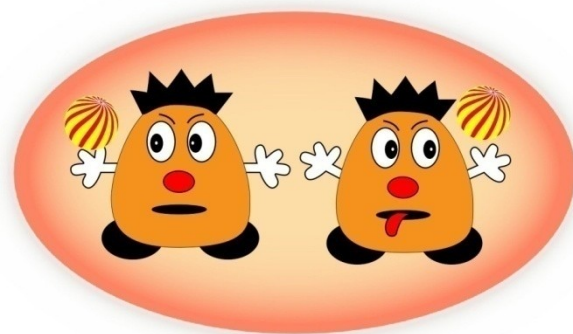


**Learn to Play**  
**Piano / Keyboard**  
**With**  
**Filo & Pastry**

*A Beginners Book For Children &  
Very Silly Adults!*



**Martin Woodward**

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# Acknowledgements

To all the fantastic musicians who I've had the privilege of working with back in the 1960s / 70s including: Pip Williams (guitarist / record producer); Tex Marsh (drummer); Roger Flavell (bassist); Kevin Fogarty (guitarist); Ralph Denyer (singer / songwriter); Phil Childs (bassist); Jim Smith (drums); George Lee (saxophonist).

To my early mentors: Alan Simonds (guitarist / vocalist); big bruv Steve (guitarist) and Mr. Henley (my inspirational music teacher at Warlingham School 1960 - 65).

And to Myriad Software: <http://www.myriad-online.com> for the Melody Assistant music notation software which was used for the production of this book. - Thanks!



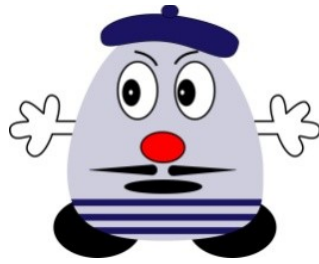
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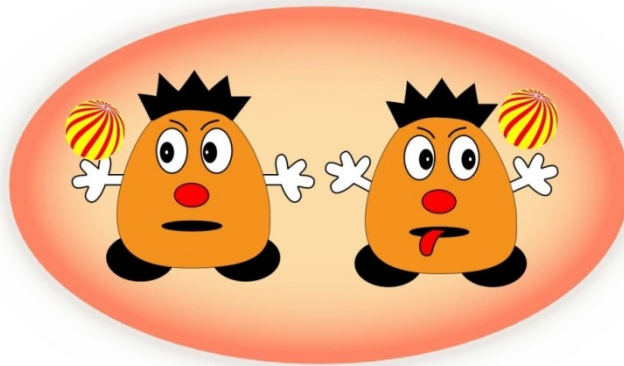
# Introduction



Bonjour mon ami - that's French for 'Good day my friend'!

My name is Alan Duvet and as you can see, I am a Gonk - A French Gonk! - *The* French Connection Gonk! But don't let this put you off as I speak very good English and I'm a very friendly Gonk - like all Gonks!

I will be teaching you to play the piano or keyboard along with your fellow pupils Filo and Pastry the Number 1 almost identical Gonkling twins who you can see below.



Filo and Pastry will probably ask many of the questions that you may have. They also have grubby, sticky little fingers possibly just like you, but we will deal with this issue shortly!

If you're wondering which one is Filo and which one is Pastry - Filo is always on the left - which means that Pastry is always on the right!

Pastry also has a tattoo of a squashed gooseberry on his bum, but as this is a respectable book, we can't show you this.

I'd also like you to meet two of my helpers: Leeroy who deals with 'rhythm' and Angus McDangle who is the 'note keeper' - he keeps the notes in his cupboard ready for when we need them.



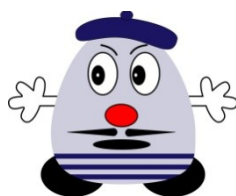


In case you haven't noticed they are Gonks also.

See if you can figure out which one is which!

If you haven't worked it out yet, Leeroy is the one with the woolly hat and Angus McDangle is the other one!

# Keyboard Notes



Now the first thing that we're going to do is go on a hunting trip.



  *"Whoopee doo can I bring my fishing net?" - asks Pastry.*

No, it's not that sort of hunting trip. We're going to go hunting for the most important note on the keyboard which is Middle 'C'.



Now keyboards and pianos come in all different shapes and sizes. Some have got lots of keys and some not so many, but all have the same basic arrangement of black and white notes. For our purposes here, it makes no difference whether you have a big one or a little one!

