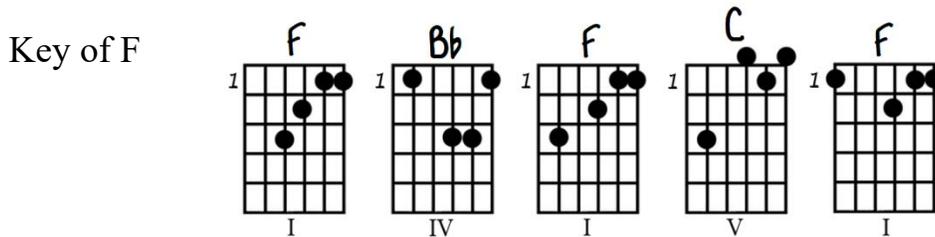


# Harmony: Basic Chord Types and Their Uses

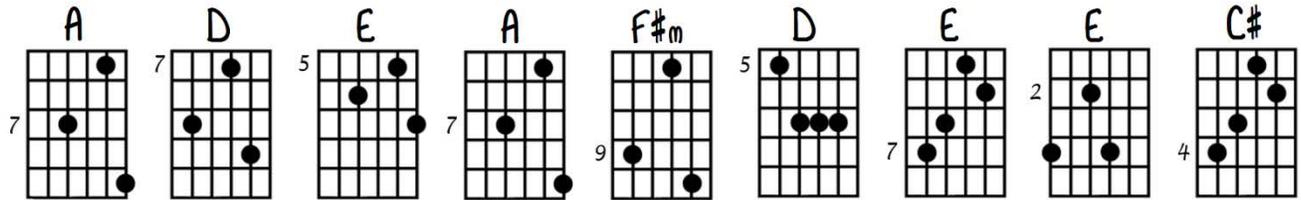
Ted Greene, 1977-10-31

## Major Types:

1) Major chord types are one of the pillars of harmony; the most basic type of major chord is the major *triad* itself, which has been in use for hundreds of years in passages like the following:



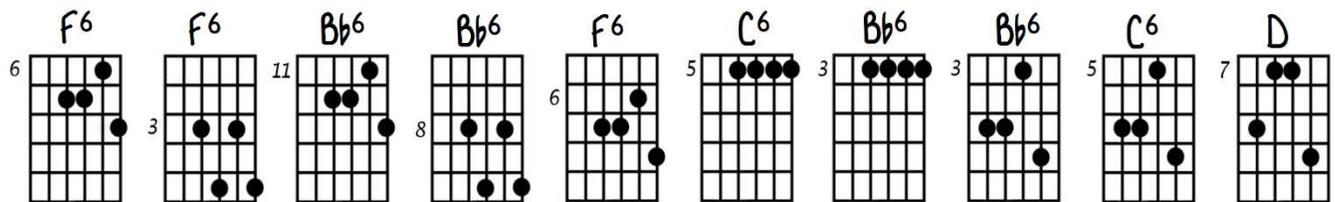
Key of A



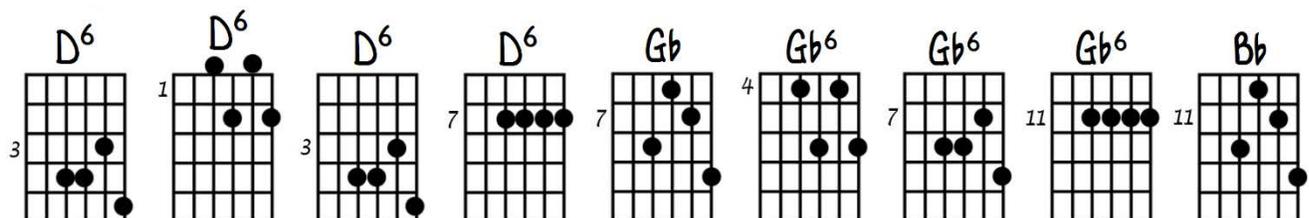
↑ This chord will be discussed soon

A good knowledge of progressions such as these can be obtained through a study of *Baroque* and earlier periods of music. As you may also know, major triads form the basis for much rock, folk, and pop music (ask for demonstration if in doubt on this).

