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Chapter 1

Major Scales

Western music, meaning music of the western world, music based upon the diatonic, otherwise called, the major scale: (pop, c&w, blues, gospel, jazz, r&b, classical, etc.) uses seven letters from the English language.

Those letters (notes) are A B C D E F G (white keys). The only variables (other forms) are:

(A# Bb) (C# Db) (D# Eb) (F# Gb) (G# Ab)
(found on the black keys).

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)(10)(11) (12)(13) (14)(15)



A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A

Notes found on the black keys:

(1) A#/Bb (2) C#/Db (3) D#/Eb (4) F#/Gb (5) G#/Ab

(6) A#/Bb (7) C#/Db (8) D#/Eb (9) F#/Gb (10) G#/Ab

(11) A#/Bb (12) C#/Db (13) D#/Eb (14) F#/Gb (15) G#/Ab

** If a black key comes after (to the right of) a white key, it is called the sharp of the white key; if a black key comes before (to the left of) a white key, it is called the flat of the white key.*

Moving to the right on a keyboard is also referred to as ascending, meaning, moving up.

Moving to the left is referred to as descending, moving down.

If a note is required to be made lower in pitch, it is said to be flatted (*b*).

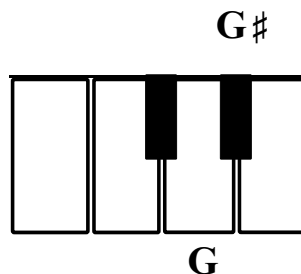
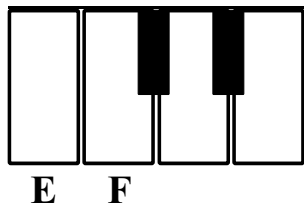
To flat a note means to move from that note (key) to a note, or notes, to the left of that note; if one flat (*b*) is required, then move to the very next key (black or white).

If two flats are required, then move two keys to the left.

1(a)

2(a)

EX: 1



Moving from the (F), to the (E) is making the (F) one note flatter, by going to the next key to the left (E).

Moving from the (G#) to the (G) is making the (G#) one note flatter, by going to the next key to the left (G).

These are two examples of lowering the pitch of a note by one flat; making the note a *semi-tone* lower.

FINGERING TIPS

LEFT HAND : B.F. R.F. M.F. P.F. T.
 (5) (4) (3) (2) (1)

B. F. - Baby Finger

R. F. - Ring Finger

M. F. - Middle Finger

P. F. - Pointing Finger

T. - Thumb

RIGHT HAND : T. P.F. M.F. R.F. B.F.
 (1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

DEGREES: I II III IV V VI VII VIII

SCALE : C D E F G A B C

LEFT HAND 3 2 1 5 4 3 2 1

RIGHT HAND 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5

**Roman numerals are sometimes used to number scale degrees and also chords built from a particular scale.*

For instance, a G major chord might be referred to as a V chord in the key of C major.

You will learn more about chords in the coming chapters.

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DEGREES:	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
SCALE :	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
LEFT HAND	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1
RIGHT HAND	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5

Note that in the left hand fingering, moving from the 1 (thumb) to the 5 (baby finger) seems kind of hard to do.

What we suggest is, crossing *over* the 1 with the 5.

In other words, crossing over the thumb with the baby finger.

If this seems difficult, at first, try playing only to the F note, in order to perfect the crossover.

Also, in the right hand fingering, moving from the 3 (middle finger) to the 1 (thumb) can also present a problem.

What we suggest here is that you cross the thumb *under* the middle finger, in order to reach the F note.

Once again, if it seems difficult, at first, play only to the F note, until you can manage it.

In order to better understand the concept of scales, let's explore, and then complete, the D Major scale.

First we will start with the eight *letters* that are required to form the D Major scale.

D E F G A B C D

These will also be called the degrees of the scale, when they are properly separated according to *tones* and *semi-tones*.

Next let's observe the *tones* and *semi-tones* (distances between the notes) required to put them in the correct order.

Order of tones & semi-tones

(DEGREES) → 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 (DISTANCES) → T T S T T T S

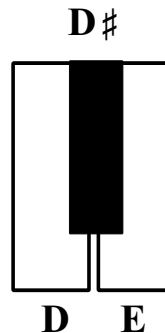
Now let's separate the degrees according to the proper *tones* and *semi-tones* as shown above.

