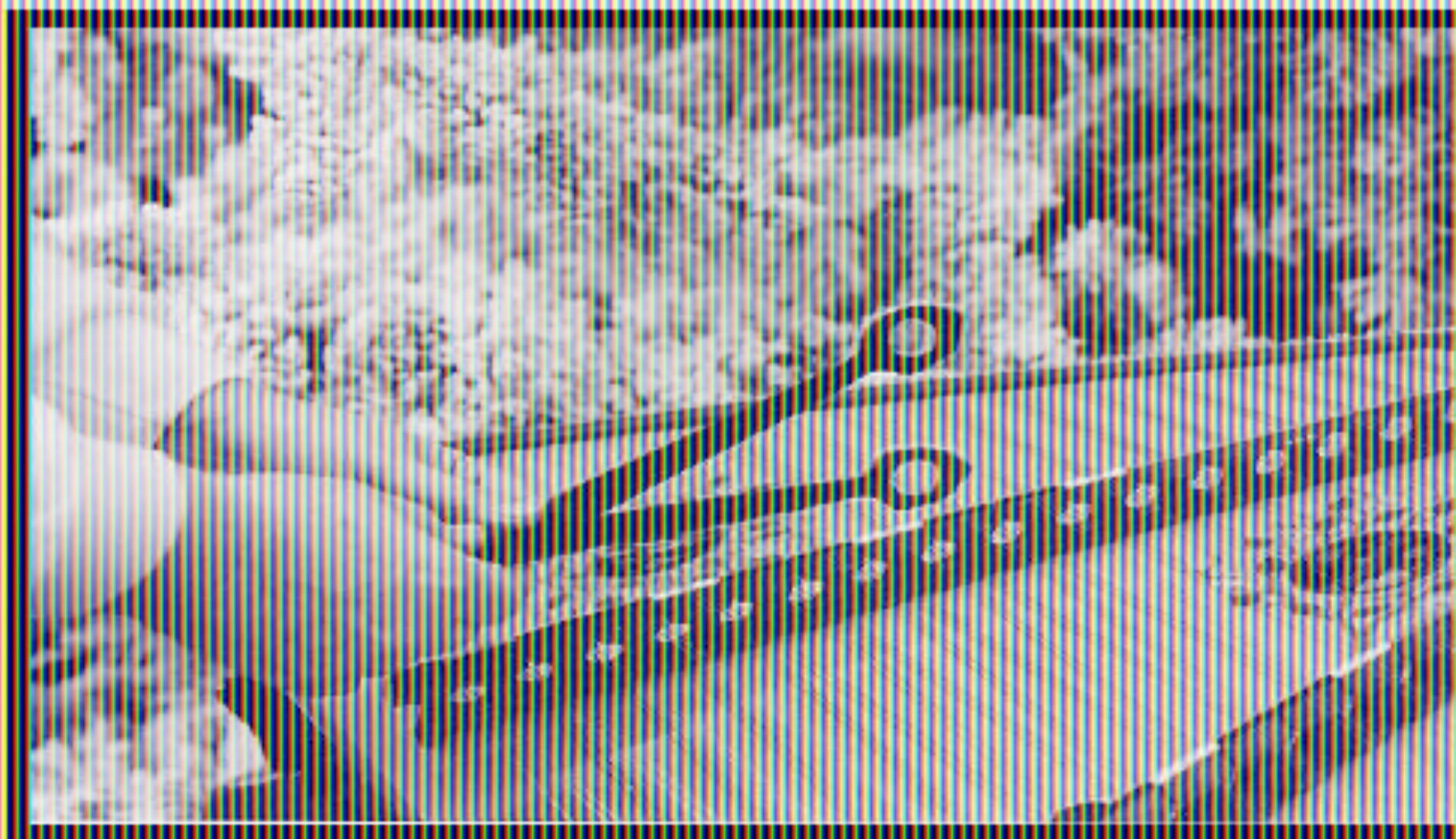


# Theory, Technique And Tunes

For Hammer Dulcimers  
By Peggy Carter



Learn Many Ways  
to be a better player

<b>Title</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Page</b>
A Little Scale Theory-Intervals	Intervals	Understand Intervals	46
Arpeggios in A	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	99
Arpeggios in C	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	100
Arpeggios in D	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	97
Arpeggios in D, G & C- 4-notes	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	90
Arpeggios in G	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	98
Arpeggios Using Bass Br.	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	89
Banjo Tune	Tune	Techniques to Embellish	144
Beg. Music Reading – Lesson 2	Measures	Reading Music	10
Beg. Music Reading – Lesson 3	Counting	Reading Music	12
Beg. Music Reading – Lesson 4	Scales	Reading Music	14
Beg. Music Reading – Lesson 5	Key Signatures	Reading Music	18
Beg. Music Reading -Lesson 1	Note Names	Reading Music	8
Beg. Music Reading -Singing	Do-Re-Mi	Reading Music	16
Beginner Scales and Arpeggios	Scale & Arpeggios	Understand Scales	45
Beginning Sight-Singing	Note Names	Reading Music	11
Black Them Boots	Tune	Hammering Technique	40
Blackberry Blossom	Tune	Using Scales	65
Blueberry Rhythms	Reading Rhythm	Understand Rhythm	41
Bog Down In The Valley	Tune	Hammering Technique	44
Boil That Jazz	Tune	Techniques to Embellish	148
Build Scales in D, G & C	Hand Sequence	Scale Technique	31
Building Scales	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	26
Carter Creek Stomp	Tune	Using Scales	69
Chord Sets, 3-notes (“frames”)	Chord Progressions	Learning Chords	86
Chord Sets, 3-notes (Notation)	Chord Progressions	Learning Chords	87

