

Music - an easy language to learn

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Learn to play music for fun, or to become a professional

The 'music easy language' tutorials will help you apply practical lessons in music theory to your musical instrument without the confines of conventional music theory 'levels'.

They will help the beginner, as well as those who may already to some extent play an instrument, understand the structural concepts of music as they apply to their instrument.

This Volume on Music Theory will develop your knowledge of music as a language and how it applies to your musical instrument.

Understand Music - Play Music - Read and Write Music

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FORWARD

The aim of all 'Easy Language' tutorials, is for the student to be able to achieve what THEY WANT to achieve as a musician.

Not everyone wants to become a professional musician. It was found in a survey conducted by Stacpoole Music, that of all those who would like to learn music, or to play an instrument, most wished simply to be able to do so for personal enjoyment. Because of the way music has been taught in conventional courses, most of these people now simply try to learn 'by ear', or pick up what they can from friends. Others may spend hundreds of dollars to get professional tuition that they, or their children, never really end up using when the children tire of the music 'classes' and endless 'scales'.

NOW THERE IS A BETTER WAY!!

The manner in which "Easy Language" manuals are written is to help as many students with their personal ambitions as possible. Parents can even help their own children to learn, and test their readiness to start with music.

The objective of this book is to explain:-

- ✓ music as an easily understood language,
- ✓ some of the basic rules in using the language,
- ✓ how music can be easily understood and played on an instrument,
- ✓ how to read written music in a way that suits your style, as well as being able to write down musical ideas you have created.

These books are designed to help you use the understanding of music structure in your playing, and to give you the enjoyment of being able to understand music better, to play music better, to read and write music better.

LEARN JUST THE 'BASICS' TO BE A BETTER PLAYER OR THE 'ADVANCED FORMAT' TO READ COMPLETE MUSIC MANUSCRIPT!

PLEASE NOTE! The term 'music structure' in these tutorials refers to the assembly of music as an entity of sound, NOT just 'music form' as written in a manuscript.

There is a lot of Music Theory that a student can learn **without** learning to actually read music manuscript.

Nevertheless, it is easier to learn to play a musical instrument by also learning to read, or at least understand, the basic concepts of written music.

So do not be put off by the strange appearance of this 'foreign' vocabulary, the basic principles can be easily understood and you will be soon enjoying your new language.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NOTES IN MUSIC AND WHAT THEY REPRESENT

LESSON NOTES:

In our first chapter we will begin at the beginning, a good place to start, and talk about how music is written like a language on a page.

*Understanding what the **NOTES** of music are means more than just being able to read them as written music. **NOTES** are the 'core characters' or 'alphabet' of music, and for a musician they are the written 'instructions' that tell you what to play.*

The 'Language' of music is made up of an 'alphabet' of characters like any language.

This alphabet, which can be written down on paper, represents what will be called the '**core**' or '**foundation**' characters of music, the **NOTES**.

In the structure of music the **NOTES** are used to depict the **TONES** of sound played on an instrument. It can be a single key struck on a keyboard, a sound produced when a trumpet is blown, or the sound when two sticks are struck together. Each sound has a given **TONE** or **PITCH**, that is, the higher or lower effect, or frequency, of the sound.

Sound and its **PITCH**, or **TONE**, is actually measured in the 'cycles per second' that the sound moves through the air. The quicker it moves, the higher the **TONE**, whereas the slower it moves, the lower the **TONE**.

The **NOTES** in Music are used to refer to and specify the **TONE**, that is, the High or Low Pitch, of Sounds that create the Music we play.

Each is called by one of **seven letters**, called **NOTE-NAMES**.

The **NOTE-NAMES** used are:-

A B C D E F G

Chapter Three - continued; 'the Notes written on the Staff'

What to Look at in Music Manuscript

It is recommended that you start to collect some simple music sheets of songs that you know. You may be surprised at what friends and relatives may have. These will help you apply the lessons as you learn them and give you some practice playing.

As you start to collect some of your favorite music sheets to play, you will come across some different types of manuscript.

Do not let the strange appearances of the music shake you. If you know what to look for, you will have little trouble sorting out which ones to buy, and what to play once you get them. Keep it simple to start with.

Following are two common forms of writing that you will most likely come across.

On some sheet music there will appear two 'treble' staves, the first with **only** the melody; the second one has the Melody as well as Harmony arrangements.

In this first example, if you are playing a melody instrument you only have to read the arrangement on the Top Treble Staff. This is the melody or tune.

If you are playing a Bass instrument, for example, the Bass Guitar or trombone, play the Bass arrangement on the Bass Staff.

