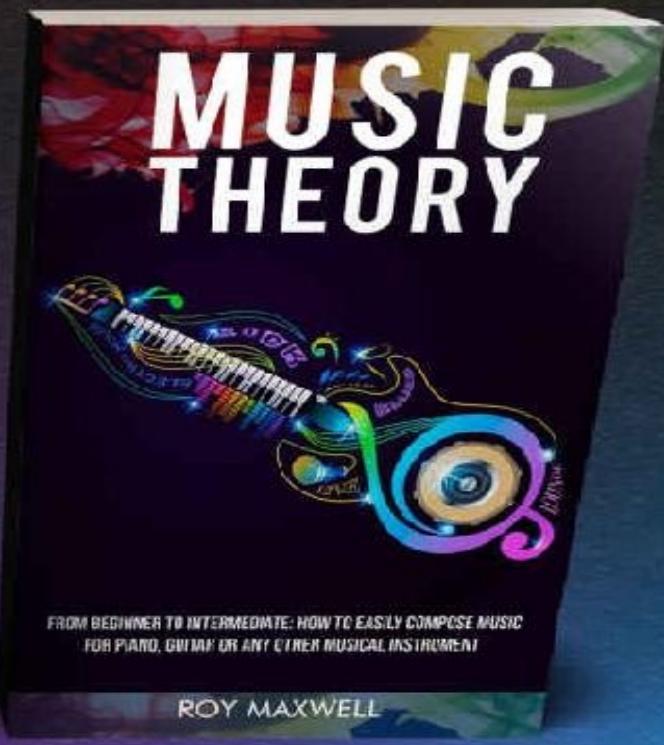
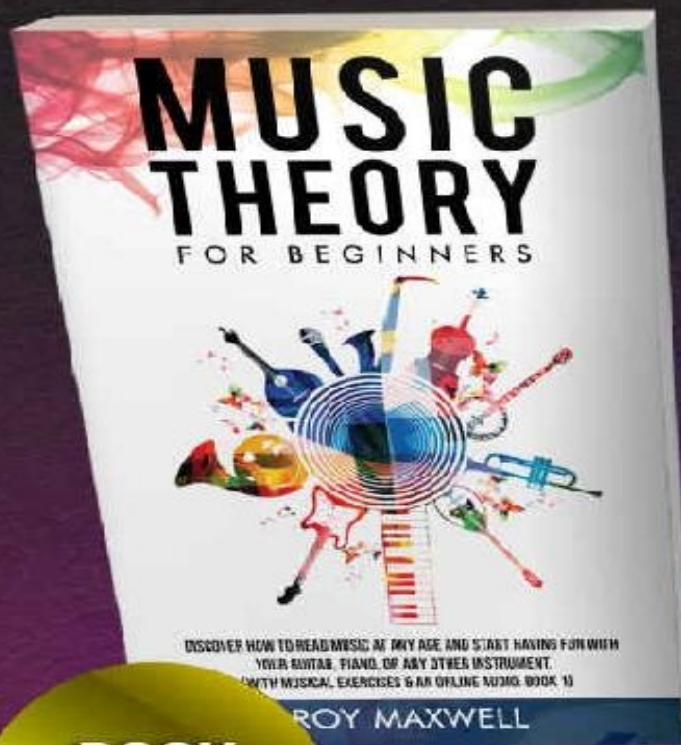


INCLUDES  
AUDIO EXERCISES

# MUSIC THEORY

2 BEGINNERS GUIDE IN 1

FROM BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE, LEARN, PRACTICE AND COMPOSE  
MUSIC FOR PIANO, GUITAR OR ANY OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENT



ROY MAXWELL

# **Music Theory**

***2 Manuscripts in 1***

***The Complete Guide From Beginner to Intermediate,  
Learn, Practice and Compose Music for Piano, Guitar  
or Any Other Musical Instrument***

**Roy Maxwell**

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# **BOOK 1**

# **Music Theory For Beginners**

***Discover How to Read Music at Any Age and Start Having Fun with Your Guitar, Piano, or Any Other Instrument.***

**(with Musical Exercises & an Online Audio: Book 1)**

**Roy Maxwell**

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## **FREE RESOURCES**

First of all, I want to thank you for your purchase.

I would like to let you know that you can use several free resources that I have prepared for you, which will help you put into practice what you will learn.

In the link you will find a copybook for musical exercises and several audio tracks that will facilitate your learning.

You will find the link on the last page of the book.

## **KNOW THIS FIRST**

Before we start anything, I have to let you know that this book is not gonna be just another music theory text. There are tonnes of those and if what you want is just another one, then you have the wrong book. This book is intended to be more than just a music theory text that tells you about sharps, flats, intervals, scales, and stuff. This book is designed to be a musician's companion, the reason you should keep creating music, a guide, a friend, a reference, a helper, and a motivation for musicians of all levels and for everyone who loves music and life, because music itself is life. Before we go a step further, let me tell you a short but really cool story:

At the very young age of five, he wrote an advanced concerto for the harpsichord. Before he turned ten, he had successfully published several violin sonatas and was already playing the best of Handel and J. S Bach from memory. Immediately after his twelfth birthday he successfully composed and conducted his first opera. He was later awarded an honorary appointment as concertmaster by the re-knowned Salzburg Symphony Orchestra, and within just a few years, he was praised as the pride of Salzburg. When he finally died at the young age of thirty-five he had written, all by himself, forty-eight symphonies; forty-seven duets, arias, and quartets with complete orchestral accompaniment; and more than twelve operas. He is credited with some six-hundred original compositions in total. Even at all this, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart lived most of his life in abject poverty and died in total obscurity. Only a very few friends made it to the church for his funeral service, but a fierce storm stopped them from going to the graveside for his burial. Because of this, the location of Mozart's grave became virtually impossible to identify. There is no tombstone or shrine to mark his resting place.

But today, what is Mozart remembered for? What is Mozart's legacy? I am not asking about the life he lived but rather, the music he gave the whole world. Actually, this is some very important music theory that you will never be taught in college or on YouTube. It's not about the life you live, how much you get paid or how much you take from the world; its 98.9% about how much you give to the world. In this case, the music you leave behind long after you are gone.

I always love this quote by the famous rapper Jay Z:

"Fear not when, fear not why,  
Fear not much while we're alive,  
Life is for living, not living uptight,  
Till you're somewhere up in the sky,  
Fear not to die, I'll be alive for a million  
years, bye-byes are not for legends,  
I'm forever young  
My name shall survive"

Like I said earlier, this is not gonna be the conventional music theory book, this book is something entirely different. I want this book to be of real use to you and not just something that tells you about some sharps and some flats- I want it to be your real companion. Before we go any step further, let's take a look at some very unconventional music theories, by which I mean some really handy and useful quotes by some not-only-famous-and-successful-but-also-really-good musicians:

**"Works of art make rules; rules do not make works of art."**

**Claude Debussy**

**"I can't understand why people are afraid of new ideas. I am afraid of the old ones [ideas]."**

**John Cage**

**"The real music is not in the musical notes, but in the silence between the musical notes."**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

**"The wise musicians are those who play what they can master."**

**Duke Ellington**

**"Musicians don't retire; they stop when there's no more music in them."**

**Louis Armstrong**

**"If everything was okay and perfect, you would never ever learn and you would never ever grow."**

**Beyoncé**

“The goal is to try and make the perfect song. Which of course will never happen.”

**Chris Martin**

“Time you enjoy wasting was not wasted.”

**John Lennon**

"Music is the weapon of the future."

**Fela Kuti**

# **HOW TO OPTIMIZE THIS BOOK AND MAKE THE BEST OUT OF YOUR PRACTISE/STUDY SESSIONS**

Now that you have started this musical journey, it's really necessary to also focus on how to keep it going. Here are a couple of very important reasons to keep up this new habit, as well as some few general tips to improve your practice, study and learning habits:

## **Always think about the benefits**

Even though there are numerous benefits to learning music theory (which I'm definitely going to go over), did you by chance know that just listening to and learning music is enough to alter brain structure? It can improve memory, mood, coordination, motivation, and even reduce stress and improve sleeping habits! Whenever you need the simplest reason or the motivation to keep going, just think of this very simple benefit. There are tonnes of bigger benefits to studying music theory and practicing your instruments as well.

## **Practice and study with confidence**

Don't approach this subject like some helpless and vulnerable person who needs this knowledge 'oh so badly' (even though you actually do). Have some confidence and make sure to enjoy every bit of this, and don't get stuck trying to make sure every damn thing is perfect; instead, feel free to move ahead when you get the idea and come back later to build some mastery and long-term memory.

## **Focus on developing good habits**

Develop a regular study and practice routine, even if it's just for very short periods. Even thirty minutes/day is enough! (Even though you can do more) Regular and consistent short practice sessions are more effective than a single once-a-week 10-hour session. Always make sure to minimize distractions by practicing and studying in a place where you won't be distracted or disturbed, and where you won't have to worry about disturbing others.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Why Music Theory is Important**

If you are starting to pick up a musical instrument or just considering picking one up, you may have been advised by friends, coaches or confidants to learn music theory, which is basically the study of the "grammar of music". Music theory thoroughly examines the elements that construct a given piece of music, including key signatures, notation, time signatures, and chord progressions (terms we will define later). Many teachers and music coaches will insist that music theory is fundamental and necessary for a well-laid and structured music education and may even have theory included as part of their music lessons. On the other side of town, some believe and teach that learning music theory does not make one a better player and thus find it extremely unnecessary. What I am going to do right now is show you some of the great importance of music theory to further reinforce the ideology that music theory makes you a better musician and player, which is one hundred and twenty percent true.

## **Is Music Theory Harmful to Creativity?**

People who don't like music theory often assert that taking time to learn music theory is not only a vain pursuit but also detrimental to one's playing and composition skills. But that is a really really really big lie! Let's just for a moment believe (incorrectly) that music theory forces musicians to follow arbitrary rules, hindering the creative expression of music, which should obviously be an art form that is free-spirited and unrestrained.

This view that music theory restrains can only be valid if we simply say that the musician strictly sticks to the regulations espoused by music theory. Otherwise, it's an extremely flawed and wrong assumption to say that all musicians with extensive music theory knowledge are just mindless robots conditioned to follow a specified logic and some rule sets in their music.

In fact, the simple truth is that all of us can discern when and when not to follow the theoretical rules of music. Oftentimes it comes so naturally that we don't even think about it. For example, with our knowledge of the grammatical rules of the English language, we should be able to write and speak in fluent and flawless English. Yet, we don't always follow these grammatical rules because we know that there are contexts in which these rules are just plain irrelevant. Though it is not in any way surprising, we break these grammatical rules daily by using some slang and some other non-standard forms of English when texting or hanging out with our friends.

To complement what I just said, if we do not have knowledge of the "rules" of music theory, we won't certainly recognize when a piece breaks the rules or know when it's appropriate to abide by these rules. We will just be blind to all of it. The truth is that breaking rules is totally meaningless if you don't even know the rules in the first place. We may casually and unceremoniously throw out a Bach Fugue as boring and very mechanical because it simply does not agree with, or should I say offends, our present-day pop sensibilities, without actually recognizing its "mathematical genius" and how Bach dares to push the boundaries of music despite the limitations in the availability of musical instruments of his time. Students of music theory will definitely know when the rules of music theory are most applicable. Music theory never hurt anybody's creativity!

Music theory is often not considered a welcomed and engaging topic among both musicians and non-musicians alike. In some cases, the mere mention of music theory is enough to disinterest students from the subject of music in general. This has always been the case since my earliest introduction to music. I remember in high school the look on the faces of my friends and classmates anytime our music teacher talked about music theory. I got similar reactions when I would bring it up. Generally, the mood of our music theory class back then, in my own opinion, wasn't a inviting, encouraging or en-tertaining one. The other students and I expected at least some small bits of entertainment from a music-related subject. But we were very much disappointed and this contributed a great deal to how the stu-dents received and perceived music theory.

Not very many students/people [music majors included] started out wanting to sit back and study all the seemingly complex and com-plicated things like pitch, rhythm, intervals, harmony, scales, etc. Everyone wants to jump straight to the part where they start shred-ding on their guitars like the famous rock stars on radio and TV, flow on the keys like the most lovable jazz and classical pianists or get their horns sounding fluent and smooth like the Bebop masters of old. But inasmuch as you can make this jump, (it is totally possi-ble) you should also know that it is gonna be a very risky and long jump and you are going to have a much better and safer, better and proper landing with some music theory on your back to break your fall and soften your landing.

I know you've probably heard or even seen cases where a musician gets to the peak of his or her career without the slightest bit of music theory. A typical example may be your favorite pop music icon who probably doesn't know what a major seventh chord is and how it's constructed. Cases like this are more "exceptions" than norms. I would bet you that John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, B.B King, Cannonball, Herbie Hancock and some other jazz and blues greats would not have gotten to the peaks of their careers and performance without having a comfortable grasp on some music theory. The same is the case with your popular pop mu-sic producer or songwriter.

Just like the alphabet, words, phrases, sentences, and punctuation are the bedrock of a language; scales, melody, harmony, intervals, pitch, rhythm, etc. are the bedrock of music. That being said, to properly understand, comprehend and appreciate music, it is very necessary that one studies music theory. Some really important points to take note of are that the study of music theory does not

make music complex, instead, it makes music simpler. It does not mystify music but rather demystifies the seemingly mysterious aspects of music. So, music theory makes music creation a lot easier for musicians and also music appreciation more fun for both musicians and non-musicians.

When a musician understands musical concepts and basics like scales, modes, intervals, melody, pitch, harmony and etc, they are more able to communicate musically with themselves and other musicians. It wouldn't be anywhere near as cool if the lead pianist and guitarist did not know how to construct a seventh chord or what a seventh chord was when the seventh chord is the needed and most useful chord for the situation. Also, imagine a pop singer who understands the rules of harmony, melody, scales, and voice leading. Such a singer would be a lot more versatile and creative than a singer who doesn't. Such a singer could comfortably break the rules for the sake of creativity (because they know the rules), communicate better and more fluently with the producer(s) and players both on stage during rehearsals and performances and in the studio during recording and tracking.

It is very important that every musician studies music theory. Understanding music theory will open a musician to a whole new world of music creation and appreciation. Mysteries will become as clear as ordinary ideas and, as a result, music creation and appreciation will be easier and more fun than they used to be. Communicating with other musicians [even more advanced] will be more fun and something you more often look forward to. Music theory will boost your confidence as a person and as a musician, make you a better person and musician, and also make you a more efficient and useful to yourself and to the musical world.

## **IF LEARNING MUSIC THEORY DOESN'T HURT YOU, THEN DOES IT HELP YOU?**

It helps you in several ways! Learning and grasping music theory comes with a truck full of benefits, and yes I do mean a truck full! Let's look at some of these benefits:

## **Master Musical Pieces and Songs a Lot Faster**

Knowing and grasping some music theory helps you speed up the learning process. A clear and vivid understanding of how a musical piece or even a popular song or jazz/blues standard is constructed helps us learn the music a lot faster. This is a lot like having and being familiar with a street map will enable us to drive and navi-gate more efficiently. We will definitely be able to find some large scale repetitions and some very formal landmarks that help us get familiar with the musical piece. This makes the musical piece or song a lot easier to memorize as well. Let's take, for example, sona-tas. These may be extremely long, but their first movements usually observe the basic thematic and harmonic structure which is the sig-nature of the Sonata Form.

Understanding this Sonata Form could save you a lot of quality time deciphering how the composition is actually constructed. This ap-plies to other musical genres like jazz, blues, rock, and even hip hop. Just knowing the fundamental chord structures, or should I say the signature structure, of any form of music (for example, the 12-bar blues) makes learning that music or similar and related pieces a lot easier than not knowing. You'll be specifically alert to its themes, the recurrences of these themes, and their different variations. You'll also very easily notice the standard structure of the sonata's 1st movement which is: exposition (where the theme is first played), development (where the theme is "developed," or varied according to certain rules), and recapitulation (where we return to them). In most sonatas, the recapitulation will essentially repeat their exposi-tions, with some minor variations. This essentially reduces the amount of new material within the sonata by about a third while also speeding up the whole learning process by that much or even more.

## **Upgrades Your Sight-Reading Skill**

With the knowledge of music theory, you can understand some common chord progressions and the structure of pieces, which then help tell or should I say guess or predict what the coming measures/bars might sound like. Also, having a good grasp of the knowledge and concept of intervals will greatly aid in recognizing them during sight-playing/reading. With this, we will definitely sight-read faster as we can identify some musical contours and some larger patterns between the notes, instead of just reading each musical note one by one.

## **Enjoy and Appreciate Music Some More**

Understanding and grasping music theory will aid us to better enjoy and appreciate music. Some great familiarity with the features of a musical composition comes together with a greater ability for expression whenever we play and this, in turn, leads to a stronger and deeper appreciation of the music we play. We will definitely be able to spot unusual features in a piece that violates the rules learned, and then appreciate that the singer or composer has done something very special (no matter how complex or simple). This could be irregular contrasts in musical phrasing, meter, dynamics, or articulation. A good example is that the 2nd movement of "Tchaikovsky's Sym-phony Number six" is actually a waltz composed in 5/4 time, instead of the common and often-used waltz time of 3/4. Even though Tchaikovsky obviously tampers with the balance and smoothness of the waltz, the dance still proceeds on elegantly, and perhaps with even some more character.

Another simple and personal example is when I first understood the blues form and the characteristic blues scale [notes] and how it contributes to giving the blues its characteristic and easily identifiable sound, it made me appreciate and love the blues even more. Even when we are not playing, a much deeper appreciation and understanding of the music we listen to will greatly bring about some greater joy during listening.

## You Will Improvise Like A Pro

With the knowledge of tonal relationships from our music theory learning and practice, we ultimately gain the ability to make predictions of some logical chord progressions, which ultimately allows us to improvise music that sounds very authentic, cohesive, logical and even mystic. This can rescue us in a pinch by helping us find our way out of some "performing emergencies," such as when the band members have gotten off track from one another, without the listeners and audience even taking notice of anything amiss. This is so much important for blues and jazz performers, who need to put in some extra effort to understand the seemingly complex jazz chords so they can make some really funky sounds that are not typical of other music genres but characteristic of good jazz.

I am a producer/guitarist/drummer/singer-songwriter? Do I really need to learn how Mozart constructed his operas, sonatas, and symphonies?

Even though it's true that you could still be an outstanding musician without paining yourself to learn about the technicalities of Baroque, Renaissance or Classical music, music theory undoubtedly still offers a great deal of relevant information.

Inarguably a lot of learning and musical materials about music theory are developed with classical contexts in mind. While this concept may seem very far removed from pop music today, the truth is that music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often serves as the bedrock of music across all genres and styles. Even if the musical instruments are different, the notation, concepts of structure, rhythm and time, as well as harmony/chord progressions are all applicable to modern music. Some popular music artists have even cleverly incorporated classical pieces into their songwriting. For instance, "I Know I Can" by US rapper NAS samples Beethoven's Fur Elise while "C U When U Get There" by US rapper Coolio featuring 40 Thevs uses the melody of Pachelbel's Canon (Canon in D). There are numerous other popular songs who were birthed from the womb of classical music.

Learning music theory gives some specific advantages and strengths to different musicians. Let us briefly examine the benefits drummers, guitar players and songwriters acquire from learning some music theory.

## **Benefits of Learning Music Theory for Guitar Players**

1. Learning how to sight-read sheet music gets guitarists familiar with the bedrock and foundations of chords and how guitar tablature looks on a music score, which in turn aids learning.
2. By simply knowing individual musical notes that each string can play, guitar players will have an easier time playing riffs, as well as playing in many different tunings.
3. The ability to sight-read [sheet] music is vital for gigging guitarists to play in a band/group.
4. With a thorough understanding of chord progressions, guitar players find it a lot simpler to re-harmonize and rearrange simple pop songs to sound jazzier.
5. Guitar players will improvise better, as they will ultimately know the scales that can be played over different chords.

## **Benefits of Learning Music Theory for Drummers**

1. Drummers do not often play in isolation; oftentimes they play to complement the melody and harmony of the music. The drummer plays very important roles in outlining different sections of songs. On that note solid knowledge of song form and structure is as important to a drummer as a solid knowledge and grasp of rhythm. To follow a song form accurately, drummers need to be able to follow chords, melody and key changes in the other parts of the song or piece.
2. Understanding meter, time signatures, and chord structures ultimately give drummers a better sense of rhythm and how to complement the rest of the music/piece.
3. Music theory knowledge helps drummers to communicate fluently with other musicians and express themselves properly about what should be done in every aspect of the music in a language that every other musician or band member can or should be able to understand. If a musical director simply says that the next piece is in 7/4 time, and you as a drummer haven't studied music theory, you'll have no idea what the hell he is talking about.

## **Benefits of Learning Music Theory for Songwriters and Producers**

1. Simply knowing voice leading and construction rules greatly helps songwriters arrange simpler and more interesting versions of songs and pieces. As long as the voice-leading is properly observed, the song or piece will still sound rich and full even if the musical accompaniment is simplified.
2. Music theory knowledge, coupled with strong aural (hearing) skills, allows songwriters and producers to transcribe by ear any piece or song they like that isn't available as sheet music or for their particular arrangement of musical instruments. With these aural skills, songwriters and producers can identify the chords involved and also the key changes.
3. Knowledge of structure or forms and chord progressions greatly will help songwriters and producers write and produce music that sounds complete and melodious to our ears.

## **WHAT IS MUSIC?**

A lot of musicologists, tutors, players, and authors define music as an organized combination of sounds and silences. And that pretty much defines it, but something is still very much missing. Okay, let's look at an example here. A car alarm which we all know transmits sound and silence in a very organized way, but, would we in any way with our right senses regard the very disturbing and annoying sound of a car alarm as music simply because it presents to us organized sounds and silences? I guess No. So, what is the missing puzzle? Why isn't a car alarm regarded as music?

However, a much more acceptable and all-embracing definition of music states that music is created by a flowing composition of melo-dy, harmony, and rhythm. Let's take that in pieces.

## **What is Melody?**

Melody is simply the “singable” flow of sound. Melody is the “lead-ing voice” that stands out from every other thing else. Melody is made up of single (group) musical notes sounded not simultaneously but separately.

## **What is Harmony?**

The overlapping musical notes that serve as a foundation to the melody is simply referred to as the harmony. For example, a singer playing the guitar and singing is making harmony with the guitar chords and thus creating the melody with his/her voice. Chords are simply an overlap of many musical notes that complement the melody and are referred to as the harmony. We will carefully examine chords later.

Take note: Melody is not necessarily composed of only one voice. It is still very possible to have two voices doing the melody, although this is a less frequent situation. To better comprehend the relationship between melody and harmony, visualize a ship moving across the ocean. The ship, which is the harmony, ultimately serves as the base and support for the people, the melody. Together, they both get safely and smoothly across the water.

## **What is Rhythm?**

Rhythm can be explained as the beat of time through the entire music. Just as the watch marks seconds, minutes and hours, the rhythm leads us at a certain pace through the entire song.

Thus we can simply define music as vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) combined with silences in such a way that it produces beauty of color, form, harmony, and expression of feelings and emotion.

# HISTORY OF MUSIC

It is always said that music has played a very important role in our life-cycle as humans and perhaps even before we were capable of speech. Some very notable evidence has been discovered that very early humans created primitive flutes from animal bones and made use of stones and wood as percussion.

The voice would actually have been the first and most natural means of expression in our most distant ancestors. It was used to bond socially, or to comfort a restless and sleepless child. It is from these humble but solid starts that the music we so much cherish today evolved.

As we keep moving further the history of music, we definitely find increasing evidence of its vital role in both sacred and secular settings, although the division into these categories (secular and sacred) was not in any way defined this way until many years later.

Cultural, environmental, social and some spiritual influences from the West to the East merged into the post-Christian music of the Greeks and later the Romans. Musical practices, conventions, and forms, perhaps conveyed by traveling musicians, brought a wealth of diversity and great innovation.

Some surviving Greek musical notation from this period of musical history has ultimately given scientists and musicologists equally some vital clues to the way the music of the time might have sounded. It certainly points some remarkable links to the music that would follow, perhaps most notably through the use of diverse modality in Greek music.

According to the "frescoes" and some written accounts, including the Bible, we have been taught about the musical instruments that featured in the Roman and Greek times and their exact significance to the cultures. The trumpet is regarded as an instrument of the announcement and splendid ceremony, and the lyre as a very important player in the melodies of poets.

It is noted that all across Europe, from the early part of the first millennium, houses of worship became the places where the music got embedded into the lives of those devoted to God and their followers.

Christianity had so established itself and with Christianity came a new liturgy that demanded some new music. Although early Christian music had its origins

in the practices and beliefs of the Hebrew people, what came from this was to become the basis and foundation for sacred music for centuries to come. The chants that were devoutly composed made sure to follow the sacred Latin texts in a style that was tightly controlled and given only to the "glory of God". Music was extremely subservient to the words, without any bit flourish or a drop of frivolity.

It was Pope Gregory- 540-604 AD, who is credited with moving the progress of sacred music forward and developing what is generally referred to as Gregorian Chant, characterized by the strong and piercing sound of the open and perfect 5th.

Although some strong controversy surrounds this claim, the name has actually stuck, and the music remains very different and essentially important as it slides away from plainchant polyphony. As a result, this looked back to earlier times and customs, especially in the music of the Jews, where the concept of a static and immovable drone commonly underpinned a second vocal part.

## **Medieval Period**

As we go further in musical time, we enter into the Medieval Period of music which can be generally accepted to span the period from around 500AD up until the mid fifteenth century. By this period, music was a dominant art form from taverns to cathedrals, practiced by both kings and paupers alike. It was during this long era of music that the actual sound of music became increasingly familiar. This is partly and maybe greatly due to the invention of musical notation, much of which has survived, that allows us a capture back and look back into this very fascinating time.

From the written down music that survives from the monasteries and some other very important accounts of musical practices, it's possible to put together an image of an extremely vibrant culture which ranged from the really sacred to the really secular. Throughout the Medieval Era of music, the music on a slower pace began to adopt some ever more elaborate and extended structures and devices that produced works of immense beauty, color, and devotion.

It is believed that Hildegard von Bingen and Perotin pioneered many of the musical forms we still recognize today, including the motet and the sacred Mass. Alongside these very important musical forms came the madrigal that often reflects the different moods and feelings of the people of the time. The madrigal is wonderfully poly-phonic in form and is both mesmerizing and delightful.

## Renaissance Period

Musical instruments were developed in accordance with the composer's imagination. A full collection and variety of wind, brass and percussion instruments accompanied Music of the medieval era, although it is still the voice (human) that dominates a lot of medieval compositions. Towards the close of the height of the Medieval era, we come across the birth of instrumental musical pieces in their own right which also paved the way for many musical forms in the Renaissance period.

Before leaving the Medieval period of music, it is necessary to mention the Troubadours and the Trouveres. These nomadic storytellers and musicians covered vast distances on their journeys across Europe and further into Asia. These travelers told stories, sung ballads and, perhaps most importantly, brought with them musical influences from far and wide that smoothly and beautifully mixed with the Western musical practices..

The Renaissance period (1450–1600) is regarded as a golden age in the history of music. Not in any way hindered by the constraints of Medieval musical conventions, the composers of the Renaissance created a new era entirely. Josquin des Prez is regarded as one of the earliest Renaissance composers to master the polyphonic musical style, often combining many voices to create very elaborate musical textures.

As instrumental pieces became accepted into the Renaissance repertoire, we find the invention of musical instruments like the trombone and the bassoon giving rise to bigger and more elaborate instrumental groupings.

This invention gave musical composers of the period far more scope to explore and express their numerous creative ideas than before. The violin family developed to provide a specific haunted quality to much of the music of the time, alongside the establishment of each recognizable family of musical instruments consisting of percussion, strings, woodwind, and brass.

Keyboard musical instruments also became increasingly common and the advent of the sonata followed suit in due course. Some other very popular forms for instrumental music included the toccata, canzona, and ricercar to name but just a few, sprouting from the Courtly dance.

Towards the end of the Renaissance era, what were formerly referred to as the

Church Modes began to dissolve in favor of what is now considered to be functional harmony or tonality which is very much based on a system of keys rather than modes.

## **Baroque Period**

The Baroque Period (1600-1760) boasts of some of the most famous composers and pieces that we have in Western Classical Music to-day. This makes Baroque a very important period of music. The Baroque Period also sees some of the most important musical and instrumental developments. The countries of Italy, Germany, England, and France continue from the Renaissance period to dominate the musical landscape, each influencing the other with its own musical conventions and style.

Amongst the numerous celebrated composers of the Baroque Period, G F Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, and Purcell provided a substantial introduction to the music of this era. It is during this very glittering and stimulating span of time that Handel composed his oratorio "The Messiah", Bach his six "Brandenburg Concertos," Vivaldi the "Four Seasons," and the 48 "Preludes and Fugues" still by Bach, together with Purcell's beautiful opera "Dido and Aeneas".

Instrumental music was composed and performed in conjunction with vocal works, each of equal importance in the Baroque Period. The virtuosity that emerged amongst the elite Renaissance performers flourished in the Baroque. Think about the Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti or the beautiful Concertos that Vivaldi composed for his student performers. This, in turn, led to significant instrumental developments, and also, thanks to the aristocratic support of Catherine Medici for the birth of the Violin.

Some common musical forms were established and founded on the principles of the Renaissance composers, but developed and extended in ways that they would have somewhat found very unimaginable. The Suite musical form became a Baroque favorite, comprising contrasting fast-slow movements like the Prelude- Allemande, Gigue, Courante and the Sarabande. Concertos became even more popular, giving players the opportunity to display their technical and creative power in regards to musical expression.

Vocal music of the Baroque era continued to include the Mass but also the Oratorio and the Cantata alongside some specific anthems and chorales. Opera appears in earnest in the Baroque era and becomes a very established musical form and vehicle for great expression and diversity.

Increasingly, in the Baroque era, the preferred harmony is tonal and the system

of keys which is major and minor is accepted in favor of modes. This acceptance and new preference lifted the limitations of modes and offered the composers some new chances to create ever more complex and expressive musical pieces that combine exciting polyphonic textures and dynamics.

Notation accompanies these musical developments and steadily we find that the accuracy of the Baroque composer's works becomes more very precise and detailed giving us a better possibility of knowing their intentions in performances of today.

## Classical Period

From the Baroque, we get into the Classical Period which spans 1730-1820. Here, Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart dominate the musical landscape and the countries of Germany and Austria sit at the creative center of this period. From the ornate Baroque, musical composers of the Classical period moved away from the polyphonic textures towards the homophonic textures, writing music that was, on the surface of it, simple, very sleek and measured.

One very major development and invention of the classical period is the Piano. The Baroque period's harpsichord got replaced by the very early piano which was actually more a "reliable" and expressive musical instrument compared to the harpsichord. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Joseph Haydn each wrote a really extensive number of musical works for the piano which as a result allowed the piano to develop and progress significantly during this musical period.

Chamber music, hand in hand with orchestral music, was a great feature of the Classical Era of music with some particular attention being given to the String Quartet. The orchestra itself became firmly established and towards the tail end of the Classical Period, it began to include musical instruments like the clarinets, trombones, and timpani.

The rise and births of some virtuoso performers continued through-out this great and color-filled period of music as shown by the numerous concertos and sonatas composed during this musical period. Opera grew and flourished in these decades and ultimately became a fully-fledged musical form of entertainment that got to extend its feet far beyond the dreams of the elegant Baroque music composers.

## The Romantic Period

As the Classical era came to a close Beethoven remains the most notable music composer, a man who made some substantial contributions to the Romantic Era (1780– 1880). Beethoven's unrivaled genius shaped the next few decades with his very substantial re-definition of many of the established musical norms of the Classical era. His musical work on Sonata form in his various concertos, symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas, goes almost unrivaled by any other music composer.

The Romantic period saw some really huge and vast musical developments in both the quality and range of many musical instruments that naturally and greatly encouraged some more expressive, color-filled and some very diverse music from the composers. Musical forms, spheres and structures like the Romantic orchestra ultimately became some really expansive landscapes where the composers gave unequalled and unrestrained reign to their deepest emotions and musical dreams.

Musicians like Berlioz in his “Symphonie Fantastique” are a really fine example of this reign, as well as, much later, Wagner in his immense operatic works. The beautiful and colorful symphonies of Gustav Mahler erect themselves like stone pillars of achievement at the very end of the Romantic period alongside the beautiful tone poems of the respected Richard Strauss. The Romantic period, being what it was, presented us with a really vast array of colorful music that actually and only began to fade towards the end of the 19th Century.

It is actually really hard to tell of what could follow such a triumphant and heroic time in musical history. But as we move ahead and forward into the 20th Century, the entire musical landscape, structure and form takes a dramatic turn. Musical influences of the Romantic Era still popped their head into the next century in the musical works of composers like Elgar, Shostakovich and Arthur Bliss. But it is actually the music from the French nation(s) that we saw impressionism which has sparkled its way into our various musical consciences.

Claude Debussy and Ravel are major exponents of this colorful movement that reflects the beautiful artistic work of Monet and Manet. What we actually hear in the music of the impressionists goes back to many of the very popular forms of the Baroque era but in ways that J. S Bach is unlikely to have foreseen. The tonal system of this era transformed to include a wider range of musical scales

and influences, thereby allowing the composers to write some of the most outstanding and beautiful compositions ever written.

Both Debussy and Ravel composed in great numbers for the piano using poetry as a medium of inspiration. Debussy and Ravel's orchestral works happen to be some of the most evocative and beautiful pieces ever composed.

In conjunction, the "Teutonic world" started to undergo its very own revolution and drastic change. This revolution was evident in the 2nd Viennese school, led by the famous Arnold Schoenberg. Dissatisfied so much with the boundaries of tonality; Schoenberg gave up the tonal system in favor of a new 12-tone sequential system and thereby giving each step of the chromatic scale some equal musical validity. The result of this was serial music that was totally atonal and it transformed the musical sphere almost beyond anything that had ever happened before.

# **PART ONE**

## **FUNDAMENTALS AND BASIC STRUCTURES OF MUSIC THEORY**

The fundamental and basic raw materials of music are sound and time. Whenever music is created (e.g. a singer sings or a player plays), "sound" is oftentimes what is made and the careful and creative arrangement of these sounds with other elements, like time and silence, creates music. Any time a musical instrument plays or sings, "sound" is what is being produced from that musical instrument. That being said, it is only important that as musicians, we use all the available time to understand these basic building blocks of music. Sound is what is used to structure time in music and that simply means that sound is what gives time meaning in music. Without sounding a little bit mysterious and complicated, what I am trying to say here is that the two most important raw materials in music are sound and time and among the two, sound is more important because music is greatly about sound and also, sound is what gives time some meaning in music. In music, time is simply how long sound and silence last.

