Music Appreciation
Unit 1
Elements of Music
&
Instruments

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Elements of Music

- Melody – refers to the tune of a given piece of music
- Dynamics – refers to how loud or soft music is played
- Harmony – refers to multiple notes played simultaneously
- Rhythm – the ordering of sounds and silences over the course of time
- Texture – refers to the number of independent layers occur at once
- Form – refers to how music is organized
- Genre – refers to how music is categorized
- Timbre – the color or sound

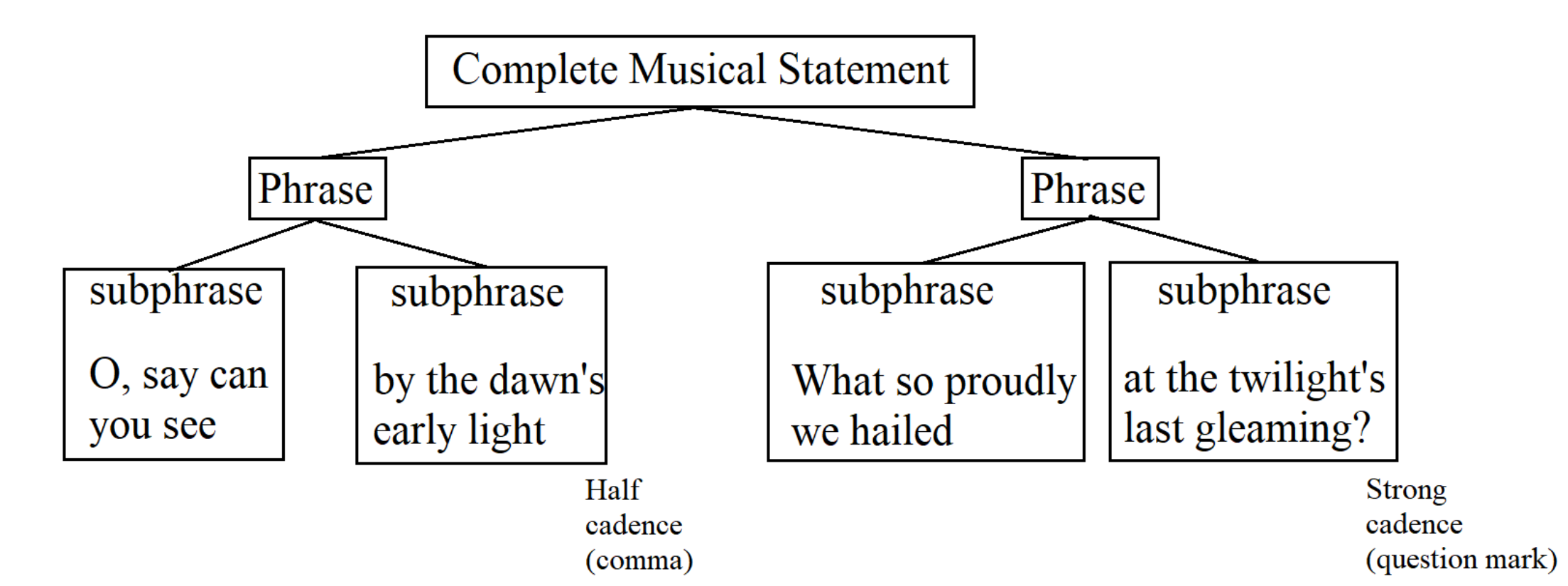
Terms covered this unit

- Melody
- Note
- Pitch
- Phrase
- Half cadence
- Full cadence
- Scale
- Key
- Tonic
- Octave
- Consonant
- Dissonant
- Harmony
- Chord
- Bass clef
- Treble clef
- Disjunct motion
- Stepwise motion
- Dynamics
- *Forte*
- *Piano*
- Major
- Minor
- Diatonic
- Pentatonic
- Rhythm
- Beat
- Measure
- Downbeat
- Meter
- 2/4 time
- ¾ time
- 4/4 time
- Form
- Texture
- Genre

