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SWING & BIG BAND GUITAR

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This book is dedicated to my parents, O. Bernard and Emma Tom Johnson, whose love and sacrifice will be with me always. I love you.

About the Author

Charlton Johnson has been active in the Memphis, Tennessee music scene since the ripe old age of 14, when early interests in jazz, blues, and R&B led the young guitarist to performances on historic Beale Street with such artists as Albert King, James Cotton, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Rufus Thomas, Carla Thomas, Ann Peebles, Syl Johnson, Phineas Newborn Jr., Calvin Newborn, Herman Green, Donald Brown, and James Williams.

After earning a Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Memphis in 1980, Mr. Johnson began his career as a jazz educator, teaching both jazz guitar and jazz combo performance classes at his alma mater. While at the University of Memphis, he was granted the opportunity to join the Count Basie Orchestra and played in legendary guitarist Freddie Green's rhythm guitar chair for six years, traveling across the U.S., Canada, South America, Russia, Thailand, Japan, and Europe with the group. In addition to extensive travel, the orchestra worked with greats Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Eckstine, Max Roach, Lionel Hampton, James Moody, Ella Fitzgerald, Nancy Wilson, Joe Williams, Dianne Schuur, Tito Puente, John Hendricks, Al Jarreau, Bobby McFerrin, Manhattan Transfer, Ernestine Anderson, Toots Thielman, and Rosemary Clooney and recorded five albums, one of which was awarded a Grammy (George Benson's *Big Boss Band*). Mr. Johnson was the first guitarist/member of the Basie orchestra to be a featured soloist since Eddie Durham in the 1940s.

Most recently, Mr. Johnson sat in the producer's seat for the recording *Finally Yours* by former Basie vocalist and international recording artist Carmen Bradford. Also featuring performances by Frank Foster, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Darryl Jones—as well as a tune, "Destiny," penned by the author himself—this recording made it to *Billboard* magazine's prestigious Jazz Top 10 list.

Introduction

The guitar is a complete musical instrument capable of a full range of human expression. In some players' hands, it can be a solo voice; in others, an orchestra; in still others, it can provide endearing and sensitive accompaniment. The guitar can play rock, swing, funk, blues, or classical music.

This book studies and discusses in detail a *single side* of the guitar's multifaceted personality—rhythm guitar, as played in the strict “four-beats-to-the-bar” style associated with the big band era of American music.

Before we begin, it is important to understand that even the term “rhythm guitar” can be used to describe a fairly wide range of musical accompaniments. The tight and funky sixteenth-note patterns on a James Brown record, the sweet upbeat “chinks” used in reggae, or the distorted crunch chords of heavy metal are just a few modern-day examples of rhythm guitar. In blues, country, or folk music, rhythm guitar is a primary source of accompaniment for a single voice or for groups of singers or instrumentalists. The key word here is *accompaniment*—in any style, the purpose or goal of rhythm guitar playing is to provide musical support and strength. In each of these cases, the guitar is used in a simple, repetitive, and supportive role.

Interestingly, the term “rhythm guitar” actually originated in the jazz of the late 1920s. It was during that time period that the guitar started to gain popularity as a rhythm instrument, taking over from the tenor banjo. However, rhythm guitar really came into its own during the big band era of the 1930s. In bands led by Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, and others, the four-to-the-bar style became an important piece of musical foundation for the entire ensemble.

“Big band” rhythm guitar as it was played from the early 1930s through the 1950s was based on two simple but important principles:

1. Play simple three- or four-note chord voicings on each beat of the bar.
2. Swing as hard as possible.

While the basis for good rhythm guitar playing is simplicity and precision, the execution of these principles in an actual playing situation is not easy. A certain amount of endurance must be developed along with a good sense of time. And a team player's attitude is a must.

This book is dedicated to providing you with the knowledge and endurance necessary to play 4/4 rhythm guitar. The book is divided into seven main sections:

Part 1: Overview—If you plan on playing some big band charts soon that call for swing-style rhythm guitar, start here. I have attempted to break down rhythm guitar into its simplest and most basic parts. A person could go through this section alone and have a fairly good understanding of what is meant by the term rhythm guitar, both stylistically and functionally.

Part 2: Fundamentals of Rhythm Guitar—To truly gain a deep understanding of 4/4 rhythm guitar, it is important to have a firm grasp of basic musicianship. This section offers a detailed discussion of the fundamental aspects of playing rhythm—i.e., technique, equipment, musical roles in a group, etc.

Part 3: Chord Reference Library—This section goes into much greater detail studying chord voicings. In all, we'll cover three different voicing types: *drop three*, *rhythm*, and *drop two*.

Part 4: Chord Inversion Exercises—In this section, we'll systematically apply the *drop three* voicings to chords in all keys, becoming more familiar with their component notes as well as with the full range of the fretboard. This will prepare us for working with the *rhythm* voicings in the following sections of the book.

Part 5: Patterns and Progressions—In this section (which uses *rhythm* voicings only) we'll look at concepts of scale and key, and common chord patterns that can be derived from them. Learning these patterns and progressions will not only help solidify our knowledge of individual chord shapes but also prepare us for learning larger tunes. We'll also cover concepts of chord substitution.

Part 6: Practice Tunes—These exercises show common chord progressions in action.

Part 7: Reduction and Expansion—In this section, we'll revisit the ideas of chord reduction and expansion, reducing and expanding some sample tunes to further equip you for reading and playing rhythm guitar in the real world.

In addition to the above sections, two appendices are included at the back of the book. For anyone who might not be clear on some of the music theory related ideas and terms presented in this book, Appendix I contains some basic chord construction theory as well as a discussion of intervals and the fretboard. For those curious about the origin and evolution of rhythm guitar playing, Appendix II offers a concise history of the subject, along with a list of exemplary rhythm players and outstanding recordings.

While this book is mainly concerned with rhythm guitar, I would like to stress the importance of studying all or as many aspects of the guitar and of music as possible. There is no reason to impose limits on your playing or musicianship any more than there is to impose limits on your view of the world.

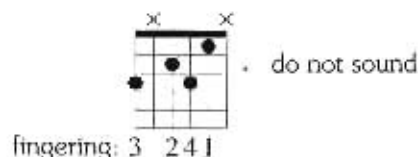
However, from time to time in your study of the guitar, it *will* become necessary to temporarily concentrate on one item, subject, or aspect of playing to the exclusion of others. Practice and a little patience should enable a guitarist using this book to cover rhythm guitar playing in a variety of musical settings—be it big band, duo, trio, etc. Furthermore, the exercises in this book encompass a twelve-fret range so that a greater knowledge of the fretboard can be achieved. Even if you do not plan to earn a living playing rhythm guitar, by taking the time and effort, you can benefit from its study and apply what you have learned to broaden your guitar playing overall.

It is my sincere hope that through the study of this book, the student or interested reader will not only develop the necessary skills to play this style of the guitar, but will also come to fully appreciate the importance and tradition of rhythm guitar in jazz music.

Charlton Johnson

The chord diagrams in this book follow a standard format:

- The strings run vertically and the frets run horizontally. Numbers below each string represent left hand fingers: 1=index, 2=middle, 3=ring, 4=pinkie. Feel free to experiment with different fingerings.
- Strings with Xs indicated above the fretboard are not to be played and should be muted by the left hand.



Part 1: Overview

WHAT IS FOUR-TO-THE-BAR RHYTHM GUITAR?

Four-to-the-bar rhythm guitar relies on simple three-note chord voicings as the main source of accompaniment. These three-string chords are played most often on the low E, D, and G strings. Occasionally, four-string chords are also used; this adds either the A or B strings to the basic three-string group. The high E string is never used. Likewise, open strings are not used.

Every chord uses the low E string, and as such, the guitarist has to be aware at all times of what chord tone is being played on this string—i.e., root, third, fifth, etc. Don't expect to play only chord roots on the low E string!

Rhythmically speaking, the chords are strummed four to the bar (in quarter notes) with a slight emphasis on beats 2 and—in other words, you should strum a little harder on these beats. We *don't* want to sound mechanical and have beats 1, 2, 3, and 4 all sound the same, like the ticking of a metronome. The idea is to have good, solid time and, most importantly, to swing.

Even though the chord voicings typically use three or four strings, they should be strummed so that they sound like one big string. This means using downstrokes and strumming in a tight, crisp manner. The left hand controls the sustain of the chords; very little sustain is necessary because the guitar is functioning more in a percussive sense, almost like a snare drum. There is just a little bit of silence between strums, and this is accomplished by a controlled release of each chord by the left hand.

TIME AND GROOVE

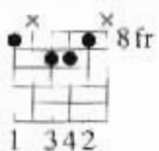
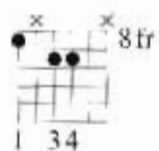
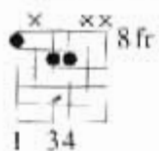
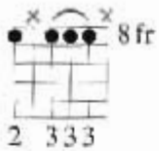
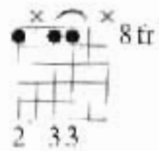
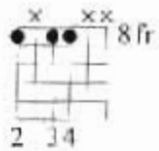
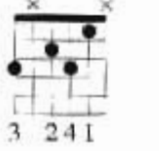
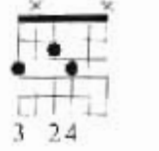
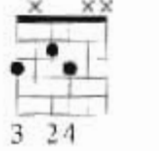
The effective rhythm guitarist has to be concerned about maintaining a consistent tempo or pulse. The fact that 99 percent of the time the rhythm guitar part calls for quarter notes means that if the part is played solidly and consistently, a good, enjoyable groove can be established. No one knows the value of a quarter note better than a good rhythm guitarist. The spaces in between the quarter notes are almost as important as the quarter notes themselves.

Generally speaking, simple and repetitive rhythms can have an almost hypnotic effect on the listener. They can make listeners tap their feet or clap their hands in time to the beat or groove. This is what you want—rhythm guitar is not mystical or cerebral; it just “feels good.” On the other hand, if the rhythm part is played disjointedly or without consistency, then the listener can't tap his or her foot and consequently will not feel any involvement with the music. Think of the difference between a long, pleasant, soothing train ride that wouldn't upset you if it lasted longer than planned and one that makes a stop every minute or less and makes you irritable—you can't get wait to get off of that second train!

Incidentally, please don't think I am making moral judgments about music or that I feel all music should be played a certain way. This is not at all how I feel. Different criteria apply to different musics and situations. I am talking here about a particular style of guitar playing, which serves a particular role and function.

RHYTHM CHORDS AND THE EXTRACTION CONCEPT

Rhythm chords can be formed out of many basic four-note chord forms you already know. The trick is simply to leave out the B string. Naturally, before you start removing notes from a chord, it's a good idea to know the full chord and what notes are being left out! In the chart below, observe the connection between each rhythm chord and its four-note counterpart.

Chord:	You know it like this:	Omit the B string:	Rhythm chord:
Cmaj7			
Cm7			
C7			

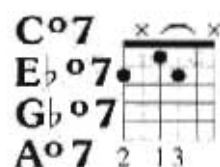
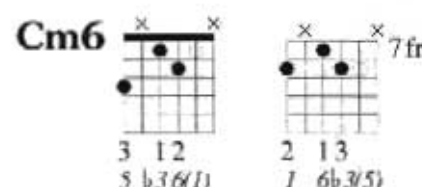
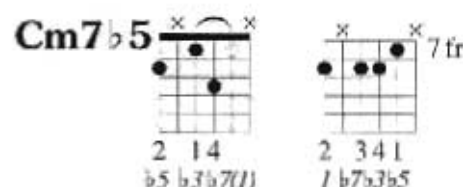
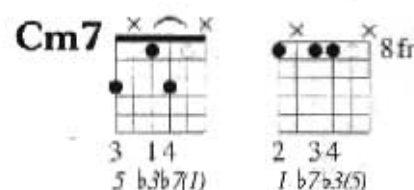
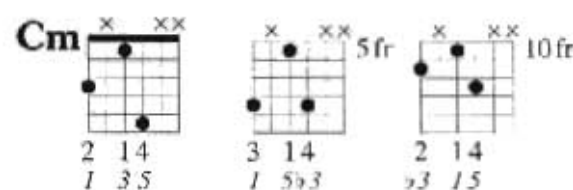
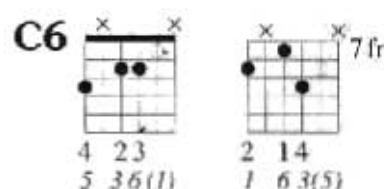
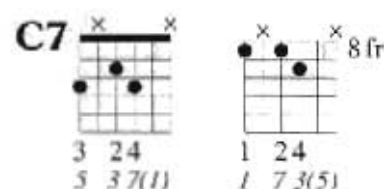
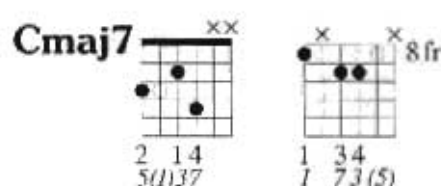
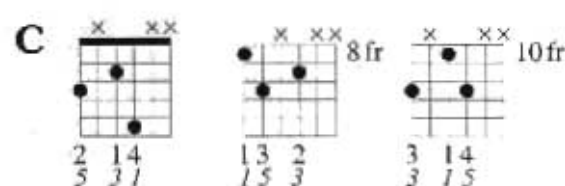
Because rhythm chords can be created from four-note voicings, I call this concept **chord extraction**. It is important to be aware of the four-note voicing from which a rhythm chord is derived.

We will now take a look at what I consider to be the 23 most basic 4/4 rhythm guitar chords. These voicings can cover perhaps 90 to 95 percent of the rhythm guitar parts that you may be required to play. Again, these voicings are not all there is to know about chords, but they are a good foundation upon which to build, and with study they will help you learn other voicings easily. Later sections of this book will use variations and inversions of these basic chords.

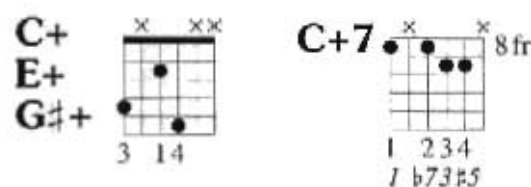
Please play all the voicings, and analyze them to the best of your ability. They are all shown with roots of C, so you will want to transpose them. Here is what you should do:

- Play each chord in the position given, naming each note and its function, i.e., root, third, fifth, etc. The function of each note is indicated in the second row of numbers (e.g. 1, 5, \flat 3) below the fingerings.
- Move each chord up the fretboard one fret at a time (chromatically), and again, name each note and its function.
- Pay particular attention to the note in each voicing that falls on the low E string. Notice its relationship to the rest of the chord—is it the root, third, fifth, or seventh? (Later sections of this book will make reference to specific voicings by referring to the chord tone on the low E string.)
- Each chord diagram in this section has the omitted B-string note indicated with a circle (o), for reference purposes. Become familiar with each four-note chord first, then play the three-note rhythm chord. Once you have studied the four-note chord, do *not* play this note.

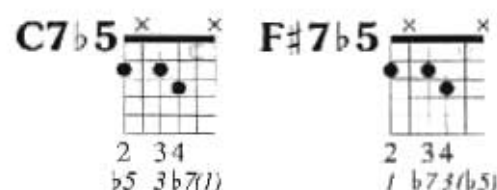
23 BASIC AND ESSENTIAL RHYTHM CHORDS



← With diminished chords, any note can be the root.



← Similarly, with augmented triads, any note can be the root. However, the augmented dominant seventh has only one possible root.



← This fingering generates two chords a tritone away from each other—F# is a tritone (three whole steps) away from C, and vice versa.

Now let's apply these essential voicings to some tunes. For the following exercises, please keep a few points in mind:

- Emphasize beats 2 and 4 while keeping a steady tempo.
- There should be just a wee bit of space or silence between strums. In other words, a chord should not still be ringing when the next strum is made. This is controlled by the left hand.
- Again, become familiar with each four-note chord before moving on to the rhythm chord.

Simple Blues in F

Simple Blues in F guitar solo notation. The first row contains F7, Bb7, and F7. The second row contains Bb7, F7, and F7. The third row contains C7, Bb7, F7, and C+7. Each chord is accompanied by a fretboard diagram showing fingerings and a staff notation with a single note and a slash indicating a full bar of sustained sound.

Row 1: F7, Bb7, F7

Row 2: Bb7, F7, F7

Row 3: C7, Bb7, F7, C+7

Bebop Blues in F


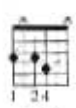

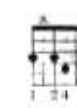



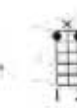
Bebop Blues in F guitar solo notation. The first row contains F7, Bb7, F7, Cm7, and F7. The second row contains Bb7, Bb7, F7, Am7, and D7. The third row contains Gm7, C7, Am7, D7, Gm7, and C7. Each chord is accompanied by a fretboard diagram showing fingerings and a staff notation with a single note and a slash indicating a full bar of sustained sound.


Row 1: F7, Bb7, F7, Cm7, F7


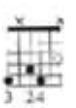




Row 2: Bb7, Bb7, F7, Am7, D7


Row 3: Gm7, C7, Am7, D7, Gm7, C7

Urban Sprawl

3  Dm7  G7  Dm7  G7  Em7  A7  Em7  A7



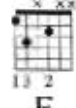


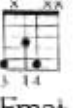
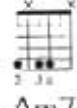

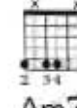

 Am7  D7  Aø7  Db7  Cmaj7  Dm7




1., 3. *2nd time to Coda* 2.

 Em7  A7  Cmaj7  Gm7  C7  Gm7  C7



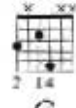
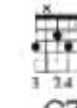

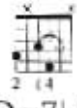
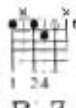
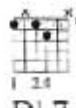
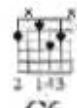

 F  Gm7  G#7  Fmaj7  Am7  D7  Am7  D7




D.C. al Coda  Dm7  G7  Em7  A7

Coda  Dm7  G7









 C  C7  Fmaj7  Dm7b5  Bb7  Db7  C6  C6



Yes, those are full four-note chords in the last bar!

Tune in G









4  Gmaj7  G6  Am7  D7  Bm7  Em7  Cmaj7  Cm6




To Coda ⊕

 G  Bb7  Am  D7  Gmaj7  G#7  Am7  D



 Gmaj7  Am7  G  F#7b5  B  E6  Bb7  B7








 E  F#m7  E7  E7  A7  Bm7  B#7  A



D.C. al Coda










⊕ Coda

 D7  Cmaj7  Bm7  Am7



 Bm7b5  E7b5  Am7  Bm7



 C6  D7  C#m7b5  Cm6  Bm7  E7b5  C6  C#7  G6  G6



READING CHARTS AND CHORD REDUCTION

Most of the written or printed guitar parts you encounter will have chords with extended harmonies, i.e., 13^b9 chords, #11 chords, maj9 chords, etc. This is particularly true of published big band arrangements.

However, contrary to popular belief, simply playing the chords as written on the chart will *not* yield the desired results. If the style is intended to be old-fashioned 4/4 rhythm guitar *à la* Freddie Green, Bucky Pizzarelli, etc., then what the guitarist must do is reduce each chord to its fundamental triad, sixth chord, or seventh chord. I call this **chord reduction** because it involves selectively playing only three or four notes of a written chord that might actually contain five or six notes.

For example, the notes in a Cmaj13 chord from the bottom to top are C-E-G-B-D-A. If this chord were written on a chord chart, the rhythm guitarist could play C, Cmaj7, or C6. Playing anything more would be unnecessary.

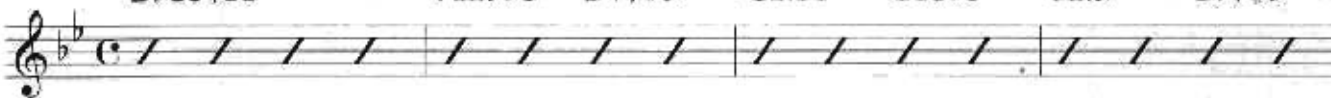
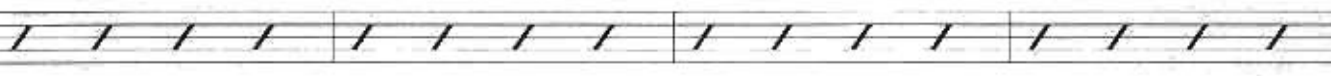
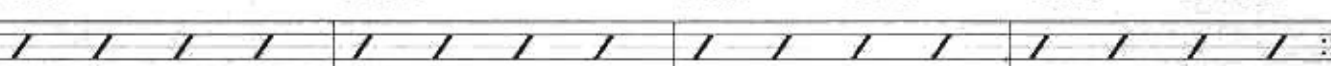
If you see this chord:	Play either this chord:	Or this chord:	Or this chord:
Fmaj9	F	Fmaj7	
F6/9	F	F6	
Gm11	Gm	Gm7	
Am9 ^b 5	Am7 ^b 5	Am7(no 5th)	
B ^b 13#11	B ^b	B ^b 7	
D+7 ^b 9	D7(no 5th)	D+7	D+
F7#9	F	F7	
C7 ^b 5#9	C7(no 5th)	C7 ^b 5	
C13 ^b 9	C	C7	C6

The reason for the seeming discrepancy between what is written and what is played is that arrangers write chord changes indicative of the overall harmony played by *all* the instruments in the arrangement. For example, if you see the chord Fmaj13#11 written on a chart, you can be sure that some of the other instruments in the orchestra are playing the notes in that chord, particularly the upper extensions—E, G, B, and D (the seventh, ninth, sharp eleventh, and thirteenth, respectively). Ironically, when you see Fmaj13#11 on the guitar part, it is natural to feel obligated to play Fmaj13#11, but if the chart asks for *rhythm* guitar, playing the full chord would be wrong! Instead of playing Fmaj13#11, you should play Fmaj7 or F6.

