



Introduction to Voice Leading with Quartal Chords

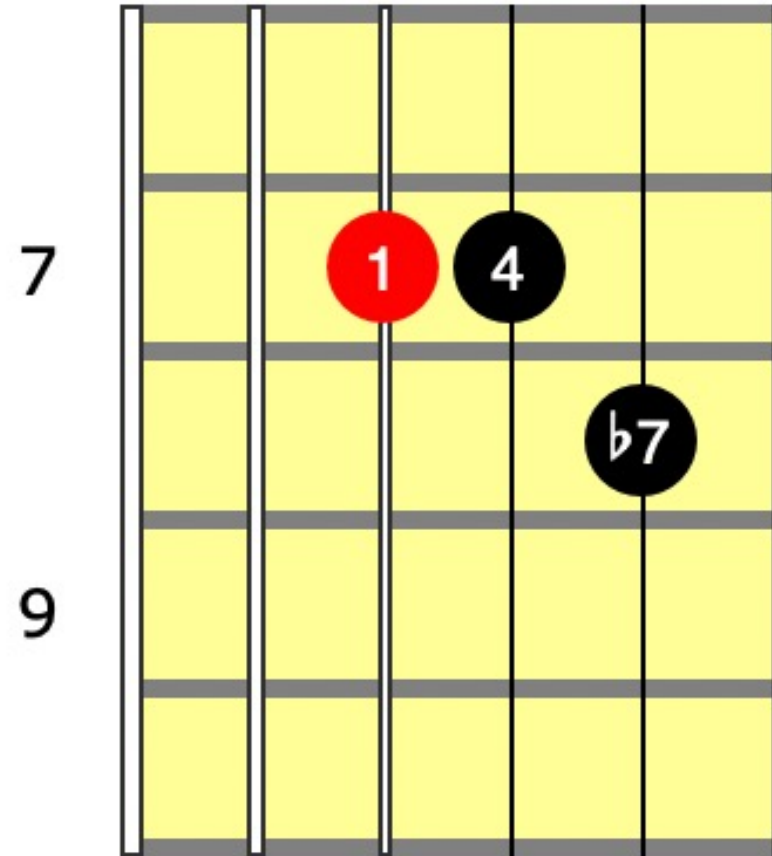
...in which we enter realms of Modern and
Impressionistic Harmony!

In collaboration with
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Quartal triad

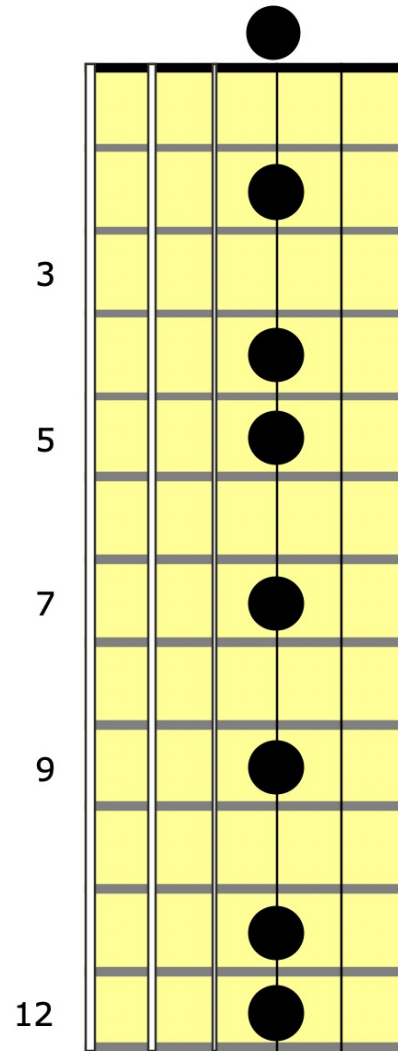
Unlike a traditional 'tertial' chord made of thirds (like a triad or seventh chord etc.)

