

Lesson 0

# Have You Ever Wondered ... What is Harmony?

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# Dear Reader

In today's world, where so much is changing and information is so freely available, I just want to outline your rights and mine with regard to this booklet, which is part of my home study course 'Read & Play Music'.

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David Dempster

## What students are saying about this course

'I'm surprised at how fast this is going. I finished **Book 1** in a weekend, and now on Book 2 I'm already learning to play with two hands.' - Don

'Book 2 of David's course opened up a whole new world for me. I'm surprised at how simple it is to play with two hands. Now I can sing and accompany myself by playing the piano. I've always wanted to do that.' - Grace

'Starting to play piano with both hands really put everything together for me. It's so much easier than I expected. Now I feel I'm really playing the piano!' - Jerry

'I've always wanted to learn about music and never knew how simple it could really be, until I was introduced to Mr. David Dempster's course. His form of writing makes things easy. Now I can do it.' - Lisa

'This is great. It is all explained so clearly.' - Gwen

'There is such a freedom in being able to see the notes on the page and know what they mean and know where to find them on the piano.' - Mary

'I'm learning to read piano music for two hands, and something just clicked. I was in mystery about it, and now it is suddenly easy.' - Kathy

'What I love about the course is that there are many exercises to play on the piano. Because they are short, I can learn them quickly and easily and get the point in a few minutes.' - Grace

'I'm actually reading the music!' - Don

'I had this exercise to do, and I just aced it! You make it seem easy.' - Barbara

'Each exercise is a challenge, but not too much. At the end of this study session, I was able to read a tune easily and play it.' - Melanie



<b>Course</b>	<b>Read &amp; Play Music</b>
<b>Book 2</b>	<b>Read and Play Simple Tunes with Two Hands</b>
<b>Lesson 0</b>	<b>Have You Ever Wondered . . . What is Harmony?</b>

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## LESSON 0:

# HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ... WHAT IS HARMONY?

In **Book 1**, you learned to read and play tunes. When playing a tune, you play a sequence of notes, one following another. At each moment you're playing one single note. We kept it simple in **Book 1** because you were just getting started on your journey.

Now that you're about to start playing with both hands, you'll be getting your first taste of playing more than one note at a time. By doing so, you will touch on a vast subject called 'harmony'.

In music, the word 'harmony' has two basic meanings:

### **Definitions:**

1. **harmony** is a combination of musical notes played at the same time.
2. **harmony** is a combination of musical notes played at the same time, *that creates a pleasing effect.*

## Play some harmonies

Do this now:

1. Put a finger of your left hand on a note on your keyboard. Don't play it yet.
2. Put a finger of your right hand on a different note.
3. Play them both at the same time.

By playing 2 notes at the same time, you've just created a harmony.

How did it sound?

Do it again with 2 different notes, and notice how that harmony sounds.

Do a few more, each time playing 2 notes at the same time and noticing the quality of the harmony.

Now play 3 notes at the same time. You can do it like this:

1. Put a finger of your left hand on a note on your keyboard. Don't play it yet.
2. Put 2 fingers of your right hand on 2 different notes.
3. Play all 3 notes at the same time.

How did that harmony sound?

Now play a harmony made of 4 notes.

See if you can find words to describe the effect each harmony creates. Perhaps you'll find one harmony sweet, another harmony sad, and another harmony may seem unpleasant.

## Instruments that can play harmonies

Many instruments, such as the flute or trumpet, can only play one note at a time.

A few instruments are special in being able to play more than one note at a time, and that means they can create harmonies. Nowadays, the most common examples of this are guitars and pianos.

That's one of the reasons why it's good to be able to play the piano, even if you choose something else as your main instrument.

You had your first experience of playing harmonies just now, and as you work through **Book 2** you'll have many more. You'll discover the richness that is added to a simple tune by playing it with harmonies.

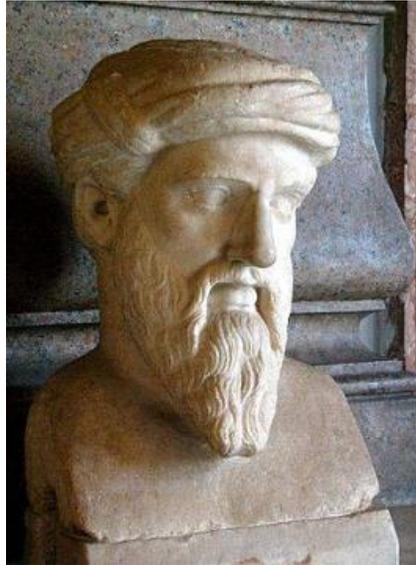
## Where does the word 'harmony' come from ?

