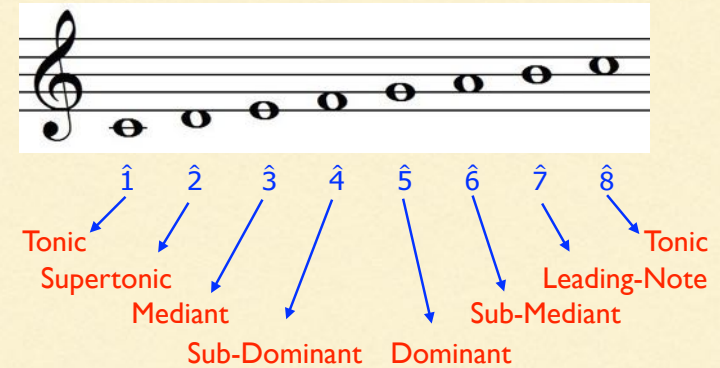


FUNDAMENTAL HARMONY

Dr. Declan Plummer
Lesson 2: Diatonic Harmony & Figured Bass

Scale Degrees

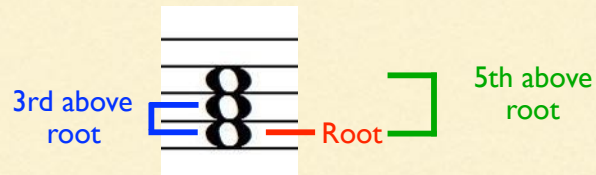
- Each note in any scale is a degree. Degrees can be described using the numeric scale-degree notation to **reflect their positions** in the scale.



- Each degree in any scale also has a special name **to reflect its importance and function** within the scale.

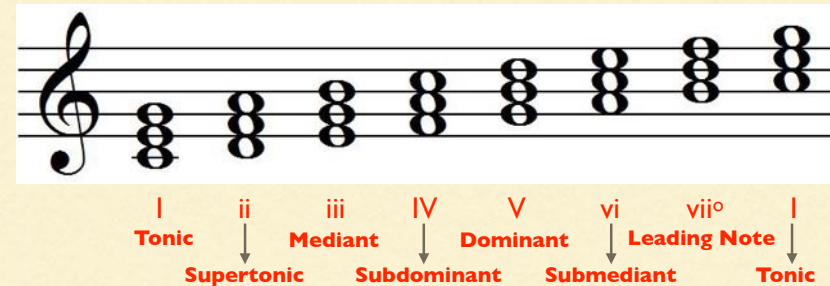
What is a Triad?

- As the name suggests a triad is a group of three notes which are played together.



- After harmonic intervals (which are two notes played together), a triad is the next most simple type of harmony
- All triads are formed the same way:
 - the first note is the note the triad is based on, called **the root**
 - the second note is a **3rd above the root**
 - and the third note is a **5th above the root**

- Triads can be built on any degree of any scale. Triads in the scale of C major:



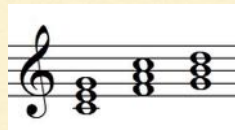
- They take their names from the degrees of the scale on which they are based: the triad on the tonic is called the 'tonic triad'; the triad on the dominant is called the 'dominant triad' and so on.
- Use **Roman Numerals** for harmony chords: **V** = Dominant Triad
Use **Numeric Scale-Degree Notation** for melody notes: **5̂** = 5th note of the scale

Triads in Major Keys

7. Triads (like intervals) can be **major**, **minor**, **diminished** or **augmented**:

Major Triads consist of a major 3rd and a perfect 5th

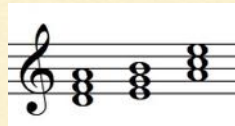
In the Key of C major



I IV V

Minor Triads consist of a minor 3rd and a perfect 5th

In the Key of C major



ii iii vi

Diminished Triads consist of a minor 3rd and a diminished 5th

In the Key of C major



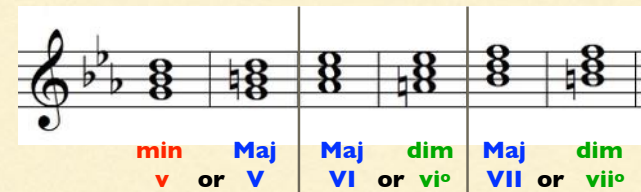
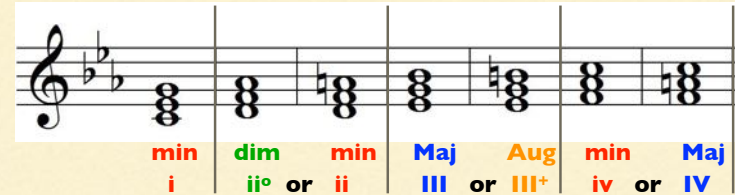
vii°

Triads in Minor Keys

8. In minor keys there two possible triads for each degree (except the 1st): harmonic minor triads and melodic minor triads

C harmonic minor:
raised 7th (B \natural) ascending
and descending

C melodic minor:
raised 6th & 7th (A \natural) (B \natural) ascending
normal 6th & 7th (A \flat) (B \flat) descending



Using chords exclusively from the harmonic minor scale can produce dull music

Coventry Carol

Lul-ly, lul - la, thou lit - tle ti - ny child, By, by, lul - ly, lul - lay.

