Learn How to Play Electronic KEYBOARD OR PIANO

In a Week!

2025 Improved & Updated Edition

1000+ Diagrams

Martin Woodward

1st Edition 2011

2nd Edition 2017

3rd Edition 2025

ISBN: 9798282715910

Enquiries: https://learn-keyboard.co.uk

Acknowledgements

To all the fantastic musicians who I've had the privilege of working with back in the 1960s / 70s including: Pip Williams (guitarist / record producer); Tex Marsh (drums); Roger Flavell (bassist / singer / songwriter); Kevan Fogarty (guitarist); Tommy Hunt (singer); Ron Thomas (bassist); Martin Johnstone (bassist / vocals); Geno Washington (singer); UK No. 1 singer / songwriter Emile Ford; U.K. top 10 artists: *'The Fantastics'* - John Cheatdom, Jerome Ramos, Donald Haywoode and Richard Pitts.

To the other members of *'Aquila'* - Ralph Denyer (singer / songwriter); Phil Childs (bassist); Jim Smith (drums); George Lee (saxophonist).

To my early mentors: Alan Simonds (guitarist / vocalist); big bruv Steve (guitarist) and Mr. Henley (my inspirational music teacher at Warlingham School 1960 - 65).

And to Myriad Software: http://www.myriad-online.com for the Harmony Assistant music notation software which was used to produce this book. - Thanks!

Aquila album cover design by Keith Besford - *Thanks Keith, I still Love it!*

A Couple of my many memorable 'Aquila' gigs in 1970

Note that the links may not work if you are viewing this in a Google or Amazon preview. Please go to https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/learn_in_a_week.html for a more complete free *working* pdf preview.

Contents

Introduction

Ok, first let me make it clear that by *'learn in a week'* I'm not suggesting that you're going to be a virtuoso at the end of this period - especially if you an absolute beginner - it's simply not realistic!

However, I assure you that the methods included herein will show you the fastest and easiest way to learn finger dexterity and *genuine* music notation. And furthermore, are geared towards all styles of music (classical / pop / jazz etc.) and applicable to both piano and electronic keyboards.

There is an enormous amount of information herein which should take the reader from absolute beginner with no previous musical knowledge to high intermediate without the need for buying more books. *No Book 1, 2 and 3 etc. It's all in here!*

This book explains in detail:

- Choosing the right keyboard for your needs
- Initial finger exercises that don't even require a keyboard
- How to read music from scratch - timing and pitch etc.
- Every major / minor scale and arpeggio in every key
- Pentatonic & Blues Scales in the most used keys
- Chord construction in a way that can be understood
- Chord charts for every chord in every key in keyboard view - including 9ths, 13ths, diminisheds etc.
- The best proven finger exercises available
- How to make boring scales & arpeggios interesting and fun to practice
- Numerous practice pieces (including two additional downloadable tune books in pdf format)
- How to play from a fake book with and without auto-accompaniment
- Plus, more!

The key points to learning quickly and effectively are as follows:

- The right type of regular practice, spaced according to your ability
- A high level of motivation
- Being assured that it has nothing to do with age, talent or being gifted even to a professional level

Let's look at the above in a little more detail.

The Right Practice

To be effective your practice should be short (initially) but regular. Three 20-minute sessions a day is ideal to begin with, which could be and should be extended as you gain more ability and finger strength. Having no practice for several days and then trying to make up for what you've missed by having a blitz, simply won't work, in fact this would more likely be a backward step. If you can't manage three sessions, then one 20 / 30-minute session per day is the absolute minimum to begin with, any less and you'd be basically wasting your time.

With the right practice, good progress will occur but it's normal for this to be in fits and jerks - good days and bad days - so don't get disappointed when it appears to be going wrong. In order to experience the peaks, you must also have the troughs! Keep doing it *every day* and it will happen!

Apparently, Chopin used to insist that his students practiced just 2 hours a day, but other greats suggested much, much more!

Included herein are some superb 5 finger exercises, plus all the scales and arpeggios that you need to know. In order to be successful these *must* be practiced, but they can be fun as shown later.

Motivation

There's absolutely no doubt about it that your willingness to practice regularly is in a direct ratio to your degree of motivation. Clearly if you're not motivated, you'll not bother. If you look at all really successful players, the one thing that they have in common is a high level of motivation - the greater the motivation - the greater the success! Apparently, Jazz pianist Jamie Cullum has a keyboard in every room of his house - even the kitchen - so that he can *'have a twiddle'* any time he feels like it - *even when he's boiling his eggs or pickling his onions!*

Talent / Gift

Successful keyboard playing has nothing to do with age, talent or being gifted. Most of the so called *'talented / gifted'* musicians were simply born into the right environment where they were encouraged and taught from a very early age. So sure, maybe they were privileged - but not gifted. And this is the same with everything from being a *'gifted'* artist to a *'gifted'* motor mechanic! - Think about it! Do you think Mozart would have achieved what he did if his parents were Inuit?

And look at Michael Jackson, perhaps you think he was born talented, yet it's widely known that he was *groomed* virtually from birth to be what he turned into at the expense of any form of normal childhood. And clearly this is the fate of many child *'prodigies'* - they're simply *forced* to accomplish what their parents couldn't!

Anyone who is motivated, and practices as instructed can be a superb player in a direct proportion to the amount of effort put in. But don't get hung up on wanting to be *'better'*

than someone else. Music is not a competition, it's *creative.* Just compete with *yourself* and you will achieve the greatest fulfilment.

Get the Best from this Book

This book has been written to be read as a paperback and / or a digital eBook. If you have the paperback version - great, - without doubt this is the best version for flipping backwards and forwards to where you want to be. However, if you wish to hear the audio examples included, you may find it convenient to also have the digital version in pdf format which can be read on any PC, laptop or tablet.

The audio links throughout the book can be accessed two ways:

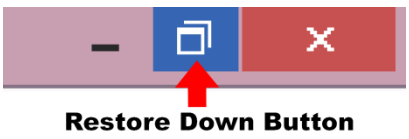
- by using the free external links at: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/keyboard_links.html (or the QR code) which gives access to all the links in the order in which they appear in each chapter or
- by using the links throughout the book as they appear in the digital pdf version (internet connection required)

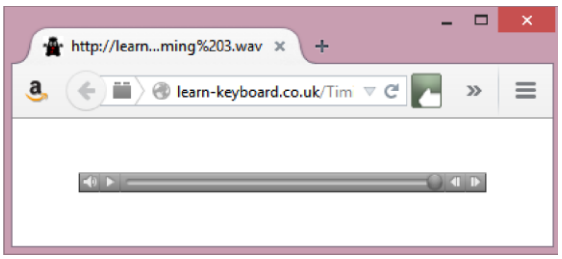
If you have purchased the paperback version, the digital version is *freely* available to you (for your own use only). This can be found under the download link heading towards the end of the book (page 255). Be sure to copy the link exactly as written including the hyphen and the underscore between the words or use the appropriate QR code. If you have any trouble with this, I will be happy to help. If you are reading a hard copy or the kindle edition, I strongly advise you to download the pdf file now so that you can hear the examples easily as you work your way through the book.

Using the *in-Book* Links

Quite probably you may only need to listen to some of the audio links, but several are included for your convenience.

To access the links easily, if you are viewing this on a laptop or PC first of all go to your browser and click the restore down button in order to reduce the view size to something like the image below to the right (by dragging the bottom and sides).

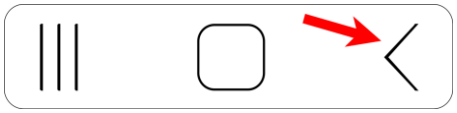




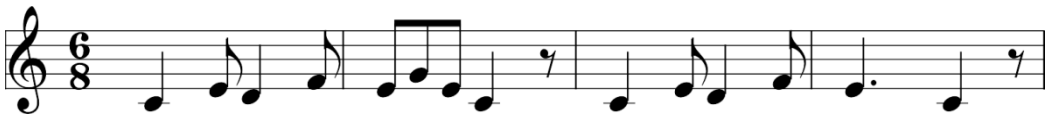
Then click on the link which should then appear in front of the document enabling you to move it out of the way of anything that you may wish to see at the same time.

If you are viewing this on an Android tablet as soon as you click on the link you will lose the book view until you push the *'Back'* button (shown next).

or



If you want to you can have a trial run now by clicking on the following graphic which actually is 'Pop Goes the Weasel'! Note that this is simply an example to hear the links and not an attempt to teach you *'Pop Goes the Weasel'* as has been suggested on a previous review.



Note that the links may not work if you are viewing this in a Google or Amazon sample. Please go to https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/learn_in_a_week.html for a free *working* pdf sample.

Note also that each link will open a new page in your browser, so you will eventually need to cancel them (or just close the browser).

In addition to the external links, there are also numerous internal links to help you navigate to certain reference points in the book and return, including the arrows either side of the chapter headings. Clicking the green right-hand one will take you instantly to the next chapter and the red left-hand arrow to the beginning of the last chapter. There are also links to and from the coinciding chapters in Parts 1 & 2.

If you want to navigate to another chapter quickly, simply click on the '«' icon which is in the footer of every page (including this one). This will take you instantly to the *'Contents'* page where you can then click and go to any section you wish - *so you can basically whizz through the document at lightning speed!*

Also, throughout the book I have included a few of my favourite keyboards. These are not *'adverts' per se,* they are basically just to fill space. Links for *all* the major manufacturers as well as my *'keyboard review'* section can be found on my website so that you can get all the up-to-date relevant information to make up your own mind as to what suits your needs either now or in the future!

Choosing Your First Keyboard

If you haven't already bought a keyboard or if you are perhaps thinking of changing, you may find the following information useful.

There are many different types of keyboards - all have black and white keys and to the uninitiated all look the same. But they can be vastly different, and which one will be right for you will be determined by:

- Your present needs
- Your ultimate needs, and of course
- Your budget

Prices can vary from as little as £50 to many thousands of pounds. The chance of buying one that is right for your initial and ultimate needs is about nil, *but you can at least try!*

Keyboards basically fall into the following categories:

a) Digital Pianos

b) Acoustic Pianos

c) Arranger Keyboards

d) Harpsichords

e) Organs

f) Workstations

g) Synthesizers

h) Controller Keyboards

And of course, all the above could be purchased either new or second-hand.

But here we are only going to discuss the first three which are the ones most suitable for beginners, but details of all the others and up to date information can be seen on my website at: https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/keyboard_reviews.html .

Digital Pianos - Home Use

Home use digital pianos in general tend to be less feature filled than the stage alternatives. Most up-to-date models will have 88 weighted hammer action keys - varying in quality. Many are also incorporated in a wooden frame with pedals included or at least have the option of a wooden stand making them fitting for a home

environment. Most will also have built-in speakers making the need for external amplification unnecessary.

Some will simply be pianos with few other features (although most do have a variety of tones). Others will have additional features such as auto-accompaniment and recording functions.

For a comparatively low-cost starter piano the Casio PX S1100 and PX S3100 are hard to beat. Both have quality piano sounds, built-in speakers, quality hammer action keybed and many other useful functions.

Casio PX S1100 - 88 Keys

If you want the convenience of all the gadgetry on an electronic digital piano and also a nice bit of furniture, then there are many *low-tech* but generally expensive instruments available such as the Yamaha Clavinovas.

Yamaha Clavinova CVP-909GP - 88 Keys

But there are many, many more to choose from in all price ranges.

Digital Pianos - Stage / Studio

In contrast, digital pianos for stage or studio use tend to be more feature filled in relation to sounds, effects and other functions. These will have either 73 / 76 or 88 hammer action keys. Built-in speakers and auto-accompaniment are less likely to be found on these and an external stand and pedals would be required. Therefore, in all cases for stage use external amplification suitable for the venue would be required. See my website for details of external amplification.

Recording functions are not the norm on stage pianos, but some may have them.

Both home and stage digital pianos will have earphone sockets enabling personal practice.

Korg SV-2S Stage Piano - 88 Keys

There are some digital pianos that are suitable for both home and stage - the Korg SV2S is available with or without built-in speakers and is about the coolest looking keyboard on the planet as well as having top notch piano sounds and the top Korg RH3 graduated keybed.

The main manufacturers for digital pianos are: Korg, Roland, Casio, Yamaha, Nord, Kawai, Dexibell and Kurzweil so there's plenty of great models to choose from. There are good and possibly not so good features with most manufacturers. You may prefer the sounds on one and the key action on another, so it's worth doing some in depth study.

If it is your intention to play classical or jazz seriously, I would suggest that a digital piano could be a good choice for you. But if you are an absolute beginner then consider one which also has auto-accompaniment which in *no way* prevents the instrument from being used as a normal complete piano.

Acoustic Pianos

I would never discourage anyone from getting an acoustic piano if this is what they want, but the clear disadvantages are:

- They need periodic tuning
- They are space greedy
- They can be very expensive
- They're not suitable for gigging
- You will drive your family and neighbours nuts when you practice, as these of course don't work too good with headphones

On the plus side, when the world eventually forgets how to generate electricity, everyone will want one!

I don't think that anyone could deny that the Bosendorfer Beethoven Grand is a beautiful instrument, but at £83,000 I wouldn't really recommend this for a beginner - *especially if they live in a bedsit!*

But the sounds of this instrument and others have been faithfully reproduced by Clavia and available on all their Nord electronic keyboards. Ok, it's not the real thing, but only a *'purist'* could tell the difference, and you'd save a massive £80,000 *and have a fair bit more room to walk around!*

Bosendorfer Grand Piano

So please also look at the digital piano alternatives - they are far better than they've been in the past and you might just be surprised.

Arranger Keyboards

Arranger keyboards generally come with 61 or 73 / 76 un-weighted or semi-weighted keys. The quality of the keybeds will vary tremendously from model to model. Although piano pieces can be played on them, weighted keys give more control for this type of music. But for just about any type of *piano* playing I would advise at least 73 keys (6 octaves). If you are wanting to learn classical or jazz piano, one of these would not be a good choice, with the exception of the Korg Pa5X 88.

Korg Pa5X Arranger Keyboard - 88 Keys

All arranger keyboards will have a fairly large selection of pre-installed sampled sounds which may or may not be editable. The quality and polyphony of these sounds will vary very much, although there are some surprisingly good sounds on some of the less expensive models.

Additionally, arranger keyboards have the facility to split the keyboard at certain (variable) points enabling different sounds to be played in each part of the board, (i.e. bass on the lower half / piano on the top half), and / or to use the lower half of the keyboard to trigger auto-accompaniment enabling the player to effectively be a one-man-band. Indeed, many of the better-quality arrangers are used for live gigging by solo players.

Korg Pa700 - 61 Keys

Many arranger keyboards have built-in speakers, which are suitable for home use, but most also have the facility for adding external speakers for better quality and more volume. The more expensive models (Korg Pa5X / Yamaha Genos) tend not to have built in speakers as is the norm for professional equipment.

Most also have recording features, in some cases with as many as 16 fully editable tracks enabling a fair degree of quality music production *on the better models - Korg Pa700 onwards!*

Arranger keyboards are available from as little as £50 up to more than £4,000. A good entry model is the Yamaha PSR E473 and the current top professional model (in my opinion) is the Korg Pa5X - *some would argue that the Yamaha Genos 2 is better!*

Casio CT-X5000 - 61 Keys

So, who are they good for?

The lower priced models are ideal for anyone who wants to learn music in a fairly casual way and just have fun - *for classical or jazz go for a digital piano*. The more expensive models are ideal for solo gigging, or music production by more experienced musicians.

At the entry level of the market, the Casios are excellent value and hard to beat, but do also look at the Korgs, Rolands and Yamahas.

Auto-Accompaniment

All arranger keyboards and some pianos / organs have the facility to either use the instrument as a full keyboard (in piano mode) or to split the keyboard at a chosen point and use the upper half for the right-hand melody work and the lower portion with an alternative sound / instrument for bass etc., or auto-accompaniment. But remember that you'd be struggling in full piano mode with less than 73 keys.

In the auto-accompaniment mode, a particular rhythm and style can be selected which will play bass, drums and other instrumentation as soon as a chord is played below the split point. As the chord is changed, the instrumentation will follow automatically.

In most cases there will be:

- An intro - one or more
- Variations - usually four different ones
- Fills which can be triggered to activate automatically between variations
- Endings - one or more

This results in the player being in control of a complete multi-instrument band / orchestra. Clearly using this option enables even a novice to produce great sounding work easily.

The quality of the styles varies between instruments, but at the high end they are quite stunning. This feature can allow a good player to make truly professional performances solo, something that I have done personally in the not-so-distant past - using a Korg SP500 digital piano.

There are thousands of styles available (downloadable) for all genres of music and it can take hours (months) to wade through them. On the advanced keyboards, you can even create your own styles, but this involves a fair learning curve.

To use this feature, ideally you will need to understand chords and inversions, details of which are included herein, but in most cases, there are also features for beginners whereby the chords can be triggered with only one or two fingers.

Auto-accompaniment can be used live or incorporated into recordings where plenty of manipulation is possible - see *'Using Auto-Accompaniment'* in the final chapter of part 1.

BUT ….. I would strongly recommend that you learn to play both with *and* without the auto-accompaniment then you will get the best of both worlds. The exercises herein teach exactly this - for your greatest fulfilment. Don't make the mistake of spending hours pushing buttons, *'having fun'* and learning nothing - *it's an easy trap to fall into!*

Note that if you are playing with a band, auto-accompaniment would never be used.

Sequencers

Most arranger keyboards, workstations and some digital pianos have one or more built in sequencer(s). This enables you to record and playback chord sequences, styles, fills and variations or even complete songs easily *once you've got your head around it!*

Out of the sequencers that I've used, I've found the Korgs to be most user friendly - or maybe it's just because I've had a few of them and I understand the Korg way of thinking best. Some incidentally are far more editable than others, which is another reason I prefer Korgs.

Another recording option is to use an external sequencer via your PC and a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) such as Cakewalk or Cubase etc., which allows far more control, editing and mixing possibilities. To do this, in most cases you would also need an audio interface unless your keyboard has one built in which is becoming more the norm.

Hammer Action or Semi Weighted?

If you conclude that you want a digital keyboard as against an acoustic instrument, then your next dilemma will be whether to buy one with fully weighted *'hammer action'* keys or to go for *'semi weighted'*.

Without doubt *hammer action* keys are far better for piano playing, while *semi weighted* are better for organ, electric piano, and synthesizer. Both types of keyboards incidentally tend to be *'velocity sensitive',* which means the harder you play the louder the sound - as on an acoustic piano. But there are times when you wouldn't necessarily want this (organs and harpsichords), in which case this feature can be turned off.

For my time *'on the road'* I only ever played the Hammond organ (which was *semi weighted*). The type of playing I did at that time would have been impossible on a weighted board. But now that I've calmed down somewhat, I'm finding that I play more piano type music. So, I have a conundrum - *I want both!* And not only that, but I also want top quality piano / organ sounds and I want to be able to move it easily without the risk of a heart attack. Clearly such an instrument has not yet been invented, but it can be done!

How?

By using a *two-tier combination* set-up, with a weighted action board at the bottom and a lightweight action at the top. There are numerous possible combinations. For instance, a fully weighted digital piano on the bottom with a Korg PA1000 arranger on top would give you just about everything.

Polyphony

When considering various keyboards, you will come across the words *'polyphonic'* and *'monophonic'*.

A *monophonic* keyboard will only allow you to play one note at a time as in the very early synths - if you play two notes together only one will sound. A keyboard which is say *polyphonic* to 32 notes, will allow 32 notes to be played / sounded at once.

As you only have ten fingers (presumably) you may think that this is fine, but when you consider that using the sustain pedal and / or auto-accompaniment can drastically increase the need for *polyphony*, 32 notes may soon become inadequate. So, the larger the *polyphony* the better!

Most quality keyboards have a *polyphony* of 120 notes or more.

Midi

What is 'Midi'?

'Midi' - Musical Instrument Digital Interface is basically a way of transferring musical information from one keyboard or recording device to another via a standard midi cable or via a USB cable (if supported). A single Midi link can carry up to sixteen channels of information.

The information that *midi* carries is basically everything except *audio*. For instance, a *midi* recording could consist of:

- The notes played and how long they are held on for
- How hard they are played (velocity)
- Timing
- Pedal on / off etc.

But it won't record the *audio.* So, if you made a *midi* recording on a particular keyboard, saved it to a *midi 'smf'* file and then played it back on another keyboard or PC, it would use the sounds from the second keyboard or computer software for playback - which of course may be better or worse than the original.

A great advantage of recording in *midi* is the ability to correct mistakes (assuming the editing facilities are available in the keyboard or DAW). For instance:

- Timing mistake can be corrected by quantizing either at the time of recording or afterwards
- Bum notes can be corrected with the *'edit event'* feature
- Velocity and pedal errors can be corrected with the *'edit event'* feature
- Part of a recording can be corrected using the *'punch in'* feature
- Plus, much more!

Another use for *midi* is to connect two keyboards which would enable you to play one board and use the sounds from the other.

So, what if I want to record in audio?

Many keyboards will have audio recording features which will record exactly what you play using the sounds of your instrument. But if you make an error, or something is not quite right you will need to record it again from the beginning.

But if your keyboard or DAW has *midi and audio* recording features, you could first record in *midi,* make your corrections, then playback the corrected file *as* you record it in *audio* and *Bingo* - you will have an *audio* recording with the sounds and effects from your keyboard.

If recording *audio* into a DAW, you will need an external *audio interface* if the facility is not in your keyboard - many new keyboards have both midi *and* audio interfaces but do check before buying if this is your intention.

Other items that you will need include:

- A stool - preferably height adjustable
- A stand strong enough to accommodate the keyboard
- A good quality sustain pedal - preferably with a reverse polarity switch
- A music stand - included with some keyboards
- A dust cover for the keyboard - eBay
- Amplification and leads if not included
- A keyboard carrying bag or case if you intend gigging or moving it around
- Headphones - if you want your family to retain their sanity!

All of these are widely available from many physical and online outlets, but more details of these can again be seen on the reviews page of my website.

Now we'll begin learning to play - after a little bit of essential theory!

Roland RD 88 Stage Piano - 88 Keys

Mid-range stage piano. Great sounds - good value!

Your First Exercises

Now before I start explaining the basic rudiments of music theory, these first few exercises can be practiced effectively even without an instrument, so don't worry if you haven't got one yet, these exercises will still be beneficial.

But assuming you have got a keyboard, you need to get yourself correctly prepared as follows.

Correct Hand and Seating Positioning

Firstly, it's a good idea to make sure that your hands are clean and warm. You can achieve this by soaking them in warm water for a while, but then dry them thoroughly. Alternatively, sit on them to warm them up; but if you happen to be sitting on a cold marble slab, nestle your right hand under your left armpit and your left hand under your right armpit for a while which is a method that I used regularly whilst gigging around Europe during the cold winters of the 60's.

The next thing is to be sure that you adopt a correct seating position so that you can achieve the correct hand position. If your seating is incorrect (too low or too high) then your hand positioning will never be correct. I recommend using a height adjustable piano stool so that you can experiment in order to get comfortable. Or of course you may have an adjustable keyboard stand.

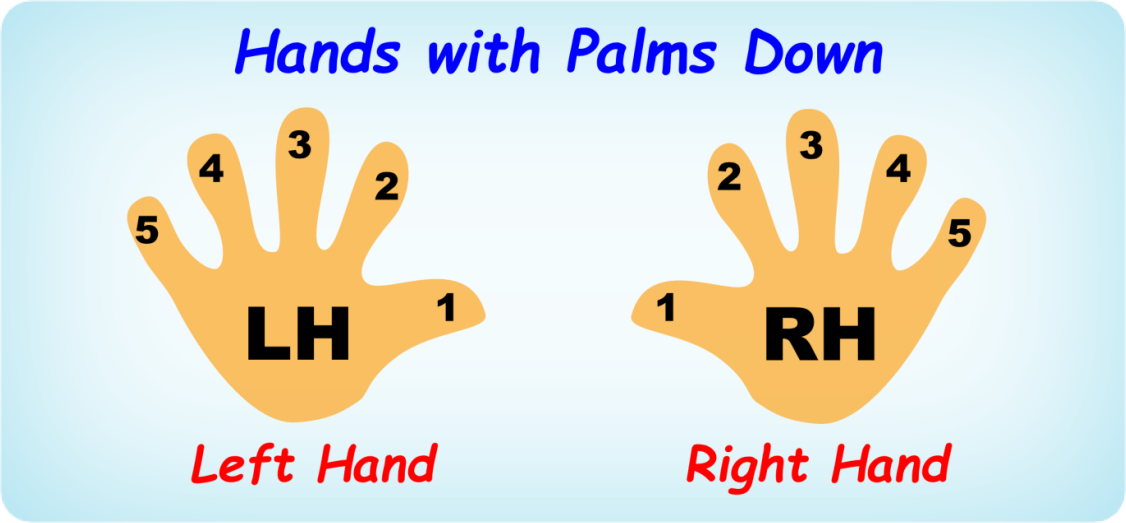
Do also consider the fact that you may need to use the pedals, or at least the sustain pedal, so both feet should be comfortably flat on the floor to begin with.

Your stool should be positioned so that you are seated more or less in the centre of the keyboard - belly button opposite **middle C**, with your back fairly straight but relaxed.

The next pictures illustrate the correct and incorrect hand positions.

Fingering

As far as the piano is concerned what some people will call their *'first'* finger is their *'second'* finger as in piano / keyboard music the *'first'* finger is always your *'thumb'* (on both hands).



Here We Go

What I'm going to get you to do now will drive your partner, kids, parents, friends and probably even your cat *nuts* - so be prepared! You are going to become a *'perpetual tapper'!* These exercises can be done anywhere, anytime on virtually any*thing* from a table to a steering wheel to your head or even your girlfriend's / boyfriend's leg! But I absolutely guarantee that they will increase your finger strength, independence and flexibility quicker than any other method. Obviously, whenever you can, use a keyboard. But because you can do these anywhere, I will call these the *'tapping'* exercises.

To prepare for your first exercise, proceed as follows:

1. If using a piano or keyboard, adjust your seating position as described previously
2. Rest the fingers of your right hand (you can do the same with your left hand later) on the keyboard (or surface) in a claw like position with your first finger (thumb) on the white key to the left of two black keys more or less in the middle of the keyboard - **middle C**
3. Keeping your hand / fingers in this position raise your hand only very slightly so that it's no longer touching the keyboard (or surface). If this is uncomfortable, adjust your seating position
4. Now begin counting either out loud or in your head: **1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &** etc.

5. With each count (but not the *'ands'*) tap your left foot and try and keep a steady rhythm. Now you're ready for exercise 1, but pay attention to the hand / finger position at all times

Exercise 1

With each tap of your foot, press the keys (or tap the surface) with each finger of your right hand one at a time in a piston type fashion starting and finishing with your thumb as shown in the right-hand diagram below. Speed is of no importance, but rhythm is. Take it as slow as you like but keep in time. It's likely that you have started counting far faster than you are able to do this, so simply slow down the tempo.

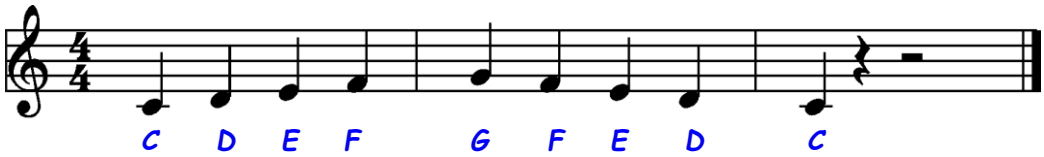
5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 (5)
Left Hand x 7

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 (1)
Right Hand x 7

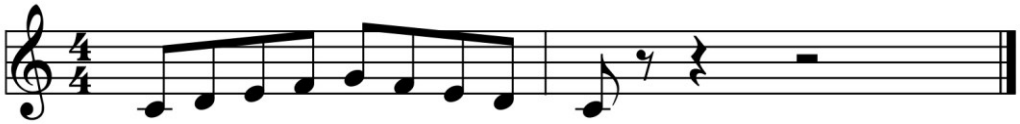
When using the left hand, start with the 5th finger, again on a key to the left of two black keys, but the next one down from the one used with the right hand and follow the pattern as in the left-hand diagram above.

Practice this exercise with both hands separately doing each one seven times making the last beat of each segment the first of the next. You will see the significance of *'seven'* later. Gradually increase the speed according to your ability, but remember speed is not important, but accuracy and rhythm is.

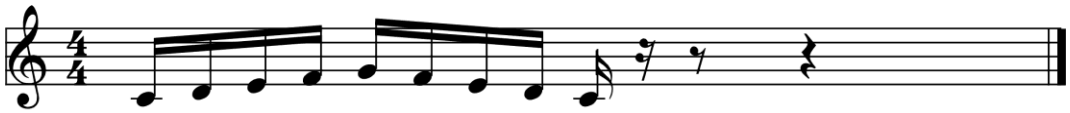
I don't want you to worry about this right now, but in music notation if you play just one segment of the above, you would in fact be playing 9 crotchets - *quarter notes US,* the last of which being the first of the continuum. This is shown in music notation for the right hand in the next diagram.



Now as you get a little more proficient, you could double the speed by tapping / playing the notes on the *'and'* beats as well - this would be 9 quavers - *eighth notes US,* as below.



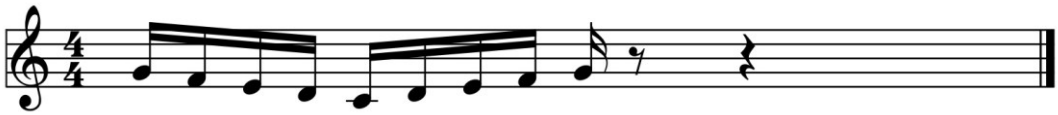
Double it again and it's 9 semi quavers - *sixteenth notes US,* as shown next, which is what you should eventually aim for, but you can always alter the tempo to suit yourself.



Each of the exercises has a *'mirror'* version thus enabling every finger in both hands to benefit equally. The mirror version for this first exercise is as follows with the right hand starting with the 5th finger and the left hand starting with the 1st.

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 (1)
Left Hand x 7

5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 (5)
Right Hand x 7



Try these exercises two different ways:

a) Tapping and releasing each finger fairly abruptly - this is known as *'staccato'* and

b) Holding each finger down until the next one comes into play - this is known as *'legato'*

c) Practice with both hands individually and then both hands together

I'll explain the music notation in detail later, but for the time being just try and get your fingers working which right now is most important and will be for quite some time.

So, when you're ready, move onto the next four exercises which will get your fingers moving in a different order.

Exercise 2

5 1 2 1 3 2 4 3 (5)
Left Hand x 7

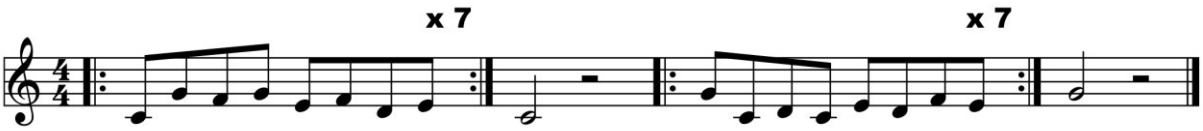
1 5 4 5 3 4 2 3 (1)
Right Hand x 7

Mirror Version Below

1 5 4 5 3 4 2 3 (1)
Left Hand x 7

5 1 2 1 3 2 4 3 (5)
Right Hand x 7

Right hand Music Notation for Normal and mirror version below



Exercise 3

5 1 2 1 3 1 4 1(5)
Left Hand x 7

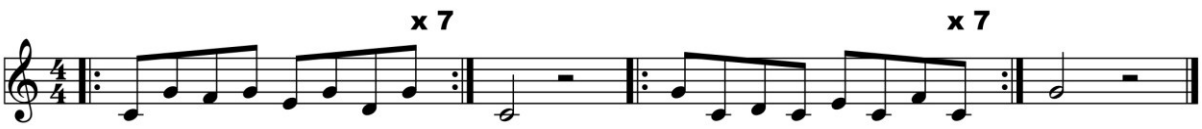
1 5 4 5 3 5 2 5 (1)
Right Hand x 7

Mirror Version Below

1 5 4 5 3 5 2 5 (1)
Left Hand x 7

5 1 2 1 3 1 4 1 (5)
Right Hand x 7

Right hand Music Notation for Normal and mirror version below



Exercise 4

5 4 3 4 2 3 1 2 (5)
Left Hand x 7

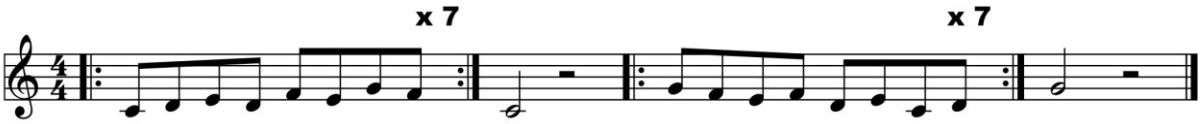
1 2 3 2 4 3 5 4 (1)
Right Hand x 7

Mirror Version Below

1 2 3 2 4 3 5 4 (1)
Left Hand x 7

5 4 3 4 2 3 1 2 (5)
Right Hand x 7

Right hand Music Notation for Normal and mirror version below



Exercise 5

5 3 4 2 3 1 2 3 (5)
Left Hand x 7

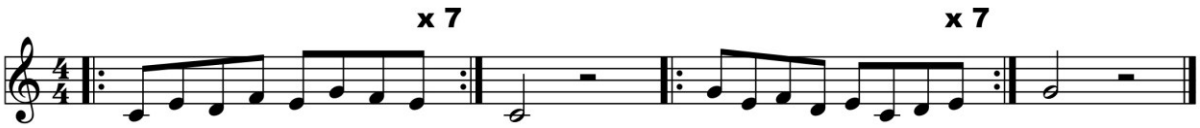
1 3 2 4 3 5 4 3 (1)
Right Hand x 7

Mirror Version Below

1 3 2 4 3 5 4 3 (1)
Left Hand x 7

5 3 4 2 3 1 2 3 (5)
Right Hand x 7

Right hand Music Notation for Normal and mirror version below



Right now, you may understand the fingering charts better than the music notation, but you must admit that it's getting a bit confusing and remember we are only dealing with five white notes here. But hopefully this has got you tapping and exercising your fingers in order to gain some initial dexterity and flexibility required to progress further.

I appreciate that if you've never done this before, these initial exercises are difficult, particularly between the 4th and 5th fingers, but believe me they work - there are no better!

Later I'll show you more but remember do them slowly and keep in time.

Even though their greatest importance is to give the initial flexibility and strength to each finger, even when you progress to learn all the scales and arpeggios shown later, never dismiss the importance of the 5 finger exercises. I still do them now after well over 60 years of playing.

Please continue with these exercises while you are reading the following chapters, I guarantee that you will see the benefits in a very short while. But don't strain your finger muscles too much - *do a bit - rest a bit!*

The audio link for the tapping exercises is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/tapping.html or click on the notation graphics or use the QR code on page 10 to gain access to all the links.

Alto Truesonic TS 408 Active PA Speaker

A great alternative to a dedicated keyboard combo amp is powered speakers like these. Although used primarily for PA, these are are great for keyboards and can be used singly or in pairs (for stereo).
These are ideal for home studio and small - average sized gigs.
I have used these!

The Notes of the Keyboard

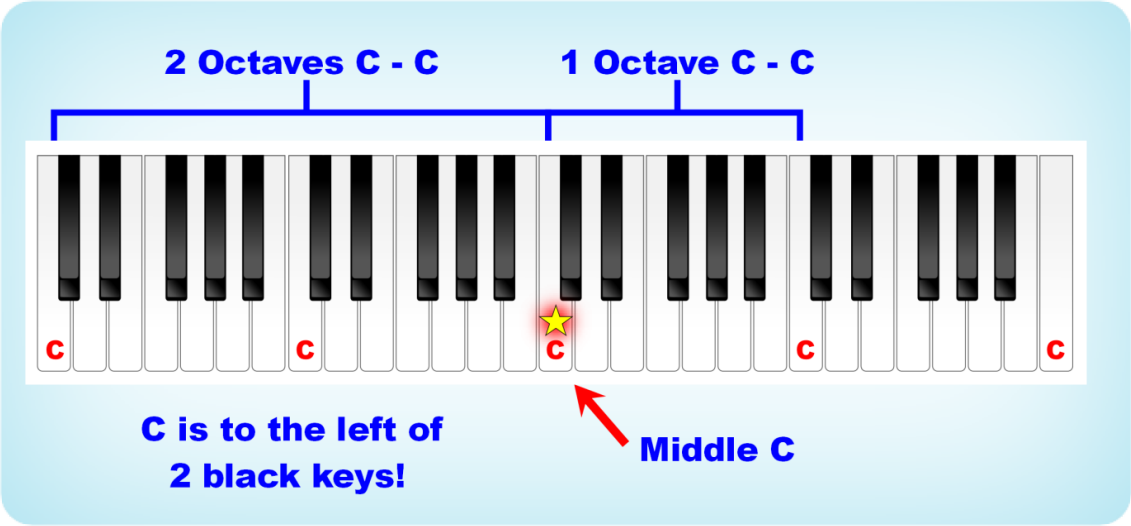
Now we'll look at the notes of the keyboard and how to identify them.

As already stated, some keyboards / pianos have more keys than others, but this makes no difference in relation to understanding how to play them, as they all have the same basic arrangement of black and white keys.

If you look closely, you will see that the black keys are in groups of two then three.

This enables us to find every single note easily. And the first one that you must learn is **'C'** which can be found just to the left of two black keys.

The diagram below shows a four-octave span revealing five **C's** each of which are eight notes apart - hence octave - as in octagon - octopus - eight!



Probably the most important note on the keyboard is **middle C** which is the **'C'** that is more or less in the middle of the keyboard and because it is so important, we are going to put a star on ours as shown.

Now all the notes to the left of **middle C** get gradually lower in pitch and all the notes to the right gradually get higher. And usually, you will use your right hand for the higher notes and your left hand for the lower notes.

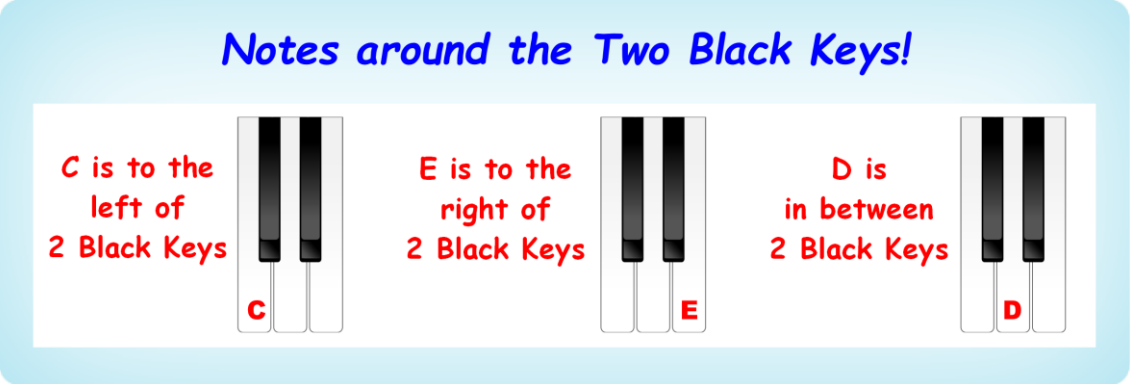
*So which hand plays **middle C**?*

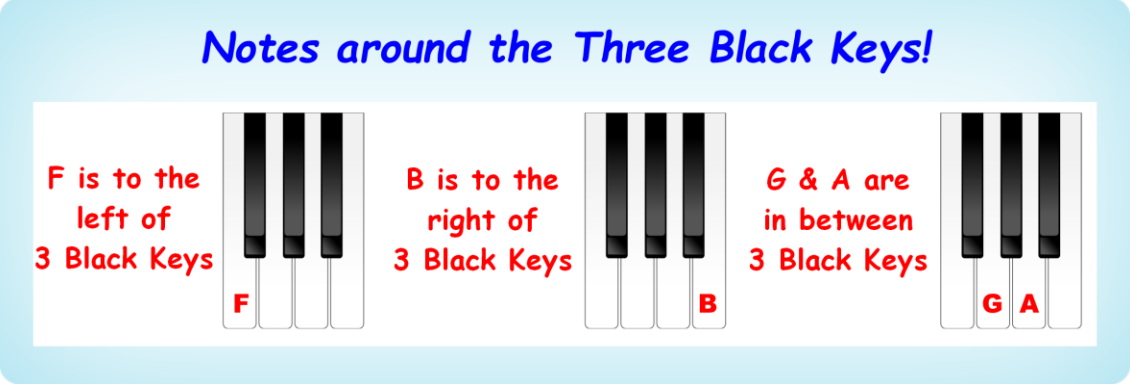
That's a good question and the answer is that it could be either, but I will explain more shortly.

Now I'll show you what all the other notes are called, but I don't want you to get too confused about all this at the moment. We will be taking it all slowly step by step.

This is mind boggling, how am I going to remember this lot?

Easy, if you split them up into two main groups according to the number of black notes as shown below:





And if you can't remember which comes first **G** or **A**, you're probably going Gaga - get it? - GA - GA!!

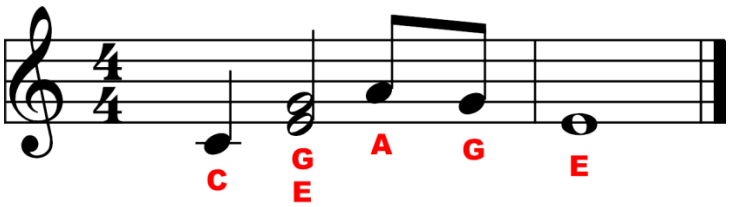
What about the black ones, what are they called?

Don't worry I've not forgotten them, we'll be dealing with them shortly, but first we'll look at how the keys of the keyboard relate to music notation.

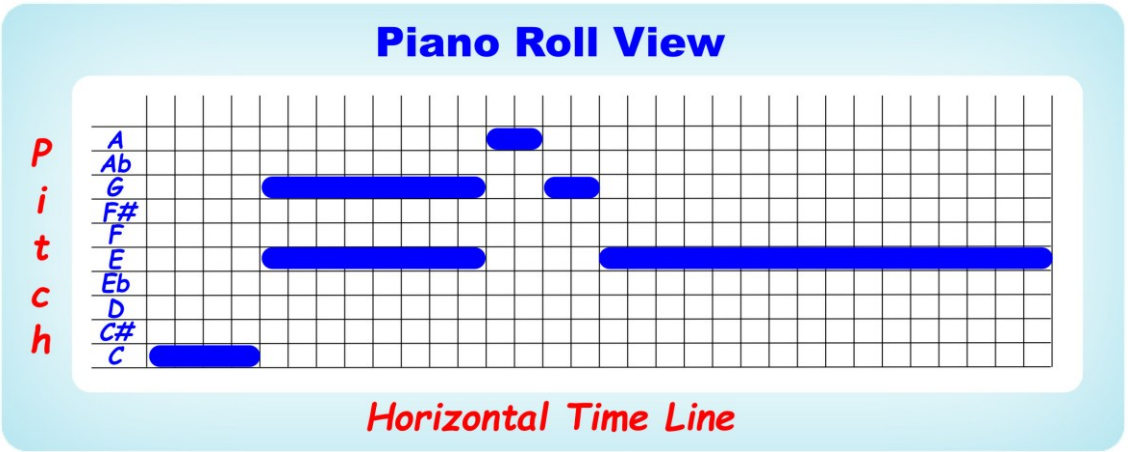
Music Notation

Music notation is basically a glorified *'graph'* using groups of lines called *'staves'* or *'staffs'*, with the *'timeline'* being the horizontal axis from left to right and the *'pitch'* being the vertical axis. How long a note is played for is determined by the time element of the note i.e. crotchet, quaver, minim etc. When it is played is determined by how far along the timeline it's placed. The pitch of the note is determined by how high or low it's placed on the vertical axis (the stave). Simple - easy peasy - in theory!

As an example, in the diagram below, the first note to be played is **C** which is the lowest pitched note of the phrase and is a *'crotchet'* (don't worry I'll explain all this shortly), followed by **E** and **G** which are higher pitched and played together. They are both *'minims'* which are sustained for twice as long as a crotchet. Then we have **A** which is the highest note of the phrase followed by **G** again both of which are *'quavers'* being timed half the value of a crotchet. And finally, the last note of the phrase is **E** which is a *'semibreve'* which is four times the time value of a crotchet.



The next diagram shows exactly the same phrase in graph form or *Piano Roll* form as used in music recording software. Click on either to hear the phrase, if you want to.



Can you recognise the similarities between the two diagrams?

Undoubtedly any untrained musician would find the piano roll view simpler to understand, and it certainly has its uses when editing recorded music. But look at how

much space it takes up compared to the first diagram. And remember this is a very short, one hand phrase. So clearly, learning conventional music notation has to be to every musician's advantage.

In order to extend the vertical axis (in conventional notation) and potentially accommodate more notes, this is split into *'clefs'*. The two clefs used in piano music are the *'treble'* and *'bass'* clefs as shown next and these form the *'grand staff'* (or stave).

Saying: "the two clefs used in Piano music" implies that there are other clefs?

Yes, there are several other clefs used by other instruments and singers, the most common being the *'alto'* and *'tenor'* clefs, but from the piano / keyboard point of view, you can completely put them out of mind, just simply know that they exist and forget about them!

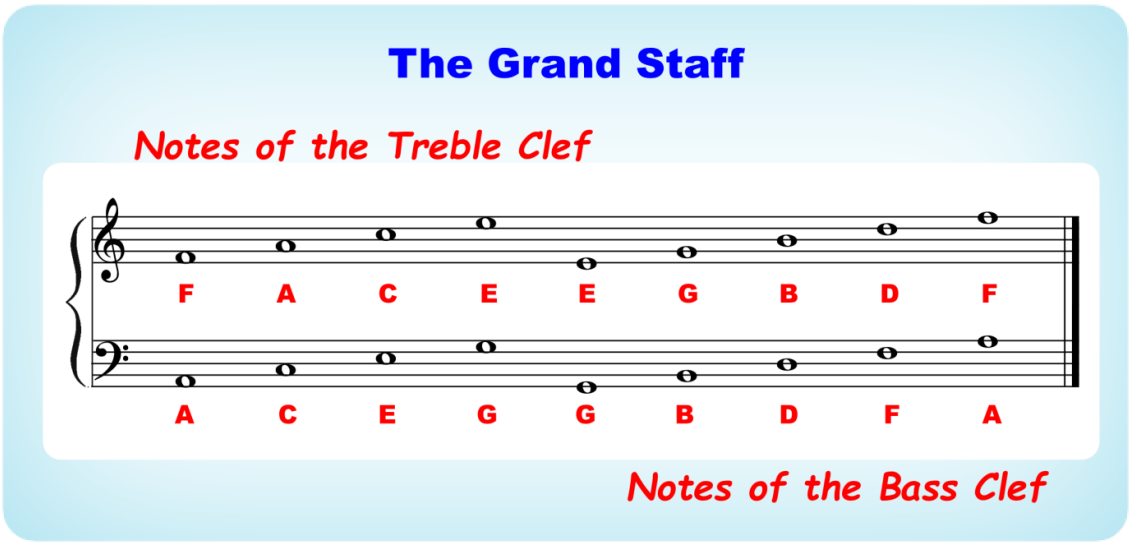
Roland FP90x - 88 Keys

One of Roland's flagship portable pianos - Stunning!

Perfect for home, studio, or stage!

The Grand Staff

The *'Grand staff'* is made up of two *'staves'* or *'staffs'* of five lines each, the top one being the *'treble clef'* which is mainly used for the higher notes by the right hand and the *'bass clef'* mainly used for the lower notes by the left hand.



What's the difference between a staff and a stave?

Actually, no-one seems to know for sure - *not even Google or Wikipedia!* But clearly a *staff* is a *stave,* and a *stave* is a *staff,* although generally the plural for both is *'staves'* not *'staffs'* - *but don't worry about it, it's just a word - well two words!*

The important thing that you need to learn is that the *'staves'* or *'staffs'* are split into the two *'clefs'* (for piano music) - these are what you need to learn and remember.

An easy way to remember the notes of each clef is to think of them in sections like:

- Treble clef *space* notes **F A C E** - the word *FACE!*
- Treble clef *line* notes **E G B D F** - *Every Good Boy Deserves Favours!*
- Bass clef *space* notes **A C E G** - *All Cows Eat Grass!*
- Bass clef *line* notes **G B D F A** - *Giant Bears Don't Fly Aeroplanes!*

So, which one is 'middle C'?

Well actually ***'middle C'*** is not in the above illustration, because it falls below the lines of the treble clef and above the lines of the bass clef. In fact, it's exactly mid-way between both clefs.

"I started out with nothing and I've still got most of it left!"

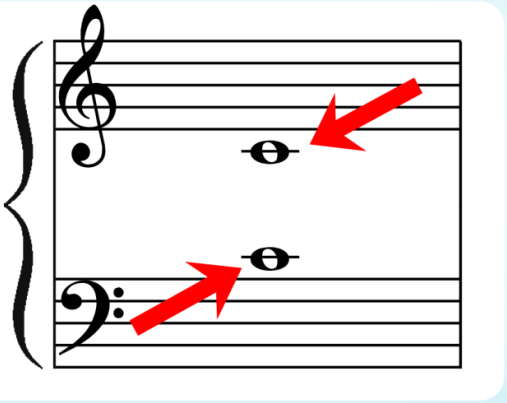
Seasick Steve

Comment: Rock on Steve, we all love you!

The next illustration will show you where it is! Although it is shown in both the treble and bass clefs it is the same note.

Middle C

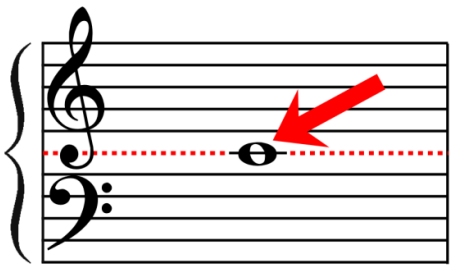
Middle C is below the lines of the Treble Clef and above the lines of the Bass Clef



If we bring the two clefs closer together, you will see that there is an imaginary line exactly midway between the two clefs and this is where ***'middle C'*** lives.

Middle C

If we bring the two clefs closer together and draw an imaginary line between them, this is where we find Middle C



And this is why ***'middle C'*** has a line drawn through the middle of it. This is called a *'ledger line'* and happens with some other notes as well, in fact any time a note goes above or below the clef staff lines.

"I have never thought of writing for reputation and honour. What I have in my heart must come out; that is the reason why I compose."

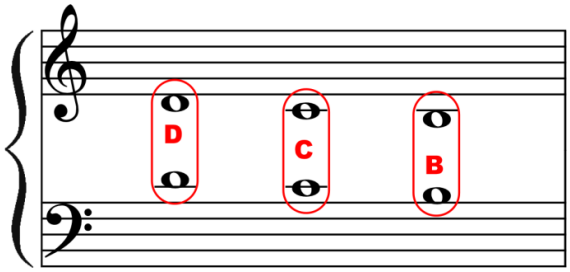
Beethoven

Comment: Wisdom from the greatest!

Now the notes both sides of middle **C** (**B** and **D**) also fall either above or below the clef staff lines which can be seen next.

Notes Between the Clefs

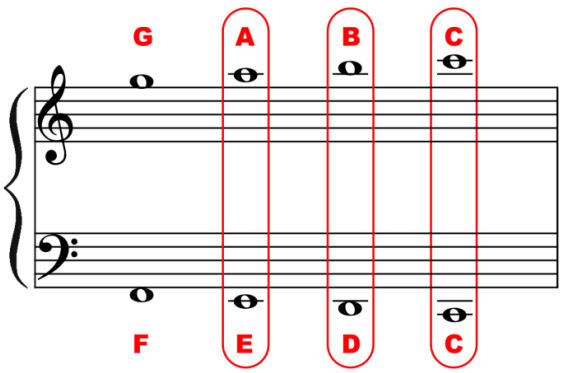
The notes shown here are the same notes written in different clefs



Now there are also notes that fall both above the treble clef and below the bass clef and these in fact would be the top four and the bottom four white notes of a four-octave spread.

Notes Above or Below the Clefs

Some notes fall above or below the clef staff lines as shown here!



The two C's shown here are 4 octaves apart!

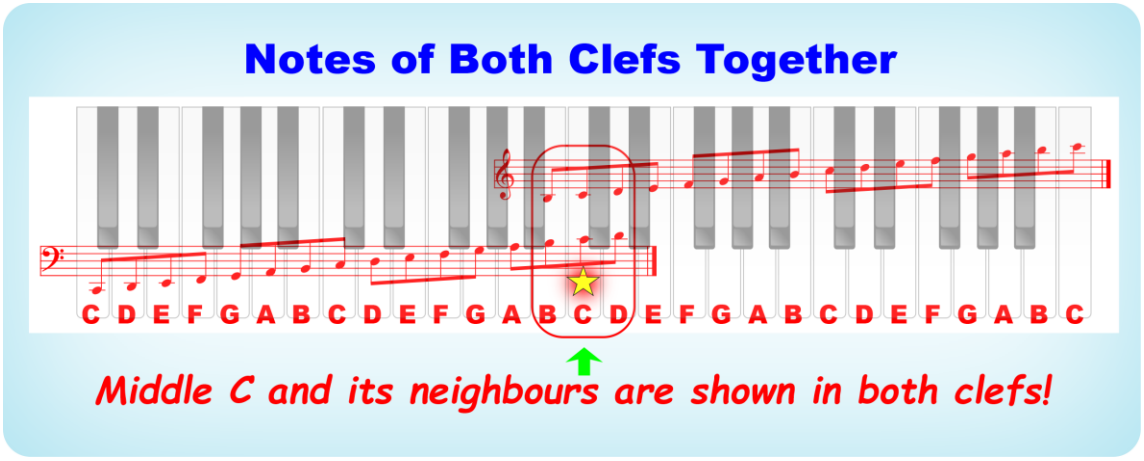
Wow this is getting heavy; I don't think I'll ever understand all this!

Please don't distress yourself, we will be dealing with everything one step at a time and it will all become clear as you progress. But you may occasionally need to review various sections to gain a complete understanding. - *Just read on!*

How the Notes Relate to the Keyboard

Now we'll look at how the musical notes relate to the keyboard.

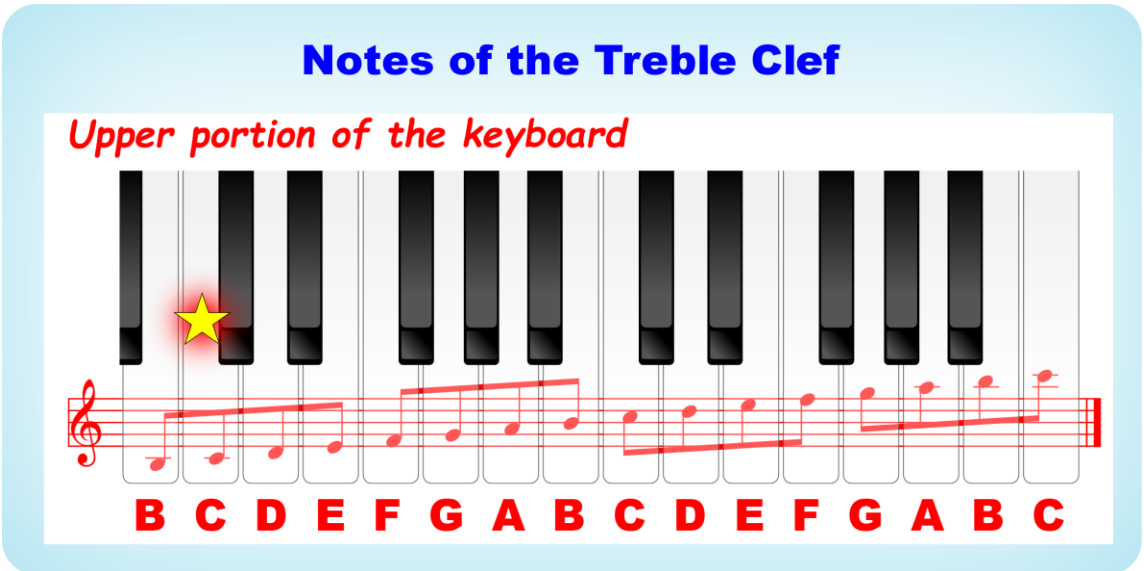
This next diagram may at first look a little confusing and difficult to read; and if you are reading this on a tablet, it may not be clear. If you haven't already done so, please go to the rear of the book to get the pdf download link and you will be able to see this much more clearly, even more so by zooming in, in landscape view!

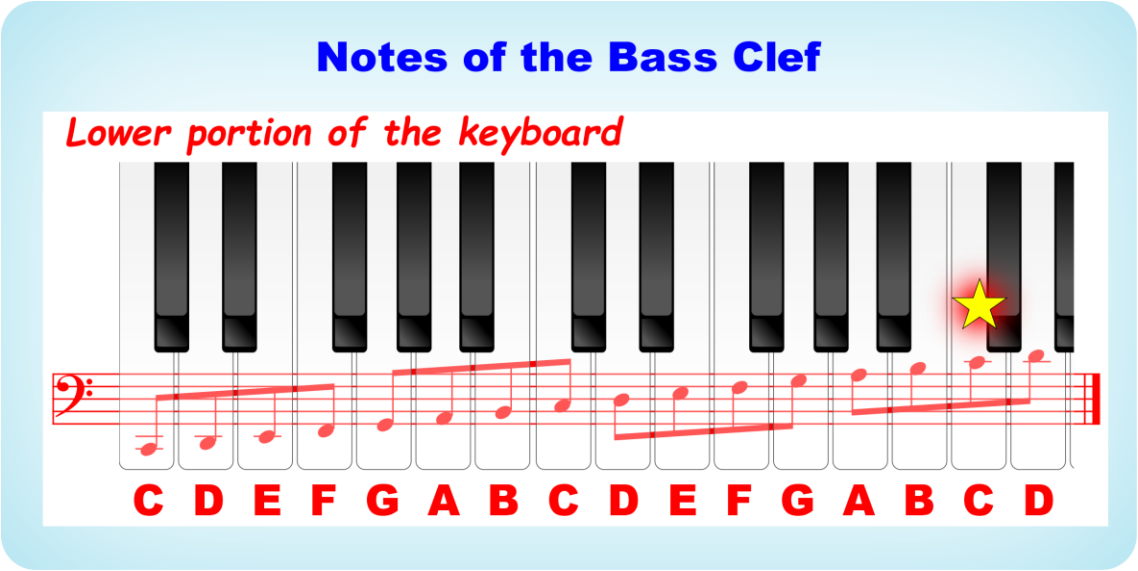


To make this easier to see, below I have split the keyboard into two 2 octave sections, one for each clef, but remember that we have put a star on ***Middle C*** so that you can always find it!

So, notice that the next two diagrams are actually the same as the above diagram split into two.

It may be useful for you to print out these three diagrams and look at them in detail.

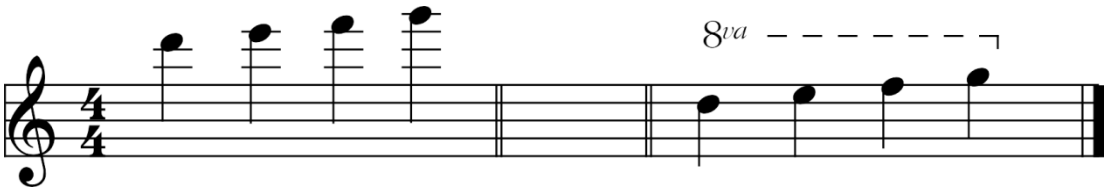




Ok so this shows a four-octave spread, but what happens when the notes are higher or lower than these as on larger keyboards?

Good question! And the answer is that up to a certain point more ledger lines are added, but when there are too many, they become impossible to read quickly, so instead the music is written an octave (or more) lower or higher to keep within the clefs and then the ***8va, 8vb, 15ma*** or ***15mb*** symbols are used.

As an example, the following two phrases are exactly the same, but on the second one the ***8va*** symbol is used indicating that the notes should be played an octave higher than written.



- ***8va*** = play the bracketed notes one octave higher
- ***8vb*** = play the bracketed notes one octave lower
- ***15ma*** = play the bracketed notes two octaves higher
- ***15mb*** = play the bracketed notes two octaves lower

To be honest it will probably be a while before you'll need these.

"The beautiful thing about learning is that nobody can take it away from you."

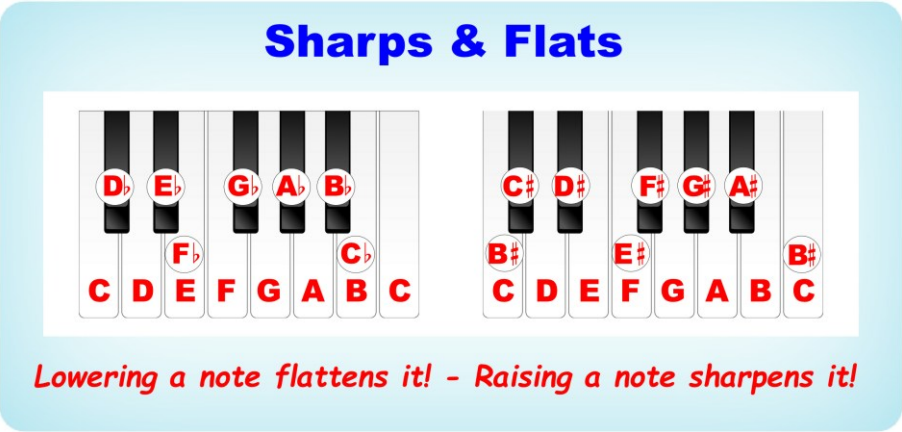
BB King - (King of the Blues)

Sharps & Flats

We've already learnt that the interval from one **C** to the next is an *'octave'*. And indeed, this is the same interval from **B - B** or **G - G** etc.

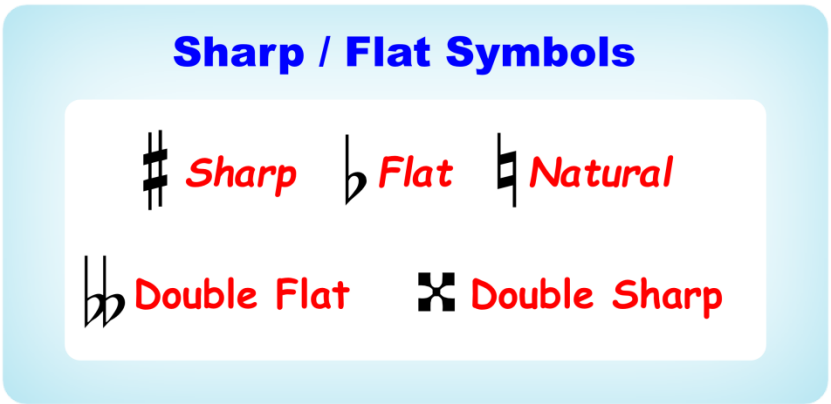
Now the smallest interval in Western music is a *'semitone'* or *'half step US'* which is the interval from any note on the keyboard to its nearest neighbour be it black or white.

So, the interval between **C** and **B** is a semitone, and also the interval between **E** and **F** as in both cases there are no black notes in-between. In all the other cases, there *are* black notes in-between, so the semitone interval will be to the black note above or below. And as you can see by the diagram below the first black note after **C** is called **C sharp** *or* **D flat**. Note that in some circumstances **B** could also be known as ***C flat*** (as there are no black notes in between) and **C** could also be known as ***B sharp*** - but actually this is fairly rare.



To *'sharpen'* a note is to raise the pitch and to *'flatten'* one is to lower the pitch.

There are also *'double sharps'* and *'double flats'* where the pitch of a note is raised or lowered twice as much (2 semitones). But these only occur occasionally in keys heavily endowed in sharps or flats. There are only two in this book - in the **G# minor** scales and the **D♭ 7♭ 5** chord in the chord substitution section. It may be years before you come across anymore.

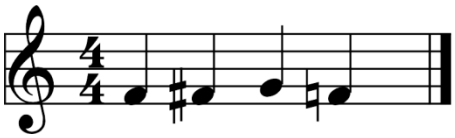


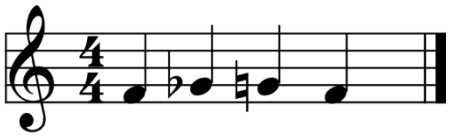
Whether a particular note is known as a sharp or a flat depends on the key signature which will be dealt with later.

Sharps and flats occur in music in two different ways:

- as *'accidentals'* or
- within key signatures (which could also include *'accidentals'*)

When they are accidentals, they are simply added to the music as and where they occur as shown below.





In this case any repeats of notes that are *'sharpened'* or *'flattened'* this way remains so for the duration of the bar unless *'naturalised'* using the *'natural'* symbol.

If you look carefully at the last diagrams, you will see that both examples are identical. The first one uses **F sharp** and the second uses **G flat** (same notes) to produce the same result.

Why do the black notes have two names? Why not just call them 'flats' or 'sharps' but not both?

Yes, I can see the confusion, but this is because there are *'flat keys'* and *'sharp keys'* which we'll be learning about later, along with key signatures.

But first we'll deal with the timing.

Timing and Rhythm Part 1

Hopefully you've understood a little about the vertical axis of the musical graph (stave). Now we'll start looking at the horizontal axis - the *'timeline',* which consists of time signatures, bars and note values.

Time Signatures and Bars

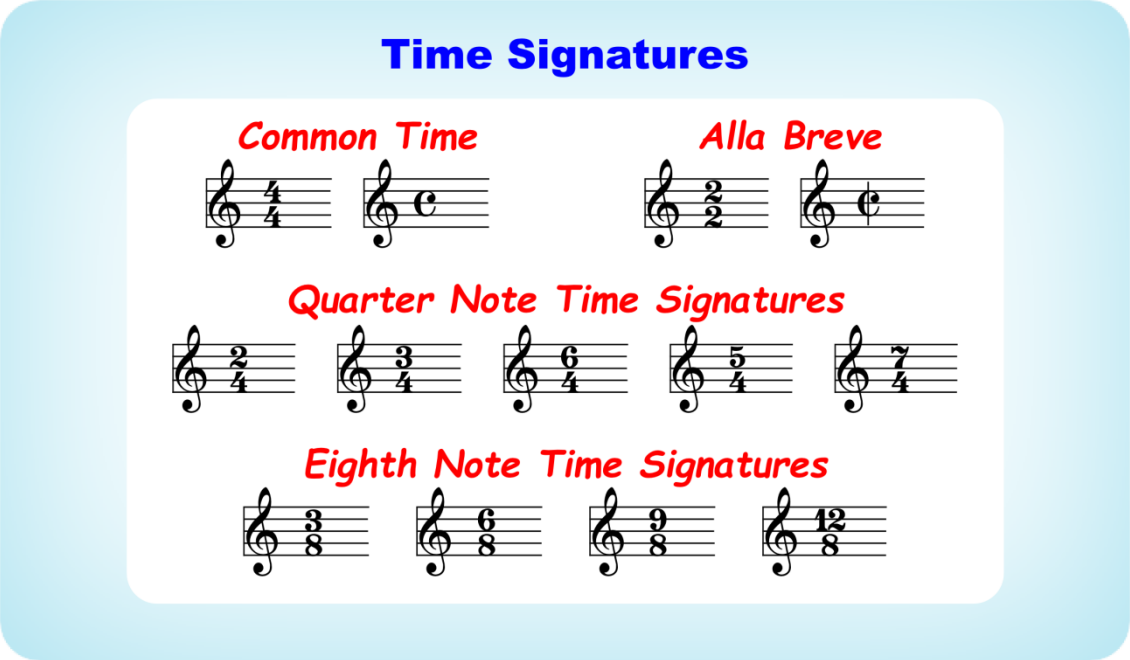
Each group of notes is separated into *'bars'* or *'measures',* which are the vertical lines separating the various notes or groups of notes. The time signature determines how many notes of what length are to be played to each bar, the first beat of which is often slightly or heavily accented.

The most common time signatures are:

- **4/4** - four quarter notes to each bar. Think or repeat '**1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4**' etc., and with your right-hand tap with the '**1 2 3 4**' beats but not the 'ands'. With your left-hand tap on the '**1** and **3**' beats
- **3/4** - three quarter notes to each bar (Waltz time). Think or repeat '**1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3**' etc., and with your left-hand tap on the '**1**' beats and with your right hand on the '**2 / 3**' beats
- **2/4** - two quarter notes to each bar (March time). Think or repeat '**1 & 2 & 1 & 2**' etc., and with your left-hand tap on the '**1**' beats and with your right hand on the '**2**' beats
- **6/8** - six eighth notes to each bar (two set of three - Jazz Waltz). Think or repeat '**1 2 3, 2 2 3 - 1 2 3, 2 2 3**' etc., (no *'ands'* this time) and tap all the beats with your right hand and the '**1**' and '**2**' beats with your left hand but giving more emphasis on the first '**1**' beat of each pattern. This may seem similar to **3/4** time, but it's generally much faster

The time signature is always given at the beginning of each piece and will remain the same throughout unless information is given to the contrary.

The most common time signature without doubt is **4/4** which is also known as *'common time'* and this also has an alternative symbol as shown below as does the **2/2**-time signature which is known as *'cut common time'* or *'alla breve'*.



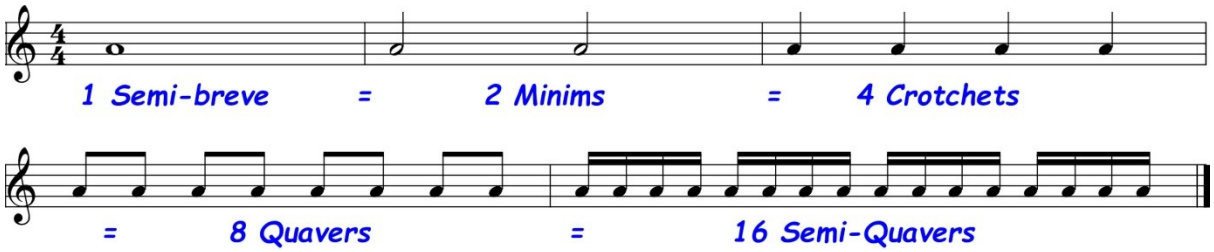
There are more - **5/4**, **7/4**, **9/8**, **11/8** etc., but we don´t need any of these for our purpose right now and by the time you come to need them you will understand them perfectly.

Korg Pa5X Arranger - 76 Keys

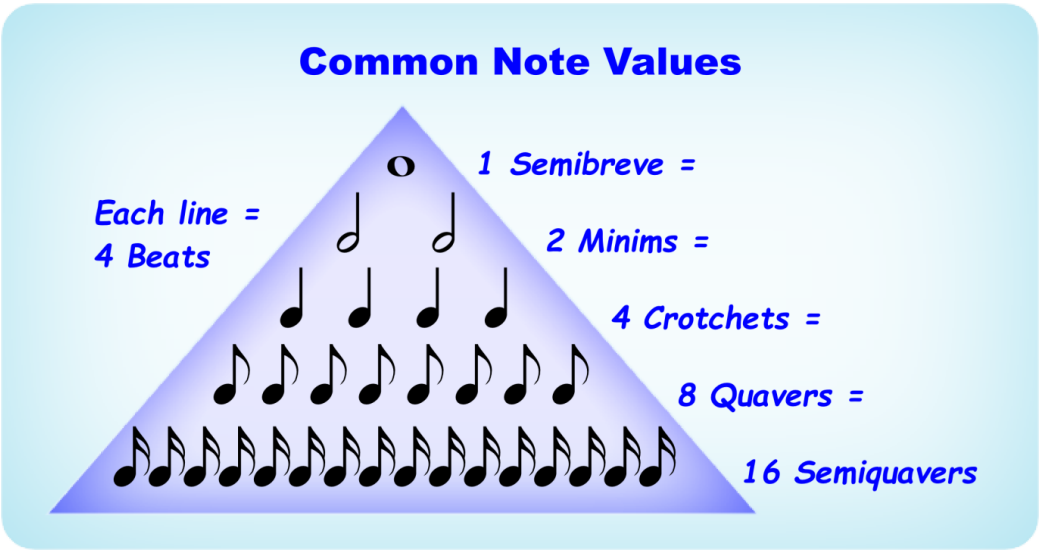
In my opinion this is the very best arranger keyboard on the market available with 61 or 76 semi-weighted keys, or 88 fully weighted. Not cheap, but superb for solo professionals!

Note Values

The most important note values that you are likely to come across for a while are as follows:



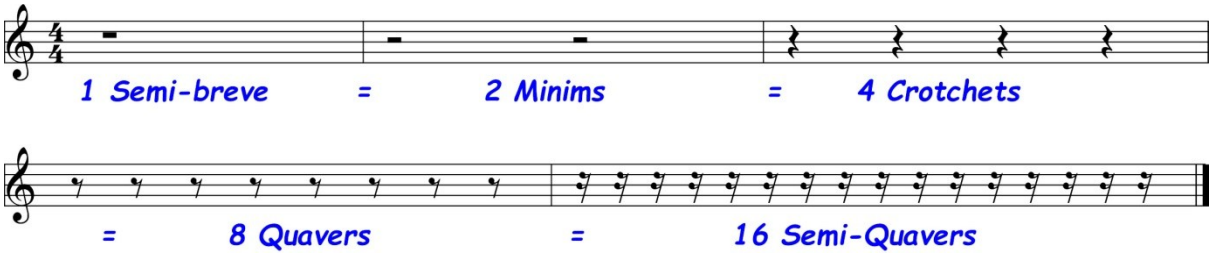
- The *'semibreve'* also known as a *'whole note'* counts as 4 beats (therefore taking up the whole of a **4/4** bar)
- The *'minim'* also known as a *'half note'* counts as 2 beats (therefore taking up half of a **4/4** bar)
- The *'crotchet'* also known as a *'quarter note'* counts as 1 beat (therefore taking up a quarter of a **4/4** bar)
- The *'quaver'* also known as an *'eighth note'* counts as half a beat (therefore taking up an eighth of a **4/4** bar)
- The *'semiquaver'* also known as a *'sixteenth note'* counts as a quarter of a beat (therefore taking up a sixteenth of a **4/4** bar). As more *'tails'* are added to the quaver family the note values halve. So, four tails will create a 64th note, but we are not going to go into these here



There are longer and shorter notes (and the corresponding rests), but these will do for now.

Rests

Each bar must always compute to the correct value except when *'lead in notes'* are used in the first bar (shown shortly). Therefore, any space where no note is sounded is taken up by a *'rest(s)'* which have similar values to the notes.



Note the similarity between the minim and semibreve rests. Although they look similar, they are rarely confused as the semibreve takes up the whole bar. I always remember these as a minim *'rests'* and a semibreve *'hangs'!*

*Sorry, I don't get any of this. Could you just explain again exactly what **4/4** timing means?*

Ok, the top '**4**' of the '**4/4**' symbol means that there are four beats to the bar and the bottom '**4**' tells us the value of the beats, and as a crotchet is a quarter of a semibreve, this means that there are four *'quarter'* notes (crotchets) to each bar.

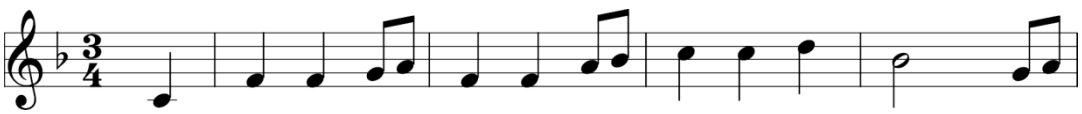
In the case of **3/4** this means that there are three *'quarter'* notes (crotchets) to a bar and **2/4**, two quarter notes to a bar.

In the case of **6/8** the there are six *'eighth'* notes (quavers) to a bar.

Being totally ridiculous, if the time signature was **19/16** there would be nineteen sixteenth notes (semiquavers) to a bar, but such a time signature does not exist in practice - (maybe on another planet). However, time signatures such as **11/8** and **7/4** etc., although a little unusual *do* exist! - I love both of them and use them frequently!

Lead in Notes

Some tunes don't start on the first beat of a bar, in which case *'lead in note(s)'* are used which will make the first bar shorter than the normal bar time. Sometimes (but not always) this is adjusted by also making the last bar a different length to make up the difference. An example of this is shown below which is in fact the first few bars of ***'Away in a Manger'***.



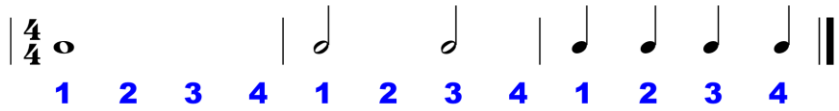
4/4 Timing

Now, looking at the example below, I want you to count out loud or in your head: **1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4** and clap your hands on the beats with the notes. Then you'll be clapping the rhythm.

Notice the **4/4** sign at the beginning and also the *'bar lines'* between each four beats.

4/4 Timing Example

Count evenly and clap on the notes!



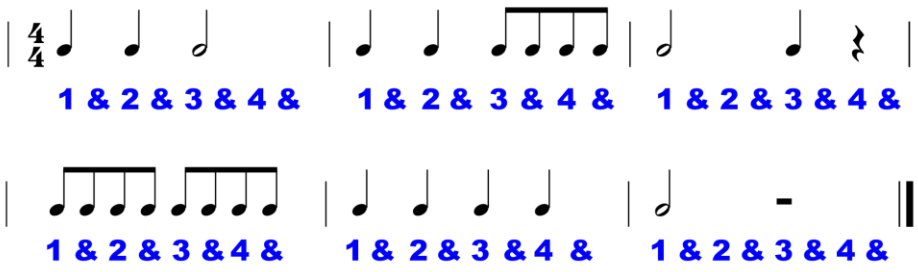
That should have been fairly simple.

Now I'd like you to count **1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &** etc., as in the next example we're going to include some quavers and also a couple of rests.

If you like, instead of clapping you can tap a steady four beats with your left hand and tap on the notes with your right hand, but don't forget to think the ***'&s'*** in your head!

4/4 Timing Example 2

Count evenly and clap on the notes!



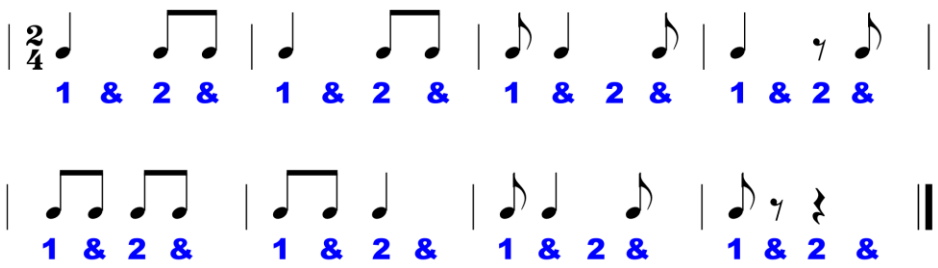
2/4 Timing

2/4, as I mentioned only a short while ago, means that there are two quarter notes (crotchets) to each bar. And this is just like *'marching'* time. So, when counting as we have done previously, you need to count **1 - 2 - 1 - 2** etc., or **1 & 2 & 1 & 2 &** etc. if there are quavers involved (which there are).

And accent should be given to both first and second beats.

2/4 Timing Example

Count evenly and clap on the notes!



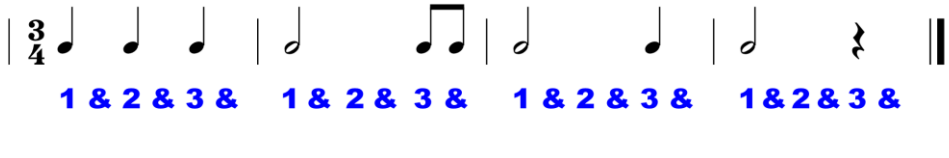
Just about all military music is written in **2/4** timing. If you've ever seen our glorious U.K. monarchy's - ***'Trooping the Colour'***, you will have heard many! But **2/4** timing is also extensively used in all types of music, including folk and classical.

3/4 Timing

3/4 timing is *'waltz'* timing and should be counted: **1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 2 - 3** etc., or if there are quavers involved: **1 & 2 & 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 &** etc., with accent on the first beat only.

3/4 Timing Example

Count evenly and clap on the notes!



So exactly how long in time is a crotchet?

There is no set time, but they are always equal unless the tempo changes during the piece. The tempo for every piece of music is generally indicated at the beginning by showing how many crotchets there are per minute or in classical music the following *Italian* terms are used:

Italian		Translation		Beats per Minute
Grave	-	*Very Slow / Solemn*	-	*40 - 44*
Largo	-	*Slow*	-	*46 - 48*
Lento	-	*Slow*	-	*50 -52*
Adagio	-	*Leisurely*	-	*54 - 56*
Andante	-	*Easily*	-	*58 - 63*
Andantino	-	*Slightly Faster*	-	*64 - 72*
Moderato	-	*Moderately*	-	*74 -92*
Allegretto	-	*Fairly Quick*	-	*96 - 108*
Allegro	-	*Quick / Lively*	-	*112 - 116*
Vivace	-	*Briskly*	-	*120 - 132*
Presto	-	*Fast*	-	*138 - 168*
Prestissimo	-	*Fast as Possible*	-	*176 - 208*

So why are all these terms in Italian?

Because many of the most important composers from the Renaissance to the Baroque period were *Italian. - That's just about all the composers who eat spaghetti and who's names end in 'i'!*

Korg EK 50 - 61 Keys

Ideal, low-cost starter arranger keyboard. Also look at the Yamaha PSR E473

Using a Metronome

If you have a modern electronic piano or keyboard there will almost certainly be a built-in metronome which can be altered to any specific time value. Note that as well as setting the timing you will also need to set how many beats there are to a bar; the metronome will then *'ding'* on the first beat of every bar and *'tick'* on the others.

If you've listened to any of the links so far, you'll notice that I've added a metronome to them - with the *'ding'* at the first beat of each bar (or measure).

If you are using an acoustic instrument, you will need an external metronome. Electronic versions are widely available and are very inexpensive, but there's something really special about the old-fashioned traditional clockwork versions which unfortunately are more expensive. I love them - they come in the same category as cuckoo clocks for me - *a touch of nostalgia!* - But all they do is tick, tock and ding - *no cuckoos!*

What about when a piece slows down or speeds up?

In this event the no metronome (electronic or mechanical) would be able to cope with the infinite possibilities, but in these events the following terms are used in the music notation:

Italian		Translations
Accelerando	-	*Increase speed*
Rallentando	-	*Slow down*
Ritardando	-	*Slow down*
a tempo	-	*Resume original tempo*

That's it for timing and rhythm for the time being. I'll show an example of **6/8** timing shortly, as this requires the need for dotted notes which we haven't dealt with yet.

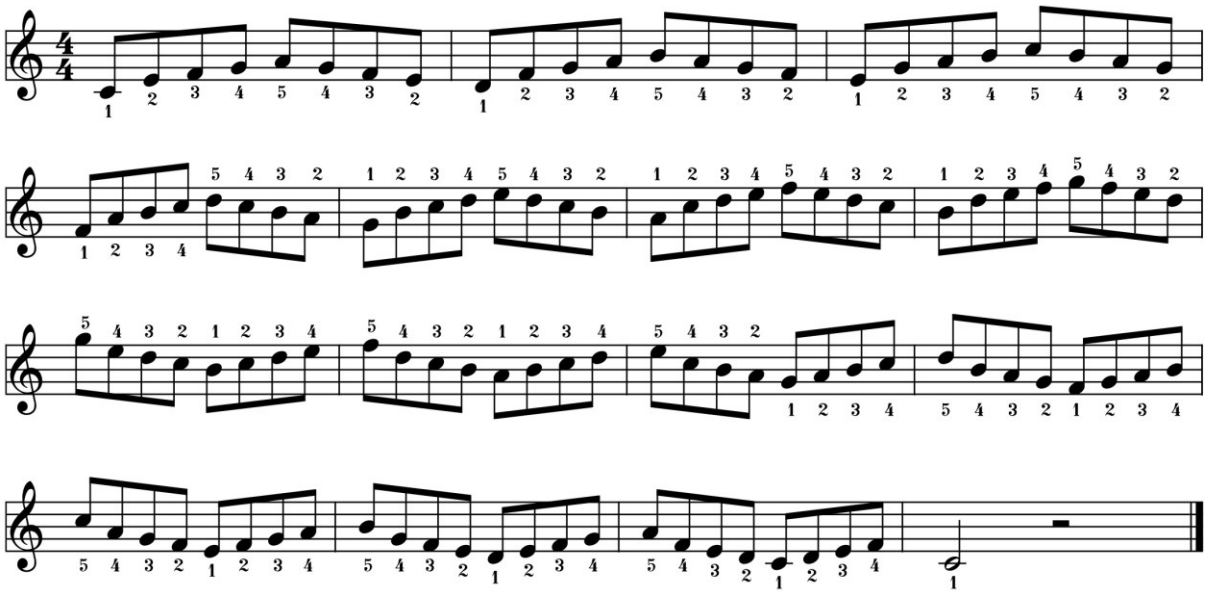
The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/timing.html *or click on the graphics!*

5 Finger Exercises in Brief

Ok, so hopefully now you understand a little bit of timing and pitch in relation to music notation. But please remember that the practical finger exercises are of the upmost importance. And one good reason for learning to read basic music notation, is so that you can be taught these practical exercises. If you happen to learn to be able to sight read music somewhere on the way, then so much the better, but do remember that some of the best keyboard players are unable to sight read or even read music at all, Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder to mention two!

I hope you did the *'tapping'* exercises that we started with as the 5 finger exercises are an extension of these and are positively the best exercises that there are. I understand that right now your music reading ability may be very limited. Fortunately, these exercises require only a very limited reading ability, are played on the white notes only and don't require any finger crossovers (which you'll learn later).

The first exercise written here in the treble clef only (right hand) follows the same pattern as the first tapping exercise. But notice that there is a gap between the first and second notes of each section which enables the exercise to ascend progressively up the scale for 7 segments. And notice that this occurs again on the descent starting in bar 8 but between the fourth and fifth fingers (of the right hand).



1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 (1)
Right Hand Ascending x 7

5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 (5)
Right Hand Descending x 7

In part 2 there are several more of these exercises that should be practiced with each hand individually and both hands together both legato and staccato, but only at speeds that you can handle. Gradually increase the speed according to your ability but remember that speed is not important - *accuracy and timing is!*

Please begin practicing the exercises in part 2 in between studying the remaining chapters.

Audio link: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/5_finger_exercises.html or click on the graphic.

Quick link to Part 2

Casio Privia PX 7000 Stage / Home Piano - 88 Keys

Superb Home / Stage piano. Ideal for the serious pianist.
A truly magnificent instrument with a stunning keybed and sounds to match!
Available in mustard, black or white.

Korg Pa1000 Arranger Keyboard - 61 Keys

This little bad boy is a beauty - what a sound!
This also has incredible recording and editing functions. Including almost all the features and sounds of the mighty Pa5X for almost half the price!
Ideal for composing or as a one-man band gigging machine.

Timing and Rhythm Part 2

In the last timing section, we dealt with the main time signatures as well as the note values. Now we're going to look at *'dotted notes'*, *'triplets'*, *'tied notes'* and *'grace notes'*, which will enable us to create far more interesting rhythms.

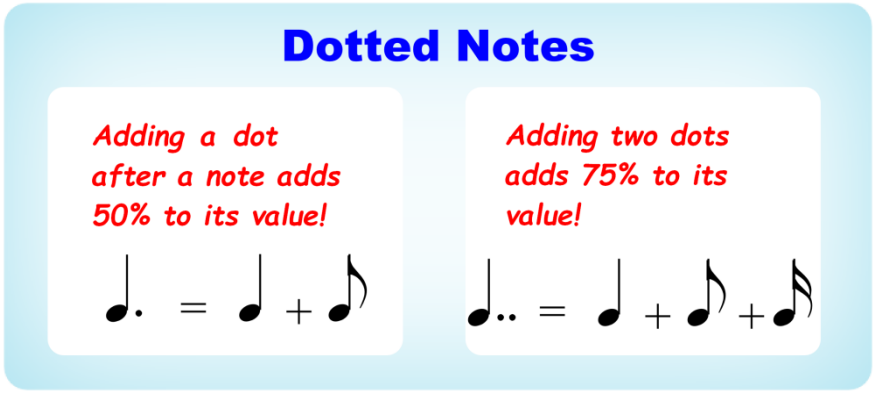
So just to re-cap, so far, we have covered:

- Semibreve = 4 beats (often referred to as a whole note)
- Minim = 2 beats (often referred to as a half note)
- Crotchet = 1 beat (often referred to as a quarter note)
- Quaver = half a beat (often referred to as an eighth note)
- Semiquaver = a quarter of a beat (often referred to as a sixteenth note)
- **4/4** - **3/4** - **2/4** timing & **6/8** timing (briefly)

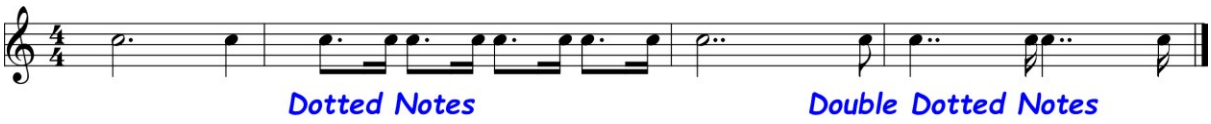
If you are at all unsure about any of the above, please refer back to the previous timing and rhythm chapter.

Dotted Notes

A single dot after (not over) a note or rest increases its length by 50%. Therefore, a *'dotted minim'* for instance would then count as 3 beats instead of 2. Two dots after a note increases its value by 75%, making a *'double dotted minim'* count as 3.5 beats.



The next diagram shows examples of how these fit into **4/4** bars.



And what about dotted rests?

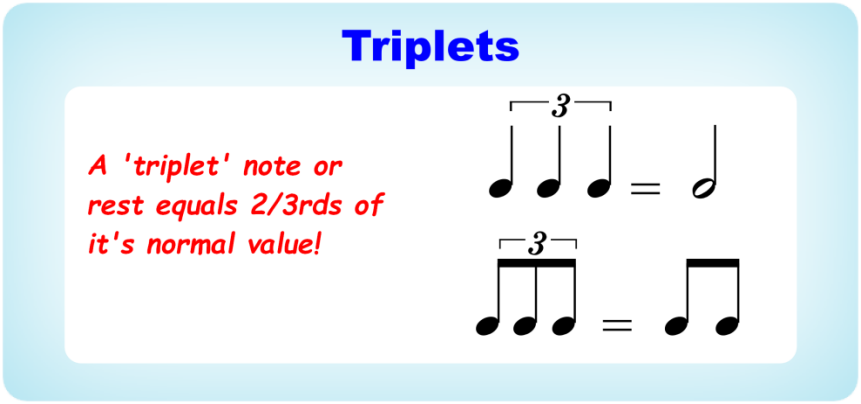
Yes, there are also *'dotted rests'* which work exactly the same.

And what about dots above or below notes?

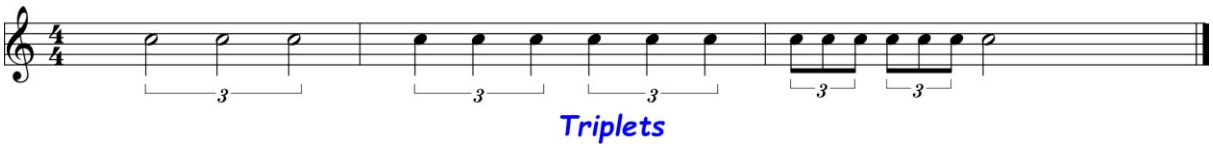
That means the notes should be played *'staccato',* which I'll explain shortly.

Triplets

Triplets are used when the timing of a group of three notes is divided equally between a beat (or combination of beats). For instance, a *'triplet'* of three crotchets would take up the space of only two and of course the timing of these would change accordingly. Similarly, a *'triplet'* of three quavers would take up 1 beat and not 1.5.



And the next diagram shows how they fit into **4/4** bars.



At first playing two beats with one hand (in the bass) and three with the other is a bit tricky, but actually you will have heard triplets in many songs and will have sung or hummed along quite easily and naturally.

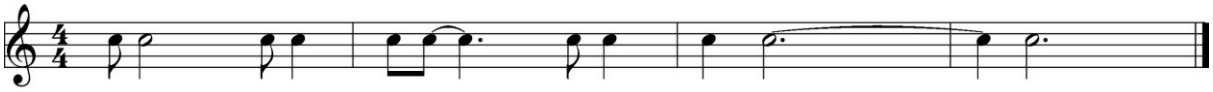
One well known song with lots of triplets that comes to mind is ***'Fool on the Hill'*** by the Beatles which is in **4/4** timing.

If converting a complicated solo into music notation it will often be found that groups of 5 or 7 or more notes are divided into a single beat. In this case the appropriate numeral will be seen instead of the '3'. This is often seen in classical music as well as pop and jazz etc.

There is a triplet exercise for you shortly.

Tied Notes

Generally, notes are written in a way which allows each beat to be identified easily. In order to achieve this, where necessary certain notes are tied together. In this event only the first note is played but is held for the length of both *'tied'* notes.



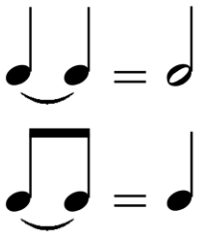
Tied Notes

Notice that bars 1 and 2 of the above are identical and could be written either way whereas the tied notes in bars 3 and 4 have to be written as shown as they cross the bar lines - remember each bar must compute to the correct value, - *you can't have leftovers!*

However please don't get these symbols mixed up with *'phrase marks'* (or *'slurs'*) which look similar but have a totally different meaning.

Tied Notes

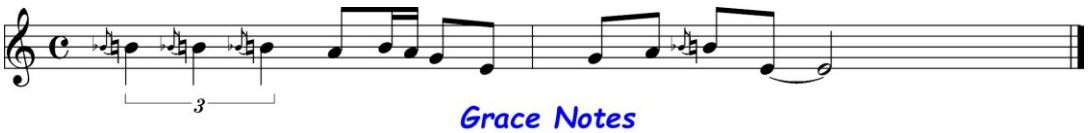
When two or more notes are tied together only the first one is played for the timing of both or all of the notes!



Grace Notes

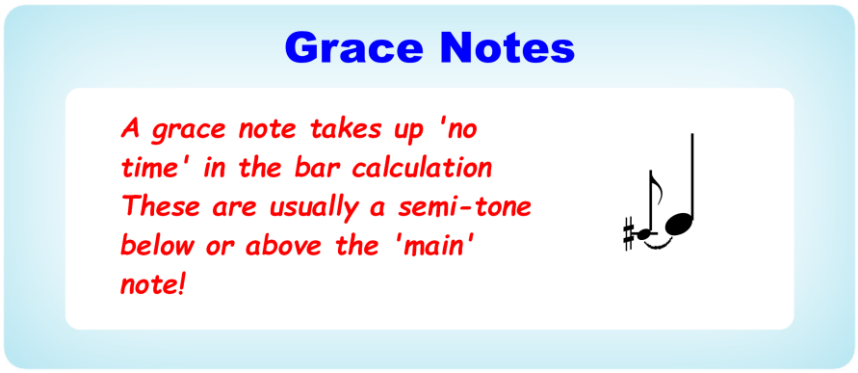
A *'grace note'*, or *'acciaccatura'* which is written as a very small quaver usually a semitone above or below the following note, is a very quick slurred note and takes up *'no time'* in the bar time calculation. Again, these are used in all types of music, but extensively in jazz and blues.

The following example shows *'grace notes'*, *'triplets'* and *'tied notes'*.



Grace Notes

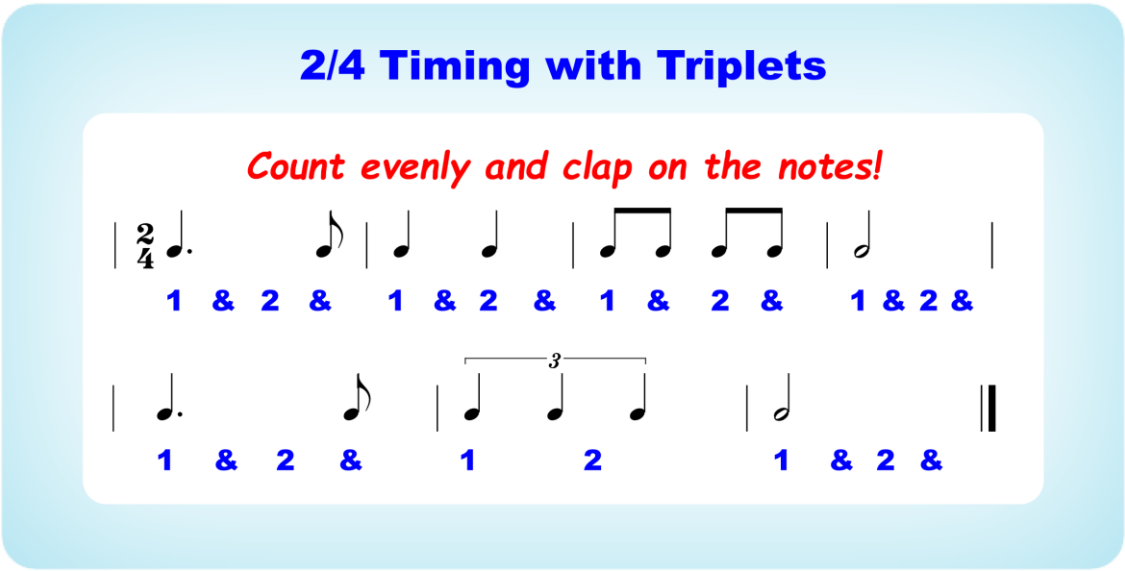
Notice that in the last example I've used the *'common time'* '**C**' symbol instead of the **4/4** symbol (as shown earlier). Note that this, as well as the **2/2** *'alla breve'* symbol are purely optional alternatives.



2/4 Timing with Triplets

Here's an example of **2/4** timing with triplets and dotted notes.

As before, count **1 & 2 & 1 & 2 &** etc. until you come to the triplets, then just count **1 - 2** and clap or tap on the notes.



