

The ultimate pianist's guide

A piano book for beginners

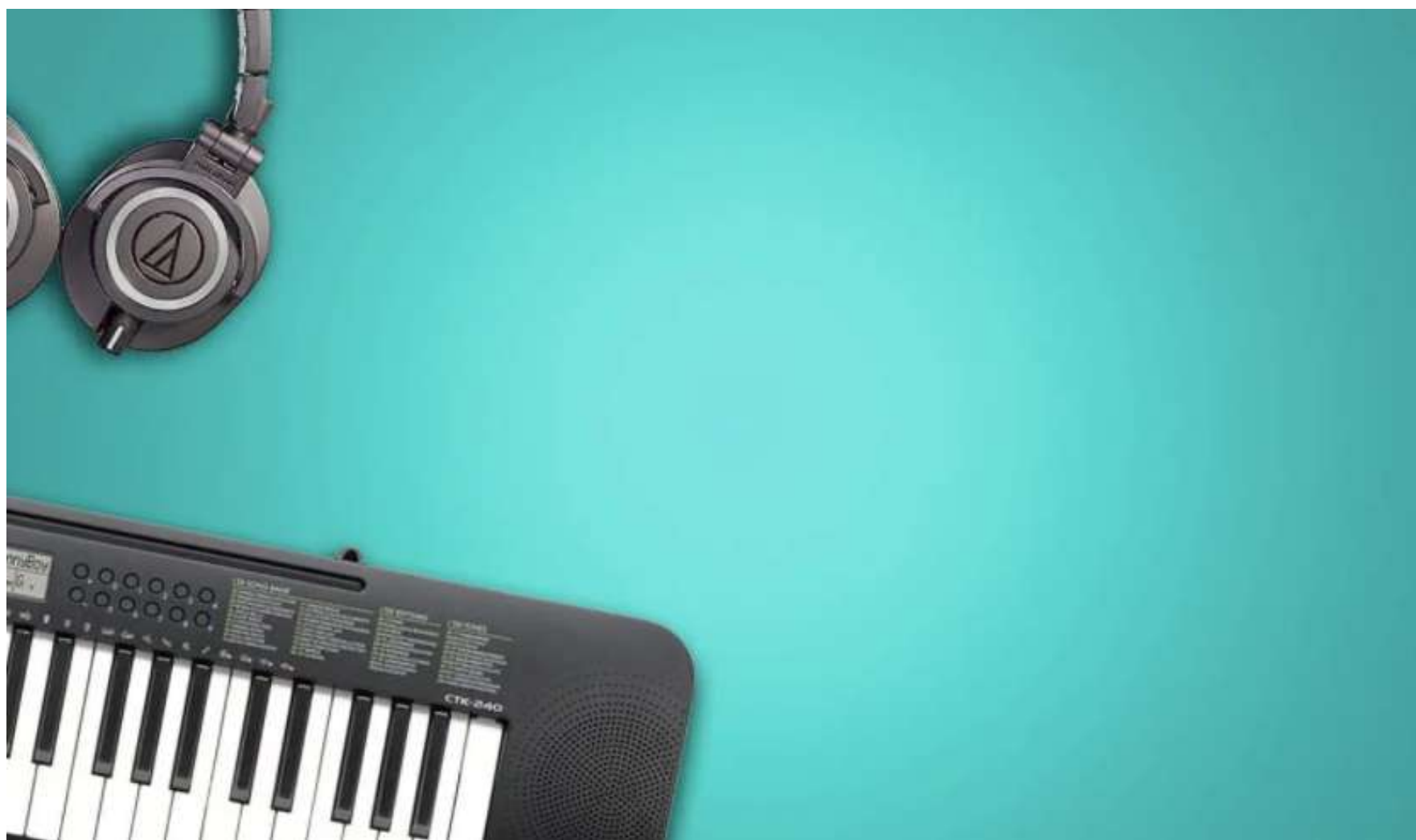


La Touche Musicale

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Chapter 1 – How to choose a digital piano or keyboard to start?



You want to start learning piano but you don't know where to start? You've come to the right place! The first chapter of this Ultimate Pianist Guide focuses on how to choose your digital piano or keyboard, and that's not easy! Indeed, there are a lot of keyboards and brands: which one should I choose? We start this guide with a chapter dedicated to giving you all the knowledge you must have to make your choice according to your needs. Let's start this chapter with a summary of the 3 types of keyboards and pianos:

1 – Digital keyboards: cheapest instrument, very convenient and customizable. But the sounds and the touch aren't as good as acoustic pianos. But they do the trick when you start learning piano. Digital keyboard can be your musical companion during your first years.

2 – Digital pianos: it's the middle of the range. Digital pianos are very good to start learning piano and as convenient as Digital keyboards. You can plug them to your devices or transport them quite easily. The sounds can be very good depending on the models and their prices.

3 – Acoustic pianos: more expensive, but more qualitative. The sound and the touch of acoustic pianos are very good. If you play on acoustic pianos, that will be your best musical experience.

Digital Keyboards



Also called “Electric Keyboard” or “Electronic Keyboard”, Digital Keyboard can be very useful and convenient. You can plug it to any device (computer, mobile phone, tablet,...) and use it for musical production with softwares, piano learning with apps, ...It’s also portable and the cheapest option. Depending on models, the features of Digital Keyboards can be very large: manage the sound volume, play with a range of instrument sounds such as organs, violins, drums, ... However, Digital Keyboards could give you a bad first musical experience because of two factors: the number of keys and the touch.

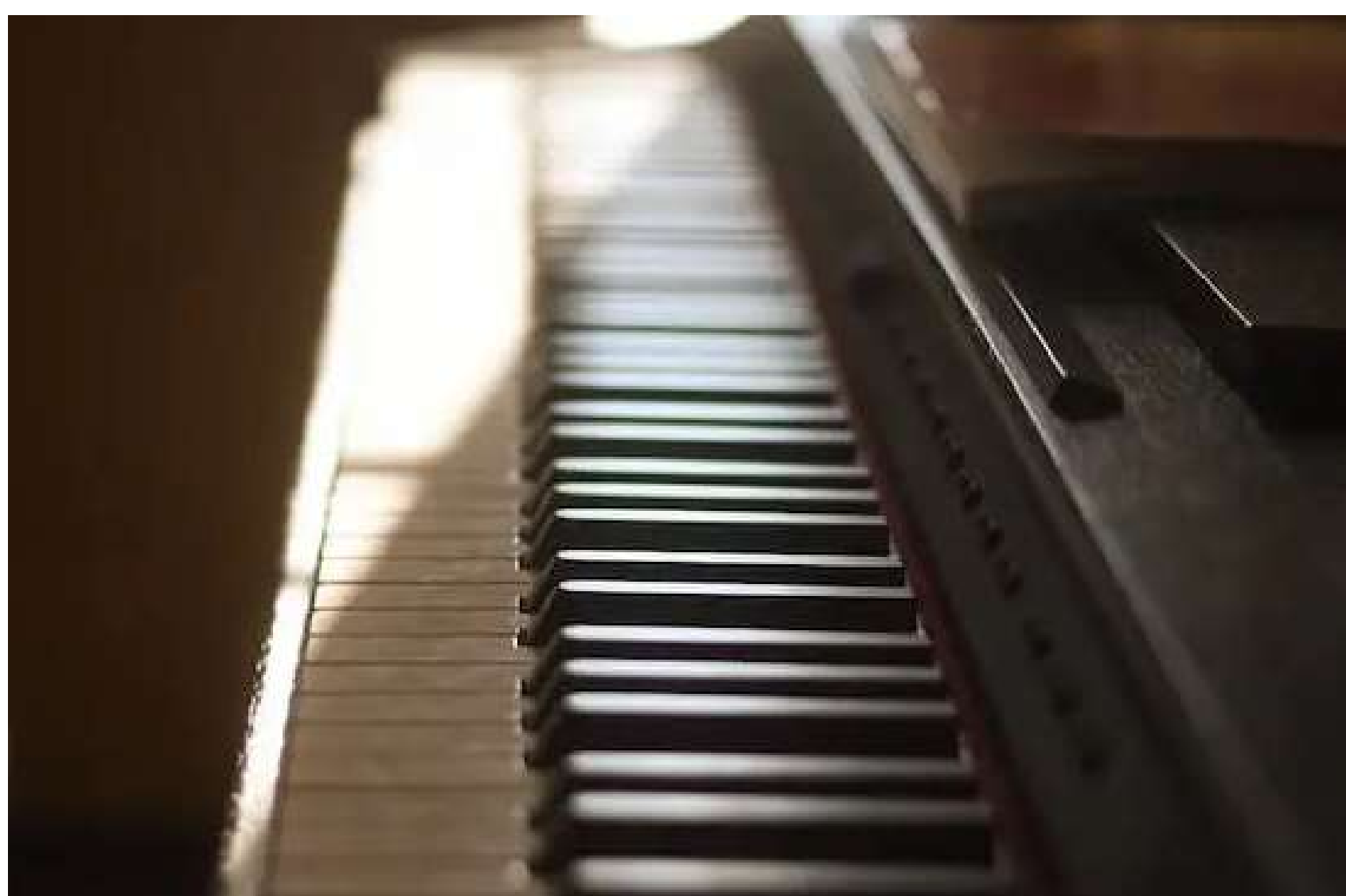
The number of keys

All acoustic pianos have 88 keys. That’s the standard number of keys. So, if you have the space to put that type of keyboard at home, go for it! If you aren’t, you should choose the maximum keys that you could. Indeed, you can quickly be restricted in your piano learning if you choose a Digital Keyboard with 25, 41 or 49 keys. You will not access the higher or lower keys if you want to work on your chords, scales or play your favorite songs on piano. So, we recommend to choose a Digital Keyboard with at least 76 keys (6 octaves). With fewer keys, you will soon be embarrassed.

The touch

The touch of a Digital Keyboard is also very important for a good musical experience and practice. A lot of keyboards have difficulty reproducing the touch of an acoustic piano. If you will not find this type of touch with a cheap keyboard, try to choose some with good touch. What is a good touch on piano? It's a heavy touch that produces a quality sound, without sizzling.

Digital pianos



Digital pianos are a good choice for pianists who want to play in the best conditions. With a Digital Piano, you will recreate the playing experience of an acoustic piano while keeping the flexibility and convenience of a Digital Keyboard. Digital Pianos are generally solid instruments composed by quality materials. And the good new: like Digital Keyboards, they not require any tuning (that's the main problem of an acoustic piano).The features are the same as those of a Digital Keyboard: manage the sound volume, play with other instrument sounds (guitar, violin, flute, ...). However, Digital Pianos solve both problems saw above: the number of keys and the touch of

the keyboards. Indeed, they have for the most part of them 88 keys, and the touch is closer to that of an acoustic piano. In short, it is the perfect intermediary between Digital Keyboards and acoustic pianos. And this is also reflected in the price: they are more expensive than keyboards but much cheaper than acoustic pianos. Like Keyboards, Digital Pianos almost always have MIDI connection. With this feature, you can plug your piano to any device (mobile phone, tablet, computer, ...) and use it with apps or softwares.

Acoustic pianos



Acoustic pianos are the most quality pianos on the market. When you are playing on an acoustic piano, the powerful sound that it makes resonates through your fingers and the space around you. This acoustic sound is created by hammers hitting the strings. The downside of an acoustic piano is the price. Indeed, it's much more expensive than Digital Keyboards or pianos. The cheapest are around 1200\$. But the playing experience is wonderful. You can find two types of acoustic piano:

- Grand Piano: most impressive pianos, long, curved. That's the most iconic pianos, used in concerts, festival or Youtube videos with the greatest pianists.

- Upright Piano: most common pianos. They are smaller than grand pianos and can easily be placed in a house. The sound is less powerful than the one of grand pianos, but it is still of an impressive quality.

What type of digital pianos or keyboards should I choose?

Now, you know all the most important differences between Digital Keyboards, Digital Pianos and acoustic pianos. But which one should I choose?

You must first ask yourself the following questions and answer them according to your needs:

- Q: What are my expectations on the quality of the sound, the touch and the dynamism of the keys?

A: If I don't have any particular expectations, I will choose a digital keyboard. If I have minimum expectations, I will choose a digital piano. If I have high expectations, I will choose an acoustic piano.

- Q: What is my budget for the purchase of a piano?

A: If I have a budget between 80\$ and 300\$, I will choose a digital keyboard. If I have a budget between \$400 and \$800, I will choose a digital piano. If my budget is more than 1000\$, I will choose an acoustic piano.

– Q: How much space do I have at home to put my piano?

A: If I have very little space, I will choose a digital keyboard. If I have the space to put a small piece of furniture, I will choose a digital piano. If I have a lot of space (in my living room for example), I will choose an acoustic piano.

– Q: Do I want to be able to move my piano outside of my home?

A: If I want to be able to transport my piano easily enough, I will choose a digital keyboard.

– Q: Would I want to connect my keyboard to my device to learn piano on app or make music production?

A: If I want to be able to plug my piano to my computer, mobile phone or tablet, I will choose a digital keyboard or a digital piano.

– Q: Am I in an apartment and will I disturb my neighbors when I will play on piano?

A: If I risk disturbing my neighbors when I play, I will choose a digital keyboard or a digital piano so that I can plug my headphones into it.

Chapter 2 – Piano learning methods



Once you choose your piano or keyboard, the next step is to choose your piano learning method. This Chapter 2 of this Ultimate Pianist Guide is dedicated to explore all the most common and effective piano learning methods to help you make your choice.

There is no single right method, every piano method has advantages and downsides. When you will make your choice, the most important that you need to keep in mind is your objectives. The best piano methods for your best friend, husband or wife may be wrong for you. Maybe you want to learn the songs you love on piano, or take lessons to understand music theory.

Think about your lifestyle and your needs before all. As in our previous chapter (Chapter 1 – How to choose a keyboard or a piano?), we will base on general questions. You will need to answer these questions personally so that your choice can fit your needs perfectly.

- 1 – Goals: what are my objectives?
- 2 – Cost: what is my budget for learning piano?
- 3 – Time: how much time do I have to learn piano?

Traditional lessons



Traditional lessons are the most common choice of people who want to learn piano. The student go to the music school and sit next to a piano teacher. He or she gives you instant feedbacks on your playing and makes you progress quickly. The quality of the pedagogy depends on teacher: some love their job and make sure you progress very quickly, while others are less rigorous.

The other downside of traditional lessons is the cost. They can be very expensive: you have to pay hundreds or thousands dollars per year to access a music school.

There are two types of traditional lessons: lessons in music schools and private lessons.

Lessons in music school

Classes in music school are by registration. Once registered, you have several hours of group lessons per week with other students of your level. You will learn music theory and the basics of the piano during the first few years.

Private lessons

Private lessons are usually given from home. The private tutor goes directly to your home. The lessons given will be less fixed (contrary to music schools where the lessons follow a pre-done path) and will depend more on the pedagogy of the teacher.

1 – Goals: traditional piano lessons are for people who want to get back to the basics of music theory and practice. You will necessarily have to go through the theory box before going into practice. You will also have to learn how to read piano sheet music. You need to be passionate to follow the lessons and be highly motivated over time because the progression curve is often long.

2 – Cost: piano lessons are expensive. Count between \$600 and \$1500 per year to take music school courses. Count between 30 and 50\$ per hour for private lessons.

3 – Time: you also need to have time to devote to piano lessons. This includes the time you take to travel to the music school as well as the time of the lesson itself. Count about 4 hours per week.

Video tutorials



The tutorial videos are very useful when you want to start playing piano without spending money. They are available in large quantities on the web and they cover a wide range of objectives: songs to learn on piano, lessons, read a piano sheet music, ...

These videos are therefore very practical for beginners who wish to have a first approach to the instrument.

The downside of this kind of piano method is that they often lack information, instant feedbacks and can cause you to develop bad habits.

1 – Goals: video tutorials are perfect for beginners who wish to have a first approach of piano learning. They will allow you to gain in dexterity and instrumental practice. However, if you're afraid of getting into bad habits or making repeated mistakes without realizing it, you're probably not cut out to learn piano with tutorial videos.

2 – Cost: most of the video tutorials available on the web are free. You will find many of them on Youtube. You can also find much better quality videos on specialized websites, edited by professional pianists, but you will have to pay for them.

3 – Time: the advantage of the video format directly available on the web is that it allows you to view them whenever you want. You can therefore perfectly integrate them into an already busy schedule and devote a little time per week to them. Be careful however not to let go little by little. You need to set a minimum number of hours per week that you want to devote to piano learning via video tutorials.

App learning



With the emergence of new technologies, apps dedicated to piano learning are more and more developed.

Their method consist of a clever combination of traditional piano lessons and tutorial videos.

The apps often allow you to connect your piano in MIDI and provide instant feedback on your playing. Thanks to these apps, you will be able to progress much faster than with tutorial videos, and at a lower cost.

1 – Goals: piano learning apps are for people who want to progress fairly quickly without spending too much time and money on music lessons. They are perfect for people who are looking for an intermediary without the need to have a very rigorous piano learning.

2 – Cost: the price varies a lot depending on the app, but in general, it remains quite low. Count between \$10 and \$30 per month for unlimited access to the app.

3 – Time: as with the video tutorials, the apps can be used at any time. People with a busy schedule will be able to find something to suit them. Try to devote 3 to 4 hours a week to the apps to see how it progresses over the first few months.

Whichever method you choose, the most important thing is that it fits your needs and goals. In fact, you can easily combine several of these methods with each other. Nothing prevents you from taking traditional piano lessons while practicing on video tutorials or on your learning app. Just make sure you choose a good app and don't get into bad habits.

Chapter 3 – The 15 best piano learning apps



flowkey



fordify



In the previous chapter of this guide, we talked about the different methods of learning to play the piano, including apps. This new chapter is designed to introduce you to the best piano learning apps.

Would you like to use the best piano learning app? There are indeed many on the market, but not all of them are the same!

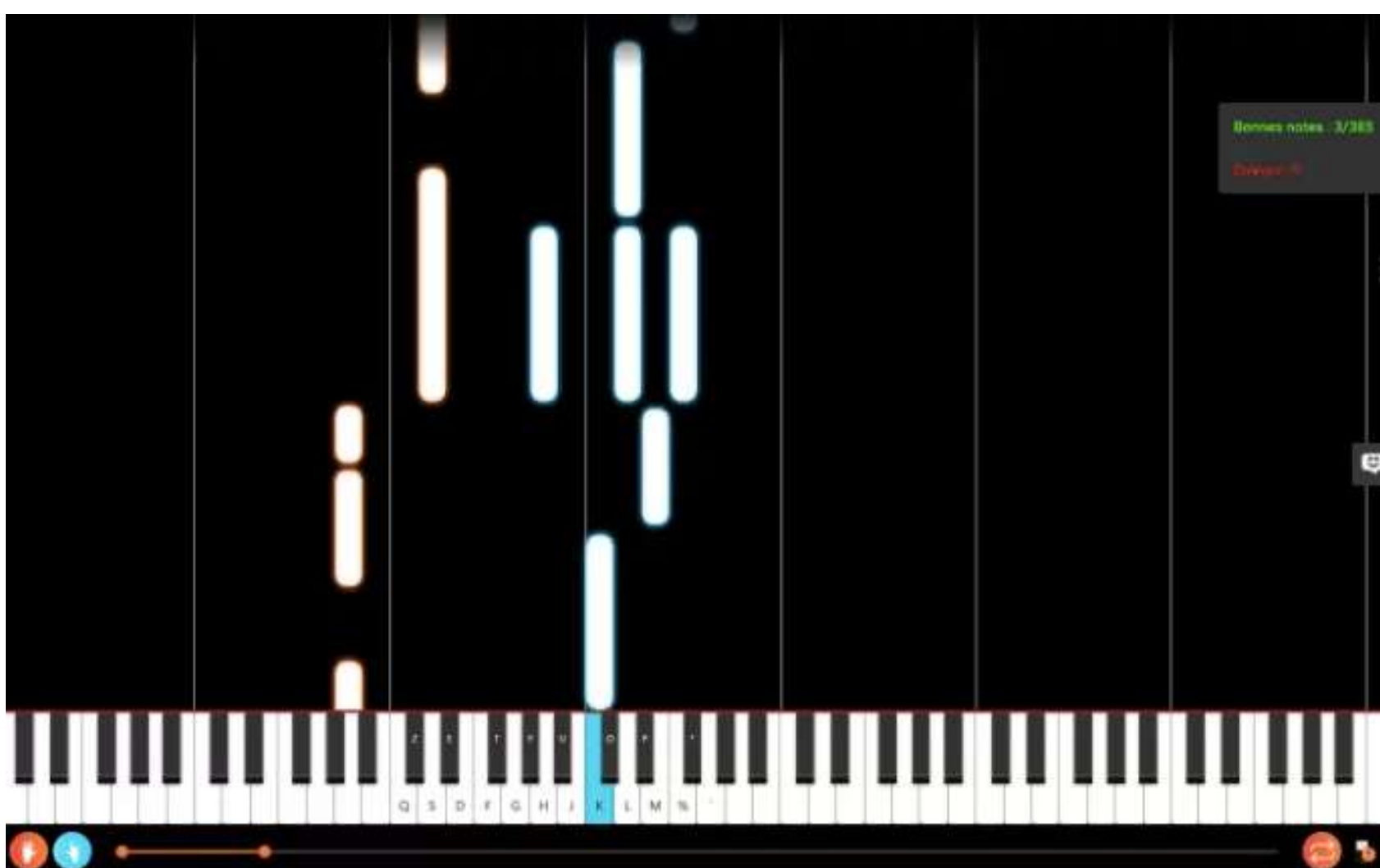
To start, you need to define what you are looking for in piano learning: an app to learn the songs you love on piano? An app to learn how to decipher a sheet? An app to learn the basics of piano learning without music theory? All this together?

Each app dedicated to piano learning offers a specific method, which corresponds to the expectations of a part of the learners.

To help you choose according to your objectives, here is an overview of the 15 best piano learning apps currently available on the market!

1 – La Touche Musicale (hundreds of free songs)

Objective : learn the songs you love on piano



How to start this ranking without mentioning the most complete piano learning app? La Touche Musicale offers you a vast library of songs to learn on piano (pop, hits, jazz, rock, rap, anime, video games, movies, ...) and offers you to learn them easily through an efficient, fun and intuitive method.

The main strong points of La Touche Musicale : the possibility to upload on your account all your favorite songs in midi format (also called "midi file") and to be able to connect your keyboard to your computer in order to interact with the platform and learn very quickly !

From a price point of view, it's certainly the most interesting piano app on the market: hundreds of songs are totally free and 3,99€ by month to have access to the whole library of songs (1000+ songs).

2 – Perfect Piano (limited free version)

Objective : learn the songs you love on piano

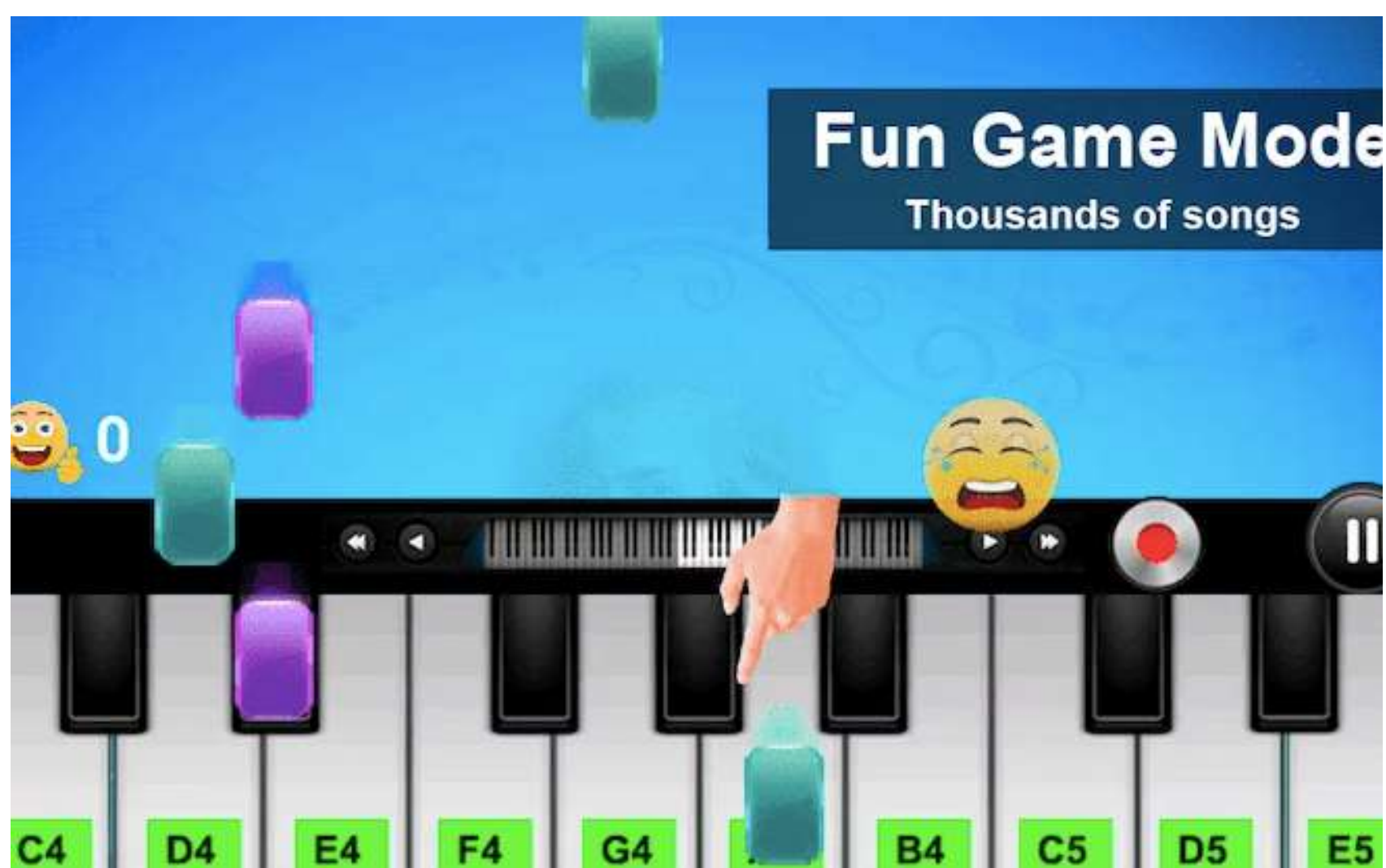


Perfect Piano is a well thought-out piano app. The library of songs is less complete than on La Touche Musicale, but the learning features and the “gaming” side make it really interesting.

The only real drawback: on this piano app, you need several smartphones to have a piano with 88 keys (the piano is very small on a single smartphone).

3 – Piano teacher (limited free version)

Objective: learn how to decipher a piano sheet



Piano Teacher is one of the best piano learning apps which help you to start deciphering sheet music. The objective is to know how to decipher a score and understand how they are made up. The whole in a playful and gamified way. The musical theory is at the heart of the app, and the way to teach its knowledge is quite funny! If that's your goal, test it, you'll certainly have fun!

4 – Chordify (paying, very limited free version)

Objective : learn the chords of the songs you love

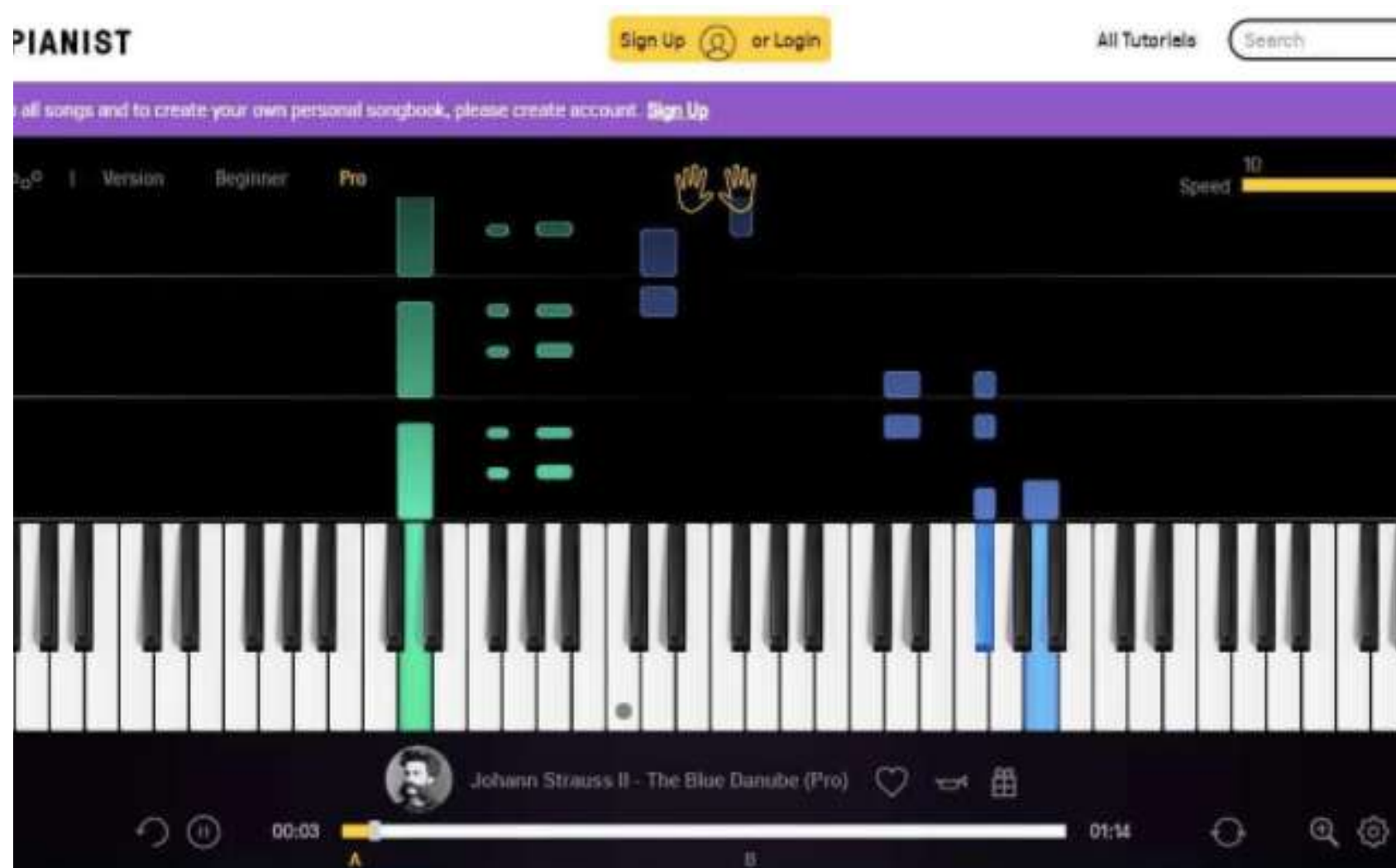


Chordify is a clever website that allows you to choose a video from Youtube and transform it into tablatures in order to learn chords of the songs on guitar or piano. Their transcription technology is very powerful and took several years of development. But the downside is that you won't really be able to learn the song, but only its main chords.

However, if you are looking to simply tune your voice to these chords to practice your singing, you'll certainly enjoy it!

5 – Online Pianist (free version limited to 30 seconds per song)

Objective: learn the songs you love on piano

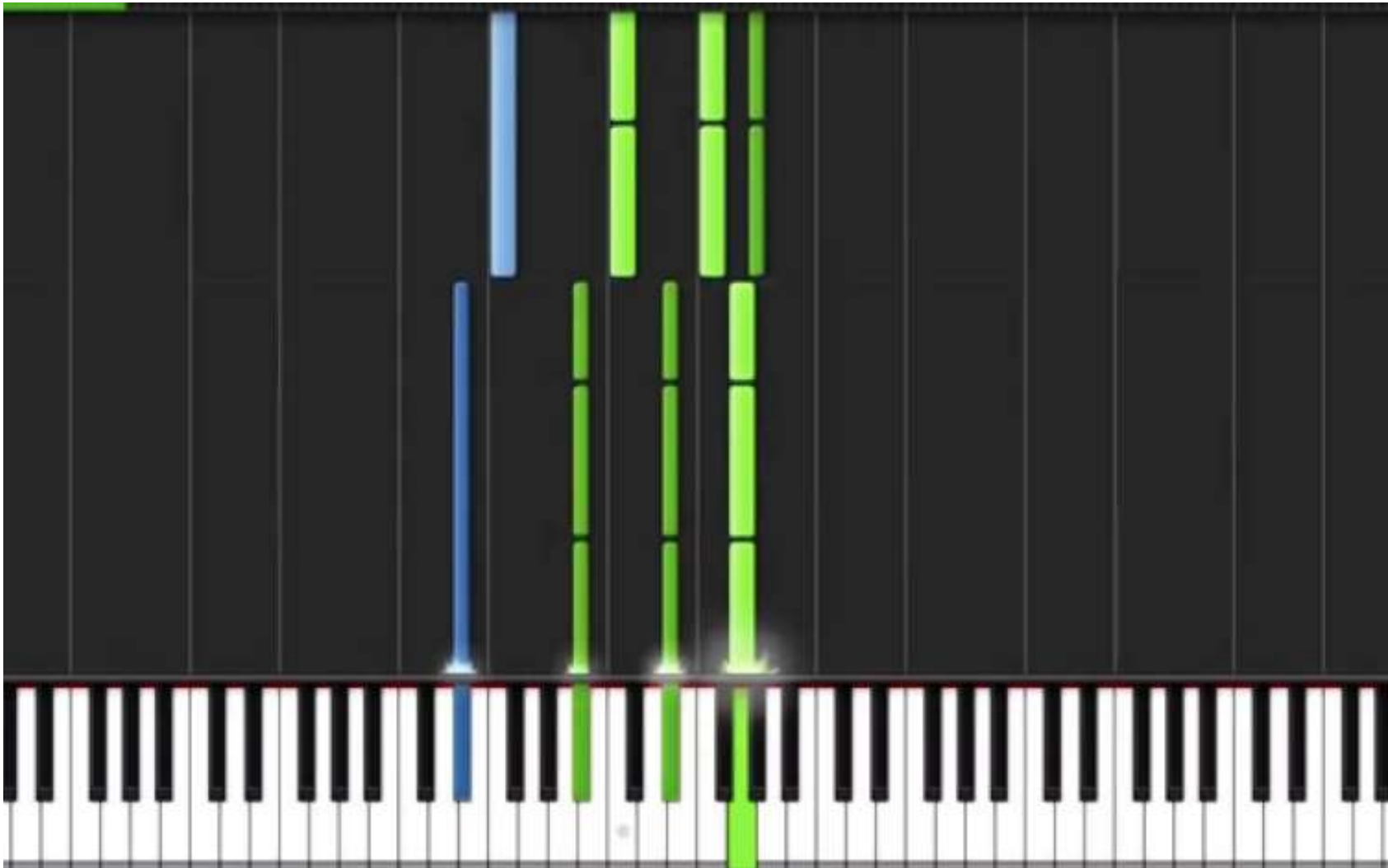


Online Pianist is a website and a mobile app that offers to learn songs on piano through a simple and intuitive interface. Its songs library is very rich and it will be easy for you to find your favorite song.

