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GospelKeys! 101



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PRESENTS ...

The "GospelKeys" Series!

GK101: "The Basics and Fundamentals to Playing Piano
By Ear"

Online Chord Charts & Reference Guide

Jermaine A. Griggs, Author

Getting Started with GospelKeys 101

Introduction

GospelKeys 101 specializes in teaching you how to play basic hymns and congregational songs by ear! By using a **three-step** formula, you'll learn how to:

1) Determine Melodies – This is basically the ability to pick out one-fingered melodies in various songs. For example, “Mary Had a Little Lamb’s” melody is: E-D-C-D-E-E-E / D-D-D / E-G-G ... and so on.

2) Harmonize Melodies – After determining the one-fingered melody to your song, it's time to accompany your melody with chords. This is called **harmonization**. The one-fingered melody to “Mary Had A Little Lamb” is harmonized as such:

GCE / FAD / EGC / FAD / GCE / GCE / GCE
FAD / FAD / FAD
GCE / GCE / CEG

... and so on.

Note: The chords above are separated by “/” symbols. For example “GCE” means to play G + C + E (in that order). Since there is a slash between “GCE” and “FAD”, this represents the separating of two different chords.

3) Adding the Bass – After the determination and harmonization of the melody has occurred, the last step is to add the bass (or left hand). There are common bass notes that correspond with every harmonizing chord of the scale. This is covered at the end of the GK 101 video.

BASIC INFORMATION ON HARMONIZATION

The following information was taken from the [300-pg course](#) (chapter 17, pages 242-246). Please refer to this section of the course for written exercises and further explanation. Later in this online reference guide, you'll be given harmonization chord charts in all **twelve keys**.

To **HARMONIZE** a melody means to create a chord accompaniment for it. Since the **I, IV & V** (or V7) chords contain all the notes of the major scale, many melodies in a major key can be harmonized with just these three chords.

To determine the chords to be used, analyze the melody notes. Refer to the following chart to see which chord is generally used with each melody note of a major scale. When more than one chord can be chosen, your **ear** should always be the final guide.

SCALE DEGREE	CHORD
1, 3, 5	I Chord
2, 4, 5, 7	V (or V7) Chord
1,4,6	IV Chord

There is also one scale degree which can be accompanied by a minor chord

SCALE DEGREE	CHORD
2	ii min Chord

From personal experience, here are the most common chords that I play with the following scale tones:

SCALE DEGREE	CHORD
1, 3, 5	I Maj Chord
2	ii Min Chord
4,6	IV Maj Chord
7	V Chord

“Harmonizing a Melody in a Major Key” (cont.)

Here is a **C major scale** that is harmonized using only the **I, IV & V chords**:

Musical notation showing the C major scale harmonized using only the I, IV, and V chords. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the harmony is written in the bass clef. The chords used are C, G, C, F, C, F, G, and C. The notes are numbered 1 through 8. The melody notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The harmony notes are C, G, C, F, C, F, G, C.

Here is a **C major scale** that is harmonized using the **I, ii, IV & V chords**:

Musical notation showing the C major scale harmonized using the I, ii, IV, and V chords. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the harmony is written in the bass clef. The chords used are C, Dm, C, F, C, F, G, and C. The notes are numbered 1 through 8. The melody notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The harmony notes are C, Dm, C, F, C, F, G, C.

Note: Sometimes, the 2nd scale degree will require a IV chord and sometimes it will require a ii chord. When not sure of which one to choose, play both chords with the melody and use your ear to pick the best combination.

When harmonizing a melody, I personally prefer that the chord be in the **inversion** which places the melody tone as the highest note. Here’s an example of a C major scale that is harmonized with inverted **I, ii, IV & V chords**:

Musical notation showing the C major scale harmonized with inverted I, ii, IV, and V chords. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the harmony is written in the bass clef. The chords used are C, Dm, C, F, C, F, G, and C. The notes are numbered 1 through 8. The melody notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The harmony notes are C, Dm, C, F, C, F, G, C. The melody notes are placed as the highest note of each chord.

Note: Notice that the melody note is the highest tone of each chord

“Harmonizing a Melody in a Major Key” (cont.)

In some chord progressions, when the IV chord is played in its root position, the I scale degree is the highest tone. That is also why a IV chord can be played both on the 1st degree, and the 4th / 6th.

For example, in C major, the IV chord is **Fmaj**:



The above diagram shows the Fmaj chord in its first inversion. That is, the **F tone** is the highest note. This chord usually accompanies the IV tone. However, sometimes, the chord is played in its root position where **C** is the highest tone:



In this case, the IVmaj (F maj) is accompanying the 1st scale degree (C).

Keep in mind that most of the time, the I chord will accompany the 1st scale degree. However, when in doubt, try playing the IV chord (root position) and listen for which chord produces the best desired sound (in some instances, it **will** be the IV chord ... but let your **ear** be the judge).

Here is a **C major scale** that is harmonized using the **I, ii, IV & V chords** (The IV chord is substituted for the I chord):

C Dm C F C F G C

Melody

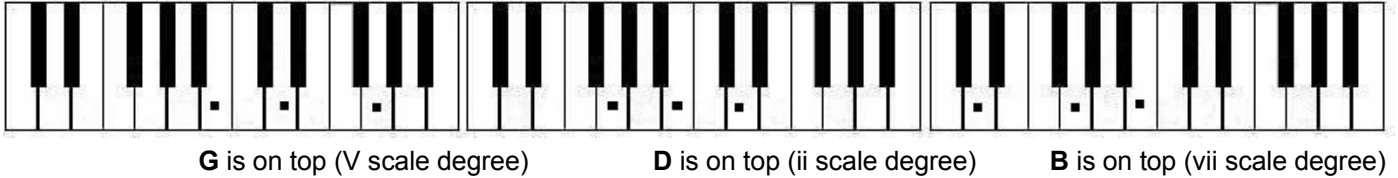
Harmony

Fmaj

“Harmonizing a Melody in a Major Key” (cont.)

The **V** or **V7** chord can also be used to accompany the 2, 4, 5 & 7 scale degree.

For example, in C major, the V chord is **Gmaj**:



When played in the above progressions, the **V chord** can be used to accompany both the ii, V & vii scale degrees. Because the ii scale degree is usually accompanied by the **ii min chord**, and the **V** degree by the **I maj chord**, you must use your ear to determine which chord fits best.

The **G7** can be used to accompany the 4th scale degree:



F is on top (IV scale degree)

In most cases, the **I maj chord** will be used to accompany the I, III & V scale degrees because those are the tones that make up the **I maj** chord.

I maj (1st Inversion): Accompanies the 1st scale degree because this inversion puts the I tone on top.

I maj (2nd Inversion): Accompanies the 3rd scale degree because this inversion puts the III tone on top *(and the I tone in the middle)*.

I maj (root position): Accompanies the 5th scale degree because this inversion puts the V tone on top *(and the I tone on the bottom)*.

“Harmonizing a Melody in a Major Key” (cont.)

The following diagrams represent all eight accompanying chords of a major scale
(Using only the I, ii, IV & V chords)

Important

From this point on, when asked to harmonize a melody, please refer to this chart as it gives you all eight chords which correspond to each scale degree. It also provides you with the chord inversions that produce the smoothest transition while keeping the scale degree on top. As stated earlier, sometimes a chord substitution will occur. Otherwise, harmonize all melodies with these chords.

The chart displays eight piano keyboard diagrams, each representing a specific chord in a major scale. The chords are arranged vertically and labeled as follows:

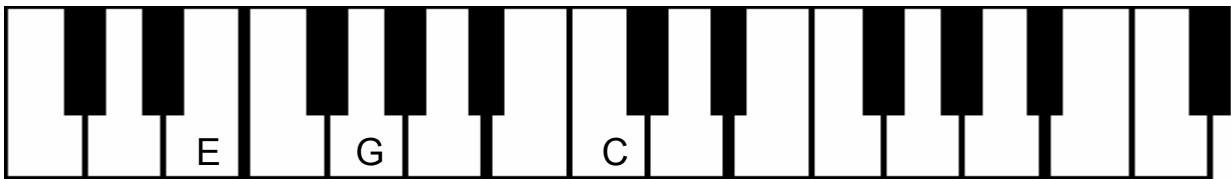
- C maj (1st)
- D min (1st)
- C maj (2nd)
- F maj (1st)
- C maj (root)
- F maj (2nd)
- G maj (2nd)
- C maj (1st)

Each diagram shows a four-note chord with a small square indicating the root position. The diagrams are arranged in a vertical column within a large rectangular frame.

