



## CHORD VOCABULARY

This chapter focuses on improving chord vocabulary using a system of chord construction based on the major scales. The spelling of major, minor, and seventh chords was introduced in Chapter 10. With this system, guitar players can find the voicing and fingering of each new chord as it is needed.

---

### Building and Improving Chord Vocabulary

#### Alterations and Extensions

Complex chords are best understood as alterations and extensions of simple chord structures. A chord is altered by changing one of its notes. For example, the augmented chord is formed by raising the 5th degree of the major triad a half step: The augmented chord is an alteration of the major chord. A chord is extended by adding a note. For example, the major sixth is formed by adding the sixth degree of the major scale to the major triad: The major sixth is an extension of the major chord.

Chord alterations and extensions add color to simple chords. They are used to

make progressions more interesting, to create voicings that blend into one another, and to harmonize melodies in which important melody notes do not fall on chord notes or even on scale degrees.

#### Families of Chord Types

The three common chord types—major, minor, and seventh—also form the basis of three families of chord sounds. With a few exceptions, all other chord types can be understood as extensions and alterations of the major, minor, and dominant seventh chords.

The following chord types are extensions of the C major triad: Major sixth (C6), major seventh (CMaj7), major six/nine (C6/9), major added ninth (Cadd9), major ninth (CMaj9).

These chord types are extensions of the C minor triad: minor sixth (Cm6), minor seventh (Cm7), minor ninth (Cm9).

Extensions and alterations of the C dominant seventh chord include: ninth (C9), eleventh (C11), thirteenth (C13), seventh flat five (C7b5), seventh sharp five (C7#5), seventh sharp nine (C7#9).

Complex chords can be simplified. For

example, CMaj9 can be simplified to C major, Cm11 can be simplified to C minor, and C13 can be simplified to C7.

Chord charts in this chapter present the spelling, voicing, shape, and fingering of common chord extensions and alterations. The charts are organized by chord type. Open string, barre, and other movable voicings are given. The harmonic function of the notes in the chords is shown below the grid diagrams. The root is identified by the letter R. Position movable chords so that the note on the root string is the same as the name of the chord.

minor triad, or by changing only one note of the chord.

These chord types are easy to voice using common open position and barre major and minor chords. Add or change the note of the chord shape according to the chord formula for each type. This system of chord construction requires knowledge of the names of notes on the fretboard, the notes of the major scales, and the function of each note in common chord shapes.

### Simple Extensions and Alterations of Triads

The maj6, maj7, m7, sus4, and sus2 chords are formed by adding one note to a major or

#### Major Sixth

The major sixth is used primarily as a variation of the major triad.

#### Major Seventh

The major seventh is a variation on the major triad. The major seventh is different from

### Chord Chart: Major Sixths

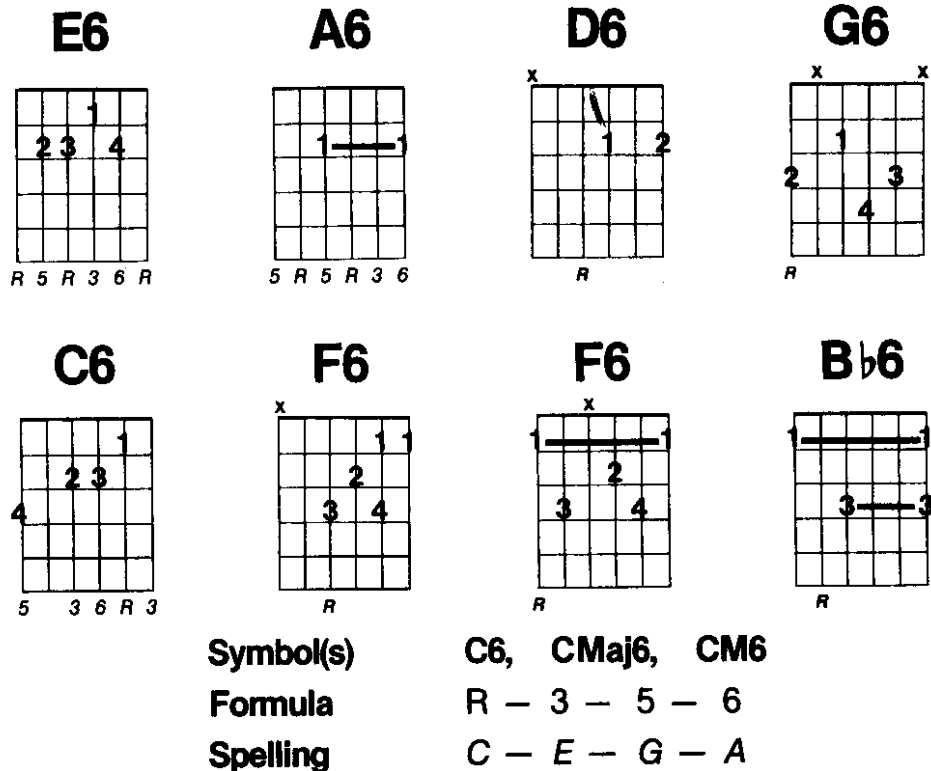


Figure 18-1

the dominant or regular seventh. The major seventh chord is formed by adding the seventh degree of the major scale to the major triad. The dominant seventh chord is formed by adding the flatted 7th degree to the major triad. Listen to "Misty" (Errol Garner), "Girl from Ipanema" (A.C. Jobim), and "Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover" (Paul Simon) for examples of the Maj7 sound.

