Rocket Piano

Beginners Book

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Welcome to Rocket Piano!

A Personal Message from Me

Welcome to Rocket Piano, the ultimate guide for learning to play the piano! In this book you're going to get everything you need to know, from hand placements to harmony. You're going to learn about keys, chords, scales, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and arpeggios. In short, by the end of this book you'll be able to understand music inside and out, all in a fun, easy-to-understand format.

My name is Ruth, and ever since I was young I've been mad about everything to do with music. It wasn't long before I decided I wanted to be a pianist and began learning songs even before I had any lessons! I honed my skills as a pianist and am now a professional musician!

All that practice paid off for me, and it can for you, too! I know exactly what works and what doesn't in teaching the piano. I've seen most of the piano books out there, and they're way too dry and serious. Learning to play the piano should be fun, cool, and cutting edge! Why learn the piano like people did fifty years ago when today you've got options like MIDI keyboards?

Whether you want to play the keyboard in a band or learn how to use that old piano stuck in the corner of the living room, this book is for you. You may want to become a famous pianist or just be the one that everyone asks to play a song. With the techniques you'll learn here, you'll be able to play any sheet music, including your favorite pop songs!

Better yet, you'll have over EIGHTY original songs to practice on! That's right … just for this book I've composed over 80 original compositions designed to take you from piano novice to piano player. Forget about old folk songs and ditties that everyone knows. These are real songs for real people!

I've also included the New Rocket Piano Progress Tracker so that you can have a checklist of all the things you can expect to learn in the course. But right now let's see what you know about the piano already. Turn the page to take a quiz on fun facts about the instrument you're going to learn to play.

Ruth

Listen to a personal message from Ruth.

Piano Facts Quiz

1. When was the first piano invented?
    a. 1300
    b. 1425
    c. 1550
    d. 1700

2. How many keys are on an average piano?
    a. 64
    b. 88
    c. 100
    d. 142

3. How many strings are in an average piano?
    a. 88
    b. 100
    c. 200
    d. 300

4. The combined tension on the strings in a concert grand piano can be how high?
    a. 100 pounds
    b. 100 kilos
    c. 1000 pounds
    d. 20 tons

5. Most domestic pianos require tuning:
    a. every two weeks
    b. every six months
    c. every year
    d. every five years

6. The year 2000 marked what anniversary of piano manufacturing?
    a. 250
    b. 300
    c. 450
    d. 500

Quiz Answers

1. (d)

In roughly 1700, Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1731) invented the piano in Florence, Italy, as an attempt to improve on the harpsichord. He was instrument maker to the court of Ferdinand de Medici and an expert on the harpsichord. The problem that he was trying to solve was how to vary the volume of sound produced by a harpsichord merely by means of touch. He did so by swapping the plucking of strings for the hitting of them. In his design, a jack caused a hammer to hit a taut string, causing it to vibrate. The hammer swings back again immediately, enabling the string to continue vibrating until the key is released. His invention was a revolutionary achievement and succeeded in attaining his goal: the piano, which unlike the harpsichord, could play both softly AND loudly. Cristofori eventually added two hand stops equivalent to the left and right pedals of grand pianos today. Three of his original pianos (dating from the 1720s) remain.

2. (b)

There are 88 keys on the modern piano (7-1/3 octaves, from A0 to C7), although older pianos may have only 85 keys. (Even older pianos, as in over 150 years old, can have even fewer keys, down to 5 octaves!)

3. (c)

Most pianos have over 200 strings. Why? Each time you depress a key, you don't just set one string vibrating. You set a group of strings vibrating. There may be anywhere from one to three strings vibrating for any single note! (That's three for the middle notes, two for the high notes, and one for the low notes). This creates layers of natural harmonics in the tone, an effect impossible to achieve with digital pianos.

4. (d)

Twenty tons. That's right! The enormous pressure is one reason that metal components were incorporated into wooden pianos, culminating in the 100% iron frame invented in 1825 in Boston by Alpheus Babcock. By 1840, the company at which he was employed, Chickering, was producing grand pianos with iron frames.

5. (b)
Every six months. A piano is tuned by adjusting the tension in each of its strings. You should always tune a piano before a performance, and pianos used in concert halls will be tuned much more frequently. You can minimize the need for tuning by regulating the humidity around the piano.

6. (b)
If you got #1 right, you'll know the answer to this one! The millennium celebrated the 300th anniversary of the piano.

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Every time you see this button, play the indicated track!

Every time you see this button, play the relevant video!

Each example is extensively illustrated to show you exactly how to play the notes!

Each chapter has piles of tunes for you to play, from simple one-handed ditties to duets that you can play along with a pre-recorded track!

Rocket Piano Progress Tracker

Everything you learn in this Rocket Piano course is incredibly valuable and it is important not to lose track of the concepts and techniques you have worked so hard to understand!

This Progress Tracker has been specifically designed for you to keep a record of each individual skill, concept and technique that you learn so that by the end of this book you can pin point exactly how far you've progressed in becoming a skilled pianist and a knowledgeable musician.

With this record of your learning you can recall the skills you've mastered without having to go through the whole course just to find the specific skill you're looking for! It can also be used as a practice schedule.

Once you have mastered a lesson or skill tick it off on the Progress Tracker, and move on to the next lesson! Commit yourself to ticking off the skills you learn as you go and see your improvement instantly!

"I _____am making the commitment to myself, to work through the Rocket Piano Course at my own speed, and absorbing all the information, and mastering all the skills I can, to enable me to play the piano like a true professional."

Signed:_____ Date: _____

Lesson or Skill	Page #	Date	Signature
☐ How a Piano works	.....	.....	.....
☐ Piano Parts: keys, strings, hammer, pedal	.....	.....	.....
☐ Piano Posture	.....	.....	.....
☐ Hand placement	.....	.....	.....
☐ Fingering system	.....	.....	.....
☐ Reading music: Rhythm	.....	.....	.....
☐ Notes: Quarter note, half note, whole note	.....	.....	.....
☐ Dynamic Signs	.....	.....	.....
☐ The C Hand position	.....	.....	.....
☐ Time Signature: 4/4	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Musical Staff:	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Bass Clef	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Treble Clef	.....	.....	.....
☐ Memorizing the notes on the Staff	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Grand Staff	.....	.....	.....
☐ Musical Intervals: the 2nd	.....	.....	.....
☐ Musical Intervals: the 3rd	.....	.....	.....
☐ Melodic and Harmonic Intervals	.....	.....	.....
☐ Both hands together	.....	.....	.....
☐ Ties, Rests and Slurs	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Time Signature: 3/4	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Intervals: the 4th	.....	.....	.....
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☐ Sharps and Flats	.....	.....	.....
☐ New dynamic signs: crescendo & diminuendo	.....	.....	.....
☐ The G Hand position	.....	.....	.....
☐ The accent sign	.....	.....	.....
☐ New dynamic sign: Staccato	.....	.....	.....
☐ The eighth note	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Time Signature 2/4	.....	.....	.....
☐ Fermenta Sign	.....	.....	.....
☐ Technical Wizardry: Pedaling	.....	.....	.....
☐ Repeats	.....	.....	.....
☐ 1st and 2nd time endings	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Middle D hand position	.....	.....	.....
☐ On and Off beats	.....	.....	.....
☐ Half steps	.....	.....	.....
☐ The Chromatic Scale	.....	.....	.....
☐ Whole steps	.....	.....	.....

Lesson or Skill	Page #	Date	Signature
☐ Playing scales & tetra chords	.....	.....	.....
☐ Thumb under technique	.....	.....	.....
☐ Hand Over technique	.....	.....	.....
☐ The G major scale & key signature	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Interval: the 6th	.....	.....	.....
☐ Performance direction: Legato and Allegretto	.....	.....	.....
☐ Dotted notes	.....	.....	.....
☐ Performance direction: Poco and Lento	.....	.....	.....
☐ The F major scale	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Interval: the 7th	.....	.....	.....
☐ D major scale	.....	.....	.....
☐ Accidentals	.....	.....	.....
☐ New Interval: the 8th or Octave	.....	.....	.....
☐ Performance direction: Accelerando	.....	.....	.....
☐ Repeat with D.S al fine	.....	.....	.....
☐ Performance direction: Fortissimo	.....	.....	.....
☐ Using the Metronome	.....	.....	.....
☐ The sixteenth note	.....	.....	.....
☐ Scale in Contrary Motion	.....	.....	.....
☐ Chord structure basics	.....	.....	.....
☐ Primary Triads	.....	.....	.....
☐ Chord Progressions	.....	.....	.....
☐ 1st inversions	.....	.....	.....
☐ Primary triads in: G major	.....	.....	.....
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☐ Block and Broken Chords	.....	.....	.....
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☐ The key of D minor	.....	.....	.....
☐ Primary chords in D harmonic minor	.....	.....	.....
☐ Arpeggios	.....	.....	.....
☐ Arpeggios with Chord Progressions	.....	.....	.....

Chapter 1. Piano Facts and History

In this chapter, I'm going to give you some basic information about the history of the piano and how it works. Frankly, you don't need to know a thing about how a piano works to be able to play, so if you're raring to get your fingers on the keyboard, skip this chapter. If not, here are some cool facts about the piano to impress your friends.

Did You Know?

- ✔ That the original name for the piano was a "*gravicembalo col piano e forte*"? In case you can't read Italian, that means a large harpsichord with soft and loud (tones). Later, the name became shortened to "*piano e forte*," then "*pianoforte*," then switched to "*fortepiano*" before finally settling on the name by which we know it today: the piano!

- ✔ That the string that produces the highest note in a piano is made of steel wire about ¾ millimeter in diameter?

- ✔ That the string that produces the lowest note in a piano is made of not just steel but copper as well, making it roughly 1-¼ millimeters in diameter?

- ✔ That an upright piano can weigh from 300 to 480 pounds, while a concert grand piano will weigh around a ton?

- ✔ That the tension on piano strings have been known to crack and collapse pianos?

- ✔ That the pianos that Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven wrote their compositions for sounded vastly different to the pianos of our day? Their pianos produced a softer, clearer tone with less power.

- ✔ That adherents to the authentic performance movement create modern replicas of early pianos to be able to perform music on the kind of pianos available to their composers (like Mozart) at the time?

- ✔ That the first music published specifically for the piano came out in 1739?

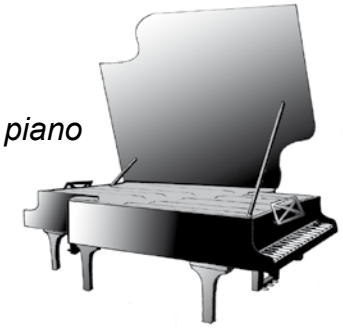
- ✔ That it wasn't until the mid 1760s that the piano took to the stage in the earliest public performances?

- ✔ That the earliest public piano performance in North America took place in Boston just five years before the Declaration of Independence?

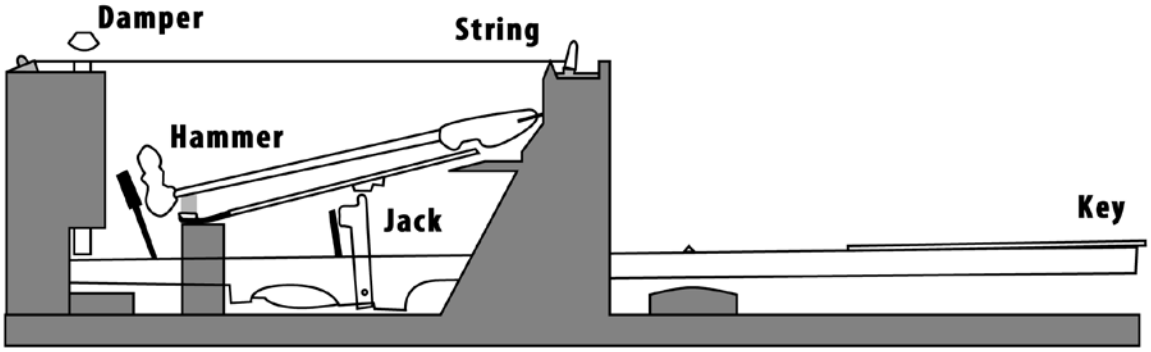
- ✔ That the patent for the action in a grand piano, taken out by Robert Stodart in 1777, was the first patent ever to use the word "grand"?

- ✔ That pianos used to come in a square shape? (At the turn of the 19th century American piano manufacturers made a square piano bonfire in Atlantic City.)
- ✔ That pianos didn't always have 7+ octaves? Mozart used a piano that only had 5 octaves, and today some pianos reach eight octaves. (The extra keys add resonance, even if they are not played.)
- ✔ That piano frames used to be made completely out of wood, and it wasn't until 1820 that metal began to be used successfully in grand piano frames?
- ✔ That hammers used to be covered in leather but are now covered in felt? (The felt covering was introduced in 1826.)
- ✔ That the solo recital (performing a piece by memory without musical assistance) was established in 1839?
- ✔ That the great maestro of piano, Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997), could memorize any piece of music on sight?
- ✔ That the self-playing piano (or *player piano*), which plays itself from a roll, was invented in 1863?
- ✔ That the modern concert grand piano has not been improved in any major way for the past 100 years?
- ✔ That piano manufacturing declined severely during the Great Depression and Second World War?
- ✔ That the world's largest grand piano was 11 feet, 8 inches long and produced by the Challen Company in 1933? (The tensile stress on the strings reached 30 tons!)
- ✔ That in 1969 the country that produced the greatest number of pianos was Japan?
- ✔ That the world's most expensive piano is an Alma-Tadema Steinway sold at auction in 1998 for 1.2 million dollars? (It originally sold for $1200 in the 1880s.)
- ✔ That the Crystal Music Company in The Netherlands makes the world's only fully transparent grand piano? (You can buy one today!)
- ✔ That you can get a "left-handed" grand piano with the lowest notes to the right and the highest notes to the left? (It's produced by Bluthner.)
- ✔ That two people can play together on a single grand piano—facing each other!—on the Grotrian Duo Grand Piano, a piano with the keyboard at opposite ends and connected soundboards?

A duo grand piano



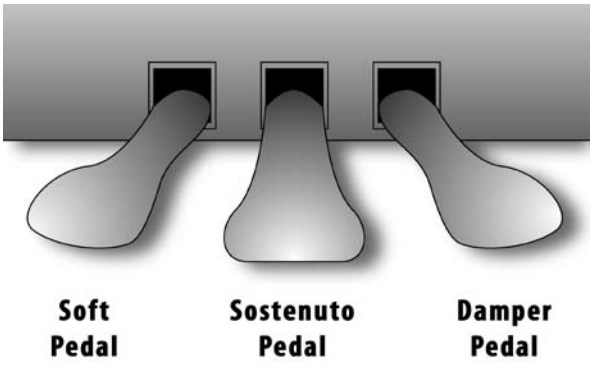
How a Piano Works



Everything starts when you press a key. When you press a key down, a device called a **jack** pushes the **hammer** towards a **string**. The hammer strikes the string, causing it to vibrate, and falls back immediately. (If the hammer didn't fall back, the sound produced would not be a clear tone but rather a "clonk"!) As the force with which you press a key determines how hard the hammer will strike, you can achieve a wide range in volume simply by how hard or softly you press a key.

When you release the key, a **damper** stops the vibrations in the string in the same way that you could stop a wire from vibrating by pressing down on it. This set of hammers, levers, and dampers compose a piano's **action**. At that point, the **bridge** carries the vibrations to the **soundboard**. The soundboard is responsible for the amplification of sound.

In fact, **pressing a key causes 35 inter-linked actions to take place**, resulting in the sound of a particular note!



You can further modify the sound that you produce by using one of a piano's two to three pedals. The **soft pedal** (una corda) on the left will make the sound quieter, while the **damper pedal** on the right will lift the dampers off all the strings, allowing the strings to continue vibrating even when you have released the keys. There may be a middle pedal called the **sostenuto pedal** that works like the damper pedal, except that it only keeps one damper raised—the one that was raised at the moment the pedal was pressed. Or, the middle pedal may be a **practice pedal** instead, which will mute the sound by dropping a strip of felt in between the hammer and keys.

What a Piano is Made of

The primary components of any piano are wood and metal, with a small amount of plastic.

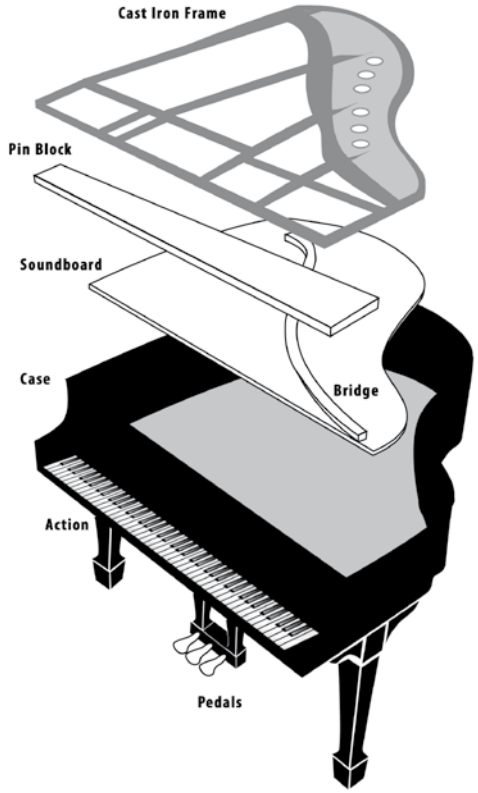
- ✔ **Outer Rim**. Hardwood (usually maple or beech)
- ✔ **Plate** (frame). Cast iron
- ✔ **Keys**. Spruce or basswood, covered with plastic.
- ✔ **Strings**. High quality steel (treble strings) or steel wrapped with copper wire (bass strings).
- ✔ **Action**. Hardwood or plastic
- ✔ **Soundboard**. Solid spruce (cheap pianos may have a plywood soundboard)

Types of Pianos

Pianos come in three types:

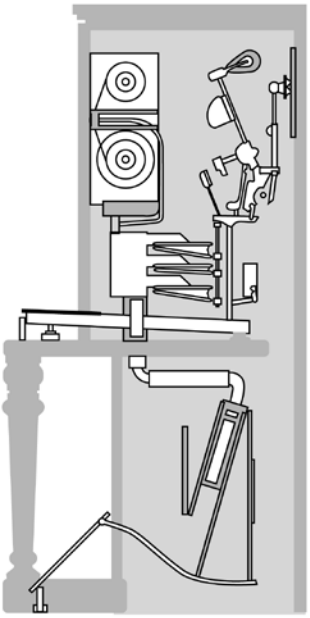
- Grand pianos
- Upright pianos
- Digital pianos

The best sound quality comes from a **grand piano**. Generally, in pianos, the bigger the better, and grand pianos are the granddaddies of the piano world. They are over nine feet long, and their frame and strings extend horizontally, perpendicular to the keyboard. They have longer bass strings than an upright piano, with a roller action that gives a superb playing response. However, due to their size, they are found less in homes than in concert halls. The powerful sound they produce requires a spacious room with high ceilings for proper resonance.



Upright pianos are most commonly found in homes.

They are also called vertical pianos, as their frame and strings extend upwards and downwards from the keyboard. As the hammers move sideways rather than upwards, it is difficult to get the same sound quality in an upright as in a grand piano.



Digital pianos (as compared with *acoustic pianos*) are a recent innovation. Developed since the 1970s, pianos use digitally sampled sounds that are replayed at the touch of a key.

They are intended to feel as much like acoustic pianos as possible, down to the weighted key action.

They're portable, don't need tuning, and often have a variety of extra effects, including other "voices," preprogrammed rhythms, and the ability to export sound to a computer. However, a digital piano's sound quality cannot approach the depth of an upright piano, due to the lack of natural harmonics.

Other similar instruments include the **electric piano**, the most famous of which is the Fender-Rhodes, which produces a sound that is part bell, part xylophone, and part piano. Completely portable, the electric piano is similar to an acoustic piano only insofar as pressing a key causes a hammer to strike … but what it strikes are tines rather than strings. Magnets located at the tip of each tine pick up the audible vibrations for amplification.

An **electronic piano**, or *electronic keyboard*, is what you see most bands playing. It is similar to a digital piano in that sounds are synthesized, or computer-generated, but unlike a digital piano an electronic keyboard does not have weighted key action or velocity sensitivity.

Chapter 2. Learning the Basics

I'm going to assume from the start that you have a piano to practice on. If you don't have one, get one now! You can't learn the piano without an instrument to practice on. Fortunately, even an inexpensive electronic keyboard will do for most of the exercises in this book.

Sitting at the Piano

When you are seated at the piano, you need to have the correct posture. Without the proper posture, you can experience back pain and stress in your joints.

1. The first rule of correct posture is to **keep your back straight**. Your torso may bend towards the piano.

2. Keep your head up. DON'T crane your neck to look at the sheet music. The sheet music should be positioned for easy visibility.

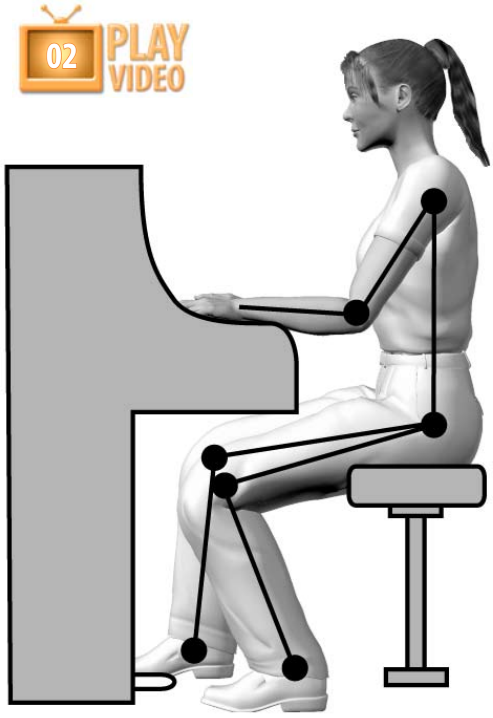
3. Your shoulders and arms should be loose and relaxed. If you need to do some stretches beforehand, feel free!

4. Your arms should be parallel with the height of the keys and bend at the elbow in an angle of slightly greater than 90 degrees.

5. Your thighs should be parallel with the floor. To ensure this, you should use an adjustable chair.

6. Your right foot should be set forward towards the pedals, while your left foot should rest midway between the pedals and your chair.

7. Keep enough distance between your chair and the piano that you can reach the pedals and keys comfortably, yet have freedom of movement. If your chair is too close, your body will get in the way of your elbows. If your chair is too far away, you will have to bend forward to reach the keys.



The Hands Have It

Your hands are the most important part of your body when playing the piano. You may have heard the myth that long fingers make a great piano player. This simply isn't true! No matter what kind of hands you have, you can tear up the keyboard. What you need more than mere finger length, is strength, agility, and dexterity.

The best fingers for piano playing are tapered: in other words, they are muscular at the base and narrower towards the fingertip.

Perfect Hand Posture

When you play the piano, your hands should be relaxed, with your fingers slightly rounded so that the tips are resting lightly on the keys. Your wrists should not be too rigid, and you should never clench your fingertips. Avoid lifting the fingers too high as you play, as this will decrease your speed and create tension where none is necessary.

Caring for Your Hands

Playing the piano should not be hard. If you experience any pain, stress, or strain at all, you need to reevaluate or have someone help you examine your posture and playing technique.

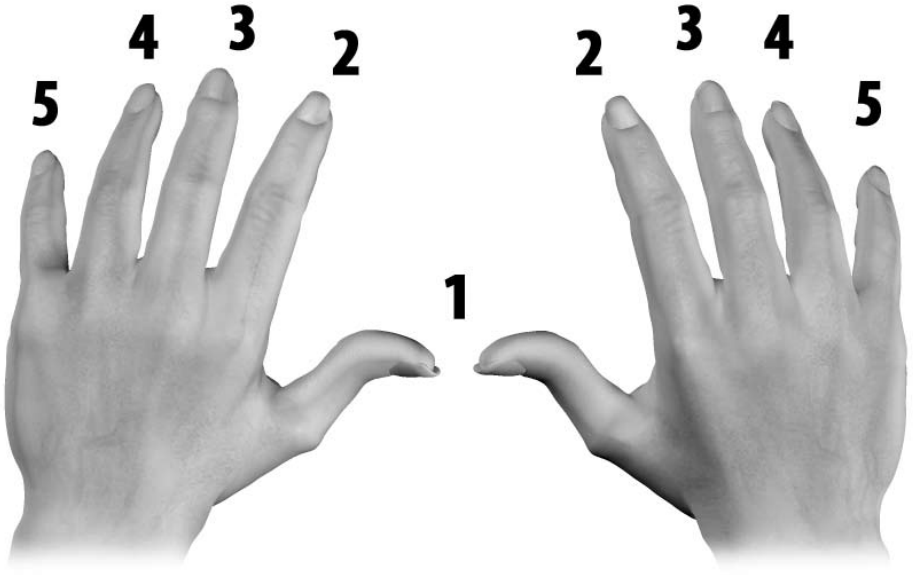
Professional pianists can develop problems with their hands caused by overuse, such as repetitive stress syndrome. To keep your hands happy, take a 10-minute break after every 45-minutes of practice. Curl and uncurl your hands to keep them limber. Implement a stretching and self-massage routine to improve blood flow to your hands and arms.

Amazingly enough, keyboardists suffer many specific hand injuries. Because the touch of the keys on an electronic keyboard is so light, people have a tendency to push harder!

How the Hands are Used in Playing Piano

If you know how to type, you know that you need to use a certain finger to press each key on the keyboard. Similarly, when you are playing piano, you will use certain fingers to press specific keys, depending on the hand position.

As you start learning the correct fingers to use, it is helpful to think of each of your fingers as having a numerical value. The standard method is to divide your fingers into your right hand (R.H.) and left hand (L.H.), and assign a number from 1 to 5 to each number, starting from the thumb (1) and finishing on the pinky (5).



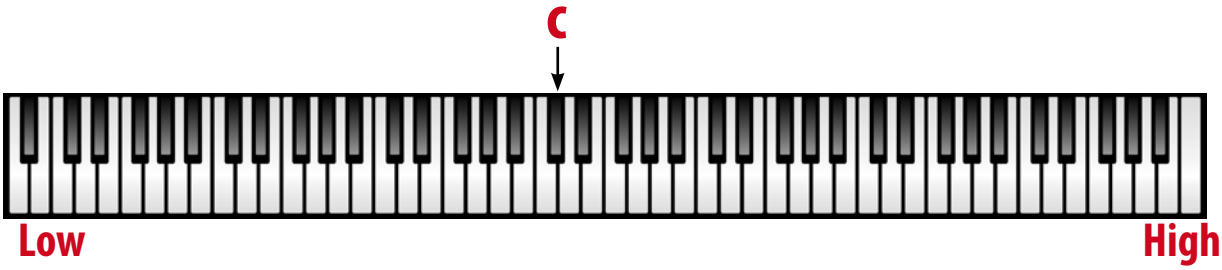
As you work through this book, you'll need to know which number corresponds to which finger, so that when I ask you to play a key with R.H. 2, you'll know to play the key with the index finger of your right hand.

Since this numbering system is standard, you will find that some pieces of particularly difficult piano music will have a number (like R.H. 2) marked above certain notes that are difficult to finger.

The Piano Keyboard

You are probably already familiar with the piano keyboard. As mentioned before, a standard modern piano has 88 keys: 52 white and 36 black. Its range will be a little over 7 octaves (one octave comprises 7 white keys and 5 black keys).

In the very center is an important key called Middle C. This establishes the basic pitch and is the key from which all other keys are referenced.



To the left of middle C, the notes become progressively lower. (Hitting a note will cause vibration of the **bass strings**).

To the right of middle C, the notes become progressively higher. (Hitting a note will cause vibration of the **tenor strings**.)You will notice that the black keys on a piano are grouped in sets of 2 and 3.

As you move up each key in the piano, you are moving up a **half-step**. You will learn more about this in later chapters.

At the moment, just play some keys on the piano. Try the following:

1. *Play some white keys, then some black keys. Do you notice any difference in the tone or quality of sound?*

2. *Play the lowest note on the keyboard, then Middle C, then the highest note. Do you think that many songs use a piano's full range?*

3. *Play a group of consecutive keys (keys that go one right after another, including the black keys.) Can you hear the progression in pitch?*

Using the Fingering System

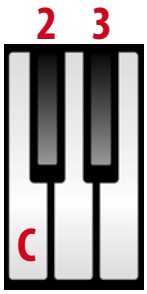
Now, try some exercises to practice the fingering system on the keyboard. Right now, we'll just use the two black keys above Middle C.

1. Using your left hand, play the two grouped black keys just up from Middle C.

2. Now, play the same keys using your left hand and the correct fingers. Play the highest note first and the lowest note second.

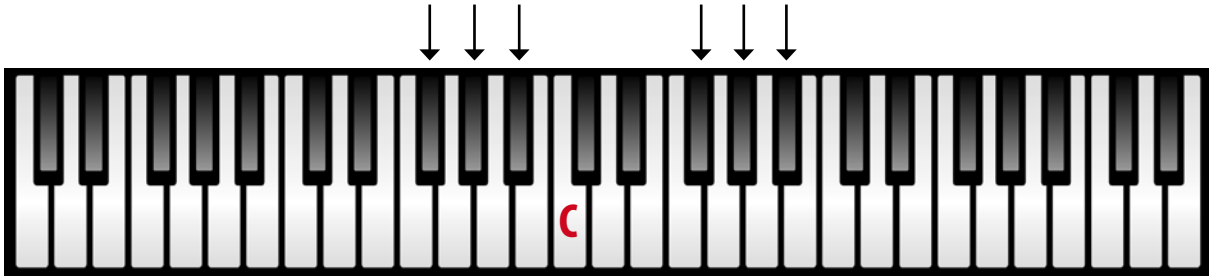
3. Now, do Exercise 2 again, this time with the right hand.

4. Play R.H. 2 then R.H. 3.



Practice makes perfect! Schedule several practice sessions of 10 to 15 minutes a day.

Now, we'll do the same thing, but on two of the groups of three black keys. Use the three black keys *below* Middle C for the left hand, and the three black keys *above* Middle C for the right hand.



1. Play L.H. 2, L.H. 3, then L.H. 4.

2. Now, play R.H. 2, R.H. 3, and R.H. 4.

Reading Music

Music consists of a pattern of tones of varying lengths. Each tone is written down as a **note**.

The word **note** can have several meanings:

1. *A tone of definite pitch.*
2. *The symbol for such a tone, indicating pitch by its position on the staff and duration by its shape.*
3. *The key of an instrument, such as a piano.*

If you want to play a note, you need to learn how to read notes from a musical score to play those notes on the piano.

You must learn how to read music if you want to play the piano. Think of a musical score as your instruction manual. It will tell you everything you need to know about playing a piece of music. Once you have the musical score memorized, you will be able to play songs easily without the aid of sheet music (as is done in most **solo recitals**).

Rhythm

Right now, let's focus on understanding the length of a note. Knowing how long to play each note is essential to capturing a song's **rhythm**. The shape of the note will tell you how long the tone should be played for (its *duration*).

A note can have many different shapes.

whole note | **half note** | **quarter note** | **eighth note** | **sixteenth note**

Each shape has a specific name and corresponds to a certain value (measured in beats).

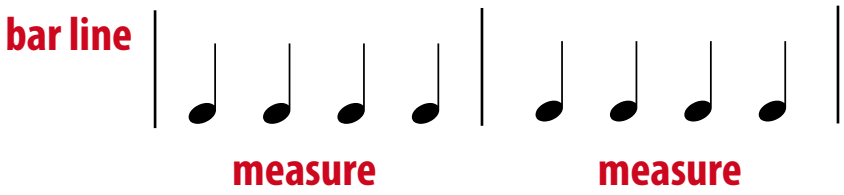
By looking at these notes on their own, you do not have any idea of the **pitch** of each note is (in other words, whether the note is Middle C, a higher note, or a lower note). The only thing that the shape of a note tells you is its duration. You will have to look at the note's *position* on a musical staff to know its pitch.

The Quarter Note

The standard note is the **quarter note**. 

It lasts for one **beat**, or count.

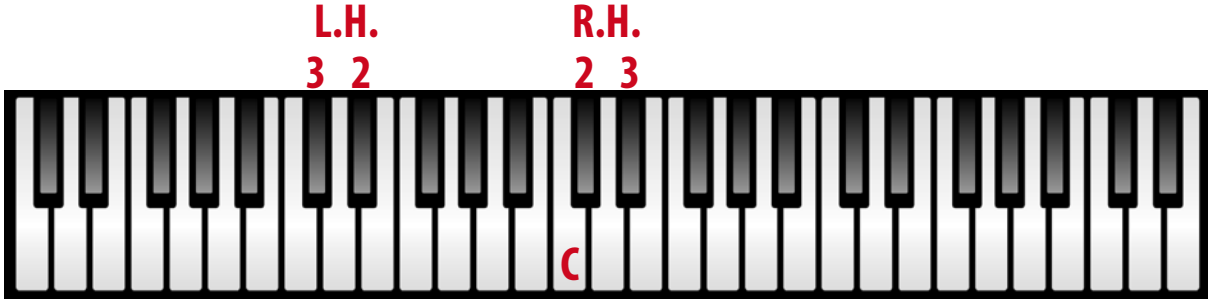
Musical rhythms are not just described by note lengths. You can also talk about rhythm in terms of **measures**. Measures are indicated by **bar lines**.



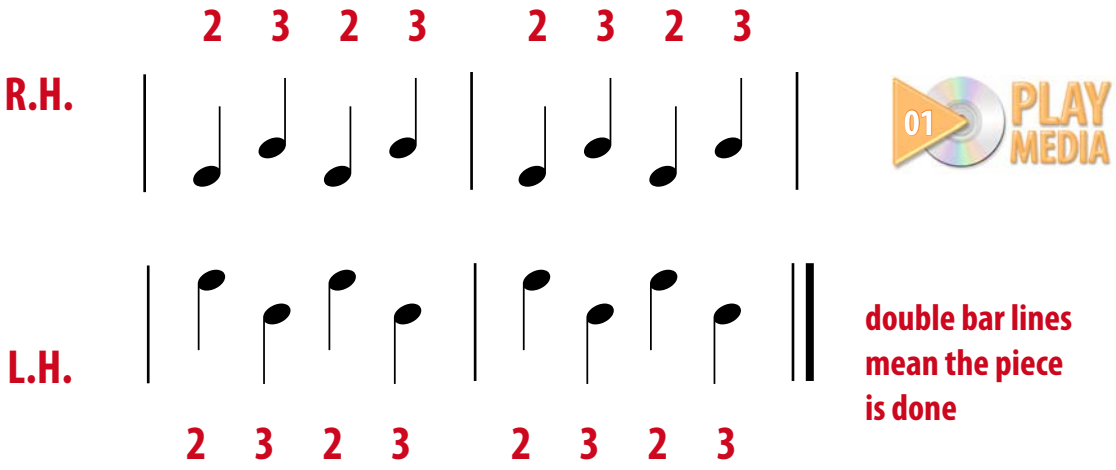
Can you guess the number of beats per measure?

4 quarter notes x 1 beat per quarter note = 4 beats

Now, let's put the last two concepts together and use the fingering system to play a tune. Place your hands on the keyboard in the following position.



Exercise: Play the following tune. Use your right hand to play the first line. Then, switch to your left hand for the second line. Each note should last for the duration of one beat.

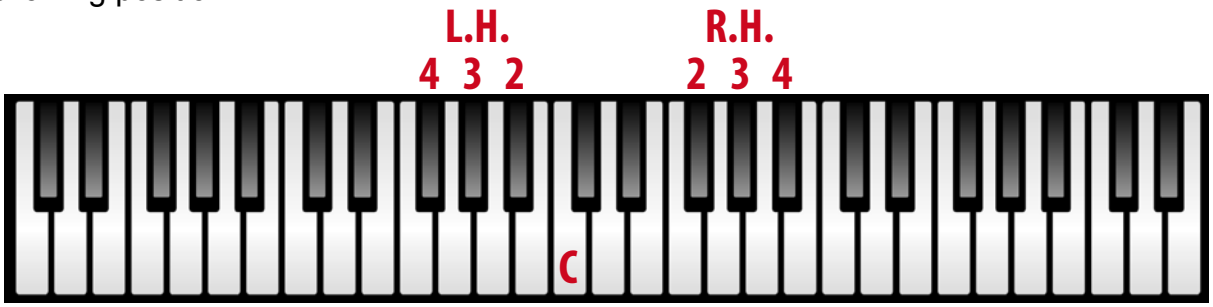


The Half Note

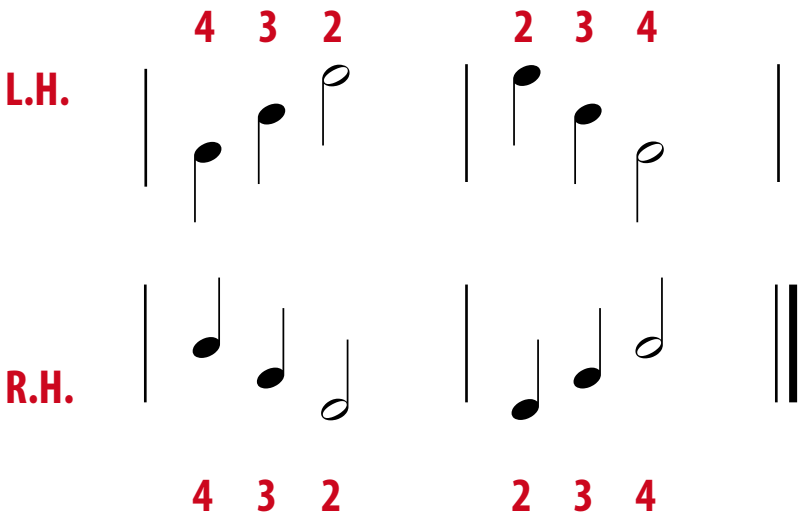
A half note  is twice the length of a quarter note. It lasts for two counts: *one, two*.

Two quarter notes make a half note. 

Let's practice using half notes and quarter notes in a song. Place your hands in the following position.



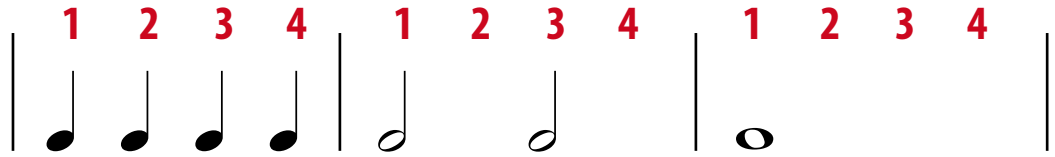
Exercise: Play the following tune. Use your left hand for the first line. Then, switch to your right hand for the second. Remember to hold the half notes for twice the duration of the quarter notes. If you need to listen to how it should sound, click on the play media button.



You may find it helpful to tap your foot as you play.

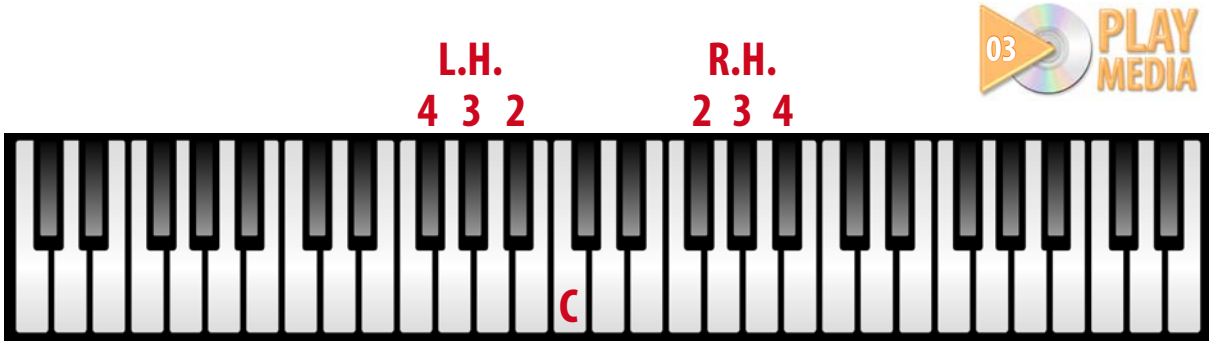
Whole Note

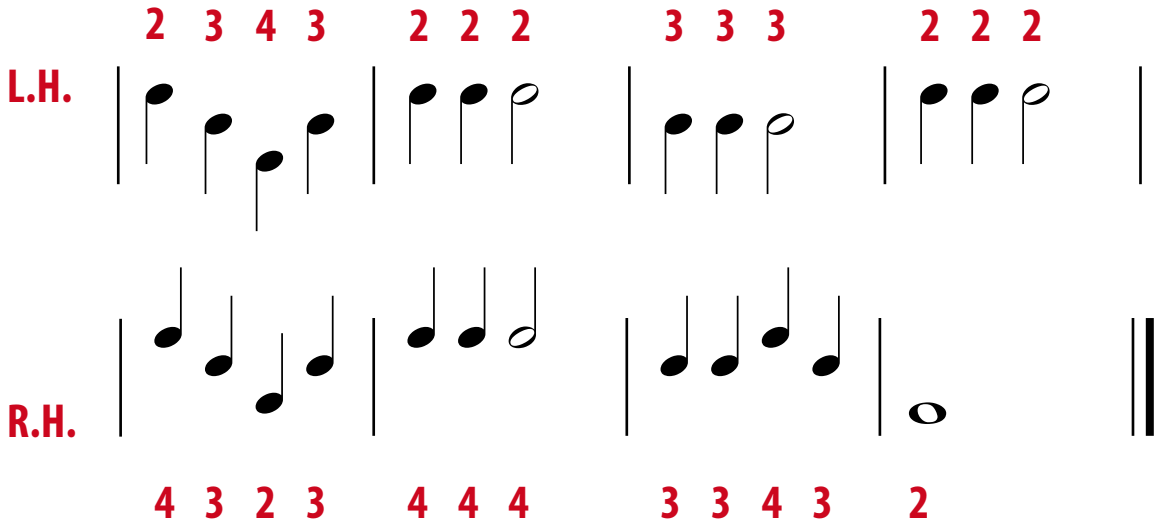
A whole note 𝅝 is four beats. It lasts for four counts: *one, two, three, four.*



A whole note is equal to two half notes OR four quarter notes.

Exercise: Using the same hand position that you used for the previous example, try this more complex tune.



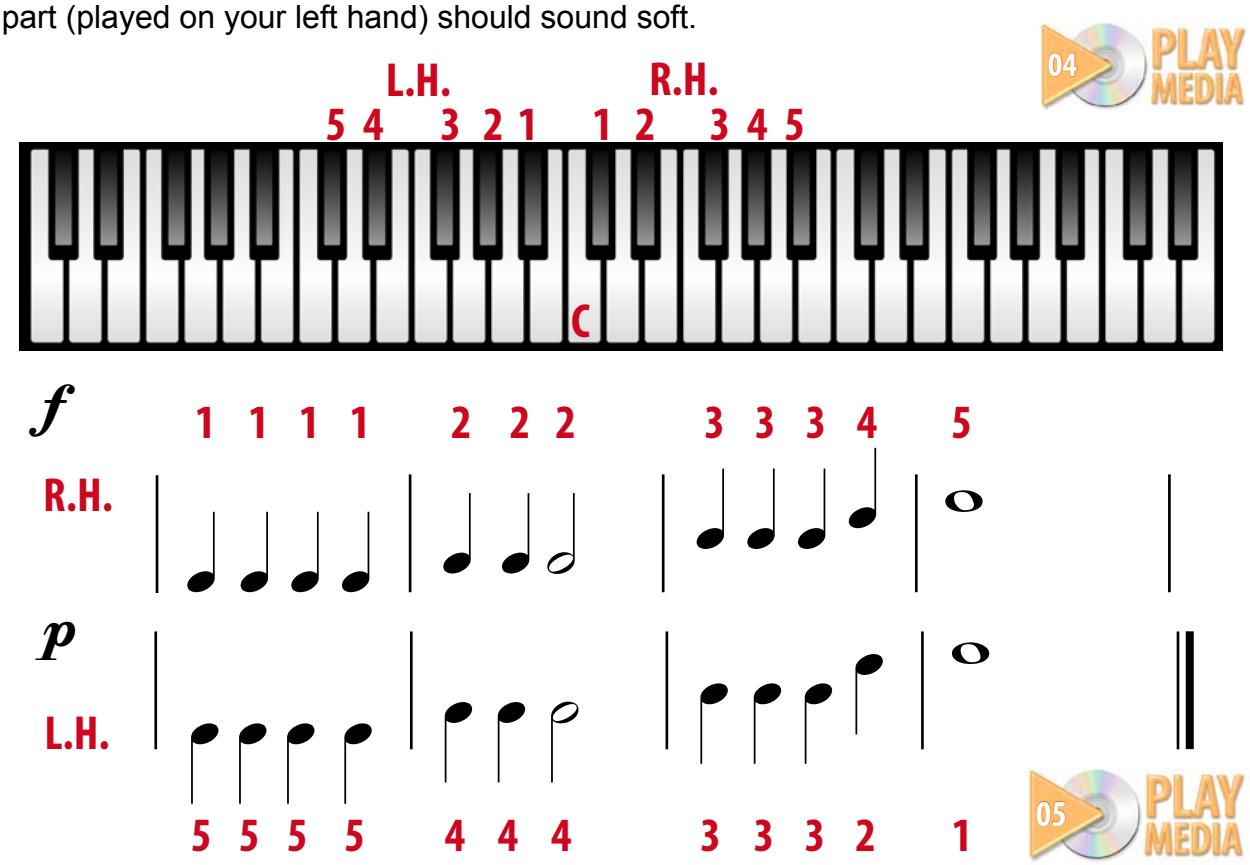


Dynamic Signs

Dynamic signs tell you how loudly or softly to play a piece. Remember that the ability to play a note loudly or softly is what inspired the invention of the piano. Like many words in music, the names for dynamic signs are taken from the Italian.

Symbol	*Italian*	Meaning
f	*forte*	loud
mf	*mezzo forte*	moderately loud
mp	*mezzo piano*	moderately soft
p	*piano*	soft

Exercise: This exercise is the most difficult yet, using all five fingers on both hands. Try to make the first part (played on your right hand) sound strong and loud, while the second part (played on your left hand) should sound soft.



Once you become comfortable with the exercise, try playing along with the track 05 as a backing track!

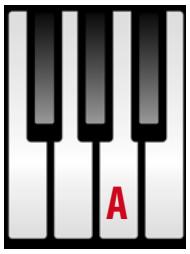
Chapter 3. The Musical Alphabet

In this chapter, you're going to learn much, much more about reading music. This includes the names for each white key on a keyboard, time signatures, the musical staff, and the Middle C hand position for playing.

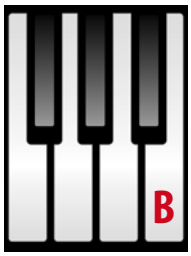
You don't have to learn many letters for the musical alphabet. (Hint: You already know one of them: C!) The musical alphabet consists of 7 letters: **A, B, C, D, E, F, G.**

If you can locate Middle C on a piano, you can figure out the letter for any key on the keyboard. From C, count upwards with one letter per white key: C, D, E, F, G. The white key after G will return to A. Quite simply, the entire keyboard consists of this sequence of 7 letters repeated one after another.

Individual white keys can be identified easily with the help of the grouped black keys.



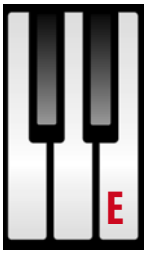
Play all the A's on your piano.



Play all the B's on your piano.

Play all the C's on your piano.

Play all the D's on your piano.



Play all the E's on your piano.

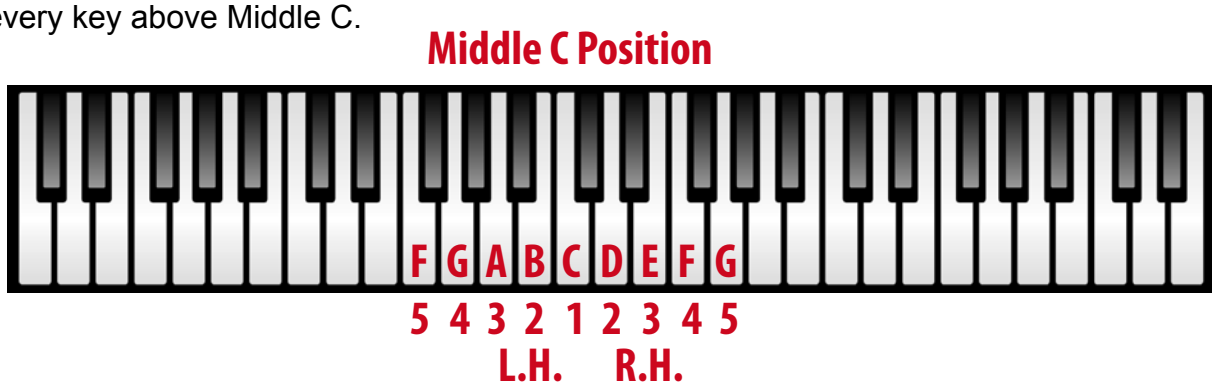
Play all the F's on your piano.

Play all the G's on your piano.

You should memorize the musical alphabet and the location of each key. If it helps, you may wish to label each key on your piano with stickers, but make sure that the stickers you use will not damage your keys.

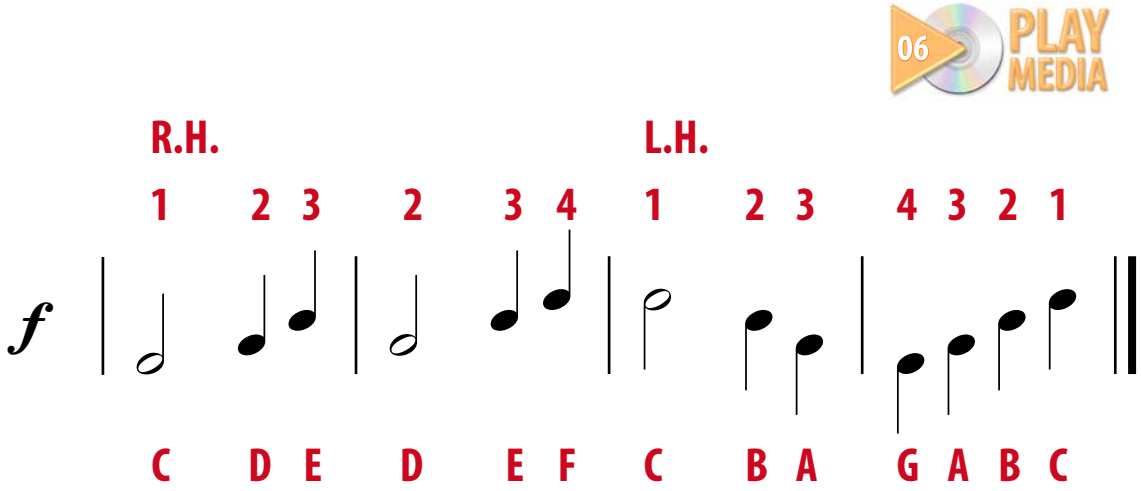
Middle C Hand Position

The first formal hand position that you will learn is the Middle C hand position. In this position, you will use your left hand for every key below Middle C and your right hand for every key above Middle C.



(Both your thumbs should be on Middle C.)

Exercise: Practice this hand position with the following tune.



Exercise: Now, play along with track seven to create your own duet.

You're doing great!

Time Signatures

To understand rhythm completely, you don't just need to know for how many counts you should hold each note. You also need to know how many beats per bar. And, to make it even more confusing, the values that you have just learned for each type of note can sometimes change!

This is why you need to understand **time signatures**. A time signature (or "*meter sign*") is a set of two numbers that appears at the beginning of every piece of music.

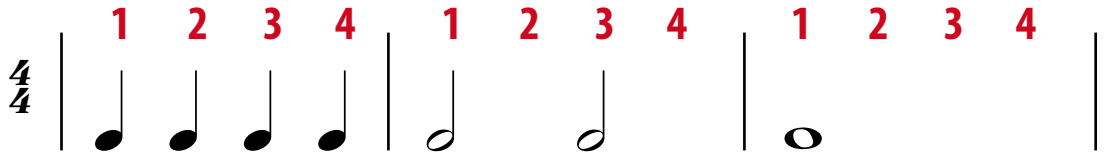
Some examples of time signatures include:

$\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{2}{4}$ $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$

The **top number** tells you how many beats in a bar.

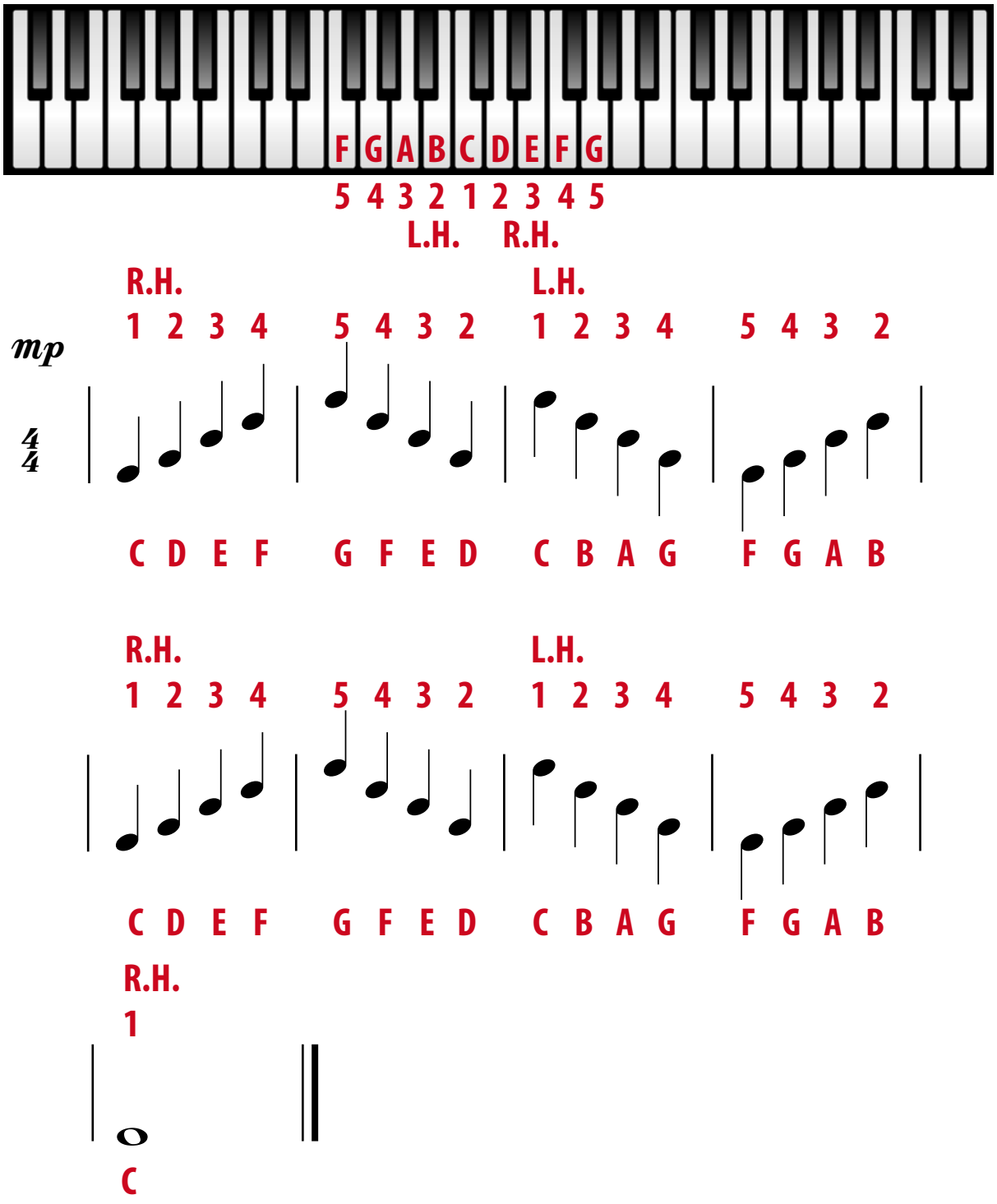
The **bottom number** tells you which note value will get one beat. This can seem a bit confusing. Remember: a quarter is ¼, so a 4 at the bottom means that the quarter note will get one beat. An 8 at the bottom would mean that the eighth note would get one beat, and so on.

The most common time signature is $\frac{4}{4}$ It is also called "common time." All of the tunes you have played so far have been in common time. In common time, there are four beats per measure. A complete measure might be four quarter notes, two half notes, or one whole note.



Exercise: Play the following tune using the Middle C hand position that you learned earlier. Note the time signature and dynamic sign.

Middle C Position



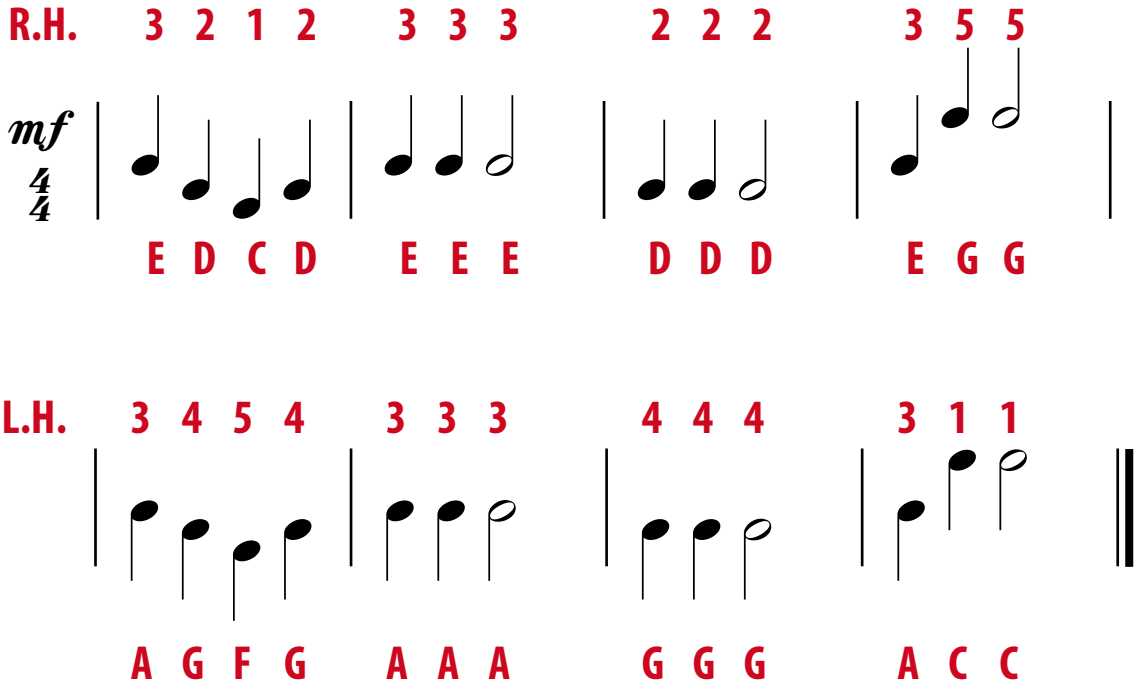
Here are two more tunes on which to practice your Middle C hand position.

Exercise: Play the following tune using the Middle C hand position that you learned earlier. Note the time signature and dynamic sign.

09 PLAY MEDIA

Middle C Position

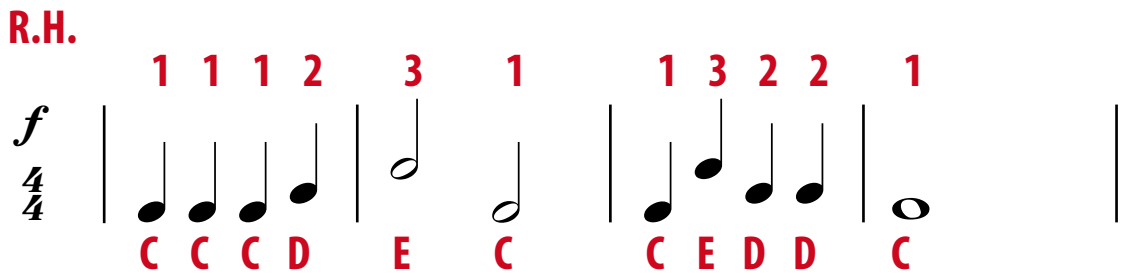
Merrily We Roll Along

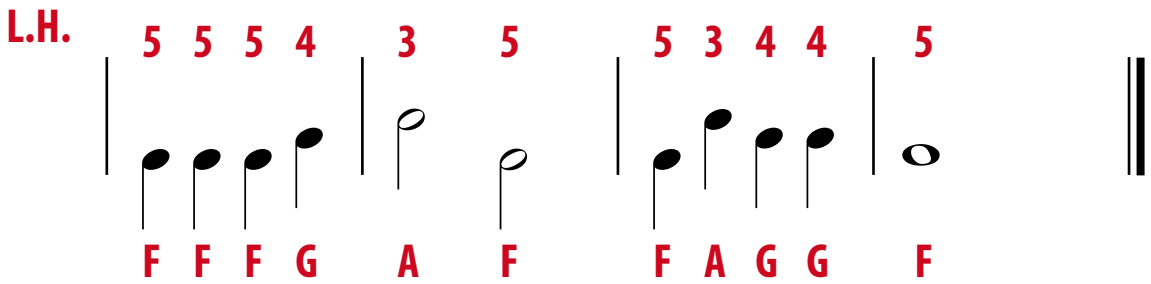


Exercise: Play the following tune using the Middle C hand position that you learned earlier. Note the time signature and dynamic sign.