Remember, they don't call this style "harmonic guitar" or "chordal guitar"—it is *rhythm guitar*, first and foremost. As a rhythm guitarist, it is more important to establish a solid rhythmic foundation or groove than it is to contribute to the extended harmonic attributes of the song or chart. In other words, leave the ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, etc. to other instruments while you concentrate on the groove of the song. Rhythm guitar is only concerned about triads, sixth chords, and seventh chords.

Chord Reduction Exercise

The first twelve measures below are what you might see on a chart. The second twelve are what you might actually play; this is essentially the same chord progression but reduced. Make a measure-by-measure comparison between both progressions.

B \flat 13 \sharp 11 **A m 9 \flat 5** **D+7 \flat 9** **G m 11** **C13 \flat 5** **F m 9** **B \flat 7 \sharp 9**

E \flat maj9 **E \flat m9** **A \flat 13 \sharp 11** **D m 11** **G13 \sharp 11**

C m 9 **F13 \flat 9** **D m 9** **G7 \flat 9** **C m 11** **F13 \sharp 11**


5

 **B \flat 6**  **A m 7 \flat 5**  **D7**  **G m 7**  **C7**  **F m 7**  **B \flat 7**

 **E \flat**  **E \flat maj7**  **E \flat m7**  **A \flat 7**  **D m**  **D m 7**  **G7**  **G**

 **C m**  **C m 7**  **F**  **F7**  **D m**  **G7**  **C m 7**  **F7 \flat 5**


READING CHARTS AND CHORD EXPANSION

Sometimes, a given chart may have overly *simple* chord changes. It may have, for example, eight bars of C major with no sevenths, ninths, elevenths, etc. Believe me, eight bars of C major would be not only boring to play but boring to listen to as well! In such a case, it may be necessary to expand the harmony by adding sixths or sevenths. This is called **chord expansion** and requires a good amount of taste and experience. An understanding of music theory helps too.

Chord Expansion Exercise

Again, the first twelve measures below are what you might see on a chart, while the second twelve are what you might actually play. In this case, the chord changes in the first progression are overly simple and a bit boring; the second progression expands on these chord changes without changing the overall character of the original progression. Make a measure-by-measure comparison between both progressions.

Three staves of music showing simple chord progressions. The first staff has chords F, F7, and B \flat 7. The second staff has chords F, G7, and C7. The third staff has chords F, B \flat 7, F, and C7. All staves are in C major and contain rhythmic notation represented by diagonal lines.

Two staves of music showing expanded chord progressions. The first staff starts with a diamond containing the number 6 and has chords F, F, F6, F7 \flat 5, B \flat , B \flat +, B \flat 6, and B \flat 7. The second staff has chords F, Fmaj7, Dm, G7, C7, C6, C, and C7. Each chord is accompanied by a fretboard diagram showing fingerings.



MORE ABOUT CHORD REDUCTION AND EXPANSION

With most big band arrangements that call for rhythm guitar, it is up to the guitarist to look at the chart and, by using his or her knowledge and experience, actually create the part. If the guitarist were to play the chart exactly as written—with chords like ninths, elevenths, thirteenth, etc.—this would *not* generate the sound of traditional 4/4 rhythm guitar. *Rhythm guitar is only concerned about triads, sixth chords, and seventh chords.*

The rhythm guitarist has to know chord construction and exercise good musical taste and judgment. This is where the concepts of chord reduction and expansion come into play. With actual written or printed chord charts for big band music, the guitarist typically has to make expansions *and* reductions throughout a single chart. With a little practice and experience, you will learn to reduce and expand chord progressions on sight with little effort; it isn't difficult, and there is room for variation and creativity.

A related skill that any rhythm guitarist needs to have under his or her belt is the ability to invert the chord voicings being used. **Inverting** means to rearrange or reorder the notes in a given chord. The notes in a C major triad, for example, can be arranged C-E-G, E-G-C, or G-C-E. We could go even further and shift these individual notes up or down an octave to make the chords sound bigger and fuller.

Inverting chords allows a guitarist to connect the voicings and effect a smooth transition from one chord to the next. Remember, there is more to rhythm guitar than simply memorizing a bunch of chord shapes on the fretboard. A good rhythm guitarist knows the function of each note in each voicing, i.e., root, third, fifth, etc.

Part 2: Fundamentals of Rhythm Guitar

The key to good musicianship is the mastery of fundamentals. These fundamentals can be grouped into two general areas: guitar and music. While these areas can't be separated totally, it is a good idea to evaluate yourself periodically and concentrate on the areas that need the most improvement.

With rhythm guitar, it is especially important to understand the musical role being played. There is a "big picture" that includes the musicians you are playing with and the audience that is listening (hopefully). Just as an actor must understand the character that he or she is playing, a rhythm guitarist must understand the meaning of rhythm guitar.

THE ROLE OF THE RHYTHM GUITAR IN A BIG BAND

A typical big band consists of three instrumental sections:

- Brass—four trumpets, four trombones
- Reeds—five saxophones with doubles
- Rhythm section—piano, bass, drums, and guitar

Because of the size of the ensemble and the harmonic/melodic structure of the musical arrangements, the guitar is not generally required or even needed to function in a harmonic or melodic capacity. What the ensemble really needs is an anchor or support for the entire ensemble to float around. With all the musical activity of sixteen other musicians playing at the same time, the feeling of time or groove can drift. This is where the rhythm guitar comes in. By limiting the guitar's role to simple chords played on the downbeats, the groove and time of the entire ensemble can "lock in." *The effectiveness of the rhythm guitar lies in its simplicity.* Every other instrument is busy—the horns alternate between melody lines, sustains, and rests while the drums are keeping time, playing and setting up figures with the brass and reeds, while the bass may be either reading or improvising a walking bass line and the piano comps sparsely around what the horns are playing, etc. Through all this activity, the constant pulse of the rhythm guitar becomes the musical cement that holds everything together.

Of course, the role of the entire rhythm section is to supply the foundation for the band, but it is the singular simplicity of the 4/4 rhythm guitar part that increases the odds of the entire ensemble playing steadily, consistently, and hopefully swingingly. It is far more likely that, given the same tempo, one person playing quarter notes will groove and be more consistent than another person playing broken and varied rhythms.

It is important to remember that big band music began as dance music, and, as such, its effectiveness depends on groove and tempo. The 4/4 rhythm guitar part must not be too loud or too soft, or it will lose its effectiveness. The musicians you are playing with must also be appreciative and sympathetic to the role of the 4/4 rhythm guitar style. In fact, the rhythm guitarist's relationship with the bass, drums, and piano is critical. As a section, you should discuss and make decisions about the music to ensure that you are all working together rather than against each other. Let's briefly discuss how 4/4 rhythm guitar interacts with the other instruments in the rhythm section.

The Drums

For big-band, swing-era style playing, drummers typically play quarter notes on the bass drum and hi-hat cymbals on the second and fourth beats (2 and 4) of each measure. This is something the 4/4 rhythm guitarist listens for because quarter notes account for 98 percent of what he or she plays. To "lock in" with the drummer, try to match or blend your quarter-note chords with the bass drum. Also, slightly emphasize beats 2 and 4 (along with the hi-hat) by striking the strings a little harder on these beats. Again,

The Bass

The bass player's primary job is to play walking lines through the chord changes of the song. Again, quarter notes are the basis of these lines. It is your job as the rhythm guitarist to place your quarter notes in sync with the bass player's lines in order to sound like a single, larger instrument. This cannot happen if you are out of sync with each other. Being able to hear each other is crucial.

Also listen to how long the bass player plays his or her quarter notes. Some players play short thumping quarter notes with a lot of attack, while others play longer notes with little space between the notes. As you play together, experiment with your own note lengths, and try to match the bass player's notes or find a happy medium that works. For instance, if your bassist prefers long notes, you might not want to hold your chords as long. Depending on the tempo of the song, if you hold each chord too long, the emphasis becomes more harmonic and less rhythmic—as a rhythm guitarist, you must strive to provide a strong rhythmic base.

The Piano

The most important thing to be aware of when playing rhythm guitar with a piano player is where his or her chord voicings fall both rhythmically and pitch- or register-wise. The piano has a great range, and the player should strive to use this range tastefully and effectively. The piano player has to be aware of what you are playing, which usually means playing less than what he or she might play without a rhythm guitarist.

It is generally better if the piano voices chords in a higher register than the rhythm guitar, so that the result is like adding a layer to a cake. If the piano plays in the same register as the rhythm guitar, the chords will be muddy and unnecessarily heavy. The piano player should also play his or her chords sparsely so that the overall effect will be to help the music breathe and hopefully swing harder.

Keeping the Rhythm Section Together

At times, you may notice you are out of sync with the other members of the section. Being out of sync means that someone is either dragging or rushing in relation to the given tempo. Whenever this occurs, it's a good idea to discuss and analyze in detail what is happening in the song. For example, does the music rush or drag only when the drummer has a figure to play with the horns? Are you dragging because you can't finger the chords fast enough? (Do your homework—practice!) Can each member of the section hear what the others are playing? If you cannot hear each other, playing together will be difficult if not impossible.

Eye contact among section members is also important. This is where setup comes in. *Setup* means the physical location of each section member in relation to the others. Generally speaking, it is desirable for everyone to be as close to each other as possible. This will require some experimentation because your playing situation will vary from place to place. Try to be consistent with your setups; don't set up differently each time you play or rehearse. Always use your eyes and ears, and make sure that you can tell what everyone is doing.

Whenever you want to seriously analyze what is happening with the music that you are playing, record your rhythm section, and listen critically to yourself and the other players. Get some feedback on what you are playing, and make it your goal to have the best rhythm section possible.

TYPES OF GUITARS AND THEIR SETUP

Before we go any further into the musical role of the rhythm guitarist, let's look at the instrumental palette available, i.e., guitars and their various characteristics. It is very important to have a concept of how your guitar should sound; in order to get that sound, the guitar itself must be set up properly.

Acoustic Guitars

Although almost any guitar can be used as a rhythm instrument, steel-string acoustic guitars are the best, and the noncutaway, *f*-hole or archtop guitar is the most suitable mainly because this is the instrument that was first used for rhythm guitar, and consequently it has the sound most associated with the style. Flat-top or dreadnought guitars are less desirable because their sound is different. The *f*-hole has a different frequency emphasis and decay than a roundhole acoustic guitar, and *f*-hole guitars are typically louder (acoustically speaking) than roundhole guitars.

Electric Guitars

An electric guitar can be an effective rhythm instrument if it is set up and used properly. The most desirable electric guitars would again be archtop hollowbodies for basically the same reasons as their purely acoustic counterparts. Because these guitars are both acoustic and electric, they can be used conveniently for both soloing and rhythm—provided of course that the guitarist has a strong conception of each role.

Choosing a Guitar

Along with reputable music dealers in your area, there are pawn shops, garage sales, classified ads, etc. that can sometimes surprise you with good deals on used instruments. However, when choosing a guitar, keep in mind that simply because a guitar is old or vintage doesn't mean that it is desirable or even worth the selling price. Ask yourself questions like, "What kind of shape is the neck/body/bridge/tailpiece in?" Above all, play the guitar on at least two different occasions if possible. Get a second opinion from a knowledgeable guitarist. This goes for any guitar that you are considering for purchase.

Setting Up the Instrument

To get the best possible acoustic rhythm sound from your instrument, consider these two factors:

Strings—If possible, your strings should be gauged either of the following two ways:

E/.012 B/.016 G/.022 D/.032 A/.042 E/.052
E/.013 B/.017 G/.026 D/.036 A/.046 E/.056

The heavier the string gauges are, the more sound your instrument will produce; bigger strings cause the guitar body to move more air. The strings should also be roundwound as opposed to flatwound, halfwound, etc. Roundwound strings have a brighter sound, which gives them more volume and cutting power. For string alloy choices, I recommend sets that are either phosphor bronze, 85/15 bronze, or 80/20 bronze, depending on your particular guitar.

Action—The term action refers to the distance between the strings and the fretboard. The higher the action is, the more volume you can get from the instrument—within reasonable limits. Freddie Green, Count Basie's longtime guitarist had the highest action of any guitarist that I know of. You could actually put your finger between the strings and the fretboard!

Unless you have had the training or experience, setups should only be done by a qualified repairman. There are practical limits on the amount of action adjustment (raising or lowering the strings) that can be done on a given guitar. Changing the action can affect the intonation and may require adjusting the pickups and bridge on an electric guitar. Changing to a heavier gauge string might also require a truss rod adjustment, to compensate for the increased tension on the neck.

THE USE OF AMPLIFICATION

How Much?

Ideally, you should use as little amplification as possible because this style of guitar playing was originally done before amplification even existed. However, musical situations today usually require some form of amplification, for one or more of the following reasons:

- Some or all of the other instruments in your ensemble may be amplified.
- A small monitor or amplifier will allow you to hear yourself better, especially if you are sitting in close proximity to the drums or other loud instruments.
- The guitar you are using may not have enough acoustic volume or cutting power on its own.

Types of Transducers

Today, there are three basic ways to convert the sound of a guitar into an electrical signal for amplification:

Magnetic pickups—These are probably the most common pickups on the market. They work by sensing the motion of a vibrating metal string within a magnetic field. Magnetic pickups can be further grouped into two categories: single coil or double coil (or “hum-bucker”). Characterized by a warm, full sound, magnetic pickups have become standard issue on today’s solidbody guitars (i.e., Gibson Les Pauls, Fender Stratocasters, etc.) as well as on most archtop hollowbody guitars.

Piezoelectric pickups—These are considered by many guitarists to be the most “acoustic” or natural-sounding pickups. They use tiny (piezoelectric) crystals that sense vibrations of the guitar’s bridge or body and convert the vibrational energy into an electric signal. These pickups are often standard equipment on many flat-top acoustic guitars manufactured today. In order to accurately reproduce the sound generated by the pickups, a high-fidelity (tweeter and woofer) speaker system is required because a conventional (single woofer) guitar amplifier does not have a wide enough frequency response.

Microphones—A good quality condenser microphone in the form of a clip-on or stand-alone placed in proximity to the soundhole (or *f*-hole) is the best way to capture the natural sound of a guitar. Proper microphone placement is important, and although feedback can be a problem, a little experimentation, patience, and common sense will generally yield good results. Like the piezo, a high fidelity speaker system is required. There are several companies that make tiny clip-on condenser microphones for musical instruments. These can work quite well when playing live gigs.

Many guitarists today use a combination of the above technologies in an attempt to utilize the advantages of each. Also, expect to see new technologies in the future.

Amplifiers for Acoustic Guitars

Electric guitar amplifiers generally do not work well with acoustic guitars. Better results can be gotten from specially designed acoustic guitar amplifiers, keyboard amplifiers, and sound systems because they are typically designed with a greater frequency range in mind. Specifically, to capture the sound of an acoustic guitar, a greater high-frequency response is called for than what conventional electric guitar amplifiers can provide.

The ideal system should have standard microphone XLR input jacks as well as regular guitar input jacks. This way, a guitarist can use both a pickup and a microphone on his or her instrument and control, equalize, and blend the sound of each. Built-in equalization offers a great deal of tonal flexibility and can be set to reduce feedback to a minimum.

The most significant difference between electric guitar amps and acoustic guitar amps is the speaker configuration. As stated above, acoustic guitars require speakers with a greater high-frequency response than what electric guitars need. To achieve this greater frequency response, most acoustic guitar amplifiers use small diameter, high-output speakers, and some systems even use tweeters. These amps are essentially PA (public address) systems disguised as guitar combo amps.

RHYTHM GUITAR TECHNIQUE

The vast majority of playing problems can be traced back to inadequacies in basic and fundamental techniques such as posture, fingerings, picking and strumming, etc. A serious musician must constantly evaluate his or her performances in these terms. By constructively working on any problem areas, a musician can not only improve and even master those problem areas, but can also gain valuable insight into his or her strengths.

The Right Hand

The right hand controls the volume, tone, dynamics, and attack of the instrument's sound.

Volume—Volume has to do not only with how loud or soft the guitar is played but also with how consistently the strings are attacked. The right-hand strum motion must be consistent and efficient. The goal here is to be able to strum the strings of a fingered chord so that they sound like one string. In order to avoid wasted arm motion, strum primarily from the wrist.

Tone—Differences in tone can be achieved by selectively striking the strings at various distances from the bridge. The closer to the bridge a guitar is strummed, the brighter and thinner the tone. Conversely, the farther away from the bridge (or closer to the fretboard) a guitar is strummed, the darker and fuller the tone. A good spot for playing rhythm on many guitars is the point where the fretboard ends and the body of the guitar begins.

Dynamics—Music should be thought of as a living entity, and, as such, it has to display a wide range of emotions. This can be accomplished through the effective use of dynamics. By listening to the musicians that you are playing with and learning where the music naturally rises and falls, the music will begin to come to life.

The Pick—The importance of your choice of picks should not be underestimated. Generally, a pick that is 1.0mm or thicker will provide the most control and yet have enough weight to get the most sound out of the guitar. Thinner picks tend to have a "clicky" sound undesirable for this style of guitar playing.

The left hand controls what chord voicings are played by both fingering the desired notes of a chord and simultaneously muting the unused strings. The majority of rhythm voicings use three or four notes, and it is very important not to have the unused strings ringing.

The left hand also controls how long the notes in a chord will ring. This, in combination with the right-hand strums, allows the guitarist to articulate the chords. In other words, the groove can be adjusted by mixing long notes with short notes in each 4/4 measure.

The basic articulation for a single measure of 4/4 rhythm is as follows: beat 1—long, beat 2—short and slightly accented, beat 3—long, beat 4—short and slightly accented. If this is done consistently, a certain groove or “feel” can be established.



Please remember that this is a very subtle effect—not nearly as dramatic as it might look on paper. I have used staccato markings on beats 2 and 4, but in actuality the chords are not played as short as a normal staccato note. Likewise, beats 1 and 3 are played just a little bit longer than 2 and 4. Beats 2 & 4 are accented slightly.

While we’re on the subject, there are two other basic articulation patterns common to 4/4 rhythm guitar. In the first below, constant staccato markings are used to indicate that each chord is played as short as possible. Think snare drum!



A tight and rigid feeling is desired here. This type of rhythm articulation dates back to the marches of the late nineteenth century (John Phillip Sousa, et. al.). The shortness of the notes is controlled totally by the left hand releasing each chord after it is strummed.

The last articulation is most often used when playing ballads. The left hand must release each chord so that it does not cover up or ring into the space (quarter rest) between each chord:



Again, as with the right hand, efficiency and economy of motion are required for good left hand technique. The left hand fingers must work together as a team or unit, and each finger must carry its weight in the task of proper fingering. Strive for the following in pursuit of good fingering:

- Identify your weakest finger(s), and develop exercises for strength and endurance.
- Always observe and monitor your hand motion while moving from chord to chord, and minimize any motion not needed.
- When any particular chord is played that does not utilize all four fingers, make sure the unused fingers hover closely above the strings and do not extend themselves a great distance. The unused fingers must remain in readiness at all times, and the smaller the distance they have to travel, the quicker and more accurate they become. Use the tips of the fingers unless a single finger has to play more than one string.
- The thumb plays a supportive role in fingering, and, as such, it must be centered in back of the guitar neck so that all four fingers can benefit from its support.

PRACTICE: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Get Serious

You already know that it will take practice to reach your full potential as a musician. Don't waste time! Get serious! Of course, there will be times when you don't feel like it. You will say that you don't have time, and you will be discouraged. Just remember that if you quit, or if you take a lazy, haphazard approach to playing music, you will never reach your full potential.