Using chords from the melodic minor scale can make the music more interesting

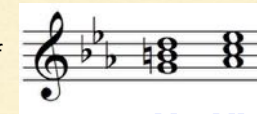
Lul-ly, lul - la, thou lit - tle ti - ny child, By, by, lul - ly, lul - lay.

descending melodic minor form also creates descending scale movement

Harmonic Minor Triads

Major Triads consist of a major 3rd and a perfect 5th

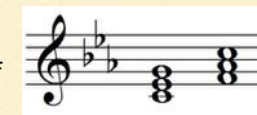
In the Key of C minor



V VI

Minor Triads consist of a minor 3rd and a perfect 5th

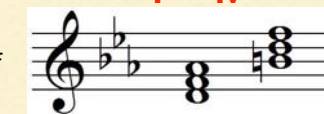
In the Key of C minor



i iv

Diminished Triads consist of a minor 3rd and a diminished 5th

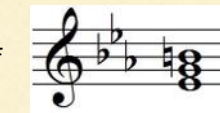
In the Key of C minor



ii° vii°





Augmented Triads consist of a major 3rd and an augmented 5th

In the Key of C minor

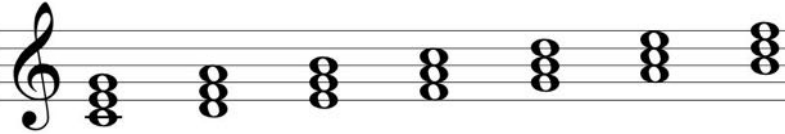


III+

Summary of Triad Descriptions

	3rd	5th	Abbreviation	Example
Augmented	Major	Augmented	+	
Major	Major	Perfect	M	
minor	minor	Perfect	m	
diminished	minor	diminished	o	

Revision of Triads



M
I

m
ii

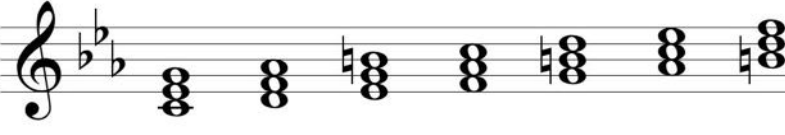
m
iii

M
IV

M
V

m
vi

o
vii°



using
 harmonic
 minor scale

m
i

o
ii°

+
III+

m
iv

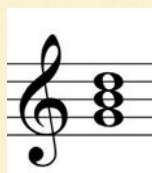
M
V

M
VI

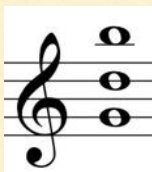
o
vii°

Open & Closed Positions

1. When a chord is played with its notes as close together as possible, it is described as being in 'closed position':

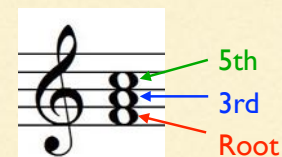


2. When a chord is played with its notes spaced apart, it is described as being in open position - this is more popular, but you have to recognise both positions.

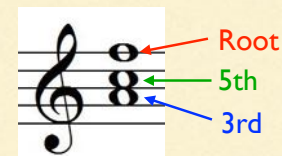


Inversions

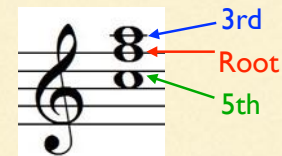
1. So far we've seen **root position** (with the root at the bottom). Take for example F triad with the notes F, A and C:



2. A triad can also have the 3rd at the bottom. This is called **first inversion**. In the F triad this would be A at the bottom, with C and F somewhere above it:



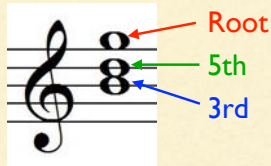
3. A triad can also have the 5th at the bottom. This is called **second inversion**. In the F triad this would be C at the bottom with F and A somewhere above it:



Inversions

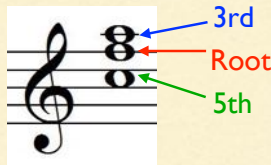
4. When using Roman Numerals to denote triads it is also possible to use small letters, **a**, **b** and **c** to indicate root position, first inversion and second inversion respectively.

For example, V_b means the **first inversion of the Dominant Triad**. In the key of C major, V = GBD, therefore V_b = BDG



V_b in the key of C major

For example, IV_c means the **second inversion of the Subdominant Triad**. In the key of C major, IV = FAC, therefore IV_c = CFA



IV_c in the key of C major

The Importance of Inversions

Start

'Hornpipe' from Water Music Suite No.2 by Handel

'Hornpipe' from Water Music Suite No.2 by Handel without inversions

The Importance of Inversions

Start

Wagner: Overture to Tannhäuser