Middle C Position

Skip Along



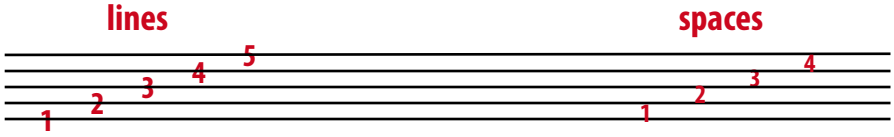


Chapter 4. The Musical Staff

By now you should feel comfortable with associating the musical alphabet with the keys on a piano. You should automatically play notes for the correct length. You should understand that pieces of music are broken into measures by bar lines and be able to find the length of each bar by looking at the time signature.

Now, you are going to put all that knowledge to use. Learning how to read the **musical staff** will enable you to dispense with the musical alphabet. You will know exactly which key on the piano corresponds to the note you want to play by "reading" the note's position on the staff.

A musical staff is a set of five lines and four spaces.

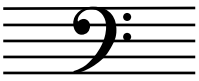


Until now, you've only seen notes on a blank background. However, musical notes are normally written on a staff. A note may be written on a line or on a space.

There are two basic staffs used in playing the piano: the **base clef staff** (for low notes) and the **treble clef staff** (for high notes). This is because one staff isn't enough for distinguishing all the notes that may be played in a song. Two staffs give you twice as many notes.

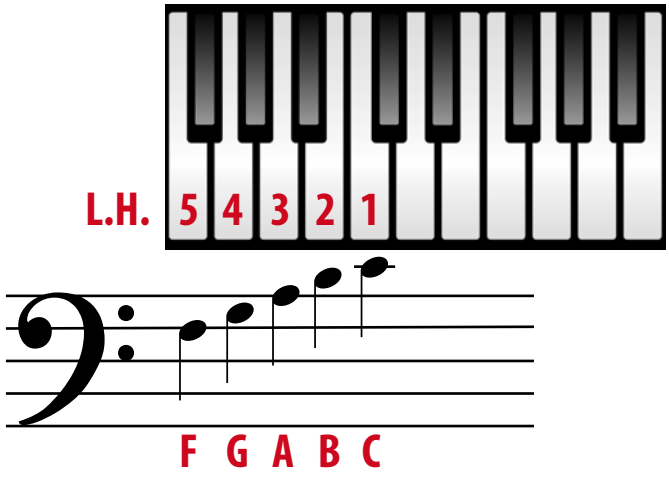
The Bass Clef Staff

Let's look at the base clef staff right now. The symbol for this staff is the **bass clef**.

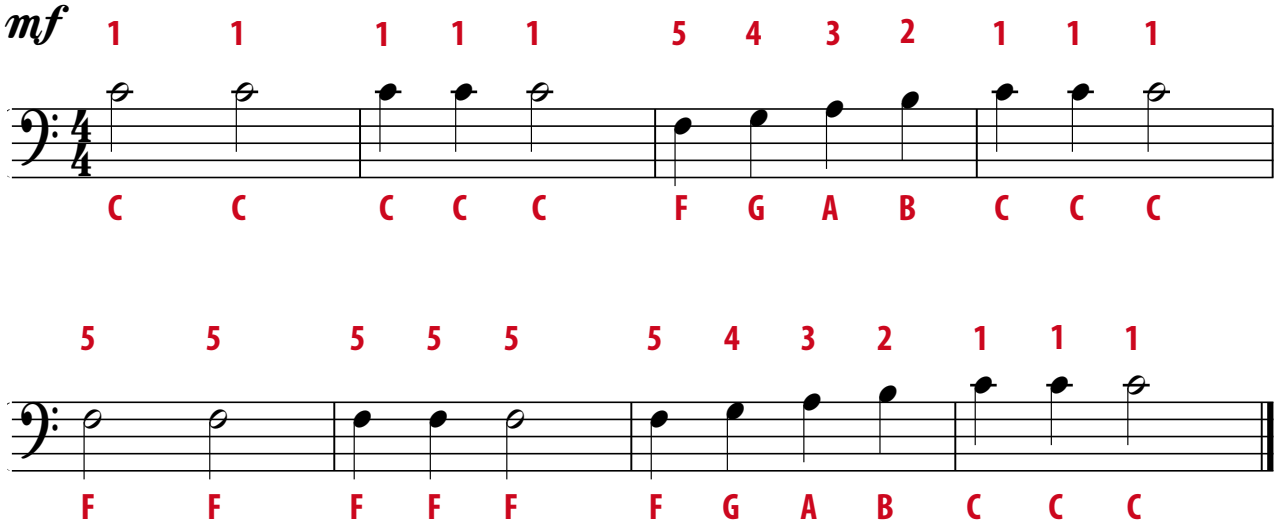


The following letter notes correspond to each line and space.

You should begin learning the bass clef staff by associating each line or space on the staff with a specific key on the piano. For example, take the Middle C hand position that you have just learned. The left hand notes will correspond to the following lines and spaces on the bass clef staff.



Exercise: Play the following tune with your left hand only.



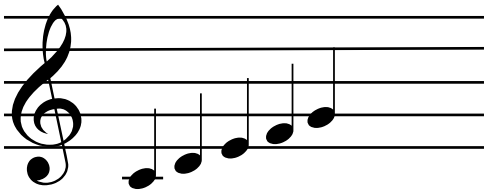
Exercise: Now, play along with track twelve to create your own duet!

The Treble Clef Staff

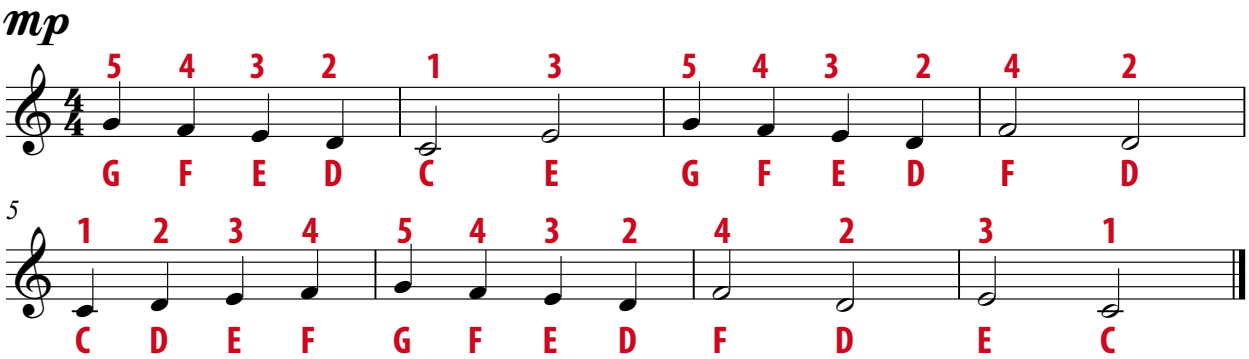
The bass clef staff is used to play low notes. The treble clef staff allows you to play higher notes. The symbol for this staff is the **treble clef**.

The following letter notes correspond to each line and space.

In the Middle C hand position that you have just learned, the right hand notes will correspond to the following lines and spaces on the treble clef staff.



Exercise: Play the following tune.



Exercise: Play along with track fourteen to create your own duet!

Memorizing the Notes on a Staff

Students of music often find memorizing which note belongs to each line and space on each staff quite difficult. Fortunately, there are a few easy ways to ensure that you'll never forget!

Think of the notes as forming a "code" when read from bottom to the top. For example, on the treble clef staff, the letters for the lines go:

E G B D F

You can memorize the notes by memorizing the sentence:

Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit

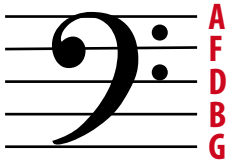
The first letter of each word correspond to the note for each line on the treble clef staff, starting from the bottom.

Now, let's do the same with the spaces.

F A C E

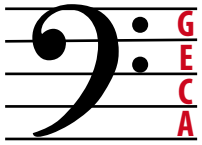
You can memorize the notes by memorizing the word **FACE.**

Moving onto the base clef staff, we'll do the same thing. Let's start with the lines.



G B D F A

Good Bikes Don't Fall Apart



A C E G

All Cows Eat Grass

*Have you tried out the bonus games yet? If not, now would be a great time to open **Jayde Musica Pro** and practice recognizing the notes on a staff!*

The Grand Staff

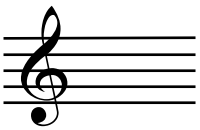
If you have looked at sheet music for the piano in the past, you may have noticed that it doesn't just have one staff. It has two! That is because each staff carries the instructions for each hand. The right hand plays the top staff (the treble clef staff) while the left hand plays the notes on the bottom staff (the base cleff staff).

To understand that grand staff, you have to learn a new symbol. You've seen it in the previous two examples:

Middle C

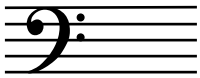
Remember that in the Middle C position, you keep the thumbs of each hand on the same note: Middle C. Since Middle C can be played by either the left hand or the right hand, the above nifty notation was invented. Whenever you see a note with a short line through it, you know that you are playing Middle C.

The grand staff consists of:



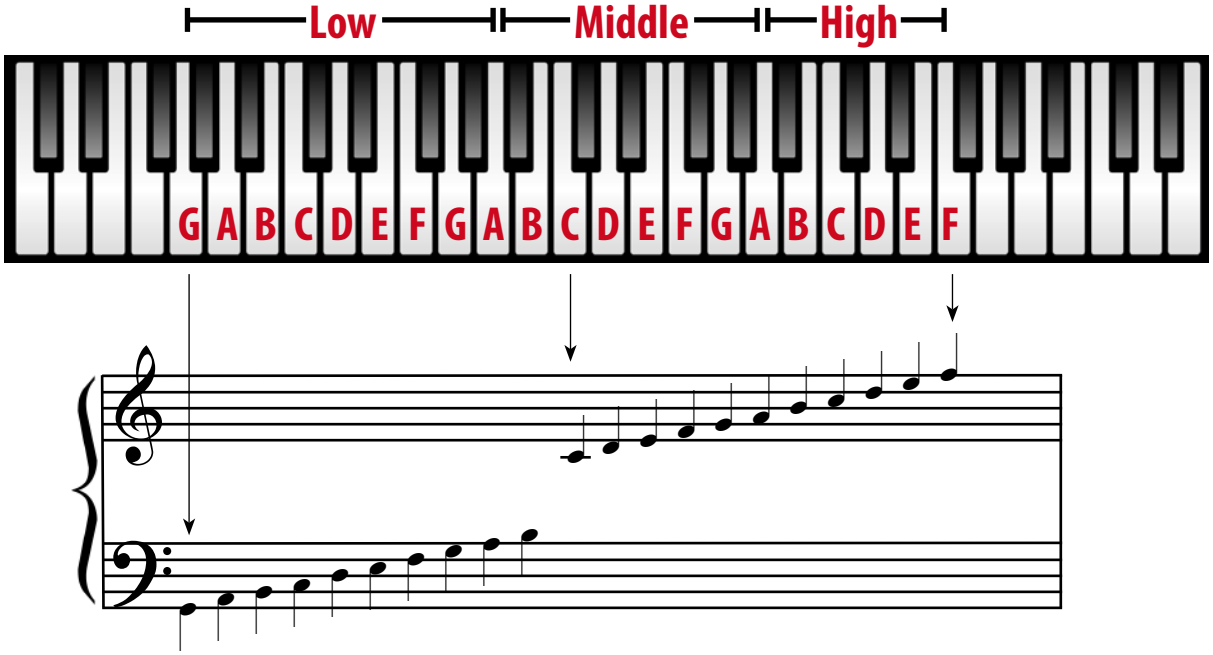
Five lines of treble

Middle C short line



Five lines of bass

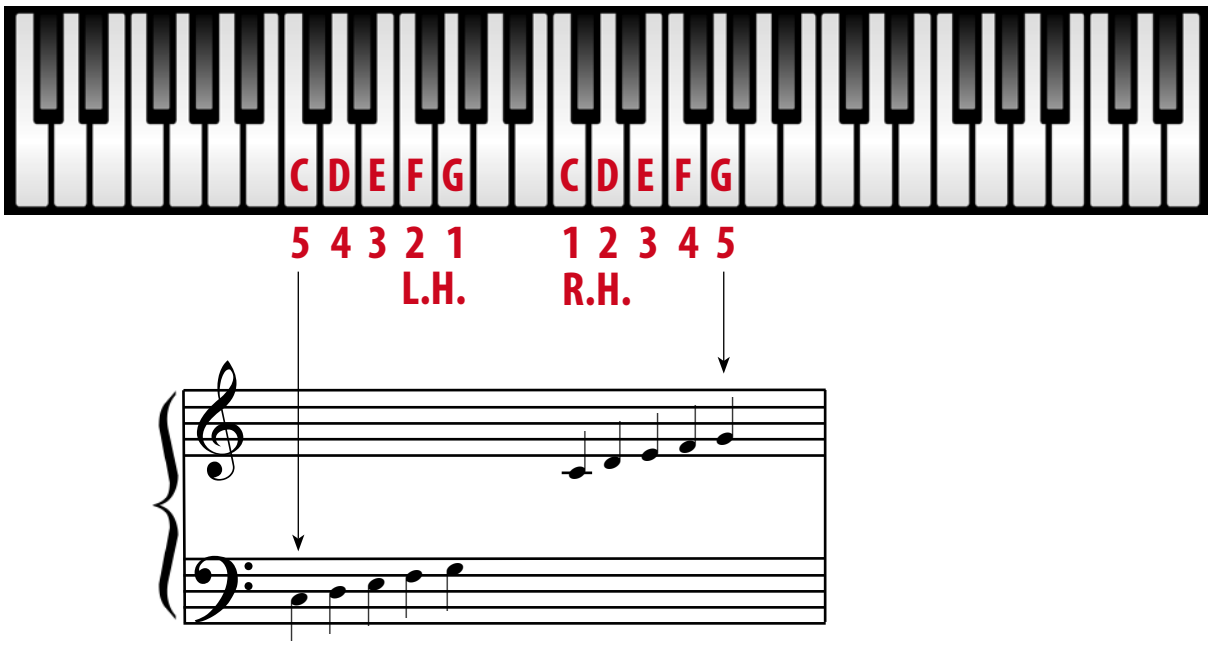
joined by a brace.



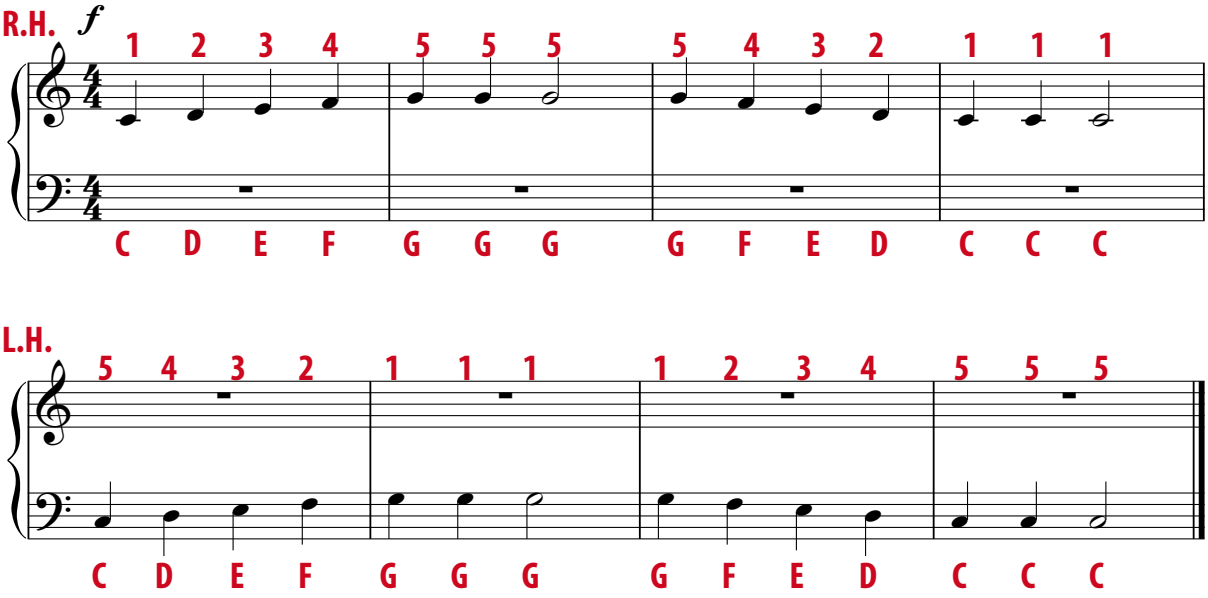
C Hand Position

Now it's time to learn a new hand position. You've already learned the Middle C hand position. Now I'm going to show you the C hand position. Don't get the two confused! They are quite different.

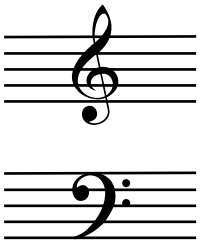
C Position



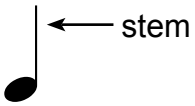
Exercise: Try the new hand position on the following tune.



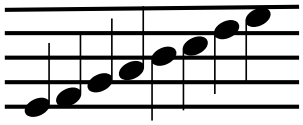
Say goodbye to the **L.H.** *and* **R.H.** *symbols! For the remainder of this book, the notes in the treble clef (the top line) will be played by your right hand, and the notes in the base clef (bottom line) will be played by your left hand.*



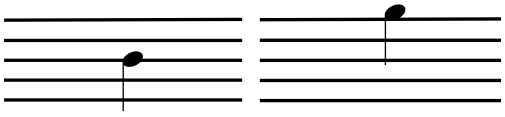
Have you wondered why the **stems** on notes sometimes point up and sometimes point down? Now that you're familiar with the musical staff, I'll let you in on a secret. Even experienced musicians sometimes read the position of a note wrong! They think that the note was on the second line when it was really on the third ... or the third when it was really on the second.



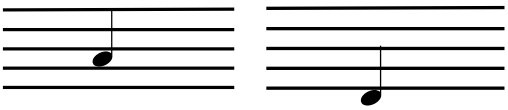
Mistakes are easy to make when you're reading sheet music quite quickly! That's why the people writing down the music made a little addition that made getting the right line a whole lot easier. They changed the direction of the stem! Take a look....



Any note that appears **on** or **above** the middle line will have its stem pointing down.



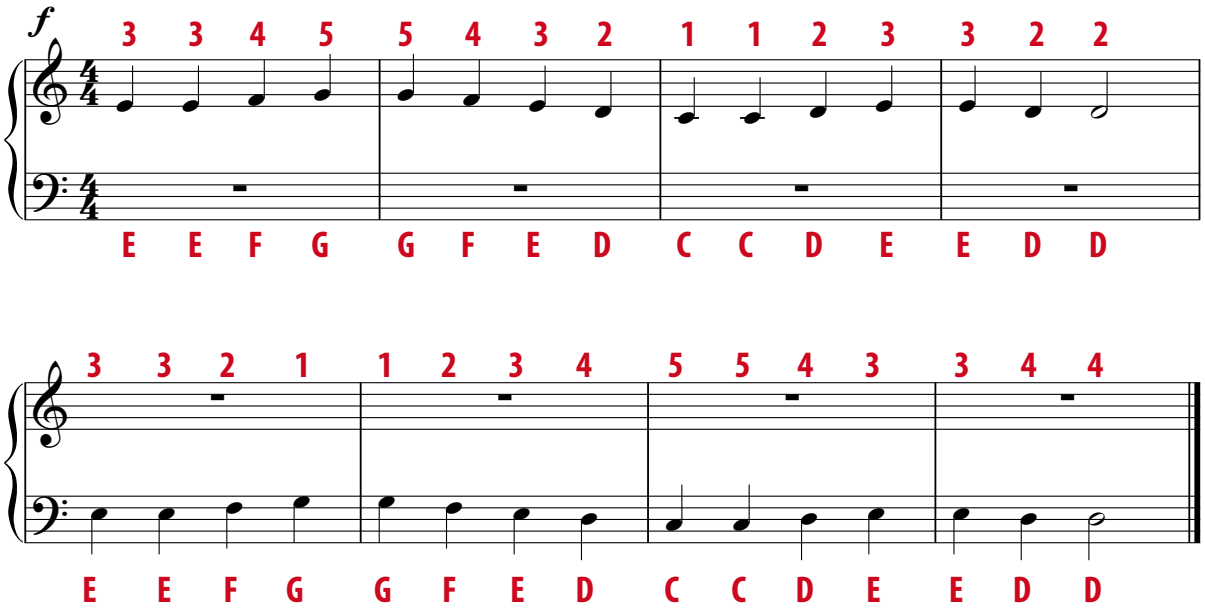
Any note that appears **below** the middle line will have its stem pointing up.



Exercise: Put together everything you have learned on the following tune. Remember that you will play the top staff with the right hand and the bottom with the left. Note the change in the direction the notes are pointing.

C Position

Ode to Joy



Chapter 5. Musical Intervals

By now, you have learned the fundamentals of rhythm, the musical "language" of notes, and how to play the notes that you see on a musical staff. The next concept that you are going to learn is the **interval**.

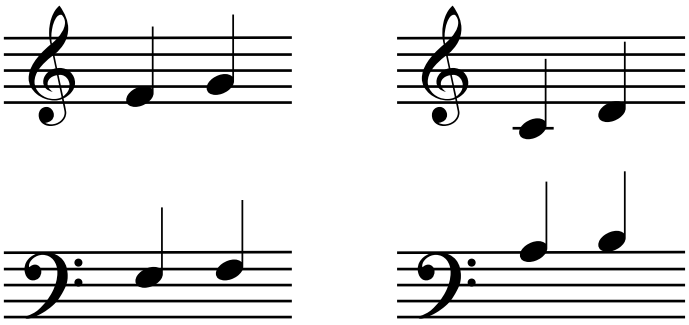
An interval measures the distance from one note to another. Intervals come in 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, 7ths, and octaves, or 8ths. (There are also **minor intervals**, which we'll discuss later.)

The 2nd

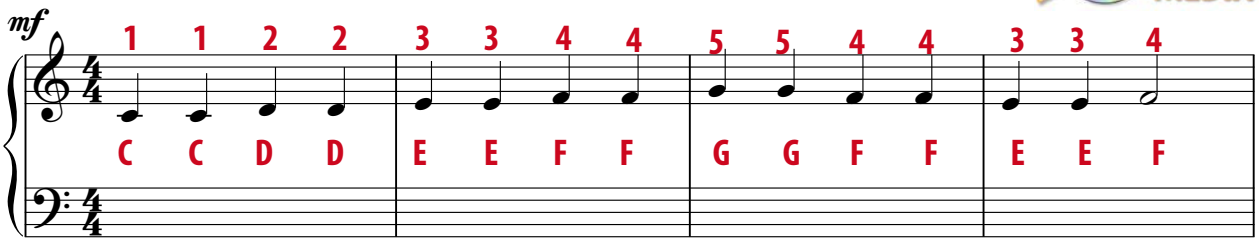
This interval is measured by the distance of one white key to the next white key either above or below it.

On the musical staff, 2nds are written:

1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is on a **line**.
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is on a **space**.

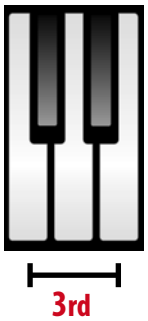


Exercise: The following tune uses 2nds. Use the C position. As it is a simple tune, see if you can play the tune without any help (e.g., finger numbers).



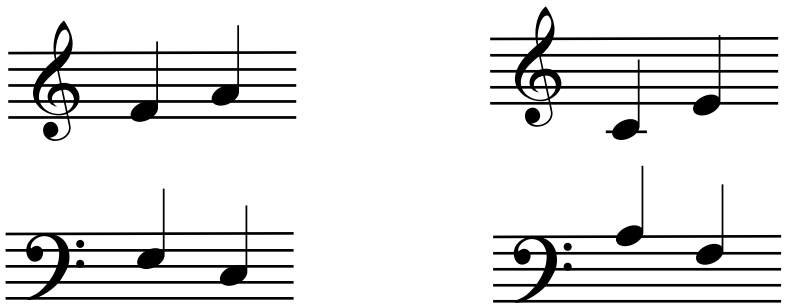
The 3rd

This interval is measured when there is always exactly one white key between the white keys being played.



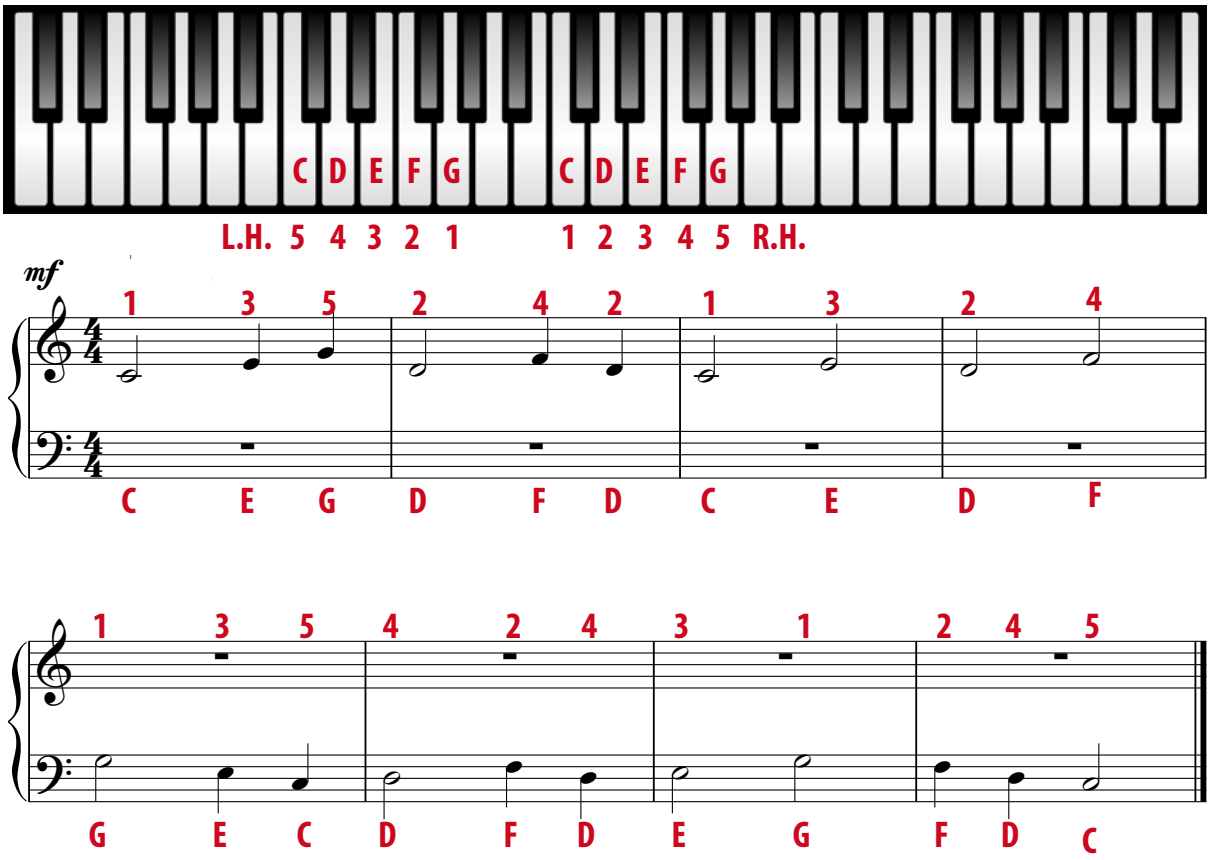
On the musical staff, 3rds are written:

1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is also on a **space** (with a line between them.)
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is also on a **line** (with a space between them).



Exercise: The following tune uses 3rds. Use the C hand position.

C Position



Melodic and Harmonic Intervals

You may already know that there are three major aspects to music: rhythm, melody, and harmony. Almost every piece of music has these three components.

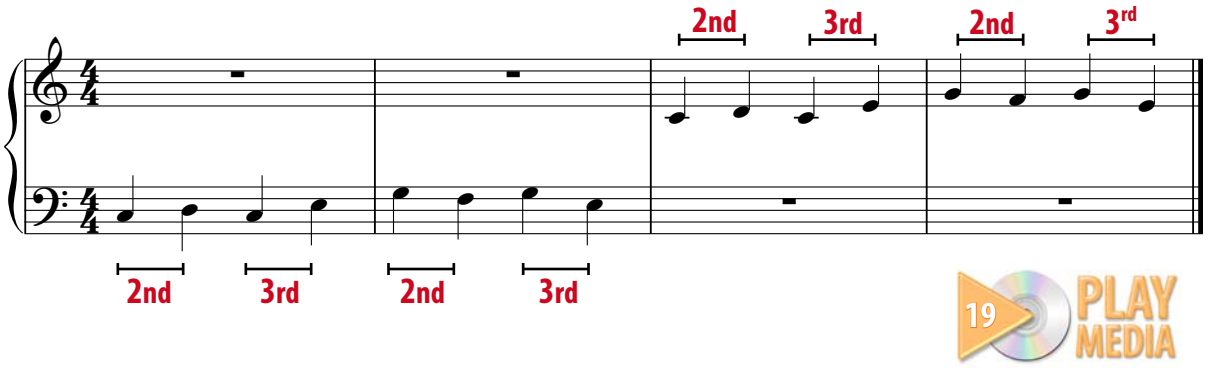
When you talk about time signatures, tapping a beat, or how fast or slow a piece of music is, you are talking about **rhythm**.

When you talk about a single line of notes, played separately one by one on the musical staff, you are talking about **melody** Melody is the horizontal aspect of music. All the tunes you have learned so far have been melodies.

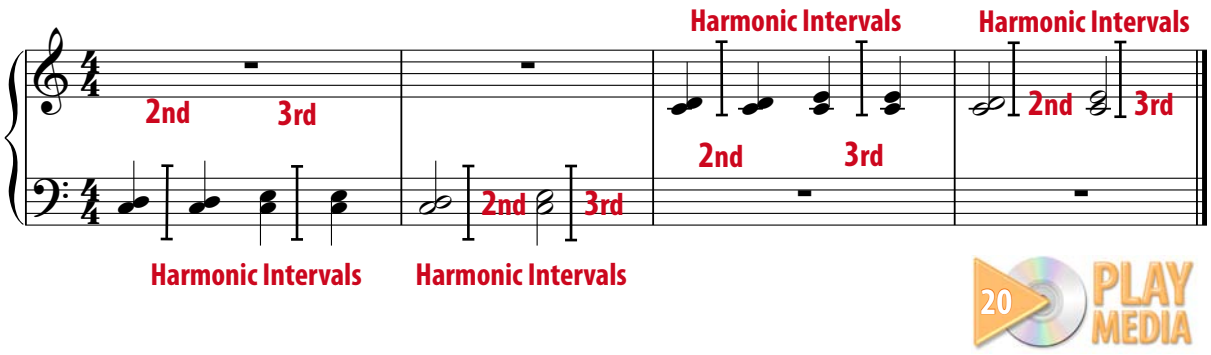
When you talk about chords or several notes played simultaneously, you are talking about **harmony**. Harmony is the vertical aspect of music and is shown on the musical staff by notes stacked on top of one another.

You need to know the difference between harmony and melody to be able to understand melodic intervals and harmonic intervals.

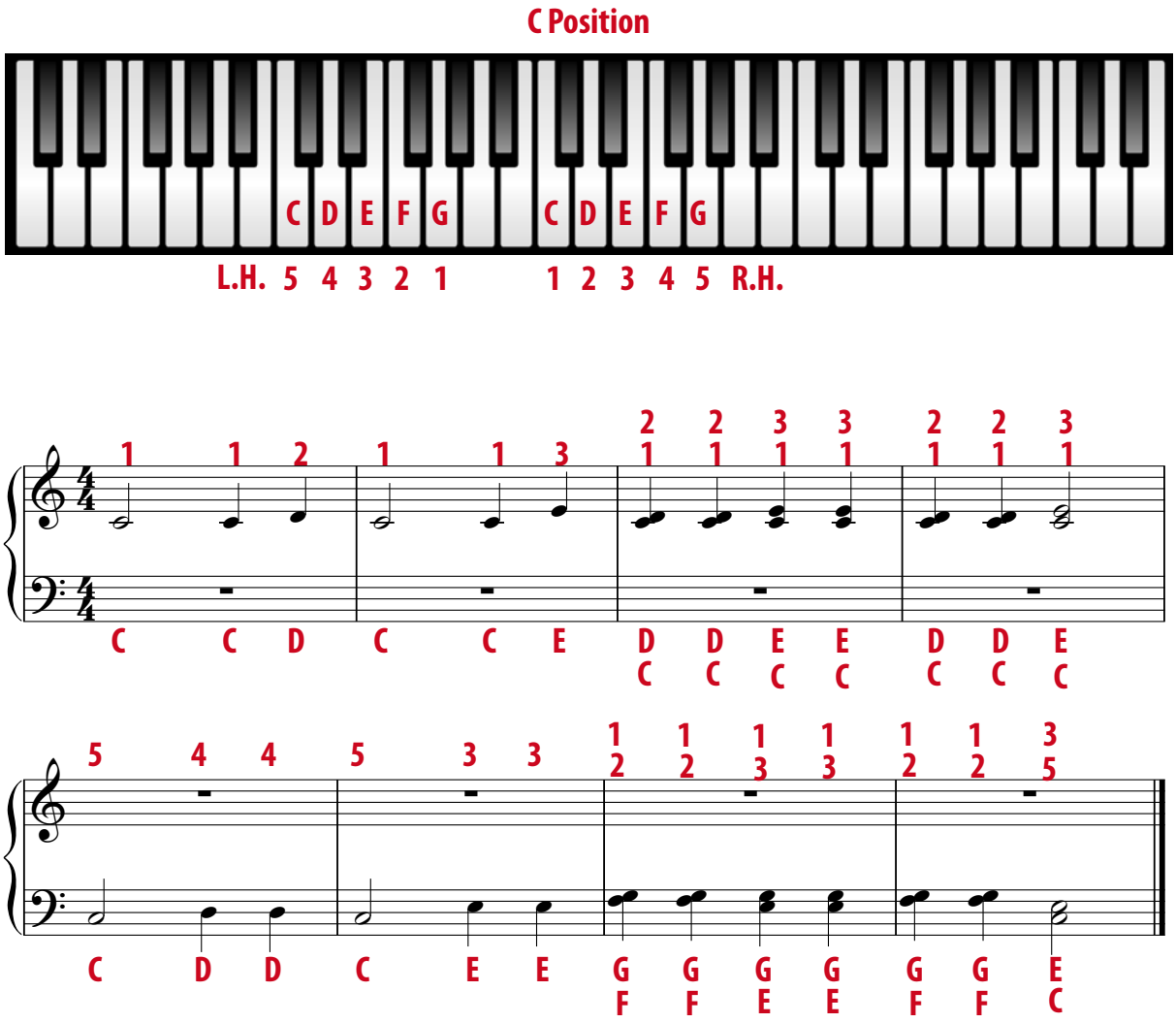
Melodic intervals measure the distance between notes played separately on a staff.



Harmonic intervals measure the distance between notes played simultaneously on a staff.



Exercise: Practice playing harmony with the following piece. When you see two notes that share the same stem, play both keys simultaneously.



Exercise: Play along with the following track to create your own duet!

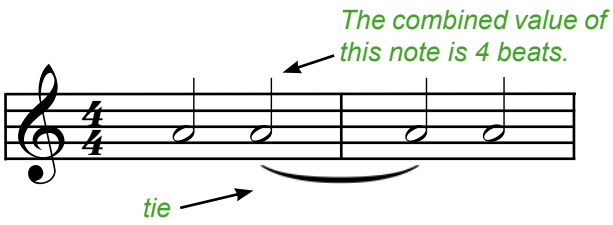
Chapter 6. Both Hands Together

You've learned so much already. You can play harmony and melody, follow the notes on sheet music, and keep a steady beat. In this chapter, we will expand on what you know. You'll learn some more musical notation, including a new note and a new time signature. Finally, you'll use both your left and right hands together for the first time.

Ties and Rests

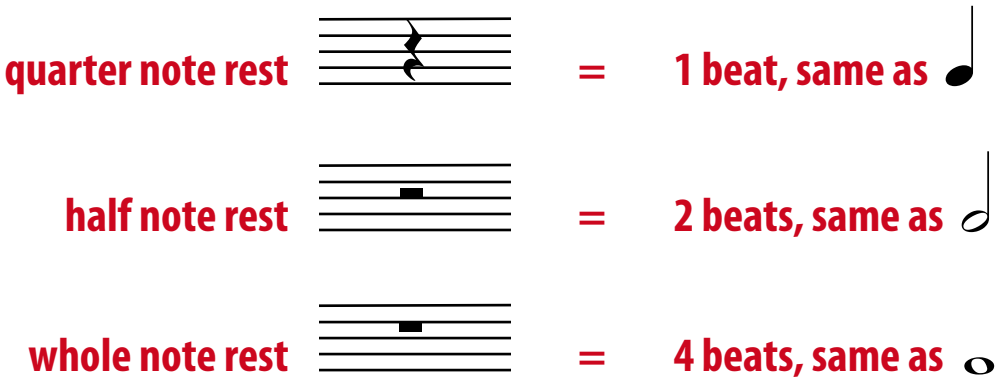
In Chapter 3 you learned that each measure in a piece of music must have a standard value, indicated by the top number on the time signature. In common time, or $\frac{4}{4}$ time, there are 4 beats to the bar.

However, this doesn't mean that you can't hold any note longer than four beats. If you want to hold a note rather than stop at the end of the measure, you will use a **tie**.



If, on the other hand, you don't want to extend a note but rather have a moment of silence when no note is being played, you will use a **rest**. You might find it useful to think of silence in piano scores as a "rest" from playing!

Rests are like notes in that their shape and position on the staff tell you important information. There are three kinds of rests.

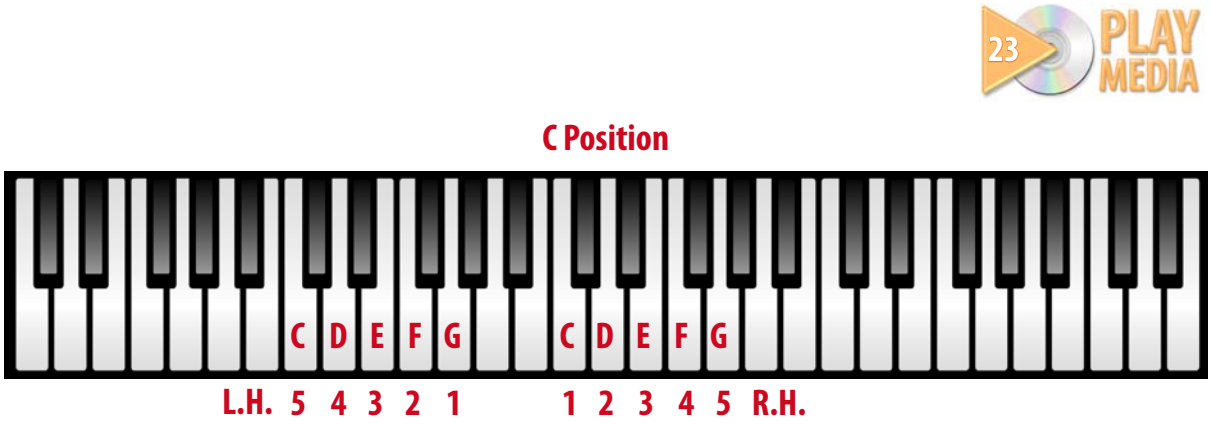


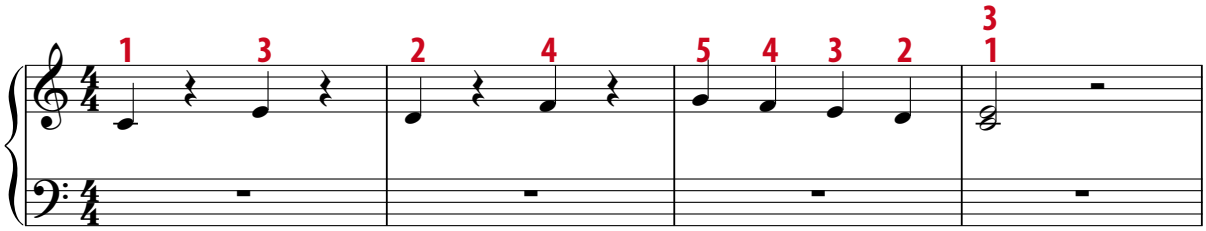
Note that the half note rest and whole note rest look identical, so you'll have to look very closely at their position on the staff!

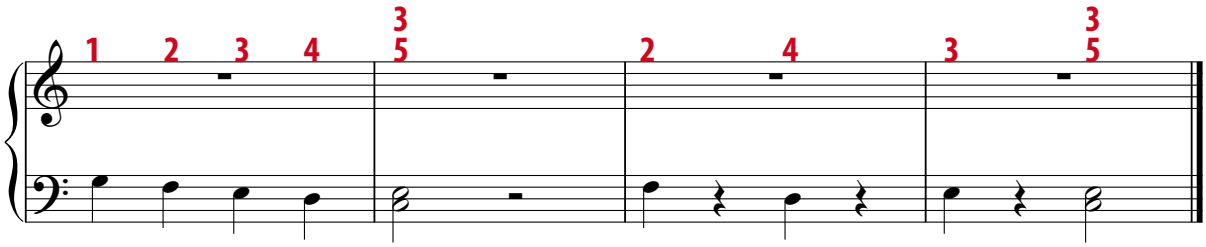
Exercise: Practice rests with the following piece, using the C hand position.

You may notice that there are no letters to indicate which notes to play!

By now you should be getting used to reading the notes by themselves and knowing which keys to play.







A New Time Signature

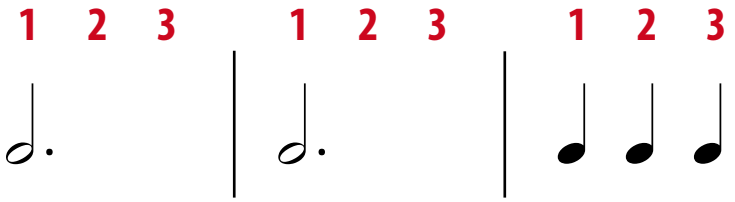
It's time to learn a new time signature: $\frac{3}{4}$

The **3** at the top means that each measure that follows will have three beats.

The **4** at the bottom means that, like in the $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature, a quarter note will still get one beat.

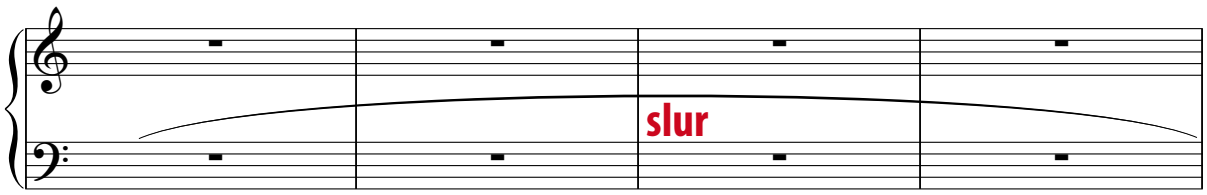
With this new time signature comes a new measured note: the dotted half note. 

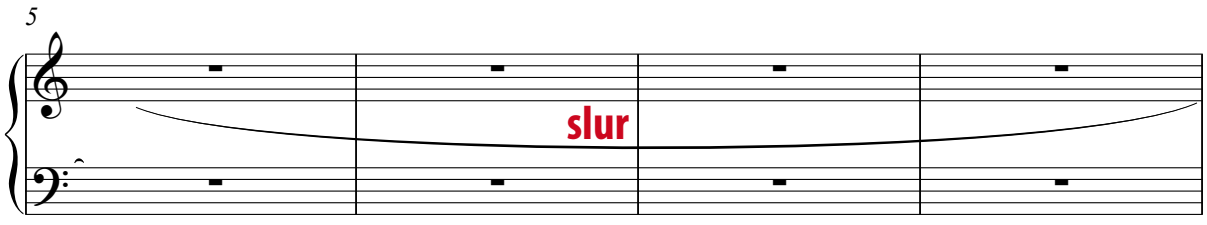
The dotted half note stands for three beats, or a count of, "One, two, three."



What's a Slur?

A slur isn't something bad that someone says about you. Rather, in music, it's a curved line that goes over or under a group of notes. It means that the notes are played smoothly and connectedly, with no pause or space between each note. The slur helps to divide the music into phrases.

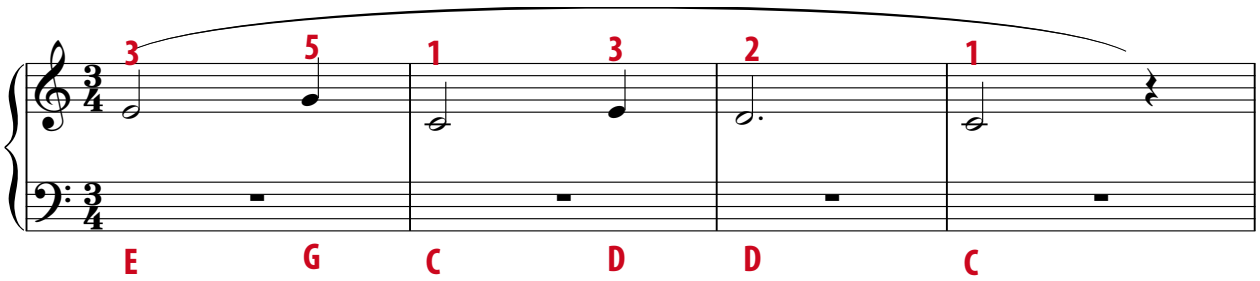


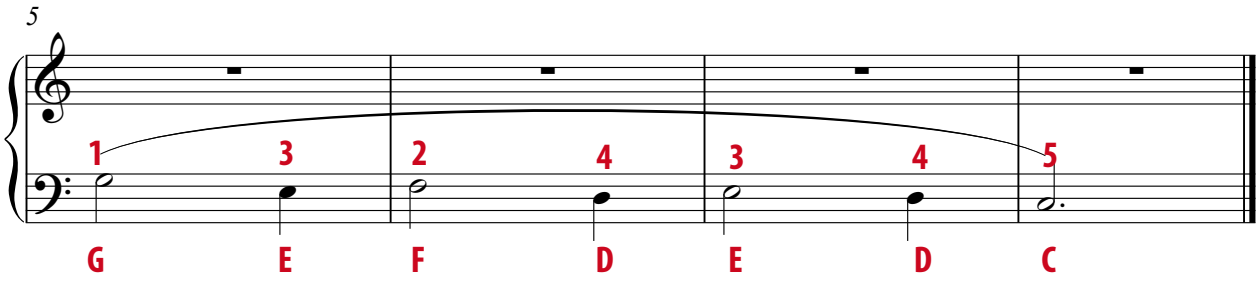


*This Italian word for this style of playing is **legato**.*

Exercise: Practice playing smoothly and connectedly in the following piece. As the piece is simple, try to do it without the help of the fingering system.

C Position





Using Your Left & Right Hand Together

04 PLAY VIDEO

Exercise: This piece is much harder than any you've played before. For the first time, you will have to play with both the left and right hand simultaneously. To get used to the piece, play each hand separately... first the left hand, then the right hand. Once your hands feel comfortable with the movements, try putting them together.

When you come to a double bar line with the two dots on the inside, you should repeat the whole song over again!

You may notice the audio examples only play the song once through. This is simply to show you how the song sounds. You should still follow the repeat signs by playing through twice.

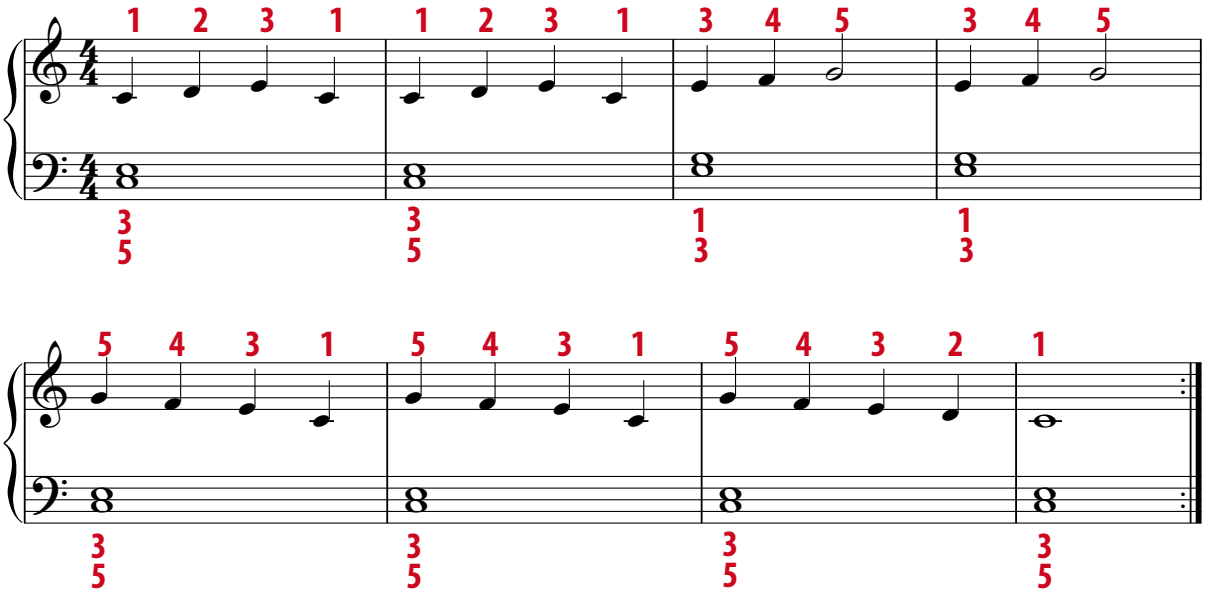
Go slowly ... it may take a while!

25 PLAY MEDIA

C Position

L.H. 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 R.H.

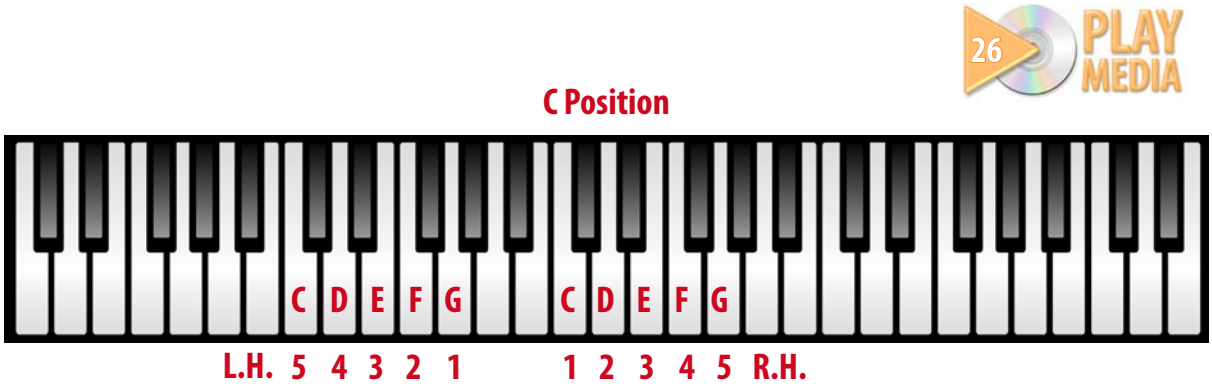
Frere Jacques



Bringing It All Together

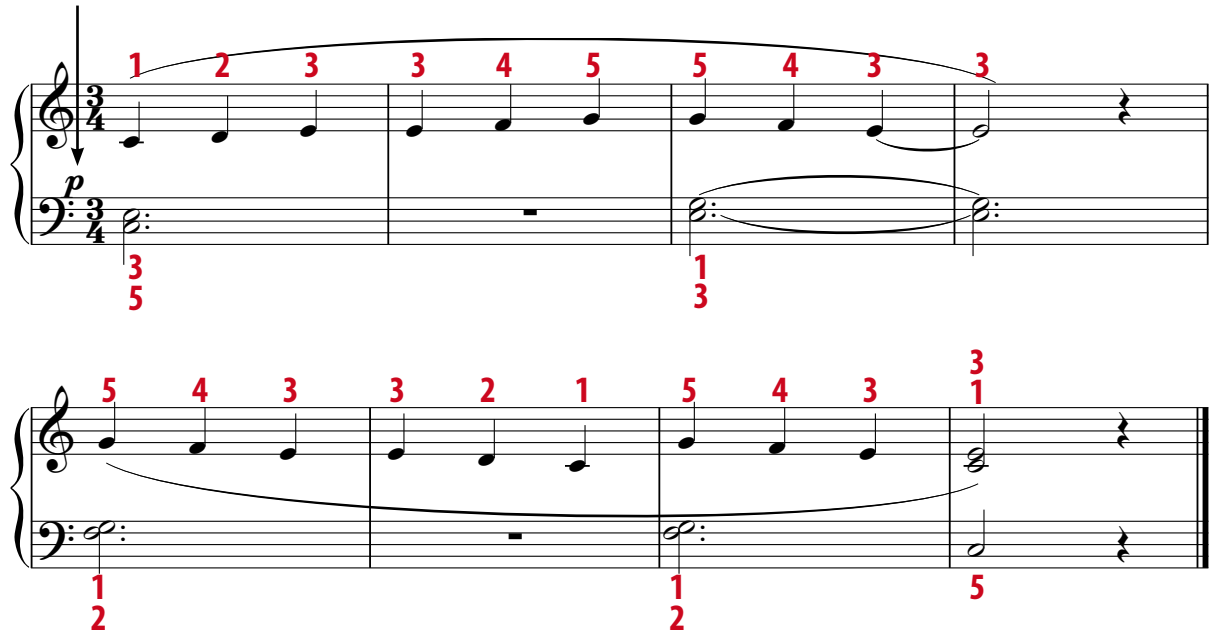
Exercise: The following two songs bring all the skills that you have learned together: tied notes, slurs, rests, harmonic intervals, 2nds and 3rds, and $\frac{3}{4}$ time signatures.

You'll also play both pieces with both your hands simultaneously. Remember to play the piece with your left hand first, then with your right. Don't attempt to play with both hands together until you feel completely comfortable with each on their own.



Note that the dynamic sign is now between the staffs.

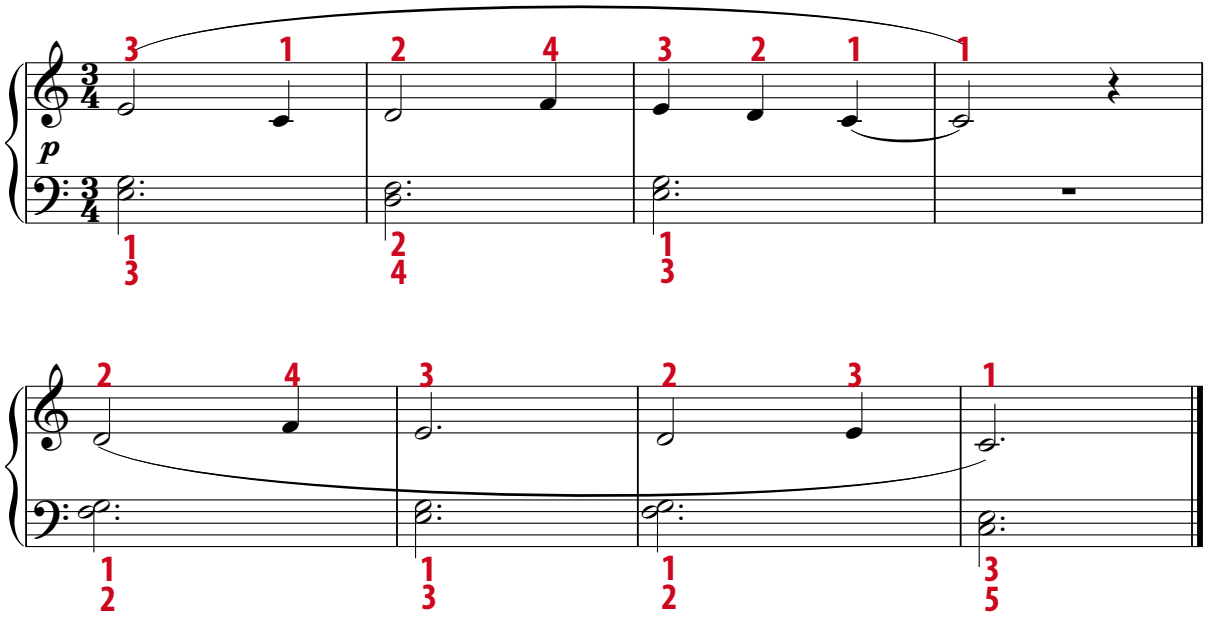
Play this piece slowly.



Exercise: This piece is a bit more tricky. The left hand changes more often. Take your time and play each hand separately before you try them together.

C Position

Slowly

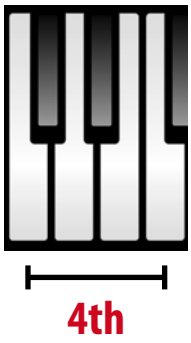


Chapter 7. New Intervals

You should feel comfortable with the concept of intervals by now. Now, let's look at two new intervals--the 4th and 5th--and see how they sound.

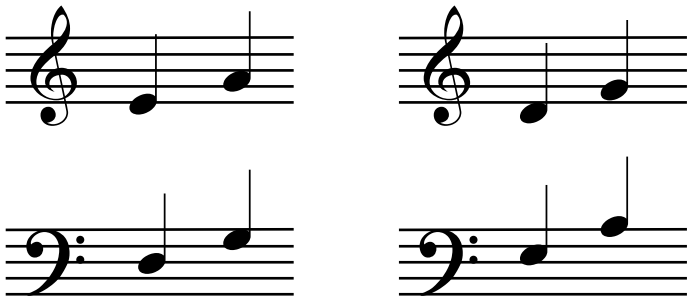
The 4th

The 4th is measured when there are two white keys between each consecutive note played.



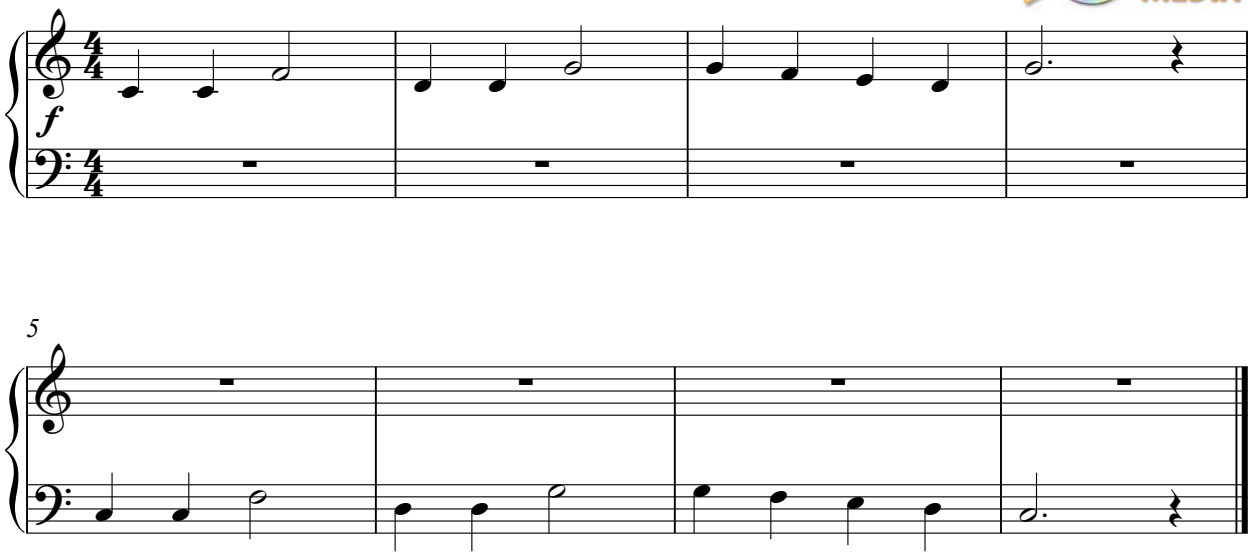
On the musical staff, 4ths are written:

1. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is two **spaces** above it.
2. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is two **lines** above it.



