



Music Musings No. 2: Making Melodies

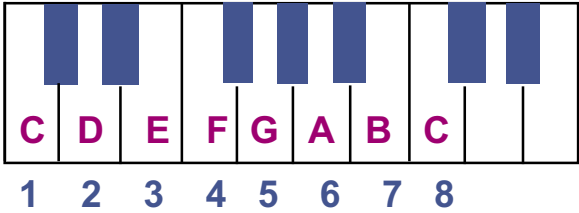
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Here's what songs are made out of:

- 1) **Melody** -- (the single note "tune" of the song).
- 2) **Harmony** -- (the chords and supporting notes that give a song it feel and flavor)
- 3) **Rhythm** -- (the timing of the notes)

Every musical masterpiece starts with the humble scale. All parts of a song are created using notes of a scale. Let's start by looking at a favorite scale of all beginning piano students: THE C SCALE!

Notes of the C scale



The scale is a group of 7 different notes from which Western music is made. Using notes of the scale, you can make up songs. In this example, the 7 white keys of the piano make up the C scale.

The C Scale is made up of all the white notes on the piano, from one C to the next. You can think of it as letter names (C D E F G A B C), or as numbers (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8). Once you learn the 7 letter names, you know ALL the names of the notes on the keyboard.* Each octave (set of 8 notes) on the keyboard has the same note names.

Using just these 7 notes, you can make up or play a zillion different melodies!

Playing a Melody

The melody is the main "tune" of a song that one would sing. For example, to play "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star," you would use the following notes of the C Scale:

(By note name:)

C C G G A A G F F E E D D C
 Twin- kle Twin- kle Lit- tle Star; How I won - der what you are.

(By note number:)

1 1 5 5 6 6 5 4 4 3 3 2 2 1
 Twin- kle Twin- kle Lit- tle Star; How I won - der what you are.

When you think of songs by note names or numbers, you begin to see how many notes songs have in common. For some examples, turn to the next page and play some well-known tunes!

* But what about the black notes, you say? The black notes use the same letter names as the white notes, with the addition of a sharp sign (#) to indicate a white note raised up to the nearest black note, or a flat sign (b) to indicate a white note lowered down to the nearest black note. For example, the black note to the right of the C would be called a C# (C sharp), meaning you "raised" the C note up to the black note. More on black notes later!

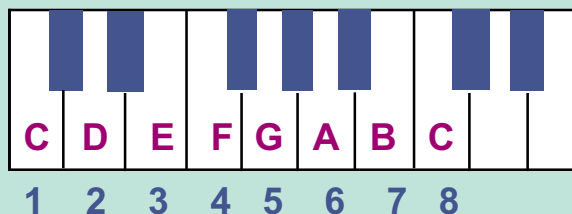
Playing Melodies using notes of the C Scale:

(Star Wars theme song)

1 5 4 3 2 8 5
C G F E D ↗C G
 Star Wars, da da da Star Wars.

C an octave higher (note # 8)

Notes of the C scale:



(Over the Rainbow)

1 8 7 5 6 7 8
C ↗C B G A B C
 Some -where o- ver the rain - bow

(Jeopardy theme song)

5 8 5 1 1 5 8 5
G ↗C G C C G ↗C G
 Da Da Da da da Da Da da

(Hey, Good Lookin')

8 6 5 6 8 8 6 5 6
↗C A G A ↗C ↗C A G A
 Hey, Good Look-in, What-cha got cook-in?

(Jaws theme song)

3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4
E F E F E F E F
 Bu dum. Bu dum. Bu dum bu dum etc.

(Gilligan's Island)

2 2 6 6 6 6 5 3 1
D D A A A A G E C
 Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale

(He's a Pirate)

3 5 6 6 6 7 8 8 8 9 7 7 6 5 5 6
E G A A A B C C D B B A G G A

(Take Me Out to the Ball Game)

1 8 6 5 3 5 2 1 8 6 5 3 5 2
C ↗C A G E G D C ↗C A G E G
 Take Me Out to the Ball Game, Take Me out with the crowd.

Can you figure out the melodies to some other songs using these same 7 notes of the C Scale? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- 1) Ode to Joy (start on E)
- 2) Amazing Grace (start on G)
- 3) Blue Moon (start on G)
- 4) The Sound of Music (start on G)
- 5) When a Man Loves a Woman (start on A)
- 6) Do Wah Diddy Diddy (start on G)
- 7) Louie Louie (start on E)
- 8) The Lion Sleeps Tonight (start on C)
- 9) Lean on Me (start on C)
- 10) Sentimental Journey (start on E)
- 11) This Land is Your Land (start on C)
- 12) On top of Old Smokey (start on C)
- 13) Three Blind Mice (start on E)
- 14) Y M C A (start chorus on G)
- 15) Yellow Submarine (start chorus on G)
- 16) Do a Deer (start on C)
- 17) Stand By Me (start on E)
- 18) My Heart Will Go on (Titanic Theme) (start on C)