

Minor 6th or Dominant 9th?

These four tones are the source of frequent lively debates among music students and barbershop arrangers on how to name the chord! It is a chameleon—can be called many names and serve multiple purposes in an arrangement, depending on how it is voiced and how it fits into a harmonic progression. An online “chord finder” lists SEVEN different names! Sweet Adelines simplifies (confuses?) the issue by narrowing that list down to two possibilities—minor 6th or dominant 9th.

The example in the first measure below appears in the Music Theory modules of the ACP and the DCP. It is not a typical barbershop voicing, and often confuses our candidates. The multiple choices given are: major triad, dominant 9th, minor 7th, dominant 7th.

Db, F, G, Bb Bb, Db, F, G=Bbm6 Eb,G,Bb,Db,F=Eb9 omit root Typical BBS use Eb7 Eb9 Eb7

Examples of Dominant 9th and Minor 6th in *It's the Music*

Ab7 Ab9 Ab7 Ab7 Ab9 Ab7 F9 F7 Gm7 Db Bbm6 F

trou - ble and strife come our er song each day

In every instance in these examples, the dominant 9th leads to a dominant 7th and is easier to identify. There are other instances of the dominant 9th in *It's the Music* that do not lead to a dominant 7th and are more difficult to identify and are open to interpretation!

Bbm6 or Eb9?
What do YOU think?