

Cuban Tres Guitar Chord & Scale Book

Written by: Rudy Furlan
Copyright © 2004



“This E-book will explain how to tune your *C Cuban Tres Guitar* and show you how to finger chords and play scales. It is designed for the guitar player wanting to change over to the world of the *Cuban Tres Guitar*. I did it and I never went back.”
Rudy Furlan

Table of Contents

Cover	Page 1
Table of contents	Page 2
Introduction	Page 3
Explanation of tuning and string selection	Page 3
Explanation of chord fingerings	Pages 3-4
Notes on the fretboard	Page 4
Basic fingerings for triads	Pages 5-7
*Major shapes	Page 5
*Minor shapes	Page 6
*Diminished shapes	Page 7
How to build beyond basic triads	Pages 8-9
Explanation of chord charts	Page 9
Major triads and Minor 7 th triads	Pages 10-13
Minor triads and Major 7 th triads	Pages 14-17
Diminished triads and Dominant 7 th triads	Pages 18-21
Explanation of scales	Page 22
Scales Major and Minor	Pages 23-34
Examples in Tablature	Page 35
References	Page 36

Cuban Tres Guitar

This is an exciting instrument that sets the Cuban music aside from the rest of the Latin music. Its peculiar tuning makes it ring in a backward/inverted way and makes it hard to tell which way the melody line is going. Some *Cuban Tres Guitars* are tuned to an open D chord and some are tuned to an open C chord. This book will explain the C tuning and any *Cuban Tres Guitar* tuned to D will just modulate up a whole step.

Tuning

The first courses of strings (The ones on top) are tuned to a G in octaves.

- The first string is tuned to a low Octave G and usually about a 24 gage.
- The second string is tuned to a higher G and usually about an 11 gage.

The second courses of strings (The ones in the middle) are tuned to a C in unison.

- The third string is tuned to a C and usually about a 14 gage.
- The fourth string is tuned to a C and usually about a 14 gage.

The last courses of strings (The ones on the bottom) are tuned to an E in octaves.

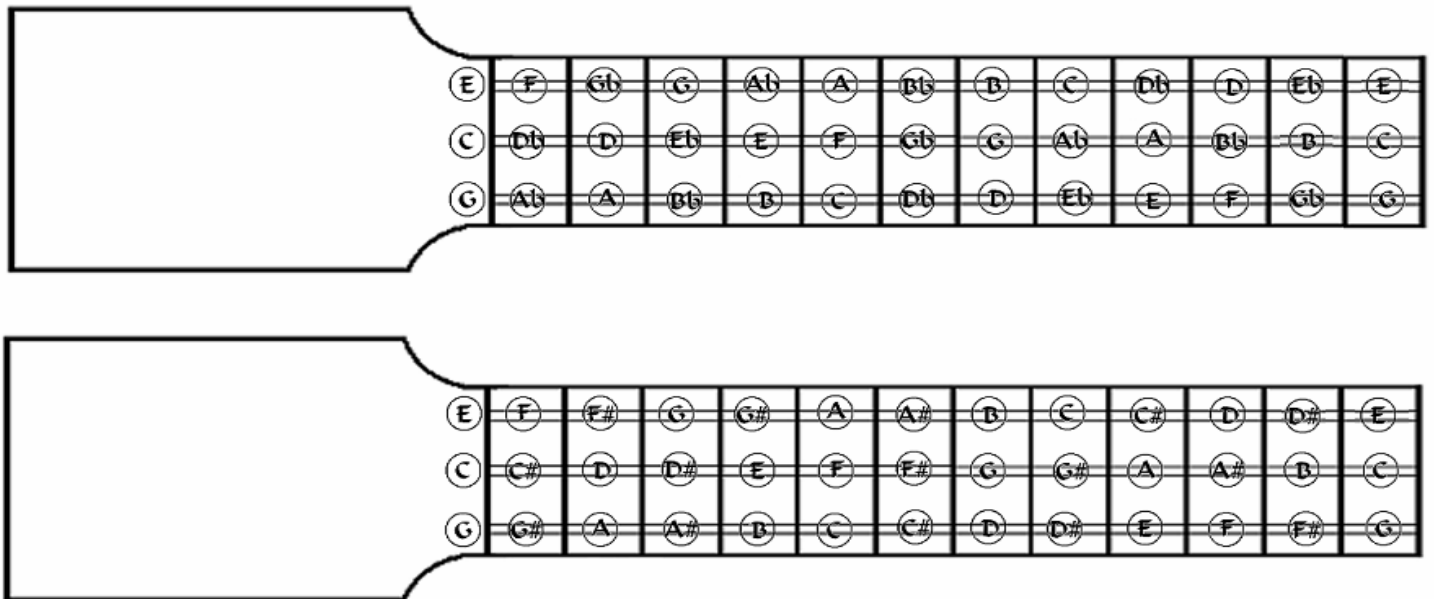
- The fifth string is tuned to a higher E and is usually about an 11 gage.
- The sixth string is tuned to a low octave E and is usually about a 24 gage.

Chord fingerings

The *Cuban Tres Guitar*, having only three courses is played as if it were a three string instrument. Being that as it is, you will only be able to play three note chords. Your basic Triad Chords are the easiest to learn because there are only three ways to play a *Major Triad* and only three ways to play a *Minor Triad*. The way to choose the correct fingering is to decide which of the three courses you will play the root on, then find that root note on your neck, and finally select the proper fingering that goes with that course. If your root is on the top course, (*the G strings*), then you will be selecting the first position fingering. If your root note is on the middle course, (*the C strings*),

then you will be selecting the second position fingering. If your root is on the last course, (*the E strings*) then you will be selecting the third position fingering.

The illustrations below show where the notes can be found on the neck. The first illustration shows all the flat notes and the second illustration shows all the sharp notes.



Next decide which fingering to use depending on which course your root note is on.

- Top course- First position
- Middle course- Second position
- Bottom course - Third position

**The top course is the set of strings with an open G.*



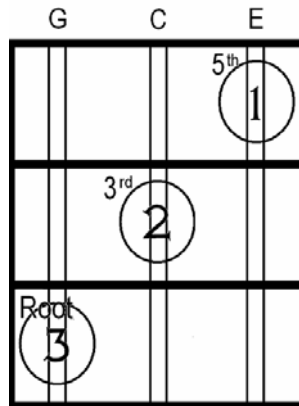
Use the following charts to find the proper Major or Minor Triad Fingering.

The numbers on the chord charts represent which finger to use. *Refer to the illustration to the right.*

Major Triads

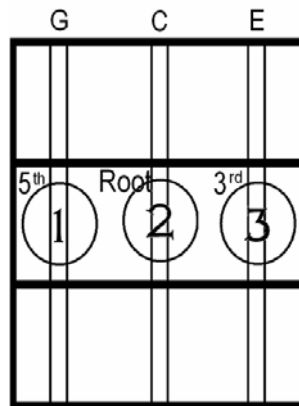
First Position

Find the root with your #3 finger on the G strings.



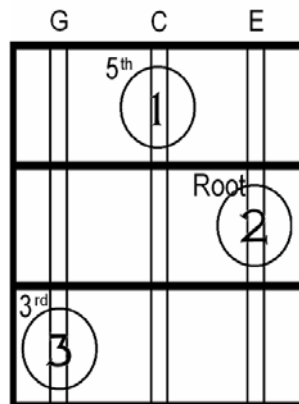
Second Position

Find the root with your #2 finger on the C strings.



Third Position

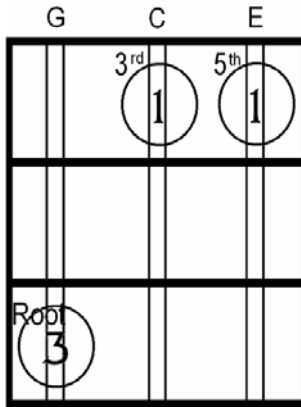
Find the root with your #2 finger on the E strings.



Minor Triads

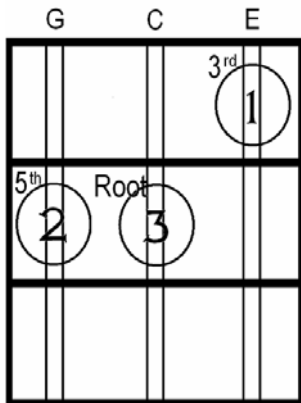
First Position

Find the root with your #3 finger on the G strings.



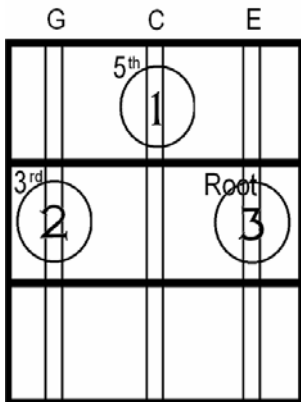
Second Position

Find the root with your #3 finger on the C strings.



Third Position

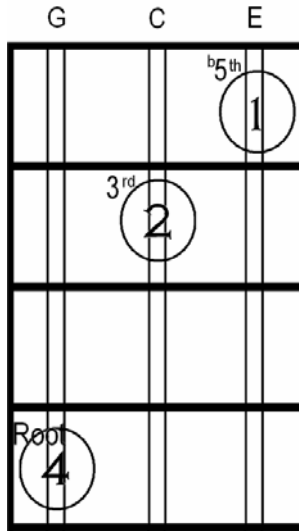
Find the root with your #3 finger on the E strings.



Diminished Triads

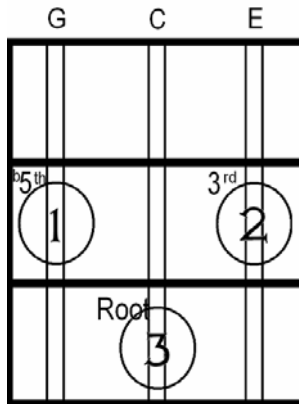
First Position

Find the root with your # 4 finger on the G Strings.



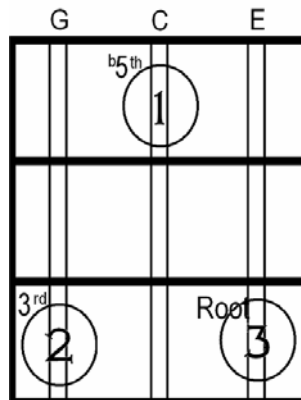
Second Position

Find the Root with your # 3 finger on the C strings.



Third Position

Find the root with your #3 finger on the E strings



Want to play more than just a Triad?

Since we can only play chords with three notes on a *Cuban Tress Guitar*, then we have to pick which notes we want to hear. If someone else in the group is playing the root, then we can play the third, the fifth and the seventh.

To play a Major 7th chord:

Find the third of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic.
Then build a Minor triad on that note.

For example:

To make a C Major 7th chord we would play an E Minor triad.

To play a Minor 7th chord:

Find the third of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic.
Then build a Major triad on that note.

For example:

To make an A Minor 7th chord we would play a C Major triad.

To play a Dominant 7th chord:

Find the third of the Chord and treat it as if it were the tonic.
Then build a Diminished triad on that note.

For example:

To make an E7 chord we would play a G# Diminished triad.

To play a Minor 7th flat 5 chord:

Find the third of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic.
Then build a Minor triad on that note.

For example:

To make a B Minor 7 flat 5 chord we would play D Minor triad.

To play a Dominant 7th flat 9 chord:

Find the seventh of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic.

Then build a Diminished triad on that note.

For example:

To make an E7 flat 5 chord we would play a D Diminished triad.

To play a Major 6th chord:

Find the sixth of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic. Then build a Minor triad on that note.

For Example:

To make a C6th we would play an A Minor triad.

To play a Minor 6th chord:

Find the sixth of the chord and treat it as if it were the tonic. Then build a Diminished triad on that note.

