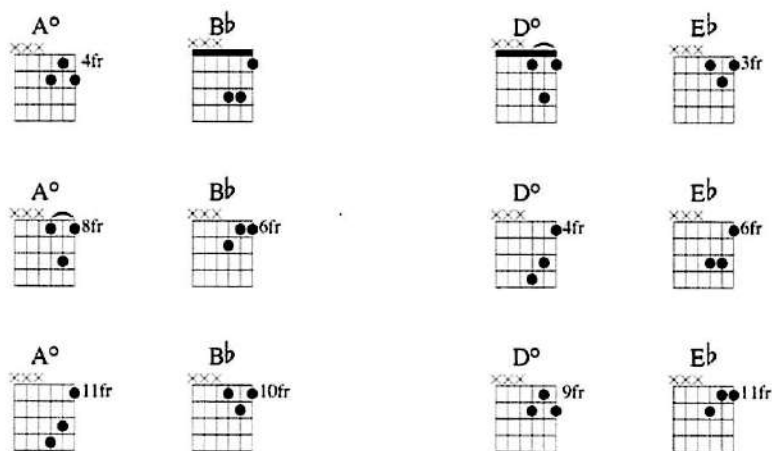
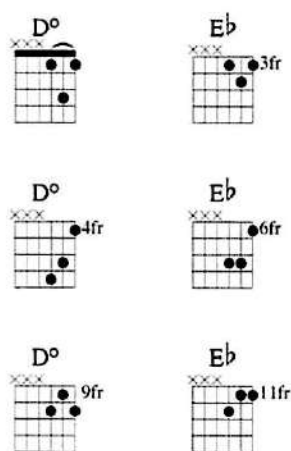


FIG. 3.4. Notes on Top of B° Triads

Compare to these different keys:



12, 13

FIG. 3.5. A° to B $\flat$ FIG. 3.6. D° to E $\flat$

Now move these forms around to create other diminished triads and notice which notes fall on the highest E string. If you are quick at the theory of chord construction, you will have an easy time of moving these chord forms around the neck to land on other diminished triads.

Here are some examples:



14

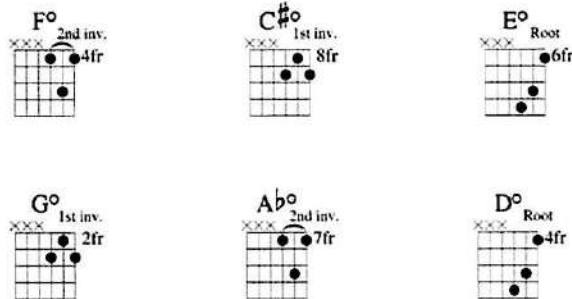


FIG. 3.7. Random Diminished Triads

Before looking at the answers, write the chord tone below the note on the first string on each chord diagram.

Answers here:

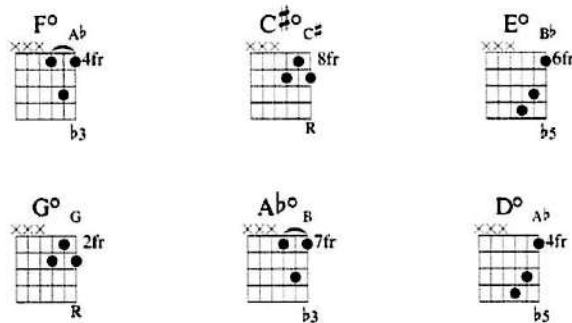


FIG. 3.8. First String Chord Tone I.D.

CHAPTER 4

Augmented Triads

Augmented triads contain two major third intervals, with an augmented fifth from the root to the fifth of the chord. The formula for an augmented triad is R 3 #5. Reference an E $\flat$ major scale to identify an E $\flat$ + triad as such. B $\flat$ is the fifth note of an E $\flat$ major scale, B natural, therefore, is the sharp five, or augmented fifth.

Augmented triads do not occur naturally in a major scale. However, you will find them in melodic minor scales, harmonic minor scales, and harmonic major scales.

Here is a quick look at the way the triads stack up naturally in each of those scales:

Cmi Dmi E $\flat$ + F G A $^\circ$ B $^\circ$ Cmi

C Melodic Minor

Cmi D $^\circ$ E $\flat$ + Fmi G A $\flat$ B $^\circ$ Cmi

C Harmonic Minor

C D $^\circ$ Emi Fmi G A $\flat$ + B $^\circ$ C

C Harmonic Major

FIG. 4.1. Melodic Minor Triads, Harmonic Minor Triads, Harmonic Major Triads

The III chord in both melodic minor and harmonic minor scales is an augmented triad. The VI chord in a harmonic major scale is an augmented triad.

Augmented triads have an unstable sound, often used to alter or spice up a V chord resolving to its I chord, as in G+ to C.



15

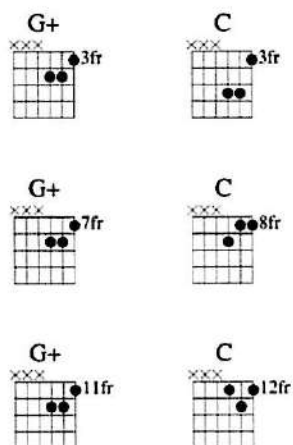


FIG. 4.2. G+ to C All Inversions on the First Three Strings



16

A whole tone scale is full of augmented triads.



FIG. 4.3. Whole Tone Scale

Making use of enharmonic spelling, you can identify every triad built on each scale degree of the whole tone scale as augmented.

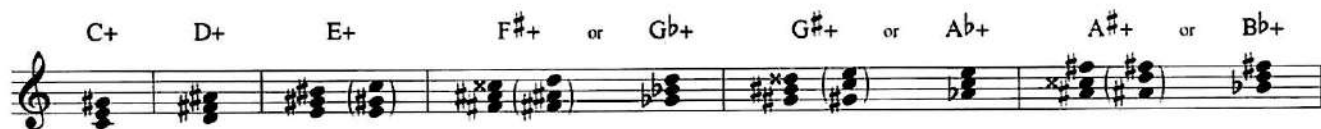


FIG. 4.4. Triads in a Whole Tone Scale

No wonder whole tone scales sound so good played over augmented chords!

CHAPTER 5

The Triads, Organized

Now that you have committed each triad type to memory, both in theory and in chord forms on the fretboard, here is a view to recap and organize them all on the first three strings:

Root	First Inversion	Second Inversion
C R 3 5	C 3 5 R	C 5 R 3
Cmi R b3 5	Cmi b3 5 R	Cmi 5 R b3
C° R b3 b5	C° b3 b5 R	C° b5 R b3
C+ R 3 #5	C+ 3 #5 R	C+ #5 R 3

FIG. 5.1. Triad List

PART II

Larger Chords and Triads

CHAPTER 6

Major 7 Chords and Their Matched Minor Triads

A major 7 chord formula is R 3 5 7. Simply add the seventh note of the major scale to a major triad. CMaj7 = C E G B.

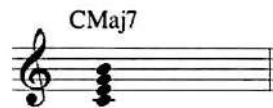


FIG. 6.1. CMaj7

In addition to CMaj7 containing a C major triad in its three lowest notes, it also contains an E minor triad in its three highest notes.

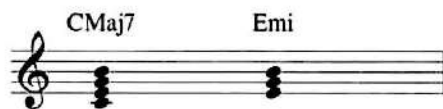


FIG. 6.2. CMaj7 and Emi

Suppose you are playing from a lead sheet with other musicians, and you see the chord CMaj7. You could play it in any of the common voicings for a major 7 chord that you might know.



17



FIG. 6.3. CMaj7 Voicings

Maybe there's a bass player, or a pianist, or another guitar player supplying the root of the chord. Or maybe you are playing a chord melody solo and you have established the sound of the CMaj7, but you'd like to be able to move it to another position on the fretboard without needing to play the root. Seeing that the Emi triad sits right on top of that CMaj7 chord means that you can play an Emi triad in any inversion or position and consider it a CMaj7 chord.

Here again are the three positions for an Emi triad on the first three strings, this time paired with C in the bass clef:



18

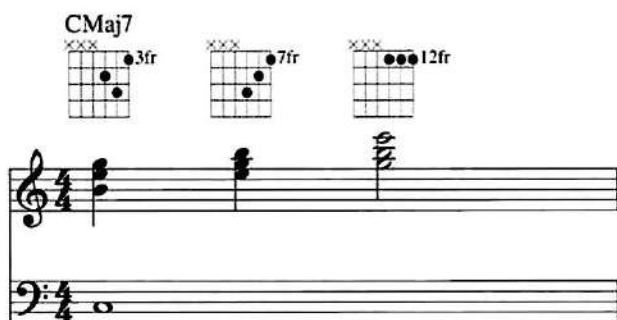


FIG. 6.4. CMaj7 Chords Played as Emi Triads

Now do the exercise of naming the notes again, as you did for the triads in part I. This time, however, indicate the chord tones as they relate to CMaj7 instead of Emi.

Answers are here:

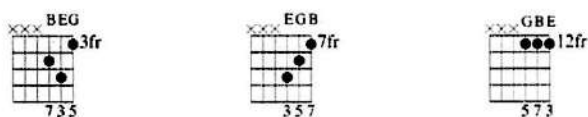


FIG. 6.5. Chord Tones for CMaj7

Notice that there is no root of the major 7 chord in these voicings, only the 3, 5, and 7. Since only the first three strings are being used here, something had to give; the root is easily replaced by the 7 in these voicings. You could think of these forms as beginning with C major triads, identifying the root, and then lowering the root by one-half step.

Here are the three inversions of a C triad followed by their corresponding major 7 voicing:



19

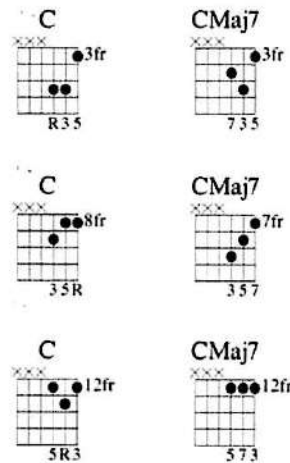


FIG. 6.6. C Triads with Related Major 7 Chords

You're left with the three Emi triads! You'll quickly be able to eliminate the step between the C triad and the CMaj7 and just think of the Emi form in a new way.