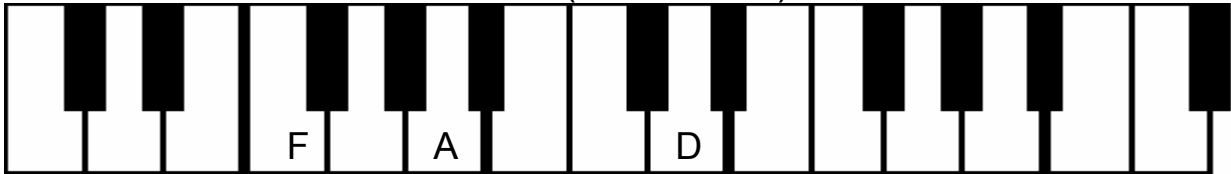
HARMONIZATION CHART

C MAJOR

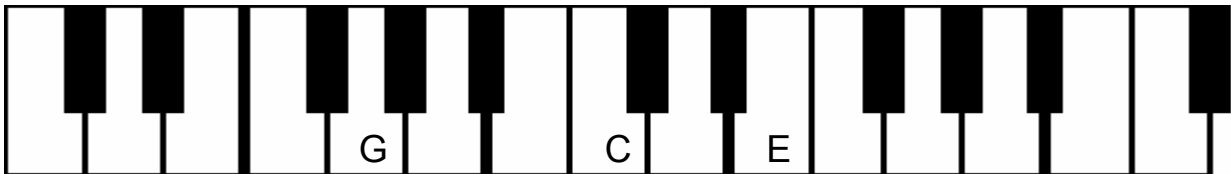
Cmaj (1st Inversion)



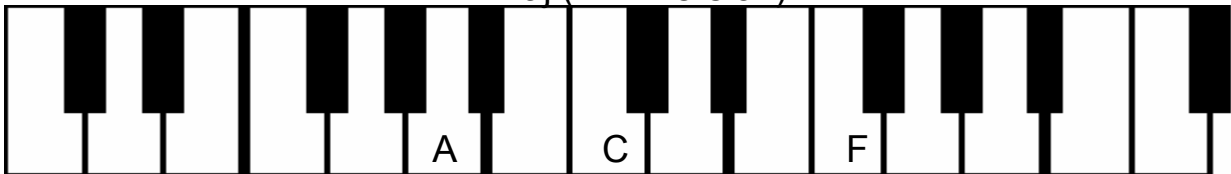
Dmin (1st Inversion)



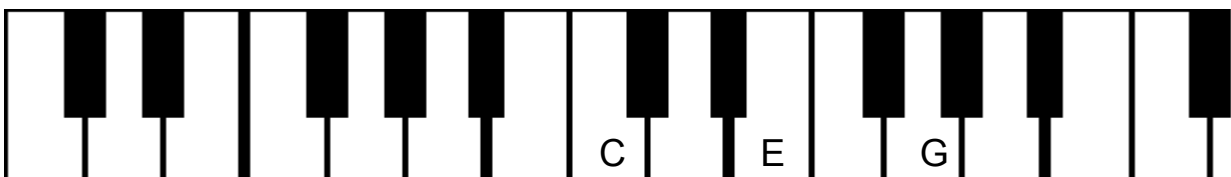
Cmaj (2nd Inversion)



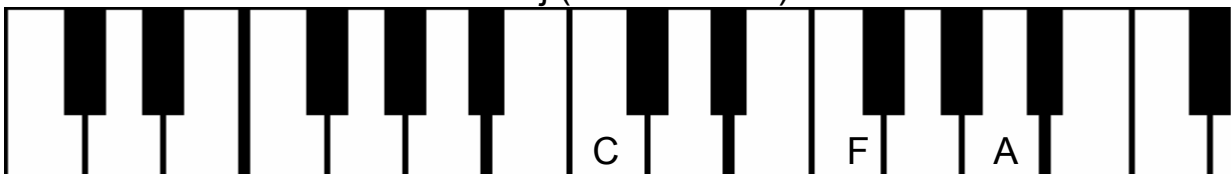
Fmaj (1st Inversion)



Cmaj (Root Position)



Fmaj (2nd inversion)



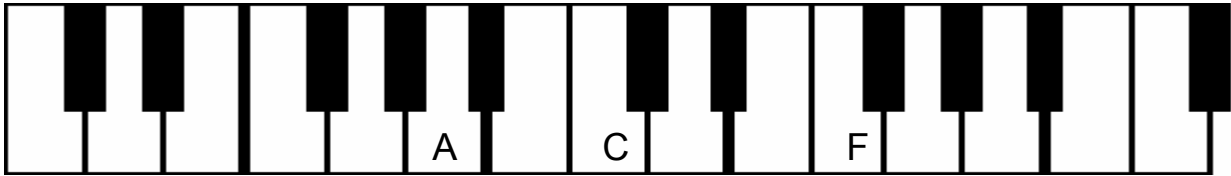
Gmaj (2nd inversion)



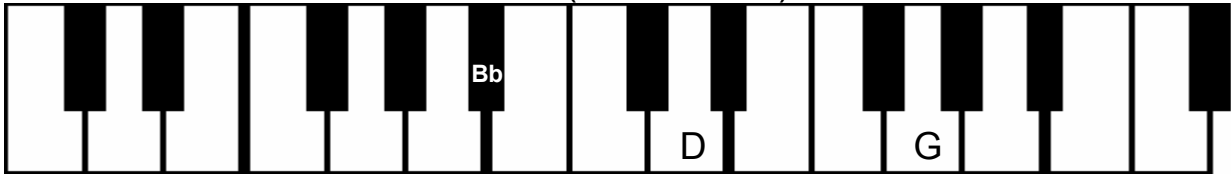
HARMONIZATION CHART

F MAJOR

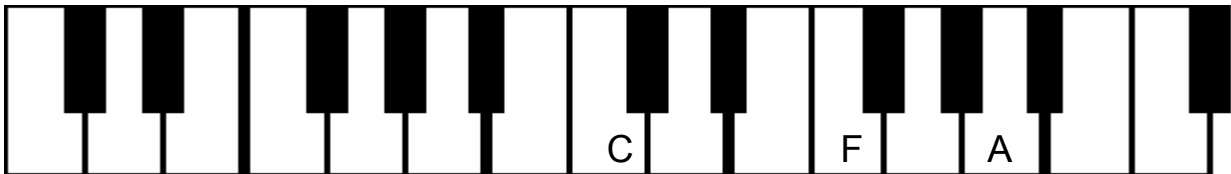
Fmaj (1st Inversion)



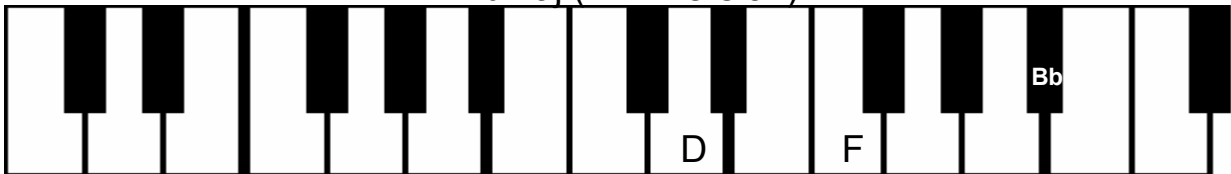
Gmin (1st Inversion)



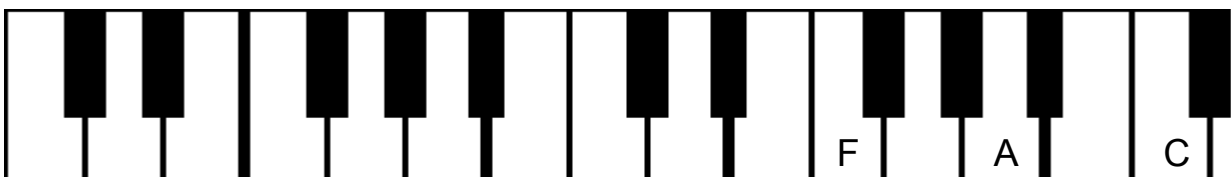
Fmaj (2nd Inversion)



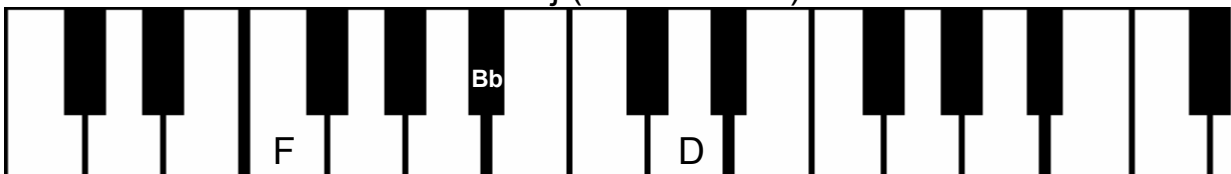
Bbmaj (1st Inversion)



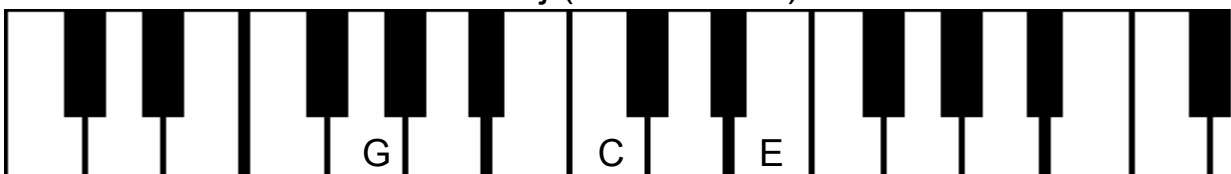
Fmaj (Root Position)



Bbmaj (2nd inversion)



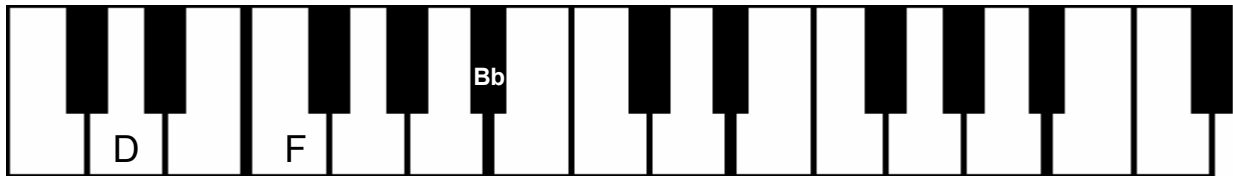
Cmaj (2nd inversion)



