



The Kikuchi Music Institute Library

Creating Music

PRIMER LEVEL

A comprehensive course in music composition

By Lee W. Kikuchi

Creating Music, is a systematic approach to teaching composition with substantial emphasis on issues of notation and formal structures. Each workbook includes thorough review of theoretical and notational skills the student may or may not have acquired through regular music lessons, thus giving the student the necessary tools to compose music. With each the level, the student is presented new and different ways to approach the craft of composition including ways to find creative ideas as well as developing an idea through the composition process. Most students should begin with the primer level book, but more advanced and older students can begin with a higher level book if the teacher determines it is more appropriate. See the preface for details.

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Preface

Although there are several composition method systems out today, most focus on the craft from a piano approach and use a series of exercises related to setting melodies to words, or improvising at the piano. This new system gives any music student the ability to write music, without assuming the student plays piano and with a solid theoretical approach so that the student is far more independent in the composition craft.

Each workbook includes thorough review of theoretical and notational skills the student may or may not have acquired through regular music lessons, thus giving the student the necessary tools to compose music. With each the level, the student is presented new and different ways to approach the craft of composition including ways to find creative ideas as well as developing an idea through the composition process. The student is taught important theoretical concepts as harmony, voice leading and formal structure in a way that is most useful to composers, and which is not found in traditional theory books.

Most students should begin with the primer level book, but more advanced and older students can begin with a higher level book if the teacher determines it is more appropriate. The descriptions below are a guideline for placement at a level beyond primer when considering the student's established musical abilities. Keep in mind these guidelines are solely for placement of students who have already demonstrated compositional ability but have not studied in these workbooks. These guidelines have no bearing on students already studying in this system. **Any student completing a given level may proceed to the next level accordingly.**

Primer Level: 1) student has never written any music or has not written a melody more than 8 measures long, 2) student has studied music for at least 1 year, 3) student is able to read music on the staff with ledger lines, 4) student is reading books at a 2nd grade level or better, and 5) student is at least age 5.

Level One: 1) student has written a melody more than 8 measures long with accompaniment (harmony), 2) student has studied music for at least 3 years, and 3) student is at least age 7.

Level Two: 1) student has written music in different keys, 2) student has written music with formal sections (AB, ABA, etc.), 3) student has studied music for at least 4 years, and 4) student is at least age 9.

Level Three: 1) student has written music that modulates keys, 2) student has written music with formal sections (AB, ABA, etc.), 3) student has written music demonstrating harmonies beyond the primary chords, 4) student has studied music for at least 5 years, and 5) student is at least age 11.

Level Four: 1) student has written music that modulates keys or with strong understanding of different tonalities; 2) student has written music in multiple movements or in a complex form such as sonata or rondo; 3) student has written music for different instruments; 4) student has written music demonstrating harmonies beyond the primary chords; 5) student understands principles of four-part voice leading and harmonization; 6) student has studied music for at least 6 years; and 7) student is at least age 13.

Level Five: 1) student has written music with strong understanding of different tonalities and/or atonality; 2) student has written music in multiple movements or in a complex form such as sonata, rondo or fugue; 3) student has written music for multiple instruments; 4) student has written music using 7th chord harmonies; 5) student understands principles of four-part voice leading and harmonization; 6) student has studied music for at least 7 years; and 7) student is at least age 15.

It is recommended that no student begin beyond Level Five, even though this series progresses to Level Ten. Even with advanced compositional ability, a student will benefit by beginning with Level Five of this series.

Lee W. Kikuchi
May, 2008

Introduction

This new series specifically teaches students how to compose music, regardless of the student's theoretical background or study of the piano. Music study on some instrument is required, and the student can begin this series at any point of his/her music education.

