

You know what key to play based on what line or space the note is sitting on. Now we'll look at how long to hold it down. Keep in mind that unlike classical music, in which it is vital to play rhythms exactly as written, in non-classical playing it is actually incorrect to play things exactly as written. Music in this style is meant only as a guide, from which you can stray a bit to interpret it as you desire. Do not get hung up trying to "count" perfectly as do so many "ex"-piano students. Try to play the rhythms as you would whistle or hum them which doesn't require you to "count."

In the rare times when you are playing a song you don't already know, this guide can help by showing what the notes look like & their duration relative to each other.

 = Whole Note – 4 beats

 = Half Note – 2 beats

 = Quarter Note – 1 beat

 = Eighth Note – 2 of them equals 1 beat
- they can also be connected like this



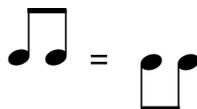
 = Sixteenth Note – 4 of them equals 1 beat
- they can also be connected like this



If you ever see a dot after a note, just increase its duration by half of its original value. For example, if a half note equals 2 beats, a dotted half note equals 3.



Also, stems of notes can go up or down. They both mean the same thing...



Finally, when we refer to beats, many find it simpler to think of beats in terms of tapping your foot. For example, a half note is two foot taps while a quarter note is only one. The important thing is to keep the tapping steady and consistent so that all the different note durations stay in the correct proportion to one another.

Now, take a look at these familiar melodies. Take advantage of the fact that you probably already know what these tunes sound like. Connect what you just learned about notation with what you know these songs should sound like. Try to play these simple melodies on your keyboard with your right hand.

Don't worry about what fingers to use. Just use what feels most natural to you. The big objective is to quickly identify *what* keys to play based on the notes you are reading or your previous knowledge of the tune.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat



Jingle Bells



My Country 'Tis of Thee



Joy to the World



If playing these melodies seems a little tough, don't panic. You simply need to get better at quickly identifying which written note in the treble clef represents which actual key on a keyboard.

To get the rest of the story on how to have FUN playing piano and how to sound good right away, go to our website:

www.scotthouston.com

And remember . . .

"Oh yes you CAN play piano!"



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