Paying careful attention to the note and the chord tone that is on the first string will now provide you with the shortcuts you'll need to move these chord forms around the neck to play your nearest CMaj7. Even though the fingerings are the same as what has been used for Emi, the context has changed, and the notes to follow on the E string will be your new reference as you transpose major 7 chords all over the neck. The first chord form, formerly thought of as Emi second inversion, will now be CMaj7 with G (5) on top. Emi from the root becomes CMaj7 with the Maj7 (B) on top. And Emi first inversion becomes CMaj7 with the 3 (E) on top.

Using a I to IV progression, which are both major 7 chords in a given major key, play around the cycle of fourths to practice finding the associated minor triad fingerings in each key and for each major 7 chord.

Here is the progression, first shown by only the chord name:



20

CMaj7 FMaj7 FMaj7 Bbmaj7 Bbmaj7 EbMaj7 EbMaj7 AbMaj7

5 AbMaj7 DbMaj7 DbMaj7 Gbmaj7 Gbmaj7 BMaj7 BMaj7 EMaj7

9 EMaj7 AMaj7 AMaj7 DMaj7 DMaj7 GMaj7 GMaj7 CMaj7

FIG. 6.7. Cycle of Fourths Major 7 Chords

You might first play this progression in whatever way you may know these chord forms. Go ahead and make a backing track for yourself of these major 7 chords. Give yourself time to get through all twelve keys. As you play the track back, play along live to it by using the corresponding minor triads for each major 7 chord. If you use the shortcut, you'll find that having learned the three different minor triad chord forms is the important first step; finding their place on the fretboard as major 7 chords for any key is the essential application for this method. If you're quick at theory and chord spelling, you'll be able to think ahead for each chord in the progression to land on the nearest chord tone of the next chord.

One way through this is shown in figure 6.8. Let your ears help you to make the match between the three-string chord and the root in the bass part.



21

CMaj7 3fr, FMaj7 5fr, FMaj7 5fr, B♭Maj7 5fr, B♭Maj7 5fr, E♭Maj7 6fr, E♭Maj7 6fr, A♭Maj7 8fr

A♭Maj7 8fr, D♭Maj7 8fr, D♭Maj7 8fr, G♭Maj7 9fr, G♭Maj7 9fr, B♭Maj7 11fr, B♭Maj7 11fr, E♭Maj7 11fr

E♭Maj7 11fr, A♭Maj7 9fr, A♭Maj7 9fr, D♭Maj7 9fr, D♭Maj7 9fr, G♭Maj7 10fr, G♭Maj7 10fr, C♭Maj7 12fr

FIG. 6.8. Voice-Led Cycle 4 Major 7 Chords

If you start on the Emi second inversion, giving you a G (the 5) of the CMaj7 chord on top, the rest of your choices will be made by considering whatever chords are the closest to that first voicing. Since there is no G in FMaj7, the nearest chord tone to the next chord is A. Using the Ami with the root on the first string, or first inversion, will work well. Leaving the A on top gives you the 7 of the B♭Maj7; the rest of the Dmi triad can be formed under that note as a root position Dmi. After a while, you won't even think of that chord form as Dmi, but rather you'll see it as B♭Maj7 when you need it.

If we continue by moving higher up the neck, we'll find that the B♭ on the sixth fret of the E string is a good next step to turn a G minor second inversion triad into an E♭Maj7.

Keep going in an ascending direction, and you'll find that a C minor triad can be used for the A♭Maj7 chord. By now, you might see that the name of each of these minor triads that corresponds to the major 7 chords being played all begin on the third of the major 7 chord. If you are quick to find those triads in voice-led fashion and in time through the cycle, then that can be a useful shortcut for you. If following the high note works well for you, then you will see that connection as you go through the repetition of finding and playing these chord forms and listening to their match with the bass notes and low-voiced seventh chords.

If, instead, you start the whole progression at the 7th fret position with B as the high note of the CMaj7, the closest FMaj7 will be at the 8th fret, the nearest B♭Maj7 will be at the 10th fret, E♭Maj7 also at the 10th fret. At some point in that high fret neighborhood, you might want to head back toward the low frets, especially if you don't have a cutaway on your guitar. Figure 6.9 shows a way to descend once you reach D♭Maj7 at the 13th fret. It's a judgment call, but if you're running out of frets, there's always a way back. G♭Maj7 could have been played at the 13th, 14th, and 15th frets as a B♭mi triad in root position, but instead, here it is back at the 9th, 10th, and 11th frets.

Shortcut: look for the 5 of the G♭Maj7 chord, which is D♭ on the first string. It's still a B♭mi triad, this time with the ♭3 on top, but with practice and the mental exercise that comes from thinking through the progression as major 7 chords, you'll be able to eliminate the minor triad as part of the thought process.



22

CMaj7 7fr FMaj7 8fr FMaj7 8fr B♭Maj7 10fr B♭Maj7 10fr E♭Maj7 10fr E♭Maj7 10fr A♭Maj7 11fr

A♭Maj7 11fr D♭Maj7 13fr D♭Maj7 13fr G♭Maj7 9fr G♭Maj7 9fr BMaj7 11fr BMaj7 11fr EMaj7 11fr

EMaj7 11fr AMaj7 9fr AMaj7 9fr DMaj7 9fr DMaj7 9fr GMaj7 10fr GMaj7 10fr CMaj7 12fr

FIG. 6.9. Cycle 4 Major 7 Chords Second Option

Finally, try starting the CMaj7 chord at the 12th fret and then work your way down the fretboard. You might see this as one step forward, two steps back, since you can ascend to the FMaj7, keeping the high E as a common tone, and then jump back to B♭Maj7 at the 10th fret with E♭Maj7 also at the 10th fret, continuing the same pattern all the way down the neck.



23

FIG. 6.10. Cycle 4 Major 7 Chords Third Option

Now practice randomizing some major 7 chords all over the first three strings. Move in either direction, jump to any interval in the root motion, listen to the chord tone that falls on the top note, and name each chord as you land on it. Use the major 7 name rather than the triad name. Record yourself doing this, and then play back the root to bring the chord into focus.



24

Here's my version:

FIG. 6.11. Random Major 7 Chord Progression

CHAPTER 7

Minor 7 Chords and Their Matched Major Triads

The formula for a minor 7 chord is $R \flat 3 5 \flat 7$ from its corresponding major scale. $Cmi7 = C E\flat G B\flat$. In addition to the Cmi triad in the lowest notes of this chord, there is an $E\flat$ major triad sitting on top.



FIG. 7.1. $Cmi7$, $E\flat$

Listen to a C bass note as you play all three inversion of the $E\flat$ triad on the first three strings. The new context will have your ears alerting you to a minor 7 chord quality.



25

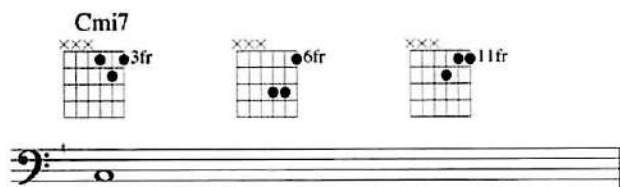


FIG. 7.2. $Cmi7$: $E\flat$ with C in Bass

You have done the work to now know that the first $E\flat$ triad shown (second inversion) has a G, or 3 on top. The root position $E\flat$ has the $B\flat$ or 5 on top, and the first inversion has the $E\flat$ or root on top. Now, as with the major 7 chords, begin to shift your thinking so that the new context is as follows: $Cmi7$ with G on top is the 5, $Cmi7$ with $B\flat$ on top is $\flat 7$, and $Cmi7$ with $E\flat$ on top is $\flat 3$.

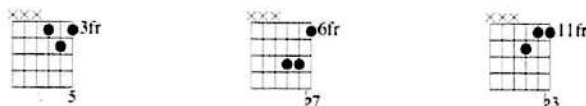


FIG. 7.3. Cmi7 with Chord Tones on First String

Here is a minor blues-based progression using all minor 7 chords:



26

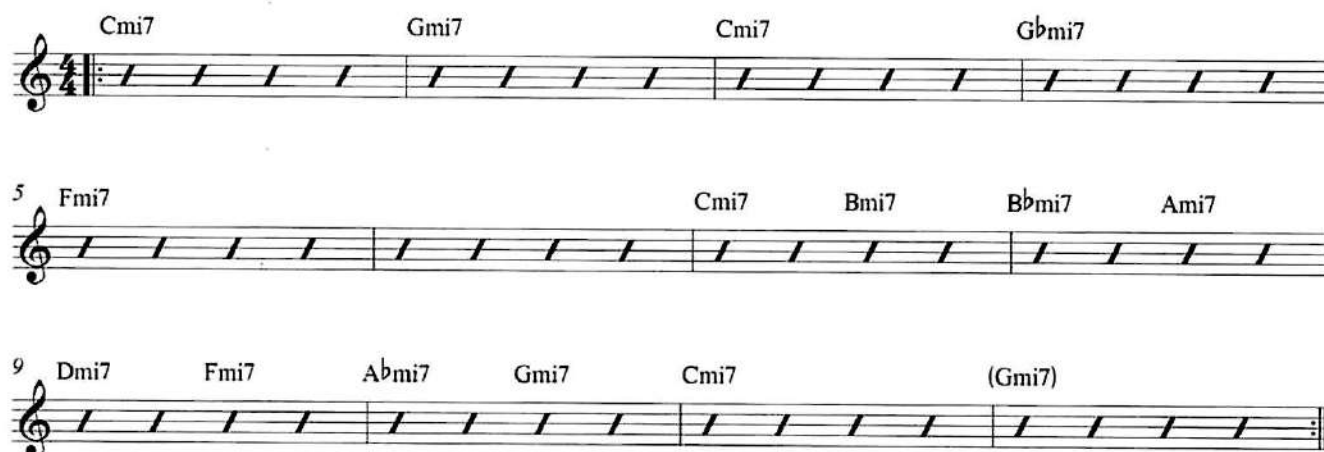


FIG. 7.4. Minor Blues-Based Progression

Play this progression three times using different major triad options each time. Make it your goal to voice lead the progression; minimize your movements from one chord to the next, and find the most efficient changes. When you're ready to compare notes, three answers are shown in figure 7.5.



