

Helene Robinson

# Basic Piano for Adults

成人钢琴基础教程

**Helene Robinson**

# **Basic Piano for Adults**

**for class and individual instruction**

**Wadsworth Publishing Company  
Belmont, California**

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## PREFACE

This book is the outcome of the author's years of experience in teaching and testing materials and methods with individual students and classes of beginners.

The book is designed for students majoring in elementary education or in music, and for any adult or teen-age beginner on the piano. A complete course for early piano study, the book provides for the acquisition of basic skills in playing and reading music, and presents the fundamentals of musical theory and structure. Included are pieces or studies employing all phases of technique needed to play piano literature of easy to intermediate level.

The music has been selected to appeal to adult interest, and is carefully arranged in progressive order of technical difficulty. In this one volume there is a varied repertoire of folk songs and short classical, romantic, and contemporary compositions, suitable for use in the classroom and in the home.

Simple familiar songs in five-finger position are presented first by rote, to enable the student to acquire familiarity with the keyboard, associate pitch with keys and fingers, and gain some finger facility. New topics and techniques are introduced one at a time to simplify the learning. Theory is presented functionally, each aspect being applied immediately in music that is played. Follow-up pieces reinforce the learning.

Other features include analysis of musical structure as an aid to playing, reading, and understanding music; suggestions to guide student practice; written assignments for independent student work; transposition; creative activities, including harmonization; an abundance of material to permit selection for individual needs; a glossary of musical terms; and a classified index.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank the piano classes that have tested the materials of this book and the many persons, too numerous to mention, who have read the manuscript and contributed ideas and encouragement. Special thanks go to Mrs. Aurora Underwood of Portland State College in Oregon, Dr. William Richards of San Fernando State College in California, Dr. Leslie Clausen of Los Angeles City College, Dr. Robert Nye of the University of Oregon, Dr. Frederick Owens of Chico State College in California, Miss Jessie Lee Thompson, editor at Wadsworth Publishing Company, and to my parents, Dr. and Mrs. K. K. Robinson.

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## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE STUDENT

1. Regular daily practice is essential for the development of muscular skill. For most beginners, two periods of twenty-five to thirty minutes each are more effective than a one-hour practice period. Each day, review a few pieces that you have already learned.
2. Two lessons a week are recommended for the first two weeks of study, if possible, to prevent the formation of incorrect habits.
3. At the piano, sit directly in front of the center of the keyboard, on a bench of proper height to bring elbows at key level, and at a distance that permits freedom of arm movement. Maintain good posture; keep feet flat on the floor. Avoid tension in the shoulders and wrists.
4. Use favorable hand position, which your teacher will demonstrate (arched hands, curved fingers, short nails so fingers can play on the tips). One way to attain correct position is to drop the relaxed hands, palms up, onto the lap, where the fingers naturally curl. Then, lift one hand at a time, gently turn it over without altering its shape, and place it on the keyboard, with each finger resting on an adjacent white key. Do this several times a day to acquire a good habit.

## THE PIANO KEYBOARD



The first seven letters of the alphabet—A B C D E F G—are used over and over to name the keys of the piano.

The black keys serve as signposts. Observe the alternating groups of two and three black keys. The white key between two black keys is D. Find all the D's on your piano. How can you distinguish between F and C? Find several F's, several C's. Find other keys dictated by your teacher.

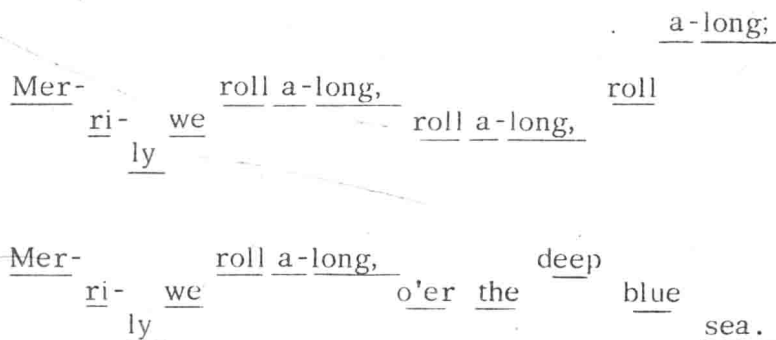
Middle C is the C nearest the center of the piano keyboard. Find it. From one C to the next C above or below is an octave (meaning "eight")—the distance from one key to the next key with the same name. Play several octaves.

