



# *The Two Faced Chord*

By Jon Dalton [www.cdbaby.com/cd/jondalton](http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/jondalton)

Form a chord on the top four strings like so:

7th fret/D string

6th fret/G string

5th fret/B string

4th fret/ E string

(suggested fingering low to high is: 4,3,2,1)

Played in conjunction with an open A string the chord you are fretting is Amaj7. This chord is very sweet sounding and is popular in jazz, soul and r&b music.

Now pluck the four fretted strings again and quickly pluck an F#/Gb note (second fret on the low "E" string) using the thumb and index finger of your right hand.

Notice how even though the top four notes are exactly the same the chord has now taken on a completely different flavour, going from light and breezy to dark and bluesy. That's because you are now playing an F#min9 chord.

This is a perfect example of a "two-faced" chord or, in other words a chord whose complete sonic character is altered when played over different root notes.

Here's another:

7th fret/A string

8th fret/D string

7th fret/G string

8th fret/B string

(suggested fingering here low to high is: 1,3,2,4)

These four notes played over an open low E string form an Emi7b5 chord. Minor 7b5 chords are often used as a substitute II chord in a II, V, I sequence.

Now by altering our fingering and adding a C at the 8th fret on the low E string, we form a rich and (dare I say?) Kenny Burrell-esque voicing of the C9 chord.

(suggested fingering is: 2,1,3,1,4)

One final variation on this theme:

Transport the four fretted notes to this position on the top four strings:

2nd fret/D string

3rd fret/G string

3rd fret/B string

3rd fret/E string

(suggested fingering is: 1,4,4,4)

Notice how, when this shape is played against a low open E, it still sounds like an Emi7b5 (although the sound is a little different due to the thickness of the strings!) but by adding a G at the third fret on the low E string:

(suggested fingering is: 2,X,1,4,4,4)

We are rewarded with a dark and sexy voicing of Gm6.

This lesson is not meant to be an end in itself but, rather, I hope to inspire you to experiment (using the different techniques we've discussed) to find hidden sounds in other chords you thought you knew. Try putting different bass notes under other examples in your chord vocabulary. Some, maybe even most, combinations will be unpleasant but occasionally you'll hit on a sound that really knocks you out. When you do, try to work out the correct name for the chord and commit it to memory. This really is a great way to expand your knowledge of chords and arpeggios and you'll find that shapes learned this way seem to stick in the mind better than something you just picked up out of a book.

My sincere thanks to Chris Standring for asking me to contribute this lesson.

Have fun!

Jon



### About the author

A top flight performer and composer Jon was active on the UK jazz scene for many years. He has performed numerous concerts to delighted audiences, and recieved a ton of great reviews. Much of Jon's work has been recorded for national and international broadcast on BBC Radio. In 1999 Jon relocated from England to Southern California to further his career in recorded music. Jon's music has already been selected for inclusion on the New York based Instinct Jazz label's compilation releases. His tunes have also been procured by publishers for film and TV use and have recieved nearly 100,000 plays in on-line business distribution. Jon's style is rooted in the classic archtop guitar sound of yesteryear. He plays a melodic almost "vocal" style and has been compared to Wes Montgomery, Kenny Burrell and Pat Metheny. Even so, his phrasing and presentation are all his own and completely contemporary. Jon draws on influences from outside of the jazz realm in modern dance styles and soulful R&B with up-to-the-minute sounds and state of the art production techniques. Jon's maintained a working transatlantic relationship with gifted and like-minded producer/arranger John O'Hara and "The Gift" is the fruit of their first collaboration. For more [click here](#)



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