

SPELLING MAJOR SCALES

It is important for musicians of all styles and instruments to have a firm knowledge of how to construct and play all 12 major scales. This is essential for understanding both melody and harmony in music theory and provides an important basic building block of the music language

The construction consists of an intervallic (distance) relationship between the notes, which is the same for any Major scale. This can be described as a formula of $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 (whole) steps:

The major scale formula: 1-1- $\frac{1}{2}$ -1-1-1- $\frac{1}{2}$

This LESSON will teach the student a “shortcut” to spelling all 12 major scales, introducing an easy method or “trick”.

Once the student can easily spell all 12 major scales using this logical “trick”, all the traditional methods will become apparent and make sense

Step One:

Memorize the order of sharps and flats: B E A D G C F

Flats> <Sharps

Step Two:

Memorize 2 Major scale spellings:

- 1) C D E F G A B C
- 2) F G A B \flat C D E F

For Flat Keys (Keys which have the name “flat” after them (with the exception of “F” will contain flats)

- 1) Spell the scale using the musical alphabet
- 2) Go 1 Letter past the key name in the ORDER OF FLATS (left to right); this is the stopping point in the order of flats (inclusive)
- 3) Fill in the flats

EXAMPLE 1: Key of Ab

- 1) Spell A-A in the musical alphabet:

A B C D E F G A

- 2) Go 1 past the key name in order of flats (BEADGCF) = BEAD

- 3) INSERT FLATS

Ab Bb C Db Eb F G Ab

For SHARP KEYS (Keys other than "C" and "F" which do not say "flat" after the letter name will contain SHARPS)

- 1) Spell using musical alphabet

2) Count up to the 7th scale degree. This is the INCLUSIVE STOPPING POINT in the ORDER OF SHARPS! (FCGDAEB)

EXAMPLE 1: Key of E

- 1) Spell E-E using the musical alphabet:

E F G A B C D E

- 2) Locate scale degree 7 (D)

- 3) This is the stopping point in the ORDER OF SHARPS (FCGD)

- 4) INSERT SHARPS:

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

This method can be repeated for all keys.

