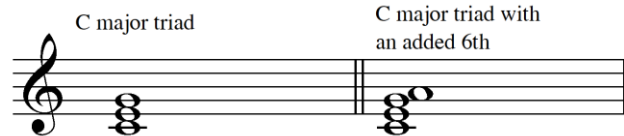


## Sixth Chords

Barbershop harmony uses two types of sixth chords: the “added 6<sup>th</sup>” chord and a “substitute 6<sup>th</sup>” chord.

### The Added 6<sup>th</sup>

The “added 6<sup>th</sup>” type adds the interval of a *major sixth* to an existing major or minor triad (hence, its name), creating a chord with **four** different notes.



In the opening bars of *Don't Be a Baby, Baby* the added sixth occurs on the tonic (I) chord, with the lead singing the added 6<sup>th</sup> (on the syllable “by”).

The image shows a musical score for the song "Don't Be a Baby, Baby". It features a treble clef and a bass clef, both in 12/8 time. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The lyrics are: "Don't be a ba - by, ba - by,". The score shows a C major triad with an added 6th (F) in the treble clef, which is highlighted by a box. The bass clef part shows a C major triad. The added sixth chord is used on the tonic (I) chord.

The added sixth may also appear in the other voices, but is less common in the bass. The *Lone Prairie* tag uses an added 6<sup>th</sup> chord on the subdominant (IV) chord, this time with the tenor singing the added 6<sup>th</sup>.

The image shows a musical score for the "Lone Prairie" tag. It features a treble clef and a bass clef, both in common time (C). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "And when I die, you can". The score shows a C major triad with an added 6th (F) in the bass clef, which is highlighted by a box and labeled "IV<sup>add6</sup>". The treble clef part shows a C major triad. The added sixth chord is used on the subdominant (IV) chord.

In *How Deep is the Ocean?* a 6<sup>th</sup> added to a minor tonic chord. (Baritone has the added 6<sup>th</sup>.)

How deep is the o - cean? I'll tell you no lie.

How i add 6

The use of a minor subdominant with an added sixth ( $iv^{add6}$ ) is *extremely* popular in barbershop (especially as the penultimate chord in a tag). (Note: it looks like a  $ii^{07}$  chord in first inversion.)

In Dix - ie land where I was born.

$iv^{add6}$

With the exception of  $iv^{add6}$ , barbershop harmony tends to use added 6<sup>th</sup> chords sparingly. Overuse will give the arrangement a swing or doo-wop flavor.

### The Substitute 6<sup>th</sup>.

The second type of 6<sup>th</sup> chord is a **triad** (a 3-note chord) that uses the sixth above the chord root instead of the fifth, in a sense substituting for that chord member. This type sonority is called a “substitute 6<sup>th</sup>” chord and is the more commonly encountered form of the 6<sup>th</sup> chord. This is what most barbershoppers understand by the term ‘barbershop 6th’ chord. However, following traditional music theory textbooks, I call this sonority a ‘substitute 6th’ (sub6) chord.

C major triad

C major triad with a 6th (A) substituting for the 5th (G)

Because it is a 3-note chord (and not a seventh chord) you'll find this sonority associated with particular harmonies that tend to occur most often as triads, such as I and IV in particular.

The 'sub6' chord is most often encountered when the melody note lies a 6<sup>th</sup> above the chord root. Here are two examples you've been singing for years!

Heart of my heart, I love you Let me call you

I<sup>sub 6</sup> IV<sup>sub 6</sup>

Detailed description: This musical score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The first two measures of the accompaniment feature a sub6 chord (F major triad with a B-flat in the bass). The next two measures feature a sub6 chord (B-flat major triad with a D in the bass). The lyrics are: 'Heart of my heart, I love you Let me call you'.

Another very familiar use of the sub6 chord occurs on the last chord of a tag, when the baritone often has a short 'tiddley.' The chord on the downbeat of the last bar is a D major chord, not a B minor chord' the bari's B simply delays the arrival of the true chord note, the A.

He may be no good, but he's all mine. all mine.

I<sup>sub 6</sup> (5)

Detailed description: This musical score is in 2/4 time and D major. The melody is in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The melody has a long note on 'mine.' in the final bar. The accompaniment features a sub6 chord (D major triad with a B in the bass) in the final bar. The lyrics are: 'He may be no good, but he's all mine. all mine.'.