

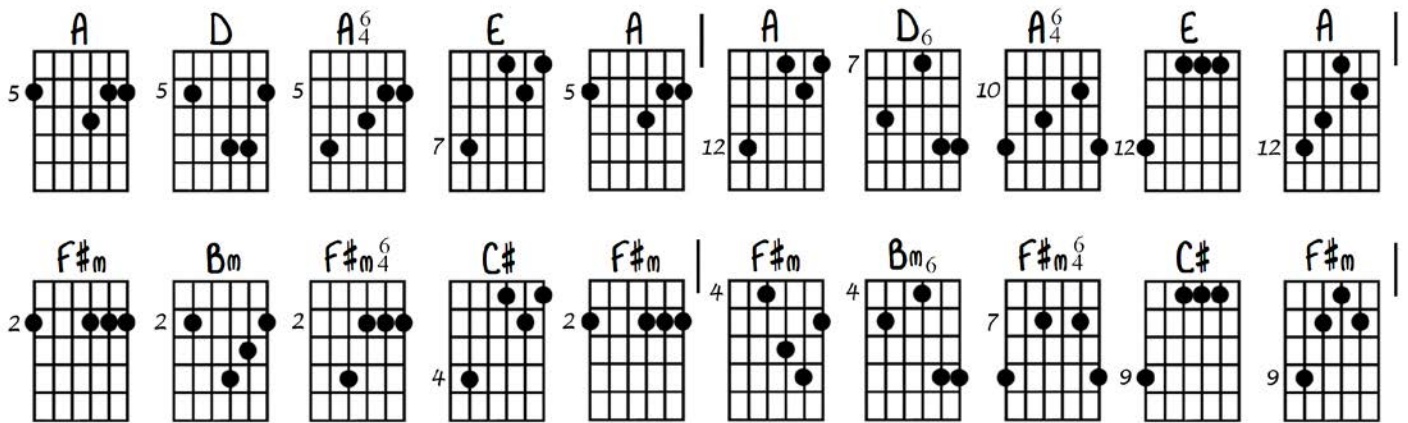
# Triads in 2nd Inversion and Figured Bass

Ted Greene, 1973-09-15

Figured bass is a system of musical shorthand where chords are indicated by the relationship in close voicing of all the notes to the bass note. Example: a closed triad in 1st inversion has (from the bass up) the following intervals → a 3rd, and a 6th. (Whether or not the 3rd's and 6th's are major or minor depends on the type of triad.) A 2nd inversion closed triad has the intervals of a 4th, and a 6th (from the bass up). In musical shorthand, any 1st inversion voicing is referred to as a  $^6_3$  or more commonly, just 6. Example: C in 1st inversion is written as  $C_6$  (notice that the 6 is *under* the chord). Similarly, any 2nd inversion is referred to as a  $^6_4$ . Example: C in 2nd inversion is written as  $C^6_4$ . This system of notation will prove to be valuable for the serious musician.

A  $^6_4$  chord is a very potent chord and should be treated with care and skill. Here are some guidelines:

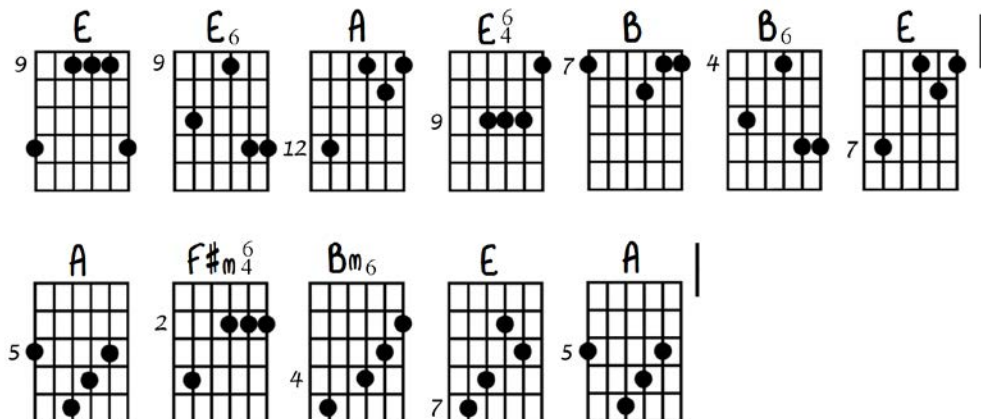
1) The  $I^6_4$  or (i in minor) is used to "announce" cadences, that is, it sets up the V chord in authentic (and 1/2 cadences sometimes).