The books are sequenced according to standard method levels: primer, 1, 2, 3, etc. Each level reflects one year of private musical study. Since a student may join this series at a level beyond the primer level, the first pages include some important theory and notational review to make sure the student is prepared for the contents of the workbook. Any student having difficulty with the initial review should be assigned an earlier level to establish the necessary musical knowledge and notational skills. (See Preface for guidelines.)

This system addresses three areas of composition skill: 1) creativity, 2) musical notation and 3) development. Since the biggest stumbling block to any budding composer is being able to write the music down, significant emphasis is placed on notational skill. In addition, all lessons regarding creativity (making up music) also include helpful techniques for facilitating its notation (what notes, what rhythm, etc.). Finally, lessons in development help the student turn a very small idea into something much bigger and much better.

With each level, some important theoretical skills are also addressed and developed, in ways that are useful to a composer and which are not found in traditional theory systems. Toward that end, these workbooks will ensure that students have solid grounding in harmony, voice leading and formal structures. All such exercises are explained carefully, supplemented with numerous meaningful examples from the standard literature, and reinforced with constructive written exercises. For instruction purposes, students are asked to compose small musical examples to demonstrate their mastery of the skills taught. However, students are strongly encouraged to pick and choose from this toolbox of musical skills according to their own preference when they write their own pieces – to maximize creativity and help develop the composer's individual voice. Every effort is made to present the full breadth of musical style, without advocating any one specifically so that the student may be empowered with the skills to write in whatever style she/he chooses.

What is Composing?

Composing consists of three different types of action:

Creative Idea	Making up the music.
Musical Notation	Writing down the music.
Development	Making the music more interesting and longer.

1. Write each of the actions below on the chart under its correct category:

Singing a melody
 Imitating a sound
 Quarter notes or half notes?
 Drawing a treble clef
 Adding chords to a melody
 Plunking keys on the piano
 Clapping a rhythm

Creating a second melody
 Trying out different rhythms
 Drawing bar lines
 Playing the melody upside down
 Choosing a time signature
 Transposing your melody
 Drawing a repeat sign

Creative Idea	Musical Notation	Development

Music Symbols

2. Before we get started writing music, let's make sure we know the names of the basic musical symbols. Cover the right side of the chart below and see if you can name all the symbols, and say what they mean. Circle the number for any symbol you do not know for extra study.

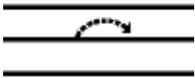
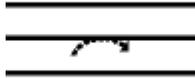
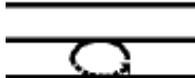
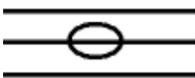
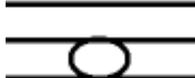
SYMBOL		MEANING
	1.	A QUARTER NOTE represents ONE BEAT.
	2.	A HALF NOTE represents TWO BEATS.
	3.	A DOTTED HALF NOTE represents THREE BEATS.
	4.	A WHOLE NOTE represents FOUR BEATS.
	5.	TWO EIGHTH NOTES equal ONE BEAT ($\frac{1}{2}$ beat each).
	6.	A SINGLE EIGHTH NOTE ($\frac{1}{2}$ beat).
	7.	A QUARTER REST marks ONE beat of silence.
	8.	A HALF REST marks TWO beats of silence.
	9.	A WHOLE REST marks a MEASURE of silence.
	10.	An EIGHTH REST marks $\frac{1}{2}$ beat of silence.
	11.	BAR LINES divide music into MEASURES.
	12.	A DOUBLE BAR LINE marks the end of the music.
	13.	A REPEAT SIGN tells you to repeat the music from the beginning.
	14.	A STAFF has 5 lines and 4 spaces, on which notes are placed.
	15.	A TREBLE CLEF marks the staff for <i>high notes</i> . Music for violins, flutes, trumpets, and the RIGHT hand on the piano uses the Treble Clef.
	16.	A BASS CLEF marks the staff for <i>low notes</i> . Music for cellos, bassoons, trombones, and the LEFT hand on the piano uses the Treble Clef.
	17.	LEDGER LINES extend the staff so that notes can be written above and below.
	18.	SHARP: Raise the note $\frac{1}{2}$ step (next key to the right).
	19.	FLAT: Lower the note $\frac{1}{2}$ step (next key to the left).
	20.	FORTE: Italian word for <i>loud</i>
	21.	PIANO: Italian word for <i>soft</i>
	22.	A TIME SIGNATURE indicates number of beats per measure.

