

The Victorian Folk Music Club  
Incorporated



# CHORDS 201

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Wattle Day Workshops 2022





# What we will learn

- Where do chords come from?
- Chord families in major
- Basic chords in every major key
- Finding chords by ear
- Using sheet music
- Borrowed chords

# Contrasting genres



- Celtic folk
  - Modal
  - Limited harmony
  - Traditionally drone and percussion accompaniment
- Main modes used:
  - ‘Major-ish’:
    - Ionian
    - Mixolydian
  - ‘Minor-ish’:
    - Dorian
    - Aeolian
- Western classical music
  - Modal up to about the 16<sup>th</sup> century
  - After that, highly organised with diatonic scales
  - Harmonically rich and complex
  - Limited rhythmic and melodic development
- Main modes used:
  - Major
  - Minor

# We'll be focusing on ...



- Australian folk
  - Some inherited from the anglo-celtic tradition (see chords 101)
  - Many tunes and songs based on popular music of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
  - Many tunes and songs inherited from American and British sources
  - Mostly in major keys, occasionally minor (true minor, not modal)
  - Harmonically simple, seldom using more than the basic triads in each key

# SECTION 1

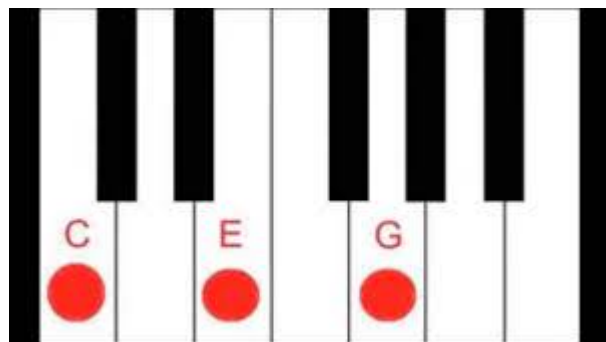
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Where do chords come from?

# Triads



- Three notes
- Skipping a scale note in between
- Sounds together as a pleasant whole



**C major chord**

Musical notation for the C major chord on a treble clef staff. The notes C, E, and G are shown as whole notes on the first, second, and third lines respectively. A vertical bar with the text 'basicmusictheory.com' is on the left. Below the staff, the notes are labeled 'C', 'E', 'G', and 'C maj' with a bracket under the last three.

C E G C maj

# Virtual piano



- <https://recursivearts.com/virtual-piano/>

# The harmonised C major scale

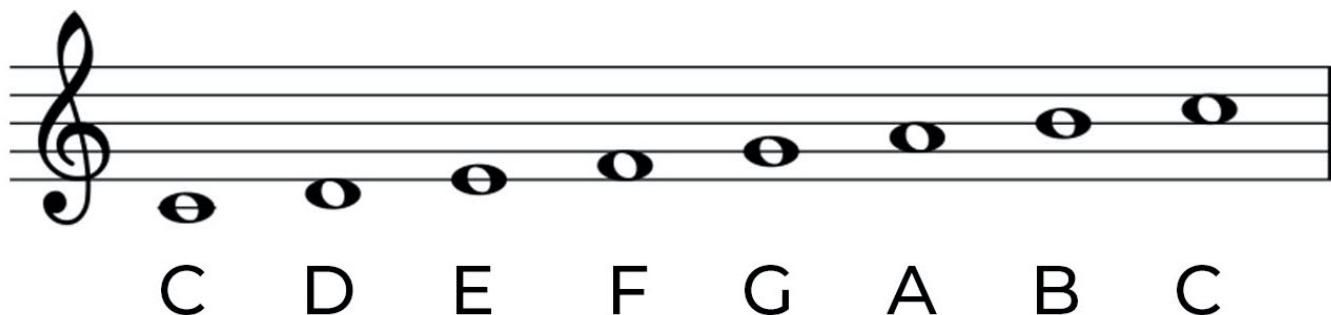
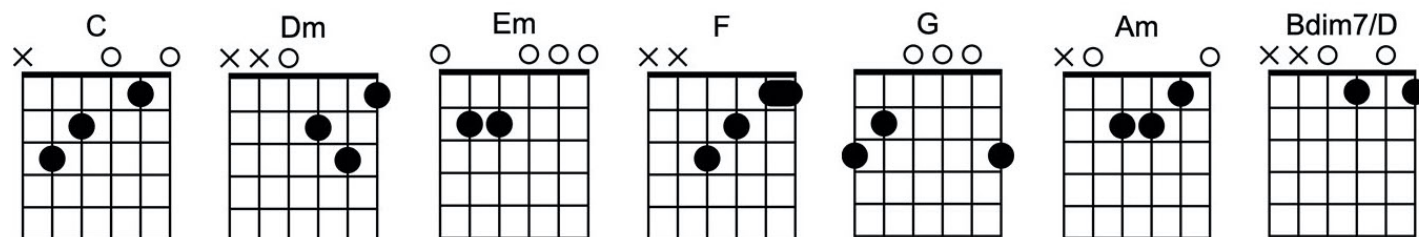


