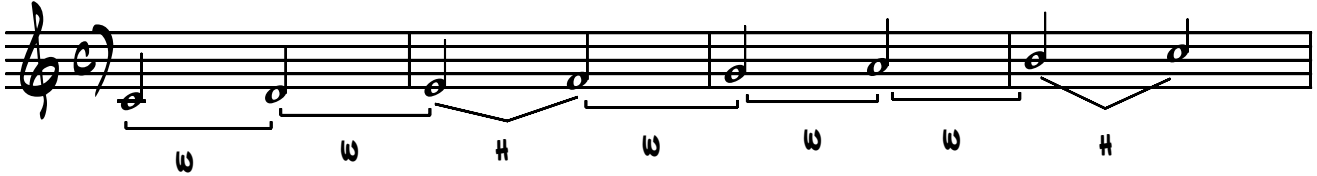


CHORD CONSTRUCTION AND FORMULAS

STEVE RALEIGH

OK, IT'S TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHORDS AND HOW TO NAME THEM.

REMEMBER THIS?



REMEMBER HOW CHORDS ARE BUILT USING THE INTERVAL OF A THIRD?

(THAT'S ALSO PRETTY MUCH LIKE "EVERY OTHER LETTER ALONG A SCALE" TOO)

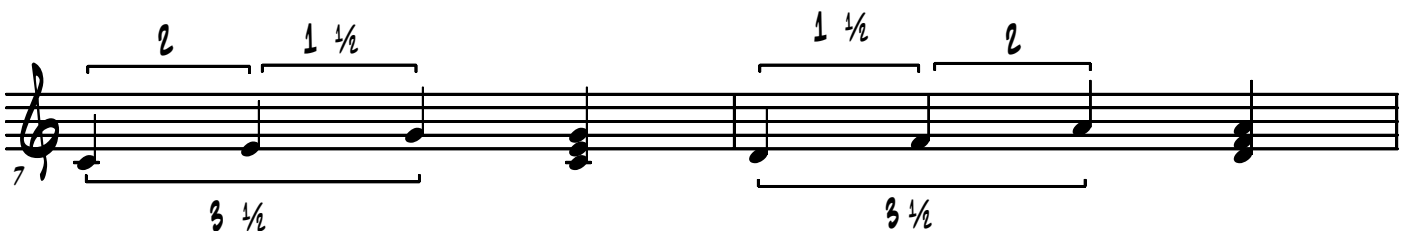
SO, A "C" CHORD WOULD BE C - E - G,RIGHT?



AND A "D" CHORD WOULD BE D - F - ARIGHT?



WELL, EVEN THOUGH THESE TWO CHORDS ARE BOTH BUILT IN THIRDS, THERE IS A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM IF YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EXACT NUMBER OF WHOLE AND HALF STEPS.



THE "C" CHORD MEASURES EXACTLY 2, AND THEN 1 1/2 STEPS FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 3 1/2 STEPS.

WHEN A CHORD DOES THAT.... IT'S CALLED "MAJOR".

THE "D" CHORD MEASURES EXACTLY 1 1/2, AND THEN 2 STEPS FOR A GRAND TOTAL OF 3 1/2 STEPS ALSO.

WHEN A CHORD DOES THAT....IT'S CALLED "MINOR".

THEREFORE THE "C" CHORD ABOVE IS ACTUALLY A C MAJOR CHORD, THE OTHER ONE IS D MINOR

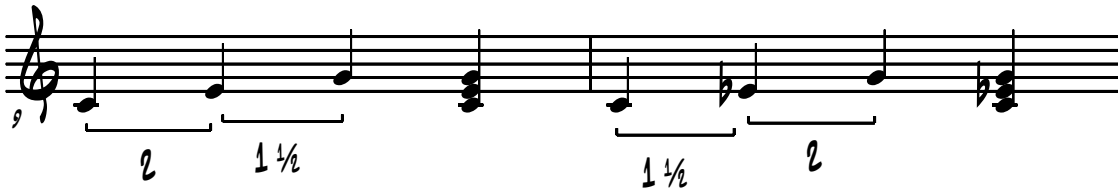
CHORD CONSTRUCTION AND FORMULAS

NOTE - IN A MAJOR SCALE THE INTERVAL OF A THIRD CAN SHOW UP IN EITHER OF TWO VARIETIES; THE SMALLER $1\frac{1}{2}$ STEP KIND (KNOWN AS A MINOR THIRD) OR THE LARGER 2 STEP KIND (KNOWN AS A MAJOR THIRD).

