keyboard

reading | technique | performance

PERFORMANCE 1

By James Dower

Instructional Design: Lisa Harriton, Keyboard Program Chair, Musicians Institute

Edited by Joe Bergamini

Digital book design and cover by Mike Hoff

Layout by Rick Gratton

Music engraving by Willie Rose

MI Curriculum Series

Series Sponsor: Jon Clayden, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Creative Director & Executive Editor: Donny Gruendler, Vice President of Instruction and Curricular Development

Managing Editor: Joe Bergamini

Published for MI by WBH MusicWorks LLC

Executive Producers: Rob Wallis, Joe Bergamini, Mike Hoff

Copyright © 2014 Musicians Institute, Inc.
All Rights Reserved

MUSICIANS INSTITUTE®

KEYBOARD PERFORMANCE 1

Unit 1

1. Notation and Chart Reading Key 4
2. Basic Keyboard Controls 6
3. Notation, Structure and Rhythm Section Concepts 10
4. The Acoustic Piano and the Sustain Pedal 17
5. Chart Talk-Down 21
6. Pop Ballad Chart/Play-Along 27

Unit 2

1. Intro To Playing With A Live Band 28
2. Performance Notes and Sound 38
3. Chart Talk-Down 39
4. Reggae Chart and Play-Along 44

Unit 3

1. Basic Notation, Structure and Concepts of ¾ Time 46
2. Performance Notes and Sound 52
3. Chart Talk-Down 55
4. Waltz Chart/Play-Along 60

Unit 4

1. Review: Acoustic Piano and Fender Rhodes 62
2. Notation, Structure and Concepts 66
3. Performance Notes and Sound 72
4. Pop Chart and Play-Along 73

Unit 5

1. Review of Units 1-4 76
2. Notation, Structure and Concepts 83
3. Performance Notes and Sounds 85

Unit 6

1. Notation, Structure and Concepts 87
2. Performance Notes and Sound 92
3. Chart Talk-Down 101
4. Motown Chart and Play-Along 103

Unit 7

1. Notation, Structure and Concepts 105
2. Performance Notes and Sound 111
3. Motown Chart and Play-Along 116

Unit 8

1. Notation, Structure and Concepts 118
2. Performance Notes and Sound 124
3. Reggae Chart and Play-Along 125

Unit 9

1. Notation, Structure and Concepts 127
2. Chart Talk-Down 135
3. Performance Notes and Sound 138
4. Blues Chart and Play-Along 139

Unit 10

1. Notation, Structure and Concepts 140
2. Performance Notes and Sound 142
3. Chart Talk-Down 146
4. Top 40 Chart and Play-Along 149

About The Author 151

Chapter 1: Notation and Chart Reading Key

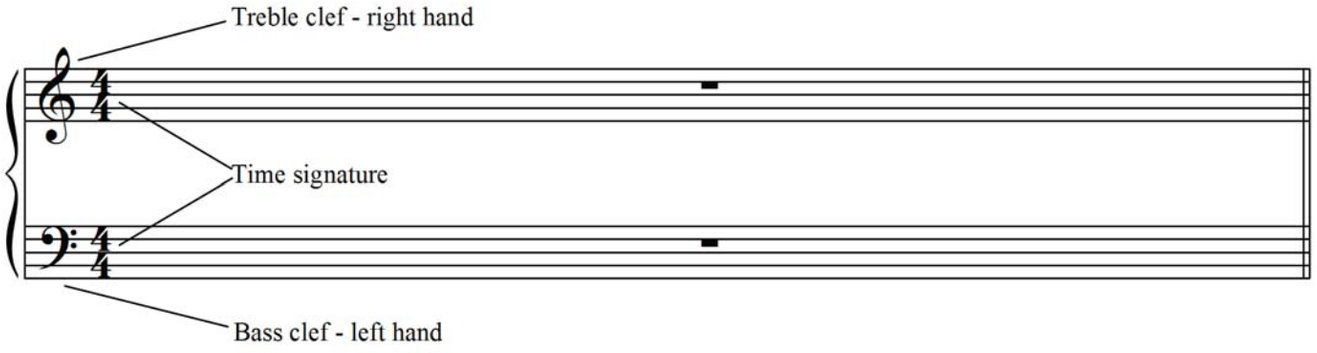
From Elton John to Alicia Keys, the pop ballad is one of the most common song formats in modern music. Deep, moving lyrics and soulful, passionate singing are some of the characteristics of pop ballads, as well as the presence of a dynamic chordal instrument such as an acoustic piano (as a keyboardist it is vital that you are able to supply proper accompaniment, or "comping," in a multitude of styles and genres). Proper use of the acoustic piano (or at least a high-quality acoustic piano sound on a keyboard) plus proper sustain pedal technique will ensure you are delivering the right background sounds for the song at hand.

