MUSICAL MNEMONICS

by

Steven Allan Wheelock

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Introduction

Throughout this work, entitled Musical Mnemonics, the author refers only to famous people (living or departed) by name.

All of the famous people (living or departed), referred to by name in this work, are referred to with utmost respect by the author of this work.

This is neither a course on mnemonics, nor is this a course in music theory. In this work, the author (yours truly) attempts to present a few mnemonic ideas for the entertainment of the reader, and claims nothing more.

This work was created on a shoestring budget, meaning the author (yours truly) typed on a computer keyboard like a chimpanzee.

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The basic idea

The basic idea is very simple: Famous women represent notes on the treble clef, whereas famous men represent notes on the bass clef.

In the following example, the famous (and honorable) name used to represent Middle C is used once, and once only. An improvised depiction of the bass and treble clefs immediately follows:

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                              G           Greer Garson
        -------------- F -------- Farrah Faucett ---------
                              E            Elsa Einstein
        -------------- D --------- Doris Day ------------
    Treble                    C           Cyd Charisse
        -------------- B ------- Billie Burke ----------
    Clef                      A           Alice Ayres
        -------------- G -------- Greer Garson ----------
                              F          Farrah Faucett
        -------------- E --------- Elsa Einstein --------
                              D          Doris Day
        (Middle C) - C - John Wayne  - C -
                              B            Bill Bixby
        -------------- A -------- Ansel Adams ----------
                              G           Gale Gordon
        -------------- F ------- Freddy Fender ----------
    Bass                      E           Erik Estrada
        -------------- D -------- Danny DeVito ----------
    Clef                      C          Calvin Coolidge
        -------------- B --------- Bill Bixby ----------
                              A           Ansel Adams
        -------------- G --------- Gale Gordon ----------
                              F          Freddy Fender
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The improvised depiction of the Bass and Treble clefs was created by using only the simplest word processing techniques.

I could have used "Cyd Charisse" or "Calvin Coolidge" to represent Middle C; however, since Middle C falls midway between the bass and treble clefs (for the purpose of this mnemonic), I decided to go with John Wayne instead. Perhaps pretend that John Wayne is needed to keep law and order between the bass and treble clefs? In the above example, John Wayne represents Middle C, and only Middle C. Using the famous (and honorable) name of John Wayne helps to create in the mind a sharp boundary between the

bass and treble clefs, or at least that's the intended effect.

(John Wayne played the role of Sheriff John T. Chance in the 1959 motion picture <u>Rio Bravo</u>, so I think of John Wayne in this role for Middle C.)

Just to recap, simply associate the natural notes (neither sharp nor flat notes) above Middle C with famous female celebrities; likewise, simply associate the natural notes below Middle C with famous male celebrities. For example: The image you have in your mind of "Doris Day" can only be associated with all of the "D" notes (D-natural notes) above Middle C. You should have easily figured out that Doris Day represents all of the D-natural notes above Middle C (treble clef) because her first and last name (Doris Day) begins with the letter D.

If associating the notes on the bass clef with famous men, and associating the notes on the treble clef with famous women, helps to prevent your memory of one clef from interfering with your memory of the other clef, then it may not be necessary to read much further.

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Intermission

This "Intermission" section is intended as a place where you can put your mind in neutral and mentally relax.

Perhaps you've been taught to associate the spaces within the treble clef (F-A-C-E) with "face"?

Perhaps you've been taught to associate the spaces within the bass clef (A-C-E-G) with "All Cows Eat Grass"?

F-A-C-E ... Flying Aardvarks Cruise Everywhere. (Treble clef)
A-C-E-G ... All Cows Emit Gas. (Bass Clef)

If you have a mnemonic device that works beautifully for only one clef, then what happens when you try to play both clefs (bass and

treble) at the same time?

When attempting to play the piano, where you have to contend with both bass and treble clefs, if you start thinking in terms of "Flying Cows Gas Aardvarks" for the treble clef, instead of "Flying Aardvarks Cruise Everywhere" (F-A-C-E) for the treble clef, then playing the correct notes may be easier said than done.

Back in the 1990s, I played piano at the beginner level. I was the worst piano player in the world, and now I'm not even that good. One problem I had was that my memory of the treble clef would interfere with my memory of the bass clef, and vice versa.

If your memory of the bass clef conflicts with your memory of the treble clef (and vise versa), then perhaps associating the notes above Middle C (treble clef) with famous women, while associating the notes below Middle C (bass clef) with famous men, would possibly help to reduce this problem for you??

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                A formal digression:

Upon discovery of the Dominic System, named after Dominic O'Brien (1957-), I realized that Mr. Dominic O'Brien used people to represent numbers in his system. This very realization somehow gave me the idea of using famous people to represent musical notes, instead of using mental images of famous people to represent numbers. As far as I can recall, I inadvertently got the idea of using people to represent musical notes from the brilliant Mr. Dominic O'Brien. On a personal note, I know very little about the Dominic System; however, it did occur to me to acknowledge a source of inspiration.

