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EAR TRAINING – TRIAD QUALITY

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EAR TRAINING – TRIAD QUALITY

In this presentation, we will learn how to identify the quality of triads aurally.
It is presumed you already know the four qualities of triads - major, minor, diminished, and augmented –
and their makeup.

IDENTIFYING TRIAD QUALITY

A major triad will sound like scale degrees 1, 3 and 5 of a major scale.



D major scale



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8



D major triad

Remember also that a major triad contains a major third, minor third, and perfect fifth – all very consonant intervals. Therefore, the major triad is a very consonant (pleasing sounding) chord.

IDENTIFYING TRIAD QUALITY

A minor triad will sound like scale degrees 1, 3 and 5 of a minor scale.

Natural minor scale:



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

A musical staff in treble clef showing the notes of a natural minor scale: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5. The notes C4, E4, and G4 are highlighted with purple boxes, corresponding to scale degrees 1, 3, and 5.

D minor triad



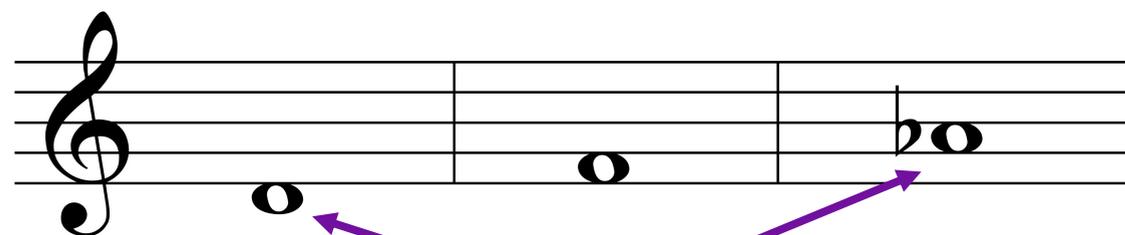
A musical staff in treble clef showing the D minor triad: D4, F4, A4. Brackets indicate the intervals between the notes: a Perfect Fifth (P5) between D4 and A4, a Major Third (M3) between D4 and F4, and a minor Third (m3) between F4 and A4.

Remember also that a minor triad contains a minor third, major third, and perfect fifth – all very consonant intervals. Therefore, the minor triad is a very consonant (pleasing sounding) chord.

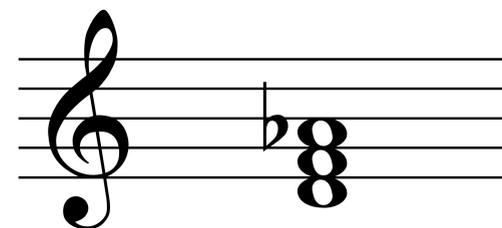
IDENTIFYING TRIAD QUALITY

A diminished triad will sound very dissonant (harsh sounding) because it has a tritone in it. The tritone is between the root and the fifth of the chord. Try listening for this interval.

D diminished triad



Tritone



It will also sound dissonant because it will sound like it needs to resolve. It has this feeling since a diminished triad is the quality of triad based on the leading tone (scale degree 7) in a major scale.

IDENTIFYING TRIAD QUALITY

An augmented triad will also sound strange. It almost sounds dissonant, but there are no dissonant intervals in it. The augmented triad is made up of two major thirds and an augmented fifth (which will sound like a minor sixth).

D augmented triad

Augmented 5

Major 3

Major 3



Even though it sounds strange, it will not sound like it has to resolve. Some people say it sounds like a train whistle.

IDENTIFYING TRIAD QUALITY

Now listen to the different types of scales a few times:



Major triad



Diminished triad



minor triad



Augmented triad



Let's practice aurally identifying the quality of triads. Select the play button to hear the triad. You can play the example any number of times. These examples use sounds of different instruments. Don't let that startle you. Just listen the the triad. Then click to see the correct answer.

Listen	Triad Quality
 	Minor triad
 	Major triad
 	Augmented triad

Listen	Triad Quality
 	Major triad
 	Diminished triad
 	Minor triad

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EAR TRAINING – TRIAD QUALITY

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