

# Chapter Two: Chords

We will have plenty more to say about scales as proceed, but I mentioned earlier that **musical keys** include two coinciding components: **scales** and the **chords** they generate. Musicians whose instruments produce only one note at a time, from bassoons to baritones to bagpipes, are often light on chordal knowledge. Frankly, these players don't *need* such knowledge to fulfill their main goal and obligation: to competently play The Dots.

Fair. But Mr. Stellingwerf impressed upon me that every musician, no matter their specialty, should understand what it means *when two or more notes sound together*.

In a word: **harmony**. And where better to learn harmony than on a keyboard?

First we'll see how the **C Major Scale** gives rise to the **C Chord Family** (collectively, the **Key of C**). We are starting with **C** again to postpone the intrusion of the black keys; anyway, the principles are equally valid for every key. I hope you will thank me.

A chord is a group of notes that sounds more or less *blended*.  
*But the simplest and clearest kind of chord is known as a TRIAD,*  
 composed of three different notes. And all their octaves, natch.

But not just *any* three notes. The pattern for building a Triad is basically **1 - 3 - 5**. There are seven notes in the scale, and they serve as the **Triad Roots** for seven chords. Count **1 - 3 - 5** starting with the **1st** degree, **1 - 3 - 5** from the **2nd** degree, and so on.

Here's the **C Major Scale** again, with the 7 degrees numbered.  
*Each of these notes functions as a Triad Root in the process below.*  
 I'll spell out the first 3 triads for you in *p-a-i-n-f-u-l* detail.

<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

The **C** note is the **1st degree** of the **C Major Scale**. When the **C** note is also the **Triad Root**, the **C Triad** is: **C** - (skip D) - **E** - (skip F) - **G**, spelled **C - E - G**. This is the **1 chord**.

The **D** note is the **2nd degree** of the **C Major Scale**. When the **D** note is also the **Triad Root**, the **D Triad** is: **D** - (skip E) - **F** - (skip G) - **A**, spelled **D - F - A**. This is the **2 chord**.

The **E** note is the **3rd degree** of the **C Major Scale**. When the **E** note is also the **Triad Root**, the **E Triad** is: **E** - (skip F) - **G** - (skip A) - **B**, spelled **E - G - B**. This is the **3 chord**.

This process continues through the **7th** degree to generate the 7 chords of the **C Chord Family**. It's all worked out for you on the next page.