Getting Ready for A Level Music

LPGS Summer 2024

Name:

.....

Instrument:

.....

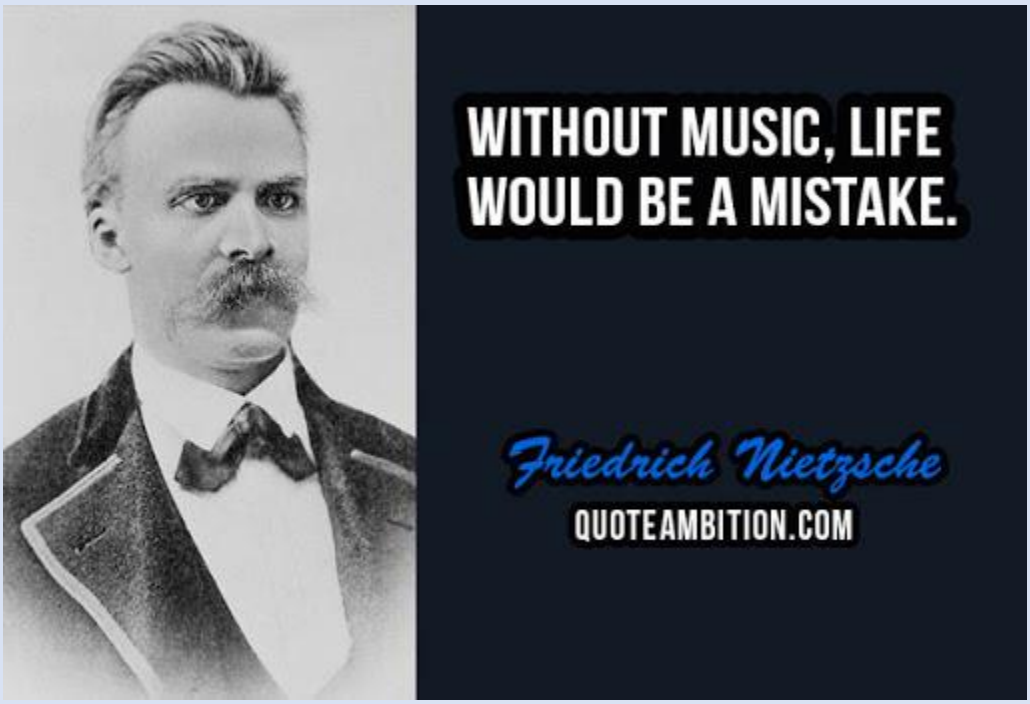
Most recent grade exam taken: .....

AQA

Welcome to Music A Level at Langley Park School for Girls. It is an exciting but challenging subject that will benefit you hugely in many skill areas, not just the obvious. In order for you to be as ready as possible for the start of the course, you will need to complete the following…

1. **Listening logs (for each of the Set Works + Area of study composers)**
2. **Keyword revision (add definitions AND diagrams to the dictionary grid)**
3. **Daily recital practice on your principle instrument**
4. **Theory exercises**
5. **Composition challenges**

Completion rate: one task/ part task from each of the five categories above per week FOR EXAMPLE…
WEEK ONE = i) Strand A listening logs (pg.4) ii) A-B keyword definitions (Pg.6) iii) Choose and practice recital piece 1 (Pg.13) iv) Key Signature theory sheets (Pg.15-16) v) Complete the bass line for B.1-2 (Pg.35)



Just like your GCSE, the course has three main components: Appraising (listening), Performance and Composition. This course overview will help you to see what is coming up, and it will be explained in more detail when you start the course in September. If you have any questions, write them at the bottom of the page to ask in September.

Component 1: Appraising music	+	Component 2: Performance	+	Component 3: Composition
What's assessed • Listening • Analysis • Contextual understanding		**What's assessed** Music performance		**What's assessed** Composition
How it's assessed Exam paper with listening and written questions using excerpts of music.		**How it's assessed** Solo and/or ensemble performing as an instrumentalist, or vocalist and/or music production (via technology).		**How it's assessed** • Composition 1: Composition to a brief (25 marks) • Composition 2: Free composition (25 marks)
Questions • Section A: Listening (56 marks) • Section B: Analysis (34 marks) • Section C: Essay (30 marks) This component is 40% of A-level marks (120 marks).		**Requirement** **A minimum of ten minutes of performance in total is required.** This component is 35% of A-level marks (50 marks). Non-exam assessment (NEA) will be externally marked by AQA examiners. Work must be completed between 1 March and the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates Work must be sent by post/ uploaded to AQA by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates		**Requirement** **A minimum of four and a half minutes of music in total is required.** This component is worth 25% of A-level marks (50 marks). NEA will be externally marked by AQA examiners. Work must be completed and sent by post/uploaded to AQA by the specified date given at aqa.org.uk/keydates

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.

AREAS OF STUDY

Just like for GCSE Music, there are COMPULSORY set works everyone has to study and analyse . You need to listen to each one of these at least once and complete a listening log for each.

You will be able to find performances of them on Spotify or YouTube.

Keep a record of what you have listened to on page 6.

Strand A: Baroque solo concerto

Composer	Set works
Purcell	Sonata for trumpet and strings in D major Z.850 (complete)
Vivaldi	Flute concerto in D *Il Gardellino* op.10 no.3 RV428 (complete)
Bach	Violin concerto in A minor BWV1041 (complete)

Strand B: The operas of Mozart

Composer	Set works
Mozart	*Le Nozze di Figaro* k.492: Act 1, focusing on: • overture • No.1 Duettino (Figaro and Susanna, including following recitative) • No.3 Cavatina (Figaro, including the previous recitative) • No.4 Aria (Bartolo) • No.5 Duettino (Susanna and Marcellina) • No.6 Aria (Cherubino) • No.7 Terzetto (Susanna, Basilio, Count) • No.9 Aria (Figaro).

Strand C: The piano music of Chopin, Brahms and Grieg

Composer	Set works
Chopin	• Ballade no.2 in F major op.38 • Nocturne in E minor op.72 no.1
Brahms	• Intermezzo in A major op.118. no.2 • Ballade in G minor op.118 no.3
Grieg	• Norwegian march op.54 no.2 • Notturno op.54 no.4

We as a school have then chosen the following two areas of study from a list of five:

3.1.5 Area of study 4: Music for theatre

For the purpose of this specification, music for theatre is defined as music composed to govern, enhance or support a theatrical conception from 1925 to the present.

Named composers

- Kurt Weill
- Richard Rodgers
- Stephen Sondheim
- Claude-Michel Schönberg
- Jason Robert Brown

Watch any musical theatre song/ scene by each of the composers above on YouTube and create the following comparison grid…

	Weill	Rodgers	Sondheim	Schonberg	Brown
Song Title					
Show					
Year					
T					
S					
H					
I					
R					
T					

3.1.8 Area of study 7: Art music since 1910

For the purpose of this specification art music since 1910 is defined as music that comprises modern, contemporary classical, electronic art, experimental and minimalist music as well as other forms.

Named composers

- Dmitri Shostakovich
- Olivier Messiaen
- Steve Reich
- James MacMillan

Listen to at least one piece by each of these composers above and complete a listening log on each using the pro forma on the next page…

LISTENING LOG

Title:	
Composer:	
Instruments/ Forces:	
Year of composition:	

T-SHIRT FEATURES

2. You need to know the definition of the main elements of music as well as a range of key features. You also need to be able to identify them in pieces you hear and study so here's a few to get you started, add definitions AND diagrams as you go...

Accented Passing Note	
Acciaccatura	
Alberti Bass	
Appogiatura	
Augmented 6th Chord	
Backbeat	
Bitonality	

Cadential 6/4	
Circle of 5ths	
Comping	
Conjunct	
Consonance	
Counterpoint	
Diminished 7th Chord	

Dominant Preparation	
Echappee	
Fugue	
Functional Harmony	
Ground Bass	
Heterophonic	
Lied	

Mordent	
Modes	
Neopolitan 6^{th}	
Oblique Motion	
Parallel Major/ Minor	
Phrygian Cadence	

Plagal Cadence	
Polarised Texture	
Quartal Harmony	
Rubato	
Secondary Dominant	
Stretto	

Suspension	
Tessitura	
Transcription	
Tritone	
Vibrato	

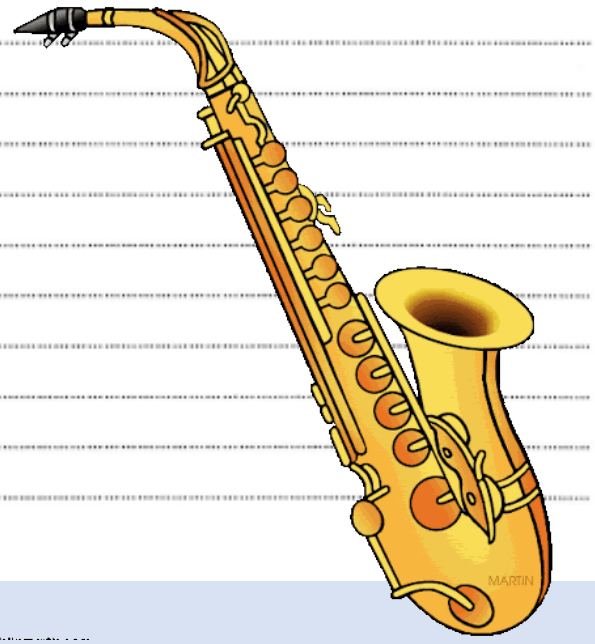
3. RECITAL PREP

Prepare a minimum of 5 minutes of music (at least two pieces) to perform as a recital upon your return in September.

- Choose pieces that are challenging. A Level Music has high expectations for performance and you need to be able to demonstrate that you can perform at a high level (minimum grade 5).
- For accompaniment, you may use a backing track (you will need to burn the backing track onto a CD and bring in in September), or provide a piano accompaniment for the performance (you will need to print sheet music for this). If the intention of the piece is for it to be unaccompanied, this is acceptable.
- You will need to print off sheet music for yourself and the teacher.
- If you need support in choosing/finding pieces, speak to one of the music department or your instrumental teacher.

Name of piece	Composer	Approx Level of Difficulty	Why I have chosen this piece

STRETCH: Write a short programme note about the pieces you will be performing.



Daily practice log (use if helpful!)

