

PIANO SAFARI® PATTERN PIECES BOOK 1

Teacher Guide by Dr. Julie Knerr

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INTRODUCTION

WHY TEACH BY ROTE?

The pieces in this book were specifically composed to be taught by rote. Although learning to read notation is extremely important, the physical, aural, and musical senses must also be developed in the beginning stages of study. These aspects do not require the student to know how to read music notation. Teaching pieces by rote has the following benefits:

- Students can play aurally satisfying music from the beginning of study.
- Students learn that music is composed in logical patterns.
- Students become more creative in their own composing and improvisation. They use the patterns they learn in their Rote Pieces to create their own music.
- Students grow in their confidence. Since Rote Pieces are memorized during the learning process, students have confidence that they can play a great sounding piece without having to rely on the notated score.
- Paradoxically, rote playing actually aids students in learning to read notation, because students gain a repertoire of technical motions in their hands that become automatic. This allows students to focus on reading without the distraction of physical mechanics.

THE ROLE OF THE PATTERN PIECES BOOKS

Pattern Pieces Book 1 is designed to supplement any reading method with pieces that were specifically composed to be taught by rote. Pieces are excerpted from the main Piano Safari® Method Level 1.. Several newly composed pieces are also included.

We call these “Pattern Pieces,” because we believe that not every piece makes a good Rote Piece. The best Rote Pieces for beginning piano students are those composed in easily memorable keyboard patterns.

We believe that Pattern Pieces learned by rote should be taught side by side with a systematic, thorough instruction in reading notation. We have found that teaching by rote and reading simultaneously, using specifically chosen pieces for each modality, produces students who are solid readers, have an understanding of the structure of music, are more creative in their improvisations, and are more technically adept.

TEACHING THE PATTERN PIECES

Pattern Pieces Book 1 is for beginning students at the elementary level. It focuses on keyboard patterns that are easily memorable for beginning students. The pieces are, in general, taught entirely by rote, with limited reference to the score. Audio Tracks are included to provide a sound model for students to listen to before learning each piece.

Students playing the pieces in this book may be working on reading notation at a lower level through their reading method. However, students are technically and musically capable to tackle these complicated pieces when learning by rote. Even the youngest students are capable of learning syncopated rhythms, playing all over the keyboard, and shifting positions when they are taught patterns by rote. They have heard complicated music from birth, and their ability to play pieces technically and musically is far in advance of their ability to read notation.

This is similar to language acquisition. Children understand language and speak at a much higher level than they can read the written word. Just as we would not limit children to speaking only words they can write, we should not limit children to playing only what they can read in music notation.

I often use the following Teaching Strategies when teaching these pieces:

- **Follow the Leader:** When learning the piece, the teacher plays a short section with correct notes, rhythm, articulation, and sound. The student imitates exactly. Learning all aspects of a phrase simultaneously from the first playing will make for more refined and correct playing, rather than learning the notes first and adding articulation or dynamics later.
- **Fun Repeats:** To develop the “Discipline for Repetition” so important for learning to practice effectively, have students repeat in fun ways. For example, they can play a piece in various octaves, fast, slow, loud, quiet, or transposed. You may be surprised at the variations your student creates, which are generally much more complicated than you might assign. For example, I have had students play “Charlie Chipmunk” hands together with the hands crossed and eyes closed! Encourage the student to be creative and to explore different sounds.
- **Two-Handed Duet:** The teacher plays RH while the student plays LH. The teacher points to the score to help the student stay in rhythm. Switch parts.
- **I Play, You Play:** The teacher plays a phrase. The student copies the same phrase, listening for correct articulation, dynamics, and phrase shaping. Continue playing the piece phrase by phrase in this way.

To download **Audio Tracks** for this book, see the URL and password on the title page of the book. Reminder Videos, Performance Videos, and Instructional Videos are available at **pianosafari.com** under Videos.

ALPHABET SUITE

I. ALPHABET BOOGIE

By Julie Knerr & Christopher Fisher

Each piece in this book has an **Audio Track** for the student to listen to before learning the piece. See the Title Page of *Pattern Pieces Book 2* to access the Audio Tracks.

Each piece also has a **Reminder Video** for students and parents to use in home practice. See Videos at pianosafari.com.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a free and confident movement of the forearm by playing Finger 2 with *non legato* articulation
- Increase concentration by playing from the bottom to the top of the piano

Step 1: Have the student listen to the recording of this piece several times before introducing it. Or play it for him*. It is easier to teach a Pattern Piece by rote if the student has listened to the audio recording several times beforehand. However, it is also possible to teach it even if the student has not listened to it previously. I often teach this piece at the student's interview or first lesson.

Step 2: Make two or more sets of cards with one letter on each card, A through G.



Step 3: Have the student put the cards in order on the music rack. Draw the student's attention to the fact that the music alphabet is "A" through "G," beginning again on "A." There is no "H."

Step 4: Point to each card and chant with the student, "A B C D E F G A B C D E F G," in the rhythm of "Alphabet Boogie."



* Students are referred to in the masculine for clarity of prose.

- Step 5:** Beginning on the very lowest note of the piano, play and sing, "A B C D E F G A B C D E F G" in rhythm. Use Finger 2 of the Right Hand (RH) to play each key, with the hand in a loose fist and Finger 2 extended. You may also have the student brace Finger 2 with the thumb if you prefer. Allowing beginning students to play this piece (and others in this book that use only Finger 2) with the hand in a regular piano hand shape may result in fingers that are tight, sticking up, or curled in an unnatural position. Therefore, it is better for the student to play with a loose fist with Finger 2 extended. Free arm movement and control of larger muscles is the focus of this piece and others that use only Finger 2. Hand shape and development of the smaller finger muscles comes after the student has gained control over the larger forearm movements.
- Step 6:** After you have played the pattern, the student imitates. Tap the rhythm on the wood of the piano and sing the letters while the student plays to help him play with the correct rhythm. If he does not hold the G long enough, hold the key down with him while he plays. This will make him pause on the key longer without you having to make a verbal correction or explain the terminology for a half note.
- Step 7:** When the student is confident, add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Step 8:** Have the student to play "Alphabet Boogie" with Left Hand (LH). Place a sticker in the boxes as the student masters the RH and LH variations.
- Step 9:** Congratulate the student on his good concentration if he is able to play all the way up the piano without making a mistake or stopping. This is easy for some children. For others, it may take several weeks to gain the concentration necessary to play from the bottom to the top of the piano accurately.
- Step 10:** Once the student can play the piece well, students with good fine motor control can be asked to play with a firm end joint on Finger 2, rather than with the floppy or collapsed joint that seems to be the default for most children. Some children will not have the control to play with a firm end joint at this point. If this is the case, don't worry. The student's technique will progress as he becomes more coordinated over the first few weeks of lessons. It is more important at this point for the student to have a relaxed and comfortable forearm motion than a firm fingertip. However, after the student has gained control over his forearm, have him play this piece with a firm fingertip.
- Step 11:** Continue to the **Decorating the Piano Activity**, explained below, which works well in combination with the "Alphabet Suite" pieces.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Strong *mf* tone
- Rhythmic playing
- Firm fingertip
- Concentration throughout the entire piece