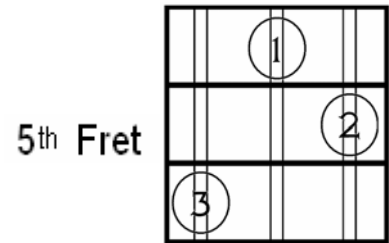
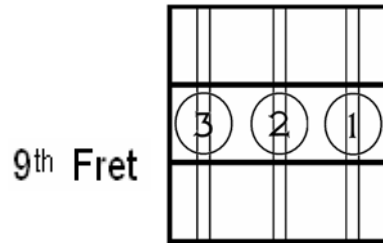
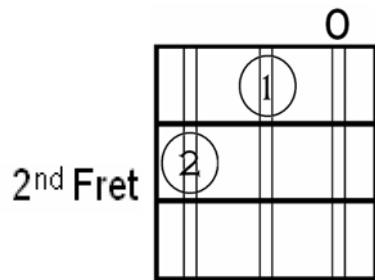
For Example:

To make an E Minor 6th we would play a C# Diminished triad

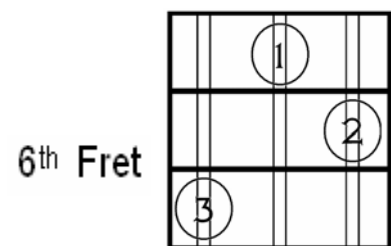
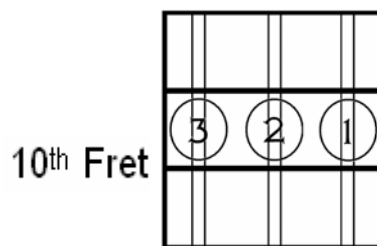
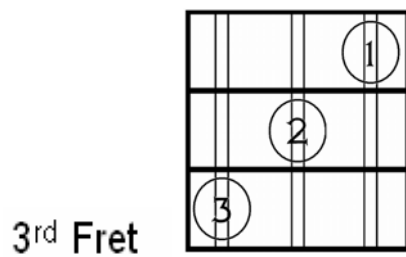
Chord Chart

In the chord charts below, the numbers in the circles are your finger numbers. An O over a set of strings represents an open course. To the left of each chord is a reference to fret number. Each shape shall represent a pure triad or 3rd, 5th and 7th of a seventh chord whether it is Major 7th, Minor 7th or Dominant 7th.

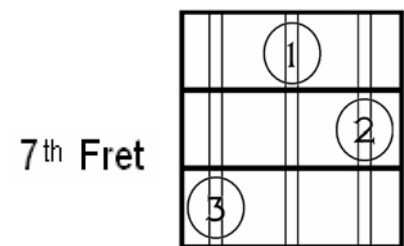
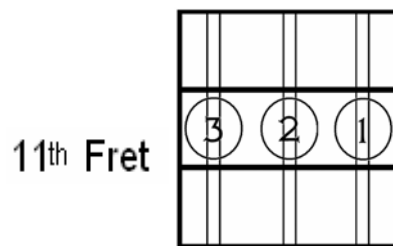
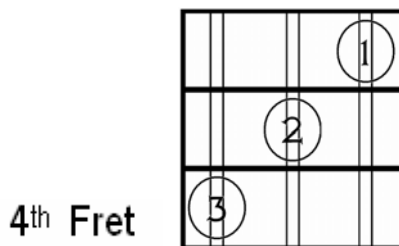
A Major or F# Minor 7th