- A quartal chord is constructed of fourths
- A quartal triad has four notes – 1 4 and 7

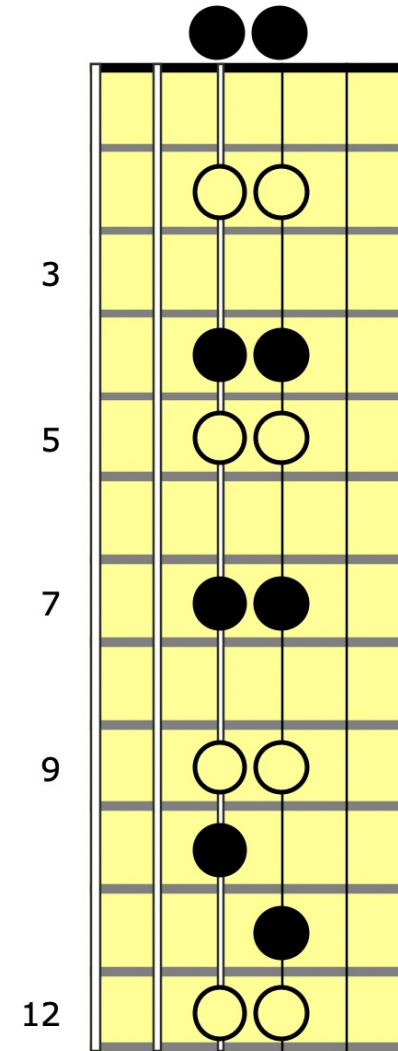


We can construct parallel quartal chords one voice at a time by using a scale along the neck (the 'unitar')