A major chord is changed to Maj7 by

lowering a root note a half step to the seventh degree. A half step is one fret. For example, open position C major becomes CMaj7 by lifting the first finger off the second string. The Maj7 is sometimes used as a passing chord between major and dominant seventh chords, as in Figure 18-3. Listen to George Harrison's "Something" for an example of the major—Maj7—dominant seventh progression.

**Chord Chart: Major Sevenths**

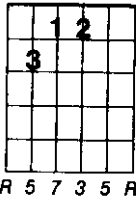
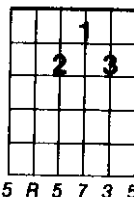
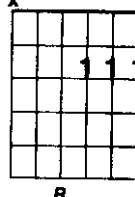
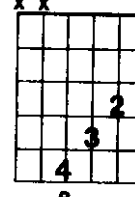
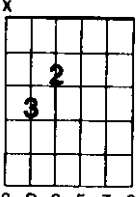
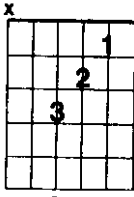

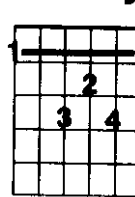
|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>EMaj7</b><br>   | <b>AMaj7</b><br>   | <b>DMaj7</b><br>   | <b>GMaj7</b><br>    |
| <b>CMaj7</b><br> | <b>FMaj7</b><br> | <b>FMaj7</b><br> | <b>B♭Maj7</b><br> |
| <b>Symbol(s)</b>  | C Maj7, C Ma7, CM7, C△7   |   |  |
| <b>Formula</b>  | R – 3 – 5 – 7   |   |  |
| <b>Spelling</b>   | C – E – G – B   |   |  |

Figure 18-2

**Progression with Major Sevenths**

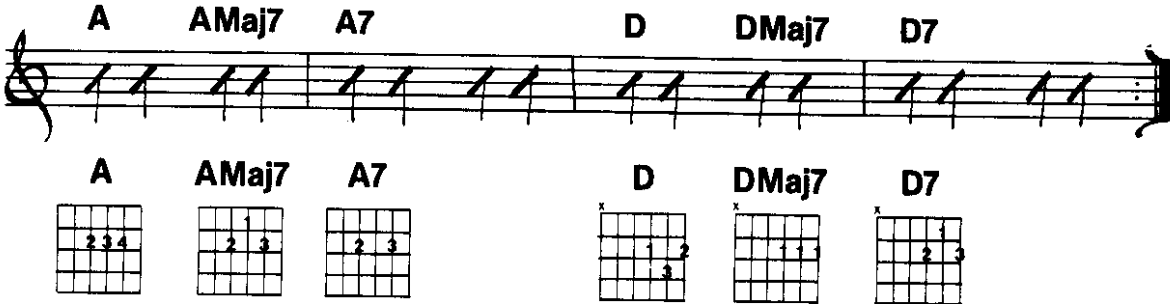


Figure 18-3

### Minor Seventh

The minor seventh chord is formed by adding a flatted seventh degree to the minor triad. The minor triad and minor seventh are similar in sound.

Each minor seventh chord has the same notes as a major sixth chord whose root is a minor 3rd higher. For example, Am7 has the same notes, A—C—E—G, as C6, which is spelled C—E—G—A. Am7 and C6 are different names for the same collection of notes. The two chords are chord synonyms and can sometimes substitute for each other in progressions.

The minor seventh can also substitute for a dominant seventh chord whose root is a perfect fourth higher. For example, four beats of G7 can be played as two beats of Dm7 and two beats of G7. The substitution

works because the notes of the minor seventh are either part of, or very close to, the notes of the dominant seventh.

In Figure 18–5, Am7 and D7 substitute for a measure of D7, and Dm7 and G7 substitute for a measure of G7. The chord grids at *c* are voicings on the bass strings. The grids at *d* are voicings played on the treble strings.

### Sus4

The *sus* of sus4 is short for *suspended*. In sus4 chords, the 4th degree of the scale replaces the 3rd in the construction of the triad. Since there is no 3rd degree in the sus4 chord it is neither major nor minor.

The sus4 is used as a variation on a major chord, as in the introduction to “Brown Sugar” shown in Figure 18–7.

