

MUSIC THEORY



**FROM BEGINNER TO INTERMEDIATE: HOW TO EASILY COMPOSE MUSIC
FOR PIANO, GUITAR OR ANY OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENT**

ROY MAXWELL

Music Theory

*From Beginner to Intermediate: How to Easily
Compose Music for Piano, Guitar or Any other
Musical Instrument.*

Roy Maxwell

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ABOUT AUTHOR

FREE RESOURCES

First of all, I want to thank you for your purchase.

I would like to let you know that you can use several free resources that I have prepared for you, which will help you put into practice what you will learn.

In the link you will find a copybook for musical exercises and several audio tracks that will facilitate your learning.

You will find the link on the last page of the book.

Introduction

We talked about many things in our previous book; we discussed some basic musical concepts and theories every musician should know. We learned about the staff, scales, modes, solfege and a lot of other very interesting things. In this second volume, we will learn many other things such as: how to read and write music on the staff, how to compose great-sounding, memorable and fantastic melodies; we will learn about rhythm, chords, melody and way more. Moreover, at the end of every chapter, you'll find what we call "unusual music theory", where we will learn about some very interesting and inspiring stories in music history. Stories that will motivate you and get you off the chair to create some amazing composition. But, before we jump right into these amazing stuffs, let me remind you, once again, of the importance of learning music theory - in case you didn't understand it yet.

Who, like us, has had already some experience, knows that studying music can give you this feeling of being a space traveler exploring some strange spheres. Everything will appear new and very exciting, but, at the same time, you won't fully comprehend what's this strange feeling and whatever you are experiencing.

I also know for sure that some musicians will advise you to learn some music theory. They will bombard you with stories of how much it helped them and how it improved their playing and singing. Someone else, instead, will tell you to avoid music theory like a red-hot iron or the plague. This group of people will tell you that music theory will inhibit your artistic, musical creativity and suck out all the vitality and life from your beloved music. What a disheartening and frightening tale. They will go ahead giving you a long list of some very amazing musicians that never studied music theory or never studied anything at all, just to support their claims.

But they will never ever tell you that Jimi Hendrix, Louis Armstrong, John

Coltrane, Miles Davis and a lot of others, knew and know so much music theory than we can't even imagine, that's the plain truth.

Thanks again for choosing this book, make sure to leave a short review on Amazon if you enjoy it, I'd really love to hear your thoughts.

Should you bother learning music theory?

Without even being told, you should know that studying music theory makes sense - or any theory in general. You might have looked up at some online materials to see what is really about this "music theory", only to find that it is some dry, kind of boring and abstract topic that you are not sure you want to waste your time on. It wasn't just going any way. And things just kept getting worse, because they brought in space aliens and some really funny looking symbols. My job here is to make it more fun and a lot less boring. Going back to the main question, to know if you should learn music theory, we first need to know what exactly music theory is for.

What is it for?

Chess, courtrooms, football and even being a citizen requires that know the rules. Even just to play soccer (not even being a good player) you need to understand that you're not in any way allowed to use your hands, tackle an opponent and you also need to know how to score goals. If you do not know the rules of the game, you will surely not understand what's happening or what you are supposed to do at any given point in time. Even watching soccer or any other sport without knowing the rules is a very detaching experience. That is why I hate hockey! But, the thing is that music is not, in any way, like chess or soccer. Music has no strict "rules" that should be observed at all times. You don't need to know the theory to sing a melody or play any tune.

You should know that music theory was not designed by a bunch of people that said: "look, this is exactly how we will be doing it". As a matter of fact, people just started making music and at a certain point, they looked for the logic behind the entire process of its creation. Probably, they asked themselves what was going on that makes music sounding so good. Music theory describes, it does not prescribe - it's not a doctor.

That is exactly how music theory can help you, or, should I say, help your music. It gives great insight into why certain music sounds good or why it doesn't. Music Theory helps you understand those sounds that you already know, by giving really cute names to them, demystifying their construction process and giving you a very systematic way of thinking about sounds. It describes what it doesn't prescribe.

It is like a language

Children learn how to speak fluently before we even teach them grammar. No one sits to teach a toddler what verbs, nouns and pronouns are. They learn about the rules of grammar only after their spoken language skills are so close to perfection. This means that we don't consciously apply all the rules of grammar to speak correctly. Instead, we do it automatically. We study grammar rules to gain a greater understanding of what we are already doing and to clean off some very possible mistakes.

On that same note, we do not become fluent in music by learning music theory. Music Theory solidifies our understanding of something we already know. And that is what we are already doing. Music Theory answers questions such as "What harmony can I use here to give it a jazzy feel?", "What makes this melody sound so bluesy?" "Why do this melody and rhythm sound so alive?"

Experience against theory

Let's assume a space alien knocks on your door by six in the morning, you open the door and he goes straight to the point and asks you what is a guitar. What would you answer? Would you explain that the guitar is a 6-stringed musical instrument that produces sound by controlling how fast those strings vibrate? I don't think such an answer would, in any way, communicate anything meaningful about what a guitar actually is to an alien from another planet. That explanation is too vague and abstract. Even though it might make a good entry into an encyclopedia.

Instead of giving the alien such a vague response, you could choose to pick up your beautiful guitar from the corner of your room and play "America the Beautiful" for the alien. That will give a so much richer information to the alien and also entertain him too. The alien would get to hear what the guitar sounds like, he will see how your hand forms some mysterious but beautiful shapes and how each of the strings vibrate, he would feel the metal of the strings on his fingertips (and maybe get some calluses after a long time) and also get to experience, the sensation of striking the strings.

After this beautiful experience, the alien might be wowed and might end up asking you "how does this work?".

This will be the right time to bring up the "encyclopedia entry" definition of a guitar. There is a big chance that the explanation of the string mechanism and pitch will be a wow moment for the alien. This is the time that the explanation connects a bunch of information and experiences, that the alien has already had, from hearing and touching the guitar. This allows your somewhat complex explanation to fall on the alien like a truckload of clarity.

I am very sure that you have had such an experience before, that moment when a person explains you something you have been wondering about for a long time and you have this huge but quick moment of clarity. Before you know what's happening, everything has fallen into place and starts making sense.

That moment of clarity will be such an interesting moment for you, because you might think; “Oh, if I had done this earlier for the alien, instead of opting for the encyclopedia definition, It would have saved me so much time and energy” but the truth remains that the burst of clarity, the wow-moment would never have happened for the alien if you had not first slammed a few tunes for the him. Instead, maybe he would’ve had an ‘who cares?’ moment.

Always start with some pleasant sound

The alien's magical guitar experience explains the experience before theory concept. This means that it's so much easier to understand some stuff after we have first gained some practical experience with it. There is a substantial difference between being told that one kilogram equals one thousand grams but, having a weight worth one kilogram placed on our hands, while someone tells us "this is exactly one kilogram" changes everything. Let's think of what is the musical equivalent of having that one-kilogram weight pushed into your hands.

Let's say you are visiting England for the weekend. You could, actually, spend your first full day curled up in your hotel room, studying the map of England, until you can close your eye and sketch it with pinpoint accuracy and with lightning speed. But I think it would be way better exploring the city by yourself, or with someone, making your way through the streets, and asking people for directions now and then. When you are finally back in your hotel room and you take a look at the map at the end of the day (wandering), things will become a lot clearer. You will know exactly how the streets look like, where that one tall building was. And you would easily figure, out on the map, which part of the city you've seen and which not. The map would make even more sense.

Music theory is much like a map. It is not in any way interesting if you've never visited the place before.

Music theory is much like a map. It is not, in any way, interesting if you've never visited the place before. That's why it is much better to learn to play some music first before you try to understand the music. Start with sound. If we do not have experience with the music in the first place, music theory won't make so much sense to us. Music arouses all kinds of feelings and emotions in you. Those aroused sensations are like tiny hooks that you can attach music theory to. Without those tiny hooks, music theory wouldn't make much sense and would not just blend. These tiny hooks bring the theory in music to life.

Should you learn music theory?

Like I said before, music theory opens up our minds to a deeper understanding of what we already know. You actually do not need theory to play music, the same way children don't need to be aware of grammar rules to speak their native language.

But, if you are trying to have some more understanding about what you're doing, the question changes automatically. It is no more about if you should learn music-theory, but when you should start learning it. The answer to that would be: first explore the city before you start studying the map. So, as long as you start with the sound, you'll learn music-theory that will make a lot more sense to you and you will also avoid the things that you won't need.

Actually, it can be really hard to resist the temptations of fellow musicians convincing you to study topic A, B, or C to 'transform' your playing.' Have in mind that they actually, might, overestimate the importance of what they are asking you to learn, since it's part of their own unique experiences. This wow-experience might have happened when they learned that bit of music-theory themselves. You should ask them to explain to you how, exactly, it will improve your singing or playing. This question will help you understand if what they are telling you to learn is, in any way, relevant for you and your musical ambitions and goals.

If you do not really know why you want to learn music theory, simply don't. Always be aware of the question you are trying to answer. Why does this harmony sound so jazzy? Why do these notes sound so bluesy?

That being said, if you wish to get started with some music theory and gain some deeper understanding of why music does what it does to you, simply do this. Pick a (section of) a song that you really love and start asking yourself why you like it so much. Try to figure out what it is that you love so much about the song, whether it's the harmony, the melody, a bunch of chords or a drum beat.

Because we are going to be talking a lot about how to read and write music, or songs, in this book.

But before starting, I will, briefly, talk about how music theory helps you become a better songwriter.

Music Theory Will Improve Your Chord Progressions

One of the quickest and easiest things you can do, is writing a boring and uninteresting chord progression. This happens all the time, in popular music — they use the same four chords but just in different tempos and keys. But if you are a musician, that knows about the Circle of Fifths (which we did on our first book) and chord construction (two important music theory concepts), you will ultimately be able to create much more interesting chord progressions.

If you understand what chords work with the key you are in, it will be such a tremendous help to your songwriting endeavor. For example, as you are singing your melody, you will be able to come up with a more engaging and creative chord progression, quicker than you would if you did not know any of the theory. Once you become good at creating chord progressions, you may even start hearing them clearly in your head as you are singing your melodies.

Music Theory Will Help You Compose Stronger Melodies

As we will discuss in this book, melodies remain one of the most important aspects of fantastic songs. I so much love building a melody and doing some unexpected things with it. I usually play around with notes or even sing until I find the right melody; this seems to me like the most natural way to get a melody.

But, normally, I do get stuck, sometimes, and, in these moments, it would be such a helpful thing to know different musical scales, so that I can pinpoint what notes to strike when. A musical scale is just a sequence of notes that sound good when played together. Like we discussed in the previous book, and are going to discuss more on this one, there are a bunch of musical scales. In each key, these are the unique types of musical scales:

1. Chromatic scales (twelve notes per octave)
2. Octatonic scales (eight notes per octave)
3. Heptatonic scales (seven notes per octave)
4. Hexatonic scales (six notes per octave)
5. Pentatonic scales (five notes per octave)
6. Tetratonic scales (four notes per octave)
7. Tritonic scales (3 notes per octave)
8. Diatonic scales (2 notes per octave)
9. Monotonic scales (one note per octave)

I am not in any way trying to make things tough for you, I'm just trying to show you how you can expand your musical horizons. If you know these

different musical scales, the count of melodies you could come up with, would be beyond count. And it would be so much easier to get yourself free from compositional blocks whenever you are searching for a melody.

To explain that, a lot of us naturally sing a melody composed of only musical notes that are present in the chord one of our chord progression. But, if you have expert knowledge of musical scales, you can compose a melody using the notes that are in other chords in your chosen progression. That would be just as interesting.

Music Theory Will Help You Communicate better and more fluently With Other Musicians

I strongly suggest co-writing a song with some other musician(s). You come to realize that you will enjoy it more than writing alone and you might even write better songs. Even if you do end up disliking the song or even the whole experience, trust me, you'll learn something new and useful.

If you are going to be collaborate with some other songwriters, it will be a must that you know the music language, which is music theory. If you get into a songwriting session with some other musician(s) and they bring up music terms into the conversation, you will surely get left behind. Knowing the foundation of music theory will help you communicate fluently and better with your fellow players and songwriter(s). It helps you getting new musical ideas across the entire process, and that would be very difficult if you didn't know music theory. If you really want to upgrade your song-writing and co-song-writing skills (and also impress other songwriters and players), you just have to learn some very basic rules. Since we are going to focus so much on song-writing in this book, let us start with this before getting into it.

Ten Very Important Things Every Songwriter Should Know

There are several things every songwriter should know at heart, since they will only help you to have better songs. You personally may have some other things that will lead to a happier song for you. The bottom line here is that, from time to time, you really do need to sit back and bring those things to memory. Never forget them.

As a musician, I compose music every day. Sometimes they may be arrangements or rearrangement of some already-existing songs (jazz standards, for example), other times they may be original works for choirs or catchy songs for a rock band. Sometimes they're short thematic music for a radio advertisement. Whatever the case, the bottom line is that I create music almost every day. It doesn't matter, in any way, what I'm composing, the following ten guidelines serve as my own personal cues about how to make my songs sound great, how to stay happy while composing and also keep my listeners happy (or maybe sad!).

1. There is a Great Power in Contrast

Every time I create a wonderful musical idea, that I love, two things come to my mind: “Okay, how will it sound like when I repeat this idea?” and also “What do I contrast this idea with?” If it’s a minor key musical idea, I always set to work coming up with a major key idea. If it’s kind of loud, I make sure to create something that works as a gentle “response.” At times, the contrast has to be more subtle than that, but always know that contrast in music is one very important part of what keeps listeners engaged.

2. Repetition is an exceptional Thing in Songwriting

It's totally impossible to find a song that does not make use of repetition. It may be melodic repetition, it may be harmonic, motivic or even rhythmic repetition. In music, once we hear something that catches our attention, all we want to do is hear it again and again: it may be the melody itself, the chords or the harmony, the rhythms or perhaps the lyric.

3. Simple is More Beautiful than Complex

Sometimes complexity in music is great and I love it so much, but not always, at the expense of the understanding of my listener. It's great (and sometimes beautiful) to have some very complex sections or even phrases that will make the listener not to understand that aspect of the music right away, but simplicity, on some level, means that your music can connect properly with the audience. Also remember that, some simplicity, in one aspect of your music, like the rhythmic vibe, for instance, can create space for you to go for a more complex melody or lyric. Mixing complexity and simplicity will result in such a piece of wonderful music.

4. Songs Are About How We Feel

The above reason is basically why it's very hard to write a song about algebra, geometry, or our car's brake shoes. This doesn't mean, in the slightest way, that you simply get to write about how you are feeling, but about something that can bring up an emotional response from your listeners. This is exactly how you make that very-important emotional connection with your listeners. Writing about how you feel with no foundational story, just sounds empty, with totally nothing for your listeners to connect to.

5. All Chord Progressions Are Great

Maybe, the best way to say this, is that all chord progressions are killer chord progressions if they give support to the melody (directly) and the words (indirectly.)

6. Every Song Should reflect Some Aspects of Yourself

Writing a song takes some confidence and courage. How you compose your melodies, build your lyrics and string it all together, must be a unique display of what is essentially yourself.

7. Every Song Is A Combination of Song Elements

The song you composed may have an amazing lyric, but should it sound best with a still-standing, not-really contoured melody, then that melody is performing a very important function which is staying out of the way. There are no songs that flaws or weaknesses are acceptable. The coming together of musical elements is always present and always very important.

8. Try to Be Comfortable With As Many Songwriting Process As You Can

If what you love is the harmony or chord-first process, then it is time to shift focus to melodies and lyrics. If you always begin your songwriting process with a poem or a prologue you've written, then it's time to try leaving words to the last stage. Why is this? Being comfortable with very many processes is one of the best ways to fight what we know as writer's block. If a creative block cross your way using method A, you won't fret since you have got method B or even C ready to try.

9. No One Ever Became Famous By Just Being Good or- Dope!

Think about this: Every studio guitarist or session player I know is fantastic and perfect, but no one ever gets to know their names, unless they look them up in the credit notes and some other document that nobody ever reads. Being perfect and fantastic will get you gigs, not fame and, maybe, not even money. Fame comes from being uniquely outstanding, and I emphasize being unique. Bob Dylan's, Bob Marley's and all the other Bob's fame as singers and songwriters come from being unique in both singing and songwriting and not just from being good. If you want to achieve fame as a songwriter, you very much need to be good, but you also very, very, very much need to be also doing things that no other songwriter is doing.