Basically, by drawing inspiration and ideas from brilliant people far smarter than I'll ever be (living and departed), I was able to cobble together a few mnemonic ideas, perhaps for your amusement if nothing else.

If you like the idea of associating notes on the treble clef with famous women, and also of associating notes on the bass clef with famous men, then it may be best to simply have fun with this mnemonic idea as is, without adding to it. If you don't prefer the famous & honorable names I've chosen for the bass and treble clefs, then change the names to your heart's content.

I truly hope that everything you've read up to this point has been worth your precious time.

I truly believe that everything you read beyond this point may possibly be unnecessarily complicated, and possibly a waste of your precious time.

Since I've attempted to donate this work (Musical Mnemonics) to the public domain, and especially since there are books by Harry Lorayne, Jerry Lucas, and David M. Roth that explain mnemonics far better than I could ever hope to explain the subject, please don't expect anything resembling an in-depth explanation of the mnemonic techniques that follow. I am merely attempting to share some mnemonic ideas I've tinkered with, as it relates to musical notes. That said, I'll try to leave you with more than enough clues to figure out all that follows.

Suggestion: If you don't understand anything that follows, simply skip ahead for further clues. Eventually, all should be clear. Looking for patterns may be the quickest, easiest, and perhaps even the best way to understand the mnemonic ideas that follow. The simple act of looking for patterns may serve you even better than all of the explanations that follow.

With the exception of using John Wayne to represent Middle C, all that follows should follow a pattern in such a way that intuition alone should suffice. If a pattern can be thought of as a form of coded information, then the author (yours truly) has attempted to make the "code" as easy for the reader to break as possible. Every time you recognize a pattern, you're breaking a code.

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An informal digression:

Okay, here's the plan for anyone curious enough to read on: I'm essentially going to dump my personal mnemonic ideas in your lap, figuratively speaking, and then hope that you're able to figure out the rest from the clues.

Is the greatest detective in the galaxy in?

Pretend you are the greatest detective in the galaxy, with a mnemonic musical mystery to solve.

The first clue (Clue #1) may test your resolve, though perhaps easily solved.

The second clue (clue #2) is a blast from the past. May it help you to obtain a memory that lasts.

(Perhaps think of Clue #1 as the key that unlocks Clue #2.)

To solve Clue #3 may require the wherewithal of a ghost, for the third clue is the most.

Clue #4 is a clue musicians may adore.

Then there's Clue #5 to be solved. Is this an unreasonable directive for the galaxy's greatest detective?

"An informal digression" ends here. Clue #1 follows:

Clue #1

Mnemonic Major System

Does the following make any sense to you?

(Skip ahead to Clue #2 if this clue causes you frustration. You can always come back to this clue later. Hint: There are many books that explain the "Mnemonic Major System" far better than anything you'll see here, and two of these books will be mentioned elsewhere in this informal work.)

Turning consonant sounds into numbers with the Mnemonic Major System:

1--T, D
2--N
3--M
4--R
5--L
6--J, Soft G, Ch, Sh
7--K, Hard G, Hard C
8--V, F, Ph
9--P, B
0--S, Z, Soft C

Vowel sounds, and the sounds made by the letters w, h, y, are not translated into numbers. Sounds made by a, e, i, o, u--w, h, y don't count. Silent letters also don't count.

(The sound made by the letter h only counts in the ch and sh sounds. By itself, the sound made by the letter h doesn't count.)

It's the sounds that count, not the letters. Examples follow:

Robinson Crusoe on Mars = 492027402340   Sofa = 08
4-9-20-2-74-0----2-3-40   0-8-

Ben-Hur = 924 (9 = B   2 = n   4 = r)   Piano = 92
9-2---4   9--2-

Stardust, Hoagy Carmichael   Jingles, James P. Johnson
01-41-01-----7--7-43-7---5   6-275-0--6-3-0-9--6--20-2

Ain't Misbehavin', Thomas "Fats" Waller   Tiger Rag, Art Tatum
--2-1-3-09---8-2---1--3-0--8-10----5--4   1-7-4-4-7---41-1-1-3

Two authors who married: Edmond Hamilton/Leigh Brackett
1-----1--40-----3-4---1---13-21---3-51-2-5-----94-7--1-

A strong vocabulary may lead to success.   Magna Carta
--014-27-8-7-9-5-4--3---5--1-1--0-70-0-   3-72--7-41-

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Famous bird: Passenger Pigeon            The Gold Standard
8-3--0-9-41--9-0--26-4-9-6--2            1---7-51-01-21-41


T.V. addiction = 181762      Keys = 70     Typewriter = 19414
1-8---1--76--2               7--0          1-9--4-1-4


Big Band era     Twelve-tone and nineteen-tone equal temperament
9-7-9-21--4-     1--58--1-2---21-2-2-1--2-1-2---7--5-1-39-4-3-21
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What you've seen is a truly incomplete explanation for turning
consonant <u>sounds</u> into numbers. The information you need to solve
<u>Clue #1</u> should become apparent as you peruse the next clue, which
immediately follows.

