



The Klavar Method



Play your first melody within
ten minutes!





Introduction

For something like 1000 years Western music has been written on a horizontal staff resembling a ladder with the high sounding notes on top and the low sounding notes at the bottom. The earliest of these had only four horizontal lines on which note-like symbols called 'neumes' were written. This staff was sufficient for the 7-note tones that were in use for singing, in church, at the time around 1000 A.D..

From about 1400 AD the five line staff was introduced to cope with a wider range of notes. As more notes and various instruments came into use, and with the introduction of the semitones the notation was asked to carry even more complex symbols indicating duration, dynamics and chords. So the modern staff often appears, as in the third example below, crowded with different clefs, sharps and flats, naturals and double sharps, double flats, naturals as well as key signatures.



This notation is difficult to read and difficult to write. It takes years to learn, so many people, adults as well as children, give up the struggle before they have made much progress.

The Klavar notation, invented by Cornelis Pot in 1931 after years of research, provides an alternative that dismisses many of these difficulties. More than 30,000 pieces of music are available in Klavar in all styles from Bach to the Beatles. You can also transcribe the music yourself, by hand or by computer.

If you wish to be able to read music as easily as you can read a book then the Klavar method is an excellent choice. All superfluous signs and symbols are swept away leaving simple patterns of black and white on the paper that correspond exactly to what you can see on the keyboard :

"What you see is what you play"

When you go through this trial lesson you will notice how quickly you progress from one concept to the next. Even after just one lesson you will be able to play some attractive music.

We wish you much enjoyment with Klavar!

The Klavar Music Foundation

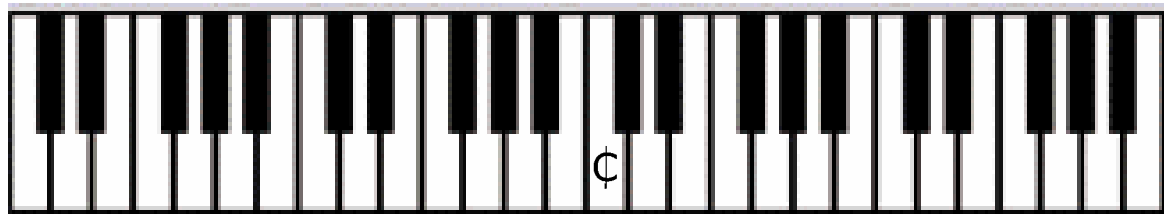
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The keyboard

Above, you can see a picture of a keyboard. Maybe your keyboard, piano or organ has more or fewer keys, but in principle all keyboards are organized in the same way in that the **black keys** lie in alternating groups of **two** and **three**, the full length of the keyboard. Keep these groups in mind as they are fundamental to the Klavar method.

The 'middle C'

We start by finding the note called **Middle C**. This is the white key just on the left of the central group of two black notes near the centre of the keyboard. When you have found it you can stick a small label on it so you can find it easily.

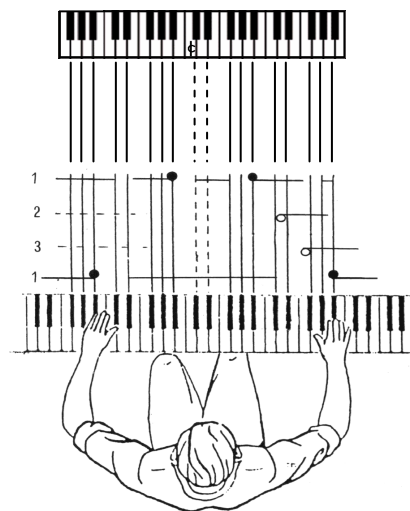
The Klavar stave

The Klavar method is based on the keyboard. On the right you can see a picture of part of a keyboard with the middle C indicated. Through the black keys of the keyboard we draw a number of vertical lines. These lines are also in groups of two and three.

Note that the two lines next to the middle C are **dotted**. This helps the player to match up the music on the paper with the physical keyboard under his/her fingers. Without this guide the player might play in the wrong place on the keyboard.

When we use the Klavar method we first look at the staff from left to right to find the first notes then read from top downwards to find the notes that follow. If the music is shown on the left of the staff our hands move to the left; if the music moves to the right then our hands move to the right of the keyboard. **Our fingers follow the direction of the written music.**

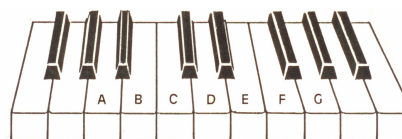
For your first exercise just touch, then, play all the groups of **two black notes** and then the groups of **three black notes**, up and down the piano. Repeat, starting from the centre, the hands going in opposite directions – have fun !