<b>Title</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Page</b>
Chord Sets, 4-notes (frames)	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	116
Chord Sets, 4-notes (notation)	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	117
Chord Shapes – 3 Notes	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	82
Chord Shapes – 4 notes	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	84
Chord Shapes – Tall chords	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	85
Chord Shapes -Using Bass Bridge	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	83
Chord Theory	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	28
Chords & Inversions Using Bass Br.	Chord Theory	Learning Chords	88
Chords in D – Inversions (frames)	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	124
Chords in D All Inversions (notes)	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	125
Chords in G, Inversions (frames)	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	126
Chords in G, Inversions (notes)	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	127
Chords With Inversions (notes)	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	128
Christmas Eve Jig	Tune	Using Jig Technique	93
Circle of Fifths (Picture)	Note Names	Basic Theory	24
Circle of Fifths (Secrets)	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	25
Cluck Ol' Hen	Tune	Bending Strings	94
Counting Jig Rhythms	Counting Jigs	Understand Jigs	79
D Arpeggio & Extension	Scale & Arpeggios	Understand Arpeggios	50
D Scale	Scale & Arpeggios	Understand Scales	49
Definitions	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	27
Diamond Shaped Arpeggios	Arpeggios	Hammering Technique	96
Did You Know?	Definitions	Basic Theory	26
Drones & Arpeggios to Embellish	Arpeggios	Using 3-note Arpeggios	131
Fairie's Reel	Tune	Using Scales/Rhythm	72
Ffaniglen	Tune	Using Scales	66

## TTT Alpha Index

<b>Title</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Page</b>
FYI (Theory Trivia)	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	26
Give Thanks	Tune	Using Arpeggios	108
Good King Wenceslaus	Tune	Techniques to Embellish	150
Green Corn	Tune	Use C Scales/Rhythm	51
Gypsy Rover	Tune	Using Rhythm	42
Hanged Man's Reel	Tune	Using Scales/Rhythm	70
Huckleberry Rhythms	Reading Rhythm	Understand Rhythm	37
I'll Tell Me Ma	Tune	Using Intervals	56
Isle Of Innisfree	Tune	Techniques to Embellish	146
Jazzy Jingle Bells	Tune	Using syncopation	140
Jig Exercises 5 – 7	Hand Sequence	Hammering Technique	78
Jig Hammer Patterns 1 – 4	Hand Sequence	Hammering Technique	77
Jingle Drills	Syncopation	Hammering Technique	139
Jingle Syncopation	Syncopation	Hammering Technique	138
John Stinson	Tune	Using Scales/Chords	110
Just A Little Talk With Jesus	Tune	Using 3-note Arpeggios	130
Keel Row	Tune	Playing Jigs	79
Learn Patterns for Scales	Hand Sequence	Scale Technique	30
Let Right Hand Know What Left Is	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	123
Lets Look At Rhythm	Rhythm Theory	Understand Rhythm	32
Li'l Liza Jane	Tune	Using Rhythm	43
Lladaw	Tune	Understand Arpeggios	102
Mississippi Sawyer	Tune	Using syncopation	134
Notes On The Stringboard	Note Names	Navigating the Strings	22
Numbering System	General Knowledge	Navigating the Strings	7
O Donnel Abu	Tune	Use C Scales	53

<b>Title</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Page</b>
Ode To Joy	Tune	Using Intervals	58
Old Joe Clark	Tune	Use Modal Scales	52
Pat a Pan/Marching	Tune	Techniques to Embellish	145
Practice The A Scale	Scales	Scale Technique	64
Practice The C Scale	Scales	Scale Technique	61
Practice The D Scale	Scales	Scale Technique	63
Practice The G Scale	Scales	Scale Technique	62
Practicing	General Knowledge	Motivation	4
Ragamuffin Practice	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	118
Ragamuffin in 3/4 (frames)	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	114
Ragamuffin in 3/4 Time (notation)	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	115
Ragamuffin in 4/4 in D, G & A	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	112
Ragamuffin in 4/4 Time (notation)	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	113
Ragamuffin Practice Using Bass Br.	Chord Progressions	Hammering Technique	120
Reading Notation for HD	Note Names	Navigating the Strings	23
Reel Exercises	Hand Sequence	Hammering Technique	48
Rhythm Practice	Hammering	Technique Exercises	38
SamFest Jammin	Tune	Using Scales/Rhythm	71
Scales & Intervals in C, D & G	Intervals	Understand Intervals	47
Scales and Exercises in A	Exercise	Technique Exercises	76
Scales and Exercises in C	Exercise	Technique Exercises	73
Scales and Exercises in D	Exercise	Technique Exercises	75
Scales and Exercises in G	Exercise	Technique Exercises	74
Seasons of Peace	Tune	Using Arpeggios	101
Simple Gifts	Tune	Using Scales/Chords	106
Skill Building: Arpeggios & Drones	Exercise	Technique Exercises	143

