

Triads in 1st Inversion

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(3rd in the Bass)

Triads in 1st inversion are used to create a melodic and smooth bass line, and also they add a fresh sound to the harmonic vocabulary when contrasted with root position triads. There are different common uses of 1st inversions which can be generally summed up as follows:

1) 1st inversion can REPLACE a root position triad of the same name - compare the following:

Practice the following chord connections on all possible string sets.

A F#m Bm E A A F#m Bm/D E A
I vi ii V I I vi ii V I

The first exercise consists of two measures of music in the key of A major. The first measure contains four chords: A (I), F#m (vi), Bm (ii), and E (V). The second measure contains five chords: A (I), A (I), F#m (vi), Bm/D (ii), and E (V). The bass line for each chord is written in the first position of the bass clef, with the root of the chord in the third position (the third line of the staff).

F#m D G#o C# F#m F#m D G#o C# F#m
i VI ii° V i i VI ii° V i

The second exercise consists of two measures of music in the key of A major. The first measure contains five chords: F#m (i), D (VI), G#o (ii°), C# (V), and F#m (i). The second measure contains five chords: F#m (i), D (VI), G#o (ii°), C# (V), and F#m (i). The bass line for each chord is written in the first position of the bass clef, with the root of the chord in the third position (the third line of the staff).

2) 1st inversion can FOLLOW a root position triad of the same name:

A A/C# D E A A D D/F# E A
I I IV V I I IV IV V I

The third exercise consists of two measures of music in the key of A major. The first measure contains five chords: A (I), A/C# (I), D (IV), E (V), and A (I). The second measure contains five chords: A (I), D (IV), D/F# (IV), E (V), and A (I). The bass line for each chord is written in the first position of the bass clef, with the root of the chord in the third position (the third line of the staff).

A D E E/G# A A A/C# D D/F# E E/G# A
I IV V V I I I IV IV V V I

The fourth exercise consists of two measures of music in the key of A major. The first measure contains six chords: A (I), D (IV), E (V), E/G# (V), A (I), and A (I). The second measure contains six chords: A (I), A/C# (I), D (IV), D/F# (IV), E (V), E/G# (V), and A (I). The bass line for each chord is written in the first position of the bass clef, with the root of the chord in the third position (the third line of the staff).

F#m F#m/A Bm C# F#m F#m Bm Bm/D C# F#m
 i i iv V i i iv iv V i

F#m Bm C# C#/E# F#m F#m F#m/A Bm Bm/D C# C#/E# F#m
 i iv V V i i i iv iv V V iv

If the key of A gets too monotonous for your ear, transpose all exercises right away (instead of waiting for a few weeks, months, as usual) to all keys via the cycle of 4ths.

Or vice versa:

Or ALTERNATE with root position triad of same name:

A/C# A Bm E A A A/C# A E E/G# E A D/F# A/C# E
 I I ii V I

3) 1st inversions can jump to other 1st inversions or to other chords.

4) 1st inversions can be used to create smooth, step-wise bass lines by alternating with root position triads:

A E/G# F#m C#/E D A/C# Bm E/G# A

will be discussed later

A E7/G# F#m C#m7/E D AΔ7/C# Bm E⁹SUS A

Set up this key (G#m)
before playing example

Deceptive: go to Ab

G#m D#m/F# E B/D# C#m G#m/B EΔ7 D# Bm A/C# D C#m/E F#m E/G# A

Notice the use of the MELODIC MINOR - this is standard procedure when a bass is ascending to the tonic in a minor key.

In descending lines (in minor) the NATURAL MINOR is usually used.

This example correlates with #6

G#° F#m/A B A/C# B7/D#C#/E# F#m D#° Bm F#m/A G#° D/F# E Bm/D C#

5) Triads in 1st inversion can be used in succession with alternate voicings:

E/G# D/F# C#m/E Bm/D A/C# G#°/B D/A A

will be discussed later

A G#°/B A/C# Bm/D C#m/E D/F# E/G# E A

Or with mixed voicings
(systems will be given later on this)

F#m/A E/G# D/F# C#m/E Bm/D E A

A G#o/B A/C# Bm/D C#m/E D/F# E/G# A D/F# C#m/E Bm/D C#

A VI v iv V

6) 1st inversion can FOLLOW (or, less commonly PRECEDE) triads on the same bass notes.

A AΔ7 F#m/A G#o G#o7 E/G# F#m F#m7 D/F# E E7 C#m/E etc.

D Bm/D E C#m/E F#m D/F#

Do in various sequences etc.

A system of exercises using many of the above devices will follow soon. For now, just get acquainted with 1st inversions by transposing the above to all keys. Think in names and numbers, not just in "pictures."

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12-7-74

Triads in 1st inversion are used to create a melodic and smooth bass line and also they add a fresh sound to the harmonic vocabulary when contrasted with root position triads. There are different common uses of 1st INVERSIONS which can be generally summed up as follows:

① 1st INVERSIONS can REPLACE a root position triad of the same name — compare the following:

Musical notation for exercise 1: A staff in G major (one sharp) showing root position triads (I, IV, V) and their first inversions (i, iv, v) with notes and chord symbols.

Practice the following chord connections on all possible string sets

② 1st INVERSIONS can FOLLOW a root position triad of the same name;

Musical notation for exercise 2: A staff in G major showing root position triads (I, IV, V) followed by their first inversions (i, iv, v).

Musical notation for exercise 3: A staff in G major showing first inversion triads (i, iv, v) followed by root position triads (I, IV, V).

IF THE KEY OF A gets too monotonous for your ear, transpose all exercises right away (instead of waiting for a few weeks, months, as usual) to all keys via the cycle of 4ths.

OR VICE VERSA OR ALTERNATE WITH ROOT POSITION TRIAD OF SAME NAME

Musical notation for exercise 4: A staff in G major showing alternating root position triads (I, IV, V) and first inversion triads (i, iv, v).

③ 1st INVERSIONS CAN JUMP TO OTHER 1st INVERSIONS OR TO OTHER CHORDS

④ 1st INVERSIONS CAN BE USED TO CREATE SMOOTH, STEPWISE BASS LINES by ALTERNATING WITH ROOT POSITION TRIADS

Musical notation for exercise 5: A staff in G major showing stepwise bass lines created by alternating root position triads (I, IV, V) and first inversion triads (i, iv, v). Includes notes like "WILL BE DISCUSSED LATER" and "SETUP THIS KEY BEFORE (G#m) PLAYING EXAMPLE".

Musical notation for exercise 6: A staff in G major showing deceptive resolutions (e.g., IV to ii) and the use of the melodic minor scale. Includes notes like "deceptive resolutions" and "NOTICE the use of the MELODIC MINOR - this is standard procedure when a bass line (in minor), descending to the tonic in a minor key." and "the natural minor is usually used".

Musical notation for exercise 7: A staff in G major showing triads in first inversion with alternate voicings. Includes notes like "OR WITH MIXED VOICINGS (SYSTEMS WILL BE GIVEN LATER ON THIS)".

Musical notation for exercise 8: A staff in G major showing first inversion triads following or preceding triads on the same bass notes. Includes notes like "LESS COMMONLY (OR, PRECEDE) TRIADS ON THE SAME BASS NOTES" and "6-9-80 DO IN VARIOUS SEQUENCES" with chord diagrams for G major triads.

A system of exercises using many of the above devices will follow soon. For now, just get acquainted with 1st INVERSIONS by transposing the above to all keys. Think in names not just in "pictures".