Names of the notes

The white notes have fixed names which are the first 7 letters of the alphabet A-B-C-D-E-F-G

The **black** notes take their names from the white notes next to them. So **D-flat** is the black note to the **left** of D; and **D sharp** is the black note to the **right** of D etc. In traditional notation the black notes have two names (D-flat is also C-sharp) .

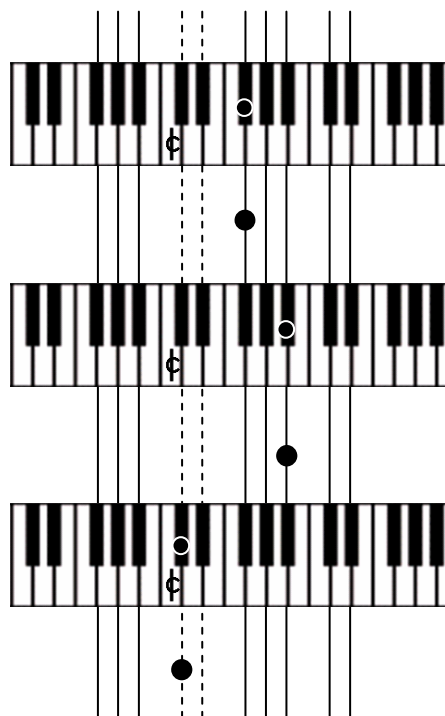




Black keys, black notes

The five **black** keys are indicated on the staff by **black** (filled) circular note heads. Each black note has its own place on the staff. Find the notes shown on the right, on your own keyboard.

The letter C with a line through it refers to the note known as **Middle C** which lies to the left of the Central **D**. Middle C is well known in conventional music literature as it is the centre of the traditional staff. The Klavar staff reflects better the relationship between the notes and the physical layout of the keyboard.



Congratulations!

You now know the basics of the Klavar method and you are ready to play your first song

Big Ben

Now you are going to play the chimes of Big Ben
Using only the five black keys.

Start at the top and read downwards in the sequence indicated by the arrows.

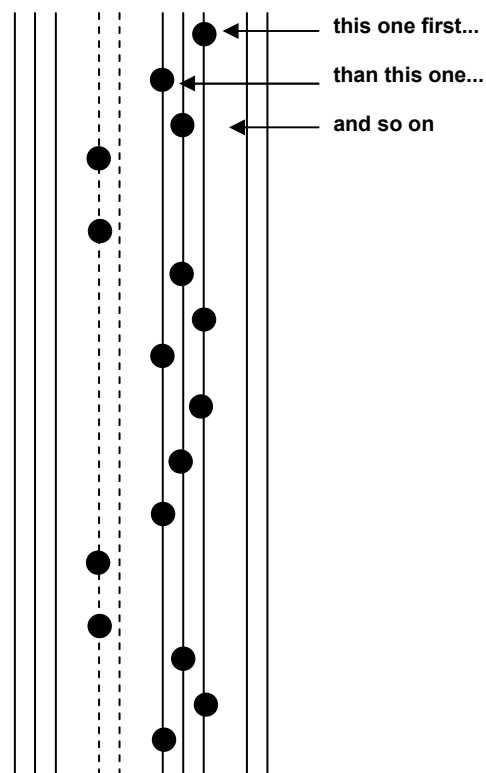
You may play the notes with any finger. You may find it convenient to start with finger 4 (the ring finger) of the right hand to play the first note.

Play it again ! This time play the notes on the group of three with the right hand and the note on the group of 2 with your left hand; experiment !

Strike the keys slowly and regularly **in groups of four notes**, extending the duration of the sound of the fourth note in each group for one more "beat" by holding down the key. Relax when you hold the long note ; there is no need to press the key hard. Practise several times until you can play **freely** and **fluently** and the tune really sounds like the chimes of Big Ben .



Big Ben





White keys, white notes

The white keys of the keyboard are represented on the stave by circular white note heads.

The seven white notes are written in the spaces **between** the five black lines in the position corresponding to their place on the keyboard.

The first example is the note D, between the two dotted lines in the centre, just to the right of the middle C.

The next note is E, to the right of D.

Take care! Do not confuse E and F ; Also take care with B and C as there is space for 2 notes in these large spaces .