Music Practice Journal

Date: **Minutes Practiced:**

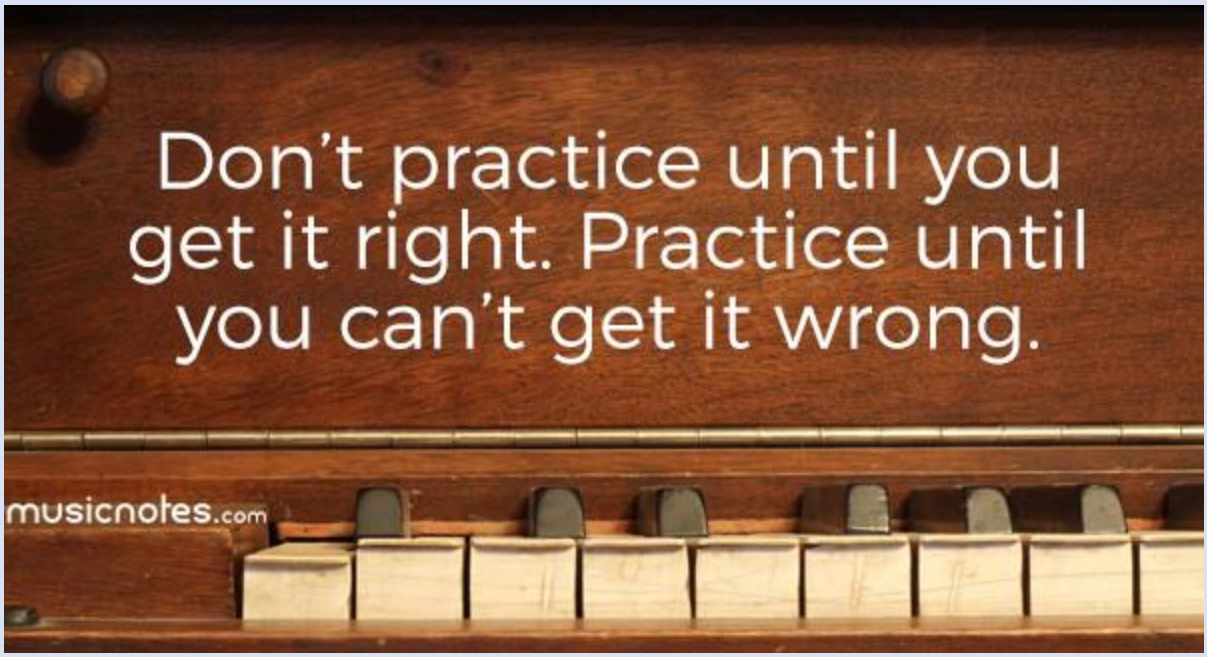
Goals for the session:

- [ ] Goal 1:
- [ ] Goal 2:
- [ ] Goal 3:
- [ ] Goal 4:
- [ ] Goal 5:

Tip: When writing down your goals, try to be specific. For example: I want to practice measures 13 - 25 of Mozart's Horn Concerto at metronome marking of 70 bpm with a tuner. Writing goals like this is important because it lets you know exactly what you need to be doing and how to know when the goal has been accomplished. Each goal should be tracked in the table below.

Practice Notes

Piece	Tempo	What went well...	I want to improve on...
Ex: B-flat Major	*60 bpm*	*My rhythm was right with the metronome.*	*Tone quality in the highest notes. Perhaps I should practice long tones.*



4. Complete these theory worksheets:

Key Signatures — The Sharp Keys

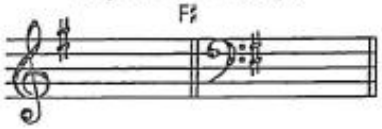
When writing the scales on page 44, you added sharp signs before the appropriate notes. In the G scale, you added a sharp sign before each F; in the D scale, you added sharp signs before each F and C.

To make writing and reading music easier, you can place all of the sharps used in a scale or piece immediately after the clef sign. This is called the KEY SIGNATURE. It indicates the notes that will be sharped each time they appear for the *entire* piece.

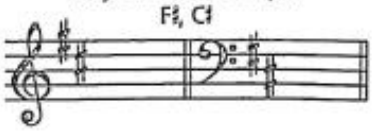
In this case, any F will always be played sharp (unless there is a natural sign before the F).

Sharps written in the key signature always appear in a specific order. Here are the sharp key signatures of the scales you know:

Key of G — 1 sharp: F♯



Key of D — 2 sharps: F♯, C♯



The order of sharps in the key signature for up to two sharps is F C.

Important!
To figure out the name of a major key from the key signature, go up a half step from the last sharp.
As an example: a key signature of F♯ would be the key of G major;
a key signature of F♯ and C♯ would be the key of D major.

Exercises

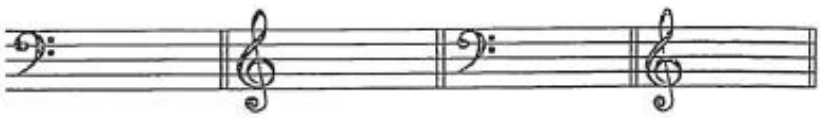
1. Write the order of the first two sharps in a key signature. _____ _____

2. If C♯ is the last sharp in the key signature, the major key name would be _____.

3. Name the following major key signatures.

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____ d. _____

4. Write the following major key signatures.



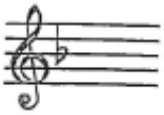
a. D major b. G major c. G major d. D major

Key Signatures — The Flat Keys

When writing the scales on page 45, you added flat signs before the appropriate notes.

In the F scale, you added a flat sign before each B; in the B♭ scale, you added flat signs before each B and E.

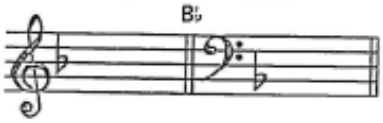
Just like sharp signs, you can place all of the flats used in a scale or piece in the KEY SIGNATURE. It indicates the notes that will be flatted each time they appear for the *entire* piece.



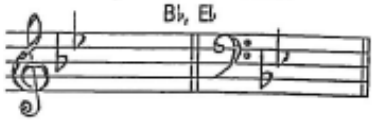
In this case, any B will always be played flat (unless there is a natural sign before the B).

Flats written in the key signature always appear in a specific order. Here are the flat key signatures of the scales you know:

Key of F — 1 flat:
B♭



Key of B♭ — 2 flats:
B♭, E♭



The order of flats in the key signature for up to two flats is B E.

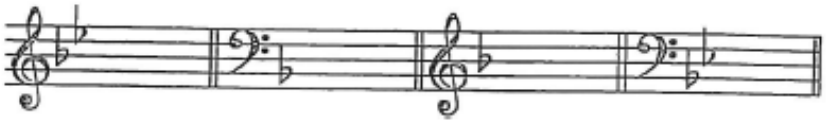
Important!
To figure out the name of a major key from the key signature, remember that one flat is the key of F; for two or more flats, the next-to-last flat is the name of the key. As an example, a key signature of B♭ and E♭ would be the key of B♭ major.

Exercises

1. Write the order of the first two flats in a key signature. _____ _____

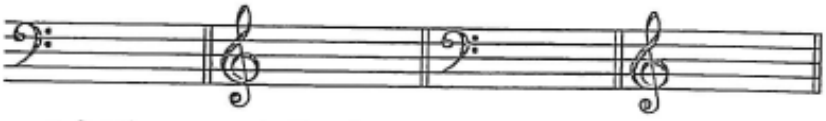
2. If B♭ is the next-to-last flat in the key signature, the major key name would be_____.

3. Name the following major key signatures.



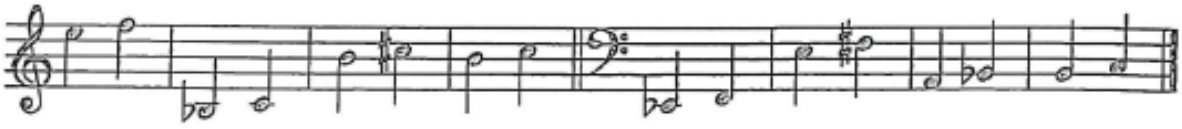
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____ d. _____

4. Write the following major key signatures.



a. F major b. B♭ major c. B♭ major d. F major

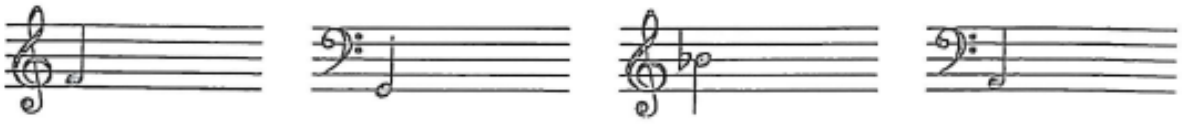
1. Indicate whether the distance between each note is a ~~whole step (W)~~ tone or ~~half step (H)~~ semitone.



_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

2. The pattern of a tetrachord is whole step, _____ _____, _____ _____.

3. Write tetrachords below starting on the following notes. Remember to include the accidentals.



4. Draw a line to match each of the following:

The 2nd tetrachord of:	Is the 1st tetrachord of:
D major	D major
G major	G major
C major	A major

5. The major scale is made up of _____ tetrachords joined by a_____ _____.

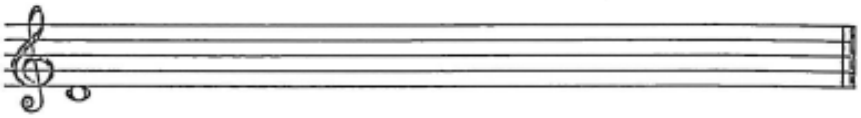
6. How many notes are in a major scale?_____

7. In a major scale, half steps occur between the _____ & _____ and _____ & _____ scale degrees.

8. Write major scales (without key signatures) beginning on the following notes using whole notes.

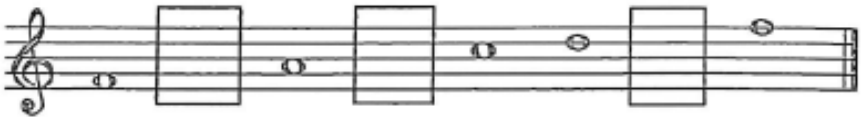
a.

b.

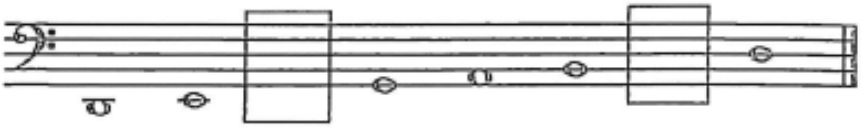


9. Fill in the missing notes in the major scales and indicate with an H above the staff where the half steps occur.

a.

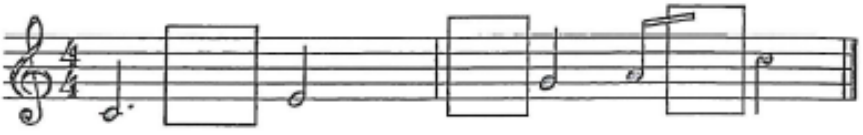


b.

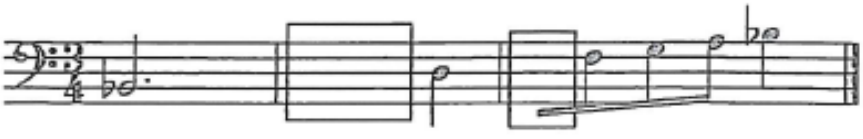


10. Fill in the missing notes and note values in the major scales.

a.



b.

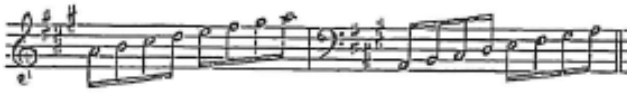


The Remaining Major Scales with Key Signatures

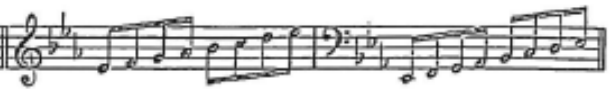
Once you are familiar with how to build tetrachords, it is easy to build any major scale. Altogether, there are 15 major scales: 7 sharp keys, 7 flat keys, and the key of C, which has no sharps or flats.

You are already familiar with the scales and key signatures of five of the 15: C, G (F♯), D (F♯, C♯), F (B♭) and B♭ (B♭, E♭). Here are the remaining 10.