27

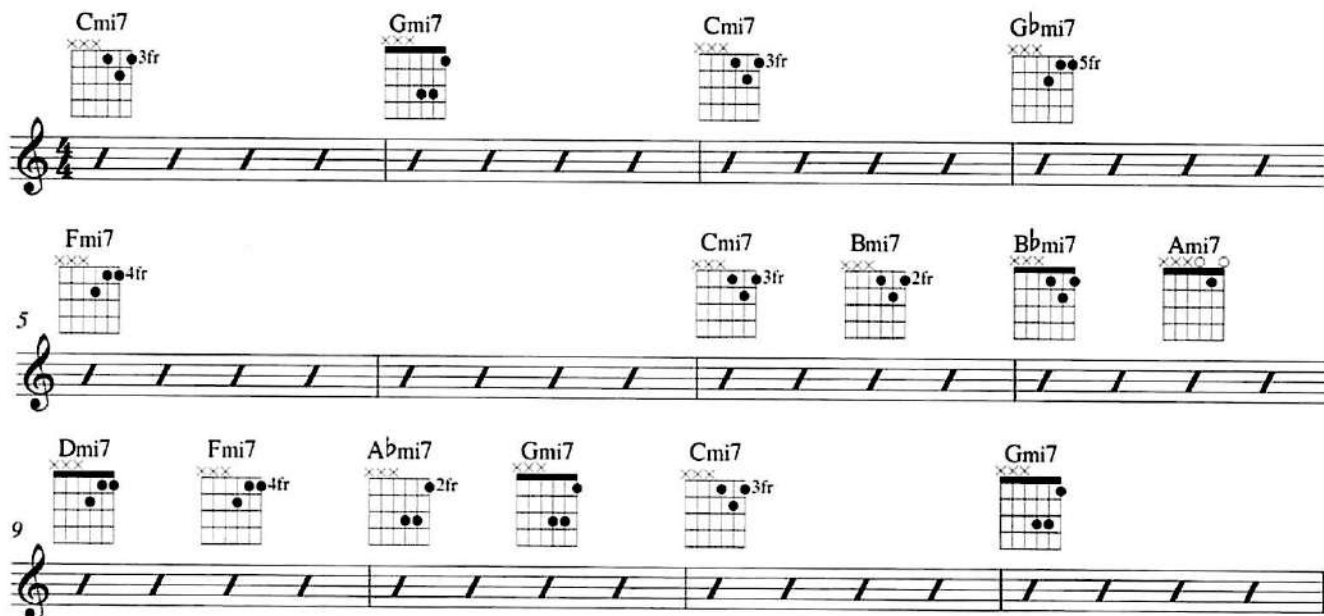


FIG. 7.5. Three Times Through Minor Progression

FIG. 7.5. Three Times Through Minor Progression

As you work this out, you will be aware of which major triads fit with the minor 7 chords. As you practice, make it a habit to think in the context of minor 7 chords on three strings rather than major triads. Go back to the diagrams and name the chord tones on the high E string as they relate to the minor 7 chords.

Answers below:

Answers below:

The diagram illustrates the chord tones for minor 7 chords and their matched major triads on the E string. The fretboards are organized into seven rows, each showing a sequence of chords and their corresponding major triads. The fret numbers are indicated by 'fr' and the string numbers by 'b'.

Row 1 (Fret 5): Fmi7 (b3, 4fr), Cmi7 (5, 3fr), Bmi7 (5, 2fr), Bbmi7 (5), Ami7 (5).

Row 2 (Fret 9): Dmi7 (b3), Fmi7 (b3, 4fr), Abmi7 (b7, 2fr), Gmi7 (b7), Cmi7 (5, 3fr), Gmi7 (b7).

Row 3 (Fret 13): Cmi7 (b7, 6fr), Gmi7 (b3, 6fr), Cmi7 (b7, 6fr), Gbmi7 (5, 9fr).

Row 4 (Fret 17): Fmi7 (5, 8fr), Cmi7 (b3, 11fr), Bmi7 (b3, 10fr), Bbmi7 (b3, 9fr), Ami7 (b3, 8fr).

Row 5 (Fret 21): Dmi7 (b7, 8fr), Fmi7 (5, 8fr), Abmi7 (b3, 7fr), Gmi7 (b3, 6fr), Cmi7 (b7, 6fr), Gmi7 (b3, 6fr).

Row 6 (Fret 25): Cmi7 (b3, 11fr), Gmi7 (5, 10fr), Cmi7 (b3, 11fr), Gbmi7 (5, 9fr).

Row 7 (Fret 29): Fmi7 (5, 8fr), Cmi7 (b7, 6fr), Bmi7 (b7, 5fr), Bbmi7 (b7, 4fr), Ami7 (b7, 3fr).

Row 8 (Fret 33): Dmi7 (5, 5fr), Fmi7 (b3, 4fr), Abmi7 (b7, 2fr), Gmi7 (b7), Cmi7 (5, 3fr).

FIG. 7.6. Chord Tones on E String

CHAPTER 8

Dominant 7 Chords Matched with Diminished Triads

The formula for a dominant 7 chord is R 3 5 $\flat 7$ from the major scale sharing the name with the root of the chord. C7 = C E G B $\flat$.

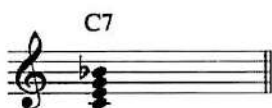
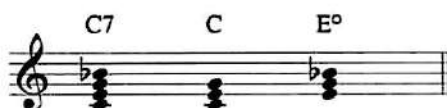


FIG. 8.1. C7

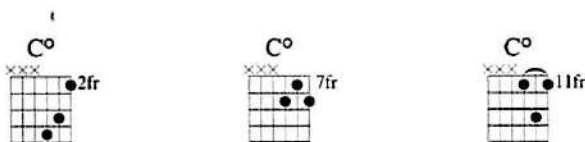
The three lowest notes are, of course, a C major triad. Sitting on top of that in the three highest notes is an E $^{\circ}$ triad, or E G B $\flat$.

FIG. 8.2. C7: C and E $^{\circ}$

Refer to the diminished triads in chapter 3 to review the three inversions on the first three strings.



28

FIG. 8.3. C $^{\circ}$ Root, First Inversion, Second Inversion

Now transpose those diminished triads to another root by first noticing what chord tone falls on the high E string.

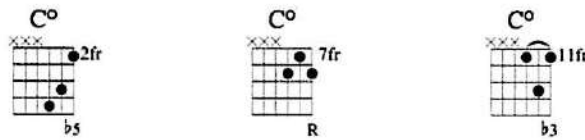


FIG. 8.4. C° Chord Tones on First String

Let's transpose it to E°. Getting quick at the theory, you'll then see that the b5 of E is Bb, the root is E, and the b3 is G. Adjust the positions of the C° triad inversions to match those chord tones on the first string to land on E°.



29

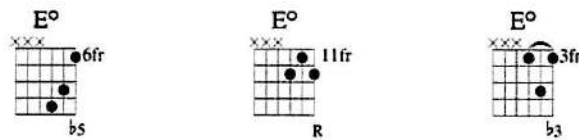


FIG. 8.5. E° with Bb, E, and G on the High String

Once you've done that, you can use those triad forms to play on a C7. Shift your thinking to identify the chord tones to relate to C7 instead of E°. Now, the Bb on the first string will be the b7, the E on the first string will be the 3, and the G on the first string will be the 5 of the chord. Memorizing those voicings in this new way gives you the luxury of using chord forms that your fingers have already learned. Your musical brain and mind's ear will guide you in a new direction when you're navigating your way around dominant 7 chords.

Here's a three-chord blues to put these diminished triad forms—now to be considered dominant 7 chords—to use in this common format.



30

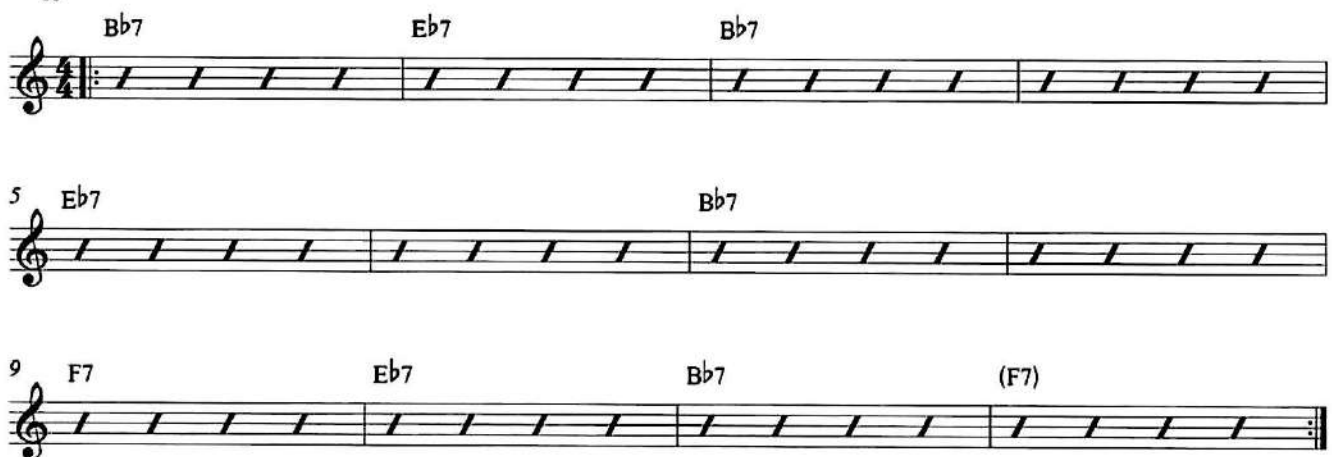


FIG. 8.6. 12-Bar Blues in Bb

I recommend making your own backing tracks (mine is provided here, in track 30) so that you can practice comping the chords however you'd like. Then play the small, three-string forms live along with the track.

Next, try it in F.



31

FIG. 8.7. 12-Bar Blues in F

You can go through each of these blues progressions three times and play them a different way each time, since you know three different inversions of the associated diminished triad forms.