Only downside: you can't interact with the website. Indeed, it's not possible to connect your piano to your device in order to learn at your own pace.

6 – Synthesia (free version limited to a few songs)

Objective: learn the songs you love on piano



Synthesia is the oldest app on the market, but that doesn't mean it's a bad app! Synthesia offers the interesting feature of importing your own songs in midi format (or midi file), just like La Touche Musicale app. This gives you an almost unlimited songs library that you can build yourself.

It's also possible to connect your keyboard to your device in order to interact with the software.

Only downside: Synthesia is a software that can be downloaded and is therefore not available directly on the web (unlike all other apps mentioned here). It is therefore complicated to access the same account on your smartphone.

7 – Skoove (25 free lessons, 400+ paid lessons)

Objective: learn music theory and sheets



Skoove is a relatively new player in the market. Its value proposition is very simple: make you learn sheet decryption through an intuitive method.

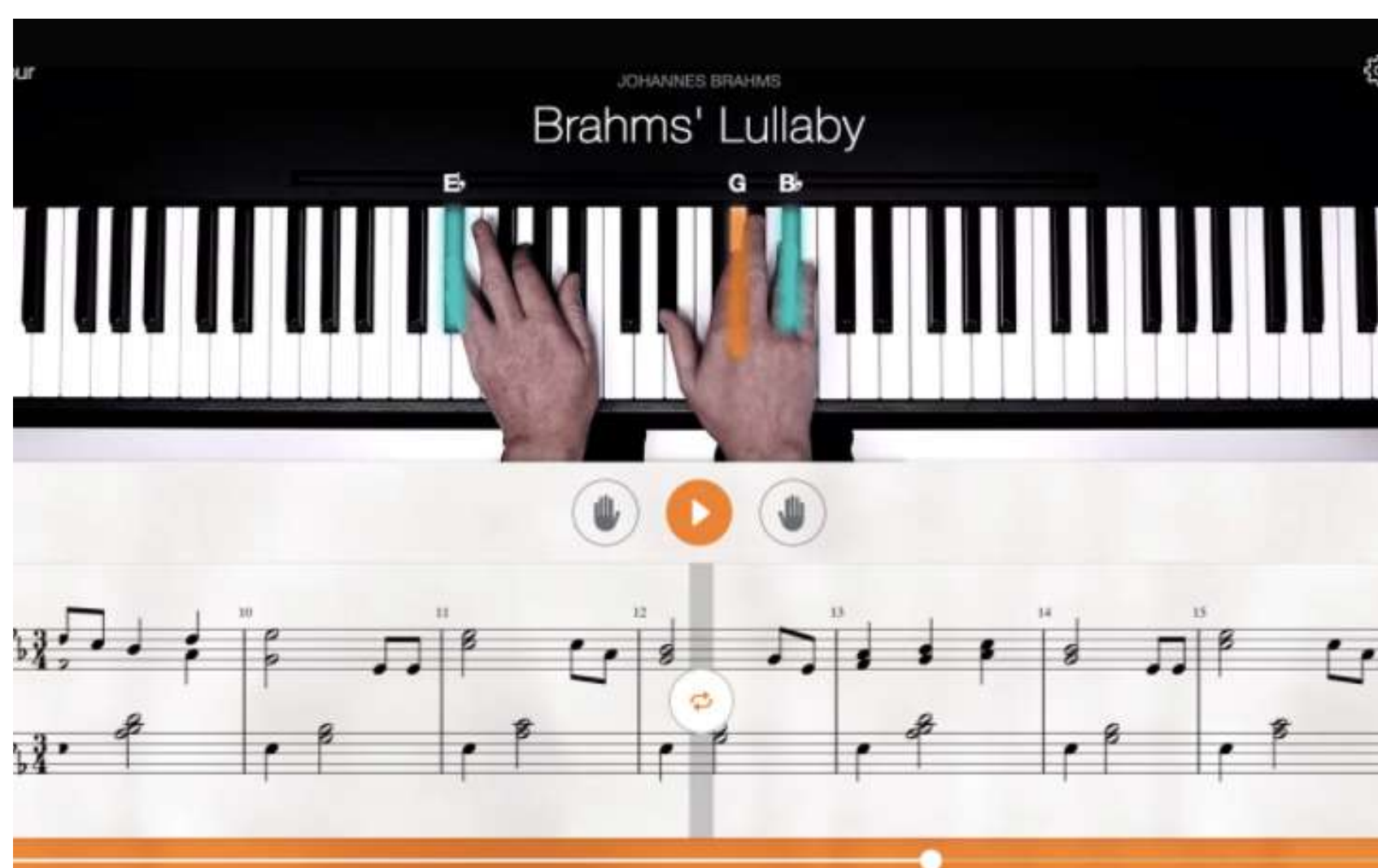
The website is well thought out and allows you to evolve progressively.

You have the possibility to connect your own keyboard in order to interact with the software, making piano learning more motivating.

On the other hand, beware of your budget: Skoove costs 19.99€ by month, making it (with Flowkey, the next app of this post) the most expensive piano app in this ranking.

8 – Flowkey (10 free songs)

Objective : learn the songs you love + music theory with lessons



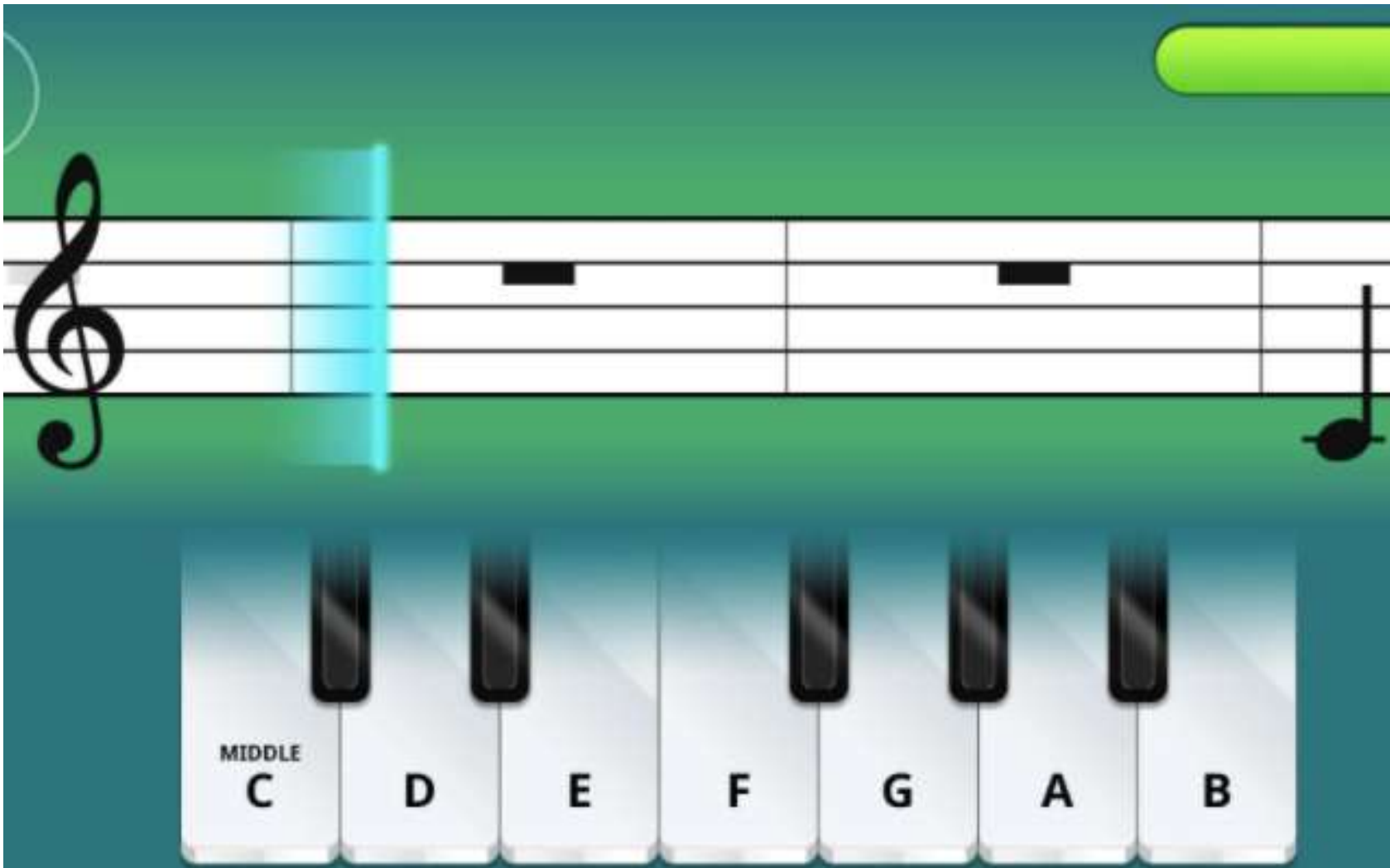
Flowkey is, like Skoove, a relatively new player in the market. The app emerged in 2012 and offers to learn both your favorite songs on piano but also to learn music theory through an interesting and visual method.

It's also possible to connect your keyboard to your computer for more ease on your learning.

However, like Skoove, its price is quite high (19,99€ by month). So make sure you have the right budget before you get started!

9 – Simply Piano (1 lesson free)

Objective: learn music theory + decipher sheets



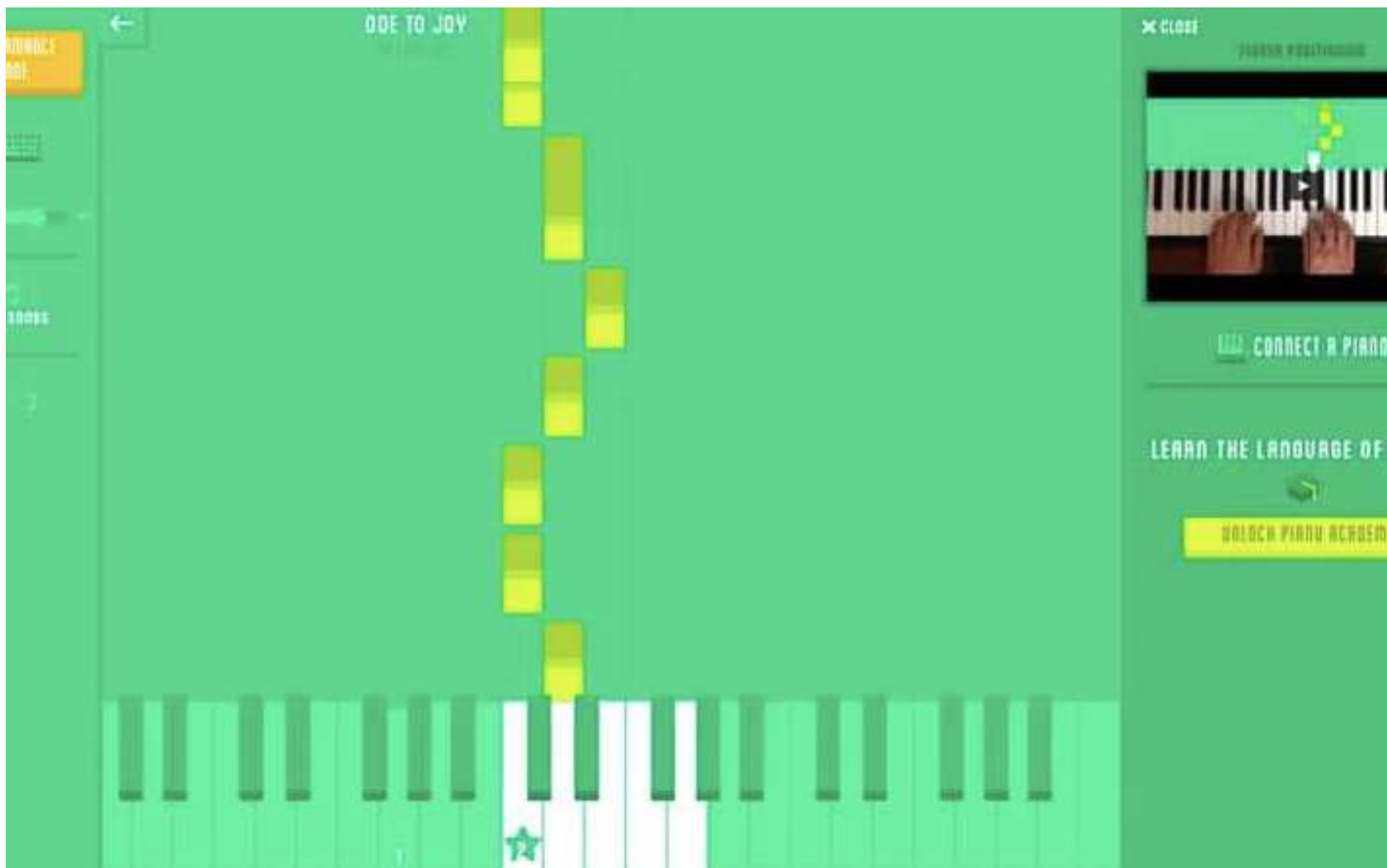
Simply Piano is a piano app only available on smartphone and tablet. Its approach is qualitative: you can learn music theory and the deciphering of scores through a (very long!) series of lessons designed to evolve gradually and not to become demotivated.

On Simply Piano, you can also connect your piano to your device to learn at your own pace!

On the other hand, if you wish to avoid the score in your learning, go ahead, because the whole application is based on this method!

10 – Pianu (very limited free version)

Objective : learn the tracks you love + decipher the scores



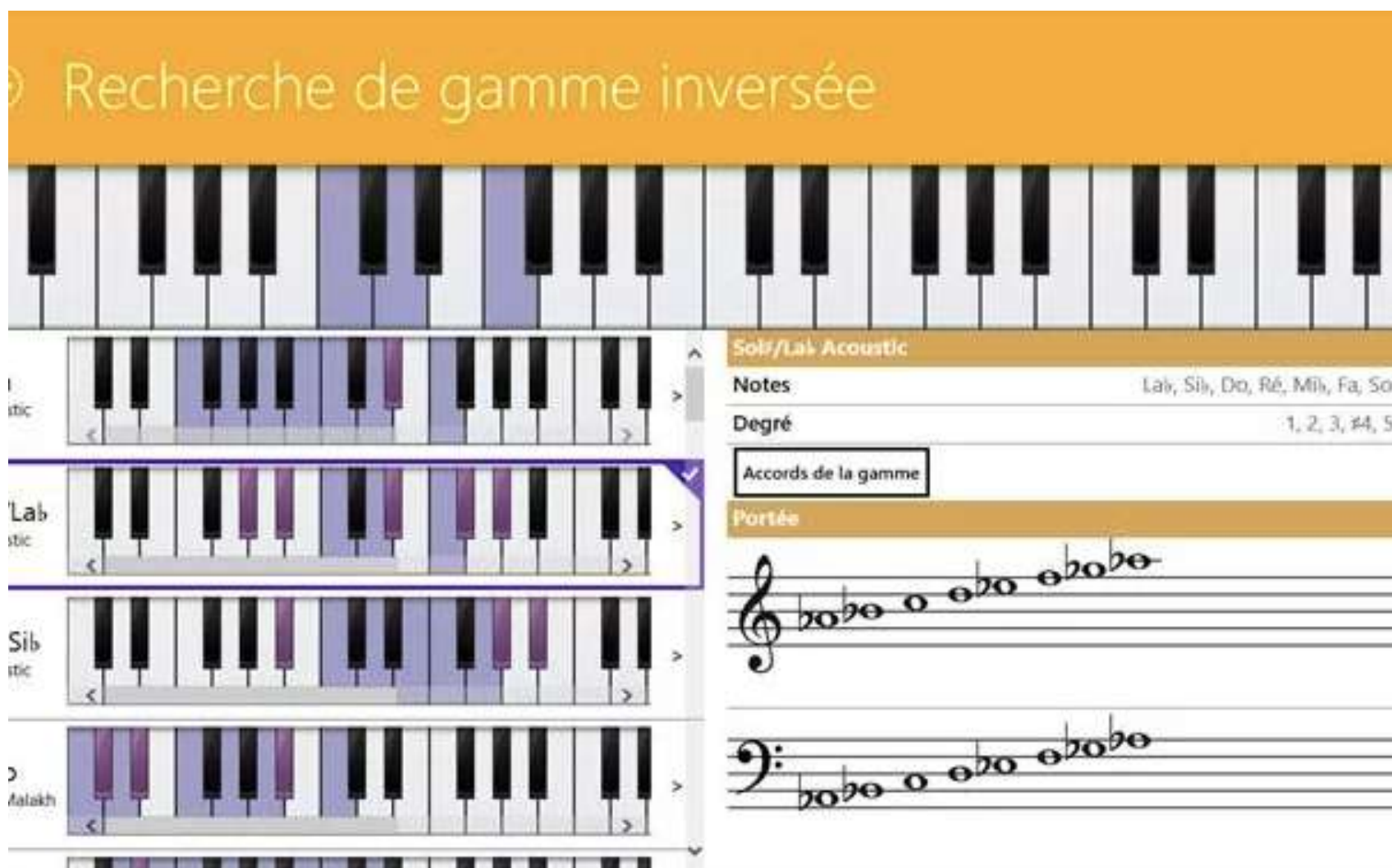
In this ranking of the best piano learning apps, Pianu is one of the most recent. It's a website that offers you to learn music theory through a series of lessons and a songs library.

The piano app is not yet very optimized for learning but it promises great things for the future!

On the other hand, pay attention here again to the budget you need to have to learn on Pianu: 14\$ by month!

11 – Piano Companion (very limited free version)

Objective: learn chords, scales, and correct finger placement on piano

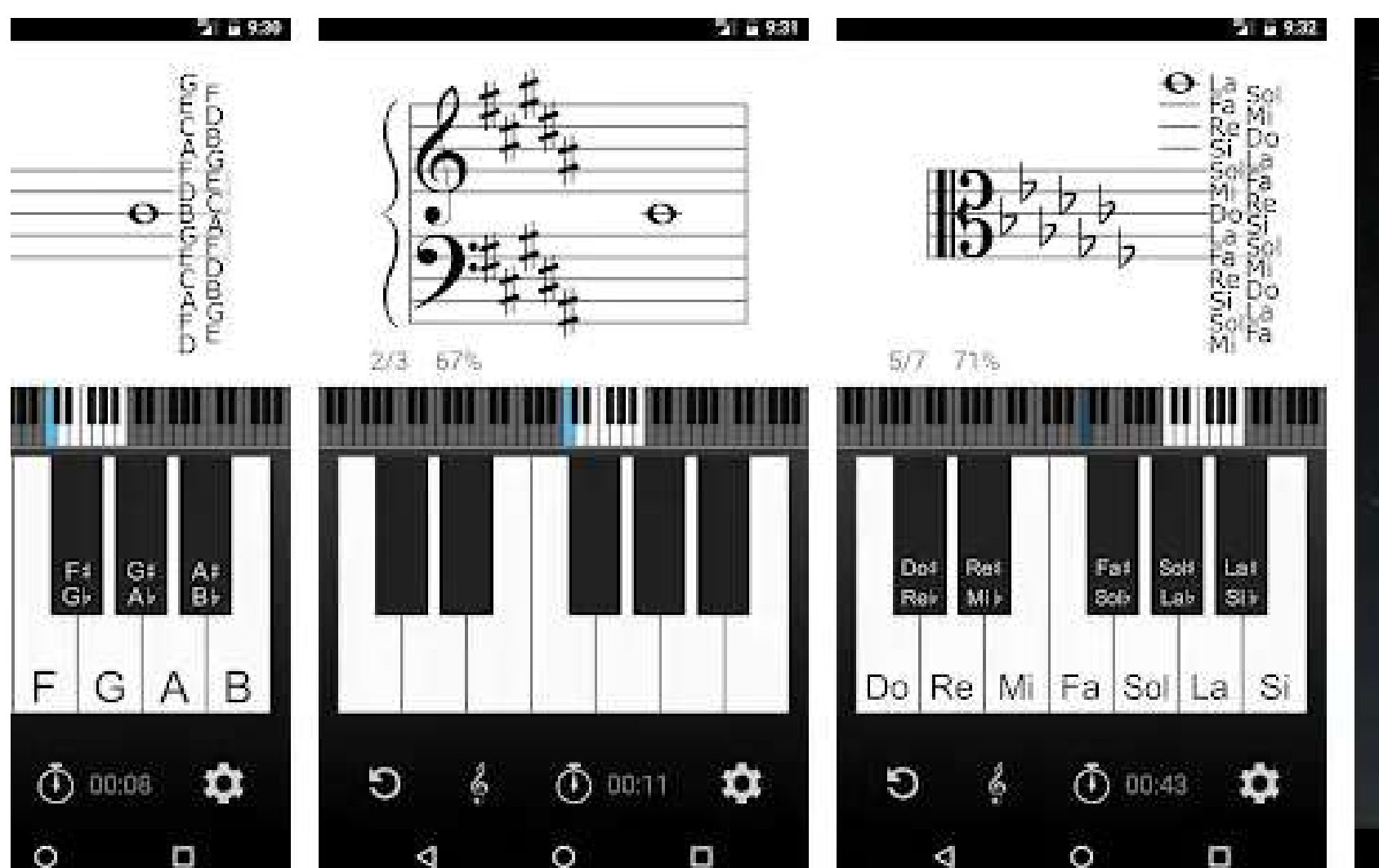


Piano Companion is an original piano app since it provides you with unique tools such as a complete chord list allowing you to get your hands on the various chord possibilities, a scale dictionary, chord progressions and a complete set of tools that every “good” pianist should have at his disposal.

However, you won’t be able to play your favorite songs or learn to decipher a score on this app, and that’s not its purpose. The app rather seeks to transmit the basics of music theory (chords and progression) so that you can improvise and compose your own songs afterwards. Nice initiative!

12 – Vivace (limited free version)

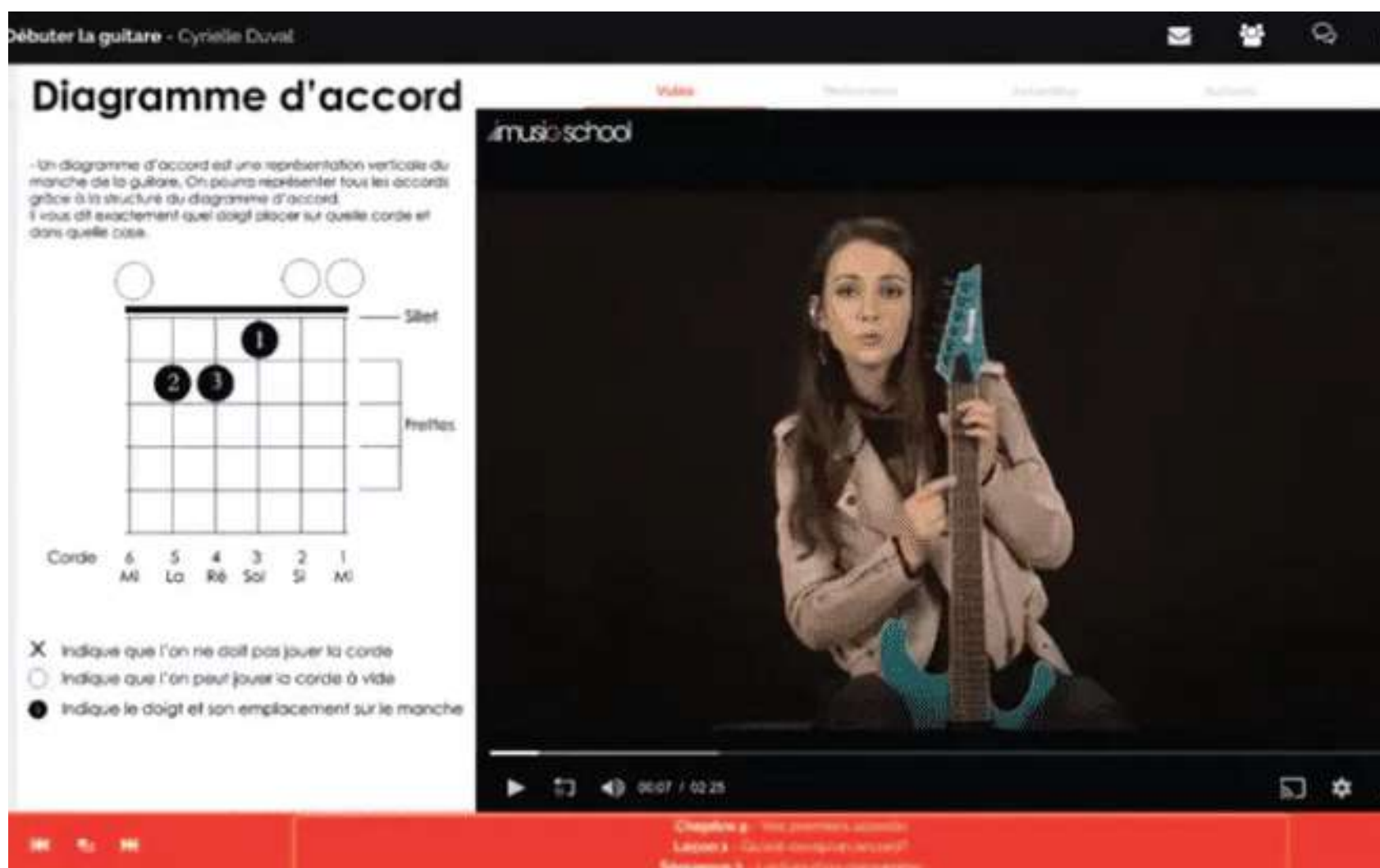
Objective: learn how to decipher scores



Vivace is a good app to familiarize yourself with sheet music. In spite of its interface which, at first glance, may seem a bit primitive, the app offers a good, methodical and rigorous approach to learning via the score. Intermediate and beginner alike will find what they are looking for.

13 – imusic School (paid)

Objective: learn how to decipher scores + music theory methods



imusic School is a website and an app dedicated to piano learning. Through a series of theoretical and practical lessons, imusic School make you a better pianist. Composed of several thousand video lessons, the website offers you to progress on piano whatever your level.

The Premium offer starts at 24,90€ by month, you can follow all the lessons you wish in video. The piano training is well structured and allows you to progress step by step without ever being lost. The lessons are composed of practical exercises and more theoretical notions, so that you can have the most complete teaching possible.

14 – Yousician (paid, free trial)

Objective: learn to decipher sheet music + play your favorite songs on piano + learn the chords on piano



Yousician is a website and an app dedicated to piano learning. With a very simple and understandable interface, the learning method is really designed for piano beginners and will allow you to progress step by step while having fun.

You can choose between several display modes (scores, scrolling sticks, ...) according to your tastes and needs. You also have the possibility to learn the different chords on piano in order to improve yourself and to be able to improvise more easily.

The Premium offer starts at 19,99€ by month and gives you access to one instrument and unlimited lessons. If you want to unlock all the songs in the library, you have to spend 29.99€ by month.

15 – Yokee Piano (very limited free version)

Objective : learn music theory + chords + train your musical ear.



Yokee is one of the best piano app on the market. Designed to make you learn piano quickly through a simple method, you just have to watch the videos presented by a virtual instructor to learn music theory: scores, exercises, chords, ...

The app is especially designed for beginners who have never played piano before. Thanks to a series of well-structured lessons, the method proposed by Yokee will allow you to progress step by step without getting discouraged.

Indeed, the comments of this app on the PlayStore are quite complimentary about the quality of the training provided. Even if you don't own a keyboard yet, you can still have a rough draft of piano training.

In conclusion: before choosing from this list of the best piano learning apps, don't forget to set your objectives. How would you like to learn piano? Would you prefer to learn the songs you love? Would you prefer to know how to decipher a score? Or learn the chords and scales to be able to compose or improvise on piano? By answering these questions, you will know exactly what you are looking for. And remember : it's important to have fun while you learn! That's what will make you succeed in progressing without seeing time go by and without demotivating you!

So now the cards are in your hands!

Chapter 4 – Piano basics: notes, octaves, scales and tones



Now that you know how to choose a piano and you've chosen your learning method, let's move on to the third step of this guide: piano basics.

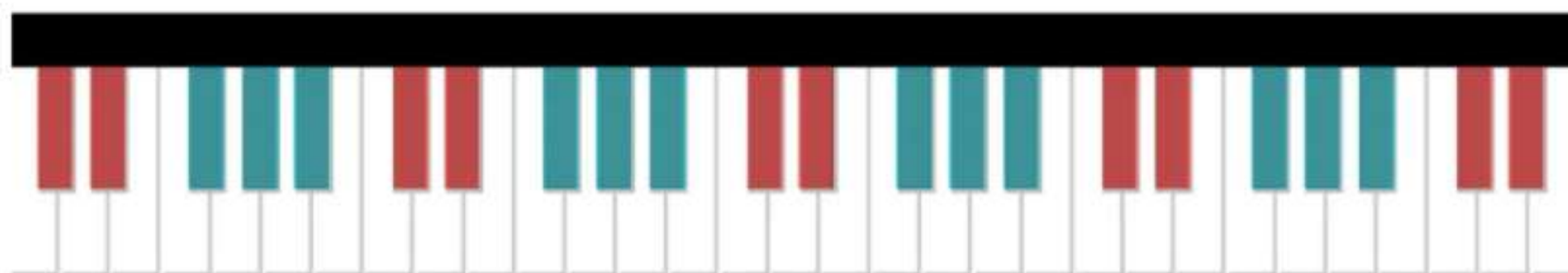
In this chapter 4, we will see in detail how a piano is made up, what is an octave and a scale, the names of the different notes, ...

All this is intended to give you a first theoretical knowledge of the instrument and to help you have the right reference points before starting to play.

Understanding the logic of piano keys

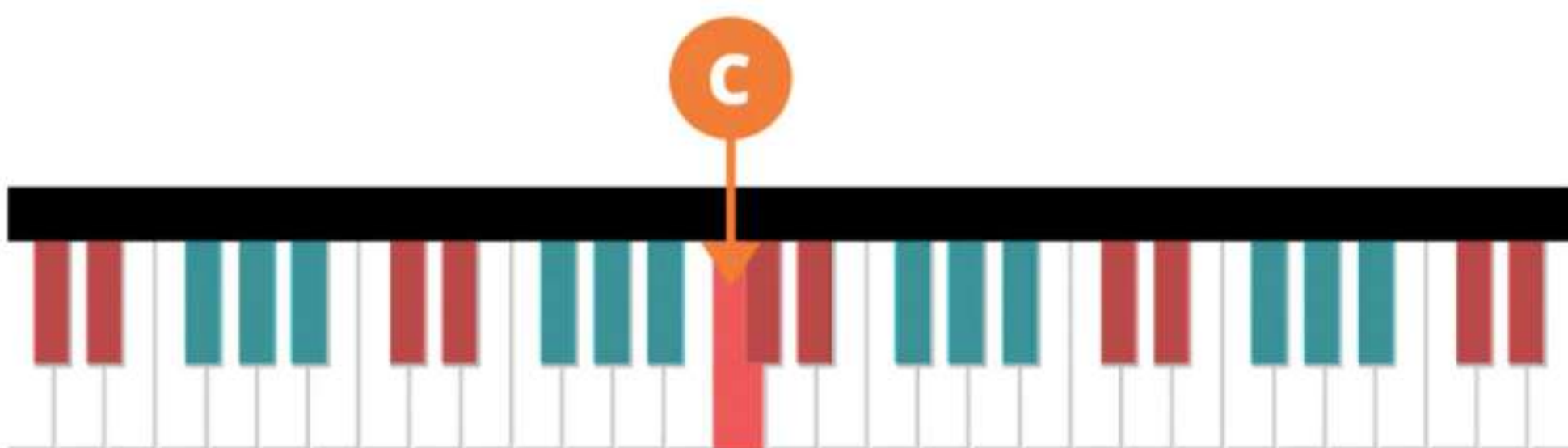
The piano is a musical instrument that was designed according to logical, even mathematical rules. When you stand in front of a piano, you can be intimidated by so many keys (88 for the largest). You don't know what to do and this is completely normal. In this part, we're going to dissect together piano white and black keys. That's one of the most piano basics.

You notice that a piano, regardless of its size, whether it's a digital or acoustic piano, always has the same sequence of notes. To make your task easier, you can pay attention to the black keys of the piano: you can see that the sequence is always the same: 2 black keys, then 3 black keys. This sequence is repeated in a loop until you reach the end of the piano.



When you're looking for a note on the piano, use the black keys to find it. For example, if you are looking for a C, you must:

- 1 – look at the sequence of the black keys;
- 2 – stop when you are on a group of two successive black keys.
- 3 – choose the white key located just to the left of these two black keys: this is your C.



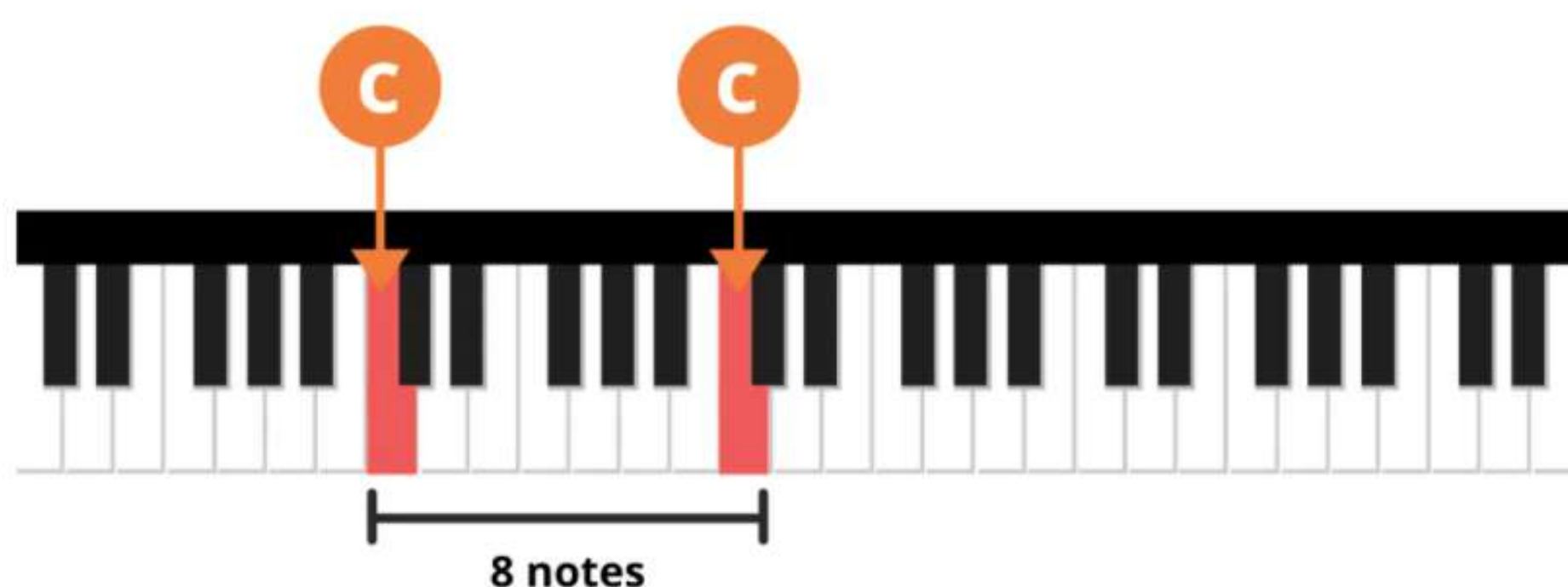
Now that you understand about how a piano is made, before we see the name of the notes, we are going to look at the notions of scale and octave.