Drawing Note Heads

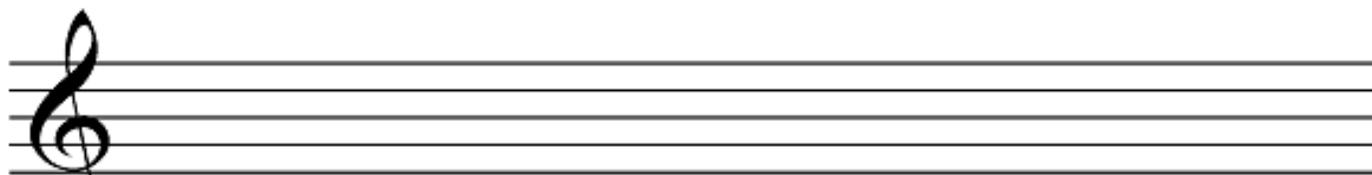
Coming up with a creative idea is the first step in composing, however you will probably forget your creative efforts if you cannot write them down. Therefore, we will start with important issues of musical notation before we start trying to make up music!

Every note in music represents two things:

- ◆ Pitch: The line or space on which the note head rests tells us which letter name to play (A,B,C,D,E,F,G).
- ◆ Value: The shape of the note (quarter note, half note, whole note, etc.) tells us how long to make (hold) the sound.

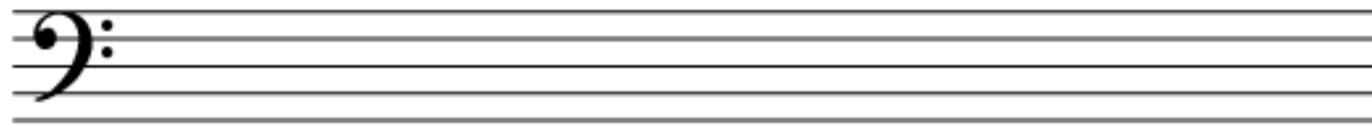
	Draw the top half of the note head first. Center it correctly between the lines.	
	Draw the bottom half of the note head second, starting the same place as the top half.	
	← Line notes should only reach ½ way through the space above and below. Space notes should touch the line above and below. →	

3. Draw WHOLE NOTES on the correct line or space of this TREBLE staff as specified:



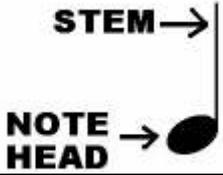
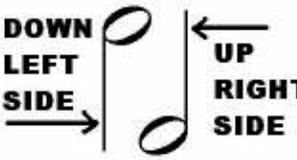
A E F D G B C F
 Space Line Space Line Space Line Space Line