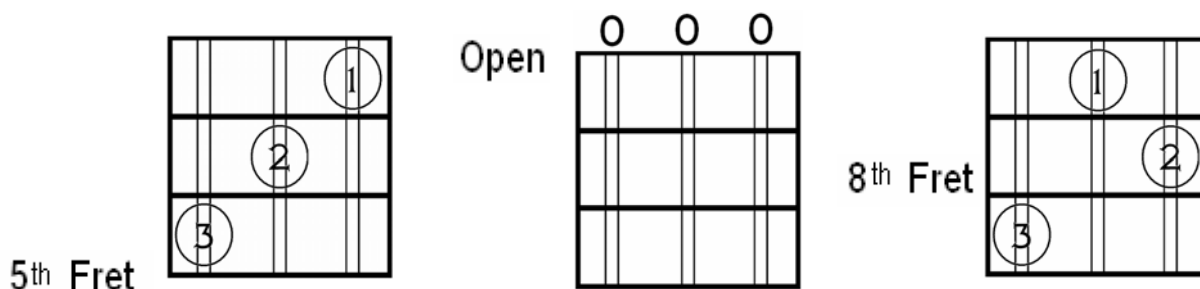
Bb Major or G Minor 7th



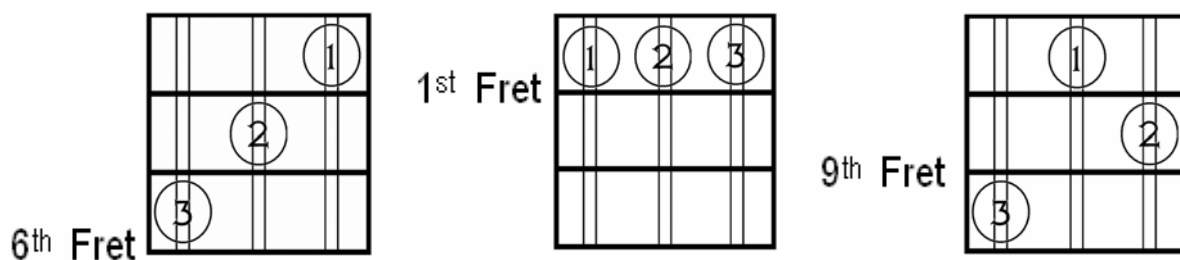
B Major or G# Minor 7th



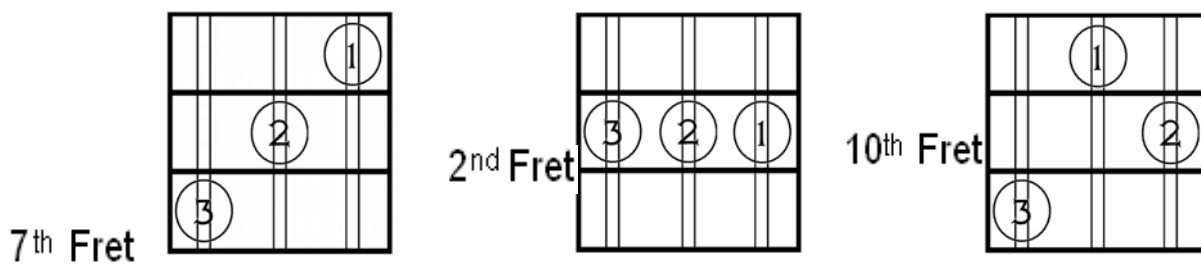
C Major or A Minor 7th



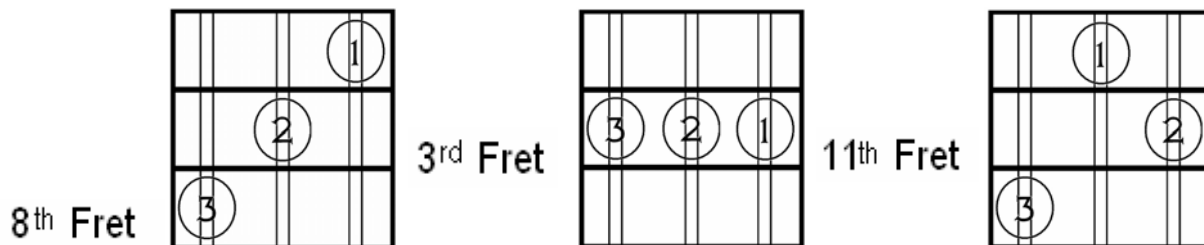
Db Major or A# Minor 7th



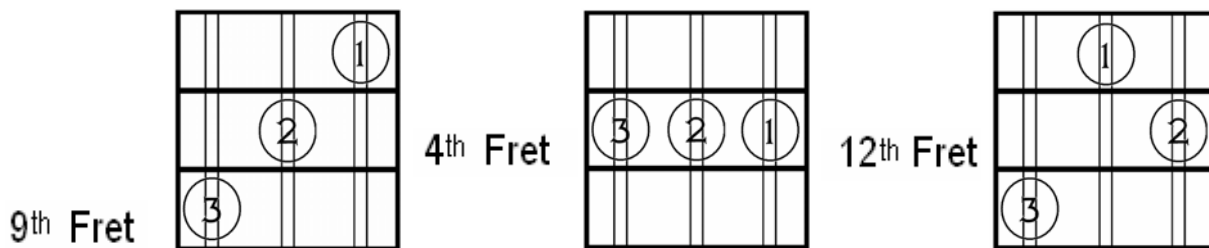
D Major or B Minor 7th



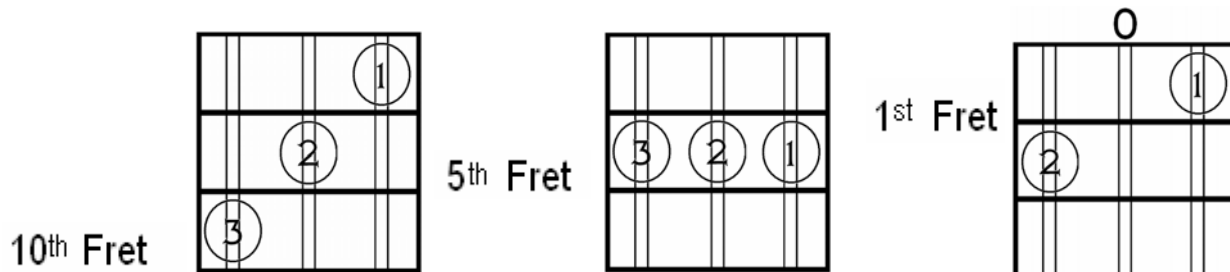
E_b Major or C Minor 7th



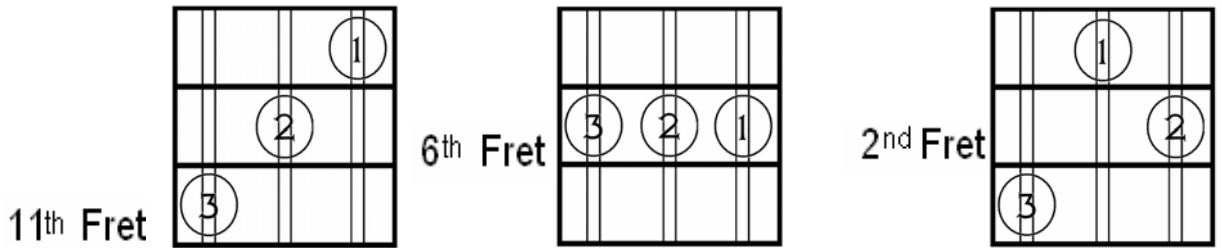
E Major or D_b Minor 7th



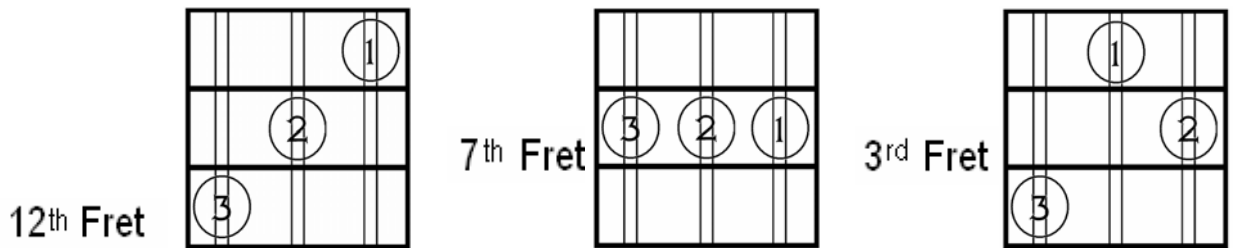
F Major or D Minor 7th



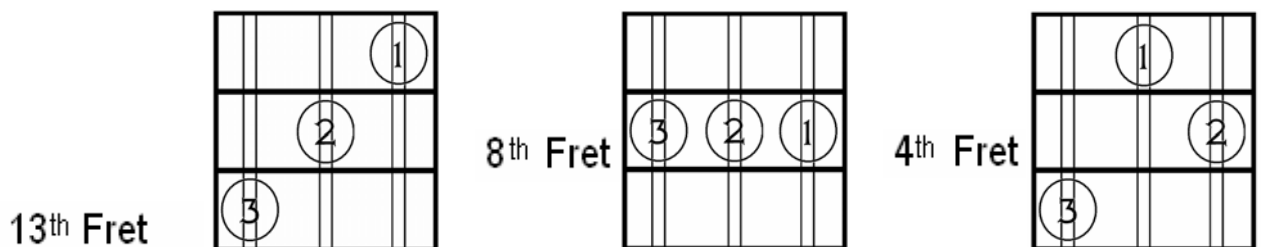
Gb Major or D# Minor 7th



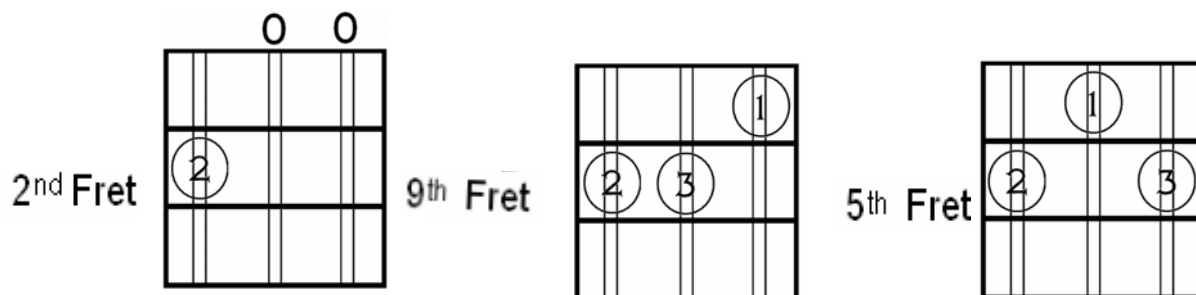
G Major or E Minor 7th



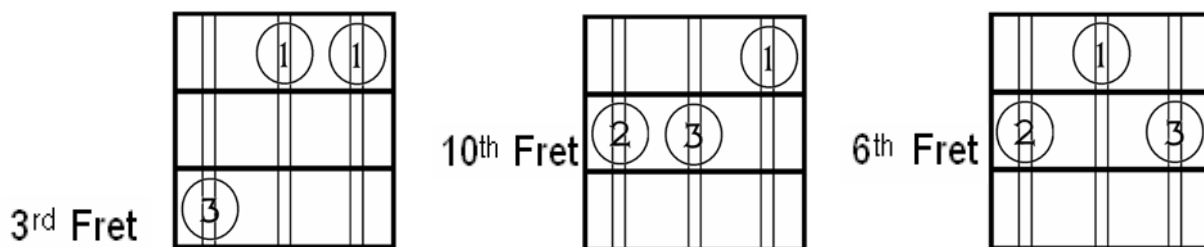
Ab Major or F Minor



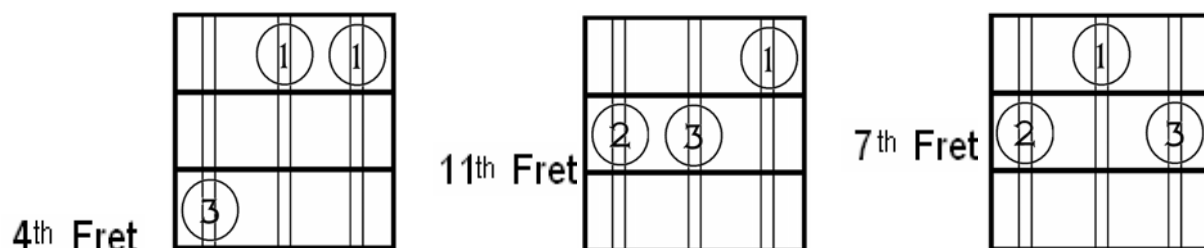
A Minor or F Major 7th



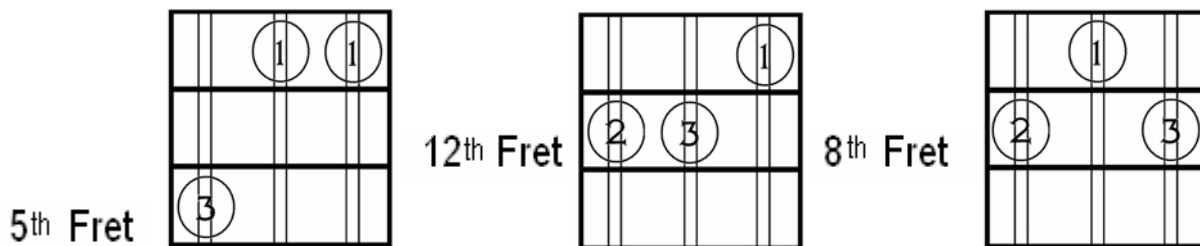
Bb Minor or F# Major 7th



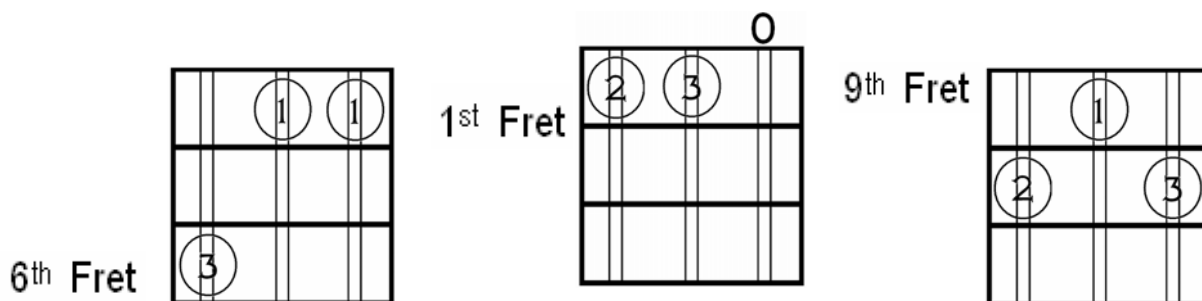
B Minor or G Major 7th



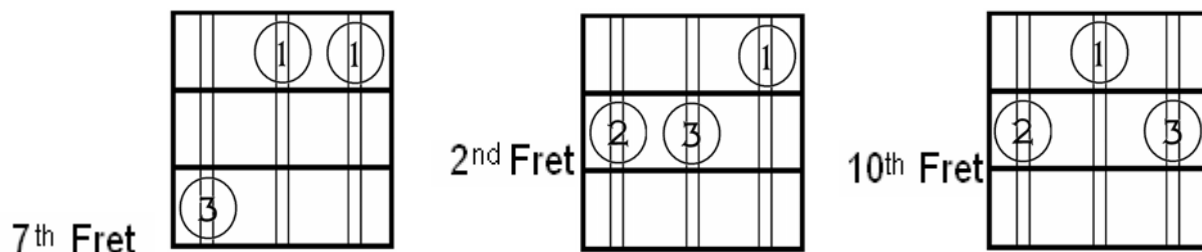
C Minor or G# Major 7th



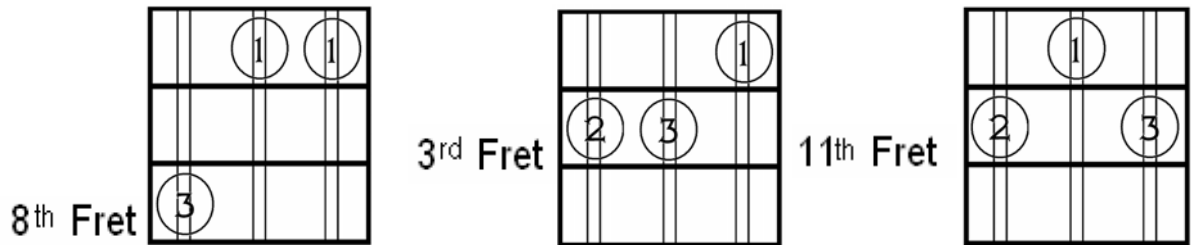
Db Minor or A Major 7th



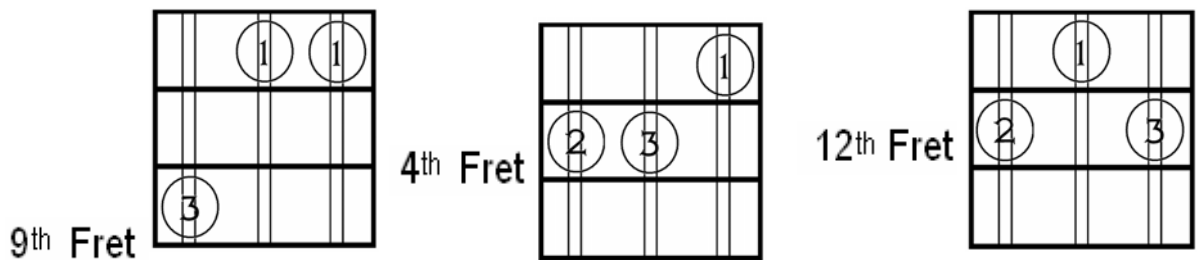
D Minor or A# Major 7th



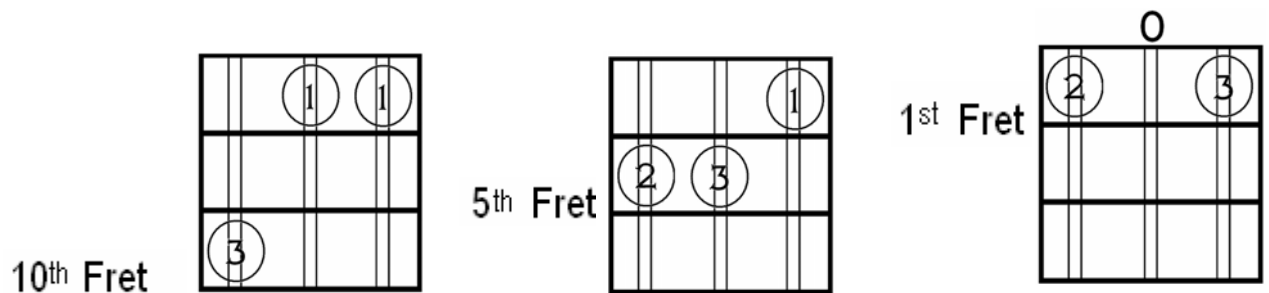
E_b Minor or B Major 7th



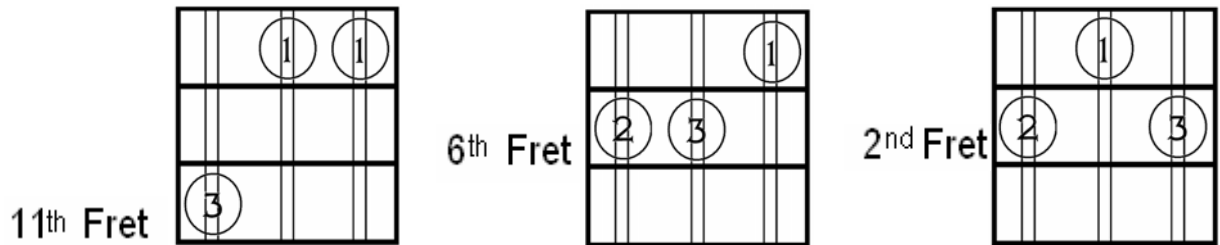
E Minor or C Major 7th



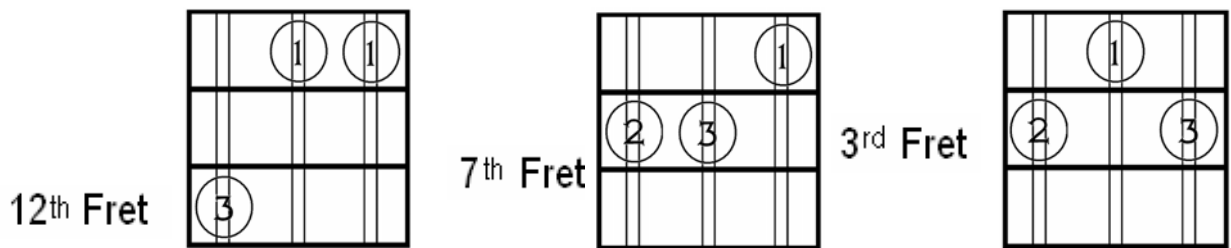
F Minor or C# Major 7th



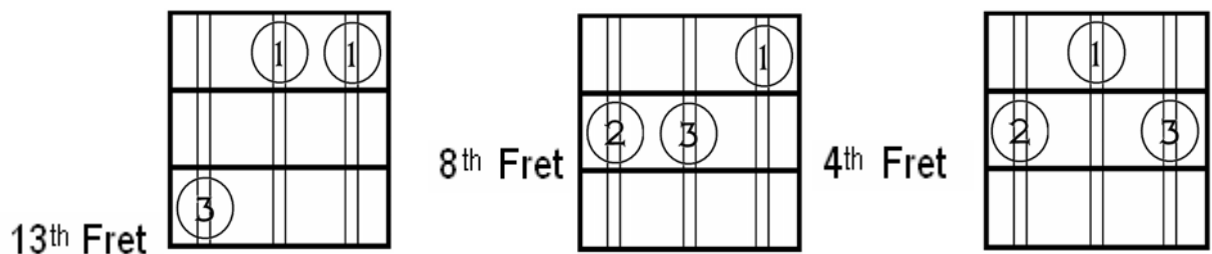
Gb Minor or D Major 7th



