

INTERVALS

An **INTERVAL** is the distance, in pitch, between two notes. If the notes are played together, it is called an **harmonic** interval, and if the notes are played after each other, it is called a **melodic** interval.

Let us take a look at the different types of intervals that we find in the chromatic scale.

The + [x] refers to how many semitones apart the notes are:

Interval	Quality	Semitones
1st	Perfect	0
2nd	Minor	+1
2nd	Major	+2
3rd	Minor	+3
3rd	Major	+4
4th	Perfect	+5
4th	Augmented	+6
5th	Diminished	+6
5th	Perfect	+7
6th	Minor	+8
6th	Major	+9
7th	Minor	+10
7th	Major	+11
octave	Perfect	+12

Intervals can be categorised into 5 types: **perfect, major, minor, augmented or diminished**.

Perfect intervals are considered to be 'open' because we cannot tell whether they are major or minor.

An augmented 4th sounds exactly the same as a diminished 5th, but it is the **KEY** and the **CONTEXT** that makes it one or the other!

Intervals can also be described by their **QUALITY**:

1. Open/perfect consonance
2. Ambiguous (depending on context) and dissonant
3. Consonant
4. Relatively dissonant
5. Highly dissonant

In music, a **consonance** (Latin con-, "with" + sonare, "to sound") is a harmony, chord, or interval considered stable (at rest), as opposed to a **dissonance** (Latin dis-, "apart" + sonare, "to sound"), which is considered to be unstable (or temporary, transitional). In more general usage, a **consonance** is a combination of notes that sound **pleasant** when played together; **dissonance** is a combination of notes that sound **harsh** or **unpleasant**.

INTERVAL STRENGTHS tend to follow the order proceeding upwards in the **HARMONIC SERIES**:

So, your strongest interval would be an octave, then a perfect 5th, perfect 4th, 3rd, 2nd and then 7th, etc.

Consonance and dissonance are certainly *relative* to musical context. For example, take these two intervals (1), usually considered highly dissonant, and then place them into this musical context (2):

What was previously considered unpleasant to the ear has now become harmonious and relatively consonant!