Converting Songs to Allcanplay
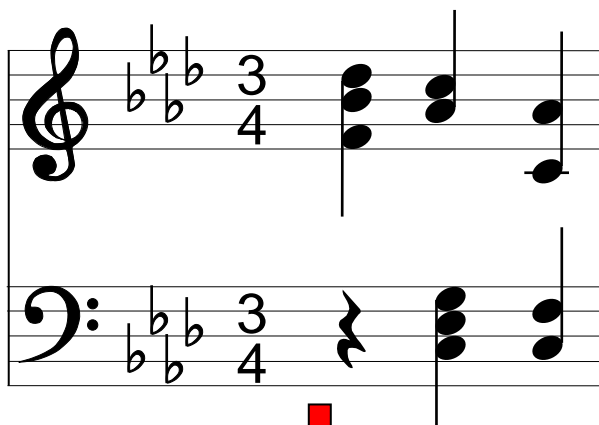
Why Convert Songs?
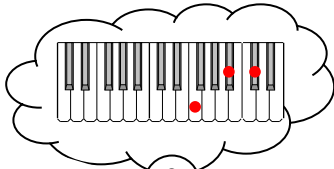
With Standard Music Notation, to play a song you must:
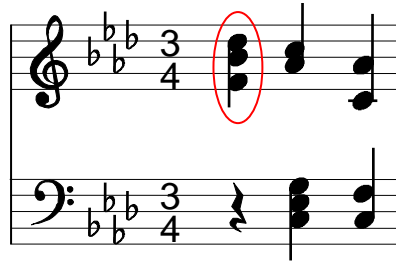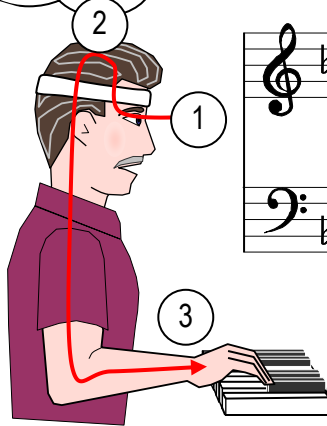1) Interpret note and other symbols on a musical staff.
2) Visualize those notes in your head as keys on a keyboard.
3) Play those keys in the proper time deciding which fingers to use on the fly.

Unless you've had years of lessons and practice reading music, it's difficult enough getting your fingers to cooperate much less try to decipher which keys to press each time you play a song.

In addition, the complexity of standard notation, with its sharps and flats and Key and Time signatures, likely puts many songs you'd like to play beyond your reach.

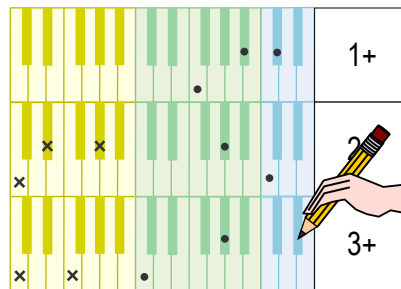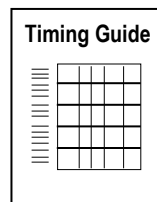You must mentally convert notes to keys *each* time you play a song.

Allcanplay eliminates the need to mentally convert notes to keys each time you play a song.

You do the conversion once by marking the keys to be pressed on a blank keyboard songsheet along with timing and fingering.
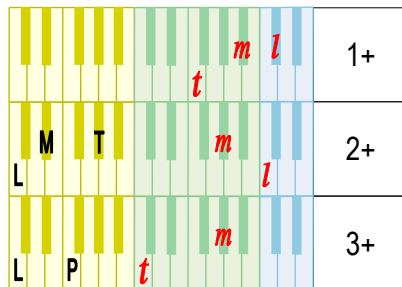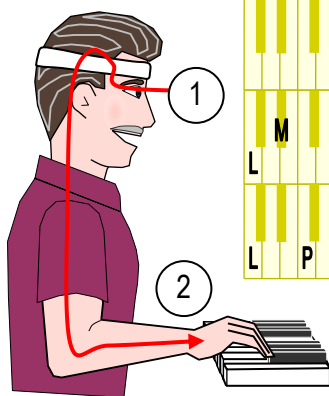
With step-by-step instructions and the Allcanplay Note, Timing, and Symbol charts that follow, you don't even need to know how to read music!