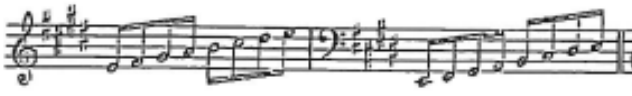
A Major (3 ♯s: F♯, C♯, G♯)



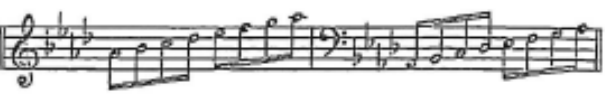
E♭ Major (3 ♭s: B♭, E♭, A♭)



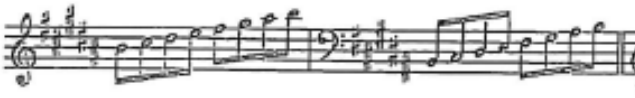
E Major (4 ♯s: F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯)



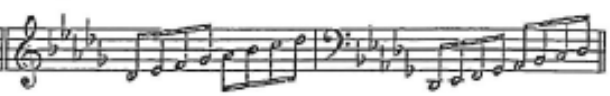
A♭ Major (4 ♭s: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭)



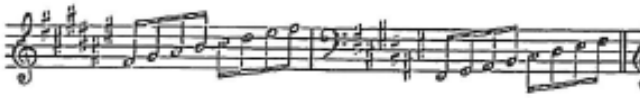
B Major (5 ♯s: F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯)



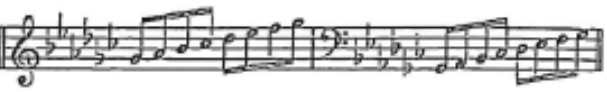
D♭ Major (5 ♭s: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭)



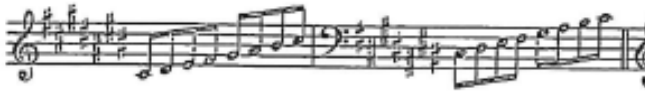
F♯ Major (6 ♯s: F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯, E♯)



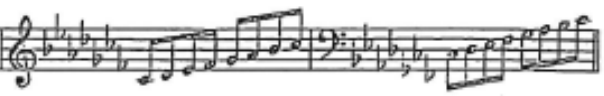
G♭ Major (6 ♭s: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, C♭)



C♯ Major (7 ♯s: F♯, C♯, G♯, D♯, A♯, E♯, B♯)



C♭ Major (7 ♭s: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, C♭, F♭)

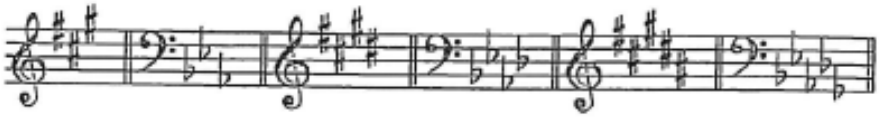


The complete order of sharps in the key signature is:
F C G D A E B.
A helpful *reminder:*
Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bread.
The complete order of flats in the key signature is:
B E A D G C F.
A helpful reminder: BEAD + G C F.

There are, however, only 12 unique *sounding* major scales. The following *are ENHARMONIC SCALES; they sound* the same but are written differently:
B major sounds the same as C♭ major
F♯ major sounds the same as G♭ major
C♯ major sounds the same as D♭ major

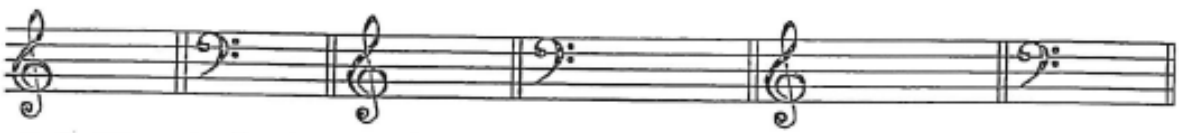
xercises

1. Name the following major key signatures.



a. ____ b. ____ c. ____ d. ____ e. ____ f. ____

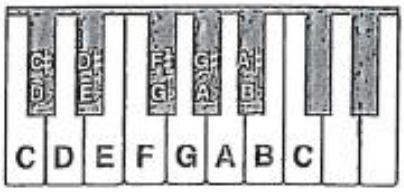
2. Write the following key signatures.



a. E♭ major b. E major c. A♭ major d. C♯ major e. C♭ major f. A major

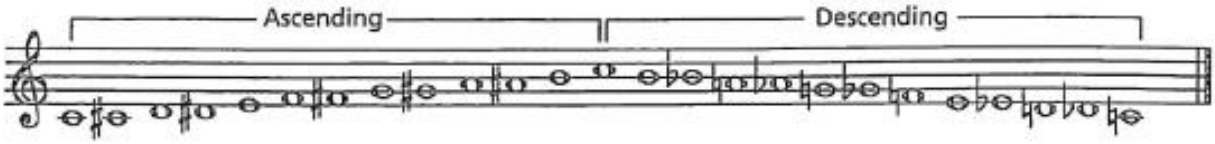
Chromatic Scale

The CHROMATIC SCALE is made up entirely of half steps in consecutive order. On a keyboard, therefore, it uses every key, black and white. When the scale goes up, it is called *ascending*; when the scale goes down, it is called *descending*.



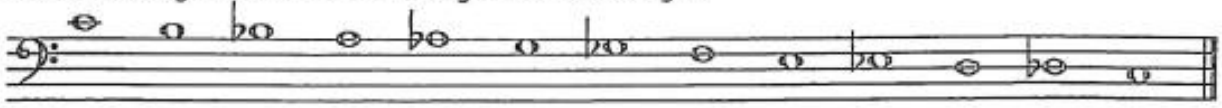
The chromatic scale may begin on any note.
In a chromatic scale, there are 12 tones.

C Chromatic Scale

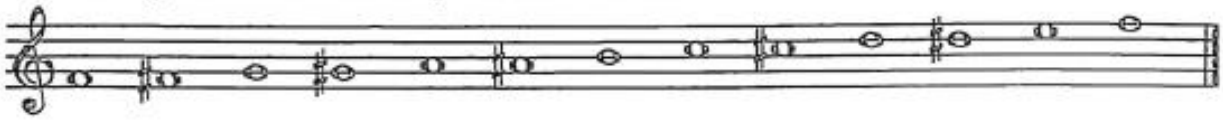


The ascending chromatic scale starting on C uses sharp signs.

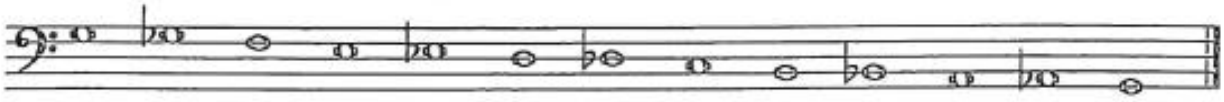
The descending chromatic scale starting on C uses flat signs.



An ascending chromatic scale starting on F looks like this:



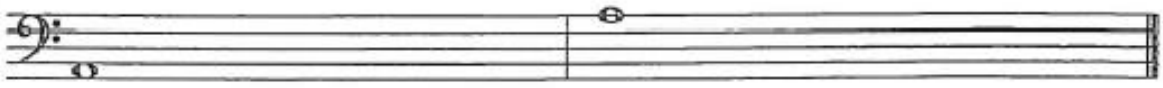
A descending chromatic scale starting on G looks like this:



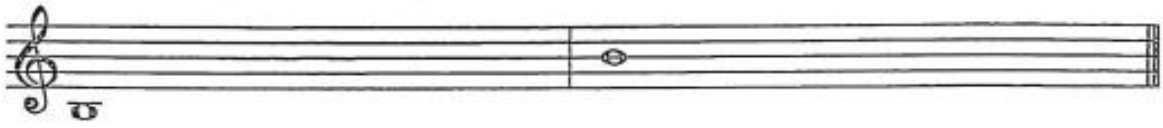
Exercises

1. What is the distance between each pitch in a chromatic scale? _____ _____

2. Write an ascending and descending chromatic scale starting on A.

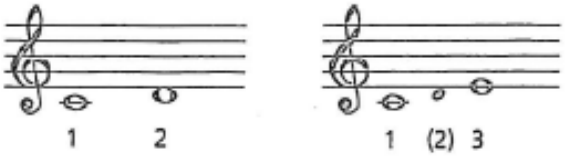


3. Write an ascending and descending chromatic scale starting on B.

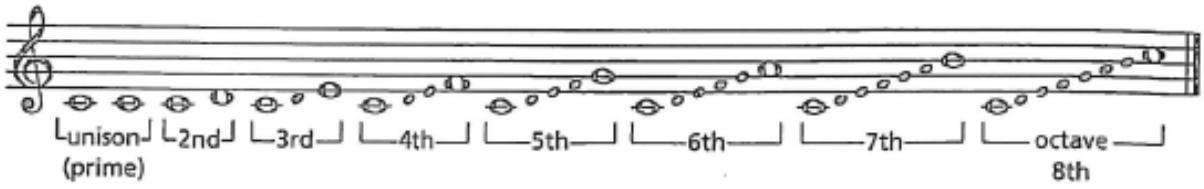


Intervals

An INTERVAL in music is the distance in pitch between two notes. The interval is counted from the lower note to the higher one, with the lower note counted as 1.

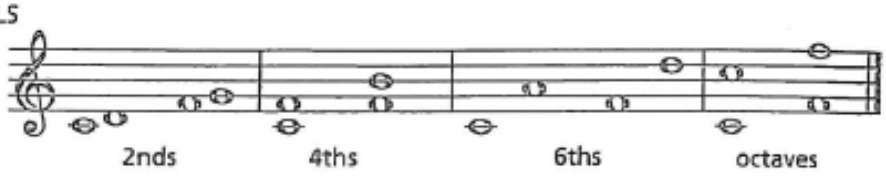


Intervals are named by the number of the upper note (2nds, 3rds, etc.) with two exceptions. The interval between notes that are identical is called a UNISON (also called a PRIME INTERVAL); the interval of an 8th is called an OCTAVE. The intervals below are all written with C as the lower note.

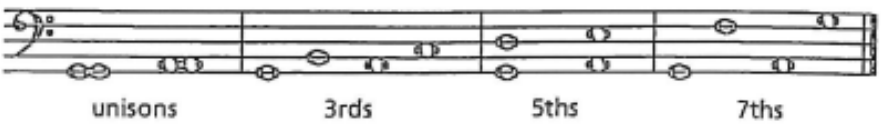


Intervals are called MELODIC INTERVALS when they are sounded separately and HARMONIC INTERVALS when they are sounded together.

EVEN NUMBERED INTERVALS of 2nds, 4ths, 6ths and octaves are written from line to space or space to line.

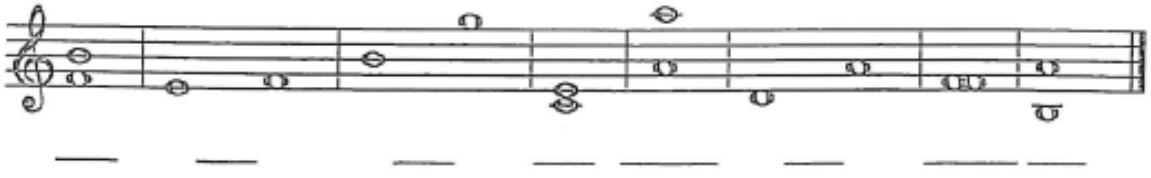


ODD NUMBERED INTERVALS of unisons, 3rds, 5ths and 7ths are written from line to line or space to space.

