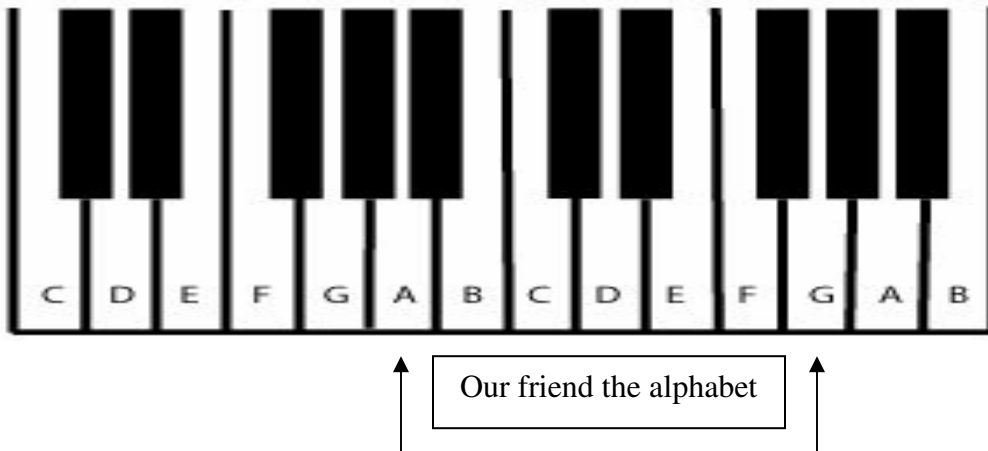


Learning the Keyboard

Learning piano is one of the best ways to understand how music works. For the history of time musicians have been using the piano as a tool to compose, teach and perform.

By learning the notes on the piano we are able to see how scales, chords and music in general are built. One of the most useful things about the piano is its visual aspect. Everything is laid out right in front of you; all twelve notes staring you right in the face.

Let's focus on the white keys first. As you can see, the note names and their order correspond to the English alphabet. It starts A-B-C-D-E-F-G, then starts all over again. How easy is that? It's also useful to use visual guides. If you use the black keys as guides it becomes easier to identify the notes. The note "C" is always to the left of the pair of two black keys. "F" is always to the left of the group of three black keys.



Now it's time for the black keys. The black keys represent alterations to what we call the natural notes (white keys). They are the sound or pitch between two natural notes. If C and D are a whole step apart then the black key between them is considered a half step apart. Each black key has two names. It is either a sharp (#) or a flat (b). It depends which way you alter the note.

Let's say you start at a "C." If you want to raise that note one half step to the black key above and to the right, that note is "C#." If you started at "D" and lowered the pitch a half step to the left that note is "Db." To add a sharp to a note is to raise the pitch or sound. To add a flat is to lower the pitch of a note. See the example below.