Melody

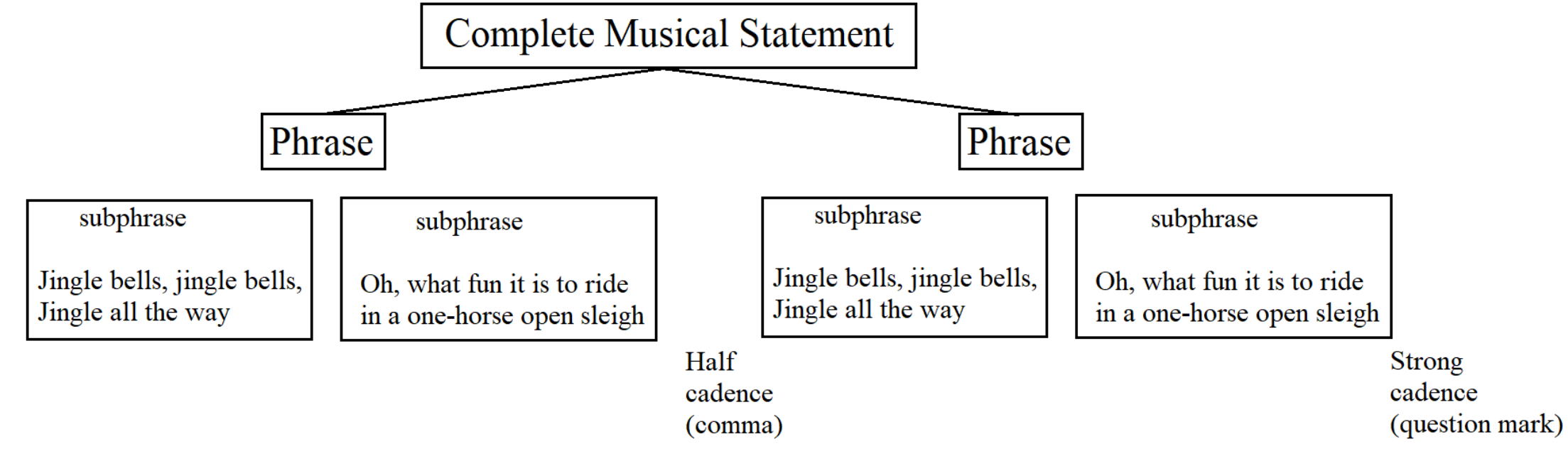
- **Melody**: a single line of notes heard in succession (one after another), heard as a coherent unit
  - **Notes** are the smallest unit of music: the building block of music
    - notes are similar to words. Several words strung together in a logical manner create a sentence, just like several notes strung together create a melody
- **Phrases** are more difficult to define
  - Music theorists disagree as to what constitutes a musical phrase
  - For purposes of this class, a phrase is a **complete musical thought that ends with a strong cadence**
- **Cadence:** a point of arrival like punctuation in language
  - **Period**: strong cadence
  - **Comma**: weak cadence
- Phrases can be broken into smaller sub-sections called **sub-phrases**

