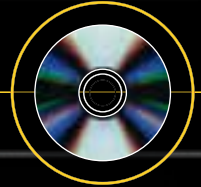


Herb Kraus

Accordion *Basics*

CD included



>> *Music Theory, Musical Pieces and Exercises.*

>> *Posture and Bellows Movement.*

>> *For Piano Accordion.*

Herb Kraus

Accordion

Basics

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© 2013 Voggenreiter Verlag OHG
Viktoriastraße 25, 53173 Bonn/Germany
www.voggenreiter.de
Phone: 0228.93 575-0

ISBN: 978-3-8024-0953-0

Preface

Welcome and thank you for buying *Accordion Basics*. This tutorial is your easy introduction to the world of accordion playing. In compiling *Accordion Basics* a special emphasis has been placed on easily understandable content and explanations.

Last but not least, the pedagogic and didactic experience of the author accounts for laying an optimal foundation for learning to play the accordion – suited for teaching at music schools as well as the self-taught player.

No previous musical knowledge is required to start working with this book. All exercises have been developed to immediately allow you to play along and are arranged in ascending difficulty.

The exercises, songs and solo pieces are recorded on the included audio CD. The tracks are recorded in stereo so that you can increase or decrease the volume for the right or left hand on the respective stereo channel. This allows you to play along with all pieces requiring both hands by listening to one hand on the CD and playing the other.

The wide spectrum of musical styles presented here opens up the path to the multi-faceted world of accordion playing.

Every track on the CD starts with a so-called count-in click. This enables you to find the beginning of an exercise or song more easily.

Have fun and much success with *Accordion Basics*!

Herb Kraus

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1. How to practice properly

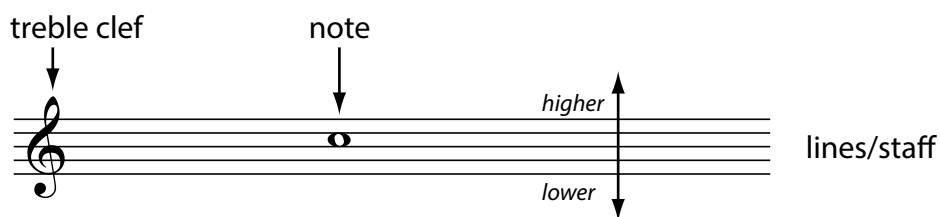
- Practice regularly every day.
- Make your practicing time a fixed part of your daily routine.
- Always be concentrated and self-critical while practicing.
- Feel every tone. Every tone is important. Every tone is music.
- While getting familiar with an exercise, always count out loud.
- Make sure to use the correct hand posture.
- Make sure to use the correct key attack with the proper fingering.
- Don't skip any exercises. This course is designed in a way that the exercises are based upon one another.
- Before you practice, listen to the playback CD to become familiar with the exercise.
- Practice the pieces for both hands with each hand individually first. When you master the piece with the single hands, play it with both.
- When you come to a difficult point, don't start from the top but practice the difficult part only. Start with a smaller part of two or three notes, for example. Practice this part as slowly as necessary to be able to play it without mistakes. Slightly increase the tempo and play the part accurately several times. Now add several notes step by step and start again slowly. When you are able to play the entire exercise at a slow tempo, increase the tempo again in small steps up to the target tempo.
- To finally control yourself, play along to the CD.
- It is quite normal that it often takes several days or weeks to master difficult passages.
- Play a piece several times without mistakes before going to the next one.

2. The notes

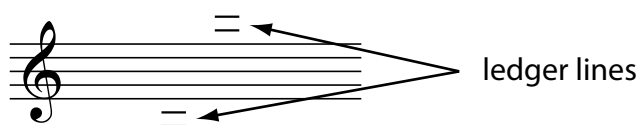
Notes are notated in a **staff**. This system consists of 5 lines. The notes are notated either on or in between the lines. The pitch depends on the line or space where the note is placed. The name of every note is based on this.

