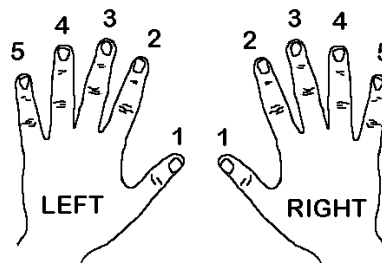


MU 009 (Feurzeig) Keyboard Lab 1

Major Pentachords (plus a bit of major pentatonic)

Keyboard fingering is indicated with numbers like this:



Note: notation on some other instruments indicates the thumb with a “0” or “+” and uses the numbers 1-4 for the remaining fingers, beginning with the index finger.

Five-finger **major pentachord** hand position

C major pentachord:

This same pattern (i.e. with the RH thumb and the LH pinky on “do”) works well for many other major pentachords besides C. Transpose the major pentachord to begin on G, D, A, E, B, and G \flat as well, using the same fingering pattern. Listen to make sure it sounds right: you should have all whole steps except for the hal step between *mi* and *fa*. Practice the hands separately, then together.

The following tune uses only the five notes of the major pentachord. Place your hand on the keyboard in the C major pentachord position and you can play the whole tune without shifting your hand.

Ode to Joy (theme from Beethoven’s Ninth), in C

Now place your hand on the keys in a D major pentachord position. Both your middle fingers should be on *mi*. (What note is *mi* in the D pentachord?) Play the tune in D, the original key. If you know the whole melody, see if you can pick out the second phrase: you will have to jump down to low *so*, an octave below the high *so*, for one note, but otherwise the entire melody lies within the pentachord.

Ode to Joy in D (the original key)

Transpose the "Ode to Joy" to the keys of F, G, A, and E as well. Remember that the tune starts on "mi", not "do". Practice hands separately, then together. Use your LH as much as your RH!

Then practice playing while singing along with solfege syllables.

Below is another tune using only the notes of the major pentachord.

When The Saints Go Marching In (key of A)

Transpose "Saints" to other keys. Try beginning on C, G, D, E, B, and G♭.

A **major pentatonic scale** can be played with the five fingers, with a finger stretch across the gap between *mi* and *so*.

You can use this stretched fingering for “Liza Jane”. Or alternatively, you can shift your hand up by one note for the second measure, and back down for mm. 3-4.

Liza Jane, first half (in the key of D, with fingering for right hand)

Try playing and transposing Liza Jane to other keys. Note that a major pentatonic scale can be played using only the black keys. (What note does this start on?)

Many, many folk tunes are in major pentatonic, including lots of African-American tunes and tunes inspired by (or stolen from) African-American sources.

Oh Susannah, first part (in the key of G, with “stretched fingering” for left hand)

Other major pentatonic tunes we’ve encountered so far are “Dinah” and “Ida Red”.

Pro tip: While piano is easier to begin playing than many instruments, repeated notes are difficult. Try changing fingers for rapid repeated notes, as at the start of “Dinah”: