

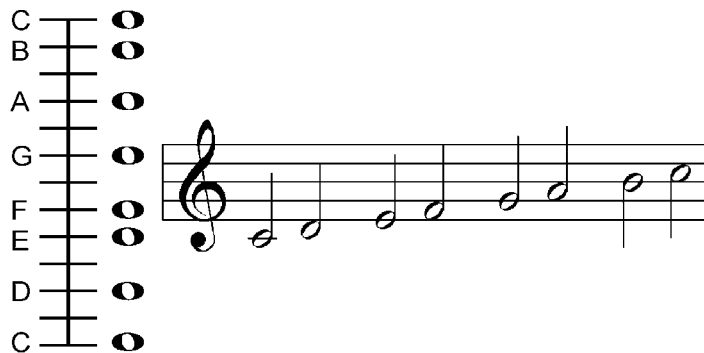
# 4

## RELATIVE PITCHES

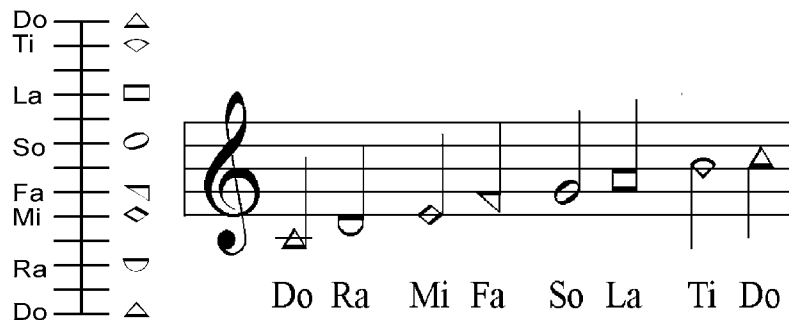
**Scope:** The Major Diatonic Scale is presented along with the symbols for each of the tones of the scale.

### Major Diatonic Scale

When a scale is formed using only the eight tones named by eight successive degrees as in the example below, the scale is called a *Diatonic Scale*. The scale shown below is the *Major Diatonic Scale* with the first note of the scale placed on the pitch "C".

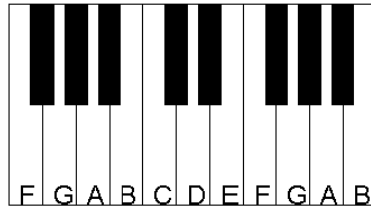


Each of the tones of the Major Diatonic Scale has a name. The symbols (*shaped notes*) (△ ▽ ◇ ▽ ○ □ ◇) for each tone are shown on the right side of the following gauge.



Notice in the Major Diatonic Scale that half steps occur between Mi (◇) and Fa (▽) and between Ti (◇) and Do (△).

Notice also that on the keyboard shown in the next illustration, that there is no black key between E and F or between B and C. Black keys are the tones for the half-steps between all the tones except between those of Mi and Fa and between Ti and Do.



The tones of the Major Diatonic Scale are called relative pitches because they only exist in their relationship to Do. In other words, Re is always a whole step above Do, Mi always two steps above Do, Fa always two and one-half steps above Do, Sol always three and one-half steps above Do, La always four and one-half steps above Do, and Ti always five and one-half steps above Do, etc. And notice that from Do to Do there are six whole steps or twelve half steps.



Since Do is the tone on which the Major Diatonic Scale is built, Do becomes the keytone of the scale. Once a pitch has been established for Do, the pitch of the rest of the tones of the scale can be heard. It is this relationship between the tones that we hear. We have grown accustomed to hearing this relationship in over 99% of all melodies used in the modern Western music.

Once Do has been heard, then each of the other tones possess tonality, a characteristic sound or feeling. Do will feel firm when sung. Re will feel rousing and uneasy. Mi will feel gentle and calm. Fa has a feeling of awe or desolation. Sol feels bright and happy. La feels sad. Ti feels piercing and uneasy as if you must sing Do next.

It does not matter what absolute pitch is associated with these tones. As long as the tones retain their relationship to Do, they will exhibit their individual tonality.

*Sight reading* (sight singing) is the ability to reproduce written music. The deciding factor in one's being able to sight read without instrumental help lies in his ability to reproduce the relationships between the tones of the scale. This is a skill that takes time to acquire. Shaped notes are the direct result of past singing schools efforts to teach the relationships between relative pitches on the staff, making sight reading easier.

**Summary:** *The names of the tones of the Major Diatonic Scale are Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and Ti. Half steps are found between Mi and Fa and between Ti and Do. The rest are a whole step apart.*

Exercises

1. Name each of the following relative pitches:

□ —    ∪ —    ∩ —    ◊ —    △ —    ○ —    ▽ —

◊ —    □ —    ∩ —    ▽ —    ○ —    ∪ —    △ —

∩ —    ▽ —    ∪ —    ◊ —    △ —    ○ —    □ —

∪ —    ∩ —    □ —    ○ —    ◊ —    ∪ —    △ —

▽ —    ○ —    □ —    ∩ —    △ —    ∪ —    ◊ —

2. Place the names and symbols for the relative pitches on the gauges below.

3. Draw the Major Diatonic Scale on each of the staffs below.

Additional Notes