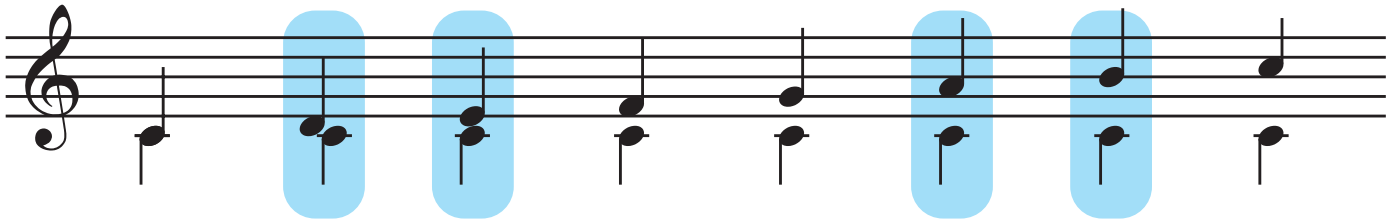
Imperfect Intervals

WE'VE TALKED ABOUT **UNISONS, FOURTHS, FIFTHS** AND **OCTAVES**, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE REST? ARE THESE OTHER INTERVALS SOMEHOW **IMPERFECT?**



WELL, YES, BUT NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE SOMEHOW **INFERIOR** TO PERFECT INTERVALS... **SECONDS, THIRDS, SIXTHS** AND **SEVENTHS** JUST WORK A LITTLE **DIFFERENTLY!**

A AUGMENTED

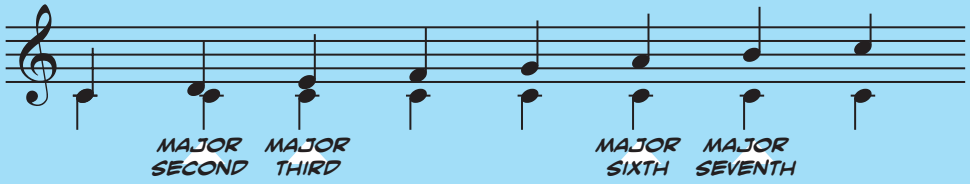
M MAJOR

m MINOR

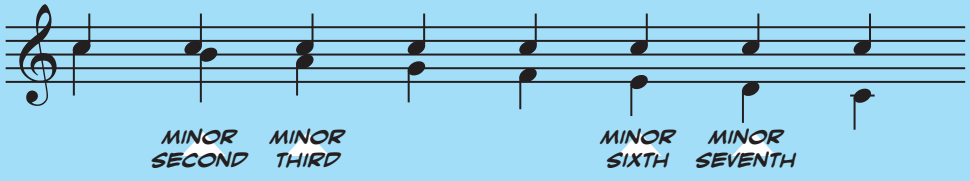
d DIMINISHED

FOR ONE THING, THE **INFLECTION** FOR THESE INTERVALS IS NEVER **PERFECT;** IT WILL BE EITHER **MAJOR** OR **MINOR.** MINOR INTERVALS ARE A SEMITONE SMALLER THAN MAJOR INTERVALS. LIKE PERFECT INTERVALS, THOUGH, THEY CAN ALSO BE **AUGMENTED** OR **DIMINISHED;** AUGMENTED INTERVALS ARE A SEMITONE LARGER THAN MAJOR, AND DIMINISHED INTERVALS ARE A SEMITONE SMALLER THAN MINOR.

HOW DO WE KNOW IF AN INTERVAL IS **MAJOR** OR **MINOR?** WE CAN ACTUALLY USE THE **MAJOR SCALE** TO FIND OUT. NOTICE THAT, IN THE MAJOR SCALE, INTERVALS FROM THE **TONIC** UP TO ANOTHER SCALE DEGREE ARE **MAJOR.**

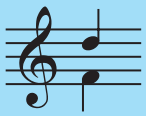


LIKEWISE, INTERVALS FROM THE TONIC **DOWN** TO ANOTHER SCALE DEGREE ARE **MINOR.**



KNOWING THIS, WHEN YOU ARE CONFRONTED WITH A **SECOND, THIRD, SIXTH** OR **SEVENTH,** YOU CAN FIND ITS INFLECTION BY THINKING ABOUT THE KEY SIGNATURE OF THE TOP AND/OR BOTTOM NOTE.

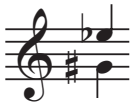
WE KNOW THIS IS A **MAJOR SIXTH** BECAUSE **D,** THE TOP NOTE, IS IN THE KEY OF **F MAJOR** (THE BOTTOM NOTE).



AND THIS IS A MINOR SEVENTH BECAUSE **B,** BOTTOM NOTE, IS IN THE KEY OF **A MAJOR** (THE TOP NOTE).

IF THE **TOP NOTE** IS IN THE MAJOR KEY OF THE **BOTTOM NOTE,** THE INTERVAL IS **MAJOR.** IF THE **BOTTOM NOTE** IS IN THE MAJOR KEY OF THE **TOP NOTE,** THE INTERVAL IS **MINOR.**

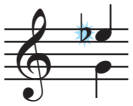
WHEN THE NOTES OF THE INTERVAL HAVE **ACCIDENTALS,** THE ASSOCIATED KEY SIGNATURES CAN BE MORE **COMPLICATED...** SO IT'S EASIEST TO **TEMPORARILY IGNORE** THE ACCIDENTALS, DETERMINE THE INTERVAL, AND THEN **ADD THE ACCIDENTALS BACK ONE AT A TIME** AND TRACK HOW THE INTERVAL CHANGES!



ACK! WHAT IS *THAT?* LET'S FIRST HIDE THE ACCIDENTALS...

M6

E IS IN THE KEY OF **G,** SO WE KNOW THIS IS A **MAJOR** SIXTH.



m6

ADDING BACK THE **FLAT** MAKES THE INTERVAL **SMALLER,** SO IT'S NOW A **MINOR** SIXTH...

d6

ADDING BACK THE **SHARP** MAKES IT EVEN **SMALLER...** A **DIMINISHED SIXTH!**