### Chord Chart: Minor Sevenths

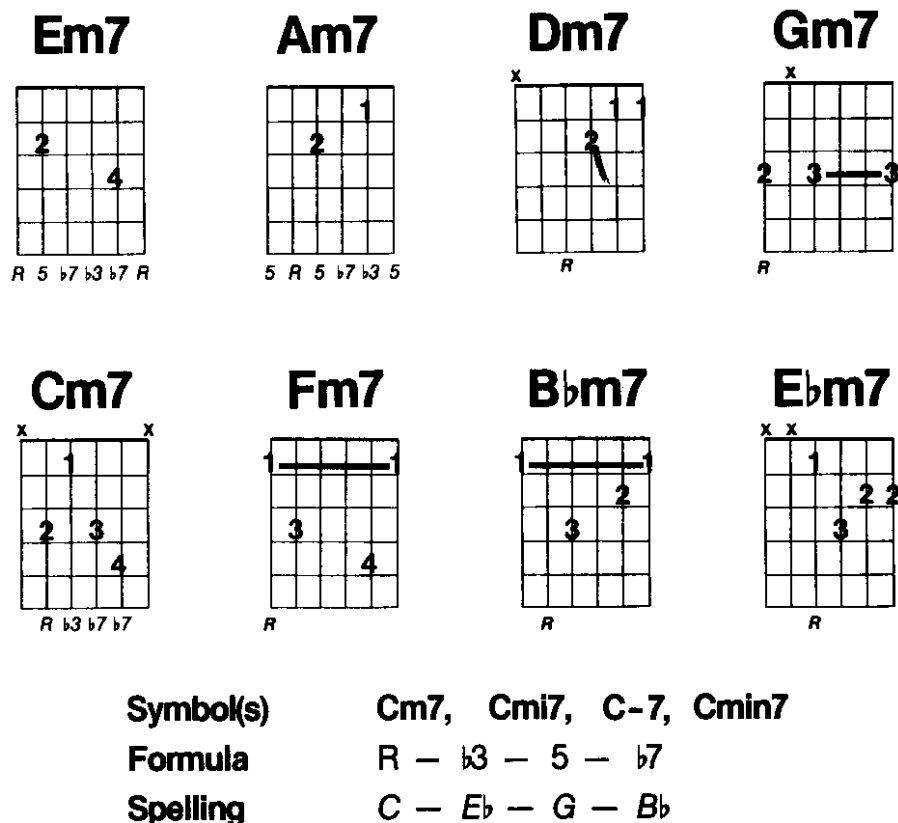


Figure 18-4

### Chord Substitutions with **IIIm7 V7**

(a) **D7** **G7**

(b) **Am7** **D7** **Dm7** **G7**

(c)

|            |           |            |           |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Am7</b> | <b>D7</b> | <b>Dm7</b> | <b>G7</b> |
|            |           |            |           |

(d)

|            |           |            |           |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| <b>Am7</b> | <b>D7</b> | <b>Dm7</b> | <b>G7</b> |
|            |           |            |           |

Figure 18-5

### Chord Chart: **Sus4**

|              |              |                          |                          |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Esus4</b> | <b>Asus4</b> | <b>Dsus4</b>             | <b>Gsus4</b>             |
|              |              |                          |                          |
| R 5 R 4 5 R  | 5 R 5 R 4 5  | R                        | R                        |
| <b>Fsus4</b> | <b>Fsus4</b> | <b>B<sup>b</sup>sus4</b> | <b>B<sup>b</sup>sus4</b> |
|              |              |                          |                          |
| R 5 R 4 5 R  | R 4 R 4 5 R  | R                        | R                        |

|                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Symbol(s)</b> | <b>Csus4, Csus, C4</b> |
| <b>Formula</b>   | <b>R - 4 - 5</b>       |
| <b>Spelling</b>  | <b>C - F - G</b>       |

Figure 18-6

**Brown Sugar** (Introduction: Sus4 Chords)

as recorded by The Rolling Stones

Words and Music by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

The musical score is presented in four systems, each on a single treble clef staff. The key signature is one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 4/4. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. Above the notes, chord symbols are provided for each measure. The first system contains two measures with chords G4, G, C, C4, and C. The second system also contains two measures with chords G4, G, C, C4, and C. The third system contains three measures with chords Eb, Eb4, Eb, C, C4, C, and Ab. The fourth system contains four measures with chords Ab, Ab4, Ab, Ab4, Bb4, Bb, C4, C, and Eb. The notation includes stems, beams, and flags to indicate the rhythmic values of the notes.

Figure 18-7

©1971 by Abkco Music, Inc. International copyright secured. All rights reserved.  
Used by permission.

## 162 CHORD VOCABULARY

***Brown Sugar*** (Tab)

The tablature consists of four staves. The first two staves show a progression of G4, G, C, C4, and C chords. The third staff shows Eb, Eb4, Eb, C, C4, C, and Ab chords. The fourth staff shows Ab, Ab4, Ab, Ab4, Bb4, Bb, C4, C, and Eb chords. Fingerings and picking directions are indicated by numbers and arrows.