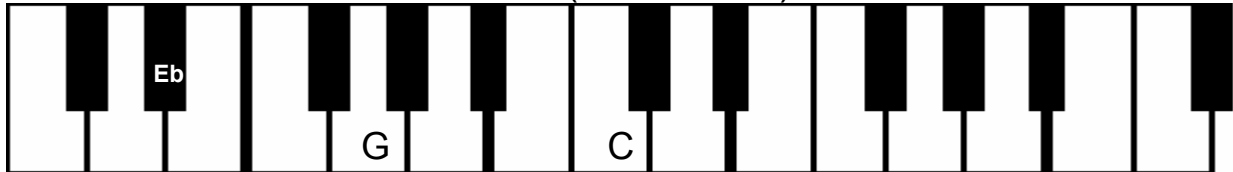
HARMONIZATION CHART

Bb MAJOR

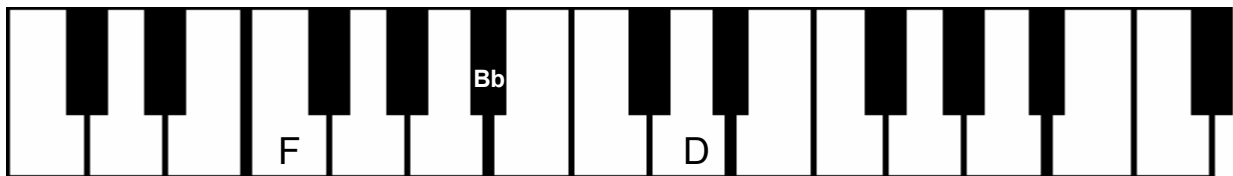
Bbmaj (1st Inversion)



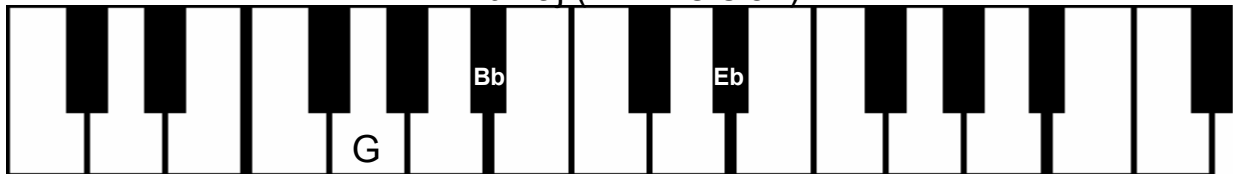
Cmin (1st Inversion)



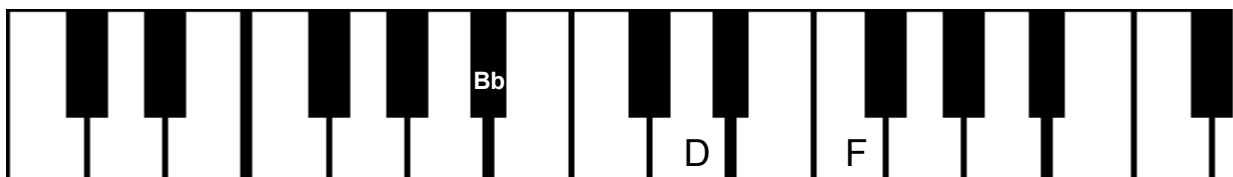
Bbmaj (2nd Inversion)



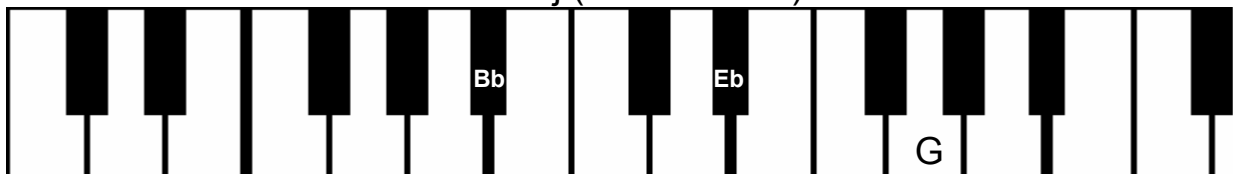
Ebmaj (1st Inversion)



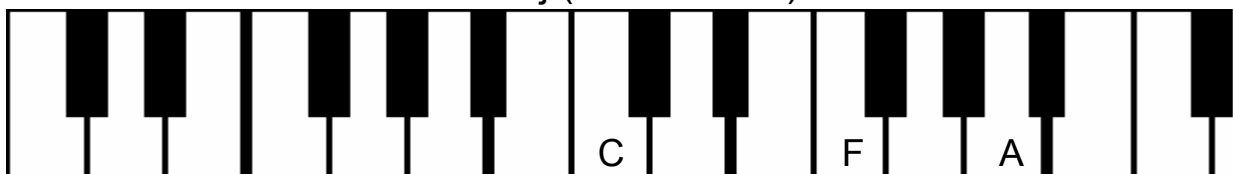
Bbmaj (Root Position)



Ebmaj (2nd inversion)



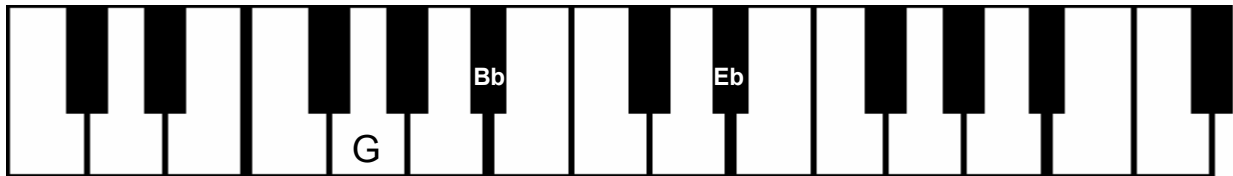
Fmaj (2nd inversion)



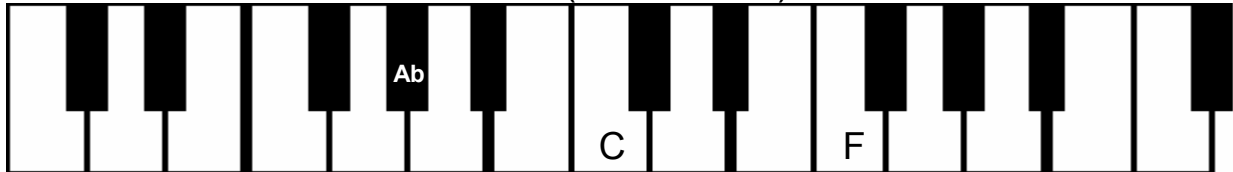
HARMONIZATION CHART

Eb MAJOR

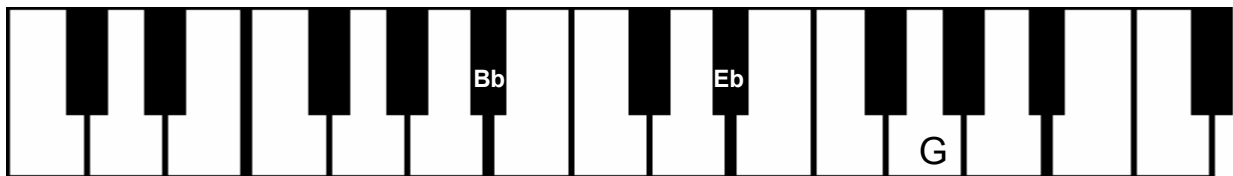
Ebmaj (1st Inversion)



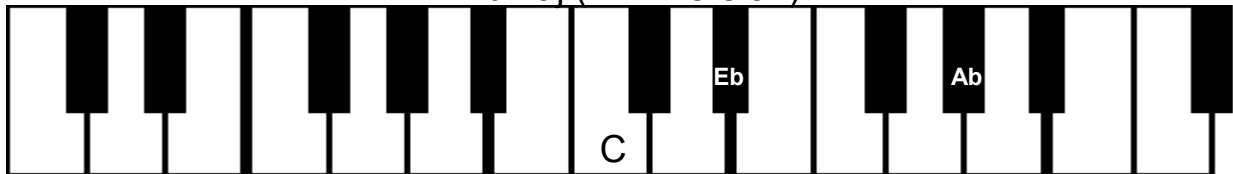
Fmin (1st Inversion)



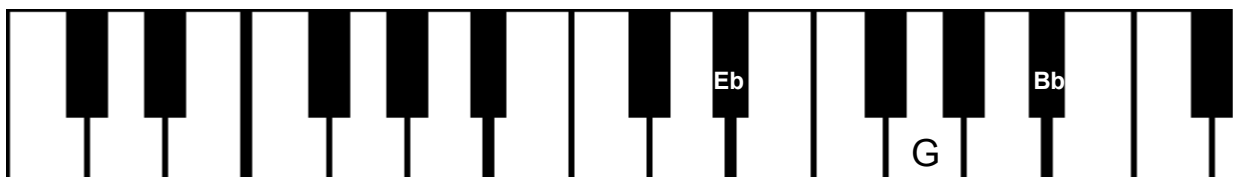
Ebmaj (2nd Inversion)



