PIANO SCALES FOR KIDS

A Comprehensive Beginner's Guide
for Kids to Learn about the
Realms of Piano Scales and Music from A-Z

JESSICA GILBERT

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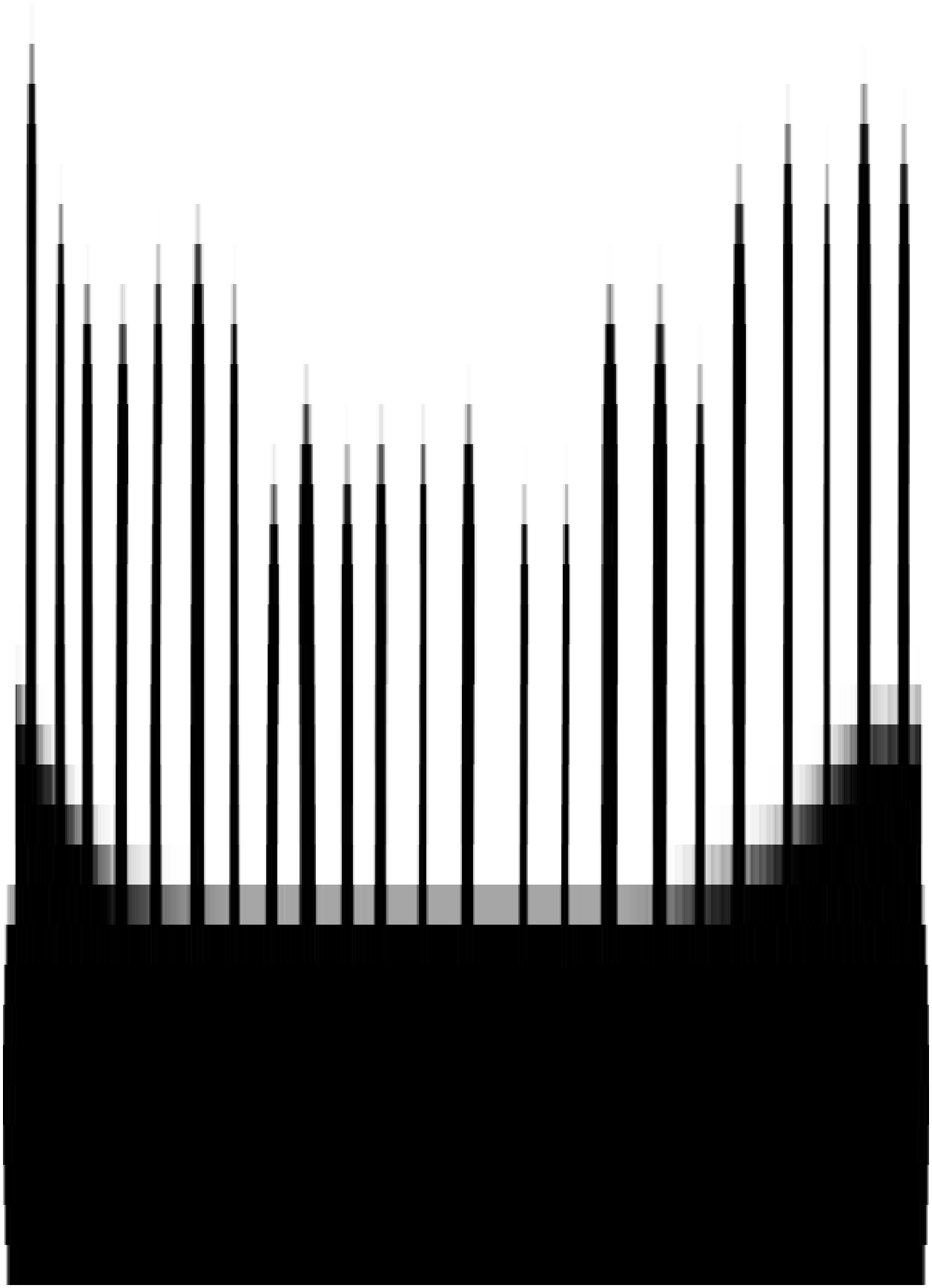
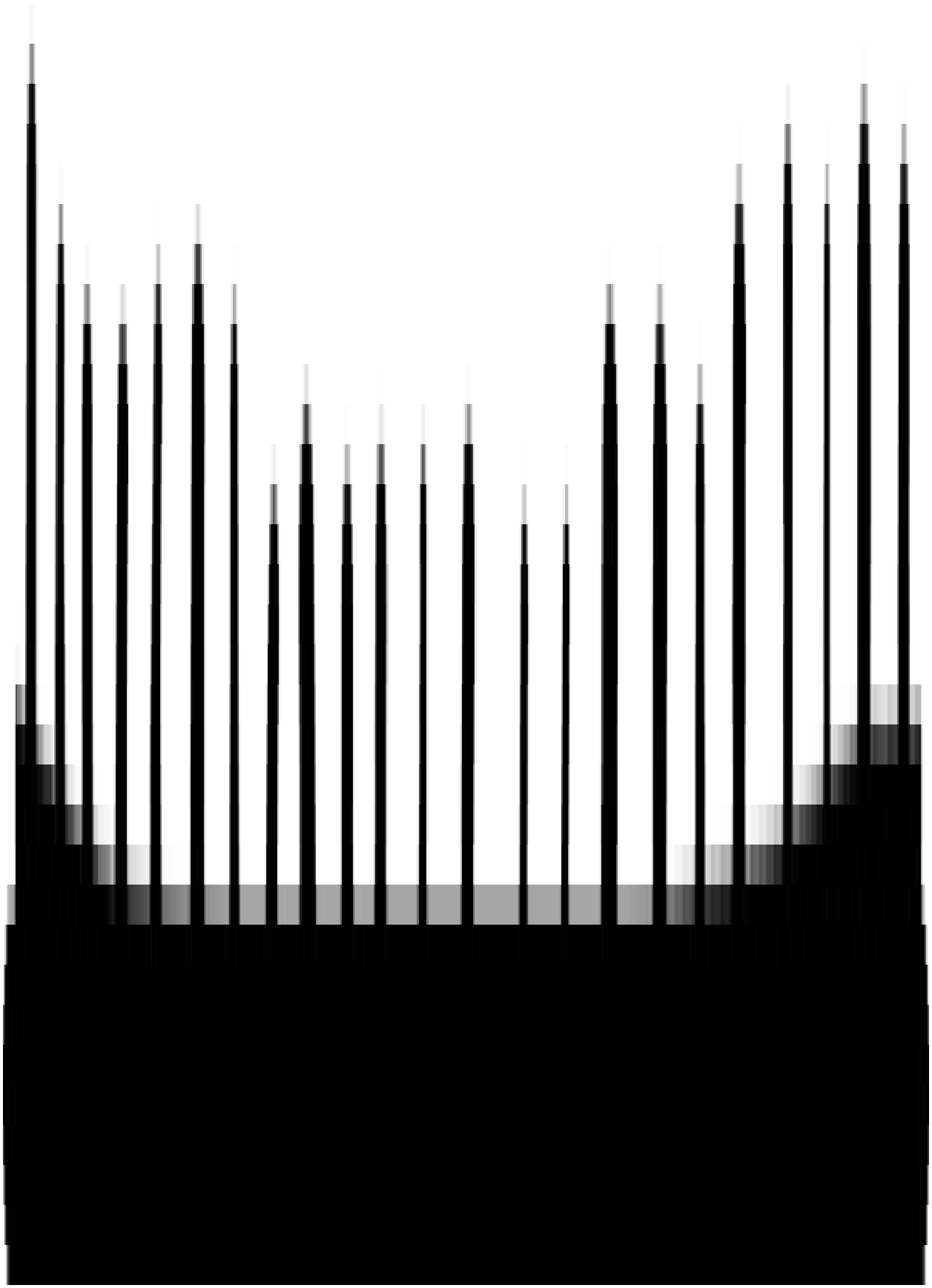


Introduction



Children have a unique ability to assimilate new information at an impressive rate. In other words, they can learn new things quickly, creating a need for constant knowledge. It is the goal of this book to provide such knowledge as it relates to piano Scales. It is a comprehensive guide for kids and gives an in-depth look into the world of music and, more specifically, into the world of piano scales. Learning piano scales is an important step for any pianist, whether young or old. However, the nature of this book is targeted toward the minds of children, and as such, it is simplified to the point of easy understanding. We understand the need for children to consume knowledge and for said knowledge to be broken down into digestible bits of information. Because of this, the lessons in this book focus on a beginner's perspective and teach complex topics in simple ways.

This book will cover the concept of piano scales and their relevance to music in general. It will explain the types of piano scales and how to read them and use them to make impactful music. It will also dive into the mind of a proper pianist and share the tips needed to succeed as one. Finally, it will cover music terminologies that are relevant and related to piano scales.

By the end of this book, the reader will have gained active and practicable knowledge about piano scales. They would have learned to connect with their pianos on a deeper level which will, in turn, help them create and play music that resonates with others on a deeper level. The knowledge shared in this book will be a stepping stone that brings children close to their dreams of being successful pianists by providing simple guidelines to help them learn the piano scales.

As you read further, you will discover that each chapter builds upon itself, allowing you to gain a clearer picture with each chapter you cover. The simplicity of this book will guide the reader into the realm of piano scales with a gentle hand through clear lessons that teach everything they are meant to teach without confusing the reader. This hand does not rush or overlook important steps; instead, it focuses on what needs to be taught and waits patiently for the

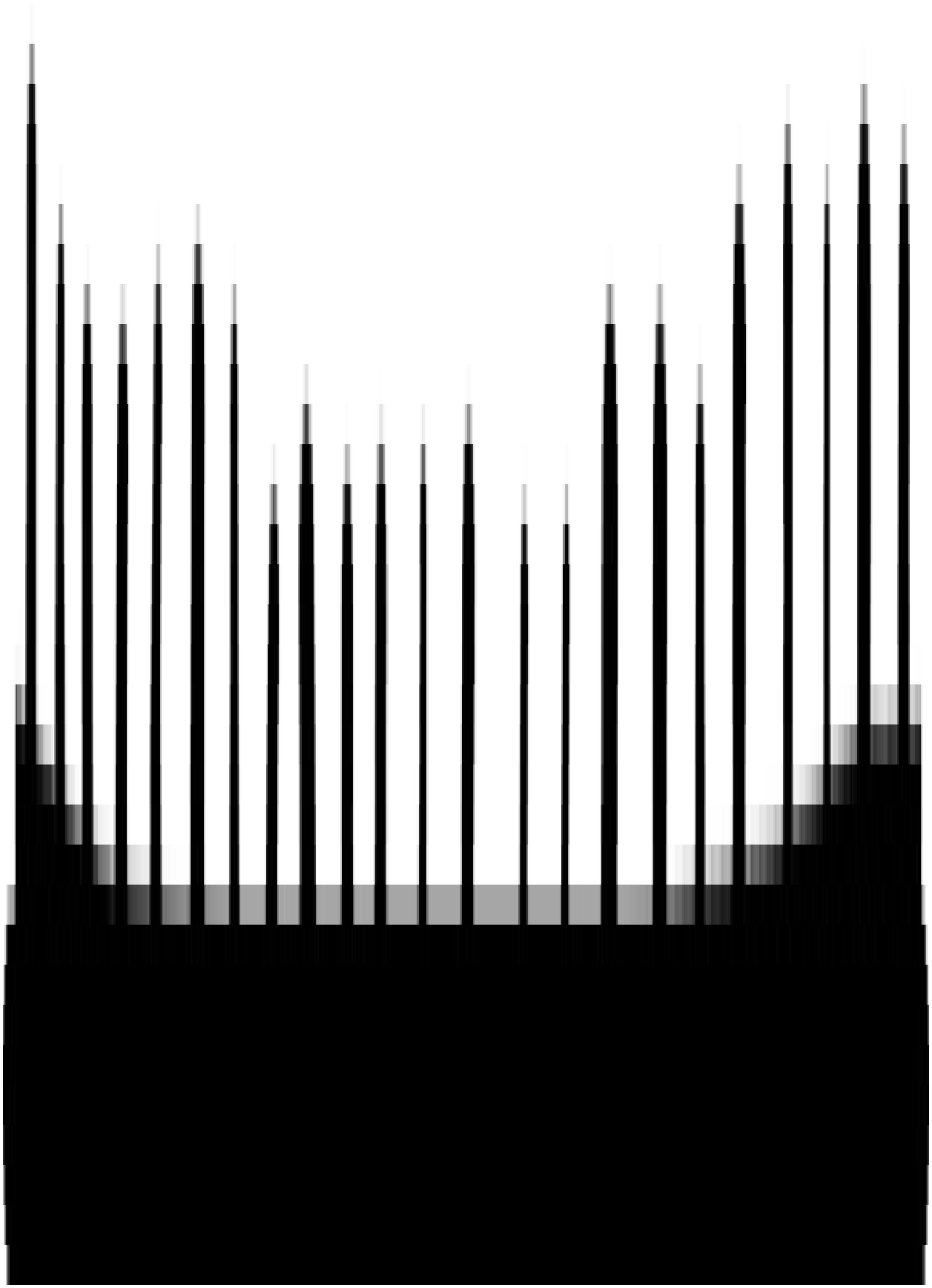
reader to catch on.

By reading this book, you will gain all the knowledge you need about piano scales and how to memorize the scales. This will allow you to take actionable steps toward creating and performing incredible music. This book's goal is to equip its reader with everything they need on their journey toward becoming successful pianists.

Chapter One

The Importance

of Piano Scales



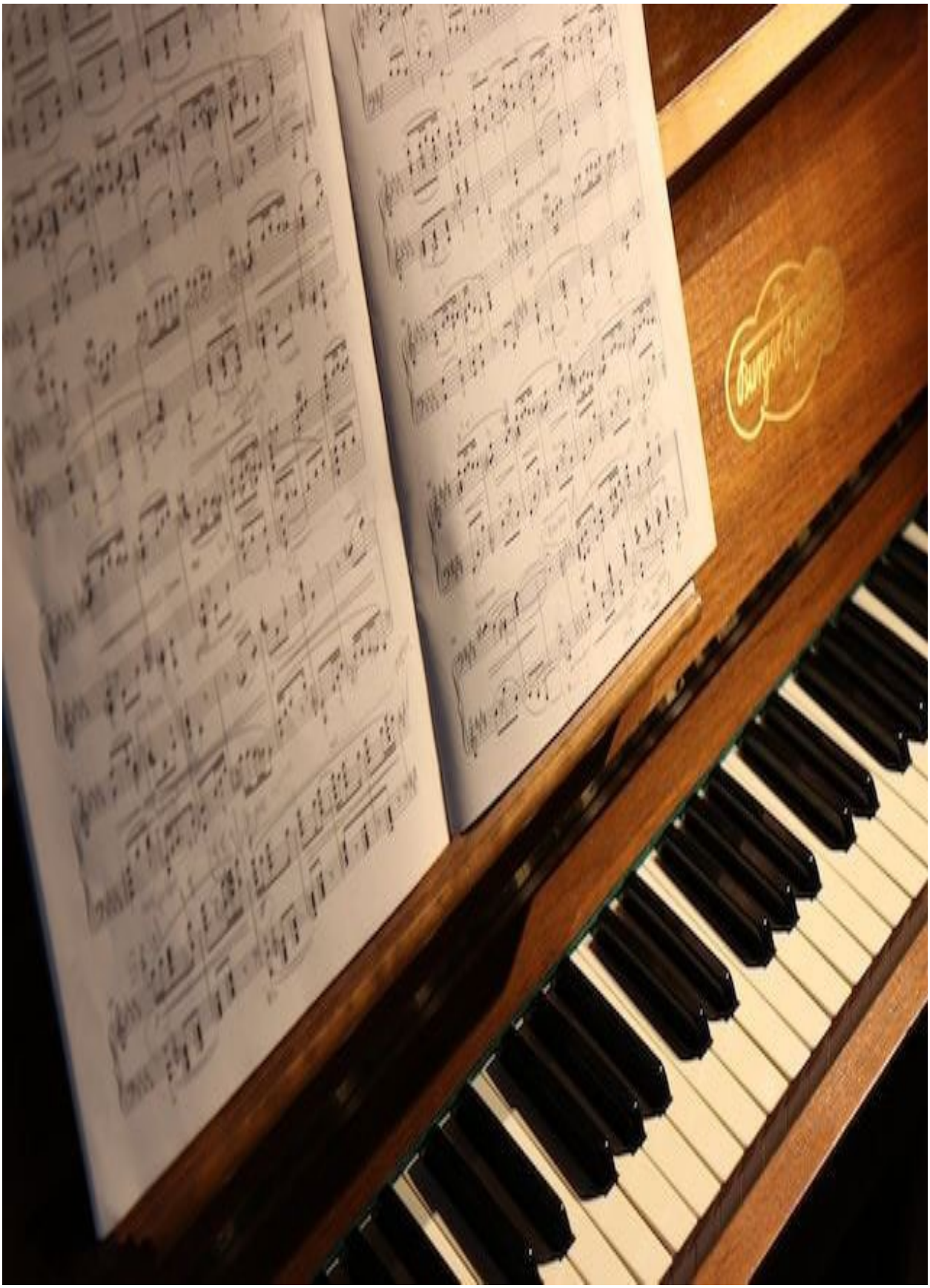
The first chapter of this book focuses on what piano scales are and why they are important. To truly understand the concept of piano scales, you must understand their origin and their relevance to music. The scales themselves are a sequence of notes that are arranged in order of frequency. These notes can be arranged in ascending order, where each note has a higher pitch than the last one, or in descending order, where each note has a lower pitch than the last one. The order of the scale determines the type of music, which makes them an important part of any musical performance. Scales are a musical concept that dates back centuries and is known to have their origin in ancient Greek music. The influence of the scales throughout the history of music is undeniable, as is their importance, especially in the life of a pianist.

The next section will discuss the piano scales, which differ slightly from the general music scales. Piano scales are specific to the piano hence their name.

What Are Piano Scales?

Piano scales are musical scales which means they are also a sequence of notes that are arranged in order of frequency. A specific distance always separates the notes in a scale. This distance is known as a step. The steps between scales are often called the building blocks of scales because they greatly influence the sound produced. Their pitch determines the arrangement of the notes in a scale, and the distance between notes that have different pitches is a step. To further explain the steps in music, we would need to look at the types of steps. These are half steps and whole steps. A half step on a piano is also known as a semitone. It is the smallest distance between notes on a piano. A common mistake for beginners is assuming that a half step refers to the distance between two white or two black keys. It is neither. A half step refers to the distance between two notes that are directly beside each other, whether above or below. This means that it is the distance from a white key to the immediate black key beside it or from a black key to the immediate white key beside it. A half step can also be the distance between two white keys that are directly beside each other and not separated by a black key. For example, E and F.

The second building block is known as a whole step. A whole step is the combination of two half steps. The easiest way to understand a whole step is to remember that two halves equal a whole. When you count the smallest distance between the notes, you have a half step, and making that journey one more time will give you a whole step. Scales that move with half steps only are called chromatic scales. Playing a chromatic scale on a keyboard means moving in half steps across the keyboard. You do this by playing all the white and black keys in perfect order. Chromatic scales do not have a tonal center, which is the most stable note on a scale. Because of this, it is rare for music to be composed using only chromatic scales. The tonal center is also known as the tonic. It is where the music is at rest, and it defines the nature of the music that is produced. The tonic is a point of total relaxation, and it is created by achieving tonality. This is the tone that other tones move away from and return to. It attracts the other tones and gives them a sense of direction by pulling the tone.



Tonal music typically sees the melody pull away and return to the final center and different points throughout the piece. Music like this will start from and end at the tonal center. An example of this can be seen with the C Major Scale on a keyboard: C D E F G A B C. In this case, C is the tonal center. It is where the music starts and ends. The tonal center of a musical piece is said to have a gravitational pull that brings the music back to it no matter how far off it strays. It gives the music rest, and without it, the piece will feel incomplete. This is why most composers do not make music using only chromatic scales. A chromatic scale does not have a tonal center, meaning the piece would feel incomplete.

Scales that move with only whole steps are whole-tone scales. Playing a whole tone scale means skipping the note that separates two notes. The distance between the skipped note and the first note is a half-step, and the distance between the skipped note and the second note is another half-step. These two half steps combined create a whole note. An example of this is the distance between B flat and C on the piano. The skipped note here is B. The distance between B and B flat is one-half step, and the distance between B and C is another half step, which creates a whole step.

Another common distance that relates to the piano scales is an octave. This is the distance between one note of a specific frequency and another note that has double the frequency of the first note. An octave describes the difference between the first note of a musical scale and the last note in terms of pitch. It is the distance that separates two musical pitches where the frequency of one is double the speed of the other. Both the first pitch and the pitch with double its frequency are named with the same letter. This allows them to be grouped according to pitch class. When two pitches have the same letter, they are said to be in the same pitch class. Pitches that are named C are grouped into pitch class C. An easy way to understand what an octave is would be by breaking down the word and analyzing its origin. While this may sound complicated, it is really very simple. The first three letters of the word are ‘oct,' which in Latin stands for eight. This is used to describe the nature of the octave. Moving eight notes up a scale will mean moving from one note to another with the same letter. It would

also mean moving from one pitch to another with double its frequency. If we move up eight notes along the C scale on the piano, we will arrive at another C. For example, C D E F G A B C. The two C's on this scale belong to pitch class C, and the second C's frequency is double that of the first. In other words, they are separated by an octave. This means that an octave can also be defined as the distance between two notes that have the same letter. This book focuses on musical scales with regard to the piano, but it is important to note that all musical instruments have octaves.

Another important characteristic of an octave is that twelve half steps separate the two letters. Counting each of the half steps between the two notes at the beginning and end of an octave will give you twelve half steps in total. In addition, because a whole step is the combination of two half steps, it can also be said that six whole steps separate an octave.

Octaves have a direct relationship with the frequency of a pitch. The frequency of a note refers to its rate of vibration, and it is one of the defining factors of an octave. The role frequency plays in the understanding of an octave is clear from its definition: an octave is the distance between two notes of varying frequencies. These two notes can also be defined by a mathematical relationship, which is expressed as a 2:1 ratio. This ratio is the reason behind the pleasing sound of an octave. The octave becomes a stable interval if you play the two notes together. For example, playing the first C note on your piano while playing the C note, an octave above the first C will create a stable interval. The stability achieved by playing these notes means that the octave does not need a resolution and instead acts as a point of resolution for other intervals. This is the point where intervals resolve, making it an important part of any piece. Composers typically place octaves at the end of a piece to bring the sound home.

Scales are known to have two parts. The first part is the root, and the second is the quality. The root part of a scale is where counting begins. We start counting the scale from the root note. This note is the beginning of the musical alphabet of a particular scale.