DECORATING THE PIANO

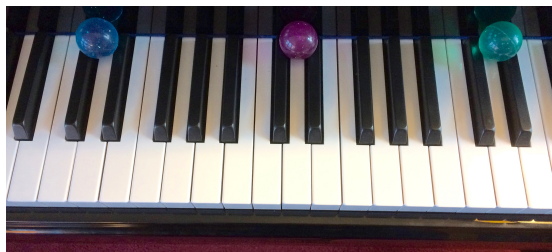
Decorating the piano is a great activity for the student's interview or very first lesson. You can also repeat it occasionally throughout the first few months of lessons as the student is learning the names of the white keys on the piano. This activity can be done in Private Lessons, Partner Lessons, or Group Classes.

Step 1: Buy 7 bouncy balls and 7 plastic caterpillars.

Step 2: Make small foam or cardboard letters that fit on the keys for each of the white keys of the piano. Color code them so that:

- 8 A's are red
- 8 B's orange
- 8 C's yellow
- 7 D's green
- 7 E's blue
- 7 F's purple
- 7 G's pink

Step 3: Hand the student the bouncy balls, and have him put them on the groups of two black keys.



Step 4: Hand the student the caterpillars, and have him put them on the groups of three black keys.



Step 5: Hand the student all the D foam letters. Tell him the D's are right in the middle of the groups of two black keys, under the ball notes. He puts the D foam letters on all the D's of the piano.



Step 6: Ask the student what comes in the alphabet before D. Say, "A B ... D" He will say, "C." Say, "Yes. A B C D," and put a C foam letter on the piano to the left of D. Hand the student all the C foam letters, and have him put them on all the C's of the piano. You may also place Alphabet Cards on the music rack to aid him in the order of notes.



Step 7: Ask the student what comes in the alphabet after D. Say, "A B C D..." He will say, "E." Hand the student all the E foam letters to put on the E's of the piano.



Step 8: Continue saying the alphabet and figuring out what comes next. "A B C D E..." "F." Tell the student that the F goes to the left of the group of 3 black keys, near the caterpillar group. Hand the student all the F foam letters. He puts them on all the F's of the piano. Repeat with G, A, and B.



Step 9: Celebrate how great the piano looks now that it is decorated! Parents often want to take a picture of the decorated piano!

Step 10: In future lessons, vary the activity by handing the student the balls, worms, and letters in random order. Emphasize that C D E are near the groups of two black keys (ball groups), and F G A B are near the groups of three black keys (caterpillar groups). However, most students will prefer to find a specific white key by counting from the bottom of the piano (as in "Alphabet Boogie"). This is fine, but eventually we want them to recognize the letters based on the groups of black keys as well. The "C D E March" and "F G A B Waltz" will aid students with the concept that the white keys relate to the groups of black keys.



Step 11: You can make this into a self-directed activity for Partner Lessons or Group Classes by strategically putting the decorating items in cups in the order you choose. The student starts at one end of the line of cups and uses everything in the cup to decorate the piano before moving onto the next cup in the line.



ALPHABET SUITE

C D E March

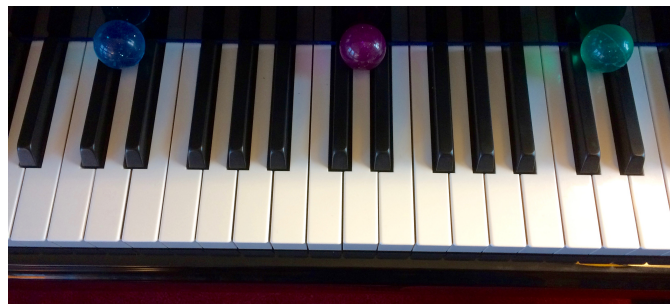
By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a free forearm technique by playing *non legato* with Finger 2
- Identify the white key groups of C D E that are near the groups of two black keys.

Step 1: Play the piece for the student.

Step 2: Have the student put bouncy balls on the groups of two black keys.



Step 3: Put C D E letter cards on the music rack.



- Step 4:** Show the student that C D E are the white keys that are near the groups of two black keys by counting up from the bottom of the piano using the music alphabet, as in "Alphabet Boogie."
- Step 5:** Beginning on the lowest C on the piano with Finger 2 in the RH extended and the hand in a loose fist, play the student part. Use a slightly bouncy arm.
- Step 6:** Now it is the student's turn to play. Small students may stand at the piano rather than sit. While the student plays, sing, "C D E," and tap on the wood of the piano within the student's peripheral line of vision. This will help the student stay in rhythm.
- Step 7:** When the student is confident, add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Step 8:** Have the student play the piece with the LH. Place stickers in the boxes as the student masters the RH and LH variations.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Strong *mf* tone
- Understanding of the groups of two black keys and their relationship to the white key group of C D E

ALPHABET SUITE

F G A B Waltz

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a free forearm technique by playing *non legato* with Finger 2
- Identify the white key groups of F G A B that are near the groups of three black keys.

Step 1: Play the piece for the student.

Step 2: Have the student put caterpillars on the groups of three black keys.



Step 3: Put F G A B letter cards on the music rack.



- Step 4:** Show the student that F G A B are the white keys that are around the groups of three black keys by counting up from the bottom of the piano using the music alphabet, as in "Alphabet Boogie."
- Step 5:** Beginning on the lowest F on the piano with Finger 2 in the RH extended and the hand in a loose fist, play the student part. Use a slightly bouncy arm.
- Step 6:** Now it is the student's turn to play. Small students may stand at the piano rather than sit. While the student plays, sing, "F G A B, move up," and tap on the wood of the piano within the student's peripheral line of vision. This will help the student stay in rhythm and put the correct number of beats between each octave.
- Step 7:** When the student is confident, add the Teacher Accompaniment. Continue to sing "F G A B, move up."
- Step 8:** Have the student play the piece with the LH. Place stickers in the boxes as the student masters the RH and LH variations.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Strong *mf* tone
- Understanding of the groups of three black keys and their relationship to the white key group of F G A B

CHARLIE CHIPMUNK

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop a free forearm technique by playing *non legato*
- Gain familiarity with the keyboard topography of groups of two and three black keys

Step 1: Play and sing the piece for the student. Play the entire piece with RH Finger 2, with the hand in a loose fist and Finger 2 extended.