<b>Title</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Page</b>
Skill Building: Flipped Arpeggios	Exercise	Technique Exercises	142
Skill Building: Flipped Octaves	Exercise	Technique Exercises	142
Skill Building: 5ths & Octaves	Exercise	Technique Exercises	141
Skill Building: 5ths, Octaves	Exercise	Technique Exercises	143
Skill Building: The Chase	Exercise	Technique Exercises	142
Soldiers' Joy	Tune	Using syncopation	136
Spotted Pony	Tune	Use C Scale	54
String Chart	General Knowledge	Navigating the Strings	6
Swallowtail Jig	Tune	Playing Jigs	81
Syncopation Exercises	Syncopation	Hammering Technique	132
Technique Is Fun	Hammering	Technique Exercises	29
Techniques for Both Hands	Hand Sequence	Hammering Technique	91
Tetrachords on the HD	General Knowledge	Basic Theory	27
The Solid Rock	Tune	Using Ragamuffin	121
Thompson's Jig	Tune	Playing Jigs	80
Triangle Chords-Left Hand Lead	Chord Exercises	Hammering Technique	122
Unclouded Day	Tune	Using 3-note Chords	105
Understanding Rhythm	Counting	Understand Rhythm	34
Using Intervals To Harmonize	Intervals	Understand Intervals	57
What This Book Is and Is NOT	General Knowledge	Theory & Technique	3
What's The Difference	General Knowledge	Understand Rhythm	39
Whiskey Before Breakfast	Tune	Using Scales	49
Wildwood Flower	Tune	Using Rhythm	95
Will The Circle	Tune	Use C Scales/Chords	107
Wizard's Walk	Tune	Using Chords Technique	92
You Are My Sunshine	Tune	Using Intervals	55

# Music Reading

## Lesson 4 - The SCALE

Just as there are only 7 letters in the musical alphabet, there are 7 steps in the MUSICAL SCALE.

A complete musical scale starts and ends on the same letter. For instance, a C SCALE would read, "C - D - E - F - G - A - B - C." This is ONE OCTAVE of the C SCALE. Two octaves of the C SCALE would read "C - D - E - F - G - A - B - C - D - E - F - G - A - B -



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

All scales are made up of WHOLE STEPS and HALF STEPS. This scale is played ON the WHITE KEYS of the piano. The spacing of the keys on the piano is not equal, though.... you'll see that there are black keys in between the white keys, except in 2 spots where there are 2 white keys right next to each other, without a black key in between. These 2 steps are called "half steps" and all the others are called "whole steps." You can find WHOLE STEPS by playing one white key then find the closest white key and skipping a black key in between. Find the HALF STEPS in the C SCALE



Half Step Half Step Half Step Half Step

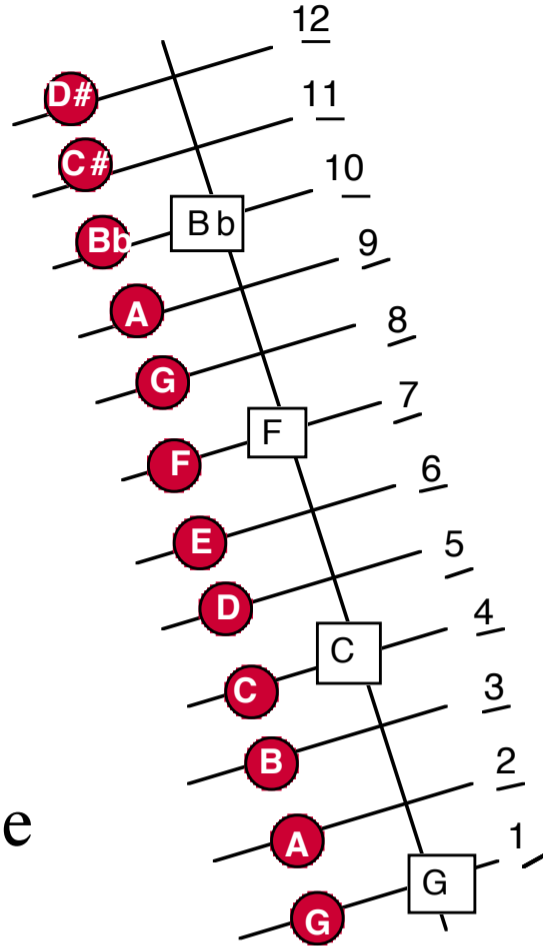
The pattern of a major SCALE is WHOLE - WHOLE- HALF- WHOLE - WHOLE - WHOLE - HALF. Circle the HALF STEPS, then find them on the piano.