The quality of a scale describes the pattern of steps between the notes. This is the second part of the scale, and it is just as important as the first. The two parts of the scale come together to determine what type of scale is played. Taking the A Major Scale as an example will allow us to see what role these parts play. The "A" in this scale is the root of the scale. It will be the first letter, and counting will begin from here. The "Major" in this scale is the quality of the scale. It describes the pattern of steps between the notes. Scales that have the Major step pattern are major scales. This means that the same half and whole steps will be followed for every Major Scale, whether an A Major Scale or a C Major Scale. The A Major and C Major scales have the same quality but different roots. This is what makes them sound different. Although the pattern of steps between the notes is the same, the counting will begin and end on different letters, creating a unique tune. Every scale produces a tune unique to that scale which is what makes them important. This leads us to the next section of this chapter.

Why Are Piano Scales Important?

There are 12 starting notes on a piano. The note you start from will determine the tune that is produced. In addition to the 12 starting notes, various patterns can be applied to each one. This creates several possible scales that can be found on a keyboard. With so much variety, it can be difficult to learn all the different scales, and because of this, some pianists may not see the importance of learning the scales. However, there are many benefits that a pianist can gain from studying, practicing, and memorizing the scales. These benefits dance from mental to emotional and even physical.

The more scales a pianist learns, the more they understand what to play when presented with a particular chord sequence. When you are familiar with the parent scale of a key, it allows you to know the notes in that key, and it helps you hit the note that will produce the tune you want. To fully understand this benefit, you must understand what chords are and why playing the right note is important.

Chords in Music

A chord is the result of three or more notes played together. These notes come in a set, and they each have different frequencies. They are layered onto each other to create a new tune. Similar to the scales, chords are also defined by two parts which are their root note and their quality. The difference between a chord and a scale is that chords are also defined by a third factor known as inversion. This refers to the rearrangement of the notes of a chord. The notes can be arranged in different ways, and each one will produce a unique sound.

The most common type of chord is a triad. This chord consists of three different notes, which are the root note, the third note above the root note, and then the fifth note above the root note. When layered together, this chord creates a sound that is often used in tonal music. There are different types of triad chords. They include major, minor, diminished, and augmented. These four chords and their relationship with the scales will be discussed further in this book.

Learning the scales will help you know what note to play over a particular chord, and this is important because it will affect how the music is heard. Chords are built with notes from scales. When you practice the scales, you prepare yourself for the different types of chords. It gives you a push in the right direction and helps you learn other musical concepts. The scales are the basics for any beginner pianist, so learning them will prepare you for what comes next.

Other Benefits of Learning Scales

Another advantage of learning piano scales is that it brings you closer to your piano. Human relationships become stronger as we learn about each other, and the same can be said for your relationship with your piano. Learning more about what your friends like will help you give better gifts, and learning more about your piano, like learning the scales, will help you understand it better, which will, in turn, help you play better. The emotional benefits of learning the scales cannot be overemphasized, but the physical benefits are just as lasting. Practicing piano scales will improve your finger endurance, which is a necessary skill for every successful pianist and musician. Finger endurance aids your speed on the piano and helps you learn new pieces faster. As you practice the scale more, you improve key awareness and your confidence on the piano. Your awareness of tonality will also be improved by learning the scales. The importance of tonality was discussed in the first section of this chapter (see page 3). Musical pieces that lack tonality tend to feel incomplete. Learning the scales will help you develop tonal and key awareness, which will place your levels ahead of the average pianist.

Pianists who are familiar with their keys are faster and more confident with the pieces they play. Playing with confidence is the result of mastering the scales because this also means mastering all the keys. When you learn the scales, you also develop your ear, which will make recognizing the notes easier. When you can recognize each note by sound, your ability to play the piano improves.

In addition, learning scales will make it easier to learn new songs. If the scales are stored in your mind, then muscle memory will help you learn a new song much faster. This is because your fingers become more agile, and they are more familiar with where each note is and what they sound like. The result of this benefit is that you also find it easier to improvise during a performance. When you commit the scales to memory, you can easily use them to improvise

whenever you want. Your movement on the keyboard will also greatly benefit from your learning the scales. As you learn scales, you improve coordination, making playing the piano easier.

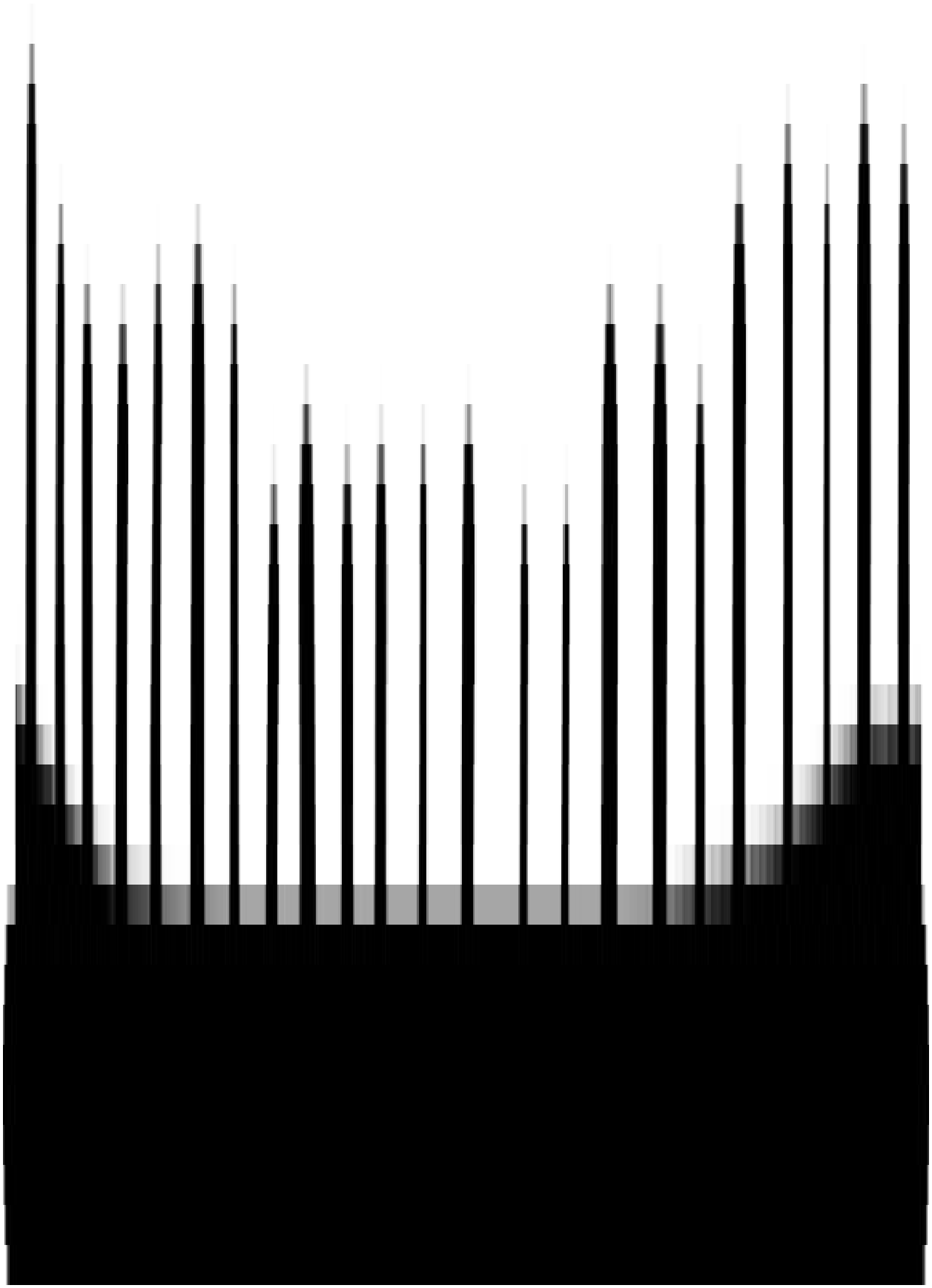
Most people find the scales difficult to learn, so taking time out to practice them will set you apart from the rest. When you put effort into learning something that has been deemed difficult, you improve yourself in a variety of ways, such as effective thumb movement and keyboard familiarity. Another benefit relates to the chords mentioned above. Learning piano scales will also help you learn chords faster because every chord is created using notes on a scale.

Reading music is the last benefit that will be added to this list. Mastering the scales allows you to read music and even makes it easier to create your own.

We can never truly state all the benefits of learning piano scales. Some benefits are obvious to us, which have been mentioned above, and others that are only obvious to those who have mastered them. The scales are in a realm of their own hence the title of this book. Those who enter this realm are exposed to a variety of benefits that will improve their ability to perform.

Chapter Two

Essential Piano Scales



Now that you understand piano scales, their relevance to music, and their importance to you as a pianist, it is time to examine the different types of piano scales. These are the scales that define the tunes you play. They give you an understanding of a particular piece and help you resonate with it on a different level.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As you learn the essential piano scales, you will slowly begin to see their importance for you. You will realize the truth behind all that has been said in this book thus far. Your personal experience with piano scales will define your life as a pianist. It will positively impact your journey and bring you closer to becoming a master of your instrument.

Chromatic Scales

The chromatic scale on a keyboard is commonly used to practice the 12 notes in an octave. Playing a chromatic scale means playing all the notes in order. This scale is rarely used in musical pieces because of its lack of tonality. The order of a chromatic scale can be ascending or descending in terms of pitch. The pattern that the chromatic scale follows consists of only half steps, which means that it goes over all 12 notes in an octave.

Chromatic scales are important to the process of learning scales, but they are typically overlooked in the grand scheme of things. Most beginners skip learning this scale because they do not see the creative benefit they can reap. Like the other types of scales on a piano, a chromatic scale can start from any of the twelve notes. This creates 12 different ways the scales can sound. Chromatic scales are often used in a variety of Western music, such as jazz, classical music, rock, and blues. The way the notes are played will determine the type of music and affect the song's overall tone. It is common for three chromatic notes to be played for genres such as jazz, rock, and blues.

How to Play Chromatic Scales

To play chromatic scales the right way, you will need to employ a particular fingering technique.

Piano Fingering

This is an important component of learning how to play the piano. It is usually the first step for any beginner and can be used to master the scales. There is a standard piano fingering method. You might want to switch it up until you find what's most comfortable for you. However, if you're just starting out, then you should follow the standard method. This method was designed to help you achieve the most melodious sounds on the keyboard.

To use this method, you first need to know that shorter fingers are used to play longer keys, and longer fingers are used to play shorter keys. The shorter fingers are your thumb and pinky, and they are used to play the longer, white keys. The longer fingers are your index, middle, and ring fingers, and they are used to play shorter keys which are black keys. The fingers are numbered 1-5.

Thumb - 1

Index - 2

Middle - 3

Ring - 4

Pinky - 5

This rule for piano fingering was created based on the hand's natural position on a piano.

Fingering for Chromatic Scales

Playing chromatic scales on the piano means playing every key in order. This includes both white and black keys. No key is skipped on chromatic scales, and you only move with half steps. Every note is separated by one-half step, so you just need to move across your keyboard from the root note to the last note. Since half steps are also known as semitones, it could be said that you are moving in semitones.

This is the fingering for left-hand chromatic scales:

1-3-1-3-2-1-3-1-3-1-3-2-1.

This is the fingering for right-hand chromatic scales:

2-3-1-3-1-2-3-1-3-1-3-1-2.

This scale has an interesting pattern that can make it easier to learn. As you move up the scale with your right hand, you might notice a pattern that your fingers create. This pattern occurs in two ways. First, when you move from a black to a white key, and second, when you move from a white key to another white key. For the first one, you use your third finger, then your first finger as you move from black to white. And for the second, you use your first finger and then your second finger as you move from one white key to another.

The pattern for your left hand is similar to that of your right hand. The only difference is that it inverts the actions when moving from one white key to another. Instead of using your first finger and then your second, as you would do with your right hand, here, you still use your second finger and then your first.

The Major Scale

In the hierarchy of scales, the major scale ranks quite highly in terms of importance. This type of scale describes the pattern of steps between the notes because it is the quality of the scale. The major scale is a common place to start on the journey of musical scales because it is known to have a happy and hopeful tune. It is usually used to create music that aims to pass on a positive message. This book will discuss the emotions behind the scales in more detail. For now, we will focus on the major scale, how it is created, and the pattern of half steps and whole steps it consists of. The pattern used for the scale is one of the main factors that define how it sounds.

Why Is the Major Scale Important?

The major scale can be regarded as the most important scale for many reasons, and surprisingly, none of them involve its name. This scale is important because it is one of the most common musical scales. Its popularity is just one of the reasons it is so important. Another factor that feeds the importance of the major scale is its contribution to the fundamentals of music. Major scales are the easiest and fastest way to memorize piano keys. The piano keys are a fundamental part of mastering the piano. When you master the major scale, you become more familiar with your piano, making learning other pieces easier. Learning the major scale also makes it easier to understand musical theories in general. This scale is often referred to as the foundation of Western music, as it is found in many of the genres that originate from there. It is an important part of musical composition and can help you improvise music if the need ever arises. The major scale can also be played over various chord progressions, which are the various ways a chord can be played.

The Pattern of Steps between the Notes

The quality of a scale describes its pattern. The same pattern of steps between the notes will be followed for both the C Major scale and the A Major scale. These scales might have different roots, such as C or A, but they have the same pattern. The movement of half steps and whole steps from the root note is what defines the major scale. The root note is where the counting begins, so while each major scale follows the same pattern, they do not sound alike because they start from different points. This pattern affects the pitch order and structure of tonal music.

This is the pattern of the major scale:

Root – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step

Counting begins at the root. Then you will travel two whole steps, one-half step, three whole steps, and finally, a half step. The major scale ends at the root note but an octave higher. The steps that define a major scale are important and must be learned. Once you learn the steps, you can apply them to the different major scales. This means that the pattern remains the same even when your root changes. Because of this, you do not need to memorize each individual major scale. You only need to learn the interval pattern that is used for all major scales.

How to Play Major Scales

Learning the intervals is the quickest way to master the major scales. Continuing with the example used above we will be examining the C Major scale. This scale begins on the middle C and moves up the scale until it ends at the C, an octave higher than where it began. The coolest part about this is that the middle C can also serve as the end of the scale if you begin the scale an octave below it. This means that all scales can move in various directions, so it all depends on where you start.

When you know a particular major scale, it will become a lot easier to understand the chords in that key. Use the major scale to create a triad—a chord made up of three notes played simultaneously, by selecting three notes at random from it or a particular scale.

Scales are the gateway to improvisation. Every new scale you learn will make it easier to improvise while you perform. A simple way to improvise on the piano is by creating a blend of major scales and chords with the same notes. You can do this by using your right hand to play the major scale notes and using your left hand to play the chords.

This creates a unique balance that produces beautiful music, which is the goal of every pianist. Every lesson you learn is designed to help you produce music that connects with you on a deeper level. Music is a powerful tool. The piano is a great way to access this tool, and the scales are a great way to access the piano.

The Spelling of the Major Scale

The major scale follows a series of patterns that are the same for all major scales. It also follows a naming technique that can be applied to all scales. Most scales are written in a particular order, usually depicting the scale ascending as it moves across an octave. The notes on a scale are described by seven letter names; A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. These letter names can serve as the root note and the succeeding notes on the scale.

A scale begins with the root note, and then it proceeds to span an octave before returning to the root note again. When spelling a scale, it is important to remember that only the root note should appear twice. Other notes on the scale can only appear once. The B Major Scale is a scale that begins counting on note B and follows the major scale pattern.

The root note of any scale is important because it defines the scale's nature and the notes it spans across. However, the order of the succeeding notes is what truly determines the sound produced and makes each scale unique. The root note and the final note may be the same for two different qualities, but the pattern they follow will differentiate them. For example, the C Major Scale and the C Minor Scale will start and end on the same notes; C. This means that the defining factor is the pattern of the scale because it will determine the steps taken within the root note and the final note.

Major Scale Patterns

The pattern of the major scale can be divided to reveal an inner pattern within the scale. By dividing the major into two tetrachords, you will see that they follow the same pattern of steps. A tetrachord is a type of chord that consists of four consecutive notes. As previously stated, the major scale begins with a whole step (the root note) and then travels two whole steps, followed by a half step, three whole steps, and finally, a half step again.

Root – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step

When the C Major Scale is divided into two tetrachords, the first being: C, D, E, and F, and the second being: G, A, B, and C, you will notice that it makes a ‘two whole steps, one half-step’ pattern.

This is the depiction of the first tetrachord:

Begin on root note C and then travel two whole steps (D and E) and one-half step (F) across notes. This part of the scale is also known as the lower tetrachord.

There is a single whole step that separates the two tetrachords. This whole step is the distance between notes F and G.

This is the depiction of the second tetrachord:

It begins on note G and then travels two whole steps (A and B) and one-half step (C) notes. This part of the scale is also known as the upper tetrachord.

Both tetrachords follow the same whole step, whole step, half step pattern.

Another aspect that will become obvious to you as you practice is the location of the half steps. There are two half steps on a major scale, and they are located in the same place. The first is between E and F, and the second is between B and C. These steps are both found at the end of the tetrachords. The E to F half step ends the lower tetrachord, and the B to C half step ends the upper tetrachord. You may also notice that the keys E and F are not separated by a black key, which is the same for keys B and C. The distance between two white keys that are not separated by a black key is a half-step. This allows all the notes to conform to the pattern of the major scale.

The seven-pitch classes in a major scale can also be referred to as scale degrees, and the root note can be referred to as the tonic. This is because the major scales are commonly used for producing tonal music. The major scale's name and sound depend on the tonic because it is where the scale begins.

The Natural Major Scale

This is an outline that contains all the notes in the major key. The natural major scale has all the notes that are within a particular major key. For instance, the C major scale contains all the notes that are in the key of C major. This means that every key in C major is played in order to achieve the C major scale.

The Minor Scale

The Minor Scale is another important scale that will aid your ability to perform on the piano. The minor scale receives less attention than the major scale but is equally important. It is essential to the process of mastering the piano.

The minor scale is known for its dark, gloomy sound, which is in contrast to the happy and hopeful sound synonymous with the major scale. Music created with the minor scale has a sadder tone than the major scale. This tone can also be described as moody or mysterious. They are often used for creating music that conveys more nuanced emotions. While the cheery tone of the major scale is melodious to hear, the mysterious tone of the minor scale hypnotizes its listeners.

Types of Minor Scales

There are a total of three minor scales that notes, diagrams and fingering techniques can depict. These minor scales are defined by many qualities that make them unique.

The Natural Minor Scale

This scale is typically called “the minor scale.” It is the second most important scale for a pianist to learn. Even though the major and minor scales are different in a lot of ways, the similarities it shares with the major scale can also make the process of learning minor scales a lot easier. The major and minor scales share a few relative keys, which means that there are scales that contain the same notes. For example, the A Minor and Major scales include the same notes. This means that they are relative keys.

In some ways, the minor scale is derivative of the major scale. However, the third, sixth, and seventh notes on a natural minor scale are flattened, unlike their major scale equivalent. These flattened notes can be referred to as minor notes.

To explain further, we will take the C major scale as an example;

This is the C Major Scale:

C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C.

This is the C Natural Minor Scale:

C –D, – E♭ – F – G – A ♭ – B♭ – C.

Notice that the third, sixth, and seventh notes are flattened. This applies to all minor scales, which allows us to derive each minor scale from the major counterparts.

A minor scale that begins on the same note as a major scale is often referred to as the parallel major. For example, the C Minor Scale is the parallel major for the C Major Scale. This makes the relationship between the two scales quite obvious, even though they do not follow the same pattern of steps. The natural minor scale can also be referred to as the ‘aeolian’ scale.

The Pattern of Steps between the Notes

The minor scale follows its own unique pattern, and this pattern applies to all the minor scales regardless of the root note that is used. While the root note and the notes within the scale may vary, the pattern itself remains the same. This pattern will alter the pitch order and structure of the music produced.

This is the pattern of the minor scale;

Root – Whole-Step – Half Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half Step– Whole-Step – Whole-Step

As always, counting begins on the root note. Then you will travel one whole step, one-half step, two whole steps, one-half step, and finally, two whole steps, which will place you on the root note again, but an octave higher. When you memorize the pattern of steps for the minor scale, you can apply this pattern to every other minor scale, no matter the root. The sooner you memorize the pattern, the sooner you will be playing the minor scales like a professional.

How to Play Minor Scales

The minor scales are played by following the pattern of steps. For this section, we will be using the A Minor Scale as an example. The notes in this scale are A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and A.

As you can see, the scale begins at root note A and ends on the same note but an octave higher.

This is the fingering for left-hand A Minor Scale:

5-4-3-2-1-3-2-1.

This is the fingering for right-hand A Minor Scale:

1-2-3-1-2-3-4-5.

Following the fingering technique will make it easier for you to learn the scale. However, if you are uncomfortable with the fingering technique, you can just follow the pattern of steps mentioned above. Doing what makes you most comfortable is important because this allows you to thrive on your own terms. While pushing yourself beyond your perceived limit is vital for growth, it is advisable to know what works for you and follow it. The methods you are comfortable with may not be comfortable for others and vice versa.

Another way to play the minor scale is by playing the sixth note in the major

scale and moving across the keyboard until you reach the root note again. This also reveals the relative key of the major scale. The sixth note of a major scale becomes the root note of its relative minor scale. For example, the sixth note in the C Major Scale (C D E F G A B C) is A. This is where its relative minor scale will begin. The A Minor Scale is relative to the C major scale because they contain the same notes (A B C D E F G). The difference between the notes of these scales is their root note. Because the root note of the A Minor scale is A, this note appears twice on the scale. However, in the C major scale, the A only appears once. This means that they contain the same notes but in a different order and quantity.

You can also use the third note of a minor scale to find its relative major scale. Following the example used above, the third note on the A Minor Scale is C, which again shows that the A Minor and C major scales are relative keys.

Relative Keys

The definition of relative keys was stated above; they are scales that contain the same notes. When the same notes are played in two different scales they are referred to as relative scales. This section expands on the subject of relative keys and highlights a few such keys that exist between the major and minor scales. Though the scale's order, pattern, and tone are different, the notes within them are the same. E minor and G Major are relative keys. These scales have different roots notes and qualities, but the notes within them are the same. Other examples of relative keys are F Major and D Minor.

The Harmonic Minor Scale

This is the second type of minor scale. It is a variant of the natural minor scale. When the seventh note of the natural minor scale is raised, a harmonic minor scale is produced. The process of raising a note means increasing its pitch by one-half note. This means that a raised flat note would become a natural note, and a raised natural note would become a sharp note. Raising the seventh note creates a new pattern for the minor scale in which three half steps are between the 6th and 7th notes. The harmonic scale is typically used in western music.

This is the pattern of the harmonic minor scale;

Root – Whole-Step – Half Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half Step – 3 Half Steps – Half Step

Applying this pattern to the A Minor scale will produce the A harmonic minor scale. On this scale, the seventh note, G is lifted to the G#. The notes on the A harmonic minor scale are A B C D E F G# A.