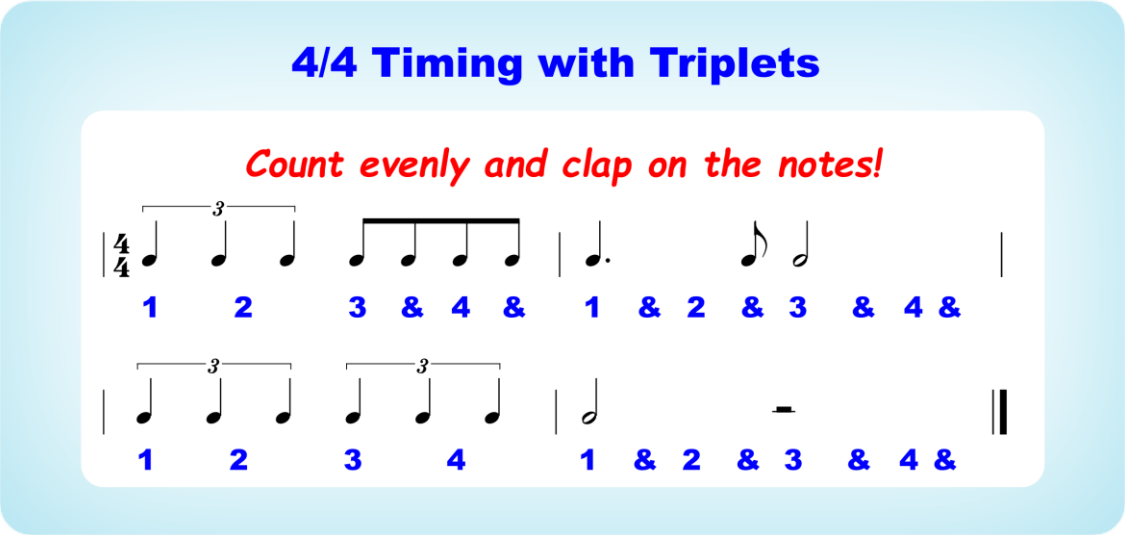
Click on any of the graphics to hear these and notice how the triplets go *across* the beats!

3/4 Timing with Triplets

And the same with **3/4** timing, just count **1 - 2 - 3** when you come to the *'triplets'*. But notice here that they are *'triplet quavers'* as against the crotchets above!

4/4 Timing with Triplets

And finally, a *'triplet'* example with **4/4** timing, but this time there are *'triplet crotchets'* and normal quavers in the same bar, so count **1 - 2 - 3 & 4 &** for that bar!



And now on to **6/8** timing which we only touched on briefly previously.

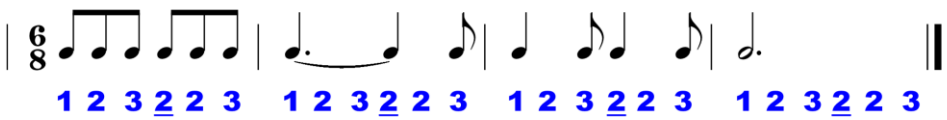
6/8 Timing

6/8 is different to all the previously mentioned time signatures. This means that there are six eighth notes (quavers) to each bar, and these are always two groups of three quavers. So, for this you will need to count: **1 - 2 - 3 - 2 - 2 - 3, 1 - 2 - 3 - 2 - 2 - 3** etc. At first you may think that this is similar to **3/4**, but it's not, as the quavers in **3/4** would be three sets of two rather than two sets of three.

So really **6/8** timing is *natural triplet timing,* **9/8** and **12/8** are similar.

6/8 Timing Example with Tied Notes

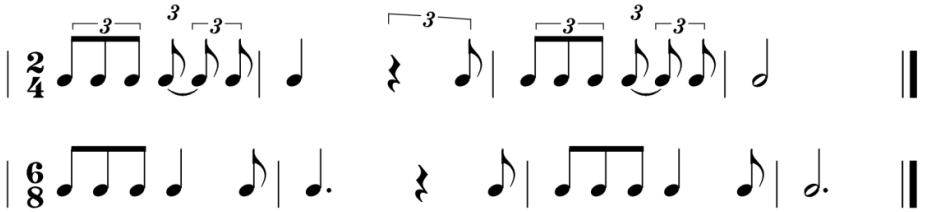
Count evenly and clap on the notes!



Now if you look at the next example, you should see what I mean about **6/8** being a *'natural triplet timing'*. The two examples are the same, one written in **2/4** and one in **6/8**.

2/4 with Triplets vs. 6/8 Timing

Both examples are the same!



Clearly 6/8 is more correct!

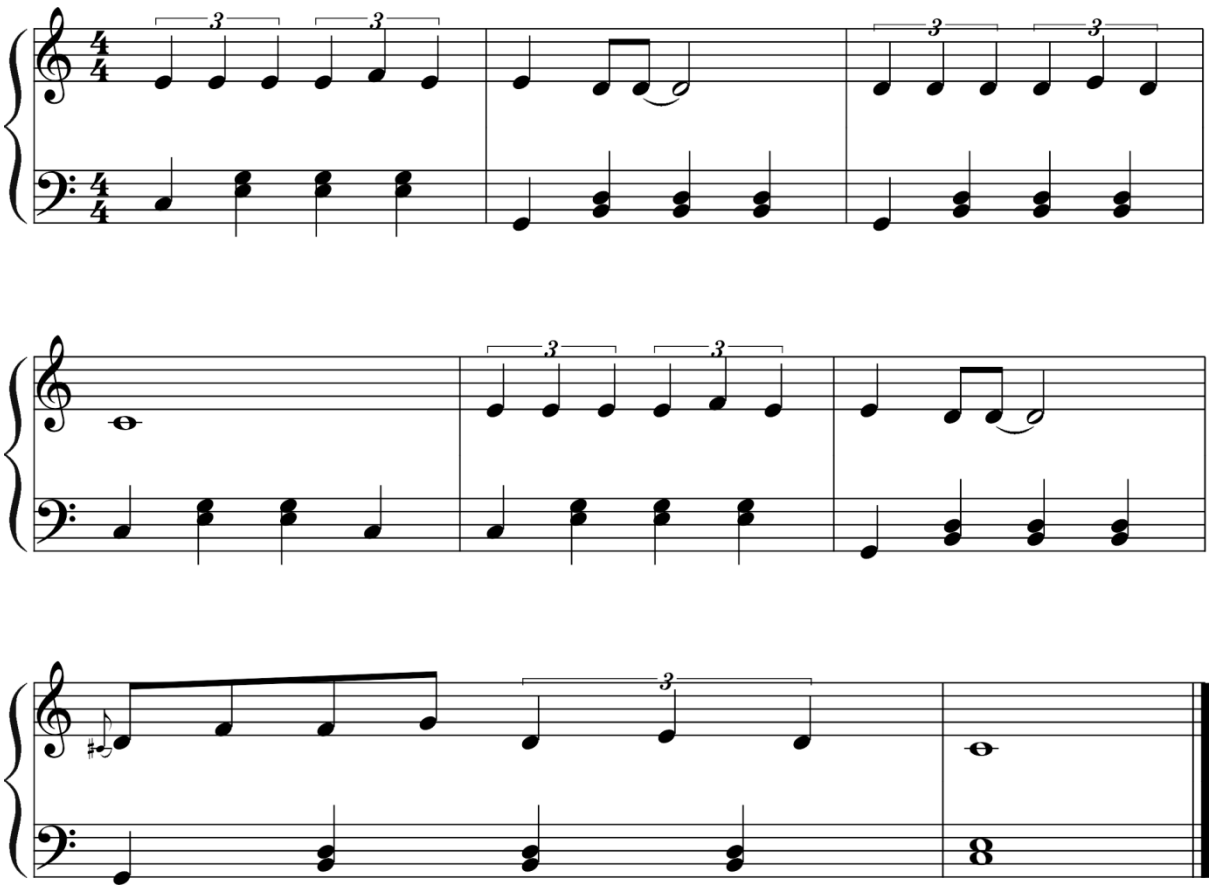
*Ok, so why bother with triplets at all? Why not just use **6/8** timing instead?*

In the case of an entire piece being in triplets you would do so, but this is not always the case, as in the **4/4** example shown previously where part of a bar is in triplets followed by normal quavers which would not compute to **6/8** timing.

All sorts of music is written in **6/8** timing including many jigs, jazz, funk etc., and even ballads (when the tempo is slower).

Triplet Exercise

This exercise uses triplets in the right hand against straight quarter notes in the left hand, which at first you may find tricky (like patting your head and rubbing your tummy at the same time), but it's a very important exercise. It also uses tied notes in bar 6 and a grace note in bar 7. Don't worry if you can't play this yet, you may need to come back to this later! But please listen to the audio link as you look at the notation.



There is much more that I could say about timing, but enough has been said for our purposes here for the time being.

The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/timing_2.html *or click on the graphics!*

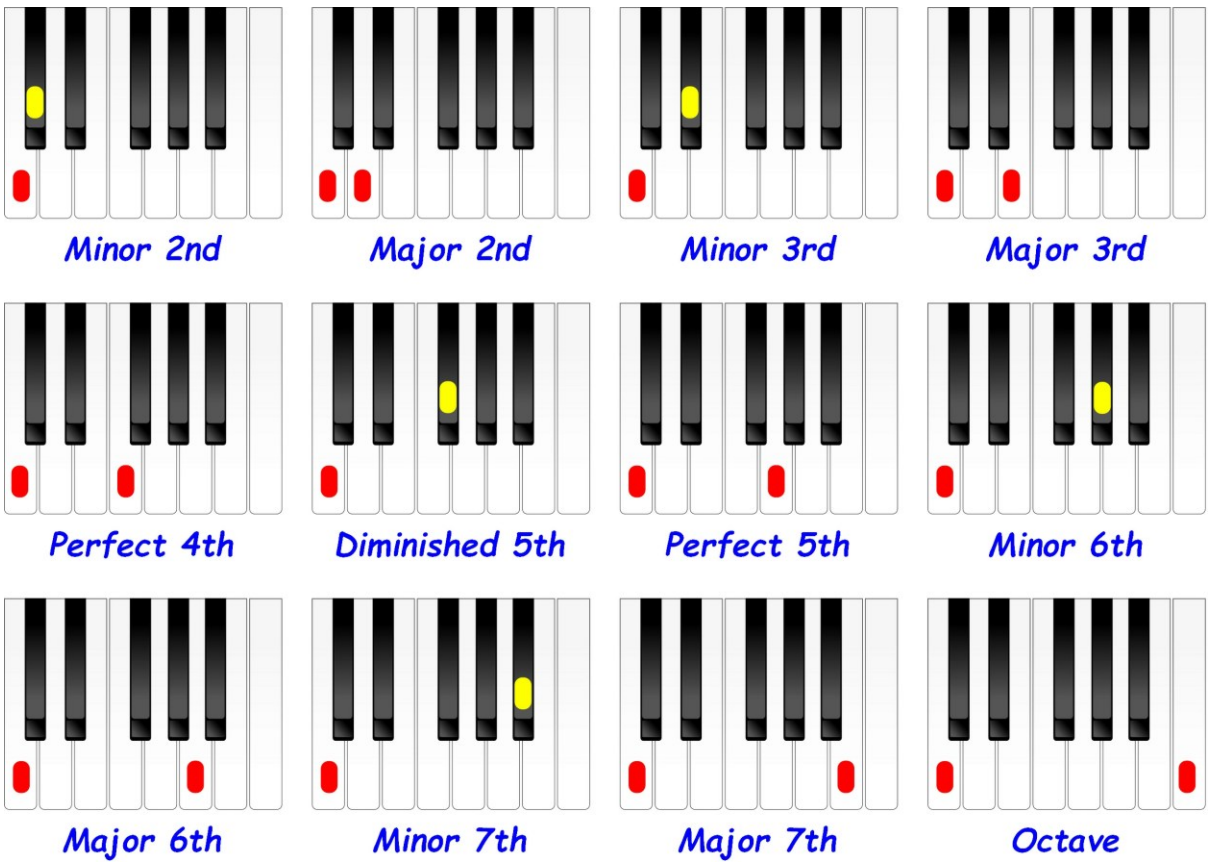
Intervals

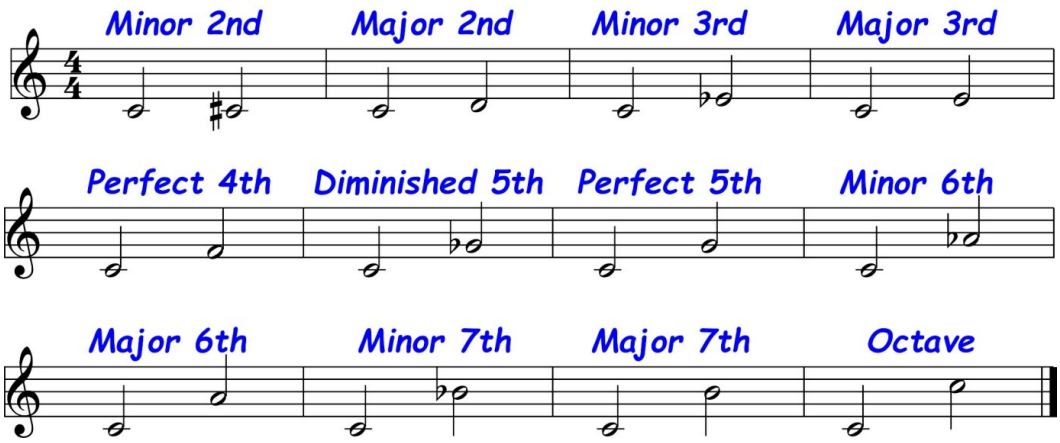
We've already learnt that the smallest interval in Western music is the *'semi-tone'* and this is the interval from **C - C sharp** (the first black note up from **C**) and going the other way from **C - B** (as there is no black note between **C** and **B**, but the *interval* is just the same). Playing a progression of semitones for one octave or more, starting on any note and returning to the same note is known as the *'chromatic'* scale which you'll see later.

Two or more semi-tones create larger intervals. The interval between **C** and **D** is a *'tone'* (two semi-tones) or *'whole step US',* as there is a black note in-between. The interval between **F sharp** and **G sharp** is also a tone, as there is a white note in-between. And the interval between **E** and **F sharp** is also a tone as in this case there is a white note in-between.

Then as more gaps are left in-between the *intervals* become greater and are named as shown below. All the intervals up to an octave are shown here starting on **C**. Continuing beyond the octave the **2nd** plus an octave is known as a **9th**, the **4th** an **11th** and the **6th** a **13th**. Interestingly every interval can be found more than once in every major and minor scale.

Intervals from C





Note that the **minor 6th** is also sometimes called an **augmented 5th**, and a **diminished 5th** could also be called an **augmented 4th**.

You are advised to learn how these intervals sound played one note at a time from high to low and vice versa and also how they sound played together. There is an audio link on the above graphic, but you should also play these yourself and really get to know them.

Kurzweil K2700 Workstation - 88 Keys

As well as being a top of the range music production tool, this is also a superb stage piano with first class piano sounds and keybed! I may well buy one of these!

So why are intervals so important?

Because different intervals form different scales, and different chords etc., and understanding them is essential for composition as well as good theoretical understanding. They are also extremely useful in order to play by ear.

The following chart shows every interval within an octave, in all cases from the lowest note upwards. You may find it useful to print out the charts from this section.

Notice how the same notes occur in the **minor 3rd** and the **major 6th**; the **major 3rd** and the **minor 6th**; the **perfect 4th** and **perfect 5th**; the **minor 2nd** and the **major 7th** etc.

For convenience, I've used **C sharp** instead of **D flat** etc.

Interval Chart

Minor 2nd	C - C# - D - Eb - E - F - F#	1 Semitone
	F# - G - Ab - A - Bb - B - C	
Major 2nd	C - D - E - F# - Ab - Bb - C	2 Semitones
	C# - Eb - F - G - A - B - C#	
Minor 3rd	C - Eb - F# - A - C	3 Semitones
	C# - E - G - Bb - C#	
	D - F - Ab - B - D	
Major 3rd	C - E - Ab - C	4 Semitones
	C# - F - A - C#	
	D - F# - Bb - D	
	Eb - G - B - Eb	
Perfect 4th	C - F - Bb - Eb - Ab - C# - F#	5 Semitones
	F# - B - E - A - D - G - C	
Diminished 5th	C - F# - C	6 Semitones (Tritone)
	C# - G - C#	
	D - Ab - D	
	Eb - A - Eb	
	E - Bb - E	
	F - B - F	
Perfect 5th	C - G - D - A - E - B - F#	7 Semitones
	F# - C# - Ab - Eb - Bb - F - C	
Minor 6th	C - Ab - E - C	8 Semitones
	C# - A - F - C#	
	D - Bb - F# - D	
	Eb - B - G - Eb	
Major 6th	C - A - F# - Eb - C	9 Semitones
	C# - Bb - G - E - C#	
	D - B - Ab - F - D	
Minor 7th	C - Bb - Ab - F# - E - D - C	10 Semitones
	C# - B - A - G - F - Eb - C#	
Major 7th	C - B - Bb - A - Ab - G - F#	11 Semitones
	F# - F - E - Eb - D - C# - C	

The audio link for this chapter is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/intervals.html .

"I'm trying to get people to see that we are our brothers' keeper, I still work on it. Red, white, black, brown, yellow, rich, poor, we all have the blues!"

B.B. King - (Blues King!)

Comment: His recent demise was a sad loss to the music world!

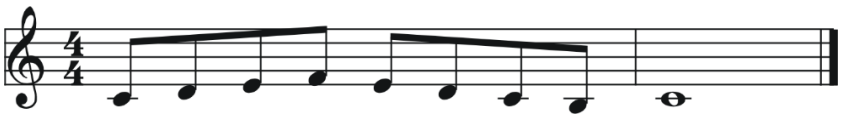
Keys, Key Signatures & Transposition

The word *'key'* has two meanings in music, one being the physical *'keys'* of the instrument and the other being the *'key'* in relation to the *'key signatures'* and which *'key'* you are playing in.

There are 12 major *'keys'* in Western music (one for each black and white note), each of which has a relative minor. With the exception of **C major** (and **A minor**) each key has a *'key signature'* which shows how many sharps or flats it has.

C major is the only major key without any sharps or flats and therefore has no key signature.

To hopefully explain this clearly, we're going to use a few diagrams showing a simple musical phrase as shown below. This phrase is in the key of **C major**.



The intervals between each note in this phrase are **< 2 < 2 < 1 > 1 > 2 > 2 > 1 < 1** (each **'1'** being a semitone and each **'2'** being a tone). Now if we stay in **C major** and begin the phrase a tone higher by starting on **D** instead of **C** (as shown next) this would create a *diatonic* progression as against a transposition and the intervals will be: **< 2 < 1 < 2 > 2 > 1 > 2 > 2 < 2**. And the phrase would sound completely different due to the different intervals. Play these or use the audio links and hear the difference.

You may recognise the second phrase as a portion of the **D minor natural** scale which you'll see this later. And yes, it is, but it's also a *'mode'* of the **C major** scale which you'll also see later when we deal with *'modes'*.

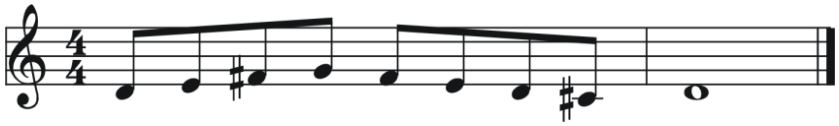
If we shove up another degree and start on **E**, we'll get the next *'mode'* or *'diatonic progression'* which has different intervals again **< 1 < 2 < 2 > 2 > 2 > 1 > 2 < 2**.

And of course, because of the different intervals it sounds different again!

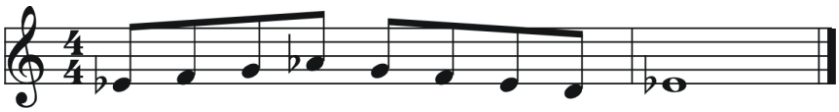
What does 'diatonic' mean?

Basically, it means using the notes only found in the scale of the key that you're in (**C major** in this case). I'll explain more about this shortly when we talk about chords.

Now if we moved the phrase up a tone from the first phrase but also kept all of the intervals the same (as the first phrase), the phrase would sound the same but at a higher pitch and would be *'transposed'* one tone higher from the key of **C major** into **D major** which contains some sharps (**F#** and **C#**).



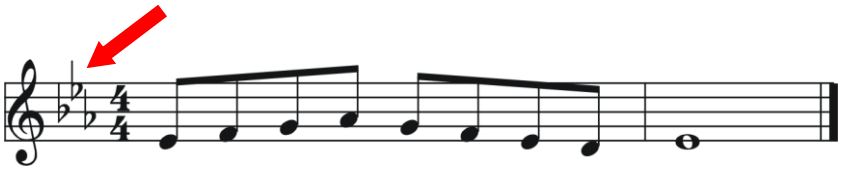
And if we moved this phrase up another semitone (again keeping all the intervals the same) it would be transposed into **E flat major** as shown below.



The reason for transposition is often due to a piece being more comfortable for a singer's particular range or the range of an instrument, and certainly some pieces are easier to play in certain keys, and some just sound better. It's also often used as an embellishment halfway through a piece to give it a lift for the finale. An example of this can be heard in ***'Beary Glen'*** on the front page of my site at http://learn-keyboard.co.uk . This piece starts in **G major** and transposes to **A major** halfway through.

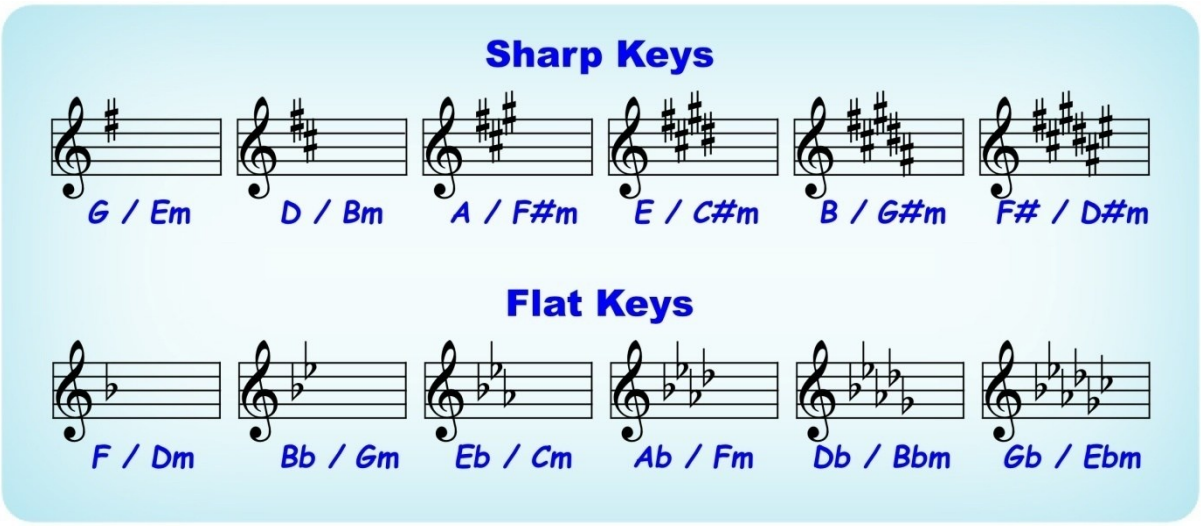
Now, rather than adding *'accidental'* sharps or flats as they appear in the notation as shown in the last two diagrams, *'key signatures'* are used instead which are shown at the beginning of each piece. And these mean that all notes corresponding to the sharps or flats in the *'key signature'* should be *'sharpened'* or *'flattened'* accordingly unless otherwise shown, which would be by way of the *'natural'* symbol shown previously, or a change of key signature, which can happen at any time.

The examples shown previously in **D major** and **E flat major** are shown again below in notation view with the key signatures added instead of the accidentals.



Although the second example has three flats in the key signature, only two of these occur in the phrase.

All of the key signatures are shown in the following chart.



Note that **F sharp major** and **G flat major** (and the relative minors) are the same keys but simply written differently. **C major** and **A minor** are not included in the above chart as they are neither *'flat keys'* nor *'sharp keys'*.

I recommend that you learn all the scales in order of how many sharps and flats that they have, which is the order in which they are taught in classical music schools. If you find the thought of this too daunting, don't continue further than you feel comfortable.

Curiously the French word for *'key'* is *'clef'*. Whether this has any significance I don't know - *probably not!*

Relative Minors

The relative minor of each major key is always a minor 3rd interval below (or major 6th above), so the relative to **C major** is **A minor**. The relative minor always shares the same key signature as of the major key, but will almost certainly have additional sharps, (the 7th and possibly the 6th) as in the harmonic and melodic scales. These are not included in the key signature but added (as accidentals) where they occur during the piece.

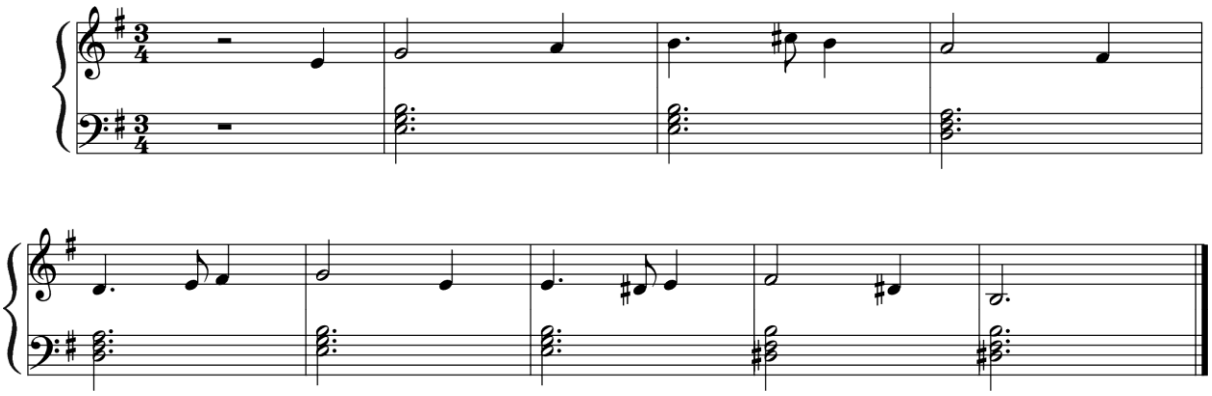
So how do I tell if a piece is in a major or minor key?

There's lots of ways to tell i.e.:

- If there is one sharp in the key signature and the piece starts or finishes on **E**, it's most probably in **E minor** and not **G major**
- Minor keys often have additional accidental sharps not shown in the key signature which we'll be discussing next
- You may notice that music written in minor keys is distinctly more *'melancholic'*
- Usually, the first few notes form a major or minor chord or if there's a chord line (as in a fake book) it's a dead giveaway

In the example below, it can be seen that there is an **F sharp** in the key signature, which indicates that the key is either **G major** or **E minor**. As the first few notes in the treble clef form an **E minor** triad and there is a **C sharp** (melodic scale 6th) in bar 3 and **D sharps** in bars 7 & 8 (harmonic and melodic ascending 7ths), it's blatantly obvious (perhaps not to you right now) from the melody alone that this piece is in the key of **E minor** and not **G major**. Furthermore, in the bass clef the first chord is **E minor**!

Don't worry if you didn't fully understand the last paragraph; we will be dealing with scales shortly after which it will make more sense!



The above example is in fact the first few bars of ***'Greensleeves'*** which was allegedly written by King Henry VIII but was in fact probably written by some poor starving minstrel with a runny nose (hence the title) who had his head removed so that Henry could take the credit! - *This was before the days of the Musicians Union!*

The audio link for this chapter is: http://www.learn-keyboard.co.uk/transposition.html.

"Put all your soul into it, play the way you feel!"

Chopin

Your First Scales

In order to progress to a reasonable level of skill and theoretical understanding, it´s absolutely essential that you know all of the major and minor scales. Running through all of the scales on a daily basis is a superb warm up exercise and only takes a few minutes when you have learnt them.

A Pre-Scale Exercise

In order to play scales effectively, finger crossovers are required.

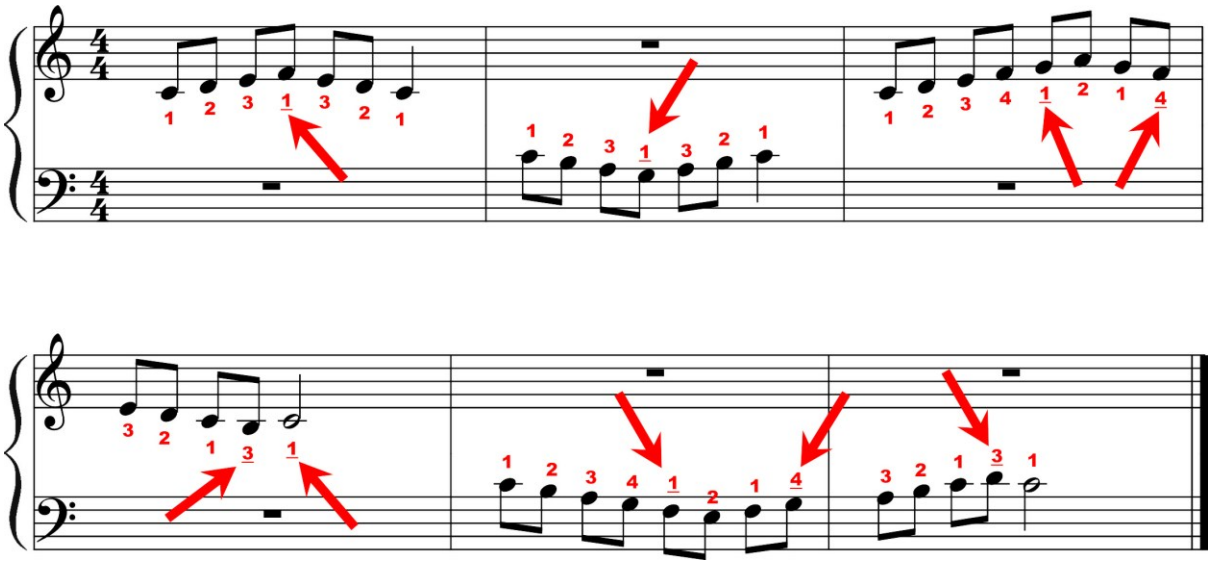
The most common crossovers are achieved by passing the thumb under the third or fourth fingers ascending and passing the third or fourth fingers over the thumb when descending, as shown in the following photos.

Passing the Thumb under (ascending)

Passing the 3rd Finger over (descending)

In order to help you learn this technique, I have included this next exercise, but **you must** follow the fingering as stated so that you can practice the finger crossovers.

Practice this slowly and evenly.



But what exactly is a scale?

A scale is a series of notes played in order usually ascending and then descending for one or more octaves.

There are different types of scales including:

- Major
- Minor (harmonic and melodic and natural)
- Whole tone
- Chromatic
- Pentatonic (major and minor)
- Blues

What differentiates the various types of scales is the intervals used in their makeup. In this book, we will be dealing with every major and minor scale in every key in keyboard and music notation view as well as the pentatonic and blues scales in the most used keys and more.

To explain further we'll firstly look at the **major** scale.

Click on any of the graphics to hear the audio examples.

The Major Scale

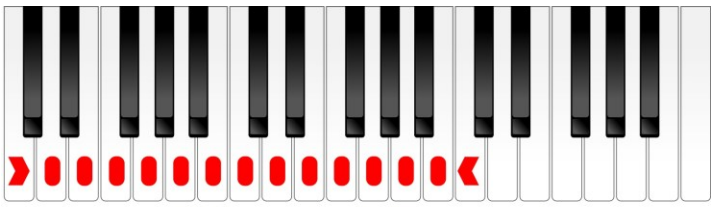
There are 12 major scales, one for each black and white note.

The one thing that every scale has in common is that they all follow the same pattern of intervals according to the type of scale. So, every major scale has identical intervals. The only thing that makes them different is that they start on different notes and consequently are *'pitched'* differently.

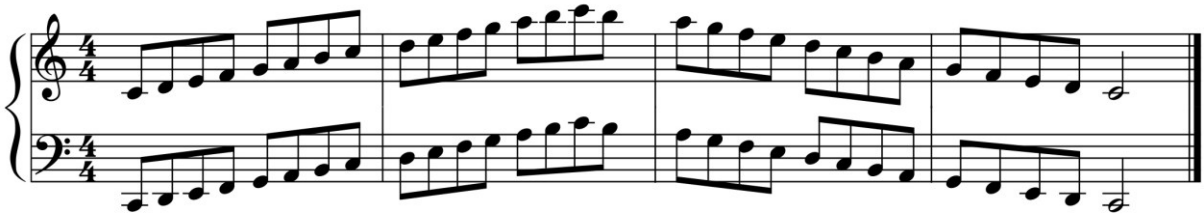
For instance, **C major** in its root mode will start on **C** and **D major** on **D** etc.

Look carefully at the following diagram of the **C major** scale you'll see that the intervals are as follows:

1. **C - D** is a tone - *2 semitones or 1 whole step US*
2. **D - E** is a tone
3. **E - F** is a semi-tone - *half step US*
4. **F - G** is a tone
5. **G - A** is a tone
6. **A - B** is a tone
7. **B - C** is a semi-tone



C Major Scale (2 octaves)



Or to put it another way it's: **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1** for a one octave span, which is the interval sequence for every major scale.

So, with a bit of mathematical knowledge you could easily work out every major scale. But to save your brain they're all included herein.

In part 2 you'll see every major scale in every key shown both in keyboard and notation view. In all cases I've included the *important* fingering. Where no fingering is included, it simply follows consecutively.

The degrees of the major and minor scales are named as follows:

- Root - Tonic
- 2nd - Supertonic
- 3rd - Mediant
- 4th - Sub Dominant
- 5th - Dominant
- 6th - Sub Mediant
- 7th - Leading Note or Sub Tonic
- 8th - Octave (Tonic)

The most important ones to remember are the *'tonic'* and *'dominant'*.

The Minor Scales

Each major key has a relative minor which shares the same key signature as the major key. The relative minor can always be found by counting three semitones down from the first note (the tonic) of the major scale. For instance, three semitones down from **C** is **A**, therefore:

- **A minor** is the relative to **C major**
- **E minor** is the relative to **G major**
- **B minor** is the relative to **D major**
- **D minor** is the relative to **F major** etc., etc.

Although the minor keys share the same key signature as their relative major keys, each minor key has one or more additional sharp(s) and these are always shown as accidentals as and when they occur (but never in the key signature). In the harmonic minor scale, there will only ever be one (extra) sharp, which is always the leading note - one semitone down from the tonic (the first and last note of the scale).

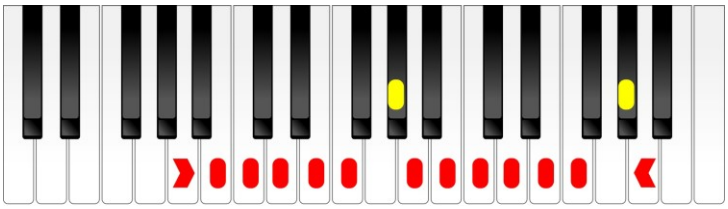
So, what is the difference between a major scale and a minor scale?

The difference is caused because of the different intervals. If you've been paying attention, you should know that the interval sequence for all major scales is: **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1**.

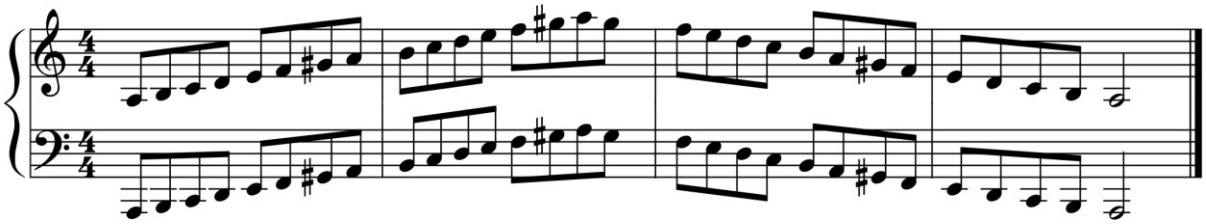
There are two conventional minor scales, the *'harmonic'* and the *'melodic'*, both of which have different interval sequences. The *'natural'* minor scale is simply the major scale beginning and ending on the relative minor, but even this will also have different intervals (to the major scale) due to its different starting position. This is also known as the *'Aeolian' mode* starting on **A** - in the case of the **A minor natural** scale.

The Harmonic Minor Scale

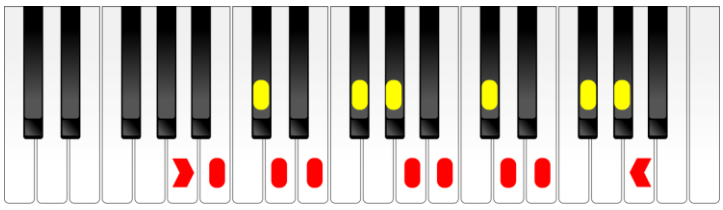
If you look carefully at the next keyboard diagram showing the **A Harmonic minor** scale you will see that the intervals are: **2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 3 - 1**.



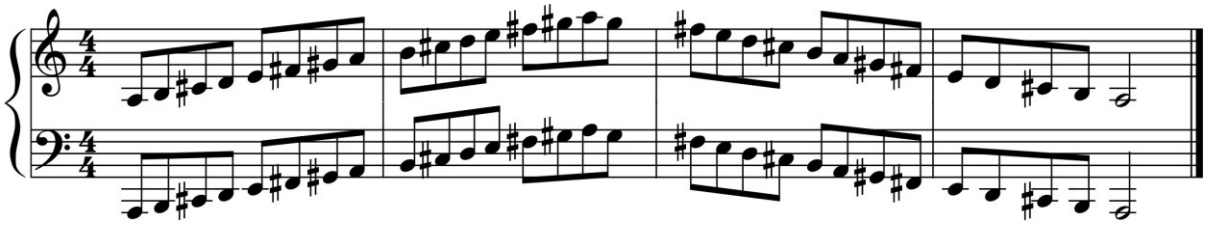
A Harmonic Minor Scale (2 octaves)



If you compare this sequence to the **A major** scale, you'll see that the difference is that both the 3rd and 6th notes are flattened by a semitone - *half step US.*



A Major Scale (2 octaves)



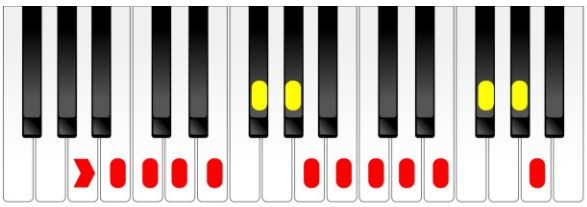
Here the **A major** scale has been written with no key signature so that you can easily see the difference!

Also note the similarities and differences between the **A major** scale and the **A melodic minor** scale shown next. When ascending the only difference is in the 3rd. But there are greater differences when descending.

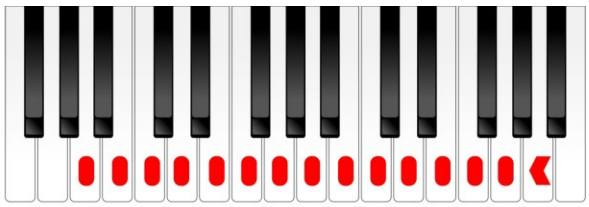
The Melodic Minor Scale

The melodic minor scale has a minor 3rd similar to the harmonic scale, but then ascends with a *sharpened* 6th and 7th (**F#** and **G#** in **A minor**), but then descends with a *natural* 6th and 7th (**F** and **G** natural in **A minor**). It's just a bit more complicated, but well worth the effort to learn. So, the intervals are:

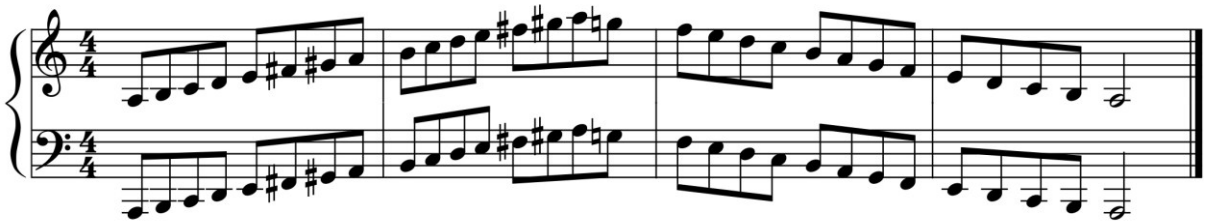
- **2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1** ascending (from the bottom) and
- **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2** descending (from the top), which is exactly the same as the *natural* minor scale shown next



A Melodic Minor Scale (Ascending)

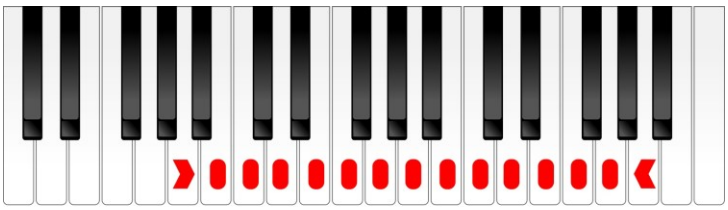


A Melodic Minor Scale (Descending)

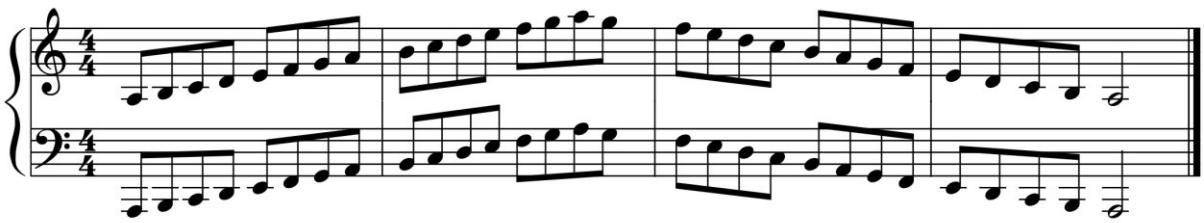


The Natural Minor Scale

As already mentioned, the natural minor scale is the same as the relative major starting on the 6th note also known as the *'Aeolian' mode*. All the modes of the major scale will be shown later. The intervals for this scale are: **2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2**.



A Minor (Natural) Scale (2 octaves)

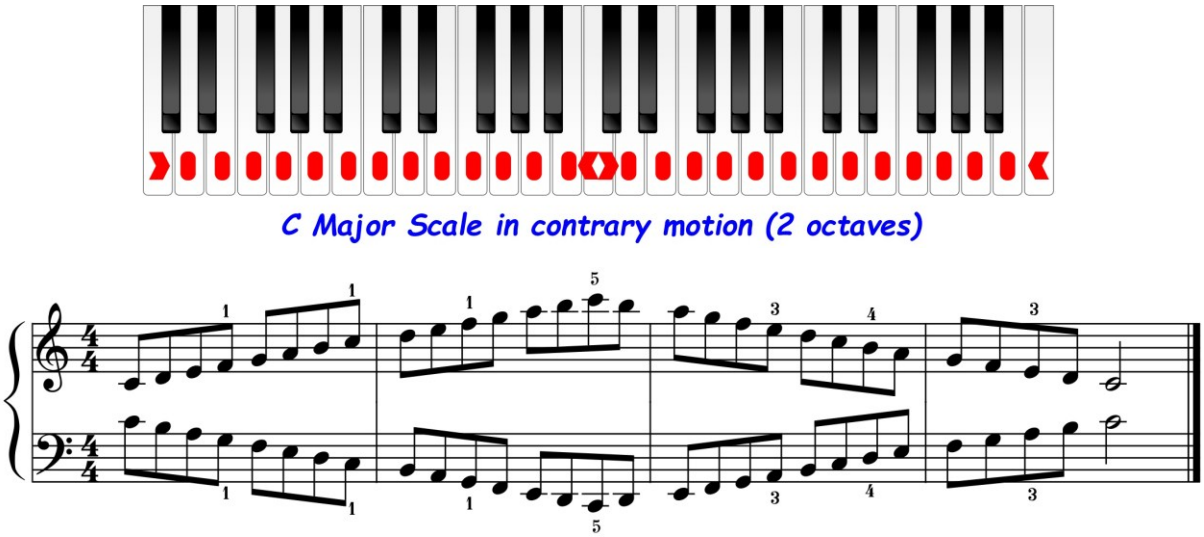


Ideally all of the major and minor scales should be practiced with each hand alone and then together for at least two octaves (four is better) both legato and staccato. Don´t try and practice them too quickly, it´s far better to practice them slowly, smoothly and accurately. Speed will come on its own later. All are shown in part 2 in the order that they should be learnt. Once you are familiar with them, they can be practiced in any order.

Contrary Motion

All the scales shown herein are shown in *'similar motion'*. Once you have become well acquainted with these it's also a good idea to learn them in *'contrary motion'* as shown below (in **C major**). This will teach your hands greater *'independence'*. In all cases the fingering used is the same as the similar motion scales which will be shown shortly.

I can honestly say that you will never truly understand the scales until you practice them this way - *in addition to similar motion!*



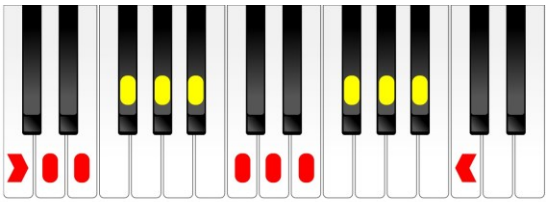
C Major Scale in contrary motion (2 octaves)

If you initially practice the left hand going from *'top to bottom to top'*, then add the right hand, these become much easier to learn. These are *fairly* easy in the early keys but do become more difficult when beginning and ending on the black keys.

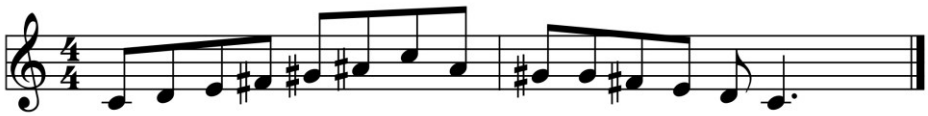
Both major and harmonic minor contrary motion scales are required in the ABRSM classical exams - *not the melodic minors*.

The Whole Tone Scale

As its name suggests all the intervals in this scale are a tone - *whole step* - apart. Using this scale can create an *'eerie theme'* although it would become boring after a short while. I wouldn't say that that this is a scale that you particularly need to practice, but needs mentioning, nevertheless and it is required in the ABRSM exam (grade 8).

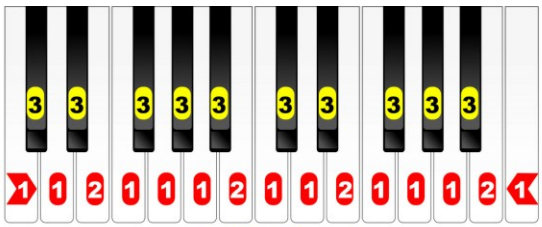


C Whole Tone Scale

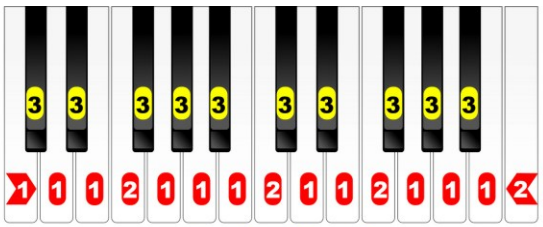


The Chromatic Scale

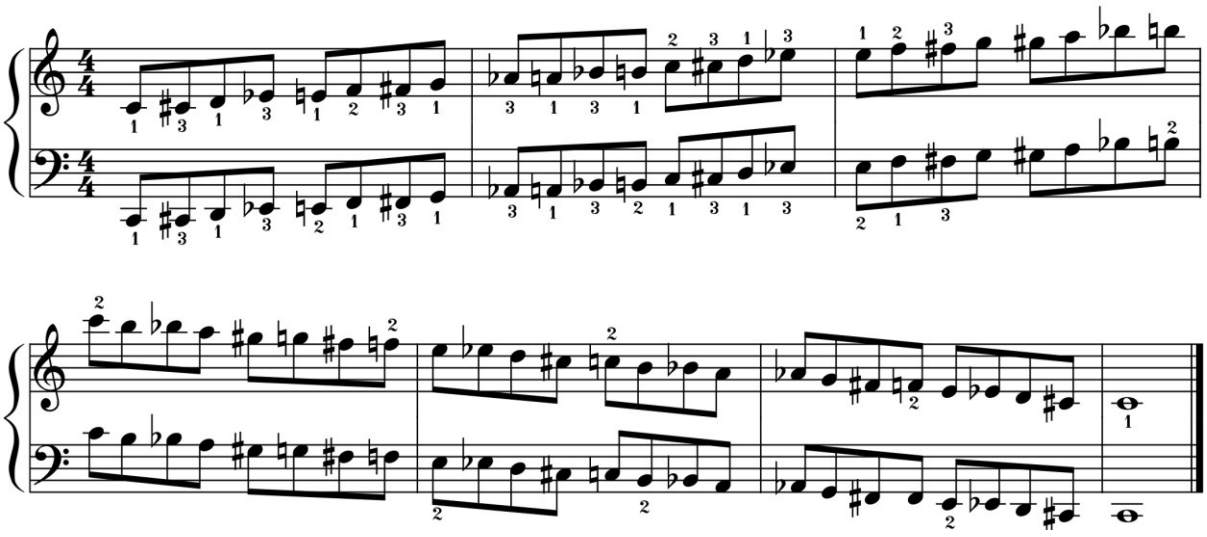
The chromatic scale is one on its own as it hits every note (black and white) in order. It's shown here starting and finishing on **C** for two octaves with left-hand and right-hand fingering. The intervals between each note ascending and descending is a semitone - *half step US.*



Left Hand



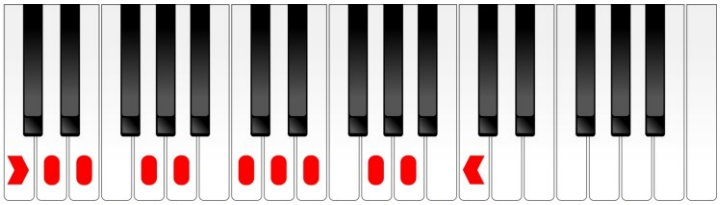
Right Hand



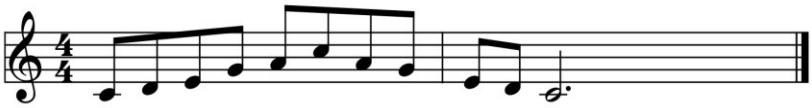
Pentatonic and Blues Scales

The pentatonic and blues scales are commonly used in pop, blues and jazz improvisations. If this is your intention, then the following scales will be vitally important to you.

C Major Pentatonic scale (C6/9)



C Major Pentatonic Scale (2 octaves)

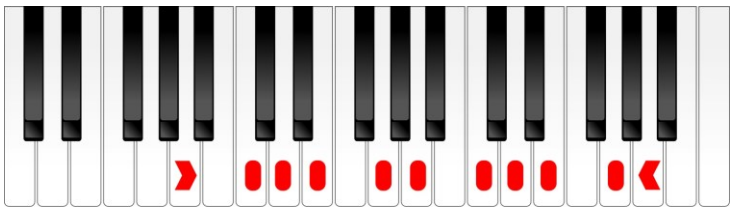


The **C major pentatonic** scale is simply a major triad - **C**, **E** & **G** with an added **6th** and **9th** - **A** & **D**. These notes form the **C 6/9** chord.

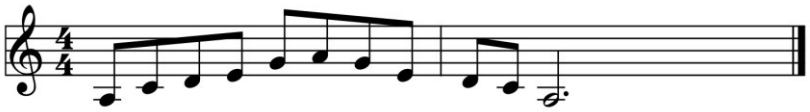
A Minor Pentatonic scale (Am7add4)

The minor pentatonic scale is the same as the relative major pentatonic scale (as it has the same notes), but simply starts on the relative minor. The **A minor pentatonic** is constructed using the minor triad - **A**, **C** & **E** and then adding the 4th & 7th - **D** & **G**. These notes form the **Am7add4** chord, which is simply a different inversion of the **C6/9** chord.

Notice that there are no semitones in the major / minor pentatonic scales - only minor 3rds and tones.

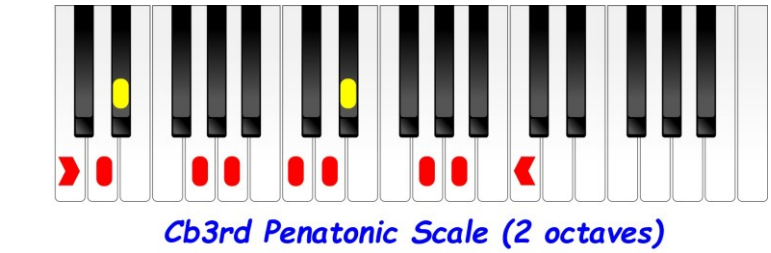


A Minor Pentatonic Scale (2 octaves)

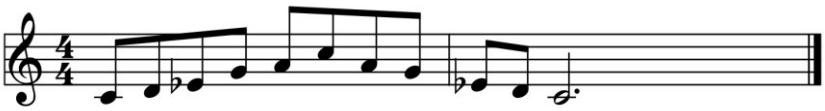


The ♭3rd Pentatonic Scale

This scale is exactly the same as the major pentatonic with the exception that the 3rd is flattened.

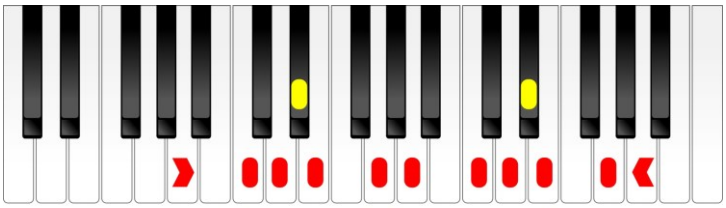


Cb3rd Penatonic Scale (2 octaves)

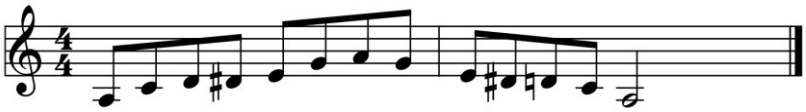


The Blues Scale

Notice the similarity between the **A Blues** scale and the **Am Pentatonic** scale. Both would work perfectly alright across an **A minor** chord. But interestingly the **'A' blues** scale is also often used in the major key (**A major**) which has no relationship to **A minor** or **C major** at all!

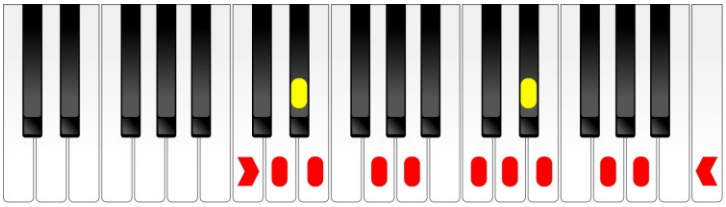


A Blues Scale (2 octaves)

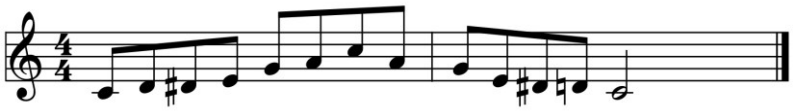


The pentatonic and blues scales are shown in detail in part 2 in the keys in which they are mainly used.

Important - what I (and many others) refer to as the *'blues scale'* is sometimes referred to as the *'minor blues scale'*. This school of thought has also created a relative *'major blues scale'* as shown below.



C major Blues Scale (2 octaves)



But they are the same! - The only difference is that the **'A'** has been taken off the bottom and a **'C'** added to the top, in the same way as the major scale is like the natural minor scale - *same notes! Take a close look!* Also notice the similarity between this and the flattened 3rd pentatonic scale - *it's the same less the natural 3rd* - and the major pentatonic - *it's the same with an added flattened 3rd!*

So, to recap and hopefully make this perfectly clear - the major and relative minor pentatonic scales are the same as one another except that they start on different notes. The blues scale as I and many others define it, is the same as the minor pentatonic with an added flattened 5th passing note!

The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/scales_2.html .

Quick link to Part 2 (Scales in Full)

Yamaha PSR SX700 Digital Arranger - 61 Keys

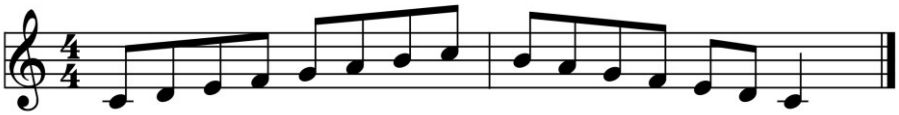
Mid to high range arranger. But also see the Korg Pa700.
Yamaha, like Casio have a huge range of arrangers in all price ranges.

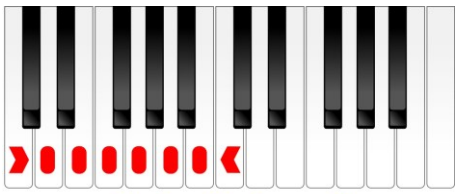
Scale Modes

As previously mentioned, all scales follow the same pattern of intervals. The intervals for the major scale starting on the tonic are 2 tones followed by a semitone, then 3 tones and a semitone: **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1** - (sometimes written: **T - T - s - T - T - T - s**). By starting the scale on a different degree, the intervals will be different thereby creating a different sound - these are called modes.

The modes of the **C major** scale are shown for one octave below. Click on the graphics to hear them if you want to.

Ionian Mode

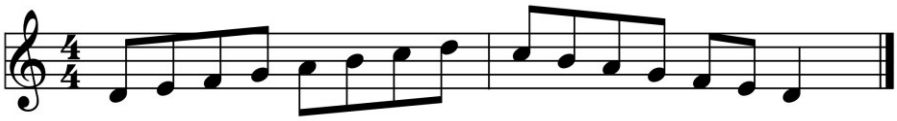


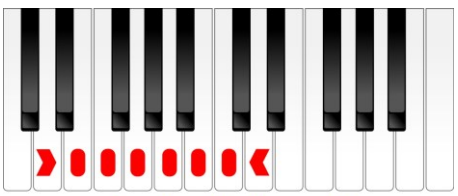


Ionian Mode on C

The *'Ionian'* mode is the *'normal root position mode'* starting on the tonic and the intervals are **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1**. In the key of **C major** the notes are: **C - D - E - F - G - A - B – C** as previously shown - *the normal **C major** scale!*

Dorian Mode

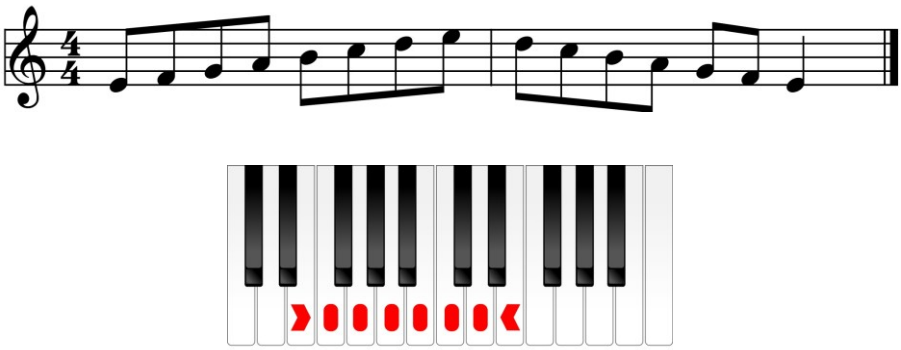




Dorian Mode on D

The *'Dorian'* mode begins on the 2nd degree (supertonic) of the major scale and the intervals are **2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2**. In the key of **C major** the notes are: **D - E - F - G - A - B - C - D**. This mode is often used in jazz / blues improvisation.

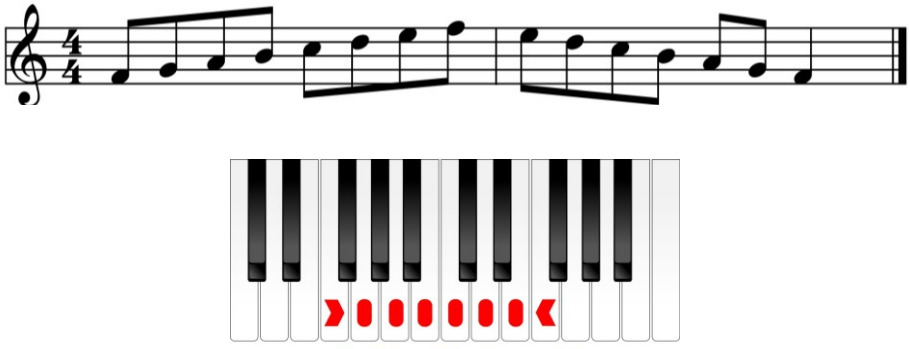
Phrygian Mode



Phrygian Mode on E

The *'Phrygian'* mode begins on the 3rd degree (the mediant) of the major scale and the intervals are **1 - 2 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2**. In the key of **C major** this begins / ends on **E**.

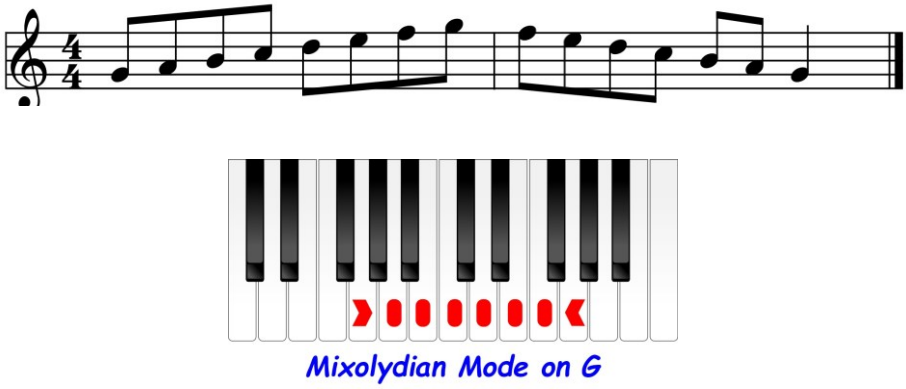
Lydian Mode



Lydian Mode on F

The *'Lydian'* mode begins on the 4th degree (sub-dominant) of the major scale and the intervals are **2 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1**. In the key of **C major** this begins / ends on **F**. This mode is often used in jazz improvisation.

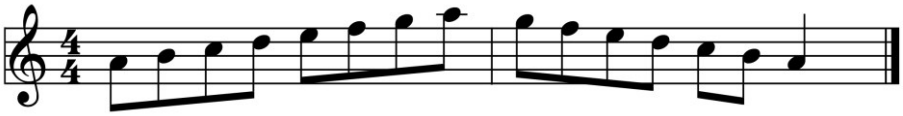
Mixolydian Mode

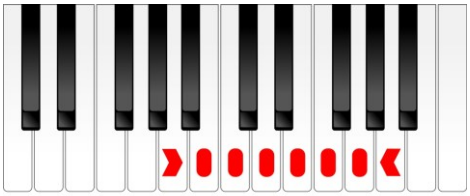


Mixolydian Mode on G

The *'Mixolydian'* mode begins on the 5th degree (dominant) of the major scale and the intervals are **2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2**. In the key of **C major** this begins / ends on **G**. This mode is often used in jazz / blues improvisation.

Aeolian Mode



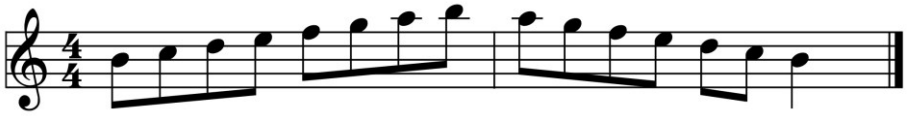


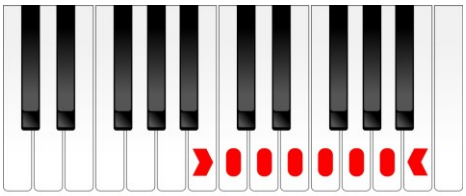
Aeolian Mode on A

The *'Aeolian'* mode begins on the 6th degree (sub-mediant) of the major scale and the intervals are **2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2**. In the key of **C major** this begins / ends on **A**.

This mode is also the *'natural'* minor scale, in the fact that it starts on the relative minor, but *without* the added sharps in the *'harmonic'* and *'melodic'* scales. This mode is particularly important for improvising in all genres.

Locrian Mode





Locrian Mode on B

The *'Locrian'* mode begins on the 7th degree (leading note) of the major scale and the intervals are **1 - 2 - 2 - 1 - 2 - 2 - 2**. In the key of **C major** this begins / ends on **B**. This is probably the least used mode, *but who knows in the future?*

I wouldn't suggest practicing these until you are thoroughly confident with the various scales in the root (Ionian) mode, but ultimately, they are very important although it doesn't matter whether you remember the names or not!

When you're ready just practice the most important major scales starting on different degrees and you've got it!

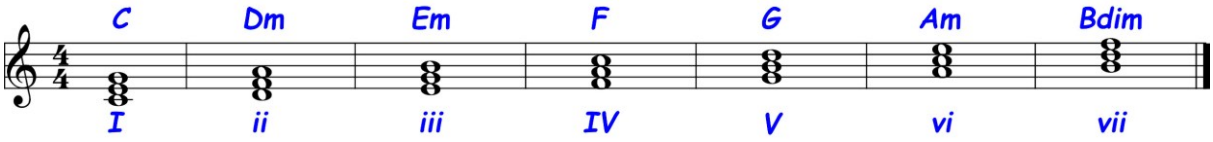
I was going to include the two octave examples of all the modes in most keys in part 2, but for fear of boring you senseless, have decided not to. As I have already written these, I have included them as a free supplement in my website.

The audio link for this section is: https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/modes_2.html .

Chord Construction

Every musical piece (in classical, jazz and pop) is formed around a progression of chords, sometimes simple and sometimes very complicated. Either way learning all of the basic chords is absolutely essential and even more so if using auto-accompaniment features. Understanding how chords are constructed is essential for correct theoretical understanding - particularly for composition and improvisation.

The basic triad chords are constructed by piling notes of the scale on top of each other a third apart and playing them simultaneously. Using the scale of **C major** and referring to the diagram below you can see that the first and most important chord of the key is made as follows: **C** (root note - the tonic), **E** (3rd note of the scale - the mediant) and **G** (5th note of the scale - the dominant). This is the root position of the **C major** chord.



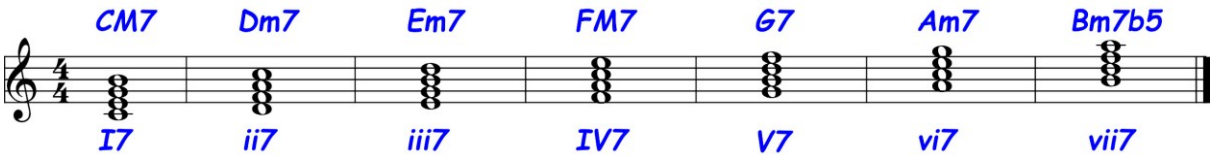
Moving up the scale, starting on **D**, we achieve a **D minor** triad, and then **E minor**, **F major**, **G major**, **A minor** and **B diminished**. These chords are the *'diatonic'* triads in the key of **C major**, which means that they are all *derived* from the notes of the **C major** scale and as such contain white notes only, (as there are no black notes in the **C major** scale).

Practice these with each hand separately and notice how they sound.

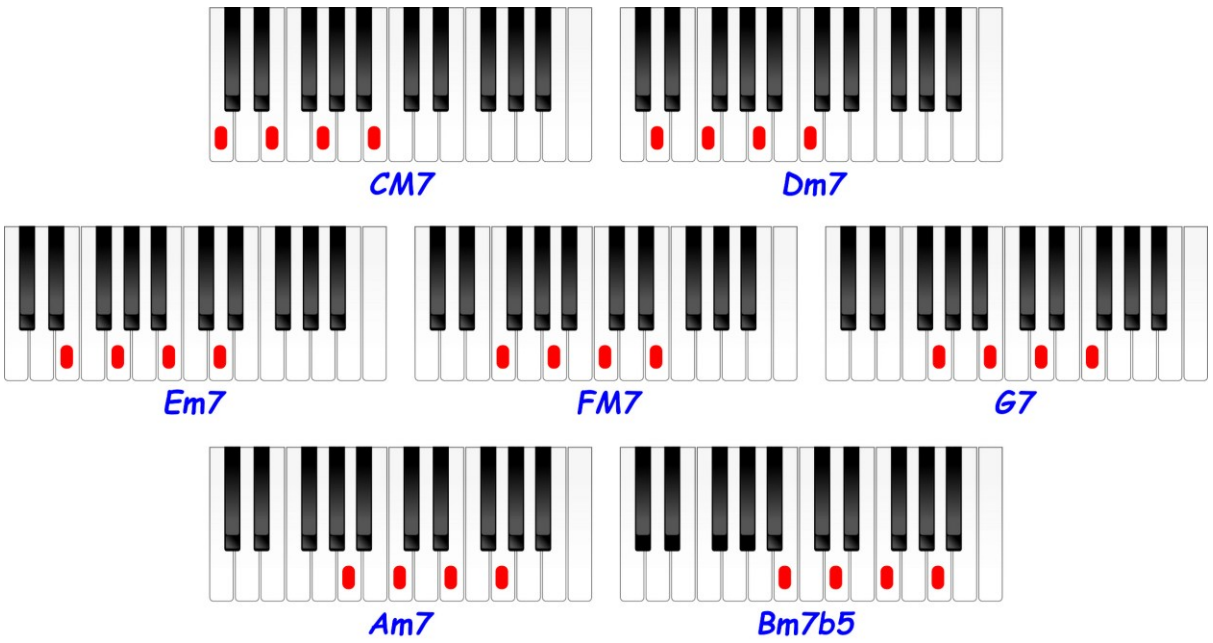
Notice that the difference between a major and minor triad is that the intervals in a *major triad* are a *'major 3rd'* followed by a *'minor 3rd',* whereas the *minor triad* has a *'minor 3rd'* followed by a *'major 3rd'*. The *diminished triad* consists of two *'minor 3rds'* and the *augmented (+5) triad* has two *'major 3rds'*.

The Roman Numerals shown signify the degree of the scale which each chord starts on. In all cases the diatonic chords of a major scale contain *major* chords at the **I**, **IV** and **V** degrees *minor* chords at the **ii**, **iii** and **vi** degrees and *diminished* at the **vii** degree. Usually (but not always) the minor and diminished chords are signified with lower case Roman Numerals (**ii**, **iii**, **vi** & **vii**).

By adding further thirds above each triad, **CM7** is achieved, then **Dm7**, **Em7**, **FM7**, **G7**, **Am7**, **Bm7♭5**. By adding further notes at third intervals more complicated chords like **9ths** and **13ths** etc. will be created; these will be covered shortly.



In the keyboard views below I have only shown the **7th** chords; to see the triads, simply omit the 7ths (the last note of each chord). Please also notice that some of the 7th chords are signified with a capital **'M'** and others with a lower case **'m'**, this is ***vitally important*** and will be explained shortly.

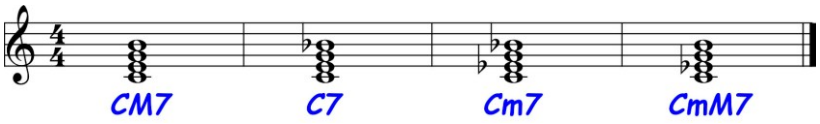


Additional chords can be created from the relative minor scales due to the harmonic and melodic (scales) differences, charts for these are shown in part 2 - quick link.

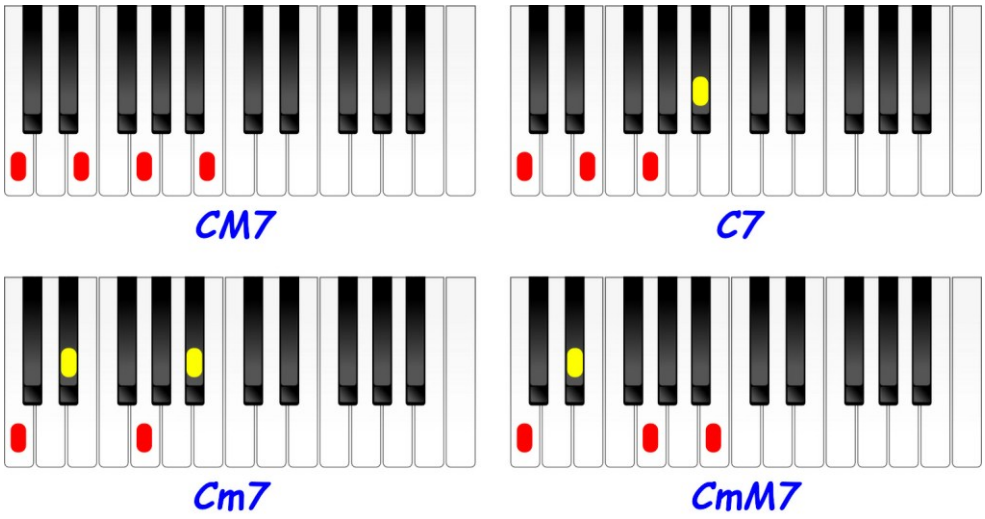
Note that it's important to remember that while many musical compositions will use only the diatonic chords (found naturally in the relevant scale) and no other, it´s by no means necessarily the case. You can use any chord in any key if you can make it work, but the diatonic chords (as found in the scale) are more likely to work!

A Few Important points about 7th Chords

Major 7th (**M7**) chords must not be confused with what is generally called a *'normal'* **7th** (**7**) chord (which really should be called a ***dominant*** **7th** but often isn't). **Major 7th** chords have a major 7th (one semitone down from the octave) whereas the *'normal'* (dominant) **7th** chords are the same major triad with a minor 7th (2 semitones down from the octave). **Minor 7th** (**m7**) chords are like the *'normal' dominant* 7th chords but have a minor 3rd. And a **minor** chord with a **major 7th**, would be written **(C)mM7** although I have to say that this one is the least common, but it needs mentioning, nevertheless.



And again, in keyboard view.



The only *'normal'* **7th** chord naturally occurring (diatonic) in the major scales is the *dominant* **7th** (which is **G7** in the **C major** scale). The *dominant* **7th** chord resolving to the tonic chord (**V7 - I**) is the strongest of all progressions and is used repeatedly in all types of music (classical, pop, jazz etc.). Notice the difference in the sounds of these chords and that they are totally different and can ***NEVER*** be substituted with one another.

The same applies to **9ths**. What is normally known as a **9th**, is a *dominant* **7th** (major triad with minor **7th**) with an added **9th**, but a **major 9th** is a **major 7th** with the same added **9th** and is be written **(C)M9**.

To make this completely clear:

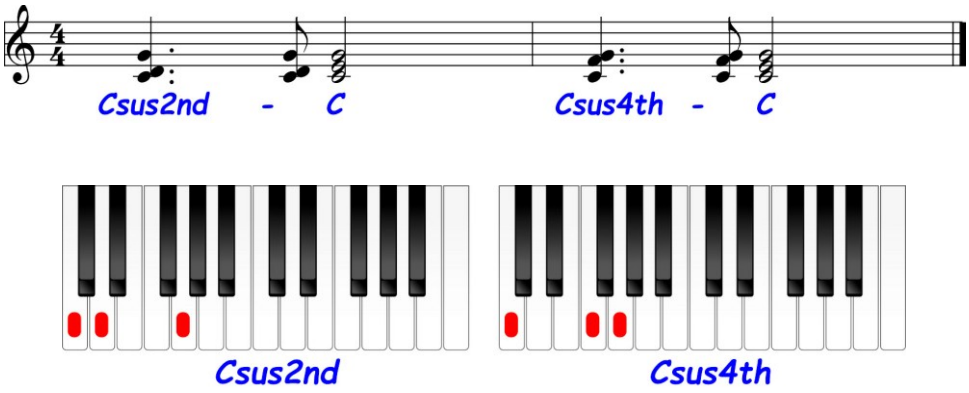
- **C7** is a major chord with a minor 7th
- **CM7** is a major chord with a major 7th
- **Cm7** is a minor chord with a minor 7th
- **CmM7** is a minor chord with a major 7th

And the only one of the above chords to appear in the notes of the **C major** scale is **CM7** and as such is the only one which is *diatonic* in the key of **C major**.

Play these now and hear the difference.

Suspended 2nd and 4th Chords

The *'suspended 2nd'* (also known as *'sus9'*) and *'suspended 4th'* (also known as *'sus'*) chords desperately want to resolve to the major chord as shown here. These are used extensively in all types of music, but perhaps more so in country music.

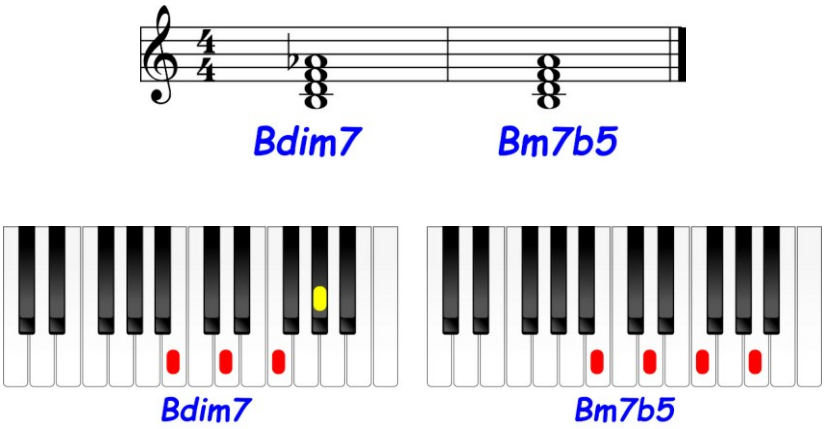


Note that these chords do not have a 3rd and as such are neither major nor minor, but as they *generally* resolve to the major chord, they can perhaps be considered more major than minor, but they could be either.

Diminished 7th Chords

You may be confused about the difference between a true *'diminished 7th'* chord and what is often called a *'half diminished 7th'*, (if not now you probably will be at some point).

Both have the diminished triad, which is **B**, **D** & **F** (**B dim**, the only diminished triad in **C major**). You should notice that the triad consists of two *minor 3rd* intervals.



If we add the 7th this will put an '**A**' at the top (which is a *major 3rd* interval above **F**) and this is often known as **B (half) dim7**. But this chord could also be known as **Bm7♭5** - (**Bm7 flattened 5th**), because that is exactly what it is! Put a **G** at the bottom of this

chord and it would become **G9**, which means that **Bm7♭5** could be used as a substitute for **G9** with no problem.

Now instead of adding the **A** (7th) at the top, if we add **G#** (a *minor 3rd* interval above **F**) we will end up with a true *diminished 7th* chord. Although **G#** (**A♭**) is not in the **C major** scale, it is in the relative **A minor**, both in the harmonic and melodic scales and is therefore a diatonic degree in the key of **A minor**.

The symbols shown below are often used to signify the *diminished 7th* and the *half-diminished 7th* chords.

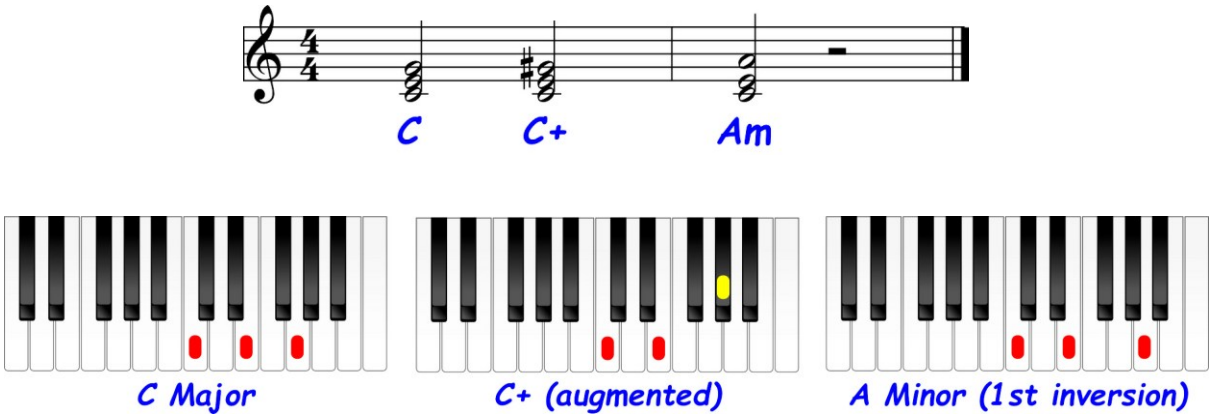
You may notice that the **B**, **D**, **F** & **G#** *diminished* **7** chords are all the same - the only difference being in the bass notes!

A beautiful example of the use of *diminished 7th* chords and arpeggios can be heard in Beethoven's ***'Moonlight Sonata'*** - a superb timeless piece of music!

Augmented Chords

Augmented chords are often used *'en passant',* i.e. stepping up from **C - Am** as shown here or from **C - F**.

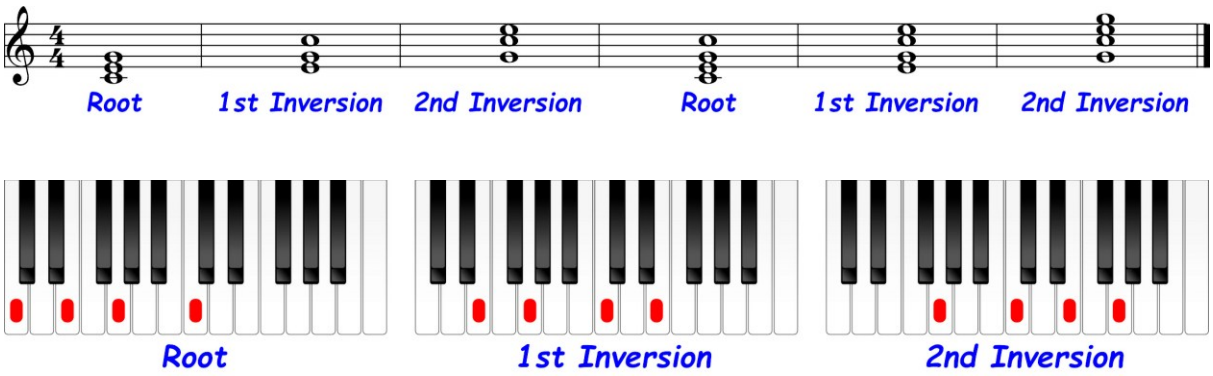
The *'augmented'* triad consists of two *major 3rd* intervals.



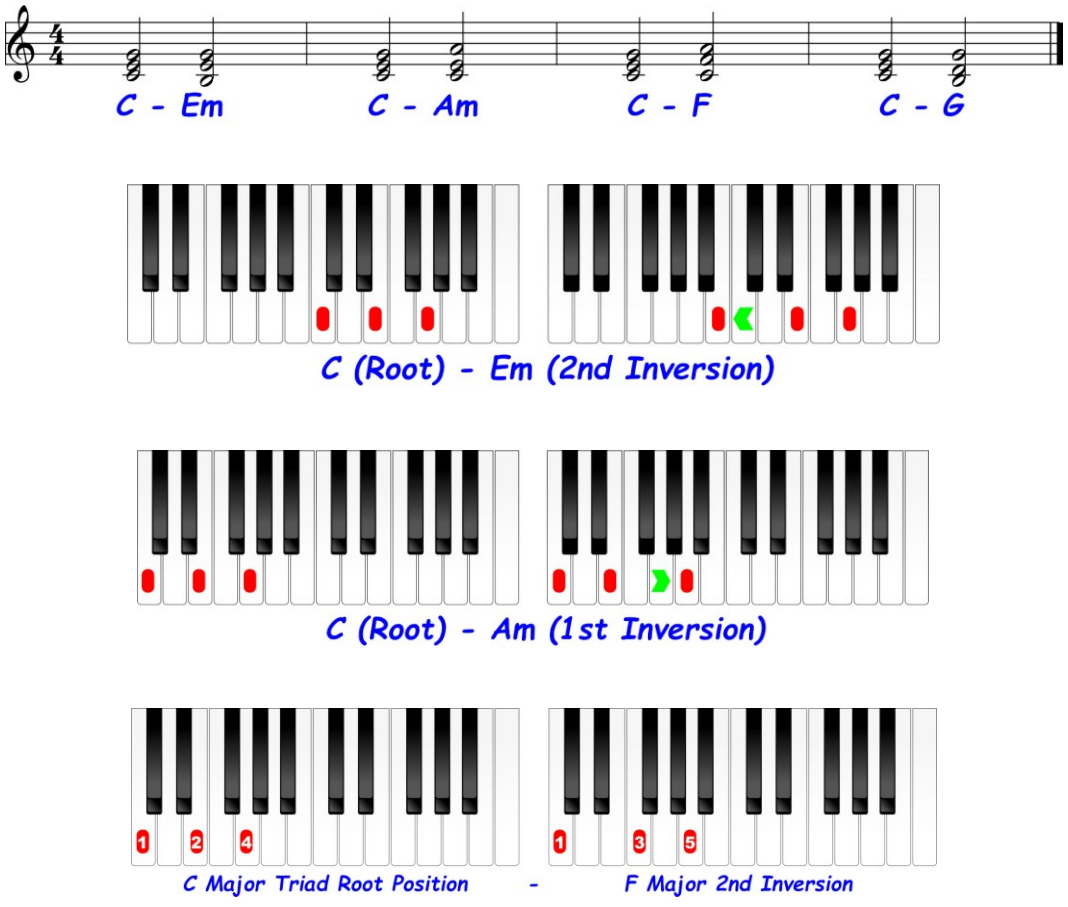
But similar to the diminished chords you may notice that **C**, **E** & **G#** augmented are all the same chords, being identified apart only by the bass notes.

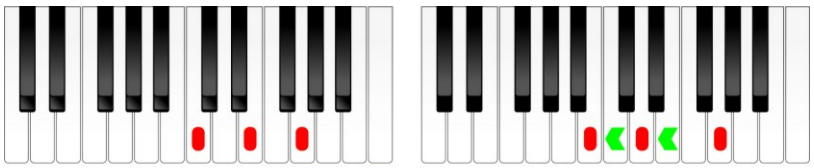
Inversions

By moving the **C** to the top of the first **C major** triad and making the **E** the bottom note, the *'1st inversion'* is created. Similarly, by moving both the **C** and **E** above, the *'2nd inversion'* is constructed. This works the same with full four note chords as well as with triads as shown below.



Using inversions can be useful when changing chords with the minimum amount of finger movements. For instance, the **C major** *'root position'* can be altered to an **E minor** triad simply by changing the **C** to **B**, or to an **A minor** triad by changing the **G** to **A**. And by moving only two fingers a short distance **C major** can be easily changed to **F major** or **G major** as shown below.





C (Root) - G (1st Inversion)

If using auto-accompaniment, you'll find that most keyboards will identify the various inversions, but you will almost certainly find that there will also be a function which allows you to choose which note is sounded in the bass which would be the root note by default.

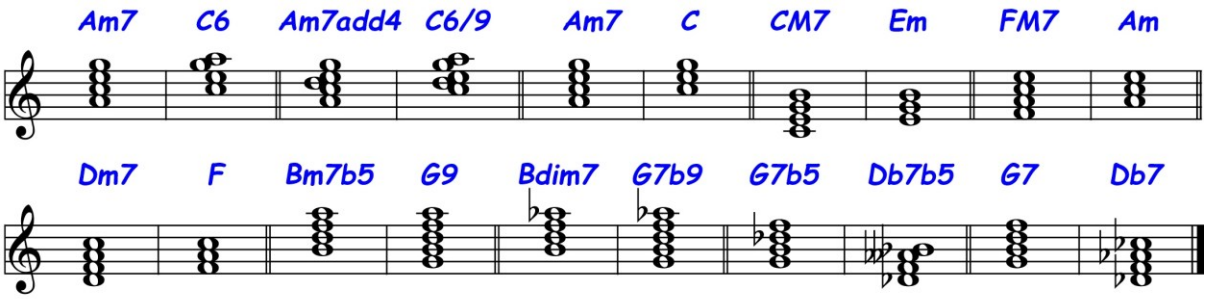
Chord Substitution

As you progress, you'll see that many chords are very similar, some even identical and as such can be used as substitutions if required.

For instance, **Am7** and **C6** consist of exactly the same notes - (**C**, **E**, **G** & **A**) and therefore the only thing that could identify them as being different is which note is used in the bass. It's more common (but not essential) to use the root note in the bass. So, remember that every **major 6th** is identical to the relative **minor 7th**.

Similarly, **Am7add4** and **C6/9** are totally identical and these are very important chords in relation to improvisation as they form the notes of the pentatonic scales.

As already shown **Bm7♭5** can be substituted for **G9** as they are the same chord except for the '**G**' as is **Bdim7** and **G7♭9**. Just a few other possible substitutions are shown below.



In fact, any two chords which share at least two common notes can often be substituted. As shown in the last example **G7** and **D♭7** (above) are in fact harmonically as far apart as it gets, but as they share two common notes - **F** and **B** (or **C♭** to be theoretically correct for the **D♭7**) are often substituted particularly as a blues finale - **D♭7** - **C**. Note that **G7♭5** and **D♭7♭5** are exactly the same (**C♭** is **B** and **A♭♭** is **G**). And this applies to all **7♭5** chords which are a *'tritone'* (3 tones) apart.

You will find that many similar substitutions can be made so don't be afraid to experiment, but always remember that a **'M7'** chord can never be substituted for a normal *'dominant'* **'7'** chord as they have no relationship whatsoever. Similarly, a *'minor'* chord could never be substituted for a *'major'* chord (of the same name, i.e. **Cm** or **C**) for the same reason.

Chord Substitutions as against Chord Alternatives

I feel that I must clarify exactly what I mean by *'substitution'* here, as there is a fear of being misunderstood.

By substitution I mean what you can play *against* what other band members are playing in a way that doesn't clash.

For instance, if the rest of the band (or even your auto-accompaniment) was / is playing a **C7** chord and you played a **G minor** - it would work, as most of the **G minor** notes are also in **C7**, the only exception being the **'D'** which would in effect change the **C7** into a **C9** but this wouldn't clash.

But if other band members (or your auto-accompaniment) played a **C7** and you tried playing a **CM7** or **Cm7** or **CmM7** etc. against this, it would sound terrible for the following reasons:

- The **'B natural'** in **CM7** and **CmM7** would clash against the **'B♭'** in **C7** and
- the **'E♭'** in **Cm7** and **CmM7** against the **'E natural'** in **C7**

Try it and you'll see what I mean.

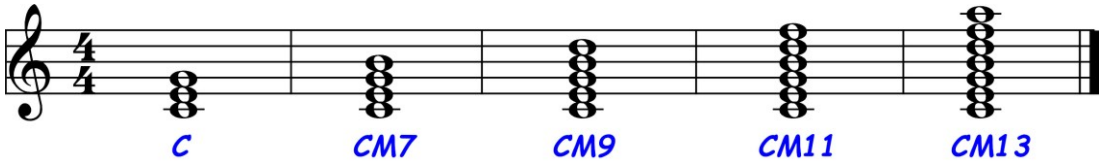
Now on the other hand what I would call an *'alternative chord',* is what you might use if you were playing on your own with no auto-accompaniment, (maybe composing or arranging) and perhaps choosing a chord to go with the notes **'C'** and **'G'**. In this instance, you would have many potential alternative choices including the four chords that I said previously could never be used as substitutes, i.e., **CM7**, **C7**, **Cm7** and **CmM7**. Any of these *could* work because they all contain the notes **'C'** and **'G'** in their makeup. As do **Am7**, **Gsus4**, **A♭M7** and no doubt many other chords.

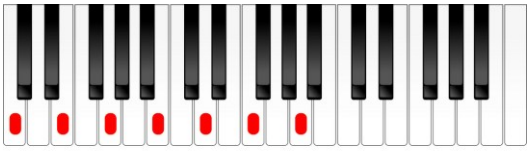
Which chord would be best, would be determined by which chord comes before and after and to a certain extent also the key signature (diatonic chords are more likely to fit). Clearly you would need to experiment.

In all cases the chords must fit the melody notes and any substituted chords must be compatible with one another *and* the melody *and* with what any other band member (or auto-accompaniment) is playing.

Extensions Beyond the 7ths

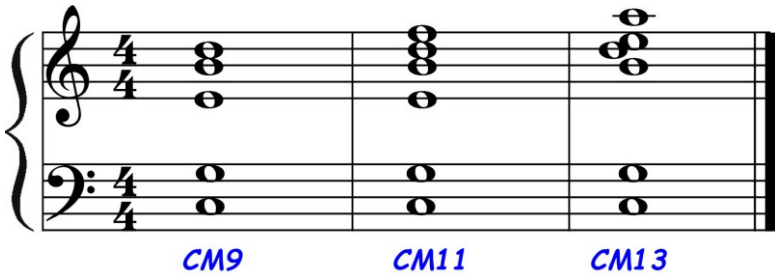
Going back to the **M7** chord extension; if we carry on adding notes to this chord at diatonic 3rd intervals above the root chord, the **M9th**, **M11th** and **M13th** chords would be created as shown below:

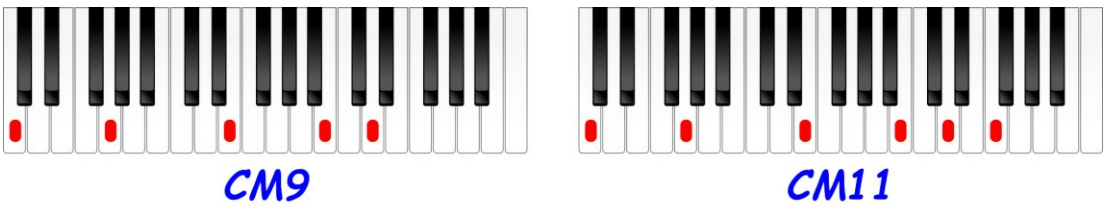


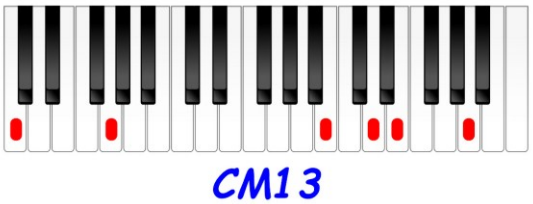


The fact that the **M7th** is used also makes the **9th**, **11th** and **13th** extensions *'Major'!*

And here's some playable inversions.

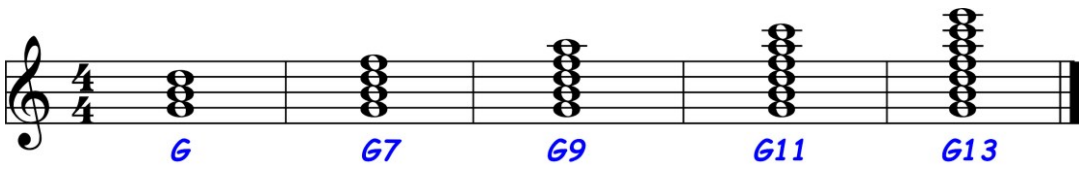






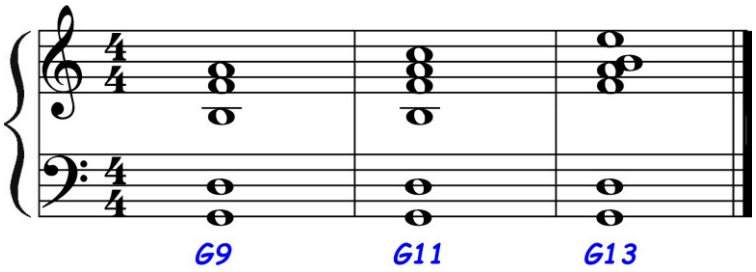
But I have to say that the **M11th** and **M13th** are fairly uncommon. The majority of chord extensions are built on the **dominant 7th (V7)** chord which of course is **G7** in

the key of **C major**. And the most common extensions created are the **9th**, **11th** and **13th** as shown next.

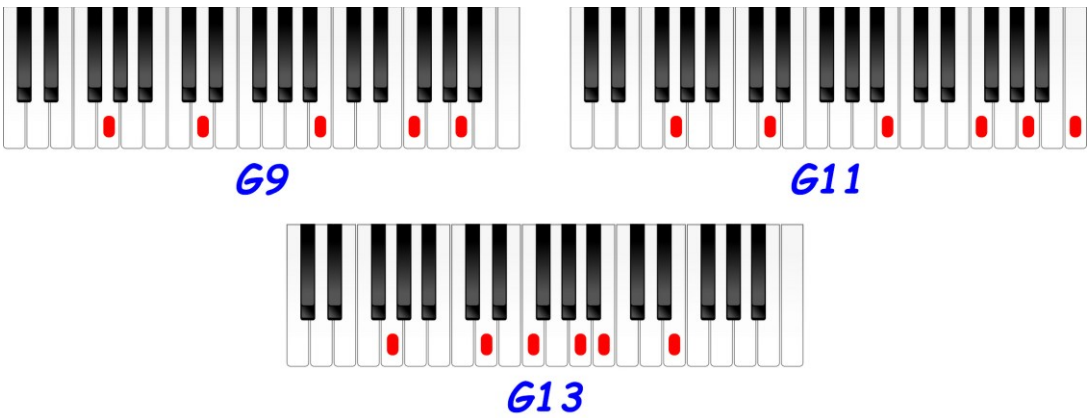


Look carefully and you'll see that **CM13th** and **G13th** are actually different inversions of the same chords and if re-organised are also the notes of the **C major** scale; and as such also contain within them all the other *'diatonic'* triads and chords of **C major** - think about it!

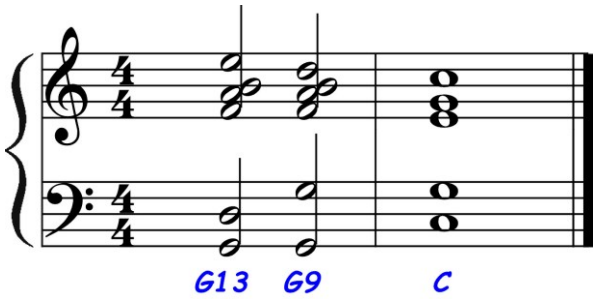
Here's some playable inversions.



If playing with a band, you only need to play the right-hand notes as shown here in the treble clef, which although don't include the tonic or 5th *do* create the sounds of the chords - try them - they work great!

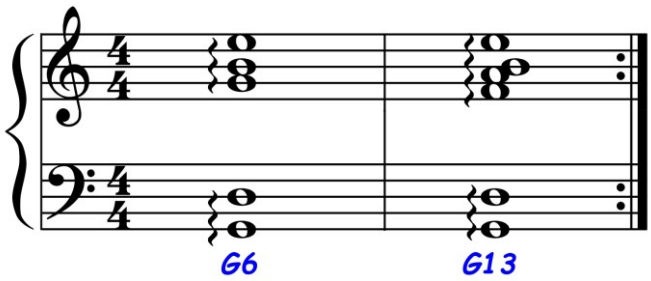


Notice how the **G13 (V13)** followed by **G9 (V9)** resolves beautifully to the tonic **C major (I)**, shown next.



What is the difference between a 6th and a 13th?

Clearly the **13th** is a **6th**. I suppose you could say that a **6th** is a cheap, simple way of playing a **13th** and it works, but the difference is the fact that the **13th** also contains the all-important **7th** and **9th** and is a completely different sounding chord - experiment and hear the difference! Clearly the **13th** is a much *'fuller'* chord!



See: http://www.learn-keyboard.co.uk/chord_construction.html for the audio link to this section or click on the applicable graphics.