In this unit, the basic controls of a digital keyboard (or synthesizer), chart notation and the keyboardists role in the rhythm section will be discussed. To this end, we have included exercises involving chordal accompaniment, pads and other techniques commonly used in the pop ballad.

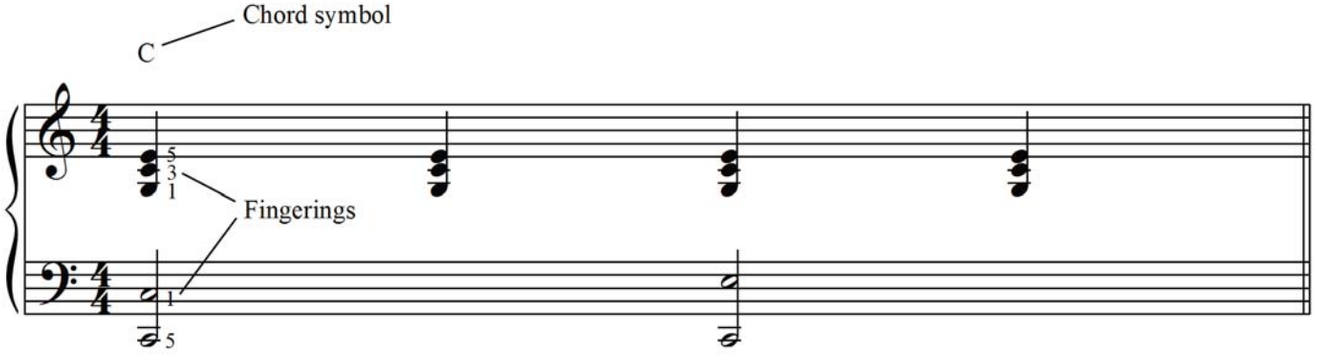
Basic Chart Notation: A *chart* is another word for sheet music that displays the information needed to play a song. Some charts are more detailed than others, but most keyboard charts contain at least the following:

The Grand Staff: Featuring both the *treble clef* (for right hand notes) and the *bass clef* (for left hand notes), the grand staff is bracketed together and also displays the *time signature*. Here, 4/4 indicates there are four beats in a measure and a quarter note gets one beat.
Ex. 1.1