The Melodic Minor Scale

This scale is also a variant of the natural minor scale. It is typically produced by raising the sixth and seventh notes. These notes are raised by one-half step. The pattern for the melodic minor scale depends on the order of the scale, whether ascending or descending. This makes this scale a bit complicated but not impossible to learn.

This is the pattern of the ascending melodic minor scale:

Root – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half Step

This is the pattern of the ascending melodic minor scale;

Root – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step

Both the ascending and descending scales have a flattened third note in comparison to their major scale counterparts. For the ascending scale, the third note is flattened and while the sixth and seventh notes are raised. Every other note in this scale is identical to the notes of the major scale. This is why the melodic minor scale is often referred to as a mix of the minor and major scales.

Here is an example to explain further:

The A Major Scale: A – B – C# – D – E – F# – G# – A

The A Melodic Minor Scale (Ascending): A – B – C – D – E – F# – G# – A

Notice that the third note, C, for the melodic minor scale has been flattened while the other notes remain the same.

For the descending melodic minor scale, the third, sixth, and seventh notes are flattened. This makes the A scale: A – B – C – D – E – F – G – A, which is the same as the A natural minor scale.

Pentatonic Scale

A pentatonic scale is a type of scale that has only five notes. These scales are created by eliminating notes from the original scale until there are only five left. A pentatonic scale can also be thought to have six notes if the pitched root note is included. This scale has the major scale and minor scale variations. It is commonly used for producing blues, jazz, country, rock, and folk music.

Major Pentatonic Scale

The fourth and seventh notes are skipped when playing the major pentatonic scale. For the C Major scale, its pentatonic counterpart will be C – D – E – G – A, where notes F and B have been skipped. This is the pattern for the major pentatonic scale:

Root – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – 3 Half-Steps – Whole-Step – 3 Half-Steps

The five notes of the major pentatonic scale fit nicely over a large number of underlying chords, which is why they are used to create a variety of music.

Minor Pentatonic Scale

The second and sixth notes are skipped when playing the minor pentatonic scale. This scale is another variation of the natural minor scale. After removing the second and sixth notes, the scale degrees will be: first, flat third, fourth, fifth, and flat seventh. The concept of scale degrees will be taught in more detail further in this book.

The A Minor scale's pentatonic counterpart will be A – C – D – E – G, where notes B and F have been skipped. Note that the same notes, F and B, are skipped in the C major scale and the A minor scale. Because of this, the C major scale and the A minor scale remain relative keys even as pentatonic scales.

This is the pattern for the minor pentatonic scale:

Root – 3 Half-Steps – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – 3 Half-Steps – Whole-Steps

Minor Blues Scale

This scale is created by adding notes to a pentatonic scale. A variety of notes can be added to the minor pentatonic scale to produce a blues scale. The only exception is the natural third. This note cannot be added to the scale because it contradicts the scale's minor nature.

Taking the G minor pentatonic scale as an example: G, B♭, C, D, F.

A variety of notes can be added to this scale to produce a blues scale. The only note that cannot be added to this scale is a B natural, but nearly all other notes can be added to the G minor scale to make it a G minor blues scale.

Flattening the fifth note in the G minor scale is a great way to produce a blues scale. Adding a flat fifth to the G minor pentatonic scale becomes G, B♭, C, D♭, D, F. This is the G minor blues scale. The flat fifth is derived from the G minor scale (G, A, B♭, C, D, E♭, F), where D is the fifth note.

Scale Degrees

The notes on a scale can be given special names that describe their position. These special names are called scale degrees, which can be expressed numerically. Despite this seemingly complicated definition, scale degrees are easy to understand.

Applying Scales Degrees to the C Major Scale

The C major scale has been used as an example several times in this book because it is the easiest scale to work with. Applying scale degrees to this scale simply means expressing each note numerically. Here's how you can do that:

This is the C major scale: C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

As you can see, the first note here is C. It is referred to as the tonic of the scale, and it is the first degree.

The second note is D. This is the supertonic of the scale, also known as the second degree.

The third note is E which is the mediant of the scale. The mediant note is called the third degree.

The fourth note is F. This is the subdominant of the scale, also known as the fourth degree.

The fifth note is G which is the dominant of the scale. The dominant note is called the fifth degree.

The sixth note is A. This is the submediant of the scale, also known as the sixth degree.

The note before the pitched root note is the leading tone which in this case is B. This note is referred to as the seventh degree.

Assigning scale degrees is easy to do because it follows an easy pattern. For example, the first note is the first degree, and the second note is the second degree, etc. The technical names of the scale degrees are where the concept may get a little complicated. These technical names include; tonic, supertonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant, submediant, and leading tone.

The Technical Names

Now that you know each note's scale degrees and technical names on the C major scale, it is time to analyze what these technical names mean. The scale degrees are pretty straight forward, and with proper learning, the technical names are also easy to understand.

1. The Tonic

This is the first degree on a scale that is commonly known as the root note. It typically begins and ends the scale and is also used to name the scale. As the name implies, the tonic is the tonal of the scale which means it is the note that provides resolution.

2. The Supertonic

This is the second degree on a scale. It is the note that typically follows the tonic. In some cases, a scale might not have a supertonic, such as the minor pentatonic scales. Recall that minor pentatonic scales are created by skipping the second and the sixth note. This means that they do not have a second or a sixth degree.

3. The Mediant

This is the third degree on a scale. Its name can be quite misleading because

although it is called the mediant, it is not in the middle of the scale. The third degree is called the mediant because of the triad that begins on the first degree. Remember that a triad is a chord that consists of three different notes: the root note, the third note, and the fifth note. The third note is the middle of the triad which is why it is called the mediant.

4. The Subdominant

This is the fourth degree on a scale. It is called the subdominant because it is a note below the dominant. Another important characteristic of the subdominant is that it is a fifth below the tonic.

On the other hand, the dominant is a fifth above the tonic. Any degree that lies a fifth above another degree is the dominant of that degree. This means that the tonic can also be called the dominant of the subdominant.

5. The Dominant

This is the fifth degree on a scale. Its name signifies its importance and is often referred to as the most important scale degree after the tonic. As mentioned above, the dominant lies a fifth above the tonic.

6. The Submediant

This is the sixth degree on a scale. It is called the submediant because it lies a third below the tonic, unlike the mediant, which lies a third above the tonic. This

degree can also be called the lower mediant or the subdominant because it is a note above the dominant.

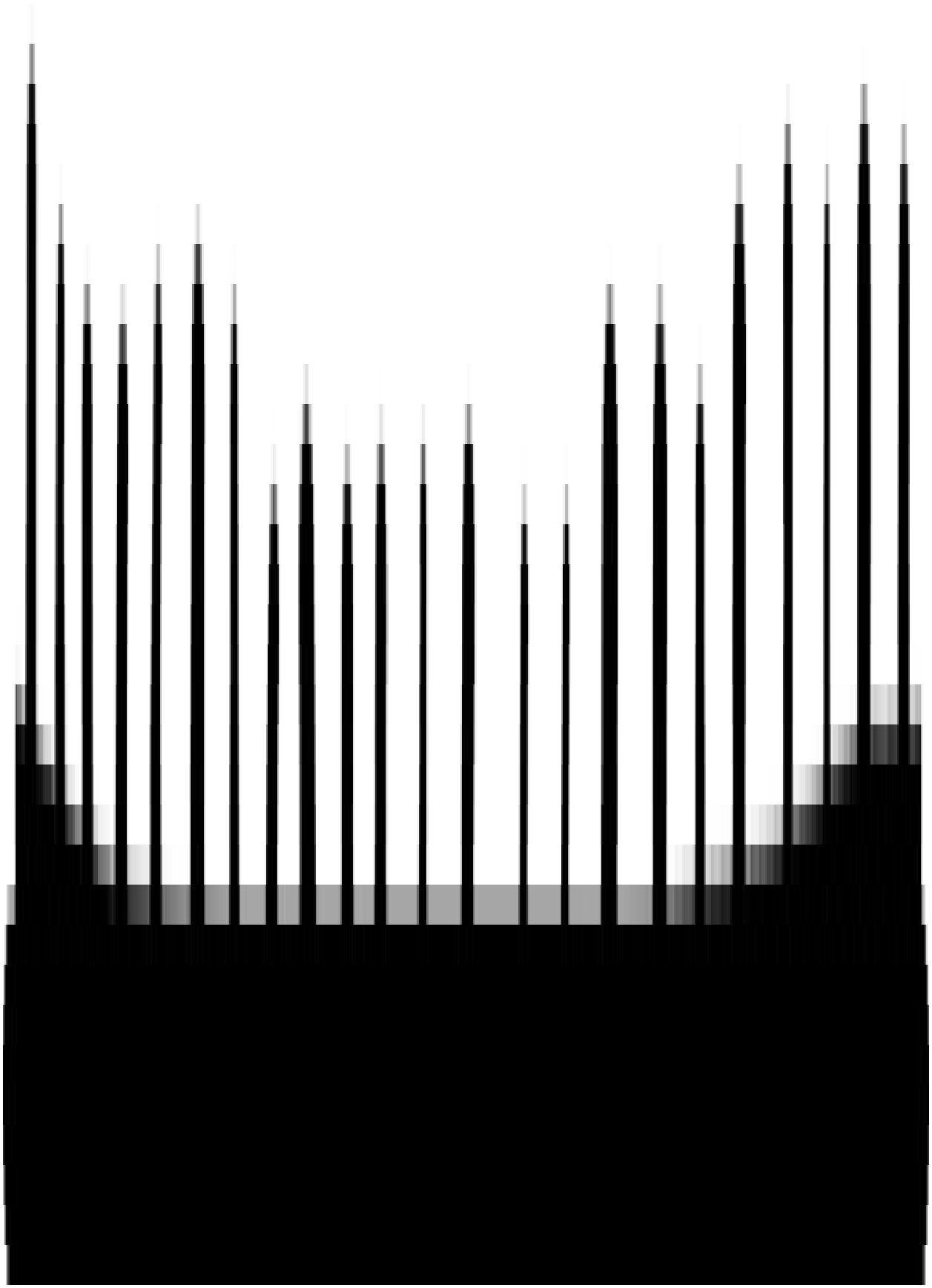
7. The Leading Note/Subtonic

This is the seventh degree on a scale. The technical name of this degree typically changes depending on the type of scale. For a major scale, the leading note is lower than the tonic by one-half step. It is the note that can resolve the tonic.

The seventh degree can also be called the subtonic when it is two-half steps below the tonic, unlike the supertonic, which is two-half steps above the tonic.

Chapter Three

Reading Piano Notes



The first two chapters of this book were designed to help you understand the concept of scales. They went deep into the world of piano scales and broke down complex topics into digestible, easy-to-understand lessons.

This chapter is the next step towards becoming a master of the piano scales. It focuses on piano notes and the relationship between piano notes and piano scales. It also explains how to read and interpret piano scales. Reading piano notes is a necessary skill for every pianist. This skill will improve your ability to perform, which is the goal of every concept learned in this book.

Every topic will refine your piano skills and make you more efficient on the keyboard. We will begin this chapter by first understanding the meaning of piano notes. We will also briefly discuss their importance because doing so will help you see the importance of learning them.

What Are Piano Notes?

Scales are made of notes. These notes represent various musical sounds and can be expressed using symbols. Each piano note corresponds to a particular key on the keyboard. The piano notes can also be expressed using letters, and these letters refer to the different keys on the piano. The letters used to describe piano notes are the first seven letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, D, E, F, G). These letters can be assigned to various white keys on the piano in a repeated order. The black keys on the piano are sharpened or flattened versions of the keys beside them.

Why Are Piano Notes Important?

Notes are symbols placed on or between the staff in sheet music. They provide important information that guides the performance of a pianist.

Piano notes determine what keys are played, how they are played, the length of time to play them, and the rhythm. They lay the foundation of sheet music which helps you decipher what keys to play. The piano notes in sheet music represent the duration and pitch of a sound.

The rhythm of music is determined by the combination of different note values. It is the pattern of a song which includes its sound, silence, repetition, and emphasis. When music is deliberately divided into beats that repeat after a specific number, a pattern is created, and this pattern is the rhythm of the song.

The tempo of a song describes its speed. It regulates how fast or slow a song is

played and is measured in beats per minute (BPM). The beat of a song measures its rhythm, and the time signature measures the number of beats. The meaning and significance of beats and time signatures will be discussed later in this chapter.

The faster the tempo, the higher the intensity of the song, and the lower the tempo, the lower the intensity. The rhythm and the tempo are two important aspects of any musical piece, and they are influenced by the piano notes.

Anyone who knows how to decipher piano notes can learn to play new songs and improve their ability to improvise. Piano notes allow other musicians to replicate the sound, rhythm, and tone of a musical piece as long as they can read the notes.

Learning piano notes will also allow you to write your own songs, which will take your piano career to the next level.

What Are Note Values?

Each piano note has a value attached to it. Note values determine how long a particular note should be played. They dictate how many beats a note is held during a musical piece. Each note is held for a specified number of beats depending on the note value. This is the list of note values:

Whole Note, Half Note, Quarter Note, Eighth Note, Sixteenth Note, Thirty-Second Note, and Sixty-Fourth Note.

As you may recall, one whole note is created by adding two half notes. Applying this to the note values will reveal a pattern between them. The duration of each note value is always double the one that comes after it. Here is what that means;

One Whole Note is Two Half Notes

One-Half Note is Two Quarter Notes

One-Quarter Note is Two Eighth Notes

One-Eighth Note is Two Sixteenth Notes

One-Sixteenth Note is Two Thirty-Second Notes

One Thirty-Second Note is Two Sixty-Fourth Notes

Each note can be broken down even further. For example, two half notes make one whole note, and two-quarter notes make one-half note. This means that four quarter notes make one whole note.

The total number of note values is seven, but the first four are the most common. The number of beats for the first four-note values is as follows:

Whole Notes are held for four beats.

Half Notes are held for two beats.

Quarter Notes are held for one beat.

Eighth Notes are held for half a beat.

What Are Dotted Notes?

The symbols of musical notes can be edited to mean different things. Changing the shape or position of a note changes how the note is played, as does the addition of a dot behind the note. The presence of a dot behind a note means its duration has increased. The amount of increase assigned to a dotted note is half of its initial value.

Taking the whole note as an example. This note is made up of two half notes which means that half of a whole note is one-half note. Adding these notes together will give you three half notes. This means that a dotted whole note is three half notes. You can apply this same theory to the other note values to determine their values as dotted notes.

A dotted Half Note is Three-Quarter Notes because half of a half note is one-quarter note.

A dotted Quarter Note is Three Eighth Notes because half of a quarter note is one-eighth note.

A dotted Eighth Note is Three Sixteenth Notes because half of an eighth note is one-sixteenth note.

A dotted Sixteenth Note is Three Thirty-Second Notes because half of a sixteenth note is one thirty-second note.

A dotted Thirty-Second Note is Three Sixty-Fourth Notes because half of a thirty-second note is one sixty-fourth note.

The tempo of the note is determined by its note value. For example, a whole note's tempo is slower than a half note's. This also applies to the rest of the note values. A quarter note's tempo is faster than a half note's. As you can see, the speed increases as you move down the list of note values.

How to Read and Interpret Piano Notes

To successfully play sheet music, you need to be able to read and interpret piano notes.

Doing this will mean understanding each part of the note, the symbols around the notes, and the structures the notes are placed in. Every aspect of the note is important when you are trying to interpret it.

1. The Staff

This refers to the five lines upon which the notes are placed. The notes can also be placed in the spaces between the lines. These lines maintain the position of the note, and they tell the player which notes to play. Where the note appears on the staff will determine the specific key to play.

The staff is separated into bars by vertical lines. These lines are called bar lines. A bar is one segment of time that contains a particular number of beats. The beats in a bar are typically played at a specific tempo, and the time signature determines the total number of beats. A song can be divided into time intervals using bar lines. The unit of time in a bar is also called a measure.

A duration of a whole note is one full bar, which is the space between two bar lines.

The duration of a half note is half of a whole note. This means that a half note is played for half a bar.

The duration of a quarter note is a quarter of a whole note. This means that a quarter note is played for a quarter of a bar.

The duration of an eighth note is an eighth of a whole note. This means that an eighth note is played for an eighth of a bar.

When these notes are stacked upon each other, a chord can be created.

2. The Treble Clef

The treble clef is used for indicating tone range. Notes that are above the middle C are indicated by the treble clef, and this helps us determine the tone ranges of the notes that come after it. The G note above the middle C note is also known as G4, and it is the reason behind the treble clef's second name.

This symbol can also be called the G clef. It is called the G clef because it describes the position of the G note. The inner curve of the G clef surrounds the G note that falls above the middle C on the piano. The treble clef is also shaped like an artful letter G.

This symbol is often referred to as the most important musical symbol in music notation. It is an integral part of learning how to interpret notes. Finding the G4 note will make finding other notes a lot easier. The treble clef is placed at the

edge of the staff, and then the notes come after it. The fingering for notes placed after the treble clef is typically right-handed.

3. The Bass Clef

This is the second most important musical symbol. It indicates notes below the middle C, making it a tone range indicator like the treble clef.

The bass clef also has another name, just like the treble clef. It can be referred to as the F clef. This is because it describes the position of note F. The two dots that come after this symbol are found above and below the F line on the staff.

On the notation system, this clef typically appears on the lower part because it is often used to play low-pitched notes. The notes that fall after this clef are normally played with your left hand, making it easier because they are found on the left side of the piano.

The middle C on the keyboard is the middle ground where the treble clef and the bass clef meet in the notation system. It is also a reference point that you can use to identify other notes. Because this note sits in the middle of the piano, it can serve as a guide for finding other notes. Once you know the notes that come after C, the next step is to identify your middle C on the piano. Then from there, you can play the keys you want.

4. Note Symbols

Note symbols are perhaps the most important part of the notation system. This is where you find out what notes to play and how to play them. The various note symbols are repeated several times throughout a musical piece, allowing you to follow them and recreate the same pattern of music. The two main things you learn when you look at the note symbols are the notes to play and the tempo to play them in. As stated above, the tempo refers to the speed of a song. This means that a note symbol describes the speed at which a musician should play a particular note.

The position of the note symbol describes what note to play, and the features of the symbol describe its tempo. If only the notes are played, then the piece will not have the desired melody. However, when you include the tempo, you can capture the melody of the music. The tempo of a musical piece has a great impact on the melody produced. When you want to learn a new musical piece, you need to pay attention to the composer's tempo. This will allow you to recreate the song with the same melody.

5. Time Signatures

This is a unique way to structure the music. Time signatures help us count the music and give order to each piece. Organizing your music with time will make it sound more professional, and time signatures are the best way to do that.

Beginners often overlook the concept of time signatures, but it is very important because it can affect the tune of the piece. A type signature is produced using two numbers where one sits on top of the other. The number on top is usually 2, 3, 4, or 6, while the number at the bottom is either 4 or 8. The combination of the top and bottom number creates the time signature. For example, a time signature can have a top number 3 with a bottom number 4. This would mean that there are three-quarter notes in each measure. This time signature can also be referred to as Waltz time. Whenever the bottom note is a 4, it means that the quarter note will get the beat. So, there will be 3 quarter beats in a measure which, as we

previously discussed, is the unit of time in a bar. The time in each bar is referred to as the measure.

Time signatures help you understand the counting technique used for music. This makes it easier to play a musical piece at the specified tempo. By doing so, you ensure that you play the piece the way it is meant to be played. Understanding time signatures also make it easier for you to compose your own music in a style that suits you.

6. Key Signatures

Similar to time signatures, the key signatures indicate the key a piece of music should be played in. While the time signature tells you how many beats should be in a single bar, the key signature tells you the particular key to play.

Key signatures are a group of sharps or flats or, in some cases, natural symbols that appear at the beginning of the staff. The sharp, flat, and natural symbols are known as accidentals. Accidentals are musical symbols that affect the pitch of a key. These symbols can make a key sharp, flat, or return it to its natural state.

The sharps are indicated with (#). Notes that fall on sharp lines are raised by one half-step. The flats are indicated with (♭). Notes that fall on flat lines are lowered by one half-step. The naturals are indicated with (♮). If a natural symbol appears on a sharp line at any point, then it means the key will no longer be raised by one step. Instead, it will be played naturally.

7. Rest Symbols

This symbol tells you when to pause the music. Counting everything in music helps to produce a harmonious tune. This is why even moments of silence are counted. Rest symbols indicate these moments.

Rest symbols also have corresponding values, and the duration of the pause will determine the type of symbol that appears.

A Whole Rest lasts for Four Beats.

A Half Rest lasts for Two Beats.

A Quarter Rest lasts for One Beat.

An Eighth Rest lasts for Half a Beat.

Simple Ways to Learn Piano Notes

Learning piano notes takes work, but if you can fully understand, interpret, and reproduce a musical piece, the benefits of piano notes will become obvious to you. There are many ways to learn piano notes, so you don't feel the need to conform to one way of doing things. The various learning techniques also create room for diversification which will help you learn faster. You can mix two techniques or choose one that works best for you.

Learning the notes can be done through note recognition or interval recognition. These are not the only ways to learn the notes, but they are the easiest methods. Using the note recognition method allows you to be more specific. This approach is perfect if you prefer direct learning. However, it can be time-consuming and a bit frustrating. Note recognition typically involves the use of mnemonics to memorize the notes. Mnemonics help you memorize large pieces of information, which make them a great choice for learning music.

The other method of learning the notes is interval recognition, which focuses more on the pattern between the notes and less on the notes themselves. Those who use this method might not even need to memorize the name of the notes, which would make it possible to play faster. The downside of this method is that one mistake can ruin the entire piece.