EXAMPLE:

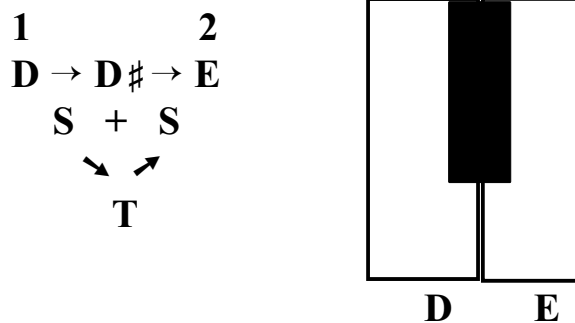
From the scale of D Major

D to D# = 1 *semi-tone* →
 +
 D# to E = 1 *semi-tone* →

 D to D# to E = 1 *tone*



Since a *tone* consists of 2 *semi-tones*, and we have covered the distance of 2 *semi-tones* from D to E; we can safely say that the distance between D and E is a *tone* (*semitone* + *semitone* = *tone*).

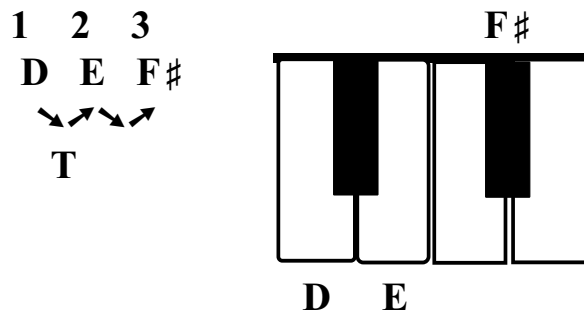


A *tone* is also required between the second (2) and third (3) degrees of a major scale.

With the second (2) degree being E and the third (3) degree being F and by observing the notes on the piano, we find that a correction needs to be made because E goes directly to F, making them only a *semi-tone* apart, when a *tone* is needed.

Since from E to F is only a *semi-tone*, another *semi-tone* is required. In order to put a *tone* between the second (2) and third (3) degrees, it is required that we change F to F#, adding another *semi-tone*.

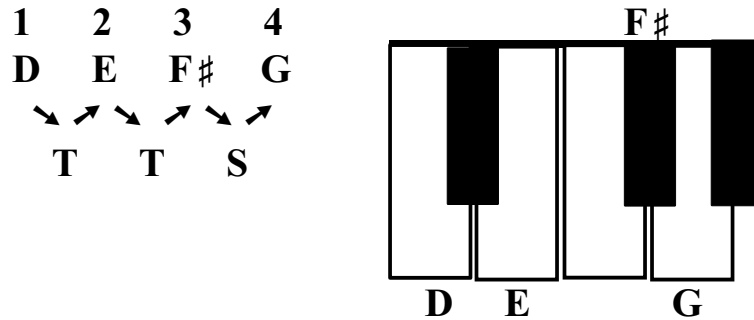
Now we have the first three degrees of the D Major scale as follows:



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The next step requires that we put a *semi-tone* between the third (3) and fourth (4) degrees of the major scale.

With the third (3) degree being F#, we know that the fourth (4) degree is required to be a *semi-tone* above F#, where we find G, exactly a *semi-tone* above.

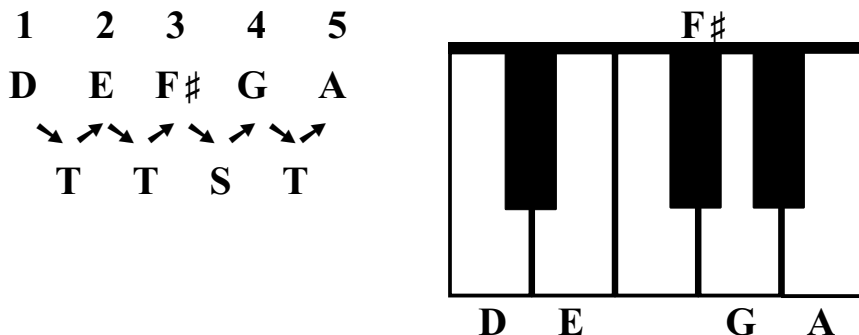


Continuing to form a major scale, in the key of D, let's proceed to the fifth (5) degree.

