

Notes and Scales

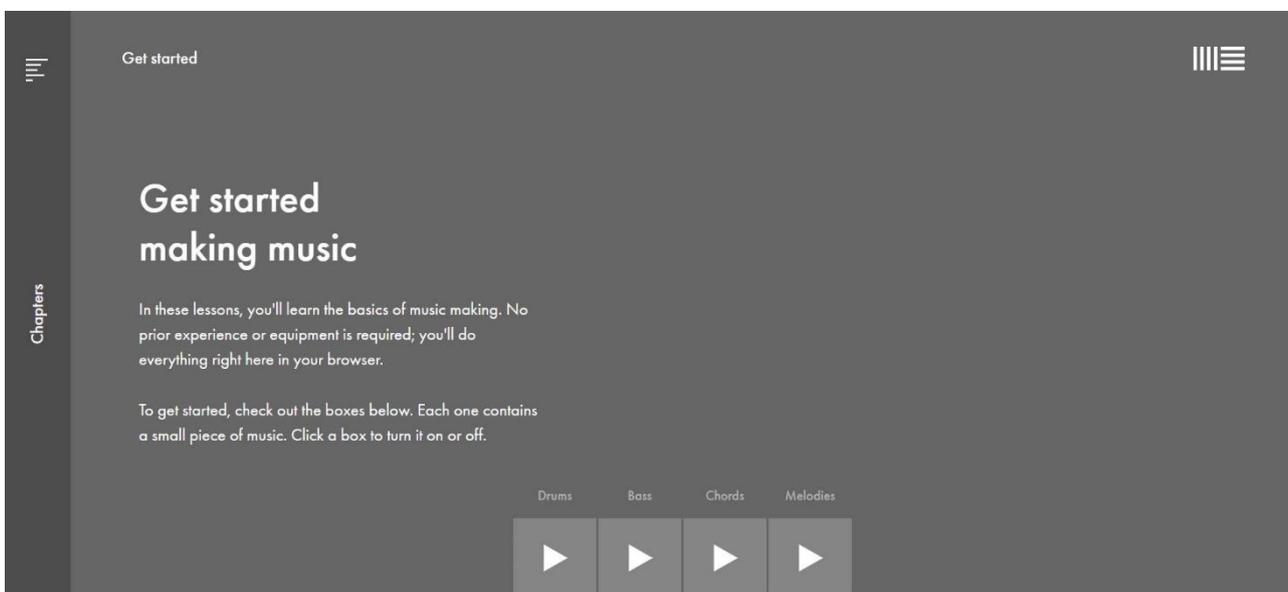
By Eddy Mentzel

For this session you will need a laptop, tablet or phone which is connected to the internet. Headphone's are advisable but not essential.

This session draws upon skills you have already learned by completing the 'Step Sequencing' and 'Layering Sounds' activities that I have previously provided. If you have not completed those two sessions, I strongly recommend trying them out to help familiarise yourself with some of the music terminology and technical processes.

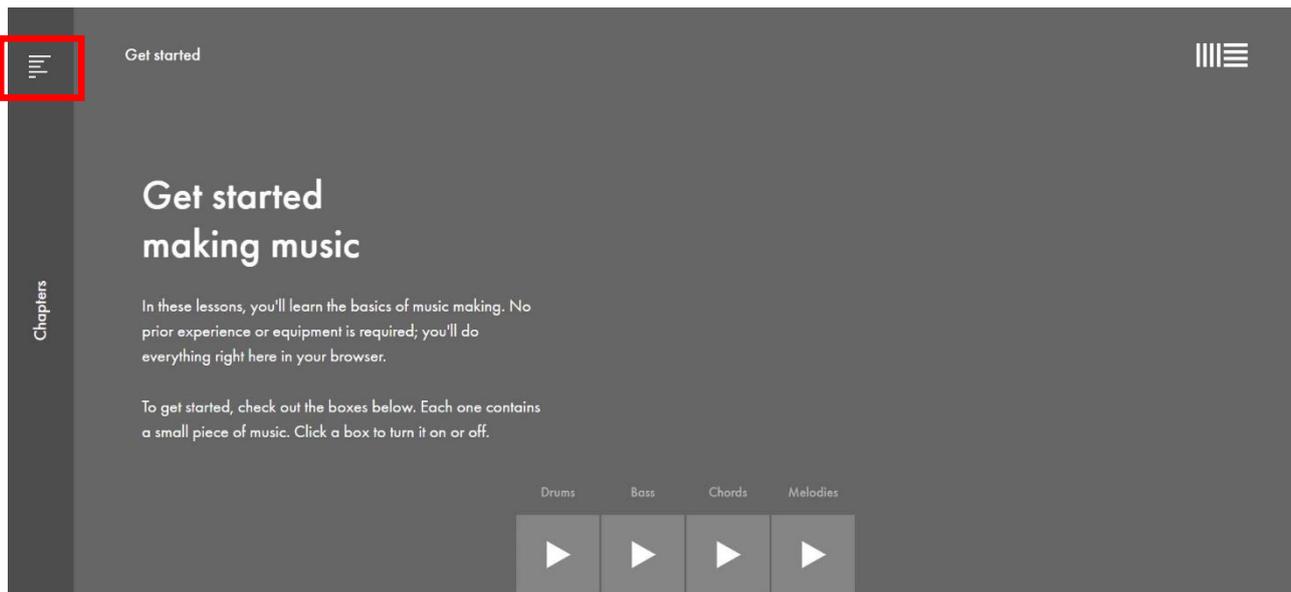
This week we are going to begin to explore basic melody creation. The melody is the main sequence of notes or chords that accompanies the drums. This is often the part of a track that makes it instantly identifiable, the part we hum to our friends when we are trying to describe it. Great songs, that often get stuck in our heads, all have one thing in common; the melody is catchy, infectious and something we want more of. Writing an amazing melody can be a tricky process, but fortunately there are techniques we can use to help us create sequences of notes (or chords) that are pleasing to the ear. Furthermore, these basic fundamentals of composition are relevant no matter what style of music you want to create, or what instrument you are using.

