

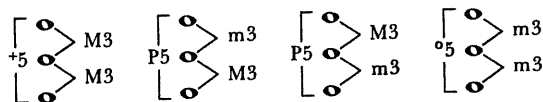
Introduction to Triads and Seventh Chords

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we begin working with chords, the basic vocabulary of tonal harmony. We will not be concerned at this stage with how chords are used compositionally or even what kinds of chords occur in the major and minor modes, although we will get to these topics soon enough. First we have to learn how to spell the more common chord types and how to recognize them in various contexts.

TRIADS

In "To the Student" (pp. xviii-xxii), we explained that tonal harmony makes use of *tertian* (built of 3rds) chords. The fundamental tertian sonority is the triad, a three-note chord consisting of a 5th divided into two superimposed 3rds. There are four possible ways to combine major and minor 3rds to produce a tertian triad.



The names and abbreviations for these four triad types are given in Example 3-1.

Example 3-1.

augmented (+) major (M) minor (m) diminished (°)