There was a period of great creativity in Greece 2,500 years ago. It is known as 'Classical Greece'. During this 200-year period, the Greeks laid the foundations for much of our present-day Western civilization (the civilization of Europe and the countries colonised by Europeans). The Greeks produced innovations in philosophy, government, science, architecture and literature. And music.

The Greek word for music was 'armonia'. As well as meaning 'music', it also meant 'fitting together, agreement'.

Both meanings have come down to us in our English word 'harmony'. You can have harmony among friends when they are not arguing, and you can hear harmony in music that pleases you.

When the Greeks wrote about ‘armonia’, they meant the whole subject of music. Over time, the English word ‘harmony’ took on its more specialised modern meaning: playing a number of notes at the same time.



**Pythagoras,**  
Greek mathematician who contributed to the basics of music.

## By the way . . .

Despite the important role music played in the lives of the Greeks, we don't know much about what tunes they actually played. They had a system for writing down music, but very little of it has survived. And of course they had no tape recorders or cellphones.

It appears that they mostly played one note at a time, but may sometimes have played harmonies.

## The evolution of harmony

Harmony as we know it today – playing more than one note at a time, like you just did on your keyboard – came into being 1,000 years ago. Before then, monks in monasteries were all singing the same notes together so they would sound like a single voice.

Then someone came up with the idea of some monks singing one note and other monks singing a different note at the same time. With that, music took its first baby steps in harmony.

And it took off from there.

Since then, harmony has evolved greatly from one generation to the next. The 20th-century sounds of blues and jazz, unthinkable to earlier generations, depend a lot on harmony for their particular character.

## Our exploration of harmony

You've just started playing harmonies, and as you work through **Book 2** you'll play more. At the end of **Book 2**, you'll be able to play tunes with two hands from the *Book 2 Tune Album*, and you'll hear the harmonies as you play.

At this point we're sticking to the white notes. When you reach **Book 4: Read and Play the Music You Want to Play**, you'll start playing the black notes, and the whole multi-coloured universe of harmony will open up for you.

## Where we're heading

The purpose of this whole course is to give you a thorough grounding in the essential elements of reading music, while playing the piano to bring the music to life.

By the end of this whole course, **you will be able to read and play the music you want to play, with two hands.**

And how will we get there?

Here's the roadmap we saw at the start of **Book 1**. It shows you how this course is structured in 4 books. You have reached the start of **Book 2**:



Roadmap for the Read & Play Music Course.

This course is made up of 4 books. You are now starting **Book 2**, which will build on the knowledge and skills you acquired in **Book 1**. By the end of **Book 2**, you will be able to read and play simple tunes with two hands. Then **Books 3 and 4** will each give you a major skill, as shown in the roadmap above.

The purpose of the whole course (**Books 1 to 4**) is to give you a thorough grounding in the basics of reading music while playing the keyboard to bring the music to life. You are making great progress, and there's lots more to come.

You watched this short video at the start of **Book 1**. Please watch it again now so you can see where you're heading on this amazing journey.



Click the blue box above,  
or find the video on your Book 2 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

## Recap of Book 1

In **Book 1**, you travelled the first part of the road, and gained the ability to read and play simple tunes. This was your first step in building your musicianship.

**Reminder: musicianship** is the collection of knowledge and skills needed to be a fine musician.



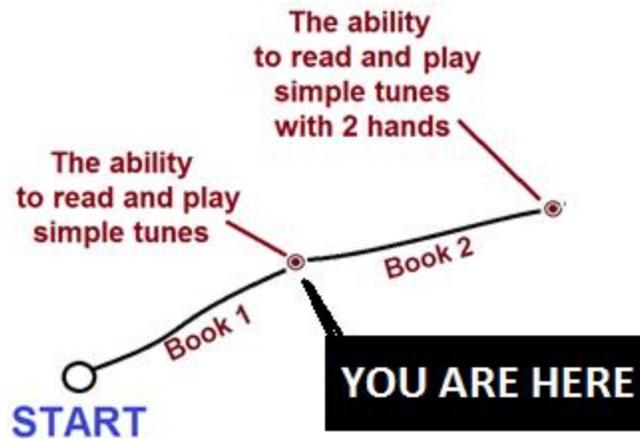
The roadmap: Book 1.