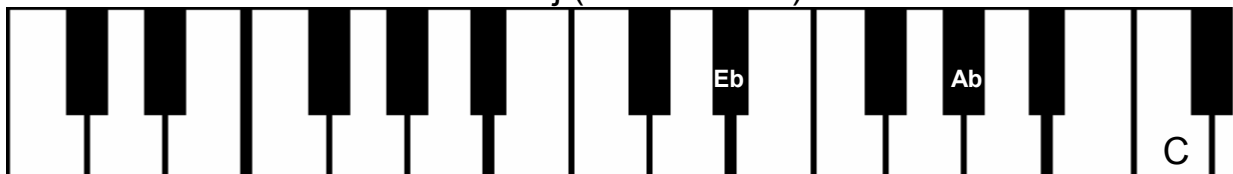
Abmaj (1st Inversion)



Ebmaj (Root Position)



Abmaj (2nd inversion)



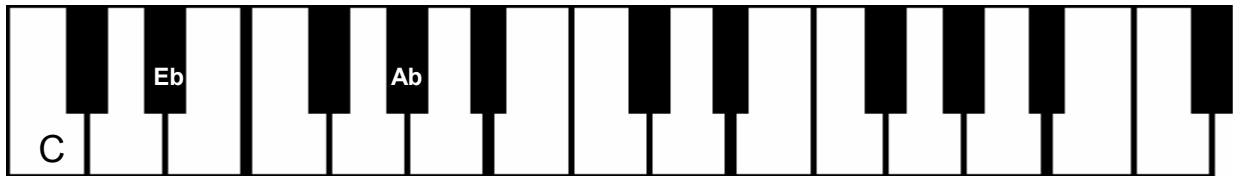
Bbmaj (2nd inversion)



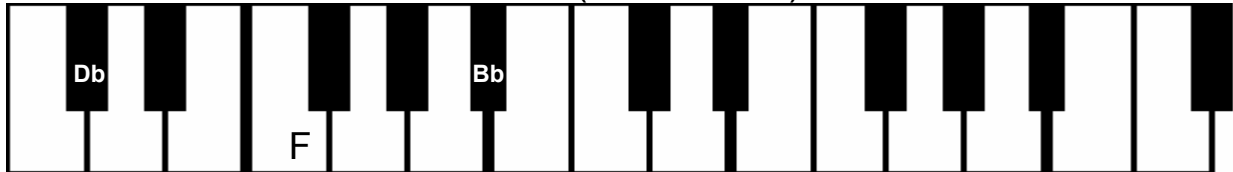
HARMONIZATION CHART

Ab MAJOR

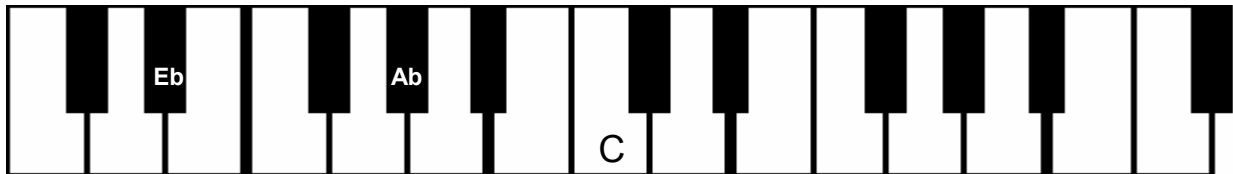
Abmaj (1st Inversion)



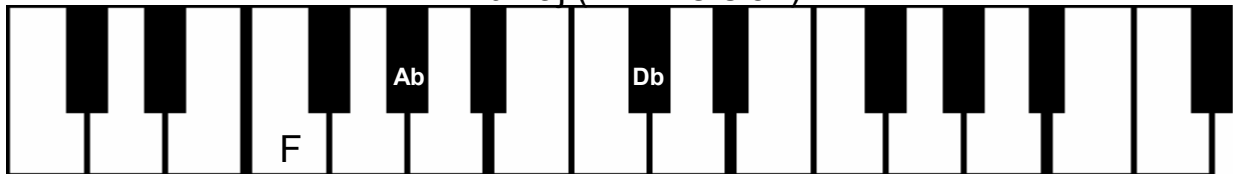
Bbmin (1st Inversion)



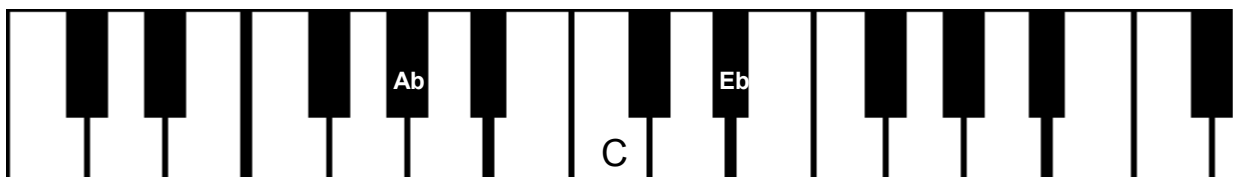
Abmaj (2nd Inversion)



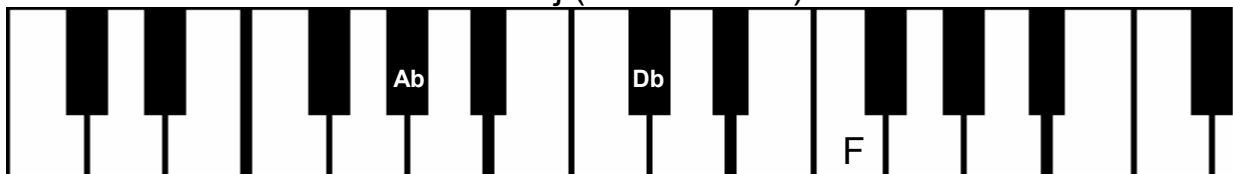
Dbmaj (1st Inversion)



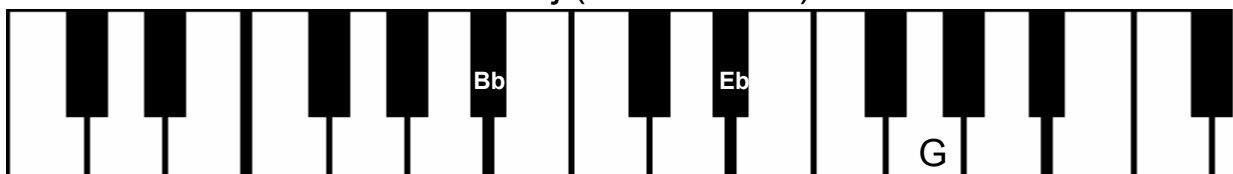
Abmaj (Root Position)



Dbmaj (2nd inversion)



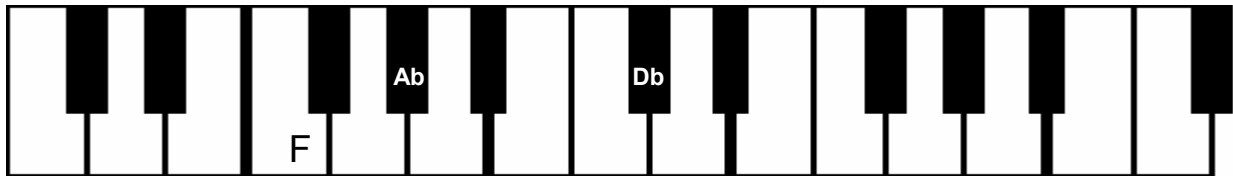
Ebmaj (2nd inversion)



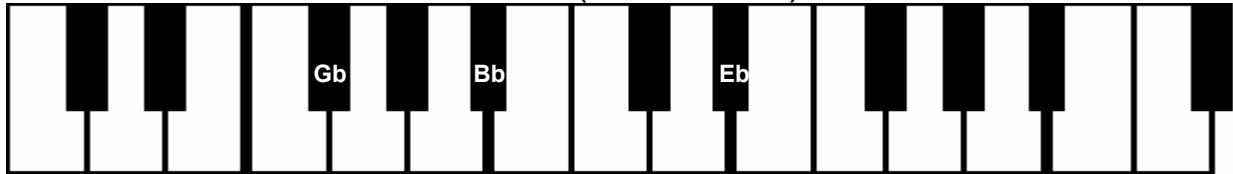
HARMONIZATION CHART

Db MAJOR

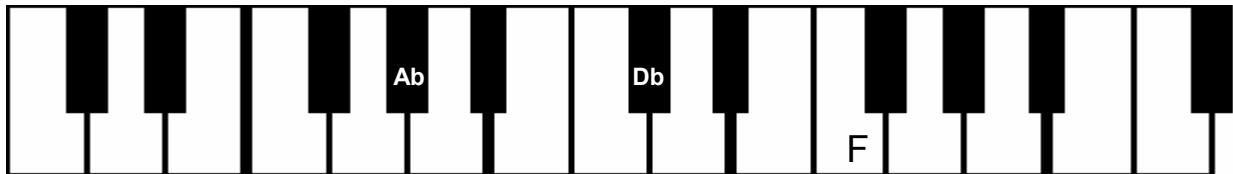
Dbmaj (1st Inversion)