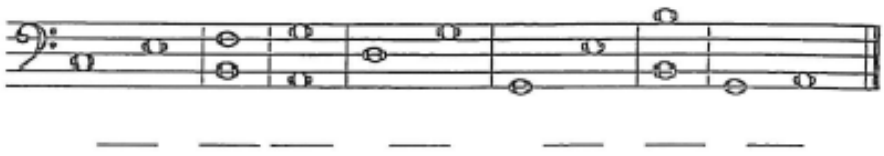


Exercises

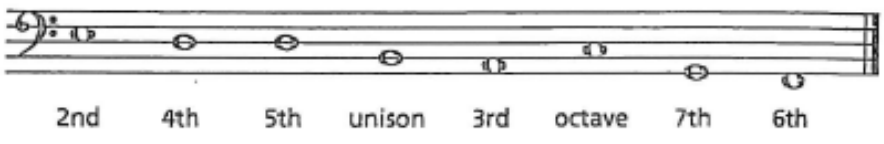
1 Name the intervals.



2 Indicate whether the following are melodic (M) or harmonic (H) intervals.



3 Write the harmonic interval indicated above the following notes.



Circle of Fifths

The CIRCLE OF FIFTHS is useful in understanding scales and key signatures. It shows the relationship of one key to another by the number of sharps or flats in the key signature and the order in which the sharps or flats occur.

SHARP KEYS
Start with C and go clockwise in *ascending* tetrachord order.

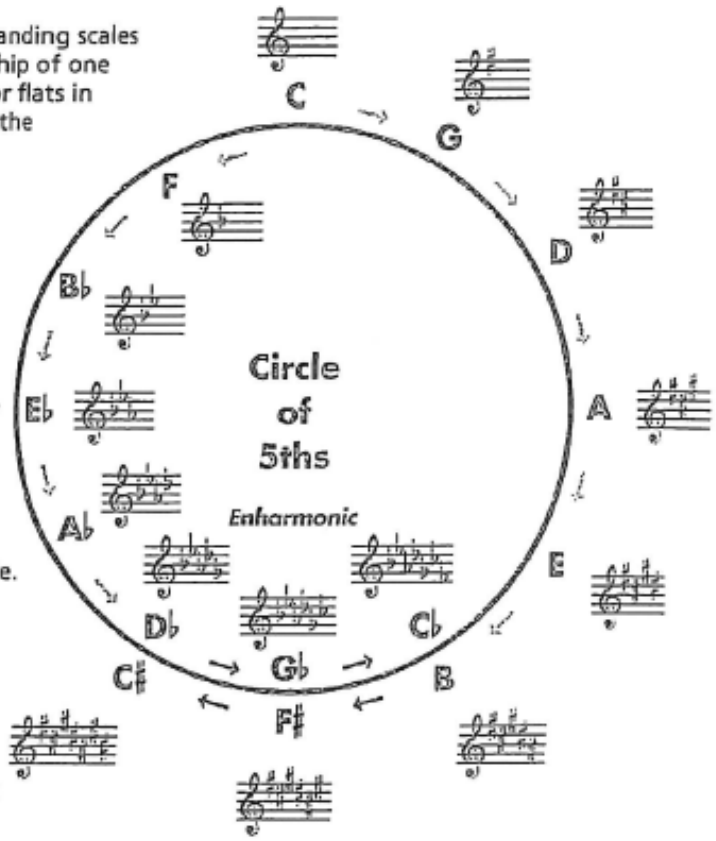
FLAT KEYS
Start with C and go counterclockwise in *descending* tetrachord order.

The sharp keys *ascend* by 5ths (W W H W);* the flat keys *descend* by 5ths (H W W W).

SHARP SCALES
Starting with C, the 2nd tetrachord of the *ascending* major scale becomes the 1st tetrachord of the following ascending scale. The scale's name is derived from the 1st note of that tetrachord, and one sharp is added to the key signature.

FLAT SCALES
Starting with C, the 2nd tetrachord of the *descending* major scale becomes the 1st tetrachord of the following descending scale. The scale's name is derived from the 1st note of that *descending* tetrachord, and one flat is added to the key signature.

OPTIONAL
Another way to determine the order of the flat keys is to ascend by 4ths (W W H). Starting on C: C to F, F to B♭, B♭ to E♭, etc.

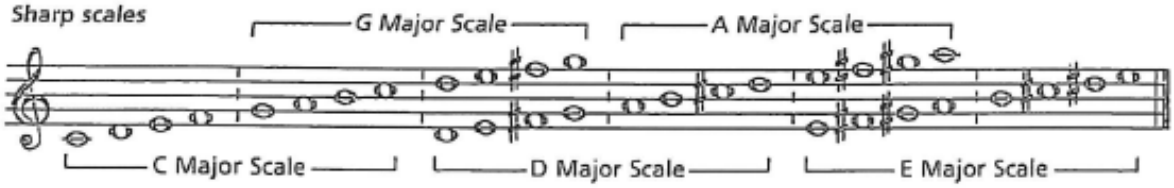


The order of sharps in the key signature:
F C G D A E B.

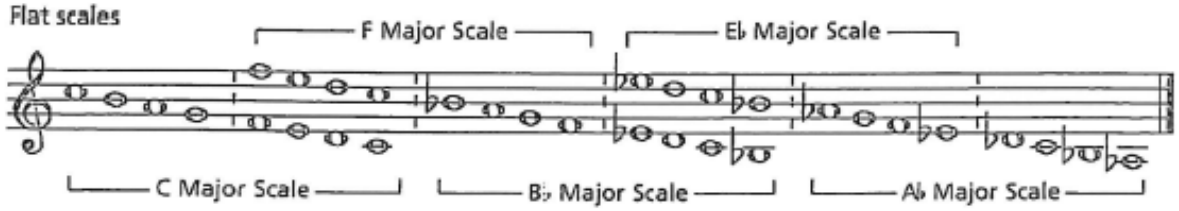
The order of flats in the key signature:
B E A D G C F.

OVERLAPPING TETRACHORD PATTERNS

Sharp scales



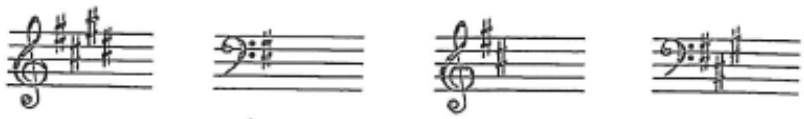
Flat scales



*W=Whole Step. H=Half Step.

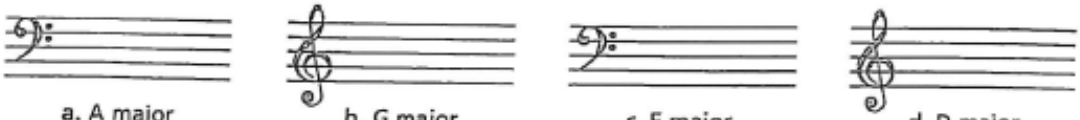
1. What is the complete order of sharps in a key signature? _____

2. Name the following major key signatures.



a._____ b._____ c._____ d._____

3. Write the following key signatures.



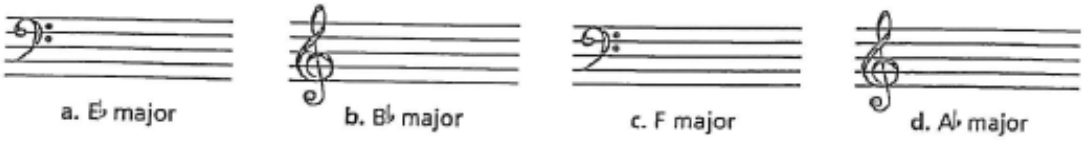
a. A major b. G major c. E major d. D major

4. What is the complete order of flats in a key signature? _____

5. Name the following major key signatures.

a._____ b._____ c._____ d._____

6. Write the following key signatures.



a. E♭ major b. B♭ major c. F major d. A♭ major

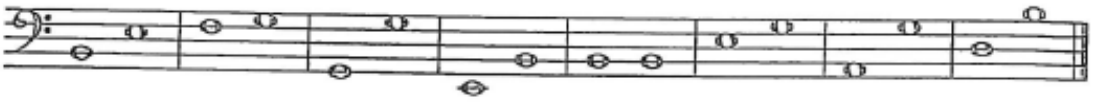
7. The C♭ major scale sounds the same as which other major scale? _____

8. The G♭ major scale sounds the same as which other major scale? _____

9. The D♭ major scale sounds the same as which other major scale? _____

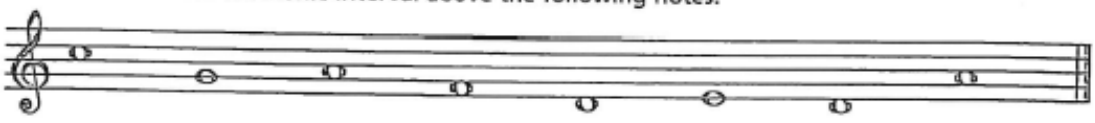
10. The chromatic scale is made up entirely of_____ _____ in consecutive order.

11. Name the melodic intervals.



_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

12. Write the indicated harmonic interval above the following notes.



2nd 6th 3rd octave 5th 7th 4th unison

13. In the circle of fifths, go clockwise and ascend by 5ths for the _____ keys, and counterclockwise and descend by 5ths for the _____ keys.

Perfect and Major Intervals

The interval between the keynote of a major scale and the unison, 4th, 5th or octave of that scale is called a PERFECT INTERVAL.

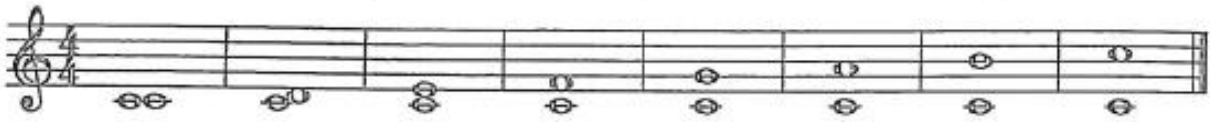
Perfect Unison Perfect 4th Perfect 5th Perfect Octave

The interval between the keynote of a major scale and the 2nd, 3rd, 6th or 7th of that scale is called a MAJOR INTERVAL.

Major 2nd Major 3rd Major 6th Major 7th

THE DIATONIC INTERVALS OF THE MAJOR SCALE

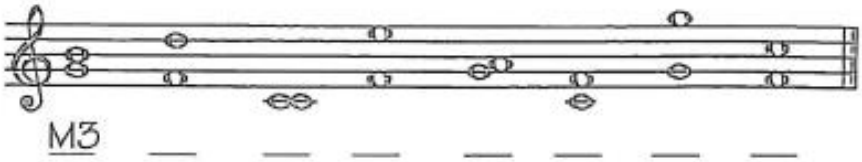
When the keynote and the upper note of an interval are from the same major scale, it is called a DIATONIC INTERVAL. All diatonic intervals in the major scale are either perfect (P) or major (M). The perfect intervals are the unison, 4th, 5th and octave; the major intervals are the 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th. This is true for all major scales. P1 indicates a perfect unison; P8 indicates a perfect octave.



