

# *Chapter* 10

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## Constructing and Labeling Triads

### **CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

When three or more pitches are produced at the same time the resulting sound is called a chord. In this chapter you will learn how to construct and analyze chords. Triads, three-note chords, as well as four-note chords are the building blocks of music. Harmony occurs when a series of chords move horizontally in time. This chapter also addresses how to identify triads using two systems of analysis: roman numeral analysis and figured bass.

Listen as your instructor plays the following piece of music. What is the connection between the melody and accompanying chords?

*Variation on a Lullaby*

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

The musical score is for a piece in 3/4 time, key of D major. The first system consists of five measures. The melody in the treble clef starts with a quarter note D4, followed by a quarter note E4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C#5, and a quarter note D5. The bass clef contains chords: a whole note G chord in the second measure, a whole note D7 chord in the third measure, a whole note D7 chord in the fourth measure, and a whole note G chord in the fifth measure. The second system consists of four measures. The melody starts with a quarter note D5, followed by a quarter note C#5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. The bass clef contains chords: a whole note G chord in the first measure, a whole note D7 chord in the second measure, a whole note D7 chord in the third measure, and a whole note G chord in the fourth measure.

## 10.1 Major, Minor, Diminished, and Augmented Triads

A **triad** is a three-tone chord built on intervals of a third. Triads are composed of three notes: the root of the triad, the third of the triad, and the fifth of the triad. The following figure shows that triads are built on two superimposed thirds.

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a D major triad (D, F#, A). Three arrows point to the notes with the following labels: 'D is the fifth.' points to the D note, 'B is the third.' points to the F# note, and 'G is the root.' points to the A note.

Triads may be classified as major, minor, diminished, or augmented.

## Major Triads

### Sing, Memorize, and Analyze



25

### Internalizing Music

1. Listen to the French Canon on Track 25. Perform and memorize the song.

#### French Canon

1. 2. 3. 4.

He Dieu qu'el - le m'a he tra - hi,  
qui ma tol - lu mon a - mis.

### Analyzing What You Hear

1. Sing the canon from memory in four parts. Listen as the instructor plays the first note of each measure harmonically (all notes sounding together) and melodically (notes played one after another).
2. How many different notes do you hear?
3. What are the solfège syllables for these notes?
4. Listen as your instructor plays notes harmonically or melodically. Describe the notes of the triads with solfège syllables.
5. Name the interval between each note of the triad.
6. As a class, sing the triad in three parts.

### Music Theory

A **major triad** consists of two superimposed thirds—a major third between the root and the third degree, a minor third between the third and the fifth degree—and a perfect fifth between the root and fifth degree of the triad. In root position, the third of the triad is a note positioned a third above the root, and the fifth of a triad is a note positioned a fifth above the root.

B to D is a minor third.  
G to B is a major third.

The root determines the name of the triad.

C major triad      F major triad      G major triad

## Minor Triads

### Sing, Memorize, and Analyze



### Internalizing Music

Listen to “Hey Ho Nobody Home” on Track 26. Perform and memorize the song.

#### Hey Ho Nobody Home

1. 2. 3.

Hey Ho No-bo-dy home, meat nor drink nor mo-ney have I none,  
Yet, I will be mer-ry, ve-ry mer-ry, Hey Ho No-bo-dy home.

### Analyzing What You Hear

1. Sing “Hey Ho” In Canon. Listen as the instructor plays all the notes on the first beat of each measure harmonically and melodically.
2. How many different notes do you hear?
3. Can you describe the notes of the triads with solfège? What is the interval between each note of the triad?
4. As a class, sing the triad.

We use the harmonic minor scale for deriving chords and triads because this form of the scale is used so frequently in harmony. Remember that the leading tone (7) of the harmonic minor scale is raised a half step; you will need to put an accidental in front of the leading tone, as it does not appear in the key signature.

### Music Theory

A **minor triad** consists of two superimposed thirds: a minor third between the root and the third degree and a major third between the third and the fifth degree. There is a perfect fifth between the root and the fifth degree of the triad.

Tonic

B $\flat$  to D is a major third.

G to B $\flat$  is a minor third.

The root determines the name of the triad.

g minor      c minor