A piano or other keyboard player can choose either one of the top Treble Staves along with the Bass Staff arrangement, or a number of other options mixing and matching the Melody with the Chords. The Chords are written on the second Treble Staff, and as Chord Names above the manuscript.

DIAGRAM 6; MUSIC WRITTEN ON THREE STAVES, TWO TREBLE AND ONE BASS

'Tells A Story'

The musical score for 'Tells A Story' is presented in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff containing the melody. The middle staff is also a treble clef staff containing chordal accompaniment. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff containing the bass line. Chord names are written above the first treble staff: C, Cmaj7, F, F, G, C. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, while the bass line consists of quarter notes.

Chapter Three - continued; 'the Notes written on the Staff'

EXERCISE THREE; review / practise: 7



- 1) What are the names of the two Staves, and what do they both contain?
- 2) Can you draw a Treble Clef, and a Bass Clef?
- 3) What does the position of the Notes' 'head' mean?
- 4) What does the 'type' of note, including its stem, tell us?
- 5) What are these Notes on the Bass Staff?



- 6) What are these Notes on the Treble Staff?



- 7) Play an appropriate part for your instrument in the following exercise. Follow the Count closely. If learning Keyboards, then learn to play the Bass Line first.

Study the position of the Notes on the Staff and their Note-names.

T 2 3 5 3 T T 2 3 4 T 3 T

T 4 T 4 T 4 3 1 T 4

Count:- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

T 2 3 5 2 3 T 2 3 5 3 2 T

T 5 T 5 T 5 4 3 T 5

Count:- 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERVALS

LESSON NOTES:

*It will be a while before we look seriously at **INTERVALS** in music. However, they do help us to read, and hence play easier, so we will begin to learn about them now, and the way in which they will affect our reading.*

An **INTERVAL** is the distance covered **by** one Note to another, counting the **lower** Note **up** to the **higher** Note. It includes **both** Notes.

For example the **Interval** of 'A' to 'D' would be an **Interval** of a **FOURTH**. Counting the 'A', there are **four** Notes covered in the distance starting with the 'A' up to the 'D'.

Refer back to D1 on page 9 to see the relationship of the two Notes on the Keyboard, remember to go up from the 'A' to the 'D'. The distance covered by playing the two Notes is that of Four Notes, or a **FOURTH INTERVAL**.

An **INTERVAL** is the distance covered by the playing of two Notes; when the Notes are played together, it is called a **HARMONIC INTERVAL**; or when played in sequence, or one after the other, it is called a **MELODIC INTERVAL**.

Pick up your instrument and play an 'A' Note anywhere on the lower part of the instrument. Then play the next 'E' Note above it. If your instrument allows it, play the two Notes, 'A' and 'E', together, that is, as a **HARMONIC INTERVAL**. Then play them in sequence, that is, one after the other, as a **MELODIC INTERVAL**.

Again refer back to D1 on page 9 to see the relationship of the two Notes on the Keyboard, remember to go up from the 'A' to the 'E'. The distance covered by playing the two Notes is that of Five Notes, or a **FIFTH INTERVAL**.

Play the Fourth Interval from 'A' to 'D' on your instrument, and then play the two Intervals in sequence, or one after the other.

Now play the 'A' Note again, and then this time, play the 'B' directly above it. This is an Interval of two, a **SECOND INTERVAL**. In this interval we step up, or down, just one Note.

Chapter Five - continued; 'The Time Signature'

So be aware here that the fraction digit in each example used, 1/4, 1/8 and 1/2, is **NOT** the fraction of a **BEAT**. It identifies the **Type** of **Note** that will be used to establish the **Regular Beat** for the music.

It is not, a **Quarter of a Beat**, but is a **Beat** measured by a **Quarter Note**, or an **Eighth Note** or a **Half Note**.

When the time signature says **4-4**, it indicates there are **4 Crotchet Beats**, or **Quarter Note** Beats, in each **Bar**.

These are also called 4 normal or regular beats.

Count; with a strong 'beat' on the first:

1 2 3 4 ; **1** 2 3 4 ; **1** 2 3 4 ;

3-4 tells us there is **3 Crotchet**, or **Quarter Note**, beats in each **Bar**.

Count:

1 2 3 ; **1** 2 3 ; **1** 2 3 ; **1** 2 3;

2-2 tells us there is **2 Minim**, or **Half Note**, beats in each **Bar**.

Count, longer / slower beats:

1 2 ; **1** 2 ; **1** 2 ;

6-8 tells us there is **6 Quaver**, or **Eighth Note**, beats in each **Bar**.