2) Around 100 years or so ago, major 6th chords came into common usage as direct replacement of the major triad. Here is a “I-IV-V” type example in F:



Here is an example that shifts tonal centers (keys) from D to Gb to Bb:



3) The major added 9th (written: add9 or /9) is another beautiful chord that can replace a major triad. (Note that when you play a 6th or add9 chord in place of a major chord, you are not really “replacing” the chord in one sense, but rather *enriching* it by adding a 6th or a 9th. Also, you may have noticed some “illogic” in the names – if so bring it up and we will discuss it – I don’t like it either, but we’re stuck with it at least to a certain extent). Anyway...about those add9’s, try the following:

Variations on above:

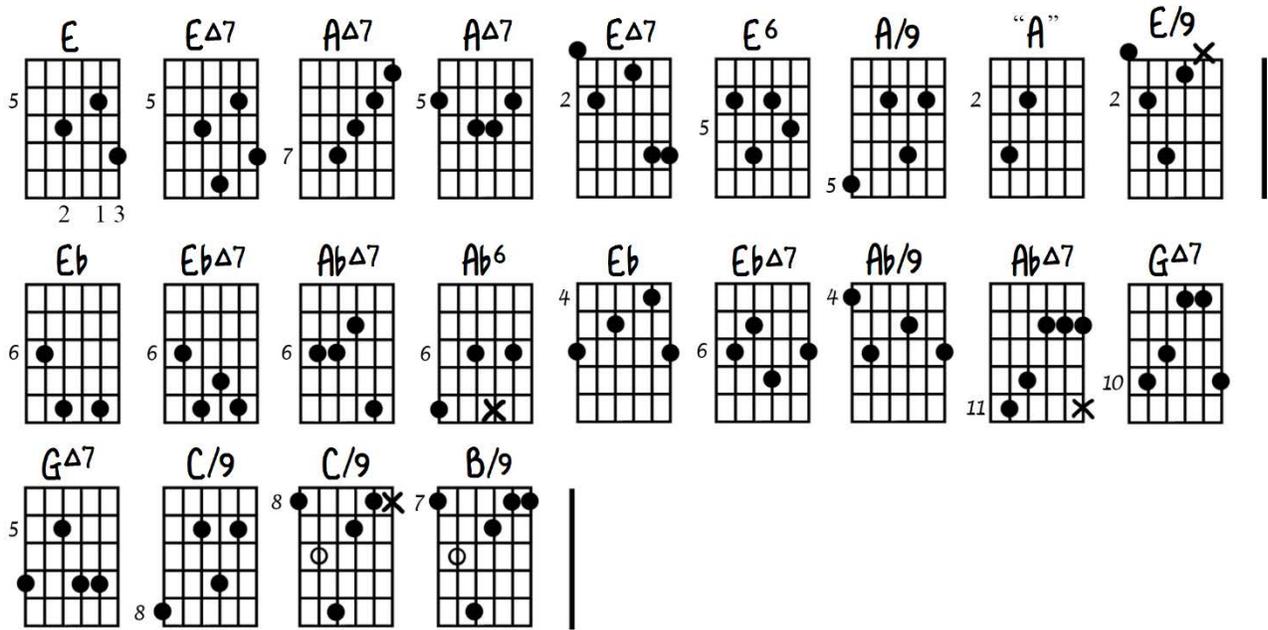
The diagram shows 28 guitar chord diagrams arranged in three rows. Each diagram is a 6-string grid with dots representing fretted notes. Some diagrams include a circled 'O' for an open string or a circled 'X' for a muted string. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