Note Chart
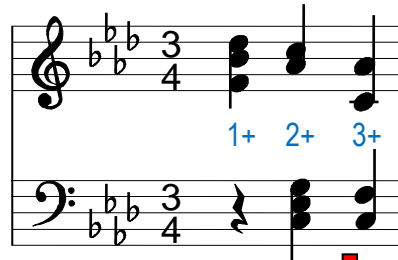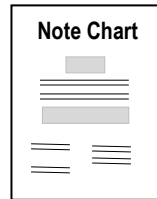
Here you convert notes to keys *once.*

Timing Guide

1+   2+   3+

Your brain on paper!

With a (1) picture of the keys to be pressed, you can devote your efforts to (2) getting your fingers to work.

An unexpected bonus of the conversion process is that you'll learn (or improve your ability) to read music!

After all, you only have to convert a note on a line or space to a piano key so many times before you begin to "see" that key in your mind's eye.

As your note-reading skills improve, you'll be able to play simpler songs directly from sheet music, saving your conversion efforts for more complex pieces.

You'll have the best of both musical worlds!

After adding finger letters, you can focus on getting your hands and fingers to work.

Note Chart

Use this chart to find and label notes on the sheet music.

2½ Octave Keyboard
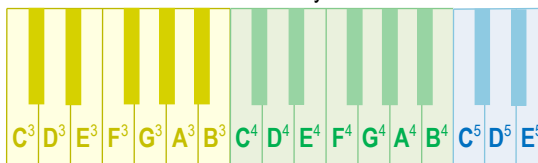
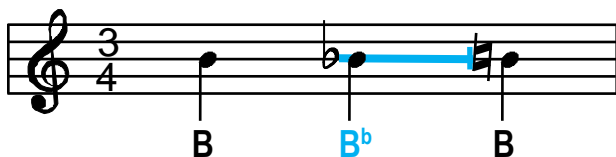See the *Reading Music* lesson for more info on Standard Music Notation

6 Octave Keyboard

Accidental Rules

♭ Flat: Play one key lower   ♮ Natural: Cancel sharp or flat   ♯ Sharp: Play one key higher
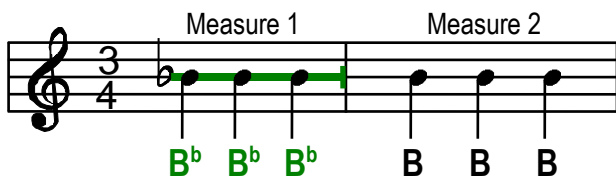
Single Note
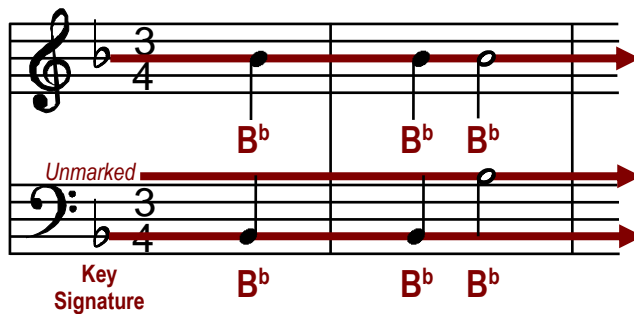
Accidental *flows* along staff until *canceled* by a natural

B   B♭   B

All Notes in a Measure

Accidental *flows* along staff until *blocked* by a bar line

Measure 1   Measure 2

B♭ B♭ B♭   B B B

All Notes in a Song

Key Signature accidentals *blast* through bar lines

B♭   B♭ B♭

Unmarked

Key Signature   B♭   B♭ B♭

Key Signature accidentals apply to *every* note in *every* measure, including notes on *unmarked* lines or spaces.

Timing Guide

Use this guide to assign timing numbers to the sheet music.

