



# 265

## Lessons Every Successful Piano Player MUST Know

Author: Gaseang Mogale

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# **365 LESSONS EVERY SUCCESSFUL PIANO PLAYER MUST KNOW**

*Gaisang Mogale*

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## **MOTIVATION**

- (1) Becoming a Piano Master takes work. You have to put in the work, and then you WILL see the results.
- (2) Don't think you know it all when you learning. Be humble, study and apply.
- (3) Practice in silence, let your songs and melodies do the talking.
- (4) Playing the piano gives you the ability to build your creative & self-expression capabilities.

## **10 'FRINGE' BENEFITS TO MASTERING THE PIANO (BACKED BY SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE)**

- (5) It trains you to have concentration, discipline & patience.
- (6) It prevents the decline of brain processing, hearing and memory loss.
- (7) Gives you improved counting & math skills.
- (8) Causes you to exercise new language skills.
- (9) Improves your reading comprehension.
- (10) Teaches you discipline in mastering time management & organization.
- (11) Strengthens your hand muscles & hand-eye coordination.
- (12) It improves your rhythm & coordination.

- (13) It boosts your self-esteem.
- (14) Expands your Cultural Knowledge.

## **THE FOUR LEVELS OF PIANO MASTERY**

- (15) There are 4 levels towards becoming a Master.
- (16) Every person playing the piano right now is placed within one of these #4 levels (even you). Check each level and reflect on yourself to see which level you are on.
- (17) NOTE: The aim of this book is to increase your awareness and skill level up to LEVEL #4 – once you apply all the principles contained within.
- (18) **LEVEL #1: THE COMPLETE BEGINNER.**
- (19) Everybody, every professional, every PRO had to start at this point.
- (20) The beginner typically has much excitement and anticipation to acquire this new skill. They have also tried to learn already or begun asking around for someone to teach them.
- (21) Majority of beginners do not have a keyboard or piano in their possession when they first begin learning.
- (22) If you fall into level #1, then you MUST make means to purchase or acquire your own keyboard.

- (23) As a beginner, you typically have little to zero knowledge of how to play the instrument or how to go about learning.
- (24) What the beginner doesn't know however, is how much effort and exertion of willpower will be required of him to get proficient and progress to LEVEL #2.
- (25) Once they begin learning, the excitement to learn (also called the piano honeymoon phase) continues for about 1 - 2 months, after which the beginner begins to encounter challenges as the learning becomes more difficult.
- (26) They realize their fingers are stiff and struggling to stretch. They also realize that it takes more effort than expected to learn, and feelings of frustration, despair, anger and helplessness come over them. Often times they will even consider wanting to quit
- (27) Unfortunately, many beginners quit at this level (LEVEL #1) and don't even progress to level #2.
- (28) In order to succeed at this level, beginners should focus on building their foundations right from the get go – namely the piano basics (names of notes, the circle of fifths) and the Four Pillars of The Piano. This will allow them to quickly progress to LEVEL #2

**(29) LEVEL #2: THE DECENT, MEDIOCRE, AVERAGE PLAYER.**

- (30) From the beginner level, you move onto the Mediocre, Average, Decent player level.
- (31) Unlike LEVEL #1 piano playing, LEVEL #2 piano players are able to play a few songs & melodies and know a few basics of the piano.
- (32) They begin to recognize simple playing patterns on the keyboard and their fingers are starting to gradually strengthen.



- (33) Some can even play on the small stage and play certain melodies quite decently.
- (34) The problem arises when the piano enthusiast becomes comfortable and doesn't quickly ascend to level #3.
- (35) Though this level is above level #1, staying comfortable here is worse than the beginner level because it describes someone who refuses to grow.
- (36) Unfortunately, the majority of the global piano-playing community is stuck on this level.
- (37) Nobody wants to be an average piano player.
- (38) If you know that you're on this level then you must urgently move yourself up to the next one – LEVEL #3.

(39) **LEVEL #3: THE EXCELLENT MUSICIAN.**

- (40) The player at this level has great potential.
- (41) He/she has progressed beyond the complete beginner and average player levels and is now evolved into an Excellent Musician.
- (42) He/she can play songs in all 12 keys, is able to play by ear and demonstrates exceptional chordal command and prowess.
- (43) He/she understands the Four Pillars of The Piano and has a strong foundation to lend to his playing.
- (44) He/she can play different genres of music, including jazz, classical, African, rock, hip hop, R&B and soul. He is able to understand and read sheet music.

(45) The Excellent Musician is very versatile and his skill gives him confidence to play with strength and ability.

(46) It is at this level that they begin to be showered with praise and acknowledgement from friends, family, colleagues or the public about their piano ability.

(47) The Excellent Musician has usually spent many hours, and multiple years to reach this level – often making a lot of mistakes - due to not understanding the right path towards effective mastery.

(48) **LEVEL #4: THE MASTER PIANO PLAYER.**

(49) This is the Master PRO level. This is an unparalleled, exceptional piano master.

(50) Think Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, Art Tatum, Isaac Petersen, Cory Henry, Lang Lang, Jesus Molina.

(51) LEVEL #4 players are absolute masters of their craft – they have spent many hours laboring on the key fundamentals and have reached unconscious competence in their ability.

(52) LEVEL #4 players typically have incredibly fast piano finger speed, and a high control of chordal proficiency. The profoundness of their playing instantly captures the attention and imagination of those listening.

(53) They have truly mastered their foundational training. Many of them go on to become professional, concert pianists or stage performers, playing on national or international platforms.

(54) Very few piano players reach this level, because it typically takes many hours of practice and consistent, intentional practice, over a longer period of time.

(55) You, yes YOU – can be a level 4 piano master PRO, just learning from home, if you follow the guidelines & principles laid out in this book.

## **THE IMMUTABLE PRINCIPLES TO BECOMING A MAESTRO**

(56) PRINCIPLE: Make The Decision That You MUST Become A PRO, Masterful Player.

(57) Your “I want learn piano” and “I wish I could play” needs to change to “I MUST become a piano maestro and play like a PRO”.

(58) In order to achieve this goal, your decision to become a Master has to change to a “MUST.”

(59) You Reason WHY: You must have strong, compelling reasons why you want to play the piano like a Master.

(60) Now Speak these words of affirmation RIGHT NOW:

*“I MUST become a piano maestro and play like a MASTER. I will wholly commit of my time and resources until I reach this goal.”*

(61) PRINCIPLE: Set a clear, SPECIFIC goal you want to reach as a Maestro, and COMMIT until you achieve it.

(62) Two important aspects from this principle: (#1) You must set a clear, SPECIFIC goal and (#2) You must COMMIT until you reach it

(63) (#1) You must set a clear, SPECIFIC goal: Can you visualize exactly how you will play and sound once you’ve reached PRO level? How will it sound? What songs will you be playing?

- (64) (#2) You must COMMIT until you reach it: Making a commitment means to pledge or bind yourself to do something until you achieve it.
- (65) Resolve in your mind that you will continue your piano-learning journey until you reach your goal - and until you become a piano PRO.
- (66) PRINCIPLE: You Are Average Because You Have Failed To Commit.
- (67) Average Players Want Glory With No Work.
- (68) The only way the LEVEL #2: Average player can progress to LEVEL #3: Excellent Musician is if they COMMIT to the practice & growth.
- (69) Commitment Breeds Motivation And Kills Procrastination.
- (70) PRINCIPLE: Get a Piano Mentor who is a PRO. Find someone who is already where you want to be, and ask him/her to mentor you.
- (71) You can find a piano mentor offline – in your local community or city, plays for a band, at a college music school or in church.
- (72) You can find a piano mentor online – head over to **MogaleMusic.com** to find the best online training for musician leaders.
- (73) PRINCIPLE: Understand The Piano Mastery Model And FOCUS On It During Your Practices.
- (74) The Piano Mastery Model entails mastering 4 pillars: **Pillar #1 – Scales, Pillar #2 – Chords, Pillar #3 – Chord Progressions, Pillar #4 – Finger Exercises.**
- (75) PRINCIPLE: Mastery Does Not Take Years, But Hours - focus on consistent hours of practice EVERYDAY, instead of thinking of results taking you 'years'.

- (76) PRINCIPLE: Master Your Time – spend the majority of your time PRACTICING and not rehearsing.
- (77) Practicing vs Rehearsing: Practicing means to repeat certain activities in order to improve your skill.
- (78) Practicing vs Rehearsing: Rehearsal refers to spending time repeating what you already know – meaning you aren't learning new things, merely reciting what's known – therefore zero growth.
- (79) Average players spend about 90% of their session time rehearsing and approximately 10% of their time practicing.
- (80) Masterful players use 90% of their time practicing and only 10% of their time rehearsing.
- (81) PRINCIPLE: Apply 'Consistent' Practices Per Week, Not One Day 'Bulk' Hour Practices.
- (82) It is better to have five 2-hour practices per week than to have one BIG 10 hour day of practice per week.
- (83) I recommend having at least 3 - 5 days of practice every week, 2 – 4 hours per session.
- (84) You need to train your brain and fingers to keep training on a continuous basis.
- (85) Make sure you have a routine practice schedule and stick to it.
- (86) Measure the success of your practices by your consistency and not by your peaks.
- (87) PRINCIPLE: Train Harder Than You Perform.
- (88) When your sessions have a new normal of fierceness and fervency, you take your playing to a new level.

- (89) What is difficult, stressful and hard for others will become easy for you. Others will struggle to play what you find easy and simple.
- (90) 3 WAYS TO TRAIN HARDER THAN YOU PERFORM: 1) Increase your Intensity during your personal practices
- (91) 3 WAYS TO TRAIN HARDER THAN YOU PERFORM: 2) Spend more time during your rehearsals.
- (92) Average players spend less than one hour per session, 1 session per week. We recommend 3 – 5 sessions per week, 2 – 4 hours per session.
- (93) 3 WAYS TO TRAIN HARDER THAN YOU PERFORM: 3) Increase your standards.
- (94) Spend almost zero time working on songs or melodies you know, and almost all of your session time on working on things you don't know yet.
- (95) PRINCIPLE: Endurance is the key to speed.
- (96) Endurance refers to your ability to keep playing licks, runs, scales, chordal sequences etc. proficiently over a long, prolonged period time.
- (97) A good way to increase your endurance is by using a metronome. Play your scales and finger exercises using the metronome, and keep playing at that tempo for 10, 15, 30 minutes without stopping.
- (98) PRINCIPLE: Don't Practice Until You Get It Right, Practice Until You Can't Get It Wrong
- (99) When you play songs, tunes, melodies and repertoires in a way you know you CAN'T get it wrong, you get this indescribable CONFIDENCE and PEACE about your playing.

(100) Watch the greats such as Oscar Petersen, George Duke, Art Tatum, Herbie Hancock or Corey Henry – notice how they never make mistakes or know where to intuitively place their fingers?

(101) Two ways to reach a level of playing until you can't get it wrong:  
UNDERSTANDING and REPETITION

(102) #1: Understanding – You need to understand what the four pillars of piano are and master each pillar accordingly.

(103) #2: Repetition – Once you learn a melody or song, keep practicing and rehearsing until you can play it without looking.

(104) Repetition is the mother of all learning.

(105) Quote by the late Chet Holmes: "I realized that becoming a master of karate was not about learning 4,000 moves, but about doing a handful of moves 4,000 times."

(106) PRINCIPLE: Practicing With A Metronome is Critical.

(107) #1 – The metronome boosts your finger speed.

(108) #2 – The metronome boosts your finger control and finger strength

(109) #3 – The metronome boosts your finger endurance

(110) Most keyboards come with a built-in metronome. You can also find one for free on the Google Playstore or Apple app store – an app by the name of 'Metronome Beats'.

(111) Physical metronomes can also be bought from your local music store, but it isn't necessary since you can download the app for free.

(112) PRINCIPLE: Keep Being Creative, Always Changing Up And Improving.

(113) Always be creative & change up how you're playing songs that you already know. Find new ways to play – use inversions, key changes or different playing styles.