Let's take this a step farther. The first note is a C... right? There's a black key to the right of C, and its called C# (C-sharp). The next white key is D. The next black key to the right is D# (D-sharp). The next white key is E, but there's no black key, so the closest key is the next WHITE key, which is F. Then the black key next to F is F# (F-sharp). Keep going...the next white key is G, and the black key to the right is G# (g-sharp) ... and all the way up until you get to the B, which doesn't have a black key by it, so the next white key is C.

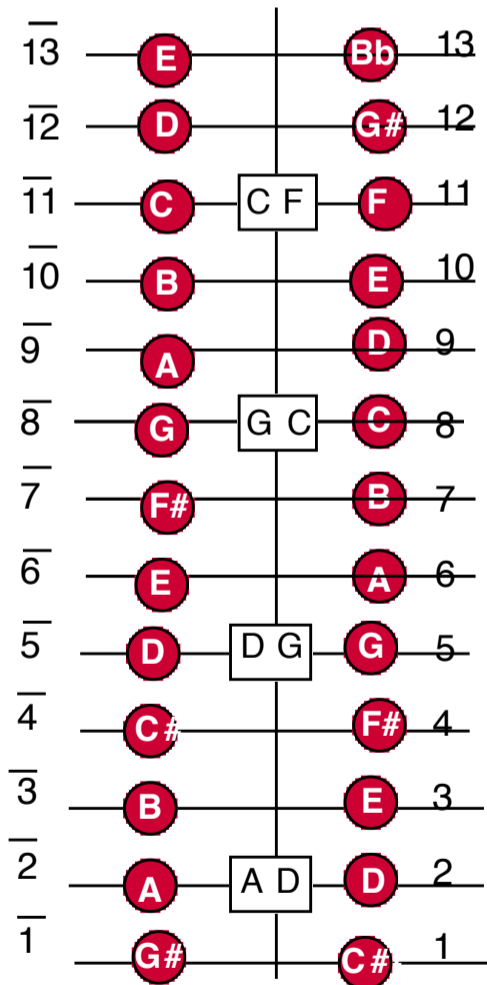


D C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C

## Notes on the Bass Bridge



## Notes on the Treble Bridge



You will use the numbers to help locate the notes you read from the staff and know which string to strike.

You will see numbers over the notation...the strings are numbered from the bottom to the top. A line under the note indicates that the string is on the BASS bridge. A line over the note indicates that the string is on the LEFT TREBLE bridge. No line below or above the number indicates that the string is on the RIGHT TREBLE bridge.



