

HARMONY

Talking about harmony, in contrast to melody we mostly talk about the accompaniment of a melody. We speak of chords. A melody can sound alone and doesn't need harmony, but with the correct chords it will sound even more beautiful. Before we look more into harmony, we must learn the technical terms of harmony first.

Harmony: results when pitches are stacked on top of each other and played simultaneously to make chords.

Chord: a chord is a group of simultaneous tones (a melody is a series of individual tones heard one after another)

Triad:



A given tone together with the 3rd and 5th above constitutes a specific kind of chord called a triad. Each member of the triad is separated by an interval of a third. The triad is composed of a **Root**, **Third**, and **Fifth**.

Arpeggio:



An arpeggio is a broken chord, or a chord in which individual notes are struck one by one, rather than all together at once.

Major/ Minor/Augmented and Diminished Chords:

There are four types of triads. Each has a different structure: major, minor, augmented and diminished chords.

Diagram illustrating the structure of four types of triads (Major, Minor, Augmented, Diminished) based on intervals from the Root:

- Major:** Root to 3rd is a Major 3rd (M3), Root to 5th is a Perfect 5th (P5).
- Minor:** Root to 3rd is a minor 3rd (m3), Root to 5th is a Perfect 5th (P5).
- Augmented:** Root to 3rd is a Major 3rd (M3), Root to 5th is an augmented 5th (+5).
- Diminished:** Root to 3rd is a minor 3rd (m3), Root to 5th is a diminished 5th (°5).

The Diatonic System

In the so-called diatonic system, all chords are represented that are available within a key, i.e. for the accompaniment of a melody in this key.

C (major)	Dm (minor)	Em (minor)	F (major)	G (major)	Am (minor)	B° (diminished)	C (major)
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I	ii	iii	IV	V	VI	vii°	VIII
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Chord Extensions

7th Chord: By adding one more note, counting the seventh note from the root, we get seventh chords. There are five types of commonly used seventh chords

The diagram illustrates the interval structure of five types of seventh chords. The vertical axis is labeled with 'Root', '3rd', '5th', and '7th'. The horizontal axis lists the chord types: Major-Major, Major-Minor, Minor-Minor, Half Diminished, and Diminished. Each chord is represented by a series of notes connected by lines, with intervals labeled between them: Major-Major (M7, P5, m3, M3), Major-Minor (m7, P5, m3, M3), Minor-Minor (m7, P5, M3, m3), Half Diminished (m7, m5, m3, m3), and Diminished (m7, m5, m3, m3).

The Diatonic System with 7th Chords

Chords and how they function in a key are referred to by an identification system called Roman Numeral Analysis or the Diatonic System. The root note of each chord in a key and its scale position in the key determine the roman numeral assigned. Upper case roman numerals signify major triads in root position while lower case roman numerals signify minor triads in root position. A "o" or "dim" is used after a roman numeral to indicate that a triad is diminished.

The diagram shows the diatonic system with 7th chords in a major key. The chords are: Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, B°7, and Cmaj7. Below the notation are the corresponding Roman numeral labels: I maj7, ii m7, iii m7, IV maj7, V 7, VI 7, vii°7, and VIII maj7.

If we raise or lower individual notes, there are further variants of the chords that we already know.

Suspended Chord:

The diagram shows a suspended chord (Csus4) and its resolution to a normal chord (C). The text explains: a suspended chord abbreviated "**sus**," is one that contains a dissonant tone that is about to resolve down to a normal chord tone.

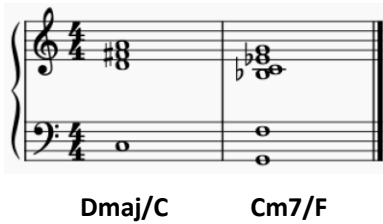
C Csus4

Augmented Chord:

The diagram shows an augmented chord (Caug). The text explains: an augmented chord is a major chord with a raised (sharpened) fifth.

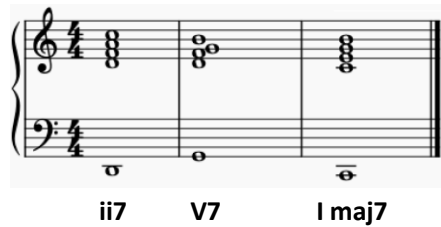
Caug

Polychord:



a bi-chord or polychord consists of two or more chords, one on top of the other.

Chord Progressions:



sequences of varying chords form progressions that fit together with the accompanying melody.

Harmony is often described in terms of its relative harshness:

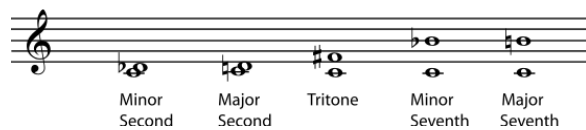
Consonance: a smooth-sounding harmonic combination. It is associated with sweetness, pleasantness, and acceptability.

Dissonance: a harsh-sounding harmonic combination. It is associated with harshness, unpleasantness, or unacceptability.

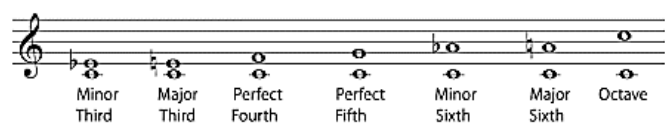
Dissonant chords produce **musical "tension"** which is often **"released"** by resolving to **consonant chords**. Since we all have different opinions about consonance and dissonance, these terms are somewhat subjective.



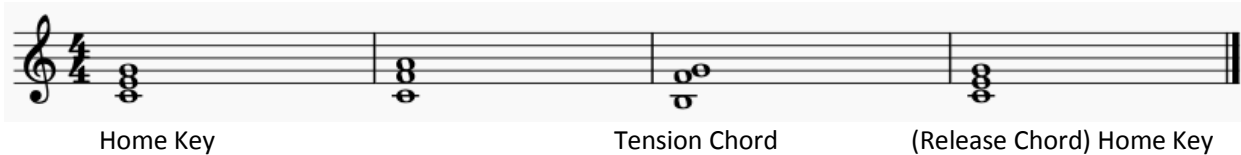
Dissonant Intervals



Consonant Intervals



A sequence of chords is called a **chord progression**. A chord progression is **tonal (Tonality)** if it focuses on a "home" key center. **'Tension and release'** refers to the build-up of musical intensity that eventually dissolves and relaxes. For the listener, a moment of unrest in the music creates an expectation for its resolution and an anticipation for the drama to resolve. Tension and release keeps the music moving forward.



Atonal in its broadest sense is music that lacks a tonal center, or key.



Modality: harmony created out of the ancient Medieval/Renaissance modes.

Monotony: is when you have too much of a boring thing: one tone of voice going on and on, one piece of flat music playing over and over, one infomercial droning on and on. There is no variety in monotony.

Words commonly used to describe chords:

Chords can be triads. They consist of a **root note**, the **3rd**, the **5th** and sometimes the **7th** tone. You can add further notes such as the **9th** and the **13th** note. Chords can be **Major**, **minor**, **diminished**, **augmented**, **suspended**, or **polychords**.

Words commonly used to describe harmonies:

Harmony can sound **harmonic** or **disharmonic**, **tonal** or **atonal**, **simple** or **complex**, **monotonic** or **rich**, **consonant** or **dissonant**. Harmony has often a **tonal center**, or **key**.