The Musical Phrase

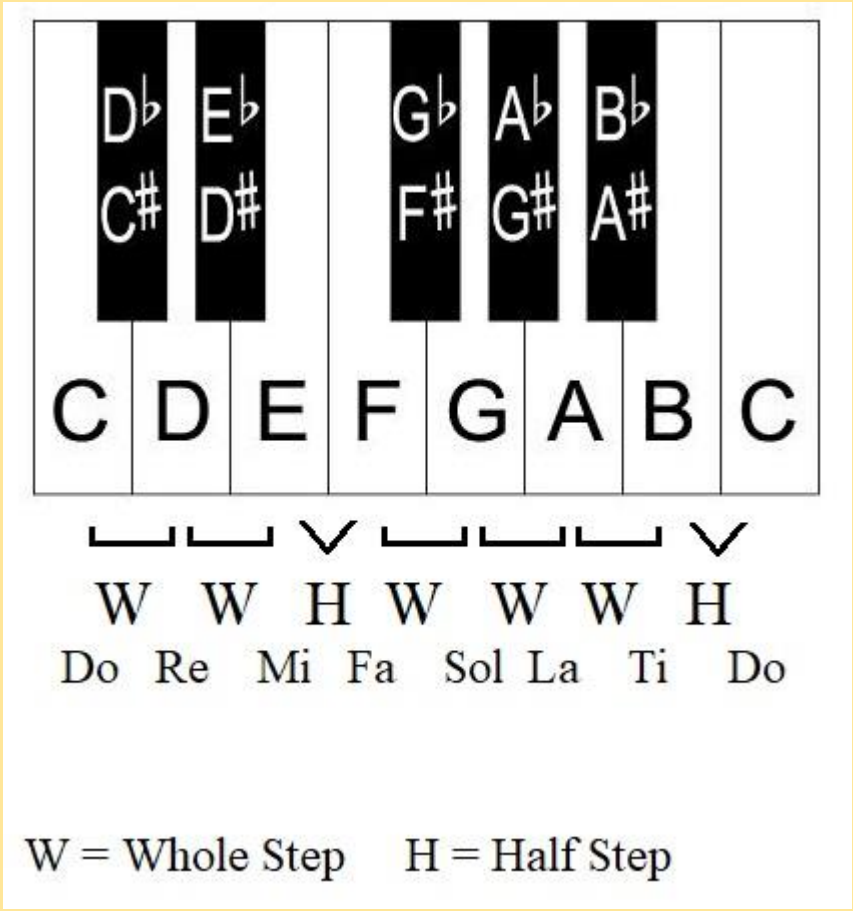


Phrase diagram of ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’

The Musical Phrase (cont'd)

