

(Book 3) Lesson 34.

Harmonizing with Triads (Close Investigation and Revision)

We can now add these notes and their altered forms to chords and their inversions.

Root Position Triad

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a major triad in root position. Above the staff, notes are labeled: (b5) (flat fifth), 5 (perfect fifth), (#5) (sharp fifth), 6 (perfect sixth), (b7) (flat seventh), and maj7 (major seventh). The notes are placed on the staff as follows: (b5) on G4, 5 on B4, (#5) on C5, 6 on D5, (b7) on F5, and maj7 on G5.

The bracketed notes are not frequently used as melody notes.

First Inversion Triad

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a major triad in first inversion. Above the staff, notes are labeled: Root, (b9) (flat ninth), 9 (perfect ninth), and (#9) (sharp ninth). The notes are placed on the staff as follows: Root on C4, (b9) on B3, 9 on G4, and (#9) on A4.

The bracketed notes rather infrequently used as melody notes.

Second Inversion Triad

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a major triad in second inversion. Above the staff, notes are labeled: b3 (flat third), 3 (perfect third), sus 4 (suspended fourth), and (#4) (sharp fourth). The notes are placed on the staff as follows: b3 on B3, 3 on D4, sus 4 on E4, and (#4) on F4.

The #4 is a relatively rare melody note.

However rare a melody note may be, do not discount the possibility.

2nd Inv. ——— Root Pos. ——— 1st Inv. ———

The diagram shows a treble clef staff with a chromatic scale from B3 to G5. The notes are labeled: b3, 3, 4, #4*, b5, 5, #5, 6, b7, 7, R, b9, 9, #9. The notes are placed on the staff as follows: b3 on B3, 3 on C4, 4 on D4, #4* on E4, b5 on F4, 5 on G4, #5 on A4, 6 on B4, b7 on C5, 7 on D5, R on E5, b9 on F5, 9 on G5, and #9 on A5. The staff is divided into three sections: 2nd Inv. (b3 to #4), Root Pos. (#4 to 7), and 1st Inv. (7 to #9).

A chromatic scale (in half tones) may now be added to a single triad.

(*) Special note: Notice that the #4 and b5 have the same sound while usually harmonized differently. They can be interchangeable as either 2nd inversion #4 or Root Position b5.

Briefly, it seems that a major triad in Root Position can support any melody note from a flat five to a major seventh. First Inversion can support any melody note from a Root to a sharp ninth. Second Inversion can support any melody note from a flat three to a sharp four.

The following pages are dedicated to solving some of the problems that you might encounter in harmonizing tunes with triads.