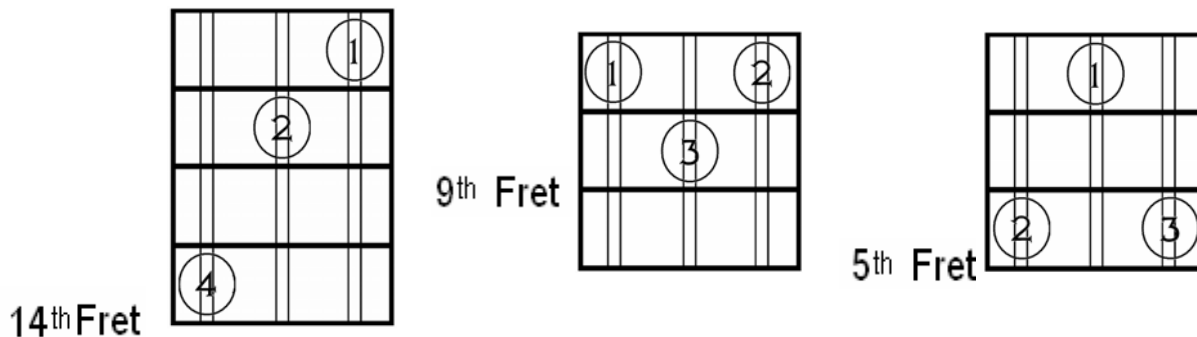
G Minor or D# Major 7th



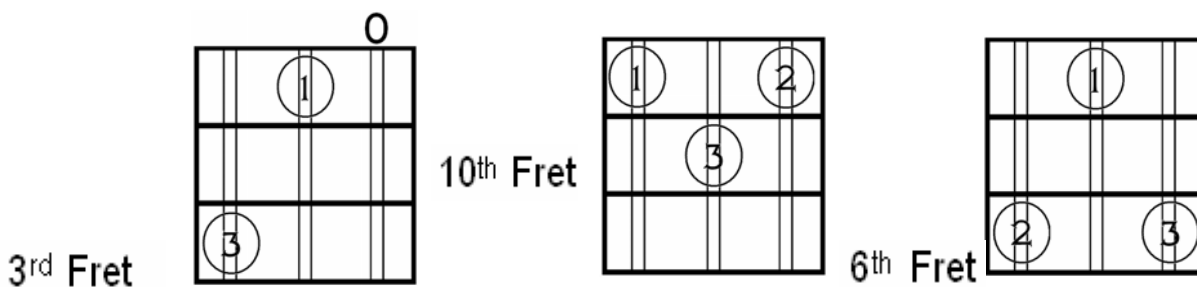
Ab Minor or E Major 7th



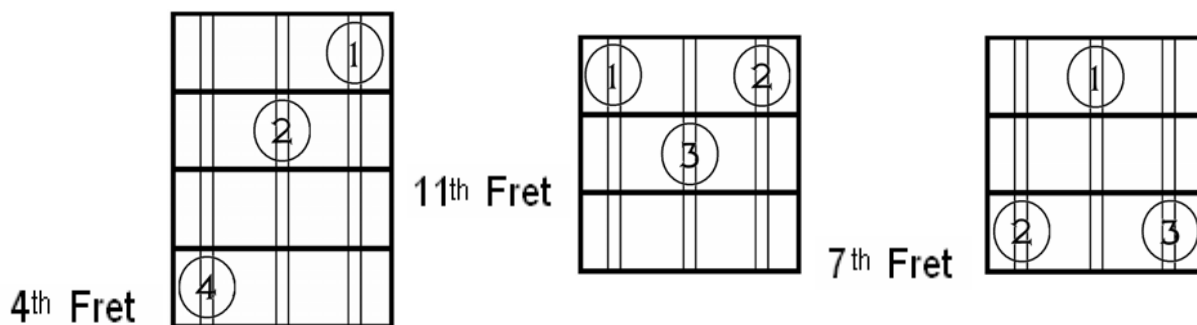
A Diminished or F Dominant 7th



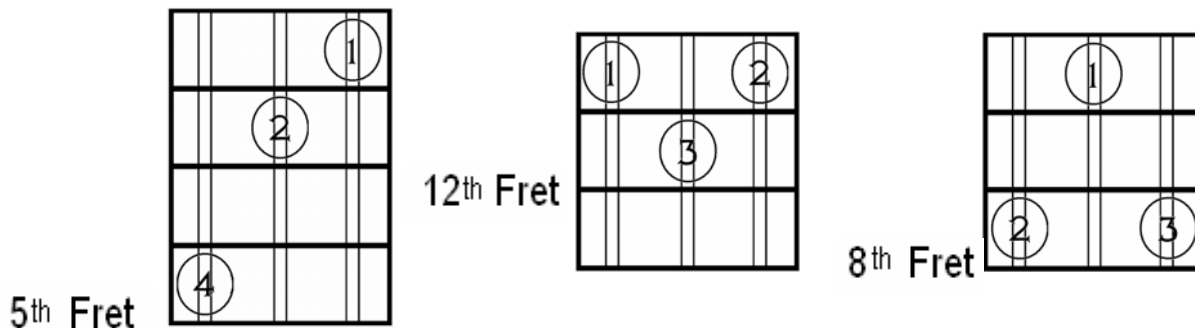
Bb Diminished or F# Dominant 7th



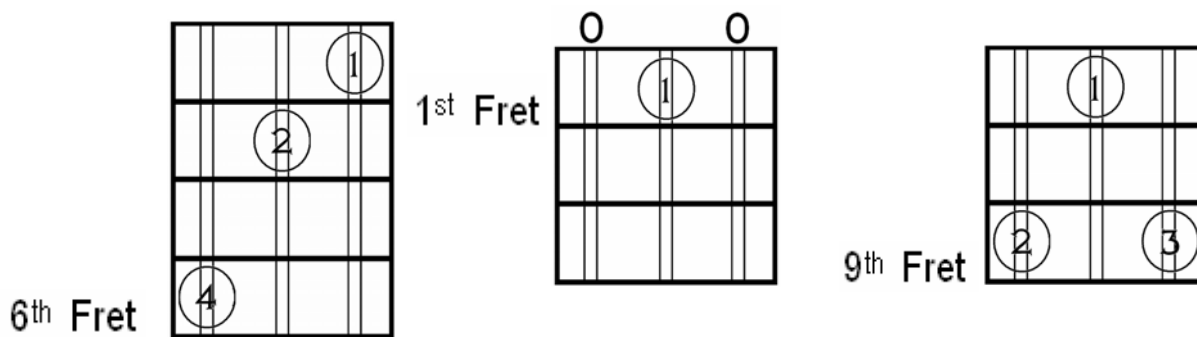
B Diminished or G Dominant 7th



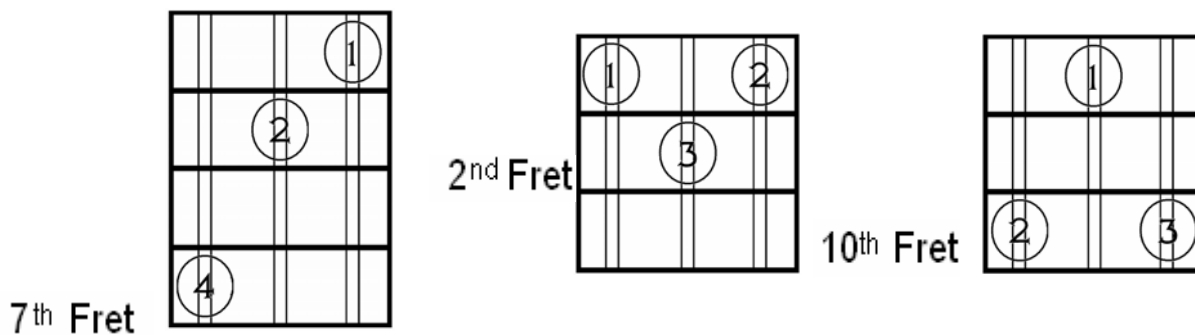
C Diminished or G# Dominant 7th



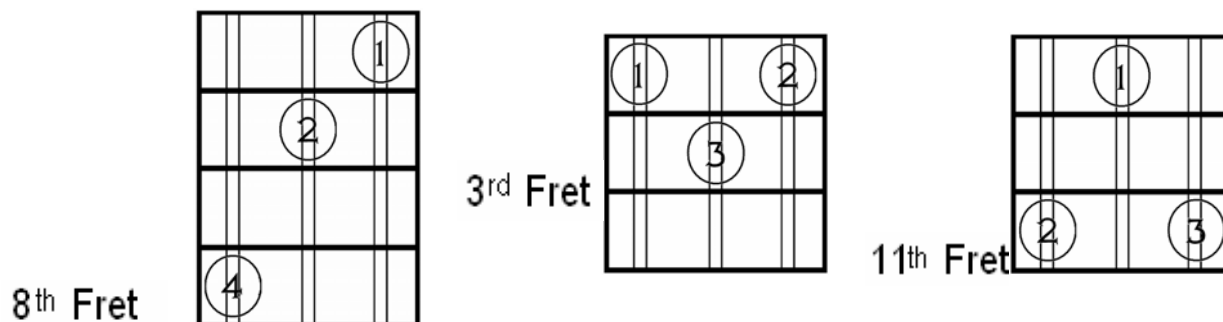
Db Diminished or A Dominant 7th



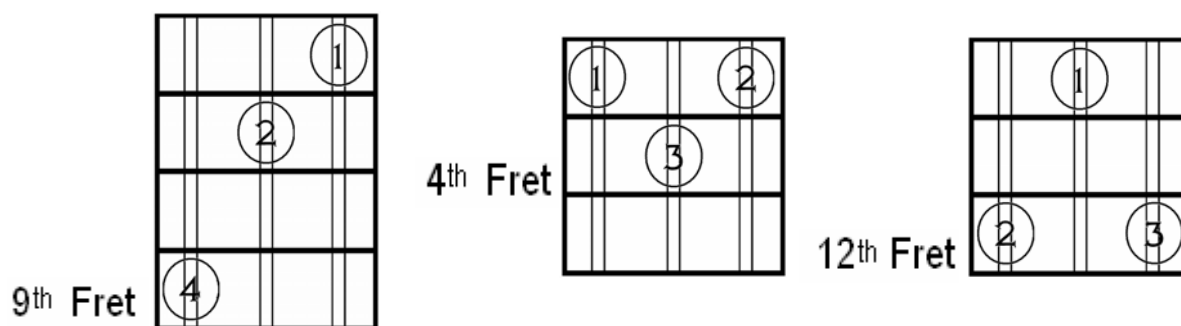
D Diminished or Bb Dominant 7th



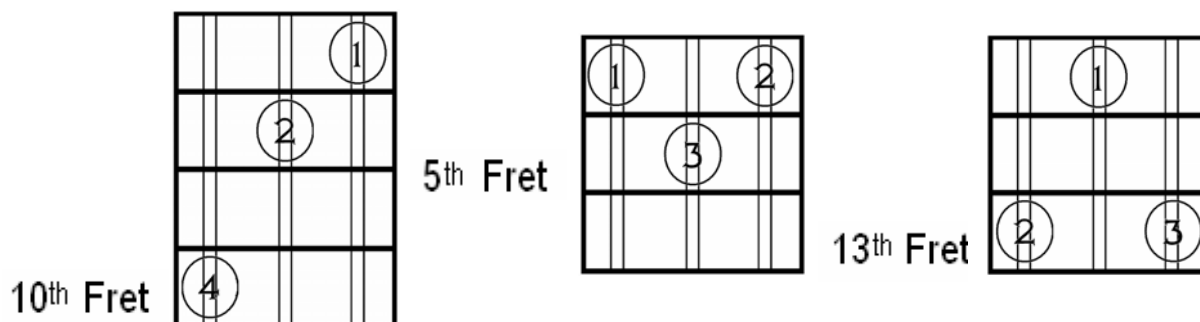
E_b Diminished or B Dominant 7th



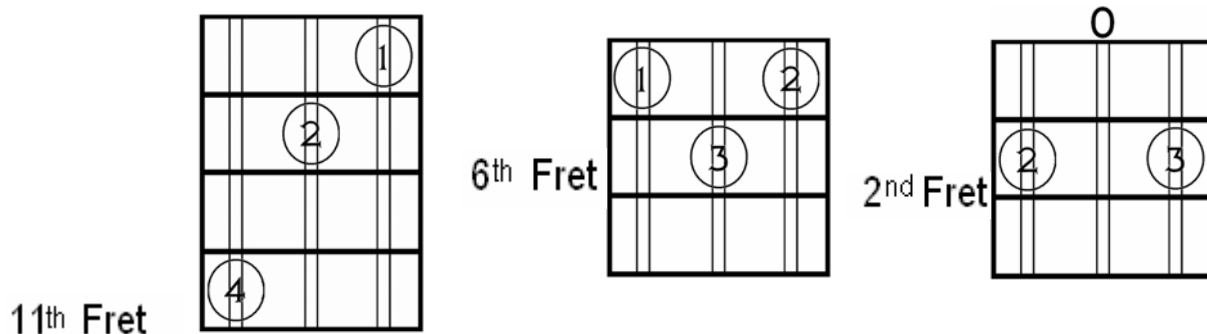
E Diminished or C Dominant 7th



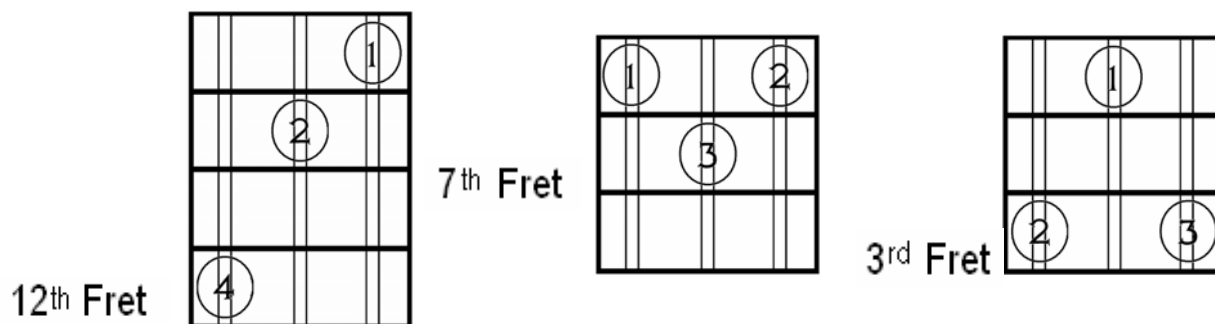
F Diminished or C# Dominant 7th



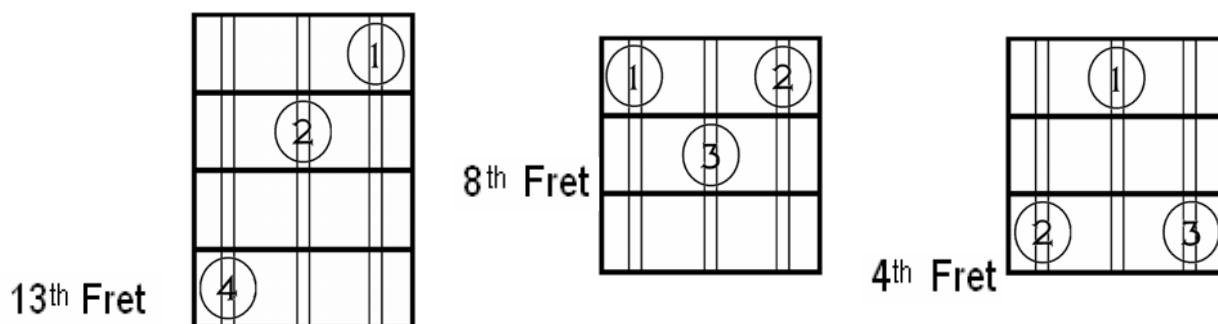
Gb Diminished or D Dominant 7th



G Diminished or D# Dominant 7th



Ab Diminished or E Dominant 7th

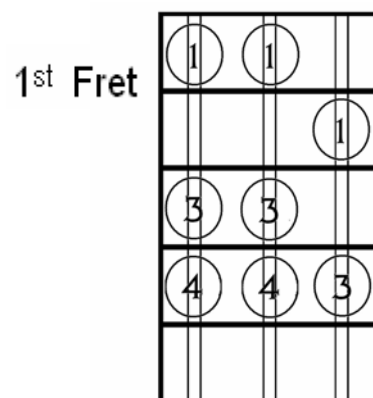
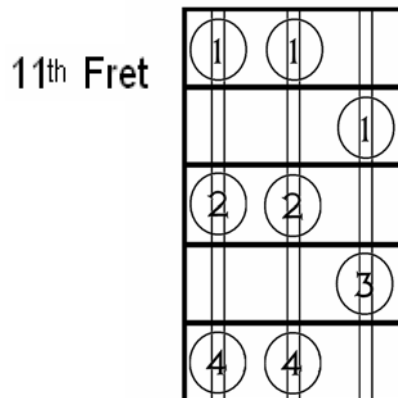
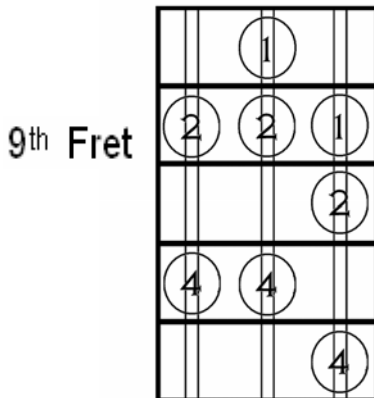
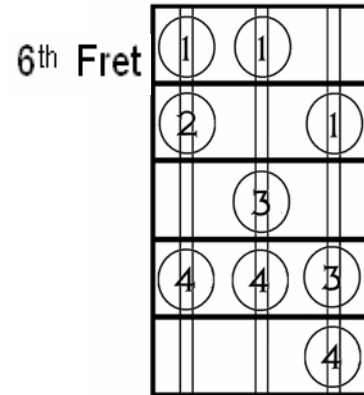
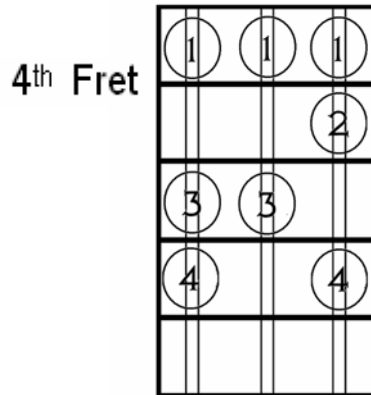
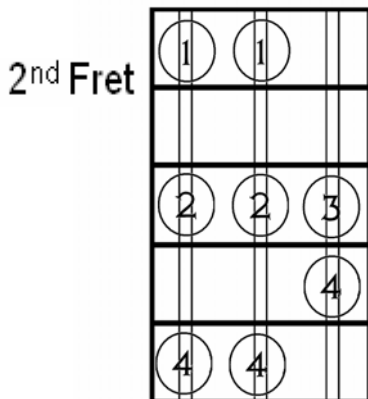
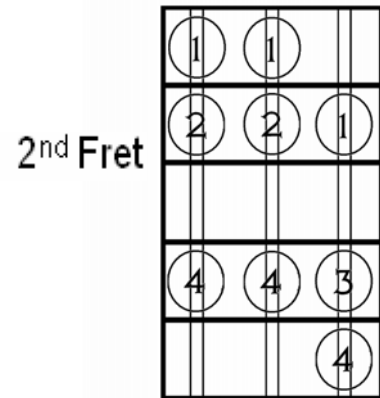


Scales

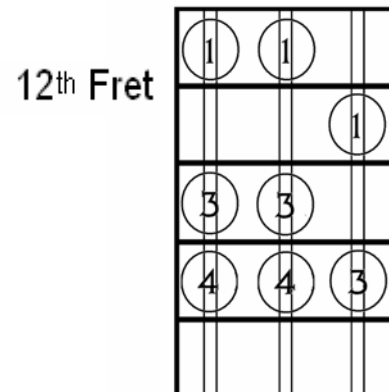
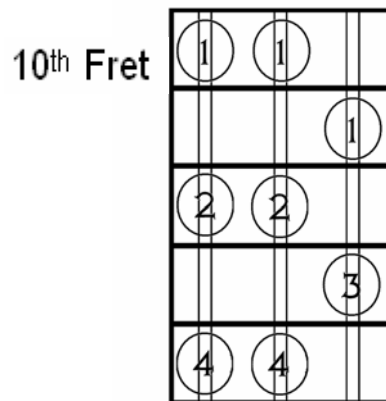
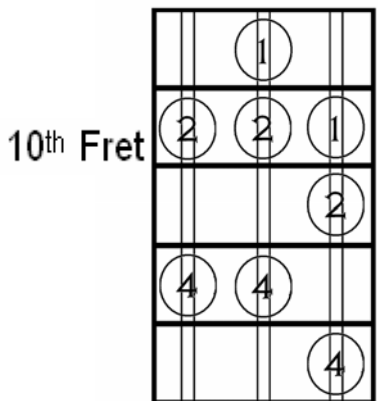
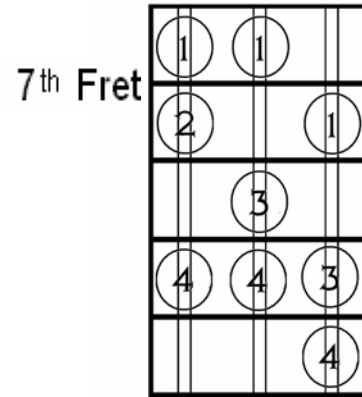