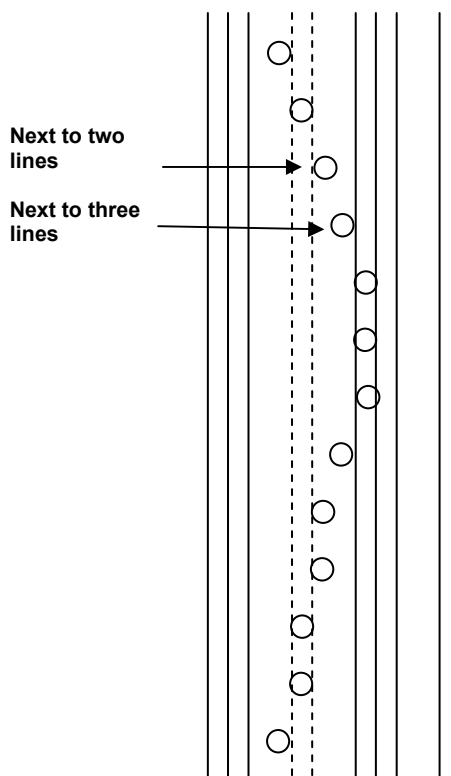
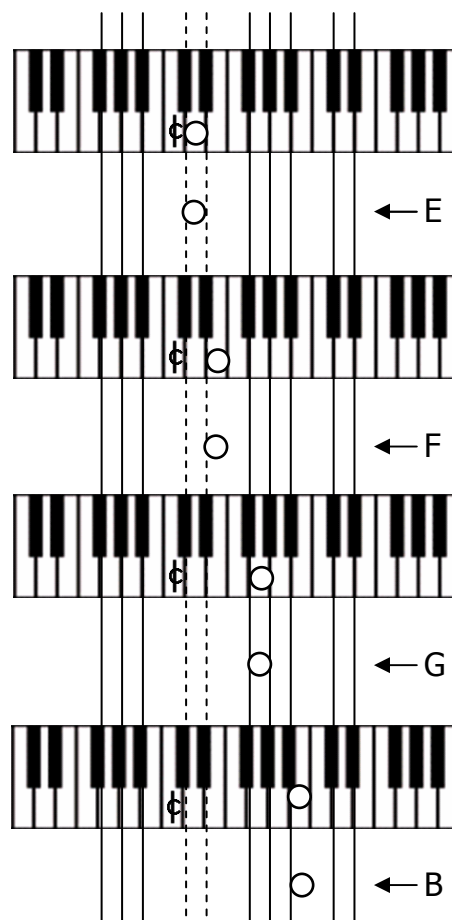
The next note is G

The final note is B, just outside the group of 3 lines.

You can now play the melody given here. Start with the thumb of your right hand. Play with a steady rhythm. Read from top to bottom. As the notes move to the right so your fingers travel to the right; and back again.

If you found them, you can start playing the tune on the white keys, as before when you played the Big-Ben tune. Again read from the top to the bottom.

Start very slowly and attentively. It will gradually become more fluently. Finally you should try to play all notes one after another without interruptions.



Summary

The Klavar stave consists of groups of two and three lines corresponding to the black keys on the keyboard. The music is read from top to bottom.

Black keys = black notes, through the lines
 White keys = white notes, between the lines

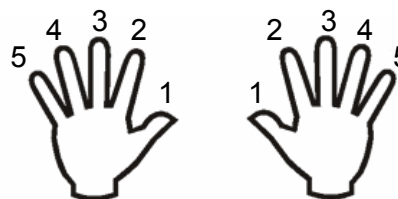
The Centre of the keyboard is indicated by two **dotted** lines. The position of Middle C, just to the left of the two dotted lines, is indicated by a **C** with an arrow through it ↓.





Fingering

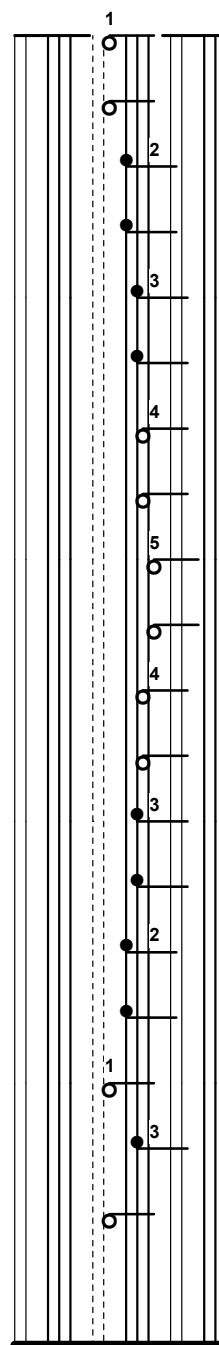
The key to fluent playing is practicing; but only in practicing in an effective manner, which means practicing using efficient fingering. To refer to the fingers we have given each finger its own number.