The **clef** is notated at the beginning of a staff. It determines what tone corresponds to a note. Both clef and note position determine the name of the note. The right-hand notes of the accordion are notated in the **treble clef**.

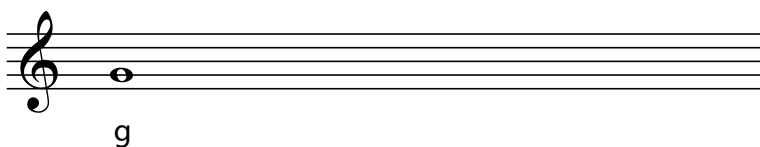
The pitch of a note depends on the line or space where the note is placed..



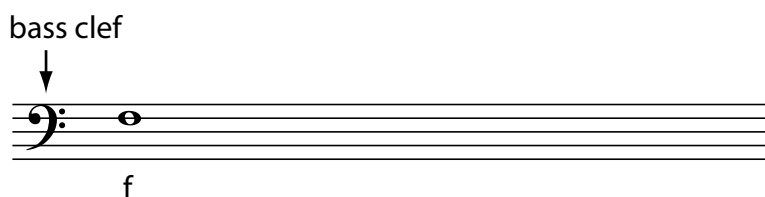
Notes that are too high or low for the staff are notated with the so-called **ledger lines**.



The curl of the **treble clef** spirals around the line on which tone G is notated. For this reason, it is called G clef as well.



The left-hand notes for the accordions are notated in the **bass clef**. The bass clef is curved and has 2 dots. The two dots are located above and below the line on which the note F is notated. Therefore, it is called **F clef** as well.



8. How to hold the accordion

Tighten the shoulder straps so that the accordion is close to the body. The keyboard of the right hand (treble side) is held vertically over the right side of the chest. When opening and closing the bellows, the treble side does not move. The bellows movement is performed exclusively with the left hand.

In the beginning, always sit down when playing. Make sure to keep your back straight. Holding the accordion is supported additionally by resting the instrument on the thighs.

At the top and bottom of the casing, the accordion has bellows straps to hold the bellows closed. Before you start playing, undo the straps to make the bellows playable.

When you are done playing, you should secure the bellows again by closing the straps.



To adjust the (leather) strap for the bellows motion, the accordion usually has a setscrew in its casing on top of the bass buttons side. By means of this screw, the strap can be adjusted so that the left hand can easily reach the bass buttons with the back of your hand touching the strap at the same time.



Setscrew used to tighten the hand strap

Air release button

The first exercises are played with the right hand only. The left hand focuses on the opening and closing of the bellows.

Place the thumb of the right hand on the low C. The low C is located at the top end of the instrument, where the low position is located. In the notation, the C in this position is indicated as the **middle C** (C') or C1.

Low position
(low tones)

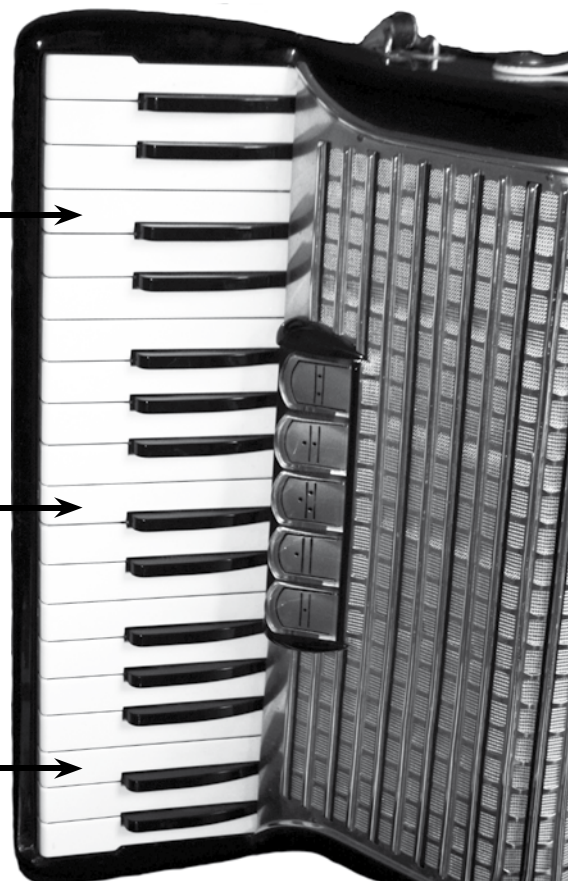


High position
(high tones)

