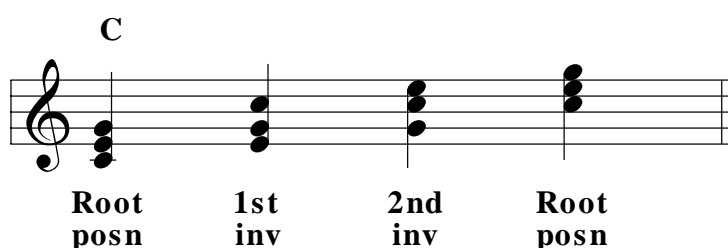


CHAPTER THREE

Triad shapes

We recall from *Contemporary Music Theory Level One* (and the review in **Chapter 1, p6-7** of this book) that the four types of triad are **major**, **minor**, **augmented** and **diminished**. When applying the 'shape concept', all of these are useful shapes, both in root position and inverted. We will now present each triad shape followed by some vertical usages of each shape within a larger chordal context, beginning with the major triad as follows:

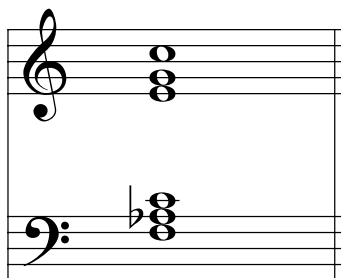
Figure 3.1. C major triad shape and inversions



Note that (in root position) the interior intervals within this shape are a **major 3rd** (from C to E) and a **minor 3rd** (from E to G). The interior intervals within the inverted major triads are a **perfect 4th** and a **major or minor 3rd** interval.

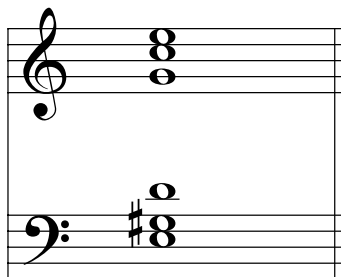
The major triad has a huge number of 'shape' applications! Here are just two of the many possibilities:

Figure 3.2. C major triad shape used on an F minor major 9th chord



Here a (1st inversion) C major triad has been 'built from' the **5th** of an F minor chord, creating an **F minor major 9th** chord overall. (The minor major 9th chord was reviewed in **Fig. 2.11.**). From bottom to top, the upper C triad represents the **7th, 9th** and **5th** of the overall F minor chord. This shape setting combines two triads together - the bottom shape is a root position F minor triad providing the **root, b3rd** and **5th** of the overall chord. Minor major 7th/9th chords are examined in detail in **Chapter 7**.

Figure 3.3. C major triad shape used on an E dominant 7th(#5,#9) chord



Here a (2nd inversion) C major triad has been 'built from' the **#5th** (b13th) of an E7 dominant chord, creating an **E7(#5,#9)** chord overall. From bottom to top, the upper C triad represents the **#9th, #5th** (b13th) and **root** of the overall E dominant 7th chord. The bottom shape contains the **root, 3rd** and **b7th** of the dominant (a 'definitive' foundation), and is enharmonically equivalent to a 'diminished-augmented' double-4th shape (see **Figs. 3.66. - 3.67.** and accompanying text). Dominant chords with sharped 5ths (equivalent to flatted 13ths) and sharped 9ths, are examined in detail in **Chapter 11**.