Quick link to Part 2 (Chords in Keyboard view)
Quick link to Part 2 (Extended Chords in Keyboard view)

"I pay no attention whatever to anybody's praise or blame.
I simply follow my own feelings."

Mozart

Comment: - And this is the difference between the leaders and the followers!

Chord Fingering

The fingering for the various chords depends very much on whether you are playing triads or full chords and which chord (or passage) is going to follow, and of course to a certain extent it depends on which chord you are playing.

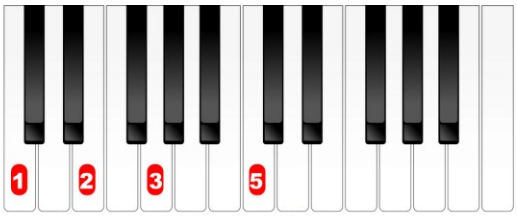
If I was to outline the fingering for each individual chord in every inversion in every circumstance it would bore you senseless apart from taking months to produce.

But what I can do more sensibly is to give you a few valuable *general* examples which work in most instances. But as always, whatever you do - if it works, it's ok.

To keep things simple, we'll start with the **C major**.

If I was asked to play a **C major triad** or a **C major full chord** with my right hand, off the top of my head without thinking, the fingerings that I would use are as follows.

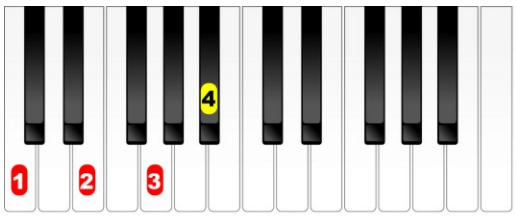
C Major Triad Root Position



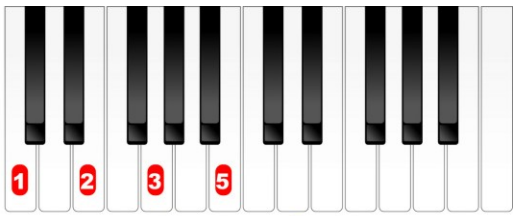
C Major Full Chord Root Position

Furthermore, the above fingering would work for every root position major and minor chord. Generally speaking, if a scale begins on a black note, you will usually use the 2nd or 3rd finger at the root, but not so with chords - the above fingering would still work for every major and minor root position chord.

Now staying with the root position, as we add the **7ths**, which finger that is used at the top (the 7th) is determined by whether it's a white note or not as shown below.

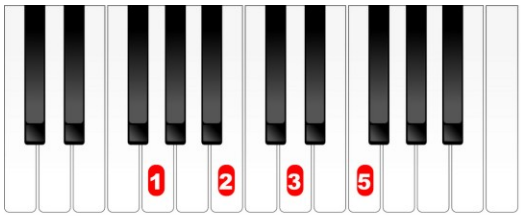


C7 - Root Position

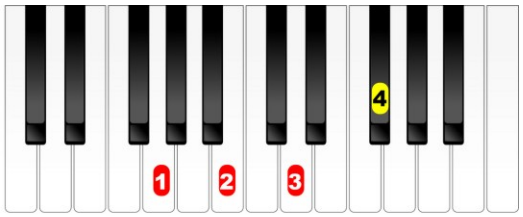


CM7 - Root Position

And if we look at **G7** and **GM7** as shown next, you will see that it's the other way around with the 5th finger being used on the **G7** and the 4th on the **major 7th** as it's a black note.



G7 - Root Position

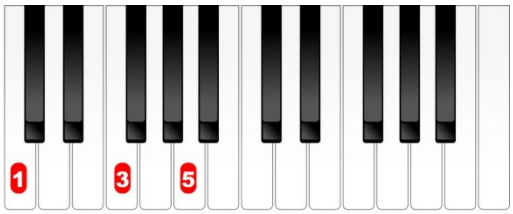


GM7 - Root Position

I must stress that these are not *'rules'*, just *'guidelines'*. If you feel more comfortable using your 5th finger on the black 7th keys, then do so. But in all cases when the span is a full octave as in the full (4 note), chords then the 5th finger will *generally* be used at the top on both white and black notes.

Ok, so now we'll look at some alternatives which are commonly used when changing to other chords. The example below shows the **C major triad** changing to **F major** - the common **I - IV** progression. By using this fingering, a smooth change can be made, particularly if sustaining the **'C'** throughout.

C Major Triad Root Position -



F Major 2nd Inversion

But for **C minor** to **F minor**, the fingering would alter as shown next. This is ***not*** because the chords are minor rather than major, but simply because of the way the black notes fall.

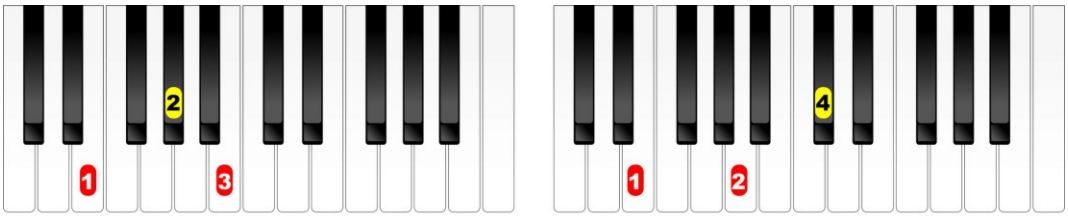
C minor Triad Root Position -

F minor 2nd Inversion

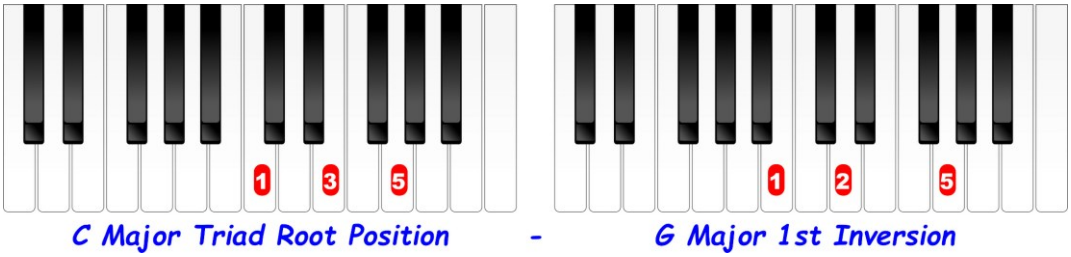
"Music is everybody's possession!"

John Lennon

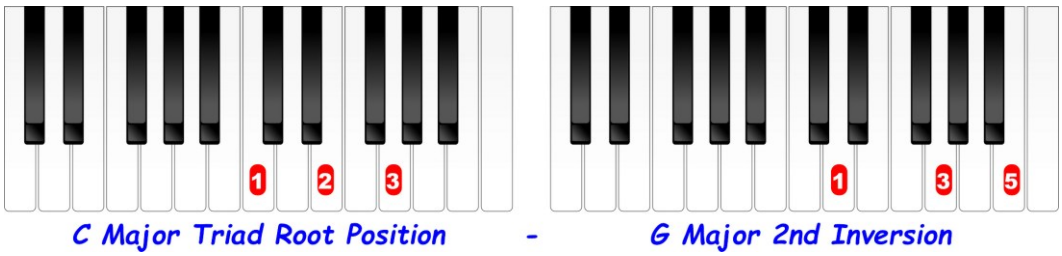
Notice that the fingering for **E major** to **A major (**in the next diagram) is exactly the same due to the black notes falling in the same relative positions - remember it's nothing to do with the major / minor difference!



Another most common progression is the **I - V** as shown below using **C major** *'root position'* to **G major** *'1st inversion'*.



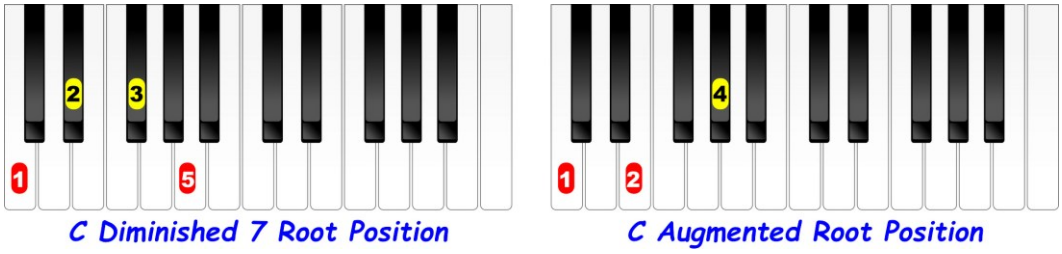
If progressing to the '*2nd inversion'* as shown next, notice that using a different fingering on the first triad is more suitable.



In all the progression examples given, note that at least one of the notes between the two chords remains the same, which assists a smooth transition. Obviously, this is not always possible, but whenever it is, it's a good idea.

Another way of ensuring a smooth transition is to *'place'* unused fingers over one or more notes of the next chord in preparation. For instance, the 5th finger could be hovering over the '**B**' in the last example which means only the 1st finger has to do any movement!

And finally, the root positions of the **C diminished 7th** and **C augmented** triad.

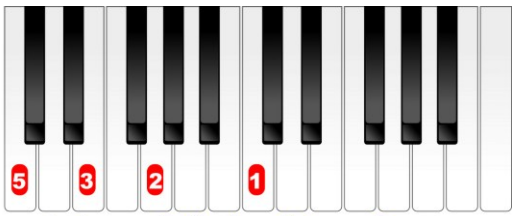


Left Hand Chord Fingering

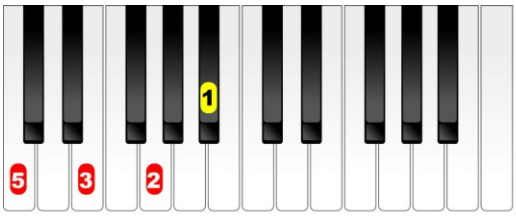
Now obviously your left hand is going to be completely different. The same sort of variations will apply - but differently. You might think that the fingering is simply *'mirrored'*, but it's not, as although your hands are mirrored, the keyboard is not!

Here's the same chords and progressions but with suggested **left-hand** fingering.

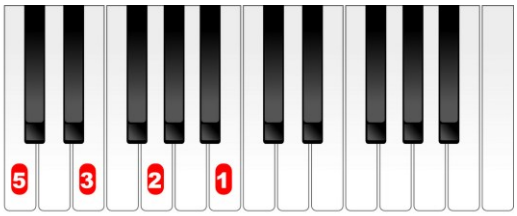
C Major Triad Root Position



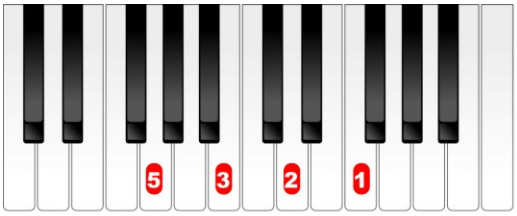
C Major Full Chord Root Position



C7 - Root Position



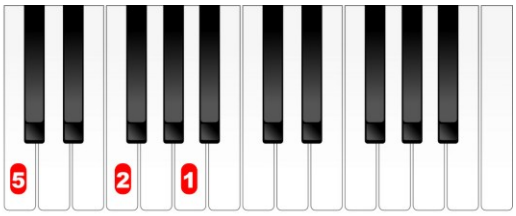
CM7 - Root Position



G7 - Root Position

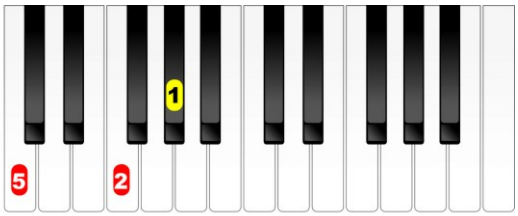
GM7 - Root Position

C Major Triad Root Position -

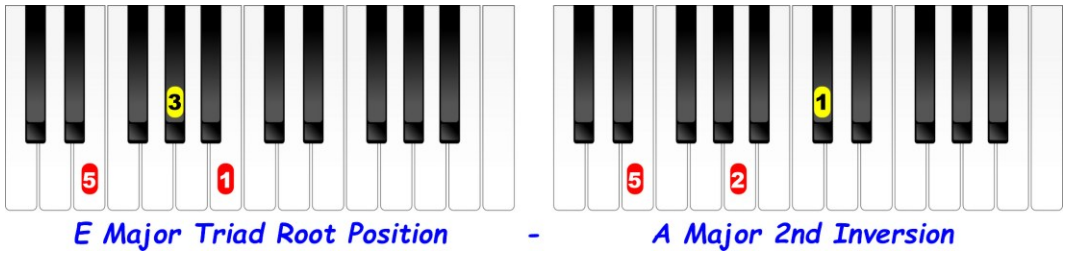


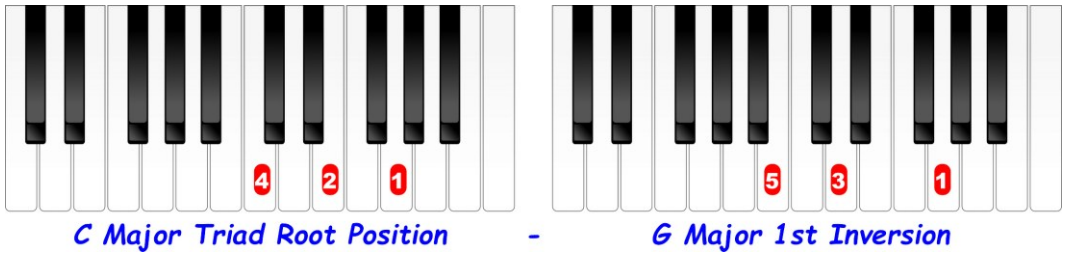
F Major 2nd Inversion

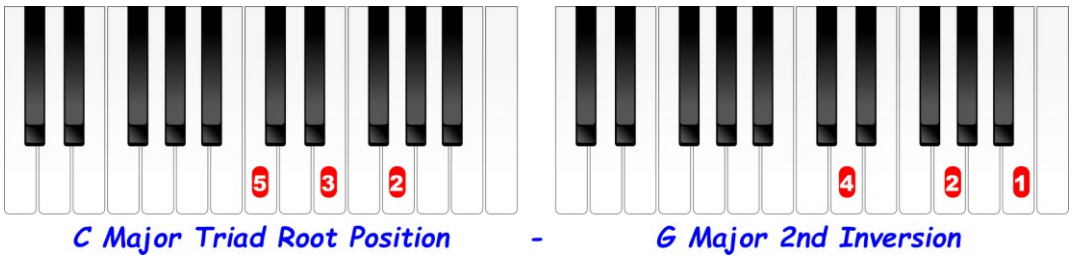
C minor Triad Root Position -

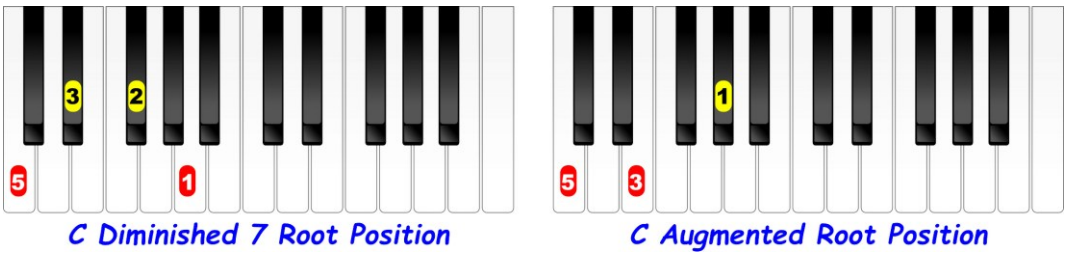


F minor 2nd Inversion









If you've been paying attention, you will have noticed that there are not so many variations with the left-hand fingerings as with the right hand. This is something that surprised me, and that I was not consciously aware of until I wrote this section.

Anyway, so hopefully now you've got the idea and can now relate all this information to other chords. But remember it's not written in blood, these fingerings work well for me, but to be honest I've seen other really good musicians who use what appears (to me) to be crazy fingering, but it works for them.

There are no audio files for this chapter.

"Music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend."

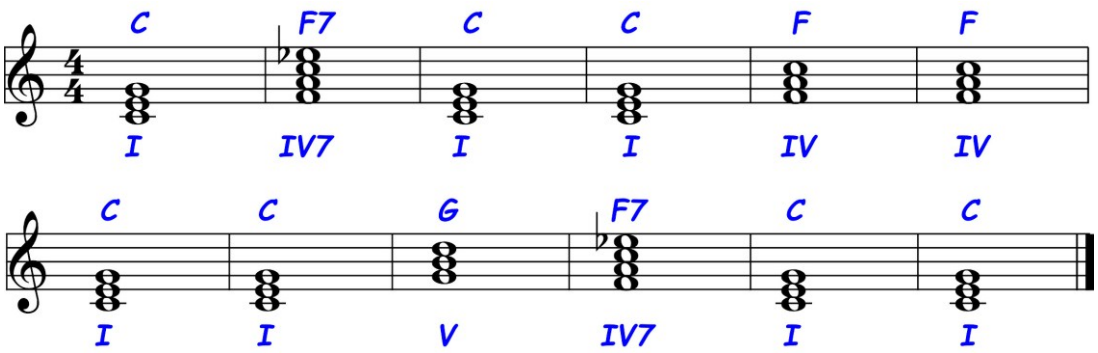
Beethoven

Chord Sequences

As already mentioned, every musical piece is constructed around a sequence of chords which may be extremely complex or very simple consisting of as few as two or three chords. But do remember that just because a piece may be complex with many chords this would certainly not necessarily make it more pleasing to listen to. In fact, very often simple is best! Even some of the greatest classical compositions are based around only a few chords.

You've no doubt heard the term *'three chord wonders'* referring to songs with only three chords, and if this is the case you can more or less guess that they will be the **tonic (I)**, the **subdominant (IV)** and the **dominant (V)** - **C**, **F** and **G** in the key of **C major**.

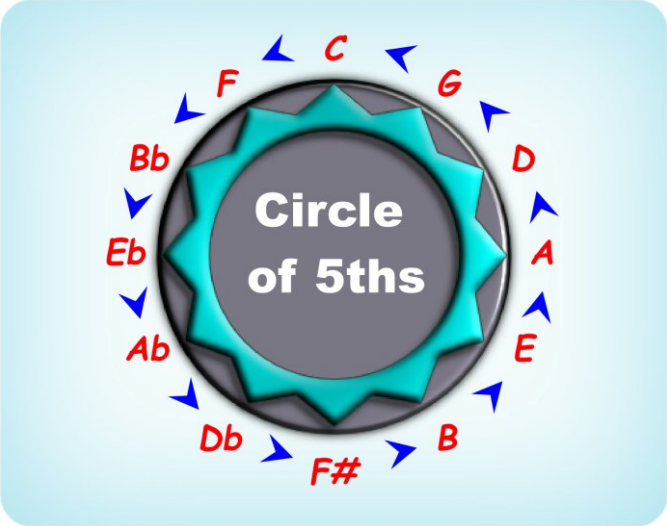
The most common sequence using these three chords is the ***'12 Bar Blues'***, which is shown below, but note that there are many variations of this.



Whether you are aware of it or not you will have heard this sequence thousands of times.

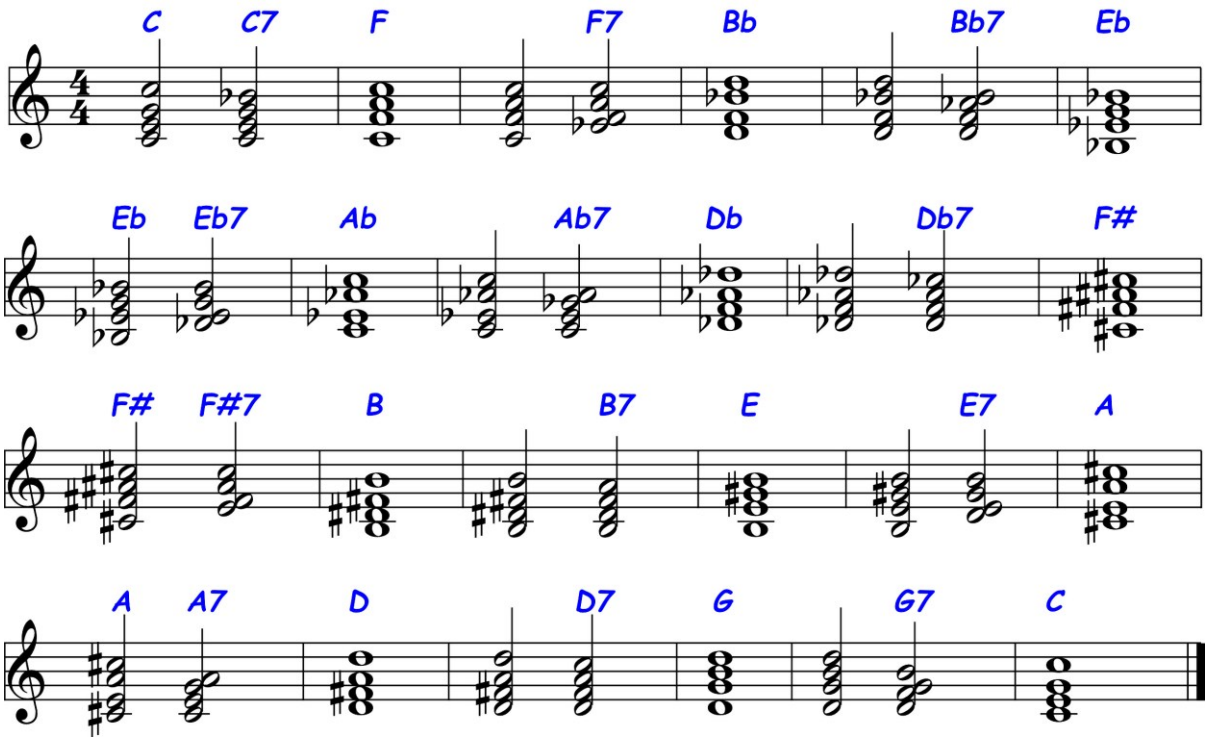
As seen previously, the strongest of all progressions is **V7 - I** (**G7 - C** in **C major**) and the second strongest is **IV - I** (**F - C**), hence the reason that these three chords are used so often. Now if you think about it, **I - IV** (**C - F** in **C major**) is also a **V - I** progression in the key of **F major**. Or to put it another way the progression is the interval of a perfect 5th descending or a perfect 4th ascending, which amounts to the same thing.

If after making this progression (**G - C**), we continue with this interval again, we'd get **C - F**, then **F - B♭**, **B♭ - E♭** etc. Carry on doing this and it will take you through the *'chromatic circle of 5ths'* as shown next. And this takes us through the full spectrum of major chords and keys and eventually returns to **C major**.



Portions of the circle of 5ths are used in numerous compositions due to the strength of the resolutions. But as the full circle goes through every key, it's doubtful that the *full* circle would be used.

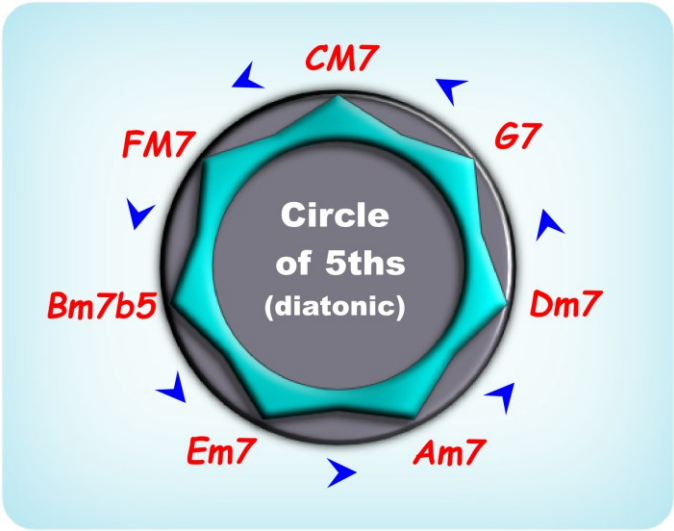
Below is the circle of 5ths again in music notation form, although in every case I've added the dominant 7th before each resolution (which makes the resolutions stronger). Listen to this and you should not fail to notice that each dominant 7th chord *wants* to resolve to the next chord in the circle (a 5th below).

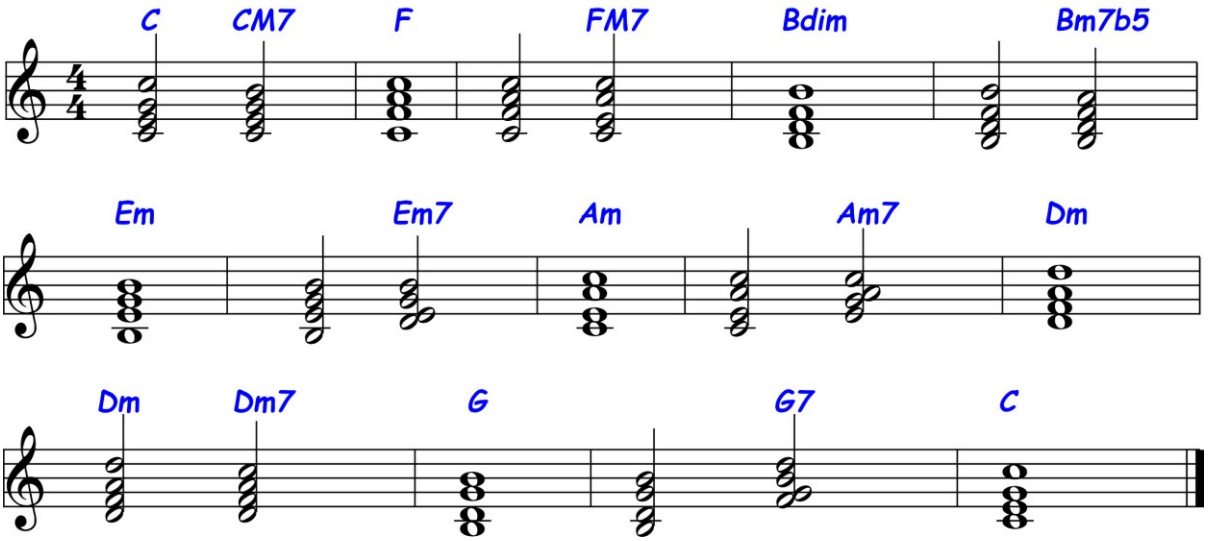


To see all of these chords in keyboard view, please see the charts further on.

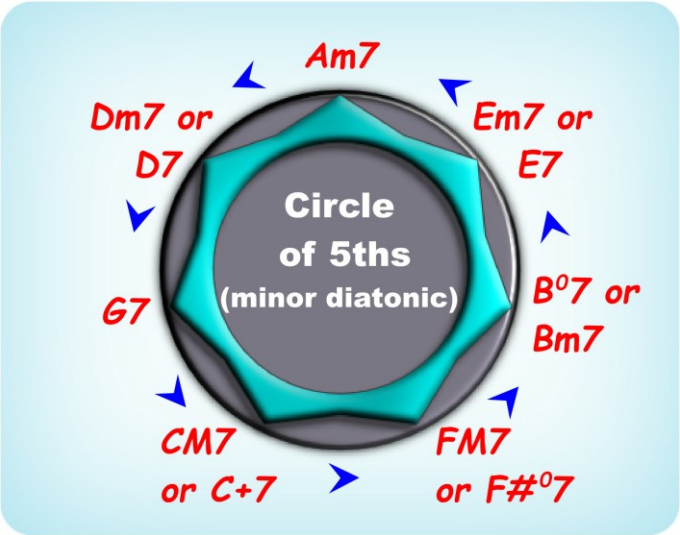
Now, by making a very small modification to the circle and using chords only found in the scale we end up with the following ***diatonic*** resolutions which you'll hear extensively either in total or partially in all types of music from classical to pop.

The next two examples are in **C major / A minor** and the slight modification incidentally is that the interval from **F - B** is a **diminished** (or flattened) **5th**. All the others are **perfect 5ths**. Also, we've used the minor and diminished chords as they appear in the scale, shown previously in the chord construction chapter.

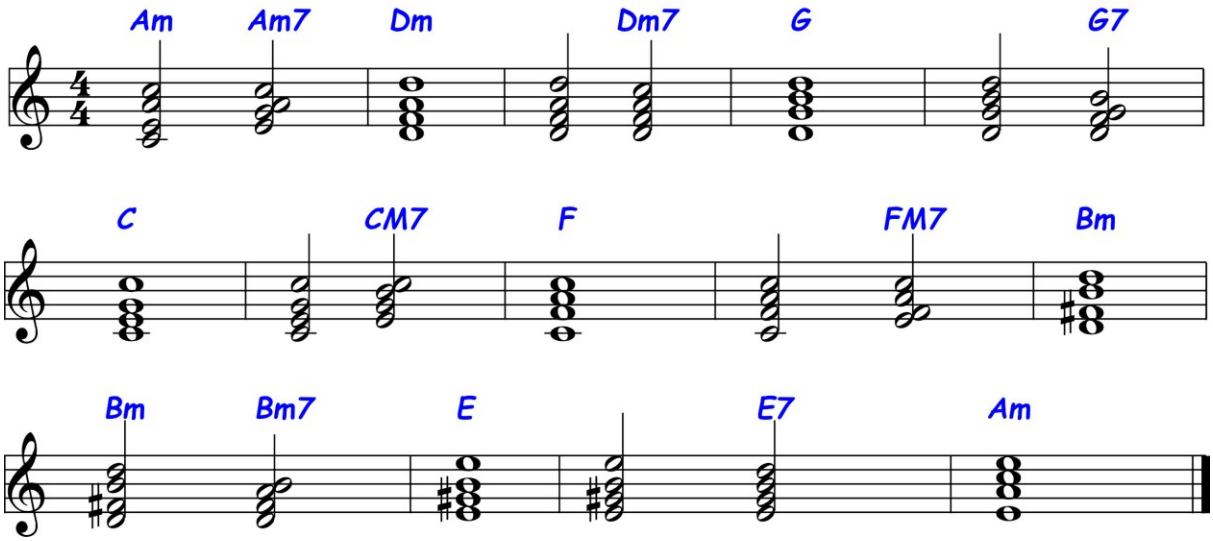




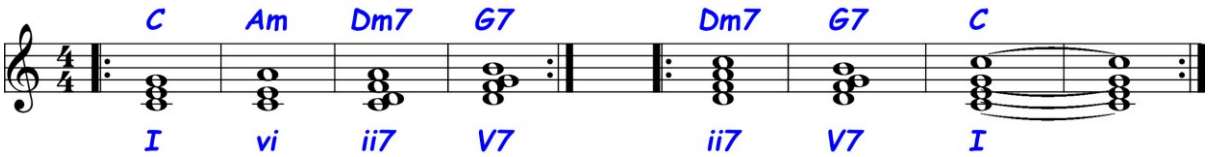
The extra (alternative) chords in the *'minor'* circle shown next, are due to the differences in the melodic / harmonic scales. Again, these were shown in the chord construction chapter.



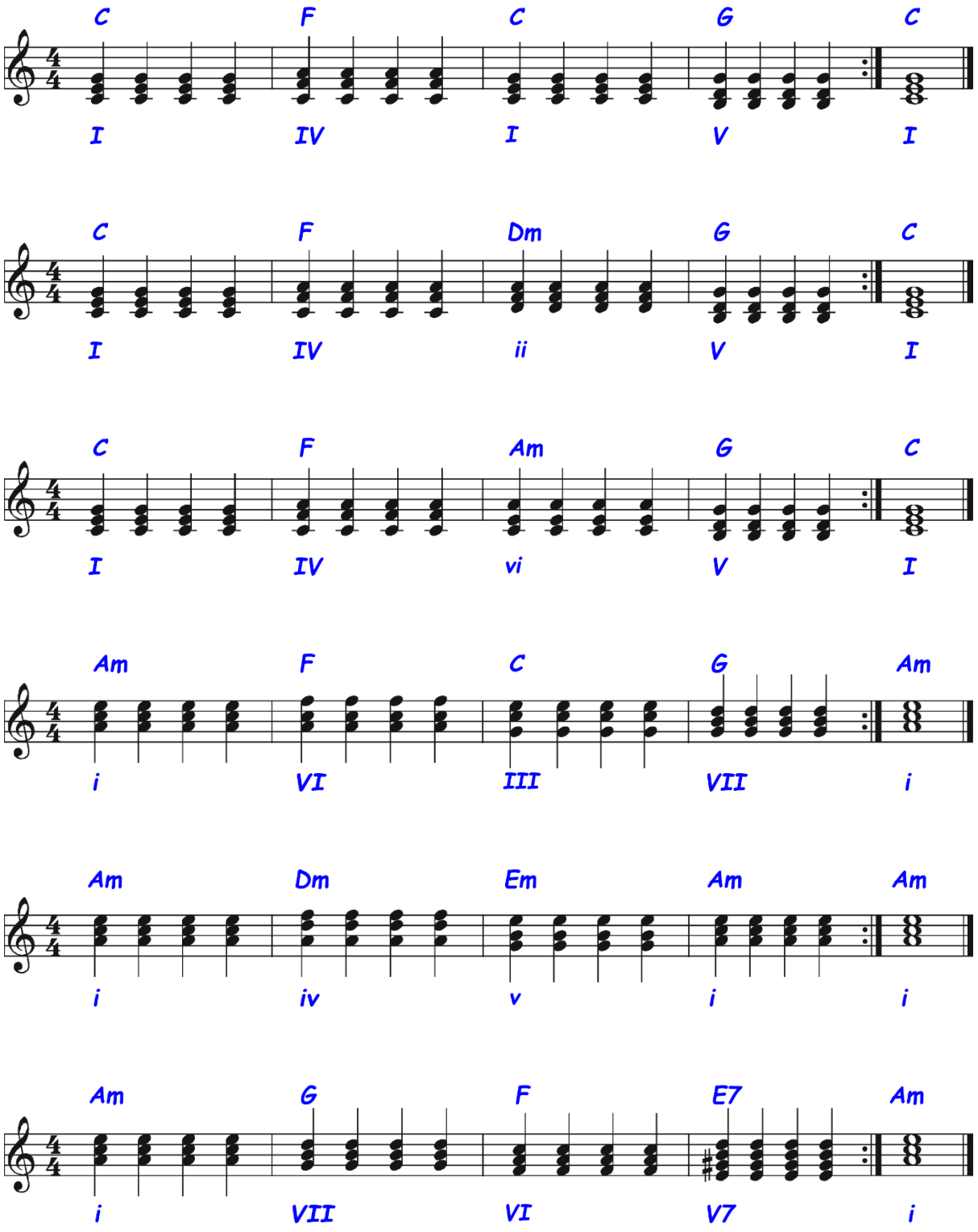
The notation example below shows just one of the several possible variations.



Other very common sequences (shown below) are **Dm7 - G7 - C** - (**ii7, V7, I**) and **C - Am - Dm7** (or **F major**) - **G7**- (**I, vi, ii7, V7**), both of which incorporate a portion of the circle of 5ths which is why these sequences are so strong. Try and notice how often part of the circle is used in other compositions - it's very common.



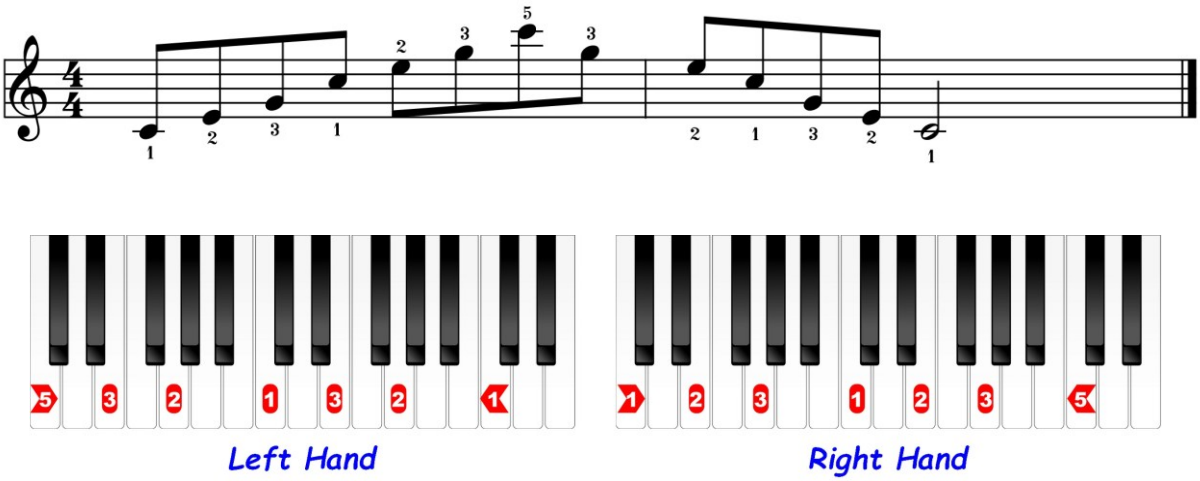
On the next page are a few more very common sequences, all in **C major / A minor**. Notice that all bar one use portions of the circle of 5ths. Remember **1 - IV** and **V - 1** are the same!



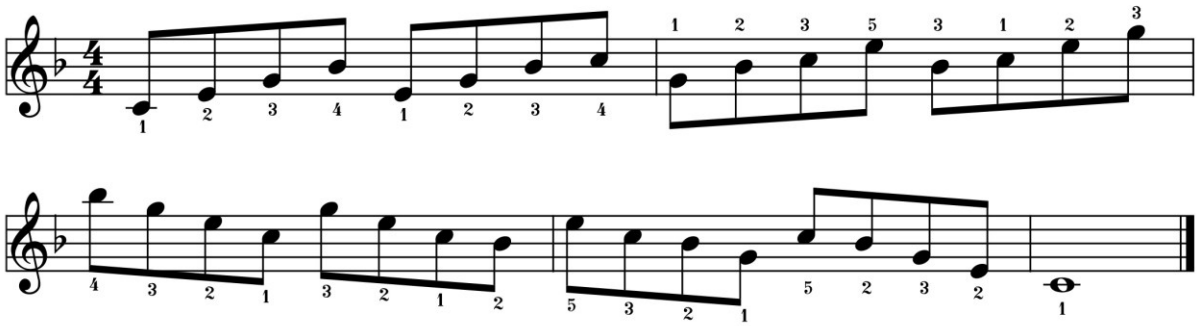
The audio link for this section is: https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/chord_sequences.html .

Arpeggios & Broken Chords in Brief

An *'arpeggio'* is simply a *'broken chord',* although the Royal College of Music describes these differently, an *'arpeggio'* being as shown below (**C major** - 2 octaves).



And a *'broken chord'* as shown in the next diagram (**C7** - 2 octaves).



Both of these they are especially important for a number of reasons:

a) They are often used (in different ways) in the left hand (classical and modern)

b) They are often used in bass patterns

c) They are excellent finger exercises

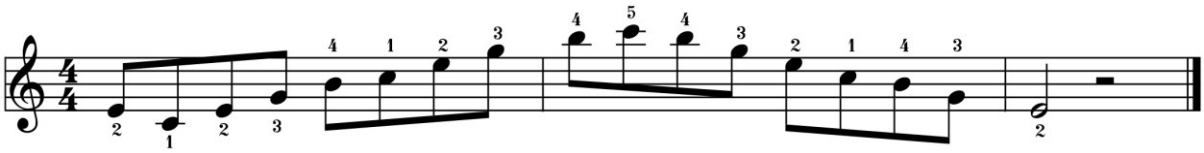
d) They are an extremely important tool to help with composition and improvisation

It's well worth the effort to practice every arpeggio in every key major and minor with both hands together and separately, remembering as always that speed is not important, but accuracy and fluency is! At first the finger crossovers are far more difficult than the

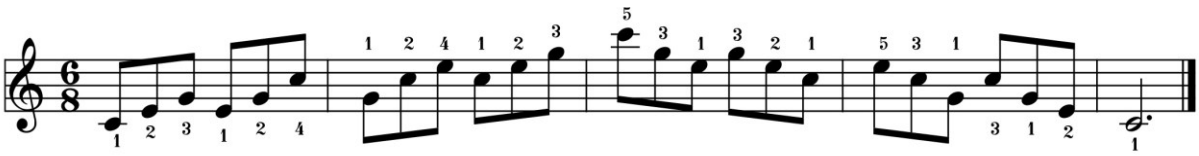
scales as they span for much greater intervals. But in all cases avoid using the sustain pedal when practicing these as doing so will give you a false impression of fluency.

All of these and other useful exercises are shown in part 2.

Similar to the scale exercises, it's also useful to practice these starting on different notes as shown here (**CM7** arpeggio on **E**).



Another extremely useful (and important) way of practicing them is to split the arpeggio / chord into triplets as shown here (**C major**).



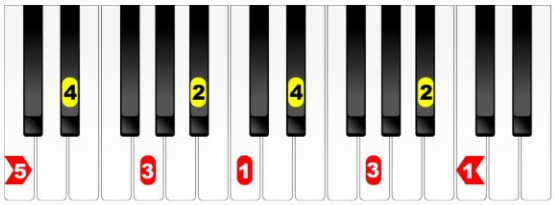
Yamaha Clavinova CVP 909 - 88 Keys

I guess this certainly must be the ultimate digital piano / arranger.
Unsurprisingly very expensive!

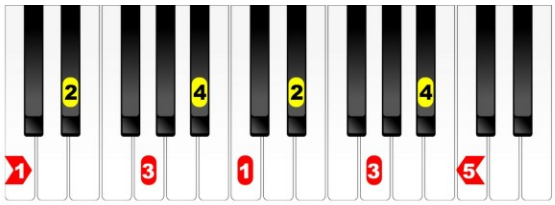
Other useful and similar versions are the **7th**, **m7th** and **M7th** arpeggios as shown next in keyboard view.

C7 Left Hand

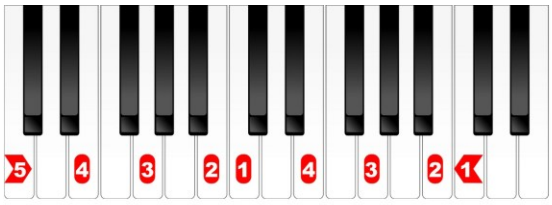
C7 Right Hand



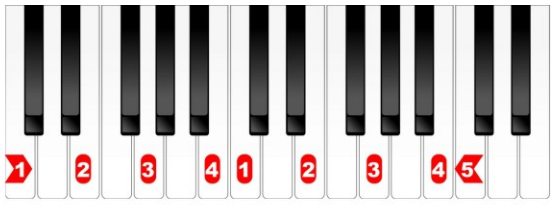
Cm7 Left Hand



Cm7 Right Hand



CM7 Left Hand



CM7 Right Hand

These can be heard by clicking on the graphics; however, these are not shown in part 2, but all the chords from which they are derived are.

The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/arp_brief.html .

Quick link to part 2 (Arpeggio Exercises).

Important Musical Terms

There are an enormous number of musical terms and symbols, many of which apply only to certain instruments. Following are the most common terms applicable to the piano / keyboard.

Staccato

Generally, notes are played *'legato'*, which means that the second key is played *as* you are releasing the first, thereby creating a smooth transition. But some notes need to be struck deliberately detached or disconnected. This is known as *'Staccato'*. All the scales and exercises should be practiced both *legato* and *staccato*.

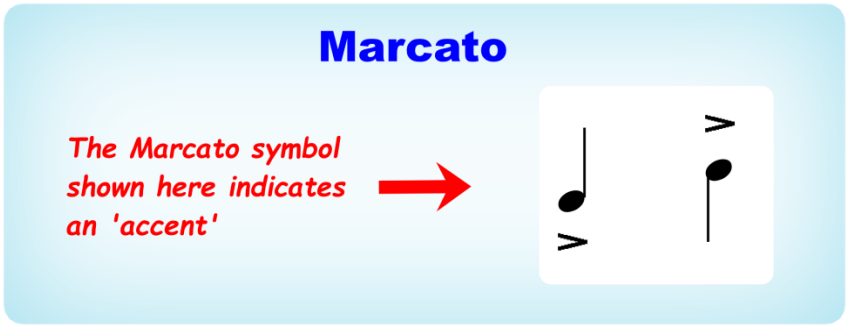
In music notation, notes which should be played *staccato* have a dot over or under them as shown here:

So, a dot over a note means it should be played staccato and if the dot is after it means that half as much again should be added to the time length - Yes?

Absolutely correct! The correct placing of a *'dot'* makes a huge difference!

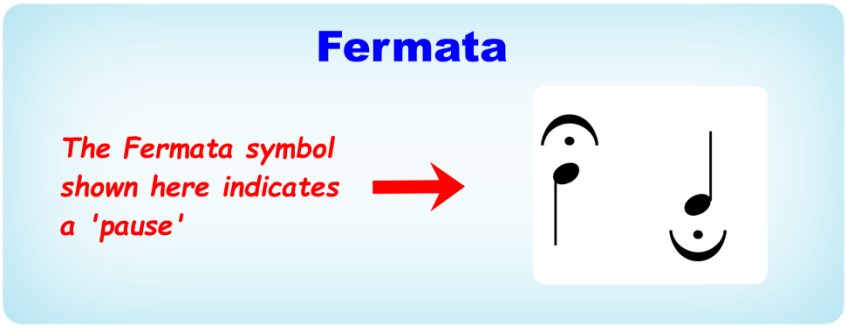
Marcato

The *'Marcato'* symbol as shown below indicates that the note should be accented.



Fermata

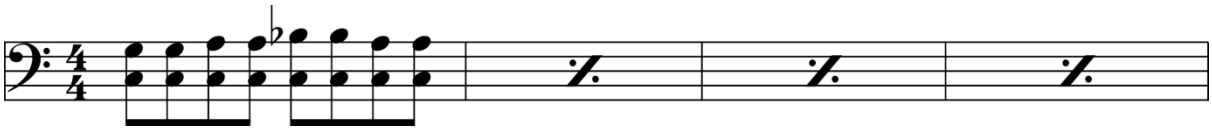
The *'Fermata'* symbol as shown below indicates a *'pause'* and thus interrupts the general tempo of the piece.



This symbol is used in two of the pieces to follow - ***'Falora'*** and ***'The Clown Waltz'***.

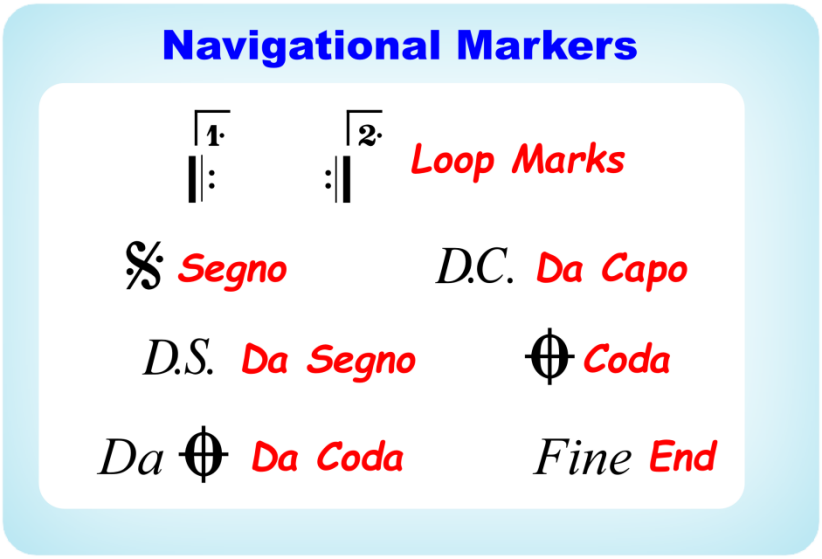
Repeat Last Measure

This symbol is used where one or more bars is an exact duplication of the previous one(s). As this is often the case in *'Blues'* or *'Boogie-Woogie'* music, this is where they are mostly seen, as shown in the example below.



Navigational Symbols

Just like navigating through a website, finding your way through a piece of music is not always straight forwards. In order to minimise the number of pages and consequently save the amount of page turns, certain navigational terms and symbols are used. These are all used very frequently in all types of music, so understanding these is essential.



Segno

The *'Segno'* sign is simply a reference mark and used in conjunction with the Da Segno (*D.S.*) marker.

Coda & *Da* Coda

The *'Coda'* is an end section marked by the *'Coda'* sign and used in conjunction with the *D.S.* and *D.C.* markers unless the instruction *Da Coda* appears which means *'go to the Coda'* after any repeats.

Fine

The *'Fine'* sign means *'end'* and is often found in the middle of a piece, meaning that the piece would end there after further instruction from either the *D.S.* or *D.C.* markers. You will see examples of this as you progress.

Da Segno

The *'D.S.'* marker means *'go to the sign'* and is used in three ways as follows:

1. *D.S.* - jump forward or back to the *'Segno'* mark
2. *D.S. Al Fine* - jump to the Segno mark and finish at the *'Fine'* mark
3. *D.S. Al Coda* - jump to the Segno mark and then proceed to the *'Coda'*

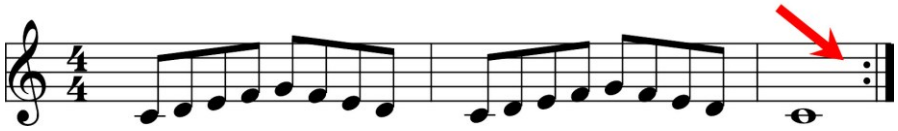
Da Capo

The *'D.C.'* marker means *'go to the beginning'* and is used in three ways as follows:

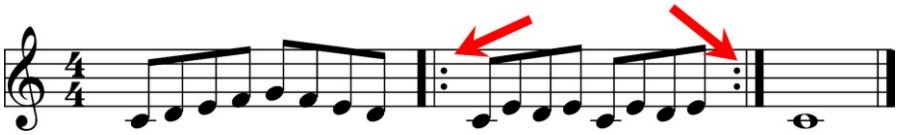
1. *D.C.* - go back to the start
2. *D.C. Al Fine* - go back to the start and then end at the *'Fine'* mark
3. *D.C. Al Coda* - go back to the start and then proceed to the *'Coda'*

Loop Section

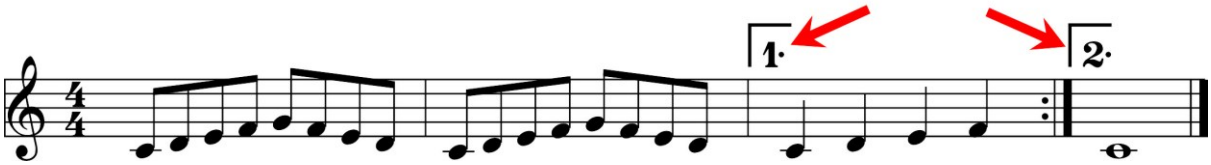
As you progress will come across some *'loop section'* symbols. The first one (below) means that the whole piece should be repeated from the beginning.



The next one means that the bar (or bars) between the markers should be repeated.



And the final one means that the piece should be repeated from the beginning, using the bar marked '1' the first time and the one marked '2' the second time.

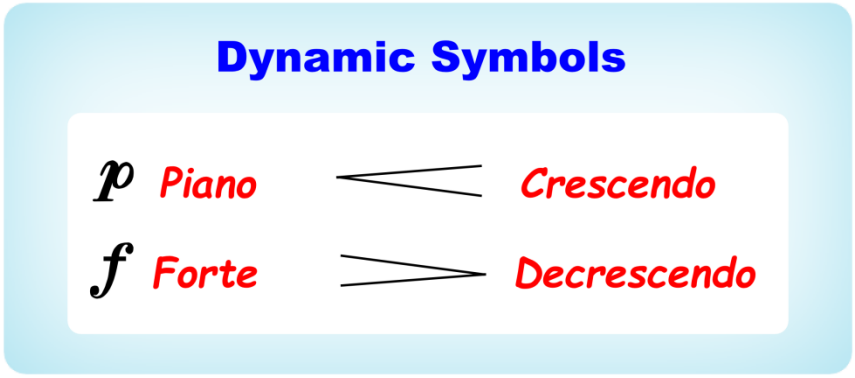


These symbols are used extensively in the practice pieces to follow.

Kawai ES920 Stage Piano - 88 Keys

This is certainly a great digital piano for home or stage.
Superb key action and top-quality sounds.
This also has internal speakers. Also look at the MP7se.

Dynamic Symbols

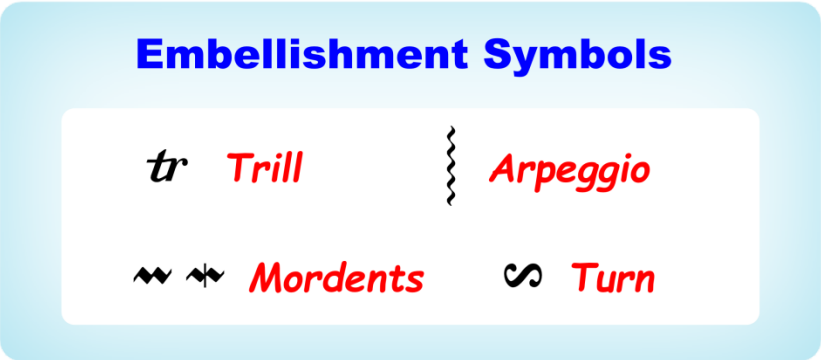


There are many dynamic symbols, but these are the most common in relation to the piano / keyboard.

Italian Words		Translations
Crescendo (cres.)	-	*Gradually becoming louder*
Diminuendo (dim.)	-	*Gradually becoming softer*
ppp - pianississimo	-	*Very, very soft*
pp - pianissimo	-	*Very soft*
p - piano	-	*Soft*
mp - mezzo piano	-	*Moderately soft*
mf - mezzo forte	-	*Moderately loud*
f - forte	-	*Loud*
ff - fortissimo	-	*Very loud*
fff - fortississimo	-	*Very, very loud*
poco a poco	-	*Little by little*

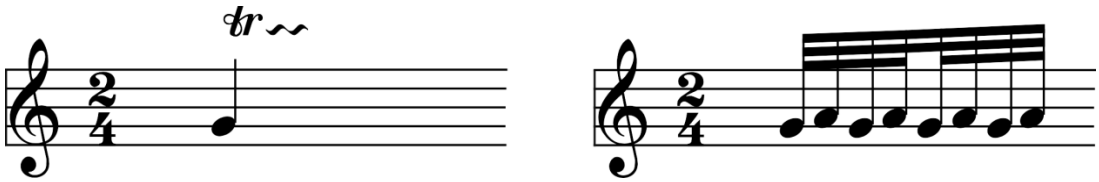
Embellishments

The following embellishments are mainly found in classical music, although the *'Arpeggio'* is common in all types of music.



Trill

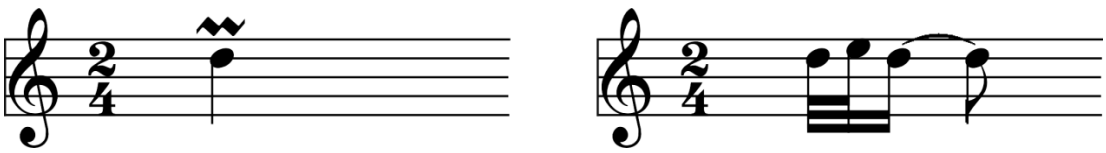
The first diagram below shows what is written and the second how it should be played. However, the *'Trill'* or *'Shake'* as it's sometimes called is rarely *exactly* as written in the second example; it may start off slowly and then increase in speed. It's also open to interpretation by the individual musician.



The note immediately above in the scale is used unless a sharp, flat or natural sign is used to signify otherwise.

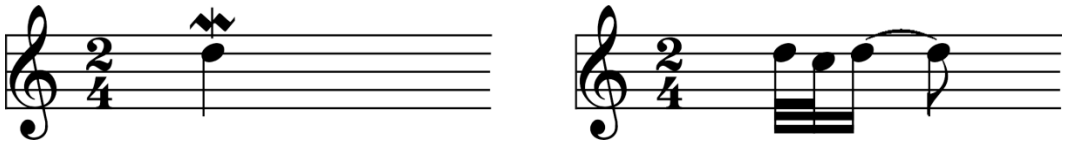
High Mordent

The *'High Mordent'* does a quick *alternation* between the written note and the next note above in the scale as shown below.



Low Mordent

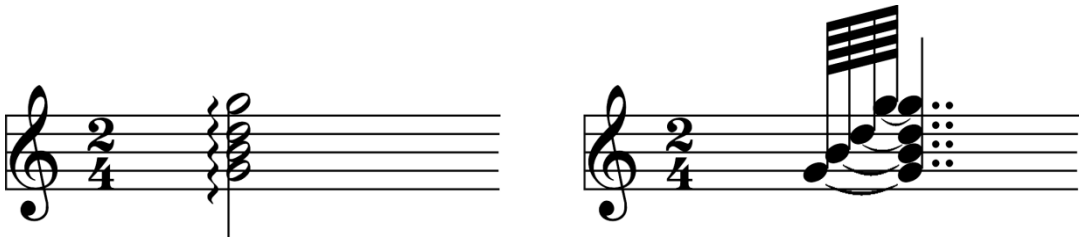
The *'Low Mordent'* (or *'inverted mordent'*) is the opposite of the above and alternates between the written note and the next note below in the scale as shown below.



Both the high and low mordents are mainly found in classical music and rarely in any other type.

Arpeggio

The *'Arpeggio'* symbol mustn't get confused with the arpeggio exercises which we briefly dealt with previously, although the term basically has the same meaning - *'broken chord'!*



The notes should be played from the bottom in sequence, sustaining each note as they are played. This is how it would be played on a harp which is where the word originates from!

Yamaha YC-88 Stage Piano - 88 Keys

This superb keyboard is similar to the CP88, but with more emphasis on organs and synths in addition to the piano. Available with 61, 73 or 88 keys. Stunning!

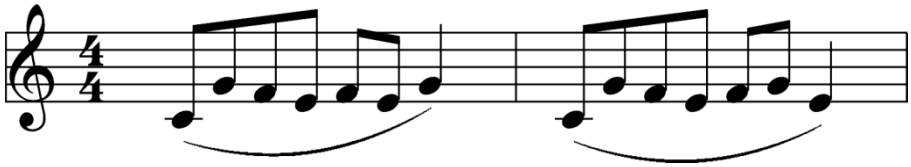
Phrase Marks

'Phrase Marks' are used to join short musical sections or *'ideas'*.

Phrase Marks

Phrase marks are used to join groups of notes into phrases.

A similar indistinguishable mark is called a *'slur'* and mainly used by bowed or woodwind instruments, but they are still used to mark a *'phrase'*.



But please don't get these confused with *'ties'* (as shown in the rhythm section), which look similar but are ***totally*** different.

Sustain Pedal Symbols

Without doubt the *'sustain'* or *'damper'* pedal is the most used pedal and if you have an electronic keyboard, it may indeed be the only one that you have. Where there are two or three pedals, the damper pedal is always to the right.

Often the damper pedal *'on-off'* symbols are written into the sheet music, or sometimes left to the player's discretion. But care must be taken not to *overuse* it. For instance, if it is not released when the harmony (chord) changes it will not sound good.

Sustain Pedal Symbols

 *Pedal On*

 *Pedal Off*

The *'una corda'* (soft) pedal, found to the left is generally used at the discretion of the musician to increase the timbre of softly played notes. When the *'una corda'* is depressed on an acoustic piano the hammer which normally strikes three strings for each note, only strikes one of them which makes the sound softer and also alters the tone somewhat.

But this pedal shouldn't be used as an alternative to *natural* dynamics, i.e., you need to learn to strike the keys with a variety of velocities (hard, soft or in-between) as and when required. To become proficient, this is something that you will need work on for many years.

The *'sostenuto pedal'* in the centre, is generally only found on later pianos both acoustic and digital and is again mainly used at the discretion of the musician to sustain certain notes while leaving others unaffected. On some digital pianos this pedal can be assigned to perform various tasks.

Piano Pedals

Damper pedal (sustain) to the right, Una corda (soft) to the left and Sostenuto in the centre.

There are many more symbols and terms that you may need to know in the future, but right now I'm trying to limit these to the minimum so as not to strain your brain any more than necessary.

But, without doubt the most important thing is actual practice on the keyboard. Hopefully, you can manage this for at least 30 minutes once or twice a day. If you can manage more than this, then so much the better!

There are no audio links for this chapter.

Putting it all Together

Ok so let's look at a summary of what we've done so far:

- 5 finger exercises and the tapping exercises (don't forget these when you are not near a keyboard)
- Scales - major, minor (harmonic and melodic), chromatic, pentatonic and blues
- Chords - major, minor, diminished and augmented with extensions (**7ths** etc.)
- Arpeggios and broken chords

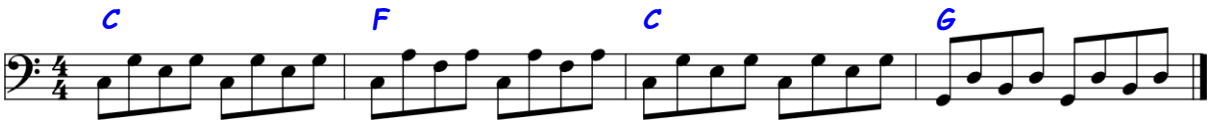
Now I don't suppose for a minute that you've managed to learn all of these yet but try and work through a portion of each section in part 2 according to your ability. If you practice every day as suggested you will become proficient whatever your age or previous ability - *I guarantee it!*

But of course, all the exercises and scales that I'm getting you to practice are only tools to improve your understanding and technique and are a means to an end to playing real compositions - or perhaps even creating your own or maybe for improvisation.

The scales and other exercises were originally created by the old masters in order to give equal practice to both hands. But generally, each hand will have a different purpose determined by:

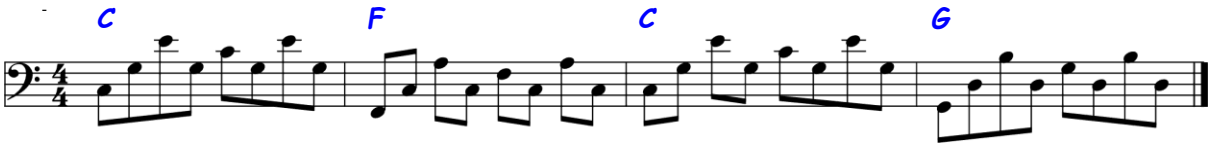
- The style of playing (classical, jazz pop etc.)
- Whether or not you are soloing
- Whether you are accompanying a singer
- Whether or not you are playing with a band
- Whether or not you are using auto accompaniment

When playing solo, broken chords and arpeggios are often used as left-hand accompaniment to the right-hand melody. Following are a couple of very different examples of this. Remember that we are using the bass clef here!



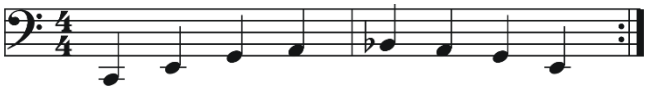
Notice in the first example (above) that the broken chords are: **C major** root position followed by **F major** second inversion and **G major** root position and are all very

'close' as against the next example (below) which uses the same chords in a *'wider'* span. The former is seen often in classical music and the latter in more modern music.

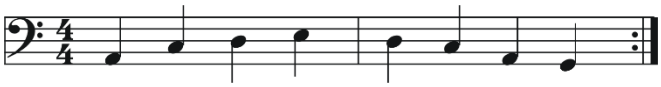


As always there are numerous variations of both of these.

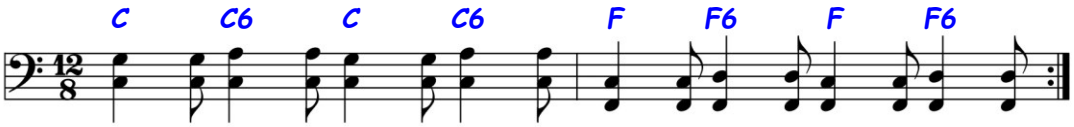
Other very common left-hand passages include the '*walking bass'* patterns as shown below (over a **C7** chord).



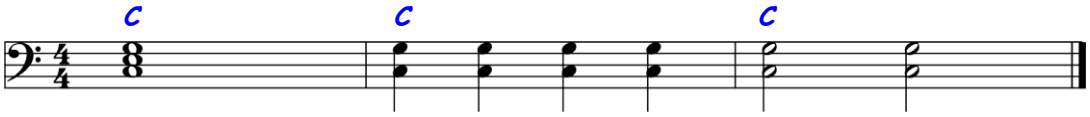
Or a pentatonic minor pattern (**A minor**) below:



And one of the many *'boogie-woogie'* style riffs as shown in the next example (over **C / C6** and **F / F6** chords), usually used in the **12-bar blues** sequence.



But initially you may want to keep things as simple as possible in the left hand particularly if your right hand is *'busy'*. This can be as simple as a sustained triad on the first beat of the bar or a repeated tonic and fifth on each beat or every other beat as shown below.

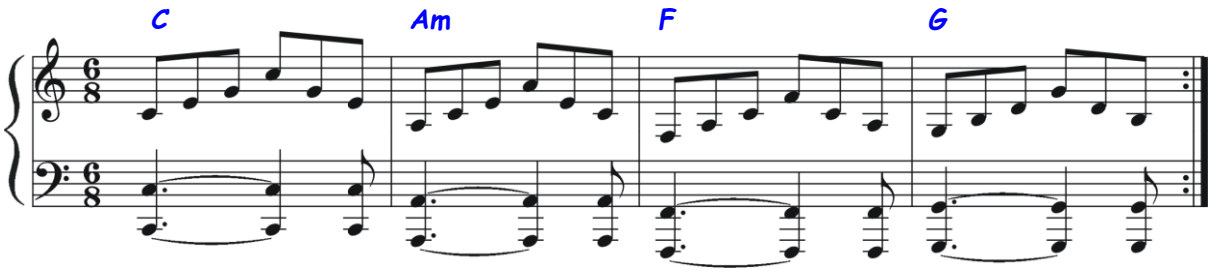


"Dope never helped anybody sing better or play music better or do anything better. All dope can do for you is kill you - and kill you the long, slow, hard way."

Billie Holiday - (Blues Legend)

Comment: - Don't learn this the hard way!

If accompanying a singer or playing with a band, it's likely that your right hand would be playing chords / arpeggios and other embellishments while your left hand compliments these by playing octaves or 10ths (if you have big enough hands).



If using the auto accompaniment feature with the keyboard split, simply play the appropriate chords with your left hand in this section and the melody with your right hand in the upper section, which in most cases is much easier. But as stated earlier for your greatest fulfilment, learn to work both with and without the auto accompaniment.

The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/putting_together.html or click in the graphics.

Yamaha Piaggero - 76 Keys

Great little low-priced starter piano. No frills or auto-accompaniment, just 76 full size keys and some descent piano sounds. Ideal for a beginner!

Yamaha P515 Stage Piano- 88 Keys

This is an excellent choice of stage pianos, which has the Natural Wood (NWX) keybed as well as a 16-track midi recorder!

Your First Tunes

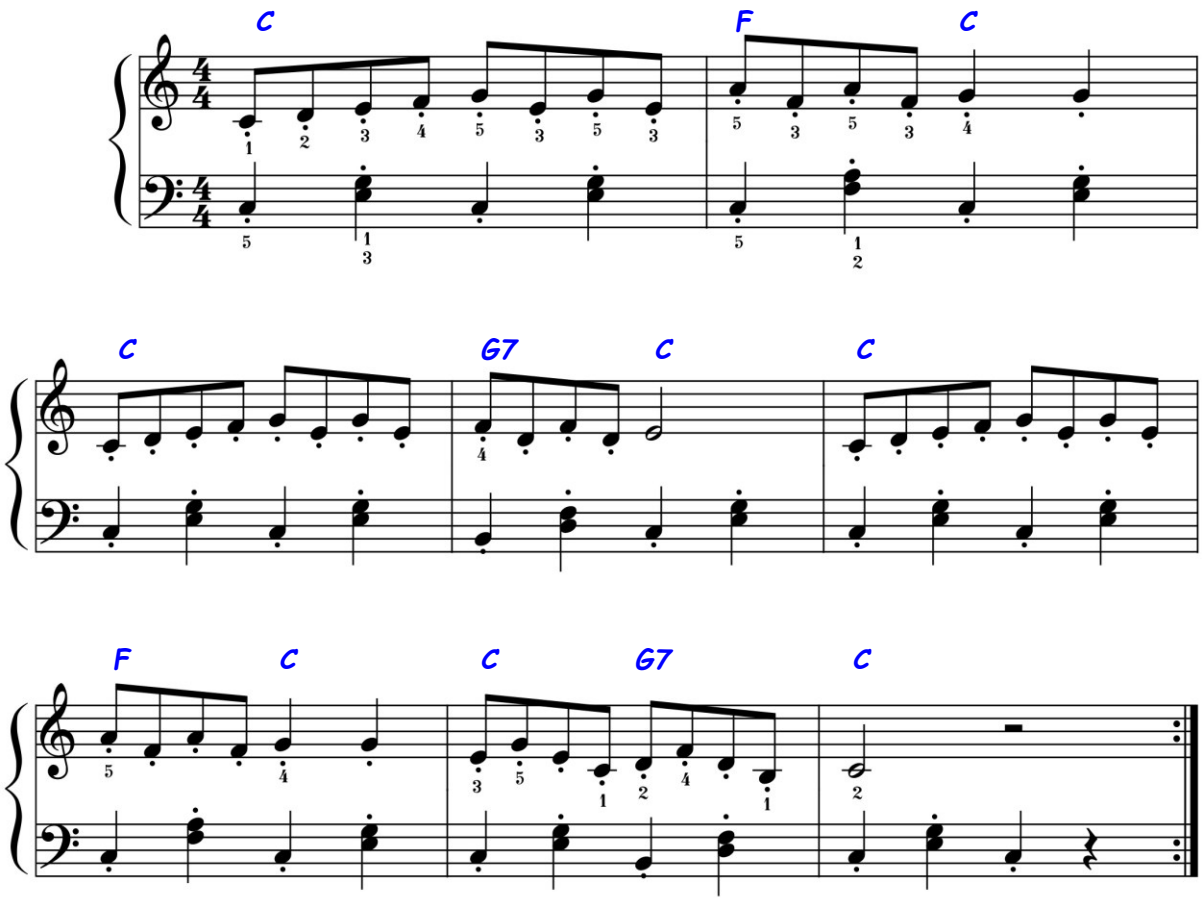
Ok so now we'll put your practice into *practice* and start playing some real tunes.

You might find the first few tunes a bit *'naff'* but please practice them anyway as it's all for a purpose. And it's a good idea to start with something that you are capable of playing, which these will be.

If you've managed to do the initial 5 finger exercises, our first three pieces should prove no problem to you as they require no finger crossovers as in the scales. Even still you may need to learn these one hand at a time, bar by bar at a speed that suites your playing and reading ability. As always remember that speed is not important, but accuracy and fluency is!

In all cases I feel that it's important to be aware of which chords are being played; something that I was never taught initially. In our first piece ***'The Jolly Farmer'*** you may notice that the left-hand part forms the *'split chords'* which are **C major (I)**, **F major (IV)** - second inversion, and **G7 (V7)**, (the **7th** being the **'F'** played in the right hand). Notice also that the right-hand melody follows these chords.

The Jolly Farmer



This piece should be played *'joyfully'* and mainly staccato as indicated by the dots above / below many of the notes. Also, please notice the *'loop'* symbols seen in most of these pieces indicating that the sections effected should be repeated.

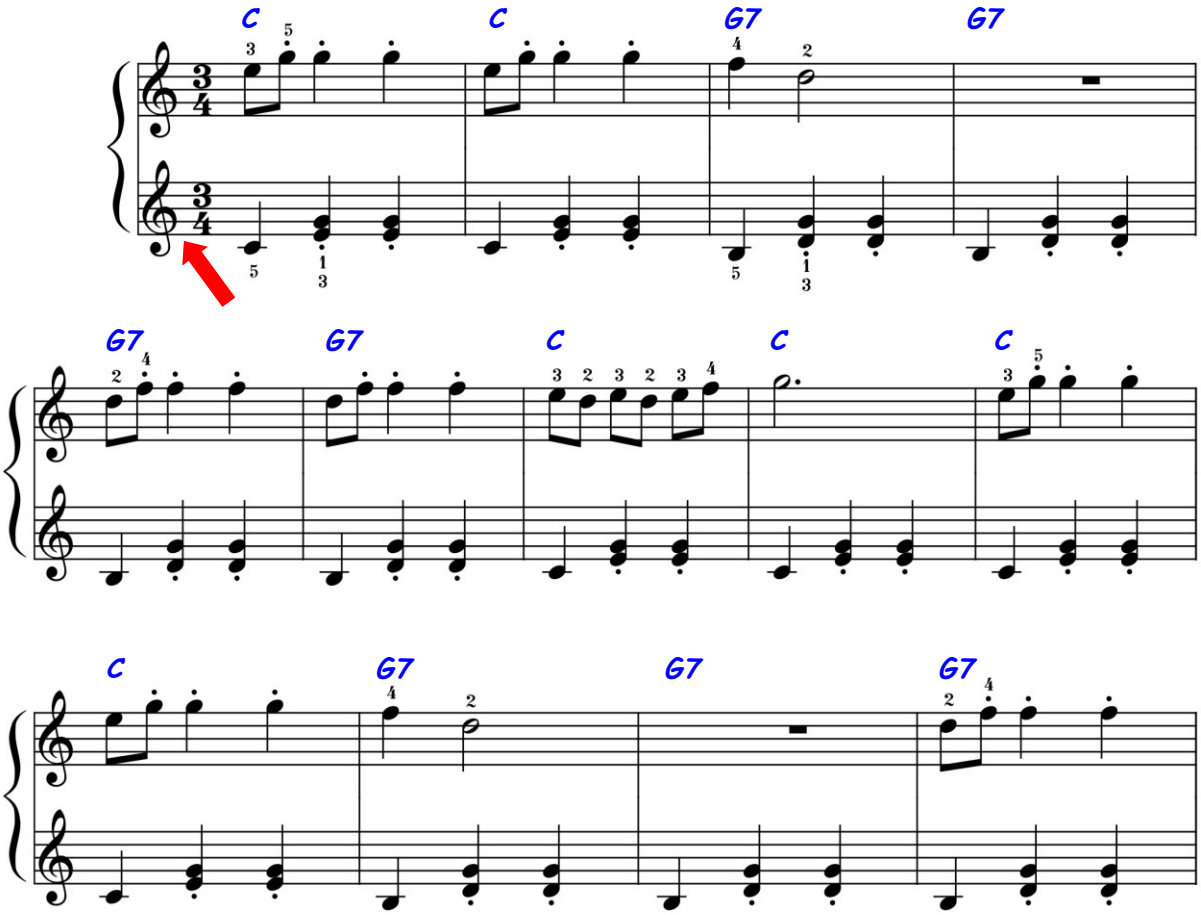
Now there's also a little story that goes with these first three pieces - just to make it a little more exciting!

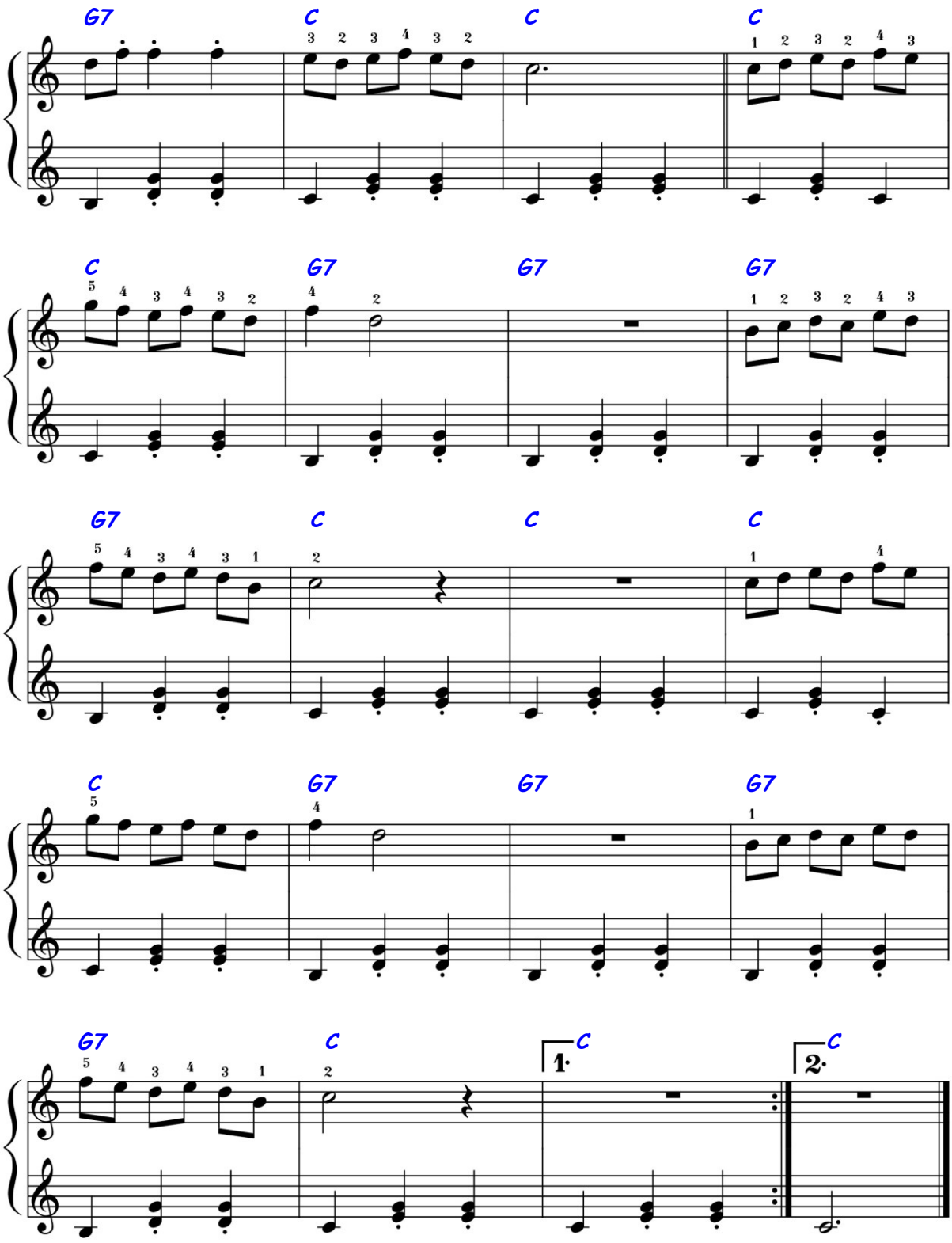
The Jolly Farmer went into the jolly cowshed to check on his *'jolly udders'* and was met by the Jolly Milkmaid who asked the Jolly Farmer if he'd like *play* with her in the Jolly Haystack. The Jolly Farmer thought long and hard - for about a quarter of a second and decided that it might be *nice* to *play* with the Jolly Milkmaid in the Jolly Haystack so he agreed and off they jolly well went!

This brings us to our next piece the ***'Jolly Milkmaid'*** which should be played *'teasingly'* and with *'passion!'* You may notice that this piece only has 2 chords **C (I)** and **G7 (V7)** - first inversion and is in **3/4** time.

Very importantly, also notice that the **left hand of this piece is in the treble clef!**

The Jolly Milkmaid





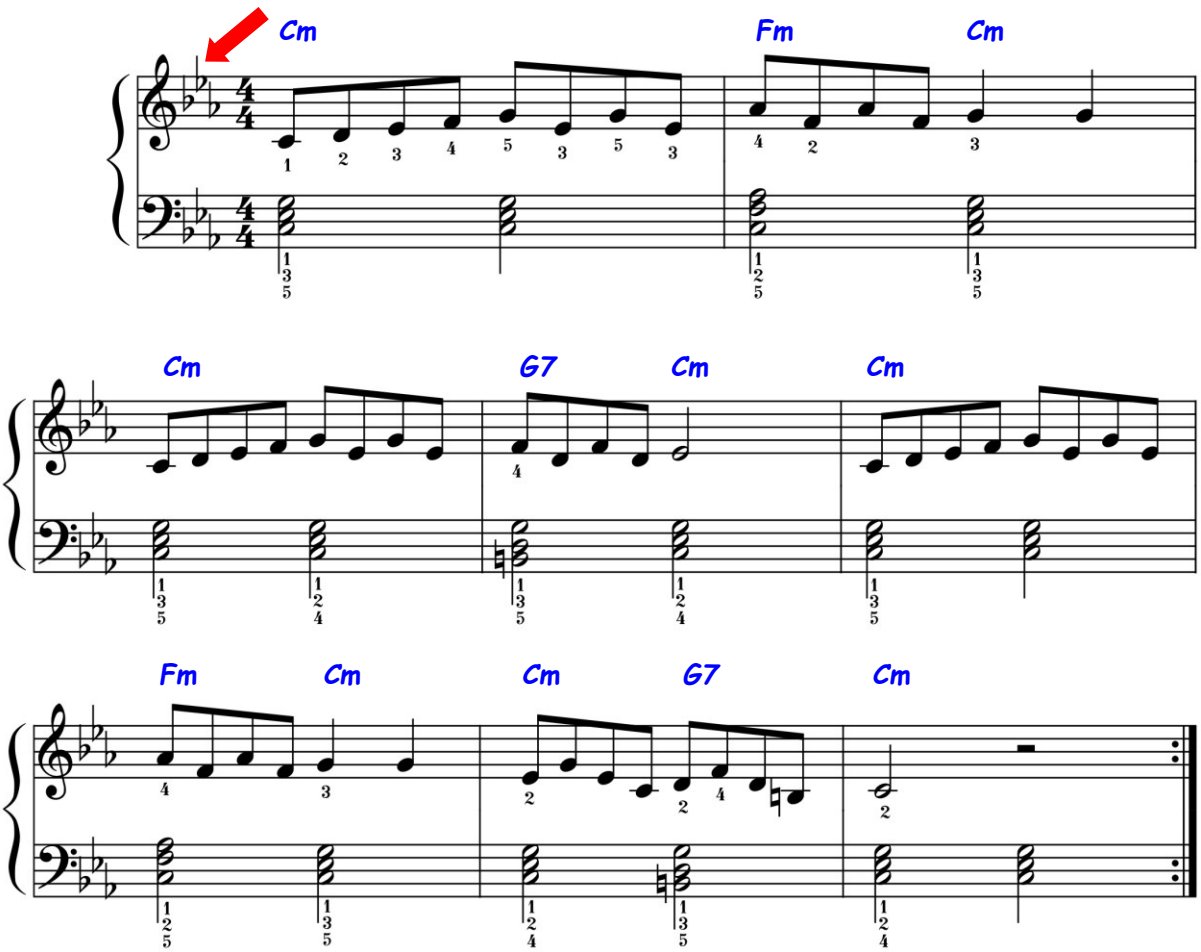
Now not long after the Jolly Farmer and the Jolly Milkmaid started *'playing'* in the Jolly Haystack who should come along but the Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife!

The Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife was not happy about the Jolly Farmer *'playing'* in the Jolly Haystack with the Jolly Milkmaid - I wonder why? Maybe she wanted to *'play'* too!

This brings us to our third piece ***'The Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife'*** which should be played *'slowly'*, *'angrily'* and *'heavily'*.

The theme in this piece is in fact exactly the same as ***'The Jolly Farmer'*** but the key has been changed to **C minor** (which remember is the relative minor to **E flat major**) introducing the **E flat** and the **A flat** which changes the chords used to **C *minor* (i)**, and **F *minor* (iv)** while retaining the **G7 (V7)**. These chords should be played heavily and in full, thereby creating a completely different feel from the broken chords used previously. You'll not fail to notice how changing to the minor key alters the piece dramatically, which is a technique regularly used in classical music.

The Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife



Also notice the *key signature* at the beginning of each line (**B flat**, **A flat** and **E flat**) indicating that all these notes should be flattened unless stated otherwise. *But* as the key is **C minor** and not **E flat major**, the **'B**'s' are *naturalised* - as indicated. This is because

'B natural' is the leading note (**7th**) note of the **C minor** harmonic scale - this scale is shown in part 2 along with all the others!

Now back to the story. - Just before the Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife got to the Jolly Haystack (clutching her jolly battle axe), Sam the Jolly Battering Ram came charging out (he was also playing in the Jolly Haystack) and *butted* the Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife down the Jolly Well. But don't worry she's alright - just a bit wet and even less jolly than before!

So briefly while the Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife was down the Jolly Well - all was *well* with the Jolly Farmer and the Jolly Milkmaid and Sam the Jolly Battering Ram (Heaven forbid) in the Jolly Haystack. That was until the Not So Jolly Farmer's Wife managed to climb out of the Jolly Well with the aid of her Jolly Broomstick. This was when the sharps and flats really started flying, but to be honest you're not quite ready for this yet, and neither am I, so we'll leave things as they are and move onto our next piece.

Our next two pieces are by Carl Czerny an Austrian composer who was famous for his technique studies. If you've successfully managed the first few 5 finger exercises *and* the **C major** scale, you should have no difficulty in playing the first of these pieces.

Both of these pieces are in **C major** and very much based around the **C major** scale and therefore require finger crossovers as shown in the fingering. The left-hand chords are **C major**, **F major** and **G7 (I, IV & V7)** using various inversions. Make sure that you are aware of which chords (and inversions) that you are playing - and this will lead to a proper understanding and make them easier to play.

Notice that both hands again use the *treble* clef in each of the Czerny pieces.

Although intended as a piano exercise, the left hand in the first piece is typical of what you would be doing with your left hand if using auto accompaniment - simply sustaining chords.

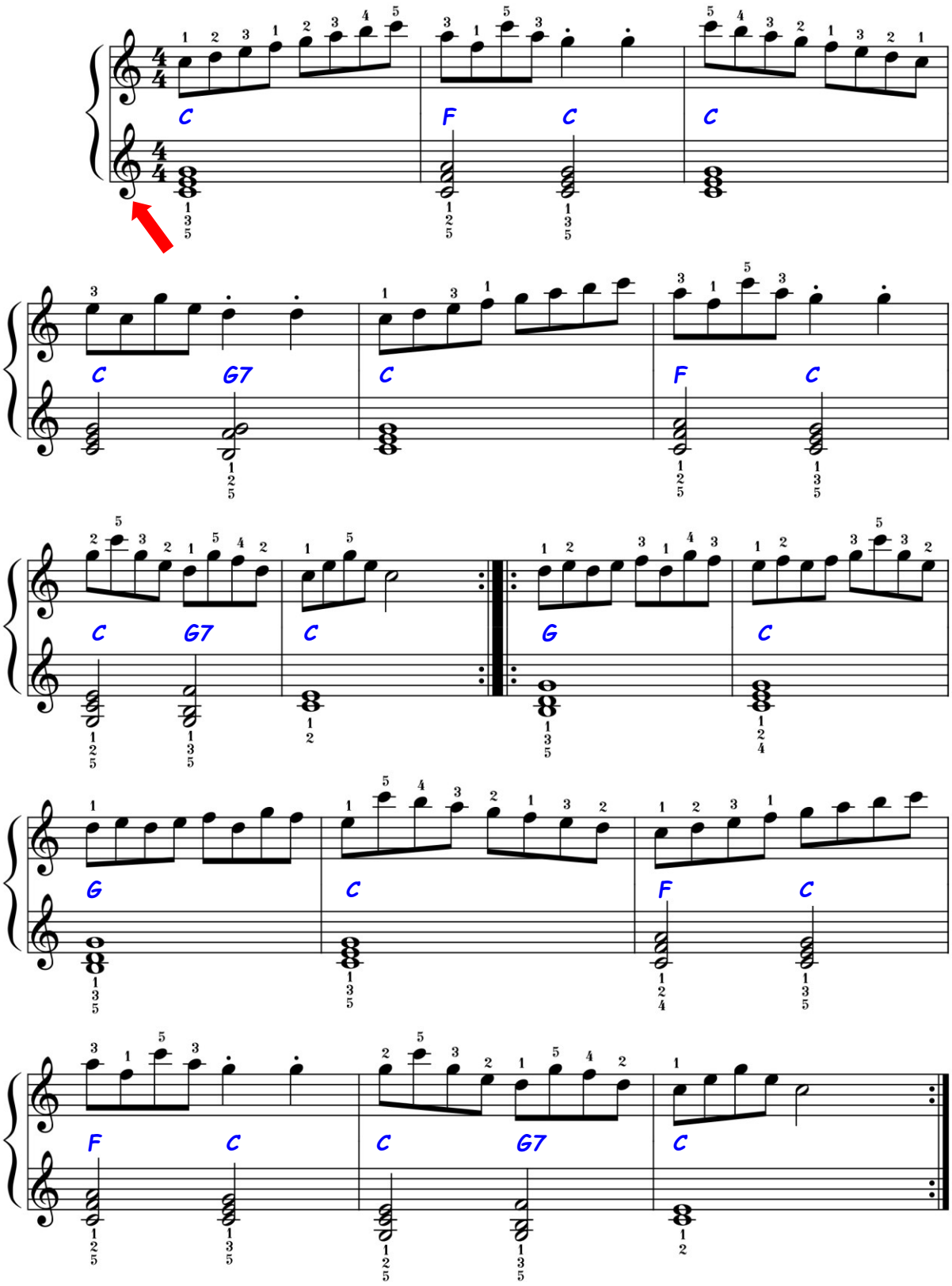
The second Czerny piece although still in **C major** and using the same three chords as before is more difficult than the first piece as the left hand is more active. However, when you look closely you will see that this consists of nothing but the broken chords in various inversions and is much easier to play when you understand *what* you are playing! *Remember, just learn it note by note, bar by bar slowly and you'll get it!*

One downside to learning the piano is that it can make you *fat!*
With this in mind here's a great bit of nutritional advice from an acclaimed expert: -

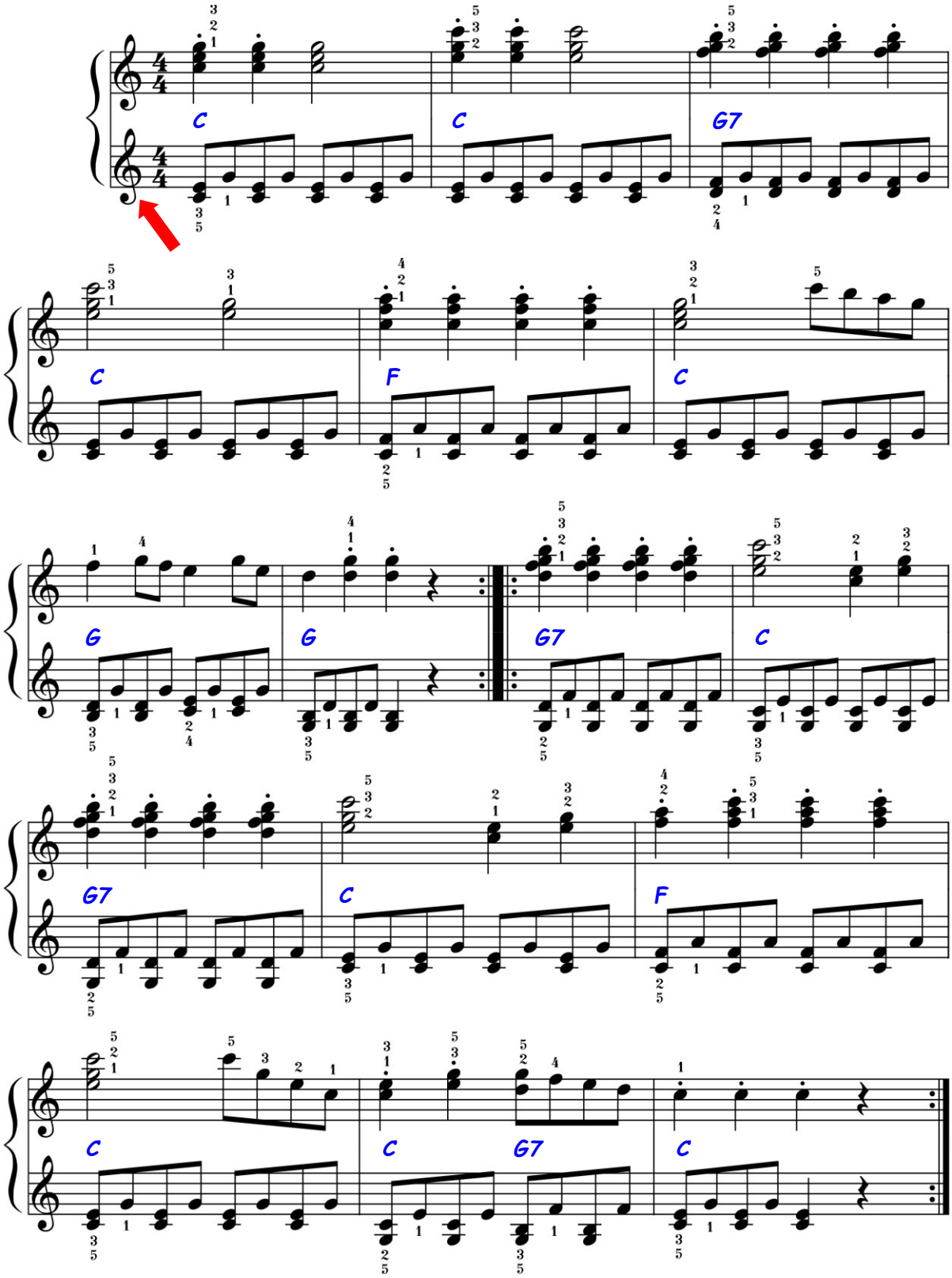
"Never eat more than you can lift!"

Miss Piggy (the Muppets)

Carl Czerny Piece 1



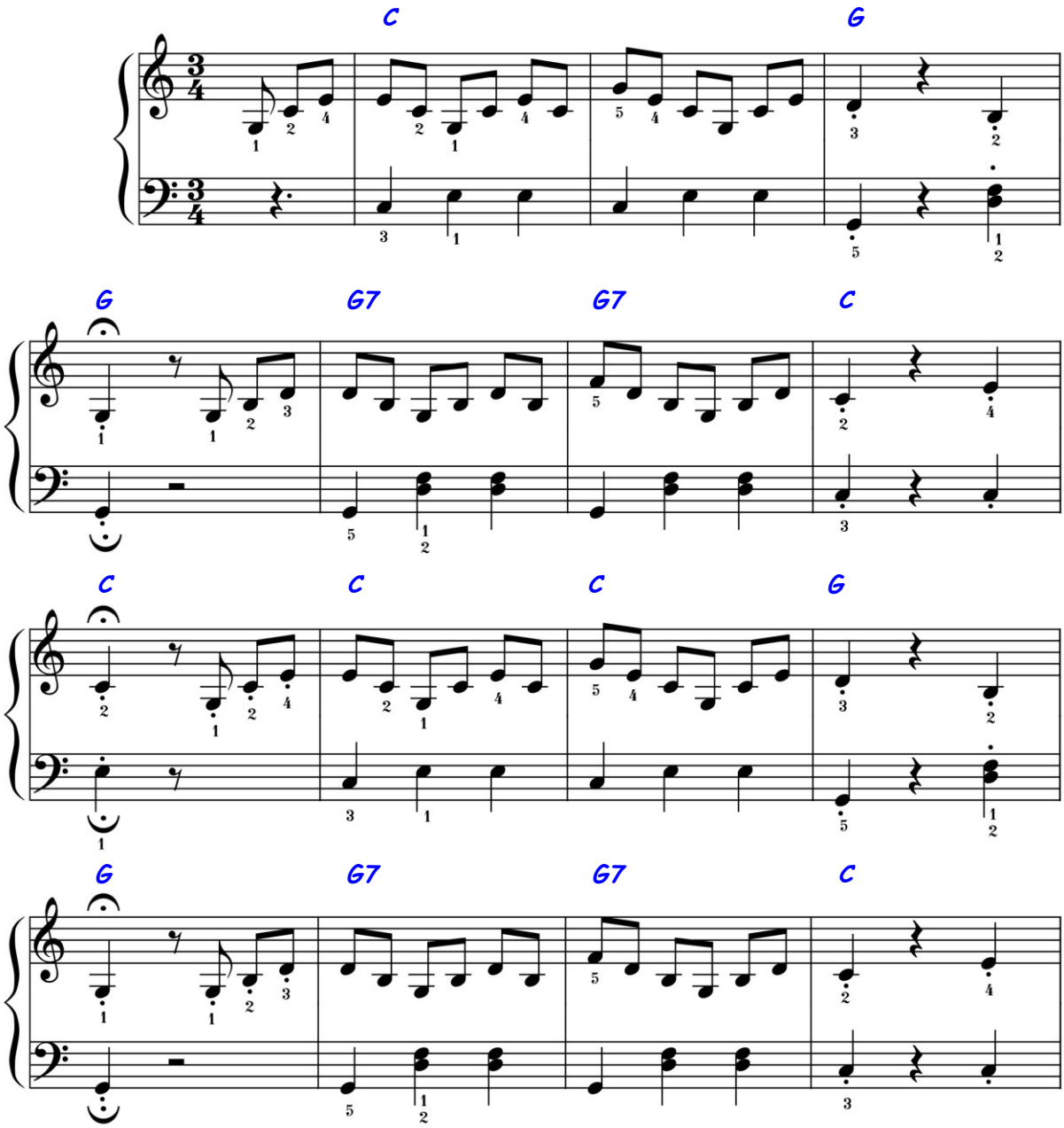
Carl Czerny Piece 2

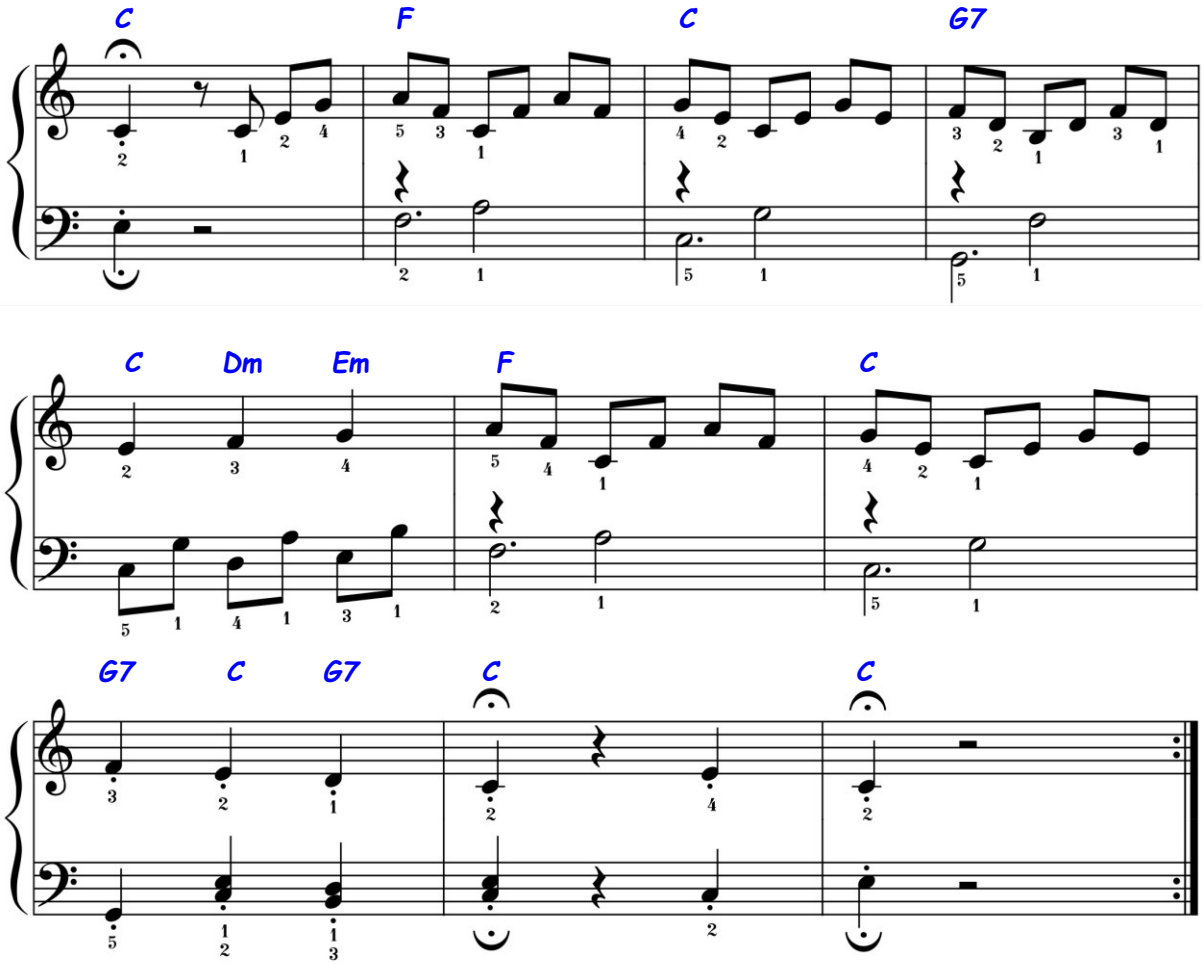


The Clown Waltz

For this next little piece, you've got to think *'clowns'* - tripping over one another's big feet - hence the pauses. Please also notice that the melody and left-hand in this piece follows the chords exactly with no passing notes. In fact, the melody is really only arpeggios. Also watch out for that low **'G'** in the right hand - not difficult at all once you know it's there!