4. Draw WHOLE NOTES on the correct line or space of this BASS staff as specified:

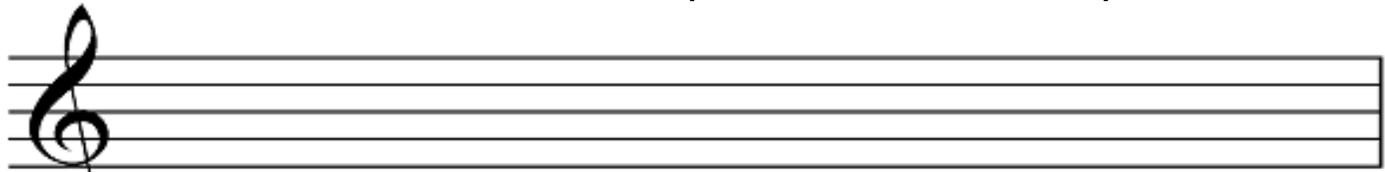


A E F D G B C F
 Space Line Space Line Space Line Space Line

Drawing Note Stems

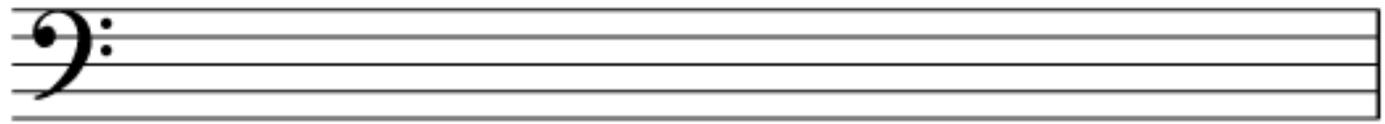
	<p>The <u>note head</u> is the oval part of the note. The <u>stem</u> is the <u>vertical</u> line part of the note.</p>		<p>Down stems are on the left side. Up stems are on the right side.</p>
	<p>If the note head is below the middle line, the stem goes <u>up</u> on the right side.</p>		<p>If the note head is on or above the middle line, the stem goes <u>down</u> on the left side.</p>
	<p>If there are 2 or more note heads, the direction is determined by the note farthest from the middle line.</p>		<p>If the top and bottom note heads are the same distance from the middle line, the stem goes <u>down</u>.</p>
<p>LENGTH: Note stems are 3½ spaces (or one octave) in length from the note head to where the stem ends.</p>			

5. Draw HALF NOTES on the correct line or space of the TREBLE staff as specified:



D G E C F A E F
 Space Line Space Space Line Space Line Space

6. Draw HALF NOTES on the correct line or space of the BASS staff as specified:



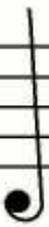
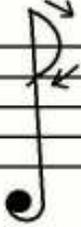
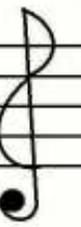
D G F C A E G A
 Line Space Line Space Line Space Line Space

7. Add stems to these whole notes to make them into half notes:

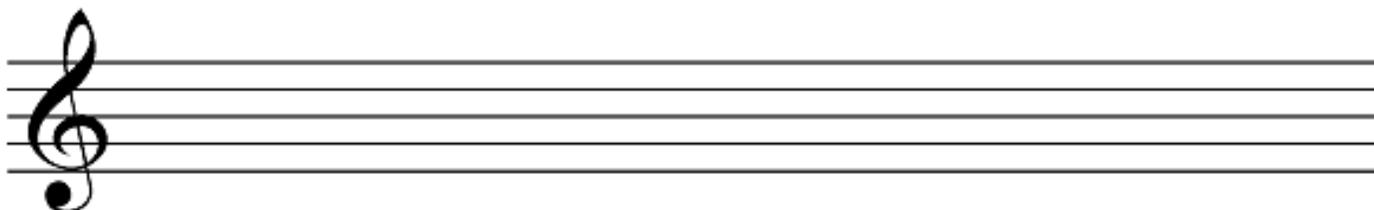


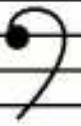
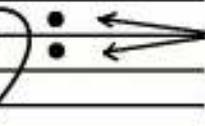
Drawing Clefs

	<p>A TREBLE CLEF marks the staff for <i>high notes</i>. [Above middle-C] Music for violins, flutes, trumpets, and the right hand on the piano uses the Treble Clef.</p>
	<p>A BASS CLEF marks the staff for <i>low notes</i>. [Below middle-C] Music for cellos, bassoons, trombones, and the left hand on the piano uses the Bass Clef.</p>