Octaves and scales on a piano

In music theory, octaves and scales are fundamental notions. They are essential for understanding what you play, improvise or compose on piano. Octaves and scales allow you to structure your playing.

Octaves

In music, an octave is an interval between two notes separated by eight notes. The octave is the consonant interval because two notes in an octave are identical. For example, when you press the note G, count eight notes on the left side of the piano to get to the G and move to the lower octave. Conversely, count eight notes on the right side of the piano to get to the G and move to the next higher octave. From a sound engineering point of view, when moving from one octave to the next, the frequency is doubled.



The octaves allow you to know the structure of the piano and to play accordingly. It's important to know that a piano song can be played in all octaves. The song will be the same but will release a lower or higher tone depending on the octave you choose.

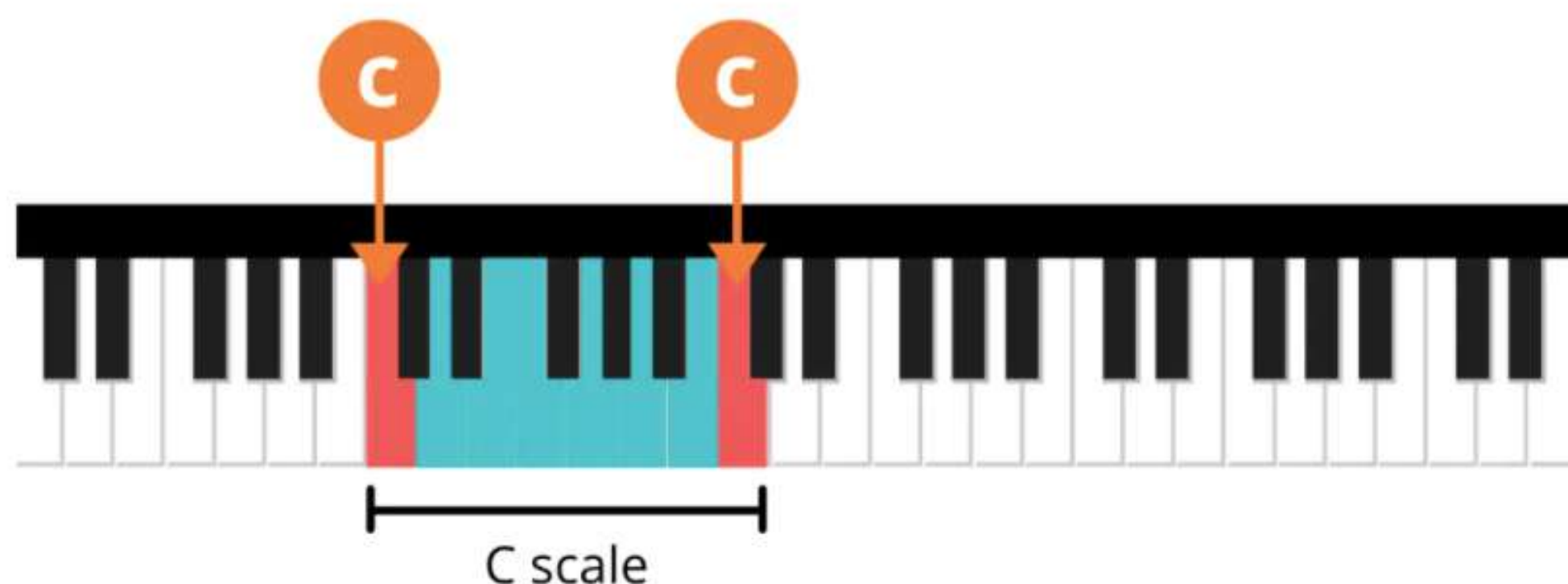
It is also important to know that an octave contains all the notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C. When you move to the next higher octave, you will reproduce exactly the same note sequence but with a higher pitch. That's why octaves are part of the piano basics.

Scales

Just before, we were talking about the sequence of successive notes contained in an octave. Well, this succession of notes is what we call the scale.

A scale is a sequence of joint notes of the same mode (minor or major), the last note of which reproduces the first one played in the lower octave (if the scale is descending) or higher if it is ascending.

To better understand, let's take again our example of the C note. A C scale will always start from the note C and will then chain one by one all the white notes which are located on its right (if we go up) or on its left (if we go down). Once you reach the eighth note, you will fall back to a C. You have thus finished your scale and, if you have followed the previous part well, you are now on a new octave.



Knowing your scales will allow you to work on the fluidity of your playing and your piano practice. Scales being part of the piano basics, we recommend you to do as much as you can!

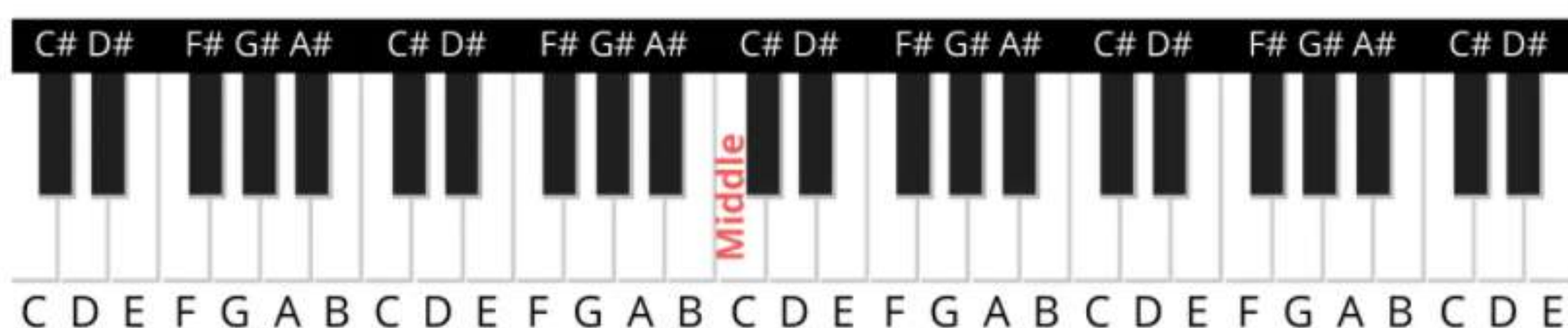
As you will have noticed, once you have understood the notion of octave, it is much easier to understand the notion of scale, and vice versa. Indeed, these two notions are closely related, and even complementary.

Now that you have understood these two fundamental notions, let's see the names of the notes and their order on a piano keyboard.

Piano keys chart

This Piano keys chart shows you all the different notes you find on your piano keyboard. The note sequences are repeated each time you pass an octave. This is why it is so important to have already explained the notion of octave and scale before introducing you to the keys of the piano.

This piano note chart is essential to fully understand how the gap between notes determines the sounds you make when you play, especially for piano chords (which we will see in the next chapter – Basic piano chords). The different keys on a piano keyboard can be summarized as follows:



The note C in the middle always determines the center key of a piano keyboard. It should be used as a reference to help you locate yourself and the note you are playing.

It's important to know the location and name of the keys that make up each octave because you will find them very often in the various exercises, lessons or tutorials that you will follow during your piano learning.

Standard piano notes

When you look at the image of the piano keys chart above, you notice that there are two types of notes: standard notes (bottom of the image) and notes containing #'s (top of the image).

The standard notes are all white notes and all have letters that identify them, from A to G.

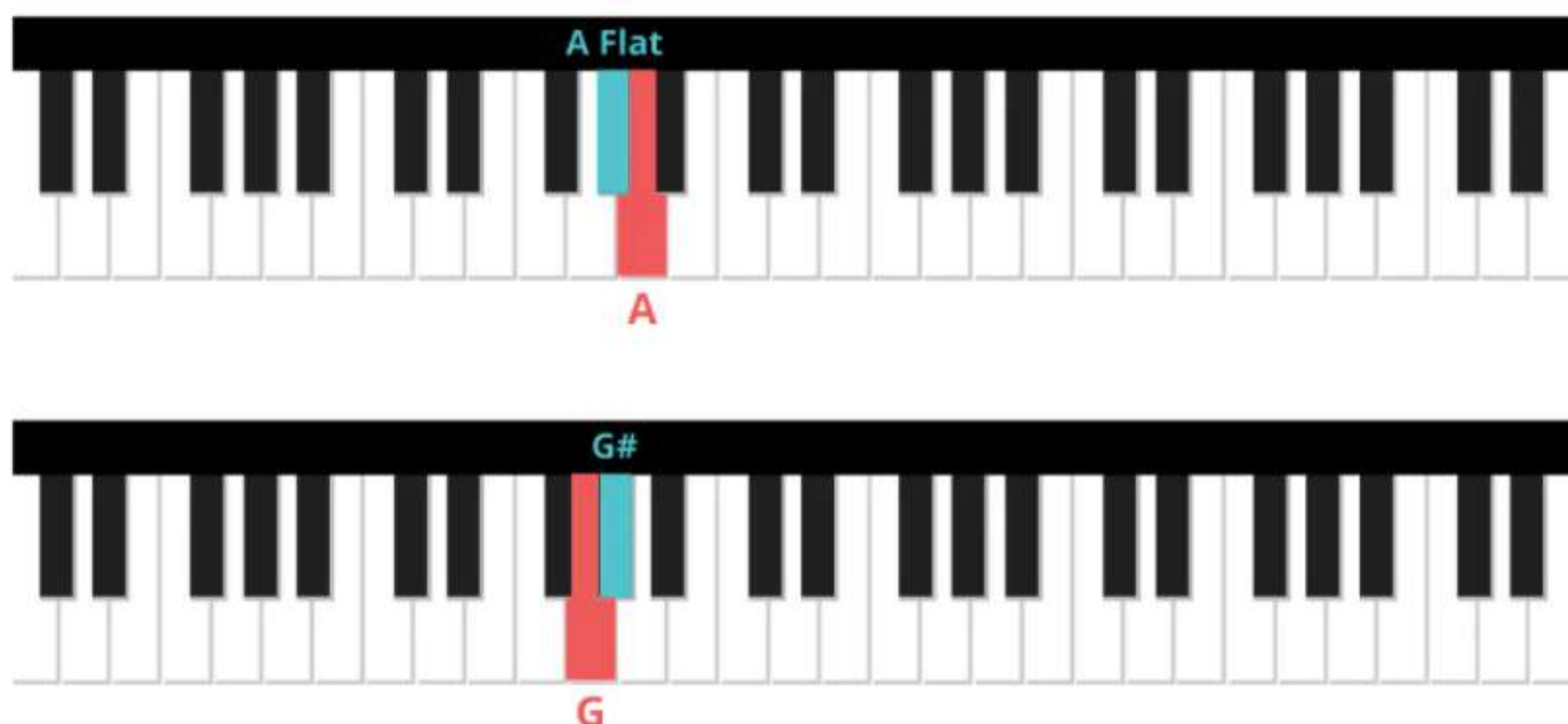
Sharp piano notes

Conversely, notes containing # correspond only to black notes. They are named after the white notes. When you look at a white note with a letter, the black key located just to its right will have the same letter, followed by a #, which is pronounced “Sharp”.

Flat piano notes

Black keys can also have another name. Depending on what you play, they will have either the name “sharp” or “flat”. How do you know which name to give them? It depends on the white note you played just before. If you go down to the left side of the piano, it will be a flat. If you move up to the right, it will be a #.

To help you understand, let's take the example of the black note in the middle of a group of 3 black notes. If you played the note A just before, the black note will be a A flat, because you moved down to the left. If you played the note G just before, this same black note will be a G#, because you moved up to the right.



Intervals and tones

Let's end this chapter with the notions of tone and interval, which are just as much piano basics.

After all that we have seen in this chapter, these are the simplest notions because they are derived from everything above.

Each time you change to the key next to it, you count an extra semitone. Black notes are of course counted in this calculation. For example, if you go from a white key to another one and there is a black note in between, it will be: one semitone + one semitone = one tone. The two white notes separated by a black note are one tone (or one interval) apart.

Let's take a concrete example once again to better understand. If you make a C scale (as seen earlier in this chapter), you press successively on the notes: C D E F G A B C. So that's it: tone + tone + semitone + tone + tone + tone + semitone = 6 tones. There are 6 tones of deviation (or 6 intervals) on the C scale.

We have included black notes in this calculation. If we want to decompose note by note by counting each deviation, it would be: semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone + semitone = 6 tones.

Ok! You know all the piano basics, congratulations! We can now move on to the next chapter of this guide: Basic piano chords.

Chapter 5 – Basic Piano Chords



You have already read the first four chapters of this Ultimate Pianist Guide about how to choose a digital piano or keyboard, the different piano learning methods, the best piano learning apps and the piano basics. Now we come to piano practice through this chapter devoted to basic piano chords.

There are a very large number of piano chords and many ways to learn them. In this chapter we will focus on the major chords and show you how to compose them. The technique we are going to show has been developed by us. You will see that it is extremely easy to understand and remember. It will allow you to play a lot of chords in just a few minutes. Let's start!

What is a piano chord ?

A piano chord is a series of notes played at the same time and producing a particular sound. It is one of the basics of music, and if you know them, you will be able to improvise, compose or better understand the pieces you play.

There are many basic piano chords and they also vary according to musical styles. You won't find the same chords in pop songs and in jazz songs for example.

There are two types of chords: the major chords and the minor chords. With these chords you will already have a very good basis to work on.

Most piano chords are made up of 3 notes pressed at the same time. This chord is also called the Triad, or Three-note Chord.



Common basic piano chords chart

When he's starting to play piano, the beginner has thousands of chord possibilities that he can play. It's not easy to choose among all these possibilities. However, there are some chords that are more common than others. They can be played in almost every musical genres. Among them, you can find the following basic piano chords:

The A major chord: A / C# / E

The A minor chord: A / C / E

The C major chord: C / E / G

The C minor chord: C / Eb / G

The D major chord: D / F# / A

The D minor chord: D / F / A

The E major chord: E / G# / B

The E minor chord: E / G / B

The F major chord: F / A / C

The F minor chord: F / Ab / C

The G major chord: G / B / D

The G minor chord: G / Bb / D

Major piano chords

A major piano chord gives a rather cheerful tone to the ear. It consists of 3 notes played at the same time. You have to start by choosing your first note, which will be called the fundamental note. Then you have to play a second note, called the third, which is two tones above the fundamental. Finally, play a third note, called the fifth, which is one and a half tones above the third. Here are the major piano chords most played and appreciated by beginners and advanced pianists:

The C major chord: C / E / G

The C# major chord: C# / E# / G#

The D major chord: D / F# / A

The Eb major chord: Eb / G / Bb

The E major chord: E / G# / B

The F major chord: F / A / C

The F# major chord: F# / A# / C#

The G major chord: G / B / D

The Ab major chord: Ab / C / Eb

The A major chord: A / C# / E

The Bb major chord: Bb / D / F

The B major chord: B / D# / F#

These are the most common major piano chords. But there is also another well-known type of chord: the minor piano chords.

Major piano chords

Minor chords are more melancholy than major chords when they are played on piano. They are the most used chords in your favorite pop and rock songs. To have the minor key of a piano chord, you just have to decrease the former major third by one half-tone: it becomes a minor third and is played on the A flat of the note. Here are the best known minor chords:

The C minor chord: C / Eb / G

The C# minor chord: C# / E / G#

The D minor chord: D / F / A

The Eb minor chord: Eb / Gb / Bb

The E minor chord: E / G / B

The F minor chord: F / Ab / C

The F# minor chord: F# / A / C#

The G minor chord: G / Bb / D

The Ab minor chord: Ab / Cb / Eb

The A minor chord: A / C / E

The Bb minor chord: Bb / Db / F

The B minor chord: B / D / F#

These 12 basic piano chords are the most played of the minor scale. Practice playing them and honor the pop and rock songs you love!

How to make a piano chord?

In music theory, a major chord always consists of 3 notes: the fundamental, the third and the fifth. At first glance, these terms may seem complicated to understand when you start learning piano, but it is actually very easy to identify them. We simply explain how to make them your own.

To compose a major chord, nothing could be easier: you just have to put your finger on a key of your choice (C, D, E, F, G, A or B), which will be the fundamental note of your chord. Once your finger placed on your note, count 5 notes on the right taking into account your fundamental note and also counting the black keys. When you reach 5, you find the third of your chord. To find the last note of your chord (the right fifth), you just have to count 4 notes on the right starting from your third, always taking into account your major third and

counting the black keys. When you reach 4, you have the fifth of your chord. Now press the 3 notes at the same time (the fundamental, the third and the fifth). Congratulations, you have made your first major chord!

All major chords are constituted in the same way, no matter which fundamental you start from. Thus, with this method, you can make all the major chords of your choice and chain them according to your own musical sensibility!

But let's take an example to help you understand a little better.

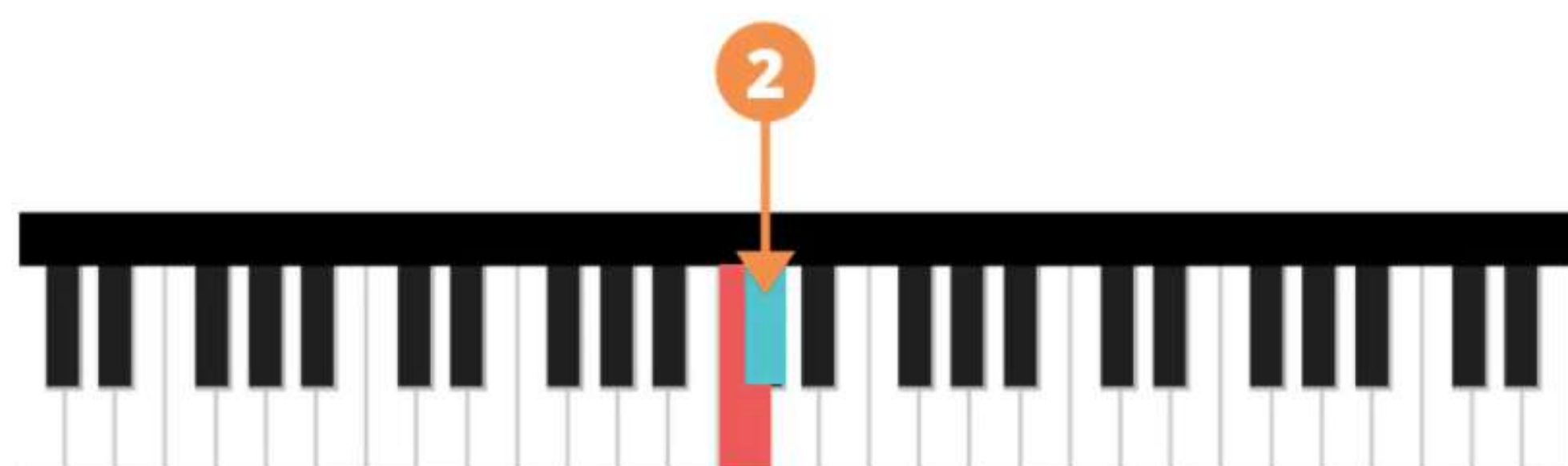
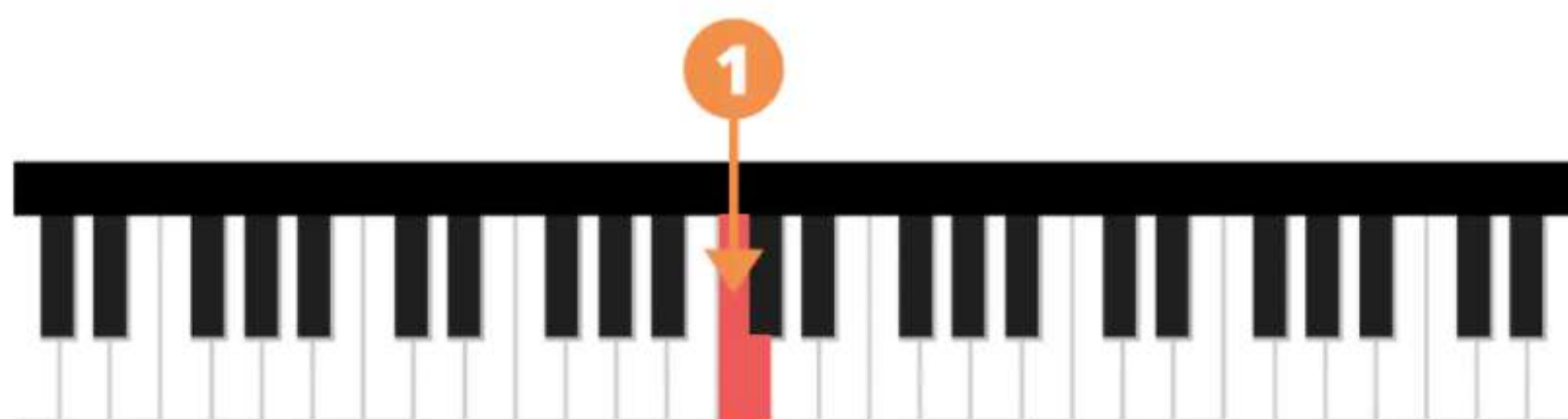
[Tutorial] Example of a basic piano chord: the C major chord

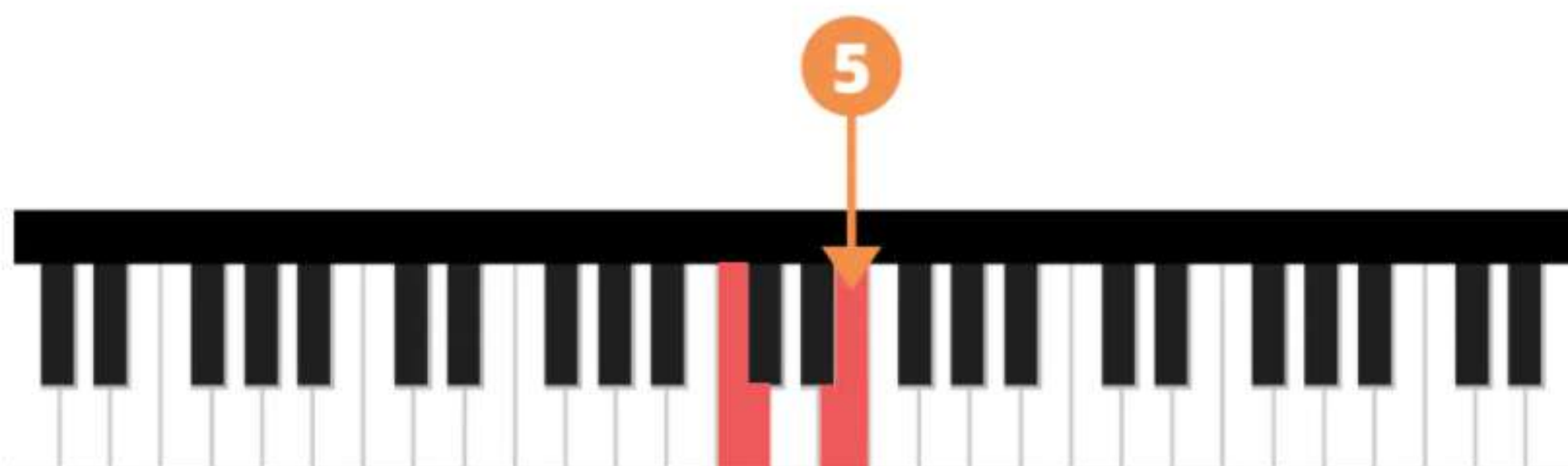
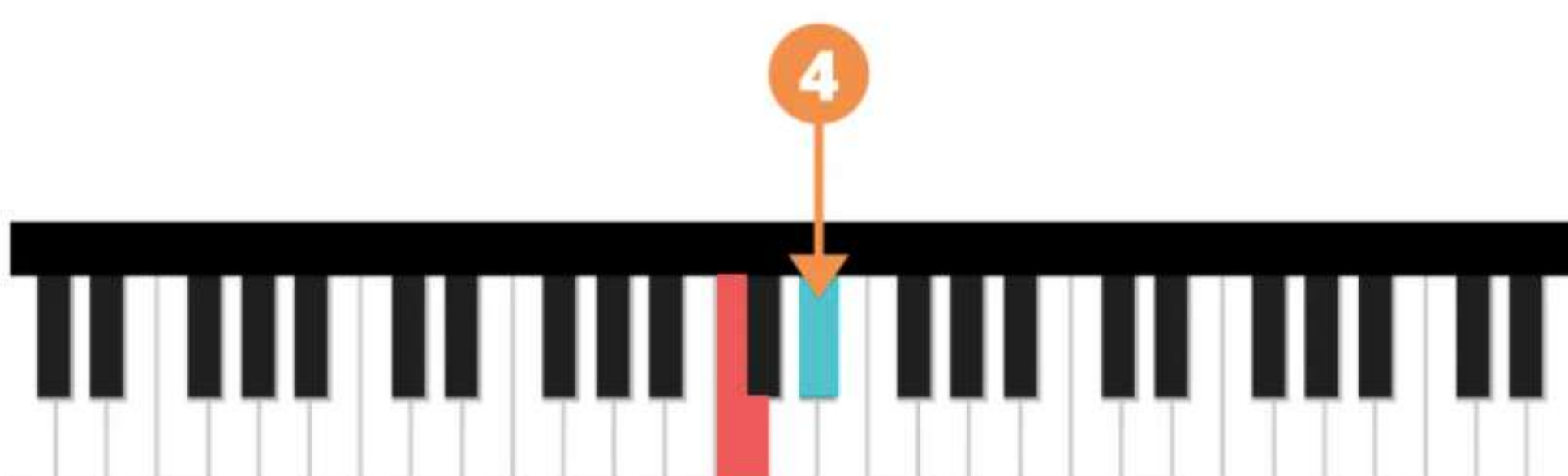
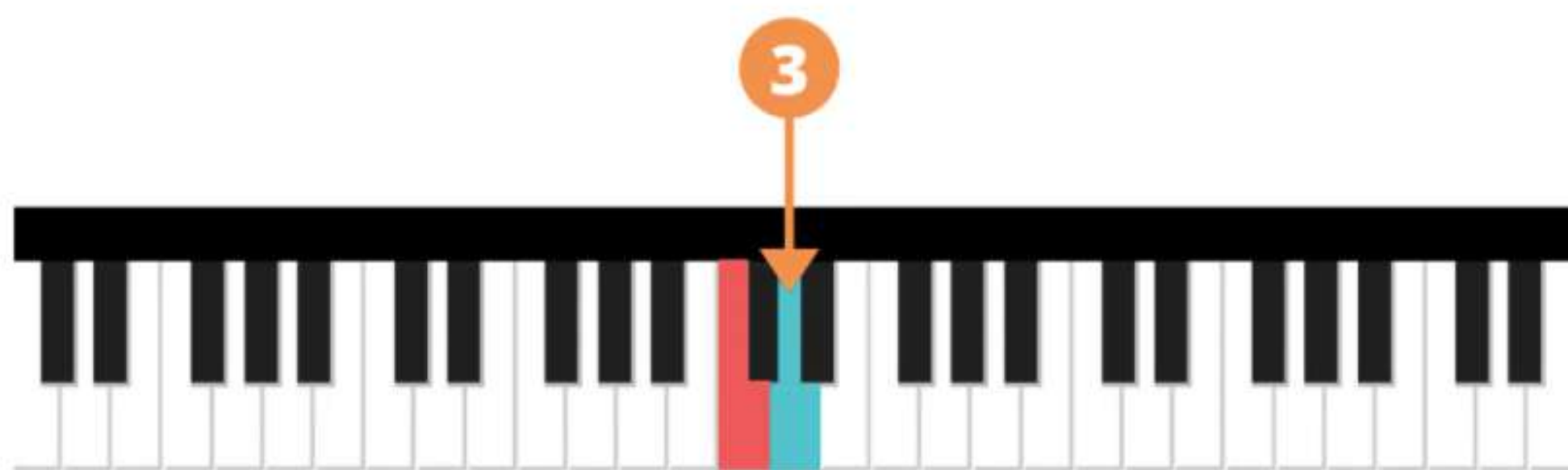
In this tutorial we will play the C major chord together. Bring your piano and follow the lesson step by step. After this tutorial you will be able to play all major chords very easily!

1. To make a C major chord, put your finger on a C note of your keyboard, whatever the octave.

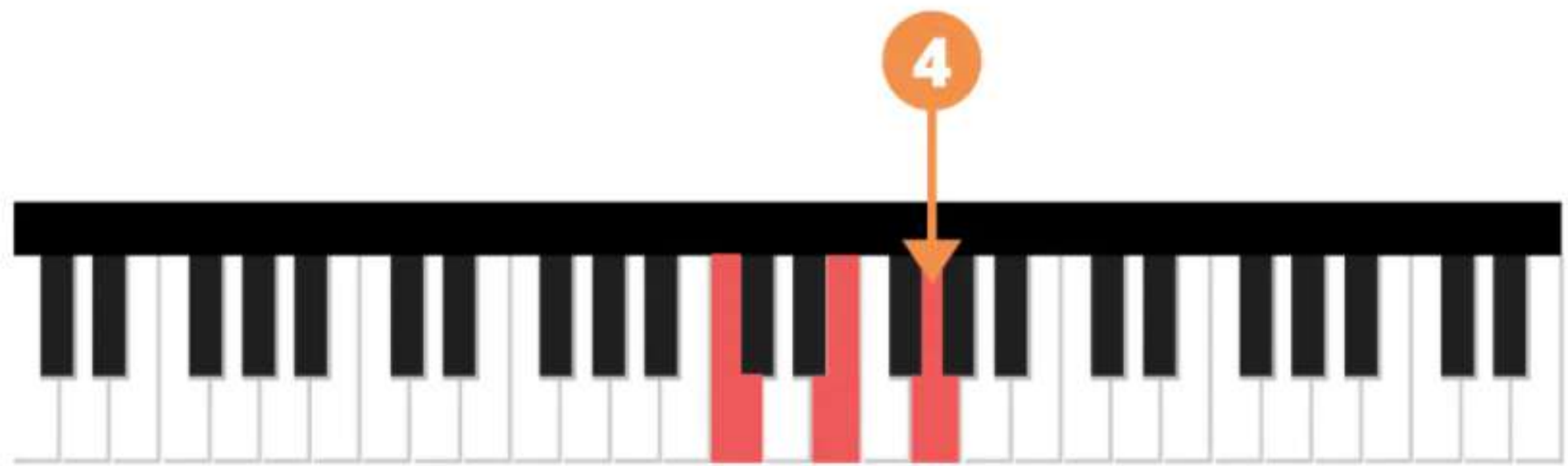
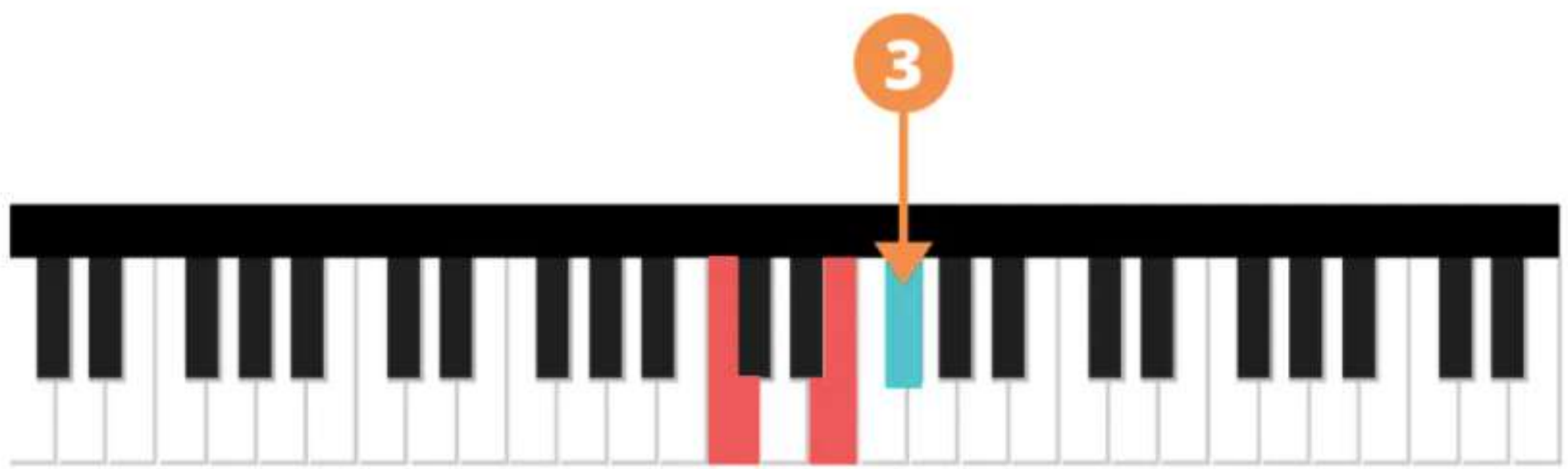
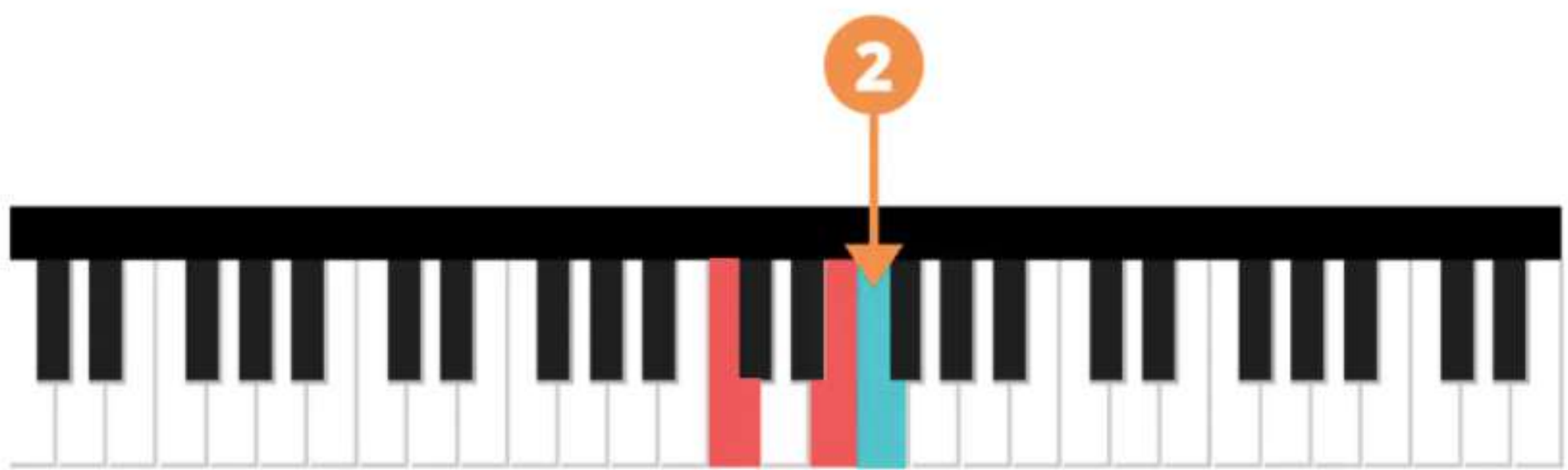
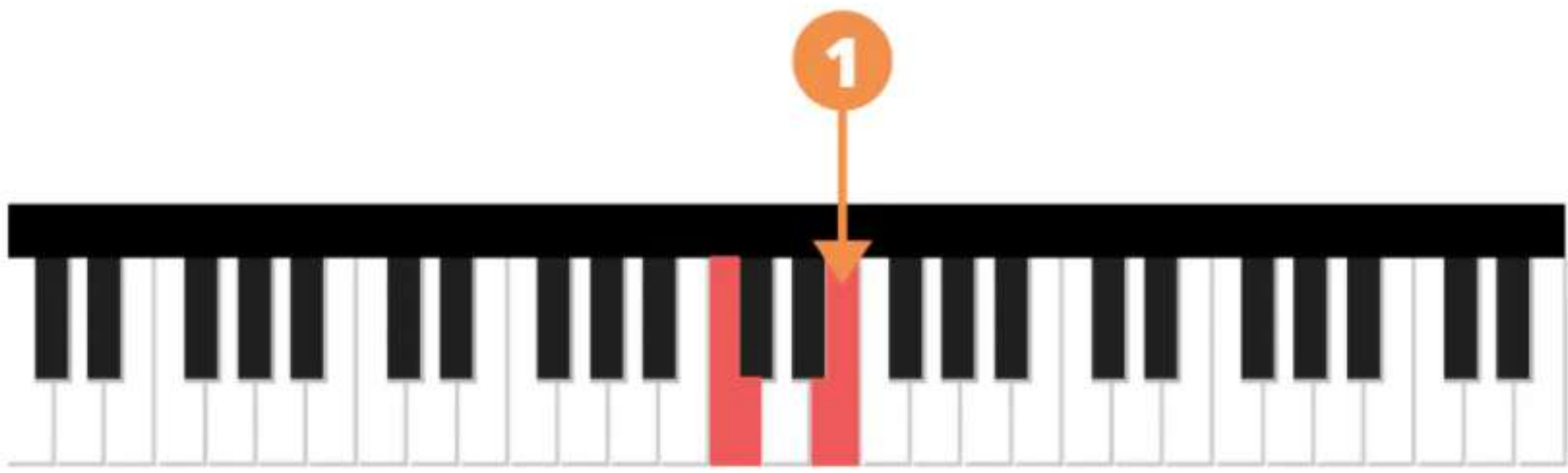


2. Once your finger put on your C note, count 5 notes on the right by taking into account your C note (which will be the fundamental note of your C major chord) and counting the black keys.