10. Consistency is the Most Important thing In Songwriting

Writing a single great song only shows good potential. As a songwriter, you need to write splendid music with more consistency. Consistency comes from composing songs and listening to songs daily and learning from some other great songs that are out there.

Part One; Rhythm

So far, we have talked very little about this very vital aspect of music which is the rhythm (or beat or sense of groove). When you listen to any beautiful or iconic pop, gospel, reggae, blues or rock tune, it is always that combination of musical elements, like melody and rhythm, that makes the song recognizable, groovy and memorable. Rhythm is a very vital aspect in music, no matter the genre of music you wish to play. Without some rhythm, there is no music.

You do not have to be a drummer or whatever kind of percussionist to feel the rhythm. Every musician has to deal with rhythm, be you a singer, drummer, bassist, guitar player or even a tambourine player. In this section, we will learn how to write any rhythm in music, starting from the simplest to the most complex. By that, I mean from some very simple whole notes to 16th note syncopations. We will also learn about time signatures, tempo and their different markings, and also about dynamics and basically how to navigate your way through any piece of music.

*“Everything in the universe has rhythm, everything in the universe dances” –
Maya Angelou*

Note Values and Basic Notation

We will talk about several and different things like;

1. Grouping musical beats into bars or measures
2. Grasping and counting whole beats, half beats, quarter notes (beats), eighth notes, and sixteenth notes and also rests.
3. Making use of dotted notes and ties
4. Dividing and subdividing beats into triplets

The first volume of this book talked about how to work with pitch, but that's only a fraction of the basic music theory every musician, including you, needs to know. In this volume, we will deal with the other half of the fraction, or equation, which is how you work with elements like time, (referred to as rhythm in music). Rhythm is that element or that thing that drives the music forward and gives music its groove and beat. To learn rhythm properly, it's very important you learn about note values. It is also very important that I tell you that this kind of music notation is not in any way hard.

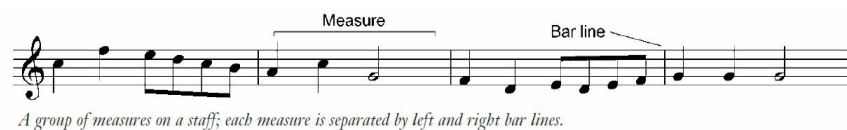
All you will need to learn rhythm are some very little and very basic of maths and how to count up to four, or from 1 to 4. Before we go forward, let's just lay down some very basic ground rules for this chapter. It is worthy of note that, while a lot of songs are composed or written with four beats to a bar or measure: one, two, three, four (1,2,3,4), this is not a universal rule. As a matter of fact, some very popular songs only have three beats to a bar or measure. For example, "My Favorite Things," from the movie "The Sound of Music", and some other tunes, mostly in the genres of blues, jazz and classical, have over four beats per measure. Some have six, eight, or even five. To make it a lot easier for you to learn the basics, in this part of the book, we will only address four-beat per measures, which we refer to as 4/4 time. All the other kinds of beats which may be 3, 5, 6, 7, or whatever, will be discussed in another chapter. And if you can take your mind back, I

clarified that all you will need in this chapter, is to only know how to count from one to four.

Rhythm is, and will always be, about counting. When you take a listen to your favourite pop song, just feel the beat of that song and go ahead, tap your foot to the music, and what you will most likely feel, is the beats of the song fall into groups of four and by that I mean; 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4. It's very easy and natural to hear and feel this. Let's go ahead and use a more specific example, which is simply our most beloved tune "Mary Had a Little Lamb". The notes or pitches of this song fall into groups of four; all I want you to do is replace the syllables of "Mary had a" [Ma-ry had a] with "one-two, three-four" and it will be clear to you how this works. In this particular song, and some other songs composed with the concept of "groups of four", each group of four beats is referred to as a measure or bar. And you can simply visualize a measure or bar as a container, or room, that holds a specific number of beats.

Using the standard 4/4 time, a measure or bar holds the equivalent of 4 quarter notes.

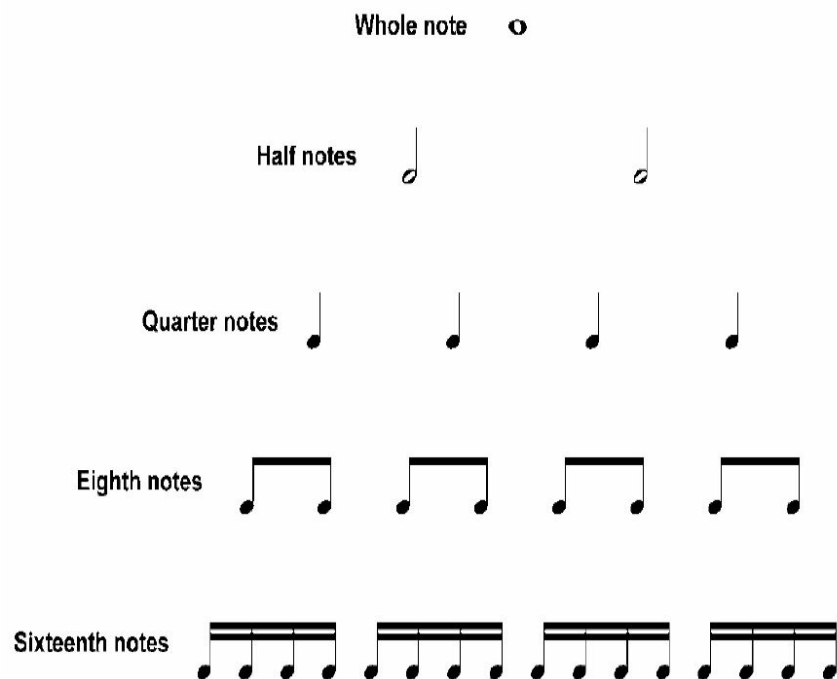
The start and end of a measure or bar are indicated by bar lines like this:



Continuing with rhythm; we count the first beat in a measure as one (1) and also count the second beat as two (2), the third beat as three (3), and the last beat as four (4). There is no fifth beat in 4/4 time; if you get to five, it means you've counted way too far! Whenever you are at four, the next beat that follows is always one. Take note that, anytime four beats (counts) are completed, that measure automatically ends there (in 4/4 time). What this means is that, when we count one, two, three, four, we complete one measure. If enough measures are being put together, what you will have is a song.

Note Values

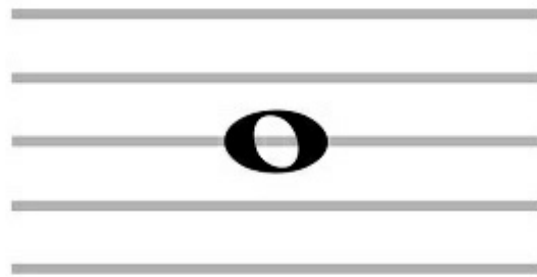
You should know that any time you sing, or play a musical tone, you're also singing or playing a particular note value. There are distinct types of note values, and each of them tells a specific length of time, as measured by parts of a bar or measure. To make this very clear, let us get into a little mathematics (not the tough ones). Each note value lasts for a specific duration, and each duration reflects a certain ratio to duration. Carefully examine the figure below to better understand me. Each smaller or shorter note value is exactly half the duration of the preceding note value. If you can simply divide and multiply by two, this concept should be simple for you to grasp.



You can see how each smaller note is exactly the size of the preceding note.

Whole Notes

First, the most basic musical note is the whole note. It is called a whole note because, in a 4/4 time signature (don't worry, we will explain time signatures later), it lasts for an entire bar or measure. Since 4/4 time has four beats in a bar or measure, it means a whole note lasts four beats. A whole note usually has the shape of a big empty oval (as shown above), and below is what it looks like on the staff.



Whole Note

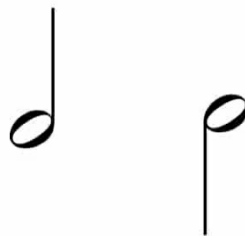
Another name for a whole note is a semibreve

Another name for a whole note is a semibreve. When you place a whole note (semibreve) in a measure of 4/4 time signature, the whole note will have to be the only note that appears in that measure; no other musical notes will fit into that measure anymore. One whole note makes one bar, or measure, in a 4/4 time signature. Also, when you play a whole note, what you do is play your musical instrument once at the very beginning of the measure, which means, play on beat one, and then you hold that tone (or breath in wind instruments) throughout the entire measure. One whole note has to last a whole measure or bar.

Half Notes

Remember, I said that the whole note (semibreve) is the largest note, have that in mind, and let us go down just one size, or length, and look at the next musical note. Also, remember that I said each shorter musical note is exactly half the size, or length, of the previous note. Let's do some very little mathematics and divide a whole note (semibreve) by two, to see what we will have. The next small note, which is exactly half the size of a whole note, is called a half note. A half (minim) note is half of a whole (semibreve) note. This means that if a whole note lasts four counts, a half note will last just two counts. Because a whole note lasts a whole bar, or measure (in 4/4 time signature), a half note will last a half measure. As I said, a half note lasts two beats, which is exactly half of the 4 beat duration of a whole note. This means that you can fit two half notes in a bar, or measure, because two half notes ($2+2=4$) equal one whole note (semibreve). A half note looks a lot like a whole note but with a line next to it. We call the line a Stem;

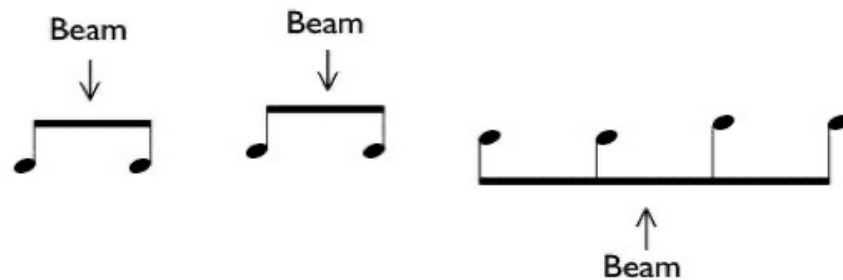
The stem of the half note can either point up or down, depending on the pitch of the musical note. If the stem points down, it will have to sit to the left of the note-head. If the stem points up, it sits automatically to the right of the note-head like this;



A half note is also known as a minim.

If the note-head, which is the part of the note that is not on the stem, is on, or above the 3rd (middle) line of the music staff, then the stem of the note should point down from the note-head. But, if the note-head is below the 3rd

line of the staff, then, the stem of the note should point up from the note-head. The one and only exception to this golden rule is when you have a series of connected notes. By this I mean, musical notes where all the stems are joined together by a beam, like a series of 8th or 16th notes.



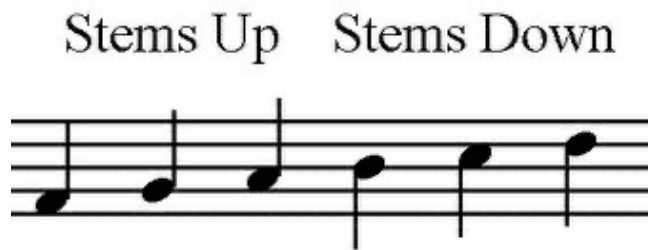
It is okay to place two, or more, of these connected notes together with their stems facing the same direction, even if they move beyond that 3rd line of the musical staff, to make the music much easier to read.



Remember that a note-head is the big, oval (round) part of a note. We always attach the stem to the note-head. Also, when you play a half note, make sure that the tone of the note lasts a full 2 beats. If you, by any chance, let up after the first beat of the tone, you're playing only a divided half note, or half of one-half note, which is what we will discuss next.

Quarter Notes

Let's keep exploring. From what we have talked about and learned so far, if the value of A half note (minim) is half of a whole note (semibreve), what will be half a half note? Well, without getting it all complicated, the simple mathematics is: divide $\frac{1}{2}$ by 2, you get $\frac{1}{4}$. This simply means that half a half note is a quarter note. Since a half note lasts for just two beats, a quarter note, which is half the duration of a half note, will last only one beat. To explain this, you can place four quarter notes in a measure; one represents a single beat. Whenever you tap your foot to the beat of your favorite pop song, your foot is most likely tapping some quarter notes. Let us count one, two, three, four; each of these counts is basically a quarter note. A quarter note looks much like a half note with the note-head filled in.



A quarter note is also referred to as a crotchet.

Eighth Notes

Musical notes just keep getting smaller and smaller, as we go. Once again, we're operating on ratio 2:1, so let's just take a quarter note, or a crotchet note, and divide it by two. The maths will be something like this: $\frac{1}{4} \div 2 = \frac{1}{8}$.

That being said, the next small musical note is the [$\frac{1}{8}$] eighth note. In the same way there are 4 quarter notes in a measure, or bar, of 4/4 time signature ($4 \times \frac{1}{4} = 1$), each measure or bar holds eight 8th notes ($8 \times \frac{1}{8} = 1$). To further explain this, there are two 8th notes for each quarter note ($2 \times \frac{1}{8} = \frac{1}{4}$), or even more simple, two 8th notes for every beat. An 8th note looks a lot like a quarter note, with a flag on top of it. If you have two or more 8th notes in a row, we can replace the flags with horizontal stems right at the end of the normal vertical stems. The flags of the 8th notes don't have to be joined together.

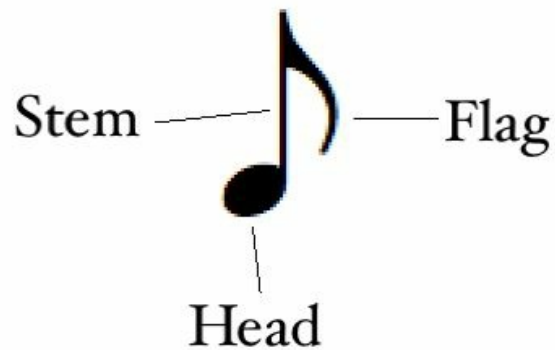


A variety of different eighth notes.

An 8th note is also referred to as a quaver.

A Flag

A flag is simply the little tail-like thing dangling off the stem of 8th notes, 16th notes, and all other smaller musical notes. In the actual sense, it looks like a country's flag flying off a pole. The flag is always located at the tail end of the stem, so, if the note stem is pointing up, the flag will be above the note-head; if the stem is pointing down, the flag will be below the note-head.



Sixteenth Notes

By now we should be familiar with how this is going, with this entire division and multiplication. Half an 8th note is (if you do the math) a 16th note ($1/8 \div 2 = 1/16$).

There are sixteen 16th notes in a bar, or measure ($16 \times 1/16 = 1$); four 16th notes per 1 beat ($4 \times 1/16 = 1/4$). A 16th note looks like a quarter note, but with two flags on it. As with the 8th note, if 2 or more 16th notes stand next to each other, the note flags may (or may not) be joined.



A variety of different sixteenth notes.

A 16th note is also called a semi-quaver.

Even though we will have to conclude this section with 16th notes, you should know that there are lots of other musical notes even smaller than the 16th. For example, we have 32nd (semi-demi quavers) and 64th (hemi-demi-semiquavers) notes, respectively. Each successive musical note is half the value of the preceding musical note, and is simply shown by an additional flag on the note stem. Let's take, for example, the 32nd note: it has three flags on its stem; the 64th note, has four flags on its stem. In reality, you will most likely not run into too many notes smaller than the 16th note.

Before we proceed, let us refresh our memory by answering a few but very important questions;

Let us Do Some Counting

1,2,3,4

It's easy to write a series of musical notes, but the real deal lies in how you communicate these musical notes and values to other musicians and players, verbally or by writing. Do you go all-in with mathematics and say things such as “the 14th, 16th musical note” or “the 8th note after the two 16th notes on beat 4”? Do you do all this maths on stage, studio, or rehearsal sessions? or is there a much easier way to communicate, or tell your rhythms and beats, to fellow musicians? Just as we discussed in our previous lessons on how to describe absolute musical pitches by using letters (A-G), we can also describe absolute rhythms by using numbers, and luckily, you will only need to count to 4.