Music Means Listening

One of the best habits a musician can develop is recording him or herself, both during rehearsals and performances. Record yourself when practicing alone or with others. Record yourself in as many situations as possible. Think about it—the only way that you can hear yourself the way others hear you is with a tape recorder. I'm not suggesting you rent studio time or invest in professional recording equipment. A simple battery-powered cassette recorder will work just fine. How many hours have you spent listening to your favorite recording artists? How familiar are you with the way your favorite guitarists sound? Well, now I am suggesting that you listen to yourself and get familiar with your own sound, from the perspective of tape recording. Do it at least enough so that you don't feel self-conscious with the tape rolling. This will also help you develop the habit of applying yourself and always making your best effort. Don't try to pick and choose when you will try to play your best—always try to play to the best of your ability at that particular moment!

After recording yourself, be sure to listen to the tape. Be honest and critical. Ask yourself questions like the following:

- What would have made me play this better?
- What are my weaknesses?
- Am I in tune?
- Do I sound comfortable with the material?
- Do I have a good sense of time?
- Do I have a good tone and sound?
- Am I listening and being sensitive to the other musicians?
- Is there emotion, feeling, or expression coming across on this recording?
- Am I making *music*?

Imagine recording and listening to yourself every day for six months, a year, or more. Believe me, your playing would improve a lot!

The Metronome

The metronome is a useful practice tool, but there are a few things to think about if you are going to use one. First of all, practice with the clicks on beats 2 and 4, instead of on 1, 2, 3, and 4. This comes closer to the way the music feels when playing with other musicians. This means you'll actually be playing at twice the tempo of your metronome setting. If, for instance, your metronome is set for quarter notes at 88 bpm, your actual playing tempo is $2 \times 88 = 176$ bpm. The metronome is clicking once every two beats at 88 bpm and once every beat at 176 bpm. Tap your foot on every beat if you want, but always have the metronome on 2 and 4 only.

Secondly, use a variety of tempos. Don't get into the habit of using the same tempo settings all the time. Your goal should be to develop consistency at any tempo.

Practice Goals

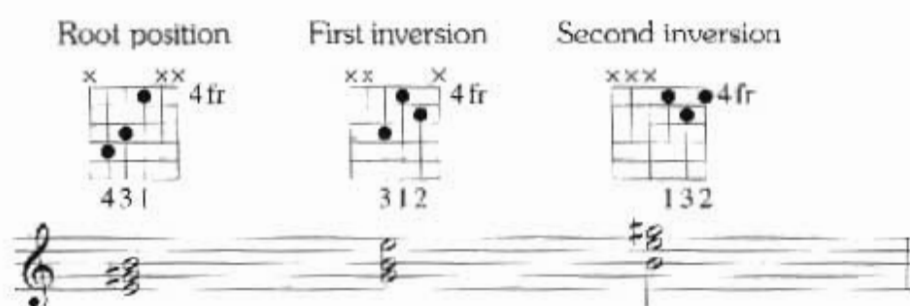
It is extremely important to set goals when practicing. As a serious musician dedicated to improving your musical skills, it becomes necessary to always challenge yourself by spending the most practice time on the things that are most difficult for you. If you can't find anything that is difficult for you to play, you are in big trouble! There is always something else to learn. There is always room for improvement. Be honest with yourself. Identify and work on your weaknesses. Adopt a problem-solving attitude.

Part 3: Chord Reference Library

We are now going to take a look at some general chord voicing concepts, which should shed some light on the how and why of rhythm chord construction.

DROP AND RAISE CHORD VOICINGS

Let's take a look at an E major triad and its inversions. These chords are in *closed position*, meaning that no other chord tone can be fit in between the chord tones.



Closed position voicings are OK, but they're not very practical on the guitar. They're also not very full-sounding. However, any closed voicing can be opened up by using a system known as *drop* and *raise* chord voicing. This works by first numbering the notes in a closed position chord, from top to bottom—1, 2, 3, 4, etc.—then simply moving the desired voice down or up an octave. Applying this to the E major triad and its inversions generates the useful rhythm chords that we have already seen. The following are all *drop two* voicings of an E major triad—the second note from the top of each closed voicing has been moved down to the bass:

Closed position
E major triads

This diagram shows the process of creating drop two voicings from closed position triads. It is organized into three columns, each representing a different closed position triad. Each column contains three parts: the closed position triad on a staff, the transformation labeled 'Dropping 2' with a curved arrow, and the resulting drop two voicing on a fretboard diagram.

- Column 1 (Root position):** Closed position triad (E, G#, B) is transformed by dropping the second note (G#) to the bass, resulting in a drop two E major triad (B, E, G#) with fretboard diagram 3 1 4.
- Column 2 (First inversion):** Closed position triad (G#, B, E) is transformed by dropping the second note (B) to the bass, resulting in a drop two E major triad (E, G#, B) with fretboard diagram 2 1 4.
- Column 3 (Second inversion):** Closed position triad (B, E, G#) is transformed by dropping the second note (E) to the bass, resulting in a drop two E major triad (G#, B, E) with fretboard diagram 3 1 4.

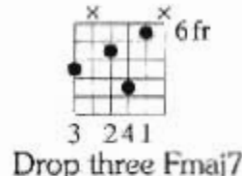
Closed position
Fmaj7 chord

Dropping 3

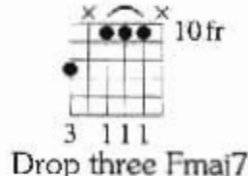


Drop three Fmaj7

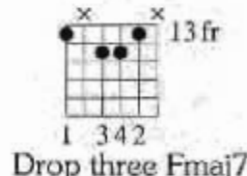
After generating the first *drop three* voicing, make the other inversions by moving to the next higher chord tone on each string, as shown with arrows.



Drop three Fmaj7



Drop three Fmaj7



Drop three Fmaj7

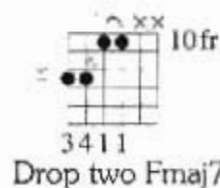
Closed position
Fmaj7 chord

Dropping 2

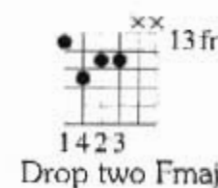


Drop two Fmaj7

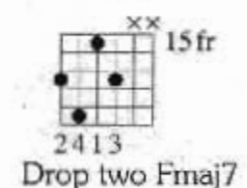
After generating the first *drop two* voicing, make the other inversions by moving to the next higher chord tone on each string, as shown with arrows.



Drop two Fmaj7



Drop two Fmaj7



Drop two Fmaj7

Drop and raise voicings can also be formed by dropping or raising *combinations* of chord tones. For instance, there can be drop 2 and 3, raise 2 and 4, etc. However, because we are only concerned about 4/4 rhythm chords, *drop two* and *drop three* voicings on the low E through high B strings will be the only voicings we study. We won't be using raise voicings at all. I encourage you to further explore the concepts of drop and raise voicings on your own though and figure out other voicings for yourself.

THE CHORD REFERENCE LIBRARY

The following Chord Reference Library is for your general information and reference. It contains all the chord voicings required in the subsequent exercises contained in this book. Each chord is illustrated in the following way:

RHYTHM — Voicing type—DROP TWO, RHYTHM, or DROP THREE

Cmaj7

(5) — Lowest chord tone—always on the low E string

2 1 4

7th
3rd
5th

Chord tones—how the notes function in the chord

These voicings are grouped into chord families as follows:

Major group—triads, major seventh, and major sixth chords

Minor group—triads, minor sixth, minor seventh, and minor 7^b5 chords

Dominant group—dominant seventh chords

Altered dominant group—augmented triads and dominant sevenths, dominant 7^b5 chords

Diminished group—diminished seventh chords

Please play each of the voicings, and analyze and examine them thoroughly. They are all shown with roots of C, so you will want to be able to transpose them to any root. Here is what you should do:

- Play each chord in the position given, naming each note and its function, i.e., root, third, fifth, etc.
- Pay particular attention to the lowest note in each chord, because the exercises that follow will use this lowest note as a reference.
- Move each chord up the fretboard one fret at a time (chromatically), and repeat the process.

Reference Chords—Major Group

C

ALL ARE DROP TWO & RHYTHM

Diagram showing three sets of guitar chord diagrams and their corresponding musical notation for the C major triad.

- Set 1:** Diagrams for 5th fret (2 1 4) and 5th fret (3 2 1). Musical notation shows root, 3rd, and 5th.
- Set 2:** Diagrams for 1st fret (1 3 2) and 1st fret (3 1 4). Musical notation shows 3rd, 5th, and root.
- Set 3:** Diagrams for 3rd fret (3 1 4) and 3rd fret (3 1 4). Musical notation shows 5th, root, and 3rd.

Cmaj7

Diagram showing two rows of guitar chord diagrams and their corresponding musical notation for the Cmaj7 chord.

Row 1:

- Set 1:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 5th fret (3 2 4 1), 5th fret (3 2 4), and 5th fret (2 3 1 4). Musical notation shows 7th, root, 3rd, and 5th.
- Set 2:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 7th fret (3 1 1 1), 7th fret (2 1 4), and 7th fret (3 4 1 1). Musical notation shows root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th.

Row 2:

- Set 3:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 1st fret (1 3 4 2), 1st fret (1 3 4), and 1st fret (1 4 2 3). Musical notation shows 5th, 3rd, 7th, and root.
- Set 4:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 3rd fret (2 1 3 4), 3rd fret (3 1 4), and 3rd fret (2 4 1 3). Musical notation shows 5th, 7th, root, and 3rd.

C6

Diagram showing two rows of guitar chord diagrams and their corresponding musical notation for the C6 chord.

Row 1:

- Set 1:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 5th fret (4 2 3 1), 5th fret (4 2 3), and 5th fret (2 3 1 1). Musical notation shows 6th, root, 3rd, and 5th.
- Set 2:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 6th fret (2 3 3 3), 6th fret (2 3 4), and 6th fret (1 3 1 1). Musical notation shows root, 3rd, 5th, and 6th.

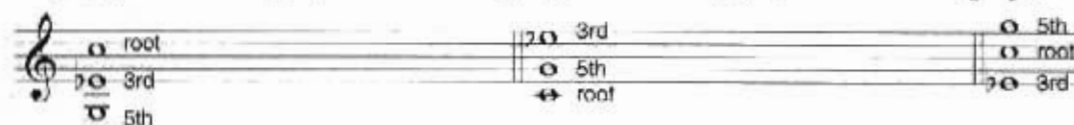
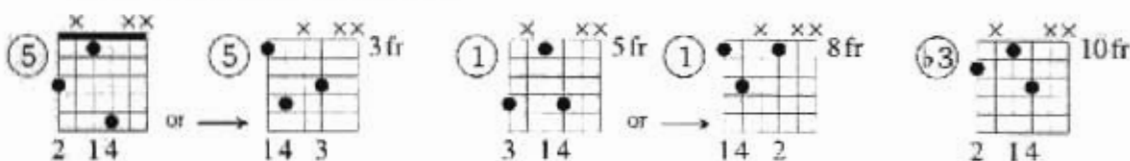
Row 2:

- Set 3:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 1st fret (2 1 4 3), 1st fret (2 1 4), and 1st fret (2 4 1 3). Musical notation shows 3rd, 5th, 6th, and root.
- Set 4:** DROP THREE, RHYTHM, DROP TWO. Diagrams for 3rd fret (3 1 4 1), 3rd fret (3 1 4), and 3rd fret (2 3 1 4). Musical notation shows 5th, 6th, root, and 3rd.

Reference Chords—Minor Group

Cm

ALL ARE DROP TWO & RHYTHM



Cm7

DROP THREE

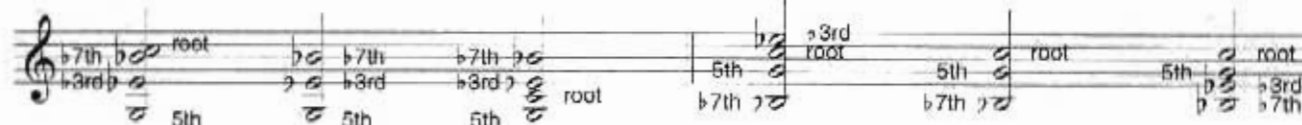
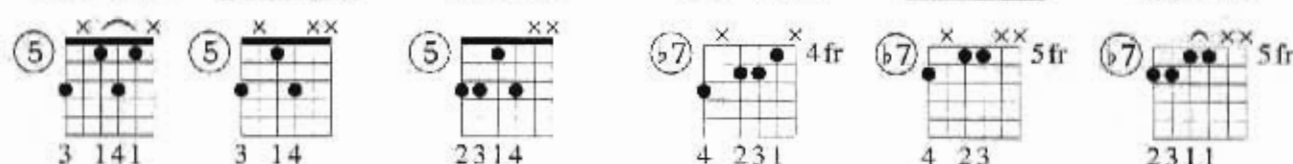
RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO



DROP THREE

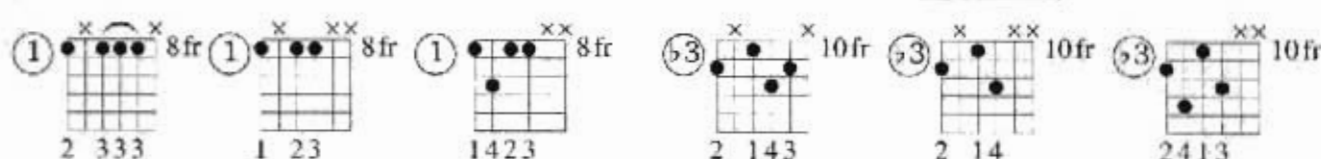
RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO



Cm6

DROP THREE

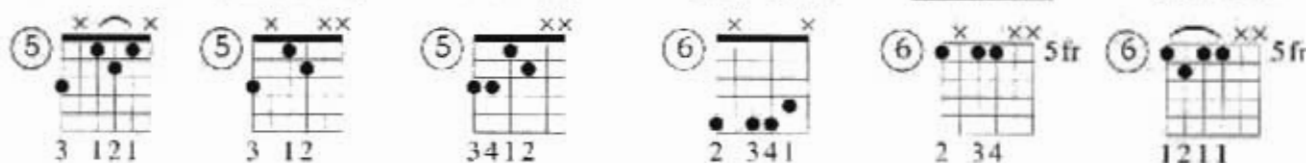
RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO



DROP THREE

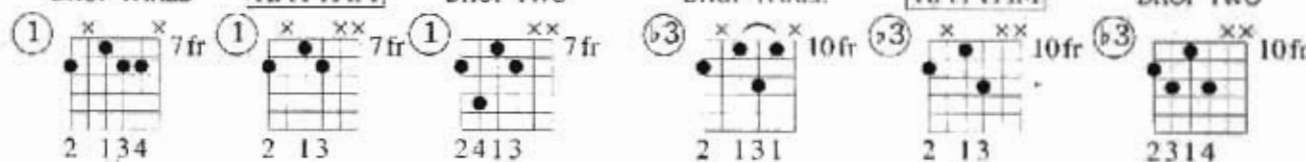
RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO



Cm7♭5

DROP THREE **RHYTHM** **DROP TWO** **DROP THREE** **RHYTHM** **DROP TWO**

DROP THREE **RHYTHM** **DROP TWO** **DROP THREE** **RHYTHM** **DROP TWO**

Notice there is a relationship between the major sixth chord and the minor seventh chord. In fact, they use the same notes! For example, A minor is the relative minor of C major. Therefore, C6 and Am7 use the same notes.

C6 Am7

Likewise, the minor sixth chord is related to the minor 7♭5. Cm6 and Am7♭5 use the same notes.

Cm6 Am7♭5

What this all means is that the same fingerings can be used for both sixth chords and minor seventh chords. This is also true for minor sixth chords and minor 7♭5 chords. Practically speaking, this reduces the total number of fingerings you must memorize.

Reference Chords—Dominant Group

C7

Reference Chords for C7 (Dominant Group) showing fretboard diagrams, rhythmic patterns, and standard chord voicings.

Row 1:

- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 3rd, 4th, 1st strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 3 2 4 1, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 2 1 3, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 2nd, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 2 3 1 4, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 1 1 1, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 1 1, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 3 1 1, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).

Row 2:

- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (1st fret, 1st, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (1) 1 2 4 3, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (1st fret, 1st, 2nd strings), rhythmic pattern (1) 1 2 3, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (1st fret, 1st, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (1) 1 3 1 2, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (3rd fret, 1st, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (3) 3 1 4 2, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (3rd fret, 1st, 2nd strings), rhythmic pattern (3) 3 1 4, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (3rd fret, 1st, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (3) 2 4 1 3, voicing (5th, 3rd, 7th).

Reference Chords—Altered Dominant Group

Technically, C+ is a triad and not a dominant seventh chord, but it is a useful and versatile substitution for C+7.

C+

Reference Chords for C+ (Altered Dominant Group) showing fretboard diagrams and voicings.

ALL ARE DROP TWO & RHYTHM

- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 3 1 4, voicing (root, 3rd, 5th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (1st fret, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (1) 3 1 4, voicing (3rd, 5th, root).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (3rd fret, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (3) 3 1 4, voicing (5th, root, 3rd).

C+7

Reference Chords for C+7 (Altered Dominant Group) showing fretboard diagrams, rhythmic patterns, and standard chord voicings.

Row 1:

- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 4th, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 4 2 3 1, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 3 1 2, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (5th fret, 4th, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (5) 4 2 1 3, voicing (7th, 3rd, 5th).
- Drop Three:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 3 1 1, voicing (3rd, root, 5th, 7th).
- Rhythm:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 3 1, voicing (3rd, root, 5th, 7th).
- Drop Two:** Fretboard diagram (7th fret, 2nd, 3rd, 4th strings), rhythmic pattern (7) 2 4 3 1, voicing (root, 5th, 3rd, 7th).

C+7 (cont'd)

DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO		DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO	
①		①		①		③		③		③	

Technically, Cb5 is a triad and not a dominant seventh chord, but it can be a substitution for C7b5.

Cb5

ALL ARE DROP TWO & RHYTHM

①		①		③	

C7b5

DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO		DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO	
①		①		①		⑦		⑦		⑦	

DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO		DROP THREE		RHYTHM		DROP TWO	
①		①		①		③		③		③	

Reference Chords—Diminished Group

With diminished seventh chords, the symmetrical nature of the intervals (all minor thirds) means that any note in the chord can be considered the root. So, in actuality, *any* note can be *any* chord tone!

Below, we are only looking at four fingerings total, but all four fingerings apply to four different roots, for a total of sixteen possible chords.

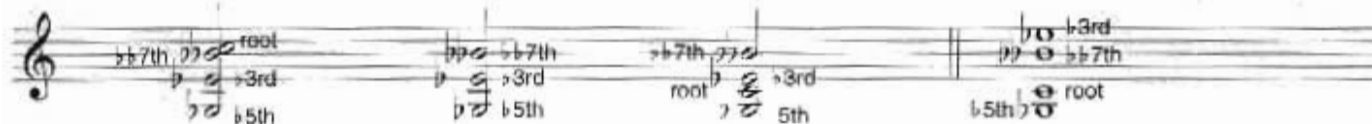
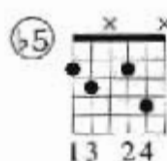
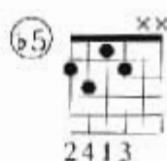
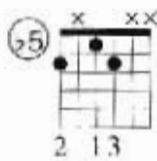
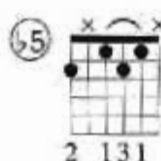
C°7

DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP TWO & FOUR

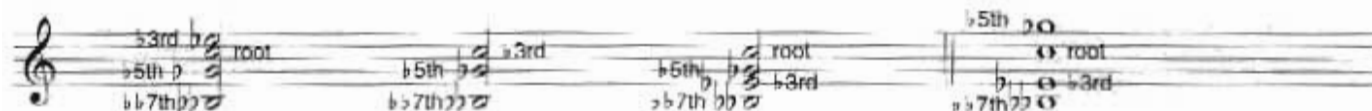
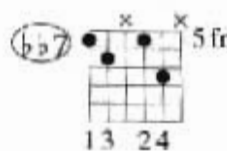
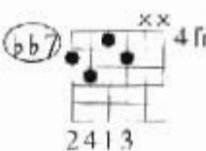
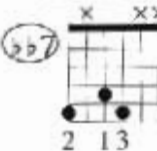
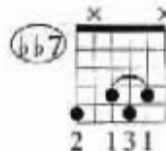


DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP TWO & FOUR

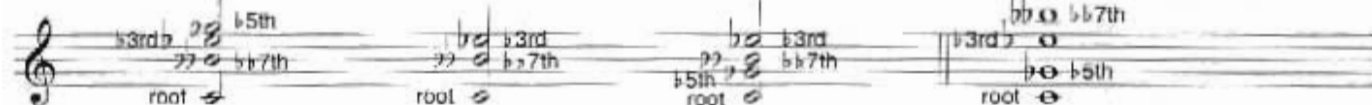
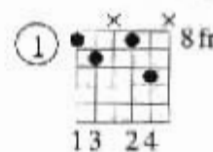
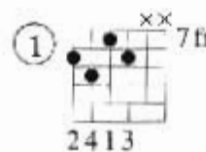
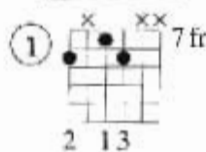
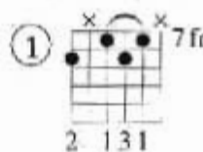


DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP TWO & FOUR

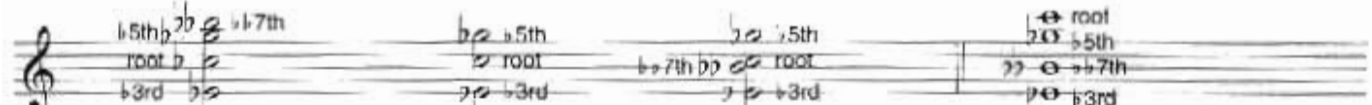
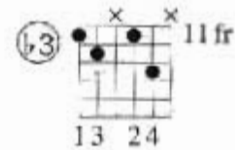
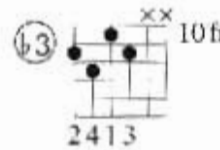
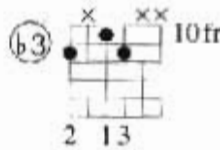
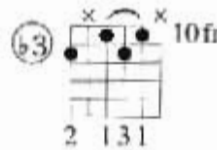


DROP THREE

RHYTHM

DROP TWO

DROP TWO & FOUR



WHICH VOICINGS SHOULD I USE?