Step 2: Play m. 1 of the student part, singing, "1 2 1 2." The student imitates.

Step 3: Play m. 2, singing, "Going up." The student imitates.

Step 4: Play m. 1 - 2, singing, "1 2 1 2 Going up." The student imitates.

Step 5: Repeat the steps with m. 3 - 4, singing, "1 2 1 2 Going down." The student imitates.

Step 6: Play m. 5 - 6 (same as m. 1 - 2). The student imitates.

Step 7: "Now for the special ending!" Play m. 7 - 8, singing, "1 2 1 2 1 2 3," "Mi mi re re do do do," or, "Chipmunk life is so much fun." Any of these three will work. The student imitates.

Step 8: Put all the phrases together.

Step 9: Once the student has developed a loose and comfortable forearm motion, refine his playing by having him play with a firm, rather than a floppy, joint at the end of this finger.

Step 10: When the student is confident and can play the piece correctly by himself, add the Teacher Accompaniment.

Step 11: Have the student play in different octaves of his choice to create a Chipmunk Family (Low = Grandpa Chipmunk. High = Baby Chipmunk). If you have a stuffed chipmunk, have the student close his eyes. Then have the chipmunk play the group of two black keys in the octave where he wants the student to start. Children love to see where the chipmunk will have them play next!

Step 12: Have the student play the piece with the LH. Place stickers in the boxes as the student masters the RH and LH variations.

Step 13: Have several students or family members play together in different octaves.

Step 14: Create a story with the student, playing in various tempos and octaves to match the story. For example, as you vamp on the Teacher Accompaniment, say:

- "Once upon a time, Charlie Chipmunk went out to play." The student plays at moderate tempo in the middle of the piano.
- "As Charlie Chipmunk was in the woods, he heard a screech. He got really scared and ran towards home." The student plays the piece fast.
- "When he got home, Mama Chipmunk soothed him and said it was probably just the neighbor practicing his kazoo. Shhh, Sister Chipmunk is taking her nap." The student plays the piece up high and slowly.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Strong *mf* tone
- Firm fingertip once the forearm motion is free and relaxed

HUNGRY HERBIE HIPPO

Traditional, arr. by Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop coordination between the hands
- Play hands together
- Develop control of the forearm
- Experience transposition
- Gain familiarity with the pattern of black and white keys on the piano

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

- Step 1:** Begin with the Gb version (on black keys). Play and sing the piece for the student. (For vegetarian students, you may substitute "Cheeseburger" for "Strawberries" or any other three-syllable food.
- Step 2:** You play the RH while playing the LH part using the student's Finger 2. You are holding his finger and controlling it.
- Step 3:** Tell the student, "This time, you play your note (LH Finger 2) after I play each of my notes." You play a note, and then the student plays his LH note. You play the next note, and the student plays his LH note, etc. Saying, "Me you me you," will be helpful as the two of you play together. Hold the student's hand up above the keys slightly at the end "cheeseburger" so he does not play the LH there.
- Step 4:** Play m. 1 Hands Together (HT), saying, "Right left right left." The student plays while you say, "Right left right left." Point from above at the key the student should play if necessary. If the student has trouble keeping the LH from moving to play other notes, put some sticky tack or tape on his LH finger and stick his finger to the key. If you make it fun, he will think it is great to have his finger stuck to the key.
- Step 5:** Play m. 1 - 2. The student imitates.
- Step 6:** Tell the student, "We play the first part three times" (m. 1 - 6) "and then keep going down for the cheeseburger" (m. 7 - 8). As the student plays the piece, point to the keys from above as necessary to help the student remember where to play next.
- Step 7:** To make repetitions fun, have the student close his eyes, and have a stuffed hippo play some keys in the octave where he wants the student to play (high, low, middle).

- Step 8:** When the student has mastered the piece, add the Teacher Accompaniment. Play the introduction to the accompaniment and say, "Ready go," on the last two beats so he will know when to start playing. After several repetitions, the student will be able to hear when to start playing on his own.
- Step 9:** To teach the transposition to B, buy flat marbles (available at a dollar store in the flower section), and put a blue marble on the B key and a green marble on the A# key. Tell the student that Herbie Hippo also likes to eat blueberries, which is why we have a blue marble on the B. (If you do not have flat marbles, coins can also work. However, flat marbles will not slip between the keys, which may happen with coins.) It is not necessary for the student to know the names of the white keys to play this piece. He can refer to the keyboard picture on the page to know where to put the marbles and how to find his starting position based on the groups of two and three black keys. For very young students, place the marbles and the student's hands for him.
- Step 10:** Play the piece for the student in B, telling him, "We skip the green marble key and end on the blueberry key, which is marked with the blue marble." Sing the words, ending with "Blueberry" instead of "Cheeseburger." The student imitates. Point to the keys from above as necessary to prevent unnecessary mistakes.
- Step 11:** For added fun, if you have a hippo puppet, the young student will enjoy feeding the marbles or coins to the hippo.
- Step 12:** For the transpositions to C, F, and G, put the marbles or pennies in place (for young students), or have the student place them according to the picture (for older students). Play the piece, skipping the marble notes. The student imitates.
- For C, substitute the words "Carrot Cake" for "Cheeseburger."
 - For F, substitute the words "French Fried Fish" for "Cheeseburger."
 - For G, substitute the words "Grape Gumdrops" for "Cheeseburger."
- Step 13:** When the student can confidently play each transposition, add the Teacher Accompaniment. Start the accompaniment introduction at various tempos to give the student practice in matching your tempo. You can also do additional repetitions by having the student think of other three-syllable foods that Herbie Hippo likes to eat.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Comfortable movement between hands
- Steady rhythm
- Good tone
- Ability to play each transposition without the marbles, knowing what notes to skip

I LOVE COFFEE

Traditional, arr. Bernard and Carolyn Shaak. Used with permission.

OBJECTIVES

- Gain control over the *non legato* forearm motion with Finger 2
- Gain awareness of pattern of black and white keys on the keyboard
- Increase concentration and memory through playing a six-part piece

Step 1: Play and sing **Part 1** for the student.

Step 2: Play m. 1 - 2. The student imitates. Sing the lyrics. Or sing, "Black white black white black white black."

Step 3: Play m. 3 - 4. The student imitates.

Step 4: Play m. 5 - 6. The student imitates.

Step 5: Play m. 7 - 8. Put a flat marble or penny on the E to show the student that E is skipped. Play while singing the lyrics, or sing, "Black white black white 1 2 3." The student imitates. After several repetitions, have him play m. 7 - 8 without the marble.