(114) PRINCIPLE: Set A Definite 'Clock-Time' For Your Practice

(115) The biggest enemies to your piano practicing is laziness, fatigue, procrastination, lack of will power and lack of motivation.

(116) You should therefore have scheduled definite days, time, and duration of rehearsals.

(117) For example: your schedule may look like this:

- Monday: 18h00 - 20h00 (2 hours) ● Tuesday: 12h00 - 14h00 (2 hour)
- Wednesday: 17h00 - 21h00 (4 hour) ● Thursday: 18h00 - 20h00 (2 hours)
- Friday: 06h00 - 10h00 (4 hours) ● Saturday: 10h00 - 14h00 (4 hours)
- Sunday: REST

(118) Make sure you set your definite times and days for practice, and COMMIT to stick to them.

(119) If you want to play like a PRO (Level #3 or Level #4), we suggest at least 3-5 practice sessions per week, with 2-4 hours each session, and then staying consistent to this routine for AT LEAST 6 MONTHS.

(120) Setting definite times for practicing helps curb procrastination issues versus leaving the decision of practice time to the mercy of how you 'feel' on that day.

(121) The best time is in the morning between 6am - 11am, when your energy and willpower is at its strongest. But due to rigorous schedules, you may have set a time later during the day.

(122) The most important thing here is that whether you select a morning or evening time, you set a DEFINITE time and stick to it daily.



(123) PRINCIPLE: Learn Difficult Songs

(124) Difficult songs are melodies that have more advanced chord movements and fingering sequences. These are songs that improve your scaling, chordal command and improvisation prowess.

(125) Difficult, challenging songs are the ones that will 'grow' you the most.

(126) Challenging songs force your fingers to learn new playing patterns and stretch them where they are stiff.

(127) LEVEL #2: Average players avoid challenging songs completely and keep playing songs that they know during their practice - over and over again – this thinking and behaviour **KEEPS THEM AVERAGE**.

(128) LEVEL #3 & #4 players refuse to stay at the average level, and so they push to learn the difficult, more challenging songs.

(129) BENEFITS OF CHALLENGING SONGS: They grow your cognitive skill level.

(130) BENEFITS OF CHALLENGING SONGS: They force your fingers to stretch.

(131) BENEFITS OF CHALLENGING SONGS: They give you newer, more exciting ways to play your existing songs.

(132) PRINCIPLE: Learn How To Play In All 12 Keys

(133) Masters can play songs in all 12 keys of the piano, at anytime.

(134) Average players are able to play 1 - 4 keys, often the black keys, and this is also one of the reasons why they hit a 'ceiling' in their playing and don't know how to progress to the next level.

(135) Death of the Transpose Button! If you find yourself still needing to use the Transpose button to play the piano – **YOU ARE STILL AN**

## AVERAGE PLAYER.

(136) Simple method to start learning in all 12 keys: start with a basic tune that you already know and can play well, and begin to learn it slowly in other keys.

(137) ADVANCED TECHNIQUE: Learn DIFFICULT Songs In All 12 Keys – this will turn you into a MACHINE!

(138) If you take a challenging song you already know how to play, and learn to play it as skillfully in all other keys, you're on your way to becoming a PRO.

(139) PRINCIPLE: If You Want To Play Like No One Else Has Played, Practice Like No One Else Has Practiced.

(140) You need to put your hours in, and work harder than your competition, in order to become the best.

## PIANO BASICS

### The Difference Between The Keyboard And The Piano

(141) The Keyboard produces its sound electronically.

(142) This is why typically, on a keyboard you will find hundreds of different sounds you can play (eg. Organ, harp, strings, violin, choir, bass, guitar sounds etc.)

(143) The Piano produces its sound from the vibrations of the strings physically attached to it.

(144) Each time you press a note, a hammer rises and hits a specific string relating to that note, which will then vibrate a sound.

## **Names Of The Notes**

(145) The Names of the Notes: The white notes are named according to the alphabet, namely 'A' – 'G'

(146) DIAGRAM

(147) The Names of the Notes: The black notes are called according to the white notes.

(148) If a black note is towards the left of a white note, it is called a "Flat". If a black note is towards the right of white note, it is called a "Sharp".

(149) DIAGRAM

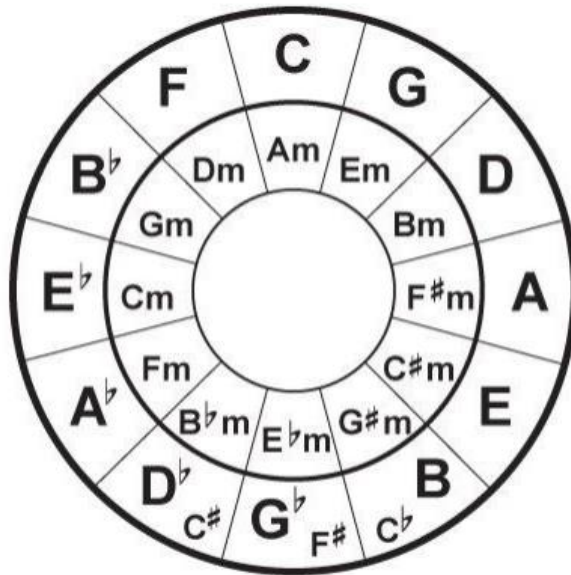
## **The Circle Of Fifths**

(150) The Circle Of Fifths is the relationship between the 12 keys of the piano on the chromatic scale, showing their key signatures, as well as the related major & minor keys.

(151) The Circle Of Fifths can be shown in a diagram form (as below) and depicts how you can go through all 12 keys of the piano.

(152)

### The Circle Of Fifths



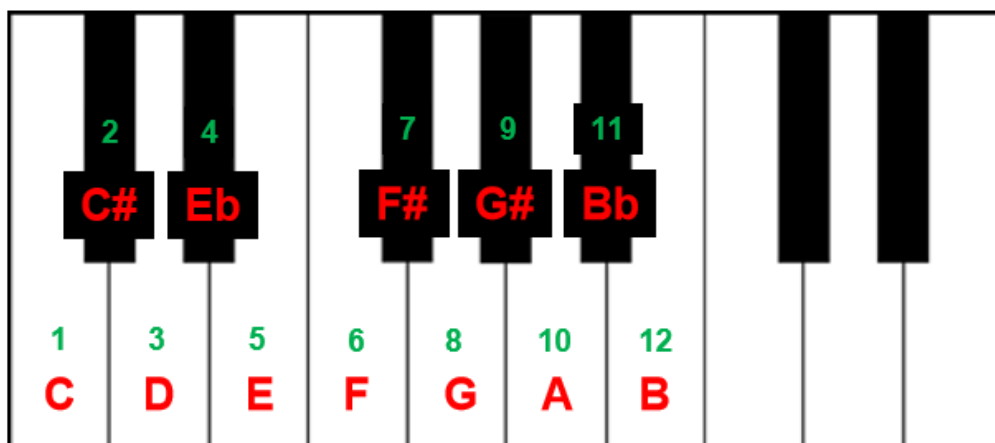
(153) It is also called The Circle Of Fourths because you play the fourth tone on each scale of the key you're on.

### The 12 Keys Of The Piano

(154) The Piano has 12 different notes, arrayed across the board.

(155)

Diagram: The 12 Keys Of The Piano



(156) These notes can also be called keys, because each have their own scales, chords, and chord progressions.

## **THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE PIANO**

(157) The four pillars of the piano are the fundamentals – the foundation of exceptional playing.

(158) If you master these four pillars, you have mastered the art of the piano, and will be playing like a PRO.

(159) The benefits are boundless – giving you massive understanding and proficiency to use in all aspects of music, whether you're a songwriter & composer, an instrumentalist, a singer, producer, DJ, musical band leader or normal piano lover.

(160) The Four Pillars are:

Pillar #1 – SCALES

Pillar #2 – CHORDS

Pillar #3 – CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Pillar #4 – FINGER EXERCISES

## **PILLAR #1 – SCALES**

(161) Scales are a collection of notes that belong together and fall under a 'Key'.

(162) They are the building blocks to creating melodies, chords, progressions, and songs.

(163) They help you make sense of songs & patterns, and help you with improvisation and even composition of your own songs

(164) The 6 most commonly played scales are:

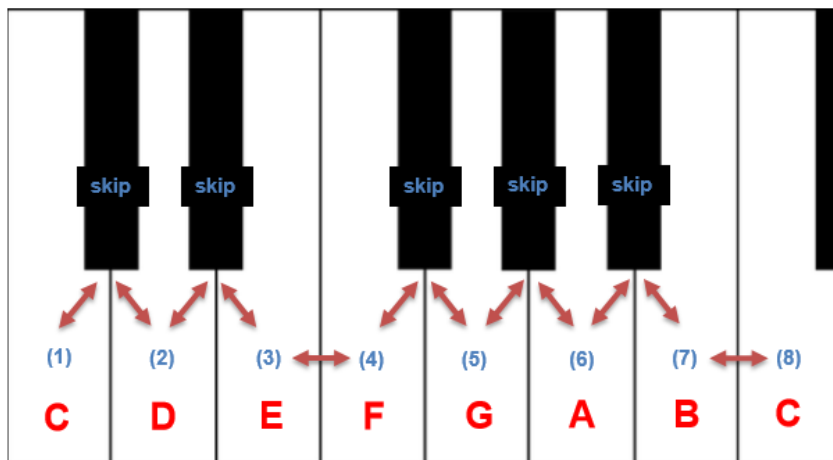
- #1 – Major Scale
- #2 – Minor Scale
- #3 – Blues Scale
- #4 – Chromatic Scale
- #5 – Pentatonic Major Scale
- #6 – Pentatonic Minor Scale

(165) **#1 – Major Scale**, the formula for creating the Major Scale is:

*1, skip, 2, skip, 3, 4, skip, 5, skip, 6, skip, 7, 8*

(166)

Diagram: C Major Scale

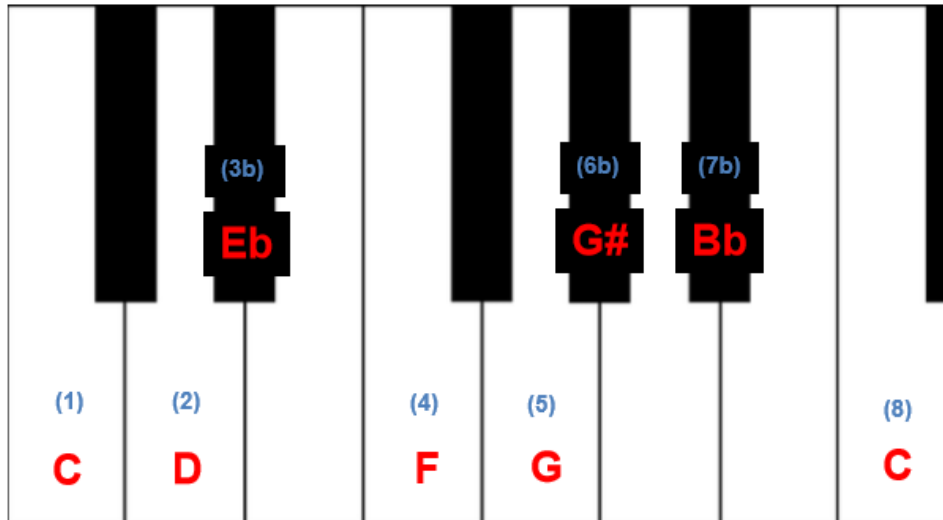


(167) **#2 – Minor Scale**, the formula for creating the Minor Scale is:

*1, 2, 3b, 4, 5, 6b, 7b, 8*

(168)

