

B $\flat$  Gm Cm F B $\flat$  Gm Cm F  
 B $\flat$  Ddim E $\flat$  E $\flat$ m B $\flat$  Gm Cm F B $\flat$  F B $\flat$   
 Am D Dm G  
 Gm C Cm F  
 B $\flat$  Gm Cm F B $\flat$  Gm Cm F  
 B $\flat$  Ddim E $\flat$  E $\flat$ m B $\flat$  F B $\flat$

Note: I will not be going into 7th-chord voice-leading here. Please refer to Chapters XIV, XV and XIX.

## F. Slash Chords

There is one common form of chord-symbol notation used to denote a chord with an alternate bass note. This type of chord-symbol uses a diagonal slash between components of the chord-symbol.

Eg. D/C

This means: "A Dmaj triad with C in the bass".

Of this form of slash chord, there are two main types. (See below.)

There is another, less common, form of chord-symbol notation used to denote one full chord (or more) stacked on top of another full chord. This type of chord-symbol uses a horizontal slash between components of the chord-symbol.

Example:  $\frac{D}{C}$

This means: "A Dmaj triad above a Cmaj triad."

### 1. Common Form

#### a.) *Inversion Indication*

These types of diagonal slash chord-symbols involve denoting a simple inversion. I.e. One of the chord-tones other than the root is to be played in the bass.

Examples:

C/E is just a Cmaj triad in 1st inversion, i.e. with E (the 3rd of the chord) in the bass, rather than C.

E G C, E C G, and E C E G (all bottom to top) are some of the possible voicings you might play when you encounter this chord-symbol.

C/G is just a Cmaj triad in 2nd inversion, i.e. with G (the 5th of the chord) in the bass, rather than C.

G C E, G E C, and G C E G are some of the possible voicings you might play when you encounter this chord-symbol.

[Note: When voicing these chords, the bass note *can be* doubled in the upper part of the voicing but it does *not need to be* doubled.

So, you might treat E/C as being any combination of the notes C and G with an E in the bass.

You might treat C/G as being any combination of the notes C and E with a G sounding in the bass.]

If you have not already done so, now might be a good time to work through the subsection in this chapter about triad inversions.

C7/E is just a C7 chord in 1st inversion, i.e. with E in the bass.

Any way that you know how to play a C7 chord that allows you to play a low E underneath it is fair game. But remember ... You don't have to double the bass note. You could treat this chord-symbol as meaning "any combination of C G and B $\flat$  sounded above an E bass note".

C7/G is just a 2nd inversion C7 chord. You could treat it as meaning "any combination of C E and B $\flat$  sounding above a G bass note.

C7/B $\flat$  is just a C7 chord in 3rd inversion. You could treat it as meaning "any C triad with B $\flat$  in the bass".

As a matter of fact, that happens to be another way to notate the same sound, namely, C/B $\flat$ .

And this brings us to the 2nd type of slash chord with a diagonal slash; the type where the alternate bass note is not a member of the chord specified above the slash.

Note: Sometimes with larger chords over alternate bass notes, eg. Cm13/G, you will have to decide which notes you can get away with omitting. There are too many things to consider for me to go into this in depth right now. But for chords like this you should first learn to play them on a piano with no omissions. Then experiment. See what the effect is when you leave out this or that note. Once you've got a feeling for what absolutely needs to be there to make the chord sound right, you can start looking for ways to play those sounds on the guitar.

### *b.) Quasi Poly-Chordal Slash Chords*

As stated above, these are slash chords where the indicated bass note is a non-chord-tone on the chord specified above the slash.

Eg. C/D

This is a Cmaj triad with a D in the bass. D is not one of the chord-tones of a Cmaj triad, so this is not a simple case of inversion.

Any way that you know how to play a Cmaj triad that allows you to also play a D below it is fair game.

As you play the 3-note Cmaj triad inversions on the upper 3 strings, see which ones allow you play a low D somewhere below the triad. Hint: You've got an open D string available.

As you play through the Cmaj triad inversions on strings 4-3-2 see which ones allow you to play a low D on the 5th or 6th strings.

As you play through the Cmaj triads on strings 5-4-3 notice when it's possible to play a low D on your 6th string. Some of these might sound a bit muddy and this points up an important consideration with slash chords in general.

The notes in the chord specified in the upper part of the slash chord-symbol should not be played too low or the overall effect can get muddy.

For 7th-chords over an alternate bass note, we often use one of the "drop 2 voicings" (as detailed in Chapter

XV) of the 7th-chord on the upper 4 strings (or the inner 4 strings), with the bass note on one of the remaining strings.

With large chords over alternate bass notes, eg.  $C13\flat 9/F\sharp$ , you will need to decide which omissions you can get away with. Again, you'll need to spend some time experimenting at the piano. Often, even with triads or 7th-chords over an alternate bass note, you might have to omit something anyway, in order to be able to approximate the intended sound on the guitar.

Suggestions for self-study:

- Spend some time playing all the various triads on the 1st three strings while you experiment with every possible bass note on the lower strings. As you do this, ask yourself what you might name the new chord if the bass note was actually the root. Now try the triads on strings 4 3 2 and 5 4 3.
- Any Drop-style voicing (see Chapter XV) of a 7th-chord that has a note other than the root in the bass is an inversion of that 7th-chord. Eg. With B in the lead, the Drop 2 voicing of Cmaj7 could be used as a voicing for Cma7/G. Etc.
- Spend some time playing Drop 2 voicings (see Chapter XV) of all the various 7th-chords on the upper 4 strings while you try out every possible bass note on the lower strings. As you do this, ask yourself what you might name the new chord if the bass note was actually the root. Now try it with the Drop 2 voicings on the inner 4 strings.
- Figure out some ways of your own to experiment with these types of slash chords.
- Look through your fake-books for slash chords and try to figure out some viable grips.

## 2. Uncommon Form

As stated earlier, a chord-symbol involving a horizontal slash is sometimes used to indicate a true poly-chord, where two (or more) full chords are stacked one on top of the other. These chord-symbols are not in common usage though, so you may never actually see one on a gig.

These types of sounds are extremely tricky to assimilate on the guitar also. Again, your best bet is to play these sounds on piano and try to figure out which notes are safe to omit. Then start looking for ways to play the essential, stripped down, sounds on guitar.

## G. Changes To Some Standard Tunes

On the following pages are the chord changes to 5 standard tunes. I have chosen these particular tunes because within their forms are many of the most common progressions that occur within a great many other tunes. Plus, they're also real good tunes.

Learn them well.

1. Work out and memorize many different fingerings for each of the 7th-chord chord-types in these progressions.
2. Work out several logical and musical sounding ways to get from one chord to the next.
3. Play triadic versions of the 7th-chords (Eg.  $Cm7\flat 5$  converts to Cdim), as indicated, on the various possible 3-string groups and figure out how to voice-lead one triad into the next. Etc.
4. See if you can find a lead sheet in a fake book for these tunes, and try to learn the melodies as well as the chords. I am not printing the melodies here for copyright reasons.
5. If the tune has lyrics learn them too!
6. Memorize the progressions.
7. Transpose these progressions into all twelve keys and play them from memory.
8. Look for recordings of these tunes by various people and become familiar with them. Try to play along.