

The Brodhead Method of Chord Construction

A simple procedure for writing chords with 2nds correctly each and every time

- 1) First determine the stem direction of the chord—will it be upstemmed or downstemmed?
- 2) If the chord is *DOWNSTEMMED*, start with the *TOP* note and work *DOWNWARD*
- 3) If the chord is *UPSTEMMED*, start with the *BOTTOM* note and work *UPWARD*
- 4) Write each note on the normal side of the stem, *UNLESS IT WILL CRASH WITH THE PREVIOUS NOTE*, in which case offset it to the *OPPOSITE* side of the stem.
- 5) *That's all there is to it!*

For example, let's take these notes and stem them with a downstem.

- 1) Because the chord will be downstemmed, we start with the top note and work downward, so first draw the top note.

2) CRUCIAL CONCEPT:

The first note will NEVER be offset, so draw its stem on the correct / standard side of the note

3) Now place the next note down. It won't crash with the previous note, so it goes on the standard side.

4) The next note would crash with the previous note if we put it on the normal side of the stem, so it must be offset to the opposite side of the stem...and we're done!

Now let's stem the same notes with an upstem.

- 1) Because the chord will be upstemmed, we start with the bottom note and work upward, so first draw the bottom note.

2) CRUCIAL CONCEPT:

The first note will NEVER be offset, so draw its stem on the correct / standard side of the note

3) Now place the next note up. It will crash with the previous note if we put it on the normal side of the stem, so it must be offset to the opposite side of the stem.

4) The next note up won't crash with the previous note, so it can be placed on the normal side of the stem. ...and we're done!

A FEW MORE EXAMPLES