I'm glad you brought this up! As you refer to the chords in the Chord Reference Library, it can be seen that we are basically studying three chord voicing types:

Drop Three

These typically employ strings 2–4 and 6 only (B, G, D, and low E). The inversion exercises in Part 4 use *drop three* voicings for seventh chords—the purpose of the exercises is to prepare you for the *rhythm* voicings.

Rhythm

These can typically be derived from the *drop three* voicings by leaving out the B string, which is the highest note. The patterns and progressions, practice tunes, and reduction/expansion exercises in Parts 5–7 all use *rhythm* voicings only. These are the most practical for 4/4 rhythm guitar.

Drop Two

These typically employ strings 3–6 only (G, D, A, and E). The major and minor triads will always be *drop two* in this book. After all, that's the only choice in the library for triads. However, as far as seventh chords go, the *drop two* voicings are primarily for your own exploration. I recommend studying them by taking them through the inversion exercises, but only after you've learned the *drop three* voicings. Some of them are not appropriate for 4/4 rhythm while others can be used to fatten up some of the *rhythm* voicings. They will also increase your knowledge of the fretboard.

In the real world, your ears, musical taste, and judgment will guide you in choosing voicings. Always keep the following points in mind:

- Generally speaking, the size of the group or ensemble you are playing with should affect the number of notes that you use in your voicings. A simple rule of thumb is this: *More musicians, fewer notes; fewer musicians, more notes.*

Duo or trio—Use three- or four-note chords. *Drop two* and *drop three* voicings are good. Because of the small number of instruments, the guitar has to take on more of a harmonic role.

Big band—Three-note *rhythm* voicings are all that you really need. Check out some Count Basic Orchestra recordings with guitarist Freddie Green. With Freddie, sometimes you only hear one note of the chord—but what a note! By using primarily three-note voicings, one left hand finger is always free, which allows a guitarist to play little melodies. This can be heard on small group recordings with Freddie Green.

Symphony orchestra—Believe it or not, two-note voicings can sound great.

In all situations—A mixture of voicings offers the most flexibility. Don't use only one voicing type throughout an entire song.

- Always think about the “next chord,” the one that will follow the current chord that you're playing. Choose an inversion that seems like the most natural transition (musically and fingering-wise) to the following chord.
- Try to listen and develop an awareness of each note in each chord as it leads into the next note of the next chord.
- Just because you use four notes in a given chord doesn't mean that the next chord can't have three notes.

Part 4: Chord Inversion Exercises

In this section, we will begin inverting triads and *drop three* seventh chords. The *drop three* voicings are a great aid in rhythm playing because they act as a reference for the actual *rhythm* voicings, which we will drill in subsequent chapters. The better you know these *drop three* voicings, the better you will know the *rhythm* voicings.

HOW THE EXERCISES WORK

In the following exercises, you will see chord symbols with numbers beneath them. The numbers 1, 3, 5, etc. refer to the chord tone at the bottom of the chord. This is how you will determine which voicing/inversion is being asked for in the exercise. For example, if you see the symbol "B \flat maj7" with a "1" under it, this means you are to play the *drop three* voicing of B \flat maj7 that has the root (B \flat) on the low E string.

The diagram illustrates the construction of drop three voicings for eight chords: B \flat maj7, Gm7, Cm7, F7, Dm7, G7, Cm7, and F7. Each chord is represented by a symbol with a circled number (1, 3, 5, or 6) indicating the chord tone on the low E string. Below each symbol is a fretboard diagram showing the fingerings (1-4, 2-4, 3-4, 1-2, 2-3, 3-4) and the fret number (6fr, 5fr, 8fr, 6fr, 10fr, 8fr, 8fr, 6fr). The fretboard diagrams are then translated into musical notation on a single staff, showing the actual notes played on the strings.

The numbers used throughout the exercises, and their corresponding chord tones, are shown in the chart below:

Number	Chord Tone
1	root
3	third
$\flat 3$	flatted third
5	fifth
$\flat 5$	flatted fifth
$\sharp 5$	raised fifth
6	sixth
$\flat 7$	flatted seventh
7	seventh

Remember that the articulation for each bar should be as follows: beat 1—long, beat 2—short and slightly accented, beat 3—long, beat 4—short and slightly accented. This is subtle, but if it is done consistently, a certain groove or "feel" can be established.

Beginning Exercises—Major Group

On the enclosed CD, Exercises 8-32 were recorded with an acoustic guitar and an acoustic piano. The chord inversions were played on the guitar and the roots of the chords were played on the piano.

C

Diagram 7: C major chord shapes. (5) 2 14, (1) 3 14 5 fr, (3) 3 14 10 fr.

Exercise 7: C major. Treble clef, C4. Fingering: (1) 5 1 5 1 3.

Exercise 7: C major. Bass clef, C3. Fingering: (1) 3 1 5 1 3.

Cmaj7

Diagram 8: Cmaj7 chord shapes. (5) 2 14, (7) 3 111 5 fr, (1) 1 342 8 fr, (3) 2 134 10 fr.

Exercise 8: Cmaj7. Treble clef, C4. Fingering: (1) 3 1 3 7 5.

Exercise 8: Cmaj7. Bass clef, C3. Fingering: (5) 7 5 1 7 3 1.

C6

Diagram 9: C6 chord shapes. (5) 4 231, (6) 2 333, (1) 2 143 7 fr, (3) 3 141 10 fr.

Exercise 9: C6. Treble clef, C4. Fingering: (5) 6 5 6 1 3.

Exercise 9: C6. Bass clef, C3. Fingering: (1) 3 1 6 5 3 1.

Major Chords Long

10

C

5

1

3

1

* repeats optional

F

5

3

1

5

Bb

3

1

E

1

5

3

5

1

A

3

5

1

3

Db

5

1

Gb

5

1

3

1

3

B

1

5

1

3

E

1

5

A

3

5

1

3

5

D

1

5

1

3

G

5

3

C

1

3

1

3

5

1

5

Major Chords Short

11

C (5) 1 F (5) 3 5 B_b (1) 3 1 E_b (5) 1 5

A_b (3) 5 D (1) 5 G (3) 5 B (3) 1 3 1

E (5) 3 5 3 A (1) 3 D (1) 5 G (3) 5 3 .

* repeats optional

Major Chords Pattern

12

B_b (1) 5 C (1) A_b (3) E_b (5) B_b (1)

G_b (3) D_b (1) A_b (3) E_b (5) B_b (1) F (3)

D (5) A (3) E (5) C (1) G (3) D (5)

F (3) C (5) G (1) E_b (5) B_b (1) F (5)

D_b (1) A_b (3) E_b (5) B (1) F_# (3) C_# (5)

A (1) 5 B (1) G (3) D (5) A (1)

* repeats optional

Major Seventh Chords

13

Cmaj7

Fmaj7

①

③

①

⑦

⑤

③

①

③



B♭maj7

E♭maj7

①

③

⑤

③

①

⑦

⑤

③



A♭maj7

D♭maj7

①

③

①

⑤

①

⑤

⑦

①



G♭maj7

Bmaj7

⑤

③

①

③

①

⑦

①

③



E♭maj7

A♭maj7

①

⑦

⑤

③

①

③

⑤

③



D♭maj7

G♭maj7

Cmaj7

①

⑦

⑤

①

⑤

③

①

③

①



Major Sixth Chords

14

B \flat 6

①

③

⑤

③

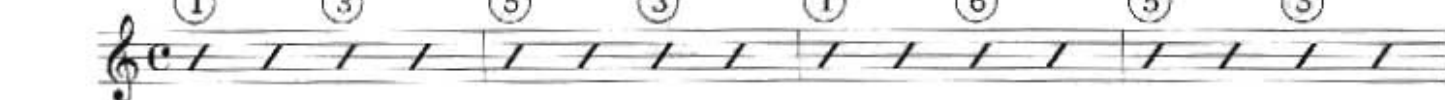
E \flat 6

①

⑥

⑤

③



A \flat 6

①

③

⑤

③

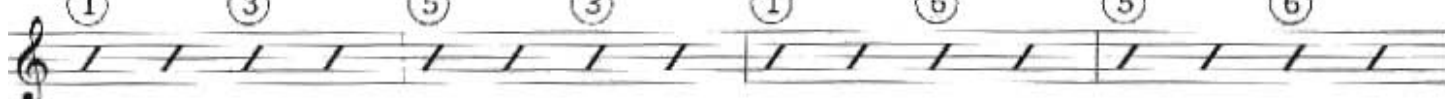
D \flat 6

①

⑥

⑤

⑥



G \sharp 6

⑤

③

①

③

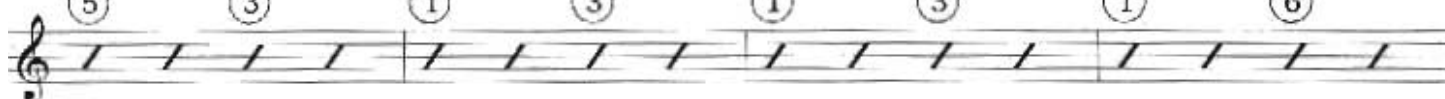
B6

①

③

①

⑥



E6

⑤

③

⑤

⑥

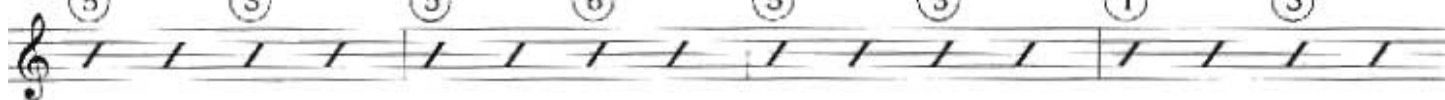
A6

⑤

③

①

③



D6

①

⑥

⑤

①

G6

⑤

③

①

③



C6

①

③

①

⑥

⑤

F6

③

⑤

⑥

⑤

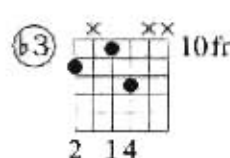
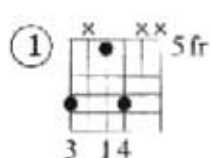
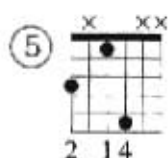
B \flat 6

①



Beginning Exercises—Minor Group

Cm



15

Cm

(1)

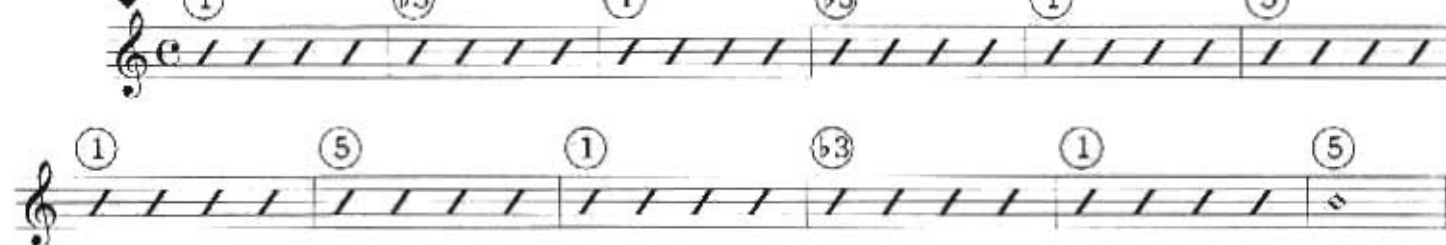
(b3)

(1)

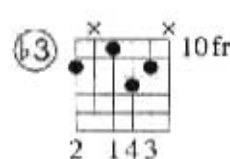
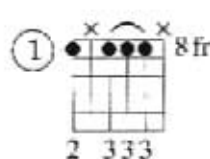
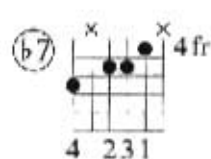
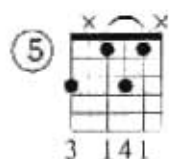
(b3)

(1)

(5)



Cm7



16

Cm7

(5)

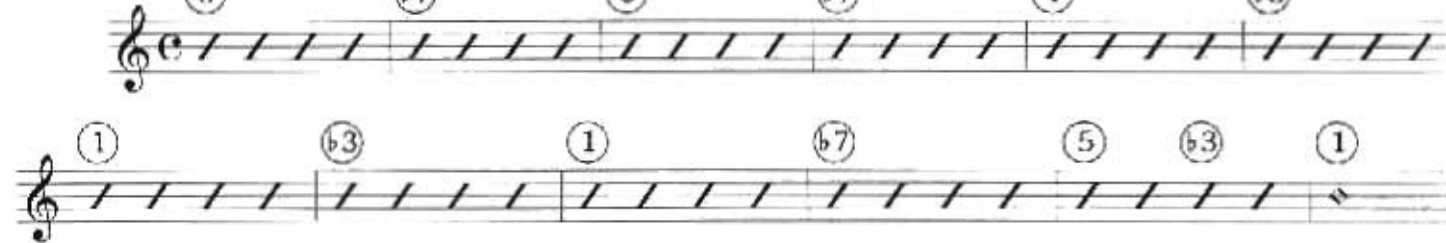
(b7)

(5)

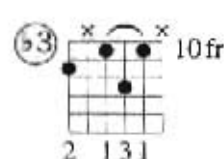
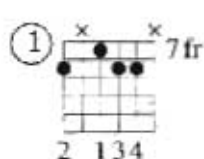
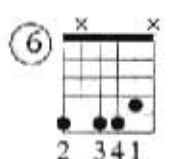
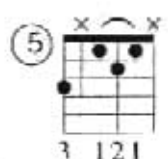
(b7)

(1)

(b3)



Cm6



17

Cm6

(5)

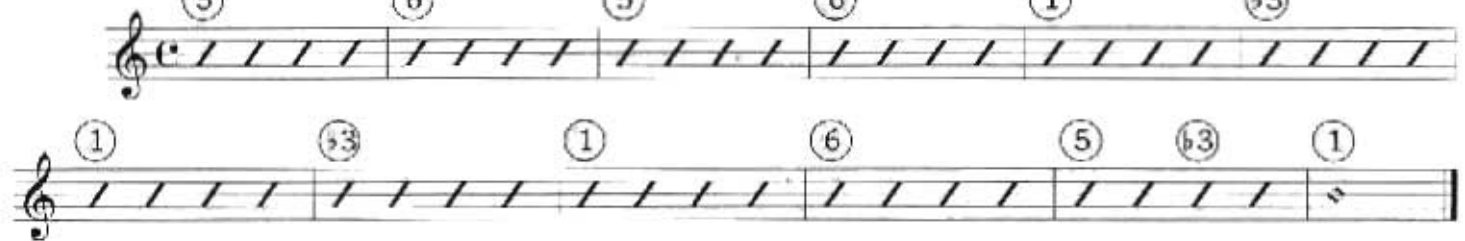
(6)

(5)

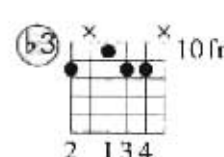
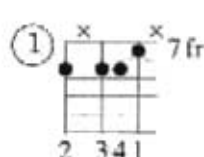
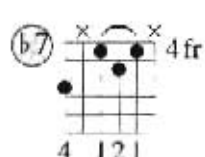
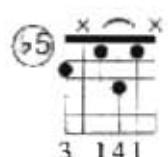
(6)

(1)

(b3)



Cm7b5



18

Cm7b5

(b5)

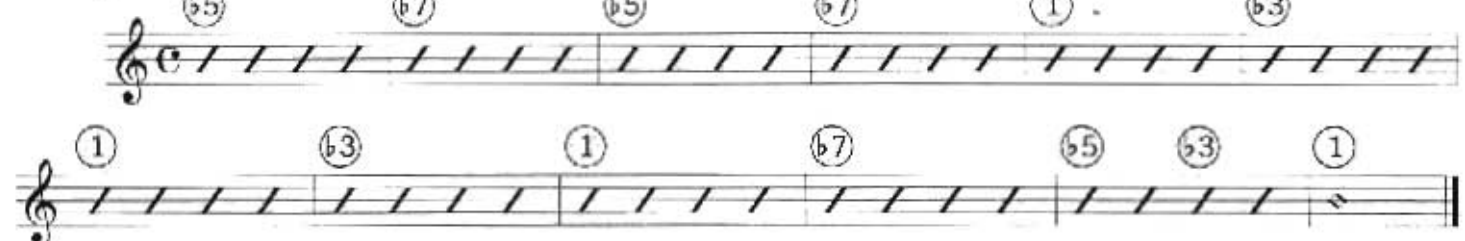
(b7)

(b5)

(b7)

(1)

(b3)