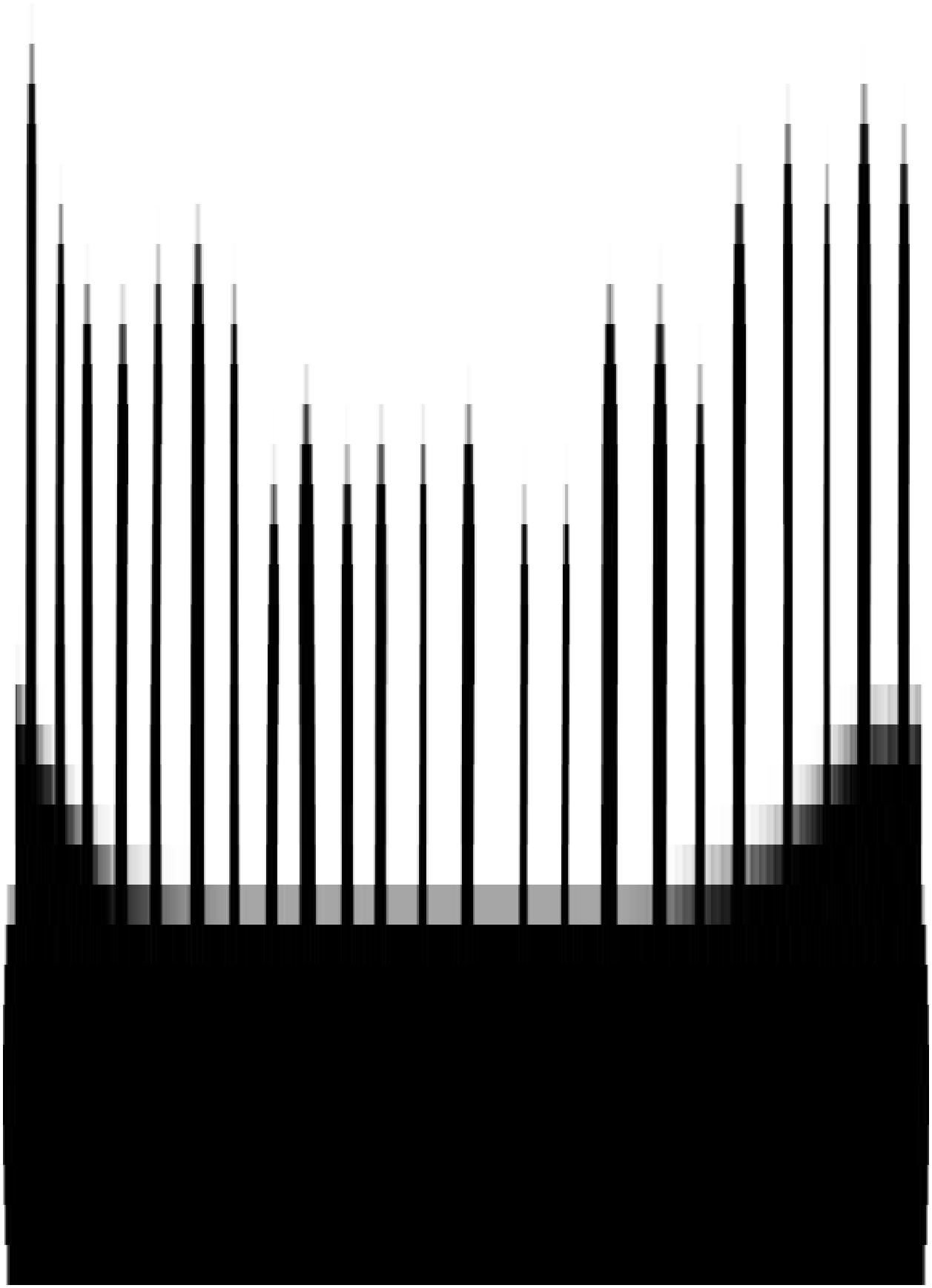
Mixing the note recognition and interval recognition methods will grant you the benefits of both learning techniques. This means that you can play faster while following the order of the piano notes.

The Composition of a Piano Note

The symbols of piano notes have three parts which are the head, the stem, and the flag. Each part provides information about the note and dictates how it should be played. These three parts determine the nature of a given note. The different note values can be represented using note symbols.

Chapter Four

How to Get Started



For any new task we start in life, the first step is always the most important. As the most important step, it is also the most difficult one to take. Starting something new can feel intimidating because the fear of failure hinders you from ever taking that first step. Most people tend to avoid taking the first step because if you never try, then technically, you never fail, but what most people don’t understand and what you need to understand in this section and in life is that there is failure in not trying. Giving up before you’ve even started is a worse kind of failure because you never even gave yourself a chance.


HUPFELD

Your first scales are like your first steps as a baby; once you take that first step, you just keep on going. You keep taking more steps until you can walk or, in this case, perform like a pro. This book is an example of a first step because reading it shows that you have taken the initiative to better yourself. This chapter will focus solely on which scales to learn first and how to learn them. You will learn how to play the easiest scale and what scales you should learn after you have mastered the first one. As a bonus, you will also learn about the hardest scale to play and why you must master it as well.

To begin with, you will learn the type of scales to play in terms of quality, which include major scales, minor scales, chromatic scales, and so on. After knowing which of these scales to learn first and why, you will learn the various root notes to play with these scales. Each scale can be played in 12 different keys. Once you have mastered the order of the scale quality, you can then follow the order of the root notes.

Figuring out which scales to learn first can be daunting for a beginner. The order in which you learn and practice the scales is very important. However, due to the large number of scales available, you might find it difficult to choose where to start from. The order of scales provided in this chapter will be a guide you can follow to help you master the scales at an impressive rate. Remember to only do what you feel most comfortable with, so if this order doesn’t suit you, feel free to change it up and make it your own.

The First Scales to Learn

The first scale that most people start with is the major scale. This is because it is often referred to as the most important scale in music theory. While not every musician agrees that the major scale is the most important, they all agree that it is a great place to start your scale journey. Learning the major scales first will help you learn the other scales because this scale is the foundation of scales in general. Almost all other scales can be formed from the major scale, making it incredibly important to learn it before moving on to more complicated scales. The major scales are easy to learn and provide ground-level knowledge of all the other scales. It is the first quality of scale you should start with before moving on.

After learning the natural minor scale, you can then move on to the harmonic and melodic minor scales. Remember that learning the major scale involves learning the pattern and the various notes in the scale. The pattern is the first step to learning any scale because once you know the pattern, you only need to change the root note, and a new scale will be formed. The root note C is a great place to start for the major scale. This is because it does not have any sharp or flat notes in it. After learning the C major scale, the next step is to change the root note and apply the same major scale pattern to other notes. The chromatic, pentatonic, and blues scales come after you have mastered the major and minor scales. Since we've already discussed this, the main focus in this chapter is the order you should follow to learn the various patterns of scales.

The Order of the Scales

The order you follow while learning the scales will determine your speed. If you start with more complex scales, it might take you more time to master everything. Starting with the easy scales and building your way up is a more efficient strategy because it allows you to build on your existing knowledge. This is the recommended order for learning scales:

1. Major Scales

The importance of the major scales has been mentioned several times throughout this book. It is the most common starting point and the most useful scale.

2. Natural Minor Scales

Understanding the natural minor scale is the next step because you will need it to progress toward the harmonic and melodic minor scales.

3. Harmonic Minor Scales

Most people learn the harmonic and melodic scales together because of their many similarities.

4. Melodic Minor Scales

You should start by understanding the harmonic scales before moving to the melodic scales, or you can combine them and learn both at once. There are a few methods for achieving this.

5. Pentatonic Scales

Pentatonic scales are great for playing contemporary music. Learning this scale will also make it easier for you to improvise.

6. Blues Scales

The similarities between the blues and pentatonic scales typically encourage many people to learn them together. The blues scales were discussed in the second chapter of this book, and as you may recall, they are created by adding notes to a pentatonic scale.

7. Chromatic Scales

This scale is often overlooked, but it is essential to learn because it helps you improve your technique.

The 12 Keys of a Scale

In every type of scale, there are 12 keys you can play. These keys form a set that makes up the entire scale. It is important to note that you don't have to learn all 12 keys of a particular scale before you move on to the next scale. In this section, we will look at each type of scale and the recommended order to learn the 12 keys within the scale. Remember that these are simply recommendations, and only you can decide what path to follow. You can adjust the different keys if it would make you more comfortable.

Major Scales

This is the scale that you will find in most musical pieces. It is rare for a musical piece not to have major scales. However, pieces like that do exist. The major thing you need to learn when mastering the major scales is the pattern. Familiarizing yourself with the pattern will help you perform a variety of major scales.

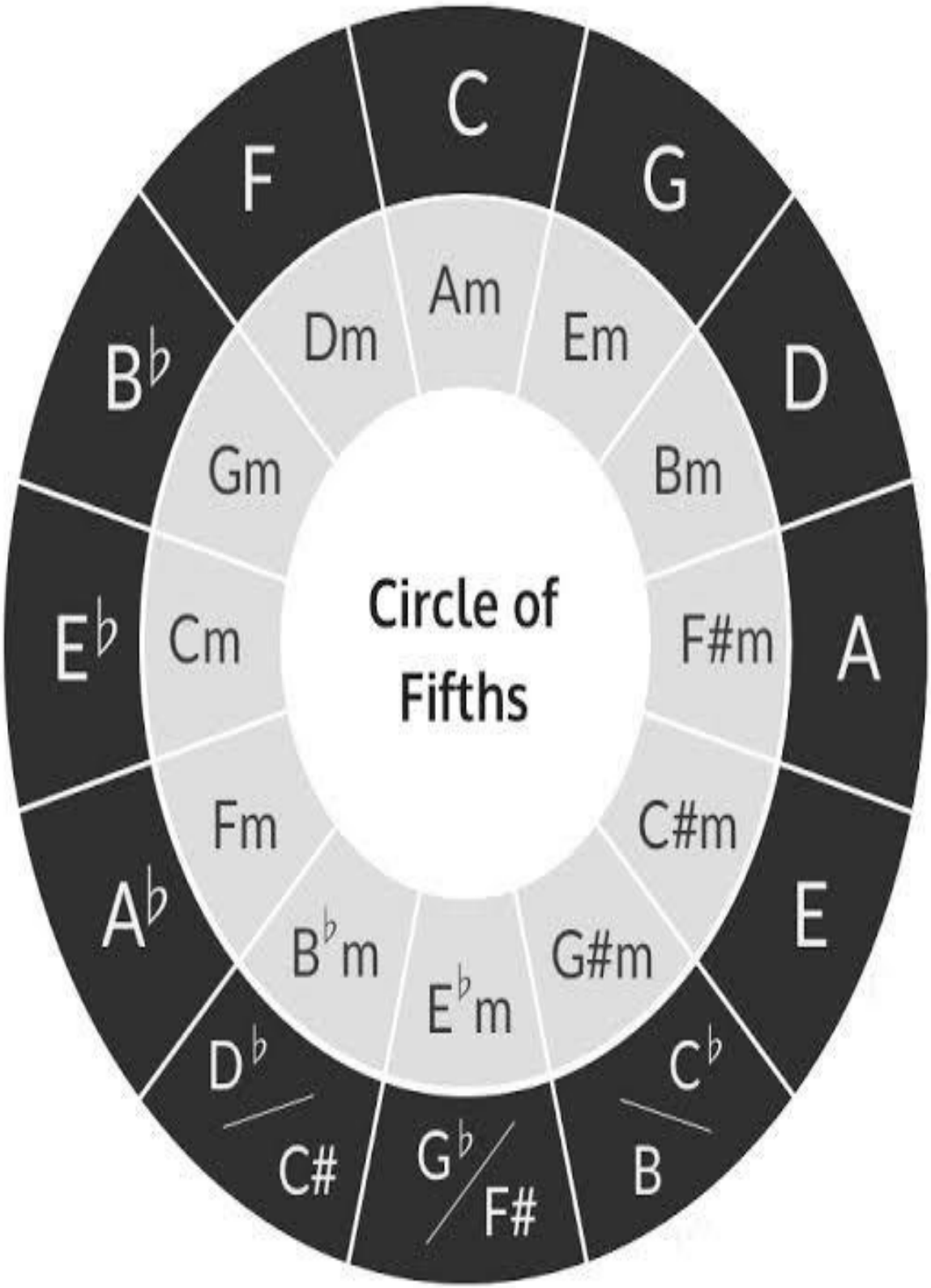
Major scales are preferred as a starting point over minor scales because they use a lot of natural notes. For example, the notes in the C major scale are all natural. There are major scales with altered notes, but the altered notes are typically few. Minor scales typically contain more altered notes than major scales but less than the other scales that come after them in the order of scales listed above. This makes it a good scale to learn after the major scale.

Another reason major scales are chosen first is that they are the fundamentals of music theory. Once you have properly understood the major scales, you can build on that knowledge and master other scales and even chords. You can also

use your knowledge of the major scales to master chord progressions. In addition, major scales help you get to know your keyboard. By learning the major scales, you become familiar with the keys, which will help you learn other scales and musical pieces faster.

The major scale consists of 12 keys defining the scale's sound. The first one that is recommended to learn is the C major scale because it only uses white keys. It has no sharps or flats, which means that every note on this scale is natural. Another benefit of starting with the C major scale is that it is straightforward. This C scale forms a straight line across the piano with no upward or downward movements. All you need to do is play the white keys from C to C. Because of this, your fingers can easily get used to playing it. The lack of sharps and flats on the C major scale makes it easier to read in sheet music. Learning the C major scale has many benefits. It helps you understand the structure of scales and how intervals play a part in creating the scales. It also allows you to instantly see the practical aspect of the musical theory you've been learning.

The circle of fifths is a great pattern to follow when learning the major scale. This circle is designed to organize key signatures and make choosing the next scale on the list easier. The number of sharps and flats in a scale is what determines their position on the circle of fifths. If you move clockwise, each key on the circle of fifths is a fifth higher than the one before. If you follow the clockwise motion on this circle, you will find that the note after C is G. If you follow the anticlockwise motion on this circle, you will find that the note after C is F.


C
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Em
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F#m
C#m
G#m
E♭m
B♭m
Fm
Cm
Gm
Dm
Circle of Fifths

The next scale you should learn after learning the C major scale is the G major scale. This scale has only one sharp, which makes it almost as easy to learn as the C major scale. The best way to learn the various major scales is to follow the order of increasing sharps;

The C major scale has NO sharps

The G major scale has ONE sharp

The D major scale has TWO sharps

The A major scale has THREE sharps

The E major scale has FOUR sharps

The B major scale has FIVE sharps

The above set of major scales is the white key major scale. They use the same fingering method, so if you master the fingering for the C major scale, you can use it for the G major scale.

The next set of major scales consists of the F major scale and the black key major scales. These scales follow the order of increasing flats:

The F major scale has ONE flat

The Bb major scale has TWO flats

The Eb major scale has TWO flats

The Ab major scale has THREE flats

The Db major scale has FOUR flats

The Gb major scale has SIX flats

The F# major scale also has SIX flats

The above set of major scales follows different fingering patterns, making them more complex to master. Remember to take your time when you get to this set and practice often to become familiar with the scales.

After learning the C and G major scales, you might want to skip the rest of the scales in the first set and jump to the F major scale since it only has one flat. The fingering for this scale is a bit different, but a little variation can be beneficial while you learn.

Natural Minor Scales

You don’t need to finish all twelve major scales before you start practicing the minor scales. All you need is a proper understanding of a few major scales, and you’re good to go. Once you learn about four to five major scales, you can pick up a few minor scales and learn them as well.

The natural minor scale is another important scale in music theory. There are a few types of minor scales, but before you can learn the rest, you need to start with the natural minor scale. It is the basis for all other minor scales. When you learn the natural minor scale, you can make the necessary adjustments to play the other minor scales.

This scale is slightly derivative from the major scale. On the circle of fifths, the C major scale is facing the A minor scale. This shows that they are relative keys. The definition and examples of relative keys were given in the second chapter of this book. When two keys are relative, it means that their scales contain the same notes, even though they have different root notes. It is also important to note that relative keys have the same key signatures.

You can learn to play the 12 keys in the natural minor scale in two ways. Firstly, you can follow the circle of fifths. This is the order for learning natural minor scales when following the circle of fifths:

A Minor Scale

E Minor Scale

B Minor Scale

F# Minor Scale

C# Minor Scale

G# Minor Scale

D#/Eb Minor Scale

Bb Minor Scale

F Minor Scale

C Minor Scale

G Minor Scale

D Minor Scale

Another great way to learn the natural minor scales is by converting the major scales to minor scales and following a similar pattern to the one created for the major scale. This method is simpler and easier to remember. Once you know the major scale, you will need to convert it to a minor scale. This is the order for learning natural minor scales when following this second method:

A Minor Scale

C Minor Scale

G Minor Scale

F Minor Scale

D Minor Scale

E Minor Scale

B Minor Scale

F# Minor Scale

C# Minor Scale

G# Minor Scale

D#/Eb Minor Scale

Bb Minor Scale

The A minor scale is the relative key of the C major scale. These scales use the same notes, but they begin counting in different places and have different patterns of intervals. The A minor scale is a great place to start learning because it only uses white keys. The second scale you should learn is the C minor scale. This scale makes it easier to understand the structure of minor scales. When you learn how to play the C minor scale, you will learn the pattern of intervals that exists in the minor scales.

After learning the C minor scale, you can move on to the G, F, D, E, and B minor scales. These scales can be created using their major scales. Once you know the major scale, you only need to flatten the 3rd, 6th, and 7th to produce its minor scale. For example, the G major scale is; G, A, B, C, D, E, and F♯.

By flattening the 3rd, 6th, and 7th in this scale, you can produce the G minor scale, which is; G, A, B♭, C, D, E♭, and F. As you can see, the 3rd note, B, is flattened, as well as the 6th note E. The 7th note on the G major scale is a sharp F, but on the G minor scale, it is a natural F because it has been flattened. You can try this with the other major scales in this set, and you will notice the same pattern.

Harmonic Minor Scale

This scale is a variation of the natural minor scale. This type of scale is used to produce soulful music like jazz or blues. The harmonic scale you should focus on is the C scale. You might have noticed that C is a common choice for learning most scales. This is because the C key sits at the center of your keyboard, which means that the scales you play from here help you clearly see the pattern intervals for the scale.

The harmonic minor scale is created by raising the seventh note of the natural minor scale. For example, the E Natural minor scale is: E, F♯, G, A, B, C, and D.

While the E harmonic scale is: E F# G A B C D#.

The example above shows that the seventh note of the harmonic scale is raised. This is how all harmonic scales are created. Because harmonic scales are created by altering natural minor scales, it is important that you learn the minor scales before trying to learn the harmonic scales. Once you know the natural minor scale, you only need to raise the seventh note to find its corresponding harmonic scale.

Melodic Minor Scale

This is another variation of the natural minor scale. It is created when the seventh and sixth notes are raised. The melodic minor scale is also used to produce soulful music. You should also start from the C scale when learning the

different melodic scales.

The C melodic minor scale is: C, D, Eb, F, G, A, B.

Pentatonic Scales and Blues Scales

The pentatonic scales and blues scales come fifth on the list of scales to learn. They are perfect for pianists who want to improve their ability to improvise. These scales are commonly used in today's music, so if there's a modern-day song you want to learn, there's a good chance that it contains one of these scales. The pentatonic and blues scales are very similar, so they are typically learned together. Learning similar scales simultaneously helps you learn more and remember better when the time comes. The blues scale is created by adding blue notes to the pentatonic scale.

A pentatonic scale is a scale with only five notes. There are major and minor pentatonic scales that have been discussed in the second chapter. In this chapter, we will be looking at pentatonic scales.

Learning the pentatonic and blues scale is important because you can stumble upon them at any point in your career. You should also start from the C scale when learning the minor pentatonic and blues scales. Next, you learn the A minor and major scales for both pentatonic and blues scales.

The A and C scales are the most common pentatonic and blues scales you will find, especially as a beginner. This is why you need to focus more on these scales before you branch out into other scales. You don't need to learn all the pentatonic and blues scales. You can choose to only learn the notes you need at a

particular time. Once you learn the C scale for both, it will be easier to learn other scales when needed.

Chromatic Scales

Chromatic scales are relatively easy to learn because they involve all the notes on the keyboard. While that may sound complicated, it is actually easy. Studying patterns can make learning the scales frustrating and a bit difficult, but with the chromatic scale, there is no pattern to learn. This scale involves playing all 12 notes without skipping a single one. You can even use one finger to play everything. Each of the 12 notes can serve as the root note; the pattern remains the same no matter which note you choose.

There are many benefits of learning chromatic scales, but where it shines the most is the teaching technique. Chromatic scales help improve your technique and familiarize you with the keyboard. Some people might choose to learn the chromatic scales first because they are simple. The scale you start from is entirely up to you.

The Hardest Scale to Learn

What is considered the hardest scale is debatable, with some people saying that it is the B major scale and others saying that it is the C major scale. Ironically enough, as previously mentioned, the C major scale has also been referred to as the easiest scale to learn.

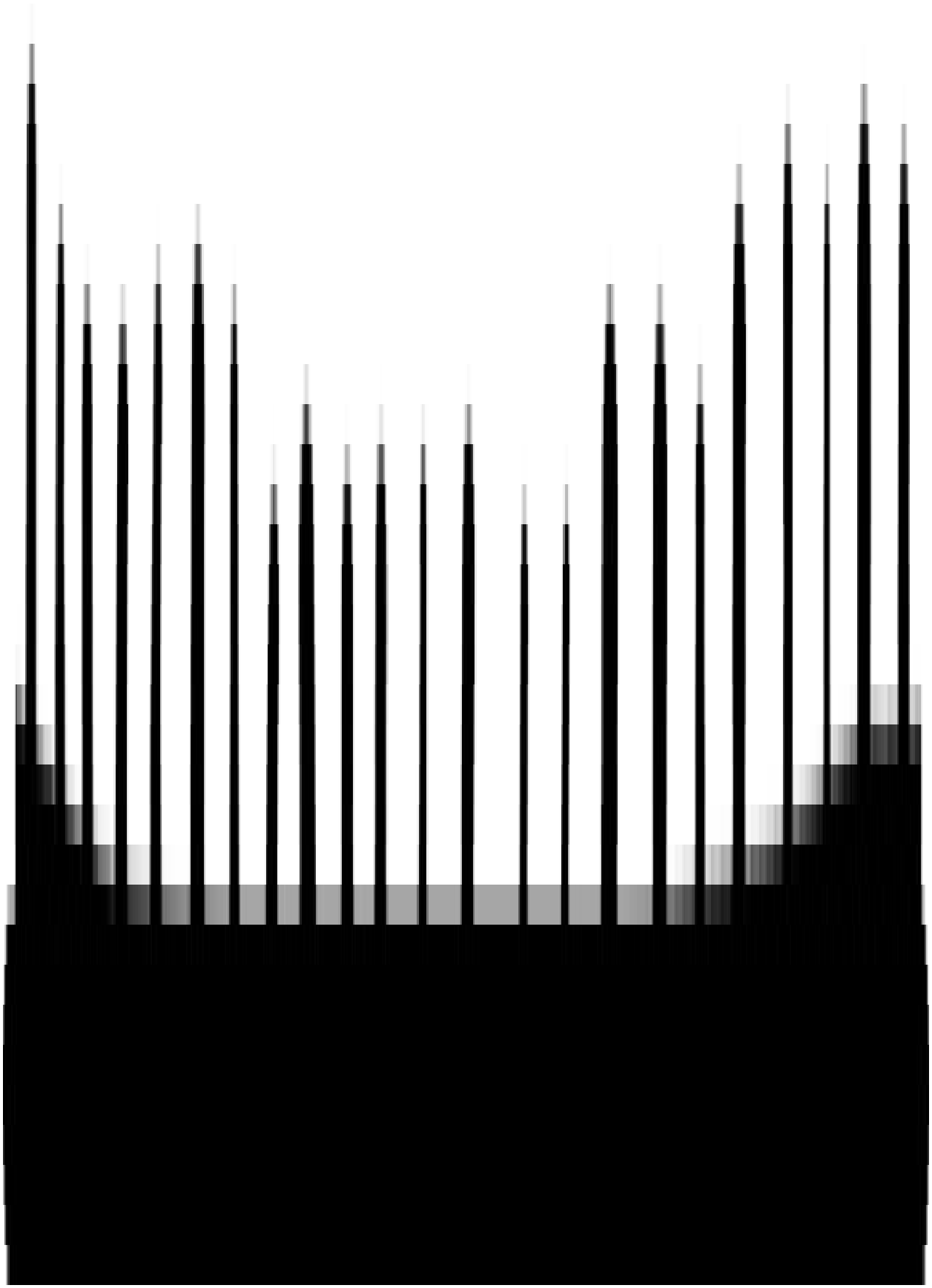
Some people might find the C major scale difficult for the same reason others find it easy. This scale contains nothing but white keys. While the lack of black keys makes it easier for some people to learn, not having any black keys to tell you where you are on the scale can make it difficult to remember which key you were on. Due to that, the fingering of the C major scale can be a bit complicated for some people.