Count, shorter / quicker beats:

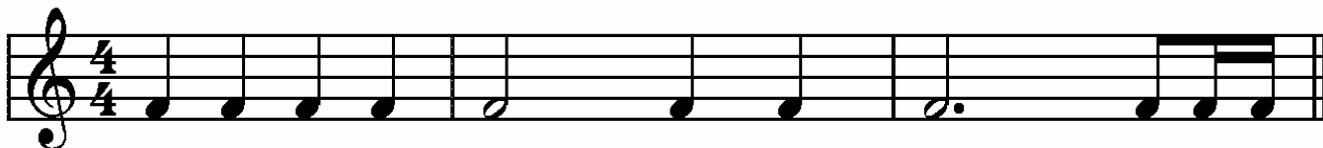
1 2 3 4 5 6; **1** 2 3 4 5 6; **1** 2 3 4 5 6;

Remember that as you count, the first beat is the strongest.

Can you feel the different rhythms in the above examples?

Where the **Time Signature** is represented by a **C**, it indicates the **Timing** is in **4-4** or what has come to be known as **COMMON TIME**.

DIAGRAM 17; EXAMPLES OF COMBINATIONS OF NOTES IN 4-4 TIMING



Beats: 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 2 + 1 + 1 3 + 1/2 + 1/4 + 1/4

⇒ In all three Bars of the example the total Value or Length of the Notes adds up to 4 Crotchet Note Beats.

⇒ All Notes of smaller Value than the beat can be grouped together in one beat; as can be seen in **D16; 3rd Bar** and **D17; 3rd Bar**.

Tied Notes

A **TIE** joins two, or more, Notes of the **same** pitch, where the second Note is not played separately, but the first is held for the time value of both notes. A **TIE** is used most often when a Note, played between the Beat, holds its time over the next Beat, or beyond it. Thus when you see a **TIE** you need only think of playing the first Note of the **TIE**, but, you need to add the Values of the Two Notes together. It may not sound like it, but it actually helps the player to read easier, as it eradicates Notes that cross the Beat, and thus where the Beat is can be easier to locate.

DIAGRAM 18; EXAMPLES OF TIES; COMPARED TO HOW THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE BE WRITTEN



Study carefully the Time Values of each Note, and the Time Values of the Tied Notes. Can you see where the Beats would be in the Bar in each Bar? Can you see the Time Values of the Notes that the Ties replace?



Here are two other Note Groups that you may regularly come across



SLUR; means to move from the First Note to the Second Note as smoothly as possible. This is easy to do on some instruments, like the guitar, not so easy on others.

TRIPLET; a group of **three** Notes played in the **same Time Value** as **two** Notes of the same Value.

In the example, three Notes would be played in the same Time as

Chapter Seven - continued; 'Timing of the Rests'

EXERCISE SEVEN; review / practise: 1 - 2



- 1) Recognize the Rest symbols in this piece of music, and explain their use and timing.

"Amy"

A - my op - en up your win - dow won't you help me break my fall

A - my I need you to hear me when I call when I call

- 2) Fill in the missing Rests in this piece of music. Can you see where a dotted rest might be used.

"Not Right At All"

let me tell you what it is there's no song not right at all

- the answer to question 2 can be found on page 78.

Chapter Eight - continued; 'the Octave'

Scales are the foundation from which **CHORDS** are built. A **CHORD** can be built which is larger than an **Octave**, but they are built according to the structure of the **Scale** from which it comes.

Musical tunes and harmonies are then built with great variety from these two simple 'core structures' or 'building blocks'.

The Basic CHORD includes the First (1st), Third (3rd) and Fifth (5th) Notes in the Scale.

In Chapter Four some basic rules about **Intervals** were learnt. **Chords** are built in **Intervals** of a **Third**. This simply means that they 'grow' with every 'odd' numbered Note of the **Scale**, even beyond the **Interval** of an **Octave**.

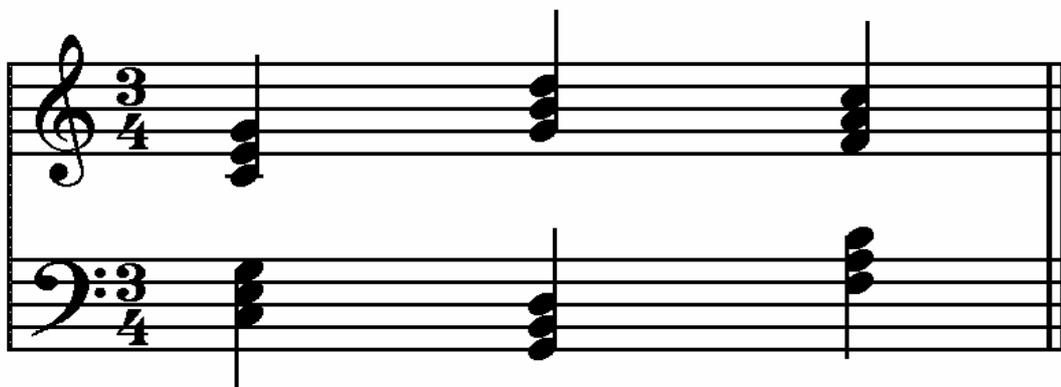
For now the 3 Octaves shown above will be used to demonstrate the creation of **3 BASIC CHORDS** using the **1st , 3rd and 5th Notes** of the **Scale**.

