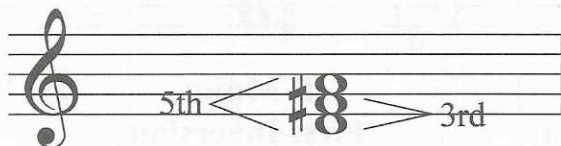


## LESSON 6

### INVERSIONS OF TRIADS

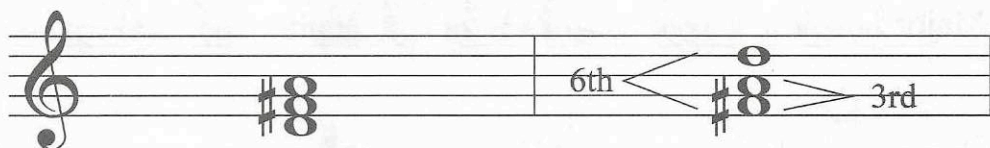
A **ROOT POSITION TRIAD** occurs when the root of the triad is lowest. **FIGURED BASS** is used to identify the position. The figured bass symbol for root position is  $\frac{5}{3}$ , because when the triad is in its simplest position, the intervals above the lowest note are a 5th and a 3rd. When labeling a triad in root position, figured bass is optional.



**D Major Root Position Triad**  
(D Major or D Major  $\frac{5}{3}$ )

A **FIRST INVERSION TRIAD** occurs when the third of the triad is lowest. The figured bass symbol for first inversion is  $\frac{6}{3}$ , because when the triad is in its simplest position, the intervals above the lowest note are a 6th and a 3rd. In this simple position, the top note of the triad gives it its name.

When labeling first inversion triads, the figured bass symbol  $\frac{6}{3}$  or  $\frac{6}{3}$  is written to the right of the name of the triad.



**D Major Root Position Triad    D Major First Inversion Triad**  
(D Major or D Major  $\frac{5}{3}$  )                      (D Major  $\frac{6}{3}$  or  $\frac{6}{3}$ )

A **SECOND INVERSION TRIAD** occurs when the fifth of the triad is lowest. The figured bass symbol for second inversion is  $\frac{6}{4}$ , because when the triad is in its simplest position, the intervals above the lowest note are a 6th and a 4th. In this simple position, the middle note of the triad gives it its name.

When labeling second inversion triads, the figured bass symbol  $\frac{6}{4}$  is used.

<b>D Major Root Position Triad</b>	<b>D Major First Inversion Triad</b>	<b>D Major Second Inversion Triad</b>
(D Major or D Major $\frac{5}{3}$ )	(D Major $\frac{6}{3}$ or $\frac{6}{3}$ )	(D Major $\frac{6}{4}$ )

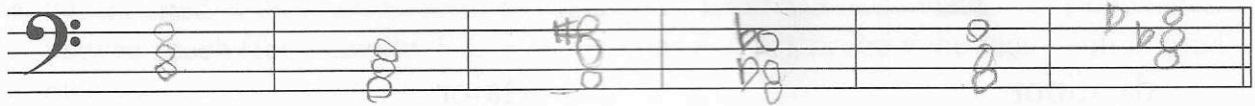
1. Name each of the following triads with its root (letter name), quality, and figured bass (inversions.) The first one is given.

A Major $\frac{6}{4}$	d m $\frac{6}{3}$	E m $\frac{5}{3}$	B <sup>b</sup> M $\frac{6}{3}$	C M $\frac{6}{3}$	C m $\frac{6}{3}$