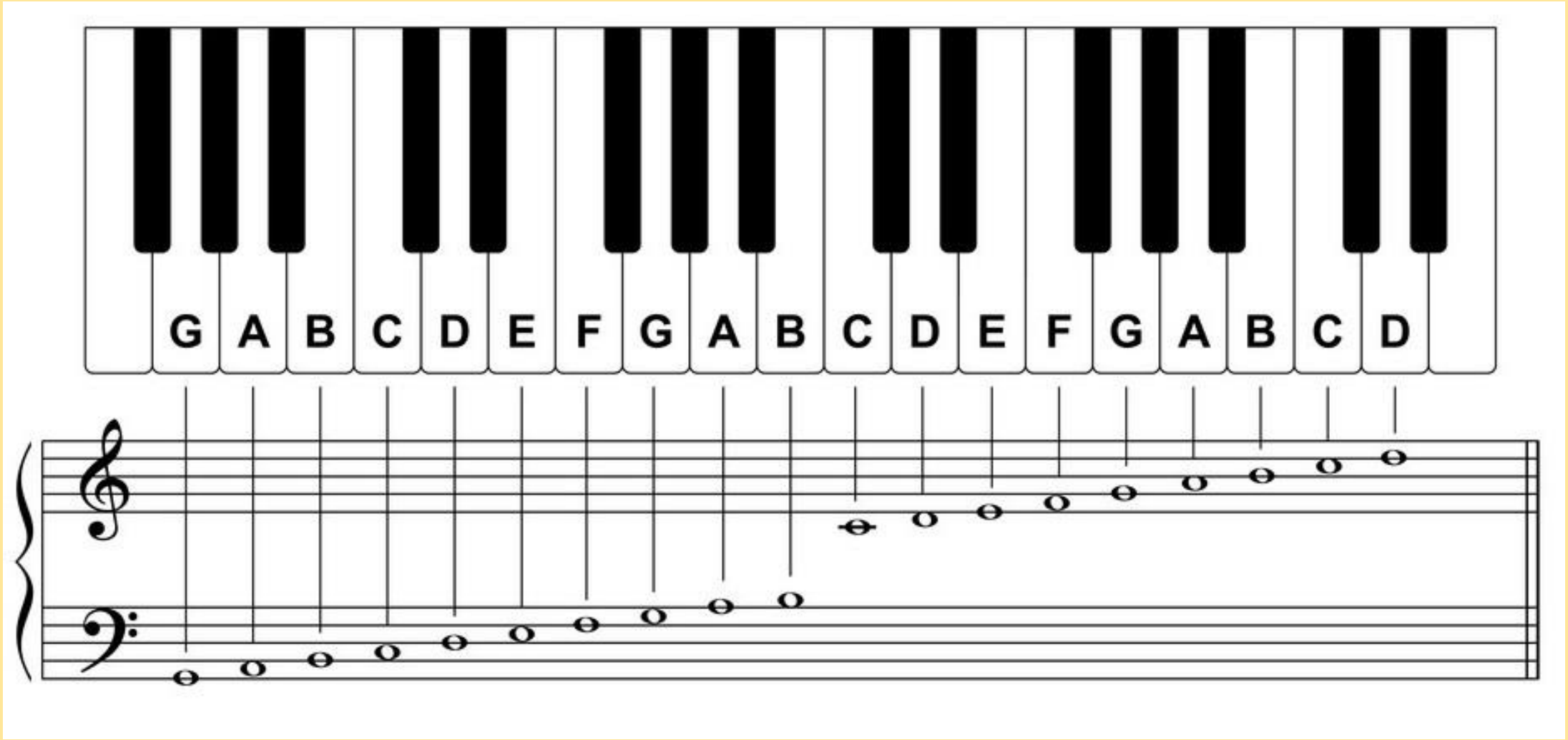


- There are 12 notes in the **chromatic scale**
  - Uses letters A-G on white keys, and uses **flat** and **sharp** on black keys
  - **Chromatic** refers to notes that are ½ step apart from each other
  - Distance between each note is a **half step**
  - Smallest distance between two notes
- Notes that are 8 notes apart (inclusively) are the same letter. These are the **same note**, but a different **register**
  - **Register** refers to how high or low notes are



Important Terms

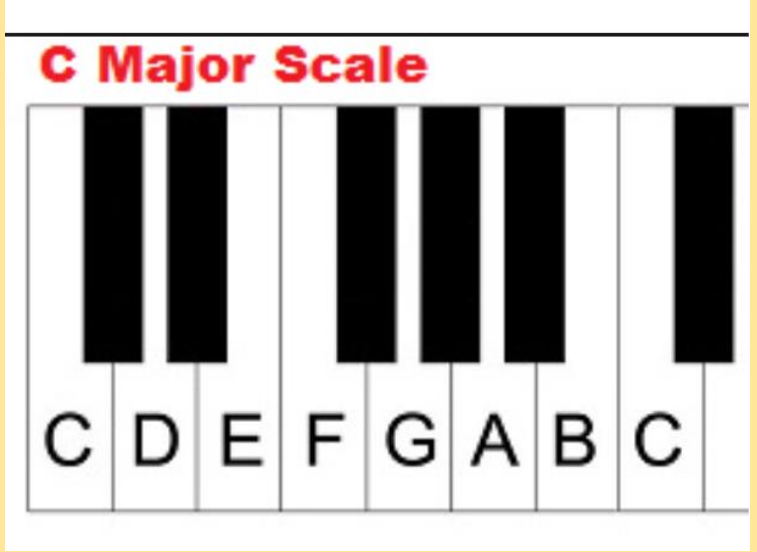
- **Tonic**: refers to the home note of a given piece of music
  - Any melody can be played using any note as tonic
  - A different combination of white and black keys must be used to maintain the "Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do" integrity
- **Scale**: a series of notes played in alphabetical order that provide all of the notes of a given piece of music
  - Ex. C-D-E-F-G-A-B-C is the C major scale.
  - Ex. D-E-F$^{\#}$-G-A-B-C$^{\#}$-D is the D major scale (notice the inclusion of sharps)
  - Ex. C-D-E^{b}-F-G-A^{b}-B^{b}-C is the c minor scale
- **Key**: refers to the home note **and scale** of a given piece of music
  - If a piece is in the key of C Major, that means the music uses C as the home note and uses the Major collection (as opposed to the minor collection)
- **Interval**: refers to the distance between two notes
- **Octave**: The distance between two notes whose interval is 8 steps
  - "Oct" means 8
  - Will always be the same exact letter
  - **C**-D-E-F-G-A-B-**C** (count inclusively)



The “Grand Staff” (below) and their corresponding notes on the keyboard (above).
The Grand Staff contains two clefs (symbols) to indicate the higher sounds (treble clef) and the lower sounds (bass clef)

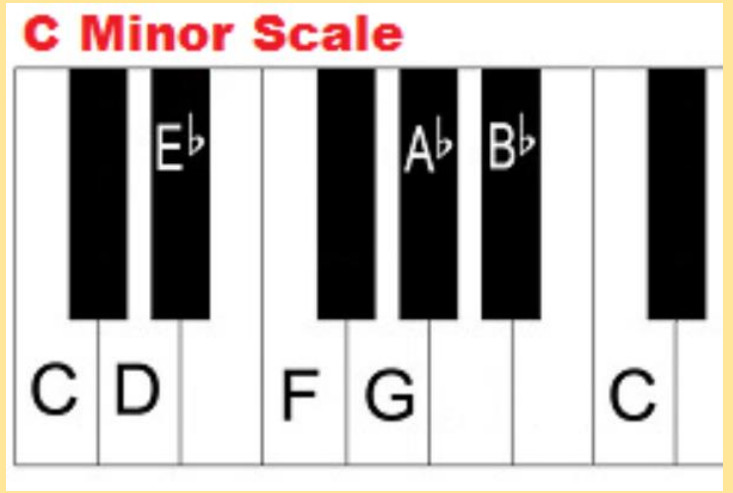
The Major Scale

- The **brighter-sounding** scale
  - “Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Ti-Do”
- Most happy-sounding melodies from nursery rhymes use the major scale for their melodies
  - Twinkle twinkle little star
  - Mary had a little lamb
  - Mexican hat dance
- Most music associated with heroes in movies and video games are in the major key



