


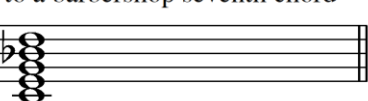
### 9<sup>th</sup> Chords

A 9<sup>th</sup> chord is created by adding that interval (an octave plus a major second) to either a triad or a seventh chord. Although a chordal 9<sup>th</sup> can be added to any of the four triad types or five seventh chord types, in barbershop harmony the ninth is almost entirely restricted to either major triads or barbershop seventh chords.

The interval of a major 9th is added to a triad.

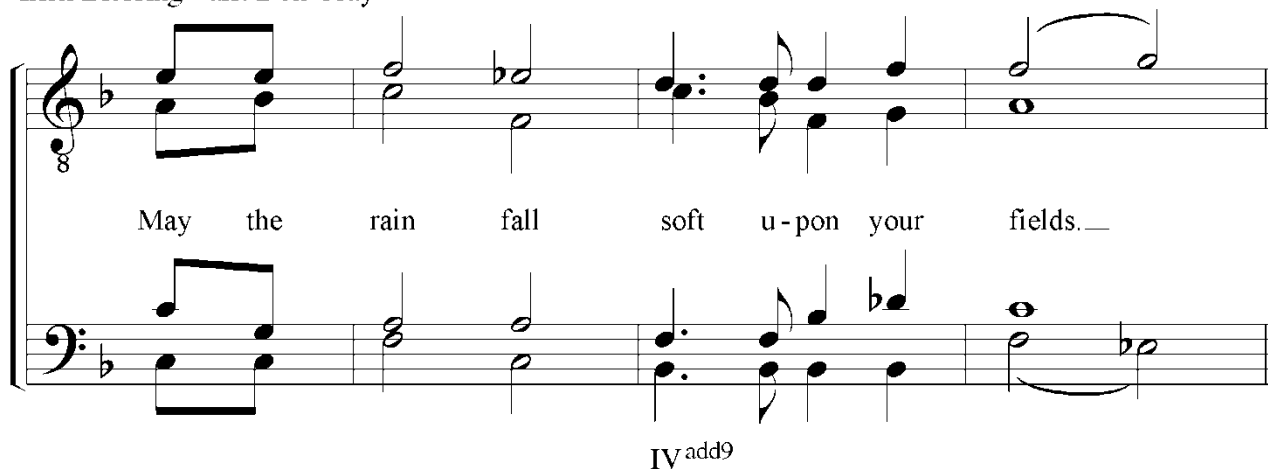


The interval of a major 9th is added to a barbershop seventh chord



**THE MAJOR TRIAD WITH AN ADDED 9<sup>TH</sup>.** This type of ninth chord occurs most often when the melody has the chordal 9<sup>th</sup>, as this passage from the *Irish Blessing* shows. However, it is possible for the 9<sup>th</sup> to appear in one of the other voice parts. The way to label this chord is to use the appropriate Roman numeral label along with “add9.”

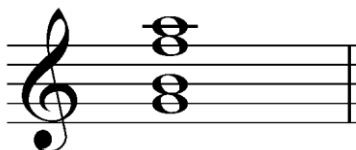
*Irish Blessing* - arr. Don Gray



IV<sup>add9</sup>

**THE BARBERSHOP SEVENTH CHORD WITH AN ADDED 9<sup>TH</sup>** (also called a dominant ninth chord). The first and obvious problem is that this sonority is a 5-note chord and barbershop uses only four voices at a time! To deal with this issue barbershop arrangers have found two solutions: 1) omit the chordal 5<sup>th</sup>, or 2) omit the root! Let’s look at each type in turn.

The example below shows a dominant 9<sup>th</sup> chord lacking the fifth.



When arranged in the barbershop style, this chord is usually used in root position with the chordal 9<sup>th</sup> most often in the tenor and chordal 7<sup>th</sup> in the lead, as shown in Lou Perry's arrangement of *Smilin' Through*. There are no special Roman numeral labels to show that the fifth is omitted.

*Smilin' Through* - arr. Lou Perry

Those two eyes of blue still smil - in' through at

II<sup>9</sup>

Here's the same chord, but this time the ninth is placed in the lead. It also is built on the lowered seventh scale step (♭VII).