3. You are now on the third of your C major chord. Now we have to find the fifth of the basic piano chord. To find it, you have to count 4 notes on the right starting from your third, always taking into account the third and the black keys in your counting. Let's show you the way to do it:



4. You are now on the fifth of your C major chord. Now you just have to press the 3 notes at the same time (the fundamental, the third and the fifth) to hear your magnificent C major chord!

Thanks to this tutorial, you can now play all the chords from the major scale. Go ahead and practice!

Now that you understand and can play chords, let's move on to the next chapter of this guide: play your first piano melody (Happy Birthday).

Chapter 6 – Play your first piano melody: Happy Birthday



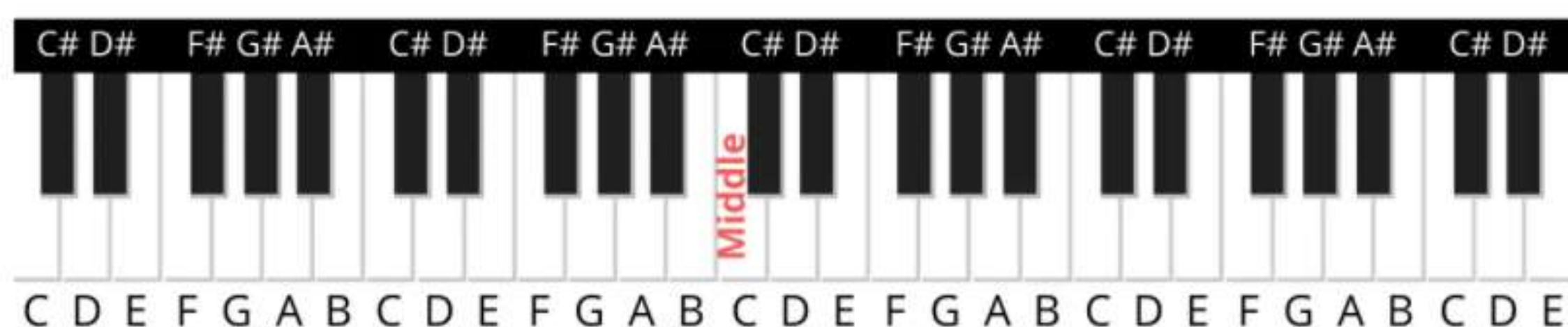
We now come to the 5th chapter of this ultimate pianist's guide, dedicated to the first real melody you'll play on piano Happy Birthday! In this chapter, we will build on what we have seen in the previous chapters, especially Chapter 4 – Piano Basics and Chapter 5 – Basic piano chords.

We will work together on the notes you need to play, one hand after the other, so that you can play the Happy Birthday song quickly.

Happy Birthday: Play the notes of the right hand

Piano Keys Chart

Let's start by recapitulating the names of the notes on a piano keyboard for those who didn't follow Chapter 4 on piano basics. The following image shows the piano keys chart to help you find your way around:



You can see that each sequence consists of 7 white keys, and once you reach the eighth, a new sequence is triggered. Use the black notes to help you find your way through the sequences. You can see, for example, that the note C returns each time you arrive just before the group of two black notes.

Now that you can identify the notes on the piano keyboard, let's get to the heart of the matter and learn Happy Birthday.

Where to start?

Let's start with the notes of the Happy Birthday song you have to play with your right hand. Start by positioning yourself on the note G in the center of the piano (on the fourth octave on an 88-key piano).

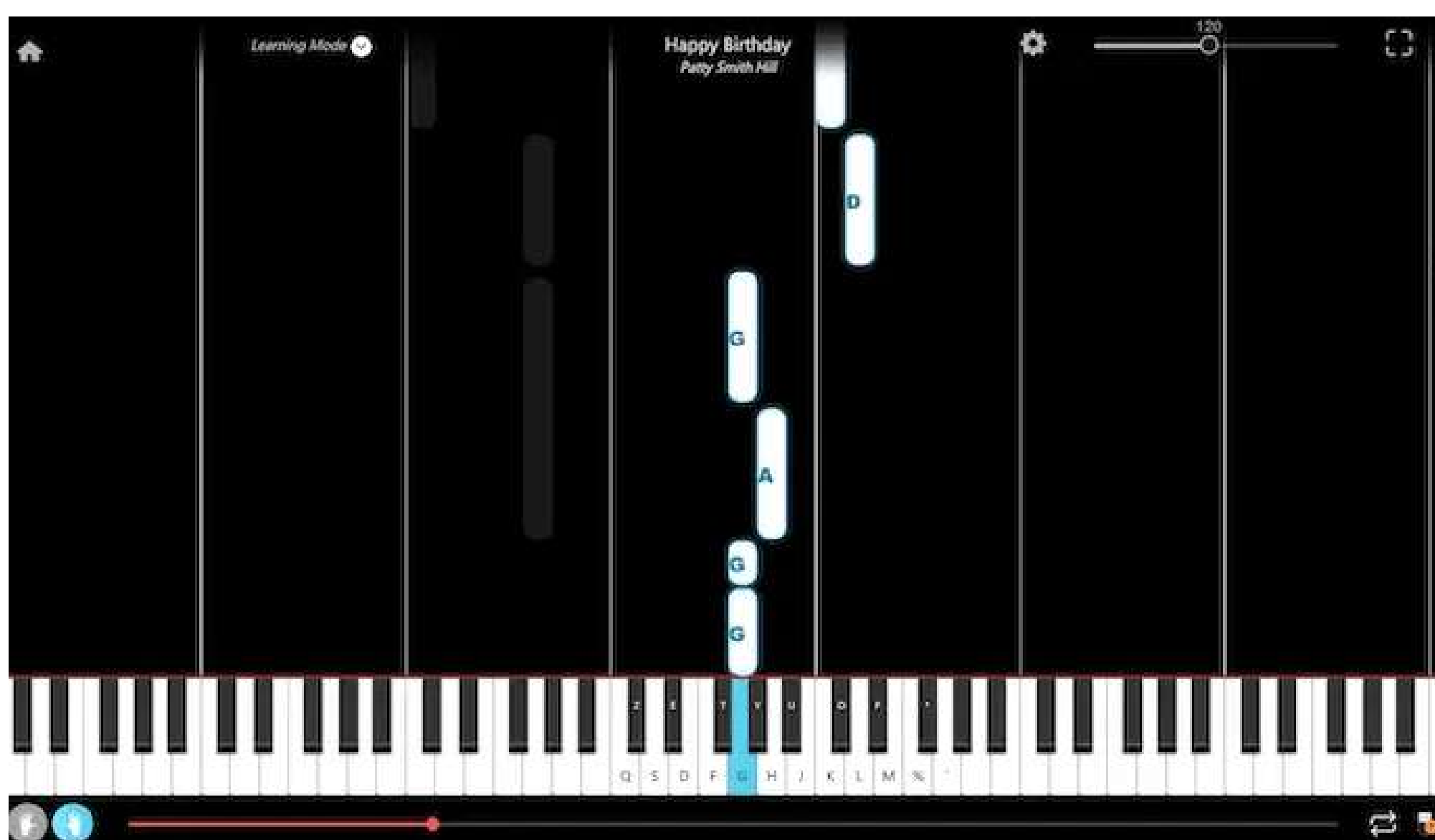


Right hand notes

Once you have found the first note G of the song, you have to play the following notes one after the other:

G – A – G – C – B – G – G – A – G – D – C – G – G – G – E – C – C – B – A
– F – F – E – C – D – C.

This sequence of notes corresponds to the whole of the piano song Happy Birthday in the right hand. If you play all these notes in a row, you will easily recognize the melody.



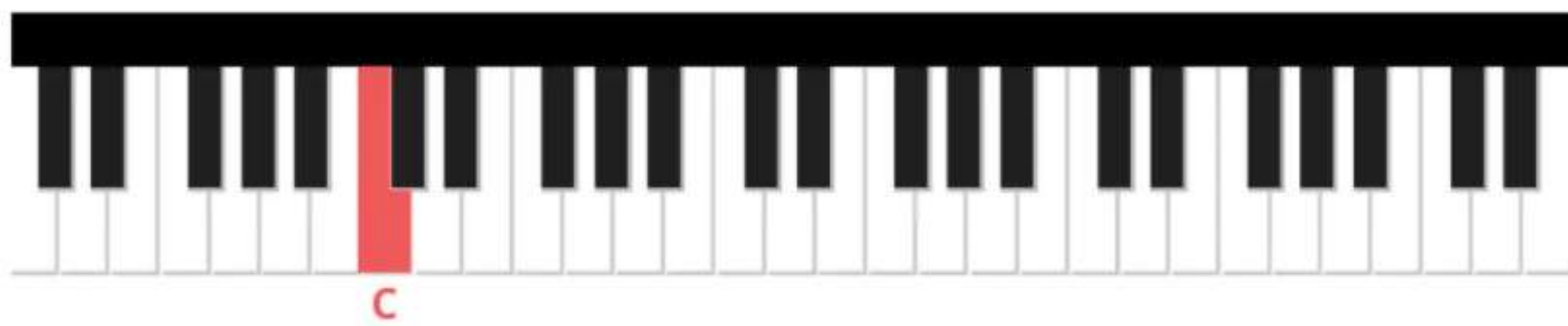
To memorize and master the right hand quickly, we advise you to repeat it in a loop several times in a row. You will see that after a few minutes, your piano playing will become more and more fluid. You will then know the whole right hand. Now we're going to look at the left hand!

Happy Birthday: Play the notes of the left hand

Where to start?

For the left hand, we will proceed in the same way. We will identify the first note of the song, then work on the sequence of notes that follows.

To play the left hand of Happy Birthday, start by positioning your finger on the C note of your piano keyboard (the one on the third octave of an 88-key piano).

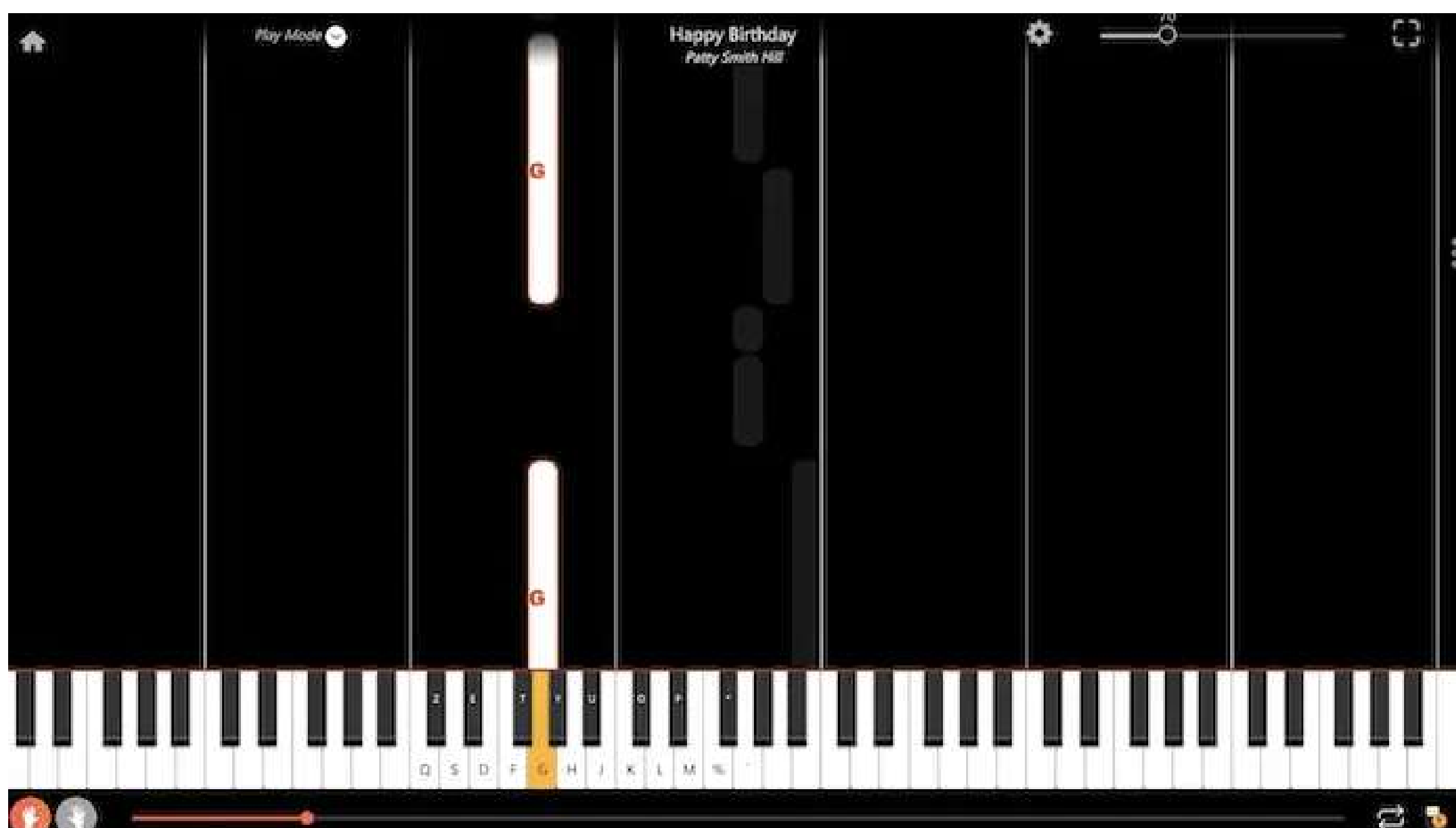


Left hand notes

Once you have found the first note with your left hand, just like the right hand, simply press each of the keys in the following sequence one after the other:

C – C – G – G – C – C – C – F – F – C – G – C.

Pressing each of the notes in this sequence will play the whole left hand of the song. The left hand giving the rhythm and serving more as an accompaniment to the piece, you won't recognize Happy Birthday by playing it alone. But it's indispensable on piano because without it you will not be able to give depth to your playing.



Congratulations! You now know how to play the right and left hand of the song Happy Birthday. But the hardest part is still to come... Now you have to play both hands at the same time!

Happy Birthday: Play the whole song with the both hands

Difficulty: the dissociation of the two hands

The greatest difficulty when you start learning piano is to play both hands at the same time. This is called hand dissociation.

This work is not easy because it requires our brain to disassociate to play two different melodies at the same time.

This is why we have made you play first the right hand and then the left hand. This is the technique most used by beginners to learn the song step by step.

This part will inevitably take time because it is a matter of work. Our brain being used to symmetry, dissociation is not something it's used to process. You will therefore have to be patient and work rigorously. But don't worry, it comes quickly! There are a number of techniques that will allow you to dissociate your hands faster.

Method and techniques

To learn faster your hands to dissociate, you can take a short sequence of a few seconds at the very beginning of the song and work it in a loop with both hands. Take your time and don't try to go fast. When you feel more comfortable with the sequence, play it a little faster. Once you think you have mastered it, move on to the next sequence. Do the same for this one, and once you've mastered it, play the two sequences in a row.

Our advice: frequency of training is more effective than persistence. Rather than spending 5 hours a day playing this passage in a loop, prefer sessions of 20 minutes every day. After a week, you will already see progress, and that will encourage you!

Congratulations, you just played your first piano song! You see, it wasn't that hard. Now you want to broaden your horizon of songs you can play on piano? Well, great! In the next chapter, we present 20 easy piano songs for you to practice.

Chapter 7 – 20 easy piano songs to play



Welcome to our selection of the 20 best easy piano songs for beginners. In the previous chapter of this Ultimate Pianist's Guide (Chapter 6 – Play your first piano melody) you learned how to play your first song on piano. This 7th chapter is designed to open up your musical repertoire and propose you some songs that are both easy and popular. If you are a total beginner, you can also play them. Indeed, they are all available in an easy version for beginners on our app dedicated to piano learning. So you can play them easily on our app (among more than 1000 songs)! These are 20 well-known and easy piano songs for beginners, so enjoy!

1 – Shallow – Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper (A Star is Born)



Theme song of the movie A Star is Born, which made her very famous, Lady Gaga's Shallow has conquered the hearts of a very large audience with its emotion and intensity. This beautiful and easy piano song won the Oscar for Best Original Song and was acclaimed by critics. The original track is not necessarily very easy to play for beginner pianists. That's why we offer an easy version of this song on our website dedicated to piano learning, specially designed for beginners. With a little practice, you can master it in just a few days. In addition, this well-known piano song will give you great emotion when you play it.

2 – Bohemian Rhapsody – Queen



In spite of its age, the famous Bohemian Rhapsody by Queen is still as much listened on the internet. Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who want to learn to play this famous piano song. It must be said that it continues to fascinate crowds even in the 21st century. Currently, it is the most streamed song on the different platforms, with more than 1.6 billion listenings. No doubt this figure has been reinforced by the recent release of the biopic centered on this immortal group. This well-known and cool piano song is easy to learn, even for beginners, so go for it!

3 – River Flows in You – Yiruma (Twilight)



The most famous piano song of the South Korean composer Yiruma continues to be a hit since its release in 2001. Reprinted in the original soundtrack of the Twilight saga, River Flows in You is a magnificent and easy piano song that has since then continued to win hearts and remains much learned by piano lovers. It can still be heard very frequently played in train stations by passers-by, surrounded by many spectators amazed by the beauty of the piece.

4 – Una mattina – Ludovico Einaudi (Untouchables)



Una mattina by Ludovico Einaudi is one of the best known song played by piano lovers. Recorded in 2004 by the famous Italian composer, it was included in the soundtrack of the French movie Untouchables. The movie's reputation propelled the talented pianist to the top, making Una mattina one of the most played piano songs of its time. The intense emotion that the title emanates greatly pleases lovers of sounds that are both soft and powerful. Una mattina is one of those piano pieces that are easy to play and yet so beautiful. Don't hesitate to start your learning on this beautiful piano song.

5 – Comptine d'un autre été – Yann Tiersen (Amélie Poulain)



Famous piece of the soundtrack of the movie Amélie Poulain, released in 2001, Comptine d'un autre été by Yann Tiersen continues to fascinate pianists with its catchy rhythm (like most of Tiersen's compositions, it is a waltz composed in 3 beats) and its reassuring melody. It is currently ranked as the second most played song on the piano behind Ludwig Van Beethoven's Letter to Elise.

This song is one of the piano pieces for beginners that are really beautiful, popular and easy to play.

6 – Happy Birthday – Patty Hill



Happy Birthday is one of the most famous piano songs, attributed to Patty Hill in 1893.

This piece is one of the easiest piano songs for beginners who wants to play.

You have to go soon at a birthday party ? Learn this song and let your friends sing its chorus!

7 – Lovely – Billie Eilish



Billie Eilish, a rising star and one of the most promising singers of the moment, released the title Lovely which exudes a musical emotion like no other.

This American pop star knows how to seduce us with a voice worthy of the greatest divas in history.

Lovely is a very easy piano song to play. It is suitable for beginners as well as for the most experienced pianist!

8 – Faded – Alan Walker

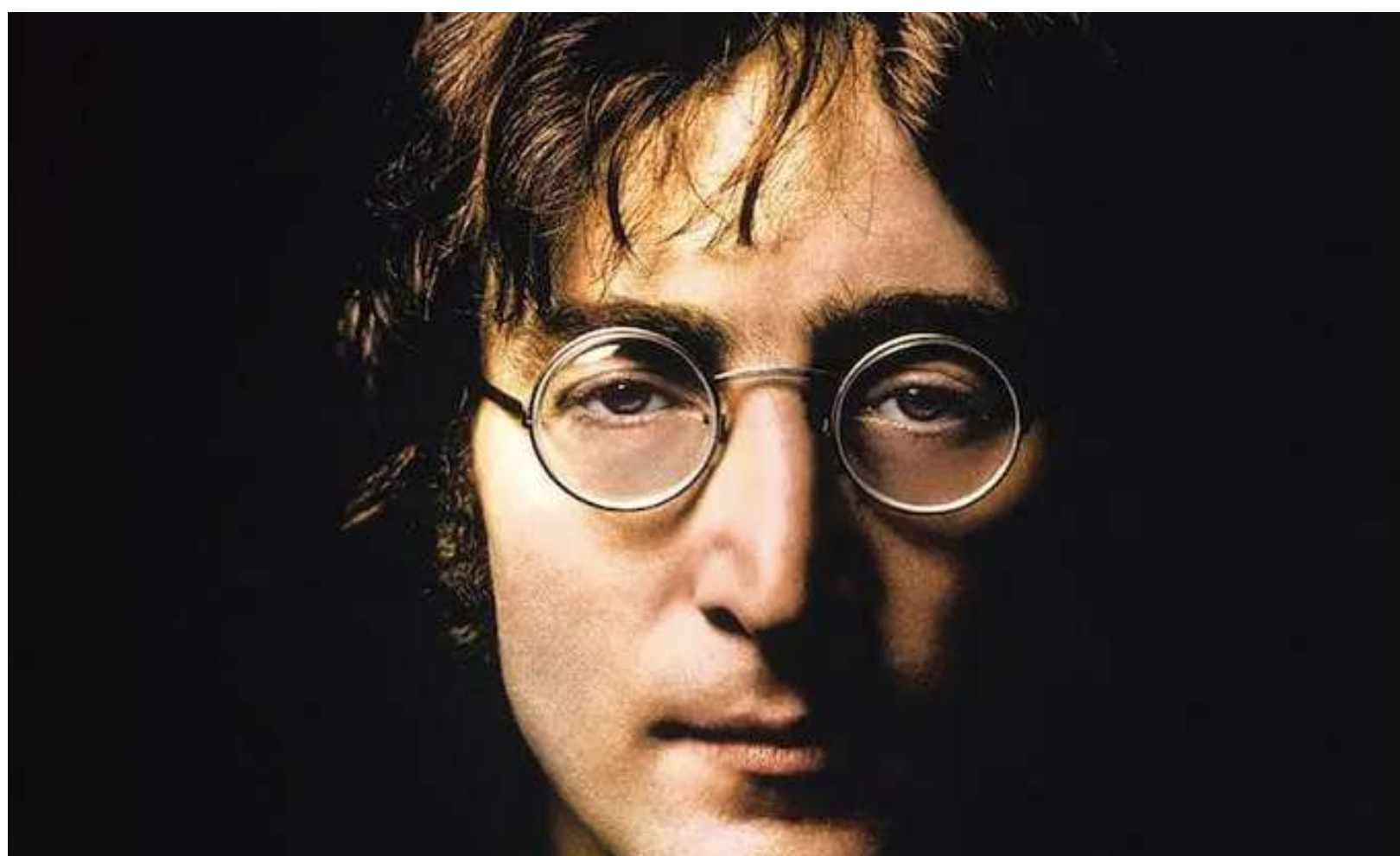


This electro-house track by the internationally known DJ has managed to win the hearts of all pianists.

Faded by Alan Walker involves several composers, such as Anders Froen or Gunnar Greve Pettersen, who have combined their musical genius to create this wonderful work.

Very simple to learn, this easy piano song for beginners will fully satisfy you if you start playing the instrument. If you play diligently, you will be able to learn it in just a few days. It is indeed a beautiful piano piece that will allow you to impress your friends and family when you play it!

9 – Imagine – John Lennon



First song of his eponymous album released in 1971, Imagine is one of John Lennon's best known songs. It is a pacifist work, projecting us into an utopian world, advocating a world without borders where brotherhood would be the key word.

Imagine by John Lennon is a piece that is easy to play on piano: it remains within the reach of all beginners. On La Touche Musicale, we actually propose in our library an easy version of the song. If you want to know how to play familiar piano song without spending too much time learning it, jump at the opportunity!

10 – Hallelujah – Leonard Cohen



First recorded in 1984 on his album *Various Positions*, Hallelujah has been the subject of numerous covers, at the top of which is Jeff Buckley's, released in 1994. This last version is indeed the best known and most listened today. The song has been the subject of much debate because of the subjects it deals with: religion and sex, approached from the angle of metaphors. At the death of Leonard Cohen in 2016, the song ranked 59th in the Billboard Hot 100 in the United States.

Hallelujah is a beautiful and easy song to learn on piano, so you can play it quickly to impress your friends at parties!

11 – Your Song – Elton John



Extracted from Elton John's second album, released in 1970, Your Song is one of the artist's best known songs.

The instrumental part of the song is mostly composed of a melancholic piano melody, invented by Elton John and influenced by Leon Russell. An acoustic guitar part, just as beautiful, completes the instrumental part of the title.

In terms of notoriety and press, in 2003 it was ranked 136th in the Rolling Stone Magazine's Top 500 Best Songs of All Time.

It is also an easy piano song within the reach of all beginner pianists. You can learn it in a few days with a little practice.

12 – Hello – Adele



Taken from Adele's third album, released in 2015, Hello is the first single from this album, hailed by music critics. Played by Greg Kurstin, the bass, guitar and piano parts of the instrumental give the song all its depth.

Regret and nostalgia are the two main themes addressed by this brilliant title.

When it's released in 2015, Adele's song breaks the record for the number of views on Youtube in less than 24 hours, dethroning the artist Taylor Swift.

Hello has the merit of being very easy to play on piano and remains completely accessible to the greatest beginners. Moreover, it's one of those beautiful piano pieces that will allow you to escape from your everyday life.

13 – He’s a Pirate – Hans Zimmer (Pirates of the Caribbean)



Composed in 2003 by Hans Zimmer and Klaus Badelt for the Disney film Pirates of the Caribbean, He’s a Pirate immediately seduced the film’s viewers with its power and the emotion it emanates.

The piano version of the original music is not easy to play. Fortunately, on La Touche Musicale, you can play a very easy version of the song.

14 – Bella Ciao – Traditionnal (La Casa de Papel)



Bella Ciao is originally a traditional song from Italy, written by an anonymous author in 1944, glorifying the bravery of Resistance soldiers during the World War II. Today, this song is the symbol of resistance throughout the world.

But it wasn't until the successful Spanish series La Casa de Papel included it in its original soundtrack in 2017 that it gained international recognition.

Bella Ciao is one of this easy piano songs which all beginners can play. La Touche Musicale offers an ultra-simplified version of this song to learn on piano. With a little practice, you can master it in just a few days.

15 – Megalovania – Toby Fox (Undertale)



Best known soundtrack of the independent video game Undertale, developed by Toby Fox and released in 2015, Megalovania immediately attracted the attention of gamers with its density and dynamism. It was composed by Toby Fox himself.

Track reputed unplayable on piano because of its difficulty, there are however reworked versions that are much easier to play. La Touche Musicale offers an ultra simplified version of the song, within the reach of all beginner pianists.

16 – City of Stars – Justin Hurwitz (La La Land)



Performed by Emma Stone and Ryan Goslin in the musical La La Land, released in 2016, City of Stars is a beautiful piano song with a style that is both retro and totally new. Fans of the movie were immediately imbued with the special tone of this piece. In 2017, it won the Golden Globe for best original song.

17 – Twinkle Twinkle Little Star – Traditionnal



Twinkle Twinkle Little Star is one of the most famous piano tracks in the world.

The lyrics of the song come from a 19th century English poem composed by Jane Taylor, intitled The Star.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star was covered by Cartoon Studio English, Nursery Rhymes & Kids Songs, Nursery Rhymes, released in 2019.

The easy piano song is perfect to children or beginners who want to start to learn piano.

18 – Havana – Camila Cabello



Havana by Camila Cabello, released in 2018 in the album intitled Camila, is very famous today.

Latino and pop, the track were one of the best hits during the 2018 summer.

Havana is an easy piano song which can be played by all beginners.

19 – Jingle Bells – James Pierpont (Christmas song)



Jingle Bells is one of the most famous christmas song.

The melody is one of the best easy piano songs to play by a beginner !

Learn Jingle Bells and play it for your family in the next christmas.

20 – Fur Elise – Ludwig van Beethoven



Fur Elise is the most famous classical piano song composed by Ludwig Van Beethoven in 1810.

This is one of the most recognized piano pieces ever written.

Fur Elise is an easy piano song that can be played by all beginners, so go for it !

Conclusion on these 20 easy piano songs for beginners

The 20 known piano songs for beginners presented above, by their sensitivity and musical variety, will expand the genres of your repertoire. And guess what? These songs are very easy to play on piano. If you play them diligently, you'll learn them in just a few days. So go for it!

Now that you know popular songs that are easy to play on piano, we are going to open another topic related to piano songs: sheet music. In the next chapter of this guide, we will teach you how to read a piano score.

Chapter 8 – How to read piano sheet music?



In this Ultimate Pianist's Guide, you've learned piano basics, chords and how to play your first piano melody. Now it's time to learn how to read a piano sheet music!

Reading sheet music is not easy when you start playing piano. You are entering a new reading system and you need to know the codes to understand it. The objective of this 7th chapter is not to make you a confirmed pianist who could read any score instantly. It's rather to show you the basics of score reading. This will give you all the keys to understand how scores are written and train you to progress little by little.

What is a piano sheet music?

Definition and generalities

Piano sheet music use a musical notation system which is a form of language. In the same way that we write series of letters and words to say something in writing, musical notation, through a system of symbols, tells the notes, the rhythm, the tempo to be used to play the song correctly. Scores are the finalized format of this music notation system. Contrary to the words we use, musical notation is a universal language. Musicians around the world who have learned to read it can play the songs that are written.

The concept of staff

Read piano sheet music starts with knowing the notion of staff. Contemporary music notation is called staff notation (or stave notation in UK). It's characterized by a set of five horizontal lines and four spaces that each represent a different musical pitch. Musical symbols (such as notes for example) are placed on the staff in different places according to their pitch and function.



Notes present on the staff can be placed either on the lines or between the lines, in white spaces.

Why are piano sheet music important to play piano?

Some may tell you that knowing how to read piano sheet music is not essential for playing music. And that's true. But you should know that if you don't, you will find yourself limited in your learning. There are several reasons for this.

You can play whatever you want

Imagine that you can read a piano sheet music. You could take any score of the song you want, and play it right away on piano. In the same way that you can read a text that you have in front of you, you could play the song just as easily. Compared to learning method that works with memory, this is a huge time saver.

You can write down what you play

Have you ever invented a song in your head and sung it? If so, you have already composed your own song! In musical composition, knowing how to read (and therefore write) a score is fundamental. Why is that? Simply because you can write down your song to make sure you never forget it and so that other pianists can play it.

But writing a song on a score is also a way to structure your song. It's as if you have to imagine a text that you invent without writing it down. When you write, you constantly look back on the previous phrases you wrote to help you build the rest of the story. For musical composition, it's exactly the same thing. Writing the song helps you to structure it and give it its full form.

You can speak with the other musicians

If you speak the same language as other people, you can understand them and they can do the same with you.

If you know how to read a piano sheet music, you can discuss and debate with other pianists. In this way, you can benefit from the advice of other musicians in order to progress or even make others progress by giving your own advice. Practicing piano is not only an activity, it's also a community.