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                            <u>Clue #2</u>

The <u>Roth Memory Course: A Simple and Scientific Method of</u>
<u>Improving the Memory and Increasing Mental Power</u> (Seven Lessons),
by David M. Roth, is in the public domain in the United States of
America (Copyright, 1918 By David M. Roth).

*Code Words marked with an asterisk (*) were taken from the <u>Roth</u>
<u>Memory Course: A Simple and Scientific Method of Improving the</u>
<u>Memory and Increasing Mental Power</u>, by David M. Roth--Copyright,
1918 By David M. Roth (Lesson Five, Page Eighteen).

<u>Code Words</u>	4 -- Hare*	14 -- Tire*
	5 -- Hill*	15 -- Hotel*
*Code Words from	6 -- Shoe*	16 -- Dish*
the <u>Roth Memory</u>	7 -- Cow*	17 -- Dog*
<u>Course</u> (1918), by	8 -- Hive*	18 -- Dove*
David M. Roth:	9 -- Pie	19 -- Tub*
	10 -- Woods*	20 -- Nose*
1 -- Hat*	11 -- Tide*	21 -- Window*
2 -- Hen*	12 -- Tin*	22 -- Onion
3 -- Moe	13 -- Team*	23 -- Gnome*

24 -- Nero	50 -- Lace*	76 -- Gauge
25 -- Nail*	51 -- Light*	77 -- Cake*
26 -- Hinge*	52 -- Lion*	78 -- Cave
27 -- Ink*	53 -- Lime*	79 -- Cab*
28 -- Nova	54 -- Lawyer*	80 -- Vase*
29 -- Knob*	55 -- Lily*	81 -- Foot*
30 -- Moose*	56 -- Lodge*	82 -- Fan*
31 -- Mud*	57 -- Lake*	83 -- Foam*
32 -- Moon*	58 -- Loaf*	84 -- Wafer
33 -- Mummy*	59 -- Lap*	85 -- File*
34 -- Hammer*	60 -- Cheese*	86 -- Fish*
35 -- Mule*	61 -- Sheet*	87 -- Fig*
36 -- Mush	62 -- Ocean	88 -- Fife*
37 -- Hammock*	63 -- Jam*	89 -- Fob*
38 -- Movie	64 -- Chair*	90 -- Bus*
39 -- Mop*	65 -- Jail*	91 -- Boat*
40 -- Rose*	66 -- Judge*	92 -- Piano*
41 -- Rat*	67 -- Check*	93 -- Beam
42 -- Rain*	68 -- Chief*	94 -- Bear*
43 -- Ram*	69 -- Ship*	95 -- Bell*
44 -- Aurora	70 -- Goose*	96 -- Bush*
45 -- Rail*	71 -- Kite*	97 -- Bag*
46 -- Roach*	72 -- Can*	98 -- Pave
47 -- Rake*	73 -- Comb*	99 -- Pipe*
48 -- Roof*	74 -- Car*	100 -- Daisies*
49 -- Harp	75 -- Coal*	

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Clue #2 continued:

For anyone baffled by Clue #1 and Clue #2, the author (yours truly) respectfully suggests the following books:

The Memory Book, by Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (Copyright © 1974 Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas).

Roth Memory Course: A Simple and Scientific Method of Improving the Memory and Increasing Mental Power (Seven Lessons), by David

M. Roth (Copyright, 1918 By David M. Roth). This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and perhaps elsewhere.

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The Memory Book, by Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (Copyright © 1974 Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas), should help you to easily solve Clue #1. To solve Clue #1, you need only to know how to turn consonant sounds into numbers. This book should also help you solve Clue #2. (Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas use the term "Peg Words" instead of "Code Words".)

The Roth Memory Course (1918) should also help you with Clue #1 and Clue #2.

You need to understand the concept behind Clue #1 before you can fully understand the concept behind Clue #2.

Clue #2 simply gives you the code words (or peg words) that I personally use, at least as of this writing. As you can see in Clue #2, I chose most of my code words (also known as peg words) from the Roth Memory Course (1918), by David M. Roth.

Instead of using the code words (peg words) that I personally use, you may be better off choosing most or all of your peg words from another source, such as The Memory Book, by Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas (Copyright © 1974 Harry Lorayne and Jerry Lucas).

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<div align="center">Clue #3</div>

Since there are eighty-eight keys on a typical piano, you may wish to learn peg words (code words) from one to eighty-eight. Learning peg words from one to one hundred may not be a bad idea, but that's obviously for you to decide.