The B major scale is difficult to learn because it contains a lot of sharp keys. This is the B major scale: B C# D# E F# G# A#. As you can see, only the root note and the note E are not sharp keys. This makes it a bit complex to memorize, but certainly not impossible.

Learning the difficult scales will make it easier to learn other scales. You can choose to start from the difficult ones or find the easiest one’s for you and start practicing from there. There is no particular order in which the scales must be learned. This chapter provided a recommended order for learning the scales you can edit to suit your experience and taste.

Chapter Five

The Emotion behind the Scales



Emotions are probably the most important part of music. Your ability to convey the right emotions with your music is what truly determines your success as a musician. Every musical piece conveys some type of emotion. This emotion could be joy, sadness, pity, or even irritation. Some moments require cheerful music, and others require more melancholic music, which is why it is important to know the emotions typically associated with each scale, so you know what to play at any given time. The last thing you want is to play overly cheerful scales at a moment requiring more peaceful and thoughtful music. Knowing the emotions behind the scales will also make it easier for you to improvise.

As a musician, you need to be able to read the room. You need to know what your audience is feeling at the moment, but more importantly, you need to know what you want them to feel. Ask yourself what you want your audience to feel while they listen to you play, and this will help you choose the right scales. For example, if the atmosphere in the room is already gloomy, you could decide to play a gloomy scale so that your audience can resonate with you and know that you are conscious of how they are feeling. You could also try playing cheerful scales if your plan is to lift their spirits. Music has the power to change the atmosphere and affect the moods of thousands of people. When you need to make a choice that involves the emotion of your music, remember to choose wisely because it will affect everyone in the room, including you. The music you play doesn't just convey emotions to the people who hear it; it also helps you express your own emotions and can be very therapeutic.

Expression is a great way to improve your self-esteem and heal your mind. Some people express themselves by drawing, others by painting, and some by writing. For musicians, expression comes through song. Every musical piece is a chance to reach within yourself and express whatever emotions you have. This makes choosing the right scale even more important. On sad days, you may choose to play sad music that resonates with how you are feeling, or you could play happy music to cheer yourself up. The beautiful thing about music is that you can convey any emotion you want with a single piece. If you want to express your joy, sadness, frustration, or love, you can use music.

In this chapter, we will be looking at the emotions behind the scales, the message each scale is trying to convey, and how you can use the scales to improve the sound of your music.

Emotions behind the Scales

This section will look at the emotion behind the different types of scales. As we've discussed above, emotions are an important part of music. If your music does not convey an emotion, you might not be able to resonate with your audience or with a musical piece you wish to learn. You could even say that the scales speak a particular language that you can also speak once you learn them.

The pattern of intervals in a scale determines the sound, which means that this pattern also determines the emotion conveyed. Because the major and minor scales are the most important and common, we will focus on them for this section. Emotions behind the major scales are powerful and can even help you understand the keys better. The pattern of intervals determines the mood and style of the musical piece you perform. If you want to achieve a particular vibe, then you need to know what scales will do that for you. Knowing this will help you connect with your keyboard and your audience. It will also help you to write your own songs and convey the right emotions with your songs. Composing a melody is easy once you know what emotions each scale expresses.

For the major scale, we will be looking at six scales and their emotions. The first is the C major scale, which is arguably the most important of all scales. This scale can be described as innocently happy. It conveys joyful emotions and makes listeners feel happy.

The next scale is the D flat major scale. This scale produces a sadder tone even though the major scales are known for being cheerful. The sound of this scale can be described as depressive or sorrowful. It can be used to convey emotions of grief and pain.

The D major scale comes in next. Unlike the D flat major scale, this scale has a victorious tone. It is often described as triumphant and could be played to celebrate a win of some kind. You can use this scale in times of celebration or to make others believe that victory awaits them.

Next is the E flat major scale, which produces a tone of harshness. The tone of this scale feels crueler than others. It fills listeners with a sense of unbreakable devotion and determination. The emotions of this scale are quite complex because it carries a hard but hopeful message.

The next scale is the E major scale. This scale is often described as bringing on a sense of cheerful vigor. The E major scale is filled with unabating pleasure and joy, making it one of the more powerful ones.

The last one is the F major scale which can be defined as angry or regretful depending on the context. This scale will help you reach your listeners instantly because it delivers a strong message whenever it is used. The regretful tone of the F major scale also makes it a good choice for sad occasions where you want to convey the feeling of wanting to do more.

Now it’s time to look at the minor scales. The natural minor scale is known for producing a sentimental or tragic sound that is similar to the sound produced by the E flat major scale.

This is the E flat major scale: E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, C, and D.

The harmonic scale combines tragic and exotic, which adds to the scale’s uniqueness. The melodic scale produces music that typically sounds mysterious.

Both harmonic and melodic scales are often used to produce jazz, soul, and funk music.

As expected, the blues scale produces music that sounds bluesy. It is often used over major and minor chords because it works well with them.

The major pentatonic scale is joyful and exciting. It is used a lot in modern-day music. The minor pentatonic scale is typically used in rock and folk music. Like the rest of the minor scales, it produces a sad sound.

The emotion for the chromatic scale can be described as free falling because it involves all 12 keys. It is known to produce feelings of anxiety.

The whole tone scale produces a dreamy sound.

The Fundamentals of Music Theory

There are three fundamentals of music theory, and they each come into play when dealing with scales, chords, and arpeggios. These fundamentals are Melody, Harmony, and Rhythm. Many people tend to overlook these fundamentals, but that does not take away their importance. The melody of a musical piece describes its sequence. The sequence has the power to please or irritate anyone listening to the piece. This goes to show the power melody possesses over music. The structure of music is determined by its melody, and this structure can produce a variety of sounds, including happy, sad, victorious, miserable, and gloomy. Melody carries the power of emotion, so if you want your music to convey a certain emotion, you need to pay more attention to the melody.

The second fundamental is harmony. This describes the sequence of music. Harmony is created when different musical notes are heard together. Harmony and melody work hand in hand to improve the quality of a musical piece because harmony focuses on how notes are played simultaneously, so it directly relates to chords and chord progressions. The arrangement of the chord and chord progressions will determine the harmony of the music.

The final music fundamental is rhythm. This is created when a sound repeats itself and produces a unique pattern. The pattern of a musical piece is its rhythm. This fundamental is governed by time. The time intervals that exist between notes and the pattern of the notes that are played are what create the rhythm.

The combination of all three fundamentals of music theory adds substance to your music. They ensure that you aren’t just playing the notes, but rather you are conveying a message and helping your listeners feel a particular emotion.

The Modes of Music

This is another unique way to improve your performance ability. It takes your knowledge of scales to a whole new level. Music modes are scales that have seven notes, just like the major and minor scales. The difference between music modes and regular scales is that they do not start and end on the same note as the major scale. All the previous scales we have discussed in this book, such as the C major scale, all start and end with the same note. Because the music modes start and end on different notes, they are able to alter the tonality of the notes. The music modes are seven in number, namely; Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian. These modes are also known to produce various emotions similar to the emotions discussed earlier in this chapter.

Music modes use the same interval pattern that is used for major scales. The major scales have seven scale degrees, and all of them are used to construct the music modes.

Why Are Music Modes Important?

The music modes are important because they produce more nuanced emotions. While the major and minor scales provide some form of variety, they can only do so much. The major scale will almost always produce a happy sound, and the minor scale will almost always produce a sad sound. With the music modes, you can produce music that isn't so dichotomous. These scales have a way of adding flavor to your music. When you're ready to try scales with a little more oomph, then you should definitely try the music modes.

You can also use music modes to emphasize a particular note and make it stand out more. This simple action will alter the tone of your scale and give you deeper emotions. The music modes can be used to produce sounds that are happy, dark, tense, soulful, heavenly, sad, and much more.

The Seven Music Modes

As the most popular scale, it's not surprising that the C major scale can be used to understand and master music modes. The C major scale follows the interval pattern of the major scales, which is:

Root – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step

The music modes also use this interval pattern to build their scales.

Ionian Mode

This is the first music mode, and it is the same as the major scale. It follows the same pattern of whole steps and half steps as the major scale. This scale also begins on the first scale degree. Taking the C major scale as an example, the Ionian Mode for this will remain C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C.

This mode is described as happy and uplifting.

Dorian Mode

This mode begins on the second scale degree, which means that it starts on the

second whole step in the major scale interval pattern. The pattern for this scale then becomes:

Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step

And the notes in the scale will be D-E-F-G-A-B-C-D.

This scale is known to produce a bright and sophisticated tone even though it is similar to the natural minor scale. The difference is that the sixth degree of this scale is raised, affecting its tonality.

Phrygian Mode

For the Phrygian Mode, the counting begins on the third scale degree of the major scale. This scale also bears some similarities to the natural minor scale, but its tone is much darker and mysterious. It can give your listeners a sense of foreboding and has even been described as conveying doom.

This scale starts from the first half step in the major scale pattern. The pattern for this scale then becomes:

Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step

And the notes in the scale will be; E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E

The Phrygian Mode isn't used as often as the other music modes, but it is still important to learn. It is often used for metal music and rarely played on the piano.

Lydian Mode

This mode begins on the fourth scale degree, which means that it starts on the whole step that falls after the half-step in the major scale interval pattern. The pattern for this scale then becomes:

Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step

And the notes in the scale will be F-G-A-B-C-D-E-F

Many musicians use the Lydian Mode because it produces a mysterious and almost heavenly sound. It is also used in movies for this same reason. This mode is a blend of happiness and mystery. It produces a dreamy sound similar to the major scale, but its tone is a lot brighter.

Mixolydian Mode

For the Mixolydian Mode, the counting begins on the fifth scale degree of the

major scale. This scale also bears some similarities to the major scale, but its tone is much calmer than the usual cheerful tone of the major scales. It makes your listeners feel good while keeping them interested because of its serious tone. The Mixolydian Mode also creates an air of thoughtfulness, and it pushes your audience to think. The Mixolydian Mode has a lowered 7th scale degree that produces this sound.

This scale starts from the next whole step in the major scale pattern. The pattern for this scale is:

Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step

These are the notes in the scale: G-A-B-C-D-E-F-G

The Dorian Mode and Mixolydian Mode are commonly used for playing jazz, rock, and blues.

Aeolian Mode

The Aeolian Mode begins on the sixth scale degree. It is the same as the natural minor scale and follows the same pattern of intervals as the minor scale. As expected, this scale has the sad sound that minor scales are known for. The pattern for this scale then becomes:

Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step

– Whole-Step

If you flip back to chapter two, you will notice that this scale has the same pattern of intervals as the natural minor scale.

The notes in the scale are; A-B-C-D-E-F-G-A.

This scale is known for producing a tragic sound and is often used to make heartbreaking music.

Locrian Mode

This is the final music mode. It begins counting on the seventh note of the major scale, and the sound it produces is unlike any other music mode. It has a dark, almost evil-sounding tone that is the result of the lowered 5th scale degree. The Phrygian Mode and the Locrian Mode are the least used modes. These modes are commonly used by metal bands but rarely ever used by pianists.

This is the pattern of intervals for the Locrian Mode:

Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Half-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step – Whole-Step

These are the notes for the Locrian Mode: B-C-D-E-F-G-A-B

Creating Music Modes

This is how to create each of the music modes;

1. Ionian Mode

This is the same as the major scale, so simply follow the same pattern to create it.

2. Dorian Mode

This mode is created by lowering the third and seventh notes by one semitone.

3. Phrygian Mode

This mode is created by lowering the second, third, sixth, and seventh notes by one semitone.

4. Lydian Mode

This mode is created by raising the fourth notes by one semitone.

5. Mixolydian Mode

This mode is created by lowering the seventh notes by one semitone.

6. Aeolian Mode

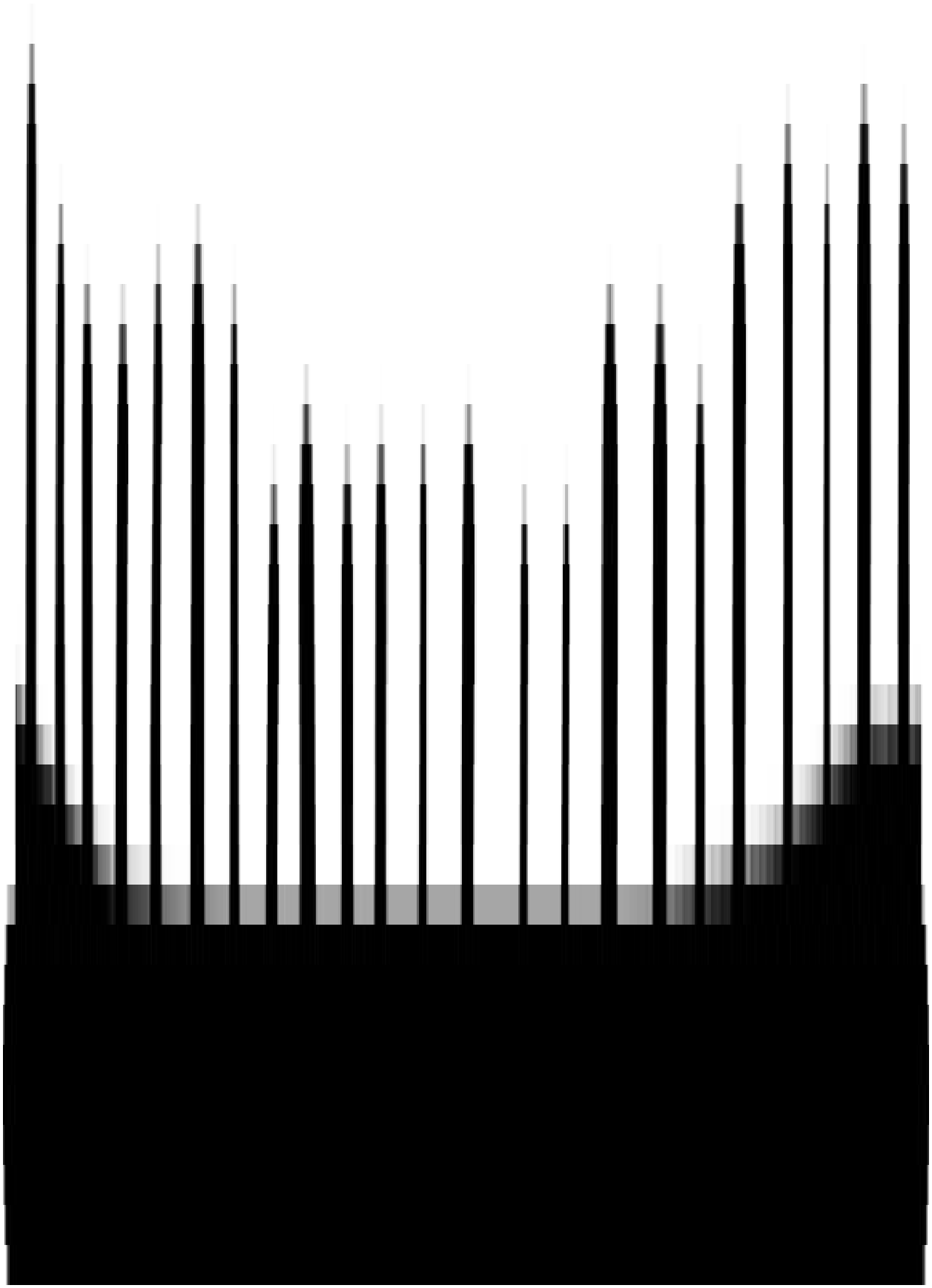
This mode is created by lowering the third, sixth, and seventh notes by one semitone.

7. Locrian Mode

This mode is created by lowering the second, third, fifth, sixth, and seventh notes by one semitone.

Chapter Six

Memorizing the Scales



Memory is the most important part of learning. It’s one thing to take in new information, but it’s another thing to store that information in your mind and recall it when needed. This is the true test of learning anything. To truly learn something, you need to memorize it to store it in your brain. Memorizing the scales will help you in many ways, and we will discuss the benefits of doing so in the following sections. First, we will discuss the benefits of memorization in general.

Memorization has many positive effects on your brain, such as an increase in brain activity. It also helps your brain recall things easily and reduces the chances of cognitive decline. Strengthening your brain is another benefit of memorization because it is like exercise for the brain. When you learn more, you give your brain the ability to assimilate new information at a quicker rate. This will make it easier to learn other musical theories. Think of it like this; the more you memorize, the stronger your cognitive functions and memory will be. It also challenges your brain to do more than you expect and can help improve your mental health. We all have self-inflicted limitations. You might not feel capable of memorizing the scales at the moment, but if you push yourself, you will realize that you can do anything you put your mind to.

If you follow the order of scales provided in the previous chapter and memorize the scales in order, it will make it easier for you to play each scale and other more complex scales. There are several scales out there. Some are perfect for the beginner level, but as you level up and try out more complicated musical pieces, you might find other types of scales that are more difficult to understand. If you have already memorized the basic scales, then it will make it easier to understand these scales when the time comes.

In the sixth chapter of this book, you will learn the importance of memorizing piano scales and their impact on your ability to perform. You will also learn how to memorize the scales. Memorizing the scales has many benefits, and there are different methods that can help you do it. This is what you will be taught in this chapter. You've made it this far, so now it's time to build on your knowledge and make yourself even better. The knowledge you gain in this chapter will help you in every moment going forward. Every time you sit in front of the keyboard, you can easily recall what you learned in this chapter and use it to play the scales.

If you can recall the scales at any given moment, you will be a better pianist. Your ability to remember the scales you've learned throughout the course of this book will improve your performance on the keyboard and before your audience.

Memorizing the scales will help you develop confidence in your ability to perform, and that will reflect how you play and what your audience hears.

Why You Should Memorize Piano Scales

When most people attempt to learn the scales, they typically have no plans of memorizing, some even relying on just mimicking the sound. They want to learn how the scale is built and then move on. While this isn't terrible, it can affect your ability to remember the scales when you need them. If you don't memorize the scales, then you might find it difficult to recognize them when you see them. Not memorizing the scales can also make it seem more unnatural when you play. When you know your scales like the back of your hand, you also reduce the chances of making a mistake. Another great benefit of memorizing the scales is that it helps you understand music theory better. It also makes it easier to learn new music. When you are familiar with the scales, picking up new music will feel super easy. It allows you to adapt to new music without feeling uncomfortable or confused. Learning new musical pieces becomes much easier after mastering the scales.

Memorizing the scales is about more than just committing it to memory. It's about immersing yourself in the scales and learning how to speak the language of the scales. Most people focus more on their ability to simply recite the scales, which is great, but it may not be enough to help you recall the scales when you need to.

Most musical pieces are created using scales, which means that the scales serve as the basis of the composition. Creating musical pieces typically involves building upon the scale, so if you want to learn a piece, you must be familiar with the basic scales within it.

Your understanding of music theory will also benefit from your learning the scales. Scales are the fundamentals of music theory, so once you understand them, it will make it easier to grasp new musical concepts at a faster rate. For

example, to understand chords, you need to understand scales because chords are made of the notes in a scale. These chords can also be used to make chord progressions, requiring you to have a basic understanding of the scales. It all comes back to scales!

It is important for you to relate practical knowledge to the theories you learn in music. This creates another benefit of memorizing scales. When you can easily visualize the scales, you will begin to understand how the music works. This will help you gain the practical knowledge you need.

Another benefit of memorizing scales is that it helps you read sheet music. The third chapter of this book discusses the various symbols used in sheet music and how to interpret them.

The key signatures in sheet music also indicate the scale or key to play. These symbols are placed at the beginning of the staff, and they tell you which notes should be flattened or sharpened. If you memorize the scales, then it will be easier to know which scale to use for a particular key signature. This is a lot better than having to stop and think about all the sharpened and flattened notes. You are good to go if you can remember the scales themselves. It will also help you quickly locate the required keys on your keyboard.

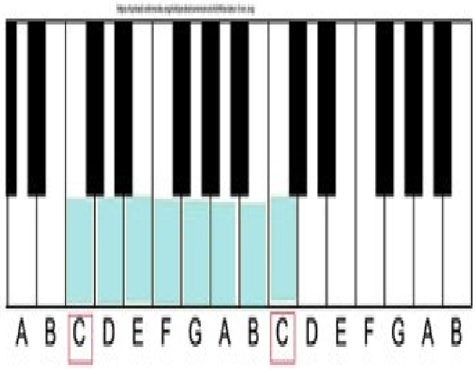
You can use the number sharp or flat symbols to determine what scale it is. For example, the D major scale has two sharps in it. If you see two sharp symbols at the beginning of the staff, then the key signature is indicating the D major scale. The sharp symbols for the D major scale appear on the fifth line and in the space between the third and fourth lines. The fifth line on the staff represents F, and the space between the third and fourth lines represents C. This is the D major scale; D, E, F#, G, A, B, and C#. As you can see, the notes F and C are sharpened. If you see a staff with a sharpened F note and C note, then you will know it is the D major scale. All the notes will follow the regular pattern of the scale. The only exception is when there is an accidental.

If you have memorized the scale and come across it in sheet music, it will be easier to play, and you might even be able to play without looking. This comes in handy when you want to play scales with lots of sharps and flats. Thinking about one or two sharps is a lot less complicated than thinking about four or five. Being able to play without thinking about the particular notes you're supposed to use will allow you to perform comfortably and learn new music faster. The more scales you learn, the easier it will be to read sheet music and understand what you are supposed to play. It will also make improvisation a lot easier. The ability to improvise is something that all pianists try to master. Improvisation helps you improve your understanding of music and add sounds that make a piece even better.

Improvising the scales is the first step towards improvising freely. Once you can improvise the scales and you are familiar with the unique sounds of the scales, it will be easier to know how to improvise musical pieces or simply improvise whenever you want. You need to first memorize the notes before you can use them the way you want. If you simply play the notes without knowing what will sound good together, then the chances of it sounding good will be slim to none. Remember that we can form coherent sentences only by knowing various words, what they sound like, and what they mean. This same logic can be applied to musical notes. Knowing the various notes, what they sound like, and how they can be used will help you form harmonic music.

