

100 Lecture 6

Scale Degrees:

Each degree of the scale also has a technical name, which shows its position within the scale “hierarchy”. Each note of the scale has its own “character” or function. For example the tonic is the basis of the scale, and the music often finishes on this note. Other less definitive “finishing” notes are the mediant and the dominant, being the other two notes of the tonic triad (see lecture 10). The leading note and the supertonic notes have the effect of making the music sound unfinished, and the leading note pulls strongly upwards to resolve onto the tonic note.

1. do Tonic
2. re Supertonic
3. mi Mediant
4. fa Subdominant
5. so Dominant
6. la Submediant
7. ti Leading Note
8. do Tonic

The Major Scale:

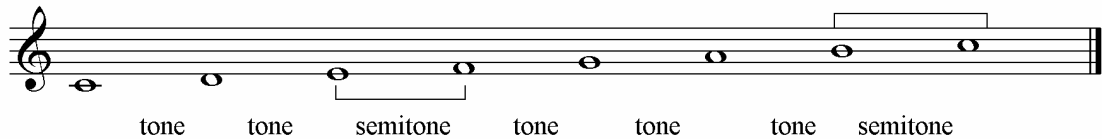
The major scale is made up of a specific series of tones and semitones:

Tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, tone, semitone.

The semitones occur between notes 3-4 and notes 7-8 of the scale.

Wherever on the keyboard the scale is played, this order must be preserved.

Here is the scale of C major. The semitones are marked with brackets.



If we begin the scale on G we need to use an F# to preserve the semitone between notes 7-8.



Here is the scale again, beginning on F and D:



Key Signatures

To save writing out sharps and flats constantly, we use a key signature at the beginning of the music. The key signature is written at the beginning of the music, and on every subsequent line of music. (Unlike the time signature, which is only shown once at the beginning of the music). The key signature alters every affected note in the piece, wherever it appears on the staff. Any other notes that need to be temporarily altered during the piece are called **accidentals**. An accidental sharp, flat or natural is placed in front of the note on the same line or space, and is only effective for one bar. **(Listening Example: *Fur Elise*, Beethoven).**

Here are the scales of G, F and D major written out again, with key signature.



Key signatures can consist of sharps or flats. The easiest way to learn them is to use the cycle of fifths – every 5 notes upwards from C a new sharp is added to a sharp key signature, and every 5 notes downwards from C a new flat is added to a flat key signature. In the middle of the cycle some scales can be spelled in sharps or flats. See the accompanying handout for the Circle of Fifths diagram. The sharps or flats in a key signature must always appear in the correct order and on the correct line or space.