# Secrets of the Circle of Fifths

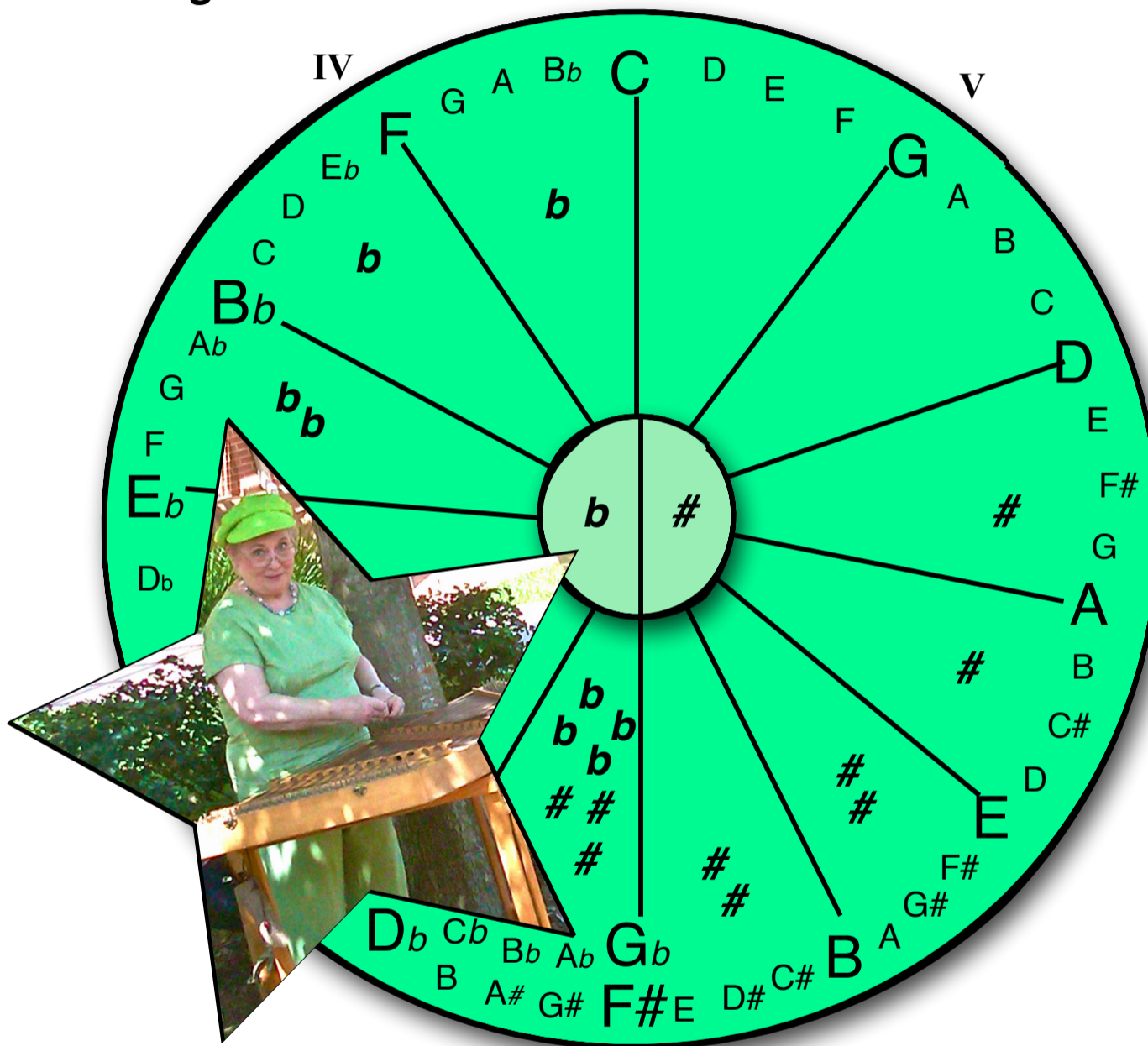
A B C D E F G A B C D E F G

*b* ←————→ *#*

*decending*

I

*ascending*

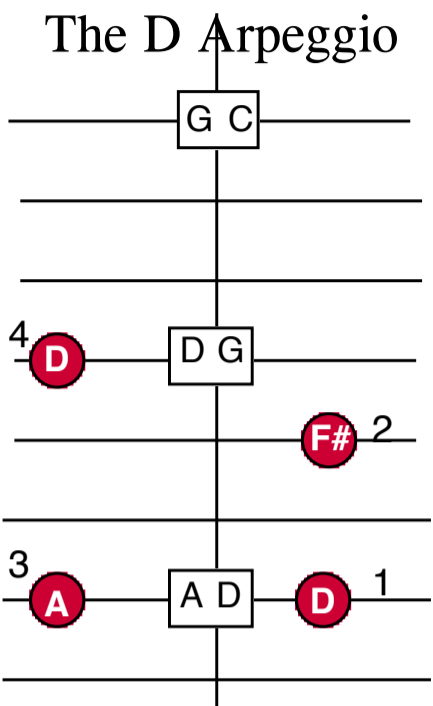


Tetrachord: X-1-1-1/2

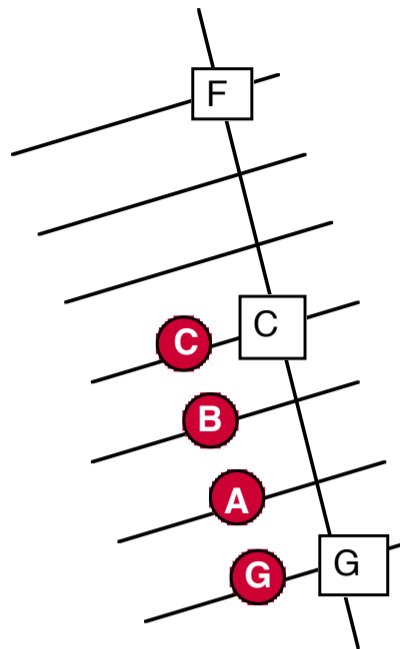
Major Diatonic Scale: Two tetrachords

X-1-1-1/2 - X-1-1-1/2

# Technique is Fun!



## The Bass Bridge



Say, "Mississippi Sawyer!  
Mississippi Sawyer!  
Mississippi Sawyer!  
Mississippi Sawyer!"

Now clap the rhythm of the words.

**X - X - X - X - X — X —**

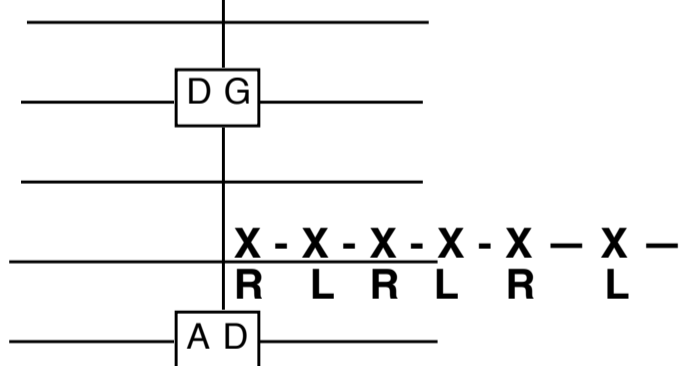
Now

Hammer the rhythm on one string.