The Shape of a Scale

The shape of a scale refers to the pattern of notes it makes on your keyboard. Knowing the shapes of various scales will help you understand how musical pieces work. It will also help you remember how a particular scale sounds. Using your ears to listen to the tune while you play will ensure that you are playing the right notes. If you already know what the G major scale sounds like, then you will know if you accidentally skip a note or play a note that is not in the scale. It allows you to catch on easily once the melody changes. Knowing what the notes sound like will also help you figure music out using your ear. If there is a particular melody you are trying to recreate, then it will be easier to do so when you know what the notes sound like.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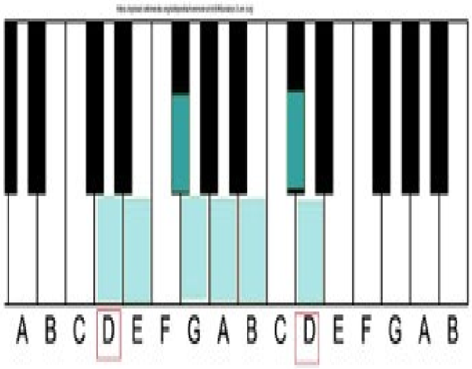
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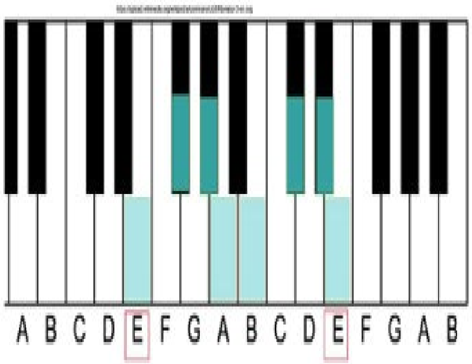
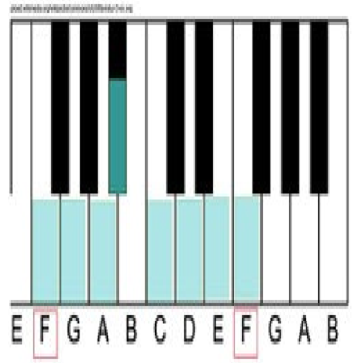
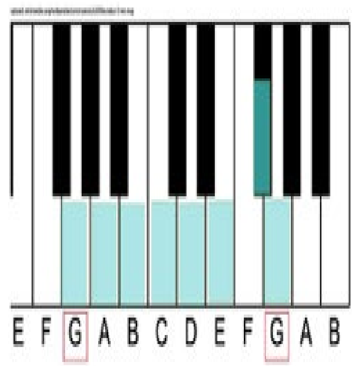

A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B

major scale


E F G A B C D E F G A B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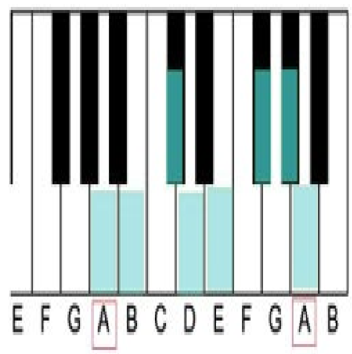
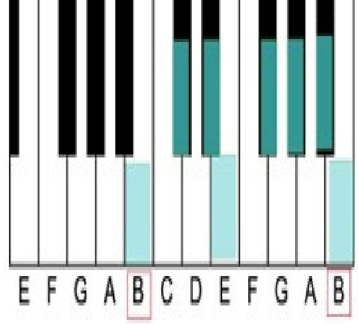

E F G A B C D E F G A B


E F G A B C D E F G A B

The diagram above shows the shape of the major scale. You can follow this shape to play and memorize the scales.

Learning the shape of the scale also gives your fingers a sense of familiarity, which helps you navigate the keyboard better. In turn, this helps you stay focused on the music rather than its theory and reduces the chances of becoming confused or lost. Remember, practice makes perfect. As a beginner, your technique might not be so great, but as you practice more, you will improve. Memorizing the shape of the scales helps you improve on your other piano playing skills because it helps you focus more on other elements that affect your performance rather than primarily notation. Combining your knowledge of the scales and your improved technique will make you perform like a pro. But if all you do is struggle to find the notes, then you will look like an amateur. Your fingering technique as you move from note to note will also be improved if you learn the scales. When you know what notes are coming next, you can easily relax your fingers and play the scales. This creates harmony between you and your keyboard and helps you produce music that flows well.

One of the greatest benefits you can gain from memorizing the scales is that you begin to understand the language of the scales. When you have mastered the scales, you might find that everything feels connected and easier to understand. The struggle to learn new musical concepts is drastically reduced because you are already familiar with the fundamentals. The scales give you guidance. If you want to play a given chord progression and notice that it uses a minor scale, then you will know what notes to play, and you will be able to find the keys faster.

The Relationship between Scales and Arpeggios

Many additional musical concepts can help to give you a deeper understanding of the scales. One of them is arpeggios. In this section, we will be analyzing what arpeggios are as well as the relationship they have with scales. Doing so will help us understand their relevance to the process of learning the scales.

To understand what an arpeggio is, we must first recall our knowledge of chords and gain new knowledge on chord progressions. Chords refer to a group of notes that are played at the same time to create harmony. Chord progressions are chords played in succession. They create the foundation of harmonic music, which is why they are sometimes referred to as the skeleton of the song. Just like the human skeleton creates the basic outline for the body, so do the chord progressions create the basic outline for the song. Some musicians combine chord progressions and arpeggios to create incredible melodies.

An arpeggio is achieved when the notes of a chord are played individually instead of all at once. This is why arpeggios are also referred to as broken chords. They are essentially chords that have been broken down into their individual parts. In this manner, the notes are played separately, leading to a break in the chord. The origin of the word arpeggio lies in the Italian word “arpeggiare.” This word means “to play on a harp.” Although the arpeggios were created for harps, they have become a common part of piano music and are often used to produce a variety of melodies on the piano. Arpeggios can also be used on other instruments, such as guitars. In fact, almost all instruments can play arpeggios because several instruments are capable of playing a single note at a time. And this is what is needed to play an arpeggio. When an arpeggio is played, the individual notes of a chord are struck either in ascending or descending order. This means that the sequential order of the arpeggio can either start from the lowest note or from the highest note. The confusing part about this is that the ranking of the notes can vary.

There are three common arpeggio patterns. The first is the triad starting from the root. This pattern is played by beginning on the root note. Recall that a triad is a chord consisting of three notes. These notes are the root note, the third note above the root note, and the fifth note above the root note. A triad chord is played together, while a triad arpeggio is played individually.

A triad arpeggio starting from the root is the first example of an arpeggio pattern.

Take the C major scale as an example where the root note is C. on this case; the triad will begin on note C. The next note in this arpeggio would be E, the third note in the C major scale. Next, the fifth note, G, would be played. After plying G, the next note is C. However, this time the C will be an octave higher than the pitch of the root note. This pattern can then be repeated across the piano. This arpeggio can also be played a different way if you begin on the high note and move towards the low one.

The second arpeggio pattern is a triad that begins on the third note. This pattern can also begin on the fifth note. An arpeggio does not need to begin on the root note. Changing the note you start with allows you to introduce a whole new melody that blends well with your original melody. An arpeggio for the C major scale can begin on the third note, E, or the fifth note, G. Then it will continue with the same pattern.

The final pattern for the arpeggios goes beyond triads. This type of arpeggio is used for a variety of chords and scales. Triads and major scales are not the only types of chords and scales out there. The chord of a minor scale can also be broken to produce minor arpeggios. Even seventh chords can be broken into arpeggios. A seventh chord is a chord that has a triad and an interval of a seventh. This means that it combines a triad with a pitch that is a seventh above the root note of the chord.

Using the C major scale as an example again. The notes in the triad of the C major scale are; C, E, and G., The seventh note above the root note, C, is B. This means that the notes in the C major seventh chord are C, E, G, and B.

There is an important relationship between scales and arpeggios. Chords can be formed from scales, and arpeggios can be formed from chords. This sets the real root of the arpeggios in the scales. Arpeggios also play a huge role in piano music. They can be found in classical piano music and even more popular genres. Learning the common arpeggios will make it easier for you to master

some of the most incredible musical pieces ever created.

How to Play Arpeggios

Playing arpeggios is rather simple, but it takes a conscious ear to get it right. You need to be aware of the rhythmic pattern between the notes. This method is great for playing shorter arpeggios. However, extended arpeggios require more than just a trained ear. In most cases, you will need to cross one hand over the other to play the extended arpeggios. For beginner pianists, this can be a bit complex, so remember to go at your own pace.

How to Memorize the Scales

Here are different methods for memorizing the scales, and the method you choose should depend on what you're most comfortable with. Each method has its own advantages, so you need to go with what works for you.

1. Improvisation

This is a bit advanced, but once you master it, you can apply it to any scale. Improvising within a scale will help you become familiar with the notes that make up the scale and its shape. When you try to improvise, you are challenging your brain to pick up on the changes in sound and figure out which keys work best with which scales.

2. Memorizing the Scales with Music Theory

The music theory of the scales refers to the way it is built and the pattern of intervals between the notes. Memorizing the pattern of intervals between the notes is the first step in mastering the scales. You need to know this pattern, so you can recreate it whenever you need to. This is the theoretical aspect of learning scales. It is what you learn on paper before you practice on the piano. Each scale has a unique pattern that determines the sound it produces. When you have mastered the pattern, you can then start to focus on the practical aspect of learning the scales.

Using music theory to memorize the scales also involves learning to spell the

scale the right way and knowing what keys to use in a particular scale. Memorizing the key signatures of a scale—knowing how many sharps and flats it has and where they are located—is another way to learn the scales with music theory.

3. Avoid Using Sheet Music to Memorize Scales

Sheet music is helpful when learning a musical piece, but it's not so helpful when you are learning the scales. Using sheet music every time you want to practice scales will make the memorization process much slower than needed. This is because you should not rely on notation for practicing and memorizing scales.

4. Practice the 12 Keys

This is another way to memorize the scales. It is a bit more tasking than learning with music theory, but it is certainly worth it. Every scale can be played in 12 keys, and practicing with all 12 keys will help you memorize the scales. It will also help your mind adapt to the patterns and shapes of the keys on the keyboard. You can easily switch from one key to another when you have adapted to this pattern. In the fourth chapter of this book, you were provided with a list that shows the order you can use to learn the 12 keys of the major and minor scales.

5. Listen Closely

As a musician, your ear is a powerful tool that you need to take advantage of. It will help you recognize when a scale is being played the right way. Every scale produces its own unique sound, and you can train your ear to detect this sound.

This can be done in a variety of ways, such as listening closely and humming along as you play the scales. Memorization by sound also involves learning the different tonalities that the scales have. You can also relate the sounds of the scales with pieces of music to help you remember them better.

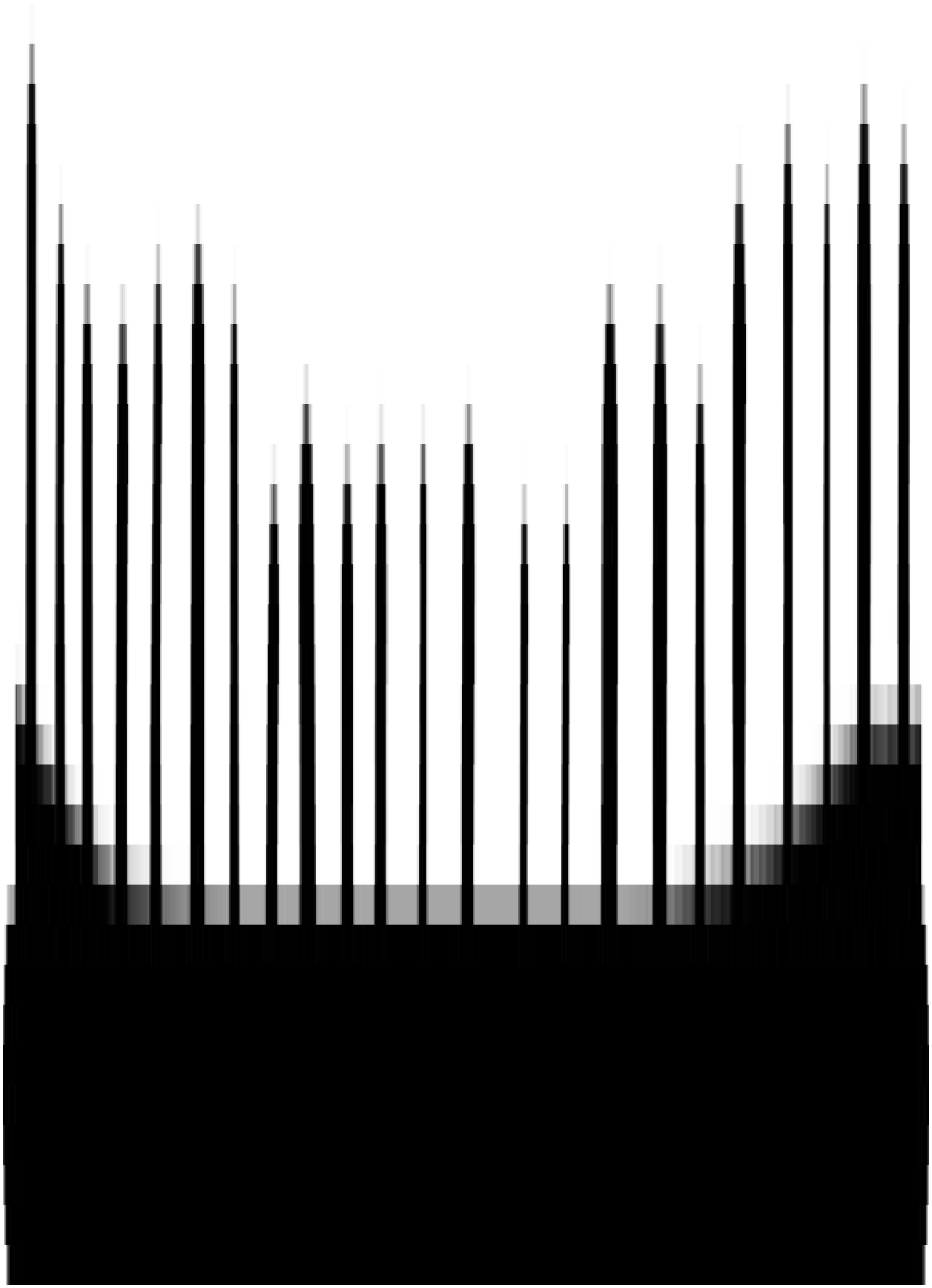
6. Apply Logic Where It Is Possible

Committing the scales to memory will require more than practice and active listening; it will also require analyzing the scales you play. You need to ensure that your brain is present in the memorization process. This may seem like an obvious thing to do, but many people do not engage their brains enough when learning scales. To do this, you need to pay attention to how the scales are played and think about how they are used in various musical pieces. Keeping your brain engaged also helps you notice little things that could come in handy later.

Remember that when memorizing music, you must focus on more than just learning individual notes. You also need to understand how those notes work in a scale. Take your time and practice as often as you can so you can memorize it all. This leads us to the seventh chapter of this book, where you will learn about practicing the scales.

Chapter Seven

Practicing Piano Scales



In this book, we have briefly discussed the difference between practical and theoretical knowledge. Reading this book will give you theoretical knowledge of the scales, but only by practicing on your keyboard can you gain the practical knowledge you need to take your performance to the next level. Throughout this chapter, you will learn the benefits of practicing piano scales as well as the best ways to do so. In the last chapter, you learned how to memorize the scales; now it’s time to learn how to practice what you have memorized. Practicing the scales is also a great way to memorize them because the more you practice, the more familiar you become with the scales. When you are familiar with the scales, you also become familiar with your piano, and your audience can tell from a mile away how familiar you are with your piano.

Imagine going to a concert and watching a singer stumble over their lyrics. Your immediate thought would be that the person was an amateur. This is exactly what people think when they see you stumbling over your piano keys. A great way to prevent stumbling is to familiarize yourself with your piano keys so you can find them easily. Finding your keys is half the job of performing any musical piece. Once you can find your keys, it becomes easier to play whatever you want.

This is why practice is important. Practicing will help you improve your performance and make performing any piece more seamless and comfortable. As you familiarize yourself with the scales, you will begin to notice how easy it is to learn new musical pieces and understand other musical concepts. Every chapter in this book is designed to build upon your knowledge of scales to the point where you can seamlessly play the scales without devoting much thought to it. This will allow you to focus on other aspects of your performance as a pianist. These other aspects include your finger movement on the keyboard. If you have not learned the scales, then you may not be able to move seamlessly across your keyboard.

The benefits of practicing when you are learning something new cannot be overemphasized. Your brain is like a muscle, and practicing a new skill is like exercise for your brain. When you practice the scales, you are training your brain to remember everything about them. This includes their structure, pattern, and the location of the notes. Not practicing the scales will produce the opposite effect because your brain will slowly start to forget about what you have learned. This means that learning the scales is about more than just recitation. If you know how to recite the scales, you should be proud, but if you want to take your skills to the next level, you need to practice until you can play it mindlessly. That stage is what is known as unconscious competence.

Unconscious competence is the fourth and final stage of learning, the others being unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, and conscious

competence, respectively. These stages describe the learning process for most people. In the first stage, known as unconscious incompetence, you are mostly unaware of what you don’t know. To put it plainly, you don’t know what you don’t know. For example, before you picked up this book, you probably didn’t know that there was a need for improvement or that you were lacking in some areas. Picking up and reading this book takes you to the next stage of learning, known as conscious incompetence. In this stage, you become aware of the things you don’t know.

Next, we have conscious competence. Hopefully, you will reach this stage after finishing this book. Here you have learned all you need to know, but even in this stage, performing the task typically requires a lot of concentration. The final stage is unconscious competence. This is where all learners aspire to be. In this stage, you can play the scales without giving it all of your concentration. It becomes something you can do without thinking about it, and performing music will come easy, like breathing.

This is the ultimate benefit of practicing. It makes you extremely familiar with your keyboard and takes you to the point where performing the scales and other musical pieces is second nature to you.

How to Practice Piano Scales

After learning the theory of the scales, you already know that you need to practice to become a better pianist, but most times, you don't know where to start. Choosing which scales to practice on and how long to practice them for might also be confusing. Before you start practicing, the first thing you need to do is warm up. This stretches out your body and prepares you for what's coming. Take a moment to stretch out your arms so you can feel more relaxed while you are practicing. You can also rotate your wrists or exercise your fingers a bit. Before you sit at the piano, always stretch your body out. Not only will this make you feel more relaxed, but it also reduces the chances of long-term injury. If you plan on practicing many scales, you will need a lot of stretching.

The next thing you need for a good practice session is proper posture. This is another thing that will reduce the chance of long-term back issues. Proper posture is important while you sit, stand, and even while you sleep, so it is definitely important while you play the piano. You don't want to walk away with a terrible backache after an incredible performance. To sit the right way, you need to have your feet firmly planted on the floor. Make your feet flat, and then relax your shoulders. Finally, you need to straighten your back. When most people start off on the piano, they usually try to play too close to the keys because they don't want to make any mistakes. The downside is that bending your back in that way can lead to serious back pains, not to mention the decrease of your field of vision over the keyboard. Sit up straight and keep your shoulders relaxed.

Once you have the proper posture, you can move on to hand and finger movement. The movement of your fingers across the piano is a test of your technique. Proper piano playing requires proper technique. To start with, you need to separate your hands and master the fingering of the scales.

Fingering and Hand Independence

These two things work hand-in-hand to improve your performance. Fingering is a technique that describes how your fingers should be positioned on the keys. Hand independence refers to your ability to keep your two hands separate. Most beginners typically struggle with this. You need to understand that each hand has a role to play. Once you understand this, then you can assign each hand their respective roles and keep them apart.

You can start by playing the C major scale since this is a common choice for practicing. Try playing the C major scale with one hand. Depending on your preference, you can try it starting from your right or left hand. If you are used to your right hand, then you can start with that before moving to your left hand. Try to master the C major scale using your right hand alone, then do it again with only your left hand. After learning this, you can start using both hands to play the scales. This can be a bit complicated at first because the fingering will change often. Remember to practice slowly, so you can master the proper movement of your fingers and the transitions between the keys. This is where fingering comes in.

Piano fingering comes with its own set of rules. These rules may change depending on the scale you decide to play. The movement of your hand and the fingers you use will affect both the sound of your piano playing and how your audience perceives you. Most beginners tend to play with only their index fingers, which is one of the biggest fingering mistakes you can make. You need to utilize all your fingers because this allows you to spread across the piano and create smoother music. The transitions between the keys will be a lot smoother if you use all your fingers. The final piece of advice for beginners is to avoid playing black keys with your thumb.

How to Play the Piano While Reading Notes

This is another tricky part of practicing on the piano. Some people struggle with playing the piano while reading notes. There are two ways to solve this problem. The first is to memorize the scales. Memorizing the scales as a solution to reading sheet music was discussed in the previous chapter. When you memorize the scales, it makes it easier to recognize them in sheet music. Once you recognize the scales, you won't have to look at the sheets too often. This means that you will reduce the time you spend looking at the sheet music. Still, it is important to remember that you cannot completely ignore your sheet music. They are there to guide you, so always give them enough attention. The second option is to reduce the amount of time you spend looking at the keyboard.

The main problem was how to play the keyboard while simultaneously reading sheet music, so the solution is to reduce the time you spend looking at either one of them. For the second solution to work, you will need to be very familiar with the location of your piano keys since you won't be looking at the keyboard that often. The number of notes on the score will determine how long you can look at your keyboard. The higher the notes, the less time you have to look at your keyboard and vice versa. If you look at your keyboard for too long when the notes are plenty, then you could lose the proper tempo that the piece needs.

Learning how to play sheet music while only sparing glances at your keyboard is one of the biggest steps you will take toward becoming a professional piano player. It's not an easy thing to do, but if you use proper fingering techniques and position your hand the right way, then it will be easier. As you do this, you will notice the benefits of using all your fingers to play piano. When you use all the fingers, then you can avoid making large jumps across the piano with only one finger. This improves your keyboard fluency.

How to Practice Piano Scales Continues

After becoming familiar with the different fingering techniques for the various scales, the next step is to focus on each scale. The first scale you should practice is the major scale. In the fourth chapter of this book, you learned the recommended order for learning the major scales. Use that order to practice on your piano. You can move on to the relative minor scales when you become familiar with the major scales.

Every major scale has a relative minor scale with the same notes. These scales always start on different notes and might even follow different interval patterns, but they always contain the same notes. The sixth note of any major scale indicates the beginning of its relative minor scale.

For example, this is the C major scale; G, A, B, C, D, E, and F♯.