C Dm Em F G Am B<sup>o</sup>

C: I ii iii IV V vi vii<sup>o</sup>



# C major triads for guitar



# SECTION 2

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Finding chords



# Primary and secondary chords

## Primary chords

C (I) Tonic

F (IV) Sub-dominant

G7 (V) Dominant

## Secondary chords

Dm (ii)

Em (iii)

Am (vi)

# The Basic chords in common keys



Key / mode	Tonic (Home chord)	Sub-dominant	Dominant
	I	IV	V
F major	F	Bb	C7
C major	C	F	G7
G major	G	C	D7
D major	D	G	A7
A major	A	D	E7
E major	E	A	B7

# (nearly) all the chords in major!



	Key								
Scale degree	E major	A major	D major	G major	C major	F major	Bb major	Eb major	Ab major
I	E	A	D	G	C	F	Bb	Eb	Ab
ii	F#m	Bm	Em	Am	Dm	Gm	Cm	Fm	Bbm
iii	G#m	C#m	F#m	Bm	Em	Am	Dm	Gm	Cm
IV	A	D	G	C	F	Bb	Eb	Ab	Db
V	B7	E7	A7	D7	G7	C7	F7	Bb7	Eb
vi	C#m	F#m	Bm	Em	Am	Dm	Gm	Cm	Fm
vii	D#dim	G#dim	C#dim	F#dim	Bdim	Edim	Adim	Ddim	Gdim

# Finding the changes



- Find the right Home chord
- Just keep playing the Home chord quietly all the way through the tune / song and notice where it doesn't fit
- When you can hear the places, write them down on the sheet music or lyrics (or just remember them!)

# Basic rules



- Make sure the song is in a major key – if it sounds minorish, refer to Chords 101
- Find out the root chord (Tonic) by playing along.
- Look up the Primary and Secondary chords for that key.
- First try to harmonise the whole song using just the three Primary chords. Only use a minor chord if you really have to.
- The first and last chords will most likely be the Tonic (I chord)
- The next-to-last chord will probably be the Dominant (V7 chord)
- Once you get it right, go back and try substituting some Secondary chords for Primary chords where the Primary chords seem a bit boring (or go on for a long time).

# Example 1 – Flow on, sweet Mitta



## Primary chords

## Secondary chords

Tonic (I)    Sub-dominant (IV)    Dominant (V)

ii

iii

vi

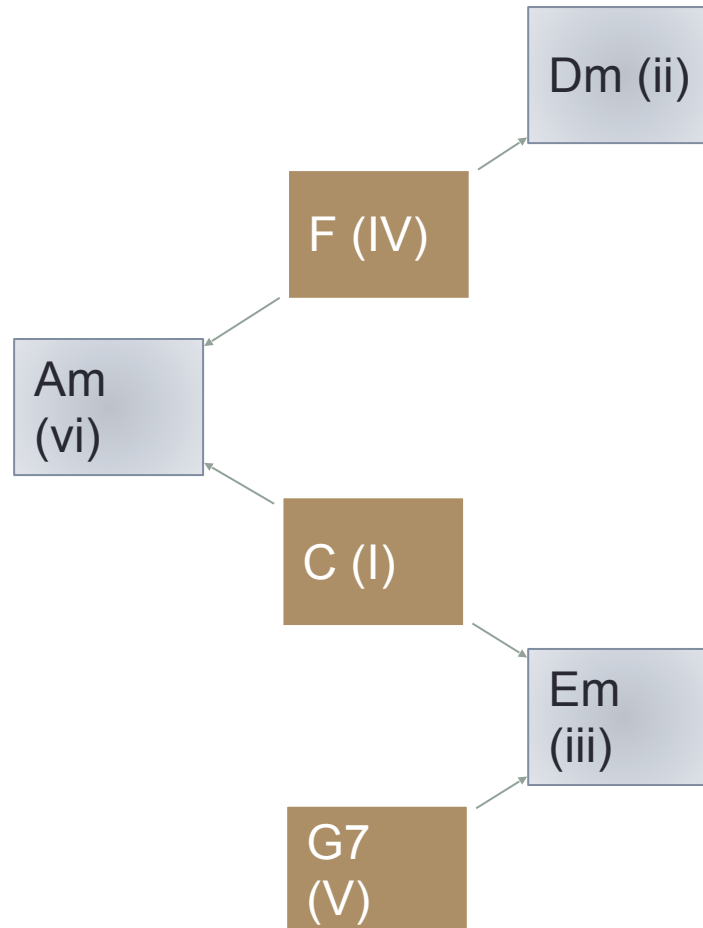
Chord progression diagram showing primary and secondary chords on a treble clef staff in 3/4 time. The primary chords are C (Tonic I), F (Sub-dominant IV), and G7 (Dominant V). The secondary chords are Dm (ii), Em (iii), and Am (vi). The diagram shows the chord symbols above the staff and their corresponding chord diagrams below the staff.

