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Words: John Goldie

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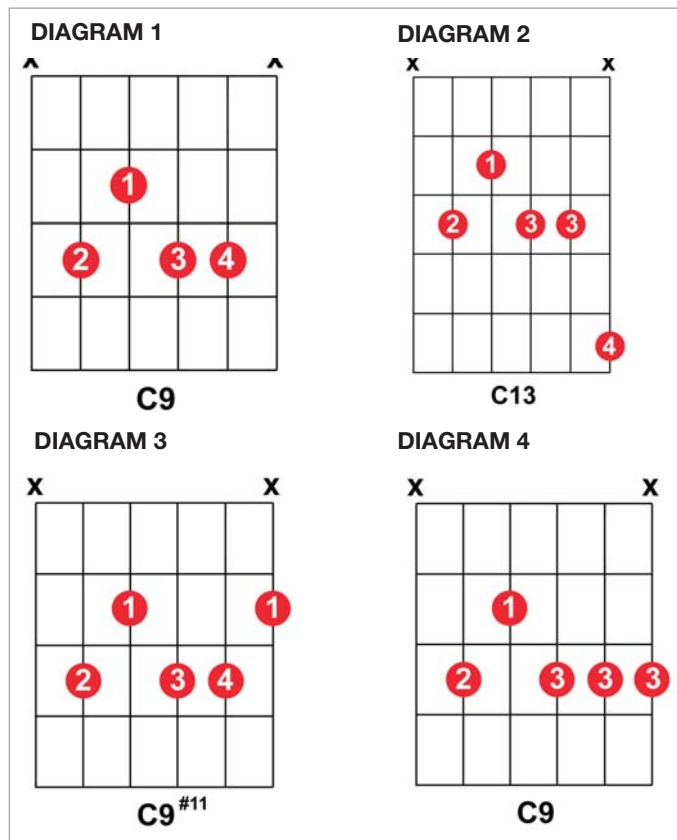
Hi there and welcome back to Acoustic Masterclass, where over the last few months I have been negotiating the minefield that is chord construction by using chord diagrams and hopefully plain speaking rather than tablature or music notation. The main reason for doing things this way is to avoid the "blocks" many people have when confronted with Tab or clusters of notes depicting chords. It is essential to be able to work out the notes required to make any given chord and also where they are on the fretboard. This is a gradual process, especially as we go further up the neck, but starting as we have done in the first position, this is enough to be going on with. By now it should also be obvious that many of these new shapes are mobile, enabling us to move up and down the neck and therefore into different keys. By the end of the last article we had progressed on to C7b9 and C7sharp9 chords, both extremely common in any number of musical genres.

To finish off this foray into the sleazy world of "Dominant" chords here's another couple of well used variations. First up is C13, this is constructed by adding the 13th note of the C scale to a C9 chord. One thing I would like to point out at this stage is that the guitar has only 6 strings normally - ok, I know you know that! But theoretically a 13th chord could have 7 notes i.e., root, 3rd, 5th, b7th, 9th, 11th and 13th - seven notes - doh! If we take a look at our 9th chord (Diag 1) we can see that the most important notes are there -

root, 3rd, b7th and 9th, the 5th is missing but this doesn't greatly affect the overall sound. Now we can add the 13th - again start from C and count up to 13 giving us an A note which can be played on the first string 5th fret, add this to the C9 and we have C13 (Diag 2). These chords are used extensively in jazz and funk but could be used as a cool alternative to 7ths or 9ths in Blues.

Again starting with C9 (Diag 1) we can easily form another classic chord, C9sharp11 - yes it's a long way from C6! Anyway back to work. Count up 11 starting as usual from C and we find the eleventh note is F so therefore sharp eleventh is F sharp, we can find this on the 1st string second fret and voila! C9sharp11 (Diag 3). This is a particularly common chord now, cropping up everywhere from pop ballad to metal. This chord also acts as a catalyst in creating moving lines within dominant chords. Try C9 (Diag 1) with the 1st string open, then C9sharp11, then C9 (Diag 4) and finally C13, giving us a nice little moving line, E, F sharp, G then A - very nice! This is a whole new area for many people but it will bear many fruits if you stick at it - honest!

Meanwhile here's some homework - try working out C9b13, C7b9B13 and C7sharp9b13. I'm sure by now you will be more than capable of working out these and other alternatives in the privacy of your room, toilet or dungeon! We've come a long way from the early fumbblings of C6 and Cmaj7 to the dizzy heights of



9sharp11 chords - well done! But before you start to feel too smug with yourself remember we have remained in the first position and only in the key of C so far, so it's up to you now to venture up the neck and into different keys - It's a dangerous mission I know, but remember that's what we've been training for! As I mentioned in the last instalment of AM, be aware of flats and sharps in the different keys other than C, again you will find a list of key signatures in any good music theory book or music education website.

It is important to start using these new chords as soon as possible - no point knowing great chords and not using them, as someone once told me - The more you know the easier things become - funny that!

Once more if you missed any of the earlier editions of AM, they are available from my website with the click of a mouse, also keep those e-mails coming with your feedback. Till next time have fun.