Learn the names of all the white keys within an octave, and you will know all the keys on the piano. Practice one minute twice daily, until you can instantly identify any key. How fast can you say the musical alphabet backward?

## PITCH AND MELODY

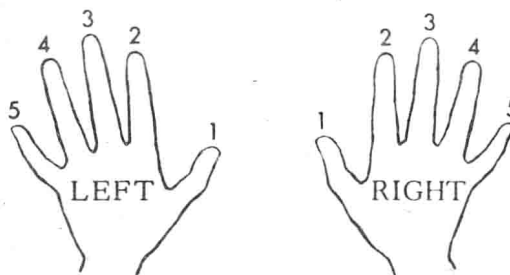
Pitch refers to how high or how low a musical tone is. Play a high tone and a low tone on your piano.

A melody is a tune made of varying pitches (tones that move up, down, or repeat). Sing "Mer-rily We Roll Along" and show with your hand how the tune moves to different pitch levels, as illustrated:



## FINGER NUMBERS

Learn the finger numbers pictured here. As the teacher calls each number, play the correct finger number in the air. Practice this with each hand, then with both together.





## THREE ROTE SONGS

Play these familiar songs by finger number and position on the keys, to develop some finger control and familiarity with the keyboard.

### Suggested Procedure:

1. Sing the song to refresh your memory of it, and clap the rhythm.
2. Sing the right-hand finger numbers (printed above the music), and play the right-hand fingers in the air.
3. Place the right-hand fingers on the keys in the FINGER POSITION illustrated for the song. Keep each finger over its own key. Sing and play by finger number only, disregarding the names of keys and notes while you are playing.
4. Sing the left-hand finger numbers (printed below the music). Sing and play left-hand fingers first in the air, then on the keys in the position illustrated.
5. Observe that the notes in the music show how the tune moves—down, up, or on the same pitch level.
6. On the finger-position charts, name the keys played. Play these keys rapidly, ascending and descending, to develop dexterity and a "feel" for the position.



FINGER POSITION  
for  
"Merrily We Roll Along"



### 1. MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

*Lively* American

RIGHT HAND

3 2 1 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 3 5 5

Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, roll a - long, roll a - long:

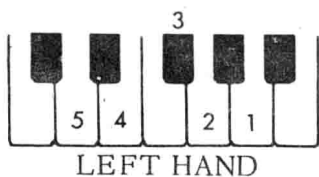
3 2 1 2 3 3 3 2 2 3 2 1

Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, o'er the deep blue sea.

LEFT HAND

3 4 5 4 3 3 3 4 4 4 3 1 1

3 4 5 4 3 3 3 4 4 3 4 5



Play Song 1 in this  
FINGER POSITION  
using finger 3 on  
the black key  
to the right of F.



Finger numbers for the black keys are printed above the black keys on the keyboards.

## TRANSPPOSITION

To play a song in a different key (position) is called transposing. You have transposed **Song 1** into the key of D major. Now transpose it by starting it on B (key of G major), then on A (key of F major); both positions are illustrated on this page.



FINGER POSITION  
for  
Song 2.



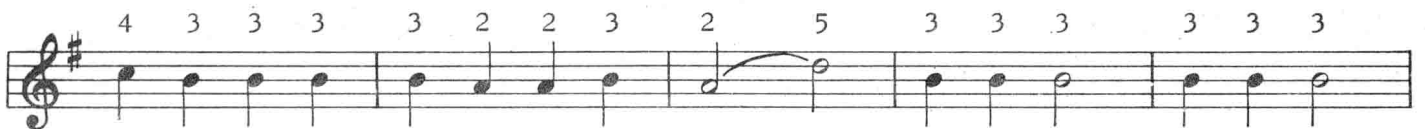
## 2. JINGLE BELLS

*Gaily*

J. S. Pierpont (1785-1866)



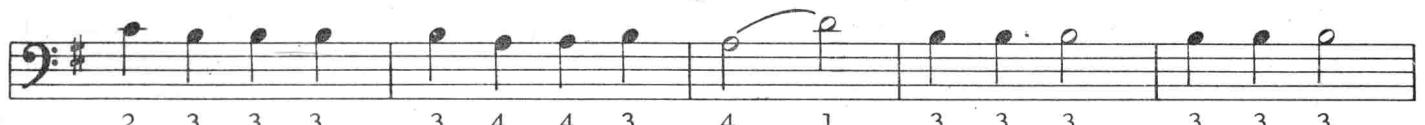
Jin - gle bells! Jin - gle bells! Jin - gle all the way! Oh what fun it



is to ride in a one horse o - pen sleigh! — Jin - gle bells! Jin - gle bells!



