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ELLEN FINISHES UP HER EXPLORATION OF CHORD EXTENSIONS FOR BEGINNERS

Hello again low enders! Last month we went on from looking at the 9th extension, which is the 2nd note in the scale from which the chord in question is derived. Once the 2nd, 4th and 6th notes of a scale are played above the octave, then they become known as extensions. As per last month's column, notes within the octave are known as simple intervals and those above the octave are known as compound intervals. Got that? Good!

In this column we will complete our discovery of chord extensions by taking a look at the 11th and 13th. As we mentioned before, these are simply the 4th and 6th played up the octave. The 4th becomes the 11th and the 6th becomes the 13th: see **Example 1**.

Extensions are commonly seen as chords: this is a way of providing more information about the notes which you have the option to highlight. Chords are built up as follows: C Maj, C Maj 7, C Maj 9, C Maj 11, C Maj 13.

Example 1

Example 1 shows two chord examples. The first is G Maj 11, with a bass line showing notes G, B, D, F#, A, and a fretboard diagram with fingerings 3, 2, 5, 4, 7. The second is G Maj 13, with a bass line showing notes G, B, D, F#, A, C, and a fretboard diagram with fingerings 3, 2, 5, 4, 7, 5, 9.

Example 2

Example 2 shows seven chord examples. Each has a bass line and a fretboard diagram. The chords are: G7b9 (bass: G, Bb, D, F, Ab), G79 (bass: G, B, D, F, Ab), G7#9 (bass: G, B, D, F#, Ab), G711 (bass: G, B, D, F#, A, C), G7b11 (bass: G, Bb, D, F, Ab, C), G7b13 (bass: G, Bb, D, F, Ab, C, Eb), and G713 (bass: G, B, D, F, Ab, C, Eb).

You may have seen different chords written out in this manner. All this means is that whoever is holding down the harmonic information in the band – often the guitarist or keyboard player – is playing the basic chord as well as the given extensions. This doesn't always mean that we bass players need to play all these extra notes, it just means that we can if we wish. Most of the time, the other musicians in the band are happy for us to stay around the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th area, but if someone plays a chord with extensions then we do have the opportunity to highlight these tones if we so choose. This all must be done in the right context and feel, of course: in punk rock, using extensions might not work so well. In jazz, on the other hand, chord extensions are common.

The 9th, 11th and 13th extensions can be altered in the following ways: b 9th (b2), 9th (2), #9th (#2), 11th (4), #11th (#4), b13th (b6), 13th (6). See **Example 2** for more on this. When building chords, some of these extensions may be written together as CMaj9#11. This just means that you can play the root, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th and #11, in other words C E G B D F#. Have a look at some chord charts and see if you can figure out which note each of the chord symbols are telling you to play. See you next month! ■

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