Music notation

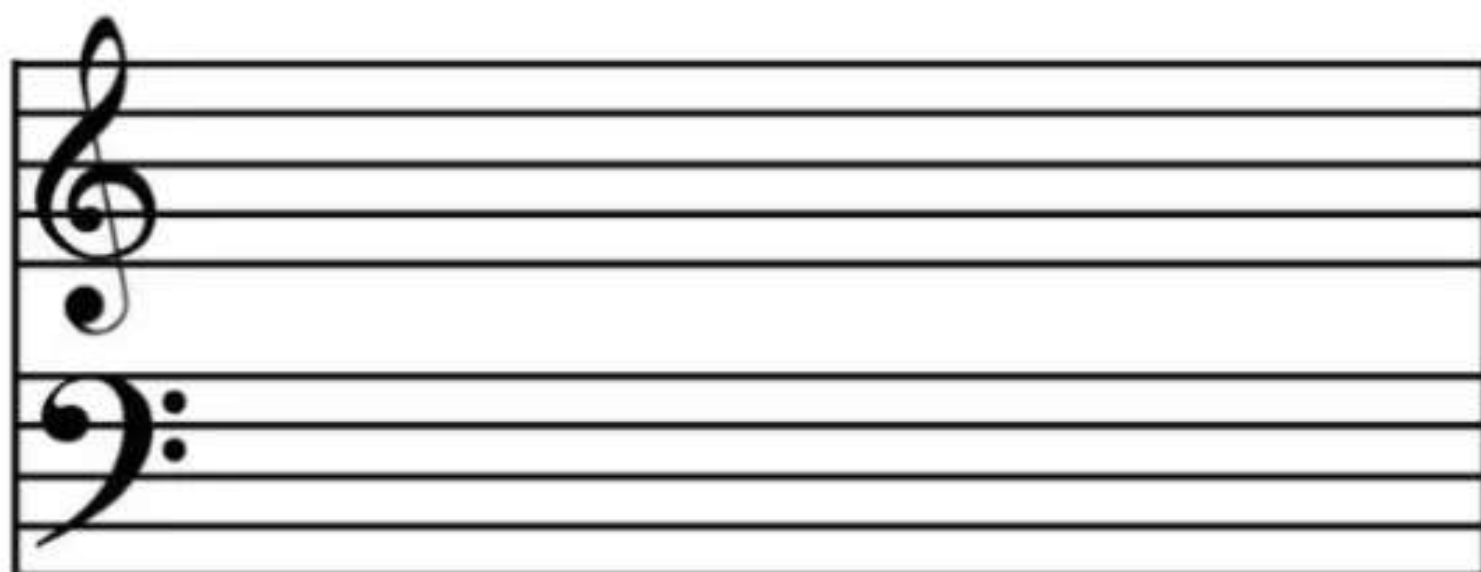
We are now going to see the basics of music notation on a piano sheet music. We will mainly talk about the constitution of a score: where are the hands, the different types of notes, the spaces, the middle C, ...

These are very basic notions but very useful to start reading scores and playing piano in the best conditions.

Most of the topics covered will be based on the elements learned in the previous chapters, especially Chapter 4 – Piano basics and Chapter 5 – Basic piano chords.

The hands on the staves

On the score, the first step to do is to identify where are the hands. Indeed, each hand will have its own space on the sheet music and you will then be able to easily differentiate the notes you will have to play with the left hand from those of the right hand.



On the score, you can see that there are two different staves, each consisting of 5 lines. The top staff is called the treble clef and is usually played with the right hand. The bottom staff is called the bass clef and is generally played with the left hand.

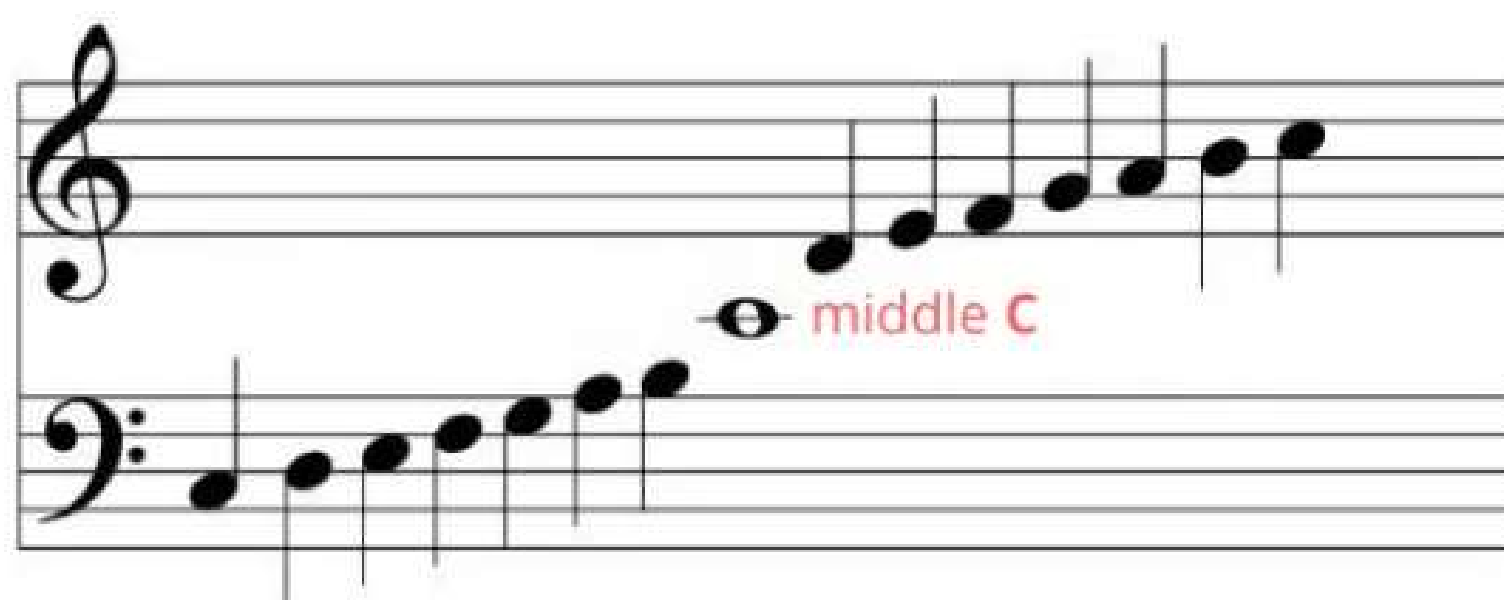


If you want to start by working only on the right hand of a song, then you should concentrate only on the notes present on the treble clef.

The middle C

We saw in Chapter 4 of this guide that finding middle C is important for the orientation on a piano keyboard. The same goes for the score. The middle C gives you a reference point that will help you identify the position of the other notes.

The middle C is in the center of the score, between the staves, on an imaginary line.



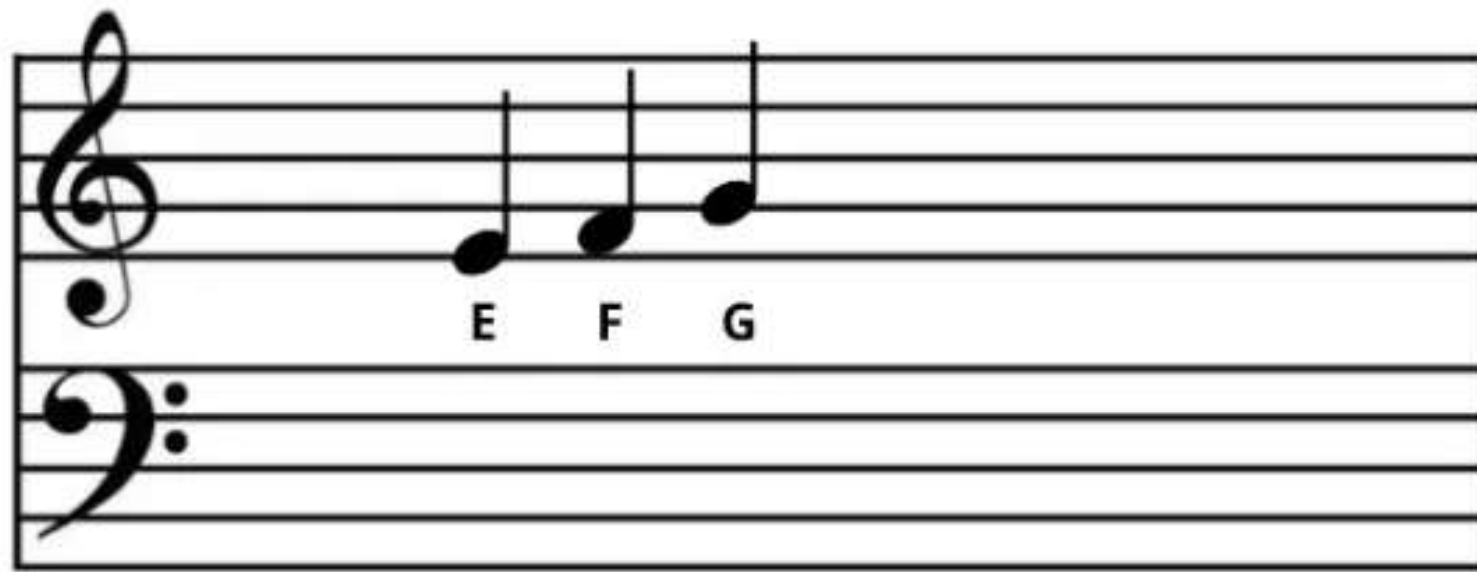
So when you start to read piano sheet music, the best way to orient yourself is to always start from middle C.

The notes

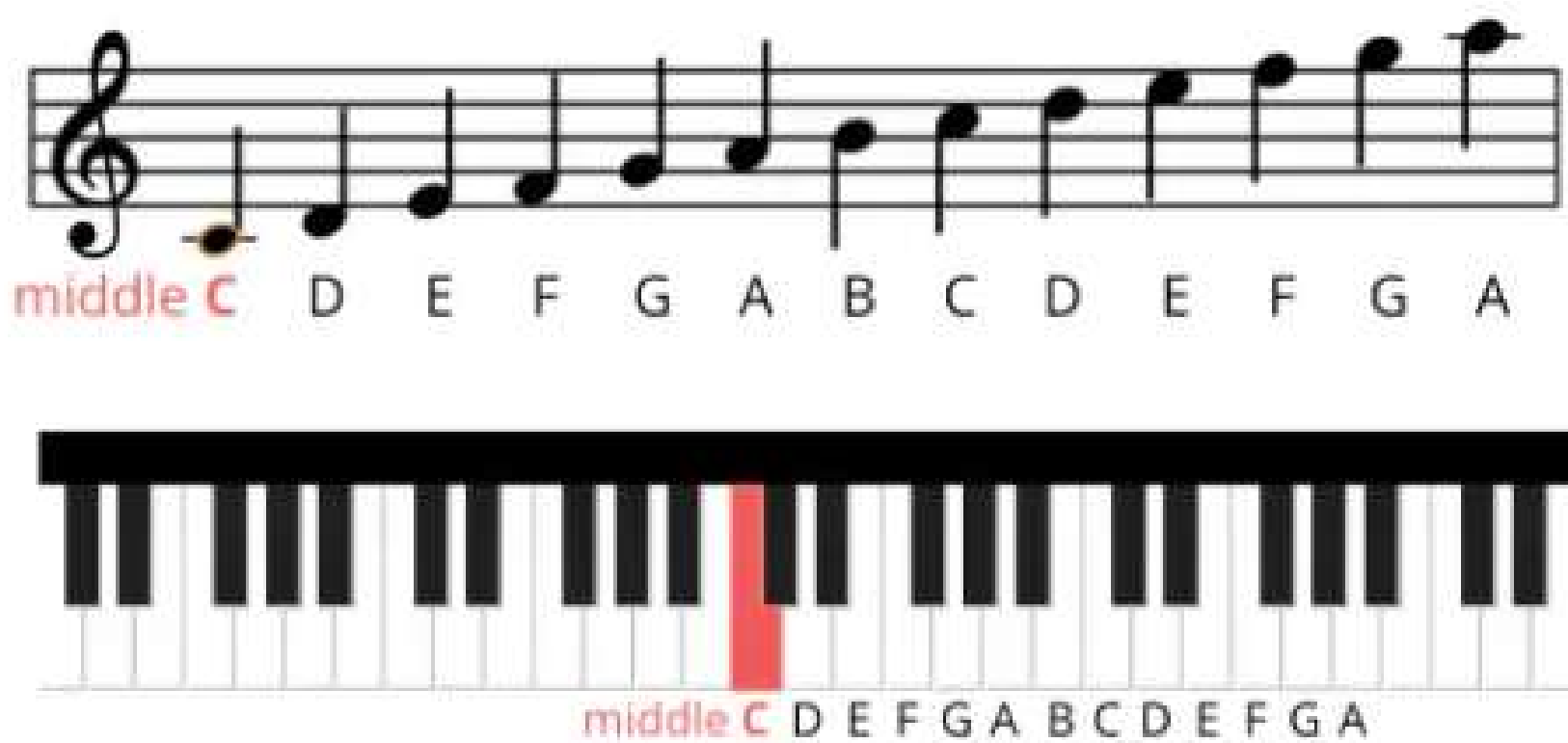
The location on the staff

On the staff, notes can be either on a line or between lines, in white spaces. The head of the note (the black ball) shows its actual position on the staff. The higher the note is on the staff, the higher its pitch will be. In other words, the higher the note is on the staff lines, the more it means that you will have to move your hand to the right of the piano keyboard.

When you move up one note on the right of your piano keyboard, you will move up one level on the staff. Note that a level can be a line or a blank space. For example, if you want to make E – F – G, E will be on the first line of the staff, F will be on the line space (white space) just above it, and G on the second line of the staff:



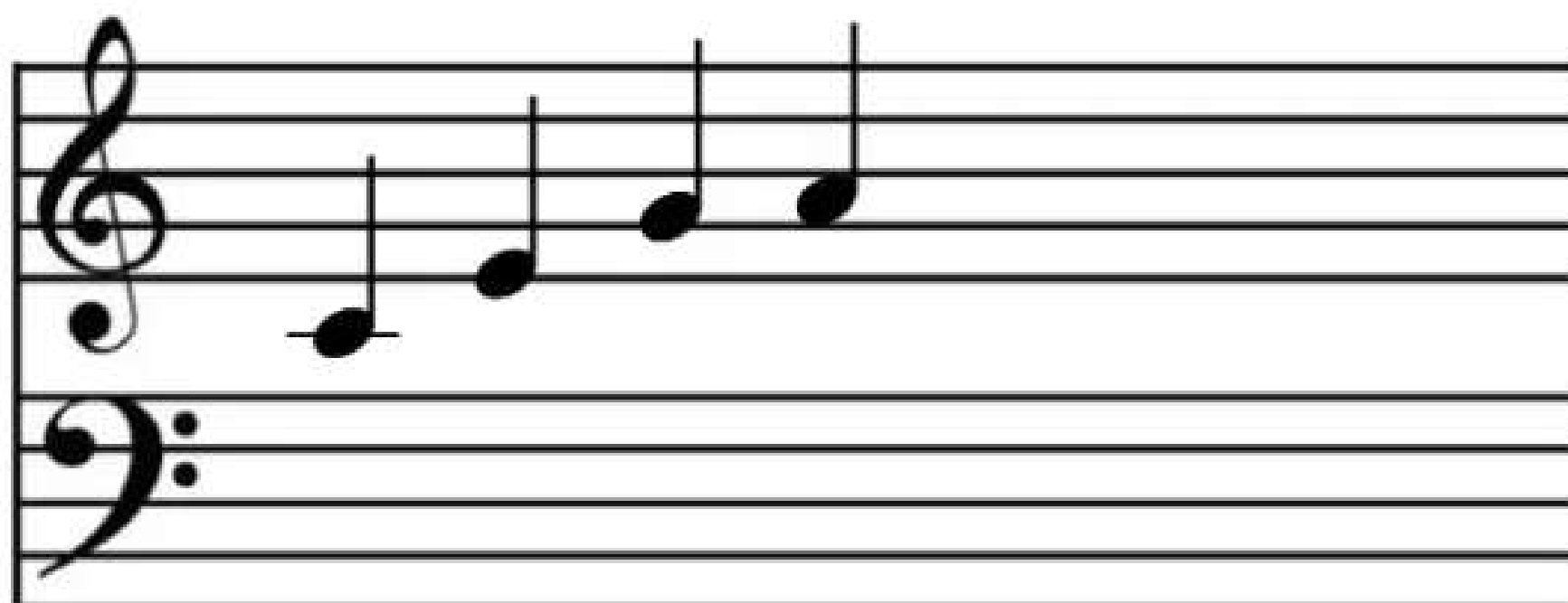
To facilitate our understanding, we will concentrate only on the treble clef (the right hand). Let's play all the notes from the middle C on the score. Don't forget, always start from middle C to orient yourself on the staff.



Let's look at the beginning of this sequence of notes. We notice that our middle C is two levels below the first line. The note D is at one level just below the first line. Finally, as seen above, the note E is the note on the first line of the staff. You can use this C – D – E sequence as a reference point to know the sequence of notes and their position in the staff. For your information, the orientation of the tails of the notes does not matter. The logic remains the same.

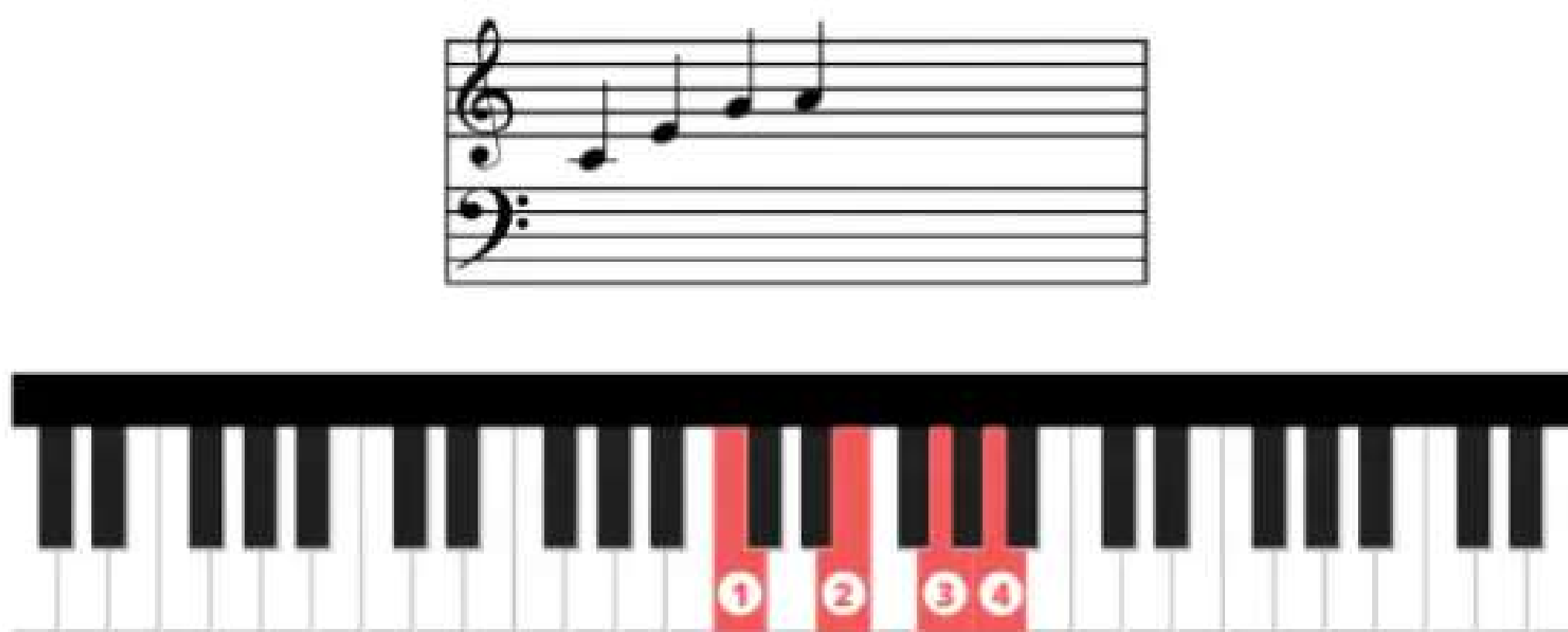
To sum up, the secret to reading notes on a staff is to proceed step by step.

First, translate the sheet music:



With the series of notes present on the staff, we can deduce that this is the following sequence: C – D – G – A.

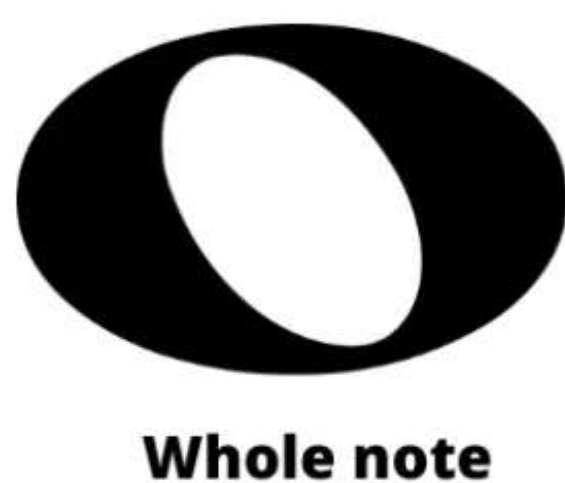
Once the score has been translated and the notes identified, we have to execute the sequence on the piano keyboard:



Note durations

As we have seen, the location of the notes on the staff tells us which note we should play on our piano keyboard. But in order to play correctly we must also take into account the duration of the note. The duration is symbolized by specific note shapes. There are five main note shapes (and therefore duration). By switching from one symbol to the other, the time of the note is halved:

1 – A whole note is symbolized by an empty circle without a tail and lasts four counts:



2 – A half note is symbolized by an empty circle with a tail and lasts two counts. Two half notes occupy the same amount of time as one whole note:



3 – A quarter note is symbolized by a full circle with a tail and lasts one count. Two quarter notes occupy the same amount of time as one half note:



Quarter note

4 – Notes that are shorter than quarter notes have a special symbol called a flag. Each flag halves the value of a note. A eighth note is symbolized by a full circle with a tail and a flag and lasts a half count. Two eighth notes occupy the same amount of time as one quarter note:



Eighth note

5 – A sixteenth note is symbolized by a full circle with a tail and two flags and lasts a quarter count. Two sixteenth notes occupy the same amount of time as one eighth note:

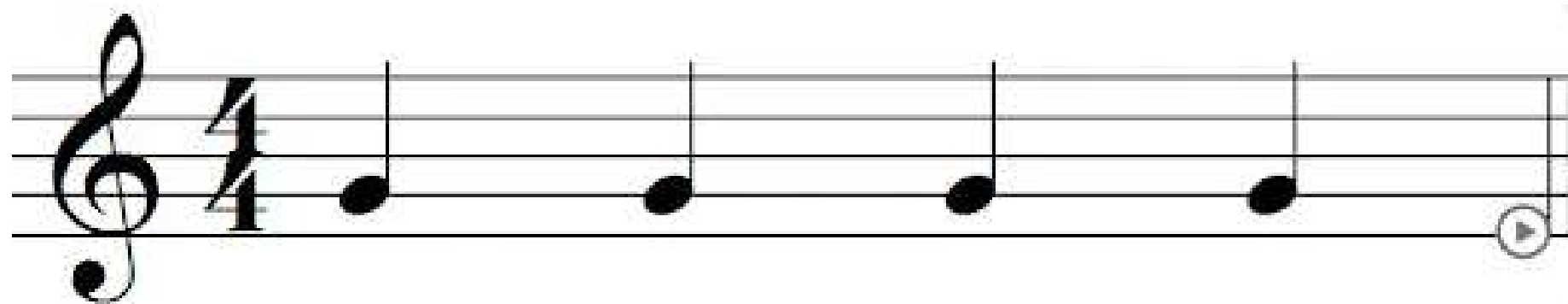


Sixteenth note

The bars and the structure of the score

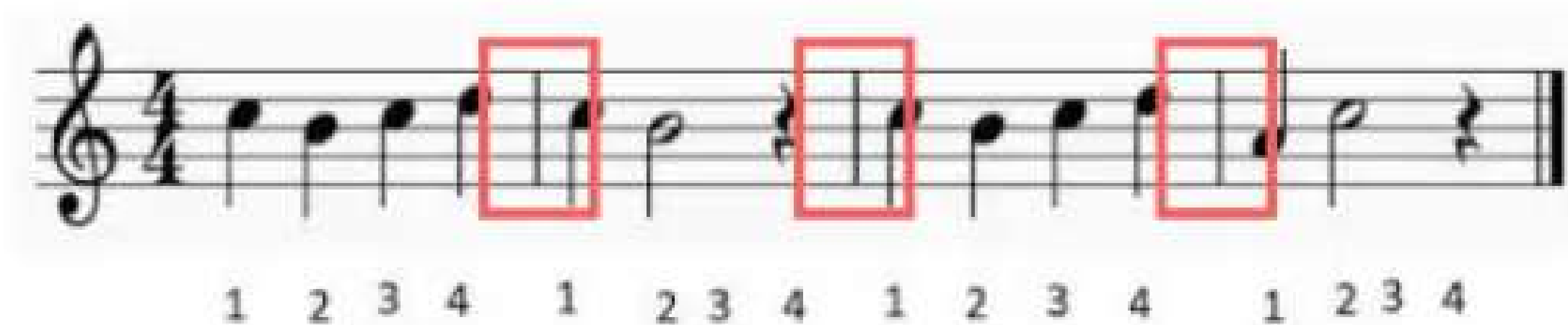
The bars are used to give the value of the notes, i.e. how long the notes will last. When you play piano, the bars are fundamental: they will give all its structure to the score and will define the way you will play the song.

They are located at the beginning of the staff and are represented by two numbers one on top of the other.



The bottom number indicates the unit of time (4 for the quarter note and 8 for the eighth note). The top number indicates the number of units (bottom number) per bar.

In the example above, 4/4 means that there will be 4 beats per bar. The quarter note will be worth 1 beat, so there will be 4 quarter notes per bar. When a bar ends and another one starts again, this is symbolized by a vertical line on the staff.



We have just seen the basics of reading piano scores. Now you can learn hundreds of easy songs just with this start of the course.

Wouldn't it be convenient to be able to download sheet music for free so we can practice? That's perfect, the next chapter of our Ultimate Pianist Guide offers 15 websites to download easy piano sheet music for free.

Chapter 9 – 15 websites to download easy piano sheet music for free



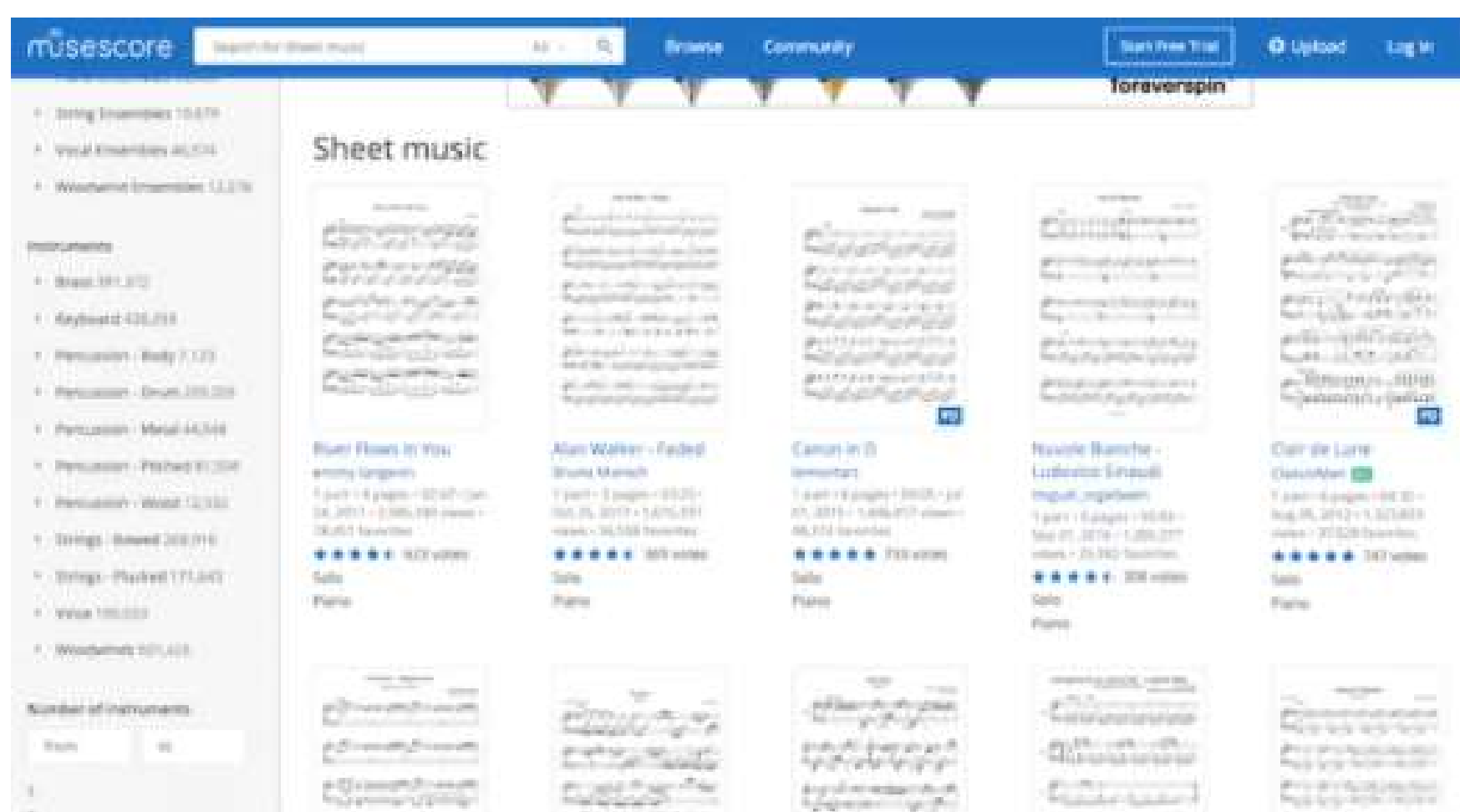
After learning in the previous chapter of this Ultimate Pianist's Guide how to read an easy piano sheet music, we thought it might be handy for you to know where to download some for free.

There are indeed many websites with free piano scores, but we don't always know where to find them and if they are really good quality or not. For example, on La Touche Musicale, you can learn piano online with simplified piano sheet music for beginners.

The purpose of this post is to give you an overview of the best websites offering free piano sheet music in pdf so that you can make your own choice!

1 – Musescore (paid, 14-day trial period)

Genres: pop, rap, easy piano sheet music, classical, ...

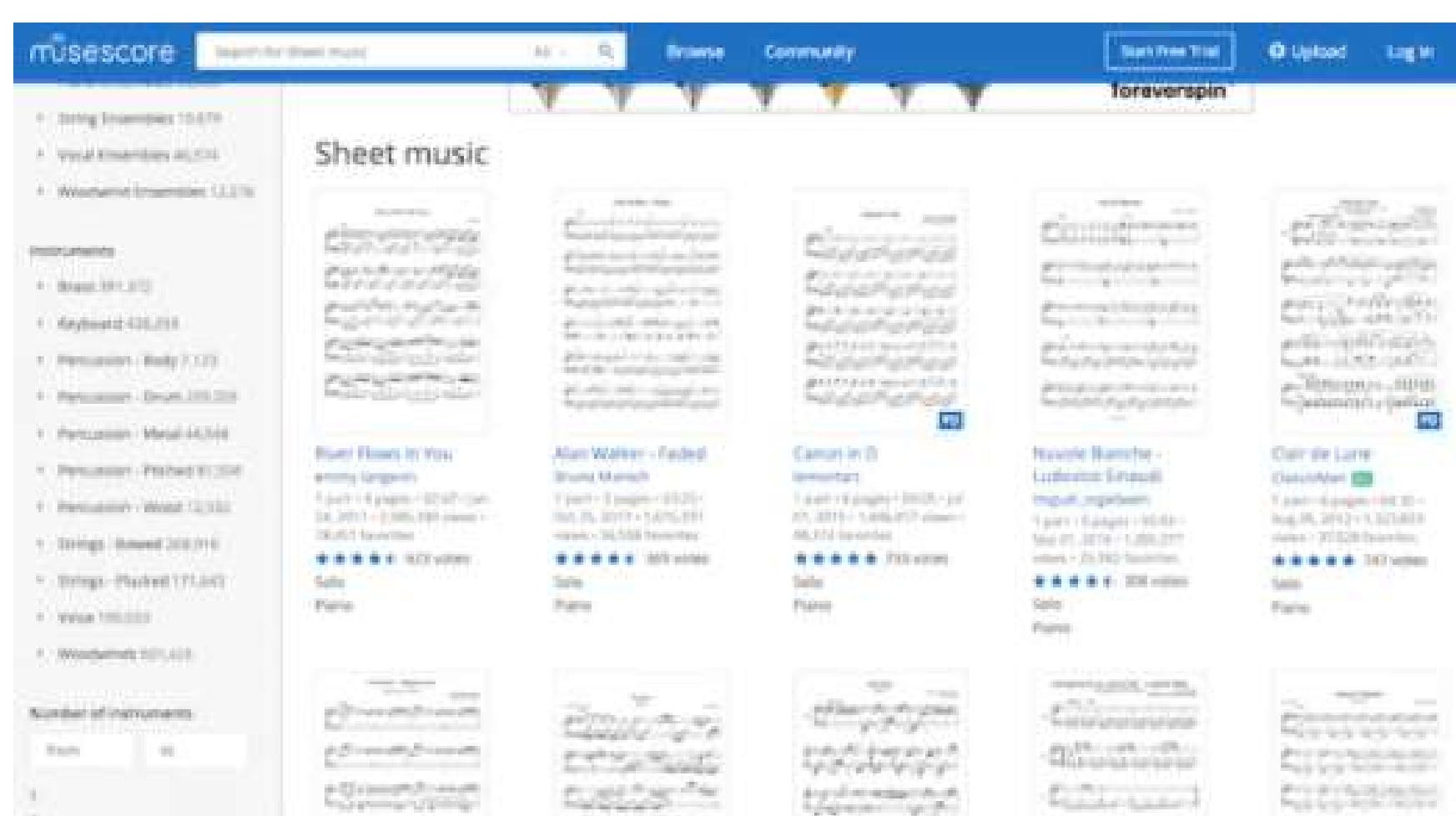


This is by far the best website for piano sheet music. Musescore offers more than a million pieces of all genres and for all skill levels on piano. By subscribing for about 4 euros per month, you can download an unlimited number of scores.

On Muscores, you can also download the midi file of your favorite songs to upload them on your La Touche Musicale account and learn them easily on piano!

2 – Muscores (very limited free version)

Genres: pop, blues, jazz, folk, rap, classical, ...