If you look closely you will see that the black notes are in groups of two then three.

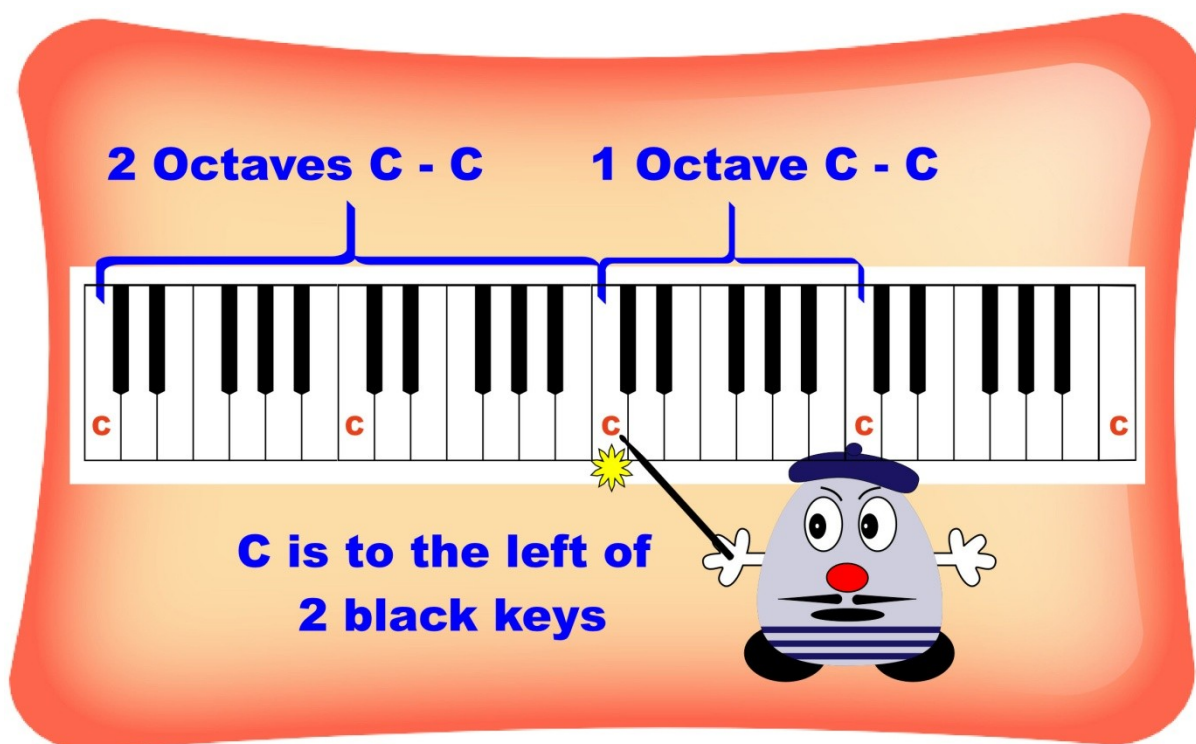
This enables us to find every single note easily. And the first one that you must learn is 'C' which can be found just to the left of two black keys.

  *"I can find lots of them", says Filo, "so which one is 'C'?"*

That's very observant of you Gonkling, and the answer is that they are all 'C', but each one is an octave apart. And if you count up from one C to the next, you'll find that they're eight white notes apart. That's why it's called an octave, just like an 'octopus' is called that because it has eight legs, and an octagon because it has eight sides and an octet being a group of eight.

  *"And like October is the 10th month", says Filo with a cheeky smirk.*

Very clever Gonkling! - But in the original Roman Gonk calendar October was the eighth month.



But ‘middle C’ is the ‘C’ that is more or less in the middle of the keyboard and because it is so important, we are going to put a star on ours as shown.

Now all the notes to the left of middle C get gradually lower in pitch and all the notes to the right gradually get higher. And usually you will use your right hand for the higher notes and your left hand for the lower notes. That is unless you are standing on your head in which case it’s the other way round!