*(choose a string - any string)*

Alternate hands, starting with  
**RIGHT HAND**

**R - L - R - L - R — L —**



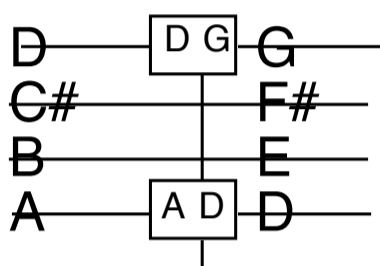
Mississippi Sawyer

*Hold the hammers loosely, between the thumb and "pointer" finger. Let the hammer bounce up from the string. Keep a steady beat.*

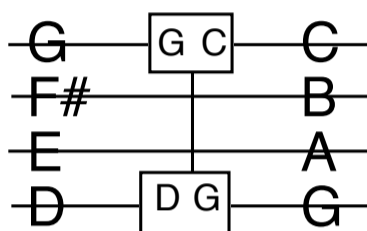


## Seeing Patterns in a “Box”

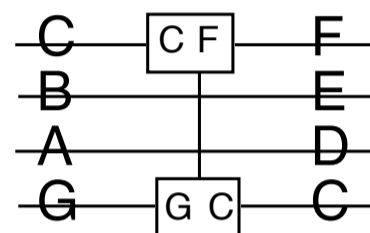
The illustrations below suggest a visual concept that may help the player visualize the patterns in a “Box” that uses four string-pairs, and continues on both sides of the treble bridge. The “Box” can be imagined with its bottom on any “position marker”, and its top on the next higher marker.



The D “Box”

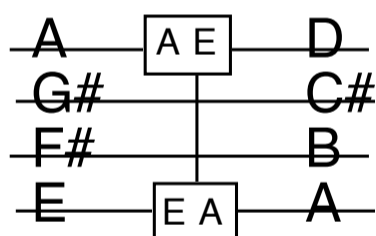


The G “Box”



The C “Box”

Play the scales that are illustrated in the “boxes” above and below. The “D Box,” the “G Box,” and the “C Box” are built on the treble bridge. On the student model (“12/11” or “13/12”) the “D Box” is built on the first treble bridge marker. The “A Box” can only be built on a dulcimer that “15/14” or larger.



The A “Box”

Locate the “boxes” before you start a new piece. Many pieces will extend above and below the original box, but if you visualize the “box” and learn to consider it your “home base,” the patterns will soon become quite natural and comfortable.

Arpeggios and embellishments will extend out from the “home-base box.” Practice scales in the boxes, then extend across the bridges and up and down the bridges to add your own style to the patterns. The patterns you create will soon become your own personal style.

# Whiskey Before Breakfast

Follow the suggested hammering suggestions to make the tune sound smooth and even. (Lines over the hand suggestion means play on left side of treble bridge.) NO LINE means right side of treble bridge. It will sound more like a dance tune if you accent the first beat in each measure.

D L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R  
 d e f# g a a a b a g f# e d g f# e f# g f# e  
 5 D D G D A D  
 9 D D em A  
 13 bm F#m G D G D A D  
 d c# b a a g f# e d

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## D Scale ( in the D Box) and extention

17 L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R  
 D E F# G A B C# D E F# G D F# A D  
 [.....D - BOX.....] [.....Extention.....] [.....D - Arpeggio.....]

# Carter Creek Stomp

(Embellishments for fiddle, hammer dulcimer, or penny whistle)

Peggy Carter

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in the key of D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. The piece consists of 15 measures. The notes are as follows: Measure 1: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 2: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 3: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 4: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 5: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 6: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 7: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 8: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 9: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 10: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 11: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 12: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 13: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 14: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Measure 15: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4.

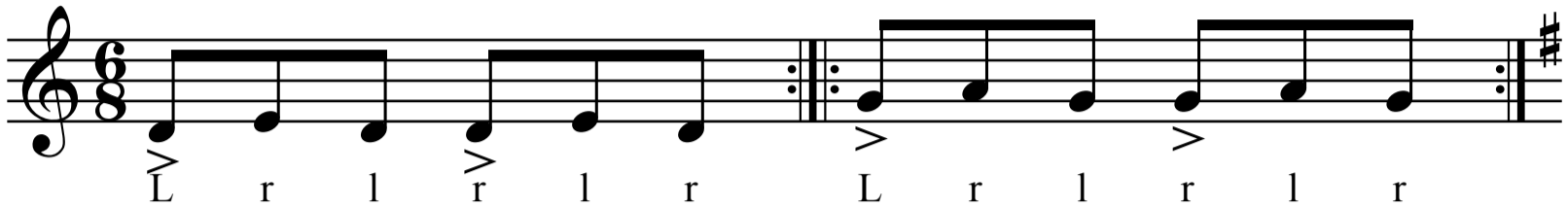
Chord markings: Measure 1: D; Measure 2: D; Measure 3: A7; Measure 4: D; Measure 5: D; Measure 6: D; Measure 7: A7; Measure 8: D; Measure 9: bm; Measure 10: f#m; Measure 11: G; Measure 12: D; Measure 13: D; Measure 14: D; Measure 15: A7.