P1 Unison M2 M3 P4 P5 M6 M7 P8 Octave

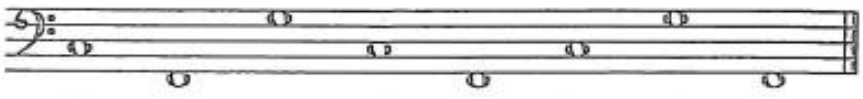
xercises

51 Name the harmonic intervals and indicate whether they are perfect or major.



M3 ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___

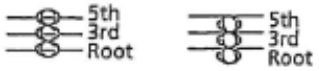
52 Write the note above the given note to complete the harmonic interval.



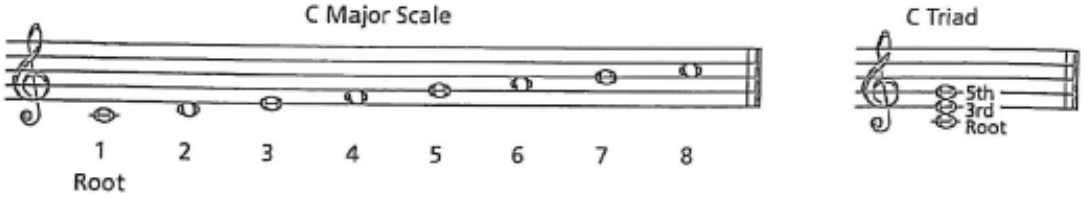
P5 P8 M3 M7 M6 P4 M2 P1

Triads

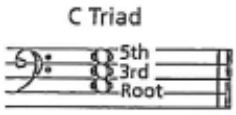
When three or more notes are sounded together, the combination is called a CHORD. When a 3-note chord consists of a ROOT, a 3rd and a 5th, it is called a TRIAD.

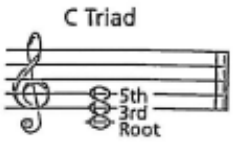


The root is the note from which the triad gets its name.
To build a triad, measure the 3rd and the 5th upward from the root.

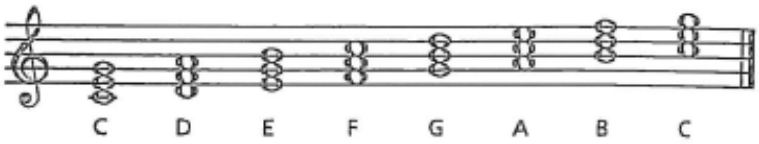


The root of a C triad is C. When a triad is in ROOT POSITION, it will include every other note (C-E-G, D-F-A, E-G-B, etc.). *All* the notes will be on lines or *all* the notes will be in spaces.



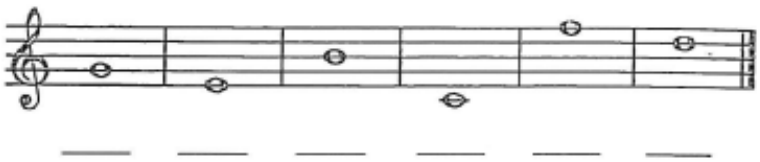


Triads may be built on any note of the scale. In the C major scale, the root position triads are:

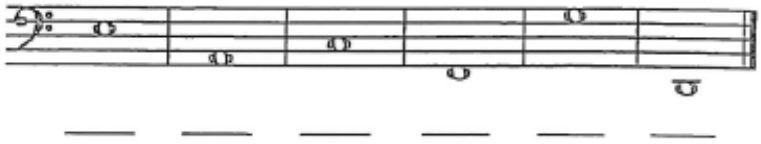


Exercises

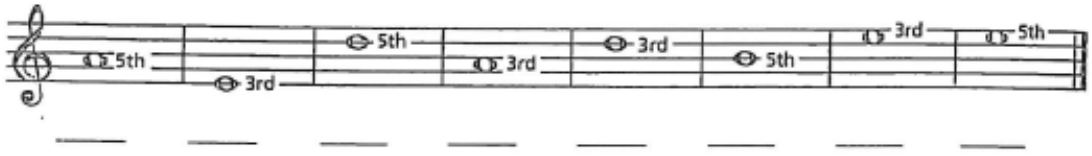
1. Build triads using each of the following *line* notes as the root. Name the root note.



2. Build triads using each of the following *space* notes as the root. Name the root note.



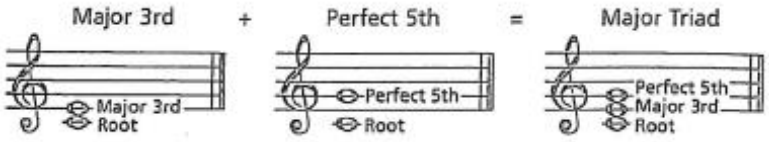
3. Add two notes (above or below) to create a triad in root position from the given 3rd or 5th. Name the root note.



Primary and Major Triads

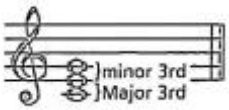
The most important triads of a key are built on the 1st, 4th and 5th scale degrees of the major scale. They are called the PRIMARY TRIADS or PRIMARY CHORDS of the key and are identified by the ROMAN NUMERALS I (1), IV (4) and V (5). These three triads contain every tone in the major scale.

The primary triads are MAJOR TRIADS because they consist of the root, a major 3rd and a perfect 5th (see page 56).



There are two other ways of forming a major triad:

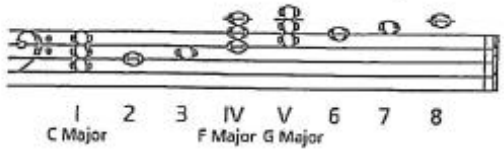
1. select the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of a major scale.
2. add the interval of a minor 3rd (see page 57) on top of a major 3rd.

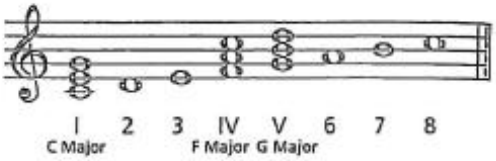


In the key of C major, the

I triad (or chord) is the C triad (C-E-G).
IV triad (or chord) is the F triad (F-A-C).
V triad (or chord) is the G triad (G-B-D).

The primary triads in the key of C major:

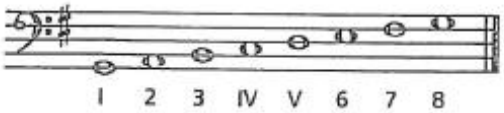




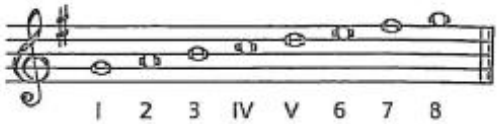
Exercises

Build the primary triads in root position for each scale by adding two notes to the 1st, 4th and 5th notes of each scale to complete the triad. Name each triad.

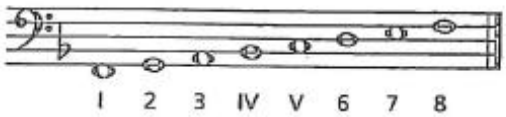
a.



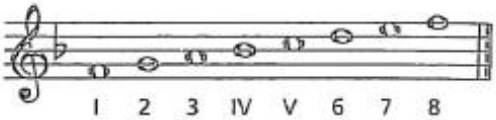
b.



c.

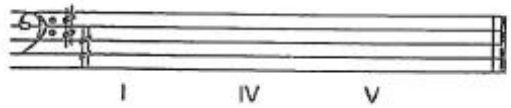


d.

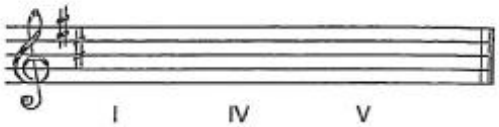


Write the primary triads in root position for each key. Name each triad.

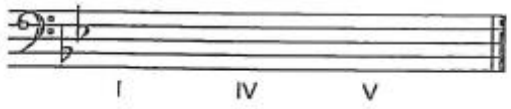
a.



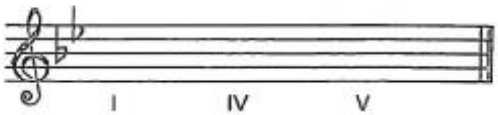
b.



c.



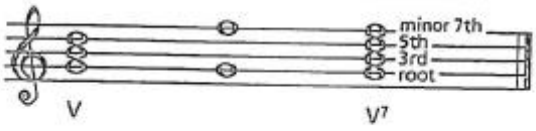
d.



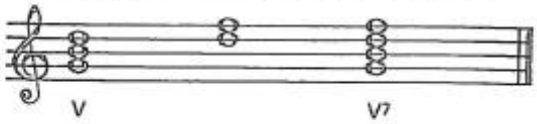
The V7 (Dominant 7th) Chord

In many pieces, a V7 (dominant 7th) chord is used instead of a V (dominant) triad. To build a V7 chord, add a minor 7th above the root of the V triad (or a minor 3rd above the 5th). The V7 is a chord and not a triad because it has 4 notes rather than 3.

Dominant + minor 7th = Dominant 7th

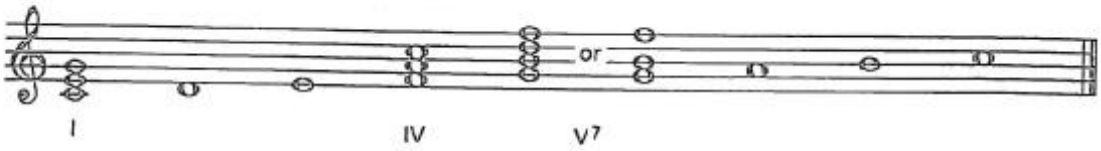


Dominant + minor 3rd = Dominant 7th



Often, the **5th of the** V7 chord is omitted. The V7 chord then would have the same number of tones as the I and IV chords while still retaining the quality of a 7th chord. This also allows the music to be sung or performed by as few as three singers or instrumentalists.

The three primary chords are now I, IV and V7.

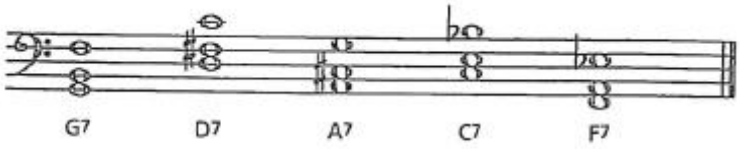


Exercises

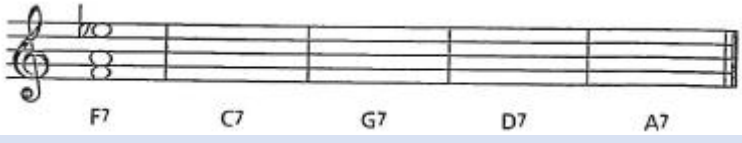
1. Write the V7 chord for each key. Write the key name and letter name of each chord.