You may notice that there are dotted minims with a crotchet rest above in the last few bars, followed by a minim which of course doesn't compute to the bar length. This is because the dotted minim is held for all three beats and the normal minim starts on the second beat - *hence the rest on the first beat!*



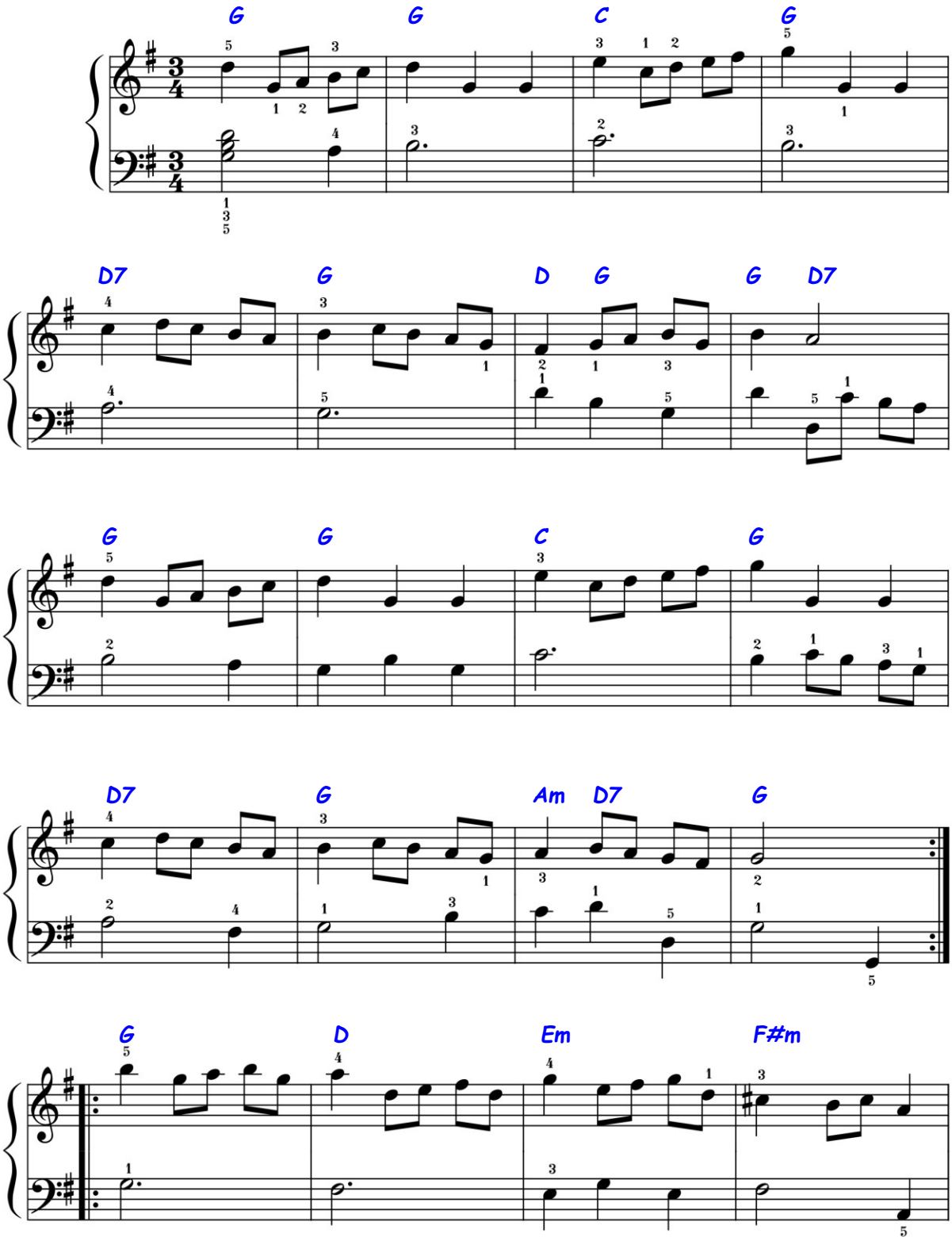


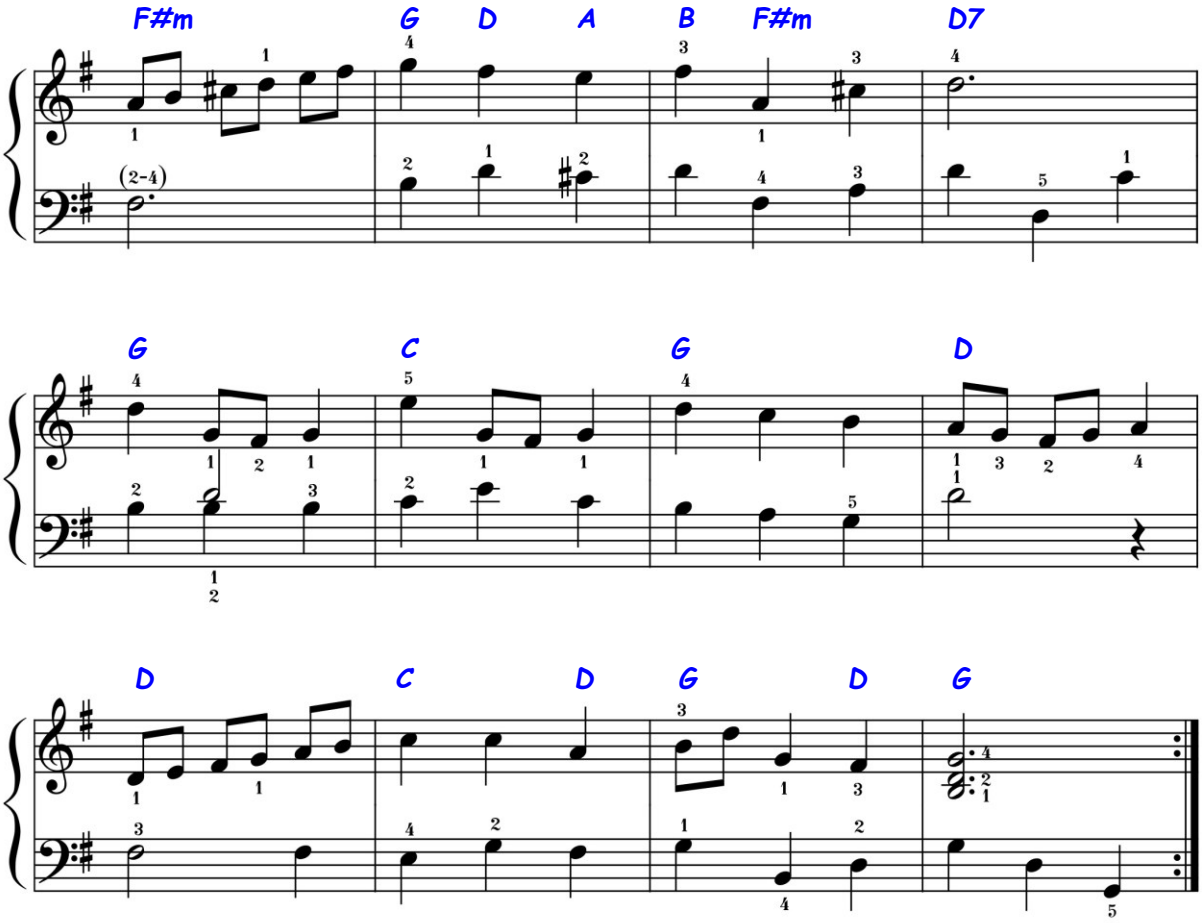
Clavia Nord Piano 5 - 88 Keys

Clavia Nord arguably make some of the very best stage pianos.
I have to agree that they sound and feel superb but can be pricey!
But don't get them mixed up as there's lots of different models that look similar:
- the piano, the stage, the electro and the synth - all great but different keyboards.

Minuet - J.S Bach

This next piece in **G major** is perhaps a little more complicated but after some practice I'm sure you will find it very simple. Start by learning both hands separately - then piece it together with both hands bar by bar.





"It's easy to play any musical instrument: all you have to do is touch the right key at the right time and the instrument will play itself."

Johann Sebastian Bach

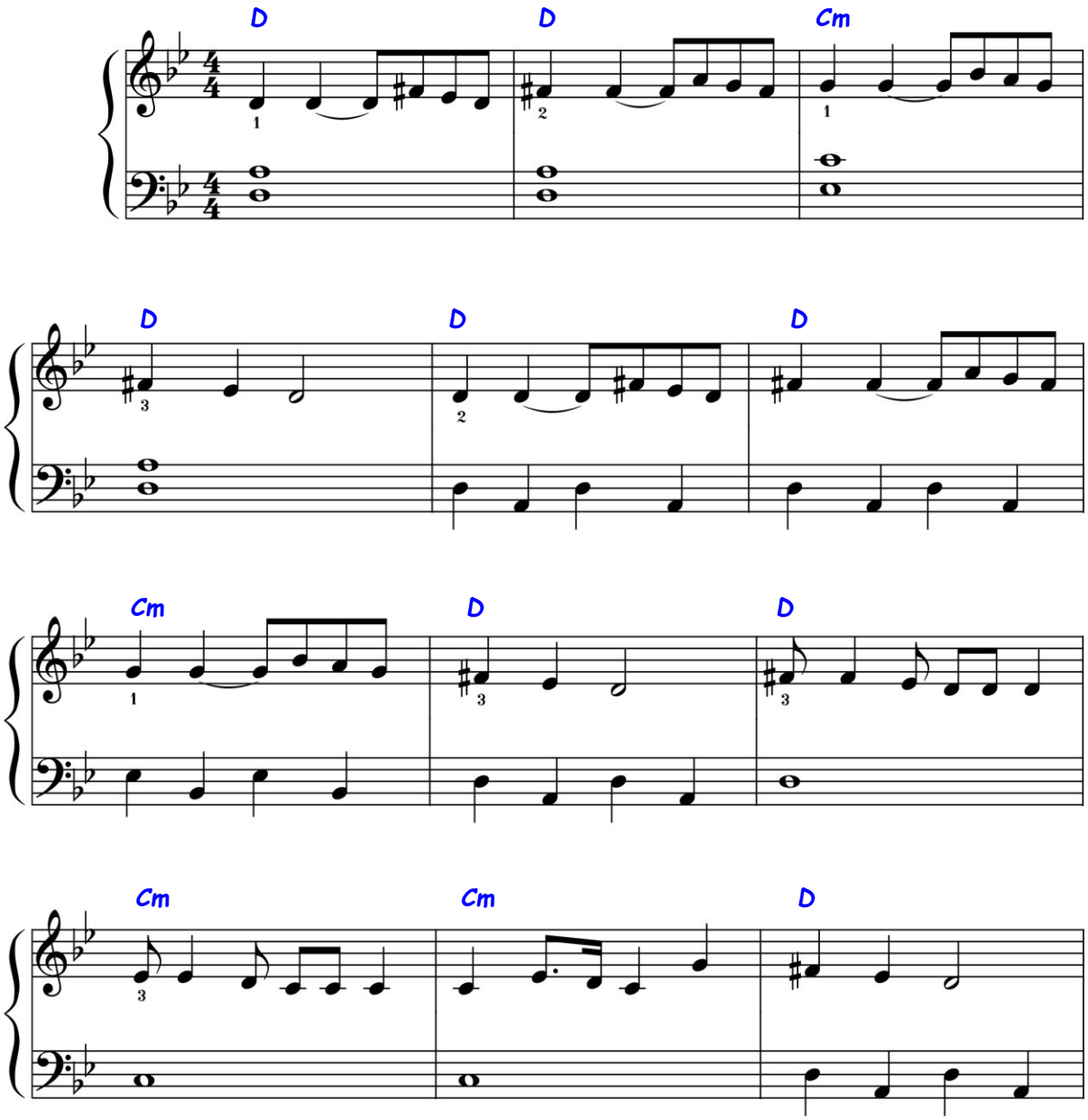
Comment: - I bet a few struggling beginners would like to kick him in the nuts for saying that!

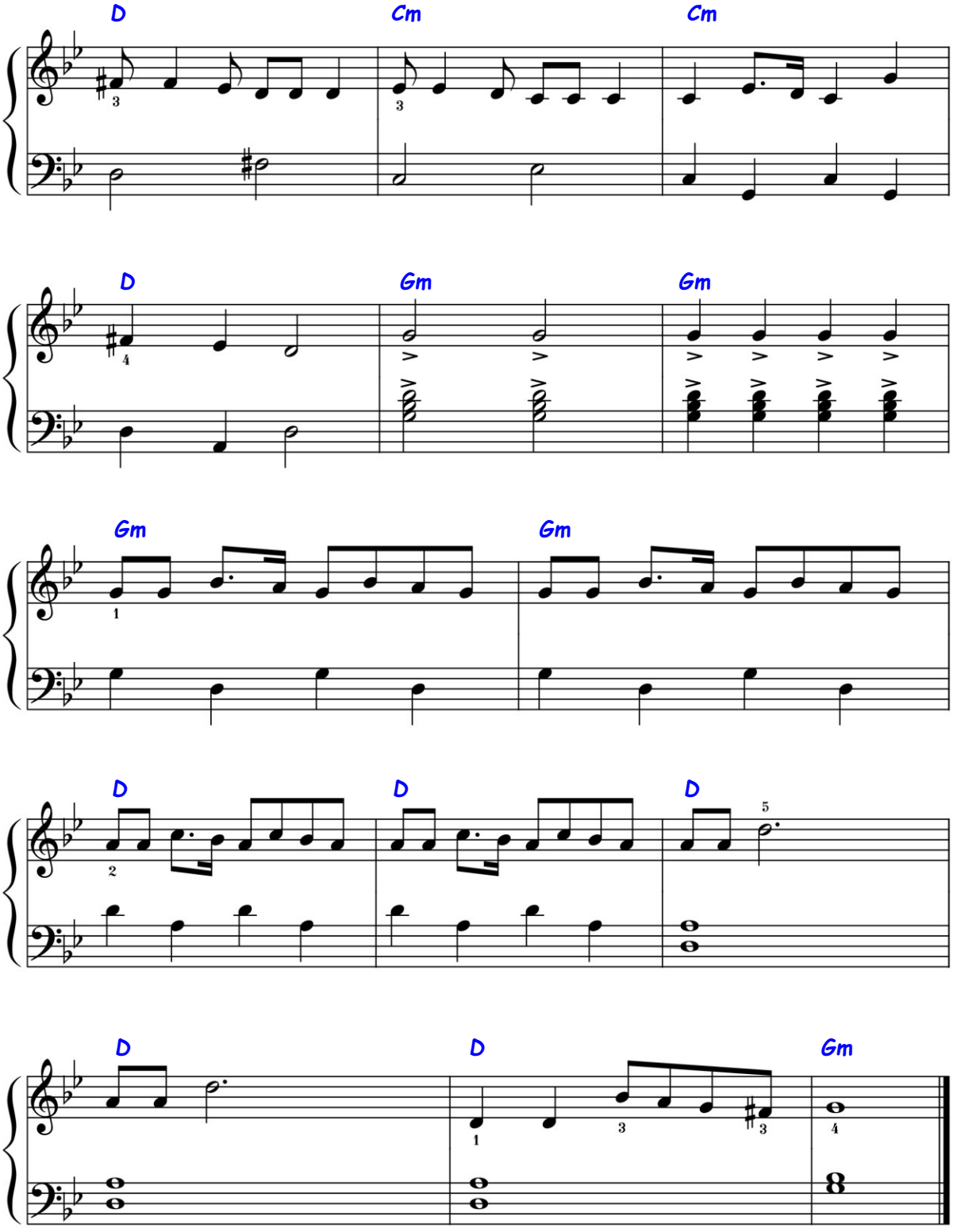
Yamaha Genos Arranger - 76 Keys

Without doubt this is a beast! Yamahas flagship arranger. If you're going to spend this kind of money, you need to also look at the Korg Pa5X.

Hava Nagila

This next piece is a traditional Jewish folk song, virtually always sung at Jewish weddings and bar mitzvah celebrations. It was also recorded as an instrumental back in the early 1960's by *'The Shadows'* and *'The Spotnicks'* and played by just about every local band. It's also a very easy, fun piano piece. But notice that this is in **G minor**.

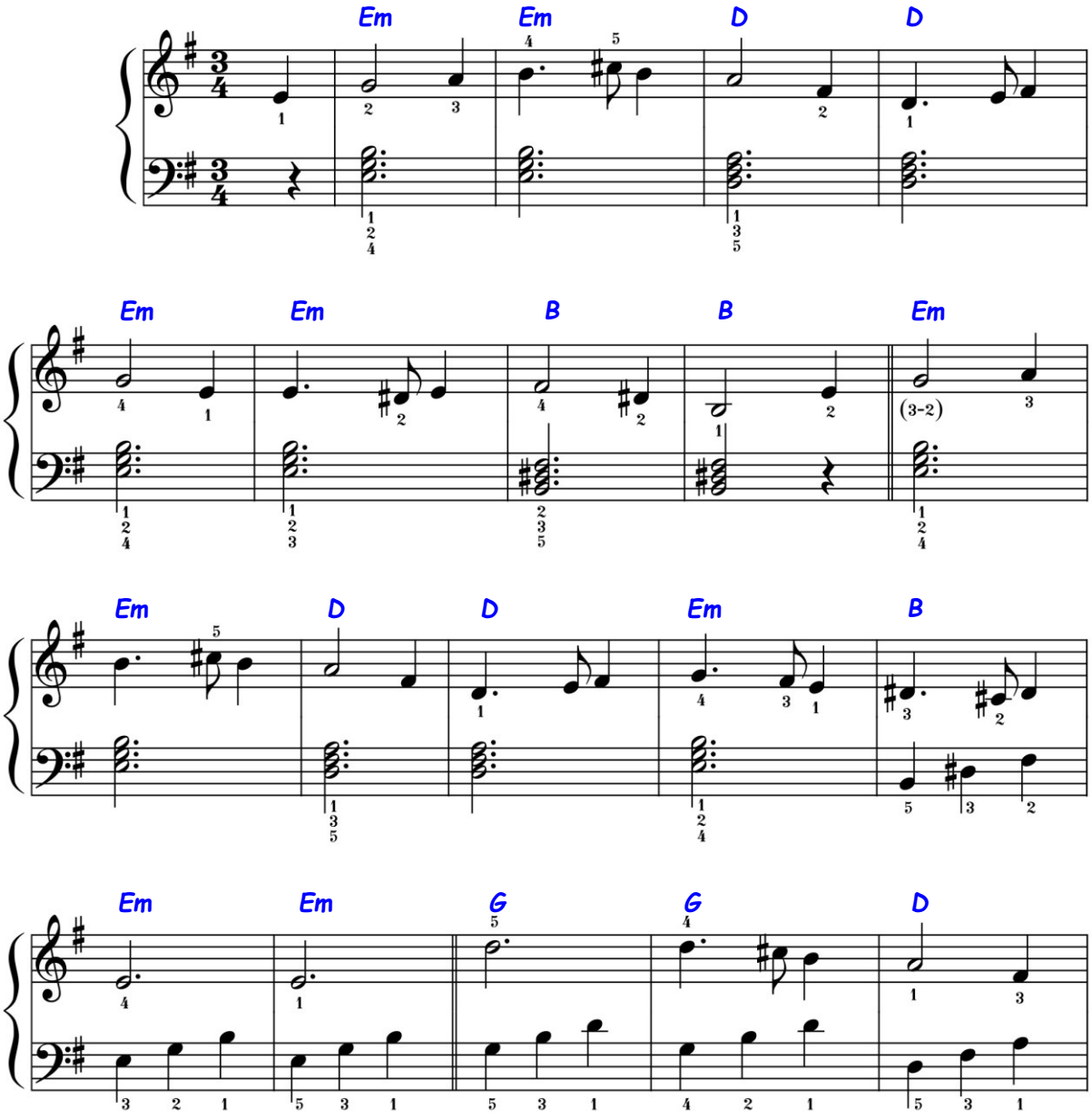


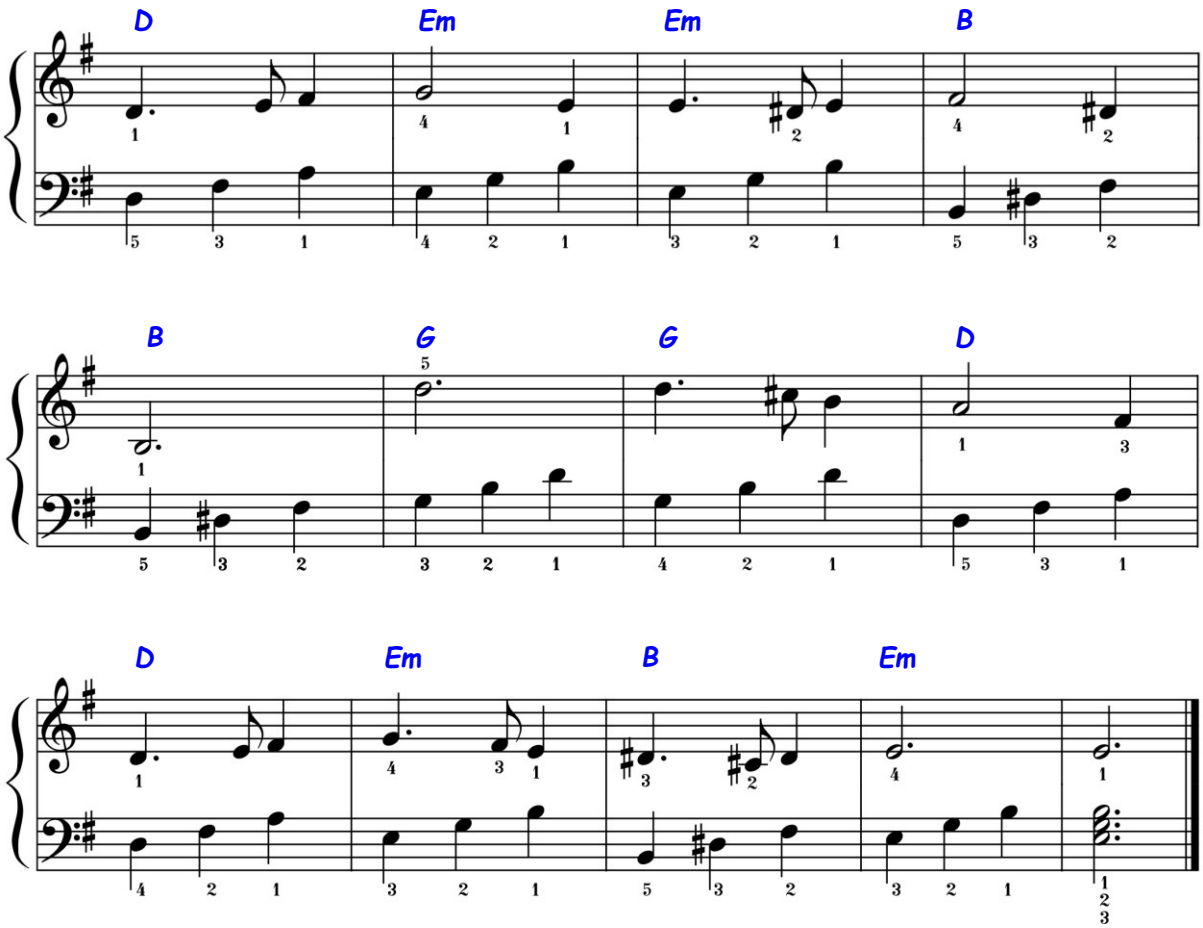


Greensleeves

We briefly featured this piece earlier in the *'Keys and Key Signature'* chapter which showed that this is in **E minor** (due to the **D#** and **C#**). Other chords used are **D major**, **B major** and **G major**. These can all easily be identified in the left hand. Notice how I've changed the left-hand chords to arpeggios from *bar 15*. And if you are aware of what the chords are, the piece (and every other piece) will be much easier to read and play! I particularly like this piece as it's ideal for jazzing up and playing in many ways.

This piece is a classic example of the *'Dorian mode on E',* but please don't be concerned if you don't understand this.





Sustain Pedal

I haven't included any pedal references to any of these pieces herein, but now that you have started to gain a little experience, you may wish to use the sustain pedal sparingly as you see fit. The chord line above the staff gives a good clue as to when the pedal should be applied and released. *Generally,* the pedal can be applied / released at every chord change and not used at all when there are several chord changes in a bar. But for classical pieces, *always* follow the instructions in the notation.

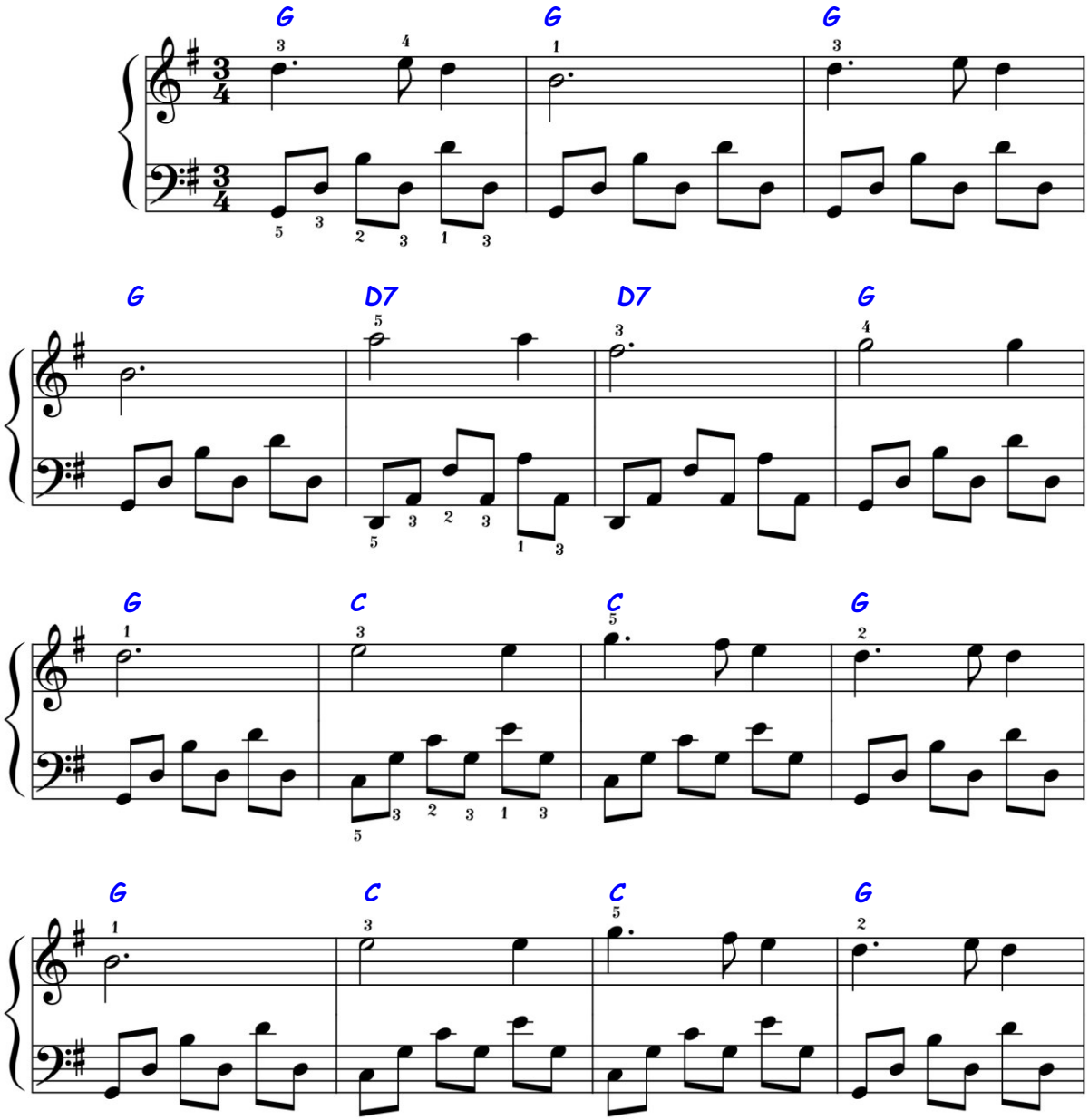
Casio CT S1000V - 61 keys

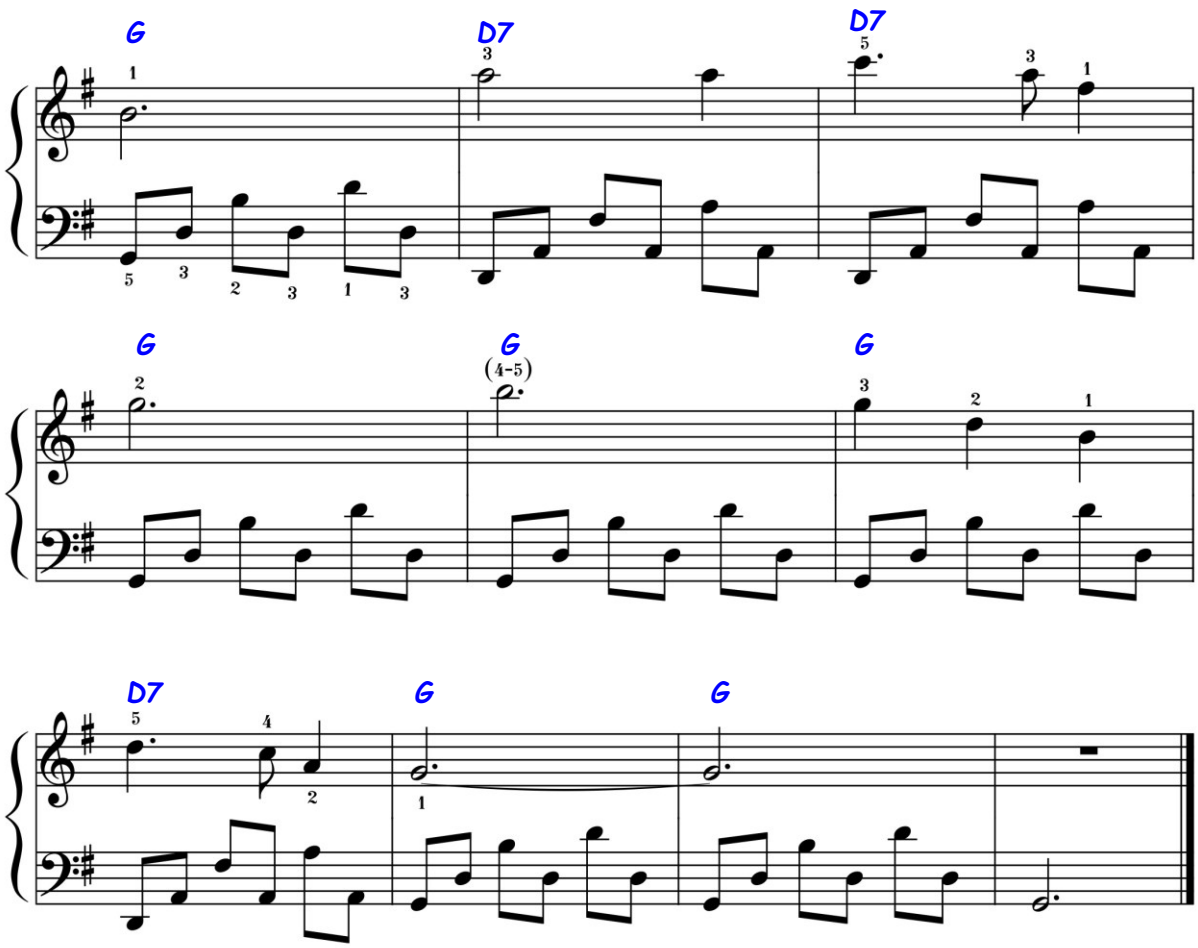
Here's a great little starter arranger with loads of sounds and features!

Silent Night

Personally, I'm not into hymns; I think that most are unbelievably boring - *although I do believe in God!*

But out of all the hymns that I've heard, I think that Christmas Carols are by far the best. And for me the one that stands out above the rest is this one - a truly magnificent composition and so simple - still based around the most basic three chords (**I**, **IV** and **V7**). The music was written (originally for guitar) by Austrian headmaster Franz Xaver Gruber in 1818 to the words written by priest Joseph Mohr two years previously and was first performed on Christmas eve 1818 in the Church of ***St. Nicholas,*** Oberndorf, Austria. - *Thank you, Wikipedia!*





This is in fact a very simple arrangement and playing it as written should give you some enjoyment. But it can also be embellished on easily by playing a repeat and using thirds or octaves in the right hand, although this will probably be a little too advanced for you right now.

At first glance, you may think that the left hand is incredibly complicated, but I assure you that it's not. It's just a series of broken chords / arpeggios as shown in the last chapter. And these are used again in my own tunes, ***'Falora'*** and ***'Flo'*** - shown shortly. Using the damper pedal sparingly on these three pieces to hold the arpeggios together is necessary.

Even on pieces where the chords are not shown, they can easily be identified from the arpeggios, which is very useful to know.

Note there is a very easy arrangement of *'Silent Night'* in one of the free downloadable tune books which you'll see details of later!

"Yabba Dabba Doo!"

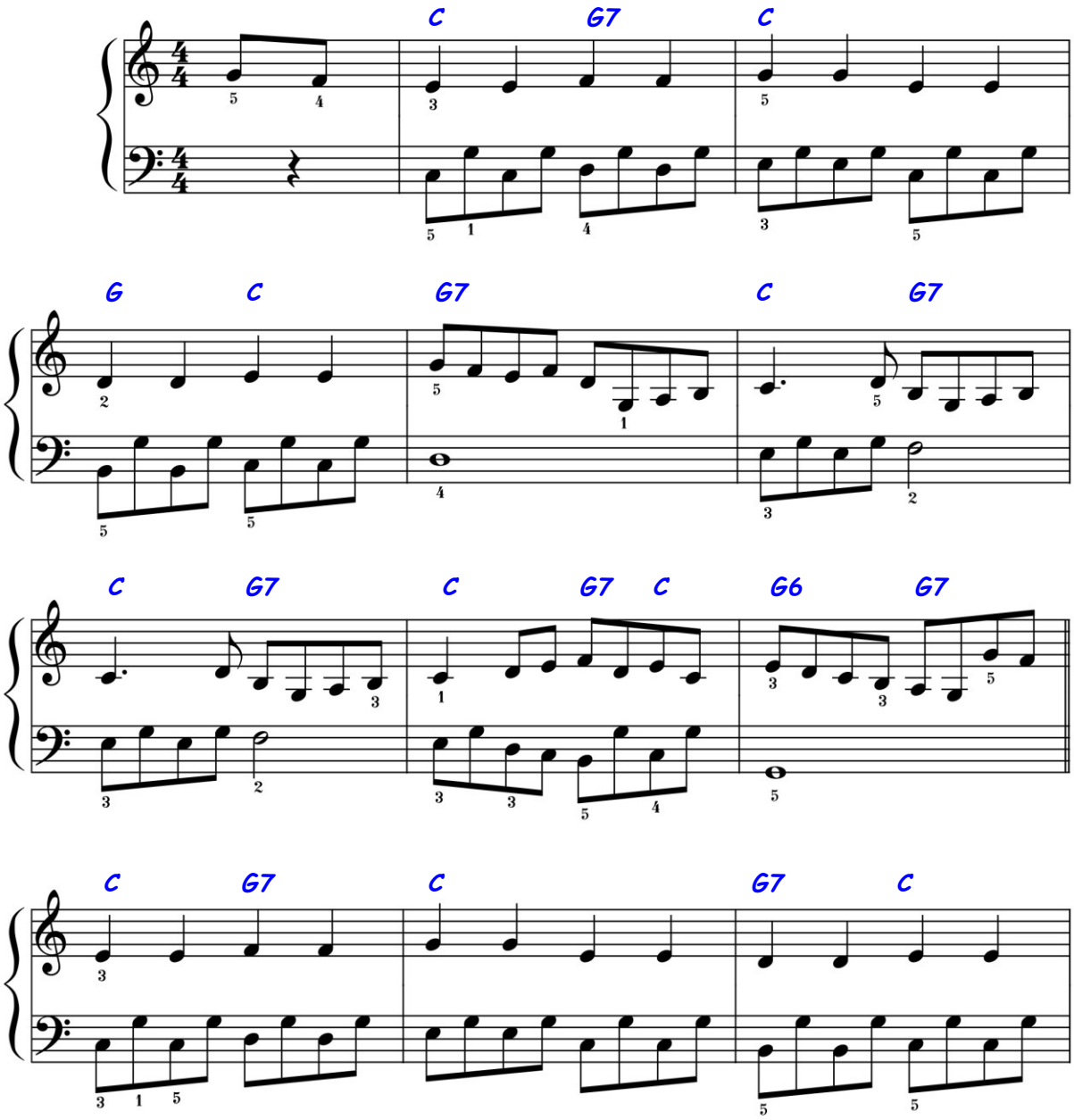
Fred Flintstone - (Early Rock Star)

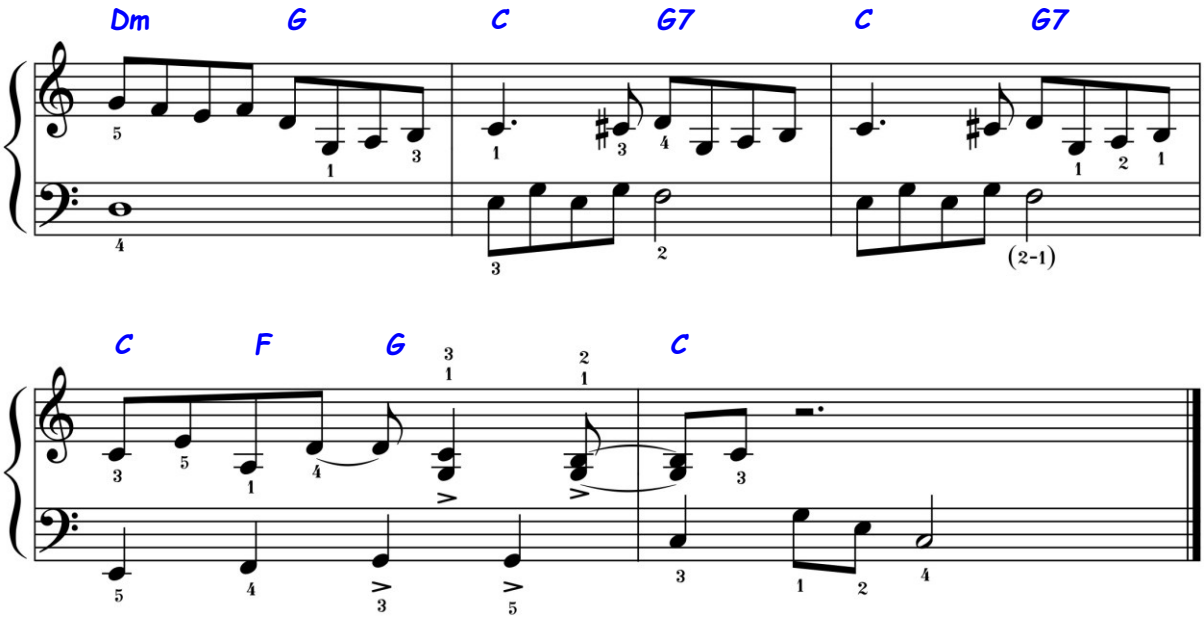
Comment: - Shout this every morning when you wake up and you'll always be happy!

Tales of the Riverbank

If you're an ancient old git like me you'll remember the 1960's TV series ***'Tales of the Riverbank'*** where real animals played the parts of Hammy the Hamster, Roderick the Rat and G.P. the Guinea Pig narrated by Johnny Morris - *'The Hot Chestnut Man'!*

If you're not quite as ancient you might remember the re-titled version *'Hammy Hamster'* in the 1970's in colour - *yeh, us old gits had to watch stuff in black and white!* Anyway, this is the title music which is correctly named ***'Andante in C major'*** by Italian guitarist / composer Mauro Giuliani (1781-1828).





As the title suggests this is in **C major** and sounds best using a classical guitar sound, but ok with a piano sound as well. The piece is probably an absolute bitch to play on a guitar but is relatively simple to play on the keyboard and very satisfying as it's a great little tune, especially if you're a *'Hammy the Hamster'* fan!

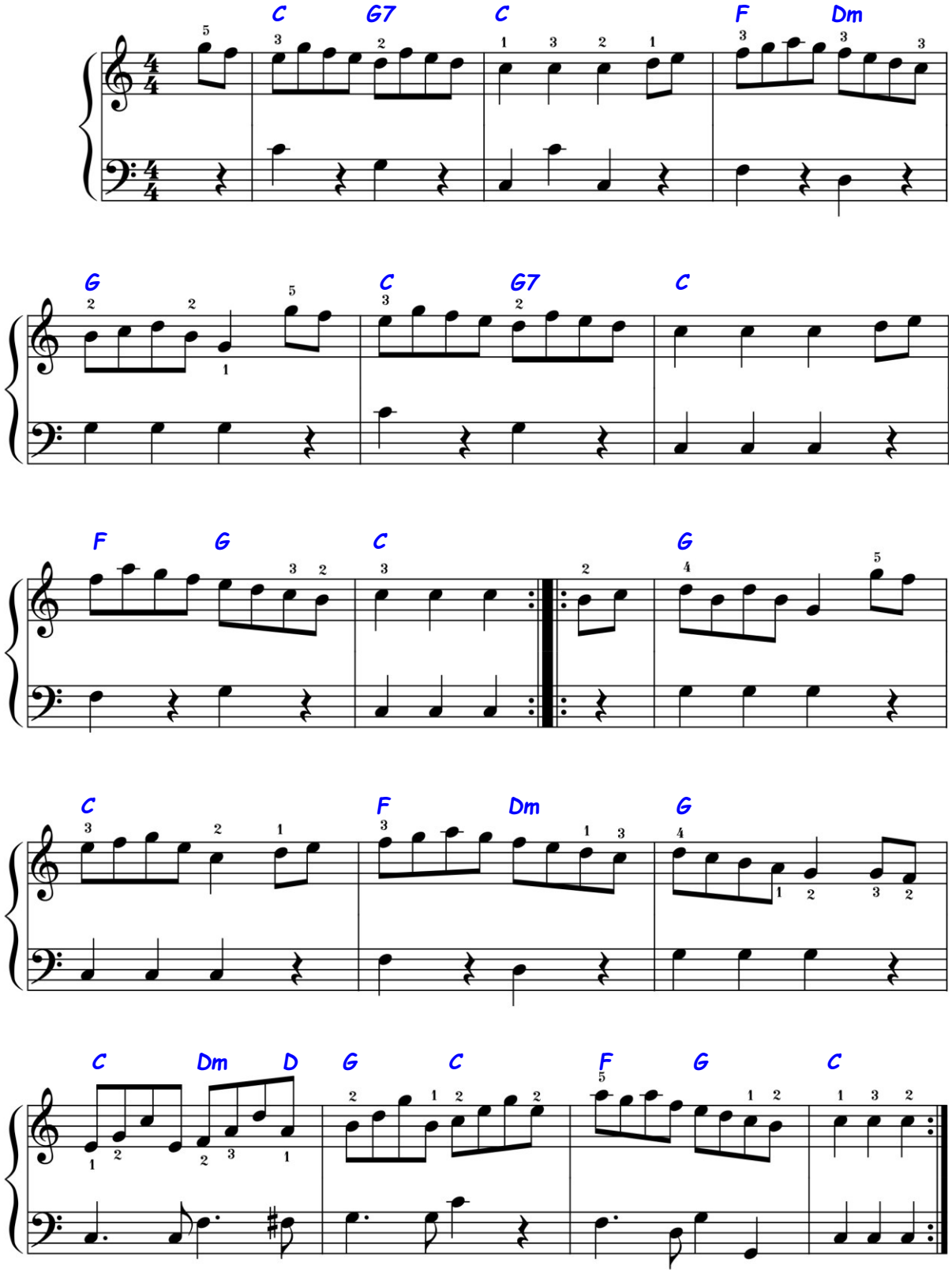
Without doubt the only tricky part is the short, syncopated bit in the last two bars, but don't let this put you off. As always practice one hand at a time and put it together bar by bar slowly and you'll get it.

Our next piece *'Jefferson Hornpipe'* by James Hewitt is easy and fun to play. I remember playing this piece as a child when I first took piano lessons. Take it slowly, one hand at a time, bar by bar and you'll get it in no time.

Hammond Sk Pro 73 - 73 Keys

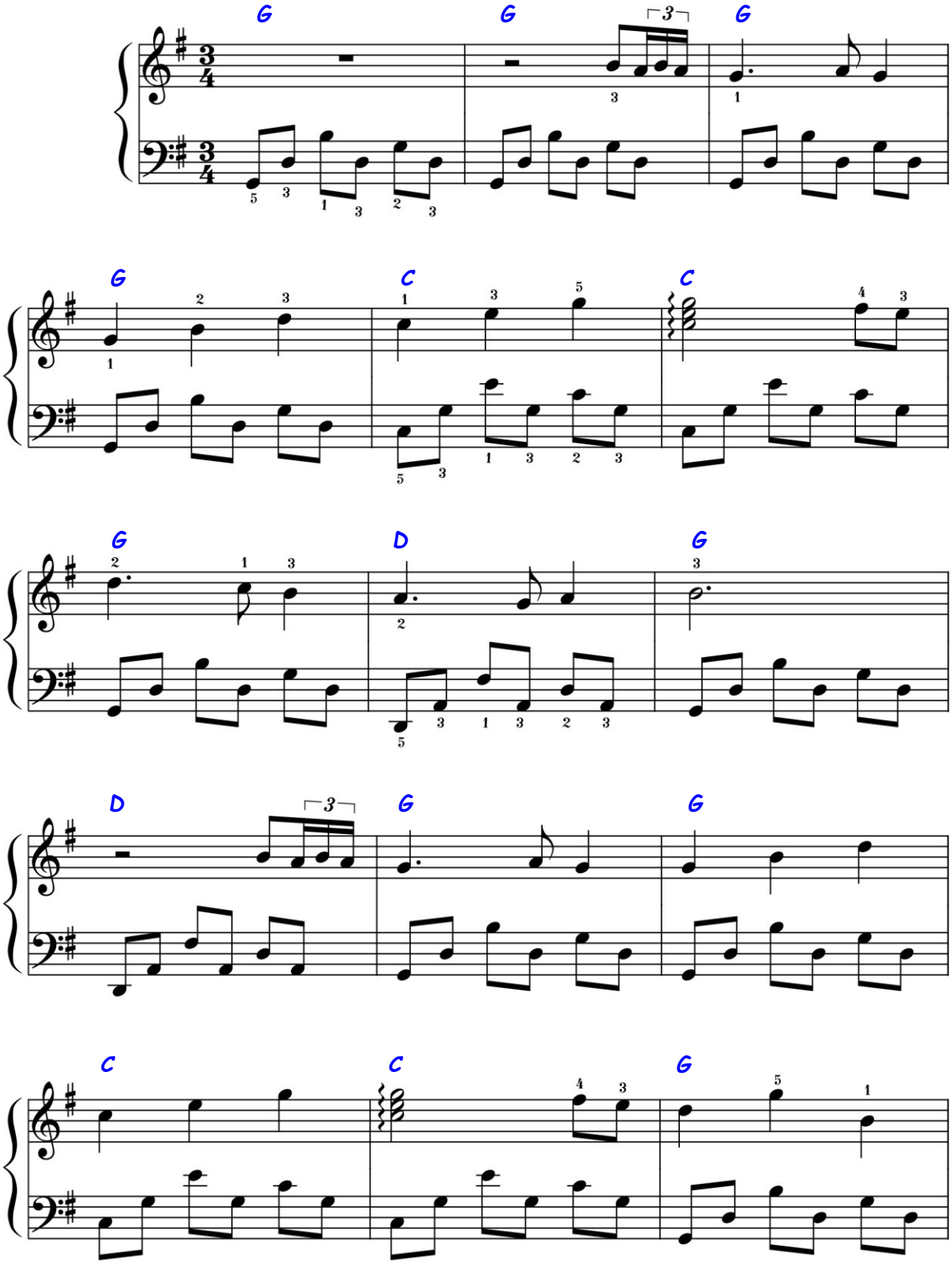
If you're looking for the real Hammond sound, you need to get a real 'Hammond'! This model also has piano and other sounds. I love it!

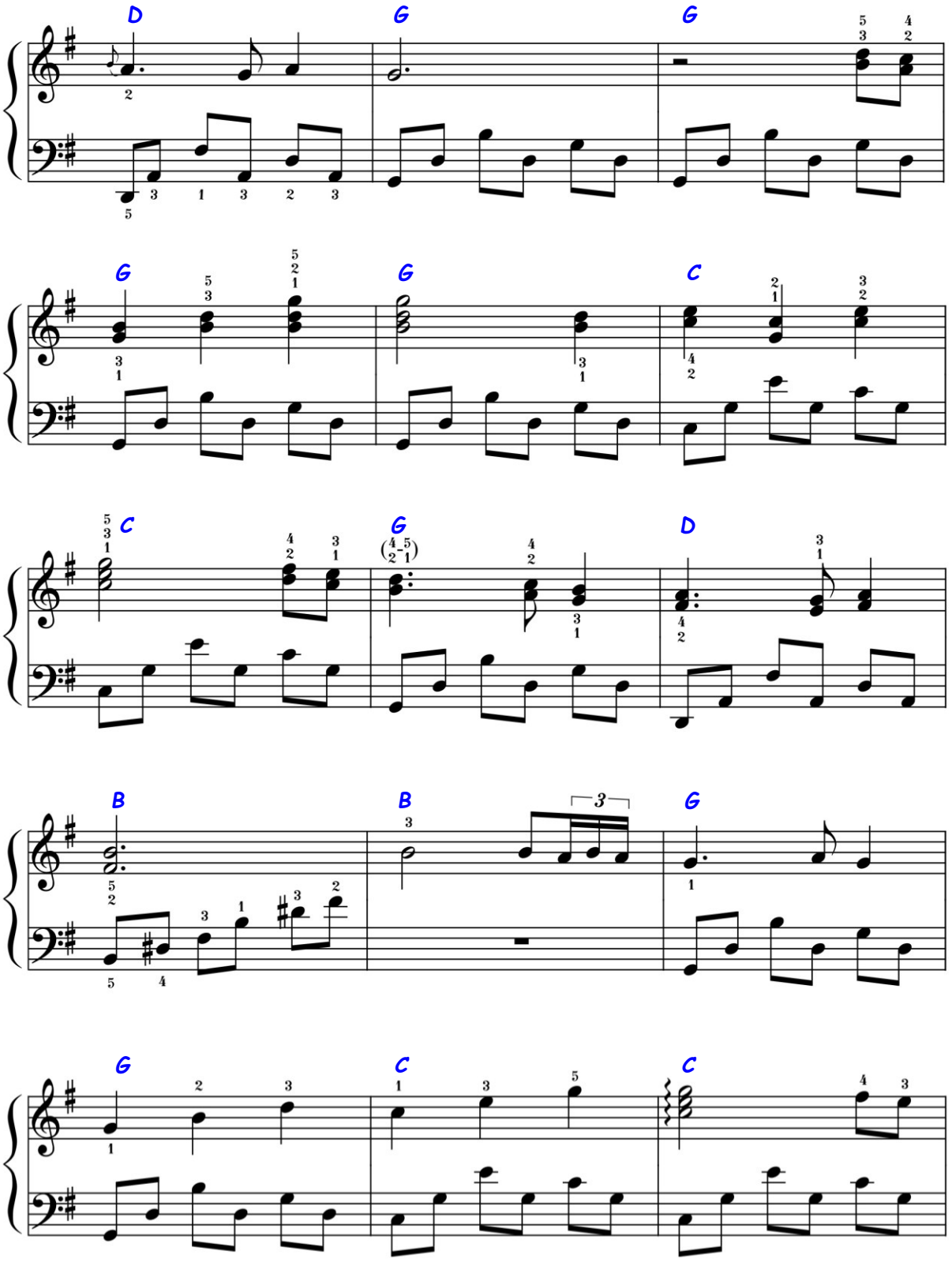
Jefferson Hornpipe (James Hewitt)

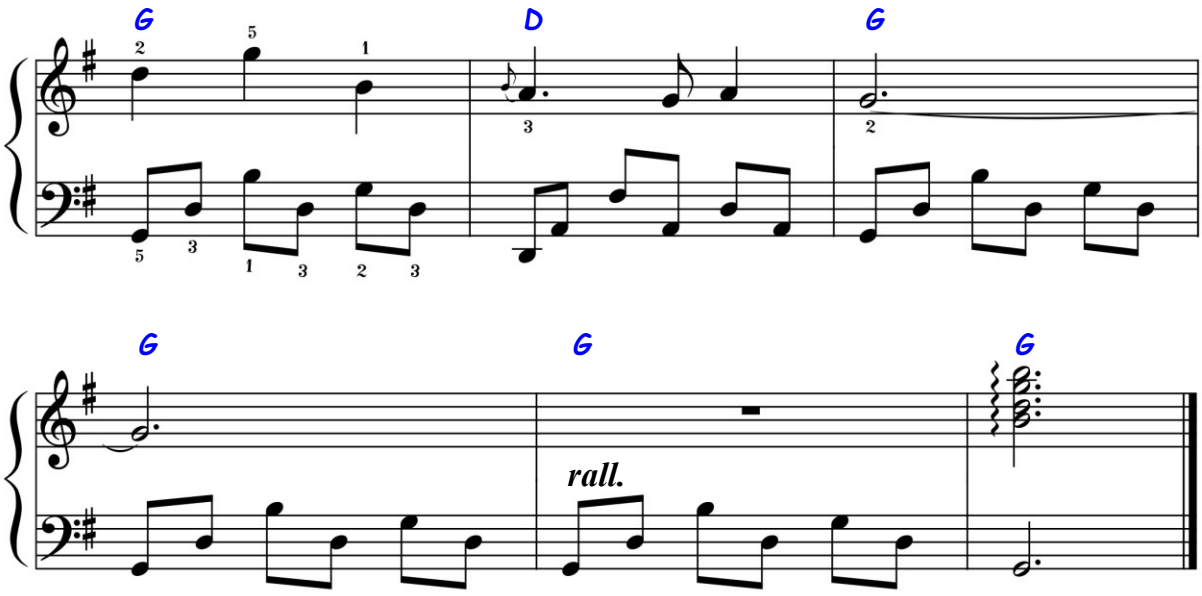


Traditional Irish Melody in G major

Our next practice piece is a lovely little ***'Traditional Irish melody'***. Unfortunately, I don't know what it's called (sorry) and to be honest I've written this arrangement just from memory, so it may not even be completely correct, but it's nice, nonetheless.







This piece again uses mainly three chords (**G major**, **C major** and **D7**) although there is a **B major** in *bar 25* adding the accidental **D#** in the left hand. Remember that **D#** is the leading note (**7th**) in the **E minor** scales, the relative to **G major**.

The left hand uses exactly the same *'arpeggio'* arrangement as in ***'Silent Night'***. And as with ***'Silent Night'***, a repeat could be played using octaves in the main theme, but you may perhaps find this a little difficult at this stage.

Notice also that there are a couple of incidental *'grace notes'* in the right hand and also the *'arpeggio'* symbol (as shown in a previous chapter) is used a couple of times.

Korg D1 Portable Piano - 88 keys

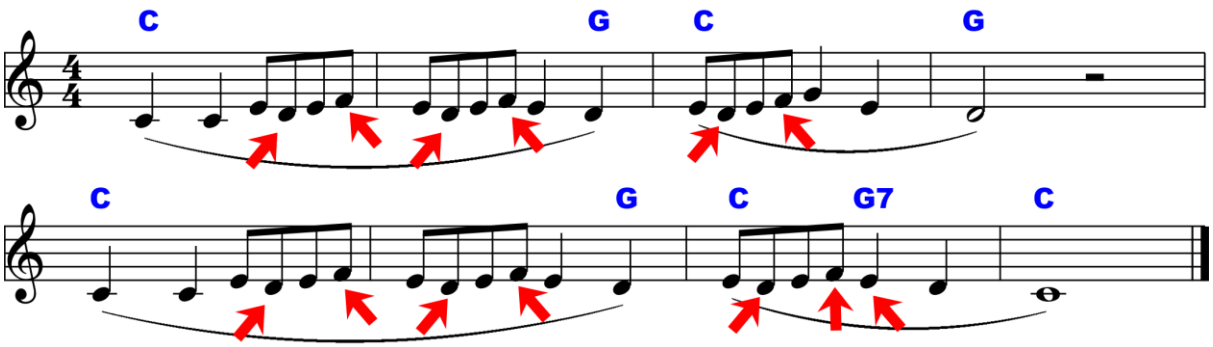
If you are on a budget and want a great piano keyboard feel, this could be for you.
This has the same RH3 keybed as the mighty Kronos and the Korg SV2.
This could also make a great lower tier board with maybe a synth or organ on top!

A Simple Arpeggio Composition

The next piece entitled ***'Flo'*** is a composition of mine comprised *'entirely'* of arpeggios (and *no* passing notes) similar to the *'Clown Waltz'* only just a bit more complicated. Putting it another way, every single note in the piece is part of the chord itemised above the staff. Hopefully, this will demonstrate how very important and versatile arpeggios can be.

What are passing notes?

Passing notes are notes of the scale but not notes of the chord. Below is a simple example. The notes indicated by the arrows are *diatonic* passing notes as they are notes of the scale (**C Major**) but not of the chords. All the other notes are notes of the chords (above the staff).



There could also be *'non diatonic'* passing notes which are neither part of the scale or chord. For instance, **F - F# - G** in **C major**, The **F#** would be a *'non diatonic'* or *'chromatic'* passing note.

I've also said previously that most compositions are based around diatonic chords (found naturally in the scale) which is true, but this piece contains one *non*-diatonic chord - **B♭**. which is repeated regularly, demonstrating that non-diatonic chords *can* work very effectively even though theoretically perhaps they shouldn't. All the other chords are *diatonic* chords in the key of **A minor**.

Remember that due to the additional sharps, there are many more diatonic chords in the minor keys, but this isn't anything that you need to concern yourself with right now. These are shown in the most used keys in part 2 in the *'Diatonic Chords'* chapter.

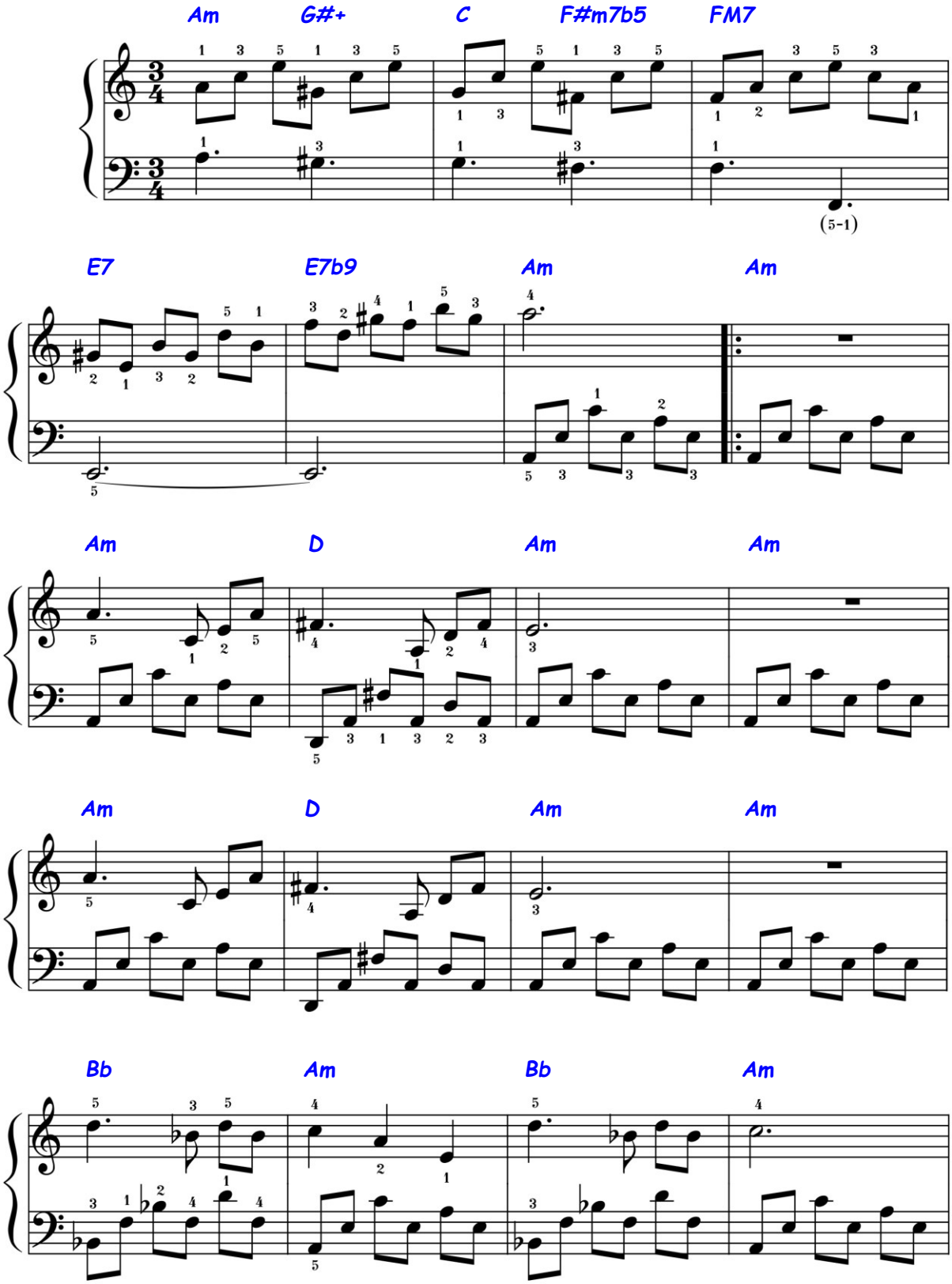
Following this piece is the final practice piece entitled ***'Falora'*** which I originally wrote for my sister-in-law Laura (hence the title), to help her get back into the piano after a long illness. I hope you like it!

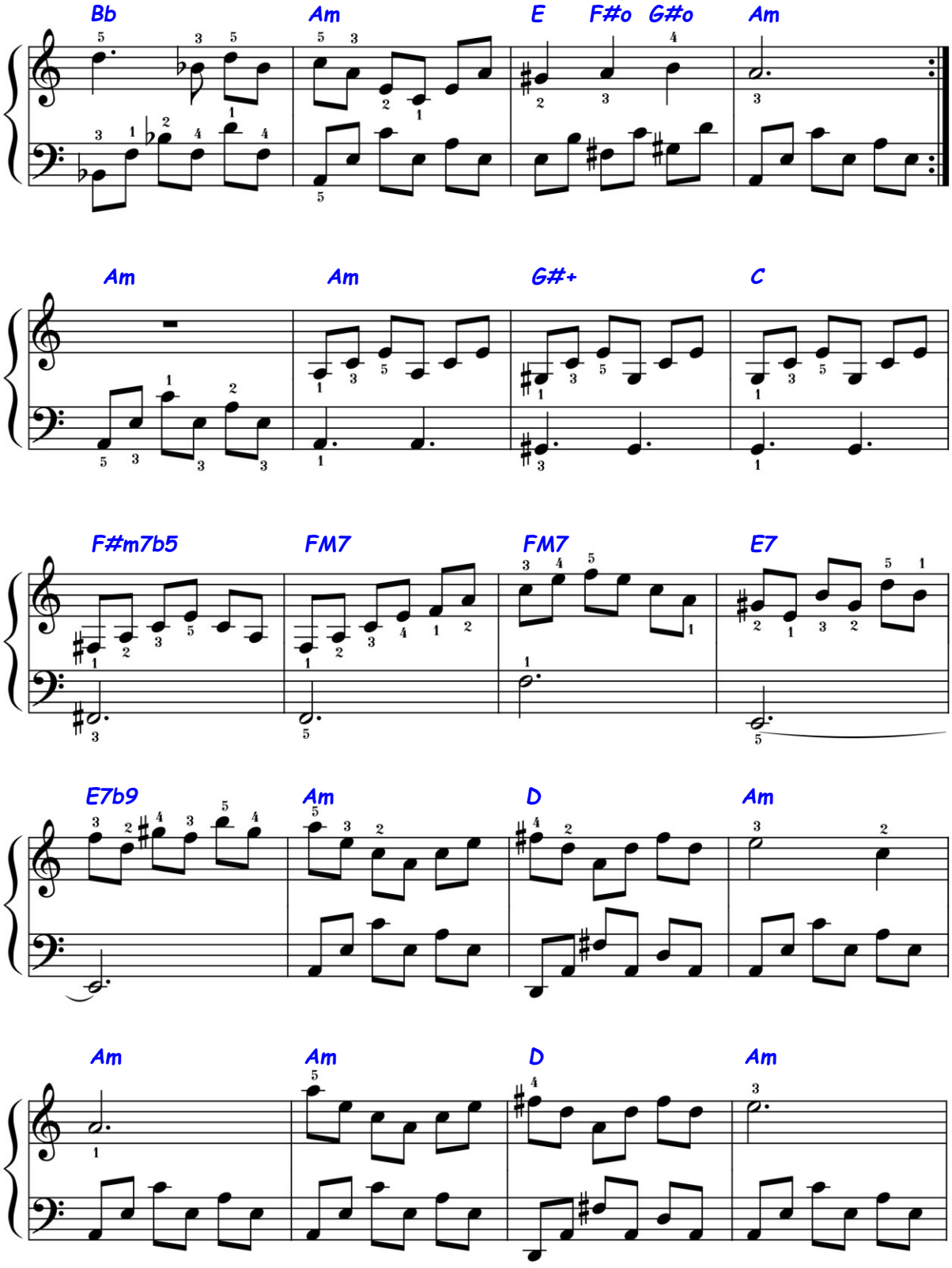
And again, the left hand of both these pieces primarily uses the same pattern as *'Silent Night'. It's a great left-hand pattern to learn!*

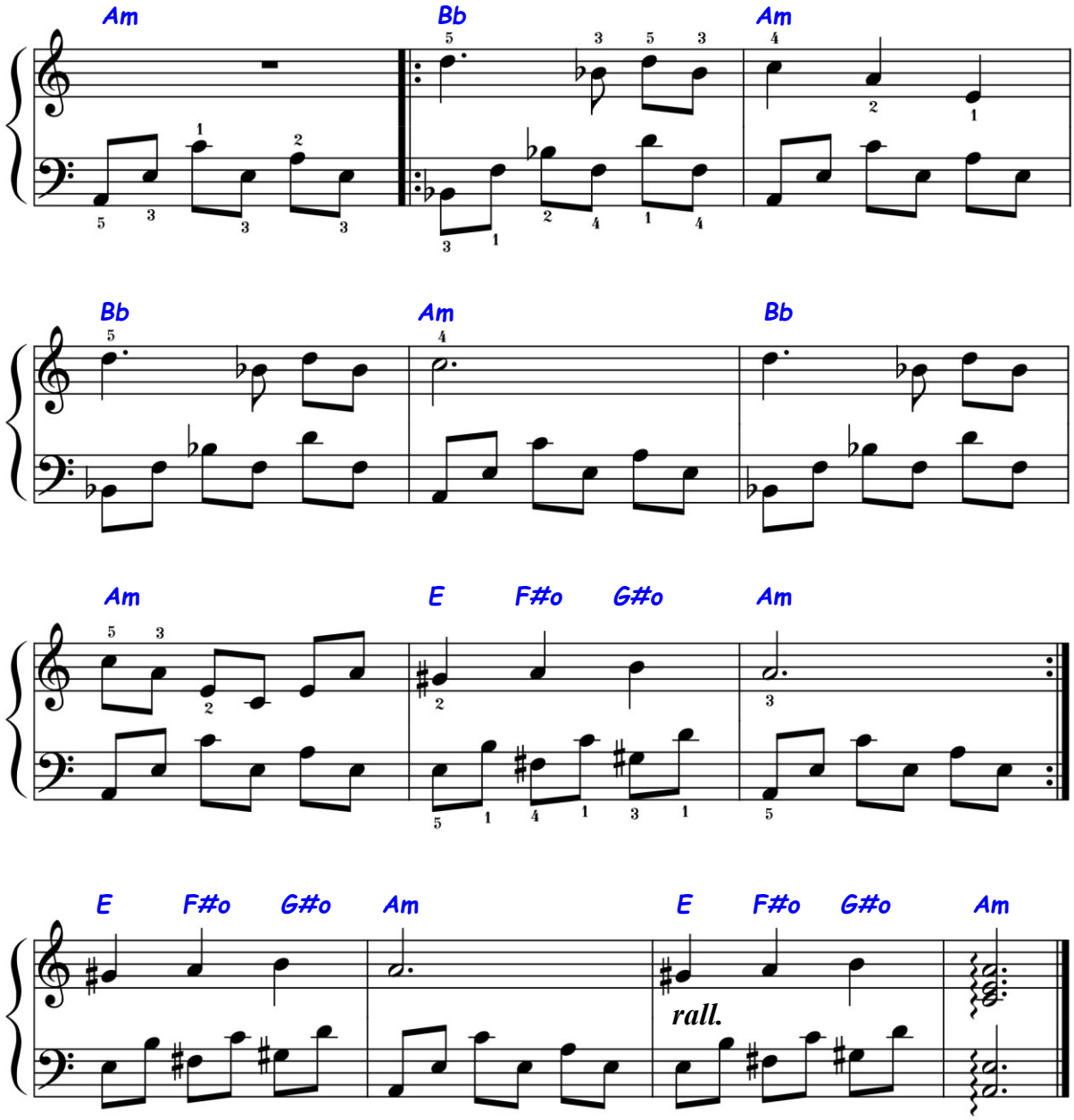
Flo

♩ = 90

Martin Woodward







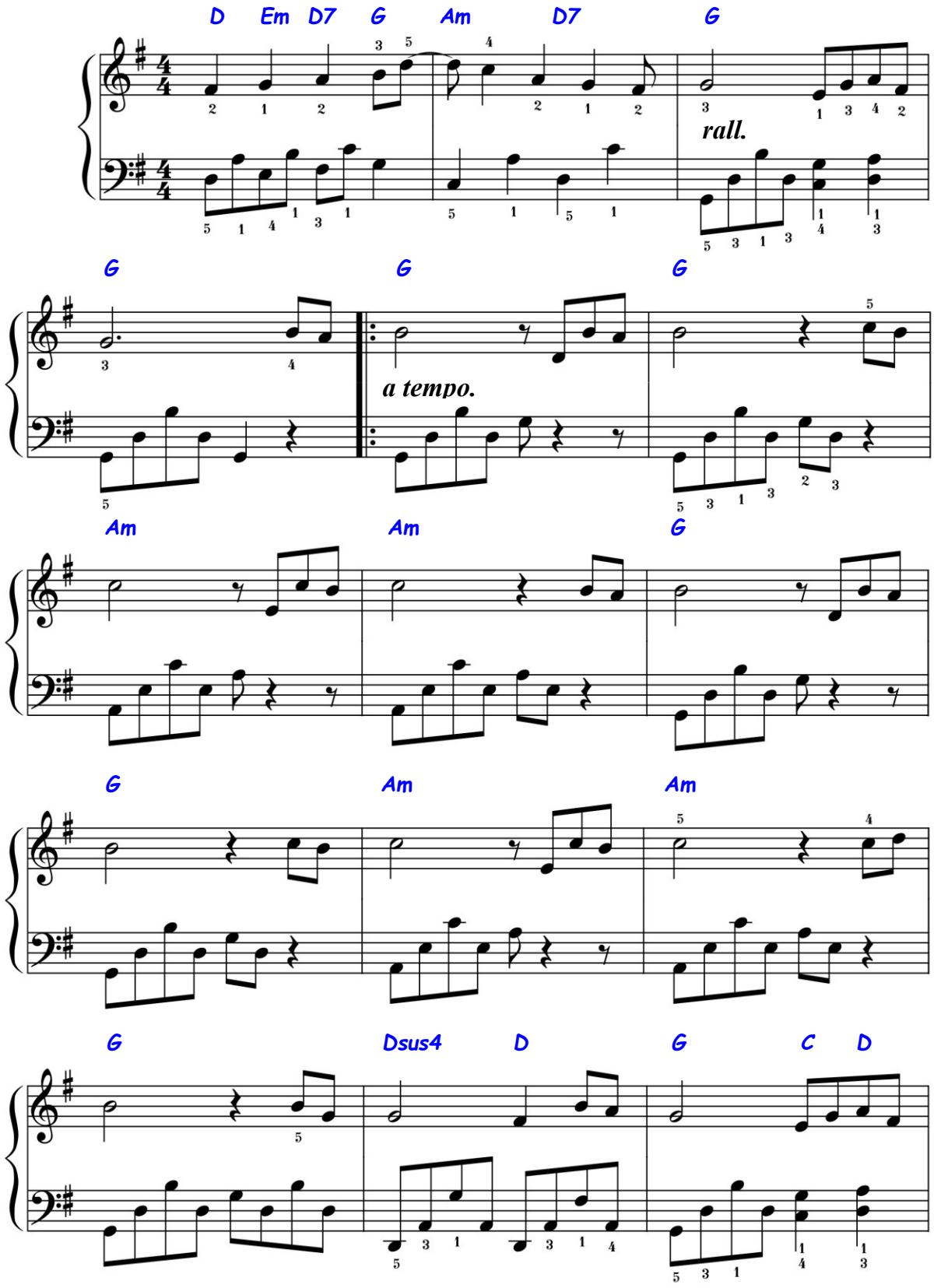
Korg Liano - 88 Keys

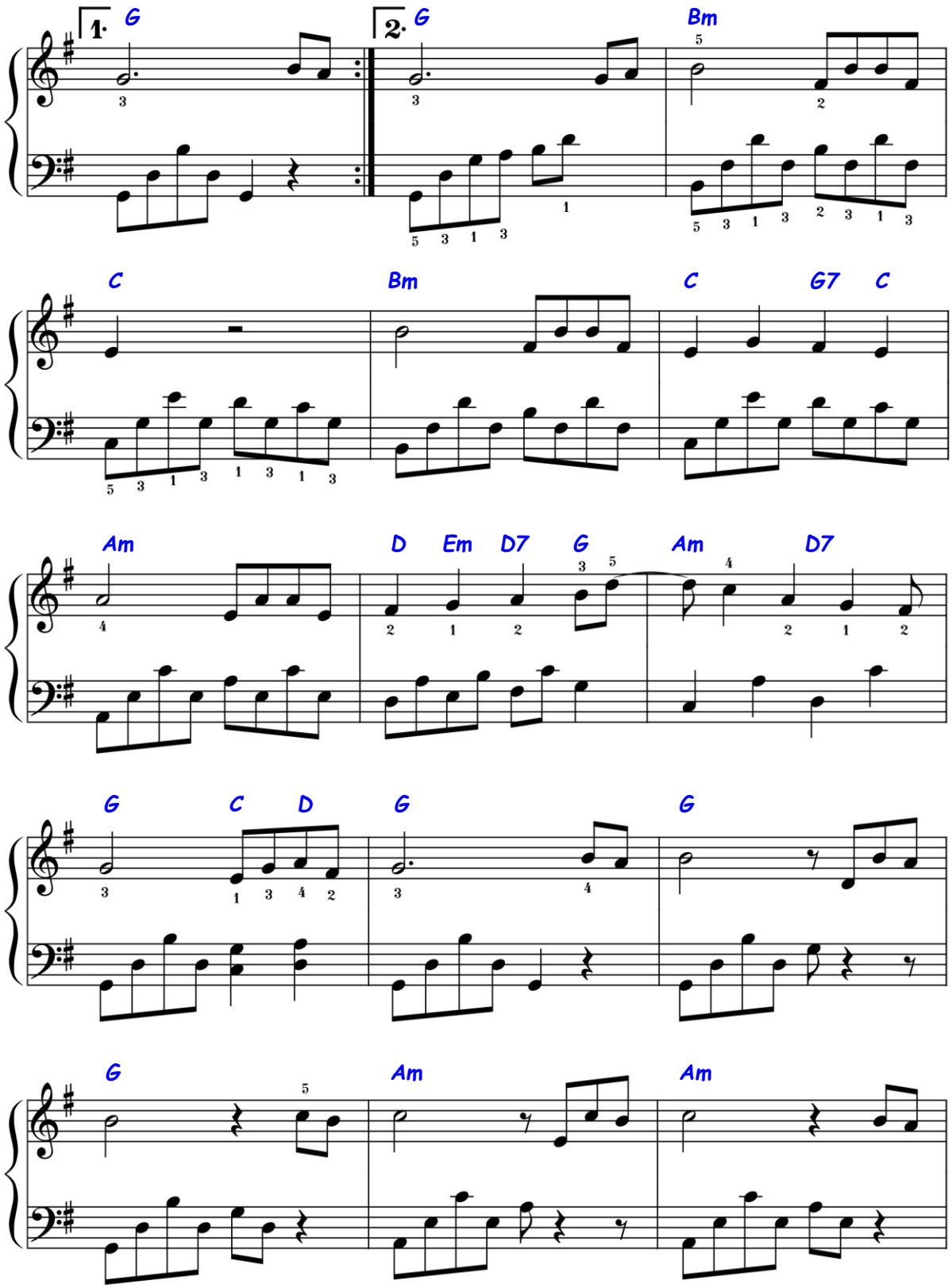
Great little low-priced starter piano. No frills or auto-accompaniment, just 88 full size keys and some descent piano sounds. Ideal for a beginner!

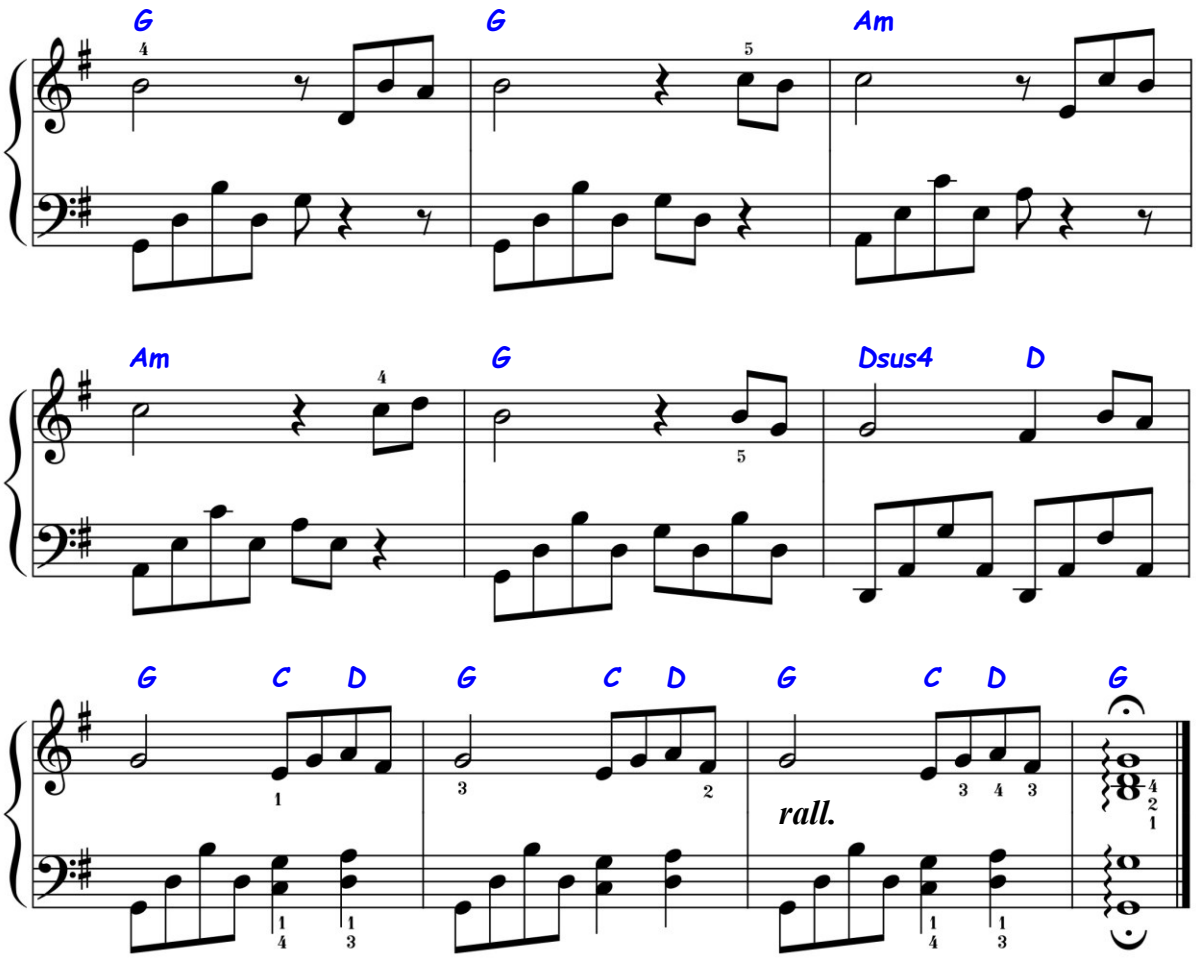
Falora

♩ = 87

Martin Woodward







The audio link for this section is http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/first_tunes.html

---

Roland Go Piano - 88 Keys

Great little low-priced starter piano. No frills or auto-accompaniment, just 88 full size keys and some descent piano sounds. Also available with 61 keys.
Ideal for a beginner!

Playing from a Fake Book

Sheet music can be very expensive and even more so if you buy the full version including right / left hand notation. Often, I've bought books containing perhaps twenty pieces when there has been maybe only three or four that I've wanted.

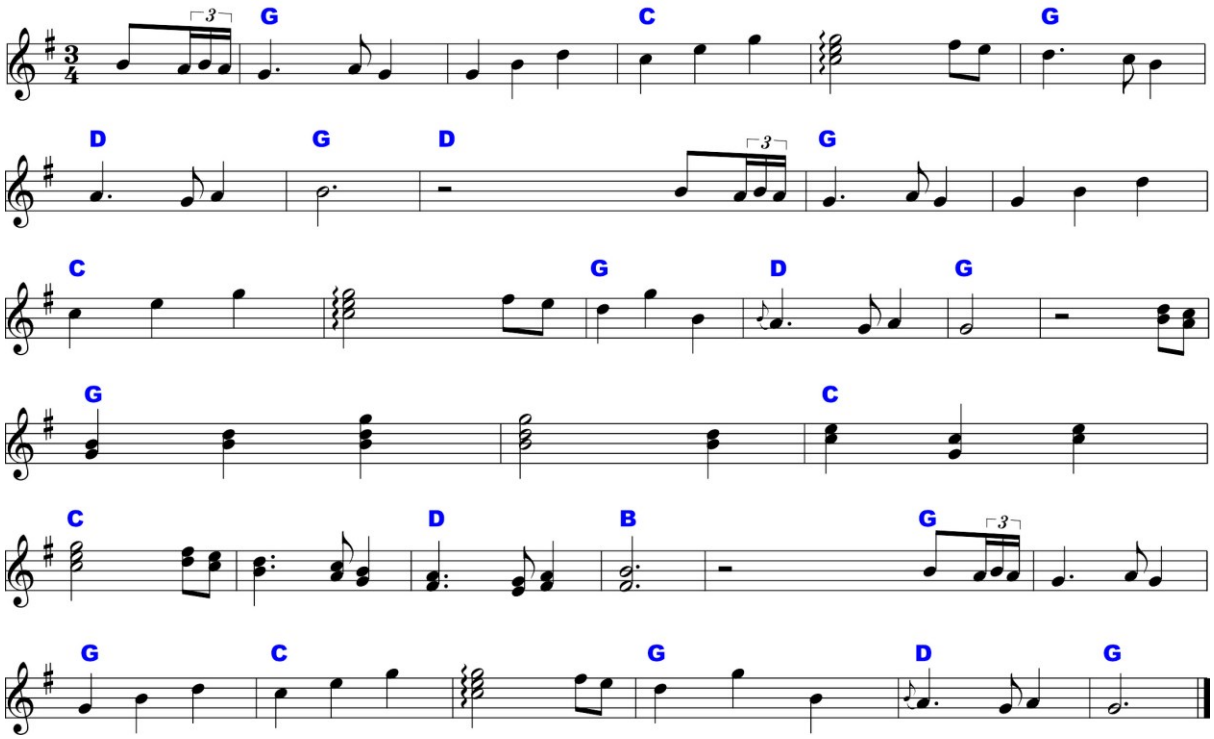
Fake books typically consist of maybe 50 - 100 tunes but only with the top line (melody) notation and the appropriate chord symbols included. This is by far the most economical way of buying sheet music enabling you to acquire hundreds of pieces at a comparatively low cost. And when using auto-accompaniment, this is all you want anyway!

But when using auto-accompaniment, a basic understanding of chords, scales and ideally arpeggios is essential for playing from fake books. There is an extensive list of chords in keyboard view in part 2 and we've already covered how to create different inversions where necessary as well as alternative fingerings. Quite probably you will need to refer to these sections until you have learnt them completely.

Here we will be looking at playing both *with* and *without* auto-accompaniment.

Below is a typical example of how music notation looks in *'fake book'* format.

Traditional Irish Melody in G major - (top line)



Immediately you'll notice that printing the music in this format takes up less space than the full conventional format shown previously and consequently is more economical to produce.

However, if you intend playing classical music, I recommend that you obtain the full music notation and learn the pieces exactly as written. Also, if this is the route you want to take, you'd be advised to seek professional classical tuition at some point. Having said this, the information given here comes from a combination of classical tuition and professional *'pop'* experience and as such provides a good *initial* grounding for whichever direction you ultimately intend following.

Using Auto-Accompaniment

When playing from a fake book and using auto-accompaniment simply choose an appropriate style and tempo, learn / play the melody with your right hand in the upper part of the keyboard and play the appropriate chords with your left hand in the lower section of the keyboard - *easy peasy!*

Hmmm!!

Well sorry, I know even this is not *easy peasy* to begin with, as there's still a lot to learn.

There are many differences between various makes and models of arranger keyboards, but all will have the following functions to consider:

- Split point
- Octave Shift
- Transpose
- Style
- Intro, variations, and fills
- Sounds (for upper portion)
- Bass inversions
- Chord *'hold'* & Chord *'fingering'* modes
- Sequencer (possibly)

We'll now look at these points.

Your keyboard may have a default *'split point'* somewhere midway up the board, but you will always be able to alter this. Often you just hold the *'split point'* button as you hit the key at where you want the split to occur - *if all else fails read the manual!*

On boards with 61 or 76 keys, I recommend splitting on or around the second **G** from the bottom which gives you enough room at the lower end to play any chord easily, and plenty of room at the top for the melody.

Some sophisticated keyboards have several split points.

The *'octave shift'* feature enables you to raise or lower the whole keyboard or just the top section in octave increments. This is a particularly useful function for keyboards with only 61 keys (which is more the norm for arranger keyboards).

The transpose feature, which is common to most keyboards, enables you to transpose what you are playing up or down by a pre-determined amount (in semi-tone increments) at the push of a button. Transposing up a semitone on a guitar is simple as it's just a case of moving everything up one fret and essentially playing the same thing. But on a keyboard, it's not so simple as you may have already found out, so in certain circumstances the *'transpose'* feature can be useful - *but always make sure you know when this feature is on or off!*

Some arranger keyboards have hundreds of styles to choose from which can be somewhat daunting to begin with. It's a good idea to audition each style and variation and make a list of which are suitable for songs that you want to play.

Each style consists of a rhythm backing, a bass part, as well as other accompaniment instruments and can range from simple to very complicated. On many boards you can alter the volume of each of the accompaniment parts - *or turn them off completely*. Within each style there are generally two or three or more variations as well as an intro, fills and an ending. You would need to get to know these by trial and error before using them in a performance. It's normal to start off with the first (basic) variation and then move on to the subsequent variations as the song progresses, perhaps returning to the first at the end.

Some styles will automatically choose a compatible sound for the upper portion of the keyboard, but you will always have the option to change this. Very often as you change variations this sound will also change unless you program it not to.

Fills are often programmed by default to occur automatically when changing variations or you can override this and add them as required at the push of a button (or foot switch).

In all cases you would be able to alter the tempo before starting, but be sure that you choose a style with the same time value as the piece you intend playing i.e., **3/4**, **4/4** etc.

Most arranger keyboards have a bass note inversion option which means that, for instance if you are playing the second inversion of a **C** chord where **G** is the lower note of the inverted chord, you could set the bass accompaniment to play either the true root note of the chord (**C**), which is usually the default setting, or to play the lowest note of the inversion (**G**). Until you gain experience, I would suggest that you don't allow the bass to play inversions.

The *'hold'* mode means that when you play a chord in the lower section, the accompaniment will continue even when you release the chord and will simply change as you change chords. The alternative mode is that the accompaniment will stop as soon as you release the chord. The *'hold'* mode is preferred in most cases, and this may even be a default setting.

To start the auto-accompaniment, you would first need to select the accompaniment mode (as against full keyboard mode), select your style and tempo, and play the first chord in the lower section as you trigger the auto start button or intro. To stop, hit the ending button on the last chord and release the keys.

Many arranger boards have an option where you can play chords and trigger the accompaniment in the lower section by playing one or two notes (rather than the normal triads). Although this function may be useful (and fun) to the absolute beginner, I would advise against using this function unless necessary - *learn the chords and learn to play them!*

All the triad, sus 4th, 6th and 7th chords shown in part 2 should be recognised by the auto-accompaniment in any inversion. To begin with I advise that you initially play pieces that don't have complicated chords.

But eventually you will come across chords such as **9ths** or **13ths** etc. The short versions of these which are also shown in part 2 may not be recognised. Following is a short list of some suitable simple alternatives. These are *not* perfect, but they will work.

Simple Chord Alternatives

9th - 7th	b9th - 7th	13th - 6th
M9th - M7th	11th - sus4th	m7b9th - m7th
sus - sus4th	6/9 - 6th	b13th - +7

Also see your keyboards reference manual as there may be alternatives shown there.

Note that for auto-accompaniment to work effectively, the chords need to be played with precision timing, usually bang on the first beat of the bar, although sometimes the chords could change on every beat which makes the process far more difficult.

If you have difficulty with this, another option (assuming your board has a sequencer) is to record each chord and variation change into the sequencer in step time. To do this you wouldn't even need to physically play the chords, but you *would* need to read the keyboard manual to find out how to do it! This could then be saved as a *'song'* and when playing back, you would only need to play the melody with your right hand. This feature can be useful for lots of reasons but particularly brilliant for anyone with limited playing ability or for anyone who may be disabled. - Cheating? - *It's all about enjoying yourself!*

Beyond all the above, most boards have numerous other features such as dual voicing, automatic melody harmony, drum mapping and oodles of effects etc., but again, you would need to read the manual!

Although auto-accompaniment is clearly an incredible tool, one big disadvantage of using it is that you could easily fall into the trap of wasting too much time *'playing*

around' and never really master the instrument. Having said this even playing well with auto-accompaniment takes a fair amount of practice. And of course, it depends on how serious you intend taking it. If you are getting enjoyment, then it has to be good!

Well, what if I don't want to use auto-accompaniment or haven't got it?

Playing From a Fake Book Without Auto-Accompaniment

If you don't have, or don't want to use the auto-accompaniment, you will need to create a suitable accompaniment for the melody using the information from the chord symbols. This can either be very simple or very complicated depending on your ability and theoretical knowledge.

But you will see that understanding the chords and arpeggios, as mentioned previously and shown in detail in part 2 is vitally important even for a basic accompaniment.

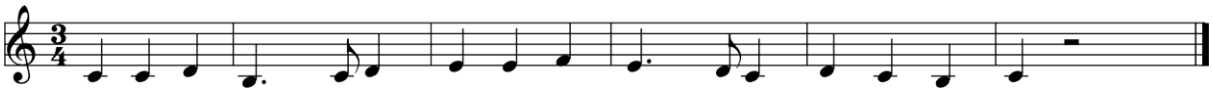
Probably the simplest way is to use broken chords or bass patterns as previously shown in the *'Putting it All Together'* chapter. This enables the music to keep moving even if the melody line is very slow.

What if there's No Chord Line?

With all fake books there *will* be a chord line, but it's bound to happen at some point that you'll come across something that you want to play that doesn't have a chord line and you'll have to work out your own.

This is nowhere as difficult as you might imagine especially if you have learnt about chord construction as already dealt with.

Ok so as an example we'll use the first few bars of the UK national anthem '*God Save the King'*.



The first thing always is to look at the key signature. In this case there is no key signature, so it must be **C major** or **A minor**. To determine which of these it is, you need to look for any accidental sharps, particularly **F#** or **G#** which are included in the **A minor** scales - remember the melodic minor scale has a sharpened 6th and 7th *ascending.*

Looking at the notation, you'll see that there are none of these, but there aren't any **G** naturals either, but because the phrase both starts and finishes on **'C'** it's clear to me that it's in **C major** and not **A minor**.

So, the first chord is probably **C major**, based on the fact that's it's clearly in the key of **C major** and the first note is '**C**'.

But **'C'** is also contained in other triads as follows:

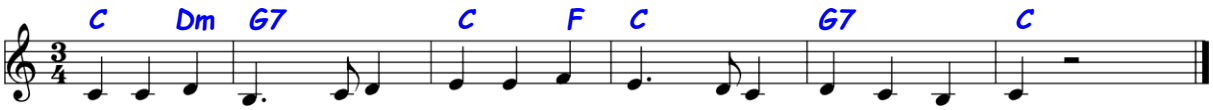
- **C** is the tonic (root note) of **C major**
- **C** is the tonic (root note) of **C minor**
- **C** is the mediant (3rd) of **A minor**
- **C** is the mediant (3rd) of **A♭ major**
- **C** is the dominant (5th) of **F major**
- **C** is the dominant (5th) of **F minor**

So, you can see that there are many possibilities, and this is before we start with **suspended 4ths**, **7ths**, and **9ths**, etc.

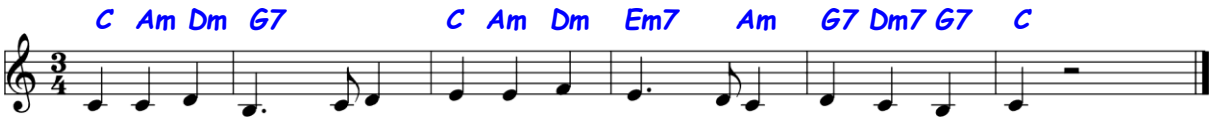
But out of the six most likely contenders only three of these are *diatonic* chords in the key of **C major** (derived from the notes of the **C major** scale). And these are **C major**, **A minor** and **F major**. So, these are the most likely ones to fit easily, but that doesn't mean that the non-diatonic chords won't work, sometimes using these can add some colourful variations.

And the same method applies to the remaining notes.

So, with all this in mind a simple chord progression for this passage is as follows:



Or you could be a bit more inventive and add a few more chords as follows:



Notice that each *main* melody note *excluding passing notes* contains either the 1st, 3rd or 5th note of the chosen chord as explained previously, apart from the **Dm7** where the **C** is the 7th.

You may also note that there are quite a few **V - I** progressions which remember is the strongest chord progression. These are **Am - Dm - G7 - C**; **Am - Dm**; **Em7 - Am** and **Dm7 - G7 - C**. And as this progression is the strongest of all progressions it will also sound reasonably pleasing to the ear, *although it must be said that only Brian May can make this piece swing!*

Now which of these is *'right'* or rather *'as written'* I really don't know and can't be bothered to find out, as both *work*, and that's all that matters.

Obviously if you were playing with other musicians, you'd all have to be playing the same arrangement, but if you're playing on your own you can do anything that works!

Acquiring Free Sheet Music

Very little *new* music is legally available free of charge due to copyright laws and I'm not suggesting that these laws should be violated. But 70 years after a composer has died his / her music becomes copyright free. And as some of the best composers have died over 70 years ago there's plenty to go at. All of the compositions that I've included in this book are copyright free (or my own) which is why I've chosen to use them.

So, don't waste a fortune buying classical, ragtime or even early blues pieces from music stores as they're virtually all available free of charge from internet sites such as: https://www.free-scores.com or https://www.8notes.com . Another good source for free sheet music is to download the Casio *'Chordana Play for Piano'* app (compatible with Android and iOS) and then open the *'pdf score viewer'* where you'll find a good selection of classical pieces for a variety of skill levels. No doubt a simple *internet* search will reveal many more sources.

I particularly recommend downloading **Bach's Prelude in C** from the first link above, as it's fairly easy and sounds great - *if you can play the first bar, you can play the rest!*

If selecting classical pieces, probably the hardest thing is being aware of which pieces are suitable for your ability. A good trick is to check out the Associated Board of Music's exam pieces which are graded I - VIII. Obviously start out with grade I.