It starts simple, we count each beat in a measure, as either 1,2,3 or 4. So, if you're counting 4 quarter notes you just count them as 1,2,3,4. So, if you want to talk about the 4th quarter note in a measure with a colleague, you just call it 4“,,”. For example, you can just say: “in the last bar of the second line, make sure you play an F# on beat four”. If the beat is always 1,2,3 or 4, what do we say about the 8th notes that lay between the beats? It's very simple: count those 8th notes as “and”. What this means is you count it as; 1“-and, 2-and, 3-and 4-and,”. That is how to count the 8th note. So, if you want to tell a fellow musician to play an 8th note, that is located somewhere in the music, you can just say: “Make sure you play an F# on the ‘and after 3”. That seemed easy, but what about 16th notes? 16th notes get a little tricky, but it will start feeling natural, once you get the hang of it. Use some funny syllables, or any other syllable you are comfortable with. But let us stick with the syllables “e” and “ah” to represent the 16th notes between 8th notes. So, if you are counting a group of straight 16th notes, you would count it as; 1“-e-and-ah, 2-e-and-ah, 3-e-and-ah, 4-e-and-ah,” and you just keep going with your nonsense but meaningful rhythmic syllables. To get a fantastic grasp of this, let us examine the following figure, which illustrates how to count various groupings of notes.



One Two Three Four One and Two and Three and Four and One e and a Two e and a Three e and a Four e and a











Rests

If a musical note, just like we discussed, represents the duration of a certain pitch, what do we say, or call it, when we are not playing, or singing, any musical note? Musically, when you're not playing or singing, you're observing a rest. So, any musical note you don't play is a rest.

When you see 4 quarter notes, you play, or sing, 4 tones, which even it out as 1 tone per beat.










But when you see 4 quarter note rests, you don't play 4 tones; you rest over 4 beats. Each type of note value, be it whole note (semibreve), half note (minim), and so on, has a corresponding equal for the rest and, also, corresponding duration. There is a whole note (semibreve) rest that lasts a whole measure, a half (minim) rest that lasts for just a half measure, and it goes on. Rests are used to show the spaces (silences) in between the notes, and are equally important as the notes you play.

The table below shows all the notes you've just learned and their corresponding rests.









Duration	Note	Rest
Whole note		
Half note		
Quarter note		
Eighth note		
Sixteenth note		

Dotted Notes

Eventually, you will run into something somewhat different, which are notes, or rest, with a dot after it. Whenever you run into one of these dotted musical notes, that note should have a longer duration than the “original version” of the same. To be precise, a dot extends a note by half of its original value. Let us get that clear by doing some maths, let’s take a dotted quarter note or crotchet as an example. A quarter (crotchet) note is the equivalent of a single beat by default. If we multiply $1 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$, what we will get is $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats, so, a dotted quarter note is simply $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats. You could also go about it by knowing that the added dot is simply half of a quarter note added to a quarter note, and that makes it longer by just half its original value. It becomes one and a half-beat. The same goes for a dotted minim, or half-note. Half of a minim is a quarter note or one beat, so a dotted minim becomes three beats because one note is being added to its original value which was two beats. However you do the maths, it still comes out the same. So, whenever you see a dotted note, hold that note fifty percent longer than its original value, as shown in the table below;

This Dotted Note ...	Equals This
	 + 
	 + 
	 + 

In the same way we have dotted notes, we also have dotted rests, which works just the same as dotted notes. Whenever you see a dot after a rest, that rest should be prolonged by fifty percent of its original value.

	Dotted Note	Equivalent Rest
whole		
half		
quarter		
eighth		

Another way to conceptualize a dotted note is that it has a duration that is equal to 3 of the next smaller note value. For example, a dotted half (minim) note equals 3 quarter (crotchet) notes, a dotted quarter (crotchet) note equals 3 eighth (quaver) notes, and a dotted eighth (quaver) note equals 3 sixteenth (semi-quaver) notes.

Ties

Another way to make a note longer is to tie it to another musical note. A tie is a little curvy, or rounded, connector placed between two musical notes; it tells you to add the second musical note to the first note. When you see two or more musical notes tied together, you play them as if they're a single note; for example, 2 quarter notes tied together equal 1 half note. What do you do if the tied musical notes are on different pitches? Well, this may visually seem like a tie, but it isn't really a tie, it's called a slur. Slurs indicate that two (or more) musical notes have to be sounded smoothly in a connected and not detached fashion.



This isn't really a tie; it's a slur.

Triplets

There's another little odd and tricky concept in rhythmic notation, and this one is also a very important one. So far, we've only been dividing beats by two. What happens if we divide notes by some different number than two? Another very common division, other than two, is dividing notes by three; we call this a triplet. When you see the number 3 over a group of three musical notes (or three rests, or a combination of three equal notes and rests), just know that those three combined musical notes have to be fixed into a space that normally would hold just two musical notes.



The 3 notes of a triplet fit in the space of 2 regular notes.

Triplets, usually, have a rolling feel and are very unlike straight notes. We count triplets as “trip-ah-let.” We can have triplets of any note value, although, quarter-note triplets (where 3 quarter-notes are spaced over 2 beats), 8th-note triplets (3 on a single quarter-note beat) and 16th-note triplets (3 in the space of 1 eighth note) are the most common kinds of triplets.

Triplets are the most uneven rhythmic division used in music, but not the only one. You can divide a musical beat any way you like, which can lead to groups of 5, 7 or any prime number. If you divide a musical beat by a non-prime number, you're just dividing by 2 or more groups of a prime number. To simplify, if you divide a beat into 6, you're just dividing into two groups of 3 or 2 triplets.

Things to Remember

- We name note values according to their different durations. Whole notes (semibreve) last a whole measure or bar (in 4/4 time), half notes (minim) last a half measure, and it goes on and on.
- Each smaller or shorter musical note lasts half as long as the previous note. A quarter (crotchet) note, for example, is half as long as a half note (minim).
- Each musical note value has a corresponding rest of the same duration, which shows how long you are not to play or sing.
- A dot after a musical note or rest elongates the value of that note by fifty percent.
- When you fix 3 notes into a space that normally holds only 2, those are triplets.

Before we do some exercises, let us relax and refresh our minds with some very unusual music theory like we always do;

Part Two; Time Signatures

Time signature, which is also known as meter signature, or measure signature, is a notational standard used in Western musical notation to show how many beats, or pulses, are to be placed in each bar, or measure, and which note value is to be given 1 beat. In any musical score, the time signature appears at the beginning of the musical piece, as a time symbol, or stacked numbers, such as for common time, or 3/4 for three-four times, respectively. Time signatures immediately follow the key signature, or come after the clef symbol, if the key signature is empty like with the C major and A-minor key signatures.

That being said, in this chapter of the book, you will;

- Understand how time signatures determine meter in music
- Learn both usual and unusual (odd) time signatures
- Change time signatures
- Subdivide odd time signatures

In the previous part, we learned about measures, or bars, which we described as rooms that hold the beats, or rhythm, of a piece of music. They mark the start and endpoints of a measure through the use of vertical bar lines; we also learned that multiple measures, or bars, has to be combined to create a complete piece of music or song. To make things much simpler for us, in a previous chapter, we purposely limited our explanation to measures with only 4 beats, with each of those beats being the equivalent of a quarter note. That explanation alone covers a lot of music, especially in the pop scene and even in classical music. Whatever genre of music you listen to, be it rock-and-roll, blues, soul, jazz, country, ragtime, hip hop, or even afro-beat, most of the songs you will ever hear are likely to comply with this 4-beat per measure

form.

Anyhow, not all music has 4 beats per measure and not every beat in music is equal to a quarter note. To understand all the many numbers, and types, of beats per measure, you will need only to apply a little mathematics, as fractions.

Measuring Beats

Like I said, music uses a time signature to signify how many beats are in a measure and what kind of musical notation is used for the basic beats. A time signature looks like a mathematical fraction. The digit on top tells how many beats are present in a bar, while the bottom number shows the note value of the basic beat. Time signatures show how beats are arranged in a particular song or composition. This beat organization is called a meter, and that is why time signatures are sometimes referred to as meter signatures.

Note that, Classical musicians, usually, refer to the organization of beats as “meter,” whereas jazz and pop musicians refer to it as “time,” as in 4/4 “time” or 4/4 “meter”. Now, using the 4-quarter-notes-to-a-bar form we analysed in the chapter before, the top digit in the time signature will be 4. And because the basic beat is a quarter (crotchet) note, the bottom number is 4. So, the form we’ve been using so far is referred to as “four-four” time because of the 4 on top and the 4 below, and it looks like this:




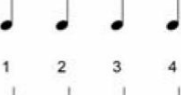


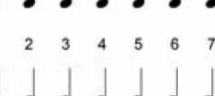

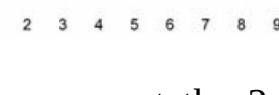


Every other time signature follows this same form. For example, if our measures or bar have 3 beats instead of 4, and still makes use of a quarter note for the beat, what we will have is a 3/4 time signature. If we have 3 beats per measure, but the basic beats are 8 notes instead of quarter notes, the time signature of that piece of music will be $\frac{3}{8}$ or “three-eight”. Let us keep learning more about the distinct time signatures you’re likely to come across in the world of music.

Quarter-Note Time Signatures

The most commonly used types of time signatures make use of a quarter note for the foundational beat. That notwithstanding, you're not limited to only 4 beats (quarter notes) per measure. Some quarter-note time signatures can have as few as 1 beat per measure or as many as 32 beats per measure. Although a 4/4 time signature is the most common quarter-note time signature, you'll most likely run into its close relative like the $\frac{3}{4}$ time. In a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature, you have 3 quarter notes per measure; we count the measures as "one, two, three, one, two, three." If you've ever listened to waltz or minuet, you've just heard a $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature.

Another very common quarter-note time signature is the $\frac{2}{4}$ time signature. This time signature is very common in marches and some other fast music. $\frac{2}{4}$ time is also very easy to play. Two bars of $\frac{2}{4}$ time signature add up to one measure of 4/4 time signature. Less common time signatures are quarter-note time signatures, which have over four beats per measure. For example, a $\frac{5}{4}$ time signature. This time signature feels a little awkward, especially if you're so used to feeling the "backbeat" of the pop music in a 4/4. But jazz musicians make use of it a lot. An outstanding example is the Dave Brubeck Quartet's popular recording of "Take Five". If you want to hear an excellent example of playing five-four time, take a listen to that recording. The table below shows some more common quarter-note time signatures.

Time Signature	Beats per Measure
$\frac{1}{4}$	
$\frac{2}{4}$	
$\frac{3}{4}$	
$\frac{4}{4}$	
$\frac{5}{4}$	
$\frac{6}{4}$	
$\frac{7}{4}$	
$\frac{8}{4}$	
$\frac{9}{4}$	







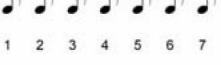


In almost all rock and pop music, they accent the 2nd and 4th beats of a measure, and this is most often done by the drum player (snare). It looks like this: 1-2-3-4-1-2-3-4. When you clap your hands to pop songs, you're probably clapping on beat 2 and 4. This accented "backbeat" is what gives pop and rock-and-roll its rolling rhythm. This characteristic is so common that it becomes very noticeable when it is absent. It's important you also know that 4/4 time is also called common time, and it is represented by a bold "C" like this;



Eight-Note Time Signatures

Not all songs make use of a quarter note for the foundational beat. A lot of music, especially in the classical genre, is based on an 8th-note beat. When you have an 8th-note meter, such as 6/8, or $\frac{3}{8}$, every time you tap your foot to the music, you're tapping an 8th-note and not a quarter note. So, for one measure of $\frac{3}{8}$ meter, you'd tap three 8th-notes and, for one measure of 6/8 meter, you'd tap six 6-notes. When the 8th-note is the foundational beat, half a beat, which is the "and" after the main beat, will be a 16th-note. Also, if you see a quarter (crotchet) note in an 8th-note meter, that note takes up 2 beats. This is all about some very simple mathematics. When you play in an 8th-note meter, all your normal note values occupy as much space as they do in a quarter-note meter. The most used 8th-note meters are those that can be divided by 3 like 3/8, 6/8, 9/8, and so on. When you're playing any of these time signatures and you're playing fast, you might end up tapping your foot just once every 3 beats, for example, **1**, 2, 3, **4**, 5, 6, **1**, 2, 3, **4**, 5, 6.

As a matter of fact, many musical conductors will conduct 6/8 meter with just two downbeats per measure, that will be in the 1st and 4th measures. These time signatures sound so much like $\frac{3}{4}$ time signatures or the waltz-time signatures. The table that follows detail the most common 8th-note time signatures.




Time Signature	Beats per Measure
$\frac{1}{8}$	 1
$\frac{2}{8}$	 1 2
$\frac{3}{8}$	 1 2 3
$\frac{4}{8}$	 1 2 3 4
$\frac{5}{8}$	 1 2 3 4 5
$\frac{6}{8}$	 1 2 3 4 5 6
$\frac{7}{8}$	 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
$\frac{8}{8}$	 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
$\frac{9}{8}$	 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Please do not assume that an 8th-note meter is automatically twice as fast as a quarter-note meter. Even though this might be true, sometimes (especially when time signatures change in the middle of a song), the speed of the beat, which is what musicians refer to as tempo, is very independent of the time signature or meter. That being said, a song in $\frac{3}{8}$ could actually be played way slower than a song in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

Half-Note Time

If you move the other way around, and deviate a little from the basic quarter-note meter, you will get into meters based on a half-note (minim) beat. In a half-note meter, each half note gets 1 beat; while quarter notes get half a beat, and 8th-notes get a quarter of a beat. Whole notes (semibreve) get just 2 beats. It's not that totally confusing, it's just more mathematics to handle.

Half-note beats like 2/2, 3/2 are typically utilized in classical music for slower and more sweeping pieces or passages. The table that follows presents the most common half-note beats.

Time Signature	Beats per Measure
$\frac{2}{2}$	 1 2
$\frac{3}{2}$	 1 2 3
$\frac{4}{2}$	 1 2 3 4

Just as 4/4 meter is sometimes referred to as common time, 2/2 is sometimes referred to as cut time. You can show 2/2 meter by either the normal time signature or by a large C with a line striking through it, just like this:



Note that in most music notations, they show the time signature only on the

first line of music or whenever there's a change in time. Unlike key signatures, that are typically shown at the beginning of each line.

Changing Time Signatures

Like we said, time signatures are always indicated at the very beginning of a music piece.

That notwithstanding, you don't have to maintain the same time signature through the entire piece of music; you can change the time signature anywhere you want, even for just a measure or more. If you decide to change the time signature in the middle, or any part of a song, you just insert a new time signature at that point. This newly inserted time signature remains in effect through the rest of the music, or until you introduce another new time signature. Here's exactly what a meter change looks like in the middle of a musical score:



How to Group Beats

If you see a piece of music written in 9/8 meter and you fret about counting such a big number (9 is a lot higher than 4), there's a simple solve the issue. Just do as many musicians do: chop up each bar into much smaller groupings. When you're playing music in some odd time signatures, especially those with over 4 beats in a single measure, it's very common to cut the beats within a bar into an easier-to-count pattern. Using these smaller groupings will not only make each measure easier to count; it will also make the music flow and swing better. When you subdivide measures in this way, you create sub-rhythms (beats) behind the very basic beat, which, in turn, makes the music a lot easier to listen to. To illustrate this, if you're playing in 6/8 meter, you could count all the beats evenly as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or you could go ahead and subdivide the beat. The most common subdivision of 6/8 meter divides the measure into two equal parts, each part containing 3 beats, like this:



This is how to subdivide 6/8/ time into groups of 3.

You count the bar or measure like this; “one-two-three; one-two-three,” or “one la lay, two la lays”, or any other nonsense syllables that work for you. Easy, isn't it? Of course it is, you could also divide 6/8 measure into three groups of 2, or one group of 4 and one group of 2, or one group of 1 and one group of 5, but the two groups of 3 are the most common method to play this particular time signature. Using another example, let's look at 5/4 time signatures. In 5/4 times, measures are typically subdivided into one group of 3 and one group of 2, like this:



You simply count each measure as “one, two, three; one, two.” However you like, you could also reverse the note arrangements, and end up having two beats in the first arrangement and three beats in the second group, and what you have will be something like this: “one, two; one, two, three.” It all depends how it feel and how the music flows. The more beats you have in a bar or measure, the more possible note groupings you can come up with. To demonstrate this, the following example shows 3 possible groupings of 7/4 meter and they are; (4+3, 3+4, and 2+3+2).



Just to catch some fun, count the notes all the way up to 11, and see how many note groupings you can come up with for a measure of 11/4. Just try that out and see.

Things to Remember

- You must place a time signature at the start of a piece of music, or anywhere you change the basic time signature or meter.
- The top digit in a time signature tells the number of beats per bar.
- The bottom number in any time signature tells what note is used for the basic beat.
- An odd number of time signatures are sometimes divided into some smaller groupings, to make every measure easier to count.