Diagram: C Natural Minor Scale

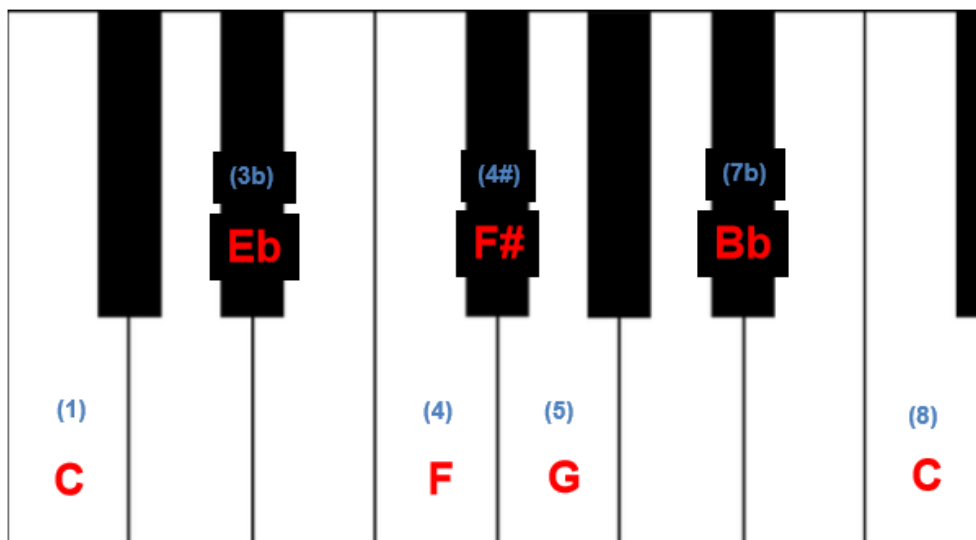


(169) **#3 – Blues Scale**, the formula for creating the Major Scale is:

1, 3b, 4, 4#, 5, 7b, 8

(170)

Diagram: C Blues Scale

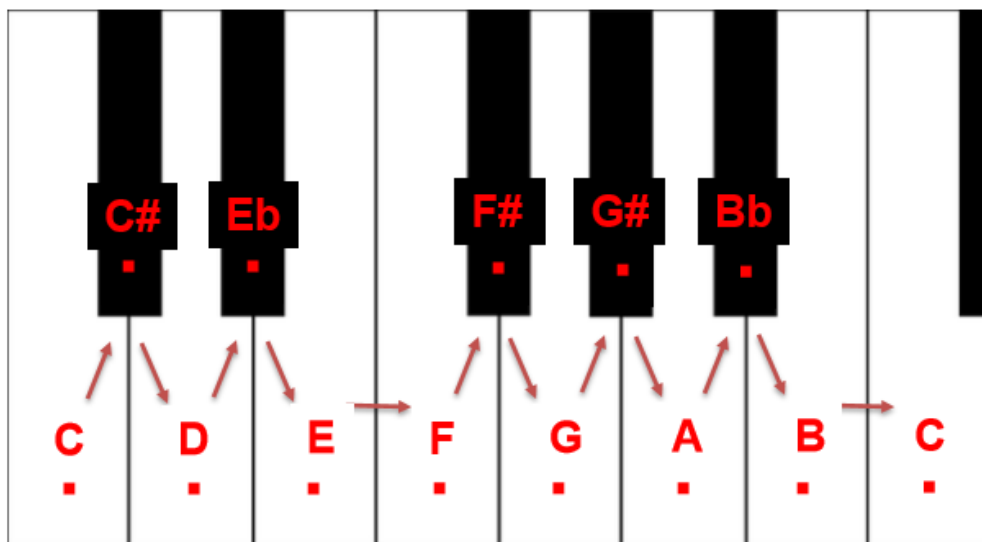


(171) **#4 – Chromatic Scale**, The Chromatic scale involves playing every consecutive note, black and white, one after the other.

(172) You may start the Chromatic scale from any note, and then continue the formulaic method of playing each consecutive note

(173)

Diagram: Chromatic Scale



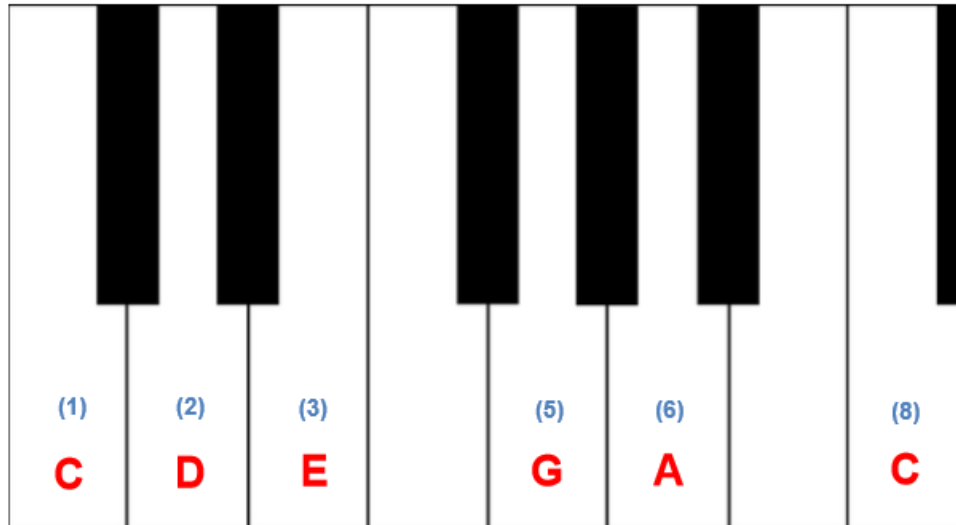
(174) **#5 – Pentatonic Major Scale**, the formula for creating the Pentatonic Major Scale is:

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8



(175)

Diagram: C Pentatonic Major Scale

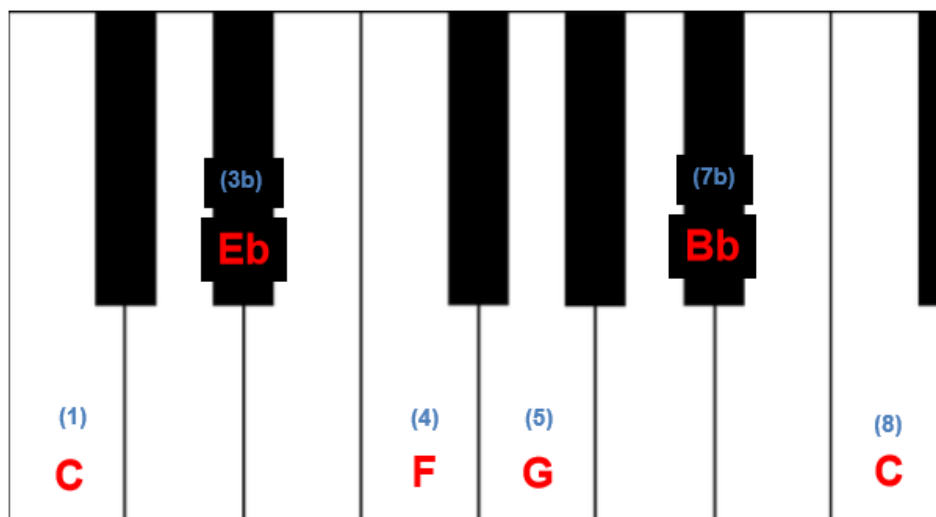


(176) **#6 – Pentatonic Minor Scale**, the formula for creating the Pentatonic Minor Scale is:

1, 3b, 4, 5, 7b, 8

(177)

Diagram: C Pentatonic Minor Scale



## PILLAR #2 – CHORDS

(178) Chords can be defined as two or more notes played together. It is a collection of notes or pitches which bring forth a musical sound.

(179) Chords can be grouped into the following:

Two Notes played: Dyads / Intervals

Three Notes played: Triads

Four Notes played: Tetrads

Five or more Notes played: Extended Chords

(180)

### Classes Of Chords

NUMBER OF NOTES	NAME
Two notes	Dyads / Intervals / Partial chord
Three notes	Triads
Four notes	Tetrads / Quartets
Five or more notes	Extended / Altered / Polychords
- Five notes	Pentad
- Six notes	Hexad
- Seven notes	Heptad
- Eight notes	Octad
- Nine notes	Ennead
- Ten notes	Decad

(181) Dyads / Intervals: are two notes played simultaneously that make up a chord. They are named according to the Major or Minor scale the two notes lie on, as per the diagram below:

(182)

NOTES PLAYED (Key of C)	NUMBERS ON THE SCALE	MINOR	MAJOR
C & C#	1 & 2b	Minor 2 <sup>nd</sup>	
C & D	1 & 2		Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>
C & Eb	1 & 3b	Minor 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
C & E	1 & 3		Major 3 <sup>rd</sup>
C & F	1 & 4		Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>
C & F#	1 & 5b	Augmented 4 <sup>th</sup> OR Diminished 5 <sup>th</sup>	
C & G	1 & 5		Perfect 5 <sup>th</sup>
C & Ab	1 & 6b	Minor 6 <sup>th</sup> OR Augmented 5 <sup>th</sup>	
C & A	1 & 6		Major 6 <sup>th</sup>
C & Bb	1 & 7b	Minor 7 <sup>th</sup>	
C & B	1 & 7		Major 7 <sup>th</sup>
C & C	1 & 8		Octaves
E & Bb OR Bb & E	3 & 7b OR 7b & 3	TRITONE	

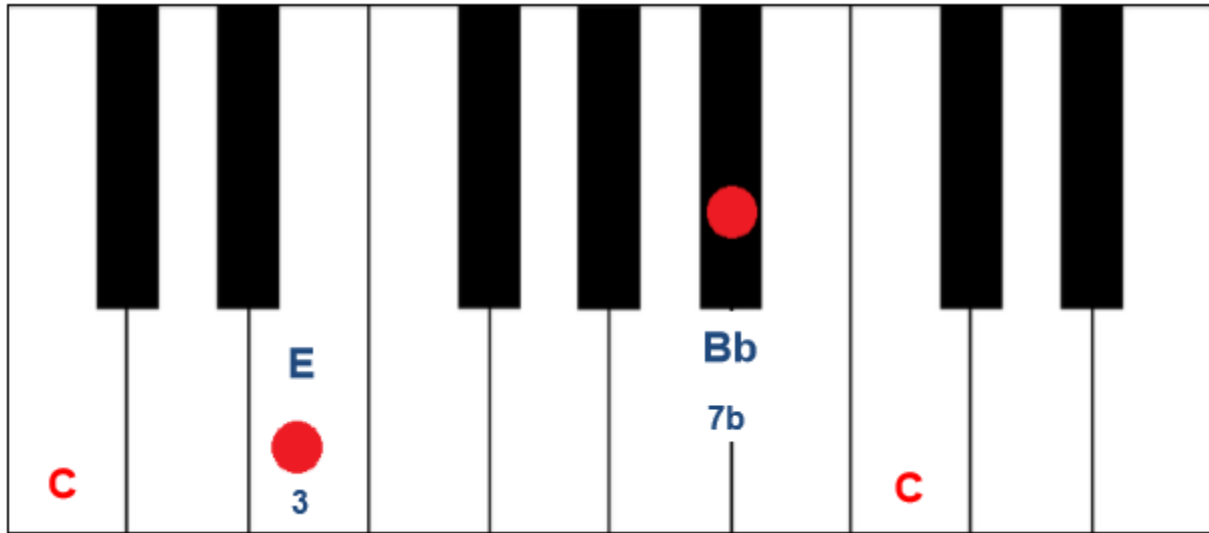
## Tritones

(183) Tritones are a type of Dydad / Interval that are 3 whole notes (or 6 half steps) away from each other on the piano.

(184) #1 - They are named according to the notes 3 and 7b on a specific major scale.

