

# *The Gary Marks* PIANO METHOD

This book is dedicated to my students,  
and to my two mentors,  
Michael Cochrane and Art Lande.

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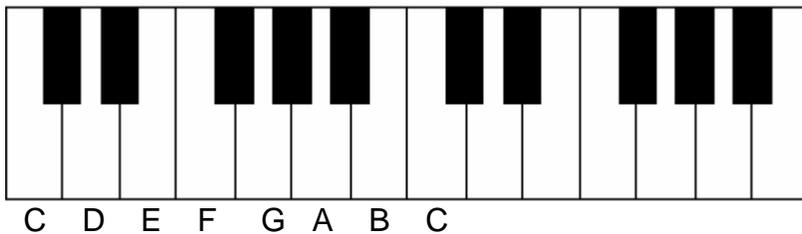
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# Glossary

**For those of you who know the names of the notes, scan the 10 definitions as well, and then move on.**

## 1. Names of the Notes - listed in both sharps and flats

C#	D#	F#	G#	A#
or	or	or	or	or
Db	Eb	Gb	Ab	Bb



2.  $\frac{1}{2}$  step = the smallest interval, or unit of movement on the piano. (For Example C to Db, or Db to D)

3. # = sharp = A symbol that raises the pitch of a note  $\frac{1}{2}$  step. (The smallest note movement to the right.)

4. b = flat = A symbol that lowers the pitch of a note  $\frac{1}{2}$  step. (The smallest note movement to the left.) [ Db is the same as C# ]

5. Up = to the right, or moving higher in pitch.  
Down = To the left, or moving lower in pitch.

6. Octave = The interval between two notes with the same name. For example, C to the following C, or D to the following D, etc. (See drawing.) Two octaves would be considered C to 2 C's above or below itself, or D to 2 D's above or below itself, etc.

7. The key = Often synonymous with "the scale."

8. Middle C = The C directly below the brand label on an acoustic piano, or the C located below the middle of the display panel of an average synthesizer.

9. Bass = The lowest sounding note, or the piano note farthest to the left of whatever you are playing.

10. Register = A general tonal range of the piano. Low register, mid-register, and high register would represent 1/3 each of the entire range of the piano.

I Understand these **10 definitions**.

II **Memorize the notes** of the piano.

**-2 exercises:**

A) Touch a note and say it. 5-10 minutes a day.

B) Say a note and find it. 5-10 minutes a day.

**~If it's too difficult to learn both flats AND sharps,**  
spend a few days learning the black notes with their **FLATTED names only**.

Here's a little game to help you:

The black notes moving left to right from the group of 2 to the group of 3, are

"Db Eb," then "Gb, Ab, Bb."

If you spell out the letters of the black notes moving from left to right, or "up", you get, **"DE GAB."** Consider it a new French phrase for "small talk." (If it helps you to memorize the black notes the French will forgive you and me both.)

**All of these black notes would be spoken as "flats."**

So you would call out the black notes from Db moving right as follows,

"D flat (Db), E flat (Eb), G flat (Gb), A flat (Ab), B flat (Bb)."

After you have memorized the black notes with their flatted names, spend time seeing and naming the black notes with their sharped names: C#, D#, and F#, G#, A#.

Don't consider the white notes as flatted or sharped,  
although they can be - for example F could be considered E#,  
and E could be considered Fb. Just learn the whites as C D E F G A B.

# CHAPTER 1

## I THE NUMERICAL LANGUAGE: INTERVALS

The interval system is the key to all theory.  
It is a system to see scales and chords  
as simple numerical patterns from any note.

(For those familiar with "minor 2nds, perfect 5ths, etc.," refer to  
"teacher's notes" at the end of this chapter.)

Here are intervals ascending in 1/2 steps:  
**Any note** on the piano could be considered the "1."  
Read this until you can say this pattern aloud.

1	b2	2	b3	3	4	b5	5	b6	6	b7	7	1
\	\				\						\	
Any note.	This is pronounced "flat 2," not "2 flat."		There is no flat 4. 4 is simply the next 1/2 step after 3.						There is no flat 1. 1 is the next 1/2 step after 7.			

Flats & sharps are written and spoken  
*before* numbers and *after* letters  
b2="flat 2," as opposed to Db= "D flat."

### 2 EXAMPLES

Ex. a.) FROM a C note in 1/2 steps:

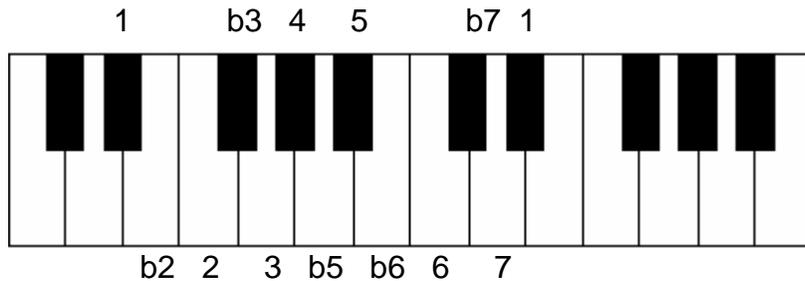
C	Db	D	Eb	E	F	Gb	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C
1	b2	2	b3	3	4	b5	5	b6	6	b7	7	1

	b2	b3		b5	b6	b7						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7						

← ← (Turn on the tape.)

Ex. b.) FROM an Eb note in 1/2 steps:

Eb E F Gb G Ab A Bb B C Db D Eb  
1 b2 2 b3 3 4 b5 5 b6 6 b7 7 1



If you're wondering why you need to learn this, I like your independent thinking. Just learn this simple exercise below and within the next few pages you'll see there are plenty of good reasons.

**EXERCISE 1 (1 min. a day):**

(Even if you are an advanced player,

MAKE SURE YOU ARE FLUID with this exercise before continuing.)

**COUNT OUT LOUD, AND TOUCH, 1 UP TO 1, FROM ANY NOTE.**

Ex. Bb: TOUCH: Bb B C Db D Eb E F Gb G Ab A Bb  
SAY: 1 b2 2 b3 3 4 b5 5 b6 6 b7 7 1



\* **You don't have to say the names of the LETTERS,**  
just touch the notes going up in 1/2 steps and say the numbers out loud.

**Make sure you understand how to do this exercise  
before moving forward.**

As soon as possible, try NOT to look up at the book, but DOWN at the piano while counting. (It is valuable to learn how to play while looking at a piece of music, or looking at another musician, but the tendency of most beginning players, especially those with classical training, is to avoid the visual world of the keyboard itself. The best idea would be to find a comfort level with both worlds.)

So for now,

LOOK DOWN

DO THIS EXERCISE NOW UNTIL IT FEELS COMFORTABLE.

## II

## THE BASIC TRIADS

Triads are three note chords.

Here is how they are formed from any note through the interval system.

(For those familiar with "augmented triads," refer to "teacher's notes.")