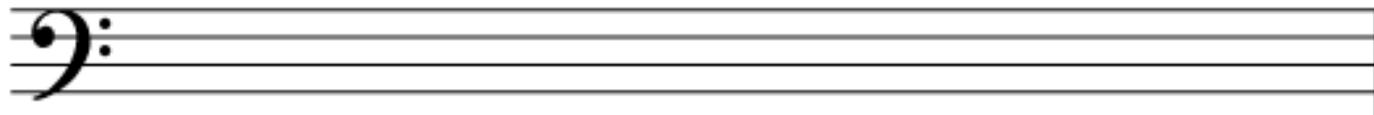
				 <p>MUST CIRCLE G-LINE</p>
<p>Draw a large dot below the staff first.</p>	<p>Draw a line upward from the dot to above the staff.</p>	<p>Loop to the right then left to cross line near the D-line on the staff (small loop)</p>	<p>Loop left then right to cross line again near the E-Line on the staff (large loop)</p>	<p>Finish with a swirl back to circle around the G-line of the staff.</p>

8. Draw 8 Treble Clefs on the staff below:



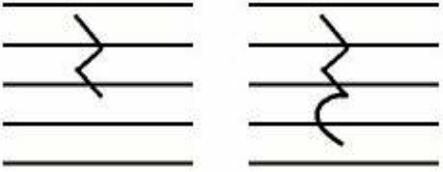
		 <p>DOTS ABOVE AND BELOW F-LINE</p>
<p>Draw a large dot on the F-line</p>	<p>From the dot, draw a half-heart or "ear" shape.</p>	<p>Place the dots to the right of the half-heart, one above the F-line and one below the F-line.</p>

9. Draw 8 Bass Clefs on the staff below:



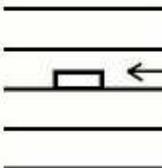
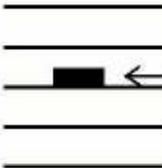
Drawing Rests

	A QUARTER REST marks ONE beat of silence.
	A HALF REST marks TWO beats of silence.
	A WHOLE REST marks a MEASURE of silence.
	An EIGHTH REST marks $\frac{1}{2}$ beat of silence.

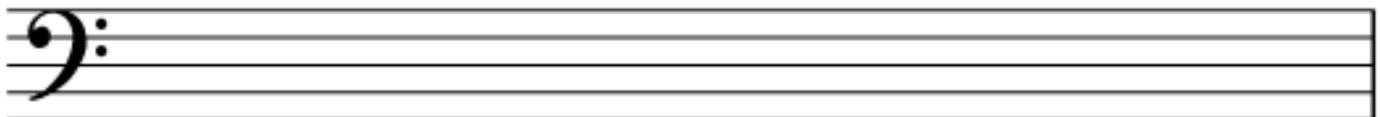
QUARTER RESTS	
	<p>Step 1: Draw a slanted "Z" (lightning bolt).</p> <p>Step 2: Finish with a slanted "C" (tail).</p> <p>[Quarter rest must be centered up & down on the staff.]</p>

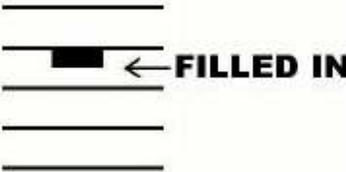
10. Draw 10 Quarter Rests on the staff below:



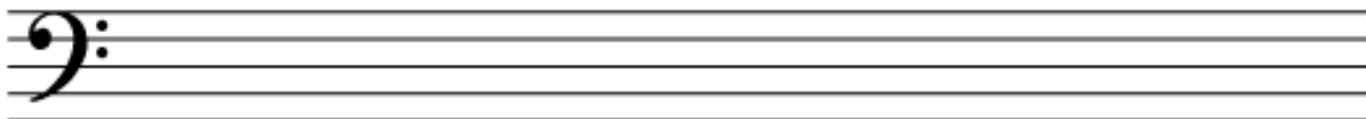
HALF RESTS	
 <p>← NO MORE THAN 1/2 IN THE SPACE</p>	 <p>← FILLED IN</p>
<p>Step 1: Draw a small rectangle "resting" on the middle line. Make sure it is no higher than $\frac{1}{2}$ way into the space.</p>	<p>Step 2: Fill in (darken) the rectangle.</p>