In the exercise on the right some small numbers have been placed on top of some of the notes. These are finger numbers. The number '1' indicates that this note is to be played with the thumb; a '2' means that you play this note with your index finger, a '3' refers to your middle finger (finger 3) and so on.

As a beginner make it a habit to follow the fingering instructions given. When you have gained mastery you may alter the fingering to suit your own hand.

Fingering is given only where necessary to ensure a good hand position, that is why only some of the numbers are given. Play the unnumbered notes with the finger that is already in the correct position to play it.

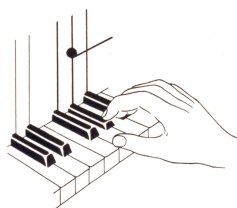
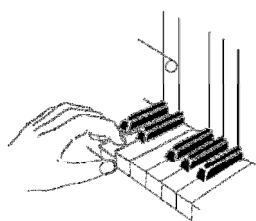


Left- and right hand indication

Which notes are to be played with which hand? The Klavar method is very clear about this. Each note head has a stem or 'tail'. If the stem of the note points to the **right**, play the note with your **right** hand; if the stem points to the **left**, play the note with your **left** hand. Notice that the white note heads are **below the stem** and the **black note heads are above the stem**.

LEFT HAND

RIGHT HAND



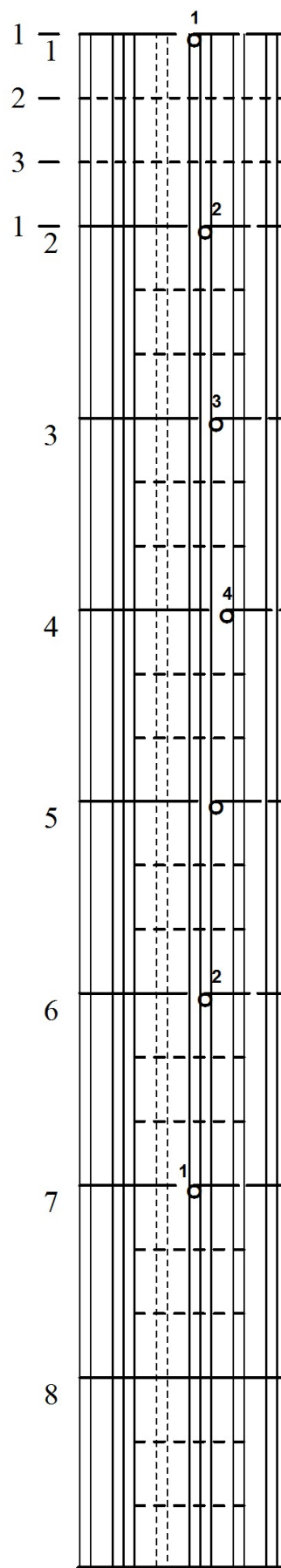
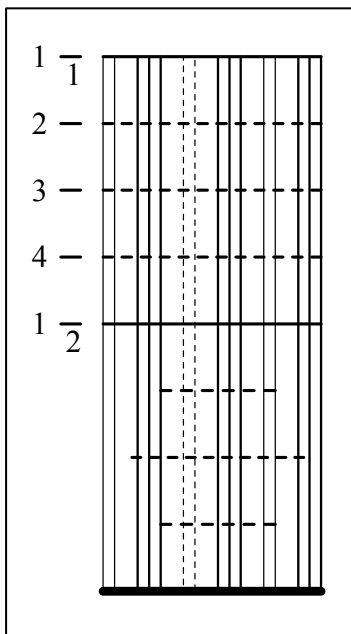


Timing

Each piece of music is divided into a number of **bars**. The example on the right shows a staff with only two bars. A *medium* thick black line is at the start of each bar while a *very* thick line occurs at the end of the last bar of the music.

The bars themselves are divided into a number of **beats** or counts with horizontal dotted lines. These are called '**counting lines**'. In the two-bar example, the numbers down the left hand side of the first bar of the music show that there are four beats to each bar.

