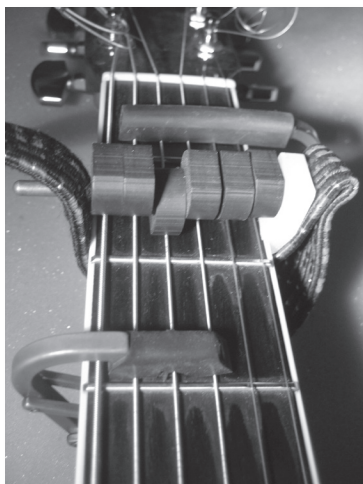


TUNING					
G	B	D#	F#	B	D#
OPEN STRINGS					
G	D	F	A	C	E



A Shubb Drop E (c8b), a Third Hand and a notched Shubb Esus forming the Mordaunt configuration.

I have included about half of my library of Mordaunt Levien chords here, with the standard tuning equivalent next to them. This is about as far from “normal” as I have ventured, and you’ll notice how many simple fingerings will map to “spaghetti chords” in standard tuning. These truly are some new and special chords, and only 2 of them (#26 & #59) are playable in standard tuning.

The Mordaunt Configuration

To simulate what Mordaunt Levien’s 1825 tuning and capo configuration would sound like on a modern 6-string guitar, you need 3 partial capos, and an unusual tuning. I have recently become very captivated by this, in spite of the clumsy appearance of all the capos on the guitar (see photo) I am arranging some Beatles songs and somewhat complex pop melodies that suggest themselves. As I explore the fingerings and scales. It is well worth the effort and when you start to explore it you begin to understand why Levien built guitars specifically for this.

It makes you wonder if Levien and Light used the word “harp” to describe their instruments because this configuration allows some very harp-like playing styles. The chords and scales sound best when heavily arpeggiated, and this is a fingerpicker’s dream tuning. If you work at it, you can find a lot of harp-like melodic runs where the notes cascade from string to string instead of the stiffer sound of formal standard tuning scales.

You first need to use a partial capo to simulate the staggered nut which leaves the low string 1 fret longer than the others. I recommend tuning to G B D# F# B D# which will sound a C chord with the capo on the first fret and allow you to play and think in C major. This is an unusual C tuning (the common one we see used today is C G C G C E) and it represents the bottom 6 strings of the 7-string Levien guitar. When you strum the “open strings” without the extra triangle of capos you get a C chord: G C E G C E. When you put on the other 2 capos, you end up with a sort of a “harp chord” that is every note of the C scale but the 7th: G D F A C E

This would be an open B tuning, except that the low string is not capoed, so it needs to be tuned a half step sharp above the low F# that would normally be the 5th of that chord. (Pretty confusing already, huh?)

You might even want to tune everything down 1 or even 2 more frets to try this tuning. The low E string could break if tuned to G, as could the A string tuned up to B.

