

Alfred's Premier Piano Express

Dennis Alexander, Gayle Kowalchyk, E. L. Lancaster, Victoria McArthur & Martha Mier

All-In-One Accelerated Course

Lesson ■ Theory ■ Technique ■ Performance

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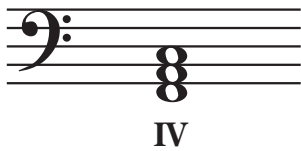
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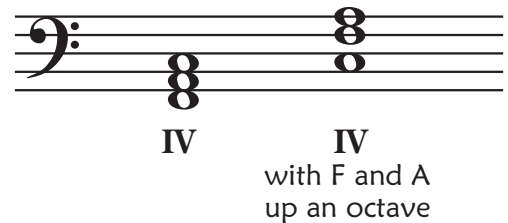
UNIT 1 The IV Chord

The IV Chord in C

The **IV** chord is built on the 4th note (subdominant) of the scale.



In C major, the **IV** chord often moves F and A up an octave.



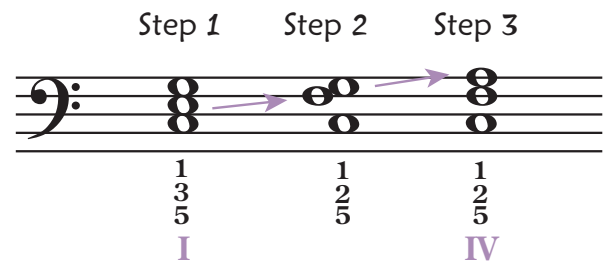
Moving from the I Chord to the IV Chord

Use these three steps to make **I–IV** in C easier to play:

Step 1: Play the **I** chord.

Step 2: Raise the middle note a half step.

Step 3: Raise the top note a whole step.



The Primary Chords in C

The most important chords in any key are the **I**, **IV**, and **V⁷** chords. They are called the **primary chords**.

1. Play **I**, **IV**, and **V⁷**, saying the chord names aloud.

2nd time RH 8va

2. Using these rhythms, play **I**, **IV**, and **V⁷** in C by reading the chord symbols.

Starting Chord

a. RH

b. LH

UNIT 4 Ledger Lines and the Chromatic Scale

Ledger Lines Below the Bass Staff

Ledger lines below the bass staff are used to notate low notes.

A musical staff in 4/4 time showing a descending chromatic scale: E, D, C, B, and A. The notes E, D, C, and B are on the staff, while the final note, A, is on a double ledger line below the staff.

Mystery Theater 9

Andante

5
Name notes.

5 *a tempo*

5
LH 1

9

ff
8va

UNIT 6 D Major Scale and Chords

Preparation for D Major Scale

a. 

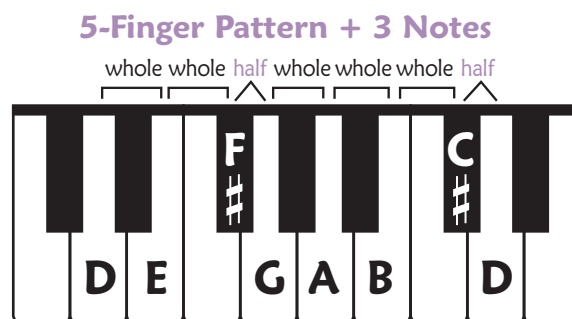
b. 

D Major Scale

The D major scale contains 8 notes—the D 5-finger pattern + 3 notes.

Half steps occur between notes 3–4 (F#–G) and 7–8 (C#–D).

In the D major scale, there are two sharps—F# and C#.