Bars can also be divided into many other sub-divisions such as 2-beats to the bar, 3-beats, 6-beats, 5-beats etc



The 3-beat bar

On the far side of the page you can see an example of a staff with 3-beats to the bar. There is a note written on the first beat of each bar. To make sure that the note sounds for the correct duration of three beats it is best to count aloud as you hold the note. Thus:

ONE, two, three; ONE, two, three etc

Notice that note played on beat ONE, is LOUDER than those on beats two and the three. So speak the word '**ONE**' louder than 'two' and 'three', which can be whispered. In a three beat bar the first note is played louder to give a sense of rhythm, as in a waltz thus:

HEAVY-light-light; HEAVY-light-light

The ability to count in strict time is essential for all musicians; so make **counting aloud** a regular practice right from the start.

Now play the tune on the far right and count at the same time. Note that this exercise is to be played with the **right hand** only as all the stems of the notes point to the right. Notice that the final note to be played (at the beginning of bar 7) lasts for **two bars**; so keep the note down while you count the full length of the bar number 8.

In a three beat bar you count 1-2-3; 1-2-3; 1-2-3 etc
With the heavy accent falling on the first beat of each bar





The 4-beat bar

In a 4-beat piece each bar has four beats. The heavy accent falls on beat one and there is a medium accent on beat three; with no accents on beats two and four. So count:

ONE, two, **THREE**, four;
ONE, two, **THREE**, four

HEAVY - light - **medium** - light

In the exercise on the right all the stems point to the left, so this is an exercise for the left hand.

Notice that it contains both black and white notes; so use both black and white keys.

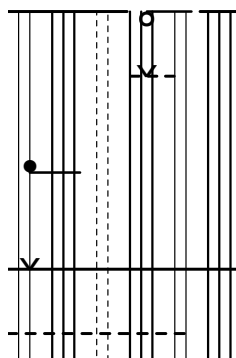
On beat 1 you play the first note; on beat 3 the second note. On beats 2 there is no note written so keep the first note held down so that the note continues to sound until you change the note on beat 3. There should be no silences in the music as it is a continuous melody. Similarly with note three; keep the note held down lightly so the note continues to sound until it is time to play note 1 of the next bar. Continue in this way to the end of the piece. Notice that the final note, on beat 1 of bar 8, lasts for four complete counts.

**In a 4-beat bar count:
 1-2-3-4; 1-2-3-4 and so on
 with a heavy accent on beat 1 and a medium
 accent on beat 3**

The rest or stop sign - 'v'

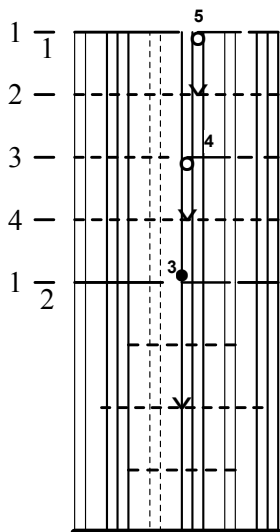
So far you have learnt to keep each key down until it is time to play the following note. In other words every note ends when the next note begins. This results in a continuous melody.

However this is not always the case. Sometimes a note ends before the next note begins and there is a period of silence, called a "rest". To indicate that the note must stop sounding a v-shaped 'rest' or 'stop' sign is inserted in the path of the note exactly at the point when the silence begins.



The diagram shows a vertical musical staff with 8 bars. The notes are: Bar 1: 1 (white), 3 (black); Bar 2: 1 (white), 2 (white); Bar 3: 3 (black), 1 (white); Bar 4: 2 (white), 4 (white); Bar 5: 4 (white), 3 (black); Bar 6: 5 (black), 2 (white); Bar 7: 4 (white), 3 (black); Bar 8: 5 (black), 4 (white). Stems for all notes point to the left. Fingering numbers are written above each note.





Practive playing notes and bars

The music you see above uses a 4-beat bar. So count 1-2-3-4, as before. On beat 1 of the first bar play the first note which is an 'A'. On beat 2 release the key by lifting your hand off the keyboard. Play the next key (G) on beat 3 and release it on beat 4 where there is a rest sign.

On the first beat of bar 2 play the black key F# (F-sharp) release it at the rest sign on beat 3; do not release it on beat 2 because there is no rest sign on beat 2. a silence of 2 beats follows.