Key of: C Major

2. Fill in the missing notes in the following V7 chords. Which interval did you add?_____



3. Write the following V7 chords with the 5th omitted—include the accidentals.



Triads — 1st Inversion

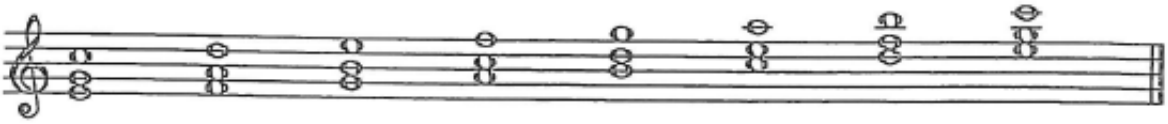
Any root position triad may be changed by moving the root (bottom note) of the chord to another position. This is called an INVERSION—it means the notes are rearranged and a tone other than the root is the bottom note of the chord.

The first inversion can be made from a C triad by moving the root (C) to the top of the chord.

C E G becomes E G C

All letter names are the same, but the 3rd (E) is now on the bottom, and the root (C) is now on top. This is called 1st INVERSION.

1st Inversion Triads in C major (3rd is on the bottom).



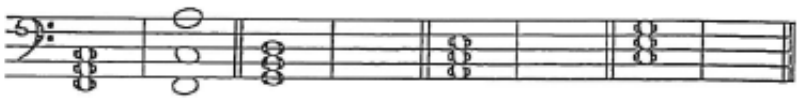
In 1st inversion, the 3rd is *always* the bottom note.

OPEN and CLOSE POSITIONS

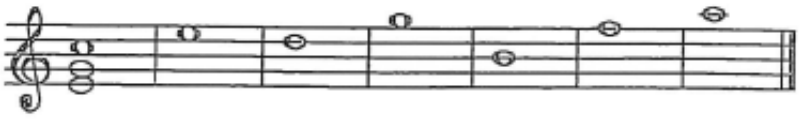
When the notes of a chord are spaced within an octave, it is in CLOSE POSITION.
When the notes of a chord are spaced larger than an octave, it is in OPEN POSITION.

Exercises

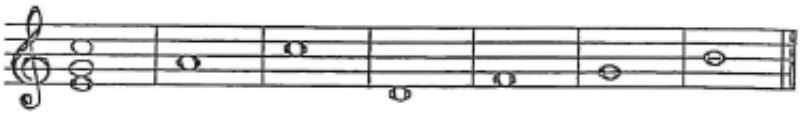
1. Rewrite the following root position triads in open position.



2. Using the given notes as the root, add the 3rd and 5th *below* each note to make 1st inversion triads in the key of C.



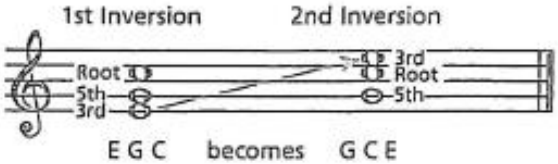
3. Using the given notes as the 3rd, add the 5th and root *above* each note to make 1st inversion triads in the key of C (close position).



Triads — 2nd Inversion

Any 1st inversion triad may be inverted again by moving the lowest note (3rd) to the top.

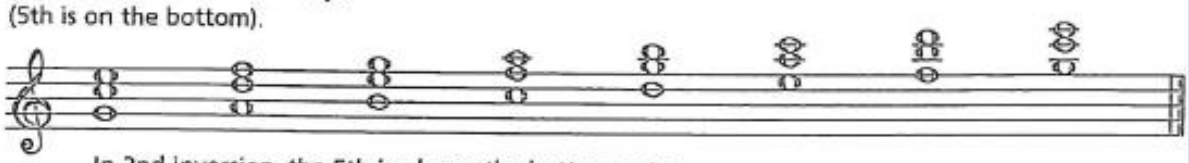
The second inversion can be made from a 1st inversion C triad by moving the 3rd (E) to the top of the chord.



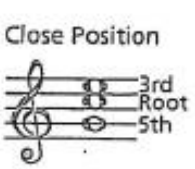
E G C becomes G C E

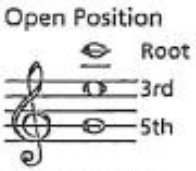
All letter names are the same, but the 5th (G) is now on the bottom, and the root (C) is now in the middle. This is called 2nd INVERSION.

2nd Inversion Triads in C Major (5th is on the bottom).

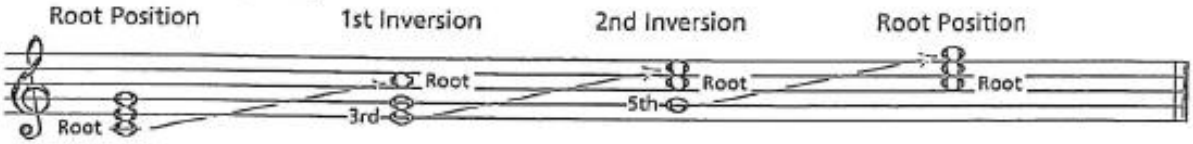


In 2nd inversion, the 5th is *always* the bottom note.



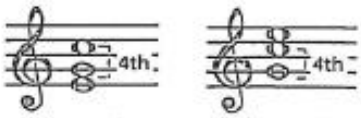


Triads in all Positions (close).



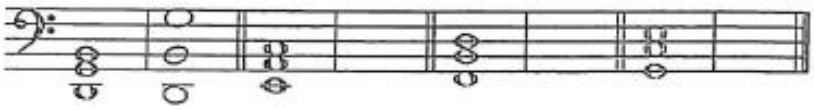
Root position: root is on the bottom.
1st inversion: 3rd is on the bottom.
2nd inversion: 5th is on the bottom.

Both inversions: In close position, the root is always the upper note of the interval of a 4th.

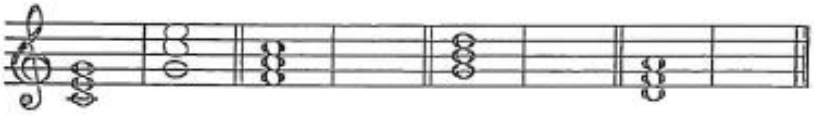


Exercises

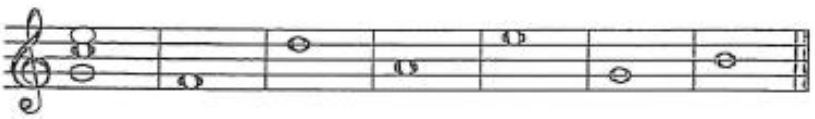
1. Rewrite the following close position 2nd inversion triads in open position.



2. Rewrite the following root position triads in 2nd inversion (close position).

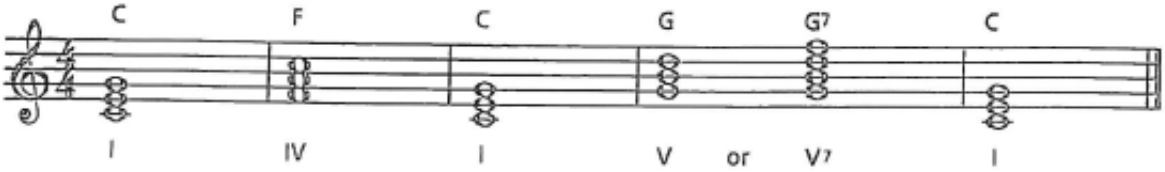


3. Using the given notes as the root, add the 5th *below* and the 3rd *above* to make 2nd inversion triads in the key of C.



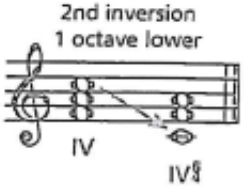
Major Chord Progressions

Chords that move (or progress) from one to another are called a CHORD PROGRESSION. Because the I, IV and V chords contain all the notes of the major scale, they can be used to ACCOMPANY (play along with) most simple melodies. In many chord progressions, a V7 chord is used in place of the V chord.

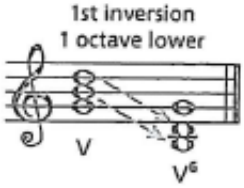


When the IV and V (or V7) chords are in root position, the progression sounds choppy. To make it easier to play and sound smoother, the IV chord often is moved to the 2nd inversion, and the V (or V7) chord often is moved to the 1st inversion.

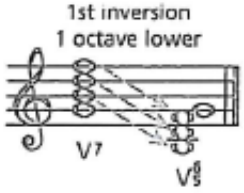
In the IV chord, the 5th (C) is moved down an octave.



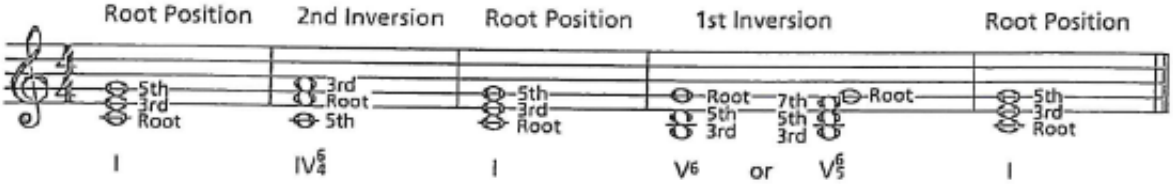
In the V chord, the 3rd (B) and 5th (D) are moved down an octave.



In the V7 chord, the 3rd (B), 5th (D) and 7th (F) are moved down an octave.

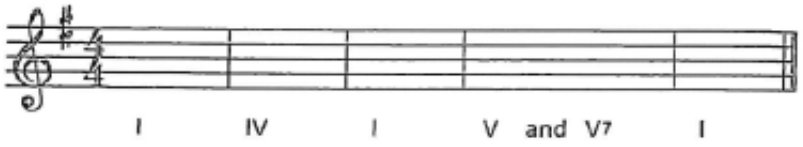


The following positions are often used for smooth progressions. Notice there is a common tone between each chord.

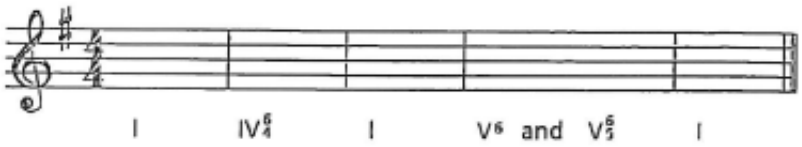


Exercises

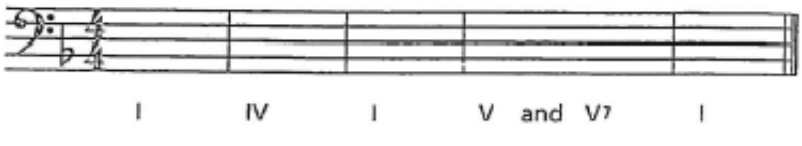
1. Write the chords in root position in the key of G major. Write the chord symbol for each above the staff.



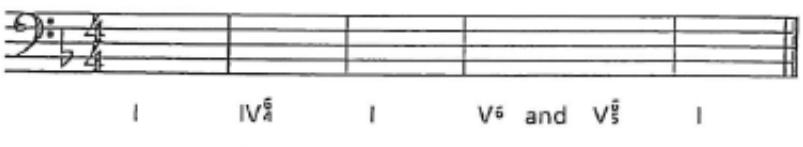
2. Rewrite the above chord progression to make it sound smoother. Add chord symbols.



