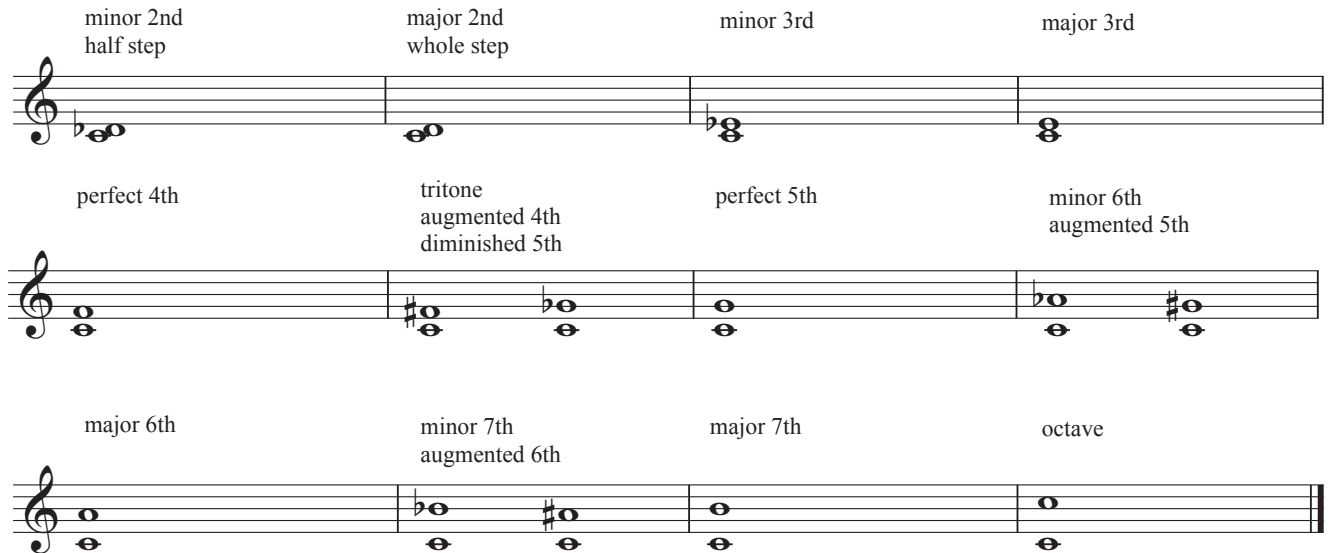


# Intervals and Triads – Review

## Intervals

A good definition of an *interval* is “the space between two notes.” **Figure 1-1** shows the intervals from the half step/minor second up to the octave, all based on middle C. The most commonly used term is shown above each interval, along with any alternate terms.

**Figure 1-1**



The chart that follows shows all the intervals, both ascending and descending, as they occur in tunes from the standard jazz repertoire. Unless otherwise noted, the interval in question is the first two melody notes of the song. Play each example and *sing* the interval. If you can sing an interval accurately, it will be easier to play when improvising. Listen carefully to all the voicings in the examples. All of them will be covered in this book. A footnote reference after each song title lists a great recording of the tune—in many cases, the original recording.



*Intervals by selected tunes*

G7<sup>b</sup>9    C $\Delta$   
 minor  
 2nd

**ascending minor second**  
Bob Haggart's "What's New?"<sup>1</sup>

F7<sup>b</sup>9    Bb-  
 minor  
 2nd

**descending minor second**  
Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady"<sup>2</sup>

Bb- $\Delta$

**ascending major second**  
Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge"<sup>3</sup>

G-7    A7alt.

**descending major second**  
Miles Davis' "Blue In Green"<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Woody Shaw, *Setting Standards*, Muse 5318.

<sup>2</sup> Duke Ellington and Ray Brown, *This One's For Blanton*, Pablo 2310-721.

<sup>3</sup> Joe Henderson, *The Kicker*, Milestone 9008.

<sup>4</sup> Miles Davis, *Kind Of Blue*, Columbia 40579.



**ascending minor third**  
Thelonious Monk's "Evidence"<sup>5</sup>

$E_b\Delta+4$        $G-7$        $C7^{+11}_b9$

minor 3rd

**descending minor third**  
Chick Corea's "Mirror, Mirror"<sup>6</sup>

$C\Delta$        $E7^{alt.}$

minor 3rd

**ascending major third**  
Chick Corea's "Windows"<sup>7</sup>

$B-7$

major 3rd

**descending major third**  
John Coltrane's "Giant Steps"<sup>8</sup>

$B\Delta$        $D7$        $G\Delta$        $B_b7$        $E_b\Delta$

major 3rd

<sup>5</sup> Thelonious Monk, *The Tokyo Concert*, Columbia 38510.