When you're ready to compare your three-string progression ideas to some of mine, look at these three ways through the blues in Bb:



32

FIG. 8.8. Three Choruses of Blues in B $\flat$

And now three times through blues in F:

33

5

9 C7 6fr Bb7 4fr F7 4fr C7 3fr

13 F7 4fr Bb7 4fr F7 4fr

17 Bb7 4fr F7 4fr

21 C7 6fr Bb7 4fr F7 4fr C7 6fr

25 F7 8fr Bb7 9fr F7 11fr

29 Bb7 13fr F7 11fr

33 C7 6fr Bb7 9fr F7 8fr

FIG. 8.9. Three Choruses of Blues in F

CHAPTER 9

Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 Chords

The formula for minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chords is R $\flat$ 3 $\flat$ 5 $\flat$ 7. Their name is a wonderfully explicit description of what they are: a minor 7 chord with a flat 5. They are also sometimes called half-diminished chords, since they contain a diminished triad in the lowest three notes. From the root to the $\flat$ 7 is the same interval as in a minor 7 chord and a dominant 7 chord. A Cmi7 $\flat$ 5 contains the notes C E $\flat$ G $\flat$ B $\flat$.



FIG. 9.1. Cmi7 $\flat$ 5, C $^\circ$, and E $\flat$ mi

The top three notes of this chord are E $\flat$, G $\flat$, and B $\flat$, which is an E $\flat$ minor triad. Any minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chord will contain the minor triad which is built on the $\flat$ 3 of the chord.

Try it out:



34

Figure 9.2 displays two rows of musical notation and guitar fretboard diagrams for minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chords. The first row shows Ami7 $\flat$ 5 and Dmi7 $\flat$ 5. Above each chord are three fretboard diagrams showing the positions of the root, $\flat$ 3, $\flat$ 5, and $\flat$ 7. For Ami7 $\flat$ 5, the diagrams are for 3fr, 8fr, and 11fr. For Dmi7 $\flat$ 5, the diagrams are for 4fr, 8fr, and 13fr. The second row shows Gmi7 $\flat$ 5 and E $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5. Above each chord are three fretboard diagrams. For Gmi7 $\flat$ 5, the diagrams are for 3fr, 6fr, and 10fr. For E $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5, the diagrams are for 3fr, 6fr, and 10fr. The musical notation is in 4/4 time, with the treble staff showing the chords and the bass staff showing a whole note bass line.

FIG. 9.2. Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 Chords with Minor Triads

Use any inversion of a minor triad to play a minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chord. From now on, think of those triad shapes as the chord tones relate to the minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chord. Thinking this way, A $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 can be played with the $\flat$ 7, $\flat$ 3, or $\flat$ 5 as the high note. What you previously thought of as C $\flat$ mi triads with the 5 (G), root (C), or $\flat$ 3 (E $\flat$) on top, can now be thought of as A $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 chords with the $\flat$ 7 (G), $\flat$ 3 (C), or $\flat$ 5 (E $\flat$) on top.

Here is a progression with some typical uses of the minor 7 $\flat$ 5 chords in combination with other seventh chords:



35

35 B $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 E7 A $\flat$ mi7 A7

5 D $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 G7 C $\flat$ Maj7

9 F $\sharp$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 F $\sharp$ Maj7 E $\flat$ mi7

13 E $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 A7 D $\flat$ Maj7

FIG. 9.3. Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 Chords with Other Seventh Chords

Practice playing this progression three times, using different three-string chord forms each time around. Your goal should be to change to the closest possible choice of chord form as you move from one chord to the next. Here are three possibilities to examine and play once you've tried out your own.



36

Diagram illustrating a chord progression across six lines of music, showing various chord forms and fret positions. Each line contains three measures, with chord diagrams and fret numbers provided for each measure.

Line 1:

- Measure 1: Bmi7♭5 (3fr)
- Measure 2: E7 (3fr)
- Measure 3: Ami7 (3fr)
- Measure 4: A7 (3fr)

Line 2:

- Measure 1: Dmi7♭5 (4fr)
- Measure 2: G7 (6fr)
- Measure 3: CMaj7 (7fr)

Line 3:

- Measure 1: F#mi7♭5 (8fr)
- Measure 2: FMaj7 (8fr)
- Measure 3: Emi7 (7fr)

Line 4:

- Measure 1: Emi7♭5 (6fr)
- Measure 2: A7 (8fr)
- Measure 3: DMaj7 (9fr)

Line 5:

- Measure 1: Bmi7♭5 (10fr)
- Measure 2: E7 (10fr)
- Measure 3: Ami7 (8fr)
- Measure 4: A7 (8fr)

Line 6:

- Measure 1: Dmi7♭5 (8fr)
- Measure 2: G7 (10fr)
- Measure 3: CMaj7 (12fr)

Line 7:

- Measure 1: F#mi7♭5 (12fr)
- Measure 2: FMaj7 (12fr)
- Measure 3: Emi7 (10fr)

29 **Emi7^b5** 10fr **A7** 12fr **DMaj7** 14fr

33 **Bmi7^b5** 5fr **E7** 7fr **Ami7** 12fr **A7** 12fr

37 **Dmi7^b5** 13fr **G7** 13fr **CMaj7** 12fr 7fr

41 **F[#]mi7^b5** 5fr **FMaj7** 5fr **Emi7** 3fr

45 **Emi7^b5** 3fr **A7** 3fr **DMaj7** 5fr

FIG. 9.4. Three Ways to Play Mixed Seventh Chords

CHAPTER 10

Diminished 7 Chords

Diminished 7 chords are an interesting set of four notes: 1 $\flat$ 3 $\flat$ 5 $\flat\flat$ 7. There is an interval of a minor third between each note, even counting the interval between the $\flat\flat$ 7 and the octave root. $C^\circ 7$ contains the notes C $E^\flat$ $G^\flat$ and $B^\flat\flat$, or A. The $\flat\flat$ 7 is the same note name as 6, and we'll use that as a short cut to name the note.



FIG. 10.1. $C^\circ 7$

Play any diminished 7 chord on the guitar, move it three frets in either direction, and you'll be playing an inversion of the same chord you started on.



37



FIG. 10.2. $E^\flat\circ 7$ Inversions

This particular seventh chord type will be treated differently from the other seventh chords in that you will stick to diminished triads as a reference rather than a triad with a different quality from the seventh chord. Another difference to notice is that the triad you use can either represent the three lowest notes of the seventh chord, or the three highest. So, a $C^\circ 7$ contains a C° triad and also an $E^\flat\circ$ triad. While you're at it, you can go ahead and use $G^\flat\circ$ and A° triads, too!



FIG. 10.3. $C^\circ 7$ Chord and Its Triads

Every diminished 7 chord can be named by any of its chord tones, since they are all inversions of the same chord. This means that there are only three different diminished 7 chords: $C^{\circ}7$, $C^{\sharp\circ}7$, and $D^{\circ}7$, going chromatically.



FIG. 10.4. $C^{\circ}7$, $C^{\sharp\circ}7$, and $D^{\circ}7$

As long as you stay within the same chord “family,” you can use four different diminished triads to play over a diminished 7 chord. Here are the three different diminished 7 chords and their corresponding four choices of triad matches:



FIG. 10.5. Diminished 7 Chords and Their Triad Matches



38

Some choices of fingerings for these seventh chords and their corresponding triads:

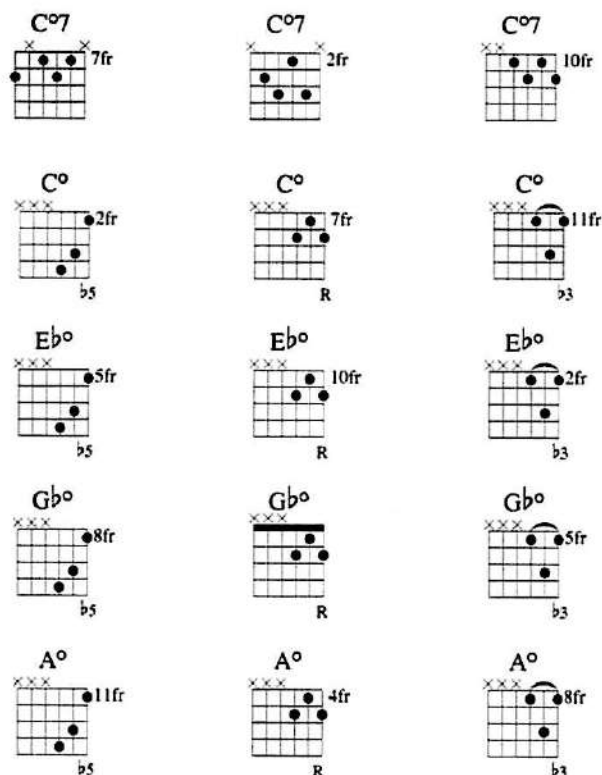


FIG. 10.6. Diminished 7 Chords Voicings and Their Related Triads

Here's a progression using some typical diminished seven chord placements in the harmony:



39

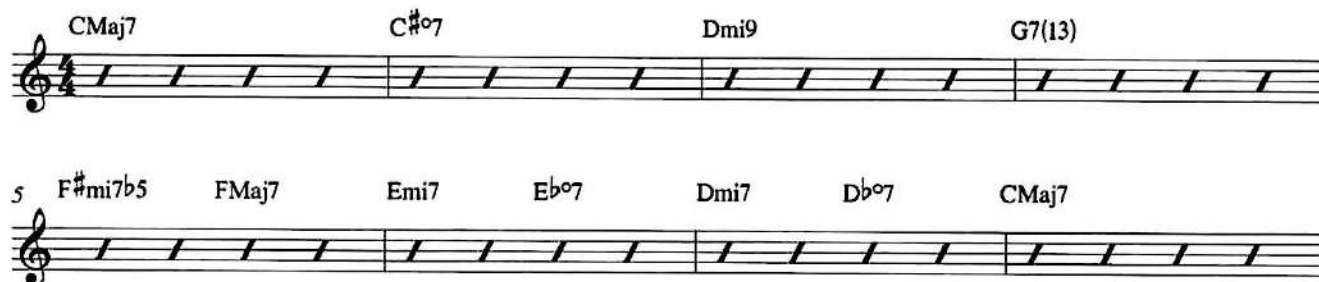


FIG. 10.7. Progression Using Diminished 7 Chords

After you've taken some time to try out the many triad options to use for this progression, compare notes with the options below.



40

Diagram showing four triad options for the first measure of the progression (40):

- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 3rd fret.
- C#°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C#, E, G, B at the 3rd fret.
- Dmi9**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 5th fret.
- G7(13)**: Fretboard diagram showing notes G, B, D, F, A, C at the 6th fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the first measure of the progression: a whole note C (open string).