To do: Open <https://learningmusic.ableton.com/> in your browser on your phone, tablet or laptop. If you have problems using the link search for 'Learning Music Ableton' on Google. You will be taken to a site that looks like this.

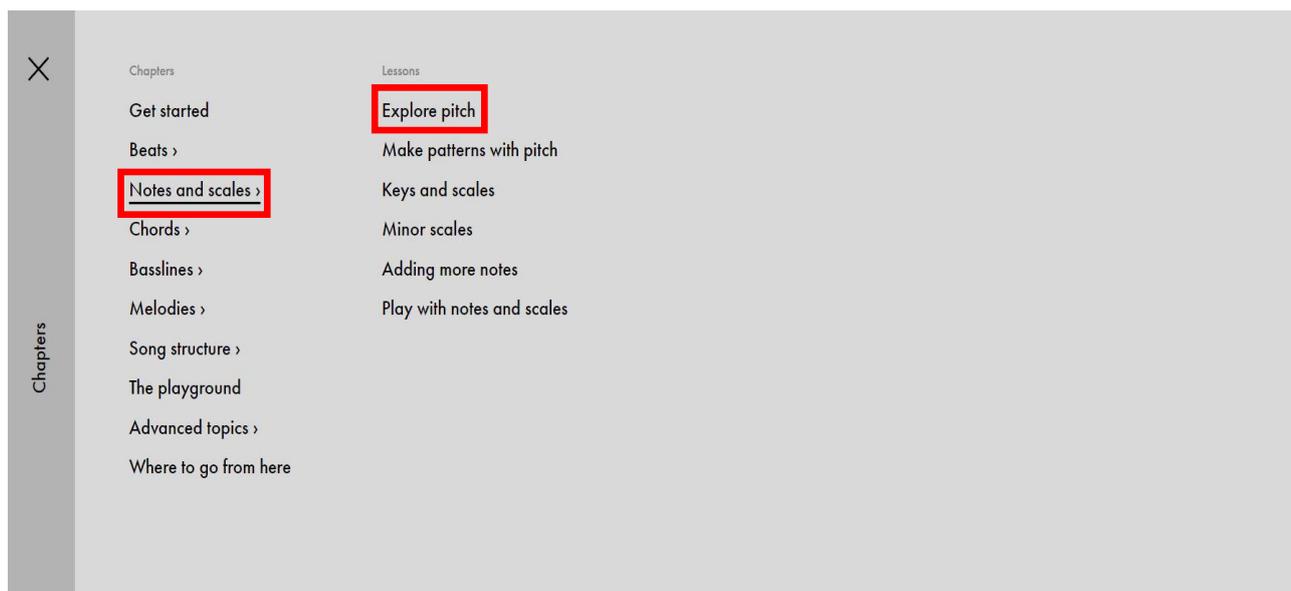


This website is a great online resource, created by music software developer 'Ableton', for learning the basics of music making. If you have already completed the first two sessions I provided, you will be able to skip in a few steps on the website. If not, I suggest starting from this first page and working through the 'Get Started' and 'Beats' chapters first.

To do: Click on the **4 horizontal lines** on the **top left** of the 'Get Started' page (as highlighted in the image below)



To do: Select '**Notes and Scales**' from 'Chapters' drop-down list, then choose '**Explore Pitch**' under the 'Lessons' tab. I have highlighted these in the image below.



You will then be taken to the start of the '**Notes and Scales**' lesson. This is a really great walkthrough, which helps you learn about two basic musical scales. Different notes that harmonize with one another can be organised into musical scales, which are a great building block for composing a melody or chord, as they naturally work together.

Please note: As part of this 'lesson', you will be asked to create your own sequences of notes. You should recognise the step sequencer format for inserting notes from the first activity I provided.

To do: Work through the six parts in this session, completing each step.

Once you have completed part six (*Play with notes and scales*) you will automatically be taken to the next 'lesson', which is about chords.

The screenshot shows a digital music lesson interface. At the top left, there is a hamburger menu icon and the text '1/7: Chords'. At the top right, there is another hamburger menu icon. On the left side, there is a vertical sidebar with the word 'Chapters' and a list of chapters. The main content area has a title 'Make some chords' and a paragraph of text: 'In the last few lessons, you've learned how to organize notes into scales. Now let's look at how to organize notes into chords. A chord is a group of multiple pitches that play at the same time.' Below this text is a button that says 'Experiment with some chords:'. At the bottom left, there is a play button icon and a chord progression display showing 'C' and 'B' on a piano keyboard. At the bottom right, there is a button that says 'Export to Live'.

Chords are created when one note is layered with one or more other notes that harmonize. As we learned in the 'layering sounds' activity, combining sounds and notes is a great way of getting a 'thicker' or more vibrant sound.

To do: Work through the seven parts in this session, completing each step.

Once you have completed part seven (*Play with chords*) you will automatically be taken to the next 'lesson', please stop here.

And finally: These two 'lessons' are only the starting point to creating great melodies. Being creative, being determined and experimenting around the traditional rules of composition is when the real magic happens.