

# Piano Scales Review (April 2019)

## Proposals for consultation

### Initial Grade proposals

	Range	Requirements all legato
<b>SCALES</b>		
C major	1 oct.	hands separately (even notes)
D natural minor		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
C major	a 5th	hands beginning on the tonic (unison); as pattern below
<b>CHORD PATTERNS</b>		
C major	a 5th	hands separately; as pattern below
D minor		

Natural minor:



Chord pattern:



Contrary-motion pattern:



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### Explanatory notes for Initial Grade

- This new grade, sitting below Grade 1, will follow the same structure as Grades 1–8 and will be assessed against the same marking criteria. It will be available for piano from 1 January 2021.
- Two scales – one major, one minor, each hands separately – are set. The minor key has been chosen to ensure candidates play a scale that includes a black key. These prepare the way to the one-octave hands-together and two-octave hands-separately scales proposed at Grade 1.
- The minor key is asked for in the natural form only. This establishes the concept and sound world of the minor mode while avoiding the theoretical challenges of understanding the harmonic or melodic form at this earliest level. An alternative option at this grade is to set a minor scale to a fifth only; this would avoid the need to understand forms and matches the range of the chord pattern.
- A contrary-motion scale is set in the same key as the major scale. It is set to a fifth only to avoid the challenge of turning the thumbs under while playing with both hands, and leads naturally to the well-established one-octave requirement at Grade 1.
- A simple chord pattern is set (hands separately, keys matching the scales), establishing the sound world of the chord/arpeggio while taking into account the hand size of most learners at this level. This prepares the way for Grade 1 arpeggios.
- In an exam, candidates can expect to play all five requirements; examiners will specify which hand to use for each of the scales and chord patterns.

## Grade 1 proposals

	Range	Requirements all legato, even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
C major	1 oct.	hands together
G, F majors	2 oct.	hands separately
A, D minors (natural or harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
C major	1 oct.	hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
G major	1 oct.	hands separately
A minor		

### Explanatory notes for Grade 1

- A one-octave hands-together scale (in C) has been introduced, building on the Initial Grade requirement.
- D minor, which is introduced at Initial, is now required hands separately over two octaves, as are the three new keys of G, F, and Am.
- An option of playing any form of the minor scale is offered, as on the current syllabus and matching other instruments at Grades 1 and 2.
- The C major contrary-motion introduced at Initial Grade is extended to cover the full octave range here (as on the current syllabus).
- One-octave hands-separately arpeggios have been included instead of the broken-chord pattern on the current syllabus. In our previous survey this inclusion was strongly recommended by teachers. These arpeggios build on the pattern covered at the Initial Grade, prepare the way for Grade 2 (where putting the thumb under is required) and encourage good hand rotation in performance.
- To create a more gradual progression in the number of new keys added at each grade, the D major scale has been delayed until Grade 2. The number of arpeggios set has been restricted to two, avoiding the duplication of fingering patterns (since G=F=C and Am=Dm)

## Grade 2 proposals

	Range	Requirements all legato, even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
G, F majors	2 oct.	hands together
A, D minors (natural or harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
D, A majors	2 oct.	hands separately
E, G minors (natural or harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
C major	2 oct.	hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
<b>CHROMATIC SCALE</b>		
beginning on D	1 oct.	hands separately
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
D, A majors	2 oct.	hands separately
E, G minors		

### Explanatory notes for Grade 2

- The design principle of introducing scales as hands-separately requirements and then consolidating them, hands together (only), on the following grade is firmly established here. G, F, Am and Dm from Grade 1 are now to be prepared hands together over the same range as at Grade 1. Four new keys (two major, two minor) are asked for hands separately.
- The contrary-motion scale covered at Grade 1 is now extended to two octaves.
- A first chromatic scale is introduced - hands separately.
- Like at Grade 1, broken chords have been dropped here. This change was strongly approved by teachers in our previous survey. Arpeggios are extended to cover two octaves and kept hands separately (as on the current syllabus). Four keys are set, matching the hands-separately scales.