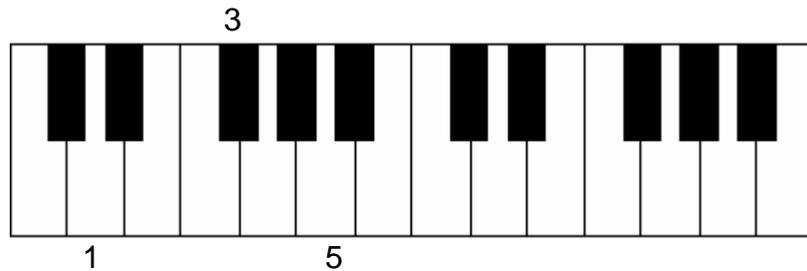
M Maj Major = 1 3 5

m min minor = 1 b3 5

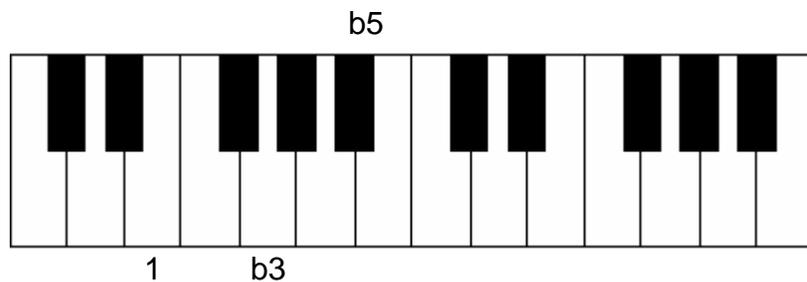
dim diminished = 1 b3 b5

EXAMPLES:

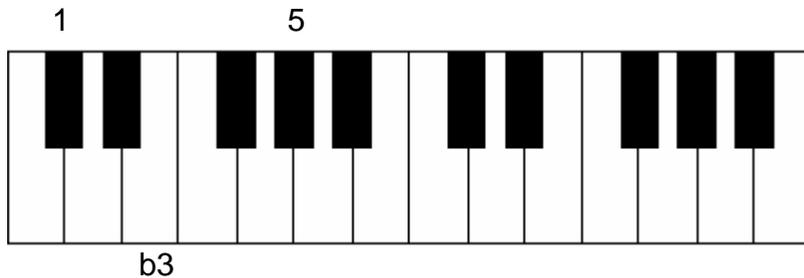
D Maj = D F# A  
1 3 5



E dim = E G Bb  
1 b3 b5



Db min = Db E Ab (This could also be  
1 b3 5 spelled "D Fb Ab.")



As a final example, C Maj = 1 3 5.

**The choice of # versus b will be explained later.  
For now just think of them as inter-changeable.**

### **EXERCISE 2 (1 min. a day):**

Memorize the different symbols and intervals for each of the  
3 basic triads.

Example:

Minor chords are known as "m" or "min,"  
and they are 1 b3 5.

I'll pick at random, Bb min:

Bb m = Bb Db F

1 b3 5. Play these three notes together.

That's the sound of the Bb minor chord. ← ←

\* Find more on your own this week for a few minutes a day. There is no need as of yet to retain the memory of any specific chord. Just understand the process of how to find them and what they are about.

### III

## MAJOR SCALES

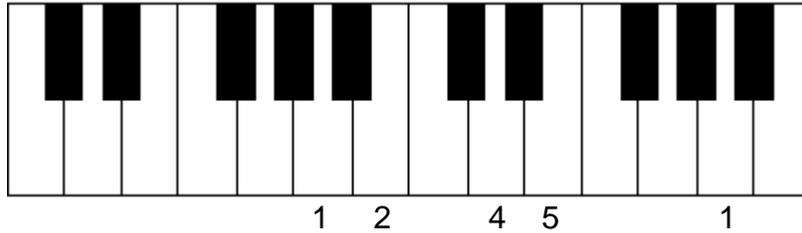
- a) Seen through the interval system  
**major scales = 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1**

There are NO flatted numbers in any Major scale.  
 In other words, all Major scales = 1, **avoid** playing b2 (Bb), play the 2 (B),  
**avoid** playing b3 (Cb), play the 3 (C#), play the 4 (D), **avoid** playing b5, play the 5, etc.  
 (Be sure not to confuse the concept of "flats" with the black keys on the piano.)

#### EXAMPLE:

The major scale, or "key of" A = A B C# D E F# G# A  
 The intervals would be 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1

3 6 7



#### EXERCISE 3: Try it.

As you play these notes you'll recognize the familiar  
 melody: Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Ti Do. ←←

### b) THE FINGERINGS

The scales of C, D, E, G, and A  
 all have the same fingerings,  
 so let's memorize these five first.

We count our fingers in numbers, 1 - 5,  
 the thumb being 1 on each hand,  
 the pinky being 5.

Here are the fingerings for these five scales only,  
 for 2 octaves UP (to the right) & DOWN (to the left):  
 Right hand - "RH": 123 1234 123 1234 ...5  
 (These are fingering numbers, not intervals.)  
 Left hand - "LH": 5... 4321 321 4321 321

Try it in the C scale: With either hand, you cross your thumb **under** the hand as you are moving to the next grouping. The 3 or the 4 finger then cross over the thumb while moving in the same direction. The wrist should be loose, and level with the hand at all times. The elbows stay in a straight line (or on the same plane) with the hand as it travels up and down the octaves. **VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure your nails are cut short enough to allow your fingertips to feel the keys.**

**Don't resist this!**

The separated finger groupings of 3 and 4 on the previous page's fingering chart are central to this whole chapter.

They're called CLUSTERS.

### c) CLUSTERS

Clusters are the repeating finger groups of 3 and 4.

**The groups of 3 are always and only played with the 1 2 3 fingers.  
The groups of 4 are always and only played with the 1 2 3 4 fingers.**

**The 5 finger (pinky), is *never* a part of a cluster, though it is used once:**

The 5 finger is used for only one note in each hand.

**It's the last note of the RH, and the first note of the LH.**

EXAMPLE:

The scale of "A" = A B C# D E F# G# A

For the right hand the clusters according to our fingering list are:

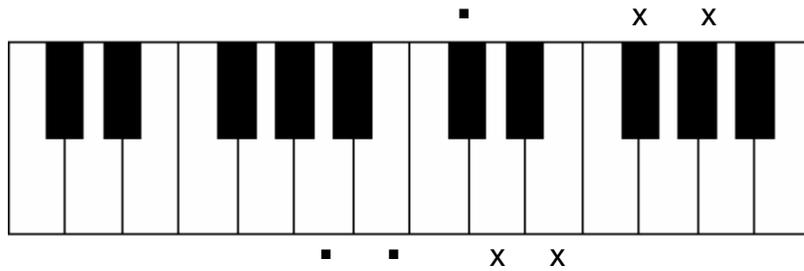
A B C#	D E F#G#	A B C#	D E F# G#	A
1 2 3	1 2 3 4	1 2 3	1 2 3 4	5

The clusters of 3 and 4 repeat. **Then you'd add the pinky for the final "A" note.**

In the **left hand** in the key of "A" the pinky BEGINS the scale on the "A" note, immediately followed by the cluster of 4, then the cluster of 3:

A	B C# D E	F# G#A	B C# D E	F# G#A
5	4 3 2 1	3 2 1	4 3 2 1	3 2 1

The "A" scale clusters of 3 and 4.