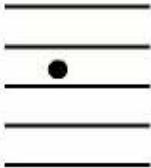
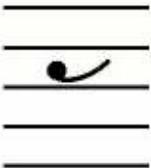
11. Draw 10 Half Rests on the staff below:



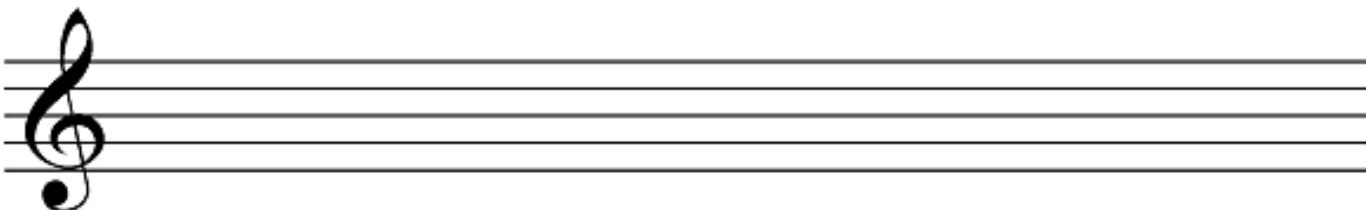
WHOLE RESTS	
	
<p>Step 1: Draw a small rectangle “hanging” from the 4th line. Make sure it is no lower than ½ way into the space.</p>	<p>Step 2: Fill in (darken) the rectangle.</p>
<p><i>[Notice that the half rest and whole rest both “reside” in the 3rd space.]</i></p>	

12. Draw 10 Whole Rests on the staff below:



EIGHTH RESTS		
		
<p>Step 1: Draw a dot in the 3rd space up. Step 2: Draw a curved line upward from the dot to the right. Step 3: Draw a straight diagonal line downward to finish.</p>		

