

Major Chord Hearts

Ted Greene, 1989, February 22 and March 11

Ted created this series of three lessons on “Chord Hearts” although he never explained in writing what he meant by the “heart” part of it. We asked several of his students if they knew this terminology, and the replies were almost all the same: “He never discussed this concept with me, but I sure like that sound.” Maybe it has something to do with a 3-note chord in the shape of a triangle (like a heart). Or perhaps the notes being used contain the essence, or “heart,” of the chord stream that they create. Ted sometimes marked his personal papers with a heart symbol to indicate that he loved that sound or idea, so that is another possibility – that he simply “loved” this chord sound.

Whatever he meant, the concept and the technique is the main thing we want to get out of these lessons. A more logical title for these pages might have been something like, “3-Note Major Pentatonic Chord Streams on the Middle Strings.”

To analyze what’s going on in these pages gives one a better understanding of the ideas he was trying to convey. Briefly, these lessons illustrate 3-note *chord streams* using a major pentatonic scale: 1, 3, 5, 6, 9. If you play all of these notes at once you get a major 6/9 chord. So, chord hearts are basically a systematic way of breaking up and stretching out a major 6/9 chord (for example) over a series of chords.

One student wrote: “Are ‘chord hearts’ streams? Ted seemed to distinguish the two in his sheets. It looks like 3-note streams are often like 4-note chord systematic inversions with one of the four notes left out, the note left out being on whatever string was not played. But there are also 4-note streams that are just systematic inversions as far as I can see. Perhaps “streams” was Ted’s term for when a series of chords were played up and down a set of strings that drew from the notes of a 4-note chord. Whereas, ‘chord hearts’ source a 5-note chord or scale, primarily the 6/9 = major pentatonic scale, but also the major 9 chord. So, I don’t know if it’s right in Ted’s terminology to call ‘chord hearts’ ‘streams.’ They both are a series of chords played up and down the neck which heard together present an extended sound. But *streams* seem to be about an extended 4-note sound and *hearts* seem to be about an extended 5-note sound.”

In these three lessons we’re analyzing the tones in terms of the I major chord (since Ted labelled these pages as “Major Chord Hearts”), but one could also interpret them as the relative minor (vi) of the key, and this would thereby result in minor 7/11 chord hearts/streams. Whichever way you analyze them, it is helpful to relate the soprano note to the *root* of the stream. And since many of these chords are rootless, it is good to visualize the “anchor root” or “visual root” (as Ted sometimes called them) that is located in the same general area of the chord form. (Notice that Ted places the fret number parallel with the visual root.) We’ve added chord names to each of the diagrams so you can see how they relate to the root of the stream, but ideally one would focus on the soprano note, as Ted suggests.

Page 1 (or Type 1) starts with a major triad, voiced 3, 5, 1 (from the bottom up) and the “stream” is created by moving each note up to the next note of the major pentatonic scale, staying on the same string (just like in Ted’s “systematic inversions”). This stream produces a major 6/9 chord sound.

The first exercise simply goes up and down the scale. The other exercises utilize the same chord forms in different melodic sequences that forces the player to make jumps on the fingerboard and to think non-linear.

Page 2 (Type 2) is structured with the soprano note being a 5th or 6th above the two lower tones. And those notes are either a 2nd or a 3rd apart from each other. Again, the major pentatonic is the scale being used, and the result is also a major 6/9 chord sound. Because of the structure of Type 2, all of the chords are either major 6, add 9 chords (/9), or major 6/9 chords.

Page 2 (Type 3) begins with a major 6 chord, and the scale used is a modified pentatonic scale: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7. This page is in Db, so the notes used for the soprano are: Db, Eb, F, Ab, C. The two lower notes of the triads sometimes use a Bb (the 6th) to replace Ab (the 5th) or C (the 7th). The stream produces a major 13 chord sound.

3-NOTE CHORD HEARTS: MAJOR

Ted Greene
1989-02-22

Key of C
1)

C C⁶/no3 C⁶ C^{SUS2} C⁶ C C⁶ C^{SUS2} C⁶

The first section shows nine guitar chord diagrams for the key of C. Each diagram is a 6x6 grid with dots representing fretted notes. Above each diagram is a blue label: C, C⁶/no3, C⁶, C^{SUS2}, C⁶, C, C⁶, C^{SUS2}, and C⁶. To the left of each diagram is a blue number: 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 10, 8, and 5. Below the diagrams is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The staff contains nine chords corresponding to the diagrams above, with a double bar line at the end.

Key of Db
2)

Db Db⁶ Db⁶/no3 Db^{SUS2} Db⁶ Db⁶ Db^{SUS2} Db

The second section shows eight guitar chord diagrams for the key of Db. Each diagram is a 6x6 grid with dots representing fretted notes. Above each diagram is a blue label: Db, Db⁶, Db⁶/no3, Db^{SUS2}, Db⁶, Db⁶, Db^{SUS2}, and Db. To the left of each diagram is a blue number: 2, 6, 4, 9, 6, 11, 9, and 14. Below the diagrams is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (Bbb). The staff contains eight chords corresponding to the diagrams above, with a double bar line at the end.

