CHAPTER TWO

MAJOR CHORDS – DIATONIC GENERATIONS

What I want to present in this chapter is a way to generate more unique and fresh sounding chord voicings by taking pre-existing voicings that we like and moving them up or down the diatonic scale from which they were first generated. The resulting voicings will all work and function as the original chord from which they were originated since they contain all the same tonal material. A thing to point out is that over every chord there are certain **"avoid notes"** that we should stay away from. Over a **major** chord the **natural eleventh** (*11^{th}*) degree is an avoid note. This note will occur at some point through the process and be part of certain voicings if we were using this procedure of diatonic transposition within the major scale (*Ionian mode*).

Ex: *To diatonically transpose an E major chord, use a preexisting voicing of your choice and move all the notes up or down to the next available diatonic scale degrees.*

However, if we use the **E Lydian mode** to generate these new voicings, then there will be no possible way to run into an **avoid note** since E Lydian contains the **raised eleventh** (*#11*) degree and that is a very nice upper extension over the E major chord. So when we apply this procedure we will have to find a scale in which all the scale degrees are chord tones or nice upper extension/alterations in relation to our harmony.

DIATONIC GENERATIONS OF A MAJOR CHORD – 1^{ST} STRING SET

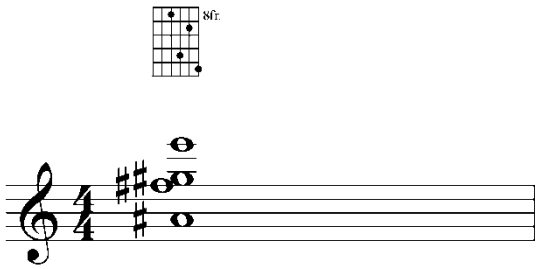
LEFT EXPANSION VOICINGS

CONSTRUCTING THE DIATONIC GENERATIONS

So let me show how this works. I'll take the first **Left Expansion** voicing on the first string set for an E major chord. Then, using the **E Lydian mode,** I will move up each note of that voicing to the next available note in the mode to create my **1^{st}** generation **Left Expansion** voicing. This way the intervallic structure of my original chord voicing will remain the same throughout all the generations.

LEFT EXPANSION VOICING #1 – ALL DIATONIC GENERATIONS

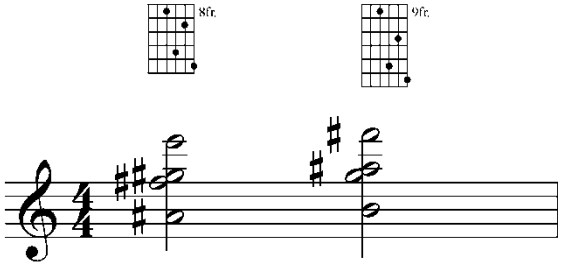
Here is the original **Left Expansion** voicing number one which harmonizes the **root** of a major chord on the first string set.



Emaj9(#11)
Left Expansion

The intervallic construction of this voicing is a **sixth, second, and a sixth interval**. Have in mind that each chord voicing possesses a unique sound mainly due to the way its chord ingredients (*chord tones, extensions, and alterations)* are combined and arranged. Therefore voicings with the same intervallic structure will tend to sound similar.

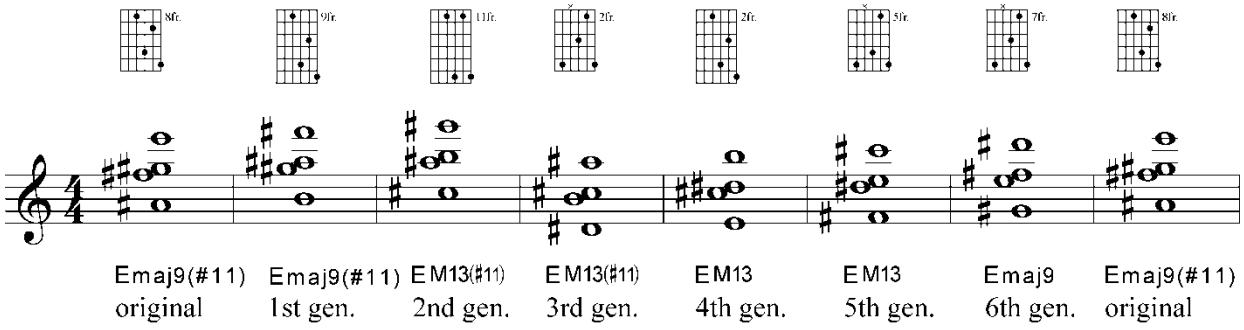
From this voicing I will move each note to the next available scale/mode degree and I'll produce the **1st** generation **Left Expansion** voicing for E major. (*The note Bb goes up to B, the note F# up to G#, the G# up to A# or Bb, and the E to the note F#*)



Emaj9(#11) Emaj9(#11)
Left Exp. 1st Generation

From the **1st** generation voicing we follow the same approach and we generate all six new diatonic generations of the original voicing number one. So here they are.