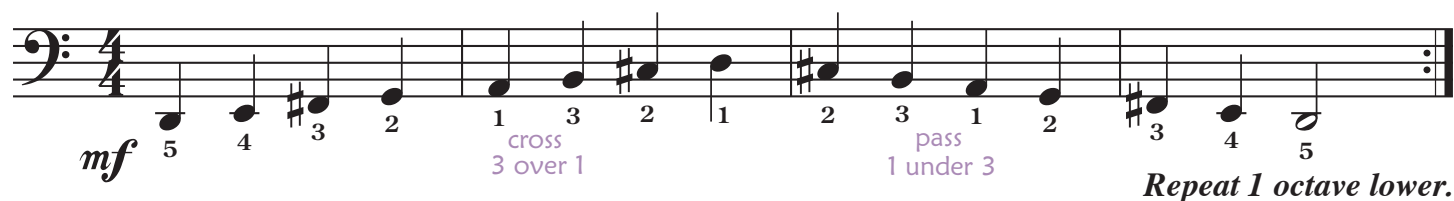
Playing the D Major Scale (Hands Separately)

Say the finger numbers as you practice slowly. Memorize the fingering.

Right Hand



Left Hand



Intervals in the D Scale



UNIT 7 A Minor Scales and Chords

Minor Scales

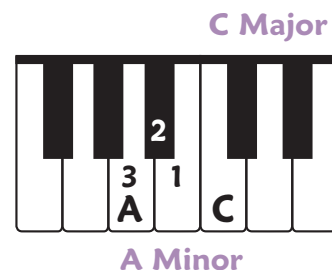
Minor scales sound different from major scales. There are 3 types of minor scales: *natural*, *harmonic*, and *melodic*. In this book, you will learn *natural* and *harmonic* minor scales.

Relative Minor Scales

Each major scale has a *relative minor* scale. The *relative minor* scale begins on the 6th note of the major scale. The two scales use the same notes and key signature.

A minor is the *relative minor* of C major. The keys of C major and A minor have no sharps or flats in the key signature.

You can also find the relative minor by counting 3 half steps *down* from the tonic.



C MAJOR SCALE **A MINOR SCALE**

A Natural Minor Scale

The A natural minor scale contains 8 notes—the A minor 5-finger pattern + 3 notes.

Half steps occur between notes 2–3 (B–C) and 5–6 (E–F).

In the A natural minor scale, there are no sharps or flats.

5-Finger Pattern + 3 Notes



Playing the A Natural Minor Scale (Hands Separately)

Say the finger numbers as you practice slowly. Memorize the fingering.

Right Hand *mf* **Repeat 1 octave higher.**

Left Hand *mf* **Repeat 1 octave lower.**

Worksheet Sixteenth Notes

1. Change the quarter notes to sixteenth notes by adding 2 beams to each group of 4.



2. Add a beam to each group of 3 quarter notes. Then change the 2nd and 3rd notes in each group to sixteenth notes by adding a 2nd beam.



3. Add a beam to each group of 3 quarter notes. Then change the 1st and 2nd notes in each group to sixteenth notes by adding a 2nd beam.



4. Write one note in the empty box to equal the total counts of the notes in the first box.

a. =

b. =

c. =

d. =

New Italian Terms

Sforzando (*sf*) = with a strong accent

Leggiero = lightly

Dolce = sweetly

Risoluto = boldly

Speed Links

To play sixteenth notes quickly, link notes together with one arm motion. Play the first note of each sixteenth-note pattern with weight. Quickly play the notes that follow in the same measure by transferring weight from finger to finger.

Arabesque* 33

Johann Burgmüller

(1806–1874)

Op. 100, No. 2

Allegro scherzando

The musical score for 'Arabesque' is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 2/4 time, marked *p* and *leggiero*. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a *mf* dynamic and a *p* dynamic. The third system (measures 9-12) includes a *ff* dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fingerings.

* An *arabesque* is a piece with many decorative musical figures. In Burgmüller's *Arabesque*, the sixteenth notes provide the decoration.

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Foreword

Premier Piano Express is designed for students who need a fast-paced approach to piano study. Based on the concepts and music from *Premier Piano Course*, this All-in-One Accelerated Course integrates Lesson, Theory, Technique, and Performance pages. This comprehensive course is organized into skills-based units that feature clear explanations of important musical concepts and written worksheets to provide review and strengthen understanding.