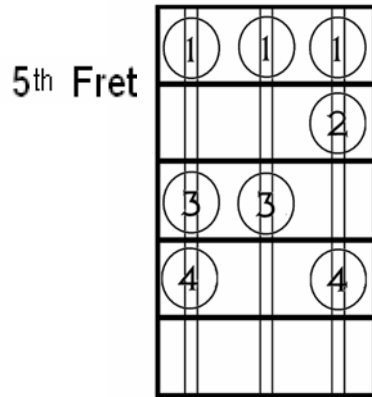
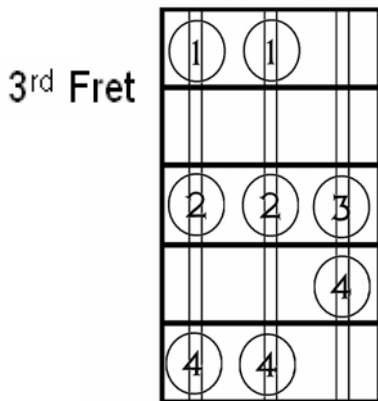
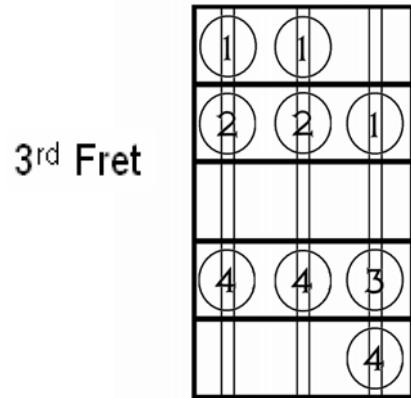
The following charts represent Major scales and the relative Minor scales. The numbers in the chart are the finger numbers. The numbers to the left of the chart reference a fret number. For every scale we are illustrating seven finger patterns. They are all small parts of the whole scale as it is played through-out the neck... All Major and Minor scales shown here are diatonic meaning seven notes. As in all music styles, chromatic embellishments are often explored. When all the chords of a progression fall within the natural diatonic scale, then embellishments are usually used to lead up to a natural note of the scale. A few examples would be that in a Major scale you can embellish up to the third note of the scale and in a Minor scale you can embellish up to the fifth note of the scale. You don't have to stop with flatted thirds or flatted fifths. By all means experiment where ever you can and find your own sounds. One of my favorite out of scale notes is the flatted fifth as used in a minor scale. I have been known to hang on that note and sometimes never resolve. Another example would be in the key of A minor. When the progression goes to an F chord my melody can drop from F chromatically down to Eb and stay there creating an F7 chord. A very powerful sound!



