

LESSON ONE

Basic Major Tonality Tools – Eb Instruments

What you will learn in Lesson One:

- Funky shuffle groove
- Triads and pentatonic scales extracted from the major scale
- Strategies to improvise over major tonalities

Take a moment to listen to **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES**.

All audio examples may be found at www.departurepointmusic.com/audio.

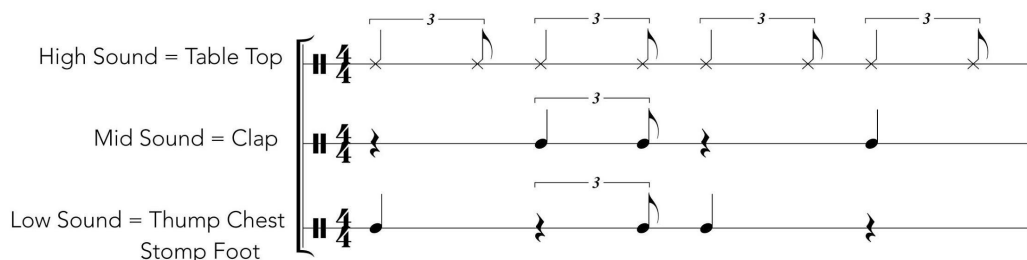
An aural concept of music will be presented before any music theory. The song will create context for why and how we practice our major scales, major triads, and major pentatonic scales.

The tune “Major Dues” has the following basic building blocks:

1. Groove
2. Bass Line
3. Melody

GROOVE

Let’s begin by constructing a funky shuffle groove which is at the heart of the tune.



Groove Assignment

Listen to **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES**. Tap, clap, and thump the different lines until the groove locks in with the track. Once you feel you have a firm grasp of the assignment, test yourself on the ability to perform the High, Middle, and Low portions of the groove along with the recording. Then attempt the groove without the recording, using a metronome for reference.

Groove Assessment

Emerging - Comfortable performance of one portion of the groove with the recording

Developing - Ability to perform all three portions of the groove with the recording

Proficient - Ability to perform all three portions of the groove without the recording and with a steady time feel

BASS LINE

Once you have a solid internal grasp of the groove, you may layer in the bass line.

NOTE – You may change the octave of any playing exercise or drill to maintain a comfortable range.

A G⁶₉

B A⁶₉

13

Bass Line Assignment

Play the bass line along with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES** until the groove locks in. In an ensemble setting, one group may continue the groove while the next begins singing/playing the following bass line. Notice how the bass line matches the kick drum sounds in the rhythm pattern. This will provide a solid foundation for the melody.

Bass Line Assessment

Emerging - Comfortable performance of the rhythms and pitches

Developing - Ability to lock the bass line in with the drum groove

Proficient - Ability to perform the bass line from memory without the track.

MELODY

Once the groove and bass line are established, play through the melody below. Try memorizing the melody as soon as you can! See Exercise #4 later in the chapter if you are experiencing difficulty memorizing this melody.

Major Dues

Funky Shuffle

Pete Whitman

A G_9^6

5 G_9^6

B A_9^6

13 A_9^6

The musical notation is written on a single staff in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Section A (measures 1-4) starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G4. Section B (measures 5-8) starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G4. Section C (measures 9-12) starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G4. Section D (measures 13-16) starts with a whole rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note G4. The notation includes various rests and note values to indicate the melody.

Melodic Assignment

Play the “Major Dues” melody over the groove and bass line you just learned. For an ensemble setting you can split the class into three sections: Groove, Bass Line, and Melody. For solo practice, you can play along with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES**.

Melodic Assessment

Test yourself on the ability to perform the melody with the recording. Then attempt the melody without the recording.

Emerging - Comfortable reading the melody off the page in the book

Developing - Ability to perform the melody with the same musical style as the recording

Proficient - Ability to perform the melody from memory

Lesson One Theory Concepts

Major scales contain all the notes within a specific key center and provide the building blocks for melodies within a tonality. They have been used to generate beautiful melodies and harmonies for hundreds of years. Learning your major scales will help you to develop an improvisational vocabulary and a basic understanding of music theory.

Exercise #1: Applying the Major Scale

Play the G Major Scale with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES** or with your rhythm section. Be sure to “swing” the eighth notes. Switch to the A Major Scale for the second half of the form.

Exercise #1

G⁶₉

Scale degrees: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Exercise #1 applied to *Major Dues*:

A G⁶₉

G⁶₉

B A⁶₉

A⁶₉

Major triads make up the basic skeletal structure of a major tonality. They provide a foundation for melodies and accompaniment patterns. Learning your major triads will help you to develop an improvisational vocabulary and a better understanding of basic music theory.

Exercise #2: Deriving Major Triads from the G Major Scale

Build a major triad using the 1st, 3rd, and 5th scale degrees of the major scale:

G⁶₉

Scale degrees: 1 3 5 1 1 5 3 1

Now play Exercise #2 with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES** or with your rhythm section.