Step 6: Play each phrase again, and have the student imitate. Sing the lyrics.

Step 7: The student plays **Part 1** alone. Point above the keys to remind him of the beginning key for each phrase if necessary. Add the Teacher Accompaniment when the student is secure.

Step 8: Teach the other parts of this piece in a similar manner, with you playing a phrase and the student imitating. For **Part 2**, the student rolls a closed fist upward along the group of three black keys for the grace notes in m. 1 and downward for the grace notes in m. 3. The C#'s in m. 1 should be played with the right side of the fist. Similarly, in m. 3, the D#'s are played with the left side of the fist. Add the Teacher Accompaniment when securely learned. You can sing, "I love tea, I love tea," as the student plays.

Step 9: For **Part 3**, tell the student to play every key from the top of the piano moving down. Put a flat marble on the D two octaves above middle D to show him which key to stop on. To make the rhythm more understandable, sing, "I love coffee, I love coffee, I love coffee, I love coffee, I love coffee, I love tea." Remove the marble from the D and have the student play again. Add the Teacher Accompaniment when securely learned.

- Step 10:** **Part 4** is often the most difficult part. Play and sing, "1 hold, up up up up," or "I really like my tea." The student imitates while you play the second key over his hand to show the length. Then have him play alone while you tap the rhythm and sing. Once he understands this pattern, have him play alone. This scaffolding of holding the key, singing, and tapping will help him learn the rhythm correctly the first time. Point out that the next phrase starts on the middle note of the group of three black keys.
- Step 11:** For **Part 5**, sing, "I love coffee. I love tea." Part 5 is often the easiest part to learn.
- Step 12:** For **Part 6**, tell the student that the notes are the same as in Part 5, but they are played together. Sing, "I love coffee. I love tea." The student should play using Finger 2 in both hands. Some students prefer to use Fingers 1 and 2 in the RH to play this, but often the hand shape is tight or incorrect. Therefore, I prefer students to play using Finger 2 in both hands. When you add the Teacher Accompaniment for this section, be sure to sing to keep the student from rushing.
- Step 13:** Teach the **Ending** part by imitation. I use the words, "Here, 1 2 up down, rest, white black." I have the student slap his lap with the LH in the rest to be sure it is long enough.
- Step 14:** Put all the parts together in one long piece.
- Step 15:** You may also download the I Love Coffee Cards at <http://pianosafari.com/product/i-love-coffee/>. Have the student draw a card from your hand to review each section by part number.
- Step 16:** This piece is also effective as an ensemble in recitals. Assign each of six children a part of the piece. They stand in a line and play their assigned parts in order. I add an extra two measures of accompaniment (m. 7 - 8) to give the students time to move up in line and to find their position at the piano. This ensemble is always a crowd pleaser!

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Free forearm motion
- Good tone
- Rhythmic playing in a tempo that matches the Teacher Accompaniment
- Ability to play all parts without stopping

OUTER SPACE

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play *non legato* with fingers 2 3 4
- Use the pedal to hear how it changes the sound
- Play in 3/4
- Improvise space sounds

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play m. 1 - 8 for the student, telling him that this is the "Space Music" part of the piece.

Step 2: Play m. 1 - 2 for the student, singing, "Flying to outer space," and playing *non legato* on the quarter notes. Saying, "Outer space" on the dotted half note will help the student hold it for three full beats. Playing *non legato* will preserve the piano hand shape. Playing *legato* too soon may result in the disintegration of a good piano hand shape. *Non legato* is easier for students to control when forming their piano hand shape. After this is secure, *legato* can be introduced. I generally require students to play *non legato* for the first three to five months of study before introducing *legato*. Use the pedal to make the piece sounds *legato* and space like. If the student is small and you do not have a pedal extender, you may pedal for him. After you have demonstrated, the student imitates.

Step 3: Have the student repeat the same pattern up an octave (m. 3 - 4).

Step 4: Demonstrate m. 5 - 8, singing, "Flying to right right left. Fly into space." The student imitates.

Step 5: Have the student start *piano* and gradually *crescendo* to shape the dynamics.

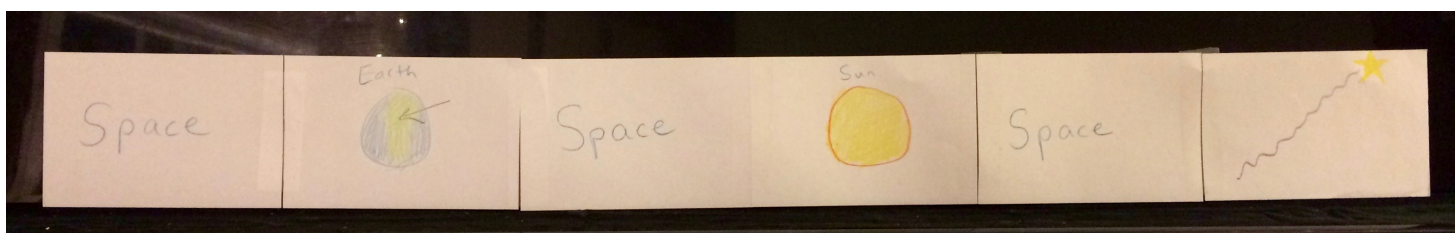
Step 6: Ask the student to think of two objects in outer space and draw pictures of those objects in the boxes provided. My students have answered, "UFO's, moon, stars, earth, planets, space ships, black holes, supernovas..."

Step 7: For each space object, ask the student to create music to match. If he is timid, demonstrate to give him some ideas. For example, you could play random high black keys for stars, black and white hand clusters for earth, or fast and loud black keys for UFO's. However, most children will have an idea about the music they want to create. It works best if there are some black keys involved rather than anything diatonic on the white keys, but I do not censor the student if he starts playing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on white keys for his star music. Anything is acceptable, and the improvisation can change each time he plays the piece. The improvisations can also be as long or as short as desired. Use pedal throughout to make it sound more space like.

Step 8: Play a *glissando* on black keys with the RH for the “Shooting Star *Glissando*” at the end of the piece. The student imitates. He can use his palm, back of the hand (may be painful), or an index card to play the *glissando*.

Step 9: Now the student has learned all components of this piece: the Space Part, two Space Objects, and Shooting Star *Glissando*. Now it is time to put the sections in order. You can teach this in any of the following ways:

1. Have the student follow the form of the piece in the score: Space Part, Space Object 1, Space Part, Space Object 2, Space Part, Shooting Star *Glissando*. This the picture below, Space Object 1 is Earth, and Space Object 2 is the Sun.