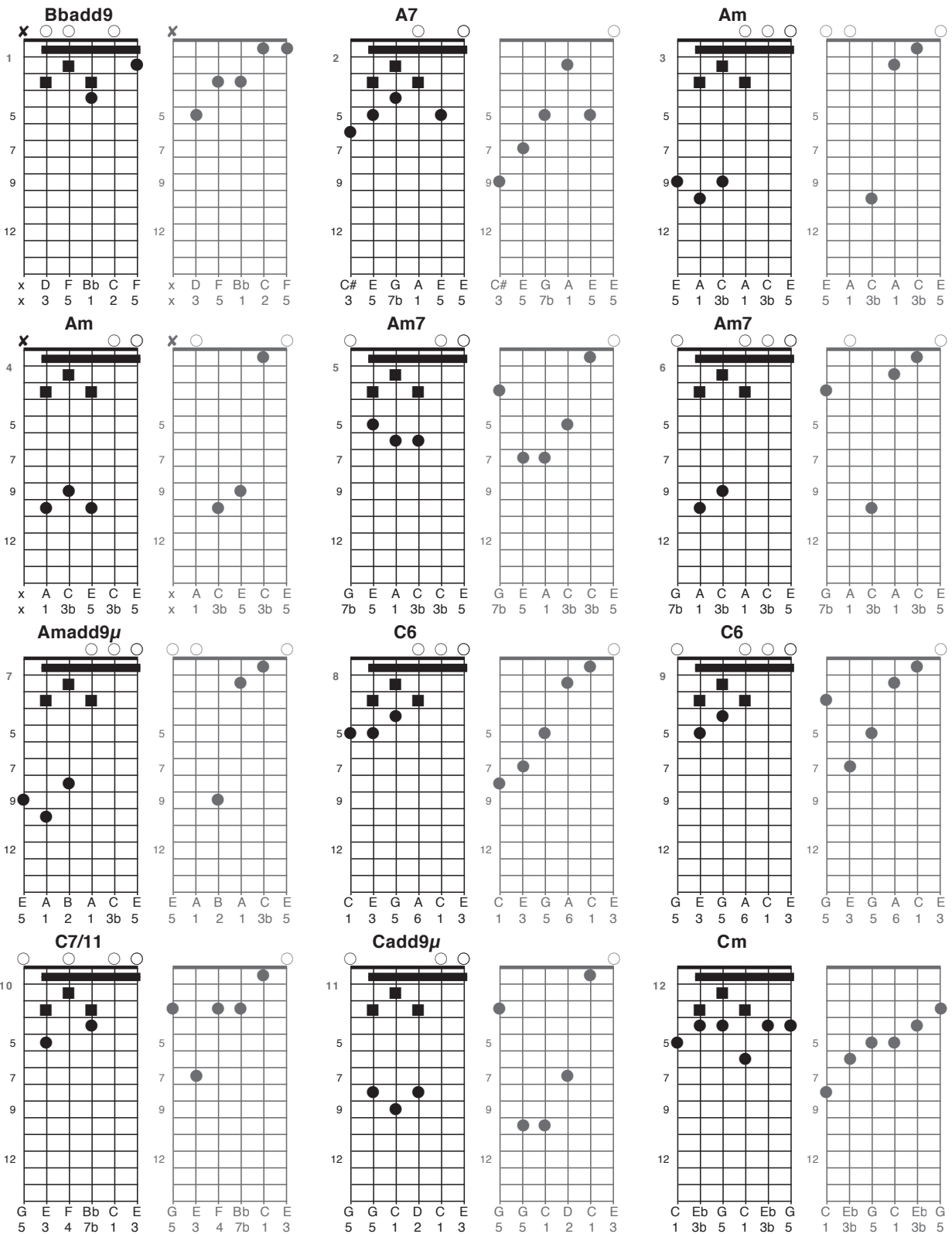
This is quite hard to do with standard string gauges and with modern partial capo tools, but with an offset regular capo to clamp fret 1, a *Third Hand* on fret 2, and an *Esus* capo with a notch cut in it for fret 3 you can get the gist of this amazing configuration. No doubt with the Levien guitar you could easily reach over and around the capoed strings, and a number of chords shown here in the diagrams are not really possible with the capos.

This is an excerpt from the first edition of
Capo Voodoo- Book 8:
“The BIG BOOK of Partial Capos”
by Harvey Reid
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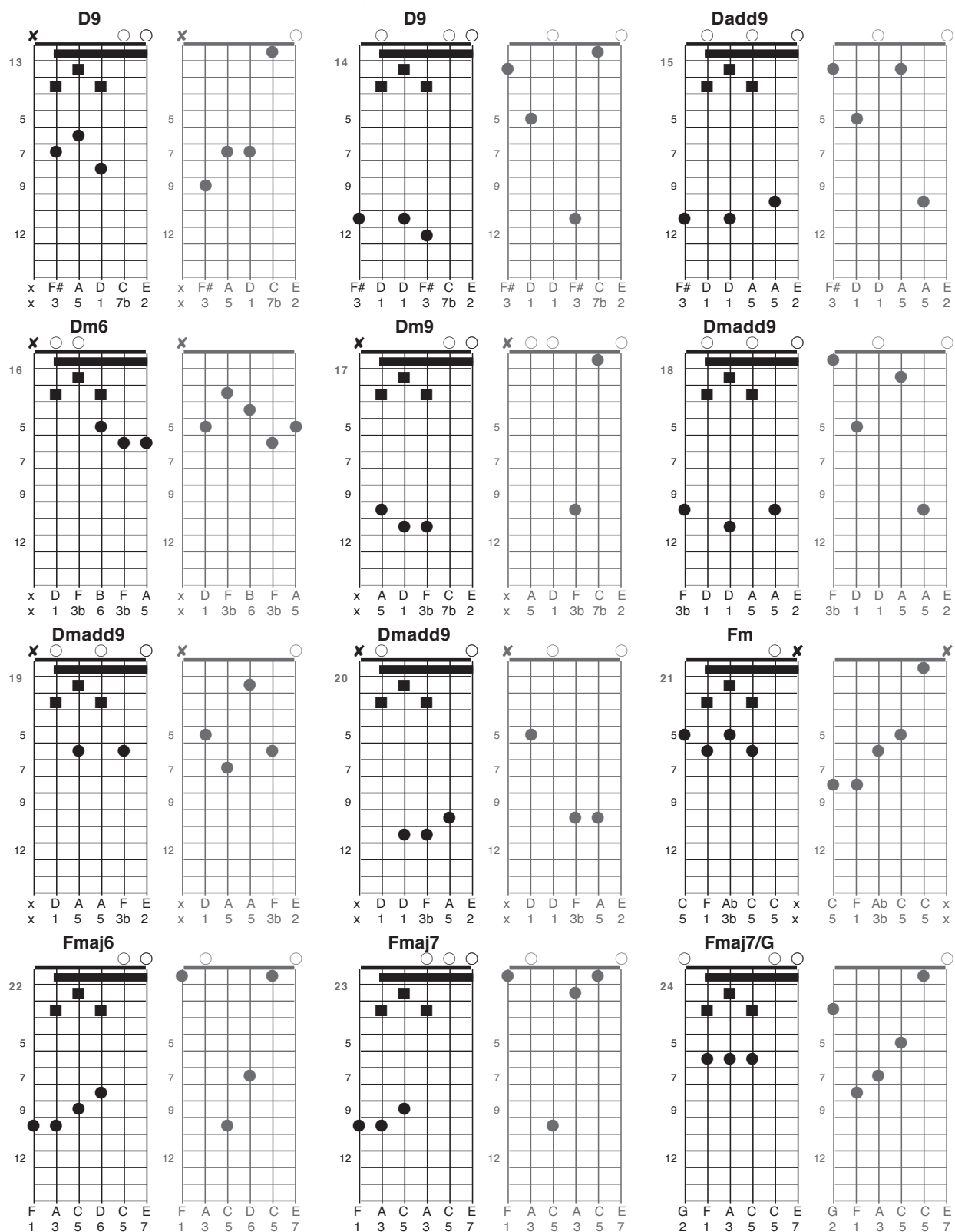
Some Chords in the Mordaunt Capo Configuration p.1

TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]



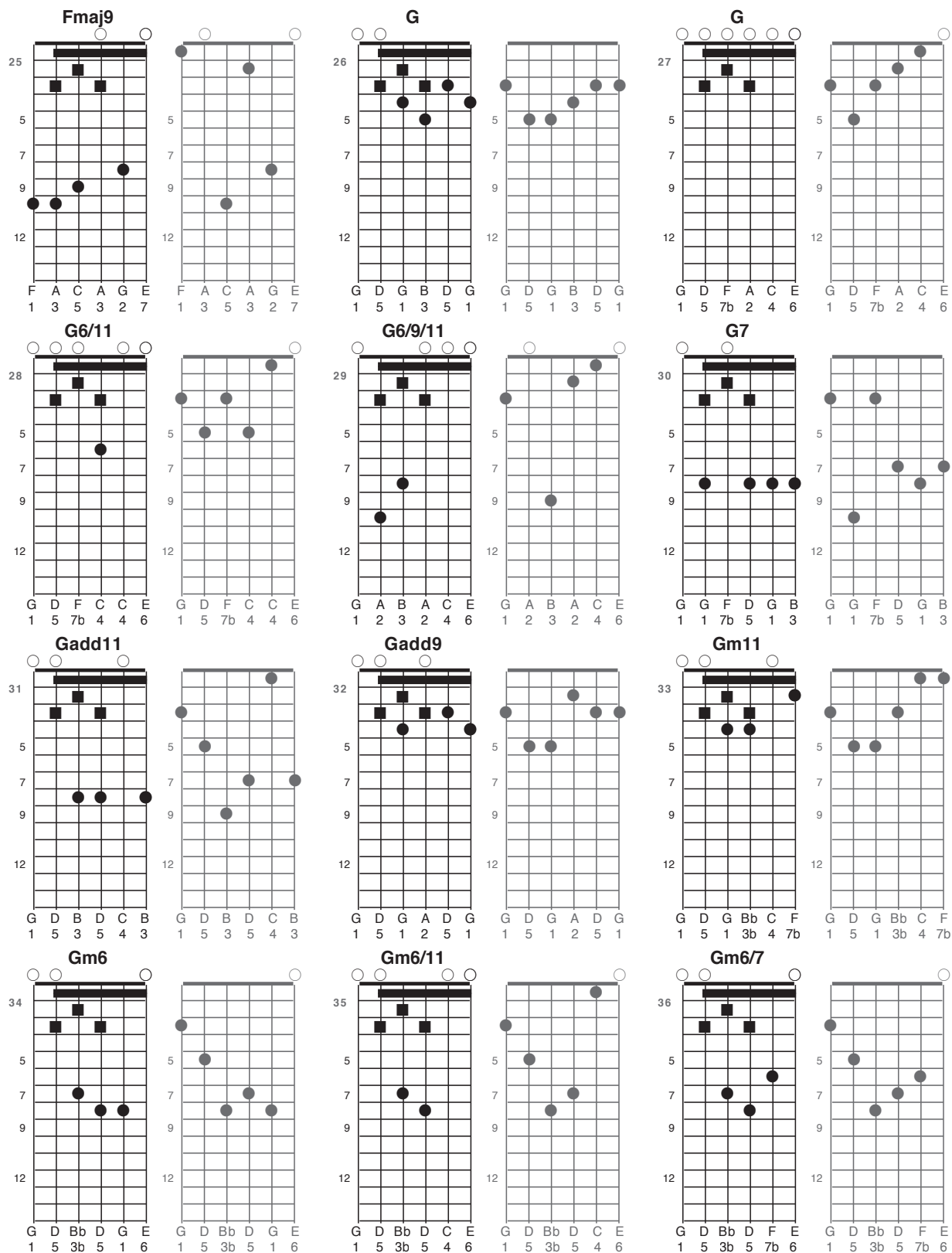
Some Chords in the Mordaunt Capo Configuration p.2

TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]



Some Chords in the Mordaunt Capo Configuration p.3

TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]

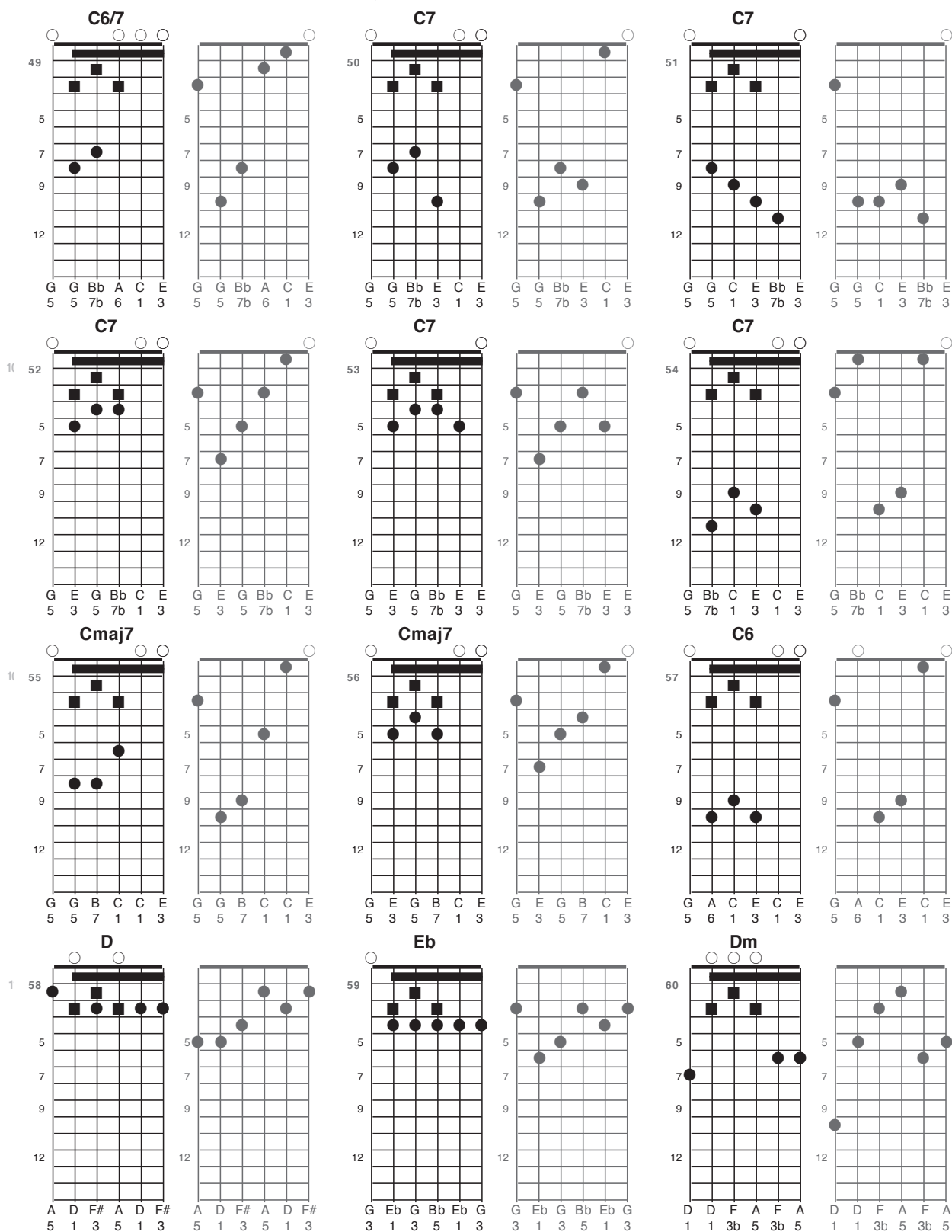


TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]



Some Chords in the Mordaunt Capo Configuration p.5

TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]



Some Chords in the Mordaunt Capo Configuration p.6

TUNING: G B D[#] F[#] B D[#]