Figure 18-8

Keep in mind the following while working on this guitar part:

1. The first chord is a D major shape played at the seventh fret with the fourth finger added to the first string. Play G4 and G with upstrokes.
2. The C chords in the first half are root sixth string barre chord shapes in eighth position.
3. The Eb and C chords in the third line are root fifth string barre chord shapes in sixth and third position.

4. All other chords are root sixth string shapes.

Other songs with sus4 chords include "Pinball Wizard" and "Needle and the Damage Done." "Walking in Your Footsteps," by the Police, is based on an alternation between a major chord and its sus4.

Leonard Cohen used suspended fourth chords in "Suzanne." The picking pattern for each chord is shown in Figure 18-9. The thumb and index fingers alternate on three bass strings while the middle finger plays sustained chord tones. Follow the chord progression on the recording.

**Suzanne** (Finger Picking Pattern)

as recorded by Leonard Cohen

Words and Music by Leonard Cohen

The image displays four systems of musical notation for the guitar accompaniment of the song 'Suzanne'. Each system is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes a melody line and a bass line. The first system is labeled with the chord 'E' and shows a melody starting on G4 and a bass line starting on E2. The second system is labeled with 'F#m' and includes fingerings 't' and 'i' for the melody and 'm' for the bass. The third system is labeled with 'G#m' and shows a melody starting on A4 and a bass line starting on G#2. The fourth system is labeled with 'A' and shows a melody starting on B4 and a bass line starting on A2. The notation uses various note values, rests, and accidentals to represent the original recording.

Figure 18-9

©1966 by Project Seven Music, a division of Continental Total Media Project, Inc.,  
120 Charles Street, New York, New York 10014, Used by permission.



### Suzanne (Tab)

The image displays four systems of guitar tablature for the song 'Suzanne'. Each system is labeled with a chord name: E, F#m, G#m, and A. The tablature is written on a six-line staff in 4/4 time. The first system, labeled 'E', shows a sequence of notes: 0, 2, 2, 2, 0, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2. The second system, labeled 'F#m', shows notes: 2, 4, 4, 4, 2, 4, 4, 4, 2, 4, 2, 4, 2. The third system, labeled 'G#m', shows notes: 4, 6, 6, 6, 4, 6, 6, 6, 2, 6, 4, 6, 6. The fourth system, labeled 'A', shows notes: 5, 7, 7, 7, 5, 7, 7, 7, 2, 7, 6, 7, 7. Each system includes a '2' above the staff and a '4' below the staff, indicating the fret and time signature respectively.

Figure 18-10

### Sus2 and Add9

In the sus2 chord, the 2nd degree of the scale replaces the 3rd degree of the triad. The sus2, like the sus4, is neither major nor minor. The add9 chord is a major triad with the 9th degree added. The add9 chord is sometimes called an add2, since the 9th is the same note as the 2nd.

The notes of sus2 chords spell at least one other chord. For example, the notes of Asus2, A—B—E, also spell Esus4 and are found in Bm11. “You’ve Got to Hide Your Love Away” and “Dust in the Wind” use sus4, sus2, and add9 chords.

### Other Chord Types

The diminished triad is spelled with the root, flat 3rd and flat 5th of the major scale. C diminished triad is written Cdim. The augmented triad is spelled with the root, 3rd, and sharp 5th. The sharp 5th degree is also called the augmented 5th. C augmented triad is written C aug or C+.

The minor sixth chord is formed by adding the 6th degree of the major scale to a minor triad. The use of the minor sixth chord is explored at the end of this chapter in the section on half-diminished seventh chords.

### Chord Chart: Sus2 and Add9

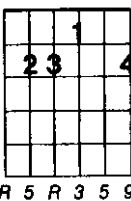
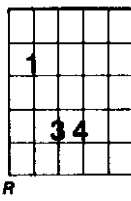
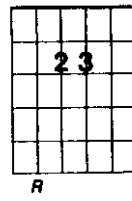
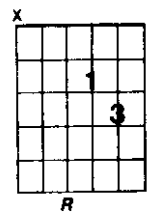
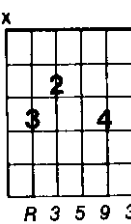
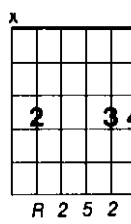
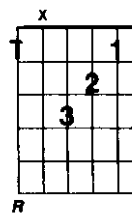
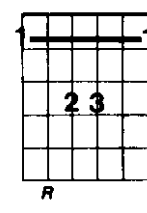
|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><b>Eadd9</b></p>   | <p><b>Esus2</b></p>   | <p><b>Asus2</b></p>   | <p><b>Dsus2</b></p>               |
| <p><b>Cadd9</b></p>  | <p><b>Csus2</b></p>  | <p><b>Fadd9</b></p>  | <p><b>B<sup>b</sup>sus2</b></p>  |
| <p><b>Symbol(s)</b></p>   | <p><b>Csus2, C2</b></p>   | <p><b>Cadd9, Cadd2</b></p>  |   |
| <p><b>Formula</b></p>   | <p>R — 2 — 5</p>  | <p>R — 3 — 5 — 9</p>  |   |
| <p><b>Spelling</b></p>  | <p>C — D — G</p>  | <p>C — E — G — D</p>  |   |

Figure 18-11

166 CHORD VOCABULARY

The minor major7, written Cm(M7), Cm(♯7), or Cm(♯7), is a minor triad with the 7th degree of the major scale: root, flat 3rd, 5th, 7th. The minor major7 is used as a passing chord between the minor triad and minor7, as in "Stairway to Heaven" (Led Zeppelin) and "Michelle" (the Beatles).