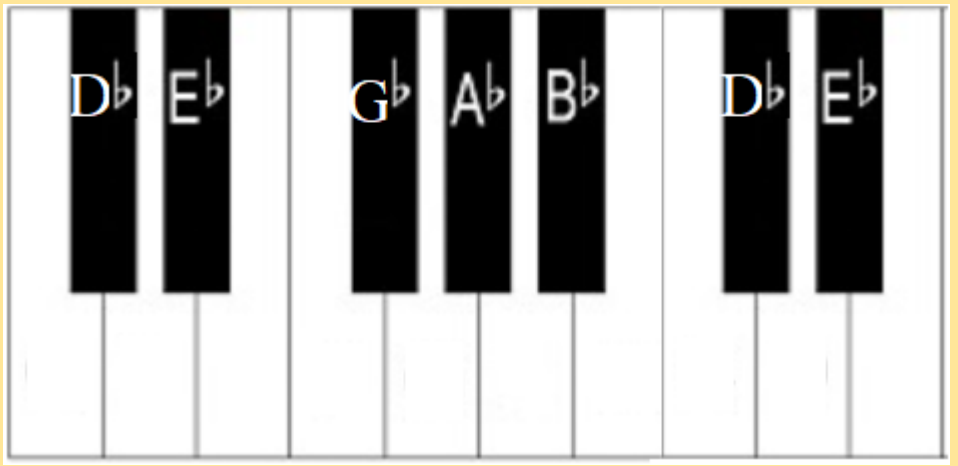
The Minor Scale

- The **darker** scale
  - “Do-Re-Me-Fa-Sol-Le-Te-Do”
- Most somber, depressing, mysterious, eerie, ‘evil’ sounding melodies use the minor key
  - Darth Vader’s theme from *Star Wars*
  - ‘Greensleeves’
  - Theme from *Harry Potter*
- Not *all* music in minor keys sound this way, but it’s often used by composers to evoke these types of moods
- Most music associated with heroes in movies and video games are in the major key