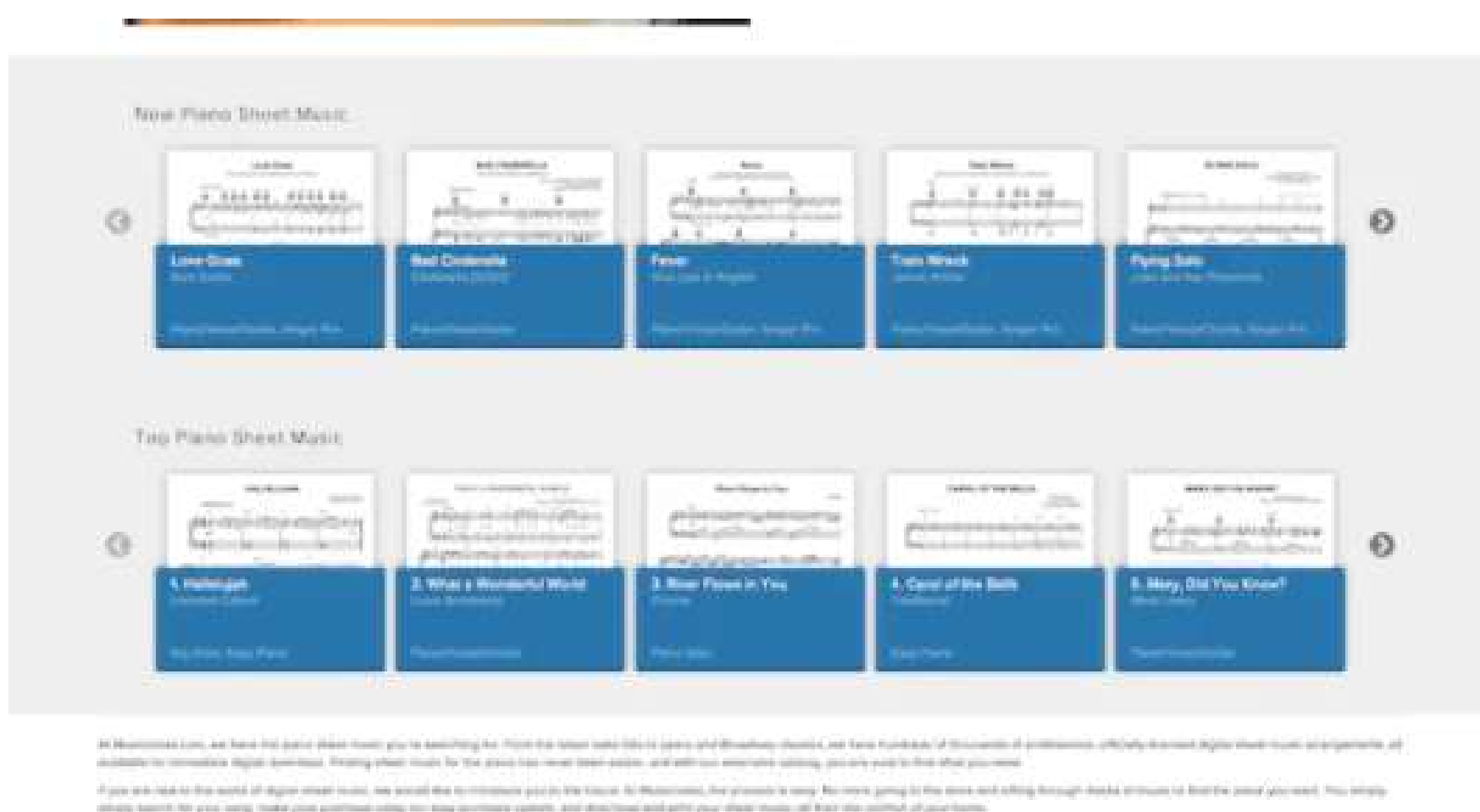


Muscores offers a “Public Domain” section composed of about 2000 songs that you can download for free in PDF and MIDI format (after creating your account). On this section of the website, you can download a lot of free easy piano sheet music in pdf of popular songs, such as those of Chopin, Beethoven or even Mozart.

Tips : download the midi file of the song for free and learn it on piano with La Touche Musicale.

3 – Musicnotes (paid)

Genres: easy piano pdf, christian, beginner notes, Broadway, classical, country, hymn, jazz, ...



Musicnotes is a very good website with a lot of easy piano sheet music. You can find all your favorite artists and songs on Musicnotes.

You can use the filters in order to choose your free piano scores according to their categories (easy piano pdf, hymn, pop, new age, movie, TV, ...).

The scores are of very good quality and you can download them in PDF on your device after buying them.

Indeed, to download a sheet music on Musicnotes, you have to pay about 4€ per score.

4 – G Major Music Theory

Genres: traditional piano, easy piano adults, easy piano kids, beginners, wedding, christmas, christian, movie



G Major Music Theory is a very easy to use website which proposes piano sheet music for free.

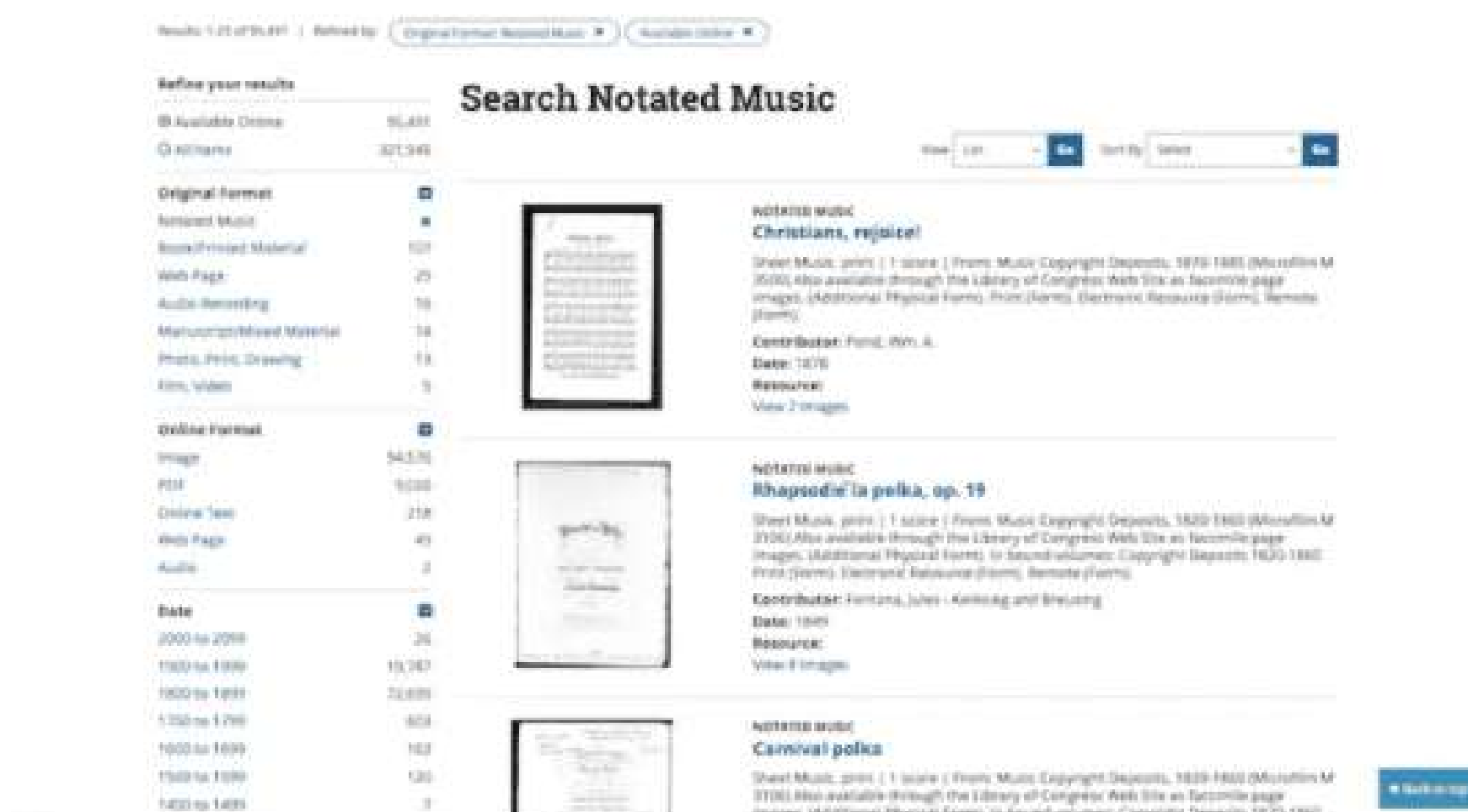
On this website, you can find a lot of scores of various genres: wedding, christmas songs, world music, jazz, classical, easy piano pdf, ...

You can download all the sheet music for free on G Major Music Theory. All the songs are classified by skill level: from beginner (1st pieces, Primer, One, Two, Three, Four) to intermediate (One, Two, Three, Four). With this classified system, you can download the free piano sheet music in pdf according to your skill level and progress step by step.

To download a sheet music for free, you have to click on one category (1st pieces for example) and click on one of the small green circles located under the pdf icon of the table.

5 – Library of Congress (free)

Genres: classical music, polka, christian, American music, hymn, ...

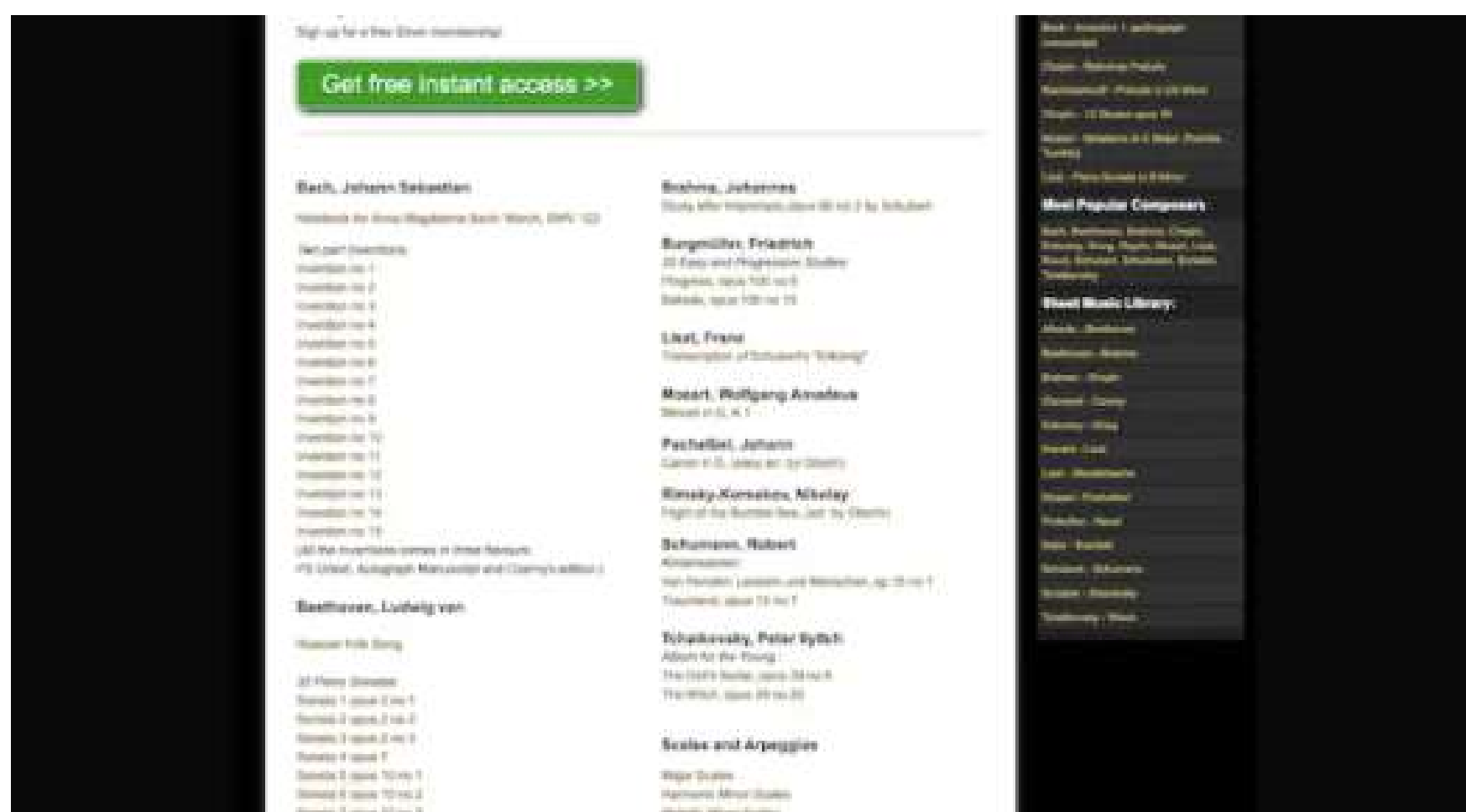


This governmental website offers a lot a piano sheet music for free. You can filter the scores library by date (1500 to 1599, 1600 to 1699, 1700 to 1799, ...), by location (United States, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Massachusetts, ...), by contributor, by subject (World War, Waltzes, songs with piano, ...), by language or by online format (image ,pdf, online text, ...).

On the Library of Congress website, you can find and download thousands of easy piano sheet music for free.

6 – Piano Street (free)

Genres: classical piano



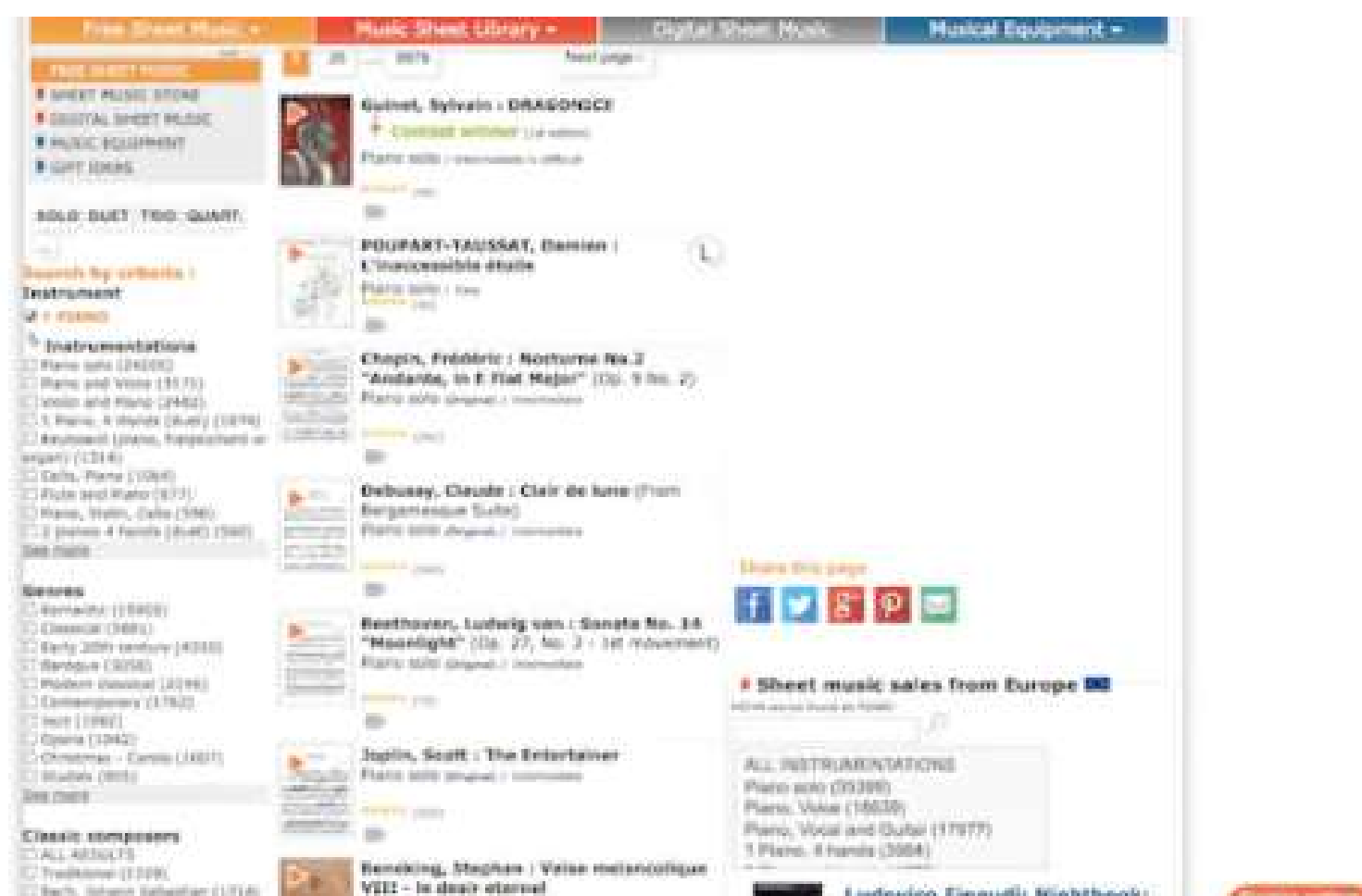
Piano Street offers access to over 30,000 piano sheet music in high quality pdf format available for instant downloading and printing.

You can use the advanced piano music search to find all the scores you love: use the filters by composer, title, opus, period, type or level to find your favorite songs according to your skill level on piano.

Before downloading a sheet music, you just have to sign up for free on the website.

7 – Free Scores (free)

Genres: classical piano, jazz, blues, romantic, rag time



Free Scores is one of the richest libraries of songs on the web.

The website is not necessarily the most elegant but it's full of songs of all genres (rather classical music and royalty-free music).

You can browse its huge content rich of thousands of songs by filtering (on the left of the page) the sheet music by instruments (piano, guitar, flute, ...), genres, composers and skill level (beginner, easy, intermediate, advanced, expert).

To download a score, nothing could be simpler: click on a song title and, once on the page, click on "Download PDF". It's as simple as that!

8 – Mutopia (free)

Genres: classical piano, royalty-free music, jazz, blues, romantic, public domain



Mutopia is an open-source project which want to give access the most complete library of sheet music belonging to the public domain.

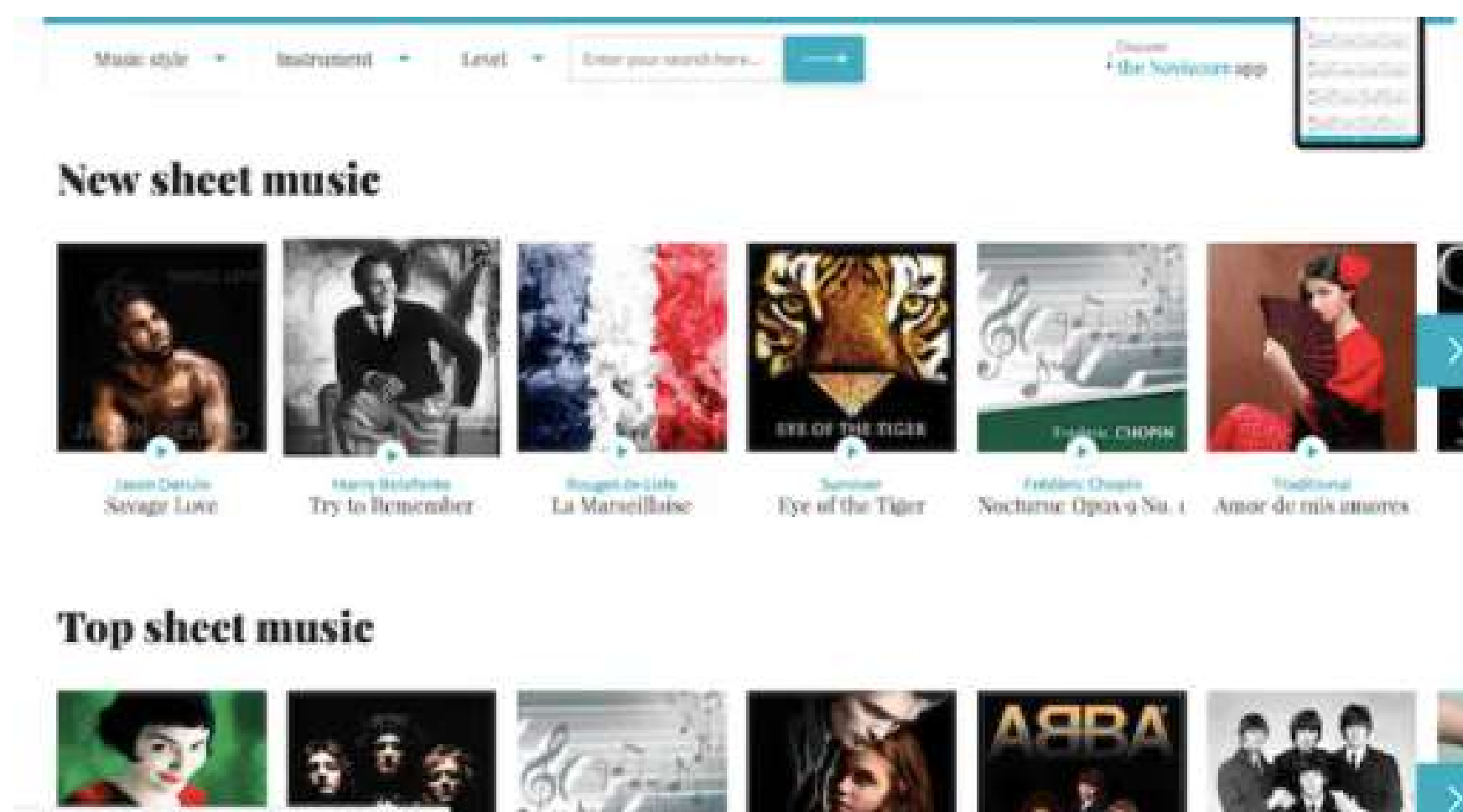
On Mutopia, you can find thousands of piano sheet music, from Mozart to Beethoven. You can search by instruments (piano, guitar, accordion, clarinet, flute, ...), by composers and by styles (baroque, classical, folk, hymn, jazz, march, gospel, ...).

On Mutopia, all is free. You don't have to sign up before downloading free piano scores.

On this website, you can find a lot of easy piano sheet music for beginners.

9 – Noviscore (free trial)

Genres: generalist, pop, jazz, hits, ...



Noviscore offers hundreds of piano sheet music to download in pdf format.

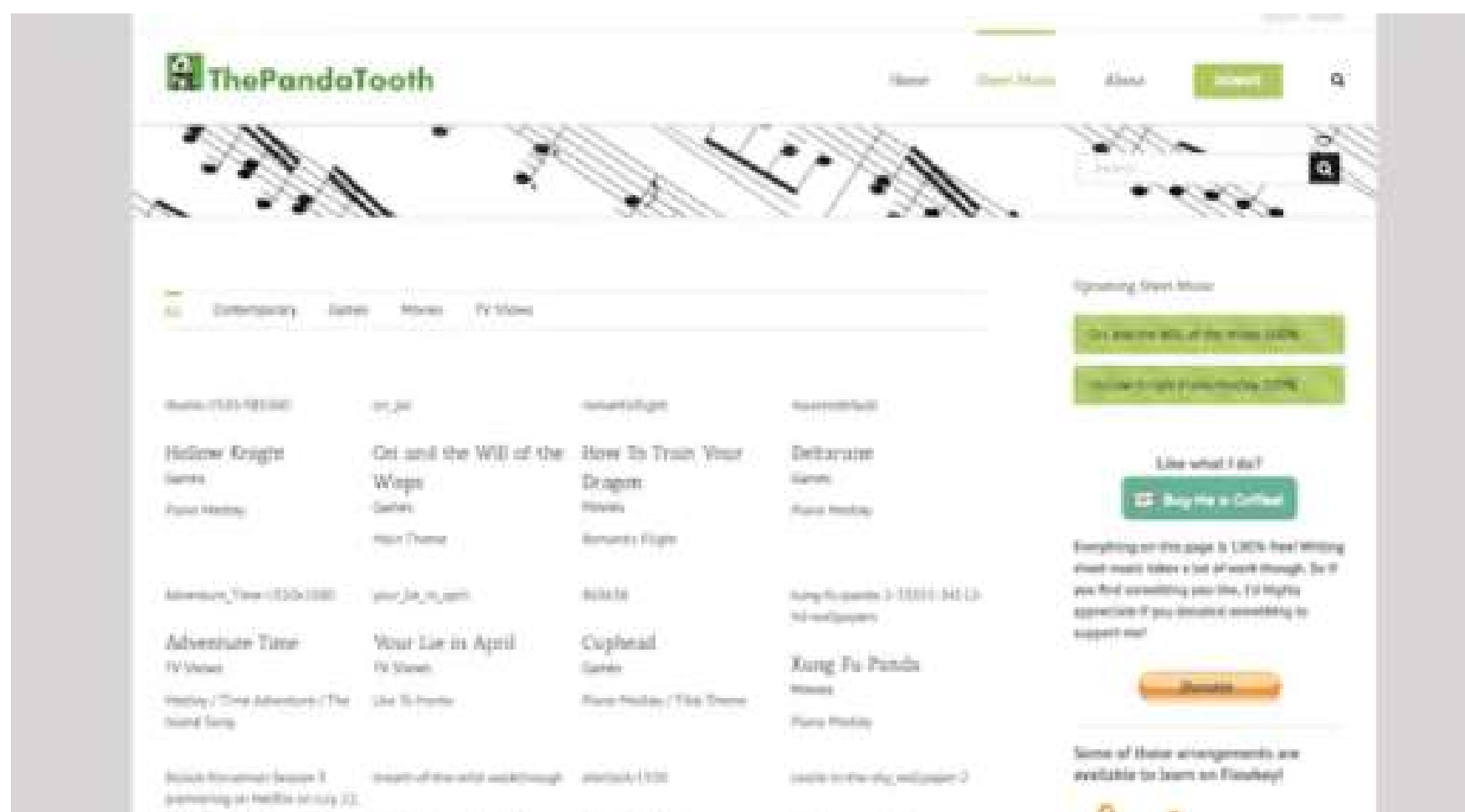
You're sure to find what you're looking for on this website because all genres are represented. Its catalog is very generalist and exhaustive.

You can also choose the songs according your skill level: if you're a beginner, you can choose easy piano sheet music.

However, you can only download a small part of the score in PDF format. To have the whole score, you will have to pay between 4,99€ and 6,99€ depending on if you want to have the notes displayed on the score or not.

10 – The Pandatooth (free)

Genres: movies, TV Shows, anime piano sheets, games, contemporary



The Pandatooth is a website where you can find easy piano sheet music for beginners. The songs available on The Pandatooth come from movies, games, animes or TV Shows: How to Train Your Dragon, Kung Fu Panda, Gravity Falls, Castle in the Sky, Rick and Morty, Jurassic World, The Witcher 3, ... You should know most of them!

If you are a fan of anime or manga, this website will please you. It offers a lot of anime piano sheets for all skill levels.

To download the sheet music of your song, you just have to click on the title of the song and click on "Sheet Music pdf" on the right of the page.

11 – Flat.io (free)

Genres: generalist, hits, pop, rap, jazz, romantic, movies, TV, anime, Disney, classical, ...



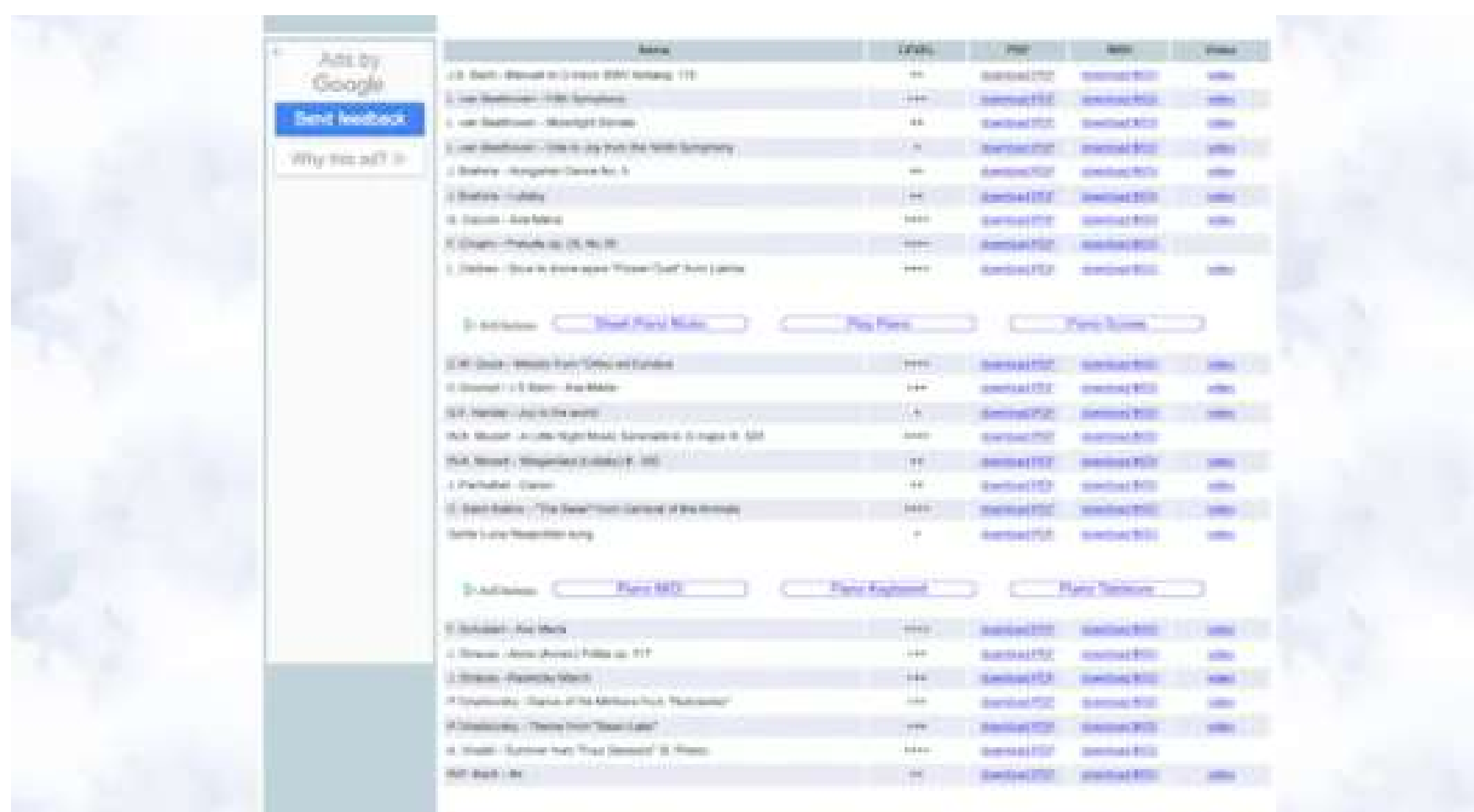
Flat.io is a website and a mobile app which allows you to create, edit, share and download piano sheet music. The Flat community is huge and there are millions of songs posted by the users on the website. You'll find all genres: pop, rock, rap, jazz, romantic, movies, TV, ...

The songs library is for all skill levels: you'll find a lot of easy piano sheet music for beginners, but also more difficult songs for advanced pianist. If you love manga universe, you will love Flat. It provides a lot of anime piano sheets that you will be able to play regardless of your skill level.

All the scores are available for free. You just have to click on "Download PDF" once on the page of the song.

12 – Learn Piano Free Sheet Music (free)

Genres: classical piano



On the Learn Piano Free Sheet Music website, you can find some songs available on pdf and midi format. For the most part, the scores are classical music: Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Caccini, Chopin, Delibes, Schubert, Mozart, ...

This website is very easy to use: the piano sheet music are available from the homepage and you just have to click on the “download pdf” link to download the file. It’s as simple as that!

You can also download free midi files to upload them on your La Touche Musicale account and learn them easily on piano.

13 – The University of Maine Library (free)

Genres: classical piano, latino, dance, free-royalty music, public domain, romantic, ...



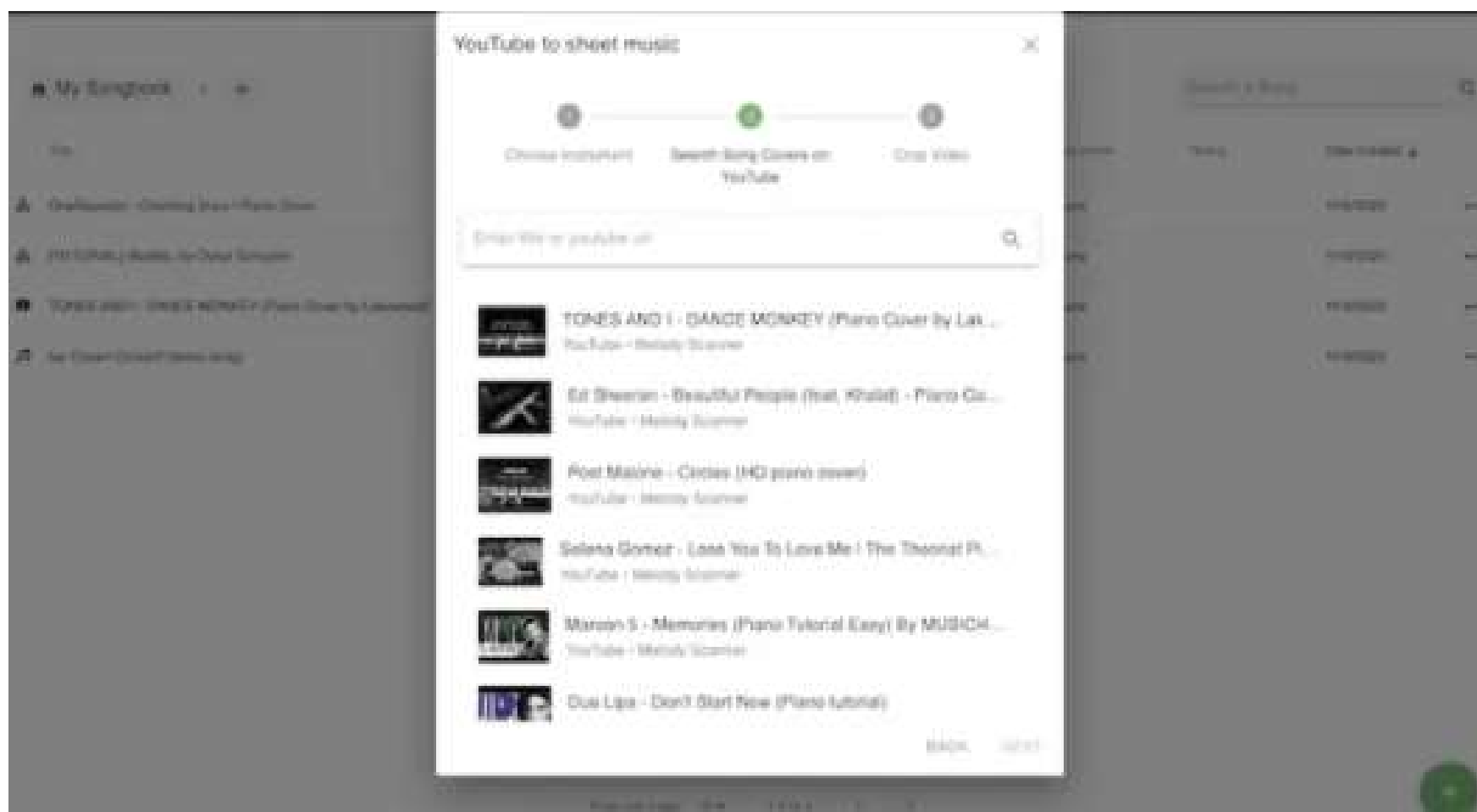
The University of Maine website has an online library composed of 3,500 songs organized in 3 collections: Vocal Parlor/Salon, Piano Parlor/Salon and Violin Parlor/Salon. The most part of the piano sheet music are from the public domain and can be downloaded for free.

You'll find a lot of easy scores for beginners in this library.

To download a sheet music on the University of Maine website, you just have to click on a song and click on "Download". Enjoy!

14 – Melody Scanner (free)

Genres: Youtube songs, generalist, youtube covers



Melody Scanner is not really a website containing a library of free piano sheet music in pdf, but it allows you to make some very easily from the video covers of your favorite songs on Youtube.