Time Signature

3   3 beats per measure
4   Quarter note gets 1 beat

6   6 beats per measure
8   Eighth note gets 1 beat

One beat = 1+
To avoid having to speed up for half beats, hold a one-beat note for [1+] and a half-beat note for [1].

Beat Number
The beat for a note can start on *any* number or + based on its position in the measure.

Downbeat (heavier)
Applies only to the **1** count.

Upbeat (lighter)
All beats but the **1** count.

Equal Beats per Measure
Exception: If the first measure begins on an *upbeat*, the missing beats will be in the *last* measure.

Counting ¼ beats
Count by splitting half beats:
1 (wuh • un)
2 (too • oo)
3 (thre • ee)
4 (fo • ur)
+ (an • da) or (an • und)

Triplet
Split the count of two notes over three notes.
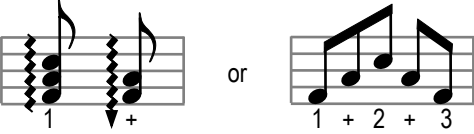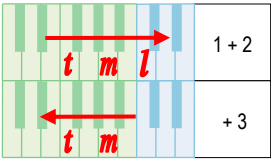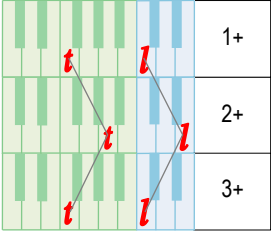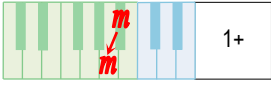
Rest
No notes played. Leave blank space on Allcanplay keyboard songsheet.

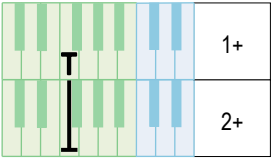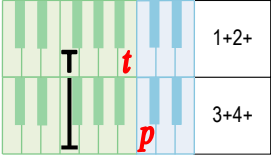| Name	Rest	Note	X/4 Time	X/8 Time
Whole	—	o	1+2+3+4+	1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+
Dotted Half		𝅗𝅥.	1+2+3+	1+2+3+4+5+6+
Half	—	𝅗𝅥	1+2+	1+2+3+4+
Dotted Quarter		♩.	1+2	1+2+3+
Quarter	𝄽	♩	1+	1+2+
Quarter Note Triplet		³ ♩♩♩	1an • d2 • and (Count: 1an duh2 anda)	1anda2 • anda3an • da4anda
Dotted Eighth		♪.	1 an•	1+2
Eighth	𝄾	♪	1	1+
2 Eighths		♫	1 +	1+ 2+
4 Eighths		♬♬	1 + 2 +	1+ 2+ 3+ 4+
Eighth Note Triplet		³ ♪♪♪	1 • an • nd (Count: 1-an-und)	1an • d2 • and (Count: 1an duh2 anda)
Sixteenth	𝄿	♬	1• (Count: wuh)	1
2 Sixteenths		♬	1• •1 (Count: wuh-un)	1 +
4 Sixteenths		♬♬	1 • a • n • d (Count: 1-a-n-d)	1 + 2 +

If you're familiar with a song, you can probably dispense with timing numbers and play the song as you hear it in your head. For unfamiliar songs or portions of songs, like intros or endings, you can search for and listen to online recordings made by other players, but it's not always possible to find an exact performance of your specific sheet music.