### **Sound**

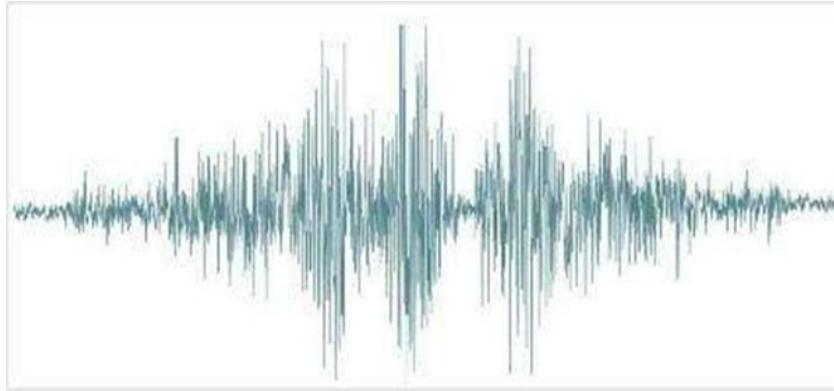
Sound can generally be defined as the sensation perceived by the hearing organs when there are vibrations or sound waves in the atmosphere/air. Sound is an auditory impression.



Sound Waves

### **Vibration**

Vibration can simply be defined as the continuous slight shaking movement: a series of small, fast movements back and forth or from side to side. Vibration is also the periodic movement or motion of any substance. When a player plays a musical instrument, some parts of the instrument like the strings, the soundhole, the body, the reed, the mouthpiece, the membrane and the air inside and around the played instrument vibrates.



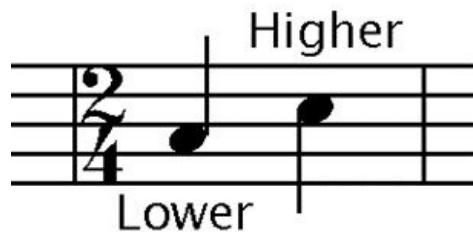
Vibration

# **PROPERTIES OF SOUND**

## **Pitch, Intensity, Duration, and Timbre**

Basically, sound has only four recognizable attributes or properties. These attributes are pitch, intensity, duration, and timbre (pro-nounced tahm-bur). No matter how complex or simple a composition of any genre of music may be and no matter how advanced a composer, player, or singer may be, he or she makes use of only these four variables.

Pitch is basically how high or how low a sound is. So we can simply say that pitch is the highness and lowness of a sound. And that is why you often hear musicians say high pitch and low pitch.



### **Pitch**

To technically illustrate, these differences in frequency (high vs low) are what we hear as pitch variation. The higher the number of sound waves produced per second of an elastic body, the higher the sound (pitch) we hear; the lesser/fewer the sound waves produced per second, the lower the sound (pitch) we hear. And this means that bass notes produce less number of sound waves as opposed to treble notes which are much higher in pitch and which will obviously produce more sound waves.

### **Tone**

Musically, a tone could mean different things but to avoid mixing things up and confusing you, let's stick with this definition for now. A tone is simply a musical sound of the definite, steady and precise pitch. In the coming parts of this book, we are going to examine some more definitions of the word tone.

## Intensity

Intensity, also known as amplitude or volume, is perceived as the loudness or softness of a pitch. In the field of acoustics, the intensity is explained as the amount of energy affecting a vibrating body. The physicist measures intensity on a scale of 0 to 130 in units called decibels. In standard musical notation, gradations of intensity are indicated with the following Italian words and their respective abbreviations.

Italian Word	Symbol	Translation	Estimated Decibels
Pianissimo	<i>pp</i>	Very soft	40
Piano	<i>p</i>	Soft	50
Mezzo Piano	<i>mp</i>	Moderately soft	60
Mezzo Forte	<i>mf</i>	Moderately loud	70
Forte	<i>f</i>	Loud	80
Fortissimo	<i>ff</i>	Very loud	100

## Duration

Duration in music can be defined as the length of time or simply how long a pitch, or tone, is sounded. For patterns and types of duration, the following terms are used: meter and rhythm.

Meter is the term used to describe regularly recurring pulses of equal duration/time, generally and often grouped into patterns of two, three, four, or more with one of the pulses in each group accepted. These orderly arrangements of strong (>) and weak pulses are referred to as beats. For example:

## 8. Accent



Duple (two-beat) and triple (three-beat) meter are the two basic meters in music. All the other meters are obtained from some combination of these two common meters.

### Simple Duple Meters

1 2      1 + 2 +  
1 2      1 + 2 +  
1 2      1 + 2 +  
1 2      1 + 2 +

## Rhythm

Operating and functioning hand in hand with the meter is rhythm. Rhythm is a pattern of uneven durations. While the steady flowing beats of the meter combine to form measures, rhythm may be a pattern of almost any length.

## Stringing it together; Differentiating Rhythm from Meter

Rhythm and meter are two very distinct and different yet very related subjects when it comes to music. Because of this very close relationship, it can be somewhat or even extremely difficult to tell the difference between rhythm and meter. But I am going to try as much as possible to make you understand the differences that lay between these two. It is very necessary to really understand

and grasp the concepts of both rhythm and meter to be able to identify some elements in music, analyze a piece of music and perform it.

Rhythm, in the most simplified form, is the combination of short and long tones (musical notes). Rhythm is oftentimes referred to as "beats", which is what we tap our foot to when we hear a piece of music. Rhythm is oftentimes divided into common patterns of beats (1,2,3 and 1,2,3,4). Arranging these musical patterns in an under-standable and organized way is meter. For example, the pattern 1,2,3,1,2,3 is different from 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4. The two different pat-tterns are two different meters. A drummer could choose to create some unique and groovy rhythms on either of the patterns (meters). Did that make sense?. Meter is what guides rhythm, rhythm is creat-ed in reference to a particular meter. Meter (pattern) must be estab-lished to make sense of the rhythm, and the rhythm is placed into measures (patterns or meters) to better read and understand the music.

## **Classifying Meters**

Not contradicting what we learned earlier, there are four major types of meter which are simple duple meter, compound duple meter, sim-ple triple meter and compound triple meter. A meter is called simple if the beats can be divided in half. On the opposite, a meter is called a compound if the beats can be divided into thirds. Duple meter means the measure is divided into two, and triple meter means the measure is divided into three. Duple and triple meters usually refer to the division of strong versus weak beats. A good example of the duple meter is a measure in which the music feels strong-weak-strong-weak, and the triple meter would be strong-weak-weak.

## **Timbre**

In music, timbre refers to the tone quality or color of a sound. Tim-bre is the property and characteristic of sound that enables and per-mits us, for example, to tell the difference between the tone of a saxophone and an acoustic or electric guitar. This characteristic sound quality is greatly determined by the shape of the vibrating body, the material which it is made of (metal, wood, animal tissue), and the specific method used to put it in motion (bowing, striking, blowing, scratching or plucking). Timbre is also the result of our ear's perception of a series of musical tones known as the harmonic series, which can be produced by all musical instruments.

# **Harmonic Series**

Harmonic series includes the numerous and different pitches produced simultaneously by any vibrating body. This physical phenomenon happens because the body vibrates in sections and also in a single unit.

## **Partials**

The different pitches produced simultaneously by the vibrating sections of a musical sound source are called partials or harmonics. The 1st partial often referred to as the fundamental, and the other series of partials constitute a musical tone. Since the fundamental (1st partial) is the deepest or lowest frequency and is also heard as the loudest, the human ear perceives it as the specific pitch of the musical tone. This means that different tones (partials) come together to make a musical note but the most audible tone (1st partial or fundamental) which also happens to be the lowest frequency is often identified by the casual listener as the specific pitch. The individual partials that come together to create a musical tone are not differentiated separately but are perceived by the human ear as a mixture that makes up timbre. Only through critical listening can the human ear pick out these individual partials.

## **Summary**

Music is simply an art of sound and time, and the basic building blocks and characteristics of musical tone which are pitch, duration, intensity, and timbre are the fundamental elements of music. It is very vital and necessary that a musician grasps the concepts and rules guarding these fundamental musical elements for the sole purpose of enhancing, developing and advancing musicality and overall musicianship. The solid grasp of the concept of pitch, duration, intensity, and timbre only but produces better playing, singing, and musical appreciation. Taking time to study, understand and apply these concepts will benefit, improve and aid music creation. The music producer, the horn player, the pianist, the drummer, the bassist, the vocalist and all other practitioners of this wonderful art will greatly reap the fruits of these very vital and important studies.

I will advise if you are a total novice or should I say totally new to music theory, I will advise against rushing through this chapter but rather recommend you taking your time to read through this chapter (probably more than once) and assimilate it in totality (not leaving behind any part of it), the concepts discussed

in this chapter and then reflecting and relating it to your current musical conditions. Ask yourself how understanding the difference between rhythm and meter can improve your musicality and musical appreciation. Make sure you provide at least an answer to the question. Make use of every little knowledge gained.

## Questions and Exercises

1. Why is music theory such an important subject for every musician?
2. How will understanding the basic fundamentals and rudiments of music help a rock, jazz or blues band communicate better during rehearsal sessions?
3. How can music theory make you become a better player of [your instrument] and singer?
4. How is sound different from vibration?
5. simply refers to the alternating increase and decrease of pressure in the air caused by a vibrating surface or air column?
6. Audible sounds for the human ear spans from to cycles per second?
7. human hearing is most sensitive around the to Hz frequency range?
8. What are the four recognizable attributes or properties of sound?
9. is basically how high or how low a sound is?
10. , also known as, is perceived as the loud-ness or softness of a pitch?
11. The physicist measures on a scale of 0 to 130 in units called decibels?
12. Give the right Italian words and English translations to the following musical symbols: pp, mf, f, and ff.
13. How is rhythm different from meter?
14. What comes first? rhythm or meter?
15. Define timbre.

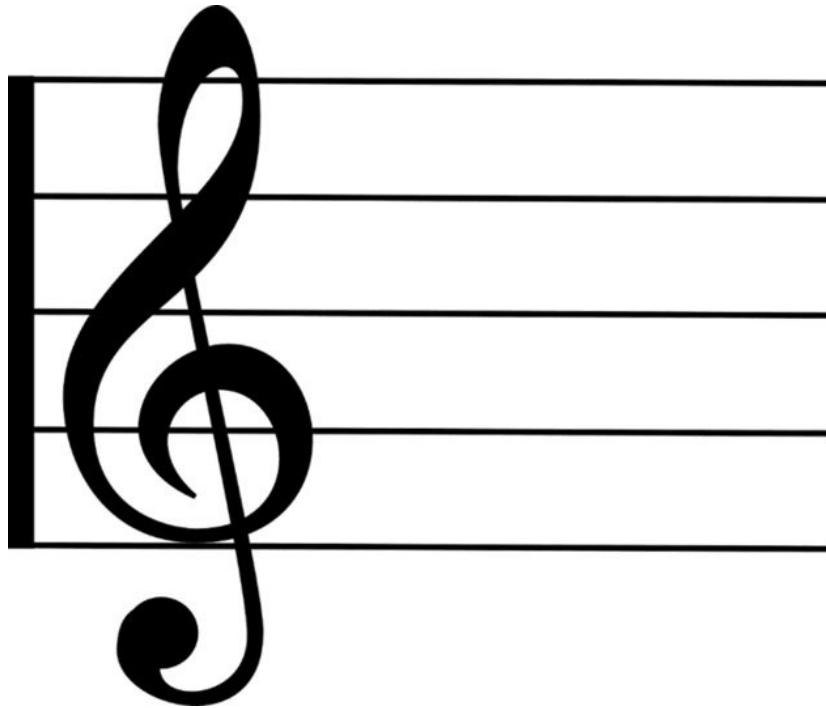
## **PART TWO**

### **MUSIC NOTATION**

Before embarking on the study of the structure of music, it is important you first understand the notation and some basic elements of music. As a musician, you have probably learned or in some cases heard of these concepts in previous studies and findings, or maybe not. The reason for this book here is to present these basic musical facts in a very systematic way which will aid you in gaining fluency and filling any gaps in your knowledge.

Even if you already know some of the resources presented here, we still urge you to take this as an opportunity to practice until you can bring back to mind, once again the fundamentals without the slight-est bit of hesitation. Your success in understanding the basic structure of music will depend on this ability. The ultimate aim of this book is to show you how music is put together. Together we will demystify these mysteries.

Music notation is a lot more precise and complicated than written language. In music notation, you can't afford to make mistakes in most cases. Whenever we notate music, we make use of symbols that show three of the four properties of sound described earlier in the introduction: pitch and duration are notated most accurately, and relative intensity or amplitude is indicated. And then, pitch and duration are shown simultaneously. The term pitch as earlier talked about describes how high or how low (the frequency) a tone is. In music notation, musical pitches are represented by some symbols positioned on the staff and they are identified with letter names. The music staff consists of five equally spaced lines (horizontal).



The various pitches on the staff are being named using the first seven letters of the alphabet which are A B C D E F G.

## More About Musical Tones

Earlier we talked about musical tones and I promised that we are gonna talk about it again. Now without contradicting or countering what we first talked about, let's look at the word tone from another musical angle. What's a tone? The definition is a very simple one: a tone is a sound that is played or sung at a specific pitch (which is what we said earlier). Whenever you hum, you're humming a tone. Whenever your whistle, you're whistling a tone. When you make meaningless and funny expressions like "aaaahhhh," you're sounding a tone. If you put all these hums, whistles, and "aaaahhhhs" together, you have music. You can hum varieties of tones, high, mid or low. The higher tones you make are referred to as higher-pitched; while the lower tones are called lower-pitched (obviously).

Try this exercise: Simply hum a tone. Now hum another tone higher in pitch than the first tone you hummed. What you've just done is that you've hummed two separate tones, at two separate pitches (higher and lower) The second tone was higher in pitch than the first tone. Different voices, and different musical instruments, produce different ranges/pitches of musical tones. A typical example is that women tend to have higher-pitched voices than men; the tones

most women sing are higher in pitch than the tones most men sing. (There are no doubt some minor exceptions to this golden rule, for instance; If you listen to some of the doo-wop singers of the 1950s you'll definitely hear some fairly high male voices!).

When it comes to the world of musical instruments, physically larger musical instruments like the baritone saxophone, cello, and double bass tend to produce lower-pitched tones, while smaller instruments like the violin tend to produce higher-pitched tones. This is basically because bigger instruments move more air than smaller

ones do, and more air simply translates to a lower pitch. This is why the very small cylinder of a flute produces higher notes than the big brass tubing of a tuba, and also why the very thin strings on a guitar are higher-pitched than the thick strings.

Some musical instruments produce a broader range of tones than some other instruments. Particularly, the grand piano has a very broad (wide) range. From the lowest tone which is simply the key on the far left of the piano keyboard to the highest which is the key on the far right, the piano produces more tones than just about any other musical instrument and a lot more than the human voice too.

Try just another exercise: Hum the lowest tone you can hum; then gradually in a comfortable way, raise the pitch until you're humming the highest tone you can possibly hum. That is you just humming a whole lot of different tones. Having done that, how, then, do you describe a specific tone so that another person can hum the same tone you just hummed?

## **Tones Do Have Scientific Values**

Anytime you want to describe a musical tone, it helps a whole lot to know that each musical tone you can play or sing has a specific scientific value. You can measure the values scientifically and use that value to describe the musical tone. If you pick up a microphone and plug the microphone into an oscilloscope, and then hum any tone into the plugged microphone, the oscilloscope will definitely measure the frequency of the hummed tune. This measurement is actually a measurement of how fast the atmospheric molecules (molecules of air) are vibrating; the faster the vibrations of the molecules, the higher the pitch (we talked about this briefly in the previous chapter).

These vibrations [of molecules] are measured in cycles per second, and there are

a whole lot of them. Cycles per second are often called hertz; simply abbreviated Hz. If you vocalise or hum the pitch we refer to as middle C which is the white key in the exact middle of a piano keyboard, or simply the 3rd fret on the string (A) of a guitar, an oscilloscope will measure around 256Hz and what this simply means is that the air is rotating (in circle) back and forth exactly 256 times per second. Sounds cool right?. So one simple way to identify specific pitches is by their frequency. But on the flip side, writing out even the simplest of melody in terms of frequency is gonna get crazy and a little bit crazy again and maybe some crazier.

To illustrate this here's the first part of the tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb"/ "Mary had a little lamb/ little lamb/ little lamb"- notated by the use of frequencies: 659Hz/ 587Hz/ 523Hz/ 587Hz/ 659Hz/ 659Hz/ 659Hz/ 587Hz/ 587Hz/ 587Hz/ 659Hz/ 783Hz/ 783Hz.

Those are the specific scientific frequencies of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Was that fun and easy to read in any way?. I guess it wasn't. This is why musicians simply don't use the frequency method to write music, no matter how simple the piece may be.

## Playing by Numbers

A much easier way to label musical tones is to assign numbers to each individual pitch. But before we commence numbering, it helps to know a little bit about how different musical pitches relate to each other. Whenever you hum a pitch, you can simply slide that pitch from lower to higher and back again, which might make you assume that there is an infinite number of pitches available. But your assumption is not totally wrong because you can certainly see this when you look at frequencies; you will have one tone at 256Hz, another at 257Hz, another at 258Hz, and it keeps going. Although your assumption of infinite pitches might be true theoretically, in actual practice some pitches are too close together for the human ear to clearly tell any difference between them. For example, if you hum a tone of 256Hz and a tone of 257Hz, they will sound almost or even certainly identical in pitch because there isn't a big enough interval between the two tones. There has to be a reasonable enough interval between musical tones, just enough for our ears to perceive and notice, and then assign specific values to the main pitches that result.

What you will end up with is a sequence of musical pitches called a scale. You'll learn more about musical scales in another chapter. Each musical scale starts on

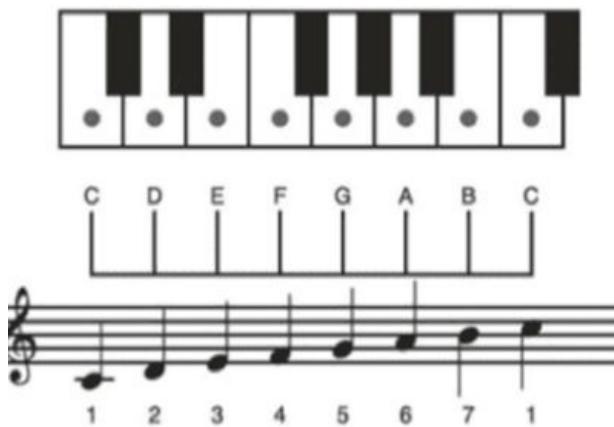
a specific tone and ends on a higher-pitched version of that same tone. In Western music, musical scales are divided into seven main notes, but eight if you include the first note that repeated itself at the end of the musical scale. Because there are only seven notes, it's relatively easy to assign a number to each of the notes in the scale. Numbering the musical notes one through seven, here is what the very first half of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" looks like:

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

2 2 2

3 5 5

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" played by the numbers.



Above is how the numbering system applies to traditional music no-tation, that is what the C Major scale looks like, by the numbers.

To avoid confusion and some unlikely surprise in the future, it is actually important to know that there are actually musical notes between some of these "main notes", just enough that we really have twelve musical pitches before they start repeating. These pitches found in-between the main seven pitches are equally spaced in what we call half steps. But let's not get too much into our brain for now. Let's keep it simple, we will still get to that.

Before we go another step ahead, let's note some very simple but important things which will help you understand music theory better and also help make you a better and more well-versed musician.

1. In music, pitch describes the specific frequency or tuning of a tone. Frequency is simply a measurement of how fast air molecules are vibrating.
2. Some musical instruments produce tones that are not at specific

and precise pitches. These musical instruments such as drums and cymbals are called unpitched or non-pitched musical instruments. The tones that these instruments produce can be high or low, but they typically don't correspond to any specific note pitch.

3. In music, they are a whole lot of musical terms but musicians tend to use a lot of these musical terms interchangeably. For example, a conductor who says, that a note was wrong, might mean that the actual pitch was not right, or that the rhythm (note value) was wrong. This is simply because the word "note" can refer to the two stated scenarios. Don't get yourself hung up on the differences between "tones" and "pitches" and "notes." While there are very specific definitions for each of these words, it's actually very much acceptable to not be very rigid on the usage. In this book, some words will be substituted for the other.
4. The "standard" pitch or standard tuning today is simply "A" above middle C, which equals 440Hz; all other musical notes are tuned/pitched in relation to this note. Prior to this, in very much earlier times and cultures, this musical note(s) had other values which went as low as 376Hz in the early eighteenth century France, and as high as 560Hz in early seventeenth-century Germany which was simply referred to as North German church pitch.
5. One very good and simple way to determine a specific musical pitch is with a tuning fork, which is an instrument that looks like an actual fork. A tuning fork is a fork-shaped piece of metal that resonates at a specific frequency when struck. Most tuning forks will resonate at 440Hz, which is the actual measurement of pitch A. Some musicians have what is called perfect pitch, and what that means is that they can hear absolute pitches in their heads. However, most people need the guidance of instruments like a tuning fork, pitch pipe, piano, or another musical instrument to fix or tell a specific pitch.

## **Solfege (Do Re Mi)**

Another very simple, interesting and efficient way to remember each musical tone is by assigning a simple syllable to each tone. If you can remember the

popular song from the film "The Sound of Mu-sic" that goes like this; "Do, a deer, a female deer"? That's exactly what we're talking about here.

In this very method, called Solfeggio or Solfège which is pronounced as sol-FEHZ, each of the seven musical notes of a scale has its unique name. The table below shows the words to use:

## Solfege Method

Tone	Solfege Name	Pronunciation
1	<b>Do</b>	<b>Doh</b>
2	<b>Re</b>	<b>Ray</b>
3	<b>Mi</b>	<b>Mee</b>
4	<b>Fa</b>	<b>Fah</b>
5	<b>So (Sol)</b>	<b>So</b>
6	<b>La</b>	<b>Lah</b>
7	<b>Ti</b>	<b>Tee</b>
8	<b>Do</b>	<b>Doh</b>

Still using "Mary Had A Little Lamb" Here's what the first half of the song looks like using the Solfeggio method:

Mi Re Do Re Mi Mi Mi

Re Re Re

Mi So So

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" in Solfeggio.

Having said that, we can say in summary that solfeggio is a method of naming musical tones using a set of syllables which are Doh, re, mi, and so on. These syllables actually come from the initial syllables of the first six words to the Hymn to St. John; the seventh syllable which is Ti or Tee is derived from the name St. John, in Latin.

This is how the solfege system applies to traditional music notation.



Solfege in relation to staff



Solfege in relation to staff and numbers

## Tones Do Have Names

It's very important to know that both the numbering and the Solfege methods are relative ways of naming musical tones. What this means is that the first note in a musical scale is always number one, and is always referred to as Doh. The second tone will always be number two and is always referred to as Ray. It doesn't matter in any way what actual tone you start with, these naming will always apply.

The only problem with using relative naming is that it doesn't actu-ally tell you what precise musical pitch to start with. You might start your Doh Ray Mi on a low pitch, and your

neighbor or bandmate might start he's/hers on a higher pitch, and your supposed lovely duet will end up sounding like something I can't actually say here.

And that's not in any way desirable. What we [musicians] actually need is an actual way to designate specific musical pitches without falling back to the extremely cumbersome and complex frequency method.

## Grasping the ABCs

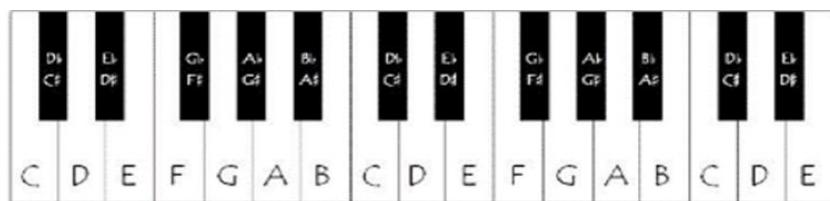
Like we said earlier, the accepted and precise way of naming specific musical pitches is by using the first seven letters

of the alphabet which are A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. While the numbering method is rather relative in nature which simply means that the number one can actually be assigned to any pitch. The latter method is absolute and not relative and what this means is that the musical note A always refers to a specific frequency. When you tell a bandmate to sing or play an A, they'll always sing or play the same pitch and nothing else.

**The only issue with just saying "A" is that A repeats both higher and lower, so there could be some confusion.**

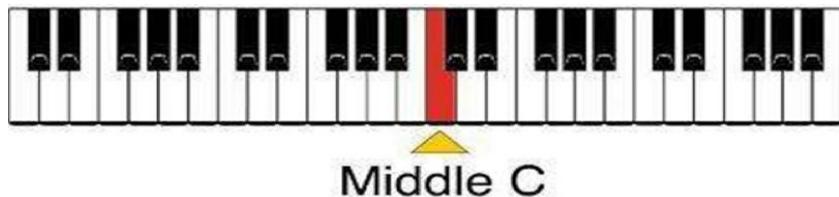
Try this simple exercise: Just sing A B C D E F G A but have in mind "Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do". Your first "A" and your second "A" should be the same tone, only with the second "A" being an octave higher than the first A. We'll learn about octaves much later. This method is a way of presenting a lower or higher version of the same musical note. You can play an A with a lower pitch, and also an A with a higher pitch and other A's below and above those. Now, all the A's will have just the same tone, but they're just higher or lower versions of the same basic pitch.

## Notes on a Piano Keyboard



A very simple and good way to visualize the seven basic notes (A through G) is to look at a piano keyboard like the one above. Each white key on the keyboard matches one of these seven main musical notes, as shown in the above figure. As you can clearly see, the black and white keys on the piano form a certain pattern. If you start just in the right place, you'll see that the black keys are arranged in groups of threes and twos. The very first white key to the left of a group of three black notes is always designated to the tone of F. The first white key to the left of a group of two black notes is always designated to the tone C. When once you know where F and C are on the piano keyboard, you can figure out the location of the other tones.

To figure out which A, F or C to play, know that the C located in the very center (center) of the piano keyboard, most times directly underneath the manufacturer's logo is called middle C.



The rest of the musical notes can be described relatively to middle C". What this simply means is that we can simply identify the F above middle C" or "the D below middle C."

## Musical Notes on a Staff

Coming back to the staff again, now that we have learned the seven basic notes and where they are located on a piano keyboard, how do we go about communicating these musical notes to others? We could just spell out a song using the letters. And if you made use of this method, the first half of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" would be like:

E-D-C-D- E-E-E-D-D-D-E-G-G

Writing the notes of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" this way is a lot more specific than using numbers or Solfege, but regardless, it's still obviously difficult to read. A much better way to notate musical pitches is to do so visually, using a well designed but simple graphic that in some ways resembles a basic piano keyboard. This graphic is simply called a music staff. You can go back to some pages to look at the staff.

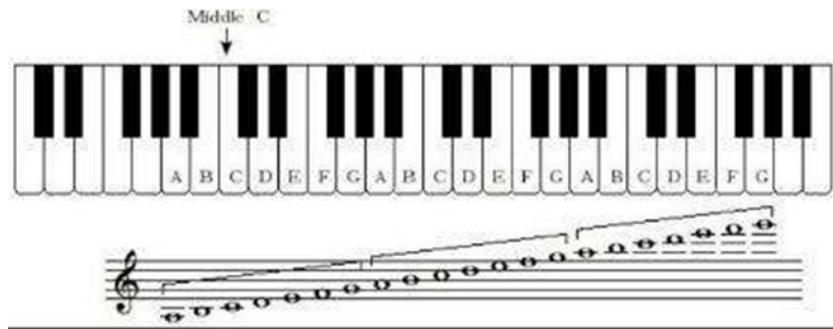
## Important Point to Note

Some musicians chose to identify the specific musical pitches by placing a number after the note name. This is more like a hybridizing method which is sometimes referred to as scientific pitch notation. In this method, the lowest C on a grand piano is notated C1 and another C up from that is C2, followed by C3, C4, and it goes on. The same naming structure is used for all the other notes. In this notation, the middle C is C4

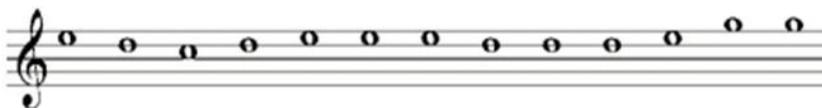
## CONTINUING WITH THE STAFF

As you could see in previous diagrams and illustrations, the staff has precisely five lines and four spaces. Every single line and space on the musical staff stands for a specific musical pitch. The musical pitches are determined by the shown clef at the beginning of the music staff. As we proceed we are going to talk about clefs.

The treble clef staff pictures the musical notes in the exact center of a piano keyboard right above middle C. The line at the bottom of the staff represents the E above middle C. The picture below shows how the notes of the staff relate to specific piano keys.



Going back to “Mary Had a Little Lamb”; here’s what the first part of the song will look like on a staff:



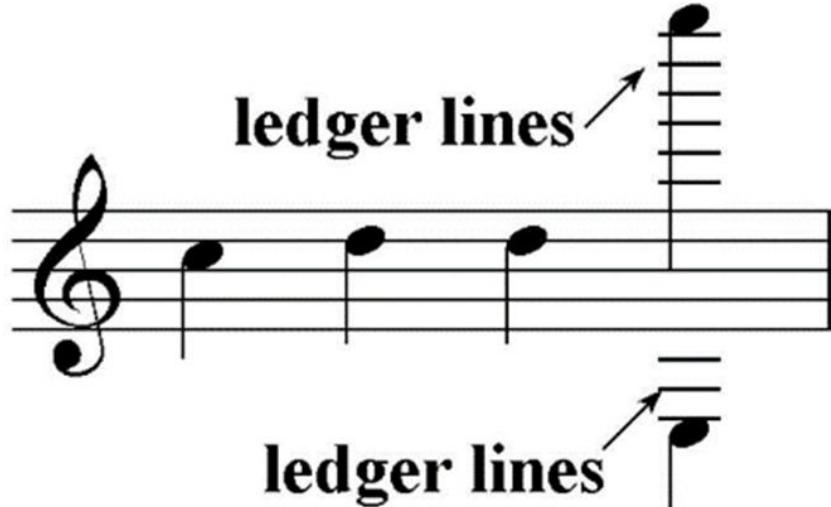
*The notes of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” on a music staff.*

## Going Above and Below the Staff

The basic music staff describes nine basic musical notes which are five on the lines, four in the spaces. But what it doesn't do is that it does, to describe all those notes either above or below these nine notes. A typical example of a note like this is the last note in “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (the full version). Musical notes that are actually higher than the F note (in regards to pitch) at the top (last line) of the music staff are simply written in the available lines and spaces above the music staff. For example, the very first space above the music staff is simply the first musical note after F and that makes it G. The first line above the staff is

the first note after G which is A. You can keep adding lines and spaces above the staff to describe higher and higher musical pitches/notes.

These added lines for higher musical pitches are called ledger lines.



Note that the same way you can add lines and spaces above the staff, you can also add lines and spaces below the music staff to de-scribe and assign lower musical notes. Look at the image above. For example, the very first space below the staff is the first note before E and that makes it D. The very first line below the staff is the first note before D and that makes it C.

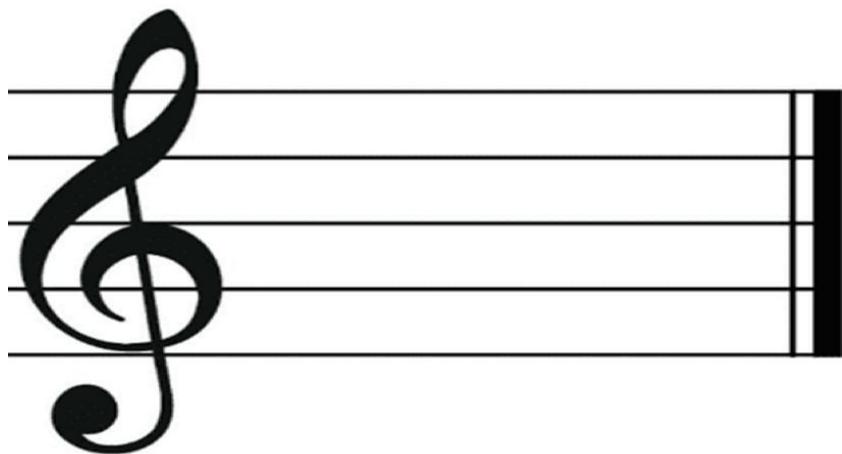
## Different Clefs

A clef can be defined as a graphical symbol, placed at the beginning of staff or piece of music to establish the pitch of a specific line or space on the staff; thus it is very right to say that a clef determines the pitch of all the other notes on the staff.

Before now, we've been looking only at a staff that represents the musical notes just above middle C on the piano keyboard. The mu-sical notes of this staff are determined by the type of clef that ap-pears at the beginning of the staff. In music, there are several and different types of musical clefs.

## The Treble Clef

The clef we've so far been working with is called the treble clef and it looks like this:



As we've learned already, in real-world terminology, the treble (G) clef is strategically placed just above the middle C. The first line (from the bottom) of the treble (G) clef staff is referred to as "E" while the top (last) line is an F. The treble clef, like all the other clefs, establishes the position of a single pitch and from that established pitch, you can figure out where all the rest of the musical notes fall. As for the treble clef, the musical pitch it fixes is the note G, which happens to be the second line on the treble staff. If only you look more closely at the treble clef above, you will also notice that the large round part of the treble clef circles itself like a snake around the second line of the staff.

It is also very much worthy of note that the treble clef is sometimes called the G clef. Giving it a close and careful look, you'll notice that the clef itself looks a little like a capital G. Should you ever have trouble remembering which note goes with which line or space on staff, here's a rather easy and fast way to remember. The five lines of the treble (G) clef staff are simply assigned from bottom to top. The lines of the treble staff from bottom to top are labeled E, G, B, D, and F. You can easily remember the lines by recalling the first letters in the phrase "Every Good Boy Deserves Food." The four spaces of the treble (G) clef staff are also assigned from bottom to top with the notes F, A, C, and E. You can also easily remember the spaces by remembering the word "FACE." Or simply touch your face whenever you forget it.

F A C E      E G B D F

Most higher-pitched musical instruments and voices make use of the treble clef.

This includes musical instruments like trumpets, flutes, clarinets, and guitars, and also singers singing the soprano, alto, and tenor parts respectively.