Here are all the knowledge and skills you acquired when you studied **Book 1**:

- Knowledge of frequency and pitch
- Knowledge of how pitches are represented on a staff with treble clef
- Knowledge of the pitches of the white notes on the piano
- Skill in reading pitches from a staff with treble clef.
- Skill in playing pitches on the piano, playing white notes with your right hand
- Knowledge of how timing is represented in printed music
- Skill in creating a beat
- Skill in reading timing
- Skill in playing music on the piano with correct timing

## What's ahead in Book 2

Now you're embarking on the second leg of your journey:



The roadmap: Books 1 and 2.

In **Book 2**, you are about to acquire these new knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge of how pitches to be played by your left hand are represented on a staff
- Knowledge of how music for two hands is represented in printed music
- Knowledge of how very high and very low pitches are represented on the staff
- Knowledge of simple harmonies (you'll learn more about harmonies in **Book 4**)
- Skill in reading and playing pitches with your left hand
- Skill in reading and playing music with two hands
- Skill in playing harmonies, discovering the effects you create when you play more than one note at a time.

By learning these new skills, you will continue to build your practical knowledge of music. This will benefit you in your musical pursuits for the rest of your life.

We'll continue approaching this one step at a time. Each step I ask you to do will be just a little more than the previous one.

And you'll do just fine.

## The lessons that make up Book 2

**Lesson 0:** Have You Ever Wondered . . . What is Harmony? [this lesson]

**Lesson 1:** Read and Play with Two Hands in 30 Minutes

**Lesson 2:** Printed Music for Piano, Left Hand

**Lesson 3:** Read and Play 3 Notes in the Bass Clef

**Lesson 4:** Read and Play 5 Notes in the Bass Clef

**Lesson 5:** Read and Play 8 Notes in the Bass Clef

**Lesson 6:** Fingering for the Left Hand

**Lesson 7:** Read and Play with Two Hands

**Lesson 8:** Know-Before-You-Go for Two Hands

**Lesson 9:** Read and Play 10 Notes in the Bass Clef

**Lesson 10:** Chords and Harmony

**Lesson 11:** More about Chords and Harmony

**Lesson 12:** Read and Play 12 Notes in the Bass Clef

**Lesson 13:** Leger Lines

**Lesson 14:** Chords with Notes of Different Durations

**Lesson 15:** Broken Chords

**Lesson 16:** Read and Play Parts of Tunes with Your Left Hand

**Lesson 17:** The Pitch-Time-Music Practice Method

**Lesson 18:** Read and Play Parts of Tunes with Two Hands

**Lesson 19:** The Practise-in-Sections Practice Method

**Lesson 20:** Keeping Your Place in the Music

**Lesson 21:** Grand Finale

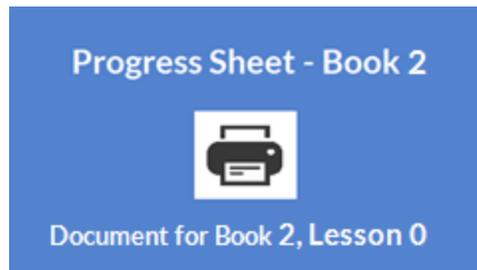
### Book 2 Tune Album

### Glossary

## Progress Sheet

You might like to print out a Progress Sheet, and sign off each step as you do it. This helps you see how you're progressing through the course.

You can download and print the Progress Sheet for **Book 2** here:



Click the blue box above,  
or find the document on your Book 2 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

# REVIEW

## SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is very important that you are confident in the skills covered in **Book 1** of this course before you carry on with **Book 2**. I want you to do well in your pursuit of music, and find fun and satisfaction in what you're doing. And the way to achieve that is to be certain of each step before going on to the next one.

So, please do this quiz on your **Book 1** skills.