■ = group of 3      x = group of 4

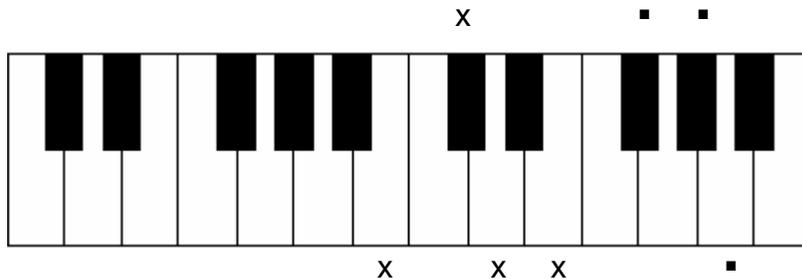
**LOOK AT THIS CAREFULLY TO UNDERSTAND LH CLUSTERS:**

The left hand clusters are different. But the notes of the scale are of course still the same.

The 5 finger plays the "A" note to START, then

B C#D E      F# G#A  
 4 3 2 1      3 2 1

The 4 and the 3 then repeat in the octave above to reach 2 octaves.



The pinky plays "A" **for the first note only**, as you run the scale 2 octaves up, and final note only, as you come back down.

x = group of 4      ■ = group of 3  
 (B C# D E)      (F# G# A)

**Clusters are a tremendously fast way to learn the scales and fingerings simultaneously.** But they are also the reason for fingerings in the first place! So even though they don't sound pretty, it's very important to learn the scales this way, and **keep the clusters MEMORIZED.**

**\*\*\*\* Memorizing the clusters is THE GOAL in scale work.**

\*The best way to memorize the clusters is this:

Let's keep our example of the "A" major scale.

The first grouping is A B C# (the group of 3)  
using the 1 2 3 fingers.

Play those notes with those fingers **simultaneously**.

Don't worry about the dissonance for the moment.

Move them up and down their different octaves for visual practice  
keeping the same notes and fingers.

Really try to lock this finger and note pattern into your memory.

Try this now with A B C# with the 1 2 3 fingers. Then ← ←

Now take the group of 4:

D E F# G#

using the 1 2 3 4 fingers. ← ←

Memorize this cluster of notes in the same way as the group of 3 -  
by playing them in random octaves.

Now, string the two groupings together up the piano:  
the 3, then up to the 4, up to 3, up to 4. Try this now.

Then go down the octaves: 4, down to 3, down to 4, down to 3.

Finally, repeat this process, but play EACH NOTE SEPARATELY,  
in consecutive order, crossing the thumb as the groupings switch.

Keep the rhythm of the notes even.

Scale of "A," 2 octaves = A B C# D E F# G# A B C# D E F# G# A

Fingerings in RH clusters 1 2 3, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3, 1 2 3 4, 5

/

add the 5 finger  
for the last note.

The method would be the same for memorizing the LH fingering.

Lock in each of the two groups separately like in the exercise above.

Then string the scale notes together- the 5 finger plays the first "A" note,

then B C# D E, F# G# A. ← ←

4 3 2 1, 3 2 1

Each hand has a group of 3 and a group of 4 to memorize within the octave of a scale.

All Major scales have finger groups of 3 and 4.

**EXERCISE 4: (40 min. a day)**

For the scales of C, D, E, G, and A:  
Memorize the clusters, 2 in the RH, 2 in the LH, for each scale.  
Then, with **separate hands**, run each scale  
playing each individual note in consecutive order.  
Play 2 octaves up and down with an evenness of rhythm,  
**WATCHING THE CLUSTERS AS YOU GO.**

**A very important trick to learn is to LOOK AHEAD to the next cluster you're  
about to play, instead of looking down at the one you're on.**

**THINK AHEAD.**

**ADVANCED PLAYERS  
WHO KNOW THESE SCALES AND FINGERINGS  
YOU STILL NEED TO MEMORIZE CLUSTERS.**

Clusters are MORE IMPORTANT to retain than the fingerings.  
THEY ARE THE REASON FINGERINGS ARE TAUGHT  
IN THE FIRST PLACE!

**Fingerings exist to keep you aware of the clusters.**

[For more on this, see "teacher's notes", at the end of this chapter.]

**If it takes you less than 40 min. a day  
to accomplish the exercise above,  
after the clusters are clear and memorized,  
move to Chapter 2.**

# CHAPTER REVIEW

~**Intervals:** 1 b2 2 b3 3 4 b5 5 b6 6 b7 7 1

Count out loud and touch 1 to 1 from any note.

1 minute a day

~**Basic Triads:**

M= 1 3 5

m= 1 b3 5

dim = 1 b3 b5

Memorize the names, symbols and numbers.

Practice the interval system by finding random triads from any note.

1 minute a day

~Work each day with the **voice/ear exercises** in "Preparations" until you can successfully do each one.

1 minute a day

~**Major Scales** = 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1, from any note.

Practice each scale: C, D, E, G, and A, always using separate hands, **WATCHING THE CLUSTERS**, then playing the notes individually in consecutive order. Run each scale, RH then LH, for 2 octaves up and down. Sit back and try to keep your wrists loose. (Good technique.) Remember **the goal is to MEMORIZE the CLUSTERS.**

It will be more important to memorize the clusters than to know the scales!

40 min. a day.

\*Remember when running your scales to LOOK DOWN at the keyboard as much as possible for now.

Don't think in sharp or flat notes,

think in cluster groupings of black and white notes.

Try to SEE and FEEL the shape of each scale. (See next page.)



# OVERVIEW

\* If initially you need to write out the notes of each scale by following the rules of the interval system (12345671), or by using your ear, that's fine. If you need to write out the notes to each individual cluster in each key, that's OK too. But use your "cheat sheets" for a very short amount of time, 2-3 days at the most. Don't get trapped in the paper. The tactile and visual information should be

## EXPERIENCED ON THE PIANO!

Move away from any tendency to stare at the printed page. When we get to the reading of chord charts, or even watching lyrics, being able to look up at the page while playing will be a skill worth developing, and will take a very short time with which to feel comfortable. For now:

LOOK DOWN. SEE and FEEL the shape of the scale - the patterns of blacks and whites of each cluster.

\* The VISUAL and TACTILE memory of the clusters are MORE IMPORTANT than "knowing" the individual notes, or what is sharped, or how many flats and sharps there are in a given key.

When you know the patterns of the clusters you automatically know the rest.

\* Descending seems to be a bit harder than ascending at first, LH seems more awkward than RH. Note the difficulties as points of interest if you like, then just keep working!

\* When running each scale, there's no need to run both hands at the same time. ADVANCED PLAYERS heed this as well.

At this initial stage, it is far too difficult to use both hands while seeing the separate clusters in each hand. It can be a useful practice for splitting the mind's attention, but at this point there are more urgent things to put your attention on. The fact is, with the exception of Salsa and Classical players, most pianists won't find a need to use both hands together straight up and down a major scale very often. Right now it's far more important to learn a sense of syncopation than it is to learn both hands in simultaneous motion.

\* One quick technique tip - SIT BACK.

Your kneecaps should be able to lift up just before the front of the keyboard, to the point where your back feels straight and postured comfortably.

It may seem as if it's too far back right now.

But it will prevent wrist, elbow, and shoulder problems later.