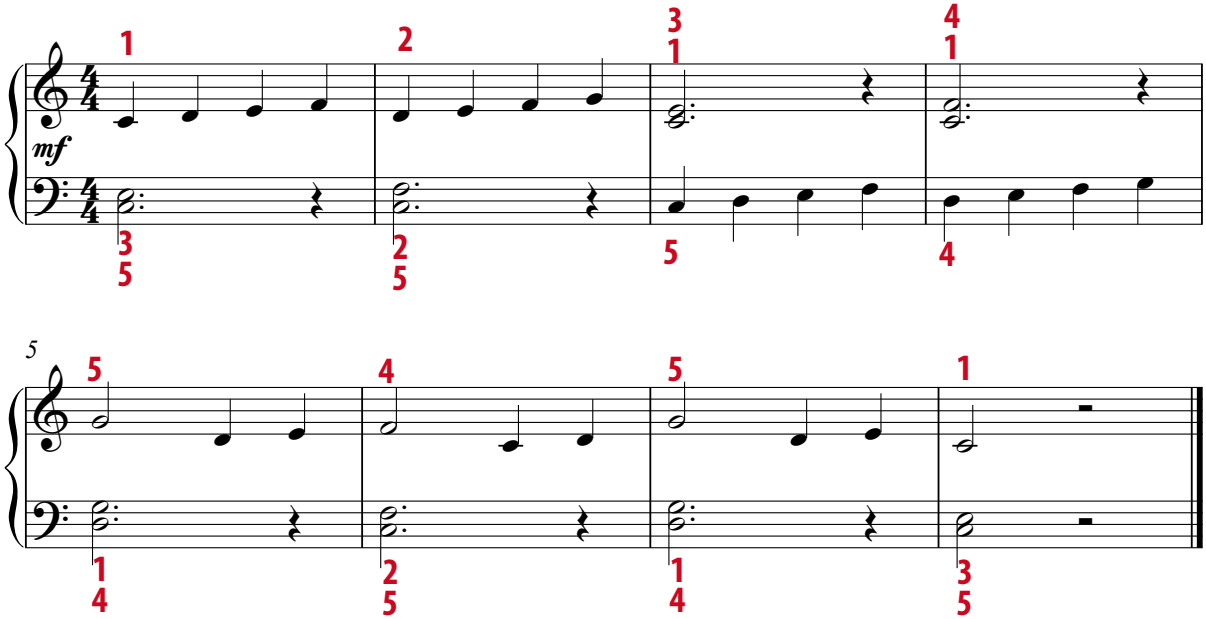
Exercise: Play this piece using the C hand position. As it is simple, try it without the help of the fingering system.

Moderately fast



Exercise: In order to get you used to playing from the notes on the staff rather than from the fingering system, this piece only has the first note in each bar numbered. If you find it too difficult, write in the numbers yourself in pencil, so that you can erase them when you're ready to make it more difficult.

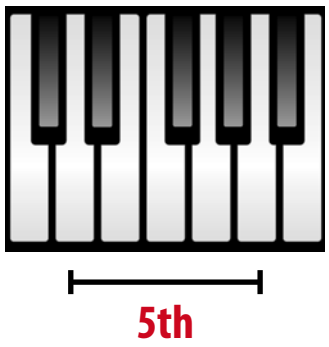
Moderately slow



Exercise: Play along with the backing track to create a duet!

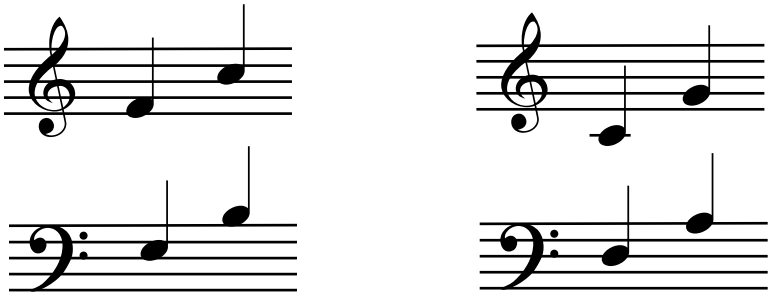
The 5th

The next interval we'll look at is the 5th. A 5th is measured when there are three white keys between the two keys played.

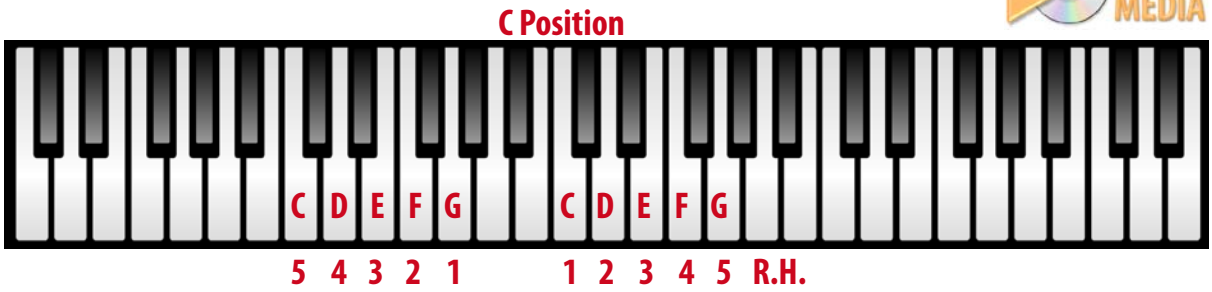


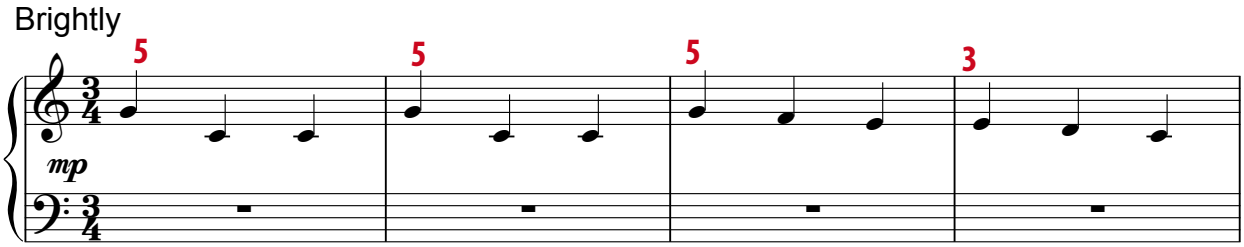
On the musical staff, 5ths are written:

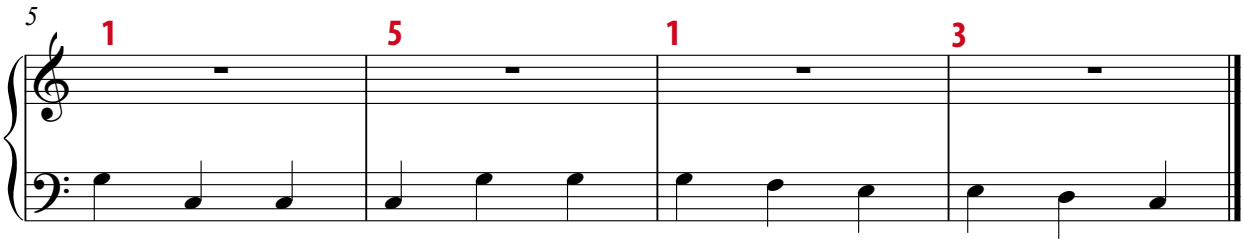
1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is two **spaces** above it.
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is two **lines** above it.



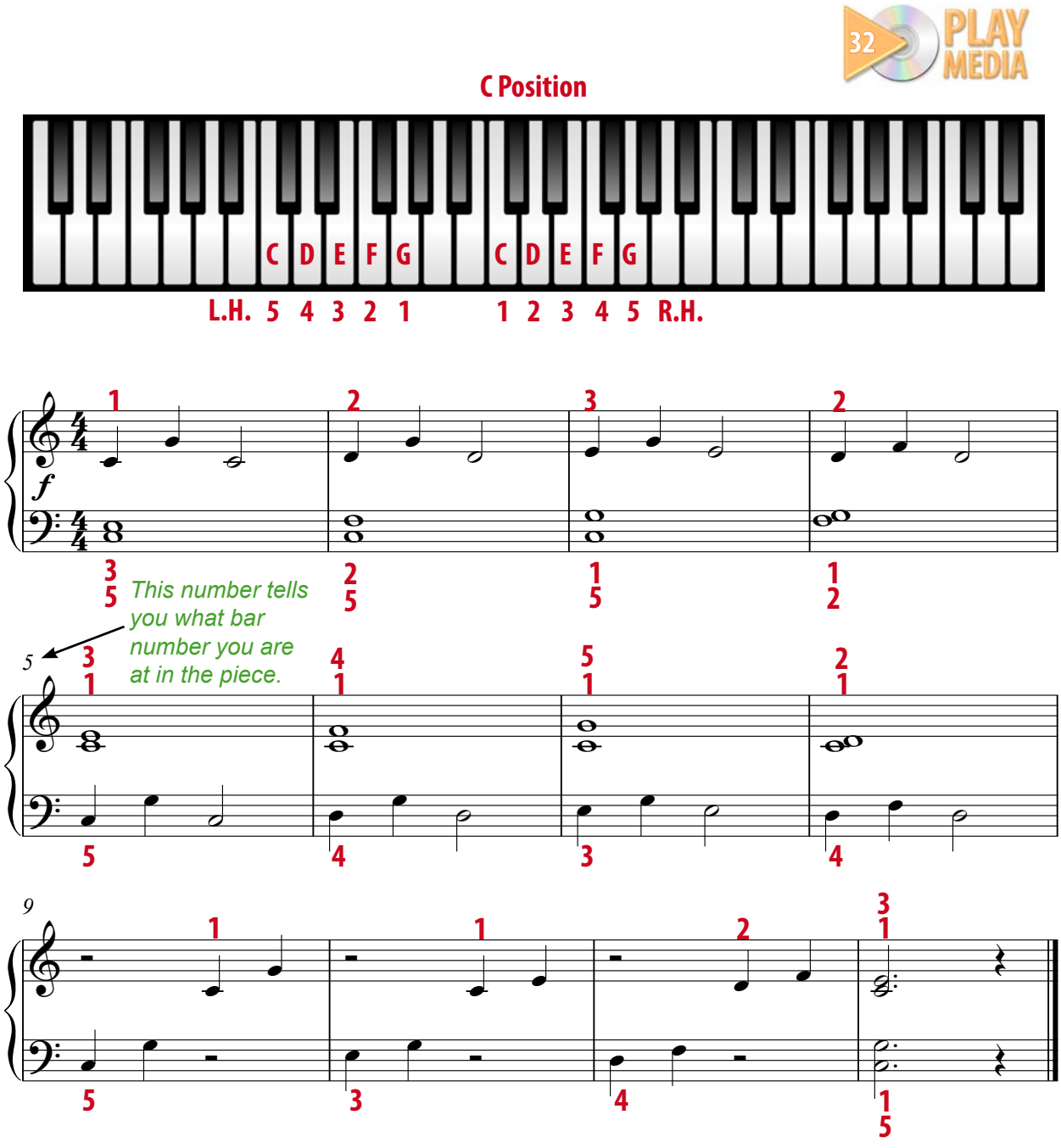
Exercise: Get used to playing 5ths with the following tune.







Exercise: The following piece has all the intervals that we've looked at so far in both hands. See if you can identify them. Once again, take it slowly to begin with. Then, try playing the piece up to speed.



Chapter 8. Sharps and Flats

By now you may be wondering when you get to play the black keys. In this chapter, you do! But before you find out about the black keys, you need to learn a few new concepts.

Incomplete Measures

There is one case in which a measure may not contain the number of beats indicated by the time signature, but rather less! This **incomplete measure** will occur at the start of a piece. For example, say that the tune is in $\frac{4}{4}$ time. The first bar may only contain three beats.

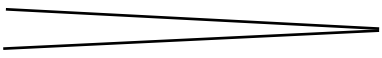
The "missing" beat or beats will usually be found at the end of the piece, creating a second incomplete measure. However, the first and last measures joined together will always create a complete measure, completing the correct number of beats for the piece.

Two New Dynamic Signs

In this chapter, you will practice with two new dynamic signs: the **crescendo** and the **diminuendo**. Both words are Italian terms.

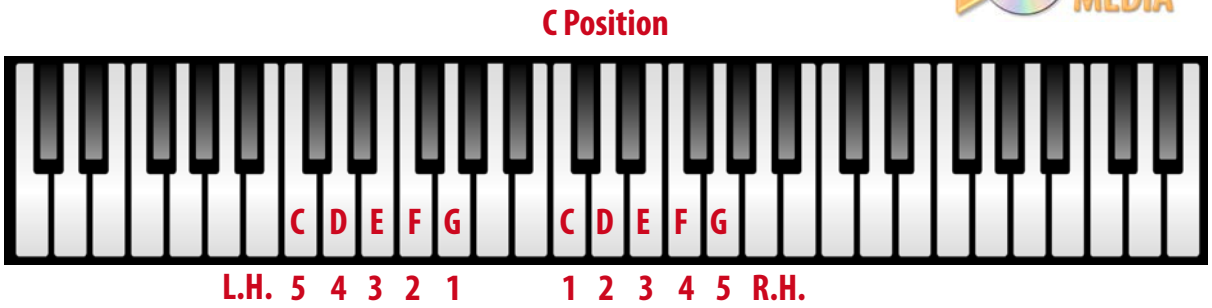
The crescendo sign tells you to gradually get louder. It can be abbreviated as *cresc*.

The diminuendo sign tells you to gradually get softer. It can be abbreviated as *dim*.

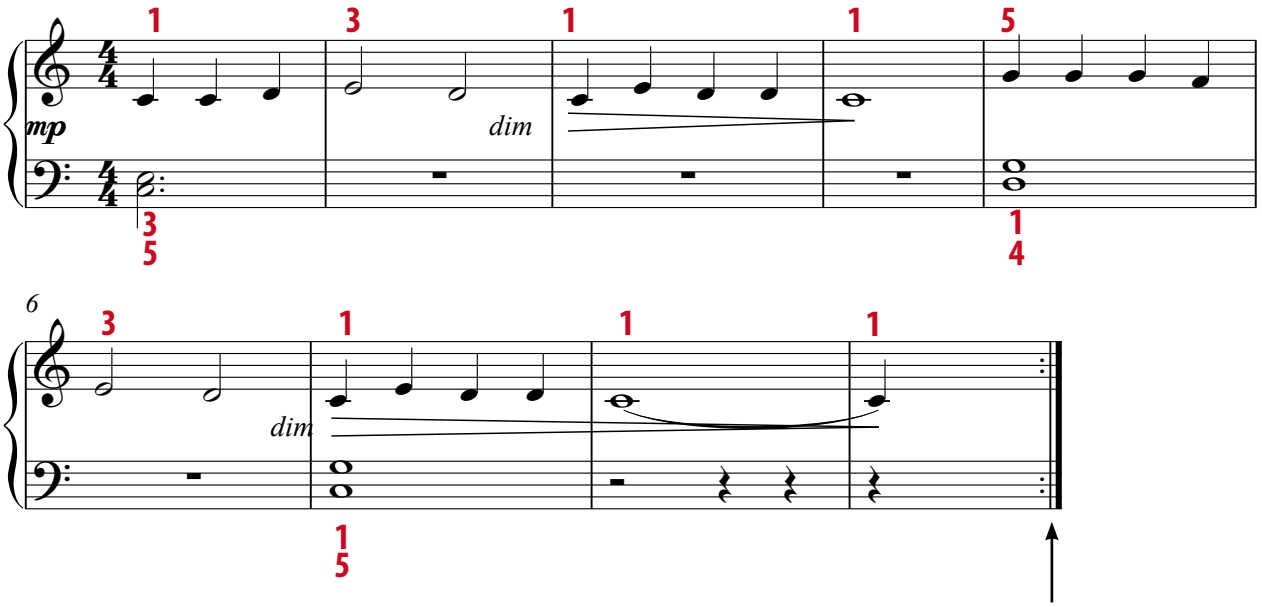


These signs are found in between the staffs and last for as long as the notes they cover.

Exercise: Practice playing a piece with one of the new dynamic signs you have learned.



Moderately slow



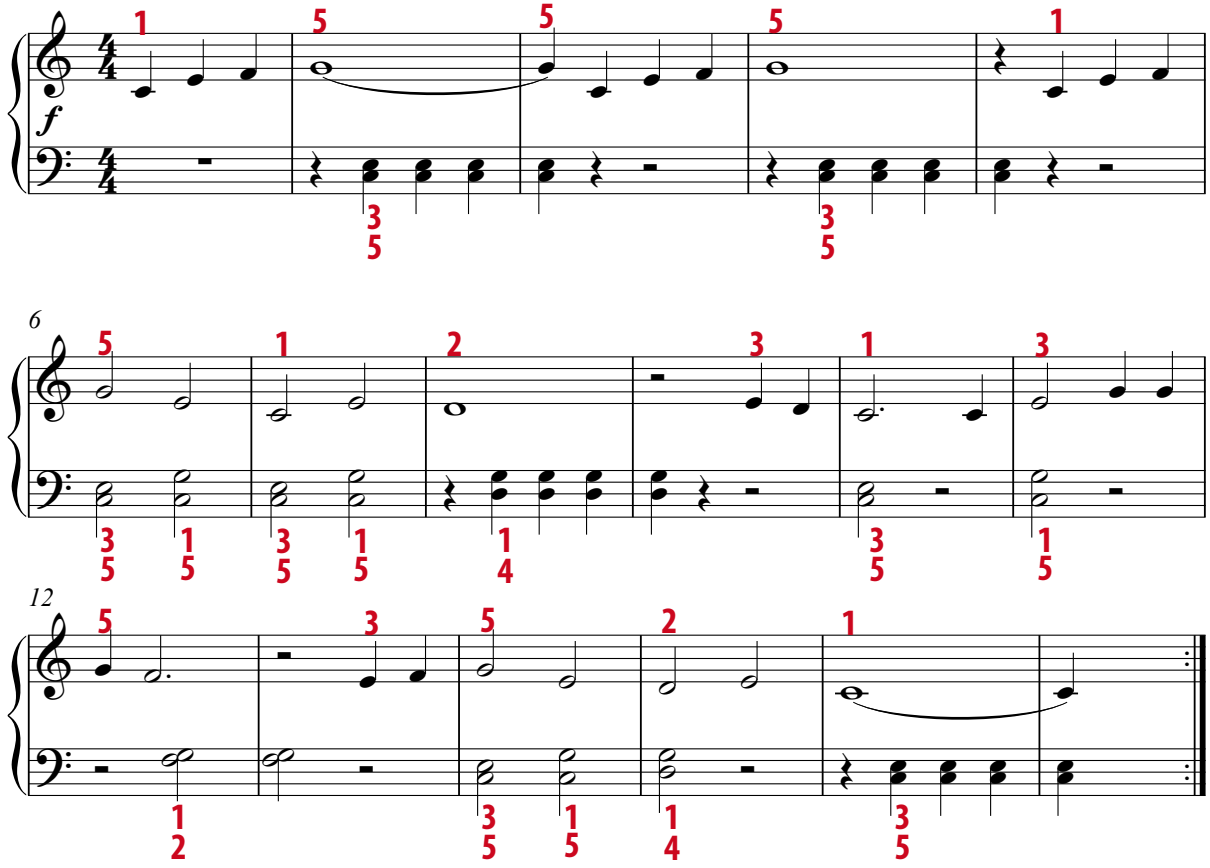
Remember this sign? Two dots on the double line signify that you go back to the beginning and play through the piece again.

Exercise: This piece has a lot of rests in it, so you need to watch your timing carefully. Note the incomplete measure.

C Position

When The Saints Go Marching In

Moderately slow



The Black Keys

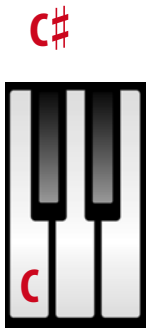
It's time to discover what the black keys are all about. The black keys use the exact same musical alphabet as the white keys, with one addition: a ♯ or a ♭ .

A note with a ♯ sign is a sharp. C ♯ = C sharp

A note with a ♭ sign is a flat. C ♭ = C flat

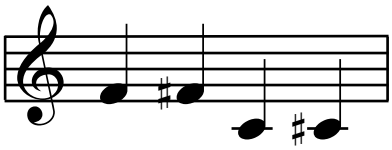
The Sharp Sign

A sharp raises a note a half step. To play a sharp, play the key directly to the right of the note you would usually play for that letter, whether that key is black or white.

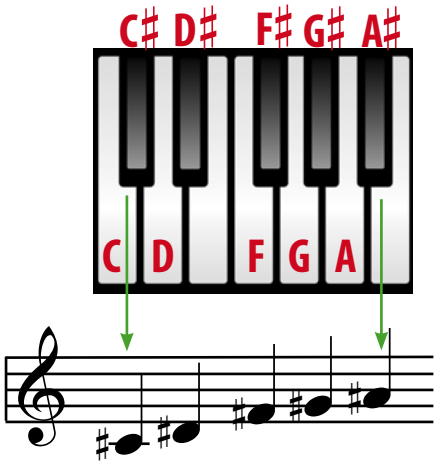


All sharps and flats are played on the black keys, with the exceptions of:
B♯ and C♭
E♯ and F♭

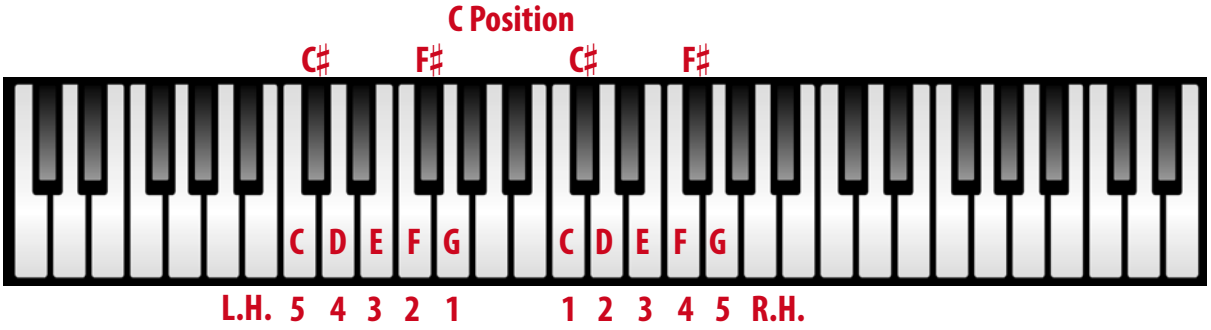
When you see a sharp on a musical score, it will appear to the left of the note:



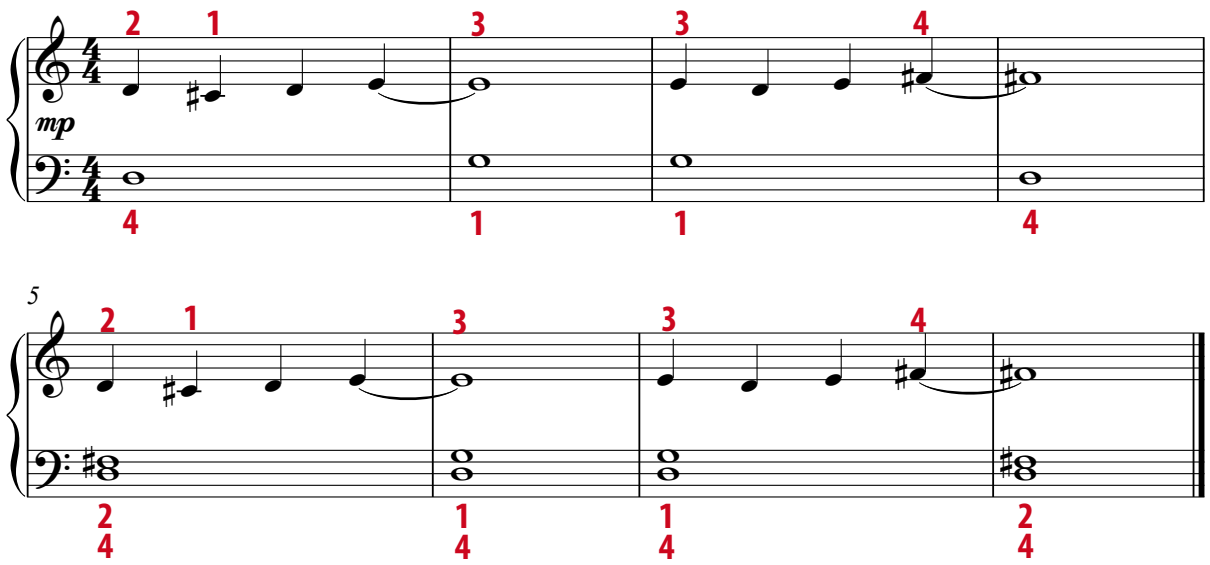
Once a sharp appears before a note, it means that particular note will stay sharp for the rest of the bar. Familiarize yourself with the location of sharps on the keyboard and staff below.



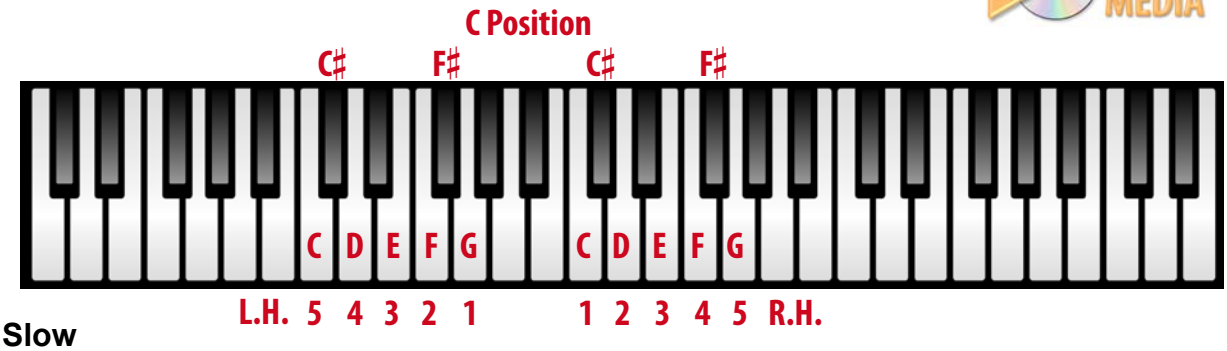
Exercise: Now, let's try playing some sharps. To play a sharp, use the same finger that you would use to play the regular note.



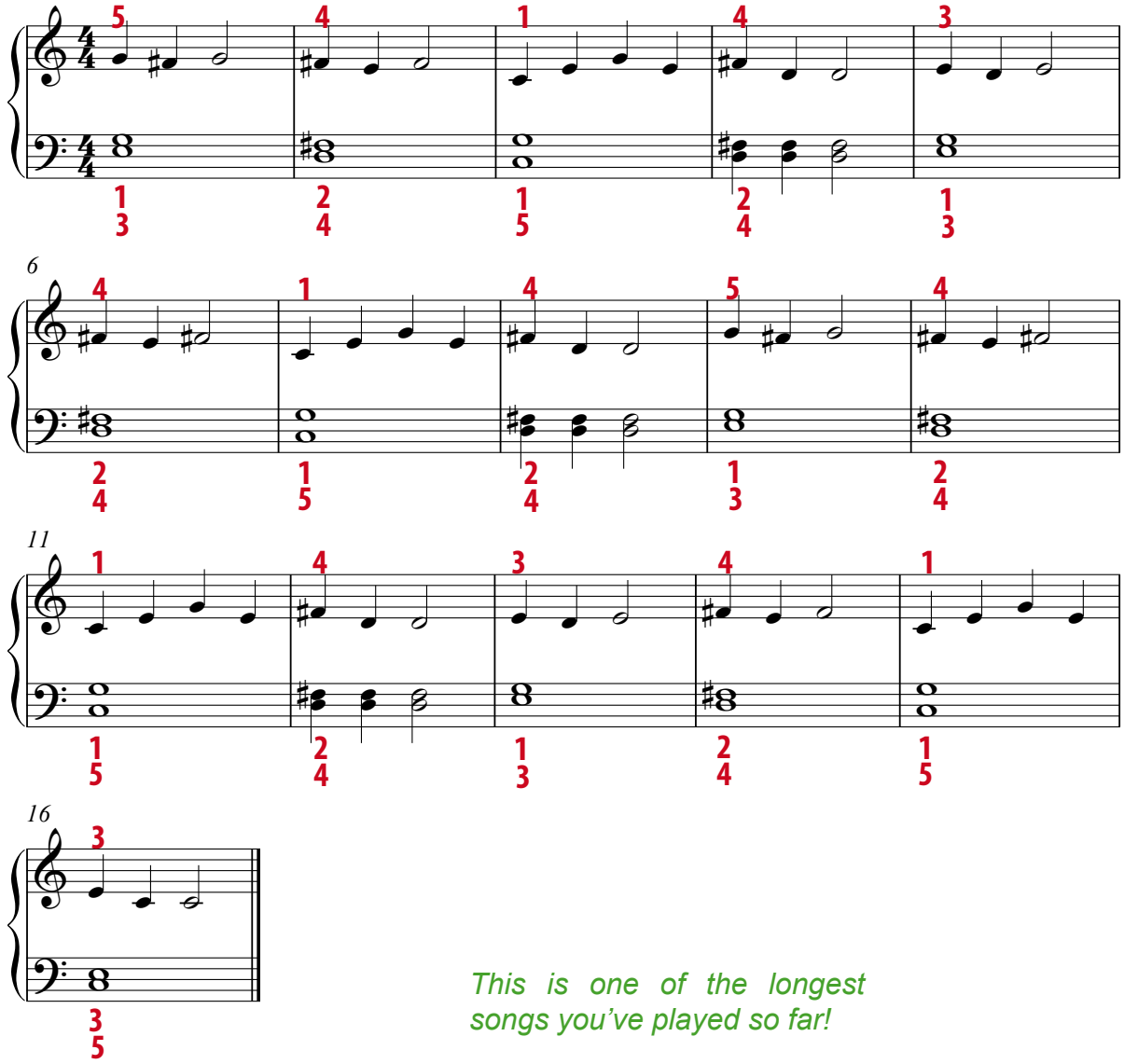
Moderately fast



Exercise: Here's a longer tune using sharps.



Slow

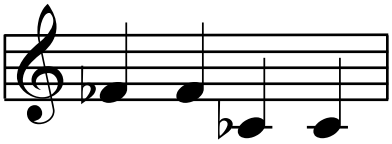


This is one of the longest songs you've played so far!

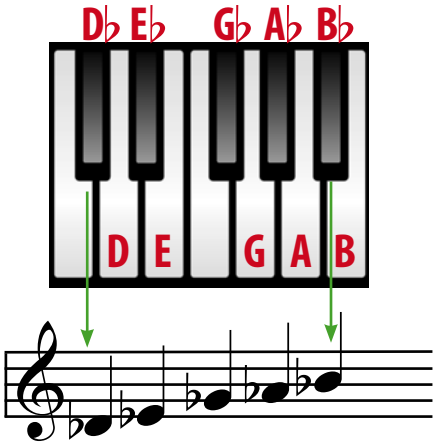
The Flat Sign

A flat lowers a note a half step. To play a flat, play the key directly to the left of the note you would usually play for that letter, whether that key is black or white.

Like sharps, when you see a flat on a musical score, it will appear before the note. Once a flat appears before a note, it means that particular note will stay flat for the rest of the bar.



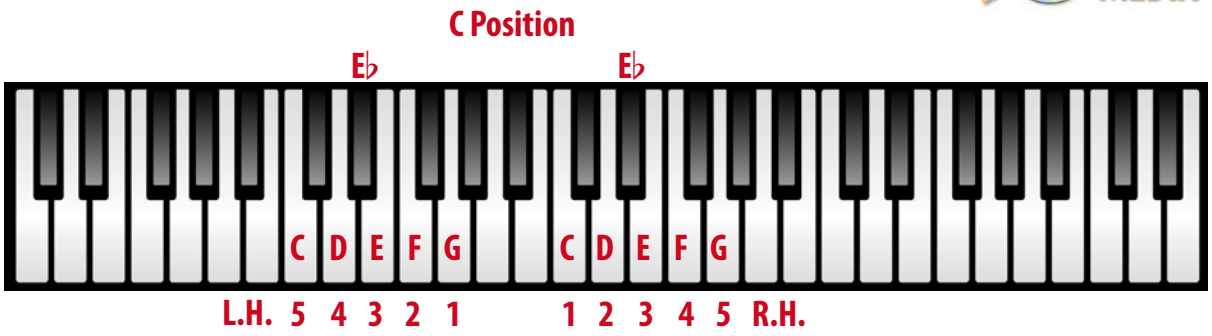
Familiarize yourself with the location of flats on the keyboard and treble clef staff below.



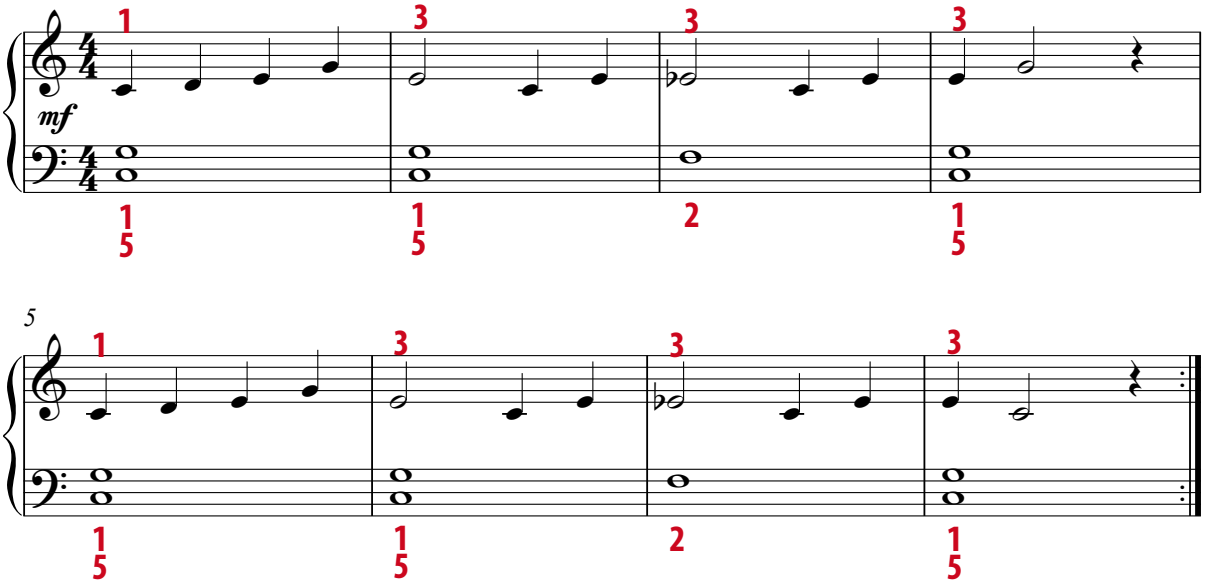
Did you notice that...

C♯ = D♭?
D♯ = E♭?
F♯ = G♭?
G♯ = A♭?
A♯ = B♭?

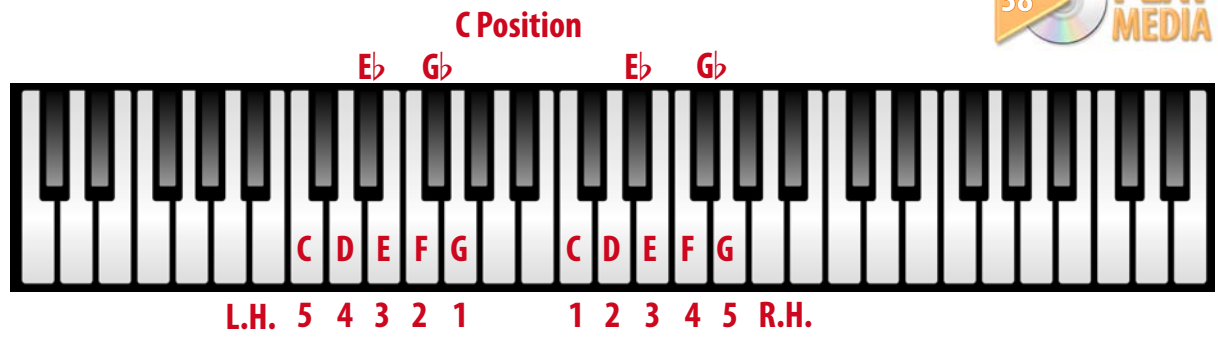
Exercise: Now, let's try to play some flats!



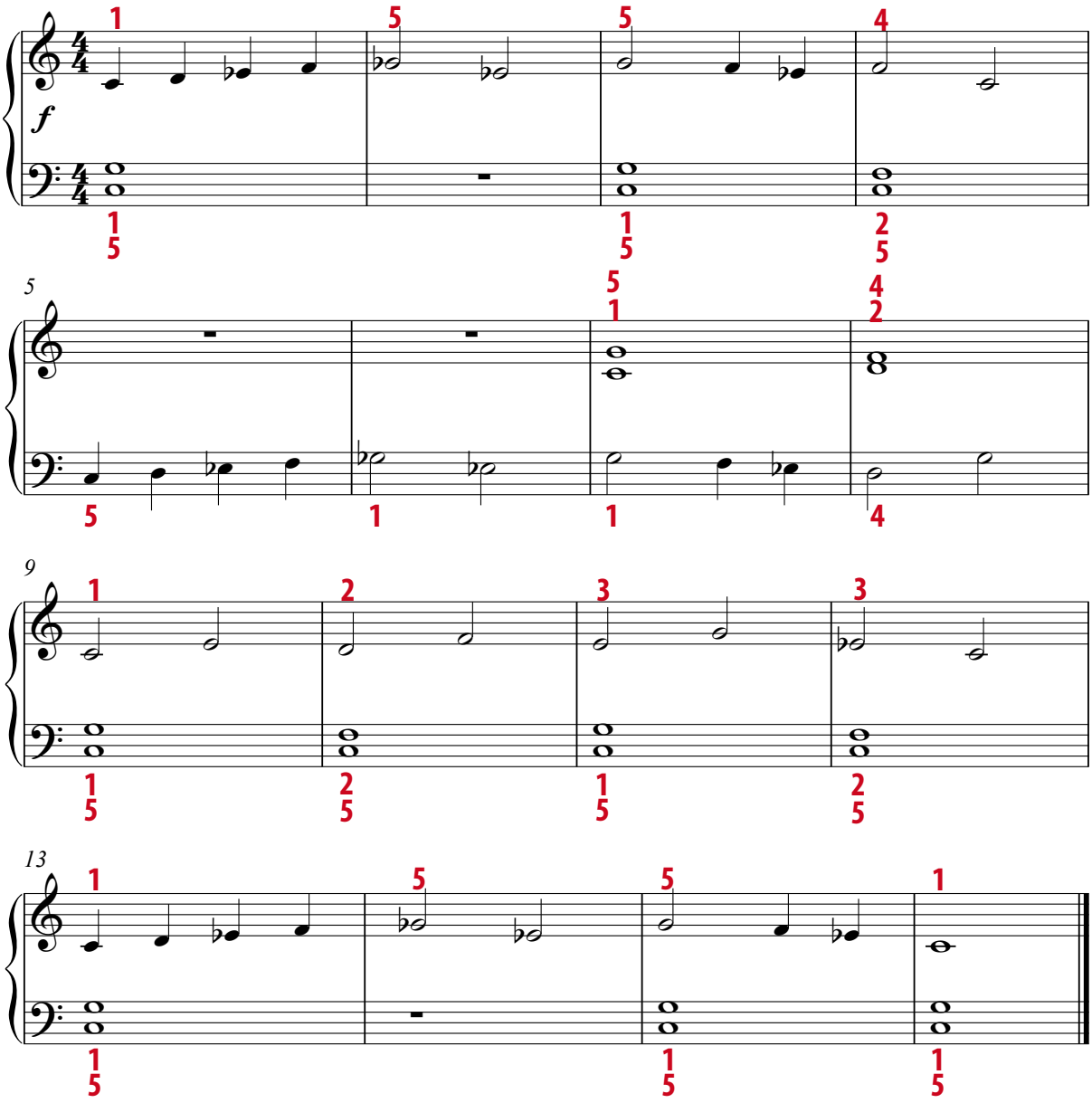
Moderately fast



Exercise: Here is a longer song with two additional flat notes.



Fast

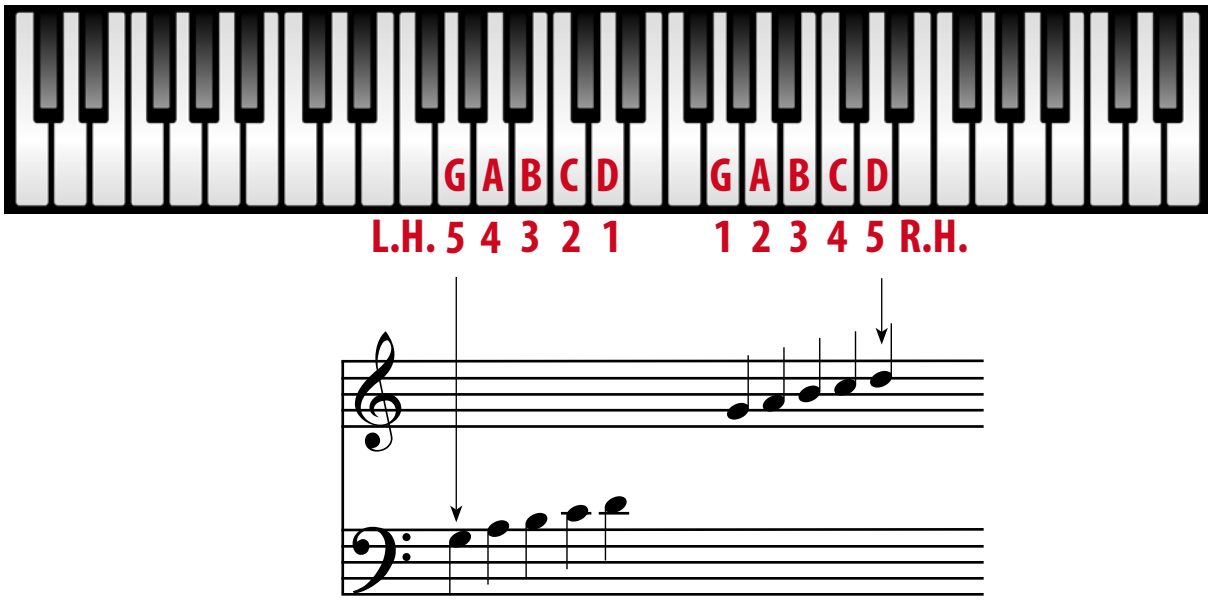


Chapter 9. The G Hand Position

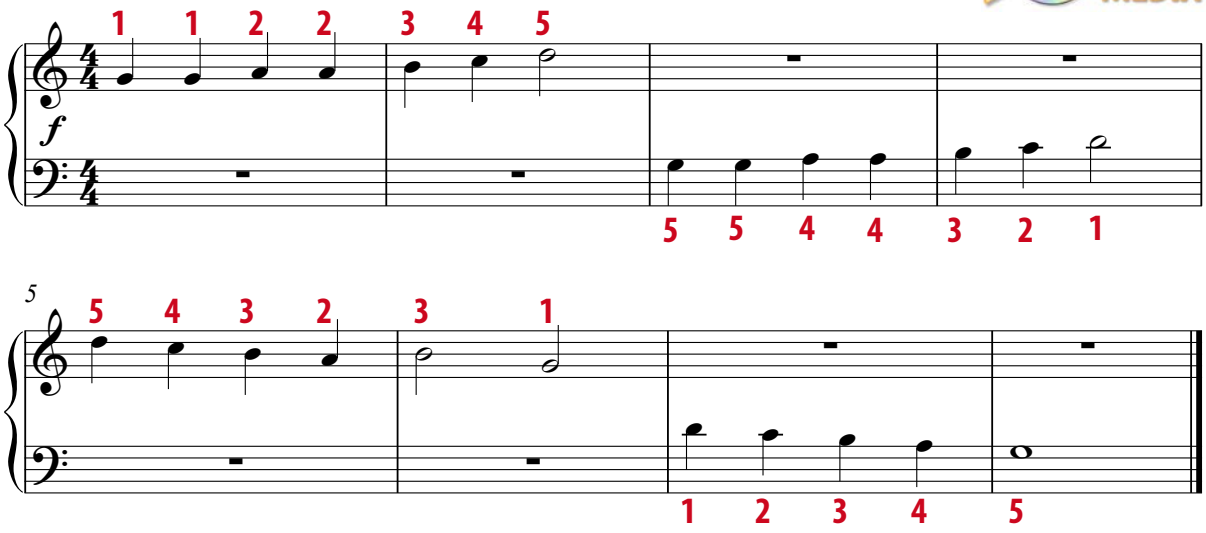
It's time to learn a new hand position! The G hand position is named so because the thumb of the right hand rests on the note G. The right hand thumb rests on the G above Middle C while the left hand thumb rests on the D above Middle C.

The new hand position plays the keys A and B that were not played in the C position, and instead leaves out the keys E and F.

G Position

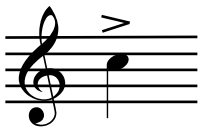


Exercise: Practice the new hand position with the following tune.



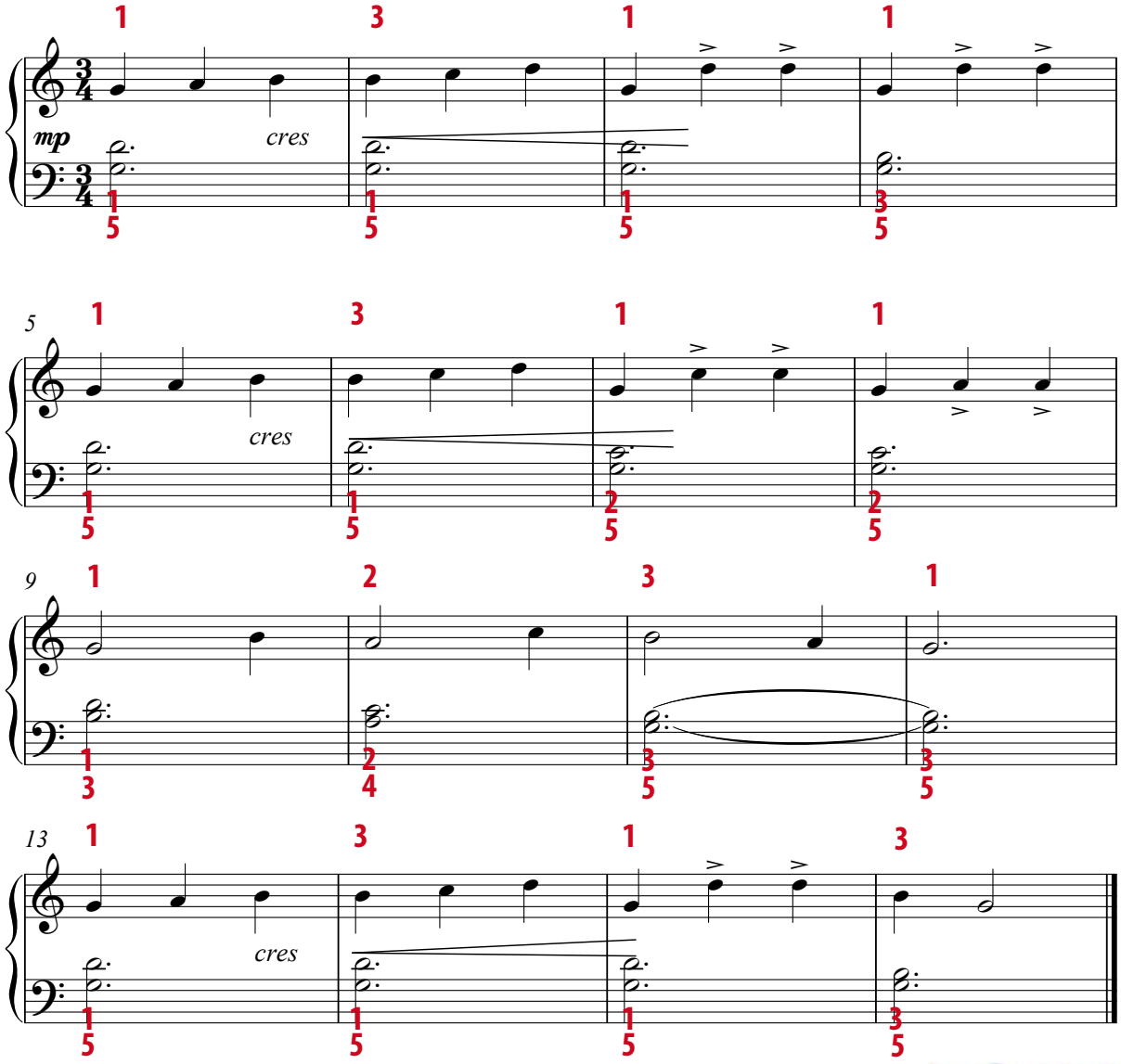
The Accent Sign

When you want to play a single note louder than the rest of the notes, you will use an abbreviated version of the crescendo sign, or an **accent sign**. It looks like this > and is located directly above the note.



Exercise: When you encounter the accent sign, play the note louder than the rest. Use the G hand position.

Waltz



Exercise: Play along with the following track to create a duet!

A New Dynamic Sign: Staccato

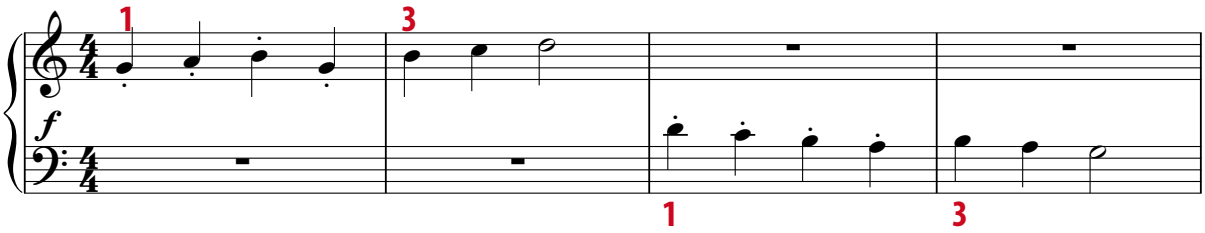
Staccato is another dynamic sign. It is the opposite of legato (or *smoothly,* which uses the long slur sign). Staccato means that you play the notes in a detached way, or separately. To do this, hit the key quickly, almost as if you're just tapping it.

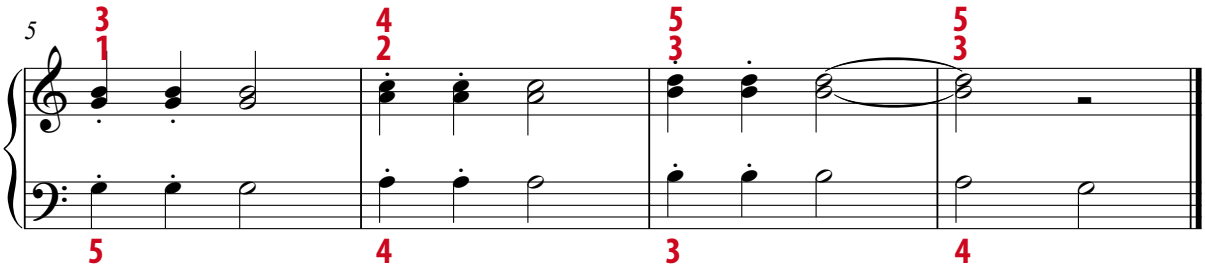
Play a note in this way when a **staccato dot** appears above or below a note.

Exercise: Practice staccato by playing the piece below.

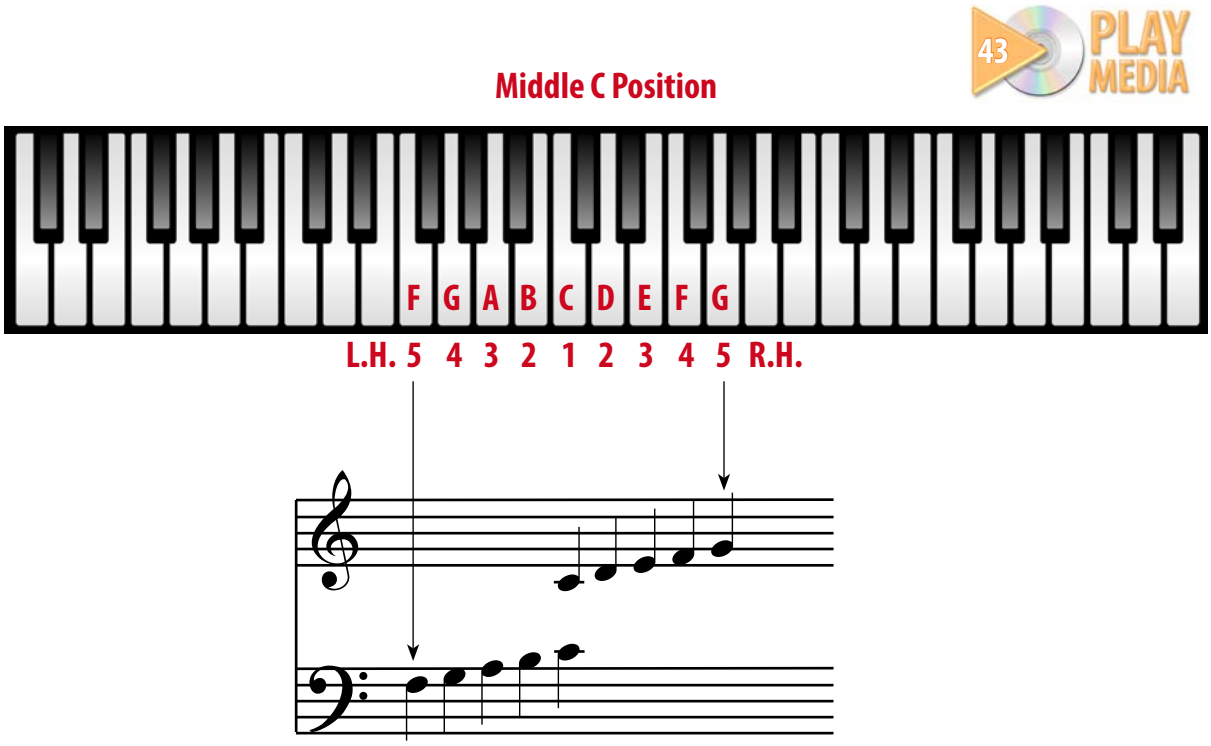
G Position

Fast



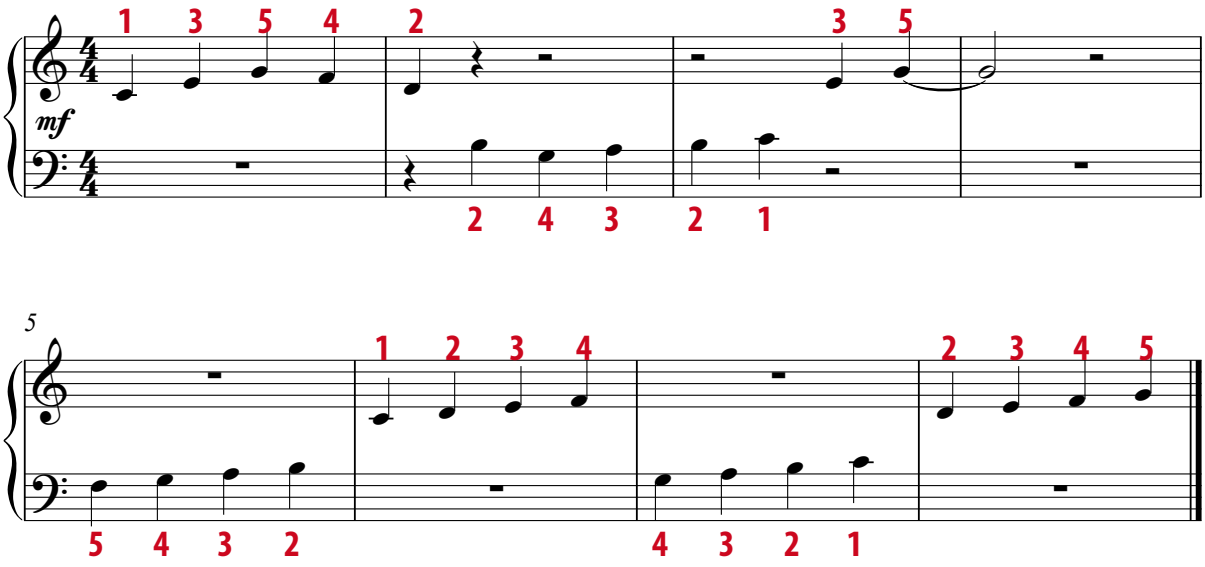


Exercise: As you're learning new hand positions, don't forget the old ones! Take a break from the G position to recall the hand movements in the Middle C position.



Moderately

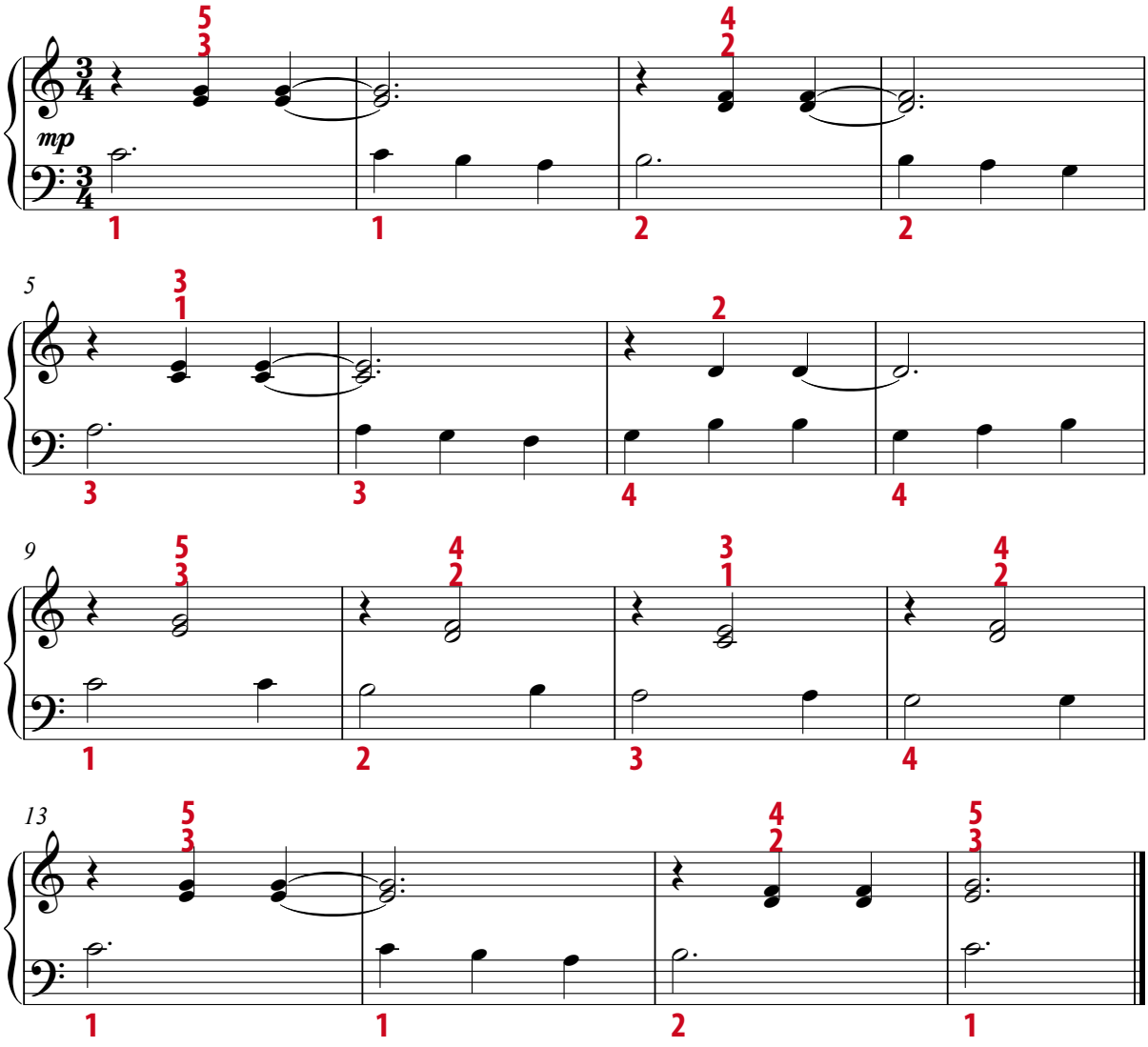
Both thumbs on Middle C!



