

The Victorian Folk Music Club
Incorporated



CHORDS 201

Wattle Day Workshops 2021





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 16th 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 ...



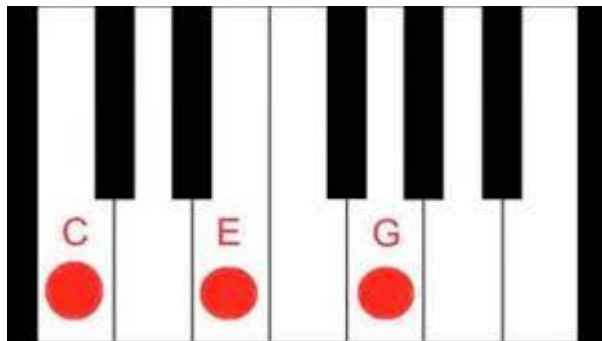
- Australian folk
 - Some inherited from the anglo-celtic tradition (see chords 101)
 - Many tunes and songs based on popular music of the 19th and early 20th century
 - Many tunes and songs inherited from American and British sources
 - **Mostly in major keys,** occasionally minor (true minor, not modal)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

SECTION 1

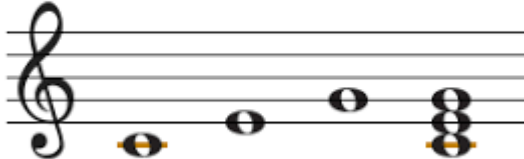
Where do chords come from?

Triads

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



C major chord



C E G C maj

The image shows the C major chord written on a treble clef staff. The notes C, E, and G are placed on the first, second, and third lines of the staff, respectively. The C major chord is labeled as 'C maj' below the staff. The website 'basicmusictheory.com' is visible in the background.



Virtual piano



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

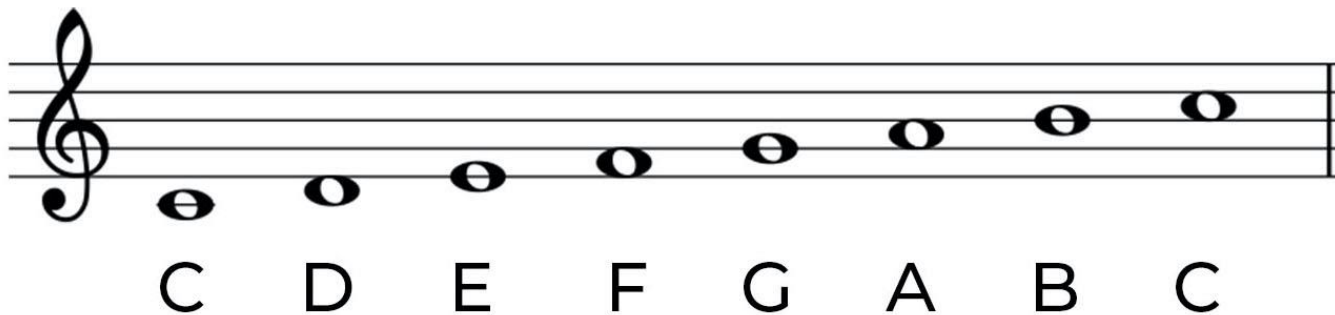
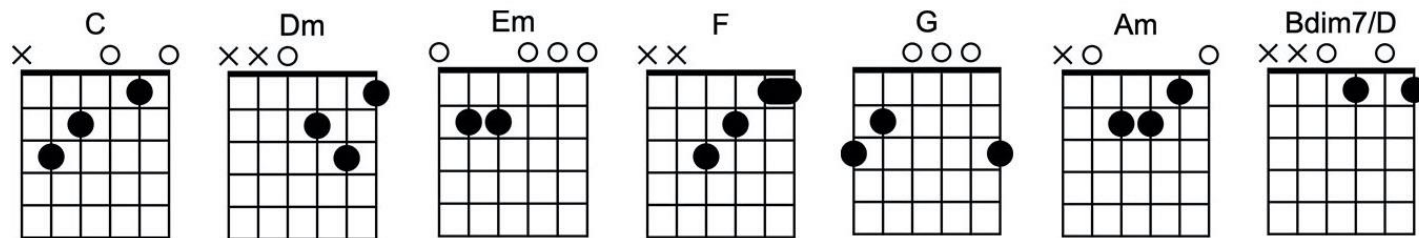
The harmonised C major scale



C Dm Em F G Am B^o

C: I ii iii IV V vi vii^o

C major triads for guitar



SECTION 2

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)

(nearly) all the chords in major!