More technique in Chapter 4.

BEGINNERS - IF THIS IS NOT RELEVANT TO YOU  
MOVE ON TO "THE ART OF PRACTICING."

\* For any of you who know how to use the tetrachord system - the counting of WHOLE STEPS and HALF STEPS to find major scales, I say, DON'T!

Other teachers use the tetrachord system successfully when their overview is clear about modes and other harmonic relationships. But most students that come to me knowing about the tetrachord system soon become confused about theories beyond the major scales themselves. (By the time we get to the minor and modal scales, if you don't understand the full relationship of the tetrachord system to the parent key, life will become unbearable!)

Assuming you learned the major scales with the "whole step, half step," system and correctly realize that modes are connected to a parent key, it is still important to know the clusters so the modal fingerings can be understood quickly, and functionally.

Therefore, I suggest any student NOT fluid with all the modal scales with their correct fingerings:

- 1) practice seeing scales through the interval system, and
- 2) memorize your clusters.

These are the two clearest ways I know of to learn scales, *taking into account* all the concepts that follow.

## IV

# The Art of Practicing

Miles Davis was once asked, "What do you do when you're not playing?" His reply was, "I practice."

Undaunted by the sober reply, the interviewer asked, "Well then, what do you do when you're not practicing?"

To which Miles said, "I practice practicing."

Assuming Miles would never have given a sarcastic answer to an interviewer, let's talk about what it means to practice practicing.

The ultimate success of practice rests not on how much time you put in, but

1) on the quality of the information you receive, and

2) your practice habits.

Many musicians I know became musicians *despite* the teaching they received, not because of it. It is not rare that students begin their journey with tremendous ability and enthusiasm, only to have the journey end in failure because the **information** was too convoluted, or irrelevant to their needs and goals as fledgling visionaries. (By "fledgling visionaries," I mean musicians still innocent enough and joyous enough to have a dream of their own.)

Part of the art of practicing, therefore, should be to find a masterful teacher and/or a masterful method.

Your **practice habits** should begin with this simple idea: don't practice what you know; practice what you don't know. It is a classic case of overkill to spend years playing scales in every key *for hours* every day. Though one may be focusing on important techniques - evenness of touch, or clarity of tone - the law of diminishing returns comes into play: the amount learned is not worth the time spent. A more balanced approach and a stronger learning experience is to try to understand how scales function by playing and analyzing pieces, exploring tonal improvisations, and working on scale runs as they come up in musical situations.

To "practice practicing," first you need well presented, relevant information, then you should have a clear sense of what your long-term goals are, and what will help you grow the most in each practice session. The key is to Keep The Learning Curve Peaked.

There will be guidance regarding these concepts as the book unfolds.

# TEACHER'S NOTES

Advanced students can read this section as well.  
Beginners - IGNORE THIS FOR NOW.

A) With the introduction of the interval system, the usual format of "minor 2nd, major 2nd. . . perfect 4th. . ." etc., has been replaced by " b2, 2, b3, 3, 4. . ." etc., for a number of different reasons.

The most important one is that I find the total beginner grasps the way I'm presenting it with a little less confusion. It avoids having to get into overly intellectual discussions about what "perfect" means, and why the 4ths and 5ths don't have minors and majors. It also avoids describing why, for instance, diminished chords have minor 3rds and minor fifths but don't have anything to do with minor chords or minor scales.

This is my subjective, perhaps quirky, opinion, and certainly goes against the grain of the way intervals are usually described. It's not at all crucial to this method that you avoid the standard way.

B) The reason I leave augmented chords out of the initial group of basic triads is that augmented chords do not invert the way the other 3 quality chords do. An augmented chord inverts into other augmented chords. So I like to teach it in Book II as part of the "Other 3 note chords:"

Sus 4 (1 4 5), sus 2 (1 2 5), and 4th chords (1 4 b7).

These three chords invert into each other, and augmented chords invert into themselves.

## C) WHY SCALES?

Especially for those players focused on wanting to know Rock and Pop, the question might arise, "Why do I need to learn scales? Why can't I just learn chords?"

There is also usually a lot of fear behind this question. The underlying question usually is, "Does this information you're teaching me ever end, or is this literally going to take the rest of my life to understand?"

The answer to the technical question of "Why scales?" is that ultimately scales and chords are the same thing. (A chord is merely a scale grouping with a specific bass note.)

In the universe of scales and chords, a chord is like a table, and its appropriate scale's notes are like the molecules of the table.

To know the all important game of "chord voicing,"

(rearranging the molecules to create a more interesting table), you need to know which scale relates to a given chord, and then work with it extensively. (Modal theory.) This is true for good Rock music as well.

Listen to Bruce Hornsby, or Sting. Their chord voicings are one reason why their music sounds so rich. More on this in the following chapters.

To address the underlying question, "Does this information you're teaching me go on forever?" I tell my students that theory is a "closed universe" of knowledge. The *theories* themselves do not expand onward and outward forever.

Theory seen as "socially acceptable harmony," may change by the decade. But there are only a finite amount of basic theoretical systems needed even to study the changes. A new style, a "new sound," can be studied with existing analysis. Just as in the science of studying the universe, the theories come and go, but, so far, they still use the formats of physics and mathematics to try to figure things out and communicate to each other.

It seems a valid act of empowerment, and a great relief, for students to realize that there are only x number of theories to know in order to understand *how* to fully explore this game. It is true that the possible moves and sounds within the theories go on forever. But this would also be true when speaking of the parameters of *any* language to any would-be poet.

Theory, as I see it, is the grouping of systems with which to discover and map the ever-changing, mosaic-like, world of music.

What a student needs to know to deeply understand their instrument can be functionally attained within a few years.

Physical technique, discovering the various pathways inside that map, and choosing the next direction one wishes to explore, is the endless work of a lifetime.

Even for Rock 'n Rollers!

#### D) WHY FINGERINGS?

Two good questions to raise with the student in this lesson are, "Why are scales important?" and also, "Why are fingerings important?"

Fingerings are there to keep us aware of CLUSTERS, not visa versa.

Clusters are of great importance for 3 reasons:

1) It's exceptional for quick and easy memory of the scale patterns and their fingerings simultaneously. But that's the *least* important reason.

2) Clusters give you a simultaneous understanding of all the minor and modal scales with their correct fingerings.

For example, the minor scale, or Aeolian in a key is 6 to 6.

Or Eb phrygian is just 3 to 3 in the scale of B.

The original clusters for a key never change. You just begin and end on the finger that corresponds to the note you want inside the appropriate cluster of the scale. So for Eb phrygian in the RH, finger 3 would be the beginning finger, then the thumb would cross under to play the E. They simply correspond with the RH clusters of the B major scale, and continue from there as if they are playing the B major scale. Because they are. Only the beginning and ending notes are different.

All this will be explained in more detail in Chapter 7.

Note: There are some modal fingerings where the starting and ending points could best be handled by a different finger, such as a thumb replacing a crossing point that is the final note in the sequence, but I don't feel the need to teach the exceptions since they are logical and usually seem to come naturally when the situation arises.

3) But again, we're left with the burning question, "Why fingerings?"