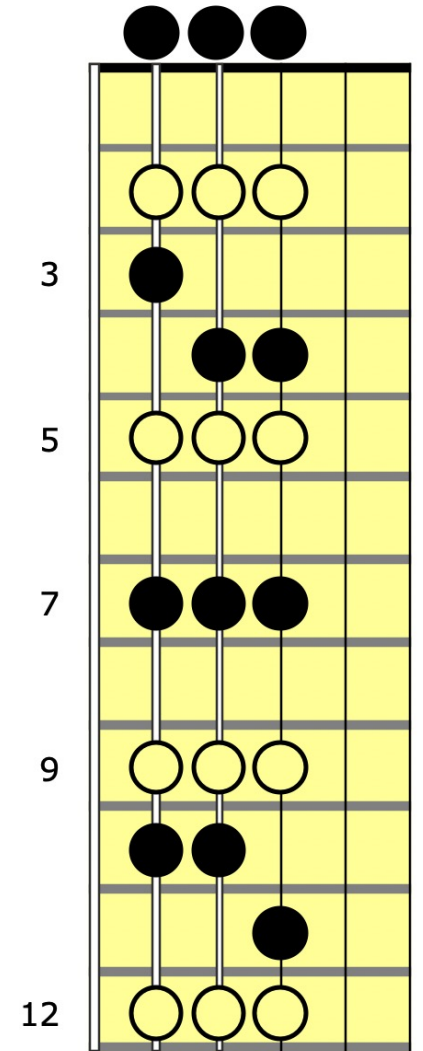
A dorian unitar



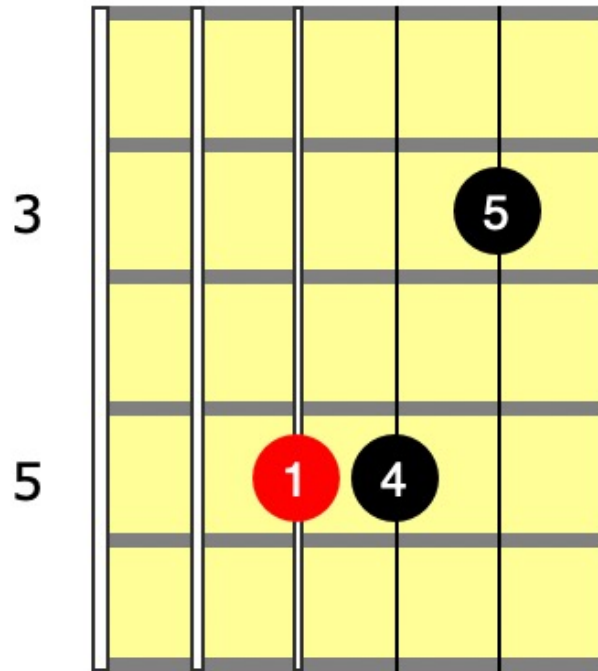
A dorian fourths



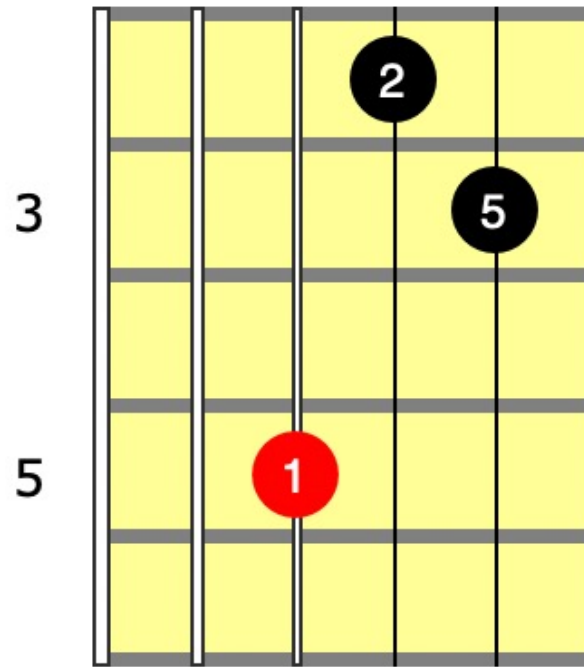
A dorian quartal triads



Fourth with a second on top



Second with a fourth on top



We can do the same thing with any diatonic interval collection, taking them in parallel through the mode

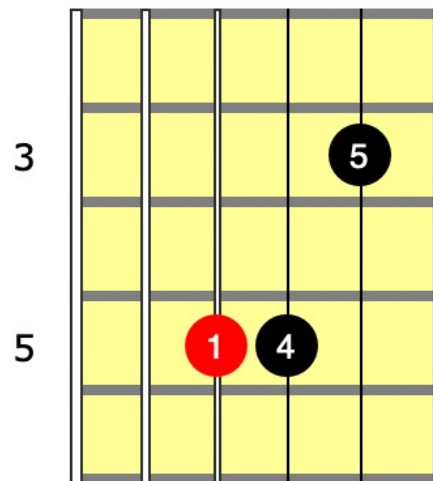
here are two more examples

- fourth with a second
- second with a fourth

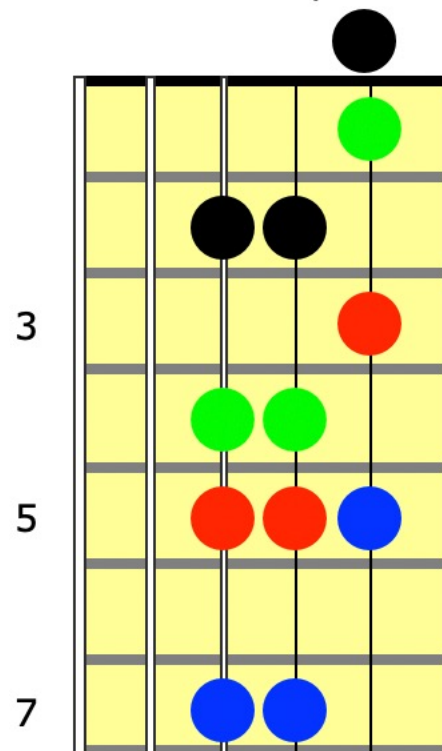
This is sometimes called 'planing'