Technique markings: Measure 1: R/T; Measure 5: R/T; Measure 7: R/T; Measure 9: L/T; Measure 11: R/T; Measure 13: R/T.

Other markings: Measure 6: B; Measure 11: B.

## Jig Exercise No. Five

A JIG has 6 beats in each measure, but taken at a fast tempo, it feels like 2 beats per measure in "triple meter" (each beat is divided into 3 equal notes). The 1st and 4th beats are accented. Alternate hands, but notice that the accent is first with the left hand, then next with the right hand. Do several repetitions of each measure, gradually increasing the speed.

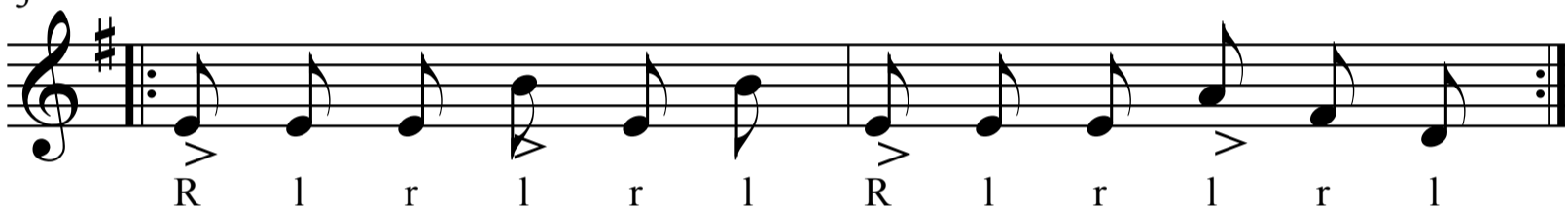


Musical notation for Jig Exercise No. Five, showing two measures of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains six eighth notes: L, r, l, r, l, r. The second measure contains six eighth notes: L, r, l, r, l, r. Accents (>) are placed above the first and fourth notes of each measure. The notes are grouped by beams. A repeat sign is present at the end of the second measure.

## Jig Exercise No. Six

The hammering pattern in jigs can be tricky.... start this exercise with right hand on E, on right side of bridge. Left hand plays the B on the left side. The left hand gets a workout as it crosses back and forth across the treble bridge, sometimes with an accented strike, and sometimes with an unaccented strike.

<sup>3</sup> To get the feel of the jig rhythm make a noticeable contrast between accented and unaccented strikes.

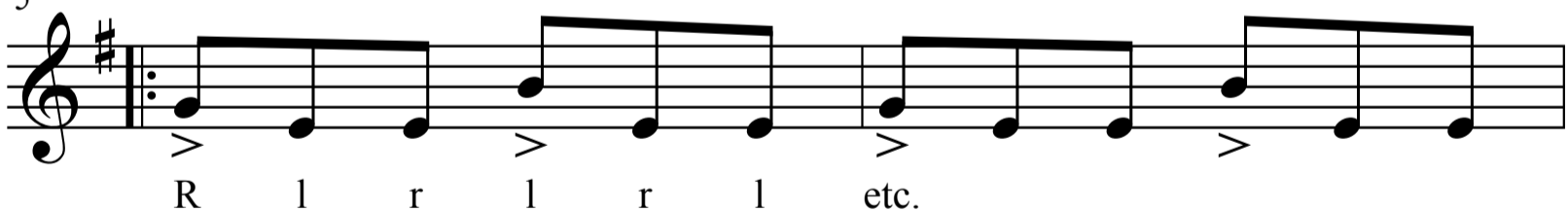


Musical notation for Jig Exercise No. Six, showing two measures of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. The second measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. Accents (>) are placed above the first and fourth notes of each measure. The notes are grouped by beams. A repeat sign is present at the end of the second measure.