Musical notation for the first line of the melody, starting with a repeat sign. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes.

Musical notation for the second line of the melody, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes.



# Substitute chords



# Example 2 – Reedy Lagoon



Primary chords

Secondary chords

Tonic (I) Sub-dominant (IV) Dominant (V)

ii

iii

vi

C

F

G7

Dm

Em

Am



# Secondary dominants

## Primary chords

C (I)

F (IV)

G7  
(V)

## Secondary chords

Dm (ii)

Em  
(iii)

Am  
(vi)

## Secondary dominants

D7 (II7)

E7 (III7)

A7 (VI7)

# Finding chords from sheet music



Strong and weak beats in 4/4



Strong and Weak Beats in 3/4



## General rules

- Normally only change chords on strong beats
- Chords should contain the melody note of the strong beat
- It's usually Ok if notes on a weak beat are not in the chord (but use your ears!)

# Example 3 – Weevils in the flour



Primary chords                      Secondary chords

Tonic                      Sub-dominant                      Dominant                      ii                      iii                      vi

D                      G                      A7                      Em                      F#m                      Bm

Chorus:

Old Joy Durst has F#,  
which makes more  
sense

# Example 4 – Sweet Georgia Brown



## Sweet Georgia Brown

Kenneth Casey

Ben Bernie, Maceo Pinkard

A7

No gal made has got a shade on sweet Geor - gia Brown.

D7

Two left feet but oh so neat is sweet Geor - gia Brown.

G7

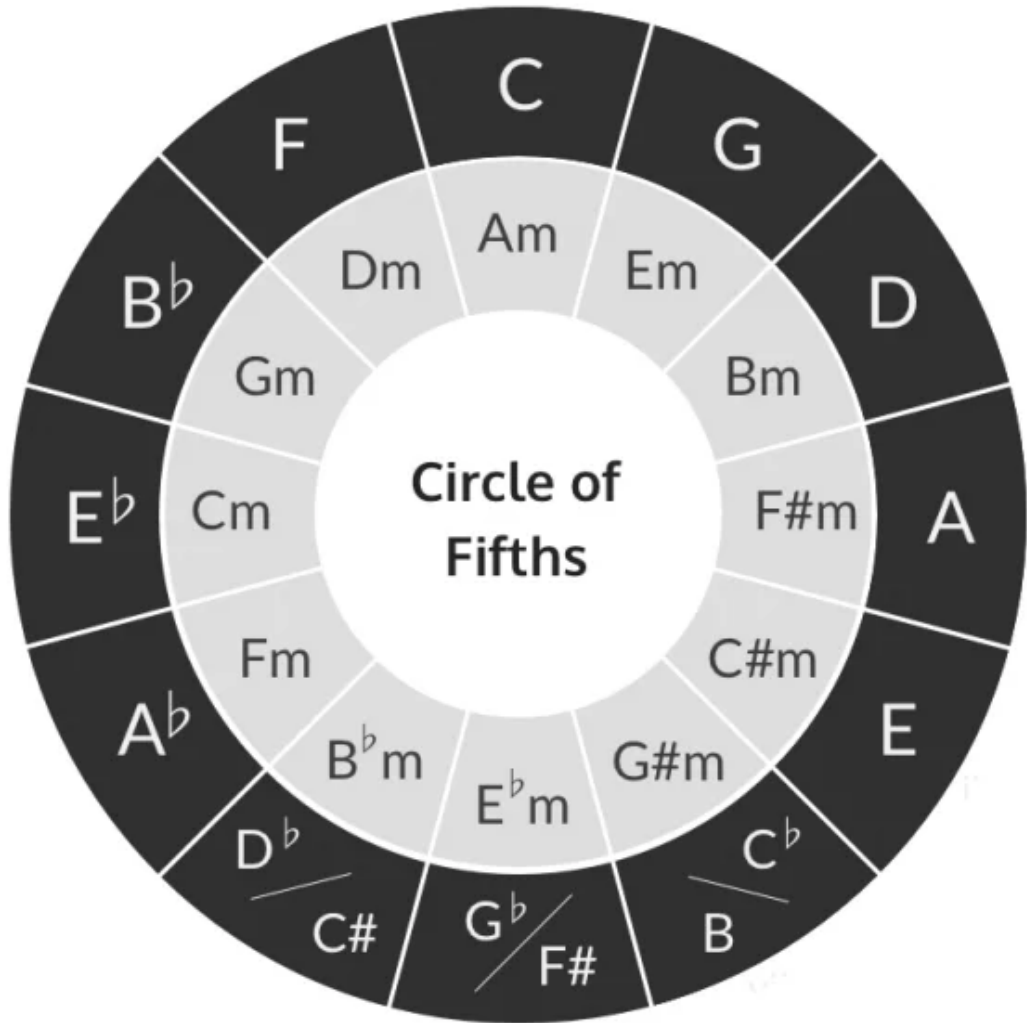
They all sigh and want to die for sweet Geor - gia Brown. I'll tell you just