Diagram showing seven triad options for the second measure of the progression (5):

- F#mi7b5**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F#, A, C, E at the 5th fret.
- FMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F, A, C, E at the 5th fret.
- Emi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes E, G, B, D at the 3rd fret.
- Eb°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Eb, G, B, D at the 3rd fret.
- Dmi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 5th fret.
- Db°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Db, F, A, C at the 3rd fret.
- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 3rd fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the second measure of the progression: a whole note F# (open string).

Diagram showing four triad options for the third measure of the progression (9):

- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 7th fret.
- C#°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C#, E, G, B at the 6th fret.
- Dmi9**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 8th fret.
- G7(13)**: Fretboard diagram showing notes G, B, D, F, A, C at the 10th fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the third measure of the progression: a whole note C (open string).

Diagram showing seven triad options for the fourth measure of the progression (13):

- F#mi7b5**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F#, A, C, E at the 8th fret.
- FMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F, A, C, E at the 8th fret.
- Emi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes E, G, B, D at the 7th fret.
- Eb°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Eb, G, B, D at the 5th fret.
- Dmi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 5th fret.
- Db°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Db, F, A, C at the 6th fret.
- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 7th fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the fourth measure of the progression: a whole note F# (open string).

Diagram showing four triad options for the fifth measure of the progression (17):

- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 12th fret.
- C#°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C#, E, G, B at the 11th fret.
- Dmi9**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 13th fret.
- G7(13)**: Fretboard diagram showing notes G, B, D, F, A, C at the 13th fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the fifth measure of the progression: a whole note C (open string).

Diagram showing seven triad options for the sixth measure of the progression (21):

- F#mi7b5**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F#, A, C, E at the 12th fret.
- FMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes F, A, C, E at the 12th fret.
- Emi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes E, G, B, D at the 10th fret.
- Eb°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Eb, G, B, D at the 8th fret.
- Dmi7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes D, F, A, C at the 8th fret.
- Db°7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes Db, F, A, C at the 11th fret.
- CMaj7**: Fretboard diagram showing notes C, E, G, B at the 12th fret.

Below the diagrams is a bass staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the sixth measure of the progression: a whole note F# (open string).

FIG. 10.8. Three Options for Mixed Chord Progression

CHAPTER 11

Minor-Major 7 Chords

Minor-major 7 chords are natural to melodic minor, harmonic minor, and harmonic major scales. Look at the make up of those three scales:



41



Melodic Minor



Harmonic Minor



Harmonic Major

FIG. 11.1. Three Scales: Melodic Minor, Harmonic Minor, Harmonic Major

Chapter 4 shows the triad make-up of each of these scales. Building seventh chords from each degree of these scales shows where the minor-major 7 chords fall.

Figure 11.2 displays three musical staves, each showing a sequence of seventh chords for a specific scale. The chords are represented by black dots on a five-line staff.

- Melodic Minor:** Cmi(Maj7), Dmi7, EbMaj7#5, F7, G7, Ami7b5, Bmi7b5.
- Harmonic Minor:** Cmi(Maj7), Dmi7b5, EbMaj7#5, Fmi7, G7, AbMaj7, B°7.
- Harmonic Major:** CMaj7, Dmi7b5, Emi7, Fmi(Maj7), G7, AbMaj7#5, B°7.

FIG. 11.2. Seventh Chords in Minor Scales

The I chord in melodic minor and harmonic minor scales is minor-major 7. The IV chord in harmonic major scales is minor-major 7.

A look at a Cmi(Maj7) chord reveals an Eb+ triad as its three high notes.

Figure 11.3 shows a musical staff with two chords. The first chord is Cmi(Maj7), and the second chord is Eb+.

FIG. 11.3. Cmi(Maj7), Eb+

An Eb+ triad can be played starting on Eb, G, or B, using the same fingering for each inversion.



42

Figure 11.4 shows three fretboard diagrams, each representing an augmented triad. The first diagram is for Eb+, the second for G+, and the third for B+.

FIG. 11.4. Eb+, G+, B+

Seen this way, you can play an augmented triad starting on any chord tone of a minor-major 7 chord except for the root. That'll give you some mental flexibility in the way that you think of approaching these minor-major 7 chords and their associate augmented triads. However, you should continue to think of the high note as related to the seventh chord rather than the triad because it will be more helpful in landing on the needed seventh chord in time while playing a progression.

Here is a reimagined blues using all minor-major 7 chords as an exercise. Try finding the augmented triads to use.



43

Ami(Maj7) Dmi(Maj7) Ami(Maj7)

5 Dmi(Maj7) Ami(Maj7)

9 Emi(Maj7) Dmi(Maj7) Ami(Maj7)

FIG. 11.5. 12-Bar Blues with Minor-Major 7 Chords

Now compare notes with these options for augmented triads. The first option starts with a C+ triad from the root and continues through, voice leading from there.



44

C+ C#+ C+

5 C#+ C+

9 D#+ C#+ C+

FIG. 11.6. Augmented Triads over Minor-Major Blues Option 1

Option 2 starts with E+ from the root. Since we know that C+ and E+ are the same triad (inversions of each other) they will both fit with the Ami(Maj7) in the first bar. Starting with E+ begins a new path to follow.



45

FIG. 11.7. Augmented Triads over Minor-Major Blues Option 2

FIG. 11.7. Augmented Triads over Minor-Major Blues Option 2

For a third option, $G^{\#+}$ is another inversion of the first two options: $G^{\#+} = C^+$ and E^+ . Voice lead from there to get yet a new way through the progression.



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FIG. 11.8. Augmented Triads over Minor-Major Blues Option 3

FIG. 11.8. Augmented Triads over Minor-Major Blues Option 3

CHAPTER 12

Matches and Deals: A Recap

As you've made your way through seventh chords, you might have noticed that some of them contain the same triad types in their top three notes. This means that you can organize the triads you play over seventh chords in a way that enables you to use the same chord forms in more than one context. It's a good deal! Efficient use of fingerings is ideal for guitarists. It promotes voice leading and smooth lines in improvising. Solving these sorts of match-game puzzles will help you to get around the fretboard in economic ways.

Here's the breakdown:

Triads	Their Uses
Major Triads	Major Triads, Minor 7 Chords
Minor Triads	Minor Triads, Major 7 Chords, Minor 7 ^b 5 Chords
Diminished Triads	Diminished Triads, Dominant 7 Chords, Diminished 7 Chords
Augmented Triads	Augmented Triads, Minor-Major 7 Chords

Check out this progression:



47

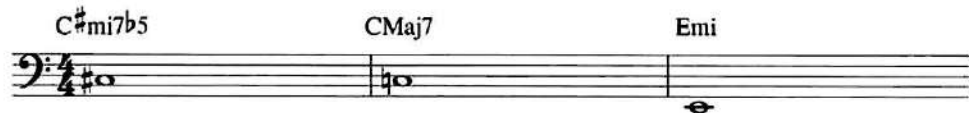


FIG. 12.1. Progression to Voice Lead

Here's one way to play it in triad forms, which illustrates a particularly economical deal with voicings:



FIG. 12.2. Economic Voice Leading

In the above example, C#mi7b5 uses the $\flat 3$ of the chord on top, CMaj7 uses the 3 on top, and Emi uses the root on top. You can't get more efficient than staying on the same chord throughout the progression! Be sure to listen to it in the context of the descending bass line to hear the chord changes in context. Make your own backing track with chords or bass lines, and have a listen to the ones provided, as well.

CHAPTER 13

Extensions and Natural Tensions

This system of playing triads over seventh chords can be thought of as putting the *upper structure triads* to use. More commonly, upper structure triads refer to triads superimposed on seventh chords with extensions or tensions, so there are more than four notes in the chord. For example, a CMaj9 = R 3 5 7 9 or C E G B D. The upper structure triad could be G rather than just thinking of the Emi7 as used in a CMaj7 chord without the added tension. It makes sense when you see the chord Emi7 on top of that CMaj9 chord. What triad would you use over an Emi7? G! The down side is that there is no E in a G triad, so there is no 3 of the C major included in the upper structure triad.



FIG. 13.1. CMaj9, G, Emi7

Making use of the upper structure triads in this way works once the chord tonality has been established. Additionally, if you think of this triad system as being a jumping off place from which to begin an improvised idea, you can then fill in other chord tones as you choose, or even other tensions.

Here are some upper structure triads contained in various quality seventh chords with tensions:

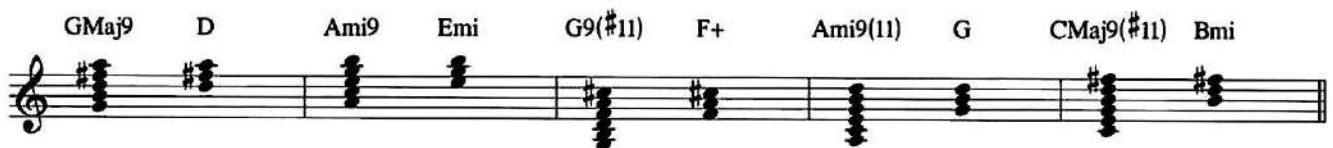


FIG. 13.2. Seventh Chords and their Upper Structure Triads

Combine the uppermost triads found in these extended seventh chords with some triad options found in the lower to middle voices of the chord for a more thorough working of the harmony. The following example shows different triads contained in seventh chords used within the harmonic rhythm of each chord.



49

DMaj9

Bmi9(11)

E9

A F#mi A F#mi D Bmi G#o

5 Ami9(Maj7)

D9(#11)

GMaj9(#11)

E C+ F#o Ami C+ D F#mi Bmi

FIG. 13.3. Triads in Progression with Seventh Chords and Tensions

By mixing and matching the multiple triads found within the larger chords, you can eliminate any doubt about the chord quality that may linger if you only use the upper-most notes of the chord without, for example, the third of the chord. Factor in inversions of each triad in use and the possibilities increase.