Suggestion: Before reading much further, write down your peg words (or code words) from one (1) to eighty-eight (88), unless

you've already memorized your peg words (or code words). If you are still confused about Clue #1 and Clue #2, then you're likely to be totally lost before you reach the end of this clue.

If you feel ready for the rest of Clue #3....

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While tuning an acoustic piano (twelve-tone equal temperament), a piano tuner may possibly tune the piano with the following criteria in mind:

Piano key number one (1) may possibly be tuned to roughly 27.50 hertz.

Piano key number forty (40) may possibly be tuned to roughly 261.63 hertz.

Piano key number forty-nine (49) may possibly be tuned to roughly 440.00 hertz.

Piano key number eighty-eight (88) may possibly be tuned to roughly 4186.01 hertz.

All remaining piano keys would possibly be tuned accordingly.

If piano key number one represents the lowest pitched note (27.50 hertz), then piano key number eighty-eight would represent the highest pitched note (4186.01 hertz).

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Counting the piano keys from left to right, Middle C is the fortieth key on the piano. So how could you use mnemonics to remember that piano key number 40 is Middle C?

For Clue #2, the code word (or peg word) for forty (40) is rose.

Rose = 40 (Remember: Vowel sounds don't count.)
4-0-

You may remember that I've associated the legendary movie star John Wayne with Middle C. You may even have pretended that John Wayne was needed to keep law and order between the bass and treble clefs.

So, for the purpose of this work:

John Wayne = Middle C
Rose = 40
Piano key number 40, counting from left to right, is Middle C.

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So I ask you again, how can you use mnemonics to remember that piano key number forty is Middle C?

Here is but one possibility: Simply pretend that JOHN WAYNE (Middle C) is arresting a ROSE (40).

Use your imagination, your mind's eye, to see John Wayne actually arresting a rose, and then you should be able to remember that Middle C (John Wayne) is key number 40 (rose) on the piano.

Or perhaps try to imagine this, and be sure to actually see the images in your mind:

Pretend there's a big ROSE ... from the planet Mars. It's a Martian ROSE that's piloting a flying saucer. So there you have it, John Wayne (Middle C) on horseback being chased by a flying saucer that's piloted by a rose (40). Note: I would guess that you would be better off simply imagining John Wayne (Middle C) arresting a rose (40).

In this somewhat informal work, called Musical Mnemonics, what is the code word for forty? (Hint: Rose is the code word for 40.)

If the number forty (40) reminds you of ROSE, then what does ROSE remind you of? If ROSE reminds you of John Wayne, then what note does John Wayne represent on the piano? Does John Wayne represent Middle C on the piano? (Hint: John Wayne represents Middle C on the piano ... unless you choose another person.)

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Please take a moment to study the following:

Rose (40) + John Wayne (Middle C)

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Rose + John Wayne ... simply means to use your imagination to make a mental connection between <u>Rose</u> and <u>John Wayne</u>. "Rose + John Wayne" (with or without the quotation marks) may also be described as making an association between Rose and John Wayne.

If "Rose + John Wayne" (with or without the quotation marks) can help you to remember that piano key number forty (rose = 40) is Middle C (John Wayne = Middle C), then this idea can be expanded to include all eighty-eight (88) piano keys. Expanding this idea to include all eighty-eight (88) piano keys is the purpose of <u>Clue #4</u> and <u>Clue #5</u>.

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Before moving on, I would like to respectfully remind the reader that this is neither a course on mnemonics, nor is this a course in music theory. I only feel qualified to give you a few mnemonic ideas I've come up with as it relates to musical notes.

The simple idea of associating the <u>natural</u> notes (notes that are neither flat nor sharp) above Middle C (treble clef) with famous women, while associating the natural notes below Middle C (bass clef) with famous men, may be the only thing about "Musical Mnemonics" that's worthy of your precious time.

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Clue #4

The famous John Wayne (1907–1979) represents only one note (Middle C), but all of the remaining famous people respectfully listed may be used to represent more than one note.

Famous women to associate <u>only</u> with the treble clef:

A-natural = Alice Ayres (1859-1885)
B-natural = Billie Burke (1884-1970)
C-natural = Cyd Charisse (1922-2008)
D-natural = Doris Day (1924-)
E-natural = Elsa Einstein (1876-1936)
F-natural = Farrah Faucett (1947-2009)
G-natural = Greer Garson (1904-1996)

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Famous men to associate <u>only</u> with the bass clef:

A-natural = Ansel Adams (1902-1984)
B-natural = Bill Bixby (1934-1993)
C-natural = Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933)
D-natural = Danny DeVito (1944-)
E-natural = Erik Estrada (1949-)
F-natural = Freddy Fender (1937-2006)
G-natural = Gale Gordon (1906-1995)

Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) represents all of the C-natural notes <u>below</u> Middle C that you come across. You will know that "Calvin Coolidge" pertains to the C-natural notes (below Middle C) because his first and last name begins with the letter C.