Book 4 continues the steady development of artistry and keyboard skills that began in Book 1. The keys of B-flat and E-flat major are introduced. Also introduced are melodic minor scales, augmented triads, diminished triads, and major key signatures with more sharps and flats. Sixteenth notes in $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, , and cut time are added to other rhythms of gradually increasing complexity, including mixed meter and syncopated rhythm patterns. Elements of musical style in the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods introduce students to considerations in performing music of those eras. Technical skills include the development of playing two-octave scales and arpeggios, grace notes, off-beat accompaniment patterns, and note-against-note coordination.

Audio recordings can be downloaded for those pieces in the book identified with a speaker icon (). There are two versions of each piece:

1. A **practice tempo** performed on acoustic piano.
2. A **performance tempo** performed on acoustic piano.

These files can be downloaded at alfred.com/premierpianoexpress.

TNT 2 Custom Mix Software (also downloadable) allows the user to change tempos in these audio files.

These recordings add musical interest, and motivate students in the lesson and during practice.

The authors of *Premier Piano Express* send our best wishes as you begin this exciting musical journey!

All music was composed or arranged by
Dennis Alexander and Martha Mier.

Audio Recordings Download Instructions:

PC: After downloading the “Premier Piano Express Book 4.zip” file, right-click on it and select “Extract All.” Follow the onscreen prompts to extract the zip file. Once the extraction is finished, the MP3s can be moved to your computer or MP3 player for listening.

Mac: After downloading the “Premier Piano Express Book 4.dmg” file, double-click it to open the disc image. From there, the MP3s can be moved to your computer or MP3 player for listening.

TNT 2 System Requirements:

Windows

10, 8, 7, Vista, XP
QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
1.8 GHz processor or faster
350 MB hard drive space, 2 GB RAM minimum
Speakers or headphones
Internet access required for updates/downloads

Macintosh

OS X 10.4 or higher (Intel only)
QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
350 MB hard drive space, 2 GB RAM minimum
Speakers or headphones
Internet access for updates/downloads

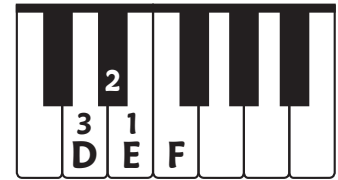
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UNIT 1 D Minor Scales and Chords

D Minor Scale *Relative Minor of F Major*

The *relative minor* scale begins on the 6th note of the major scale. Therefore, D minor is the *relative minor* of F major. The keys of F major and D minor have one flat in the key signature—B \flat .

F Major



D Minor

You can also find the relative minor by counting 3 *half steps* down from the tonic.



F MAJOR SCALE

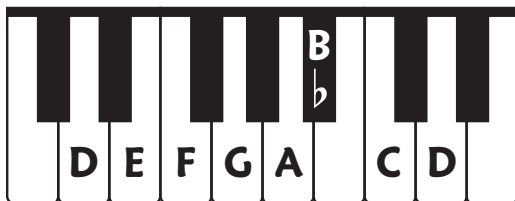
D NATURAL MINOR SCALE



D Natural Minor Scale

In the D natural minor scale, there is one flat (B \flat).

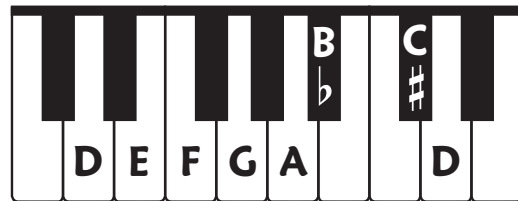
Half steps occur between notes 2–3 (E–F) and 5–6 (A–B \flat).



D Harmonic Minor Scale

The D harmonic minor scale is the same as the D natural minor scale, but with the 7th (C) raised a half step. The C \sharp is written as an accidental.

7th raised



Playing D Minor Scales—Hands Separately

Say the finger numbers as you practice slowly. Play the LH 2 octaves lower than written. Memorize the fingering.

D Natural Minor

Repeat 1 octave higher.