Count the First Note as '1'; this is called the **ROOT NOTE** of the **Chord**.

C	E	G	also	G	B	D	and	F	A	C
1	3	5		1	3	5		1	3	5

In their simplest form they can be written **Harmonically** as 'blocked', or 'stacked', Chords on the Treble Staff and the Bass Staff as shown in Diagram 22.

DIAGRAM 22; THREE BASIC CHORDS WRITTEN ON THE STAVES



Basic Chords:	C	G	F
Notes:	C E G	G B D	F A C

Chapter Nine - continued; "the Major Scale"

Using a similar rule, if we go back to the **C Major Scale**, and this time take the **Sub-Dominant Degree**, the **4th Note**, and start a Major Scale, the **opposite** effect is produced.

DIAGRAM 27; THE SCALE OF F MAJOR



F G A B^b C D E F

Full Step; Full Step; Half Step; Full Step; Full Step; Full Step; Half Step;

Compare with the keyboard.

Here the **'B' Note** had to be **flattened** to correctly apply the Major Scale Formula.

Why didn't we sharpen the **'A'**? This is because **'A'** would then appear twice in our Scale and **'B'** not at all. Every alphabetical Note-name must be represented once in the Major Scale.

⇒ The Scale of **'F Major'** has **One Flat - B^b**.

Now lets take the **Sub-Dominant** of the **F Major Scale** and start a new Scale.

This is the 4th Note - **B^b**:

DIAGRAM 28; THE SCALE OF B^b MAJOR



B^b C D E^b F G A B^b

Full Step; Full Step; Half Step; Full Step; Full Step; Full Step; Half Step;

The next Scales all start with a Flat, because each new Flat is the Fourth Note, the Tonic of our new Scale.

⇒ The Scale of **'B^b Major'** has **Two Flats - B^b and E^b**.

Although we used the **'B^b**, as the Tonic and the Upper Tonic, we still only count it as one Flat, as it has the same Note-Name.

Chapter Ten - continued; "the Key Signature"

So this is the same song, now **Transposed** into the **Key of 'F Major' with 1 Flat; B^b**.

DIAGRAM 33; TUNE IN F MAJOR

"Short Song" (in F major)

Sharps, Flats and Accidentals on the Musical Staff

When a piece of music is written in, for example, **D Major**, and the **Key Signature** therefore shows 2 Sharps, '**F#**' and '**C#**', we know that **every 'F'** and '**C'**' in the song would normally be played '**F#**' and '**C#**'. However, it does not mean that it is always that way. There may be exceptions to the rule within the music.

1; If a Note is to be played as a Sharp or a Flat, when it is **not** in the Scale of the song, it is called an **ACCIDENTAL**.

2; Likewise, if a Note is to be played as a normal or **Natural** Note, that is, not Sharp or Flat, when it is indicated in the Key Signature to be played as a Sharp or Flat, it is also called an **Accidental**.

In the case of:-

1; a '**Sharp**' or a '**Flat**' sign would appear directly before the affected Note.



2; the '**Natural**' Sign, would appear directly before the affected Note.

In both cases, any **Accidental**, whether it is a Sharp, a Flat or a Natural, changes all instances of that Note occurring again **in that Bar**, unless changed back again with the appropriate signage.

Chapter Ten - continued; "the Key Signature"

EXERCISE TEN; review / practise: 3 - 5



- 1) Where do we find the Key Signature in music, and what does it tell us to do?
- 2) How does the Key Signature tell us what Scale the song is played in?
- 3) Assign the proper Key Signature that is missing from the following tune.

"Take It From Here"

no chord 1 1 2

3 1 1 2

3 1 1 2

2 1 1 2 1

- 4) There are 8 unnecessary Accidentals in this piece of music; can you identify them all?

"Empty"

- 5) Start practising to play the songs in the chapter.

- the answers to questions 3, 4 and 5 can be found on page 78.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MINOR SCALE AND CHORDS

LESSON NOTES:

The Major Scale and the Minor Scale are the two foremost foundations for the writing of contemporary western music. Although there are common exceptions, most Chords found in popular music are either Major or Minor Chords.