13. Draw 10 EIGHTH Rests on the staff below:

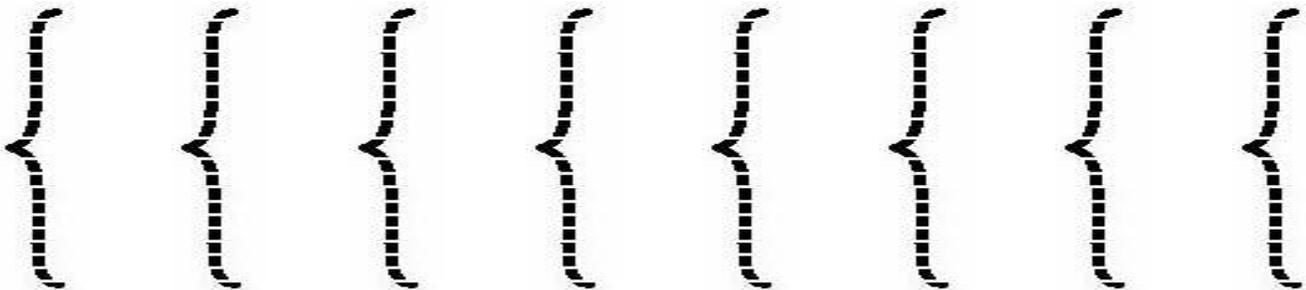


The Grand Staff

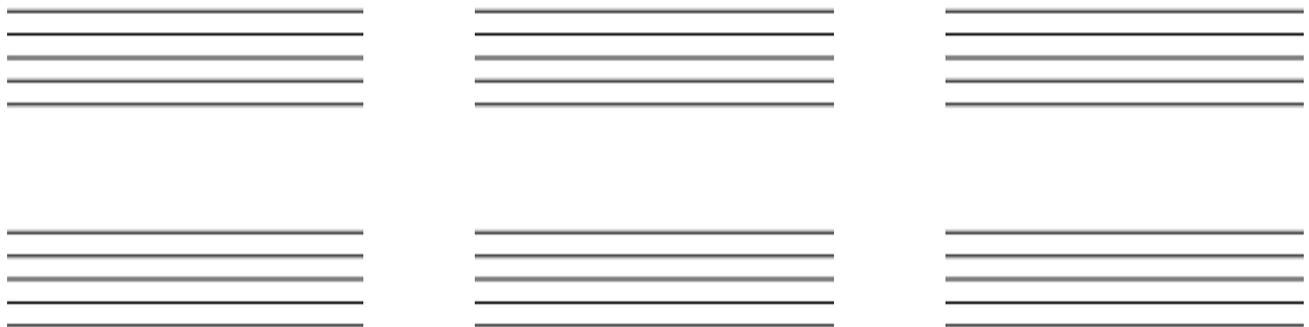
	<p>Piano music is written on a <u>Grand Staff</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ A grand staff has two staves. ◆ The upper staff is <i>usually</i> Treble Clef. ◆ The lower staff is <i>usually</i> Bass Clef. ◆ A brace connects both staves at the beginning of each line. ◆ EVERY bar line connects both staves.
--	---

<h2>THE BRACE</h2>	
	<p>Step 1: Draw an <u>elongated</u> "S" shape (top half).</p> <p>Step 2: Draw a reversed elongated "S" shape (bottom half).</p>

14. Trace the following braces to practice drawing them:



15. Convert the following plain staves into GRAND STAVES (add brace, clefs and bar line):



Question and Answer Melodies

A common type of melody is called a “question and answer”. The first part seems to ask a question and the second part seems to answer the question. Making a melody into a question and answer is a good way to take a small fragment and make it bigger – into a complete melody (development). Play the example:

QUESTION ANSWER

Would you like to play with me? Yes, I would. Let's climb a tree!

Notice the following about the melody:

- ◆ The question part does not sound complete.
- ◆ The notes go upward in measure 2, like the raise of the voice in a question.
- ◆ The answer part has a similar rhythm as the question.
- ◆ The answer part moves down to sound like an answer or end.

23. Complete these melodies by “answering the question”:

QUESTION ANSWER

A

QUESTION

B

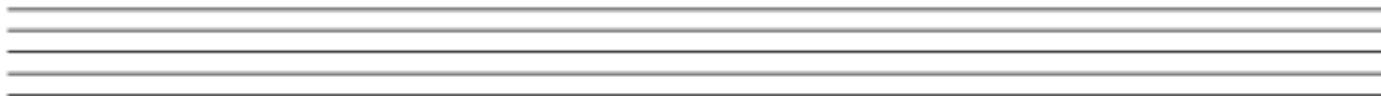
ANSWER

Rhythmic Variation

“To vary” means “to change”. A variation, is something that is changed but not so much that you cannot recognize what it was originally. We can make a melody much longer by simply repeating it with rhythmic variation. Notice in the example that the first staff is the original melody and the second staff is the same melody with rhythmic changes:



28. Choose one of your melodies from page 15 or the new one on page 16 and double it using rhythmic variation. Be sure to copy the original melody first!



Write Your Own Variations

29. Choose two of your melodies from page 15 or page 16 write at least two variations for each one. Use both rhythmic and pitch variation:

The page contains ten blank musical staves, each consisting of five horizontal lines, arranged vertically for writing musical notation.

Programmatic Music

Sometimes composers use words to help create the musical idea, but the words are never sung because the music is for *instruments only*. Compositions of this type are called *programmatic music*. Vivaldi's very famous work, *The Four Seasons*, is a collection of four violin concertos based on an Italian poem about the seasons of the year that is a wonderful example of programmatic music!