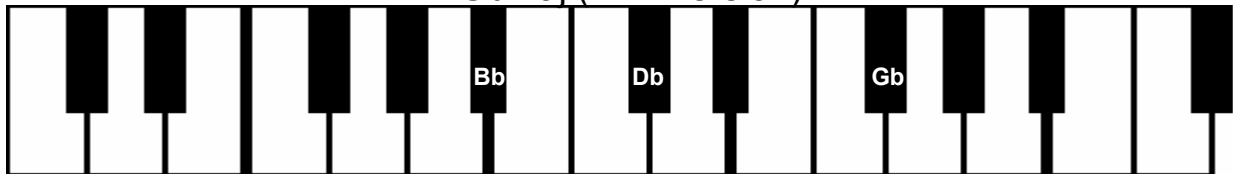
Ebmin (1st Inversion)



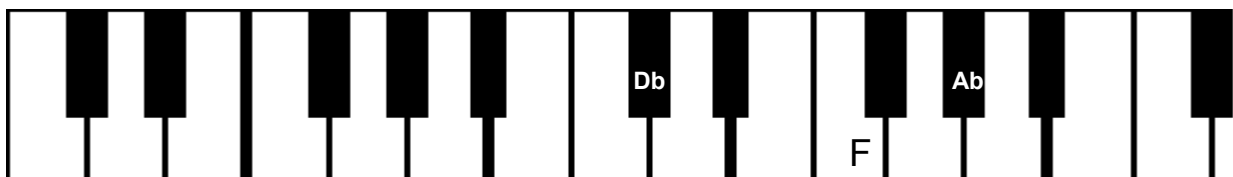
Dbmaj (2nd Inversion)



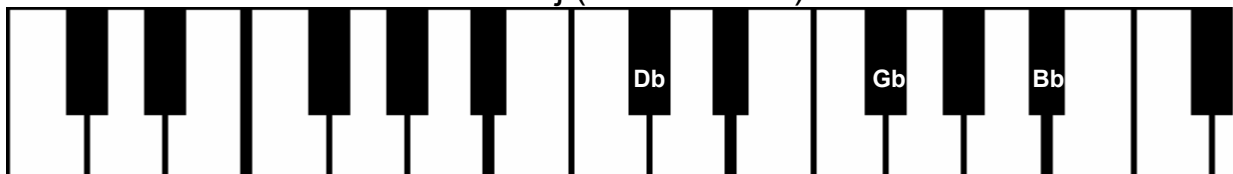
Gbmaj (1st Inversion)



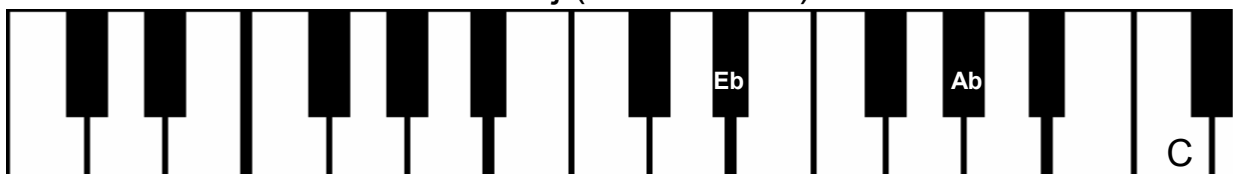
Dbmaj (Root Position)



Gbmaj (2nd inversion)



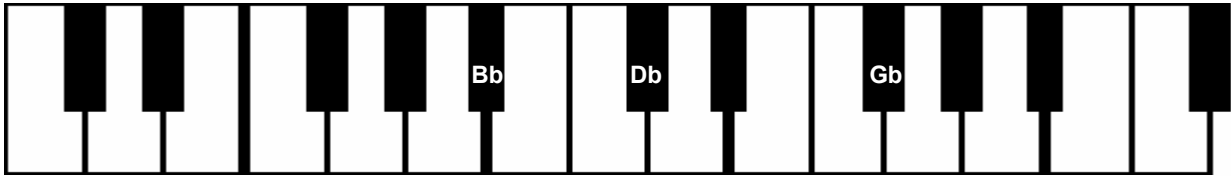
Abmaj (2nd inversion)



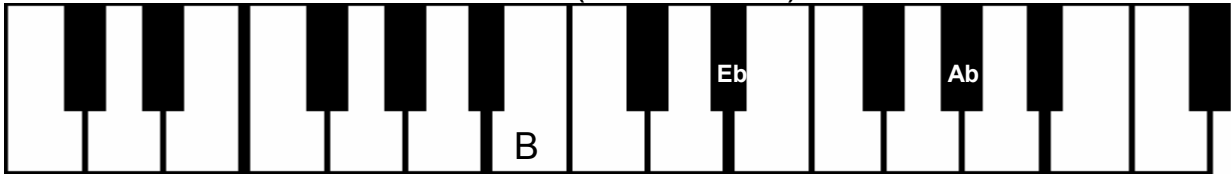
HARMONIZATION CHART

Gb MAJOR

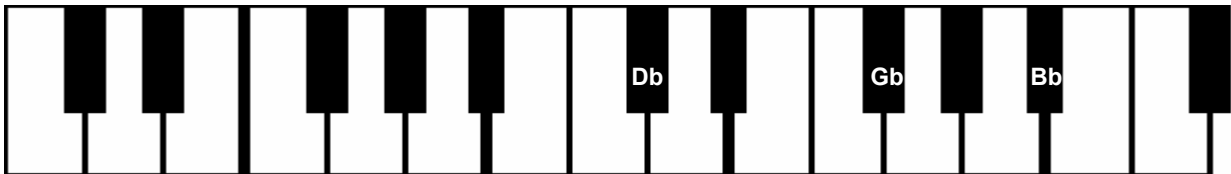
Gbmaj (1st Inversion)



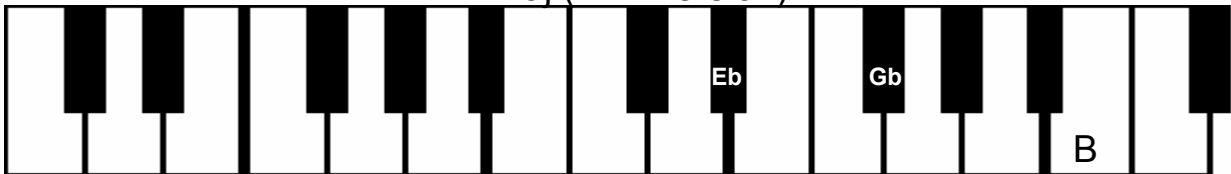
Abmin (1st Inversion)



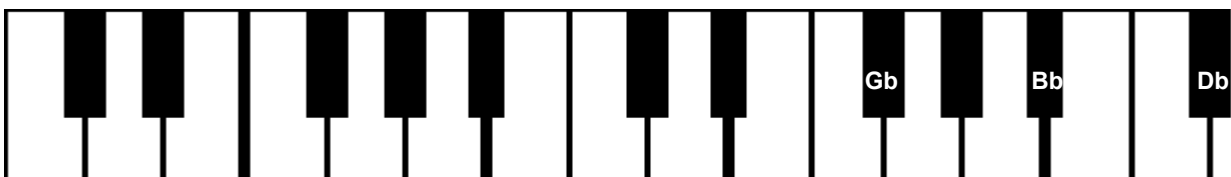
Gbmaj (2nd Inversion)



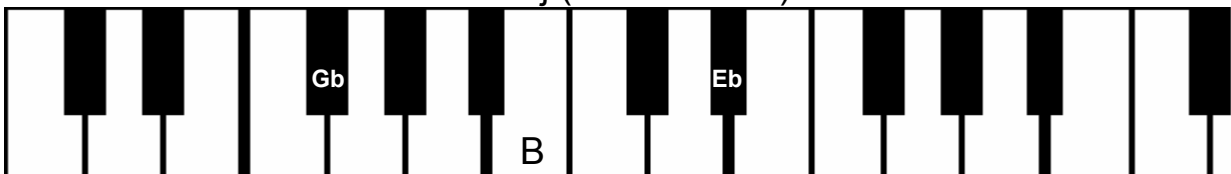
Bmaj (1st Inversion)



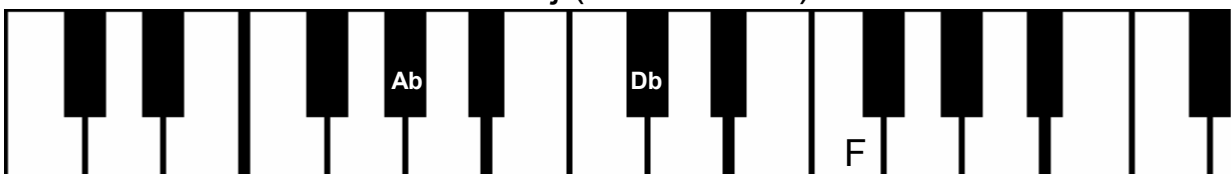
Gbmaj (Root Position)



Bmaj (2nd inversion)



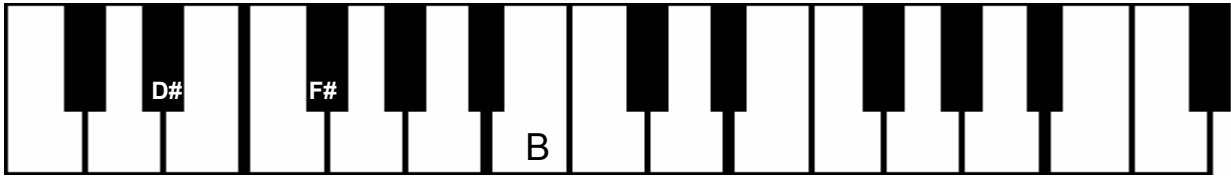
Dbmaj (2nd inversion)