SO, WE HAVE TWO CHORDS (TRIADS), ONE MAJOR, WITH A THIRD THAT'S 2 STEPS FIRST (MAJOR), THEN A THIRD THAT'S $1\frac{1}{2}$ STEPS NEXT FOR A TOTAL OF $3\frac{1}{2}$ STEPS.

THEN A MINOR CHORD THAT'S $1\frac{1}{2}$ STEPS FIRST, THEN 2 STEPS, AGAIN FOR A TOTAL OF $3\frac{1}{2}$ STEPS.

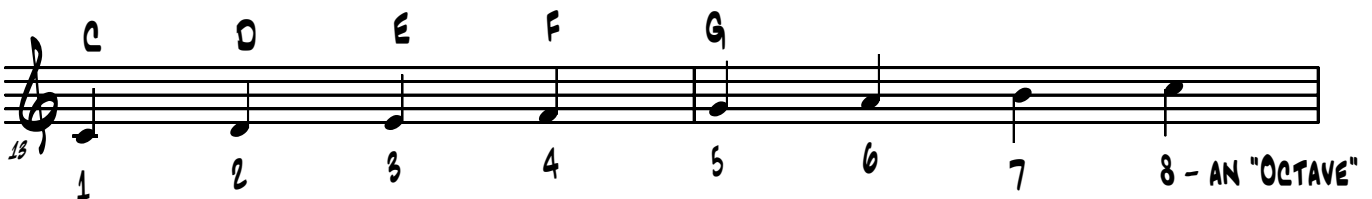
HOW DO MAKE A MAJOR TRIAD INTO A MINOR ONE? ...YOU LOWER THE MIDDLE NOTE BY A $1/2$ STEP.



HOW DO MAKE A MINOR TRIAD INTO A MAJOR ONE? ...YOU RAISE THE MIDDLE NOTE BY A $1/2$ STEP.



IN MUSIC LINGO WE SAY THAT THE "C" TRIAD (C - E - G) IS MADE UP OF A ROOT, A THIRD, AND A FIFTH, STARTING FROM C AND COUNTING UP THE LETTERS OF THE MUSICAL ALPHABET, C IS ONE, E IS THREE, AND G IS FIVE - C, (D), E, (F), G



SO, THE FORMULA FOR A MAJOR TRIAD IS: 1 3 5

AND A MINOR TRIAD IS THEN: 1 $b3$ 5

CHORD CONSTRUCTION AND FORMULAS

HERE IS A LIST OF THE MOST COMMON TRIAD FORMULAS

MAJOR 1 3 5

MINOR 1 b3 5

DIMINISHED 1 b3 b5

AUGMENTED 1 3 #5

FOLLOWING THE ROUTINE OF CHORDS BUILT IN 3RD'S, WE CAN EXTEND THIS PATTERN TO INCLUDE EVEN BIGGER CHORDS; MORE "EXPENSIVE" CHORDS. IT WOULD STACK UP LIKE THIS:

1 3 5 7 9 11 13



SO NOW WE MOVE ON TO 4 NOTE CHORDS. HERE ARE SOME FORMULAS FOR SOME OF THE MOST COMMONLY USED ONES:

MAJOR 7 1 3 5 7 (MAJ7 OR MA7)

DOMINANT 7 1 3 5 b7 (7)

MINOR 7 1 b3 5 b7 (-7 OR MI7)

MINOR 7 b5 1 b3 b5 b7 (M7b5 OR -7b5)

DIMINISHED 7 1 b3 b5 bb7 (DIM7 OR °7)

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE IS A VERITABLE CORNICOPIA OF SYNONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS FOR SOME OF THESE CHORD TYPES THAT HAVE DEVELOPED OVER THE YEARS. ITS A LITTLE BIT LIKE SLANG, ACTUALLY. AT A SESSION OR WHEREVER, NEVER BE AFRAID TO ASK!