

Acoustic Masterclass

We're delighted to have acoustic aficionado John Goldie aboard the new look Reverb, on hand with his ever popular masterclasses. Words: John Goldie



Hi there and welcome back to Acoustic Masterclass, home to those brave souls who have found the strength to face their fears (theory/harmony) and are now able to embrace them like old friends – well that's the plan anyway! Last time we had a look at a chord shape which could have several names depending on which bass note we used with it. The idea behind this is to show that common shapes can have more than one 'name' – I learned chords like most people from books containing chord shapes, usually above the lyrics of the song I would be trying to learn at the time. Although there is nothing wrong in this, it took me a long time to figure out that the same shapes cropped up regularly with different names.

It is important to look at chords in different ways to understand more about them which is why I'm going to look at another couple of examples similar to last time, again using simple shapes. The first shape (Diag 1) would be an F chord if we added F on the 4th string 3rd fret, but if we left the 4th string open (D note) then we would have D minor 7th – not only is this an easy way to play the chord, it sounds great and you don't have to dash up the neck for the safety of a trusty Barre chord. Again it is worth expanding on this by trying different bass notes, each time making sure you name the chord using the bass note as the root – don't worry if you don't have all the notes required for the complete chord it is commonplace with guitar to use 'key' notes especially with more complex chords.

Use your ears as a guide, after all if you don't like the sound of a particular chord you will be unlikely to use it unless of course you are being extremely well paid! Similarly in (Diag 2) we have F minor if we add the F in the bass but by utilising the open D string we have Dminor7thb5. Since these chords are all very alike it's easy to understand why it is sometimes difficult to ascertain precisely what's going on when trying to work tunes out by ear – the more you know about chords the easier it is! Another shape known to everyone is the mighty D chord (Diag 3) which has the open D string as the root but if we use B on the 5th string second fret the chord is magically transformed into Bminor7th – well it is Panto time after all!

This is also a mobile shape playable all over the neck provided the open strings are muted using your left hand fingers or perhaps your nose – just checking you were paying attention! Now you're fully focussed have a go with any shape, altering the bass note and then naming the chord – ok so it won't take over from charades but it is a great way of getting to grips with naming chords and understanding the relationships between them. After banging on in the last issue about having different names for the same shapes etc the more observant amongst you – in fact even those who weren't paying attention would have spotted the deliberate mistake in the last instalment of A.M – under the unnamed chord in bold print was D major – loud, proud and completely wrong! Since this was not of my own hand I decided to investigate and after a thorough grilling, our esteemed editor confessed that after a long and arduous lunch meeting (in the pub) there may have been some anomalies amongst the normally Everest-like high standards achieved in the Reverb office. Till next time have fun and keep your e-mails coming.

johngoldie.co.uk
myspace.com/johngoldieguitar

DIAGRAM 1

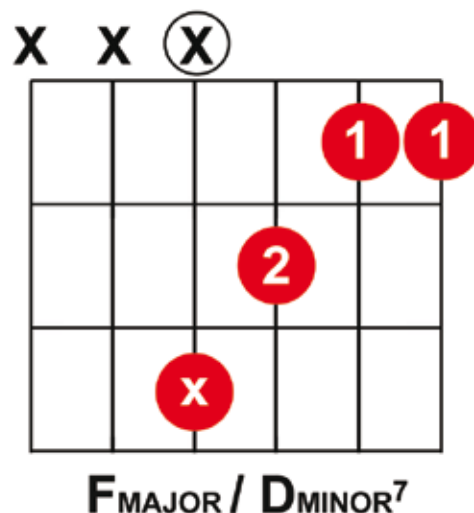


DIAGRAM 2

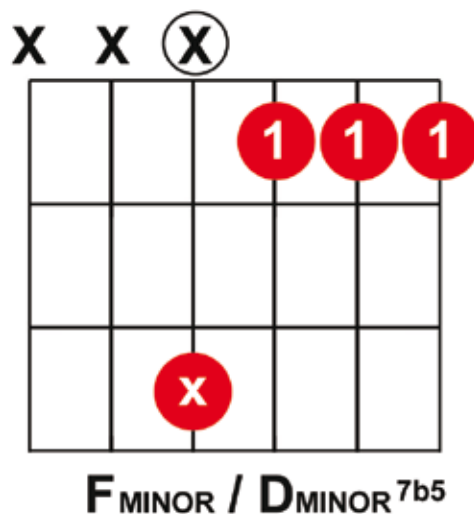


DIAGRAM 3

