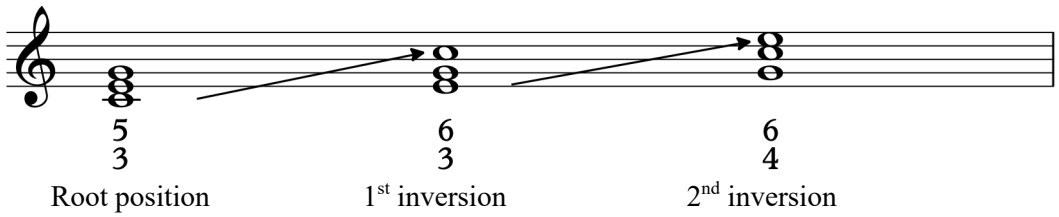
**MU 1310 (Feurzeig)** Keyboard 2: Triads

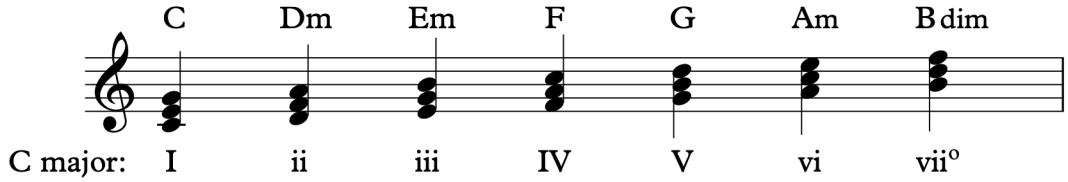
Play a C major triad in root position. **Invert** it by taking the lowest note up an octave, leaving the other two pitches where they are. It is now in **first inversion**.




Invert it again by taking the current bottom note (the third) up an octave, leaving the others where they are. It is now in **second inversion**.

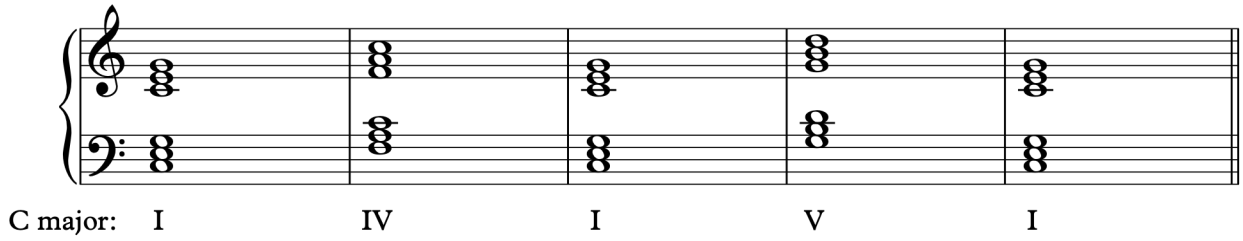
Count from the bottom note by steps to the upper notes, in each inversion. Note that the standard figured-bass labels for the inversions simply describe the intervallic distance of each upper note above the bass note. (Remember, **bass note** and **root** are **not** synonymous!)

Play the triads of the C major scale in root position. Listen as you play. Arpeggiate each triad and sing the notes using solfege (do-mi-sol-mi-do, re-fa-la-fa-re, etc.). Then play the triad as a chord again and listen to its quality.




In reference to a key, triads can be labeled with **roman numerals** corresponding to the scale degree of the root. Unlike the letters that indicate the chord root in popular (lead-sheet) chord symbols, roman numerals **change case** according to the **triad quality**.

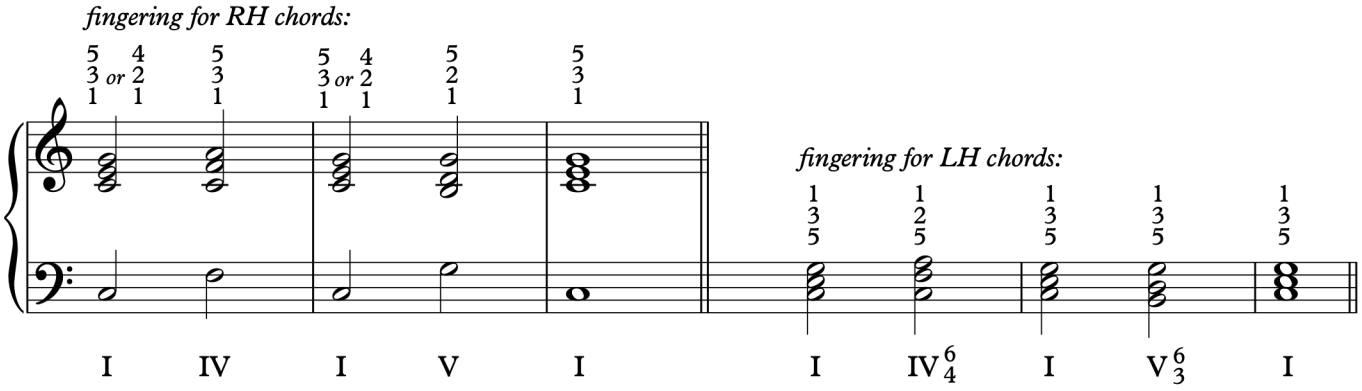
Play the I, IV, and V chords in C major. Practice both LH and RH, separately.



