

PACKET 1: My “Leitmotiv”

What is a Leitmotiv? Answer this below in your own words

Definition: A leitmotiv is a short, constantly recurring musical phrase associated with a particular person, place, or idea.



For your next project, you will compose your own Leitmotiv. It will be your very own melody that represents you. It will be a melody that will represent you. If someone were to make a movie about your life, this musical theme would be your leitmotiv in the movie. Every time someone heard it, they would know that the story was about you.

In order to write your leitmotiv (your melody), you first need to practice writing notes on a musical staff.

We have already begun to read notes and associate them with the piano keys to play melodies. Now we have to reverse the process. That is, we now have to decide which notes on the piano we want to play, then write those notes down.

Let’s begin by first learning how to draw the treble clef and then how to draw the notes on the staff.

Below is a staff (five lines and four spaces) with a treble clef at the beginning. Try drawing 10 more treble clefs. To help, I have shown you 5 step process you can use to repeat it – try using that pattern.

Treble Clef:  5 step Process: 

Now try drawing 10 Treble Clefs

Now lets practice drawing some notes on the staff. To keep it simple, we will ignore any rhythm changes for now and just write everything as a quarter note which can look like these two examples: (with stem up or down)



Notice that when the stem is up, it looks like the stem is attached on the right side, and when the stem is down it appears to be attached to the left side. The stem must always match these examples.

Now try drawing 5 quarter notes with stem UP and 5 with the stem Down in the box below:

Now lets place the quarter notes on a treble clef staff.

First, look at the staff below with the treble clef and quarter notes.

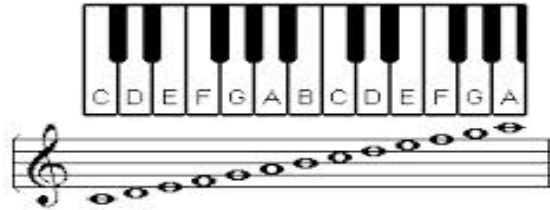


Notice that the stems are up for the lower notes (C through A), but then point down when the notes reach the note B and higher. This is an accepted rule for writing music. The stem direction is very important and should be always observed when writing music.

Now, duplicate the music above by drawing the treble clef, quarter notes, and note names on the staff below. Make it look exactly like what you see above.

Now that you have practiced placing notes on a staff, lets remind ourselves how these notes match up to the notes on the piano.

Below you can see how the notes on the treble clef staff match to the notes on the piano keyboard.



By matching the notes on the piano with the notes on the music staff, you can record your melody by writing down the notes in the order you want them performed.

For example, if you wrote a Leitmotiv for someone names Mary who had a little lamb, you could start the melody on the note D and write the following melody!

Mary had a little lamb

anon. (England)



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To practice writing notes a little more: copy down the melody from “Mary Had a Little Lamb” on the two lines of music below. Make it look like the one above.

Two sets of empty musical staves for practice. Each set consists of two staves of music.

Now that you have practiced writing music, start to experiment on the pianos. The melody may not come to you at first, but give it a try and have fun with it. Play notes in different combinations until you find something you like.

Today, try to decide which note you want to start on and how you want it to proceed. Use the staff below as a place to record your rough draft of your melody. You will turn this in today to show your progress.

If you end up not wanting to use this as your final melody (leitmotiv) that is OK – don't worry about it. Composers just like poets and authors make many drafts and change their mind a lot. It is only important to get some notes down right now to see what you like, what you want to keep, or even what you want to delete.