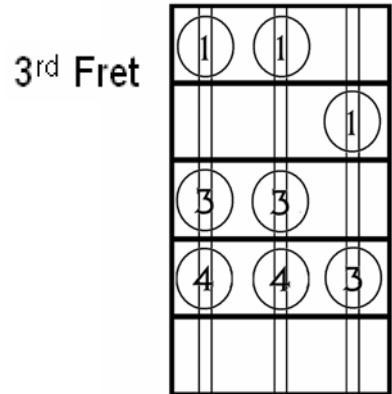
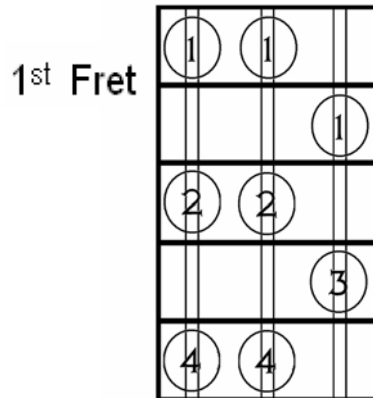
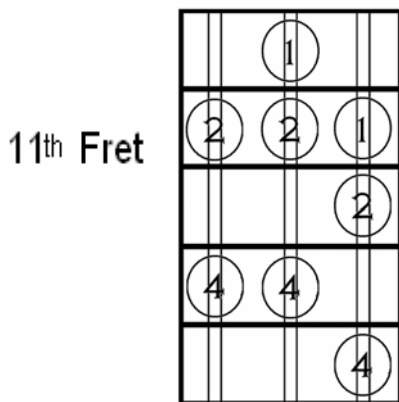
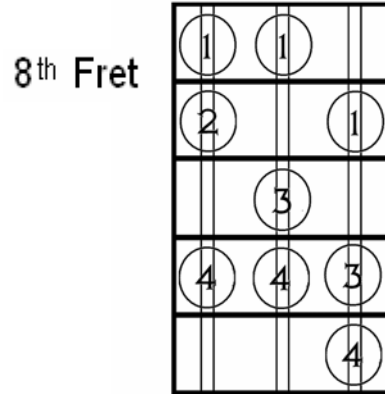
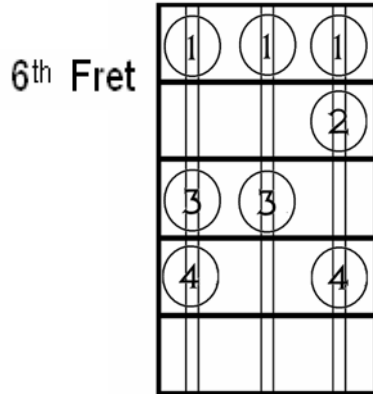
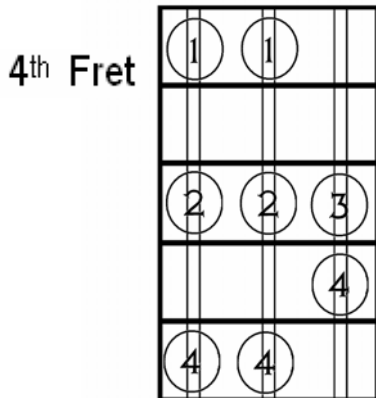
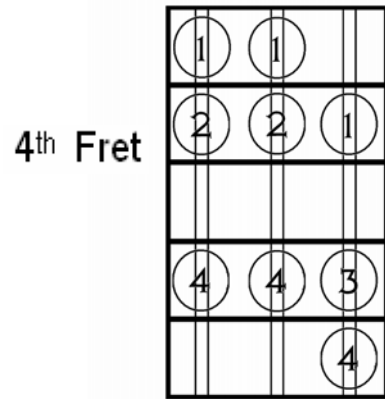
A Major or F# Minor



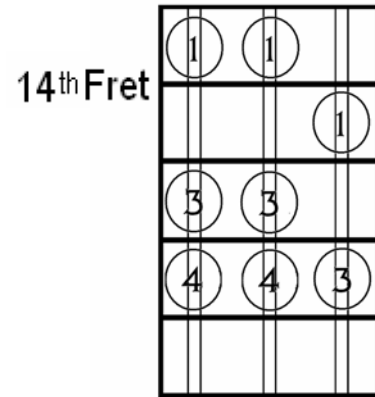
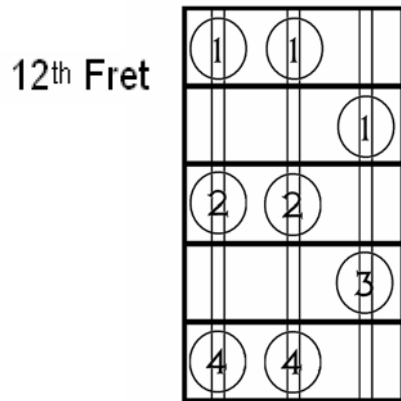
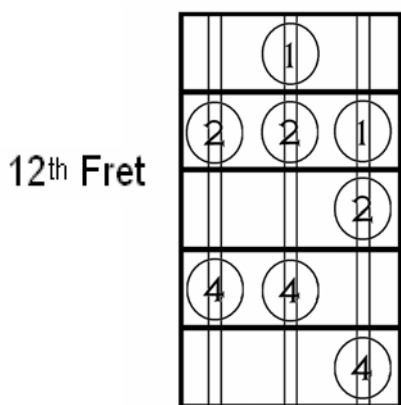
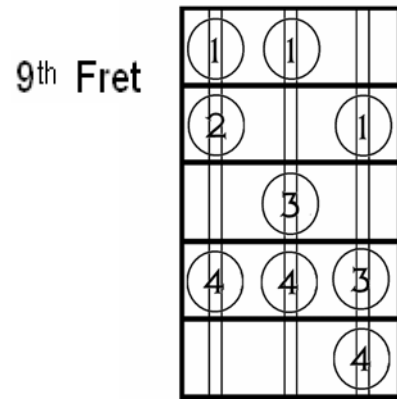
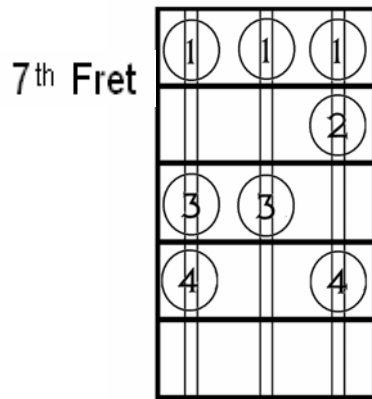
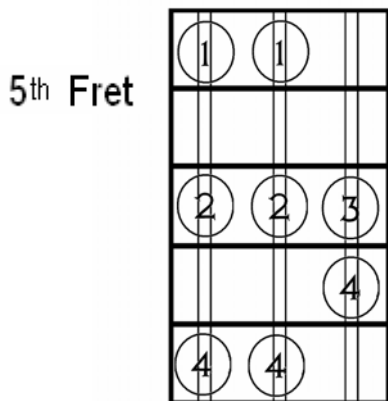
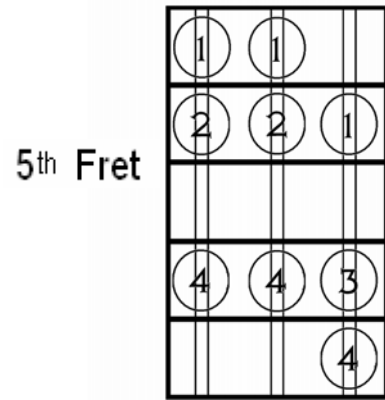
Bb Major of G Minor



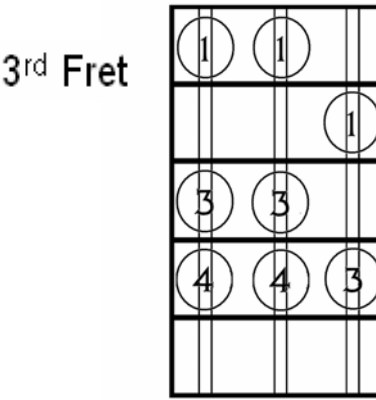
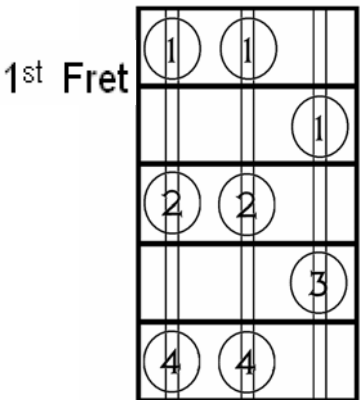
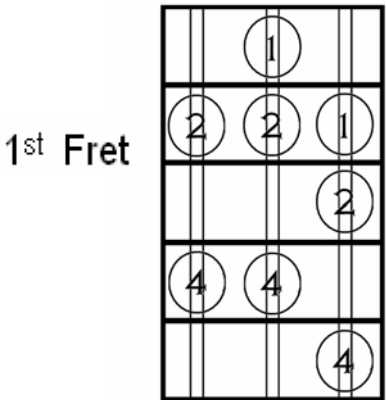
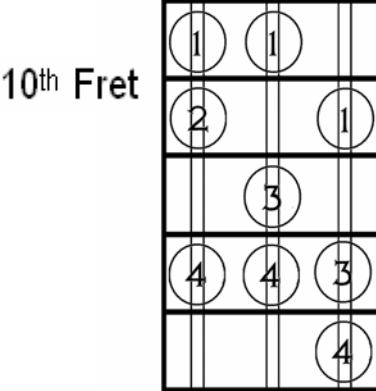
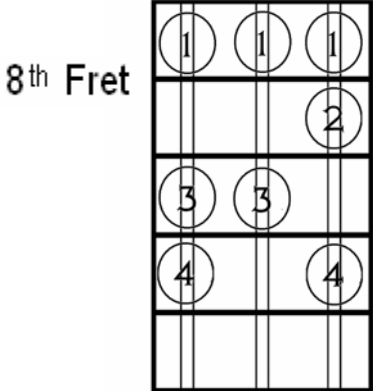
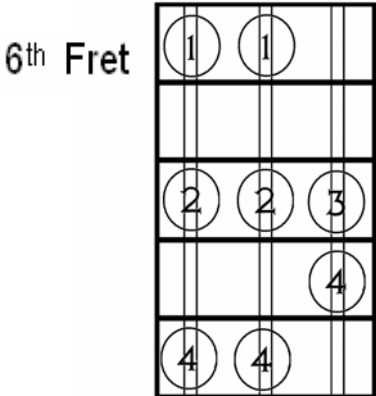
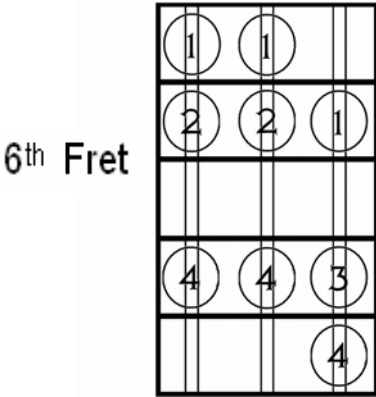
B Major or G# Minor



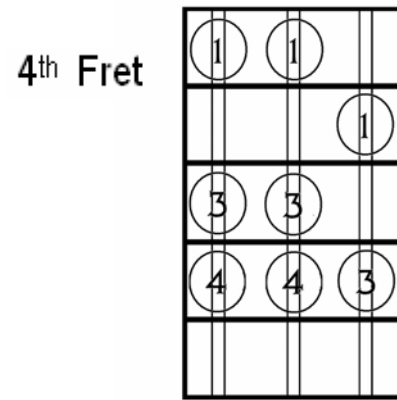
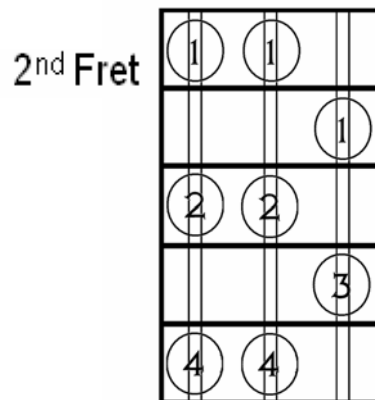
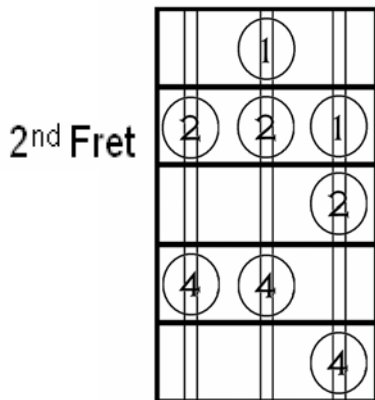
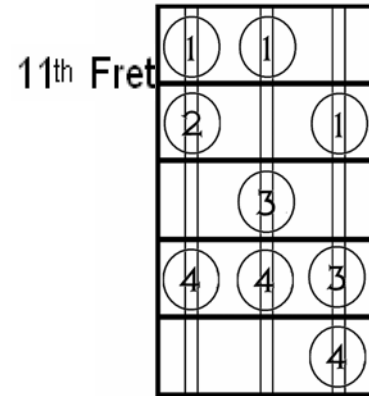
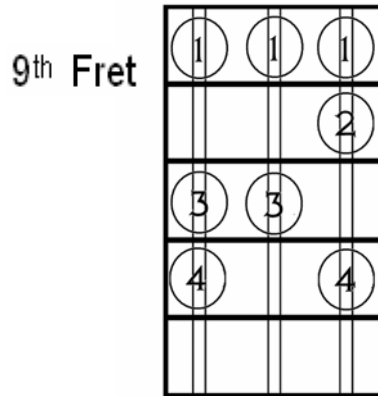
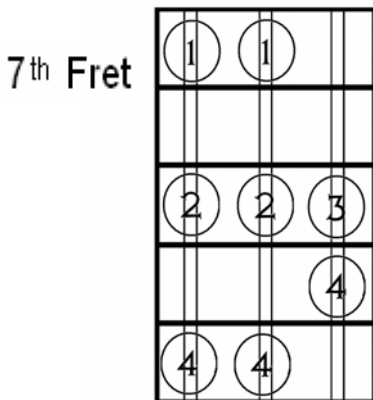
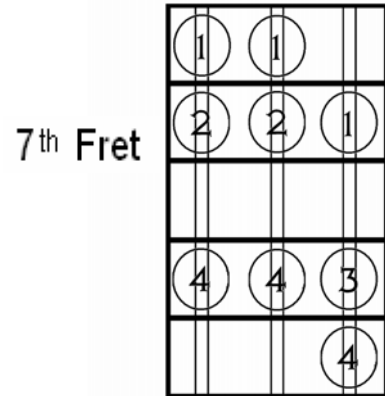
C Major or A Minor