These interval structures are actually inversions of the basic quartal triad

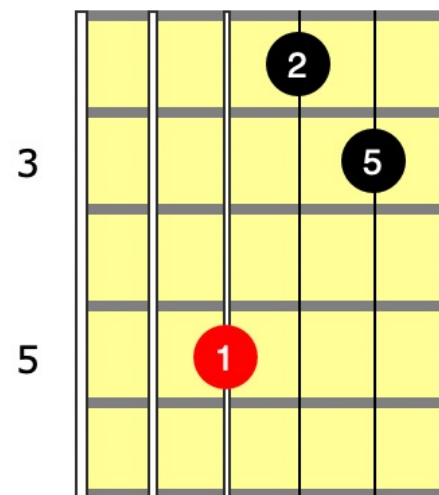
Fourth with a second on top



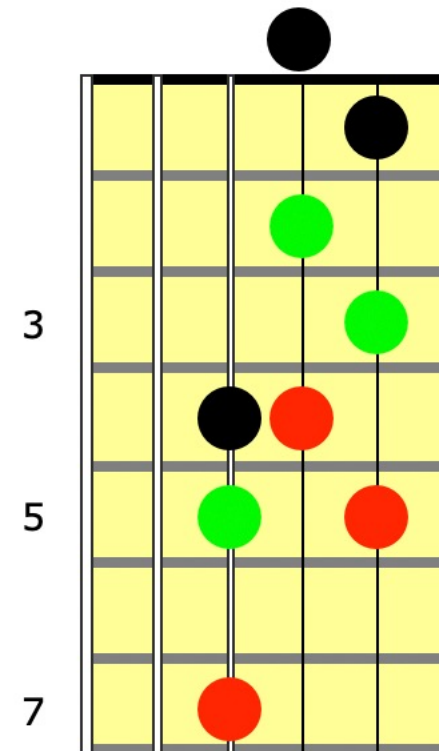
Fourth with a second on top



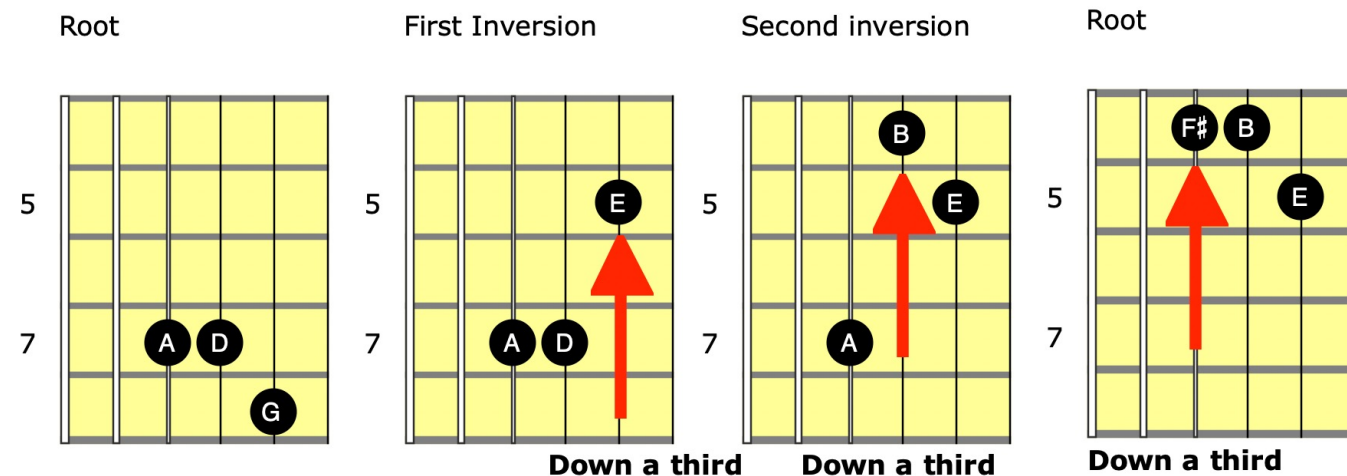
Second with a fourth on top



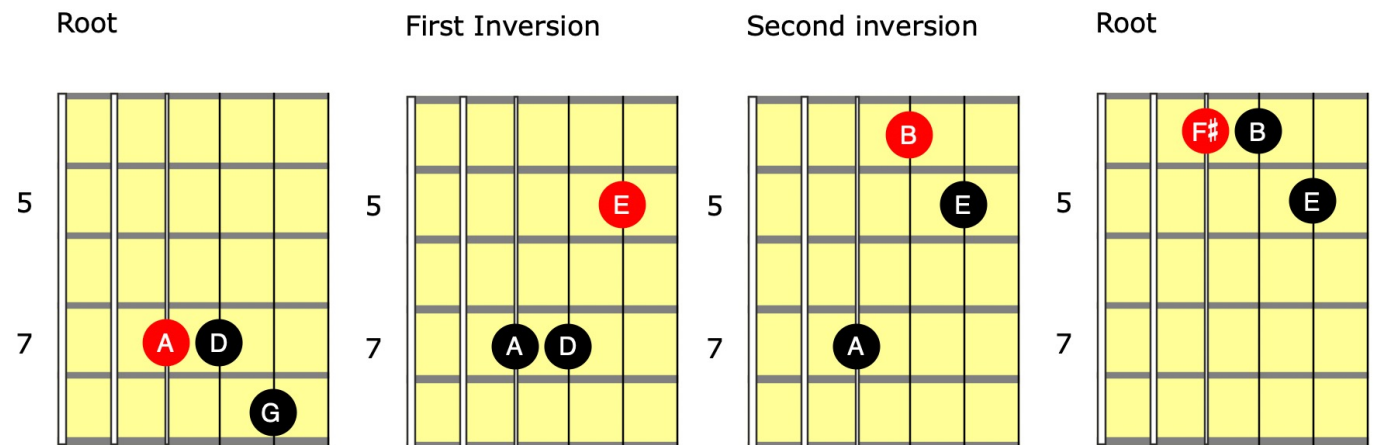
Second with a fourth on top



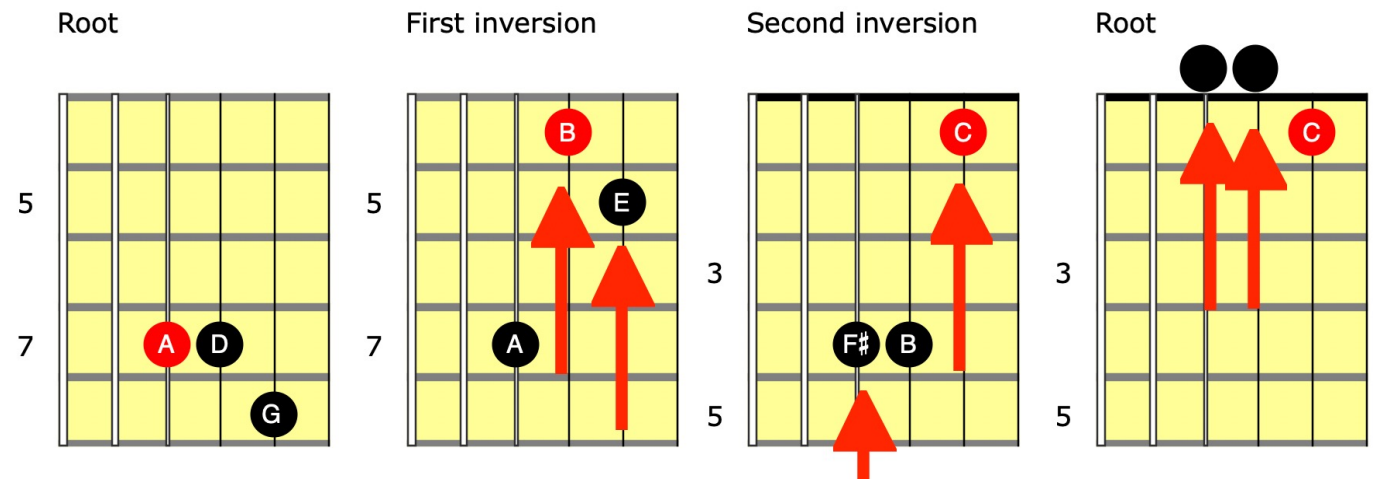
- So far we've been moving everything together in parallel. If we want to we can move each voice in turn down a third.
- We get our three quartal triad inversions by doing this and we can go all through the mode and through the range of the guitar practicing this movement



- We can locate the root either at the bottom of the chord for the root position or above the second for the inversions
- When we do this, we can see the cycle is clearly moving in descending fourths/ascending fifths (depending on how you look at it)
- Mick Goodrick would call this a cycle 5, and it's one of the Voice Leading Cycles in Volume II of his Alamanacs
- We can get a cycle 4 by running things backwards



- A more dynamic cycle can be obtained by moving the root up a scale (cycle 2)
- While we can simply use parallel voicings for this, a nice alternative is to use this movement, where two voices descend by a third each time
- This creates a highly dynamic and interesting harmonic movement
- We can also reverse the movement to get cycle 7
- This means you now understand four out six of the VLA Quartal triad cycles





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Explore making bridges between different modes – for example, try to move smoothly from A Dorian to C Dorian

Transpose these to all keys

Experiment with different scales and modes!

Try turning them into quintal or open quartal voicings by transposing the middle note up an octave

Make sure to check out Mick Goodrick's famous Voice Leading Almanacs – this material is covered in Volume II

These are available at [ModernGuitarHarmony.com](https://www.ModernGuitarHarmony.com) with loads of other goodies and resources!