**Extensions and Alterations of Seventh Chords**

Chord types with numbers higher than 7 are seventh chords with added scale tones. For example, C9 is a C7 chord with the added 9th degree, D. Similarly, CMaj9 is a CMaj7 with an added D note, and Cm9 is a Cm7 with an added D.

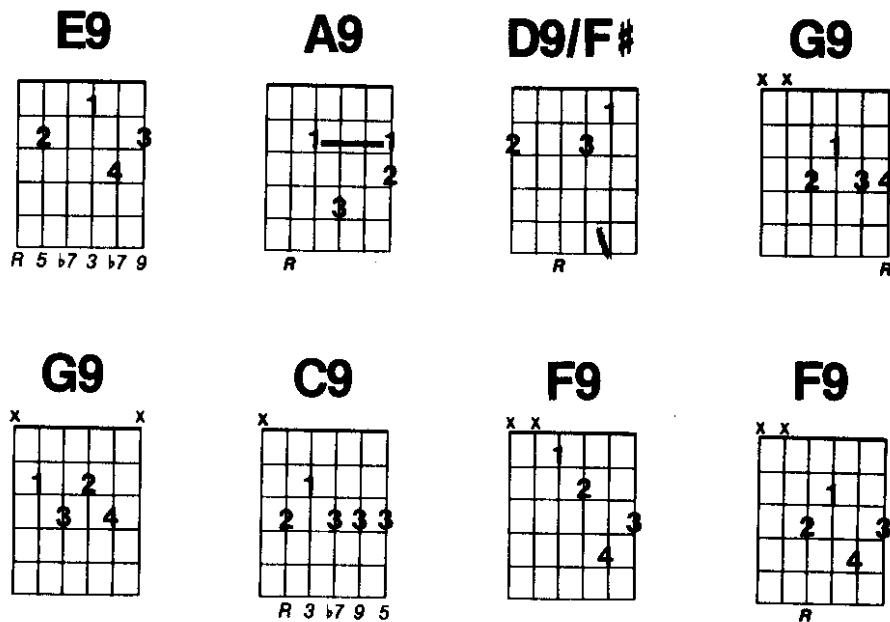
The ninth chords contain five different notes each. When voicing higher extensions, the guitarist must often leave out some notes. The 3rd and 7th degrees should not be dropped. The 3rd specifies the major or minor quality of a chord; the 7th, if flatted, specifies the dominant quality. The highest scale degree specified by the chord type should also be included.

**Dominant Ninths**

The dominant ninth is an extension of the dominant seventh. Not all the shapes in Figure 18–12 include the root of the chord.

Figure 18–13 shows C9 used in several different styles. Example a is a fingerpicking

**Chord Chart: Ninths**

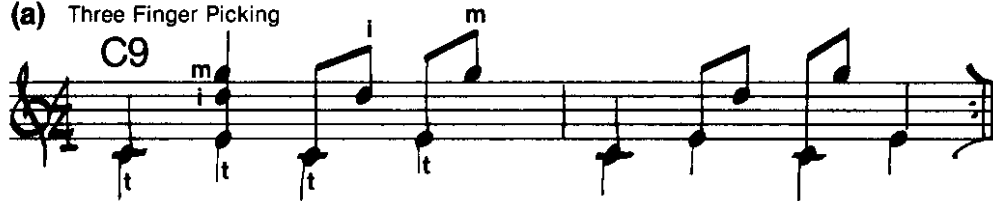


|                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Symbol(s)</b> | C9, C7(9)          |
| <b>Formula</b>   | R – 3 – 5 – ♭7 – 9 |
| <b>Spelling</b>  | C – E – G – B♭ – D |

Figure 18-12

## Vamps on C9 (Varied Styles)

### (a) Three Finger Picking



### (b) Bass/Chord Strumming



### (c) Rhythm and Blues



### (d) Samba



Figure 18-13

pattern. Example *b* is a flatpicking strumming pattern. Example *c* is a rhythm and blues riff. Example *d* is a typical samba or bossa nova pattern. The thumb plays the bass notes, and the index, middle, and ring fingers play the treble string chords. Ninth chords are also used in the sixteenth note mute and squeeze strumming pattern in Figure 11-10.