Now before we answer some questions and do some exercises, let's do some unusual music theory;

Close your eyes and cover up your two ears and then start imagining directing a symphony or an orchestra, or playing a piano you can't hear a sound from but, you are staring at the audience and still playing on.

Many of us know that classical music composer Ludwig van Beethoven struggled with deafness, but not all or even most of us realize how much of a struggle it was between Beethoven and deafness.

Apart from composing without hearing a single note of it, Ludwig Van Beethoven struggled with living in the 1800s when very few understood deafness and it was hindering his ability to communicate properly, work as a musician and even get a place to live.

According to Donate Cabrera, who is the music director of Las Vegas Philharmonic, how Beethoven dealt with this deafness is one of the greatest stories of humanity and not just of music.

Gradually Losing Sound

Ludwig Van Beethoven began losing his hearing gradually in his mid-20s, after he had already built a reputation as a good musician and composer. The cause of Beethoven's deafness remains a mystery, even though modern analysis of his DNA has revealed health issues including some very large amounts of lead in his system.

Cabrera also said this concerning this discovery: "by that time, people consumed food off of lead plates, they just did not know back then," Cabrera tells.

Beethoven pretended for several years that he had no hearing issues. He continued to compose and conduct music, Beethoven changed lodgings constantly in Vienna, which may be because of the landlords' frustration with him slamming on his piano at all hours.

That would obviously drive everyone wild in the middle of the night, hearing a person pounding on the piano to be able to hear it. Ludwig Van Beethoven continued performing publicly as a musician and conductor, this was necessary for many composers of the era.

That is how they got their pieces out, it wasn't just composing but also performing. For a really long time he didn't want to reveal his deafness to people because he believed so well that it would ruin his music career and ultimately chances of him landing gigs or getting hired.

His hearing condition didn't go unnoticed, however hard he tried. Composer Louis Sporh attests to watching Beethoven rehearse on piano in the year 1814 and he said that the music was very unintelligible unless one could look straight into the pianoforte part. He was deeply saddened (according to him) to see such a disheartening fate.

Detached from Public Life

Once Beethoven's hearing was fully gone by age 45, Beethoven lost his

public life with his hearing. He gave up performing and public appearances and he allowed only some select friends to visit him. He communicated only through written conversations in his notebooks.

Beethoven's deafness forced him to become a very private and withdrawn person over the course of life on earth.

Composing Music in Silence

A very common and valid question is how Ludwig Van Beethoven continued composing music without his hearing.

This probably explains the process: because music is a language, with some rules (theory). Knowing the rules and guidelines of how music is made, Beethoven could sit at his desk or piano and compose a piece of music without hearing even a single note. (there's another good reason to keep learning music theory!)

Beethoven's musical style changed, however, as he withdrew from public life. His once-lively (vivacious) piano sonatas and other compositions took on a darker tone.

Ludwig Van Beethoven's famous sixth symphony also reflects his different life and phases in deafness. Labelled the Pastoral Symphony, the piece shows the peace of the countryside, where Ludwig Van Beethoven escaped the noisy and booming city life after losing his hearing.

In terms of Beethoven's deafness, the 6th Symphony was a very important symphony, because it reflected the importance of Beethoven as an individual to keep his sanity by being in the countryside.

Ludwig Van Beethoven was a master of the beautiful language of music, which is ultimately about the creation of sound and not about listening.

Beethoven Defied all odds!

The speed of any given piece of music, how fast the beat or rhythm goes by, is simply known as the tempo. A faster tempo translates to a faster beat while a slower tempo makes for a slower beat. You can tell tempo in either of two ways; by indicating the exact number of beats per minute or by using some traditional Italian terminologies. We'll discuss both methods right away.

Part Three; Dynamics, Tempo And Finding Your Way

In this chapter of the book, we will;

- Learn about speed- the appropriate speed
- Learn how to change the tempo
- Determine just how loud to play
- How to change dynamics and accenting notes
- Repeating sections of a song

If you have been following carefully, you would notice that the previous chapters of this book concentrated on how to read and write music. And we have talked about all the aspects of reading and writing music like staves, notes, clefs, and rests. These aforementioned make up what we refer to as standard music notation, which is the common language used by all musicians. Look at it this way: elements like the music staff, clef, and key signature (meter) determine where a musical note is located. Time signature and note length (value) are what determines where a musical note is located regarding time or rhythm. By placing a musical note in this two-dimensional space, you are telling a musician everything they need to know to play that note accurately, and all the other musical notes that follow. The only thing we haven't learned yet about music notation is how to tell the tempo (speed) and dynamics (loudness) of a piece of music. That is what we will talk about in this chapter of the book, along with some simple music navigational aids to help you move from point A to point B within a given song.

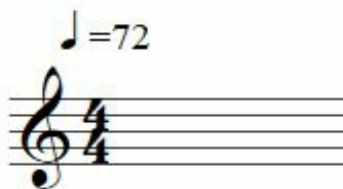
Tempo

In the chapter before this, we talked about how to figure out how many beats are there in a bar, but what we did not learn is how fast we should play those beats. As you'll inevitably see, a good part of music notation markings (especially in the classical music) is in Italian. This makes us understand the importance, and great impact, of Italian culture in the evolution of Western music, and it also means it would not be a terrible thing to learn a little Italian. But before we go into learning some Italian, let us look at:

Beats per Minute (bpm)

The most accurate way to show tempo in music is by specifying an actual number of beats per minute (bpm). This method will give you a very precise speed for your music, especially when you make use of a metronome, or a click track, on your smartphone or computer. Set your metronome or click track to a specific [bpm] number, and it will count back and forth at the programmed speed. Whenever you play along to your metronome or click track, you are playing at a specific tempo. No matter the reason, it is always advised to use a metronome at every rehearsal session. In the classical music genre, the abbreviation MM, which stands for Maelzel's Metronome, is always used to represent beats per minute.

A metronome is an instrument that accurately ticks off musical beats at a specified tempo. Metronomes can either be old-fashioned with a pendulum mechanism or modern computerized digital devices that emit a kind of electronic beat. Maelzel, who was a contemporary of Ludwig Van Beethoven (we talked about him) invented the metronome. Besides creating the metronome, Maelzel also designed a hearing aid to help Beethoven handle with his escalating deafness. When you're playing music professionally (especially in audio recording studios), you will most likely run into something referred to as a click track, which is an example of an electronic metronome. They usually play the click track on a synthesized musical instrument, like an electronic cowbell, temple block, or woodblock. Computerized music sequencing and recording software can also create click tracks for when you're recording music at home.



This stands for 72 eight-note beats per minute.

Learning Some Italian

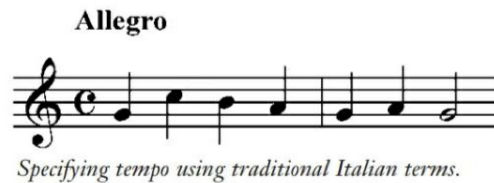
The second way to show tempo, typically used in orchestral music, is through the use of some traditional Italian musical terminologies. These terminologies correspond to all used tempo ranges, as stated in the following table. I arrange this from the very slowest up to the fastest tempo.

Tempo	Means ...
<i>Slow Tempos (40–75 bpm)</i>	
<i>grave</i>	Very slow; solemn
<i>largo</i>	Slow and dignified
<i>larghetto</i>	A little faster than largo
<i>lento</i>	Slow
<i>adagio</i>	Moderately slow
<i>adagietto</i>	A little faster than adagio
<i>Moderate Tempos (70–115 bpm)</i>	
<i>andante</i>	A “walking” tempo
<i>andantino</i>	A little faster than andante
<i>moderato</i>	Moderate pace
<i>allegretto</i>	Not quite as fast as allegro
<i>Fast Tempos (110–220 bpm)</i>	
<i>allegro</i>	Fast, cheerful
<i>vivace</i>	Lively
<i>presto</i>	Very fast
<i>prestissimo</i>	Very, very fast

Sometimes you will see these tempo terms together with the prefix and suffix “molto,” which means “very.” So, whenever you see molto vivace, just know that the music is to be played “very lively.”

These Italian tempo markings are just approximated and not in any way precise, and even the order is not one hundred percent observed. The main thing the Italian terms try to get across is just the “spirit” of the music. To illustrate, the word allegro in the Italian language really translates “cheerful.” When these markings are applied, we always leave the precise tempo only to the discretion of the musicians or orchestra’s conductor. So, whenever you see a piece of music with “Allegro” written on it, such as J.S. Bach’s

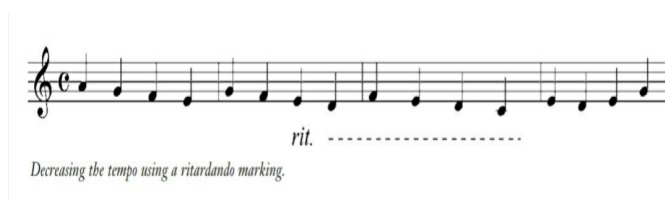
Brandenburg Concerto Number Six, you just know that it should be played fairly fast (at your own discretion). If you see a piece of music marked “Largo,” as the case of the 2nd movement of Dvorřák’s New World Symphony, you just know that the tempo of the music should be fairly slow. This method isn’t in any way precise, but it will sure give you a clue of what to do.



Playing Fast and Playing Slow

Some pieces of music maintain the same tempo throughout the entire piece (most popular songs do this). Some other tracks speed up or slow down at certain times, and this is often done for some dramatic effects. If a tempo changes, in any piece of music, is immediate (by that I mean, you move straight from tempo A to tempo B), with no form of gradual transition, what you do is to indicate the sudden change by adding a new tempo marking of your choice. For example, if you have been playing at 75bpm and you want to switch to a faster tempo like 120bpm, then all you have to do is insert a new 120 bpm tempo mark at that point of change. If you're making use of Italian tempo markings, just insert the new marking at the point you want change. If you would rather speed up or slow down the tempo gradually, then it's time I introduce you to a new set of Italian markings. There are several, of these markings, you can use, but the most common ones are: *ritardando*, which means to "gradually slow" down the tempo, and *accelerando*, which means to "gradually speed" up the tempo. The table that follows presents to you all the tempo-changing markings you will probably have an encounter:

Tempo Indicator	Meaning
ritardando (rit., retard.)	Slow down gradually
rallentando (rall.)	Slow down gradually
ritenuto (riten.)	Hold the tempo back
accelerando (accel.)	Speed up gradually
doppio movimento	Play twice as fast
a tempo	Go back to the previous tempo
tempo primo	Go back to the tempo at the beginning of the music



A Fermata

Sometimes in music, what you want is not to slow down, but to stop. Whenever you want to ignore the original beat length and hold a specific note for as long as you want, you just use what's called "a fermata" which actually looks much like a little bird's-eye drawn on top of a musical note, or a rest, and it shows a pause in the music. This means that you hold that note, or rest, for as long as you would like or until the musical conductor cuts you off, and then you start up with the next musical note after the fermata, still at the normal tempo.



Playing Loud and Soft

We have learned how to indicate the appropriate speed (how fast or how slow) of a musical piece. Now, what we will learn is indicating how loud or how soft a given piece of music should be played.

Dynamic Markings

Musically dynamic refers to the volume of a sound or musical note. The term dynamics also apply to the written musical notation used to indicate musical dynamics. In music, dynamics are very much relative and do not, in any way refer, to specific volume levels. In that sense, a song's dynamic markings indicate how soft or loud you should play the song. In the sphere of music notation, there is a fixed range of volume levels which goes from very soft to very loud, that musicians used to tell the dynamic level of a given piece of music. These dynamic markings are shown in the table that follows:

Marking	Dynamic	What It Means
<i>ppp</i>	pianississimo	Very, very soft
<i>pp</i>	pianissimo	Very soft
<i>p</i>	piano	Soft
<i>mp</i>	mezzo-piano	Medium soft
<i>mf</i>	mezzo-forte	Medium loud
<i>f</i>	forte	Loud
<i>ff</i>	fortissimo	Very loud
<i>fff</i>	fortississimo	Very, very loud

Just like the tempo marking, the dynamic marking typically appears at the start of the music. If you happen not to see any dynamic marking, it means we should play the music at a medium volume.

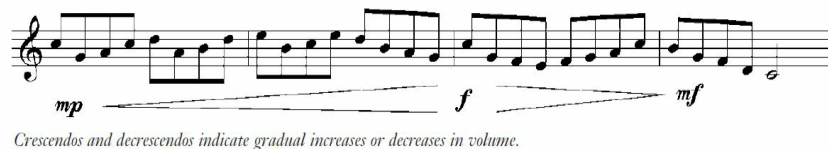


Use dynamic markings to indicate how loud a song should be played.

How to Change Dynamics In Music

Dynamic doesn't have to be static, dynamic can (and do) change throughout a song. As a matter of fact, dynamic changes a lot more than tempo and time signatures.

To suddenly change the dynamic level of a given song, at a specific point, just insert a new dynamic marking at that point. It's okay to show dramatic changes in the volume of a song; you can move from *p* (soft) in one measure to *fff* (very, very loud) in the next measure, if you wish. To fade the dynamic (volume) of a song, you have to use what we know as 'crescendo' and 'decrescendo' signs. The 'crescendo' sign which looks like a huge hairpin closed at the left side, and widening to the right side, shows that you should gradually increase the volume from your current one level to the new level, shown at the end of the crescendo. The 'decrescendo' sign which looks much like a big hairpin open at the left side, and closed at the right side, tells that you gradually decrease the volume of your music from your current level to the new one, shown at the end of the decrescendo sign.



To easily remember whether the dynamic marking means to get louder or softer, just know that the bigger the "mouth", or opening of the hairpin, the louder the volume of the music. When the mouth is on the left side, and then narrows, that means you should start loud and get softer. When the mouth of the pin is at the right, that means you start with a soft volume and then get louder. Note that 'crescendos' and 'decrescendos' can actually be very short or very long; it may last for just one beat or two, or extend over several bars. Note that, the longer the length of the crescendo or decrescendo, the more gradual is the change in dynamics.

Accent Marks

If you want to play a certain note louder than the other notes around it, you must place an accent mark over that particular note. When you accent a note, you play it louder than a normal one, or the other surrounding musical notes. To show that a note has to be sounded very loud (or struck very hard, if you're notating a percussion part), you fix a 'marcato' sign (^) over the musical note. This sign shows that you play, or hit, that note extra hard—with a fantastic solid punch! You can use three other musical markings to show a sudden accent. These markings, like all other Italian notations, are fixed under the affected musical note, as shown in the following table.

Italian Accent Symbols

Marking	Means ...
<i>fz</i>	Sudden accent (forzando)
<i>sf</i>	Forced (sforzando)
<i>sfz</i>	Even more forced (sforzando)

Technically, marcato is not a musical accent. The technical definition means to play the note distinctly, or “well marked,” from the surrounding notes. However, this translates into a loud and long accent.



Two accent marks and a marcato.

More Dynamics

We have some more musical markings that you can use to show how soft and how loud you have to play a piece of music, although these markings are less frequently used than those already learned. We list these additional markings on the following table.

Dynamic Markings and Their Meanings

Marking	Means ...
<i>calando</i>	Decreasing tone and speed
<i>con sordino (sordini)</i>	Muted (for horn instruments: use a mute)
<i>diminuendo (dim.)</i>	Gradually become less powerful; diminish in intensity
<i>dolcissimo (dolciss.)</i>	Very gently; sweetly
<i>incalzando</i>	Increasing tone and speed
<i>leggiero</i>	Light, delicate
<i>mancando</i>	Dying away
<i>marcato (marc.)</i>	Marked or emphasized
<i>martellato</i>	Hammered out
<i>mezza voce</i>	In an undertone—literally, “half voice”
<i>morendo</i>	Dying away
<i>perdendosi</i>	Dying away
<i>senza sordini</i>	Without mutes
<i>smorzando</i>	Dying away
<i>sotto voce</i>	In an undertone
<i>strepitoso</i>	Boisterous
<i>tacet</i>	Silent
<i>tutta forza</i>	As loud as possible
<i>una corda</i>	For pianists: use the soft pedal

Navigating Your Way

We, musicians, know that reading a long-lasting piece of music is like reading a roadmap. You will see various markings in a score that provides you with direction, to play louder, softer, faster, repeat a section, or to skip to another section within the piece of music.