## The Bass Clef

Whenever you need to write music below the treble clef, you can use a totally different musical clef, called the bass clef. The bass clef un-like the treble clef is positioned just below middle C and is some-times referred to as the F clef. It is called the F clef simply because the two dots on the clef surround the fourth line, which is F. Below is what the bass clef looks like, with the notes of a bass clef staff:



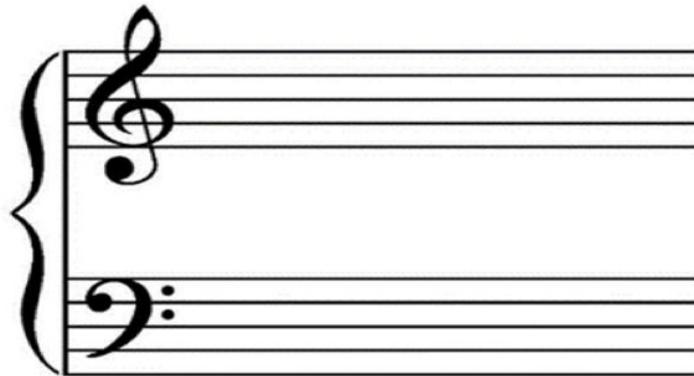
Note this: The word "bass", just like in "bass clef" is pronounced base. like the bottom (the base) of things, not like "bar or bars".

Most of the lower-pitched musical instruments and voices utilize the bass clef. These musical instruments include trombones, bass guitars, tubas, double bass, and singers singing the bass part. A very easy way to re-member the lines of the bass clef is with the phrase "Good Boys Don't Fight Always." The number one letter of each of these words describes each line of the staff from the bottom to the top. Equally, to remember the spaces of the bass clef, remember only the first letters in the phrase "All Cows Eat Grass." - A, C, E, and G.

## The Grand Staff

If you play or intend to play the piano or write/intend to write music for the piano, there's just another music staff you need to know. This staff is referred to as the grand staff. The grand staff simply links together a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff and this is simp-ly because you play the piano with two hands; each staff roughly corresponds to each hand- the right and left hand.

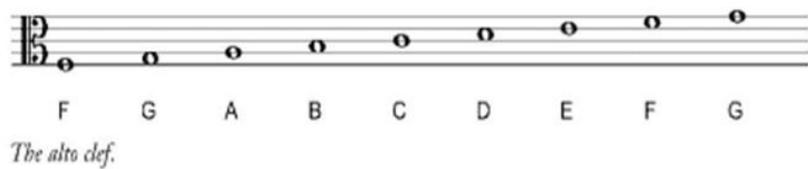
The grand staff simply looks like this:



When you make use of a grand staff, it's very important to note that the two staves smoothly flow into each other. The A note at the top of the bass clef extends above that staff to a B and a C note. The C (middle C) is then linked to the treble clef, goes right up to D, and then to the E on the bottom line of the treble clef. The neat thing is that the C note which just happens to be middle C is just halfway between each staff. So whenever you notate a middle C on the grand staff, the middle C might go down from the treble clef staff or go up from the bass clef staff, depending on where the bordering musical notes are fixed on the music staff.

## Specialty Clefs

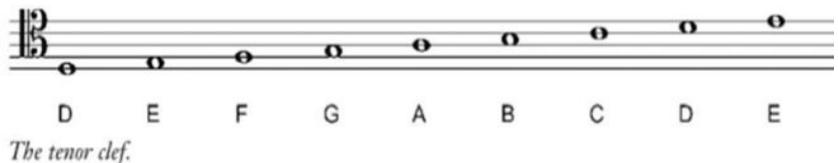
Apart from the treble and bass clefs, there are other clefs called specialty clefs you must learn as a musician, although you probably won't use these clefs so much. These clefs are designed specifically for musical instruments whose range does not fit comfortably within the traditional treble or bass clefs. One of the most commonly used specialty clefs is the alto clef, shown here:



The alto clef is used basically by the viola, which is just a larger and slightly different version of a violin. The pointer on this clef points exactly at the middle C, which is the third line, in the exact middle of the staff.

The tenor clef looks very much like the alto clef, except for the pointer which points at an entirely different line. It still points to middle C, but the tenor clef's middle C is positioned at an entirely different position on the music staff. The tenor clef looks something like this, and it is sometimes utilized by musical

instruments like bassoons, tenor trombones, and bass violins:



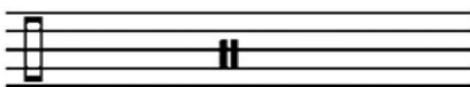
Although there are a lot of other specialty clefs (including the bari-tone, sub-bass, and French violin clefs), you probably won't encounter them too often simply because they're not widely used. However, you might accidentally run into what is called an octave clef which pretty much resembles a normal treble clef or bass clef with a "number 8" fixed either above or below the clef. Whenever you encounter this type of clef, you're supposed to transpose the normal treble clef notes either up (if figure 8 is above the clef) or down (if figure 8 is below the clef ) an octave.



*Octave clefs.*

## The Percussion Clef

There is just one more musical clef you should know, and that clef is really the easiest of all the clefs. This clef is used when you are writing music for instruments like the drums, other percussion instruments and those instruments that don't play a fixed pitch. This clef is either called the percussion clef or the indefinite pitch clef, and it can be written one of two ways:



*The percussion clef—version one and version two.*

One of the characteristics of this clef that makes it very neat and easy to use is that the lines and spaces of this clef do not in any way correspond to any set

musical pitches. Instead, you assign different percussion instruments to different parts of the staff. For example, if you're writing music for drum set, you might assign the bass drum to the bottom space, the snare drum or hi-hat to the third space, and two tom-toms to the second and fourth spaces and also, you can put the ride cymbal on the top line of the staff. Below is a sample of a really simple but well-arranged drum/percussion score:

The image shows a musical score for a drum set. It consists of six staves, each with a different rhythm pattern. The instruments assigned to each staff are as follows:

- Staff 1:** Ride Cymbal (top line), Crash Cymbal (middle line), 1st Tom (High Tom) (bottom line).
- Staff 2:** Snare Drum (top line), Bass Drum (middle line), Hi-Hat (bottom line).
- Staff 3:** 2nd Tom (Mid Tom) (top line), 3rd Tom (Low Tom) (middle line), 2nd Bass Drum (bottom line).
- Staff 4:** Open Hi-Hat (top line), Closed Hi-Hat (middle line), Ghost Notes (bottom line).
- Staff 5:** Cross-Stick (top line), Cowbell (middle line), Hi-Hat with Foot (bottom line).
- Staff 6:** Accented Notes (bottom line).

There really are no fixed rules for how to assign different percussion instruments to a percussion clef, so you're pretty much free, flexible and on your own. It is always suggested you consult a few drummers or look at a few percussion parts like the one above to get a better idea of how to use the percussion clef.

## Simple But Important Things to Know/Remember

1. Music is a sequence of tones arranged in a specific pattern; a tone is a sound that is sung or played at a specific pitch.
2. There are numerous ways to describe a specific pitch. A pitch can be described by its vibration frequency, by where it lies numerically in comparison to other pitches and also by making use of the Do Re Mi (Solfeggio) method.
3. Established music notation works by assigning letters to the seven basic pitches. It uses the letters A through G. The letters repeat

themselves as you go higher in pitch.

4. Musical pitches are assigned to specific keys on the piano keyboard, and to specific lines and spaces on the musical staff.
5. The clef placed at the start of staff determines which notes will appear where on the staff. The most used clef in the world is the treble clef; the bass clef is used for lower-pitched voices and instruments.

## PART THREE

# INTERVALS

In this chapter you'll learn:

1. How to alter musical pitches with sharps and flats.
2. How half steps and whole steps work.
3. How to calculate the intervals between notes.
4. How to make use of major, minor, perfect, diminished, and augmented intervals.

In the chapter that came before, we learned all about musical pitch-es, how they're labeled and how they're presented on a music staff. In this chapter we'll have to go beyond that by looking at how musical pitches can be raised (sharpened) and lowered (flattened), and how you can tell or describe the differences between pitches in terms of intervals. To simplify things as much as possible, we'll talk about these pitches and intervals by using the C Major scale as a reference scale and what this means is that we will make use of only the notes between one C on the piano keyboard and the next C above that C.

This very basic concept can be applied to any musical scale, as you'll see; it's just that sticking to just one musical scale makes the concept a little easier to grasp compared to using other scales. And also, on the piano, the C Major scale happens to be the easiest scale to work with because it's all white keys and no black keys. The black keys visualized are not part of the C major scale. We will still talk about these.

### Sharps and Flats

As we learned in a previous chapter, the spaces and lines on a music staff matches exactly to the white keys on the piano keyboard. But some people may be wondering, what about those beautiful black keys? Where are they located on the music staff? Okay, the truth is, when we say there are 7 main pitches in a Western musical scale (A-G), there is some bit of oversimplification in the statement because there are actually 12 possible notes in one musical octave, with some of these notes falling between the 7 main pitches. Simply count all of the keys (the Black Keys included) between middle C and next C on the piano—count them all, but simply omit the second [higher] C. If only you counted

correctly, you will have exactly 12 keys, which represent exactly 12 pitches; each pitch/key is the same interval from the previous key/interval.

Before we go any further, let's carefully look at the following musical definitions and understand them:

## Intervals

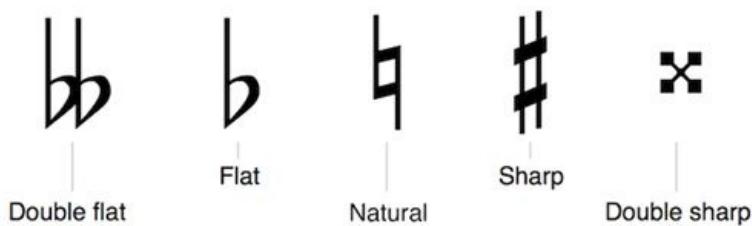
Musically, an interval is a space between two musical pitches. In Western music, the smallest or shortest interval is a half step; intervals are usually measured in the number of half steps between two notes.

## Enharmonic Notes

Two musical notes that sound the same spelled differently are called enharmonic notes. We are still going to go deeper into this but the simple concept here is that in music, two notes that are actually identical in pitch can be spelled differently depending on how it's being used. For example, C sharp (C $\#$ ) which is the black note after C can also be called D flat (D $b$ ). The two notes actually are the same in terms of sound but visually, they are spelled differently. They are aurally identical but visually (written) different. We will go further into enharmonic differences later.

## Accidentals

Any modification applied to a natural note is called an accidental. Sharps and flats are regarded as accidentals; the natural sign which is used to take back a flattened or sharped note to its natural/original state is also known as an accidental. We will understand these concepts better as we proceed.

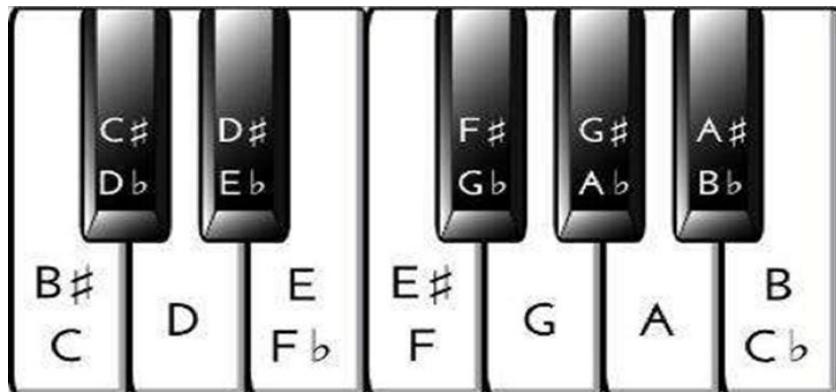


Accidentals in Music

Note  
Names: F F# F

Notice that the accidental is placed before and not after the note.

The black keys on a piano keyboard are called sharps and flats. Sharps and flats (black keys) are halfway between the musical pitch-es represented by the white keys on a piano keyboard. A sharp is always above a specific key and a flat is below a specific key. What this simply means is that when you are referencing the Black Key as a note below any key, it will be called a flat but when you put it the other way round (reference it as a key above another key), it is re-garded as a flat. Putting it another way, a sharp raises the natural note while a flat lowers the note. Taking the black key above the middle C key, for example. You can refer to this key as C sharp, be-cause it raises (sharpens) the pitch of C. It also can be called D flat because it lowers (flattens) the next white key up which is D. For now, it may seem somewhat confusing, but it's just true that C sharp is the same note as D flat. And remember what we said earlier, whenever you have two musical notes that describe the same pitch, like C sharp and D flat, the notes are simply referred to as enharmonic. Below are the dual names you can use for a piano's black keys:



On a musical staff, sharps and flats are recognized by special charac-ters placed before (not after) the affected note. These characters like we said before are called accidentals. Any modification to a natural note is referred to as an

accidental. Sharps and flats are regarded as accidentals, the natural sign previously shown, which is used to re-turn a sharpened or flattened note to its natural state is also acci-dental. Whenever you see a natural sign on any piece of music, it simply tells you to return the specified musical note to its natural state, without adding any sharps or flats.

It's very important to know that you can add sharps and flats to any note and even on those keys on a piano that don't have black notes between them. To make this very clear, if you add a flat sign to the C note, you have lowered it to the next note on the piano keyboard which very much happens to be B natural. What this simply means is that B natural is the same pitch as C flat.

## **Taking it a Step Further**

The smallest/shortest interval in Western music is the half step. On the piano, half steps usually appear between the keys B and C and between the keys E and F. In other cases they simply appear be-tween a white key and a black key. For example, from D to D sharp (E flat) and F sharp to G are half steps. The one-half step is called a semi-tone.

Two half steps make one whole step or we can just say that two semitones make one whole tone. The interval that lies between the notes F and G is simply a whole tone and the interval between B and C sharp is also a whole tone. Now that we know about steps, it's a little easier now to understand how sharps and flats work. Whenever you sharpen a musical note, you move the pitch up a half step (a semitone). When you flatten a note, you lower the pitch by a half step. Take the note C, for example, If you add a flat to the note C, you are simply lowering it a half step. Because the first key to the left of C is the key B, this simply means that C flat equals B natural. When you add a sharp to the note C, you are taking it up one half step. The first musical note to the right of the note C is the note we call C-sharp. This black (C sharp) key is also the first key to the left of D, which means C sharp is the same as D flat.

You can use this step method to describe the intervals between two musical notes even though once you get more than just a few steps away, the numbering becomes a little difficult. In case you're trying to figure out which note is seven half steps above middle C (the note is G, in case you're counting), it's time to use another method to de-scribe our intervals.

## **Making Use of Degrees**

A much more acceptable way of describing musical intervals is to go back to the seven main notes of a scale and look once again into the numbering method. You can use the relative numbers of the scale to name the basic intervals between musical notes, and then apply this numbering to any musical scale.

## Fancy Names

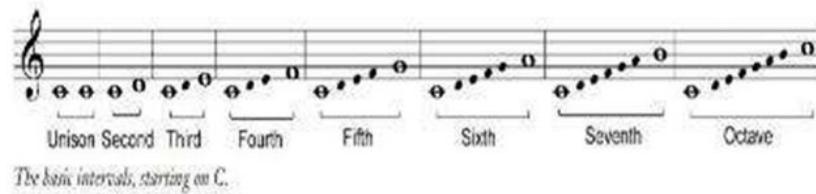
As we learned in the previous chapter, you can use numbers to de-scribe the seven main notes in any musical scale. The first note is always numbered as one, the second note is numbered as two, and it goes on and on. This numbering method actually describes the seven degrees of a scale. There are also some very cool musical names which you can use in place of the digits, which you might actually run into in some less casual musical situations. The following table presents these formal and fancy degree names.

Scale Degree	Fancy Names
First (Root)	Tonic
Second	Supertonic
Third	Mediant
Fourth	Subdominant
Fifth	Dominant
Sixth	Submediant
Seventh	Leading Tone/Subtonic
Eight (Octave)	Tonic

There are only a few more terms we need to know before we pro-ceed. When two musical notes of the exact same pitch are played by two different musical instruments or voices, they're played in unison. The same musical note name ("A", "D sharp") played eight degrees apart is called an octave, from the Latin octo (eight). This is because in Western music, there are seven notes in a scale, and the eighth note in the scale is the same as the first. For example, if you move from middle C to the next C up the piano keyboard, that's one octave; F to F is just another octave ... and it goes on and on.

These musical degrees come into use when you're describing inter-val-s between musical notes. Instead of counting half and whole steps, you could simply

describe an interval by using these numbers. For example, let's just say you wish to describe the interval between C and D. If you count C as number one (the 1st degree), D is number two and the interval between them is called a second. The interval between C and E (the 1st and 3rd degrees) is a third; the interval between C and F (the 1st and 4th degrees) is a fourth ... and so on. This is very easy, once you get acquainted with it! The figure that follows shows the basic intervals, starting with a unison and ending with an octave and with the C note as the root:

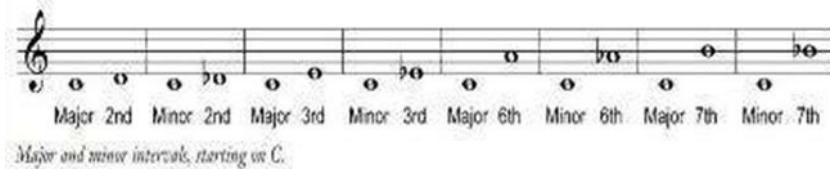


Before going any further, let's take note of the following simple but very important musical facts:

1. While the half step is the shortest or smallest interval in Western music, music from other parts and cultures of the world often contains intervals smaller than a half step. For example, some Indian music divides an octave into 22 steps, each about half as large as a Western half step. That's some deep microtonality.
2. On the guitar, a half step is simply the distance of a single fret while a whole step is equal the distance of two guitar frets.
3. Like we tried to illustrate before, in some musical terrains circles, a half step is called a semitone while a whole step is called a tone.
4. An interesting fact is that, whenever you examine the frequencies of two notes, as discussed in a previous chapter, you find that the second note in an octave is an exact multiple of the first note. To make this clear, the A above middle C has a frequency of 440Hz while the note "A" which is an octave above that has a frequency double the previous A which makes it 880Hz. Because of this, two musical notes with the same name have the same sound, even if they happen to be pitched an octave or more octaves higher or lower.
5. The lowest musical note of any interval, chord or scale is simply referred to as a root.

## Major and Minor Intervals

Whenever you make a description of intervals by degree, you still have the duty of dealing with those musical notes that fall below or above the basic musical notes which are the flats and sharps, or the black keys on a piano keyboard. When measuring by degrees, you can see that the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th notes can be easily flattened. When you flatten any of these notes, you create what is simply re-ferred to as a minor interval. The natural state of these intervals (on a major scale) is called a major interval. Here is what these four mu-sical intervals look like, with C as the root, in both their major and minor forms.



## Perfect Intervals

Some specific intervals don't have separate major or minor states (even though they can still be flattened or sharpened). These inter-valls which are fourths, fifths, and octaves exist in only one form, referred to as a perfect interval. You cannot lower these intervals to make them minor or raise them to make them major; there is no such thing as a minor 5th or a major octave. These intervals, be-cause of their acoustical nature are extremely perfect and nothing but perfect.

## Why are perfect intervals so perfect?

The flawlessness and the extremely perfect nature of these intervals all have to do with measurements, and with ratios between their dif-ferent frequencies. In summary, perfect intervals sound so related because their different frequencies are very closely related. For ex-ample, a perfect octave has a fixed ratio of 2:1 between the two fre-quencies while the octave is two times the frequency of the begin-ning pitch (which is referred to as the fundamental). If the beginning pitch/fundamental is 440Hz, the octave above will be twice that frequency or simply 880Hz. Also, a perfect 5th has a ratio of 3:2 and a perfect 4th has a ratio of 4:3. Other musical intervals have more complex ratios, which makes them less perfect in comparison to per-fect intervals. For example, a Major third has a ratio of 5:4 and that ratio is not quite as simple or as perfect 2:1. Putting it into a series, each increasingly complex interval ratio forms what is called a har-monnic

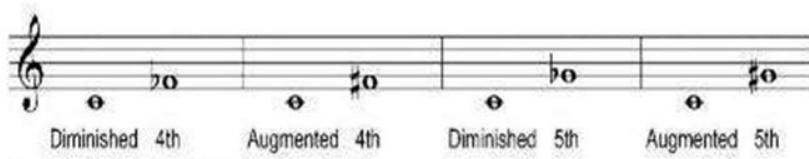
series, and the intervals arranged in order are called harmon-ics. But do not get too hooked on all the mathematics. What's im-portant is that you know what perfect intervals are and not the maths behind them.



*Three perfect intervals, starting on C.*

## Augmented and Diminished Intervals

Now we know that perfect intervals can't be either major nor can they be minor. However, this doesn't mean that they can't be altered or changed. You can still raise and lower fourths and fifths, the re-sult is not just called major or minor. Whenever you sharpen a per-fect interval, it is called an augmented interval and not a major in-terval. When you flatten a perfect interval, it's called a diminished interval and not a minor interval. So, simply don't call the new in-tervals major or minor, Just call them diminished or augmented. For example, if you are using C as the root, F is a perfect 4th away from the root. If you raise the F by a half step, the resulting note which is F-sharp is an augmented 4th above the root. Similarly, G is a perfect 5th above C. When you flatten the G, the resulting note which hap-pens to be G-flat is a diminished 5th above the tonic (root). Here are the most important augmented and diminished intervals, with C as the tonic.



*Augmented and diminished intervals, starting on C.*

The aug. fourth and dim. Fifth are enharmonically equal.

Just to confuse things a little bit, other types of intervals can also be called diminished and augmented and these intervals do not have anything to do with the perfect intervals. To start, you can alterna-tively create a diminished interval by lowering a minor interval by another half step. For example, F to D flat is a minor sixth; if you flatten the D flat (recall, there is actually a thing as a double flat), the interval you get is called a diminished 6th. You could also create an augmented interval by simply sharpening a major interval by one half step. For

example, from the note F to the note A is a major 3rd, if you raise the note A to the A sharp, the resulting interval is an augmented 3rd. On the happy side, you don't have to deal with either type of diminished or augmented interval that often. But you still need to know all of it, just in case!

## Going Beyond the Octave

You basically don't have to stop counting intervals when you get to the octave. Above the octave are even more musical intervals which are ninths, tenths, elevenths, and so on. Oftentimes used in jazz and blues music. Intervals that span more than one octave are simply referred to as compound intervals. They are called "compound" because they join an octave (8) with a smaller interval to bring about a larger one. For example, a 9th is nothing more than an octave and a 2nd while an 11th is an octave and a 4th ... and it keeps going. The following table describes the very first six intervals above the octave.

## Compound Intervals

Intervals	What makes it
9th	Octave + 2nd
10th	Octave + 3rd
11th	Octave + 4th
12th	Octave + 5th
13th	Octave + 6th
14th	Octave + 7th

Compound intervals can have all the attributes of smaller and less complex intervals, which means a compound interval can also be (depending on the interval) major, minor, perfect, augmented, or diminished.

## Intervals and Half Steps

It might be easier for us to think of all these intervals in terms of half steps. On that note, the following table shows how many half steps are between these major and minor intervals.

Intervals	Number of Half steps
-----------	----------------------

Perfect unison	0
Minor second	1
Major second	2
Minor third	3
Major third	4
Perfect fourth	5
Augmented fourth	6
Diminished fifth	6
Perfect fifth	7
Minor sixth	8
Major sixth	9
Minor seventh	10
Major seventh	11
Octave	12
Minor ninth	13
Major ninth	14
Minor tenth	15
Major tenth	16
Perfect eleventh	17
Augmented eleventh	18
Diminished twelfth	18
Perfect twelfth	19
Minor thirteenth	20
Major thirteenth	21
Minor fourteenth	22
Major fourteenth	23

## Note

What we've learned so far is traditional Western music notation, but it's not the only way to notate musical pitches. Some music educators today use what is referred to as the "Mod-12 system" to teach musical notes and intervals. In this (mode-12) system, the intervals between the 12 half steps in One octave are simply numbered from 0-11. If you count the 0, that measures up to 12 musical

intervals. For example, the interval we refer to as unison has 0 (no) half steps between them, and is referred to as “interval 0”. The interval we call a minor 3rd has 3 half steps in between and is referred to as “interval 3.” The cool thing about using this system is that you don’t have to worry about harmonics.

A diminished 5th and an augmented 4th both have 6 half steps, and are both referred to as “interval 6.” The "Mod-12 method" can also be used to name individual notes simply based on their interval from the tonic (root). The tonic, in this case, is note 0 and the minor 2nd degree is regarded as note 1, and the major 2nd degree is simply note 2. If you simply wanted to describe the tonic, the major third degree, and the perfect fifth degree, you’d just use 0, 4, and 7.

While many people love to use the "Mod-12 system" to teach musi-cal intervals, we prefer the old-fashioned way presented here in this chapter and for the sole reason that this is what you’ll most likely run into in the real world. When you’re playing in a concert band, rock band, blues or a jazz trio, you won’t ever hear other musicians say “play 4, 7, 11.” You will most likely hear them say “play the ma-jor third, fifth, or major seventh.” Regardless, if the "Mod-12 sys-tem" works for you, then use it. It is a perfectly acceptable way to teach and learn the 12 tones used in Western music and it also makes it a lot easier to deal with enharmonic notes.

Also, take very special note of those intervals that are just enhar-monically identical such as the augmented fourth and the diminished fifth. The names you call that particular interval depends on which direction you’re heading, and which notation is the easiest to read in the piece of music given to you.

You can also learn these intervals by knowing popular songs that utilize them at some key part, especially the first two notes. For some easy examples:

- Minor 2nd - Jaws Theme
- Major 2nd - Happy Birthday song (first two notes)
- Minor 3rd - Greensleeves (first two notes)
- Major 3rd - When the Saints Go Marching In (first two notes)
- Perfect 4th - Amazing Grace (first two notes)
- Aug 4th/Dim 5th - The Simpsons (first two notes)/West Side Story “Maria” (first time Tony sings the words “Maria”)
- Perfect 5th - Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (first four notes)
- Minor 6th - Lacrimosa (Mozart)

- Major 6th - Jingle Bells (first two notes)/NBC Jingle (first two notes)
- Minor 7th - West Side Story “Somewhere” (first two notes)/Pure Imagination (first and third notes)
- Major 7th - Take on Me by A-ha
- Octave - Somewhere Over the Rainbow from The Wizard of Oz

These will give you an idea of each, and you can practice these if you’re learning to listen for intervals and it will help you tremendously. Other examples can be found as well. Try listening to your favorite songs and figuring them out!

## **Important things to Remember/Know**

1. The smallest/shortest interval between any two musical notes is called a half step. Two half steps equal 1 whole step.
2. A sharp raises the value of a musical note by a half step while a flat brings down the value of a musical note by a half step.
3. The underlying intervals between any two musical notes are named or described in terms of degree. To explain that, the interval between the first and third notes is simply referred to as a third.
4. In a major scale, 2nds, 3rds, 6ths, and 7ths are referred to as major intervals. You create a minor interval by flattening/lowering these notes.
5. Still, on a major scale, 4ths, 5ths, and octaves (8s) are called perfect intervals.
6. When you flatten any perfect interval, you create a diminished interval and on the other hand, whenever you sharpen (raise) a perfect interval, you create what is known as an augmented interval.

## PART FOUR

# SCALES

In this chapter you'll:

1. Learn how to put eight notes together to form a scale
2. Learn how to create major and minor scales
3. Discover the different modes within a major scale

In the previous chapters, we discussed the seven keynotes (A-G), and these keynotes relate to each other. We also briefly talked about the word “scale” by using it to describe all seven of those notes together. In this part of the book, we will look into the concept of the musical scale, which is basically seven notes all in a row, in alphabetical order. When we talk about playing a scale, we frequently mean the octave as well. Looking at it that way, a scale has eight notes (counting the octave). However, there are other types of scales as well. What we have discussed so far (playing from C to C with only white keys) is what is called a major scale. Changing the intervals, throwing in some more black keys, we can make different minor scales. We can even start from a different key (playing D to D with no black keys) to make what is called a mode, which we will get into later. This may sound a bit confusing at this point, but it's really fairly simple once you grasp how scales are built/constructed, using different intervals between the various notes.

You may actually be asking what a mode is but don't worry so much, you'll only have to study this entire chapter to discover that!

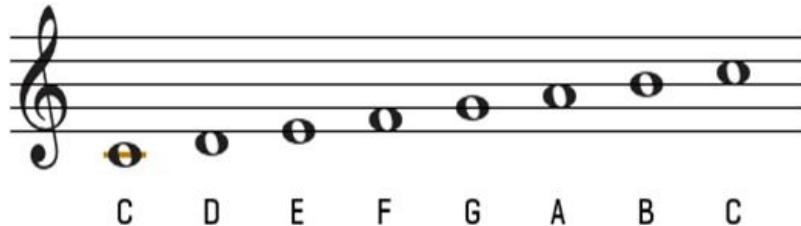
Scales are very important in music because you use them to create melodies, which you'll learn about in another chapter. In fact, you can create a really nice-sounding and appealing melody just by picking notes from a single major scale. For example, using the C Major scale (the white notes on a piano), pick and choose only notes that sound good (to you) when played. Make sure to start your melody on C and also end it on the C note itself. Wow! you've just written a simple song.

### **Eight Notes Makes One Scale**

A scale is, in the simplest way, eight successive/sequential pitches within a range of one octave. All musical scales start on one note and end still on that same

musical note one octave higher. For example, the C scale starts on the C note and ends on another C which is one octave (8) higher than the beginning C; an F scale will start on F and ends on F which is an octave higher than the first F, and they all have 6 more notes in between.

### C Major Scale Ascending (Treble Clef)



Like we said before, the first note of a scale is always referred to as the tonic or 1st degree of the scale. Not surprising in any way, the 2nd note is called the second degree, the 3rd note is called the 3rd degree, and so on and this goes on and on until we reach the eighth note, which is the tonic/root (again).

A major exception to the 8 note scale rule is the scale that includes all the notes within an octave, including all the sharp and flat notes. This type of scale is referred to as the chromatic scale. When you start with C, the scale looks something like this:



It is important to note that, any given scale has specific and mapped out relationships between the different degrees of the scale. That's the only way you can describe different types of scales: A major scale will have different musical intervals between some specific notes; very different from the intervals you'll find in a similar and related minor scale. These different intervals are actually what give each type of scale its very unique sound. The most common and most used scale is called the major scale. Major scales are happy sounding scales; they have very pleasing and expected intervals at every point. Simply sing "Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do" and you'll perceive this very pleasant quality of the major scale.

The scale that mirrors the major scale (the opposite of the major scale) is the minor scale. Minor scales are somewhat sad-sounding scales; the intervals between the notes of a minor scale sound a little bit depressing/saddening. Both

major and minor musical scales can start on any musical note. From E flat to G sharp, it doesn't matter which musical note you begin with, each musical scale has its own specific mixture of intervals between notes. The coming sections will discuss in detail, major and minor scales respectively.

## Major Scales

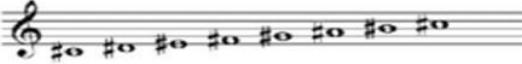
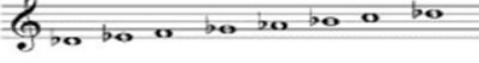
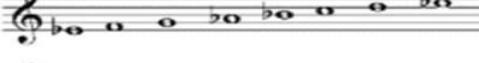
The things that make a major scale major are the specific intervals between the notes of the scale. Every major scale makes use of the same intervals, as shown in the following table:

### The Intervals of the Major Scale

Notes	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	2 half steps
Third	1 half step
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	1 half step

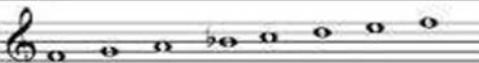
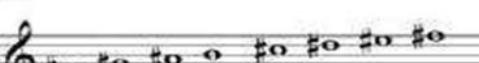
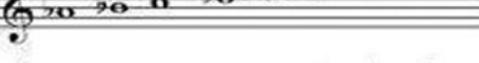
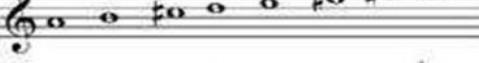
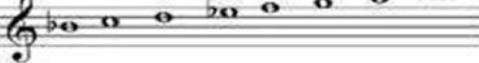
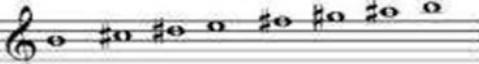
Putting it another way, the intervals on a major scale go like this: whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step (w, w, h, w, w, w, h). If you should start your major scale on the C note (the C Major scale), you will end up playing all white keys on the piano. C Major scale happens to be the only major scale that uses only the white keys on the piano; all the other music scales have black keys in between them. To make things much easier for you, the following table shows all the notes in the fifteen major scales:

### The 15 Major Scales

Scale	Notes
C Major	
C-sharp Major	
D-flat Major	
D Major	
E-flat Major	
E Major	

*continued*

### The 15 Major Scales (continued)

Scale	Notes
F Major	
F-sharp Major	
G-flat Major	
G Major	
A-flat Major	
A Major	
B-flat Major	
B Major	
C-flat Major	

Note that many of these scales are enharmonic. (Recall the meaning of that word from a previous chapter? It simply means two notes that are identical aurally, but spelled differently.) So F sharp Major and G flat Major are just different ways of

describing the same musical notes, as are C sharp Major and D flat Major, and E flat Major and D sharp Major.

## **Some Extra Notes on the Major Scale**

You should spend quite some time learning the major scale. It is actually the most common scale and is the mother scale to seven other musical "modes", so it's very important for you to know it well.

### **When to use the major scale**

You can use the major scale on both Major and major 7 chords respectively. A major scale is often the right or should I say scale of choice for your tonal center. So if you're playing a song in the key of C Major, you can play C Major scale over it. If you are improvising, it is always a good idea to allow your ear and your musical intuition to be the pilot. As for improvisation, the idea is to try and use the major scale to make up a solo, however short, long, good, bad it is, just improvise and let your ear guide you.

The best way to learn to improvise with a major scale is to use a backing track and simply play along. We've included with this book, a C major backing track.

### **Some tips on improvising with the major scale**

1. Make sure to stick to the scale notes for now- other notes are most likely to sound horrible, and the point of your exercise is to explore the Major Scale for improvisation.
2. It's a good idea to stay mostly in the middle and higher octaves of your instrument, such as the thinner strings on the guitar, as thick strings with low sounds tend to sound muddy and that is not very encouraging at first (though it has its own uses).
3. Always try as much as possible to avoid really long (marathon) practice sessions. Instead, play a bit and then stop, play again and then stop again. If you play for too long without taking a break it might just get boring. You can think of it as the "play and rest" approach where you play one bar and get to stop and think about what you are doing next. I am not encouraging laziness, I'm just giving you a healthier and less boring approach to grasping this.
4. Keep it very simple. It will ultimately sound better and always repeat good sounding musical phrases. There is power in repetition.

5. Do not be afraid to explore because the worst thing that can happen when exploring is that you play something that doesn't really sound great!! So when practicing the major scale, try and explore as much as possible.

Try to break up the scales into different intervals to really get inside them. You could try 7ths. Simply play both notes at once (for example the root and the seventh) to create some micro chords or play them separately for some super modern-day sound.