## Major and Minor Ninths

The Maj9 is an extension of the Maj7. To play a major ninth chord, add the ninth degree of the scale to a major seventh chord. The minor 9th is an extension of the minor 7th. To play a minor ninth chord, add the ninth degree of the scale to a minor seventh chord.

Vamps on C9 (Tab)

(a) C9



(b)



(c)



(d)

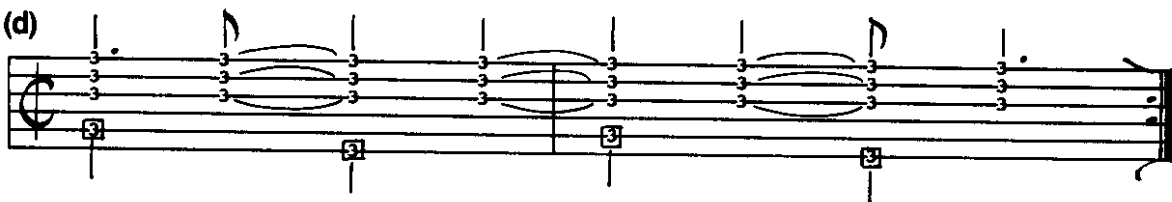
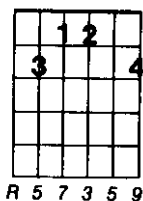


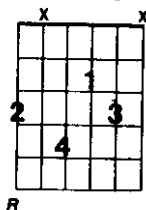
Figure 18-14

Chord Chart: Major Ninths

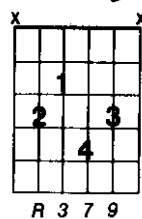
**Emaj9**



**Gmaj9**



**Cmaj9**



**Fmaj9**



**Symbol(s)**

**C Maj9, CM9, C△9**

**Formula**

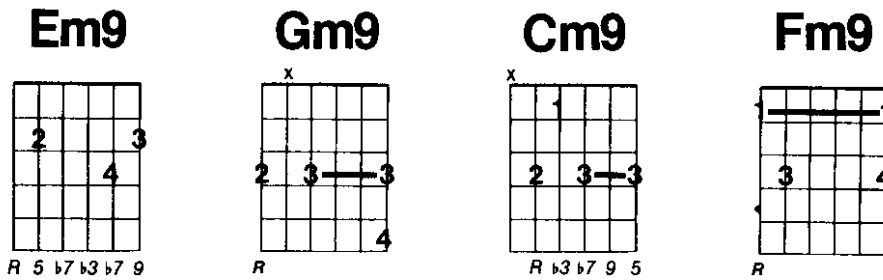
**R - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9**

**Spelling**

**C - E - G - B - D**

Figure 18-15

### Chord Chart: Minor Ninths



|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Symbol(s)</b> | <b>Cm9, Cmi9, C-9, Cmin9</b> |
| <b>Formula</b>   | <b>R - b3 - 5 - b7 - 9</b>   |
| <b>Spelling</b>  | <b>C - Eb - G - Bb - D</b>   |

Figure 18-16

### Dominant Elevenths and Thirteenth

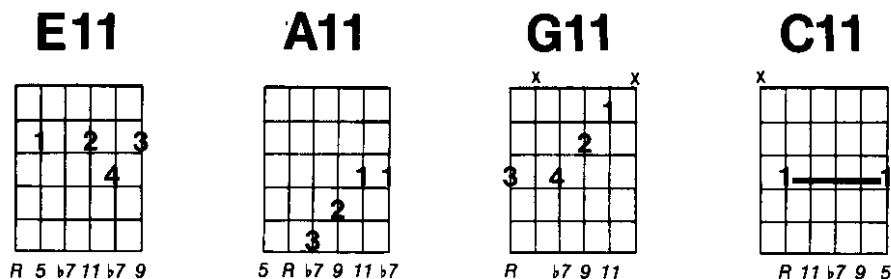
The eleventh chord is formed by adding the 9th and 11th degrees of the scale to the seventh chord. The thirteenth chord is formed by adding the 9th, 11th, and 13th degrees.

Figure 18-19 shows shapes for IIm7—V7 progressions with extensions. The chords are voiced so that they share notes. In *a*, Am11 and D7 have the same ex-

cept for the note on the fourth string. In *b*, the flat 3rd of Dm9 is the same note as the flat 7th of G13; the 9th of Dm9 is the same as the 13th of G13.

Extensions of IIm7—V7 chord progression can be heard in “Mr. Magic” by Grover Washington, Jr., and in Boz Scaggs’ “Low Down.” The sound of minor and dominant eleventh chords can also be heard in “Isn’t She Lovely” (Stevie Wonder) and “Moon-dance” (Van Morrison).