Good fingerings set up correct hand positions for improvising, composing, and tackling difficult passages. No matter how far the hand wants to move from register to register, or any time the thumb might need to cross and then continue moving, **clusters** give you the correct hand position for the fingers to remain fluid in either direction. This is the reason scale fingerings, and clusters in particular, are so important.

If the piano is seen as Los Angeles, the clusters are the super highway out of traffic, with an entrance at every cross-street!

## **CHAPTER 2**

**IMPROVISATION: "FREE PLAY,"**  
IN THE KEYS OF D, G, E, and A.

# CHAPTER 2

## FREE PLAY

The work this week is very straight forward, yet endless in its possibilities and variations.

Pick a scale, either D, E, G, or A. Not C.

Stay within the pattern of that scale, and just play!

Use both hands. Let them do separate things, rhythmically and melodically, as best as you are able to right now.

Be daring!

Don't let the blizzard of mistakes daunt you. Listen to the sounds and respond as best you can.

When mistakes are made (accidentally falling out of the scale pattern), try to make it musical and find a sense of resolution to the sound while moving back into the key. Stay open and instinctive. This is not an intellectual process, other than "knowing" you're trying to stay in the key.

## THE EXERCISE

~ **STAY IN ONE SCALE AT A TIME**, use both hands, play free.

~Obviously, fingerings and especially the clusters are very important concepts and need to be practiced daily. But. . . .

**DON'T WORRY ABOUT CLUSTERS AND FINGERINGS FOR NOW.**

Just stay inside the scale in any varied formation of notes you can imagine.

~**USE THE PEDAL** The pedal on the right. (The damper, or sustain pedal.)

I'll tell you about the other 2 pedals in the OVERVIEW section.

Just let your right foot explore its function of prolonging sound. It should be very active. It can be loosely thought of like the clutch in a stick shift car. Trust your instincts for now.

Don't wait until "other things come together" before you start working with the pedal. It will usually feel twice as hard to learn later. Everything about this game should feel **EQUALLY FOGGY** right now!

(EXPLORE THE PEDAL, EVEN USING JUST ONE NOTE, right now.)



## ~THE 3 DO'S

1) **A MELODY** This is a phrase composed of single notes strung together. ← ←

2) **A "SMUSH"** Any random grouping of notes in a key. ← ←

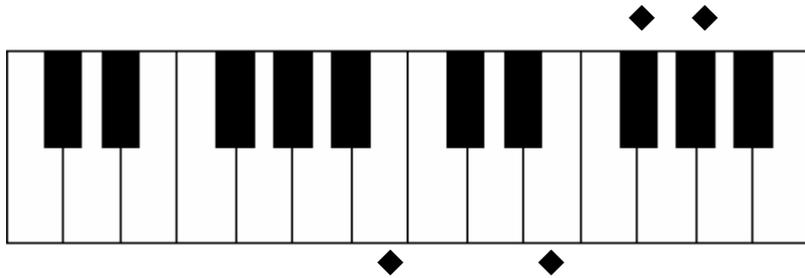
**There are only two things your hand can do at any given instant**  
on the keys.

You can either play a single note, or several notes together.

The several notes do not need to be in consecutive order, like a cluster.

**They can be spread out in any random formation in the scale**, with one or both hands participating. That random spread is a **Smush**.

A sample SMUSH in the key of E: (RH)



Notes being played one at a time as a musical sentence, or phrase, also need not be played in consecutive order. These single note phrases are **melodies**.

**Notice** as you play that LH Smushes, or **chords in general**, need to be played in the mid-register to prevent a "muddy" tone.

The LH pinky won't often go below "C below middle C"  
when playing 3 notes or more simultaneously. ← ←  
(For more, see "Combinations," on next page, and teacher's notes.)

3) **SYNCOPIATION** Use your hands and fingers like a drum.

The piano is an 88 tone DRUM.  
If you can play drum solos on your legs, then  
you can coordinate your LH and RH in music

(Try drumming with both hands right now, first on your legs, then with each hand on any random grouping on the piano, even if they're "atonal" (not in any scale), just to get the idea of 2 hand syncopation. Notice, the hands should hit simultaneously sometimes as well as alternating from one to the other.) ← ←

(More about this in the next chapter,  
and in "The Rhythm Game" in Chapter 5.)

TRY A FREE PLAY IN THE SCALE OF  
D, E, G, or A, RIGHT NOW.  
Then read on and try again.

▪ These are **the 4 combinations** of melodies and smushes  
you can use between the two hands:

LH		RH
Melody		Melody
Melody		Smush
Smush		Melody
Smush	*	Smush

\*For 2 hand smushes,  
try playing  
with  
your hands fairly  
close together,  
and near mid-  
register, for a  
more cohesive sound.

▪ One more extremely important concept to take into account. Once your fingers are playing any of the above combinations, the movement from there tends to be **INCREMENTAL** rather than lifting the hand and leaping to the next note. Most, though certainly not all, of the time, a few of the fingers will tend to move a half step or whole step from where they are, while the other fingers stay on their present note.

Make sure in your free play you are exploring each of these combinations. They switch from one to another constantly in piano playing, as when speaking words the tongue hits the roof of your mouth, then the back of your teeth, etc.

If you add syncopation to these combinations written above,

POOF. . . MUSIC. ←

## CHAPTER REVIEW

OK, let's organize this barrage of concepts so you actually feel like you want to touch the piano.

40 min. a day (10 min. per scale.)

~**Play free** in one scale at a time - ALWAYS USE BOTH HANDS.

Play in each one of these scales, 10 min per scale: D, E, G, or A, with each hand playing notes inside the scale.

(NO free play in the scale of C this week.)

Don't worry about clusters and fingerings for now.

**Work with the pedal.**

No known chords.

No LH octaves.

Use all combinations of MELODIES and SMUSHES.

(LH smushes need to be around mid-register.)

SYNCOPATE with 2 handed drumming ideas,

with single notes and smush combinations.

Use incremental movements more than leaping around.

**Re-read this chapter** before, and after, some of your free plays, to absorb some of the more subtle ideas. You're likely to find new things that will deepen your understanding.

20 min. a day (Try using the pedal when running scales.)

~Continue to **memorize the clusters, and run the scales**

2 octaves up and down, LH & RH separately, in the 5 keys.

30 seconds (1 to 1 from any note.)

~**Touch and count "intervals,"** (Ch. 1), starting from any note.

~Continue your **voice/ear exercises**, if needed.

Read on to end of chapter

# OVERVIEW

\*Obviously the times in the chapter review sections are approximate.

Keep your learning curve peaked:

Spend more time on what seems the most difficult.

\* If during the free play process you are not exploring adventurously enough to be making lots of "mistakes,"

you're making the ONLY mistake in this game:

You're not "pushing the outer envelope,"

and peaking out the learning curve.

Be WILD, ☉ *er* ☹ ↲↻↵↶↷↸↹

and daring ☺☒ ⚡☼ ☾ ☽☼\*

You've got nothing tangible to lose, and everything discoverable will be open for you to find.

Don't judge your "talent" or lack of it,

or the worthiness of your practice piece.

Just listen with a neutral mind,

and check out how much fun this game will be

as your experience with it grows.

At this point you're way too young at this game

to be doubting yourself, or giving your hands a hard time.