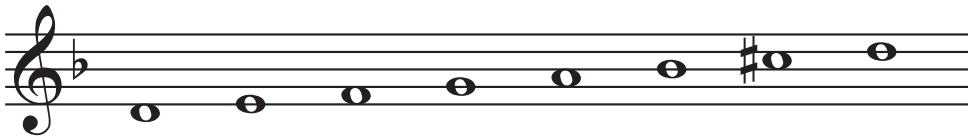
D Harmonic Minor

Repeat 1 octave higher.



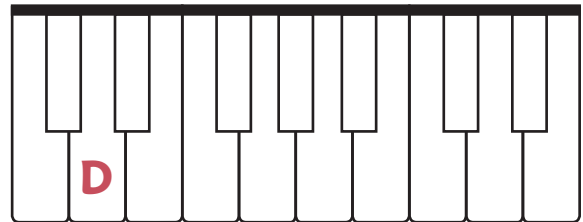
Worksheet D Harmonic Minor Scale

D Harmonic Minor Scale



1. The D harmonic minor scale is the same as the D natural minor scale, but with the 7th note raised a half step. The raised note in D harmonic minor is ____ #.

2. On the keyboard, write the letter names for the notes in the D harmonic minor scale. Circle the keys that have a half step between them.



3. Using whole notes, write the D harmonic minor scale going up.



4. On the blank lines *above* the notes, write the fingering for the RH D harmonic minor scale. Then play.



5. On the blank lines *below* the notes, write the fingering for the LH D harmonic minor scale. Then play.



Musical Style Periods: The Baroque Period (1600–1750)

Baroque means “irregularly shaped pearl.” The word *Baroque* was first used to describe the ornate architecture of the period, which had many swirls and other decorations. Much of the music from the same period had ornate sounds created by embellishments or ornaments such as trills.

During the Baroque Period:

- Much music was composed for popular dances of the time, such as minuets and gavottes.
- The main keyboard instruments were the harpsichord with its plucked strings, the clavichord with its delicately struck strings, and the organ.
- Three important keyboard composers were Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), and Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757). All three composers were born in the same year.

1607 The British settled in North America in Jamestown, Virginia.

1638 King Louis XIV (14th) of France was born. He ruled for over 70 years and had a great impact on music and dance of the period.

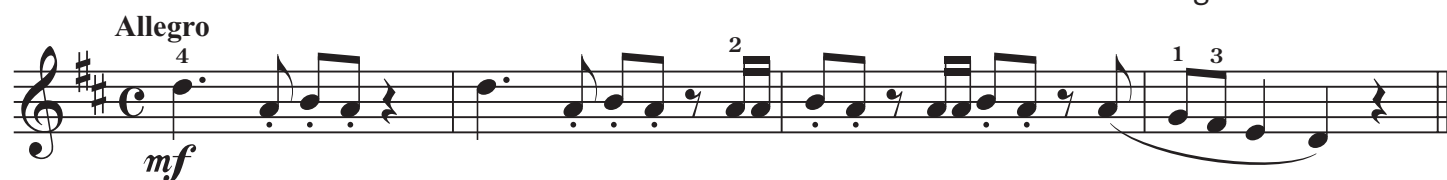
1725 Johann Sebastian Bach compiled the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*, dedicated to his wife.

1741 George Frideric Handel composed the *Messiah* for chorus and orchestra. Even today it is performed frequently, especially at Christmas.

Play these melodies from the Baroque period. Count aloud.

1. Hallelujah Chorus (from *Messiah*)

George Frideric Handel



2. Minuet (from *Sonata in C Major*)

Domenico Scarlatti
K. 73; L. 217

Moderato

mf

7

Practice Plan

Because Baroque music often has independent lines (called *counterpoint*) being played at the same time, it is useful to practice in a certain way. Follow these suggestions while practicing *Minuet in G Major*.

■ Section A (measures 1–16)

1. Practice each hand separately, carefully observing the phrasing and *staccato* (lightly detached) marks.
2. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 7–8, 11–12, and 15–16 hands together. Then play, hands together.

■ Section B (measures 17–32)

1. Practice each hand separately, carefully observing the phrasing and *staccato* marks.
2. First, play the LH rhythm in measures 25–26 as three quarter notes. Then play, holding the half notes for two counts each. (Notice they overlap.)
3. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 25–32 hands together. Then play, hands together.