Programmatic music tells a story, but the words do not have to be a poem:

A boy was walking in the woods.....



He was frightened by a large bird squawking loudly and flying away.....



The boy ran all the way home!



31. Make up your own 3-4 line story for a programmatic composition. Make sure you use a lot of descriptive words that will help you write the music. [Notice how many adjectives and adverbs are used in the short story above!]:

Review

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

35. Composing music consists of three different types of action: 1) _____ ,
2) _____ , and 3) _____ .
36. Every note in music represents two things: 1) _____ and 2) _____ .
37. If the note head of a quarter note is below the middle line, the _____ goes
_____ on the _____ side of the note.
38. If the note head of a half note is on or above the middle line, the _____ goes
_____ on the _____ side of the note.
39. If there are 2 or more note heads, the stem direction is determined by the note
_____ from the _____ line.
40. If the top and bottom note heads are the _____ distance from the
_____ line the stem goes _____ .
41. The final swirl of the _____ - clef must circle the ____ - line of the staff.
42. The dots of the _____ - clef must go above and below the ____ - line of the staff.
43. _____ rests and _____ rests must never extend more than _____
way into the space.
44. _____ rests always _____ from the 4th line.
45. _____ rests always _____ on 3rd line.
46. The _____ _____ includes two staves connect by both a
_____ and a _____ .
47. The _____ number of a _____ _____ tells
how many _____ are in a _____ .
48. The _____ number of a _____ _____ tells
what kind of _____ gets _____ .
49. _____ is the compositional technique of starting with just
two notes and step-by-step making it into a long melody.
50. A _____ is a way of changing a melody, which can happen in two
ways: _____ changes and _____ changes.
51. Making up a melody to match the words to a song is called _____ .
52. Making up music to tell a story, with no singing, is called _____ .

Glossary

Bass clef: a symbol that marks the staff for low notes (notes below middle-C).

Brace: the symbol “{” which is used to connect the staves for a Grand Staff.

Chord: three notes that sound (are played) at the same time.

Composition: 1) the act of writing music, 2) a work of music that has been composed.

Dynamics: marks in the music that indicate how loud or soft to play.

Germination: the compositional technique of starting with a very small idea (2 or 3 notes) and, through a series of steps, expanding the small idea into a much larger idea or melody.

Grand staff: a system of two staves used in piano music, in which the two staves are connected by a brace at the beginning of each line and both staves are connected by every bar line.

Improvise: to make music up as you are playing. Goofing off and fooling around are forms of musical improvisation.

Melody: The important notes to be sung or played.

Notation: the writing of music, which must follow strict rules for how musical symbols are drawn so that other musicians can read them.

Note head: the oval (egg-shaped) part of a note.

Pitch: the letter name of a note or the key you strike on the piano.

Programmatic music: the writing of music that follows a story line, but does not have words that are sung.

Question and answer: the type of a melody where the first half seems to ask a question and the second half seems to answer the question.

Rest: a symbol that marks a beats or beats where sound is not made (silence).

Rhythm: the fact that the sounds of music have different lengths of time (short, long, very short, very long, etc.)

Setting text: the act of writing a melody to fit a set of words as from a poem.

Staff: five lines and four spaces on which notes are written for music.

Stem: the vertical line of a note (whole notes do not have stems.)

Tempo: the speed of the music.

Time signature: two numbers at the beginning of music. The top number tells how many beats are in a measure, and the bottom number tells what kind of note gets one beat.

Transpose: to play music in different keys or hand positions.

Treble clef: a symbol that marks the staff for high notes (notes above middle-C).

Upbeat: a note or notes before the first complete measure.

Value: the amount of time (number of beats) a note is held (sounded). Quarter notes have the value of 1 beat. Half notes have the value of 2 beats, etc.

Variation: change a musical idea or melody in terms of rhythm or pitches to make it different and/or longer.