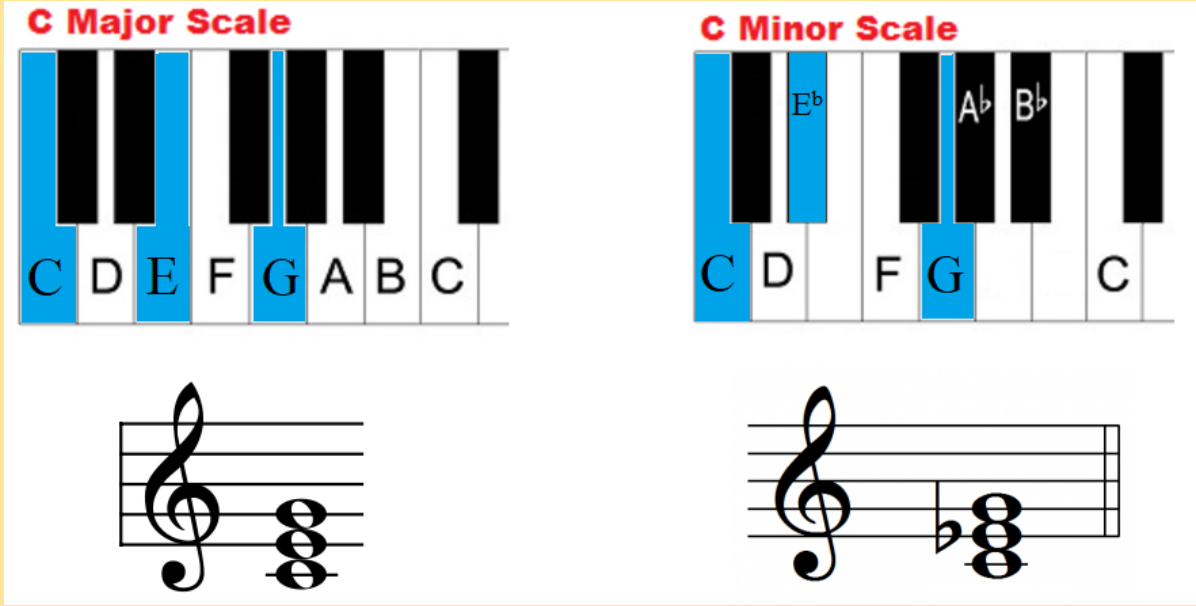
The Pentatonic Scale

- A 5-note scale
  - Most common form is playing all the black keys on the piano (there are many more possibilities)
- Many different cultures use the pentatonic scale in different ways:
  - Traditional Chinese folk song
    - “100 birds pay tribute to the Phoenix”
  - American folk song
    - “Oh, Susanna”
  - Spirituals
    - “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen”
  - Christian hymns
    - “Amazing Grace”
  - Hollywood tropes of the American Indian
    - “Colors of the Wind” from Disney’s *Pocahontas*



Harmony

- Refers to multiple notes playing at the same time
- The simplest type of harmony is a **chord**
  - Simplest type of chord contains 3 notes (called ‘triads)
- Many different types of chords, but the most common are **major** and **minor** chords
  - Just like in melodies, major chords are bright, minor chords are dark



Consonance and Dissonance

- Harmonies and melodies can also be **consonant** or **dissonant**
  - **Consonance** refers to sounds that sound naturally pleasing or ‘correct’ to us
  - **Dissonance** refers to sounds that sound naturally ‘ugly’ or ‘incorrect’ to us
    - Traditionally, **dissonance** wants to resolve to consonance
      - Harmonic rules demand that dissonance resolves to more pleasing sounds
    - In the 20th century, it is common to use **dissonance** more freely, without requiring resolution to a consonant sound

La *Marseillaise* (French national anthem)

“Battle Hymn of the Republic”

“Hail to the Chief”

Rhythm

- **Rhythm** refers to the movement of music in time
  - the combination of long and short sounds/silences over time
- **Beat** is the underlying pulse in music (and in poetry)
  - Beats remain consistent throughout – does not get faster or slower
  - Beats are organized by their emphasis
    - The heaviest and most emphasized beat is called the **downbeat**
      - A **downbeat** is the first beat of each group
        - Each group is called a **measure**
- **Meter** refers to how many beats there are in each measure of music

Rhythm (cont'd)

- Most common **meters** are 2/4, 3/4, and 4/4
  - **Marches** are mostly in 2/4
    - 2 beats in every measure
    - **1**-2, **1**-2, **1**-2, **1**-2 (or "**Left**-right, **Left**-right, **Left**-right")
  - **Waltzes** contain three beats in each measure (3/4 time)
    - **1**-2-3, **1**-2-3, **1**-2-3, **1**-2-3
    - Happy birthday and the Star-Spangled Banner are both in 3/4 time
  - Traditional blues, **rock** and pop music are in 4/4
    - **1**-2-3-4, **1**-2-3-4, **1**-2-3-4, **1**-2-3-4,

Form

- **Form**: refers to how music is organized:
  - Most common form in popular music is “Verse” form
    - Verse 1, Verse 2, Verse 3, etc.
    - ‘Star-spangled Banner’ is in Verse form (there’s no chorus in this music)
      - 4 verses of poetry using the same melody – we only sing the 1st first at sporting events
  - Each verse contains 4 complete musical statements
    - Musically, the same melody is used for statements 1 and 2, with contrasting melodies for statements 3 and 4.
      - Applying letters to these musical phrases give us AABC form for each verse:

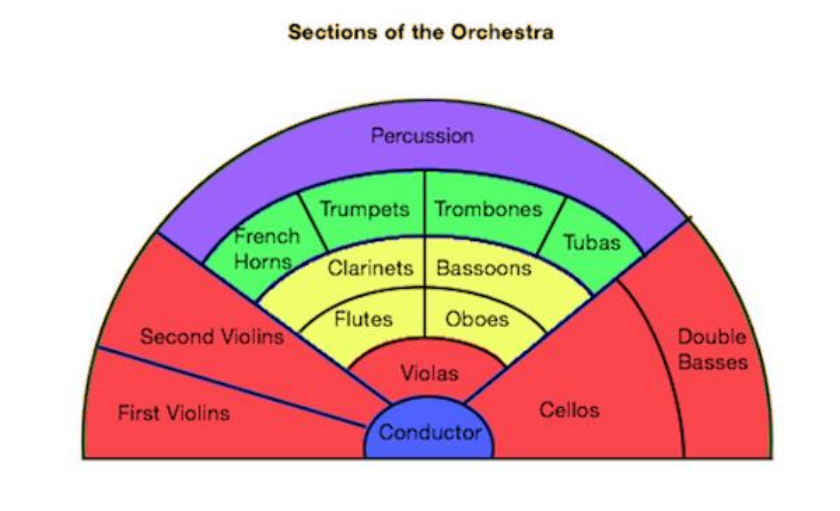
A: Oh say can you see, by the dawn’s early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight’s last gleaming
A: Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming
B: And the rocket’s red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there
C: Oh, say does the that star-spangled banner yet wave
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Other Terms to know

- **Texture**: refers to how many independent lines are playing/singing at the same time
- **Genre:** refers to the categorization of music
  - Not all music is a ‘song,’ just like not all books are ‘novels.’
    - Fiction, non-fiction, reference books, biographies, humor, etc. are all **genres** of books
- **Timbre** (pronounced ‘tam-ber’)
  - Refers to the color of a sound
  - Different instruments and voices had different timbres

Instrument Families

- Families of the orchestra are categorized in 4 families:
  - **Strings**
    - Violin, viola, cello bass
    - All make sound the *same exact way*
  - **Woodwinds**
    - Flute/piccolo – blow air over a hole to make a sound
    - Clarinet – 1 reed vibrates between lip to create a buzz before air passes through instrument to make a sound
    - Oboe, bassoon – 2 reeds vibrate
  - **Brass**
    - Trumpet, trombone, French horn, tuba
    - All make sound and *same exact way*
      - Lips are placed in a metal mouthpiece. Lips create a buzzing sound to create vibration, which makes sound
  - **Percussion**
    - Timpani, bass drum (traditional instruments)


Sections of the Orchestra
Percussion
Trumpets
Trombones
French Horns
Tubas
Clarinets
Bassoons
Flutes
Oboes
Second Violins
Violas
Double Basses
First Violins
Cellos
Conductor

String Instruments

- String family all creates sound the same way
  - Gliding a bow (made of horse hair) over strings
  - Can also pluck the strings
    - Called ‘pizzicato’
- Fingers push down on the string against the fingerboard to shorten the length of the string
  - Rule of sound: the shorter/smaller something is, the *higher the pitch*
    - Likewise, the bigger something is, the *lower the pitch*

Violin and Viola

Violin

Viola

Cello and Double Bass

Cello

Double bass. Notice how much larger the bass is than the cello

Ulysses Quartet performs the 4th movement of Bartok's 4th string quartet. Everyone plays 'pizzicato' in this movement. They either pluck the strings or strum them, creating a completely different sound

The Flute

The flute mouthpiece. Air is blown over this hole like blowing air over a soda bottle to make sound

Clarinet

Clarinet mouthpiece. The reed is made of cane. It’s strapped to the mouthpiece, and the reed vibrates between the lip before making a sound

Oboe

Oboe mouthpiece. This contains 2 reeds (hence being a ‘double reed’ instrument).

Bassoon

Bassoon mouthpiece. This contains 2 reeds (hence being a ‘double reed’ instrument).

The Brass Family

Clockwise from top left: Trumpet, French Horn, Tuba, Trombone

Brass Instruments - Mouthpieces

Trumpet and Trombone

The trumpet. Notice how powerful and bright of a sound it creates.

The trombone. By extending the arm and the slide, the player essentially elongates the instrument, creating a lower sound.

Tuba and French Horn

The tuba. The large bell at the top creates a very full and deep sound

The French horn. If we uncoiled the instrument, it would be longer than even the tuba. It is capable of playing both very low and very high.

Timpani and Bass Drum

Timpani. Also known as the ‘kettle drum.’ Unlike the snare or bass drum, this instrument is a *pitched percussion* because depending on how tight the membrane of the drum, as well as the size, different notes can be played. Most common percussion instrument in the orchestra, and typically the only percussion in Baroque and Classical era orchestras

Bass drum. Creates a very deep and low sound. Used typically for dark color and accentuation within the orchestra