Jin - gle all the way! Oh what fun it is to ride in a one horse o - pen sleigh!

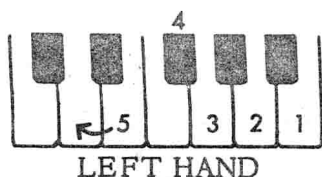


Transpose Song 2  
into the key of F major.  
Use the black key to  
the left of B.



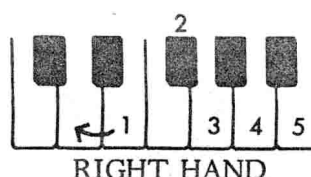
Transpose Song 2 into the key of A major; 3rd fingers play the black key to the right of C.





LEFT HAND

**FINGER POSITION**  
for Song 3.  
The right-hand thumb and left-hand 5th finger do double duty; for the final tone they move down from E to D.



RIGHT HAND

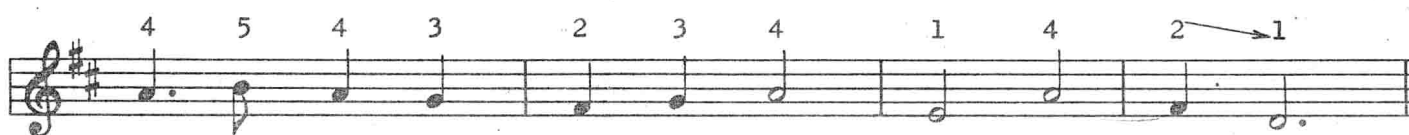
### 3. LONDON BRIDGE

*Lively*

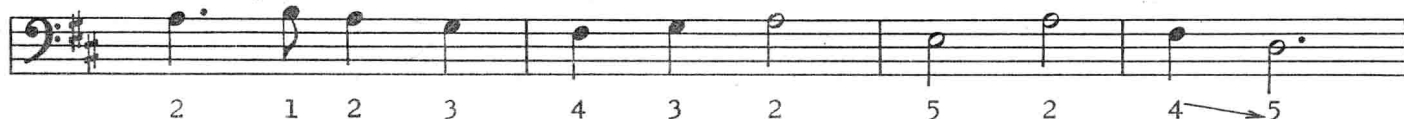
English



Lon - don Bridge is fall - ing down, fall - ing down, fall - ing down,

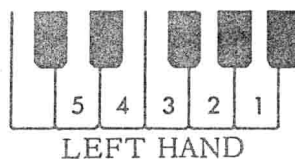


Lon - don Bridge is fall - ing down, My fair la - dy.



Song 3 transposed. Study the new finger position. Remember to reach down to C for the final tone.

R. H. = right hand; L. H. = left hand.



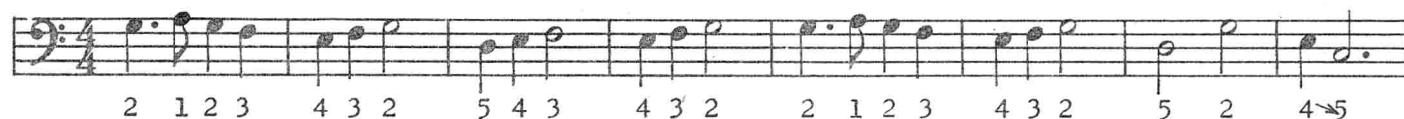
LEFT HAND



RIGHT HAND



L. H.




### FROM ROTE TO NOTE

Each note of music on the page represents a tone or key to play on the piano. The note and the key have the same letter name. If you sing the key names as you play, you will also be singing the letter names of the notes. You might try this.


Hereafter, finger numbers will not be given for every note of a song. Songs will be learned by reading the notes.