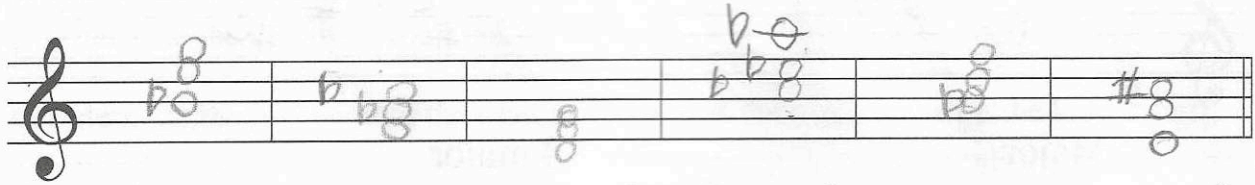
gd 5	C m $\frac{6}{4}$	G <sup>b</sup> M $\frac{6}{2}$	F <sup>#</sup> M $\frac{6}{4}$	f m $\frac{6}{3}$	d m $\frac{5}{3}$

am $\frac{5}{3}$	a $\frac{6}{4}$	E <sup>b</sup> M $\frac{6}{4}$	B M $\frac{6}{4}$	Ebd $\frac{5}{3}$	C d $\frac{5}{3}$

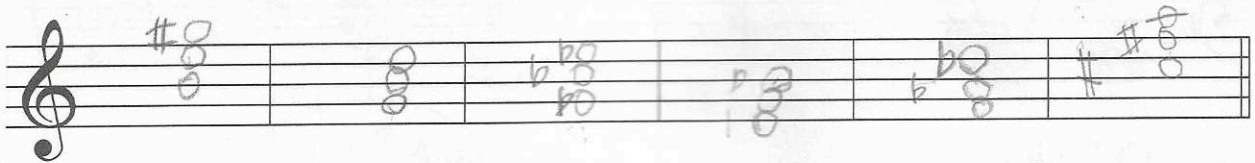
2. Draw each of the following triads.



b dim.      G Major      D Major  $\frac{6}{4}$       E $\flat$  Major  $\frac{6}{3}$       F Major  $\frac{6}{6}$       c dim.

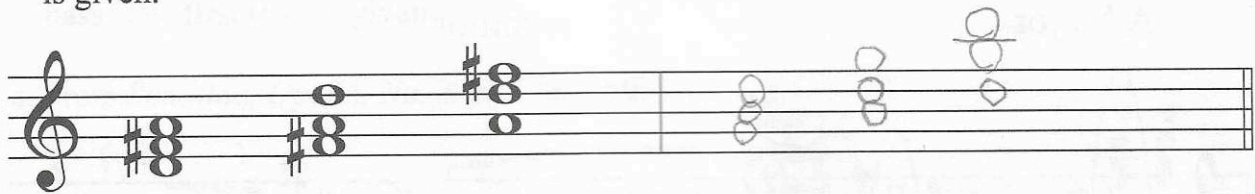


g minor  $\frac{6}{4}$       f dim.      d minor  $\frac{5}{3}$       a $\flat$  minor  $\frac{6}{3}$       B $\flat$  Major      A Major  $\frac{6}{4}$



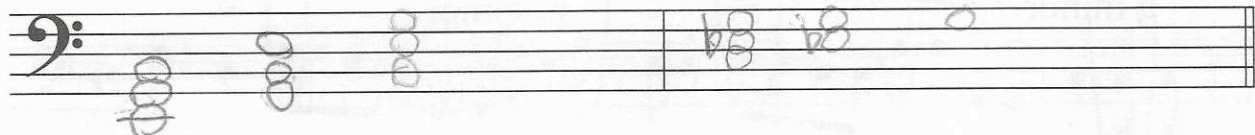
E Major  $\frac{6}{4}$       g dim.  $\frac{5}{3}$       C $\flat$  Major  $\frac{6}{4}$       e dim.      D $\flat$  Major  $\frac{6}{3}$       f $\sharp$  minor  $\frac{6}{4}$