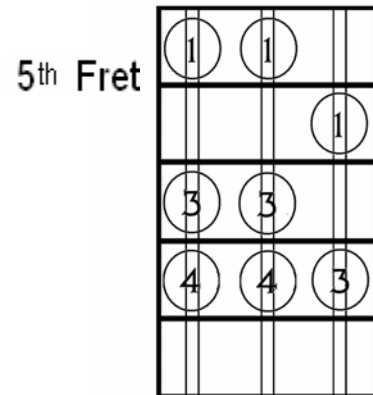
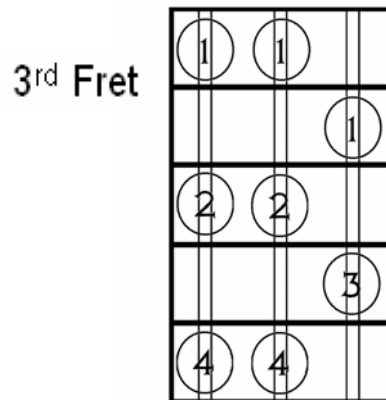
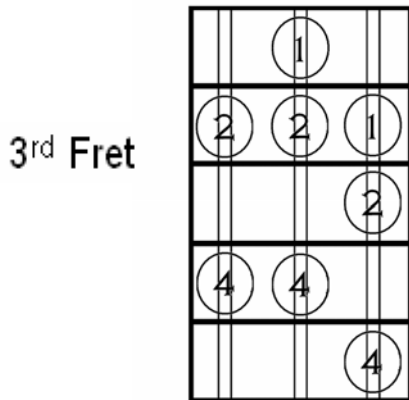
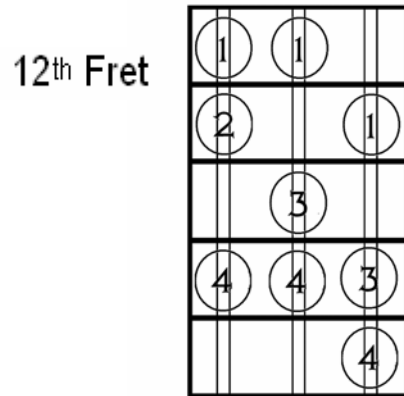
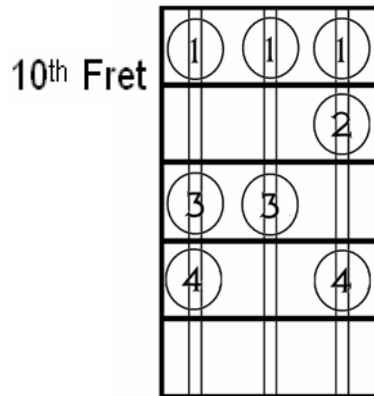
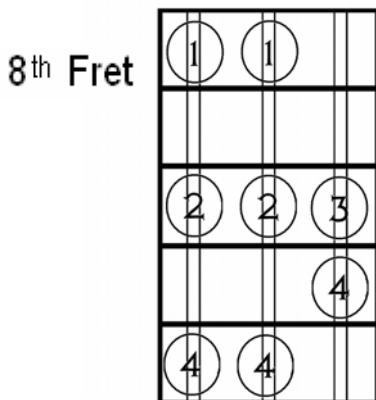
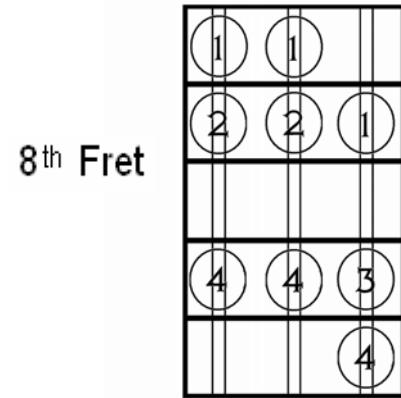
Db Major or Bb Minor



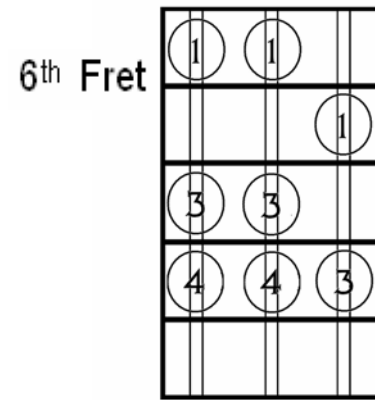
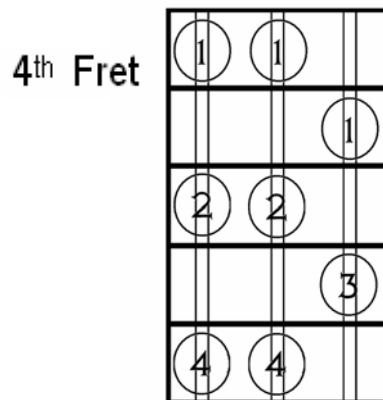
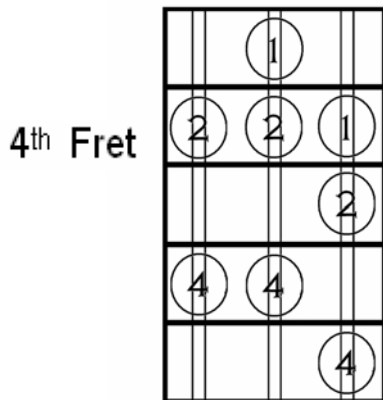
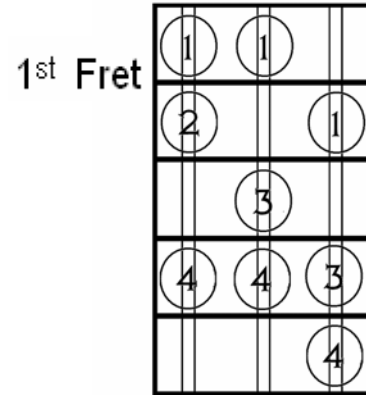
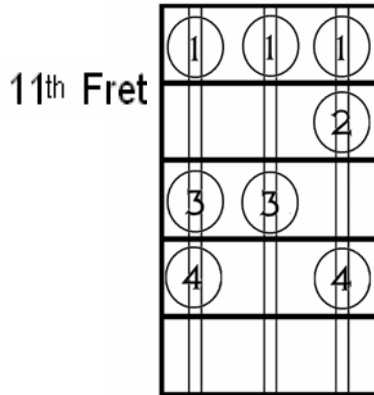
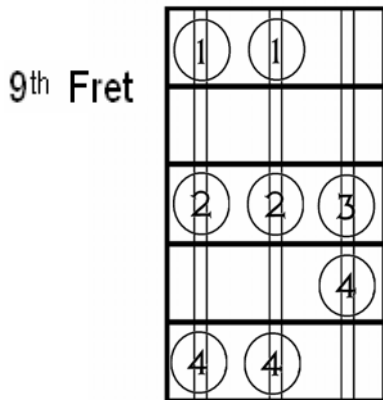
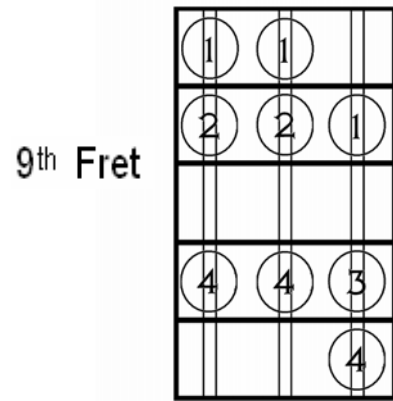
D Major or B Minor



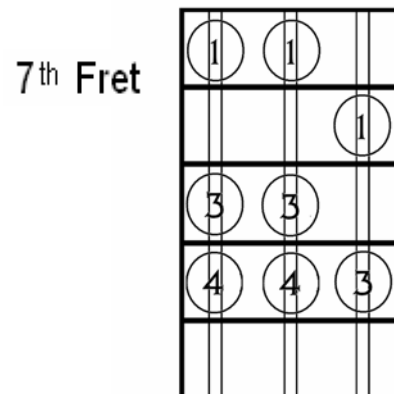
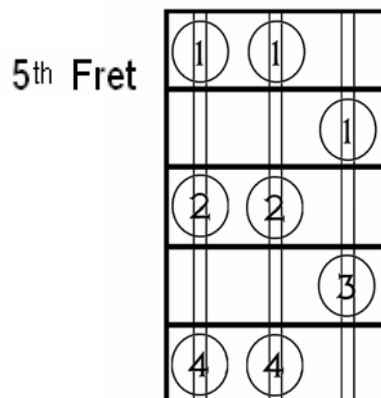
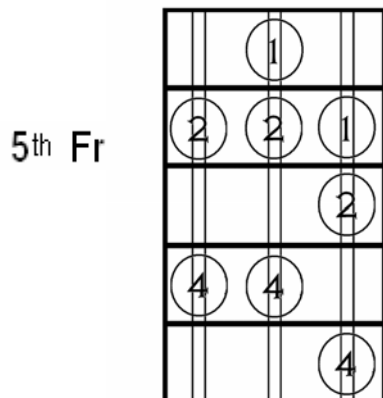
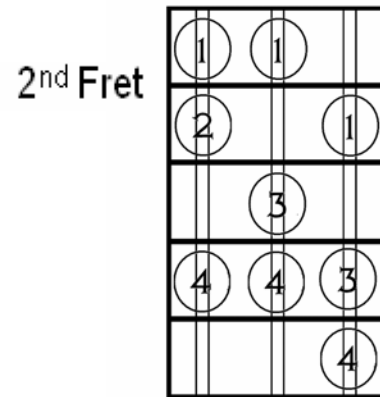
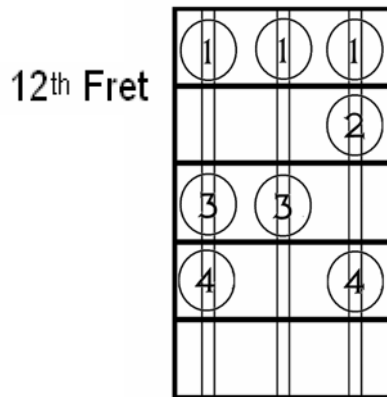
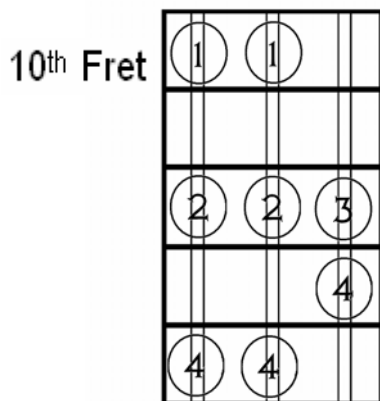
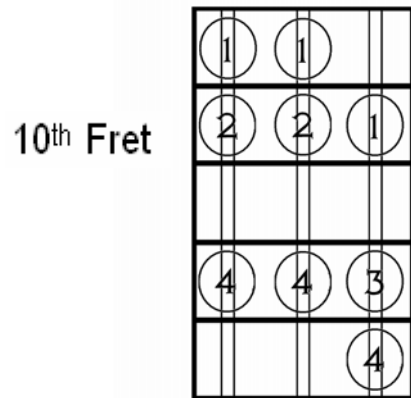
Eb Major or C Minor