2. Show the student the diagram at the bottom of the second page. Have the student color the Space Part boxes one color and write the name of the space objects above the respective boxes. Have the student color each of these space object boxes to match the colors he used in his drawings above. He can then color the Shooting Star *Glissando* part a different color.
3. On six index cards, draw a section on each card: Space Part, Space Object 1, Space Part, Space Object 2, Space Part, Shooting Star *Glissando*. Tape the cards together in order, or string them on a string to make a mobile.

Step 10: This long piece requires concentration to remember the form. To aid students in this, you play the Space Parts while the student plays the Improvisations. Then switch parts, with the student playing the Space Parts and you playing the Improvisations.

Step 11: The student plays the entire piece.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Relaxed hand while playing *non legato*
- Firm fingertips
- Correct rhythm
- Understanding of the form of the piece

I LIKE BANANAS

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play syncopated rhythms
- Coordination between hands
- Awareness of pattern of black and white keys on the keyboard
- Play with changing the lyrics of a piece to develop the Discipline for Repetition

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play the piece for the student.

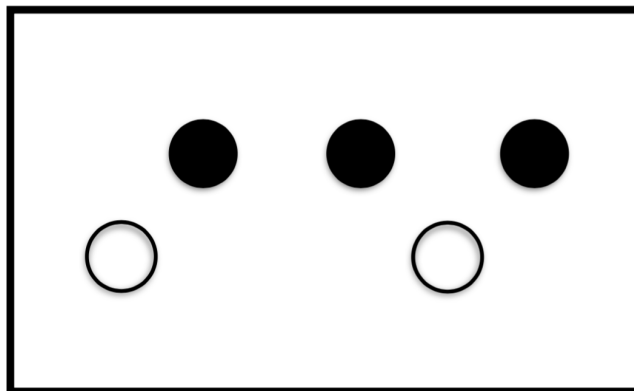
Step 2: Play the first two notes, "I like," using Finger 2 extended in both hands, with the hands in a loose fist. The student imitates.

Step 3: Play the next three notes, singing, "Bananas." The student imitates.

Step 4: Student plays, "I like." You play, "Bananas," for m. 1.

Step 5: Switch parts. You play, "I like," and the student plays, "Bananas."

Step 6: Play m. 1, "I like bananas." The student imitates. If the student has trouble, you can say "White black, black white black." You may also draw the pattern on a card, like this:



- Step 7:** Once the student has m. 1 solidly learned, demonstrate m. 2, which is the same pattern of black and white keys but uses different keys. Say, "Just like a monkey," or, "White black, black white black," pointing to the keys from above as necessary. The student imitates.
- Step 8:** Continue playing each measure, and have the student imitate.
- Step 9:** Student plays m. 1 - 8 until confident. Point to notes from above as necessary.
- Step 10:** Download the "I Like Banana Cards" at <http://pianosafari.com/product/i-like-bananas/>. Cut them apart, and sort them into two groups: food and animals.
- Step 11:** Hold the animal cards up facing you so the student cannot see the animals. The student chooses a card. Repeat with the food cards. Sing the words, replacing, "I like bananas just like a monkey," with the cards the student has drawn. For example, "I like spaghetti just like a panda." Have the student play the piece while you sing these words. Some young students may need to get used to the idea that this is a joke, because pandas don't eat spaghetti. After they understand the joke, they will think this is great fun and will be excited to see what other combinations they can choose. If you do not have the cards downloaded, you can have the student choose combinations of animals and food on the page.
- Step 12:** You can extend the amount of repetitions the student plays by choosing a food and animal for each octave of the piano, beginning with the lowest octave and working up. This develops the Discipline for Repetition, which is an important practicing skill that is necessary to become a good pianist.
- Step 13:** Add the Teacher Accompaniment. In the teacher interludes, cue the student when to start playing again. This may take some rehearsal. You may also have the student listen to the Performance Video on the website to understand how the accompaniment fits with the student part.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Correct rhythm
- Understanding of the patterns
- Discipline for Repetition

FLOATING SNOWFLAKES

By Julie Knerr, Christopher Fisher, & Katherine Fisher

OBJECTIVES

- Play with fingers 2 3 4 with *non legato* articulation to gain control over the forearm and hand shape
- Become familiar with groups of 2 and 3 black keys and with moving between octaves
- Play a lyrical piece in 3/4 meter that features cross rhythms with the accompaniment
- Improvise on the black keys

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play the piece for the student using a *non legato* articulation and strong fingertips. Using a *non legato* articulation will help the student develop a loose technique and a good piano hand shape. The pedal will make it sound *legato*.

Step 2: Play the first five notes (descending pattern). The student imitates.

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." While he plays, tap the rhythm on the fallboard or play his part with him in a different octave to keep him playing in rhythm, with all quarter notes rather than stopping at the end of each group of five notes.
- 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." The student imitates. As he approaches the last two notes, point to the keys from above to remind him how the pattern ends.
- 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 the accompaniment.
- Step 7:** Play m. 9 - 10, while singing, "Snowflakes coming down. I love snow!" The student imitates.
- Step 8:** Play m. 11 - 12, singing the same lyrics. The student imitates.
- Step 9:** Student plays m. 9 - 12 while you sing the lyrics to keep the student in rhythm.
- 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 this time a snowflake escaped. The wind blew it up to to the very top black key on the piano. Demonstrate. The student imitates.
- Step 12:** Play the entire piece, and add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Step 13:** After playing as written, 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

CROCODILE IN THE NILE

By Wendy Lynn Stevens

OBJECTIVES

- Play a rhythmic and dramatic piece
- Play a patterned piece that moves over the entire piano
- Play *staccato* and *non legato*

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play the piece and sing the words for the student.

Step 2: Play m. 1 and sing, "Crocodile." Play with a sharp *staccato* articulation to encourage the student to play short notes (like sharp crocodile teeth). Young students may not yet have the coordination to play *staccato*. If this is the case, *non legato* is fine also.

Step 3: Play m. 2. The student imitates.

Step 4: Ask the student to count how many sounds you play as you play m. 3 - 4. "1 2 3 4 5 6 7." The student imitates while you sing, "1 2 3 4 5 6 7."

Step 5: Play m. 1 - 4 and sing, "Crocodile, Crocodile, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7." The student imitates. Point to the group of notes the student will move to as necessary.

Step 6: Play m. 5 - 8, singing, "Crocodile, Crocodile, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7."

Step 7: Students plays m. 1 - 8.

Step 8: Demonstrate m. 9 - 10 and sing, "C D E and end on C." Play *non legato* with the pedal down. The student imitates. Playing *non legato* will help the student keep a good hand shape on both white and black keys and will allow him to play with good tone. It will sound *legato* with the pedal down.