## **Now it's time to do some very unusual music theory. So read this:**

Horatio G. Spafford was a very successful lawyer and businessman in the city of Chicago and also had a lovely family. He had a wife named Anna, and she bore him five children. However, this lovely family was not strangers to tears and tragedy. Their young son died of pneumonia in the year 1871, and still, in that same year, much of their business was consumed in the great Chicago fire. Yet, for some reason, the business still flourished once again.

On exactly November 21 in the year 1873, the French ocean liner by name "Ville du Havre" was making a cross across the Atlantic from the United States to Europe with precisely 313 passengers on board. Among the 313 passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four lovely daughters. Although Mr. Spafford had initially planned to go with his family on the trip, he deemed it important to remain in Chicago to help handle an unexpected business issue. He told his wife he would later join her and their daughters in Europe a few days later. His plan was to board another ship.

Just about four days into the crossing of the Atlantic, the "Ville du Harve" collided with a very powerful iron-hulled Scottish ship by name, the "Loch Earn". Suddenly, all of those on board the ship(s) were in grave danger. Anna hastily brought her four daughters to the deck of the ship. She knelt there with the four of them, Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie, and Panetta. She prayed and cried that God would spare them if that is His will, or just make them willing and able to endure whatever pain awaited them. In approximately twelve minutes and a few seconds, the "Ville du Harve" slipped underneath the deep and dark waters of the Atlantic ocean, going down with it; 226 of the passengers on board including the four Spafford children.

A rescue sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down,

spotted a helpless woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was Anna, still alive. He dragged her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel which, some nine days later, landed them in the city of Cardiff in the country of Wales. From Cardiff, Anna sent her husband a telegram which began with the words:

“Saved alone, what shall I do?”

Mr. Horatio Spafford later framed that telegram and placed it in his office. Another of the ship's survivors by name Pastor Weiss, later recalled Anna saying these words:

“God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why.”

Mr. Spafford hurriedly booked passage on the next available ship and went to join his grieving wife Anna. With the ship, about four days out on the ocean, the captain of the ship asked Spafford to come into his cabin, the captain told Spafford that they were right over the place where his four daughters went down.

According to Bertha Spafford Vester, another Horatio Spafford daughter born after the tragedy, Mr. Spafford wrote the hymn, the hymn which we love so much; “It Is Well With My Soul” while on this particular voyage.

Mrs. Spafford did give birth to some three more children, one of which died at age four still with much-dreaded pneumonia. In August 1881, the Spaffords relocated to Jerusalem. Mr. Spafford died and is buried in Jerusalem.

That was some very unusual music theory and I really hope you got something(s) from it. Now let's move over to:

## **Minor Scales**

Minor scales are just the opposite of major scales and remember we said that major scales are happy sounding scales, so minor scales sound a little less "happy" than the major scale. This is partly because the 3rd note of the minor scale happens to a minor interval unlike the 3rd note of the major scale which is a major interval. The little half step between a minor (minor scale) third and a major (major scale) third makes a really great difference in the world! I am not trying to make things more complicated for you but I will have to let you know that even though there was just a single type of major scale, there actually are three different types of minor scales and they are natural, harmonic, and melodic minor scales. Let's take out some time to look at these three separately. But

before we do that, here is just something you should know before we proceed any fur-ther:

Whenever you're playing a piece of music, you will typically stay within the musical notes (boundaries) of the designated musical scale. Any other musical notes you play outside of the scale (bound-aries) are simply called chromatic notes while musical notes within the used musical scale are said to be diatonic notes. For example, using the C Major scale, the note C is a diatonic note while the note C sharp (#) would be a chromatic note. Even though chromatic notes might sound "very different" from the normal musical scale notes, they can actually add some color and beauty to a piece of mu-sic. And that's simply where the term comes from because "chroma" simply means color.

## **Natural, Harmonic and Melodic Minor Scales**

### **Natural Minor**

Of the three kinds of minor scales, the easiest to construct is the natural minor scale. You can describe the natural minor in terms of its matching/responding major scale. Anytime you begin and end a major scale on the sixth note, instead of the root note (tonic), what you get is simply a natural minor scale.

For example, simply play a C Major scale (C D E F G A B C). Now move up to the 6th note or simply move down two notes. (It's still the same thing, up to six notes or down two notes, both will put you on the A note.) Now simply play an 8-note scale, but maintain the notes in C Major. What you will get is A B C D E F G A which is simply the A natural minor scale. As you can clearly see here, each natural minor scale shares the same tones (notes) as a specific or should I say relative major scale. Also note that, If you begin your natural minor scale on the A note (the A minor scale), you will ulti-mately play only the white keys on the piano keyboard. The "A" natural minor scale happens to be the only minor scale which makes use of only the white keys on the piano. All the other minor scales have black keys in them.

The table below clearly shows which minor scales match up with which major scales. Or we can simply call it a table of relative major and minor scales.

### **Relative Major and Minor Scales**

<b>Major Scale</b>	<b>Relative Natural Minor Scale</b>

C Major	A minor
C-sharp Major	A-sharp minor
D-flat Major	B-flat minor
D Major	B minor
E-flat Major	C minor
E Major	D-flat (C-sharp) minor
F Major	D minor
F-sharp Major	D-sharp minor
G-flat Major	E-flat minor
G Major	E minor
A-flat Major	F minor
A Major	F-sharp (G-flat) minor
B-flat Major	G minor
B Major	G-sharp minor
C-flat Major	A-flat minor

Every natural minor scale makes use of the same intervals, as shown in the table below:

## Intervals of The Natural Minor Scale

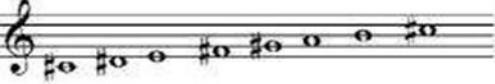
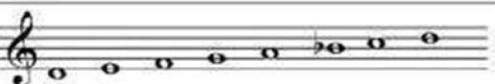
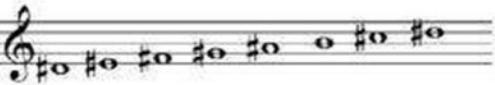
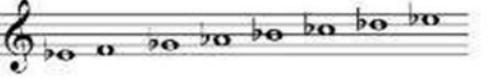
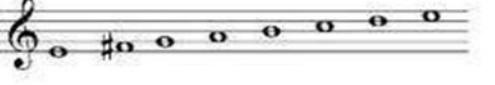
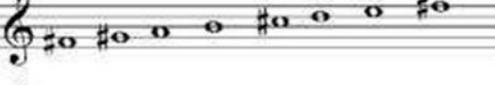
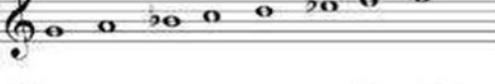
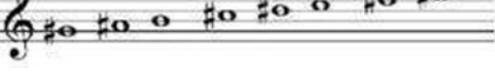
Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	1 half step
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	1 half step
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	2 half steps

Putting it another way, the intervals that exist in a natural minor scale go like this

whole-step (tone) , half-step (semitone) , whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone), half-step (semitone), whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone).

To make things so much simpler for you, the following table shows all the musical notes in the fifteen natural minor scales respectively.

### The 15 Natural Minor Scales

Scale	Notes
C minor	
C-sharp minor	
D minor	
D-sharp minor	
E-flat minor	
E minor	
F minor	
F-sharp minor	
G minor	
G-sharp minor	

A-flat minor

A minor

A-sharp minor

B-flat minor

B minor

## Note

Even though the C Major scale and the A natural minor scale have basically the same notes, however, this doesn't in any way mean that these notes are [to be] used in the same way and context. For instance, note A functions and sounds completely different in these two keys. A natural minor will sound colorful and perhaps even slightly unstable in the key of C Major but will ultimately sound solid and very much foundational in the key of A minor. During improvisation, it can be extremely useful to think in both scales from time to time (yes you can actually mix them), mixing the A natural minor scale with the key of C Major and vice versa. Even though these scales contain the same notes/pitches, the melodies, colors, and moods you will come up with will be totally and completely different.

Although not any of the scales after C Major introduces new notes/pitches, each of these scales actually gives a different color and sound. Depending on style and context, some of these scales may actually be more appropriate than others, so trust your ear to tell you whether it really sounds good.

A word of caution is that you should never ignore mastery of the A natural minor scale just because it contains the same musical notes/pitches as the C Major scale, which simply allows you to master two scales just by mastering either of them. Approach the two scales separately and individually and totally forget the fact that they contain the same pitches. They may contain the same pitches but the order/sequence makes them two different scales with very contrasting and unique characters. Approaching these two relative scales as separate individuals will ultimately inhibit your ability to think in a certain key and to

come up with different musical ideas in that key. So, in very short and clear terms, learn all the scales and simply decide how you wish to use each of them.

## The Harmonic Minor Scale

The harmonic minor scale shares some similarities with the natural minor, except for the fact that the 7th note (leading tone) note is raised (sharpened) a half step. Some players, singers, and musicians prefer this type of minor scale simply because the sharpened 7th note creates a better lead up to the tonic of the scale.

The following table shows the intervals between the notes in the harmonic minor scale:

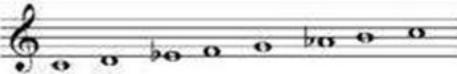
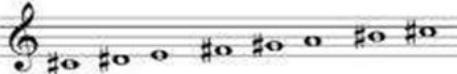
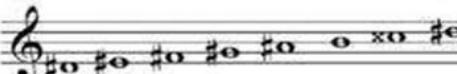
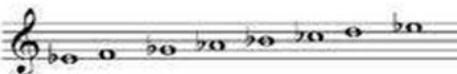
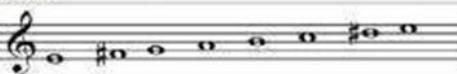
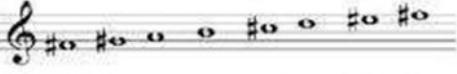
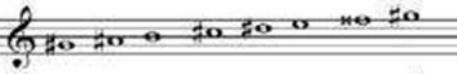
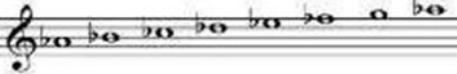
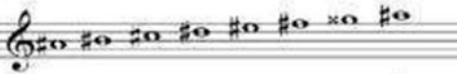
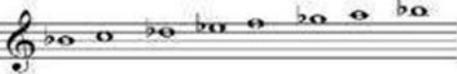
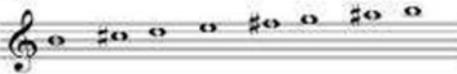
### Intervals of the Harmonic Minor Scale

Note	Half Steps to New Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	1 half step
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	1 half step
Sixth	3 half steps
Seventh	1 half step

Putting it another way, the intervals in the harmonic minor scale simply go like this whole-step (tone), half-step (semitone), whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone), half-step (semitone), whole and a half step, half-step (semitone).

To make things so much simpler for you, the following table shows all the notes in the 15 harmonic minor scale.

### The 15 Harmonic Minor Scales

Scale	Notes
C minor	
C-sharp minor	
D minor	
D-sharp minor	
E-flat minor	
<hr/>	
E minor	
F minor	
F-sharp minor	
G minor	
G-sharp minor	
A-flat minor	
A minor	
A-sharp minor	
B-flat minor	
B minor	

Remember that the 7th note of any musical scale is sometimes called the leading note (tone) only because it 'leads' up to the root/tonic of that particular scale.

Note: The tiny "x" you see before several of the notes in the previous scale table is simply a double sharp. It means you raise the base note by two half steps.

## Melodic Minor Scale

The only issue with the harmonic minor scale is that the interval between the 6th and 7th notes is three half steps and in music, you seldom have an interval on a scale larger than two half steps. (It's somewhat awkward to sing.) So the melodic minor scale solves this by raising both the 6th and 7th notes (degrees) of the natural minor scale by just a half step each, and that simple fix results in the following intervals:

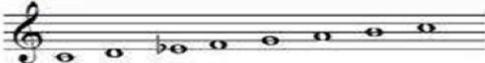
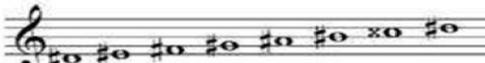
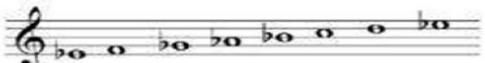
### Intervals of the Melodic Minor Scale

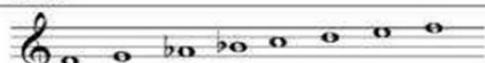
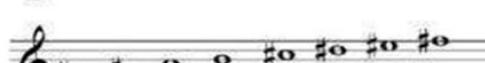
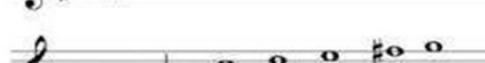
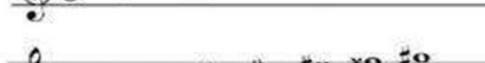
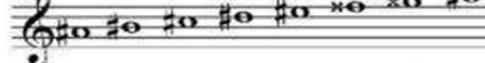
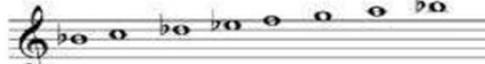
Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	1 half step
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	1 half step

Putting it another way, the intervals in the melodic minor scale simply go like this: whole-step (tone), half-step (semitone), whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone), whole-step (tone), half-step (semitone).

To make things so much simpler for you, the table below shows all the notes in the 15 melodic minor scales:

### The 15 Melodic Minor Scales

Scale	Notes
C minor	
C-sharp minor	
D minor	
D-sharp minor	
E-flat minor	
E minor	

Scale	Notes
F minor	
F-sharp minor	
G minor	
G-sharp minor	
A-flat minor	
A minor	
A-sharp minor	
B-flat minor	
B minor	

As if just knowing and practicing the three minor scales were not enough to deal with, some music scholars, players, and theorists use this melodic minor scale only when they're going "up" the scale. They simply call this the ascending

melodic minor scale. While going back down, which they call the descending melodic minor scale, what they do is that they simply use the notes in the natural minor scale when descending the scale. So the 6th and the 7th degrees are sharpened (raised) on the way up, but not on the way down. Not all theorists have agreed to this, some have split on this issue, however, some still use the melodic minor scale in both ascending and descending forms while others use the two different scales. It's very okay to use a single scale as presented to you here, as long as you're very much aware of the alternate way of doing this.

## **But Why Do Minor Scales Actually Sound Sad? (Some Science)**

Most of the time, when everything goes according to the rules, music in a major key is often perceived as happy while music in a minor key is perceived as sad. The reason I say most of the time is because this is not always true across all scenarios. Music on a minor scale can still be very happy even if people do not understand the lyrics. A good example is Van Morrison's "Moondance". Also, many traditional dance and popular African pieces are in minor keys. A good example is Fela Kuti's Afrobeat genre which is built on a minor scale but still one hundred percent happy sounding and danceable. Also, most or should I say some danceable folk tunes in West Africa are in minor keys and the melodies are gotten from minor scales. Also, on the other hand, try putting a smile on your face whenever "Dinner At Eight" by Rufus Wainwright or "I Know It's Over" by The Smiths comes on the radio. Both of these songs are in major keys.

There are countless examples of minor-happy and major-sad pairings in the musical catalog, some really sad hymns, and spirituals are in major keys. But it's also very fair to say that these examples are more of exceptions rather than rules.

It seems to be mostly the effect of cultural conditioning. Whenever we listen to tunes, we rely greatly on our memory for the body of music we have heard all our life. Constantly referencing the roots with our musical memory back catalog only helps to trigger a certain expectation of what might come next in a melody or song, which is actually a very important source of enjoyment in musical listening. The downside of this excessive reliance on memory is that our musical appreciations are frequently led by some really bad stereotypes.

In the western musical practice and tradition, major music like Mendelssohn's "Wedding March", "Happy Birthday", Brian May's "National Anthem" right at

Buckingham Palace, "Celebration" by Kool And The Gang, are played at times of celebration, jubilation and general fun times. Whereas music in minor keys like Chopin's "Fu-neral March", 'Back To Black' by Amy Winehouse, 'Hurt' by Tool (famously covered by Johnny Cash) or 'Gloomy Sunday' by Billie Holiday is used to mark mourning, heartache, and despair.

We are often exposed to this repeated pairing of sound and emotional meaning from the time our ears start functioning, which is around the 5th to 6th month in the womb. so it is at all surprising that we jump to emotional assumptions based on our past experience(s).

Interestingly and somewhat obvious, it seems that the Western popular music genre may actually be moving away from the overwhelming use of minor keys to make sad music and major keys to make happy music. It has been shown by a certain music psychologist that over the past decade, people actually preferred music in a minor key although there is no actual evidence that we are getting more miser-able as human beings. The relationship between major and minor music and our emotions may actually be about to get more complex.

Cultural exposure will always vary, but it seems there may actually be something deeper in music that activates our overwhelming responses to minor and major sounds. Some hints at a universal response to music come from a study of the African Mafa tribe in Northern Cameroon. At the time they were studied by researcher Tomas Fritz the tribe members had no form of exposure to Western music cultural traditions. Could they actually recognize happy versus sad feelings in western music? Of course, they could, but their performance was very much poorer than Western music listeners.

The big difference between Mafa and Western listeners in this experiment speaks to the power of cultural influence and over-time accumulated listening experiences on our emotional reaction to music. Then again, the Mafa tribe did reliably sense something in the music that allowed them to tell happy from sad. What are the major and minor emotional triggers that are common to all of us?

Let's look at the basic elements of sound. The tempo is obviously very important. A very simple minor chord with only three notes, also known as a 'triad' also makes use of a middle note that is closer to the tonic as compared to a major triad. Take for example the C triad chord which is made up of the notes C, E, and G; in the minor form, the note in the middle is E flat which is nearer to C while in the major form we hear natural E which is actually further away from

C. The tonic/root (C) is the strongest note and draws more of our attention, so minor chords like this (triad) trigger more sensory dissonance, which is a kind of tension that stems from the clashing of some very closely spaced frequencies.

The Mafa tribe people may also actually be reacting to sound and emotion associations that stem from the way that we speak. Scientists have shown us that the sound spectra which is the profile of sound ingredients that make up happy speeches are more similar to happy music than sad music and vice versa.

The actual science behind the speech to music link may be new but the idea is a very ancient one. The great philosopher Aristotle suspected that the emotional effect of music was at least partly down to the way that it imitated our own vocalizations when we shout for joy or cry out in pain and anger.

Numerous components make up happy and sad music, including differing and contrasting tempos, timbres and rhythms, but the major/minor tonality is a key clue from which we extract an emotional message. This musical evaluation is drawn from our reaction to the very acoustic structure of major and minor chords but it is mostly down to learned and somewhat stereotypical associations, both ancient and modern.

And now, enough of this kind of theory, let's do some abnormal, but interesting, music theory. I have a little story to tell you:

"That man looks like a sober man, I think I'll have to pay him to cut wood for me." That's what was said of a man who was walking along the streets of Lake Rice, Canada, as he walked by, carrying a sawhorse and wood saw. The response from a nearby man was, "That man is Joseph Scriven. Joseph Scriven would not cut wood for you because you can actually afford to pay him. Joseph only cuts wood for those who do not have enough money to pay him." That was the philosophy and attitude of Scriven, who was a devoted member of the Plymouth Brethren Church. Scriven had a sincere desire to help those who were truly in need and destitute.

Joseph Scriven was born on September 10, 1819, in Ireland. His parents had financial prowess enough to afford a wonderful educational opportunity for their son. He was enrolled in the prestigious Trinity College in Dublin where he subsequently graduated with a bachelor's degree.

In Scriven, the country of Ireland had the prospect of a really great citizen with some very high ideals and notable aspirations. He fell in love with a young

beautiful lady who was also very eager to spend her life with him. But, on the day just before their wedding, she fell from her horse while crossing a bridge over the River Bann and she was drowned in the water below. Scriven stood helplessly watching from the other side of the bridge.

In an effort to overcome his bitterness and sorrow, Scriven began to wander. By the young age of 25, his numerous travels and wandering lifestyle had taken him to an area near Port Hope, Canada. Scriven became highly regarded and loved by the people of Port Hope. He helped and tutored some of the local children in their school work. It was there that Scriven met another wonderful young lady by the name of Elisa Roche, and once again fell in love. They both had exciting plans to be married. But tragedy, which is never far, reared its ugly head once again and she died of pneumonia before they could be joined together for eternity.

As stated earlier in this story, Scriven labored in Port Hope, Canada among the really poor widows and some very sick people. Scriven often worked for no wages and even shared his clothes with those who were less fortunate than himself.

On one occasion when Scriven became ill, a close friend who was visiting with him discovered a written poem just near his bed and asked who had written it. Scriven simply said, "The Lord and I did it between us." He actually thought the poem would, maybe, bring some spiritual and emotional comfort to his Mom, who still lived in the country of Ireland. Joseph Scriven had not intended that anyone else should set eyes on the poem.

On August 10, in the year of our Lord 1886, Joseph Scriven's body was dragged from a body of water just near Bewdley, Ontario. Two monuments have been erected in honor of Scriven. Each of the monuments has the first stanza of his song engraved boldly on it. Charles Converse who was an attorney and composer wrote the musical setting used today for the song:

What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,

Oh, what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer.

hope you got something from that.

## **Final Note on Scales**

Not everyone wants to be the next Jimi Hendrix, John Coltrane, Scott Storch or Herbie Hancock, but no matter the level of proficiency you wish to attain as a musician, learning and understanding your scales is paramount.

There are no two ways about it and also no shortcuts. Not at least knowing your foundational pentatonic and major/minor musical scale shapes and structures is actually akin to going skydiving with-out understanding the basic concept of gravity. Learning your musical scales trains your brain to think like a real musician, and whether you know it or not, it will ultimately enhance your understanding of music on all levels. Knowing scales improves your familiarity with music, is vital for music composition, helps you improvise, ad infinitum. Knowing your scales is key, and makes a huge difference in your overall musicianship.

## **Builds Finger and Memory Strength**

Most beginners are not able to change between chords quickly or get them to actually sound clean and sustained for quite some time, especially when they are learning on physically tough instruments like an acoustic guitar. This is basically because it can take a while to develop the needed finger strength and agility to execute precise movements and coordination of the fingers on the guitar fretboard. To play any chord flawlessly, a guitar player must first ensure that the correct string or strings are being held down by the correct fingers with just the correct and needed amount of pressure/force. Doing this for just a chord chord is not so hard or tough, but actually moving flawlessly between multiple chords is tricky and takes some real practice.

Learning your musical scales, actually builds finger strength, coordination, and agility. Think of your scales as being an exercise or drill for your fingers. As you begin to learn different scale shapes you might not actually notice it at first, but your hands are becoming stronger, coordinated and more agile and that is exactly what is needed to effectively play chords. Learning your scales will save

you some time and effort in all aspects of your playing, even if improvisation is not on your list of priorities.

## **Scales Give/Gave Birth to Chords**

The heading has sure said it all. Actually, our entire concept of harmony and music is based on manipulating different musical scales. When we say “this song is in G major,” we are just stating that most or all the musical notes in all of the chords used or should I say present in that particular song were simply taken from the G major scale. For all songwriters out there, melodies come from scales. Basslines come from scales too. Simple.

Forget about the skeptics, scales are just music’s building blocks and a very essential raw material, it ties everything together and makes the whole thing possible. To know music, you just have to know scales.

## **Chord Embellishment**

Even if you don’t intend to play some scorching-hot solos, knowing your scales comes very much in handy when trying to add some nice flavor to your playing. A lot of guitarists hit a roadblock when they’ve learned their basic and primary chords/strumming patterns.

A really wise musician once said that “It’s not about what chords you play, but how you play them.” This means that knowing how and when to embellish chords, and by that, I mean adding some flavors and flare that goes beyond changing up your strumming or comping is most efficient and useful when you are able to visualize musical scales while playing your chords. For example, the G major scale which surrounds your G major chord. This might sound somewhat confusing, but all that this really means is that knowing your scales will allow you to play some other very great sounding musical notes that are in the right key but not basically in the chord you are strumming or comping.

## **Improvisation**

Taking the previous tip a step further, here we are at the second one which is improvisation. Let me take just a minute to give you the definition of the word improvisation for a better understanding of this point:

Musical improvisation is simply the creative activity of the on-the-spot or immediate musical composition. Improvisation combines musical performance

with communication of emotions and some instrumental techniques as well as an on-the-spot and very spontaneous response to other musicians or players.

Having explained the concept of improvisation, I will say that the most basic and standard practice of improvising on any pitched musical instrument involves playing and manipulating scales and in some other cases (which is not very common), chords. If you really wish to be able to improvise properly as a musician, you just have to know your scales.

So there they are, well outlined—some very practical and theoretical reasons for learning your musical scales. No matter the level of proficiency you wish to attain as a musician, make sure to take your time to learn at least the most basic scales on your musical instrument. Even if it does nothing else, they simply make the rest of your playing a whole lot easier.

## **Theoretical Questions on Scales**

1. How many notes make up a musical scale?
2. The first note of a scale is always referred to as?
3. What is enharmonic equivalence/relationship?
4. List the enharmonic equivalence of F-sharp, E-flat, C-sharp, and B-flat?
5. The intervals of a major scale go as -----?
6. List the three kinds of minor scales and state their differences.
7. List the relative minors of G Major, D-flat Major, A Major and F-sharp Major scales respectively.
8. List the relative majors of an A-flat minor, C minor, B-flat minor, and F minor scales respectively.
9. Write out the intervals in a melodic minor scale.
10. Which minor scale has a sharpened (raised) 7th degree.
11. How does scale knowledge help you improvise better on your musical instrument?

## PART FIVE

## MODES

Simply because a scale is a combination of eight successive musical notes which are of course in alphabetical order does not necessarily mean that any eight notes make a musical scale. Not at all. The truth is, once you get past the major and minor scales, all the other eight-note combinations aren't technically in any way called scales, they're simply referred to as modes.

There are only seven essential modes, each of which are starting on a different degree of the major scale. You still stay within the relative major scale but you only just start on different musical notes. To illustrate what I just said, the Dorian mode starts on the 2nd degree of the major scale.

In regards to the C Major scale, the Dorian mode starts on D which is the 2nd degree in C Major scale and thus continues upward and ultimately giving us this sequence- D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D. The same concept and rule holds true for the Phrygian mode which ultimately starts on the 3rd degree of the corresponding major scale. In C Major, the Phrygian is simply E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E.

Modes are very important when you're building or composing melodies. When you build a melody based on a particular mode, you get to create an entirely different sound and feel while still staying within the notes and boundaries of a traditional major scale. You start and stop in different places (pitches). On that note, you should know that melodies revolving around specific modes are simply called modal melodies.

### What Makes A Mode So Different From A Scale?

This is a regular question, but sadly, some folks who have great knowledge of the two always find it somewhat hard to make clear the differences between the two, theoretically. The major scale which is also called the diatonic scale is made up of a series or sequence of tonal intervals. If we take the C major, for example, you name the notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C and the tonal intervals separating each of these musical notes in terms of whole tones (W) and halftones (H) are:

W, W, H, W, W, W, H

Let's say you have a piano handy or a drawing of a piano keyboard, look simply

at how the white keys are separated by groups of black keys in groups of twos and threes. That is basically repeating up the piano keyboard. The note C is always to the left of two black keys, and between the notes F and G there is not any black key, then there is a pattern of three black keys, and then, between the notes B and C there is no black key, this order creates the two and three pattern all the way up. Any major scale must have these described tonal intervals present. Also, you'll see that for the scale of C major, the two half-tones (E and F and between B and C) correspond exactly with the places where there are no black keys, and this allows us to play C major on the piano using only the white keys. All the other keys do have sharps or flats and those sharps and flats are inserted to enable the Whole and Halftone pattern/sequence of the major scale to be followed accordingly. Looking at our piano keyboard again, if we play in the key of D major, we will need to play the notes D, E, F#, G, A, B, C# D. The two sharps are there to keep the W, W, H, W, W, W, H intervals.

Now, modes are based, as we earlier said, on the major scale and they make use of the notes of that major scale. The point about a mode is that it just begins on a different note of the major scale de-pending on the mode chosen. The C Ionian mode begins on the C note which is the root note, and that makes it exactly the same series of notes as the C major scale. The Dorian mode begins on the 2nd note of the corresponding major scale and in C major, this would be the D note, and the mode is then D Dorian mode. The other modes, in order of their starting notes, are Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian modes. Because you start and end a mode on the note which is not actually the root note, it changes the Whole tone and Halftone pattern, and this is the reason a tune in a mode other than Ionian (which begins on the first note)sounds really different from a tune played in the Major scale. D Dorian has the inter-vals: W, H, W, W, W, H, W! A Aeolian mode (which is the minor scale of C Major starting on the A or sixth note of the scale), has in-tervals of W, H, W, W, H, W, W.

I hope this has not complicated stuff even more for you, but once you grasp this idea of the tonal interval patterns, you will for sure see the bigger pattern of scale and mode creation.

## **Ionian Mode**

Every musician plays the Ionian mode all the time and I'm some cases without really knowing that they are playing the Ionian. That's simply because the Ionian mode starts on the first note (tonic) of the corresponding major scale. The Ionian

Mode contains just the exact same notes as the major scale. The following table outlines the half steps between the notes of the Ionian mode.

## Intervals of the Ionian

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	2 half steps
Third	1 half step
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	1 half step

Below is what the C Ionian mode looks like



### Dorian Mode

The Dorian mode can simply be thought of as beginning on the second note of a major scale. The Dorian mode actually sounds a little bit like the natural minor scale, but with a raised sixth degree. For an example of this mode in use, listen to “Scarborough Fair” by Simon & Garfunkel. This song makes a heavy use of the Dorian mode in its composition.

The intervals of the Dorian mode are below.

## Intervals of the Dorian

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps

Second	1 half step
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	1 half step
Seventh	2 half steps

The D Dorian mode is relative to the key of C, and it consists of the following musical notes:



*D Dorian mode, relative to the key of C.*

Before going another step further, take note:

Modes go all the way back to the very ancient Greeks, and the findings of Aristotle and Pythagoras. Factually, it was Aristotle's student by the name of Aristoxenus, who actually formalized the ancient Greek method of modes, which included the Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian modes respectively. The names of each of the modes were based on the final notes of the modes. The actual number and use of modes were very much expanded in the era of the medieval church, where they were basically called church modes and used in the form of plainsongs referred to as Gregorian chants. The very last discovered mode by name Locrian is just a theoretical model. The Locrian mode was never used in the same context as the other church modes. Chronologically, modes were very much around long before scales came to existence. The major and minor scales we are using today came after the introduction of the various church modes, and they were actually based on the Ionian and Aeolian modes, respectively.

While it's very convenient to think of modes in relation to an actual major scale, modes are in and of themselves, Just arrangements of intervals. In actual practice, any musical mode can start on any musical note. It's just a lot easier to

learn them in relation to the major scales.

## Phrygian Mode

If you've been following the order from the Ionian mode, you'll simply tell that the Phrygian mode is starting on the third note of the corresponding major scale. Just like the Dorian mode, the Phrygian mode sounds like a natural minor scale, but with a lowered (flat-toned) 2nd degree.

The following table shows the interval between notes in the Phrygian mode:

### Intervals of the Phrygian Mode

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	1 half step
Second	2 half steps
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	1 half step
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	2 half steps

Below are the notes in the E Phrygian mode:



*E Phrygian mode, relative to the key of C.*

## Lydian Mode

The Lydian mode starts on the fourth note of a major scale. The Lydian mode is an almost-major scale because of its intervals, but it has a raised fourth degree.

The underlying intervals between musical notes in the Lydian mode are shown as follows:

## Intervals of the Lydian Mode

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	2 half steps
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	1 half step
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	1 half step

Below is what the F Lydian looks like:



*F Lydian mode, relative to the key of C.*

## Mixolydian Mode

The Mixolydian mode follows the sequence and it starts on the 5th note of the corresponding major scale. Like the Lydian mode, it's also sort of a major-sounding mode, but in this case with a lowered 7th degree.

The following table shows the intervals between notes in the Mixo-lydian mode:

### Intervals of the Mixolydian Mode

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	2 half steps
Third	1 half step
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	1 half step

Seventh

2 half steps

In the key of C Major, the Mixolydian mode consists of the following musical notes:



*The Mixolydian mode in the key of C.*

## Aeolian Mode

The case of the Aeolian mode is somewhat unique because it contains the exact same notes as the natural minor scale. Just like the Ionian contains all the notes as the major scale, the Ionian contains all the notes as the natural minor scale. The Aeolian mode can be thought of as starting on the 6th degree of the corresponding major scale.

The underlying intervals between musical notes in the Aeolian mode are shown below:

## Intervals of Aeolian Mode

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	2 half steps
Second	1 half step
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	2 half steps
Fifth	1 half step
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	2 half steps

The Aeolian mode can be used when you play blues and jazz tunes. relative to the key of C Major, the Aeolian scale consists of the following musical notes:



*A Aeolian mode, relative to the key of C.*

## Locrian Mode

The Locrian mode begins on the seventh degree of the corresponding major scale. The Locrian is probably the weirdest-sounding of all the musical modes, because all the leading notes (tones) are in all the "wrong places". Back in the olden days, the Locrian was a mode that existed only theoretically, it wasn't used in actual and real musical scenarios. Today, the story is different because the Locrian mode is used in some jazz music, and in some new musical compositions.

The underlying intervals between musical notes in the Locrian mode are shown below:

## Intervals of the Locrian Mode

Note	Number of Half Steps to Next Note
Tonic	1 half step
Second	2 half steps
Third	2 half steps
Fourth	1 half step
Fifth	2 half steps
Sixth	2 half steps
Seventh	2 half steps

B Locrian corresponds (relative) to the key of C Major, and it consists of the following musical notes:



*B Locrian mode, relative to the key of C.*

## Using Modes in Songwriting

Perhaps, if most of your songwriting has been employing only the very basic minor and major scales, your taking time to learn these benefits can bring some priceless benefits. The use of these beautiful modal colors just makes your art a lot more beautiful and unique. Every mode possesses its own very particularly unique mood, fla-vour, and emotion. The unique and contrasting melodic signatures each mode embodies can bring some extra emotion and pristine novelty to your already established (or not) personal sound. On the extremely good side, modes are not in any way difficult to grasp or even play with. Once you begin getting deep into the game with them, you'll soon see how new and extremely beautiful horizons will open up for your music and songwriting.

Once you've really gotten to know the different musical modes by simply playing through them, you're going to start getting a natural sense for each of the modes and will also start thinking about where you want to apply them in your music and songwriting quite easily. As a general guideline, musical modes with a greater number of low-ered (flattened) scales feel darker, while on the other side of town, modes featuring more raised (sharpened) notes go well for brighter and happier sounds. That is a really simple way to discern or should I say tell which modes will be the most useful and handy for what-ever musical situation you're currently working on. That being said, there's no one wrong or right way to incorporate a mode into a song, and all you can do is simply interpret each one as you see fit and proper. However, as you start picking up on the use of musical modes in other forms and kinds of music, you might notice that in some songs the mode's interval characteristics are being expressed through melody, whereas other songs employ the changes in harmo-ny.

