# CHAPTER 4:
# MORE WORK WITH INTERVALS

Our interval talk thus far has been limited to whole steps and half steps. Though these two intervals are terribly important, they're really only the tip of the iceberg that is the world of intervals. Now we're going to take a more extensive look at intervals and how they work. This will most likely be the most difficult chapter in the book, so you may want to grab a drink or a snack before you dig in.

## NUMBERS AND MORE NUMBERS

Earlier, we dealt briefly with numbers in regards to notes—seven letters in the musical alphabet (A–G), seven white keys, five black keys, etc. Now we'll take this number/note concept a bit further and apply it to intervals. A musical interval has two parts: a **quantity** and a **quality**. The quantity is expressed with a number, while the quality further defines it as a certain type. We'll look at the quantity part now and examine the quality a bit later.

### Interval Quantity

The quantity of an interval is a fairly simple concept. You don't even really need an instrument in front of you. It basically just involves counting note names. For example, if we want to know the interval between a C and an E note, we simply count up through the letters of the musical alphabet starting from C:

C (1) – D (2) – E (3)

There are three note names involved, so the distance from C to E is a type of 3rd. That's almost all there is to an interval's quantity. (I say almost, because this isn't the *whole* story, but it's all you need to know for now.) It doesn't take too long to get the hang of it. Just remember that once you reach G, you start back over at A. You don't even really need to concern yourself with sharps and flats; the letter names are the only thing that matters in an interval's quantity.

For example, let's say you want to find the quantity of an interval between the notes A♭ and E. You can just simply ignore the flat sign on the A; don't even worry about it. Just count up the alphabet from A until you reach E.

A (1) – B (2) – C (3) – D (4) – E (5)

So from A♭ to E is a type of 5th. That's all there is to it. Just remember to count through the alphabet from the first note until you reach the second note. Again, this is only half the story of intervals; the other equally important aspect of an interval is the *quality*, which is what we'll look at after this quiz.