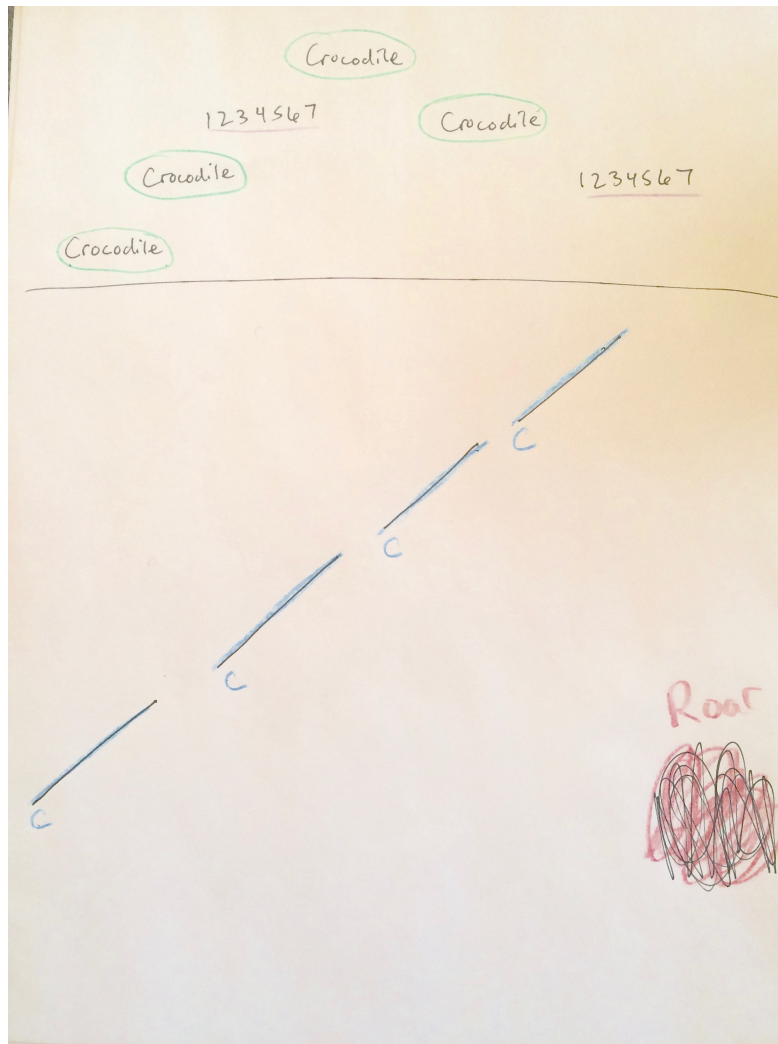
Step 9: Play m. 9 - 16, noting that the pattern is played four times. The student imitates.

Step 10: For m. 17, drop the side of the forearm on the keys loudly for the "Roar."

Step 11: The student plays the entire piece.

Step 12: If you have a drum, you can reinforce the rhythmic rests by having the student play the piece on the piano while you play the quarter rests on the drum. Then switch parts.

Step 13: Help the student remember the octave changes and patterns by drawing a map of the piece. It could look something like this:



DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Rhythmic and energetic playing
- Understanding of the patterns and form of the piece
- *Staccato* and *non legato* articulation with good tone

ROBOTS

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play keyboard patterns on the C D E and F G A B groups of white keys
- Experience tempo changes
- Develop strong fingertips and a loose technique through playing *non legato* on the white keys

Step 1: Play m. 1 - 8 slowly, *non legato*, and with firm fingertips. Show the student that you play the C D E group of white keys (near the group of two black keys) for m. 1 - 4, and then you play the F G A B group of white keys (near the group of three black keys) in m. 5 - 8. This is a review of the concept learned in the "Alphabet Boogie Suite."

Step 2: Play m. 1 - 4 again. The student imitates. Be sure the student plays with a good piano hand shape, *non legato*, and with firm fingertips. *Legato* would not sound like a robot!

Step 3: Play m. 5 - 8 again. The student imitates.

Step 4: The student plays m. 1 - 8 slowly.

Step 5: Play m. 9 - 16 at a medium tempo. The student imitates.

Step 6: Play m. 17 - 26 at a fast tempo. The student imitates. Do not play faster than the student can control while playing *non legato*.

Step 7: Create a story about why the robot is moving at slow, medium, and fast tempos. Call out a tempo, and have the student play at that speed. Point to the octave he is to play in.

Step 8: When the student has control over the three tempos, he plays the entire piece.

Step 9: Add the Teacher Accompaniment.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Strong fingertips and a loose *non legato* forearm technique
- Understanding of the groups of white keys that are near the groups of black keys
- Control over slow, medium, and fast tempos

DANDELION FLUFF

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play with fingers 2 3 4 with *non legato* articulation
- Practice hand crossing and moving between octaves
- Play a lyrical piece
- Improvise on the black keys

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play the piece for the student.

Step 2: Play m. 1 - 2. The student imitates, playing with a *non legato* bouncy arm and strong fingertips.

Step 3: Play m. 3 - 4, noting that the LH plays the same notes as in m. 1 - 2, but up an octave, crossed over the RH. The student imitates.

Step 4: Student plays m. 1 - 4 until comfortable.

Step 5: Play m. 5 - 8. Sing the direction of the notes (up, down) until the last three notes of the phrase. For those notes, say "2 3 2." The student imitates while you sing and point to the keys from above as necessary.

Step 6: Play m. 9 - 16, noting that this is the same as m. 1 - 8 except for the last note. The student imitates. Be sure to point to the key from above on the last note to help the student remember that it ends differently from the first half of the piece.

Step 7: When the student can play confidently, add the Teacher Accompaniment.

Step 8: After playing the piece through as written, repeat the accompaniment while the student improvises on black keys.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* forearm movement with strong fingertips
- Singing tone
- Fluent hand crossing and movement between positions

MARTIANS COME TO TOWN

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play with bouncy *non legato* forearm motion and strong tone
- Understand the chromatic, symmetrical pattern of white and black keys
- Remember the form of the piece
- Play a dissonant-sounding piece

Stems up = RH. Stems down = LH

Step 1: Play the piece for the student using Finger 2 in both hands and *non legato* articulation.

Step 2: Download the "Martian Cards" from <http://pianosafari.com/product/martians-come-town/>. Cut them apart.

Step 3: Put the Green Martian Card on the music rack, and tell the student he is going to learn the Green Martian Part first. Play m. 1, singing, "White, black, white." The student imitates.

Step 4: Play m. 2, singing, "Martians come to town." The student imitates.