19

Cm

5

1

b3

1

* repeats
optional

Fm

5

b3

5

Bbm

b3

1

Ebm

1

5

b3

5

A7m

b3

5

b3

1

Dbm

5

1

Gbm

5

b3

5

b3

Bm

1

b3

1

b3

Em

1

5

Am

b3

1

b3

5

Dm

1

5

1

5

Gm

b3

5

Cm

1

b3

1

b3

1

5

Minor Chords Short

20

Cm
①

⑤

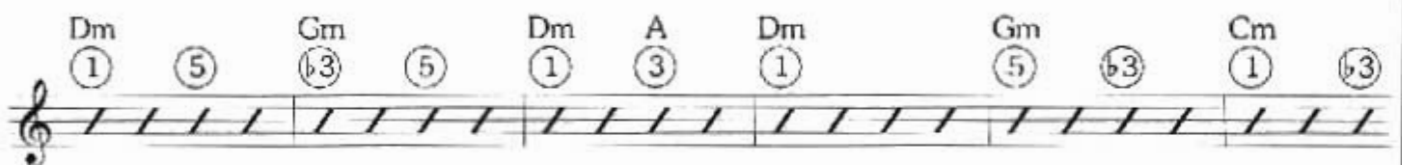
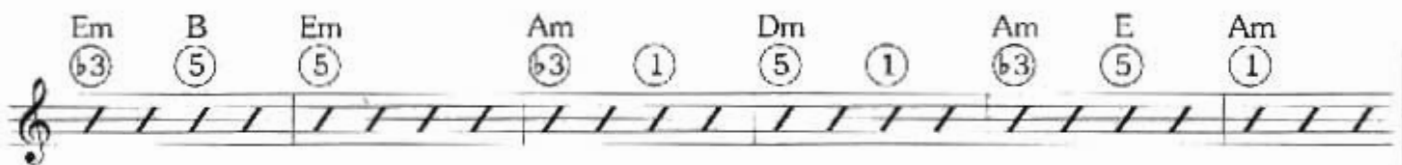
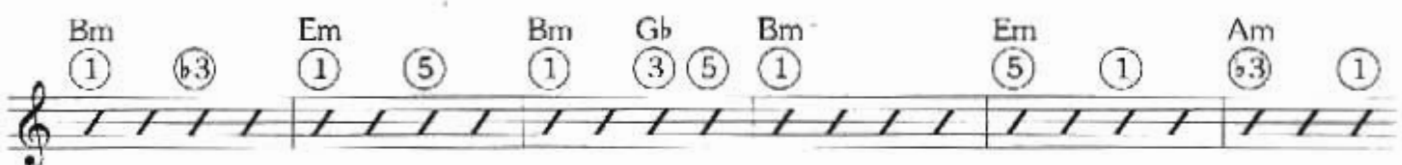
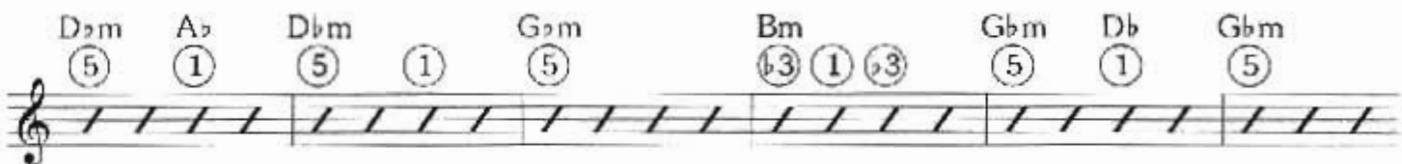
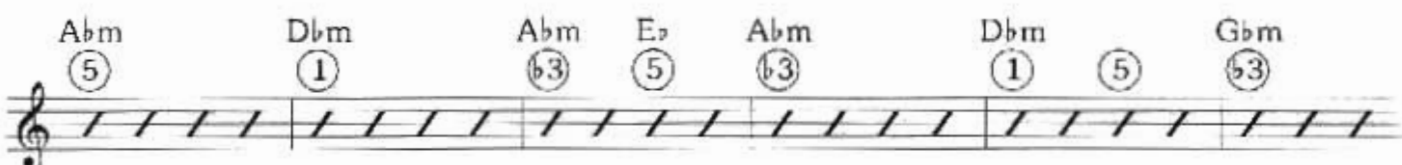
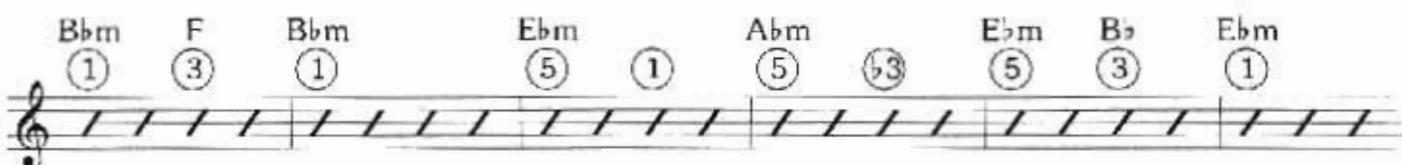
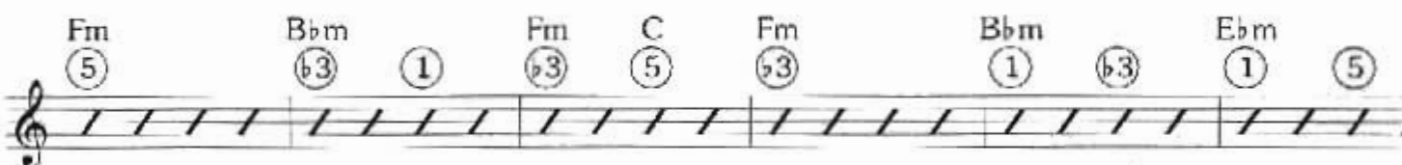
Fm
③ ⑤

⑤

Cm
①

G
③

Cm
①

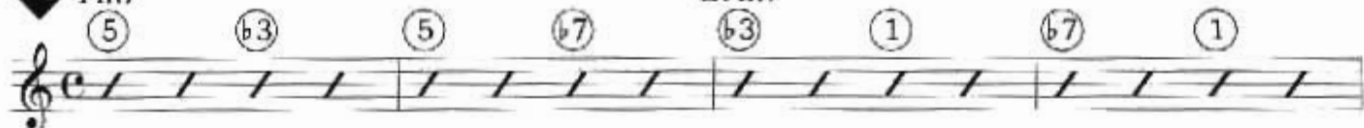


Minor Seventh Chords

21

Fm7

Bbm7



Ebm7

Abm7



Dbm7

Gbm7



Bm7

Em7



Am7

Dm7



Gm7

Cm7

Fm7

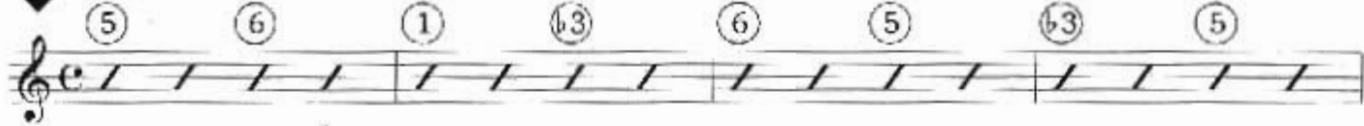


Minor Sixth Chords

22

Cm6

Fm6



Bbm6

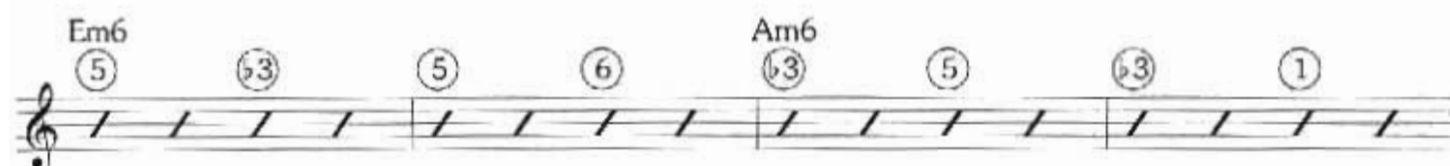
Ebm6



Abm6

Dbm6



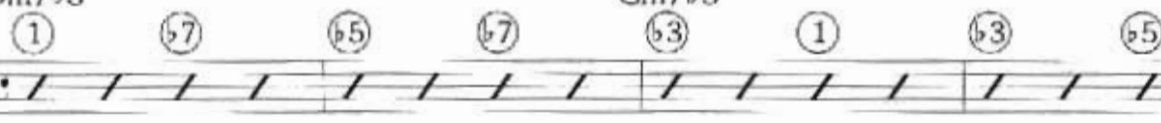


Minor 7^b5 Chords

23

Dm7^b5

Gm7^b5



Cm7^b5

Fm7^b5



Bbm7^b5

Ebm7^b5



Abm7^b5

Dbm7^b5



Gbm7^b5

Bm7^b5

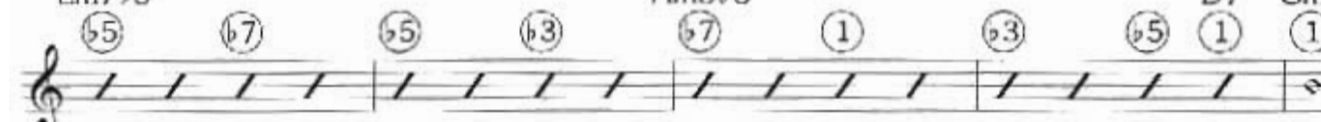


Em7^b5

Am5^b5

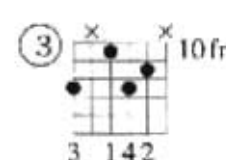
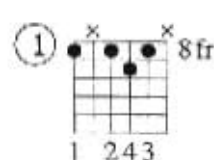
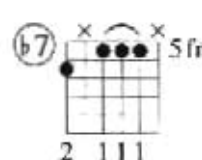
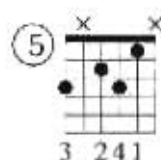
D7

Gm6



Beginning Exercise—Dominant Group

C7



24

C7
(5)

(b7)

(5)

(b7)

Three staves of musical notation for exercise 24. The first staff shows a C7 chord (5) and a b7 chord. The second staff shows a 1st fret position (1) and a 3rd fret position (3). The third staff shows a 1st fret position (1), a b7 chord, a 5th fret position (5), a 3rd fret position (3), and a 1st fret position (1).

Dominant Seventh Chords

25

G7
(1)

(3)

(5)

(b7)

C7
(3)

(1)

(b7)

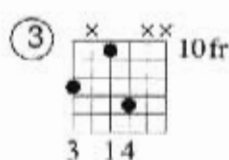
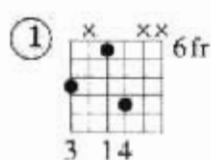
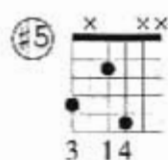
(5)

Five staves of musical notation for exercise 25, showing dominant seventh chords and their fingerings. The first staff shows F7 (1, 3, 5, b7) and Bb7 (3, 1, b7, 1). The second staff shows Eb7 (5, 3, 5, b7) and Ab7 (3, 5, 3, 1). The third staff shows Db7 (5, b7, 1, b7) and Gb7 (5, b7, 5). The fourth staff shows B7 (1, b7, 3, 1) and E7 (5, 3, b7, 5). The fifth staff shows A7 (1, 3, 5), D7 (1, b7, 5, b7, 5), and Gmaj7 (1).

Beginning Exercises—Altered Dominant Group

The augmented triad is more versatile than the augmented seventh chord and is preferred even when the music asks for an augmented seventh.

C+



26

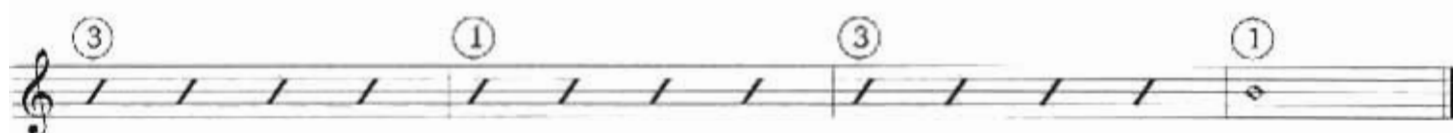
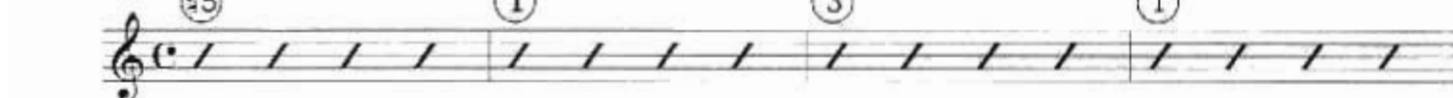
C+

(5)

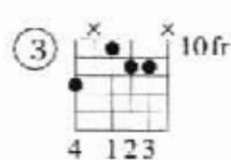
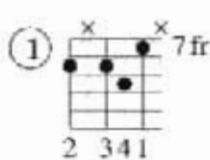
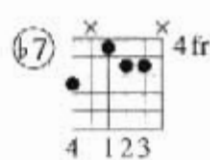
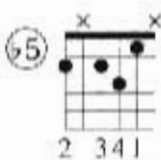
(1)

(3)

(1)



C7 \flat 5



27

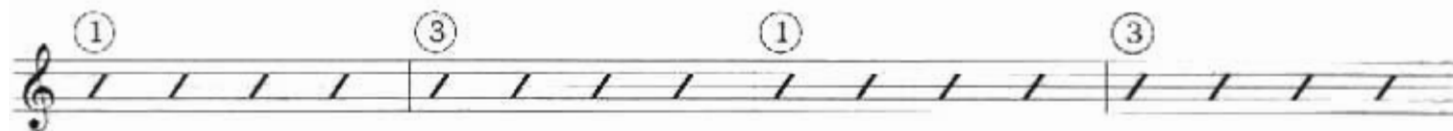
C7 \flat 5

(5)

(7)

(5)

(7)



Augmented Chords

28

G+

(1)

(3)

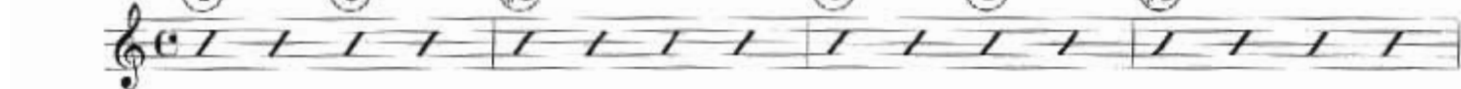
(#5)

C+

(3)

(1)

(#5)



F+

(3)

(#5)

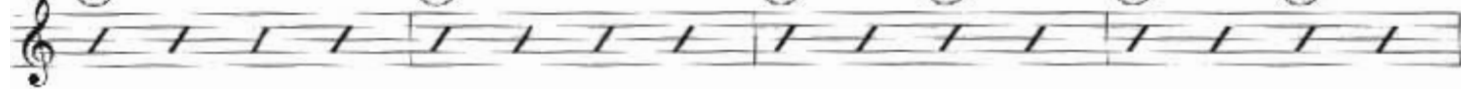
Bb+

(3)

(1)

(3)

(1)



Eb+

(#5)

(3)

(#5)

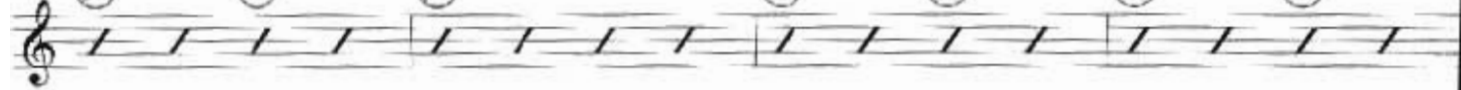
Ab+

(3)

(#5)

(3)

(1)



Db+

(#5)

(1)

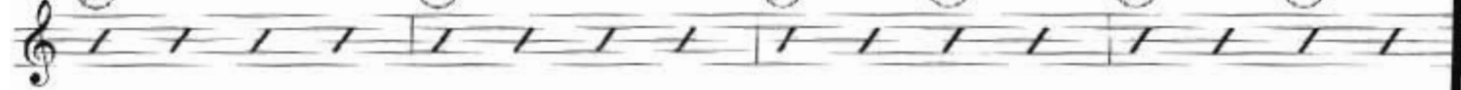
G#+

(#5)

(3)

(#5)

(3)



B+

(1)

(3)

(1)

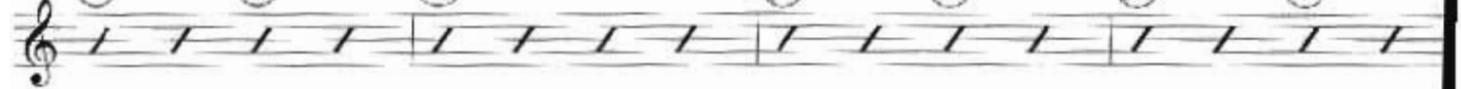
E+

(#5)

(3)

(#5)

(3)



A+

(1)

(3)

(1)

(3)

D+

(1)

(#5)

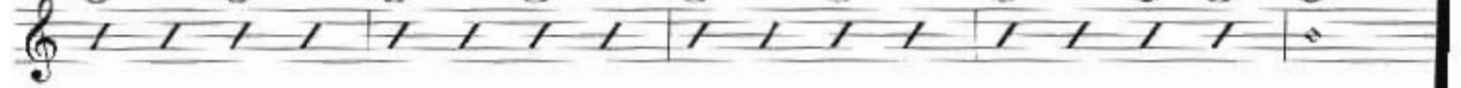
(1)

(#5)

(1)

Gmaj7

(5)



Dominant 7^b5 Chords

29

G7^b5

C7^b5

①

③

♭5

①

♭7

♭5

F7^b5

B^b7^b5

③

♭5

③

♭5

①

③

①

E^b7^b5

A^b7^b5

♭5

③

♭5

①

③

♭5

D⁺7^b5

G^b7^b5

①

♭7

♭5

①

③

♭5

B7^b5

E7^b5

①

③

③

①

♭5

③

♭5

③

A7^b5

D7^b5

Gmaj7

①

♭7

①

③

①

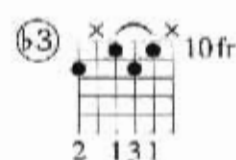
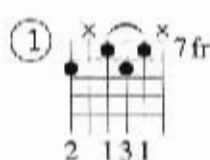
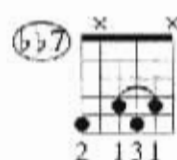
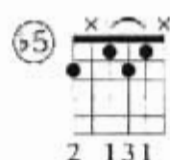
♭7

♭5

①

Beginning Exercise—Diminished Group

C°7



30

C°7

Handout 30: C°7 exercise. The exercise consists of four staves of music, each containing four measures of slurs. The fingering for each measure is indicated by a circled number above the staff:

- Staff 1: (b5), (b7), (1), (b3)
- Staff 2: (b3), (1), (b3), (1)
- Staff 3: (b7), (1), (b7), (1), (b5)

Diminished Seventh Chords

31

C°7

F°7

Handout 31: Diminished Seventh Chords exercise. The exercise consists of five staves of music, each containing four measures of slurs. The fingering for each measure is indicated by a circled number above the staff:

- Staff 1: C°7 (b5), C°7 (b7), C°7 (1), C°7 (b3); F°7 (b7), F°7 (b5), F°7 (b3), F°7 (b5)
- Staff 2: Bb°7 (1), Bb°7 (b3), Bb°7 (b5), Bb°7 (b3); Eb°7 (1), Eb°7 (b7), Eb°7 (b7), Eb°7 (b5)
- Staff 3: Ab°7 (1), Ab°7 (b3), Ab°7 (b5), Ab°7 (b3); D°7 (1), D°7 (b7), D°7 (b7), D°7 (b5)
- Staff 4: Gb°7 (1), Gb°7 (b3), Gb°7 (b5), Gb°7 (b7); B°7 (b3), B°7 (1), B°7 (b7), B°7 (1)
- Staff 5: E°7 (b5), E°7 (b3), E°7 (b5), E°7 (b7); A°7 (b3), A°7 (b5), A°7 (b3), A°7 (1); D°7 (b5), D°7 (b7), D°7 (1), D°7 (b7); G°7 (b5), G°7 (b7), G°7 (b5), G°7 (b7); A°maj7 (1)

Part 5: Patterns and Progressions

From this point on, we will be using only the *rhythm* chord voicings from the Chord Reference Library. In a smaller ensemble, more notes may be needed to bring out the harmony, but, in a big band situation, using only three-note chords allows the guitarist to give strong rhythmic support without affecting the complex harmonies that the other instruments are playing. This makes them well-suited to big band work.

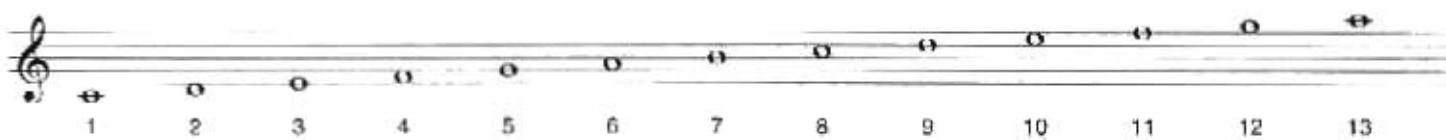
A *rhythm* chord can be extracted from a *drop three* voicing by leaving out the B string. A strong knowledge of *drop three* voicings is therefore invaluable because some of the *rhythm* chord voicings don't have a root, fifth, etc., and one could easily get lost or confused about the actual chord being played. Make sure that you have played all the exercises in Part 4 before you begin this section.

Personally, I like using *rhythm* voicings for big band work not only for their sound but because they are easy to use. For playing with small groups, I tend to use more *drop three* voicings. Of course, I'm not saying that anyone should actually attempt to use *only rhythm* or *only drop three* voicings in an actual playing situation. It is usually best to mix the voicings—e.g., some *rhythm* and some *drop three* voicings—in the course of a given tune. But, even while using a mixture of voicings, most players tend to primarily use mostly one type of voicing. Again, ideally the guitarist should adjust his or her playing to the situation at hand.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHORD PATTERN EXERCISES

Many of the chord progressions to popular jazz tunes use stock chord patterns. An entire tune might be built on one chord pattern, for instance, or it might use several patterns consisting of two, four, or eight or more bars in length. Practicing some of the more common chord patterns in all keys will therefore make learning jazz tunes easier.