Db⁶ Db⁶ Db^{SUS2} Db Db⁶

The third section shows five guitar chord diagrams for the key of Db. Each diagram is a 6x6 grid with dots representing fretted notes. Above each diagram is a blue label: Db⁶, Db⁶, Db^{SUS2}, Db, and Db⁶. To the left of each diagram is a blue number: 6, 11, 9, 2, and 6. Below the diagrams is a musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of three flats (Bbb). The staff contains five chords corresponding to the diagrams above, with a double bar line at the end.

Key of F
3)

Diagram 1: F (6)

Diagram 2: FSUS2 (13)

Diagram 3: F6 (10)

Diagram 4: F (6)

Diagram 5: F6/9 (8)

Diagram 6: F (6)

Diagram 7: F6/9 (8)

Diagram 1: F6 (10)

Diagram 2: FSUS2 (13)

Diagram 3: F6 (10)

Diagram 4: F (6)

Diagram 5: F6/9 (3)

Key of G
4)

Diagram 1: GSUS2 (3)

Diagram 2: G (8)

Diagram 3: G6/9 (10)

Diagram 4: GSUS2 (15)

Diagram 5: G6 (12)

Diagram 6: G (8)

Diagram 7: G6/9 (5)

Diagram 8: G6 (12)

Diagram 9: G (8)

Master each phrase a little at a time by focusing on the SOPRANO.

Let's put it another way:

- 1) Memorize which chord shapes are under which soprano notes (by numbers, i.e., 5th in the key, or 6th in the key, and so on).
- 2) Memorize the exact soprano line given in each of the four phrases...and then the shapes will just fall in line.

Major Chord Hearts - Type 2

Ted Greene
1989-03-11

Key of Eb

1) Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb⁶ Eb⁶ Eb⁶/no3 Eb⁶ Eb⁶ Eb/9 Eb/9

1)

2) Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb⁶ Eb⁶ Eb⁶/no3 Eb/9 Eb⁶/no3 Eb⁶ Eb⁶

2)

3) Eb⁶ Eb⁶ Eb⁶/no3 Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb⁶/no3 Eb⁶ Eb⁶

3)

4) Eb⁶ Eb⁶/no3 Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb⁶ Eb/9 Eb/9 Eb⁶/no3 Eb⁶

4)

5)

6)

4a): Also try these as the last 3 chords in line #4.

Transposing:

- 1) Do example #1 in Ab, G, Gb, F, and E as well as the given Eb.
- 2) Do example #2 in Ab, G, Gb, F, and E as well as the given Eb.
- 3) Do example #3 in Gb, F, E, Eb, D, Db, C and B.
- 4) Do example #4 in E, Eb, D, Db, C, B, Bb, A, and Ab.
- 5) Do example #5 in Gb, F, E, Eb, D, Db, and C.
- 6) Do example #6 in Ab, G, Gb, F, E, and Eb.
- 7) Do example #4a in E, Eb, D, Db, C, B, and Bb.

Take your time! This material is deceptively difficult...but worth it.

Major Chord Hearts - Type 3

Ted Greene
1989-03-11

Key of Db

1) *Db6* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ9* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *Db6*

1)

2) *Db6* *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ7* *DbΔ9* *DbSUS2* *Db/9* *DbΔ9*

2)

Assume a slow 8th-note feel and start on the "and" after beat one.

3) *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ9* *Db/9* *Db6* *Db/9* *DbΔ9* *Db/9*

3)

4) *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ9* *Db/9* *Db6* *Db/9* *DbΔ9* *DbSUS2* *Db/9*

Or use first chord

4)

Start on the "and" after one.

5) *Db6* *Db6* *Db/9* *DbΔ9* *DbSUS2* *DbΔ7* *DbSUS2* *Db/9* or *Db6*

5)

Please transpose the first four examples into the keys of E, Eb, D, C, and B. The fifth example will work on many necks in C and B....and on some longer necks in D and maybe even Eb and E.

MAJOR CHORD HEARTS TYPE 2

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① Key of E^b

4 6 6 8 11 8 6 6 4

②

4 6 6 8 11 16 11 8 6

③

6 8 11 16 18 16 11 8 6

④

8 11 16 18 18 16 11 8

⑤

6 8 6 11 8 16 11 18 16

⑥

4 6 6 8 6 11 8 16 11

④a: Mooty these as the last 3 chords in line

Transposing: ① do ex. ① in A^b, G, G^b, F + E as well as the given E^b.
 ② " " ② in the same keys as ①
 ③ " " ③ in G^b, F, E, E^b, D, D^b, C + B.
 ④ " " ④ in E, E^b, D, D^b, C, B, B^b, A + A^b.
 ⑤ " " ⑤ in G^b, F, E, E^b, D, D^b + C.
 ⑥ " " ⑥ in A^b, G, G^b, F, E + E^b.
 ④a " " ④a in E, E^b, D, D^b, C, B and D^b.

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MAJOR CHORD HEARTS TYPE 3

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① Key of D

②

③ Assume a slow 8th note feel and start on the 'and' after beat one

④ NORMAL START AGAIN

⑤ Start on the 'and' after one

Please transpose the first four examples into the keys of E, E^b, D, C and B. The fifth example will work on many necks in C and B... and on some longer necks in D and maybe even E^b & E.