Getting a really good grasp of modes can have a real positive impact on your songwriting. Once you pick up their various patterns, you'll just start discovering that they simply run through many of your fa-vorite pieces of music. Modes also function as a stepping stone to other, more advanced music composition techniques and skills and can open your ears and mind permanently

to some new moods and colors. Give that mode a try right away. You never can tell.

Now enough of the normal music theory, let's do some not-so-normal music theory. Read this:

For almost two and a half centuries ago in the year 1772, the words for this very beloved song were borne from the heart, mind and life experiences of the Englishman John Newton. Knowing the real story of John Newton's life as a slave trader and the rough journey he went through before writing the hymn "Amazing Grace" will help to understand how deep are his words and his gratefulness for truly amazing grace.

Having survived through a rather unfortunate and very troubled childhood (Newton's mother passed away when he was just 6 years old), John Newton spent several years fighting against authority, going so far as trying to leave the Royal Navy in his 20s. Newton was later abandoned by his crew in West Africa, he was forced to be a servant to a slave trader although he was eventually rescued. On his return voyage to England, a violent storm hit and almost sank the ship he was aboard. This prompted Newton to begin his spiritual conversion as he cried out to God to save them from the raging storm.

Upon his return, John Newton became a slave shipmaster, a profession in which he served for several numbers of years. Bringing slaves from Africa to England on multiple trips, Newton admitted to sometimes treating the slaves cruelly. In the year 1754, after becoming violently ill on a sea voyage, John Newton gave up his profession as a slave trader, the slave trade business, and his seafaring, altogether and wholeheartedly devoting his life to the service of God.

Newton was ordained as an Anglican priest in the year 1764 and he became quite popular as a preacher and hymn writer, writing some 280 hymns, among them, was the beautiful "Amazing Grace," which appeared first in the Olney Hymns, which was printed by John Newton and poet/fellow writer William Cowper. It was later set to a popular tune in the year 1835 by William Walker.

In his later years, John Newton fought alongside William Wilberforce, leader of the parliamentary campaign to abolish the African slave trade. Newton described the horrors of the slave trade in a tract he wrote supporting the campaign against slavery and lived to see the British passage of the Slave Trade Act the year 1807.

I once was lost,  
but now am found,

Was blind  
but now I see.

The words of this song carry a much deeper meaning than just a sinner's mere gratitude. Close to death at various instances and blind to reality at others, John Newton would most likely not have written the hymn "Amazing Grace" if not for his tumultuous and painful past. And right now we would be without these lovely words that so precisely describe our own numerous lives and our reliance on grace in our lives.

I hope you got something from that not-very-mundane music theory. But let's get back to modes.

## **Important Points to Remember**

1. A scale consists of 8 notes whose letter names are in successive alphabetical order and the 8th note is just a repetition of the 1st note (tonic) but at a higher octave.
2. Musical scales can be either major or minor. Also, there are three different types of minor scales.
3. All the major scales have the same intervals between different notes, no matter what note they begin on.
4. A mode, Just like a scale, consists of 8 notes in a row, but are not limited to only major and minor forms. Modes are gotten from the very ancient Greeks and (much later) the medieval church, and we can also regard modes as starting on different degrees of their related major scales.

## PART SIX

# Major and Minor Keys

In This Chapter you will:

1. Understand major and minor keys
2. Determine key by using key signatures
3. Make use of the circle of fifths
4. Apply accidentals and change keys

If you're writing, improvising or composing music within the C Major scale, then you definitely have it easy. All the notes of the C Major are located perfectly in the lines and spaces of the treble and bass clefs; with no flats or sharps needed. And, if you're jamming the piano, you just don't have to use those tricky black keys. But on the other side of town, if you're writing music using another scale, you need to use accidentals to raise and lower notes beyond the white keys on the piano keyboard. To explain that, if you're using the F Major scale, for example, you have a slightly disturbing B-flat to deal with.

Now, to ease things, you could put a flat sign in front of every B-flat note in your music. But, you'll just end up writing a lot of flats which happens to be a major pain in the butt. However and Fortunately, there's an easy way to designate consistent flats and sharps throughout your entire musical piece, without notating each and every bit of it. This approach needs some good knowledge of musical keys, which just happen to correspond to the musical scales we discussed earlier in the previous chapter.

### Note

When any piece of music is based on a particular musical scale, we say that the music is in the key of that particular scale. For instance, a song based around the key of C Major

scale is simply in the key of C Major. A song based around the key of the B-flat Major scale is said to be in the key of B-flat Major. Whenever you assign a key to a piece of music or to a musical section within a larger piece of music, it's simply assumed that most of the notes in that piece of music will stay within the corresponding musical scale. So if a piece of music is written in A Major, most or even all of the used musical notes in the chords and melody should not be

outside the A Major scale. Although there are exceptions to this, they're simply referred to as accidentals. Accidentals are discussed later in this chapter.

## Key Signatures

One of the easy and convenient things about assigning a particular key to any piece of music is that it allows you to assign appropriately, the needed sharps and flats up front, without necessarily having to repeat them every time they occur in the music.

Here's how it simply works.

You simply designate a key to your music by inserting a key signature at the very start of your music, right next to the first clef on the first staff. This key signature will indicate the sharps and flats used in that particular key. So, when you play through that entire piece, you automatically sharpen and flatten just the right musical notes. For example, let's make an assumption that you are writing a song around the F Major scale. The F Major scale, if you can take your mind back, has just one flattened note and that is simply the B-flat note. So, Just next to the first clef on the first staff, all you have to do is, fix a flat sign on the B line. Simply, whenever you play that song, every time you set eyes on a B note, what you have to do is just sound the B-flat. The key signature for F Major. Make sure to note the flat sign on the B line, indicating the automatic B-flat note.



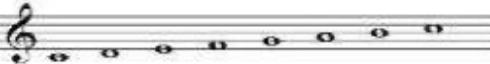
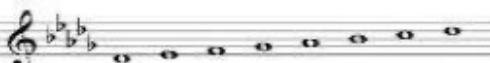
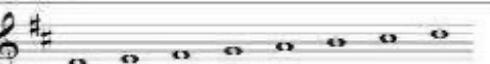
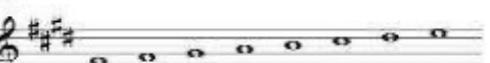
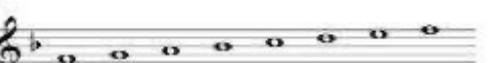
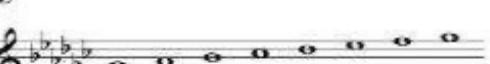
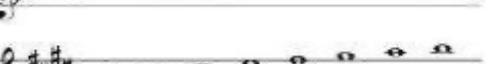
Notice the flat sign on the B line?

Since a G major scale has only one sharp, F-sharp, you would apply the same rule. If you put a sharp sign on the top F line on the first staff, it then simply means that every time you see an F, you should simply play an F-sharp.

## Major Keys

In the same way, there are 15 major scales including three enharmonics, there are also 15 major keys with each having its own key signature. The table below shows what each key of these key signatures looks like, with its corresponding scale.

### The 15 Major Keys

Key	Key Signature and Scale
C Major	
C-sharp Major	
D-flat Major	
D Major	
E-flat Major	
E Major	
F Major	
F-sharp Major	
G-flat Major	
G Major	
A-flat Major	
A Major	
B-flat Major	
B Major	
C-flat Major	

## How to Quickly Decipher Key Signatures

How can you quickly decipher the key signature you're looking at? It all depends on whether the key signature contains sharps or flats. If the key signature contains flats, the trick is to look at the second-to-last flat which is the one that's just next to the farthest one on the right. This note determines the key signature. To illustrate, if a key signature has two flats, all you have to do is simply look at the second-to-last flat sign and tell that the key is B-flat, which is actually E-flat. If the key signature has 3 flat signs, what you do is simply look at the second-to-last flat and determine that the key is E-flat. It's that easy. But what do you do to decipher it if there's only one flat and there's no next-to-last flat! In the key signature with only a single flat, the key is simply F. You'll just have to memorize that one, the same way you will the key of C Major which has no flats or sharps.

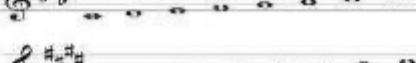
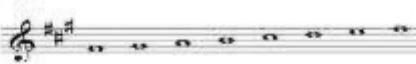
If the key signature includes some sharps, the method is actually different. What you simply have to remember here is that the last sharp in the key signature represents the seventh degree (leading tone or tee in solfege) of that particular scale, so the tonic of that scale is simply the next note up. In other words, Just look at the last sharp and the next musical note up is the key. To explain this better, the key signature with just one sharp simply has that sharp on the note F, making it F-sharp, so the next note up tells you that the key is G, because after F-sharp, the next note is G. If the given key signature has 2 sharps, the last sharp is on the C-sharp note, and the next musical note up is simply D which is actually your key. And it keeps going that way for all the other sharp key signatures.

## Minor Keys

The same key signatures used to indicate major keys can also be used to represent natural minor keys. As you remember from a previous, a natural minor scale is simply based on the same notes as a major scale, but only starts on the sixth note of the scale. This same method applies to minor keys, so for example, the key of A minor uses the same notes and the same key signature as the key of C major.

The table that follows shows the 15 minor keys, with their corresponding key signatures and scales.

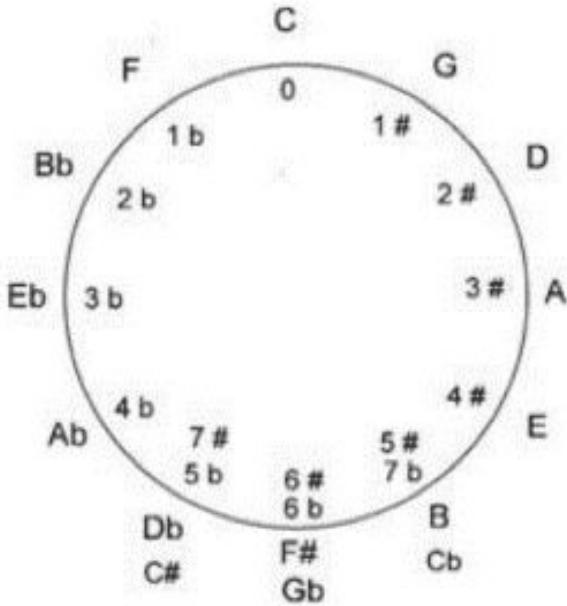
### The 15 Minor Keys

Scale	Notes	Same as This Major Key
A minor		C Major
A-sharp minor		C-sharp Major
B-flat minor		D-flat Major
B minor		D Major
C minor		E-flat Major
C-sharp minor		E Major
D minor		F Major
D-sharp minor		F-sharp Major
E-flat minor		G-flat Major
E minor		G Major
F minor		A-flat Major
F-sharp minor		A Major
G minor		B-flat Major
G-sharp minor		B Major
A-flat minor		C-flat Major

## The Circle of Fifths

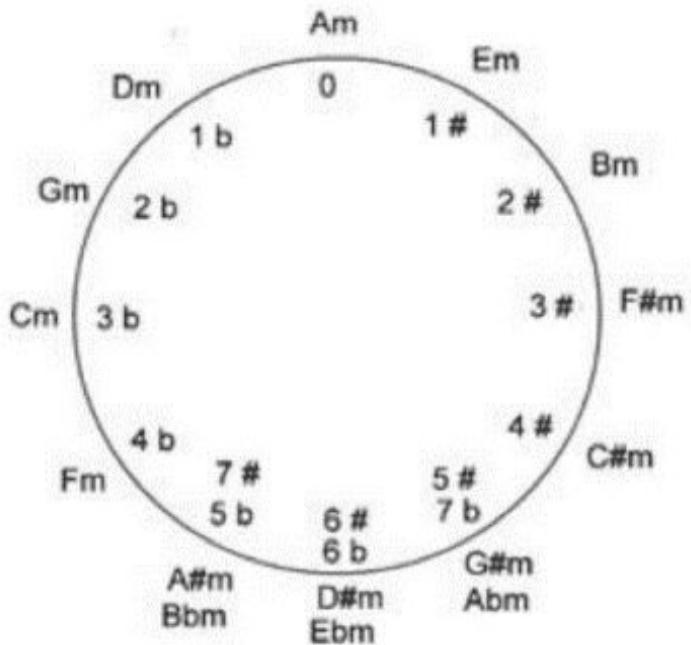
There's a really quick and reliable way to remember how many sharps or flats to include with each of the key signatures. This method is simply called the circle of fifths and it works like this. You start with the key of C, for every perfect fifth you move up, you simply add a sharp. So the key of G which is a perfect fifth up from the key of C has but only one sharp. The key of D which a perfect fifth up from G has two sharps and it goes on and on. The circle of fifths works in the opposite direction for flats. For every perfect 5th, you move down from the key of C, you simply add a flat. So the key of F which has a perfect 5th down from

the key of C has but only one flat. The key of B-flat which is a perfect fifth down from F has two flats and it goes on and on. The drawing that follows illustrates how the major keys relate in the circle of 5ths. When you move clockwise around the circle of 5ths, you're simply moving up through the 5ths (and the sharp keys) but when you move rather anti-clockwise, you're moving down through the 5ths and the flat keys.



Notice how all the major keys are a 5th apart in the circle of 5ths.

The following figure shows the circle of fifths for the 15 minor keys. It works just the same way as the major key circle of 5ths, Just move in a clockwise direction for the sharp keys, and in a counter-clockwise direction for the flat keys.



## Accidentals

When you assign a certain key signature to any piece of music, it's simply assumed that all the following musical notes will correspond to that particular key. That being said, how then, do you indicate musical notes that fall outside that given key? First of all, you should note that you can still play outside a key. And by that I mean, that it's very okay to play the occasional B natural when you're actually in the key of F Major, which normally has a B-flat instead of a B-natural. No one will ever confront you for it, as a matter of fact, certain types of music regularly employ out-of-scale notes. Anytime you decide to write a musical note that is not in the chosen key, you have to manually indicate the change in the played or written music by simply using the sharp, the flat, and the natural signs. Whenever musicians notices the inserted flat, sharp, or natural sign, they will just know to play the note as written regardless of what the actual key signature tells.

These “out-of-scale notes” are simply called accidentals or chromatic (color) notes; they’re quite not uncommon. To illustrate, let’s just say a piece of music is written in the key of F, which has just a flat which is B-flat. You simply want your melody to include an E-flat, which isn’t in the key of F. So, all you have to do is when you get to that note, you just insert a flat sign before the E note to indicate an E-flat note. It’s as simple as that.



*Use accidentals to indicate notes outside the current key signature.*

This same theory would apply if you want to include a B natural in the same piece, instead of the supposed B-flat. If you simply fix a natural sign before the B, congrats! Because you've successfully accomplished your mission. Whenever you change (alter) a musical note with an accidental, that accidental applies until the end of that particular and specific measure. At the beginning of the next bar or measure, it is assumed that all musical notes automatically revert to what they were supposed to be, given the current key signature. So if you flatten an E in the first measure of an F Major melody, the 1st E you will be writing in measure two will be assumed to be E natural and not flattened. The one exception to this rule happens whenever you tie a musical note from the end of one bar to the start of the next bar. The accidental [affected note] carries over to the first note in the next measure. Thanks a million to the tie. The first note in the second measure is definitely affected, as you can see in the example that follows. Also, note that the accidental doesn't apply to some subsequent notes in the second measure. It only applies to the tied notes.



*Accidentals apply to all notes tied over a measure.*

## Take Note

- I have to repeat this again: accidentals apply only from that point in the measure to the end of the measure. It doesn't in any way affect those notes in the measure before and after the accidental appears (except in cases of tied notes).
- Jazz and blues music oftentimes add flatted 3rds and 7ths within the designated or used major key, which is what gives these styles their very unique sound.

If you are worried that other musicians might be confused about whether a note has been restored back to normal or not, it's very okay to use what is known as a courtesy sharp, flat, or natural sign. This sign is placed within parentheses. This

sign simply reminds the reader that the note has reverted back to its original state. You don't basically have to use courtesy signs like this, but in the case of some very complicated pieces, it can be quite helpful.



*A courtesy accidental reminds musicians that a changed note has reverted back to normal.*

## Key Change

Some long and even short pieces of music don't always use the same key throughout the entire musical piece. As a matter of fact, some short popular songs change keys midway through the song. Key changes are totally allowed.

Whenever you change keys in the middle of a song, it's simply referred to as modulating to another key (tonal center). You can actually modulate to any key of your choice, although the most common modulations in music are always up a half step like from F Major to F-sharp Major, to illustrate, or up a 4th or 5th like from E Major to either A Major or B Major.

When you want to change keys in music, you simply show this by fixing a new key signature in the first bar of the new key. It's as simple as that, and it is being illustrated in the following figure. Also, note that some composers and arrangers also do insert a double bar whenever there's a key change.



*To change keys, insert a new key signature.*

The half-step modulation is the most common type of modulation in 20th-century popular music and can add an emotional "lift" to the end of a pop song. The 4th or 5th modulation is more common in classical music of the 17th through the 19th centuries.

On the other hand, if you want, you can actually bring musicians attention to a key change by fixing the right flats and sharps at the tail end of the last staff of the old key and as well as with a new key signature in the following measure.

This approach is just an optional one, and it is perfectly all right to tell the key change with just a single key signature in the first measure/bar of the new key.

The only complicated key change in music is when you're changing to the key of C Major or A minor, which has no sharps or flats. You simply indicate this by using natural signs to cancel out the previous sharps or flats, Just like this:



*How to change to the key of C.*

## Things to Remember

1. Key signatures are used to indicate what scale your music is based on.
2. The indicated sharps and flats in a key signature are automatically applied throughout the entire song.
3. To indicate notes that are outside the current key, simply use accidentals like sharps, flats, and natural signs.
4. To change the key (tonal center) in the middle of a piece of music, insert a new key signature.

## Theoretical Questions

1. What makes a scale different from a mode?
2. The Phrygian, Aeolian and Locrian modes start from which degree of the major scale?
3. How can modes be useful in songwriting?
4. Which key signature has only one flat?
5. Which key signature has only two sharps?
6. How can you quickly decipher key signatures?
7. What are "accidentals" used for?
8. How do you understand modulation?

# MUSICAL TERMS FOR BEGINNERS

**Accidentals:** These marks indicate when a pitch is sharpened (raised), flattened (lowered), or a previously used accidental is canceled (a “natural”).

**Adagio:** This sign means you should play at a slower tempo.

**Allegro:** This means that you should play really fast and lively.

**Arco:** This simply directs that string instruments should be played with bows and not picked with fingers (pizzicato). Arco usually comes after a section of pizzicato, as these instruments bow by default.

**Bar line:** A line that marks the end of a measure.

**Cadenza:** Cadenza is a short, embellishing solo, usually towards the end of a movement in a concerto.

**Clef:** A clef is a symbol that assigns notes to the different lines and spaces on the musical staff. The most common clefs are the bass clef (F) clef, and treble (G) clef.

**Common Time:** A common time is simply a time signature of 4/4. The alternative symbol of common time is c.

**Crescendo:** This simply means the gradual increase in volume at a certain point in a given musical score.

**Cut Time:** Cut time is also known as "alla breve," it means twice as fast. Cut time usually has a feeling of two beats per bar. Cut time is symbolised by a c with a vertical line through it.

**Decrescendo:** This is the direct opposite of crescendo and it simply means gradual decrease in volume.

**Divisi:** This translates to the English word "divided". It simply notes where a section of musical instruments divides into two or more sections playing different parts.

**Dotted Note:** A dotted note increases the value of the note by half the original value of that note. To illustrate, a dot next to a two beats note adds a one beat note to its value, thus making it three beats.

*Double Bar:* Two vertical lines that marks the end of a score or section of it.

*Dynamic Markings:* These are musical symbols and terms that indicate the different degrees of loudness.

*Espressivo:* Espressivo means that you should simply play expressively.

*Fermata:* A fermata is a pause or hold. Usually, a fermata is placed over a note or rest and it simply means you should hold the musical note longer than its normal value. In an ensemble, it is always the duty of the conductor to indicate when to stop playing a fermata note.

*Fine:* A fine is the end of a score or a particular section in a musical score.

*Forte:* Forte is a dynamic marking that means to play loudly. Forte is simply abbreviated as *f*.

*Glissando:* This means you should play with a continuous or sliding movement from a pitch to the next pitch. The symbol of glissando is a diagonal or jagged line connecting two musical notes.

*Grace Note:* This is a musical note of very short value/duration played before another longer musical note.

*Grazioso:* This means play with some grace or simply play gracefully.

*Largo:* Largo translates to play very slow and very broad.

*Legato:* Legato means play smoothly, without any separation between musical notes. For wind instrument players, it means to play with a soft tongue. Simply see slur.

*Lento:* Lento directs you to play slowly, but not really as slow as largo.

*Maestoso:* This simply means play majestically.

*Marcato:* Play with some emphasis or with some heavy accents.

*Mezzo:* Mezzo simply means medium or moderate. Mezzo is usually abbreviated and used to prefix another dynamic marking or musical term. For example, *MP* (Mezzo Piano) and *Mf* (Mezzo forte), meaning moderately soft and moderately loud respectively.

*Moderato:* This means play with a moderate tempo.

*Ornaments:* These are musical embellishments such as trills and grace notes.

*Piano: Piano means soft or simply play softly. Abbreviated as p*

*Pickup Notes: Any note that precedes the first full measure of a score.*

*Pizzicato: This is an instruction for string players to play notes by plucking the strings instead of bowing, this sign is usually followed by the instruction arco which means return to bowing.*

*Presto: Means play fast.*

*Repeat sign: If this is fixed at the end of a musical score, it simply means to play the entire musical piece once again from the top. Within a piece it means repeat the music between the signs.*

*Ritardando: It means gradually slow down.*

*Slur: This is a curved line placed over or under two or more musical notes indicating they are to be played legato connected.*

*Staccato: This is a dot underneath a musical note that means play it short and detached.*

*Tempo Marking: A digit written over a musical score that indicates at what metronome speed to play the score.*

*Tenuto: This means to sustain a musical note for a full value. It is indicated by a short line drawn over or under the musical note.*

*Time Signature: These are two numbers found at the beginning of a measure that indicates how many beats are in the measure or bar and what note equals one beat.*

*Tremolo: This is an instruction that calls for a rapid repetition of a single musical note. The tremolo sign is written over the tail of a musical note.*

*Trill: This is a musical ornament that consists of very quick alternations between two musical notes that are standing next to each other in the given music's key.*

*Tutti: Everyone in the section plays the music. The "tutti" instruction is usually shown after a solo.*

*Unison: Unison means all the instruments in the section should play together using the same pitch.*

*Vibrato: This is a performance technique wherein the person “vibrates” his finger on the string to produce a subtle ‘trembling’ or ‘vibrating’ sound where*

*the pitch changes very slightly (way less than a half step).*

## **ABOUT AUTHOR**

Fierce and passionate, strong-headed and devoted to my musical aspirations, I like to think of my journey like red wine: it only gets better with time. Do you ever take some time out to pause and contemplate about everything that has contributed to making you who you are today? I know it can be hard to resonate with your good and bad, your highs and your lows, but it is also wonderful. And maybe all that I am, my residence in New Orleans, Louisiana, and my choice to pursue singing and songwriting has had the greatest impact on that.

Sometimes you don't realize the powers you possess, the strengths that formulate your existence. And maybe the ability to play the guitar and saxophone professionally is not empowering for you, but it built me up. It still empowers me. Isn't it beautiful when music can be your calling, your mode of expression and the channel that says all the unsaid? Throughout my existence, I have always wanted more people to be able to comprehend the abilities music provides one with, and that more people could experience what I or many music lovers experience. After all, there is magic out there! When all my thoughts failed, my journey as a musical writer and producer began. With more than fifteen years of solid experience in the musical field and as a music teacher, I can say for sure that there is nothing quite like the feel of producing a melody that soothes the soul, a melody that revives your joys. And so, there is nothing I enjoy more than producing albums and singles, just like old times.

I have a belief. A belief that if you have experienced a great joy in life, you must share it. And so, I decided to delve into writing several books and blogs about musical theory. It is like living through a great piece of art..

# **BOOK 2**

## **Music Theory**

***From Beginner to Intermediate: How to Easily  
Compose Music for Piano, Guitar or Any Other  
Musical Instrument.***

**Roy Maxwell**

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## **FREE RESOURCES**

First of all, I want to thank you for your purchase.

I would like to let you know that you can use several free resources that I have prepared for you, which will help you put into practice what you will learn.

In the link you will find a copybook for musical exercises and several audio tracks that will facilitate your learning.

You will find the link on the last page of the book.

## INTRODUCTION

We talked about many things in our previous book; we discussed some basic musical concepts and theories every musician should know. We learned about the staff, scales, modes, solfege and a lot of other very interesting things. In this second volume, we will learn many other things such as: how to read and write music on the staff, how to compose great-sounding, memorable and fantastic melodies; we will learn about rhythm, chords, melody and way more. Moreover, at the end of every chapter, you'll find what we call "unusual music theory", where we will learn about some very interesting and inspiring stories in music history. Stories that will motivate you and get you off the chair to create some amazing composition. But, before we jump right into these amazing stuffs, let me remind you, once again, of the importance of learning music theory - in case you didn't understand it yet.

Who, like us, has had already some experience, knows that studying music can give you this feeling of being a space traveler exploring some strange spheres. Everything will appear new and very exciting, but, at the same time, you won't fully comprehend what's this strange feeling and whatever you are experiencing.

I also know for sure that some musicians will advise you to learn some music theory. They will bombard you with stories of how much it helped them and how it improved their playing and singing. Someone else, instead, will tell you to avoid music theory like a red-hot iron or the plague. This group of people will tell you that music theory will inhibit your artistic, musical creativity and suck out all the vitality and life from your beloved music. What a disheartening and frightening tale. They will go ahead giving you a long list of some very amazing musicians that never studied music theory or never studied anything at all, just to support their claims.

But they will never ever tell you that Jimi Hendrix, Louis Armstrong, John Coltrane, Miles Davis and a lot of others, knew and know so much music theory than we can't even imagine, that's the plain truth.

Thanks again for choosing this book, make sure to leave a short review on Amazon if you enjoy it, I'd really love to hear your thoughts.

### Should you bother learning music theory?

Without even being told, you should know that studying music theory makes

sense - or any theory in general. You might have looked up at some online materials to see what is really about this "music theory", only to find that it is some dry, kind of boring and abstract topic that you are not sure you want to waste your time on. It wasn't just going any way. And things just kept getting worse, because they brought in space aliens and some really funny looking symbols. My job here is to make it more fun and a lot less boring. Going back to the main question, to know if you should learn music theory, we first need to know what exactly music theory is for.

## **What is it for?**

Chess, courtrooms, football and even being a citizen requires that know the rules. Even just to play soccer (not even being a good player) you need to understand that you're not in any way allowed to use your hands, tackle an opponent and you also need to know how to score goals. If you do not know the rules of the game, you will surely not understand what's happening or what you are supposed to do at any given point in time. Even watching soccer or any other sport without knowing the rules is a very detaching experience. That is why I hate hockey! But, the thing is that music is not, in any way, like chess or soccer. Music has no strict "rules" that should be observed at all times. You don't need to know the theory to sing a melody or play any tune.

You should know that music theory was not designed by a bunch of people that said: "look, this is exactly how we will be doing it". As a matter of fact, people just started making music and at a certain point, they looked for the logic behind the entire process of its creation. Probably, they asked themselves what was going on that makes music sounding so good. Music theory describes, it does not prescribe - it's not a doctor.

That is exactly how music theory can help you, or, should I say, help your music. It gives great insight into why certain music sounds good or why it doesn't. Music Theory helps you understand those sounds that you already know, by giving really cute names to them, demystifying their construction process and giving you a very systematic way of thinking about sounds. It describes what it doesn't prescribe.

## **It is like a language**

Children learn how to speak fluently before we even teach them grammar. No one sits to teach a toddler what verbs, nouns and pronouns are. They learn about

the rules of grammar only after their spoken language skills are so close to perfection. This means that we don't consciously apply all the rules of grammar to speak correctly. Instead, we do it automatically. We study grammar rules to gain a greater understanding of what we are already doing and to clean off some very possible mistakes.

On that same note, we do not become fluent in music by learning music theory. Music Theory solidifies our understanding of something we already know. And that is what we are already doing. Music Theory answers questions such as "What harmony can I use here to give it a jazzy feel?", "What makes this melody sound so bluesy?" "Why do this melody and rhythm sound so alive?"

## **Experience against theory**

Let's assume a space alien knocks on your door by six in the morning, you open the door and he goes straight to the point and asks you what is a guitar. What would you answer? Would you explain that the guitar is a 6-stringed musical instrument that produces sound by controlling how fast those strings vibrate? I don't think such an answer would, in any way, communicate anything meaningful about what a guitar actually is to an alien from another planet. That explanation is too vague and abstract. Even though it might make a good entry into an encyclopedia.

Instead of giving the alien such a vague response, you could choose to pick up your beautiful guitar from the corner of your room and play "America the Beautiful" for the alien. That will give a so much richer information to the alien and also entertain him too. The alien would get to hear what the guitar sounds like, he will see how your hand forms some mysterious but beautiful shapes and how each of the strings vibrate, he would feel the metal of the strings on his fingertips (and maybe get some calluses after a long time) and also get to experience, the sensation of striking the strings.

After this beautiful experience, the alien might be wowed and might end up asking you "how does this work?".

This will be the right time to bring up the "encyclopedia entry" definition of a guitar. There is a big chance that the explanation of the string mechanism and pitch will be a wow moment for the alien. This is the time that the explanation connects a bunch of information and experiences, that the alien has already had, from hearing and touching the guitar. This allows your somewhat complex explanation to fall on the alien like a truckload of clarity.

I am very sure that you have had such an experience before, that moment when a person explains you something you have been wondering about for a long time and you have this huge but quick moment of clarity. Before you know what's happening, everything has fallen into place and starts making sense.

That moment of clarity will be such an interesting moment for you, because you might think; "Oh, if I had done this earlier for the alien, instead of opting for the encyclopedia definition, It would have saved me so much time and energy" but the truth remains that the burst of clarity, the wow-moment would never have happened for the alien if you had not first slammed a few tunes for the him. Instead, maybe he would've had an 'who cares?' moment.

## **Always start with some pleasant sound**

The alien's magical guitar experience explains the experience before theory concept. This means that it's so much easier to understand some stuff after we have first gained some practical experience with it. There is a substantial difference between being told that one kilogram equals one thousand grams but, having a weight worth one kilogram placed on our hands, while someone tells us "this is exactly one kilogram" changes everything. Let's think of what is the musical equivalent of having that one-kilogram weight pushed into your hands.

Let's say you are visiting England for the weekend. You could, actually, spend your first full day curled up in your hotel room, studying the map of England, until you can close your eye and sketch it with pinpoint accuracy and with lightning speed. But I think it would be way better exploring the city by yourself, or with someone, making your way through the streets, and asking people for directions now and then. When you are finally back in your hotel room and you take a look at the map at the end of the day (wandering), things will become a lot clearer. You will know exactly how the streets look like, where that one tall building was. And you would easily figure, out on the map, which part of the city you've seen and which not. The map would make even more sense.

Music theory is much like a map. It is not in any way interesting if you've never visited the place before.

Music theory is much like a map. It is not, in any way, interesting if you've never visited the place before. That's why it is much better to learn to play some music first before you try to understand the music. Start with sound. If we do not have experience with the music in the first place, music theory won't make so much sense to us. Music arouses all kinds of feelings and emotions in you.

Those aroused sensations are like tiny hooks that you can attach music theory to. Without those tiny hooks, music theory wouldn't make much sense and would not just blend. These tiny hooks bring the theory in music to life.

## Should you learn music theory?

Like I said before, music theory opens up our minds to a deeper understanding of what we already know. You actually do not need theory to play music, the same way children don't need to be aware of grammar rules to speak their native language.

But, if you are trying to have some more understanding about what you're doing, the question changes automatically. It is no more about if you should learn music-theory, but when you should start learning it. The answer to that would be: first explore the city before you start studying the map. So, as long as you start with the sound, you'll learn music-theory that will make a lot more sense to you and you will also avoid the things that you won't need.

Actually, it can be really hard to resist the temptations of fellow musicians convincing you to study topic A, B, or C to 'transform' your playing.' Have in mind that they actually, might, overestimate the importance of what they are asking you to learn, since it's part of their own unique experiences. This wow-experience might have happened when they learned that bit of music-theory themselves. You should ask them to explain to you how, exactly, it will improve your singing or playing. This question will help you understand if what they are telling you to learn is, in any way, relevant for you and your musical ambitions and goals.

If you do not really know why you want to learn music theory, simply don't. Always be aware of the question you are trying to answer. Why does this harmony sound so jazzy? Why do these notes sound so bluesy?

That being said, if you wish to get started with some music theory and gain some deeper understanding of why music does what it does to you, simply do this. Pick a (section of) a song that you really love and start asking yourself why you like it so much. Try to figure out what it is that you love so much about the song, whether it's the harmony, the melody, a bunch of chords or a drum beat.

Because we are going to be talking a lot about how to read and write music, or songs, in this book.

But before starting, I will, briefly, talk about how music theory helps you become

a better songwriter.

## **Music Theory Will Improve Your Chord Progressions**

One of the quickest and easiest things you can do, is writing a boring and uninteresting chord progression. This happens all the time, in popular music — they use the same four chords but just in different tempos and keys. But if you are a musician, that knows about the Circle of Fifths (which we did on our first book) and chord construction (two important music theory concepts), you will ultimately be able to create much more interesting chord progressions.

If you understand what chords work with the key you are in, it will be such a tremendous help to your songwriting endeavor. For example, as you are singing your melody, you will be able to come up with a more engaging and creative chord progression, quicker than you would if you did not know any of the theory. Once you become good at creating chord progressions, you may even start hearing them clearly in your head as you are singing your melodies.

## **Music Theory Will Help You Compose Stronger Melodies**

As we will discuss in this book, melodies remain one of the most important aspects of fantastic songs. I so much love building a melody and doing some unexpected things with it. I usually play around with notes or even sing until I find the right melody; this seems to me like the most natural way to get a melody.