When you're playing a long-lasting piece of music, numbers or letters might be used to show various parts of the song. To illustrate this, you might see the letter A at the start of the first verse, the letter B at the start of the second verse, and the letter C at the start of the chorus section. By doing it this way, other players can tell you to start at a specific place in the song by just saying, "play from letter B". Alternatively, each measure of a song might be enumerated (numbered). If this is actually what you wish to do, you can just say "play from measure 16" and every musician will know what you mean. You need some way to tell just where you are in a given piece of music; otherwise, you will always have to start at the beginning of the music, even if all you need to play is at the very end of the piece.

An extended piece of music (especially in the orchestral setting) is often referred to as a 'score'. To be more precise, a score is the piece of music that is used by the conductor. The piece contains all the parts for all the musical instruments and voices. Technically, the music for each individual instrument is not a score, although sometimes musicians refer to it as if it is.

Repeating Musical Sections

There are many shorthand methods you can use when notating or arranging a piece of music. Particularly useful are various ways to show repeating musical sections, which saves you the hassle of writing out [repeatedly] the same section two or more times.

When you have a musical section that should be repeated, you demarcate that musical section by a pair of repeat signs. One repeat sign shows the start of the section to be repeated while the other one shows the end of it. Unless marked otherwise, repeat a section only once (that means, you play it twice), and then you move ahead to the next section.



Use repeat marks to indicate a range of measures to play twice.

Sometimes, you must repeat a musical section but play it a slightly differently the second time. When you see this kind of sign in a musical score, referred to as a first ending and a second ending, you just play the first ending the first time to the end, and then when you are repeating the section you skip the first ending and play the second ending instead.



Use first and second endings to end a repeated section two different ways.

You also can repeat a song section by simply returning to a designated

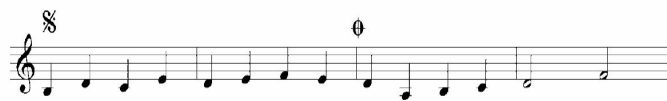
section with a marking referred to as a Segno sign. To explain this, whenever you see the notation “D.S. al Fine,” you simply move back to the Segno marking and play right to the end of the piece.

Another method is the Coda. Whenever you fix a Coda marking in your piece of music, it shows that whoever is reading should jump to the section marked Coda. A common technique is to notate it as “D.C. al Coda” or “D.C. al Fine,” and it means you jump to the start of the song and then play through to the Coda or the end (Fine). The following table shows these and some other common Italian navigation signs.

Italian Navigation Signs

Marking	Means ...
<i>D.C. al Fine</i>	Go back to the beginning and play through to the end.
<i>D.C. al Coda</i>	Go back to the beginning and play to the Coda sign; then skip to the Coda section.
<i>D.S. al Fine</i>	Go back to the Segno sign and play through to the end.
<i>D.S. al Coda</i>	Go back to the Segno sign and play to the Coda sign; then skip to the Coda section.

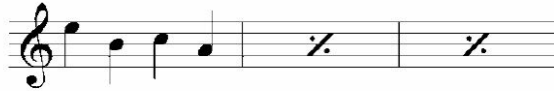
Note that “D.S.” is the abbreviation for Dal Segno, which translates “from the Segno” (or “from the sign” in English). “D.C.” is the abbreviation for Dal Capo, which translates “from the start.” or “from the head” (Capo is the Italian word for “head”).



Use the Segno (left) and Coda (right) signs to navigate a piece of music.

Repeating Musical Measures

If you only have one measure to repeat, you can just use a measure repeat sign. Simply insert this [repeat] sign between the bar lines after the measure you wish to repeat; musicians will understand and repeat the previous measure.



Use the measure repeat sign to repeat the contents of the previous measure.

You can use the shown measure repeat sign in many measures. Let us say, you have three measures worth of repeat signs; you play the original measure 4 times which is the original time plus 3 repeats.

Repeating Musical Notes

If you're somewhat lazy, you will appreciate the fact that you don't always have to write (re-write) each individual note in a piece of music. If you're repeating musical notes of the same rhythmic length and pitch, you can use the repeat signs to spare yourself the trouble of writing all those 8th or 16th-notes in a row.

Note repeats are shown by drawing slash notes through the main note. One slash sign means to play two notes in a row; each equal to half the length of the original musical one. To exemplify, if you draw a single slash through a quarter (crotchet) note, you play two 8th-notes; one slash through an 8th-note means you play two 16th-notes. Two slash signs mean you play four musical notes in a row; each note equal to one quarter the value of the main musical note. To illustrate, if you strike a double slash right through a quarter (crotchet) note, you play four 16th-notes; a double slash through an 8th-note means you play 32nd-notes. The table that follows shows some very common note-repeat lengths.

Note Repeat Markings

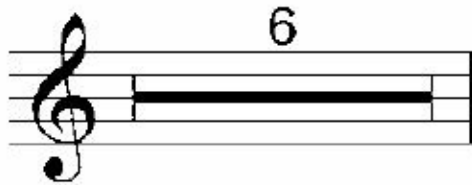
Marking	Equals ...
	
	
	
	
	
	
	



You can also use note repeat signs on dotted musical notes. When you fix a single slash on a dotted musical note, you play 3 notes of the next-higher length; when you put a double slash on a dotted note, you play six notes of the 2nd higher value.

Repeating Musical Rests

There's one last puzzle about note repetition that you need to know and it is about the rest; by that, I mean not playing any note. In orchestral music, and some other kinds of music, each instrument spends a lot of time not playing a single note. What you do not play is just as vital as what you play. While the musical composer could show all this inactivity by writing lots of individual measures full of whole note rests, it is more appropriate, and a lot easier, to show the total number of measures of rest. This is achieved by using a multiple-measure rest marking in a single measure, with the exact number of rests written above the rest. The number shows how many bars of rest the player is required to observe. To illustrate, a multiple-measure rest with 6 written above shows that the player is supposed to rest for 6 measures.



Things to Remember

- We can use traditional Italian markings to show the tempo of a piece of music or use specific “beats per minute” notation.
- You can also show changes in musical tempo by using Italian markings such as *ritardando*, which means slow down and *accelerando*, which means speed up.
- The volume (dynamic) level of any piece of music is usually indicated by the use of traditional Italian [dynamic] markings like *pianissimo* (pp) and *fortissimo* (ff).
- You show changes in volume (dynamics) by using *crescendo* markings which means get louder and *decrescendo* markings which means get softer.
- When you want a single musical note played louder than normal, just use an accent to show that.
- You walk through an entire piece of music using repeat signs and various other Italian signs. For example, *D.C. al Coda* means go back to the start, play to the Coda marking; then skip to the Coda section.

Are you enjoying this book? If so, I'd be really happy if you could leave a short review on Amazon, it means a lot to me! Thank you.

Theoretical Questions

1. What does the following dynamic stand for, in a piece of music; *calando*, *dolcissimo (dolciss.)*, *diminuendo (dim.)*, *meza voce*, and *marcato (marc.)*?
2. What is dynamic in music?
3. What is the full meaning of D. C?

Part Four; Melodies And Tunes

In this part we will learn how to put rhythms and tones together to create what is known as a melody; then, we will learn how to add some chords to melodies. We will also learn all about chord progressions and song structure or forms. You will learn everything you need to know to compose your own songs and pieces of music.

Before we start this chapter properly, let's look at what a melody is;

Think of your favorite song. What part of the song sticks to your memory? I mean, what's the part you always remember? Is it the chord progression? Is it the bass guitar part? I don't think it is either of the aforementioned; actually, I think it's the melody that sticks the most to your brain. Melodies are the most memorable part of a song. But [sorry to disappoint you], they're also the hardest part of a song to write. Coming up with great melodies can be very challenging, because it seems like they have all already been used. It's like everything has already sung or written. Do not fret about what I just said, it's not true.

There's an enormous world of incredible new and beautiful melodies out there waiting to be written. You only have to know how music theory works and then know how to find those beautiful melodies. In this part of the book, I'll show you what a melody is, why they stick so much in your brain, and the basic tools you need to write melodies.

What is Melody?

Before we go into detail, I will briefly tell you that melody is a linear pattern of musical notes the listener perceives as a single entity. The melody of a song is the prime ground to the backing elements of it, like rhythm and harmony, and is also a combination of pitch and rhythm. Series of notes that make up a melody is musically satisfying and is often the most memorable

part of a song.

When you sing “Merry Christmas” to your friends and family, you just sing the melody.

From those really catchy hooks to those soul-touching electric guitar riffs, melodies establish the music you know and cherish, since they are the part of music you are most likely never to forget. So, melodies are vital in all forms of music. Melodies are being produced through the human voice and any other musical instrument that produces pitches, and these could be: organs, marimbas, flutes, saxophones, synthesizers, trumpets, guitars, etc.

Just be aware that there’s a tremendous difference between harmony and melody: a melody turns into harmony when distinct notes are placed above, or below, each other and are played at the same time. This is simply how chords, instrumental, and vocal harmonies are built. As we will write our own melodies, It’s very important to remember that melodies are moving (linear) lines of single musical notes.

How to make use of melodies in your music

Even though we are still going deep into this, I’ll ask you to think about melodies like a scene in your favourite movie or play. Your chords (harmony) are what create the scene, and melodies are the major characters on the stage that act out the story. A fantastic melody will capture and hold the listener’s attention. Songwriters, music producers, guitar players, pianists, and composers use melodies in their music to tell stories and give listeners a thing or two to remember and connect with.

The most popular way to use melodies in music is through musical verses, choruses, and bridges vocal lines; but instrumental melodies are also very important.

In This Chapter we will:

- Create a melody from rhythms and tones

- Analyze existing melodies
- Compose our first melody
- Discover what makes a melody memorable we also learned

In the previous parts of this book, we learned all about notes and pitches, values (lengths) and rhythms. Standing alone, musical pitches and rhythms mean little to nothing. But when you mix them, they create something amazing - a melody.

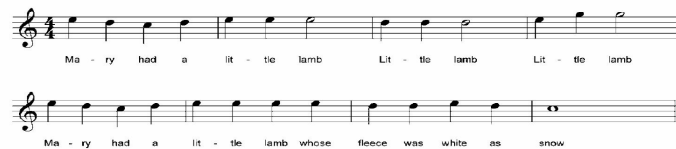
A melody, as we discussed earlier, is defined as a meaningful and pleasing progression of tones and rhythms, or we can simply say that is a tune set to a beat. But pay close attention to that word “meaningful.” A melody isn’t just a random or haphazard conglomeration of musical notes, they have to relate to and follow-through from each other. What I'm saying, basically, is that a melody has to make sense, or else it’s just going to be a bunch of noise.

Like we said in the introductory parts of this chapter, a melody is the most memorable part of a song. It is the track you sing, the musical notes you hum, the line that stays in your mind and brain long after the CD has ended, or the band has stopped jamming. The best musical melodies has some emotional strikes; they can make us jump with joy or sink into deep sadness.

When played or created right, melodies can tell a story without making use of words, or give a solid backing to the meaning of a song’s lyrics. If you wish to compose, or arrange, music or, even improvise to an existing composition, it's a must that you know how to create a memorable and pleasing melody. That’s where this chapter comes in, where all is about the art of melody.

How to Combine Musical Tones and Rhythms

If you take your mind back to the previous chapters, you will remember how we talked about various ways to describe the tones in the popular song “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” After that, we finally settled on the traditional naming of musical tones using the letters A – G, we assigned each tone in the song to a letter corresponding to its exact pitch; any musician who read the letters knows just the exact tones to sing or play. Assigning musical tones, of course, is only part of the lengthy story. When you sing the song “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” you also give each musical tone a specific rhythmic value (length); each musical tone takes up a particular place in time. The beat or rhythm of the song is shown by using different note values which can be: half (minim) notes, and the quarter (crotchet) notes that we know as music notation. By putting together the pitch values with the rhythmic lengths, we can now properly notate the entire melody of the song “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” The musical notes on the staff tell us exactly what pitches to sing; the note lengths (values) tell us exactly how long to sing each musical pitch. The result looks something like this:



This is the complete melody for “Mary Had A Little Lamb”

All musical melodies are described by using similar notations. You fix the key signature and the time signature first, and then, fill in the musical notes of the melody from there. Normally, you have to arrange the musical notes within bars or measures, with each measure holding just the right number of beats. When you’re through writing down the musical notes, you have just written down your melody.

Often-Used Melodic Techniques

Every single song has a melody. Some longer musical pieces, like some orchestral music, usually have more than one melody. Some musical melodies comprise many parts, with distinct parts repeated in different sections of the song itself. No matter the way the music is arranged, the melody remains the heart of the song and it is the part you should be able to hum, sing or even whistle all by itself, with no other musical instruments needed. To get a good feel for how melodies are built, let's just take a look at some melodies from some well-known musical pieces. You will see that although they all have their distinct sound and feel, these melodies also have a lot of attributes and factors in common.

Dvorak's New World Symphony

Let us start with a tune from Antonin Dvorak's Symphony number 9 in the key of E minor titled "From the New World" and more popularly recognized as the New World Symphony. This is a very popular orchestral piece, and it consists of several different sections; the melody we will take a look at, is just one of the many melodies used throughout this song, and this is how it goes:



This is one of the major melodies in Dvorak's New World Symphony.

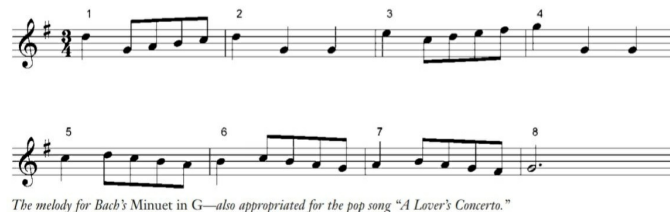
First, let's have a look at the structure of this melody. As shown, the time signature for this melody is 4/4 time, so, there are four quarter-note (crotchet) in each of the measures. The key signature of the melody is D, because it has five flats. When you listen to this symphony, you listen to a *allegro* (happy), which means it's written in a major key, D Major, precisely. this piece is four measures long. If you take a look at, or take a listen to, this melody carefully, you will see or hear that it breaks into 2 two-measure phrases. The first two measures stop on an E, and that feel like an ending musicalnote (E is the second note in the scale of D Major); this sets up a kind of musical tension, that you want to hear solved. The second two measures, resolve the tension by repeating, or should I say resounding, the first two measures but ending in a more satisfying musical tone which is the D. this note is the tonic (root) of the scale.

This is a very common compositional technique; setting up some musical tension in the first part of the melody then resolving it in the second one. This greatly contributes to make a very interesting melody; if you think of it, it's

also a very meaningful (logical), symmetrical, and an-almost mathematical [musical] construction technique. If you take a look at it as some mathematical formula, the first half of this melody contributes (equals) to the second one. Another musical technique used in this melody, is the repetition of specific beats or rhythms. Take a look at the rhythmic pattern; dotted 8th-note, 16th-note and quarter note. Notice how the [“doom de duh”] pattern is sounded twice in the first measure, and twice again in the third measure of the music, establishing a type of rhythmic signature for the entire musical piece. This beat repetition helps to give familiarity to the listener; once you hear the rhythm, and you hear it again, it feels very familiar; almost very comfortable. As a matter of fact, every listener expects to hear some repetition; if every measure of a melody differs completely from all the previous measures, then it will be extremely difficult to remember it. This applies also when you improvise: Repetition is very necessary in any form of composition.

J. S Bach's Minuet in G

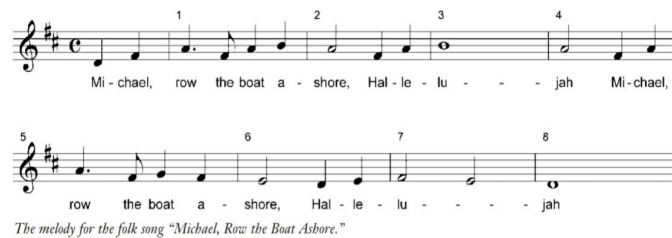
The next music we are using as an example is J. S Bach's Minuet in G. Although, you might be somehow familiar with this piece, as the melody of the popular song "A Lover's Concerto," rendered by the Toys in the mid-1960s. This melody differs from Dvorak's one in several ways. First, it is composed in $\frac{3}{4}$ time (because it is a minuet); not $\frac{4}{4}$ time. Second, it is in the key of G and it is based on the G Major scale. Beyond those mentioned differences, there are many similar compositional techniques in use. Note the beat (rhythmic) repetition between measures one to two and three to four, and the continued repetition of the first bar in bar 5 through 7. Also, note the little tension created in bar 4, which is the end of the first half of the melody, it makes it sound like there's some more coming and then resolves it in the second half of the melody.



