

# ACOUSTIC MASTERCLASS

The acoustic master that is John Goldie takes us through some more of the dark secrets of chords and theory behind great guitar playing.

Words: John Goldie



Hi there and welcome back to Acoustic Masterclass, home to those dedicated to unravelling the deeply hidden mysteries behind chord construction – let's light the incense and clear our minds!

Last time in AM we looked at 3 inversions of Minor chords utilising moveable shapes with no open strings enabling us to play minor chords anywhere on the neck easily. To round off this area of mobile chord shapes I'm going to take a look at 3 inversions of Major chords so that we will have 3 inversions of both Major and Minor chords at our disposal. I've decided to use 3 well known shapes for this, E, A and C. Although a lot of players only use these chords in the first position with open strings I'm going to focus on making them mobile by moving them up one fret and changing the fingering around a bit.

Let's look at E firstly, by moving this shape up one fret and using a barre on the relevant strings we have F major (Diag1). I have shown two options for fingering, a partial barre and a full barre. As I have mentioned previously the mighty full barre is not for everyone! This is an industry standard chord used in almost every style of music. The second shape I want to look at is A major – again if we move this up one fret and employ different fingering we have Bb major (Diag2), again I have shown two fingerings for this although I would have to say that it is worth persevering with the barre version because this means we have the Bb (root note) on the bass. The last and probably least known as a moveable shape is C. I've included this because although it is quite a tricky shape to play it has many uses including mimicking picking patterns normally played in the first position. This is particularly helpful if the tune shifts key in the middle but you have to play the same pattern – and don't have time to get your capo out! So by moving our C shape up a fret and using a partial barre we now have a Db chord (Diag3).

DIAGRAM 1

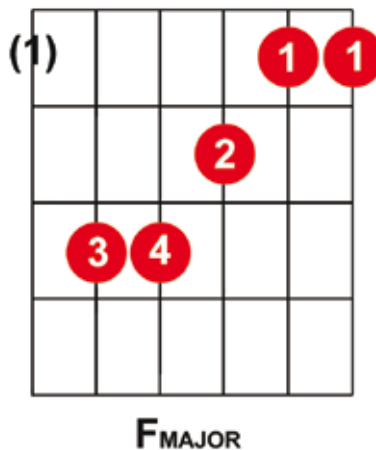


DIAGRAM 2

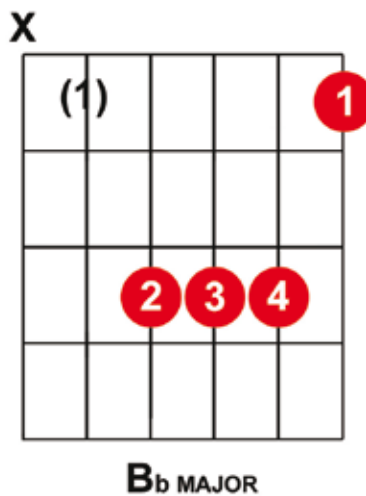
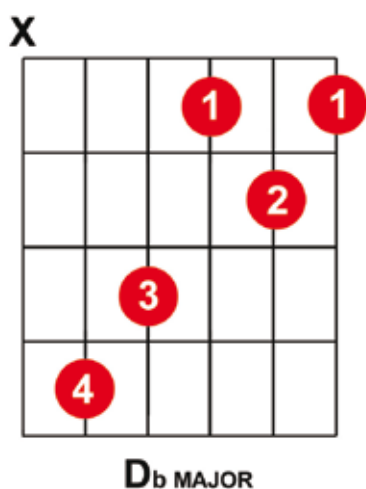


DIAGRAM 3



To recap, we should now be able to play 3 inversions of major and minor chords anywhere on the neck – there are no excuses! At this stage you might be a little unsure of the notes on the neck but it can be good fun working them out as you go – pick one major chord, find 3 inversions then try minor etc. I remember learning about this and being amazed at how many doors opened with what seemed like a little knowledge. If you have previously only ventured up the neck cautiously then familiarising yourself with these inversions and getting to understand the neck should propel you forward to the next level in your playing.

Remember that understanding the neck and chords properly can stump even seasoned players – I've met many good guitarists over the years who regret not learning more and being humbled by the fact that after 20 years of playing they have learnt so little about what could be described as basics. Now that we have some major and minor inversions down, next time I'll be having a look at some seventh and minor seventh inversions. So get practising in the meantime!

Till next time have fun – and don't light up the incense near a smoke alarm!

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WEDNESDAY 31ST MAY  
FROM 7PM

If you happen to live in or around Glasgow, then come along to Sound Control's Glasgow West store for an evening of Martin Guitars and AER Amplification - the perfect acoustic combo. There will be a demonstration of AER amps, courtesy of John Goldie, who will be putting them through their paces and fielding questions. Also on display will be an exciting range of rare and never before seen Martin models, with plenty of 'on the night only' deals if you are on the market for one of these great peices. If you are an acoustic player, then make sure you get along - this is an evening not to be missed! Contact the store on 0141 339 0566 for more information.



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John Goldie is a virtuoso acoustic fingerstyle guitarist who encompasses twenty years experience as both session player and jazz guitarist into his repertoire as a solo performer. He is also a renowned composer and educator.  
[www.johngoldie.co.uk](http://www.johngoldie.co.uk)