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Scales, Arpeggios, Chords, Inversions, and Cadences

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Basic Music Theory

Before we begin practicing through the scales, arpeggios, and cadences on the pages which follow, let's first take a look at some basic music theory concepts. It would be impossible to have a thorough and complete discussion about music theory in just a few pages, but a fundamental understanding will be very helpful as you continue through the pages of this book. Take the time to familiarize yourself with these concepts before proceeding.

Intervals

An INTERVAL is the distance between two notes. Precise placement of intervals make up scales and chords.

A HALF STEP is the shortest distance between two notes. On the keyboard, the distance between any two touching keys is a half step. This may occur between a white key and a black key or between two white keys.

A WHOLE STEP is the distance of two half steps. On the keyboard, a whole step is the distance between any two keys which have exactly one key in between them. This may occur between two white keys, two black keys, or between a white key and a black key.

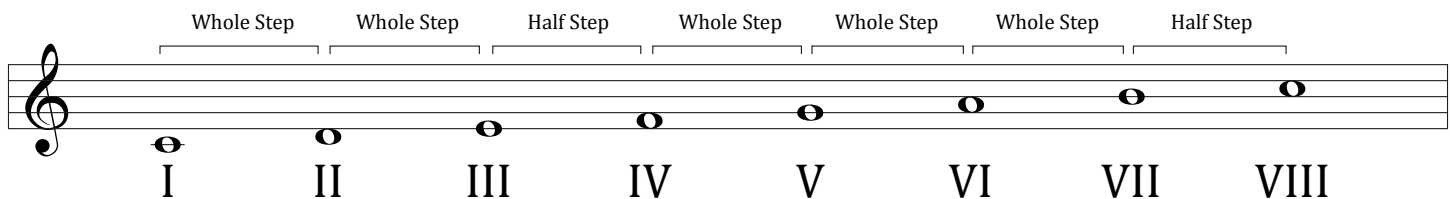
A MAJOR 3rd is the distance of 4 half steps, while a MINOR 3rd is the distance of 3 half steps. Major and Minor 3rds are the basic building blocks of certain types of CHORDS.

Scales

A SCALE is a succession of musical notes separated by half steps, whole steps, or a combination of both.

A MAJOR SCALE is a type of scale with a precise arrangement of half steps and whole steps.

The notes of scale are referred to as DEGREES. The degrees of the major scale have special names.



The Names of the Scale Degrees

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1st Degree - TONIC | 5th Degree - DOMINANT |
| 2nd Degree - SUPERTONIC | 6th Degree - SUBMEDIANT |
| 3rd Degree - MEDIANT | 7th Degree - SUBTONIC |
| 4th Degree - SUBDOMINANT | 4th Degree - TONIC |

The most important degrees are the 1st (Tonic), 4th (Subdominant), and the 5th (Dominant)

Sharps, Flats, and Keys

SHARPS and FLATS are placed on the staff at the beginning of each line, which determine the KEY.

The KEY of a piece of music is the scale on which it is based. It is the tonal center of the composition.

Sharps and Flats placed at the beginning of each line are known as the KEY SIGNATURE. A key signature may consist of a number of sharps or flats which **must appear in a precise order**, or it may contain no sharps or flats. The number of sharps or flats in the key signature determines the key of that particular composition. Notice that the order of flats is the same as the order of sharps, except in the opposite direction.

The order of sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, E#, B#

The order of flats: Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb, Cb, Fb

Key Signatures

There are two possible keys for each key signature, a MAJOR KEY and a MINOR KEY. The major and minor keys which share a key signature are called RELATIVE KEYS. A more in depth discussion of relative keys appears later in this book. As we've discussed, a key signature may be blank, or it may contain a number of sharps or flats.

The Sharp Key Signatures

The major and minor keys for all of the sharp key signatures are shown below.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| C Major | G Major | D Major | A Major | E Major | B Major | F# Major | C# Major |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A Minor | E Minor | B Minor | F# Minor | C# Minor | G# Minor | D# Minor | A# Minor |
|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

A quick way to identify the Major Key from a sharp key signature is to go up one half step from the last sharp.

The Flat Key Signatures

The major and minor keys for all of the flat key signatures are shown below.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| C Major | F Major | B ^b Major | E ^b Major | A ^b Major | D ^b Major | G ^b Major | C ^b Major |
|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A Minor | D Minor | G Minor | C Minor | F Minor | B ^b Minor | E ^b Minor | A ^b Minor |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|

Except for F Major, the name of a major flat key is the same as the second to last flat in the key signature.

Determining Whether a Key is Major or Minor

As you'll discover as you progress through this book, major keys and minor keys, along with the notes and chords associated with them, sound quite different. Pieces in minor keys have what many people describe as a darker or more sombre feel to them. It's very easy to hear, but there are also other ways to determine the type of key.

The Tonic, which is the first degree of the scale on which a composition is based, is the note which is the tonal center of the piece. This note is the first degree of the scale in that key, which may be either major or minor. Most of the time, a song or other composition will end on the tonic note. This note brings a sense of finality or conclusion to the piece. It may not always be the tonic note, but many times it is. By simply looking at the end of the work, it may be possible to determine if the piece is written in the major key or the minor key.