If you intend gigging (or if you just want to be incredibly organised) it's a good idea to photocopy / scan the entire music notation that you need and collate it into one or two clear pocket folders to keep everything easy to find. Technically this is a breach of copyright, but if you do this just for your own use with music that you have legitimately acquired or purchased then I can't see anything unethical about it.

Additionally, you could store all the styles and settings for each piece into your keyboard, making it available for easy instant access (if this feature is available).

Just about all the modern *'pop'* music is available as sheet music for a price, but much of this is frankly unsuitable for piano as it's not been *written* for piano. Even the best pianist in the world isn't going to make a bit of *'Led Zeppelin'* sound descent on a piano - great as it may be, it's simply not suitable!

I've personally scoured the music shops looking for music that sounds right on a piano and that I want to play. Often, I've bought a compilation of pieces which only contains one or two pieces that I actually want - *very uneconomical!*

The only book that I've ever bought where I can honestly say that I like every piece is called *'Tranquillity'* by Irish composer Phil Coulter. And all of these pieces can be played by *'mortals'!* If you can manage the left-hand arpeggios in the last few pieces, you will have no trouble with this book.

And as a special gift you may also download the two free printable eBooks which I've compiled for you.

One of these is for *'auto-accompaniment'* and the other for *'normal'* playing. Both include very easy pieces which should be well within your limitations. I've also tried to include various tunes from different countries, so where-ever you live you should find some that you will be familiar with, but my apologies for anyone living in the Gobi Desert! The link for the free pdf downloads is at the end of the book.

I have also written my own *sensibly priced* tune book: ***'Tranquil Waters'*** which includes a selection great sounding original pieces available as either a printable eBook (in pdf format) or paperback. All of the pieces are fairly easy to play and suitable for solo piano or some with accompaniment (with chord lines). These pieces can also be heard on my website - try before you buy at: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/sheet_music.html .

There are no audio links for this chapter.

Part 2

Practical Exercises

5 Finger Exercises

These exercises are a continuation of the *'tapping'* exercises shown earlier and should be practiced every day while you are reading and understanding the other information.

Even though the exercises are written in musical notation for both hands they really don't require any musical understanding to play them. All are played entirely on white notes and require no finger crossovers. Follow the patterns for ascending and descending as shown in the charts (7 bars ascending - 7 bars descending) and notice how they relate to the music notation.

Compared to the initial *'tapping'* exercises in order for the exercises to ascend and descend there are a few slight interval variations i.e.:

- On exercise 1 there are extended intervals of a third between the first two notes of each bar
- On exercises 2 and 3 the initial interval of each bar is a sixth instead of a fifth
- On exercise 4 and 5 the first note of each ascending bar is second interval higher than the previous (or lower on the decent)

I have put a circle around the important fingerings where the patterns change from ascending to descending and also the final notes of each exercise which vary from the pattern in order to conclude.

They should be practiced with each hand separately and both hands together both staccato and legato at speeds that you are comfortable with.

These exercises are variations from the ***'C L Hanon Virtuoso Pianist'*** and are designed to create finger strength, speed, agility and independence in both hands - AND THEY WORK! There are no better exercises than these and they are simple and fun to play! Although these initial exercises will *'get you going',* if your intentions are to progress classically, you'd be advised to seek out more of these exercises. The full set of Hanon's exercises takes about one hour a day to complete, but the rewards are phenomenal. See: further reading.

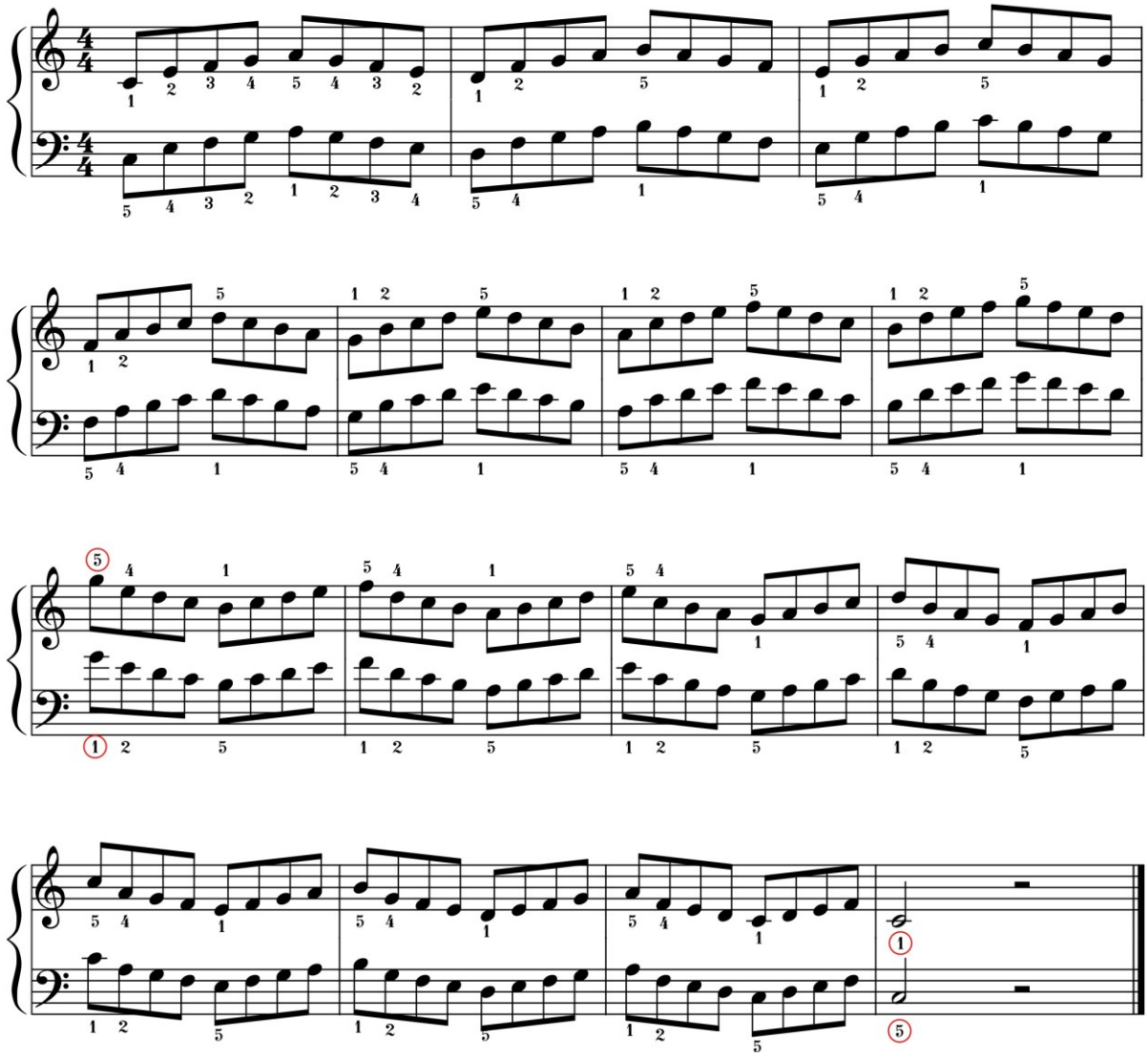
Section audio link: http://www.learn-keyboard.co.uk/5_finger_exercises_2.html .

Quick link to Part 1

Exercise 1

5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 (5)
Left Hand Ascending

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 (1)
Right Hand Ascending



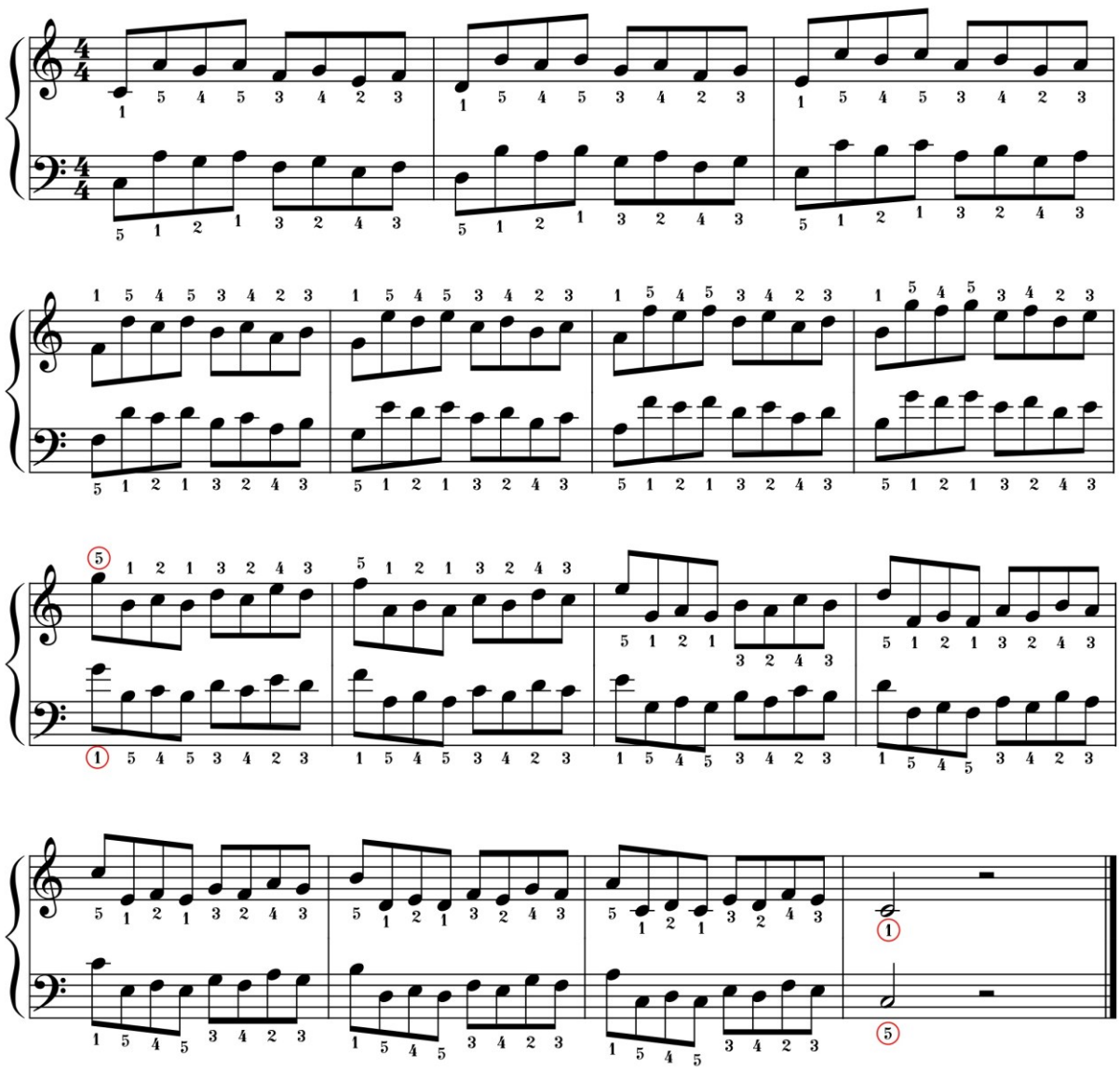
1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 (1)
Left Hand Descending

5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 (5)
Right Hand Descending

Exercise 2

5 1 2 1 3 2 4 3 (5)
Left Hand Ascending

1 5 4 5 3 4 2 3 (1)
Right Hand Ascending



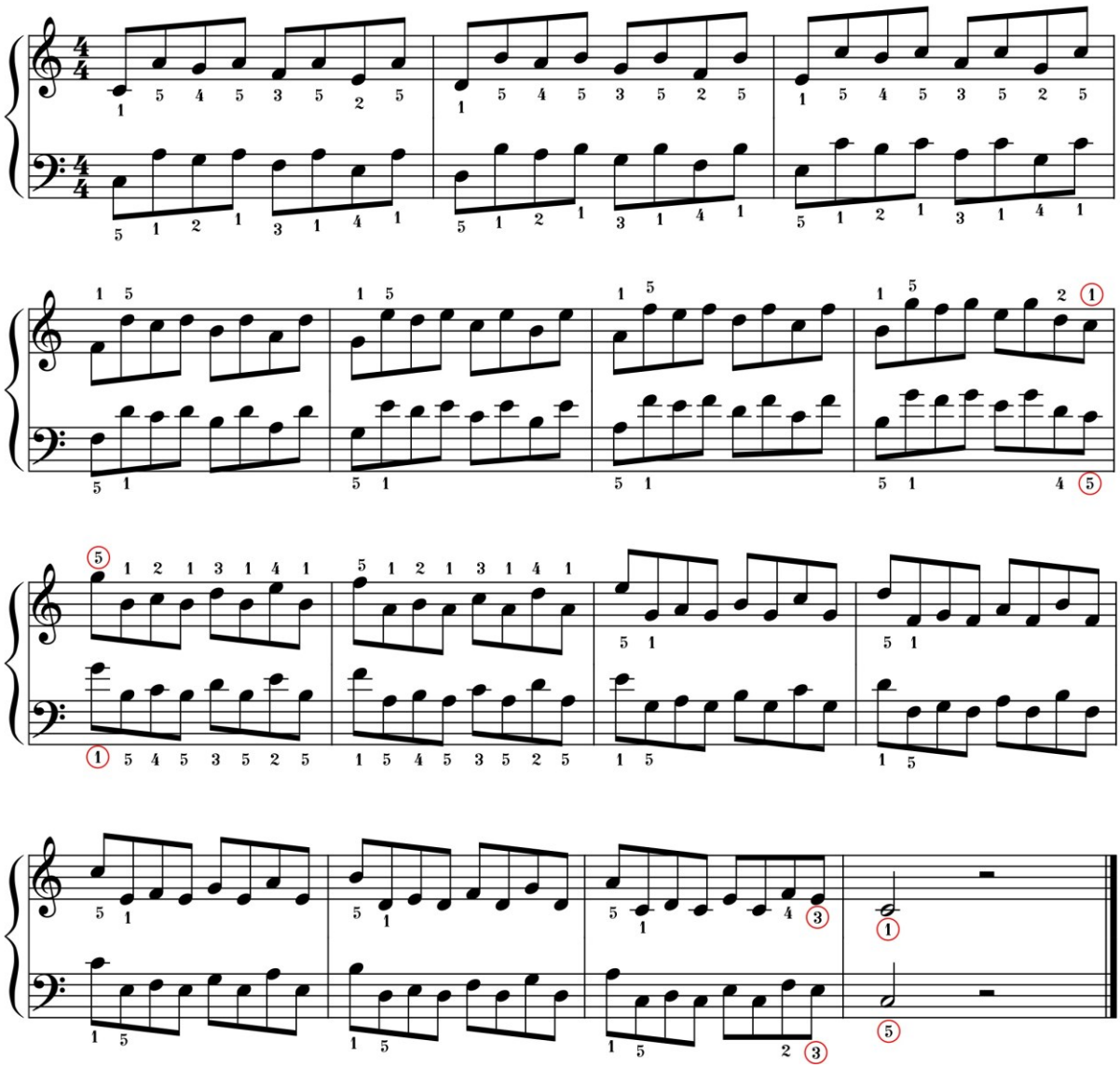
1 5 4 5 3 4 2 3 (1)
Left Hand Descending

5 1 2 1 3 2 4 3 (5)
Right Hand Descending

Exercise 3

5 1 2 1 3 1 4 1(5)
Left Hand Ascending

1 5 4 5 3 5 2 5 (1)
Right Hand Ascending



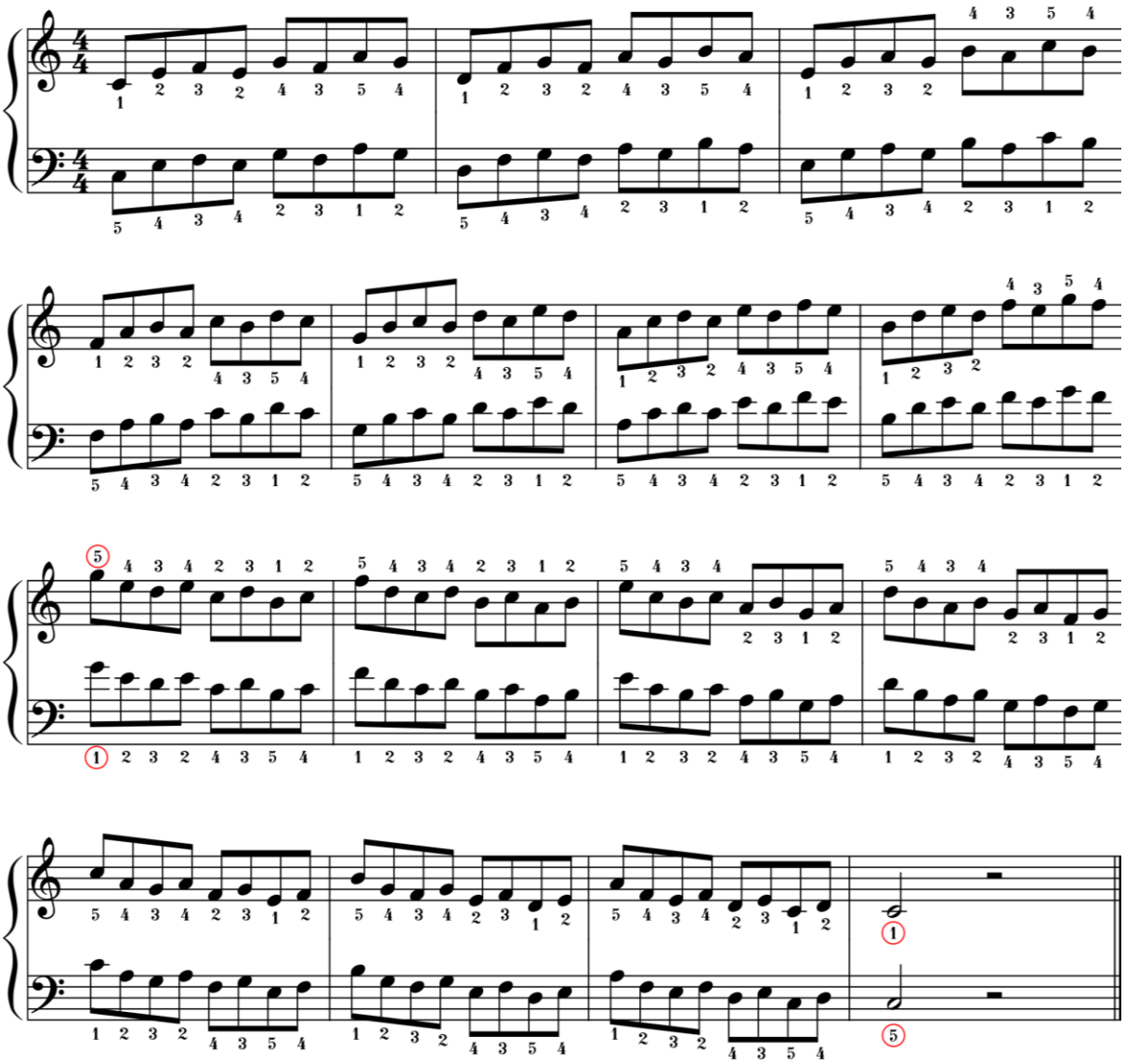
1 5 4 5 3 5 2 5 (1)
Left Hand Descending

5 1 2 1 3 1 4 1(5)
Right Hand Descending

Exercise 4

5 4 3 4 2 3 1 2 (5)
Left Hand Ascending

1 2 3 2 4 3 5 4 (1)
Right Hand Ascending



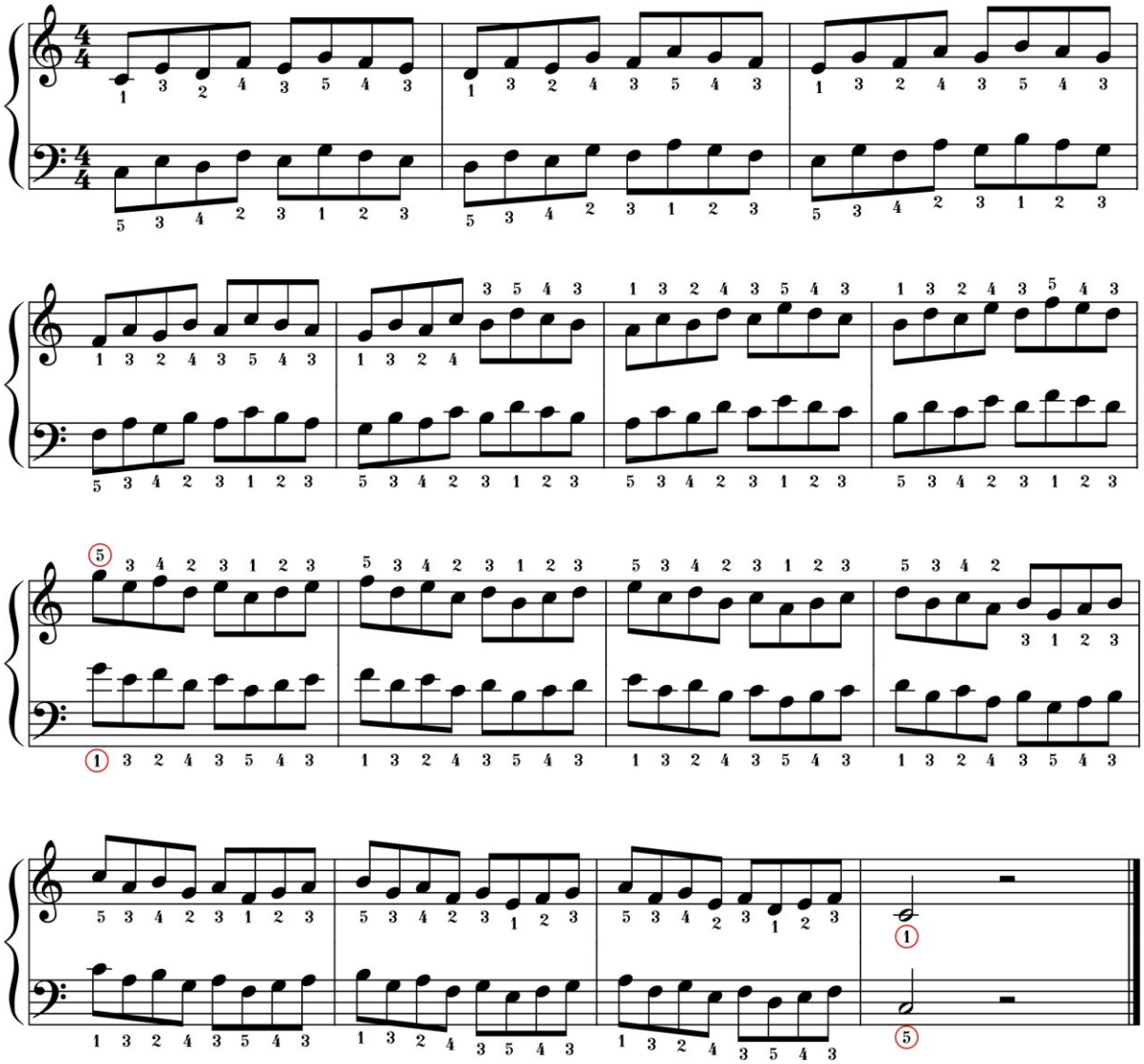
1 2 3 2 4 3 5 4 (1)
Left Hand Descending

5 4 3 4 2 3 1 2 (5)
Right Hand Descending

Exercise 5

5 3 4 2 3 1 2 3 (5)
Left Hand Ascending

1 3 2 4 3 5 4 3 (1)
Right Hand Ascending



1 3 2 4 3 5 4 3 (1)
Left Hand Descending

5 3 4 2 3 1 2 3 (5)
Right Hand Descending

Scale Exercises (in full)

We discussed the importance of scales earlier; in this section, you have all the major and minor (natural / harmonic / melodic) scales in every key, and the pentatonic (major / minor) and blues scales in the most commonly used keys.

In this chapter you will find all the major and relative minor scales in the order in which they should be learnt. They are written here in two octaves, one octave apart, but can and should also be played for four octaves. Ideally these should be practiced with each hand separately and both hands together staccato and legato paying attention to accuracy and timing. Also make sure that each note is played with an equal pressure. Gradually increase the speed according to your ability. When you are familiar with them, they can be practiced in any order.

If you have the eBook version, you can of course print out the pages that you require.

So, when I learn the scales can I forget about the 5 finger exercises and Hanon?

No, you can't and here's why. If you take a close look at the scale fingerings, you will notice that the 5th finger on both hands is used only once in each scale even if played for four octaves or more; and in fact, the scales that start on black notes don't use the 5th finger at all. Whereas the *'5 finger'* and *'Hanon'* exercises use all the fingers extensively. Funnily enough it took me over 60 years to notice this and I've never heard anyone else mention it, but it's clearly significant. However, the scales teach finger crossovers which the 5 finger exercises don't.

So, you need:

- Scales (all of them)
- Hanon or the 5 finger exercises and
- Arpeggios

In equal proportions.

Sorry but there's no getting away from it, but they don't have to be boring as I'll explain next. You will also need a basic understanding of chords which has already been covered.

Scales don't have to be boring

So now we'll look at how you can make scales more interesting. Actually, when you really start looking, you'll notice that all compositions are variations of different scales and chords / arpeggios. Constructed by:

- using different note timings
- adding rests at varying points

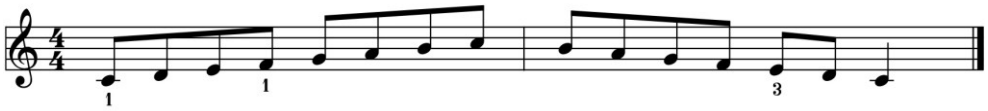
- starting / ending the scale on different positions
- missing out some notes of the scale
- changing direction at varying points
- changing from one scale to another etc., etc.

Note also that the previously shown (Hanon) 5 finger exercises are simply variations of scales - they have to be as *all* music is.

Following are a few examples of how you can make them more interesting.

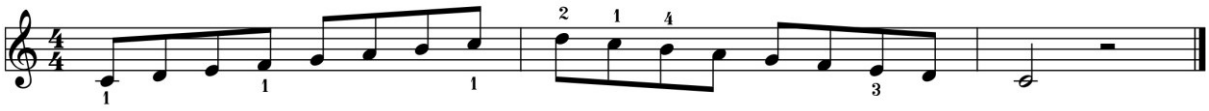
The first example shows the **C major** scale for one octave in its natural state and yes, it's boring - because the timing doesn't compute well at all.

Example 1

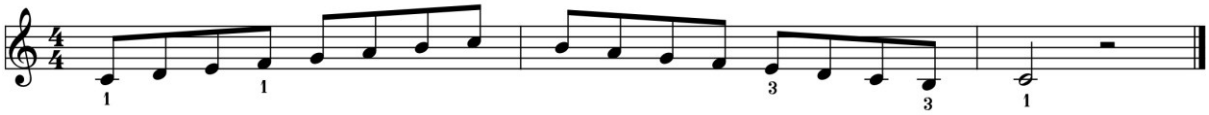


But, by simply adding a single note at the top or bottom of a one octave scale the timing computes much better and sounds much more musical as shown in examples **2** and **3**. Listen to these and notice how much better they sound!

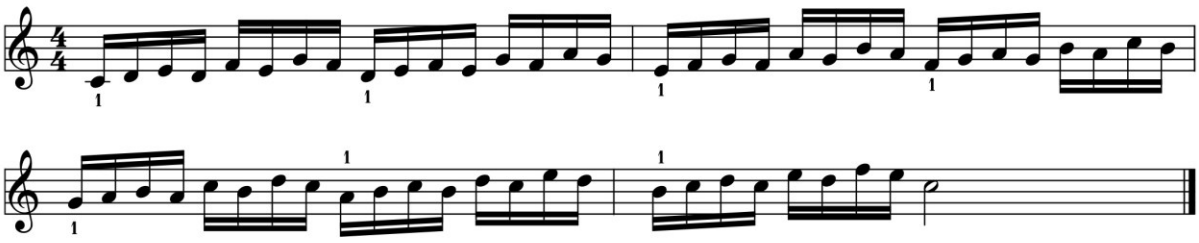
Example 2



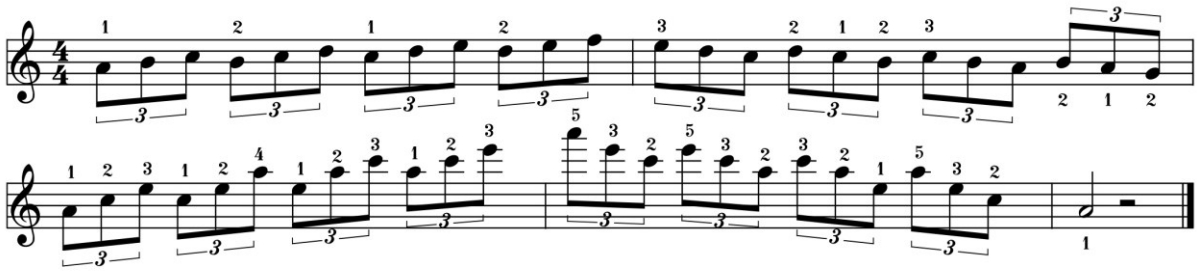
Example 3



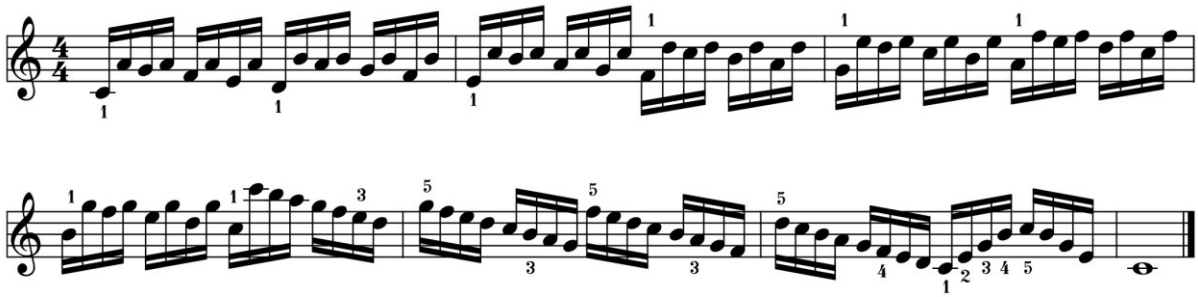
Example 4 shows a Hanon type progression giving plenty of practice for every finger.



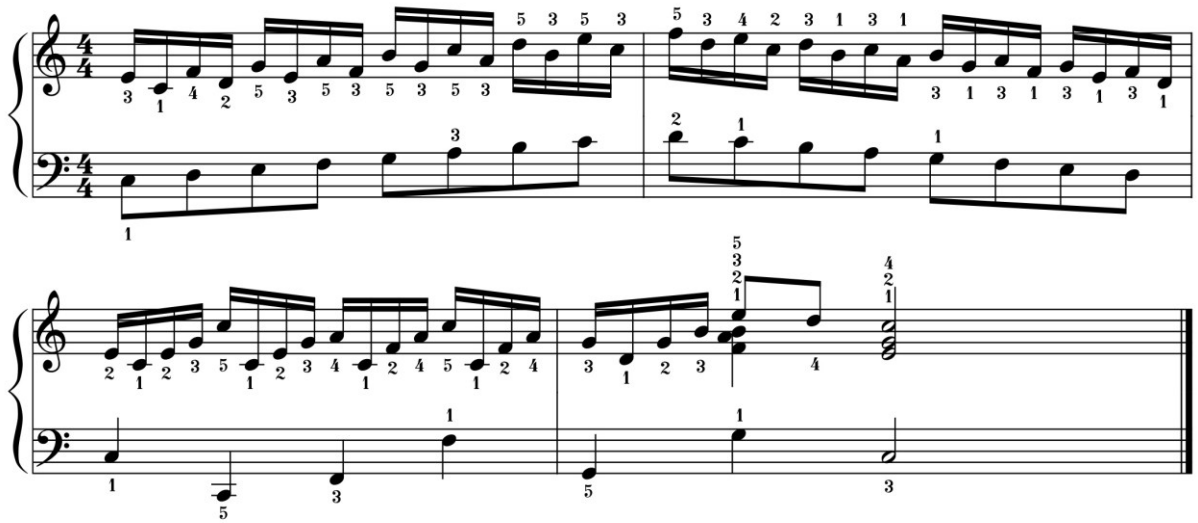
Example 5 shows the use of triplets, finishing with a nice **A minor** arpeggio - we'll be dealing with arpeggios in more detail later, but note that these are still part of the scale, with just a few notes missing!



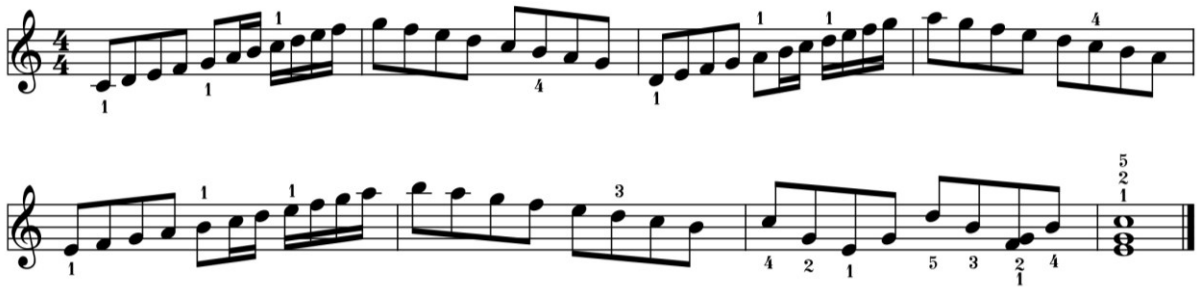
Example 6 begins with a Hanon type progression giving excellent practice for the fourth and fifth fingers followed by the descending **C major** scale in different modes finishing with a **CM7** arpeggio.



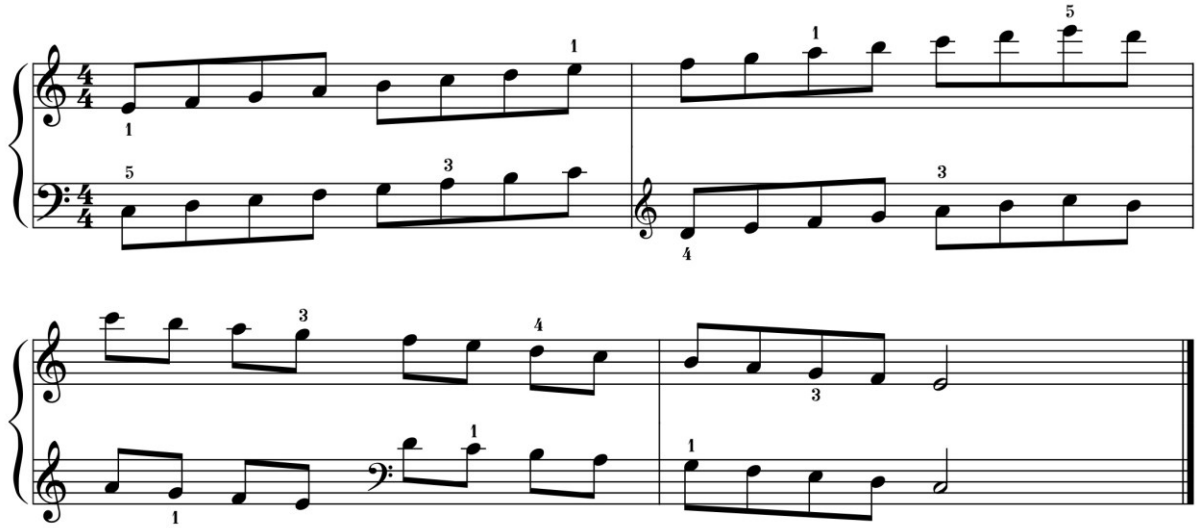
Example 7 shows the right hand playing the **C major** scale in broken thirds against the left hand *'normal'* scale followed by **C major**, **F major** and **G major** arpeggios and ending with the **G13 / G9 / C** chords.



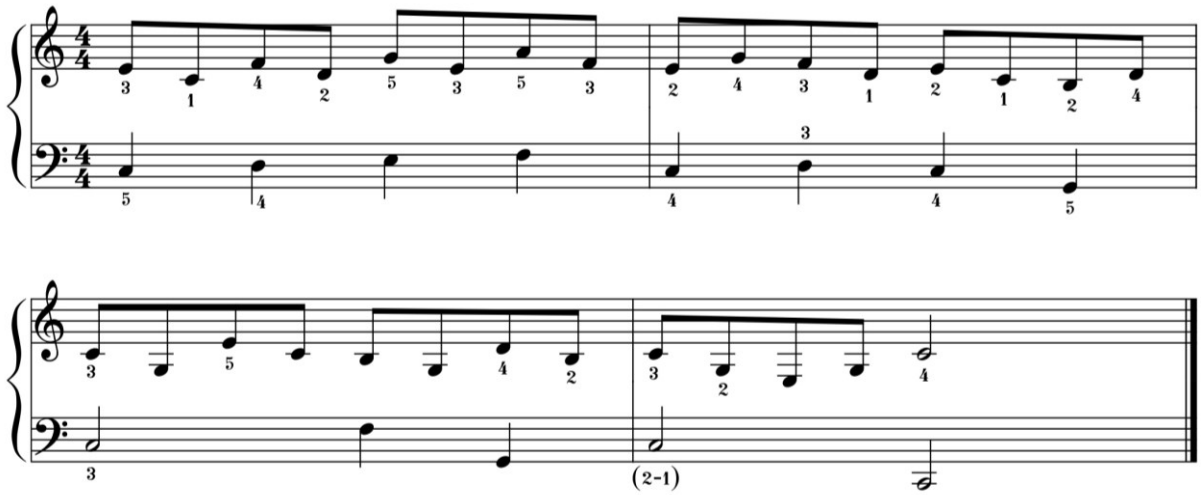
Example 8 shows the scale starting and ending on different pitches and with different time elements. The final chord is the first inversion of **C major** as shown previously.



Example 9 shows the **C major** scale for two octaves with the right hand starting and finishing a third above the root - sounds cool, and this is also one of the scales required in the later classical piano exams.



Example 10 As a result of just fiddling about with the **C major** scale I came up with this, which I use this as the intro and outro for one of my tunes *'First Love'*.

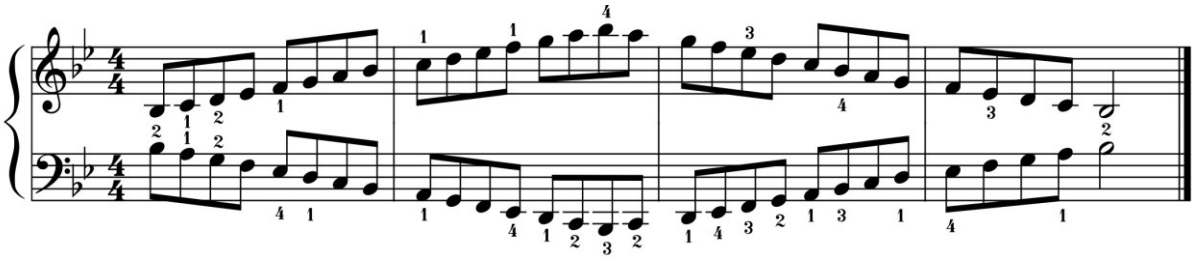


Example 11 This shows the **B flat major** scale in *'contrary'* motion. Previously I showed you this in **C major** which is *fairly* simple. But as we start adding more black notes this scale starts to get more difficult.

As I said earlier, it's a good idea to learn all the scales played this way as well as in *'similar'* motion. This will teach your hands *'independence'*. These are also required in the classical exams at all grades - major and harmonic minor, starting with the easiest at grade 1.

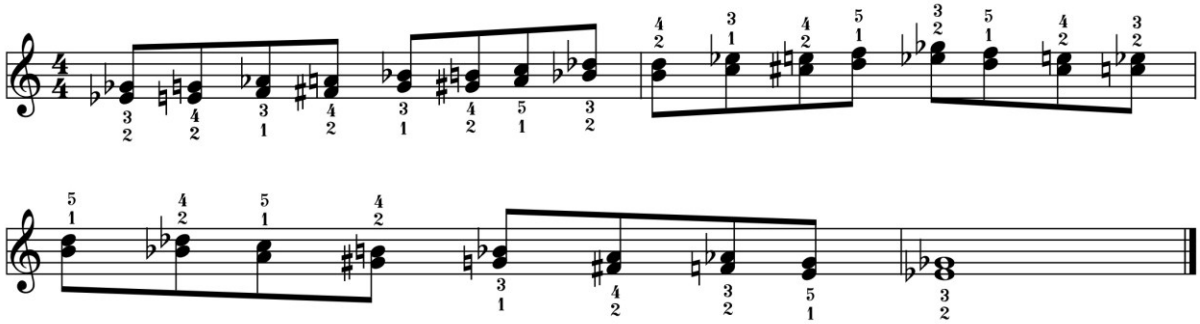
I can honestly say that you will never truly understand the scales until you practice them this way. A useful tip is to first practice the left hand descending then ascending before adding the right hand.

Incidentally, both hands start and finish this scale using the 2nd finger.



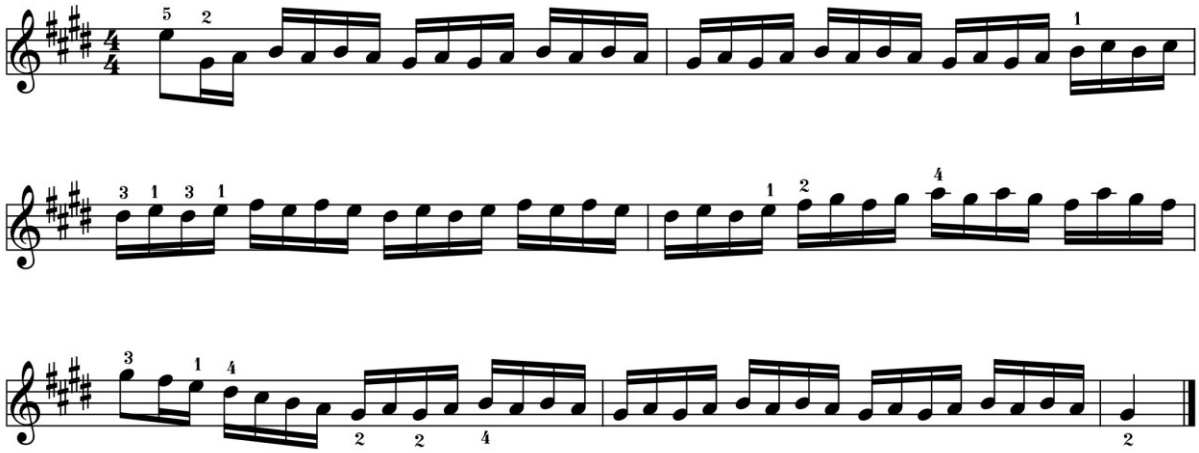
Example 12 This shows the chromatic scale in thirds for the right hand which is certainly one of the most difficult keyboard scales and is only required at the grade 8 ABSRM (final) exam. So, I'll be honest, you're not going to be able to play this without some serious practice. But as with all the exercises if you play the first note slowly, then the next etc., it will all come together. The same will work here but as the notes are in pairs, it may take you maybe a few weeks or longer to learn.

Notice that the 2nd finger *slides* from the **E flat** to the **E natural** and again from the **B flat** to **B natural** when ascending and the **F sharp** to **F natural** and **C sharp** to **C natural** when descending.

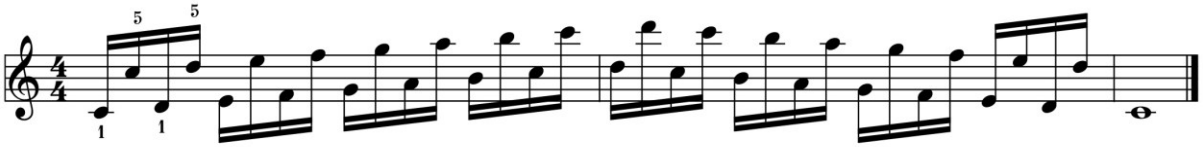


This little fingering trick makes this scale possible for mortals - *but don't tell anyone as it's a secret!*

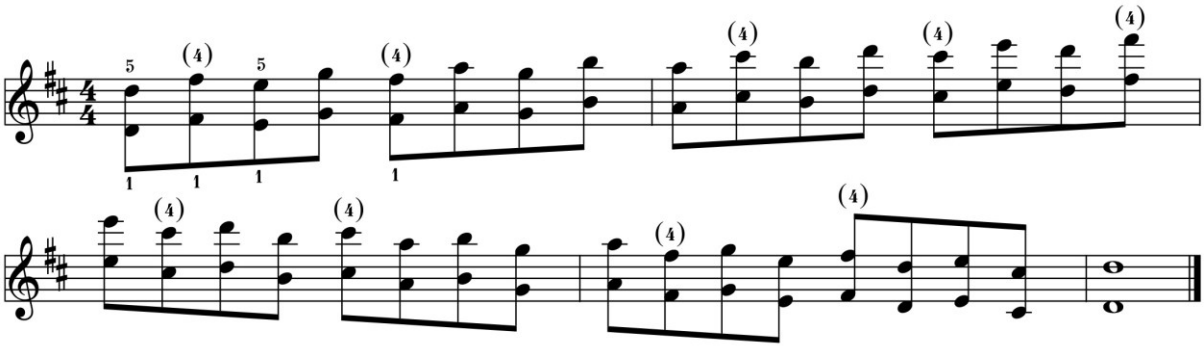
Example 13 Shows what Vivaldi did by messing with the **E major** scale in his *'Four Seasons'*. Actually, this is very simple, but it took a genius to come up with it!



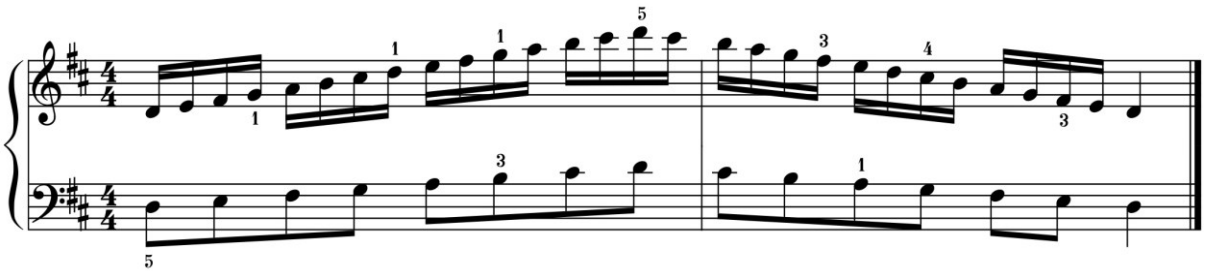
Example 14 Shows the **C major** scale for one octave (plus one extra note at the top) in broken octaves. This is an extremely useful exercise, but don't overdo it as it can also cause finger and wrist strain. Shown here for the right hand, but of course could also be practiced with the left hand and hands both together - *eventually!* When practicing in other keys the 4th finger can be used on the black notes if required.



Example 15 Shows a variation of the **D major** scale for one octave (plus a few extra notes) in octaves for the right hand. As with the previous example, don't overdo it. Notice that the 4th finger is used on the black notes (optional - I usually prefer not to), which could be the same if using the left hand but, in this case, would be on the lower notes.



Example 16 shows the **D major** scale for one octave in the left hand against two octaves at twice the speed in the right hand.



So of course, the possibilities are infinite which is why original compositions are forever being created.

If you want to see a few more examples of what can be done by messing with scales look at my *'Rhythmic Scales'* book see *'further reading'*.

The audio link for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/scales_full.html .

Quick link back to Part 1

Roland RD2000 Stage Piano - 88 Keys

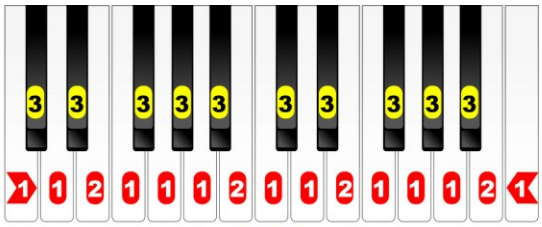
This is one of the best stage pianos available. I'm really torn between this and my Korg Kronos. For home use perhaps consider the Roland FP 90x which is almost the same but with not quite so many 'bells and whistles'!

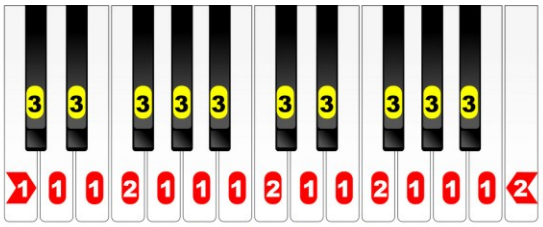
Roland E A7 Arranger - 61 keys

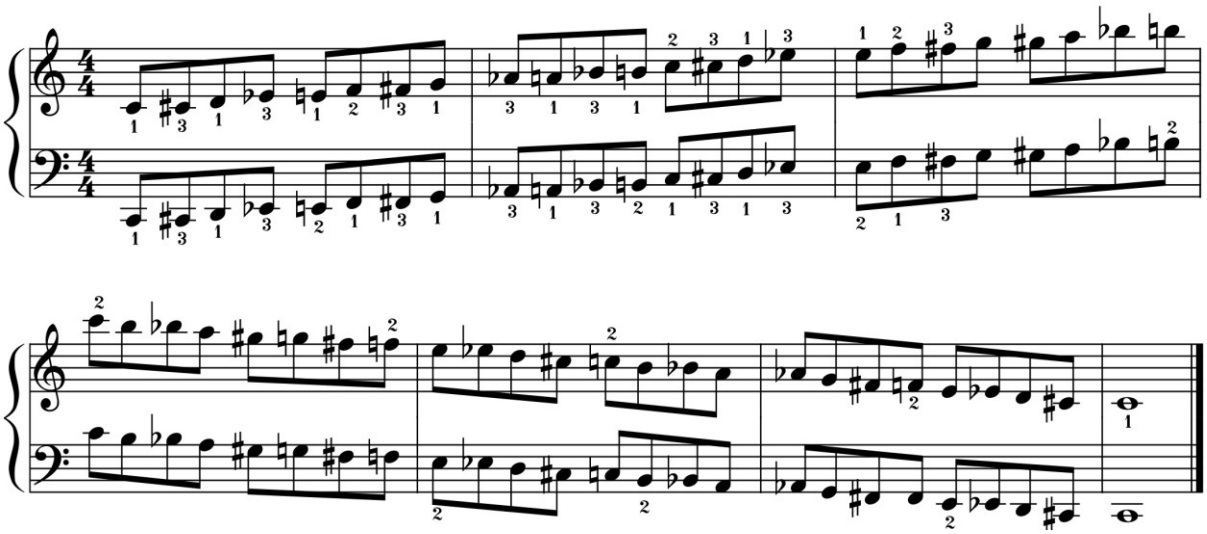
Mid to high range arranger. Great sounds and build quality!

The Chromatic Scale

The chromatic scale as already shown in part one is one on its own as it hits every note (black and white) in order. It's shown here starting and finishing on **C** for two octaves with left-hand and right-hand fingering. The intervals between each note ascending and descending is a semitone - *half step US.*



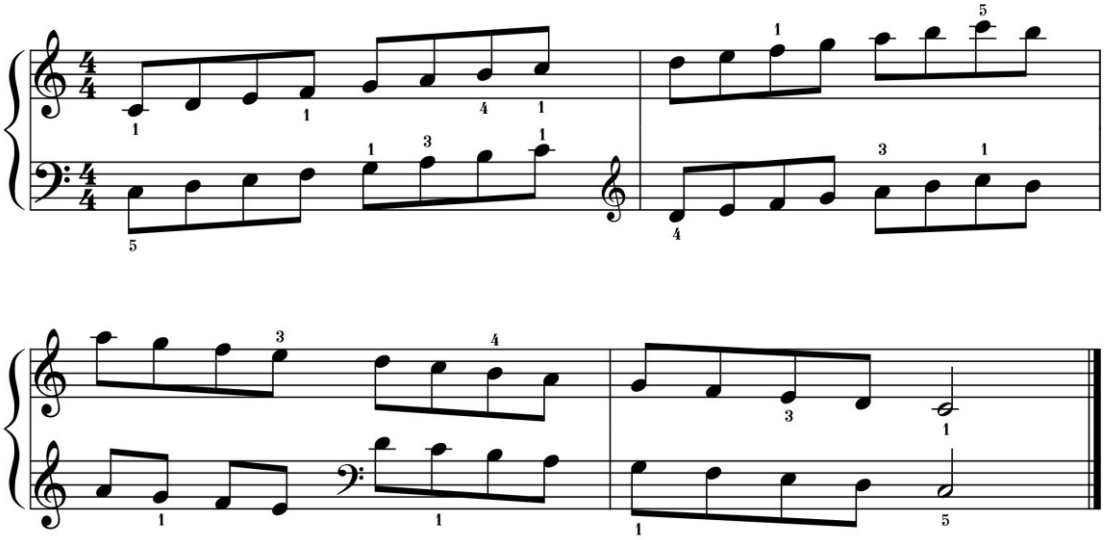




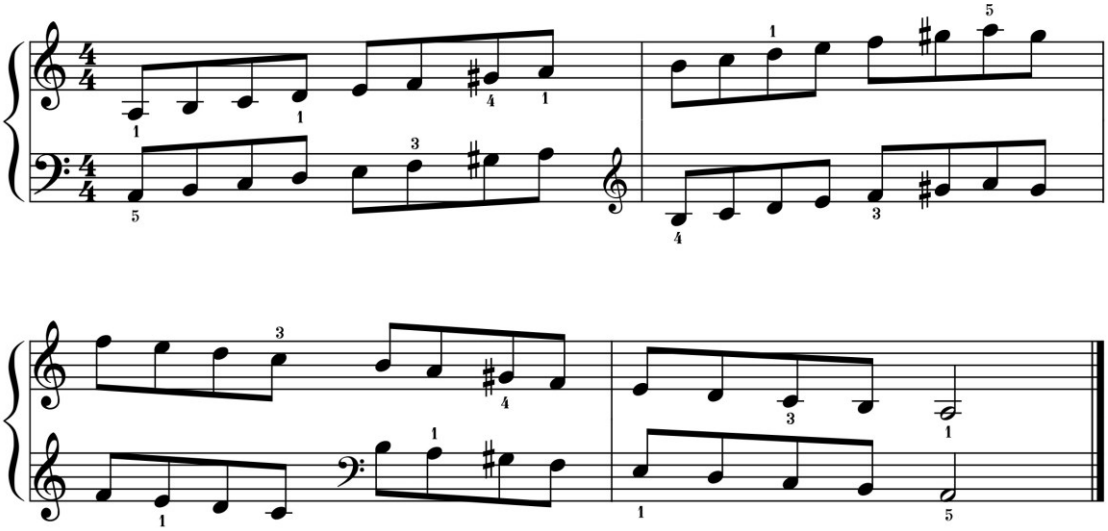
Ideally this scale should be practiced for two or more octaves both staccato and legato starting and finishing on various notes. The fingering remains the same regardless of which note you start on.

The trick to learning this scale easily is to remember where the **2nd** fingers go - **F** and **C** in the right hand and **E** and **B** in the left hand!

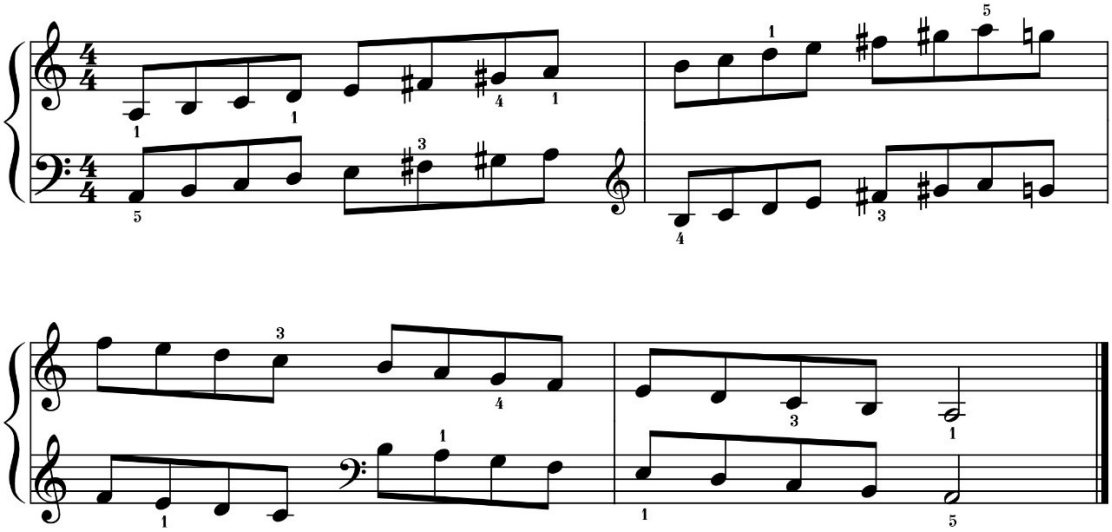
C major Scale



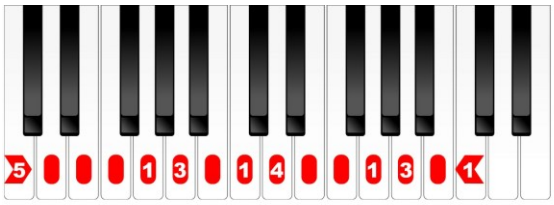
A Harmonic Minor Scale



A Melodic Minor Scale

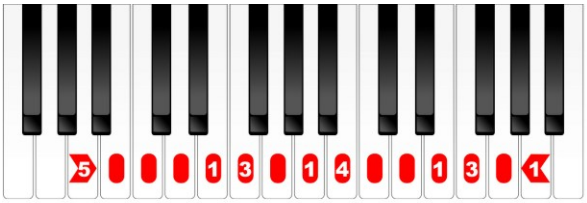


C Major



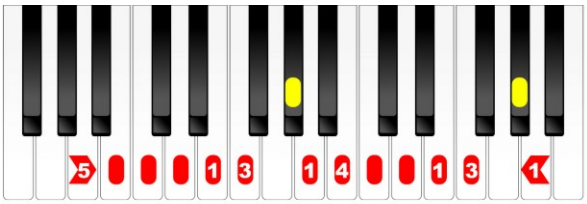
Left Hand | Right Hand

A Natural Minor



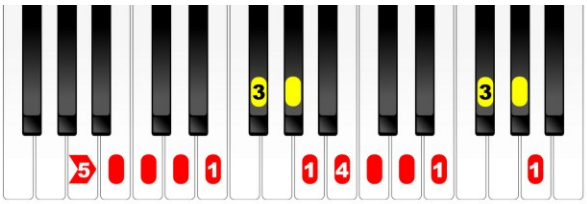
Left Hand | Right Hand

A Harmonic Minor



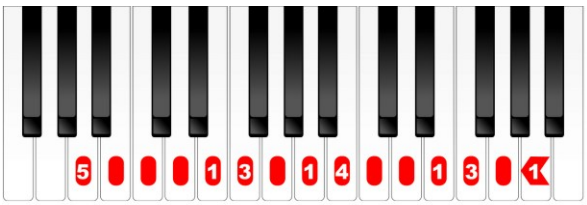
Left Hand | Right Hand

A Melodic Minor (Ascending)



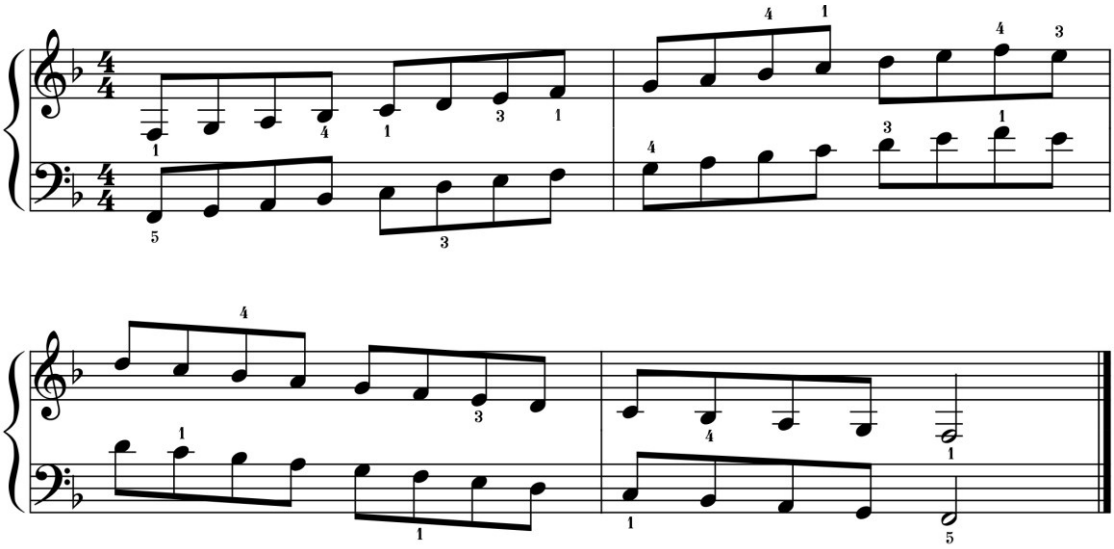
Left Hand | Right Hand

A Melodic Minor (Descending)

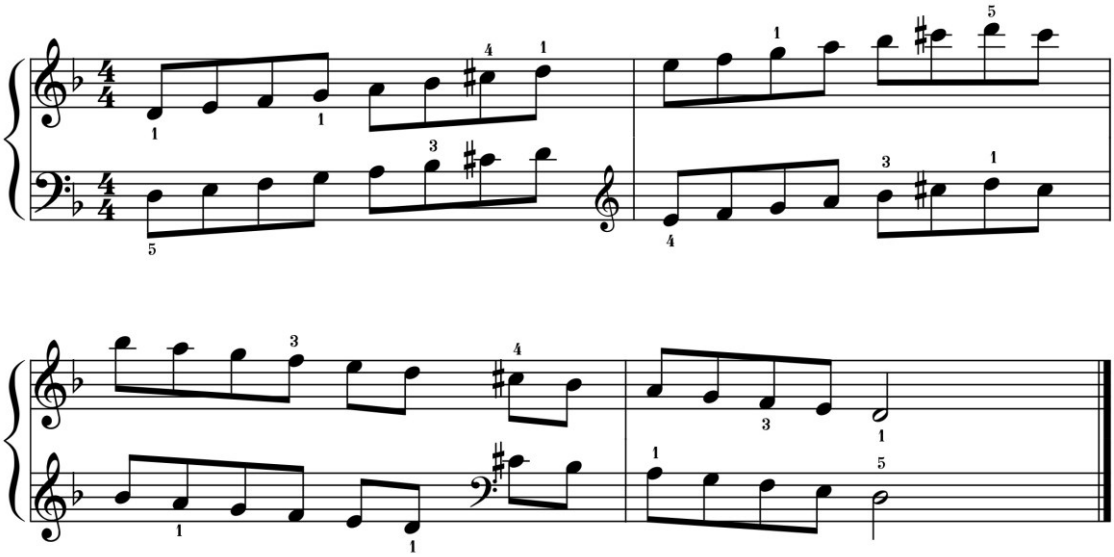


Left Hand | Right Hand

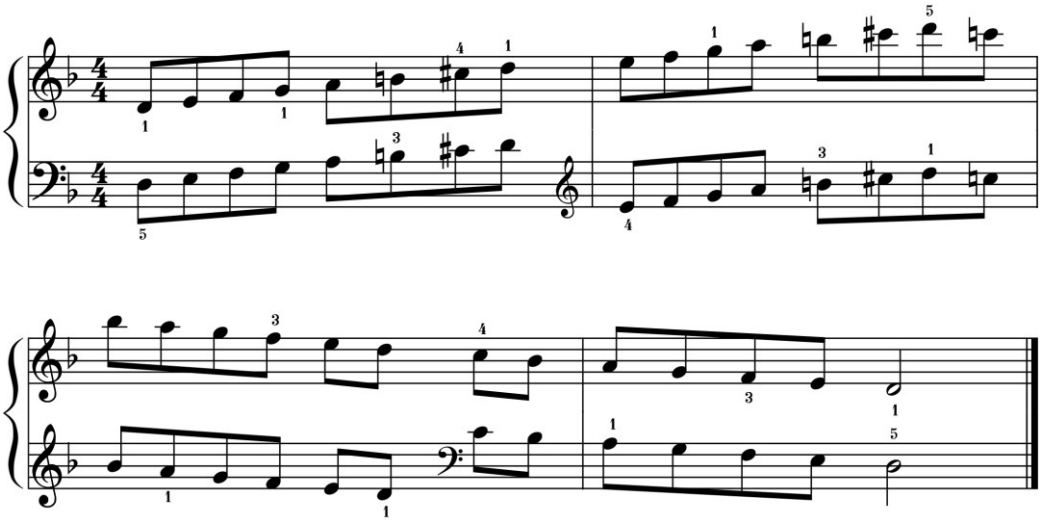
F major Scale



D Harmonic Minor Scale

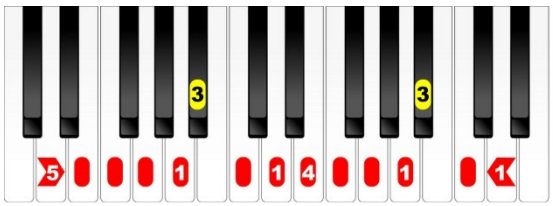


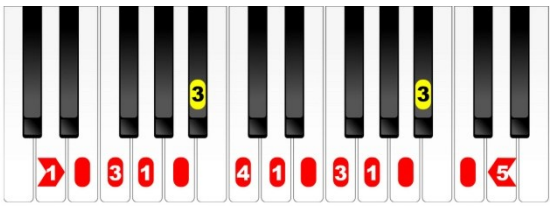
D Melodic Minor Scale



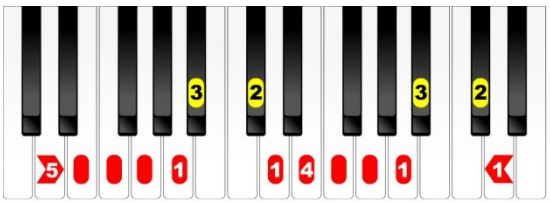
F Major

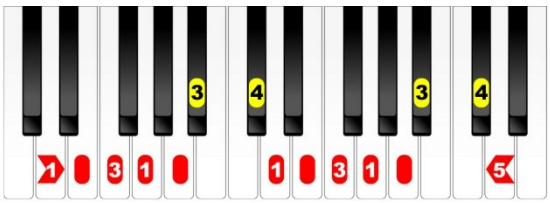
D Natural Minor



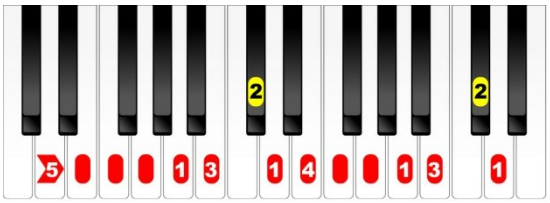


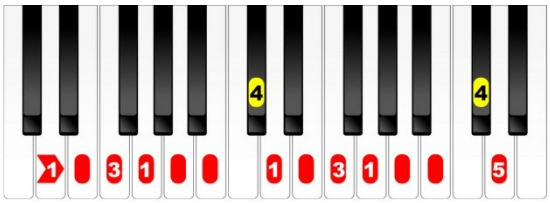
D Harmonic Minor



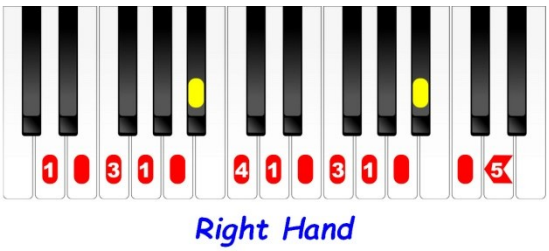


D Melodic Minor (Ascending)

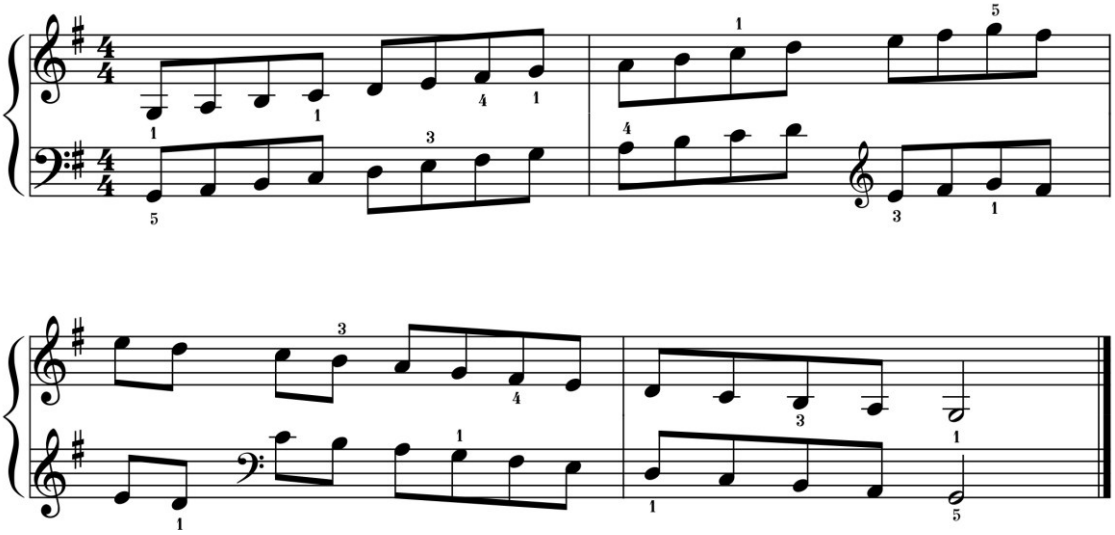




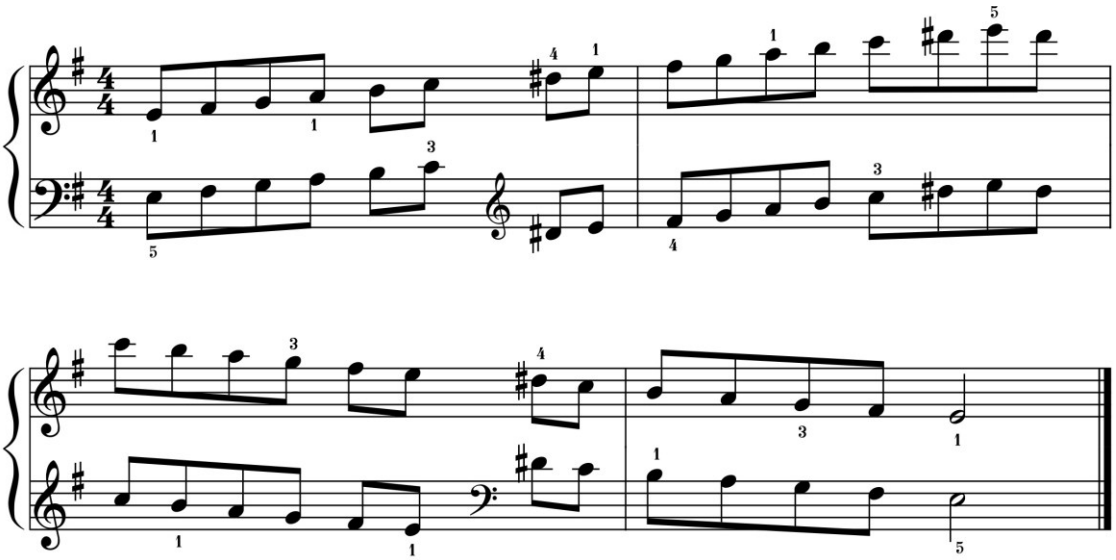
D Melodic Minor (Descending)



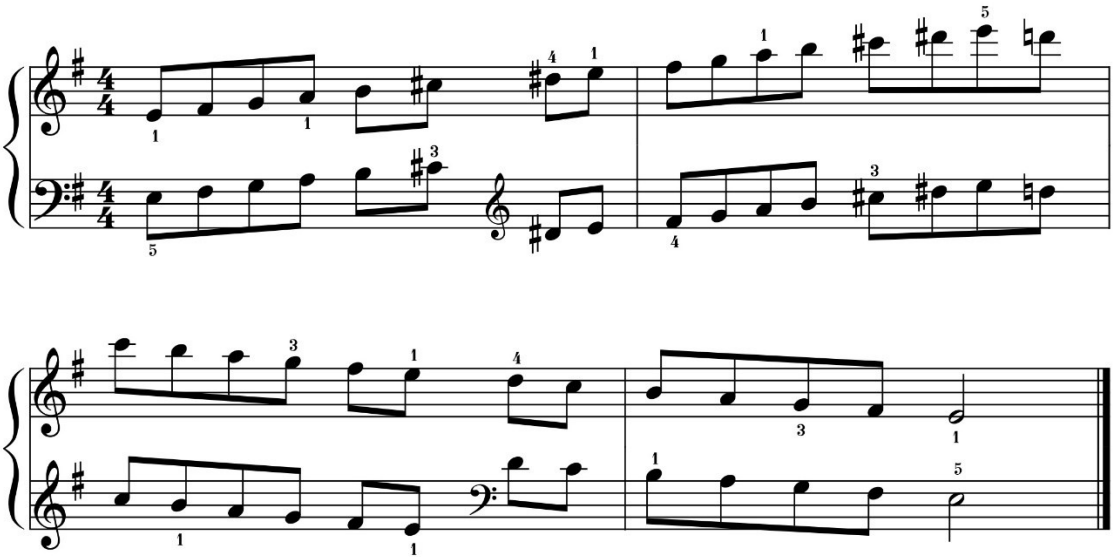
G major Scale



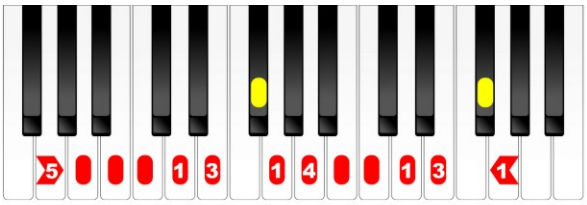
E Harmonic Minor Scale

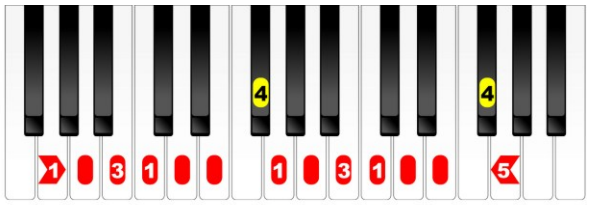


E Melodic Minor Scale

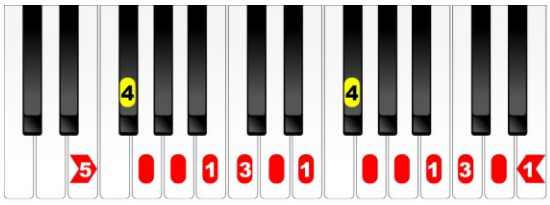


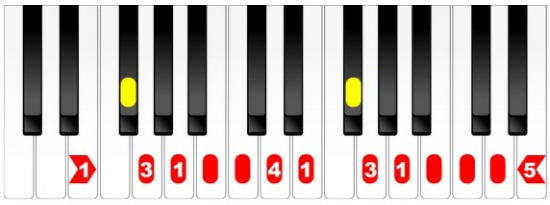
G Major



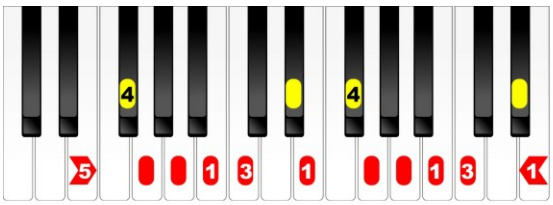


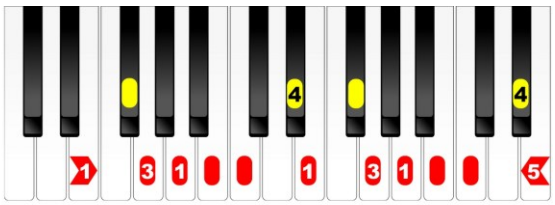
E Natural Minor



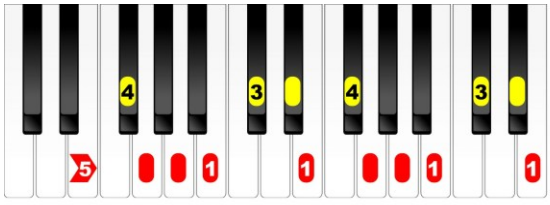


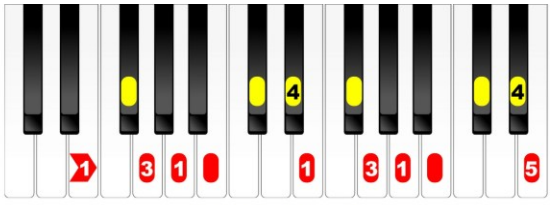
E Harmonic Minor



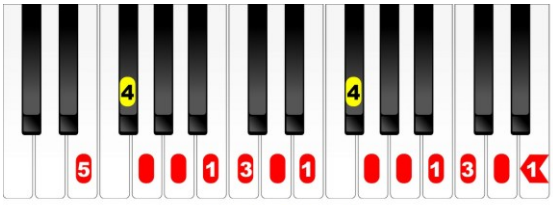


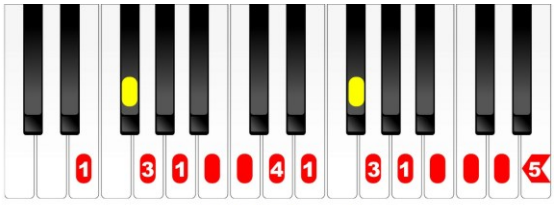
E Melodic Minor (Ascending)



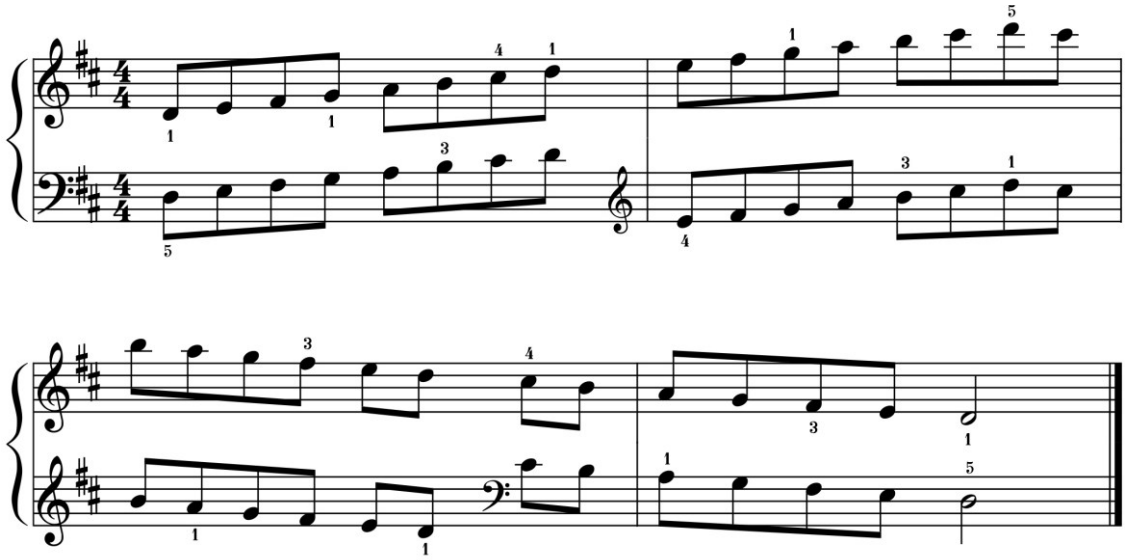


E Melodic Minor (Descending)

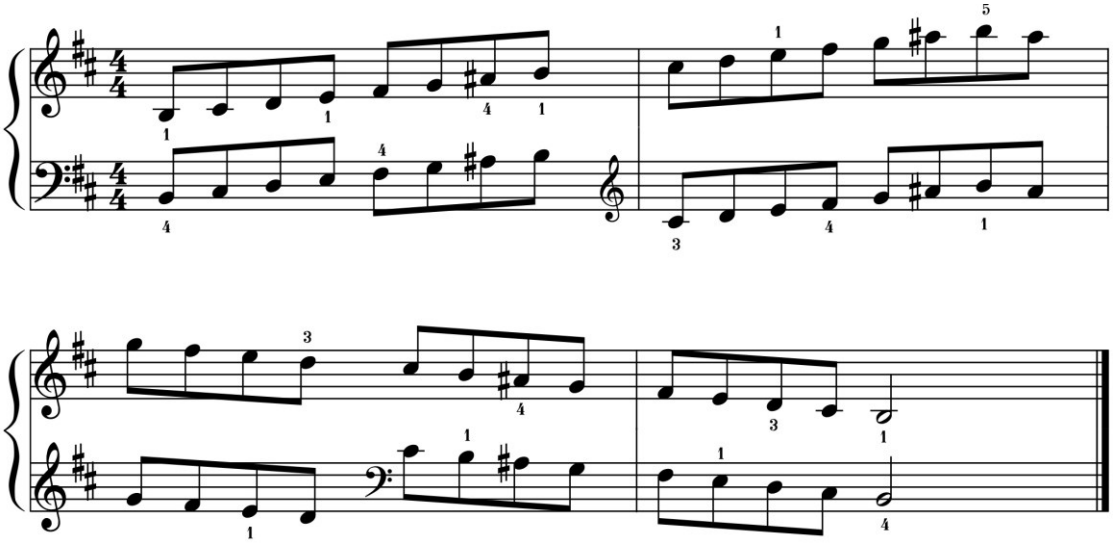




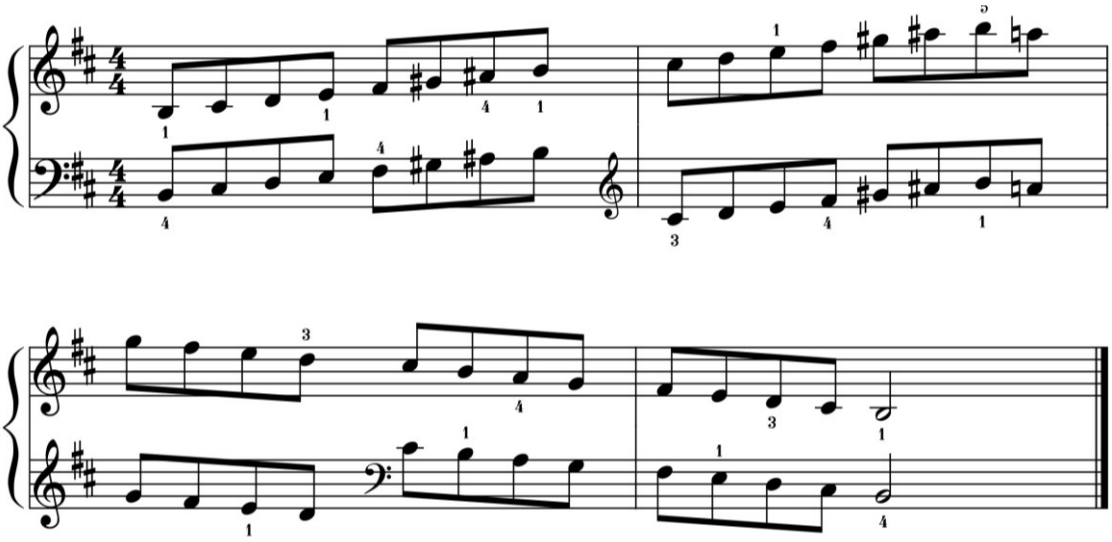
D Major Scale



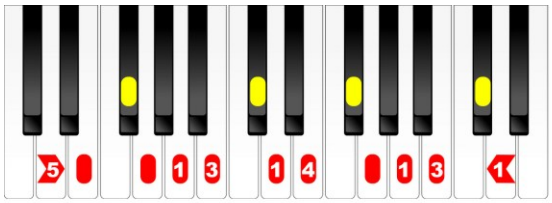
B Harmonic Minor Scale



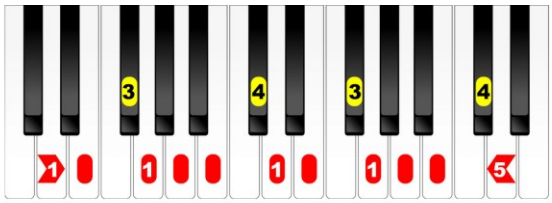
B Melodic Minor Scale



D Major

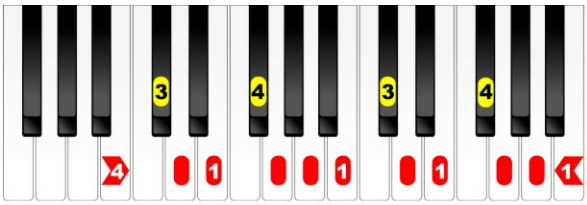


Left Hand

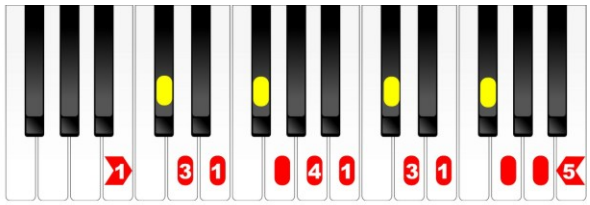


Right Hand

B Natural Minor

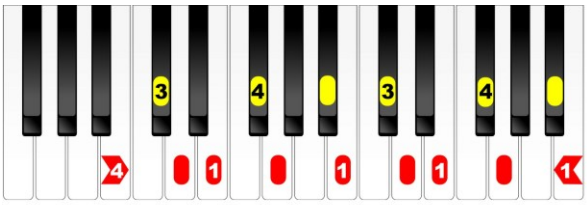


Left Hand

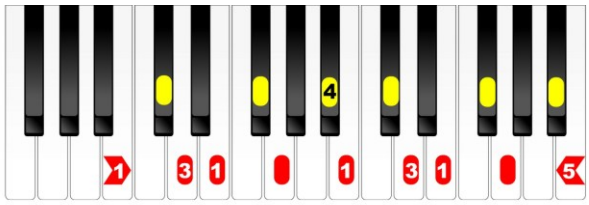


Right Hand

B Harmonic Minor

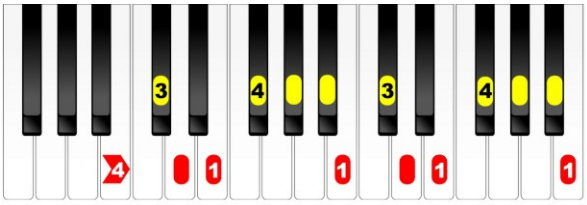


Left Hand

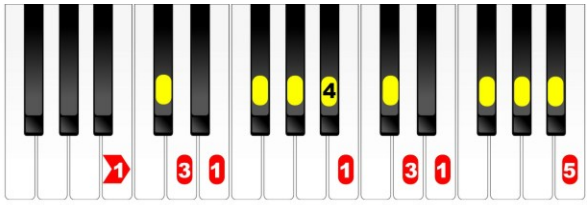


Right Hand

B Melodic Minor (Ascending)

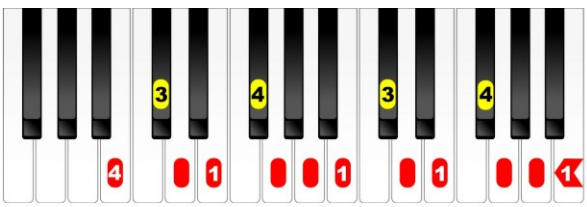


Left Hand

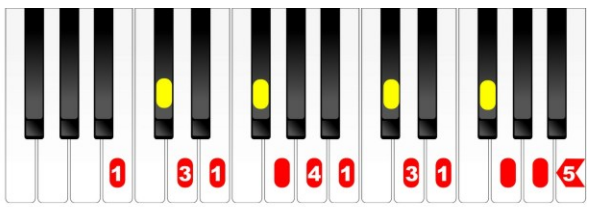


Right Hand

B Melodic Minor (Descending)

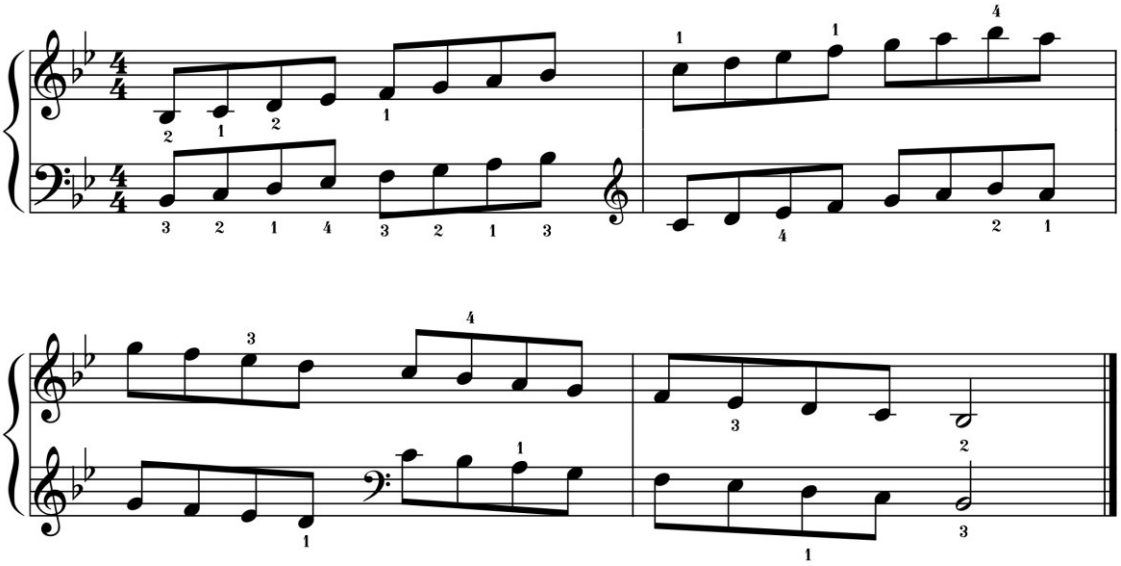


Left Hand

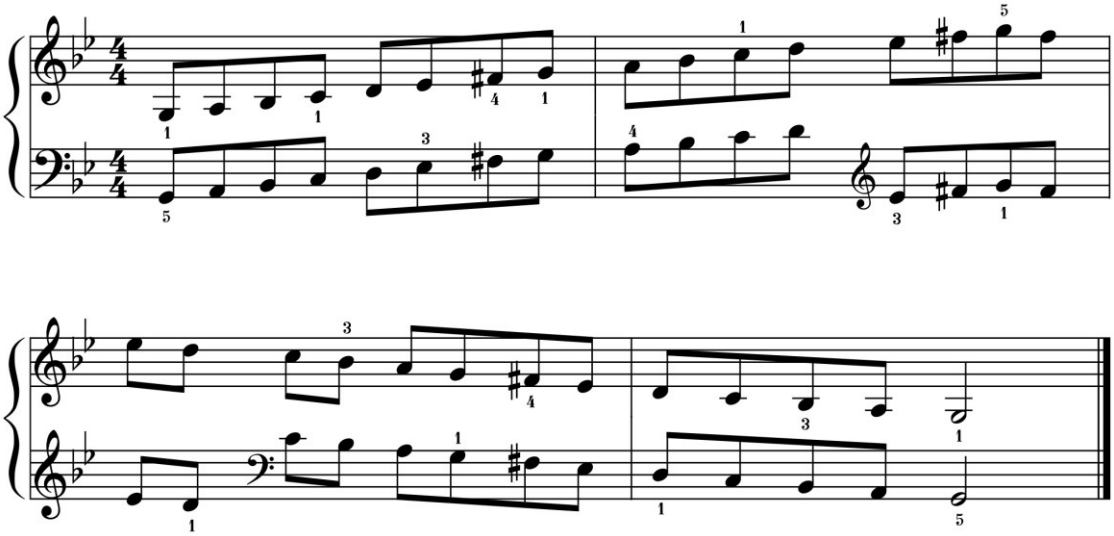


Right Hand

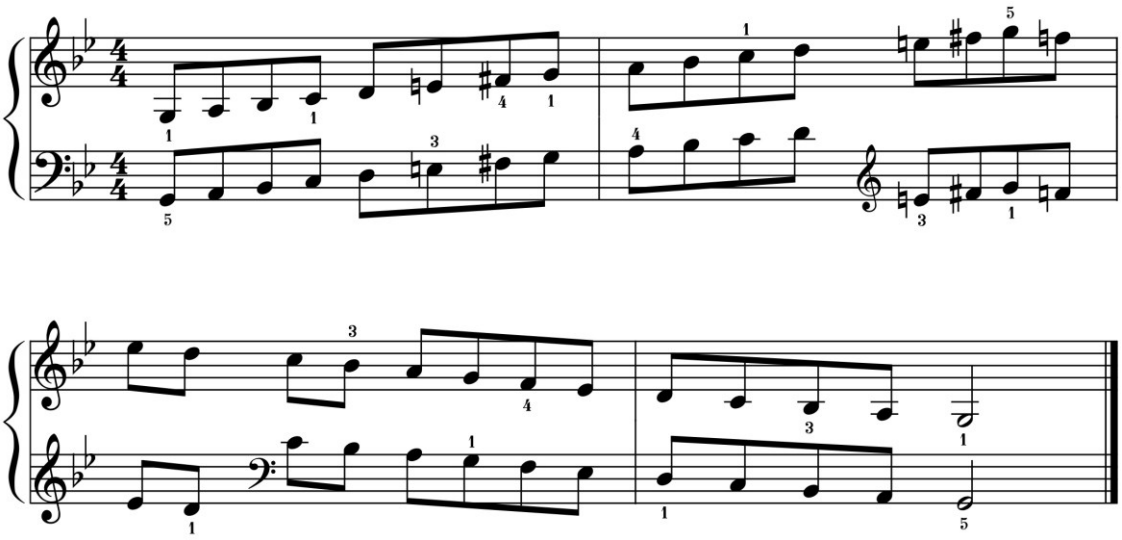
B♭ Major Scales



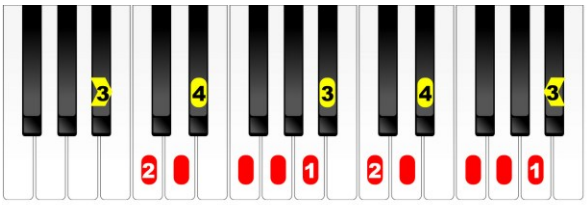
G Harmonic Minor Scale



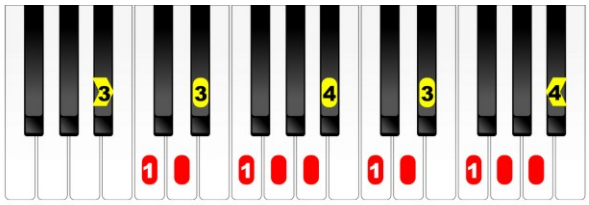
G Melodic Minor Scale



B♭ Major

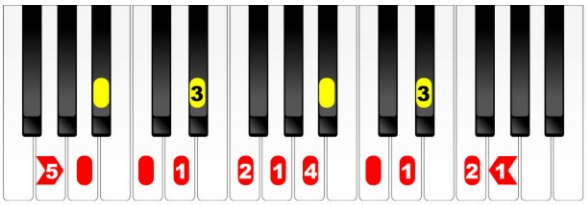


Left Hand

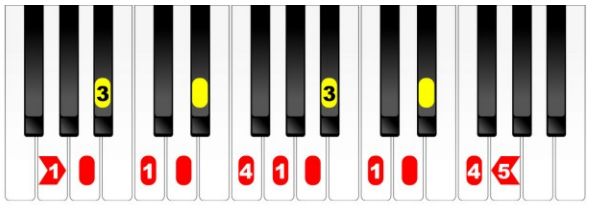


Right Hand

G Natural Minor

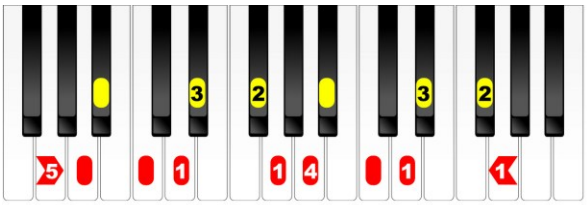


Left Hand

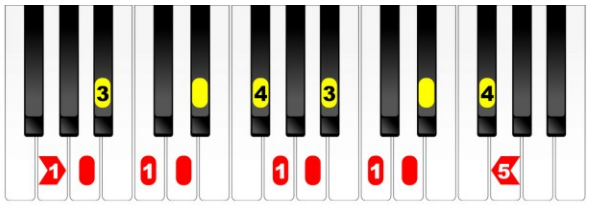


Right Hand

G Harmonic Minor

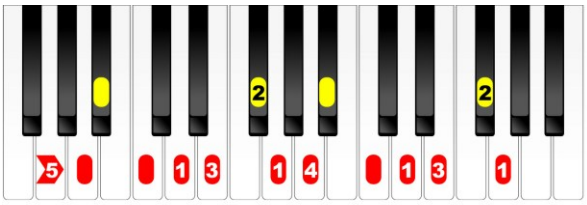


Left Hand

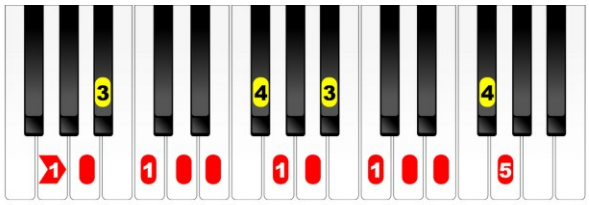


Right Hand

G Melodic Minor (Ascending)

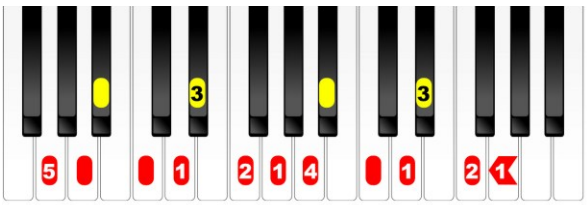


Left Hand

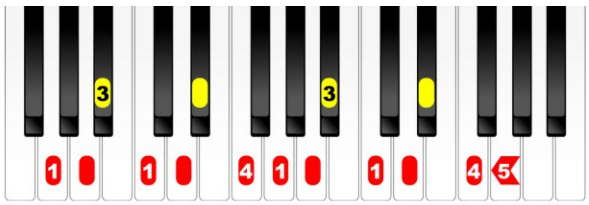


Right Hand

G Melodic Minor (Descending)