*Lonely, So Lonely* - Mac Huff

Lone - ly for you am I.

♭VII<sup>9</sup>

A second version of the dominant ninth chord **OMITS THE ROOT!**

Now, you might think that this type of ninth is rare, but, in fact the opposite is true—it's extremely common, especially when the ninth is part of the melody. (The chordal fifth is almost always placed in the bass.) The B—D—F—A chord above spell a B<sup>♭7</sup>, but it's the context that will make clear the it's actually a G<sup>9</sup> chord but without the G. Once you know how to recognize the “rootless” dominant 9<sup>th</sup> chord, you'll discover it frequently in barbershop arrangements. Let's look a few examples.

In *Down Our Way*, the chord on the word “and” appears to be an E<sup>9</sup> chord, but the context (sandwiched between a pair of II<sup>7</sup> chords) makes clear that this is a C<sup>9</sup> chord, with the C missing. (Note that the tenor and bari have the same notes in the last three bars.)

The image shows a musical score for the song "Down Our Way" in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The score consists of two staves: a treble staff (soprano) and a bass staff (bass). The lyrics are: "Down our way, both night and day." The chord progression is as follows:
 

- Bar 1: Treble staff has a whole note chord (F4, A4, Bb4, D5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 2: Treble staff has a whole note chord (G4, Bb4, D5, F5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 3: Treble staff has a whole note chord (A4, Bb4, D5, F5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 4: Treble staff has a whole note chord (Bb4, D5, F5, Ab5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled II<sup>7</sup>.
- Bar 5: Treble staff has a whole note chord (C5, Eb5, G5, Bb5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled II<sup>9</sup> (no root).
- Bar 6: Treble staff has a whole note chord (D5, F5, Ab5, C6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled II<sup>7</sup>.

 A box highlights the chord on the word "and" (Bar 5) in both staves.

This example, from *Sweet and Lovely*, contains both types of dominant ninth chords. The first chord on the word “while” is a true dominant ninth chord (containing the root and ninth, with the lead on the ninth, which then drops to the chord root on the word “you’re.” On the word “by” the ninth is in the tenor (which then moves to the root on beat 3), and on the word “my” the ninth is in the bari (which moves to the root on beat 2). In both cases the ninth acts like a decoration, moving down by step to the chord root (changing the chords to simple barbershop seventh chords). Finally, note the use of circle of fifth progression in the last three bars: VI—II—V. This context helps to identify each of the ninth chords as a substitute for a barbershop seventh chord with the same root.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Sweet and Lovely" in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The score consists of two staves: a treble staff (soprano) and a bass staff (bass). The lyrics are: "All the while you're by my". The chord progression is as follows:
 

- Bar 1: Treble staff has a whole note chord (F4, A4, Bb4, D5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 2: Treble staff has a whole note chord (G4, Bb4, D5, F5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 3: Treble staff has a whole note chord (A4, Bb4, D5, F5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3).
- Bar 4: Treble staff has a whole note chord (Bb4, D5, F5, Ab5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled VI<sup>9</sup> (no fifth).
- Bar 5: Treble staff has a whole note chord (C5, Eb5, G5, Bb5); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled VI<sup>9</sup> (no root).
- Bar 6: Treble staff has a whole note chord (D5, F5, Ab5, C6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled VI<sup>7</sup>.
- Bar 7: Treble staff has a whole note chord (E5, G5, Bb5, D6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled II<sup>9</sup> (no root).
- Bar 8: Treble staff has a whole note chord (F5, Ab5, C6, Eb6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled II<sup>7</sup>.
- Bar 9: Treble staff has a whole note chord (G5, Bb5, D6, F6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled V<sup>9</sup> (no root).
- Bar 10: Treble staff has a whole note chord (A5, Bb5, D6, F6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled V<sup>7</sup>.
- Bar 11: Treble staff has a whole note chord (Bb5, D6, F6, Ab6); Bass staff has a whole note chord (Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3). This chord is labeled bII<sup>7</sup>.

 The progression from Bar 7 to Bar 11 (II<sup>9</sup>—II<sup>7</sup>—V<sup>9</sup>—V<sup>7</sup>—bII<sup>7</sup>) is a circle of fifth progression.