

Cantoludus

The musical chord-building deck-builder

Designed by Jesse Herrnson and Maze Labowitz

You are a passionate conductor who has traveled far to the great city of Cantoludus to play in the Grand Royal Concert. Compete with your rivals for the favor of Queen Symphonia and King Audiolus by impressing them with your wondrous mastery over musical harmonies. Only one can receive the Golden Note, the most prestigious honor in all the land!

Gameplay Overview

Cantoludus is a *deck-building card game*. Players each start with an individual deck of cards representing musical notes, and construct specific sets of notes to acquire cards from a central row of cards called the Orchestra. Acquiring a card grants a player **Impression Points!**, and then that card is added to the player's deck! The first player to 30 **Impression Points!** wins!

2 Players

30-45 minutes

Learning Objective

This game can be used to practice introductory concepts in music theory, and as such is aimed at people who already have a basic grasp of these ideas. The base version of the game makes use of intervals, chord construction, and chord functions/progressions. For variants of the game that remove or modify the inclusion of some of these concepts, please see the end of this booklet.

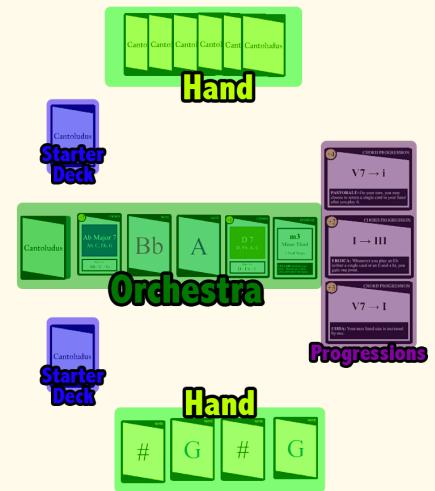
Contents

- 36 Starter cards
- 120 Orchestra Deck card
- 32 Progression cards
- 4 Impression Counter tool cards
- 1 Rulebook

Setup

1. Distribute the Starter cards evenly to both players. (These are all **Note** cards and have a "STARTER" label in the bottom left.) Each player should end up with 2 copies of each natural note card (i.e. A, B, C, etc.), sharp card (#), and flat card (b). These are the starting **Decks**: shuffle and put one face-down in front of each player.
2. Shuffle the **Orchestra Deck** (which includes **Notes**, **Intervals**, and **Chords**) and place it face-down. Take the top **five** cards and lay them face up where both players can reach and see. These face-up cards form the **Orchestra**.

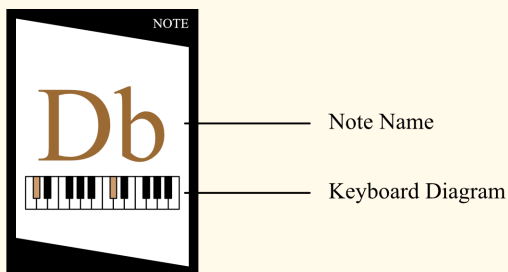
- Shuffle the landscape-oriented **Chord Progression** cards and place them face-down. Take the top **three** cards and lay them face up, similar to the **Orchestra**.
- Distribute the Impression Counter tool cards to each player and set them to 0 by overlaying them. Use these to track your **Impression Points!** As a recommended alternative, you can keep track of your points with pen and paper or a calculator.
- Randomly choose a player to go first. That player draws **four** cards from the top of their deck, and the second player draws **six** cards. Now you're ready to begin!



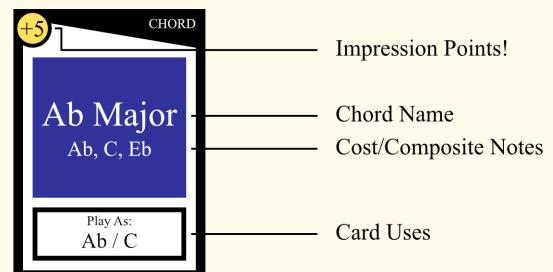
Parts of a Card

There are 4 different card types. Your deck starts with Note cards, and you can acquire **Chords**, **Intervals**, and more **Note** cards from the Orchestra throughout the game, which will eventually be added to your deck. You can also acquire Chord **Progression** cards, which are not added to your deck but instead stay in front of you for the rest of the game.

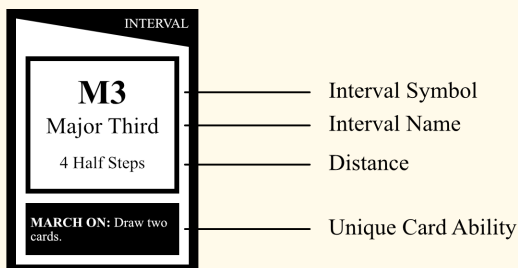
1. Note cards:



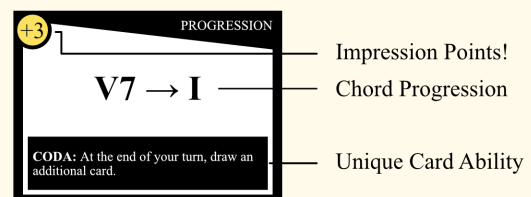
3. Chord cards:



2. Interval cards:



4. Progression cards:



On Your Turn

Each player can take several actions during each turn. There is no limit to the number of actions you can take, as long as you have the means to do them.