## \*THE STUTTERING STORY

For those students having a particularly hard time with their free play, read this story a time or two this week:

This is about the genesis of stuttering. There has never been a known case of a genetic stutterer. It is always caused by environmental factors. A particularly sensitive child is exposed to a particularly critical and judgmental person.

So one scenario might be that a little girl comes rushing into the house and calls to her mother, "Mom, mommy, the, the, ice cream truck is - can I have money for ice cream. . ."

To which the mother replies, "It's not 'the, the ice cream truck'. Slow down and start over. And this time say it right."

Of course, by the time the little girl has said it right, the ice cream truck is gone.

If the mother had simply given her the quarter, or not given her the quarter, in a few years the girl would "stutter" less and continue to develop normal speech patterns. But the hyper-awareness of her mistakes makes her less and less confident about her speech, until, finally, the fears become the reality, and she indeed finds herself permanently speech impaired.

The fact is we all stutter, all the time. Even mothers and teachers and speech therapists stutter. The difference is we've just learned to MOVE FORWARD, and push

past our mistakes without judgment. This is the key to the approach with improvisation, and learning in general. Don't let the "judgmental parent," or "bad teacher" voice rule your responses, or you're sunk!

Pretend your hands are your 3 year old child's hands. Let them explore, with curiosity and openness, the patterns of a scale. Encourage a sense of trust and joy. Let your mistakes lead the way to something better than you had planned, as they so often do. If you go out of the scale, simply move back into the scale as musically as possible. **MOVE FORWARD.** Be a patient teacher.

Paying excessive attention to your mistakes, your stuttering, will just make you stutter more.

You could instead pay attention to what you're hearing and simply respond to it as musically as possible.

The choice, each second, is up to you.

**WHICHEVER ATTITUDE YOU FOCUS ON EXPANDS.**

\* The other 2 pedals: Aside from the pedal on the right, the "sustain pedal," **the pedal on the left** softens the overall sound. Experiment with it if you wish. The quality of this pedal varies greatly from one piano to another.

If your piano has a **middle pedal**, it's probably there as ornamentation only. Unless you have a Grand piano, the middle pedal is rarely functional. (You may not even have a middle pedal at all.) If you have a functional middle pedal, that's great. They are a lot of fun. Play a note or a smush, then press down the middle pedal while sustaining the notes with your hands. Now lift your hands up, but keep the pedal down. The notes will sustain, but any other notes you now play on the piano won't sustain! (When the middle pedal is in use, the right pedal IS still operable. So it's good to explore the middle pedal with your left foot.)

## A Rhythmic Note

If you have doubts about whether you are rhythmically ready for this information, I would suggest the following experiment: See if you can find a friend or an acquaintance who understands how to clap out a **SIMPLE** one bar rhythm.

If you can clap the rhythm back accurately, then you're ready to go.

**CAUTION:** If your friend gives you too complicated a rhythm - you picked the wrong friend! If you can drum a clear simple beat on the dashboard of your car, or on your legs, that is another way to be assured that you'll do fine.

If you really do have trouble repeating a simple rhythm, or playing little "phrases" on your legs, find someone to help you learn how to do it while continuing to work through the information in this course.

The best way I know to overcome this initial gap in your understanding is to learn the fundamentals of rhythmic notation. Read and clap simple written rhythmic note values as you say the eighth notes aloud: "1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &." It would take only a few weeks to learn how to do this from any teacher who teaches notation. Your body would then better understand the idea of rhythmic phrasing.

# TEACHER'S NOTES

Advanced players may want to read this too.  
Beginners - read this first paragraph,  
quickly scan the rest.

If in the free play sessions with your student fear or judgment are strong, you might suggest the book, "Free Play, Improvisation in Life and Art," by Stephen Nachmanovitch. (Although, it's important to remember, the more this is addressed as a problem for a student, the more it is weighed down with the burden of A PROBLEM. So, if possible, just nudge things forward without too much headiness or focus.)

Also, as a good reference for all students I would strongly suggest they acquire some Keith Jarrett piano solos. Either "Facing You," "Staircase," "Bremen-Lausanne Concerts," or "Koln Concerts," (that's my order of preference, as study guides). They may be hard to find. But you can order them through a record store in bulk to pass on to students.

"Smushes" are the revoicing of a chord. (The student just may not know any STANDARD chords yet!) But first, the freedom to build one's own tactile, visual and sonic dreamscapes are functionally addressed. Structured ways of revoicing chords, like A B forms and upper structure triads, all originally came from free association smushing in the first place.

## Why Free Play?

This game, to be sure, is not being explored this early in the course to merely develop the student's improvisation skills.

There are 2 basic reasons for this exercise:

1) It's the only opportunity at such an early stage for a student to source their own creativity and set their own ideas in motion, to get an initial introduction to ear training inside scale-based harmony, and to get a true sense of "playing music" in their hands.

2) Most importantly, however, there is a big connection between free play and being able to play with fluidity through songs.

Without the free play, a chord chart would be reduced to something like: playing the root of the chord in the left hand, and connecting chords and appropriate inversions in the right.

Or, without much of a chance of sounding "hip" or modern, one could play the melody of the vocal in the right hand while singing the lyrics, like grandma does at a Christmas party. Or one could read notes, or be taught in some other way to reproduce a specific note by note arrangement. But the ability to theoretically interpret the broader meaning of the information, or to personalize the music is limited.

With free play the concepts of revoicing chords, syncopation, and seeing all the possible harmonic movements in a key (including in Book II - arpeggios, 3rds, and 6ths), are functionally explored in hundreds of variations. Ultimately, with playing any song that doesn't rely solely on the written note, the main question is "What key, or familiar pattern, does this chord suggest?" Once you answer that question (with modal theory, or any other way you know), then it all comes down to how comfortable you are playing and exploring inside the pattern of that key. Even a Pop tune can and should be approached with that degree of available options under the hands. Then the transition from imitating, to being able to emotionally convey and personalize the music becomes a physical reality.

## CHAPTER 3

I. 3 NEW SCALES - Bb, Eb, and Ab.

II. 3 NEW FREE PLAY IDEAS:  
BEING A RECEIVER RATHER THAN A TRANSMITTER.  
"SMUSHING" WITH VARIED SPREADS.  
CROSSING FINGERS ON THE CLUSTER POINTS.

III. THE SPINNING PLATES THEORY OF PRACTICING.

# CHAPTER 3

This chapter will deal with two subjects continued from the previous chapter: We're going to learn three new scales, and go further in depth with free play work.

## I **3 New Scales:**

Rather than feed the specific notes of each scale to you, it is much more important for you to understand the concept of intervals so you can figure out the scales yourself. Remember intervals are 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 from any note, WITH NO NUMERICAL FLATS. The three notes from which we are going to learn scales this week are Bb, Eb, and Ab. If you don't understand how to find the rest of the notes in each of these scales go back to Chapter 1 to find out how.

Here are the fingerings, two octaves up and down, separated in their correct cluster groupings, for the 3 scales. For those who may realize it, the beginning fingerings for some of these scales are not the "classic" textbook fingerings, though they quickly begin to match. For the reasons behind this, see the teacher's notes.