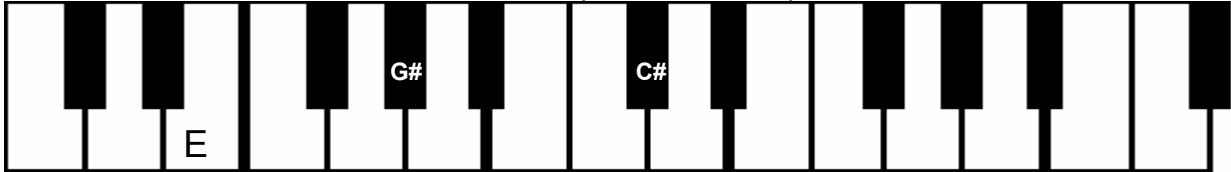
HARMONIZATION CHART

B MAJOR

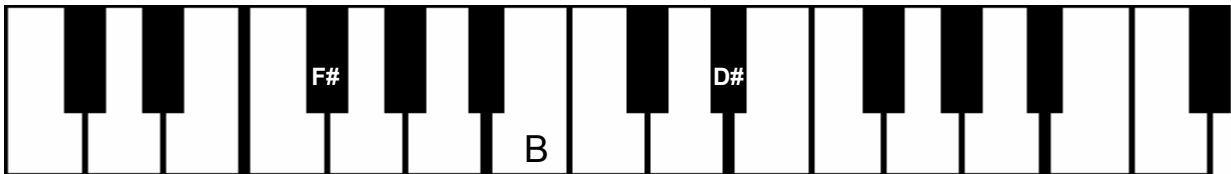
Bmaj (1st Inversion)



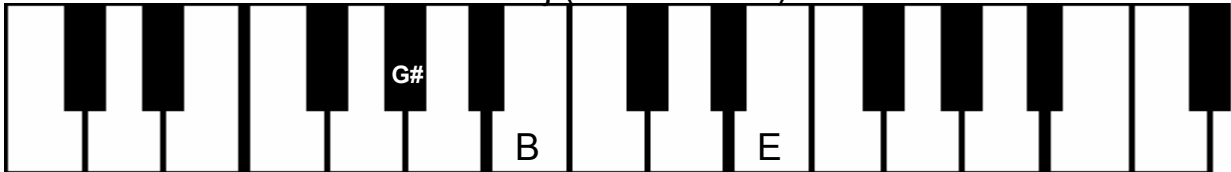
C#min (1st Inversion)



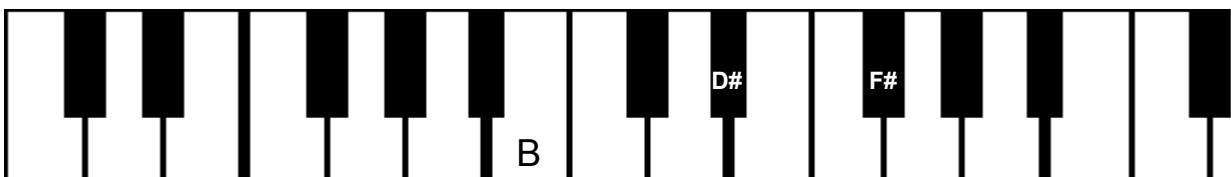
Bmaj (2nd Inversion)



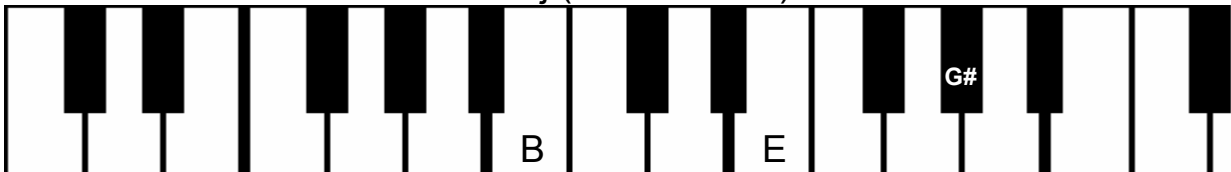
Emaj (1st Inversion)



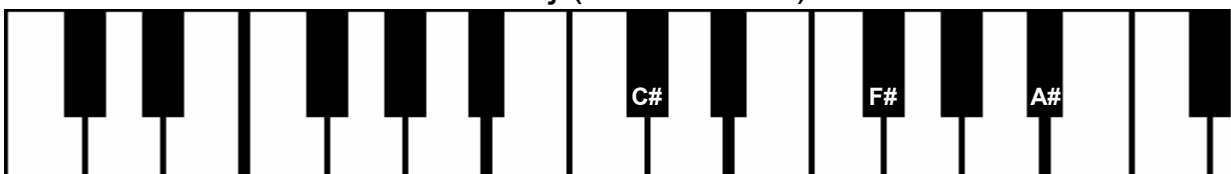
Bmaj (Root Position)



Emaj (2nd inversion)



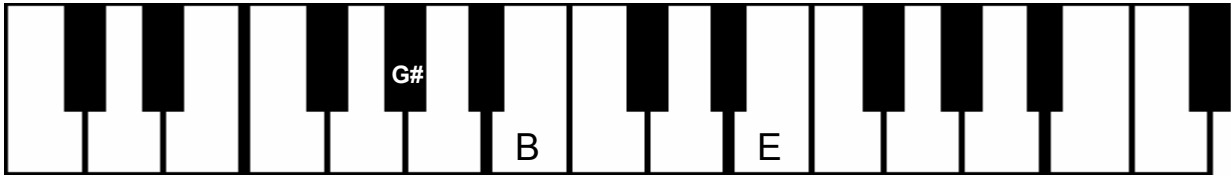
F#maj (2nd inversion)



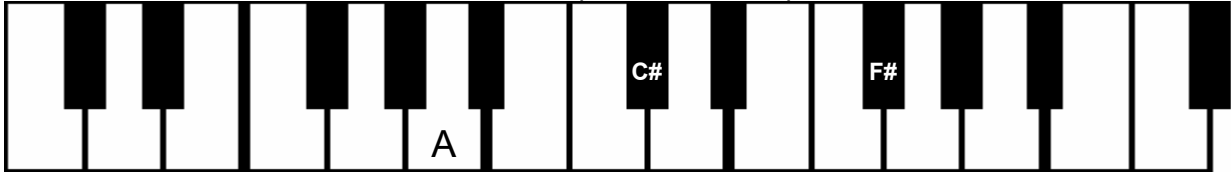
HARMONIZATION CHART

E MAJOR

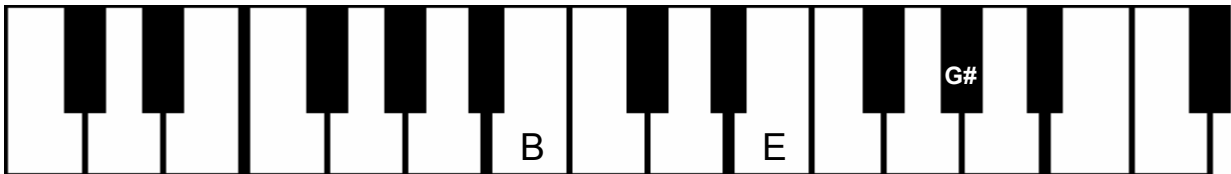
Emaj (1st Inversion)



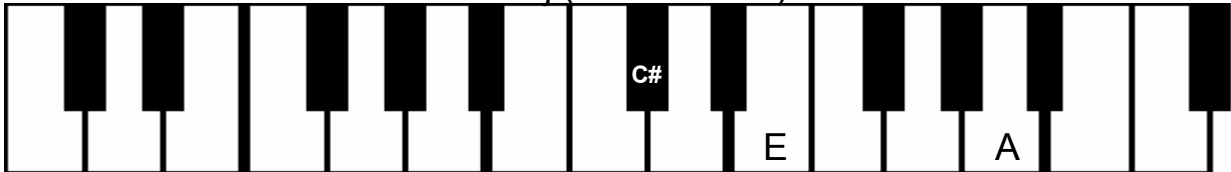
F#min (1st Inversion)



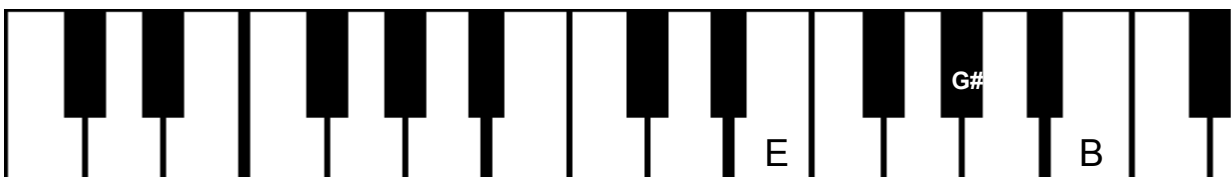
Emaj (2nd Inversion)



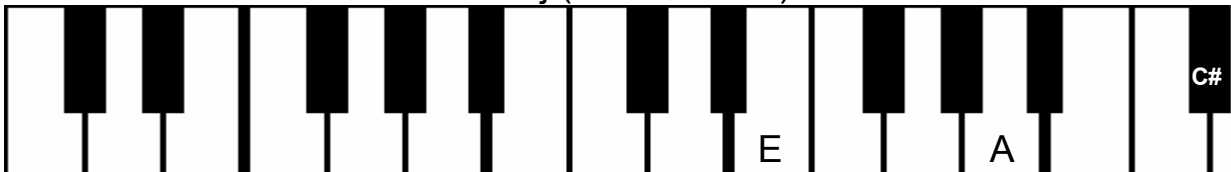
Amaj (1st Inversion)