3. Write the chords in root position in the key of F major. Write the chord symbol for each above the staff.



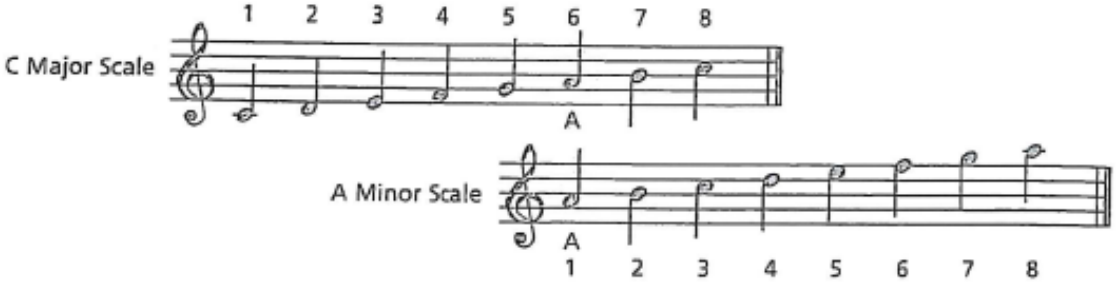
4. Rewrite the above chord progression to make it sound smoother. Add chord symbols.



Minor Scales

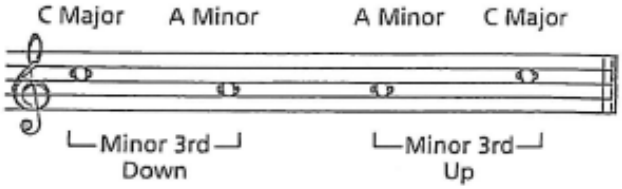
Remember, there are 15 major scales with unique key signatures—see Book 2, page 50.
For every major key, there is a RELATIVE MINOR KEY that has the *same* key signature.

Each relative minor scale begins on the 6th note of the RELATIVE MAJOR SCALE.
The 6th note is the keynote of the minor scale and the note from which the scale gets its name.



The keynote of a relative minor scale may also be found by *descending* a minor 3rd from the keynote of the major scale.

Conversely, the keynote of the relative major scale may be found by *ascending* a minor 3rd from the keynote of the minor scale.



The keys of C major and A minor are relatives because they have the same key signature (no ♯s, no ♭s).

Exercises

1 Write the relative minor key name and the key signature for each major key.

G major: _____minor

D major: _____minor

A major: _____minor

E major: _____minor

F major: _____minor

B♭ major: _____minor

E♭ major: _____minor

A♭ major: _____minor

2 Write the following minor key signatures and scales.

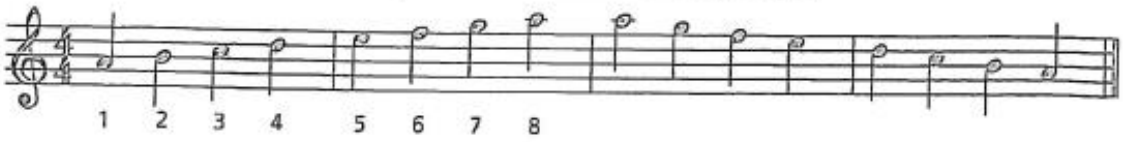
E minor

D minor

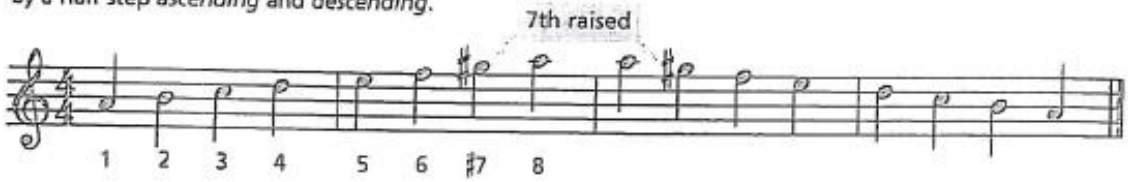
Natural, Harmonic and Melodic Minor Scales

There are three types of minor scales: the NATURAL, HARMONIC and MELODIC.

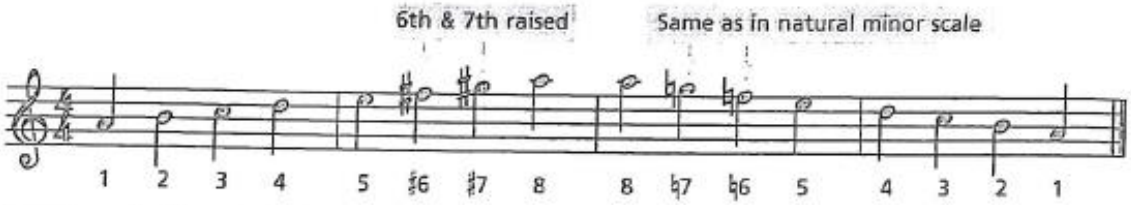
The NATURAL MINOR SCALE uses *only* the tones of the relative major scale.



The HARMONIC MINOR SCALE raises the 7th tone (G) by a half step *ascending* and *descending*.



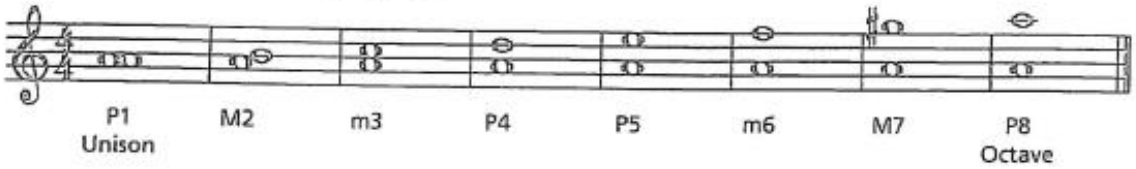
The MELODIC MINOR SCALE raises the 6th (F) and 7th (G) tones by a half step *ascending*. It *descends* like the natural minor scale.



The Harmonic Minor Scale is the most frequently used of the three minor scales.

THE DIATONIC INTERVALS OF THE HARMONIC MINOR SCALE

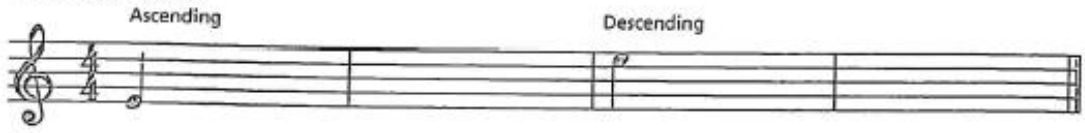
All diatonic intervals in the harmonic minor scale are either perfect (P), major (M) or minor (m). The perfect intervals are the unison, 4th, 5th and octave; the major intervals are the 2nd and 7th; the minor intervals are the 3rd and 6th. This is true for all harmonic minor scales. Compare with the major scale intervals in Book 2, page 56.



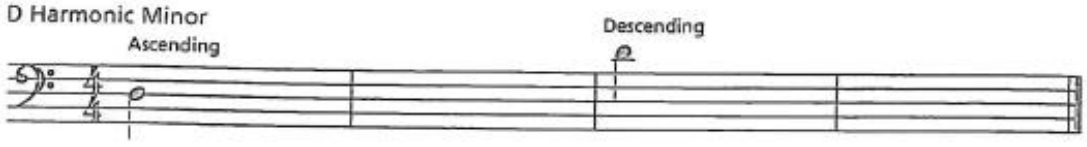
Exercises

1 Write the following harmonic minor scales with key signatures using quarter notes.

E Harmonic Minor



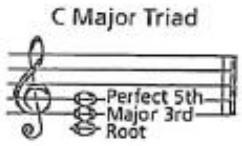
D Harmonic Minor



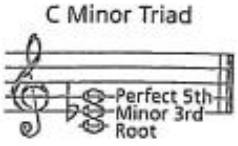
Minor Triads

Just as a major triad can be built from the 1st, 3rd and 5th scale degrees of a major scale, a MINOR TRIAD can be built from the 1st, 3rd and 5th scale degrees of a minor scale.

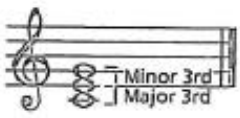
Major triads consist of a root, major 3rd and a perfect 5th.



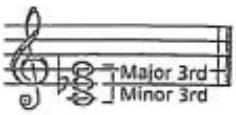
Minor triads consist of a root, minor 3rd and a perfect 5th.



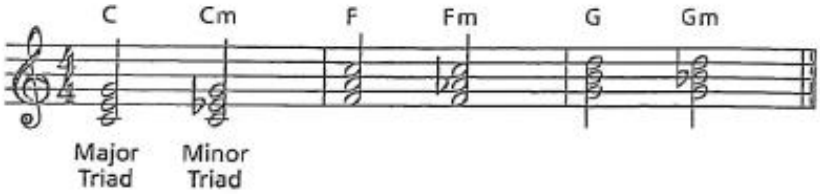
Build a major triad by adding a minor 3rd on top of a major 3rd.



Build a minor triad by adding a major 3rd on top of a minor 3rd.

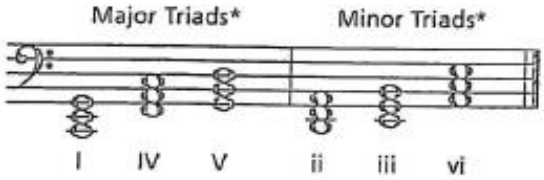


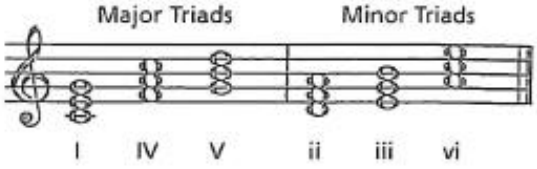
Any major triad may be changed to a minor triad by lowering the 3rd by ½ step.



MAJOR and MINOR TRIADS IN THE MAJOR SCALE

In a major scale, only triads with the root on the 1st, 4th and 5th scale degrees are *major triads*. Triads with the root on the 2nd, 3rd and 6th scale degrees are *minor triads*.



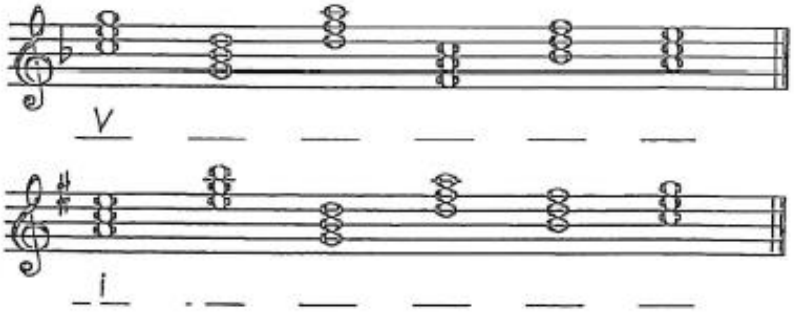


*Major triads are numbered with upper case Roman numerals (I), minor triads with lower case Roman numerals (ii).

Exercises

1. Build minor triads (adding accidentals where necessary) using each of the following notes as the root. Name the triad.

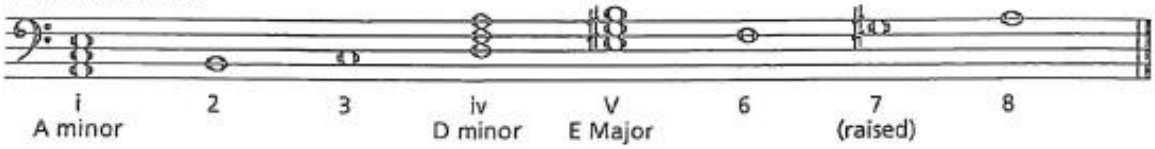
2. Label each triad in the keys of F and G major using upper and lower case Roman numerals.