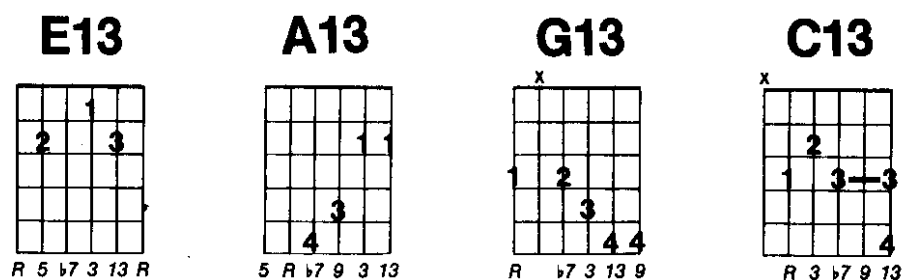
### Chord Chart: Elevenths



|                  |                                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Symbol(s)</b> | <b>C11</b>                     |
| <b>Formula</b>   | <b>R - 3 - 5 - b7 - 9 - 11</b> |
| <b>Spelling</b>  | <b>C - E - G - Bb - D - F</b>  |

Figure 18-17

### Chord Chart: Thirteenth



|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Symbol(s)</b> | <b>C13, C7(13), C7(6)</b>                       |
| <b>Formula</b>   | <b>R - 3 - 5 - <i>b</i>7 - 9 - 11 - 13</b>      |
| <b>Spelling</b>  | <b>C - E - G - <i>B</i><i>b</i> - D - F - A</b> |

Figure 18-18

### Extensions of IIm7 V7

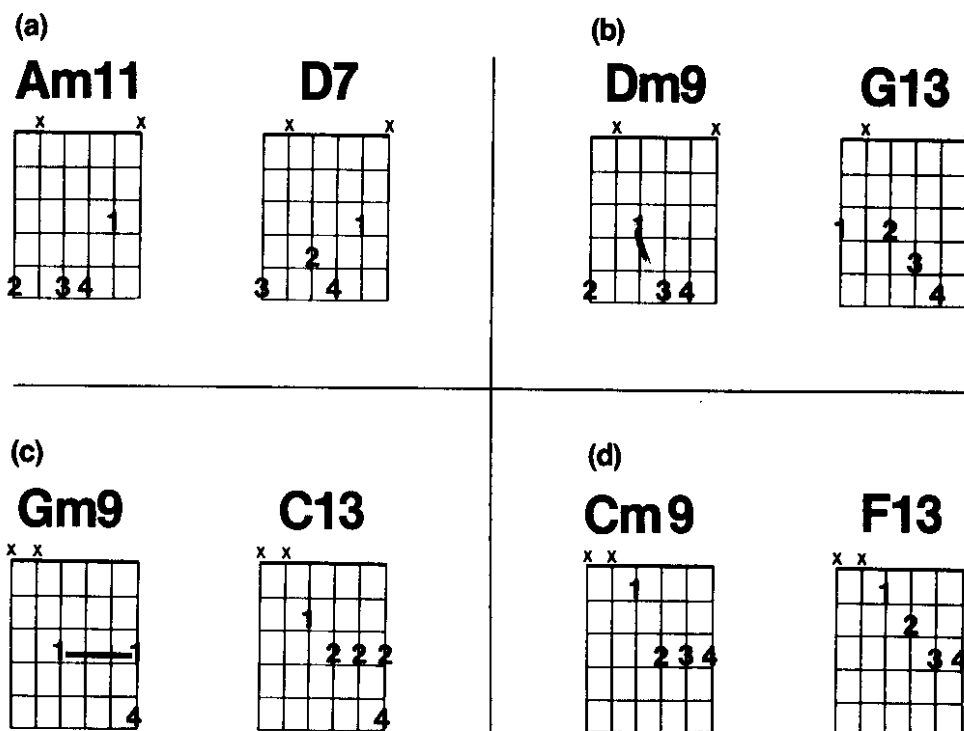


Figure 18-19

### Altered Seventh Chords

Altered chords are voiced by raising or lowering notes in a dominant seventh chord or its extension. For example,  $C7\flat 5\sharp 9$  is voiced by lowering the 5th degree and raising the 9th a half step each.

Altered chords are used extensively in jazz but also appear in the rock repertoire. The  $7\sharp 9$  chord appears in "Foxy Lady" and "Purple Haze" by Jimi Hendrix, and also in "Taxman" by the Beatles. The Police's "Murder by Numbers" uses many altered chord shapes.

### Half Diminished Seventh

The half diminished seventh is also called a minor seventh flat five ( $m7\flat 5$ ). The  $m7\flat 5$ , minor sixth, and dominant ninth chords are synonyms, as shown in Figure 18–21. The first grid shows the names of notes on a chord shape. The remaining grids show how these notes function in a  $G9$ ,  $Bm7\flat 5$ , or  $Dm6$  chord. Any ninth chord voiced without a root is also a shape for a  $m7\flat 5$  or a minor sixth chord. For example, the top four strings of the  $C9$  chord in Figure 18–12 contain the same notes as  $Gm6$  and  $Em7\flat 5$ .