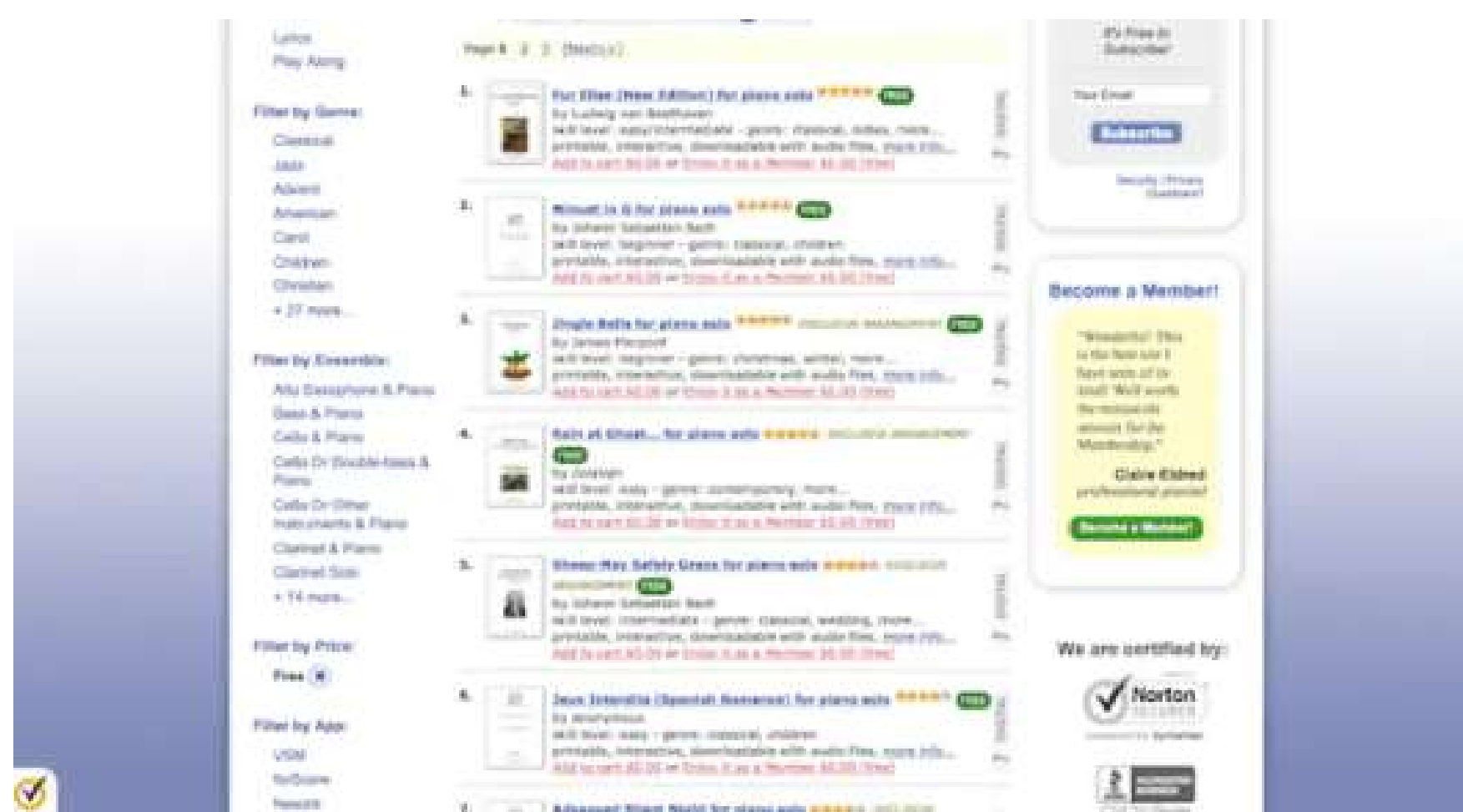
On your Melody Scanner account, you just have to choose the title or url of a Youtube video, and the app will transcribe the sound of the video on piano sheet music.

You can choose the best covers of your favorite songs on Youtube and download the score in pdf format.

However, this technology is not yet optimal and there are still many errors on the sheet music. But you can still use it on easy songs to get the score for free.

15 – Virtual Sheet Music (free)

Genres: classical piano, public domain



Virtual Sheet Music is a website that offers some free piano sheet music in pdf for beginners.

By filtering by instrument (piano) and by free, you can find some Christmas songs, classical music, traditional hymns or even well-known lounge music.

The scores are of good quality and you can simply download them in pdf format. Just click on “Add to card” (don’t panic, the sheet music costs \$0.00) and place your order for free!

We hope that this list of websites will allow you to find what you are looking for and to practice the scores of your favorite songs.

Now let’s move on to the next chapter of our guide: piano pedals. What are they for and how to use them? That’s what we’re going to find out.

Chapter 10 – Piano pedals: what are they for and what do they do?



In this 9th chapter of this guide, we look at piano pedals, their function and proper use.

Once you have acquired the piano basics, know how to make chords, play songs, or read sheet music, you will certainly want to give more depth to your playing. That's what piano pedals are for. They give nuance to the songs you play. But to do so, you need to know what they are used for and how to use them properly. And this is the purpose of this 9th chapter.

Piano pedals

Piano pedals are located at the bottom of the pianos. There are usually three different pedals that have very specific functions.

Pedals on acoustic pianos

Whether uprights or grand pianos, all acoustic pianos have pedals towards the bottom of their structure. On traditional pianos, there were always 3 pedals. On newer pianos, sometimes only two pedals (the most commonly used) are present. On acoustic pianos, pedals are entirely part of the acoustic mechanism and are therefore integrated into the structure of the piano, unlike digital pianos.



Pedals on digital pianos

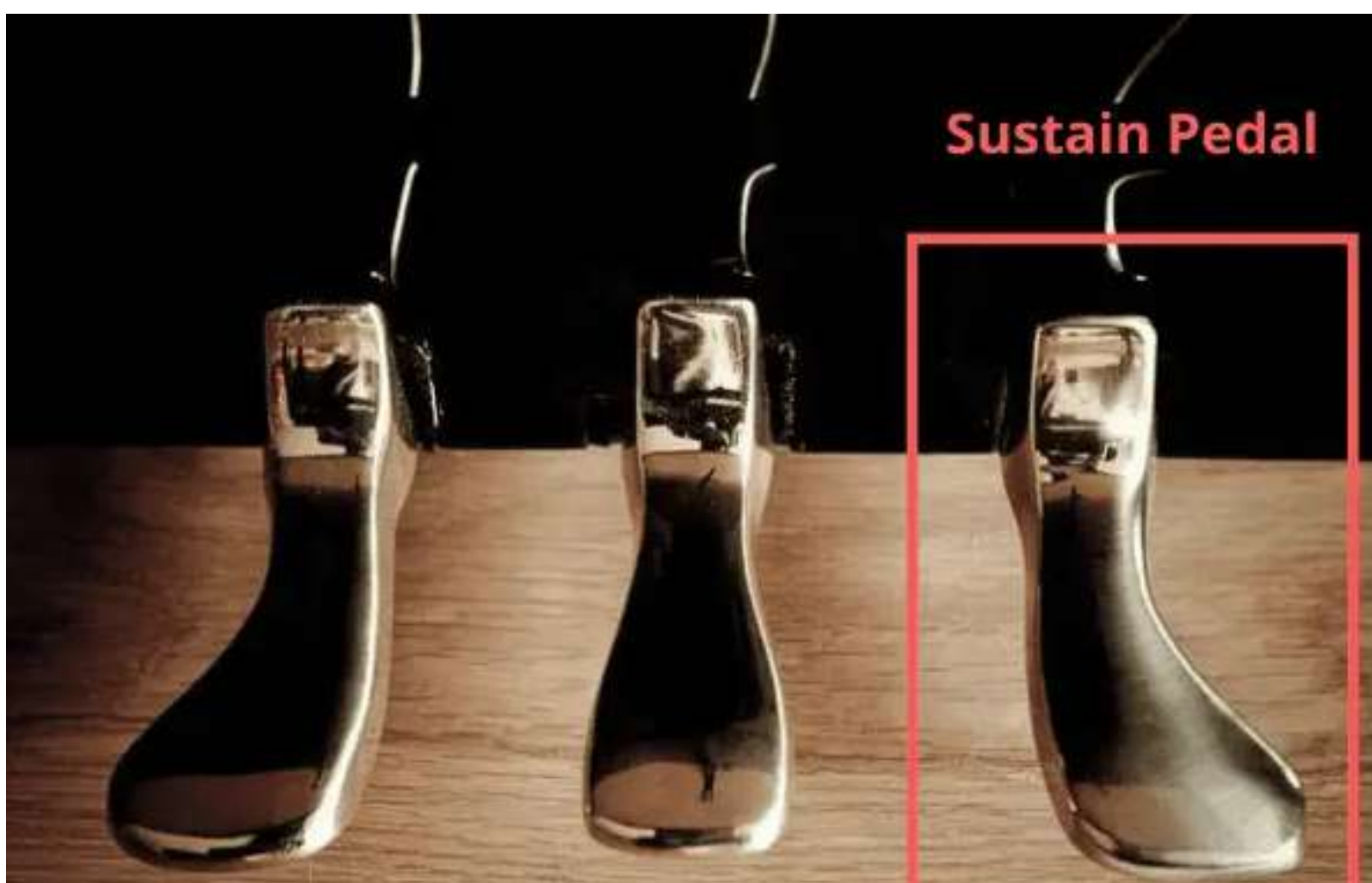
On digital pianos, the pedal system is optional. Usually, only one pedal (the one most used by pianists) is connected to the piano, which has a specific connection system. On a digital piano, you can therefore play without a pedal. However, as soon as you start to progress, you will quickly notice that your playing lacks depth and nuance. Pianists who play a digital piano for several years often end up getting a pedal and learning how to use it to improve their playing.



What do the pedals on a piano do?

Pedals have an essential function on a piano: they give nuance and depth to your playing. There are a maximum of 3 pedals on a piano and each of them has a specific function and effect on your playing.

Sustain pedal

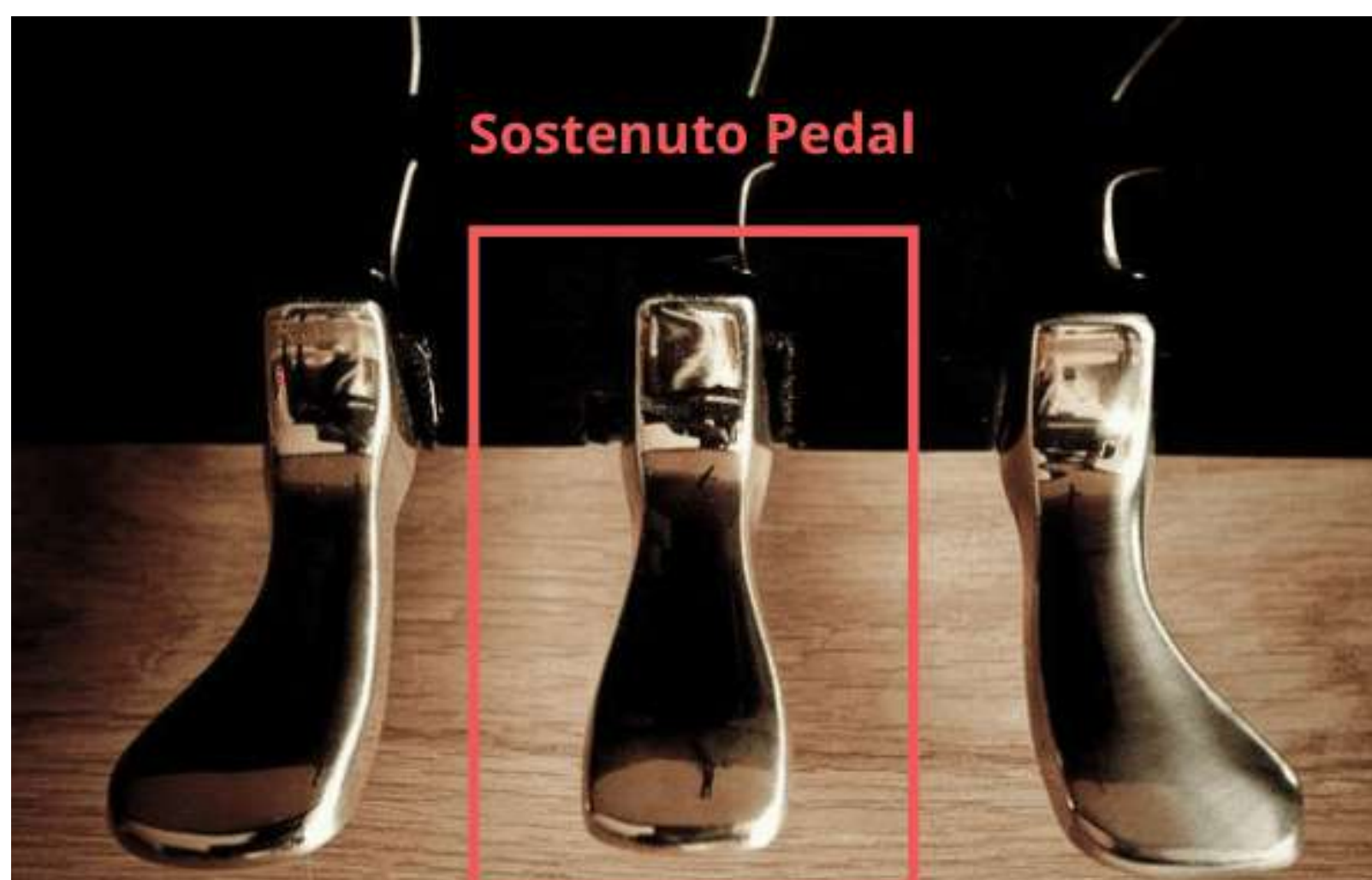


The sustain pedal is the pedal located on the right. It's the most used on acoustic pianos, but also on digital pianos and digital keyboards. On acoustic pianos, the sustain pedal causes a mechanical phenomenon where the dampers are lifted from the strings. This is called the “damper” phenomenon. On digital pianos, this mechanism is reproduced artificially and electronically. In all cases, the sustain pedal makes it possible to retain the sound emitted when pressing the piano keys and to make it last longer, through a resonance effect. When the pedal is pressed, the sound continues to last even if you stop pressing the piano keys. Once you stop pressing the pedal, the sound stops immediately.

When you start playing piano, the sustain pedal can be quite difficult to use. Indeed, it should be used only at certain moments of the song. If you abuse it, your playing will lose its fluidity and depth. The notes you have played previously will fade into the notes you are playing.

However, once you understand how to use it, your game will be much more fluid. You will be able to give an echo effect which, when used properly, will improve your transitions between two sequences of a song. Your playing will no longer be jerky.

Sustain pedal



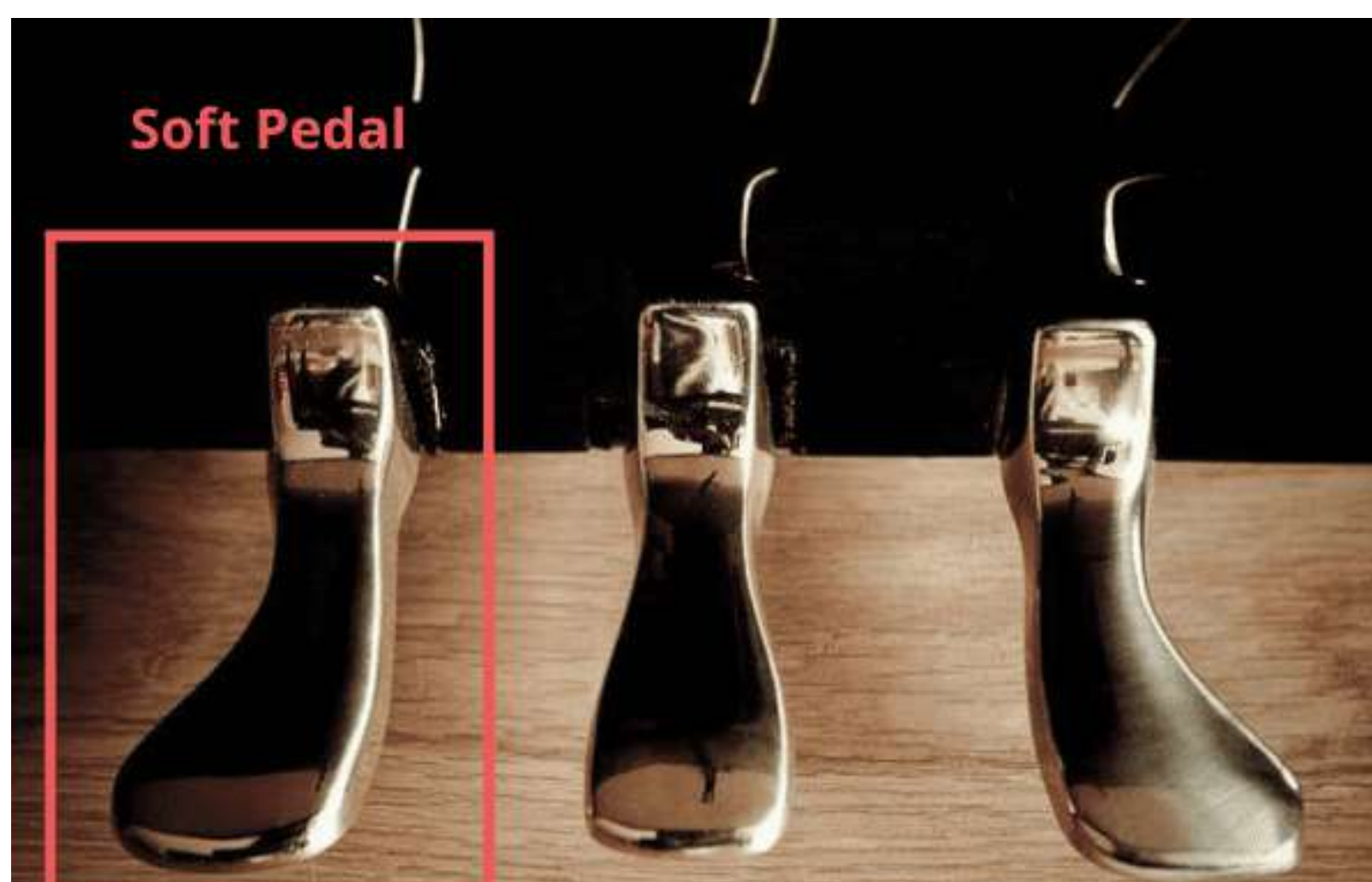
The sostenuto pedal is the middle one on a piano. “Sostenuto” is an Italian word meaning “sustained”. In music, this word can have several meanings but in this case it means “to stifle”.

When you use the sostenuto pedal, only the notes already played before are affected. Those that will be played after pressing the pedal will not be affected. As with the sustain pedal, the effect of the susteno pedal stops as soon as you stop pressing it.

But how to use it? For example, you can perfectly use this pedal when you play a chord with your left hand. Press it when you play this chord (so that it can have its effect on the notes of this chord) and you can immediately afterwards use both hands to play another part of the song. The effect is different from that of the sustain pedal since the notes of this part do not last longer. But the notes of the chord will be prolonged.

For those of you who use upright pianos, you may have noticed that the description of the sostenuto pedal does not correspond to the one above. Indeed, on upright pianos, this pedal has a different effect. It allows you to attenuate the sound of the notes you play. It is also called “repetition pedal”. This allows you to work on your song or exercise without disturbing those around you. Playing a piano sequence to perfection requires repetition and many mistakes are made when you’re learning piano, which can irritate the ears of those who hear you play. This pedal allows you to practice without disturbing others.

Soft pedal



The soft pedal, also called “una corda pedal”, is the left-most pedal on the piano. To properly explain the function of the soft pedal, we must first explain the acoustic and sound mechanism of a piano. The strings of a piano are assembled in groups of two or three strings that are tuned in unison. This mechanism produces a richer sound each time you press a note, since the hammer hits several strings at once.

When you use the soft pedal on an acoustic piano, the hammers shift slightly to the right. As long as you keep the pedal pressed, the hammers will remain in this off-center position. When you press a note while the soft pedal is used, the hammers will strike only one or two strings of that group, instead of the usual two or three strings. This acoustic mechanism produces a more muffled and less rich sound. This pedal is used when you want to produce a dampening effect on certain parts of the song, in order to give more acoustic strength to the next part, once the soft pedal is released.

How to use piano pedals?

Foot position

Piano pedals are used to produce a very large number of effects. They help you to give depth and nuance to your playing. Let's start with the basics: the position of the foot on the piano pedals. The pedals are used with the sole of the foot only. The toes must not come into contact with them. Whether it's used or not, the pedal must always touch the foot, which must be prepared to press on it. The heel must constantly touch the ground and must never come off.

Now that we saw the position of the foot on the pedal, we can see some methods of use. There are many different techniques for using pedals wisely. Here are a few of them.

Legato pedalling

This term refers to the most commonly used sustain pedal technique. It's used when the pianist wishes to prolong the sound of a note before playing the next one. The sound of the first note stops and the sound of the second one begins at the same time. To do this, your foot must release the pedal exactly when your hand goes down. The legato pedalling will produce an effect of fluidity in your playing.

Direct pedalling (or simultaneous pedalling)

This term refers to the most commonly used sustain pedal technique. It's used when the pianist wishes to prolong the sound of a note before playing the next one. The sound of the first note stops and the sound of the second one begins at the same time. To do this, your foot must release the pedal exactly when your hand goes down. The legato pedalling will produce an effect of fluidity in your playing.

The preliminary pedal

This is the simplest technique. It simply consists of engaging the sustain pedal in preparation for the beginning of the song or a specific passage. This gives the sound produced by the note (or chord) maximum depth and resonance.

Joining pedal

This technique makes it possible to join at the sound level two notes that cannot be joined with the hands. In this case the pedal is only used to join the notes, not to add a particular effect to the sound.

Articulation pedal

This technique consists in separating each of the notes played while using the pedal as an echo or resonance effect. This allows each note to benefit from an extension of sound while anticipating in a more qualitative and fluid way the sound produced by the next note. In this way, your finishes will be more controlled and your playing will sound much more fluid.

Half pedal

This technique consists in pressing very lightly on the sustain pedal so that the dampers touch only a little bit the strings of the notes you play. This gives a slightly richer and more melodic sound.

How to read pedal notation on a piano sheet music?

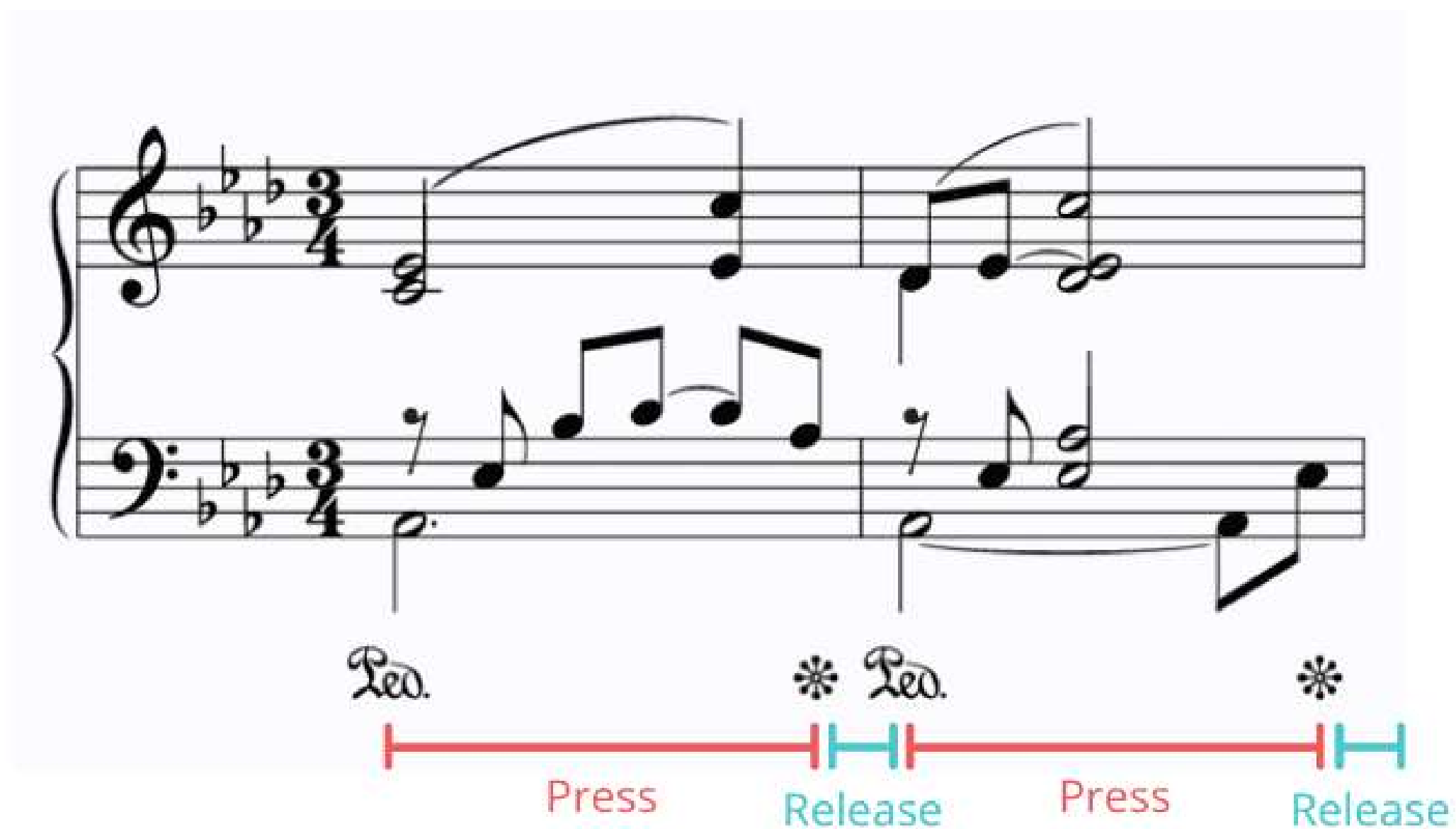
The notation of pedals on a piano score is very simple. For each pedal, there are two symbols: one symbol to tell you when to press the pedal and another symbol to tell you when to release it.

The notation of the sustain pedal

The sustain pedal is noted as follows:

- To press the pedal: “Ped.”;
- To release the pedal: “*”.

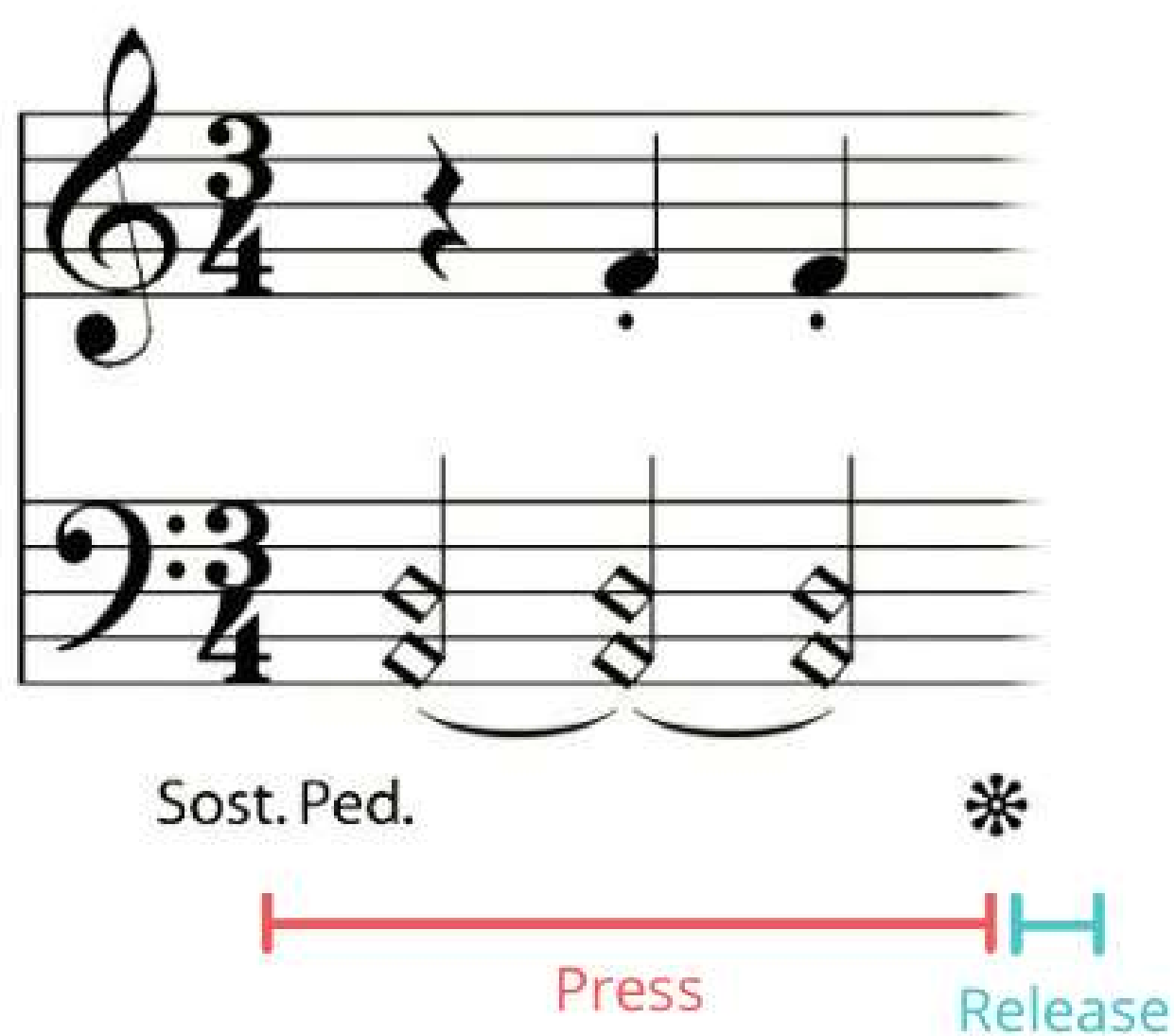
As you can see, during the time between the “Ped.” and “*” symbols, all the notes of the staff must be played with the pedal pressed.



The notation of the sostenuto pedal

The sostenuto pedal is noted as follows:

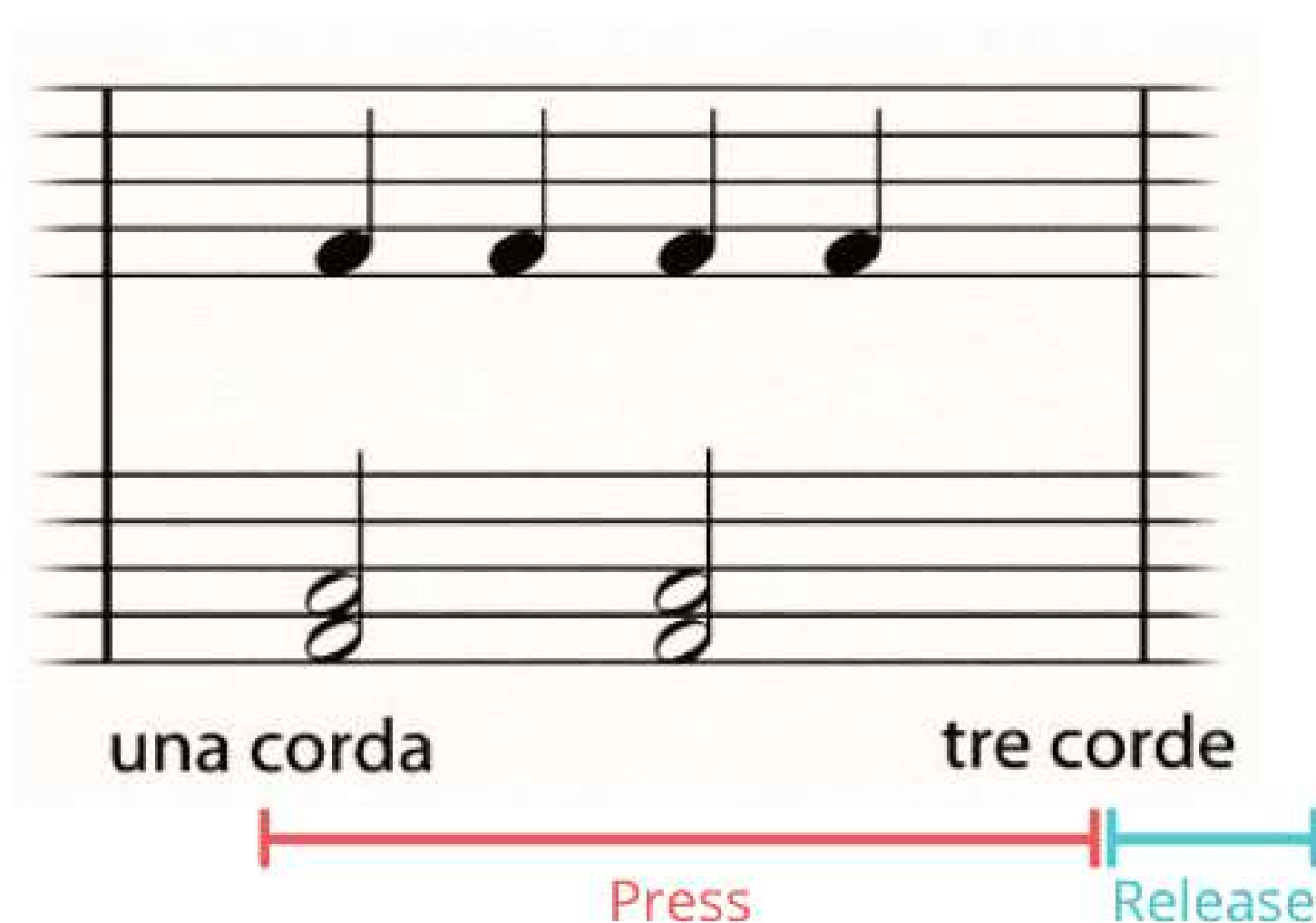
- To press the pedal: "Sost. Ped.";
- To release the pedal: "*".



The notation of the soft pedal

The soft pedal (or una corda pedal) is noted as follows:

- To press the pedal: “una corda”;
- To release the pedal: “tre corde”.



Now that you know what piano pedals are for and how to use them, we will see the best piano practice techniques to progress efficiently without getting discouraged.

Chapter 11 – The 10 best piano practice techniques to progress



In this guide, we have seen many elements related to piano learning: piano basics, how to make a chord, how to play your first piano melody, how to read a score, ... But all this is useless if you get discouraged after a few weeks of piano practice.

The piano is an instrument that is worked on over time and the results take time to be effective.

This is why we are now going to present you with the 10 best piano practice techniques that will help you stay focused and progress quickly.

1 – Maintain a weekly schedule



As with any activity, piano must be worked on assiduously in order to progress. Do you think you can improve your skill level in sport by practicing only one session every two months? No. On piano, it's the same.