*“So which hand plays middle C?”*

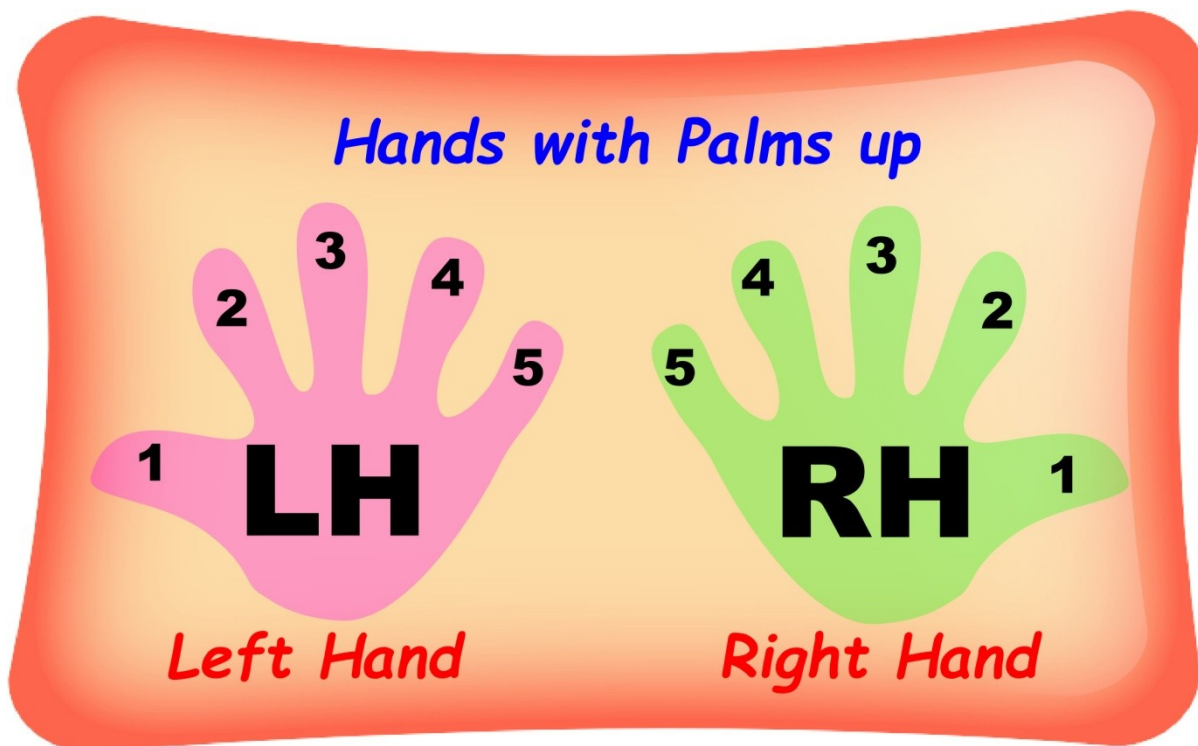
That’s a good question Gonkling and the answer is that it could be either, but I will explain more shortly.



*“And what about all the other notes?”*

Don’t worry I haven’t forgotten them, but next you need to understand your finger numbering in relation to music.

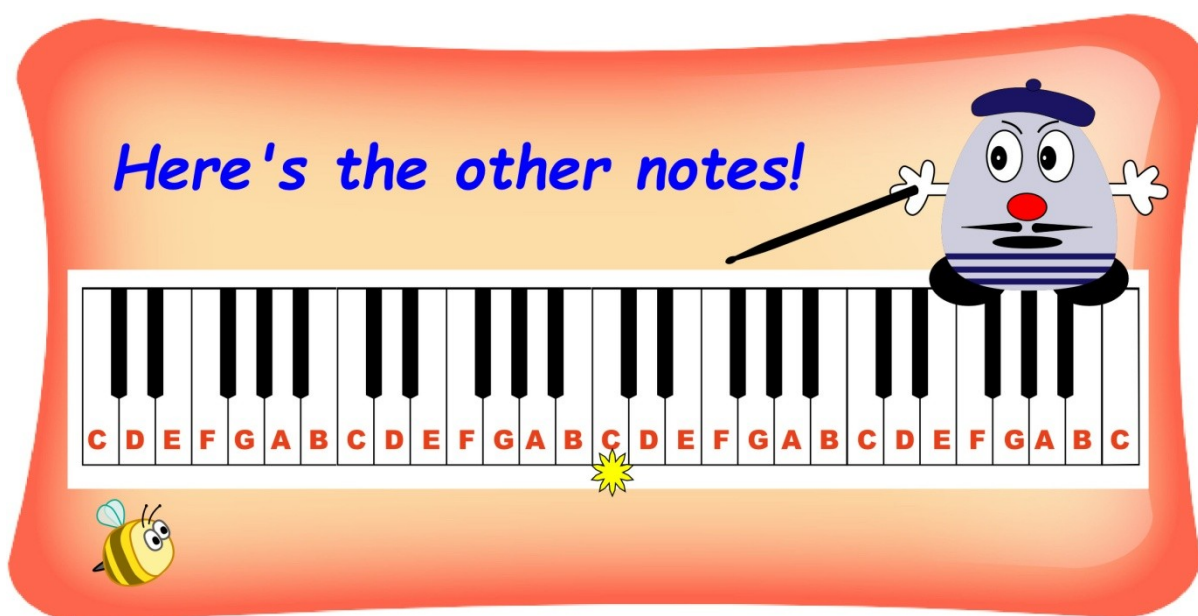
As far as music is concerned what most people will call their ‘first’ finger is their ‘second’ finger as in music the ‘first’ finger is always your thumb.

