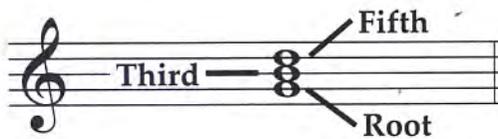


PART I

TRIADS

Triads are constructed in the following manner; they all contain a **root tone** that represents the *letter name* of the chord; a **third** that represents the interval of a *third* above the root tone; and a **fifth** that represents the interval of a *fifth* above the root tone.

Example 1 The Triad



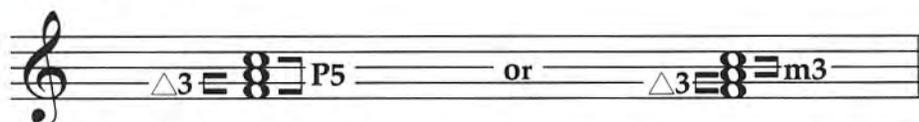
For the purposes of this study there are **four basic triads** and **two variations** for a total of **six** triadic categories:

- [1] the **Major** triad;
- [2] the **Minor** triad;
- [3] the **Augmented** triad;
- [4] the **Diminished** triad;
- [5] the **Major** triad with a **lowered fifth**; and
- [6] the **Suspended** triad.

[1] THE MAJOR TRIAD

Previously, it was shown that a triad contains three tones: a **root tone**; a **third**; and a **fifth**. The quality of the triad is **major** when the distance between its *root* and its *third* is **major** and its *fifth*—that distance between the *root* and the *fifth*—is **perfect**. Or, in other words, a **major triad** consists of two successive intervals of a third, the first interval represents the distance of a **major third** and the second interval represents the distance of a **minor third**.

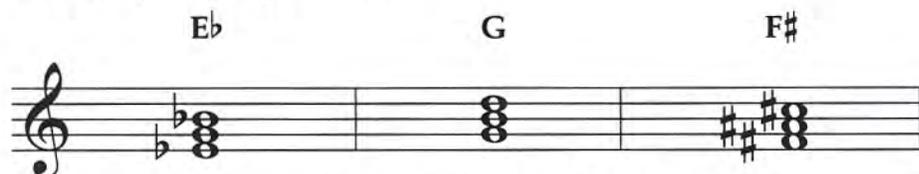
Example 2
The Major Triad



N.B. In this book *all major intervals* will be indicated by a triangular symbol (Δ).

In the *Alphabetical Chord System* use only a capital letter to represent the **root tone** and **accidental**, if needed, to designate a **major triad**. *No* modifying words, abbreviations, or symbols such as major, maj., ma., Δ, etc., are ever used to symbolize a **major triad**.

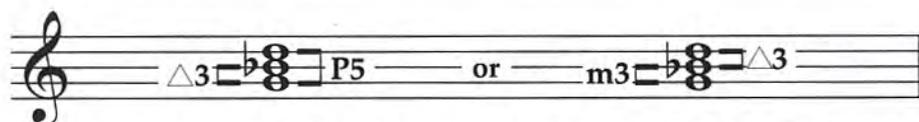
Example 3
More examples of Major triads.



[2] THE MINOR TRIAD

The **minor triad** contains a **minor third** and a **perfect fifth** above the **root**. Or, in other words, a **minor triad** consists of two successive intervals of a third, the first interval represents the distance of a **minor third** and the second interval represents the distance of a **major third**.

Example 4
The Minor Triad.



The chord symbol for a **minor triad** may be represented by one of four possible choices [**min**, **mi**, **m**, or **-**] and in each case the symbol always follows the letter name of the **root tone**. In this textbook, when more than one designation is given for a particular alignment, chord symbols given in **Bold** are the recommended choice.

Example 5
Chord symbol examples of four representative minor choices.

Dmin	E♭min	F♯min
Dmi	E♭mi	F♯mi
D-	E♭-	F♯-
Dm	E♭m	F♯m



SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the term **triad**.
2. Name the **four** basic triads.
3. *Two* additional triads exist and are found in conjunction with **seventh chords** and, sometimes, **extension chords**. Name them.
4. By stacking both intervals above the **root tone**, name the two intervals that comprise a **major** triad.
5. In using the *Alphabetical Chord System*, how does one indicate a **major** triad?
6. Is there more than one way to indicate a **major** triad?
7. By stacking both intervals above the **root tone**, name the two intervals that form a **minor** triad.
8. Name the two successive intervals that form the **diminished** triad.
9. Name the two successive intervals that comprise an **augmented** triad.
10. Give at least four ways to indicate an **augmented** triad.
11. Give at least *four* ways to indicate a **minor** triad.
12. Give at least *three* symbols for a **diminished** triad.
13. How does one indicate the **suspended** triad?
14. What makes the **suspended** triad unique?
15. Define the term *figured bass* and how it's used in music theory.

SUGGESTED KEYBOARD DRILLS

1. Play each **root position triad** presented in **Part I**.
2. Take each triad presented in **Part I**, and play it in **root position**, **first inversion**, and **second inversion**.
3. Play the *three* triadic formulas provided below in **root position**, on the following root tones: **C, D, F, D^b, E^b, F[#], and B^b**.

Drill #1

Major↔Major^(b5)↔Major↔Major⁽⁺⁵⁾↔Major

Major↔Minor↔Diminished↔Minor↔Major

Suspended↔Major↔Suspended↔Minor↔Suspended