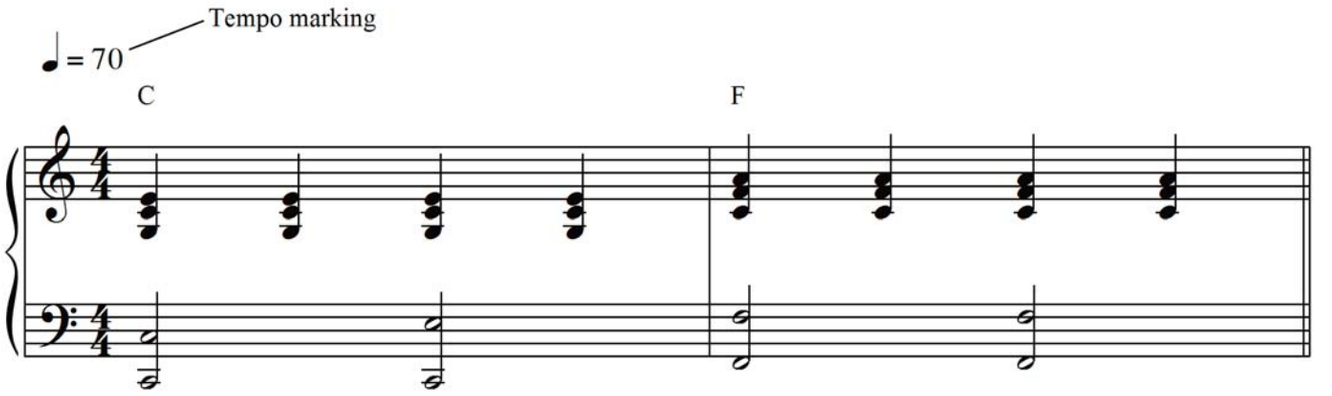
The Grand Staff



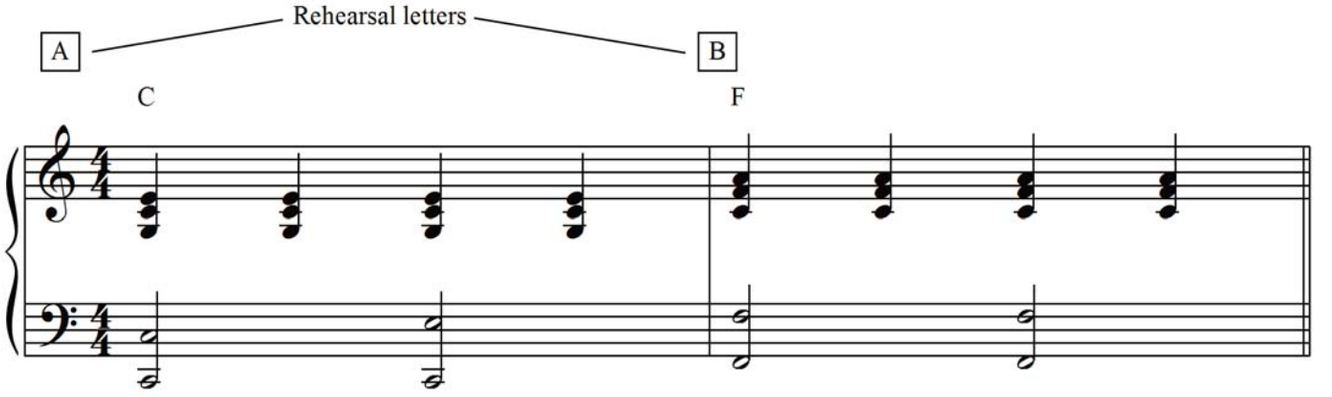
Chord symbol: Indicates what chord quality is needed for a measure or part of a measure.
Fingerings: Indicates which fingers of the hand to use for the displayed part or voicing. *Please note* that fingerings are most often omitted in charts and are only provided here for instructional purposes.
Ex. 1.2



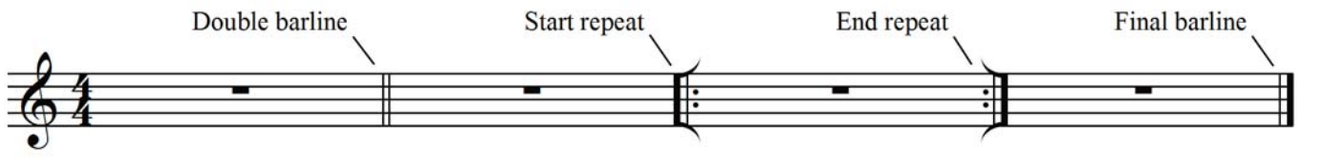
Tempo Marking: Indicates the tempo/speed of the music by showing how many beats per minute (BPM) are heard, also known as a *metronome marking*. In this example, the rate of the quarter note is shown, but any subdivision (such as eighth or 16th) can be displayed here.
Ex. 1.3



Rehearsal Letters: These are symbols that are used to identify certain sections within a chart such as *verse* and *chorus*. Each symbol can also denote a change in feel or overall groove.
Ex. 1.4



Double Barline: Signifies the end of a phrase.
Start Repeat Sign/End Repeat Sign: Indicate that a certain musical phrase will be repeated.
Final Barline: Marks the end of a composition.
Ex. 1.5