(185) For example, **the Tritone of C is E and Bb**, because they are numbers 3 and 7b on the C major scale:

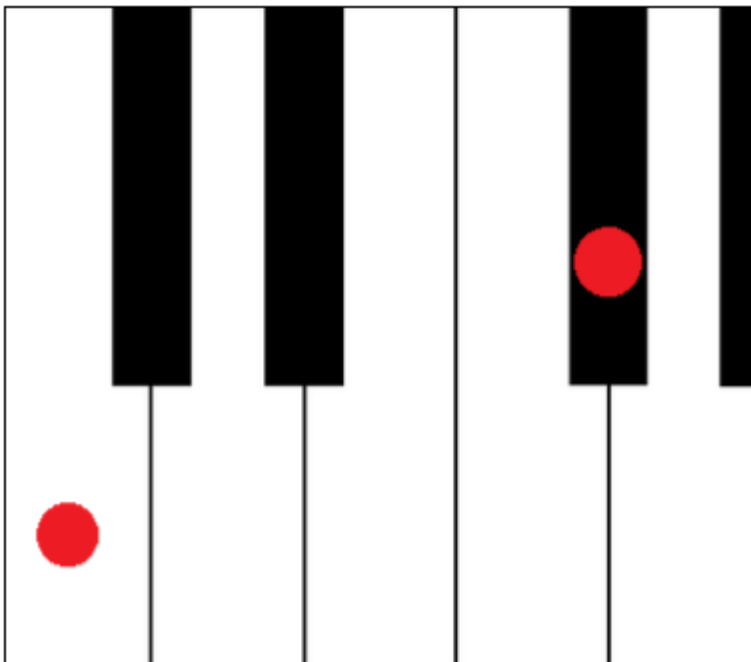
(186)



(187) Tritones can also be named according to the position of notes that are played.

(188) For example. The **Tritone of C** is **C and F#**, because the notes are 3 whole notes (or 6 half steps) away from each other AND that the Tritone is named according to the first note played, ie. C:

(189)



(190) The list of the tritones found on the keyboard are

C and F#  
C# and G  
D and G#  
Eb and A  
E and Bb  
F and B

(191) Triads: are three notes played simultaneously on the piano that make up a chord.

(192) There are 4 common triads that can be played, namely:

Major chord  
Minor chord  
Augmented chord  
Diminished chord

(193)

TRIADS		
NAME	FORMULA	NOTES PLAYED (Key of C)
Major Chord	1, 3, 5	C, E, G
Minor Chord	1, 3b, 5	C, Eb, G
Augmented Chord	1, 3, 5#	C, E, G#
Diminished Chord	1, 3b, 5b	C, Eb, F#

(194) Tetrads: are 4 notes played together simultaneously to make up a chord.

(195) There are 4 common tetrads that can be played on the piano, namely:

Major 7<sup>th</sup> chord

Minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord

Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord

Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord

(196)

TETRADS		
NAME	FORMULA	NOTES PLAYED (Key of C)
Major 7 <sup>th</sup> Chord	1, 3, 5, 7	C, E, G, B
Minor 7 <sup>th</sup> Chord	1, 3b, 5, 7b	C, Eb, G, Bb
Dominant 7 <sup>th</sup> Chord	1, 3, 5, 7b	C, E, G, Bb
Diminished 7 <sup>th</sup> Chord	1, 3b, 5b, 6	C, Eb, F#, A

## The “Left-Hand-Playing-Bass” Syndrome

(197) The “Left-Hand-Playing-Bass” Syndrome is a problem LEVEL #2: Average players have of playing chords with the right hand and using one finger to play bass with the left hand.

(198) The solution is that your left hand needs to start playing chords!

(199) Playing chords with both left and right hands will immensely add flavour and colour to your playing.

(200) HOW: Take a song you already know how to play with your right hand, and replicate it with your left hand by playing the exact same chords as your right hand, with your left hand, at the same time.

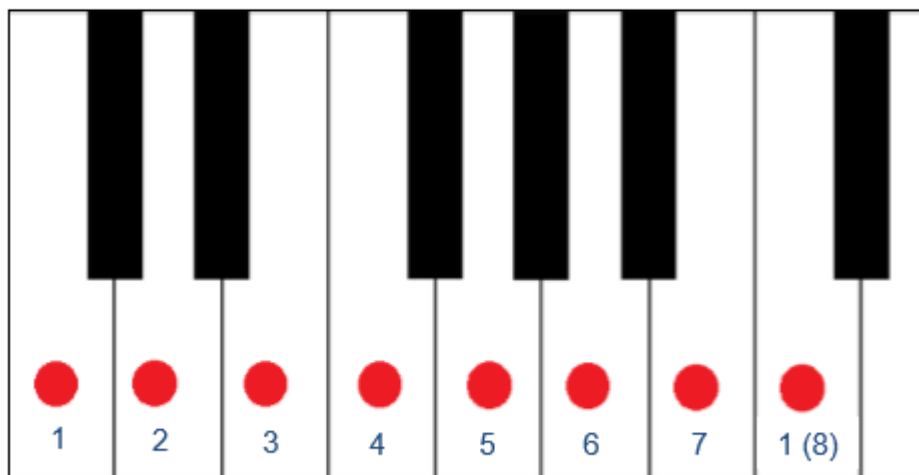
### **PILLAR #3 – CHORD PROGRESSIONS**

(201) Chord Progressions are a series of chords played together in sequence.

(202) To recap the Pillar #1 of scales, the Major Scale can be shown as a 1 – 8 progression, as shown on the diagram below:

(203)

**Diagram: C Major Scale**



(204) Each number on the scale has a corresponding chord attached to it – these are called Diatonic chords

(205) The word ‘Diatonic’ means “within a key”.

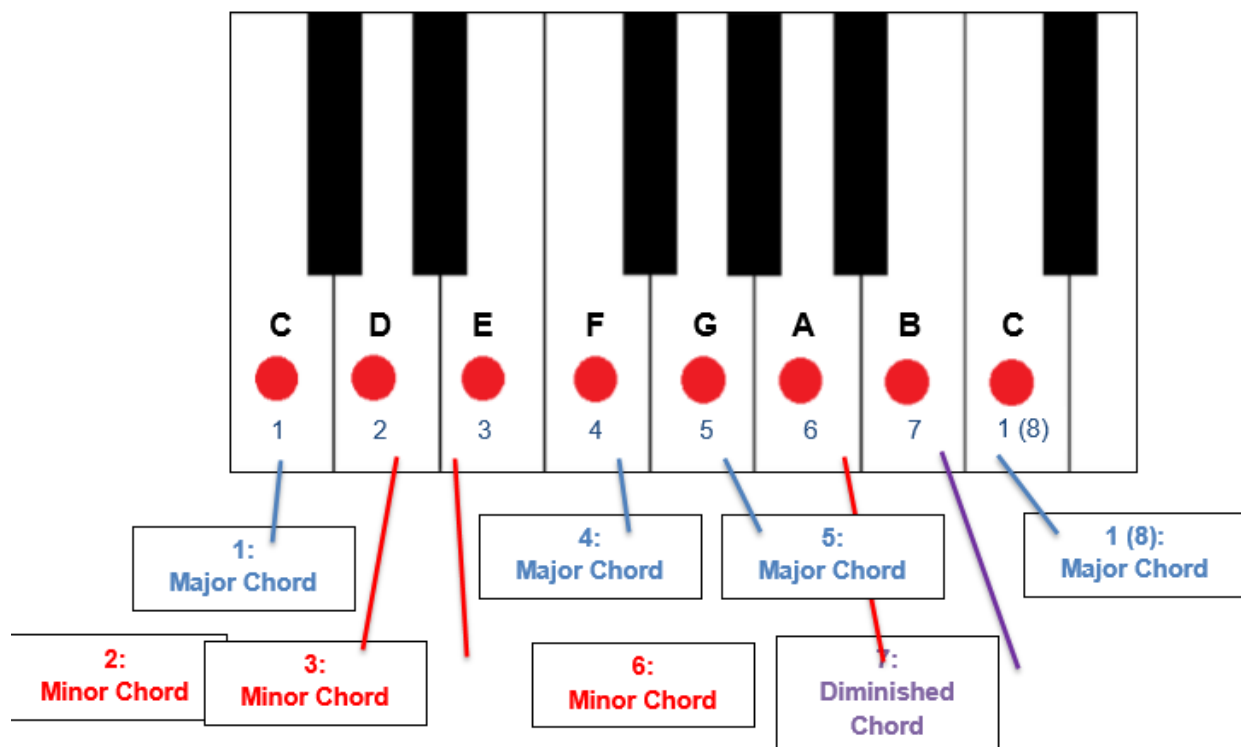
(206) The Diatonic Chord Progression is the construction of chords within a certain key signature. In this case, our key is 'C'.

(207) The Diatonic Chord Progression can be done using Triads or Tetrads.

(208) Construct your diatonic chords USING TRIADS as follows:

- 1 – Major Chord
- 2 – Minor Chord
- 3 – Minor Chord
- 4 – Major Chord
- 5 – Major Chord
- 6 – Minor Chord
- 7 – Diminished Chord
- 1 / (8) – Major Chord

(209)





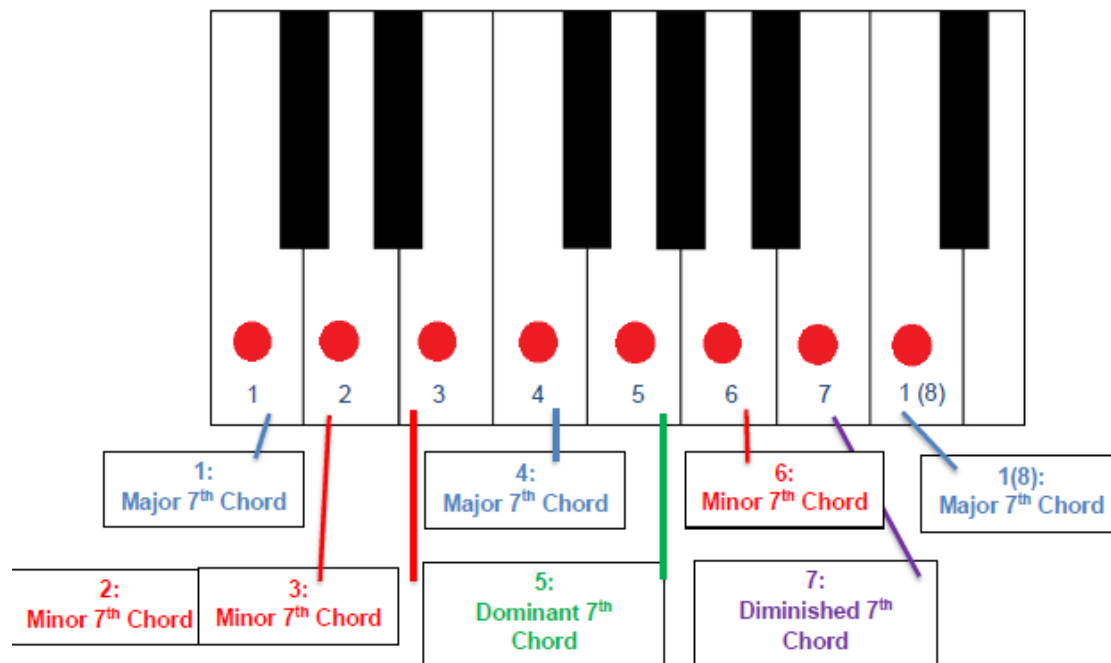
(210) Therefore, the C Diatonic Chord Progression USING TRIADS will be as follows:

- 1 – C Major chord
- 2 – D Minor chord
- 3 – E Minor chord
- 4 – F Major chord
- 5 – G Major chord
- 6 – A Minor chord
- 7 – B Diminished chord

(211) Construct your diatonic chords USING TETRADS as follows:

- 1 – Major 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 2 – Minor 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 3 – Minor 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 4 – Major 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 5 – Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 6 – Minor 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 7 – Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> Chord
- 1 / (8) – Major 7<sup>th</sup> Chord

(212)



(213) Therefore, the C Diatonic Chord Progression USING TETRADS will be as follows:

- 1 – C Major 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 2 – D Minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 3 – E Minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 4 – F Major 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 5 – G Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 6 – A Minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord
- 7 – B Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord

(214) Now we are going to look at the 6 common Chord Progressions found in almost all melodies, songs and musical tunes.