- Row 1:  $D_b^6$  (fingering 2),  $G_b^6$  (fingering 4),  $D_b^6$  (fingering 2),  $D_b^6$  (fingering 6),  $F^6$  (fingering 6, includes open string),  $B_b^6$  (fingering 8),  $F^6$  (fingering 6),  $F^6$  (fingering 10).
- Row 2:  $A$  (fingering 10),  $A^6$  (fingering 7),  $D/9$  (fingering 10),  $D/9$  (fingering 10),  $A/9$  (fingering 5, includes open string).
- Row 3:  $D$  (fingering 7),  $D^6$  (fingering 5),  $G/9$  (fingering 3),  $G^6$  (fingering 3),  $D$  (fingering 5),  $G/9$  (fingering 10),  $E/9$  (fingering 7),  $(A^{11}) G/9$  (fingering 5),  $D/9$  (fingering 5).

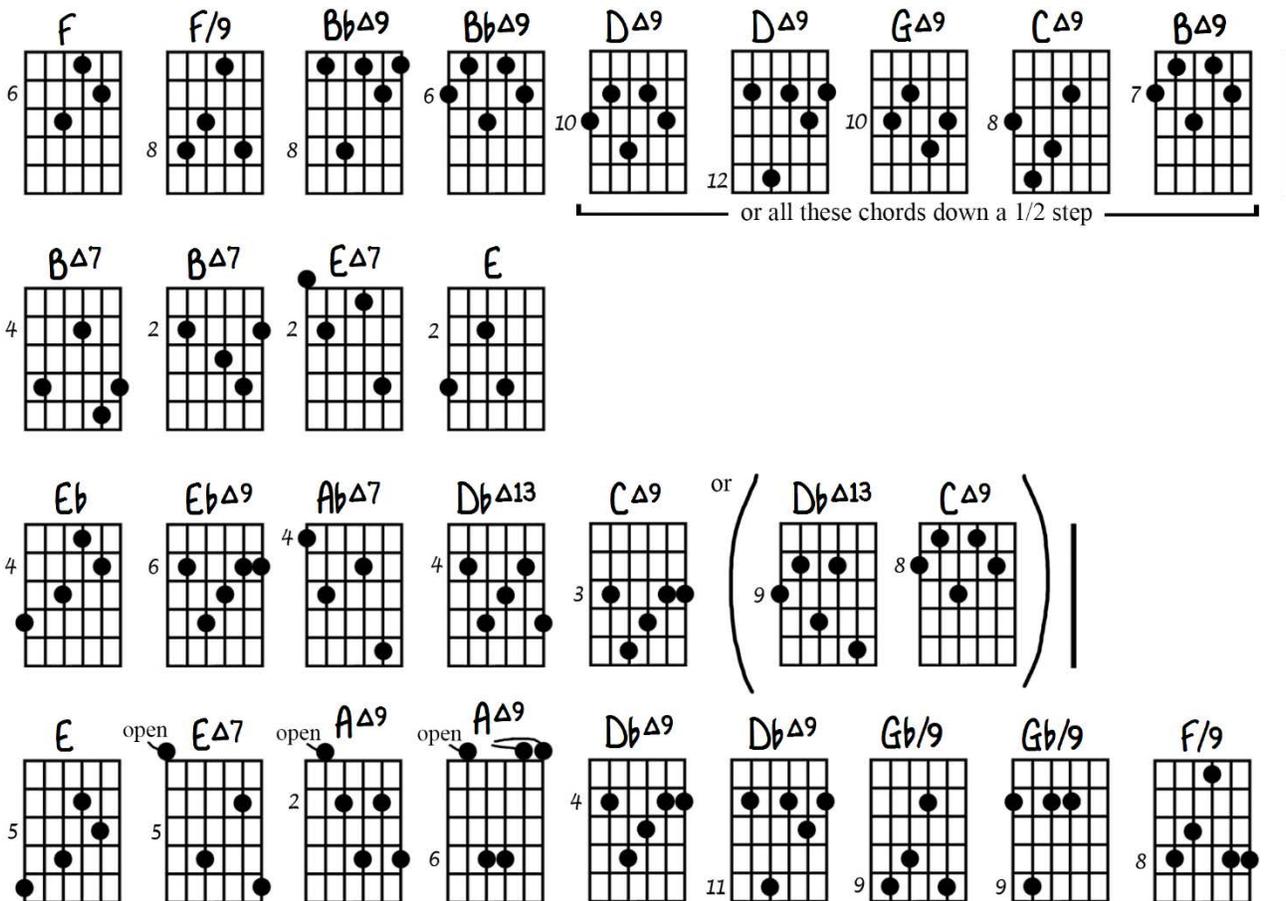
4) Major 7ths ( $\Delta 7$ ) are a common “replacement” for major triads:

