

Introduction

This book is written for the beginning to intermediate piano/harmony student. Its purpose is to equip the student with the theory necessary for harmonizing melodies via chord symbols, improvisation, and enhanced voicings with tensions. It covers modern harmony basics from triads and sevenths up to secondary dominants with related minor sevenths, and includes many examples. Any pianist or musician with a basic knowledge of music theory can learn from this book. This volume is the first book of a two book set. It has been written with experience, care, and thoroughness. It is truly designed to help anyone take the initial steps to becoming a great jazz pianist.



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Chapter I - Triadic Harmony

Definition:

Triad - A harmonic structure consisting of THREE notes played simultaneously.

Major scales will be used to reference all notes within any of the harmonic structures discussed in this book. Each of the seven notes of the scale is assigned a number from 1 to 7. This provides an easy way to construct any chord in any key. Of course, you should have a knowledge of all the major and minor scales. This is necessary not only for chordal construction, but for improvisation as well.

There are four basic triads. They are called MAJOR, MINOR, DIMINISHED, AUGMENTED. An additional three part structure is added here called the SUSPENDED FOURTH chord.

All of the chord structures will be shown with :

- * *The proper chord symbol, and any common variations.*
- * *The referenced major scale.*
- * *The formula, or major scale degrees necessary to construct the structure. Note that the scale degree may have to be altered. The terms 'lowered' and 'raised' will be used to show whether a note is flatted or sharped, respectively..*
- * *The actual chordal structure labeled with the related major scale degrees.*

It is important to realize that the key signature must be taken into account. A given chord may occur in ANY key. The major scale you need to reference will be the LETTER NAME of the chord symbol. Thus, you would use an Ab major scale to construct an Ab chord.

This will become clearer as the examples are presented. More often than not you will have to cancel accidentals that are in the current key signature, or add sharps or flats to achieve the correct chord structure.

Exercise - Fill in the proper chord tones for each triad.
 Add a bass note in bass clef - play all examples.

Piano

F min Bb G aug D

F sus4 A dim Gb B dim

Db aug D dim Eb dim F aug

G min Eb min Bb aug F#

Exercise - Label the these triads with the correct chord symbol.
Practice playing them. Observe the sound qualities.

Piano

4/4

4/4

4/4

4/4