If you find you are weak in any of the areas covered by the quiz, go back to **Book 1**, restudy the relevant part, and spend some more time doing the exercises.

Then you will sail through **Book 2**.

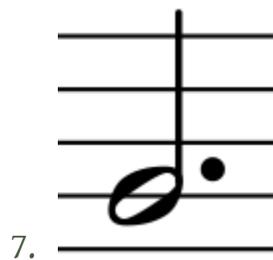
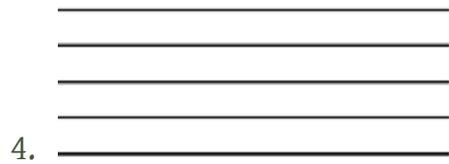
## Theory from Book 1

(Answers are at the end of the quiz)

Define these musical terms:

1. beat
2. measure (British name: bar)
3. time signature

Name each of these symbols and explain its function:



9. What are the numbers below these notes called, and what do they mean?



## Answers

1. Beat: the regular pulsing of a piece of music.  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 13: *The Heartbeat Of Music*)
2. Measure (British name: bar): the section of music between 2 bar-lines. Usually, every measure has the same number of beats as defined by the repeating pattern of that piece of music.  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 14: *The Repeating Pattern of Beats*)
3. Time signature: a pair of numbers, one over the other, that indicates the repeating pattern of the music. The top number indicates how many beats are in each measure, and the bottom number indicates which type of note represents 1 beat.  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 17: *Showing The Pattern*)
4. Name: staff (British name: stave)  
Function: acts as a framework on which music notes are written  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 11: *Two Important Symbols In Printed Music*)
5. Name: treble clef  
Function: shows that the 2nd line up from the bottom is the G above middle C.  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 11: *Two Important Symbols In Printed Music*)

6. Name: 3/4 time signature (spoken as ‘three-four time signature’)  
Function: indicates that there are 3 quarter note beats per measure  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 17: *Showing The Pattern*)
7. Name: dotted half note (British name: dotted minim)  
Function: indicates a musical sound is to be played for 3 beats. (This assumes the quarter note is used to represent the beat, which was true for all the music in **Book 1**.)  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 15: *Duration Of Sounds*)
8. Name: quarter rest (British name: crotchet rest)  
Function: indicates a silence of 1 beat  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 16: *Duration Of Silences*)
9. The numbers are fingerings. The ‘1’ means play the note with your thumb.  
The ‘4’ means play the note with your ring finger.  
(See **Book 1**, Lesson 7: *Play Using All Your Fingers*)

## Practical: Read and play a tune using Book 1 skills

Play this piece of music with your right hand. Use the fingering shown, so you can play it smoothly.



## Chat with David: How did you do?



If the quiz revealed any areas you are uncertain of, please go back and do a bit more work on **Book 1**. You can restudy any of the lessons and spend some more time on the exercises. That will improve your practical skills in reading and playing music in preparation for studying **Book 2**. If you are unclear about the meaning of any of the musical terms, consult the Glossary at the end of **Book 1**.

Done with all that? Great! Carry on with your musical adventure . . . ■

## What's next?

Let's get started reading and playing with two hands!

To find Lesson 1, click the green box:

**Go on to your next lesson**



or go to your Book 2 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

## About the Author



*'There has been a decline in music-making. The days of singing around the piano are virtually gone, replaced by television, video games and the internet. This has been made worse by huge cuts in the funding of music education. A whole generation is being denied the rich experience of making music.'*

*I want to open up the world of music-making to anyone who wants it.'*

- David Dempster

**Dempster Music™** was created by David Dempster. This unique method of learning embodies David's strengths in music, teaching and storytelling. The result is a method that teaches the real fundamentals of music while taking the student on a lively and entertaining journey of discovery.

David lives and breathes music. Spend some time with David and you will likely hear him humming a tune or burst out singing a bit of a symphony.

When he was four years old, David learned to read music while taking piano lessons from Mr Ingram in Perth, Scotland. Because he learned to read music fluently, it was easy for David to go on to play other instruments, and conduct choirs, orchestras and opera. He has experienced a lifetime of music-making.

David gets a thrill when he hears from his students who are now playing and singing music instead of just listening to it.

David leads a colourful life as musician, choir director, writer, storyteller, mathematician, mountaineer and world traveller.