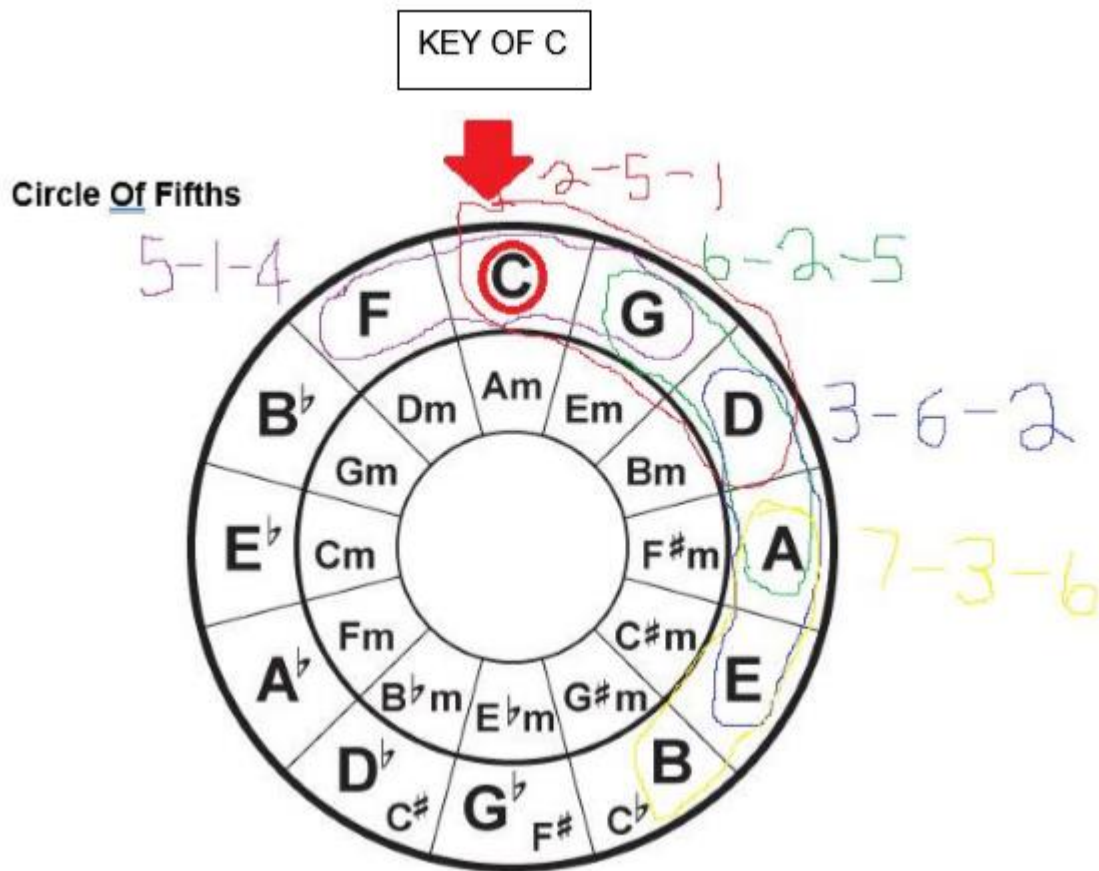
(215) These chord progressions are derived from the Circle of Fifths table.

(216) The 6 common chord progressions are:

- 2-5-1

- ☐ 6-2-5
- ☐ 3-6-2
- ☐ 7-3-6
- ☐ 5-1-4
- ☐ 1-4-5

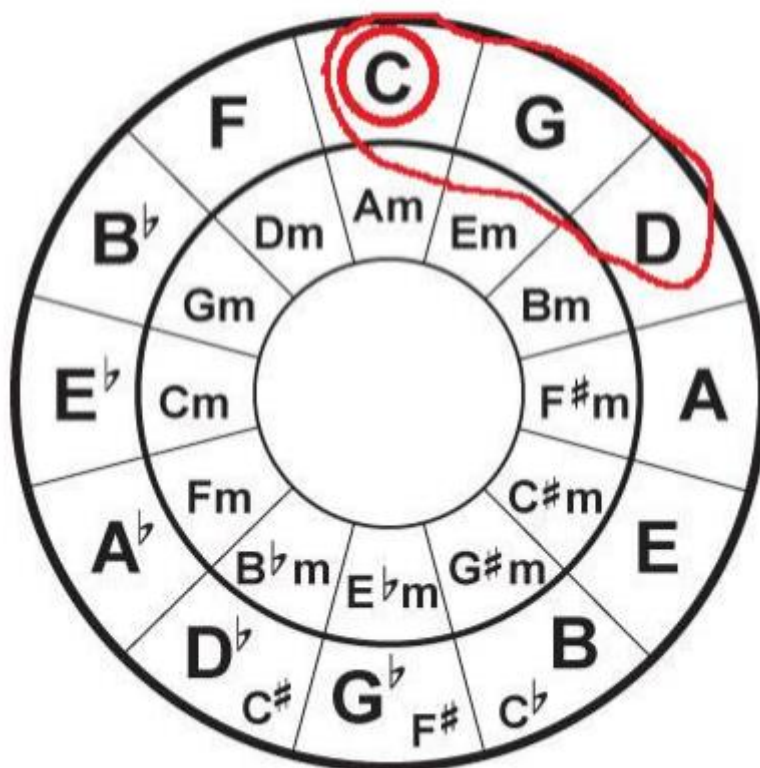
(217) Graphical depiction attached below:



(218)

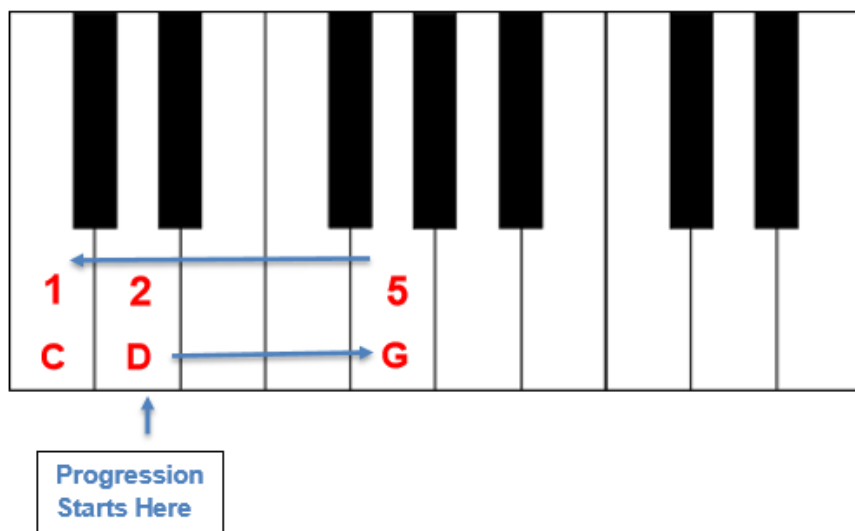
In the key of C:

D (2) → G (5) → C (1)



(219) Progression [#1]: 2 – 5 – 1

(220)

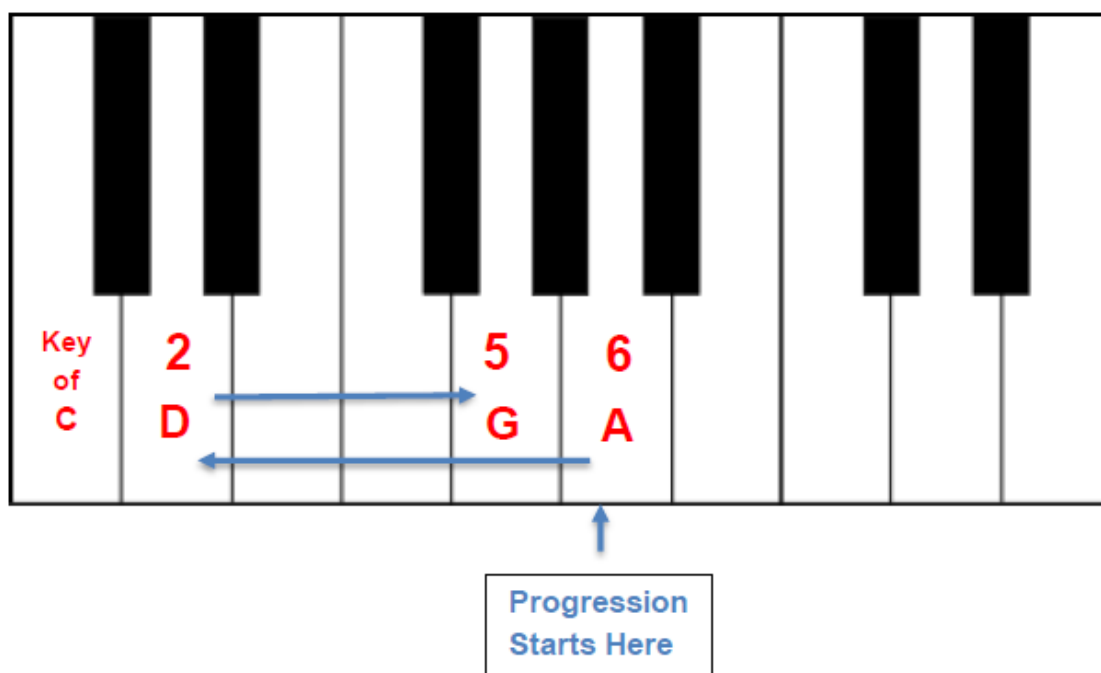


(221) Progression [#2]: 6 – 2 – 5

(222)

In the key of C:

A (6) → D (2) → G (5)

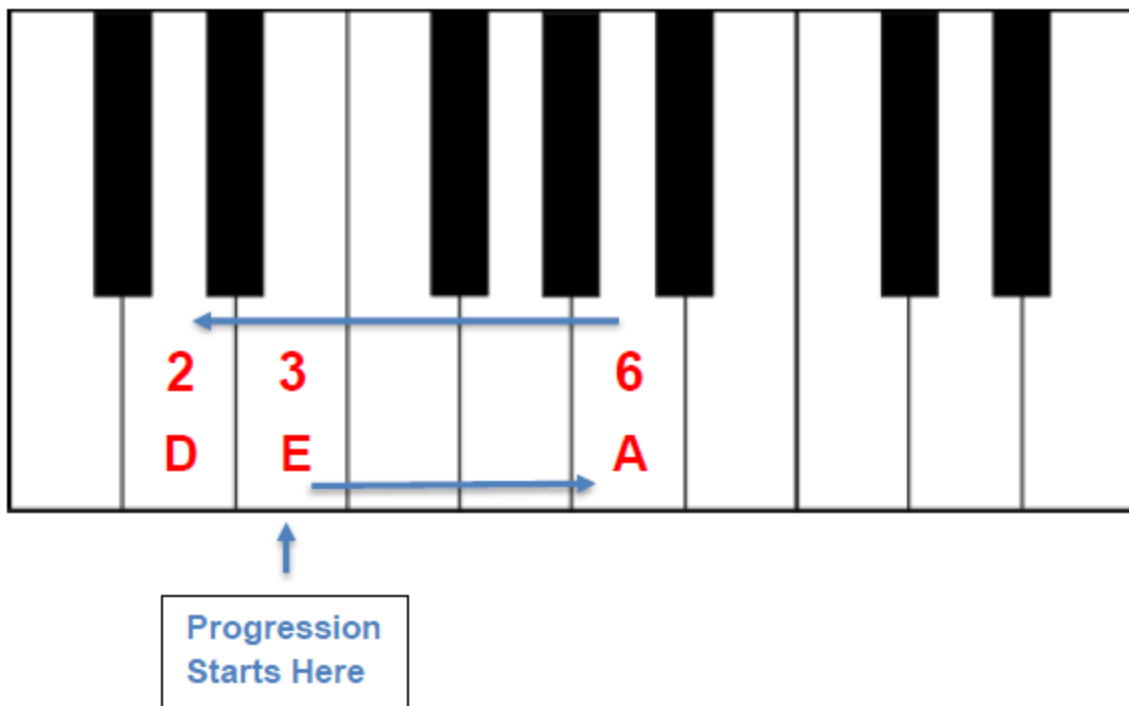


(223) Progression [#3]: 3– 6 – 2

(224)