Step 5: Play m. 1 - 2. The student imitates. Tell the student, "This is the Green Martian Part."

Step 6: Put the Orange Martian Card on the music rack next to the Green Martian Card. "Next is the Orange Martian Part. The orange martian looks like he is saying, 'Neener neener neener neener,' which means, 'Nice to meet you,' in martian language." Play m. 3 and sing, "Neener neener neener neener." The student imitates.

Step 7: Play m. 4, singing, "Nice to meet you," or, "White black white black." The student imitates.

Step 8: Play m. 3 - 4, singing, "Neener neener neener neener. Nice to meet you." The student imitates.

Step 9: Call out "Green" or "Orange." The student plays the correct martian part.

Step 10: The student plays m. 1 - 4.

Step 11: Have the student listen as you play m. 5 - 6 and tell you whether you are playing the Green or Orange Martian Part. "Green." Put another Green Martian Card on the music rack.

- Step 12:** Have the student listen as you play m. 7 - 8 and tell you whether you played the Green or Orange Martian Part. "Orange." Put another Orange Martian Card on the music rack.
- Step 13:** The student plays m. 1 - 8 while you point to the cards in order as he plays. This will reinforce the form of the piece thus far.
- Step 14:** Play m. 9 - 10. "What color martian part is that?" "Green." Put another Green Martian Card on the music rack.
- Step 15:** "The next part is the Purple Martian Part." Put the Purple Martian Card on the music rack. Play m. 11 - 12, ending on the downbeat of m. 13 and singing, "White black white black white black white black white." The student imitates. The symmetrical pattern of white and black keys on the piano is a theme of this piece, and the student will have grasped this by now.
- Step 16:** "The ending part is the Blue Martian Part." Put the Blue Martian Card on the music rack. Play the eighth eighth quarter section in m. 13 - 14. Begin on the second beat of m. 13 while singing, "Come to town." The student imitates.
- Step 17:** The student plays the whole piece while you point to the martian cards in order.
- Step 18:** To test the student's knowledge of each section, put up a card on the music rack and have him play that part.
- Step 19:** To test the student's knowledge of the form of the piece, hand him the cards and have him put them in order before playing.
- Step 20:** Add the Teacher Accompaniment.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Fluent and relaxed forearm motion while playing *non legato*
- Understanding of the black and white chromatic keyboard pattern
- Understanding of the form of the piece using the martian cards

SWANS ON THE LAKE

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play *non legato* with fingers 2 3 4
- Become familiar with groups of 2 and 3 black keys and with moving between octaves
- Play a lyrical piece

Step 1: Play the piece for the student. Use a *non legato* articulation with an arm bounce on each note to be sure the student maintains a relaxed manner of playing with a good piano hand shape. With the pedal down, it will sound *legato* and lyrical. The phrase marks show the long phrases and are not necessarily meant to denote *legato* playing. If your student is ready to play *legato*, be sure he has a slight arm bounce on each note (Tree Frog Technique). This will insure that the non-playing fingers stay relaxed and will help the student produce a singing tone. Having the student play with pure finger *legato* too soon may lead to tight non-playing fingers.

Step 2: Play m. 1 - 2. The student imitates. If the student has trouble after several attempts, try singing the finger numbers, "4 3 2 2 3 2 3."

Step 3: Demonstrate m. 1 - 2 with a *diminuendo* on the end of the phrase. Tell the student that the ends of the phrases should be gentle like a swan. Having the student learn the phrase with the *diminuendo* during the initial phase of learning, rather than adding dynamics after the student has learned the entire piece, will insure that the student will play more musically with attention to the details of phrasing and dynamics. The more perfectly a student learns a piece from the first presentation, the more perfectly the student will learn the piece.

Step 4: Play m. 3 - 4, with a tapered phrase ending. The student imitates.

Step 5: Play m. 5 - 6, noting that it is the same as m. 1 - 2. The student imitates.

Step 6: Play m. 7 - 8. The student imitates.

Step 7: The student plays m. 1 - 8 while you sing and point to the keys from above as necessary.

Step 8: Play m. 9 - 12, saying, "Right right left. Right right left. Right right left right left." Student imitates while teacher points to the keys from above and says, "Right, right, left." During the whole note in m. 12, sing, "Swans are swimming," to help the student give the whole note its full value.

Step 9: Play m. 13 - 16. The student imitates.

Step 10: The student plays the entire piece with pedal. Coach the student through the dynamics and *ritardando* at the end, using the image of swans on a calm lake to evoke a gentle mood.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good piano hand shape with relaxed non-playing fingers
- Shaping of dynamics and pacing of *ritardando* at the end

SKIP TO MY LOU

Traditional, arr. Julie Knerr


OBJECTIVES

- Play a familiar tune
- Hear how tonic and dominant sounds accompany a melody
- Play *non legato* with all fingers
- Accompany a partner

PRIMO

Step 1: Play the melody with the accompaniment for the student.

Step 2: Tell the student he is going to get to play both the melody and the accompaniment parts! If a parent is available and capable, after you teach the piece to the student, have him teach it to his parent at the lesson. Children love to do this, and the parent and child can then practice together at home.

Step 3: RH Finger 3 starts on E. Play RH m. 1 - 2 melody, singing finger numbers and playing *non legato* with a bouncy arm. The student imitates. If the student has trouble with the rhythm, play slower and say, "3 3 1 1 3 Kangaroo" (We call the  rhythm the "Kangaroo Rhythm.")


Step 4: Move Finger 3 to D. Play m. 3 - 4, singing finger numbers. Note that this is the same as m. 1 - 2 except that it starts on D. The student imitates.

Step 5: Play RH m. 5 - 6 (same as m. 1 - 2). The student imitates.

Step 6: Play RH m. 7 - 8. The student imitates.

Step 7: Student plays RH m. 1 - 8.

Step 8: (Optional) The student teaches his parent how to play RH m. 1 - 8 melody.

Step 9: Play RH m. 9 - 16 melody and sing words. Or say "Ta - 2" or "Hippo" on the half notes. (We call the  rhythm the "Hippo Rhythm.") Tell the student that the notes are the same as the first part. Only the rhythm is different. The student imitates.

Step 10: Student plays RH m. 1 - 16 melody.

Step 11: When the student is confident, play Secondo while the student plays Primo.

Step 12: For an extra challenge, the student may play the melody hands together in parallel motion, with both hands beginning with Finger 3 on E.

SECONDO

Step 1: The student is now ready to learn the Secondo part, which is the accompaniment. Show the student how to play the C chord in m. 1 - 2. Play and say, "Left right left right left right left right."

Step 2: Show the student how to play the G chord in m. 3 - 4, and play and say, "Left right left right left right left right." The student imitates.