But, normally, I do get stuck, sometimes, and, in these moments, it would be such a helpful thing to know different musical scales, so that I can pinpoint what notes to strike when. A musical scale is just a sequence of notes that sound good when played together. Like we discussed in the previous book, and are going to discuss more on this one, there are a bunch of musical scales. In each key, these are the unique types of musical scales:

1. Chromatic scales (twelve notes per octave)
2. Octatonic scales (eight notes per octave)
3. Heptatonic scales (seven notes per octave)
4. Hexatonic scales (six notes per octave)
5. Pentatonic scales (five notes per octave)
6. Tetratonic scales (four notes per octave)

7. Tritonic scales (3 notes per octave)
8. Diatonic scales (2 notes per octave)
9. Monotonic scales (one note per octave)

I am not in any way trying to make things tough for you, I'm just trying to show you how you can expand your musical horizons. If you know these different musical scales, the count of melodies you could come up with, would be beyond count. And it would be so much easier to get yourself free from compositional blocks whenever you are searching for a melody.

To explain that, a lot of us naturally sing a melody composed of only musical notes that are present in the chord one of our chord progression. But, if you have expert knowledge of musical scales, you can compose a melody using the notes that are in other chords in your chosen progression. That would be just as interesting.

## **Music Theory Will Help You Communicate better and more fluently With Other Musicians**

I strongly suggest co-writing a song with some other musician(s). You come to realize that you will enjoy it more than writing alone and you might even write better songs. Even if you do end up disliking the song or even the whole experience, trust me, you'll learn something new and useful.

If you are going to be collaborate with some other songwriters, it will be a must that you know the music language, which is music theory. If you get into a songwriting session with some other musician(s) and they bring up music terms into the conversation, you will surely get left behind. Knowing the foundation of music theory will help you communicate fluently and better with your fellow players and songwriter(s). It helps you getting new musical ideas across the entire process, and that would be very difficult if you didn't know music theory. If you really want to upgrade your song-writing and co-song-writing skills (and also impress other songwriters and players), you just have to learn some very basic rules. Since we are going to focus so much on song-writing in this book, let us start with this before getting into it.



# **Ten Very Important Things Every Songwriter Should Know**

There are several things every songwriter should know at heart, since they will only help you to have better songs. You personally may have some other things that will lead to a happier song for you. The bottom line here is that, from time to time, you really do need to sit back and bring those things to memory. Never forget them.

As a musician, I compose music every day. Sometimes they may be arrangements or rearrangement of some already-existing songs (jazz standards, for example), other times they may be original works for choirs or catchy songs for a rock band. Sometimes they're short thematic music for a radio advertisement. Whatever the case, the bottom line is that I create music almost every day. It doesn't matter, in any way, what I'm composing, the following ten guidelines serve as my own personal ques about how to make my songs sound great, how to stay happy while composing and also keep my listeners happy (or maybe sad!).

## **1. There is a Great Power in Contrast**

Every time I create a wonderful musical idea, that I love, two things come to my mind: "Okay, how will it sound like when I repeat this idea?" and also "What do I contrast this idea with?" If it's a minor key musical idea, I always set to work coming up with a major key idea. If it's kind of loud, I make sure to create something that works as a gentle "response." At times, the contrast has to be more subtle than that, but always know that contrast in music is one very important part of what keeps listeners engaged.

## **2. Repetition is an exceptional Thing in Songwriting**

It's totally impossible to find a song that does not make use of repetition. It may be melodic repetition, it may be harmonic, motivic or even rhythmic repetition. In music, once we hear something that catches our attention, all we want to do is hear it again and again: it may be the melody itself, the chords or the harmony, the rhythms or perhaps the lyric.

## **3. Simple is More Beautiful than Complex**

Sometimes complexity in music is great and I love it so much, but not always, at

the expense of the understanding of my listener. It's great (and sometimes beautiful) to have some very complex sections or even phrases that will make the listener not to understand that aspect of the music right away, but simplicity, on some level, means that your music can connect properly with the audience. Also remember that, some simplicity, in one aspect of your music, like the rhythmic vibe, for instance, can create space for you to go for a more complex melody or lyric. Mixing complexity and simplicity will result in such a piece of wonderful music.

#### **4. Songs Are About How We Feel**

The above reason is basically why it's very hard to write a song about algebra, geometry, or our car's brake shoes. This doesn't mean, in the slightest way, that you simply get to write about how you are feeling, but about something that can bring up an emotional response from your listeners. This is exactly how you make that very-important emotional connection with your listeners. Writing about how you feel with no foundational story, just sounds empty, with totally nothing for your listeners to connect to.

#### **5. All Chord Progressions Are Great**

Maybe, the best way to say this, is that all chord progressions are killer chord progressions if they give support to the melody (directly) and the words (indirectly.)

#### **6. Every Song Should reflect Some Aspects of Yourself**

Writing a song takes some confidence and courage. How you compose your melodies, build your lyrics and string it all together, must be a unique display of what is essentially yourself.

#### **7. Every Song Is A Combination of Song Elements**

The song you composed may have an amazing lyric, but should it sound best with a still-standing, not-really contoured melody, then that melody is performing a very important function which is staying out of the way. There are no songs that flaws or weaknesses are acceptable. The coming together of musical elements is always present and always very important.

#### **8. Try to Be Comfortable With As Many Songwriting**

## **Process As You Can**

If what you love is the harmony or chord-first process, then it is time to shift focus to melodies and lyrics. If you always begin your songwriting process with a poem or a prologue you've written, then it's time to try leaving words to the last stage. Why is this? Being comfortable with very many processes is one of the best ways to fight what we know as writer's block. If a creative block cross your way using method A, you won't fret since you have got method B or even C ready to try.

## **9. No One Ever Became Famous By Just Being Good or- Dope!**

Think about this: Every studio guitarist or session player I know is fantastic and perfect, but no one ever gets to know their names, unless they look them up in the credit notes and some other document that nobody ever reads. Being perfect and fantastic will get you gigs, not fame and, maybe, not even money. Fame comes from being uniquely outstanding, and I emphasize being unique. Bob Dylan's, Bob Marley's and all the other Bob's fame as singers and songwriters come from being unique in both singing and songwriting and not just from being good. If you want to achieve fame as a songwriter, you very much need to be good, but you also very, very, very much need to be also doing things that no other songwriter is doing.

## **10. Consistency is the Most Important thing In Songwriting**

Writing a single great song only shows good potential. As a songwriter, you need to write splendid music with more consistency. Consistency comes from composing songs and listening to songs daily and learning from some other great songs that are out there.

# PART ONE

## Rhythm

So far, we have talked very little about this very vital aspect of music which is the rhythm (or beat or sense of groove). When you listen to any beautiful or iconic pop, gospel, reggae, blues or rock tune, it is always that combination of musical elements, like melody and rhythm, that makes the song recognizable, groovy and memorable. Rhythm is a very vital aspect in music, no matter the genre of music you wish to play. Without some rhythm, there is no music.

You do not have to be a drummer or whatever kind of percussionist to feel the rhythm. Every musician has to deal with rhythm, be you a singer, drummer, bassist, guitar player or even a tambourine player. In this section, we will learn how to write any rhythm in music, starting from the simplest to the most complex. By that, I mean from some very simple whole notes to 16th note syncopations. We will also learn about time signatures, tempo and their different markings, and also about dynamics and basically how to navigate your way through any piece of music.

*“Everything in the universe has rhythm, everything in the universe dances” –  
Maya Angelou*

### Note Values and Basic Notation

We will talk about several and different things like;

1. Grouping musical beats into bars or measures
2. Grasping and counting whole beats, half beats, quarter notes (beats), eighth notes, and sixteenth notes and also rests.
3. Making use of dotted notes and ties
4. Dividing and subdividing beats into triplets

The first volume of this book talked about how to work with pitch, but that's only a fraction of the basic music theory every musician, including you, needs to know. In this volume, we will deal with the other half of the fraction, or equation, which is how you work with elements like time, (referred to as rhythm in music). Rhythm is that element or that thing that drives the music forward and gives music its groove and beat. To learn rhythm properly, it's very important you learn about note values. It is also very important that I tell you that this kind of music notation is not in any way hard.

All you will need to learn rhythm are some very little and very basic of maths and how to count up to four, or from 1 to 4. Before we go forward, let's just lay down some very basic ground rules for this chapter. It is worthy of note that, while a lot of songs are composed or written with four beats to a bar or measure: one, two, three, four (1,2,3,4), this is not a universal rule. As a matter of fact, some very popular songs only have three beats to a bar or measure. For example, "My Favorite Things," from the movie "The Sound of Music", and some other tunes, mostly in the genres of blues, jazz and classical, have over four beats per measure. Some have six, eight, or even five. To make it a lot easier for you to learn the basics, in this part of the book, we will only address four-beat per measures, which we refer to as 4/4 time. All the other kinds of beats which may be 3, 5, 6, 7, or whatever, will be discussed in another chapter. And if you can take your mind back, I clarified that all you will need in this chapter, is to only know how to count from one to four.

Rhythm is, and will always be, about counting. When you take a listen to your favourite pop song, just feel the beat of that song and go ahead, tap your foot to the music, and what you will most likely feel, is the beats of the song fall into groups of four and by that I mean;1-2-3-4,1-2-3-4. It's very easy and natural to hear and feel this. Let's go ahead and use a more specific example, which is simply our most beloved tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb". The notes or pitches of this song fall into groups of four; all I Want you to do is replace the syllables of "Mary had a" [Ma-ry had a] with "one-two, three-four" and it will be clear to you how this works. In this particular song, and some other songs composed with the concept of "groups of four", each group of four beats is referred to as a measure or bar. And you can simply visualize a measure or bar as a container, or room, that holds a specific number of beats.

Using the standard 4/4 time, a measure or bar holds the equivalent of 4 quarter notes.

The start and end of a measure or bar are indicated by bar lines like this:

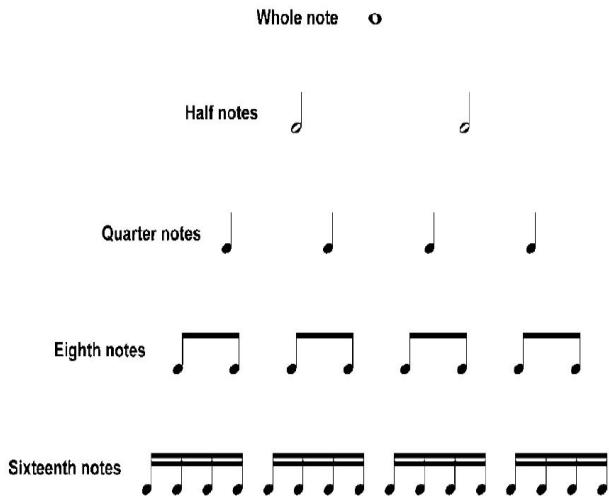


Continuing with rhythm; we count the first beat in a measure as one (1) and also count the second beat as two (2), the third beat as three (3), and the last beat as four (4). There is no fifth beat in 4/4 time; if you get to five, it means you've counted way too far! Whenever you are at four, the next beat that follows is always one. Take note that, anytime four beats (counts) are completed, that

measure automatically ends there (in 4/4 time). What this means is that, when we count one, two, three, four, we complete one measure. If enough measures are being put together, what you will have is a song.

## Note Values

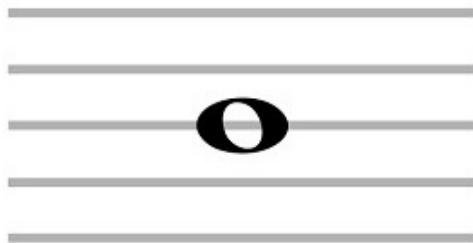
You should know that any time you sing, or play a musical tone, you're also singing or playing a particular note value. There are distinct types of note values, and each of them tells a specific length of time, as measured by parts of a bar or measure. To make this very clear, let us get into a little mathematics (not the tough ones). Each note value lasts for a specific duration, and each duration reflects a certain ratio to duration. Carefully examine the figure below to better understand me. Each smaller or shorter note value is exactly half the duration of the preceding note value. If you can simply divide and multiply by two, this concept should be simple for you to grasp.



You can see how each smaller note is exactly the size of the preceding note.

## Whole Notes

First, the most basic musical note is the whole note. It is called a whole note because, in a 4/4 time signature (don't worry, we will explain time signatures later), it lasts for an entire bar or measure. Since 4/4 time has four beats in a bar or measure, it means a whole note lasts four beats. A whole note usually has the shape of a big empty oval (as shown above), and below is what it looks like on the staff.



Whole Note

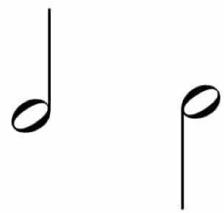
Another name for a whole note is a semibreve

Another name for a whole note is a semibreve. When you place a whole note (semibreve) in a measure of 4/4 time signature, the whole note will have to be the only note that appears in that measure; no other musical notes will fit into that measure anymore. One whole note makes one bar, or measure, in a 4/4 time signature. Also, when you play a whole note, what you do is play your musical instrument once at the very beginning of the measure, which means, play on beat one, and then you hold that tone (or breath in wind instruments) throughout the entire measure. One whole note has to last a whole measure or bar.

## Half Notes

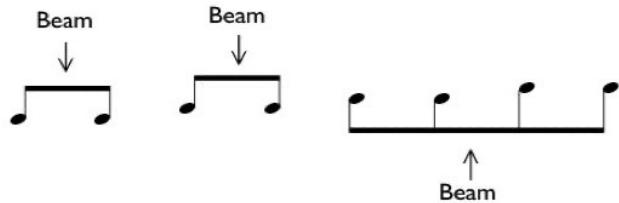
Remember, I said that the whole note (semibreve) is the largest note, have that in mind, and let us go down just one size, or length, and look at the next musical note. Also, remember that I said each shorter musical note is exactly half the size, or length, of the previous note. Let's do some very little mathematics and divide a whole note (semibreve) by two, to see what we will have. The next small note, which is exactly half the size of a whole note, is called a half note. A half (minim) note is half of a whole (semibreve) note. This means that if a whole note lasts four counts, a half note will last just two counts. Because a whole note lasts a whole bar, or measure (in 4/4 time signature), a half note will last a half measure. As I said, a half note lasts two beats, which is exactly half of the 4 beat duration of a whole note. This means that you can fit two half notes in a bar, or measure, because two half notes ( $2+2=4$ ) equal one whole note (semibreve). A half note looks a lot like a whole note but with a line next to it. We call the line a Stem;

The stem of the half note can either point up or down, depending on the pitch of the musical note. If the stem points down, it will have to sit to the left of the note-head. If the stem points up, it sits automatically to the right of the note-head like this;



A half note is also known as a minim.

If the note-head, which is the part of the note that is not on the stem, is on, or above the 3rd (middle) line of the music staff, then the stem of the note should point down from the note-head. But, if the note-head is below the 3rd line of the staff, then, the stem of the note should point up from the note-head. The one and only exception to this golden rule is when you have a series of connected notes. By this I mean, musical notes where all the stems are joined together by a beam, like a series of 8th or 16th notes.



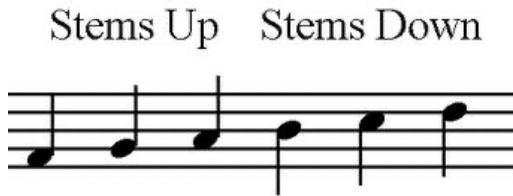
It is okay to place two, or more, of these connected notes together with their stems facing the same direction, even if they move beyond that 3rd line of the musical staff, to make the music much easier to read.



Remember that a note-head is the big, oval (round) part of a note. We always attach the stem to the note-head. Also, when you play a half note, make sure that the tone of the note lasts a full 2 beats. If you, by any chance, let up after the first beat of the tone, you're playing only a divided half note, or half of one-half note, which is what we will discuss next.

## Quarter Notes

Let's keep exploring. From what we have talked about and learned so far, if the value of A half note (minim) is half of a whole note (semibreve), what will be half a half note? Well, without getting it all complicated, the simple mathematics is: divide  $1/2$  by 2, you get  $1/4$ . This simply means that half a half note is a quarter note. Since a half note lasts for just two beats, a quarter note, which is half the duration of a half note, will last only one beat. To explain this, you can place four quarter notes in a measure; one represents a single beat. Whenever you tap your foot to the beat of your favorite pop song, your foot is most likely tapping some quarter notes. Let us count one, two, three, four; each of these counts is basically a quarter note. A quarter note looks much like a half note with the note-head filled in.



A quarter note is also referred to as a crotchet.

## Eighth Notes

Musical notes just keep getting smaller and smaller, as we go. Once again, we're operating on ratio 2:1, so let's just take a quarter note ,or a crotchet note, and divide it by two. The maths will be something like this:  $1/4 \div 2 = 1/8$ .

That being said, the next small musical note is the [ $\frac{1}{8}$ ] eighth note. In the same way there are 4 quarter notes in a measure, or bar, of 4/4 time signature ( $4 \times 1/4 = 1$ ), each measure or bar holds eight 8th notes ( $8 \times 1/8 = 1$ ). To further explain this, there are two 8th notes for each quarter note ( $2 \times 1/8 = 1/4$ ), or even more simple, two 8th notes for every beat. An 8th note looks a lot like a quarter note, with a flag on top of it. If you have two or more 8th notes in a row, we can replace the flags with horizontal stems right at the end of the normal vertical stems. The flags of the 8th notes don't have to be joined together.



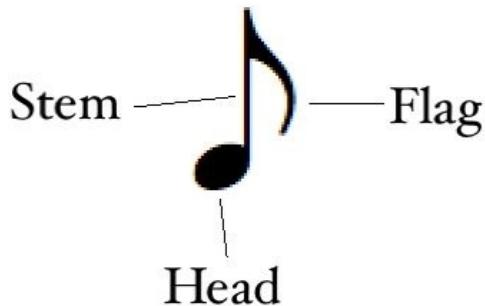
*A variety of different eighth notes.*

An 8th note is also referred to as a quaver.

## A Flag

A flag is simply the little tail-like thing dangling off the stem of 8th notes, 16th notes, and all other smaller musical notes. In the actual sense, it looks like a

country's flag flying off a pole. The flag is always located at the tail end of the stem, so, if the note stem is pointing up, the flag will be above the note-head; if the stem is pointing down, the flag will be below the note-head.



## Sixteenth Notes

By now we should be familiar with how this is going, with this entire division and multiplication. Half an 8th note is (if you do the math) a 16th note ( $1/8 \div 2 = 1/16$ ).

There are sixteen 16th notes in a bar, or measure ( $16 \times 1/16 = 1$ ); four 16th notes per 1 beat ( $4 \times 1/16 = 1/4$ ). A 16th note looks like a quarter note, but with two flags on it. As with the 8th note, if 2 or more 16th notes stand next to each other, the note flags may (or may not) be joined.



*A variety of different sixteenth notes.*

A 16th note is also called a semi-quaver.

Even though we will have to conclude this section with 16th notes, you should know that there are lots of other musical notes even smaller than the 16th. For example, we have 32nd (semi-demi quavers) and 64th (hemi-demi-semiquavers) notes, respectively. Each successive musical note is half the value of the preceding musical note, and is simply shown by an additional flag on the note stem. Let's take, for example, the 32nd note: it has three flags on its stem; the 64th note, has four flags on its stem. In reality, you will most likely not run into too many notes smaller than the 16th note.

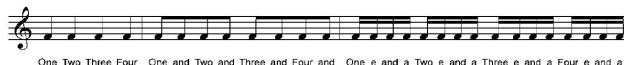
Before we proceed, let us refresh our memory by answering a few but very important questions;

# Let us Do Some Counting

## 1,2,3,4

It's easy to write a series of musical notes, but the real deal lies in how you communicate these musical notes and values to other musicians and players, verbally or by writing. Do you go all-in with mathematics and say things such as "the 14th, 16th musical note" or "the 8th note after the two 16th notes on beat 4"? Do you do all this maths on stage, studio, or rehearsal sessions? or is there a much easier way to communicate, or tell your rhythms and beats, to fellow musicians? Just as we discussed in our previous lessons on how to describe absolute musical pitches by using letters (A-G), we can also describe absolute rhythms by using numbers, and luckily, you will only need to count to 4.

It starts simple, we count each beat in a measure, as either 1,2,3 or 4. So, if you're counting 4 quarter notes you just count them as 1,2,3,4. So, if you want to talk about the 4th quarter note in a measure with a colleague, you just call it 4,". For example, you can just say: "in the last bar of the second line, make sure you play an F# on beat four". If the beat is always 1,2,3 or 4, what do we say about the 8th notes that lay between the beats? It's very simple: count those 8th notes as "and". What this means is you count it as; 1"-and, 2-and, 3-and 4-and,". That is how to count the 8th note. So, if you want to tell a fellow musician to play an 8th note, that is located somewhere in the music, you can just say: "Make sure you play an F# on the 'and after 3". That seemed easy, but what about 16th notes? 16th notes get a little tricky, but it will start feeling natural, once you get the hang of it. Use some funny syllables, or any other syllable you are comfortable with. But let us stick with the syllables "e" and "ah" to represent the 16th notes between 8th notes. So, if you are counting a group of straight 16th notes, you would count it as; 1"-e-and-ah, 2-e-and-ah, 3-e-and-ah, 4-e-and-ah," and you just keep going with your nonsense but meaningful rhythmic syllables. To get a fantastic grasp of this, let us examine the following figure, which illustrates how to count various groupings of notes.



## Rests

If a musical note, just like we discussed, represents the duration of a certain pitch, what do we say, or call it, when we are not playing, or singing, any

musical note? Musically, when you're not playing or singing, you're observing a rest. So, any musical note you don't play is a rest.

When you see 4 quarter notes, you play, or sing, 4 tones, which even it out as 1 tone per beat.

But when you see 4 quarter note rests, you don't play 4 tones; you rest over 4 beats. Each type of note value, be it whole note (semibreve), half note (minim), and so on, has a corresponding equal for the rest and, also, corresponding duration. There is a whole note (semibreve) rest that lasts a whole measure, a half (minim) rest that lasts for just a half measure, and it goes on. Rests are used to show the spaces (silences) in between the notes, and are equally important as the notes you play.

The table below shows all the notes you've just learned and their corresponding rests.

Duration	Note	Rest
Whole note	o	-
Half note	d	-
Quarter note	j	{}
Eighth note	n	γ
Sixteenth note	ñ	⋮

## Dotted Notes

Eventually, you will run into something somewhat different ,which are notes, or rest, with a dot after it. Whenever you run into one of these dotted musical notes, that note should have a longer duration than the “original version” of the same. To be precise, a dot extends a note by half of its original value. Let us get that clear by doing some maths, let's take a dotted quarter note or crotchet as an example. A quarter (crotchet) note is the equivalent of a single beat by default. If we multiply  $1 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ , what we will get is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  beats, so, a dotted quarter note is simply  $1\frac{1}{2}$  beats. You could also go about it by knowing that the added dot is simply half of a quarter note added to a quarter note, and that makes it longer by just half its original value. It becomes one and a half-beat. The same goes for a dotted minim, or half-note. Half of a minim is a quarter note or one beat, so a dotted minim becomes three beats because one note is being added to its original value which was two beats. However you do the maths, it still comes out the same. So, whenever you see a dotted note, hold that note fifty percent longer

than its original value, as shown in the table below;

This Dotted Note ...	Equals This

In the same way we have dotted notes, we also have dotted rests, which works just the same as dotted notes. Whenever you see a dot after a rest, that rest should be prolonged by fifty percent of its original value.

	Dotted Note	Equivalent Rest
whole		
half		
quarter		
eighth		

Another way to conceptualize a dotted note is that it has a duration that is equal to 3 of the next smaller note value. For example, a dotted half (minim) note equals 3 quarter (crotchet) notes, a dotted quarter (crotchet) note equals 3 eighth (quaver) notes, and a dotted eighth (quaver) note equals 3 sixteenth (semi-quaver) notes.

## Ties

Another way to make a note longer is to tie it to another musical note. A tie is a little curvy, or rounded, connector placed between two musical notes; it tells you to add the second musical note to the first note. When you see two or more musical notes tied together, you play them as if they're a single note; for example, 2 quarter notes tied together equal 1 half note. What do you do if the tied musical notes are on different pitches? Well, this may visually seem like a tie, but it isn't really a tie, it's called a slur. Slurs indicate that two (or more) musical notes have to be sounded smoothly in a connected and not detached fashion.





*This isn't really a tie; it's a slur.*

## Triplets

There's another little odd and tricky concept in rhythmic notation, and this one is also a very important one. So far, we've only been dividing beats by two. What happens if we divide notes by some different number than two? Another very common division, other than two, is dividing notes by three; we call this a triplet. When you see the number 3 over a group of three musical notes (or three rests, or a combination of three equal notes and rests), just know that those three combined musical notes have to be fixed into a space that normally would hold just two musical notes.



The 3 notes of a triplet fit in the space of 2 regular notes.

Triplets, usually, have a rolling feel and are very unlike straight notes. We count triplets as "trip-ah-let." We can have triplets of any note value, although, quarter-note triplets (where 3 quarter-notes are spaced over 2 beats), 8th-note triplets (3 on a single quarter-note beat) and 16th-note triplets (3 in the space of 1 eighth note) are the most common kinds of triplets.

Triplets are the most uneven rhythmic division used in music, but not the only one. You can divide a musical beat any way you like, which can lead to groups of 5, 7 or any prime number. If you divide a musical beat by a non-prime number, you're just dividing by 2 or more groups of a prime number. To simplify, if you divide a beat into 6, you're just dividing into two groups of 3 or 2 triplets.

## Things to Remember

- We name note values according to their different durations. Whole notes (semibreve) last a whole measure or bar (in 4/4 time), half notes (minim) last a half measure, and it goes on and on.

- Each smaller or shorter musical note lasts half as long as the previous note. A quarter (crotchet) note, for example, is half as long as a half note (minim).
- Each musical note value has a corresponding rest of the same duration, which shows how long you are not to play or sing.
- A dot after a musical note or rest elongates the value of that note by fifty percent.
- When you fix 3 notes into a space that normally holds only 2, those are triplets.

Before we do some exercises, let us relax and refresh our minds with some very unusual music theory like we always do;

## PART TWO

# Time Signatures

Time signature, which is also known as meter signature, or measure signature, is a notational standard used in Western musical notation to show how many beats, or pulses, are to be placed in each bar, or measure, and which note value is to be given 1 beat. In any musical score, the time signature appears at the beginning of the musical piece, as a time symbol, or stacked numbers, such as for common time, or  $3/4$  for three-four times, respectively. Time signatures immediately follow the key signature, or come after the clef symbol, if the key signature is empty like with the C major and A-minor key signatures.

That being said, in this chapter of the book, you will;

- Understand how time signatures determine meter in music
- Learn both usual and unusual (odd) time signatures
- Change time signatures
- Subdivide odd time signatures

In the previous part, we learned about measures, or bars, which we described as rooms that hold the beats, or rhythm, of a piece of music. They mark the start and endpoints of a measure through the use of vertical bar lines; we also learned that multiple measures, or bars, has to be combined to create a complete piece of music or song. To make things much simpler for us, in a previous chapter, we purposely limited our explanation to measures with only 4 beats, with each of those beats being the equivalent of a quarter note. That explanation alone covers a lot of music, especially in the pop scene and even in classical music. Whatever genre of music you listen to, be it rock-and-roll, blues, soul, jazz, country, ragtime, hip hop, or even afro-beat, most of the songs you will ever hear are likely to comply with this 4-beat per measure form.

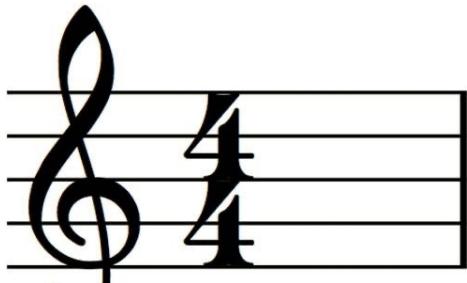
Anyhow, not all music has 4 beats per measure and not every beat in music is equal to a quarter note. To understand all the many numbers, and types, of beats per measure, you will need only to apply a little mathematics, as fractions.

## Measuring Beats

Like I said, music uses a time signature to signify how many beats are in a measure and what kind of musical notation is used for the basic beats. A time signature looks like a mathematical fraction. The digit on top tells how many

beats are present in a bar, while the bottom number shows the note value of the basic beat. Time signatures show how beats are arranged in a particular song or composition. This beat organization is called a meter, and that is why time signatures are sometimes referred to as meter signatures.

Note that, Classical musicians, usually, refer to the organization of beats as “meter,” whereas jazz and pop musicians refer to it as “time,” as in 4/4“ time” or 4/4“ meter”. Now, using the 4-quarter-notes-to-a-bar form we analysed in the chapter before, the top digit in the time signature will be 4. And because the basic beat is a quarter (crotchet) note, the bottom number is 4. So, the form we’ve been using so far is referred to as “four-four” time because of the 4 on top and the 4 below, and it looks like this:



Every other time signature follows this same form. For example, if our measures or bar have 3 beats instead of 4, and still makes use of a quarter note for the beat, what we will have is a 3/4 time signature. If we have 3 beats per measure, but the basic beats are 8 notes instead of quarter notes, the time signature of that piece of music will be  $\frac{3}{8}$  or “three-eight”. Let us keep learning more about the distinct time signatures you’re likely to come across in the world of music.

## Quarter-Note Time Signatures

The most commonly used types of time signatures make use of a quarter note for the foundational beat. That notwithstanding, you’re not limited to only 4 beats (quarter notes) per measure. Some quarter-note time signatures can have as few as 1 beat per measure or as many as 32 beats per measure. Although a 4/4 time signature is the most common quarter-note time signature, you’ll most likely run into its close relative like the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. In a 3/4 time signature, you have 3 quarter notes per measure; we count the measures as “one, two, three, one, two, three.” If you’ve ever listened to waltz or minuet, you’ve just heard a 3/4 time signature.

Another very common quarter-note time signature is the 2/4 time signature. This time signature is very common in marches and some other fast music. 2/4 time is also very easy to play. Two bars of 2/4 time signature add up to one measure of

4/4 time signature. Less common time signatures are quarter-note time signatures, which have over four beats per measure. For example, a 5/4 time signature. This time signature feels a little awkward, especially if you're so used to feeling the "backbeat" of the pop music in a 4/4. But jazz musicians make use of it a lot. An outstanding example is the Dave Brubeck Quartet's popular recording of "Take Five". If you want to hear an excellent example of playing five-four time, take a listen to that recording. The table below shows some more common quarter-note time signatures.

Time Signature	Beats per Measure
4	♩
2	♩   ♩ 1   2
3	♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3
4	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4
5	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4   5
6	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4   5   6
7	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4   5   6   7
8	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
9	♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩   ♩ 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

In almost all rock and pop music, they accent the 2nd and 4th beats of a measure, and this is most often done by the drum player (snare). It looks like this: 1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4. When you clap your hands to pop songs, you're probably clapping on beat 2 and 4. This accented "backbeat" is what gives pop and rock-and-roll its rolling rhythm. This characteristic is so common that it becomes very noticeable when it is absent. It's important you also know that 4/4 time is also called common time, and it is represented by a bold "C" like this;



## Eight-Note Time Signatures

Not all songs make use of a quarter note for the foundational beat. A lot of music, especially in the classical genre, is based on an 8th-note beat. When you have an 8th-note meter, such as 6/8, or 3/8, every time you tap your foot to the music, you're tapping an 8th-note and not a quarter note. So, for one measure of 3/8 meter, you'd tap three 8th-notes and, for one measure of 6/8 meter, you'd tap six 8th-notes. When the 8th-note is the foundational beat, half a beat, which is the "and" after the main beat, will be a 16th-note. Also, if you see a quarter (crotchet) note in an 8th-note meter, that note takes up 2 beats. This is all about some very simple mathematics. When you play in an 8th-note meter, all your normal note values occupy as much space as they do in a quarter-note meter. The most used 8th-note meters are those that can be divided by 3 like 3/8, 6/8, 9/8, and so on. When you're playing any of these time signatures and you're playing fast, you might end up tapping your foot just once every 3 beats, for example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

As a matter of fact, many musical conductors will conduct 6/8 meter with just two downbeats per measure, that will be in the 1st and 4th measures. These time signatures sound so much like 3/4 time signatures or the waltz-time signatures. The table that follows detail the most common 8th-note time signatures.

Time Signature	Beats per Measure
1 8	♪ 1
2 8	♪ ♪ 1 2
3 8	♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3
4 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4
5 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4 5
6 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
9 8	♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Please do not assume that an 8th-note meter is automatically twice as fast as a quarter-note meter. Even though this might be true, sometimes (especially when time signatures change in the middle of a song), the speed of the beat, which is what musicians refer to as tempo, is very independent of the time signature or meter. That being said, a song in  $\frac{3}{8}$  could actually be played way slower than a song in  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter.

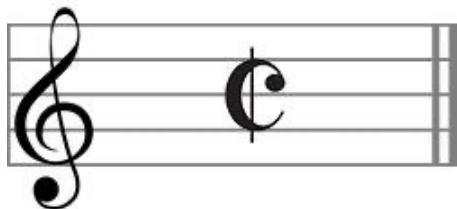
## Half-Note Time

If you move the other way around, and deviate a little from the basic quarter-note meter, you will get into meters based on a half-note (minim) beat. In a half-note meter, each half note gets 1 beat; while quarter notes get half a beat, and 8th-notes get a quarter of a beat. Whole notes (semibreve) get just 2 beats. It's not that totally confusing, it's just more mathematics to handle.

Half-note beats like 2/2, 3/2 are typically utilized in classical music for slower and more sweeping pieces or passages. The table that follows presents the most common half-note beats.

Time Signature	Beats per Measure
$\frac{2}{2}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{d} \quad \text{d} \\ 1 \quad 2 \end{array}$
$\frac{3}{2}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{d} \quad \text{d} \quad \text{d} \\ 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \end{array}$
$\frac{4}{2}$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{d} \quad \text{d} \quad \text{d} \quad \text{d} \\ 1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 4 \end{array}$

Just as 4/4 meter is sometimes referred to as common time, 2/2 is sometimes referred to as cut time. You can show 2/2 meter by either the normal time signature or by a large C with a line striking through it, just like this:



Note that in most music notations, they show the time signature only on the first line of music or whenever there's a change in time. Unlike key signatures, that are typically shown at the beginning of each line.

## Changing Time Signatures

Like we said, time signatures are always indicated at the very beginning of a music piece.