Exercise: Let's try another tune in Middle C. Note the time signature.

Middle C Position

Moderately slow



Revision Test: Part One

1. How many keys are on an average piano?
   a. 64
   b. 88
   c. 100
   d. 142

2. How many keys are there in one octave?
   a. 7
   b. 8
   c. 10
   d. 12

3. How many quarter notes make up one measure in a 4/4 time signature?
   a. 2
   b. 4
   c. 8
   d. 12

4. What does the symbol ***f*** mean?
   a. “Farce” meaning play with humour
   b. “Folte” meaning play powerfully
   c. “Fainte” meaning play quietly
   d. “Forte” meaning play loudly.

5. If your right hand is in middle C position, what note is your ring finger or 4 finger on?
   a. F
   b. G
   c. F#
   d. C

6. What does 3/4 at the beginning of a piece of music indicate?
   a. there are 3 whole notes to a measure
   b. there are 3 quarter notes to a measure
   c. there are 4 third notes to a measure
   d. there is a repeat sign 3 quarters of the way through the piece.

Revision Test: Part One continued..

7. How many lines are there on a musical staff?
   a. 4
   b. 5
   c. 6
   d. 7

8. What is the interval between D up to E?
   a. 1st
   b. 2nd
   c. 3rd

9. What does ***legato*** mean?
   a. play fast
   b. play lightly
   c. play with lego
   d. play smoothly

10. What other note shares the same key position as D#?
   a. Db
   b. Eb
   c. F#
   d. None

11. What does ***staccato*** mean?
   a. To play notes short
   b. To play notes long
   c. To stack notes together
   d. To play hesitantly

Revision Test Answers

1. (b) The average piano has 88 keys, black and white.

2. (d) There are twelve keys (black and white) in one octave.

3. (b) There are 4 quarter notes in one measure of 4/4

4. (d) ***F*** stands for the Italian word “Forte” meaning loud.

5. (a) The 4 finger in the right hand is resting on the F note when in C position.

6. (b) The 3/4 time signature means there are 3 quarter notes to every measure.

7. (b) There are 5 lines to a musical staff, although more ‘ledger’ lines can be added.

8. (b) The harmonic interval between D up to E is a 2nd. Or to be specific, a major 2nd.

9. (d) The italian expressions ***Legato*** means to play smoothly and joined.

10. (b) D# and Eb are located on the same key on the keyboard. This is called a “Harmonic Equivalent” because they are harmonically equal meaning they share the same pitch.

11. (a) The term ***Staccato*** indicates for the notes to be played short and detached from one another.

How did you go?

Add up your percentage by dividing the number you got right by 11, and x100. See if you can better your score in the next Revision Test!

Chapter 10. More About Rhythm

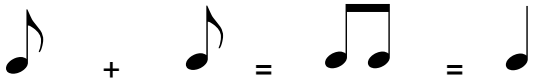
In this chapter, you are going to learn more about rhythm. You'll learn a new note (the *eighth note*), a new time signature, and some common tempo marks.

The Eighth Note

A quarter note isn't the smallest note in music. When you want to play music that moves rapidly, you need notes of short duration, and the **eighth note** fits the bill.The eighth note is half the length of a quarter note.

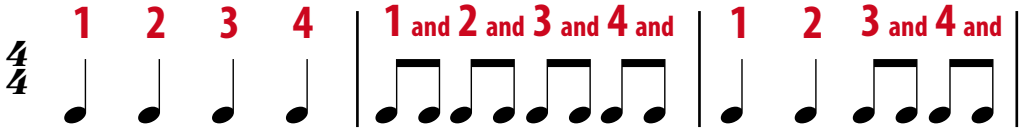
One eighth note looks like a quarter note with a "tail." 

When there are two eighth notes in a row, the tails join together. 



Two eighth notes are equivalent to one quarter note.

When counting eighth notes, you count: "ONE-and-TWO-and-THREE-and-FOUR-and..."

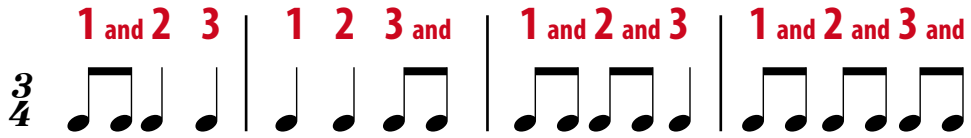


So an 8th note is equal to ½ a beat.

 *= ½ beat*

 *= 1 beat*

Exercise: Clap or count these measures aloud for practice



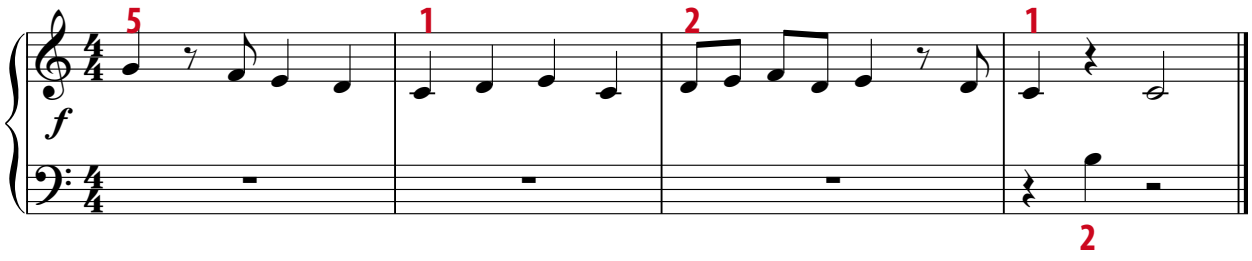
Just as there are quarter note and whole note rests, there are **eighth note rests** as well.

An eighth note rest looks like this: 

Exercise: Practice playing eighth notes with the tune below.

Middle C Position

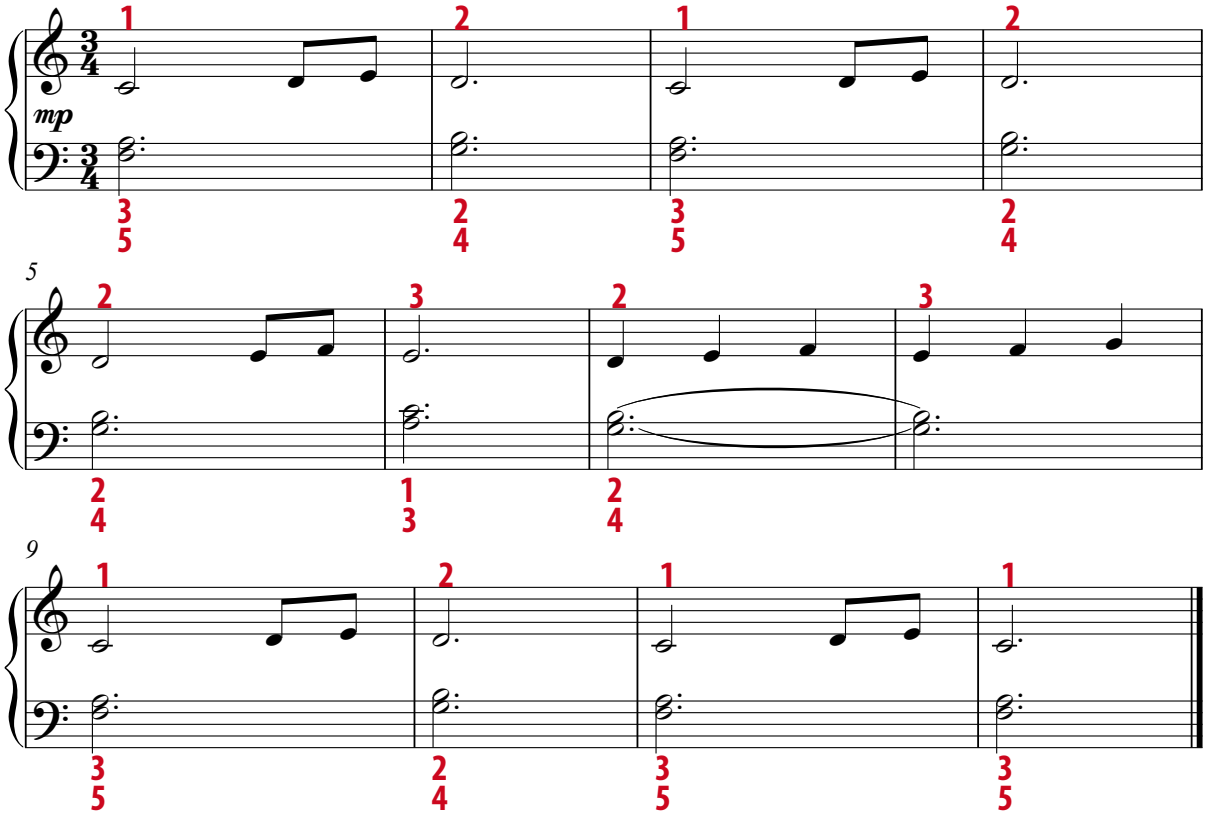
Deck the halls



Exercise: Here's another song with which to practice eighth notes.

Middle C Position

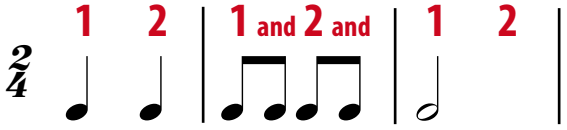
L.H. 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 R.H.



Another New Time Signature

Now that you understand and can play eighth notes, you are ready to learn a new time signature!

$\frac{2}{4}$ time means:
- the bar gets divided into 2 beats (the top number), and
- the quarter note still gets one beat (the bottom number).

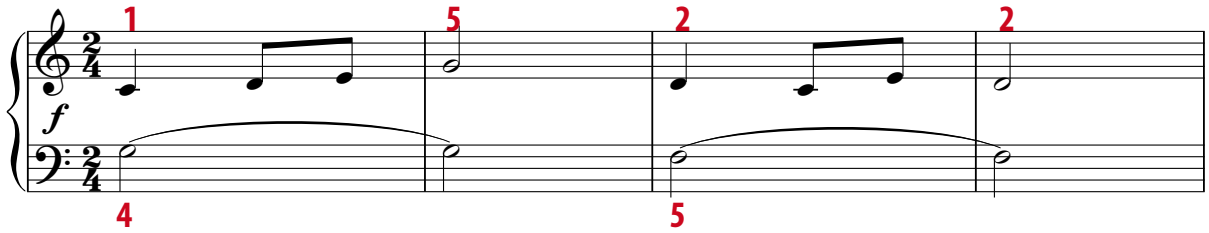


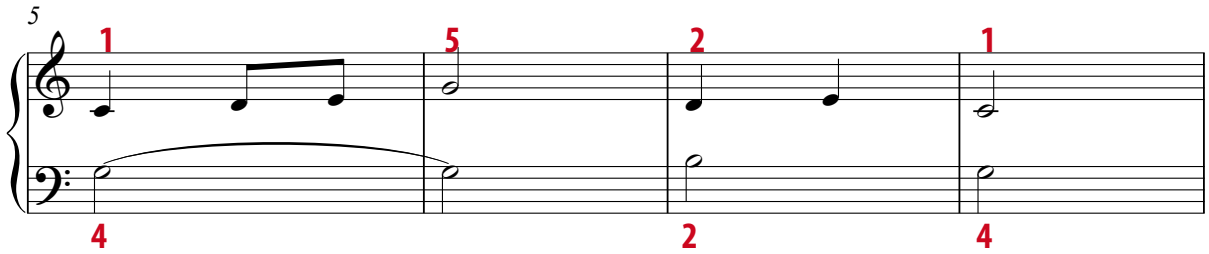
Exercise: Try out the new time signature with the following piece.

Middle C Position

L.H. 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 R.H.

Slowly





Exercise: Play along with the following track to create your own duet!

Tempo Marks

You have seen them before, but you may have not known what they were. **Tempo marks** are the words written at the beginning of a piece to tell you how fast or slow the piece is to be played. The word *tempo*, in fact, is Italian for "rate of speed."

The tempo marks that you have seen so far are "fast," "slowly," et cetera. However, tempo marks are usually written in Italian. Study the list of words below so that you will recognize them when they appear in a musical score.

allegro	quick, lively, bright
moderato	moderately
andante	moving along, walking pace
adagio	slowly

Fermata Sign

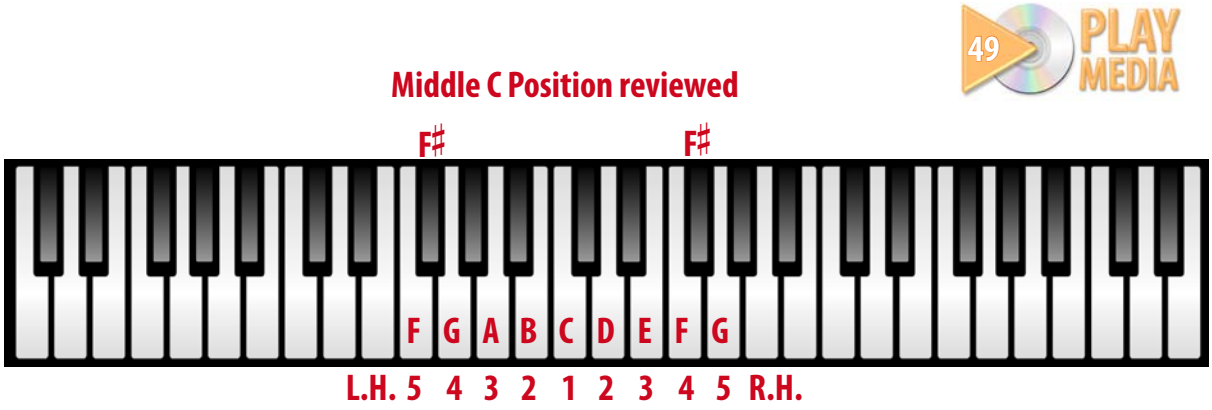
Because so much information needs to be contained in a musical score, there are many symbols that appear above or below notes to indicate how the composer intends them to be played. You've already learned the staccato dot and the accent sign. Now, you are going to learn about the **fermata sign**.

The fermata sign looks like an eye: 

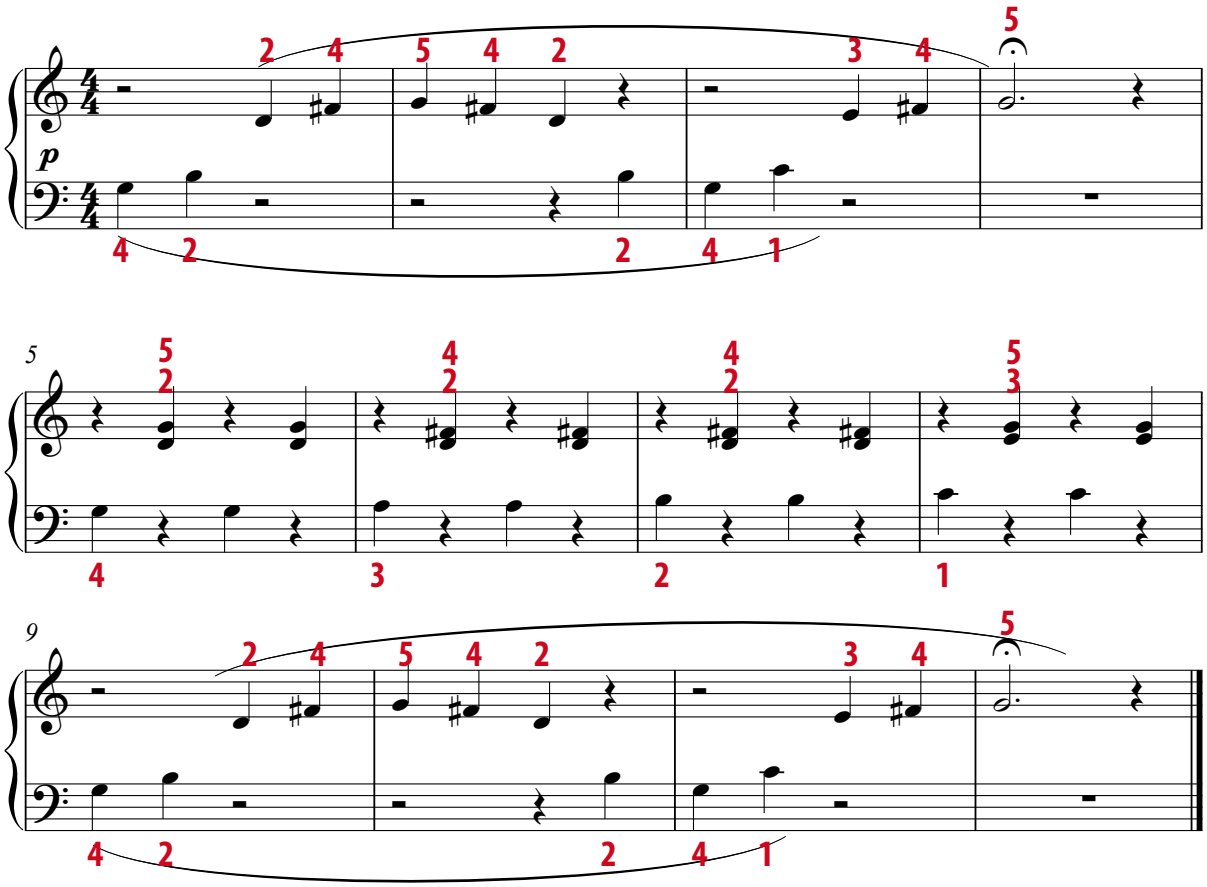
When it appears above a note (or notes), you should hold that note for longer than the given time value. In other words, you will pause on the note a bit longer for effect.

A fermata sign often appears at the end of a phrase or piece.

Exercise: Now, practice the *andante* tempo and the fermata sign with the following piece.



Andante



More Tempo Markings

You can also find indications about changes in tempo in the piece itself. Two that you will encounter frequently are *ritardando* and *a tempo.* These words appear between the staffs with a dashed line to indicate how long the change in tempo should last.

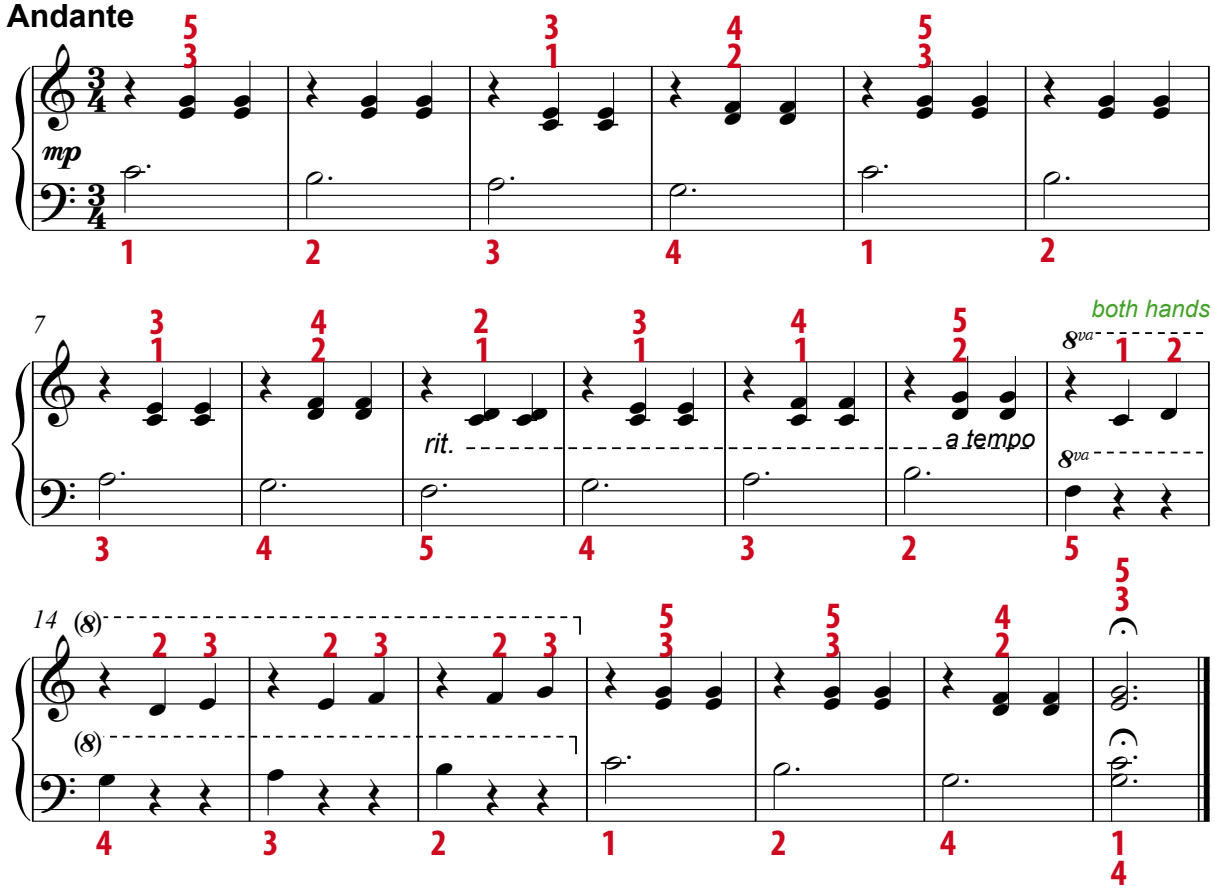
Ritardando means a gradual decrease in tempo, or slowing of a piece. (It is often abbreviated as *rit*.)

A tempo means that you should return to the original tempo specified at the beginning of the piece.

Exercise: Practice changing tempo with the following piece. Note that the 8^{va} sign means that you should play the note or notes one octave (or eight notes) higher than what is written.) Listen to the track if you have difficulties.

Middle C Position

Andante

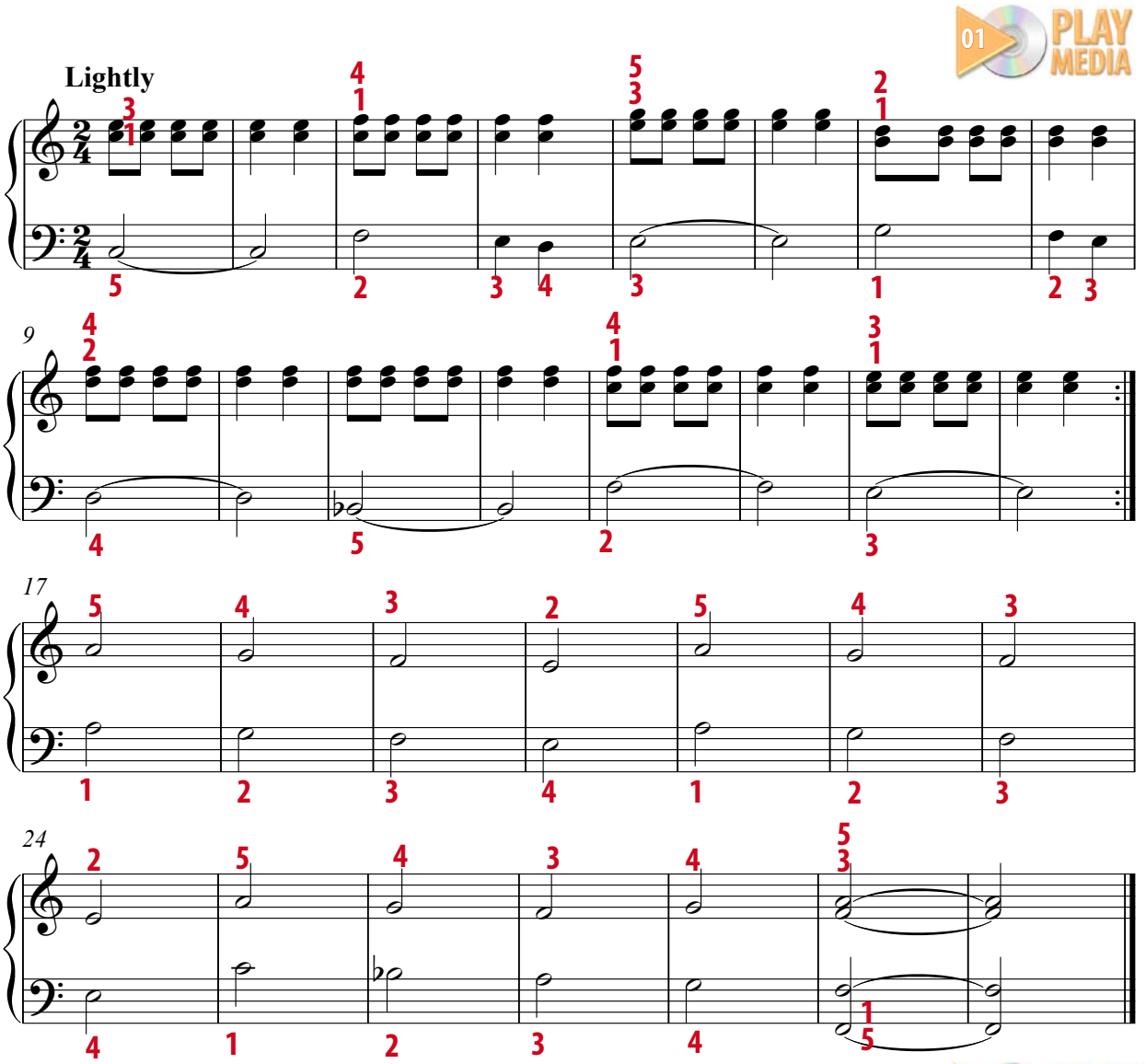


WE'RE JAMMIN'!

Jam Track One

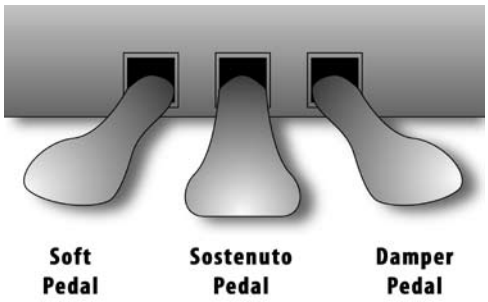
Exercise: Here is your first **Jam Track**! This piece includes the new time signature you have just learned about. Practice it a few times with the piano band track so that you know it well before you play along with the band.

After the repeat of the first two lines of music, (note the double bar line with the dots), we then play straight through to the end of the song. Then repeat the whole thing!



Now you know the song, have a go playing along with the Rocket band!

Chapter 11. Technical Wizardry



Your piano is not simply made up of black and white keys. It also has two or three pedals. These pedals perform several special effects, as explained in Chapter 1 pg 15. Now, it's time to teach you to use one of those effects with the **damper pedal**.

As you may recall, the damper pedal lifts the dampers off the strings so that they can continue vibrating.

Press the pedal, then play a few notes to see what happens.

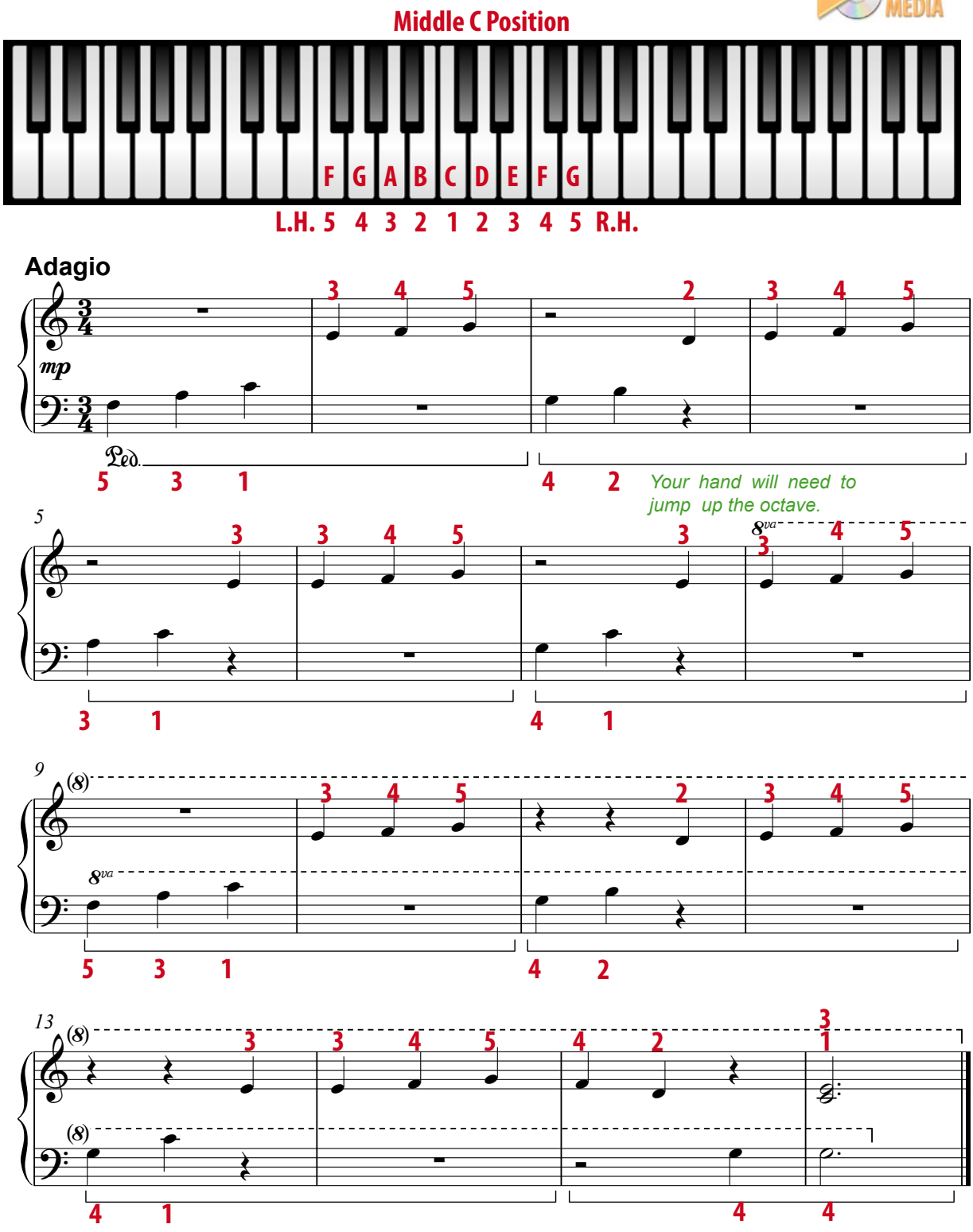
You should have noticed that the notes continued to make a tone until you lifted your foot off the pedal.

Basically, the damper pedal is used to **sustain** a note.

The pedal sign in music looks like this:

Flip the page to try playing an exercise that uses the damper pedal.

Exercise: Notice how the damper pedal smooths out the sound. Don't forget the tempo marking, and remember that the 8va sign means that you should play the note or notes one whole octave (an 8th interval) higher than what is written.

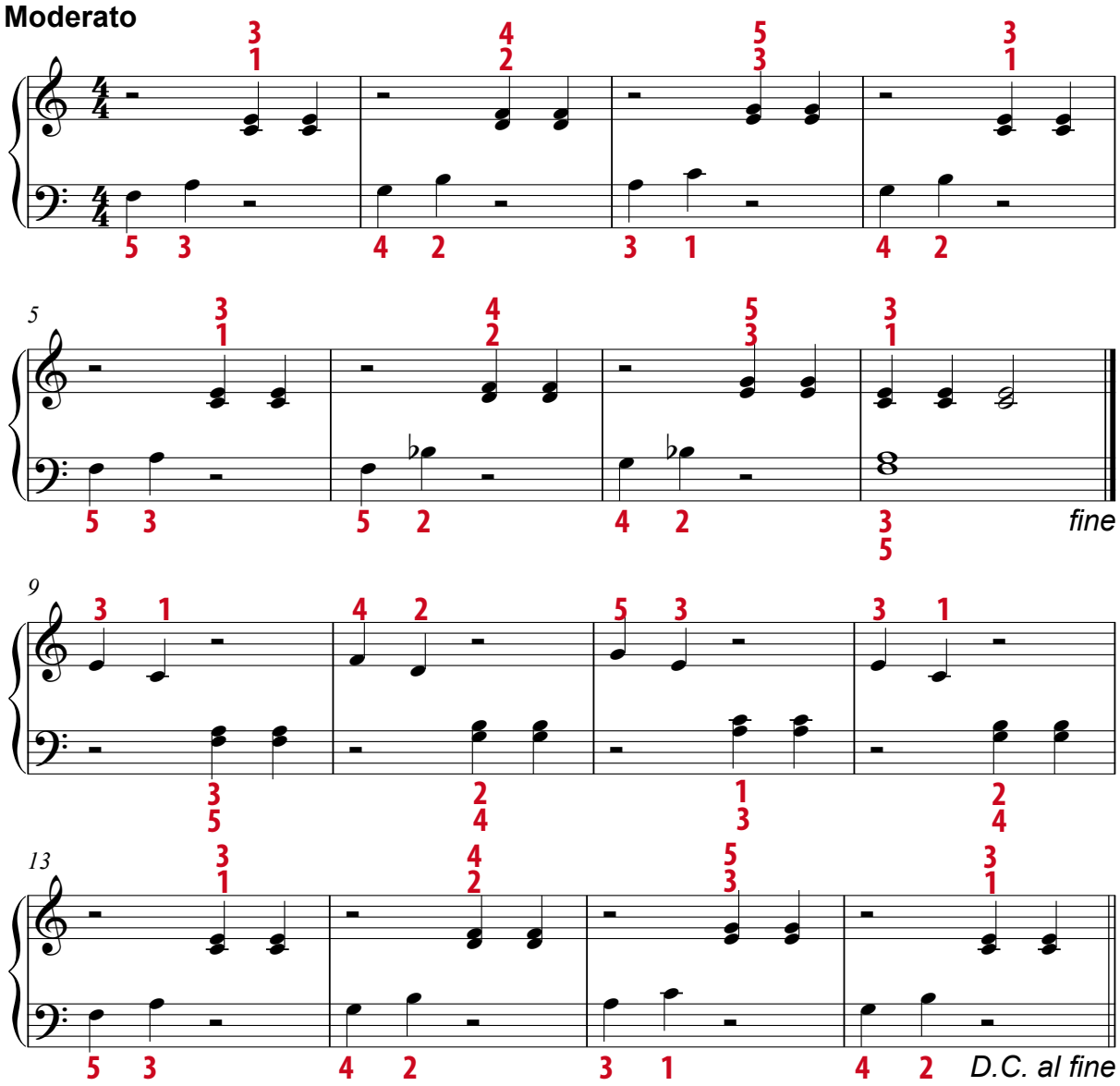


Repeating It Over and Over

Many pieces of music contain sections that repeat. You've already seen one sign to repeat a section: the dotted double bars at the end of a piece of music.

There is another way of indicating that a section should repeat: the words ***D.C. al fine***. This **directional sign** is an abbreviation for *Da Capo al Fine*. When you encounter this sign, you should go back to the beginning and play the piece until you reach the word *fine*. *Fine* is pronounced *fee-nay* and means "finish."

Exercise: Use the Middle C hand position to play the following piece.

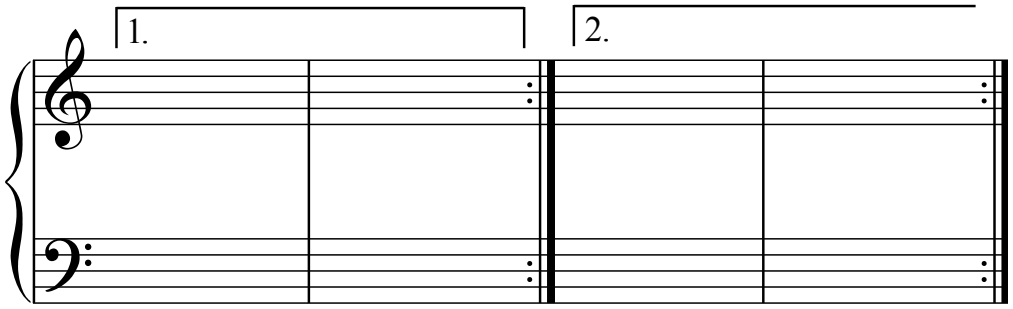


1st and 2nd Time Endings

Sometimes you don't want to play a song a second time through from the beginning just as it was played the first time. You may want to make a modification. First and second time endings help you do that.

With first and second time endings, you will reach the end of a song and start it all over at the beginning again, just as you have done in previous examples. However, this time you will skip the bar that has "1" written over it and only play the bar that has "2" written over it.

Sound confusing? Here's an example:



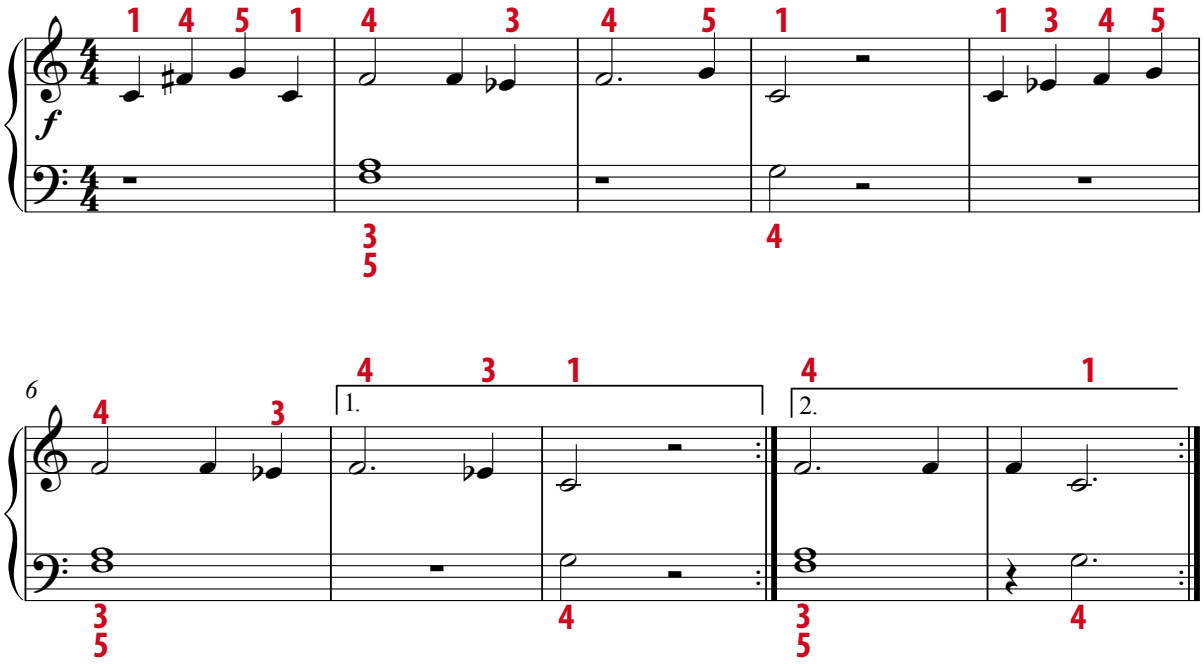
Play through the piece the first time, until you get to the first repeat sign near the end. Don't play the bars with a "2" above it.

Then, go back to the beginning and repeat the song.

Play the piece a second time, but DON'T play the bars with "1" written over them. Skip those bars and finish with the second time ending.

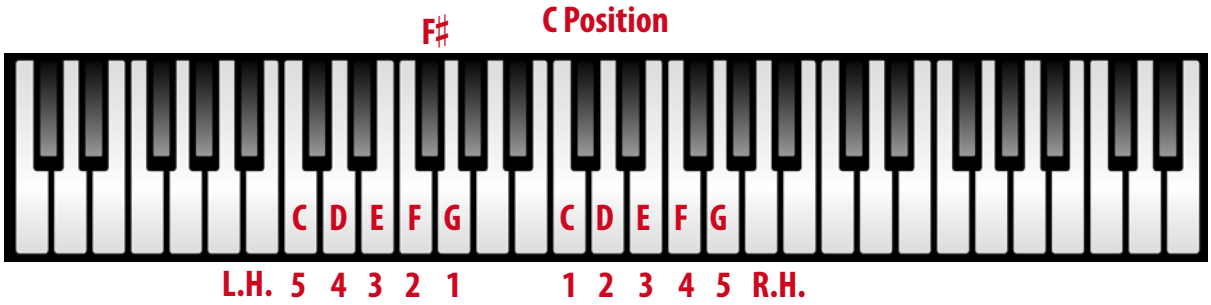
Exercise: Use the Middle C hand position to play the following piece. Remind yourself of the locations of E flat and F sharp before starting.

Allegro



One famous song that uses first and second time endings is “Jingle Bells.”

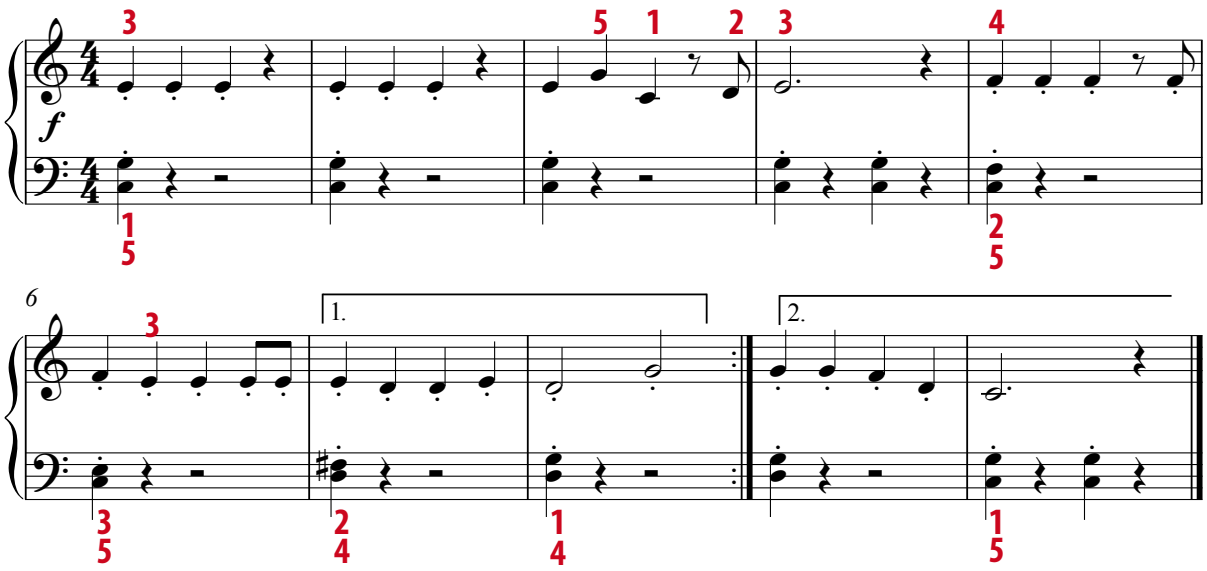
Exercise: Switch to the C hand position for this song. Note the staccato dots and eighth notes.



Jingle Bells

54 PLAY MEDIA

Happily



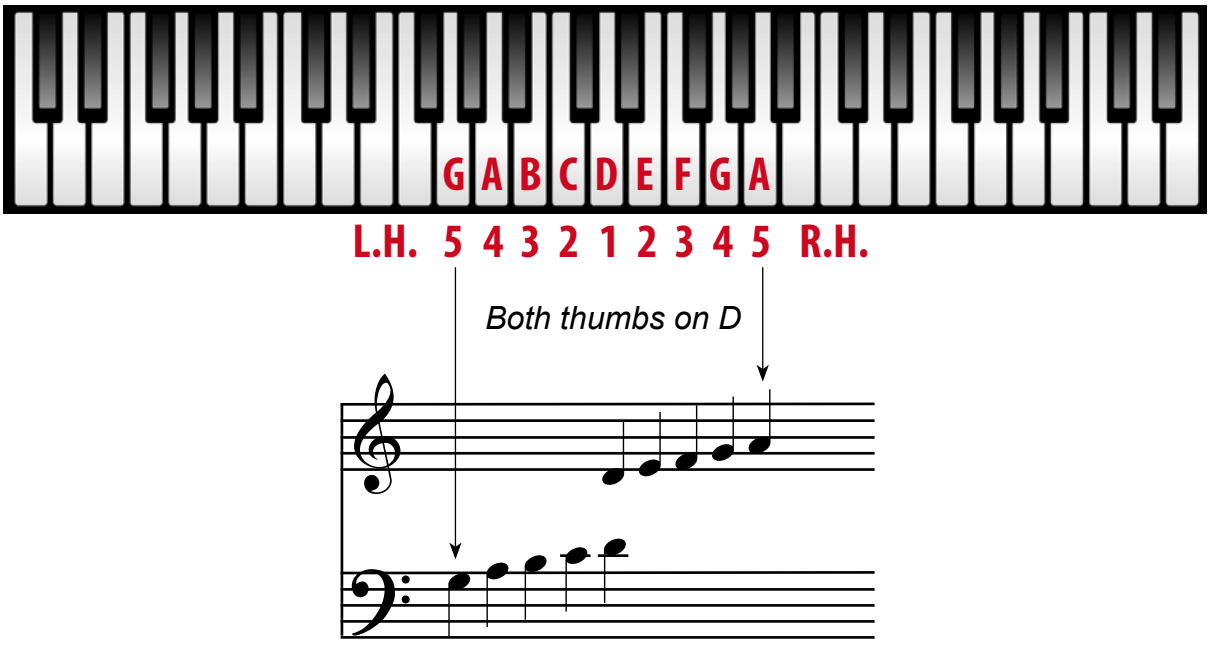
Chapter 12. Taking Steps

In this chapter, you are going to learn a new hand position: the Middle D position. Then, you are going to learn about half steps and whole steps (or semi-tones and whole tones).

The Middle D Position

The Middle D position is given its name because you will place both your thumbs on the D above Middle C.

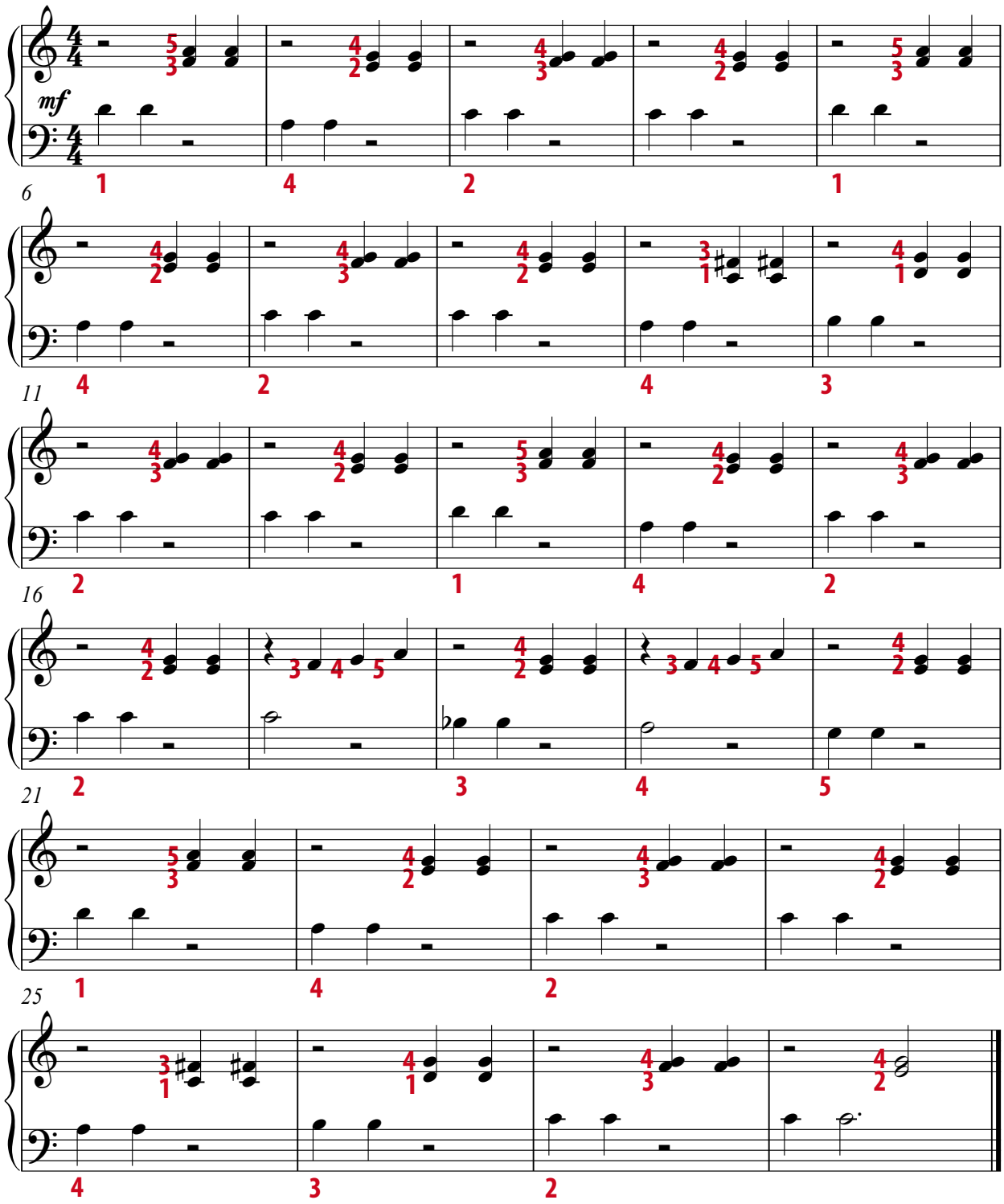
Middle D Position



You now know four hand positions:

- *Middle C*
- *C*
- *G*
- *Middle D*

Exercise: Here is a long piece to practice your Middle D hand position.

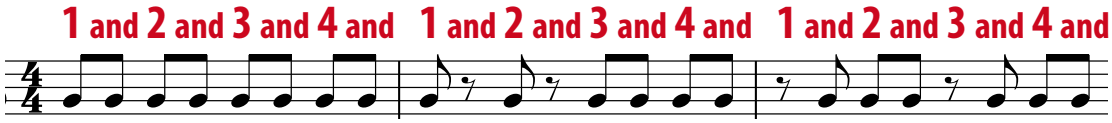


On and Off Beats

To understand the concept of “on” and “off” beats, we’re going to take a closer look at the 8th note rest (𝄾).

Single 8th notes are often accompanied by 8th note rests.  When you are counting out a rhythm, include the rests in your count.

Exercise: Count or clap this rhythm aloud.



Notice how you tend to emphasize the beats of the bar that are numbers and give less emphasis to the beats of the bar that are “and”s. Music recognizes this by distinguishing between *on* and *off* beats.

Any note that falls on a **number** is called an **on beat note**.

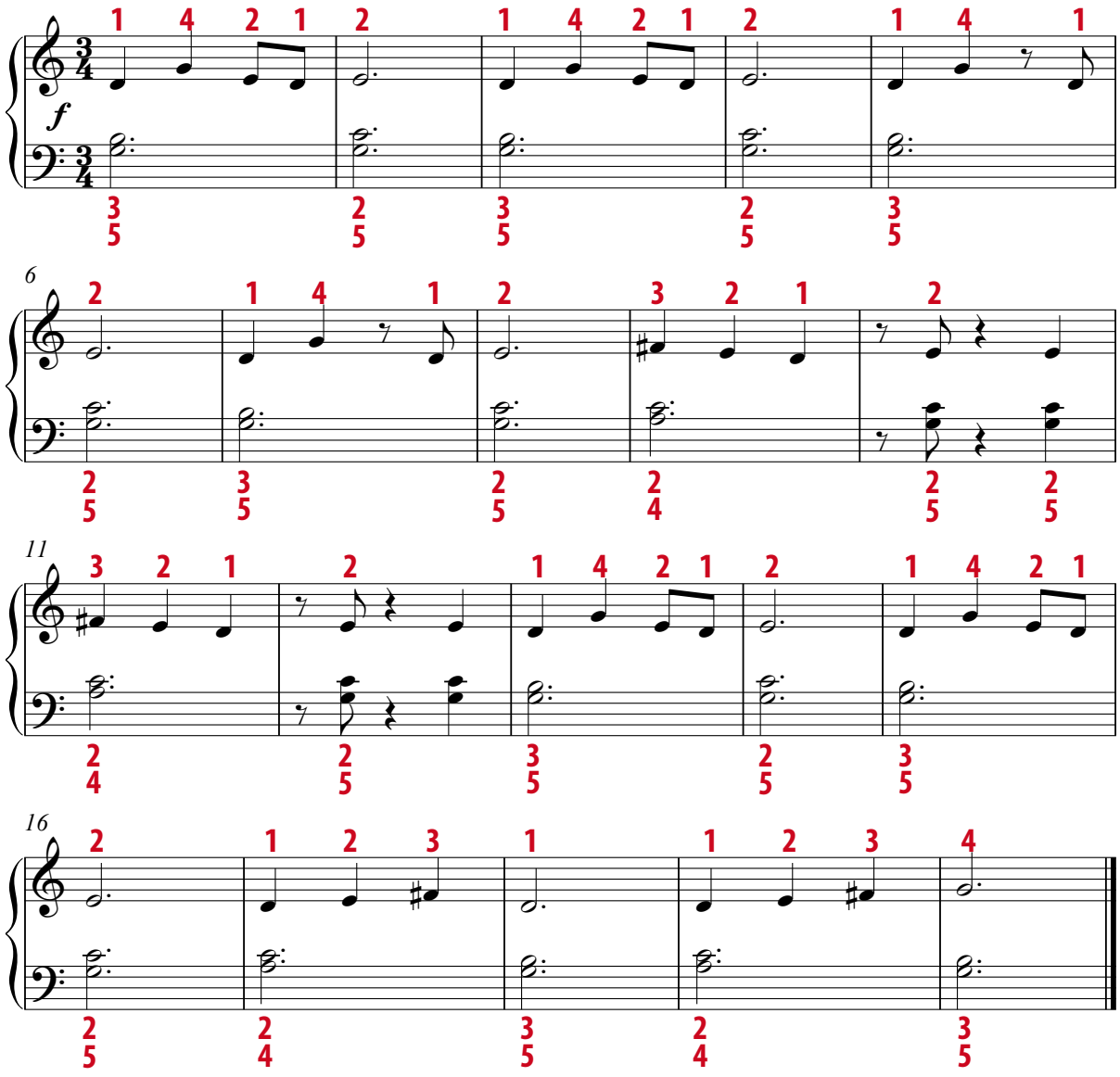
Any note that falls on an **and** beat is called an **off beat note**.

When the first note in a bar falls upon the off beat, the rhythm can be quite tricky to play. This occurs in the last bar of the example above. Practice off beat rhythms with the piece on the following page.

Keep your toes tapping!

Exercise: Be careful with the off-beat rhythms in this piece.

Middle D Position



Half Steps

You have already learned that sharps and flats raise or lower notes a half step. On the keyboard, a half step is the measured distance between a key and the key immediately next to it. For example, the key next to C on the right hand side is C ♯ The key next to C on the left hand side is B (or C♭!).

To review, t**he ♯ sign means that the note is raised a half step**.

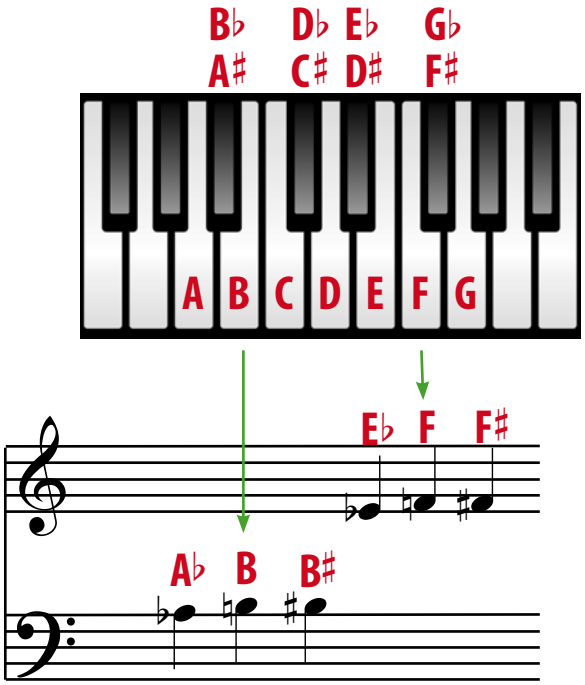
T**he ♭ sign means that the note is lowered a half step**.

Now, you are going to learn a new sign: the natural sign. **The ♮ sign means that the note should return to its original value**.

Do you remember how once a sharp or a flat appears before a note, it applies to a note for the entire measure ... even if you don't see the sharp or flat sign again? What happens if you want to play the unmodified note? Quite simply, you use a natural sign.

The ♮ sign is used to cancel a sharp or a flat when it appears in the measure or in the key signature. (You'll learn more about sharps and flats in key signatures in a later chapter.)

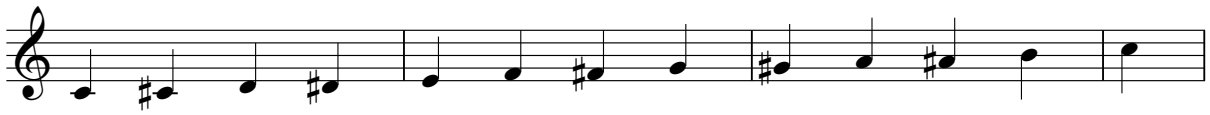
While sharps and flats are usually played on the black keys, a note after a natural sign is ALWAYS played on a white key.



*Half steps are also called **semi-tones**.*

The Chromatic Scale

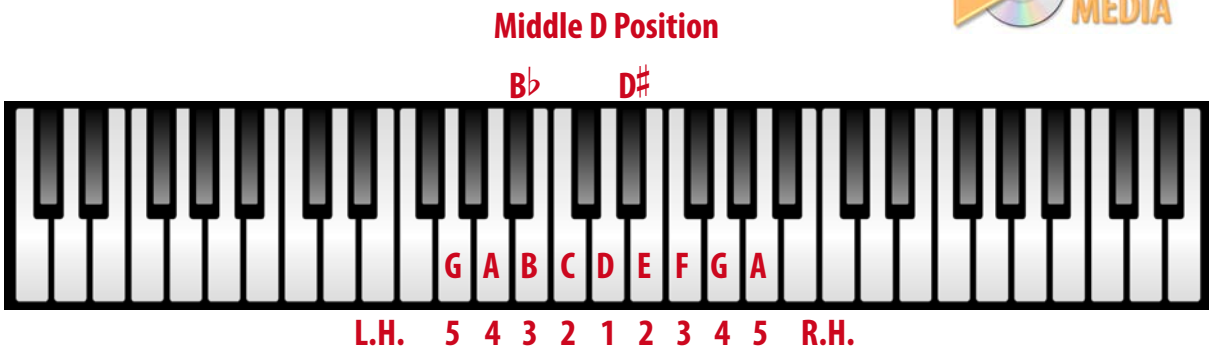
A half step can also be called a **chromatic step**. That is because the chromatic scale contains twelve notes separated by a half step.



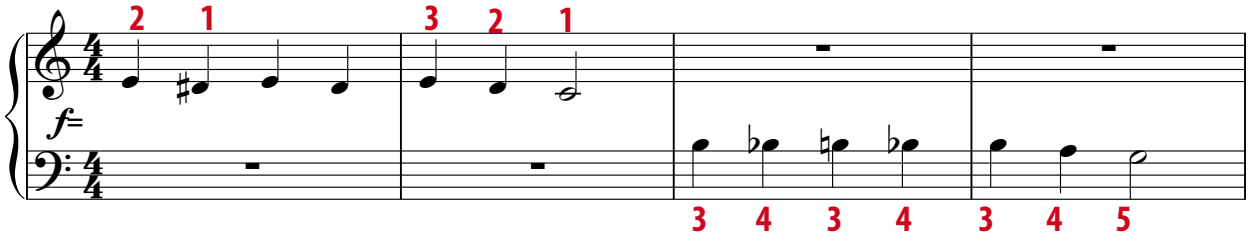
The chromatic scale written on the treble clef staff, starting from C.

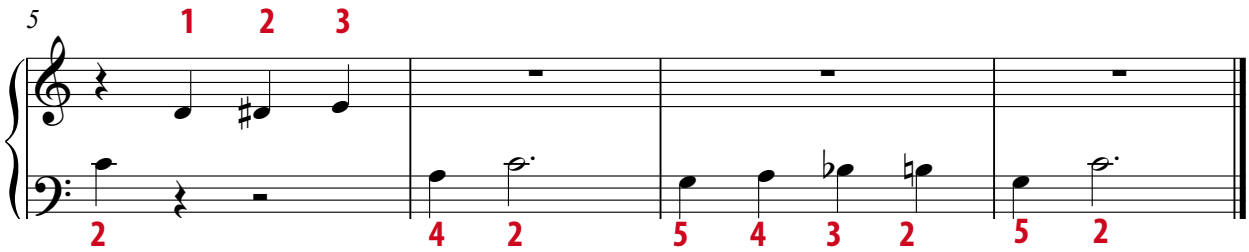
Check out Video Lesson #8 to learn how to play the chromatic scale.