<sup>6</sup> Joe Henderson, *Mirror, Mirror*, Pausa 7075.

<sup>7</sup> Stan Getz, *Sweet Rain*, Verve 8693.

<sup>8</sup> John Coltrane, *Giant Steps*, Atlantic 1311.



A $\emptyset$  D7alt G9sus

**ascending perfect fourth**  
McCoy Tyner's "Search For Peace"<sup>9</sup>

G-7 C7 F#-7 B7

**descending perfect fourth**  
Thelonious Monk's "Ask Me Now"<sup>10</sup>

C7

**ascending tritone**  
Joe Henderson's "Isotope"<sup>11</sup>

G $\Delta$  E-7 A-7 D7 G $\Delta$  G# $^{\circ}$

**descending tritone**  
bars 18 and 19 of  
Duke Ellington's  
"Sophisticated Lady"<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> McCoy Tyner, *The Real McCoy*, Blue Note 4264.

<sup>10</sup> Thelonious Monk, *Solo Monk*, Columbia 9149.

<sup>11</sup> Joe Henderson, *Power To The People*, Milestone 9024.

<sup>12</sup> Duke Ellington and Ray Brown, *This One's For Blanton*, Pablo 2310-721.



**ascending perfect fifth**

Wayne Shorter's

"Angola"<sup>13</sup>

**descending perfect fifth**

intro to Wayne Shorter's "Black Nile"<sup>14</sup>

**ascending minor sixth**

Woody Shaw's "In A Capricornian Way"<sup>15</sup>

**descending minor sixth**

intro to Freddie Hubbard's Happy Times"<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Wayne Shorter, *The Soothsayer*, Blue Note LT-988.

<sup>14</sup> Wayne Shorter, *Night Dreamer*, Blue Note 4173.

<sup>15</sup> Woody Shaw, *Stepping Stones*, Columbia 35560.

<sup>16</sup> The Griffith Park Collection, *The Griffith Park Collection #2*, Elektra/Musician 60262.



B $\flat$  $\Delta$  Eb7

major 6th

b $\bar{6}$  b $\bar{6}$

**ascending major sixth**  
Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso"<sup>17</sup>

C7 $\flat$ 9<sup>+11</sup> F $\Delta$

major 6th

**descending major sixth**  
Dizzy Gillespie's "Ow!"<sup>18</sup>

G $\Delta$  E-7 A-7 D7 G $\Delta$  G $\sharp$ <sup>0</sup>

minor 7th

**ascending minor seventh**  
second bar of the bridge of Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady"<sup>19</sup>

F $\sharp$ -7 B7alt B-7 E7

minor 7th

**descending minor seventh**  
fourth bar of the bridge of Billy Strayhorn's "Chelsea Bridge"<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Thelonious Monk, *Live At The Jazz Workshop*, Columbia 38269.

<sup>18</sup> *The Gifted Ones*, Pablo 2310 833.

<sup>19</sup> Duke Ellington And Ray Brown, *This One's For Blanton*, Pablo 2310 721.

<sup>20</sup> Joe Henderson, *The Kicker*, Milestone 9008.



**ascending major seventh**  
2nd and 3rd notes of  
Joe Henderson's "Serenity"<sup>21</sup>

major 7th

Dø

G7alt

**descending major seventh**  
bar 17 of Wayne Shorter's "This Is For Albert"<sup>22</sup>

Db9sus

major 7th

3

FΔ

G♭7+11

**ascending octave**  
Billy Strayhorn's "Daydream"<sup>23</sup>

octave

**descending octave**  
2nd and 3rd notes of  
Freddie Hubbard's "Birdlike"<sup>24</sup>

F7

B♭7

octave

<sup>21</sup> Joe Henderson, *In 'n Out*, Blue Note 4166.

<sup>22</sup> Art Blakey, *Thermo*, Milestone 47008.

<sup>23</sup> Steve Lacy, *Soprano Sax*, Fantasy/OJC I30.

<sup>24</sup> Freddie Hubbard, *Ready For Freddie*, Blue Note 4085.



