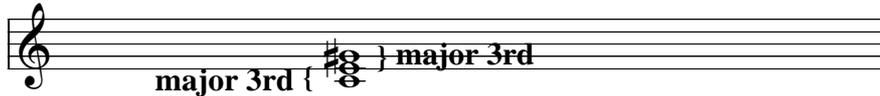
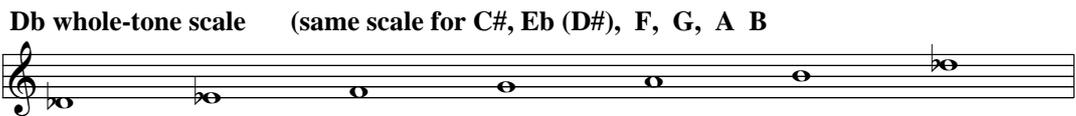


THE AUGMENTED TRIAD

The augmented triad is a triad which is made up of two major 3rds superimposed on one another. In other words the triad has an augmented or sharpened 5th to it (measured from the bass note).

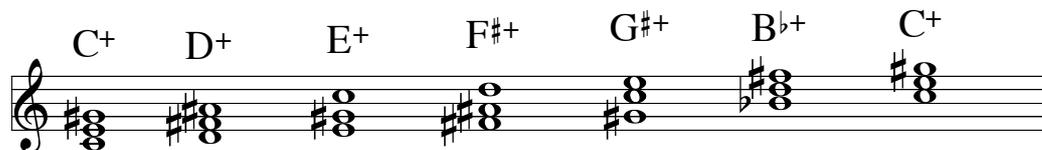


The chord is derived from the whole tone scale. In this scale each note is a tone away from the notes on either side of it. So it is made up entirely of tones or major 2nds. There are only two of these scales which are shown below:



To play any other whole tone scale, just start on that particular note, eg F# whole tone scale is the same as C whole tone scale starting on the F#.

The augmented triad is formed by taking a note from the scale, skipping the next note, adding the next note on top, skipping the next note and adding the next one top of that. If we do this to the C whole tone scale we end up with these chords:

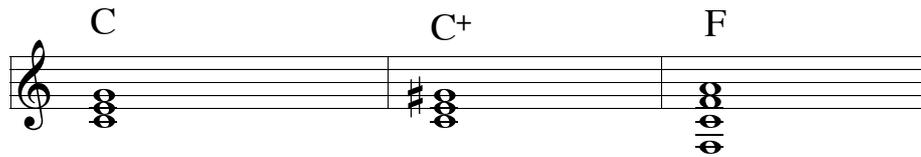


I have changed the A# to a Bb to make it easier to read. You will often find enharmonic changes made to notes where a note can be regarded as either a sharp or flat. Thus Bb here could also be an A#.

The chord symbols are shown above. Sometimes this chord may also have this symbol: C (+5) or perhaps C (#5) or even C aug.

Note too that the scale is one note shorter than a major or minor scale.

The chord can be used to lengthen a progression from one chord to the next, eg.
C C+ F instead of C F



Just as there are only 2 whole tone scales, there are only really 4 chords as other chords are merely inversions of these chords. So, E+ has the same notes as C+, etc. This means that one chord can belong to 3 different keys. C+ E+ G#+ all have the same notes. An augmented triad can also progress to any other augmented triad. This ambiguous relationship to different keys was used by composers such as Debussy and Ravel to create pieces of music which were not tied down to specific keys. They used this technique to compose tone poems - music which describes a scene such as the sea (La mer) or a mythical scene (Après-midi d'un faune).

The whole tone scale is also used (overused) to portray magic spells and so on and can often be heard in pantomimes and in certain Disney films.

Play the scales over and get used to the sound. Also play the chords together and as arpeggios. See what interesting sounds you can come up with.