Exercise: Practice sharps and flats with this piece.



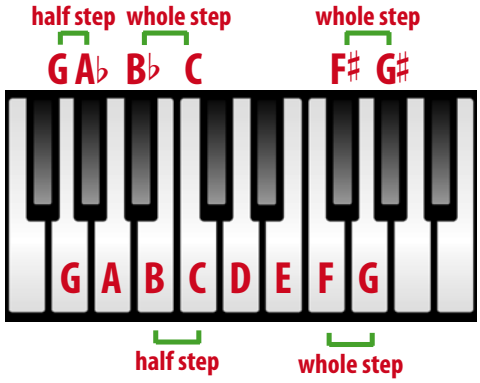
Allegro moderato



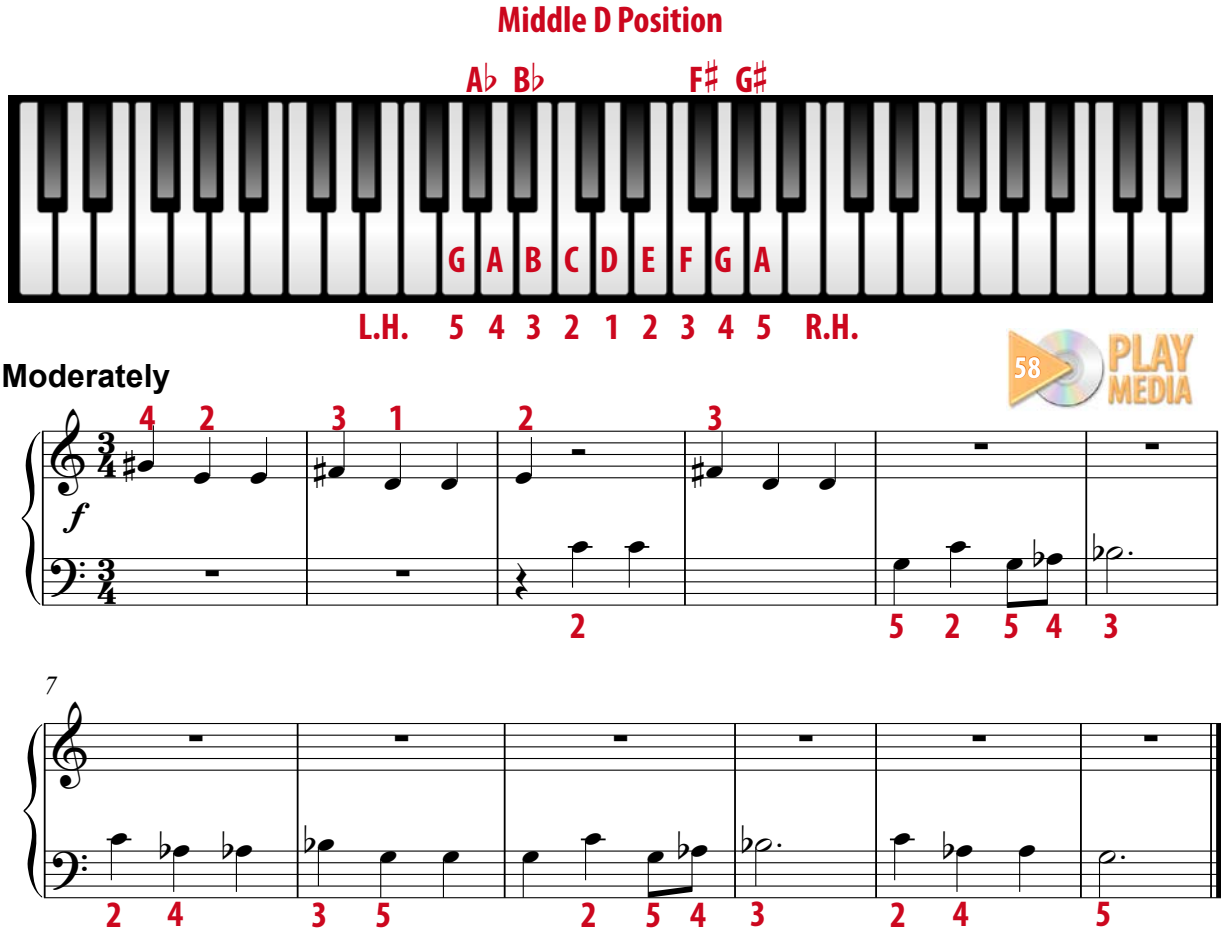


Whole Steps

A **whole step** is made up of two half steps. On the keyboard, a whole step is the measured distance from one key to another when there is exactly one key in between the two. A whole step is also referred to as a *whole tone*.



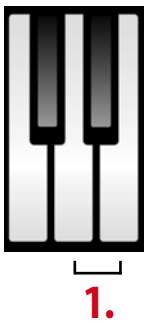
Exercise: Practice more sharps and flats with this piece. Remember that when a ♯ or a ♭ appears before a note, it applies for the whole measure. This is unless it gets canceled by a ♮ sign.



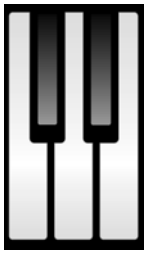
Review of Whole Steps & Half Steps

It can be rather difficult to distinguish whole steps and half steps. As the black keys are grouped in twos and threes, there are always pairs of white keys with a half step between them instead of the whole step you'd expect.

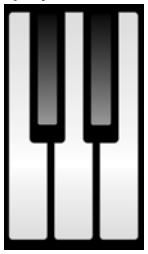
Test yourself on the examples below to see if you've mastered whole steps and half steps.



1.



2.



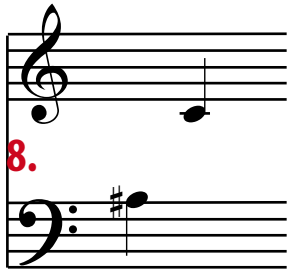
3.

4. E to F

5. G to G♯

6. B to C

7. A♭ to B♭



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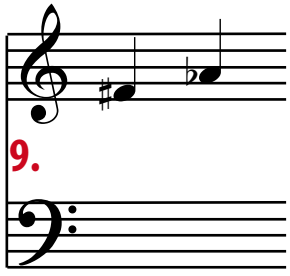

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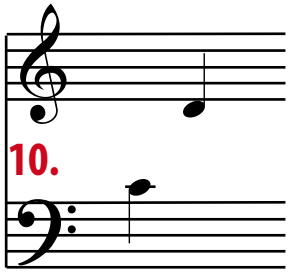
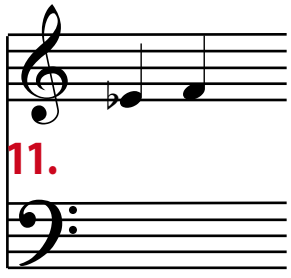
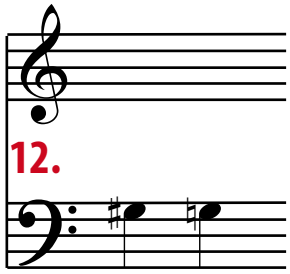


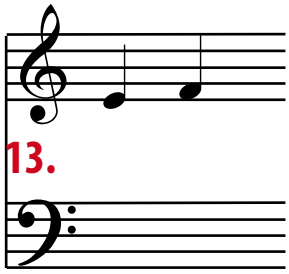
10.



11.



12.



13.

Answers: (1) whole, (2) whole, (3) half, (4) half, (5) half, (6) half, (7) whole, (8) whole, (9) whole, (10) whole, (11) whole, (12) half, (13) half.

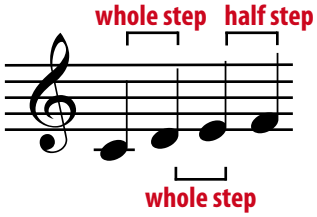
Chapter 13. Playing Scales

Now you are ready to look at scales! A **scale** is a series of eight notes that ascend and descend. A **major scale** (like C major or G major) has eight tones.

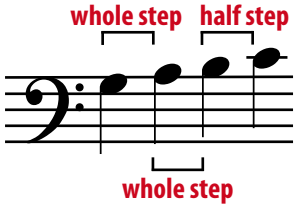
In order to play a scale, it is easier to divide the eight notes in half. Each part (which includes four notes) is called a **tetrachord**. A **major tetrachord** has the pattern:

whole step, whole step, half step

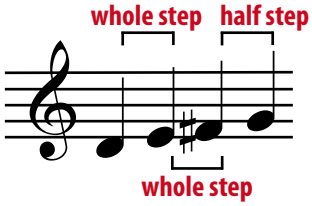
C major tetrachord (R.H.)



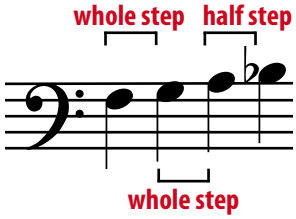
G major tetrachord (L.H.)



D major tetrachord (R.H.)



F major tetrachord (L.H.)

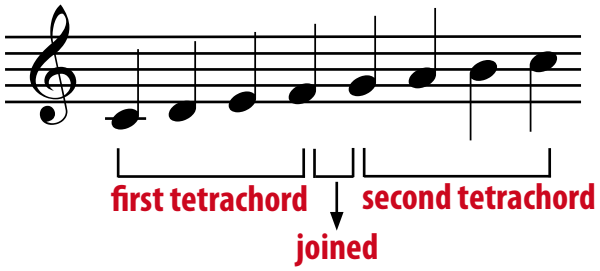


Every major scale is made from two major tetrachords joined in the middle by a whole step. The pattern for every major scale goes:

whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step

Any major scale can be worked out this way, regardless of what note you start on.

For example, the **C major scale** looks like this:



A scale will always end on the note you started with, but one **octave** (8 notes) up or down.

That note (the *first* and *last* of the scale) is called the **key note**.

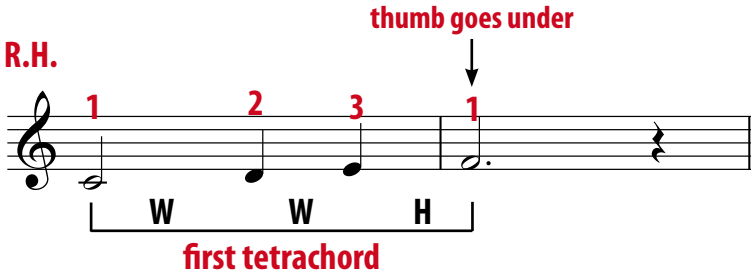
In the C major scale, the key note is C.

Hand Movement #1: Thumb Under

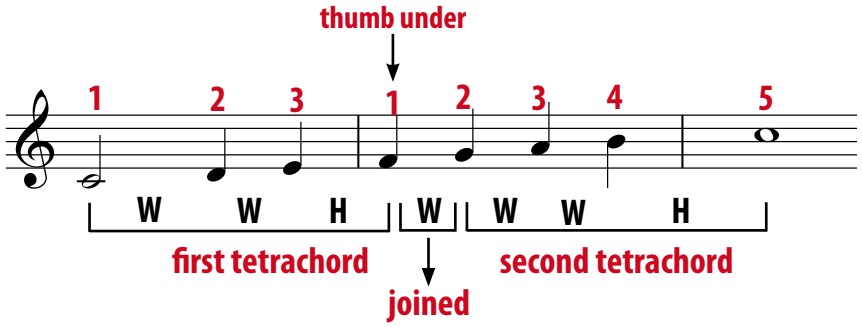
Playing scales involves shifting the hand across the keyboard at certain points to play every note in the scale. Let's practice with the first tetrachord now.

In playing the first tetrachord, we'll use the technique of having the thumb go under the hand in order to reach every note in the scale.

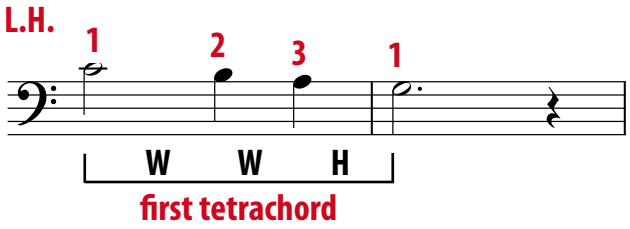
To see this process on the keyboard, watch Video Lesson 09.



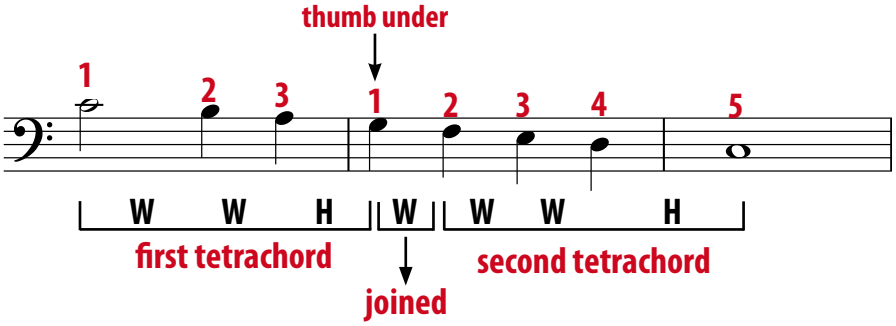
Practice this slowly several times to get used to the technique.



You can hit every note on the scale simply by repositioning your thumb.

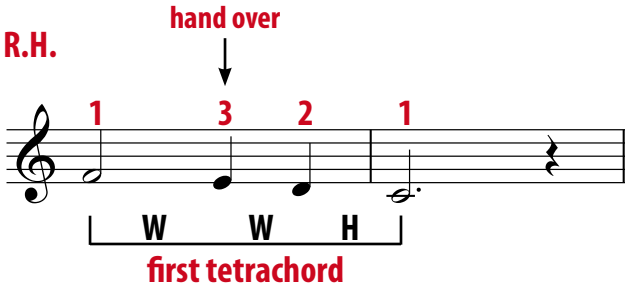


Now for the left hand. This time, the scale descends.

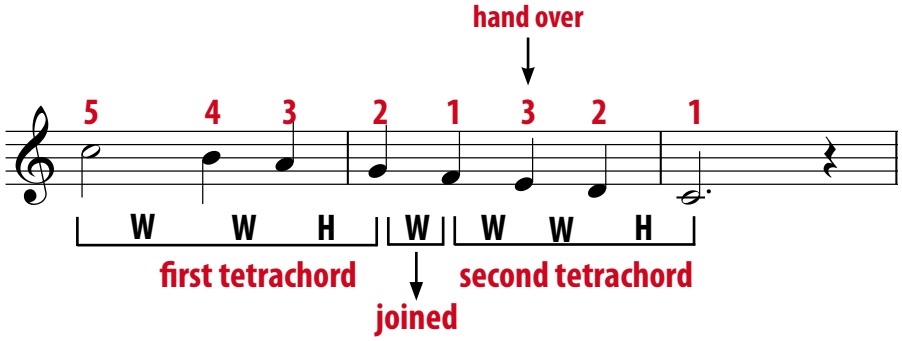


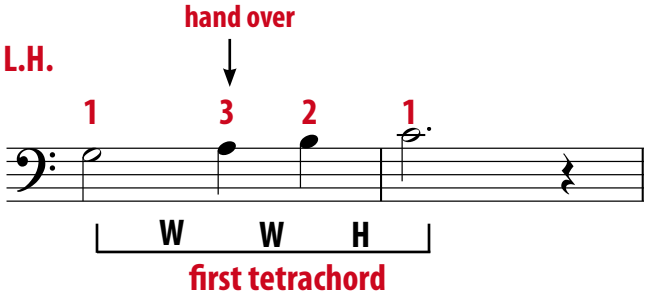
Hand Movement #2: Hand Over

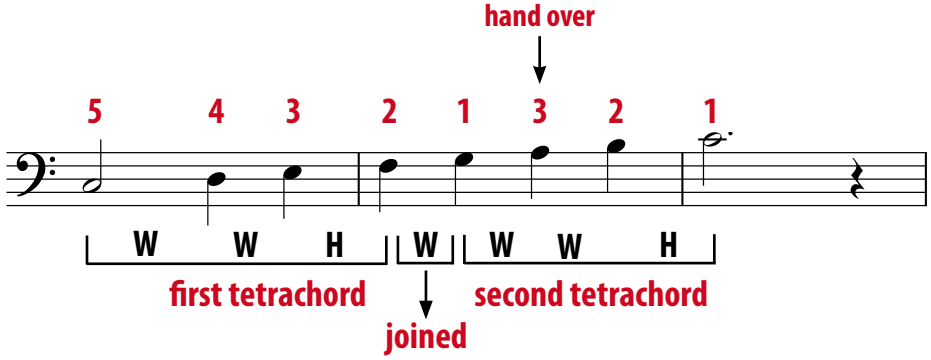
When scales go in the opposite direction, the hand must cross over the thumb. To be more precise, your middle finger will pass over your thumb.



Play slowly to get your hand used to the movement.

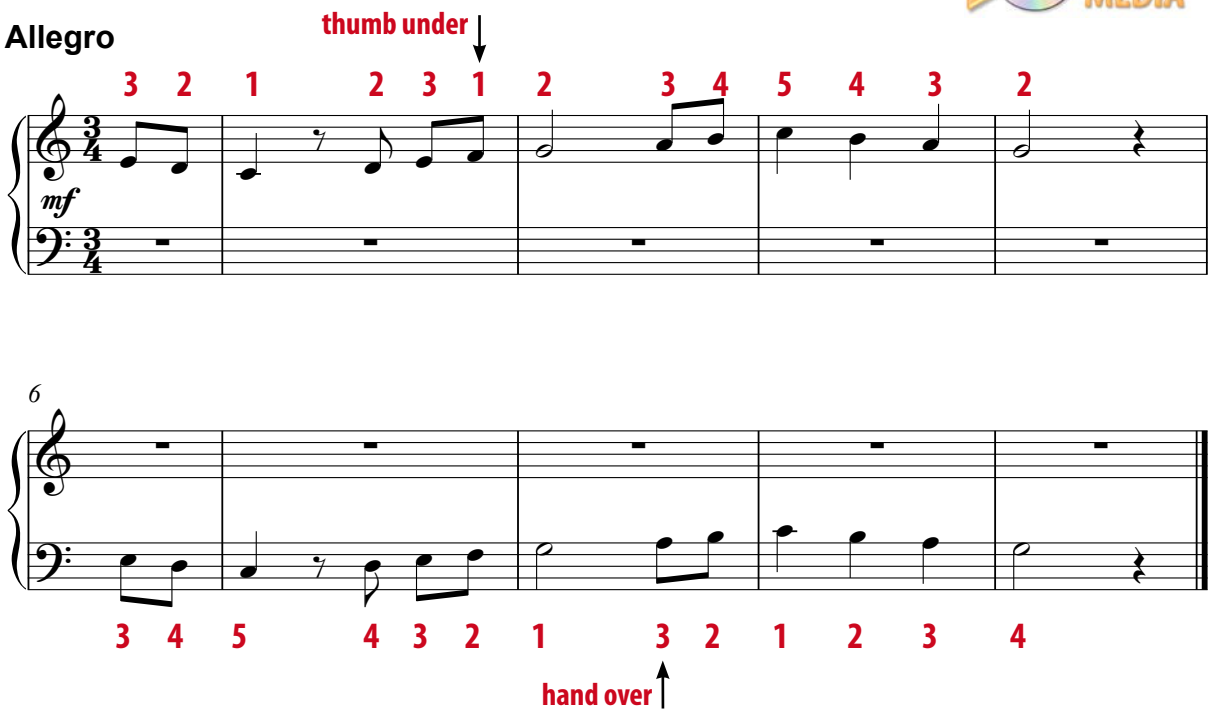




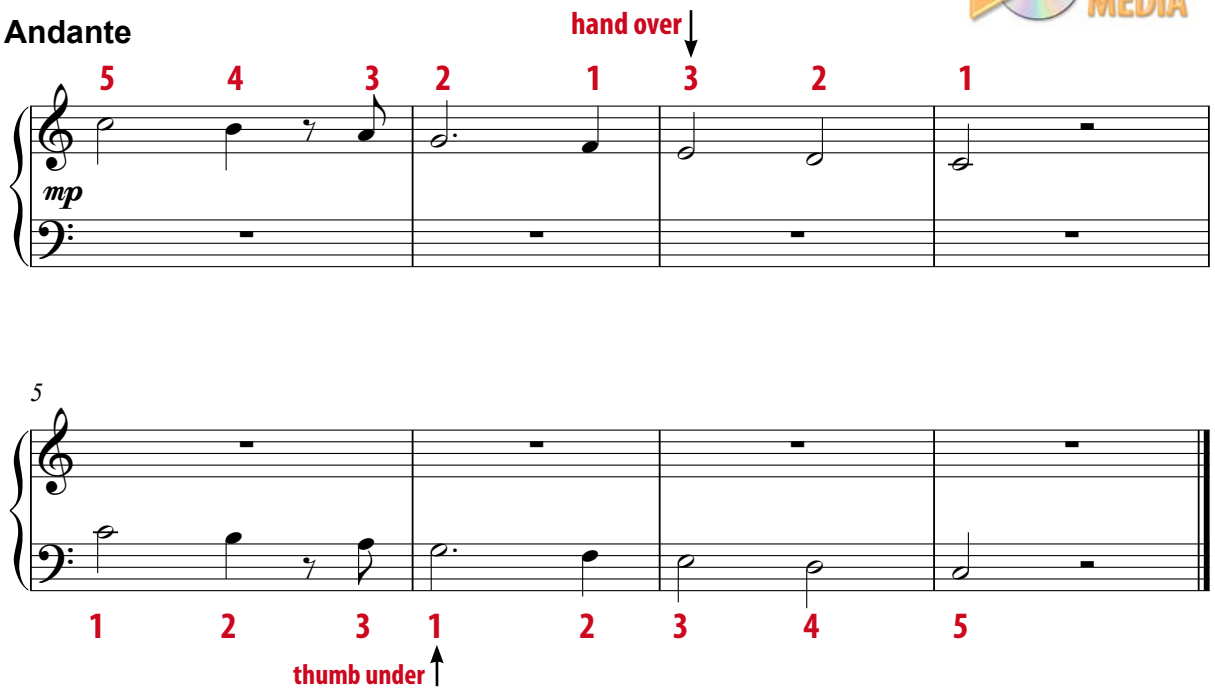


Exercise: Here are some songs that use the C major scale. You will need to make use of the hand over, thumb under technique.

The First Noel

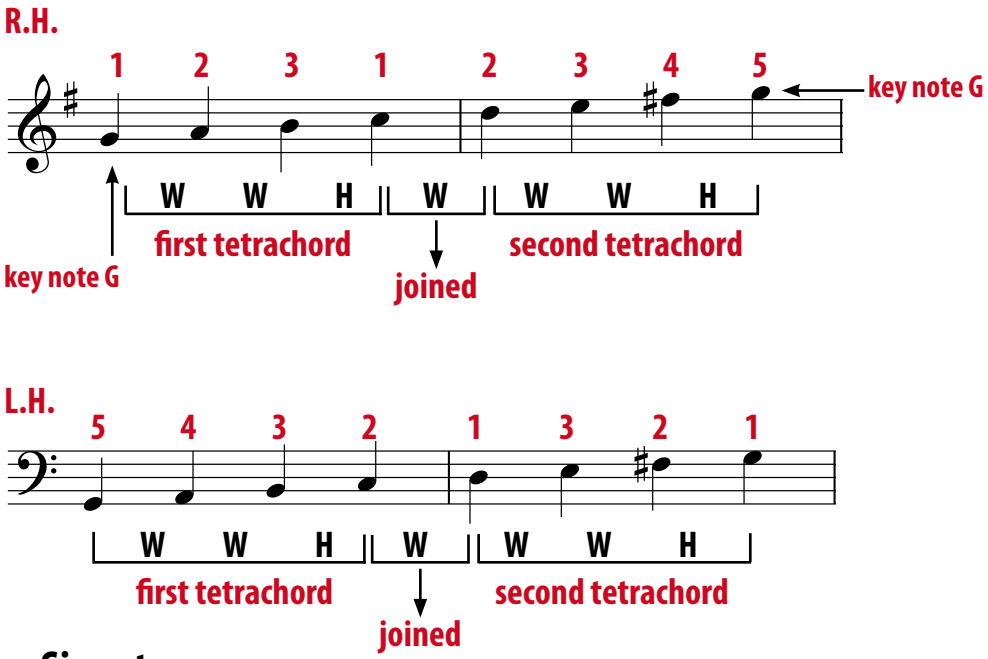


Joy to the World



The G Major Scale

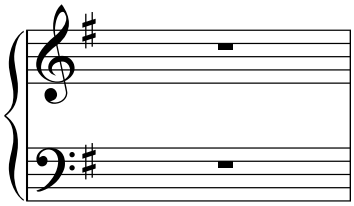
The next scale we are going to look at is the G major scale.



G Major Key Signature

Composers will often write pieces based around the notes in a certain scale. If a piece is based on the notes in the G major scale, we say that the piece is in the **key** of G major.

In order to indicate what key a song is in, composers add a group of sharps or flats after the clef mark. This group of sharps or flats is called the **key signature**.



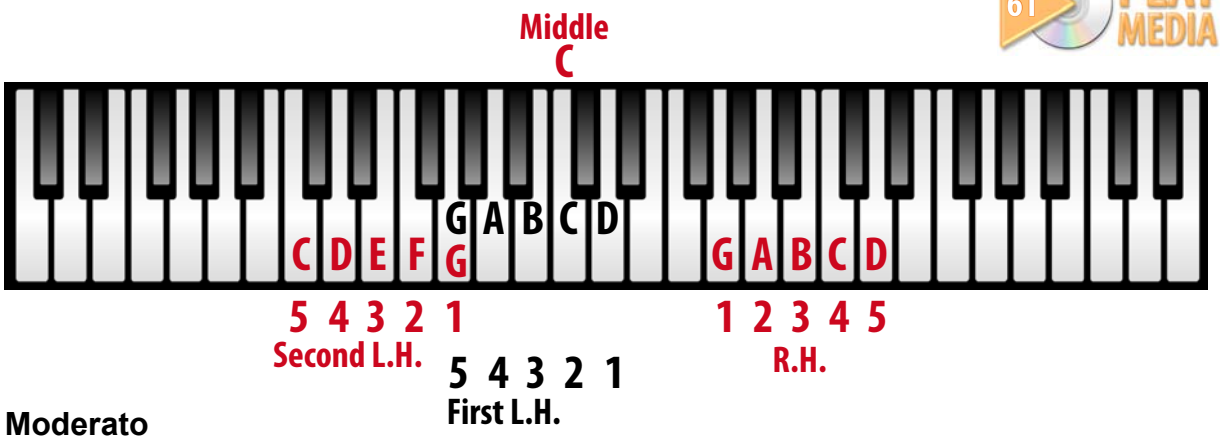
Here is the key signature for G major.

Note that it has one sharp in it, F ♯. Glance up at the G major scale above. You can see that there is only one sharp on the scale, attached to the note F.

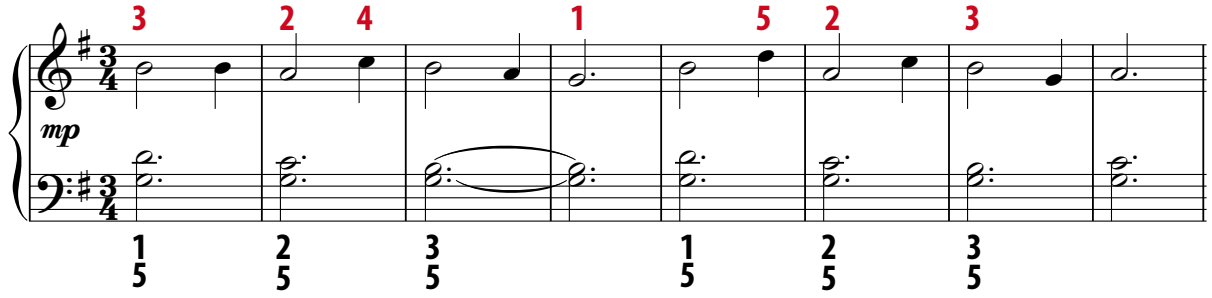
You can easily determine the key signature for any scale if you know what the scale looks like written out on the musical staff. For example, remember the C major scale? It has no sharps or flats. Therefore, when no sharps or flats appear at the beginning of the piece, you know that the piece is written in the key of C major.

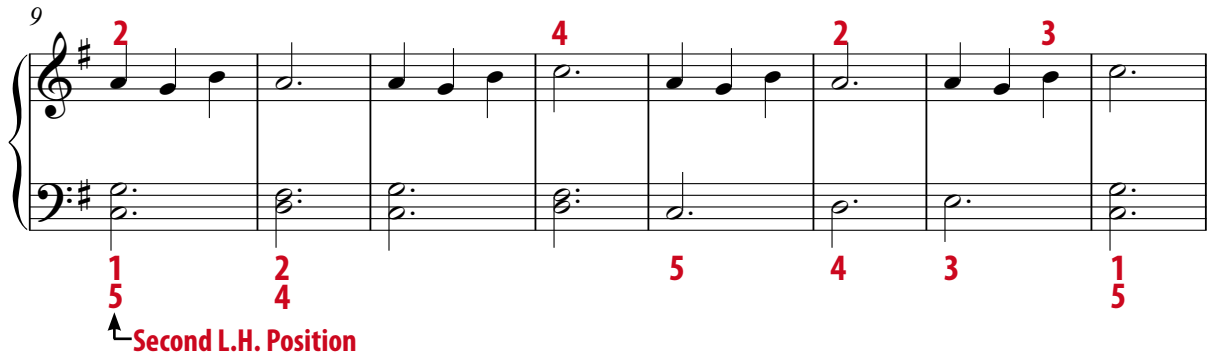
Sharps and flats written into the key signature apply to the *whole piece.* That means that whenever the note F appears in a song written in G major, you play it as an F ♯. The only time you will not play it as a sharp is if the note is preceded by the natural sign (♮).

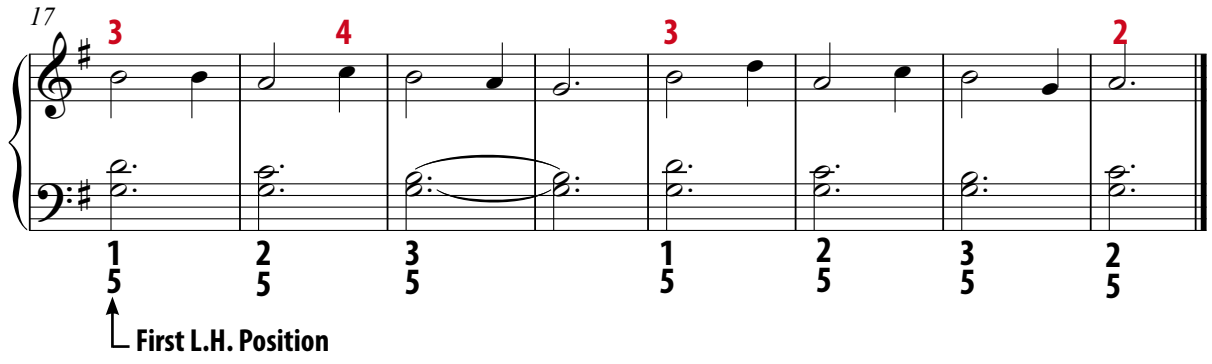
Exercise: The following piece has two left hand positions. Start with the first hand position and switch when prompted. Notice the key signature that tells you that the piece is in the G major key. Remember that this means that all Fs are F♯s.



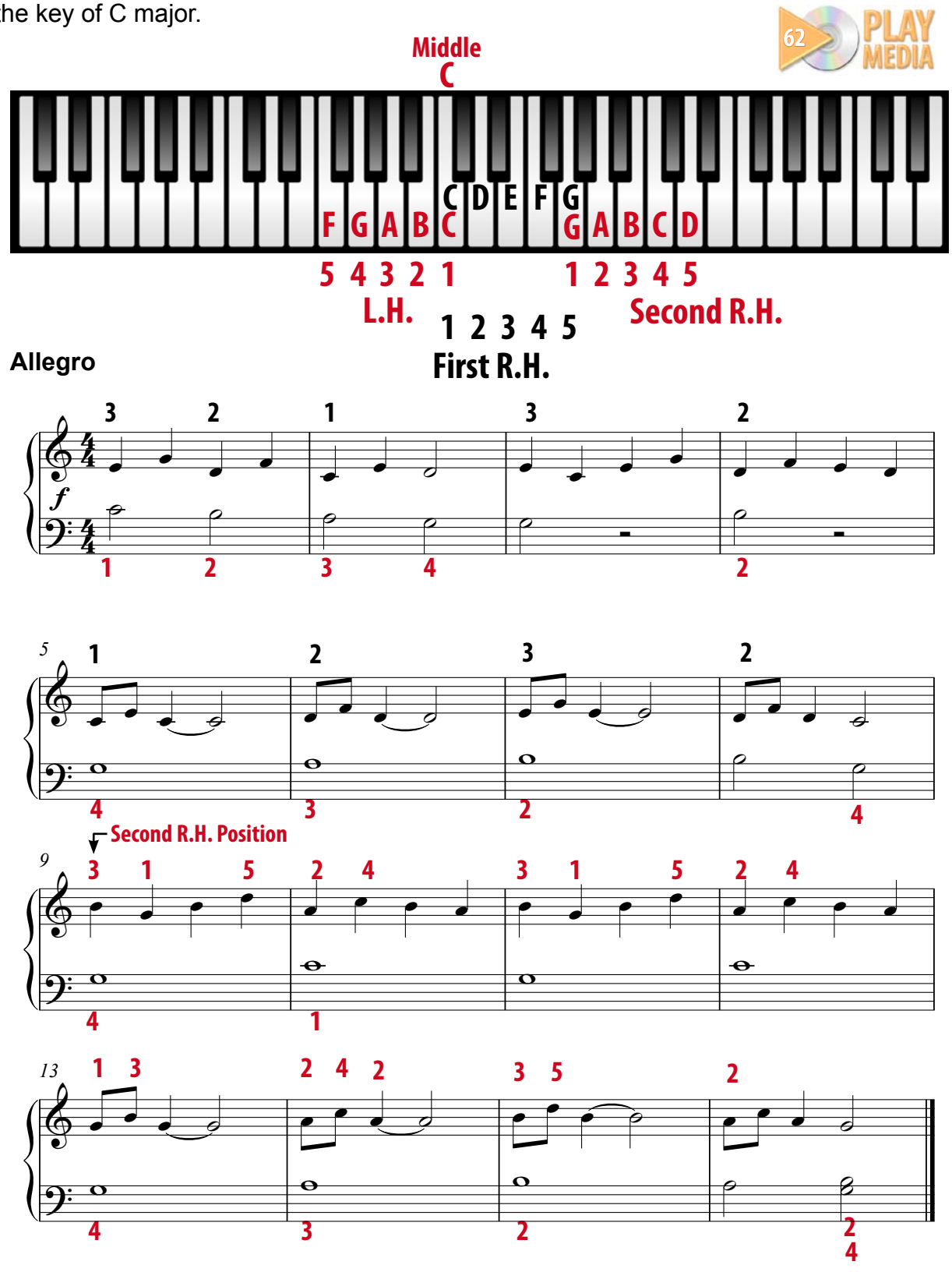
Moderato





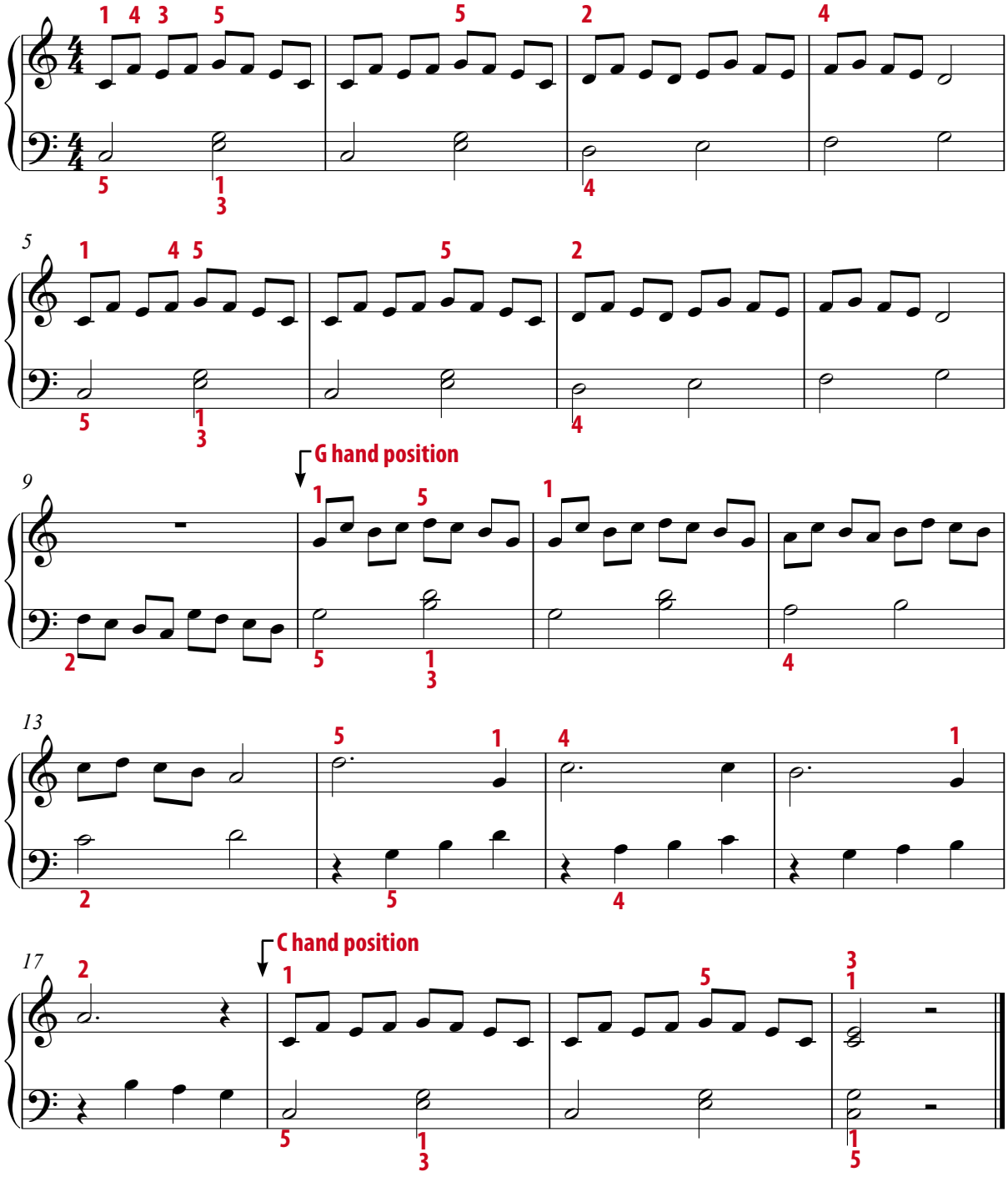


Exercise: The following piece has two right hand positions. Start with the first right hand position and change where indicated. Notice that there are no sharps or flats, so it is in the key of C major.



Exercise: Now you will have to switch to a different hand position for *both* hands.

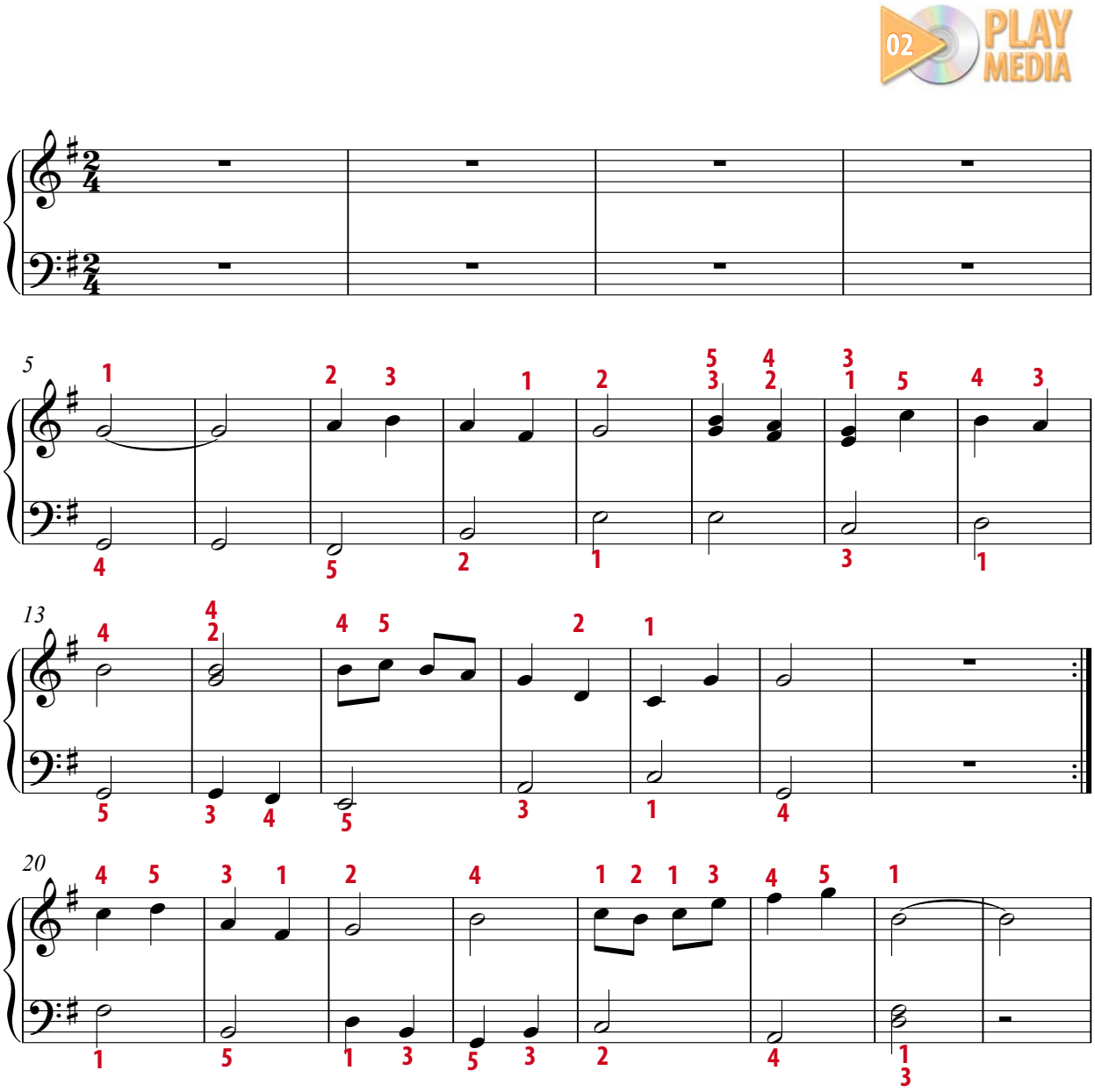
Moderato



WE'RE JAMMIN'!

Jam Track Two

Exercise: Here is another Jam Track for you to have some fun with! This piece is in the key of G major which you have just learned about. Listen to the track with piano first, and practice your part several times before you jam out with the band.



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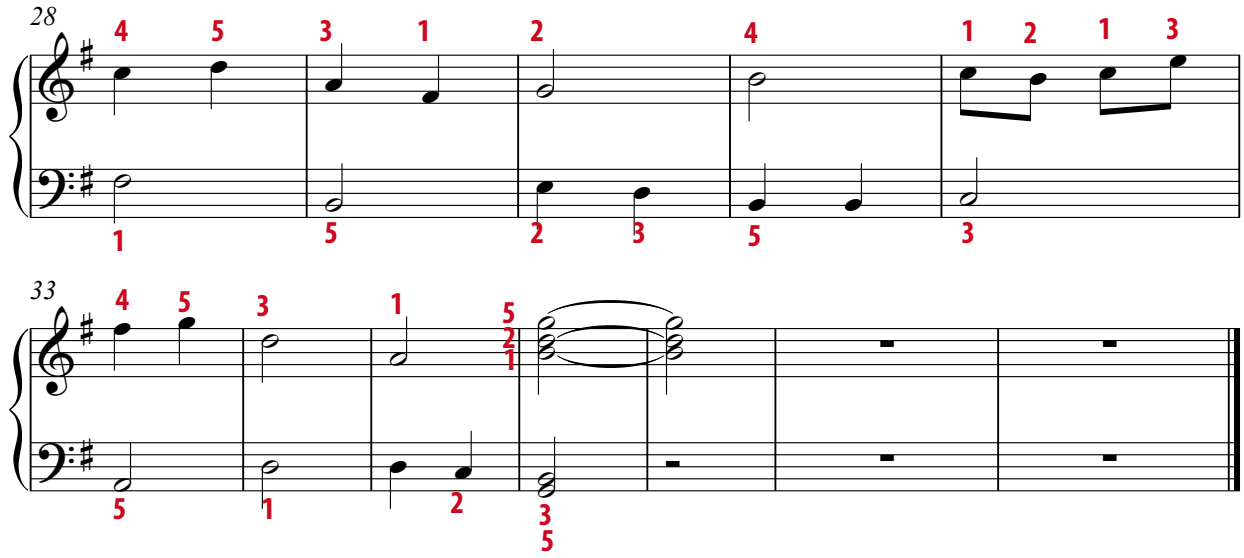


Play this track to jam out the song with the Rocket Band!

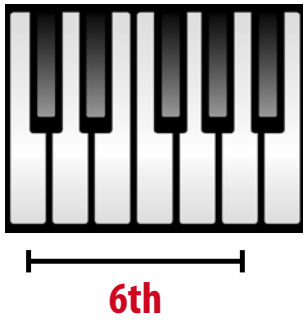
Chapter 14. Tempo Revisited and a New Interval

In this chapter, we're going to look at more tempo marks, including *legato, allegretto, poco,* and *lento*. You'll also learn more about the dotted notes.

For right now, though, let's look at a new interval: the 6th.

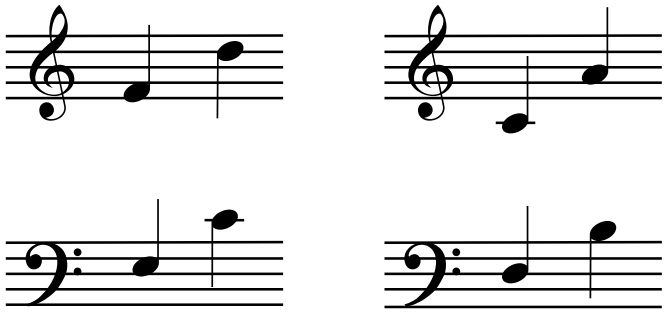
The 6th

When there are four white keys in between two notes played consecutively or simultaneously on the piano, you are dealing with a 6th.



On the musical staff, 6ths are written:

1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is three **lines** above it.
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is three **spaces** above it.

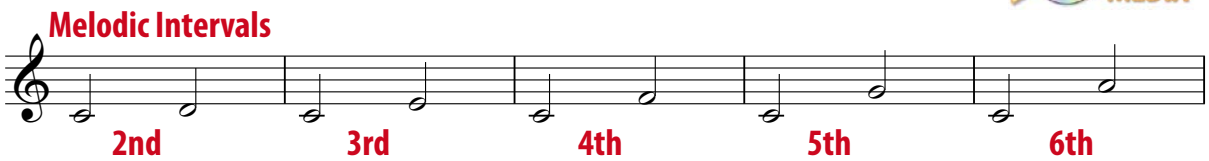


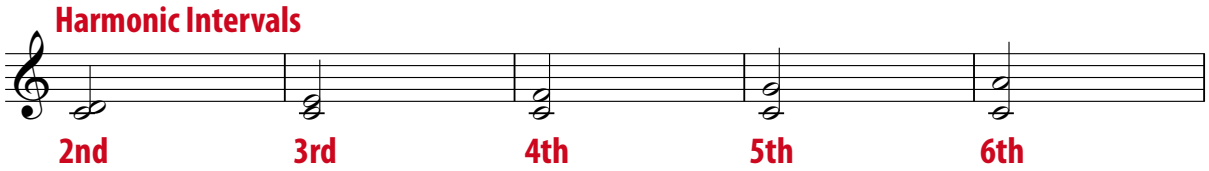
When playing 6ths, it is necessary to move either the pinky (5) or the thumb (1) to reach the extra notes. Let's take a look at what this would mean on the keyboard, starting with the right hand in the C position. For extra help, see the video lesson.

R.H.

The thumb can now play either the C or B note, while the pinky can play either the G or A note.

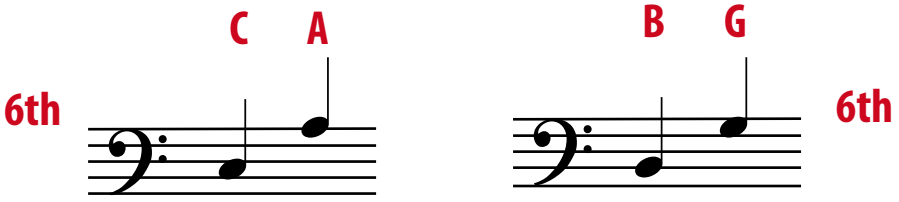
Here's a brief recap of the intervals we've covered so far.

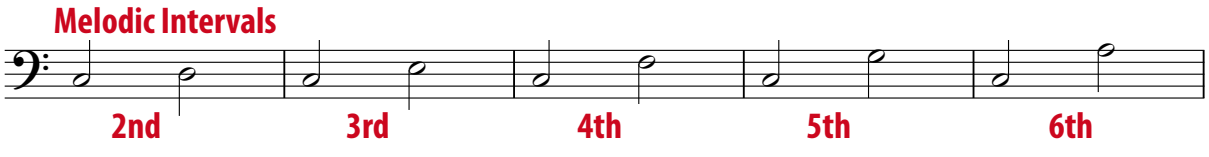


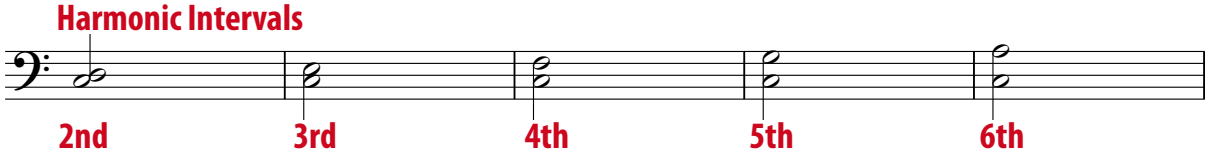


Now, let's look at what this will mean for the left hand in the C position.

Again, the thumb can now play either the C or B note, while the pinky can play either the G or A note.



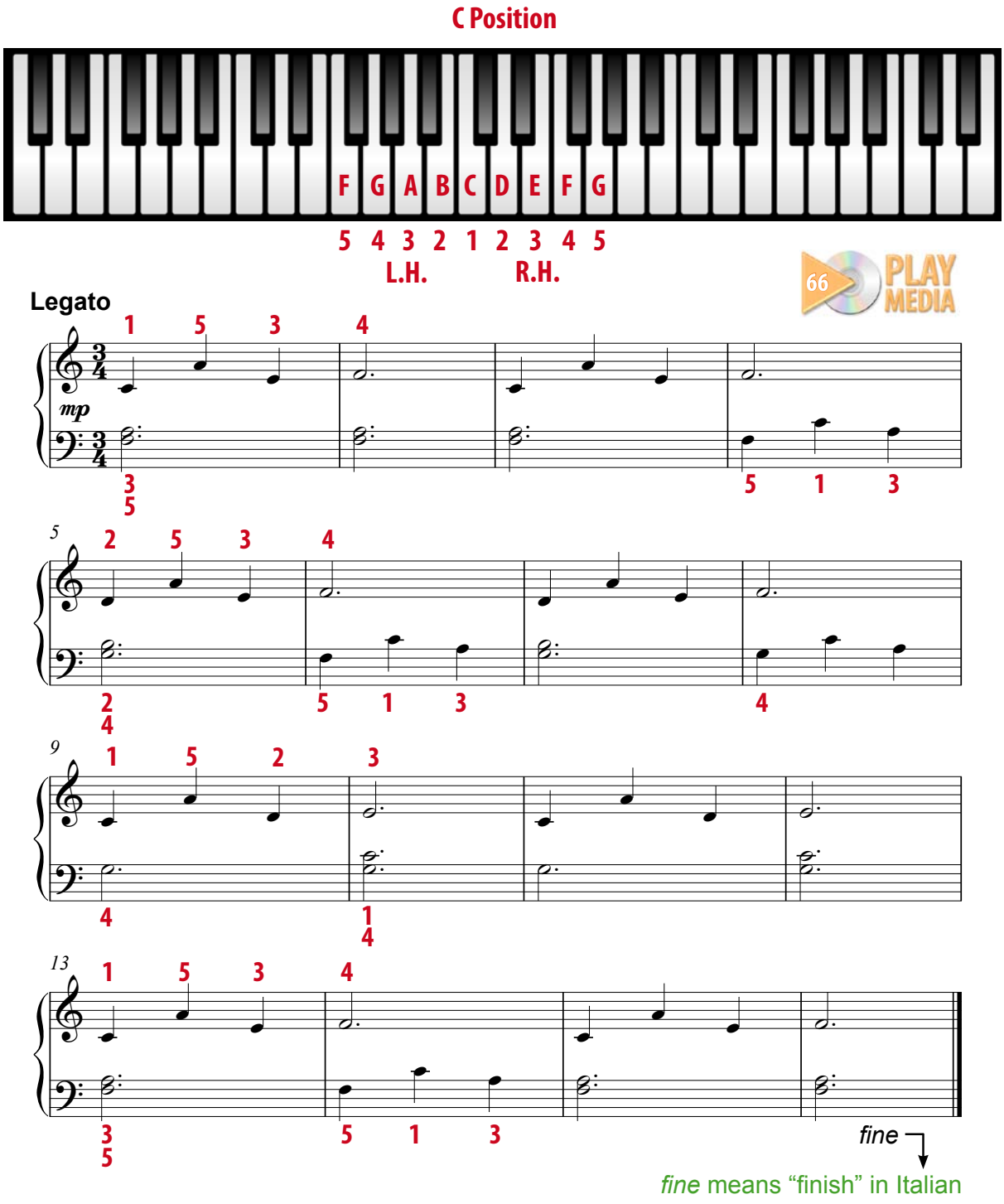




Legato

Legato is an Italian word that means “smoothly.” When you see it before a piece, you should play that piece so that all the notes are joined into a smooth flow.

Exercise: Play the following piece in a smooth way. Remember that the dotted half note means that you should hold the note for an extra beat.



Allegretto

Allegretto means to play quickly, but not quite as quick as *allegro.*

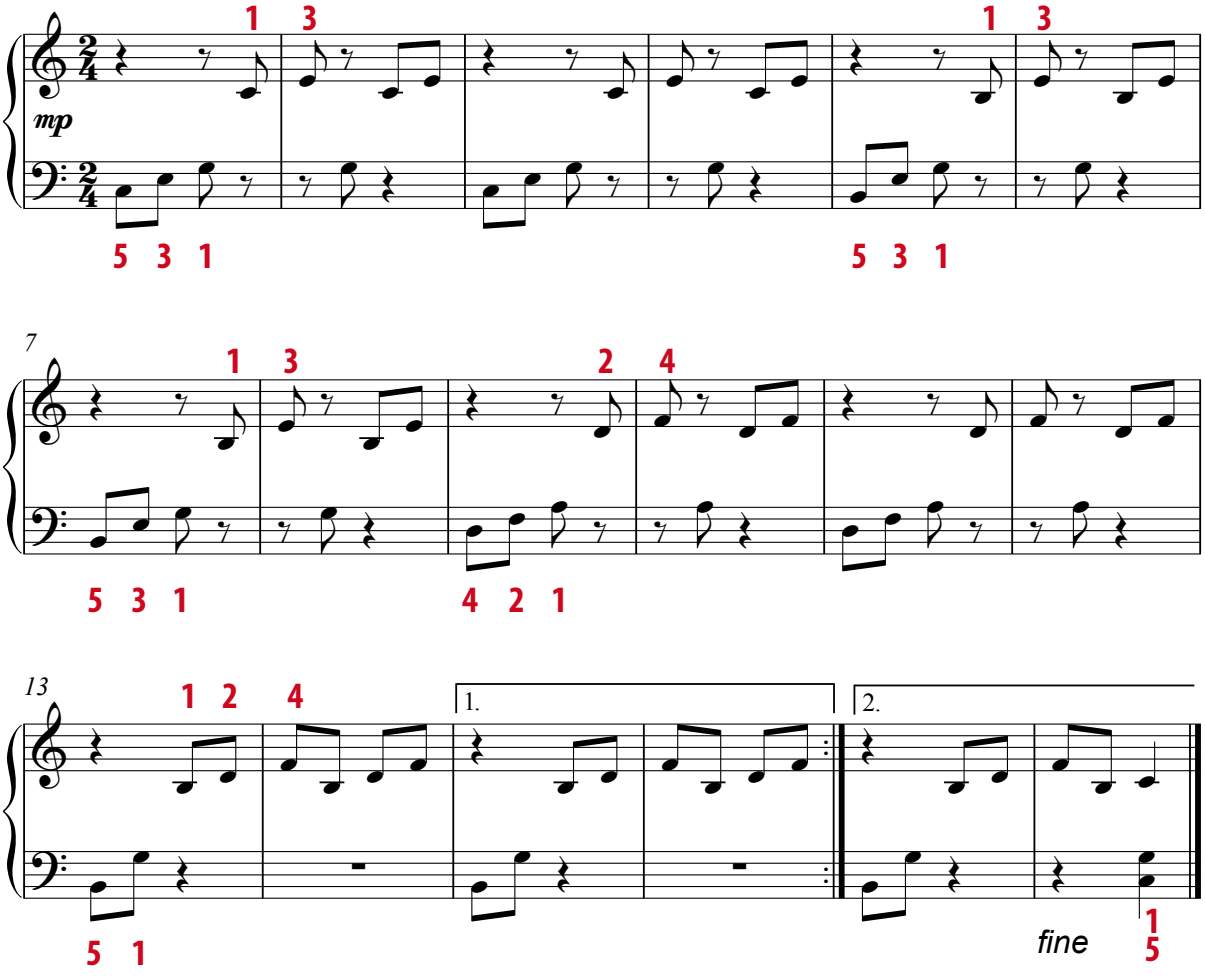
Exercise: The following piece has both hands moving to cover the extra keys demanded by the intervals. Note the 1st and 2nd time endings.

C Position

Prelude

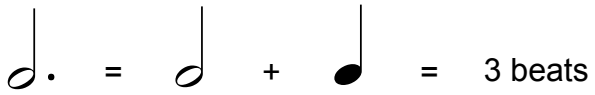
PLAY MEDIA 67

Allegretto

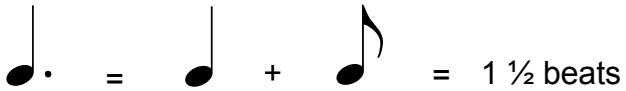


Dotted Notes

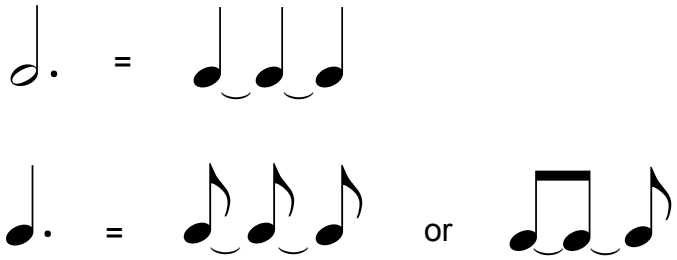
In Chapter 6 pg 48, you learned that a dot after a note makes that note longer by half its original value. You practiced with the dotted half note.



A dotted quarter note functions in exactly the same way.



In other words, a dotted half note equals three tied quarter notes, while a dotted quarter note equals three tied eighth notes.