Step 3: The student practices changing between the C and G chords.

Step 4: Call out "C" or "G." The student plays the chord you say.

Step 5: Put a piece of paper with "C" written on it on the floor. A short distance away, put a piece of paper with "G" on the floor. Play the C chord as written in m. 1 - 2 while the student stands on the C paper. Play the G chord while the student stands on the G paper. See if he can recognize the chords by ear as you change between C and G chords. Then play the entire accompaniment and sing the melody while the student moves between the C and G papers.

Step 6: Ask the student to choose two colors, one for the C chord and one for the G chord. Write C with one color under each of the C chord measures (m. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16). Write G with another color under G chord measures (m. 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 15).

4 2

5 1

p

5 1

C C G G

- Step 7:** The student plays the C chord measures while you play the G chord measures and sing the melody. Explain the first and second endings.
- Step 8:** The student plays the G chord measures while you play the C chord measures and sing the melody.
- Step 9:** The student plays Secondo while you point to the measures and play the melody.
- Step 10:** The student plays Secondo while you play Primo without pointing to the measures.
- Step 11:** Tell the student that the Secondo is quieter than the Primo, since the Primo has the melody part. Practice playing the parts too quietly, too loudly, and then with just the right balance.
- Step 12:** In a recital, have the student play Primo first (while you or another person plays Secondo). Then the student can run around the bench and play Secondo (while you play Primo). This is very effective in recital, since the audience is not expecting a student to play the accompaniment part.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Rhythmic and energetic playing
- Understanding of the chord changes by ear
- Good ensemble skills
- Dynamic balance between Primo and Secondo

DETECTIVE WOMBAT BLUES

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece with swing eighths
- Change the piece by moving between various octaves and dynamics

Step 1: Tell the student what a wombat is (a cute, fuzzy marsupial from Australia). This wombat is a detective. He is looking high and low for clues, which is why we play the piece beginning on different C's. Ask the student to watch for the part where you clap and to clap along with you in that measure. Play the piece, swinging the eighths notes. After m. 19, repeat, beginning with thumbs on different C's and changing the dynamics. This piece can be repeated as many times as desired in various octaves and dynamic levels to show the wombat's sleuthing. The student should be able to anticipate the clapping part as you repeat the piece. When you are ready to end the piece, play m. 20.

Step 2: Play m. 1. The student imitates.

Step 3: While you play the RH, the student plays LH m. 1 - 10 and then claps in m. 11. After hearing the piece several times, he should be able to hear when the clapping part enters. Or you can point to the LH part as the student plays. Although the student may not know all the notes on the score, he can start to see how the patterns he is learning by rote relate to what he is seeing on the score. He is, in this way, transition from pure rote learning to what I call "quasi-rote" learning.

Step 4: Play m. 12. The student imitates.

Step 5: The student plays LH m. 1 - 19 while you play the RH.

Step 6: By this time, the student has heard the RH melody several times, so he should be able to play the rhythm easily. Play m. 5 - 7 hands together. The student then plays the RH while you play the LH. For some students, playing m. 5 - 7 hands together straightaway may be easier than playing the RH alone.

Step 7: Play m. 8 hands together. The student imitates.

Step 8: The student plays m. 5 - 8 hands together.

Step 9: Play m. 9 - 11 hands together. The student plays the RH while you play the LH, or he may play hands together.

Step 10: The student plays the piece hands together.

Step 11: Show the student that the piece can be repeated many times in different octaves and dynamics, depending on what Detective Wombat is finding in the investigation of his case. You can make up a story if desired.

Step 12: Play the ending, m. 20 - 21. The student imitates and then plays the entire piece.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Swing eighths rhythm
- Control over the dynamics

DRAGON DANCE

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play *non legato* with fingers 2 3 4 on white keys
- Play a minor piece with dragon-like energy
- Play in parallel motion hands together

DUET VERSION

Right Hand

Step 1: Play the piece hands together for the student. Use a *non legato* articulation with an arm bounce on each note. *Non legato* will help the student maintain a relaxed arm, create singing tone, and maintain a good piano hand shape. Also, *non legato* makes the piece sound more energetic and dragon-like.

Step 2: Show your student this picture. "This piece uses only three fingers, 2, 3, 4, because this dragon has three fingers!" (Also note that if this dragon expects to be a pianist, he will need to cut his fingernails!)



- Step 3:** Play RH m. 2 *non legato* with strong fingertips. ("A dragon has strong fingers.") The student imitates.
- Step 4:** Play RH m. 3. The student imitates.
- Step 5:** Play RH m. 4 - 5. The student imitates.
- Step 6:** The student plays RH m. 2 - 5.
- Step 7:** The student plays RH m. 1 - 5 while you play LH. If the rhythm is problematic, have the student move up an octave. You play hands together while he plays RH.
- Step 8:** Play RH m. 6 - 9, noting that this is the same as the first line, except that it begins on E instead of D.
- Step 9:** Student plays m. 2 - 9.
- Step 10:** Add m. 10 - 13, noting that this is the same as the first line (m. 2 - 5).
- Step 11:** Play RH m. 14 - 16. The student imitates.
- Step 12:** The student plays the entire RH.
- Step 13:** The student plays RH while you play LH. This version of the piece works well as an elementary level duet for two students.

DUET VERSION

Left Hand

- Step 1:** You play the whole piece hands together while the student taps the LH, which is the "Dragon Part." Say "Dragon" on each LH part. Note that the Dragon Part comes after each RH phrase. Repeat several times until the student is secure with tapping the LH rhythm. You can also have him play the Dragon Part on a drum.
- Step 2:** You play RH m. 1 - 3 and tap LH while the student plays LH. Say "Dragon" for each LH part.
- Step 3:** You play RH m. 1 - 13 and tap LH while the student plays LH. Say "Dragon" for each LH part.
- Step 4:** You play LH m. 14 - 16. The student imitates. Repeat several times until mastered.
- Step 5:** You play the RH of the entire piece while the student plays LH. Or another student may play the RH.

SOLO VERSION

- Step 1:** After the student has learned both RH and LH parts, he may put the hands together to create a Solo Version. You play the piece hands together while the student taps the piece hands together on a solid surface.
- Step 2:** You play the piece hands together while the student plays on a drum, with each hand correctly playing the rhythm of its part.
- Step 3:** The student plays the piece hands together. Pay special attention to helping the student play in parallel motion with the correct fingering in m. 14 - 16.

DRAGON STAMPEDE

Multiple students may play this piece on one, two, or more pianos to create a Dragon Stampede. Students may play whichever parts they know: RH, LH, or both hands.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Good piano hand shape
- Energetic playing
- Correct rhythm