3. Draw these triads in root position, first inversion, and second inversion. The first one is given.



D Major

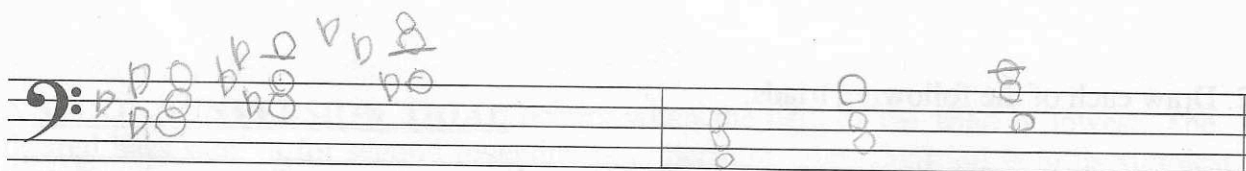
G Major



e minor

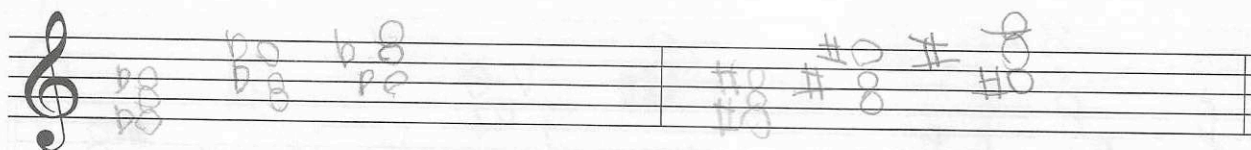
c minor





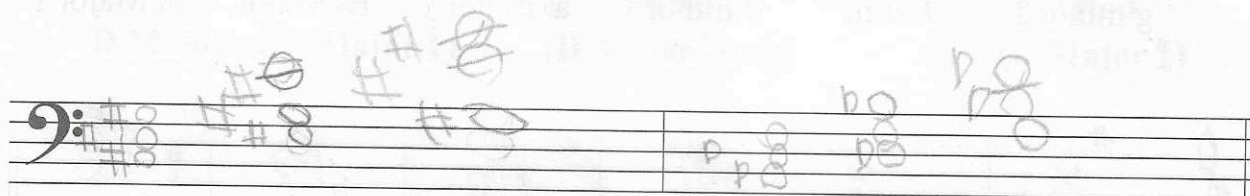
Db minor

F Major



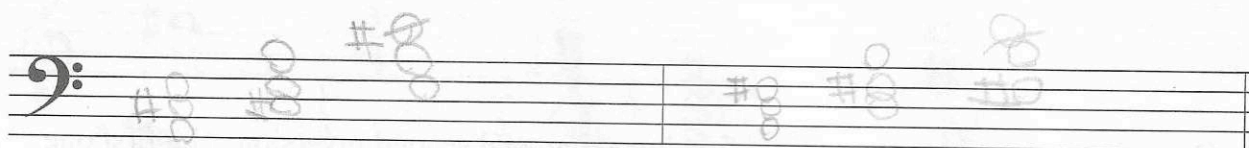
Eb Major

F# minor



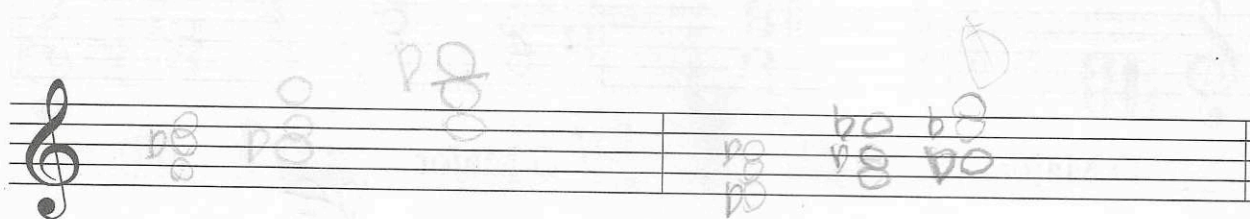
C# Major

Bb minor



A Major

B minor



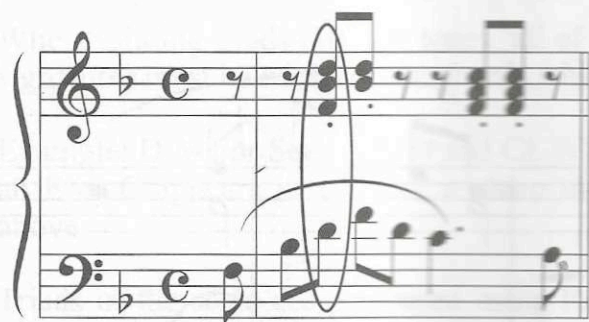
G minor

Eb minor

In actual music, triads are rarely in their simplest positions. To determine the root and quality of a triad within a composition, follow these steps:

- Put the triad in its simplest form by placing the letter names so that there is one letter between each (for example, F-C-F-A becomes F-A-C), or draw the root position triad on a staff..
- Draw any sharps or flats from the key signature or from earlier in the measure before the notes.
- Determine the quality of the triad.
- Determine the inversion of the triad by looking at the lowest note on the lowest staff.

Example (from *The Merry Farmer* by Schumann):

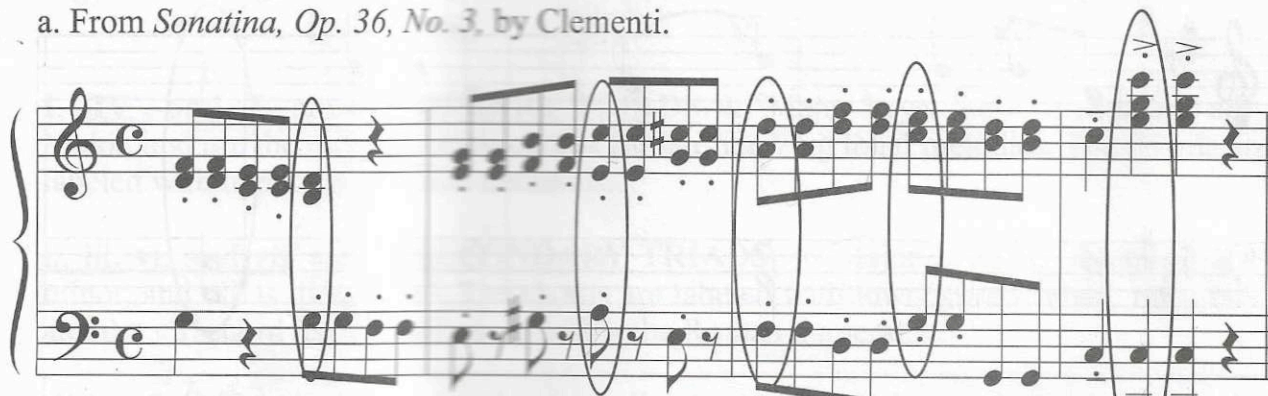


**B $\flat$  Major  $^6$**

- Notes are D-F-B $\flat$ -D
- Simplest form is: B $\flat$ -D-F
- B $\flat$  Major Triad
- D is the lowest note (in the bass clef), so the triad is in first inversion ( $^6$  or  $^6_3$ )
- B $\flat$  Major  $^6$  or  $^6_3$

4. Name each circled triad in the following examples with its root, quality, and figured bass. The first triad is given.

a. From *Sonatina, Op. 36, No. 3*, by Clementi.



**G Major**  
(G Major  $^5_3$ )

$am \ ^5_3$

$dm \ ^6_3$

$CM \ ^6_3$

$CM \ ^5_3$

b. From *Chorale* by Schumann.

Handwritten chord symbols below the staff:

$Em \frac{5}{3}$   $D M \frac{5}{3}$   $G M \frac{5}{3}$   $C M \frac{6}{3}$   $G M \frac{5}{3}$   $D M \frac{5}{3}$   $G M \frac{5}{3}$

c. From *To a Wild Rose* by MacDowell.

Handwritten chord symbols below the staff:

$AM \frac{5}{3}$   $BM \frac{5}{3}$

Handwritten chord symbols below the staff:

$AM \frac{5}{3}$