


MUSICAL TIMING AND THE BEAT

8

The 'Beat' is the name given to the rhythmic pulse felt behind most music.

When you were tapping your foot to *When The Saints Go Marching In, Banks Of The Ohio*, and *Rivers Of Babylon*, you were tapping out the beat. In most tunes there is a series of natural 'accents', which recur regularly every few beats. A line called a 'bar line' is drawn in front of every one of these natural accents. These lines divide the music into 'bars' or 'measures'.

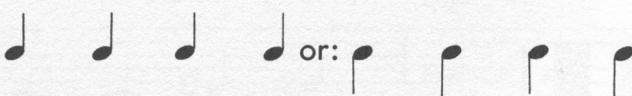
Accents (not usually marked)



BAR 1 BAR 2 BAR 3 BAR 4

Bar lines Double Bar lines (the end of the piece, or a section of the piece)

In the above example the beat is written in 'quarter notes':



(Note that the 'tails' or 'stems' may be written up or down).

Look at the above example again, and you will see that there are four quarter notes to the bar. This is indicated at the beginning of the piece like this:

Time Signature



The above pair of numbers is called the 'time signature'. In every time signature there is:

An 'upper figure': this shows how many beats there are in the bar (four in our example).

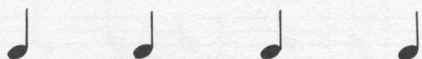
A 'lower figure': this shows how the beats are written. In our example the lower figure 4 means that the beats are written as quarter notes.

Here is another example:

This time, the upper figure tells you that there are three beats to the bar. The lower figure is still 4, so there are: Three quarter notes to the bar.

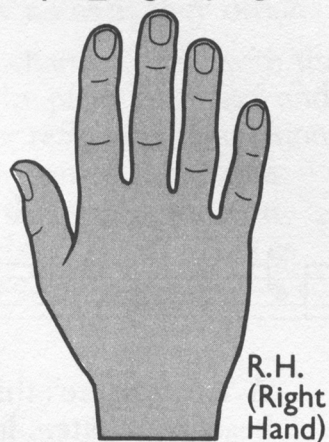
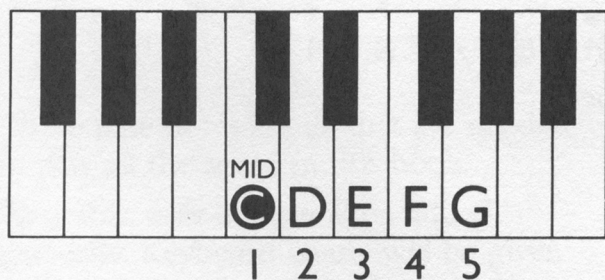


The next song you are going to learn is *This Ole House*. It is written entirely in quarter notes:



Tap your foot on each quarter note – this will help keep you in time.

You will be using the same five right hand notes as before:



Cover these notes before you start to play. Your first note is E, played by the 3rd finger.

Notice that there are four quarter notes in each bar, and the tune starts on the third beat of the bar.

THIS OLE HOUSE


Words & Music by: Stuart Hamblen

R.H. 

This ole house once knew his child - ren, this ole house once knew his

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

↑
start playing here



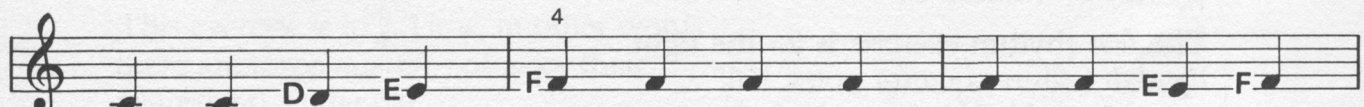
wife — This ole house was home and com - fort as they

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4




fought the storms of life — This ole house once rang with

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



laugh - ter, this ole house heard ma - ny shouts — Now he

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



trem - bles in the dark - ness when the light - nin' walks a - bout. —

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

↑
2 beats only in this bar (making good the deficiency in bar 1).

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You now know about quarter notes.