C1

C2

C3



26. The major scale

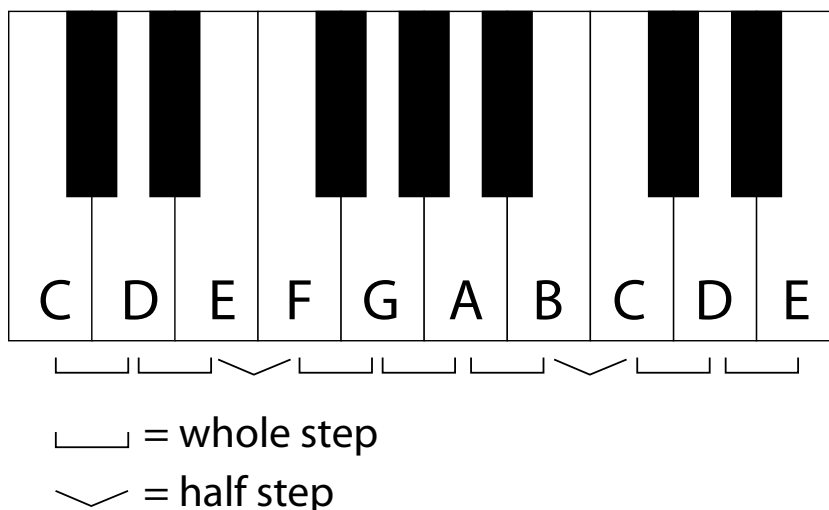
As shown in chapter 7, the keys of the treble side of the accordion (right hand) are arranged in a specific pattern.

The tablature shows different step sizes for certain key (tone) progressions.

There is a (black) key located between tone C and the next tone D. Therefore, the step from C to D is a **whole step**. A black key is also located between D and E, F and G, G and A, A and B. All these steps are whole steps.

There is no key located between E and F. Therefore, the step from E to F is a **half step**. The step from B to C is a half step as well.

So, the half steps in this scale are located between the 3rd and 4th and the 7th and 8th note. This pattern of whole and half steps forms the **major scale**.



The half steps of the major scale are located between the 3./4. and the 7./8. tone.

The first note of a scale is called the **root**. The root of the C major scale is C.

27. Crossing under and crossing over

This playing technique allows you to smoothly play melody passages that go beyond the five-note range without gaps.



When **ascending** the C major scale, thumb, index finger and middle finger play the first 3 tones C, D and E. Now the thumb crosses under the middle finger to play F. Then the other fingers play G, A, B and C consecutively.

Cross under

Finger:	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
Tones:	c	d	e	f	g	a	b	c

When **descending** the C major scale, the pinky, ring finger, middle finger, index finger and thumb consecutively play the tones C, B, A, G, F. Then the middle finger crosses over the thumb to play E and the index finger and thumb are in the position to play D and C again.

Cross over

Finger:	5	4	3	2	1	3	2	1
Tones:	c	b	a	g	f	e	d	c

CD tracklist

CD track	page	CD track	page
1	15	35	34
2	15	36	34
3	16	37 Oh, wie wohl	35
4	16	38 Kuckuck	35
5	16	39	38
6	17	40	38
7	17	41 Fuchs, du hast die Gans gestohlen .	39
8	17	42 Bald gras ich am Neckar	43
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20	23	53 When the saints go marching in	52
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25	28	58	56
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34	32		