major chord

Ramsay

The triplet B, D, F, has been called the imperfect triad, because in it the two diatonic semitones, B-C and E-F, and the two minor thirds which they constitute, come together in this so-called imperfect fifth. But instead of deserving any name indicating imperfection, this most interesting triad is the Diatonic germ of the chromatic chord, and of the chromatic system of chords. Place this triad to precede the tonic chord of the key of C major, and there are two semitonic progressions. Place it to precede the tonic chord of the key of F# major, and there are three semitonic progressions. Again, if we place it to precede the tonic chord of the key of A minor, there are two semitonic progressions; but make it precede the tonic chord of E? minor, and there are three semitonic progressions. This shows that the chromatic chord has its germ in, and its outgrowth from the so-called "natural notes," that is notes without flats or sharps, notes with white keys; and that these natural notes furnish, with only the addition of either A? from the major scale or G# from the minor, a full chromatic chord for one **major** and one minor chord, and a secondary chromatic chord for one more in each mode. [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 52]

The dominant seventh, G, B, D, F, a 4-note chord,¹ only requires that the root G be made sharp, which will make G#-B a minor third agreeably with the structure of the other two intervals, B-D and E-F. The chromatic chord only differs from the dominant seventh in that it is wholly of minor thirds. There are four notes in a chromatic chord, but only three of them move by semitonic progression to a tonic chord. When these three notes thus move to a **major chord**, one is upward to the root, a second downward to the top, and the third downward also to the middle. The relative minor being a minor third below [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 52]

the major, the root of the **major chord** is the middle of the relative minor, and the middle of the **major chord** is the top of the relative minor; and as the note which has a semitonic progression downward to the top of the major has a semitonic progression upward to the root of the relative minor, so the same three notes which move in semitonic progression to the top, root, and middle of the **major chord**, likewise move by the semitonic progression to the root, top, and middle of the relative minor. In both cases the progressions are upward to the roots and downward to the tops; but in the major the movement is downward to the middle, while in the minor it is upward. So each one of these three of the four notes of the chromatic chord has two various movements.¹ [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 53]

The CHROMATIC SYSTEM of chords is developed from these three primitive chromatic chords, and in the course of its development one or two notes are brought in semitonic progression to the middle, one or two to the root, and one or two to the top of all **major** and minor tonic chords. Likewise, at one time or another in the course of the system, there is one note in common with the middle, one note in common with the root, and one note in common with the top of all the **major** and minor tonic chords. [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 57]

Moreover, it is only from one to five, that is from C to G in *ascending*, which is its proper direction in the genesis, that the major in being harmonized does not admit of minor chords, but if we *descend* this same natural major scale of the fifth from five to one, that is from G to C, the first chord is C E G; the next chord is F A C; if this is succeeded by the minor chord A C E, there are two notes in common and one semitonic progression, as very facile step in harmony; and the following two notes are most naturally harmonized as minor chords. So modulation into the minor, even in this major scale, is very easy in *descending*, which is the proper direction of the minor genesis.² In a similar way, it is only from five to one, that is from E to A in *descending*, which is its proper genetic direction, that the minor in being harmonized does not admit of **major chords**; but if we *ascend* this same minor scale of the fifth from one to five, the first chord is A C E, the next is E G B, and if this chord be followed by the **major C E G**, there are here again two notes in common and one semitonic progression; and the two notes following are then most naturally harmonized as **major chords**. So modulation into the major, even in this minor scale, is very natural and easy in *ascending*, which is the proper direction of the major c E G, there are here again two notes in common and one semitonic progression; and the two notes following are then most naturally harmonized as **major chords**. So modulation into the major, even in this minor and the tonic major are, like the subdominant major and the tonic minor, very intimately related in having two notes in common and one semitonic progression. [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 65]