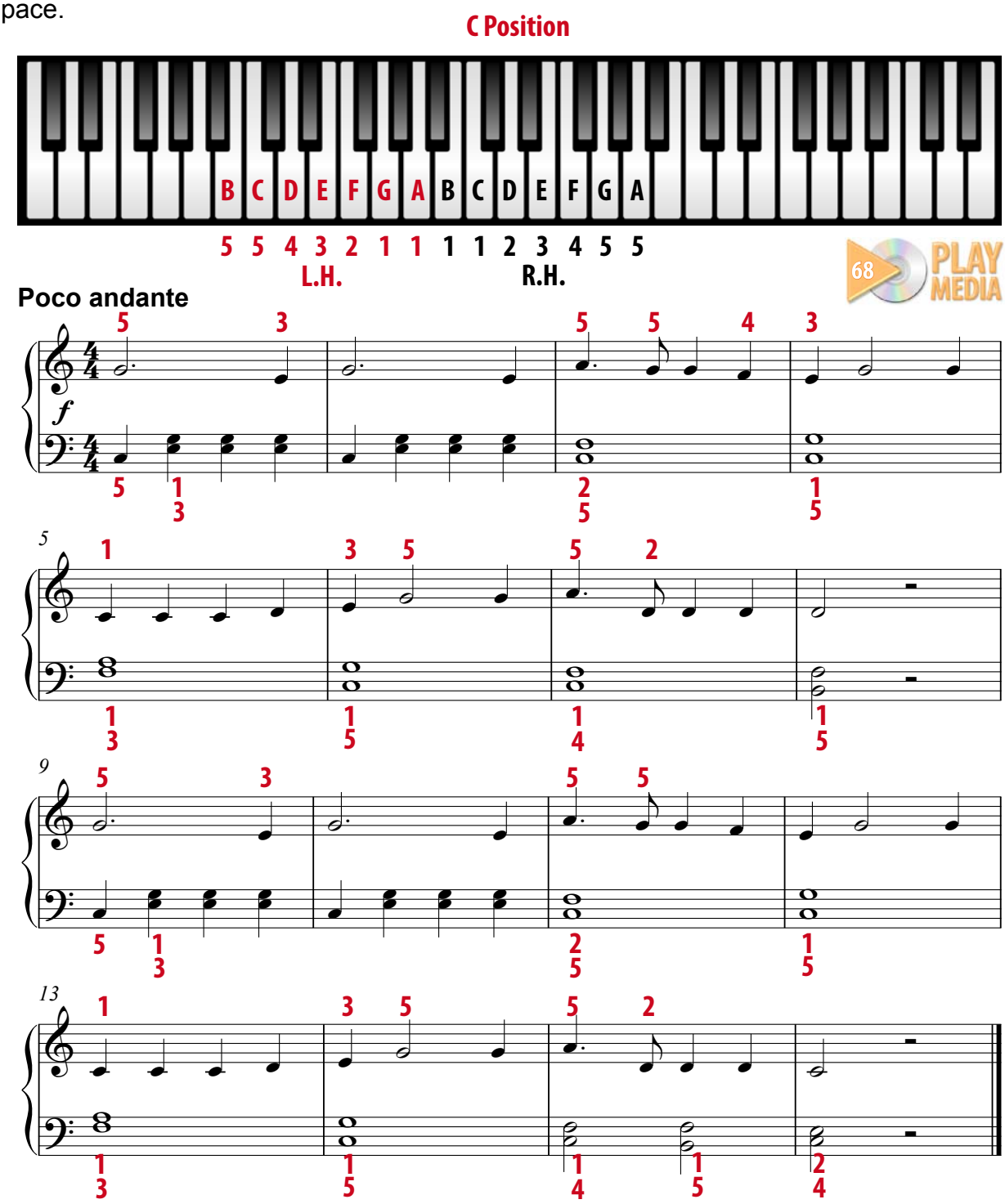
Exercise: Count or clap this exercise aloud.

Exercise: Now, do the exercise again, but written the correct way (using dotted quarter and half notes).

Poco

Poco is Italian for “a little.” It is another performance indicator that goes in conjunction with other tempo indicators.

Exercise: The following piece should be played “a little” *andante*, or at a walking pace.



Lento

You already learned the Italian word *adagio,* which means to play slowly. *Lento* is used interchangeably with *adagio* to indicate that you should play the piece slowly.

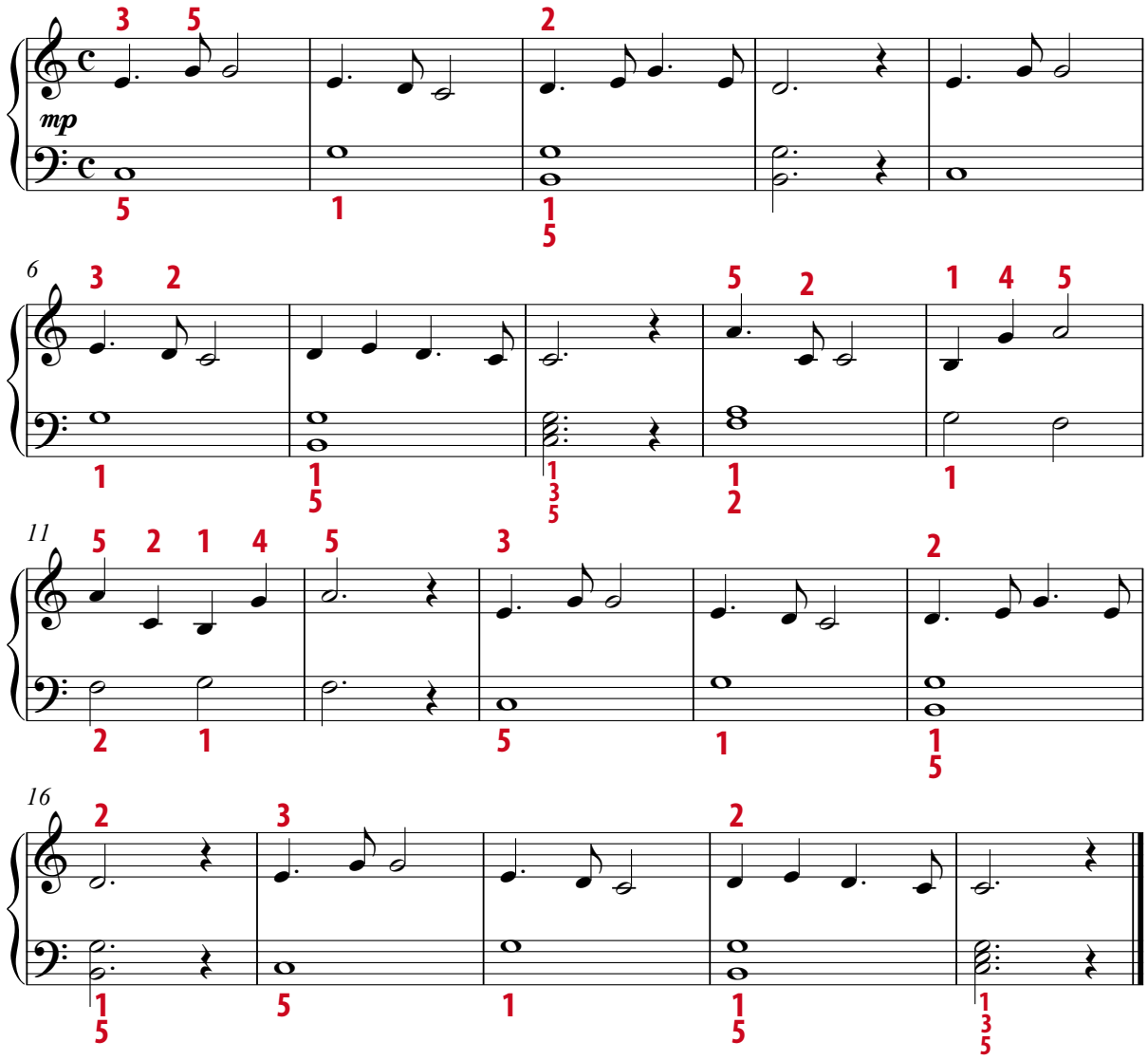
You should also note that the letter 𝐂 that appears after the clef mark is a shortened version of the time signature for common time, or $\frac{4}{4}$ time.

𝐂 = Common Time

Exercise: The following piece should be played "a little" *andante*, or a little bit at a walking pace. Use the extended C position to reach all the notes and be careful with the dotted notes.

Antonín Dvořák

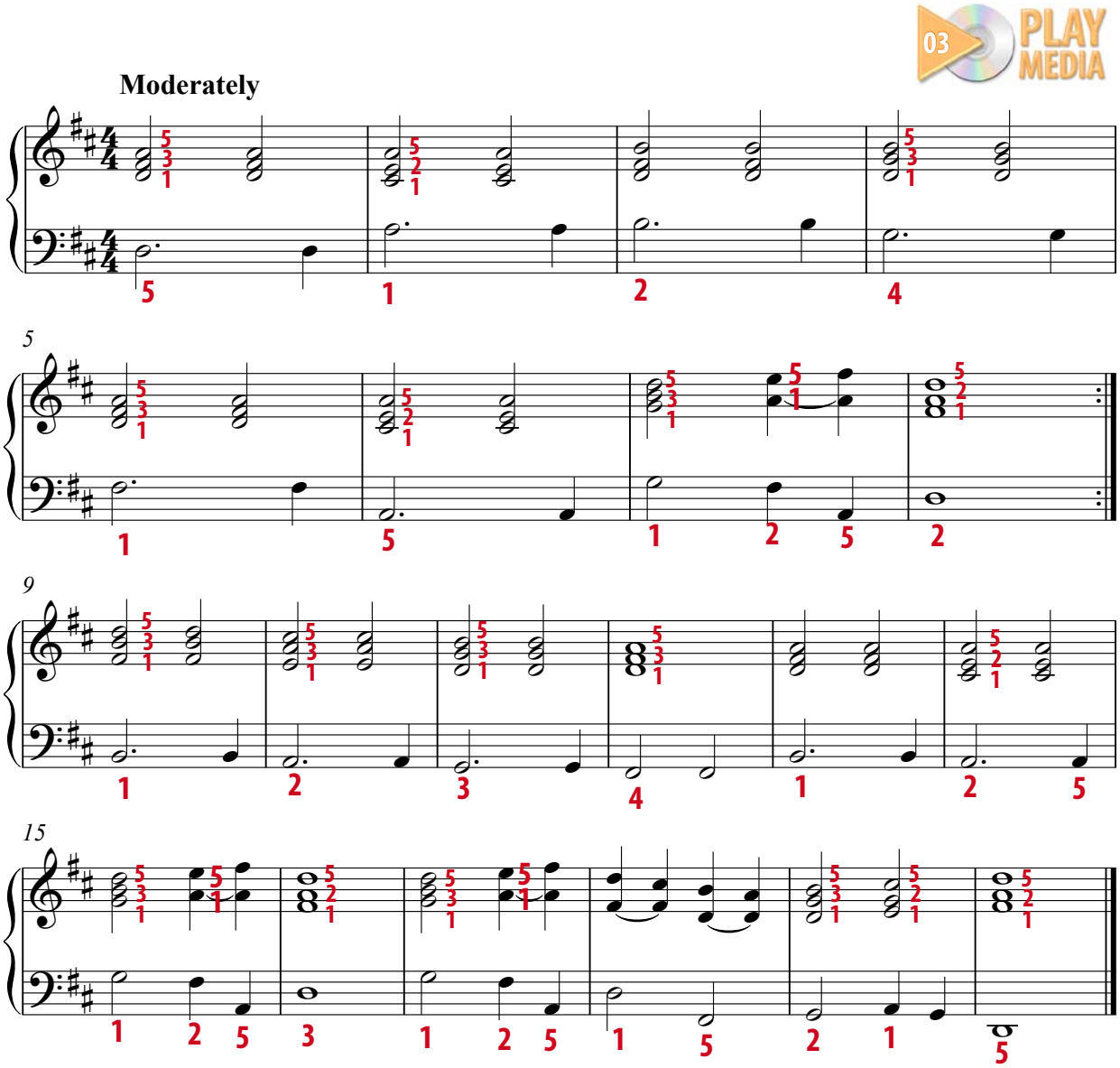
Lento



WE'RE JAMMIN'!

Jam Track Three

Exercise: This Jam Track for you to play includes use of the dotted half note you have just been learning about. Practice your piano part and listen to the first track with piano before you go on to play with the band in the second track.



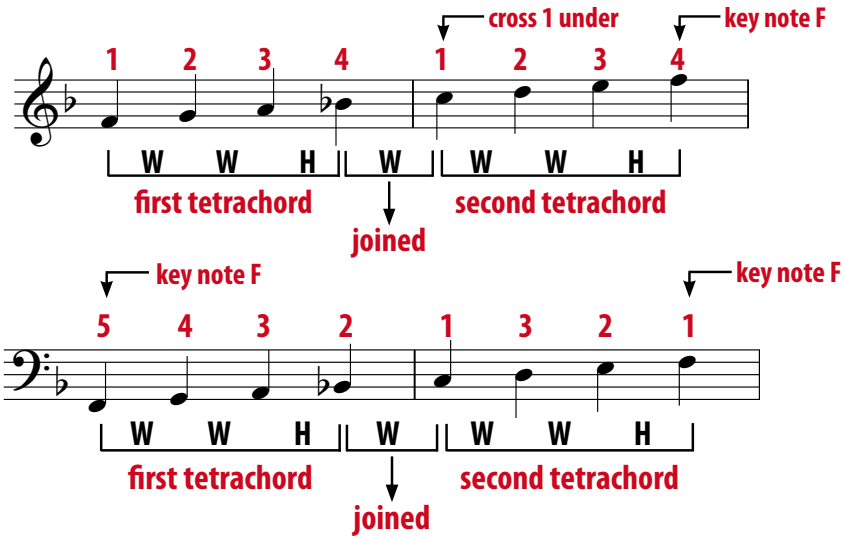
Are you ready to play with the Rocket Band? Let's have a go!

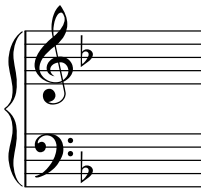
Chapter 15. Two New Scales

In this chapter, you are going to learn two new scales: F major and D major. Also, you'll learn the last two intervals: 7ths and 8ths.

The F Major Scale

Whereas the G major scale had one sharp, the F major scale has one flat, B♭



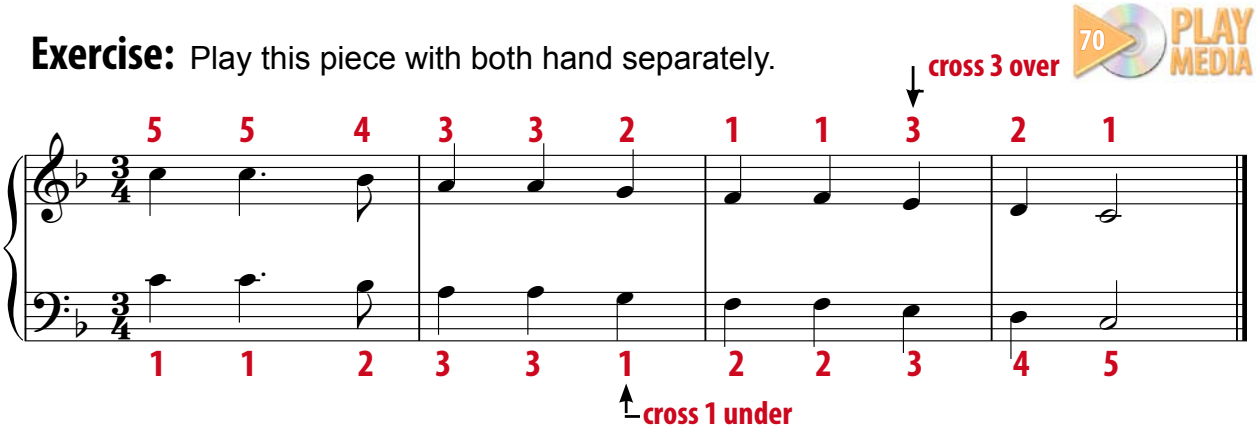


Note the key signature.

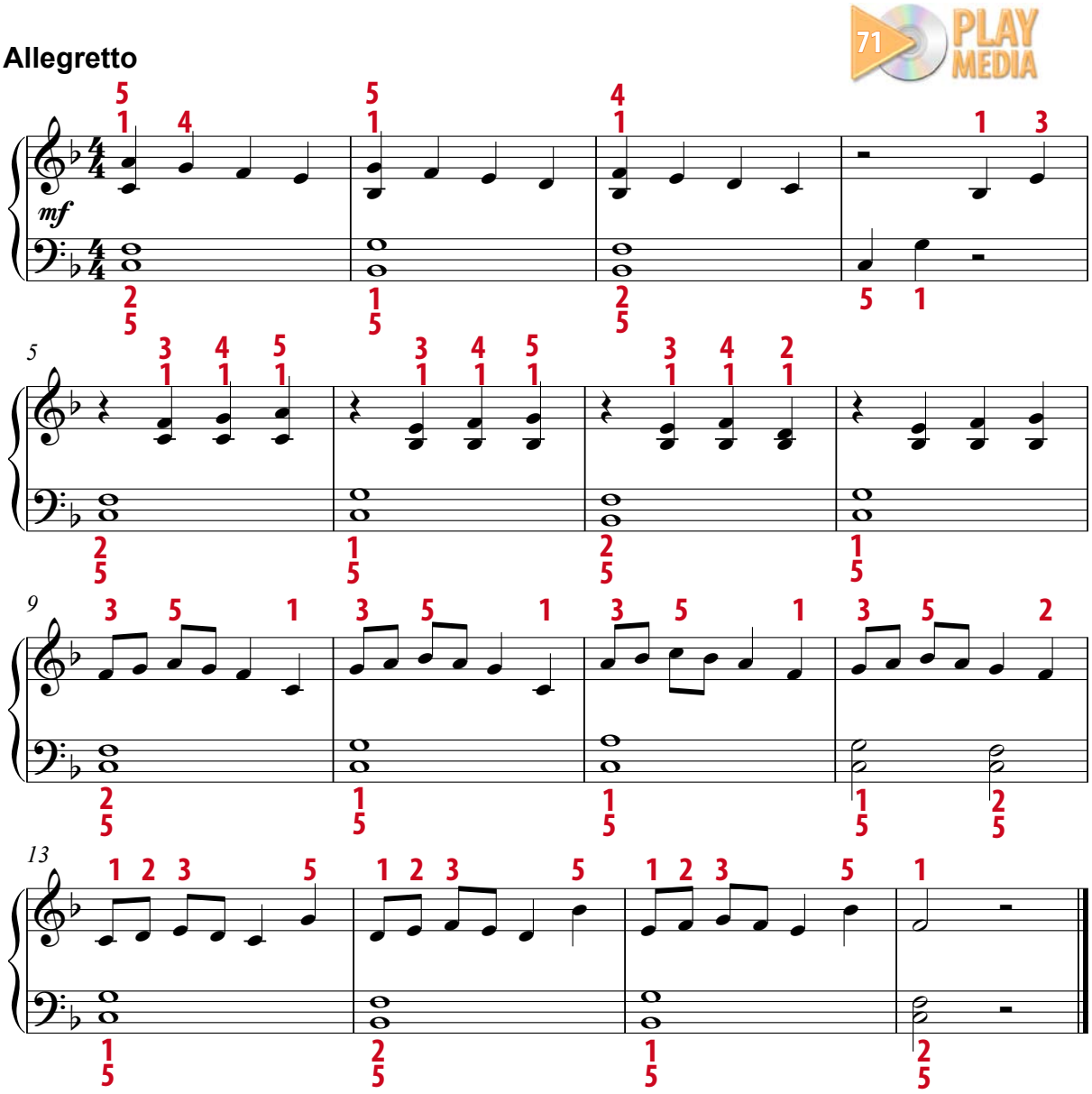
The fingering for the F major scale is a little different from the scales you've learned so far. When your right hand plays the scale, it would be too awkward to cross your thumb under your middle finger. Instead, your right thumb will go under your right ring finger.

Practice the F major scale, ascending and descending with both hands. Remember that when playing a descending scale with your right hand, the right ring finger crosses over. When playing a descending scale with your left hand, the thumb goes under.

Exercise: Play this piece with both hand separately.



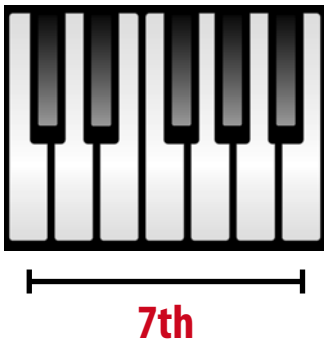
Exercise: This piece has a **moving right hand position**. In other words, the right hand position has to adjust to cover all the notes. The following positions will help you get used to the movement needed to encompass the notes outside the regular hand position.



The 7th

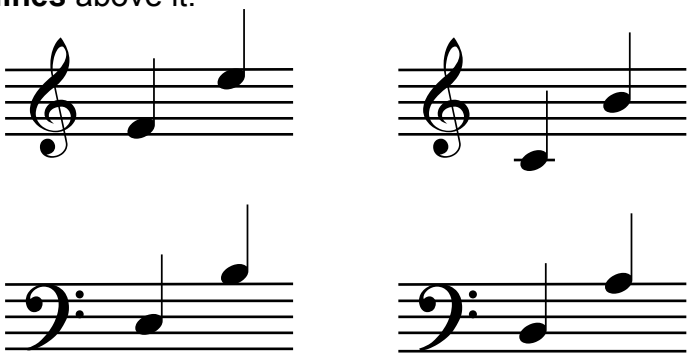
Now that you're becoming so good at moving your hands around the keyboard, let's try a new interval: the 7th. This interval is measured by having five white keys between the notes.

The 7ths can sound slightly dissonant to begin with, so don't worry if they sound a little funny to you. They take a little getting used to.



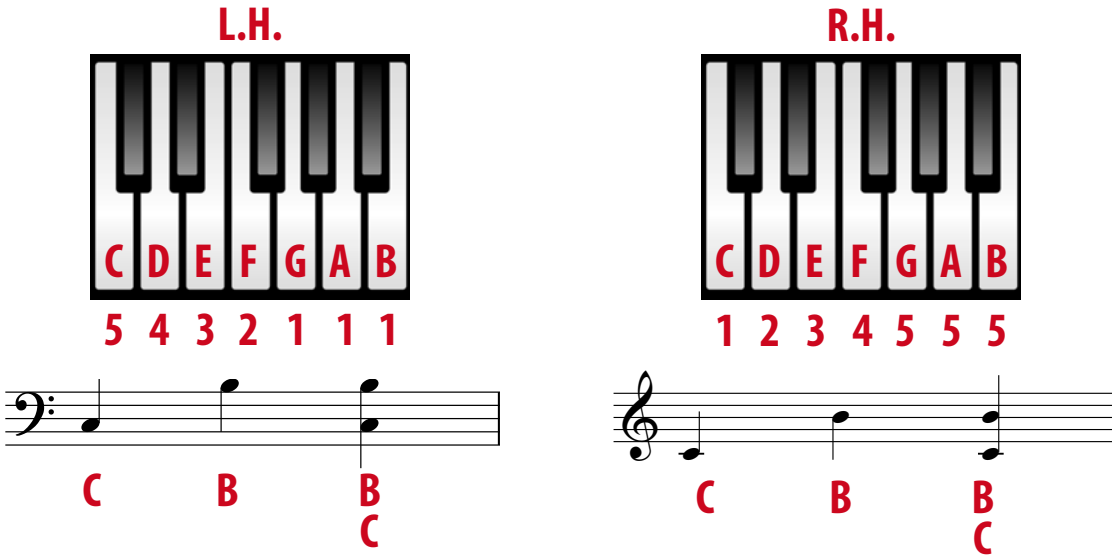
On the musical staff, 7ths are written:

1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is three **spaces** above it.
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is three **lines** above it.



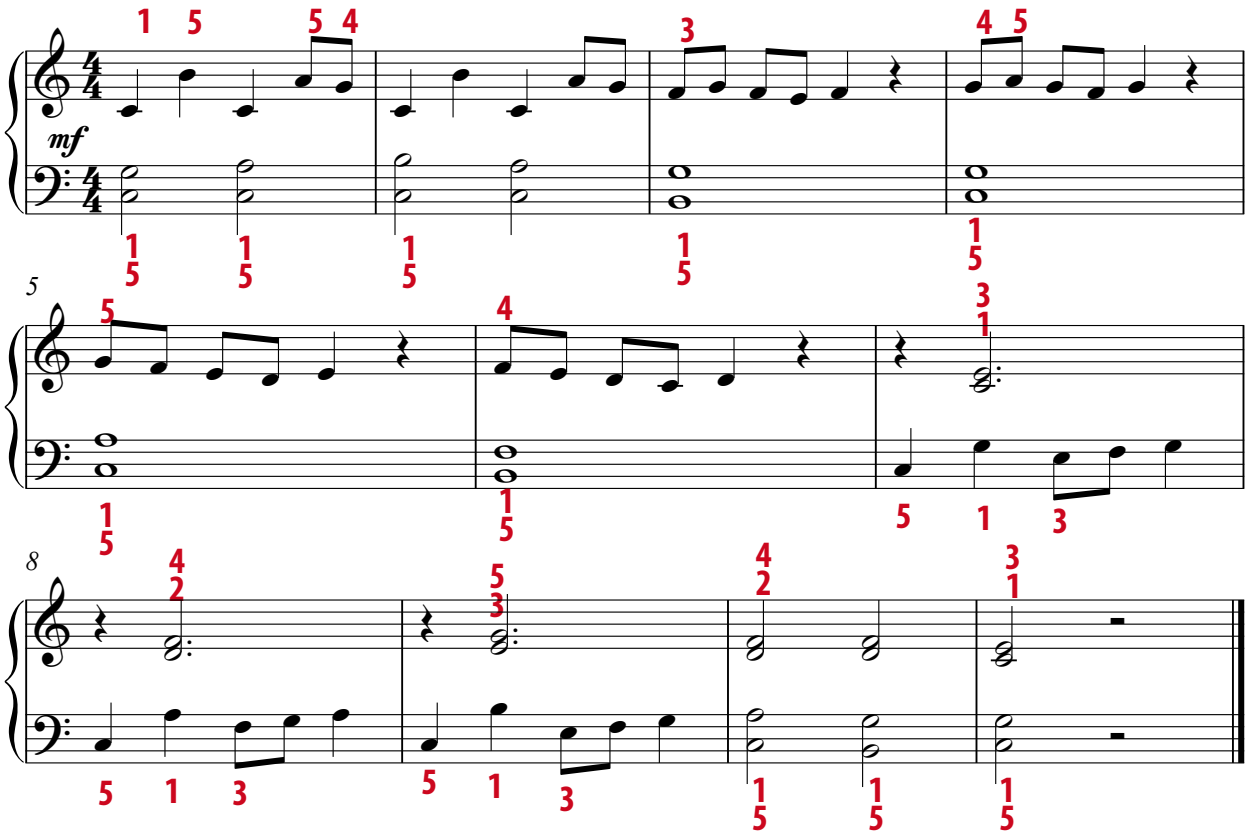
When you play 7ths, you will need to reach your fingers even farther. Look at the hand position below. Note that on the left hand, your thumb will play not just G and A, but B as well. On the right hand, your pinky will play G, A, and B.

If you need extra help with the hand position, play Video Lesson 12.

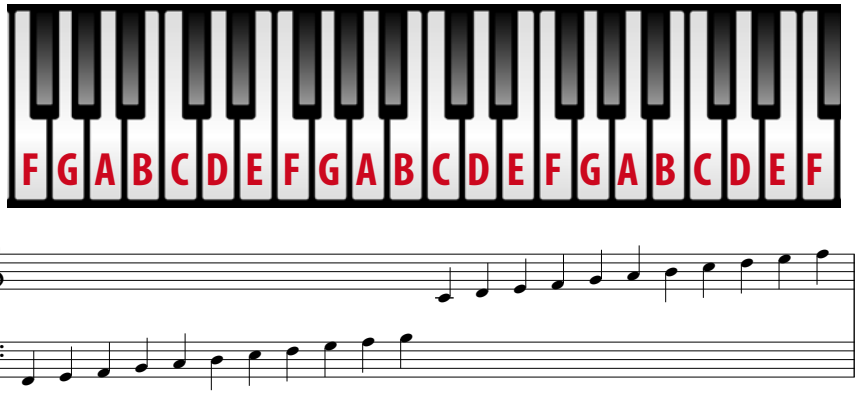


Exercise: Use the left and right hand positions shown below to play the following piece and accustom your ear to 7ths.

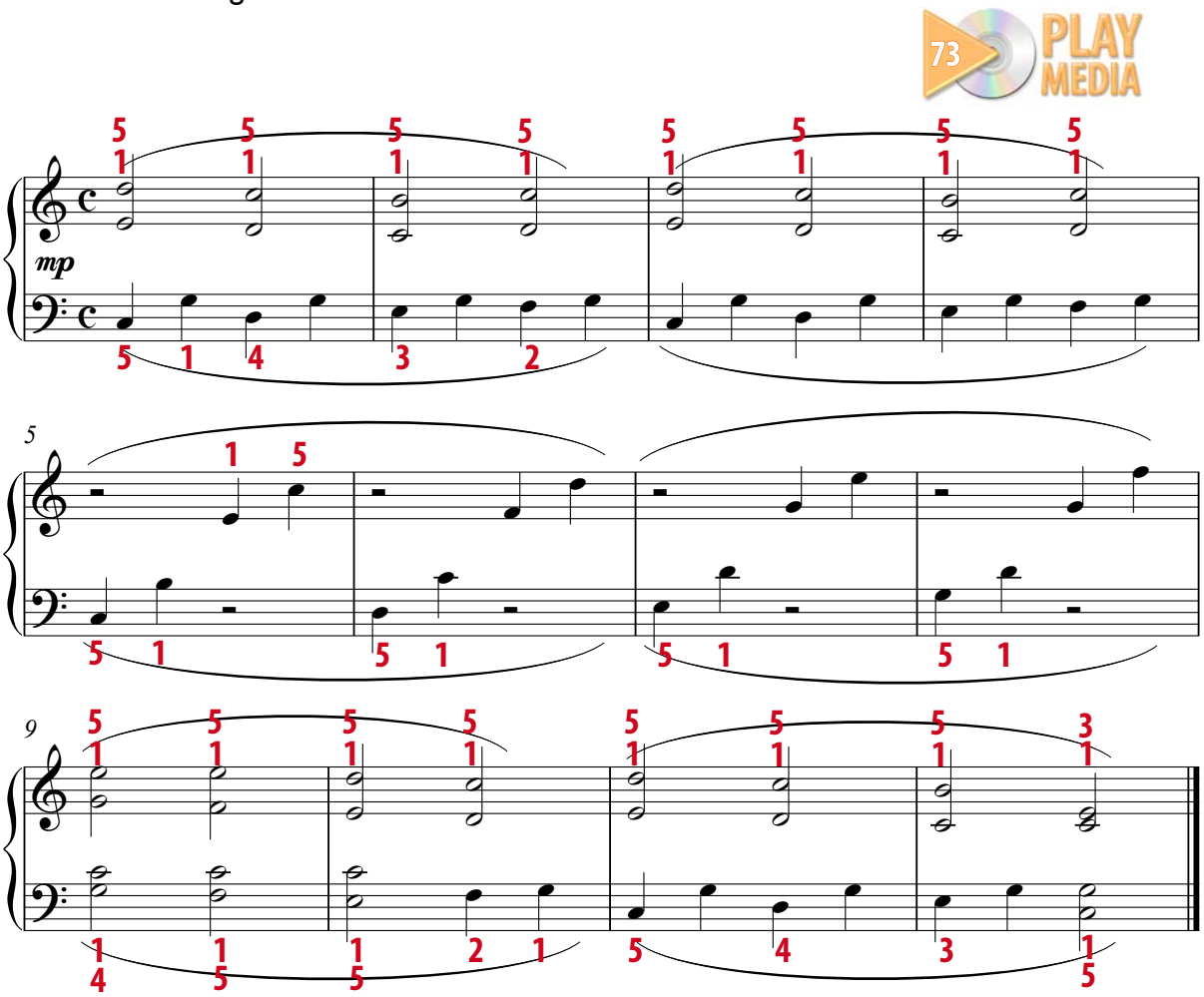
Moderato



Here's a quick recap of the notes we've covered so far.

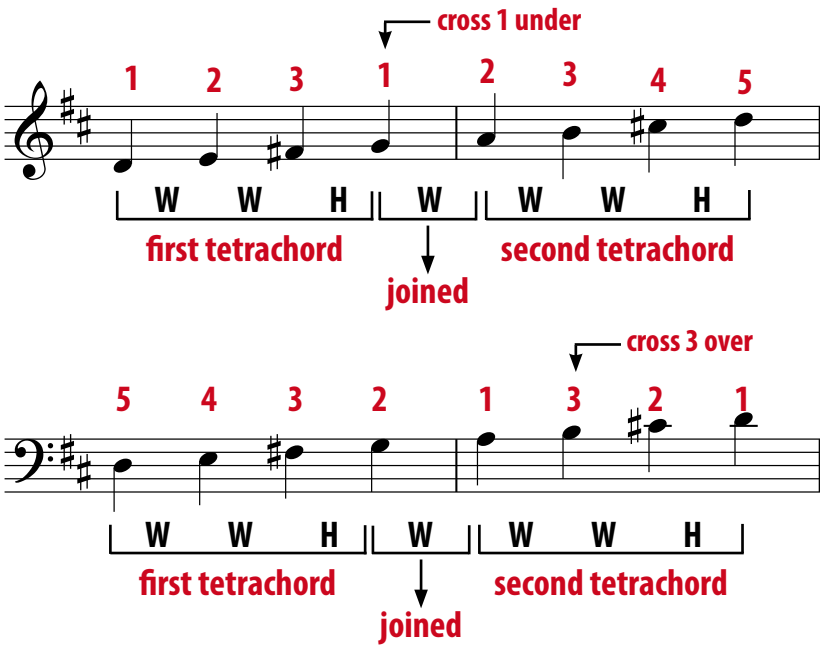


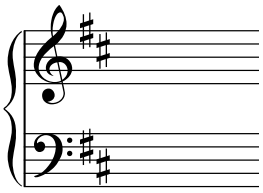
Exercise: This piece has no sharps or flats, which means that it is in the key of C major. It also has a lot of movement around the 6th and 7th intervals, so take your time getting used to the shifting intervals.



The D Major Scale

The next scale we'll look at is the D major scale. D major has two sharps: F♯and C♯. Take some time to memorize each scale individually. It is easy to memorize a scale once you know the rule that every scale is made up of two tetrachords joined by a whole note.

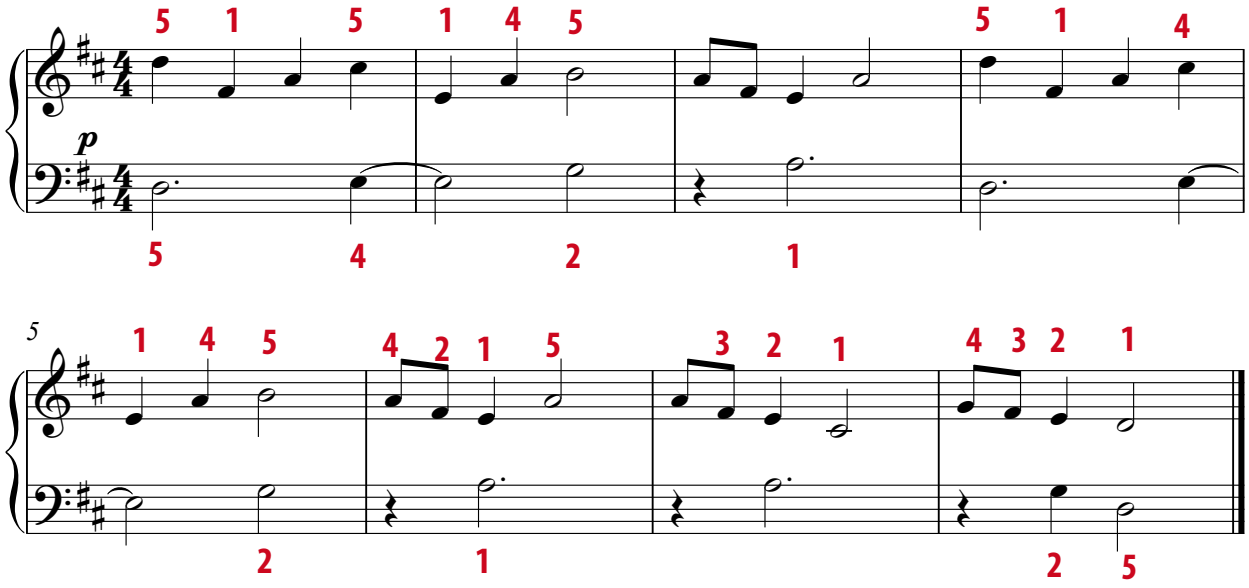




This is the key signature for D major.

Exercise: Familiarize yourself with the D major scale with the following piece.

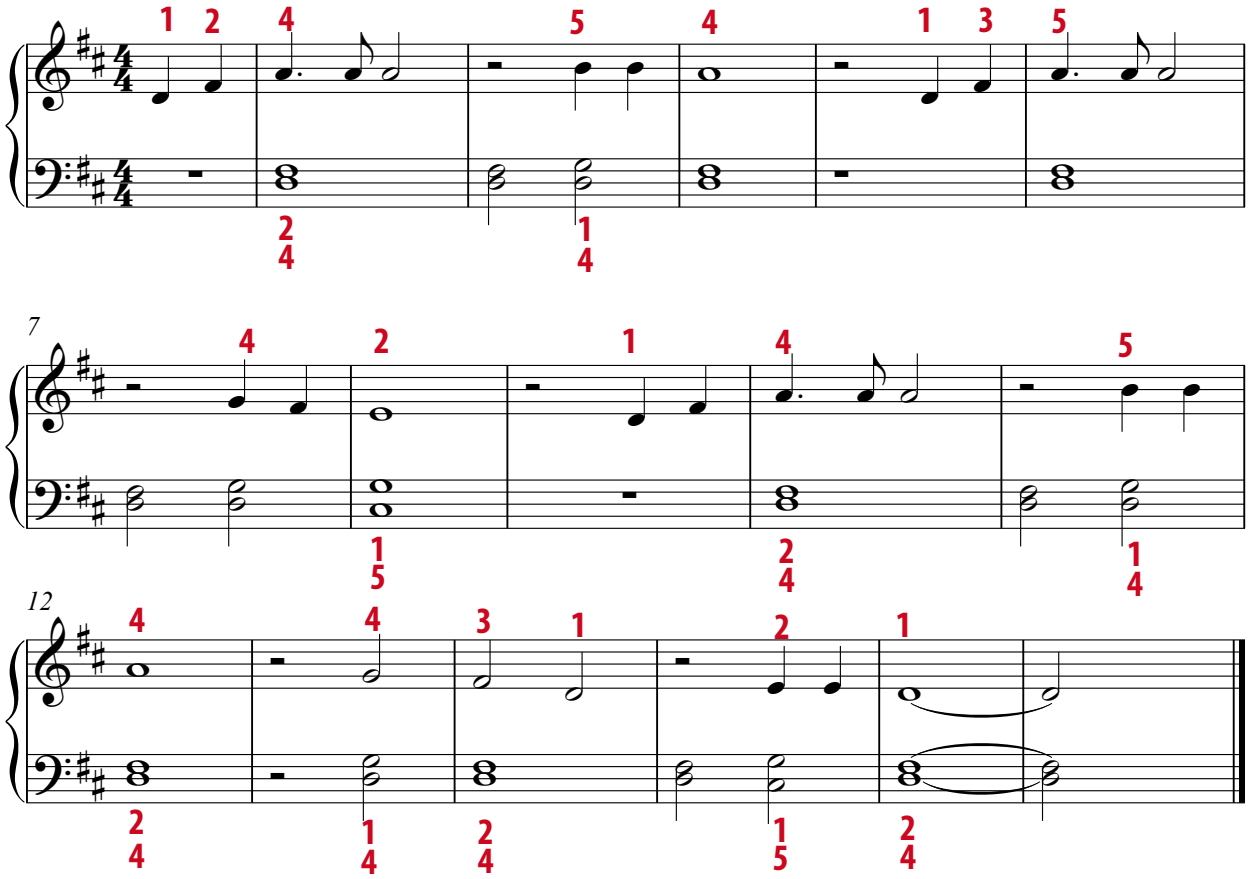
Allegro



Exercise: This piece is in D major also. The expression *cantabile* means to play the piece with a singing style.

Kum-Ba-Ya

Cantabile



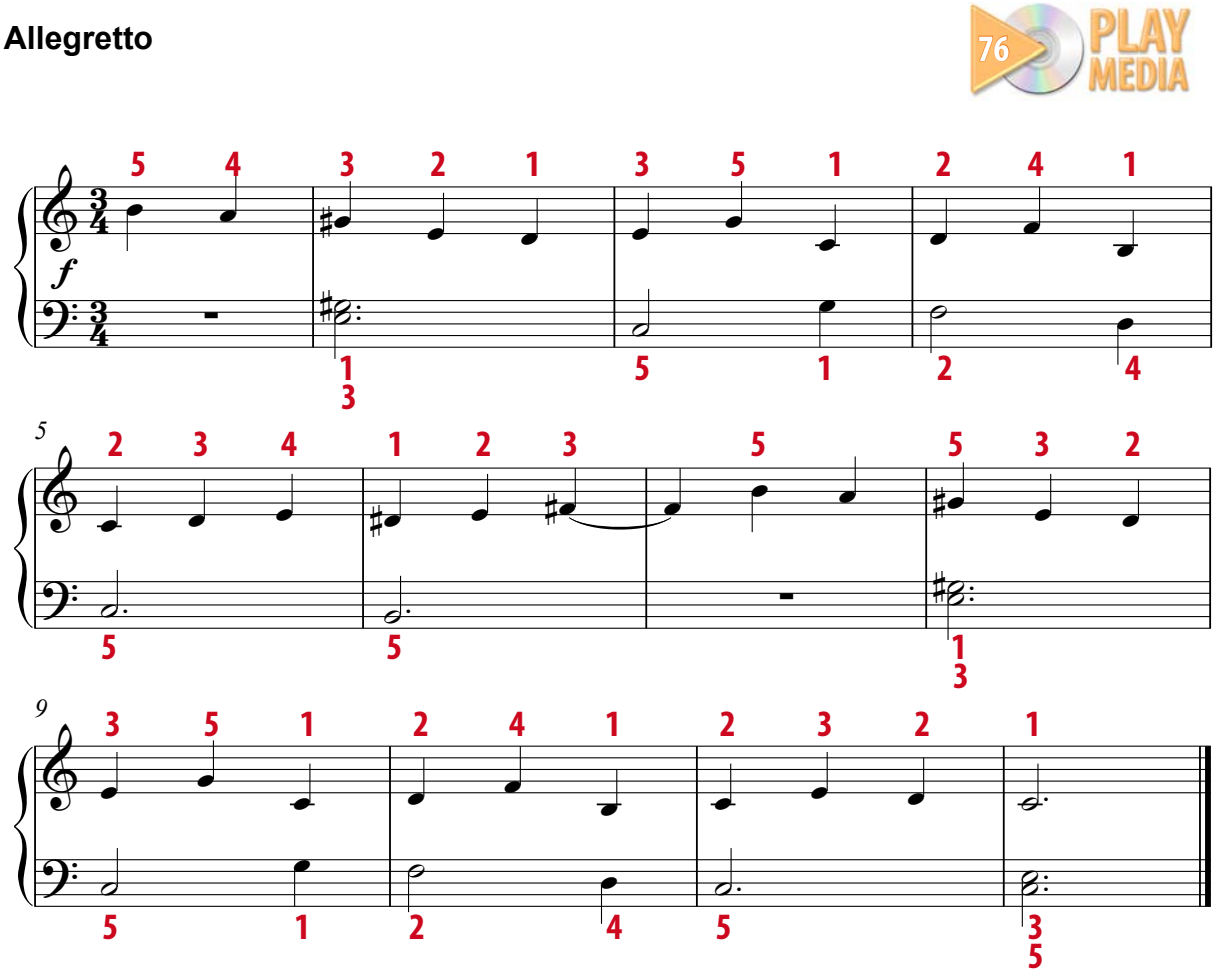
Accidentals

You already know that sharp, flat, or natural signs may appear before a note in a musical score to alter that note's pitch. You know that a piece's key signature tells you what notes will be sharp or flat for the duration of that piece, unless preceded by a natural sign.

An **accidental** is a note that is sharp, flat, or natural *contrary* to the key signature. In other words, the note will be preceded by a ♯, ♭, or ♮ that does *not* appear in the key signature.

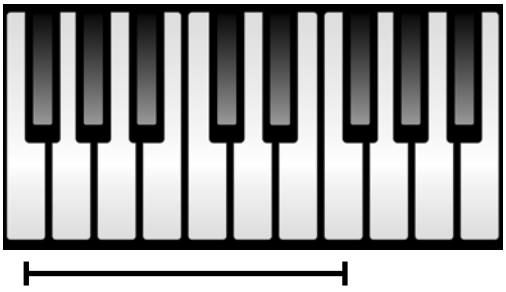
Exercise: This piece is in C major, so it would normally have no sharps or flats in it. So, the sharps that appear in the piece would be considered accidentals.

Allegretto



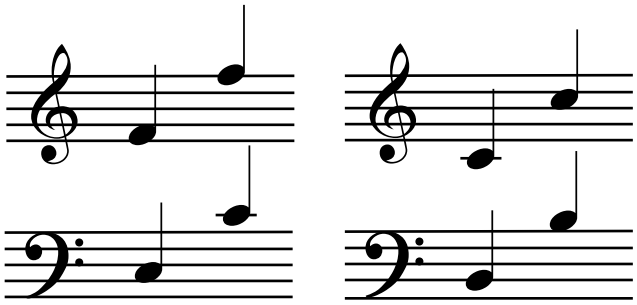
The 8th or Octave

At last, we've reached the last interval in music: the 8th, or as it is more commonly known, the octave. The octave is measured by having six white keys between the two keys being played. The two keys being played will have the exact same letter note: for example, the distance between F and F, when there is six keys in between them, is one octave.



On the musical staff, octaves are written:

1. When the first note is on a **space** and the next note is four **lines** above it.
2. When the first note is on a **line** and the next note is four **spaces** above it.

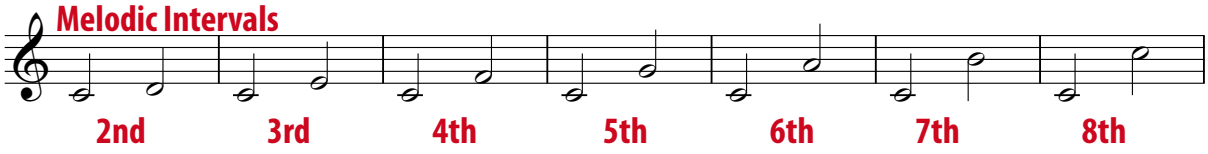


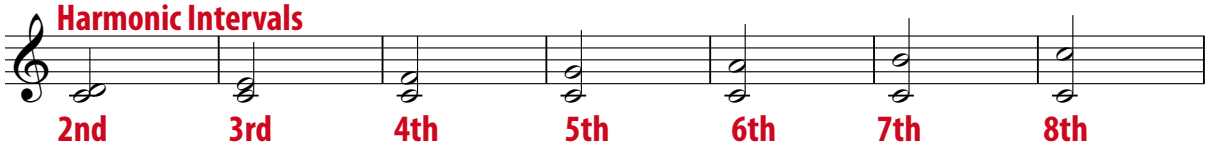
PLAY VIDEO 13

For more about octaves, play Video Lesson 13.

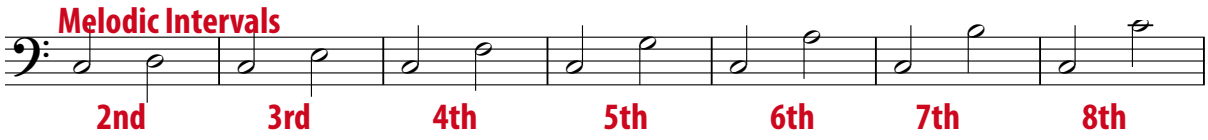
Before we go further, let's do a recap of the 7 intervals.

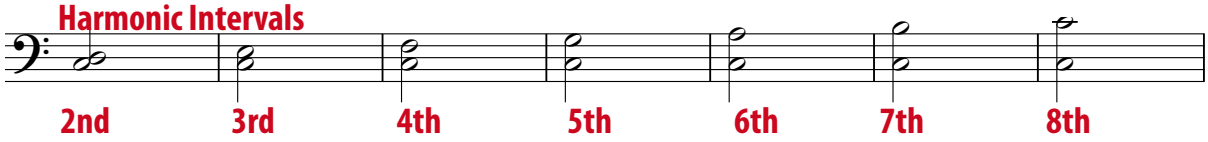
PLAY MEDIA 77





PLAY MEDIA 78

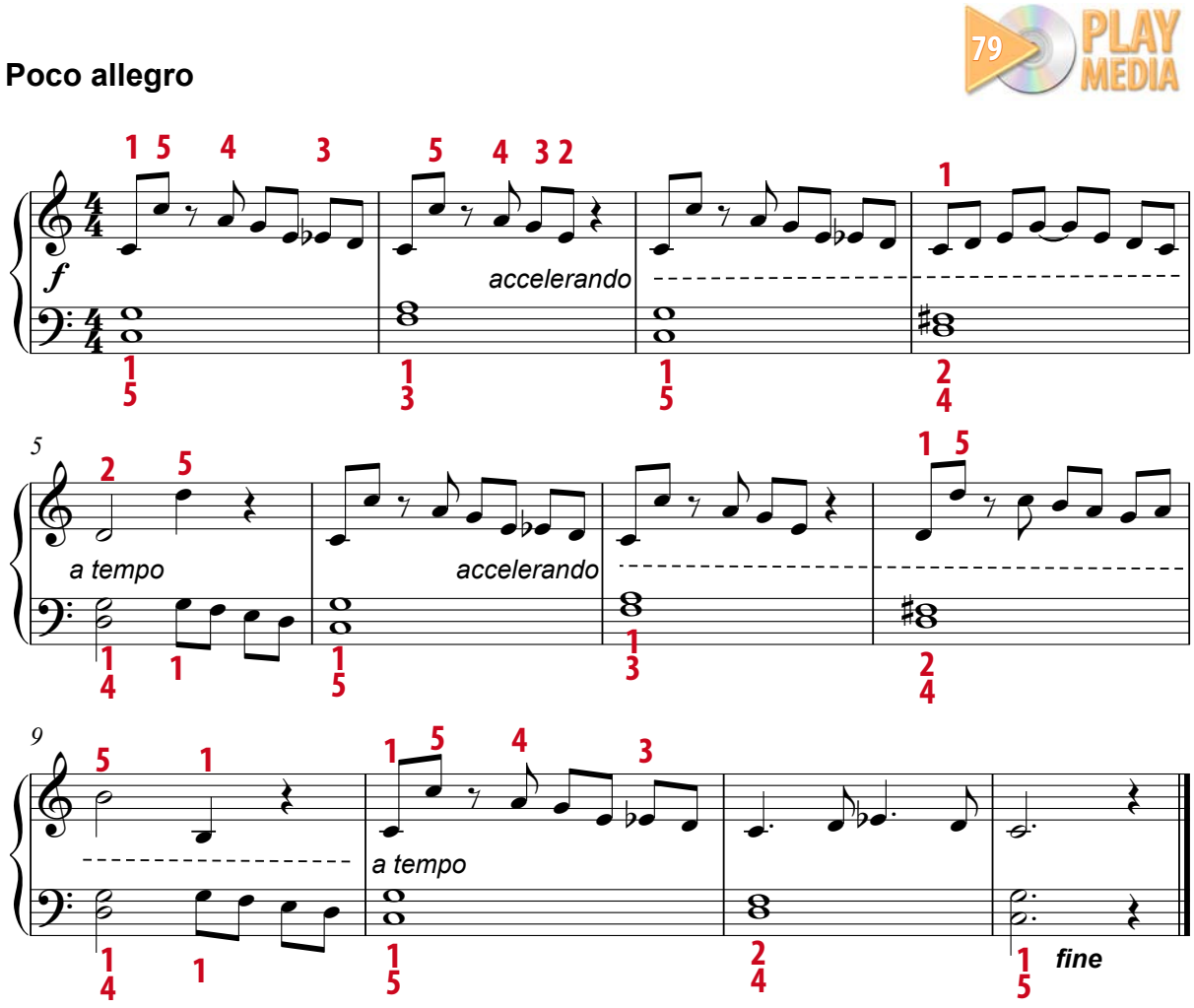




Accelerando

In the piece below, you'lll learn two new tempo indicators. *Accelerando* means that you should gradually increase the tempo. The word *a tempo* means that you should return to the original tempo.

Exercise: Try to navigate the piece below without the help of the fingering system.

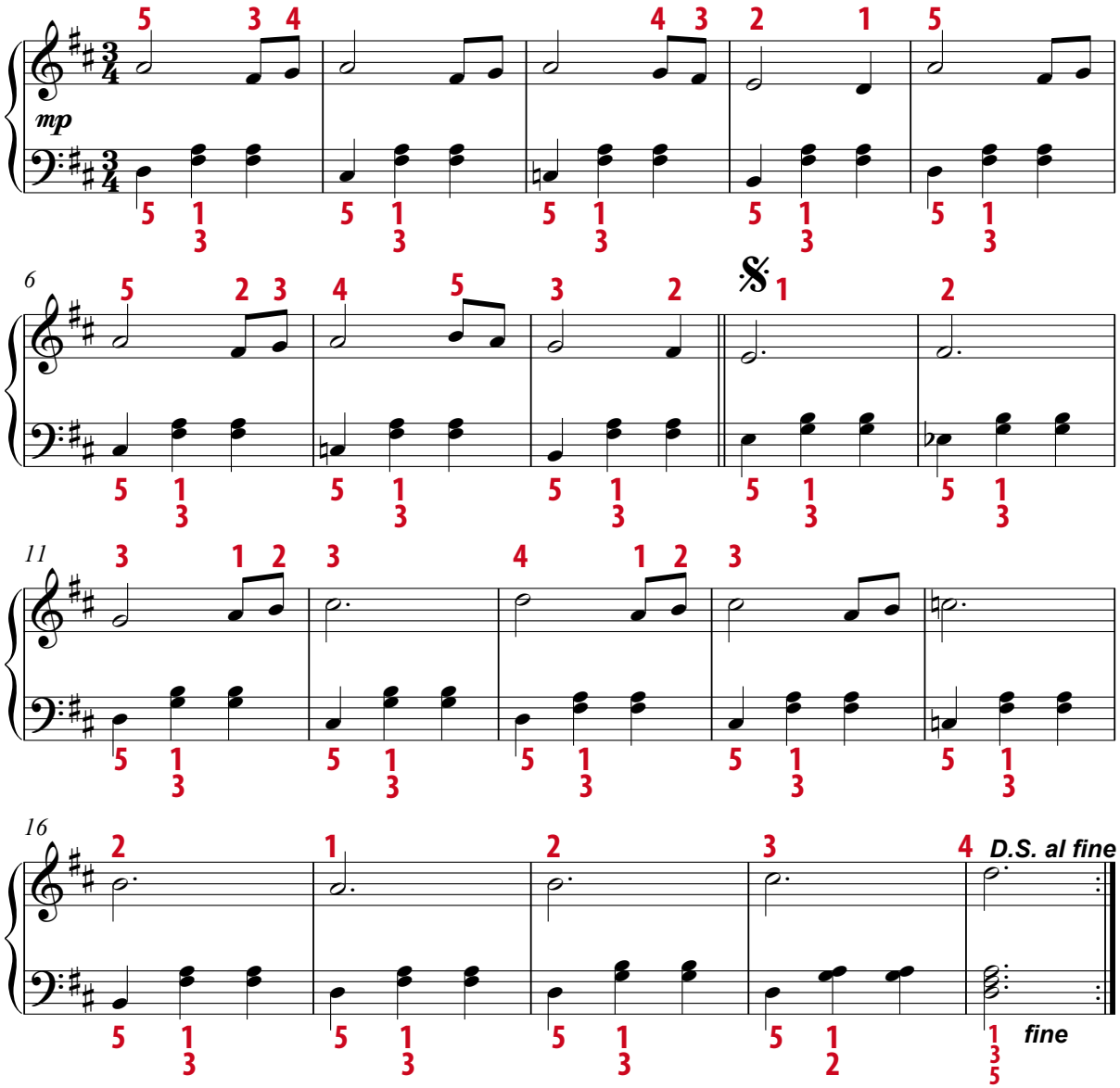


Repeat with D.S. al fine

Let's say that you want to repeat the second half of a song rather than begin again from the beginning. The sign ***D.S. al fine*** will help you do that. It stands for *Dal segno al fine* and means that you should repeat the piece from the 𝄋 sign and play until you reach the word ***fine***.

Exercise: Practice the piece below with just the left hand to get yourself used to the movement. Then, add the right hand. Remember to play slowly to accustom yourself to the movements required.

Moderato andante

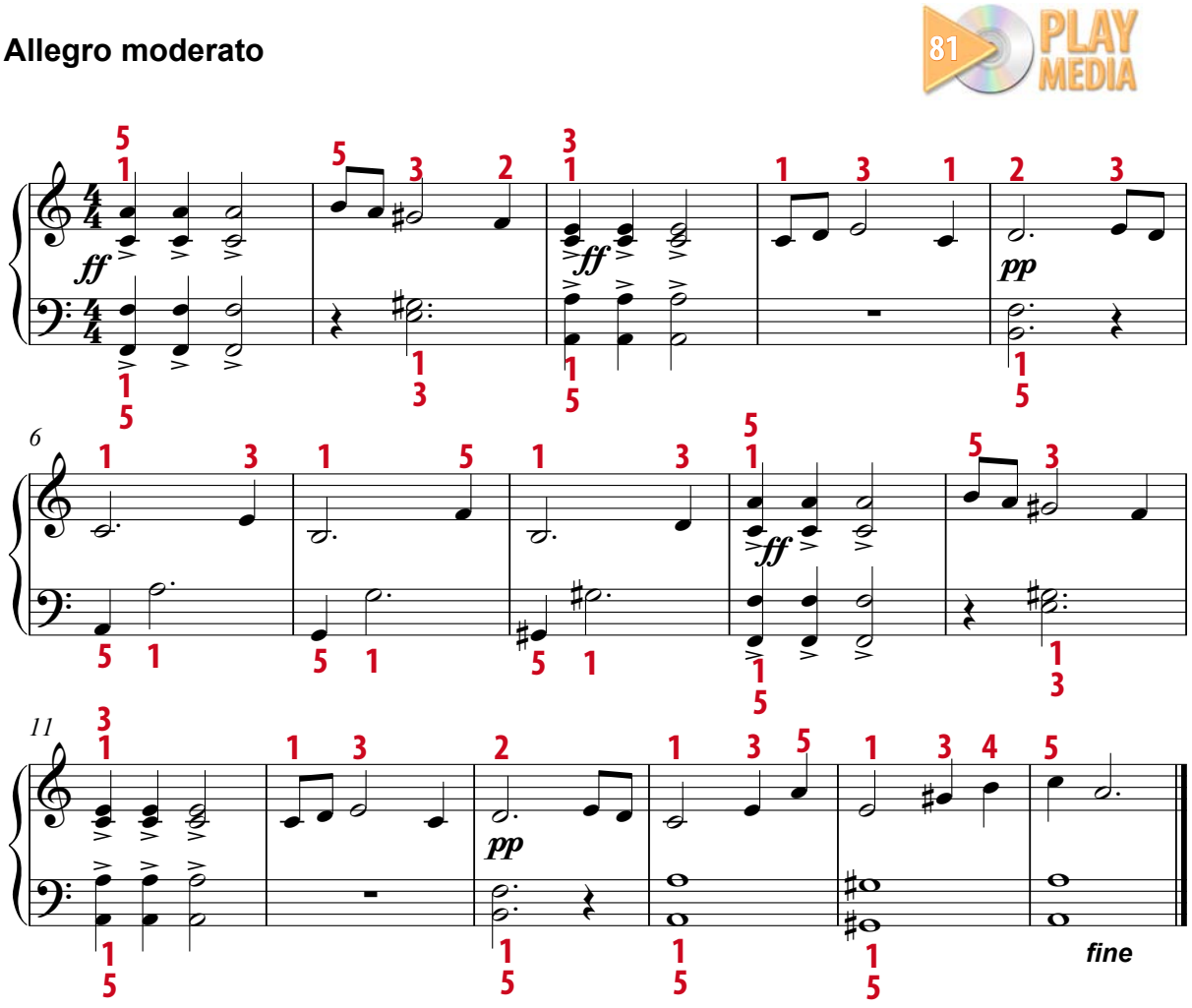


Fortissimo: Making it Loud

You may also see volume indicators on a musical score. The letters ff stand for fortissimo, which means that you should play very loudly. Similarly, the letters pp stand for pianissimo, which means that you should play very quietly.

