



# The 12-Note Exercises

Mark Holdaway mark@kalimbamagic.com

Owners of the Catana 12 Note Kalimbas have  
nqp i "dpggŁvgf"htq o "Uvgxg"  
Catania's numbers-based  
uqp i "dqmqm0""Dwv"pqy "vjgtg"  
is another way to learn to  
play the 12-Note Kalimba.

I offer to you this collection  
of tablature in both KTabS  
and PDF format for a variety  
of scales, chords, arpeggios,  
exercises, and songs.



Perseverance is the most important tool you have for your kalimba journey - if you play for hours a day, you will discover great and wonderful things. After that, KTabS is the next most powerful tool.

KTabS is the Kalimba Tablature Software written by Randy and Sharon Eaton, a husband wife team where the wife knows music and kalimba while the husband knows software, and together they made this wonderful computer program for windows that lets you write kalimba tablature. While inventing your own stuff is probably the most fun approach, I think that tablature is the best way to learn to play  
ur gekŁe" o wuke"qp"vjg"mcnk o dc0""Dwv"vcmg"vjgug"gzgtekugu"cu"gzc o rngu"cpf"dwknfkpi "dnqemu"hqt" {qwt"qyp"  
kpxgpkvqpu"/" y jkng"vjg"lqwtpg { "ku" {qwtu"vq"ejctv."vjgug"dwknfkpi "dnqemu" y knn"rcxg"vjg"Łtuv"hg y" o kngu0

KTabS animates the tablature and brings it to life. First, KTabS displays the instructions for the music in bite-sized chunks that scroll through the tab as it is played (like Dance Dance Revolution). KTabS also plays the music for you, highlighting the notes as you should be playing them, and actually chimes the sound of the kalimba on your computer speakers. Your job is to just play along. Or if it is too fast, you can change the tempo. And when you are ready to write your own music, you can do it in KTabS.

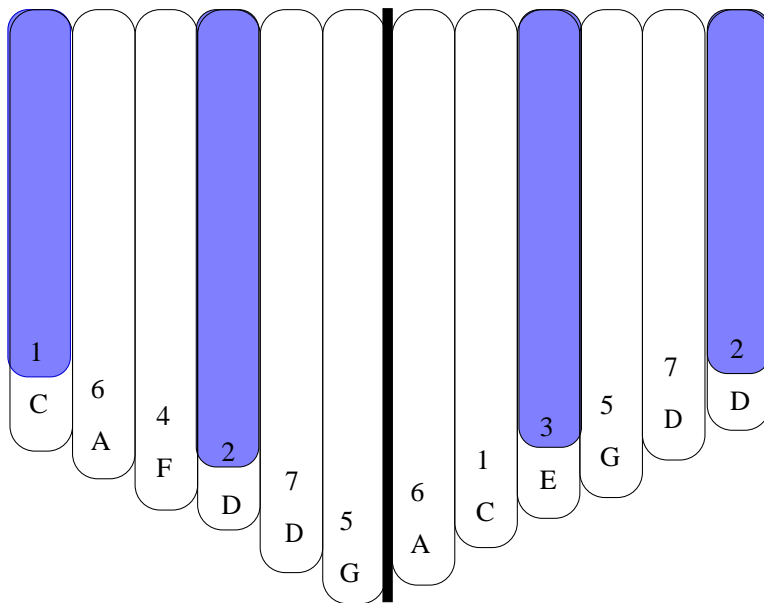
This download includes all the exercises in PDF (ie, just a graphic of the tablature you can view on your computer or print out) and in KTabS format. The basic information is there in both formats, but KTabS will sing it out for you and let you look over its shoulder while it plays so you can see just how its done - the next best thing to having *me* come over to your house whenever you want a lesson.

You can get the KTabS reader for free, or the full program for \$30 at: <http://ktabs.theirhouse.org>

You can get KTabS to run on the Mac using Darwine - look here for instructions:

[http://www.kalimbamagic.com/newsletters/newsletter4.06/whats\\_new\\_at\\_kalimba\\_magic.shtml#ktabs](http://www.kalimbamagic.com/newsletters/newsletter4.06/whats_new_at_kalimba_magic.shtml#ktabs)

The Catania kalimbas come with unpainted tines. Hugh Tracey started painting selected tines on his kalimbas before 1954. Why? The painted tines served several purposes. First, it helped you keep your place - that is, you won't get lost on the slopes of a half dozen tines on each side. If you start on a painted tine, you'll remember which tine to start on. As every third tine is painted, a given



tine will be a painted one, one above (ie, outward from) a painted tine, or one below (ie, inward from) a painted tine. Another important reason for painting the tines this way is that it helps you interface the left and right sides of the kalimba. A painted tine on the right side will always be one note higher in the scale than its painted counterpart on the opposite side. Think about it - you are on the left side painted tine (D) and you want to go up by one note - go to the painted tine directly across (E). This is much easier than comparing the lengths of the tines.

*Suggested painting scheme for the Catania 12-Note Kalimba. The letters and numbers may be generally helpful, but are*

A third reason for painting the tines is that it relates the notes of different kalimbas which are similarly painted. For example, the Hugh Tracey 8-Note Kalimba consists of the right hand C up through the high left hand C, and that kalimba

has the D and E and high C all painted just as this kalimba does. If you learn a song on the 8-Note, the painted tines will show you the way onto this kalimba.