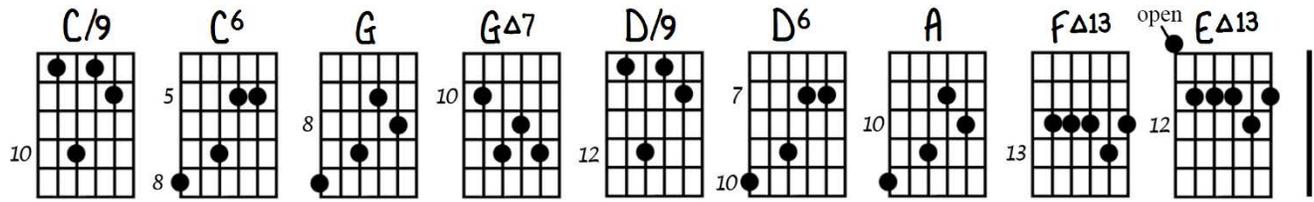
The diagram shows 18 guitar chord diagrams arranged in two rows. Each diagram is a 6-string grid with dots representing fretted notes. Some diagrams include a circled 'O' for an open string or a circled 'X' for a muted string. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

- Row 1:  $G_b$  (fingering 7),  $G_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 9, includes open string),  $C_b/9$  (fingering 9),  $C_b^6$  (fingering 9),  $G_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 9),  $G_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 7, includes muted string),  $C_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 7),  $C_b/9$  (fingering 9),  $G_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 9).
- Row 2:  $B_b/9$  (fingering 6),  $B_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 8),  $E_b/9$  (fingering 6),  $A_b^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 4),  $G^{\Delta 7}$  (fingering 3).