## Grade 3 proposals

	Range	Requirements all legato, even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
D, A majors	2 oct.	hands together
E, G minors (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	hands separately
B, C minors (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
E major	2 oct.	hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
<b>CHROMATIC CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
beginning on D	1 oct.	hands beginning on the stated note (unison)
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
D, A majors	2 oct.	hands together
E, G minors		
B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	hands separately
B, C minors		

### Explanatory notes for Grade 3

- The arpeggios now join the scheme of consolidating and developing keys from the previous grade by being required hands together. Four new keys are covered within the scales and arpeggios.
- A fifth new key is covered as a contrary-motion scale. Like C played at previous grades, this uses mirrored finger patterns but is more challenging because the distances between the keys are spaced differently in each hand.
- The chromatic scale is now tested as a one-octave contrary motion. This comes earlier than in the current syllabus but as this example beginning on D uses mirrored finger patterns it is an accessible way into playing chromatics hands together. A pattern of setting similar- and contrary-motion chromatics on alternate grades is starting from here.
- The option of playing the natural minor form no longer applies from this grade on (this is consistent with other instruments).

## Grade 4 proposals

	Range	Requirements all even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands together
B, C minors (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
B, F $\sharp$ , A $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
F $\sharp$ , F minors (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
E $\flat$ major	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
C harmonic minor		
<b>CHROMATIC SCALE (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
beginning on F $\sharp$	2 oct.	legato; hands together
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands together
B, C minors		
B, F $\sharp$ , A $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
F $\sharp$ , F minors		
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on B	2 oct.	legato; hands separately

### Explanatory notes for Grade 4

- Five more new keys are covered within the scales and arpeggios. Two previously covered keys, the related pair of E $\flat$  and C $m$ , are also set as contrary-motion scales (these now move away from the mirrored finger patterns of previous grades).
- At this grade, the chromatic is tested as a similar-motion hands-together scale (the hands now use an asymmetrical finger pattern). F $\sharp$  is set as the starting note as it begins comfortably, with a run of alternating black and white notes.
- A hands-separately diminished seventh is introduced. Both diminished and dominant sevenths are appearing two grades earlier in these proposals than in the current syllabus, to bring piano requirements into line with other instruments. Unlike other instruments, diminished sevenths are being set for piano before dominant sevenths, taking into account that they are physically more comfortable for the hand with their smaller and even intervals (all minor thirds).
- Everything is now required over a two octave range, as on the current syllabus.
- To compensate for the earlier introduction of the diminished seventh, reductions are made in the number of contrary-motion and chromatic scales to be prepared.

## Grade 5 proposals

	Range	Requirements all even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
A, E, B, F#, D♭ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands together
F#, C#, G#, E♭, B♭ minors (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>STACCATO SCALES</b>		
A♭ major	2 oct.	staccato; hands separately
F minor (harmonic or melodic, at candidate's choice)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
D♭ major	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
C# harmonic minor		
<b>CHROMATIC CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
beginning on F#	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning on the stated note (unison)
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
A, E, B, F#, A♭, D♭ majors	2 oct.	legato; hands together
F#, C#, G#, E♭, F, B♭ minors		
<b>DOMINANT SEVENTHS (resolving on tonic*)</b>		
in the keys of A and E♭	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on A beginning on C#	2 oct.	legato; hands together

\* Dominant seventh - resolving on the tonic:



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### Explanatory notes for Grade 5

- The significant change at this grade is that the 'all keys' requirement of previous syllabuses no longer applies. This brings piano into line with other instruments, helps improve the progression through the grades, and addresses teachers' concerns about the preparation load at this level. The focus is now on requirements that are at an appropriate level of demand for the grade rather than volume of requirements (many of which would be repetitions from earlier grades). The expectation that candidates should be familiar with all keys by Grade 5 remains, however, and is built into the key scheme across Grades Initial-5 where every key is covered at least once.
- Three-octave requirements (as set in the current Grade 5 syllabus) are replaced by two octaves. The three-octave range is not used at any grade in these proposals - this change was strongly welcomed by teachers in our previous survey.
- In order to ensure that all keys are covered by Grade 5, there are five new keys set here (D♭, C#m, G#m, B♭m, E♭m). At this point the syllabus moves away from the early-grade design principle of setting new keys/requirements hands separately first. All legato scales and arpeggios are to be prepared hands together.