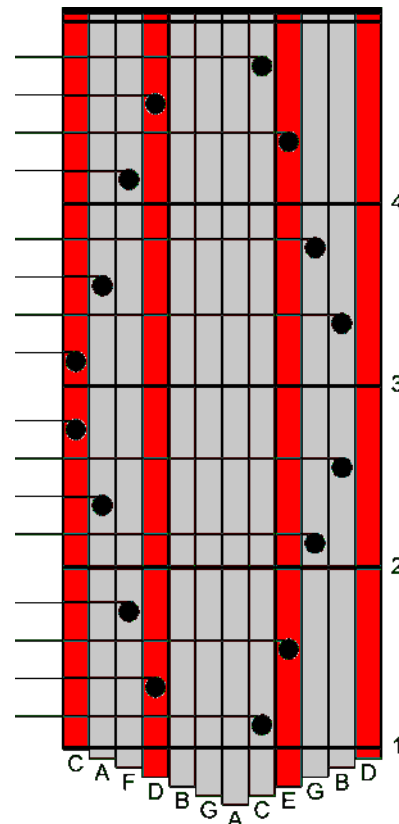
You will note that this kalimba doesn't seem to be painted like the Hugh Tracey Alto kalimba, which jcu"vjg"nqy"C"cpf"D"rckpvgf0"Dwv"yg"ctg"kp"vjg"mg{"qh"E0"Vjg":/Pqvg"kp"E"ku"cevwcm{"rckpvgf"nkmg"vjg"Alto - but not in terms of note names, but in terms of note function. The numbers correspond to the pqvg"hwpevkqp0"Vjkpm"qh"õFq"TG"Ok"Hc"Uq"Nc"Vk"Fqõ0"Vjgug"uqwpfu"ctg"pqv"vkgf"vq"pqvg"pcog"õC."Dd." or C#", but point to the note function, no matter what key you are in. "Do" is "1", or the root. On the Alto, the low root note "1" is unpainted, but the "2" and the "3" are painted, and the "1" note an octave above is painted. And so it is here as well. So you can think of this as the lower 9 notes of the Alto (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,1,2, or from C on up), but with three more notes (7,6,5) stuck in the middle below the root note "1".

*By the way, you will note that the numbers on this diagram are different from the numbers in Steve Catania's book. Steve's numbers are purely ordinal - tine #1, tine #2, tine #3... through tine #12. The pwodgtu"qp"o{"fkcitco"tghgt"vq"vjg"3"\*kg."tqqv"qt"õFqõ+."vjg"7"\*kg."vjg"Łhvj."qt"õUqõ+."gve"/"eqpegrvu" that will resonate with anyone who has studied music for more than about a year, and concepts that are waiting for you to further exploit as you learn more about music.*

Which brings us to the most important reason for you to paint four of the tines on your Catania kalimba: the painted tines will help you translate the notes from the tablature in this collection of exercises to the tines on your kalimba. The tablature doesn't really tell you to play E, or to play tine #2, or play the root. Instead, it just shows the physical pattern that you must play. The tablature starts at the bottom and reads up to the top. The measure numbers at the far right of the tablature indicate this. The amount of time each note takes is determined by the common rules for musical notation - ie, a quarter note gets a beat. If you don't know what a quarter note is,

[www.kalimbamagic.com/tipoftheday/tip\\_tues\\_archives.php#notation](http://www.kalimbamagic.com/tipoftheday/tip_tues_archives.php#notation)

Why is the tablature vertical and not horizontal like staff notation? Dgecwug"vjg"mcnk o dc"vcdncvwtg"ku"c" o cr"qh"vjg"vkpgu"qp"vjg"mcnk o dc" you are holding in your hands, and this way, you can hold the kalimba up to the tablature, look at the tablature, and see the pattern you need to play. The tablature is aligned with the actual kalimba tines, simplifying the process - unless you are a concert pianist and you read staff notation just a bit to well.



Tablature for the C major scale.

Uq o g"rgqrng"Łpf"vjg{"ecp"tgc f"vjg"vcdncvwtg"Łpg"gxgp"kh"vjg"vkpgu" aren't painted. If you do want to paint your 12-Note Catania kalimba tines, start with something like nail polish or Sharpee marker. These are both removed with nail polish remover or alcohol wipes. Enamel paint is a more permanent painting solution, and it tends to go on very smoothly. You can paint the tines in any color you want, but the tablature in this collection of exercises uses red paint.

D{"vjg"yc{"vjgtg"ku"qpg"cpq o cn{"cdqvw"vjg"vcdncvwtg<"kv"cuuw o gu"vjg"mcnk o dc"ku"õtki jv"jcpfgfö." o gcp- ing the lowest note on the instrument belongs, logically, to the right hand. However, the Catania 12- Note Kalimbas are logically "left handed". A consequence of this is that the low A in the tablature looks like the longest tine, but really the low G is the longest tine.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy the material in these exercises. The main points are to get your thumbs dancing quickly - to get you accustomed to the back and forth - to get you into some syncopated rhythms that sound *so good* on the kalimba - to key you into the different scales, modes, and chords vjcv"ecp"dg"htwkvhwnn{"wugf"qp"vjg"mcnk o dc"/"cpf"vq"jqrghwmm{"vgcej" {qw"jqy"vq"ł {"qp"uq o g"tkej" i tqxgu" and songs.

If you would like more information on the kalimba, you can always go and visit the Kalimba Magic web site and see what else is of interest.

Dguv"qh"nwem"qp" {qwt"mcnk o dc"lqwtpg {#"

Mark Holdaway,  
Tucson, AZ,  
May 11 2010