# NOTATION OF PITCH

Notes are written on the lines and in the spaces of the STAFF. Count the 5 lines and 4 spaces from the lowest up to the highest. The line-space-line-space arrangement makes the nine STAFF DEGREES.

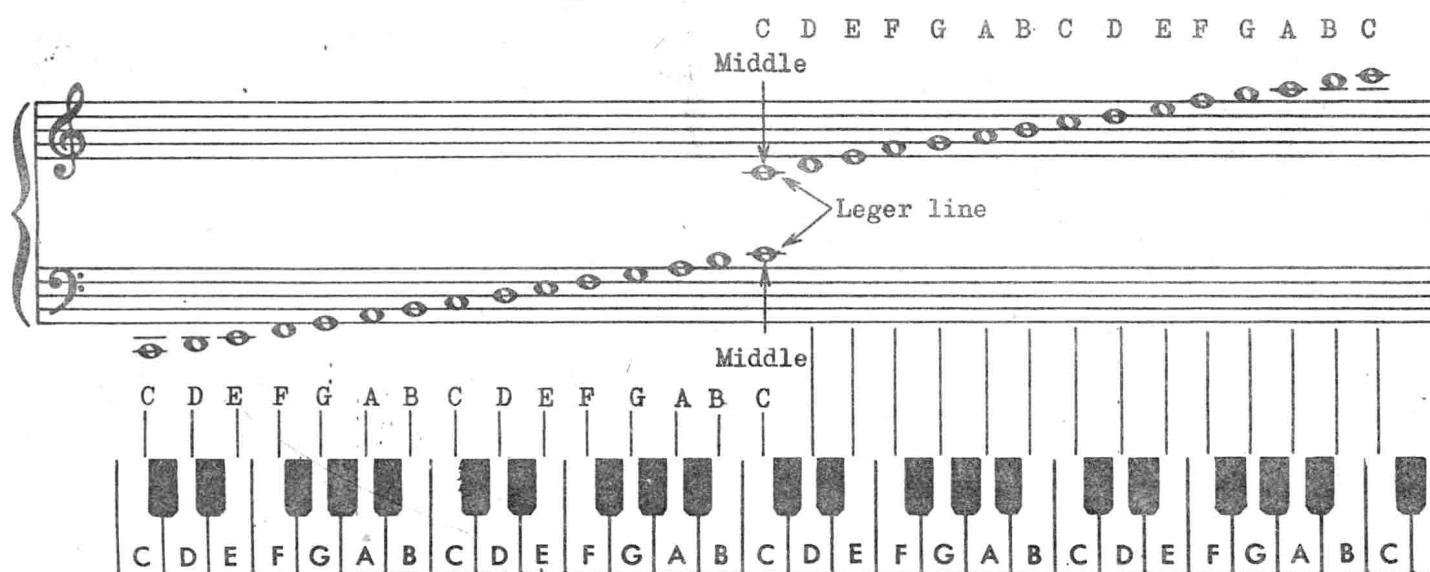
The TREBLE STAFF is indicated by the TREBLE or G CLEF  sign, which encircles the second staff line and locates on it the first G above Middle C. In general, the treble staff is for right-hand notes from Middle C upward. Find the illustrated note on your piano.



The BASS STAFF is indicated by the BASS or F CLEF  sign, which designates the fourth staff line as the first F below Middle C (see dots). In general, the bass staff is for left-hand notes from Middle C downward. Find the illustrated note on your piano.



The GRAND or GREAT STAFF combines treble and bass staves (staves), making, in effect, an eleven-line staff, with the middle line used only as a LEGER LINE.\* Observe that Middle C, between the staves, may be used either as a treble note or as a bass note. Why do the corresponding lines and spaces of the two staves have different letter names?



Observe that every STAFF DEGREE (every line and space) has a letter name, and that the name corresponds to the name of a white key on the piano.

Beginning on Middle C with the right hand, play and name all the treble notes on the grand staff, ascending, then descending. Begin on Middle C with the left hand, and name and play all the bass notes, descending and then ascending.

Memorize the note names immediately. Avoid "crutches" that impose an additional mental process. Until you are able to identify notes instantly, say the letter name of each treble and bass note before and after you play a song. Do not always name notes while playing because the process retards the playing and hinders reading by intervals; but name the notes sometimes, to develop association of note and key names.

What are the names of the treble and bass notes of Songs 1 and 2?