Chapter 2: Basic Keyboard Controls

On/Off Switch. There are a few different configurations of this basic control. Most involve a form of toggle.
Toggle: to alternate between two or more electronic, mechanical, or computer-related options, usually by the operation of a single switch or keystroke.
Here are a few examples:
Ex. 1.6, 1.7, 1.8

Volume Knob. Usually either a knob, a button or a slider control. (Note that on MIDI controller keyboards, this control can be disabled.)
E.x 1.9, 1.10, 1.11

Octave Buttons. The plus sign is used to shift the entire keyboard up an octave (eight notes). The minus sign is used to shift the entire keyboard down an octave (eight notes). This is an especially helpful tool for smaller keyboards that do not have the full 88 key range.
Ex. 1.12

Pitch Bend Wheel. The pitch bend wheel raises or lowers the pitch by bending the wheel upwards or downwards. This is an excellent way to create a more expressive melodic line.
Ex. 1.13

Some pitch bend wheels come in the form of a joystick.
Ex. 1.14

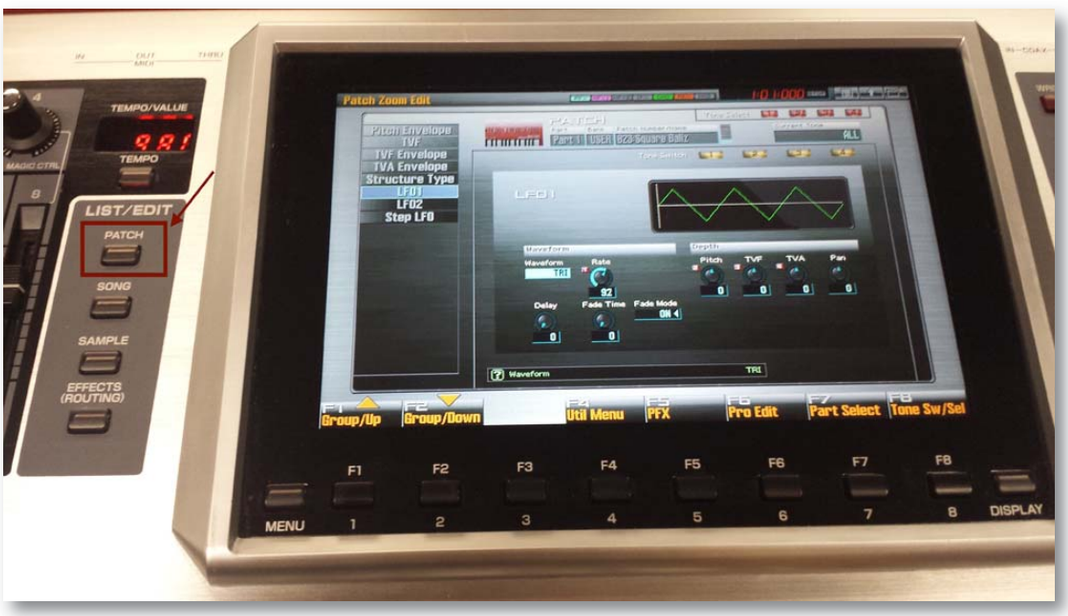
Modulation Wheel or "Mod Wheel." The modulation wheel can control vibrato, tremolo and many other effects.
Ex. 1.15

Some modulation wheels come in the form of a joystick.
Ex. 1.16

Main Screen. Many of today's keyboards have a main screen where you can select patches and customize and save sounds.

Ex. 1.17: Select patch.

Ex. 1.18: Customize sound.



Ex. 1.19: Save sound.

Scrolling Wheel. There is usually a wheel to the right of the main screen.
Ex. 1.20

Selector Buttons. These buttons scroll through different patches and command screens.
Ex. 1.21

Chapter 3: Notation, Structure and Rhythm Section Concepts

Notation

As mentioned previously, we will be using charts to learn the musical concepts in this unit. Included in most charts are musical "phrases." *Phrase:* A short passage or segment, often consisting of several measures, forming part of a larger unit. We will explore the common eight-bar phrase (*bar* is another word for measure).