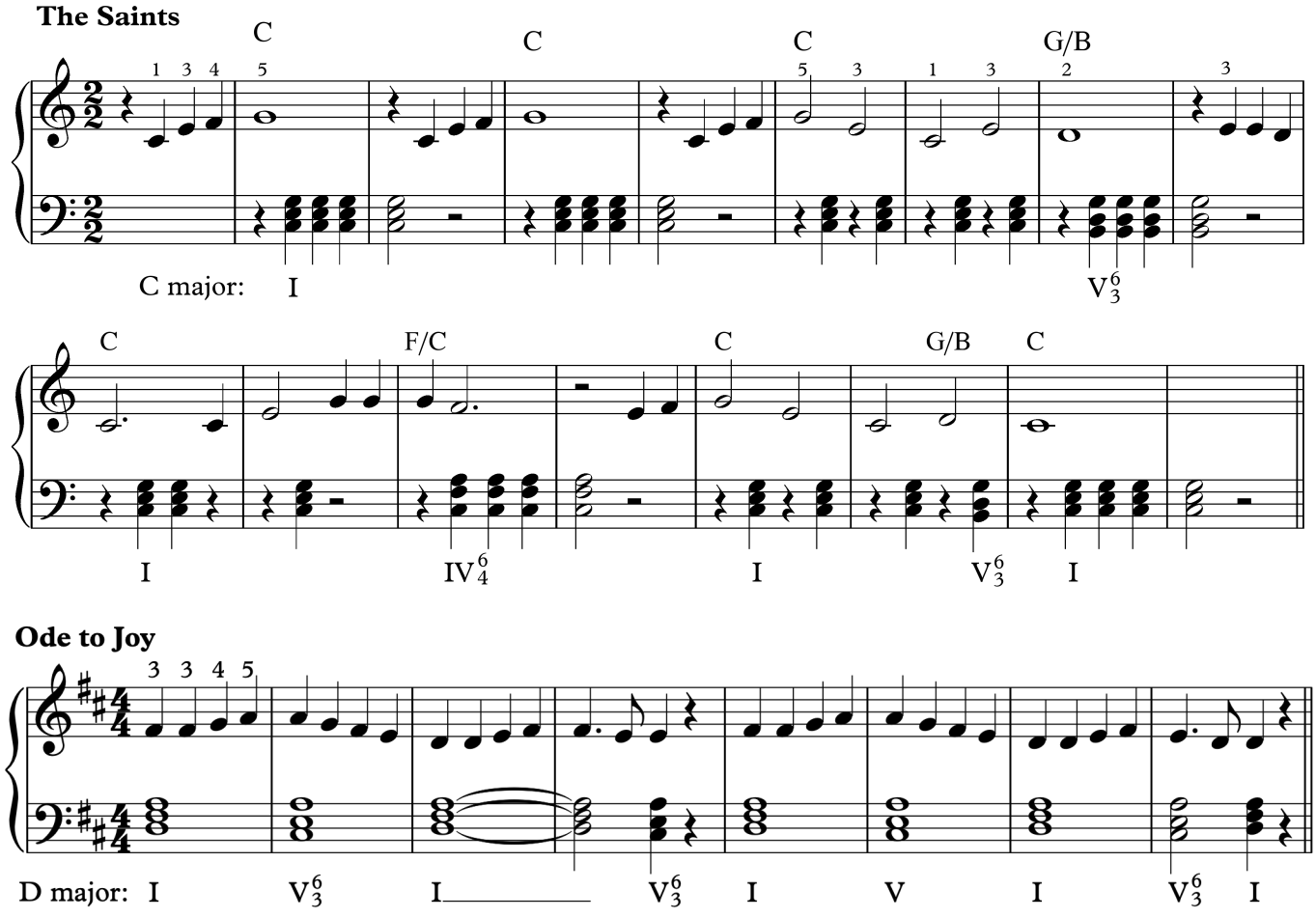

Chords are built on **skips** (thirds), and in harmonic progression chord roots often **jump** from one chord to the next, as in most chord changes in the blues progression, for example: I to IV, IV to I, I to V, V to I. Yet skips and leaps are hard to sing and to play, as you may have noticed just now when you played the I-IV-I-V-I progression. That's why melodies favor close motion: mostly steps, with some skips.

Chords are often **voiced** (arranged) so that the individual note motions from chord to chord are smooth (close) rather than jumpy, at least in the upper parts. (Bass lines tend to be jumpier.) The way notes move from chord to chord is called **voice leading**, and when this motion is mostly stepwise, we say the music uses **close**, or **smooth**, or **conjunct** voice leading.

Here is the same progression with conjunct voice leading. (Note that in the example on the left, all chords are in **root position**. Don't be misled by the RH chord shape! In isolation, the RH IV chord would be in 2nd inversion, and the RH V chord in 1st inversion. But with the LH playing the root, they're in root position.)




Many tunes can be harmonized effectively using only the three primary triads (I, IV, V) of the key.




**Experiment!**

Try harmonizing other tunes using only the primary triads I, IV, and V. Or, when you get to a place where no primary triad sounds right, try another chord. Don't wait for me, or your overall theory knowledge, to give you permission to fool around.

**Practice, Practice, Practice**

The only way to absorb music theory knowledge meaningfully is to practice. Play all the material on these pages. Practice it in other keys as well.