Minuet in G Major 4

(from the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*)

Christian Petzold (1677–c. 1733)*
BWV Anh. 114

Section A
Allegro moderato

Section B

* Although this piece is often said to be written by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), recent research suggests that it was composed by Christian Petzold, a German organist and composer.

13

4 1 2 1

2 3 1 2 1 1

17 **Section B**

5 1 2 1 3

mf 2 4

21

3 1 2 4 1 3

1 3 1 1 4 2 1

25

5 1 2 1 5 1 2 1 5 2 1 2 3

f 3 1 2 1

29

1 3 1 1 3 5 2 1

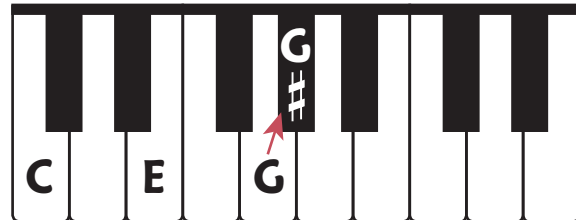
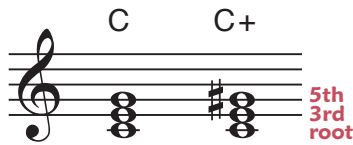
last time rit. 4 2 1 4 2

UNIT 3 Augmented Triads

Augmented Triads

The word *augment* means to make larger.

A major triad becomes augmented when the 5th is raised one half step. A plus sign (+) indicates an augmented chord.

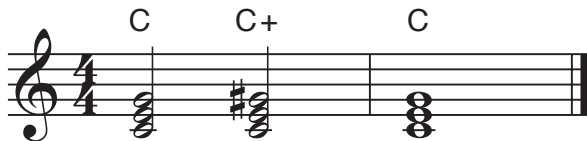


To make a C major triad augmented, raise G (the 5th) one half step to G#.

Playing Major and Augmented Triads

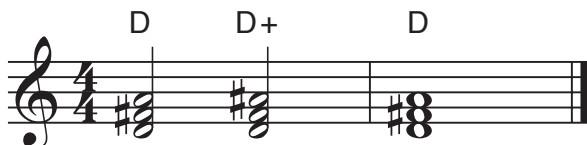
Play *major* and *augmented* triads. Raise the top note of the *major* triad one half step to form an *augmented* (+) triad. Practice one group of triads each day.

Group 1: C, G, F (Major Triads: white key–white key–white key)



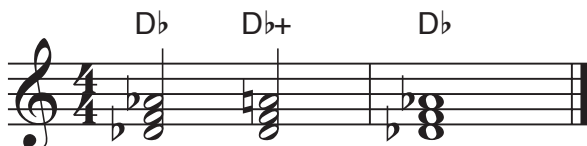
- Transpose to G and F.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 2: D, A, E (Major Triads: white key–black key–white key)



- Transpose to A and E.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 3: D^b, A^b, E^b (Major Triads: black key–white key–black key)



- Transpose to A^b and E^b.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 4: B^b, B, F# (G^b) (Major Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to B and F# (G^b).
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Worksheet Augmented Triads

1. Draw a line to connect each triad name in the center column to the matching bass-clef triad in the left column and the matching treble-clef triad in the right column.

	A^b major	
	G augmented	
	E major	
	C augmented	

2. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 1 major triad. Remember to *raise* the top note of the major triad *one half step* to form the augmented triad. Then play.

C C+ G G+ F F+

3. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 2 major triad. Then play.

D D+ A A+ E E+

4. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 3 major triad. Then play.

D^b D^b+ A^b A^b+ E^b E^b+

Grace Note

A small note with a slash is an ornament called a **grace note**. It is a decorative note. Play it quickly, before the beat of the note that follows.



Carnaval de Buenos Aires* 5

Moderato

4

8

2nd time to Coda

* Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina. It hosts an annual carnival where people dress in colorful costumes.