The most common chord patterns are derived from harmonized scales. For example, a C major scale looks like this:

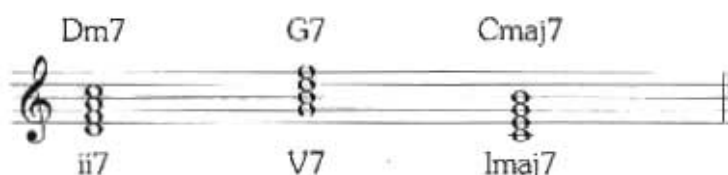


Stacking thirds on top of each note will generate the seventh chords contained in the scale:

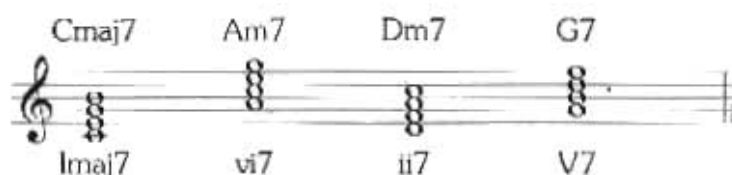
A musical staff in treble clef showing the seventh chords generated by stacking thirds on the C major scale notes. The notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The chords are: Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, Bm7b5, Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, Bm7b5, Cmaj7. The chords are labeled above and below the staff.

Chord	Chord	Chord	Chord	Chord	Chord	Chord
Cmaj7	Dm7	Em7	Fmaj7	G7	Am7	Bm7b5
I maj7	ii7	iii7	IV maj7	V7	vi7	vii7b5

Loc
commo
become
onc."



The next most common chord pattern uses the first, sixth, second, and fifth chords from the harmonized scale. In the key of C, this pattern is Cmaj7–Am7–Dm7–G7. Referring to the chords by their place in the scale gives us Imaj7–vi7–ii7–V7, or “one-six-two-five.”



Just as harmonizing the major scale generates common progressions like ii7–V7–Imaj7 and Imaj7–vi7–ii7–V7, harmonizing minor scales generates similar common progressions but with a minor sonority.

C natural minor

“one” “two”

Cm7 Dm7b5 Ebmaj7 Fm7 Gm7 Abmaj7 Bb7

i7 ii7b5 IIIImaj7 iv7 v7 VIImaj7 VII7

C melodic minor

Cm(maj7) Dm7 Eb+maj7 F7 G7 Am7b5 Bm7b5

imaj7 ii7 III+maj7 IV7 V7 #vi7b5 #vii7b5

“five” “six”

Again, these exercises are intended to drill you on a few of the basic chord patterns used in many jazz standards. These patterns can be thought of as the building blocks of jazz tunes—understanding them will help you understand the songs that use them. Most of the exercises go through all twelve keys so that you can explore the fretboard with these voicings. As stated above, we are now concentrating on *rhythm* chord voicings, but feel free to play through any of the exercises by first using *drop three* or *drop two* voicings—this will help you visualize the chords needed.

As with previous exercises, start at a comfortable tempo, and work your way up. At all tempos, be consistent. If you use a metronome, put the clicks on beats 2 and 4, and try to really groove with the exercises. I want you to groove so hard that anyone listening will automatically start to tap their feet to the beat!

Harmonized Major Scales

Use *rhythm* chord voicings! Each four-bar group is in a different key. This is indicated with double bar lines.

32

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 Bm7b5 Cmaj7 Fmaj7 Gm7 Am7 Bbmaj7



C7 Dm7 Em7b5 Fmaj7 Bbmaj7 Cm7 Dm7 Ebmaj7 F7 Gm7 Am7b5 Bbmaj7



Ebmaj7 Dm7b5 Cm7 Bb7 Abmaj7 Gm7 Fm7 Ebmaj7 Abmaj7 Bbm7 Cm7 Dbmaj7



E7 Fm7 Gm7b5 Abmaj7 Dbmaj7 Cm7b5 Bbm7 Ab7 Gbmaj7 Fm7 Ebm7 Dbmaj7



Gbmaj7 Abm7 Bbm7 Cbmaj7 D7 Ebm7 Fm7b5 Gbmaj7 Bmaj7 A#m7b5 G#m7 F#7



Emaj7 D#m7 C#m7 Bmaj7 Emaj7 D#m7b5 C#m7 B7 Amaj7 G#m7 F#m7 Emaj7



Amaj7 Bm7 C#m7 Dmaj7 E7 F#m7 G#m7b5 Amaj7 Dmaj7 C#m7b5 Bm7 A7



Gmaj7 F#m7 Em7 Dmaj7 Gmaj7 Am7 Bm7 Cmaj7 D7 Em7 F#m7b5 Gmaj7



Two-Five-One: ii7-V7-I maj7

33

Dm7

(1)

G7

(5)

Cmaj7

(1)

C6

(1)

Cm7

(1)

F7

(5)

Bbmaj7

(1)

Bb6

(1)

Bbm7

(1)

E7

(5)

Abmaj7

(1)

Ab6

(1)

Abm7

(1)

D7

(5)

G7maj7

(1)

Gb6

(3)

G7m7

(5)

B7

(1)

Emaj7

(5)

E6

(5)

Em7

(5)

A7

(1)

Dmaj7

(5)

D7

(5)

A7

(3)

C7m7

(1)

F7

(5)

Bmaj7

(1)

B6

(1)

Bm7

(1)

E7

(5)

Amaj7

(1)

(3)

A6

(5)

Am7

(5)

D7

(1)

Gmaj7

(5)

G6

(5)

Gm7

(5)

C7

(1)

Fmaj7

(5)

F6

(5)

Fm7

(5)

Bb7

(1)

E7maj7

(5)

E76

(5)

Em7

(5)

A7

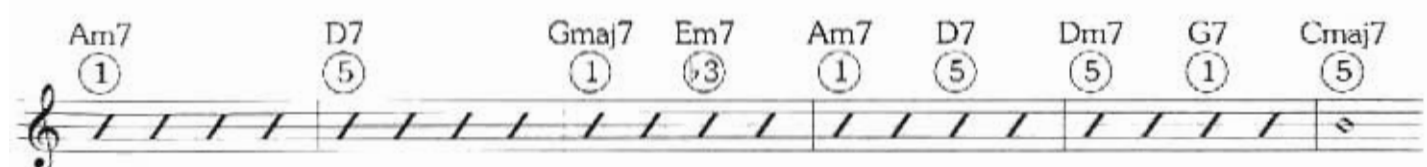
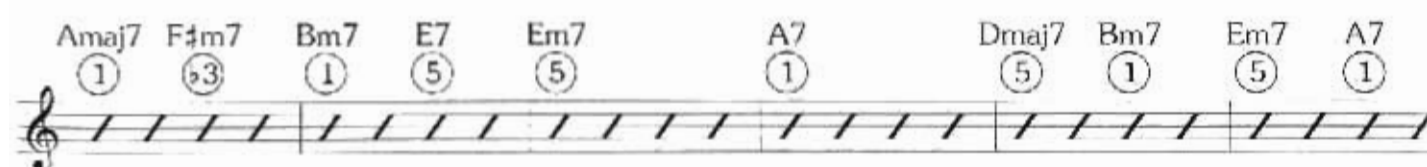
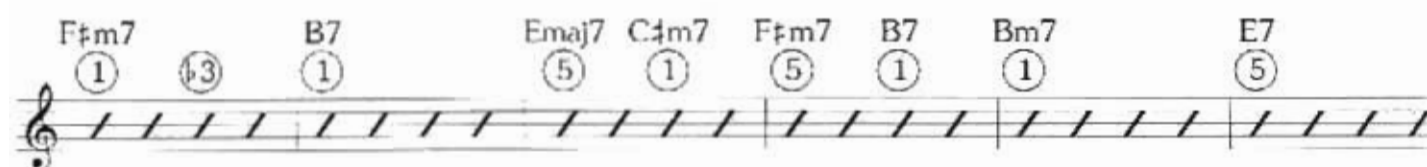
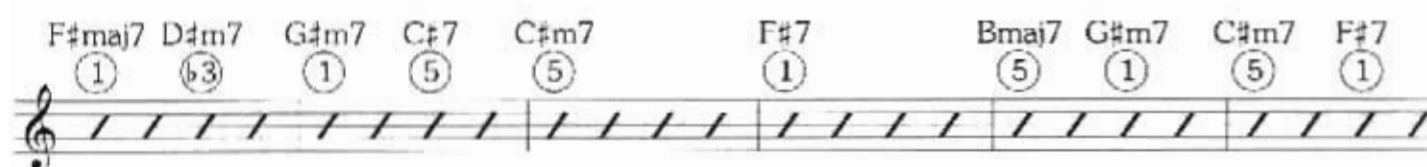
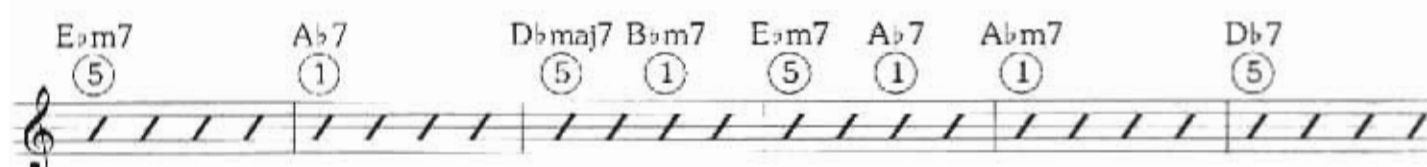
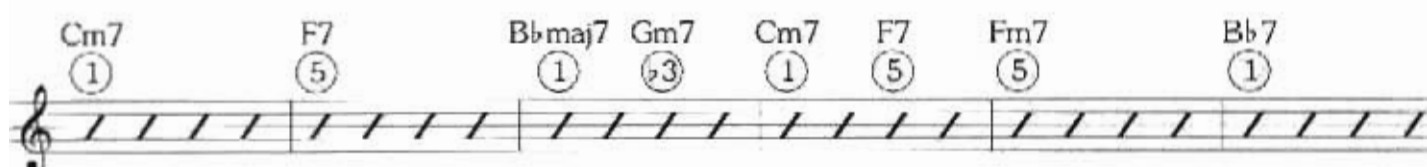
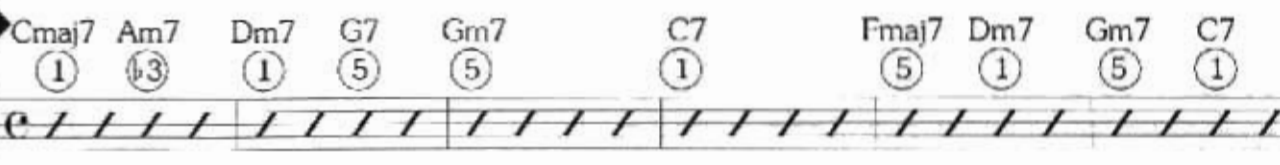
(1)

Dmaj7

(5)

One-Six-Two-Five: I maj7-vi7-ii7-V7

34



Minor Two-Five-One: ii7 \flat 5-V7-i7

35

Dm7 \flat 5

(1)

G7

(5)

Cm7

(1)

Cm6

(1)

Cm7 \flat 5

(1)

F7

(5)

B \flat m7

(1)

B \flat m6

(1)

B \flat m7 \flat 5

(1)

E \flat 7

(5)

A \flat m7

(1)

A \flat m6

(1)

A \flat m7 \flat 5

(1)

D \flat 7

(5)

G \flat m7

(5)

G \flat m6

(5)

G \flat m7 \flat 5

(5)

B7

(1)

Em7

(5)

Em6

(5)

Em7 \flat 5

(5)

A7

(1)

Dm7

(5)

Dm6

(5)

D \flat m7 \flat 5

(5)

G \flat 7

(1)

Bm7

(1)

Bm6

(1)

Bm7 \flat 5

(1)

E7

(5)

Am7

(5)

Am6

(5)

Am7 \flat 5

(5)

D7

(1)

Gm7

(5)

Gm6

(5)

Gm7 \flat 5

(5)

C7

(1)

Fm7

(5)

Fm6

(5)

Fm7 \flat 5

(5)

B \flat 7

(1)

E \flat m7

(5)

E \flat m6

(5)

E \flat m7 \flat 5

(5)

A \flat 7

(1)

D \flat m6

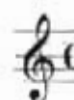
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Minor One-Six-Two-Five: i-#vi7b5-ii7b5-V7

36

Cm6 Am7b5 Dm7b5 G7 Gm Gm7 C7 Fm6 Dm7b5 Gm7b5 C7

(1) (b5) (1) (5) (5) (5) (1) (5) (1) (b5) (1)



Cm Cm7 F7 F7b5 Bbm6 Gm7b5 Cm7b5 F7 Fm Fm7 Bb7

(1) (1) (5) (b5) (1) (b5) (1) (5) (5) (5) (1)



Ebm6 Cm7b5 Fm7b5 Bb7 Bbm Bbm7 Eb7 Eb7b5 Abm6 Fm7b5 Bbm7b5 Eb7

(5) (1) (b5) (1) (1) (1) (5) (b5) (1) (b5) (1) (5)



Ebm Ebm7 Ab7 Dbm6 Bbm7b5 Ebm7b5 Ab7 Abm Abm7 Db7 Db7b5

(5) (5) (1) (5) (1) (b5) (1) (1) (1) (5) (b5)



Fbm6 Dbm7b5 Gbm7b5 Cbm7 Cbm Cbm7 Fbm7 Bm6 Gbm7b5 Cbm7b5 Fbm7

(1) (b5) (1) (5) (5) (5) (1) (5) (b5) (1) (b5) (1) (5)



Fbm Fbm7 B7 Em6 Cbm7b5 Fbm7b5 B7 Bm Bm7 E7 Eb7b5

(5) (5) (1) (5) (1) (b5) (1) (1) (1) (5) (b5)



Am6 Fbm7b5 Bm7b5 E7 Em Em7 A7 Dm6 Bm7b5 Em7b5 A7

(1) (b5) (1) (5) (5) (5) (1) (5) (1) (b5) (1)



Am Am7 D7 D7b5 Gm6 Em7b5 Am7b5 D7 Dm7b5 G7b5 Cm6

(1) (1) (5) (b5) (1) (b5) (1) (5) (b5) (1) (5)



DIMINISHED CONNECTING CHORDS

In jazz, the diminished chord is most often used as a connection or bridge between two chord changes. For example, the following progression works, but it sure is dull:

Diagram illustrating a basic chord progression without a connecting diminished chord:

Chords shown: Fmaj7, Gm7, C7.

Fingering for Fmaj7: 1 3 4 2. Fingering for Gm7: 2 3 3 3. Fingering for C7: 3 2 4 1.

Musical notation shows the progression: Fmaj7 (5th, 7th, root) → Gm7 (b3rd, 5th, 7th, root) → C7 (b7th, root, 3rd, 5th).

The same progression with a connecting diminished chord added is musically more interesting and gives the listener a greater sense of movement toward the target chord:

Diagram illustrating the same progression with a connecting diminished chord (Gb°7) added:

Chords shown: Fmaj7, Gb°7, Gm7, C7.

Fingering for Fmaj7: 1 3 4 2. Fingering for Gb°7: 2 1 3 1. Fingering for Gm7: 2 3 3 3. Fingering for C7: 3 2 4 1.

Musical notation shows the progression: Fmaj7 (5th, 7th, root) → Gb°7 (b5th, b7th, root) → Gm7 (b3rd, 5th, 7th, root) → C7 (b7th, root, 3rd, 5th).

Most often, the target chord (the chord that the progression is moving toward) can be approached in two ways, either from a half step above or from a half step below. In the example above, we used a Gb°7, which is a half step below the target chord of Gm7. The example below uses Ab°7, a half step above Gm7.

Diagram illustrating the same progression with a connecting diminished chord (Ab°7) added:

Chords shown: Fmaj7, Ab°7, Gm7, C7.

Fingering for Fmaj7: 1 3 4 2. Fingering for Ab°7: 2 1 3 1. Fingering for Gm7: 2 3 3 3. Fingering for C7: 3 2 4 1.

Musical notation shows the progression: Fmaj7 (5th, 7th, root) → Ab°7 (b5th, b7th, root) → Gm7 (b3rd, 5th, 7th, root) → C7 (b7th, root, 3rd, 5th).

The following exercises demonstrate how the diminished chord is used most often in jazz.

Diminished Connecting Chord Exercises

Scale Degree $\flat 2$ of the Key

37

Cmaj7 (1) D \flat °7 (1) Dm7 (1) G7 (5) C7 \flat 5 (1) Fmaj7 (5) G \flat °7 (\flat 5) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) F7 \flat 5 (\flat 5)



B \flat maj7 (1) B°7 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) B \flat 7 \flat 5 (1) E \flat maj7 (5) E°7 (\flat 5) Fm7 (5) B \flat 7 (1) E \flat 7 \flat 5 (\flat 5)



A \flat maj7 (1) A°7 (1) B \flat m7 (1) E \flat 7 (5) A \flat 7 \flat 5 (1) D \flat maj7 (5) D°7 (\flat 5) E \flat m7 (5) A \flat 7 (1) D \flat 7 \flat 5 (\flat 5)



G \flat maj7 (1) G°7 (1) A \flat m7 (1) D \flat 7 (5) G \flat 7 \flat 5 (1) Bmaj7 (5) C°7 (\flat 5) C \sharp m7 (5) F \sharp 7 (1) B7 \flat 5 (1)



E \sharp maj7 (5) E°7 (\flat 5) F \sharp m7 (5) B7 (1) E7 \flat 5 (\flat 5) A \sharp maj7 (1) A \sharp °7 (1) Bm7 (1) E7 (5) A7 \flat 5 (1)



Dmaj7 (5) D \sharp °7 (\flat 5) Em7 (5) A7 (1) D7 \flat 5 (\flat 5) Gmaj7 (1) G \sharp °7 (1) Am7 (1) D7 (5) G7 \flat 5 (1) C6 (5)



Scale Degree 3 of the Key

38

Cmaj7 (1) Eb°7 (1) Dm7 (1) G7 (5) C7 (1) Fmaj7 (5) A°7 (b5) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) F7 (5)

Bbmaj7 (1) Db°7 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) B°7 (1) Ebmaj7 (5) Gb°7 (b5) Fm7 (5) B°7 (1) Eb7 (5)

Abmaj7 (1) B°7 (1) Bbm7 (1) Eb7 (5) Ab7 (1) Dbmaj7 (5) E°7 (b5) E°m7 (5) Ab7 (1) Db7 (5)

Gbmaj7 (1) A°7 (1) Abm7 (1) Db7 (5) Gb7 (1) Bmaj7 (5) D°7 (b5) Cbm7 (5) F#7 (1) B7 (5)

Emaj7 (5) G°7 (b5) F#m7 (5) B7 (1) E7 (5) Amaj7 (1) C°7 (1) Bm7 (1) E7 (5) A7 (1)

Dmaj7 (5) F°7 (b5) Em7 (5) A7 (1) D7 (5) Gmaj7 (1) B°7 (1) Am7 (1) D7 (5) G7 (1) C6 (5)

TRITONE SUBSTITUTION

The harmonized major scale shows us that a dominant seventh chord typically functions as V7 in a given key. Our own ears tell us that most dominant seventh chords want to resolve to the tonic or I chord of the key. In the key of C, for example, G7 has a tendency to resolve to C. Even if a ii7 chord (Dm7) is placed in front of the G7, it still wants to resolve to C.

Going one step further, if G7 wants to resolve to C, then G7^b5 wants to resolve even more. The flat-fifth is D^b, which is just one half step above the tonic, C.

Now notice the similarity between G7^b5 and D^b7^b5. Actually, these two chords are more than just similar—both chords contain exactly the same notes!

This means that the two chords are interchangeable; either can substitute for the other in a given chord progression. Both chords resolve to C very well.

But D^b7^b5 is the V7 chord in the key of G^b. This means that it also wants to resolve to its I chord, G^b:

Now, substituting the G7^b5 chord gives us this:

This means that in a given chord progression where V7 is followed by I, instead of playing V7, you can play \flat II7 instead. This is a “tritone substitution” because \flat II7 is three whole steps, a tritone, away from V7.

In the key of C major, for instance, D \flat 7 can be played in place of G7. Either chord, G7 or D \flat 7 will resolve to C nicely. In the key of G \sharp , the V7 chord is D \flat 7. This means that G7 can substitute for the V7 and still resolve to the G \sharp tonic.

In an even broader sense, the V7 chord can be any kind of dominant seventh—e.g., G7, G13 \sharp 11, G7 \flat 9(\sharp 5), etc. All V7 chords are related to their corresponding \flat II7 chords. The third and flat seventh of the V7 chord will always be the flat seventh and third of the \flat II7 chord. As an exercise for yourself, figure out what G7 \sharp 9 becomes when you put D \flat in the bass.

Tritone Substitution Exercise

In this exercise, the corresponding ii7 chord is inserted in front of each tritone substitution.

