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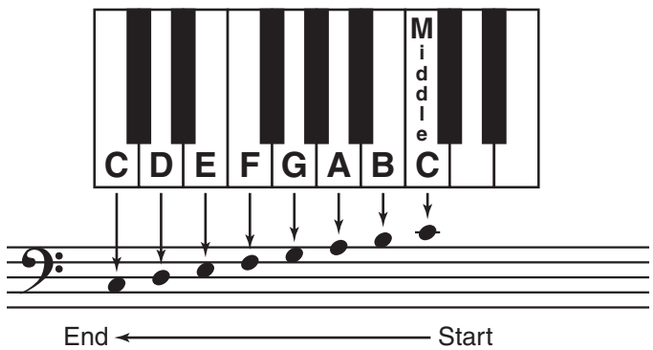
Left-Hand Chords

MUSICAL ALPHABET (BACKWARDS)

Find middle C with your left hand and play the musical alphabet backwards, descending one octave from C to C.

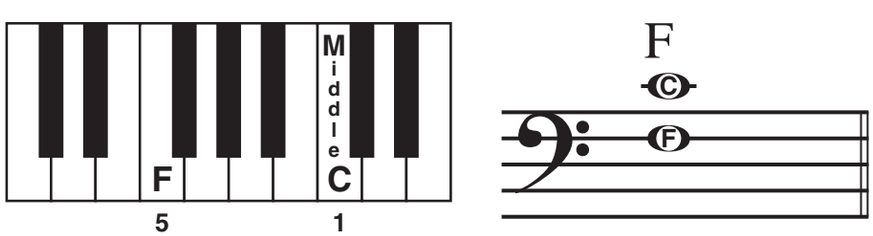


C CHORD: LEFT HAND

Using your left hand, put your 5th finger on C (below middle C) and your 1st finger on G. Play these notes together. You'll be playing two of the three notes that make the complete chord when you play both hands together.

F CHORD: LEFT HAND

Keep your left hand in the same shape and move your 5th finger up to F and your 1st finger to middle C. Use your 5th finger (or pinky) as your reference point.



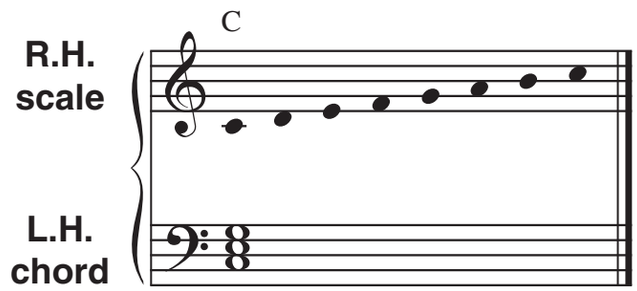
IMPROVISATION

We've learned a little about scales and about playing melodies by ear; now let's explore ***improvisation***. Improvisation means making up your own melodies from the notes of the scale. All you need is a little technique and a lot of imagination.

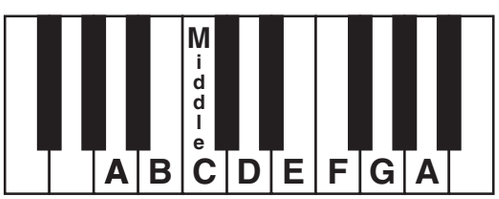
Let's go back to our familiar key of C. With only white keys to deal with, it's hard to make a mistake.

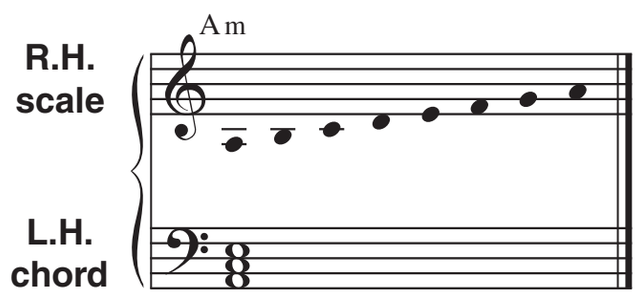
First we'll need a chord progression so that we will have a background for our improvised melody. We can pick any chords from the key. Let's start with two: C major and A minor.

C Major



A minor





Listening

Track 46

This track is an example of improvising over the C major and A minor chords. The keyboard player plays a C chord with the left hand and the notes of the C scale in the right hand in any order he chooses. The chord changes to A minor in the left hand, and the keyboard player continues to improvise with the right hand using the notes in the C major scale.

As you listen to the recording, notice the keyboard player plays basically the same notes over both chords, yet the notes sound very different when played over each chord. Hearing the relationship of a scale to a chord is the essence of improvising.