**In the key of C:**

**E (3) → A (6) → D (2)**

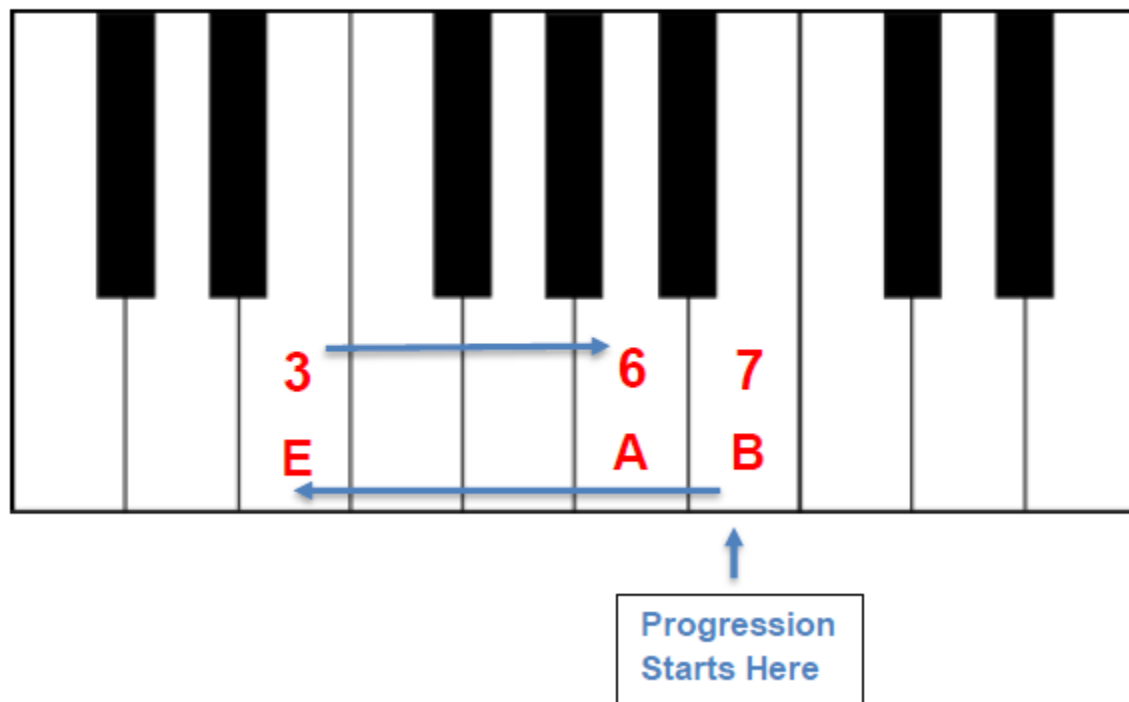


(225) Progression [#4]: 7 – 3 – 6

(226)

In the key of C:

**B (7) → E (3) → A (6)**

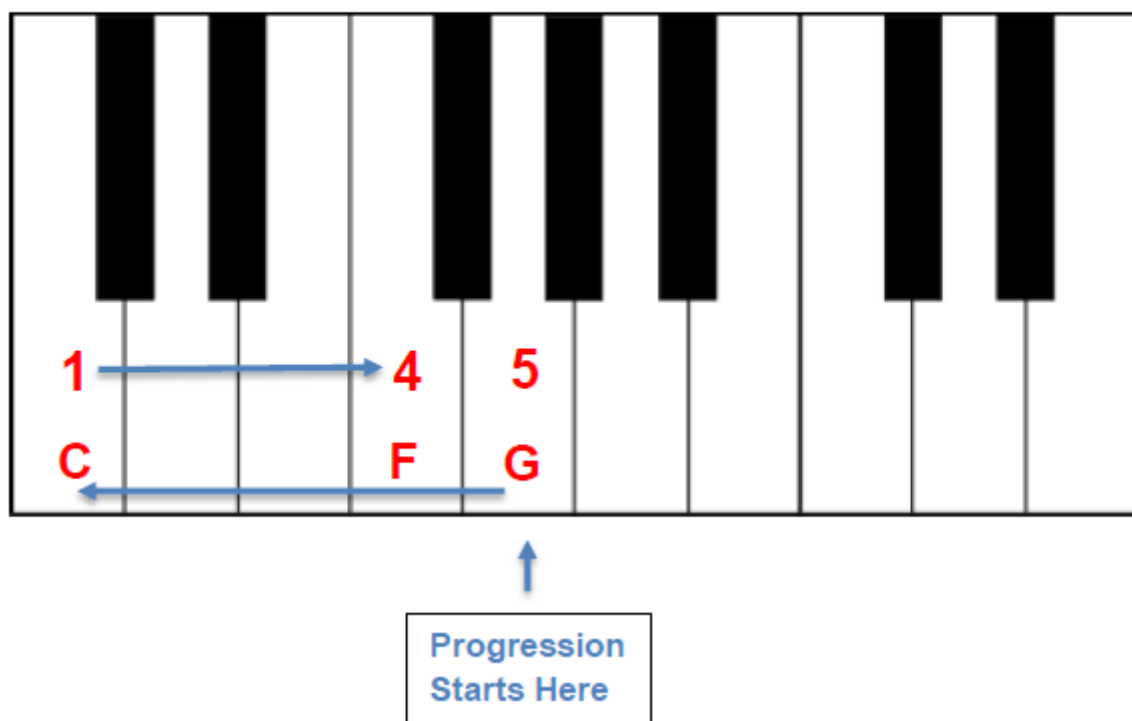


(227) Progression [#5]: 5 – 1 – 4

(228)

In the key of C:

**G** (5) → **C** (1) → **F** (4)



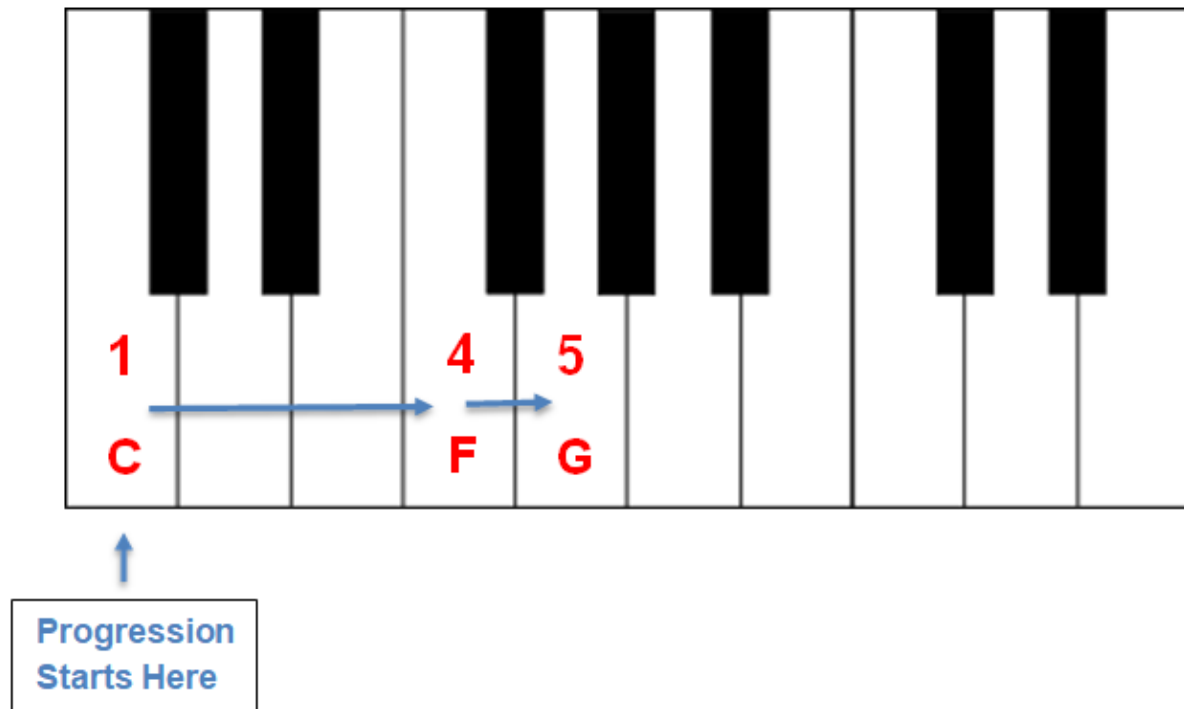
(229) Progression [#6]: 1 – 4 – 5



(230)

**In the key of C:**

**C (1) → F (4) → G (5)**



(231) Stacked Progressions: these are progressions that combine one or more of the 6 common progressions together.

(232) We will be looking at two types of stacked progressions, namely:

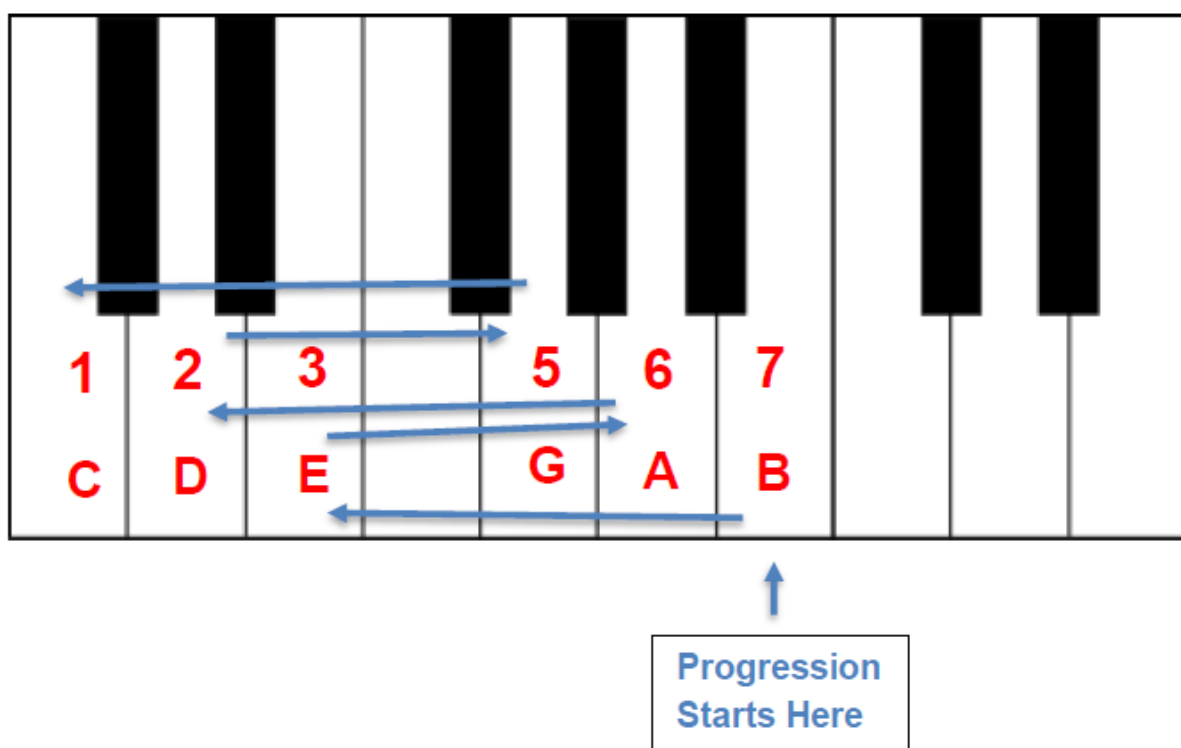
- 7-3-6-2-5-1 and
- 6-2-5-1-4

(233) Stacked Progression [#1]: 7-3-6-2-5-1

(234)