As you can see, the sixth note here is E. This is where the relative minor scale will begin. To practice both scales, start by practicing the G major scale with your right hand and then with your left hand. After mastering each hand individually, you can practice with both hands. When you are done with the G major scale, it will be easy to move to the E minor scale because they use the same keys. This will make it easier for your fingers to adapt to the new scale. Because of this, you can learn a minor scale while learning a major scale. All you need to do is learn the major scale and then slowly transition to its relative minor scale.

The next step in the learning process is to play both major and minor scales together. This is a complicated technique to learn, and many beginners struggle

at first, but once you do, you will notice an improvement in your performance. To do this, you will need to play the major scale with your right hand and play its relative minor scale with your left hand. Taking the G major scale and the E minor as an example again, you will be playing the G major scale with your right hand and the E minor scale with your left hand. This can also be applied to other relative keys like the C major scale and the A minor scale. In this case, the C major scale will be played with your right hand, and the A major scale will be played with your left hand.

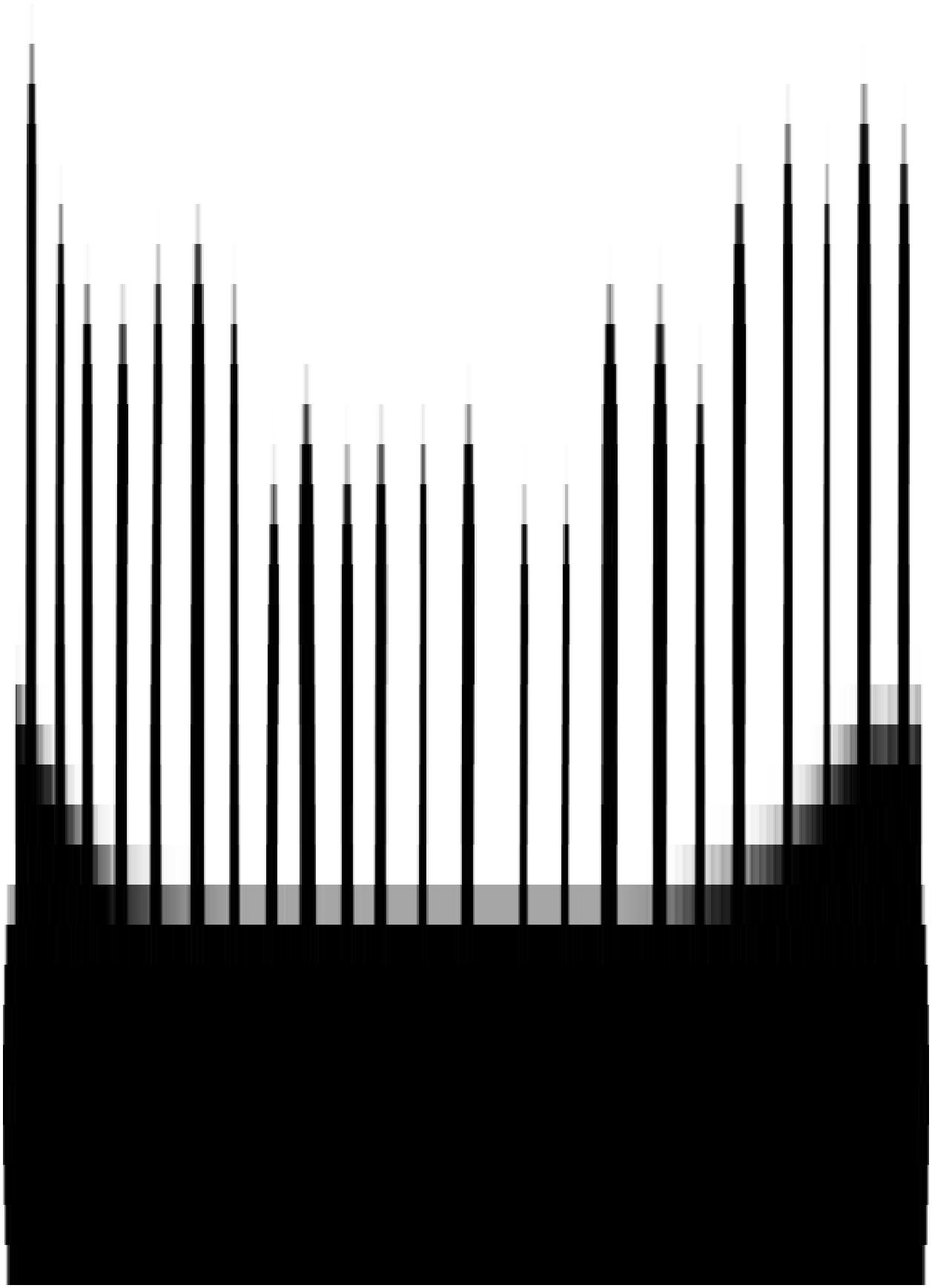
When you can successfully play the major scale with your right hand and its relative minor scale with your left hand, try switching hands so that the major scale is played with your left and the minor scale with your right. This is a great way to challenge yourself and improve your understanding of the scales.

One of the best ways to learn new scales is to follow the circle of fifths. This circle can be used to guide your practice routine and help you choose the next scale to learn. The benefit of using the circle of fifths is that the number of black keys will only increase by one as you move in an anticlockwise motion from the C major scale. For example, the C major scale has no black keys, and the scale that comes after it, the G major scale, has one black key. As you move along the circle of fifths, you will see that each scale typically has one black key more than the scale before it.

After practicing the scales, you can take it a step further by practicing chords and chord progressions. Scales give us information about the chords and how to make them sound good. Use this information to practice playing chords and improve your ability to improvise.

Chapter Eight

The Pianist Mindset



Adopting a pianist mindset is the final step in learning the scales. To do this, you must first understand how a pianist's mindset is structured and what makes it different from non-pianists. Believe it or not, science has proven that the brain of a true pianist is not the same as the brain of the average human.

Learning, in general, helps your mind evolve. Every time you read a book, you change your brain and give it the power to see new possibilities. This is the same thing that happens once you learn how to play the piano. Your mind changes as it adapts to everything you will need as a pianist. All the keys, scales, chords, and music modes that you learn are slowly transforming your brain and helping you become an even better version of yourself. And as you continue to practice these various musical theories, you will notice your brain changing even more.

While every musician gets a mental upgrade from mastering their craft, the mental upgrade of a pianist is second to none. This is because the piano is a complex instrument to master. It demands a lot of time, skill, and energy. Learning any instrument requires time and energy, but the piano is arguably the most tasking instrument. A pianist will need to carefully play specific keys out of the several options while remembering their scales, looking at the sheet music, and simultaneously moving both hands and, as they progress, even their feet. Doing all this will force the pianist to develop a special brain capacity that can hold and process all that information.

The hand movements of the pianist also affect their status as left or right-handed. Most people either have a dominant right hand or a dominant left hand. Only a few can seamlessly use both. For a pianist to successfully perform a musical piece, they would need to simultaneously move both hands. This means that even if the pianist is right-handed, they would still need to depend on their left hand just as much as they do their dominant hand.

The dominance of the right or left hand is determined by a part of the brain known as the central sulcus. If the central sulcus is deeper on the right side, then the person will be right-handed, and if the central sulcus is deeper on the left side, then the person will be left-handed. With this information, you can imagine what will happen to someone who is both left and right-handed.

A pianist who easily learns to use their left and right hands has a more symmetrical central sulcus. To understand this more, we will look at a young pianist who was born right-handed. After years of practicing on the piano and using his left hand to play the keys, his central sulcus developed equal depth on both sides. Scientists have discovered that doing this helps the pianist to strengthen the weaker side of their central sulcus. If your central sulcus is deeper on the left side, but you practice the keys with both hands, the right side will grow in strength until it matches your dominant left side.

The Mindset of a Pianist

Now that you know how a pianist's brain works, it’s time to look at the mindset you need to become a successful pianist. You’ve learned all the theories behind the scales and even practiced most of them, but without the right mindset, you can only go so far. If you want to reach the heights of the famous and talented pianists that have existed throughout history, then you need to adopt the right mindset.

The first step to adopting a new mindset is to let go of an old one. You can’t pick something up with your right hand if you’re already holding something else in it unless you want both items to fall. Letting go of negative mindsets creates room in your brain for new mindsets that add value to your life instead of taking value away from it. One mindset that most beginners have and that you need to get rid of immediately believes that people are born talented. When you watch incredible piano players, it’s easy to assume that they were born gifted, but the truth is that they worked hard to become as great as they are today. When you understand that no one was born a talented pianist, then you will understand that you can reach every height before you. Most skills are developed, and only a few people were born with the ability to simply do incredible things. Most of us need to work before we exhibit any real results. Every great pianist you see today has had to work hard to achieve what they have. They practice for hours upon hours, but no one ever notices this part of the story.

The first mindset you need to develop is the growth mindset. This is the belief that growth is possible, your goals are achievable, and you can make all your dreams a reality. With this mindset, you can accomplish anything. The growth mindset is about understanding that the real failure is in not trying. If you work hard but don’t get instant results, you haven’t really failed. You now have a chance to learn from your mistakes and do better. But if you don’t try at all because you believe you can’t do something, you have lost the battle before it’s

even begun, which is true failure.

You must prepare your mind in every way possible to be a successful piano player. The road to achieving this goal is not a smooth path, but with dedication and determination, you can definitely achieve it.

Developing a Pianist Mindset

In this section, you will find a guide to help you develop a pianist mindset. This guide includes rules on how to practice, what to focus on, and how to improve.

1. Focus on You

Nothing limits your ability to improve yourself like comparison. When you constantly compare yourself to others, you won't be able to focus on your ability to shine, and even if you do, you will be too busy looking at other people to notice.

The internet has made learning, in general, a lot easier by having information at our fingertips. Anyone can learn something new simply by searching it on Google. And while this is great because it exposes us to more opportunities, it also has negative side effects. These side effects include an increase in the opportunity for comparison. It's much easier to find pianists with incredible skills today than several years ago. Back then, you would probably have to go to the opera or a music club, but today you can just check Instagram or TikTok and find several incredible performers. You can choose to either learn from these pianists or compare yourself to them. Learning from them will improve your skills, but comparison will hold you back. Comparing yourself to other people is a surefire way to stifle your progress. If you want to practice the right way, then you need to focus on yourself and what you can achieve. You also need to remember that the incredible performers you see today were in your position at some point in their lives. They worked to get to where they are, and you can get there with hard work, too.

2. Develop a Growth Mindset

To achieve any kind of positive change, you need a growth mindset. Believing that your dreams can become a reality is necessary for you to actually make them a reality. If you don't believe in your own dreams, then the chances of them coming true are slim to none. A growth mindset helps you see the possibility of achieving your dream, and without it, all you will see is the possibility of failure. The importance of a growth mindset reflects in every area of your life, and as you learn the piano scales, you will need a growth mindset so you will not be discouraged. Practicing and memorizing piano scales is not easy. There are several scales, so the task of learning them can be overwhelming. However, with the right mindset, you can learn as many scales as you want. This mindset also helps you focus more on your personal goals as a pianist while you work to achieve growth.

3. Play to Learn

To practice the scales, you need to first accept that every performance is an opportunity to learn. Every time you sit in front of your piano, you learn something new, so don't feel too devastated when you miss a few keys. It's natural not to get it all during the first tries, so don't strive for perfection. Instead, strive for growth. Focus more on learning instead of playing all the keys perfectly. Don't worry about missing a key, and be quick to forgive yourself if you do. Make your piano practice more about actually learning than about getting it right. This is a common mistake made by most beginners. It is important to get the keys right, but what is more important is learning from every stumble you encounter. View these stumbles as an opportunity to do better. Adopt a mindset that rises from failure instead of dwelling in it. If you ever find yourself stumbling over the keys during practice, take a moment to reorient yourself. Take deep breaths and remember that you play to learn not to be perfect. You need to be in a state of constant learning if you want to become a great pianist.

4. Improve Your Confidence and Determination

The pianist’s mindset is a confident and determined one. It accepts failure and strives for improvement even when faced with unbearable situations. It is determined and devoted to its instrument and feels confident just by playing it. You need this mindset if you want to succeed on the piano. This instrument is incredibly complex. The piano's technical, theoretical, and practical aspects are complicated to learn, which is why you need to be determined.

Another important aspect of the pianist is confidence. Your confidence reflects on your piano performance, and your audience can tell how confident you are just by watching you. People can tell when you don’t know what you’re doing. The funny part is that you can know all there is to know about scales and still not be confident, while on the other hand, someone could know just the basic scales but exhibit the confidence of a seasoned professional. What you need to do is combine the best aspects of these scenarios. Learn all there is to know about scales and practice hard. After doing that, you need to develop the confidence of a professional, even if you aren’t one. You can do this by first believing in yourself. Remember that your mind is a powerful tool, and for anything you want to become in life, you must first visualize it in your mind. Believing you’re a professional is the first step to becoming one.

5. Embrace Challenges

There are many challenges that you might encounter while learning piano scales. You will need to overcome all of these challenges if you want to master the scales. The challenges can range from a simple backache to constantly mixing up the notes. Whatever it is, you need to accept that these challenges are a part of the process. They help you learn in their own ways. For example, constantly hitting the wrong notes will eventually teach you what notes not to play. This is why you need to see every setback as an opportunity to learn more. Even a backache can teach you something new, like proper posture. When your back

hurts, it is natural to look for a solution that can help you discover the right posture.

Don’t forget that there are many ways you can improve, and setbacks make you aware of the places that need improvement. When you encounter a difficult situation during the learning process, you need to embrace the challenge of the situation and keep pushing yourself to learn more.

6. Silence Your Inner Naysayers

No matter how positive you try to be, there will likely be days when your mind focuses more on the negative. On days like this, you might find yourself thinking about all your past failures or current limitations. This is when you need to silence your inner naysayers. It’s easy to fight the people who try to bring you down from the outside, but when that fight takes place inside you, it’s a whole different story. Your inner naysayers love reminding you of everything you did wrong and telling you not to take risks because you won’t succeed. If you’ve ever heard a voice like this, don’t worry because you’re not alone. Many of us have inner naysayers, and they typically cause us to develop a fixed mindset.

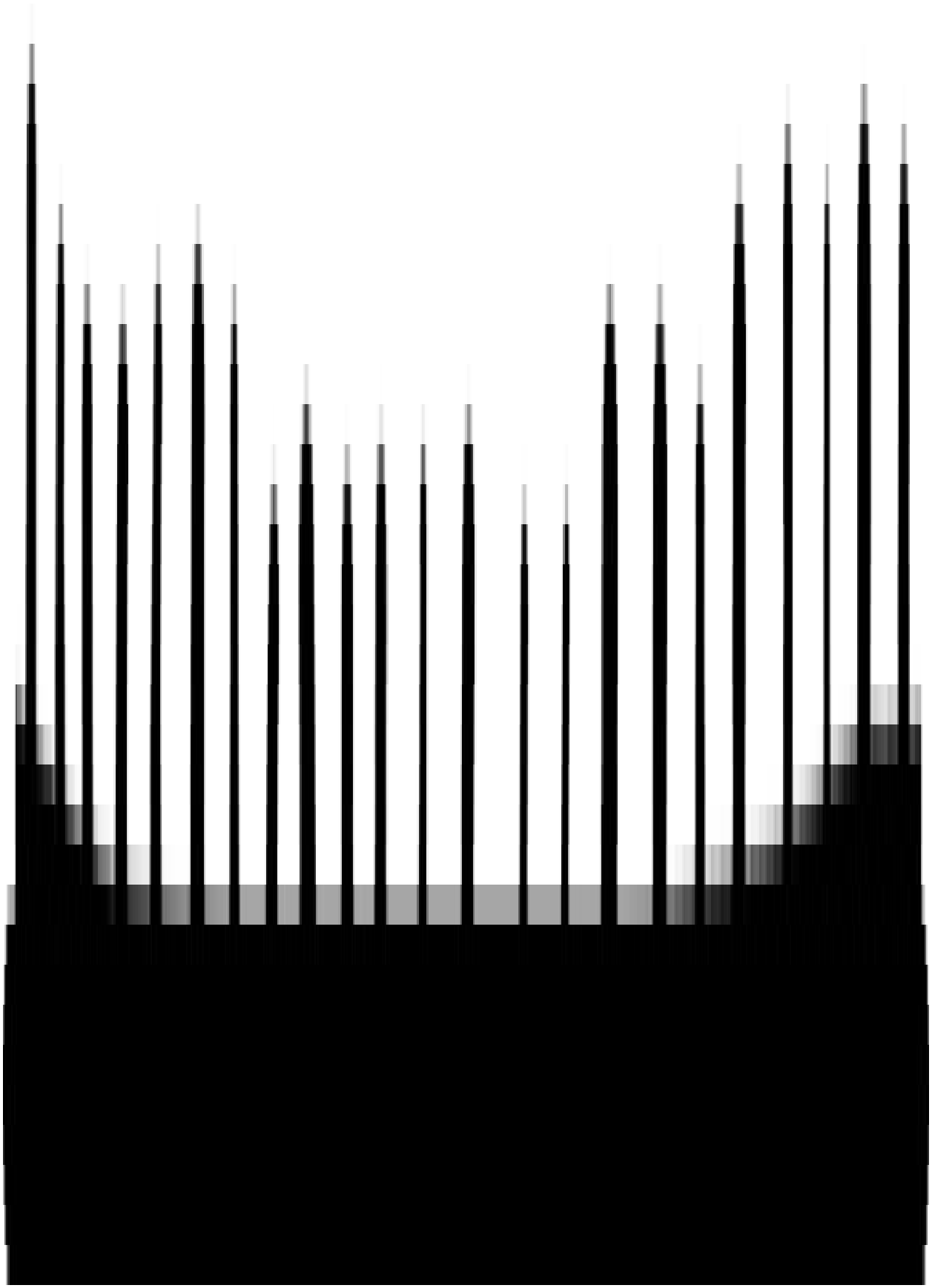
A fixed mindset is the opposite of a growth mindset. This mindset believes that change is impossible, so it stops you from even trying. It can also cause reduced self-esteem and self-confidence because it forces you to focus on old mistakes. The fixed mindset focuses on the negative because it wants to discourage you from trying to achieve more. You need to let go of this mindset if you want to grow.

Always face life and the piano from the point of possibility. See the possibility of growth in every situation and know that every step you take brings you closer and closer to becoming the incredible pianist you want to be. Your mindset is

important when facing inner naysayers.

Chapter Nine

Tips to Help Learn Piano Scales



For the ninth chapter of this book, we will focus on all the tips available to help you learn the scales faster and better. These tips are designed to make the learning process a lot easier, so be sure to follow them religiously so you can reap all the benefits. This chapter aims to give you everything you need for the final phase of your learning process. The tips in this chapter will apply to all the other chapters in this book. They will include tips for understanding, memorizing, and practicing scales. They will also include tips for reading and interpreting piano notes and for detecting the emotions behind the scales. In addition, you will learn tips for developing the pianist mindset.

Each tip will be actionable advice that will bring you even closer to your dreams of becoming an incredible piano player. At this stage, you should be looking for new ways to level up your piano-playing game, and that is exactly what you will learn in this chapter.

Different Techniques

As a beginner, you must embrace different learning techniques until you discover what works best for you. You need to be willing to try out various methods because this will allow you to find out more about yourself, specifically what does and doesn't work for you. Once you know that, you will also know how to edit these tips and make them suit your preferences. Work with and around these tips until you reach the point where you fully understand the scales.

1. Start with the Black Keys

This tip may seem counterproductive at first, but the truth is that it is very effective. Some people choose to start with the white keys first, but starting with the black keys helps you master your hand position. These black keys include the B major scale, D flat major scale, and G flat major scale. The B major scale has five sharp keys, while the D flat scale has five flat keys. The F flat major scale has six flat keys; the presence of flat and sharp keys means that most of the notes in this scale will land on the black keys. Playing these keys helps you develop a natural hand position because your longer fingers will become used to playing the shorter black keys.

You may recall that according to the fingering technique, shorter keys are played with your long fingers, and longer keys are played with your short fingers. Your thumb and pinky are your shorter fingers. Because they are short, they are used to playing long white keys. Your index, middle, and ring fingers are your long fingers. They are used to playing short black keys. Some of the most famous composers and teachers in the world recommend starting with the black keys before moving on to the white ones. It is important to note that starting with the black keys might make adjusting to the C major scale difficult since it contains only white keys. Starting with the black keys is a great way to help your hand

get accustomed to the rules of fingering.

2. Explore the Octaves

An octave is the distance between one note of a specific frequency and another note with double the frequency of the first. When you play the C major scale, you are moving from one C to another C that is an octave higher. There are many keys on the piano which means that note C appears more than twice. Because of this, the root note of one C major scale can also be the final note for another C major scale. And the final note of one C major scale can be the root note of its own scale. This means that there are many ways the C major scale and all other scales can be played on the keyboard. Exploring the octaves allows you to test out the different methods and become a better pianist. If you want to make it more challenging, then you can try playing the various octaves with only your right hand and then try it again with only your left hand. This allows you to really familiarize yourself with the keys.

Try practicing with two octaves at a time to make it even more challenging.

3. Give a Key a Chance

Try not to focus on a single set of keys when practicing the scales. Always switch it up and try more keys as often as you can. A good way to start is by trying a different key each week. If you do this, then you will memorize your keys faster and play them more naturally because you know them well. Embrace practice and always be ready to put in the effort to learn a new key.

4. Connect with Your Keyboard and the Music

Music uniquely connects you and your keyboard. Every time you practice on the keyboard, you need to make sure that you aren't just moving your fingers. Allow the power of music to move your heart as well. Connect with the music and let it guide your emotions and, by extension, your fingers. Instead of simply playing the scales, try to feel them.

When you play the scales, you need to listen attentively so you can know them and open your heart up and play from the heart. If you want to test your connection to the scales, then you can try conveying different emotions through the scales. When you play scales without adding emotion, then they will sound stoic or mechanical. Merging your emotions with the scales will give them the musical tone that they need.

5. Track Your Progress

Nothing inspires people to keep going like the sight of progress. When people try to lose weight, it's difficult in the beginning, because their progress is not visible. This is the same for learning the piano. When you first start, it might be difficult to stay motivated because you may not see immediate progress. It might take you days, weeks, or even months to master your first scale, so what do you do in the meantime? How can you stay motivated even when you don't see progress?

It's easy! All you need to do is track your little wins. Every time you play the scales right or even sit with the right posture throughout a practice session, take note of these small wins and track them in any way you can. Tracking your progress will also help you discover learning techniques that work well for you. If you adopt a new technique and you notice a decline in your progress, then you will know that technique isn't for you.

6. Try Out Different Rhythms

Practicing piano scales in different rhythms is another great tip for improving your skills on the keyboard. To start, you can try a dotted note rhythm before moving on to other rhythms. You can also try altering the speed of your scales. Trying out different speeds and rhythms will help you memorize the scales quicker and strengthen your hands. This task serves as a little work for your mind and your hands.

