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My Country, 'Tis of Thee: Part 2 BEETHOVEN 7 Variations on 'God Save the King', WoO 78



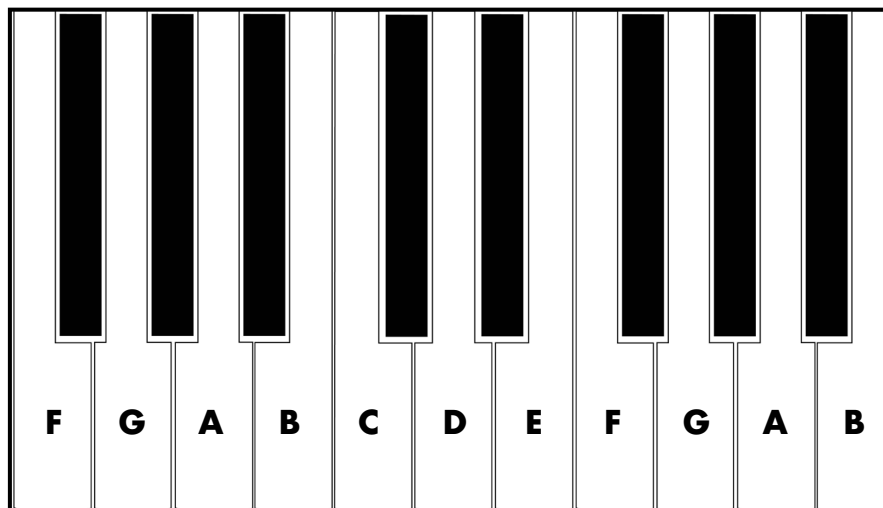
MAJOR AND MINOR



In this episode, Buddy and guest pianist Benjamin Rossen trade off playing a set of variations written by Beethoven around the famous theme, "God Save the King," also known as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." In each variation, the composer challenges the pianist in different ways. One of the variations—variation 5—has a very different character than the other variations, because it is in a **minor** key.

Minor keys tend to sound sad or serious, while **major** keys generally sound happy or upbeat, even grand. Even if you are unfamiliar with these terms, you will certainly recognize the difference in sound! Let's learn why this is.

Here's a view of the keyboard from overhead.



Each **white key** on the keyboard has a note name using the **musical alphabet**. The musical alphabet has seven letters:

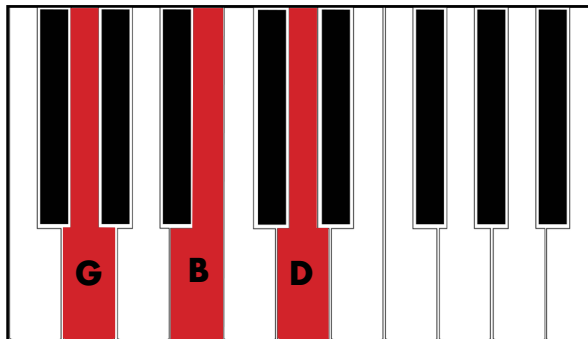
A B C D E F G



MAJOR AND MINOR

Composers use chords to create harmony in music. A **chord** is made when three or more notes are played at the same time. They look like this on the keyboard:

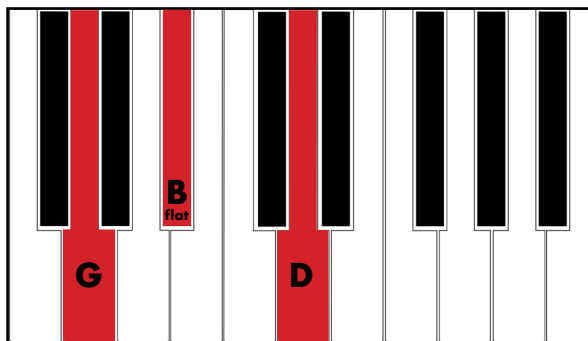
G Major



This is a **major chord**. In the video Buddy shows us how this sounds. How does the sound of the major chord make you feel? Happy, sad, or something else? Describe the sound and how it makes you feel below.

Next, Buddy moves the white key in the middle of the chord (the note B in the example above) down to the black key to its left (B-flat):

G Minor



This makes a **minor chord**, which has a very different sound than the major chord, even though we only changed one note! How does the sound of this minor chord make you feel?



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LET'S DRAW!

Let's listen to some musical examples of major and minor and draw how they make us feel!

Listen to this nocturne in a minor key by Chopin: <https://youtu.be/cykgz9nlRtl?t=33>

Now draw a scene in the box below. What kind of scene does this sound bring to mind?

Let's listen to something a little more upbeat! This waltz by Chopin, nicknamed the "Minute Waltz" for its short length, is a very happy tune: https://youtu.be/ToeH-sSM_lk

Now draw a scene in the box below reflecting its mood.