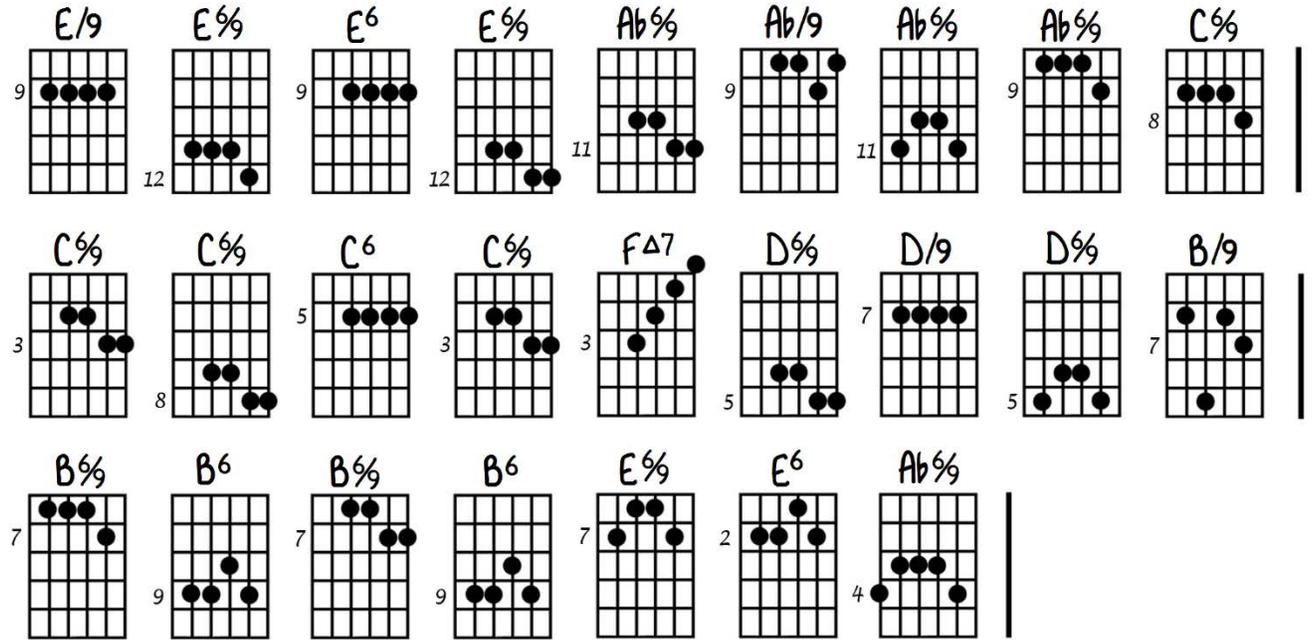


5) Major 9th ( $\Delta 9$ ) and major 13th ( $\Delta 13$ ) [and major 9/6th ( $\Delta 9/6$ )] chords are other great major family sounds:

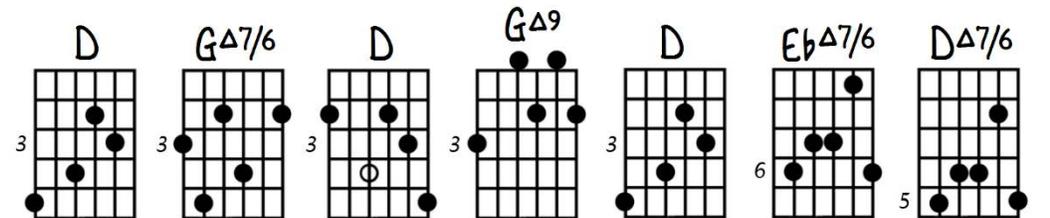




6) Major 6/9 chords (6/9) are another unique color that can be used instead of the major triad; notice the kind of oriental sound that they have:

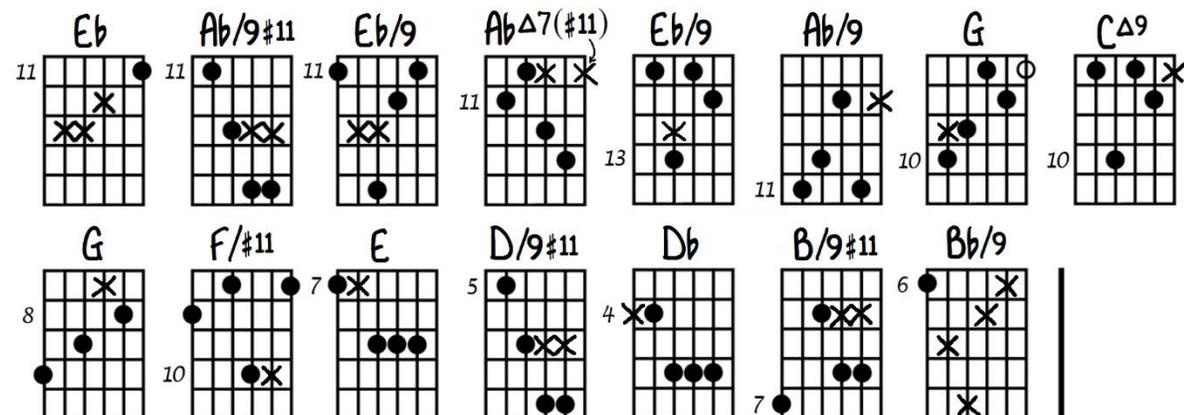


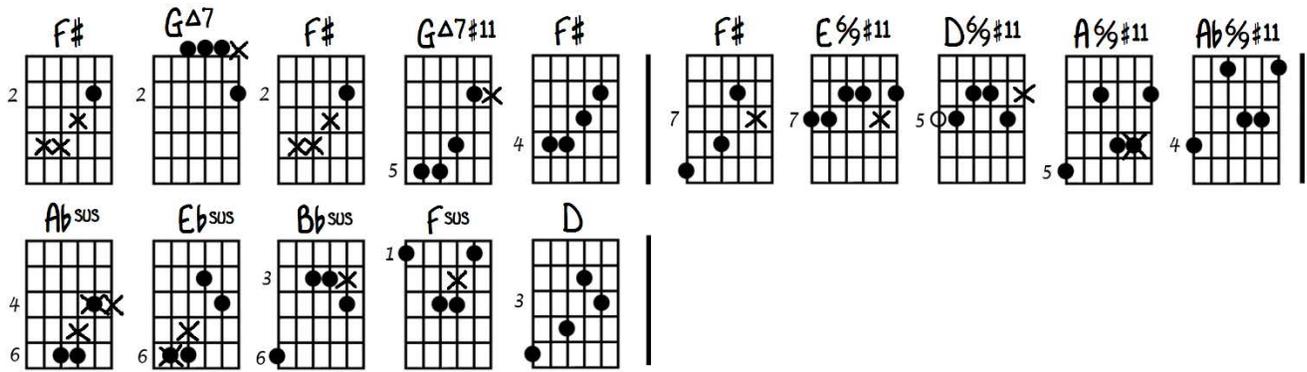
7) One other chord available in the major family is the  $\Delta$ 7/6 :



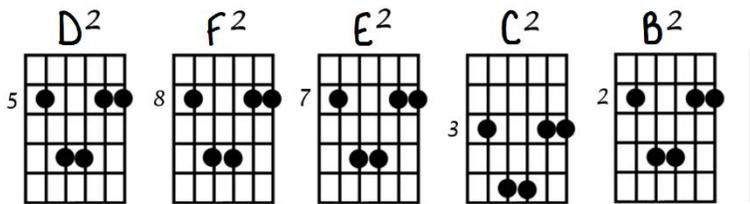
**Extra Major Types:**

1) Any of the preceding major type of chords may be enriched by the addition of a #11 tone:

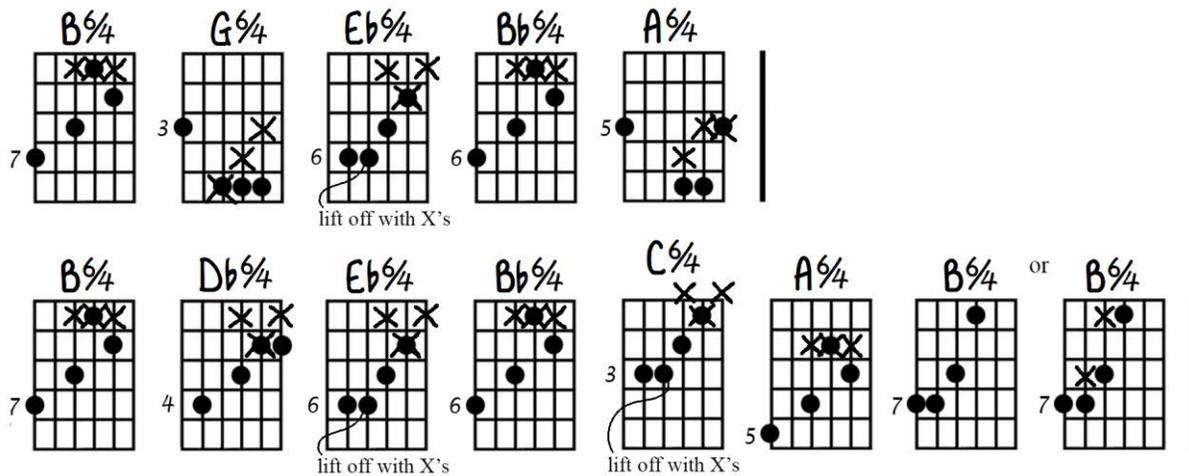




2) The 3rd in certain major chords may be replaced with the 2nd or 4th:



3) The 6th and 4th tones may replace (and resolve to) the 5th and 3rd. The resulting structure is what is known as a 6/4 chord (a *real* 6/4).