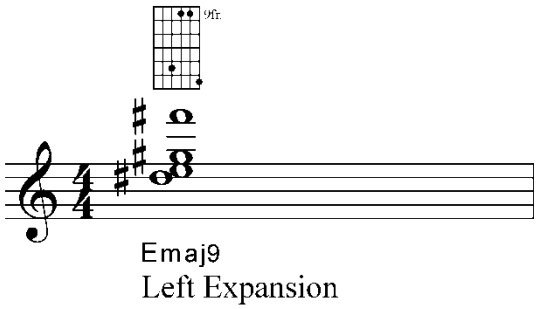
Left Expansion Voicing 1



As you can notice some of the voicings shown above contain very wide stretches to be played on the determined first string set. Therefore, I have transposed the lowest note to another string (*the 5th string – not part of the first string set*) to accommodate for a more comfortable execution.

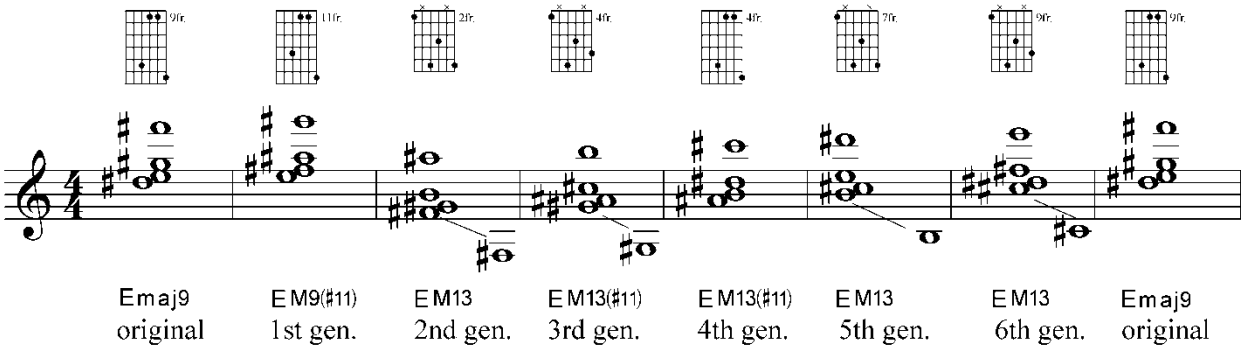
LEFT EXPANSION VOICING #2 – ALL DIATONIC GENERATIONS

Now we move to our next original voicing from the **Left Expansion** kind. Here is the original voicing number two which harmonizes the **9th** degree of a major chord on the first string set.



The intervallic structure of this voicing is a **second, third, and a seventh interval**. Let's take a closer look at its diatonic generations.

Left Expansion Voicing 2

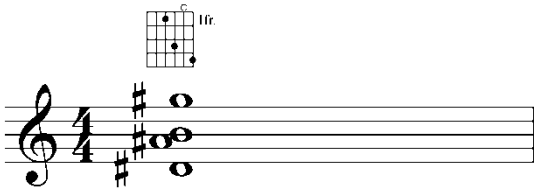


Notice that in the newly generated voicings presented above, the **2nd**, **3rd**, **5th**, and **6th** generations have their lowest notes moved an octave lower in order to be physically playable on the instrument. Otherwise, the original intervallic order is not playable on the instrument. Because of this note displacement these voicings do not fit within the first string set, but have to utilize other strings from the other sets. Nonetheless, they do provide us with very nice harmonic textures which can easily be incorporated in our playing.

Let's take a look at **Left Expansion** voicing number three and its generations.

LEFT EXPANSION VOICING #3 – ALL DIATONIC GENERATIONS

Here is the original **Left Expansion** voicing number three which harmonizes the **third** degree of an E major chord on the first string set.



Left Expansion

The intervallic construction of the voicing presented above is a **fifth, second, and sixth interval.** Let's explore the new chords that can be produced by its diatonic transposition.