There's some other thing that is very interesting about this specific melody. The first half of the melody has a very consistent upward motion while the second half makes use of downward motion to take you back to where you started. Even though not all the musical notes go up or down, the very general flow of this melody moves in that direction, and thus, pushes the melody forward. It is very important that you have some sort of motion in a melody, or you'll force the listener to sleep. It doesn't matter where the motion lies, it just needs to be there, to help the melody get from point one to point two.

Michael, Row the Boat Ashore

Another song is the traditional folk song titled “Michael, Row the Boat Ashore.” The words to this song, as simple as they are, can actually help us visualize the melodic form. When you read the words of the song, you can clearly see that the song is made up of two near-identical halves; regarding rhythm. The first time, we sing that Michael rows his boat ashore, the melody of that part has a slight upward motion and also ends with some bit of tension on the fifth note of the "A" scale. The second time, we sing that Michael goes boating, the melody of the song sways slightly downward and resolves itself by ending on the root, or tonic of the key of D. You can feel some symmetry, tension, repetition and release. They use these compositional techniques over and over, to simply create really beautiful and memorable melodies.



The first two-quarter notes before the starting measure are referred to as pickup notes; that little half (first) measure is referred to as a pickup measure. You utilize pickup notes, and measures, when the melody actually kicks in before the first beat of the first measure or bar.

Canon in D by Pachelbel

Our last melody is a bit different from the ones we've analysed so far. That's because rhythmically it's really simple, since it has nothing but half notes. You've probably heard this melody countless times, it's actually Johann Pachelbel's Canon in D, which is sometimes just called to "Pachelbel's Canon". It has been used in several original films in Hollywood and television shows. You even might have heard this popular melody in the background of an advertisement for GE light bulbs back in the 1990s. And also, listen to Coolio's "C U When You Get There". In any case, it's an amazing and interesting melody, despite its simplicity in rhythm. It does not always have to be complicated or complex to sound good!



The "Canon In D" melody is different because it doesn't use a lot of repetition or symmetry like the melodies we have analysed so far, except for the repeated half (minim) notes. It is the stepwise intervals between the musical notes that shoot this melody forward; every pitch leaning forward to the next pitch, one after the other, in an enormous spinning circle of tones. And then, the last note, which is C#, is the leading tone (7th tone) of the D Major scale; you leap back to F# note (a third of the scale) and start again from afresh. The point of analysing this melody is to prove that you don't need fancy rhythms to compose an amazing and memorable melody. Some very pure musical tones, played in a very simple manner, can still be quite lyrical- only if you pick the right notes.

Note that the melody portrayed in Pachelbel's Canon in D is just the first four bars of a much more elaborate melody. The musical form, that is a canon, used in this piece is like a round, where the melody begins in one part and then continues, while other musical parts start with the same melody starting in the first part. In another part of this book, we will learn more about the canon and some other musical forms.

Let's Compose Our First Melody

Now that we have learned some techniques, we can create an amazing, or maybe not, melody, as the case may be. Let's put those learned techniques to work. As we learned with Pachelbel's Canon In D, a melody doesn't have to include some very complex rhythms to sound great. Just the right musical notes, on the right pitches, are what we need to start any new melody. One of the principal rules of composing music is to base your melody on a specific musical scale. And, as you will learn in another chapter, there are three musical notes in a scale, which, when sounded together, create what we know as a major triad. These three musical notes represent an agreeable place to start for our first melody. For simplicity's sake, let us begin our composition in the key of C, and the C Major scale to be precise. The three musical notes we want to make use of are the tonic (root), the third (mediant), and the fifth (dominant) and these notes are C, E, and G. So, let's begin our melody with two half (minim) notes and a whole (semibreve) note, starting with C and moving up to G on the whole note.

And with that, the first two measures of our melody will look something like this;



Let's first analyse these first two bars. In case you want to give this melody a little more of a flow, feel free to fill in the blanks among these three musical notes by adding notes in the step between each musical pitch. We will do this by turning the half (minim) notes into quarter (crotchet), and adding some passing tones between the C and E note, and also the E and G. what that means is that we'll go from C to D to E, and then from E to F to G. The result looks something like this:



The first two measures, with passing tones added.

You must be wondering what a passing tone is; a passing tone is just a subsidiary musical tone you have to pass by to move from one important musical note to another. Because passing tones are not part of the fundamental chord structure, they are often situated between two of the musical notes, in a triad.

Now let's get back to analyse the melody, you can see that we are still left with that single whole note (semibreve) sitting there, at the last bar. It's not bad, if we leave it like that, but, doing that makes this part of our melody sound more like a simple major scale, which it is! Luckily, we can add some more interest, by using another compositional technique, known as a neighbouring tone, in this case, you land on the main musical note, which is the G, in this case, move slightly to an adjacent note, and then come back to rest on the main note, which is the G, again. The result will sound a little like “duu-de-duu”, which is slightly more compelling than a plain “duu.” You can fix neighbouring tones just above or below the main musical tone and, for our little melody, we will use the neighbouring tone just above the G note—which happens to be an A note. Keeping the beat (rhythm) simple, we will now begin the second bar with a quarter (crotchet) note on G, follow it by another quarter note on A and a half (minim) note on G. The result will be this:



Embellishing the melody with a neighboring tone.

Before we go on with the analysis, let's get something clear. A neighbouring tone is created by starting on a musical pitch and then moving up or down by a step, that can be either half or whole, and then going back to the original musical pitch. This tone is the note that “neighbours” the original musical one. Just like a passing tone, a neighbouring one is usually not one of the three musical notes in the fundamental chord triad.

The above melody is a nice simple one—but it's actually only half of one

melody. Anytime a melody ends on the 5th note (dominant) of the scale, like our, there is always some melodic tension. When you listen to this melody, all you want to do is solve that tension, and maybe, somehow, get the melody back to where it started, on C. There's an easy way to do this, of course, and all you will have to do is to create a similar mirroring image of the first bars, but this time with a downward motion from the G to the C note. The number one thing we will do is to copy the first bar into a new 3rd bar, with the difference that we will copy it with the first note beginning on G, and with the quarter (crotchet) notes moving down in a G F E D motion. Note that this motion (progression) puts two of the C Major triad note, which are C and E, on the primary beats of the bar or measure, beat one and three. Then we will end this musical run with a whole note (semibreve) in the fourth bar, placed on the tonic note which is C. Your completed melody will look like this:



Your completed melody—play it loud and proud!

That was not in any way difficult. We know that this melody will not win an award, but even at that, it is still a very legitimate melody, and it is very easy to sing and remember. Believe me, I have heard way worst melodies, so let us praise ourselves a little. The major thing here is that you've seen that composing a melody is easy, as long as you know the basic theory that is behind music composition.

Things that Make A Melody Memorable

All of this brings us to a very vital question: How exactly can we create a memorable melody? It is important to have a little inspiration and some soul, but, you can also make use of some very reliable compositional techniques, not only to make sure that you create a melody that work, but also that sticks in the listener's memory. We will go through several techniques, with the warning that these aren't fundamental "rules": it's very possible to do the opposite of what I suggest here and still create a remarkable melody. What I am trying to say is that there must be some art involved in the entire composition process.

Focus on a Pitch

What we want from our melodies is to be more like a hunting domestic animal, who knows exactly where home is and finds its way back there at the end of the hunting day. Here, what we refer to as “home” of a melody has to be a specific musical pitch. When we pick one, our melody can then spin around it. We can begin and end on that pitch. Also, important, the other musical notes in the melody can play around that same pitch, or just land on it, once in a while. Note that this home pitch doesn’t have to be the tonic note, you can make your home the third note, or even the fifth, but, advisably, not the second, sixth or the seventh note, since these notes are less related to the tonic triad of 1, 3, and 5. To illustrate this, take a listen to the following melody. The melody is written in the key of G but it revolves around the home pitch of B which is a third of the scale.



A four-measure melody in the key of G, which hovers around the third of the scale (B).

What we really want to avoid is having each measure of our melody centre on a different musical pitch. If our melody wanders around in this way, without a central place we can call home, we won’t know how to end our melody and we will not know where home is. The fundamental rule is that you always have to end at home. Most of the memorable melodies we know, make use of the home pitch to give some meaning to the melodic flow. As a matter of fact, it would be amazing if your audience can listen to some section of your melody, and, because of the dominance of the home note, they hum the end of the melody before they can even hear you play it. When you don’t conclude your melody on the home, or expected, note, what you create is an unresolved tension that can unsettle the listeners.

Even if it is still okay to fix that kind of tension right in the middle of your melody, what you do not want is to end your melody with that tension. What you want is to solve your melody, so that there is a feeling of

accomplishment at the end of the music. What you really want to avoid is a melody that wanders around pointlessly. Always trust your ear to be your guide. Sing, or play, over your melody and see if it goes well, or if you are feeling it at all. It's a little like writing some good poetic paragraphs; when you are finished, the advisable thing to do is to sing or play it aloud and see if it really works.



Stick to A Scale

When you're selecting the specific musical notes for your melody, it's an excellent idea to pick a particular musical scale, and then just stay within the seven notes of it. Let's say, you decide to write your melody in the F Major key, your melody will include the musical notes F, G, A, B, C, D and E. if used properly, none of these notes will sound odd in your melody.



Also, keep in mind that, if you're writing your melody in the F Major key and you throw a D into your melody, that D note will sound odd. Although it's still very possible to use this non-scale (chromatic or colour) notes in your melody, it's actually something that you, as a starter, should not try. Composing a melody using chromatic (color) notes requires some degree of harmonic fluency or, sophistication, that less-often comes naturally, even though we can develop it with some practice. When you pick a musical scale for your melody, it does not have to be a major one. Let's assume we are still in a F key, but we want to write a less happy, more sad-sounding, melody. For this kind of melody, you might use the D minor scale (which makes use of one flat, like in the key of F Major). When you write this kind of melody, you'll probably focus on the tonic triad of D minor which are D, F, and A; rather than the tonic triad of F Major, which is F, A, and C.

Use the Pentatonic Scale

You can even make things a lot simpler for yourself by sticking to 5 key musical notes within a given major scale, which are the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th of the scale. In the case of the C Major, these musical notes are C, D, E, G, and A. These notes come together for what we call the pentatonic scale. The word PENTA means 5; five musical tones equal a pentatonic scale, in music. By using only these five musical notes, you ultimately avoid the two trouble notes in the scale, the 4th and the 7th, that sometimes create unwanted harmonic tension. When you make use of the five notes in the pentatonic scale, it's totally impossible to hit a “wrong” note into your melody. Nevertheless, you can overuse these musical notes and end up with a vaguely Asian-sounding melody, or even something that sounds a little like the soundtrack of an old cowboy movie.

Note that instead of centring your melody on a major, minor or even pentatonic scale, you can also base your melodies on one of the modes, like Aeolian, Lydian, Dorian, and others. Also, on the piano, an effortless way to see and play the pentatonic scale is to play strictly on just the black keys. These five keys; G ♭ , A ♭ , B ♭ , D ♭ , and E ♭ , make up the G ♭ pentatonic scale.



A melody composed on the C pentatonic scale.

The Hook

For a melody, to be memorable, there needs to be a part of it that really goes out and captures the listener's attention. In popular music, they call it 'hook' mainly because it's the part of a song that "hooks" the listener. In more traditional or classical music, this part of the song is sometimes referred to as the motif, or motive, and it is repeated throughout the entire music. A motif is usually made of few notes (take your mind to the five whistling musical notes in Sergio Leone's soundtrack from the movie "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly"). At the longest, the motif could be just one or two measures. When you have a good hook, don't be afraid, in any way, to make use of it, try to repeat it as often as necessary, throughout your entire piece of music.



A simple four-note motif, repeated throughout a longer melody.

Creating Variations

You can create some added melodies in your music, just by slightly varying your motif in the music. You can achieve this by changing the song's rhythm or moving its tones up or down on the used scale. But note that it's important you keep enough of the main motif, so that listeners can know and remember where it come from, but also add enough variation so that you have some new but related melody. How can you create variation in your motif? You can simply reverse, or simplify, the rhythm, or even make the rhythm more complex. You can also reverse the musical notes, so that the melody climbs up instead of going down, or goes down instead of climbing up, or simply change the centre notes in the motif, or shift the musical notes up or down a 3rd or a 5th. As a matter of fact, any musical variation is accepted, as long as the foundational motif is not completely shadowed by it. Take a good look at the following example, in which the straight-forward four-note motif, from the former example, is being put through several variations, both melodically and rhythmically.

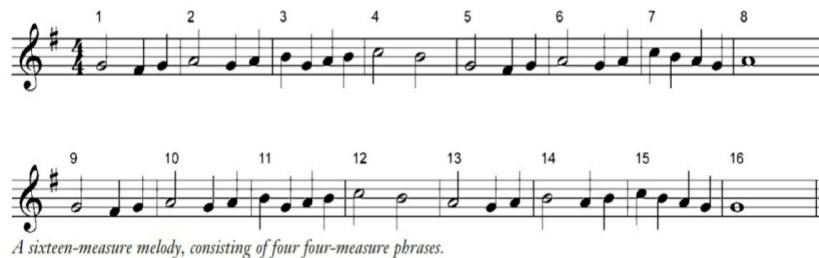


The same four-note motif, with variations.

Don't forget that what you want for your variations is to relate to the foundational motif of the music. If you go too far away from the foundational motif, it is no more a variation—it's a brand-new melody.

Compose in 4—or 8, or 16

When you're writing a melody, it really helps to keep the lengths of the sections (the phrases and motifs) relatively simple. In most Western and popular music, (especially pop music) —most of the melodies are dividable by two. What this means is that you probably want your melody to be 2, 4, 8, or 16 measures long. You probably do not want to write a 3 or 5 measure melody; composing an odd number of measures may feel very wrong and unnatural to some of your listeners. When you compose a longer melody, you can easily divide it up into 2, 4 or 8 measure fractions. To illustrate this, the following 16 measure melody is constructed from four 4 measure parts.



One known exception to this 2, 4, 8, and 16 rule, is the genre we refer to as blues. Most blues songs utilize a 12-measure (bar) form, with 12-measure (bar) melodies. I'm sure you've heard of the 12-bar blues.

Let The Melody Move

A fantastic melody doesn't just sit in one place; it goes somewhere. You can move, or shoot, a melody rhythmically or tonally through the “movement” of the musical tones. In this context, motion simply refers to the continuous upward or downward movement of the pitches, or what some musicians call the contour of a line of music. A fantastic way to conceptualize the upward or downward movement of a melody is to look at the first and last musical note, and you can ignore, for the time being, all the musical notes in between. To compose an upward-moving melody, make sure the ending note is at least a 3rd (preferably a 5th or more) higher than the first note. The same rule applies with a downward-moving melody; make sure the last musical note is lower than the first musical note. All the musical notes between the first and last ones help you transit to that final note. The musical notes do not basically have to go in the same direction, but they have to slowly and continuously move up or down to where you want the melody to end.



A melody with upward motion.

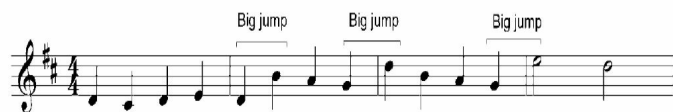
It's important that you know that it's okay to have a melody that begins and ends on the same musical note. What you can do, in this case, is to make the centre point of the melody higher or lower than the beginning/ending pitch. If you opt for a higher centre point, the first half of your melody will need to have an upward movement, and the last half will make use of a downward movement to get back to the home pitch.

Don't Leap; Take Small Steps

Most of the easy-to-sing melodies move in slight steps, so each music note is only one or two step away from the previous musical note. The shorter the steps between the notes in your melody, the more lyrical and organized your melody will sound. When you take large jumps (also known as leaps), of four or more steps (even three is still big), into your melody, it sounds unorganized, directionless and becomes very much difficult to sing or play. It is much better to use a series of passing tones within your chosen musical scale to get from one main musical note to another.

As a matter of fact, this isn't a hard-and-fast compositional rule. (we can break the rules, however!) think, for example, to the songs “Moon River” or “Somewhere Over the Rainbow”. These songs feature leaps of unique kinds from a 5th to an entire octave in their different melodies. So, it's very okay to leap if you know exactly what you're doing, even though slight steps are better suited for less-experienced songwriters and composers.

Note that a melody that moves in half or whole steps, uses what we call step-wise or conjunct motion, while melodies that move by leaps larger than a whole step uses what we call skip-wise or disjunct motion.



Small steps and large leaps in a melody—the small steps sound more lyrical and are easier to sing.

