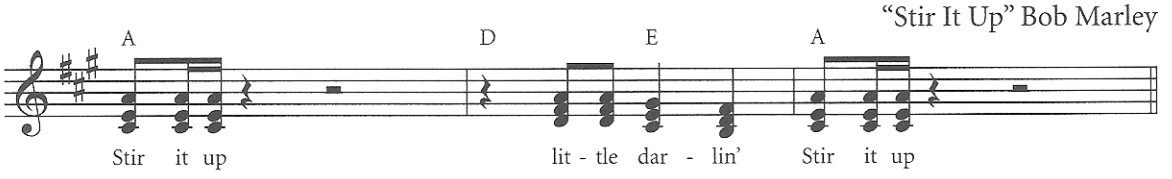
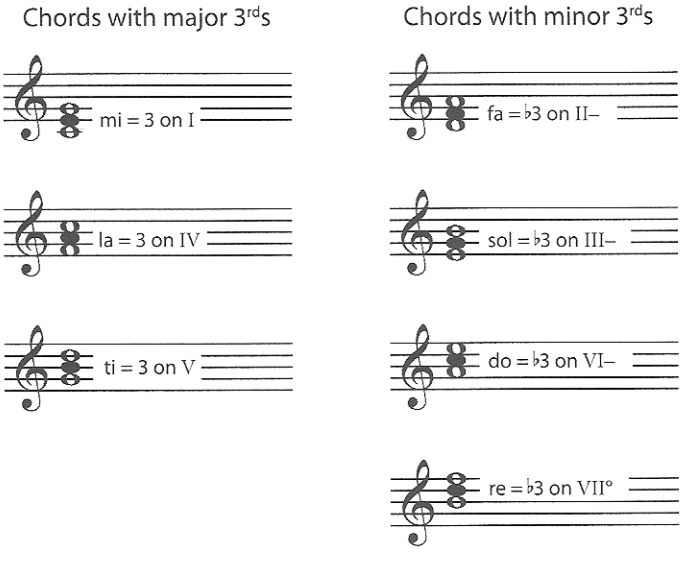
Why take this detailed, horizontal approach at times? Because sometimes you'll want to know exactly what's being played. At times, your band will need to "cover" the song exactly by audience request; check out these vocal background lines to Bob Marley's "Stir It Up."

"Stir It Up" Bob Marley



And sometimes, using the horizontal approach might be easier than using the vertical approach when figuring out the chord progression. Let's see how.

Hearing the Third of the Triad as the "Guide Tone"

In earlier chapters, using the vertical approach, we listened up from the root to the third of the triad, and determined if this relationship was major or minor. We will refer to the third of a triad as the "guide tone," the note that best describes the chord color as major or minor. Now, using solfege syllables, let's give a closer listen to this guide tone, the third of the chord, in relation to the sound of the key. For example, the third of the I major triad is Mi of the key; the third of the II– triad is Fa of the key, etc. It will be helpful to make a chart of these guide tones. We'll do so by grouping the chords into two categories: those with major thirds, and those with minor thirds.

The Guide Tone Chart