WRITING PRACTICE: Written Assignment One, page 9. Fill in II and III.

\*Leger lines (also spelled ledger) are short lines added for notes above or below the treble or bass staff. Find leger lines in the diagram of the grand staff.

LEGATO TOUCH. Connect the tones smoothly, but avoid blurring two tones together (compare the process with walking). Always listen to the effect while you play; make legato tones "sing."

#### 4. EXERCISES in FIVE-FINGER POSITION (Key of C Major)

Practice each hand alone for speed and evenness of tones; then try both hands together. Use the favorable hand position (see "Preliminary Considerations," p. iv). Transpose into other keys.

M.M. ♩ = 96-112

##### (i) FIVE-FINGER PATTERN



##### (ii) TWO FINGERS WALKING



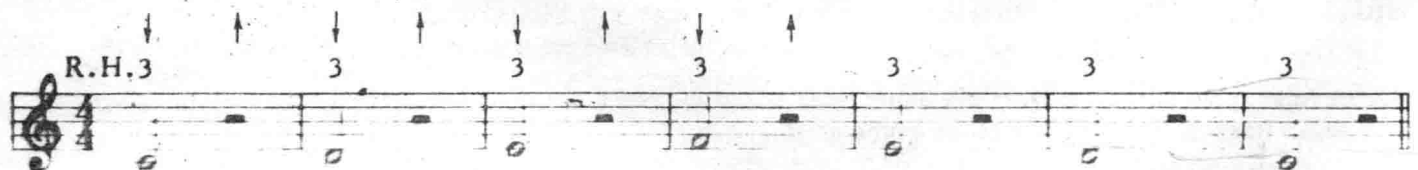
##### (iii) ARPEGGIO

Arpa is Italian for harp. Play the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes (C-E-G) of the five-finger pattern on four successive octave ranges, alternating hands. These three notes are skips—every other key played by every other finger. Move your hands in the air to feel the movement; say "left-right," then finger numbers, then key names.



##### (iv) EXERCISE for ARM FREEDOM (Optional)

Lift the arm, leading with the wrist, dangling the finger tips three inches above key level. Drop the arm weight onto the 3rd finger, making the first (nail) joint firm and curving the finger and hand into correct position as the finger depresses the key. Lift the hand and arm, leading with the wrist. Repeat on the next note. The arrows indicate the dropping and lifting action.



## AIDS TO NOTE READING

1. Watch the music and not your hands or the keys as you play.
2. Try to see at a glance a group of notes, not just one note at a time.
3. Within this group, perceive the direction (up, down, same) and the distance (number of staff degrees) between notes.

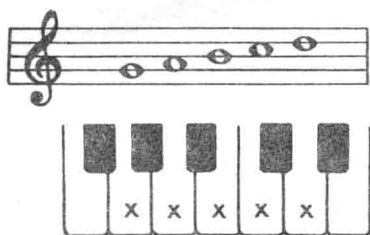
If the next note is one staff degree higher or lower (on the next letter of the alphabet), use the adjacent finger to play the adjacent key above or below.

If the next note skips a staff degree (skips a letter of the alphabet), skip a finger and a key.

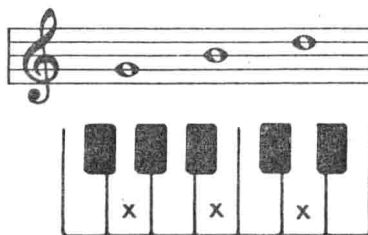
Motto: "Skip a letter, skip a finger."

Study and play the following examples, first with the right hand, then with the left.

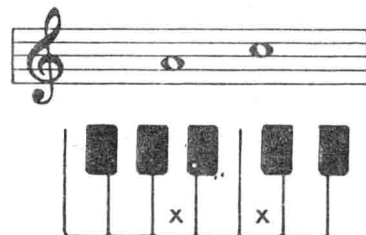
SUCCESSIVE  
STAFF DEGREES



SKIPS  
(line to line)



SKIPS  
(space to space)



Write the finger number for the second note of each example below. Play the examples.