Melodic intervals greater than an octave in tunes are rare, but a few examples are shown here:

B $\flat$  $\Delta$ +5                      minor 9th                      E $\flat$ 9sus

**ascending minor ninth**  
bars 53-54 of Wayne Shorter's "Wild Flower"<sup>25</sup>

A $\emptyset$       D7alt      G-7      C7alt                      minor 9th

**descending minor ninth**  
bar 18 of Benny Golson's  
"I Remember Clifford"<sup>26</sup>

B $\flat$  $\Delta$       major 9th                      G-

**ascending major ninth**  
2nd and 3rd notes of Duke Ellington's  
"I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good"<sup>27</sup>

D $\flat$  $\Delta$ +4    11th

**descending eleventh**  
15th bar of Joe Henderson's  
"Inner Urge"<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Wayne Shorter, *Speak No Evil*, Blue Note 4194.

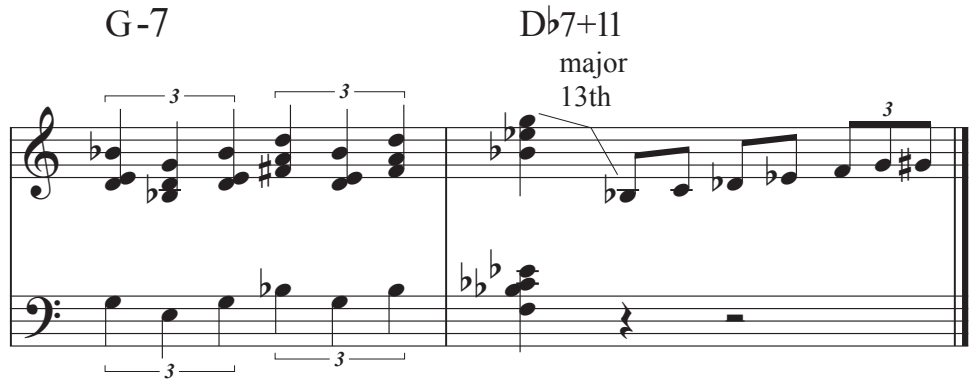
<sup>26</sup> The Jazztet, *Meet The Jazztet*, Argo 664.

<sup>27</sup> Donald Byrd, *Mustang*, Blue Note 4238.

<sup>28</sup> Joe Henderson, *Inner Urge*, Blue Note 4189.



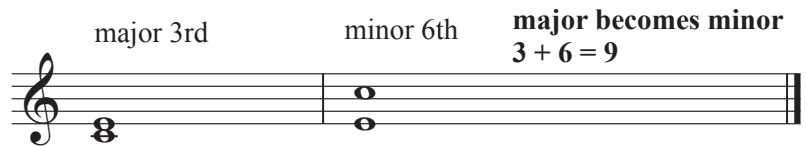
descending major thirteenth  
bar 24 of Billy Strayhorn's  
"Chelsea Bridge"<sup>29</sup>



### Inverting intervals

One of the skills a pianist must have is the ability to *invert* intervals quickly. When you invert an interval, you take the bottom note and put it on top, or vice versa. A new interval results, and the rules for inverting intervals are simple.

Figure 1-2



When you invert an interval:

- major becomes minor
- minor becomes major
- perfect remains perfect
- tritone remains tritone

and the old and new intervals add up to "nine."

Figure 1-3



Look at **figure 1-2**. If you invert a major third, C with E on top, it becomes E with C on top, a minor sixth. Major becomes minor, and three plus six add up to nine. In **figure 1-3**, a minor second inverts to a major seventh. Minor becomes major, and two plus seven add up to nine. Now look at **figure 1-4**. A perfect fourth becomes a perfect fifth. Perfect remains perfect, and four plus five add up to nine. In **figure 1-5**, a tritone inverts to another tritone. Because a tritone is right in between a fourth and a fifth, you could say it is "four and a half," and four and a half plus four and a half equal nine.