- Overall, there is a group of six related major/minor keys set here for teachers and learners to work with. They are made up of the keys consolidated from Grade 4, the five new keys and two keys repeated from earlier grades (A and E).
- One related pair of keys are asked to be prepared with staccato articulation (hands separately). Staccato playing comes a grade earlier than the current syllabus and was strongly supported by teachers in our previous scales survey.
- Following on from Grade 4, another two contrary-motion scales are required. The related major/minor pair are drawn from the set of scale keys for this grade.
- For the chromatic scale, a contrary-motion with an asymmetrical fingering pattern is set (starting from the same note as the Grade 4 similar-motion requirement – F#).
- The dominant seventh is introduced with two hands-separately examples (see also the Grade 4 notes). Two comfortable examples are set, with both keys (and starting notes) drawn from the set of keys set for the scales at this grade.
- In a change from the current syllabus, dominant sevenths are to resolve on the tonic to encourage a greater understanding of the harmonic function of the chord (and to match what is now required of string and wind players). This change was strongly endorsed by teachers in our previous survey.
- Having been introduced hands separately at Grade 4, the diminished sevenths are now required hands together. One starts on a white note, the other on a black note, and they each cover different patterns meaning that all three possible patterns have now been covered (the third being the one set at Grade 4).
- While there are a number of extra types of requirements at this grade compared to the current syllabus, they are offset by the reduction in the number of keys to be prepared for the scales and arpeggio and the omission of similar-motion chromatic scales.

### Explanatory notes covering Grade 6–8

- *In a change from the current syllabus, a key-/note-centre approach is applied at Grades 6–8 with a range of activities undertaken in the same group of four keys or starting from those four notes (or a subset of them) at each grade. All twelve possible key centres are covered across the three grades, which is similar to the approach taken at these grades for string and wind instruments. The groups of keys at each grade have been built on diminished seventh chords.*
- *All minors are required in both harmonic and melodic forms, as in the current and other instrumental syllabuses. This approach was strongly endorsed by teachers in our previous survey.*
- *Most requirements are now required over four octaves, as in the current syllabus (exceptions are contrary-motion scales and scales in thirds or sixths).*
- *Hands-separately requirements are no longer set (except for scales in thirds and sixths); this helps to keep the preparation load for teachers and candidates at a reasonable level.*

### Grade 6 proposals

	Range	Requirements all even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
D, F, A $\flat$ , B majors	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
D, F, G $\sharp$ , B minors (harmonic and melodic)		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
D, F, A $\flat$ , B majors	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
D, F, G $\sharp$ , B harmonic minors		
<b>CHROMATIC SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
beginning on G $\sharp$ beginning on B	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
D, F, A $\flat$ , B majors	4 oct.	legato; hands together (root position)
D, F, G $\sharp$ , B minors		
<b>DOMINANT SEVENTHS</b> (resolving on tonic)		
in the keys of D, F, A $\flat$ and B	4 oct.	legato; hands together
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on G $\sharp$ beginning on B	4 oct.	legato; hands together

### Explanatory notes for Grade 6

- *Now that staccato scales are introduced at Grade 5, all similar-motion scales here are to be prepared legato and staccato (hands together).*
- *Given the similarities between all chromatics, only two are required, covering a black- and a white-note start. In a change from the current syllabus, they are to be prepared both legato and staccato.*
- *The diminished sevenths set share the same starting notes as the chromatic scales and are restricted to two for the same reason.*
- *Having been introduced hands separately at Grade 5, the dominant sevenths are now required hands together.*
- *The staccato scale in thirds has been delayed until Grade 7 (see notes there).*
- *While there is a reduction in the number of scale, arpeggio and chromatic requirements at this grade from the current syllabus, this is offset by an increased number of contrary-motion scales, staccato requirements and the inclusion of dominant sevenths. The requirement to prepare both forms of minor scale also represents a step up from Grade 5.*



