

Music Makers



Helen Maxey

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Making Music



Anyone can be a musician! As long as you can make sound, you can make music.

Rhythm and Beat

Do you tap your foot in time to music? If so, you are responding naturally to the music's pulse or beat. The beat can be very heavy, such as in rock music. It can be fast, as it is in some dance music. It can also be slow, such as that found in a funeral march.

You may tap your finger to a pattern, or rhythm, that fits around the beat. Rhythm makes the sound of music more interesting.

▼ Some drummers make music from rhythm alone, which can be both exciting and energetic. The shifting patterns of sound have a powerful effect on the listener.

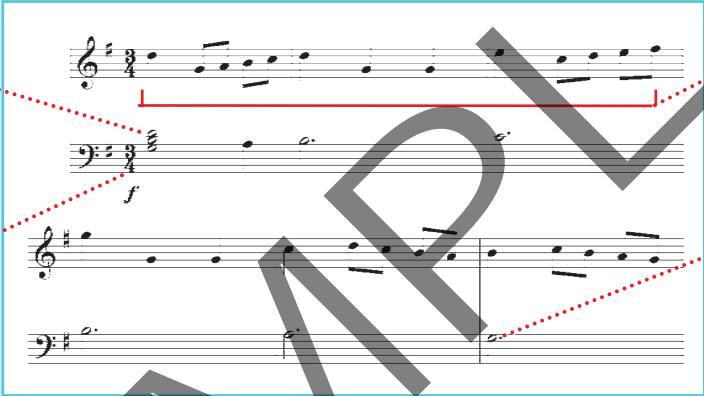
▲ You don't have to be an expert to be a musician! This girl is being taught how to hold a violin and bow correctly. A music summer camp is a good place to explore the magic of music-making.



Melody and Harmony

Try to imagine that a piece of music is a painting. The tune, or **melody**, could be described as the main subject that you focus on. The background sounds, or **harmony**, could be considered the backdrop that gives the scene in the picture its depth and interest.

A melody is literally a series of musical notes that forms a pattern, which you may recognize and remember – can you sing or hum the song from a commercial? Some pieces of music have several different melodies. When a melody appears and reappears in a long piece of music, it often has slight changes, or **variations**.



harmony (groups of notes, or chords, that accompany the melody)

time signature (this shows the number of beats in a bar)

melody (a pattern of notes that provides the tune)

note values (this shows the length of the beats: the rhythm)

The diagram shows two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. A red bracket underlines a sequence of notes in the melody. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. A red bracket underlines a sequence of notes in the harmony. Dotted lines connect the text labels to the corresponding parts of the notation.



▲ Barbershop quartets specialize in unaccompanied “close harmony” singing. The notes in the chords they sing are very close together, and have to be sung accurately.

When two or more notes are played together, we call this blend of sounds the harmony. Harmony can influence the mood of the music, such as excitement followed by peacefulness. People who write music follow certain rules of harmony to get the right combination of notes to create a particular effect. It is kind of like mixing colors to get different shades when you are painting. Taste in music varies, just like it does with fashions in clothing and pictures. What looks or sounds beautiful to people at one time or in one part of the world may be considered horrible by people at another time or in another place.