Here is a voice-led option through the progression:



50

DMaj9

Bmi9(11)

E9

5fr 5fr 7fr

5 Ami9(Maj7)

D9(#11)

GMaj9(#11)

7fr 8fr 10fr

FIG. 13.4. Diagrams for Voice-Led Triads

CHAPTER 14

Altered Tensions

The upper structure of altered chords—seventh chords with altered tensions added to them—define the altered sound of the chord. When guitarists need to choose which notes of a five- or six-note chord will be played, since some will be necessarily sacrificed, triads can help to prioritize voicing decisions. In a bar of 4/4, there will be time to use two or more triad forms if a chord lasts for one measure. Comping decisions made in this way can be just as creative as single-note improvisation lines. In fact, in part III, you'll see how setting up these voicings will lead to improvised melodies.

The figure displays two staves of musical notation, each showing a sequence of triads for altered dominant seventh chords. The first staff contains the following chords: G7(b9), B°, D°, C7b9(b13), E°, G°, Bb°, Dbmi, and Ab+. The second staff contains: F9(b13), A°, Cmi, Db+, A7b9(13), C#°, E°, F#, D7(#9), F#°, F, and Dmi. Each chord is represented by a triad (three notes) on a five-line staff, with the notes positioned to show their relative positions within the chord.

FIG. 14.1. Triads in Altered Dominant Seventh Chords

Typically, altered dominant chords sound like they want to resolve to their I chord. Figure 14.2 shows some triad forms voice led through a progression featuring resolving altered dominant chords.



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Figure 14.2 displays triads used in altered dominant chords, organized into three rows. Each row shows a guitar fretboard diagram with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The diagrams are labeled with chord names and their corresponding functions in parentheses.

Row 1:

- A7(#9) (C#°)
- DMaj9 (C)
- B7(b9) (F#mi)
- Emi9(Maj7) (B)

Row 2:

- Emi9(Maj7) (Emi)
- F7b9(b13) (Eb+)
- BbMaj9 (F)
- G9(b13) (Dmi)

Row 3:

- Cmi9(Maj7) (Eb+)
- A7b9(13) (F#mi)
- Dmi9 (Dmi)
- (Ami)
- (F)
- (Ami)

FIG. 14.2. Triads Used in Altered Dominant Chords

Now, revisit the habit of identifying the note that falls on the first E string. It will either be a chord tone or a tension of the seventh chord. Sketch it in to figure 14.2 and then compare with the answers below.

Figure 14.3 displays the notes and functions of the triads from Figure 14.2, organized into three rows. Each row shows a guitar fretboard diagram with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The diagrams are labeled with chord names and their corresponding functions in parentheses. The notes are indicated by dots on the fretboard, and the functions are indicated by numbers or symbols below the diagrams.

Row 1:

- A7(#9) (b7)
- DMaj9 (5)
- B7(b9) (b7)
- Emi9(Maj7) (b3)

Row 2:

- Emi9(Maj7) (b3)
- F7b9(b13) (b9)
- BbMaj9 (7)
- G9(b13) (9)

Row 3:

- Cmi9(Maj7) (7)
- A7b9(13) (3)
- Dmi9 (R)
- (Ami)
- (F)
- (Ami)

FIG. 14.3. Notes and Functions of Triads from 14.2

PART III

Comping and Soloing

CHAPTER 15

Comping

The following chord progressions are based on standard jazz repertoire. For practice, you can lay down a backing track of just a bass line if you'd like so that you can hear how effectively these three-string moveable chord forms will work without hearing any other comping. Additionally, go ahead and comp a backing track with chords that you might ordinarily use and then play the three-string moveable forms on top of that to hear how well the two chord approaches complement each other in the harmony.

To start the process, choose a triad form as a starting place to match the first chord in the progression. From there, the chord forms that follow will be dictated by what precedes them. As an exercise, write out the chord tone that falls on the first string for each of your choices. Triad choices and their chord tone identification on the first string will be shown on the pages following the initial chord chart for each chord progression. No specific tempo or groove is given so that you may feel free to mix it up!

Southern Charm

Chord progression for "Southern Charm" (G major, 4/4 time):

- Measure 1: DMaj7
- Measure 5: GMaj7
- Measure 9: DMaj7
- Measure 13: GMaj7

Other chords in the progression:

- Measure 2: Bmi7
- Measure 3: E7
- Measure 6: Bb7
- Measure 7: A7
- Measure 8: DMaj7
- Measure 10: Bmi7
- Measure 11: E9
- Measure 14: Bb7(13)
- Measure 15: A9
- Measure 16: DMaj7

FIG. 15.1. Chord Progression to "Southern Charm"



52

Southern Charm

52

DMaj7

Bmi7

E7

5

GMaj7

Bb7

A7

DMaj7

EbMaj7

9

DMaj7

Bmi7

E9

13

GMaj7

Bb7(13)

A9

DMaj7

17

DMaj7

Bmi7

E7

21

GMaj7

Bb7

A7

DMaj7

EbMaj7

25

DMaj7

Bmi7

E9

Detailed description: This page contains the guitar triad patterns for the song 'Southern Charm'. It features seven systems of guitar triad diagrams and corresponding musical staves. Each system includes a measure number on the left (52, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25) and three triad diagrams with their respective fret numbers. The triads are: DMaj7, Bmi7, E7 (first system); GMaj7, Bb7, A7, DMaj7, EbMaj7 (second system); DMaj7, Bmi7, E9 (third system); GMaj7, Bb7(13), A9, DMaj7 (fourth system); DMaj7, Bmi7, E7 (fifth system); GMaj7, Bb7, A7, DMaj7, EbMaj7 (sixth system); and DMaj7, Bmi7, E9 (seventh system). Each triad diagram shows the fret number and the notes on the strings. The musical staves show the corresponding notes for each triad.

The figure displays three choruses of triad choices for guitar, each consisting of four measures. The notation includes fretboard diagrams and musical staves.

Chorus 1 (Measures 29-32):

- Measure 29: GMaj7 (7fr)
- Measure 30: Bb7(13) (4fr)
- Measure 31: A9 (3fr)
- Measure 32: DMaj7 (2fr)

Chorus 2 (Measures 33-36):

- Measure 33: DMaj7 (5fr)
- Measure 34: Bmi7 (5fr)
- Measure 35: E7 (3fr)
- Measure 36: (Empty staff)

Chorus 3 (Measures 37-40):

- Measure 37: GMaj7 (2fr)
- Measure 38: Bb7 (3fr)
- Measure 39: A7 (3fr)
- Measure 40: DMaj7 (5fr)

Chorus 4 (Measures 41-44):

- Measure 41: DMaj7 (9fr)
- Measure 42: Bmi7 (10fr)
- Measure 43: E9 (10fr)
- Measure 44: (Empty staff)

Chorus 5 (Measures 45-48):

- Measure 45: GMaj7 (10fr)
- Measure 46: Bb7(13) (9fr)
- Measure 47: A9 (12fr)
- Measure 48: DMaj7 (12fr)

FIG. 15.2. Three Choruses of Triad Choices

Southern Charm

DMaj7 Bmi7 E7

5 9 13 17 21 25

GMaj7 Bb7 A7 DMaj7 EbMaj7

DMaj7 Bmi7 E9

GMaj7 Bb7(13) A9 DMaj7

DMaj7 Bmi7 E7

GMaj7 Bb7 A7 DMaj7 EbMaj7

DMaj7 Bmi7 E9

29

GMaj7 7fr 3

Bb7(13) 4fr b7

A9 3fr b7

DMaj7 2fr 3

33

DMaj7 5fr 5

Bmi7 5fr b7

E7 3fr 3

37

GMaj7 2fr 7

Bb7 5fr 5

A7 3fr b7

DMaj7 5fr 5

Ebmaj7 6fr 5

41

DMaj7 9fr 7

Bmi7 10fr b3

E9 10fr b7

45

GMaj7 10fr 5

Bb7(13) 9fr 3

A9 12fr 5

DMaj7 12fr 9

FIG. 15.3. Chord Tone I.D. for 15.2

My Roaming

BbMaj7 Cmi7 Dmi7 Db7 Cmi7 F7 BbMaj7 D7(b9)
 5 Gmi Gmi(Maj7) Gmi7 C9 Cmi7 F7 Fmi7 Bb7
 9 EbMaj7 Ebmi7 BbMaj7 EbMaj7 Ebmi7 BbMaj7
 13 Emi7b5 A7 Dmi7 G7 Gmi7 C7 Cmi7 F7

FIG. 15.4. Chord Progression to "My Roaming"



53

My Roaming

BbMaj7 Cmi7 Dmi7 Db7 Cmi7 F7 BbMaj7 D7(b9)
 5 Gmi Gmi(Maj7) Gmi7 C9 Cmi7 F7 Fmi7 Bb7
 9 EbMaj7 Ebmi7 BbMaj7 EbMaj7 Ebmi7 BbMaj7
 13 Emi7b5 A7 Dmi7 G7 Gmi7 C7 Cmi7 F7
 17 BbMaj7 Cmi7 Dmi7 Db7 Cmi7 F7 BbMaj7 D7(b9)

21

Gmi 10fr Gmi(Maj7) 10fr Gmi7 10fr C9 6fr Cmi7 6fr F7 4fr Fmi7 4fr Bb7 4fr

25

EbMaj7 3fr Ebmi7 2fr BbMaj7 EbMaj7 3fr Ebmi7 2fr BbMaj7

29

Emi7b5 3fr A7 3fr Dmi7 5fr G7 6fr Gmi7 6fr C7 6fr Cmi7 6fr F7 4fr

33

BbMaj7 5fr Cmi7 6fr Dmi7 8fr Db°7 6fr Cmi7 6fr F7 8fr BbMaj7 10fr D7(b9) 8fr

37

Gmi 6fr Gmi(Maj7) 6fr Gmi7 6fr C9 6fr Cmi7 6fr F7 4fr Fmi7 4fr Bb7 4fr

41

EbMaj7 6fr Ebmi7 6fr BbMaj7 5fr EbMaj7 3fr Ebmi7 2fr BbMaj7 5fr

45

Emi7b5 6fr A7 8fr Dmi7 8fr G7 6fr Gmi7 6fr C7 6fr Cmi7 6fr F7 4fr BbMaj7 5fr

FIG. 15.5. Three Choruses of Triad Choices

My Roaming

Diagram illustrating the triads for the song "My Roaming" across six systems of guitar fretboards. Each system shows a sequence of chords and their corresponding fret positions on the guitar neck.