Now we come to a remarkable arrangement of Nature. The minor does not grow in the same way out of this third

chord's top. Two features come before us: first the minor chord grows out of the **major**, but it is *taken not from the top but from the middle*, from a rib out of his side. B, the middle of the major dominant chord; B, the lastborn of the major genesis; B is the point of departure in the outgrowth of the minor mode. The feminine is a lateral growth from the masculine. Another feature: it *grows downward*, like a drooping ash or willow. Its first generated chord is its dominant, and its last is its subdominant. Its middle chord, like the middle one of the **major**, is its tonic. Still further, it is *generated by division*, not multiplication; B45 is divided by 3 and by 5 for the root and middle of this highest chord, E and G. E15 is divided by 3 and 5 for the root and middle of the tonic chord, A and C. A5 is divided by 3 and 5 for the root and middle of the lowest chord, D and F. Thus we have the whole generation of the elements of music, six generations of harmony, like the six days of creation. Up to this point the whole process and aspect is *inverse*; growing from a middle; growing downward; growing by division;while the **major** is growing from the top; growing upward; growing by multiplication. But here the inverse aspect ends. The generating primes of the **major** are 3 and 5; 3 and 5 are also the generating primes of the minor. In this essential phase of their creation their comparison is *direct*, not inverse. [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 67]

together on radial lines from the center they appear grouped in various chords and combinations, dropping out and coming in in such succession as to constitute what Ramsay, whose genius was given to set this thus before us, calls "Nature's Grand Fugue." Beginning at F in the center at the top, and moving either to the right or to the left, after a run of 7 notes we have 4 consecutive Octaves, and then comes the Minor fifth, A-E, followed by the Major fifth, G-D; and this by another Major fifth, F-C; the combinations keep changing till at the quarter of the circle we come to F, A, C, E, G, a combination of the subdominant and tonic Major; and after another varied series of combinations we have at the half of the circle the elements of 2 minor chords, D, F, A and A, C, E, and one **Major chord**, C, E, G; at the third quarter we have a repetition of the first quarter group; and the various chords and combinations dropping out and coming in, fugue-like; finally we return to where we began, and end with the *three-times-three chord*, in which the whole 25 notes are struck together, and make that wondrous and restful close of this strange Fugue. No one can hear the *thrice-threefold chord* of this close and ever forget it; it is "the lost chord" found; and leads the saintly heart away to the Three in One who is the Lord of Hosts; Maker of Heaven and Earth, and all the host of them. [Scientific Basis and Build of Music, page 103]

Hughes

The roots of the minor chords

- -The difference between a major and a minor chord
- -The chords of the twelve keys in musical clef, those of A coloured, . . .37 [Harmonies of Tones and Colours, Table of Contents3 Harmonies]

Reflections on the scheme

- -Our present powers are as darkness groping after light
- -A quotation from Milton compared with the scheme
- -Major and minor chords respond to our feeling
- -Milton had a glimpse of the laws of Evolution
- -Evade the belief of the development of trinities from unity and the scheme falls into ruin, 43 [Harmonies of Tones and Colours, Table of Contents4 Harmonies]

ON a keyed instrument only twelve are major key-notes, but as the double tones C#-D? and F#-G? are roots, there are fourteen different chords. The fourteen that are roots are written in musical clef. As an example of the **major chords** in the different keys, we may examine those in the key of C. A major fifth includes five out of the seven of its key; with the third or central note it is the threefold chord, or fourfold when the octave note is added. Including the silent key-notes, a threefold chord embraces eight, or, counting the double tones, not including E#, eleven. The first and second chords of the seven of the harmony are perfect major chords in the key of C; the central note of the third chord, being #C-?D, is a discord. The first pair of fifths in the scale, with its central note, is a chord of the key; if we include the octave, the last pair of fifths, with its central note, is the same chord an octave higher than the lowest chord of the seven. Of the chords written in musical clef of the

twelve keys, the octave chord is only written to C, the seven of each having two chords and the scale one, thirtysix in all, or forty-eight if the octave chords are added. Notice how the chords of each seven and the chord of its scale are altered. [Harmonies of Tones and Colours, Diagram V - The Chords of the Twelve Major Keys, page 27a]

DIAGRAM XVII.—The roots of the minor chords—The difference between a **major** and a minor chord—The chords of the 12 minor keys follow. [Harmonies of Tones and Colours, Additional Diagrams, page 57]

The roots of the Minor Chords. The difference between a **Major** and a Minor Chord. The Chords of the 12 Minor keys follow. [Harmonies of Tones and Colours, The Roots of the Minor Chords, page 61]

See Also

chord major