

# WESTERN MUSIC MANUAL

For The Developing Composer

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SCALES

## 1 What Is Music?

"The organization of sounds and silences."  
– My Father

## 2 What Is Harmony?

Harmony is a word we use to describe how groups of musical notes work together. Just as painters use different colors to create emotions and moods in their art, musicians use combinations of notes to craft a wide range of feelings in music. This book will be your guide to the world of harmony in Western music. We'll start by learning about scales and chords—the building blocks of Western harmony.

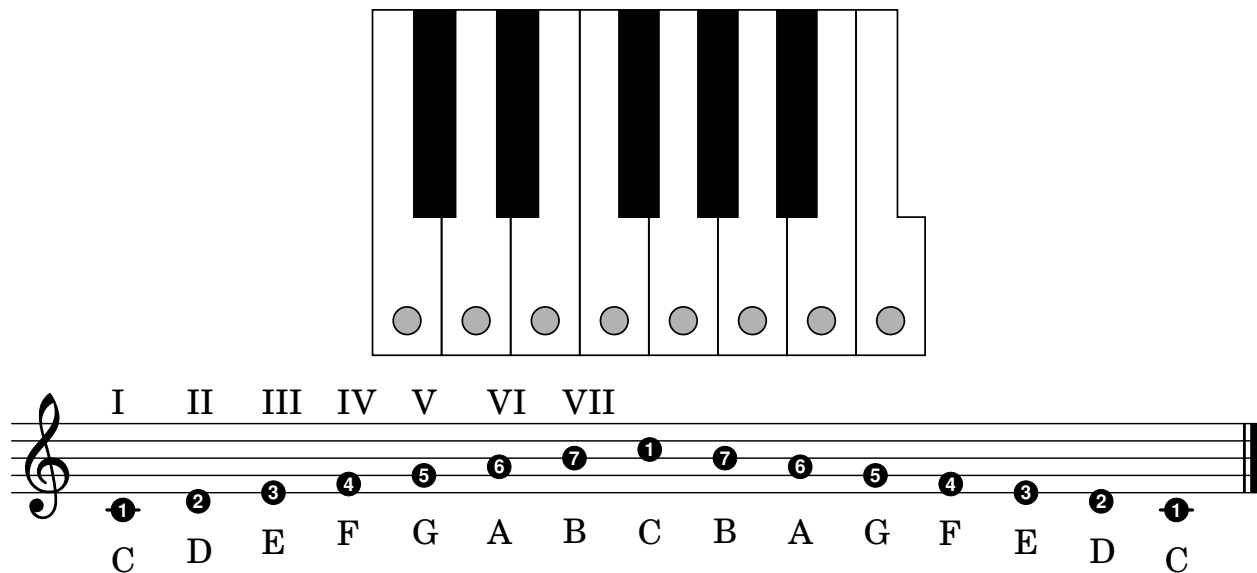


Pythagoras used a special musical instrument and mathematical ratios to figure out harmonic relationships, leading to the creation of scales.

### 3 What Is A Scale?

The organization of pitches in either ascending or descending order. Scales are referred to by the starting pitch. The following scale begins on "C" ascends to "C" an octave above before descending back down.

C major scale



The scale above is constructed using 7 unique pitches. This type of 7 note scale is known as a *diatonic* scale. Scales can have any number of unique pitches. A scale can have 5, 8, and even 12 unique pitches. There are two types of *diatonic* scales—the major and minor scales.

## 4 What Is A Circle Of Fifths?

The following circle of fifths organizes the relationship between different diatonic scales. The diagram represents the 24 diatonic major and minor keys. The outer keys are major, the inner keys are minor.

Practice drawing the circle from memory, doing so will give you agility in making better harmonic decisions when composing.