The Primary Triads in Minor Keys

As in the major keys (see Book 2, page 75), the most important triads of a minor key are built on the 1st, 4th and 5th scale degrees of the minor scale. They are called the PRIMARY TRIADS or primary chords of the key and are identified by the Roman numerals i, iv and V. These three triads contain every note of the minor scale.

A Harmonic Minor

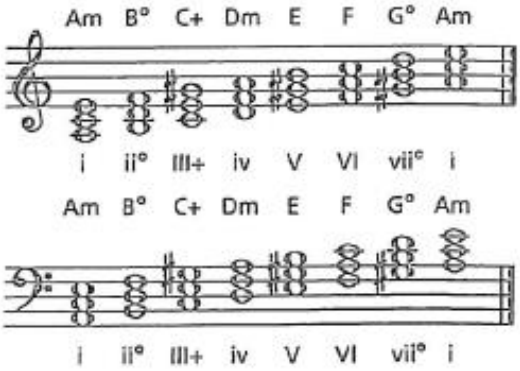


- Notice that the i and iv chords are minor chords because they consist of the root, a minor 3rd and a perfect 5th (see page 92).
- The V chord is a major triad, as in the major scale, because it consists of a root, major 3rd and perfect 5th. The G is sharped because the A harmonic minor scale has the 7th raised a half step.

HARMONIC MINOR TRIAD SCALE

In the harmonic minor scale, triads built on the:

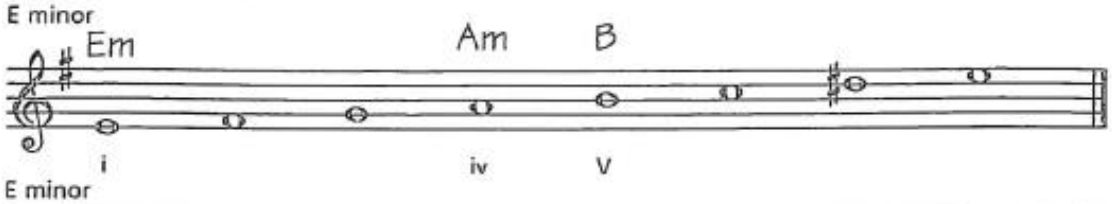
- 1st and 4th scale degrees are minor triads,
- 5th and 6th scale degrees are major triads,
- 2nd and 7th scale degrees are diminished triads (see page 93),
- 3rd scale degree is an augmented triad (see page 93).



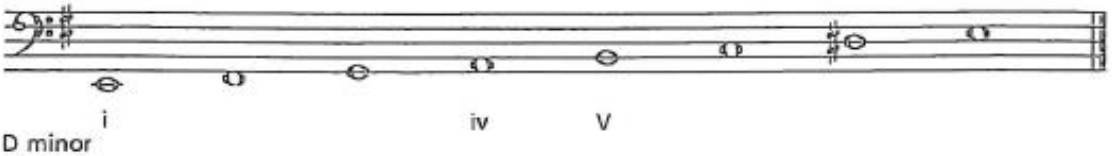
Exercises

Build the primary triads for each minor scale by adding two notes to the 1st, 4th, and 5th notes of each scale to complete the triad. Use the harmonic minor scale (raised 7th). Name each triad.

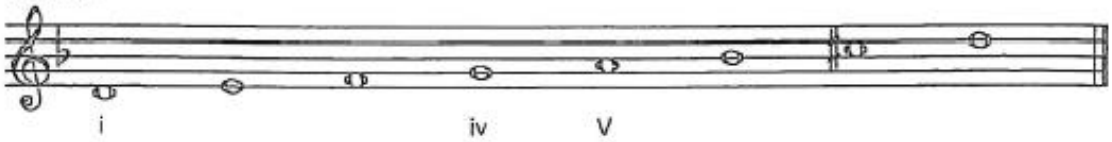
E minor



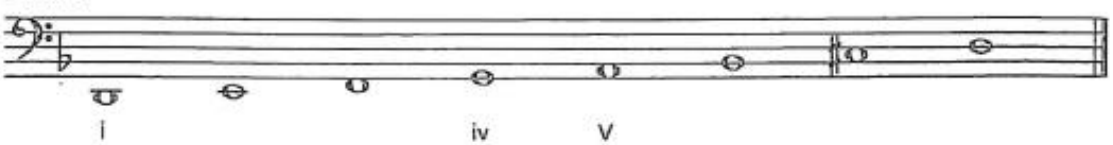
E minor



D minor

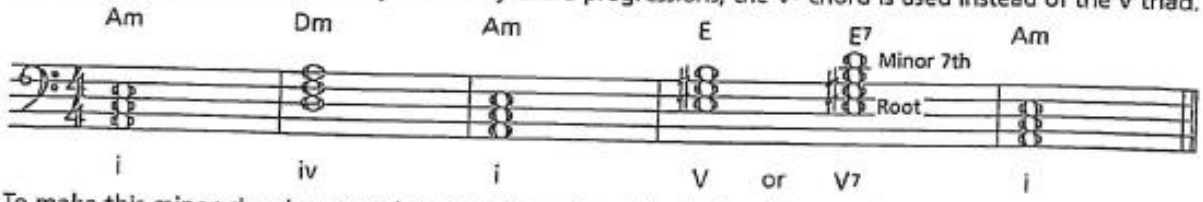


D minor



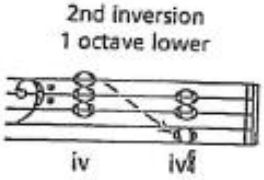
Minor Chord Progressions

Because the i, iv and V triads contain all the notes of the harmonic minor scale, they can be used to accompany most simple melodies in minor keys. In many chord progressions, the V7 chord is used instead of the V triad.

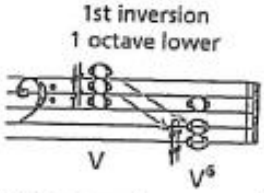


To make this minor chord progression sound smoother, the iv chord is moved to the 2nd inversion, and the V (or V7) chord is moved to the 1st inversion.

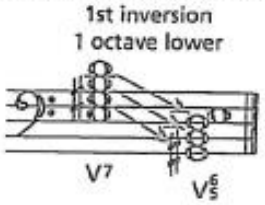
In the iv chord, the 5th (A) is moved down an octave.



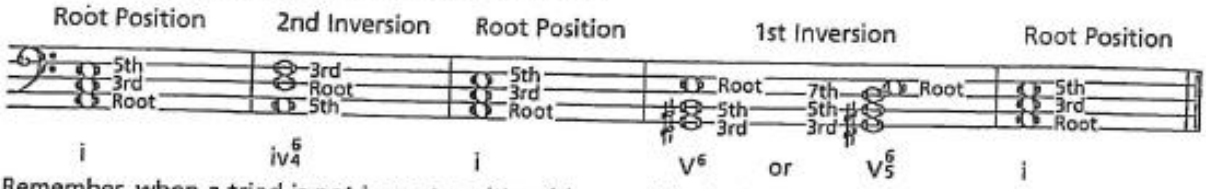
In the V chord, the 3rd ($G^{\sharp}$) and 5th (B) are moved down an octave.



In the V7 chord, the 3rd ($G^{\sharp}$), 5th (E) and 7th (D) are moved down an octave.



The following positions are often used for smooth progressions. Notice there is a common tone between each chord.

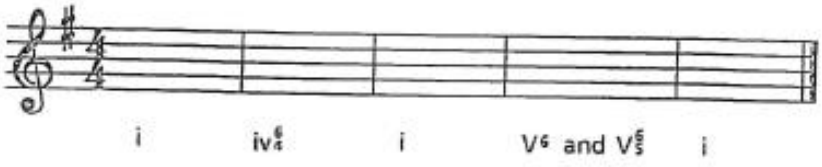


Remember, when a triad is not in root position (close position), the root is always the upper note of the interval of a 4th. When a V7 chord is not in root position (close position), the root is always the upper note of the interval of a 2nd.

Exercises

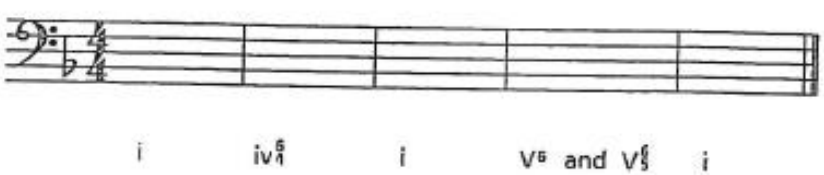
1. Write the chords in root position in the key of E minor. Write the chord symbols for each above the staff.

2. Rewrite the above chord progression to make it sound smoother. Add chord symbols.



3. Write the chords in root position in the key of D minor. Write the chord symbols for each above the staff.

4. Rewrite the above chord progression to make it sound smoother. Add chord symbols.



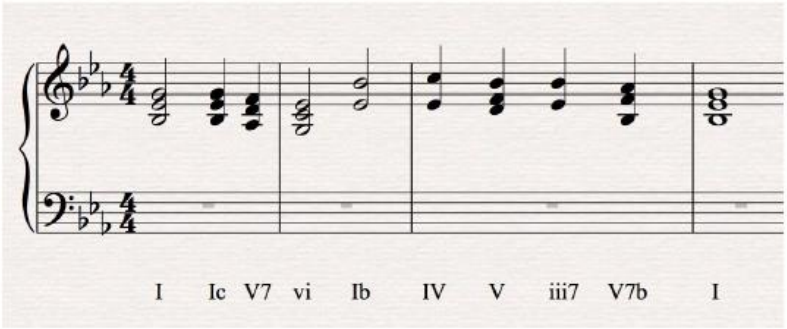
5. **Complete the following composition challenges using SIBELIUS FIRST (available for free download)..**

CHALLENGE 1

Have a look at the music below. Can you complete the bass line using the given chord symbols? Remember to work out the key and do a chord chart, as you did in activity 1.

The key of this music is: .....

3rd/d (V only)							
2nd/c							
1st/b							
Root							
KEY:	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII

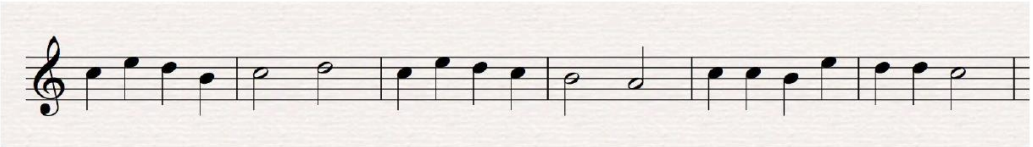


Given the use of chord iii7 – do you think this piece is likely to be from the baroque, classical or romantic period? Why?

CHALLENGE 2

Have a look at the short melody below. Try to harmonise it in different ways, perhaps thinking about:

- Only using primary chords in root position
- Using primary chords with inversions
- Adding dominant 7ths
- Could you modulate to a different key? Perhaps the relative minor?
- Could you use a diminished 7th?



If you have found this part easier, maybe then think about how this melody might be played in contrasting styles – for example, how might this melody sound in:

- The style of a tango?
- A Purcell-inspired lament?
- A solo character song from a musical?
- A Beethoven piano piece?