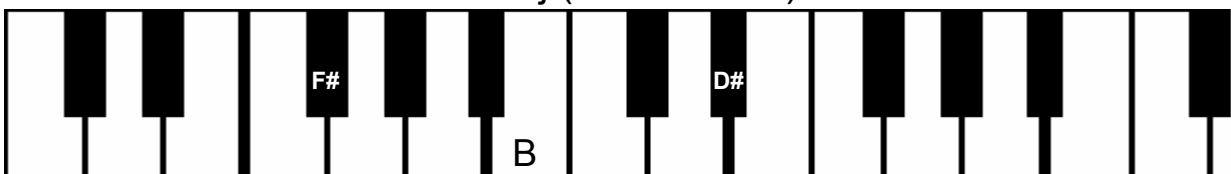
Emaj (Root Position)



Amaj (2nd inversion)



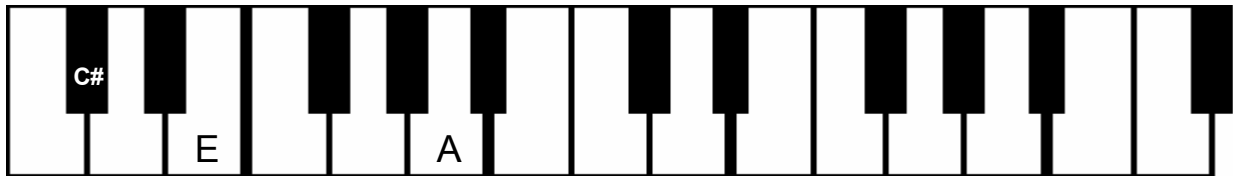
Bmaj (2nd inversion)



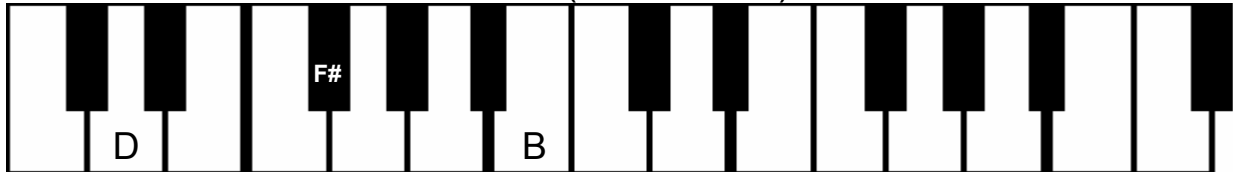
HARMONIZATION CHART

A MAJOR

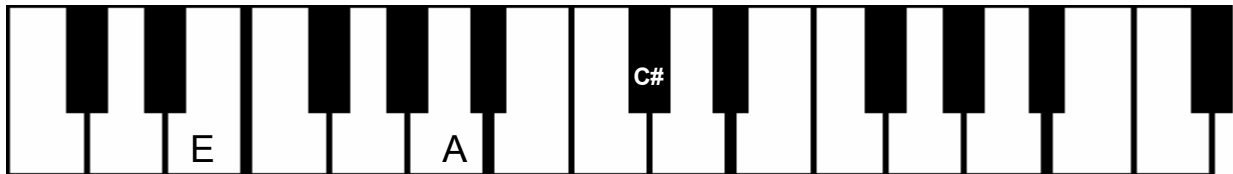
Amaj (1st Inversion)



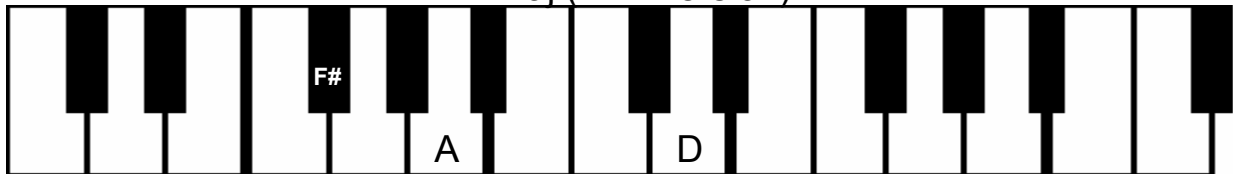
Bmin (1st Inversion)



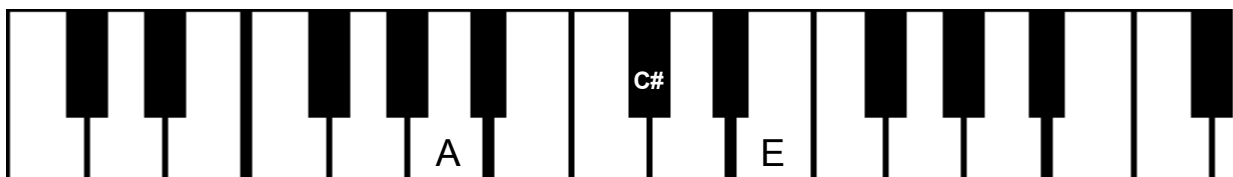
Amaj (2nd Inversion)



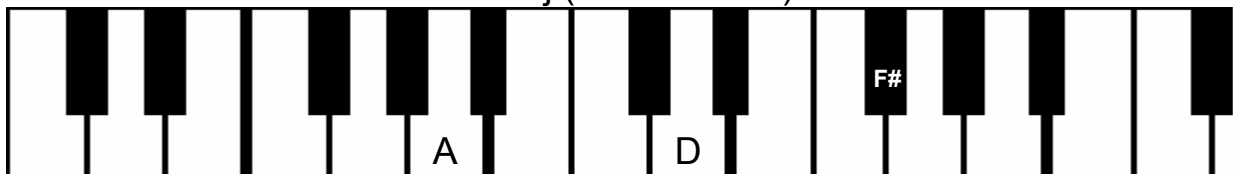
Dmaj (1st Inversion)



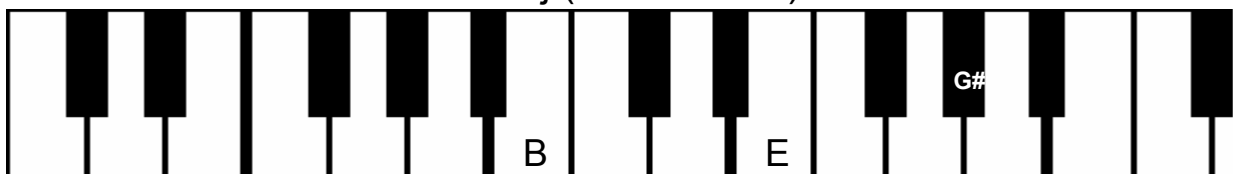
Amaj (Root Position)



Dmaj (2nd inversion)



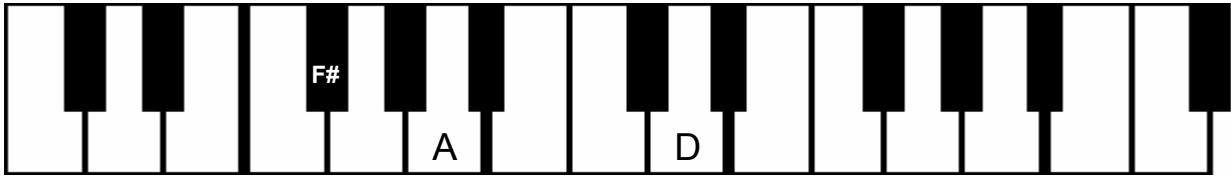
Emaj (2nd inversion)



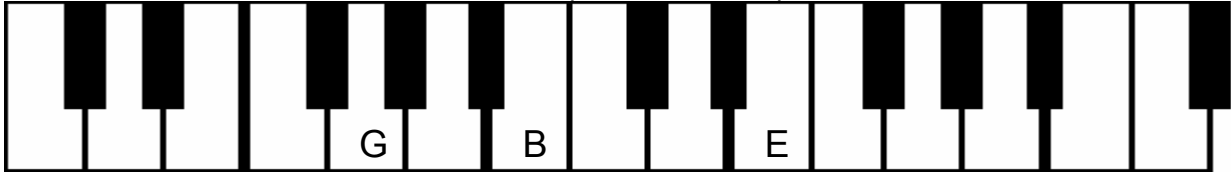
HARMONIZATION CHART

D MAJOR

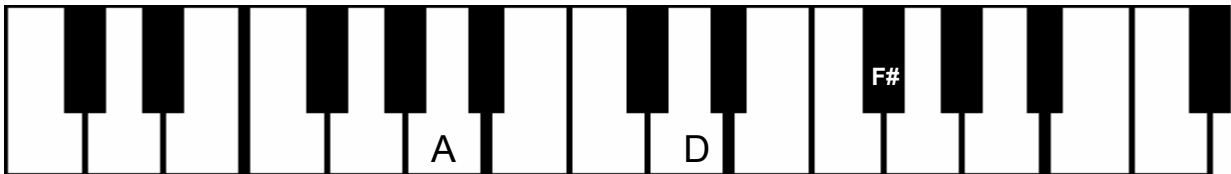
Dmaj (1st Inversion)