12

5 2 1

f

15

4 2 1

2 3 4

mp

18

4 2

p

D. C. al Coda

Coda

5 2 1

2 1

4 3 1

f

mf

25

5 2 1

mp

rit.

8va

UNIT 4 Sharp Key Signatures

Sharp Key Signatures

The key signature (the sharps or flats at the beginning of the staff) identifies two things:

- The key of the piece.
- The *sharps* or *flats* to be played throughout the piece.

The sharps that are used in key signatures are *always* written in the same order on the staff: **F C G D A E B**

Play the sharps in order on the keyboard.



Memorize the order of the sharps.
This sentence will help you remember:
Furry **c**ats **g**et **d**irty **a**fter **e**very **b**ath.

Finding a Sharp Key Signature's Name

Use these two steps:

- Name the *last* sharp.
- Then go *up one half step*.

This is the name of the major key.



Last sharp: C#
Up one half step: D
Key of D Major

You have already learned the following key signatures:

- C major—no sharps or flats
- G major—1 sharp
- D major—2 sharps

Name the following keys by circling the last sharp and then going up one half step.



Key of ____ major



Key of ____ major



Key of ____ major

Two-Octave Scales Beginning on White Keys

You have played one-octave scales for C, G, D, and F major, and A, E, and D minor. Follow the fingering below and play the scales hands separately for two octaves.

	1st octave	2nd octave
C, G, D,	RH: 1 2 3 1 2 3 4	1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5
Am, Em, Dm	LH: 5 4 3 2 1 3 2	1 4 3 2 1 3 2 1

New Sharp-Key Major Scales Beginning on White Keys

Name the sharps in each key and circle each note that is played as a sharp. Then practice hands separately. Play the LH two octaves lower than written.

Key of A Major

Key of E Major

Key of B Major

Hints for remembering the fingering of two-octave major scales that begin on white keys:

- The keys of C, G, D, A, and E major and A, E, and D minor use the same fingering in each hand.
- The RH for B major and the LH for F major use the same fingering as C, G, D, A, and E major.
- The LH for B major and the RH for F major never use finger 5.

UNIT 5 Dotted Eighth Note

Dotted Eighth Note

An eighth note tied to a sixteenth note equals a dotted eighth note.

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{eighth note} \text{ --- } \text{sixteenth note} = \text{dotted eighth note} \\ \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4} \\ \text{count} \quad \text{count} \quad \text{count} \end{array}$$

The dotted eighth note is almost always followed by a sixteenth note.



The dot increases the length of a note by half its value.

Clap and count each pattern.

1.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

3.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

2.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

4.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

Dotted Eighth Note Patterns

- Study the rhythm pattern in each exercise.
- Each repeated pattern begins on the key that is one step above or below the first pattern.
- First, practice slowly. Then, gradually increase the tempo.

Moderato

1.

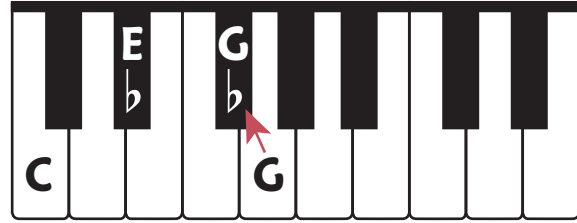
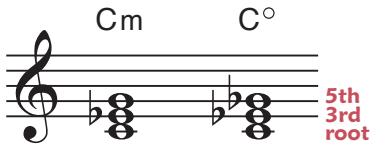
Moderato

2.

Diminished Triads

The word *diminish* means *to make smaller*.

A minor triad becomes diminished when the 5th is lowered one half step. A small circle (°) indicates a diminished chord.

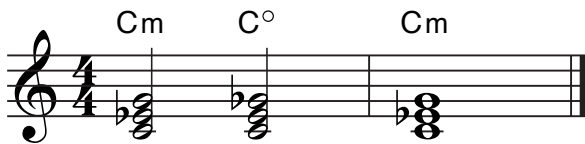


To make a C minor triad diminished, lower G (the 5th) one half step to G♭.