THE FIRST FULL CLUSTER GROUPINGS FOR EACH HAND are preceded BY AN ASTERISK:

### **Bb:**

RH: 4 \*123 \*1234 123 1234 (Can you try this one before you read on?)  
LH: \*321 \*4321 321 4321 3

### **Eb:**

RH: 3 \*1234 \*123 1234 123  
LH: \*321 \*4321 321 4321 3 (same fingering as Bb LH)

### **Ab:**

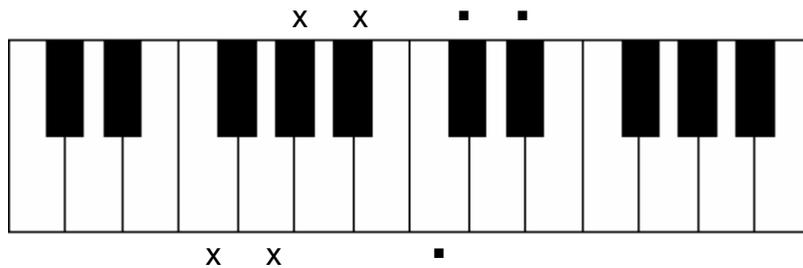
RH: 34 \*123 \*1234 123 123  
LH: \*321 \*4321 321 4321 3 (same fingering as Bb LH)

Learning the clusters to these three scales are actually easier than in the five previous scales, because there is no pinky to add.

Notice the incomplete cluster groupings, such as the beginning group of 3 4 in the RH of Ab. The 3 and 4 fingers are actually a partial cluster (they are the last half of a grouping of 4). In other words, Ab and Bb played with the 3 and 4 fingers are the last half of the grouping of F G Ab Bb, played with the 1 2 3 4 fingers.

Notice the apparent two groupings of 3 at the end of the RH in Ab. But the last grouping of 3 is really 3/4 of a group of 4: (F G Ab played with the 1 2 3 fingers is 3/4 of the grouping F G Ab Bb).

So the only 2 groupings you need to practice for Ab RH are these:



x = group of 4      ■ = group of 3

## THE 2 EXERCISES

1) **Memorize the clusters** for each of these 3 scales, LH and RH, and run each scale 2 octaves up and down, with separate hands, in an even rhythm, **WATCHING THE CLUSTERS.**

2) **Play free** in each of the 3 new scales

FIND THE GROUP OF 3, AND THE GROUP OF 4, AND PRACTICE THEM LIKE YOU DID WITH THE CHAPTER 1 CLUSTERS: string the clusters of 3 and 4 together up and down the octaves before you play the individual notes.

IT WILL SAVE YOU A LOT OF TIME, and it will also be teaching you the most important part of the scale fingering game.

← ← (Ex: Ab RH)

# SCALE OVERVIEW

\*USE THE PEDAL while running scales. PUMP IT so the run doesn't get too muddy  
Don't pump it in any particular rhythm. Just let your instincts take over, and keep  
a small part of your mind focused on getting the pedal to feel and sound better over  
time.

\*Here are the notes of the scales to check against your interval work.  
Try to find them yourself first.

Bb: Bb C D Eb F G A Bb

Eb: Eb F G Ab Bb C D Eb

Ab: Ab Bb C Db Eb F G Ab

\*Note: Bb is the same as A#, Eb is the same as D#, Ab is the same as G#  
The reason some scales are sharp scales, and some scales are flat, is the  
following:

Every scale has one letter of the alphabet from A to G  
without the skipping of a letter or the repeating of a letter.

Thus, the scale of E is E F# G# A B C# D# E

We have in consecutive order an E F G A B C and D  
rather than E Gb Ab A . . . which would have no F and two A's.

The black note scales, like the ones we are working on this week, are almost  
always considered "flat" scales.

The scale of Bb: Bb C D Eb F G A Bb,  
as seen in A# would look like this:

A# B# C## D# E# F## G## A#

\  
You don't really want to deal with things  
like double sharps, do you?  
(And it's unlikely you'll even use this  
information in the future.)  
So let's move on.

## II

### New Free Play Ideas, or "Effects."

There are usually 3 basic problem spots, or new things to add in, after the first week or so of free play. **Try these ideas, or "effects."**

1) Obviously, the main work is still just to see each scale in all of its variations, and to let your hands and ears get acquainted with the keyboard. But if I can get just a little deeper, I would like to suggest this:

**Try receiving sounds from the piano,  
rather than just being a transmitter.**

Many students have told me that they want to learn piano because they have musical ideas inside them, or burning things to say, that they want to express through the piano. And that's great, for as long as those ideas last. But it puts an incredible amount of pressure on the person to produce everything from inside themselves. They are the sole creator, instead of a soul creator.

It reminds me of King Midas and the Midas touch. Everything he touched, because it was his "granted wish," turned to gold. Unfortunately, that included his hamburgers, his girlfriend, you get the idea.

The piano, too, can turn into a useless kind of gold, instead of turning into "a relationship." The piano is not a tool, it's a mirror. And it reflects things back to you when you're open enough to listen.

I find, as a composer, I often come to the piano with little or nothing pre-known. The piano becomes my equal partner in the dream. Often *it* comes up with so many possibilities that my job is merely one of organizer, rather than inventor.

So listen to the voice of the piano as you play together. Be the RECEIVER. There is no obligation on the part of a receiver to memorize, or be able to repeat anything that's happening. Your only responsibility is to LISTEN DEEPLY and RESPOND. If repetition is a natural part of your response, then that's fine. But don't repeat things out of habit, or a lack of trust in finding a totally new place to go. When you're feeling stuck in that way, that's when you need to go fully back into the receiver mode again. GO ANYWHERE. DO ANYTHING. And respond from there.

Find your intuitive sense of melody from a listening place, rather than a "creating" place. Allow phrases to breathe, pause. Remember too, silences are some of the most powerful choices in music. When you hear something beautiful, run with it. But don't hang on to it too long. There are millions of beautiful rhythms and melodies left to explore. And the piano will sing to you at least as many things as you can sing to it.

2) **Explore SMUSHES WITH VARIED SPREADS**

Most players in their beginning exploration of SMUSHES tend to keep their fingers evenly spread in a comfortable position. I call this the "starfish." This will tend to give you an even and comfortable sound. But harmony usually needs to be more than even and comfortable.

Begin to experiment with the different spreads your fingers can make in the scale.

Example:

A "starfish" in the key of D: D F# A C# (try this around  
RH fingering: 1 2 3 5 mid-register.) ← ←

This could be altered to: D E A C#  
1 2 3 5  
as one interesting  
spread possibility. ← ←

Or

how about a D scale smush like this: E A C# D E  
RH fingering: 1 2 3 4 5 ← ←  
\  
play this note as the E just above  
middle C

Now play it with the LH playing random single notes in the D scale! ← ←

Or

keep the RH smush above and add just below it the following LH smush:

F# C# D ← ←  
\  
this should be the C# just  
above middle C.  
The RH pattern would then  
be a whole step  
above the D of the LH pattern

## EXPLORE MORE INTERESTING SMUSHES NOW:

- Choose a random key. Use combinations of wide spreads, and small spreads, **including 1/2 steps**. (The 1/2 steps IN EVERY KEY are between the 3 and 4, and the 7 and 1). Try in the LH, RH, and especially BOTH HANDS TOGETHER. (Remember to stay around the mid-register, especially in the LH.)