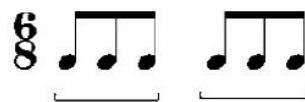
That notwithstanding, you don't have to maintain the same time signature through the entire piece of music; you can change the time signature anywhere you want, even for just a measure or more. If you decide to change the time signature in the middle, or any part of a song, you just insert a new time signature at that point. This newly inserted time signature remains in effect through the rest of the music, or until you introduce another new time signature. Here's exactly what a meter change looks like in the middle of a musical score:



## How to Group Beats

If you see a piece of music written in 9/8 meter and you fret about counting such

a big number (9 is a lot higher than 4), there's a simple solve the issue. Just do as many musicians do: chop up each bar into much smaller groupings. When you're playing music in some odd time signatures, especially those with over 4 beats in a single measure, it's very common to cut the beats within a bar into an easier-to-count pattern. Using these smaller groupings will not only make each measure easier to count; it will also make the music flow and swing better. When you subdivide measures in this way, you create sub-rhythms (beats) behind the very basic beat, which, in turn, makes the music a lot easier to listen to. To illustrate this, if you're playing in 6/8 meter, you could count all the beats evenly as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or you could go ahead and subdivide the beat. The most common subdivision of 6/8 meter divides the measure into two equal parts, each part containing 3 beats, like this:



This is how to subdivide 6/8/ time into groups of 3.

You count the bar or measure like this; “one-two-three; one-two-three,” or “one la lay, two la lays”, or any other nonsense syllables that work for you. Easy, isn’t it? Of course it is, you could also divide 6/8 measure into three groups of 2, or one group of 4 and one group of 2, or one group of 1 and one group of 5, but the two groups of 3 are the most common method to play this particular time signature. Using another example, let’s look at 5/4 time signatures. In 5/4 times, measures are typically subdivided into one group of 3 and one group of 2, like this:



You simply count each measure as “one, two, three; one, two.” However you like, you could also reverse the note arrangements, and end up having two beats in the first arrangement and three beats in the second group, and what you have will be something like this: “one, two; one, two, three.” It all depends how it feel and how the music flows. The more beats you have in a bar or measure, the more possible note groupings you can come up with. To demonstrate this, the following example shows 3 possible groupings of 7/4 meter and they are; (4+3, 3+4, and 2+3+2).



Just to catch some fun, count the notes all the way up to 11, and see how many note groupings you can come up with for a measure of 11/4. Just try that out and see.

## Things to Remember

- You must place a time signature at the start of a piece of music, or anywhere you change the basic time signature or meter.
- The top digit in a time signature tells the number of beats per bar.
- The bottom number in any time signature tells what note is used for the basic beat.
- An odd number of time signatures are sometimes divided into some smaller groupings, to make every measure easier to count.

Now before we answer some questions and do some exercises, let's do some unusual music theory;

Close your eyes and cover up your two ears and then start imagining directing a symphony or an orchestra, or playing a piano you can't hear a sound from but, you are staring at the audience and still playing on.

Many of us know that classical music composer Ludwig van Beethoven struggled with deafness, but not all or even most of us realize how much of a struggle it was between Beethoven and deafness.

Apart from composing without hearing a single note of it, Ludwig Van Beethoven struggled with living in the 1800s when very few understood deafness and it was hindering his ability to communicate properly, work as a musician and even get a place to live.

According to Donato Cabrera, who is the music director of Las Vegas Philharmonic, how Beethoven dealt with this deafness is one of the greatest stories of humanity and not just of music.

## Gradually Losing Sound

Ludwig Van Beethoven began losing his hearing gradually in his mid-20s, after he had already built a reputation as a good musician and composer. The cause of Beethoven's deafness remains a mystery, even though modern analysis of his

DNA has revealed health issues including some very large amounts of lead in his system.

Cabrera also said this concerning this discovery: "by that time, people consumed food off of lead plates, they just did not know back then," Cabrera tells.

Beethoven pretended for several years that he had no hearing issues. He continued to compose and conduct music, Beethoven changed lodgings constantly in Vienna, which may be because of the landlords' frustration with him slamming on his piano at all hours.

That would obviously drive everyone wild in the middle of the night, hearing a person pounding on the piano to be able to hear it. Ludwig Van Beethoven continued performing publicly as a musician and conductor, this was necessary for many composers of the era.

That is how they got their pieces out, it wasn't just composing but also performing. For a really long time he didn't want to reveal his deafness to people because he believed so well that it would ruin his music career and ultimately chances of him landing gigs or getting hired.

His hearing condition didn't go unnoticed, however hard he tried. Composer Louis Spohr attests to watching Beethoven rehearse on piano in the year 1814 and he said that the music was very unintelligible unless one could look straight into the pianoforte part. He was deeply saddened (according to him) to see such a disheartening fate.

## **Detached from Public Life**

Once Beethoven's hearing was fully gone by age 45, Beethoven lost his public life with his hearing. He gave up performing and public appearances and he allowed only some select friends to visit him. He communicated only through written conversations in his notebooks.

Beethoven's deafness forced him to become a very private and withdrawn person over the course of life on earth.

## **Composing Music in Silence**

A very common and valid question is how Ludwig Van Beethoven continued composing music without his hearing.

This probably explains the process: because music is a language, with some rules (theory). Knowing the rules and guidelines of how music is made,

Beethoven could sit at his desk or piano and compose a piece of music without hearing even a single note. (there's another good reason to keep learning music theory!)

Beethoven's musical style changed, however, as he withdrew from public life. His once-lively (vivacious) piano sonatas and other compositions took on a darker tone.

Ludwig Van Beethoven's famous sixth symphony also reflects his different life and phases in deafness. Labelled the Pastoral Symphony, the piece shows the peace of the countryside, where Ludwig Van Beethoven escaped the noisy and booming city life after losing his hearing.

In terms of Beethoven's deafness, the 6th Symphony was a very important symphony, because it reflected the importance of Beethoven as an individual to keep his sanity by being in the countryside.

Ludwig Van Beethoven was a master of the beautiful language of music, which is ultimately about the creation of sound and not about listening.

Beethoven Defied all odds!

The speed of any given piece of music, how fast the beat or rhythm goes by, is simply known as the tempo. A faster tempo translates to a faster beat while a slower tempo makes for a slower beat. You can tell tempo in either of two ways; by indicating the exact number of beats per minute or by using some traditional Italian terminologies. We'll discuss both methods right away.

## **PART THREE**

# **Dynamics, Tempo And Finding Your Way**

In this chapter of the book, we will;

- Learn about speed- the appropriate speed
- Learn how to change the tempo
- Determine just how loud to play
- How to change dynamics and accenting notes
- Repeating sections of a song

If you have been following carefully, you would notice that the previous chapters of this book concentrated on how to read and write music. And we have talked about all the aspects of reading and writing music like staves, notes, clefs, and rests. These aforementioned make up what we refer to as standard music notation, which is the common language used by all musicians. Look at it this way: elements like the music staff, clef, and key signature (meter) determine where a musical note is located. Time signature and note length (value) are what determines where a musical note is located regarding time or rhythm. By placing a musical note in this two-dimensional space, you are telling a musician everything they need to know to play that note accurately, and all the other musical notes that follow. The only thing we haven't learned yet about music notation is how to tell the tempo (speed) and dynamics (loudness) of a piece of music. That is what we will talk about in this chapter of the book, along with some simple music navigational aids to help you move from point A to point B within a given song.

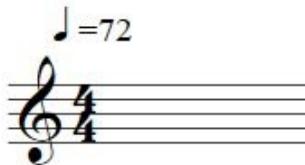
## **Tempo**

In the chapter before this, we talked about how to figure out how many beats are there in a bar, but what we did not learn is how fast we should play those beats. As you'll inevitably see, a good part of music notation markings (especially in the classical music) is in Italian. This makes us understand the importance, and great impact, of Italian culture in the evolution of Western music, and it also means it would not be a terrible thing to learn a little Italian. But before we go into learning some Italian, let us look at:

## **Beats per Minute (bpm)**

The most accurate way to show tempo in music is by specifying an actual number of beats per minute (bpm). This method will give you a very precise speed for your music, especially when you make use of a metronome, or a click track, on your smartphone or computer. Set your metronome or click track to a specific [bpm] number, and it will count back and forth at the programmed speed. Whenever you play along to your metronome or click track, you are playing at a specific tempo. No matter the reason, it is always advised to use a metronome at every rehearsal session. In the classical music genre, the abbreviation MM, which stands for Maelzel's Metronome, is always used to represent beats per minute.

A metronome is an instrument that accurately ticks off musical beats at a specified tempo. Metronomes can either be old-fashioned with a pendulum mechanism or modern computerized digital devices that emit a kind of electronic beat. Maelzel, who was a contemporary of Ludwig Van Beethoven (we talked about him) invented the metronome. Besides creating the metronome, Maelzel also designed a hearing aid to help Beethoven handle with his escalating deafness. When you're playing music professionally (especially in audio recording studios), you will most likely run into something referred to as a click track, which is an example of an electronic metronome. They usually play the click track on a synthesized musical instrument, like an electronic cowbell, temple block, or woodblock. Computerized music sequencing and recording software can also create click tracks for when you're recording music at home.



*This stands for 72 eighth-note beats per minute.*

## Learning Some Italian

The second way to show tempo, typically used in orchestral music, is through the use of some traditional Italian musical terminologies. These terminologies correspond to all used tempo ranges, as stated in the following table. I arrange this from the very slowest up to the fastest tempo.

Tempo	Means ...
<i>Slow Tempos (40–75 bpm)</i>	
<i>grave</i>	Very slow; solemn
<i>largo</i>	Slow and dignified
<i>larghetto</i>	A little faster than largo
<i>lento</i>	Slow
<i>adagio</i>	Moderately slow
<i>adagietto</i>	A little faster than adagio
<i>Moderate Tempos (70–115 bpm)</i>	
<i>andante</i>	A “walking” tempo
<i>andantino</i>	A little faster than andante
<i>moderato</i>	Moderate pace
<i>allegretto</i>	Not quite as fast as allegro
<i>Fast Tempos (110–220 bpm)</i>	
<i>allegro</i>	Fast, cheerful
<i>vivace</i>	Lively
<i>presto</i>	Very fast
<i>prestissimo</i>	Very, very fast

Sometimes you will see these tempo terms together with the prefix and suffix “molto,” which means “very.” So, whenever you see molto vivace, just know that the music is to be played “very lively.”

These Italian tempo markings are just approximated and not in any way precise, and even the order is not one hundred percent observed. The main thing the Italian terms try to get across is just the “spirit” of the music. To illustrate, the word *allegro* in the Italian language really translates “cheerful.” When these markings are applied, we always leave the precise tempo only to the discretion of the musicians or orchestra’s conductor. So, whenever you see a piece of music with “Allegro” written on it, such as J.S Bach’s Brandenburg Concerto Number Six, you just know that it should be played fairly fast (at your own discretion). If you see a piece of music marked “Largo,” as the case of the 2nd movement of Dvorák’s New World Symphony, you just know that the tempo of the music should be fairly slow. This method isn’t in any way precise, but it will sure give you a clue of what to do.

**Allegro**



*Specifying tempo using traditional Italian terms.*

## Playing Fast and Playing Slow

Some pieces of music maintain the same tempo throughout the entire piece (most popular songs do this). Some other tracks speed up or slow down at certain times, and this is often done for some dramatic effects. If a tempo

changes, in any piece of music, is immediate (by that I mean, you move straight from tempo A to tempo B), with no form of gradual transition, what you do is to indicate the sudden change by adding a new tempo marking of your choice. For example, if you have been playing at 75bpm and you want to switch to a faster tempo like 120bpm, then all you have to do is insert a new 120 bpm tempo mark at that point of change. If you're making use of Italian tempo markings, just insert the new marking at the point you want change. If you would rather speed up or slow down the tempo gradually, then it's time I introduce you to a new set of Italian markings. There are several, of these markings, you can use, but the most common ones are: ritardando, which means to "gradually slow" down the tempo, and accelerando, which means to "gradually speed" up the tempo. The table that follows presents to you all the tempo-changing markings you will probably have an encounter:

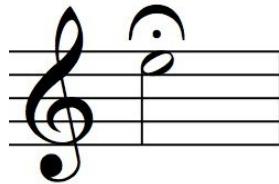
Tempo Indicator	Meaning
ritardando (rit., retard.)	Slow down gradually
rallentando (rall.)	Slow down gradually
ritenuto (riten.)	Hold the tempo back
accelerando (accel.)	Speed up gradually
doppio movimento	Play twice as fast
a tempo	Go back to the previous tempo
tempo primo	Go back to the tempo at the beginning of the music



Decreasing the tempo using a ritardando marking.

## A Fermata

Sometimes in music, what you want is not to slow down, but to stop. Whenever you want to ignore the original beat length and hold a specific note for as long as you want, you just use what's called "a fermata" which actually looks much like a little bird's-eye drawn on top of a musical note, or a rest, and it shows a pause in the music. This means that you hold that note, or rest, for as long as you would like or until the musical conductor cuts you off, and then you start up with the next musical note after the fermata, still at the normal tempo.



## Playing Loud and Soft

We have learned how to indicate the appropriate speed (how fast or how slow) of a musical piece. Now, what we will learn is indicating how loud or how soft a given piece of music should be played.

### Dynamic Markings

Musically dynamic refers to the volume of a sound or musical note. The term dynamics also apply to the written musical notation used to indicate musical dynamics. In music, dynamics are very much relative and do not, in any way refer, to specific volume levels. In that sense, a song's dynamic markings indicate how soft or loud you should play the song. In the sphere of music notation, there is a fixed range of volume levels which goes from very soft to very loud, that musicians used to tell the dynamic level of a given piece of music. These dynamic markings are shown in the table that follows:

Marking	Dynamic	What It Means
<i>ppp</i>	pianississimo	Very, very soft
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo	Very soft
<i>p</i>	piano	Soft
<i>mp</i>	mezzo-piano	Medium soft
<i>mf</i>	mezzo-forte	Medium loud
<i>f</i>	forte	Loud
<i>ff</i>	fortissimo	Very loud
<i>fff</i>	fortississimo	Very, very loud

Just like the tempo marking, the dynamic marking typically appears at the start of the music. If you happen not to see any dynamic marking, it means we should play the music at a medium volume.



*Use dynamic markings to indicate how loud a song should be played.*

# How to Change Dynamics In Music

Dynamic doesn't have to be static, dynamic can (and do) change throughout a song. As a matter of fact, dynamic changes a lot more than tempo and time signatures.

To suddenly change the dynamic level of a given song, at a specific point, just insert a new dynamic marking at that point. It's okay to show dramatic changes in the volume of a song; you can move from p (soft) in one measure to fff (very, very loud) in the next measure, if you wish. To fade the dynamic (volume) of a song, you have to use what we know as 'crescendo' and 'decrescendo' signs. The 'crescendo' sign which looks like a huge hairpin closed at the left side, and widening to the right side, shows that you should gradually increase the volume from your current one level to the new level, shown at the end of the crescendo. The 'decrescendo' sign which looks much like a big hairpin open at the left side, and closed at the right side, tells that you gradually decrease the volume of your music from your current level to the new one, shown at the end of the decrescendo sign.



*Crescendos and decrescendos indicate gradual increases or decreases in volume.*

To easily remember whether the dynamic marking means to get louder or softer, just know that the bigger the "mouth", or opening of the hairpin, the louder the volume of the music. When the mouth is on the left side, and then narrows, that means you should start loud and get softer. When the mouth of the pin is at the right, that means you start with a soft volume and then get louder. Note that 'crescendos' and 'decrescendos' can actually be very short or very long; it may last for just one beat or two, or extend over several bars. Note that, the longer the length of the crescendo or decrescendo, the more gradual is the change in dynamics.

## Accent Marks

If you want to play a certain note louder than the other notes around it, you must place an accent mark over that particular note. When you accent a note, you play it louder than a normal one, or the other surrounding musical notes. To show that a note has to be sounded very loud (or struck very hard, if you're notating a percussion part), you fix a 'marcato' sign (^) over the musical note. This sign shows that you play, or hit, that note extra hard—with a fantastic solid punch!

You can use three other musical markings to show a sudden accent. These markings, like all other Italian notations, are fixed under the affected musical note, as shown in the following table.

## Italian Accent Symbols

Marking	Means ...
<i>fz</i>	Sudden accent (forzando)
<i>sf</i>	Forced (sforzando)
<i>sfs</i>	Even more forced (sforzando)

Technically, marcato is not a musical accent. The technical definition means to play the note distinctly, or “well marked,” from the surrounding notes. However, this translates into a loud and long accent.



*Two accent marks and a marcato.*

## More Dynamics

We have some more musical markings that you can use to show how soft and how loud you have to play a piece of music, although these markings are less frequently used than those already learned. We list these additional markings on the following table.

## Dynamic Markings and Their Meanings

Marking	Means ...
<i>calando</i>	Decreasing tone and speed
<i>con sordino (sordini)</i>	Muted (for horn instruments: use a mute)
<i>diminuendo (dim.)</i>	Gradually become less powerful; diminish in intensity
<i>dolcissimo (dolciss.)</i>	Very gently; sweetly
<i>incalzando</i>	Increasing tone and speed
<i>leggiero</i>	Light, delicate
<i>mancando</i>	Dying away
<i>marcato (marc.)</i>	Marked or emphasized
<i>martellato</i>	Hammered out
<i>mezza voce</i>	In an undertone—literally, “half voice”
<i>morendo</i>	Dying away
<i>perdendosi</i>	Dying away
<i>senza sordini</i>	Without mutes
<i>smorzando</i>	Dying away
<i>sotto voce</i>	In an undertone
<i>strepitoso</i>	Boisterous
<i>tacet</i>	Silent
<i>tutta forza</i>	As loud as possible
<i>una corda</i>	For pianists: use the soft pedal

## Navigating Your Way

We, musicians, know that reading a long-lasting piece of music is like reading a roadmap. You will see various markings in a score that provides you with direction, to play louder, softer, faster, repeat a section, or to skip to another section within the piece of music.

When you're playing a long-lasting piece of music, numbers or letters might be used to show various parts of the song. To illustrate this, you might see the letter A at the start of the first verse, the letter B at the start of the second verse, and the letter C at the start of the chorus section. By doing it this way, other players can tell you to start at a specific place in the song by just saying, "play from letter B". Alternatively, each measure of a song might be enumerated (numbered). If this is actually what you wish to do, you can just say "play from measure 16" and every musician will know what you mean. You need some way to tell just where you are in a given piece of music; otherwise, you will always have to start at the beginning of the music, even if all you need to play is at the very end of the piece.

An extended piece of music (especially in the orchestral setting) is often referred to as a 'score'. To be more precise, a score is the piece of music that is used by the conductor. The piece contains all the parts for all the musical instruments and voices. Technically, the music for each individual instrument is not a score, although sometimes musicians refer to it as if it is.

## Repeating Musical Sections

There are many shorthand methods you can use when notating or arranging a piece of music. Particularly useful are various ways to show repeating musical sections, which saves you the hassle of writing out [repeatedly] the same section two or more times.

When you have a musical section that should be repeated, you demarcate that musical section by a pair of repeat signs. One repeat sign shows the start of the section to be repeated while the other one shows the end of it. Unless marked otherwise, repeat a section only once (that means, you play it twice), and then you move ahead to the next section.



*Use repeat marks to indicate a range of measures to play twice.*

Sometimes, you must repeat a musical section but play it a slightly differently the second time. When you see this kind of sign in a musical score, referred to as a first ending and a second ending, you just play the first ending the first time to the end, and then when you are repeating the section you skip the first ending and play the second ending instead.

First Ending                      Second Ending

1.                                  2.

Use first and second endings to end a repeated section two different ways.

You also can repeat a song section by simply returning to a designated section with a marking referred to as a Segno sign. To explain this, whenever you see the notation “D.S. al Fine,” you simply move back to the Segno marking and play right to the end of the piece.

Another method is the Coda. Whenever you fix a Coda marking in your piece of music, it shows that whoever is reading should jump to the section marked Coda. A common technique is to notate it as “D.C. al Coda” or “D.C. al Fine,” and it means you jump to the start of the song and then play through to the Coda or the end (Fine). The following table shows these and some other common Italian navigation signs.

### Italian Navigation Signs

---

Marking	Means ...
D.C. al Fine	Go back to the beginning and play through to the end.
D.C. al Coda	Go back to the beginning and play to the Coda sign; then skip to the Coda section.
D.S. al Fine	Go back to the Segno sign and play through to the end.
D.S. al Coda	Go back to the Segno sign and play to the Coda sign; then skip to the Coda section.

---

Note that “D.S.” is the abbreviation for Dal Segno, which translates “from the Segno” (or “from the sign” in English). “D.C.” is the abbreviation for Dal Capo, which translates “from the start.” or “from the head” (Capo is the Italian word for “head”).



*Use the Segno (left) and Coda (right) signs to navigate a piece of music.*

## Repeating Musical Measures

If you only have one measure to repeat, you can just use a measure repeat sign. Simply insert this [repeat] sign between the bar lines after the measure you wish to repeat; musicians will understand and repeat the previous measure.



*Use the measure repeat sign to repeat the contents of the previous measure.*

You can use the shown measure repeat sign in many measures. Let us say, you have three measures worth of repeat signs; you play the original measure 4 times which is the original time plus 3 repeats.

## Repeating Musical Notes

If you're somewhat lazy, you will appreciate the fact that you don't always have to write (re-write) each individual note in a piece of music. If you're repeating musical notes of the same rhythmic length and pitch, you can use the repeat signs to spare yourself the trouble of writing all those 8th or 16th-notes in a row.

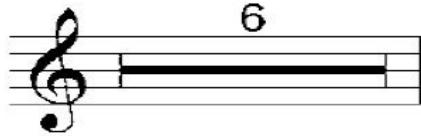
Note repeats are shown by drawing slash notes through the main note. One slash sign means to play two notes in a row; each equal to half the length of the original musical one. To exemplify, if you draw a single slash through a quarter (crotchet) note, you play two 8th-notes; one slash through an 8th-note means you play two 16th-notes. Two slash signs mean you play four musical notes in a row; each note equal to one quarter the value of the main musical note. To illustrate, if you strike a double slash right through a quarter (crotchet) note, you play four 16th-notes; a double slash through an 8th-note means you play 32nd-notes. The table that follows shows some very common note-repeat lengths.

## Note Repeat Markings

You can also use note repeat signs on dotted musical notes. When you fix a single slash on a dotted musical note, you play 3 notes of the next-higher length; when you put a double slash on a dotted note, you play six notes of the 2nd higher value.

## Repeating Musical Rests

There's one last puzzle about note repetition that you need to know and it is about the rest; by that, I mean not playing any note. In orchestral music, and some other kinds of music, each instrument spends a lot of time not playing a single note. What you do not play is just as vital as what you play. While the musical composer could show all this inactivity by writing lots of individual measures full of whole note rests, it is more appropriate, and a lot easier, to show the total number of measures of rest. This is achieved by using a multiple-measure rest marking in a single measure, with the exact number of rests written above the rest. The number shows how many bars of rest the player is required to observe. To illustrate, a multiple-measure rest with 6 written above shows that that the player is supposed to rest for 6 measures.



## Things to Remember

- We can use traditional Italian markings to show the tempo of a piece of music or use specific “beats per minute” notation.
- You can also show changes in musical tempo by using Italian markings such as ritardando, which means slow down and accelerando, which means speed up.
- The volume (dynamic) level of any piece of music is usually indicated by the use of traditional Italian [dynamic] markings like pianissimo (pp) and fortissimo (ff).
- You show changes in volume (dynamics) by using crescendo markings which means get louder and decrescendo markings which means get softer.
- When you want a single musical note played louder than normal, just use an accent to show that.
- You walk through an entire piece of music using repeat signs and various other Italian signs. For example, D.C. al Coda means go back to the start, play to the Coda marking; then skip to the Coda section.

Are you enjoying this book? If so, I'd be really happy if you could leave a short review on Amazon, it means a lot to me! Thank you.

## Theoretical Questions

1. What does the following dynamic stand for, in a piece of music; *calando, dolcissimo (dolciss.), diminuendo (dim.), meza voce, and marcato (marc.)?*
2. What is dynamic in music?
3. What is the full meaning of D. C?

## **PART FOUR**

### **Melodies And Tunes**

In this part we will learn how to put rhythms and tones together to create what is known as a melody; then, we will learn how to add some chords to melodies. We will also learn all about chord progressions and song structure or forms. You will learn everything you need to know to compose your own songs and pieces of music.

Before we start this chapter properly, let's look at what a melody is;

Think of your favorite song. What part of the song sticks to your memory? I mean, what's the part you always remember? Is it the chord progression? Is it the bass guitar part? I don't think it is either of the aforementioned; actually, I think it's the melody that sticks the most to your brain. Melodies are the most memorable part of a song. But [sorry to disappoint you], they're also the hardest part of a song to write. Coming up with great melodies can be very challenging, because it seems like they have all already been used. It's like everything has already sung or written. Do not fret about what I just said, it's not true.

There's an enormous world of incredible new and beautiful melodies out there waiting to be written. You only have to know how music theory works and then know how to find those beautiful melodies. In this part of the book, I'll show you what a melody is, why they stick so much in your brain, and the basic tools you need to write melodies.

### **What is Melody?**

Before we go into detail, I will briefly tell you that melody is a linear pattern of musical notes the listener perceives as a single entity. The melody of a song is the prime ground to the backing elements of it, like rhythm and harmony, and is also a combination of pitch and rhythm. Series of notes that make up a melody is musically satisfying and is often the most memorable part of a song.

When you sing "Merry Christmas" to your friends and family, you just sing the melody.

From those really catchy hooks to those soul-touching electric guitar riffs, melodies establish the music you know and cherish, since they are the part of music you are most likely never to forget. So, melodies are vital in all forms of music. Melodies are being produced through the human voice and any other

musical instrument that produces pitches, and these could be: organs, marimbas, flutes, saxophones, synthesizers, trumpets, guitars, etc.

Just be aware that there's a tremendous difference between harmony and melody: a melody turns into harmony when distinct notes are placed above, or below, each other and are played at the same time. This is simply how chords, instrumental, and vocal harmonies are built. As we will write our own melodies, It's very important to remember that melodies are moving (linear) lines of single musical notes.

## **How to make use of melodies in your music**

Even though we are still going deep into this, I'll ask you to think about melodies like a scene in your favourite movie or play. Your chords (harmony) are what create the scene, and melodies are the major characters on the stage that act out the story. A fantastic melody will capture and hold the listener's attention. Songwriters, music producers, guitar players, pianists, and composers use melodies in their music to tell stories and give listeners a thing or two to remember and connect with.

The most popular way to use melodies in music is through musical verses, choruses, and bridges vocal lines; but instrumental melodies are also very important.

In This Chapter we will:

- Create a melody from rhythms and tones
- Analyze existing melodies
- Compose our first melody
- Discover what makes a melody memorable we also learned

In the previous parts of this book, we learned all about notes and pitches, values (lengths) and rhythms. Standing alone, musical pitches and rhythms mean little to nothing. But when you mix them, they create something amazing - a melody.

A melody, as we discussed earlier, is defined as a meaningful and pleasing progression of tones and rhythms, or we can simply say that is a tune set to a beat. But pay close attention to that word "meaningful." A melody isn't just a random or haphazard conglomeration of musical notes, they have to relate to and follow-through from each other. What I'm saying, basically, is that a melody has to make sense, or else it's just going to be a bunch of noise.

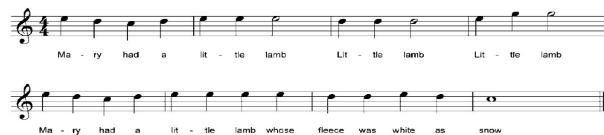
Like we said in the introductory parts of this chapter, a melody is the most

memorable part of a song. It is the track you sing, the musical notes you hum, the line that stays in your mind and brain long after the CD has ended, or the band has stopped jamming. The best musical melodies have some emotional strikes; they can make us jump with joy or sink into deep sadness.

When played or created right, melodies can tell a story without making use of words, or give a solid backing to the meaning of a song's lyrics. If you wish to compose, or arrange, music or, even improvise to an existing composition, it's a must that you know how to create a memorable and pleasing melody. That's where this chapter comes in, where all is about the art of melody.

## How to Combine Musical Tones and Rhythms

If you take your mind back to the previous chapters, you will remember how we talked about various ways to describe the tones in the popular song "Mary Had a Little Lamb." After that, we finally settled on the traditional naming of musical tones using the letters A – G, we assigned each tone in the song to a letter corresponding to its exact pitch; any musician who read the letters knows just the exact tones to sing or play. Assigning musical tones, of course, is only part of the lengthy story. When you sing the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb," you also give each musical tone a specific rhythmic value (length); each musical tone takes up a particular place in time. The beat or rhythm of the song is shown by using different note values which can be: half (minim) notes, and the quarter (crotchet) notes that we know as music notation. By putting together the pitch values with the rhythmic lengths, we can now properly notate the entire melody of the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb." The musical notes on the staff tell us exactly what pitches to sing; the note lengths (values) tell us exactly how long to sing each musical pitch. The result looks something like this:



This is the complete melody for "Mary Had A Little Lamb"

All musical melodies are described by using similar notations. You fix the key signature and the time signature first, and then, fill in the musical notes of the melody from there. Normally, you have to arrange the musical notes within bars or measures, with each measure holding just the right number of beats. When you're through writing down the musical notes, you have just written down your melody.

## **Often-Used Melodic Techniques**

Every single song has a melody. Some longer musical pieces, like some orchestral music, usually have more than one melody. Some musical melodies comprise many parts, with distinct parts repeated in different sections of the song itself. No matter the way the music is arranged, the melody remains the heart of the song and it is the part you should be able to hum, sing or even whistle all by itself, with no other musical instruments needed. To get a good feel for how melodies are built, let's just take a look at some melodies from some well-known musical pieces. You will see that although they all have their distinct sound and feel, these melodies also have a lot of attributes and factors in common.

### **Dvorak's New World Symphony**

Let us start with a tune from Antonin Dvorak's Symphony number 9 in the key of E minor titled "From the New World" and more popularly recognized as the New World Symphony. This is a very popular orchestral piece, and it consists of several different sections; the melody we will take a look at, is just one of the many melodies used throughout this song, and this is how it goes:



This is one of the major melodies in Dvorak's New World Symphony.

First, let's have a look at the structure of this melody. As shown, the time signature for this melody is 4/4 time, so, there are four quarter-note (crotchet) in each of the measures. The key signature of the melody is D, because it has five flats. When you listen to this symphony, you listen to a allegro (happy), which means it's written in a major key, D Major, precisely. this piece is four measures long. If you take a look at, or take a listen to, this melody carefully, you will see or hear that it breaks into 2 two-measure phrases. The first two measures stop on an E, and that feel like an ending musicalnote (E is the second note in the scale of D Major); this sets up a kind of musical tension, that you want to hear solved. The second two measures, resolve the tension by repeating, or should I say resounding, the first two measures but ending in a more satisfying musical tone which is the D. this note is the tonic (root) of the scale.

This is a very common compositional technique; setting up some musical tension in the first part of the melody then resolving it in the second one. This

greatly contributes to make a very interesting melody; if you think of it, it's also a very meaningful (logical), symmetrical, and an-almost mathematical [musical] construction technique. If you take a look at it as some mathematical formula, the first half of this melody contributes (equals) to the second one. Another musical technique used in this melody, is the repetition of specific beats or rhythms. Take a look at the rhythmic pattern; dotted 8th-note, 16th-note and quarter note. Notice how the [“doom de duh”] pattern is sounded twice in the first measure, and twice again in the third measure of the music, establishing a type of rhythmic signature for the entire musical piece. This beat repetition helps to give familiarity to the listener; once you hear the rhythm, and you hear it again, it feels very familiar; almost very comfortable. As a matter of fact, every listener expects to hear some repetition; if every measure of a melody differs completely from all the previous measures, then it will be extremely difficult to remember it. This applies also when you improvise: Repetition is very necessary in any form of composition.

## J. S Bach's Minuet in G

The next music we are using as an example is J. S Bach's Minuet in G. Although, you might be somehow familiar with this piece, as the melody of the popular song “A Lover’s Concerto,” rendered by the Toys in the mid-1960s. This melody differs from Dvorak’s one in several ways. First, it is composed in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time (because it is a minuet); not 4/4 time. Second, it is in the key of G and it is based on the G Major scale. Beyond those mentioned differences, there are many similar compositional techniques in use. Note the beat (rhythmic) repetition between measures one to two and three to four, and the continued repetition of the first bar in bar 5 through 7. Also, note the little tension created in bar 4, which is the end of the first half of the melody, it makes it sound like there’s some more coming and then resolves it in the second half of the melody.



*The melody for Bach’s Minuet in G—also appropriated for the pop song “A Lover’s Concerto.”*

There’s some other thing that is very interesting about this specific melody. The first half of the melody has a very consistent upward motion while the second half makes use of downward motion to take you back to where you started. Even though not all the musical notes go up or down, the very general flow of this

melody moves in that direction, and thus, pushes the melody forward. It is very important that you have some sort of motion in a melody, or you'll force the listener to sleep. It doesn't matter where the motion lies, it just needs to be there, to help the melody get from point one to point two.

## Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

Another song is the traditional folk song titled "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore." The words to this song, as simple as they are, can actually help us visualize the melodic form. When you read the words of the song, you can clearly see that the song is made up of two near-identical halves; regarding rhythm. The first time, we sing that Michael rows his boat ashore, the melody of that part has a slight upward motion and also ends with some bit of tension on the fifth note of the "A" scale. The second time, we sing that Michael goes boating, the melody of the song sways slightly downward and resolves itself by ending on the root, or tonic of the key of D. You can feel some symmetry, tension, repetition and release. They use these compositional techniques over and over, to simply create really beautiful and memorable melodies.

The first two-quarter notes before the starting measure are referred to as pickup notes; that little half (first) measure is referred to as a pickup measure. You utilize pickup notes, and measures, when the melody actually kicks in before the first beat of the first measure or bar.

## Canon in D by Pachelbel

Our last melody is a bit different from the ones we've analysed so far. That's because rhythmically it's really simple, since it has nothing but half notes. You've probably heard this melody countless times, it's actually Johann Pachelbel's Canon in D, which is sometimes just called to "Pachelbel's Canon". It has been used in several original films in Hollywood and television shows. You even might have heard this popular melody in the background of an advertisement for GE light bulbs back in the 1990s. And also, listen to Coolio's "C U When You Get There". In any case, it's an amazing and interesting melody, despite its simplicity in rhythm. It does not always have to be complicated or complex to sound good!

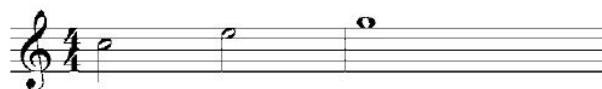
The “Canon In D” melody is different because it doesn’t use a lot of repetition or symmetry like the melodies we have analysed so far, except for the repeated half (minim) notes. It is the stepwise intervals between the musical notes that shoot this melody forward; every pitch leaning forward to the next pitch, one after the other, in an enormous spinning circle of tones. And then, the last note, which is C#, is the leading tone (7th tone) of the D Major scale; you leap back to F# note (a third of the scale) and start again from afresh. The point of analysing this melody is to prove that you don’t need fancy rhythms to compose an amazing and memorable melody. Some very pure musical tones, played in a very simple manner, can still be quite lyrical- only if you pick the right notes.

