

Segment 1: Listening to Triads

Triad Types:

As we have noted in this video and in a couple of the previous weeks, a triad is a 3 note chord containing a root, a third and a 5th. The following are all triads:

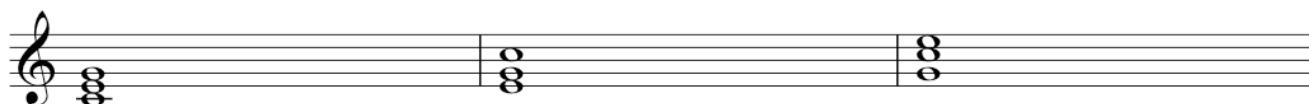


1. The major triad consists of a root (C), a **major** third (E) and a perfect fifth (G).
2. The minor triad consists of a root (C), a **minor** third (Eb) and a perfect fifth (G).
3. The augmented triad consists of a root (C), a **major** third (E) and an **augmented** fifth (G#) - incidentally, this means the intervals are consecutive *major* thirds.
4. The diminished triad consists of a root C, a **minor** third (Eb) and a **diminished** fifth (Gb) - incidentally, this means the intervals are consecutive *minor* thirds.

Inverting Triads:

All of the triads above are in root position, that is to say that the root of the chord is the lowest pitch.

However, triads do not need to be stacked root, 3rd, 5th from the bottom up, as is shown here. In fact, the notes can appear in any order vertically, we just have to know the conventions for understanding and communicating this. When we talk about chords being 'voiced' in different ways we use the term 'inversion' and we have a fairly simple system to deal with this. Look at the chords below:



As we can see, each chord contains the notes C E and G but these notes are arranged in different ways in each of the chords. As each chord contains these notes, we can describe them all as C major triads. Actually, the fact that each of these chords differ in the way that the notes are stacked up does affect the sound of the chord and potentially also the ways in which they relate to other chords in a harmonic progression. As such, we need to be able to describe them individually.

1. If a chord has the root note as the lowest pitch then we describe it as being in **ROOT POSITION**, e.g. C E G, as above.
2. If a chord has the 3rd as the lowest sounding note then we describe it as being in **first inversion**, e.g. E, G C, as above
3. If a chord has the 5th as the lowest sounding note then we describe it as being in **second inversion**, e.g. G, C, E as above

The system that we use employs a combination of roman numerals and the letters a, b and c. So, if we have chord 5 in a key in:

1. Root position then we would describe it as 'Va' (although in the case of root position chords the 'a'

is often tacitly implied.

2. 1st inversion would be described as 'Vb'

3. 2nd inversion would be described as 'Vc'

For chords containing more than 3 notes, this system can be expanded. 7th chords for example which have 4 distinct notes can be in 3rd position which would be described as 5d.

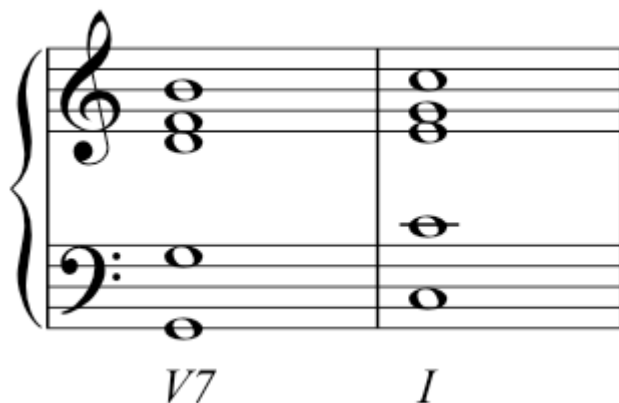
[CLICK HERE http://www.musictheory.net/lessons/42](http://www.musictheory.net/lessons/42) for a nice animated explanation of chord inversions from musictheory.net.

Segment 2: Elaborating

Cadences

In this segment we introduced the idea of cadences. In music, a cadence is a melodic or harmonic progression that creates a sense of finality or a pause in the music. We mention two cadences in this section (and you will explore more in the next lecture), one that sounds *finished* and one that sounds *unfinished*.

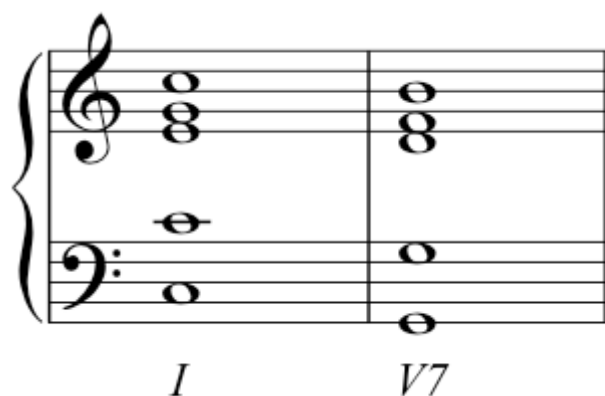
Let's look at the one that sounds finished, first:



AUDIO EXAMPLE: Perfect_1.mp3

As we can see we are in the key of C major and the chords are G7 followed by a C. Numerically speaking this is chord V7 followed by chord I and this is known as a **perfect** cadence.