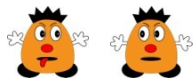


*“But Gonks only have four fingers on each hand!”*

I know, but most of the other girls and boys have five and anyway Gonks have an extra ‘magic’ finger that no-one else knows about, so don’t go spreading this about.

Ok Gonklings, now I’ll show you what all the other notes are called, but I don’t want you to get too confused about all this at the moment. We will be taking it all step by step.





*“What about the black ones, what are they called?”*

We’ll deal with those a little later as we need to, but you have plenty to learn for the time being.

And next you need to learn a little bit about rhythm from Leeroy the Drummer Gonk.



*“Thank you M. Duvet.”*

# Rhythm Part 1



Right Gonklings, now we're going to learn a little about note values and rhythm.

There's quite a few different note values, but the three that we are going to learn today are:

- Semibreve which = 4 beats (often referred to as a whole note)
- Minim which = 2 beats and
- Crotchet which = 1 beat (often referred to as a quarter note)

Now Gonklings, can you count up to four?



*"Of course I can, I can count up to ten!" - says Filo proudly.*

Well that's great because in music you will rarely need to count more than eight.

 **Semi-breve = 4 Beats**

 **Minim = 2 Beats**

 **Crotchet = 1 Beat**



**Count evenly and clap on the stars**





Now I want you to count out loud or in your head: **1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4** and clap your hands on the beats with the stars. Then you'll be clapping the rhythm.

Notice the **4/4** sign at the beginning. This means that there are 4 beats to each bar, which is why you are counting to 4. You can see the '**bar lines**' above between each 4 beats.

Now here's a couple more to try before we move on.



**Here's Some More!**

**Count evenly and clap on the stars**

$\frac{4}{4}$ 


$\frac{4}{4}$ 


Now every **4/4** bar must always add up to four beats, that is either 4 crotchets, or 2 minims, or 2 crotchets and a minim etc. There can't be any 'leftovers'.

So if we need a gap between notes, that is a brief moment of silence, we have to add a 'rest' to make up the correct value.

So there are 'rests' to the same value of every 'note'.

# Rests



**Semi-breve = 4 Beats**



**Minim = 2 Beats**



**Crotchet = 1 Beat**



The Semibreve and minim rests look very similar but actually are rarely confused as the semibreve will take up a whole bar. And also remember that a minim 'rests' on the line and the semibreve 'hangs'!

Now let's have a look at how the rests fit in with the notes and do some more clapping.

Notice that the very last bar contains a semibreve rest so is totally silent.

## Notes and Rests!



**Count evenly and clap on the stars**

	$\frac{4}{4}$							-						
		★1	★2	3	★4	★1	2	3	4	★1	2	★3	4	

	$\frac{4}{4}$									-				
		1	★2	3	★4	★1	2	3	★4	1	2	3	4	



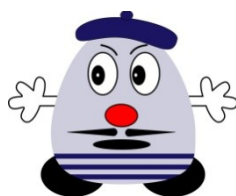


Ok Gonklings, that's it for rhythm for the time being, but there will be much more later.



*"Thank you Leeroy!"*

# The Grand Staff

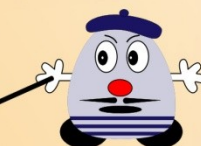


Thank you Leeroy. Now in order to see the notes of the keyboard in music notation, we need to look at the Grand Staff.

The Grand staff is made up of two 'staves' or 'staves' of five lines each, the top one being the treble 'clef' which is mainly used for the higher notes by the right hand and the bass 'clef' mainly used for the lower notes by the left hand.