Exercise #2 applied to *Major Dues*

A G⁶₉

G⁶₉

B A⁶₉

A⁶₉

Written Assignment #1

Build the major triads in the space provided using the scales listed below:

*Written assignment answers may be found at the end of this lesson.

Bass lines create a link between groove and harmony. They provide a wonderful tool to internalize a chord progression and help you to “feel” phrase lengths. Generating bass lines over different grooves and chord progressions will help you develop a foundation for improvisation.

Exercise #3: Using Major Triads to Augment the Bass Line

Apply the concept of major triads to the rhythm of the bass line below:

The image shows a musical staff in G major (one sharp) with a 4/4 time signature. The key signature is G⁶₉. The original bass line consists of the notes G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. The first three measures are labeled 'Original Bass Line' and the last three measures are labeled 'Applying the Major Triad to the Bass Line'. The first three measures have a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B) and a quarter note (G). The last three measures have a quarter note (G), a triplet of eighth notes (A, B, C), and a quarter note (D). Below the staff, the scale degrees are indicated: 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Now play your new bass line with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES** or with your rhythm section.

Exercise #3 applied to *Major Dues*

The image shows two variations of Exercise #3 applied to Major Dues. Variation A is in G major (one sharp) and Variation B is in A major (two sharps). Both variations consist of two staves. The first staff of each variation shows the original bass line with a triplet of eighth notes (G, A, B) and a quarter note (G). The second staff of each variation shows the augmented bass line with a quarter note (G), a triplet of eighth notes (A, B, C), and a quarter note (D). The key signature for Variation A is G⁶₉ and for Variation B is A⁶₉.

Here are some more examples of major triad bass lines. Try mixing them up over Track One or with your rhythm section.

The image shows three examples of major triad bass lines. Example 1 is in G major (one sharp) and consists of the notes G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. Example 2 is in G major (one sharp) and consists of the notes G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. Example 3 is in G major (one sharp) and consists of the notes G, A, B, A, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, G. Below the staff, the scale degrees are indicated: 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4.

Major pentatonic scales have been used for hundreds of years to create beautiful and soulful melodies in music from all over the world. The “Major Dues” melody is based on the five-note major pentatonic scale.

Exercise #4: Deriving the Major Pentatonic Scale from the G Major Scale

Extract the following scale degrees from the G Major Scale to create the G Major Pentatonic Scale.

G⁶₉

Scale degrees: 1 2 3 5 6 1 1 6 5 3 2 1

Now play Exercise #4 along with **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES** or with your rhythm section.

Exercise #4 applied to Major Dues

A G⁶₉

G⁶₉ *Simile*

B A⁶₉

A⁶₉ *Simile*

Written Assignment #2

Build major pentatonic scales in the space provided using the scales listed below:

Improvise!

Now go and play “Major Dues,” and improvise over the form of the song.

Some suggestions:

- Memorize the melody and the chords. Learn to rely on your “ears” more than your eyes.
- Start by playing simple ideas that sound intentional.
- Create a groove with the rhythms that you play.
- Develop a concept of the kind of ideas that you want to play.
- Be patient! This whole process gets easier the more you do it.

Lesson One Drills

Now let’s learn some tools to be more expressive in our improvisation. Learning to spontaneously create melodies over harmony is similar to learning how to verbally communicate your ideas. The following drills mimic the process of learning your alphabet and simple phrases. They provide the building blocks of musical sentences. Begin by practicing the different concepts over **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES**.

Major Chord Scale/Shape Drills

Write the scale degrees under the pitches to help transpose each exercise.

Note – Continue to perform these drills with swing eighth notes.

1. G_9^6

Scale degrees: 3 5 1 3

2. G_9^6

3. G_9^6

4. G_9^6

5. G_9^6

6. G_9^6

7. G_9^6

8. G_9^6

9. G_9^6

10. G_9^6

11. G_9^6

12. G_9^6

13. G_9^6

The image displays a page of musical notation for guitar, consisting of 13 numbered lines of music. Each line begins with a G_9^6 chord symbol. The music is written in G major, indicated by a single sharp (F#) on the treble clef. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, accidentals, and phrasing slurs. The lines are numbered 5 through 13. The notation is as follows:

- Line 5: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 6: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 7: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 8: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 9: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 10: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 11: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 12: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.
- Line 13: G_9^6 Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody starts with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a half note C5. The next measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a half note G5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a half note D5. The fourth measure contains a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a half note G4.

Use the space below to compose your own three drills.

G⁶₉

G⁶₉

G⁶₉

Monitor Your Progress on the Drills

Check off each box as you progress through the Lesson One drills. Make sure to master each drill in the original key and then transpose it up a whole step to match the harmony on **TRACK ONE – MAJOR DUES**.

Drill 1	Drill 2	Drill 3	Drill 4	Drill 5	Drill 6	Drill 7	Drill 8	Drill 9	Drill 10	Drill 11	Drill 12	Drill 13

Written Assignment Answer Key

Written Assignment #1

Written Assignment #2