

# FLOATING SNOWFLAKES

By Julie Knerr

## OBJECTIVES

- Play with fingers 2 3 4 in preparation for reading pre-staff music
- Gain control over the *non legato* forearm motion
- Become familiar with groups of 2 and 3 black keys and with moving between octaves
- Play a lyrical piece
- Improvise on the black keys

**Step 1:** Play the piece for the student, using a *non legato* articulation and strong fingertips.

**Step 2:** Play the first five notes (descending pattern). Student imitates. Be sure that the student is using a *non legato* articulation with a slightly bouncy forearm and that he is playing on firm fingertips. The pedal in the accompaniment will make the piece sound lyrical and *legato*. Playing *non legato* will help the student keep a good piano hand shape and a relaxed technique.

**Step 3:** Have the student choose four winter items and draw pictures of each. For example: Snowman, Tree, Star, Stocking.



- Step 4:** Have the student play the descending pattern (first five notes) four times, one for each of the winter items he has chosen. As he plays, say, "Snowman, tree, star, stocking."
- Step 5:** Play m. 1-8 for the student, saying the winter items. At the end of the last group (m. 7-8), add the last two notes of the phrase, saying "2 2." Student imitates.
- Step 6:** Once the student is comfortable with m. 1-8, add the Teacher Accompaniment while saying the winter items. This will help the student remember how many times to play the descending pattern even while hearing the cross rhythm between the student part and accompaniment.
- Step 7:** Play m. 9-10, while singing, "Snowflakes float in the air 2 3." Or just say, "I love snow," on the dotted half note. Student imitates.
- Step 8:** Play m. 11-12. Student imitates.
- Step 9:** Student plays m. 9-12.
- Step 10:** Notice that m. 13-16 is a repeat of m. 9-12 one octave higher.
- Step 11:** The remainder of the piece is a repeat of m. 1-16, except for the last note. For the last note, tell the student that usually the LH goes down, but right at the end of the piece, a snowflake escaped, and the wind blew it up to play the very top black key on the piano. Demonstrate. Student imitates.
- Step 12:** Play the entire piece, and add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Step 13:** After playing as written, you may repeat the Teacher Accompaniment while the student improvises on black keys.

### DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Relaxed hand while playing *non legato*
- Firm fingertips
- Ability to play correctly with accompaniment and to remember the patterns