### Chord Chart: Altered Sevenths

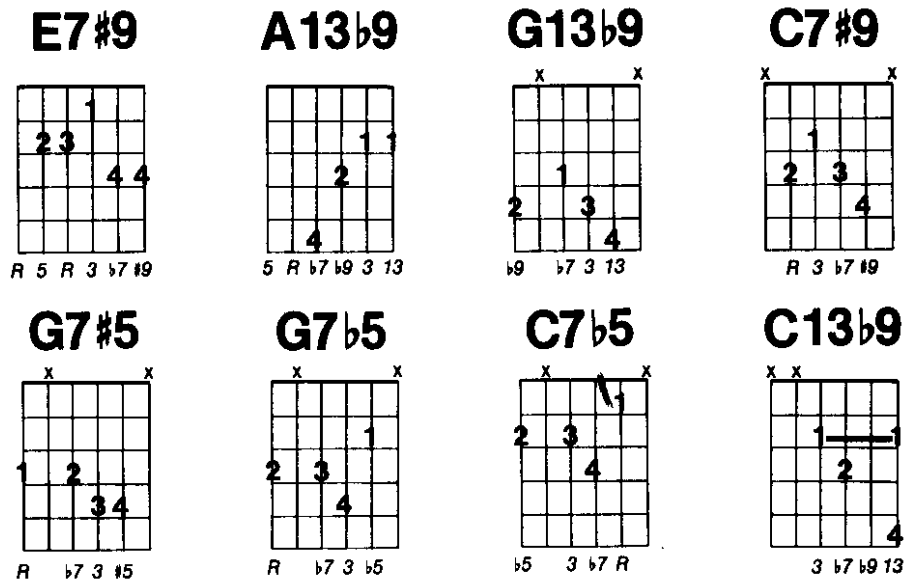


Figure 18-20

### Functional Analysis of Chords

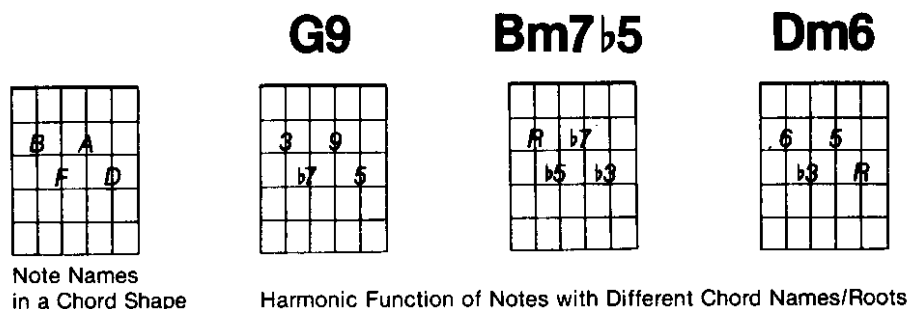


Figure 18-21



### The Diminished Seventh

The diminished seventh chord is spelled with the root, flat 3rd, flat 5th, and double flatted 7th degrees of the major scale. The double flatted seventh, or diminished seventh degree, is the same note as the 6th. Every note of the diminished seventh chord is a root:  $Cdim7 = E\flat dim7 = A dim7$ .

Diminished seventh chord shapes are formed by lowering the flat 7th degree of half diminished chord shapes a half step. Diminished seventh chords are also formed by lowering the 5th degree of a minor sixth chord, or lowering by a half step the 9th degree of a dominant ninth chord voiced without a root. The diminished seventh is a syn-

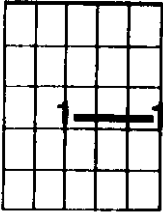
onym for the dominant 7 $\flat$ 9 a half step below:  $E\flat dim7 = D7\flat 9$ .

### Exercises and Projects

1. Know the spelling and harmonic functions (scale degree) of the notes in every chord you play.
2. Figure 18–22a shows a single chord shape with four different names. The chord at a is Gm7, B $\flat$ 6, C11, or E $\flat$ M9. Scale degrees under the grid show how the notes function in each chord name. Name the chord types for all the given roots in b, c, and d. Show how each note functions in the chords.

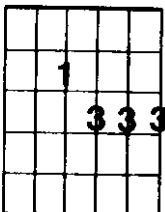
## Exercise: Functional (Harmonic) Analysis

(a)




|              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Gm7          | $\flat 7$ $\flat 3$ 5 R |
| B $\flat$ 6  | 5 R 3 6                 |
| C11          | 11 $\flat 7$ 9 5        |
| E $\flat$ M9 | 9 5 7 3                 |

(b)



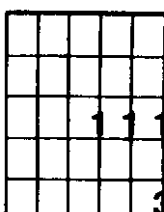
|            |  |
|------------|--|
| G          |  |
| F $\sharp$ |  |
| C          |  |
| E          |  |

(c)



|   |  |
|---|--|
| G |  |
| A |  |
| C |  |
| E |  |

(d)



|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| G         |  |
| B $\flat$ |  |
| C         |  |
| D         |  |