Playing Minor and Diminished Triads

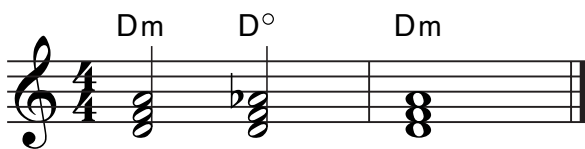
Play *minor* and *diminished* triads. Lower the top note of the *minor* triad one half step to form a *diminished* (°) triad. Practice one group of triads each day.

Group 1: Cm, Gm, Fm (Minor Triads: white key–black key–white key)



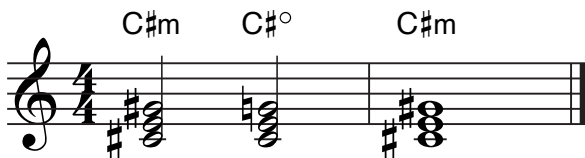
- Transpose to Gm and Fm.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 2: Dm, Am, Em (Minor Triads: white key–white key–white key)



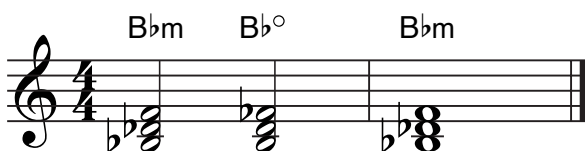
- Transpose to Am and Em.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 3: C#m, G#m, D#m (Minor Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to G#m and D#m.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 4: Bbm, Bm, F#m (Minor Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to Bm and F#m.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Three Types of Minor Scales

There are 3 types of minor scales: *natural*, *harmonic*, and *melodic*.

1. **Natural minor scale**—uses *only* the notes of the relative major scale. The **A natural minor scale** uses the notes of the C major scale.
2. **Harmonic minor scale**—same as the *natural minor scale* but raises the 7th note a half step. The **A harmonic minor scale** raises the 7th note (G) a half step to G♯.
3. **Melodic minor scale**—same as the *natural minor scale* but raises the 6th and 7th notes a half step going *up*, and returns to the natural minor going *down*. The **A melodic minor scale** raises the 6th (F) and 7th (G) notes a half step to F♯ and G♯ going *up*; they become F♭ and G♭ going *down*.

Playing Melodic Minor Scales—Hands Separately

Play the LH 2 octaves *lower* than written. Memorize the fingering.

A Melodic Minor

E Melodic Minor

B Melodic Minor

D Melodic Minor

G Melodic Minor

Spinning Song 🎧 21

Albert Ellmenreich (1816–1905)
Op. 14, No. 4

Allegretto

p *mp* *f* *subito (suddenly)* *p* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

6 11 16 21

The Primary Chords in A \flat , D \flat , and G \flat Major

Key of A \flat Major

Moderato

mf I IV I V7 I

5 3 1 5 4 1

1 2 5 1 2 5

Key of D \flat Major

Allegro

f I IV I V7 I

5 3 1 5 4 1

mp 1 2 5 1 2 5

Key of G \flat Major

Moderato

mp I IV I V7 I

5 3 1 5 4 1

1 2 5 1 2 5

Put It All Together

Andante

mp I IV I V7 I IV I V7 I

5 3 1 5 4 1 2 3 1 3 1 1 3 1 4

mf 3 1 4 1 3 1 4 1 1 2 5 1 2 5

Play again in D \flat and G \flat major.

Practice Plan

Section A (measures 1–30 and measures 57–86)

1. Practice each hand separately, listening for the crisp staccato notes in measures 1–26 and 57–82.
2. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 3–4 hands together. Then play, hands together.

Section B (measures 31–56)

1. Practice each hand separately, listening for the legato phrasing in the RH.
2. Silently “play” the LH chords as you play the singing RH melody.

Coda (measures 87–96)

1. Practice measures 87–91 slowly, listening that the hands always play exactly together.
2. Silently practice the moves to the different octaves in measures 92–95.

New Italian Terms

misterioso = mysteriously
animato = animated, lively

Ballade* 27

Johann Burgmüller
 (1806–1874)

Section A

Allegro con brio

* A *ballade* is a piece that tells a dramatic story.