The circle of fifths also allows you to construct scales:

♪ If you start at **F**, move clockwise, and reach **B**

(**F → C → G → D → A → E → B**)

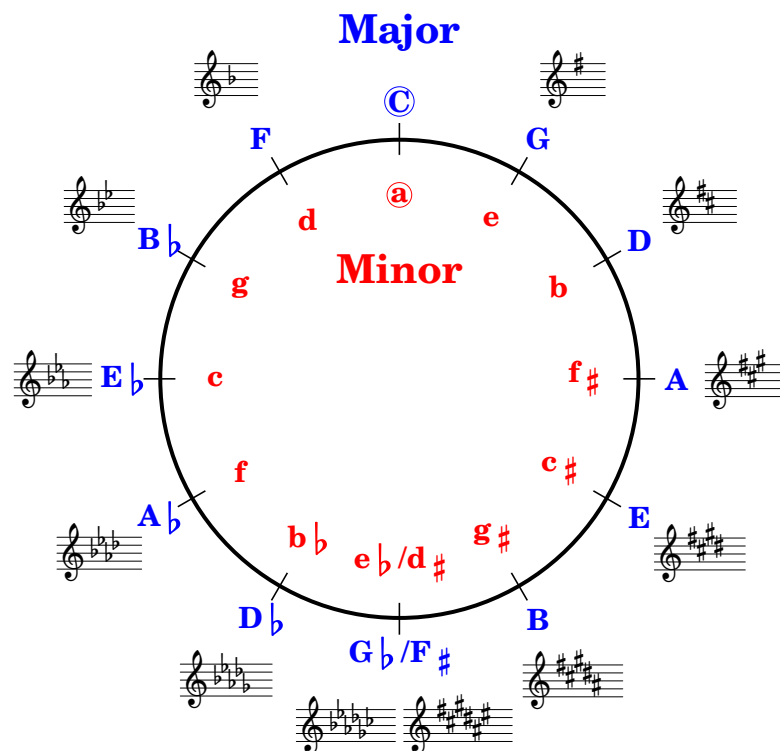
then you get a **C major** scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B),

and an **A minor** scale (A, B, C, D, E, F, G).

♪ If you start at **C**, move clockwise, and reach **E**

(**C → G → D → A → E**)

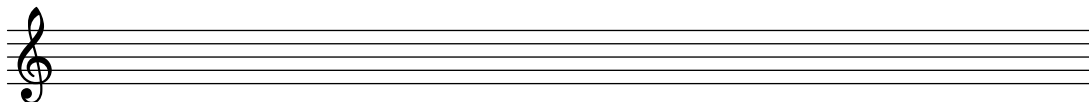
then you get a **C major pentatonic** scale (C, D, E, G, A).



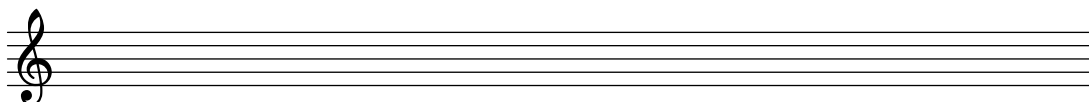
## 5 Exercises

By following this pattern complete the exercises in this pamphlet to construct major scales, minor scales, and major pentatonic scales.

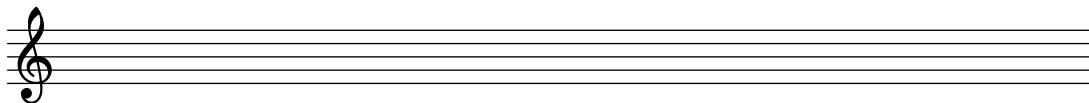
Write a **D major scale**:



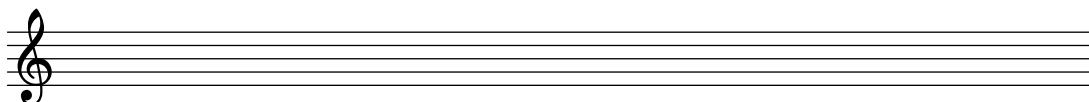
Write a **D minor scale**:



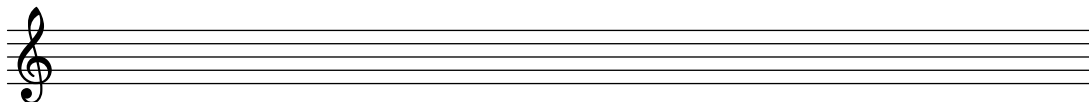
Write a **G major pentatonic scale**:



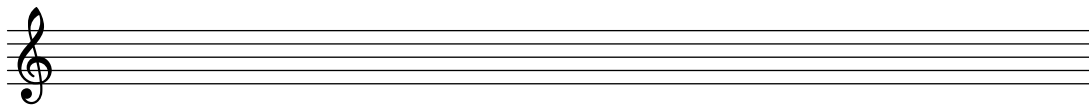
Write an **E minor scale**:



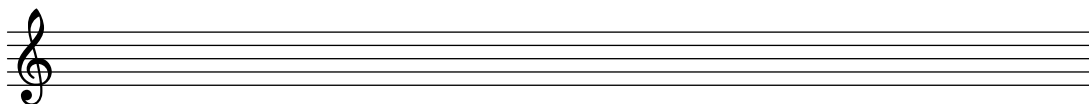
Write an **E<sub>b</sub> major scale**:



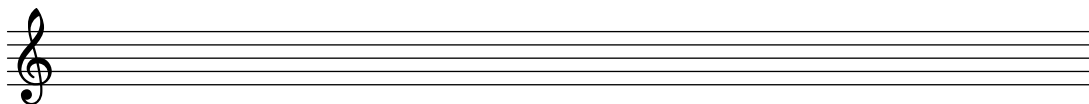
Write an  $E\flat$  minor scale:



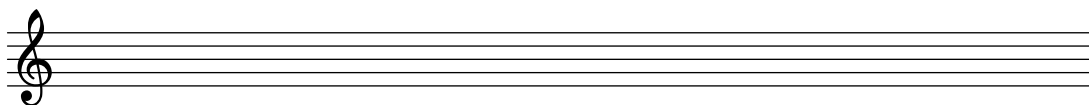
Write a  $F\sharp$  major pentatonic scale:



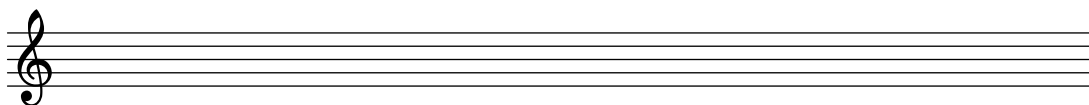
Write a  $D\sharp$  minor scale:



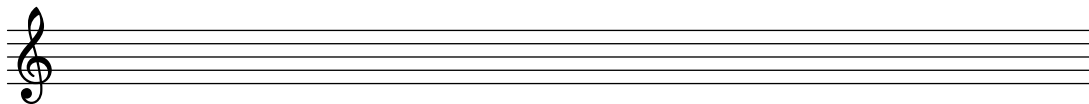
Write an A major scale:



Write a G minor scale:



Write an  $A\flat$  major pentatonic scale:



## 6 Glossary

**Pitch** - A label that relates to either how high or low it is. In Western music, it is represented with note heads on a staff. Imagine the lines of a stave as steps on a ladder. The higher we place the note head on those lines, the higher the pitch. It's like saying which step on the ladder the sound is. Pitches can be ordered in a variety of series, constructing different scales.

**Key** - A representation of what scale or series of pitches is being used in a musical composition. It is usually placed at the beginning of the staff or whenever there is a shift from an old key to a new key. These shifts between keys usually signal a new section of music or a contrasting mood. When composing it is important to be aware of what key you are writing in, this awareness allows you to make informed musical decisions.

**Circle Of Fifths** - A circular diagram with 12 points where pitches are ordered in ascending perfect fifths going clockwise. This diagram usually represents the 24 keys (12 major, 12 minor) that are possible in the 12-pitch Western system. It can also be used as a tool to construct scales and find closely related keys.

**Major Scale** - A series of pitches that follows the W W H W W W H intervallic pattern. It is usually associated with a lighter mood, however, there are exceptions.

**Minor Scale** - A series of pitches that follows the W H W W H W W intervallic pattern. It is usually associated with a darker mood, however, there are exceptions. There are also other variants to this scale such as the melodic minor scale and the harmonic minor scale.

**Major Pentatonic Scale** - A series of pitches similar to the major diatonic scale that omits the fourth and seventh scale degrees. In the case of C major, this would be the pitch of F and B. Because these two pitches create dissonances within a major diatonic scale, their absence in a pentatonic scale allows for greater melodic flexibility.