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



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

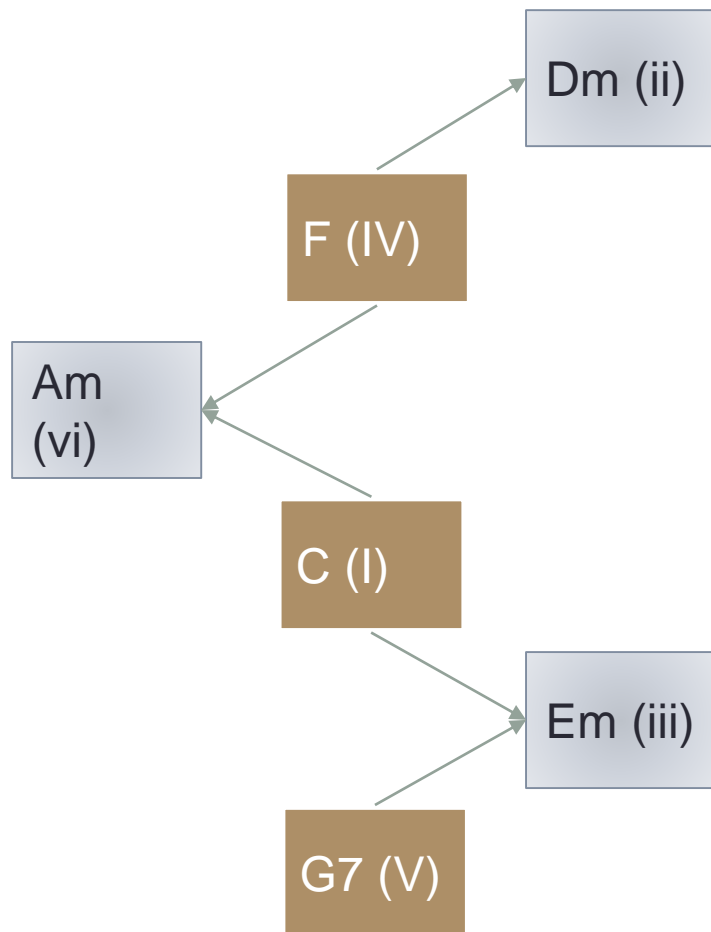
iii

vi

Chord progression diagram in 3/4 time:

Chords: C (Tonic I), F (Sub-dominant IV), G7 (Dominant V), Dm (ii), Em (iii), Am (vi)

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

³C Am C Am C G G7

I

11

C Am G7 ??? G G7

19

C Am C Am C G G7



Secondary dominants

Primary chords

C (I)

F (IV)

G7 (V)

Secondary chords

Dm (ii)

Em (iii)

Am
(vi)

Secondary dominants

D7 (II7)

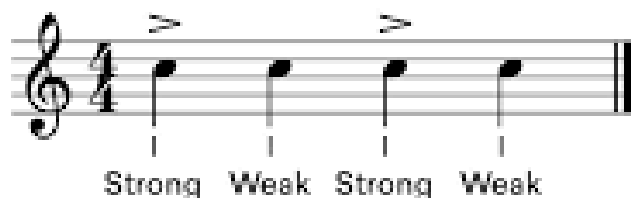
E7 (III7)

A7 (VI7)

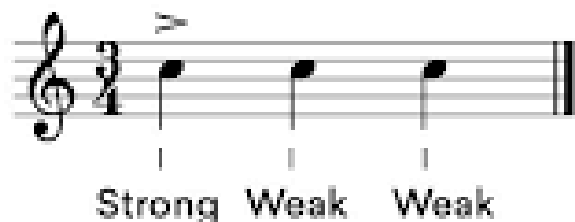
Finding chords from sheet music



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.