Note that the melody portrayed in Pachelbel’s Canon in D is just the first four bars of a much more elaborate melody. The musical form, that is a canon, used in this piece is like a round, where the melody begins in one part and then continues, while other musical parts start with the same melody starting in the first part. In another part of this book, we will learn more about the canon and some other musical forms.

## Let’s Compose Our First Melody

Now that we have learned some techniques, we can create an amazing, or maybe not, melody, as the case may be. Let’s put those learned techniques to work. As we learned with Pachelbel’s Canon In D, a melody doesn’t have to include some very complex rhythms to sound great. Just the right musical notes, on the right pitches, are what we need to start any new melody. One of the principal rules of composing music is to base your melody on a specific musical scale. And, as you will learn in another chapter, there are three musical notes in a scale, which, when sounded together, create what we know as a major triad. These three musical notes represent an agreeable place to start for our first melody. For simplicity's sake, let us begin our composition in the key of C, and the C Major scale to be precise. The three musical notes we want to make use of are the tonic (root), the third (mediant), and the fifth (dominant) and these notes are C, E, and G. So, let’s begin our melody with two half (minim) notes and a whole (semibreve) note, starting with C and moving up to G on the whole note.

And with that, the first two measures of our melody will look something like this;



Let's first analyse these first two bars. In case you want to give this melody a little more of a flow, feel free to fill in the blanks among these three musical notes by adding notes in the step between each musical pitch. We will do this by turning the half (minim) notes into quarter (crotchet), and adding some passing tones between the C and E note, and also the E and G. what that means is that we'll go from C to D to E, and then from E to F to G. The result looks something like this:



*The first two measures, with passing tones added.*

You must be wondering what a passing tone is; a passing tone is just a subsidiary musical tone you have to pass by to move from one important musical note to another. Because passing tones are not part of the fundamental chord structure, they are often situated between two of the musical notes, in a triad.

Now let's get back to analyse the melody, you can see that we are still left with that single whole note (semibreve) sitting there, at the last bar. It's not bad, if we leave it like that, but, doing that makes this part of our melody sound more like a simple major scale, which it is! Luckily, we can add some more interest, by using another compositional technique, known as a neighbouring tone, in this case, you land on the main musical note, which is the G, in this case, move slightly to an adjacent note, and then come back to rest on the main note, which is the G, again. The result will sound a little like "duu-de-duu", which is slightly more compelling than a plain "duu." You can fix neighbouring tones just above or below the main musical tone and, for our little melody, we will use the neighbouring tone just above the G note—which happens to be an A note. Keeping the beat (rhythm) simple, we will now begin the second bar with a quarter (crotchet) note on G, follow it by another quarter note on A and a half (minim) note on G. The result will be this:



*Embellishing the melody with a neighboring tone.*

Before we go on with the analysis, let's get something clear. A neighbouring tone is created by starting on a musical pitch and then moving up or down by a step, that can be either half or whole, and then going back to the original musical pitch. This tone is the note that "neighbours" the original musical one. Just like a

passing tone, a neighbouring one is usually not one of the three musical notes in the fundamental chord triad.

The above melody is a nice simple one—but it's actually only half of one melody. Anytime a melody ends on the 5th note (dominant) of the scale, like our, there is always some melodic tension. When you listen to this melody, all you want to do is solve that tension, and maybe, somehow, get the melody back to where it started, on C. There's an easy way to do this, of course, and all you will have to do is to create a similar mirroring image of the first bars, but this time with a downward motion from the G to the C note. The number one thing we will do is to copy the first bar into a new 3rd bar, with the difference that we will copy it with the first note beginning on G, and with the quarter (crotchet) notes moving down in a G F E D motion. Note that this motion (progression) puts two of the C Major triad note, which are C and E, on the primary beats of the bar or measure, beat one and three. Then we will end this musical run with a whole note (semibreve) in the fourth bar, placed on the tonic note which is C. Your completed melody will look like this:



*Your completed melody—play it loud and proud!*

That was not in any way difficult. We know that this melody will not win an award, but even at that, it is still a very legitimate melody, and it is very easy to sing and remember. Believe me, I have heard way worst melodies, so let us praise ourselves a little. The major thing here is that you've seen that composing a melody is easy, as long as you know the basic theory that is behind music composition.

## Things that Make A Melody Memorable

All of this brings us to a very vital question: How exactly can we create a memorable melody? It is important to have a little inspiration and some soul, but, you can also make use of some very reliable compositional techniques, not only to make sure that you create a melody that work, but also that sticks in the listener's memory. We will go through several techniques, with the warning that these aren't fundamental “rules”: it's very possible to do the opposite of what I suggest here and still create a remarkable melody. What I am trying to say is that there must be some art involved in the entire composition process.

## Focus on a Pitch

What we want from our melodies it to be more like a hunting domestic animal, who knows exactly where home is and finds its way back there at the end of the hunting day. Here, what we refer to as “home” of a melody has to be a specific musical pitch. When we pick one, our melody can then spin around it. We can begin and end on that pitch. Also, important, the other musical notes in the melody can play around that same pitch, or just land on it, once in a while. Note that this home pitch doesn’t have to be the tonic note, you can make your home the third note, or even the fifth, but, advisably, not the second, sixth or the seventh note, since these notes are less related to the tonic triad of 1, 3, and 5. To illustrate this, take a listen to the following melody. The melody is written in the key of G but it revolves around the home pitch of B which is a third of the scale.



*A four-measure melody in the key of G, which hovers around the third of the scale (B).*

What we really want to avoid is having each measure of our melody centre on a different musical pitch. If our melody wanders around in this way, without a central place we can call home, we won’t know how to end our melody and we will not know where home is. The fundamental rule is that you always have to end at home. Most of the memorable melodies we know, make use of the home pitch to give some meaning to the melodic flow. As a matter of fact, it would be amazing if your audience can listen to some section of your melody, and, because of the dominance of the home note, they hum the end of the melody before they can even hear you play it. When you don’t conclude your melody on the home, or expected, note, what you create is an unresolved tension that can unsettle the listeners.

Even if it is still okay to fix that kind of tension right in the middle of your melody, what you do not want is to end your melody with that tension. What you want is to solve your melody, so that there is a feeling of accomplishment at the end of the music. What you really want to avoid is a melody that wanders around pointlessly. Always trust your ear to be your guide. Sing, or play, over your melody and see if it goes well, or if you are feeling it at all. It’s a little like writing some good poetic paragraphs; when you are finished, the advisable thing to do is to sing or play it aloud and see if it really works.



*Always end your melody with a resolved tension.*

## Stick to A Scale

When you're selecting the specific musical notes for your melody, it's an excellent idea to pick a particular musical scale, and then just stay within the seven notes of it. Let's say, you decide to write your melody in the F Major key, your melody will include the musical notes F, G, A, B, C, D and E. if used properly, none of these notes will sound odd in your melody.



*A melody that uses the F Major scale.*

Also, keep in mind that, if you're writing your melody in the F Major key and you throw a D into your melody, that D note will sound odd. Although it's still very possible to use this non-scale (chromatic or colour) notes in your melody, it's actually something that you, as a starter, should not try. Composing a melody using chromatic (color) notes requires some degree of harmonic fluency or, sophistication, that less-often comes naturally, even though we can develop it with some practice. When you pick a musical scale for your melody, it does not have to be a major one. Let's assume we are still in a F key, but we want to write a less happy, more sad-sounding, melody. For this kind of melody, you might use the D minor scale (which makes use of one flat, like in the key of F Major). When you write this kind of melody, you'll probably focus on the tonic triad of D minor which are D, F, and A; rather than the tonic triad of F Major, which is F, A, and C.

## Use the Pentatonic Scale

You can even make things a lot simpler for yourself by sticking to 5 key musical notes within a given major scale, which are the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> of the scale. In the case of the C Major, these musical notes are C, D, E, G, and A. These notes come together for what we call the pentatonic scale. The word PENTA means 5; five musical tones equal a pentatonic scale, in music. By using only these five musical notes, you ultimately avoid the two trouble notes in the scale, the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup>, that sometimes create unwanted harmonic tension. When you make use of the five notes in the pentatonic scale, it's totally impossible to hit a "wrong" note into your melody. Nevertheless, you can overuse these musical notes and end up with a vaguely Asian-sounding melody, or even something that sounds a little like the soundtrack of an old cowboy movie.

Note that instead of centring your melody on a major, minor or even pentatonic scale, you can also base your melodies on one of the modes, like Aeolian, Lydian, Dorian, and others. Also, on the piano, an effortless way to see and play the pentatonic scale is to play strictly on just the black keys. These five keys; G<sub>b</sub>, A<sub>b</sub>, B<sub>b</sub>, D<sub>b</sub>, and E<sub>b</sub>, make up the G<sub>b</sub> pentatonic scale.



*A melody composed on the C pentatonic scale.*

## The Hook

For a melody, to be memorable, there needs to be a part of it that really goes out and captures the listener's attention. In popular music, they call it 'hook' mainly because it's the part of a song that "hooks" the listener. In more traditional or classical music, this part of the song is sometimes referred to as the motif, or motive, and it is repeated throughout the entire music. A motif is usually made of few notes (take your mind to the five whistling musical notes in Sergio Leone's soundtrack from the movie "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"). At the longest, the motif could be just one or two measures. When you have a good hook, don't be afraid, in any way, to make use of it, try to repeat it as often as necessary, throughout your entire piece of music.



*A simple four-note motif, repeated throughout a longer melody.*

## Creating Variations

You can create some added melodies in your music, just by slightly varying your motif in the music. You can achieve this by changing the song's rhythm or moving its tones up or down on the used scale. But note that it's important you keep enough of the main motif, so that listeners can know and remember where it come from, but also add enough variation so that you have some new but related melody. How can you create variation in your motif? You can simply reverse, or simplify, the rhythm, or even make the rhythm more complex. You can also reverse the musical notes, so that the melody climbs up instead of going down, or goes down instead of climbing up, or simply change the centre notes in the motif, or shift the musical notes up or down a 3rd or a 5th. As a matter of

fact, any musical variation is accepted, as long as the foundational motif is not completely shadowed by it. Take a good look at the following example, in which the straight-forward four-note motif, from the former example, is being put through several variations, both melodically and rhythmically.



*The same four-note motif, with variations.*

Don't forget that what you want for your variations is to relate to the foundational motif of the music. If you go too far away from the foundational motif, it is no more a variation—it's a brand-new melody.

## Compose in 4—or 8, or 16

When you're writing a melody, it really helps to keep the lengths of the sections (the phrases and motifs) relatively simple. In most Western and popular music, (especially pop music) —most of the melodies are dividable by two. What this means is that you probably want your melody to be 2, 4, 8, or 16 measures long. You probably do not want to write a 3 or 5 measure melody; composing an odd number of measures may feel very wrong and unnatural to some of your listeners. When you compose a longer melody, you can easily divide it up into 2, 4 or 8 measure fractions. To illustrate this, the following 16 measure melody is constructed from four 4 measure parts.

A musical staff in G major with a common time signature. The melody is divided into four 4-measure phrases, labeled 1 through 16 above the staff. Measure 1 starts with a half note followed by quarter notes. Measures 2-4 follow a similar pattern. Measures 5-8 introduce a new pattern with eighth-note pairs. Measures 9-12 continue this pattern. Measures 13-16 conclude the melody.

*A sixteen-measure melody, consisting of four four-measure phrases.*

One known exception to this 2, 4, 8, and 16 rule, is the genre we refer to as blues. Most blues songs utilize a 12-measure (bar) form, with 12-measure (bar) melodies. I'm sure you've heard of the 12-bar blues.

## Let The Melody Move

A fantastic melody doesn't just sit in one place; it goes somewhere. You can move, or shoot, a melody rhythmically or tonally through the “movement” of the musical tones. In this context, motion simply refers to the continuous upward or downward movement of the pitches, or what some musicians call the contour of a line of music. A fantastic way to conceptualize the upward or downward

movement of a melody is to look at the first and last musical note, and you can ignore, for the time being, all the musical notes in between. To compose an upward-moving melody, make sure the ending note is at least a 3rd (preferably a 5th or more) higher than the first note. The same rule applies with a downward-moving melody; make sure the last musical note is lower than the first musical note. All the musical notes between the first and last ones help you transit to that final note. The musical notes do not basically have to go in the same direction, but they have to slowly and continuously move up or down to where you want the melody to end.



It's important that you know that it's okay to have a melody that begins and ends on the same musical note. What you can do, in this case, is to make the centre point of the melody higher or lower than the beginning/ending pitch. If you opt for a higher centre point, the first half of your melody will need to have an upward movement, and the last half will make use of a downward movement to get back to the home pitch.

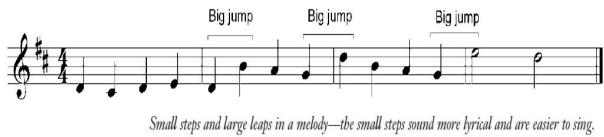
## Don't Leap; Take Small Steps

Most of the easy-to-sing melodies move in slight steps, so each music note is only one or two step away from the previous musical note. The shorter the steps between the notes in your melody, the more lyrical and organized your melody will sound. When you take large jumps (also known as leaps), of four or more steps (even three is still big), into your melody, it sounds unorganized, directionless and becomes very much difficult to sing or play. It is much better to use a series of passing tones within your chosen musical scale to get from one main musical note to another.

As a matter of fact, this isn't a hard-and-fast compositional rule. (we can break the rules, however!) think, for example, to the songs "Moon River" or "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". These songs feature leaps of unique kinds from a 5th to an entire octave in their different melodies. So, it's very okay to leap if you know exactly what you're doing, even though slight steps are better suited for less-experienced songwriters and composers.

Note that a melody that moves in half or whole steps, uses what we call step-wise or conjunct motion, while melodies that move by leaps larger than a whole

step uses what we call skip-wise or disjunct motion.



## Keep it in Range

What you do not want to do is play too many musical notes in your tune. If the distance between the lowest musical note and the highest musical note is too wide, singers, and even players, will have trouble singing, or playing, all or some of your melodies, and your melody will sound disjointed and random, without a place to call home. Think for example, at the United States' national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The composer Francis Scott Key put his words to one hell of a tune (it has a quite wide melodic range). Think of how hard this song is to sing, and how many well-trained vocalists have trouble hitting all the musical notes. The very wide range in this song doesn't make it an awful song, it just makes it one of the more hard songs to sing, or play. That being said, always try to keep the lowest and highest musical notes in your melody within an octave of each other. Or, at most, within an octave (8th) and a 3rd. You should always remember the exact range of the instrument, or voice, you're writing for, and try everything possible to stay within that range. We will learn more about voice and instrument ranges in the coming chapter.



## Avoid Using Intervals That Can't Be Sung

While we are still on the simplicity of every melody, certain musical intervals are easier to sing than others. Whole and half steps are easy to sing, as are 2nds, 3rds and 5ths. Some 4ths [for some reason] are a little more difficult to sing, and 6ths and 7ths are very problematic.

Octaves (8th) aren't by nature so difficult; an F remains an F, whether it's high or low, although the sheer distance between the musical notes adds some degree of difficulty for both singers and players. Along the same lines, we should probably avoid any interval over an octave, just because it's such a big jump.

Chromatic intervals are musical notes that aren't in the used scale and they are very difficult for some, or even most, singers to sing. To illustrate this, let's say

you are in the key of C and your melody leaps from an E to a G, a lot of singers won't be able to strike that second note. They'll prefer to sing either an F or G, both of which are in that scale, the G note takes a lot of concentration and precision to strike, out of the blue. There is one other chromatic interval you should avoid at all costs, it is called a tritone, or the devil's interval; it's (based on how you look at it) a sharpened (augmented) 4th or a flatted (diminished) 5th. It just totally sounds wrong; some of the early music theorists considered this interval the "Devil's interval", and it was regarded as the musical equivalent of evil. (simply play a tritone; F to B, for example, and you will see how difficult it is to

Sing this "devil's interval".



Whatever intervals you create, try to sing the notes first, and then check what you just sang on the piano. If you have any trouble singing a particular interval, so will others, and you should know that the best melodies are actually the easiest to sing.

## Keep Your Rhythm Simple

When you're just at the beginning stage, it helps so much to keep the beat, or rhythm, of your melody relatively simple. What this means is that you should stick to the quarter (crotchet) notes and half notes (minim) notes and use 16th-notes carefully. This also means avoid what, for the time, we refer to as syncopation. Syncopation creates a really jumpy melody, and it is hard for some players, or singers, to play, or sing.

Syncopation means there's a strong emphasis in a very unexpected place in the music, it can also be when there is not an emphasis where you were expecting it. Syncopation can also be called a displaced rhythm. You can create a syncopated rhythm by putting an accent on something other than the downbeat, or by just putting a rest, or silence, on the downbeat. This change-up creates some rhythmic patterns that might sound very "off" to some listeners but often have a kind of jazzy or funky feel.

We can create syncopated rhythms by using a brief rest on the downbeat, or other powerful beats. If you compose a melody that sounds just a bit too "jerky," consider making the rhythm a bit simple and using some more straight 8th and

quarter notes on the beat.

**Complex**                    **Simplified**

The image shows a musical staff in G major (one sharp) and common time (4/4). It contains two measures of music. The first measure consists of six eighth notes with various slurs and grace marks, labeled 'Complex'. The second measure consists of four eighth notes connected by a single horizontal bar, labeled 'Simplified'.

*Simplifying a rhythmically complex melody.*

# Keep to Time

It is very possible, especially when you're just starting out, to create a melody that does not strictly follow the laid down pattern of your chosen time signature. For example, you could compose a 6-beat melody, which doesn't sit so well in a 4-beat 4/4 time signature.

What you want is to pace your melody, so it fits within your used time signature. What this means is that you should create a melody that is easily divisible into measures, without having some extra, or leftover, beats. In fact, it's a splendid exercise to write out your melody without using bar lines, and then, make sure you can easily map out where to fix the bars, to create your different measures. If you can't easily fix your melody into different measures, consider rephrasing your rhythms, or changing the rest lenght between different sections of your melody. Still, on that, make sure you can easily point where the first beat of the measure lies throughout your melody, especially in the starting and ending measures. What you don't want is your melody to feel "offbeat," in the strictest sense of the musical phrase. What you want for your melody is to end on a beat that feels just right; else, your listeners will stumble in a place when "beat one" isn't where it is supposed to be.

# Create—and Resolve—Tension

One of the most common melodic, or should I say compositional, techniques is to divide your melody into two parts and create a harmonic tension in the first part of the melody, that is then solved in the second part. This technique gives your melody a very distinct form and its own internal meaning; this also helps to shoot the melody from the first part to the second one. One magnificent way to create tension is to conclude the first part of your melody on something other than the root (tonic) of the scale. When you're considering the chord structure of your song, you will find that the tension can be achieved by stopping the first

part of the melody on an IV or V chord. Putting this into practice, you can create musical tension by concluding a musical phrase with the 2nd, 5th or 7th notes of the used scale, which actually correspond to the musical notes in the scale's V chord, if you are reading the music ahead. Some more-experienced music composers can change time signatures within a melody, bringing in musical lines that do not find it possible to fit within a steady time signature flow.



*The half note in measure two creates tension; the next two bars resolve the tension.*

You have to relieve this built-up tension by taking the second part of your melody back to the root (tonic) of the scale, or to one of the musical notes in the tonic triad (chord one). The musical notes in the tonic triad are the tonic (root), third (mediant) and the fifth (dominant) of the scale; the root (tonic) and the third probably perform better for relieving tension, just because the fifth (dominant) is an ambiguous musical note, used both in chord-one and the V chord (chord-five); again, read ahead to the coming chapters to learn all about chord types and progressions. Without being told or taught, you can hear the tension when you play a melody.

## Create Call and Response

Another very effective technique is the call and response. This is where you bring up a musical phrase in the first part of your melody and then give an “answer” to that in the second part. This differs slightly from the technique of tension and release, even if the call sets up a certain tension that requires a tension-relieving response (answer). The answering musical phrase serves as a “part 2” to the first [question] phrase; the “question” takes you in a particular direction, and the “answer” brings you back home. To compose a call-and-response type of tune or melody, think of as a question and its answer. For example, you might think of the question, “Where is my bike?” and the answer, “It’s in the park.” When you bring this call and response to music, you might have something like this:



Where is my bike? It’s in the park

## Establish Some Symmetry

A technique that we sometimes bring into both the call-and-response and the

tension-and-relief techniques is known as symmetry. By it, I mean that the second section of your melody should be a mirror image of the first section of your melody.

This symmetry can be achieved by mirroring tones, or by mirroring rhythms. Let us use Dvorak's New World Symphony for illustration. The third measure is identical to the first one, thus establishing symmetry between the two parts of the tune. The song "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore" has a rhythmic symmetry between the two parts, even though the musical tones used change a little. Sometimes the musical tones have to change to bring relief to the built-up harmonic tension, or respond to a melodic call. Whenever you make the second section of your melody, it will look much like the first section, you establish familiarity in the mind and ear of your listener, so they know what to expect in the music and feel at home when you deliver it to them.



*The last two bars are a near-mirror image of the first two measures.*

## Not Only Repetition; Bring In Some Variety

Repetition is an integral part of symmetry, also to establish musical hooks and motifs.

When you create a melodic, or rhythmic, phrase that sounds great to you, and you repeat it throughout the entire melody or song. This kind of repetition, such as the one shown in the following example, helps so much to unify melody; it is the melodic equivalent of a steady rhythm [drumbeat] by the drummer, and serves as a strong identifying factor for listeners. But too much of a magnificent thing, can get annoying. If you repeat your figure so often, it will bore your listener. It is quite hard to say how many repetitions are too much.

When you catch yourself making use of too much repetition, it means it is time to bring in some variations, or add completely new rhythmic or melodic figures. Balancing repetition and variety is a very essential skill to master, that marks a monumental difference between an experienced and a novice composer.

## Follow Chord Progressions

We have mentioned chords, and chord progressions ,a couple of times in this chapter because they contribute magnificently to the melodies you compose. However, I have not told you about chords and harmony yet, since it is very important that you master how to create a single melodic line before you stack

multiple musical notes on top of each other, the chords. That being said, after you've read the chapters that will deal with chords and progressions, you will definitely want to come back to this chapter and apply whatever you've learned.

I say this because one very useful approach to composing melodies is to create first, a chord progression, and then create a melody on top of that chord progression. You can't pull this stunt until you learn about chords and chord progressions. After you've read chapters on chords and chord progressions, you will better understand how to establish and resolve harmonic tension in your melody, using certain chords. For example, you will discover that the most commonly used chord progression in music is I-IV-V (one, four, and five), or some other variation of that. In the key of C Major, I-IV-V chords would be C Major, F Major, and G Major chords, respectively. The IV and V chords (especially the V chord) are used to create musical tension. You always end the first section of your melody with the V chord. You solve that tension by getting back to the root (I) chord, which is why you [almost] always conclude your tunes with the root (I) chord. When your melodies make use of these chords, you bring the kind of tension and relief that lead for a very memorable melody.

Your melody has to fit within the chordal structure of your composition. What this means is that, within a specific bar, the dominant notes of your melody should probably fit within the three dominant notes of the foundational chord. To exemplify this, if you have an A-minor chord, the dominant musical notes of the melody associated to that chord should probably be A, C, or E—which are the three notes in the chord. Once again, we will learn more about chords and chord progressions in the next parts of the book, so don't fret—I will explain it all.

## Follow the Song Form

Most pieces of music, or songs, you hear follow some established musical forms. What this means is that your melodies should fit within those forms: so many popular songs are being divided into choruses and verses. The verse is always the first melody, which is repeated throughout the entire song. The chorus becomes the second melody, and quite often the main melody, and it contains the hook which is repeated between verses. So, a typical pop song form might look like verse-verse-chorus-verse. This means that you must write two melodies for the song, which must be in some way related. After you read the chapter on chord and chord progressions, return to this chapter to apply whatever you have

learned about musical form to your basic melodic compositional skills.

## **Always Follow the Words**

Another very important factor that can move a melody is the lyrics. If you're composing a piece of instrumental music, of course, you do not need to worry about following the lyrics, but if you're composing a popular song, you have no option but to deal with both music and lyric; and how they flow together.

As a composer, or songwriter, what you want for your music is to fit perfectly with your words. To simplify things, this means arranging the beat (rhythm) to the lyrics. You don't want to force your singers into awkward phrasing. Most phrases and words have their natural pace and will always suggest a rhythm to you. Make sure your song's rhythm fits with the natural rhythm of these words; in particular, avoid fixing an unaccented syllable on an accented part of the measure, for instance, the downbeat.

Match the flow with the lyrics. To illustrate this, if the lyrics ask a question, you probably want your melody to go upward, to copy the way a human voice concludes a question on a much higher pitch. Adding to that, you want the feel of your music to match the feel of the lyrics. If your lyrics are sad, it wouldn't be right to set them to a happy-sounding melody. There are exceptions to this particular rule, though; mismatching lyrics and beat can create what I will refer to as a musical irony, which is appropriate in some musical situations; but as a general rule, you want your melody to mirror the feel of the lyrics.

## **Compose for a Specific Instrument or Voice**

Specific voices, or the musical instruments, might dictate the melody you are composing. For example, if you're composing for flutes, you probably don't want to compose a very bombastic and booming melody—they cannot play it. On the same note, a too high a melody, will be very difficult for low male voices, or musical instruments with lower ranges. You need to use not only the appropriate range for a voice or musical instrument but also the right feel. Match the requirements of your composed melody with the right voices and musical instruments to avoid an ugly listening experience.

## **Always Be Unique**

Lastly, know that your melody does not have to be rhythmically or harmonically sophisticated to be memorable and nice; it doesn't have to be short or long or any

certain length. But it sure has to be unique. A memorable melody might somehow remind us of other melodies, but it can never duplicate them. The best melodies have something distinctive in them, some unique hook, motif or rhythmic pattern that makes them different from other melodies.

It's difficult and nearly impossible to teach you how to be unique, and how to stand out, so this is something you must address on your own. Ask yourself if your melody stands on its own or if it sounds a little like some other melody you've heard. Does your melody sound a lot like something else you have heard before? As with many other aspects of music composition, this is the area in which you must trust the most your ears—and also one that you definitely have to listen out for.

## **Learn More About Music Composition**

Composing your own music is extremely fun, but it requires some mastery of many musical skills and techniques, of which we have only covered a few in these chapters of the book. Whether you want to compose songs or symphonies, the same skills and techniques of composition apply. You must start with being very grounded in music theory (which is the reason you're studying this book), then proceed to learn how to create memorable and amazing melodies, captivating chord progressions, and some really bright orchestrations. You could take a special song writing course; every talented songwriter at a point has done that, so do not in any way feel reluctant to do that too. Above all, keep composing and writing music every day.

## **Things to Remember**

- A melody is made up of a logical progression of rhythms and tones.
- Melodies usually follow a 2-, 4-, 8-, or 16-measure form.
- Melodies usually conform to a specific mode or scale.
- The best melodies are always the simplest in terms of both rhythm and tune.
- More extended melodies can usually be divided into two sections, with the end of the first section creating a tension that is resolved in the second section.
- You should get certain that your melodies are truly easy-to-sing,

and the only way to know this is to see if you can actually sing the melodies.

# **#10 MISTAKES EVERY BEGINNING MUSICIAN MUST AVOID**

It is always an amazing and exciting thing picking up a musical instrument like the drums, guitar, piano, saxophone or bass, or even embarking on a journey of vocal training or pretty much any other aspect of music. As exciting and motivating as this may be, you are also prone and very much exposed to many mistakes that, if not addressed, avoided or corrected [on time], may lead to a terrible musical fall, halt or block. As a self-taught musician (I also went to college), and also as a tutor who has coached many aspiring musicians, singers and players, I know that there are very common mistakes that we have to try to avoid at all costs. I will go straight to the point and list these ten mistakes:

## **#1: Not Tuning Your Instruments Before Playing**

I will try to make every heading self-explanatory so that you can probably get the points by just going through the distinct points. The above-stated mistake is pretty much common among musicians that are just starting out and, surprisingly, also common among some supposedly advanced players. Even though there may be some exceptions for musical instruments like the grand piano and the electronic keyboards; but pretty much the rest of the musical instruments like the guitar, saxophone, violin, trumpet, and even the human voice, require some proper tuning before playing. It is really wrong to pick up a musical instrument and start playing without first checking if it is in tune or not. Always make sure an electronic tuner is handy or even a pitchfork, and for the voice, always make sure to do some warm-ups before sounding any note and cross-check on your tuner, or pitch pips, if you are in tune.

## **#2: Still Playing Stuff You've Already Mastered**

I am not saying, forget all the cool stuff you learned and mastered, i am only saying: move on to the next one! Don't get too comfortable playing repeatedly when you've already gotten it; I know it feels great, but..... Move to the next one!

## **#3: Running From the Tough Things**

This is common among both newbies and not, and is very much related to #2. Do not run away from the barre chords, the tough inversions, the not-very-simple scales, modes, and licks. Play them because heavy loads only strengthen you.

#### **#4: Having too Many Sources of Information**

Information is cool and learning fresh stuff is amazing, but when you have too much fresh stuff from too many sources to learn... well, you should know what will happen. Just stick to one reliable and authentic source of information and maybe two, at most.

#### **#5: Not Having Some Patience With Yourself**

Patience is the key to success.

#### **#6: Neglecting Timing and Tempo**

These are very important musical aspects; concentrate on these two as much as you do on your playing. Get yourself a metronome and always keep it on when rehearsing, and not only keep it on; follow the timing and tempo strictly.

#### **#7: Rushing to Achieve “thunder-speed” Playing**

It's cool when your favourite player plays your favourite lick at lightening-speed, it looks great and maybe sounds great too! But take a chill pill. Keeping to tempo is way more important than playing at thunder-speed. You will achieve speed with time, for now, don't rush for that.

#### **#8: Being Shy to Play In Front of Others**

#### **#9: Avoiding Music Theory**

#### **#10: Expecting to Become A Virtuoso Over-Night**

It takes some time. Enjoy your ride and do not rush. Rushing in any form hurts and it is unacceptable; it may hurt you.

## **BEST APPROACH TO LEARNING THE GUITAR**

At first, the guitar may appear mysterious and the dream of ever playing like the famous rock star on tv may seem like a daunting, or even an impossible, one; do not fret just yet! The guitar is tough, I won't dispute that. But that does not in any way change the fact that a guitar is just a musical instrument and should be only an extension of you as a musician. It is just your instrument, not your god. What I mean here is that the most ultimate thing in learning any musical instrument is the musicianship in you. It doesn't matter if you are playing the violin, cello, harp, trombone or whatever, these instruments are just tools that help you to express what's in you and what you are.

This means that, before being a great guitar player, you first have to be a superb musician. It's the boxer and not the boxing gloves. You may follow all the great approaches to being a superb guitar player, but if the music in you is not great, then you will never get there. It is much easier for a superb musician to become a great guitar, piano, saxophone or even trumpet player. In terms of the best approach to learning the guitar, as a musician and music tutor, i will tell you to first build the musicality in you, then learning whatever kind of musical instrument, will be a lot more fun. You could have all the tablatures for the most famous songs and master all the cool-looking chord shapes and forms on the guitar, but it won't make any sense if you don't understand the basic anatomy behind those exceptional sounding and cool looking chords. I never played a major seventh chord on the guitar until I understood how it was constructed and how it was supposed to be used in music. It made a lot more sense to me that way, and it made learning the guitar a lot more fun and inspiring. I am not saying have all the theories at your fingertips before playing the guitar, i am just saying, build your musicality, understand how music works and why a particular chord sounds the way it sounds. Don't approach the guitar or any instrument just like someone who wants to learn how to play, but like a musician who wants to learn that instrument for the sole purpose of expressing himself with it. And always remember that theory makes you a better performer.

## THE SAXOPHONE

The saxophone is a somewhat new musical instrument. The saxophone was invented in the 1840s. Adolphe Sax, who was a Belgian musician, and musical instrument maker, patented it. It belongs to the woodwind family (partially), although usually played with brass. We use the saxophone in many genres: including blues, jazz, military and marching bands, classical, and popular music, including rock-and-roll.

As a young adult, Adolphe Sax studied the clarinet and the flute at Brussels Music Conservatory. Adolphe Sax's father was also a musical instrument maker, and he was an apprentice in his father's shop. There, he was given not only an outstanding instruction, but also the freedom to create and nurture his own ideas, as an instrument maker. While still studying at the Conservatory, Adolphe observed the balance of woodwind and brass musical instruments in musical performances and compositions. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that there was a missing musical range, that a hybrid brass and woodwind musical instrument might fill. His experimentation with instruments, like the bass clarinet, led him to a design that hybridized the projection ability of a brass musical instrument with the agility of a woodwind musical instrument. Through this hybridization, the saxophone was given birth to.

Adolphe Sax's idea of the saxophone family was wider than just one musical instrument. This was shown in his 1846 patent, which described 14 unique versions of the saxophone, classified into two groups. This ranged from the F contrabass saxophone to Eb sopranino saxophone. The saxophone series pitched in B-flat and E-flat quickly became very dominant and most of the saxophones we use today are from this series.

## FREE RESOURCES

We have come to the end of this book before saying goodbye I would like to remind you to go to this link:

[https://bit.ly/3iGx5O8:](https://bit.ly/3iGx5O8)

And download all the free resources of the book or Scan this QR.



If you enjoyed this book, please let me know your thoughts by leaving a short review on Amazon.

Thank you

SEE YOU SOON.

## **ABOUT AUTHOR**

Fierce and passionate, strong-headed and devoted to my musical aspirations, I like to think of my journey like red wine: it only gets better with time. Do you ever take some time out to pause and contemplate about everything that has contributed to making you who you are today? I know it can be hard to resonate with your good and bad, your highs and your lows, but it is also wonderful. And maybe all that I am, my residence in New Orleans, Louisiana, and my choice to pursue singing and songwriting has had the greatest impact on that.

Sometimes you don't realize the powers you possess, the strengths that formulate your existence. And maybe the ability to play the guitar and saxophone professionally is not empowering for you, but it built me up. It still empowers me. Isn't it beautiful when music can be your calling, your mode of expression and the channel that says all the unsaid? Throughout my existence, I have always wanted more people to be able to comprehend the abilities music provides one with, and that more people could experience what I or many music lovers experience. After all, there is magic out there! When all my thoughts failed, my journey as a musical writer and producer began. With more than fifteen years of solid experience in the musical field and as a music teacher, I can say for sure that there is nothing quite like the feel of producing a melody that soothes the soul, a melody that revives your joys. And so, there is nothing I enjoy more than producing albums and singles, just like old times.

I have a belief. A belief that if you have experienced a great joy in life, you must share it. And so, I decided to delve into writing several books and blogs about musical theory. It is like living through a great piece of art.