Practicing the different rhythms will allow you to study patterns that may occur while you play. You can do this by playing in the quarter and eighth notes. And if you're up for it, you could also try out eighth-note triplets and sixteenths. Small changes made to the scale introduce a new challenge into your practice routine, which will help you learn quicker and perform better. Doing this will also teach you more about improvisation and show you new ways to do it.

7. Perfect Your Fingering Technique

Practicing your fingering technique is one of the best tips to help you master the scales. When you can glide across the piano like a professional, learning new scales and musical pieces will be easier.

8. Don't Play Too Fast

When you are new to the scales, you might feel tempted to play quickly, but you have to remember to focus more on evenness and not speed. As you practice

more, you will become faster at your own pace but don’t rush yourself unnecessarily.

9. Don’t Force Anything

While learning the scales, it’s important to remember that you shouldn’t force anything. Always take your time to practice and master the scales. Don’t expect to get it immediately because you might feel too frustrated to continue if you don't. Understand that it is a process and that only hard work will give you the progress you want.

10. Develop a Listening Ear

You need to listen attentively if you want to master the scales. A listening ear will help you detect when you are playing the right keys and when you’re not. This is why you need to listen attentively when you practice the scales. Listening will also help you know what notes sound good together.

11. Practice Often

This tip seems obvious, but you would be surprised how many people neglect it. Everyone wants to do something great, but when they see the work it takes to do it, they usually shy away.

If you want to be a great pianist, you need to practice even when you don’t want to. You need to constantly push yourself and make sure that you sit down in front

of your keyboard for at least 20 minutes every day. You can practice for up to an hour or even two if you have more time. The important thing is to be consistent. Remember that practicing for 20 minutes daily is much better than practicing for one hour every two weeks. The goal is to consistently show up.

12. Practice Chromatically

You can follow the chromatic progressions while practicing the scales. The recommended order for learning scales is the circle of fifths, but practicing chromatically also has its benefits. For example, it helps you train your fingers more intensely. When you follow the chromatic progressions, you will discover that you need to switch the interval pattern when moving from one scale to the next. This challenges you in a unique way.

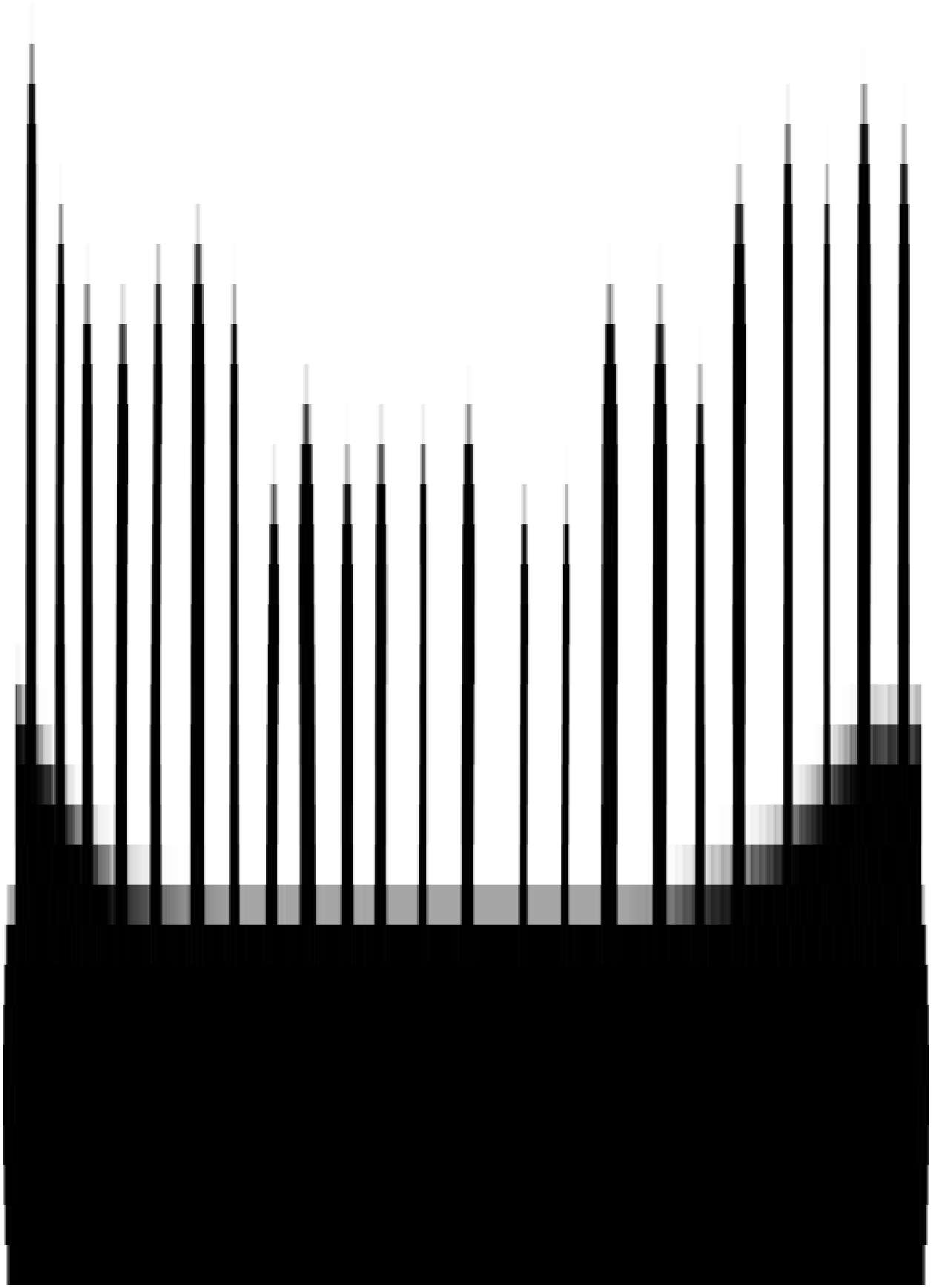
13. Rest

Even music notation needs rest to sound harmonious, so you certainly do, too. Practice hard but don’t forget to take breaks and rest when you need to. Give yourself time to recuperate, so your fingertips don’t burn off. While resting, you can pick up a book and learn a new musical concept. And once you are done resting, you can put everything you learned into practice. Proper rest will allow you to practice harder and better, but if you don’t rest, then you might burn out and lose hours and maybe even days of practice. Some beginners usually get carried away by the need to practice at every given moment, but you can’t let this be your story. Take time to rest when you need to, and return to your piano with even more gusto.

The final chapter of this book will be an overview of everything that was taught in this book. Hopefully, as you read it, you will recall little details you might have forgotten and test your knowledge of the scales. Use this quick summary as

an opportunity to refresh your mind. Reading the last chapter will prepare you for the next phase of your journey as a pianist.

Conclusion



If you made it this far, then you definitely deserve a pat on the back. The goal of this book was first mentioned in the introduction. This book was created to guide you into and through the realm of scales. By covering the piano scales and important topics related to the scales, this book has introduced you to everything you need to know about scales.

The piano scales are a group of notes, so as expected, notes were discussed. This book discussed the types of notes and how these notes can be used to construct the scales. It also looked at the different types of scales, which include major, natural minor, harmonic, melodic, pentatonic, blues, and chromatic. The major scales all follow a particular pattern and are the basis of music theory. Scales can be used to compose musical pieces, and the major scales are the most commonly used ones.

The natural minor scale is derivative from the major scale and can be created by flattening the third, sixth, and seventh notes. Major and minor scales are also related by their relative keys. Relative keys are scales that contain the same notes. When a minor scale contains the same notes as a major scale, these two scales are said to be relative keys. For example, the C major scale and the A minor scale contain the same notes, so they are relative keys.

The harmonic scale is a variation of the natural minor scale that is created by raising the seventh note. The melodic scale is also a variation of the natural minor scale, but it is created by raising the sixth and seventh notes. The pentatonic scale is a scale that has five notes, unlike the usual seven notes that are found in a scale. The chromatic scale is a scale that uses all 12 keys when it is played.

To understand the pattern of intervals between the scales, you need to understand the concept of whole and half steps. A whole step is the combination of two half

steps, and a half step is the smallest distance between the notes on a piano. The half-steps and whole steps are used to construct the interval pattern of the scales.

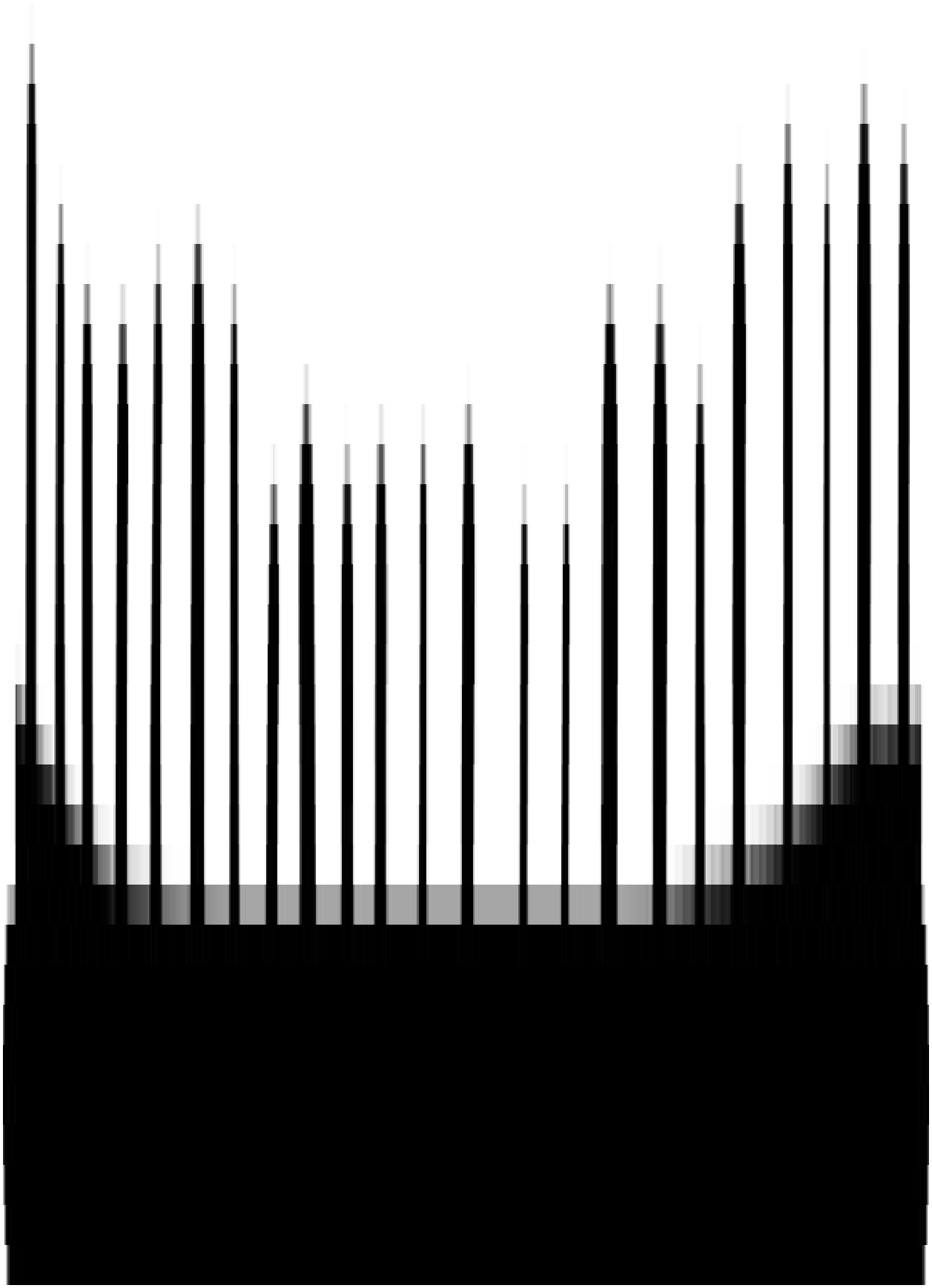
You can flip back to chapter two to see the interval pattern of the major and natural minor scales.

There are two parts of a scale that describe its sound and movement. The first part is the quality. A scale's quality determines the interval pattern of the scale. For example, if the scale's quality is major, then it will follow the interval pattern of the major scales. The second part of the scale is the root. This is where you begin counting the notes of the scale. The root of the C major scale is C, so you will begin counting on note C. Combining the root, and the quality gives us the scale. The quality of the A minor scale is minor, which means it follows the interval pattern of the minor scales. The root of this scale is A, which means counting will begin on A. So, putting this together will mean that you will begin counting from A while following the interval pattern of the minor scale.

That brings us to the end of this book. You have been successfully guided through the world of piano scales and all the musical concepts related to this topic. Remember that this book only offers you the theoretical aspect, and only proper practice can take you to the level you want to reach. Dedicate the proper amount of time and effort to your piano so you can become the professional you dream of becoming.

Thank you for buying and reading/listening to our book. If you found this book useful/helpful please take a few minutes and leave a review on Amazon.com or Audible.com (if you bought the audio version).

Music Terminologies



For the final section of this book, you will learn important music terminologies that pertain to your training.

1. Accidental

When a note appears on a staff line but does not follow the initial key signature, it is known as an accidental.

2. Adagio

This describes the tempo of the musical piece. It is an Italian word that translates to slowly, so it tells the musician to use a slower tempo.

3. Allegro

This is another Italian word. It translates to cheerful, and it is also used to describe the tempo of a musical piece. Allegro means that the piece should have an upbeat and brisk tempo.

4. Alto

Alto falls into a category of pitches that are used to describe singers. People who sing alto are singing below the Soprano pitch.

5. Andante

Andante is an Italian word that means “to go about.” This word describes the pace of the music and tells the musician to use a moderately slow tempo.

6. Arpeggio

This refers to a broken chord that is played sequentially, ascending, or descending. The chord is broken into notes.

7. Bar

A bar is created when a bar line divides a staff. In this section, it is a measure of time that is determined by the time signatures.

8. BPM

BPM is a unit of measurement in music. It stands for Beats Per Minute, and it signifies the number of beats that happen per minute.

9. Cadence

When a sequence of chords creates a resolution that ends the phrase, then it is called a cadence.

10. Cadenza

This refers to a moment of freedom that allows a singer or instrumentalist to go outside the specified tempo. Like a mini-solo performance.

11. Canon

This is when a melody is repeated by another instrument shortly after it has been played. The two melodies overlap one another.

12. Clef

This symbol is used in sheet music. It is placed at the beginning of the staff, and it indicates tone range.

13. Coda

This is another symbol that you can find on sheet music. It typically signifies that the piece is coming to an end.

14. Crescendo

The gradual rise in the dynamic volume is the crescendo. It allows the composers to signify that the musical piece should increase in loudness.

15. Da Capo

This tells the performers to restart a musical piece from the top. It is an instruction that can be found in sheet music.

16. Dal Segno

This is a symbol found in sheet music that gives the band or orchestra instruction. It tells them to shift to a different section before they resume playing.

17. Diminuendo

Diminuendo is the opposite of crescendo. The crescendo signifies an increase in dynamic volume, but the diminuendo signifies a decrease.

18. Dynamics

There are three main dynamics which include piano, forte, and mezzo. These

dynamics indicate the intensity of a musical note. Piano means the note should be played softly, while forte means it should be played hard, and mezzo means medium.

These three are the basic dynamics, but there are six in total, namely; pianissimo (very soft), piano (soft), mezzo-piano (medium soft), mezzo-forte (medium loud), forte (loud), fortissimo (very loud).

19. Enharmonic

Enharmonic notes are notes that sound the same but are spelled differently. For example, G# and Ab sound the same because they are the same note, but they are spelled in different ways. The existence of enharmonic notes emphasizes the importance of learning how to spell the scales.

20. Fermata

This signifies that a note should be held for longer. There is a standard duration for each of the notes, but the Fermata symbol shows that the duration should be extended.

21. Flat

Flat notes are notes that have a lower pitch. When a note is flattened, it is lowered by a semitone. Flat notes are signified with (♭).

22. Forte

This is a type of dynamic. It indicates that a note should be played loudly. On the range of dynamics, forte sits between mezzo-forte and fortissimo, which means it is louder than mezzo-forte but softer than fortissimo.

23. Fortissimo

This is the loudest dynamic. The volume of the fortissimo is very loud. Fortissimo is usually abbreviated to ff.

24. Fortepiano

Fortepiano describes the sudden change in a dynamic, which usually involves a rise in volume and then a sudden drop. This dynamic instruction is usually abbreviated to fp.

25. Giocoso

This describes the tempo of a musical piece. It tells the artist to play the piece in a fun manner, which usually means playing at a higher tempo.

26. Glissando

Glissando is gotten from the French word glisser, which means “to glide.” Glissando is the Italian version of the word, and it instructs the musician to glide from one note to another in terms of pitch.

27. Grave

This is an Italian word that means solemn. It indicates that the musical piece has a very low tempo, which conveys solemn emotions. The tempo of music like this is usually less than 60 BPM.

28. Key

The keys refer to the notes that are within a scale. The keys in the G major scale are; G, A, B, C, D, E, and F♯.

This is why when a major scale and a minor scale have the same notes, they are said to be relative keys.

29. Largo/Larghetto

Largo is an Italian word meaning large. It is typically used for orchestral music to signify a slow pace. The larger the pace, the slower the music will be.

30. Leggero

This is an Italian word for light. Music played in Leggero is lighthearted but typically has a fast pace.

31. Legato

This refers to the connection of the notes. Legato indicates a series of musical notes that are performed smoothly and without interruption.

32. Motif

A motif is when a set of notes is used to create a specific melody that is repeated throughout a musical piece in different ways.

33. Natural

This refers to notes that have not been sharpened or flattened. They exist in their natural state. The natural symbol lets the musician know that they should overlook the original key signature and make the note natural. The key signature is placed at the beginning of the staff and tells the musician if the notes are sharp or flat. The presence of a natural symbol means that the note will be played in its natural state even though the staff line has a sharp or flat symbol.

34. Nonet

Ever heard of a barbershop quartet? Well, a quartet is a group of four musicians, while a nonet is a group of nine.

35. Ostinato

This word also has Italian connections. It translates to obstinate, and it refers to a repeating pattern similar to that of the motif. The pattern is a short melodic phrase that repeats throughout the musical piece.

36. Pianissimo

This is a type of dynamic that indicates very soft music. It can be abbreviated as pp.

37. Sharp

This symbol signifies that a note is one semitone higher than its natural state. A sharp is the opposite of a flat. This is the sharp symbol (#).

38. Soprano

A Soprano is a term used to describe singers whose voices are on the high side of the pitch range. These singers have a higher pitch than the alto pitch.

39. Tempo

The tempo of a musical piece describes its speed. It is used to indicate the speed at which the piece should be played.

40. Solfege

This is a system that assigns a syllable to every note in a scale. It allows musicians to hear notes that they might not be familiar with. The most common solfege was created for the C major scale, and it is; do, re, mi, fah, so, la, ti, do.

Each syllable here corresponds to a note in the C major scale.

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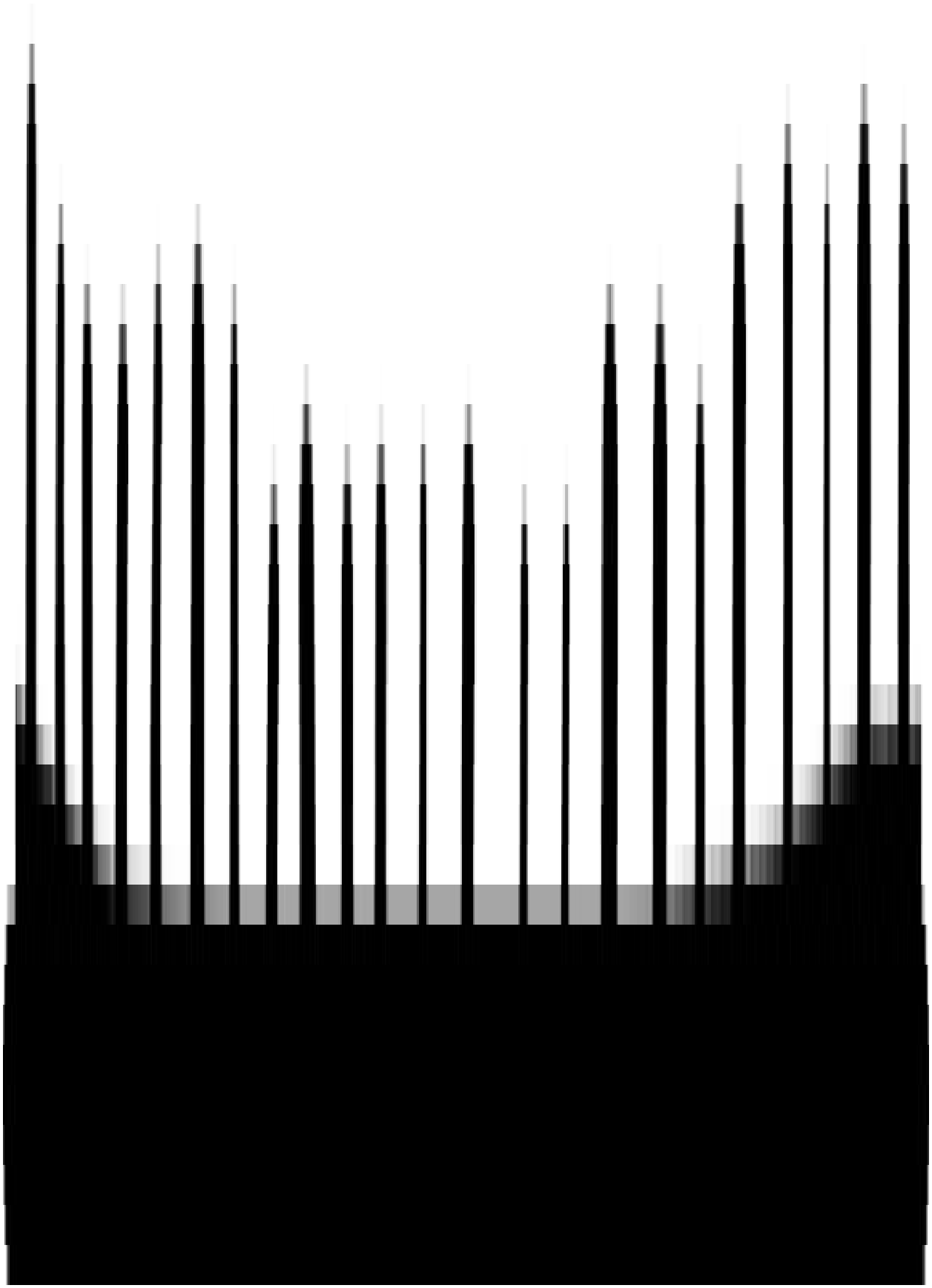

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