Keep it in Range

What you do not want to do is play too many musical notes in your tune. If the distance between the lowest musical note and the highest musical note is too wide, singers, and even players, will have trouble singing, or playing, all or some of your melodies, and your melody will sound disjointed and random, without a place to call home. Think for example, at the United States' national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." The composer Francis Scott Key put his words to one hell of a tune (it has a quite wide melodic range). Think of how hard this song is to sing, and how many well-trained vocalists have trouble hitting all the musical notes. The very wide range in this song doesn't make it an awful song, it just makes it one of the more hard songs to sing, or play. That being said, always try to keep the lowest and highest musical notes in your melody within an octave of each other. Or, at most, within an octave (8th) and a 3rd. You should always remember the exact range of the instrument, or voice, you're writing for, and try everything possible to stay within that range. We will learn more about voice and instrument ranges in the coming chapter.



A melody with too wide a range—really hard to sing!

Avoid Using Intervals That Can't Be Sung

While we are still on the simplicity of every melody, certain musical intervals are easier to sing than others. Whole and half steps are easy to sing, as are 2nds, 3rds and 5ths. Some 4ths [for some reason] are a little more difficult to sing, and 6ths and 7ths are very problematic.

Octaves (8th) aren't by nature so difficult; an F remains an F, whether it's high or low, although the sheer distance between the musical notes adds some degree of difficulty for both singers and players. Along the same lines, we should probably avoid any interval over an octave, just because it's such a big jump.

Chromatic intervals are musical notes that aren't in the used scale and they are very difficult for some, or even most, singers to sing. To illustrate this, let's say you are in the key of C and your melody leaps from an E to a G, a lot of singers won't be able to strike that second note. They'll prefer to sing either an F or G, both of which are in that scale, the G note takes a lot of concentration and precision to strike, out of the blue. There is one other chromatic interval you should avoid at all costs, it is called a tritone, or the devil's interval; it's (based on how you look at it) a sharpened (augmented) 4th or a flatted (diminished) 5th. It just totally sounds wrong; some of the early music theorists considered this interval the "Devil's interval", and it was regarded as the musical equivalent of evil. (simply play a tritone; F to B, for example, and you will see how difficult it is to Sing this "devil's interval".



Whatever intervals you create, try to sing the notes first, and then check what you just sang on the piano. If you have any trouble singing a particular interval, so will others, and you should know that the best melodies are actually the easiest to sing.

Keep Your Rhythm Simple

When you're just at the beginning stage, it helps so much to keep the beat, or rhythm, of your melody relatively simple. What this means is that you should stick to the quarter (crotchet) notes and half notes (minim) notes and use 16th-notes carefully. This also means avoid what, for the time, we refer to as syncopation. Syncopation creates a really jumpy melody, and it is hard for some players, or singers, to play, or sing.

Syncopation means there's a strong emphasis in a very unexpected place in the music, it can also be when there is not an emphasis where you were expecting it. Syncopation can also be called a displaced rhythm. You can create a syncopated rhythm by putting an accent on something other than the downbeat, or by just putting a rest, or silence, on the downbeat. This change-up creates some rhythmic patterns that might sound very "off" to some listeners but often have a kind of jazzy or funky feel.

We can create syncopated rhythms by using a brief rest on the downbeat, or other powerful beats. If you compose a melody that sounds just a bit too "jerky," consider making the rhythm a bit simple and using some more straight 8th and quarter notes on the beat.



Simplifying a rhythmically complex melody.

Keep to Time

It is very possible, especially when you're just starting out, to create a melody that does not strictly follow the laid down pattern of your chosen time signature. For example, you could compose a 6-beat melody, which doesn't sit so well in a 4-beat 4/4 time signature.



A melody that doesn't follow the normal bar-line breaks.

What you want is to pace your melody, so it fits within your used time signature. What this means is that you should create a melody that is easily divisible into measures, without having some extra, or leftover, beats. In fact, it's a splendid exercise to write out your melody without using bar lines, and then, make sure you can easily map out where to fix the bars, to create your different measures. If you can't easily fix your melody into different measures, consider rephrasing your rhythms, or changing the rest length between different sections of your melody. Still, on that, make sure you can easily point where the first beat of the measure lies throughout your melody, especially in the starting and ending measures. What you don't want is your melody to feel "offbeat," in the strictest sense of the musical phrase. What you want for your melody is to end on a beat that feels just right; else, your listeners will stumble in a place when "beat one" isn't where it is supposed to be.

Create—and Resolve—Tension

One of the most common melodic, or should I say compositional, techniques is to divide your melody into two parts and create a harmonic tension in the first part of the melody, that is then solved in the second part. This technique gives your melody a very distinct form and its own internal meaning; this also helps to shoot the melody from the first part to the second one. One magnificent way to create tension is to conclude the first part of your melody on something other than the root (tonic) of the scale. When you're considering the chord structure of your song, you will find that the tension can be achieved by stopping the first part of the melody on an IV or V chord. Putting this into practice, you can create musical tension by concluding a musical phrase with the 2nd, 5th or 7th notes of the used scale, which actually correspond to the musical notes in the scale's V chord, if you are reading the music ahead. Some more-experienced music composers can change time signatures within a melody, bringing in musical lines that do not find it possible to fit within a steady time signature flow.



The half note in measure two creates tension; the next two bars resolve the tension.

You have to relieve this built-up tension by taking the second part of your melody back to the root (tonic) of the scale, or to one of the musical notes in the tonic triad (chord one). The musical notes in the tonic triad are the tonic (root), third (mediant) and the fifth (dominant) of the scale; the root (tonic) and the third probably perform better for relieving tension, just because the fifth (dominant) is an ambiguous musical note, used both in chord-one and the V chord (chord-five); again, read ahead to the coming chapters to learn all about chord types and progressions. Without being told or taught, you can hear the tension when you play a melody.

Create Call and Response

Another very effective technique is the call and response. This is where you bring up a musical phrase in the first part of your melody and then give an “answer” to that in the second part. This differs slightly from the technique of tension and release, even if the call sets up a certain tension that requires a tension-relieving response (answer). The answering musical phrase serves as a “part 2” to the first [question] phrase; the “question” takes you in a particular direction, and the “answer” brings you back home. To compose a call-and-response type of tune or melody, think of as a question and its answer. For example, you might think of the question, “Where is my bike?” and the answer, “It’s in the park.” When you bring this call and response to music, you might have something like this:



Where is my bike? It’s in the park

Establish Some Symmetry

A technique that we sometimes bring into both the call-and-response and the tension-and-relief techniques is known as symmetry. By it, I mean that the second section of your melody should be a mirror image of the first section of your melody.

This symmetry can be achieved by mirroring tones, or by mirroring rhythms. Let us use Dvorak's New World Symphony for illustration. The third measure is identical to the first one, thus establishing symmetry between the two parts of the tune. The song "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore" has a rhythmic symmetry between the two parts, even though the musical tones used change a little. Sometimes the musical tones have to change to bring relief to the built-up harmonic tension, or respond to a melodic call. Whenever you make the second section of your melody, it will look much like the first section, you establish familiarity in the mind and ear of your listener, so they know what to expect in the music and feel at home when you deliver it to them.



The last two bars are a near-mirror image of the first two measures.

Not Only Repetition; Bring In Some Variety

Repetition is an integral part of symmetry, also to establish musical hooks and motifs.

When you create a melodic, or rhythmic, phrase that sounds great to you, and you repeat it throughout the entire melody or song. This kind of repetition, such as the one shown in the following example, helps so much to unify melody; it is the melodic equivalent of a steady rhythm [drumbeat] by the drummer, and serves as a strong identifying factor for listeners. But too much of a magnificent thing, can get annoying. If you repeat your figure so often, it will bore your listener. It is quite hard to say how many repetitions are too much.

When you catch yourself making use of too much repetition, it means it is time to bring in some variations, or add completely new rhythmic or melodic figures. Balancing repetition and variety is a very essential skill to master, that marks a monumental difference between an experienced and a novice composer.

Follow Chord Progressions

We have mentioned chords, and chord progressions, a couple of times in this chapter because they contribute magnificently to the melodies you compose. However, I have not told you about chords and harmony yet, since it is very important that you master how to create a single melodic line before you stack multiple musical notes on top of each other, the chords. That being said, after you've read the chapters that will deal with chords and progressions, you will definitely want to come back to this chapter and apply whatever you've learned.

I say this because one very useful approach to composing melodies is to create first, a chord progression, and then create a melody on top of that chord progression. You can't pull this stunt until you learn about chords and chord progressions. After you've read chapters on chords and chord progressions, you will better understand how to establish and resolve harmonic tension in your melody, using certain chords. For example, you will discover that the most commonly used chord progression in music is I-IV-V (one, four, and five), or some other variation of that. In the key of C Major, I-IV-V chords would be C Major, F Major, and G Major chords, respectively. The IV and V chords (especially the V chord) are used to create musical tension. You always end the first section of your melody with the V chord. You solve that tension by getting back to the root (I) chord, which is why you [almost] always conclude your tunes with the root (I) chord. When your melodies make use of these chords, you bring the kind of tension and relief that lead for a very memorable melody.

Your melody has to fit within the chordal structure of your composition. What this means is that, within a specific bar, the dominant notes of your melody should probably fit within the three dominant notes of the foundational chord. To exemplify this, if you have an A-minor chord, the dominant musical notes of the melody associated to that chord should probably be A, C, or E—which are the three notes in the chord. Once again, we will learn more about chords and chord progressions in the next parts of the book, so don't fret—I will explain it all.

Follow the Song Form

Most pieces of music, or songs, you hear follow some established musical forms. What this means is that your melodies should fit within those forms: so many popular songs are being divided into choruses and verses. The verse is always the first melody, which is repeated throughout the entire song. The chorus becomes the second melody, and quite often the main melody, and it contains the hook which is repeated between verses. So, a typical pop song form might look like verse-verse-chorus-verse. This means that you must write two melodies for the song, which must be in some way related. After you read the chapter on chord and chord progressions, return to this chapter to apply whatever you have learned about musical form to your basic melodic compositional skills.

Always Follow the Words

Another very important factor that can move a melody is the lyrics. If you're composing a piece of instrumental music, of course, you do not need to worry about following the lyrics, but if you're composing a popular song, you have no option but to deal with both music and lyric; and how they flow together.

As a composer, or songwriter, what you want for your music is to fit perfectly with your words. To simplify things, this means arranging the beat (rhythm) to the lyrics. You don't want to force your singers into awkward phrasing. Most phrases and words have their natural pace and will always suggest a rhythm to you. Make sure your song's rhythm fits with the natural rhythm of these words; in particular, avoid fixing an unaccented syllable on an accented part of the measure, for instance, the downbeat.

Match the flow with the lyrics. To illustrate this, if the lyrics ask a question, you probably want your melody to go upward, to copy the way a human voice concludes a question on a much higher pitch. Adding to that, you want the feel of your music to match the feel of the lyrics. If your lyrics are sad, it wouldn't be right to set them to a happy-sounding melody. There are exceptions to this particular rule, though; mismatching lyrics and beat can create what I will refer to as a musical irony, which is appropriate in some musical situations; but as a general rule, you want your melody to mirror the feel of the lyrics.

Compose for a Specific Instrument or Voice

Specific voices, or the musical instruments, might dictate the melody you are composing. For example, if you're composing for flutes, you probably don't want to compose a very bombastic and booming melody—they cannot play it. On the same note, a too high a melody, will be very difficult for low male voices, or musical instruments with lower ranges. You need to use not only the appropriate range for a voice or musical instrument but also the right feel. Match the requirements of your composed melody with the right voices and musical instruments to avoid an ugly listening experience.

Always Be Unique

Lastly, know that your melody does not have to be rhythmically or harmonically sophisticated to be memorable and nice; it doesn't have to be short or long or any certain length. But it sure has to be unique. A memorable melody might somehow remind us of other melodies, but it can never duplicate them. The best melodies have something distinctive in them, some unique hook, motif or rhythmic pattern that makes them different from other melodies.

It's difficult and nearly impossible to teach you how to be unique, and how to stand out, so this is something you must address on your own. Ask yourself if your melody stands on its own or if it sounds a little like some other melody you've heard. Does your melody sound a lot like something else you have heard before? As with many other aspects of music composition, this is the area in which you must trust the most your ears—and also one that you definitely have to listen out for.

Learn More About Music Composition

Composing your own music is extremely fun, but it requires some mastery of many musical skills and techniques, of which we have only covered a few in these chapters of the book. Whether you want to compose songs or symphonies, the same skills and techniques of composition apply. You must start with being very grounded in music theory (which is the reason you're studying this book), then proceed to learn how to create memorable and amazing melodies, captivating chord progressions, and some really bright orchestrations. You could take a special song writing course; every talented songwriter at a point has done that, so do not in any way feel reluctant to do that too. Above all, keep composing and writing music every day.

Things to Remember

- A melody is made up of a logical progression of rhythms and tones.
- Melodies usually follow a 2-, 4-, 8-, or 16-measure form.
- Melodies usually conform to a specific mode or scale.
- The best melodies are always the simplest in terms of both rhythm and tune.
- More extended melodies can usually be divided into two sections, with the end of the first section creating a tension that is resolved in the second section.
- You should get certain that your melodies are truly easy-to-sing, and the only way to know this is to see if you can actually sing the melodies.

#10 Mistakes Every Beginning Musician Must Avoid

It is always an amazing and exciting thing picking up a musical instrument like the drums, guitar, piano, saxophone or bass, or even embarking on a journey of vocal training or pretty much any other aspect of music. As exciting and motivating as this may be, you are also prone and very much exposed to many mistakes that, if not addressed, avoided or corrected [on time], may lead to a terrible musical fall, halt or block. As a self-taught musician (I also went to college), and also as a tutor who has coached many aspiring musicians, singers and players, I know that there are very common mistakes that we have to try to avoid at all costs. I will go straight to the point and list these ten mistakes:

#1: Not Tuning Your Instruments Before Playing

I will try to make every heading self-explanatory so that you can probably get the points by just going through the distinct points. The above-stated mistake is pretty much common among musicians that are just starting out and, surprisingly, also common among some supposedly advanced players. Even though there may be some exceptions for musical instruments like the grand piano and the electronic keyboards; but pretty much the rest of the musical instruments like the guitar, saxophone, violin, trumpet, and even the human voice, require some proper tuning before playing. It is really wrong to pick up a musical instrument and start playing without first checking if it is in tune or not. Always make sure an electronic tuner is handy or even a pitchfork, and for the voice, always make sure to do some warm-ups before sounding any note and cross-check on your tuner, or pitch pips, if you are in tune.

#2: Still Playing Stuff You've Already Mastered

I am not saying, forget all the cool stuff you learned and mastered, i am only saying: move on to the next one! Don't get too comfortable playing repeatedly when you've already gotten it; I know it feels great, but.....

Move to the next one!

#3: Running From the Tough Things

This is common among both newbies and not, and is very much related to #2. Do not run away from the barre chords, the tough inversions, the not-very-simple scales, modes, and licks. Play them because heavy loads only strengthen you.

#4: Having too Many Sources of Information

Information is cool and learning fresh stuff is amazing, but when you have too much fresh stuff from too many sources to learn... well, you should know what will happen. Just stick to one reliable and authentic source of information and maybe two, at most.

#5: Not Having Some Patience With Yourself

Patience is the key to succes.

#6: Neglecting Timing and Tempo

These are very important musical aspects; concentrate on these two as much as you do on your playing. Get yourself a metronome and always keep it on when rehearsing, and not only keep it on; follow the timing and tempo strictly.

#7: Rushing to Achieve “thunder-speed” Playing

It's cool when your favourite player plays your favourite lick at lightening-speed, it looks great and maybe sounds great too! But take a chill pill. Keeping to tempo is way more important than playing at thunder-speed. You will achieve speed with time, for now, don't rush for that.

#8: Being Shy to Play In Front of Others

#9: Avoiding Music Theory

#10: Expecting to Become A Virtuoso Over-Night

It takes some time. Enjoy your ride and do not rush. Rushing in any form hurts and it is unacceptable; it may hurt you.

Best Approach to Learning the Guitar

At first, the guitar may appear mysterious and the dream of ever playing like the famous rock star on tv may seem like a daunting, or even an impossible, one; do not fret just yet! The guitar is tough, I won't dispute that. But that does not in any way change the fact that a guitar is just a musical instrument and should be only an extension of you as a musician. It is just your instrument, not your god. What I mean here is that the most ultimate thing in learning any musical instrument is the musicianship in you. It doesn't matter if you are playing the violin, cello, harp, trombone or whatever, these instruments are just tools that help you to express what's in you and what you are.