C G7#5 C B-7 E

why - - you know I don't lie (well not that much):

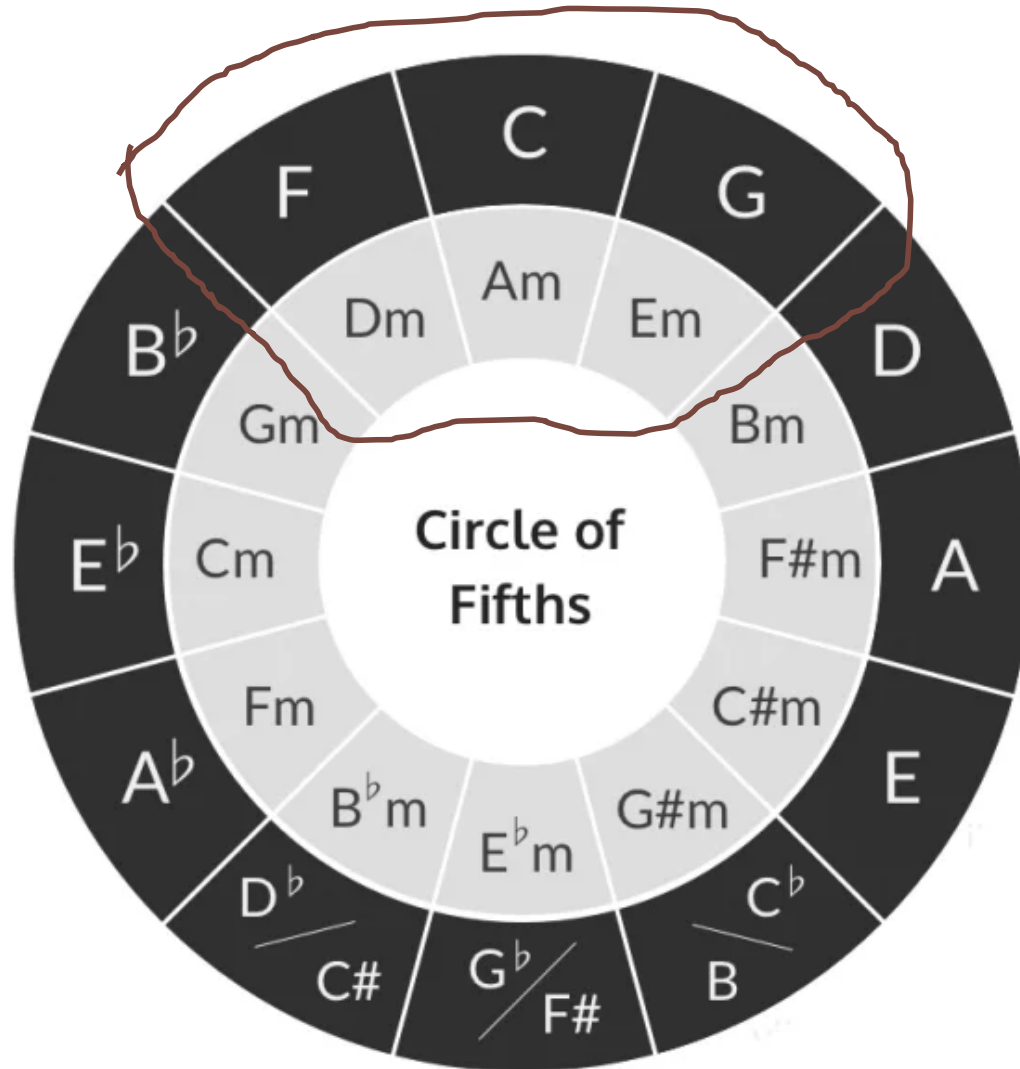


# The circle of fifths





# The circle of fifths





# Example 5

## Cadair Idris

Also known as Arthur's Chair, Ca' Cannel Ucha, Cadeir Idris, Cader Idris, My Sweet Jenny Jones, Sweet Jennie Jones.



A musical score for the piece 'Cadair Idris'. It consists of six staves of music, all in treble clef. The key signature is two sharps (D major or F# minor), and the time signature is 3/4. The music is written in a simple, folk-like style with quarter and eighth notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 3/4 time signature. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the sixth staff.

# ADDITIONAL TOPICS

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Chords in minor keys

# The harmonic minor scale



C D Eb F G Ab B C  
1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b 1  
Do Re Me Fa So Le Ti Do

# The harmonised C minor scale



Im                  II<sup>dim</sup>                  <sup>b</sup>III<sup>aug</sup>                  IV<sup>m</sup>                  V                  <sup>b</sup>VI                  VII<sup>dim</sup>

C<sup>m</sup>                  D<sup>dim</sup>                  E<sup>aug</sup>                  F<sup>m</sup>                  G                  A<sup>b</sup>                  B<sup>dim</sup>

# ADDITIONAL TOPICS

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7<sup>th</sup> chords and beyond

# 7<sup>th</sup> chords in the C major scale



CMAJ<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> EMIN<sup>7</sup> FMAJ<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> AMIN<sup>7</sup> BMIN<sup>7(b5)</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup>

