

My personal approach of using the Iranian santour

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The harmonies on the santour - 3: Triads

In a series of texts, I present the construction of harmonies on the santour. The present text is the third one of the series. *These texts consider that the reader has the theoretical knowledge of harmonies: what is a chord, what distinguishes a major chord from a minor chord etc.*

In the following, I will illustrate the construction of triads on the santour.

First, a reminder of the terminology derived from the tonal harmony:

- A **triad** is a set of three notes that can be stacked vertically into major or minor thirds and named: root, third and fifth.
- In the **root position**, the root note is in the lowest position of the 3 notes: E in the Em chord (EGB).
- In the so-called **first inversion** position, the third is in the lowest position of the 3 notes: G in the Em chord.
- In the so-called **second inversion** position, the fifth is in the lowest position of the 3 notes: G in the Em chord.
- A chord is in the so-called **closed** position if its notes follow each other in order, for example, for an Em in root position, E followed by G followed by B
- A chord is in the so-called **open** position if its notes do not follow each other in order, for example, for an Em in root position, E followed by B followed by G or E followed by the G of the octave above followed by B.

On the santour, there are a high number of possible combinations to produce a triad, especially in open positions. However, some patterns emerge that make it easier to find one's way around.

Reference pattern for the root position chords

The figure 1 shows the Em chord. The grid on the right shows the (simple to remember) construction of this chord in root position. In addition to the first bridge E, this construction is reproducible for the chords having for root the second bridge F, G, A or B.

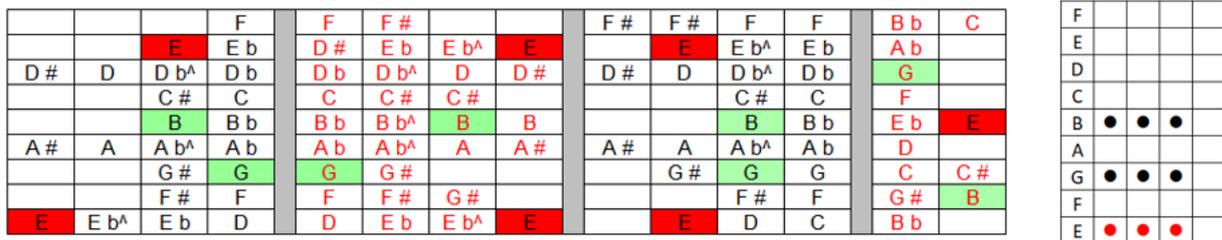


Figure 1

Reference pattern for the first inversion chords

The figure 2 shows the same Em chord. The grid on the right shows the (simple to remember) construction of this chord in the first inversion (G on the lowest note). In addition to the eighth bridge E, this construction is reproducible for the chords having for root the ninth bridge F, D or C.

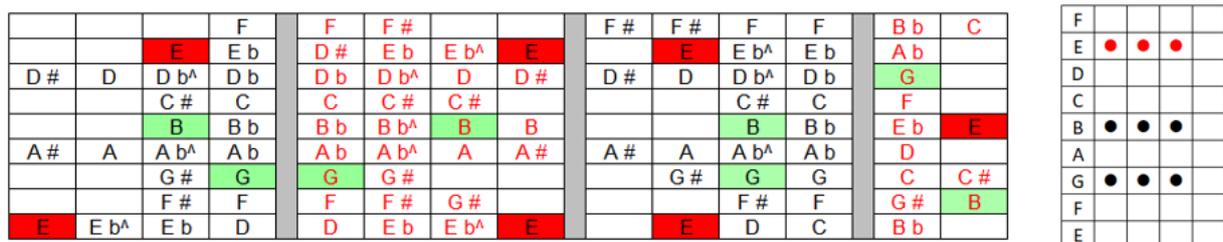


Figure 2

Reference pattern for the second inversion chords

The figure 3 shows the chord of Am. The grid on the right shows the (simple to remember) construction of this chord in the second inversion (E on the lowest note). In addition to note A, this construction is reproducible for the chords having for root B, C or D.

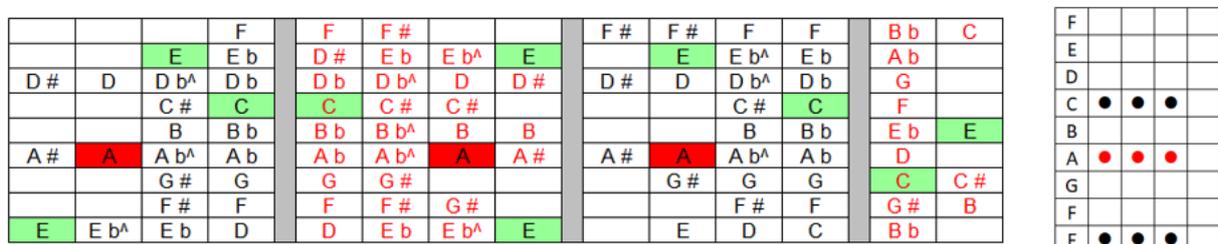


Figure 3