No need to remember anything you come up with. Just stay adventurous and open to the myriad of beautiful, or tense patterns. **Try to use your visual or tactile senses to come up with totally wild spreads that would never have otherwise crossed your mind.**

Your visual and tactile intelligences will grow over time. Unconsciously, they will begin to understand and pre-know the general texture and emotional effect of the grouping you're about to play.

### 3) CROSSING the thumb under the hand using CLUSTERS:

When playing single notes (a melodic phrase), **cross your thumb on the correct white note of the nearest CLUSTER of that scale**, just as you do in your scale runs. The crossing point should be where the thumb normally falls **in the cluster you're closest to**. Your fourth finger in the group of four, and third finger in the group of three, also are conscious crossing points for the hand. This is VERY IMPORTANT. TRY THIS EXERCISE AFTER LISTENING TO THE TWO EXAMPLES BELOW:

#### PLAY FREE IN A SCALE WITH BOTH HANDS.

With either the LH or RH, become visually conscious of your clusters, while the other hand plays something very simple without a lot of motion. In the chosen hand, improvise a melody line (a single note line) that involves crossing the thumb onto the correct white note of its closest cluster: **The idea is to SEEK OUT THE NEAREST CLUSTER that allows you free motion in the direction you wish to move.** This will prevent your melodies from being "walled in" with your thumb and pinky. This is the main reason why clusters and fingerings exist!

**Ex. 1** In Bb you could start on a cluster of 3 (C D Eb).  
Play Eb with your 3 finger, then move down to the C note (thumb).  
THEN CROSS the 4 finger to the Bb and continue down to A,  
then to the F with the thumb again.

**Ex 2** Begin with the same C D Eb cluster. Play D up to Eb,  
THEN CROSS the thumb under UP to the F.  
Continue the phrase by playing the A with the 3 finger  
then down to G with the 2 finger. ← ←

**REMEMBER, EXCEPT FOR THIS THUMB CROSSING EFFECT,  
IT'S NOT NECESSARY OR NORMAL TO BE THINKING ABOUT  
FINGERINGS OR CLUSTERS WHEN YOU'RE PLAYING FREE.**

# FREE PLAY OVERVIEW

\*The definition of an "effect," is simply: an important musical concept to focus your concentration on.

\* The following is another effect. It is **OPTIONAL, FOR THOSE HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH THE CONCEPT OF SYNCOPATION:**

## **RANDOM FIRE FINGER DRUMMING**

Any of the ten fingers can hit a note in the scale at any moment, alone or in tandem with any other finger. Each finger is like a singer in a choir, awaiting their turn, and none of them want to stay silent for too long.

PUT ALL 10 FINGERS ON ANY 10 NOTES IN A SCALE,  
(NOT NECESSARILY IN CONSECUTIVE ORDER.)  
LET ALL FINGERS RANDOM FIRE, ALONE OR IN RANDOM GROUPS.  
WORK THE PEDAL, IT WILL SOUND BETTER.

← ←

This is a good game to show you the variety of rhythmic options  
at your command.

**If, after this next week, rhythm and syncopation are still your highest concern,** if you feel like it is your key weakness, you might consider skipping to Chapter 5, to The Rhythm Game section. But do this only if you think it's absolutely critical that you do so. Then return to this chapter and continue to read sequentially.

### III THE SPINNING PLATES THEORY OF PRACTICING

At this point there is work to do on many different fronts. You probably feel you need a lot more time to practice everything.

You do!

But there is a way to keep everything growing while still learning new information. Here's how.

Do you remember the little man on Ed Sullivan who would spin plates on top of sticks? He'd spin one plate on the first stick, then start another plate on another stick. But before he reached for the third plate he'd give the first plate a quick spin to keep it going. Soon he'd be going for plate 5, stick 5. But before he reached for plate 5, he'd give each of the first four plates a spin to keep them steady. Otherwise as he reached for plate 5, CRASH, plate 1 would fall. And as he went to replace plate 1, CRASH, CRASH, more ignored plates would lose their momentum.

Practicing is the same way. Everything needs small amounts of concentrated attention. Small amounts of attention given to a number of different exercises every day is far better than learning the clusters for one week, then learning free play and forgetting the clusters the next week, then learning chords while ignoring free play and scales. That's why following the suggested times in the CHAPTER REVIEW section is so valuable. Don't assume you can or should attend to every scale every day, AND improvise in each of them with every new effect. There's not enough time. The key is not to ignore any one thing for too long, or plates will fall!

If by the end of a week, all concepts have been given small amounts of focused attention in every key, then everything will slowly, equally grow. You'll have future weeks to continue to make the whole of the process clearer and stronger.

Keep all the plates spinning. The plate man will be glad you got his point.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

PER DAY:  
20 min.

~**Learn the 3 new scales:** Bb, Eb, & Ab

Find the notes of the scale through the interval system, and or by ear.

**Find and memorize the appropriate CLUSTERS, AND STRING THEM TOGETHER for the RH and LH, SEPARATELY.**

Then run each scale 2 octaves up and down in an even rhythm, **WORKING THE PEDAL, WATCHING THE CLUSTERS.**

Sit back (kneecaps just before the front of the keyboard), and keep your wrists loose.

LOOK AT THE SHAPES OF THE SCALES.

15 min.

~**Review the original 5 scales and clusters.**

15 min.

~Play free in the new scales (3 per day, 5 min. ea.)  
**Explore the new and original effects.**

10 min.

~Play free in the original 4 scales (Not C).  
**Explore the new and original effects.**

---

### NEW EFFECTS:

- Listen TO the piano, and respond.
- Smushes with varied spreads.
- Crossing the thumb  
(on cluster points).
- 10 finger Random Fire (if needed).

### ORIGINAL EFFECTS:

- Be adventurous
- Work with the pedal
- Use all Smush/melody combinations
- Syncopated "drumming" ideas

### REMEMBER:

**DON'T JUDGE YOUR FREE PLAY. JUST LISTEN and RESPOND!**

## TEACHER'S NOTES

This is for teachers only.  
Advanced and beginning players can ignore this.

\*Check a student's free play about every other week.  
Look for developmental weaknesses and try to find games to correct them.

\*The reason I choose to begin the scale fingerings where their natural clusters fall instead of the classic beginnings is this: As an improviser or a composer I think it's best to be able to leave your options open in terms of the direction you're moving. Many times it's too restrictive to have to decide within microseconds about whether or not you're going to ascend or descend. For example, if you are about to run the scale of Bb from the root, if you play it with the 4 finger you could move in either direction instead of being committed to only ascending (from the 2).

Aside from that, I simply find it to be easier to remember for beginning students, with no long term harm to their potential to master the instrument.

So, unless it's the case of a pinky replacing a thumb crossing for only one note, as in the case of C, D, E, G, and A, I feel good about the decision to go against the norm. If you feel uncomfortable about this, stay with teaching the formal fingerings. In fact, if I had a student who came to me already knowing the formal fingerings, I would leave it to them to keep their beginning fingerings or switch. But I would, in all cases, have them memorize the clusters.