## The Treble & Bass Clefs

*This is the  
Treble clef  
symbol*



*And this is  
the Bass clef  
symbol*



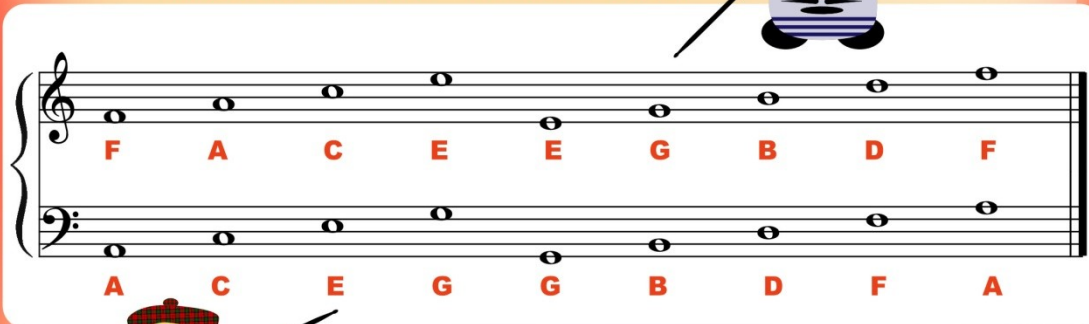
*"What's the difference between a staff and a stave?"*

Actually no-one seems to know for sure, but a staff *is* a stave - it's just a word, well two words actually, so don't worry about it!

The important thing that you need to learn is that the 'staves' or 'staves' are split into the two clefs - these are what you need to learn and remember.

# The Grand Staff



## Notes of the Treble Clef





## Notes of the Bass Clef

An easy way to remember the notes is to think of them in sections like:

- Treble Clef *space* notes **F A C E** - the word *FACE!*
- Treble Clef *line* notes **E G B D F** - *Every Good Boy Deserves Favours!*
- Bass Clef *space* notes **A C E G** - *All Cows Eat Grass!*
- Bass Clef *line* notes **G B D F A** - *Giant Bears Don't Fly Aeroplanes!*

  “Yes, but mummy whales are called cows and they don't eat grass!”

Very true Gonkling, but let's just say that *nearly* all cows eat grass!

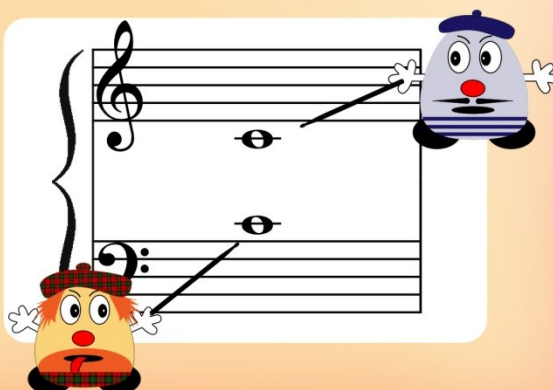
  “So which one is ‘middle C’?”

Well actually ‘middle C’ is not in the above illustration, because it falls below the lines of the treble clef and above the lines of the bass clef. In fact it's exactly mid way between both clefs.

The next illustration will show you where it is!

## Middle C

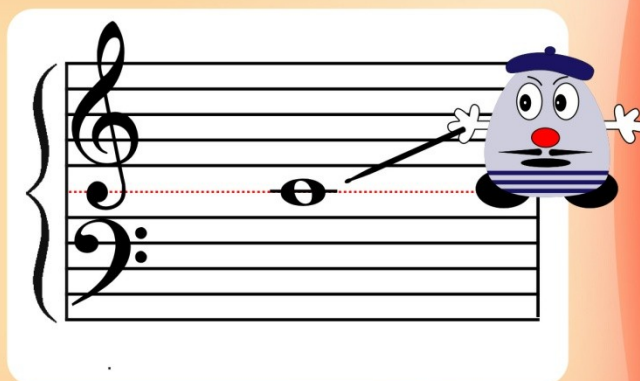
*Middle C is below the lines of the Treble Clef and above the lines of the Bass Clef*



If we bring the two clefs closer together, you will see that there is an imaginary line exactly midway between the two clefs and this is where middle C lives.

