LESSON 3: Introduction to Theory: The Pep-Talk

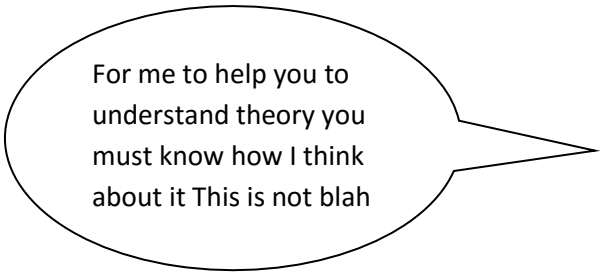
This method is based on years of experience at the Fine Arts Association in Willoughby Ohio. I have had many Lakeland Community College Students who were struggling with theory.

Trying to make sense of the theory they usually were frustrated and looking for some sort of system to learn it. This is how this method came about .

I have felt for a long time that I am somewhat of a private tutor, or some cliff notes, or a DSL line.

The music we will be addressing here is traditional music theory. Some of Rock N roll basic harmonies are considered incorrect as far as traditional theory goes.the biggest example of this are power chords or 5^{th} chords. So keep that in mind as you are learning this, that this is traditional theory that sometimes clashes with the way modern music looks at things.

But even the, most far out music is still measured against this system. If you look at contemporary music magazines, they analyze something like this. See how this group goes out of the key on this song, or how they go chromatically up the scale or how they seem to be hitting random notes that have nothing to do with the key signature. Even the unusual music is still analyzed by the old method



THIS MATERIAL GETS VERY HEADY AND YOU M

REMEMBER WHY YOU'RE STUDYING THIS

Usually when you take theory courses you are told to memorize the sca s.
But because it can be dry and mathematical you need to have some motivation and maybe some illustrations, and reminders of just why you want to work through this theory knowledge.

Knowing theory is like setting up some new software on your computer. You know that if you set up something new, you may find you need more memory or you may have to Lord forbid call tech help, or have the person in the family who know more about computers help you. Somehow it could get involved, possibly get frustrating and do is often the case with computer problems ruin a perfectly good day. But why we do it. Because once the new program is set up we get all kinds of games or shortcuts that make life easier. We merge documents, paste in photos burn CD converts wave files, and do HTML all kinds of things . It is the same with theory.

Theory requires work and concentration to understand. When people go to learn theory they often do not put in all of the time that they would put in if they were studying other subjects. I believe a lot of people think of music and specifically the guitar as an escape from the repetition of their lives, and an escape from the boring routine of their lives. When you play the guitar often it seems people want to get in the groove and relax. But to take your music up on a higher level, many people need a little bit o theory, which is mathematical and requires using that other side of you brain.

But to illustrate why you want to work through the dry parts of theory here is a comparison I made up. If you go to a wedding and your eating some good food, if you are a passive consumer you eat the food and go hey that's good. But if you are chef or if you cook you may go hey the reason that tastes good is because there is garlic in the potatoes. The person who know how to analyze the ingredients can then make it their own and recycle it, add to it. Or cook up a similar dish, the same with theory once you know how to analyze what's happening in music by seeing patterns in the theory, you will be able to think of what ingredients makes that song sound good. Hey I'm getting hungry, let's change the subject

Once you're set up your theory knowledge you'll be able to train your ear to transpose a song from one key to another. You'll know how to use a capo. You'll also be able to analyze chord progressions and see why they work. You'll be able to hear a song by ear and figure it out. You might be able to solos better and learn your fretboard, read notes, figure out harmonies and orchestrations and be able to talk to other musicians in your new language.

If you are a guitar player and you tell the piano player play these note way up hear on the fretboard it might be better if you knew it was and f#. The piano player understands F#, not your hand gestures on your guitar.

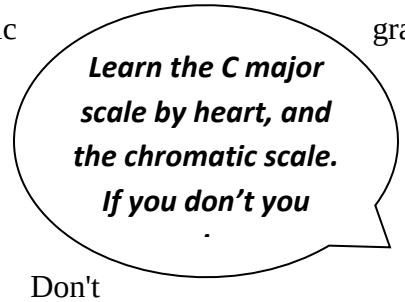
Also if you are interested in this book about theory there is a chance that you may be on the verge of being very good. And if you are very good there is a responsibility with that. You may have to help others along who maybe aren't as quick as you are and may need to have things broken down in a more traditional way of looking at things musically.
So knowing theory will help you communicate more with more people and will also help you gather more knowledge, from those sources.

If you see a guitar magazine that states Randy Rhodes plays Phrygian modes with a raised third you will not be able to get that knowledge, unless you know what a Phrygian mode or a third. A Phrygian mode by the way is a minor scale with a flat 2ns more on this later.

One of the main things, that should be cleared up before we study music theory, is the difference between music theory and music history. Why is a c major scale the starting point for theory? Why do we call them modes? These may be interesting questions, but the origins of the system of music should be covered by a history book, not by music theory. Music theory has been passed down by a combination of church, cultural and political forces. The Catholic Church invented numes, which became notes, so they could sing Gregorian chants. The Chinese measured strings and noticed natural physical vibrations at certain points on the string. These are interesting events in history but of not much help in understanding what makes music work.

The best way to understand music theory is to accept the musical system as it is, as it has been passed down through the years. Everything in theory is based on the C major scale, and the chromatic scale.

This is a fact: just accept it. I taught at a Catholic grade school a few years ago, and I overheard the following conversation. I heard sister say that 20 plus 72 equaled 92.A young students in the back yelled: WHY? "Because I told you yesterday why" she screamed as she cracked her ruler on the desk! This might not be the most progressive education technique around, but it does illustrate the approach you need to understand theory. Don't ask too many questions why, and try to remember what you learned yesterday.



Once you know the concepts of the C major scale you will build your chords, modes and minor scales from your knowledge of the major scale. C D E F G A B C It's like a computer. It will save you a lot of time once you set it up. Once you understand the beginning theory, it will be **fairly easy; to understand the more complicated concepts.**

YOUR NEXT LESSON IS THE CHROMATIC AND THE MAJOR SCALE

LESSON 4: The Beginning of Theory

C MAJOR SCALE AND THE CHROMATIC SCALE

AS we said, all music theory starts with the knowledge of the C major scale and the chromatic scale. What makes a C major scale or the chromatic scale what it is ,is the distance or intervals, between the notes in that scale. To understand the major
scale, it is important to understand first the chromatic scale.

All music (excluding Indian and some Asian)goes in the order of the chromatic scale.

The chromatic scale

C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C
Db Eb Gb Ab Bb

The chromatic scale is nothing more than the order of the notes. After a C note comes a C# or Db note on all instruments. Some notes have two names: C# Db D# Eb F# Gb A# Bb etc

Another way of remembering the Chromatic scale, would be to say that **there is a sharp or flat between every note except E-F and B-C.** Every two notes is called a whole step, while every note is called a half
step.

The C major scale

C D E F G A B C

What makes a C major scale is the distance between intervals. Scales differ from each other by there varying degrees or intervals. All scales start on the Root and progress in either whole tone, (two frets) half tone(one fret) or one and a half tone intervals (3 frets).A major scale formula is; I W 2 W 3 H 4 W 5 W 6 W 7 H 8..

Every week you could come for a guitar lesson and I could show you many different ways of doing your scales. In other words I could show you a C major scale starting on the eighth fret on the low E string, and then show you a C major scale starting on the third fret on the A string