# Triads and inversions

## Introduction to triads

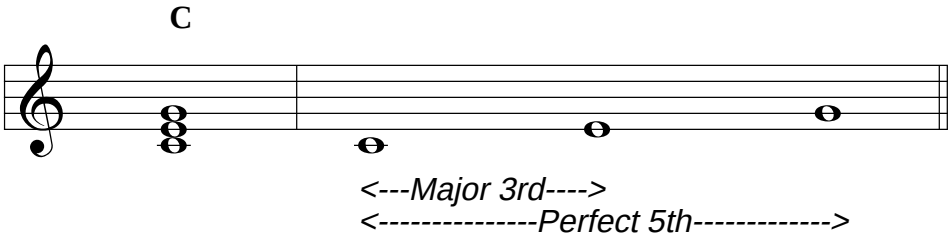
The first type of chord we will consider is called a **triad**. A triad is a chord consisting of three notes, which are commonly referred to as a **root**, **3rd** and **5th**. All chords (including triads) can be analyzed to determine the **intervals present** in the chord - and from our recent work in **Chapter 2**, we are now in a position to correctly derive any required interval. We will also look at the major scale (first derived in **Chapter 1**) to see if it can be used as a 'scale source' for the triads under consideration.

There are four basic types of triad to be derived - known as **major**, **minor**, **augmented** and **diminished**. You will recall that these words have already been used in **Chapter 2** as **interval descriptions** - now we will use them as **chord** (triad) **descriptions**. It's important that you understand the distinction between an interval description and a chord description, as the same adjectives can be used in each case - keeping these two different 'usages' clear in your mind will be helpful, especially later on when we get to larger (i.e. 4- and 5-part) chords.

## The major triad

The first and most important triad to be studied is the **major** triad. It is derived by placing **major 3rd** and **perfect 5th** intervals above the root, as follows:-

***Figure 3.1. C major triad - interval construction***




Note that we have measured the intervals (major 3rd and perfect 5th) up from the root of the triad in each case. We recall from **Chapter 2** that major and perfect intervals were diatonic i.e. they occurred within a major scale built from the lowest note - this triad could therefore also be considered as the first, third and fifth degrees of a **C major scale** (review **Figs. 1.42.** and **2.5.** as necessary).