System 1:

- B $\flat$ Maj7 (5)
- Cmi7 (5, 3fr)
- Dmi7 (b3)
- D $\flat$ 7 (b5, 2fr)
- Cmi7 (5, 3fr)
- F7 (3, 4fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (7, 5fr)
- D7(b9) (5, 5fr)

System 2:

- Gmi (b3, 6fr)
- Gmi(Maj7) (b3, 6fr)
- Gmi7 (b3, 6fr)
- C9 (b7, 6fr)
- Cmi7 (b7, 6fr)
- F7 (5, 8fr)
- Fmi7 (5, 8fr)
- B $\flat$ 7 (3, 9fr)

System 3:

- E $\flat$ Maj7 (7, 10fr)
- E $\flat$ mi7 (b7, 9fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (3, 10fr)
- E $\flat$ Maj7 (7, 10fr)
- E $\flat$ mi7 (b7, 9fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (3, 10fr)

System 4:

- E $\flat$ mi7 $\flat$ 5 (b7, 10fr)
- A7 (3, 8fr)
- Dmi7 (b7, 8fr)
- G7 (5, 10fr)
- Gmi7 (5, 10fr)
- C7 (3, 11fr)
- Cmi7 (b3, 11fr)
- F7 (b7, 11fr)

System 5:

- B $\flat$ Maj7 (5, 13fr)
- Cmi7 (5, 15fr)
- Dmi7 (b3, 13fr)
- D $\flat$ 7 (b3, 12fr)
- Cmi7 (b3, 11fr)
- F7 (b7, 11fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (3, 10fr)
- D7(b9) (b7, 8fr)

System 6:

- Gmi (5, 10fr)
- Gmi(Maj7) (5, 10fr)
- Gmi7 (5, 10fr)
- C9 (b7, 6fr)
- Cmi7 (b7, 6fr)
- F7 (3, 4fr)
- Fmi7 (b3, 4fr)
- B $\flat$ 7 (b7, 4fr)

System 7:

- E $\flat$ Maj7 (3, 3fr)
- E $\flat$ mi7 (b3, 2fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (5)
- E $\flat$ Maj7 (3, 3fr)
- E $\flat$ mi7 (b3, 2fr)
- B $\flat$ Maj7 (5)

29

Emi7b5 3fr b3

A7 3fr b7

Dmi7 5fr 5

G7 6fr 3

Gmi7 6fr b3

C7 6fr b7

Cmi7 6fr b7

F7 4fr 3

33

BbMaj7 5fr 7

Cmi7 6fr b7

Dmi7 8fr b7

Db°7 6fr bb7

Cmi7 6fr b7

F7 8fr 5

BbMaj7 10fr 3

D7(b9) 8fr b7

37

Gmi 6fr b3

Gmi(Maj7) 6fr b3

Gmi7 6fr b3

C9 6fr b7

Cmi7 6fr b7

F7 4fr 3

Fmi7 4fr b3

Bb7 4fr b7

41

Ebmaj7 6fr 5

Ebmi7 6fr 5

BbMaj7 5fr 7

Ebmaj7 3fr 3

Ebmi7 2fr b3

BbMaj7 5fr 7

45

Emi7b5 6fr b5

A7 8fr 3

Dmi7 8fr b7

G7 6fr 3

Gmi7 6fr b3

C7 6fr b7

Cmi7 6fr b7

F7 4fr 3

BbMaj7 5fr 7

FIG. 15.6. Chord Tone I.D. for 15.5

Bonnie in Seoul

Chord progression for "Bonnie in Seoul" (4/4 time, key of E-flat major):

- Measures 1-4: E $\flat$ mi7, B $\flat$ 7(b9), E $\flat$ mi7, D9
- Measures 5-8: D $\flat$ Maj7, G $\flat$ 7, Fmi7, E $^{\circ}$ 7
- Measures 9-12: E $\flat$ mi7, E $\flat$ mi7/D $\flat$, Cmi7, F7
- Measures 13-16: B $\flat$ mi7, E $\flat$ 7, E $\flat$ mi7, A $\flat$ 7, D $\flat$ Maj7, (B $\flat$ 7)

FIG. 15.7. Chord Progression to "Bonnie in Seoul"



54

Bonnie in Seoul

Guitar fretboard diagrams for "Bonnie in Seoul" (4/4 time, key of E-flat major):

- Measures 1-4: E $\flat$ mi7 (2fr), B $\flat$ 7(b9), E $\flat$ mi7 (2fr), D9
- Measures 5-8: D $\flat$ Maj7, G $\flat$ 7, Fmi7, E $^{\circ}$ 7
- Measures 9-12: E $\flat$ mi7 (2fr), E $\flat$ mi7/D $\flat$ (6fr), Cmi7 (3fr), F7 (4fr)
- Measures 13-16: B $\flat$ mi7 (6fr), E $\flat$ 7 (6fr), E $\flat$ mi7 (6fr), A $\flat$ 7 (7fr), D $\flat$ Maj7 (4fr), B $\flat$ 7 (4fr)

17 $E\flat mi7$ 6fr $B\flat 7(b9)$ 4fr $E\flat mi7$ 6fr $D9$ 5fr

21 $D\flat Maj7$ 4fr $G\flat 7$ 5fr $F mi7$ 4fr $E^{\circ} 7$ 2fr

25 $E\flat mi7$ 6fr $E\flat mi7/D\flat$ 9fr $C mi7$ 11fr $F7$ 11fr

29 $B\flat mi7$ 9fr $E\flat 7$ 9fr $E\flat mi7$ 9fr $A\flat 7$ 7fr $D\flat Maj7$ 8fr $B\flat 7$ 9fr

33 $E\flat mi7$ 9fr $B\flat 7(b9)$ 9fr $E\flat mi7$ 11fr $D9$ 12fr

37 $D\flat Maj7$ 13fr $G\flat 7$ 12fr $F mi7$ 11fr $E^{\circ} 7$ 11fr

41 $E\flat mi7$ 14fr $E\flat mi7/D\flat$ 9fr $C mi7$ 11fr $F7$ 11fr

45 $B\flat mi7$ 13fr $E\flat 7$ 14fr $E\flat mi7$ 14fr $A\flat 7$ 11fr $D\flat Maj7$ 13fr

FIG. 15.8. Three Choruses of Triad Choices

Bonnie in Seoul

Diagram illustrating the chord progressions for the song "Bonnie in Seoul" across six systems of guitar notation. Each system shows a staff with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 4/4 time signature. Chord diagrams are provided above the staff, indicating fingerings and fret positions.

System 1:

- Chord 1: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 3, 2fr)
- Chord 2: B $\flat$ 7(b9) (Fret 5)
- Chord 3: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 3, 2fr)
- Chord 4: D9 (Fret 3)

System 2:

- Chord 5: D $\flat$ Maj7 (Fret 3)
- Chord 6: G $\flat$ 7 (Fret 7)
- Chord 7: Fmi7 (Fret R)
- Chord 8: E $\circ$ 7 (Fret R)

System 3:

- Chord 9: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 3, 2fr)
- Chord 10: E $\flat$ mi7/D $\flat$ (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 11: Cmi7 (Fret 5, 3fr)
- Chord 12: F7 (Fret 3, 4fr)

System 4:

- Chord 13: B $\flat$ mi7 (Fret R, 6fr)
- Chord 14: E $\flat$ 7 (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 15: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 16: A $\flat$ 7 (Fret 3, 7fr)
- Chord 17: D $\flat$ Maj7 (Fret 5, 4fr)
- Chord 18: B $\flat$ 7 (Fret 5, 4fr)

System 5:

- Chord 19: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 20: B $\flat$ 7(b9) (Fret 7, 4fr)
- Chord 21: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 22: D9 (Fret 5, 5fr)

System 6:

- Chord 23: D $\flat$ Maj7 (Fret 5, 4fr)
- Chord 24: G $\flat$ 7 (Fret 3, 5fr)
- Chord 25: Fmi7 (Fret 3, 4fr)
- Chord 26: E $\circ$ 7 (Fret 3, 2fr)

System 7:

- Chord 27: E $\flat$ mi7 (Fret 5, 6fr)
- Chord 28: E $\flat$ mi7/D $\flat$ (Fret 7, 9fr)
- Chord 29: Cmi7 (Fret 5, 11fr)
- Chord 30: F7 (Fret 7, 11fr)

29

Bbmi7 9fr b3

Eb7 9fr b7

Ebmi7 9fr b7

Ab7 7fr 3

DbMaj7 8fr 7

Bb7 9fr 3

33

Ebmi7 9fr b7

Bb7(b9) 9fr 3

Ebmi7 11fr R

D9 12fr 9

37

DbMaj7 13fr 3

Gb7 12fr b7

Fmi7 11fr b7

Eo7 11fr R

41

Ebmi7 14fr b3

Ebmi7/Db 9fr b7

Cmi7 11fr b3

F7 11fr b7

45

Bbmi7 13fr 5

Eb7 14fr 3

Ebmi7 14fr b3

Ab7 11fr 5

DbMaj7 13fr 3

FIG. 15.9. Chord Tone I.D. for 15.8

CHAPTER 16

Soloing

In a sense, this chapter represents everything that the preceding chapters have been leading to and preparing you for. You've gained a new perspective and understanding of chords and the many places on the fretboard that they can be played. You're equipped with the mental practice of noticing what note falls on the first string and how you can use that information to identify chord shapes to place in an efficient way. You're connecting small chord shapes easily from one complex chord to another without being hindered by keys, scales, modes, or anything else that might have intimidated you before this perspective took hold. The next step to spring from all of this is to break up these triad forms into single-note lines.

Start right in with the examples from chapter 15. Simply play the notes on the first three strings separately. Repeat notes if you want to for rhythmic continuity; use any rhythms you'd like to fill out each measure. Notice the close connection from one chord to the next as you single out each of your chosen triad forms, which you are now thinking of as seventh chords.

Eventually, you'll be able to skip the step of writing out each three-string form as you begin to solo single note lines using the same voice led concepts. As you leave one chord and move to the next, you'll find yourself reaching for chord tones or tensions of the next chord just as you did when finding the triad forms. Having gone through the extensive practice and written exercise of economically working your way through each progression will make this part of your process easier and fun.

