

MUSIC THEORY NOTES

PART 1

NOTE NAMES

Symbol	US	UK	PT
♩	whole note	semibreve	semibreve
♪	half note	minim	mínima
♫	quarter note	crochet	semínima
♬	eight note	quaver	colcheia

1

2

RELATIVE TEMPO

whole note	♩
half note	♪
quarter note	♫
eight note	♬

STAVES & BARS

- A staff is used to write notes
- Composed of 5 evenly spaced horizontal lines
- Vertical lines separate different bars (or measures)
- Every bar has the same number of beats



3

4

TEMPO & RHYTHM

- Tempo describes the steady pulse of the music
- Rhythm describes the variation of length between different notes

TEMPO

- Tempo describes the steady pulse of the music
- Described using terms like *adagio* (slow) or *allegro* (fast)
- Beats per minute (BPM) give a more accurate description

♫ = 116	116 quarter note beats per minute
♬ = 60	60 eight notes beats per minute

5

6

TIME SIGNATURES

- Describe the tempo
- Top number: beats per bar
- Bottom number: length of a beat

$\frac{2}{4}$	2 quarter note beats per bar
$\frac{3}{4}$	3 quarter note beats per bar
$\frac{4}{4}$	4 quarter note beats per bar
c	common time, same as above

PITCH



- The pitch of a note represents it's tone
- The clef defines the position of the notes in the stave
- Seven letters are used to represent different notes pitch

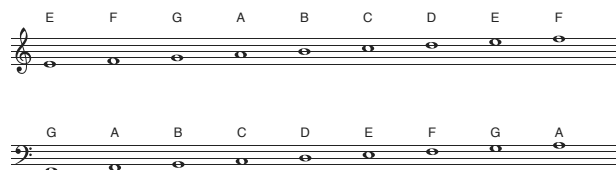
UK, US	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<i>Solfejo</i>	<i>La</i>	<i>Si</i>	<i>Do</i>	<i>Re</i>	<i>Mi</i>	<i>Fa</i>	<i>Sol</i>

7

8

CLEFS

- Describe the pitch of the notes in the stave
- The treble (or G) clef symbol is 
- The bass (or F) clef symbol is 
- The vertical position of the clef defines the line for the note











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10

RESTS

- Rests describe absence of sound
- Duration is related with notes length

Note	Rest
	
	
	
	

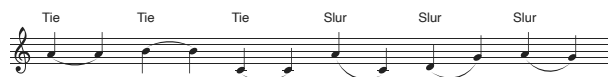
DOTS

- Dots after a note or rest make them plus half as long

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{♩} \cdot &= \text{♩} + \text{♩} \\
 \text{♪} \cdot &= \text{♪} + \text{♪} \\
 \text{♫} \cdot &= \text{♫} + \text{♫}
 \end{aligned}$$

TIES & SLURS

- Ties join notes that sound the same into one
- Slurs, smooth transition between different notes (*legato*)



11

12

ACCIDENTALS

- Sharps (#) raise the tone by half-step
- Flats (b) lower the tone by half-step
- Natural (♮) cancels any sharps or flats
- Accidentals are placed before the note on the staff
- And affect the same notes until the end of the bar (or measure)

MAJOR SCALES

- A scale is any predefined series of notes
- The distance between notes defines the tonality of the scale
- The distance can be a whole tone (T) or a semitone (S)
- Major scales pattern is T-T-S-T-T-T-S
- Example for the C Major scale:

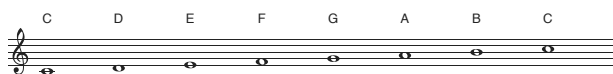
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
└ T ┘	└ T ┘	└ S ┘	└ T ┘	└ T ┘	└ T ┘	└ S ┘	

13

14

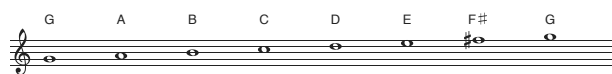
C MAJOR SCALE

- Starts and ends on C
- Follows the major scale pattern
- Doesn't require sharps (#) or flats (b)



G MAJOR SCALE

- Starts and ends on G
- Follows the major scale pattern
- Requires a F#

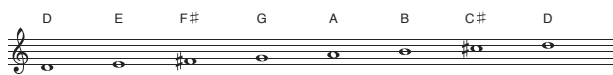


15

16

D MAJOR SCALE

- Starts and ends on D
- Follows the major scale pattern
- Requires a F# and a C#



F MAJOR SCALE

- Starts and ends on F
- Follows the major scale pattern
- Requires a Bb



17

18

KEY SIGNATURES

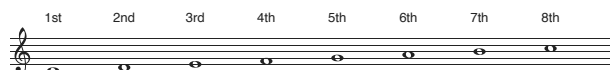
- Placed on the staff, in the beginning of each line of music
- Reminder of the sharps and flats in the current scale

C Major G Major D Major F Major



INTERVALS & DEGREES

- Interval is the distance in pitch between two notes
- Harmonic interval: notes are played together
- Melodic interval: notes are played one after the other
- For example, the degrees for the C Major scale are:



19

20

TRIADS

Groups of three notes:

- The 1st degree of the scale, the tonic
- The 3rd degree of the scale
- And, the 5th degree of the scale

C Major Triad G Major Triad D Major Triad



PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

TEMPO

<i>lento</i>	slow
<i>adagio</i>	slow, with expression
<i>andante</i>	moderate, "walking pace"
<i>accelerando</i>	gradually getting quicker/faster
<i>allegretto</i>	fairly quick/fast, not as fast as allegro
<i>allegro</i>	quick/fast, "cheerful"

21

22

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

DYNAMICS

<i>ppp</i>	very very soft
<i>pp</i>	<i>pianissimo</i> , very soft
<i>p</i>	<i>piano</i> , soft
<i>mp</i>	<i>mezzo piano</i> , half soft
<i>mf</i>	<i>mezzo forte</i> , half loud
<i>f</i>	<i>forte</i> , loud
<i>ff</i>	<i>fortissimo</i> , very loud
<i>fff</i>	very very loud

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

ARTICULATION

<i>legato</i>	smoothly
<i>semi-staccato</i>	a little detached, less than <i>staccato</i>
<i>staccato</i>	detached and short
<i>tenuto</i>	held






23

24

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

EXPRESSION	
<i>cantabile</i>	in a singing style
<i>dolce</i>	sweet
<i>grazioso</i>	graceful
<i>molto</i>	very much
<i>poco</i>	a little

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

SPECIAL SYMBOLS	
	<i>crescendo</i> , gradually getting louder
	<i>diminuendo</i> , gradually getting quieter
	accent, strong, with emphasis
	<i>staccato</i> , detached and short
	<i>fermata</i> , pause, hold on the note

REFERENCES

- *The AB Guide to Music Theory* -- by Eric Tailor