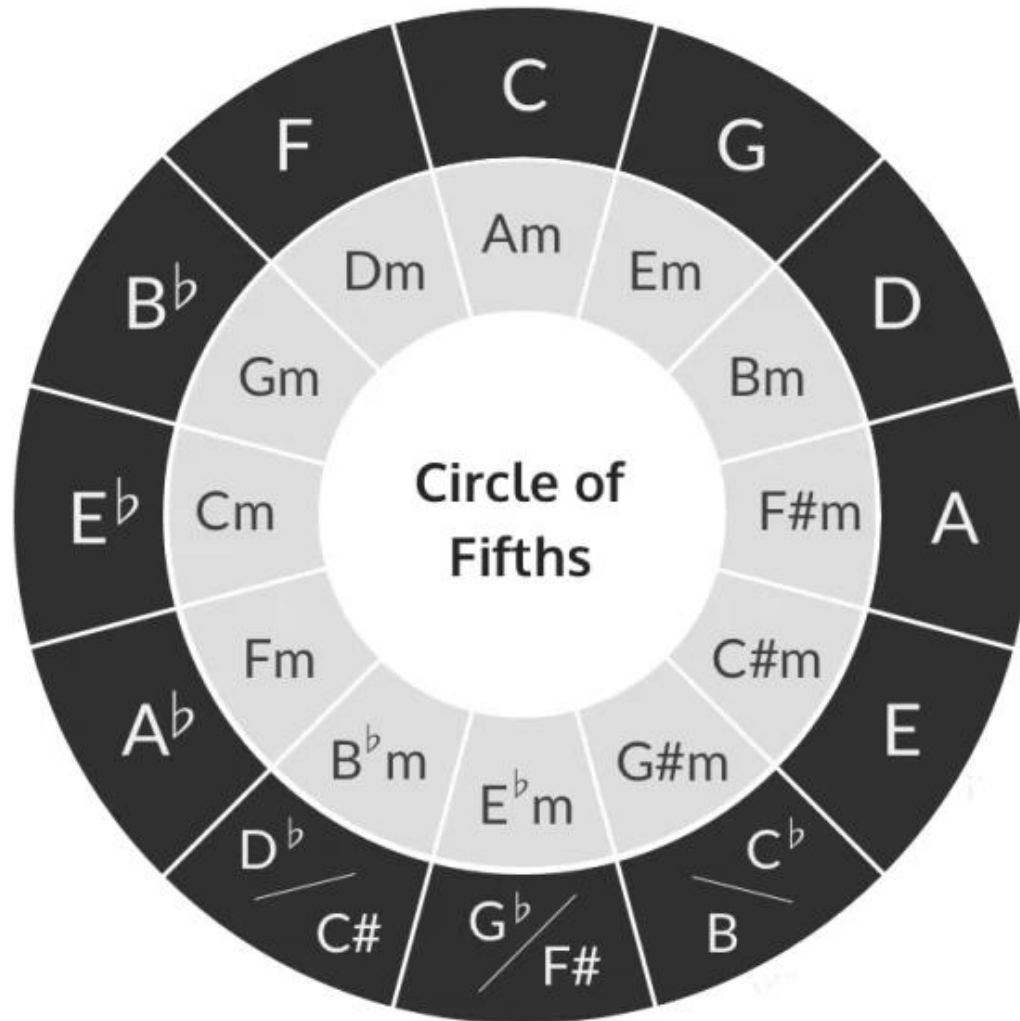
G7

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

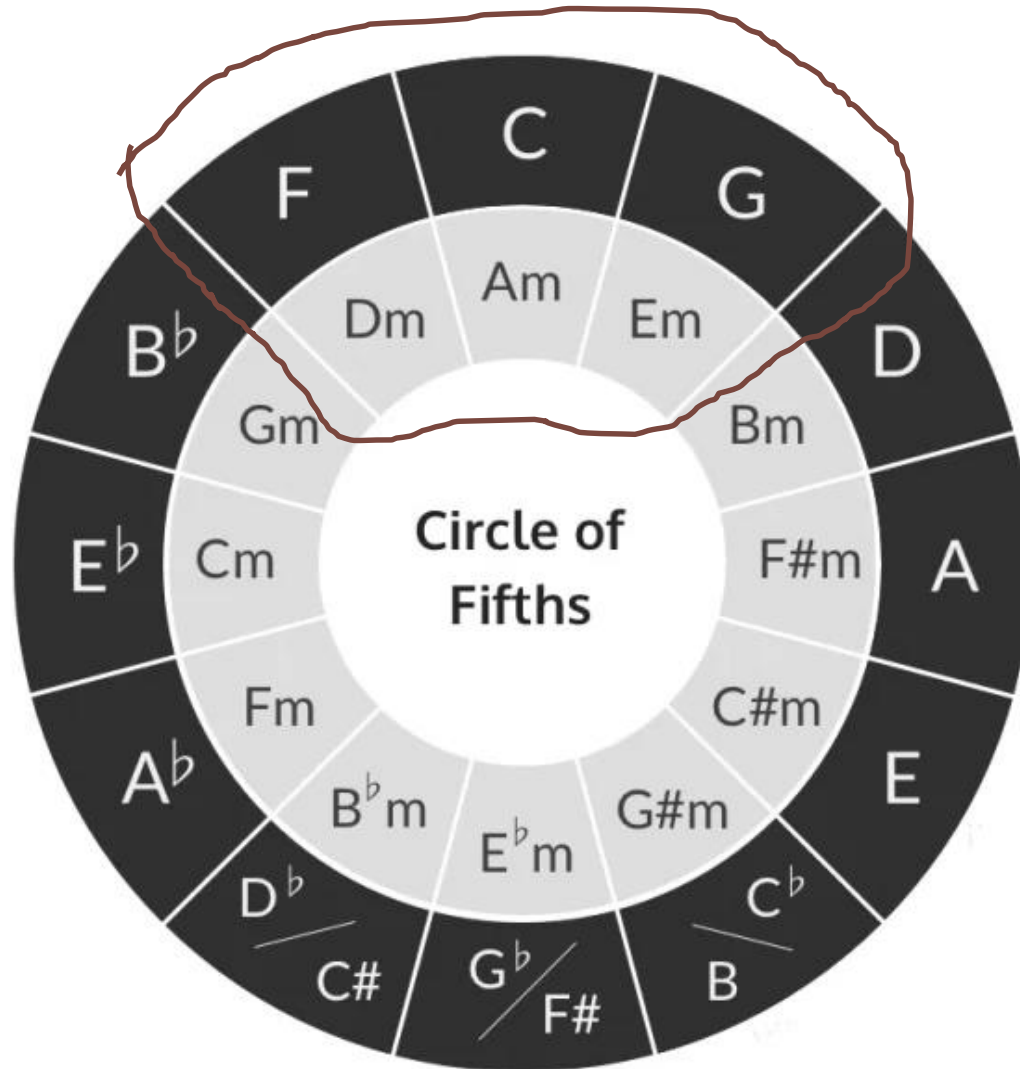
C G7#5 C B-7 E

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.



The musical score for 'Cadair Idris' is presented in six staves. The key signature is G major (two sharps: F# and C#) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written in a simple, folk-like style. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff ends with a repeat sign. The remaining staves continue the melody with various rhythmic patterns and note values.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

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^{dim} ^bIII^{aug} IV^m V ^bVI VII^{dim}

C^m D^{dim} E^baug F^m G A^b B^{dim}

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

7th chords and beyond

7th chords in the C major scale



CMAJ⁷ DMIN⁷ EMIN⁷ FMAJ⁷ G⁷ AMIN⁷ BMIN^{7(b5)} CMAJ⁷

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The staff contains eight vertical lines representing chords. Above each line is a chord symbol: CMAJ⁷, DMIN⁷, EMIN⁷, FMAJ⁷, G⁷, AMIN⁷, BMIN^{7(b5)}, and CMAJ⁷. Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a stack of four circles (notes) on it, indicating the chord's structure.

7th 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

7th, 9th, 11th and 13th chords



Diagram illustrating the construction of 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th 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^o

Row 2: 2 Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, B^o7

Row 3: 3 Cmaj9, Dm⁹, Em7(b9), Fmaj9, G⁹, Am⁹, Bm7(b₅⁹)

Row 4: 4 Cmaj11, Dm¹¹, Em11(b9), Fmaj9(#11), G¹¹, Am¹¹, Bm11(b₅⁹)

Row 5: 5 Cmaj13, Dm¹³, Em11(b 9, b 13), Fmaj13(#11), G¹³, Am¹¹(b13), Bm11(b 5, b 9, b 13)

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