Figure 1-4

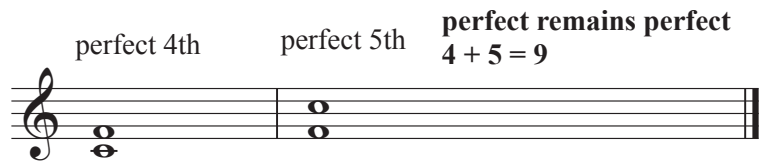
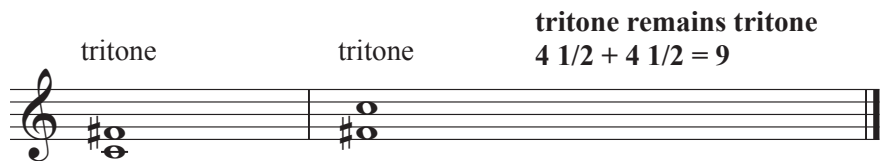


Figure 1-5



### Practice tips

Practice singing the intervals, both ascending and descending. Sing the melody, or "head," of standards, bebop, and other jazz tunes while listening to records.

<sup>29</sup> Joe Henderson, *The Kicker*, Milestone 9008.



*Thelonious Monk*

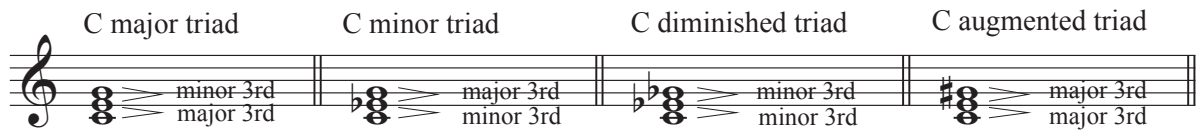
Photo © by Lee Tanner



## Triads

**T**riads are formed by stacking one third on top of another. There are four possible combinations: major third and minor third, minor third and major third, two minor thirds, and two major thirds. A major third with a minor third on top of it forms a *major* triad. A minor third with a major third on top forms a *minor* triad. Two minor thirds make up a *diminished* triad. Two major thirds form an *augmented* triad. All four triads are shown in **figure 1-6**.

**Figure 1-6**



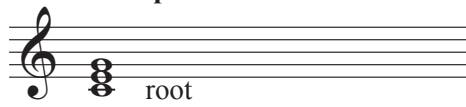
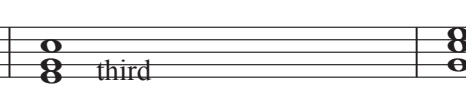
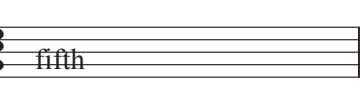
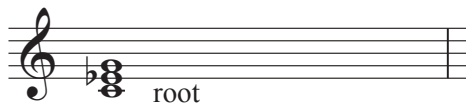
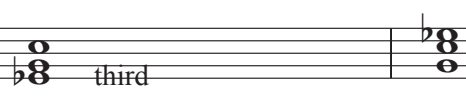
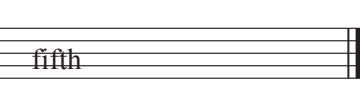
Play **figure 1-6** and listen to the effect each triad has. Be aware of your emotional response to each triad. In program music (music for TV, movies, the theatre) harmony is used to enhance whatever emotional response a scene demands. A major triad sounds happy, strong, or triumphant. A minor triad may sound sad, pensive, or tragic. A diminished triad suggests tension, agitation. An augmented triad has a floating quality, suggesting, among other things, Bambi emerging from the mist at dawn (seriously). Although these have become clichés, they still work, otherwise TV and movie composers wouldn't continue to use them. These emotional responses apply to seventh chords as well, the next chords you will learn about. It's no accident that sad tunes such as Benny Golson's "I Remember Clifford," John Lewis' "Django," and the Raye-DePaul standard "You Don't Know What Love Is" are written in minor keys, or that Bix Beiderbeck's "In A Mist"<sup>30</sup> uses augmented chords. As you play, you elicit an emotional response in your listener, your fellow musicians, and yourself. Be aware of it.

<sup>30</sup> Freddie Hubbard, *Sky Dive*, CTI 6018.



Triads are often inverted. An *inversion* is a chord with a note other than the root on the bottom. **Figure 1-7** shows both a C major and a C minor triad in their three possible positions: *root position*, as the term implies, with the root on the bottom; *first inversion*, with the third on the bottom; and *second inversion*, with the fifth on the bottom.

Figure 1-7

root position	first inversion	second inversion
		
root position	first inversion	second inversion
		

**P***practice tips*

Play the major, minor, diminished, and augmented triads in all keys and all inversions.