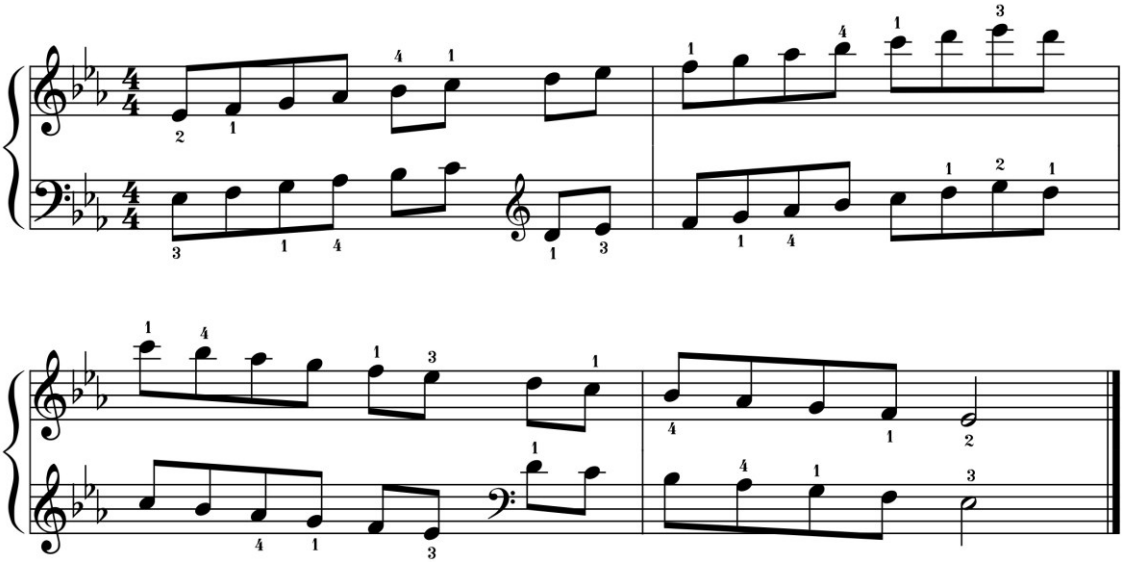


Left Hand

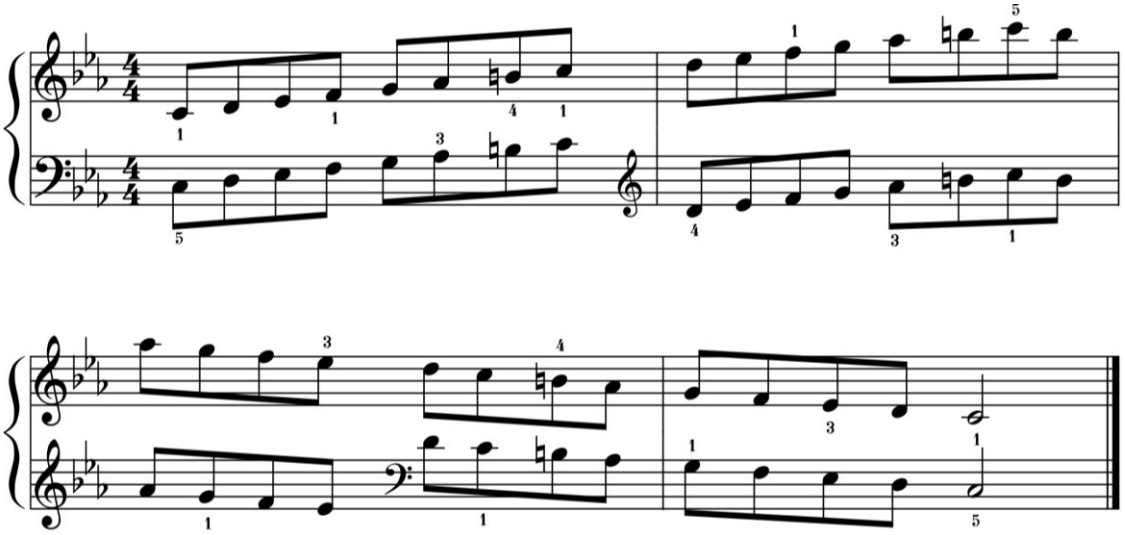


Right Hand

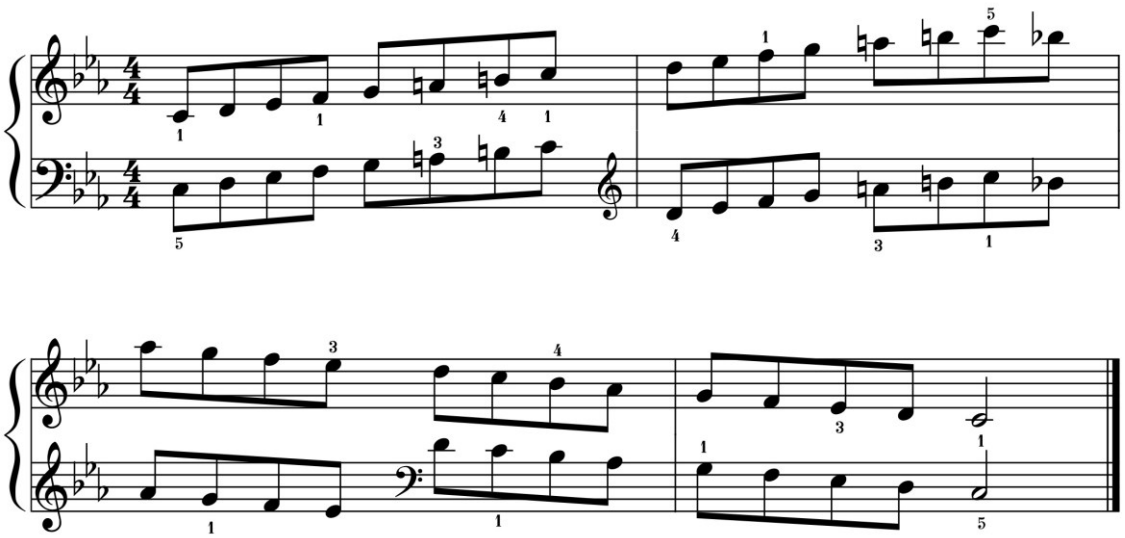
E♭ Major Scales



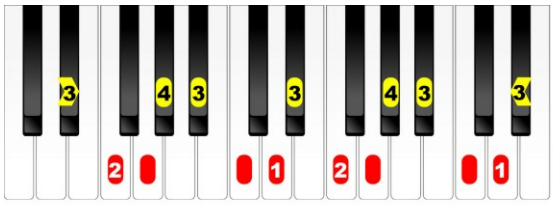
C Harmonic Minor Scale



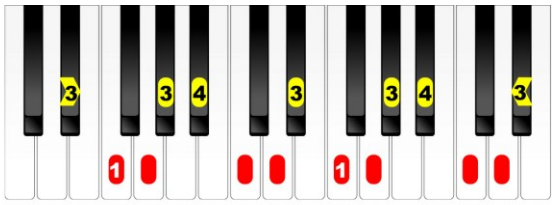
C Melodic Minor Scale



E♭ Major

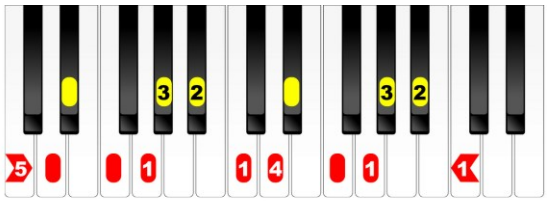


Left Hand

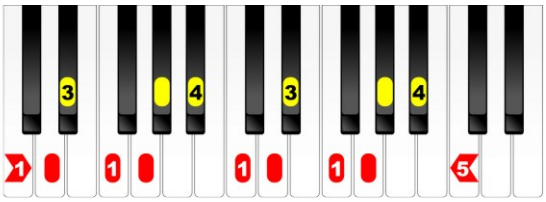


Right Hand

C Natural Minor

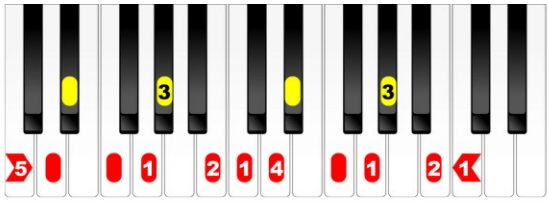


Left Hand

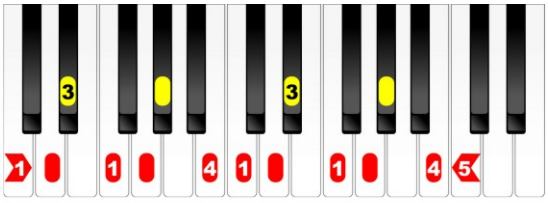


Right Hand

C Harmonic Minor

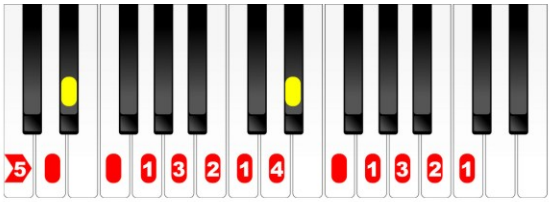


Left Hand

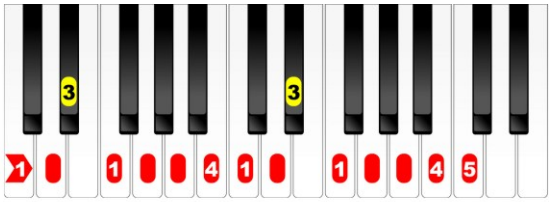


Right Hand

C Melodic Minor (Ascending)

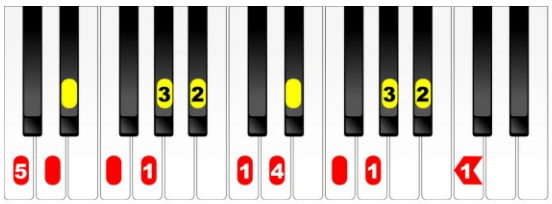


Left Hand

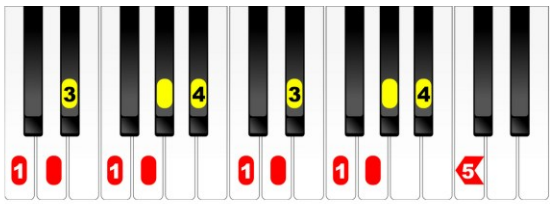


Right Hand

C Melodic Minor (Descending)

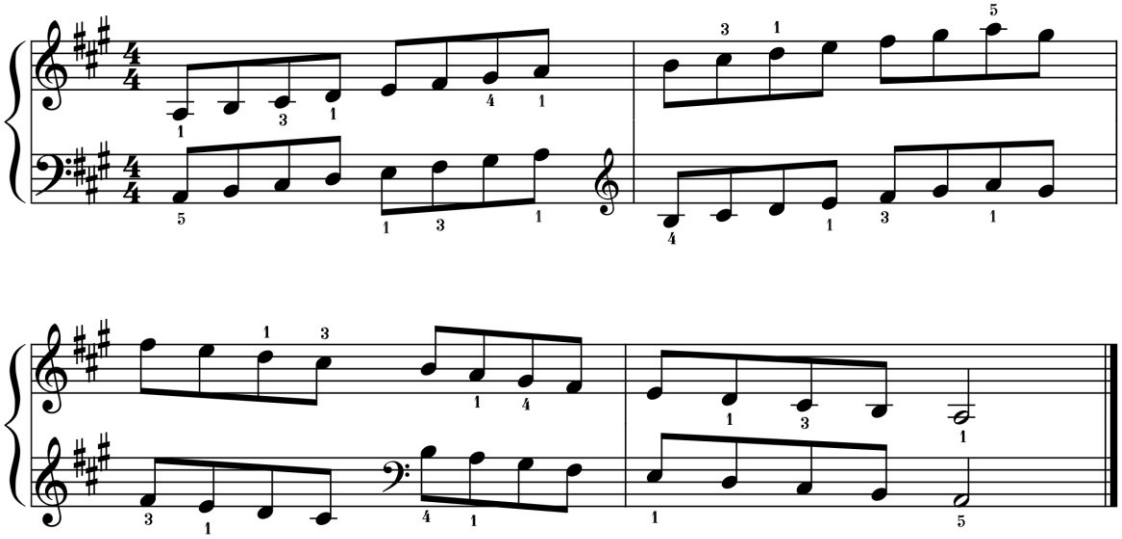


Left Hand

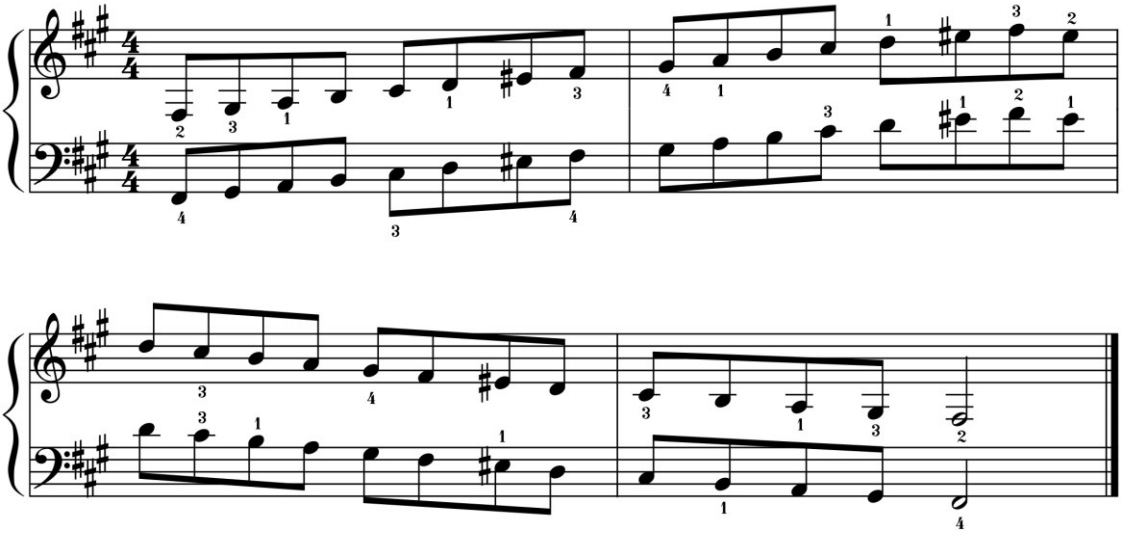


Right Hand

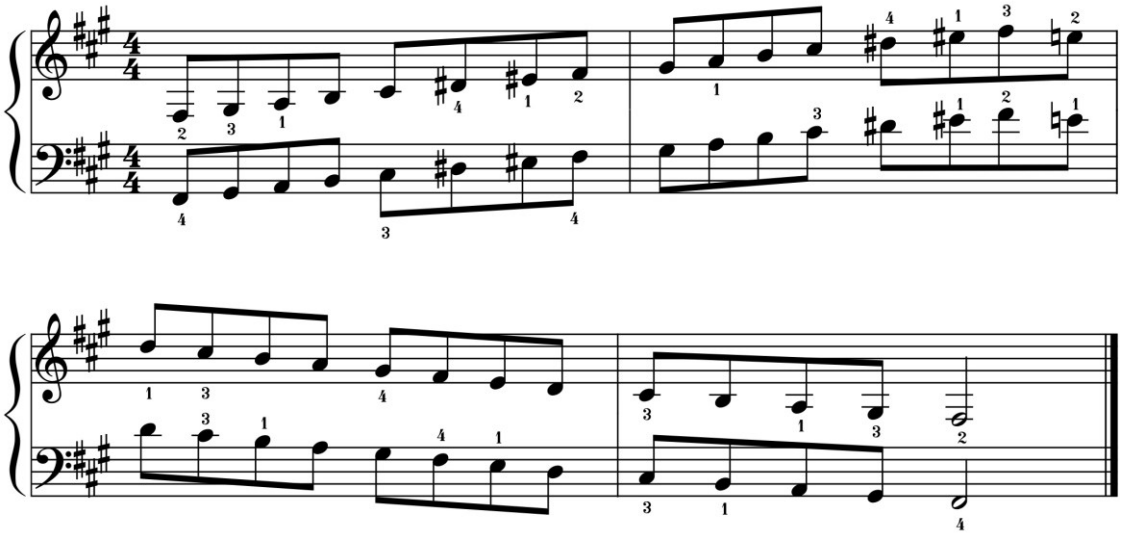
A Major Scales



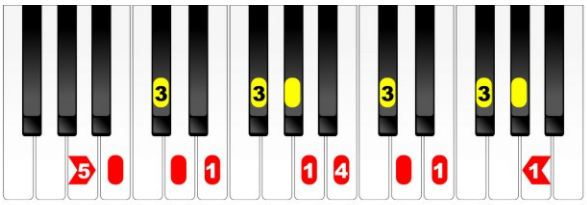
F# Harmonic Minor Scale



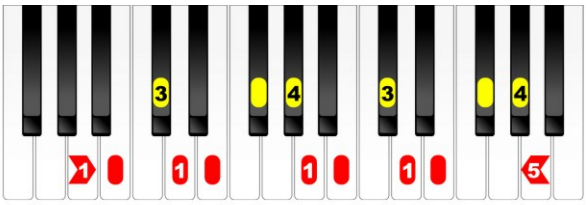
F# Melodic Minor Scale



A Major

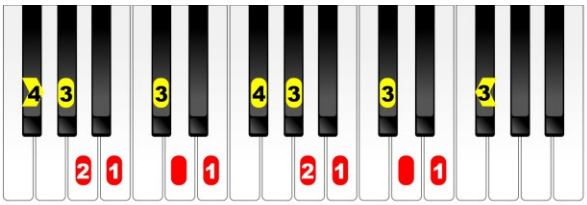


Left Hand

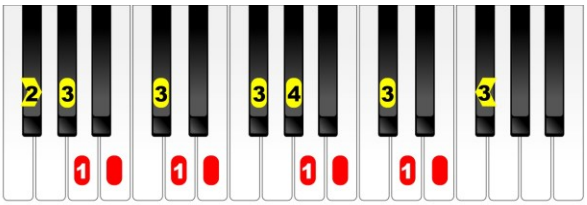


Right Hand

F# Natural Minor

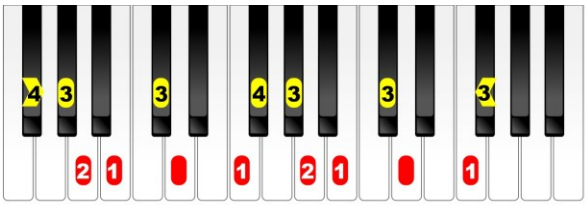


Left Hand

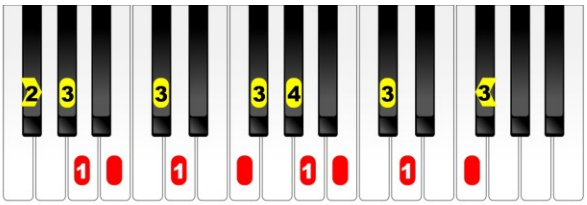


Right Hand

F# Harmonic Minor

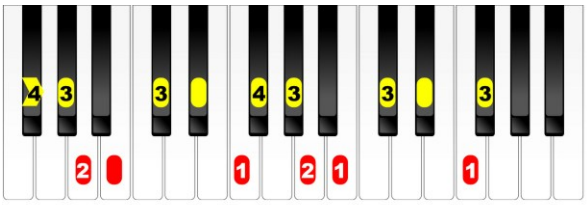


Left Hand

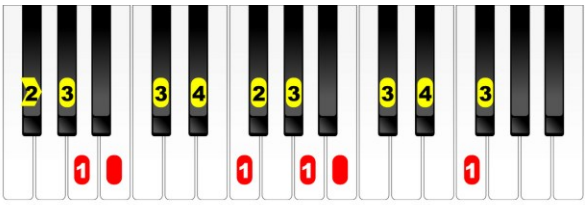


Right Hand

F# Melodic Minor (Ascending)

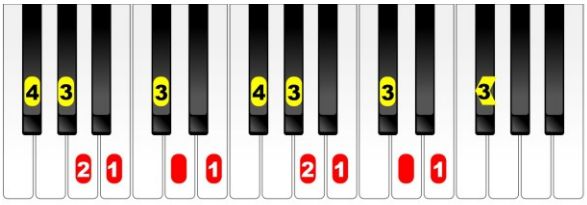


Left Hand

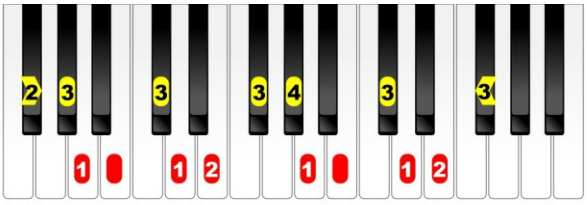


Right Hand

F# Melodic Minor (Descending)

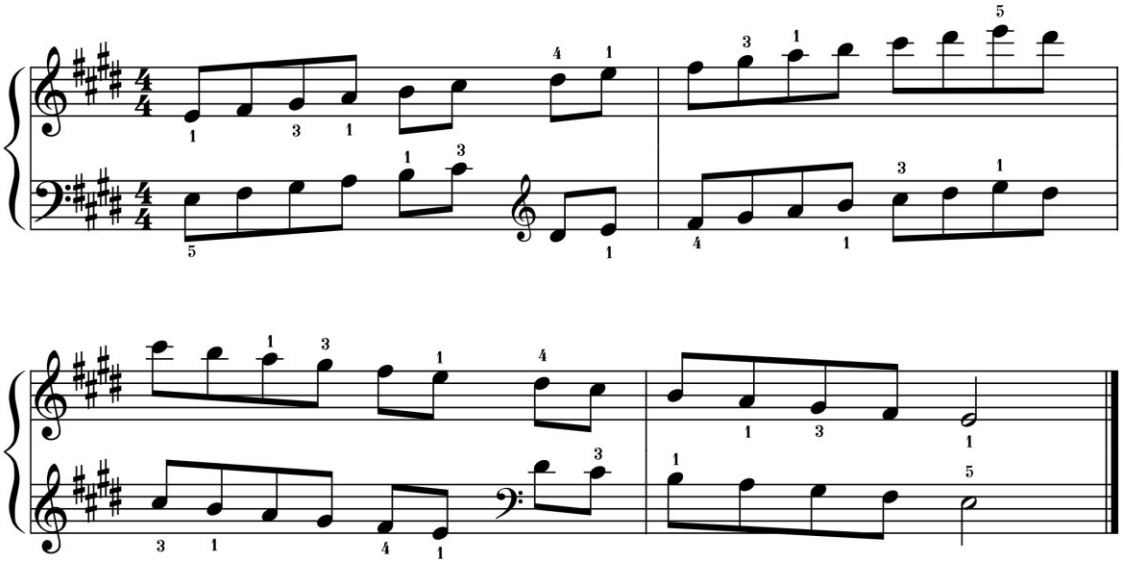


Left Hand

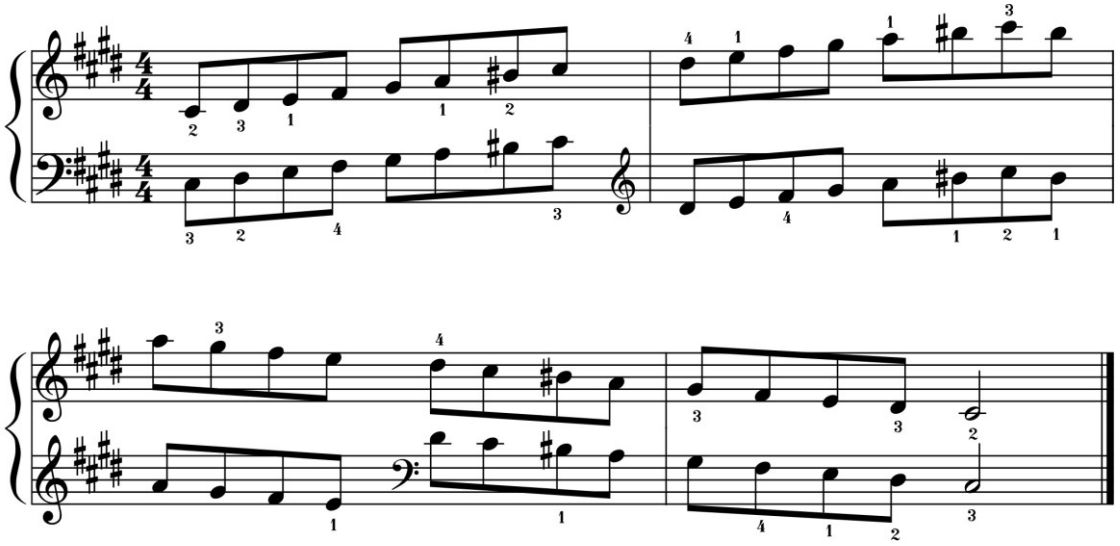


Right Hand

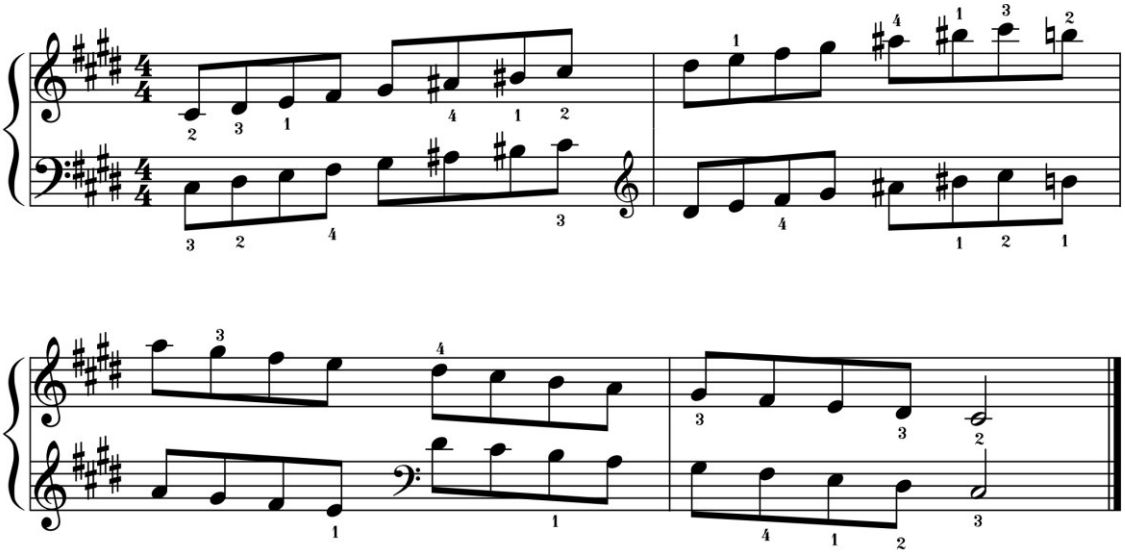
E Major Scales



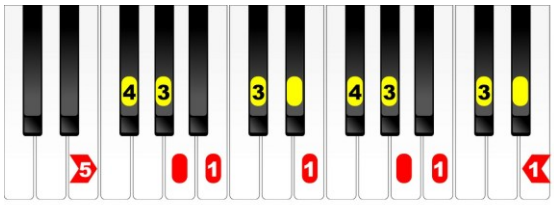
C# Harmonic Minor Scale



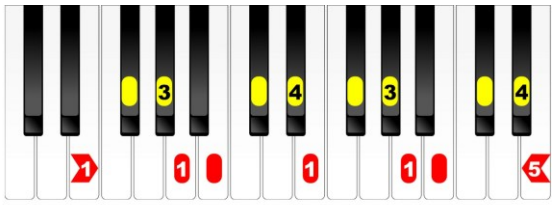
C# Melodic Minor Scale



E Major

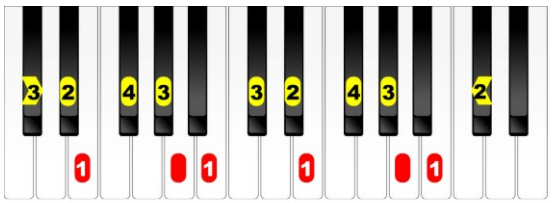


Left Hand

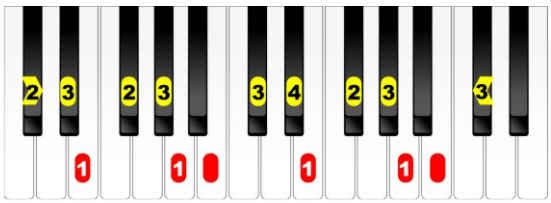


Right Hand

C# Natural Minor

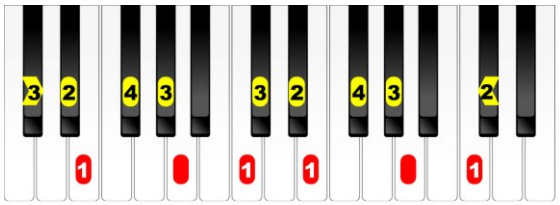


Left Hand

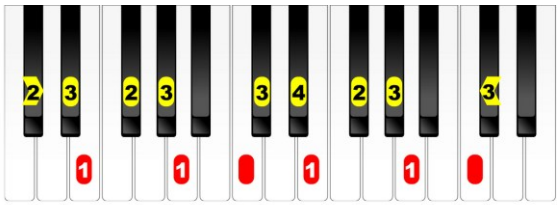


Right Hand

C# Harmonic Minor

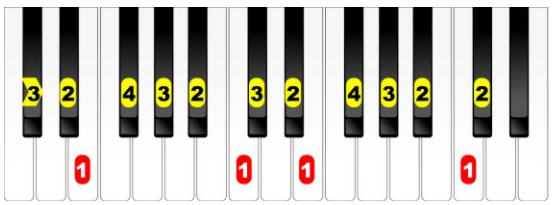


Left Hand

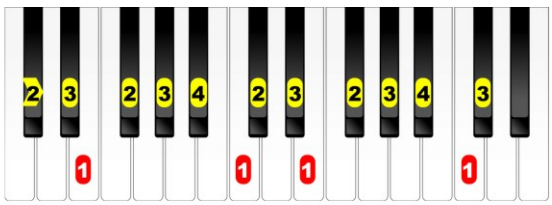


Right Hand

C# Melodic Minor (Ascending)

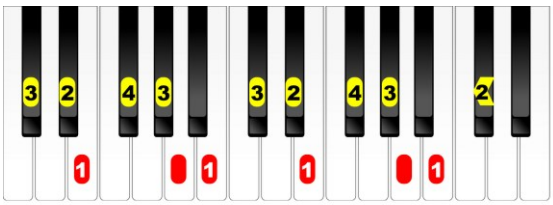


Left Hand

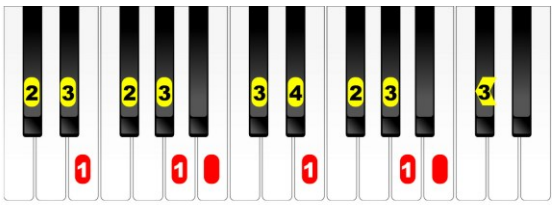


Right Hand

C# Melodic Minor (Descending)

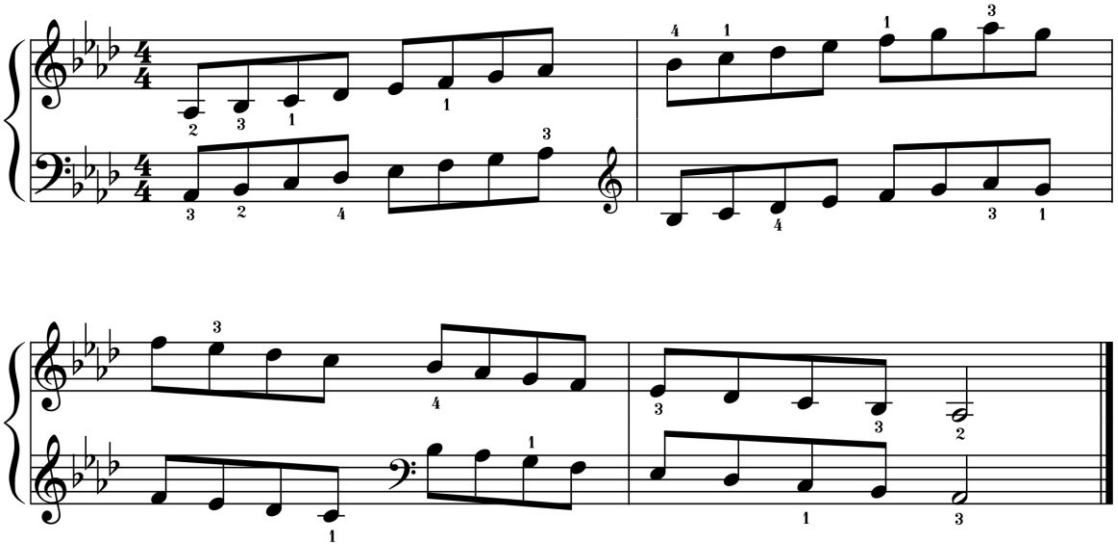


Left Hand

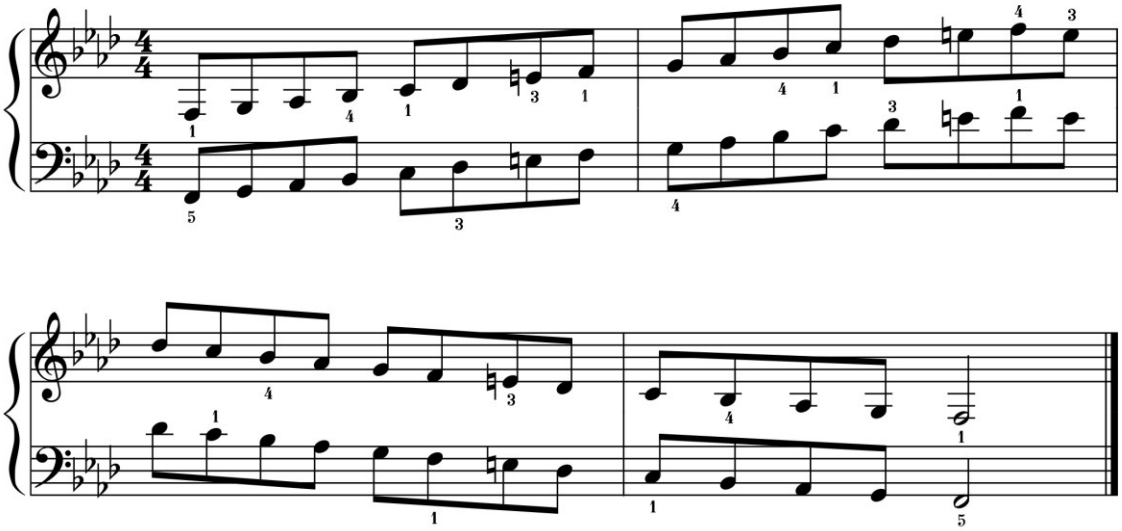


Right Hand

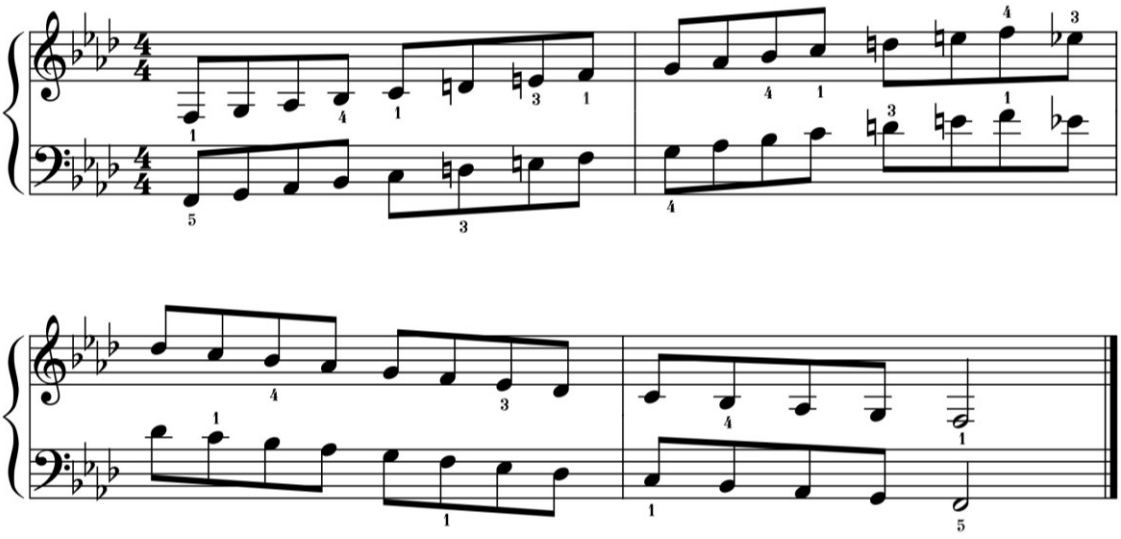
A♭ Major Scales



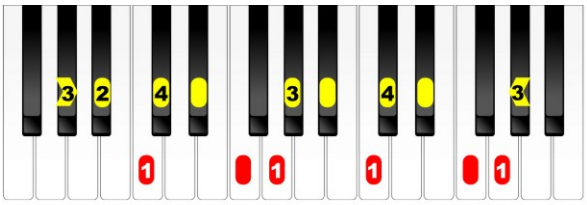
F Harmonic Minor Scale



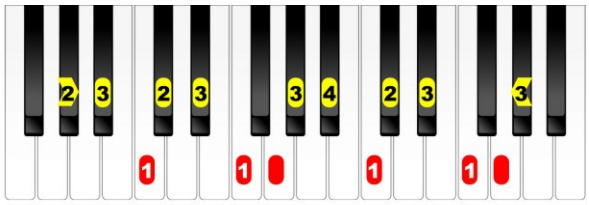
F Melodic Minor Scale



A♭ Major

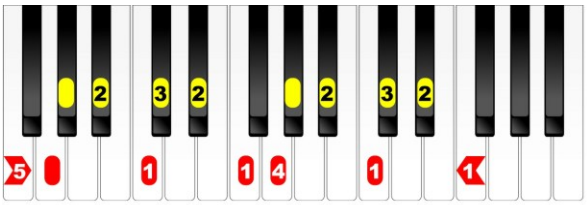


Left Hand

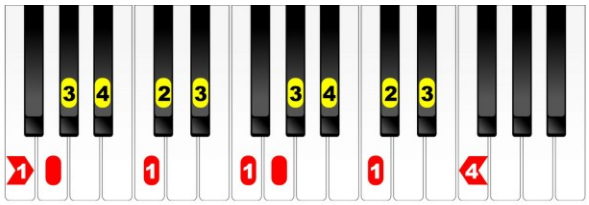


Right Hand

F Natural Minor

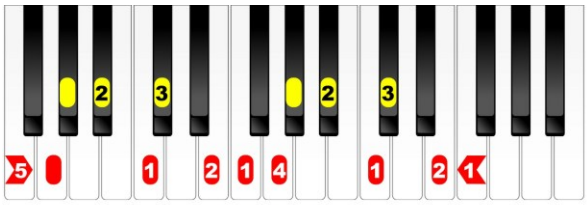


Left Hand

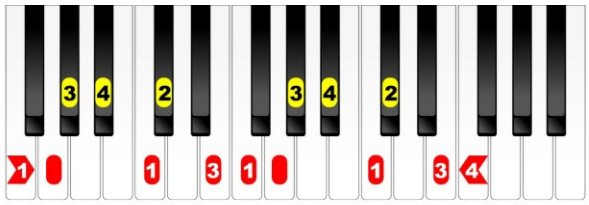


Right Hand

F Harmonic Minor

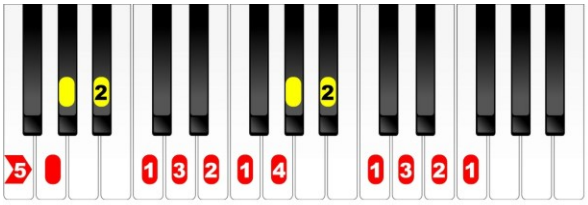


Left Hand



Right Hand

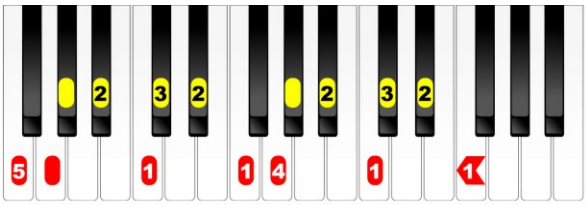
F Melodic Minor (Ascending)



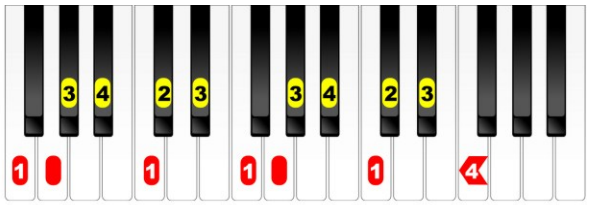
Left Hand

Right Hand

F Melodic Minor (Descending)

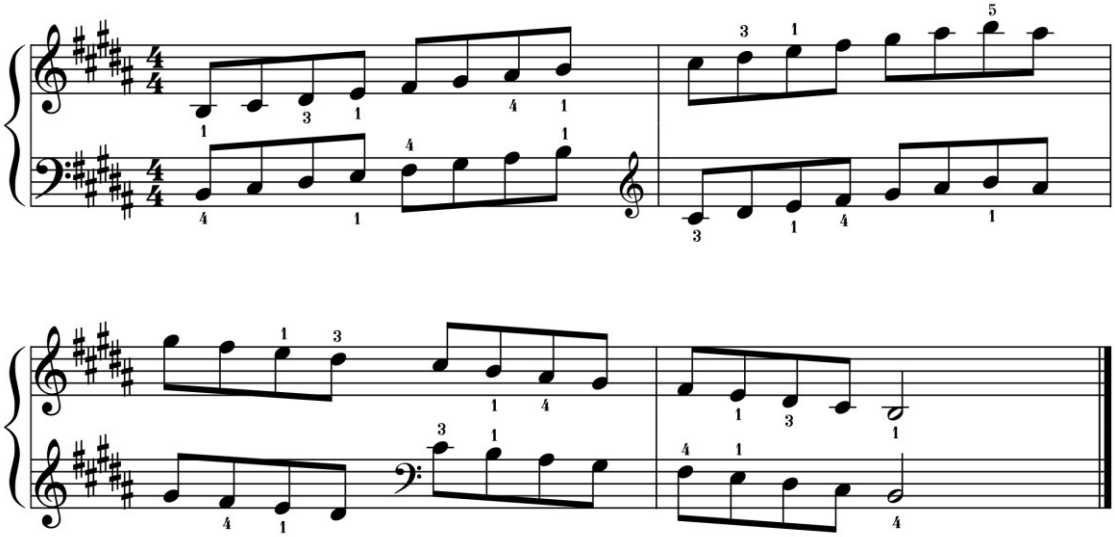


Left Hand

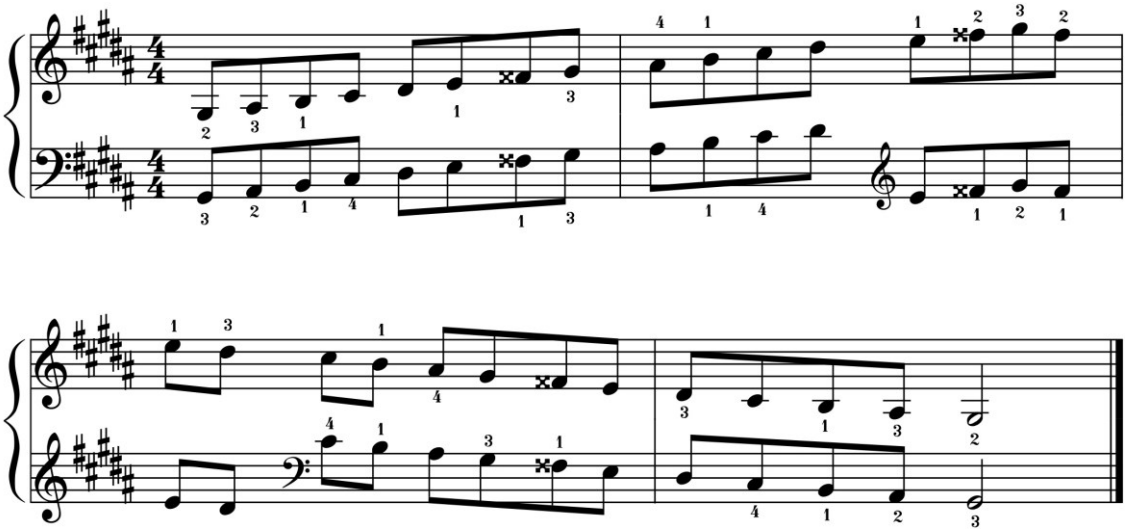


Right Hand

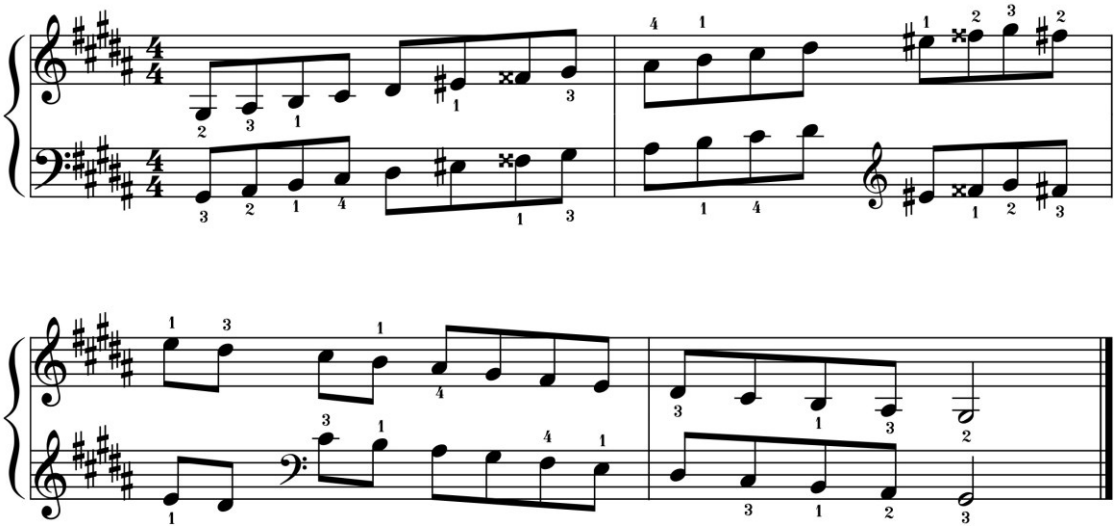
B Major Scales



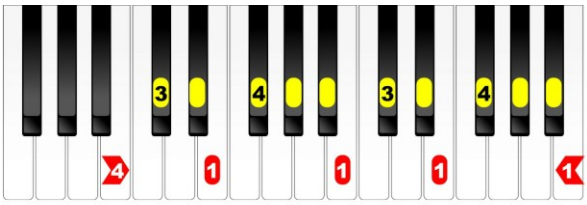
G# Harmonic Minor Scale



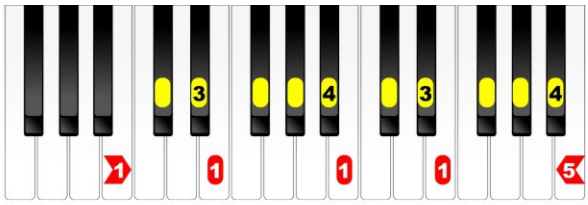
G# Melodic Minor Scale



B Major

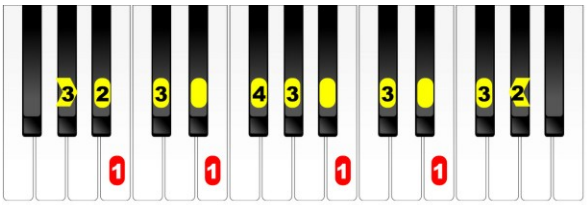


Left Hand

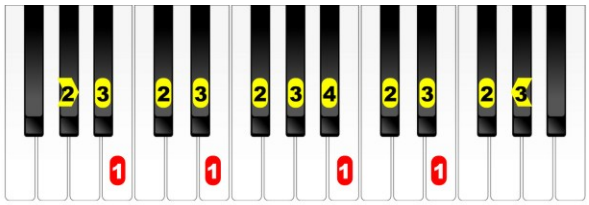


Right Hand

G# Natural Minor

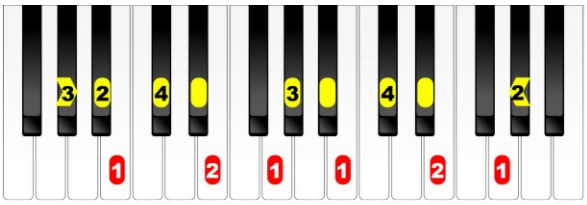


Left Hand

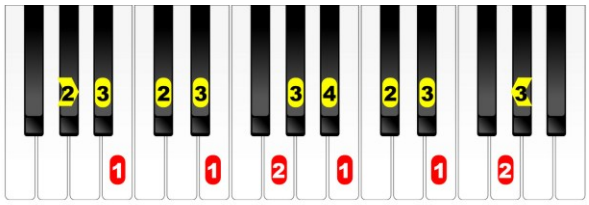


Right Hand

G# Harmonic Minor

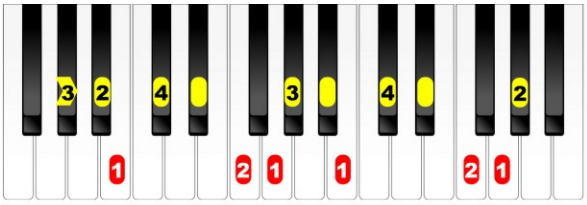


Left Hand

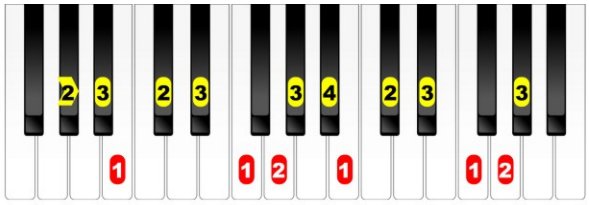


Right Hand

G# Melodic Minor (Ascending)

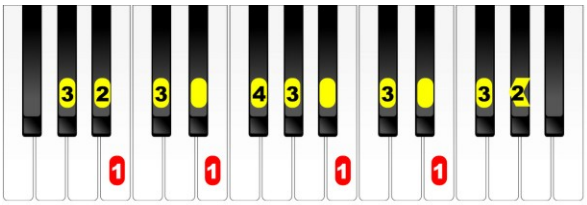


Left Hand

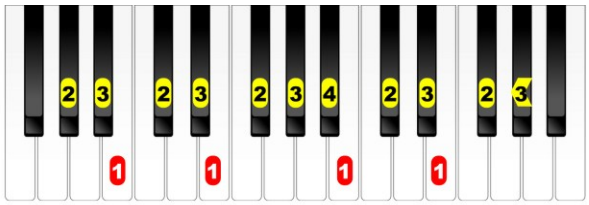


Right Hand

G# Melodic Minor (Descending)

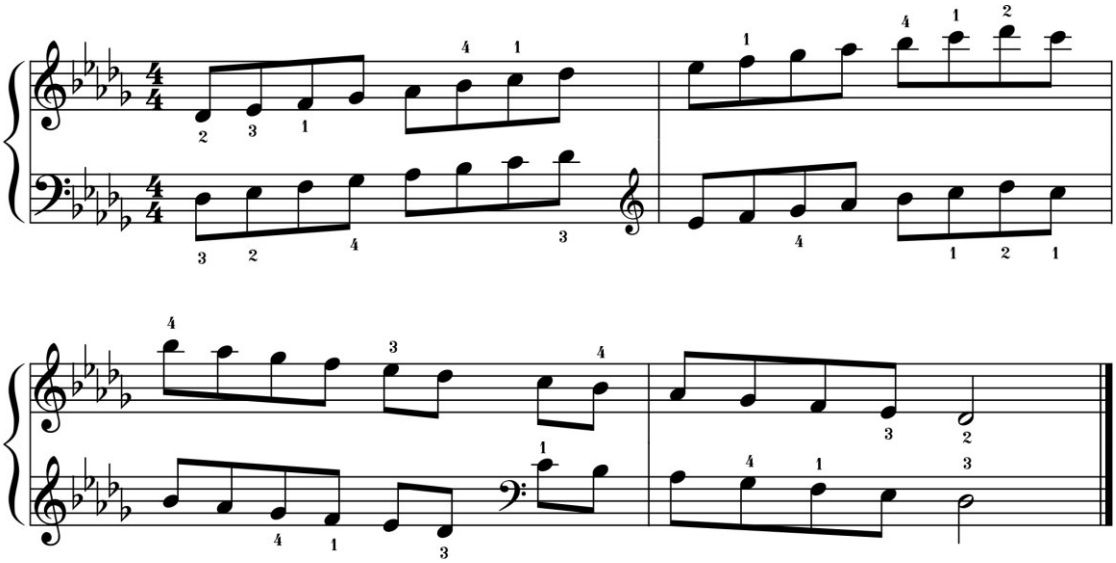


Left Hand

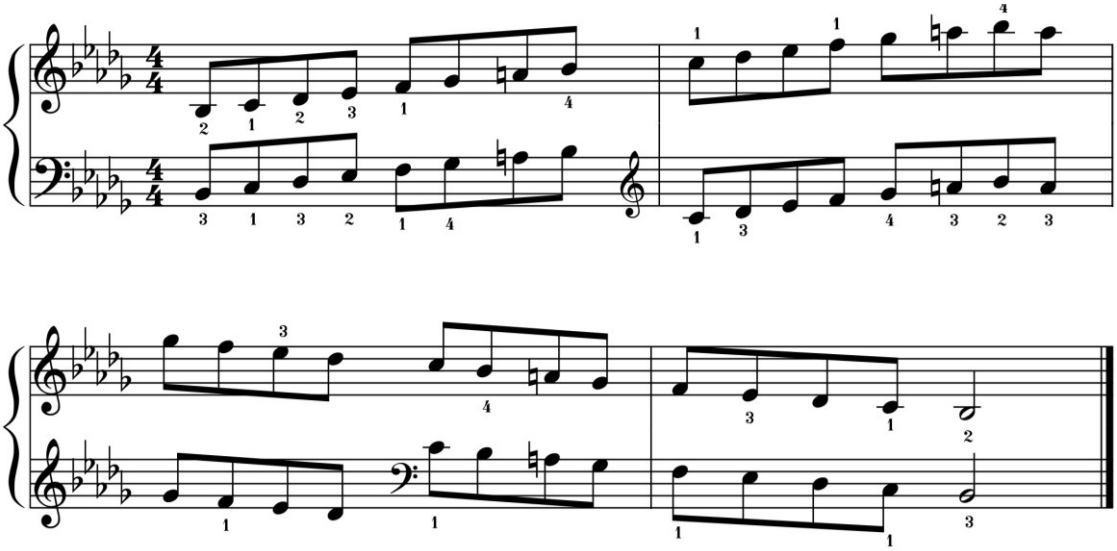


Right Hand

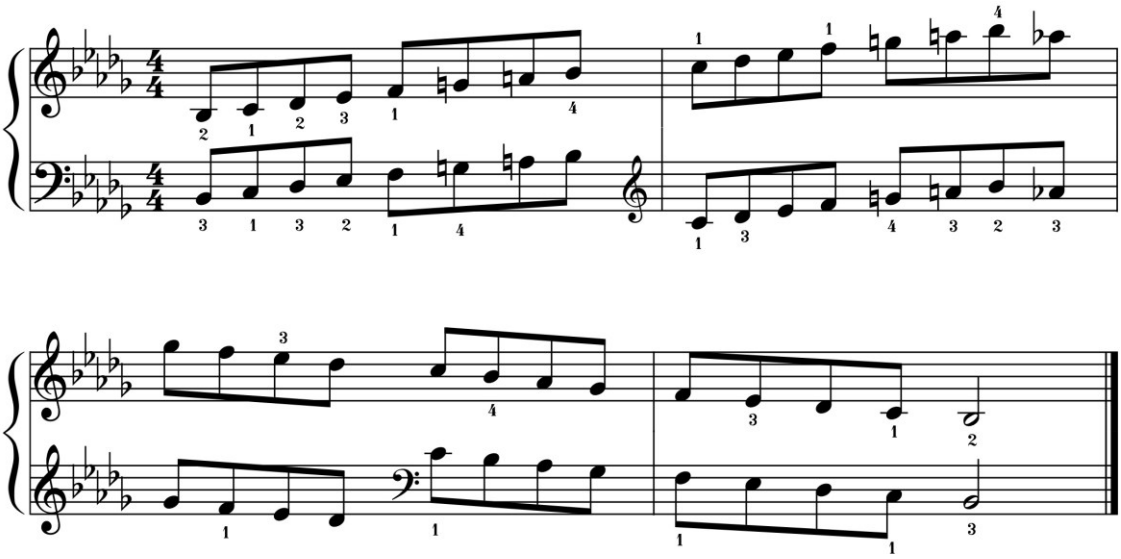
D♭ Major Scales



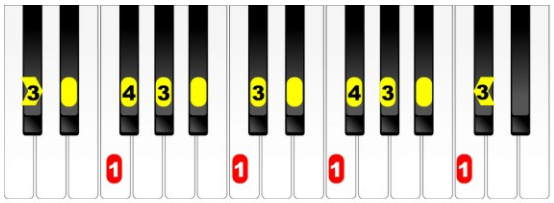
B♭ Harmonic Minor Scale



B♭ Melodic Minor Scale



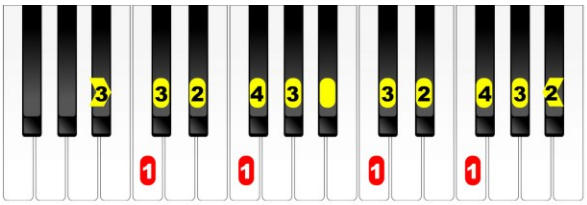
D♭ Major



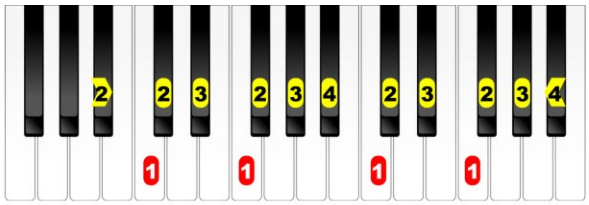
Left Hand

Right Hand

B♭ Natural Minor

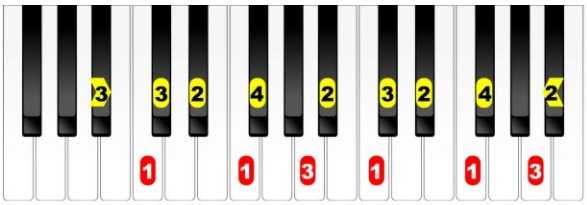


Left Hand

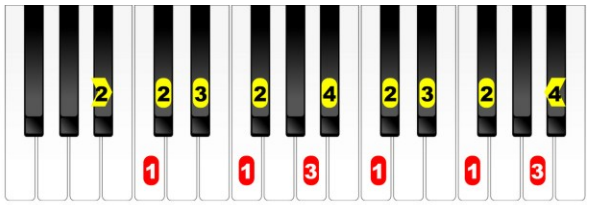


Right Hand

B♭ Harmonic Minor

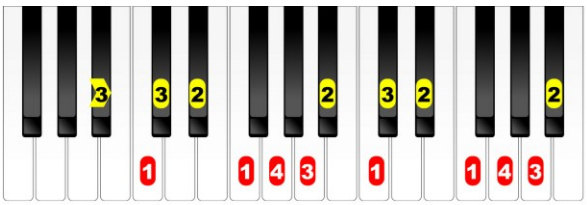


Left Hand

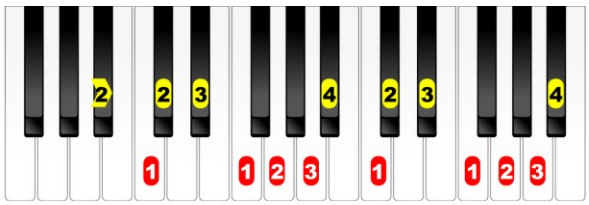


Right Hand

B♭ Melodic Minor (Ascending)

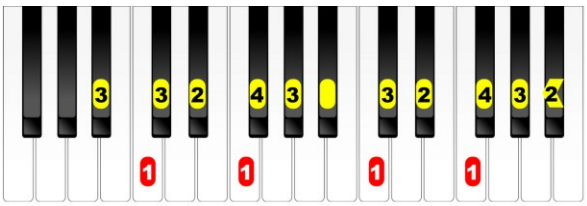


Left Hand

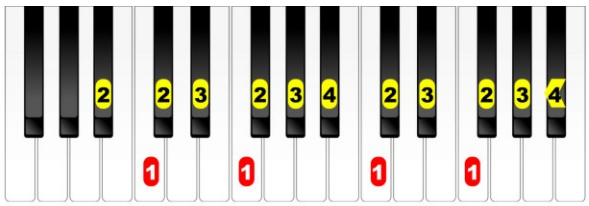


Right Hand

B♭ Melodic Minor (Descending)

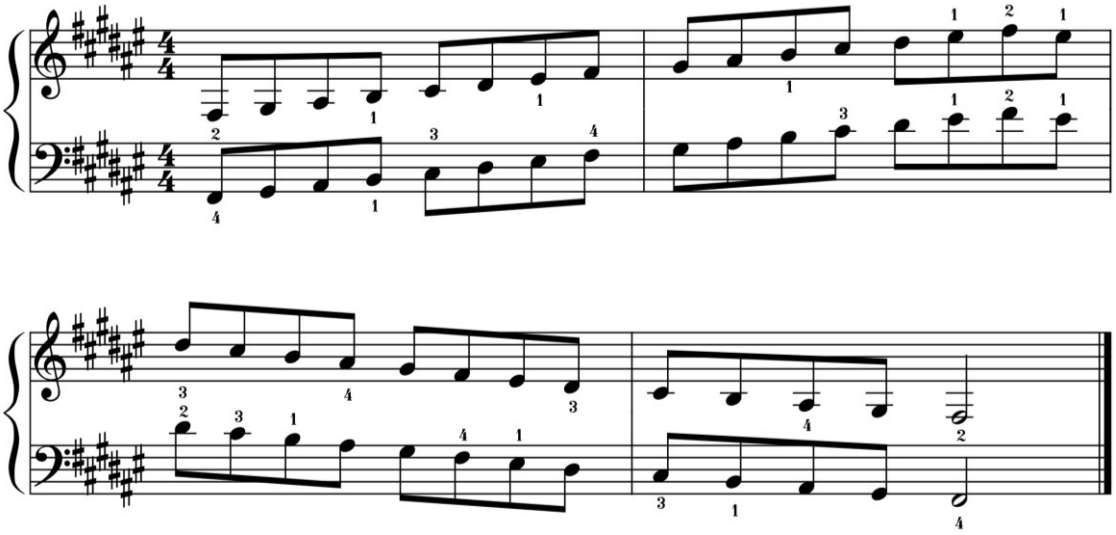


Left Hand

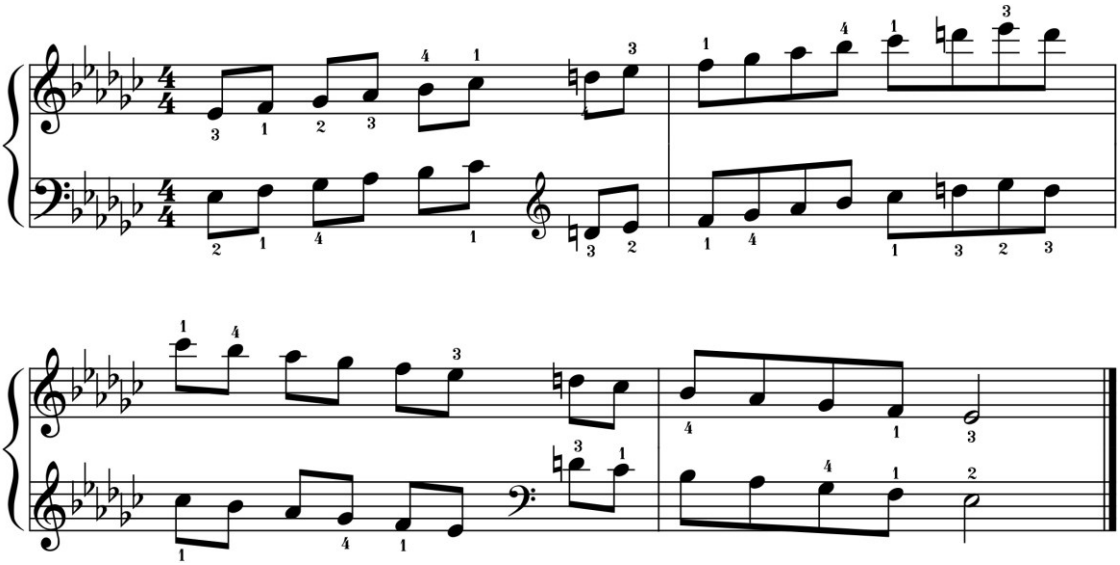


Right Hand

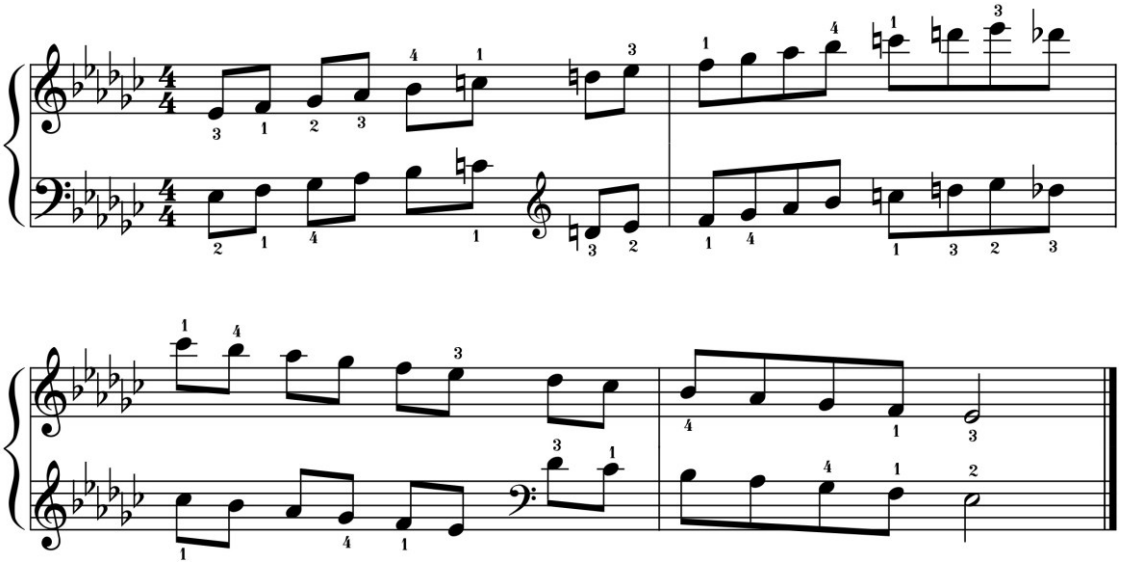
F# (G♭) Major Scales



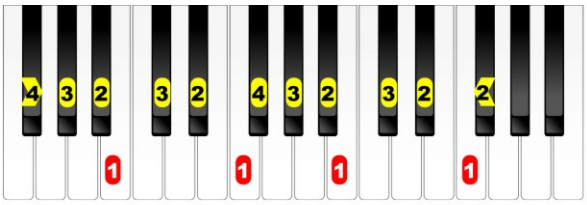
E♭ (D#) Harmonic Minor Scale



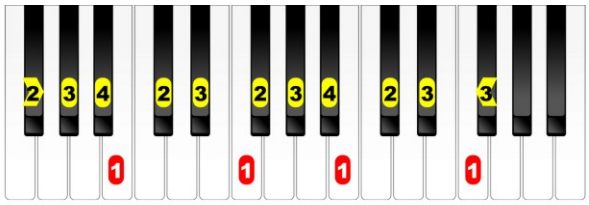
E♭ (D#) Melodic Minor Scale



F# (G♭) Major



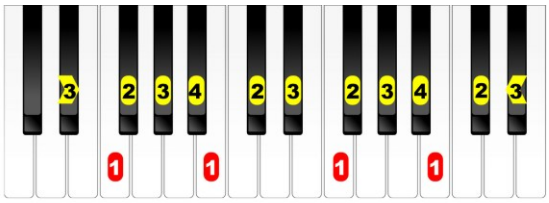
Left Hand



Right Hand

E♭ (D#) Natural Minor

Left Hand



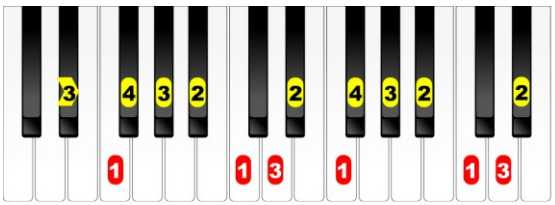
Right Hand

E♭ (D#) Harmonic Minor

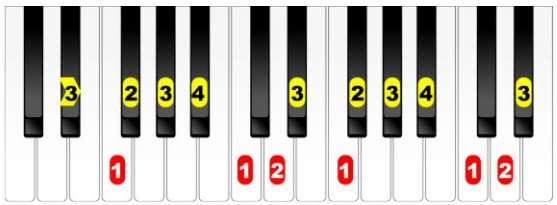
Left Hand

Right Hand

E♭ (D#) Melodic Minor (Ascending)

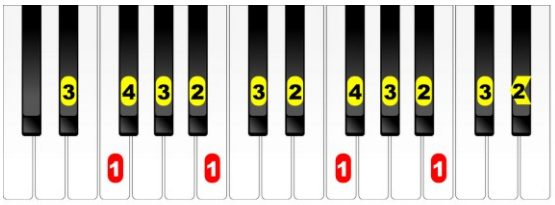


Left Hand

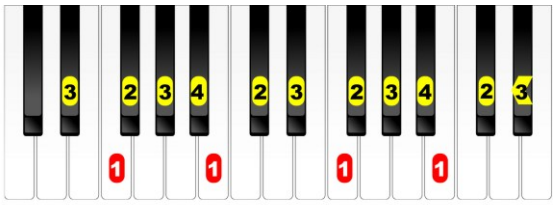


Right Hand

E♭ (D#) Melodic Minor (Descending)



Left Hand



Right Hand

Pentatonic & Blues Scales in the most used keys

These scales are used extensively in jazz, blues and pop improvisation. The fingering given here is for a guide only as there are many possible alternatives - if it works it's correct!

Note that the major pentatonic scales are always the same as the relative minor but start on different notes. The major pentatonic being based around the **major 6/9** chord and the minor based round the **minor 7add4** chord - which are the same chords. Know these chords and you will automatically know these scales!

Note also that the blues scale is almost identical to the minor pentatonic - the only difference being the added flattened fifth. The blues scales listed here are all written in the same key as the pentatonic scales but note that the blues scale is neither major nor minor (or both).

Using variations on these scales alone can produce some really inventive improvisations. But add broken chords, arpeggios and the major scales starting on various notes (modes) and you will have it all!

In all cases in this section the major pentatonic scale is listed first, then the minor pentatonic and finally the blues scale that relates closest to the minor pentatonic.

And notice that the treble clef is occasionally used in the left hand.

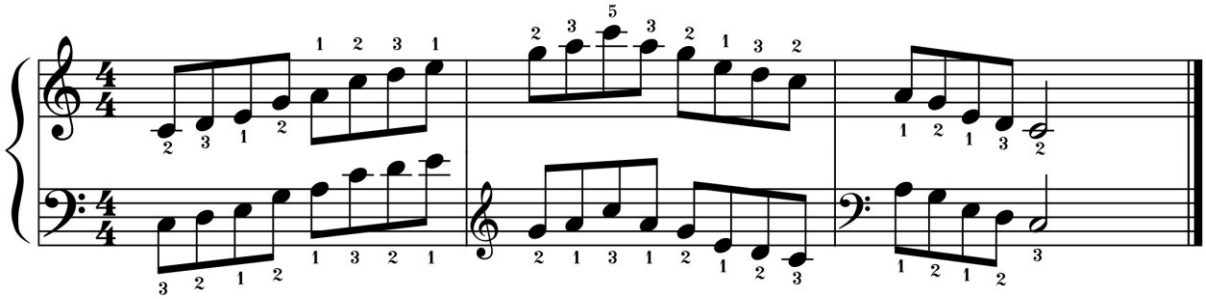
The audio for this section is: http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/scales_full.html or click on the graphics where applicable.

Quick link to Part 1

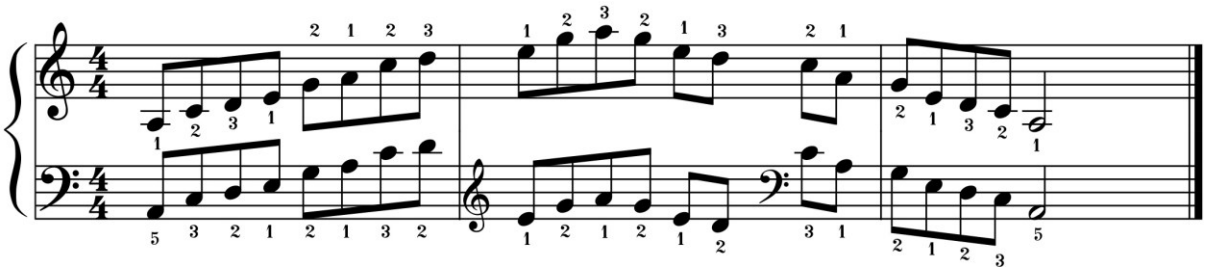
Korg Kronos 3 Workstation (88 keys) - very Hi-Tech

This is probably the ultimate recording keyboard / workstation. Totally amazing in every respect, but very expensive and certainly not for beginners.
My advice is - learn to play before taking the time to learn the intricacies of synths and workstations - especially this one!

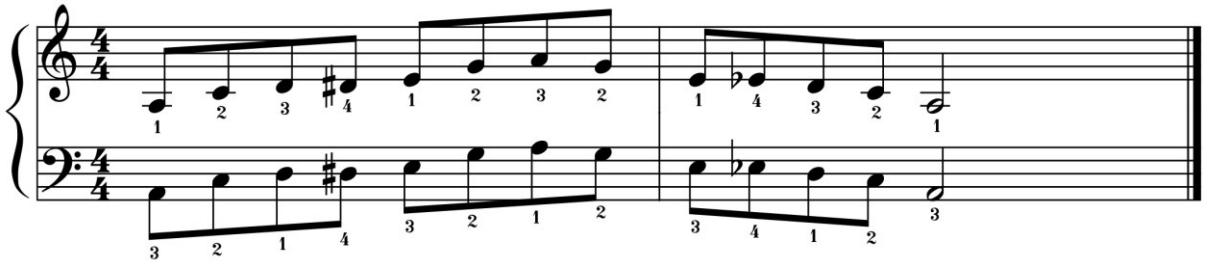
C Major Pentatonic Scale



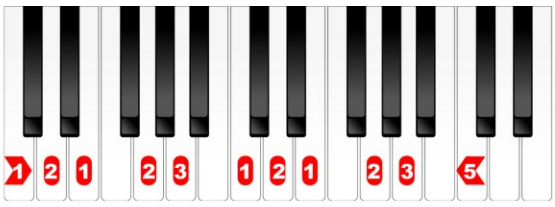
A minor Pentatonic Scale



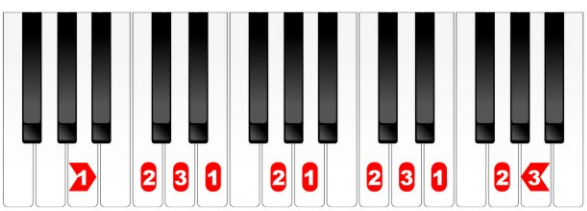
A Blues Scale



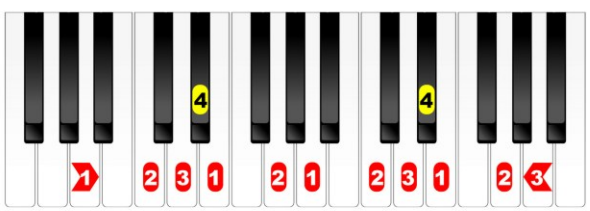
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



C Major Pentatonic

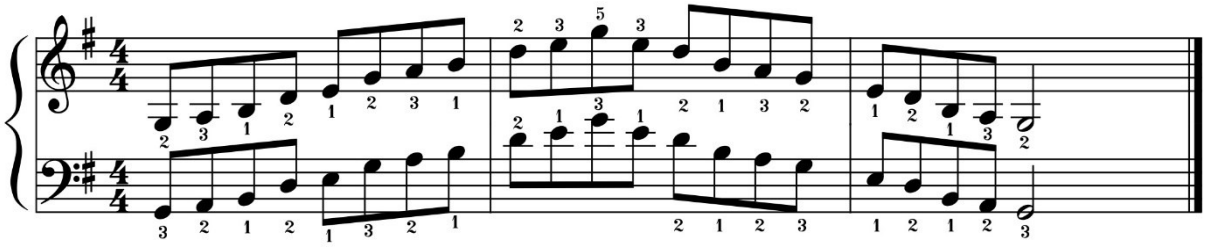


A Minor Pentatonic

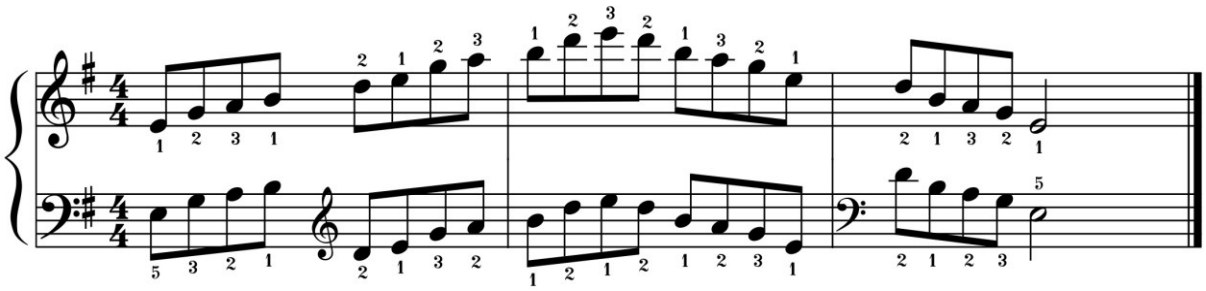


A Blues Scale

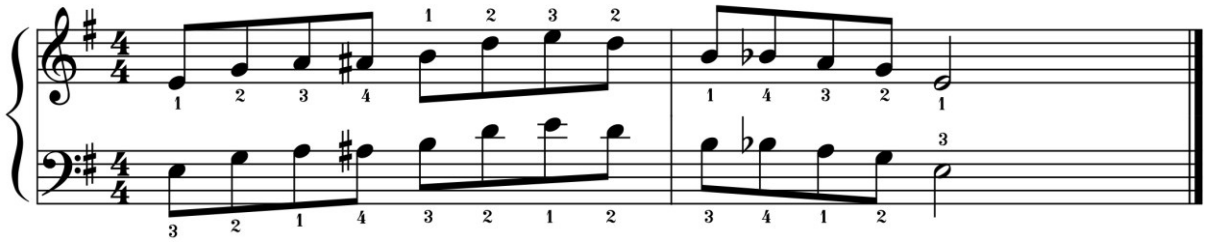
G Major Pentatonic Scale



E minor Pentatonic Scale



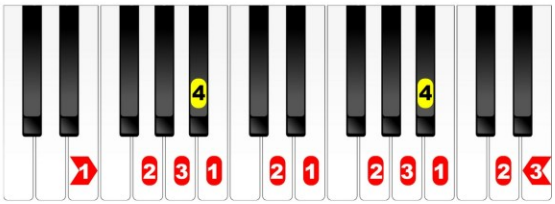
E Blues Scale



Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)

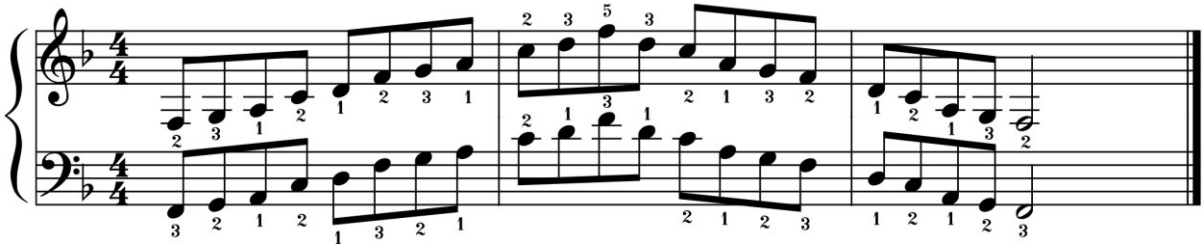
G Major Pentatonic

E Minor Pentatonic

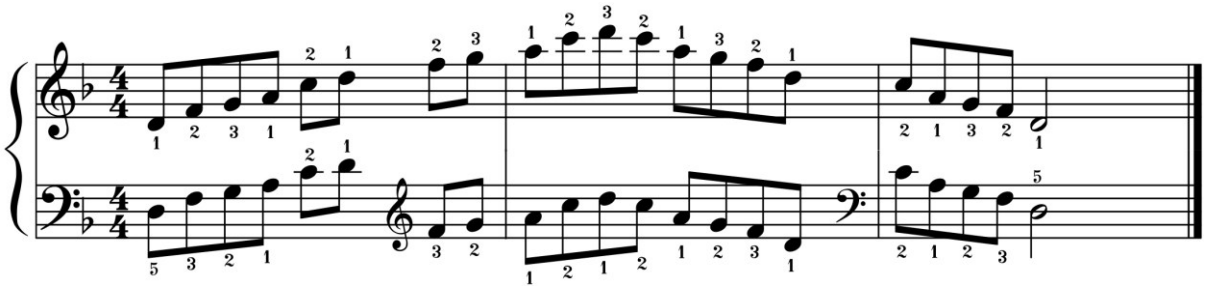


E Blues Scale

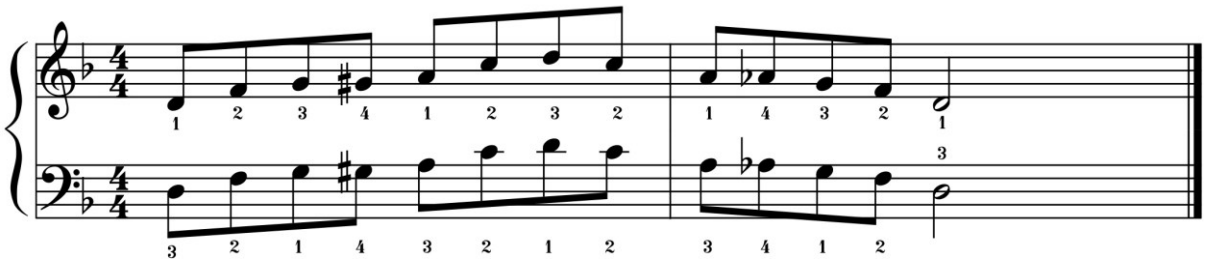
F Major Pentatonic Scale



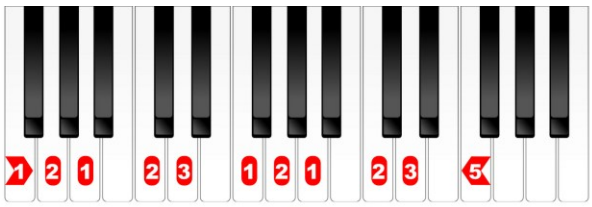
D minor Pentatonic Scale



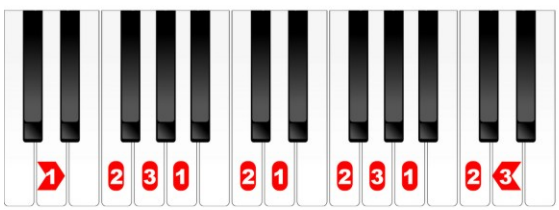
D Blues Scale



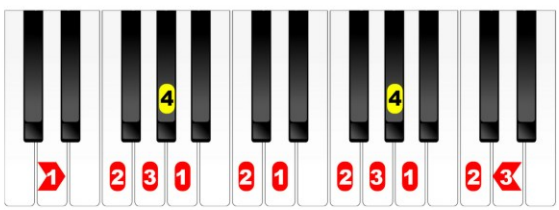
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



F Major Pentatonic

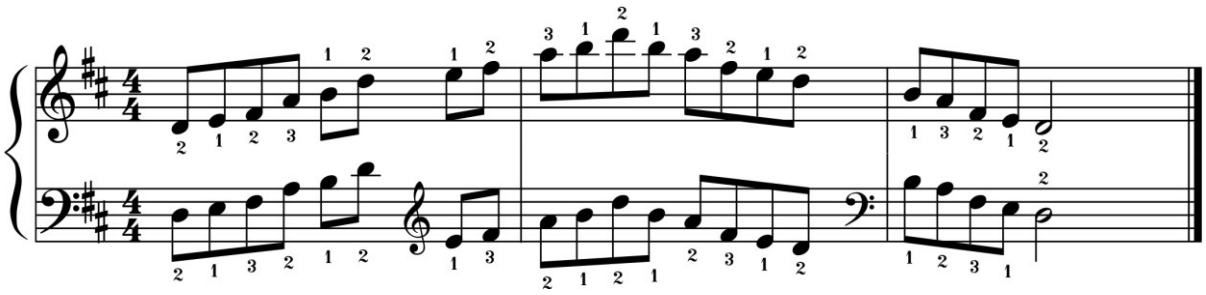


D Minor Pentatonic

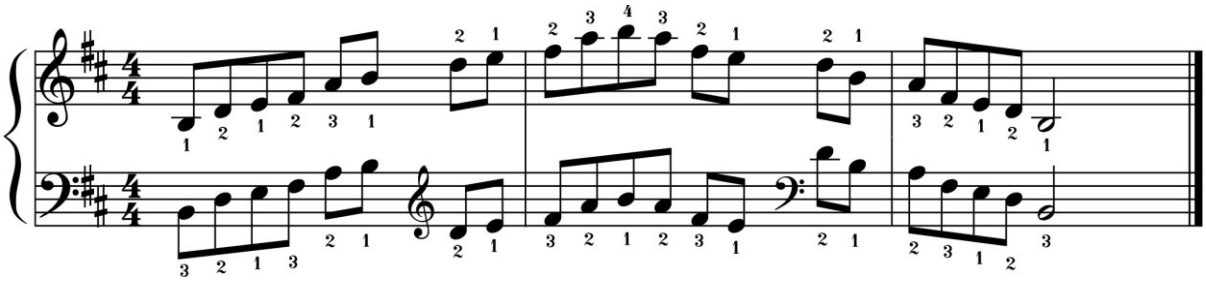


D Blues Scale

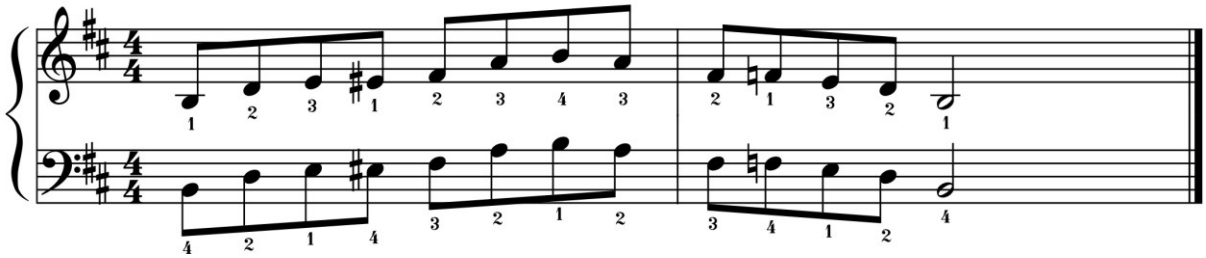
D Major Pentatonic Scale



B minor Pentatonic Scale

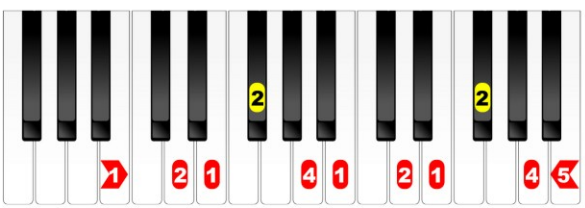


B Blues Scale

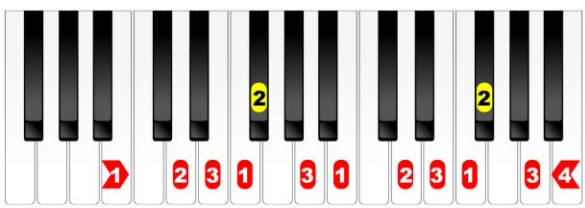


Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)

D Major Pentatonic

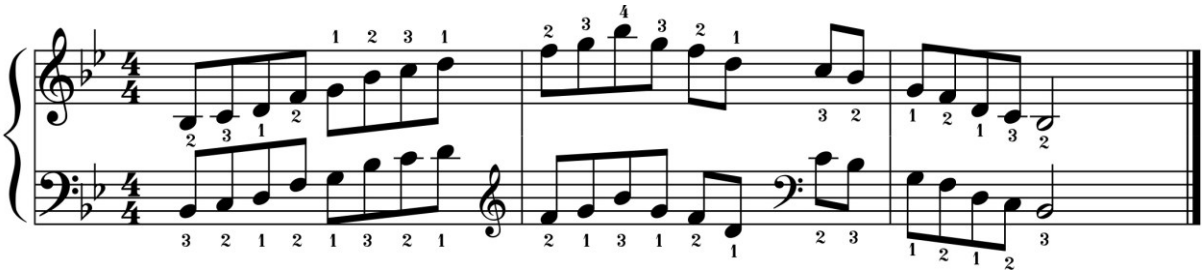


B Minor Pentatonic

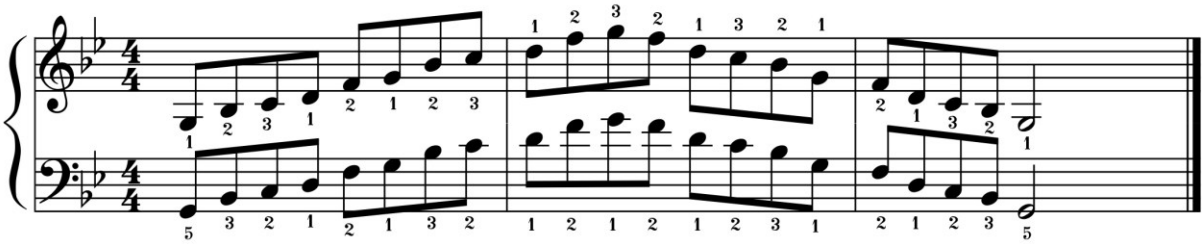


B Blues Scale

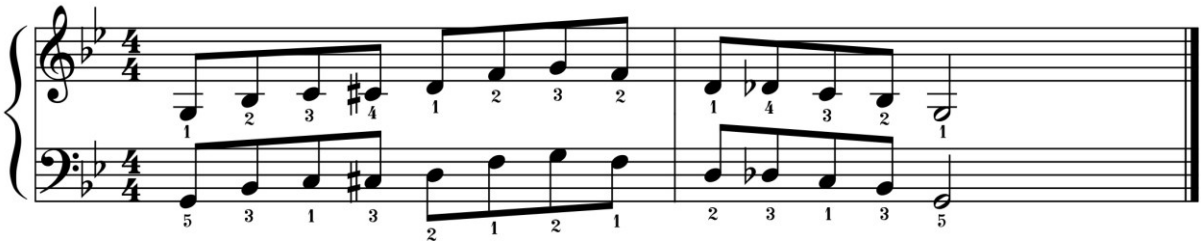
B♭ Major Pentatonic Scale



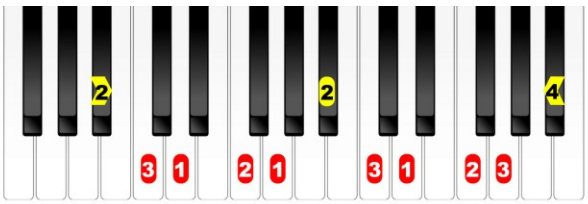
G minor Pentatonic Scale



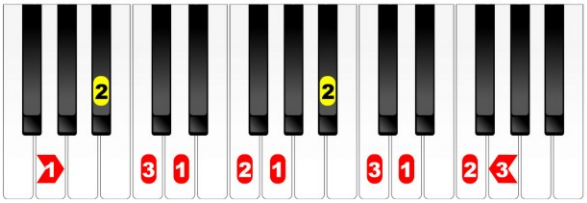
G Blues Scale



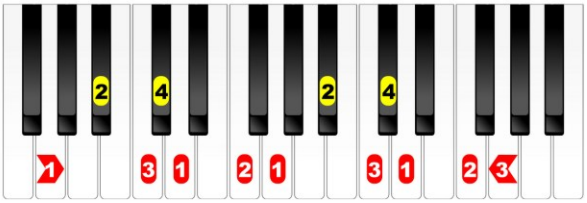
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



Bb Major Pentatonic

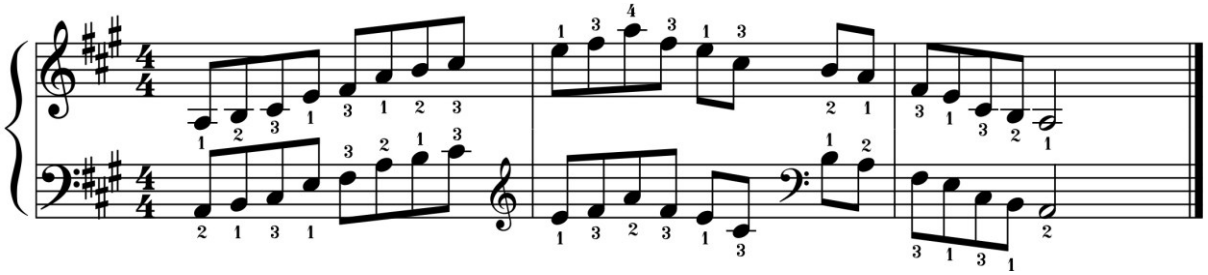


G Minor Pentatonic

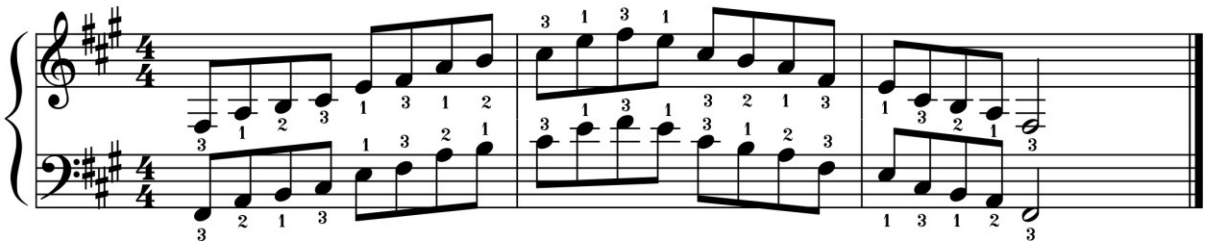


G Blues Scale

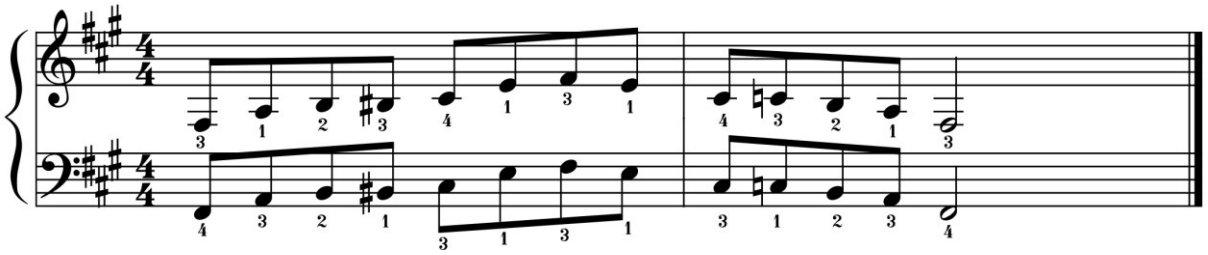
A Major Pentatonic Scale



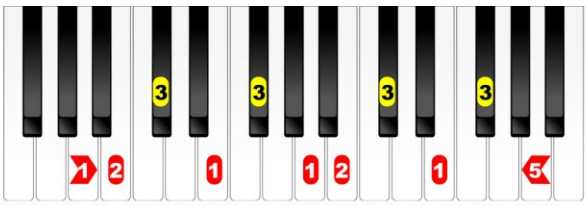
F# minor Pentatonic Scale



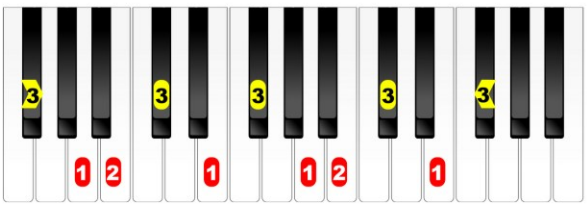
F# Blues Scale



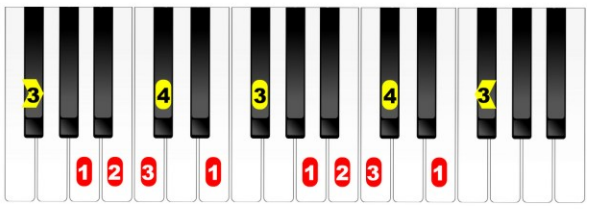
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



A Major Pentatonic

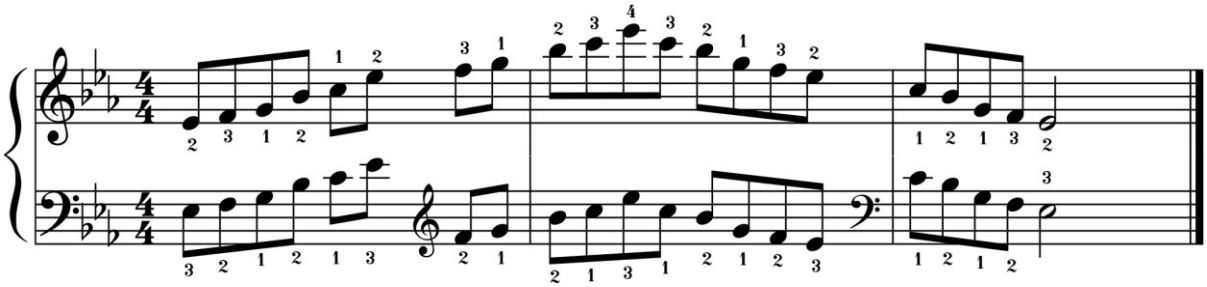


F# Minor Pentatonic

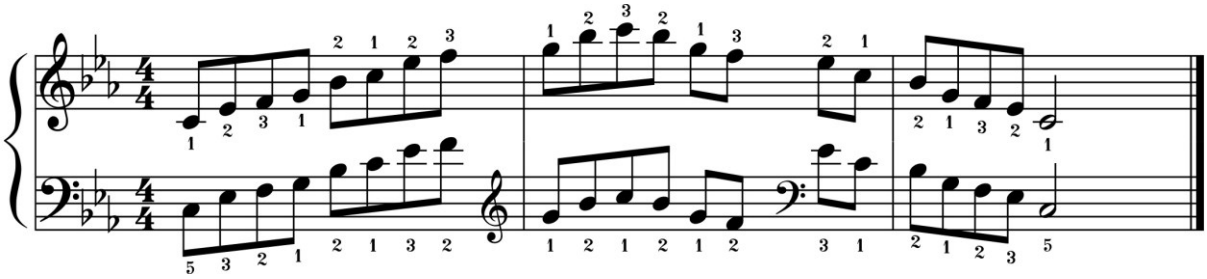


F# Blues Scale

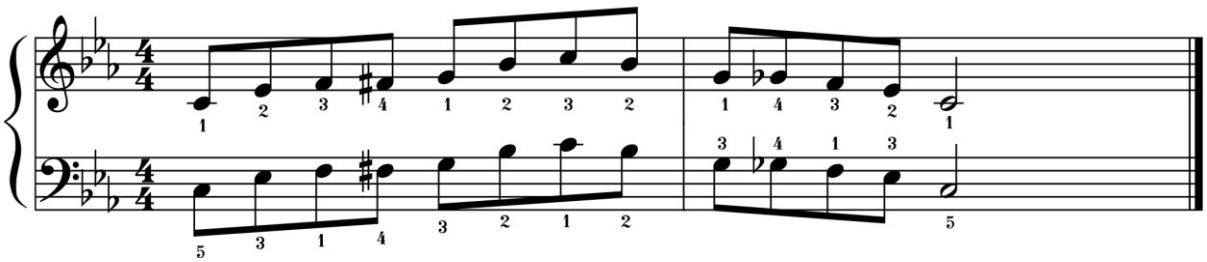
E♭ Major Pentatonic Scale



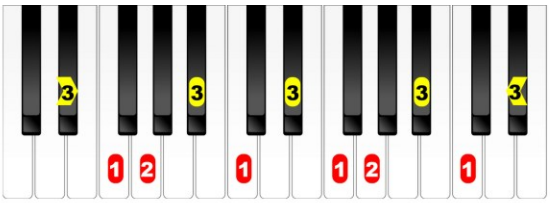
C minor Pentatonic Scale



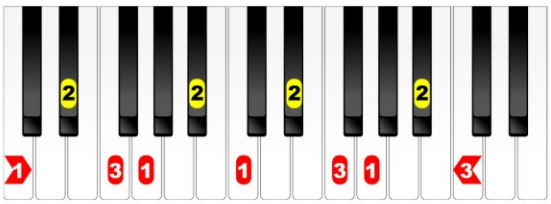
C Blues Scale



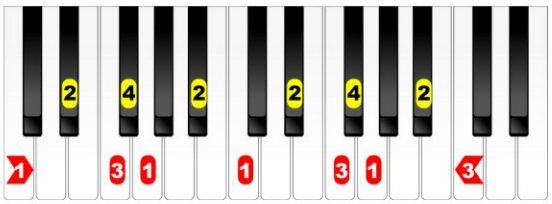
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



Eb Major Pentatonic

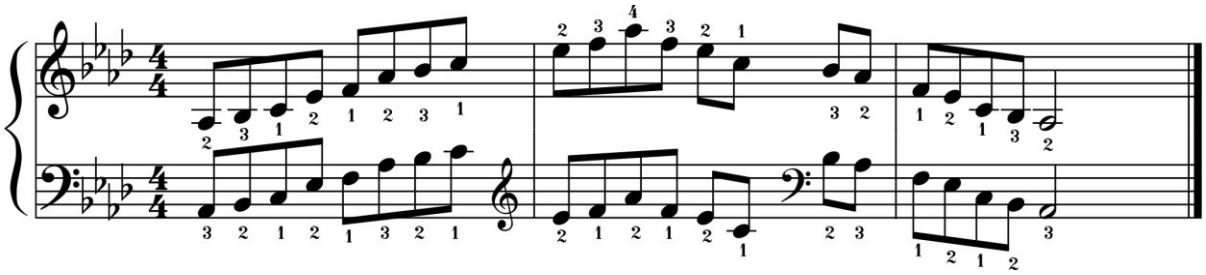


C Minor Pentatonic

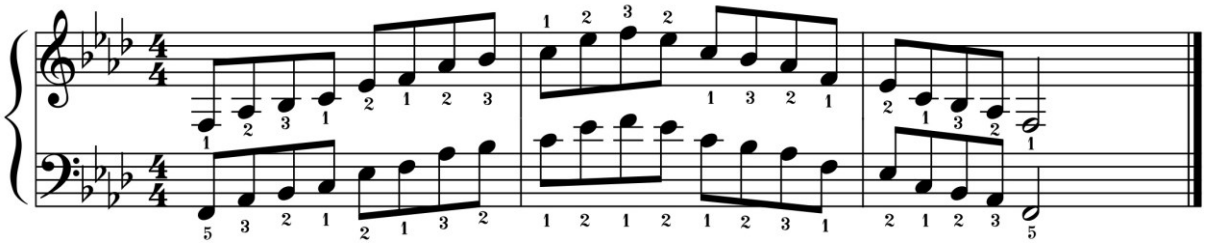


C Blues Scale

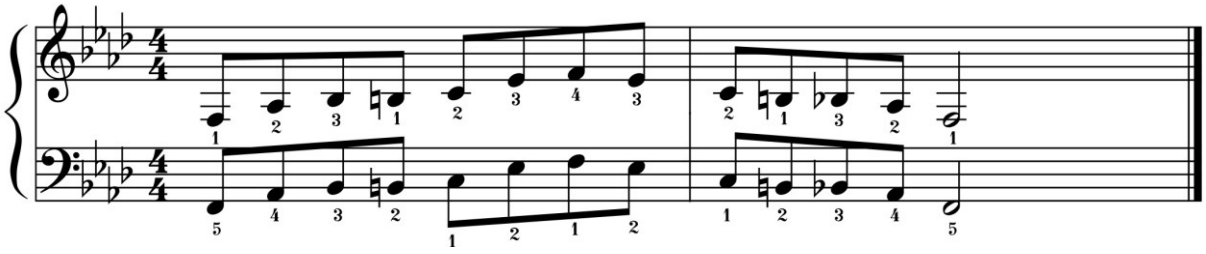
A♭ Major Pentatonic Scale



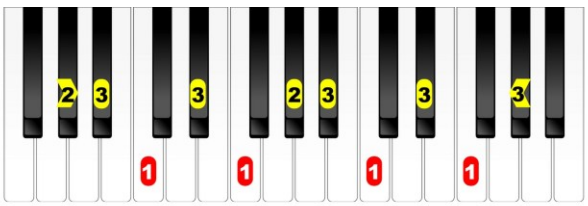
F minor Pentatonic Scale



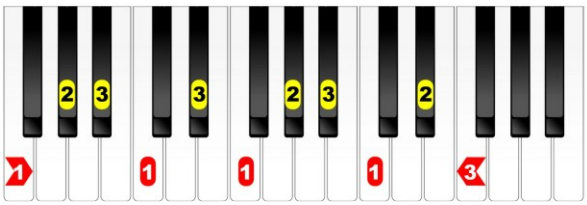
F Blues Scale



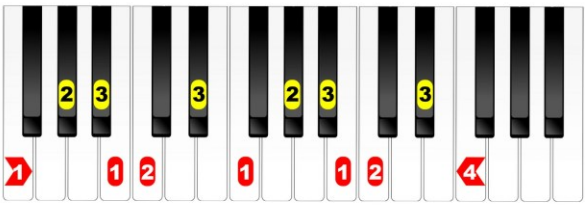
Keyboard View (Right Hand Fingering Only)



Ab Major Pentatonic



F Minor Pentatonic



F Blues Scale

Diatonic Chords

The next few pages show the diatonic chords in the most used keys.