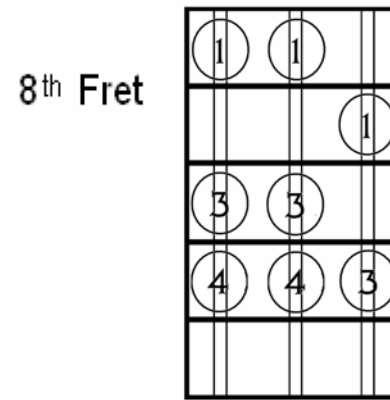
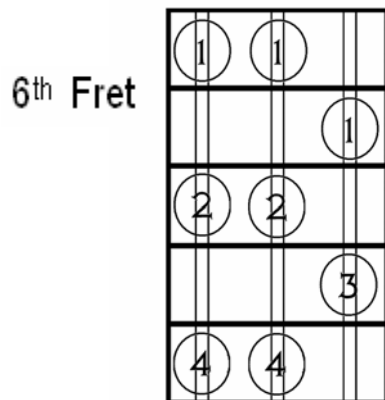
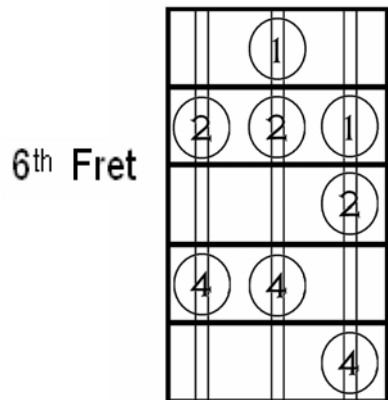
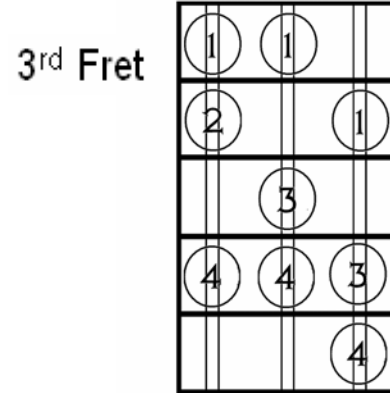
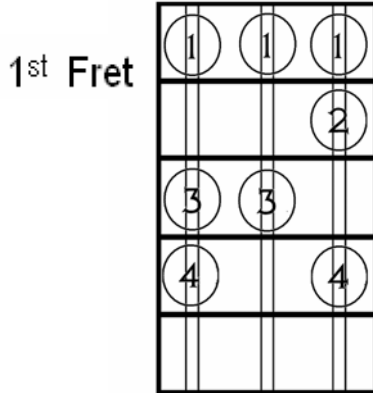
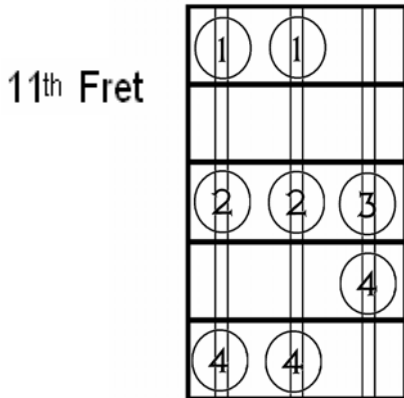
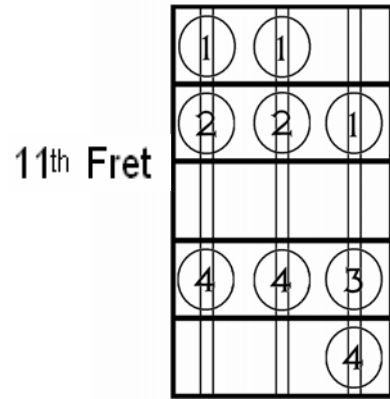
E Major or C# Minor



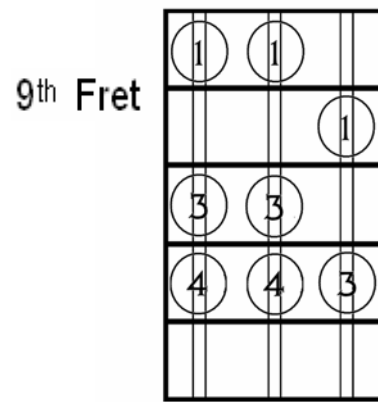
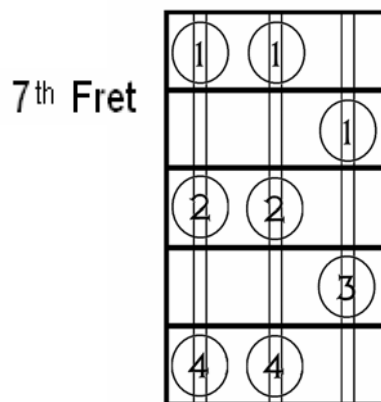
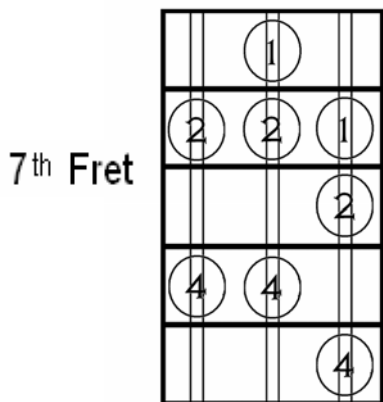
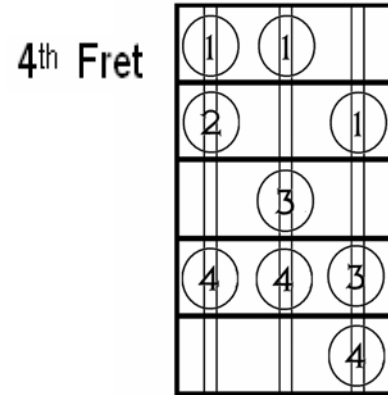
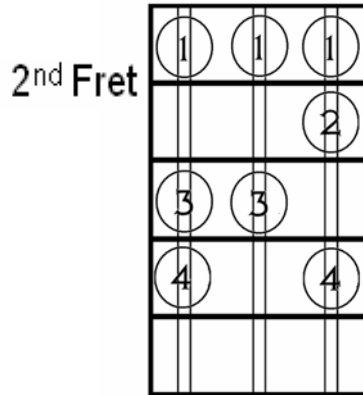
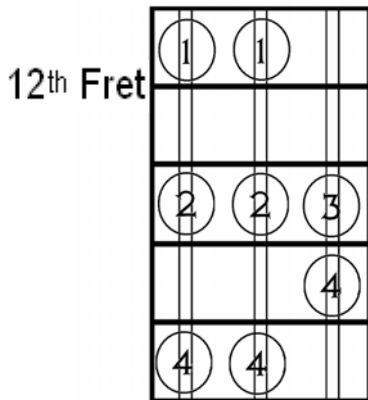
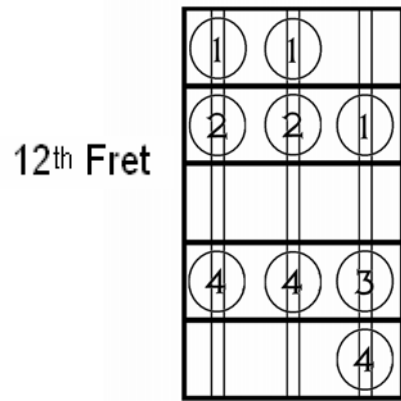
F Major or D Minor



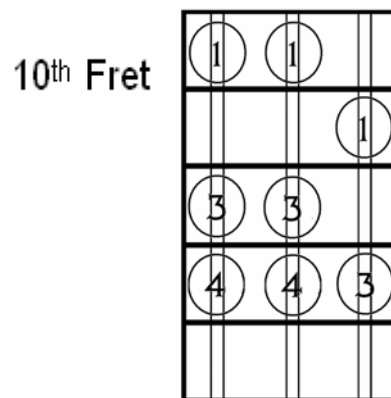
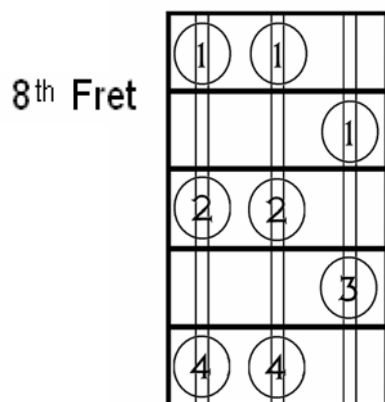
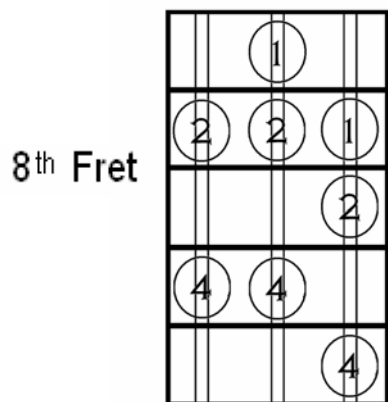
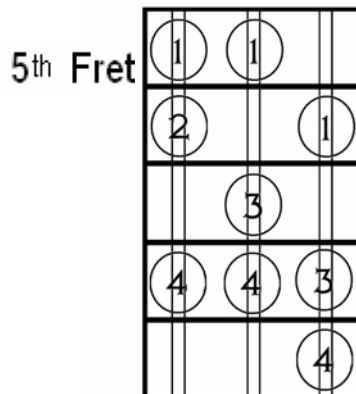
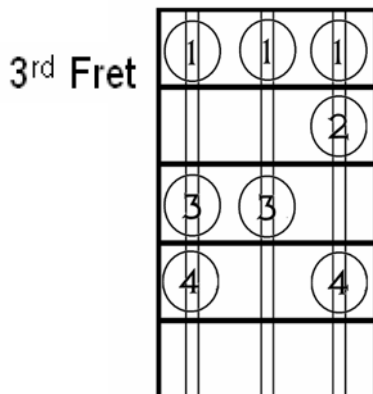
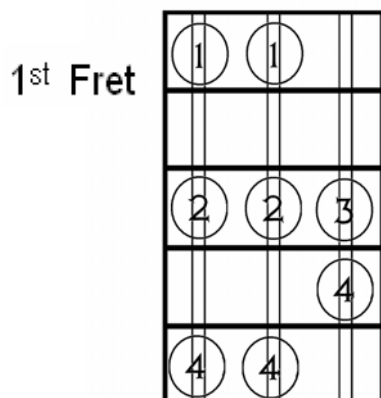
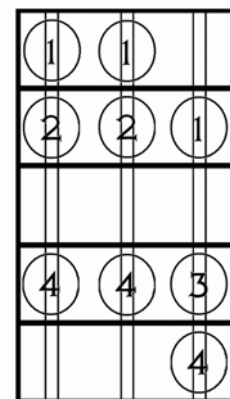
Gb Major or Eb Minor



G Major or E Minor



Ab Major or F Minor

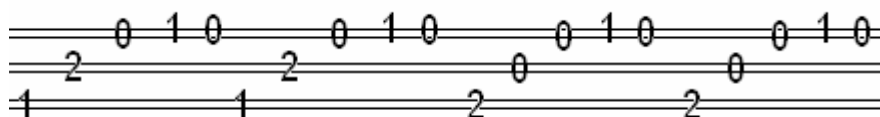


Examples in Tablature

Numbers indicate the fret number. O is open. These phrases are repeated over and over.

Key of A minor.

Goes between E7 and A minor.



Key A minor.

Chords are D minor, E7, D minor, A minor



Key of E minor.

Vamp from E minor to B7



References

Here are some references to listen to in no particular order. The parenthesis indicate groups that they recorded or performed with.

Papa Noel and Papi Oviedo, Elliades Ochoa (As himself and with Buena Vista Social Club), Nelson Gonzales, Mario Hernandez, Arsenio Rodriguez, Nino Rivera (Septeto Matencero, Israel “Cachao” Lopez, Las Estrellas Areito, El Conjunto Modelo), Isaac Oviedo, Compay Segundo (as himself and with Buena Vista Social Club), Junior Rivera (Johnny Pacheco, Yayo “El Indio”, Santiago Seron, Conjunto Imagen, Ralph Santi, Ray Rodriguez) Arturo Harbey (Chappottine Y Su Conjunto, Conjunto Chappottine), Francisco Gonzales (Sexteto National), Victor “Chino” Trias (Conjunto Crema)

Among my personal favorites are:

Buena Vista Social Club

This album is probably my greatest inspiration.

Café Cuba

This album was put out by StarBucks Coffee.

Music of the Coffee Lands

by Putamaya Records

Elliades Ochoa

This gifted artist has put out nothing but great albums. The kind where every single track is a hit!