Referring back to the correct order of *tones* and *semi-tones* that constitute a major scale, we find that between the fourth (4) and fifth (5) degrees of the scale, the distance of a *tone* is required.

EXAMPLE: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 T T S T T T S

Knowing that from G is G# is only a *semi-tone*, we find that in order to complete the distance of a *tone* we must add another *semi-tone*, thus moving from G through G# to A.



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Although each major scale is different in appearance from the others, they are all formed, and governed, by the same principle (T T S T T T S) separating the degrees.

EXAMPLES:

C Major scale

C D E F G A B C
T T S T T T S

B Major scale

B C# D# E F# G# A# B
T T S T T T S

A Major scale

A B C# D E F# G# A
T T S T T T S

E Major scale

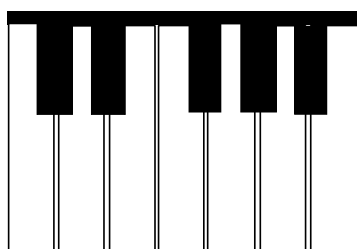
E F# G# A B C# D# E
T T S T T T S

FINGERING FOR CHORDS

For playing chords, we can use either of two types of fingering.

First, there is what we call the closed chord fingering.

EXAMPLE :



	C	E	G
R.H.	1	3	5
L.H.	5	3	1

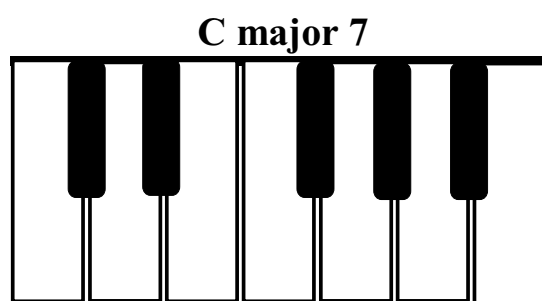
The reason that we call these fingerings closed is because of the tight positioning of the fingers.

We recommend this type of fingering when there are melody notes to be played between chords that are located in the same register (area) of the keyboard as the chords.

For instance, if the D note in the example above, needed to be played, the 2 finger (R.H.) or the 4 finger (L.H.) would already be in position to play it.

This is what we call the open chord fingering style.

EXAMPLE :



C E G B

R.H.	1	2	3	4
L.H.	4	3	2	1

The reason that we call these fingerings open is because of the fingers being stretched out.

Also, this is the positioning that we recommend for playing extension chords (4 or more notes), for obvious reasons.

As you can see, playing extension chords would be impossible in the closed fingering position, without using two hands.

Experiment to find which fingerings work best for you, in different situations.

Since there are many different ways to play melodies *and* chords, consider these as helpful suggestions .

Chapter 2

Chords

Now that we have learned about *tones* and *semi-tones*, the degrees of a major scale, sharps and flats, and how they come together to form a major scale; let's explore the major scale even further.

From a properly constructed major scale, we can extract (or take) *chords*.

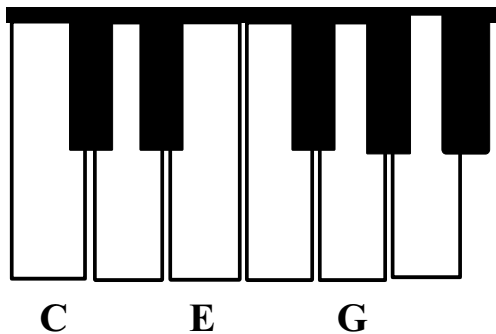
A chord is when three (3) or more notes are played simultaneously (at the same time).

There is a system that allows us to form chords using every degree of a major scale, as a root (starting) note; we call it the *take one, skip one, take one, skip one, take one* method.

Let's see how it works; by forming triads (three note chords) using the C Major scale.

EXAMPLE:

①	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
↓		↓		↓			
C		E		G			
①		③		⑤			



All of the rules and principles that we have used to form chords from the C Major scale are the same ones used to form chords *in all of the major scales*.

When major scales are properly formed, according to the distances of (*tones & semi-tones*), they yield the same chord types on each respective degree of the scale.

EXAMPLE:

- 1 = Major
- 2 = minor
- 3 = minor
- 4 = Major
- 5 = Major
- 6 = minor
- 7 = diminished

Once you have learned how all of these principles work in one key (*scale*), you can apply them to every major scale.