## Grade 7 proposals

	Range	Requirements all even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
D $\flat$ , E, G, B $\flat$ majors	4 oct.	legato <i>or</i> staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
C $\sharp$ , E, G, B $\flat$ minors (harmonic <i>and</i> melodic)		
<b>SCALES A THIRD APART</b>		
D $\flat$ , E, G, B $\flat$ majors	4 oct.	legato <i>or</i> staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
C $\sharp$ , E, G, B $\flat$ harmonic minors		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
D $\flat$ , E, G, B $\flat$ majors	2 oct.	legato <i>or</i> staccato, at examiner's choice; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
C $\sharp$ , E, G, B $\flat$ harmonic minors		
<b>LEGATO SCALE IN THIRDS</b>		
G major	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
<b>STACCATO SCALE IN THIRDS</b>		
G major	2 oct.	staccato; hands separately
<b>CHROMATIC CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
beginning on C $\sharp$ (LH) and E (RH)	2 oct.	legato <i>or</i> staccato, at examiner's choice; hands beginning a minor third apart
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
D $\flat$ , E, G, B $\flat$ majors	4 oct.	legato; hands together; first inversion only
C $\sharp$ , E, G, B $\flat$ minors		
<b>DOMINANT SEVENTHS</b> (resolving on tonic)		
in the keys of D $\flat$ , E, G and B $\flat$	4 oct.	legato; hands together
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on B $\flat$ beginning on E	4 oct.	legato; hands together

### Explanatory notes for Grade 7

- *Thirds* is a theme running through the design of the Grade 7 requirements with scales a third apart, legato and staccato scales in thirds, and a chromatic contrary motion starting a minor third apart all included.
- In the previous set of proposals we consulted on, the staccato scales in thirds and sixths were removed from the syllabus entirely. Teachers' responses to this suggestion were very divided. They are reintroduced in this set of proposals but a grade later than they each appear on the current syllabus. This reflects the feedback that they are important to cover, but moving them later allows for a smoother progression and places them amongst other requirements based around the intervals of a third (Grade 7) and a sixth (Grade 8).
- All hands-together scale types are now expected legato and staccato (unchanged from the current syllabus).
- The number of arpeggios to be prepared has been reduced by removing root-position requirements (which have been well established on earlier grades).
- Like at Grade 6, two diminished sevenths, with a black- and a white-note start, are set.

## Grade 8 proposals

	Range	Requirements all even notes
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A majors	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A minors (harmonic and melodic)		
<b>SCALES A SIXTH APART</b>		
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A majors	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A harmonic minors		
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A majors	2 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A harmonic minors		
<b>LEGATO SCALES IN THIRDS</b>		
E $\flat$ major	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
<b>STACCATO SCALE IN SIXTHS</b>		
C major	2 oct.	staccato; hands separately
<b>CHROMATIC SCALE A MAJOR SIXTH APART</b>		
beginning on E $\flat$ (LH) and C (RH)	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
<b>CHROMATIC SCALE IN MINOR THIRDS</b>		
beginning on C/E $\flat$	2 oct.	legato; hands separately
<b>WHOLE-TONE SCALES</b>		
beginning on E $\flat$ and C	4 oct.	legato or staccato, at examiner's choice; hands together
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A majors	4 oct.	legato; hands together; second inversion only
C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , A minors		
<b>DOMINANT SEVENTHS</b> (resolving on tonic)		
in the keys of C, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ and A	4 oct.	legato; hands together
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on E $\flat$ and C	4 oct.	legato; hands together

### Explanatory notes for Grade 8

- Requirements based on the interval of a sixth are a focus at this grade, with scales a sixth apart, a staccato scale in sixths and a chromatic a sixth apart included. The chromatic a major sixth apart replaces the requirement a minor third apart on the current syllabus.
- Unlike the current Grade 8, contrary-motion scales feature here. This means that all major and minor keys are played in contrary motion across Grades 6–8 in these proposals. The similar-motion scales a third apart that feature on the current Grade 8 are removed in compensation.
- A single legato scale in thirds is set, further developing the activity introduced at Grade 7. A staccato scale in sixths is also included, a grade later than in the current syllabus (see Grade 7 notes)
- A single chromatic scale in minor thirds (hands separately) is tentatively included for now. In the last set of proposals no example was included and teachers were evenly divided when asked whether they agreed with the omission or not.
- The whole-tone scale is covered (as in the current Grade 8) but both possible patterns are now set and are to be prepared legato and staccato, for completeness and consistency with other requirements at this grade.
- The number of arpeggios to be prepared has been reduced by setting second inversions only.
- As at Grades 6 and 7, two diminished sevenths are set, with a black- and a white-note start.