I know I've said this before, but to make it perfectly clear: - *'diatonic chords'* are chords which are *derived* from the notes of the relevant scale and as such all diatonic chords are related - think of them as *'families'* of chords.

Due to the *relationship*, it's likely that many compositions will use *only* diatonic chords, but this is not necessarily the case!

Here I have listed the major and relative minor chords on the same page.

Note that there are more diatonic chords in the minor keys due to the ascending / descending difference in the melodic scale. They are listed here in the order in which they are recommended to be practised / understood.

Only the basic, **Major 7th**, **Dominant 7th**, **diminished** and **augmented** chords are listed (as well as the **6ths** and **6/9ths**) progressing up the scale to show how they come into being. But please note that more complicated chords can also be created by adding further extensions. For instance, all of the notes of the **C major** scale can be rearranged to form **G13th** and as such this is also a diatonic chord in the key of **C major**.

The following pages also form a good starting base for composition, i.e. knowing which chords are most likely to fit together - but remember there are always exceptions and anything is ok if it sounds ok!

As this section is simply for reference, no audio links are included.

All of these chords can be seen in keyboard view further on.

There are no audio links for this chapter.

Quick link to Part 1

C Major Diatonic Chords

I	C	CM7	C6
ii	Dm	Dm7	Dm6
iii	Em	Em7	
IV	F	FM7	F6
V	G	G7	G6
vi	Am	Am7	
vii	Bdim	Bm7b5	

C major has no sharps or flats

A Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Am	Am7	Am6	AmM7
ii	Bdim	Bm7b5	Bm	Bm7
III	C	CM7	C6	C+
IV	D	D7	D6	
iv	Dm	Dm7	Dm6	
iv	Ddim	Ddim7	Dm7b5	
v / V	Em	Em7	E	E7
VI	F	FM7	F6	
vi	Fm	Fm7	Fm6	
vi	Fdim	Fdim7	F#dim	F#m7b5
VII	G	G7	G6	GM7
vii	G#dim	G#dim7		

A Natural minor has no sharps or flats - A Harmonic minor has one sharp which is G# - A Melodic minor has F# and G# ascending, but no sharps or flats descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

F Major Diatonic Chords

I	F	FM7	F6
ii	Gm	Gm7	Gm6
iii	Am	Am7	
IV	Bb	BbM7	Bb6
V	C	C7	C6
vi	Dm	Dm7	
vii	Edim	Em7b5	

F major has 1 flat which is Bb

D Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Dm	Dm7	Dm6	DmM7
ii	Edim	Em7b5	Em	Em7
III	F	FM7	F6	F+
IV	G	G7	G6	
iv	Gm	Gm7	Gm6	
iv	Gdim	Gdim7	Gm7b5	
v / V	Am	Am7	A	A7
VI	Bb	BbM7	Bb6	
vi	Bbm	Bbm7	Bbm6	
vi	Bbdim	Bbdim7	Bdim	Bm7b5
VII	C	C7	C6	CM7
vii	C#dim	C#dim7		

D Natural minor has 1 flat which is Bb - D Harmonic minor has Bb and C# - D Melodic minor has, B natural and C# ascending, but Bb, C natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

G Major Diatonic Chords

I	G	GM7	G6
ii	Am	Am7	Am6
iii	Bm	Bm7	
IV	C	CM7	C6
V	D	D7	D6
vi	Em	Em7	
vii	F#dim	F#m7b5	

G major has 1 sharp which is F#

E Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Em	Em7	Em6	EmM7
ii	F#dim	F#m7b5	F#m	F#m7
III	G	GM7	G6	G+
IV	A	A7	A6	
iv	Am	Am7	Am6	
iv	Adim	Adim7	Am7b5	
v / V	Bm	Bm7	B	B7
VI	C	CM7	C6	
vi	Cm	Cm7	Cm6	
vi	Cdim	Cdim7	C#dim	C#m7b5
VII	D	D7	D6	DM7
vii	D#dim	D#dim7		

E Natural minor has 1 sharp which is F# - E Harmonic minor has F# and D# - E Melodic minor has F#, D# and C# ascending, but F#, D natural and C natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

B♭ Major Diatonic Chords

I	Bb	BbM7	Bb6
ii	Cm	Cm7	Cm6
iii	Dm	Dm7	
IV	Eb	EbM7	Eb6
V	F	F7	F6
vi	Gm	Gm7	
vii	Adim	Am7b5	

Bb major has 2 flats: Bb and Eb

G Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Gm	Gm7	Gm6	GmM7
ii	Adim	Am7b5	Am	Am7
III	Bb	BbM7	Bb6	Bb+
IV	C	C7	C6	
iv	Cm	Cm7	Cm6	
iv	Cdim	Cdim7	Cm7b5	
v / V	Dm	Dm7	D	D7
VI	Eb	EbM7	Eb6	
vi	Ebm	Ebm7	Ebm6	
vi	Ebdim	Ebdim7	Edim	Em7b5
VII	F	F7	F6	FM7
vii	Gbdim	Gbdim7		

G Natural minor has 2 flats: Bb and Eb - G Harmonic minor has Bb, Eb and F# - G Melodic minor has Bb, E natural and F# ascending, but Bb, Eb, Ab and F natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

D Major Diatonic Chords

I	D	DM7	D6
ii	Em	Em7	Em6
iii	F#m	F#m7	
IV	G	GM7	G6
V	A	A7	A6
vi	Bm	Bm7	
vii	C#dim	C#m7b5	

D major has 2 sharps: F# and C#

B Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Bm	Bm7	Bm6	BmM7
ii	C#dim	C#m7b5	C#m	C#m7
III	D	DM7	D6	D+
IV	E	E7	E6	
iv	Em	Em7	Em6	
iv	Edim	Edim7	Em7b5	
v / V	F#m	F#m7	F#	F#7
VI	G	GM7	G6	
vi	Gm	Gm7	Gm6	
vi	Gdim	Gdim7	G#dim	G#m7b5
VII	A	A7	A6	AM7
vii	A#dim	A#dim7		

B Natural minor has 2 sharps: F# and C# - B Harmonic minor has F#, C# and A# - B Melodic minor has F#, C#, G# and A# ascending, but F#, C#, G natural and A natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

E♭ Major Diatonic Chords

I	Eb	EbM7	Eb6
ii	Fm	Fm7	Fm6
iii	Gm	Gm7	
IV	Ab	AbM7	Ab6
V	Bb	Bb7	Bb6
vi	Cm	Cm7	
vii	Ddim	Dm7b5	

Eb major has 3 flats: Bb, Eb and Ab.

C Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Cm	Cm7	Cm6	CmM7
ii	Ddim	Dm7b5	Dm	Dm7
III	Eb	EbM7	Eb6	Eb+
IV	F	F7	F6	
iv	Fm	Fm7	Fm6	
iv	Fdim	Fdim7	Fm7b5	
v / V	Gm	Gm7	G	G7
VI	Ab	AbM7	Ab6	
vi	Abm	Abm7	Abm6	
vi	Abdim	Abdim7	Adim	Am7b5
VII	Bb	Bb7	Bb6	BbM7
vii	Bdim	Bdim7		

C Natural minor has 3 flats: Bb, Eb and Ab - C Harmonic minor has Eb and Ab - C Melodic minor has Eb, B natural and A natural ascending, but Eb, Ab and Bb descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

A Major Diatonic Chords

I	A	AM7	A6
ii	Bm	Bm7	Bm6
iii	C#m	C#m7	
IV	D	DM7	D6
V	E	E7	E6
vi	F#m	F#m7	
vii	G#dim	G#m7b5	

A major has 3 sharps: F#, C# and G#

F# Minor Diatonic Chords

i	F#m	F#m7	F#m6	F#mM7
ii	G#dim	G#m7b5	G#m	G#m7
III	A	AM7	A6	A+
IV	B	B7	B6	
iv	Bm	Bm7	Bm6	
iv	Bdim	Bdim7	Bm7b5	
v / V	C#m	C#m7	C#	C#7
VI	D	DM7	D6	
vi	Dm	Dm7	Dm6	
vi	Ddim	Ddim7	D#dim	D#m7b5
VII	E	E7	E6	EM7
vii	Fdim	Fdim7		

F# Natural minor has 3 sharps: F#, C# and G# - F# Harmonic minor has F#, C#, G# and E# (F) - F# Melodic minor has F#, C#, G#, D# and E# (F) ascending, but E natural and D natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

A♭ Major Diatonic Chords

I	Ab	AbM7	Ab6
ii	Bbm	Bbm7	Bbm6
iii	Cm	Cm7	
IV	Db	DbM7	Db6
V	Eb	Eb7	Eb6
vi	Fm	Fm7	
vii	Gdim	Gm7b5	

Ab major has 4 flats: Bb, Eb, Ab and Db

F Minor Diatonic Chords

i	Fm	Fm7	Fm6	FmM7
ii	Gdim	Gm7b5	Gm	Gm7
III	Ab	AbM7	Ab6	Ab+
IV	Bb	Bb7	Bb6	
iv	Bbm	Bbm7	Bbm6	
iv	Bbdim	Bbdim7	Bbm7b5	
v / V	Cm	Cm7	C	C7
VI	Db	DbM7	Db6	
vi	Dbm	Dbm7	Dbm6	
vi	Dbdim	Dbdim7	Ddim	Dm7b5
VII	Eb	Eb7	Eb6	EbM7
vii	Edim	Edim7		

F Natural minor has 4 flats: Bb, Eb, Ab and Db - F Harmonic minor has Bb, Ab Db and E natural - F Melodic minor has Bb and Ab but D natural and E natural ascending, then Bb, Eb, Ab and Db descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

E Major Diatonic Chords

I	E	EM7	Eb
ii	F#m	F#m7	Fm6
iii	G#m	G#m7	
IV	A	AM7	A6
V	B	B7	B6
vi	C#m	C#m7	
vii	D#dim	D#m7b5	

E major has 4 sharps: F#, C#, G# and D#

C# Minor Diatonic Chords

i	C#m	C#m7	C#m6	C#mM7
ii	Ddim	Dm7b5	Dm	Dm7
III	E	EM7	E6	E+
IV	F#	F#7	F#6	
iv	F#m	F#m7	F#m6	
iv	F#dim	F#dim7	F#m7b5	
v / V	G#m	G#m7	G#	G#7
VI	A	AM7	A6	
vi	Am	Am7	Am6	
vi	Adim	Adim7	G#dim	G#m7b5
VII	B	B7	B6	BM7
vii	Cdim	Cdim7		

C# Natural minor has 4 sharps: F#, C#, G# and D# - C# Harmonic minor has: F#, C#, G#, D# and B# (C) - C# Melodic minor has F#, C#, G#, D#, A# and B# (C) ascending, then A natural and B natural descending which creates many more diatonic chords.

Chords in Keyboard View

The next few pages show the following chords in keyboard view in each of the twelve keys:

- Major (including **6th**, **7th** and **M7th**)
- Minor (including **6th**, **7th**, **mM7th** and **m7♭5th**)
- Diminished (including **7th**)
- Augmented (including **7th**)
- Suspended **4th** (also called just **'sus'**)
- Suspended **9th** (**2nd**)

These form a good starting point and all of them should be recognised by auto-accompaniment features. So, if you intend using these features, knowing all these chords will be extremely useful.

Following these are the **root positions**, **1st**, and **2nd inversions** of every basic major and minor triad in every key. Remember that **F# major** is the same as **G♭ major** and **A♭ minor** is the same as **G# minor**.

More complicated extensions such as **9ths**, **11ths** and **13ths** etc. are often not correctly recognised by auto-accompaniment and these are shown in the next section.

Why do I need to learn chords?

As I've said before, all music is based around chords, so you will be playing them in a roundabout way whether you like it or not. But if you *understand* which chords you are playing, it makes the whole process easier. Furthermore, if you intend using auto-accompaniment or playing from a *'fake book',* they are essential.

When I first took classical lessons, I was never taught anything about chords, even though I was playing them, - maybe I was too young. But I learnt much more about chords as a *'pop'* musician.

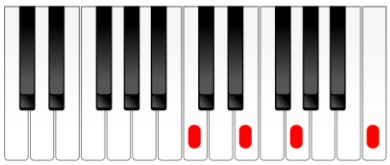
As this chapter is for reference only, there are no audio links.

Quick link back to Part 1.

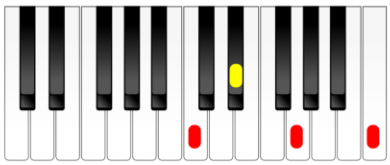
"When I am completely myself, entirely alone... or during the night when I cannot sleep, it is on such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly. Whence and how these ideas come I know not nor can I force them."

Mozart

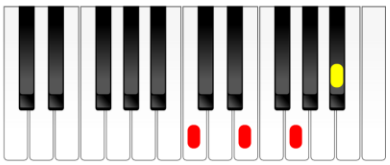
C Chords



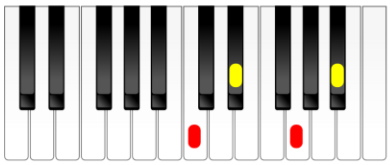
C



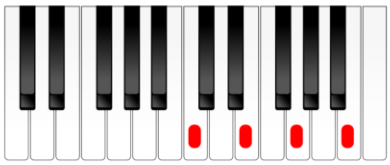
Cm



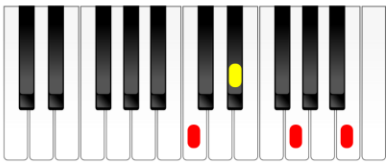
C7



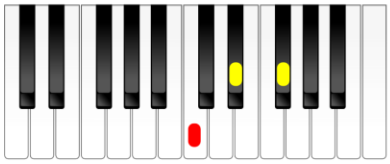
Cm7



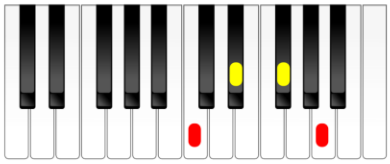
CM7



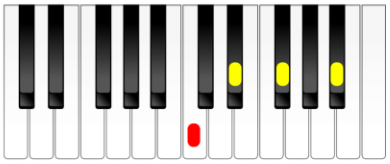
CmM7



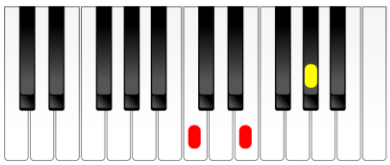
Cdim



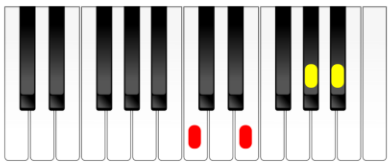
Cdim7



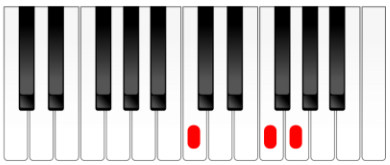
Cm7b5



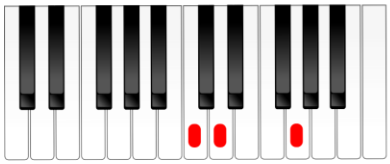
C+



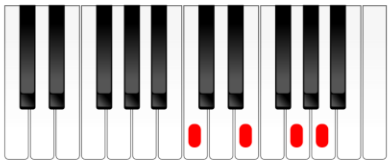
C+7



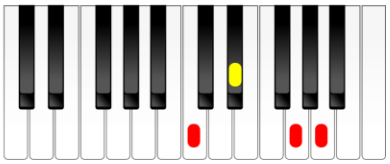
Csus4



Csus9



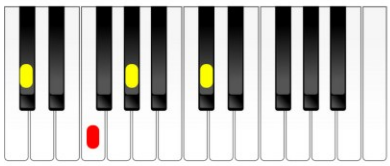
C6



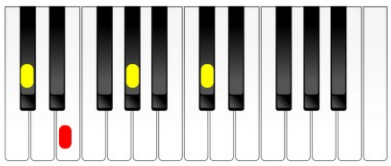
Cm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

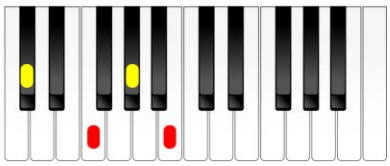
C# Chords



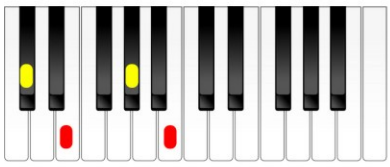
C#



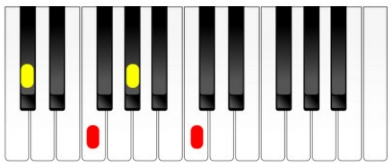
C#m



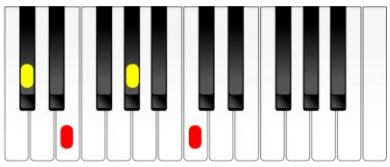
C#7



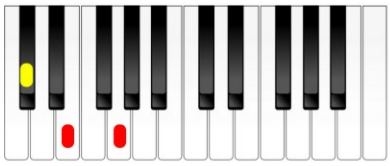
C#m7



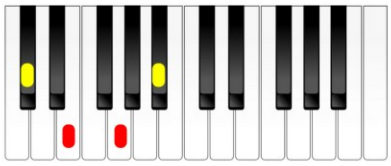
C#M7



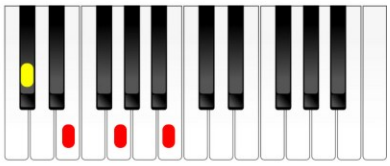
C#mM7



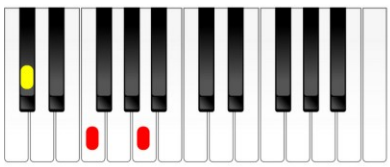
C#dim



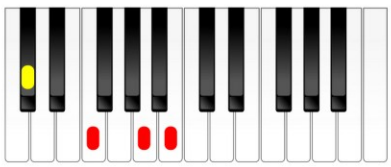
C#dim7



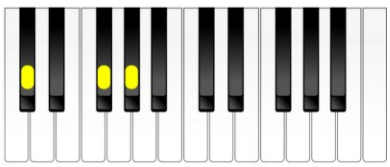
C#m7b5



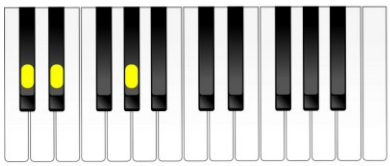
C#+



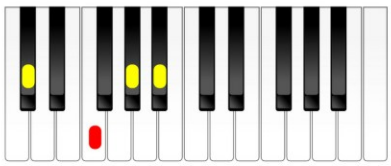
C#+7



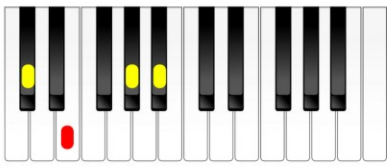
C#sus4



C#sus9



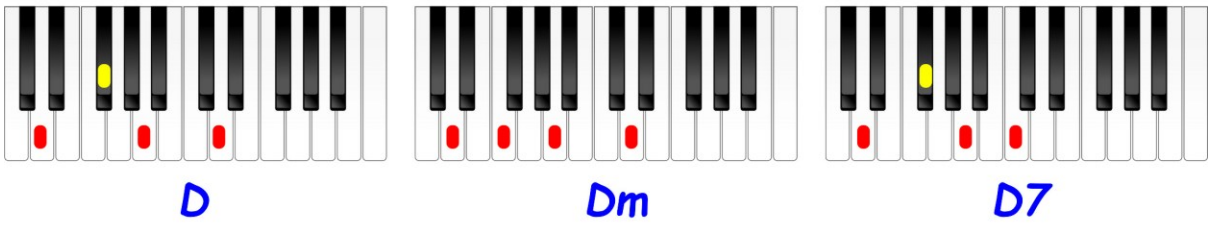
C#6



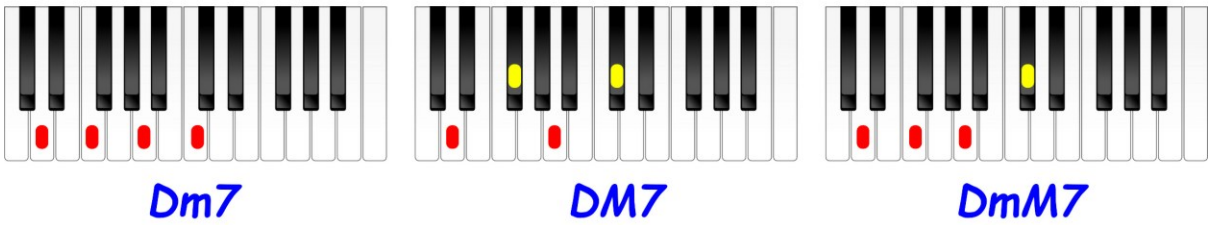
C#m6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

D Chords

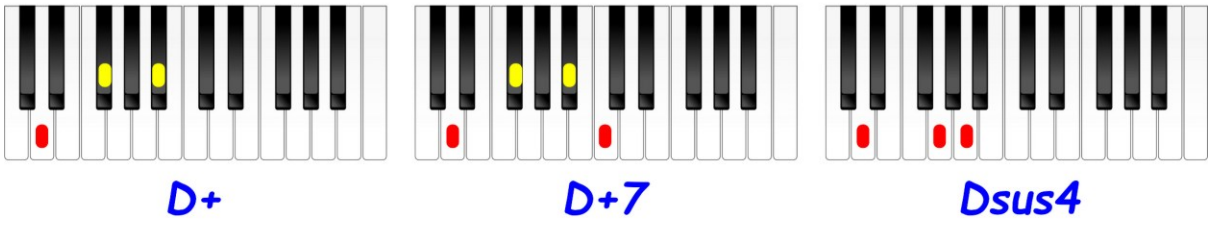


D Dm D7

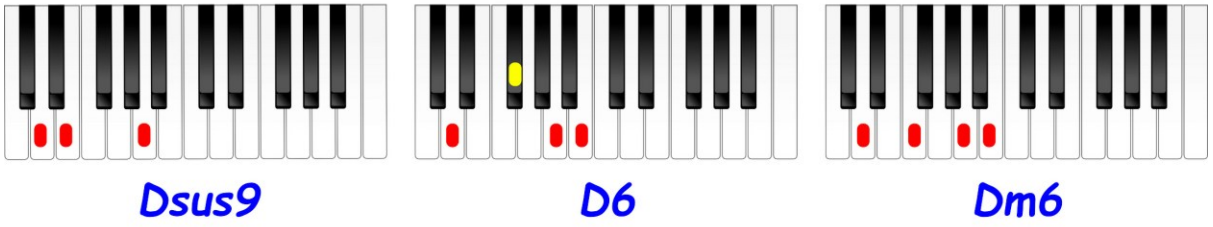


Dm7 DM7 DmM7

Ddim Ddim7 Dm7b5



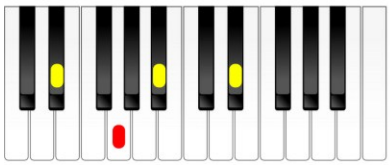
D+ D+7 Dsus4



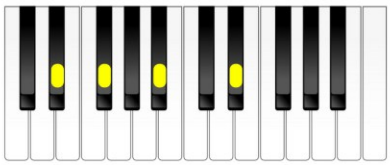
Dsus9 D6 Dm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

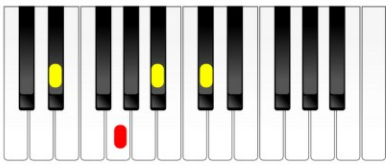
E♭ Chords



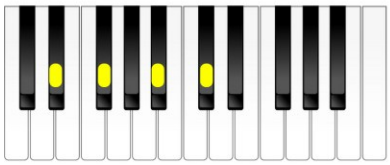
Eb



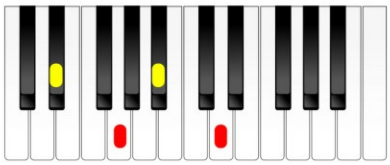
Ebm



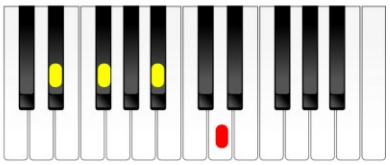
Eb7



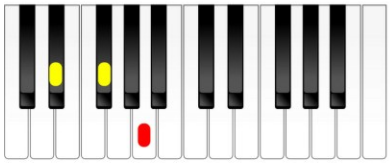
Ebm7



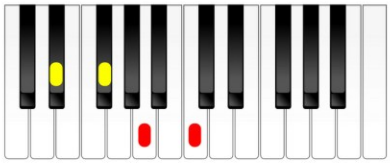
EbM7



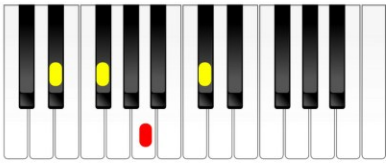
EbmM7



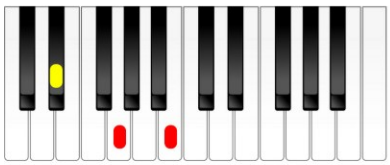
Ebdim



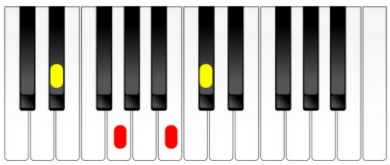
Ebdim7



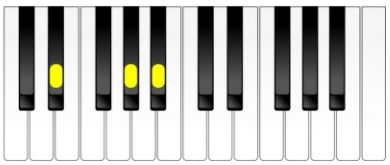
Ebm7b5



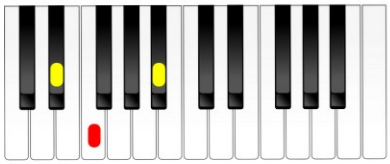
Eb+



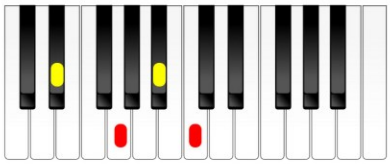
Eb+7



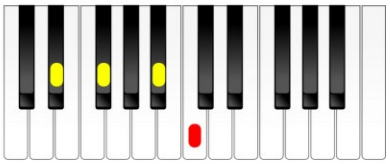
Ebsus4



Ebsus9



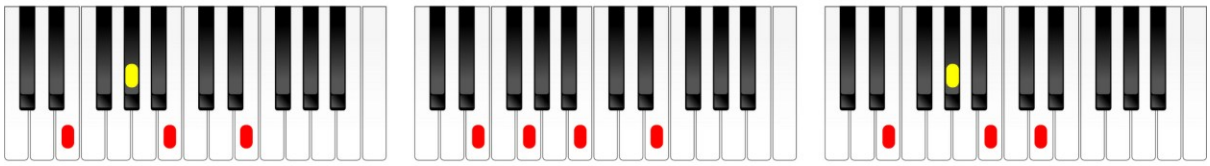
Eb6



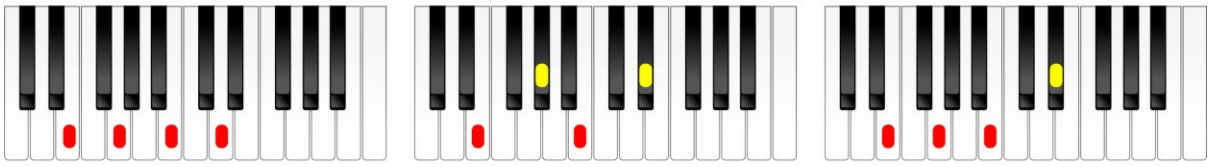
Ebm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

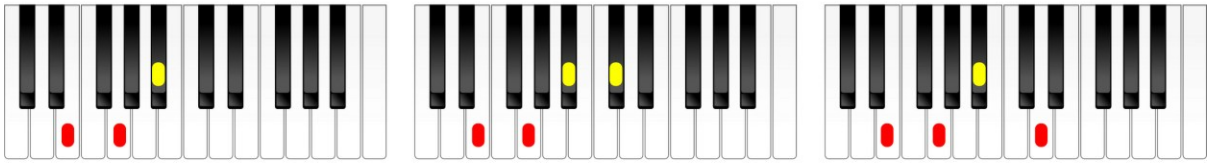
E Chords



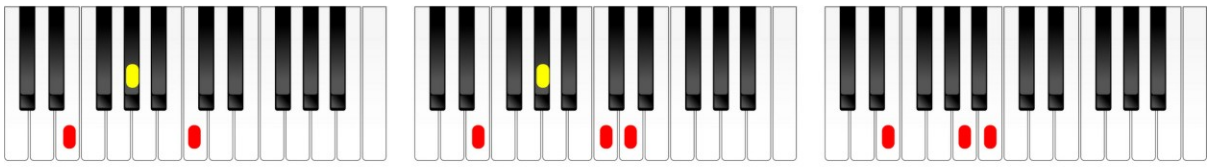
E Em E7



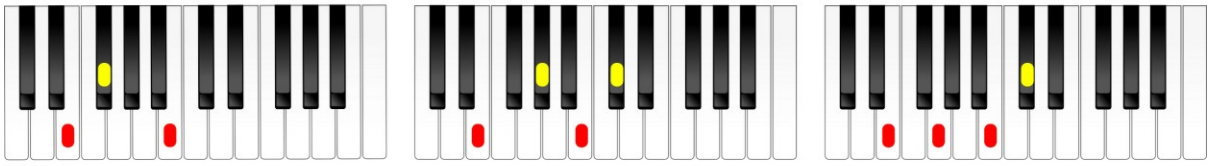
Em7 EM7 EmM7



Edim Edim7 Em7b5



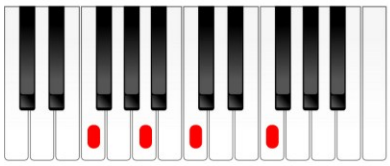
E+ E+7 Esus4



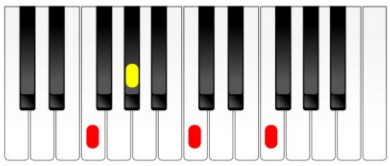
Esus9 E6 Em6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

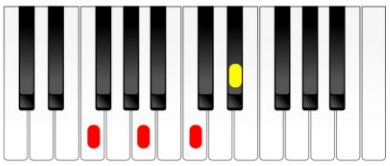
F Chords



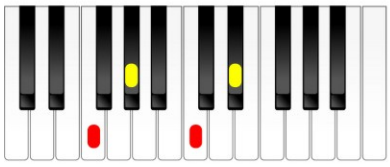
F



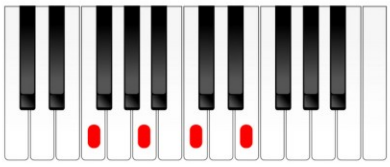
Fm



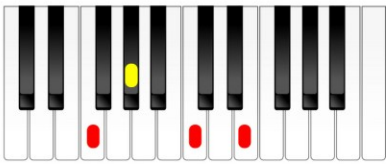
F7



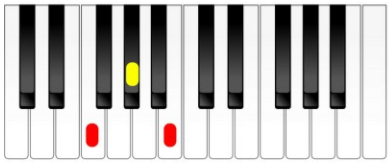
Fm7



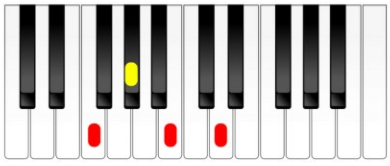
FM7



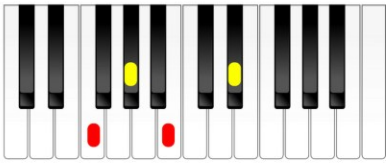
FmM7



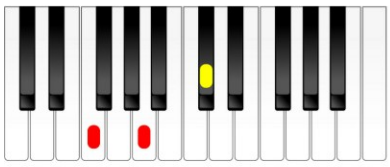
Fdim



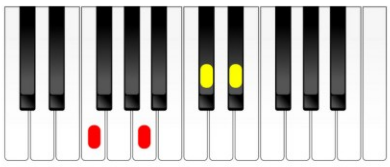
Fdim7



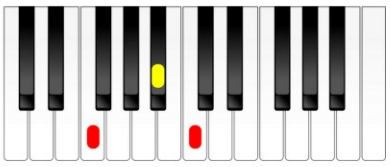
Fm7b5



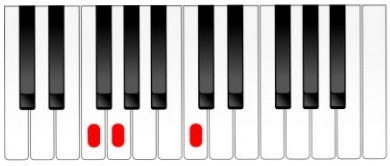
F+



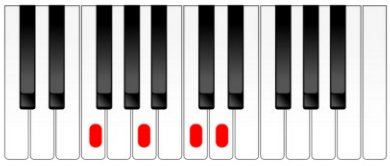
F+7



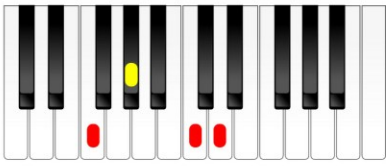
Fsus4



Fsus9



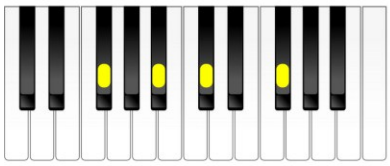
F6



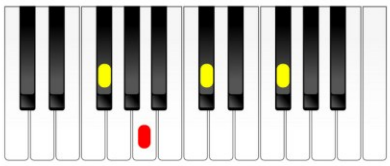
Fm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

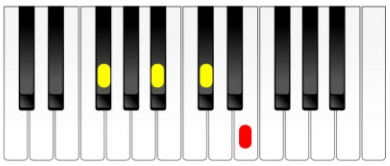
F# Chords



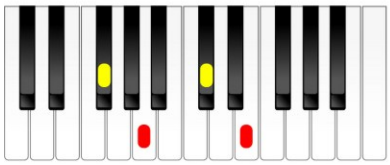
F#



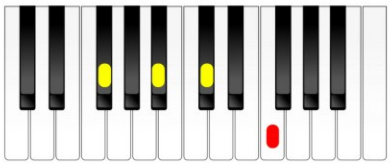
F#m



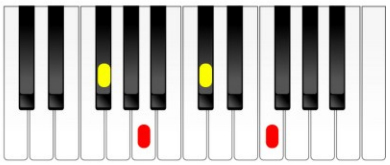
F#7



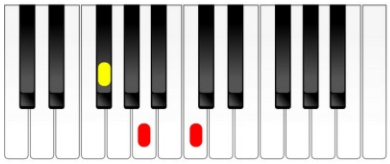
F#m7



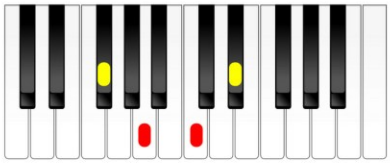
F#M7



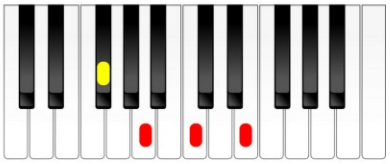
F#mM7



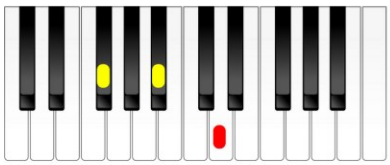
F#dim



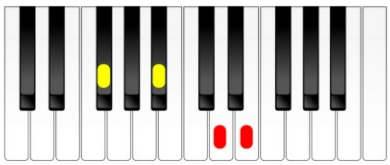
F#dim7



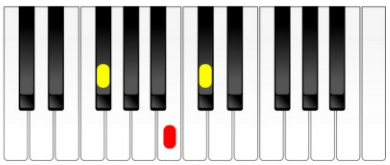
F#m7b5



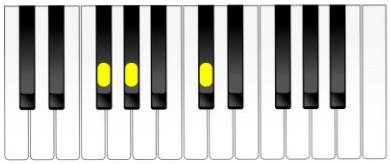
F#+



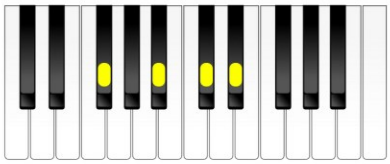
F#+7



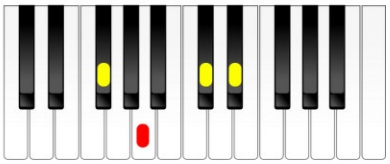
F#sus4



F#sus9



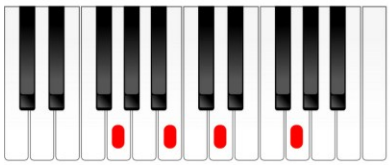
F#6



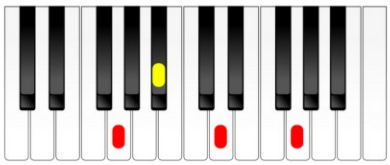
F#m6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

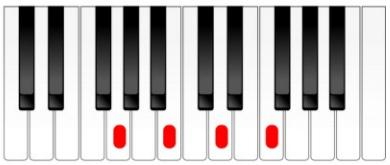
G Chords



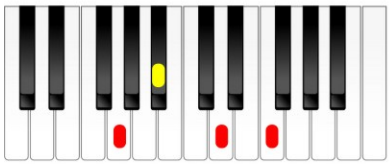
G



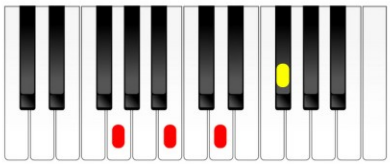
Gm



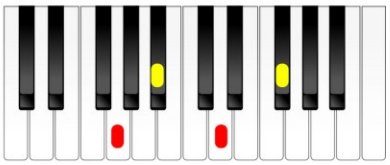
G7



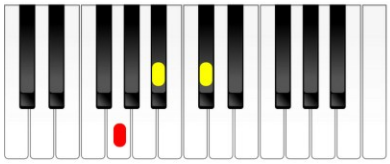
Gm7



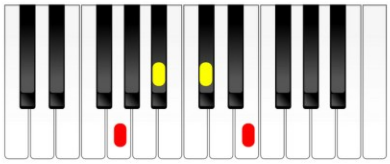
GM7



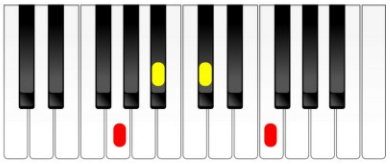
GmM7



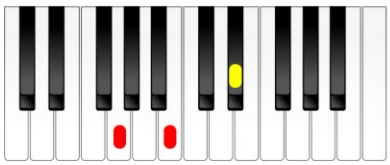
Gdim



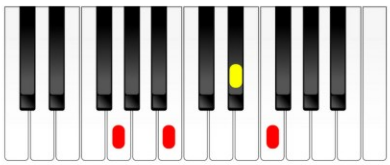
Gdim7



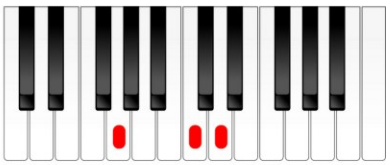
Gm7b5



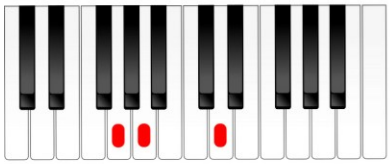
G+



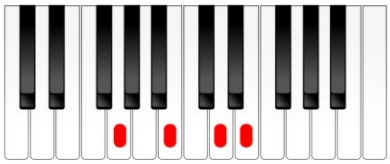
G+7



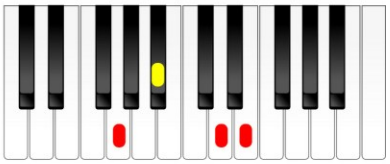
Gsus4



Gsus9



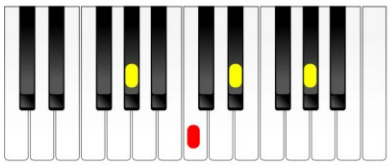
G6



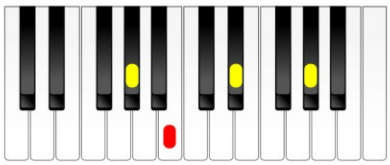
Gm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

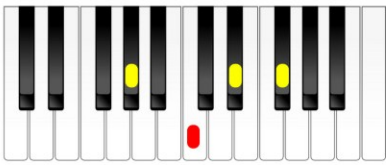
A♭ Chords



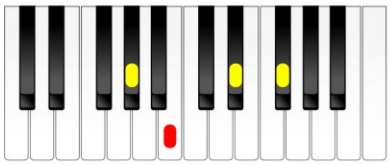
Ab



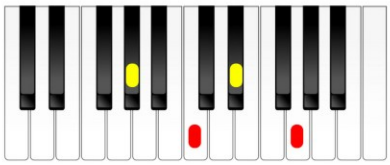
Abm



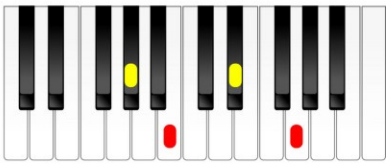
Ab7



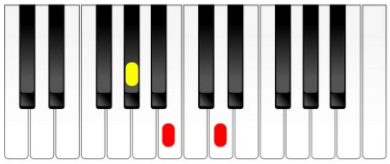
Abm7



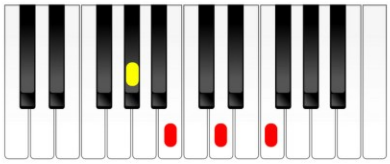
AbM7



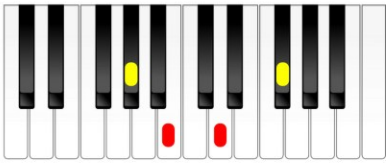
AbmM7



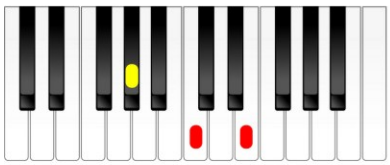
Abdim



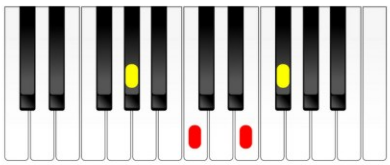
Abdim7



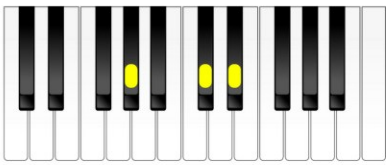
Abm7b5



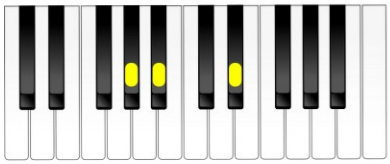
Ab+



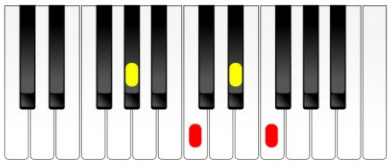
Ab+7



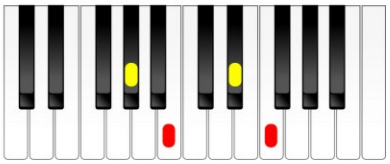
Absus4



Absus9



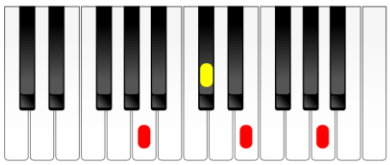
Ab6



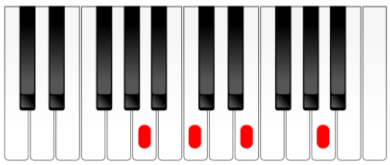
Abm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

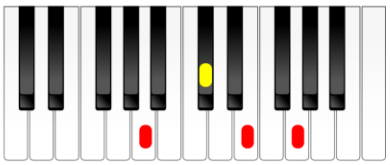
A Chords



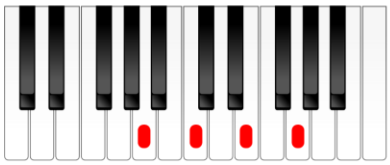
A



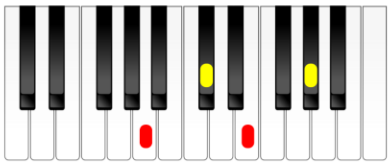
Am



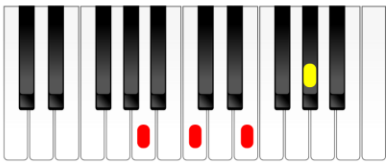
A7



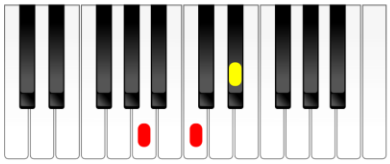
Am7



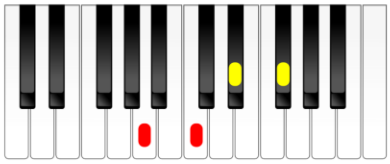
AM7



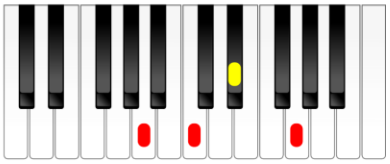
AmM7



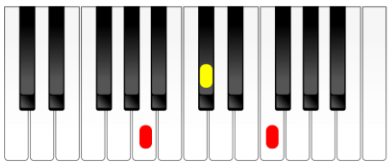
Adim



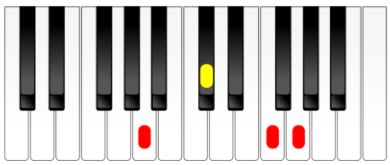
Adim7



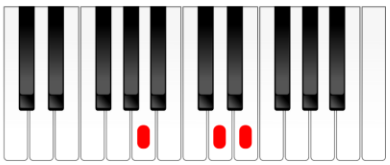
Am7b5



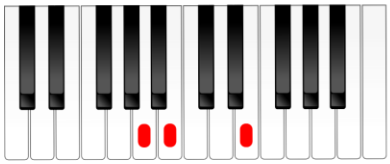
A+



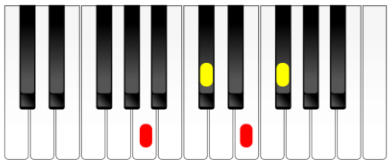
A+7



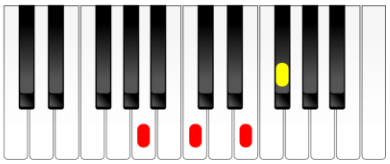
Asus4



Asus9



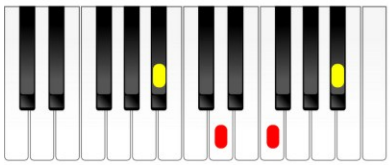
A6



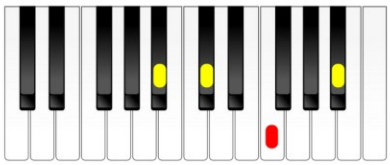
Am6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

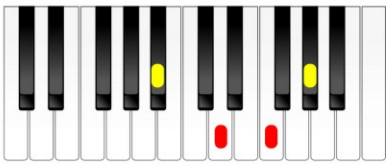
B♭ Chords



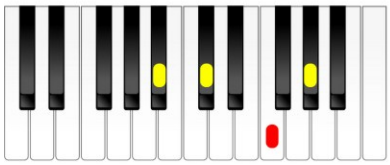
Bb



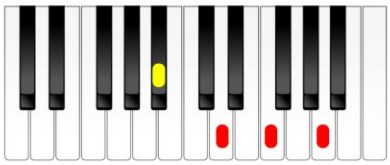
Bbm



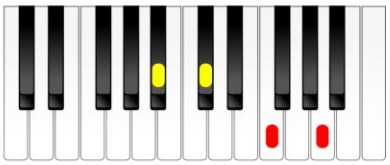
Bb7



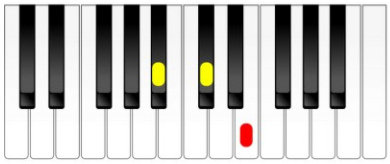
Bbm7



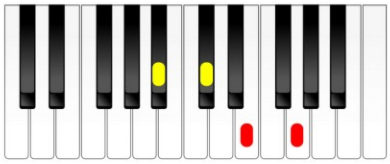
BbM7



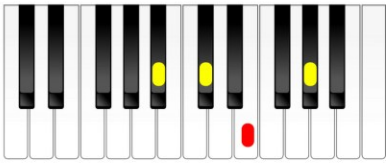
BbmM7



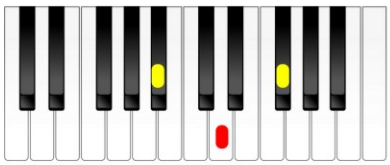
Bbdim



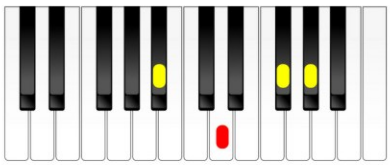
Bbdim7



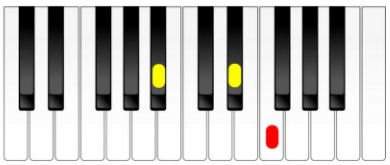
Bbm7b5



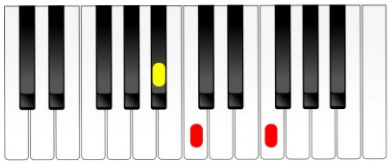
Bb+



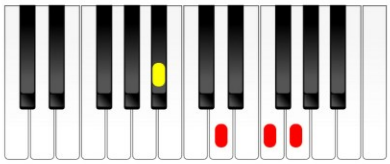
Bb+7



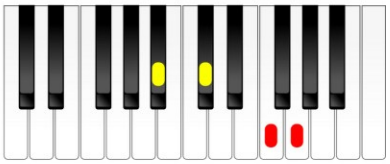
Bbsus4



Bbsus9



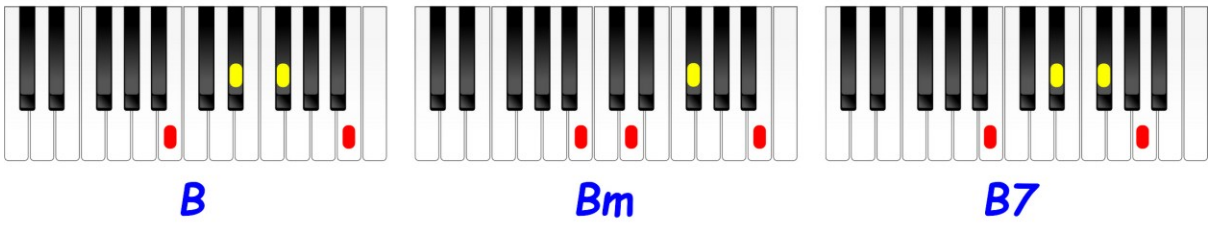
Bb6



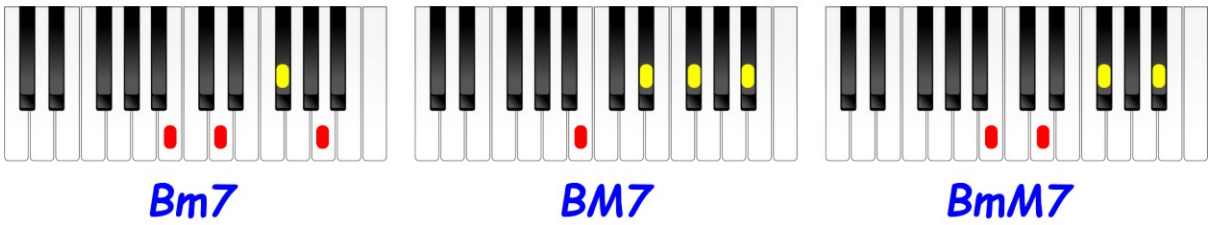
Bbm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

B Chords

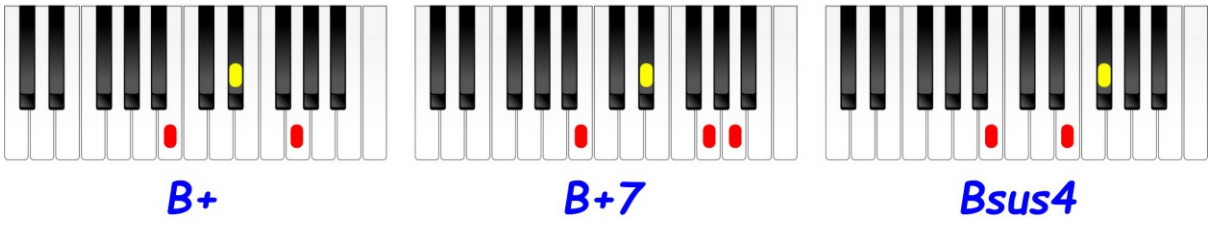


B Bm B7

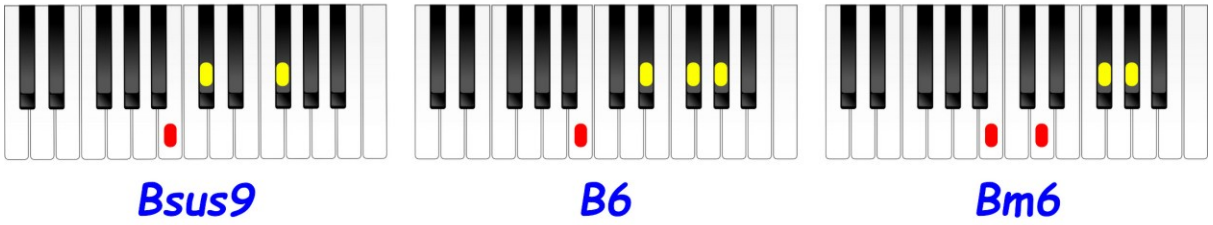


Bm7 BM7 BmM7

Bdim Bdim7 Bm7b5



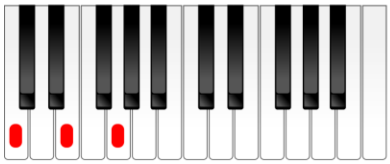
B+ B+7 Bsus4



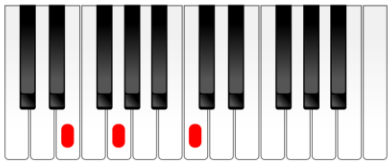
Bsus9 B6 Bm6

All chords shown are in Root position only. To find the 1st inversions simply move the bottom note of each chord to the top. Repeat for the 2nd and (where applicable) 3rd inversions.

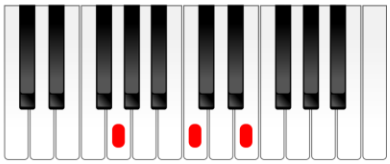
C - G - F - D - B♭ - A Inversions



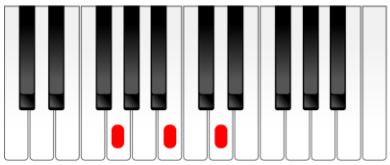
C - Root



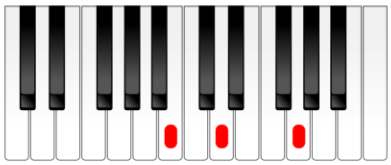
C - 1st Inv.



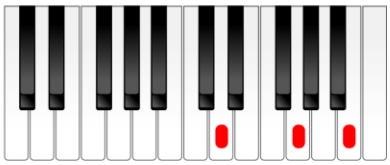
C - 2nd Inv.



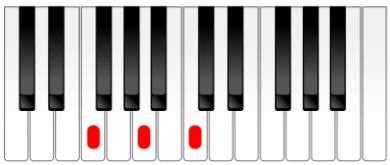
G - Root



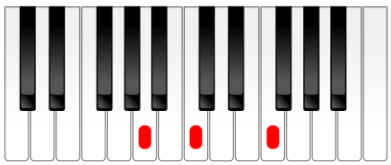
G - 1st Inv.



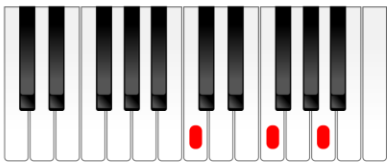
G - 2nd Inv.



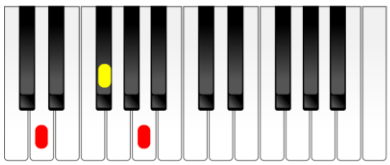
F - Root



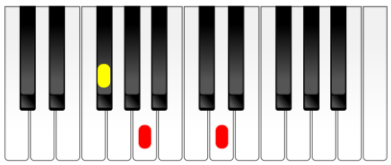
F - 1st Inv.



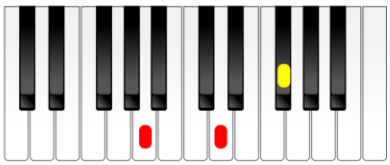
F - 2nd Inv.



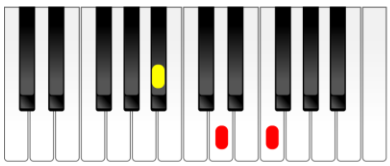
D - Root



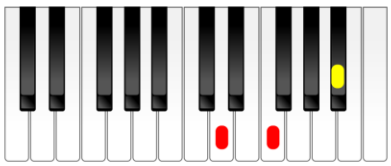
D - 1st Inv.



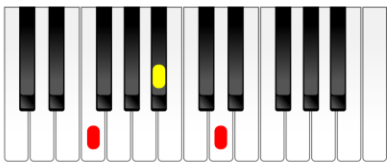
D - 2nd Inv.



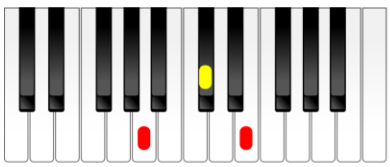
Bb - Root



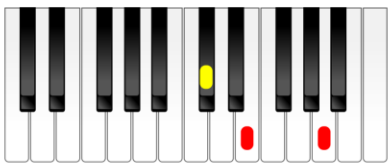
Bb - 1st Inv.



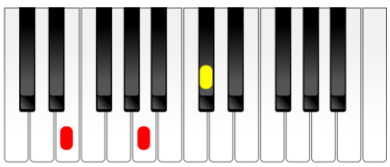
Bb - 2nd Inv.



A - Root

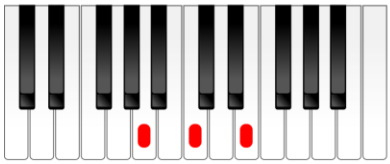


A - 1st Inv.

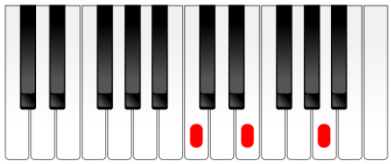


A - 2nd Inv.

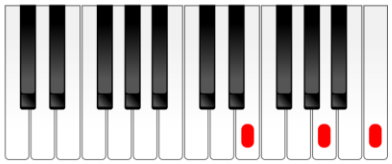
Am - Em - Dm - Bm - Gm - F#m Invs.



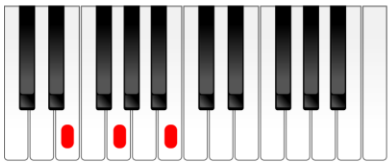
Am - Root



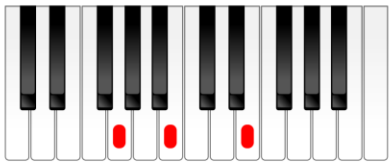
Am - 1st Inv.



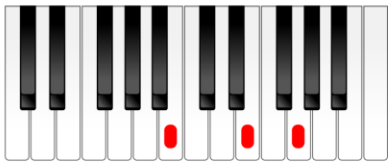
Am - 2nd Inv.



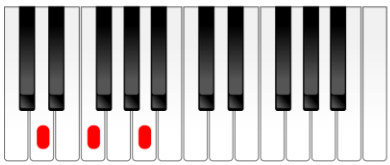
Em - Root



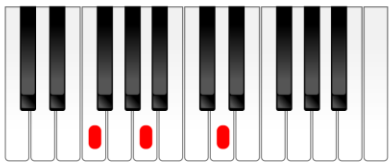
Em - 1st Inv.



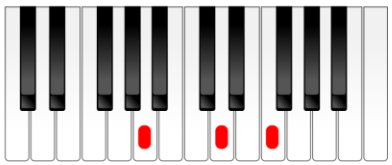
Em - 2nd Inv.



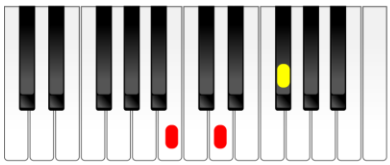
Dm - Root



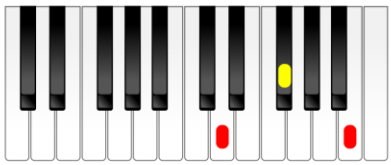
Dm - 1st Inv.



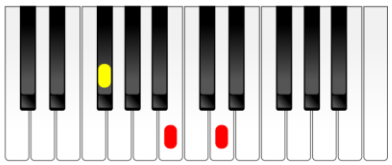
Dm - 2nd Inv.



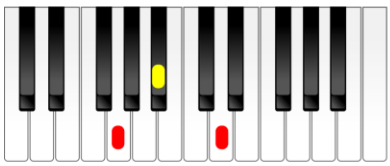
Bm - Root



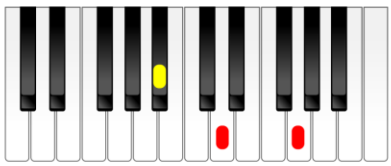
Bm - 1st Inv.



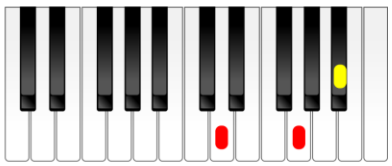
Bm - 2nd Inv.



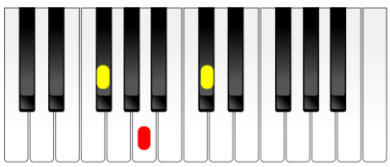
Gm - Root



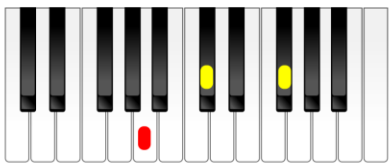
Gm - 1st Inv.



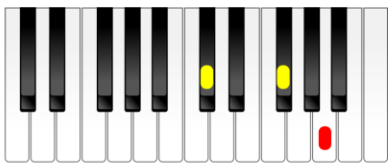
Gm - 2nd Inv.



F#m - Root

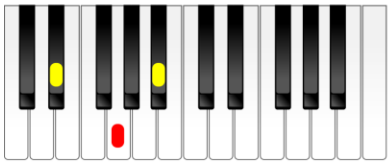


F#m - 1st Inv.

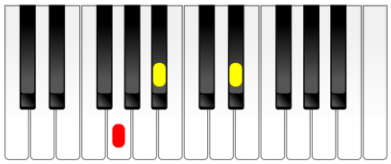


F#m - 2nd Inv.

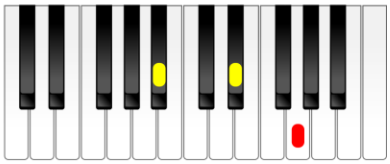
E♭ - E - A♭ - B - D♭ - F# Inversions



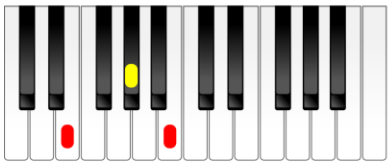
Eb - Root



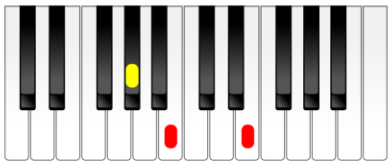
Eb - 1st Inv.



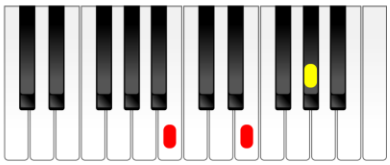
Eb - 2nd Inv.



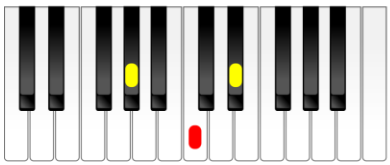
E - Root



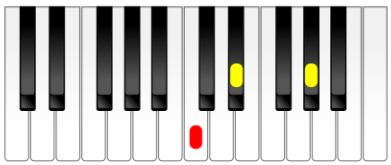
E - 1st Inv.



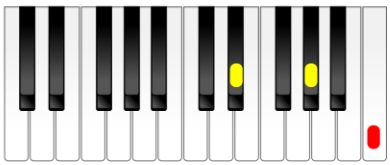
E - 2nd Inv.



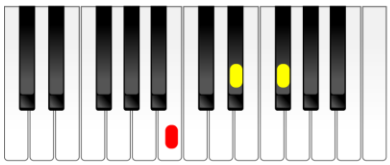
Ab - Root



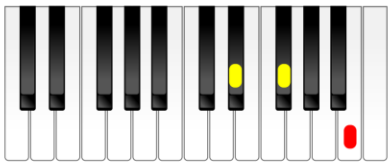
Ab - 1st Inv.



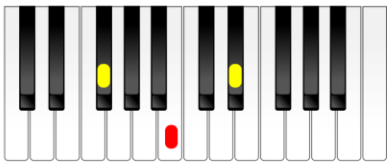
Ab - 2nd Inv.



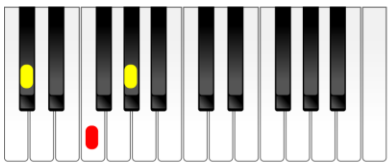
B - Root



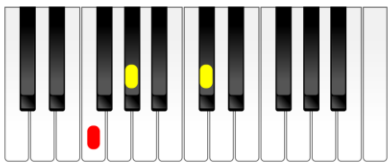
B - 1st Inv.



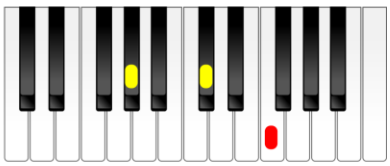
B - 2nd Inv.



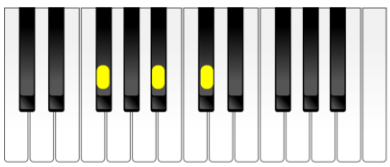
Db - Root



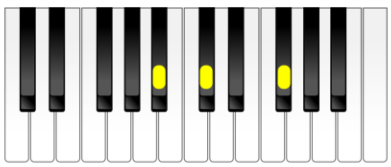
Db - 1st Inv.



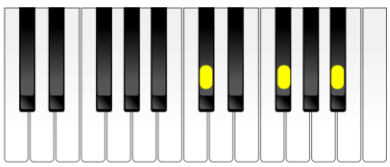
Db - 2nd Inv.



F# - Root

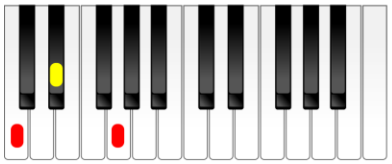


F# - 1st Inv.

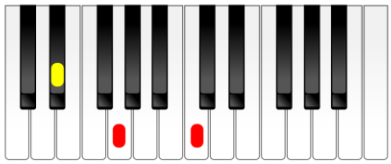


F# - 2nd Inv.

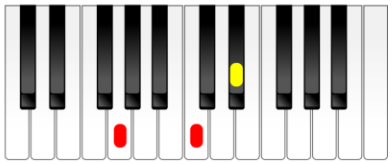
Cm - C#m - Fm - G#m - B♭m - E♭m Invs.



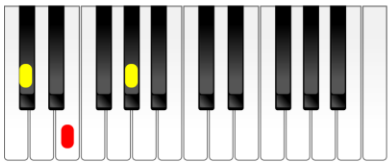
Cm - Root



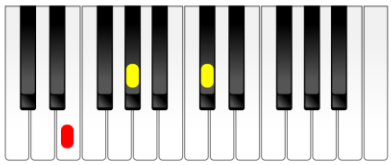
Cm - 1st Inv.



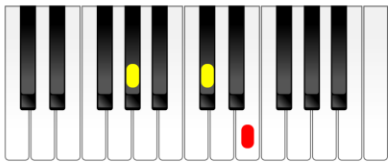
Cm - 2nd Inv.



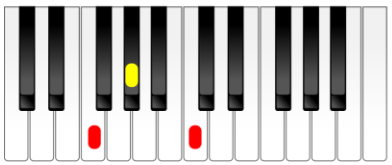
C#m - Root



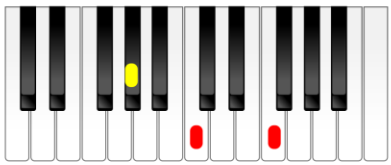
C#m - 1st Inv.



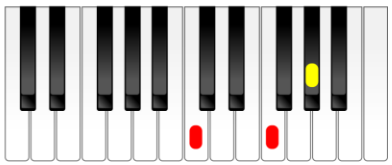
C#m - 2nd Inv.



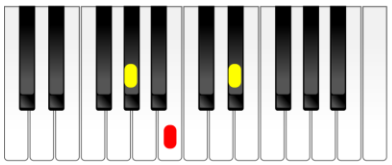
Fm - Root



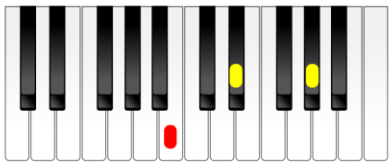
Fm - 1st Inv.



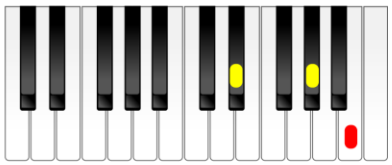
Fm - 2nd Inv.



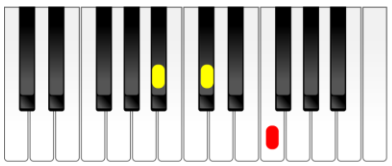
G#m - Root



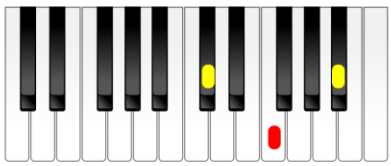
G#m - 1st Inv.



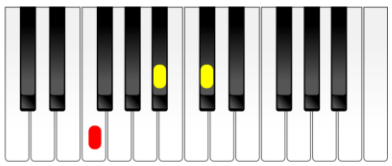
G#m - 2nd Inv.



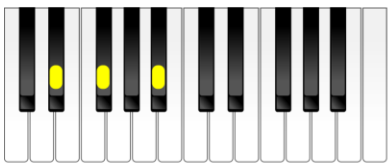
Bbm - Root



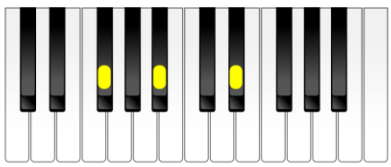
Bbm - 1st Inv.



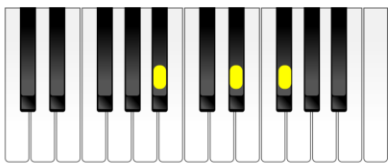
Bbm - 2nd Inv.



Ebm - Root



Ebm - 1st Inv.



Ebm - 2nd Inv.

Extended Chords

The next twelve pages show the following chords in keyboard view in each of the twelve keys:

- **6/9th**, **m6/9th**, **m7add4th (m7sus4th)**
- **9th**, **m9th**, **M9th** & **7♭9th**
- **11th** & **m11th**
- **13th**, **♭13th** & **13♭9th**
- **♭10th**

Apart from the first three chords of each page, the two lowest notes (the root and 5th) are to be played with the left hand.

Note that if playing the short (right-hand) version of these chords, it's doubtful, that they would be recognised by *auto accompaniment*. In this event, just play the relevant major (or minor if applicable) chord with your left hand and the more complicated extension (as shown) with your right hand. It will work - try it! But also note that the chords shown are my suggestions which have served me well, but there are of course others - the possibilities are endless! As you get to understand how chords are constructed, you will be able to figure out different inversions.

If playing with a band, you may only *need* to play the right-hand parts, omitting the tonic and 5th which will be dealt with by the bass player.

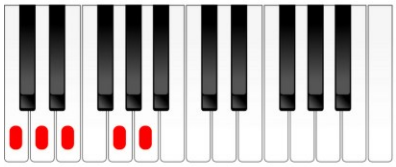
As this chapter is for reference only, there are no audio links.

Quick link back to Part 1.

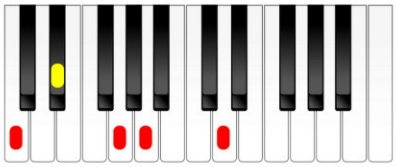
Clavia Nord Stage 4 Synth / Piano / Organ - 88 keys

This is certainly one of the very best professional boards availalble for stage and recording use, and incorporates some the best piano, organ and synth sounds available. - I love it!

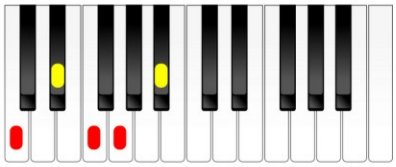
C Extended Chords



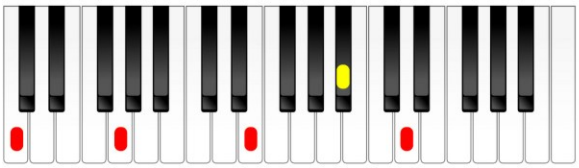
C6/9



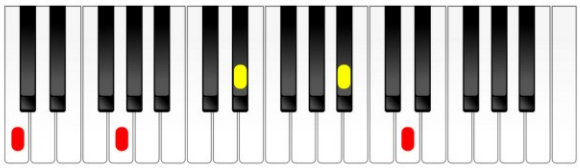
Cm6/9



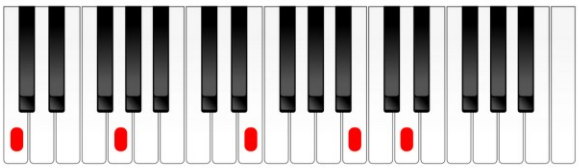
Cm7sus4



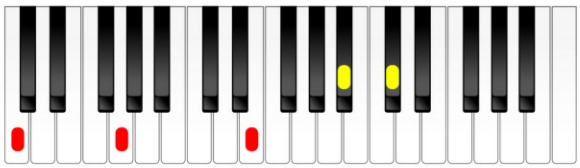
C9



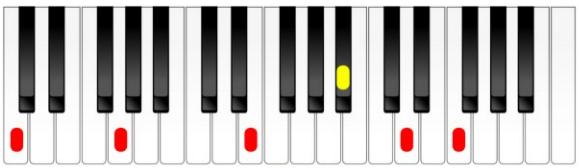
Cm9



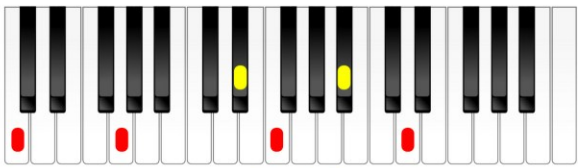
CM9



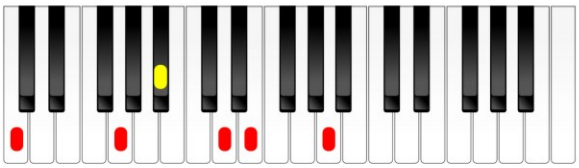
C7b9



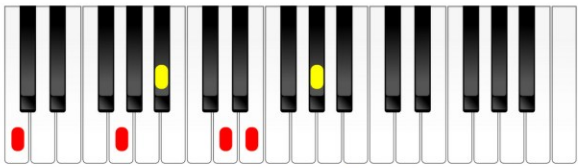
C11



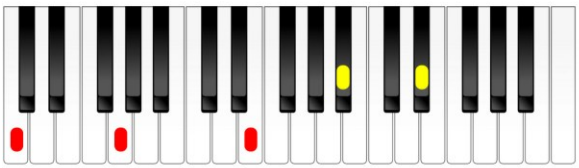
Cm11



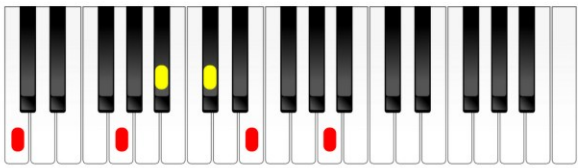
C13



C(b13)

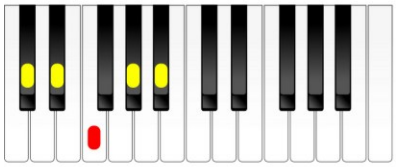


C(b10)

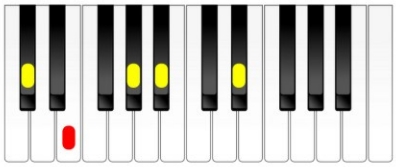


C13b9

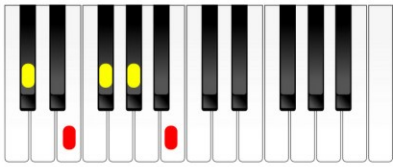
C# Extended Chords



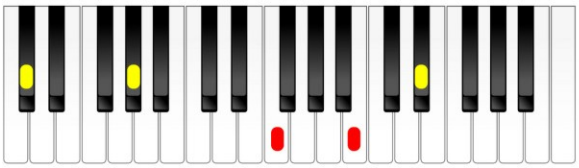
C#6/9



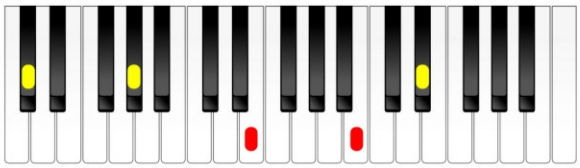
C#m6/9



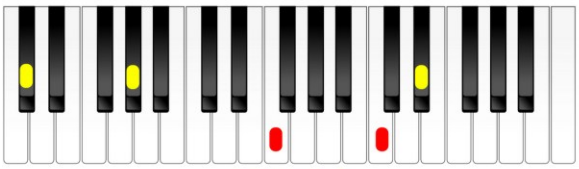
C#m7sus4



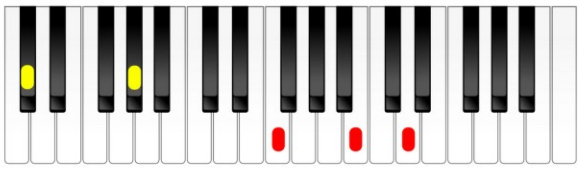
C#9



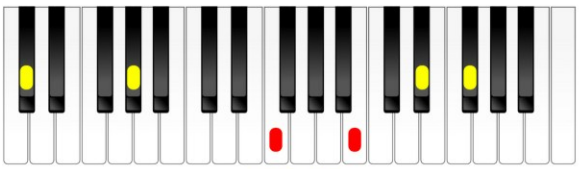
C#m9



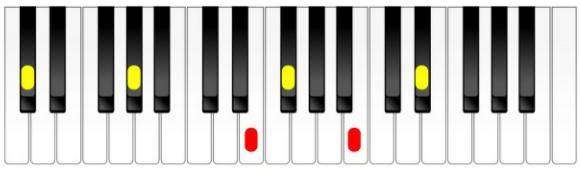
C#M9



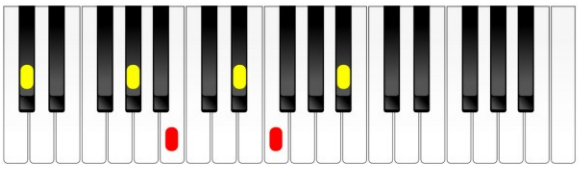
C#7b9



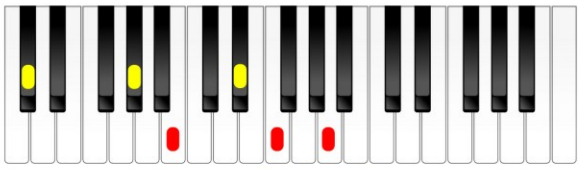
C#11



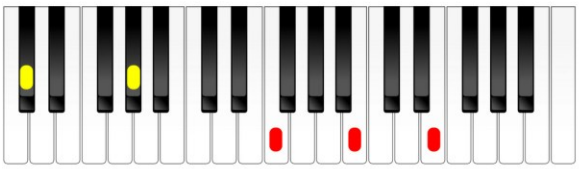
C#m11



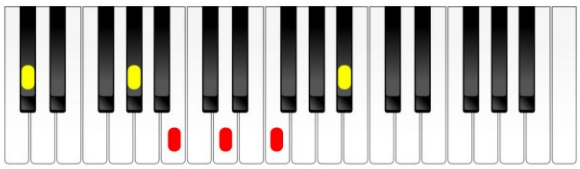
C#13



C#(b13)

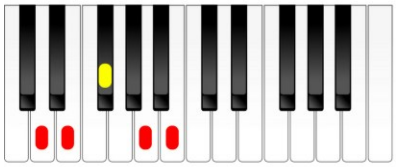


C#(b10)

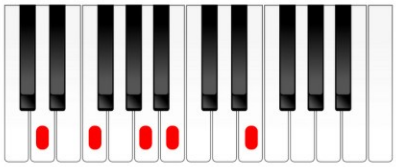


C#13b9

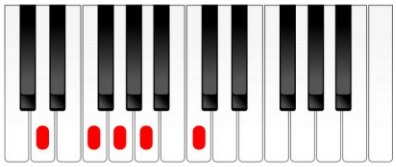
D Extended Chords



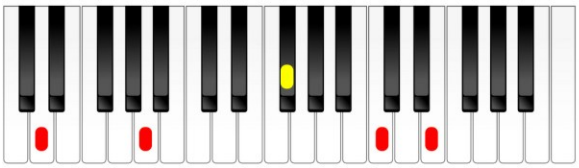
D6/9



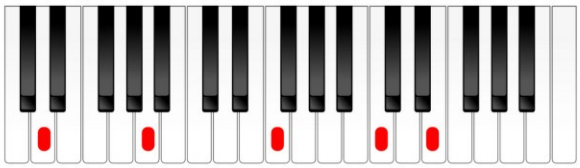
Dm6/9



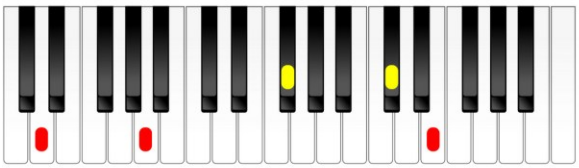
Dm7sus4



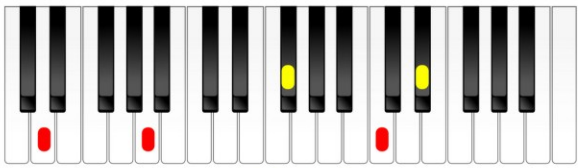
D9



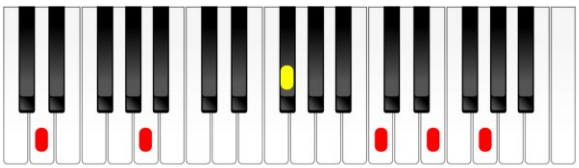
Dm9



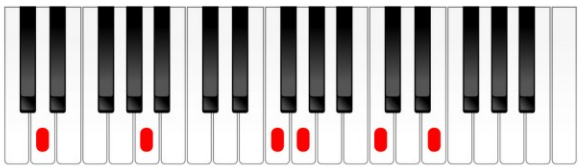
DM9



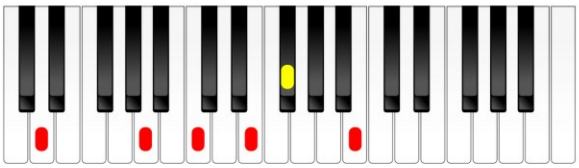
D7b9



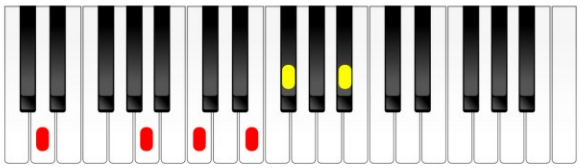
D11



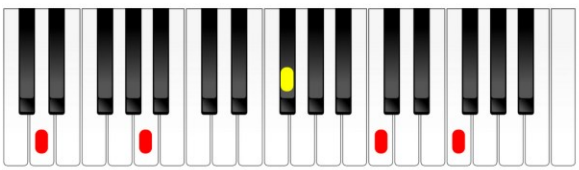
Dm11



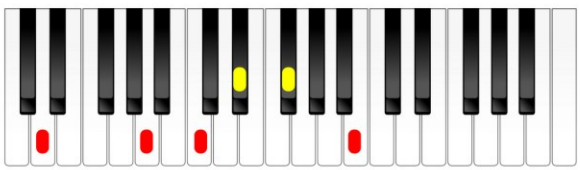
D13



D(b13)

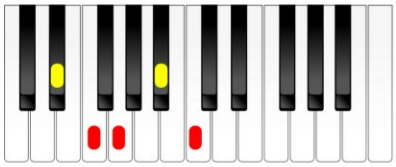


D(b10)

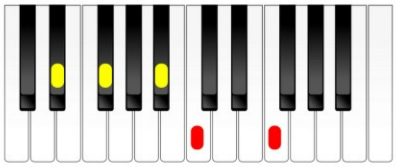


D13b9

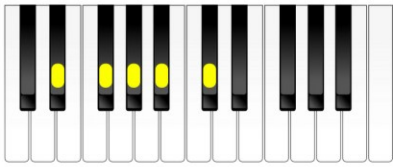
E♭ Extended Chords



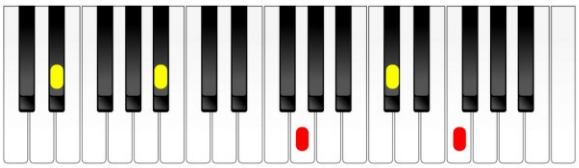
Eb6/9



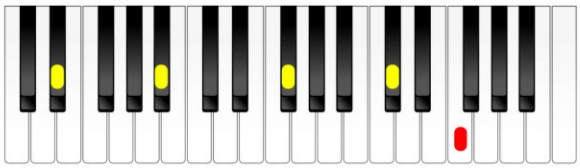
Ebm6/9



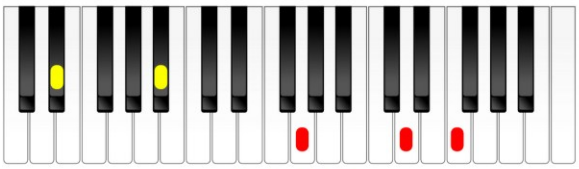
Ebm7sus4



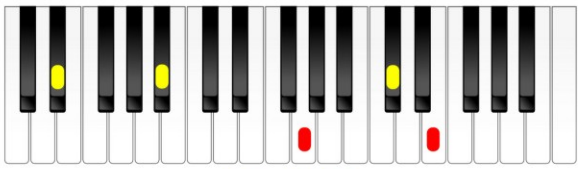
Eb9



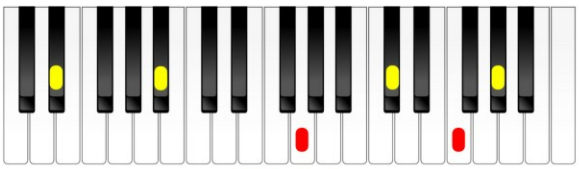
Ebm9



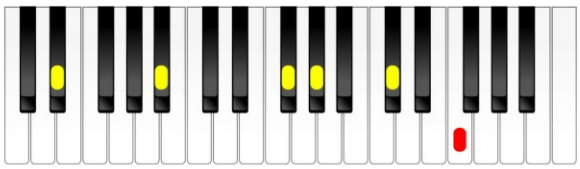
EbM9



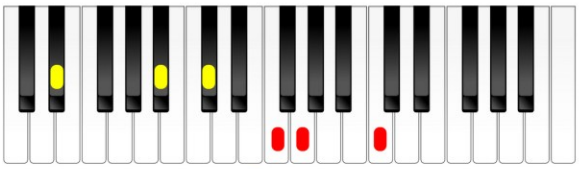
Eb7b9



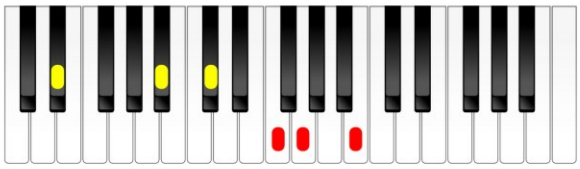
Eb11



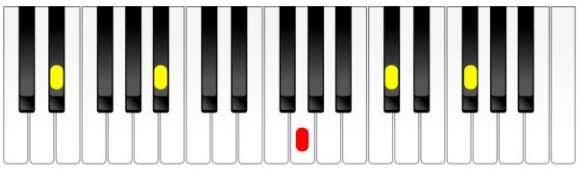
Ebm11



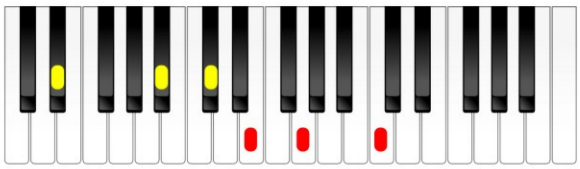
Eb13



Eb(b13)

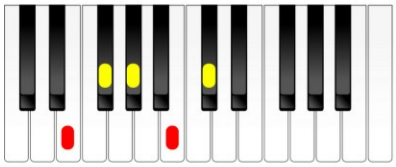


Eb(b10)

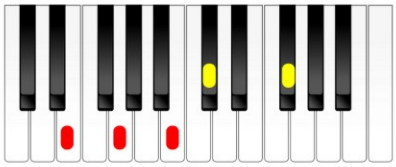


Eb13b9

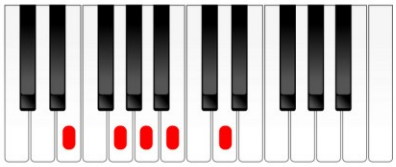
E Extended Chords



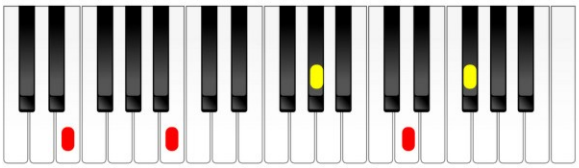
E6/9



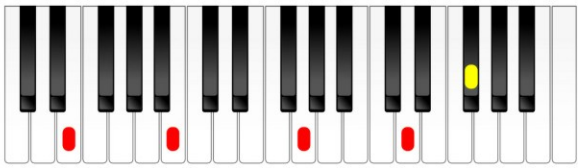
Em6/9



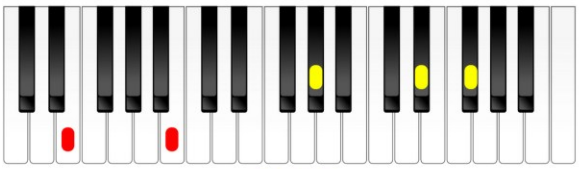
Em7sus4



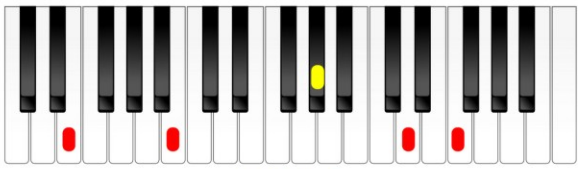
E9



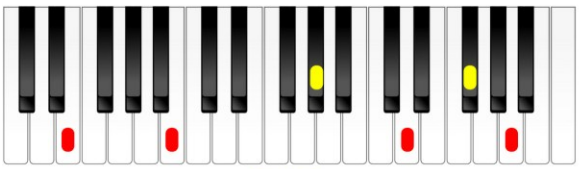
Em9



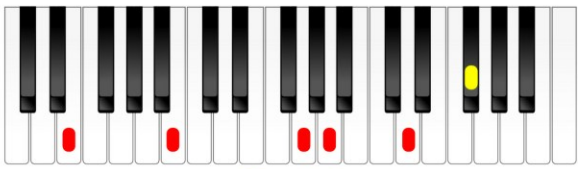
EM9



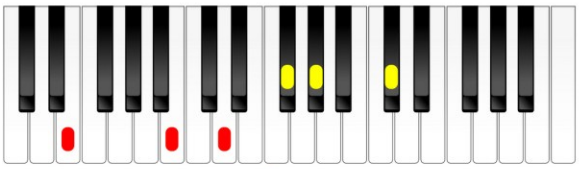
E7b9



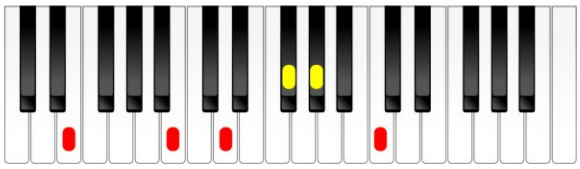
E11



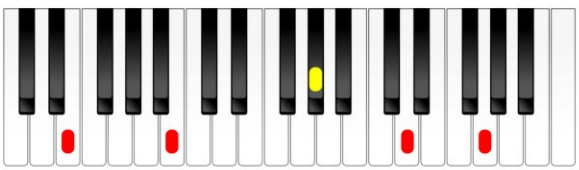
Em11



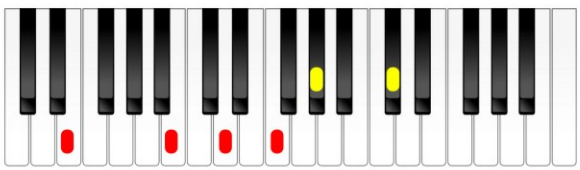
E13



E(b13)

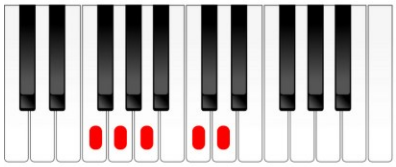


E(b10)

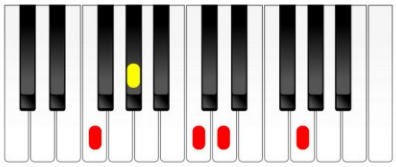


E13b9

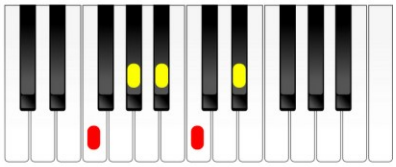
F Extended Chords



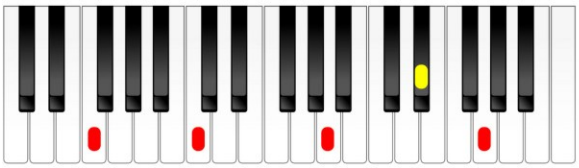
F6/9



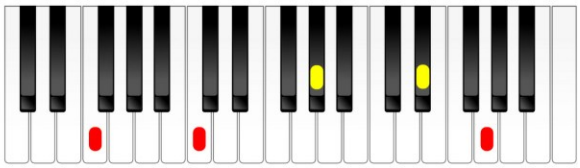
Fm6/9



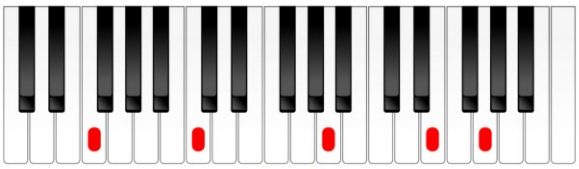
Fm7sus4



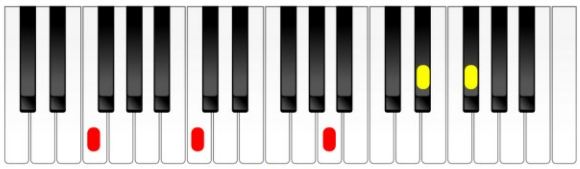
F9



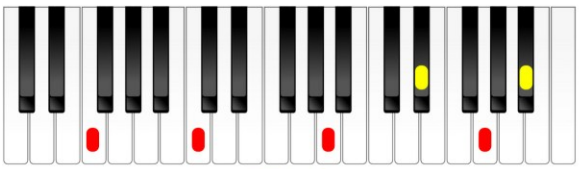
Fm9



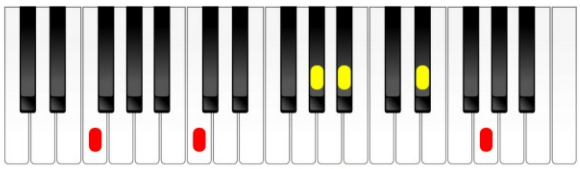
FM9



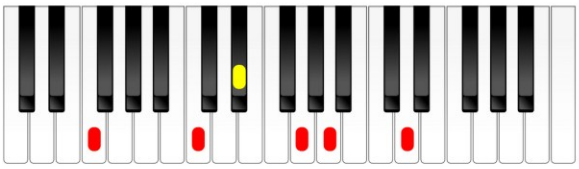
F7b9



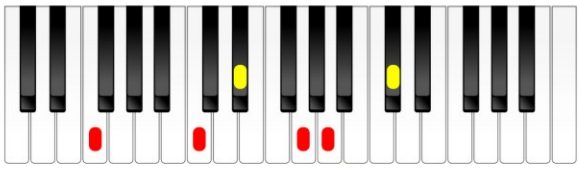
F11



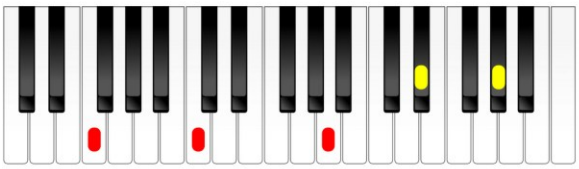
Fm11



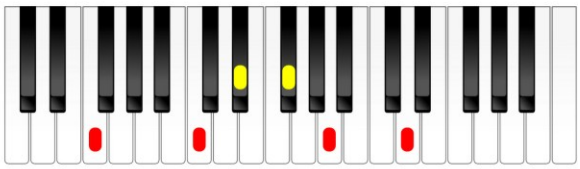
F13



F(b13)

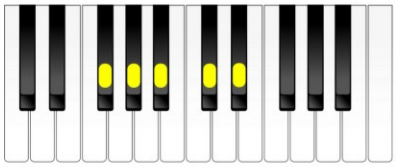


F(b10)

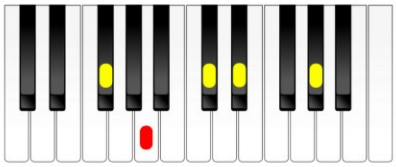


F13b9

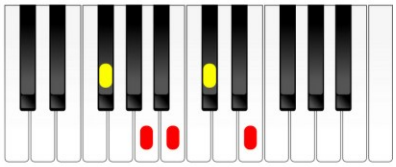
F# Extended Chords



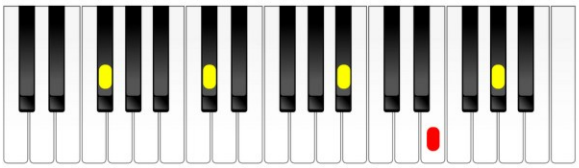
F#6/9



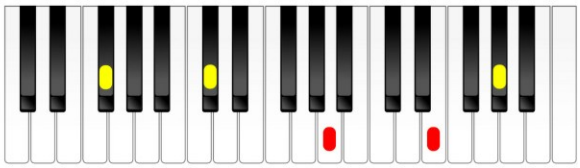
F#m6/9



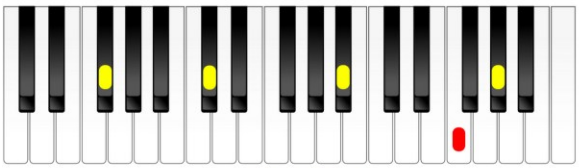
F#m7sus4



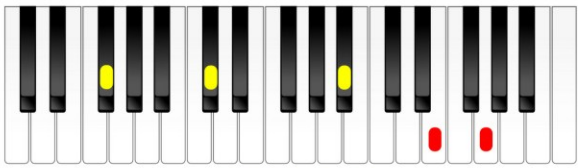
F#9



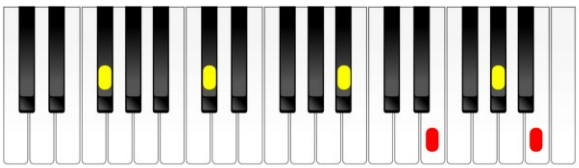
F#m9



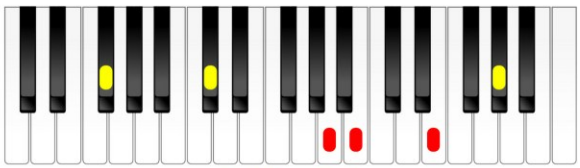
F#M9



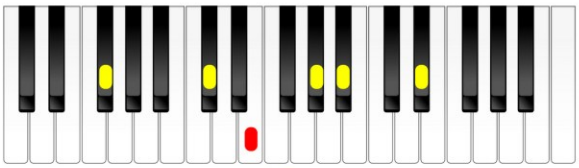
F#7b9



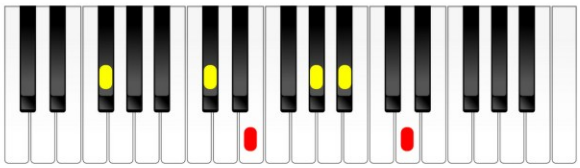
F#11



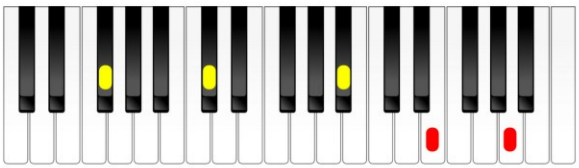
F#m11



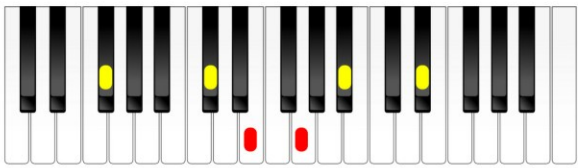
F#13



F#(b13)

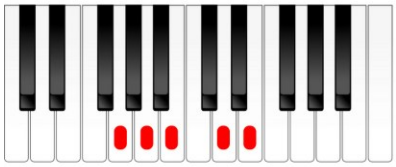


F#(b10)

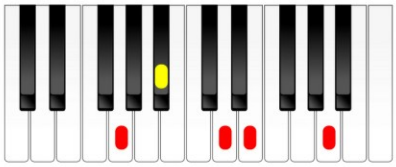


F#13b9

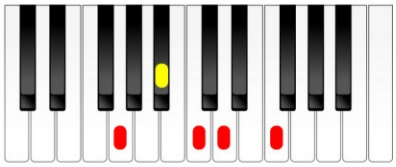
G Extended Chords



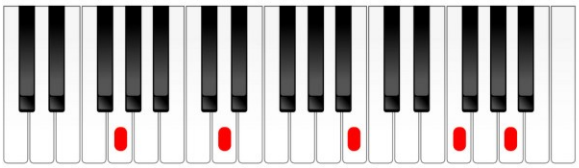
G6/9



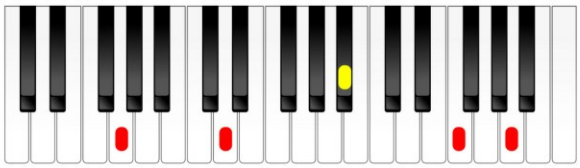
Gm6/9



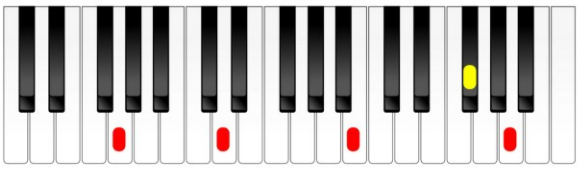
Gm7sus4



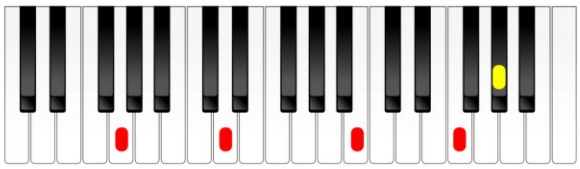
G9



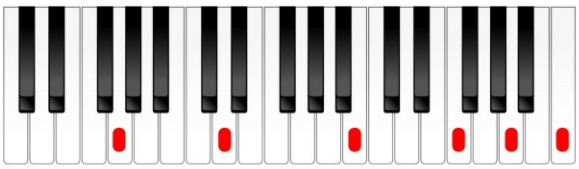
Gm9



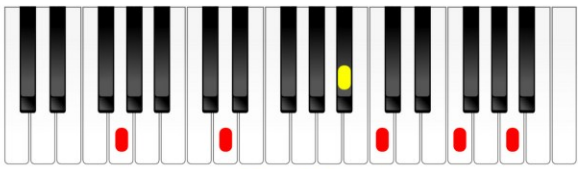
GM9



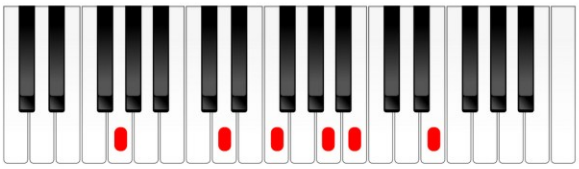
G7b9



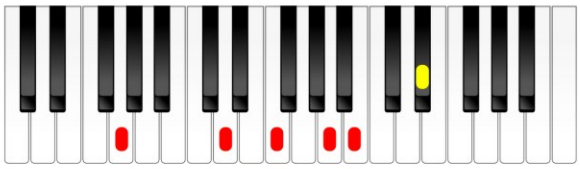
G11



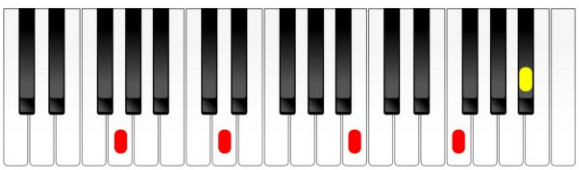
Gm11



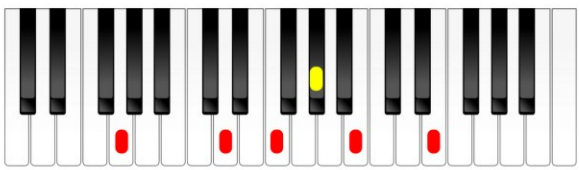
G13



G(b13)

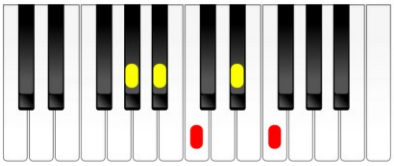


G(b10)

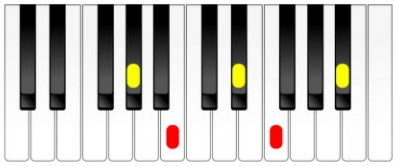


G13b9

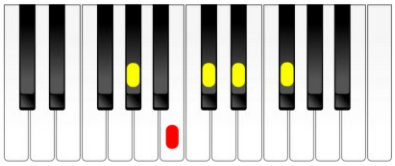
A♭ Extended Chords



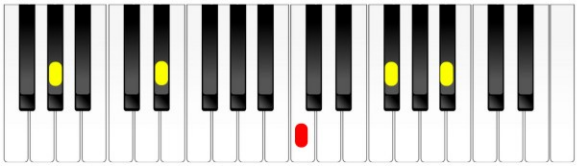
Ab6/9



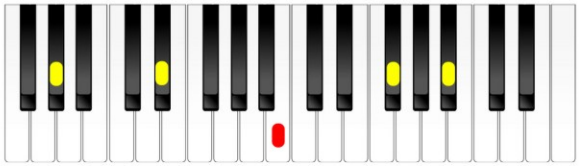
Abm6/9



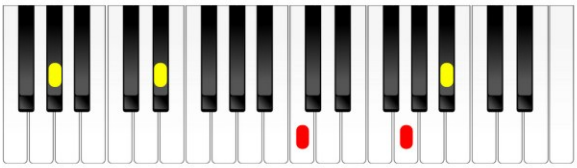
Abm7sus4



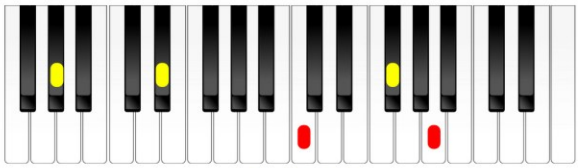
Ab9



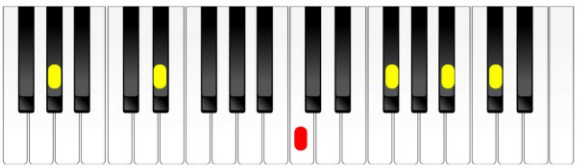
Abm9



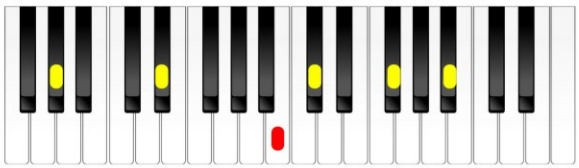
AbM9



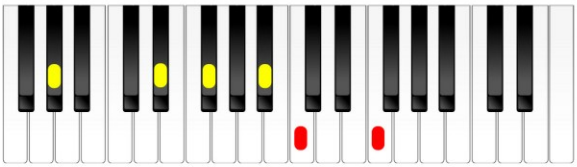
Ab7b9



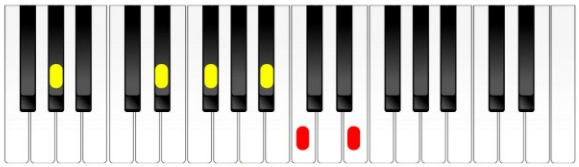
Ab11



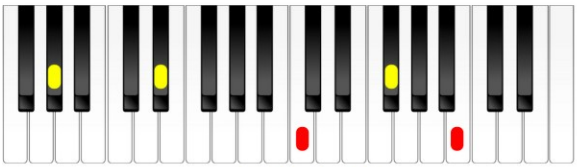
Abm11



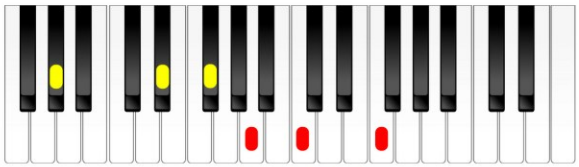
Ab13



Ab(b13)

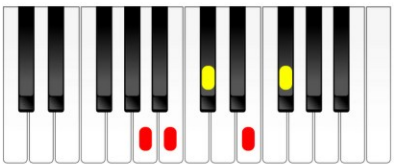


Ab(b10)

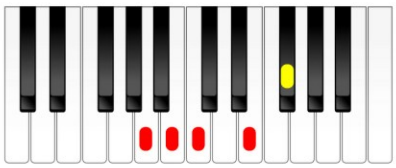


Ab13b9

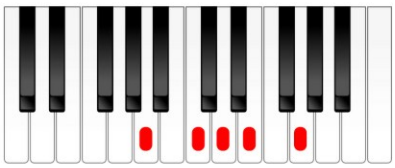
A Extended Chords



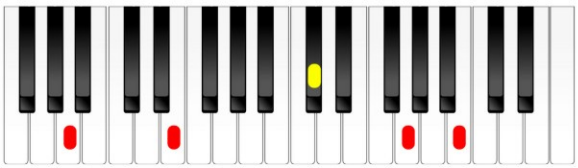
A6/9



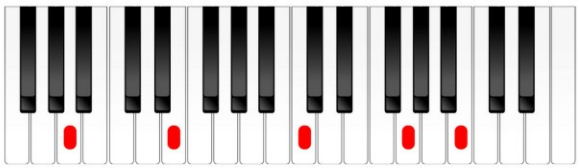
Am6/9



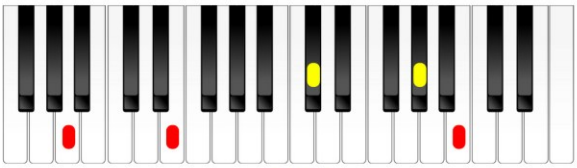
Am7sus4



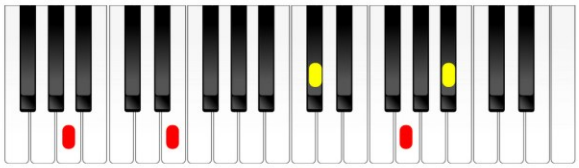
A9



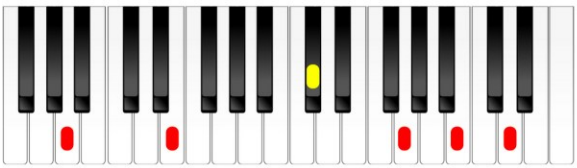
Am9



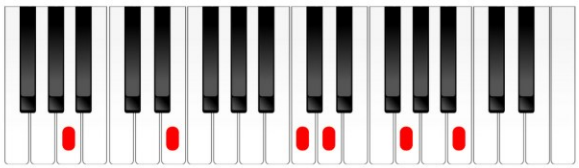
AM9



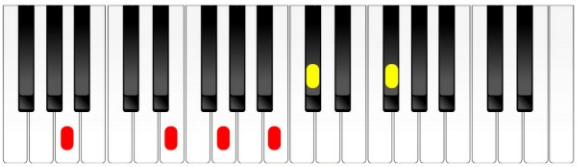
A7b9



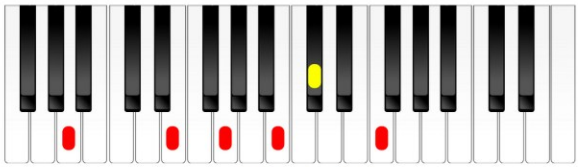
A11



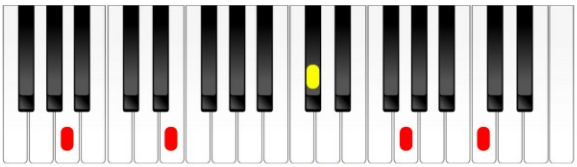
Am11



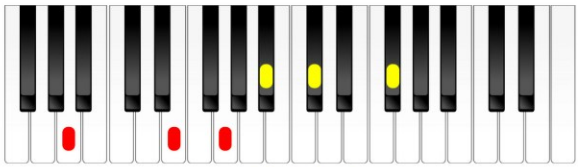
A13



A(b13)

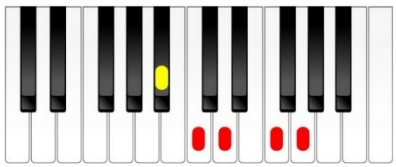


A(b10)

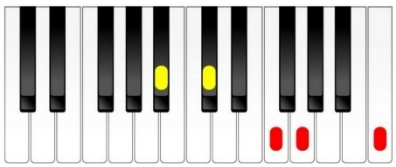


A13b9

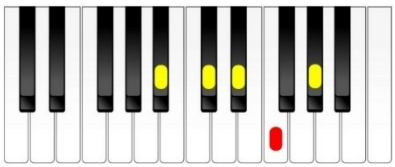
B♭ Extended Chords



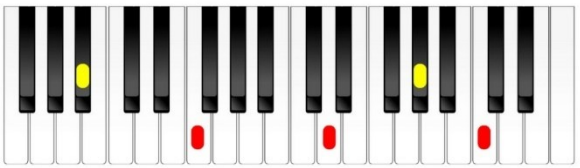
Bb6/9



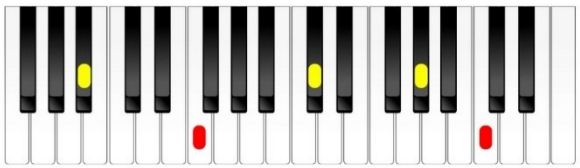
Bbm6/9



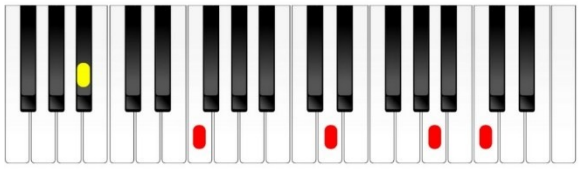
Bbm7sus4



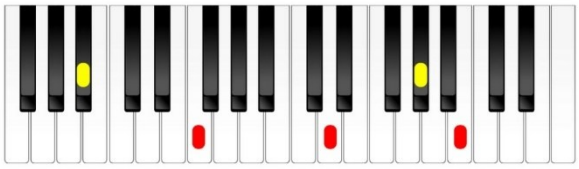
Bb9



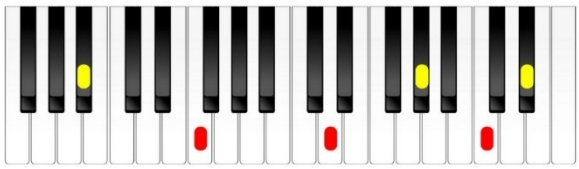
Bbm9



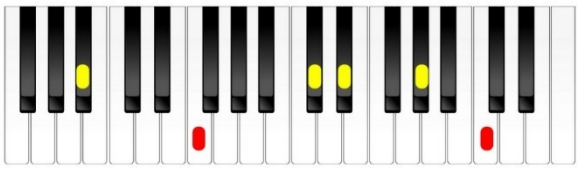
BbM9



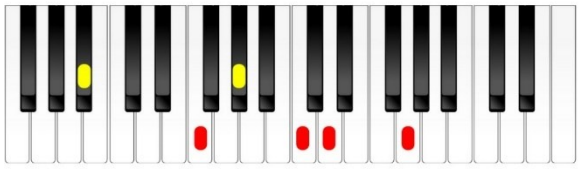
Bb7b9



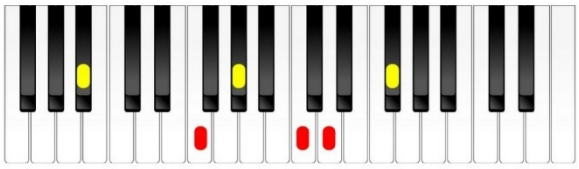
Bb11



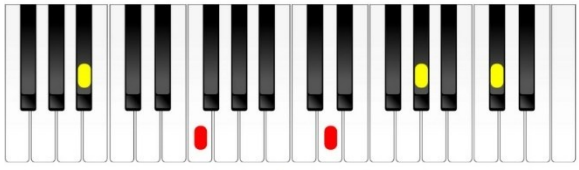
Bbm11



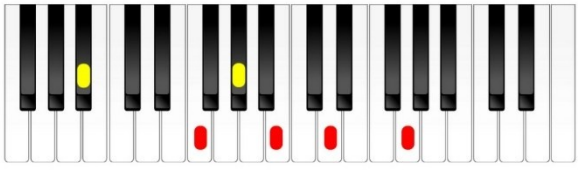
Bb13



Bb(b13)

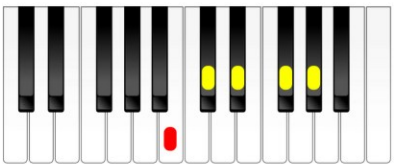


Bb(b10)

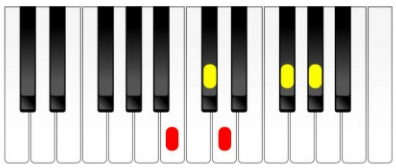


Bb13b9

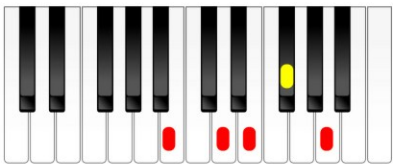
B Extended Chords



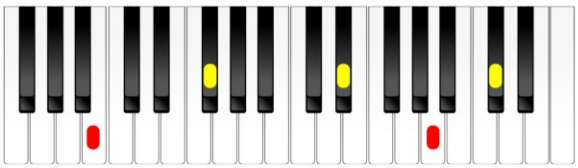
B6/9



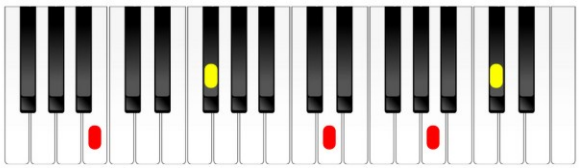
Bm6/9



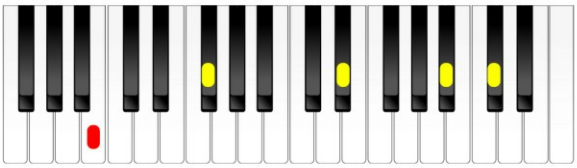
Bm7sus4



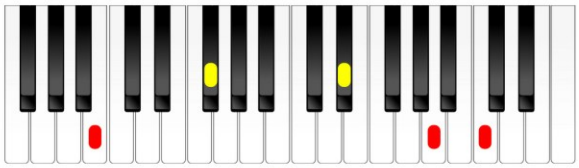
B9



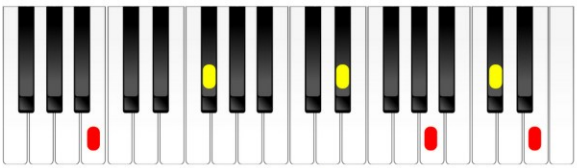
Bm9



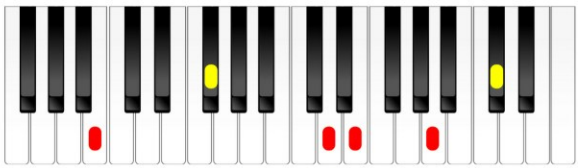
BM9



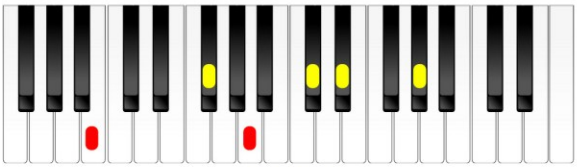
B7b9



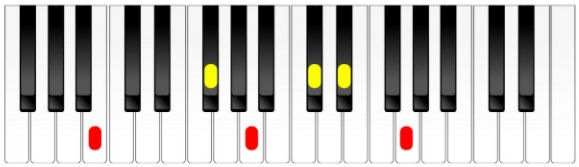
B11



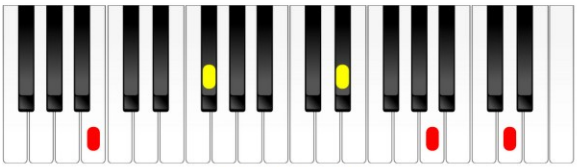
Bm11



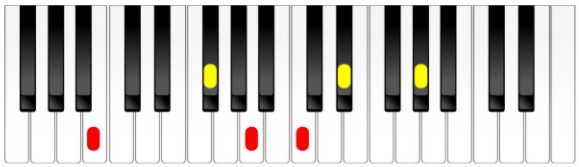
B13



B(b13)



B(b10)



B13b9

Arpeggio Exercises

It's well worth the effort to practice every arpeggio in every key major and minor with both hands together and separately, remembering as always that speed is not important, but accuracy and fluency is! At first the finger crossovers are far more difficult than the scales as they span for much greater intervals. But in all cases, avoid using the sustain pedal when practicing these as doing so will give you a false impression of fluency.

The next few pages show every major and minor arpeggio in every key both in keyboard and notation view with fingering for both hands. Notice that the fingering is identical for every arpeggio starting on a white note, but not so for the ones that start on black notes. Note also that there is no difference between the *harmonic*, *melodic* and *natural* minor arpeggios as the 6th and 7th degrees of the scales are not included.

Broken chords are then shown in the most used keys with left / right hand fingering in notation view only.

You are advised to practice these in the order in which they are listed with each hand separately and then together at comfortable speeds. Remember speed is not an issue but fluency and accuracy is. And remember - *no pedal!*

When you are familiar with them all, they can be practiced in any order.

You are also advised to practice the **7th**, **M7th** and **m7th** arpeggios in the most used keys as shown in part 1. However, these are not shown here, but the chords from which you can take them have been shown in every key in the last two chapters.

As with the scale exercises, I have only included the hyperlinks on the first major and minor examples on the next page as the others are the same but at different pitches. And again, one example of a broken chord, and the final right-hand exercise.

The audio link for this section is http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/arp_full.html or click on the graphics.

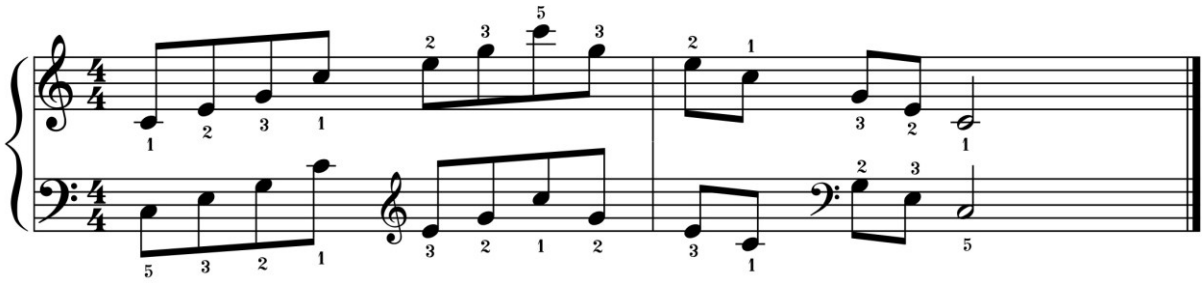
Quick link back to Arpeggios part 1

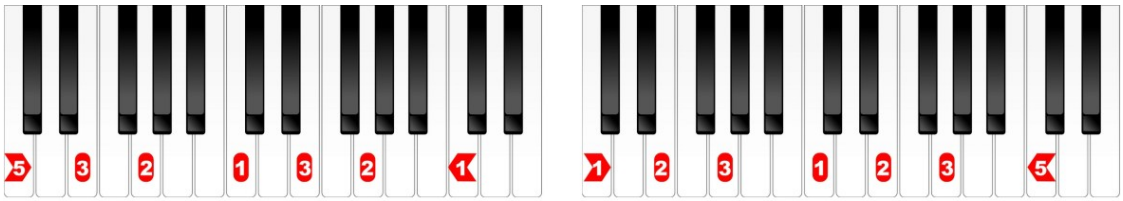
"When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace!"

Jimi Hendrix (1942-1970)

Comment: Not only was he one of the world's greatest guitarists, but he was also clearly a bit of a philosopher!

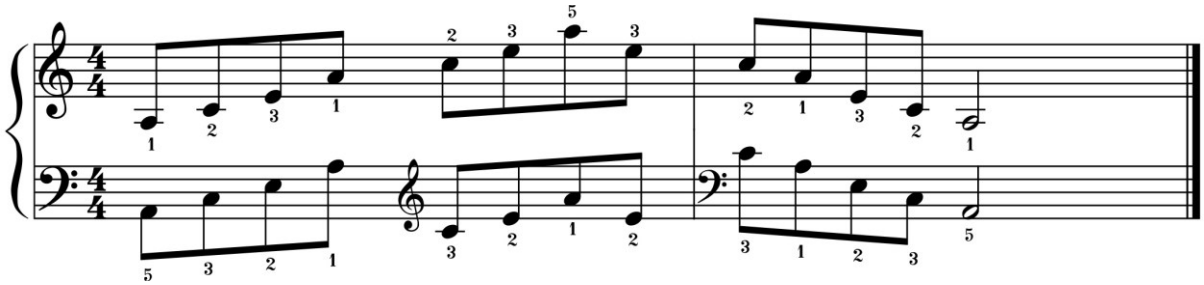
C Major Arpeggio

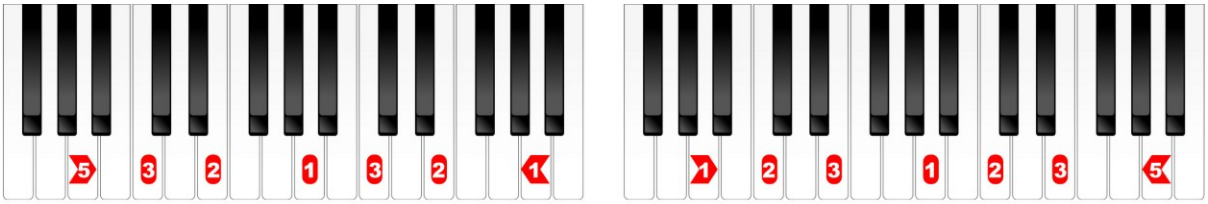




Left Hand Right Hand

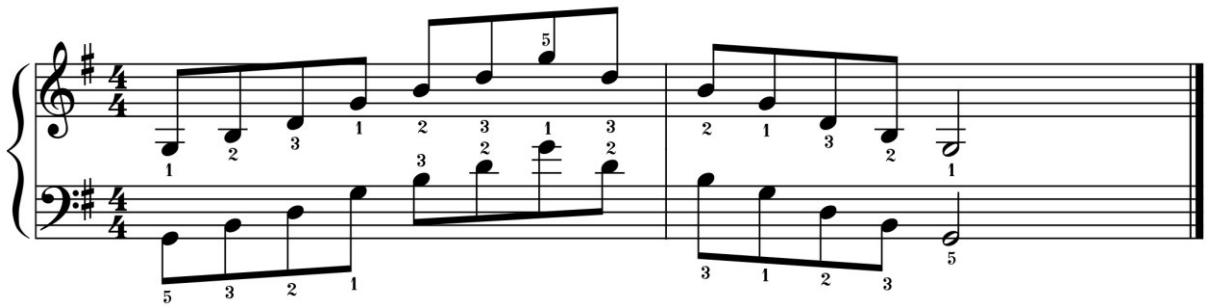
A Minor Arpeggio

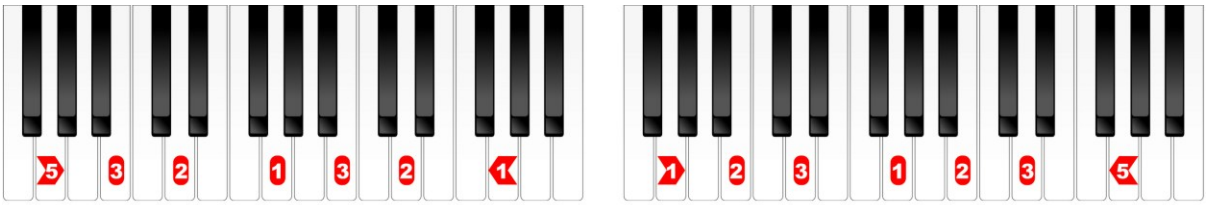




Left Hand Right Hand

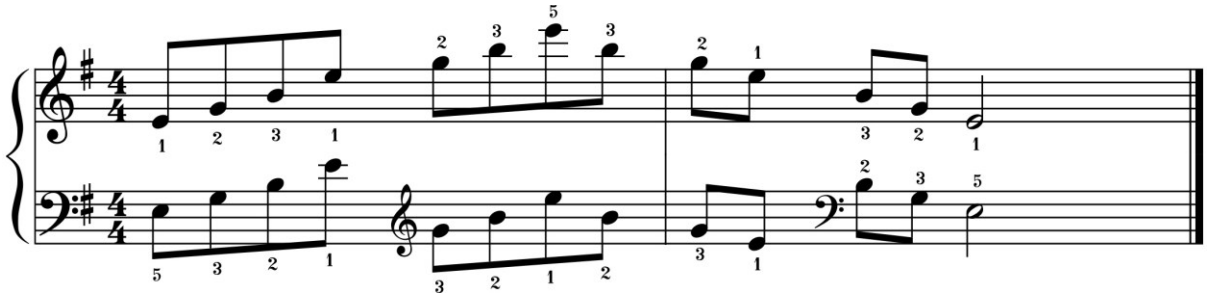
G Major Arpeggio

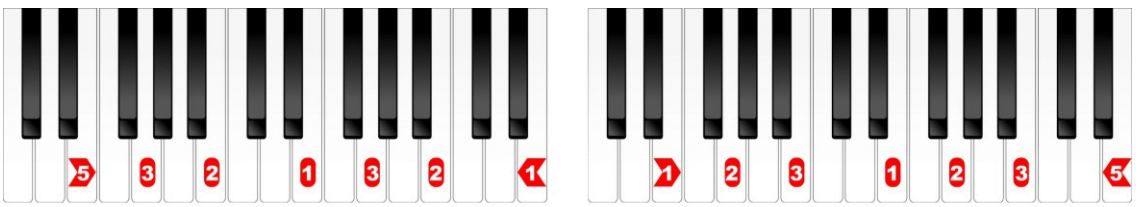




Left Hand Right Hand

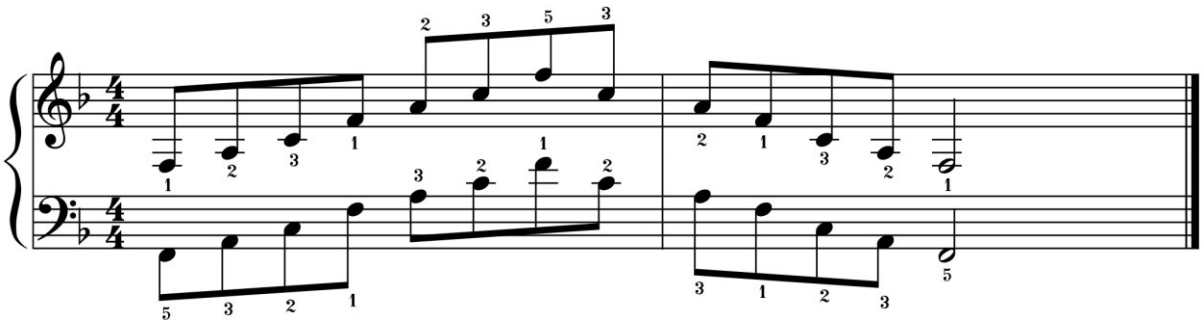
E Minor Arpeggio

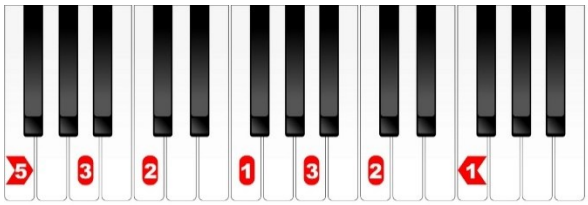




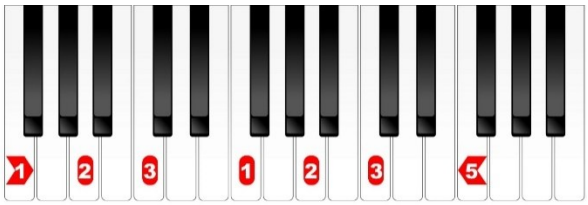
Left Hand Right Hand

F Major Arpeggio



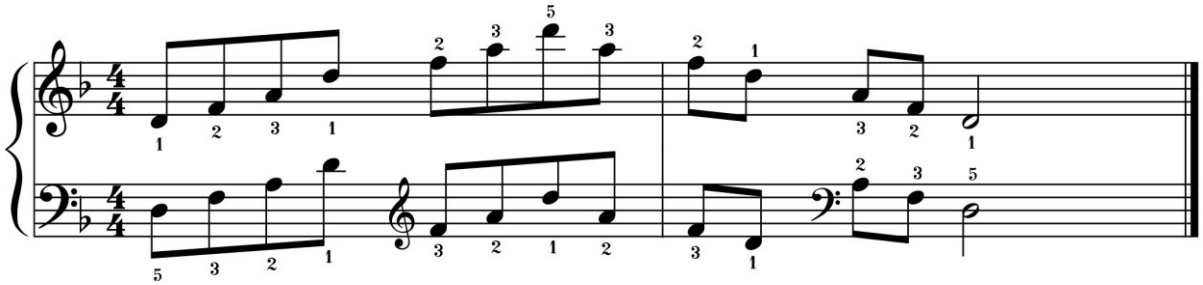


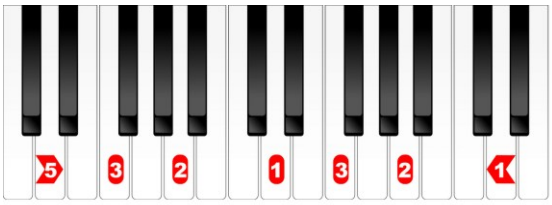
Left Hand



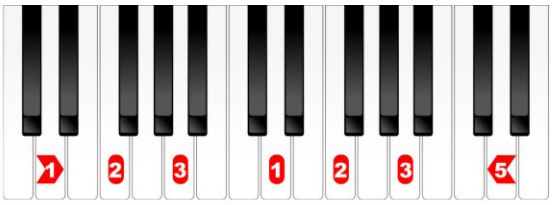
Right Hand

D Minor Arpeggio



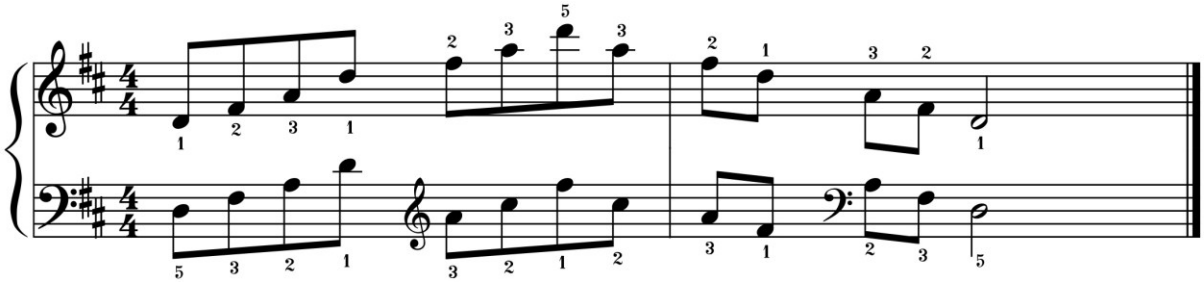


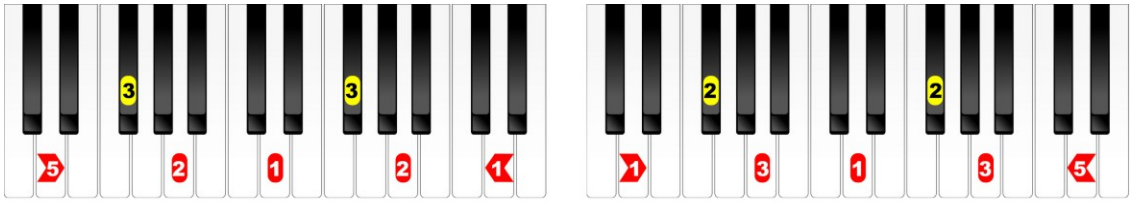
Left Hand



Right Hand

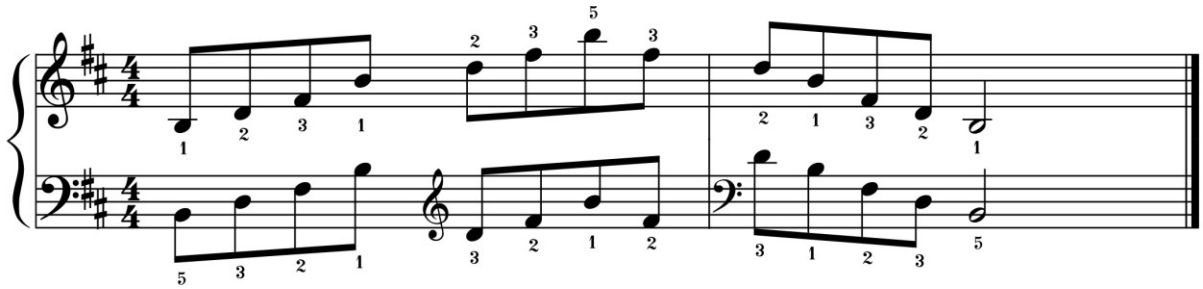
D Major Arpeggio

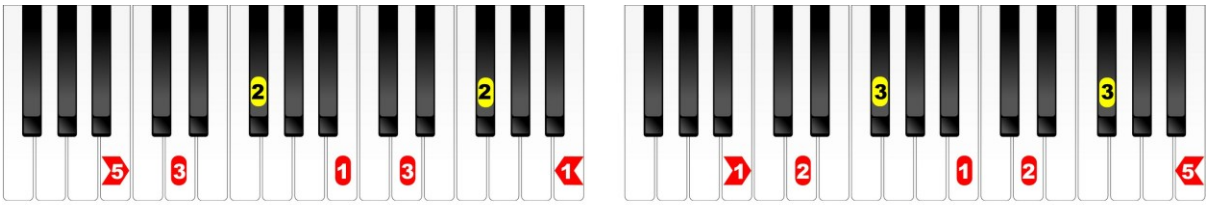




Left Hand Right Hand

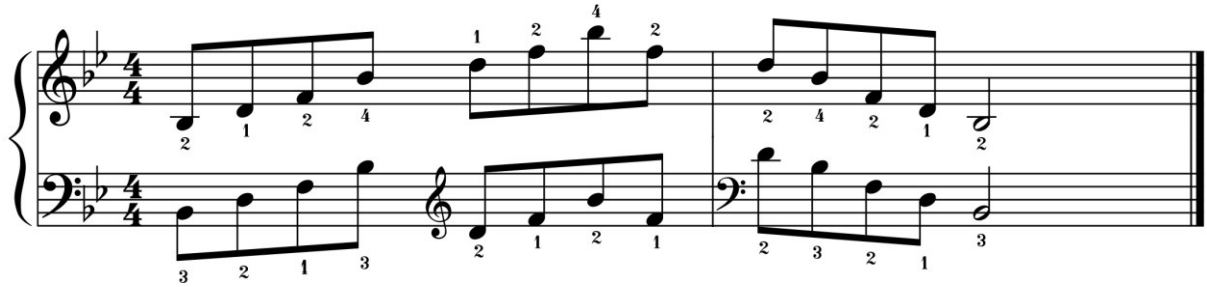
B Minor Arpeggio





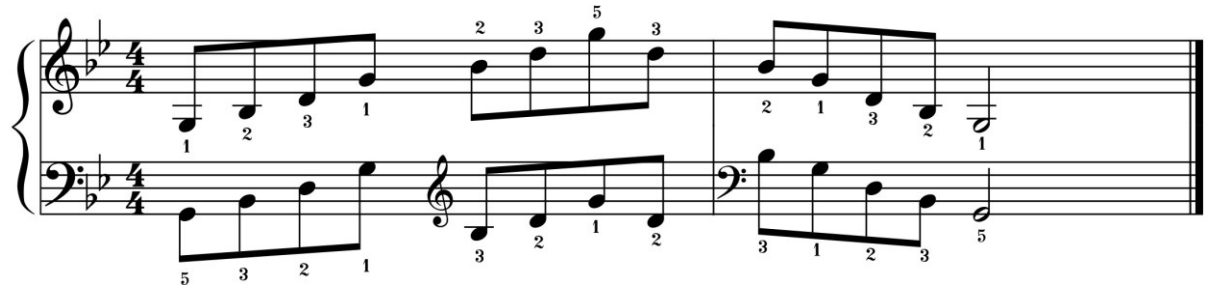
Left Hand Right Hand

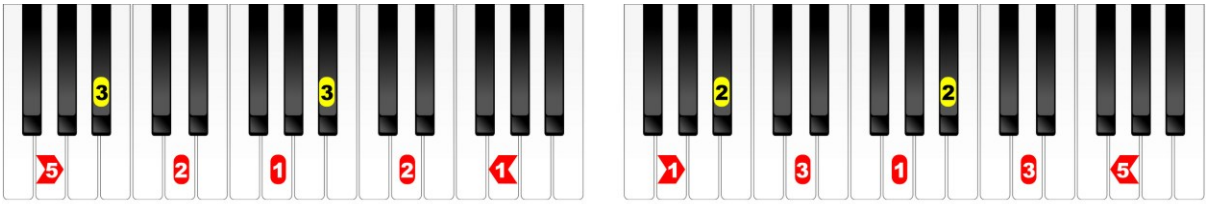
B♭ Major Arpeggio



Left Hand Right Hand

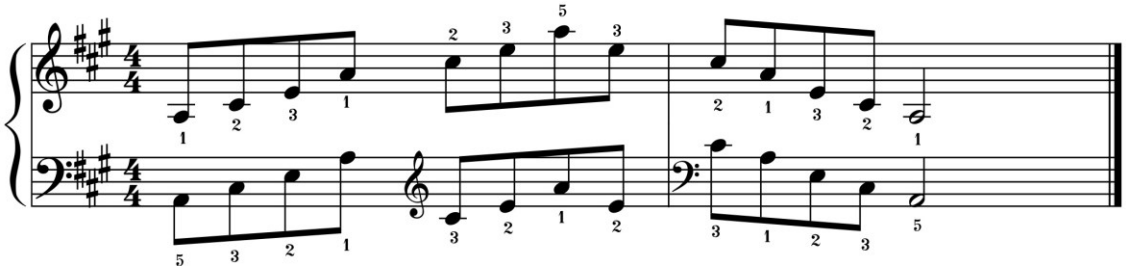
G Minor Arpeggio





Left Hand Right Hand

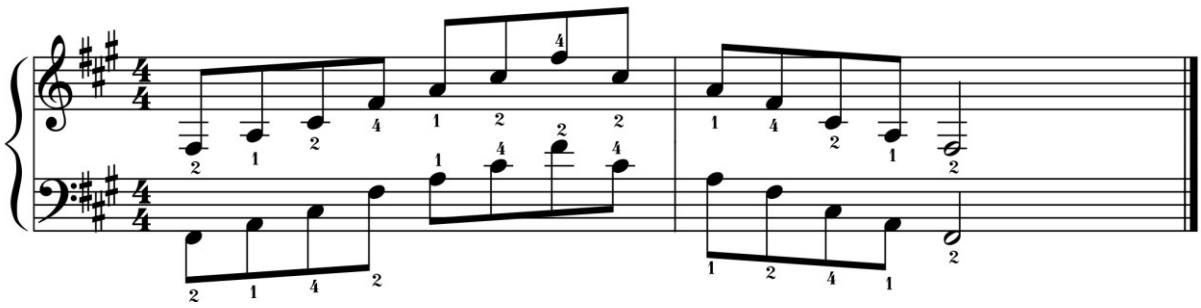
A Major Arpeggio

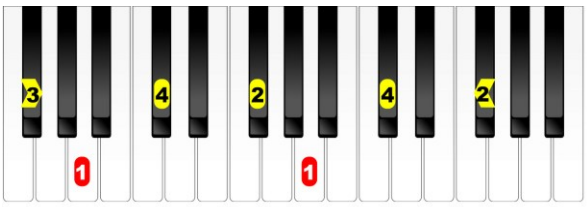


Left Hand

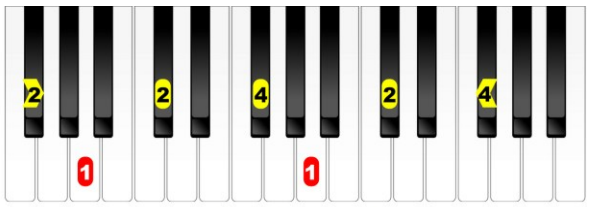
Right Hand

F# Minor Arpeggio



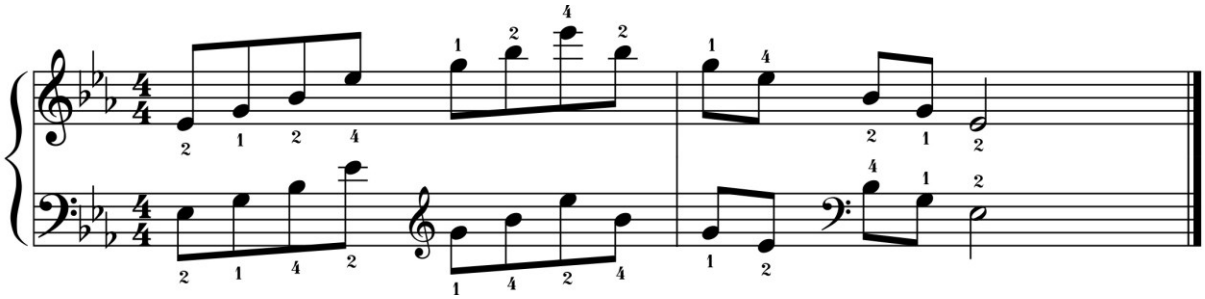


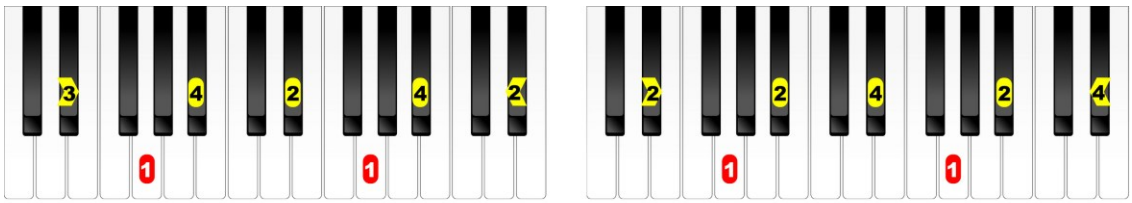
Left Hand



Right Hand

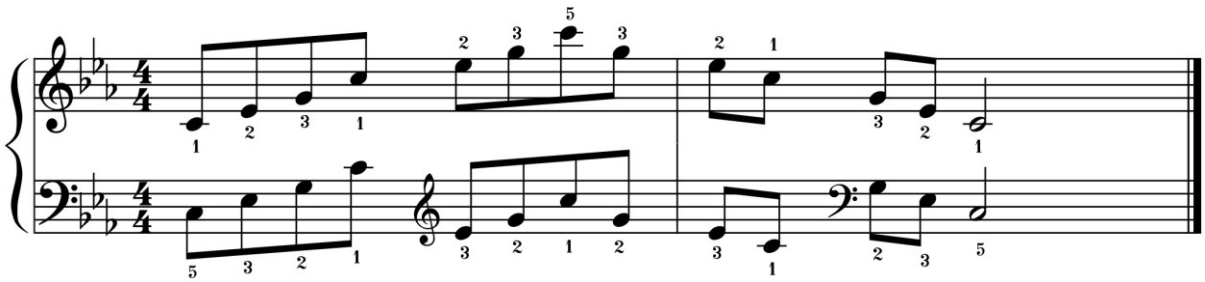
E♭ Major Arpeggio

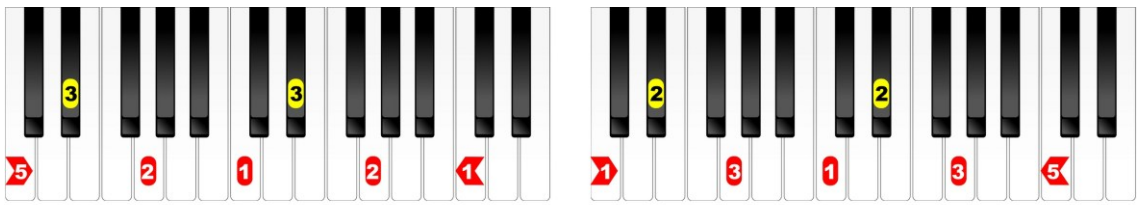




Left Hand Right Hand

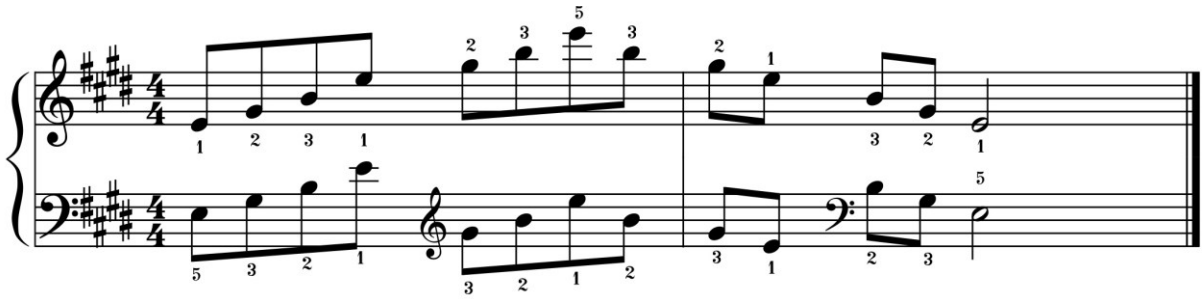
C Minor Arpeggio

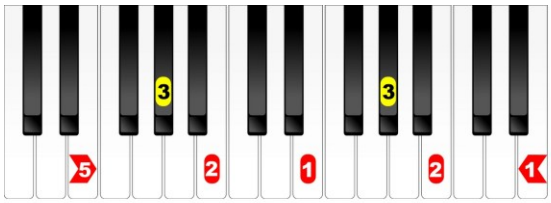




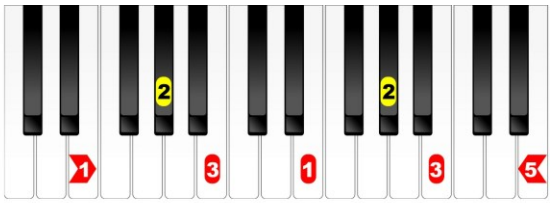
Left Hand Right Hand

E Major Arpeggio



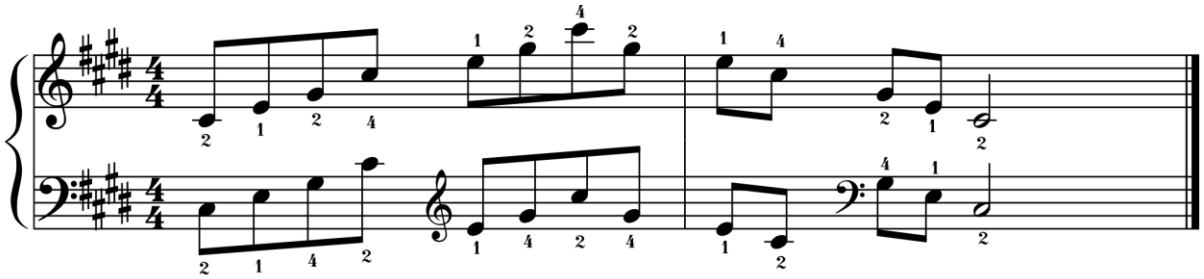


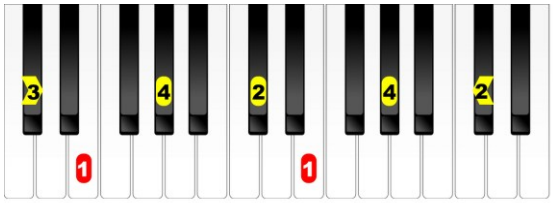
Left Hand



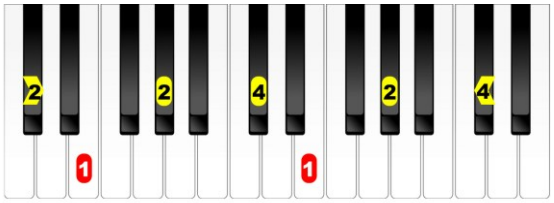
Right Hand

C# Minor Arpeggio



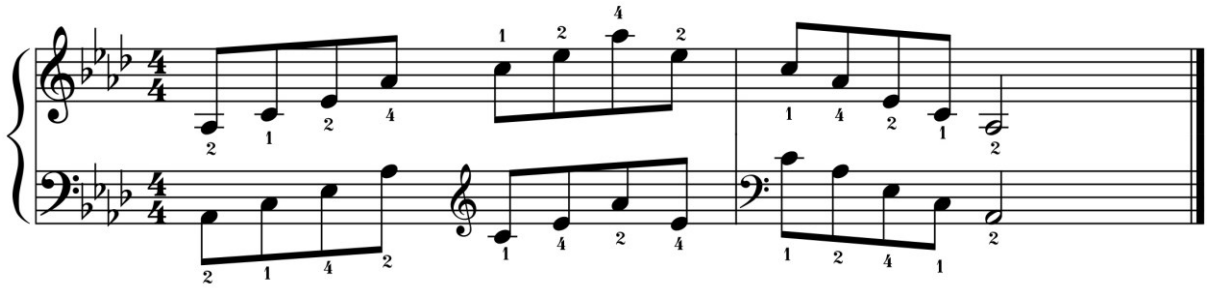


Left Hand



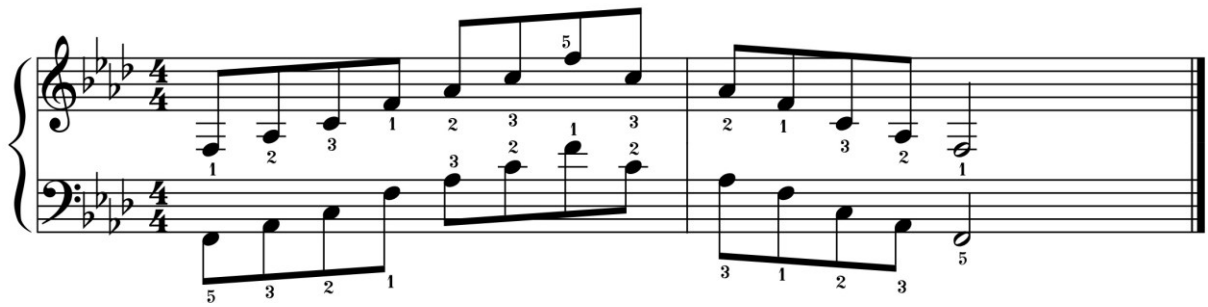
Right Hand

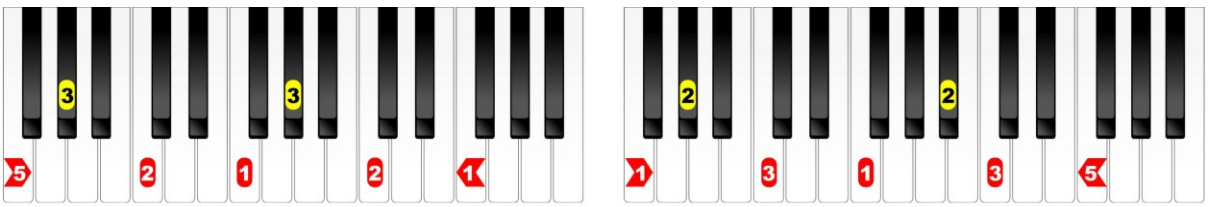
A♭ Major Arpeggio



Left Hand Right Hand

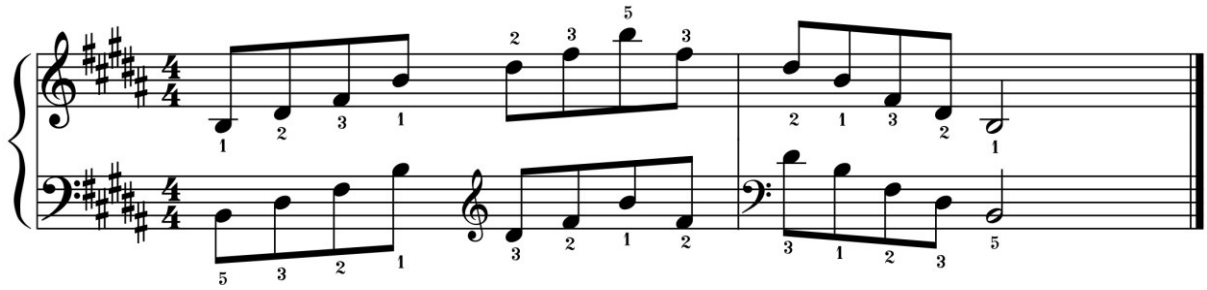
F Minor Arpeggio

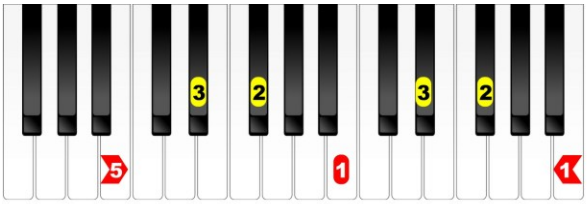




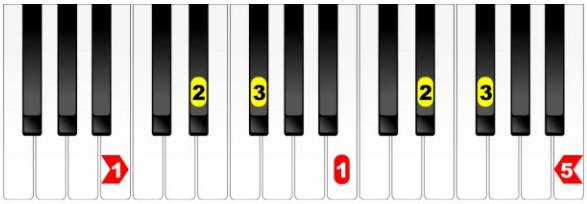
Left Hand Right Hand

B Major Arpeggio



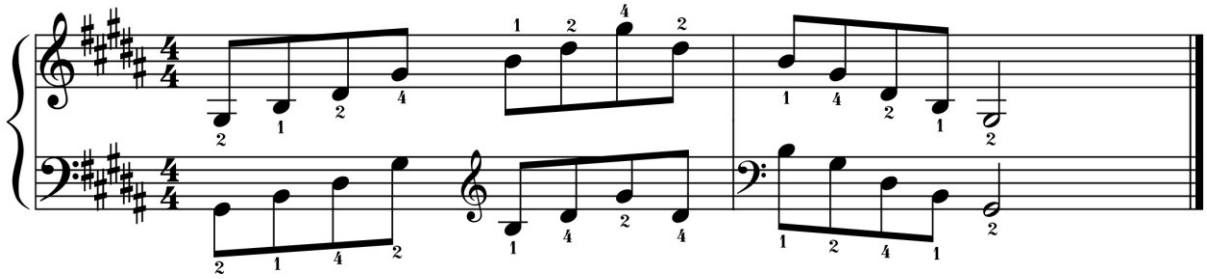


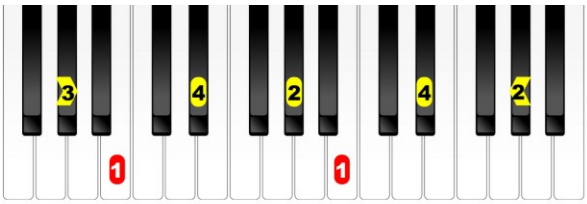
Left Hand



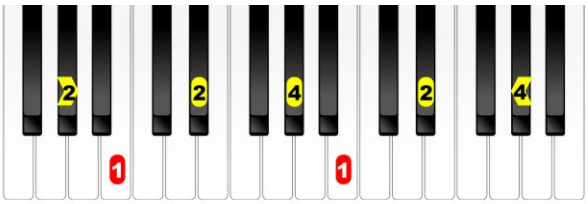
Right Hand

G# Minor Arpeggio



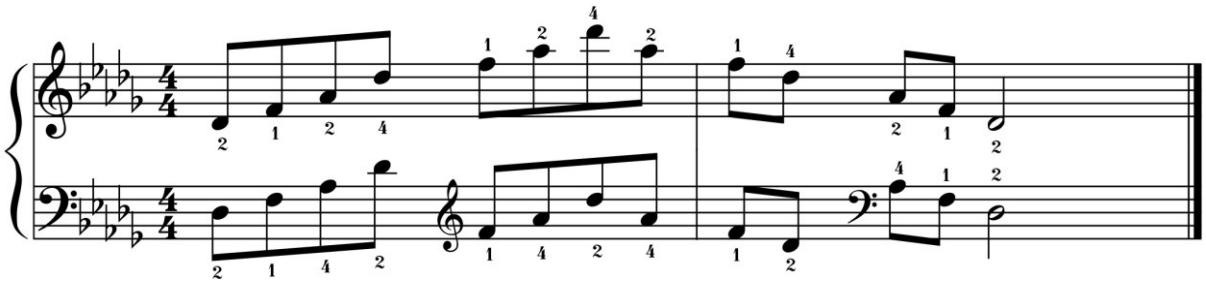


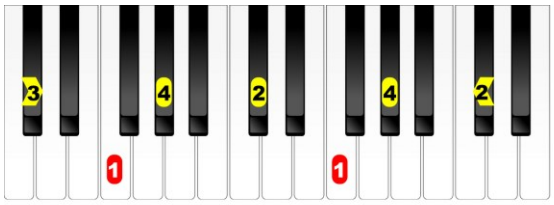
Left Hand



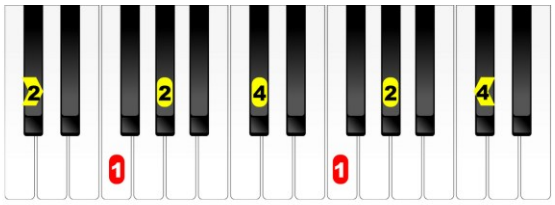
Right Hand

D♭ Major Arpeggio



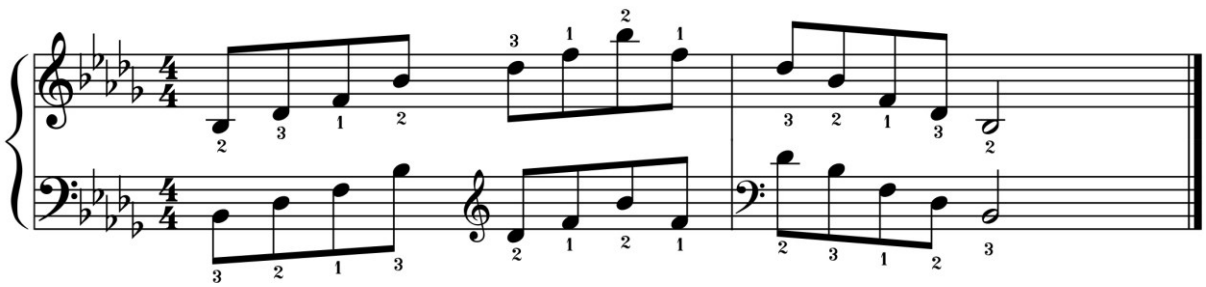


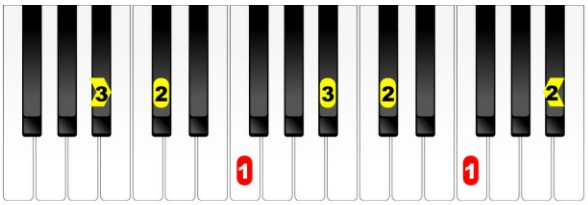
Left Hand



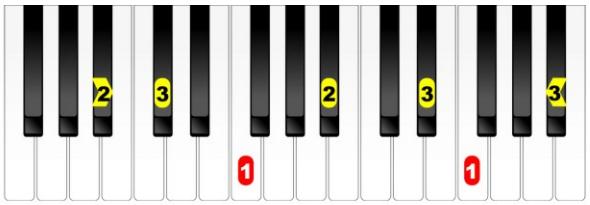
Right Hand

B♭ Minor Arpeggio



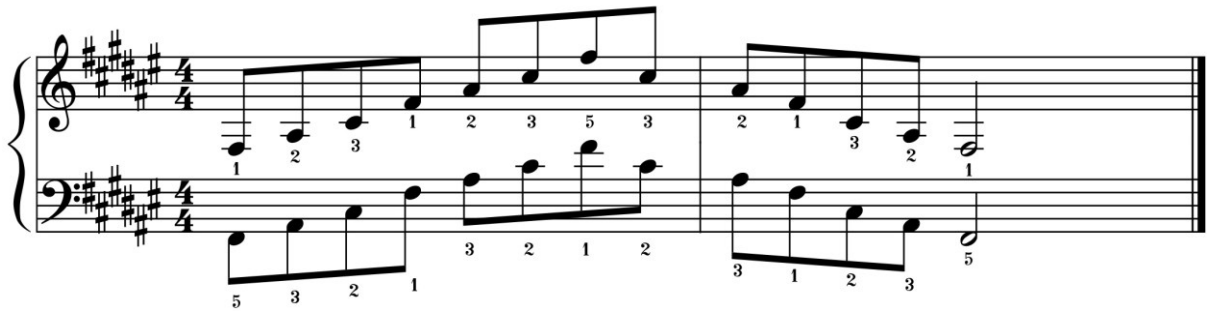


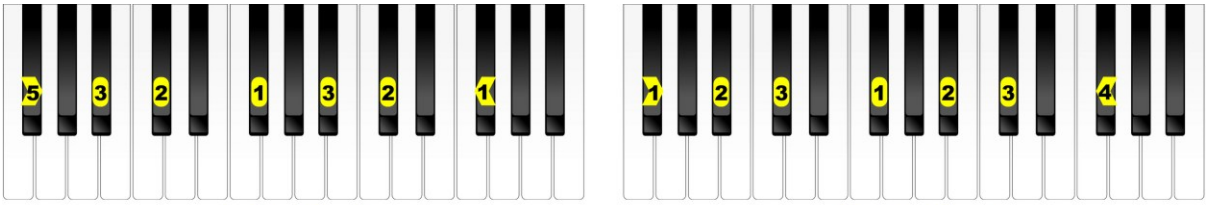
Left Hand



Right Hand

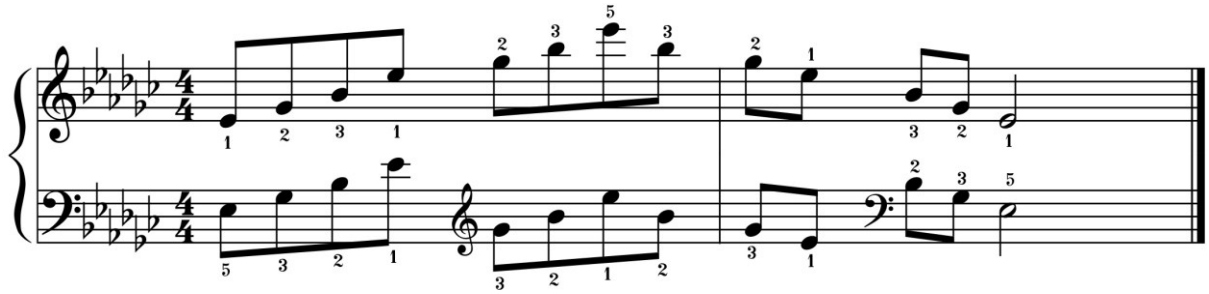
F# (G♭) Major Arpeggio

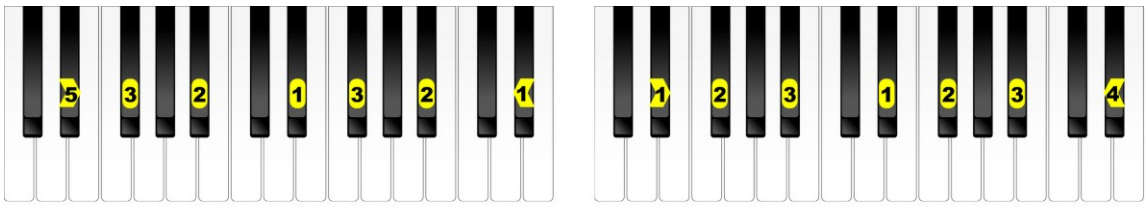




Left Hand Right Hand

E♭ (D#) Minor Arpeggio

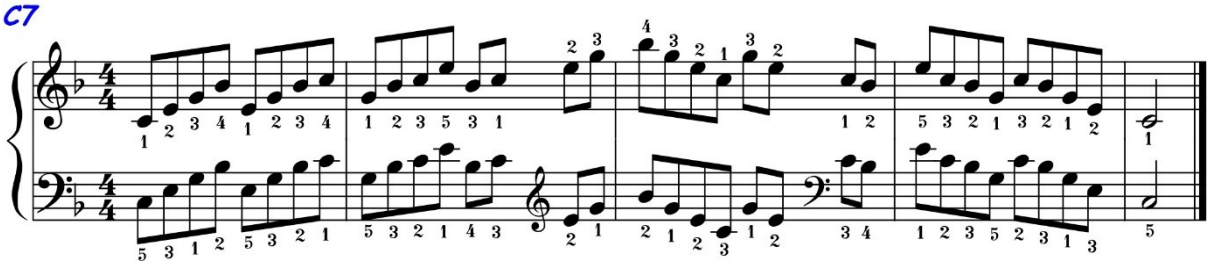




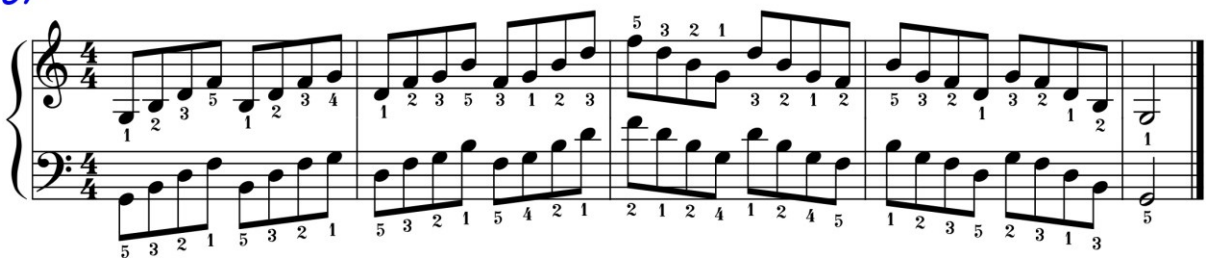
Left Hand Right Hand

Broken Chords in the most used keys

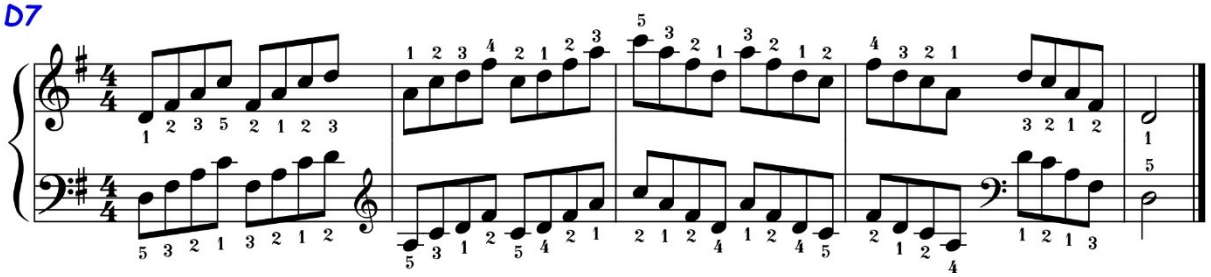
C7



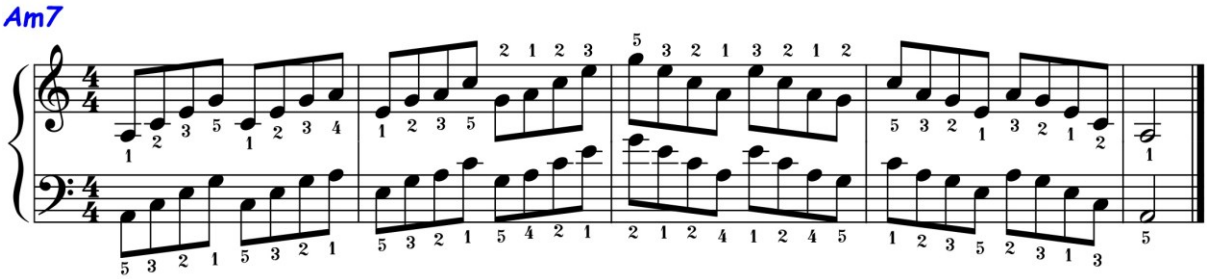
G7



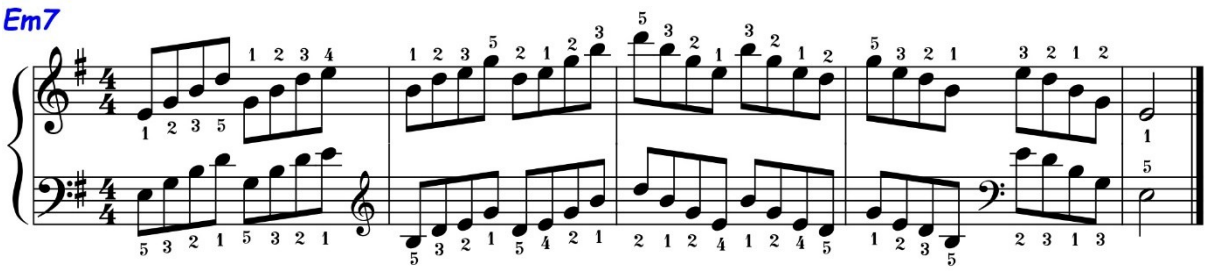
D7



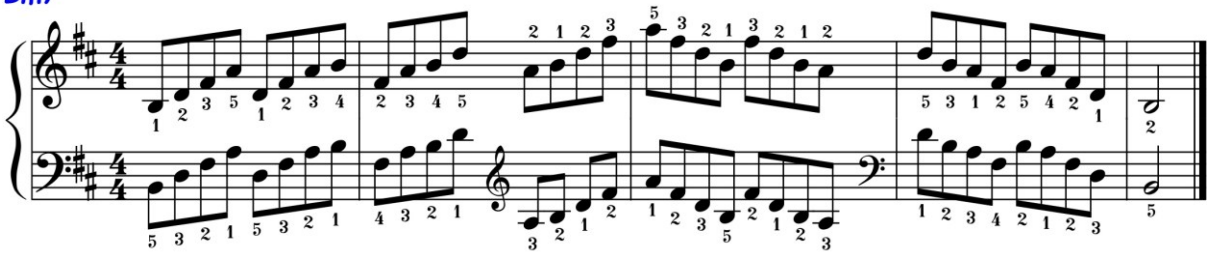
Am7



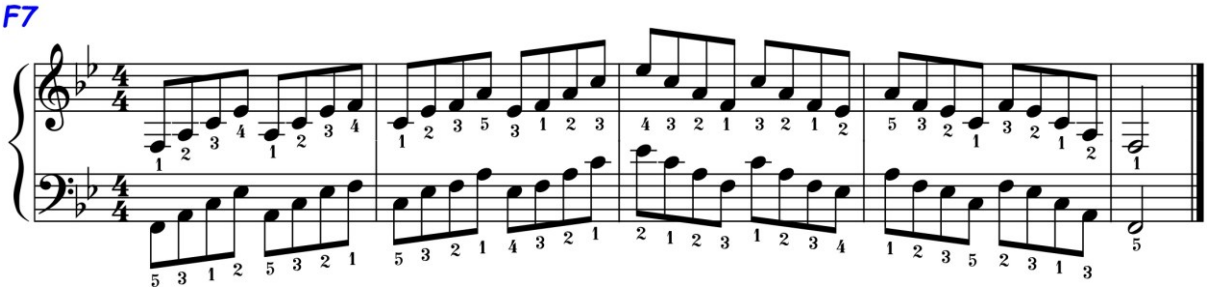
Em7



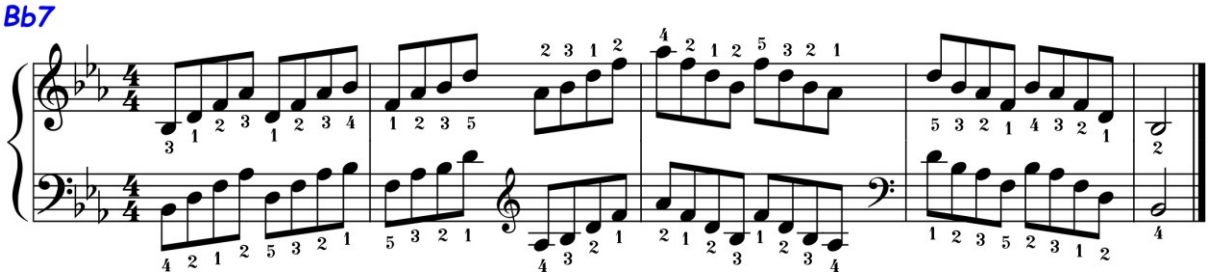
Bm7



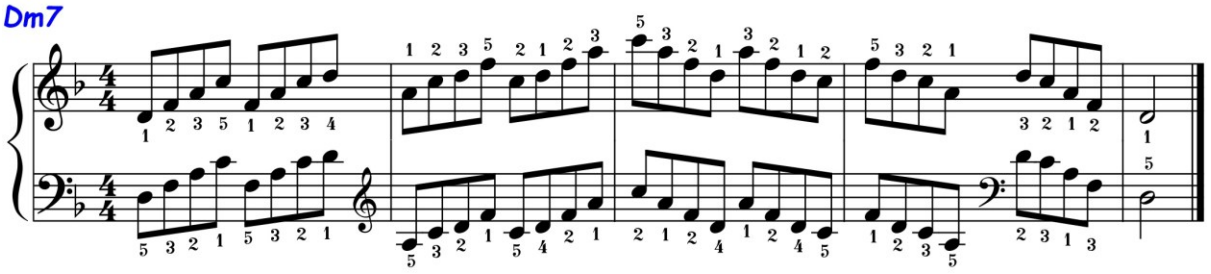
F7



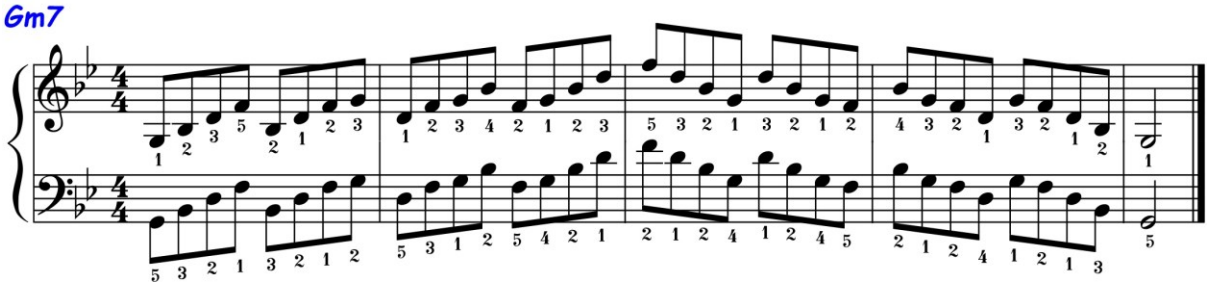
Bb7



Dm7

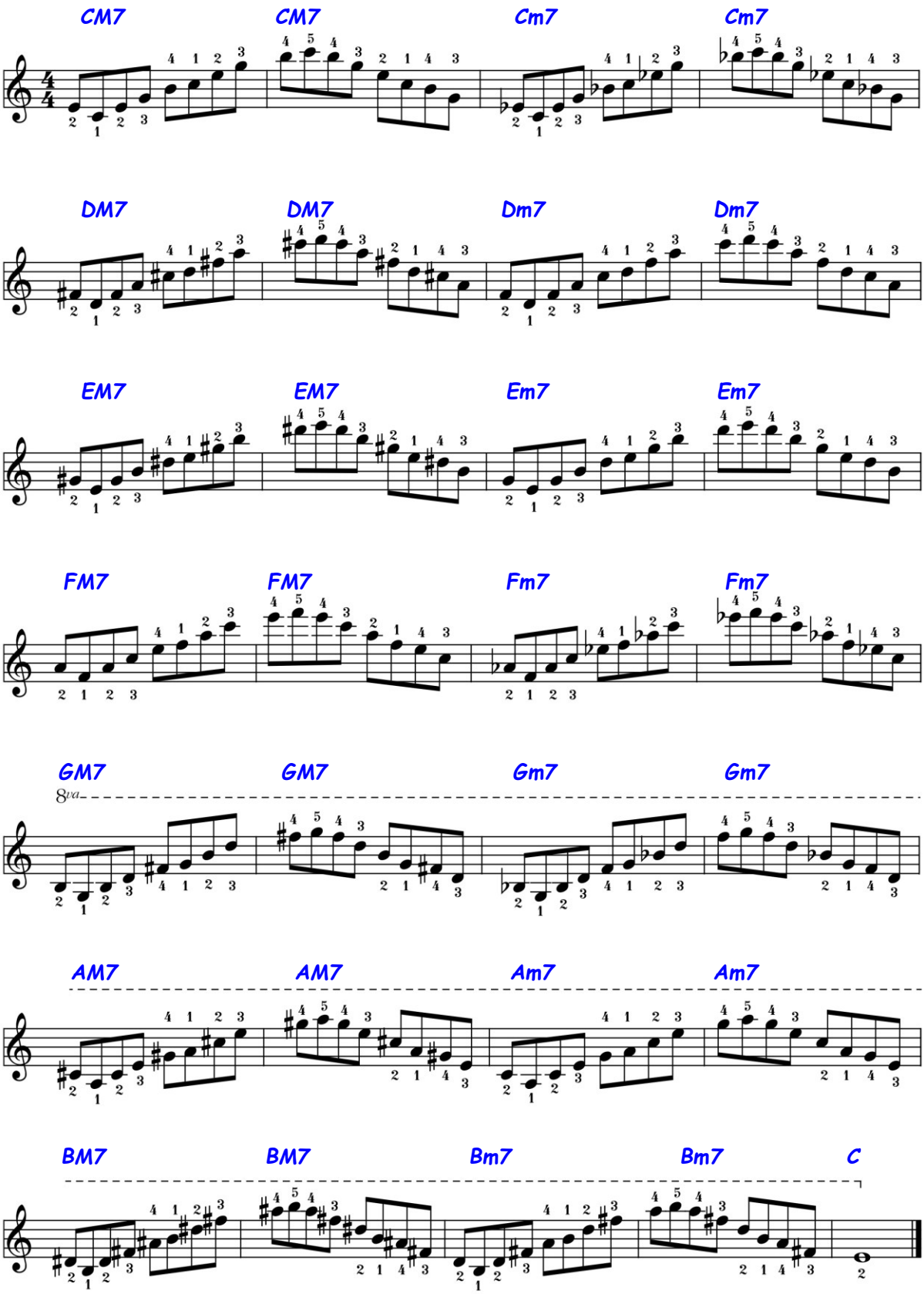


Gm7



For the Right Hand Only

This exercise takes you through every major (M)7th and minor 7th arpeggio in 7 keys for two octaves starting on the 3rd. This is a great exercise *but take it slowly at first!*



Thank You

Well, that's it folks, but finally and most importantly, I'd like to thank you kindly for buying this book. It's been my sincere desire to give excellent value for money with this and all my books. I've worked very long and very hard to achieve this and hope that you think I've succeeded.

If you've enjoyed this, your positive feedback on Amazon, Lulu, Etsy or Google etc., would be very much appreciated. Thanks!

Please feel free to contact me at http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/contact_us.html if you have any queries. I'd be pleased to hear from you and I will always answer (unless I've snuffed it), but please check your spam box just in case my reply goes amiss.

Download Links

The download link for the digital pdf printable edition of this book is: https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/keyboard_dl.html - or scan the QR code to the right. Now I'm going repeat this without the link underline: **https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/keyboard_dl.html** and hopefully you will notice that there is an underscore between 'keyboard' and 'dl'. *If you don't include the underscore the link won't work!* The same thing applies to just about all of my links so *look carefully for the underscores!*

Here's the links for the two *free* tunes books:

https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/free_top_line_songs.html

https://learn-keyboard.co.uk/easy_piano_dl.html

Again, don't forget the underscores between the words!

And please honour my copyright and the hard work I've put into this by using this for your own use only. Thank you!

Quick return link to introduction page

If you have any trouble with the download links, I'll be happy to assist.

What Next?

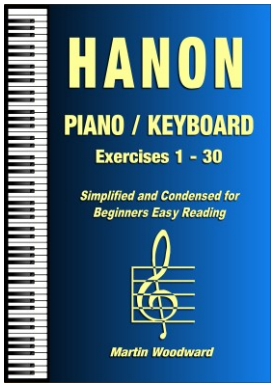
Although you should have enough information and exercises to keep you going for at least a couple of years, it certainly doesn't end here, this is just the end of the beginning. If you've covered everything herein, you should have a good grounding ready for further advancement in your chosen genre. But keep doing the exercises and keep improving. Music is a lifelong ever improving experience.

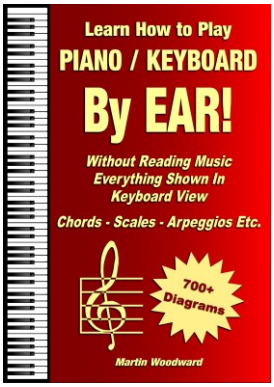
But if you want to go the classical route, then I strongly recommend that you seek some professional one-to-one tuition.

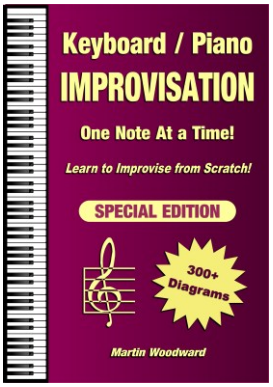
Further Reading

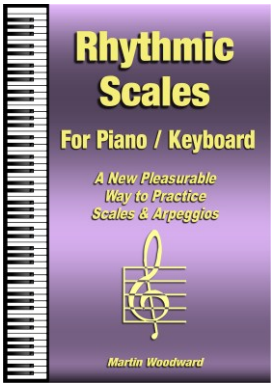
If you enjoyed the last two pieces herein *'Flo'* and *'Falora'*, I could particularly recommend my ***'Tranquil Waters' New Original Piano / Keyboard Solos'*** which includes several original great sounding pieces which can be played by mortals. All the pieces can be heard online before buying at http://learn-keyboard.co.uk/sheet_music.html . - *take a listen!*

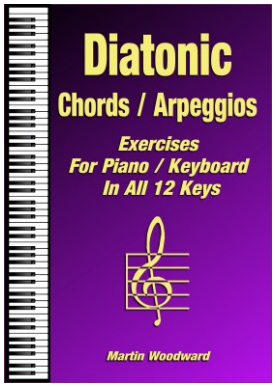
If you want more of the 5 finger exercises, then the Hanon book shown below could be for you. All the items below can be seen on my website at https://learn-keyboard.co.uk or if you are reading the digital version just click on the graphics.

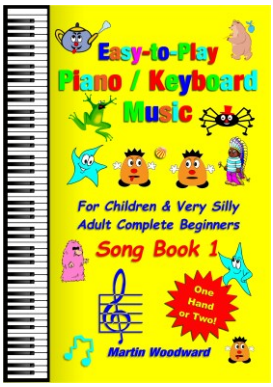


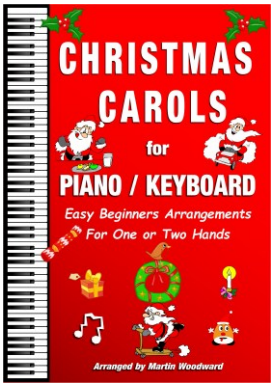












This book was produced using Harmony Assistant, Corel Draw, Serif Draw Plus X8, Microsoft Word, Serif Web Plus X8 and multiple gallons of tea!

With Gratitude and Blessings,

Martin

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new!"

Albert Einstein

Comment: - I still remember my first gig when we were booed off stage!