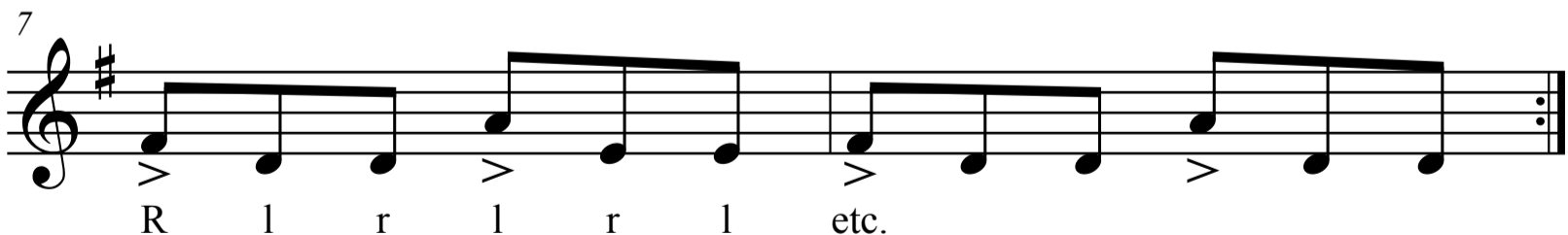
## Jig Exercise No. Seven

Start with the right hand on the right side of the bridge. The left hand crosses over for the B in the first two measures, and the A in the last two measures. Stay relaxed and let your fingers do all the work. Don't forget to observe the accents, and exaggerate the contrast between the accented attack and the light strike.

<sup>5</sup> Gradually build up speed so that the music flows smoothly as a dance requires.



Musical notation for Jig Exercise No. Seven, showing two measures of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. The second measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. Accents (>) are placed above the first and fourth notes of each measure. The notes are grouped by beams. A repeat sign is present at the end of the second measure.



Musical notation for Jig Exercise No. Seven, showing two measures of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. The second measure contains six eighth notes: R, l, r, l, r, l. Accents (>) are placed above the first and fourth notes of each measure. The notes are grouped by beams. A repeat sign is present at the end of the second measure.

# Keel Row

Trad

## Counting Jig Rhythms

Jigs are in 6/8 time.... that is: an 8th note gets 1 beat, and there are 6 beats in each measure.

Count: 1...2 - 3 4...5 6 1...2 3 4...5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6  
 Sounds like: gal lop, gal lop, gal lop, gal lop, gal loping, gal loping, gal loping, gal loping,

1...2 3 4 5 6 1...2 3 4 5 6 1...2 3 4 5 6 1...2...3... 4...5...6  
 gal lop, gal loping, gal lop, gal loping, gal lop, gal loping, stop stop.

Arrangement © 2004 Peggy Carter

# Techniques for Both Hands

Peggy Carter

Wizard's Walk: Always alternate hands (except when you don't.)

$\bar{L}$   $\bar{R}$   $\bar{L}$   $R$        $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $R$        $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $\bar{R}$   $\bar{L}$   $R$

Give Thanks: There's more than one way to skin a cat!

$\bar{L}$   $R$   $L$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$        $L$   $R$   $L$   $R$

$\bar{R}$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$   $R$   $\bar{L}$        $R$   $L$   $R$   $\bar{L}$

Christmas In Killarney: Jig rhythm - alternating accents.

$R$   $L$   $R$   $L$        $\overset{>}{R}$   $L$   $R$   $\overset{>}{L}$   $R$   $L$

Cluck Ol' Hen: Bending strings.

Cluck ol' hen! Cluck and squall!

Wildwood Flower: Learn Rhythm Patterns to embellish.

$L$   $L$   $R$   $L$   $R$        $L$   $L$   $R$   $L$   $R$        $L$   $L$   $R$   $L$   $R$        $L$   $L$   $R$   $L$   $R$        $L$



# Arpeggios in the Key of D

Follow hammering suggestions.....a line UNDER the suggested hand indicates BASS bridge. "R" means right hand on BASS bridge. A line OVER the suggested hand indicates the LEFT side of treble bridge. NO LINE indicates RIGHT side of treble bridge. "L" means LEFT hand on on LEFT side. Capital "L" & "R" indicate the first beat of a measure.

17 D b m

R l r l̄ r̄ l̄ r l R l r l̄ r̄ l̄ r l

19 G e m

Continue the same hammering pattern, beginning each measure with RIGHT hand on the BASS bridge and playing the top note with the RIGHT hand on the LEFT side.

21 D A7

23 D

R l r l̄ r̄ l̄ r l \*L/R (D) R l r l̄

\* The "D" achieves an interesting timbre when struck with left hand on LEFT side of treble bridge, and at the same time with the right hand on the UNISON "D" on the top of the BASS bridge. This note may not be included in all models of the hammer dulcimer.

The arpeggio in the last measure starts with RIGHT hand on BASS bridge.

This set of arpeggios progresses through all of the most-used chords in the key of D.

# 4/4 Time

**I** D chord (D F# A)

*Follow the numbering sequence in each frame, starting with the right hand each time.*

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**IV** G chord (G B D)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**V7** A7 chord (A C E G)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**I** G chord (GBD)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**IV** C chord (CEG)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**V7** D7 chord (DF#AC)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**I** A chord (AC#E)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**IV** D Chord (D F# A)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

**V7** E7 chord (EG#BD)

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Skill-Building Exercises

# MORE 5ths & Octaves on 3 courses

(Two-on-the-BASS)

14 G A

R L R L

16 C D

## Arpeggios on 3 courses

18 D Bm

R L R L R L R L

20 G Em

## Arpeggios Using "Drones"

22 D Bm

R L R L R L R L

24 G Em