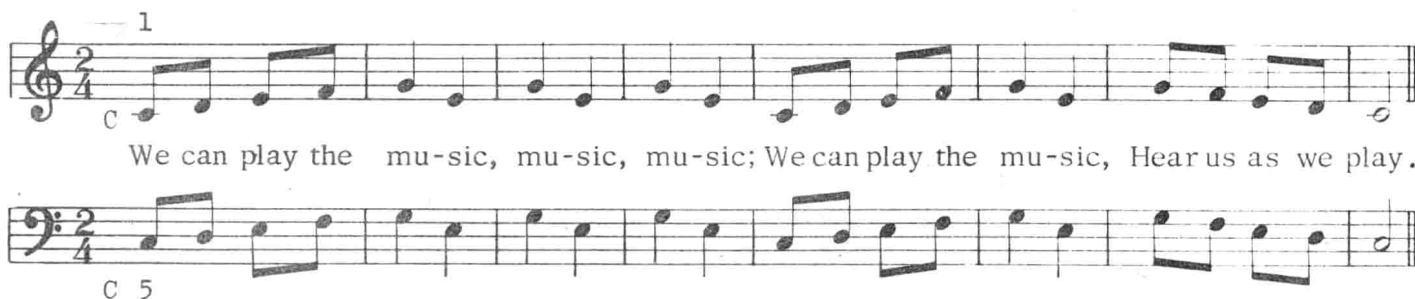
### Procedure for Song 5:

1. Hear the song (sung and played by the teacher).
2. Sing the song and clap the rhythm as you listen again.
3. Find how many notes move in the same direction on successive staff degrees, and the number and distance of skips. Find any repetition in the music.
4. Use the five-finger pattern for position, right thumb on C, left 5th finger on C. Plan the fingering for the successive notes and for the skipping notes. Observe the clef signs.
5. Play the song rhythmically with the right hand, then with the left, reading the notes by staff degrees up or down.
6. After you play the song well several times, sing the names of the notes as you play.

## 5. WE CAN PLAY THE MUSIC

*Lively*

German (arr. H. R.)



Transpose into the key of G major. Start on G; read up and down by staff degrees. Transpose into the key of A major, using 3rd fingers on the black key to the right of C.

Be sure to watch the music and not your hands as you play.

## 6. GO TELL AUNT RHODIE

Song 7. Position as for the key of C major. Key signatures will be explained later. Sing the song and clap the rhythm. Play the rhythm by ear.

*Tenderly*

Welsh

8

Song 8. Position as for the key of C major.

# 8. AURA LEE

George Poulton

*Sentimentally*

1 (Repeat)

As the black-bird in the spring, 'Neath the wil-low tree  
Sat and piped, I heard him sing, Sing of Aur-a Lee.

5

## WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT ONE

- I.
  1. The treble clef locates the pitch          on the          line of the staff.
  2. The bass clef locates the pitch          on the          line of the staff.
  3. Trace the process of making a treble clef. Observe distances and exact crossing of lines. Make three complete treble clefs, then two bass clefs.



- II.
  1. On the blanks beneath each note, write the letter name (pitch) of the note.

2. Draw the indicated note above each letter.

C G D A F B E                      C G D A F B E

- III. On the treble staff below, write these notes and fill in their letter names. Count each new note from the preceding note:

- A note on the G line.
- A note one staff degree higher.
- A higher note that skips one staff degree.
- A note one staff degree lower.
- A lower note that skips two staff degrees.

G                      D

- IV. On the bass staff above, write the following notes and fill in their letter names:

- A note on the D line.
- A note one staff degree lower.
- A higher note that skips one staff degree.
- A higher note that skips two staff degrees.
- A lower note that skips one staff degree.

KEYBOARD DRILL: How fast can you locate keys dictated by another person?



## NOTATION OF RHYTHM

**METER.** Music, like poetry, has meter—a regular recurring pattern of strong and weak beats (pulsations). Vertical **BAR LINES** (**MEASURE BARS**) mark the staff into **MEASURES**, which usually start on a strong beat and usually have the same number of beats.

A **DOUBLE BAR** marks the end of the music or of a section of music.

**TIME VALUES.** The relative lengths of tones are shown by the kinds of notes and rests.

Sing and clap "Hot Cross Buns," the old English song given below, and find three kinds of rhythm: (1) the accents (strong beats); (2) the number of beats in each measure; and (3) the longest notes and shortest notes. How many measures are in the song?

MEASURE                      BAR LINE                      DOUBLE BAR

Hot cross buns!      Hot cross buns!      One a pen-ny, two a pen-ny, Hot cross buns!