For instance, in every major scale, the first (1) chord will be a major chord. The second (2) chord will be a minor chord etc. (see example above).

You should also be able to look at a major scale and pick out the chords, using *the ta-ski-ta-ski-ta method*.

Here is the D major scale and it's respective chords.
(you'll find every major scale and their chords in Chapter 10)

D Major scale

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D

Chords in D Major

1 = D F# A = D

2 = E G B = Em

3 = F# A C# = F#m

4 = G B D = G

5 = A C# E = A

6 = B D F# = Bm

7 = C# E G = C#^o

Chapter 3

Classifying Chords

Classifying chords requires a complete understanding of how a major scale is constructed.

The reason for this is that every triad (*3 note chord*) taken from a major scale, using the *ta-ski-ta-ski-ta* method, has to be compared to the (1),(3), and (5) notes of the major scale having the *same root note* as the particular chord.

EXAMPLE:

The chord C E G has to be compared to the (1), (3), and (5) notes of the C Major scale.

If, when comparing the chord against the scale, the (1), (3), and (5) line up exactly, then the chord is classified as a major chord. C E G is a C major chord.

EXAMPLE:C Major scale (first five notes)

	①	2	3	4	5
	C	D	E	F	G
	↑		↑		↑
Chord →	C		E		G
	①		③		⑤

* The first chord taken from a major scale will naturally match up exactly because it is being taken from itself.

So the first (1) chord will always be a *major chord*.

Chapter 4

Chord Functions

In every major scale each chord has a function, or a certain job to do, according to the degree upon which it falls.

Although the chords vary by name and pitch, each has the same function from scale to scale, depending upon the degree on which each chord falls.

For instance, in the scale of D Major, the chord formed on the fourth (4) degree is G (or GM).

In the scale of C Major the chord formed on the fourth (4) degree is F (or FM).

Even though these two chords [G and F] are different in pitch, they each have the same function or purpose, in their respective scales.

There are three categories or functions that the chords of a major scale are divided into; and they are the Tonic, Subdominant, or Dominant.

EXAMPLE:

<u>Tonic</u>	<u>Subdominant</u>	<u>Dominant</u>
(1) (3) (6)	(2) (4)	(5) (7)

The above example is the formula for chord functions in every major scale, please memorize it.

Chords built upon each of the degrees above will have the same *function* in every major scale.

The (1), (3), and (6) degrees will always belong to the Tonic function, the (2) and (4) degrees will always belong to the Subdominant function, and the (5) and (7) degrees will always belong to the Dominant function.

EXAMPLEKey of C major

C F G Dm C
 / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

This example is showing how to bridge a *Tonic* chord to a *Dominant* chord and a *Dominant* chord back to a *Tonic* chord, as discussed on the previous page.

In this case, for the 2nd chord, we used the *Sub - dominant (4)* chord (F), instead of the *Sub - dominant (2)* chord (Dm), to bridge the *Tonic (1)* chord (C) to the *Dominant (5)* chord (G).

For variation, moving back from the *Dominant (5)* chord (G) we use a *Sub - dominant (2)* chord (Dm).

Try reversing the F chord and the Dm chord, to hear what effect it will have, since they are both *Sub - dominant* chords.

EXAMPLEKey of C major

C Dm G F C
 / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

As you can hear, it is all a matter of what you are trying to achieve.

They are both right, but you will make these choices according to your personal tastes.

That is the point to studying music, to be able to express *yourself*.

Chapter 7

Melody and Rhythm

Music is comprised of three main components, melody, rhythm, and harmony.

Harmony is another word for chords, which means to *play* or *sing* more than one melody note simultaneously (at the same time).

Melody, often referred to as the tune of a song, means to play or sing one note at a time, usually in succession (one *after* the other).

Lyrics (words) are most often applied to the *melody* of a piece of music, although some music such as choir and choral music often uses *lyrics, in harmony, as the melody*.

In order to study melody properly, we will need to demonstrate on lines and spaces.

All of the information that you have studied in previous chapters will help you, greatly, in understanding music written on a staff (lines and spaces).

Rhythm is what gives music its feel or syncopation (otherwise known as the beat).

Let's take a closer look at a staff (*lines and spaces*) and its components.