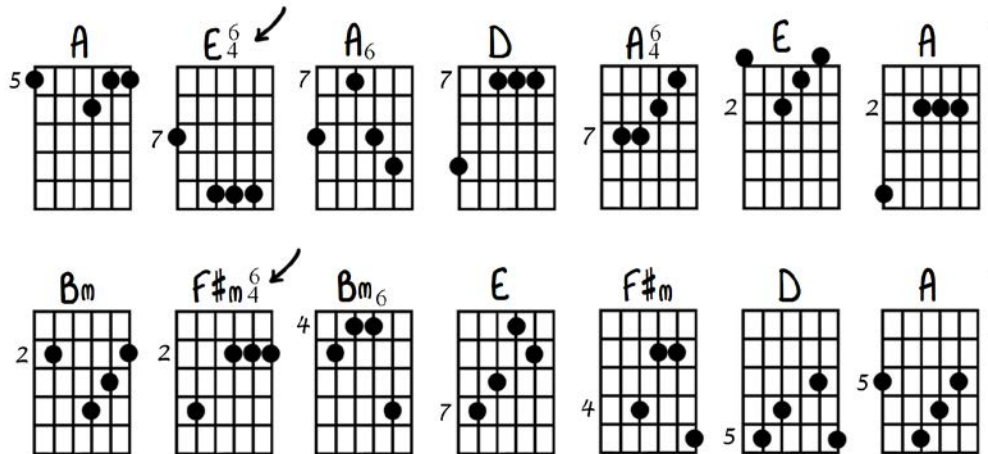
Figured bass symbols can be omitted at the discretion of the individual when labeling chords. They are very useful and effective when one wishes to indicate a precise bass line.

2) Although it is found most often in cadences as above, the  $^6_4$  may be used effectively elsewhere in a phrase also:

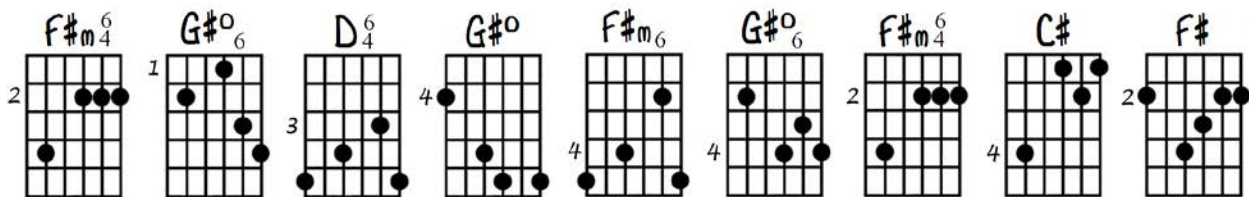
Key of E:



Another common use is that of connecting a chord and its 1st inversion via the  ${}^6_4$ :

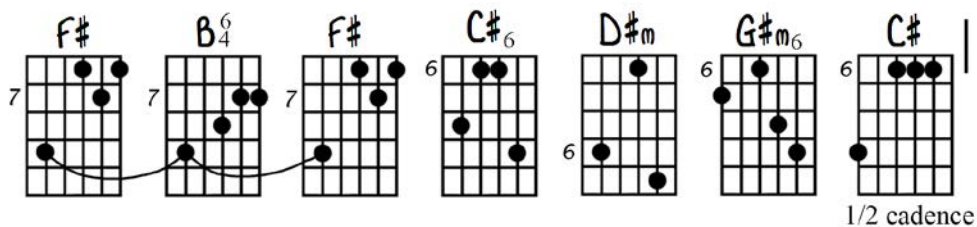


These are called passing  ${}^6_4$ 's. Here is another example in F<sup>#m</sup>. Ending on a major chord in a minor key is common (this device is called the *Picardy 3rd*.)



Another common use of the  ${}^6_4$  is as a stationary bass note embellishment of a chord of which the  ${}^6_4$  is the IV (or iv).

Key of F<sup>#</sup>:



# Triads in 2nd Inversion and Figured Bass

9-15-73

Figured bass is a system of musical shorthand where chords are indicated by the relationship in close voicing of all the notes to the bass note. Example: a closed triad in 1st inversion has (from the bass up) the following intervals → a 3rd, and a 6th. (Whether or not the 3rd's + 6th's are major or minor depends on the type of triad). A 2nd inversion closed triad has the intervals of a 4th, and a 6th (from the bass up). In musical shorthand any 1st inversion voicing is referred to as a  $\frac{6}{3}$  or more commonly, just 6. Example: C in 1st inversion is written as  $\frac{6}{3}$  (notice that the 6 is under the chord). Similarly, any 2nd inversion is referred to as a  $\frac{6}{4}$ . Example: C in 2nd inversion is written as  $\frac{6}{4}$ . This system of notation will prove to be valuable for the serious musician.

A  $\frac{6}{4}$  chord is a very potent chord and should be treated with care and skill. Here are some guidelines: ① The I  $\frac{6}{4}$  (or i  $\frac{6}{4}$  in minor) is used to "announce" cadences, that is, it sets up the V chord in authentic (and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cadences sometimes).

Figured bass symbols can be omitted at the discretion of the individual when labeling chords they are very useful and effective when one wishes to indicate a precise bass line.

② Although it is found most often in cadences as above, the  $\frac{6}{4}$  may be used effectively elsewhere in a phrase also:

Key of E:

Another common use is that of connecting a chord and its 1st inversion via the  $\frac{6}{4}$ :

These are called passing 6/4's. Here is another example in F#m:

Ending on a major chord in a minor key is common (this device is called the PICARDY 3RD).

Key of F#:

SUSTAIN

Another common use of the  $\frac{6}{4}$  is as a stationary bass note embellishment of a chord of which the  $\frac{6}{4}$  is the IV (or iv)