## Middle C

*If we bring the two clefs closer together and draw an imaginary line between them this is where we find Middle C*



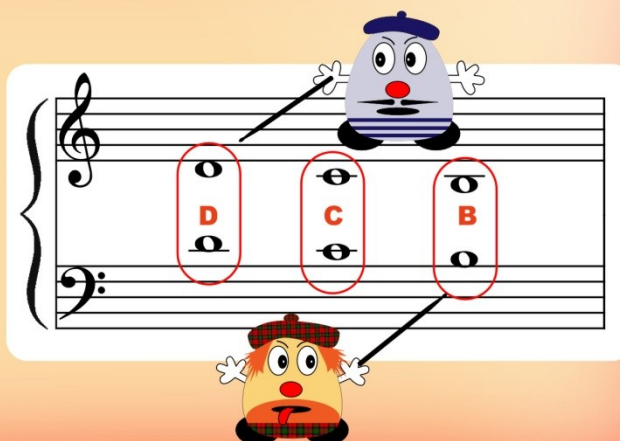
And this is why middle C has a line drawn through the middle of it. This is called a ledger line and happens with some other notes as well, in fact any time a note goes above or below the clef lines.

Now the notes both sides of middle C (B and D) also fall either above or below the staff lines which can be seen next.



## Other Notes Between the Staves

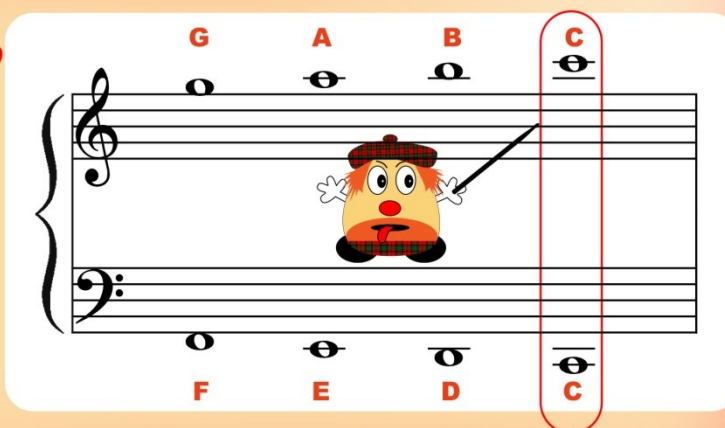
The notes shown here are the same notes written in different clefs!



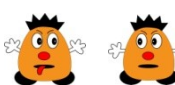
Now there are also notes that are both above the treble clef and below the bass clef.

## Notes Above or Below the Staves

Some notes go above or below the staff lines as shown here!



The two C's shown here are 4 octaves apart!

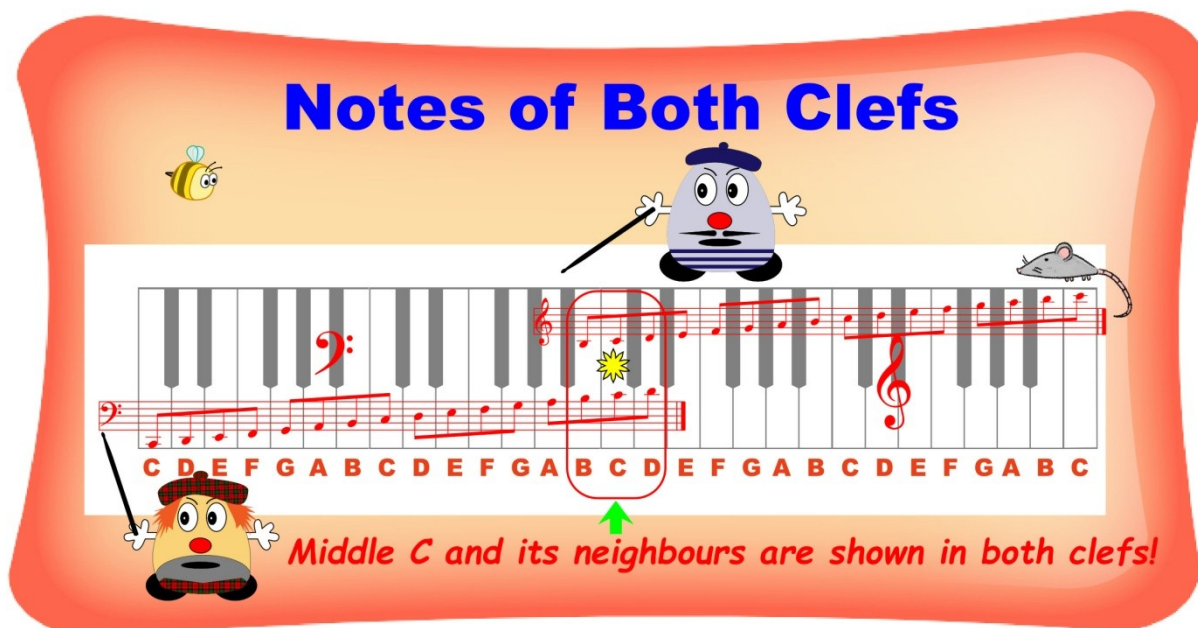
 “Oh this is too confusing for a little Gonkling like me M. Duvet, I don't think I'll ever understand all this!” - says Pastry.