Cyd Charisse (1922-2008) represents all of the C-natural notes <u>above</u> Middle C that you come across. You should know this because her first and last name (Cyd Charisse) begins with the letter C.

The pattern should be obvious: Danny DeVito represents all of the D-natural notes below Middle C (bass clef), et cetera.

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<u>But what about the sharps and flats?</u>

For the notes that are either sharp or flat, I've associated (thought of) names that can be used for notes above and/or below Middle C: For the sharps and flats <u>only</u>, it's okay to associate

famous females and famous males with <u>either</u> clef.

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<div align="center"><u>Two important rules</u> to keep in mind:</div>

Associate famous <u>women</u> to all of the notes that are <u>sharp</u>.

Associate famous <u>men</u> to all of the notes that are <u>flat</u>.

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If you ever come across a B-sharp (B#) note, simply associate that note to a famous woman whose first or last name begins with the letter B. Leigh Brackett (1915-1978), for example.

If you ever come across a B-flat (Bb) note, simply associate that note to a famous man whose first or last name begins with the letter B. Among the possibilities would be Jack Benny (1894-1974), John Boyega (1992-), Ray Bradbury (1920-2012), or someone else.

For E-flat (Eb), I think of Edmond Hamilton (1904-1977). Since Edmond Hamilton's first name begins with the letter E, and his last name begins with the letter H, I know that Edmond Hamilton must pertain to an E-flat note (because there are no "H-flat" notes that I am aware of).

If a famous person's first and last name begins with the same letter, then associate that person to a natural (neither sharp nor flat) note. If a famous person's first and last name begin with different letters, then that famous person represents either a sharp (famous female) or a flat (famous male) note.

For <u>ALL</u> of the G-sharp notes, above and/or below Middle C, you might go with Grace Kelly (1929-1982), Judy Garland (1922-1969), or someone else.

A famous name such as Edie Adams (1927-2008) would cause a problem, as "Edie Adams" would represent all of the E-sharp <u>and</u> all of the A-sharp notes, at least according to the rules put

forth thus far.

Famous names such as Paul Mantee (1931-2013) and Victor Lundin (1930-2013) would be a problem, as musical notes range only from A to G on the alphabet.

It's ultimately up to you to decide the rules for which names to associate to musical notes.

(For sesquiflats, you might use the names of male cartoon characters for your associations; for sesquisharps, perhaps go with the names of female cartoon characters for your associations, etc. In addition to cartoon characters, you might wish to consider fictional space opera heroes, fictional detectives, fictional doctors, etc., if you venture far beyond 12-tone equal temperament. In addition to using the names of famous people, using the names for species of birds, dinosaurs, fish, plants, trees, etc., might allow you to eventually handle every form of sharp and flat found in 31-tone equal temperament, for example. I do not know if it would be practical to extend the mnemonic ideas presented here to 31-tone equal temperament. With any luck, the mnemonic ideas presented here may possibly work for 12-tone equal temperament ... and perhaps even work for 19-tone equal temperament.)

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You may wish to memorize other names, but here's what I came up with for the notes that are either sharp or flat:

For all of the sharp notes above and/or below Middle C

A-sharp (A#) = Audrey Meadows (1922-1996)
B-sharp (B#) = Leigh Brackett (1915-1978)
C-sharp (C#) = Condolezza Rice (1954-)
D-sharp (D#) = Daisy Ridley (1992-)
E-sharp (E#) = Ethel Merman (1908-1984)
F-sharp (F#) = Nanette Fabray (1920-)
G-sharp (G#) = Judy Garland (1922-1969)

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For all of the flat notes above and/or below Middle C

A-flat (Ab) = Neil Armstrong (1930–2012)
B-flat (Bb) = Ray Bradbury (1920–2012)
C-flat (Cb) = Charlton Heston (1923–2008)
D-flat (Db) = DeForest Kelley (1920–1999)
E-flat (Eb) = Edmond Hamilton (1904–1977)
F-flat (Fb) = Jonathan Frakes (1952–)
G-flat (Gb) = George Lucas (1944–)

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Clue #5

For this clue, you will need to know your peg words (code words) from one to eighty-eight, or at least have a suitable substitute for peg words that represent numbers from one to eighty-eight.

You'll need at least a cursory understanding of all the previous clues in order to figure out what follows. Good luck.

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Most of the code words, as mentioned earlier, come from the Roth Memory Course (1918), by David M. Roth (see Clue #2).