Let's look at the one that sounds unfinished, next:



AUDIO EXAMPLE: Imperfect.mp3

Again, we are in the key of C major but this time the chords are a C followed by G7. Numerically speaking this is chord I followed by chord V7, i.e. the reverse of the example above. This is known as an **imperfect** cadence. This sounds unfinished (hence, *imperfect*) because it finishes on the dominant 7th chord. We know that this chord is unstable and sounds as if it requires a resolution.

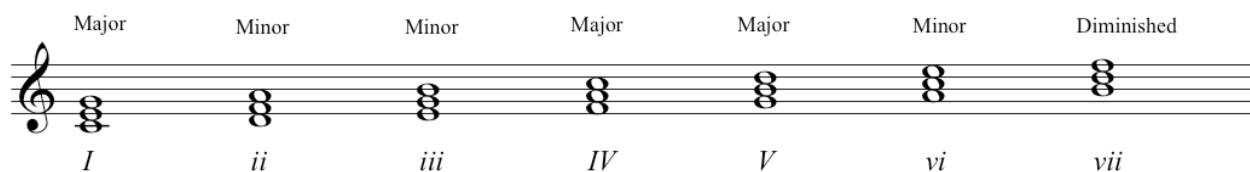
Segment 3: Building

Building Triads:

In the video for this segment, we talked about building triads on each degree of the major scale and minor scale. The following graphics will be useful for your reference:

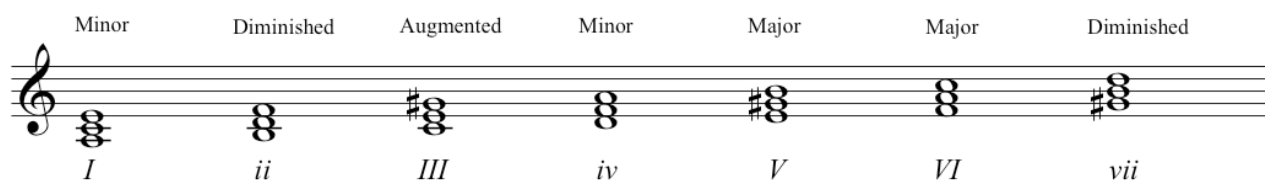
Triads built on each degree of the **major** scale.

(This is shown in C major for ease of illustration but the pattern is the same in any major key)



Triads built on each degree of the **minor** scale.

This is shown in A minor (built on the harmonic minor scale) for ease of illustration but the pattern is the same in any minor key.



Segment 4: Harmonising

In this segment we spoke about harmonising melodies. The following wikipedia page may be of interest if you would like to do some further reading in this area:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harmonization>

You could also recap the final segment of lecture 1 in which Richard discussed the 3-chord-trick (a method for harmonising diatonic melodies) by [clicking here](https://class.coursera.org/musictheory-001/lecture/99). <https://class.coursera.org/musictheory-001/lecture/99>

(now that we have explored more chord types, the same rules apply and you can use them to harmonise melodies using more than just the primary chords I, IV and V)

Remember to check the [forums for this weeks lecture](https://class.coursera.org/musictheory-001/forum/list?forum_id=10008) https://class.coursera.org/musictheory-001/forum/list?forum_id=10008 and discuss some of these concepts with your fellow learners.

Finally, try this for yourself. Take a simple well known melody and create a harmonisation for it (i.e. choose chords to go with the melody). This is not only good fun, it also ties your theoretical knowledge into your aural skills and helps you to understand these concepts more thoroughly.

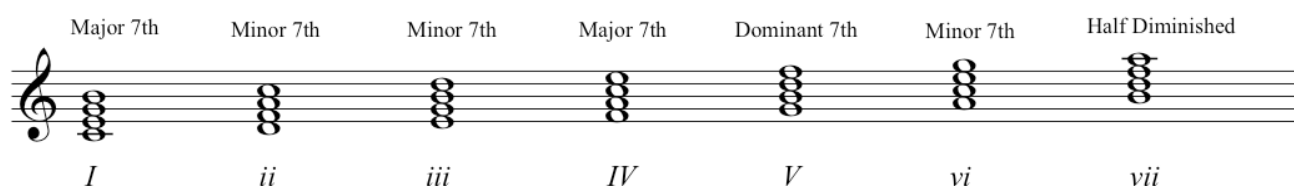
Segment 5: Summary

Building 7th chords on each degree of the major and minor scales:

In the video for this segment we built 7th chords (i.e. 4 note chords) on each degree of the major and harmonic minor scales. The following graphics will be useful for your reference.

7th chords built on each degree of the **major** scale.

(This is shown in C major for ease of illustration but the pattern is the same in any major key)



7th chords built on each degree of the **minor** scale.

This is shown in A minor (built on the harmonic minor scale) for ease of illustration but the pattern is obviously the same in any minor key.