Please don't distress yourself Gonklings, we will be dealing with the notes one step at a time and it will all become clear as we progress.

## How the Notes Relate to the Keyboard

Now we'll look at how the musical notes relate to the keyboard.


This next diagram may look a little confusing and difficult to read, and if you are reading this on a tablet, it may not be clear.



To make this easier to see, below I have split the keyboard into two 2 octave sections, one for each clef, but remember that we have put a star on Middle C so that you can always find it!

So notice that the next two diagrams are actually the same as the above diagram split into two.

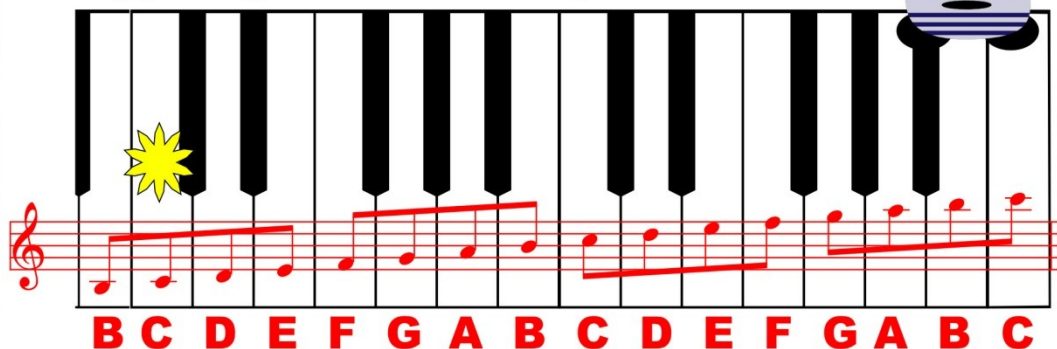
It may be useful for you to print out these three diagrams and look at them in detail.

 “Ay and don’t forget that poor old Angus McDangle has been up all night making these diagrams! ..... And that’s why I didn’t even have time to shave this morning!”

  “Oh, thank you Angus, we really appreciate it!”

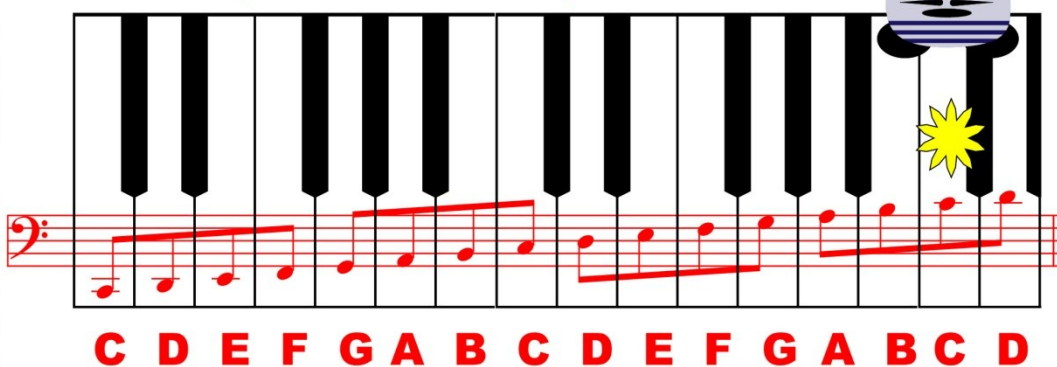
## Notes of the Treble Clef

*Upper portion of keyboard*

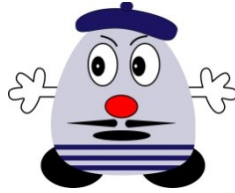


## Notes of the Bass Clef

*Lower portion of keyboard*



# Let's Begin



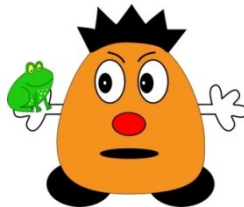
Right Gonklings now we're ready to actually start working on the keyboard, but first let me check your grubby little hands!