Let your ears be your guides as you add notes and phrases to the three string chord forms. Improvise! You will be making the changes already from simply breaking up the triad forms into single notes, but you'll notice that the shapes are becoming mental images rather than tightly held grips. In this way, you'll be more free to come and go from one chord to the next by visiting anything you'd like in between—including space! This process can relate to whatever you've worked on throughout your practice on the instrument. Ear training, scale practice, arpeggios, and patterns will all be useful to you as you find musical ways to thread lines through the juxtaposed chord forms that you've carefully and logically mapped out.

Again, keep in mind that the routine of sketching out each triad shape and making a note of how the chord tones relate to the seventh chord of the moment will become second nature as you turn the shapes into lines. You will still “see” the chords and visualize them as you navigate your way around the neck, but they will serve as interpreters, springboards, and guardrails for your ideas.

Mix these ideas together with anything else you might be working on. Let your mind’s ear be your guide; that is the driving reason for improvising music. Your fingers will teach your ears new ideas, and your ears will begin to call for those ideas in new and interesting ways and musical contexts.

The songs here contain some passages that cannot rely on just knowing what key you’re in and playing that scale. Having found the triad shapes for all of these chords grants you entry into soloing over the changes when you want to make an intelligent statement about the harmony on which the song is built.

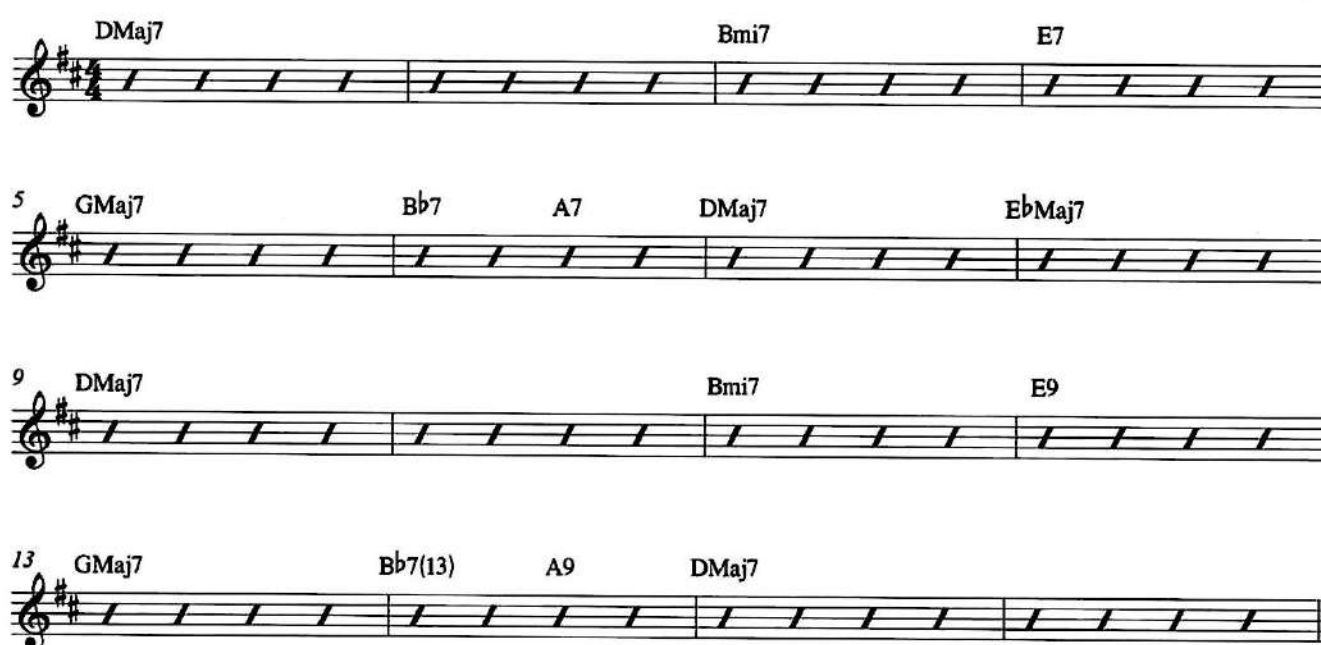
Here are your blank canvases, also known as the chord charts from chapter 15, to improvise over using what you’ve investigated about them to this point. Use your backing tracks, your ears, and your mind’s eye to solo using your now familiar places to start.

Take three choruses for each chord progression so that you can try out the different places to start: the inversions of the triads.

The second audio track of each pair can be heard as a demonstration improvisation on that progression.

 55, 56

Southern Charm



DMaj7 Bmi7 E7

5 GMaj7 Bb7 A7 DMaj7 EbMaj7

9 DMaj7 Bmi7 E9

13 GMaj7 Bb7(13) A9 DMaj7

FIG. 16.1. “Southern Charm” Chord Chart



57, 58

My Roaming

Chord chart for "My Roaming" (Measures 57-60):

Measure	Chord
57	BbMaj7
58	Cmi7
59	Dmi7
60	Db°7
61	Cmi7
62	F7
63	BbMaj7
64	D7(b9)
65	Gmi
66	Gmi(Maj7)
67	Gmi7
68	C9
69	Cmi7
70	F7
71	Fmi7
72	Bb7
73	Ebmaj7
74	Ebm7
75	Bbmaj7
76	Ebmaj7
77	Ebm7
78	Bbmaj7
79	Emi7b5
80	A7
81	Dmi7
82	G7
83	Gmi7
84	C7
85	Cmi7
86	F7

FIG. 16.2. "My Roaming" Chord Chart



59, 60

Bonnie in Seoul

Chord chart for "Bonnie in Seoul" (Measures 59-60):

Measure	Chord
59	Ebm7
60	Bb7(b9)
61	Ebm7
62	D9
63	DbMaj7
64	Gb7
65	Fmi7
66	E°7
67	Ebm7
68	Ebm7/Db
69	Cmi7
70	F7
71	Bbm7
72	Eb7
73	Ebm7
74	Ab7
75	DbMaj7
76	(Bb7)

FIG. 16.3. "Bonnie in Seoul" Chord Chart

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo by Emily Joy Ashman

Jane Miller is a professor in the Guitar Department at Berklee College of Music. She has presented master classes and performances around the world. With roots in both jazz and contemporary acoustic guitar, she performs solo guitar shows, plays with her group, and freelances with players in the New England Area. She is a composer and arranger, and has contributed many solo guitar arrangements to the Berklee Guitar Department library. She is a contributing editor for *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* and a former monthly columnist for *Premier Guitar Magazine* ("The Jazz Box"). She has recorded over seventy video lessons in jazz guitar for jamplay.com. Her newest recording *Boats* (her fifth CD) was released in April 2018 and contains fourteen of her compositions, which she

arranged for her quartet featuring Tim Ray (piano), Lincoln Goines (bass), and Mark Walker (drums). Noted jazz writer Scott Yanow featured Jane in his book *The Great Jazz Guitarists: A Complete Guide*. In a review of Miller's 2013 solo recording *Three Sides to a Story*, Yanow called Miller "a fine guitarist whose attractive chord voicings and ability to swing at all tempos makes her a very complete musician... A flawless player...she is an important educator... Her playing, which sometimes recalls Joe Pass, makes the absence of a bassist and drummer barely noticeable."

janemillergroup.com

Learn how triads are key to understanding harmony, soloing, and comping. Triads are the basis of all harmony. By understanding how they relate to larger chord structures, you will improve your command over harmony generally and be able to use triads more effectively in all your playing.

Through visualizing and using the common triads on the first three strings, you will create smooth lines that make sense of the chords even when the song changes keys or modes.

Audio includes live guitar, bass, and drums performing rhythm tracks, guitar demonstration tracks, and play-along tracks based on common jazz progressions. Examples are in traditional notation and guitar chord diagrams.

You will learn to:

- Identify, organize, and use triads in your improvising: major, minor, diminished, and augmented
- Use inversions to improve transitions between chords, flowing from one to the next (i.e., voice leading)
- Develop your chord/muscle memory through the use of shapes, which will improve your intuitive mastery of the fingerboard
- Understand the relationship between triads, seventh chords, and tensions
- Improvise using triads as the basis for navigating chord changes
- Use triads as the basis of comping parts



Photo by Emily Joy Ashman

Jane Miller is a guitarist, composer, arranger, writer, and educator. She is author of *Introduction to Jazz Guitar* (Berklee Press) and many articles and instructional videos for guitar magazines and websites, and has released several albums as a band leader. Jane is a professor of guitar at Berklee College of Music.

"In *Triads for the Improvising Guitarist*, Jane Miller presents a comprehensive overview of not only 'the what,' in terms of the theory of understanding triads, but 'the how,' in terms of applying them effectively in a practical musical context.

"Jane has a very accessible and valuable approach to sharing her knowledge of this most essential musical utility, and players of all levels will find ways to benefit from the work she has assembled here."

—**Professor Sheryl Bailey, Assistant Chair of Guitar, Berklee College of Music**

"I came to the guitar with a keyboard background so I went hunting for the triads and the scales. If I'd had Jane Miller's book, I would have found all the triad shapes in all the keys and I would have seen how the scales are woven into the triads. And I would have seen the triads lurking in the seventh chords. Jane not only shares the information; she shares her perspective."

—**John Knowles, C.G.P., Composer, Author, Performer, and Teacher; Certified Guitar Player, as honored by Chet Atkins**

"Utilizing a guitarist's propensity for visualizing 'grips,' Professor Miller investigates superimposing triads from diatonic harmonic extensions to advanced altered dominant, upper structure triads and modal applications.

"Her approach clearly presents a thorough system for seamlessly balancing linear and vertical playing. A fresh approach and generously shared. Brava!"

—**Professor Rich Falco, Director of Jazz Studies at WPI; Faculty Curator, New England Jazz Hall of Fame**

"All guitarists will benefit from the info in this book. Read and learn!"

—**Danny "Kootch" Kortchmar, Session Guitarist (James Taylor, Carole King, Linda Ronstadt, the Section), Songwriter, Producer**

"Jane Miller's book *Triads for the Improvising Guitarist* goes deep into an often-overlooked elemental part of understanding the fretboard, and, well . . . music in general. It'll be a revelation for many who are looking for a way to 'connect the dots' in their playing."

—**Duke Levine, Solo Artist, Session Guitarist (Peter Wolf, Mary Chapin Carpenter)**

The price of this book includes access to audio tracks online, for download or streaming, using the unique code inside the book!



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