

sci.physics: Re: Why are there 7 discrete notes? A possibly stupid question about sound...

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Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics/2004-06/9115.html>

From: Gulliver (winnim3_at_yahoo.com)

Date: 06/28/04

Date: 27 Jun 2004 23:11:23 -0700

I will continue another branch of the thread, to which replies were given about a month ago, but to which I didn't notice until later.

It is amended to this branch because this one is still new enough to allow direct replies.

From: crynwulf (lyttlec@earthlink.net)

Subject: Re: Why are there 7 discrete notes? A possibly stupid question about sound...

Newsgroups: alt.sci.physics.acoustics,
alt.sci.physics, sci.physics, comp.music

Date: 2004-05-16 21:16:34 PST

>Gulliver wrote:

>> ...

>> An 'octive' on a piano consists of 7 (not eight – count 'em
ABCDEFG(7)

>> A (the first note in the next 'octive' makes eight)) white keys and
5

>> black keys (12 notes total).

>> ...

>

>You forgot about the "H" note. (Yes, there was an H but it got
replaced by

>G#/Aflat on the tempered scale). The notes were based on ratios of
small

>integers from Greek philosophy. There were notes for going from C1
... C2

>and another set going from C2 ... C1. The tempered scale replsce
these with

>one set that doesn't quiet match either. For example, it replaces

>B1(rising) and B1(lowering) with a sort of not too bad sounding
median tone

>called B. I've been told that American Indians find piano music
terrible

>because they hear the hammers and all the notes are a bit off. On the

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other

>*hand, their music is so different from ours, we can't even hear it.*

From: Eberhard Sengpiel

(esengpiel@t-online.de)

Subject: Re: Why are there 7 discrete notes? A possibly stupid question about sound...

Newsgroups: alt.sci.physics.acoustics

Date: 2004-05-17 00:04:13 PST

>*No, the english note B is still called in Germany*

>*an H and the english B flat is called a B.*

>*The G#/Aflat was never the note H.*

>

>*Eberhard Sengpiel*

>*German forum for microphone recordings*

>*and sound studio techniques*

>*<http://www.sengpielaudio.com>*

So, on a modern German scale the notes are ABHCDEFG and on the proposed theoretical one it was ABCDEFGH.

Were there any pianos or harpsichords in the history of their manufacture, that had 8 white keys and 4 black keys, or even other configurations, rather than the modern 7 – 5 configuration?