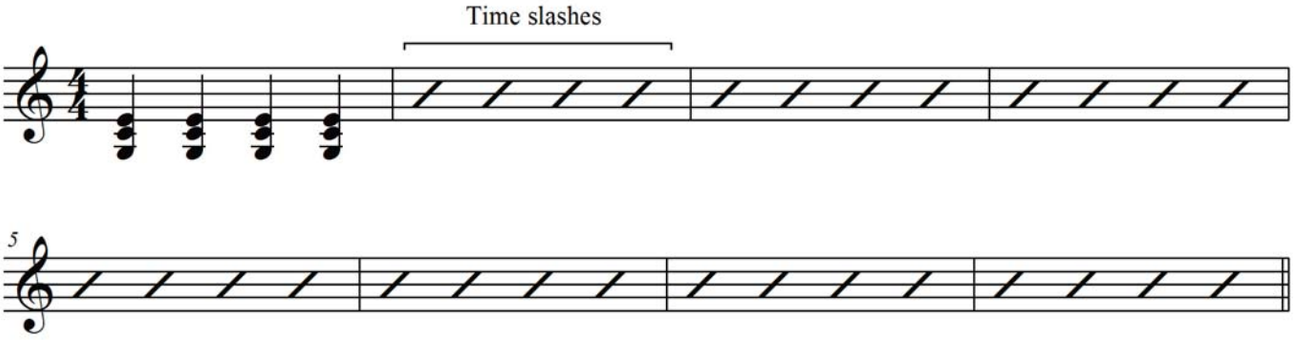
Other structural elements of the chart include: time slashes, time slashes with chords written above, rehearsal letters, repeat signs and a tempo marking. These elements will be discussed below.

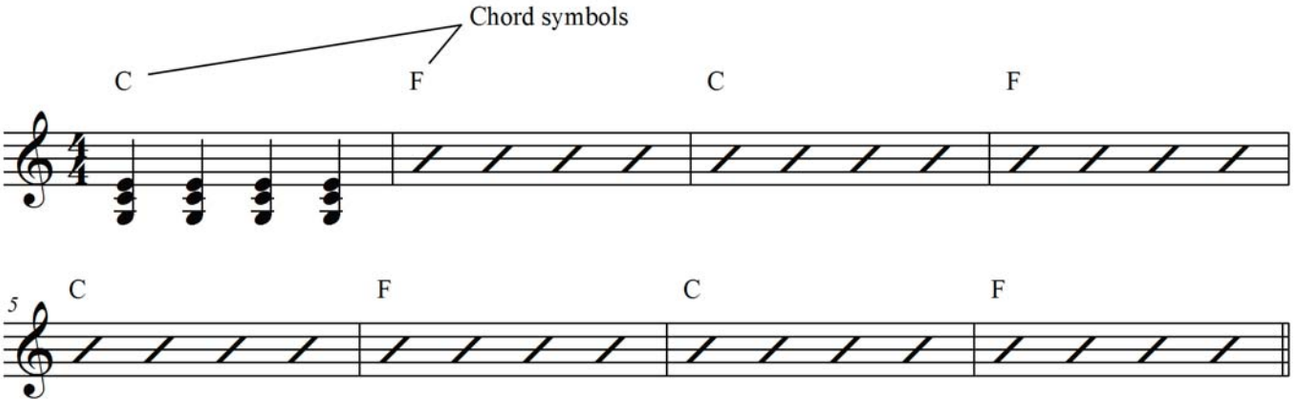
Structure: Eight-Bar Phrase

This chart utilizes an eight-bar phrase. The phrase is eight bars (measures) long and each bar after the first displays *time slashes.*

Time Slashes: Time slashes are a shorthand method of displaying the quarter-note pulse (or any subdivision) of a measure. They also denote the composer's requirement that the keyboardist continue to play a similar pattern to the one fully notated in bar one.

Ex. 1.22



Time Slashes with Chord Symbols Written Above: Example 1.23 demonstrates measures of music written with *chord symbols* above each measure. *Chord symbols* denote the chord quality required for each measure. In this case, the composer requires a triadic chord voicing similar to the one displayed in bar one to be played in every bar in quarter-note pulses.

Ex. 1.23