This means that, before being a great guitar player, you first have to be a superb musician. It's the boxer and not the boxing gloves. You may follow all the great approaches to being a superb guitar player, but if the music in you is not great, then you will never get there. It is much easier for a superb musician to become a great guitar, piano, saxophone or even trumpet player. In terms of the best approach to learning the guitar, as a musician and music tutor, i will tell you to first build the musicality in you, then learning whatever kind of musical instrument, will be a lot more fun. You could have all the tablatures for the most famous songs and master all the cool-looking chord shapes and forms on the guitar, but it won't make any sense if you don't understand the basic anatomy behind those exceptional sounding and cool looking chords. I never played a major seventh chord on the guitar until I understood how it was constructed and how it was supposed to be used in music. It made a lot more sense to me that way, and it made learning the guitar a lot more fun and inspiring. I am not saying have all the theories at your fingertips before playing the guitar, i am just saying, build your musicality, understand how music works and why a particular chord sounds the way it sounds. Don't approach the guitar or any instrument just like

someone who wants to learn how to play, but like a musician who wants to learn that instrument for the sole purpose of expressing himself with it. And always remember that theory makes you a better performer.

The Saxophone

The saxophone is a somewhat new musical instrument. The saxophone was invented in the 1840s. Adolphe Sax, who was a Belgian musician, and musical instrument maker, patented it. It belongs to the woodwind family (partially), although usually played with brass. We use the saxophone in many genres: including blues, jazz, military and marching bands, classical, and popular music, including rock-and-roll.

As a young adult, Adolphe Sax studied the clarinet and the flute at Brussels Music Conservatory. Adolphe Sax's father was also a musical instrument maker, and he was an apprentice in his father's shop. There, he was given not only an outstanding instruction, but also the freedom to create and nurture his own ideas, as an instrument maker. While still studying at the Conservatory, Adolphe observed the balance of woodwind and brass musical instruments in musical performances and compositions. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that there was a missing musical range, that a hybrid brass and woodwind musical instrument might fill. His experimentation with instruments, like the bass clarinet, led him to a design that hybridized the projection ability of a brass musical instrument with the agility of a woodwind musical instrument. Through this hybridization, the saxophone was given birth to.

Adolphe Sax's idea of the saxophone family was wider than just one musical instrument. This was shown in his 1846 patent, which described 14 unique versions of the saxophone, classified into two groups. This ranged from the F contrabass saxophone to Eb soprano saxophone. The saxophone series pitched in B-flat and E-flat quickly became very dominant and most of the saxophones we use today are from this series.

To further enrich your experience in music theory, as a gift; an extract of a whole chapter from my first book:

Music Theory for beginners
Discover How to Read Music at Any Age and Start Having Fun With Your
Guitar, Piano, or Any Other Instrument.

(With Musical Exercises & an Online Audio: Book 1)

Here's a preview of this amazing book, and what else you'll learn:

- 7 ways that music theory can help you become a better musician and why you have to know music theory
- Meaning of music and the three important elements that make up a piece of music
- An introduction to the basic philosophies of music, and the fundamental elements of music theory and complete musicianship
- Understanding whether music is an art form or a science [or both], and also the role of notation and timing in composition, songwriting, and modern music
- Explore both common and uncommon musical staves, different clef signs, and also the full capability of your different musical instruments
- Get to understand intervals, scales, and modes and how they shape the music you create
- In-depth studies of major and minor keys and how and how you can apply them in your compositions regardless of style or genre and truly explore the art of your personal expression
- Varying patterns designed to help anyone learn music
- A bonus exercise book with over 25 exercises
- Audio resources of musical notes and scales that you can download for free; because besides studying, you need to have an aural

perception (hearing) of exactly what you are learning

- Self-assessment questions at the end of each chapter to guide you and help you remember exactly what you learned
- A glossary of music terms which every musician should know

... And much more!

History of Music

It is always said that music has played a very important role in our life-cycle as humans and perhaps even before we were capable of speech. Some very notable evidence has been discovered that very early humans created primitive flutes from animal bones and made use of stones and wood as percussion.

The voice would actually have been the first and most natural means of expression in our most distant ancestors. It was used to bond socially, or to comfort a restless and sleepless child. It is from these humble but solid starts that the music we so much cherish today evolved.

As we keep moving further the history of music, we definitely find increasing evidence of its vital role in both sacred and secular settings, although the division into these categories (secular and sacred) was not in any way defined this way until many years later.

Cultural, environmental, social and some spiritual influences from the West to the East merged into the post-Christian music of the Greeks and later the Romans. Musical practices, conventions, and forms, perhaps conveyed by traveling musicians, brought a wealth of diversity and great innovation.

Some surviving Greek musical notation from this period of musical history has ultimately given scientists and musicologists equally some vital clues to the way the music of the time might have sounded. It certainly points some remarkable links to the music that would follow, perhaps most notably through the use of diverse modality in Greek music.

According to the "frescoes" and some written accounts, including the Bible, we have been taught about the musical instruments that featured in the

Roman and Greek times and their exact significance to the cultures. The trumpet is regarded as an instrument of the announcement and splendid ceremony, and the lyre as a very important player in the melodies of poets.

It is noted that all across Europe, from the early part of the first millennium, houses of worship became the places where the music got embedded into the lives of those devoted to God and their followers.

Christianity had so established itself and with Christianity came a new liturgy that demanded some new music. Although early Christian music had its origins in the practices and beliefs of the Hebrew people, what came from this was to become the basis and foundation for sacred music for centuries to come. The chants that were devoutly composed made sure to follow the sacred Latin texts in a style that was tightly controlled and given only to the "glory of God". Music was extremely subservient to the words, without any bit flourish or a drop of frivolity.

It was Pope Gregory- 540-604 AD, who is credited with moving the progress of sacred music forward and developing what is generally referred to as Gregorian Chant, characterized by the strong and piercing sound of the open and perfect 5th.

Although some strong controversy surrounds this claim, the name has actually stuck, and the music remains very different and essentially important as it slides away from plainchant polyphony. As a result, this looked back to earlier times and customs, especially in the music of the Jews, where the concept of a static and immovable drone commonly underpinned a second vocal part.

Medieval Period

As we go further in musical time, we enter into the Medieval Period of music which can be generally accepted to span the period from around 500AD up until the mid fifteenth century. By this period, music was a dominant art form from taverns to cathedrals, practiced by both kings and paupers alike. It was

during this long era of music that the actual sound of music became increasingly familiar. This is partly and maybe greatly due to the invention of musical notation, much of which has survived, that allows us to capture back and look back into this very fascinating time.

From the written down music that survives from the monasteries and some other very important accounts of musical practices, it's possible to put together an image of an extremely vibrant culture which ranged from the really sacred to the really secular. Throughout the Medieval Era of music, the music on a slower pace began to adopt some ever more elaborate and extended structures and devices that produced works of immense beauty, color, and devotion.

It is believed that Hildegard von Bingen and Perotin pioneered many of the musical forms we still recognize today, including the motet and the sacred Mass. Alongside these very important musical forms came the madrigal that often reflects the different moods and feelings of the people of the time. The madrigal is wonderfully polyphonic in form and is both mesmerizing and delightful.

Renaissance Period

Musical instruments were developed in accordance with the composer's imagination. A full collection and variety of wind, brass and percussion instruments accompanied Music of the medieval era, although it is still the voice (human) that dominates a lot of medieval compositions. Towards the close of the height of the Medieval era, we come across the birth of instrumental musical pieces in their own right which also paved the way for many musical forms in the Renaissance period.

Before leaving the Medieval period of music, it is necessary to mention the

Troubadours and the Trouveres. These nomadic storytellers and musicians covered vast distances on their journeys across Europe and further into Asia. These travelers told stories, sung ballads and, perhaps most importantly, brought with them musical influences from far and wide that smoothly and beautifully mixed with the Western musical practices..

The Renaissance period (1450–1600) is regarded as a golden age in the history of music. Not in any way hindered by the constraints of Medieval musical conventions, the composers of the Renaissance created a new era entirely. Josquin des Prez is regarded as one of the earliest Renaissance composers to master the polyphonic musical style, often combining many voices to create very elaborate musical textures.

As instrumental pieces became accepted into the Renaissance repertoire, we find the invention of musical instruments like the trombone and the bassoon giving rise to bigger and more elaborate instrumental groupings.

This invention gave musical composers of the period far more scope to explore and express their numerous creative ideas than before. The violin family developed to provide a specific haunted quality to much of the music of the time, alongside the establishment of each recognizable family of musical instruments consisting of percussion, strings, woodwind, and brass.

Keyboard musical instruments also became increasingly common and the advent of the sonata followed suit in due course. Some other very popular forms for instrumental music included the toccata, canzona, and ricercar to name but just a few, sprouting from the Courtly dance.

Towards the end of the Renaissance era, what were formerly referred to as the Church Modes began to dissolve in favor of what is now considered to be functional harmony or tonality which is very much based on a system of keys rather than modes.

Baroque Period

The Baroque Period (1600-1760) boasts of some of the most famous composers and pieces that we have in Western Classical Music today. This makes Baroque a very important period of music. The Baroque Period also sees some of the most important musical and instrumental developments. The countries of Italy, Germany, England, and France continue from the Renaissance period to dominate the musical landscape, each influencing the other with its own musical conventions and style.

Amongst the numerous celebrated composers of the Baroque Period, G F Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, and Purcell provided a substantial introduction to the music of this era. It is during this very glittering and stimulating span of time that Handel composed his oratorio "The Messiah", Bach his six "Brandenburg Concertos," Vivaldi the "Four Seasons," and the "48 Preludes and Fugues" still by Bach, together with Purcell's beautiful opera "Dido and Aeneas".

Instrumental music was composed and performed in conjunction with vocal works, each of equal importance in the Baroque Period. The virtuosity that emerged amongst the elite Renaissance performers flourished in the Baroque. Think about the Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti or the beautiful Concertos that Vivaldi composed for his student performers. This, in turn, led to significant instrumental developments, and also, thanks to the aristocratic support of Catherine Medici for the birth of the Violin.

Some common musical forms were established and founded on the principles of the Renaissance composers, but developed and extended in ways that they would have somewhat found very unimaginable. The Suite musical form became a Baroque favorite, comprising contrasting fast-slow movements like the Prelude- Allemande, Gigue, Courante and the Sarabande. Concertos

became even more popular, giving players the opportunity to display their technical and creative power in regards to musical expression.

Vocal music of the Baroque era continued to include the Mass but also the Oratorio and the Cantata alongside some specific anthems and chorales. Opera appears in earnest in the Baroque era and becomes a very established musical form and vehicle for great expression and diversity.

Increasingly, in the Baroque era, the preferred harmony is tonal and the system of keys which is major and minor is accepted in favor of modes. This acceptance and new preference lifted the limitations of modes and offered the composers some new chances to create ever more complex and expressive musical pieces that combine exciting polyphonic textures and dynamics.

Notation accompanies these musical developments and steadily we find that the accuracy of the Baroque composer's works becomes more very precise and detailed giving us a better possibility of knowing their intentions in performances of today.

Classical Period

From the Baroque, we get into the Classical Period which spans 1730-1820. Here, Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Mozart dominate the musical landscape and the countries of Germany and Austria sit at the creative center of this period. From the ornate Baroque, musical composers of the Classical period moved away from the polyphonic textures towards the homophonic textures, writing music that was, on the surface of it, simple, very sleek and measured.

One very major development and invention of the classical period is the Piano. The Baroque period's harpsichord got replaced by the very early piano which was actually more a "reliable" and expressive musical instrument

compared to the harpsichord. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Joseph Haydn each wrote a really extensive number of musical works for the piano which as a result allowed the piano to develop and progress significantly during this musical period.

Chamber music, hand in hand with orchestral music, was a great feature of the Classical Era of music with some particular attention being given to the String Quartet. The orchestra itself became firmly established and towards the tail end of the Classical Period, it began to include musical instruments like the clarinets, trombones, and timpani.

The rise and births of some virtuoso performers continued throughout this great and color-filled period of music as shown by the numerous concertos and sonatas composed during this musical period. Opera grew and flourished in these decades and ultimately became a fully-fledged musical form of entertainment that got to extend its feet far beyond the dreams of the elegant Baroque music composers.

The Romantic Period

As the Classical era came to a close Beethoven remains the most notable music composer, a man who made some substantial contributions to the Romantic Era (1780– 1880). Beethoven's unrivaled genius shaped the next few decades with his very substantial redefinition of many of the established musical norms of the Classical era. His musical work on Sonata form in his various concertos, symphonies, string quartets, and sonatas, goes almost unrivaled by any other music composer.

The Romantic period saw some really huge and vast musical developments in both the quality and range of many musical instruments that naturally and greatly encouraged some more expressive, color-filled and some very diverse

music from the composers. Musical forms, spheres and structures like the Romantic orchestra ultimately became some really expansive landscapes where the composers gave unequalled and unrestrained reign to their deepest emotions and musical dreams.

Musicians like Berlioz in his “Symphonie Fantastique” are a really fine example of this reign, as well as, much later, Wagner in his immense operatic works. The beautiful and colorful symphonies of Gustav Mahler erect themselves like stone pillars of achievement at the very end of the Romantic period alongside the beautiful tone poems of the respected Richard Strauss. The Romantic period, being what it was, presented us with a really vast array of colorful music that actually and only began to fade towards the end of the 19th Century.

It is actually really hard to tell of what could follow such a triumphant and heroic time in musical history. But as we move ahead and forward into the 20th Century, the entire musical landscape, structure and form takes a dramatic turn. Musical influences of the Romantic Era still popped their head into the next century in the musical works of composers like Elgar, Shostakovich and Arthur Bliss. But it is actually the music from the French nation(s) that we saw impressionism which has sparkled its way into our various musical consciences.

Claude Debussy and Ravel are major exponents of this colorful movement that reflects the beautiful artistic work of Monet and Manet. What we actually hear in the music of the impressionists goes back to many of the very popular forms of the Baroque era but in ways that J. S Bach is unlikely to have foreseen. The tonal system of this era transformed to include a wider range of musical scales and influences, thereby allowing the composers to write some of the most outstanding and beautiful compositions ever written.

Both Debussy and Ravel composed in great numbers for the piano using

poetry as a medium of inspiration. Debussy and Ravel's orchestral works happen to be some of the most evocative and beautiful pieces ever composed.

In conjunction, the "Teutonic world" started to undergo its very own revolution and drastic change. This revolution was evident in the 2nd Viennese school, led by the famous Arnold Schoenberg. Dissatisfied so much with the boundaries of tonality; Schoenberg gave up the tonal system in favor of a new 12-tone sequential system and thereby giving each step of the chromatic scale some equal musical validity. The result of this was serial music that was totally atonal and it transformed the musical sphere almost beyond anything that had ever happened before.

We have come to the end of this book before saying goodbye I would like to remind you to go to this link:

<https://bit.ly/3iAQi4M>

And download all the free resources of the book or Scan this QR.



If you enjoyed this book, please let me know your thoughts by leaving a short review on Amazon.

Thank you

SEE YOU SOON.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Fierce and passionate, strong-headed and devoted to my musical aspirations, I like to think of my journey like red wine: it only gets better with time. Do you ever take some time out to pause and contemplate about everything that has contributed to making you who you are today? I know it can be hard to resonate with your good and bad, your highs and your lows, but it is also wonderful. And maybe all that I am, my residence in New Orleans, Louisiana, and my choice to pursue singing and songwriting has had the greatest impact on that.

Sometimes you don't realize the powers you possess, the strengths that formulate your existence. And maybe the ability to play the guitar and saxophone professionally is not empowering for you, but it built me up. It still empowers me. Isn't it beautiful when music can be your calling, your mode of expression and the channel that says all the unsaid? Throughout my existence, I have always wanted more people to be able to comprehend the abilities music provides one with, and that more people could experience what I or many music lovers experience. After all, there is magic out there! When all my thoughts failed, my journey as a musical writer and producer began. With more than fifteen years of solid experience in the musical field and as a music teacher, I can say for sure that there is nothing quite like the feel of producing a melody that soothes the soul, a melody that revives your joys. And so, there is nothing I enjoy more than producing albums and singles, just like old times.

I have a belief. A belief that if you have experienced a great joy in life, you must share it. And so, I decided to delve into writing several books and blogs about musical theory. It is like living through a great piece of art.

¹ A time signature change is referred to as metric modulation.