

Eleven BBS Chords and Their Voicings

MAJOR TONALITIES - SIX CHORDS

MAJOR TRIAD 1-3-5

3-Note Chord (M3 + m3)

Strong Chord

Double root preferably

Extremely seldom double 5th

Never double third

Bass on Root or 5th

BARBERSHOP (or Dominant) 7th

Major Triad + minor 3rd = 1-3-5-7 \flat

4-Note Chord

Very strong chord

Hallmark chord of BBS

Bass best on Root & 5th

MAJOR SIXTH (6th) 1-3-5-6

4 - Note Chord

Major Triad + Major 2nd

Weak Chord (modern flavor)

Check bass note to identify

Bass on Root or 5th

MAJOR SEVENTH (M7th) 1-3-5-7

4 - Note Chord

Major Triad + Major 3rd

Dissonant, Weak - use in passing

Used when melody is on the 7th

Bass on Root

MAJOR NINTH (M9th) 1-3-5-7-9

5 - Note Chord (Omit the 7th)

Major Triad + Perfect 5th

Extremely weak - use in passing

Used when melody is on the 9th

Bass on Root

DOMINANT NINTH (9th)

5 note Chord -- 1-3-5-7 \flat -9

Major Triad (with one note omitted)

+ minor 3rd + Major 3rd

Omit Root or 5th

Root omitted = Bass on 5th-strongest

5th omitted = Bass on Root

Root omitted = same notes as m6

MINOR TONALITIES - THREE CHORDS

MINOR TRIAD 1-3^b-5

3 - Note Chord
Weak chord
3 different notes;
Any note can be doubled
Bass OK on Root, 3rd, or 5th

MINOR SIXTH (m6th) 1-3^b-5-6

4 - Note Chord
Minor triad + Major 2nd
A weak chord
Bass on Root, 3rd, 5th, or 6th

MINOR SEVENTH (m7th) 1-3^b-5-7^b

4 - Note Chord
Minor triad + minor 3rd
A Weak chord
Check Bass note to identify
Bass on Root or 5th

SYMMETRICAL CHORDS - TWO CHORDS

DIMINISHED 1-3^b-5^b-7^{bb}

4 - Note SYMMETRICAL Chord
(Notes equi-distant apart - All minor 3rds)
Weak chord, but used frequently
Often deliberately spelled wrong
Any note can be the Root
Bass on any note

AUGMENTED 1-3-5[#]

3 - Note SYMMETRICAL Chord
All Major 3rds
Weak chord - Double anything
Often deliberately spelled wrong
Used when melody is on the raised 5th
Consider the doubled note to be the Root
Bass on anything

NOTE: These Eleven Chords are the only chords used in Barbershop Harmony