## Appendix I

Introduction and subsequent setting of keys across Grades Initial-8

CM = contrary motion	First use of key	subsequent use of key (to Grade 5)	Use of key across Grades 6-8)
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Key / Grade	Initial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
F# major									
B major									
E major				CM					
A major									
D major									
G major									
C major				CM					
F major									
B $\flat$ major									
E $\flat$ major									
A $\flat$ major									
D $\flat$ major									

Key / Grade	Initial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
G# minor									
C# minor									
F# minor									
B minor									
E minor									
A minor									
D minor									
G minor									
C minor									
F minor									
B $\flat$ minor									
E $\flat$ minor									

<b>New keys</b>	2	3	4	5	5	5	-	-	-
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## Appendix II

Overview of requirements across Grades Initial-8, in order of introduction of different types

TYPES	INITIAL GRADE	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6	GRADE 7	GRADE 8
1 Scales* major	C HS x1	C HT x1 G, F HS x2	G, F HT x2 D, A HS x2	D, A HT x2 Bb, Eb HS x2	Bb, Eb HT x2 B, F#, Ab HS x2	A, E, B, F#, Db HT x2 <i>legato</i> Ab HS x2 <i>staccato</i>	D, F, Ab, B HT x4	Db, E, G, Bb HT x4	C, Eb, F#, A HT x4
minor	D HS x1	A, D HS x2	A, D HT x2 E, G HS x2	E, G HT x2 B, C HS x2	B, C HT x2 F#, F HS x2	F#, C#, G#, Eb, Bb HT x2 <i>legato</i> F HS x2 <i>staccato</i>	D, F, G#, B HT x4	C#, E, G, Bb HT x4	C, Eb, F#, A HT x4
2 CM scales* major	C x5th	C x1	C x2	E x2	Eb x2	Db x2	D, F, Ab, B x2 <i>legato only</i>	Db, E, G, Bb x2	C, Eb, F#, A x2
minor†					C x2	C# x2	D, F, G#, B x2 <i>legato only</i>	C#, E, G, Bb x2	C, Eb, F#, A x2
3 Arpeggios‡ major	C HS x5th	G HS x1	D, A HS x2	D, A HT x2 Bb, Eb HS x2	Bb, Eb HT x2 B, F#, Ab HS x2	A, E, B, F#, Ab, Db HT x2	D, F, Ab, B HT x4	Db, E, G, Bb 1st inv HT x4	C, Eb, F#, A 2nd inv HTx4
‡ minor	D HS x5th	A HS x1	E, G HS x2	E, G HT x2 B, C HS x2	B, C HT x2 F#, F HS x2	F#, C#, G#, Eb, F, Bb HT x2	D, F, G#, B HT x4	C#, E, G, Bb 1st inv HT x4	C, Eb, F#, A 2nd inv HTx4
4 Chromatic scales*			D HS x1		F# HT x2		G# HT x4 B HT x4		
5 Chromatic CM scales*				D x1		F# x2		C#/E x2	
6 Diminished 7ths					B HS x2	A, C# HT x2	G#, B HT x4	Bb, E HT x4	Eb, C HT x4
7 Dominant 7ths						A, Eb HS x2	D, F, Ab, B HT x4	Db, E, G, Bb HT x4	C, Eb, F#, A HT x4
8 3rd apart* major								Db, E, G, Bb x4	
minor†								C#, E, G, Bb x4	
9 6th apart* major									C, Eb, F#, A x4
minor†									C, Eb, F#, A x4
10 Legato scale in 3rds								G HS x2	Eb HS x2
11 Staccato scale in 3rds								G HS x2	
12 Staccato scale in 6ths									C HS x2
13 Chromatic scale in minor 3rds									C/Eb HS x2
14 Chromatic scale a 6th apart*									Eb/C x4
15 Whole-tone scales*									Eb, C HT x4

### Notes

- requirements are legato unless otherwise indicated
- **minors:** natural @ Initial Grade; natural or harmonic or melodic @ Grades 1-2; harmonic or melodic @ Grades 3-5; harmonic and melodic @ Grades 6-8
- at the Initial Grade, the 'arpeggio' is a chord pattern
- dominant 7ths are 'in the key of'

### Symbols

\* legato only Grades Initial-5; legato and staccato Grades 6-8 (except where indicated otherwise)

† minors in harmonic form only

‡ root position only Grades 1-6; positions as shown for Grades 7 & 8

### Abbreviations

HS = hands separately; HT = hands together

x5th = to a fifth; x1 = 1 octave; x2 = 2 octaves; x4 = 4 octaves

1st inv = first inversion; 2nd inv = second inversion