See the *Reading Music* lesson for more info on Timing

Symbols Chart

Standard Notation	Allcanplay Notation	
Tied Note	**Tie** Hold & let go	1+ / 2+
Longer Note	**Tie** Hold & let go	1+2+ / 3+4+
or — Up / Down Arpeggios	**Arpeggio** Play key by key in arrow direction	1 + 2 / + 3
Repeated Note	**Repeat** Play indicated number of times	② 1 +
Fixed span notes	**Parallels** Keep fingers in fixed span	1+ / 2+ / 3+
Grace note	**P** Play quick *m* **Blend** **M** Play normal *r*	1+
Octave higher: **8**^{va} Octave lower: **8**^{vb}	**+/- Octave** Play key an octave lower or higher	1+
Repeat Signs: Play notes between these signs again	Repeat M4-8 (M = Measure)	
Double Ending: Play song through 1st ending. Repeat from beginning or repeat symbol, skip over 1st ending, play 2nd ending. <u>Repeat Variations</u> Play to **D.C. al Coda**. Repeat from beginning until **To Coda** ⊕. Skip to ⊕ **Coda**. Play until end of song. Play to **D.S. al Coda**. Repeat from 𝄋 until **To Coda** ⊕. Skip to ⊕ **Coda**. Play until end of song.	Repeat M5-12 Skip M13-15 Play M16-End (M = Measure)	

For more symbols, see the Allcanplay *Symbols* and *Reading Music* lessons.

Conversion Process

Each Phase follows a 4-step sequence:
Measure, Group, Timing, Notes (MGTN)

PHASE I
Prepare Sheet Music

Pencil in the MGTN (megtan) markings on a *copy* of the original sheet music. Refer to the Note Chart and Timing Guide as needed.

Steps are shown here in color for clarity, but it's best to use pencil so you can easily correct mistakes.

Measure
Draw and number a heavy line to *start* each measure.

Group
Draw a light line between each vertical group of notes.

Timing
Assign time count to each group.

Notes
Draw note names, accidentals, octave numbers, and tie lines.

PHASE II
Convert To Allcanplay

Transfer the MGTN markings to a blank 2½ or 4-octave or 88-key keyboard songsheet (downloaded and printed from the main *Piano* webpage).

To Minimize Errors:
* Proof each transferred measure before going to the next.
* Count and match groups to keyboard segments. An omission throws off following segments.
* Make sure measures have the correct time counts.
* Play the converted keys to make sure they sound right.

Measure
Draw and number a heavy line to *start* each measure.

Group
No need to draw lines, but reserve *one* keyboard segment for *each* group.
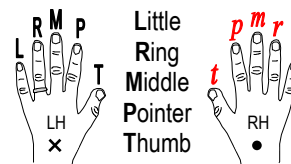
Timing
Transfer the time count and any lyrics or chord symbols.

Notes
Transfer notes and tie lines. Use dots for right hand keys and *x*'s for left hand keys.

Fingering & Symbols

See the *Fingering* lesson to replace dots and *x*'s with finger letters. See the *Allcanplay Symbols* lesson for adding playing tips and aids.

Converting Auld Lang Syne

This portion of Auld Lang Syne contains the
basic elements needed to demonstrate a song conversion.

Print then fill in this page as you follow the step-by-step tutorial on the following pages.

Phase I: Prepare Sheet Music

Measure

Pencil in a number and a heavy line to *start* each measure.

Conductors and orchestras follow a similar process so they can refer to measures by number as they practice and prepare for a concert.

Group

Draw a light line between each vertical group of notes.

Groups identify keys played simultaneously with both hands and generally correspond to one word or syllable of the lyrics.

Timing

Pencil in the timing count beneath the lyrics. Draw horizontal tie lines for held notes.

Time Signature: 4/4
4 beats per measure
Quarter note = one beat [1+].

Begins on an upbeat [4+], so "missing" beats are in last measure [1+2+3+].

Notes

Mark each note with its letter name, accidental sign (if any), and superscripted octave number.

Since the Key Signature contains an F-sharp, *every* F in the song will be sharped.

Phase II: Convert to Allcanplay

Measure
Draw and number a heavy line to *start* each measure

Group
Reserve *one* keyboard picture for *each* group

Timing

Transfer time count, lyrics, and chord symbols to the appropriate keyboard box

Notes

Transfer notes and tie lines. Use dots for right hand keys and x's for left hand keys

Fingering

Once you've converted an entire song, you can refer to the *Fingering* lesson to find the Hi/Lo Boundaries and replace the dots and x's with finger letters that work for you.

Wow, that's a lot of work!
The conversion process is what you have to do—in your head, on the fly—every time you play from Standard Notation. But if you really want to play a song without having devoted years of practice learning to read music, it's worth the effort!