1. **Acquire a Note, Interval, or Chord card from the Orchestra.** To do this, you must first spend a set of **Note** cards that form the card you want to acquire. (See below for how to do this.) When you do this, put that new card into your **Discard Pile** along with the cards spent to acquire it. The new card will later get shuffled into your deck so that you can use it!
 - a. **Acquiring Notes** (A-G, \sharp , \flat , \natural , or notes with accidentals, i.e. C \sharp , Eb, etc.): Spend the same note by using an individual card or combining cards (For example, C \sharp can be bought with another C \sharp , or with a C and a \sharp .) Plain accidentals (\sharp , \flat , and \natural) can be bought by spending any single note.
 - b. **Acquiring Intervals** (Major thirds, minor seconds, perfect fourths, etc.): Spend two notes that form that interval (for example, M3 can be a C and E, or an F and A; m2 can be a C and D \flat , or E and F). See Figures 2 and 3 for help identifying intervals.
 - c. **Acquiring Chords** (C Major, E minor, A7, etc.): Spend all the notes that form the specified chord. (C E G \rightarrow C Major) When you acquire a **Chord**, immediately gain **Impression Points!** equal to the number in the top left.

Whatever you acquire from the Orchestra, remember that you can spend **Chord** cards as if they were one of the **Note** cards specified by "Play As" at the bottom. You can also combine notes and accidentals to act as a single note with that accidental. (e.g. a C card and a \sharp for a C \sharp in any **Note**, **Interval**, or **Chord**; D Major with a \sharp for a D \sharp .)

2. **Acquire a Progression card.** (I \rightarrow V, ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow i, etc.) To do this, spend **Chord** and **Note** cards in combination to construct the progression. You can either spend a single **Chord** card to act as one of the chords in the progression, or you can combine different Note cards to form a corresponding chord. You can choose any starting chord as long as the other fits the second chord listed. See Figure 4 for more details. When you acquire a Progression, immediately gain **Impression Points!** equal to the number in the top left.
3. **Play an Interval card.** **Interval** cards have instructions to follow written on them. After you've used one, put it into your **Discard Pile**.
4. **Bank up to two Note or Chord cards.** Each turn, you can put up to two **Note** or **Chord** cards from your hand in front of you face-up. These cards can be spent just like cards in

your hand. Unlike cards in your hand, you don't have to discard these at the end of your turn. You must bank cards before you discard at the end of your turn.

5. **End your turn.** When you have nothing else to do or don't want to do anything else, you can end your turn. Discard your hand, then draw **six** cards. If there are not enough cards left in your deck (now or any time you would draw), shuffle your discard pile and put it face down as your deck first.

Ending the Game

Gameplay continues as players accumulate points from their **Chord** and **Progression** cards. As soon as a player has reached 25 *Impression Points!*, the game ends and that player wins!

Reference Figures

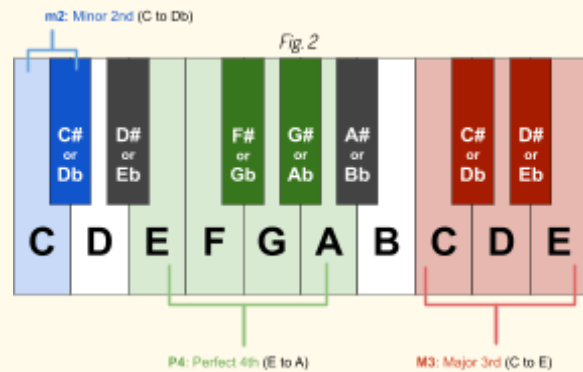
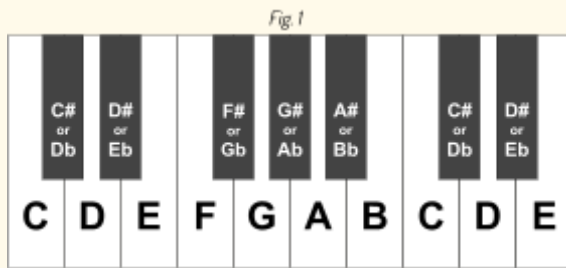


Fig. 3

Playing Intervals: The number in an interval tells you the separation between the note names. If C is 1, then D is 2, so a second above C will be some form of D, a fourth above C will be some form of F, etc. To determine if it should be Major, Minor, or Perfect, check the table below, which tells you the number of half steps (C to Db) between notes in the interval:

P1 Perfect Unison 0 Half Steps	m2 Minor Second 1 Half Step	M2 Major Second 2 Half Steps	m3 Minor Third 3 Half Steps	M3 Major Third 4 Half Steps	P4 Perfect Fourth 5 Half Steps	Tri Tritone 6 Half Steps
P5 Perfect Fifth 7 Half Steps	m6 Minor Sixth 8 Half Steps	M6 Major Sixth 9 Half Steps	m7 Minor Seventh 10 Half Steps	M7 Major Seventh 11 Half Steps	P8 Perfect Octave 12 Half Steps	

Fig. 4

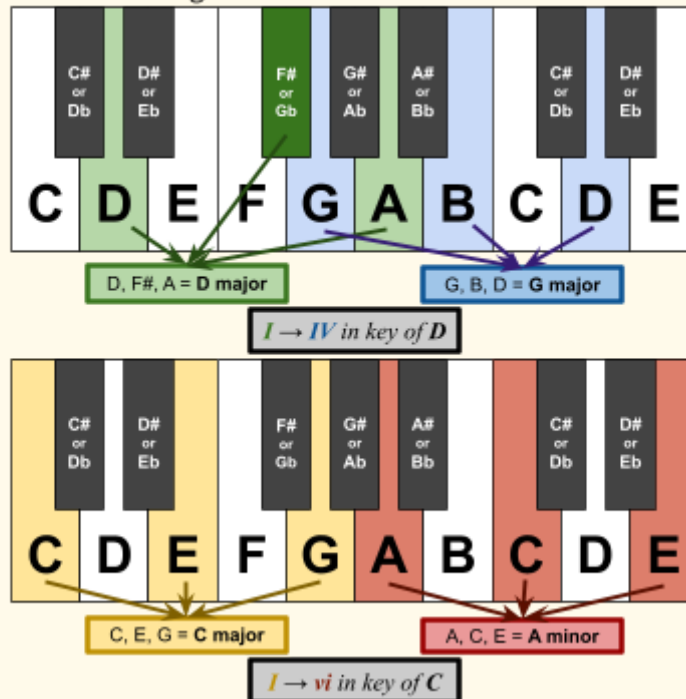
Progressions:

Progressions follow the form of multiple roman numerals. The number of the roman numeral represents the note in a given scale that a chord starts on. If the numeral is **uppercase**, the chord is **Major** – if it's **lowercase**, it's **Minor**. For example, consider this progression:

$ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I$

First, we should figure out what our *I* chord is, as that is the chord which determines the key we're in*. If we play a C as that chord, then the *V* chord is the chord that begins on a note a **P5** up from C (i.e. G major), and the *ii* chord is the note a **m2** up from C (i.e. D minor).

*The *I* chord is called the **Tonic** – it determines the key because it begins on the note that is the key of the scale, i.e. the note that begins the scale.



Rule Variants for Different Learning Objectives

There are a variety of ways to play **Cantoludus** in order to achieve different learning goals. Here are a few officially supported modifications:

1. Just Intervals

Want to focus on constructing intervals without any of the other aspects of the game?

Make the following modifications to the game:

- Remove the deck of 32 **Progressions**
- Remove all 42 of the **Chord** cards from the **Orchestra Deck**
- Instead of playing to a certain number of *Impression Points!*, play until one player has acquired 5 **Interval** cards

This gameplay mode will reinforce players' knowledge of the space between notes, what notes can create different intervals, as well as basic piano structure.

2. Chord Focused

If players want to focus on the construction of chords, they can make the following modifications to the game:

- Remove the deck of 32 **Progressions**
- Keep all 120 cards in the **Orchestra Deck**
- Play up to 15 *Impression Points!* instead of 25

This is a recommended gameplay mode for beginners to the game and music theory, as it will reinforce concepts of interval construction and chord construction, and build player's intuition of what notes go into what intervals and chords.

3. Ad Cantoludum

Full gameplay! Playing with the deck of **Progressions** as well as all 120 of the cards in the **Orchestra Deck** will reinforce players' knowledge of interval, chord, and progression construction, as well as their knowledge of piano layout.

4. Blind Chords

Do you feel confident in your knowledge of scales and chord construction? Try one of the previous gameplay modes after having **hidden the costs and usages** of all the **Chord** cards, shown in the figure on the right. This can be done by covering them with tape or crossing them out with a pen or marker. This gameplay mode can further reinforce players' knowledge of which notes go into which chords, as well as scale degrees and the triads/chords used in progressions.



5. Make Your Own!

This game is not comprehensive (no music game can be!) and does not include things like Augmented or Diminished **Intervals**, **Chords** of more than 4 notes, diminished, augmented, and suspended **Chords**, and **Progressions** of more than 2 chords. We invite you to add your own cards to the game representing these concepts, with your own custom effects!