To memorize the note positions of all eighty-eight keys (notes) on the piano keyboard, let's begin with the following associations:

Hat + Ansel Adams (Hat = 1 = first note [27.50 hertz] on piano)

"Hat + Ansel Adams" (with or without the quotation marks) simply means to associate Hat with Ansel Adams. (Perhaps imagine that Ansel Adams is attempting to take a picture of a beautiful scene with a camera shaped like a hat.)

By associating Hat (code word for the number one) with Ansel Adams (Ansel Adams represents A-natural), then this should help you to remember that the first key (Hat) on the piano is an A-

natural (Ansel Adams) key.

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Associating Hare to Calvin Coolidge (Hare + Calvin Coolidge) will tell you that the fourth note (Hare = 4) on the piano is a C-natural note (Calvin Coolidge = any and all C-natural notes <u>below</u> Middle C). Pretending that a HARE (Hare = 4) was elected President instead of Calvin Coolidge (C-natural) is but one possible way to associate Hare to Calvin Coolidge.

Associating Rose (40) to John Wayne (Middle C) should help you to remember that the fortieth key on the piano is Middle C. We covered this one earlier....

Associating Fife (88) to Cyd Charisse (any and all C-natural notes <u>above</u> Middle C) should help you to remember that piano key number eighty-eight (Fife) is a C-natural (Cyd Charisse) note.

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Okay, I've thrown a lot of information at you all at once. The information I've thrown at you is supposed to allow you to associate eighty-eight peg words (or code words) to famous people. The act of associating eighty-eight peg words to famous people should eventually allow you to memorize the piano keyboard.

Suppose someone asks you, "What musical tone (note) should you hear when key number fifty-nine (59) is played on a properly tuned piano?" One possibility immediately follows:

Lap + Greer Garson

Associate Lap to Greer Garson (Lap + Greer Garson), and you should soon remember that piano key number fifty-nine (Lap = 59) should give you a musical tone of G-natural (Greer Garson = G-natural) on a properly tuned piano.

Perhaps pretend that GREER GARSON (G-natural) is greatly annoyed because someone dropped an informal piece called "Musical

Mnemonics" on her LAP (59).

Any bit of imagination you can come up with that allows you to
associate LAP (59) to GREER GARSON (G-natural) should allow you
to remember that piano key number fifty-nine is a G-natural note.

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I'll attempt to show you one possible way of associating eighty-
eight peg words (code words) to famous people in order to
memorize the notes found on all eighty-eight keys on a standard
piano (twelve tones per octave). The associations that follow may
leave you a bit perplexed at first, but I'll attempt to offer a
reasonable explanation after dumping the following associations
in your lap, figuratively speaking.

Hint: In the "Musical Mnemonics List" that soon follows, be sure
to take a look at piano key number 40, which is between the bass
and treble clefs, at least for the purpose of this informal work.
Piano key number 40 (Rose) is Middle C (represented by John
Wayne).

While you study the "Musical Mnemonics List" that follows, you
will be presented with a lot of coded information. Once you've
broken the code, there will be very little more that I could
possibly show you concerning music and/or mnemonics.

Eighty-eight associations for memorizing the piano keyboard
immediately follows:

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Musical Mnemonics List

Piano keys & notes   The associations

1 = A   Hat (1) + Ansel Adams (A)
2 = A#/Bb .... Hen + Ray Bradbury
3 = B   Moe + Bill Bixby

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 4 = C                                       Hare + Calvin Coolidge
 5 = C#/Db (C-sharp/D-flat note) ......      Hill + Condolezza Rice
 6 = D                                       Shoe + Danny DeVito
 7 = D#/Eb ...........................       Cow + Daisy Ridley
 8 = E                                       Hive + Erik Estrada
 9 = F                                       Pie + Freddy Fender
10 = F#/Gb (F-sharp/G-flat) ..........       Woods + Nanette Fabray
11 = G                                       Tide + Gale Gordon
12 = G#/Ab ..........................        Tin + Judy Garland
13 = A                                       Team + Ansel Adams
14 = A#/Bb ..........................        Tire + Audrey Meadows
15 = B (B-natural note)                      Hotel + Bill Bixby

16 = C                                       Dish + Calvin Coolidge
17 = C#/Db ..........................        Dog + DeForest Kelley
18 = D                                       Dove + Danny DeVito
19 = D#/Eb ..........................        Tub + Edmond Hamilton
20 = E (E-natural)                           Nose + Erik Estrada
21 = F                                       Window + Freddy Fender
22 = F#/Gb ..........................        Onion + George Lucas
23 = G                                       Gnome + Gale Gordon
24 = G#/Ab ..........................        Nero + Neil Armstrong
25 = A (A-natural)                           Nail + Ansel Adams
26 = A#/Bb ..........................        Hinge + Ray Bradbury
27 = B                                       Ink + Bill Bixby

