

Tips for memorising simple piano melodies

Tip #1: Look for repeated patterns

Are there repeated passages? How many times do the same passages appear? Are there sequences? Do they move up or down? Are there passages with the same rhythm but slightly different notes? What's the same and what's different?

Tip #2: Check the melodic movement

How does one note move to the next note? Does it move in stepwise motion, up or down? If it skips notes, what is the interval (3rd, 4th, 5th etc.)? How many notes move in the same way before something different comes along? What happens when the movement changes? How do the hands move in relation to each other? Similar motion or contrary motion?

Tip #3: Work out the harmonic progression

Do you know what key you are in? Can you hear or work out where the tonic and dominant (including dominant 7th) harmonies/notes are? Does the melody start and end on tonic or dominant?

Melody 1 (example):

This melody is in C major. It begins and ends on the tonic (i.e. C). RH starts on treble C and LH starts on middle C moving in contrary motion. Both play 4 notes moving in stepwise motion, RH steps downwards, LH steps upwards. The same pattern repeats starting on different notes for both hands. RH skips up to start the pattern from E. The left hand moves down to start on the dominant (i.e. G) before stepping back to tonic (i.e. C). To finish, the tonic note is echoed higher in the RH.

Piano

The musical score is for a piano piece in 4/4 time, C major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand (RH) and a bass clef staff for the left hand (LH). The melody is composed of four measures. In the first measure, the RH plays C4, B3, A3, G3 and the LH plays C4, D4, E4, F4. In the second measure, the RH plays E4, D4, C4, B3 and the LH plays G3, F3, E3, D3. In the third measure, the RH plays C4, B3, A3, G3 and the LH plays C4, D4, E4, F4. In the fourth measure, the RH plays C5 and the LH plays C4. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Try figure out how to memorise these melodies using the tips above

Melody 2:

6

Pno.

Musical notation for Melody 2, measures 6-12. The score is in 2/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The left hand (bass clef) has a bass line of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. The piece ends with a double bar line.

13

Pno.

Musical notation for Melody 2, measures 13-19. The right hand (treble clef) has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The left hand (bass clef) has a bass line of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Melody 3:

21

Pno.

Musical notation for Melody 3, measures 21-23. The score is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) has a melody of quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The left hand (bass clef) has a bass line of quarter notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, B3, A3, G3. The piece ends with a double bar line.