39 Gm7 (5) C7 (1) D \flat m7 (1) G \flat 7 (5) G \flat m7 (5) B7 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5)

Fm7 (5) B \flat 7 (1) Bm7 (1) E7 (5) Em7 (5) A7 (1) B \flat m7 (1) E \flat 7 (5)

E \flat m7 (5) A \flat 7 (1) Am7 (1) D7 (5) Dm7 (5) G7 (1) A \sharp m7 (1) D \sharp 7 (5) Cmaj7 (5)

Cm7 (1) F7 (5) G \flat m7 (5) B7 (1) Bm7 (1) E7 (5) Fm7 (5) B \flat 7 (1)

B \flat m7 (1) E \flat 7 (5) Em7 (5) A7 (1) Am7 (1) D7 (5) E \sharp m7 (5) A \flat 7 (1)

A \flat m7 (1) D \flat 7 (5) Dm7 (5) G7 (1) Gm7 (1) C7 (5) D \flat m7 (5) G \flat 7 (1) Fmaj7 (1)

Part 6: Practice Tunes

One of the best things that any musician can do is learn as many tunes or songs as possible. This is not only important for rhythm guitar but for overall musicianship. The exercises in this section demonstrate some typical chord progressions common to jazz tunes or standards. Again, use *rhythm* voicings in this section.

On the CD, Exercises 40-63 are played twice. The first time is with rhythm guitar, melody guitar(s), and a rhythm section with upright bass and drums. The second time is without the rhythm guitar, so that you can play along with the rhythm section by yourself. Feel free to experiment with your own inversions after you've played mine.

40 41

Bebop Blues in B \flat

Exercise 40 (measures 1-4): B \flat 7 (1), Eb7 (5), Ab7 (1), Gm7 (1), C7 \flat 5 (5), Fm7 (5), B \flat 7 (1).

Exercise 41 (measures 5-8): E \flat 6 (5), Eb7 (5), E \flat 7 (5), B \flat 7 (3), Ebm6 (1), Dm7 (1), G7 \flat 5 (5).

Exercise 42 (measures 9-12): Cm7 (1), Cm (1), A \flat (3), F (5), F7 \flat 5 (5), B \flat 6 (1), D \flat 7 (1), G \flat maj7 (5), B7 \flat 5 (1), B \flat 6 (1).

G Minor Blues

42 43

Exercise 42 (measures 1-4): Gm (5), Gm7 (5), Cm7 (1), Cm6 (1), Gm7 (5), Am7 \flat 5 (1), D7 \flat 5 (5), Gm7 (1), G+5 (1, 3).

Exercise 43 (measures 5-8): Cm (1), Cm6 (1), Cm7 (1), Cm (3), Gm (5), Gm7 (5), Gm6 (5), E7 \flat 5 (5).

Exercise 44 (measures 9-12): Am7 \flat 5 (1), D7 \flat 5 (5), Gm6 (1), E7 \flat 5 (5), Am7 \flat 5 (1), D7 \flat 5 (5), Gm6 (1).

♩ = 176
44 45

B \flat Rhythm Changes

B \flat maj7 (1) Gm7 (3) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Dm7 (1) G7 (5) Cm7 (1) F7 (5)

1.

B \flat maj7 (1) B \flat 7 (1) E \flat maj7 (5) E 7 (5) B \flat maj7 (1) G7 (3) Cm7 (1) F7 (5)

2.

B \flat maj7 (1) F7 (5) B \flat 6 (1) A7 (1) D7 (5) Am7 (1) D7 (5)

G7 (1) Dm7 (5) G7 (1) C7 (5) Gm7 (1) C7 (5)

F7 (3) (5) Cm7 (1) F7 \flat 5 (5) B \flat maj7 (1) B \flat 7 (1) Cm7 (1) D \flat 7 (1) Dm7 (1) G7 (5)

Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Fm7 (5) B \flat 7 (1) E \flat maj7 (5) A \flat 7 (1) Dm7 (5) G7 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) B \flat 6 (1)

♩ = 138
46 47

Great Bebop Love

B \flat maj7 (1) B \flat 6 (1) E \flat 7 (5) E \flat 7 (5) A \flat 7 (1) G7 (1)

1.

C7 (5) Gm7 (1) C7 (5) Cm7 (5) F7 (1) Gm7 (1) Am7 \flat 5 (1)

Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Bb6 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Bb6 (1) Am7b5 (1) D7b5 (b5)

Gm7 (1) Gm6 (1) Am7b5 (1) D7 (5) Gm6 (3) (5) Eb6 (1) D7 (1)

Gm (5) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) C6 (1) Cm (1) F7b5 (b5) Bbmaj7 (1) Bb6 (1)

Eb7 (5) Eb (5) Ab7 (1) (3) Dm (1) G7 (5) Gm7 (5) C7 (1)

Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Bb6 (1) Bb7 (1) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Bb6 (1)

Swing the Stomp

48 49

Db6 (5) Dbmaj7 (5) Db6 (5) Ab7 (1) Db6 (5) Gb7 (1) Fm7b5 (b5) Bb7 (1)

1. Ebm (5) Ebm7 (5) Ab7 (1) Bbm7 Cm7b5 (1) Db6 (1) Dbm7 (b5) Ebm7 (5) A7+ (1)

2. Db6 (1) (6) Db (5) Db7(b5) (b5) Gb6 (1) G7b5 (1) Gb7 (1) A7m7 Bbm7b5 (1) (1)

B7 (1) D7 (1) B7 (1) Cbm7 D7 (1) B7 (3) E (5) F7 (5) E7 (5)

Em7 (5) A7 (1) E7m7 (5) Ab7 (1) Db6 (5) Dbmaj7 (5) Db6 (5) Ab+ (1)

D6 (5) G7b5 (1) Fm7b5 (b5) Bb7 (1) Ebm (5) Ebm7 (5) Ab7 (1)

Db6 (5) D7 (b5) Ebm7 (5) A+ (1) (3) D6 (1)



Augmented Times

Eb (5) B+ (1) Bbm (1) Eb7 (5) Abmaj7 (1) Ab6 (1) Db7 (5) Db (5)

1. Eb (3) (5) F7 (5) Fm (5) Fm7 (5) Bb+ (1)

2. Fm7 (5) Bb7 (1) Eb (5) E7 (5) Ab (3) A7 (b3)

Eb (1) Bb+ (3) Bbm7 (b3) Eb (1) (5) Ab (3) B7 (1)

Fm (5) Fm7 (5) Bb7 (1) Bb+ (1) Eb (5) B+ (1) Bbm7 (1) A7b5 (1) Abmaj7 (1) Ab6 (1)

Db7 (5) Db (5) Eb (3) (5) F7 (5) Cm7 (1) F7 (5) Fm7 (5) Bb7 (1) Eb6 (5)

Throw the Yellow Stone

♩ = 132

52 53

B \flat 7

(1)

E \flat 7

(5)

E \flat 7

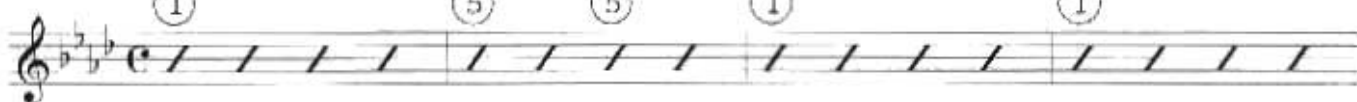
(5)

A \flat maj7

(1)

A \flat 6

(1)



E \flat m

(5)

E \flat m7

(5)

A7 \flat 5

(1)

A \flat 7

(1)

D \flat

(5)

D \flat maj7

(5)

D6

(5)



D \flat 7

(5)

D \flat 7 \flat 5

(\flat 5)

G \flat 7

(1)

G7

(1)

A \flat 6

(1)

G7

(1)

G \flat 7

(1)

F7

(1)

Gm7

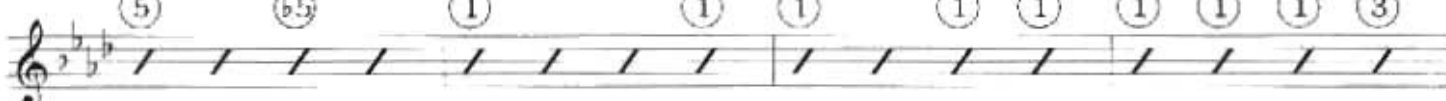
(1)

A \flat 7

(1)

F

(3)



B \flat 7

(1)

B7 \flat 5

(1)

B \flat 7

(1)

B \flat m7

(1)

E \flat 7

(5)

Cm7

(1)

F7 \flat 5

(\flat 5)



B \flat 7

(1)

A7 \flat 5

(1)

A \flat maj7

(1)

A \flat 6

(1)

A \flat

(1)

Fm7

(5)

E7

(5)



E \flat m

(5)

E \flat m7

(5)

A7 \flat 5

(1)

A \flat 7

(1)

D \flat

(5)

D \flat maj7

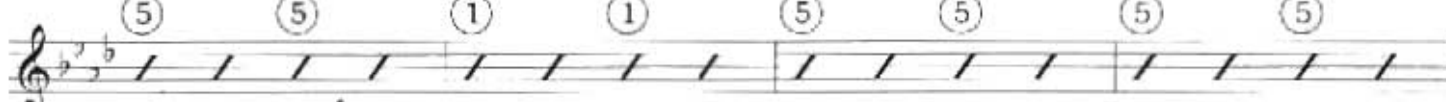
(5)

D \flat 6

(5)

D \flat maj7

(5)



D \flat 7

(5)

D \flat

(5)

D \flat 7

(\flat 5)

(1)

A \flat

(5)

A \flat maj7

(5)

G \flat

(5)

G \flat maj7

(5)

F

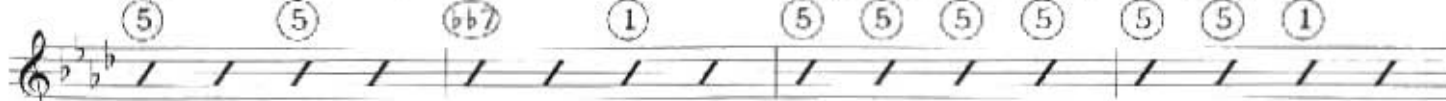
(5)

Fmaj7

(5)

B7

(1)



B \flat 7

(1)

E7

(5)

E \flat 7

(5)

A7 \flat 5

(1)

A \flat maj7

(1)

G \flat

(5)

Cm

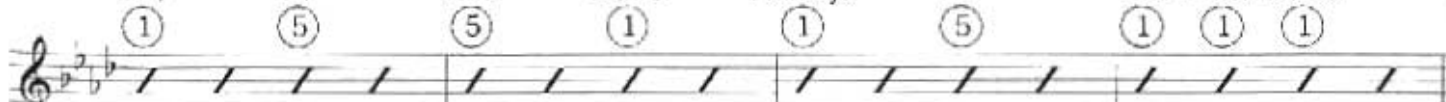
(1)

Cm7

(1)

B7 \flat 5

(1)



Mellow Car Lights

Chord progression for "Mellow Car Lights" (Key of D major, 4/4 time):

Row 1: C#m7b5 (b5), F#7 (1), Am7 (1), D7 (5)

Row 2: Dm7 (5), G7 (1), Cmaj7 (5), F7 (1), (3)

Row 3: Gmaj7 (1), G (3), C#m7b5 (1), F#7b5 (b5), Bm7 (1), Bm (b3), Gm7 (5), C7 (1)

Row 4: Dmaj7 (1), D6 (1), C#m7b5 (1), F#7 (5), F#m7b5 (b5), B7 (1)

Row 5: E+ (b5), F#+ (b5), E+ (b5), D+ (b5), Am7 (1), Am6 (1), Am7 (1), Am (b3)

Row 6: F7 (5), F (5), F7 (5), Gmaj7 (5), G6 (5), G (5), Gmaj7 (5)

Row 7: C#m7b5 (1), F#7 (5), F#7b5 (b5), Bm7b5 (1), (b3), E (5), E7b5 (b5)

Row 8: Am7b5 (1), (b3), D7 (5), (b5), G7 (1), Gmaj7 (1)

Hopefully, you found these exercises challenging, but I am still going to suggest that you practice rhythm guitar by playing as many standards as possible. Remember, rhythm guitar is a groove-oriented style—you gotta swing! Listen to recordings, but above all, play with real human beings. Rhythm guitar is a “hands-on” experience. Only after many hours of playing with people—preferably older, more experienced musicians—will you truly learn to master rhythm guitar.

Here is a list of jazz standards you’d be wise to learn. Become a collector of jazz fake books and jazz recordings. Even if you already know some or all of these tunes, make sure you can play them in all keys. (This goes for the previous exercises as well.) The artists listed here are suggestions only, as there are many recordings of these standards.

General swing tunes

Satin Doll
Take the A Train
Perdido
There Is No Greater Love
Just Friends
Stompin’ at the Savoy
Shiny Stockings
April in Paris
The Days of Wine and Roses
Love for Sale
Lullabye of Birdland
What Is This Thing Called Love
Lover Come Back to Me
On Green Dolphin Street
Groovin’ High
All the Things You Are
A Night in Tunisia
I’ll Remember April
Afternoon in Paris
Embraceable You
Stella by Starlight
Out of Nowhere
Sweet Georgia Brown
Have You Met Miss Jones
There Will Never Be Another You
In a Mellow Tone
Speak Low

As recorded by:

Duke Ellington Orchestra
Duke Ellington Orchestra
Duke Ellington Orchestra
Oscar Peterson
Sarah Vaughan w/Count Basie Orchestra
Benny Goodman
Count Basie Orchestra
Count Basie Orchestra
Duke Ellington Orchestra
Cannonball Adderly
George Shearing Quartet
Clifford Brown/Max Roach
Dizzy Gillespie
Miles Davis Sextet
Charlie Parker
Tal Farlow
Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie
Clifford Brown and Max Roach
The Modern Jazz Quartet
Charlie Parker
Joe Pass/Oscar Peterson
Charlie Parker
Bud Powell
Joe Pass/Neils—Henning Oersted Pederson
Nat “King” Cole
Duke Ellington Orchestra
Carmen McCrae

Part 7: Reduction and Expansion

CHORD REDUCTION

As we saw in Part 1, *chord reduction* involves simplifying a written chord change—converting an extended chord into a more basic chord, i.e., one with fewer notes. This is possible because extended chords are built from simple structures. For example, Cmaj9 contains C and Cmaj7. When reading rhythm guitar charts, the guitarist must be able to determine reduced or simplified chords from the written extended chords on the chart.

The figure below illustrates how simple chords are contained within extended chords. Notice that for every thirteenth chord, there is one seventh chord and one sixth chord to choose from; either can be played. Of course, this figure does not contain every possible extended chord. The idea is to think of chords in terms of building blocks. The rhythm guitarist's job is to play the foundation upon which all the other blocks lay. Study the examples below carefully.

The figure illustrates chord reduction by showing how extended chords contain simpler chords. The examples are organized into six rows, each containing four staves. Each staff shows an extended chord and its constituent basic chords.

- Row 1:** Cmaj9 (reduces to Cmaj7), Cmaj9#11 (reduces to Cmaj7), Cmaj13#11 (reduces to Cmaj7), Cmaj13 (reduces to C6).
- Row 2:** Cm9 (reduces to Cm7), Cm11 (reduces to Cm7), Cm13 (reduces to Cm7), Cm13#11 (reduces to Cm6).
- Row 3:** C9 (reduces to C7), C9#11 (reduces to C7), C13#11 (reduces to C7), C13 (reduces to C6).
- Row 4:** C13#9 (reduces to C7), C13#9#11 (reduces to C6), C13#9#11#5 (reduces to C7b5), C13#9#11#5#9 (reduces to C+7).
- Row 5:** C7b9 (reduces to C7), C7b9#5 (reduces to C7b5), C7b9#5#9 (reduces to C+7).
- Row 6:** C7#9 (reduces to C7), C7#9#5 (reduces to C7b5), C7#9#5#9 (reduces to C+7).

CHORD EXPANSION

Chord expansion entails adding notes to a written chord change, because the given changes lack color or interest. (On some charts, the arranger leaves out harmony for different reasons.) Chord expansion is harder than chord reduction because the guitarist can't expand the chords without first hearing what everyone else in the band is playing; a guitarist must not add notes to the chords that might conflict or clash with notes that other musicians in the band are playing.

The two basic rules for chord expansion are as follows:

Triad—Look for ways to mix in sixth and seventh chords with triads.

Seventh chord—Look for ways to mix in sixth chords with seventh chords.

Along with mixing different chords, the guitarist has the option of adding color to a progression by inverting chords and connecting them with scalewise movement—a guitarist has to be ready to pull out the necessary tools at any given time.

REDUCTION AND EXPANSION—SUMMARY

In the real world, you will most often need to both expand and reduce chords within the same chart. When performing these expansions and reductions, remember the following points:

- Don't feel pressure to play the exact changes you see on a chart. The written changes are what the arranger used to shape the harmony for all the instruments in the arrangement. Just because your part says "guitar" does not mean the arranger actually gave much thought to what the guitarist should play specifically. Instead, you are expected to create a rhythm part based on the chord changes written. In my experience, few arrangers have shown me that they are interested in exactly how rhythm guitar chords are voiced. They just know the right sound and feel when they hear it.
- Reduction is not the same as reharmonization. Playing, for example, Fmaj7 when the written chart reads Fmaj9#11 does not constitute reharmonization. Fmaj7 is contained within Fmaj9#11; therefore, nothing has been added. Reduction simply means playing the foundation or lowest form of the written chord and letting the other instruments play the extended harmonies.
- Reharmonization occurs when new chord tones have been added to the chord changes. This might mean that the other musicians need to change what they are playing in order to fit the alteration. Don't reharmonize a song without first discussing it with the musicians that you are playing with. If you change the function of a written chord or add a chord change that was not written, the bassist and the piano player need to be told. You must also be sure that what you change will not affect the melody of the song, or other parts being played.
- Expansion may get into some slight reharmonization, because notes are being added to the written chord changes. If, for example, the written chord change is C, and you play Cmaj7, the added note, B, could clash with some of the other instruments. Pay attention to what your fellow musicians are playing. If another musician's part clashes with what you have added, then either expand less or discuss what you've added with the other musicians to see if it is an improvement over what is written. Ideally, an expansion should not require any of the other musicians to change what they are playing.
- Use your ears, taste, experience, and knowledge of music theory to determine how to expand and reduce chord changes. Again, it is up to you to create the rhythm guitar part. Most arrangers wouldn't know how to write one because they don't know how 4/4 rhythm guitar chords are voiced. They assume the guitarist will know what to play from looking at the chart and being familiar with the style.

Reading vs. Playing—Reduction

The upper staff of each system in this exercise is an example of the kinds of chord symbols you might see on a guitar part of an actual big band arrangement. In the lower staff, the chords have been reduced to what you might actually play to get an authentic 4/4 rhythm guitar sound.

♩ = 120
56 57

F6/9 B \flat 13 \sharp 11 Am9 \flat 5 D7 \flat 9 Gm11 C13 \flat 9 Fmaj13 C+7 \flat 9

Fmaj9 B \flat 9 \flat 5 Am9 \flat 5 D13 \flat 9 G13 \sharp 11 Gm11 G \flat 13 \sharp 11

F7 \sharp 9 G \flat 13 \sharp 11 F7 \sharp 9 G \flat 13 \sharp 11 F7 \flat 9 G \flat 13 \sharp 11 F7 \flat 9 B13 \sharp 11

B \flat 13 \sharp 11 Bbm11 E \flat 13 F6/9 B \flat 13 \sharp 11 A7 \flat 5 D+7 \flat 9

Gm11 C13 \flat 9 Am9 \flat 5 D13 \flat 9 G13 D \flat 13 \sharp 11 Gm9 C13 \flat 9

F6/9 G \flat 6/9 F6/9 G \flat 6/9 F6/9 G \flat 6/9 F6 Eb \flat 6/9 E13 \flat 9 F6/9

Reduction of "Mr. Bones Lives Alone"

Now it's time for you to do a reduction. Imagine that you are playing a gig that asks for rhythm guitar, and this is the chart they give you to play. Play through this, and see if you can make a rhythm guitar part out of it.

Fmaj9 B \flat 13 \sharp 11 Am9 D7 \flat 9 Gm11 C13 \sharp 11 B \flat 13 Am11

1. 2.

Dm9 Abm9 Db13 Gm9 C13 \flat 9 Gm9 C13 Cm11 B9 \flat 5 B \flat maj9

Abm9 Db13 G \flat 6/9 Em9 A13 \flat 9 Dmaj7/6 Abm9 Db9 \flat 5

G \flat maj9 Gm9 C13 \flat 9 Fmaj9 B \flat 13 Am9 D7 \flat 9 Gm9

C13 \sharp 9 B \flat 13 Am9 Dm11 Gm7 C13 \sharp 11 Fmaj13 Bm9 \flat 5 B \flat 13

Am9 Dm9 Gm9 C13 \flat 9 Gbmaj9 Fmaj9 E \flat maj9 D \flat maj9 Gbmaj9 Fmaj13 \sharp 11

My Reduction of "Mr. Bones Lives Alone"

This is an example of what I might play, given the previous chord changes.

