

# Introduction

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## To the student

Have you ever realised that it is much easier to learn something if you want to? Do you ever forget your telephone number? How many characters can you name from your favourite 'soap' or football team? Scales are not difficult to learn if you really want to learn them. Not only will they improve many aspects of your technique, but you will also get high marks in the scale section of grade exams, you will be able to learn pieces more quickly (difficult passages are often nothing more than scale patterns) and your sight-reading will improve too! Treat scales as friends – they will pay you great dividends!

## To the teacher

Scales and arpeggios are often a real stumbling block for exam candidates and budding musicians. *Improve your scales!* is designed to make scale preparation and learning fun!

Working through the book will encourage your pupils to approach scales and arpeggios methodically and thoughtfully. It will help with memory problems and turn scale-learning into an enjoyable experience.

## Simultaneous learning

Scales, sight-reading and aural are often the aspects of teaching relegated to the final few minutes of a lesson. The link between scales (particularly in the development of 'key-sense' and the recognition of melodic/harmonic patterns) and sight-reading is obvious, and there are many ways to integrate aural into the process too. Thus the use of the material in this book as a more central feature of a lesson is strongly recommended, especially when used in conjunction with *Improve your sight-reading!* Pupils will learn to become more musically aware, make fewer mistakes and allow the teacher to concentrate on teaching the music!

## Using the book

The purpose of this workbook is to incorporate regular scale playing into lessons and daily practice and to help pupils prepare for grade examinations. You need not work at all sections, nor in the order as set out, but the best results may well be achieved by adhering fairly closely to the material.

**Know the Notes!** is to prove that the actual notes are known! Students should be encouraged to say the notes up and down until this can be done really fluently.

The **Finger Fitness** exercises are to strengthen the fingers and to cover technically tricky areas. They should be played legato, detached, staccato and any other form of mixed articulation that you can devise! When they are fluent you may like to add dynamic levels and vary the rhythmic patterns. Always encourage an active awareness of intonation. It is recommended that these exercises are played slowly until real control is achieved.

The **Scale Study** and **Arpeggio Study** are really extended exercises, but place the material in a more musical and 'fun' context. Some have *ad lib.* accompaniments or you might like to improvise a simple piano accompaniment; this would add interest and help the student with intonation and time.

**Have a go** is to encourage thought 'in the key', through the improvisation or composition of a short tune.

As a further exercise to develop the ability to think in a key, encourage pupils to play (by ear) a well known melody – for example, Happy Birthday or the National Anthem (major), 'Greensleeves' or 'God rest ye merry, gentlemen' (minor). You might like to ask pupils to improvise a simple variation on their chosen melody. This could be rhythmic or dynamic to begin. As they grow in confidence they might try 'decorating' the melody.

**Say→Think→Play!** is where the student finally plays the scale and arpeggio. The following method should really help in memorising each scale and arpeggio:

- 1 **Say** the notes out loud, up and down, and repeat until fluent.
- 2 Say the notes out loud and finger the scale. Don't proceed further until this can be done confidently and accurately.
- 3 **Think** the notes and finger the scale (but don't play out loud).
- 4 Think the notes and **play** the scale/arpeggio. By this time there should be no doubt in the player's mind and there should certainly be no fumbles or wrong notes!

## Marking

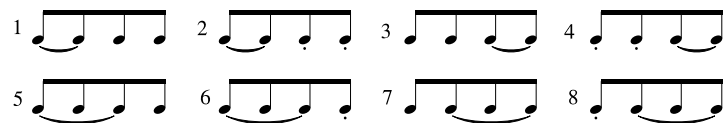
A marking system has been included to help you and the student to monitor progress and to act as a means of encouragement. It is suggested you adopt a grading system as follows:

- A Excellent work!
- B Good work, but keep at it!
- C A little more practice would be a good idea!
- D No time to lose – get practising at once!

## Revision

At the end of each stage you will find a **Revision Practice** table. As the new scales become more familiar you will wish your student to revise them regularly. This table is to encourage a methodical approach to scale practice, and show that there are endless ways of practising scales and arpeggios! Fill out the table for each week, or each practice session as follows:

- 1 Mark L for legato, D for detached and S for staccato, or;
- 2 Choose a different articulation pattern each time from the following:  
Scales:



Arpeggios:



- 3 Choose a different rhythmic pattern each time from the following:



- 4 Finally, choose a different dynamic level. As students get into the habit of good scale and arpeggio practice they should no longer need the table.

## Group Teaching

*Improve your scales!* is ideal for group teaching. Members of the group should be asked to comment on performances of the **Finger Fitness** exercises – was the tone even? Were the fingers moving rhythmically and together when necessary? Was the pulse even? *etc.* Exercises could be split between two or more players (for example, playing alternate phrases), and constructive criticism should be encouraged for the scale and arpeggio studies. With the optional *ad lib.* parts, a small group of the pieces could be performed at a private 'group concert', or even at a more formal concert.

# C major 2 octaves

## Know the Notes!

1 Write the key signature of C major:

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2 Write out the notes of the scale:

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3 Write out the notes of the arpeggio:

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## Finger Fitness

Always practise the **Finger Fitness** exercises legato, detached and staccato (see Introduction).

1

2

3

4

5

## Champagne Caprice

Scale study in C major

Allegretto con moto

7

13