28 = C                                       Nova + Calvin Coolidge
29 = C#/Db ..........................        Knob + Condolezza Rice
30 = D (D-natural)                           Moose + Danny DeVito
31 = D#/Eb ..........................        Mud + Daisy Ridley
32 = E                                       Moon + Erik Estrada
33 = F                                       Mummy + Freddy Fender
34 = F#/Gb ..........................        Hammer + Nanette Fabray
35 = G (G-natural)                           Mule + Gale Gordon
36 = G#/Ab ..........................        Mush + Judy Garland
37 = A                                       Hammock + Ansel Adams
38 = A#/Bb ..........................        Movie + Audrey Meadows
39 = B                                       Mop + Bill Bixby

40 = C (Middle C on the piano)               Rose + John Wayne
41 = C#/Db ..........................        Rat + DeForest Kelley
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42 = D                                        Rain + Doris Day
43 = D#/Eb ........................... Ram + Edmond Hamilton
44 = E                                        Aurora + Elsa Einstein
45 = F (F-natural)                            Rail + Farrah Faucett
46 = F#/Gb .......................... Roach + George Lucas
47 = G                                        Rake + Greer Garson
48 = G#/Ab .......................... Roof + Neil Armstrong
49 = A                                        Harp + Alice Ayres
50 = A#/Bb (A-sharp/B-flat) .......... Lace + Ray Bradbury
51 = B                                        Light + Billie Burke

52 = C                                        Lion + Cyd Charisse
53 = C#/Db ........................... Lime + Condolezza Rice
54 = D                                        Lawyer + Doris Day
55 = D#/Eb (D-sharp/E-flat) .......... Lily + Daisy Ridley
56 = E                                        Lodge + Elsa Einstein
57 = F                                        Lake + Farrah Faucett
58 = F#/Gb .......................... Loaf + Nanette Fabray
59 = G                                        Lap + Greer Garson
60 = G#/Ab (G-sharp/A-flat) .......... Cheese + Judy Garland
61 = A                                        Sheet + Alice Ayres
62 = A#/Bb ........................... Ocean + Audrey Meadows
63 = B                                        Jam + Billie Burke

64 = C                                        Chair + Cyd Charisse
65 = C#/Db (C-sharp/D-flat) .......... Jail + DeForest Kelley
66 = D                                        Judge + Doris Day
67 = D#/Eb ........................... Check + Edmond Hamilton
68 = E                                        Chief + Elsa Einstein
69 = F                                        Ship + Farrah Faucett
70 = F#/Gb (F-sharp/G-flat) .......... Goose + George Lucas
71 = G                                        Kite + Greer Garson
72 = G#/Ab ........................... Can + Neil Armstrong
73 = A                                        Comb + Alice Ayres
74 = A#/Bb ........................... Car + Ray Bradbury
75 = B (B-natural)                            Coal + Billie Burke

76 = C                                        Gauge + Cyd Charisse
77 = C#/Db ........................... Cake + Condolezza Rice
78 = D                                        Cave + Doris Day
79 = D#/Eb ........................... Cab + Daisy Ridley
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80 = E (E-natural)                         Vase + Elsa Einstein
81 = F                                     Foot + Farrah Faucett
82 = F#/Gb .......................... Fan + Nanette Fabray
83 = G                                     Foam + Greer Garson
84 = G#/Ab .......................... Wafer + Judy Garland
85 = A (A-natural)                         File + Alice Ayres
86 = A#/Bb .......................... Fish + Audrey Meadows
87 = B                                     Fig + Billie Burke

88 = C                                     Fife + Cyd Charisse
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Two general rules about the <u>Musical Mnemonics List</u>:

1. Below Middle C (bass clef), famous MALE names represent musical notes that are neither sharp nor flat (perhaps think of the white keys on the piano <u>below</u> Middle C).

2. Above Middle C (treble clef), famous FEMALE names represent musical notes that are neither sharp nor flat (perhaps think of the white keys on the piano <u>above</u> Middle C).

THESE TWO RULES REPRESENT AN ATTEMPT TO PREVENT YOUR MEMORY OF THE BASS CLEF FROM INTERFERING WITH YOUR MEMORY OF THE TREBLE CLEF, AND VISE VERSA.

<center>#</center>

<center>From the <u>Musical Mnemonics List</u>:</center>

7 = D#/Eb .... Cow + Daisy Ridley

Pretend that a COW (Cow = 7) stars with Ms. DAISY RIDLEY (Daisy Ridley = D#) in a tremendously successful space opera movie. This association should enable you to remember that key number seven (Cow) on the piano is a D# (Daisy Ridley = D#) note. And since you know from music theory that a D-sharp note is also an E-flat (Edmond Hamilton = E-flat) note....

7 = D#/Eb .... Cow + Edmond Hamilton

For the <u>Musical Mnemonics List</u>, I could have associated Cow (7) to Edmond Hamilton (E-flat).

