

Materials for Study

Volumes I & II of *Ear Training* (See the back cover of this volume for additional information) form the basis for the study of chordal alignments, a system in which various intervals are oftentimes stacked in a tertiary manner (thirds) to form triads and seventh chords. Although triads are essential to chordal construction, they are introduced in this textbook *only* as a basis and means for studying seventh chords. Special emphasis, therefore, is placed upon understanding the various seventh chord configurations rather than simply gaining a knowledge of triads, as is so often the case in ear training classes. The Alphabetical Chord System will be used as the means for identifying these four-level chords.*

Four Customary Triads Plus Two Dominant-Related Triads

In most theory textbooks on triads, four different qualities are presented: **major**, **minor**, **augmented**, and **diminished**. In this textbook two additional triads will be added to these customary three-level chords. They are used in conjunction with the fifth degree of a major and /or minor scale and are, therefore, referred to as **dominant-related triads**.

Triads representing the four customary types, including the two additional dominant-related triads, are presented in Example 1. They are also presented in a specific order for the purposes of ear training. Recommended symbols for proper identification are included.

Example 1

The four customary triad types plus two dominant-related triads.

F F^(5) F^(5) F^{sus4} Fmi Fmi^(5)

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Two
dominant-related
triads

*Another book written by this author entitled, *All About Chords*, is more definitive in scope and is designed to present the language of the Alphabetical Chord System in greater detail. It deals with the practical application of triads, seventh chords, and extensions, through analysis and chordal progressions, and includes comprehensive exercise materials.

Intervals of the Seventh

Three intervals of the seventh are combined with the previously introduced triads to form seventh chords. These intervals that are calculated up from the chord root are the major seventh ($\Delta 7$), the minor seventh (**m7**), and the diminished seventh (**d7**). The diminished seventh interval is often optionally-notated enharmonically as a major sixth ($\Delta 6$). It is interesting to note that when the major sixth is employed, the chord is still referred to as a diminished seventh chord. Within the alphabetical chord system, the interval of the minor seventh (**m7**), is *always* represented by the Arabic number seven and is shown alone without modifiers. In the following example, all three intervals of the seventh with the optional major sixth are presented. Partial chordal symbols (modifiers plus the number seven in two instances) are presented above each interval while interval identification is presented below.

Example 2

The major seventh ($\Delta 7$), minor seventh (m7), and diminished seventh (d7) with its optional major sixth ($\Delta 6$).

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with four intervals of the seventh. Above the staff, the symbols $\Delta 7$, 7, $\circ 7$, and $\Delta 6$ are placed above their respective intervals. Below the staff, the symbols $\Delta 7$, m7, d7, and $(\Delta 6)$ are placed below their respective intervals. The word "or" is placed between the third and fourth intervals.

Seventh Chords

There are *six* basic seventh chords; three of these have variations. Each of these chord types and their variations is presented below:

1. the **dominant seventh chord**, its *two altered fifths forms*, and its *suspended fourth (sus 4)*;
2. the **major seventh chord**, its more consonant sounding seventh substitute—the *added sixth*, and its *suspended fourth (sus 4)*;
3. the **minor seventh chord**;
4. the **half-diminished seventh chord**;
5. the **fully-diminished seventh chord**; and
6. the **minor/major seventh chord**, its common seventh substitute—the *minor added sixth*, and its *suspended fourth (sus 4)* alignment.