

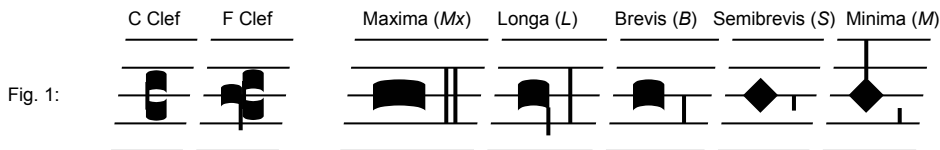
# Merry Christmas!

What is this you ask? This is the well known Christmas song Pat-a-Pan, but I have arranged it in an early music styling. I wrote this arrangement and put it into Franconian notation to be a Christmas season decoration. There is always a danger in giving art (or at least something framed) in that the recipient feels compelled to hang it in his/her home. I have **no** expectations for seeing this displayed. Just sharing my love for early music. Ok, enough with the caveats.

Unlike the original music, this has been arranged modally (Dorian mode), meaning there is no key signature and no accidentals (only piano white notes). I took care to make sure the arrangement didn't let any voice stray outside of what could be represented within a 4 line staff, and that only simple note types were used. Two intentional anachronisms are 1) expressing a tune written around 1700 in notation from the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and 2) partitioning the Franconian notation ligatures to visually align the simultaneity of parts between staves (in the period of the notation, that was not yet a common practice, though it is not without precedent).

In order that you may decode your art, here's my brief introduction to Franconian notation (1250-1300) with a few of the common French notation extensions (1300-1450) thrown in.

Staves generally had 3 to 6 lines. The F and C clefs could appear around any line to denote F and C lines respectively. Five note types are shown (Fig 1) along with their equivalent rests, and starting with the Maxima, are in order of descending duration.



The Maxima can also be drawn with a right hand stem, much like the Longa. The Minima and additional smaller notes types (not shown) were introduced after 1300.

The ratios between the notes were often binary, meaning the Maxima was twice the duration of the longa, the longa is twice the duration of the brevis, etc. However, a symbol from figure 2 could override these relationships. If the symbol is round, then  $3S = 1B$  (otherwise  $2S = 1B$ ). If the symbol contained a dot, then  $3M = 1S$  (otherwise  $2M = 1S$ ). The symbols were often not used, and the ratios had to be derived from analyzing the rests (as there are no barlines to help).

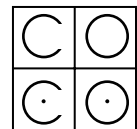
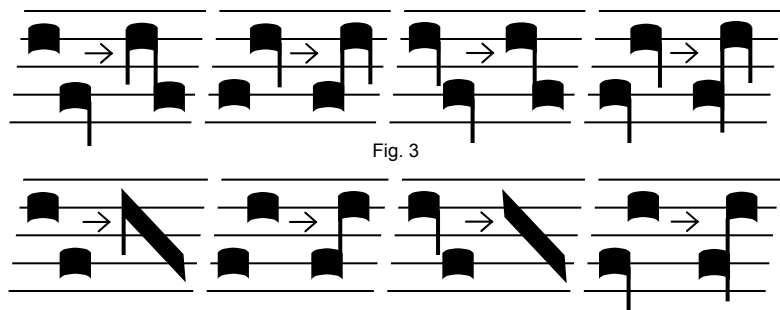


Fig. 2

Ties are nonexistent, and therefore cannot be used to add duration to a note. However, in ternary ratios, silent notes were sometimes subtracted to reduce duration (details not covered here). The pat-a-pan arrangement is binary in all note relations. For this work, you can assume that *Mx* maps to a whole note, *L* to a half, and *B* to a quarter.

Ascending and descending combinations of two notes (be they *L*, *B*, or *S*) have their own representations (fig 3). To keep it simple, I will only cover the *L* and *B* combinations here (as there are no semibrevis notes in my pat-a-pan arrangement). Vertical connecting lines extend or shorten as needed to connect the two notes.



Diagonal lines only represent two notes (for example, not a glissando), and the notes are said to be in oblique form. Alternate L/B forms (not shown) also exist, which can be confusing, as they show one note atop another, but are not meant to represent a chord.

Ligatures containing more than two notes are allowed and common. Here is perhaps the most succinct distillation one can make of the rules, without including rules covering the use of semibrevises (since they're not in this arrangement).

First note: Either a square or oblique with a left descending tail is a brevis. A square lower than its following note is a brevis. A square higher than its following note is a longa. The start of a tailless oblique is a longa.

Middle notes: All are brevis, unless it looks like a maxima, or unless there is a downward tail on the right which would make it a longa.

Last note: A square lower than its preceding note is a longa. A square higher than its preceding note is a brevis. The end of an oblique is a brevis.

Using the rules above, we can find a valid modern notation translation for the example in figure 4, which comes from The Notation of Polyphonic Music 900-1600 (Willi Apel, Mediaeval Academy of America, Cambridge, © 1942).

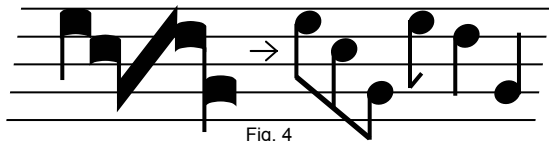


Fig. 4

**Pat-a-Pan**

Bernard de la Monnoye (1641-1728)  
Arrangement by David Youd

Guil - lô, pran ton tam - bor - in Toi pran tai fleûte Rô - bin Au son  
de cé in - stru - man Tu - re - lu - re lu, pat - a - pat - a - pan Au son  
de cé in - stru - man Je dir - on Noei gai - man