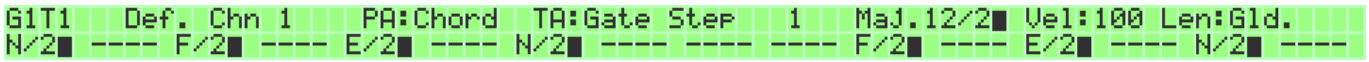
MIDIdocs

Chords

Forum Discussion Thread - for comments, corrections, or questions about this article

When you initialize a track as a CHORD track type, the first parameter layer is a special “chord” layer. Data on this layer is represented as upper or lower case letters with an octave offset. The letters on CHORD layers are not related to note names - For example, an “A” is not necessarily an A chord.



When not transposed, the chords in a chord layer are all C chord variants. A-P are C major chords and variants, a-p are C minor chords and variants. You can play other chords by transposing the chord track (either by external keyboard, or with a loopback bus track). For example: To play a D major chord, choose an “A” chord type (C Major, root position), and send a D note to transpose the chord track. To play an E minor chord, choose an “a” chord type (C Minor, root position), and send an E to transpose the chord track.

You can also use the static transpose function (MENU → Transpose) to transpose the chords by octaves or semitones (press SELECT to switch to semitone transposition).

If you're not up on your music theory, you might want to use Force-To-Scale when transposing chords to ensure that your results are always in key.

When not transposed, the 32 chord letters correspond to the following chords:

- **A-C:** Major I, Major II, Major III (transposed variants)
  - **A:** C Major (Root position) (notes: C E G)
  - **B:** C Major (1st inversion) (notes: E G C)
  - **C:** C Major (2nd inversion) (notes: G C E)
- **D-F:** Root note, 3rd note, 5th note (single notes)
  - **D:** note: C
  - **E:** note: E
  - **F:** note: G
- **G,H:** Root+3rd, Root+5th
  - **G:** notes: C E
  - **H:** notes: C G
- **I-N:** Maj6, Maj7, Maj8, Maj9, Maj10, Maj12 (4-note chords)
  - **I:** C Maj6 (notes: C E G A)
  - **J:** C Maj7 (notes: C E G B)
  - **K:** C Maj8 (notes: C E G C)
  - **L:** C Maj9 (notes: C E G D)
  - **M:** C Maj10 (notes: C G C E)
  - **N:** C Maj12 (notes: C G C G)
- **O-P:** Sus4 and Maj+
  - **O:** C Sus4 (notes: C F G)

    - **P:** C Maj+ (notes: C E G#)

- **a-c:** Minor I, Minor II, Minor III (transposed variants)
    - **a:** C Minor (Root position) (notes: C D# G)
    - **b:** C Minor (1st inversion) (notes: D# G C)
    - **c:** C Minor (2nd inversion) (notes: G C D#)

- **d-f:** Root note, 3rd Min. note, 5th note (single notes)
    - **d:** note: C
    - **e:** note: D#
    - **f:** note: G

- **g,h:** Root+3rd min, Root+5th
    - **g:** notes: C D#
    - **h:** notes: C G

- **i-n:** Min6, Min7, Min8, Min9, Min10, Min12 (4-note chords)
    - **i:** C Min6 (notes: C D# G A)
    - **j:** C Min7 (notes: C D# G B)
    - **k:** C Min8 (notes: C D# G C)
    - **l:** C Min9 (notes: C D# G D)
    - **m:** C Min10 (notes: C G C E)
    - **n:** C Min12 (notes: C G C F#)

- **o-p:** CoG and Min+
    - **o:** CoG (notes: C F G)
    - **p:** C Min+ (notes: C E G#)

Adding Notes to Chord Tracks

Chord tracks can have additional NOTE Parameter Layers. You can enter notes on these layers, and they will be played along with any chords on that step.

The step recording feature is a great way to quickly enter chords on multiple NOTE layers - you don't have to use a CHORD track type to do that. Step recording will be covered in a future MIDIdocs article. Once that's written, I'll try to remember to come back here and link to it.

Example: Playing a Chord Progression

This example is based on TK's Tutorial on how to use chords, transposition, and loopback to play a chord progression - that tutorial has audio examples and detailed steps. I'll summarize it briefly here, and give an example of how to play the same progression in a different key.

To play a iii-vi-i-iii progression in C Major - Em-Am-C-Em - is relatively simple, because it's in the key of C.

1: set force to scale to C Major

2: Enter some chord letters in the chord track - Since force-to-scale is enabled, you can enter pretty much any chord letter - the C minor variants will be forced-to-scale to fit the C Major scale anyway.

3: Initialize a different track as a note track on your SEQ, set the MIDI out port to one of the BUS ports. Enter a progression of notes as follows: E-A-C-E.

4: Set the transpose source on your chord track to the same bus that your NOTE track is on.

...Transpose + Force-to-scale will ensure that your chord track plays an Em-Am-C-Em progression.

Playing the same progression in Eb Harmonic Minor

Notes in Eb Harmonic Minor are: Eb F Gb Ab Bb Cb D Eb

Chords in Eb Harmonic Minor are:

i: Eb Minor (notes: Eb Ab Cb) ii: F Diminished iii: Gb Augmented (notes: Gb Bb D) iv: Ab Minor v: Bb Minor vi: Cb Major (notes: Cb Eb Gb) vii: D diminished

So, a iii-vi-i-iii progression in the key of Eb Harmonic Minor is: Gb Augmented - Cb Major - Eb Minor - Gb Augmented. To play that progression, use the same chord track from the previous example, and:

1: set force to scale to Eb Harmonic Minor.

2: clear your NOTE bus track, and enter this progression of notes: Gb - Cb - Eb - Gb

...Transpose and force-to-scale will ensure that your chord track plays a Gb Augmented - Cb Major - Eb Minor - Gb Augmented progression.

Resources

- Tutorial on how to use chords, transposition, and loopback to play a chord progression - with audio examples.
- SOURCE CODE: seq_chord.h
- SOURCE CODE: seq_chord.c

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