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CHAPTER 2

Blues Theory

If you understand half and whole steps, note names and sharps and flats, you know enough to understand how scales, chords, keys and harmony work—everything you need to know to understand what's in this book.

THE MAJOR SCALE

Our basic reference point is the *major scale*, which is the scale you get when you sing “do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do.” Here’s a C Major scale (“do” is C):

17

T
A
B

3 0 2 3 0 2 0 1

Notice where the whole steps and half steps fall in this scale. This pattern is the definition of a major scale.

Notes: C D E F G A B C
Steps: W W H W W W H

W = whole step
H = half step

SCALE DEGREES

The notes of the scale are numbered according to their distance from the first note, which is called the *root* (R). In the C Major scale, D is the *second degree* of the scale, or 2nd, E is the 3rd, and so on. The scale degrees are written above the staff in this example.

18

R 2 3 4 5 6 7 R

W W H W W W H

T
A
B

3 5 7 8 10 12 14 15