

# SPY TUNES

# MUSIC



# THEORY

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## **Publisher**

Spytunes Ltd

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This is the first edition, released in 2012

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## Intro

As a guitar player you might have learned open position chords, the minor pentatonic and maybe even the major pentatonic scale shapes.

If so, you are at the classic next barrier of starting to practice the modes and arpeggios.

Up until now you didn't really need music theory at any depth, you just learn some chords, play some songs.

Should you have played blues solos using the minor pentatonic you haven't really needed theory either,

actually, at that stage it won't really help at all!

Blues based guitar music is theoretically very complicated, it breaks all kinds of rules all the time, trying to fuse theory with blues solos really isn't going to sell the concept of music theory to the aspiring student.

However, if you start playing with arpeggios and modes, need to change key for a song last minute, read a chart, explain a musical concept to a musician that doesn't play guitar, anything like that, an understanding of music theory suddenly become vital.

With this in mind, let's take a look at normal music theory, the staff and how all this works.

This way, when you read a chart or see a chord extension for example, you'll know where it all comes from, can't be a bad thing!

Who knows, maybe you'll even start reading and writing music on the staff yourself!

-Dan (your guitar guru)



### How many notes in an octave?

Many music theory teachers would start by saying that there are 12 chromatic notes in the octave, this would be a modification of the truth.

This early stand point has led many aspiring musicians to give up understanding music theory.

What really is the answer was discover in ancient Greece, thousands of years ago, this is what they realized:

If you took a string, tightened it hard enough and plucked it, you would get a note. The pitch of this note is irrelevant since all notes behave in the same way.

When this was discovered (thousands of years ago) there was no pitch reference, all was done on the relationship between notes, what we today call intervals.

Once the string had made a noise the experimentation begun!

Half the length of that string and you would get the octave, which is the same note, but an octave higher.

Using  $1/2$ ,  $1/3$ ,  $1/4$  and  $1/5$  to shorten the string you'd find more intervals:

- # If you shortened it by  $2/3$  you would get a fifth of that original note.
- # Shorten it by  $4/3$  and you would get a fourth.
- # If you shortened it by  $5/4$  you would get a major 3rd.
- # To get a minor third you need to shorten it by  $6/5$ .
- # For a major 6th you need to make the string  $5/3$  of it's original length.
- # For the minor third you need  $8/5$ .

By altering the length of the string in various degrees of  $1/2$   $1/3$   $1/4$  or  $1/5$  you get musical notes. Not a 12 note chromatic scale.

Instead, the 12 note chromatic scale is a product of what happens when we build a 7 note scale and then transpose it to all possible root notes via the cycle of 5ths and 4ths.

So the answer to the "chicken and egg" like question:

What came first, the 12 note chromatic scale or the 7 note scale?

The answer is that a 7 note scale is a product of nature, the chromatic scale a product of the 7 note scale in different keys.



**What about 8 notes?**

I can hear you:

What about 8 notes?

Doesn't octave mean 8?

There's a sign called 8va, why 7, not 8?

That's right, an octave means:

An octave is the interval between one musical pitch and another with half or double its frequency.

That's right, and there are 7 notes in that octave!

If you still don't believe me, go to a piano, look at all the white keys, there are 7 notes before the same notes are repeated again.

In the next chapter you'll find out how every note has overtones consisting of a major triad!