From the start, you should therefore set a number of sessions that you will do per week. We advise you to start with 3 or 4 sessions per week. Like traditional lessons in music schools, learning piano at home requires a certain frequency to obtain satisfactory results. You can choose to work after class or work at 6 or 7 pm. For example, your work schedule over a week can be broken down as follows: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. This schedule allows you to have a rest day between each session and thus improve your cognitive abilities during your work sessions.

It's up to you to organize yourself as you want according to your motivation and your time. The important thing is to stick to your schedule over time. If you stick to it for several months, you will soon see that your efforts will be rewarded.

2 – Remove distractions during piano practice sessions



When we have to work (classes, job, sports) we are always tempted to distract ourselves by doing things that are less tiring and more entertaining. How many times have you been on Facebook during classes or during work meetings? This is a behavior that everyone tends to adopt. It's the same when you're learning piano.

However, it slows us down considerably in our progress. It's therefore important not to spread yourself too thin. Before starting each piano session, you should put your phone in airplane mode, remove the social networking tabs from your computer, and move to a quiet room in your house, such as your bedroom. The important thing is that you stay focused for the duration of your work session. That way, you'll progress much faster.

3 – Set specific objectives for each work session



When you start your session, it's important to set goals that you will have to achieve by the end of the session. This method allows you to challenge yourself in order to progress very quickly. Once you reach your goal, you will feel a sense of satisfaction, which will motivate you even more to continue your efforts.

For example, if you are learning a song on piano, you can set a goal of learning to play the next 10 seconds of the song. If you are practicing chords, you can set a goal to be able to play 4 major chords smoothly at the end of the session.

Be careful, this method works well only if you set yourself achievable goals during the session. Don't set yourself the goal of being able to play a whole 3-minute song in only 30 minutes of session time, it won't be possible and it will discourage you. You need to take it step by step. With this method, you will progress very quickly and take real pleasure in your piano sessions.

4 – Favour short but frequent sessions (20 – 30 minutes)



Short sessions of 20 to 30 minutes are always preferable to long sessions of several hours. Scientific studies have proven that the cognitive capacities of the brain begin to become weaker after 20 to 30 minutes of intellectual effort. You begin to become distracted and have less memory for what you are learning.

Let's use this scientific knowledge in our piano work methods. Let's prefer 20 to 30 minute sessions several times a week (between 3 and 4 times) rather than long sessions once a month. This working methodology will be much more efficient. Thanks to it, you will be able to progress really quickly.

When you learn piano, you must therefore be efficient and assiduous during your sessions. It's a long-term work that produces excellent results after a few months. In addition, the large number of small sessions accumulated over several months will allow you to better assimilate the information over the long term. By adopting this technique, you will be able to remember what you learned several months ago during your first piano sessions.

5 – Always start with a warm-up



Each activity begins with a warm-up. Can you imagine starting your sport session without warming up? No, because the muscles need to be warm before starting a session. Piano is not different. It's also a physical activity, mainly because of the repeated movements of the fingers and hands, which can cause muscle pain. Warming up allows your muscles and tendons to practice slowly and thus reduce the pain when you play. This will allow you to focus even more on your goals during your piano practice session.

The exercises most used at the beginning of a session to warm up the fingers are the scales. But you can choose your own exercises. There are plenty of them on the web and you can make the choices that best suit you among thousands.

Once your warm-up is complete (5-10 minutes should be enough), you can start your session and reach your goals.

6 – Do not skip the steps



The most common mistake when you start to play piano is to want to skip steps. Indeed, what has made us want to play piano is often a friend who plays superbly, the performance of a pianist that we have seen on the web or in concert, songs that we often listen to and that we have wanted to play for a long time, ... There are a lot of reasons why we embark on this wonderful adventure.

It's important to be aware of your skill level when you start playing piano. So you have to go step by step, setting goals that are always more difficult to reach. Start with basic exercises that any beginner would do on piano. As soon as you feel comfortable with these exercises, increase the level of difficulty.

Don't choose a very difficult song that you love for a long time. Prefer begin with very simple songs (even if you find them less cool). Consider these simple songs as practice before moving on to your more difficult song.

7 – Mix the types of work sessions



Diversity is an essential part of all learning. Who likes to take boring courses that are all built the same way? This leads to fatigue because there is no diversity. So constantly incorporate new exercises, new challenges, new warm-ups, new songs, new techniques, ... into your piano practice.

If you notice that you have been stuck for a long time on an exercise during your piano practice, don't persist. During the next session, you will choose another exercise to vary and mix different types of pedagogy. If you get stuck on something for several weeks, you may lose motivation.

Also think about inserting more playful exercises or methods into your piano training. Indeed, by alternating between pure work techniques and fun, you will be much more able to learn effectively. Numerous scientific studies have also shown that this method of "gaming" in learning has a great influence on the student's progress. There are many fun exercises available on the web that you can take back to reinforce your piano practice.

8 – Get feedback on your playing



When you're learning piano on your own, it's always difficult to get feedback that pushes you to work on your difficulties. For beginners, this can be demotivating because they miss the presence of an experienced person, such as a piano teacher.

Gathering feedback during our sessions is essential to develop good habits and progress in the best possible conditions. Even if a teacher is the best way to get feedback, it's not the only one. There are indeed other solutions to help you. Many apps on the web offer you to play piano while listening to how you play. Just connect your piano to the app so that it can give you feedback in real time. This can be a very interesting and inexpensive solution, unlike the piano teacher.

If you are not interested in any of these solutions, you can develop your own feedback method. Take a sheet of paper, write down all the elements that are important to you in piano practice (you can look up the most important basics on the web), and watch yourself. Look at the position of your fingers, put a mirror next to you, take a video of yourself, ask someone close to you to watch you play, ... There are many ways to get feedback on your own.

9 – Motivate yourself



Do you remember that friend, that pianist or that song that made you want to start playing piano? It's important to keep this motivation in mind at all times!

Indeed, even if it shouldn't be your priority when you start, because you have to go step by step, starting with the simplest exercises, it should be your ultimate goal. You will be able to reach it in a few months or a few years. It's what motivated you when you start and will continue to motivate you in each of your piano practice sessions.

To always keep this motivation in mind, often watch videos of pianists on the web, watch people play the song you love, listen to the song you love over and over again. You have to be able to dream of having this skill level or being able to play this song. When you practice piano, dreaming is important and gives you a goal that will make you progress no matter what.

10 – Reward yourself



If it's important to work, it's at least as important to relax and enjoy yourself. Reward yourself when you have succeeded in doing something difficult. For every goal you achieve, you need to find a way to reward yourself. Something that relaxes or pleases you.

Unconsciously, your brain will get used to that pleasant feeling when the difficulty has been overcome and the goal achieved. This will make your piano practice sessions all the more effective.

It's important for your mind and morale to be satisfied and proud of what you have accomplished. It's this positive mindset that will lead you to continue your efforts and progress even faster.

Chapter 12 – The 7 best piano exercises for beginners



In the previous chapter of this guide, we talked about piano exercises that are important to warm up before a piano practice session or to improve your technique. This new chapter is designed to introduce you to the top 10 piano exercises for beginners that you can use for your warm-ups, improve the dexterity of your fingers and your rhythm.

1 – The Five Finger Scale

This first piano exercise is quite simple. Start by placing the thumb of your right hand on the middle C. Then place your other fingers on the next white keys. Your fingers should be located as follows: the index finger on D, the middle finger on E, the ring finger on F and the little finger on G.



Now, you must play each note in turn, starting with C. You will go up your scale until you play the G with the little finger, then go down the scale using the same fingers until you reach the C with your thumb. Repeat the exercise by accelerating gradually, but playing with regularity.

2 – Full scales

The whole scale is a slightly more complicated exercise than the previous one, because of what is called “thumb tuck”. This is a movement from which you will be able to continue moving up the notes of the scale by passing the thumb under the other fingers (usually under the index and middle fingers) and playing the next note with it. Usually this movement is used when we have to play scales higher than 5 notes in a row, in order to be able to keep moving up the scale as smoothly as possible.

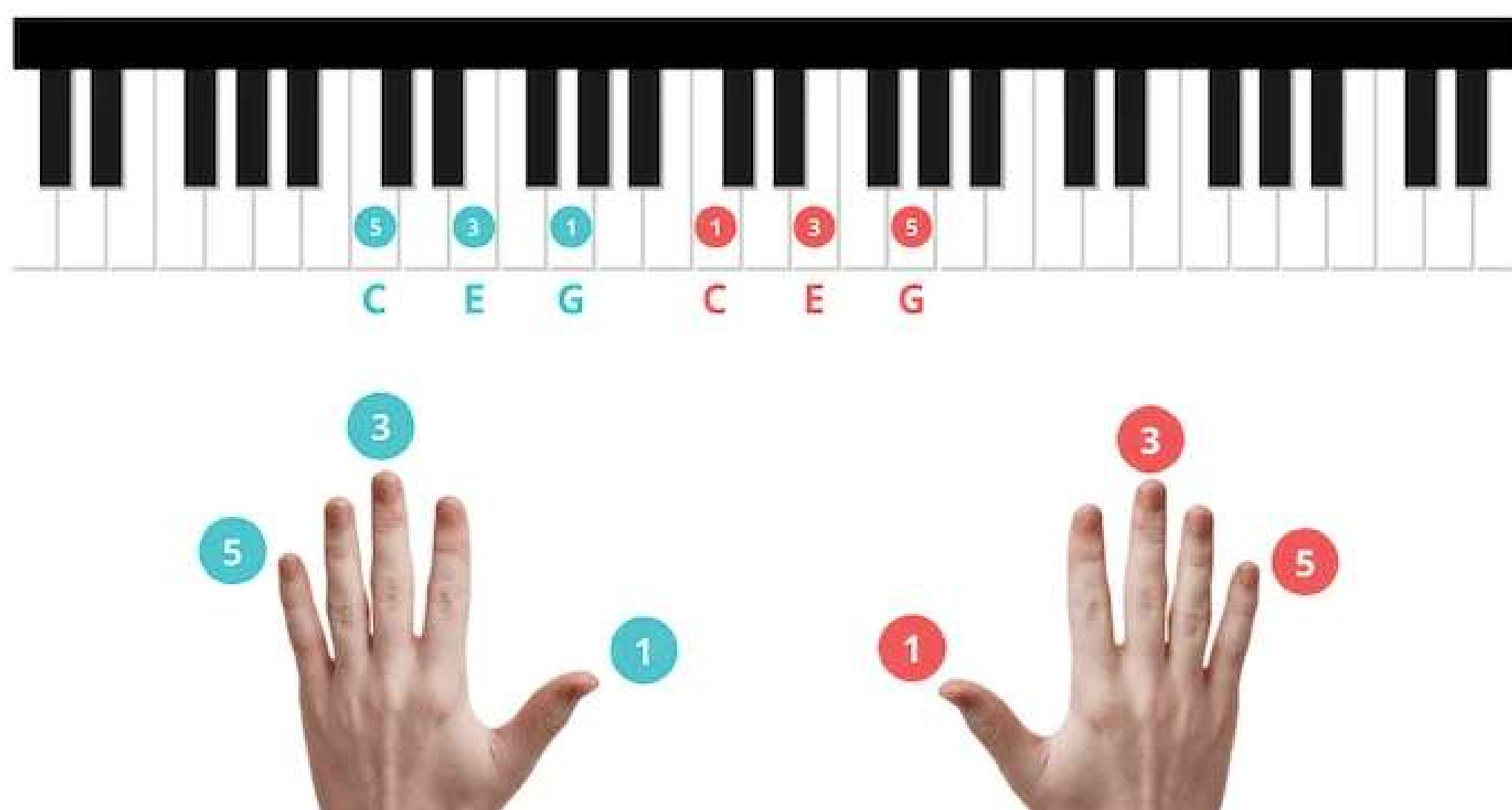
Before practicing the full scale as a piano exercise, we recommend practicing thumb tuck on a 3- or 4-note series. Once you understand the movement, you can start practicing the full scale exercise.

To do so, position the thumb of your right hand on middle C, the index finger on D, and the middle finger on E. Play the 3 notes in a row. Then pass the thumb under the index and middle finger to play the F with it, while repositioning your other fingers on the next keys. Your fingers should now be placed as follows: thumb on F, index on G, middle finger on A, ring finger on B, and little finger on C. Now all you have to do is play the notes one by one with the right fingers.

As usual, take it easy at first. Gradually increase the speed of your exercise as you feel comfortable.

3 – The chords exercises

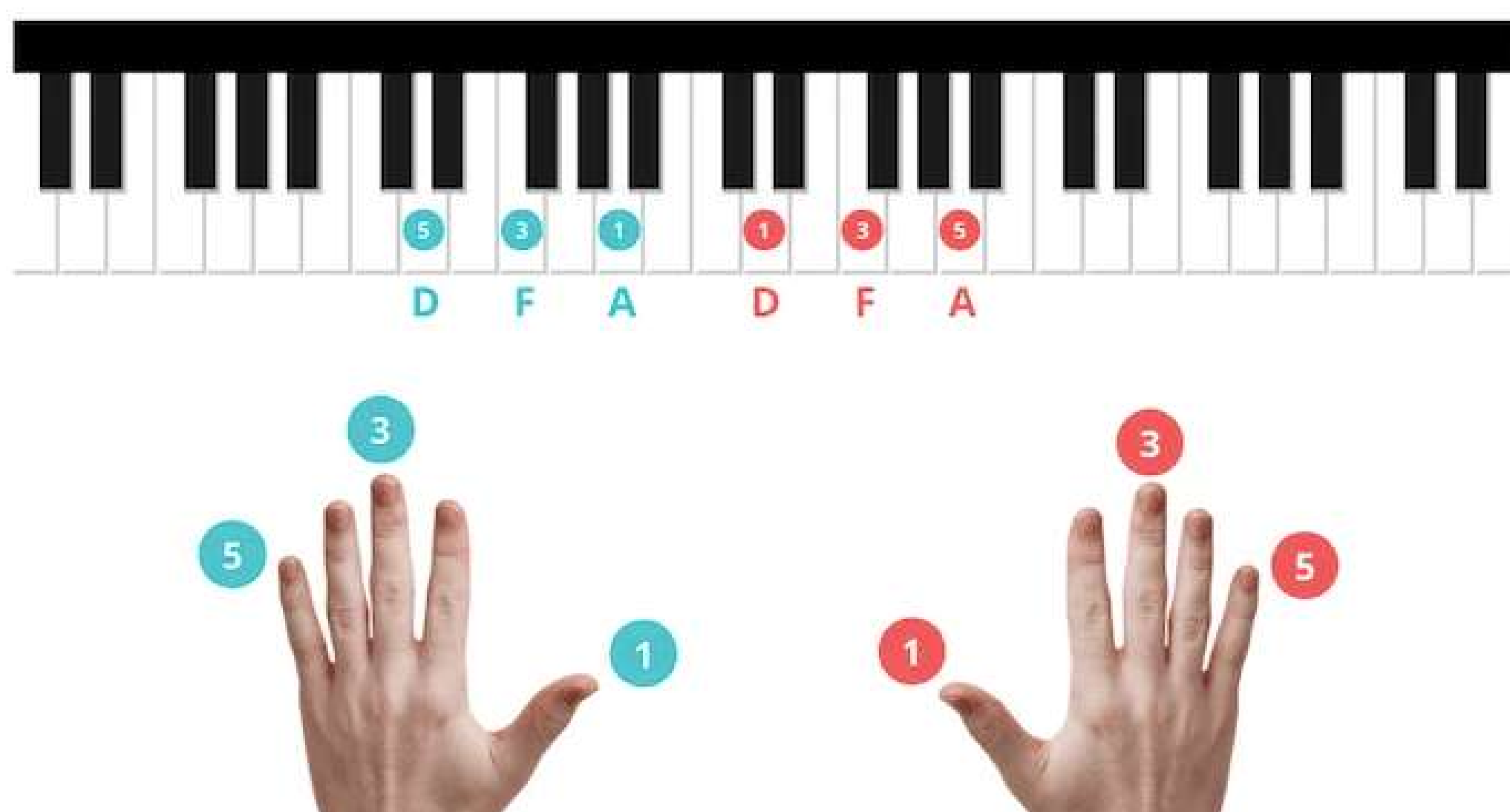
This exercise will train you on major 3-note chords. To begin, place your right hand thumb on middle C, middle finger on E, and little finger on G. For the left hand, place your little finger on the C of the scale below, your middle finger on the E, and your thumb on the G.



Now press all 6 notes at the same time. You have just made your C major chord with both hands. But let's continue the exercise. Then you have to raise your 6 fingers one more note to make a D major chord. So you have to find yourself in the following position:

- your right hand: thumb on D, middle finger on F, and little finger on A.
- your left hand: the little finger on the D, the middle finger on the F, and the thumb on the A.

Now press all 6 notes at the same time. You have just made your D major chord with both hands.



Continue to raise all your fingers one note higher to make the following chords. Once arrived on the C chord, repeat the same exercise by going down one note between each chord.

As with all piano exercises, you should go slowly at the beginning, then gradually speed up.

4 – The broken chords exercise

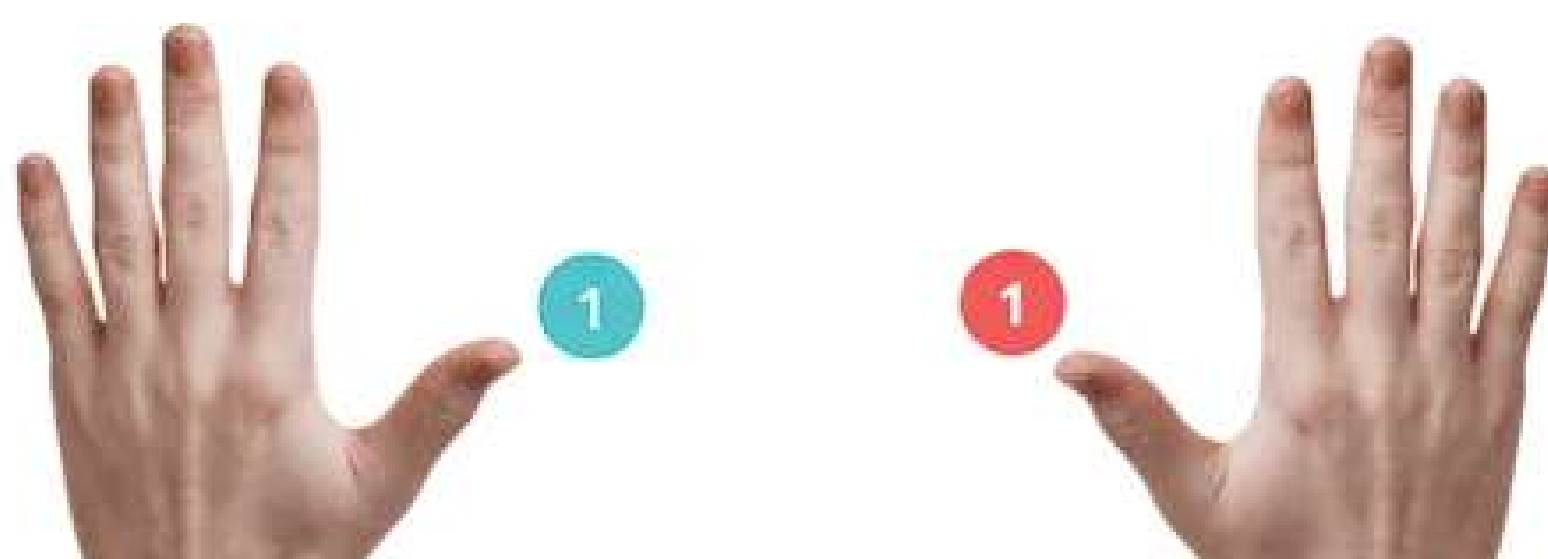
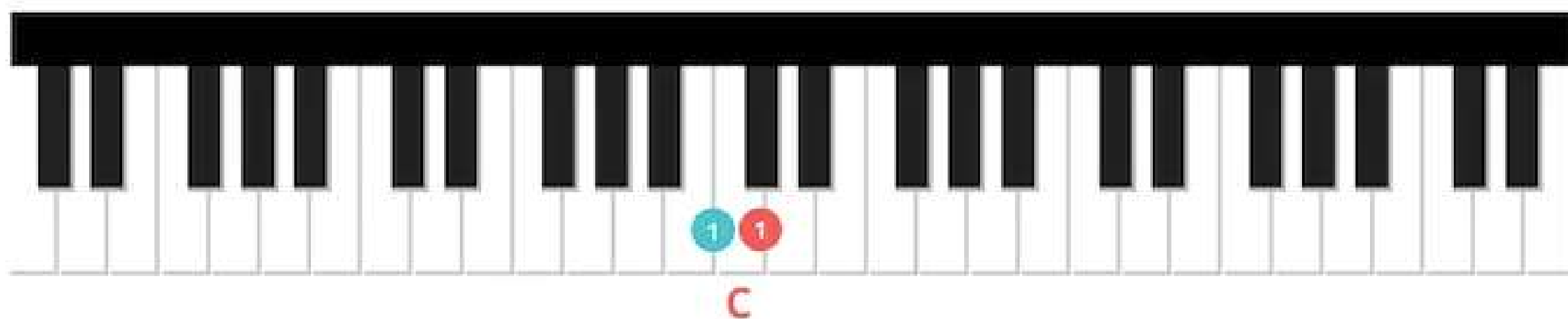
This exercise is very similar to the previous one but will differ in that it does not play the chord notes at the same time, but one by one. For each chord, you will play the little finger of your left hand and the thumb of your right hand at the same time, then the middle finger of your left hand and the middle finger of your right hand, and finally the thumb of your left hand and the little finger of your right hand at the same time.

Once this sequence has been performed on one chord, you move on to the next chord. On a C scale for example, you will go up one note at a time to make all the chords of the scale by playing the keys one by one. Once on the C chord, you go back down.

5 – The hands independence

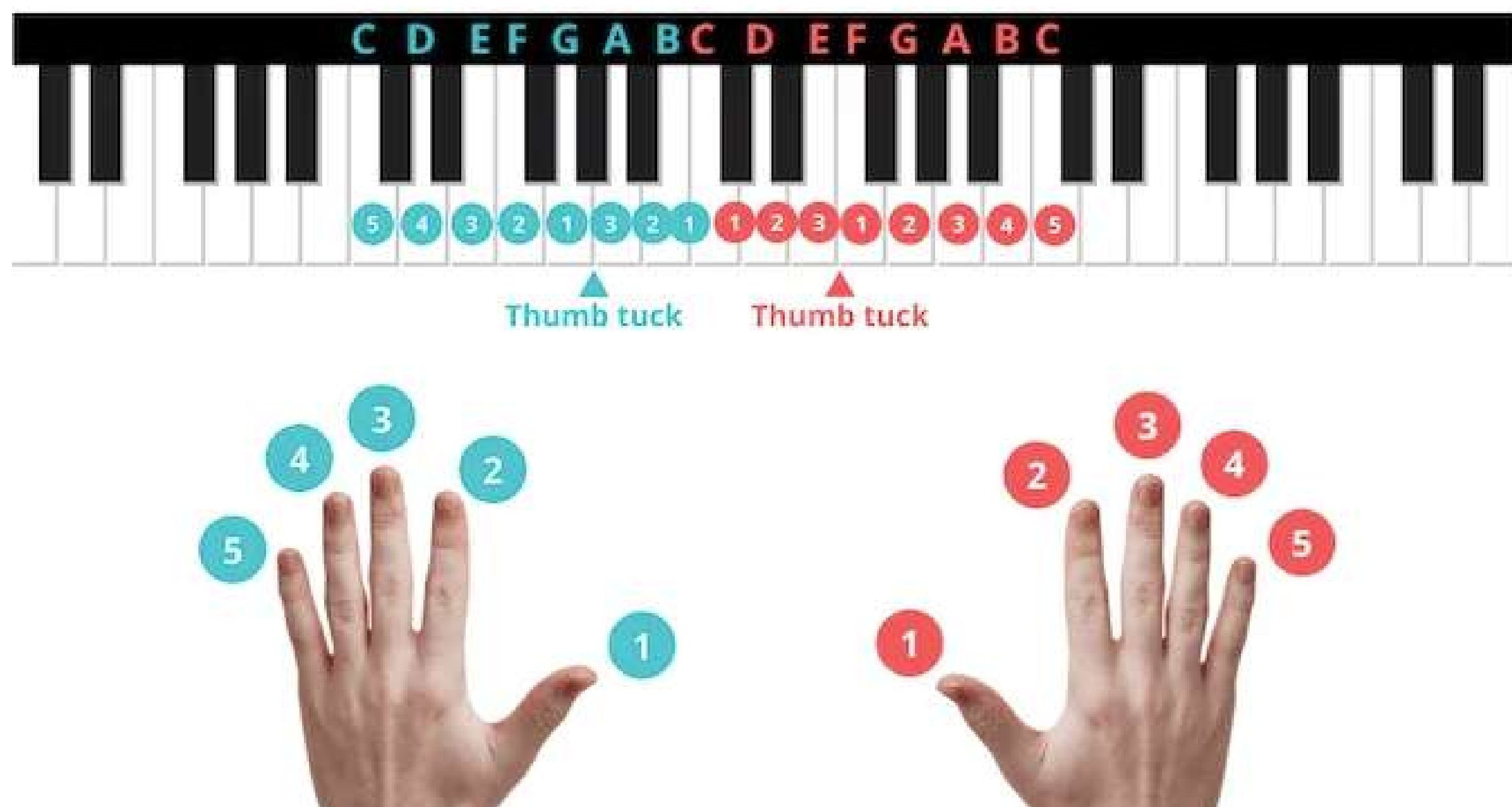
The independence of the hands is one of the most difficult piano exercises for beginners. Indeed, when we start playing piano, our brain is not used to doing two things at the same time: it works symmetrically. When the left hand produces something precise, it's difficult to do anything else so precise with the right hand. In this respect, piano is one of the most complicated musical instruments for beginners.

But rest assured, there are exercises to help you improve your independence of the hands. By working on them, you will get your brain used to functioning asymmetrically and greatly improve your piano playing.



With your right hand, you will, as in exercise 2 of this chapter (Full Scales), go up one note with each of your following fingers, doing the thumb tuck after your middle finger has pressed E to be able to finish your full scale.

With your left hand, you will do the same thing, but going down one note each time. As for your right hand, your left hand will do the thumb tuck after your middle finger has pressed the A to be able to finish your full scale.



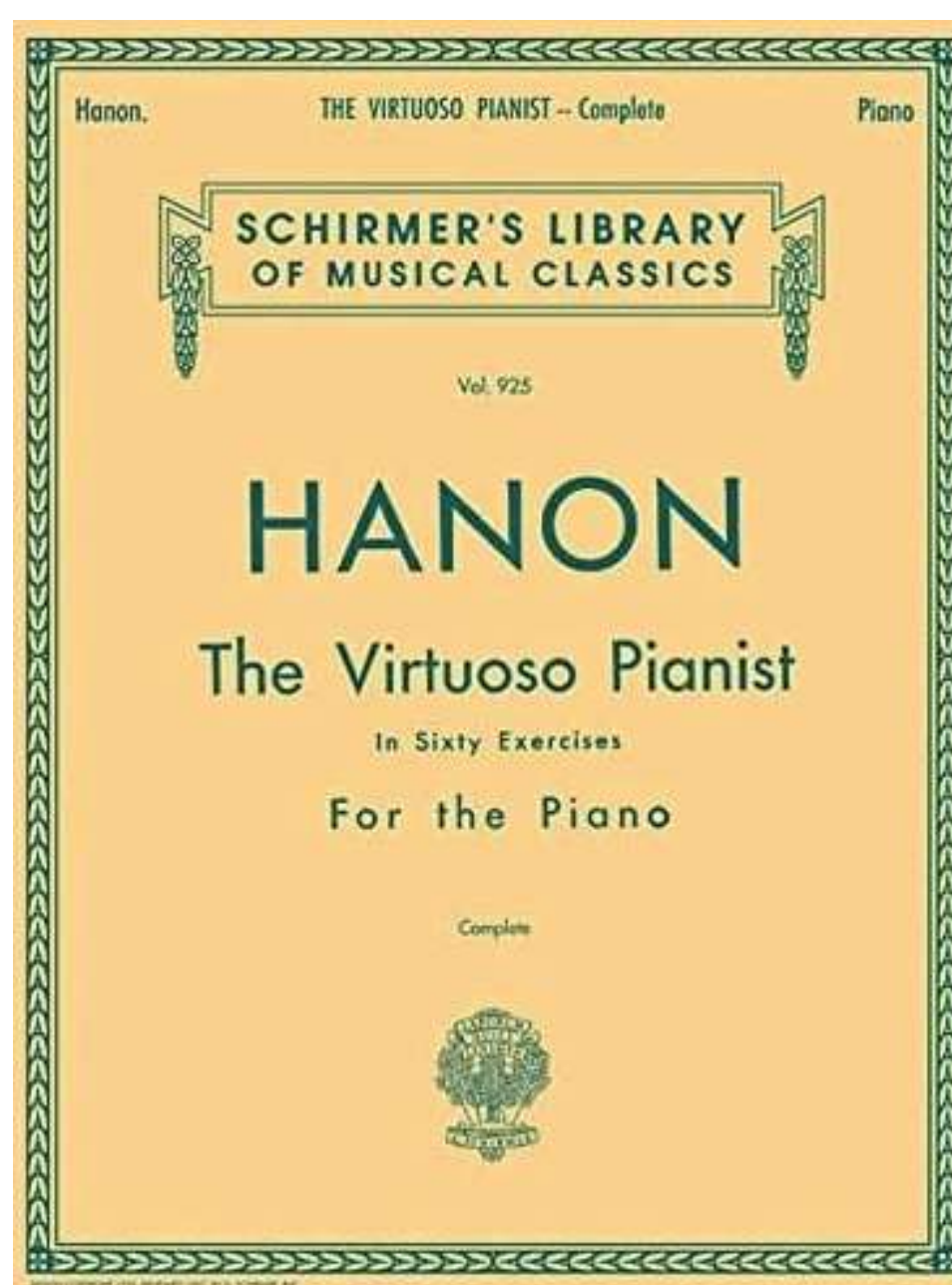
Once you have finished the scale with both hands, you must go up the scale with your left hand and down the scale with your right hand. The goal is to return to the original position, with your two thumbs on middle C.

As with all the piano exercises in this chapter, go slowly at first. Contrary motion scales are not easy to do for beginners. Take your time and gradually increase the speed to perform this movement.

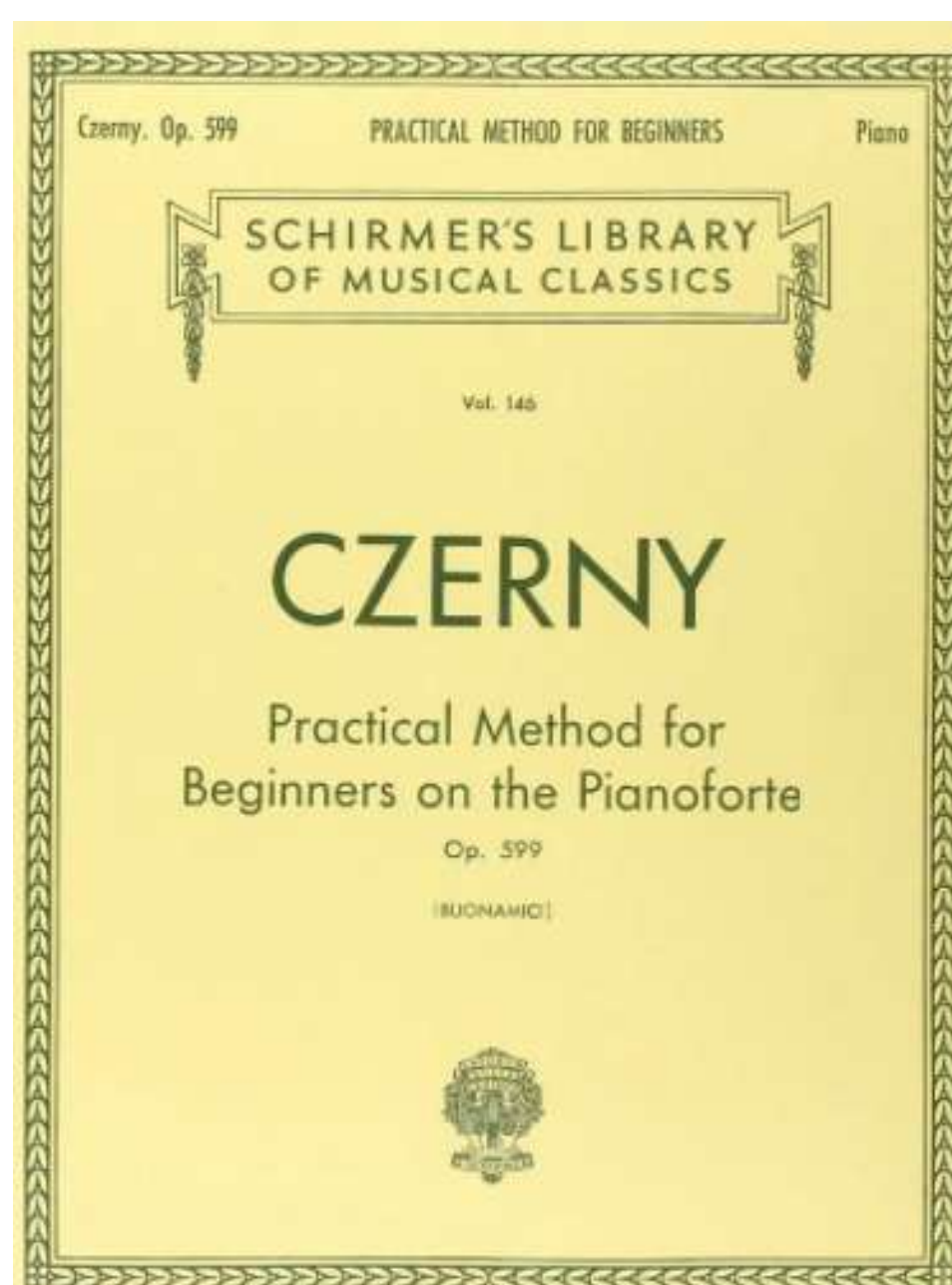
7 – Hanon and Czerny piano exercises and techniques

When you start playing piano, you often feel clumsy with your fingers, and the 4th and 5th fingers seem a bit helpless. As with the hands, it's also difficult to make each of your fingers independent when you're playing. The methods designed by Hanon and Czerny make it possible to loosen your fingers and make your playing considerably more fluid. They also offer you exercises to strengthen your fingers so that you can play longer and more intensely.

The Hanon method is a very famous collection containing between 40 and 60 piano exercises, most of them focusing on the independence of your fingers. It will offer you many exercises around playing series of notes to strengthen your muscles and work on your fingering.



The exercises and studies of Carl Czerny, composer and pianist, are a little more difficult than those of Hanon. In his collections, the composer proposes exercises for the 5 fingers, scales, thumb tuck, alterations, intervals, ... Czerny's collections are very complete. However, be careful to take a collection for beginners, because his collections for advanced students are very difficult!





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piano learning?



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