Exercise: At this stage, you have played enough to be able to abandon the fingering system. The fingering indicated in the scores below is a guide only. If you can find a fingering that is more comfortable and natural to you, then play the piece that way.

Allegro moderato

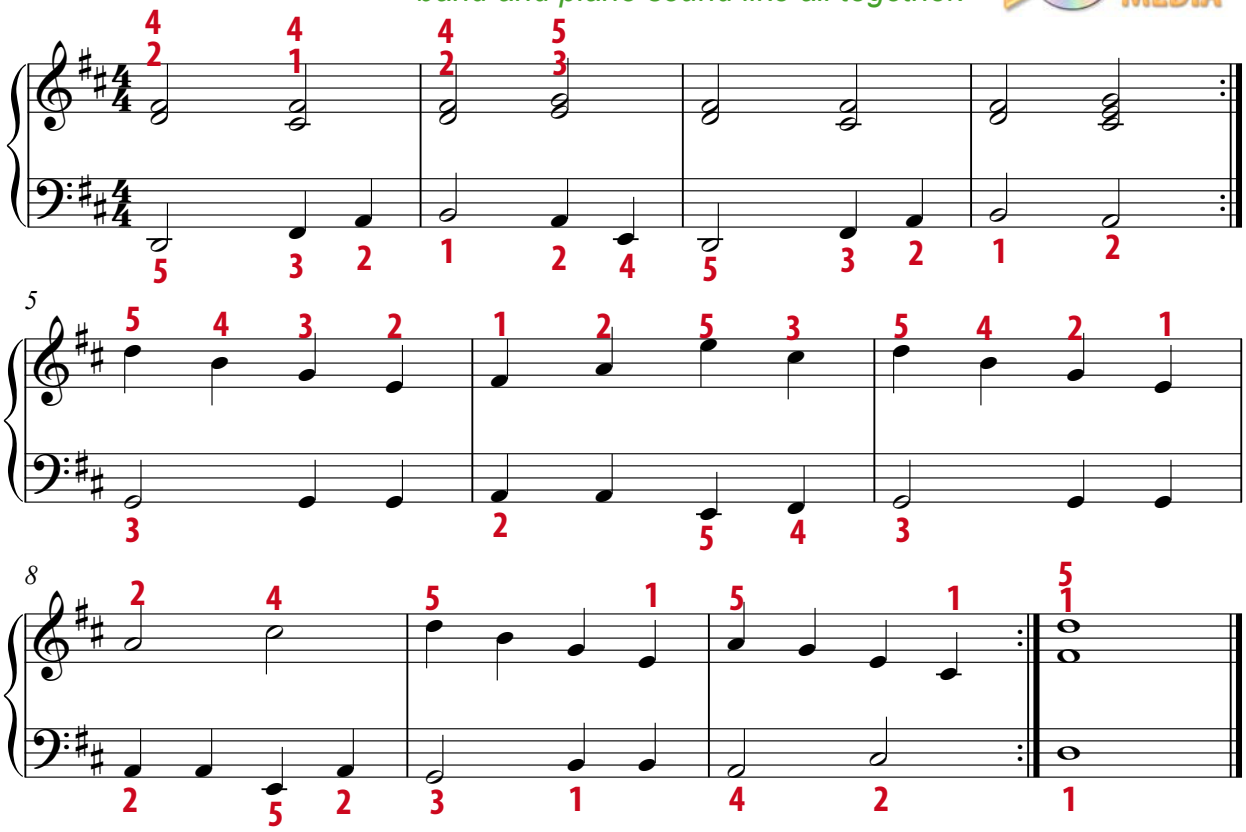


WE'RE JAMMIN'!

Jam Track Four

Exercise: This next Jam Track is in the key signature of D major. You have been learning about the D major scale in this chapter. Practice through your piano part a few times, before jamming it out with the Rocket band!

Listen to this track to hear what the full band and piano sound like all together.



When you can play this piece confidently by yourself, you are ready to jam! This track has the band but no piano. So you can play the piano part on your own!

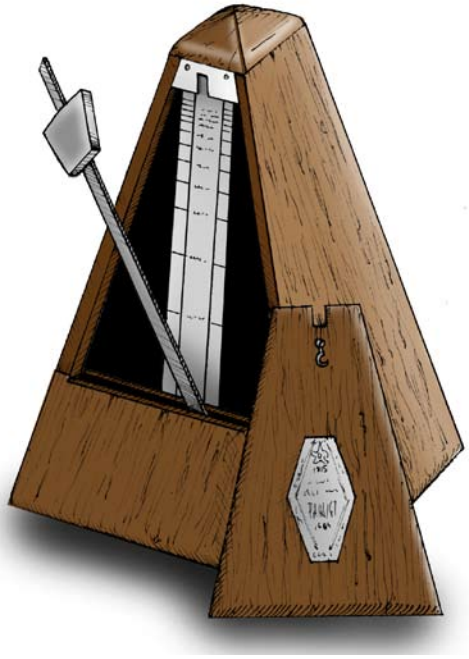
Chapter 16. Metronomes and More

In this chapter, you are going to learn how to use a metronome to check your tempo. You'll learn one final note (*a sixteenth note*) and how to play scales in contrary motion.

The Metronome

Have you ever seen a piece of music with **mm ♩ = 72** or some other number written above it? This is an extra tempo indicator that is used in conjunction with a metronome.

A **metronome** is a device that clicks at a certain rate, set by the user. Those clicks function like a tapping toe, or counting aloud "one-two-three-four."



The **mm** in the example above stands for *Maelzels Metronome*, which is an old style of metronome that measures time through the mechanics of a pendulum, which swings faster or slower depending on the position of an adjustable metal weight.

A metronome is set to beats per minute. If you set it at 60, then the metronome will click once every second, or at 60 beats per minute. This is quite a slow setting.

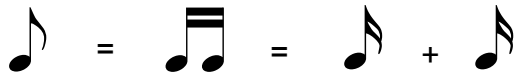
The ♩ **= 72** in the example above tells you to set your metronome to 72 beats per minute. The value of a quarter note is equal to the value of the metronome setting. So, there will be 72 quarter note beats per minute.

You can practice perfecting your timing using the **Rocket Piano Metronome**, *the free software included with this book. Perfect your sense of rhythm! Never drop the beat again!*

The Sixteenth Note

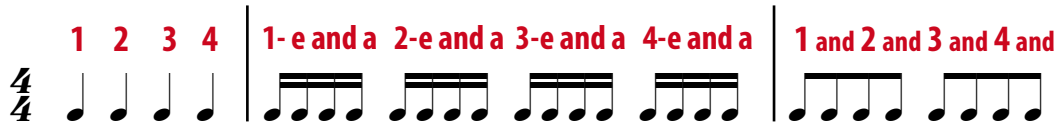
The last note value that we will look at in this book is the sixteenth note. Like the eighth note, it will often appear grouped in pairs or larger groups.

Two sixteenth notes equal one eighth note, while...

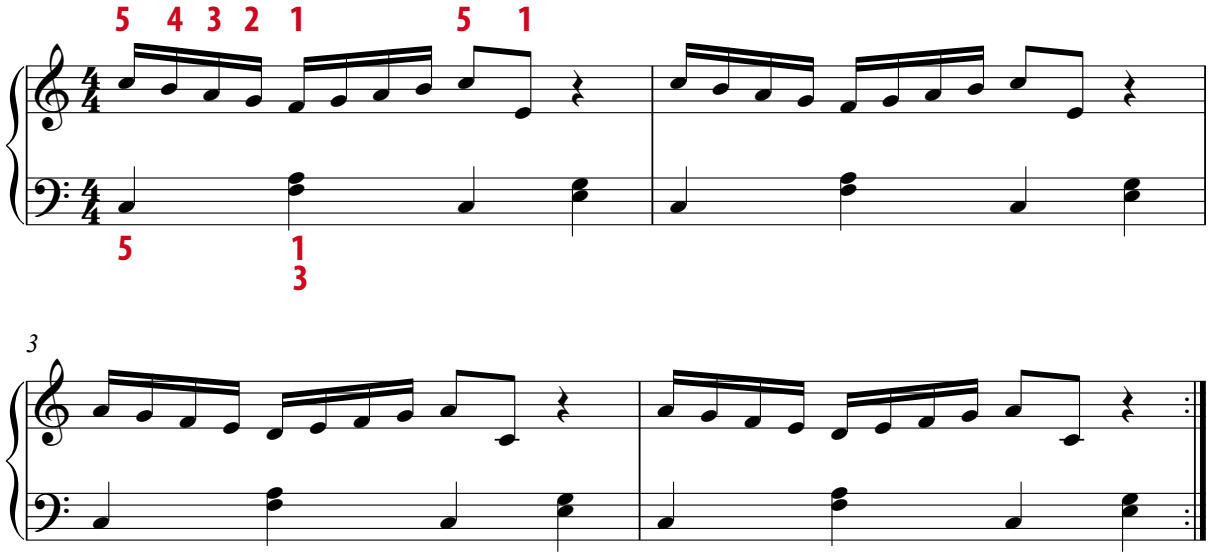


...four sixteenth notes equal one quarter note.

When counting sixteenth notes, you count: “ONE-e-and-a-TWO-e-and-a-THREE-e-and-a-FOUR-e-and-a...”

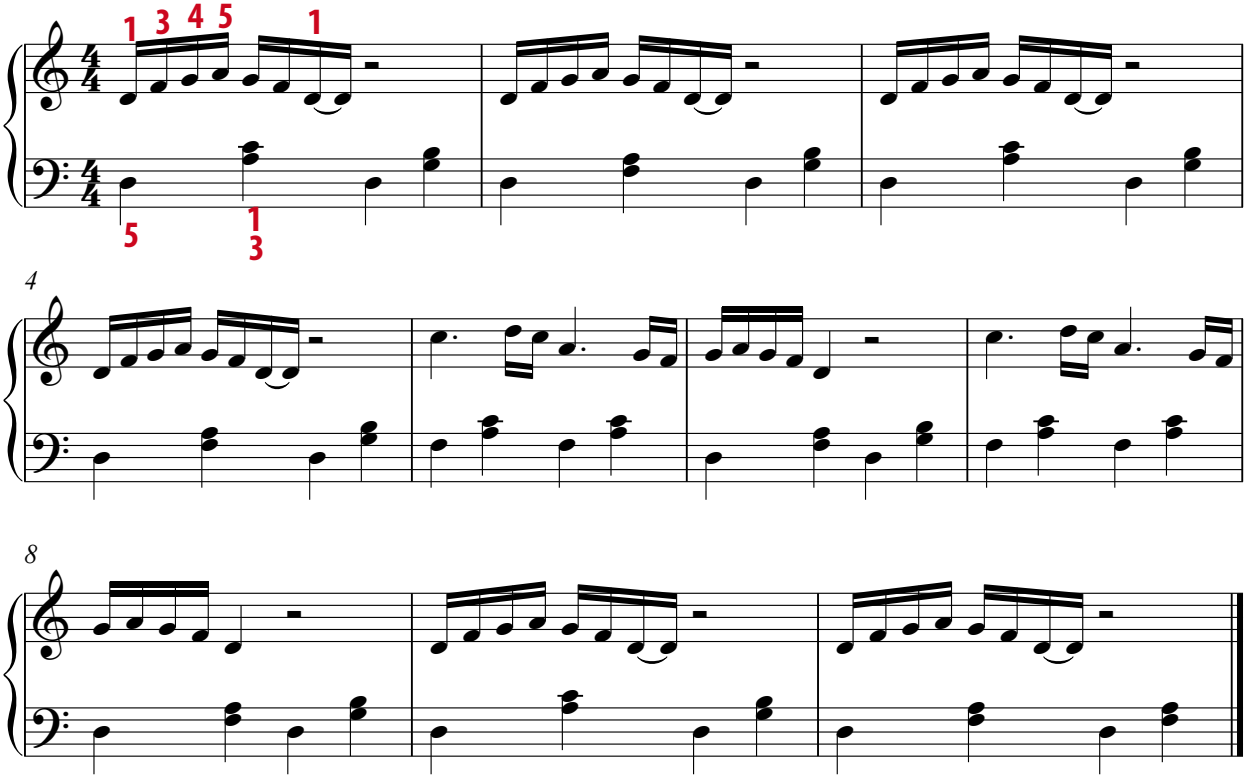


Exercise: This piece looks quite difficult due to the number of notes, but play through slowly, or ***adagio***, to begin with. Then, try to increase your speed as you get used to the counting. Can you play this piece ***allegro***?



Exercise: Use the Rocket Piano Metronome to practice your rhythm with this piece.

Andante moderato



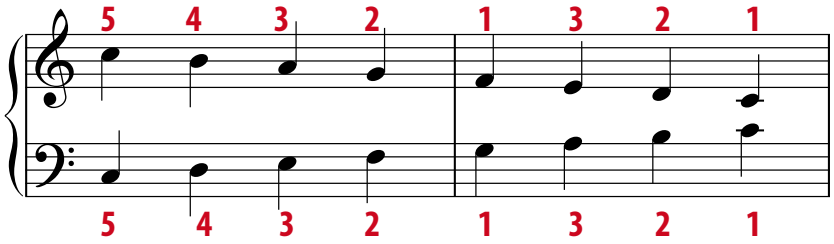
Scale in Contrary Motion

A **scale in contrary motion** is where the left hand is ascending and the right hand is descending, or vice versa. Playing scales in contrary motion is a good way to get used to fingering and playing scales. It is also a good starting point to practice the independence of both hands.

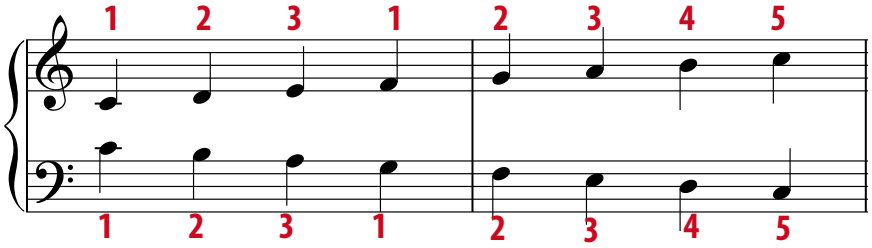
Exercise: Practice the following scales. Go slowly to begin with. If you need additional help, play Video Lesson 14.

C major

R.H. descending, L.H. ascending

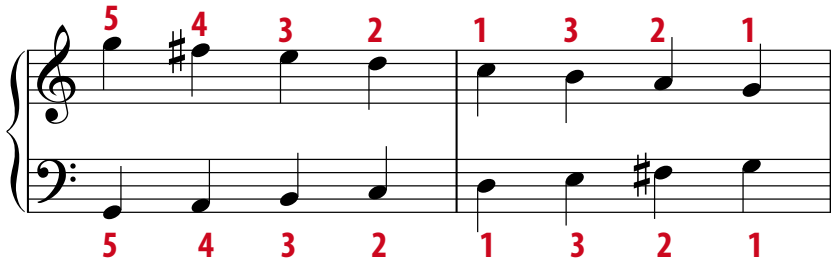


R.H. ascending, L.H. descending

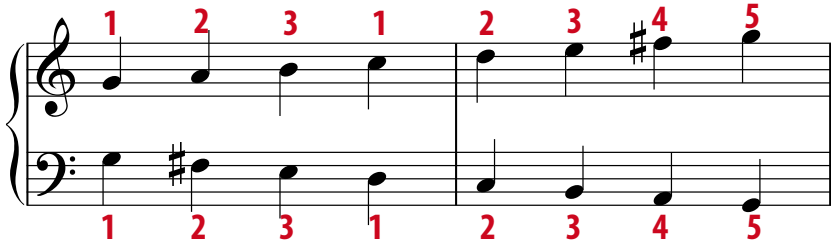


G major

R.H. descending, L.H. ascending

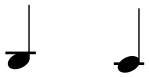


R.H. ascending, L.H. descending

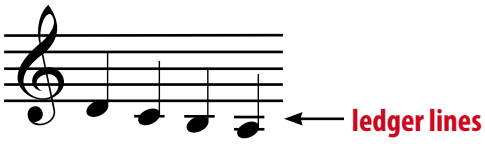


Reading Notes Above/Below Lines

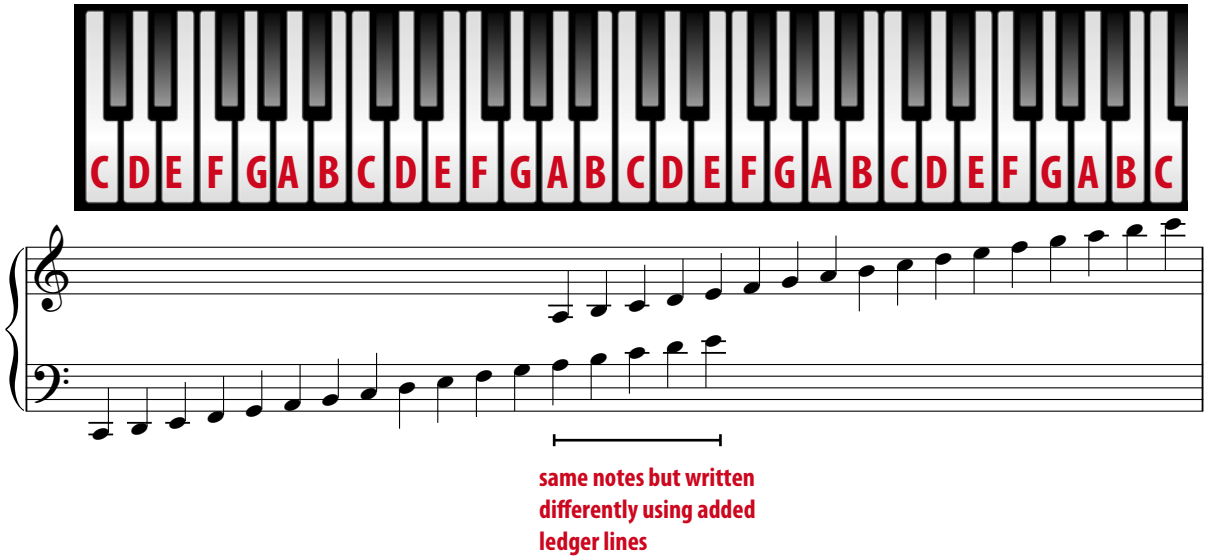
Just a brief comment about reading notes above or below the lines. You have already seen the note with the line running through it (Middle C) as well as the note beneath the line.



Extra lines can be added to indicate the position of musical notes that fall off the musical staff. Those lines are called **ledger lines**. They are useful for extremely high or low notes.



For now, we'll use notes that fall no further than two lines below or above the staff, but be aware that notes can be written like those you see below.



Chapter 17. Chords

Now, you're ready to learn about chords! You've already been playing chords all this time. That's because you are playing a **chord** any time you play two or more notes together.

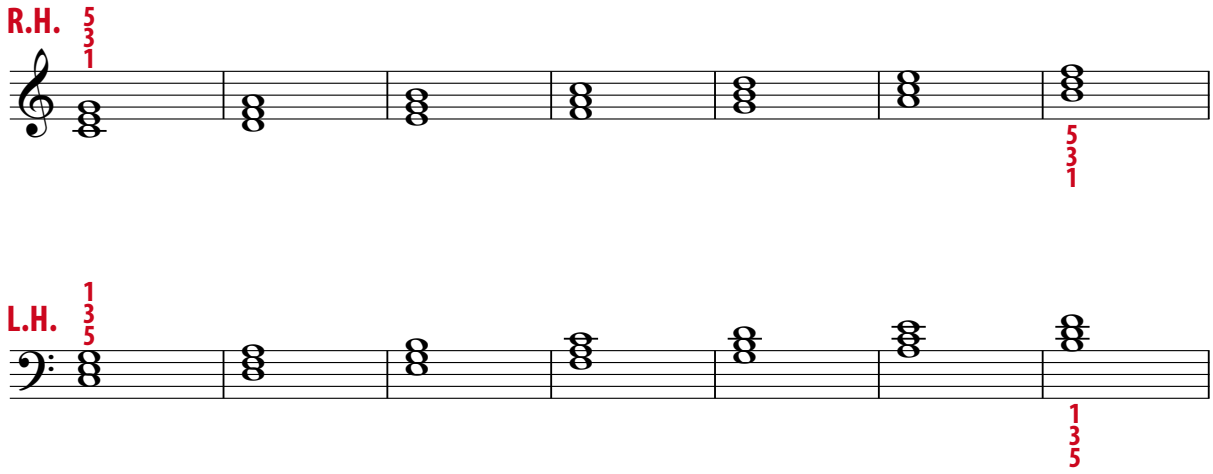
To understand chords completely, you must know what a triad is. A **triad** is a chord with three notes. The three notes in a triad are:

- the **fifth** note
- the **third** note
- the **root** note

The type of triad name will come from the root note on the bottom. If the root note is on the bottom of the triad, it is said to be in **root position**.

A triad can begin on any note in a scale.

Below are the triads in C major.

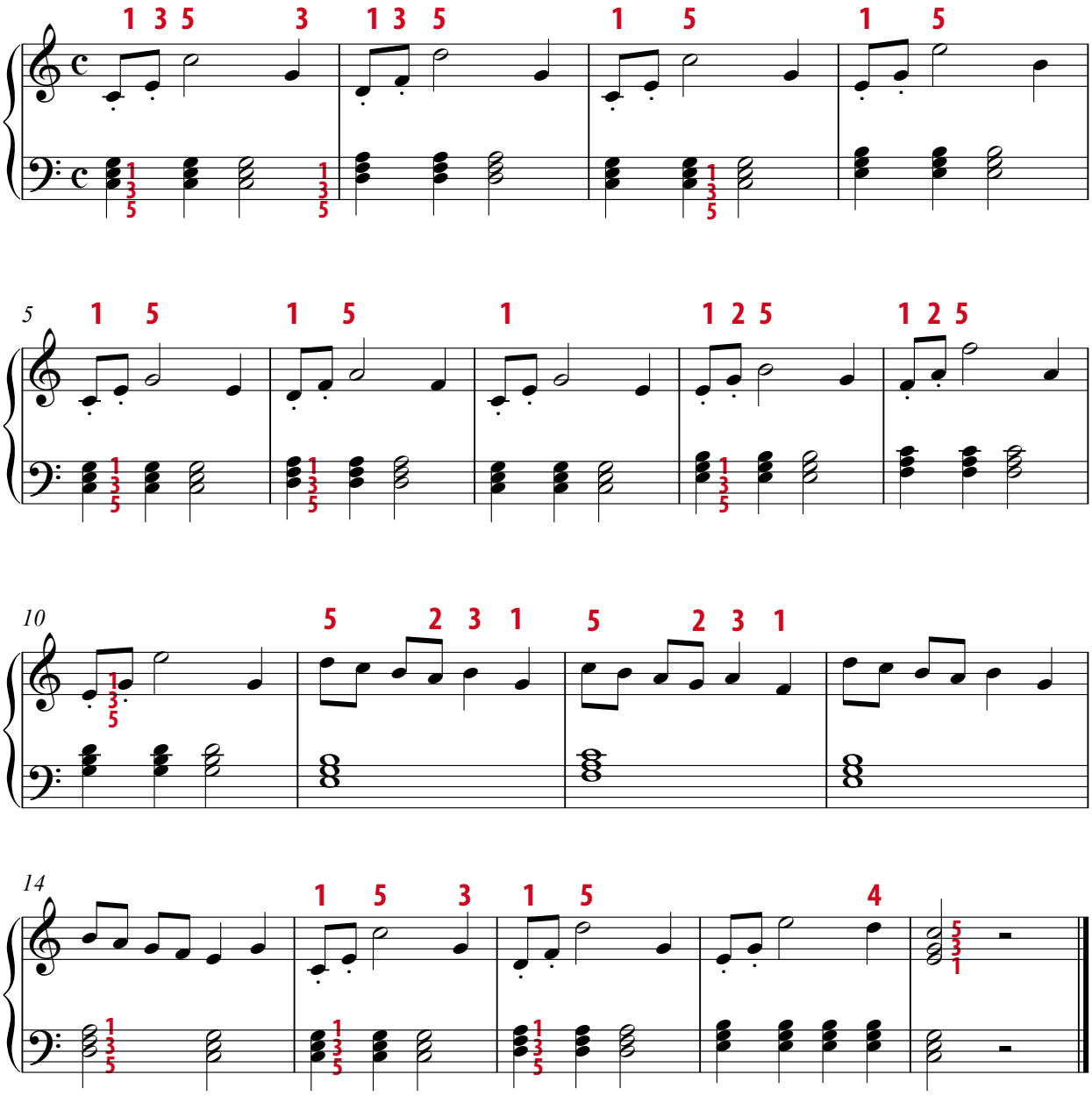


Exercise: Play through the above triads slowly to get used to playing three notes at once.

Chords are usually played with the left hand, while the right hand is free to play the melody.

Exercise: Practice playing chords with the following piece.

Moderato



Primary Triads

The most frequently used triads are those that begin on the *first, fourth*, and *fifth* note of the scale. These are called the **primary triads**.

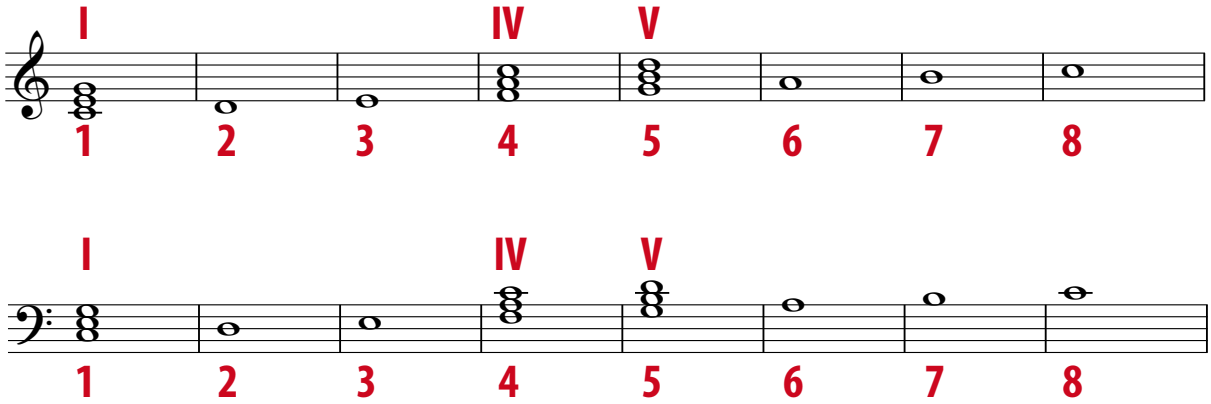
When these chords are written down, they are usually identified by Roman numerals.

For example, in the key of C major, the three primary triads will be C, F, and G. (In other words, C, F, and G are the *root*, or bottom, notes of these triads.)

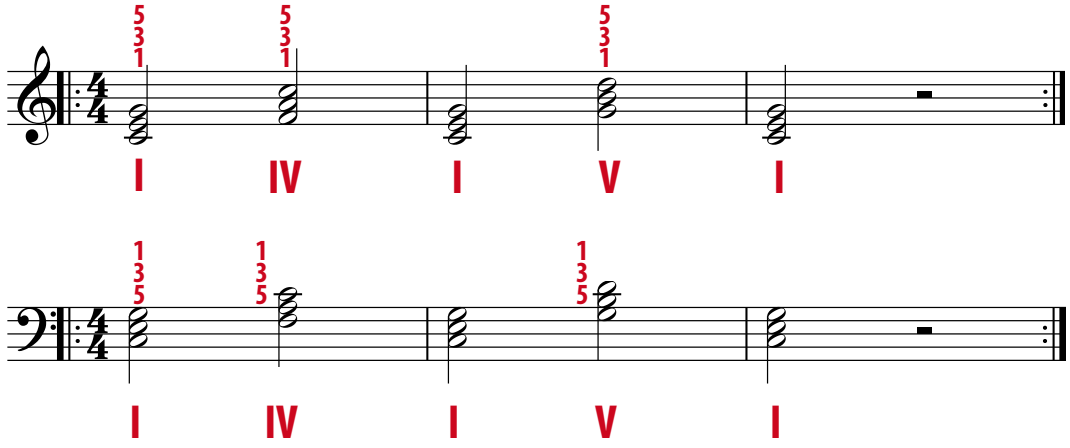
Position	Triad	Chord
1st note	C major	I
4th note	F major	IV
5th note	G major	V

To see these chords played watch Video Lesson 16.

Here are the I, IV, and V progression chords, with each in the root position.



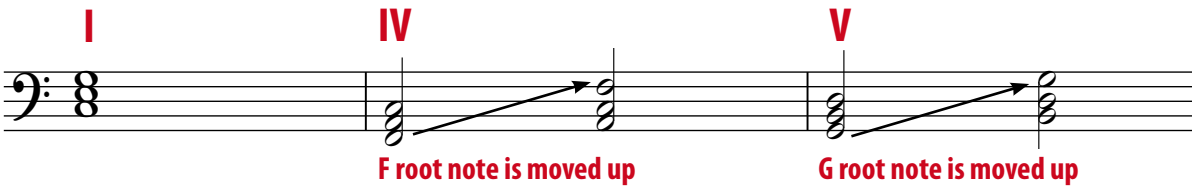
Exercise: Play through slowly to get used to the movements and sounds.



Chord Progression

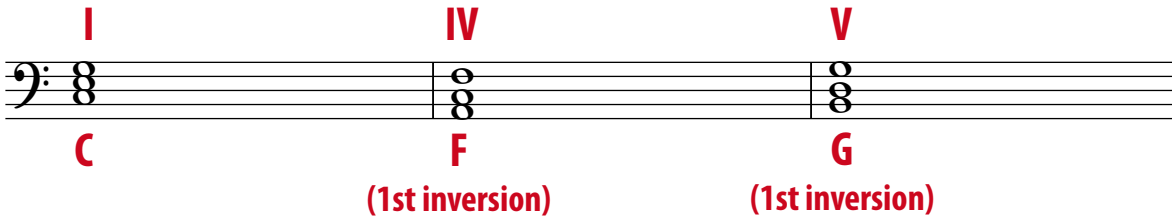
When there is a series of chords in a row, it is called a **chord progression**. The I, IV, V progression that you have just learned is very popular and used in many compositions.

Chords may not always appear in root position. When playing the chord progression, the hand must jump around a lot, from one root position to another. To avoid this and improve the playability of a piece, the chord may be **inverted**. Inverting a chord involves altering the note that is played on the bottom or top of the chord. In other words, the notes are shuffled to better suit their playability.



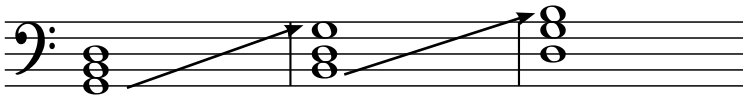
The F and G chords are now played in what we call the **first inversion position**. Try to play the chords in this way and note how much easier they are to play.

Exercise: Play the following chord progression with the IV and V chords in the second inversion position.



2nd Inversions

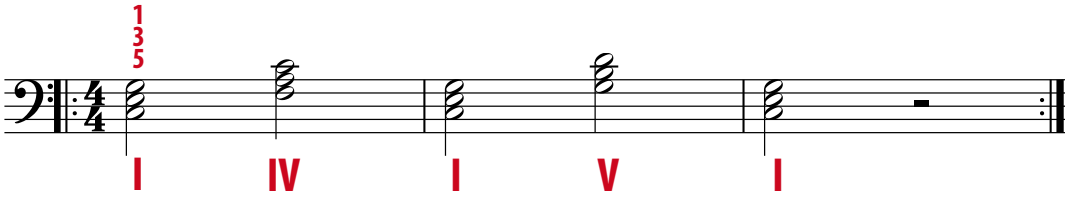
For the G chord (V), you can shuffle the notes yet again.



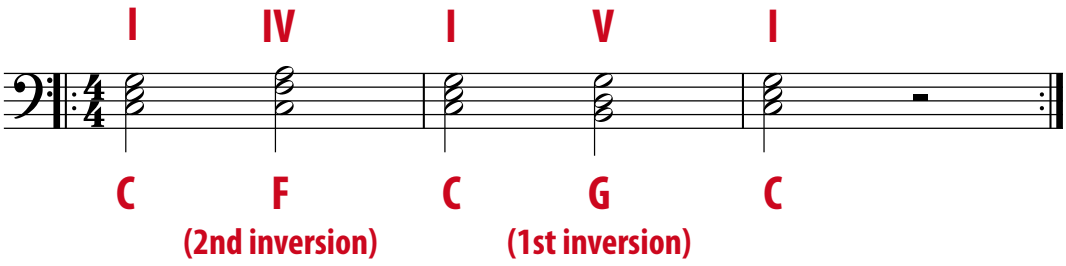
Now the chord has been altered twice from it's root position, the G chord is now in the **second inversion**.

Every time the bottom chordal note is moved to the top of the chord, the chord goes through another inversion (first, second, third, and so on).

Exercise: Compare and contrast the chord progressions with and without inversions. Play the original I, IV, V progression.

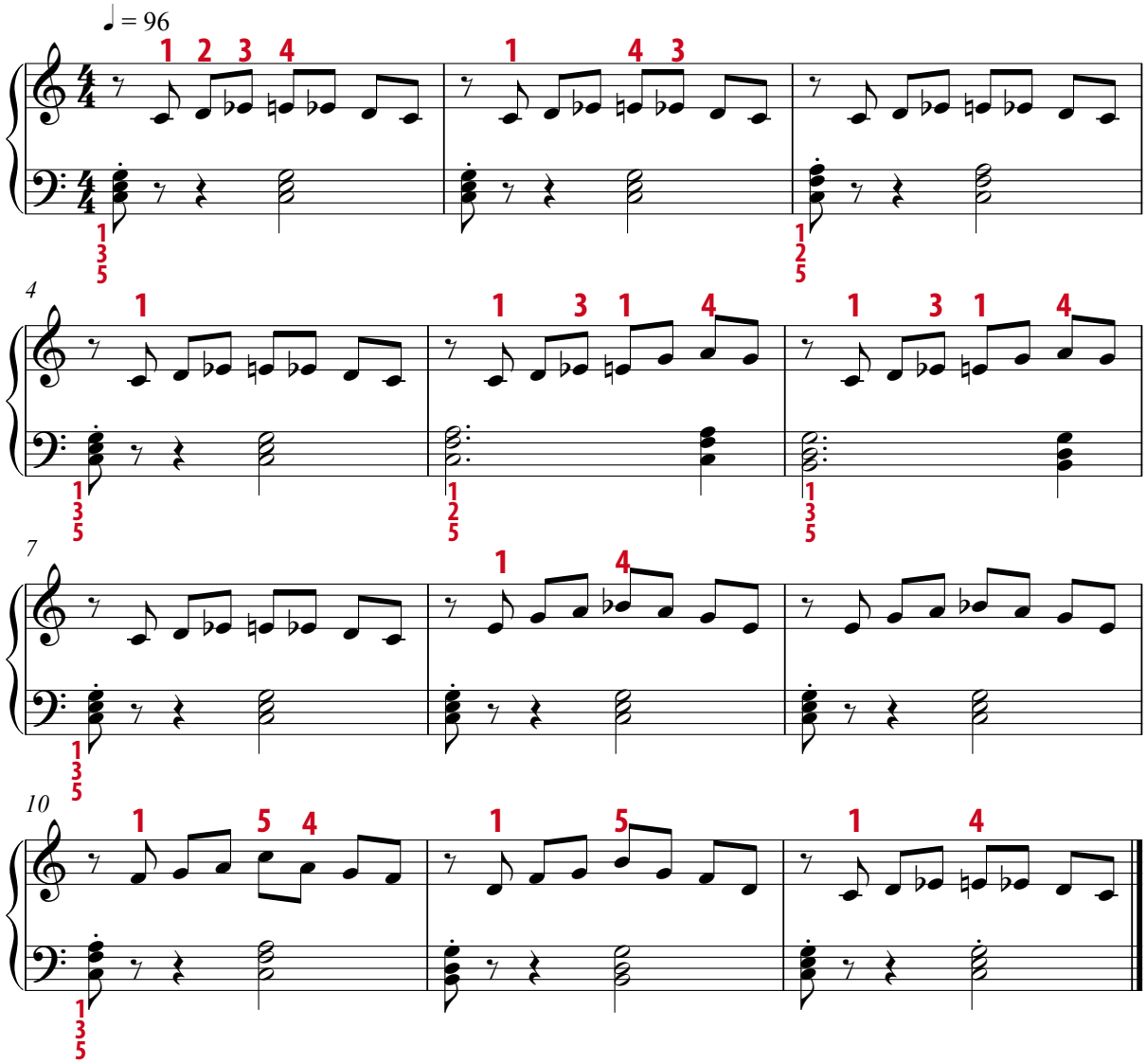


Now, play the I, IV, V progression with the new inversions. Note the difference in quality.



Exercise: Practice with the following piece using the Rocket Piano Metronome.

Allegretto



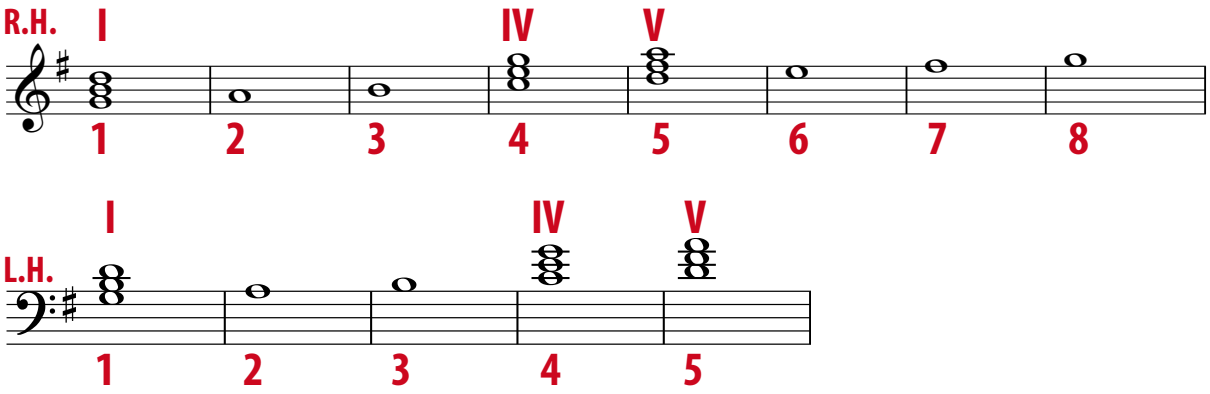
Primary Triads in G major

The primary triads in the key of G major have the same shape as the C triads. Although the notes are different, the inversions and finger positions will be the same.

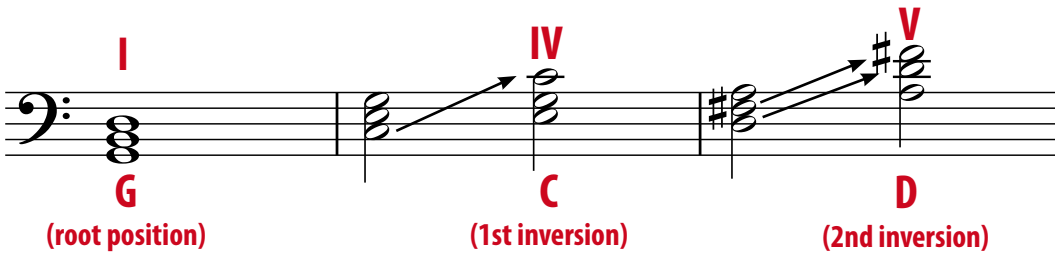
In the key of G, the three primary triads are G, C, and D.

Position	Triad	Chord
1st note	G major	I
4th note	C major	IV
5th note	D major	V

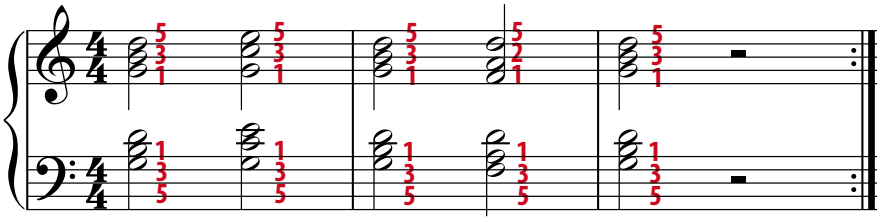
The I, IV, V progression of G major, with all the chords in the root position, looks like this:



Now, with the new inversions of chords, it looks like this:

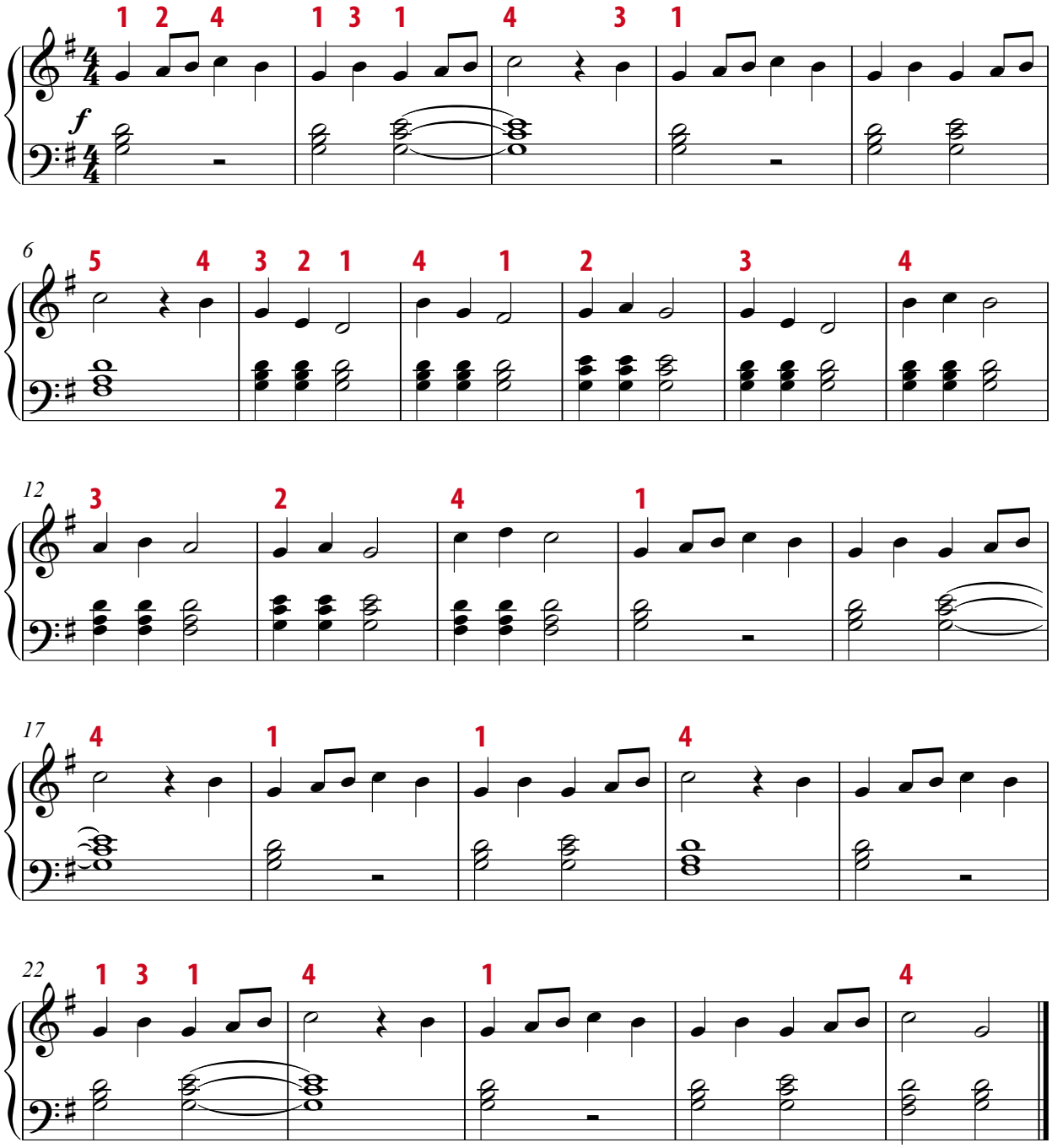


Exercise: Play through the G major I, IV, V progression separately to being with, then play with both hands together.



Exercise: Practice the G major triads with the following piece. For left hand chords use the $\begin{matrix}1\\3\\5\end{matrix}$ position.

Allegro



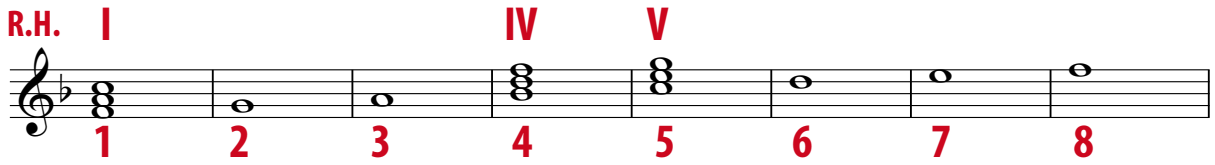
Primary Triads in F major

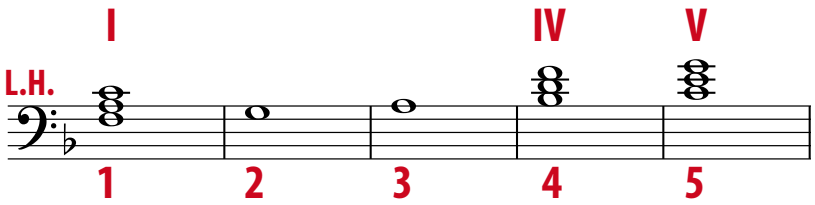
The primary triads in F major are also the same shape and inversion as the other triads, except with different notes.

In the key of F, the three primary triads are F, B ♭, and C.

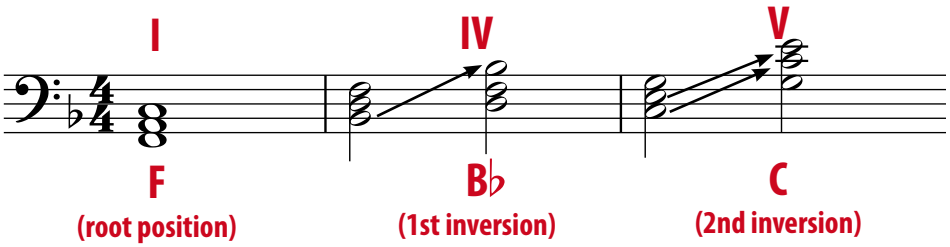
Position	Triad	Chord
1st note	F major	I
4th note	B♭ major	IV
5th note	C major	V

The I, IV, V progression of F major, with all the chords in the root position, looks like this:

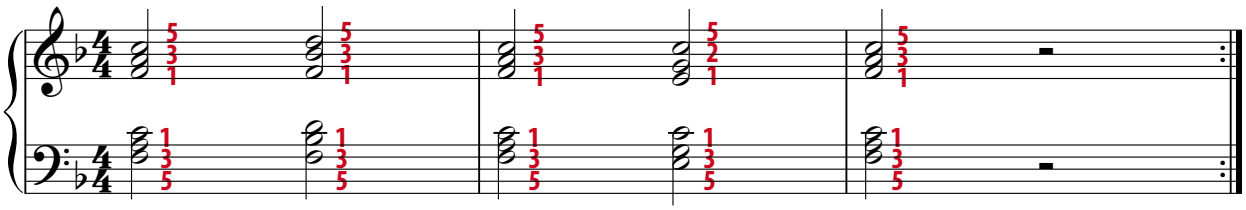




Now look at the I, IV, V progression in F major with the chord inversions.

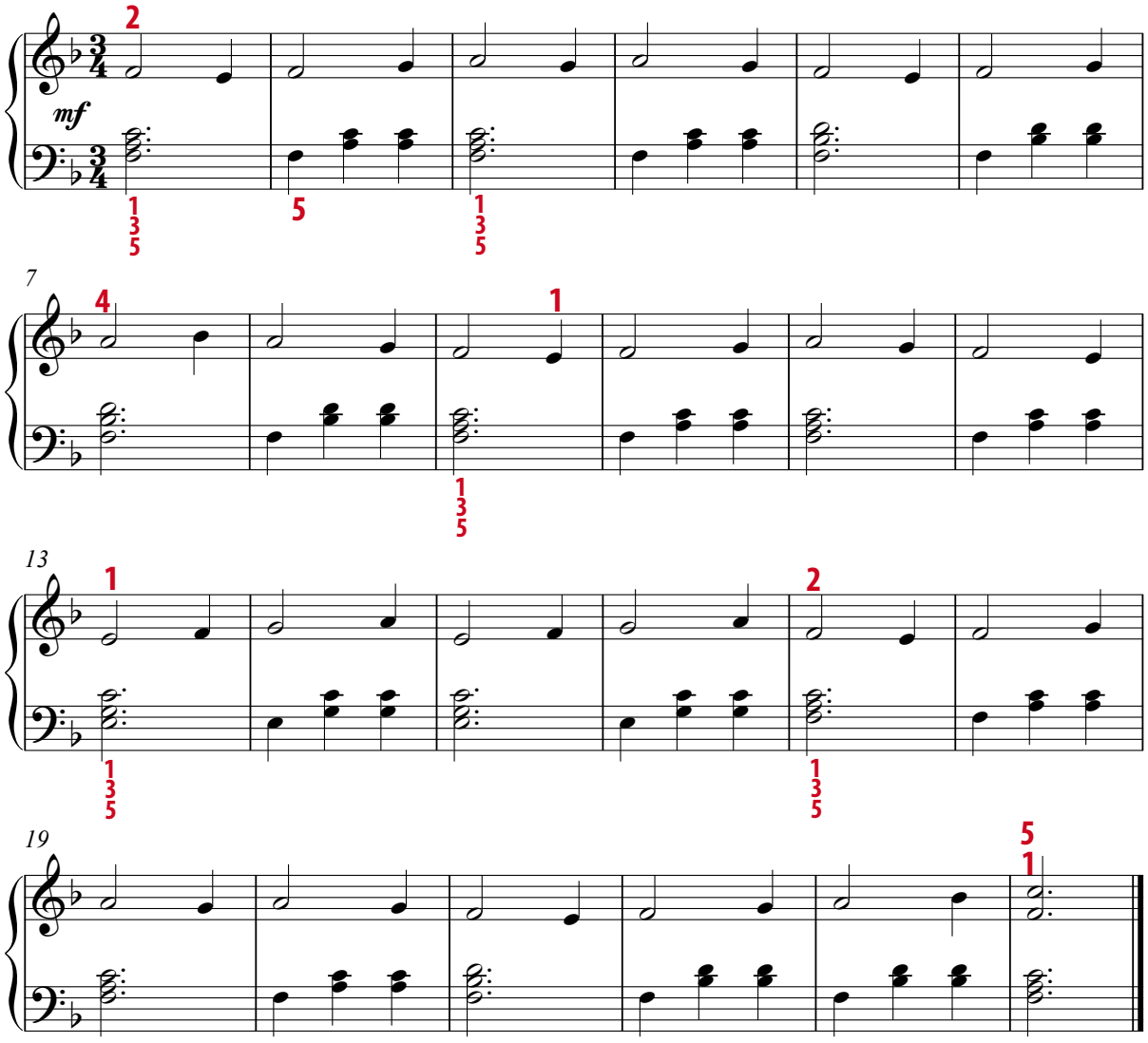


Exercise: Play through the F major I, IV, V progression separately to begin with, then play with both hands together.



Exercise: Practice the F major triads.

Allegretto



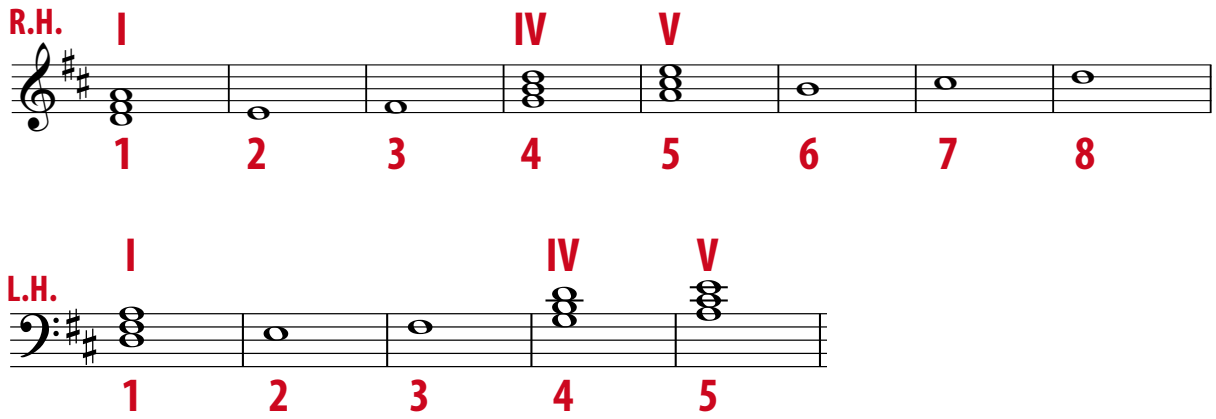
Did you ever imagine you'd be playing songs this complicated when you started?

Primary Triads in D major

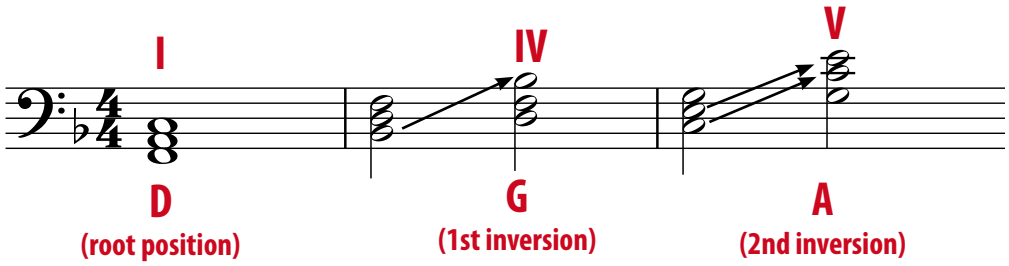
The primary triads of D major are D, G, and A.

Position	Triad	Chord
1st note	D major	I
4th note	G major	IV
5th note	A major	V

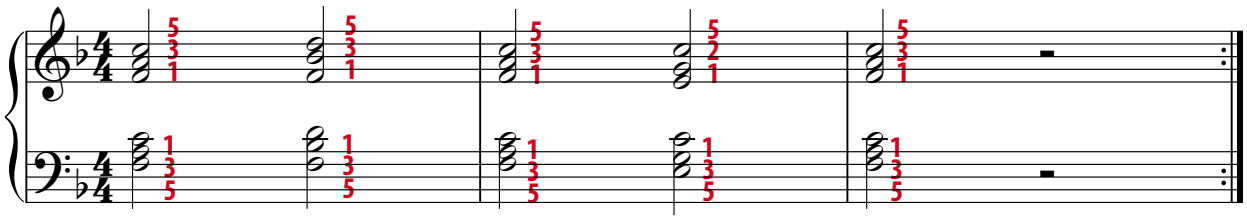
The I, IV, V progression of D major in the root position is as follows:



And now the same progression, except with the chord inversions:

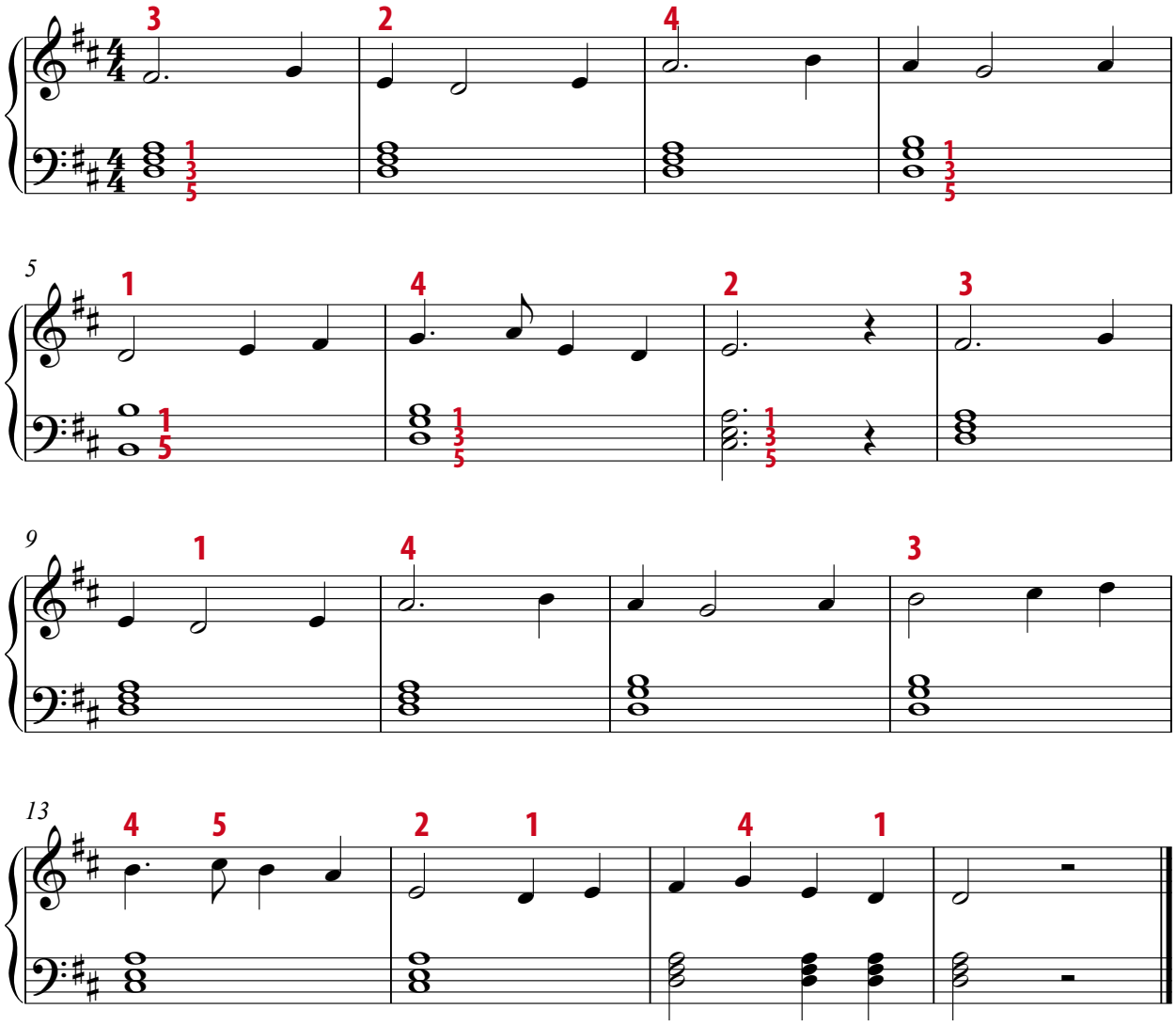


Exercise: Play through the D major I, IV, V progression separately to begin with, then play with both hands together.



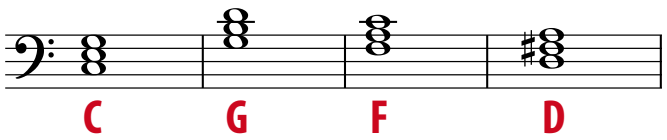
Exercise: Practice the D major triads with the following piece.

Lento



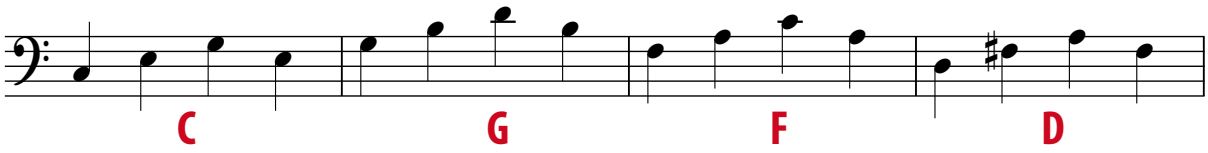
Block and Broken Chords

What you have been playing are **block chords**. These are chords made of three or more notes, all played together.



Block chords of the scales we've looked at already

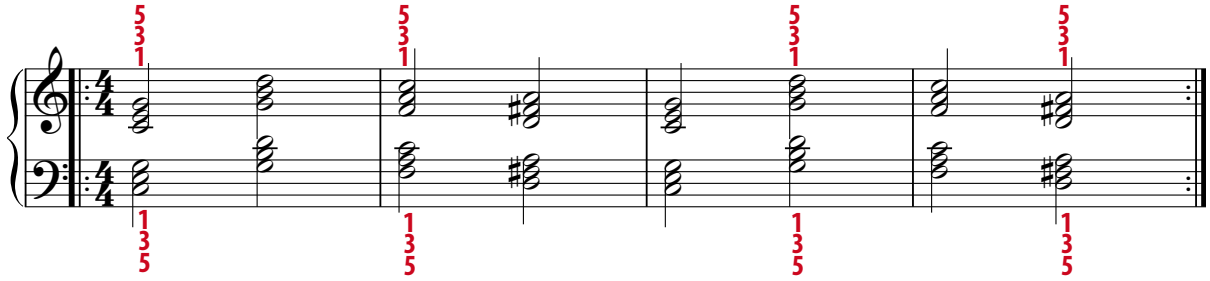
The opposite of a block chord is a **broken chord**. This is when you play the notes of a chord separately. Below are broken chords of the scales we've already looked at.



