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JOHN GOLDIE BRINGS US ANOTHER SLICE OF ACOUSTIC WISDOM WITH SOME MORE ADVANCED CHORD CONSTRUCTION

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Hi there, and welcome back to the Acoustic Masterclass. By now you should be on the way to understanding chord construction and hopefully having fun along the way. As always if you missed any of the earlier issues don't panic, they're available from my website.

Now lets check out the story so far. We've looked at building chords, staying in the first position on the neck and using the key of C major. From our starting point of a C major chord we've progressed through C6, Cmajor 7th, C add 9 on to C7 and C9. As I've mentioned previously it's not only important to be able to work the chords out yourself but also to familiarise yourself with the sounds and even musical genres that utilise these certain types of chord i.e. 7th chords – Blues etc. There are a few more 'dominant' chords we can look at, so if we continue where we left off last time, with C9 (Diag 1) we can make some simple variations to give us two new chords. First up is C7 flat 9. This chord is particularly useful when playing in a Minor key. Although C7 would take us nicely back to F minor, the flat 9 chord just seems right (more on this later!).

Now if we look at Diag 1 we have the C9 chord which was formed by adding the 9th note of the C scale which is D (3rd fret, 2nd string) to a C7th chord. So to form a C7 flat 9 chord we simply flatten the 9th note, i.e. move the note back one fret towards the nut. There are two ways to finger this chord, see Diag 2 and 3 - both work well. The other obvious chord to look at now is C7

sharp 9. This is one of the most recognisable guitar chords around thanks to a certain Mr Hendrix amongst others. It's a great rhythm chord also used a lot in jazz and funk music. To get this chord all we do is sharpen the 9th note i.e. move up one fret toward the bridge - see Diag 4. All the 'dominant' chords we have learned so far, 7th,9th, flat and sharp 9ths, all tend to lead us back to the 'root' chord which is normally the same as the key the song is in. Put in simple terms, there are three main chords in every key. For example in the key of C we would have C, F and G7, the 7th being the chord which takes us back home to C. If you weren't aware of this, have a look at any music you have lying around or have a closer look at songs you're already playing and you should see a familiar pattern forming!

This is a particularly useful bit of information to have under your belt as it is commonplace in pretty much every style of music. The three main chords in any key can be worked out using the 1st, 4th and 5th degrees of the relevant major scale – remembering any sharps or flats in the key signature. Here are a few examples. Key of D would be D,G,A7, key of A would be A,D,E7 and the key of F would be F,Bb,C7 (note B is flat in the key of F major). You'll find a list of key signatures in any theory books or educational music websites.

Armed with this new information and hopefully ready to use it, now would be a good time to experiment with the new 7th and 9th chords we have learned so far, remembering that they will all lead us back to F(major or

minor). Try changing from the new 7ths and 9ths to both major and minor and see what differences there are - and remember what works best for your ears might be different from someone else's, otherwise we wouldn't have bands splitting up over 'music differences'! Also, these new shapes are movable up and down the neck as long as we don't play the two outside E strings, which are easy to mute, enabling us to play the chords in any key.

Have a go at working out the three main chords in every key, it's not as difficult as it sounds (honest!) and you will start to see familiar shapes and patterns repeating themselves as you work through different keys. Till next time have fun.

