

FOUR NOTE CHORDS

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE WE BEGIN WITH TWO SERIES OF FOUR NOTE CHORD FORMS WITH THE ROOT NOTE ORIGINATING ON THE LOWER E AND A STRINGS OF THE GUITAR. THESE ARE WHAT I MIGHT CALL THE "BREAD AND BUTTER" FOUR NOTE CHORDS. (DON'T WORRY, THERE WILL BE MORE SOON ENOUGH!)

IT IS IMPERATIVE WITH THESE FORMS THAT YOU ABSOLUTELY KNOW WHERE THE ROOT, 3RD, 5TH, AND 7TH ARE IN EACH ONE AND IF IT'S BEEN ALTERED IN ANY WAY. FOR INSTANCE WITH CMINOR7 b5, YOU MUST BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE ROOT, THE b3RD, THE b5TH, AND THE b7TH IN THAT FORM. AGAIN, THIS IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!!!! (NO KIDDING!!) EACH SERIES IS LAID OUT FROM MAJ7 TO DIM7 SO THAT FROM EACH CHORD TO THE NEXT, ONE MORE NOTE IS LOWERED. IT WOULD BE IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO PRACTICE THEM IN THAT ORDER, CAREFULLY WATCHING AS YOU SUCCESSIVELY FLAT A NOTE IN EACH ONE AND BEING VERY CLEAR WHAT NOTE IS CHANGING AND WHY.

WHEN I WAS FIRST LEARNING ALL THIS STUFF AND REFERRING TO MY BOOKS OF 1001 CHORD FORMS, I WAS COMPLETELY OVERWHELMED BY THE MASSIVE NUMBER OF INSANE CHORDS I WAS SUPPOSED TO SOMEHOW MEMORIZE, NOT TO MENTION TO ACTUALLY USE SOMEHOW. IT WASN'T UNTIL MUCH LATER THAT I SLOWLY CAME TO REALIZE THAT WAS THE WRONG APPROACH. THE KEY IS TO LEARN AND UNDERSTAND A CORE OF BASIC FORMS, AND THEN LEARN HOW TO MUTATE THEM INTELLIGENTLY SO THEY CAN BE ALTERED ON PURPOSE - BY YOU - TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT. IMAGINE IF YOU LEARNED TO MAKE A PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH IN EXACTLY ONLY ONE WAY. ONE CERTAIN KIND OF BREAD AND EXACTLY ONE AMOUNT OF ONE BRAND OF PEANUT BUTTER, SPREAD WITH ONE CERTAIN KIND OF KNIFE IN ONE CERTAIN KIND OF SPREADING MOTION ETC... WE PROBABLY TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT WE CAN USE DIFFERENT KINDS OF BREAD, OR MAYBE ONLY ONE SLICE OF BREAD, AND DIFFERENT AMOUNTS OF PEANUT BUTTER AND SO ON. WE CAN SPONTANEOUSLY CUSTOMIZE THAT SANDWICH DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES. WE SPONTANEOUSLY IMPROVISE WITH THE SANDWICH.

WELL IT'S THE SAME FOR CHORDS. IF WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE COMPONENTS AND FUNCTION OF THE PARTS, THEN WE CAN'T LEARN TO ALTER THEM TO SUIT OUR NEEDS AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT. THE CHORDS ARE ALIVE!

FOUR NOTE CHORDS

C CMA7 C7 Cmin7 Cm7(b9) C°7

THE PARENT TRIAD

G GMA7 G7 Gmin7 Gm7(b9) G°7

THE PARENT TRIAD

SO WE'LL START WITH THESE AND SEE HOW TO ALTER A FEW OF THEM A LITTLE BIT.

IN THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE, ASSUMING WE ACTUALLY KNOW WHERE THE 5TH OF THE CHORD G7 IS, IT'S NOT TOO DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW TO EITHER FLAT IT, OR SHARP IT (EXAMPLES 1 THRU 3). IF WE HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT A G9 CHORD IS A G7 WITH AN ADDED 9TH (THE NOTE A), WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND ONE TO ADD TO THE TOP (EXAMPLE 4)

G7 G7(b9) G7(#9) G9

EXAMPLE 1 EXAMPLE 2 EXAMPLE 3 EXAMPLE 4

AS TO WHY WE WOULD WANT TO DO THIS, WE'LL GET TO LATER ON. FOR NOW, LEARN THE BASIC CHORDS AND BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENT DEGREES OF THE CHORDS AND THEIR ALTERATIONS.