

# LEAD, MELODY AND IMPROVISATION

## ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The goal of this chapter is to teach the student how to create music on the guitar in a precise, methodical and no-nonsense way. The essence of lead, melody and improvisation can be reduced to three elements: the major scale, the arpeggio and the blues scale. Within these three elements, we find countless variations. The other essential scales can be found within them. When learning these elements, not only will you be playing very great sounding riffs but also you will be examining what is occurring theoretically, exploring such concepts as scale and chord construction, intervals and other essential elements for mastering the guitar. After completing this chapter, you will understand how melodies are created, which notes sound good and why they sound good.

## THE MAJOR SCALE

A scale is a group of musical notes collected in ascending and descending order. The major scale is the most important scale in music. The major scale can be played in 12 keys. Each of the 12 keys has different combinations of notes. In this chapter, we will discuss only the major scale in the key of C and the key of E. To learn more about scales visit [guitarlessonsbybrian.com](http://guitarlessonsbybrian.com).

## THE MAJOR SCALE IN THE KEY OF C

The major scale has seven notes. The notes are always in alphabetical order. The notes of the major scale in the key of C are C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The seven letters are given number names when referring to the intervals of the major scale. Therefore C is the 1<sup>st</sup> interval, D is the 2<sup>nd</sup> interval, E is the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and so on. It ends on C, an octave (8<sup>th</sup>) higher than it started. The prefix "oct" means eight. Therefore the eighth note, C, is called the octave.

The major scale is constructed with a combination of whole tones and semitones. A whole tone is the span of two frets. A semitone is the span of one fret. C to D is one whole tone. D to E is one whole tone, E to F is a semitone, F to G is one whole tone, G to A is one whole tone, A to B is one whole tone, and B to C is a semitone. Therefore, the intervals that create a major scale are: w, w, s, w, w, w, s (where "w" represents a whole tone, and "s" represents a semitone). There is a semitone between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> intervals and a semitone between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> intervals. All other intervals of the major scale are a whole tone apart.