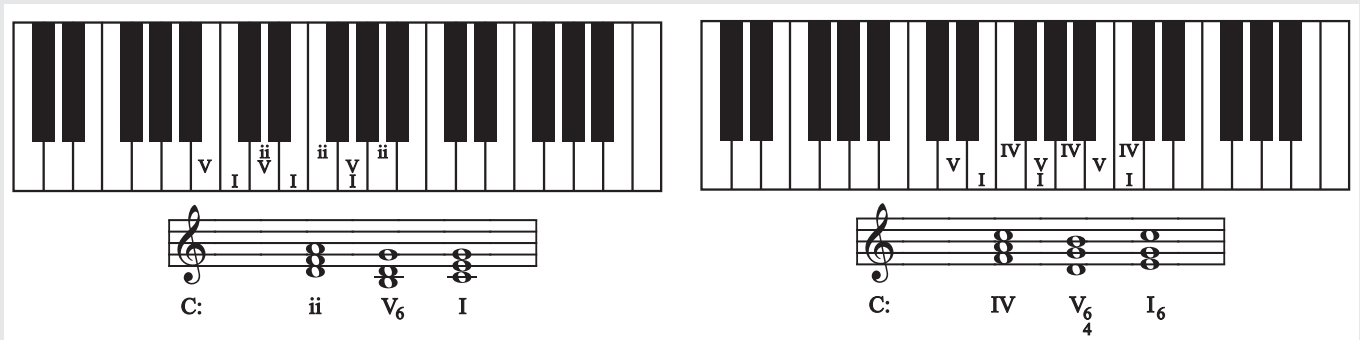
FIGURE 1–25



The same pitches that were shown in FIGURE 1–24 are present in these chords, but the notes are rearranged (i.e., some of the chords are inverted).

F, G♭ (the "x" notes of the right-hand keyboard).

Ears accustomed to Western music expect dissonance to resolve. Tension is created as the listener waits for a tense interval or chord to come to resolution in something more restful. Dissonance and its resolution are central to harmonic progression. An example of this is the tritone. The tritone is an interval made up two notes that are three whole steps apart (e.g., C-F♯: C-D, D-E, E-F♯), or six half steps. Tritones can also be called augmented fourths (when spelled with two note names a fourth apart, as in C-F♯) or a diminished fifth (when spelled enharmonically with two note names a fifth apart, as in C-G♭). Play an F and B together on the piano (the "T" notes in FIGURE 1–22). The two most natural sounding resolutions are *either* G♭ and B♭, or E and C, as shown by the "O" notes on the keyboard diagrams in FIGURE 1–22.

Try playing the tritone followed by its resolution a few times. Then try playing it backwards (the "O" notes *before* the "T" notes) to see if there is a way to make the tritone sound more restful than the other interval. It is difficult, if not impossible. Any chord that contains a tritone will sound more dissonant than a chord without one.

Diatonic Triads

The term **diatonic** means "within the key." A chord or melody is diatonic if no accidentals are needed other than those already indicated in the key signature. The *quality* (major, minor, diminished, or augmented) of a diatonic triad depends upon which scale degree its root is on. If a melody or chord borrows notes from outside the key, then it is **chromatic**.

Chords within any given key are related to each other in a predetermined pattern that sounds perfectly intuitive to Western ears. The fascinating thing is that the pattern connecting diatonic chords is also based on the circle of fifths. But, first let's take a closer look at the individual triads.

The **tonic triad** (also called the tonic chord or simply the tonic) is a diatonic triad built on the tonic pitch, $\hat{1}$. This is perceived as the most stable chord in a key. Nearly all pieces of music end on the tonic chord. In a major key, the tonic triad is always major.

The other major triads that occur naturally in a major key are on scale degrees $\hat{4}$ and $\hat{5}$. The diatonic triads on $\hat{2}$, $\hat{3}$, and $\hat{6}$ are minor (even though they are part of a major key). The triad built on the seventh scale degree is unique, consisting of two minor thirds. This is a **diminished triad**, and it is highly unstable; intuitively the listener wants to hear it resolve to something more restful. The diagram in FIGURE 1–23 shows a C major scale (left) and a D major scale with a triad built on each scale degree. They are labeled with Roman numerals. The single diminished triad is lower-case with a small superscripted circle added. Capitalized numerals indicate major triads, and lower-case numerals (with no superscripted circle)