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The staff contains eight vertical stems, each representing a 7th chord. Above each stem is a label: CMAJ<sup>7</sup>, DMIN<sup>7</sup>, EMIN<sup>7</sup>, FMAJ<sup>7</sup>, G<sup>7</sup>, AMIN<sup>7</sup>, BMIN<sup>7(b5)</sup>, and CMAJ<sup>7</sup>. Each stem has a vertical line through it, and a series of small circles representing the notes of the chord are stacked vertically along the stem. The notes are: CMAJ<sup>7</sup> (C, E, G, Bb), DMIN<sup>7</sup> (D, F, Ab, C), EMIN<sup>7</sup> (E, G, Bb, D), FMAJ<sup>7</sup> (F, Ab, C, Eb), G<sup>7</sup> (G, B, D, F), AMIN<sup>7</sup> (A, C, Eb, G), BMIN<sup>7(b5)</sup> (B, D, F, Ab), and CMAJ<sup>7</sup> (C, E, G, Bb).

# 7<sup>th</sup> chords in the C minor scale



Cm7    Dm7 $\flat$ 5    E $\flat$ M7    Fm7    G7    A $\flat$ M7    B $\flat$ o7    Cm7

Im7    IIIm7 $\flat$ 5     $\flat$ IIIM7    IVm7    V7     $\flat$ VIM7    VIIo7    Im7

# 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> chords



Diagram illustrating the construction of 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> chords in the key of C major, shown on a treble clef staff with a 7/4 time signature. The chords are presented in five rows, each starting with a number in the left margin.

Row 1: C, Dm, Em, F, G, Am, B<sup>o</sup>

Row 2: 2 Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, B<sup>o</sup>7

Row 3: 3 Cmaj9, Dm<sup>9</sup>, Em7(<sup>b</sup>9), Fmaj9, G<sup>9</sup>, Am<sup>9</sup>, Bm7(<sup>b</sup><sub>5</sub><sup>9</sup>)

Row 4: 4 Cmaj11, Dm<sup>11</sup>, Em<sup>11</sup>(<sup>b</sup>9), Fmaj9(<sup>#</sup>11), G<sup>11</sup>, Am<sup>11</sup>, Bm<sup>11</sup>(<sup>b</sup><sub>5</sub><sup>9</sup>)

Row 5: 5 Cmaj13, Dm<sup>13</sup>, Em<sup>11</sup>(<sup>b</sup> 9, <sup>b</sup> 13), Fmaj13(<sup>#</sup>11), G<sup>13</sup>, Am<sup>11</sup>(<sup>b</sup>13), Bm<sup>11</sup>(<sup>b</sup> 5, <sup>b</sup> 9, <sup>b</sup> 13)