

Jazz Lesson 1

Technique

1. Major Scales

- a. **Major Scales** are a huge corner stone for improving your technique, learning harmony and theory about jazz, and helping you become a better player overall. You can create any major scale from any starting note using a combination of whole steps and half steps in the following order. From any note, move up a Whole Step, move up another whole step, move up a half step, move up a whole step, move up a whole step, move up a whole step, and finally move up a half step. In short hand the major scale formula looks as follows. W W H W W W H, (see below).



2. Major Scale Exercises Template

- a. For our major scales there is an exercise template you will follow every time we practice our scales and add a new scale. The two scales you will be practicing for this lesson will be the C Major Scale and F Major Scale. Below is the template for the major scales.

With every scale you will perform the following steps below.

1. Right Hand

- a. RH Alone, One Octave, Quarter notes
- b. RH Alone , Two Octaves, Quarter Notes
- c. RH Alone, One Octave, Eighth Notes
- d. RH Alone, Two Octaves Eighth Notes

2. *Left Hand*

- a. LH Alone, One Octave, Quarter notes
- b. LH Alone, Two Octave, Quarter notes
- c. LH Alone, One Octave, Eighth Notes
- d. LH Alone, Two Octave, Eighth Notes

3. *Hands Together*

- a. HT, One Octave, Quarter Notes
- b. HT, Two Octaves Eighth Notes

3. *Key Signature*

- a. The **Key Signature** is going to tell us what notes to make **sharp** or **flat**, in a piece or scale. When we make a note sharp, we are moving up a half step. So if we were to find G# we would find G, then move up a half step, and this gives us G#, (see below).



When we make a note flat we move down a half step from the note. If we were to play a Bb, we would find B then move down a half step to find Bb, (see above).

When we learn our key signatures well, it will help us play our major scales, jazz chords, and all pieces better! For example, if we look at the key signature for our F Major Scale, we see that on the fourth note we are required to play is a Bb, and then the rest of the notes are white notes, (see below).



While playing songs or exercises in the key of F this Bb is going to stay constant because it is part of the F major scale and the key signature for F, therefore we are never going to play a B natural, (unless specified by a natural sign) we are always going to play Bb. The key signature is written at the beginning of pieces to let us know what key we are in. All keys have a certain number of sharps or flats. This way when we see one flat on the B line for example, we automatically know, that we are in the key of F, because the F is the only key with one flat being Bb.

4. Fingering

- a. **Fingering** is very important for scales. The fingering for our scales will allow us to play our major scales with ease, and control. You will see fingering on the exercises or pieces listed as small numbers above the notes. (See Figure 9 for C Major scale fingerings. See Major Scale Fingering exercise pdf for all fingerings for all major scales.)

The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is labeled "RH C MAJOR SCALE" and contains two lines of music. The first line shows the scale from C4 to C5 with fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. The second line shows the scale from C5 to C4 with fingerings: 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, 1. The bottom staff is labeled "LH C MAJOR SCALE" and also contains two lines of music. The first line shows the scale from C4 to C5 with fingerings: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The second line shows the scale from C5 to C4 with fingerings: 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Harmony & Theory

1. Whole Steps and Half Steps

- a. Be comfortable with whole steps and half steps will greatly help everything to come. A **Half Step** is going from one tone to the next closest tone up or down. i.e. going up from C to C# or E to F. Also going down from C to B or E to Eb, (see figure below).

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. It illustrates four half-step intervals. The first two are labeled "HALF STEP UP" and show C moving to C# and E moving to F. The last two are labeled "HALF STEP DOWN" and show C moving to B and E moving to Eb. The notes are written on a single staff line.

A **Whole Step** is going from one tone to another while skipping one in between. i.e. going up from C to D, you have skipped C#, (Db) or going up from E to F#, you have skipped F natural. Also going down from A to G, you have skipped Ab, (G#), or from Eb to Db, you have skipped D natural, (see figure below).



2. Intervals

- a. An **interval** is the distance between two notes. We already learned two intervals in the Technique portion of this lesson called the half step and the whole step. The half step and whole step are the two building blocks we will use to create our other intervals. We will now learn all the names of all the intervals in the major scale, see figure below.
 - i. *Half Step* – This interval can also be called a Minor 2nd.
 - ii. *Whole Step* – This interval can also be called a Major 2nd.
 - iii. *Minor 3rd* – A minor third is built from a whole step and a half step, or 1 ½ steps total.
 - iv. *Major 3rd* – A major third is built from a whole step and a whole step, or 2 steps total.
 - v. *Perfect Fourth*– A perfect fourth is built from a whole step, whole step, and half step, or 2 ½ steps total..
 - vi. *Tritone* – A Tritone is built from a whole step, whole step, and a whole step, or 3 steps total.
 - vii. *Perfect Fifth* – A perfect fifth is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, and whole step, or 3 ½ steps total.

- viii. *Minor 6th (Augmented 5th)* – A minor sixth is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 4 steps total.
- ix. *Major 6th* – A major sixth is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, and whole step, or 4 ½ steps total.
- x. *Minor 7th* – A minor 7th is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 5 steps total .
- xi. *Major 7th* – A major 7th is built from a whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, and a whole step, or 5 ½ steps total
- xii. *Octave* – An octave is built from a whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, whole step, or 6 steps total.

The image displays three staves of musical notation in a treble clef, illustrating various intervals. Each interval is represented by two notes on a staff, with the interval name and its constituent steps written above the notes.

- Staff 1:**
 - Interval 1: HALF STEP (MINOR 2ND) (C4 to B3)
 - Interval 2: WHOLE STEP (MAJOR 2ND) (C4 to D4)
 - Interval 3: MINOR 3RD (C4 to E♭4)
 - Interval 4: MAJOR 3RD (C4 to E4)
- Staff 2:**
 - Interval 5: PERFECT 4TH (C4 to F4)
 - Interval 6: TRITONE (C4 to F♯4)
 - Interval 7: PERFECT 5TH (C4 to G4)
 - Interval 8: MINOR 6TH (AUGMENTED 5TH) (C4 to B♭4)
- Staff 3:**
 - Interval 9: MAJOR 6TH (C4 to A4)
 - Interval 10: MINOR 7TH (C4 to B♭4)
 - Interval 11: MAJOR 7TH (C4 to B4)
 - Interval 12: OCTAVE (C4 to C5)

- b. You may notice that you can use different combinations of whole steps and half steps to form intervals. However you chose to count the half steps and whole steps is up to you as long as you come to the total number of steps accurately.

Repertoire

1. Listen to a jazz album

- a. What is the best way for someone to learn a new language? To move to the native country where that language is spoken so that the ear has no choice but to listen to the language and learn it! Learning jazz is exactly like learning a new language. In order to fully grasp all the nuances, you have to listen to the jazz giants of the past and present. Pick any album that you might own or have heard and listen to it as many times as possible until our next lesson. Have fun!

2. Learning Tunes Series Part 1 – How To Learn A Tune And Remember It (6 Step Process)

- a. I hear so many people say “Brenden, I play pieces over and over again but they never seem to stick in my head!” Well that is because you are not actually learning the main components of the piece. You are just playing it. Playing pieces doesn’t help memorize and know it well. You must practice each section of the puzzle and then put together to create the entire tune. What do I mean by this? We will break each piece down into six steps that you will work on individually to learn and memorize the piece so well you will never need the music again. These six steps are the building blocks of every piece. Every step must be treated with equal importance. After completing these steps the piece will be burnt into your memory forever. Take a look at this 4 bar passage below. We will first start with this simple section from a tune called “All The Things You Are” in order to learn our 6 step process.