*"We've just washed them M. Duvet - honest!"*

Was that before or after I saw you gonkhandling that slimy frog?

Let me have a look, hmmm, I don't want marmalade or decomposing frogs spawn all over my keyboard! ..... Ok, that'll do for now, but rest assured I'll keep checking!



*"I've still got him in my pocket," - whispers Pastry to Filo.*



*"Well don't let M. Duvet see him, remember he's French and they eat frogs legs there!"*

What are you two Gonklings whispering about?



*"Nothing M. Duvet!"*

Did I hear one of you croak?



*"It must have been the creaky chair M. Duvet!"*

Hmmm.....!

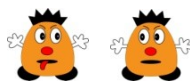


## Correct Hand Positioning

Ok, having made sure that your hands are clean, the next thing is that you must be sure that you adopt a correct seating position so that you can achieve the correct hand position.

If your seating is incorrect (too low or too high) then your hand positioning will never be correct. And if they are too sticky you won't be able to let go of the keys!

The next pictures illustrate the correct and incorrect hand positions.



*“Who’s hairy hand is that it in the picture M. Duvet?”*

That is ‘Boiler Suit Bill’ the roadie. I had to use his hand so that I could take the photos!

## Back and Forth 1

Ok, our first piece is very simple and only requires the thumb on each hand.

But just because it's simple doesn't mean that you should rush it. You must pay attention to correct timing. And each note should be played evenly with equal pressure and held / released at the correct time.



Before you begin, count 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 etc. evenly, then when you feel ready begin playing on the next '1' beat. When you get to the last note, don't release it until you have counted to '4'.

It may help you to sing along with the song as you play.

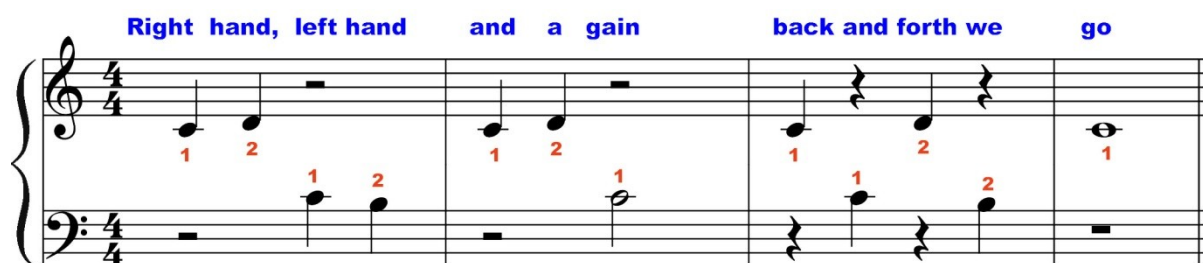
You can hear all of the songs and exercises in order via the website link which I'll give you later. Or go now to - [http://gonkmusic.com/back\\_forth.html](http://gonkmusic.com/back_forth.html)



## Back and Forth 2

This next short piece is unsurprisingly slightly more difficult as you will need two fingers on each hand and also two more notes.

Take note of the correct hand positioning as shown above and begin to press the second key *as* you are releasing the first which will create a smooth transition which is known as ‘**legato**’.



Note that in this case ‘middle C’ is played by both hands (alternately) and the rhythm and rests are exactly the same as the last piece. Most importantly do not play any faster than you can manage. Speed is not important, but accuracy and steady timing is. 🎵 [http://gonkmusic.com/back\\_forth.html](http://gonkmusic.com/back_forth.html)



# Further Reading

You may also perhaps be interested in some of the following books, the details for which can all be seen on my websites at <http://gonkmusic.com> and <http://learn-keyboard.co.uk> .

- Learn How to Play Electronic Keyboard or Piano In a Week!
- New Easy Original Piano / Keyboard Music - Beginners - Intermediate
- Keyboard / Piano Improvisation One Note At a Time - Learn to Improvise from Scratch!
- Learn Keyboard / Piano Scales & Arpeggios In Music Notation & Keyboard View!
- Piano / Keyboard Chords - In Keyboard View Including 9ths and 13ths Etc.

You may also find the following web page useful - [http://www.learn-keyboard.co.uk/musical\\_terms.html](http://www.learn-keyboard.co.uk/musical_terms.html) . If copying the links be sure to include the underscores between the words.