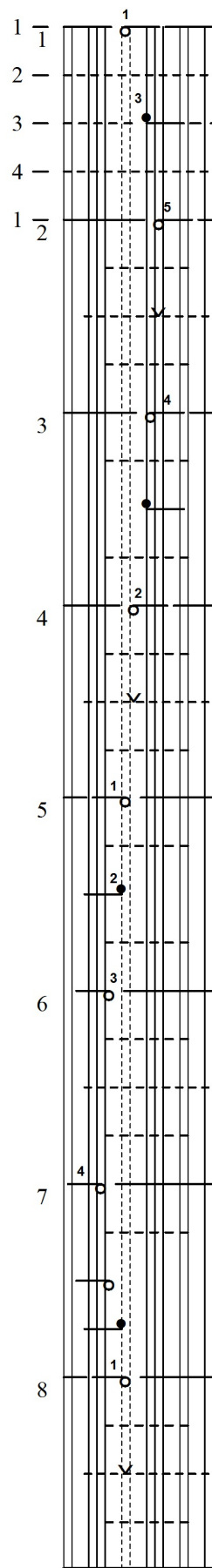
The exercise on the right also uses a 4-beat bar. The first 4 bars are played by the right hand since the stems point to the right.. Play bars 5 to 8 with the left hand, as the note stems point left.

Play the rests as indicated. Keep counting during the rests; do not stop counting just because you release a key.

Although you do not start using your left hand before bar 5 it is advisable to hold it ready over the keys it will play, so that you can play the music without any interruption .

Notice the rest signs in bars 2 ,3 and 8 and pay attention to bar 7: a note of 2 beats duration followed by two notes of 1 beat each

Every note lasts until it is time for the next note to be played: unless a rest sign 'v' indicates that it should stop.





Playing with both hands at the same time:

This song is played "hands together"; both hands play at the same time. But do not *start* with both hands. Start by playing the right hand so that you learn the melody. Then play the left hand part. Next, play the piece in short **two bar phrases**. When one 2-bar phrase is easy and comfortable to play, go on to the next two bar phrase. Next, join up the two bar phrases into four bar phrases. Finally join them all up and play the song through from beginning to end.

In the first bar the left hand plays notes that last for two beats, while the right hand plays on every beat. The two hands play their respective notes on beat 1, hold the left hand note down on beat 2 without striking it again, while the right hand plays its second note.

In bar 4 there is a rest sign. Lift both hands and play the silence on the fourth beat. Resume playing on beat 1 of bar 5 without breaking the rhythm - so count regularly throughout the piece.

Auf den grünen Rasen (German folk song)





Experienced musicians

If you are already an experienced musician you might like to try the music on the next page. It is the famous Lullaby by Bernard Flies in the key of Gb, (formerly attributed, by mistake, to Mozart)

If this is your first time to play from Klavar music you may have problems finding the right keys and you may think that the white notes should last longer than the black notes (mistaking them for minims and crochets of the traditional system.) But persevere and you will soon discover that these difficulties soon disappear. You will have no difficulty reading pieces in any key and you will not be disturbed by clef changes, sharps and flats and naturals, double sharps and double flats etc. After studying ten lessons, pieces like the Lullaby by Flies will be easy to play at first sight.

Being an experienced musician you do not have to start from the beginning again. You will have a well developed sense of rhythm, good co-ordination, you have mastered fingering and the use of arm weight and have a good "touch". All you lack is sight reading practice. But it will not take long before a new world of music will be open to you; a world without sharps and flats; a world with clear bars and beats and a world in which every note has its own position on the staff. You will even be able to compose with ease. In short – a world of musical pleasure.

Welcome to the world of Klavar!

Course information

The Klavar method course for piano, keyboard, or organ consists of six books each of 13 lessons, that is totally 78 lessons. With regular practice the course takes about one year and a half to complete. With every book there is a 'listening CD' containing the music of that book, so you can listen to hear how the music sounds when correctly played. These CDs are optional and cost € 39,00 each. If you pay in advance for the complete course of 78 lessons (6 x 13 lessons)

You get a 15% discount and pay only € 199,00 instead of € 234,00.

Application : via our Klavar-website, www.klavarskribo.nl








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Or by Fax : + 00 31 180 41 21 13

Or by e-mail: info@klavarskribo.nl

Advantages of the Klavar method

-  No sharps and flats.
-  Every note has it's own position on the staff.
-  There can be no mistake about the duration of notes.
-  Quick result.
-  More result with less exercise.
-  Playing for pleasure.
-  Almost all music available and ready to be played.





Lullaby

Bernard Flies

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