If I associate Cow (7) to Edmond Hamilton (Eb), then I'll know that piano key number seven is an E-flat (Eb) key ... and since D-sharp and E-flat are the same note, I'll ultimately realize that Edmond Hamilton represents a D#/Eb note.

D#/Eb = Daisy Ridley/Edmond Hamilton

#

Important clue: By associating eighty-eight peg words (code words) to famous people, you should be able to memorize the note positions of all eighty-eight keys on the piano. (Hint: This is what the <u>Musical Mnemonics List</u> is all about.)

From all of the clues I've dropped in your lap, you should be able to figure out the <u>Musical Mnemonics List</u>, even if it takes a little bit of time and effort to do so.

One possibility you may wish to play with is to use famous REAL people along with famous FICTIONAL characters to represent musical notes. Make changes to your heart's content, until you have a mnemonic system for music that <u>YOU</u> are happy with!

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<u>Appendix</u>

This appendix is respectfully presented for your amusement only. This appendix is presented because the author lacked the intelligence to delete it, so here we go:

Pretend that space aliens hand you a guitar built by extraterrestrials. Or pretend that extraterrestrials hand you a guitar that was constructed by space aliens.

Here is your first clue:

Person number one + Code Word + Person number two

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Here is your second clue:

Person number one = <u>open guitar string</u> tuned to a musical note.

Code Word = guitar fret number applied to <u>previously</u> open guitar string.

Person number two = the note you're trying to play.

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Pretend you're traveling throughout the Milky Way galaxy, and space aliens hand you a guitar. You realize that the (open) A string (A-natural) on the guitar is tuned to 110 hertz. Since you're the greatest detective in the galaxy, what might the following association suggest to you?:

Ansel Adams + Pie + George Lucas

Hint:

Person number one = Ansel Adams
Code Word = Pie
Person number two = George Lucas

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Ansel Adams + Pie + George Lucas

Ansel Adams (open A-natural string) + Pie (Pie = 9 = ninth fret) + George Lucas (George Lucas represents the note you're trying to play)

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Ansel Adams + Pie + George Lucas

Pretend that Ansel Adams (A-natural) threw a Pie (ninth fret) at George Lucas (G-flat).

In other words, if you tune a guitar string to A-natural (Ansel Adams), and then press the A-natural guitar string down to fret number nine (Pie = 9), then you should be able to play a G-flat (George Lucas) note. Technically, you'd be playing an F-sharp/G-flat note.

NOTE: For F#/Gb I have a choice between George Lucas (Gb) and Nanette Fabray (F#), simply because F# and Gb are enharmonic equivalents. F#/Gb = Nanette Fabray/George Lucas

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Here's another possibility: Suppose you've memorized LOCATIONS by NUMBER (Method of Loci). Pretend that the location of your mail box represents the number NINE (9) to you, then take a look at the following association:

Ansel Adams + Mail box + George Lucas

Okay, remembering the open A-natural (Ansel Adams) string on your guitar should be the easy part. Remembering that pressing the A-natural string on your guitar down to the ninth fret should give you an F#/Gb (George Lucas = Gb) tone in return....

Pretend that Ansel Adams and George Lucas have their hands stuck in your mail box. Pretend they were both delivering your mail at the same time and got their hands stuck in your mail box. The mail box tells you ninth fret; you know that Ansel Adams represents your original open guitar string that you started with ... which means Mr. George Lucas (Gb) represents the guitar tone (F#/Gb) you're likely to hear ... when you play the guitar handed to you by space aliens....

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Final notes

If a space-alien word for <u>table</u> is masculine, perhaps imagine a male (male = masculine) attempting to break a <u>table</u> with a karate chop; if a space-alien word for <u>table</u> is feminine, then perhaps imagine a female (female = feminine) breaking a <u>table</u> with a karate chop. Mnemonics isn't just for music.

Could vocabulary, mnemonics, and one's vocation (music?), along with love and honor, essentially be the brain's operating system in well-adjusted individuals? The author can only guess, and the reader may have something to ponder.

The reader is strongly advised to learn music theory and/or mnemonics from experts, and <u>not</u> from anything found in this informal piece, called <u>Musical Mnemonics</u>.

The author apologizes for any and all grammatical errors and/or boneheaded blunders the reader may have noticed in this work.

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About the author

The author dedicates this informal work, <u>Musical Mnemonics</u>, to his departed mother & father, to his departed brother, and to his happily married sister & brother-in-law.

Steven Allan Wheelock is the author of <u>Star-crossed to Star Dust</u>, Copyright © 2014 Steven Allan Wheelock. <u>Star-crossed to Star Dust</u> (ISBN: 9781311356291) is a space opera novel. The author (yours truly) was inspired to write his space opera novel after reading stories and novels written by the late, great Edmond Hamilton (1904-1977).

[The End](#)