$\text{♩} = 108$ 58 59

Fmaj7 B \flat 7 Am7 D7 Gm Gm7 C7 B \flat 6 Am Am7

(5) (1) (1) (5) (3) (5) (1) (1) (1) (1)

1. 2.

Dm7 Abm E D \flat 7 Gm E \flat C7 Gm7 C7 Cm7 B7 \flat 5

(5) (b7) (3) (5) (1) (3) (5) (1) (5) (1) (1) (1)

B \flat maj7 B \flat 6 Abm Abm7 D \flat 7 Gbmaj7 G \flat Em7 A7 Dmaj7 D6

(1) (1) (b3) (5) (1) (5) (3) (5) (1) (5) (5)

Abm7 (5) Db7b5 (1) Gbmaj7 (5) Gb (3) Gm (b3) Eb (5) C7 (1) Fmaj7 (5) Bb7 (1) Am7 (1) D7 (5)

Gm (b3) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) Bb (3) Am (b3) Dm7 (1) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) Fmaj7 (5) F6 (5) Bm7b5 (1) Bb7 (1)

Am7 (1) Dm7 (b7) Gm7 (5) C7 (1) Gbmaj7 (5) Gb6 (5) Fmaj7 (5) Ebmaj7 (5) Dbmaj7 (5) Gbmaj7 (1) Fmaj7 (1)

Reading vs. Playing—Expansion

The upper staff of each system in this exercise is an example of the kinds of chord symbols you might see in fake books or in an actual big band arrangement. In the lower staff, the chords have been expanded to make the harmonically simple chord progression more interesting. Just because you're playing rhythm guitar doesn't mean the music has to be boring!

60 61

G7 C7 F
 G7 (1) 3 C6 (1) C7 (1) F (5) Fmaj7 (5) Dm (5) F (3)

Cm F7 Bb
 Cm (1) Ab (3) F7 (5) F7b5 (b5) Bbmaj7 (1) Bb6 (1) Bb (1) Bb6 (1)

Bb7 Bb7 F/C D7
 Bb7 (1) 3 Bb7 (1) E (5) F (5) Fmaj7 (5) D6 (1) D7 (1)

G7 C7 F F
 G7 (5) G7b5 (b5) Gm7 (5) C7 (5) F (5) Fmaj7 (5) F6 (5)

Your Expansion of "Full of It!"

Now it's time for *you* to do an expansion. Play through this, and see how you can make it sound better.

Chord progression for "Your Expansion of 'Full of It!'":

- Line 1: C6, E7, A7
- Line 2: D \flat 7, Dm7, E7, F7, E7, Am7
- Line 3: D7, Dm7, G7, C6, Dm, C6
- Line 4: E7, A7, B \flat 7, A7, D \flat 7, Dm7, F
- Line 5: G \flat 7, C6, B \flat 7, A7, Dm7, G7, F, F7, C6

My Expansion of "Full of It!"

This is how I might expand the same chord changes.

Chord progression for "My Expansion of 'Full of It!'":

- Line 1: C6 (1), Dm (1), Em (1), Dm (1), C6 (1), Dm (1), E \flat 7 (1), C (3), E7 (1), B7 (b7), E7 (5), (3), A7 (1), Bm7 (1)
- Line 2: A7 (1), A (3), D \flat 7 (1), (b3), Dm7 (1), (b7), E7 (5), F7 (5), E7 (5), E7 \flat 5 (b5)
- Line 3: Am7 (1), Bm7 (1), Cmaj7 (1), Bm7 (1), Am7 (1), F (3), D7 (5), Em7 (5), Am (b3), D7 (5), Dm (5), A+ Dm (1, 5)
- Line 4: G7 (1), Am B \flat 7 (1), G (3), C6 (1), Dm7 (1), C6 (1), Bm7 (1), G (3), E7 (1), E7 (b7)

A7 (1) B \flat 7 (1) A7 (1) A (3) D \flat 7 (1) (3) Dm7 (1) Gm7 (5) F (5) (3) G \flat 7 (1) (3)

C6 (1) B \flat 7 (1) A7 (1) A+ (1) Dm (5) Dm7 (5) G7 (1) G (3) F (5) F7 (5) C6 (1)

FOR THE EXTRA-INQUISITIVE

There is a *tritone relationship* between 9 \flat 5 chords and seventh augmented fifth chords, which can be used to add color to a chord progression.

B \flat 9 \flat 5 E+ E+ E+ E+

E+7 D+ D+ D+

Looking at the notes B \flat 9 \flat 5, for example, we can see that within this chord there is an E+7. Notice that E is a tritone away from B \flat . If we then move E+ up or down in whole steps, it will alternate with D+ in a symmetrical pattern. (In other words, starting with E+, moving up or down the whole tone scale will generate inversions of E+ alternating with inversions of D+.) This means that whenever B \flat 9 \flat 5 appears on a chart, E+ can be played and moved up or down in whole steps to create movement and interest.

The example below illustrates the use of augmented triads to add color to an otherwise monotonous two bars of B \flat 9 \flat 5. This is especially effective with a bass player walking through the changes. (Incidentally, this does not work if the chord is a 13 \sharp 11. Can you figure out why? Start by looking at the notes in a 13 \sharp 11 chord, and see if the whole tone scale works with this chord.)

It's a 9 \flat 5 Thang

64

A \flat maj7 B \flat 9 \flat 5

A \flat maj7 A \flat 6 A \flat A \flat 6 E+ D+ E+ D+

B \flat m7 E \flat 7 Cm7 F7 B \flat m7 E \flat 7

B \flat m B \flat m7 E \flat E \flat 7 Cm F7 B \flat m7 E \flat 7

Appendix I: Intervals and Chords

INTERVALS

Intervals are the building blocks of chords. A good understanding of them is essential for any rhythm guitarist. Let's begin with two definitions:

Half step—A half step is the shortest distance between two notes. For example, the distances between the notes E–F, C–C[♯], and G–A^b are all half steps. On the guitar, each fret is one half step above or below the next consecutive fret. In other words, there is no note that can go between notes that are a half step apart (not counting bent strings).

Whole step—Two consecutive half steps equal one whole step. For example, the distances between the notes E–F[♯], C–D, and G–A are all whole steps. On the guitar, every two consecutive frets equals one whole step. Two notes that are a whole step apart therefore have one note between them.

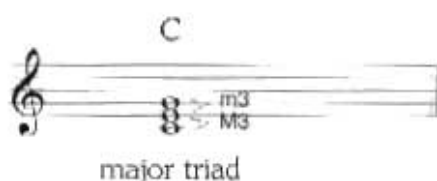
Simply stated, an *interval* is the distance in whole or half steps between two notes. In other words, we can combine half steps and whole steps to form any interval. However, intervals are named according to their scalar or diatonic distance rather than by their half- and whole- step distances. The chart below illustrates both.

Interval Name	Major Scale Position	Half-Step Distance	Whole-Step Distance	Example (from C)
<i>Second</i>	2	2	1	C to D
<i>Third</i>	3	4	2	C to E
<i>Fourth</i>	4	5	2 1/2	C to F
<i>Fifth</i>	5	7	3 1/2	C to G
<i>Sixth</i>	6	9	4 1/2	C to A
<i>Seventh</i>	7	11	5 1/2	C to B
<i>Ninth</i>	9	14	7	C to D

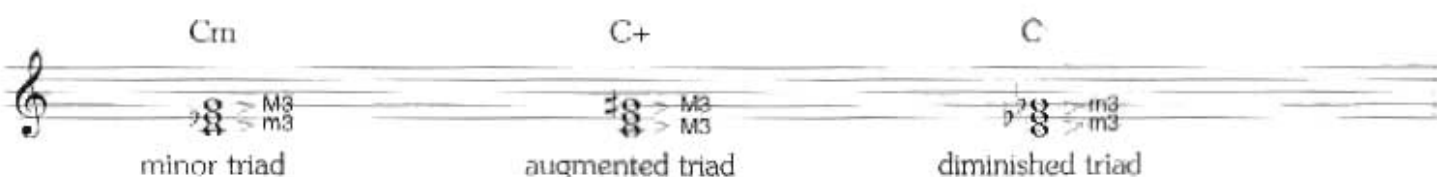
Of course, this list is by no means all-inclusive. Intervals exist between all notes; there are flatted fifths, sharp ninths, thirteenth, etc. The table above lists only the most common diatonic intervals.

CHORDS

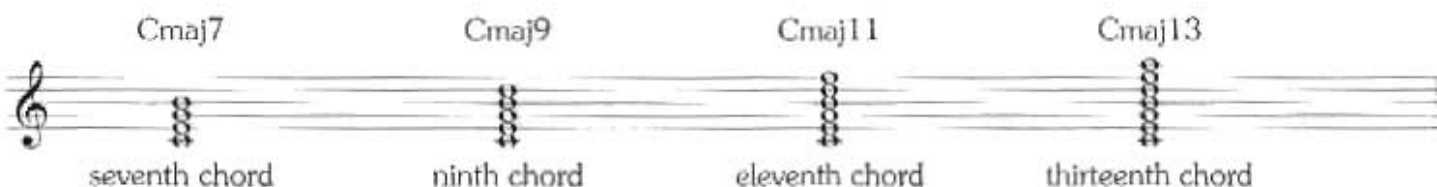
Chords are formed by stacking intervals on top of each other. Let's start with three-note chords, or *triads*. A major triad can be formed by stacking two intervals, a major third and a minor third, one on top of the other.



There are basically four types of triads: *major*, *minor*, *augmented*, and *diminished*. These can all be formed from various pairs of intervals.



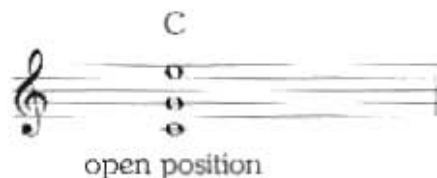
If we continue to stack intervals, thirds in particular, we get larger chords—*seventh chords*, *ninth chords*, *eleventh chords*, *thirteenth chords*, etc.



Chords can be built from any of the notes of the chord—e.g., root, third, fifth, etc. If we change the order or arrangement of the notes, different *inversions* of the chords are created.



Notice that the chords above are all built in ascending fashion. Their notes are all contained within an octave, and there are no additional possible chord tones that could fit between the notes in the chord. These voicings are therefore said to be in *closed position*. If we take, on the other hand, the note E in the root position C major chord and raise it an octave, we produce an *open position* voicing:



An open position voicing is one in which the notes are spread out in such a way that additional chord tones could be added between the notes of the voicing. Open position voicings generally sound larger and fuller than closed voicings because they cover a wider range.

CHORD TYPE	FORMULA (from notes in major scale)	FORMULA (from C major scale)	SYMBOL WITH "C" ROOT
Major triad	root, 3, 5	C, E, G	C
Major 6th	root, 3, 5, 6	C, E, G, A	C6
Major 7th	root, 3, 5, 7	C, E, G, B	Cmaj7
Major 9th	root, 3, 5, 7, 9	C, E, G, B, D	Cmaj9
Minor triad	root, ♭3rd, 5th	C, E♭, G	Cm
Minor 6th	root, ♭3, 5, 6	C, E♭, G, A	Cm6
Minor 7th	root, ♭3, 5, ♭7	C, E♭, G, B♭	Cm7
Minor 9th	root, ♭3, 5, ♭7, 9	C, E♭, G, B♭, D	Cm9
Dominant 7th	root, 3, 5, ♭7	C, E, G, B♭	C7
Dominant 9th	root, 3, 5, ♭7, 9	C, E, G, B♭, D	C9
Dominant 13♯11	root, 3, 5, ♭7, 9 ♯11, 13	C, E, G, B♭, D, F♯, A	C13♯11
Dominant 13th	root, 3, 5, ♭7, 9, 13	C, E, G, B♭, D, A	C13
Dominant 7th with suspended 4th	root, 4, 5, ♭7	C, F, G, B♭	C7sus4
Dominant 7th ♭5	root, 3, ♭5, ♭7	C, E, G♭, B♭	C7♭5
Dominant 7th ♯5	root, 3, ♯5, ♭7	C, E, G♯, B♭	C+7
Dominant 7th ♭9	root, 3, 5, ♭7, ♭9	C, E, G, B♭, D♭	C7♭9
Diminished triad	root, ♭3, ♭5	C, E♭, G♭	C°
Diminished 7th	root, ♭3, ♭5, ♭7	C, E♭, G♭, B♭♭	C°7

INTERVAL SHAPES ON THE FRETBOARD

It's not enough to simply study intervals by looking at them on paper. The complete guitarist must be able to identify and play intervals on the guitar almost without thinking about it. Interval knowledge is invaluable for things like transposing or for adding notes to chords. If ever you need to add the ninth to a chord, for example, knowing the intervals makes it very easy.

There is a geometry to intervals that can be seen on the fretboard, with careful study. I encourage you to practice different intervals and notice their shapes, so that for any note played on the fingerboard, you can play any interval above or below that note instantly.

Appendix II: A Brief History of Four-to-the-Bar Rhythm Guitar

EARLY JAZZ AND THE BANJO

In the early days of jazz, before what came to be known as the "Swing Era," particularly the early 1920s, most of the popular groups of the day typically included a tenor banjo rather than a guitar as part of the rhythm section. The *tenor banjo* was a four-stringed instrument tuned in fifths—C, G, D, A, low to high—that actually had ties to another popular instrument of the day: the mandolin.

The banjo was appealing because of its bright sound and formidable cutting power, which was important because the amplifier had not yet been invented. It also blended well with the tuba (or brass bass), whose usage correspondingly preceded the string bass in many of the early jazz bands. Groups such as King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, Bix Beiderbecke's group, and Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven all included the tenor banjo as the rhythm instrument of choice. The tenor banjo was quite popular from around 1918 up to around the time of the stock market crash of 1929.

THE BEGINNINGS OF RHYTHM GUITAR

As music evolved, it became more refined and sophisticated. The banjo sound began to seem a bit harsh, if not inappropriate, for some songs. This is where the guitar came in. In time, there was a growing preference for the sound of the guitar over the banjo. But before the banjo was to become obsolete, there was an interim period when many musicians brought both instruments, banjo and guitar, to their jobs. Basically, they played banjo on the songs that were upbeat, and guitar on the slower, mellower tunes.

The transition from banjo to guitar was facilitated for some musicians by the introduction of an interim instrument—the *tenor guitar*, which because of its tuning (C, G, D, A—the same as the tenor banjo) enabled tenor banjo players to double on guitar almost immediately. This "new" sound caught on gradually, and eventually it became the standard.

But this does not mean that all rhythm guitarists of the day played tenor guitar. On the contrary, many actually started on the six-string guitar, particularly those who were influenced by Eddie Lang and Lonnie Johnson, two premiere guitar soloists of the day. Even bandleader Benny Goodman saw the increased harmonic and tonal advantages of the six-string guitar over the banjo and tenor guitar upon hearing Lang. Some musicians like Carl Kress, who started on banjo, tuned their six-string guitars close to a banjo tuning, i.e., B^b, F, C, G, D, A (low to high). Notice that the top four strings are exactly like a tenor banjo.

EARLY RECORDING TECHNOLOGY

Another factor that influenced the triumph of the guitar over the banjo was the delicate nature of early recording equipment. The early recorders used a warm, spinning, wax cylinder and a cutting needle. As the music was played, the cylinder revolved, and a groove was etched into the cylinder by the needle, much like a record turntable. If the music got too loud, even for an instant, the needle would jump out of the groove, and they'd have to start the recording over. Banjo players had to stand at the optimum distance from the recording horn (no microphones yet) and be careful to keep their strumming at an even volume, for fear of making the needle jump. Simply stated, the guitar was much easier to record than the banjo.

MAKING THE GUITAR LOUDER

As wonderful as the guitar sounded, bands were beginning to get larger and larger. This is when the so-called "Big Band Era" began. In some cases, it was not surprising to see twenty or more musicians on stage. More musicians meant that the guitar sound was getting drowned out. This led to the next important step on the evolutionary ladder for guitarists: in the late 1920s, guitar makers began to rethink previous designs in an attempt to make the guitar louder than ever before. They experimented with different internal bracing patterns, body sizes, and materials.

One concept that was considered a big departure from previous designs was the resonator guitar. This guitar had metal resonators mounted in the body that vibrated and acted like little megaphones. Of course, electrical amplification was destined to become the most popular vehicle for making the guitar louder, but this was still a few years off. The resonators offered an attractive if not complete solution for some guitarists. Count Basie—arranger, trombonist, and guitar soloist Eddie Durham experimented with homemade resonators on his guitars. Durham later brought the electric guitar to the attention of Charlie Christian, who became known as an electric guitar pioneer. Charlie played some mean rhythm guitar, when he wasn't soloing!

Even though the primary job most guitarists were hired for was to supply rhythm, many were fine soloists as well. It had to be frustrating for many of them. Although they had wonderful ideas to play, the guitar simply could not compete (from a volume standpoint) with horns and drums, until the amplifier came around in the 1930s.

THE SPECIALISTS

There were many guitarists that were very happy playing rhythm guitar exclusively. These guitarists did not care to play solos and did not mind that the guitar was not as prominent as some of the other instruments in a band. They simply felt that their contribution to the music, although simple and unobtrusive, was nonetheless a valid and important one, and as such were quite content playing four-to-the-bar rhythm guitar throughout their entire careers. Soloing held little or no interest for them. These guitarists today would be known as specialists—musicians that choose to play one style exclusively.

It also has to be pointed out that many musicians did not like the sound of the electrically amplified guitar. To them, it was better not to hear the guitar rather than to amplify it. They opted instead to use large-bodied instruments with high action and heavy-gauged strings in order to get more volume. Their credo was: "The guitar should be felt rather than heard." But even Freddie Green, stellar guitarist with the Count Basie Orchestra for almost fifty years, experimented with amplifiers at one time. But it was the 1930s and amplification was still a new and developing technology. It seems that for Freddie, electrical amplification didn't work out because after trying it for a short time, he never went back to it.

RHYTHM GUITAR AND CHANGING TIMES

Throughout the 1930s, the music environment enabled many guitarists to earn a decent living playing rhythm guitar exclusively. But as big bands began to fade in popularity (in the 1940s), so did the jobs for rhythm guitarists. This forced some specialists to leave the music business altogether, while only a precious few were able to continue working and earning a living.

Even the instruments, strings, and accessories that rhythm guitarists used were not readily available as time passed on. It became a simple matter of the music suppliers yielding to the demand of the majority. Unfortunately, this was a majority that didn't include rhythm guitarists. The age of the electric guitar had begun, and this changed things forever.

Sadly, even today, as popular an instrument as the electric guitar is, it still doesn't have total acceptance in the world of mainstream jazz. But that's not stopping anyone from playing!

CONCLUSION

Of course, the entire history of rhythm guitar can't be contained in a few paragraphs of text. Please understand that I have given you just a small taste of the rhythm guitar's background. It is important to realize that the guitar has a rich heritage in jazz. When playing the rhythm guitar part to a song or chart with other musicians, you are in fact linking yourself to a long chain of other guitarists that came before you who played and identified with what you are doing. Enjoy it! Appreciate it!

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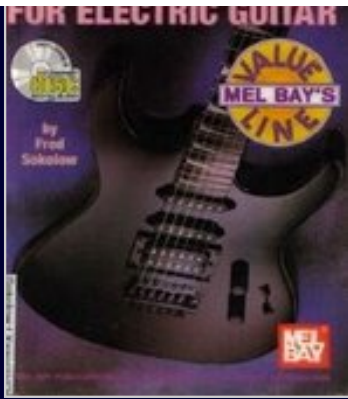
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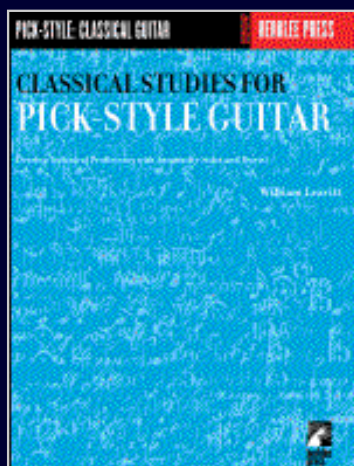
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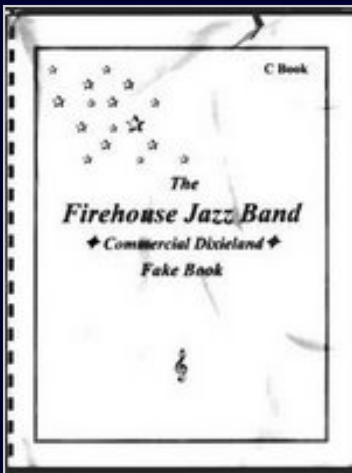
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