**In the key of C:**

**B (7) → E (3) → A (6) → D (2) → G (5) → C (1)**

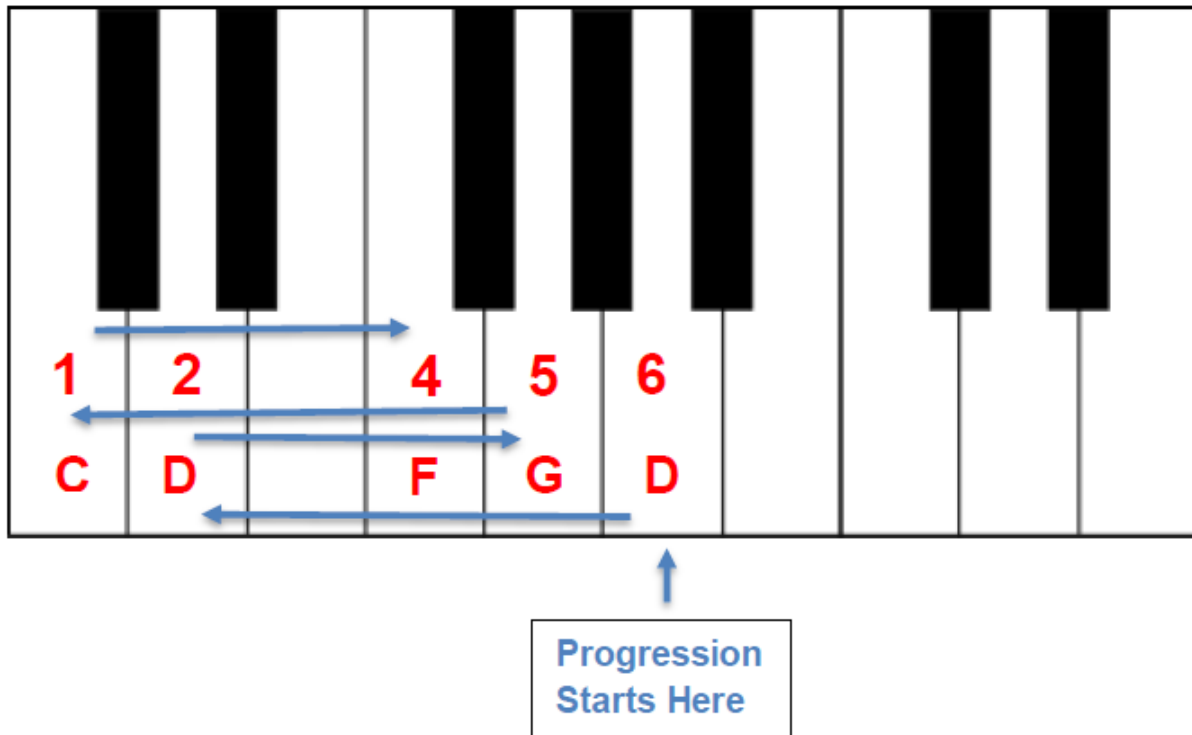


(235) Stacked Progression [#2]: 6-2-5-1-4

(236)

**In the key of C:**

**A (6) → D (2) → G (5) → C (1) → F (4)**



## **PILLAR #4 – FINGER SPEED & STRENGTH EXERCISES**

(237) In Pillar #4, we focus on your fingers – increasing their agility, speed and strength.

(238) A common problem which persists, especially for Level #1 (Beginner) and Level #2 (Average) players, is that your fingers tend to be stiff, unresponsive or inflexible.

(239) They are not able to play with the same speed and prowess that advanced players typically have.

(240) Hanon exercises are an incredible way to strengthen & speed up your fingers.

(241) Hanon Exercises were created by the late great Charles-Louis Hanon, a French piano teacher and composer born on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1819.

(242) Charles Hanon pioneered a set of piano finger exercises in a book named “The Virtuoso Pianist”, which contained 60 finger drills called the Hanon Exercises.

(243) For the purposes of this book, we look at Hanon #1 and Hanon #5 to help boost finger strength and speed.

(244) You can also increase your endurance with Hanon exercises using the metronome to gradually speed up your fingers.

## **CHALLENGING, DIFFICULT SONGS**

(245) Mastering how to play difficult, challenging songs is a crucial aspect to becoming a master musician.

(246) A difficult song is a song which expands your current piano-playing capacity by stretching your fingers and hands to learn new movements, melodies and piano progressions.

(247) Here are 6 reasons why mastering challenging, difficult songs has HUGE benefits for your playing:

(248) (#1) – Difficult songs touch all 4 pillars of the piano so that you are constantly growing in each area.

(249) (#2) – Difficult songs teach you the intensity & concentration needed in your personal practices to become a Piano PRO.

(250) (#3) – Difficult songs train your ear to hear new sounds and movements, so that you can incorporate them creatively in your own playing.

(251) (#4) – Difficult songs dramatically improve your finger technique and control.

(252) (#5) – Difficult songs force your 'new-normal' level of playing to increase. Each challenging song you learn will heighten your 'normal' level of playing.

(253) (#6) – Mastering Difficult songs is one of the fastest ways to get to Piano PRO status and beyond.

## INDEX

### General Musical Terms

- (254) **Articulation:** The style in which tones or sections of pieces are played; Typically, articulation can be long or short, smooth or choppy, heavy or light and is indicated by symbols or with words (usually in Italian).
- (255) **Dynamics:** The volume at which one is to play; the loudness or softness of a particular section or tone as indicated by “dynamic markings” (symbols on the sheet music).
- (256) **Harmony:** A group of tones that is played underneath or around the melody to make it more interesting and give it a particular mood; Changing the harmony, even if the melody is the same, can create a completely different mood for the piece. For example, a new harmony can change the same melody from a happy mood to a sad one.
- (257) **Melody:** A tune or theme that you would sing along with; a group of single tones played one after the other that the listener hears as a complete unit or idea.
- (258) **Rhythm:** The arrangement of tone lengths or tone duration over time; the flow of music through time.
- (259) **Tempo:** The speed (fast or slow) at which one is to play; usually indicated at the beginning of the music and whenever it should change.

### Key And Scales

- (260) **Key:** A particular relationship between tones that is focused on and named after a central tone; the harmony of a piece or section functions around the key.
- (261) **Major/Minor:** These are the two “modes” which define particular groupings of tones, keys, and scales. Those written in the major mode are often heard as being happy, light, and positive while those in the

minor mode are typically sad, dark, and serious.

(262) **Scale:** A series of different tones played one after the other and arranged from lowest to highest or highest to lowest.

(263) **Half step (semitone) / Whole step (whole tone):** The distance between one note and the one after it. A half-step is the distance between one piano key to the very next key. A whole step or whole tone is twice as big as a half step (semitone).

(264) **Octave:** Commonly used in scales, it's the note which is seven full tones (whole steps) higher than the note on which you began. These two notes have the same name and sound similar, the only difference is that one sounds higher than the other.

(265) **Scale degree:** The tones of a scale numbered one through seven. The eighth tone of the scale is the octave, so it is not generally numbered.

(266) **Tonic:** Known as scale degree 1, it's the first tone of a scale and also called a keynote. The tonic is the most important tone of the scale. It is related to keys. If you're in C Major, for example, then C is the tonic. If you're in G minor, G is the tonic.

(267) **Dominant:** Known as scale degree 5, it's the fifth note of a scale. It is the second most-important tone of the scale. Like the tonic, it's also related to keys.

(268) **Major scale:** A selection of notes (pattern of whole steps and half steps) that contains all of the tones of any major key played in order of lowest to highest or highest to lowest. The formula for creating it is: **1, skip, 2, skip, 3, 4, skip, 5, skip, 6, skip, 7, 8**

(269) **Minor scale:** A selection of notes (pattern of whole steps and half steps) that contains all of the notes in a minor key. The formula for creating the natural minor scale is: **1, 2, 3b, 4, 5, 6b, 7b, 8.**

(270) **Blues scale:** A selection of notes (pattern of whole steps and half steps) that contains all of the notes in a blues key. The formula for

creating the Blues scale is: **1, 3<sup>b</sup>, 4, 4<sup>#</sup>, 5, 7<sup>b</sup>, 8.**

(271) **Chromatic scale:** A scale that is made up entirely of half steps.

(272) **Pentatonic Major scale:** A selection of notes (pattern of whole steps and half steps) that contains all of the notes in a pentatonic major key. The formula for creating the Pentatonic Major scale is: **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.**

(273) **Pentatonic Minor scale:** A selection of notes (pattern of whole steps and half steps) that contains all of the notes in a minor key. The formula for creating the natural minor scale is: **1, 3<sup>b</sup>, 4, 5, 7<sup>b</sup>, 8.**

(274) **Chord:** 2 or more notes played together at the same time.

(275) **Dyad / Interval:** name given to 2 notes played together at the same time. It also denotes the distance between two notes on the piano.

(276) **Triad:** The most common type of chord that you'll encounter, a triad is the name given to a chord with 3 notes.

(277) **Tetrad:** name given to a chord which has 4 notes played at the same time.

(278) **Extended Chords:** name given to chords which have 5 or more notes played at the same time.

(279) **Arpeggio:** A chord that is broken up so that you play each tone one at a time instead of playing them all at once.

(280) **Chord progression:** A series of chords played one after the other.

## Pop And Jazz Terms

(281) **Refrain/Chorus:** A melody which repeats at specific times during a song or piece; often indicated with the word "refrain" or "chorus" above it.



(282) **Break:** A pause in a piece; often occurs in jazz pieces and is where you can improvise (create/compose) your own solo for a few measures.

(283) **Improvisation:** Used primarily in jazz, it means composing music “on the spot” and performing it immediately, in the moment and without any previously written notes. Typically, improvisation will be based on a set of chords or melodies that the performer has studied in advance.

(284) **Backbeat:** A jazz term used to describe a very heavy accent on unstressed beats (for example, beats 2 and 4); it’s often played by a drum.

(285) **Swing:** A style of jazz music where certain rhythms (usually eighth notes which are printed as two notes of equal length) are instead performed with the first note being longer and the second note being shorter.

## **Beginning Piano Piece Terms & Types**

(286) **Opus (Op.):** A method of numbering a composer’s works (for example, Op. 120); numbers are assigned by publishers.

(287) **Movement (Mvmt.):** A complete section within a larger work; will be indicated by a large Roman numeral at the top of the music (I, II, III).

(288) **Etude:** A French term for “study;” a piece for technical and musical training that’s usually devoted to developing one particular skill.

(289) **Sonata/Sonatina:** A multi-movement piece written for a specific instrument and played by a soloist; A sonatina is a “little” sonata and is often shorter than a sonata. Beethoven’s 32 piano sonatas are some of the most famous and respected sonatas ever written for the instrument.

(290) **Concerto:** A piece for a soloist (in this case, a pianist) to perform with orchestra.

- (291) **Gavotte:** A quick French dance, usually written in 2/2; Many of these exist for solo piano in suites with other dance pieces or as standalone movements.
- (292) **Lied (plural=Lieder):** A German song; Some of the most popular lieder are those from the Romantic era (1825-1900). The German composer Mendelssohn wrote a collection of “Lieder ohne Worte” (Songs Without Words) for solo piano between 1829-1845.
- (293) **Nocturne:** A slow, often reflective piece that tends to suggest some sort of peaceful “nighttime” imagery to the listener/performer; Polish composer Chopin wrote 21 nocturnes for solo piano.
- (294) **March:** A fast piece usually in 6/8 or 4/4; often upbeat in nature and performed at military or patriotic parades.
- (295) **Waltz:** A dance usually in 3/4; It can be slow or fast and was a very popular 19th-century ballroom dance. The composers Johann Strauss, Jr., Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert all wrote famous waltzes.
- (296) **Duet/Four-Hand:** A duet is a piece that’s performed by two players; “Four hand” duets are common in piano and are duets that 2 pianists play while sitting at the same piano, thus using 4 hands.