Credit to Spud Murphy for this concept.

**MAJOR TYPES** ①

Major chord types are one of the pillars of harmony; the most basic type of major chord is the major triad itself, which has been in use for hundreds of years in passages like the following:

Key of F

A good knowledge of progressions such as these can be obtained through a study of the BAROQUE and earlier periods of music.

As you may also know, major triads form the basis for much rock, folk and pop music (ask for demonstration if in doubt on this).

② Around 100 years or so ago, MAJOR 6th chords came into common usage as direct replacement of the major triad. Here is a "I IV V" type example in F:

Here is an example that shifts tonal centers (keys) from D to Gb to Bb:

③ The MAJOR ADDED 9th (written: add 9 or /9) is another beautiful chord that can replace a major triad. (Note that when you play a 6th or add 9 chord in place of a major chord, you are not really "replacing" the chord in one sense, but rather, enriching it by adding a 6th or a 9th. Also, you may have noticed some "illogic" in the names - if so bring it up & we'll discuss it - I don't like it either but we're stuck with it at least to a certain extent). Anyway..... about those add 9's, try the following

VARIATION ON ABOVE:

④ MAJOR 7ths ( $\Delta 7$ ) are a common "replacement" for major triads:

MAJOR TYPES: MAJOR 7th (A7) and MAJOR 13th (A13) chords are other great MAJOR family sounds: [MAJOR 9/6th (A9/6)]

F F13 BbA9 BbA9 DA9 DA9 GA9 CA9 BA9 | BA7 BA7 EA7 E

Eb EbA9 AbA7 DbA13 CA9 (or) DbA13 CA9

DbA9 Gb/9 Gb/9 F/9 | C/9 C6 G GA7 D/9 D6 A FA13 EA13

OR ALL THESE CHORDS DOWN A 1/2 STEP

E OPEN EA7 AA9 AA9 DbA9

OPEN STRINGS PENE

MAJOR 6/9 CHORDS (6/9) are another unique color that can be used instead of the major triad; notice the kind of oriental sound that they have:

E/9 Eb/9 Eb Eb/9 Ab/9 Ab/9 Ab/9 Ab/9 C6/9 C6/9 C6/9 C6 C6/9

F/9 D6/9 D/9 D6/9 B/9 B6/9 B6 B6/9 B6 Eb/9 Eb Ab/9

One other chord available in the major family is the A7/6:

D GA7/6 D GA9 D EbA7/6 DA7/6

EXTRA MAJOR TYPES: Any of the preceding major type of chords may be enriched by the addition of a #11th tone:

Eb Ab/9# Eb/9 AbA7(11) Eb/9 Ab/9 G CA9 G F/11 E D/9+11 Db

B/9+11 Bb/9 F# GA7 F# GA7+11 F# F# Eb/9+11 D6/9+11 Ab/9+11 Ab/9+11

The 3rd in certain major chords may be replaced with the 2nd or 4th:

Abus Eb3us Bbsus Fsus D D2 F2 E2 C2 B2

B6/4 G6/4 Eb6/4 Bb6/4 A6/4 Bb6/4 Eb6/4 Bb6/4 C6/4 A6/4 Bb/4 or B6/4

what is known as a 6/4 chord (a real 6/4)

LIFT OFF WITH X =

③ The 6th + 4th tones may replace (and resolve to) the 5th + 3rd. The resulting structure is

CREDIT TO SPUD MURPHY FOR THIS CONCEPT