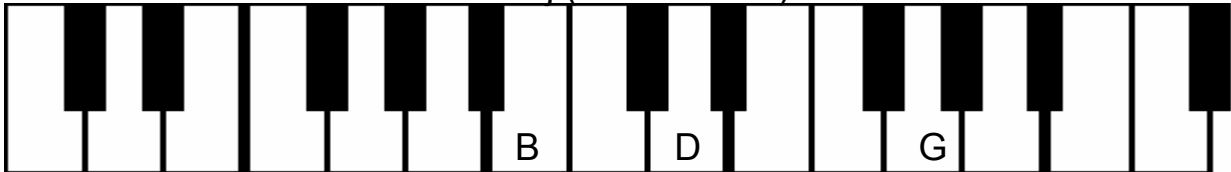
Emin (1st Inversion)



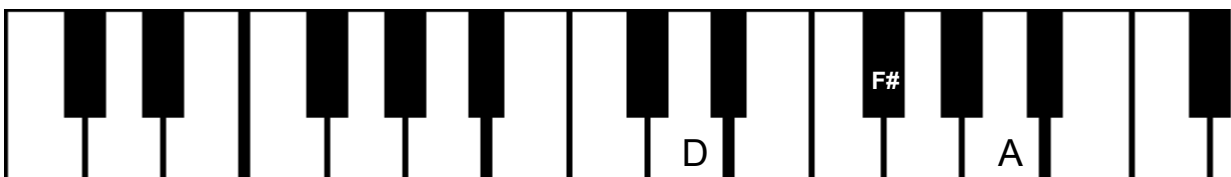
Dmaj (2nd Inversion)



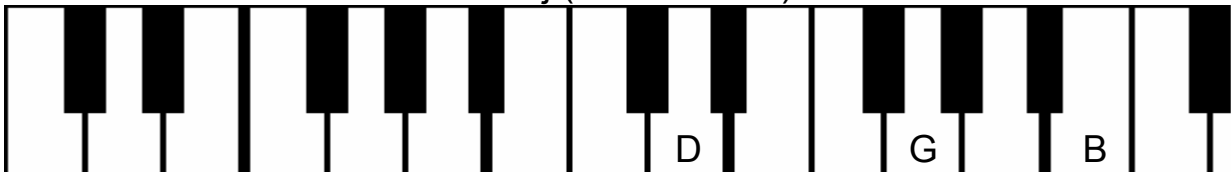
Gmaj (1st Inversion)



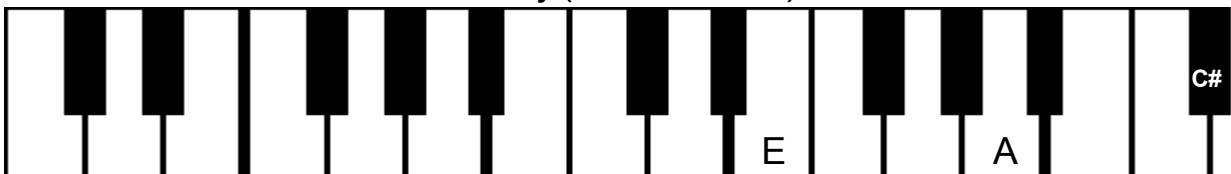
Dmaj (Root Position)



Gmaj (2nd inversion)



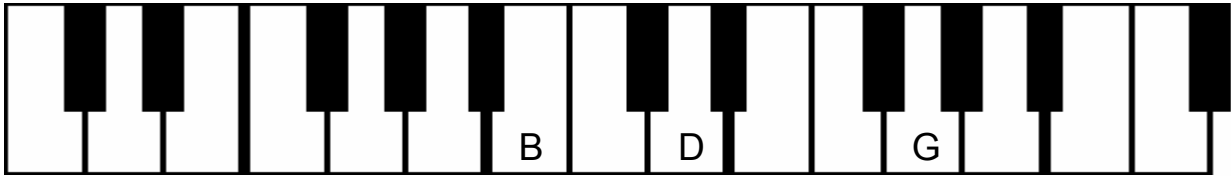
Amaj (2nd inversion)



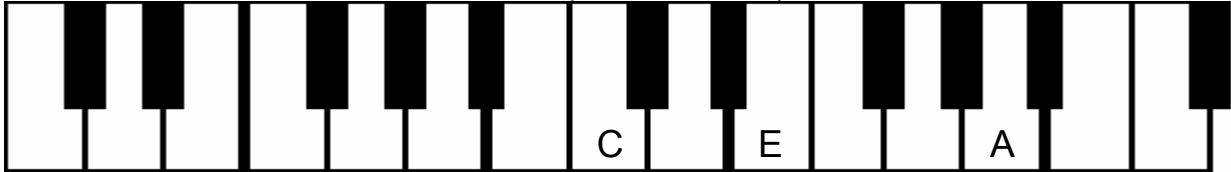
HARMONIZATION CHART

G MAJOR

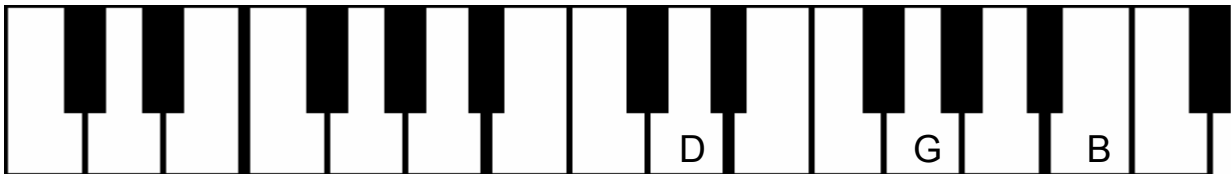
Gmaj (1st Inversion)



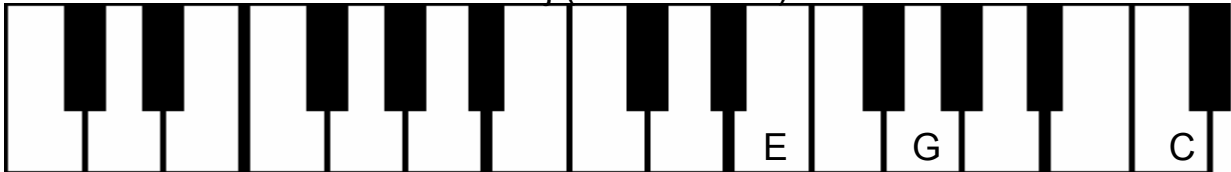
Amin (1st Inversion)



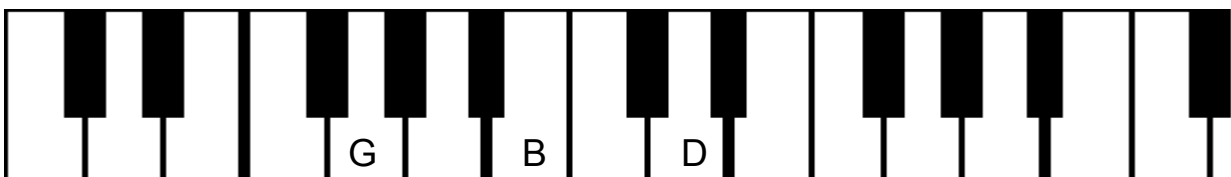
Gmaj (2nd Inversion)



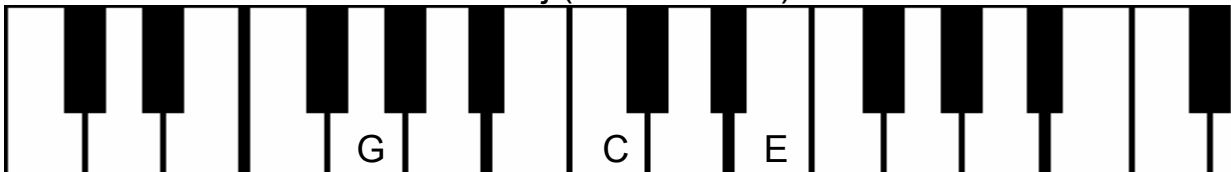
Cmaj (1st Inversion)



Gmaj (Root Position)



Cmaj (2nd inversion)



Dmaj (2nd inversion)



CONCLUSION

Dear Musician,

Thank you for taking the time to read this online reference guide to **GospelKeys 101**: "The Basics and Fundamentals to Playing Piano By Ear." If you're a beginning musician, you've definitely made the right choice and have taken the first step towards learning to play the piano by ear! If you can apply these **three** simple steps to learning new hymns and basic songs, then you're surely on your way to playing ALL of your favorite popular songs by ear ... I PROMISE!

If you're an experienced musician and simply wanted to "go back" to the basics, I can't begin to stress the importance of the ability to harmonize what you hear. Not only can harmonization provide fancier "fill-ins" but it also allows you to arrange vocal parts for choirs and groups. There have been numerous times when all I knew was the soprano's note, but was able to harmonize their part for the altos and tenors. If you didn't know the **harmonization** scale before (as basic as it may seem), I pray that your mind is opened to see the power of this *simple* concept.

Lastly, if you haven't ordered my "GOSPELKEYS 300" and "202" yet, I strongly recommend that you do. I can truly say that if you've learned a wealth of knowledge with ONLY this "GOSPELKEYS 101" course, you're definitely in store for a treat (especially in 202)! Simply visit: <http://www.gospelkeys.com> or call us at 1-877-856-4187.

As always, stay informed by visiting <http://www.hearandplay.com> and by joining us every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights in the chatroom! <http://chat.hearandplay.net>

Thank you again for choosing HearandPlay.com!

Jermaine A. Griggs

President & CEO of Hear and Play Music, Online!

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P.S. – Visit www.GospelKeys.com for more videos!