Here we will study the Minor Scale and Chords, and their relationship with the Major Scale.

At the top of page 55, it was said that **Chords** or **Triads** can be built from each of the Degrees of the Major Scale. Scales can also be started from any Note of the Major Scale, some of these are also called **MODES**.

Starting from the **Sixth Degree** of the Major Scale, and following the same Intervals of the Major Scale from that point on, a **MINOR SCALE** is formed. The process can be followed on the White Keys of the Keyboard, starting from the Note 'A'.

The **Formula** for the **MINOR SCALE** is as follows:-

TONIC		MEDIANT	SUB- DOMINANT		DOMINANT	SUB- MEDIANT		LEADING NOTE	UPPER TONIC
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
	Full Step;	Half Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;	Half Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;
	or; Tone;	Semi-Tone;	Tone;	Tone;	Semi-Tone;	Tone;	Tone;	Tone;	Tone;

This is called the **NATURAL MINOR SCALE**, and all **Minor Scale Key Signatures** adhere to this formula.

The Scale of **A Minor** would thus be like this;

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A						
	Full Step;	Half Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;	Half Step;	Full Step;
	Full Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;	Half Step;	Full Step;	Full Step;

The Scale of A Minor would thus have no Sharps or Flats

Chapter Thirteen - Continued; "Diminished, Augmented & Extended Chords"

The effect of forming the **AUGMENTED CHORD** on the Major Chord, is that the **Dominant**, or 5th, is **Sharpened**.

It is written as a Chord with either:- **aug** or **+**

Augmented Chords are similar to Diminished Chords in that the three Notes of the Chord are the same for the Chords based on all the Notes in the Chord.

For example,

A aug;	A	C [#]	E [#]	uses the same Tones as
C [#] aug;	C [#]	E [#]	G ^X	(G Double Sharp) also
F aug;	F	A	C [#]	

Remember again that E[#] is the same Note as F; G^X the same as A.

Compare the samples above and below.

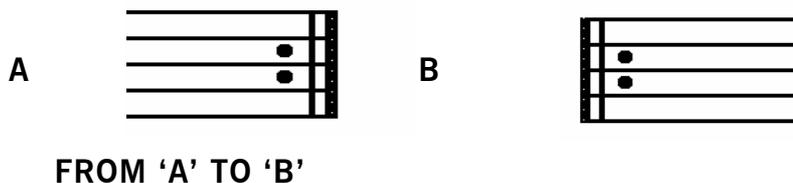
A ^b aug;	A ^b	C	E	
C aug;	C	E	G [#]	
E aug;	E	G [#]	B [#]	
B ^b aug;	B ^b	D	F [#]	
D aug;	D	F [#]	A [#]	
F [#] aug;	F [#]	A [#]	C ^X	(C double sharp)

And finally:-

B aug;	B	D [#]	F ^X	(F double sharp)
E ^b aug;	E ^b	G	B	
G aug;	G	B	D [#]	

Compare on the keyboard the Note positions and the sounds of the Diminished and Augmented Chords in comparison to the Major Chord.

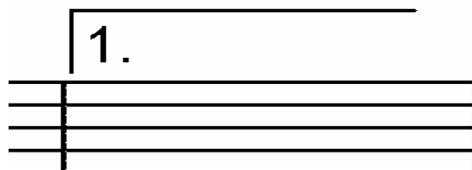
DIAGRAM 44; REPEAT SIGNS DENOTE YOU NEED TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE



This sign, 'A', is a **REPEAT SIGN** and will most likely be the first directive sign you come across in the script you will need to follow. It denotes that you must go **back** to the Complimentary **REPEAT SIGN**, 'B', or if there is none, then return to the start of the music. The Repeat Sign, 'B', may be back near the start of the song, generally meaning that you need to repeat the whole Verse and Chorus. Or it may be somewhere in the middle, and it may only be 2 or 3 Bars back. Wherever it is you need to go back to that point and repeat what you played from there at least once.

There may also be other directives, in the form of “repeat 3 times” or “repeat and fade” as well accompanying these signs.

DIAGRAM 45; DIRECTIVE SIGN



This sign will generally be towards the end of a phrase or section of the music, mostly at the end of the verse, just before a repeat sign directing you back to the next verse. It literally means that the first time through the piece you play this bar and those following till you reach another directive, which often is the repeat sign.

The second time through you will miss these bars and go to the bars, usually directly after, marked with this next sign. The music may then go into the Chorus or the Bridge.

DIAGRAM 46; DIRECTIVE SIGN