Another clue you may see is in the use of ACCIDENTALS which appear often on specific notes. Accidentals are notes which are altered with a sharp, flat, or natural sign. When you see a sharp or a natural sign on what you would expect to be the fifth degree of the major scale, and this note appears often, it is likely that the piece is written in the minor key. We'll discuss these altered notes, as well, in the section on relative minor keys.

In time, you'll see that it's really not difficult to determine if the key is major or minor. As you practice through the scales, arpeggios, and cadences which follow, we think you'll develop a good ear for hearing the difference.

C Major

Tonic Chord

C Major Scale (1 Octave)

C Major Scale (2 Octaves)

C Major Arpeggio

(1 Octave)

(2 Octaves)

Inversions of Principal Chords of C Major

I (Tonic)

IV (Sub-dominant) V (Dominant)

Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv

Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv

Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv

Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv

Arpeggios in Inversions

1 2 3 1 2 3 5 3 2 1 3 2 | 1 2 4 1 2 4 5 4 2 1 4 2 | 1 2 4 1 2 4 5 4 2 1 4 2 | 1

5 4 2 1 4 2 1 2 4 1 2 4 | 5 4 2 1 4 2 1 2 4 1 2 | 5 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 | 5

Sva

Cadences in C Major

Authentic

5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 3 1

Root Position: 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5

1st Inv: 1 2 4 | 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5

2nd Inv: 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5

I V I | I V I | I V I

Plagal

4 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 2 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 2 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 2 1 | 4 2 1

Root Position: 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5

1st Inv: 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5

2nd Inv: 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5

I IV I | I IV I | I IV I

Mixed

5 3 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 3 1 | 5 2 1 | 5 3 1 | 4 2 1 | 5 3 1

Root Position: 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5

1st Inv: 1 3 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5

2nd Inv: 1 2 5 | 1 2 4 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5 | 1 2 5 | 1 3 5

I IV I V I | I IV I V I | I IV I V I

A Minor

Relative Minor of C Major

Tonic Chord

A Harmonic Minor Scale (1 Octave)

A Harmonic Minor Scale (2 Octaves)

A Minor Arpeggio

(1 Octave)

(2 Octaves)

Inversions of Principal Chords of A Minor

I (Tonic)

IV (Sub-dominant) V (Dominant)

Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv

Arpeggios in Inversions

Cadences in A Minor

Authentic

Root Position: I V I, I V I, I V I

1st Inv: I V I, I V I, I V I

2nd Inv: I V I, I V I, I V I

Plagal

Root Position: I IV I, I IV I, I IV I

1st Inv: I IV I, I IV I, I IV I

2nd Inv: I IV I, I IV I, I IV I

Mixed

Root Position: I IV I V I, I IV I V I, I IV I V I

1st Inv: I IV I V I, I IV I V I, I IV I V I

2nd Inv: I IV I V I, I IV I V I, I IV I V I

The Circle of Fifths

The CIRCLE OF FIFTHS illustrates the relationship between the Keys. Beginning with the Key of C Major, as we add Sharps to the Key Signature, we see that the new Key is a Fifth *above* the previous Key. For the Flat Keys, the same relationship exists as we remove Flats from the Key Signature until we eventually return to the Key of C. Another way to look at this is to begin with the C Major Scale. The 5th Note (or, "DEGREE") of that scale is G, which is the next Key in the Circle. The 5th Degree of that Key is D, which is the next Key in the Circle. In the other direction, each new Key is a Fifth *below* the previous as we add Flats or remove Sharps.

(The Relative Minor of each key in the circle is shown below each of the key signatures)

C Major G Major D Major

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

next key → next key → and so on ...

C Major

**THE
CIRCLE OF FIFTHS**

As you follow the circle in a clockwise direction, each subsequent key is a fifth above the previous. In other words, the first degree of the next key is the fifth degree of the key which it follows. The circle will also work in the other (counter-clockwise) direction. In that direction, each subsequent key is a fifth below the previous. When you see groups of two keys, they are Enharmonic Equivalents of each other. Even though they have different key signatures and different notes in their respective scales, the actual pitches will sound the same. Though there are fifteen keys in the circle, there are only twelve enharmonically.

F Major G Major

D Minor E Minor

B \flat Major D Major

G Minor B Minor

E \flat Major A Major

C Minor F \sharp Minor

A \flat Major E Major

F Minor C \sharp Minor

C \sharp Major B Major

A \sharp Minor G \sharp Minor

D \flat Major C \flat Major

B \flat Minor A \flat Minor

G \flat Major E \flat Minor

Dominant 7th Chords & Arpeggios

The DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORD is built on the fifth step, or degree, of either a Major or Minor Scale. It is composed of one Major Third with two Minor Thirds on top, or to put it another way, a Major Triad with a Minor Third on top. The Dominant Seventh Chords for all the Major Keys are shown below. They would be the same notes and chords in the Parallel Minor Key, except the Key Signature would be different to reflect the Minor Key.

| | Dominant 7th Chord | Dominant 7th Arpeggio | Cadence |
|-----------|--|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Key of C | G7 Root Pos 1st Inv 2nd Inv 3rd Inv | 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 | V7 I |
| Key of G | D7 | 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 | |
| Key of D | A7 | 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 | |
| Key of A | E7 | 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 | |
| Key of E | B7 | 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 | |
| Key of B | F#7 | 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 1 2 3 2 1 4 3 2 | |
| Key of F# | C#7 | 2 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 2 | |