

6.7 Chords and Harmonic Sonorities

1. **Chord** or **sonority** = *any* group of notes played at the same time.
2. **Voicing** = The vertical spacing/arrangement of notes in a sonority. Usually emphasizes *2nds*, *3rds*, or *4ths/5ths*.

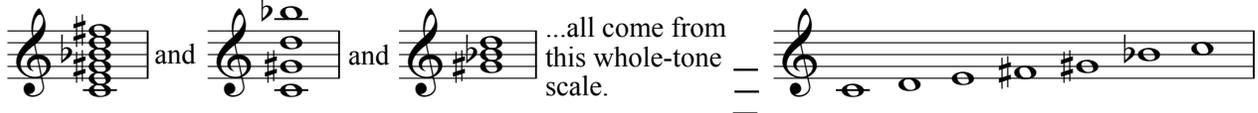
SECONDS: Secundal Chords

A **secundal chord** is any harmonic sonority whose voicing emphasizes *major and minor seconds or sevenths*.

A **tone cluster** is a secundal chord voiced as a stack-of-seconds in a single octave.



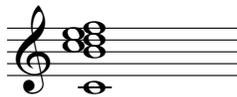
A **whole-tone chord** is any chord (in any voicing) drawn entirely from any single whole-tone scale.



More examples of **secundal chords**:



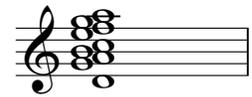
Tone cluster with 2 notes raised an octave



Based on a series of seconds (B-C-D-E-F), with the C doubled.



A-B-C-D-E-F, with the pitch A raised an octave.

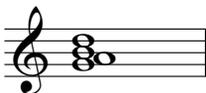


Overwhelmingly secundal, despite the P4 (D-G) and M3 (C-E).

THIRDS: Tertian Chords

A **tertian chord** is any harmonic sonority whose voicing emphasizes *major and minor thirds*.

You should know triads and 7th/9th/11th/13th chords (see earlier chapters). Here are more tertian chords:



Added-note chord:
One or more notes are added to a primarily tertian sonority. *Above: "A" is an added 2nd.*



Split-third chord:
Triad or 7th chord with major AND minor 3rds. *Above: F minor + F major (voicing varies).*



Chord with split members:
Triad or 7th chord with note(s) a m2 away from root, 3rd, 5th, and/or 7th. *Above: B7 (=C♭) is the split 5th.*



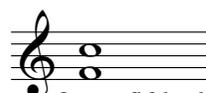
Polychord:
Two or more simultaneous triads. *Above: C and D♭.*



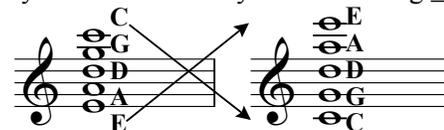
Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" chord:
Polychord with two triads a tritone apart, here C and F#.

FOURTHS/FIFTHS: Quartal/quintal Chords

A **quartal/quintal chord** is any harmonic sonority whose voicing *emphasizes fourths and/or fifths*.



Open-fifth chord:
Triad lacking the third (root + fifth only). Notes may be doubled.



Quartal chord:
"Stack of Fourths"

Quintal chord:
"Stack of Fifths"

Notice any quartal stack can be reordered as a quintal stack.



Scriabin's "mystic" chord:
Favored by composer Alexander Scriabin.

SPECIAL CASES: Mixed-interval chords and revoicing

Mixed-interval chord = No single interval type dominates the voicing. When analyzing these, discuss the overall interval structure. Which interval(s) occur the most? Is there a pattern to the structure?

Revoicing: Often a sonority can be **revoiced** (reordered) to emphasize different intervals. For instance, G-B-D-F-A is a stack of 3rds, but F-G-A-B-D emphasizes 2nds. **Always analyze the voicing in the music itself.**