## ADVANCED – SHEET MUSIC TERMS

### Music Notation: Basic Terms

- (297) **Score:** The formal name for the sheet music for a song or piece; professionals prefer this term
- (298) **Staff:** A set of 5 horizontal lines and 4 spaces on which notes (tones) are placed; The lines are connected by a vertical line drawn at the left and right corners. Notes can be placed either on a line or in a space.
- (299) **Grand staff:** Seen on piano scores, it's when 2 staves (the plural of staff) are linked together by a brace (a curved line) on the far left side and a vertical line on the far right side, both spanning the whole length of both staves.
- (300) **Note:** An object placed on the staff that indicates tone (pitch) and length (rhythm).
- (301) **Clef:** A symbol placed at the beginning of the staff that determines the pitches of the notes on that staff.
- (302) **Treble clef:** This symbol is often seen on the top line/staff of a piano score (also called the treble line). It is also called "G clef" because it's symbol looks a bit like the letter G. In treble clef, the second line counting up from the bottom is the note G.
- (303) **Bass clef:** This symbol is often used for the bottom line/staff of a piano score (also called the bass line). It's known as the "F clef" because the 4th line counting up from the bottom is the note F.
- (304) **Measure/bar & measure/bar lines:** A measure (called a "bar" in the British system) is a group that contains a fixed number of beats. The groupings are separated from one another by thin vertical lines called measure (or "bar") lines. Measures/Bars are numbered by publishers (usually every 5-10 measures or so); the numbers are most often placed in circles or squares and are in a different font than the rest of the numbers on the page. These measure numbers act as a reference point that allows you to quickly find your place in rehearsals with other people.

- (305) **Ledger line:** a line that acts as an extension of the staff and is used to notate pitches that cannot fit within the 5 staff lines because they are too high or low.
- (306) **8va:** Symbol that indicates you should play the given passage one octave away from the notes that are printed. If 8va is printed above the printed notes, play them an octave higher than printed; if written below the printed notes, play them an octave lower than printed.
- (307) **L.H. (left hand) and R.H (right hand):** An abbreviation indicating that a given passage should be played by the left hand (if L.H.) or right hand (if R.H.)
- (308) **Trill (Tr.):** An ornamental device that uses rapid alternation between notes that are a half step or whole step apart; it is abbreviated “Tr.” and sometimes with these symbols over the tops of the notes.
- (309) **Grace note:** A note used to decorate a main note; it’s indicated in smaller type than the main notes. Grace notes are common in the music of the composer Bach (i.e. “Goldberg Variations”).
- (310) **Key signature:** An arrangement of sharps or flats (see below) found on the far left of every staff indicating which pitches are to be played for a particular piece or section.
- (311) **Accidental:** Any of the symbols (sharp, flat, natural) that indicate the raising or lowering of a pitch and appear next to the notes themselves instead of in the key signature.
- (312) **Sharp:** A symbol (which looks like #) located on the left side of a particular note that indicates it is to be played a half-step (semitone) higher than its natural tone that is notated.
- (313) **Flat:** A symbol (which looks like ‘b’ ) located to the left side of a particular note that indicates you are to play it a half-step lower than its natural tone that is notated.
- (314) **Natural:** A symbol placed to the left of a note that indicates you are to play it at the given pitch without any alteration higher or lower. For example, if you see a G with a natural sign beside it, you are to play a

G-natural which is the same as the note G. Notes with a natural sign will always be white keys on the piano.

- (315) **Repeat sign:** This symbol indicates that a section of music is to be played again immediately. It often appears at the end of A and B sections in binary form.
- (316) **First (1st) and second (2nd) endings:** Multiple endings that may occur at a repeat sign. You play the first ending first, then after repeating the section, you go directly to the second ending, skipping the first.
- (317) **Double bar line:** A set of two bar lines, the second one thicker than the first; this symbol indicates the end of the piece and looks like this

## **Rhythmic, Terms, Note Values and Rests**

- (318) **Beat (also called “pulse”):** Unit of musical rhythm that divides it into regular, equal units of time.
- (319) **Rest:** A symbol indicating silence for a particular length of time; all note values have corresponding rests with similar names indicating that silence should be observed for that particular duration.
- (320) **Metronome:** A device which produces audible ticks or clicks that you can set to a particular grouping of beats; it helps with learning and counting rhythms and staying together when playing with others.
- (321) **Time signature (also called “meter”):** Organization of beats into groups (usually of 2, 3, or 4); it’s indicated at the start of each piece and any time there’s a change. Common time signatures (meters) include 2/2, 4/4, 3/4, and 6/8.
- (322) **Whole note (semibreve) & whole (semibreve) rest (also called “whole bar” rest):** A whole note (semibreve) generally indicates that a given note is to be played for 4 beats. A whole (semibreve) rest (or “whole bar” rest) indicates that silence is to be observed for an entire measure/bar.

(323) **Half note (minim) & half (minim) rest (also called “half bar” rest):** A half note (minim) lasts for 2 beats. Similarly, a half rest (or “half bar” rest) indicates 2 beats of silence.

(324) **Quarter note (crotchet) & quarter (crotchet) rest:** A quarter note sounds for one full beat; a quarter rest indicates a full beat of silence.

(325) **Eighth note (quaver) & eighth (quaver) rest:** An eighth note sounds for one-half of a beat (half as long as a quarter note); an eighth rest indicates half a beat of silence.

(326) **Sixteenth note (semiquaver) & sixteenth (semiquaver) rest:** A sixteenth note (semiquaver) sounds for half as long as an eighth note, equivalent to one-fourth of a beat. Similarly, a sixteenth (semiquaver) rest indicates 1/4th of a beat’s worth of silence.

(327) **Thirty-second (32nd) note (demisemiquaver) & 32nd rest:** A 32nd-note lasts for 1/8th of a beat, half as long as a sixteenth note; a 32nd rest indicates 1/8th of a beat’s worth of silence.

(328) **Dotted half note (dotted minim):** A dotted half note generally sounds for 3 beats. There is no single rest that lasts for 3 beats—you’d use a combination of other types of rests to indicate 3 beats of silence.

(329) **Downbeat:** The first beat of a measure/bar; it is a stressed (strong or “on”) beat.

(330) **On and off beats:** A pattern of stressed (strong) and unstressed (weak) beats determined by the meter. In 4/4 (a group of 4 beats), beats 1 and 3 are strong (“on”) beats, and beats 2 and 4 are weaker (“off”) beats.

(331) **Pickup note(s):** The note or notes that come before the first full measure/bar of a piece.

(332) **Common time (4/4):** A grouping of 4 beats per measure counted as “1-2-3-4” with 1 and 3 being the stressed (“on”) beats; The quarter note gets the beat. It can appear as 4/4 or with a C.

- (333) **Cut time or “alla breve” (2/2):** A grouping of 2 beats per measure, counted “1-2” with 1 being the stressed (“on”) beat; The half note gets the beat.
- (334) **3/4:** A grouping of 3 beats per measure, counted “1-2-3” with 1 being the strongest beat, 2 being less strong, and 3 being the weakest; The quarter note gets the beat.
- (335) **6/8:** A compound meter in which the eighth note gets the beat; if the tempo is slow it may be counted in 6 “1-2-3-4-5-6” or if the tempo is fast it is usually felt and counted as two big beats “1-2.” Each of the bigger beats includes 3 of the eighth notes.
- (336) **Fermata (“Bird’s Eye” or “hold”):** A symbol that looks like a bird’s eye and appears over a note or rest; it means that you should hold the given note or rest for a longer length than is printed, and you can use your artistic skills and knowledge to decide how long you want to hold it—you have a degree of freedom to choose the length based on how you feel in the moment.
- (337) **Syncopation:** Emphasizing (accenting, stressing) an unstressed or “off” beat; for example, accenting beat 2 in a 4/4 bar

## Tempo Terms

- (338) **Largo/lento:** Both of these terms mean that you should play at a slow speed.
- (339) **Andante:** This is a medium-slow speed that you can comfortably walk to; In fact, the word literally translates as “walking.”
- (340) **Allegretto:** A moderately fast speed often played with a light character.
- (341) **Allegro:** A faster speed than allegretto; this is a brisk tempo.
- (342) **Accelerando (accel.)/stringendo:** Both of these terms mean that you should speed up over the course of a given passage in the music.

(343) **Ritardando (ritard. or rit.):** This term means “getting slower,” and when you see it you should gradually slow down over the duration of a given passage. It’s usually used at the end of a piece or section of music.

(344) **Rubato (or “con rubato”):** This word translates as “stolen time,” and playing with rubato means that the performer gets to set the tempo, slowing down or speeding up a bit at will. The word rubato is not always printed in the text; it is used at the performer’s discretion in certain styles of music and is commonly accepted in music of the Romantic era (roughly 1825-1900).

## Dynamic Markings

(345) **Piano (abbreviated “p”):** This direction means to play at a soft volume.

(346) **Mezzo forte (abbreviated “mf”):** Play at a “medium-loud” volume.

(347) **Forte (abbreviated “f”):** Play at a “loud” volume, louder than mezzo-forte.

(348) **Crescendo (abbreviated “cresc.”):** To get louder over the course of a given passage; this can be indicated by the abbreviation “cresc.” or the symbol.

(349) **Decrescendo (decresc.) or diminuendo (dim.):** Both of these terms indicate that you should get softer over the course of a particular passage. They are indicated by their abbreviations (decresc. or dim.) and a decrescendo can also be expressed with this symbol.

(350) **Subito piano:** “Subito” is the Italian word for “suddenly,” and a subito piano means you are to suddenly play a given note or passage quietly. This often comes after a loud note or passage and introduces an element of surprise into the music. It doesn’t have any special symbol; it’s just marked with the usual piano “p” marking. Look out for it after loud passages/notes.



## Articulation And Expressive Markings

- (351) **Accompaniment:** The music used underneath the main theme or most interesting material of the moment to support it; typically, this can be harmony but may sometimes be a melody. For example, pianists often have a melody in the right hand supported by chords that accompany it in the left hand. Accompaniment is usually played more softly than the melody.
- (352) **Slur:** A curved marking printed over a group of notes to indicate that they should be played smoothly and sound connected to each other.
- (353) **Dot:** Dots appear as markings above or beneath notes which are meant to be played short or with space between them (not smooth). Dots can be used for many different types of articulation and can mean different things.
- (354) **Staccato:** One type of articulation that is indicated by dots; Staccato notes are to be played short and separated from the notes around them by a slight space.
- (355) **Marcato (marc.):** Marked or emphasized; this stroke is a bit heavier than staccato. Marcato is usually printed as a word or abbreviation, but it can sometimes appear as this symbol over a note.
- (356) **Accent: Similar to marcato;** It indicates that a particular note is to be heavily stressed and is represented by this symbol over or under a given note.
- (357) **Legato:** Played in a smooth, connected way; often indicated by a slur.
- (358) **Tenuto (ten.):** Performed in a smooth, sustained manner and held for longer than its printed length; usually printed in words but sometimes expressed with a line like this.
- (359) **Dolce:** Italian term translated as “sweet;” it indicates the passage should be played in a sweet, gentle manner.
- (360) **Leggiero:** Italian for “light;” music with this direction should be played swiftly and delicately with a light touch.

(361) **Con pedale:** This direction indicates that the pianist should put down (use) a pedal when playing the given passage.

### Map Of Piece: What To Play When

(362) **Da capo (D.C.):** Italian term that indicates the performer should return to the very beginning of the piece.

(363) **Dal segno (D.S.):** Italian term that indicates the performer should repeat the specific passage of music that is marked by the sign; it's printed with its abbreviation (D.S.) or indicated by this symbol.

(364) **Coda:** Italian for "tail," this is a short section of music that occurs at the very end of a piece; it's usually marked with the word "coda" but is sometimes unmarked.

(365) **Fine:** Italian for "finish," this refers to the end of the piece, it's sometimes printed at a double bar line (another indicator of the end of the piece) for emphasis.