COUNT: 1   2   3   4      1   2   3   4      1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &   1   2   3   4

**TIME (METER) SIGNATURE**—the two numbers (not fractions) at the beginning of the music.



Upper number is the number of beats in a measure.

4 indicates four beats in a measure.

Lower number tells what kind of note receives one beat.

4 stands for a quarter note (or its equivalent).

**C** =  $\frac{4}{4}$  (Common Time)

**¢** =  $\frac{2}{2}$  *Alla Breve* (Cut Time)

**PARTS OF NOTES:** Head ; with Stem ; with Flag ; with Beam

### TIME VALUES OF NOTES AND RESTS

Kind of Note	Corresponding Rest	Number of Beats in $\frac{4}{4}$ Meter	Portion of the Measure	Sample Measure
		4 beats	whole measure	
		2 beats	one-half	
		1 beat	one-fourth	
		$\frac{1}{2}$ beat	one-eighth	
		total one beat		
		$\frac{1}{4}$ beat	one-sixteenth	
		total one beat		

A **DOT** lengthens the preceding note by half the value of the note (the dot receives half as much time as the note). In  $\frac{4}{4}$  time  $\text{p} \cdot = 1\frac{1}{2}$  beats,  $\text{p} \cdot \cdot = 3$  beats.

#### WAYS OF "KEEPING TIME":

Clapping before playing. Clap each note; shake the clasped hands once for each extra beat (e.g.,  $\text{p} = \text{clap, shake}$ ;  $\text{p} \cdot = \text{clap, shake, shake, shake}$ ).

Tapping the beat with the left heel while playing.

It is traditional to count the beats in each measure while playing.

Count the beats aloud and play the notes of "Hot Cross Buns," above.

Beginners find it helpful to chant (rhythmically) the time values of the notes, as follows:

quar-ter   quar-ter   half note      quar-ter      two eighths      quar-ter   dot      eighth

Clap the notes of Song 6, page 8. Then play and count the beats in each measure.

## PATTERNS

A musical pattern (or motive) is a recognizable figure or design formed by a group of notes. The pattern may be melodic or rhythmic or both. A pattern usually occurs more than once and helps give the music its particular character and individuality. The recognition of patterns is an aid to reading, playing, interpreting, and memorizing music. Try to read an entire pattern as one unit, not separate notes. In Song 9, find a pattern that occurs twice.

Song 9. Position: key of G major; G A B C D for each hand. Play the five-finger pattern. Plan the fingering for each hand, observing the skips. Clap the notes and chant the time values. Play each hand alone, counting the beats in each measure. After each hand plays well, try both hands in unison. How many measures are in Song 9?

Transpose this song into the key of F major, playing the black key to the left of B.

### 9. J'AI DU BON TABAC

*Briskly*

French

SLUR:

A SLUR (curved line above or below a group of two or more notes) indicates that these notes are to be played legato. Read the slurred notes as a unit; slightly shorten and soften the last note of the unit.

The exercise below is especially helpful in learning how to play slurs.

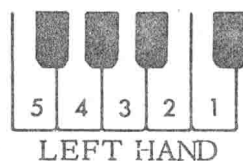
### 10. EXERCISE for WRIST FLEXIBILITY, ARM FREEDOM, and FIRM FINGER JOINTS

↓ = Drop,  
↑ = Lift,  
the wrist.

Songs 11 and 12. Find the repeated tonal-rhythmic patterns; chant the time values of notes in these groups and also in unlike measures. Before playing, count one measure. Continue to count while you play.

Keep each finger over its own key.

Song 11. Finger position: both thumbs on Middle C.



## 11. LET US BE MERRY

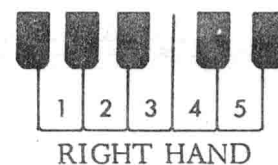
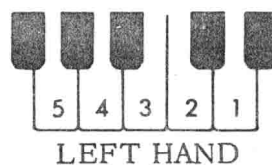
*Energetically*

Czech and Polish

(Repeat) 1

Song 12. Five-finger position, key of G major. Play each hand separately at first.

Transpose to the key of F major; start on A, 3rd finger.



## 12. SCHLAF, KINDLEIN, SCHLAF

*Gently*

German Lullaby