

Chord Reading 14.

"sus 4" chords

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(in August, 2011)

A most common alteration of the triad or certainly a Dominant 7th chord is the sus 4. Generally, the sus4 is resolved back to the third of the chord. Notice that the sus 4 is a semi-tone above the third of the major triad. Because the 3rd is the colour note of the major triad or a Dominant 7th chord, the sus 4 cannot be played with the third being present in the chord. (sus 4 = suspended 4th.) Some players think that the "sus" means "sustained." Not so! Notice that the Csus4 and the G7sus4 are often the same chord. In the Csus4, the 4th is the flat 7th of G7. In the G7sus4, the sus4 is the Root of the C chord. The naming of the chord will depend mostly on what fundamental bass note is being played and of course the resolution of the chord. These are just casual observations. In this study, the object of the game is practicing reading three part harmony.

Csus4 C (etc)

G7sus4 G7 (etc)

Fsus4 F (etc)

C7sus4 C7

Gsus4 G (etc)

D7sus4 D7 (etc)

It would seem appropriate to call the first chord Dm (sus4) only due to the fact that the subsequent chord is Dm. Similarly in the 2nd measure, the chord is a Dm7sus4 because it is followed by a Dm7 chord. Suspending the 4th above the 3rd makes the chord ambiguous until you hear/see the resolution.

Dm(sus4) Dm Dm7sus4 Dm7 Dsus4 D D7sus4 D7

Perhaps worth noting is that the sus 4 could exist along with the minor third in a min7sus4 chord. This is due to the fact that the sus4 is a full tone above the minor 3rd. The only problem now is that the chord would need four voices and can easily become some type of indistinguishable cluster. "Less" is better. Clarity always wins the harmonic contest.