For more information watch Video Lesson 17.

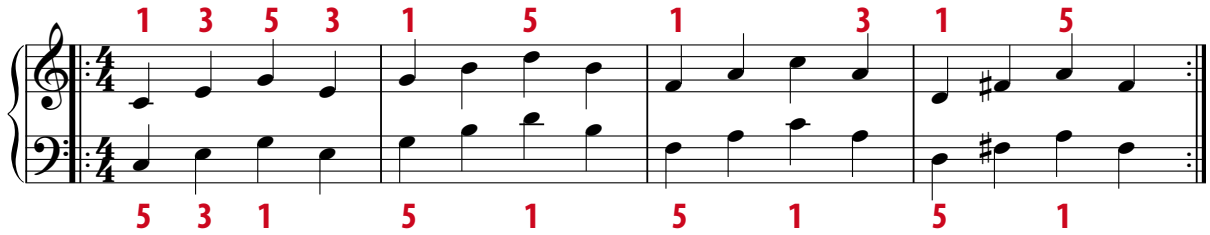
Exercise: Practice block chords by playing the following bars with C, G, F, and D.

Adagio



Now, practice broken chords in both hands by playing the following with C, G, F, & D.

Adagio



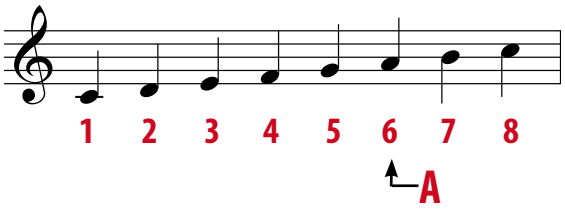
Chapter 18. Minors

In this chapter you'll learn about the minors: minor keys, minor scales, and minor intervals.

Every major key has a corresponding **minor key**. The minor key is always **relative** to a major key.

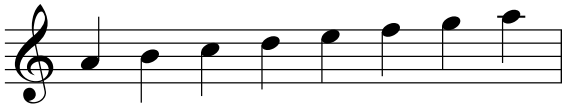
The relative minor scale always begins on the sixth note of any major scale.

Let's take C major as an example.



The sixth note is A, so in C major (with no sharps or flats), A is the relative minor.

Now we play the scale starting on A.

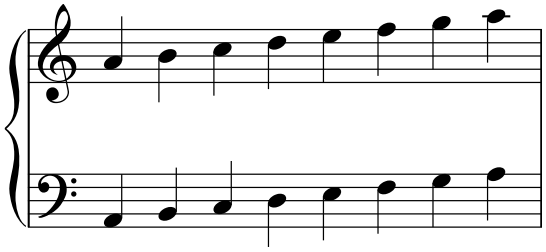


So, C major and A minor have the same key signatures. Thus, they are relative.

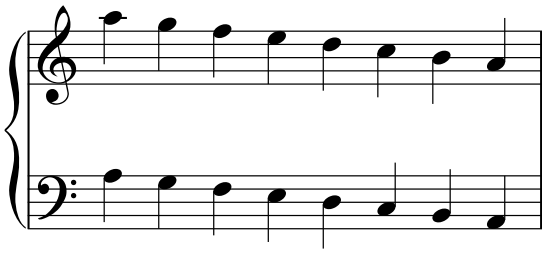
We'll now look at the three types of minor scales/keys, starting with A minor.

The Natural Minor Scale

The **natural minor scale** uses only the notes of the relative major, which, in the case of A, is C major. The other two minor scales are both variations of the natural minor scale.



a natural minor ascending



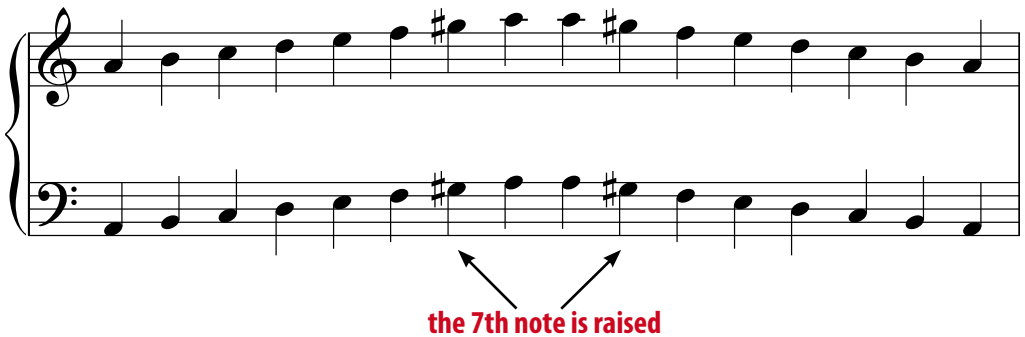
a natural minor descending

The Harmonic Minor Scale

In the **harmonic minor scale**, the seventh note is raised a half step, or up a semi-tone. The harmonic minor is the most commonly used minor scale.

In A harmonic minor, the G (G being the 7th note in the scale) is raised up to G♯.

A harmonic minor scale

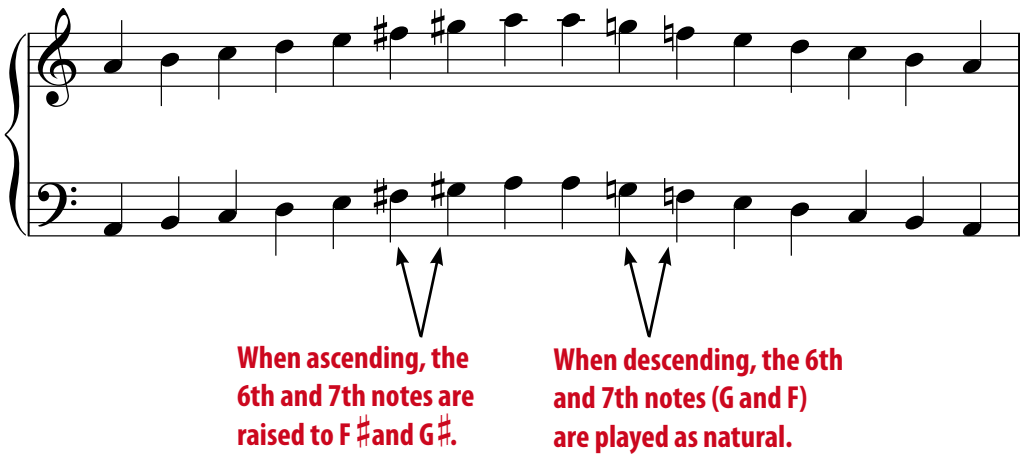


The Melodic Minor

The descending melodic minor uses different notes from the ascending version of the scale. On the way up the scale, the 6th and 7th notes are raised a half step or semi-tone. In this instance, the F will become F♯ and the G will become G♯.

When playing the scale on the way down, you will not use any sharps at all. Rather, you'll play the same notes as in the natural minor scale (F♮ and G♮.)

A melodic minor scale



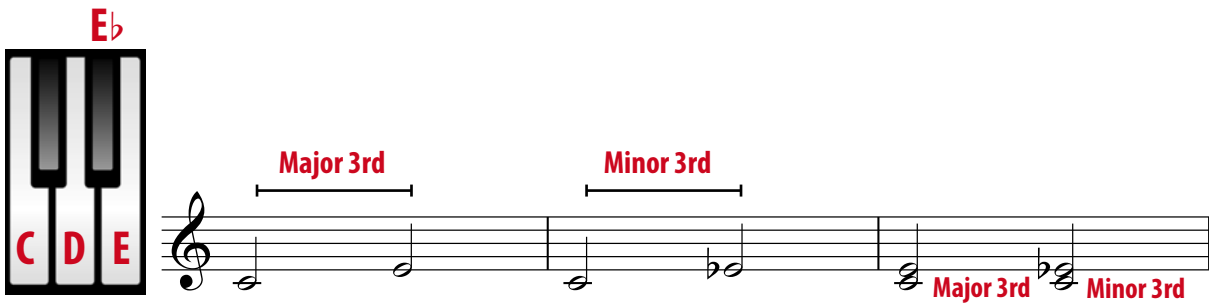
Exercise: A good way to practice and learn these scales is to play them in contrary motion. You should also practice playing the other major scales we have learned in contrary motion as well.

Minor Intervals

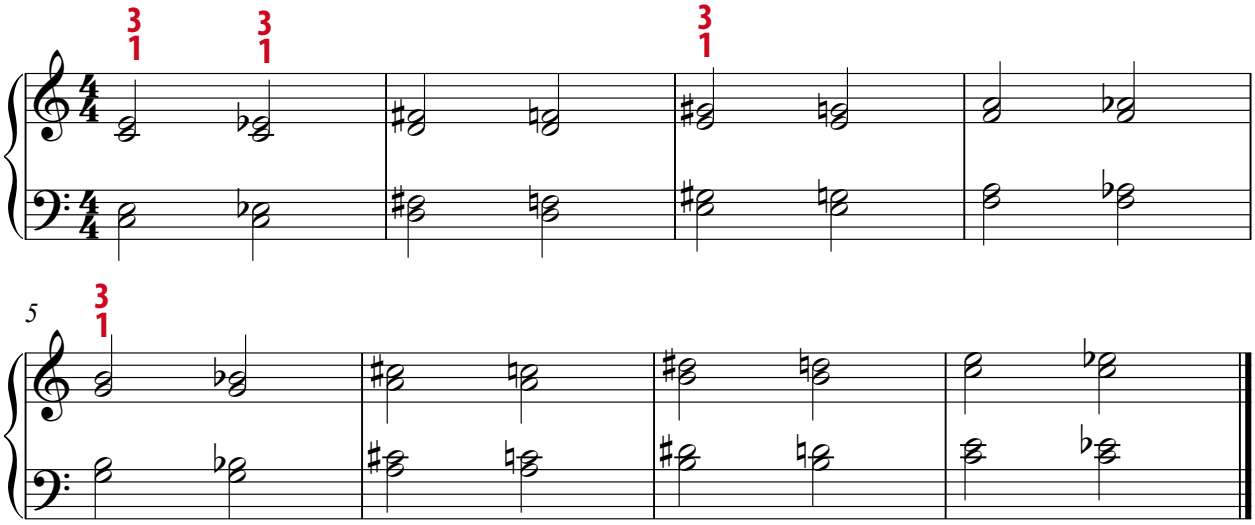
Now that you've learned all eight major intervals, you are ready to learn about minor intervals. **Minor intervals** can be measured by taking a major interval and flattening/lowering it by a semi-tone.

For more information watch Video Lesson 19.

The first interval we will look at is the **minor 3rd interval**. A minor 3rd looks similar to the major 3rd interval, except that it is flattened by a semi-tone. In other words, minor 3rds are always three semi-tones apart, while major 3rds are always four semi-tones apart.

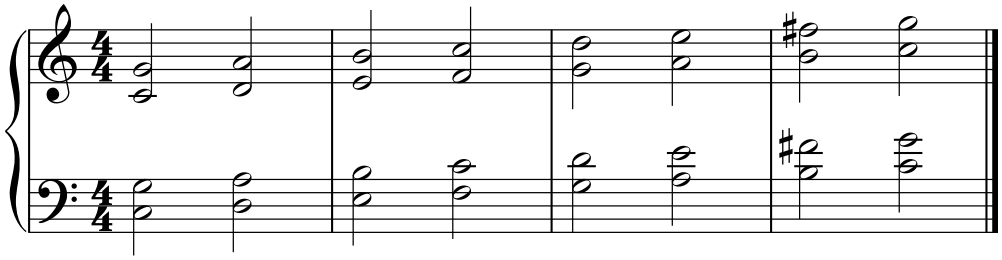


Exercise: Go through the notes in an octave from Middle C and play the major 3rds, then their subsequent minor 3rds.



The Perfect 5th

Now, the next step is to make a full chord. Any time a note is a 5th apart, it is called a **perfect 5th**. You should recognize perfect 5ths, as you've played them before. A perfect 5th is always seven semi-tones apart.

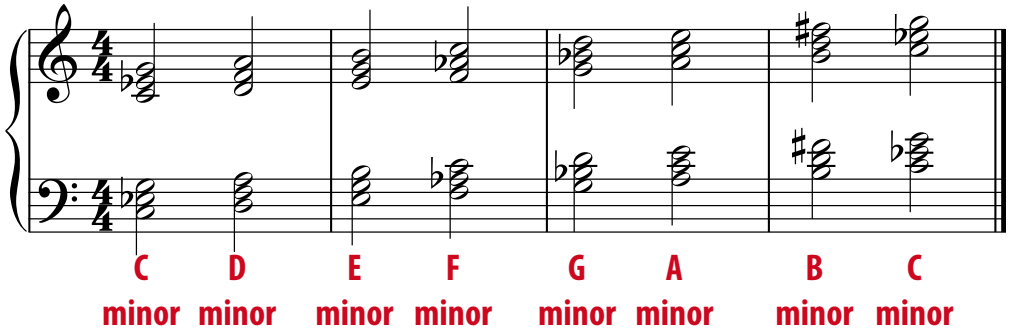


Notice that in the last perfect 5th above, there is a B and an F♯. This is because F♯ is exactly seven semi-tones away from B, which means that its relation to B is a perfect 5th. Therefore, F♯is included even though it is not in the scale of C major.

For more information watch Video Lesson 20

Minor Triads

Once you understand minor 3rds and perfect 5ths, you can learn the names to the triads. Here are some minor triads beginning with C minor.



For more information watch Video Lesson 21.

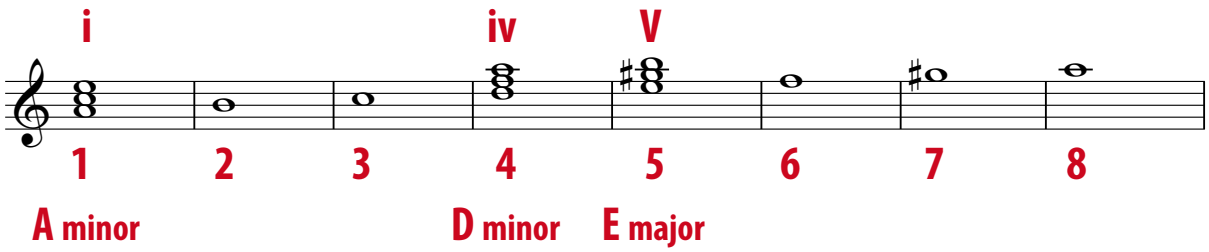
Primary Chords in Minor Keys

Now we'll look at the primary chords in the scale of the minor keys. We'll use the harmonic minor scale, as it is most common.

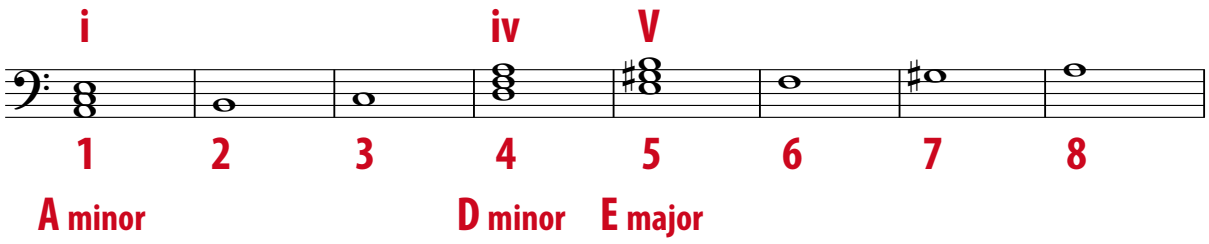
First, let's look at the A harmonic minor scale. Remember how Roman numerals were used to identify major chords? For the minor chords, ***lower-case* Roman numerals** are used.

Let's look at the A harmonic minor scale first. The primary triads of A minor are A, D, and E.

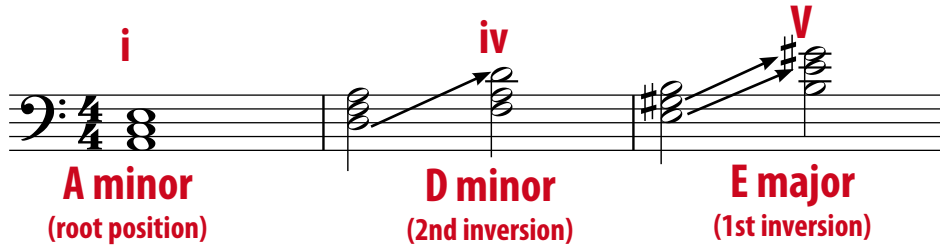
Position	Triad	Chord	
1st note	A minor	i	(an upper-case letter is used since E major is a major chord)
4th note	D minor	iv	
5th note	E major	V	



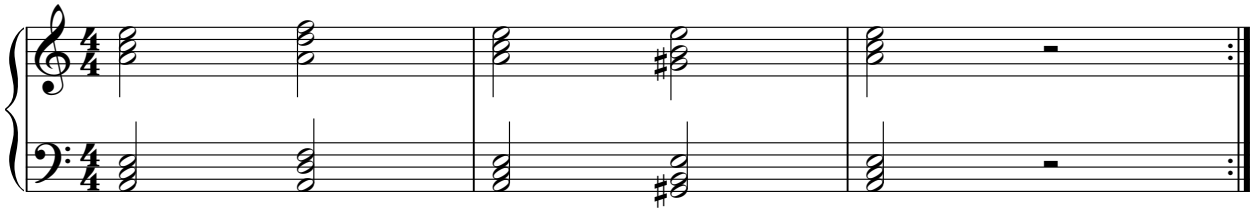
Note that the E (V) chord is major, because in the harmonic minor scale of A minor, the 7th note (G) is raised to G♯. G♯ is also the 3rd note in an E major chord, so it makes E into a major chord.



And now the same chord progression, except with inversions.



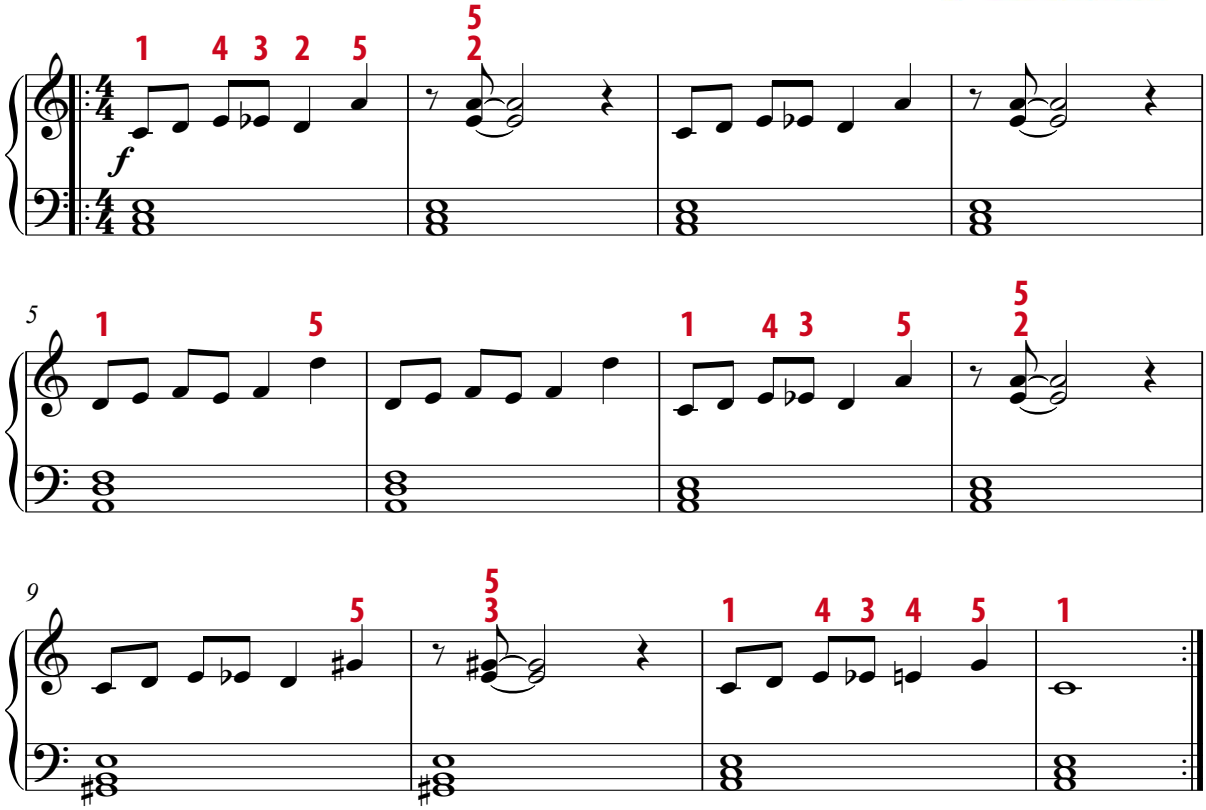
Exercise: Play through the A minor i, iv, V progression separately to begin with, then play with both hands together.



As the chords get lower on the keyboard, they can become muddy and unclear. It is best to try to keep the chords near to the middle of the keyboard so that their sounds and qualities are heard more easily.

Exercise: Practice the A minor chord progression with the following piece. Use the hand position $\begin{matrix}1\\3\\5\end{matrix}$ for the left hand chords.

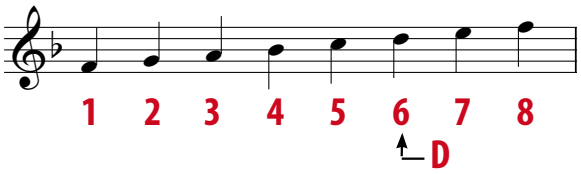
Allegro



D Minor

D minor is the relative minor to F major. This is because D is the 6th note in F major.

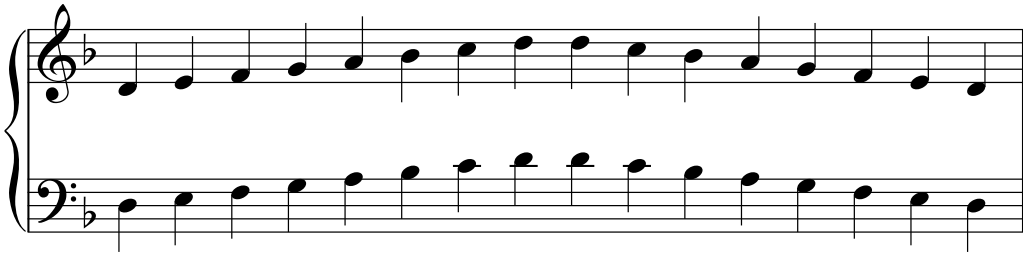
F major scale



D minor has one flat, B♭. The scale is relative to F major, because it also has one flat.

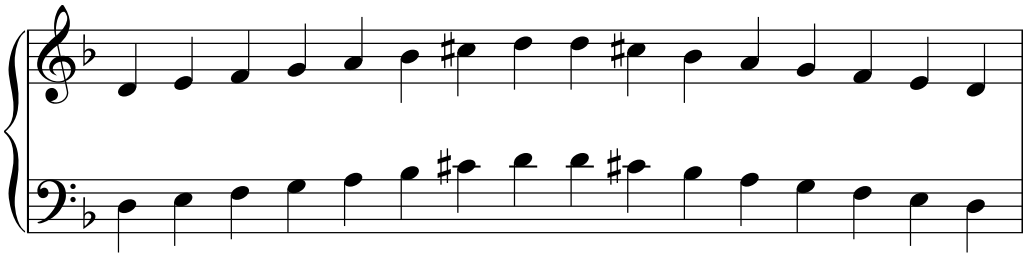
If we write a scale starting from D, using the same notes as F major, we get the D natural minor.

D Natural Minor



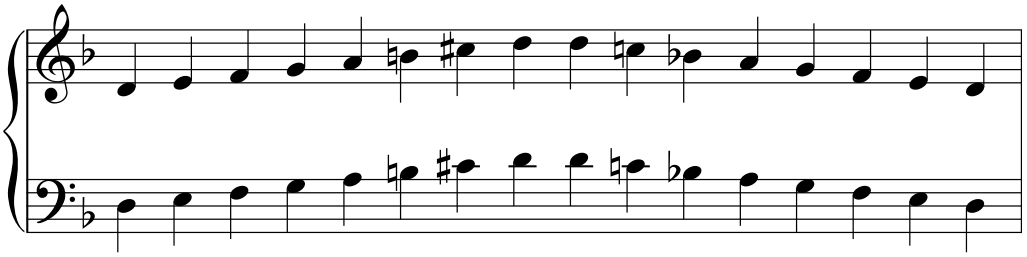
Now, we'll look at the D harmonic minor. Remember that on this scale, the seventh note is raised a semi-tone. In this case, the note C is raised to C♯.

D Harmonic Minor



The last scale to look at is the D melodic minor. Remember that for an ascending melodic minor scale, the 6th and 7th notes are raised a semi-tone, while the notes return to their normal values for a descending scale. In the ascending D melodic minor scale, the 6th note (B♭) will be raised to B♮, while the 7th note (C) will be raised to C♯

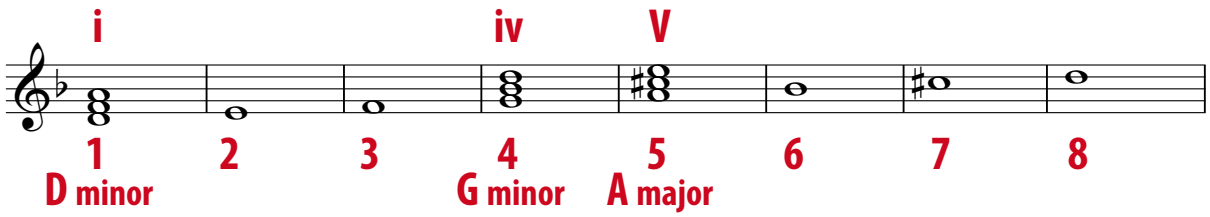
D Melodic Minor



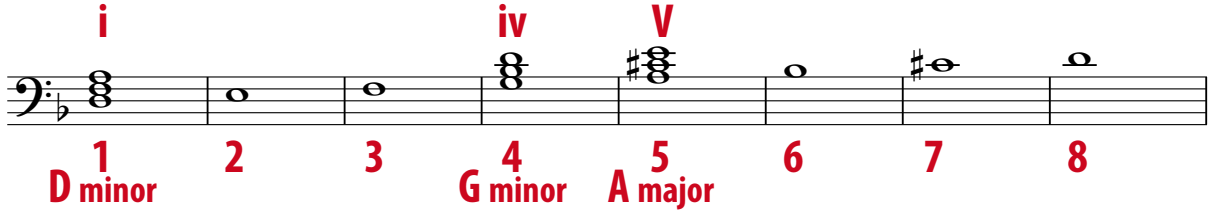
Primary Chords in D Harmonic Minor

The D harmonic minor primary triads are D, G, and A.

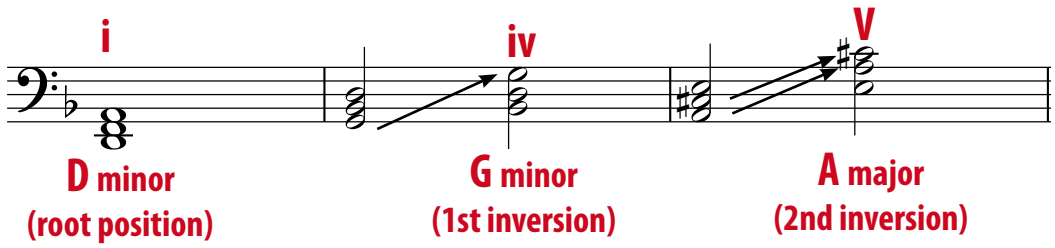
Position	Triad	Chord
1st note	D minor	i
4th note	G minor	iv
5th note	A major	V



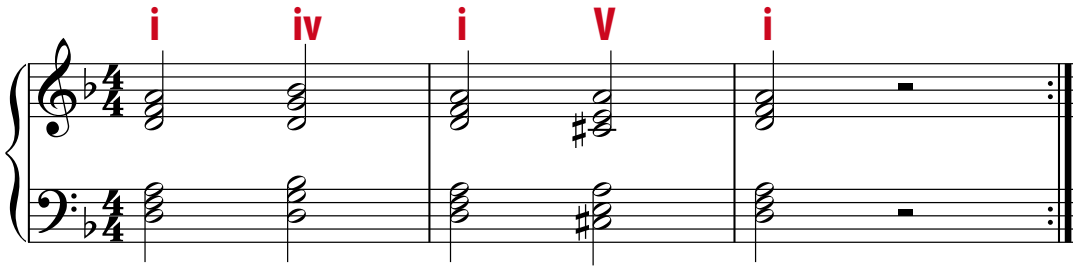
Note that the A (V) chord is major, because in D harmonic minor, the 7th note (C) is raised to C♯. This makes A a major chord, as C♯ is the 3rd note in the chord.



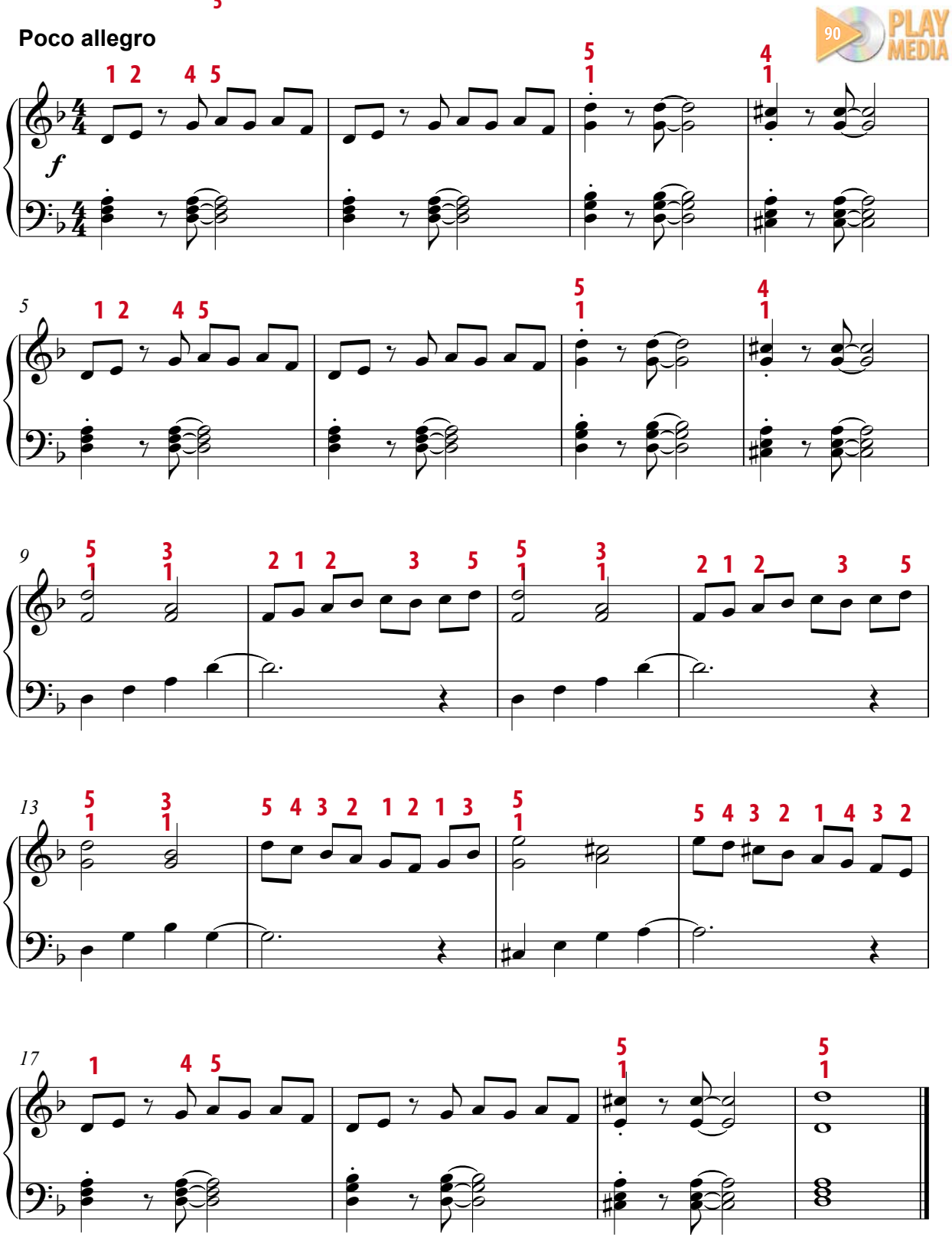
And now the same chord progression using the inversions we've previously covered.



Exercise: Play through separately, then play with both hands together.



Exercise: Use the $\begin{smallmatrix}1\\3\\5\end{smallmatrix}$ hand position for the left hand chords. Note the staccato dots.

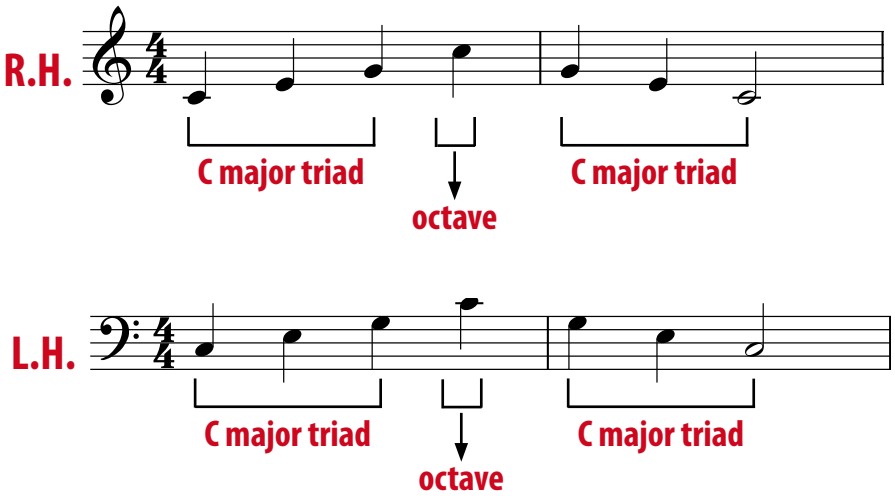


Chapter 19. Arpeggios

Now that you've mastered scales, you're ready for arpeggios! An **arpeggio** is when the notes of a chord are played separately, like in a broken chord, but with the root note added to the end.

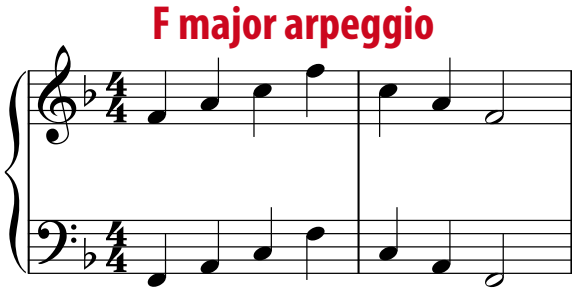
This chord covers an entire octave, which makes the fingering quite a stretch. The fingering goes **1, 2, 3, 5, 3, 2, 1**. Take it slowly at first and try to get it flowing.

If you need more explanation, watch Video Lesson 22.

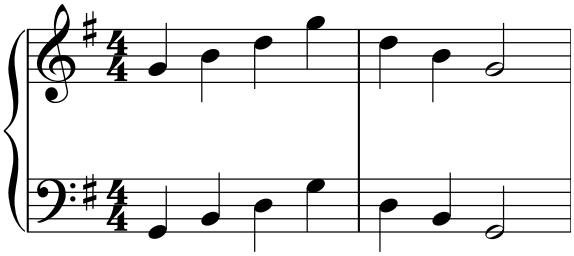


Practice arpeggios separately, then together. This gets your hands used to spanning across the keyboard. It also helps in getting used to the sound of arpeggios.

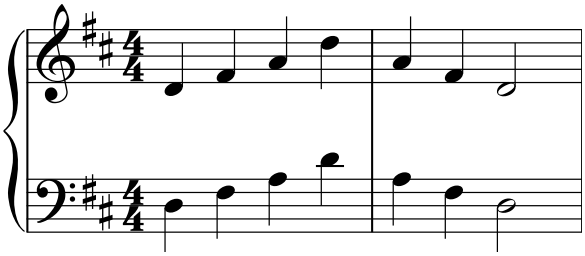
Exercise: Practice playing arpeggios of the scales that you've learned so far: G major, F major, D major, and the two minor keys, A minor and D minor.



G major arpeggio

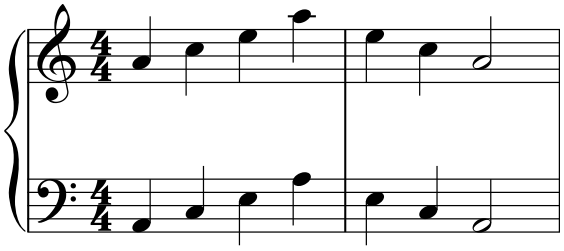


D major arpeggio

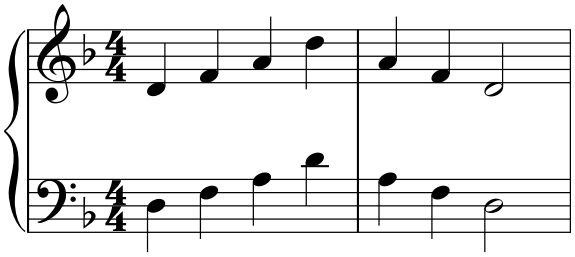


And now for the two minor scales:

A minor arpeggio



D minor arpeggio



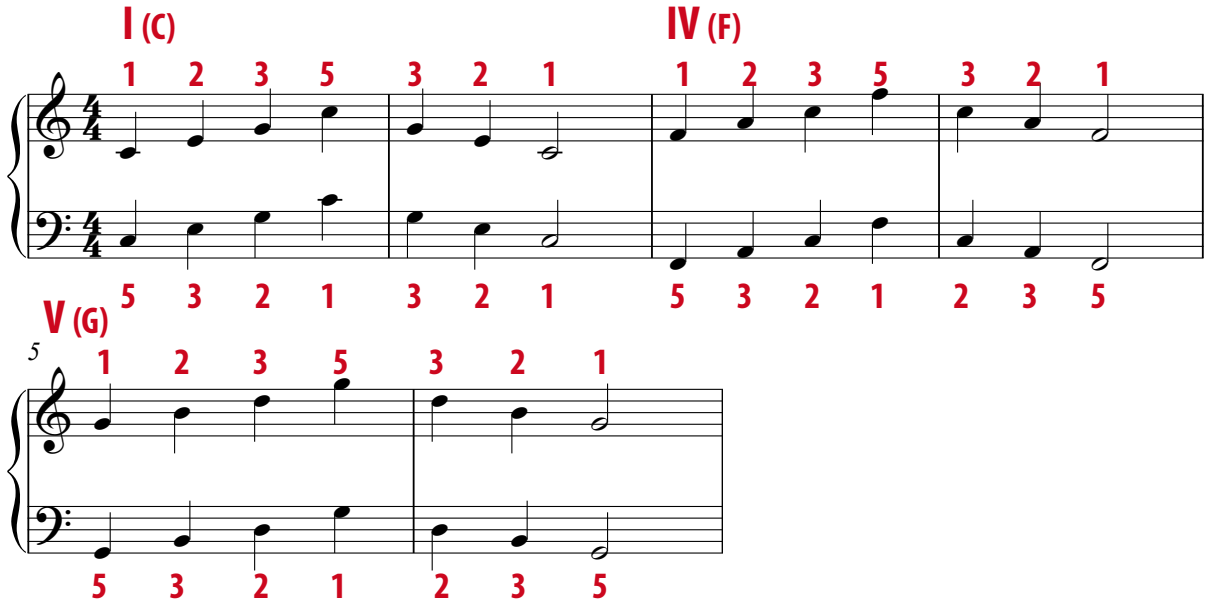
You're almost done with the book! Good job!

Arpeggios with Chord Progression

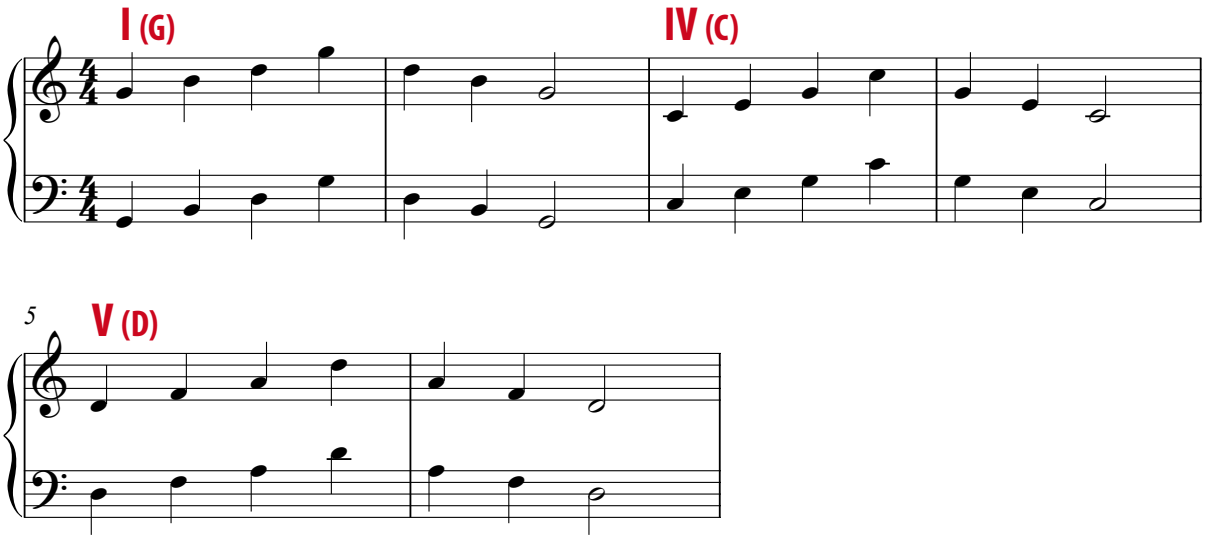
The last topic we'll look at in this book is arpeggios built up on the I, IV, V progression of the primary chords in all the keys we've looked at so far: C major, G major, D major, A minor, and D minor.

Exercise: Practice playing these arpeggios.

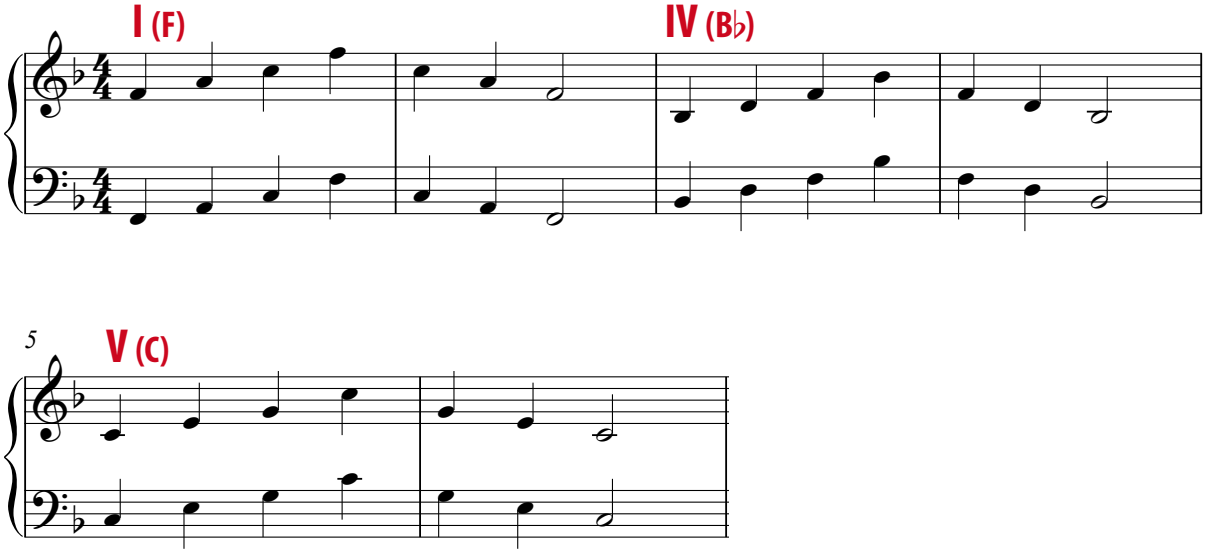
C major I, IV, V arpeggios



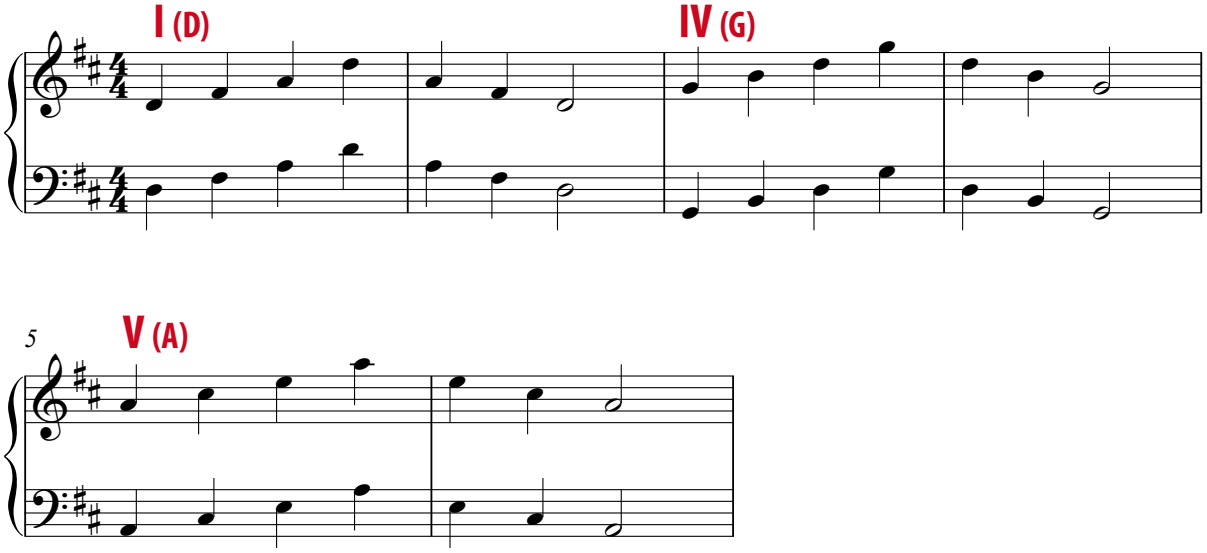
G major I, IV, V arpeggios



F major I, IV, V
arpeggios

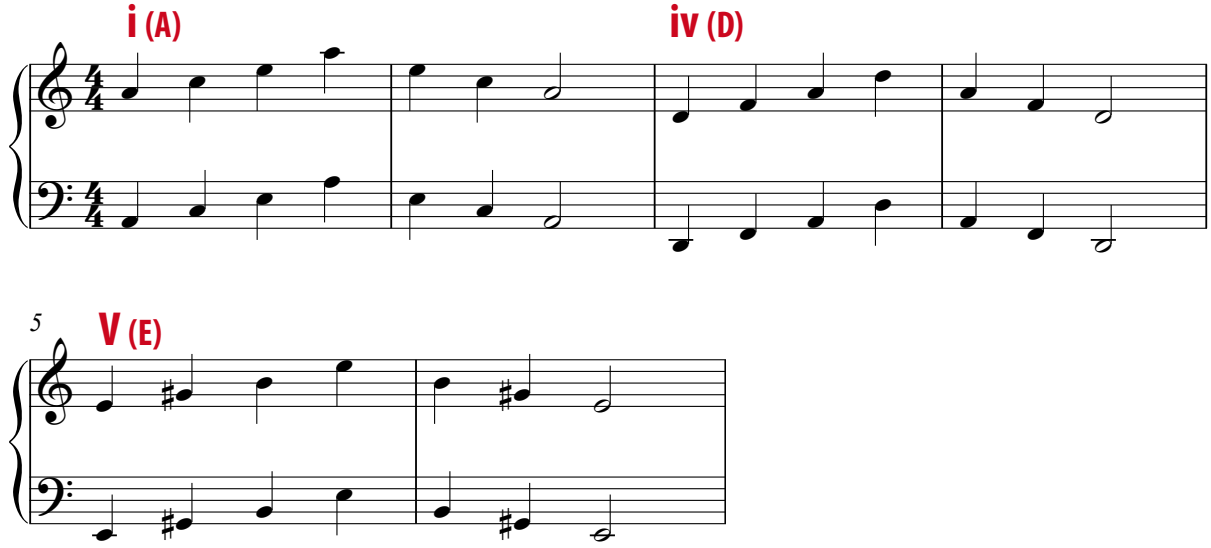


D major I, IV, V
arpeggios

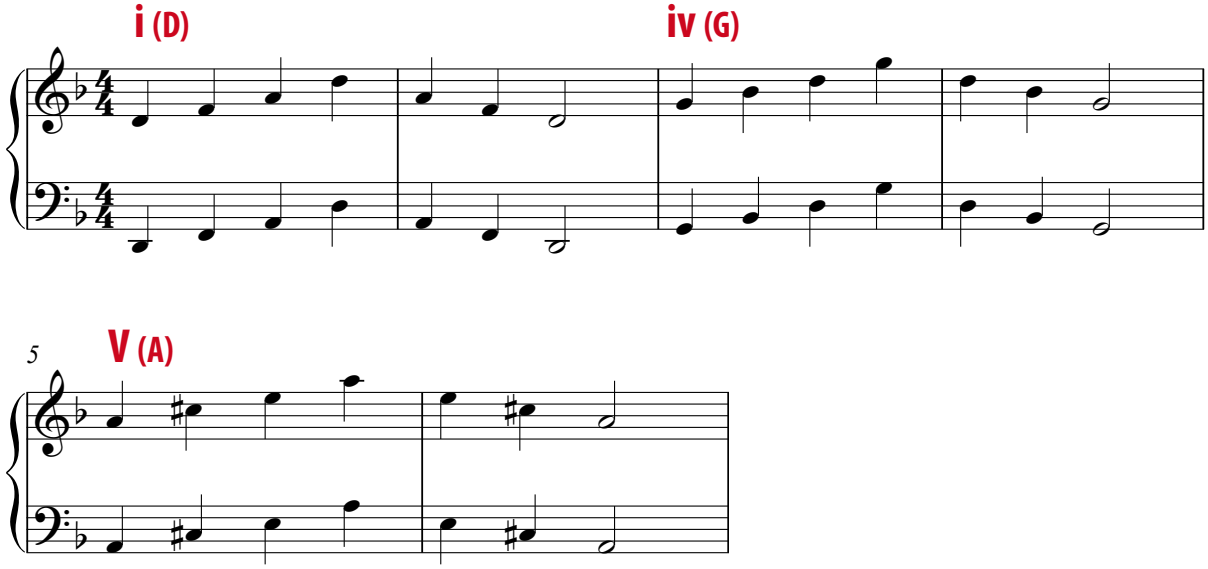


And now, the final two minor arpeggios:

A minor i, iv, V arpeggios



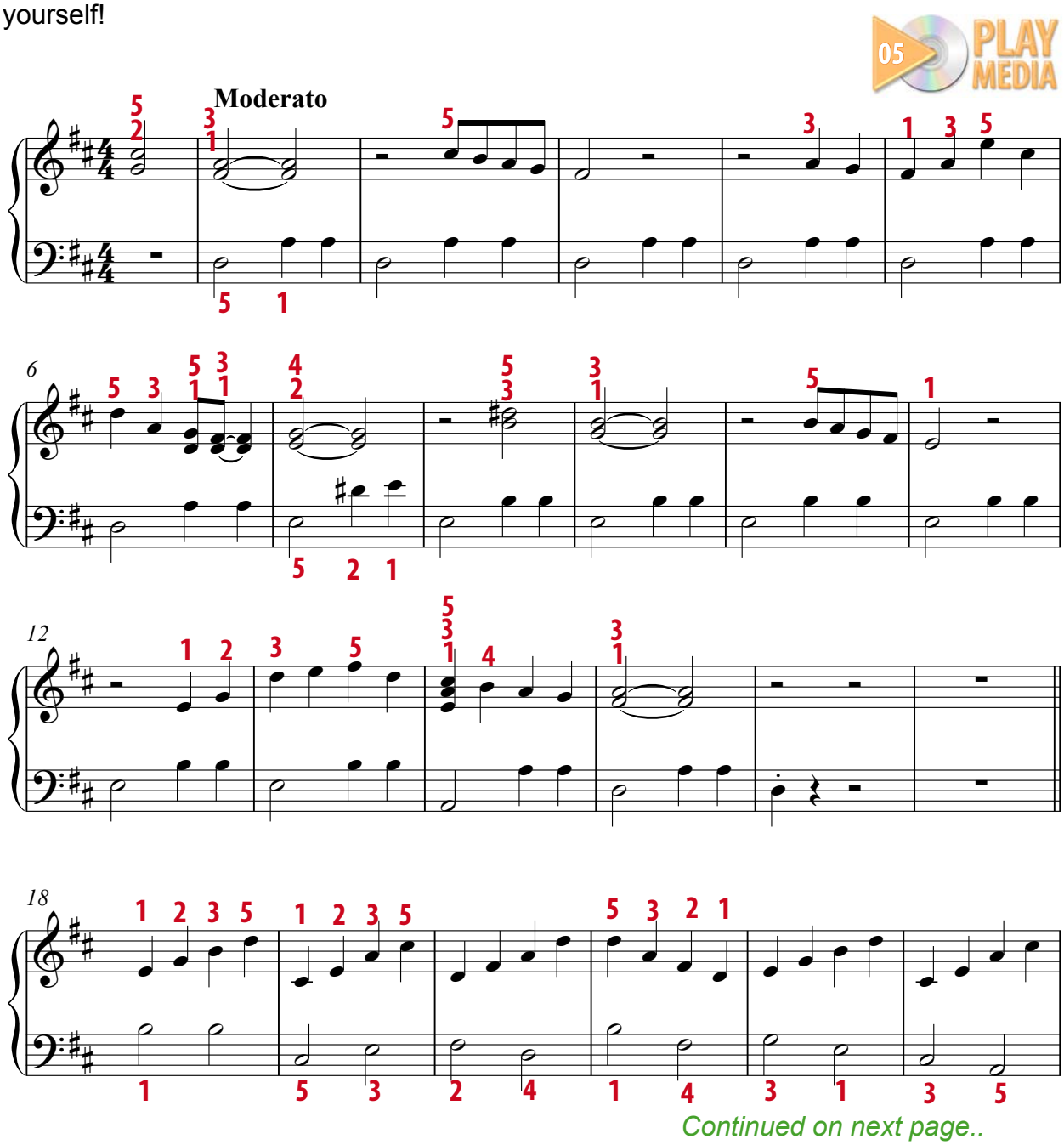
D minor i, iv, V arpeggios



WE'RE JAMMIN'!

Jam Track Five

Exercise: This is the last Jam Track for this book. This piece uses the Arpeggios that you have just learned about in this last chapter. Practice the piece on your own and with the piano & band track until you are confident enough to play with the Rocket band by yourself!



Continued on next page..

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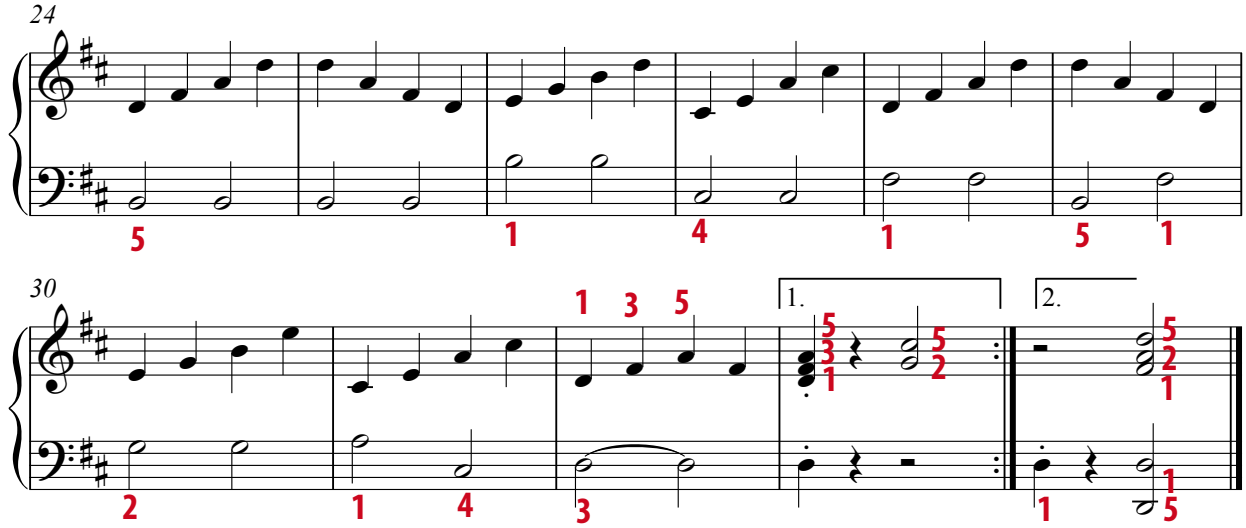

Did you notice the arpeggios in the second half of the song? Each arpeggio is playing the root, 3rd, and 5th of the chord represented.

Now lets JAM!

Revision Test: Part Two

1. How many eighth notes make a quarter note?
   a. 2
   b. 4
   c. 8
   d. 1/2

2. What does ***Andante*** mean?
   a. play daintily
   b. play lightly
   c. play at a walking pace
   d. play at a pace that is most comfortable

3. What does it mean when there is a ***fermata*** sign above a note?
   a. To play the note firmly
   b. To make the note detached
   c. Do not play the note
   d. To hold the note

4. What kind of scale plays every note on the keyboard and does not have a key signature?
   a. the Chromatic scale
   b. the Blues scale
   c. the Major scale
   d. the Melodic Minor scale.

5. What is the name of the harmonic interval between C up to A?
   a. 3rd
   b. 6th
   c. 10th
   d. Major

Revision Test Part Two continued..

6. What does poco mean?
   a. poke the keys
   b. play quietly
   c. “a little”
   d. “always”

7. What accidentals are in the key signature of F major?
   a. A#
   b. Bb Eb
   c. there are no accidentals in F major
   d. Bb

8. What does the term “***accelerando***” intend for the piece?
   a. to excel the previous notes by playing louder
   b. to gradually become slower in speed
   c. to accelerate or quicken in speed
   d. to half the duration of all the notes

9. The term used for when a scale is played ascending in one hand and descending in the other simultaneously?
   a. Chromatic Motion
   b. Contrary Motion
   c. Simultaneous Scale Motion
   d. Similarando

10. Name the primary triads in Roman Numeral form?
   a. I IV V
   b. C F G
   c. 1 4 6
   d. C CC CiV

11. What is an ***Arpeggio***?
   a. indication to play sweet and harp like
   b. a scale that is played on the edge of the piano
   c. a scale played using only the chord tones
   d. a technique used to figure out the key signature

Revision Test Part Two: Answers

1. (a) Two 8th notes make up the same value as one quarter note. (pg 74).

2. (c) Andante means to play at a slow walking pace. (pg 78)

3. (d) A fermata above a note is indicating to hold the note and pause on it. (pg 78)

4. (a) The chromatic scale plays every note on the keyboard. (pg 93)

5. (b) The harmonic interval between C up to A is a 6th. Or more specifically a major 6th. (pg 104)

6. (c) Poco means “a little” is often preceding an expression - to play ‘poco dolce’ means to play a little sweetly. (pg 109)

7. (d) The F major key has one flat in it. B flat. (pg 111)

8. (c) Accelerando means to accelerate and quicken the speed. (pg 120)

9. (b) Contrary motion. (pg 126)

10. (a) I IV V are the roman numerals for the primary triads 1, 4, and 5. (pg 130)

11. (c) An Arpeggio is a type of scale made up of only chord tones, and is often used as a form of bass in the left hand. (pg 150)

Well done! What score did you get out of 11? If you got less then 6/11, go back and do the test again and refer to the book to find your answers. This is a good way to ensure you are familiar with this book before going on to the next.

Conclusion

You've done it! You have completed the Rocket Piano for Beginners. Just think of everything you can do now that you couldn't before. You can read music, play chords, and play with both hands independently. You're on your way to becoming a musician ... all you need is more practice!

You are now prepared to go onto the second book, Rocket Piano Intermediate.

Ruth