

FUNCTIONAL HARMONY

We will be using (at least) four-note chords (7th chords), as the “bare” triads” are insufficient for jazz.

DIATONIC HARMONY – Building 7th chords on each scale degree:

CMaj7 Dm7 Em7 FMaj7 G7 Am7 Bm7b5

I ii iii IV V vi vii

M **m** **m** **M** **x** **m** **ø**

There are 5 types of chords:

Type of Chord	Referred to as	Notated ¹	Found diatonically on
Major, M7	“Major”	M	I, IV
Major, m7	“Dominant”	x	V
Minor, m7	“Minor”	m	ii, iii, vi
Dim, m7	“Half-diminished”	ø	vii
Dim, °7	“Diminished”	o	vii in harmonic minor

Adding 9, 11, 13 to the chords, will be regarded as “colors” (Mehegan = “sensitive notes”), will NOT change the basic FUNCTION of the chord

Alterations of the chord notes

- 4 = suspended 4th, replaces the 3rd
- #5, b5 = modifications of the 5th
- 6 = M6 added instead of M7
- 8 = chord with no 7th, the root is doubled
- #7 = M7 on a minor chord

¹ The denominations M, x, m, ø, o come from Mehegan; other ways of describing the 7th chords might be: MM7 (major 7th), Mm7 (dominant 7th), mm7 (minor 7th), om7 (half-diminished 7th), oo7 (diminished 7th) – Turek p.43

Translation of Chords from a chart to Harmonic Functions

- If a chord is Diatonic (belongs to the key) then the roman numerals are sufficient, without specifying the type of chord and 7th.
Ex: I = Maj chord with M7, II = minor chord with m7, etc
- A change of the TYPE of chord, that is not diatonic in the key, will be specifically notated.
Ex: Ix = dominant chord on I, IIø = half-dim chord on II, etc
- If the ROOT of the chord is altered, it will be notated with the alteration symbol before the roman number; ATTN: if the chord type is the same as the chord without alteration, then adding of M,x,m... etc, will not be necessary
ex: #I = C#Maj7; #Ix = C#7; bIII = Ebm7; bIIIx = Eb7

Another example:

Cmaj7	D7	Dm7 G7	Em7 Ebm7	Dm7 Db7	Cmaj7
I	IIx	II V	III bIII	II bIIx	I

The 60 chord system in root position

- practice with both hands
- go down the columns first. Ex: CM, Cx, Cm, Cø, Co; DbM, Dbx, etc.
- memorize the chords so you can play them without reference to the sheet
- practice by Random Chords sheet
- practice by II-V-I sheet