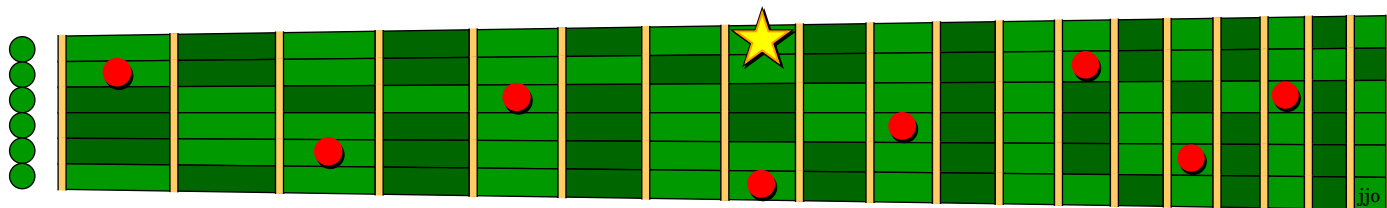


December Fretboard Exercises

Medieval Sightreads for Yuletide



Exercise 1: I 1 II 3 III 1 IV 2 V 1 VI 3 VII 1 VIII 4 IX 1 X 3 XI 4 XII 1 ② ③

$\text{♩} = 96$

Exercise 2: I 1 II 3 III 3 IV 2 V 2 VI 5 VII 2 VIII 5 IX 2 X 4 XI 7 ③ ④

$\text{♩} = 60$

Exercise 3: I 0 II 0 III 4 IV 4 V 0 ⑤ ⑥

$\text{♩} = 72$

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These medieval songs in Latin mensural notation were collected from across northern Europe into the Finnish book *Piae Cantiones* published by Theodoricus Petri in 1582. Nearly 300 years later, that book was brought to England where some of the songs were converted into Christmas carols that we recognize today. A PDF of the original 1582 edition is available for free on IMSLP.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piae_Cantiones
- [https://imslp.org/wiki/Piae_cantiones_\(Petri%2C_Didrik\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Piae_cantiones_(Petri%2C_Didrik))

The note shapes in these exercises are from 15th century mensural notation, but the durations chosen are ones more familiar in today's music. Notice there are no measures/bars.

- See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mensural_notation

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'mensural:' and features a treble clef with a C-clef. It contains a sequence of note shapes: a diamond-shaped note with a stem, a square note with a stem, a diamond note with a stem, a diamond note with a stem, a diamond note with a stem, a diamond note with a stem, and a diamond note with a stem. Below the first two notes are the labels 'longa' and 'breve' respectively. The bottom staff is labeled 'modern:' and features a treble clef with a C-clef. It contains the modern equivalent of the notes above: a half note, a half note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note.

Exercise 1 was a 1973 hit when sung *a cappella* by an English folk rock group (watch youtube below!). The 1582 book gave music only for the chorus, so groups do their own thing for the verses; Steeleye used D minor and mine is D Dorian. The last staff is the 1582 tenor part for the chorus. The video by Early Music Sources is a must-see on the history of Gaudete.

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaudete>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDc2FD-vy8M> (by 70s rock band Steeleye Span)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aab7TvfDEKE> (by Early Music Sources 2023)

Exercise 2 was a spring song until the English made it into Good King Wenceslas

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempus_Adest_Floridum
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zv8PgukSLX0>

Exercise 3 was revised into Good Christian Men Rejoice; also used by Bach and others. The first note is a pickup, not a downbeat.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_dulci_jubilo
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wduFx3kOB14> (guitar arr. by Hayward)

These exercises are from the yet to be released book “Diatonic Fretboard Exercises”, which contains over a thousand such exercises and will be made available for free on IMSLP. The contents may be freely copied and modified, but with the condition that they be attributed to J. J. Olson (CC-BY license).

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