

PIANO SAFARI® ANIMAL ADVENTURES

Teacher Guide by Dr. Julie Knerr

Table of Contents

TITLE	COMPOSER	TYPE	BOOK PAGE NUMBER	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGE NUMBER
Table of Contents				1
Introduction				3
Lion Paw		Technique	6	5
King of the African Drum		Pattern	8	7
Roaring Lion, Crouching Lion		Improvisation	10	9
Tall Giraffe		Technique	12	11
A Day in the Life of a Tall Giraffe		Pattern	14	14
Tall Giraffe and Friends		Improvisation	16	16
Zechariah Zebra		Technique	18	18
Zebra on a Pogo Stick		Pattern	20	23
Zebra on the Playground		Improvisation	22	25
Tree Frog		Technique	24	27
Rain Forest Mystery		Pattern	26	29
Tree Frog in a Rainstorm		Improvisation	28	31
Kangaroo		Technique	30	32
Kristabel Kangaroo Visits Korea		Pattern	32	33
Kangaroo Takes a Trip		Improvisation	34	35
Soaring Bird		Technique	36	36
Hawk Over the Mountain Peak		Pattern	38	38
White Bird, Black Bird		Improvisation	40	39

TITLE	COMPOSER	TYPE	BOOK PAGE NUMBER	TEACHER'S GUIDE PAGE NUMBER
Monkey Swinging in a Tree		Technique	42	40
Monkey Blues		Pattern	44	42
Jungle Jumps		Improvisation	46	44
Technique Review		Technique	48	46
Safari Friends		Pattern	49	47

INTRODUCTION

The **Piano Safari® Animal Adventures** book is designed to supplement any standard beginning method series.

This book includes:

- Seven **Animal Techniques**, which present technical motions that form the foundation of piano technique
- A corresponding **Pattern Piece** that uses the technical motion featured in each Animal Technique
- An **Improvisation Piece** to encourage freedom of movement in using each Animal Technique

All pieces in this book are designed to be taught 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.

ANIMAL TECHNIQUES

The Seven Animal Techniques highlight the basic motions of piano technique for first year students. They are derived from Dr. Julie Knerr's dissertation research about the basic principles of developing beginning piano technique in children. You may read the full dissertation at pianosafari.com under Resources. The Animal Techniques are:

- Lion Paw: Arm weight
- Tall Giraffe: *Non legato* articulation
- Zechariah Zebra: Fast repeated notes with a pause to check hand shape
- Tree Frog: *Legato* articulation
- Kangaroo: Fast repeated notes
- Soaring Bird: *Legato* in three-note slurs
- Monkey Swinging in a Tree: Rotation

These exercises are taught by rote to allow students to concentrate solely on the motion without the added complication of reading from the score. Students who become comfortable with these motions will have a foundation for all continued work in piano technique. Animal names are provided to make the motions appealing to children.

PATTERN PIECES

A Pattern Piece is provided for each Animal Technique to allow the student to experience each technical motion in the context of a piece. The pieces are to be taught by rote. For this reason, they are based on easily memorable keyboard patterns to emphasize that music is created in patterns and is not a random assortment of notes. Technique is best learned apart from reading notation. This allows the student to focus completely on making the correct physical gesture. For this reason, Pattern Pieces taught by rote are ideally suited for reinforcing technical motions.

It is recommended that this book is used in conjunction with *Piano Safari Pattern Pieces Book 1*, which provides additional Pattern Pieces to be taught by rote at an easier level than the Pattern Pieces found in the *Animal Adventures Book*. Combining the two books will allow students to progress gradually in their ability to understand and play patterns at the piano.

IMPROVISATION PIECES

We have found that students are eager to improvise when provided with:

- A repertoire of keyboard patterns in the hands with which to explore sounds on the keyboard. These patterns are provided in the Pattern Pieces and in the Animal Techniques
- A solid technique that will allow the student to confidently experiment with various sounds and motions at the piano.

In order to solidify the Animal Techniques in the hands, an Improvisation Piece is provided for each Animal Technique. Students use the Animal Technique gesture to improvise in a set key group. A Teacher Accompaniment is provided for each Improvisation to provide a rhythmic and harmonic foundation and to inspire the student.

The three types of pieces for each Animal Technique can be taught in sequence or in combination over the course of approximately one to two months per animal over the first year of study.

PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Although learning to read notation is an extremely important component of a student's musical literacy training, reading is not the focus of this book. Instead, this book is designed to function as a supplement to any standard reading method. For the complete Piano Safari® Method at the beginning stages, we suggest the Piano Safari Level 1 Pack, which includes instruction in learning by rote, reading notation and technique. The Animal Techniques and Pattern Pieces from this book are excerpted from *Piano Safari® Repertoire Book 1*.

To download **Audio Tracks** for this book, see the URL and password on the title page of the book.

Please visit pianosafari.com for **Reminder**, **Performance**, and **Instructional Videos** for the pieces in this book.

LION PAW

Animal Technique No. 1

By Julie Knerr

Each piece in this book has an **Audio Track** for the student to listen to before learning the piece. See the Title Page of the *Animal Adventures Book* 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

- Feel the sensation of a relaxed arm
- Create a loud tone by dropping with arm weight

- 1 The student should listen to the Audio of each exercise and piece before learning to play it.
- 2 Have the student stand with his arms by his* side. Say, "Pretend that you are walking across the plains of Africa, and you see a sleeping lion under a tree. You tiptoe up to the lion as he sleeps and lift up his arm. Do you think his paw would be heavy or light?" The student answers, "Heavy." You say, "That's right. When we play the piano, we want heavy, sleeping lion arms. Let me check your arms. Are they asleep?" Gently move the student's arms a bit back and forth to see if they are loose. Have him move your arms or his parent's arms to feel loose and stiff arms. Incidentally, almost all children will have loose arms. The parents have a more difficult time finding their own loose arms! If you have a stuffed animal lion, you can have the student lift the lion's floppy arms also.
- 3 Put your hand in your lap. Bring it up over the keys and drop your whole hand onto the piano with a loose arm. Student imitates, making a loud sound with a loose arm. If the student hits the piano with a stiff arm, ask him to make his arm looser and try again.
- 4 Before playing the entire Lion Paw Exercise, first help the student practice the Lion Paw drop on one key. Take the student's hand and hold his LH Finger 2 by the nail knuckle joint. Bring it from his side up over the keyboard four to six inches, and use his hand drop on D loudly. Your fingers are contacting the key. The student is just sensing the motion, because you do not want to hurt the student's finger. You should be doing all the work while the student is relaxed. Don't worry about hand position at this point. The goal is a loose arm, but the fingers should all be out in a piano hand shape, not in a fist. The wrist should be low as the student holds the note so that the arm is completely relaxed after playing the note. Repeat with RH Finger 2.

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

In summary, the motion for the Lion Paw Technique is:

- Arm comes up above the keyboard about four to six inches
- Arm and hand drop with Finger 2 on D
- Wrist and arm relax downward, lower than normal playing position, to be sure the arm is completely relaxed. Check for loose arm by moving it slightly to make sure it is flexible rather than stiff
- Arm comes up out of the keys, with a loose wrist in the air
- Arm rests in the lap

- 5** Let the student play the Lion Paw motion himself, dropping Finger 2 on a D. If the child hits the piano with a stiff arm, draw attention to the difference in sound between a relaxed arm drop (round, rich, *forte* sound) and hitting the piano (harsh, unpleasant sound).
- 6** For young students, get a stuffed lion and pretend it is sleeping. When the child plays a good Lion Paw drop, the lion wakes up startled because the child played so loudly with such a relaxed arm. Young students are more motivated to startle the lion than to play correctly for the sake of their piano technique. The lion stays asleep if the sound is not loud or if the child is banging on the piano with a stiff arm rather than dropping with a relaxed arm. Only a proper Lion Paw will wake the sleeping lion.
- 7** When the student has found his arm weight and can successfully play a good Lion Paw on D, it is time to play the exercise in rhythm as notated. To help the student know which D's to play, put fuzzies on the three D's for the LH part. Demonstrate, saying, "Ta - 2 - 3 - 4" for each note. Then add the Teacher Accompaniment. As you and the student play, cue him in rhythm by saying, "Pinky fuzzy...green fuzzy...yellow fuzzy...green fuzzy...pink fuzzy."



- 8** Move the fuzzies in position for the RH part, and play together. Refine the motion over several weeks until the student has gained a reliable and confident Lion Paw motion.
- 9** Repeat with other keys, checking off a box when each is completed. This is a great way to practice the names of white keys and technique at the same time. You can also introduce "King of the African Drum" (correlating Pattern Piece) and "Roaring Lion, Crouching Lion" (correlating Improvisation Piece) while the student is perfecting their Lion Paw Exercise. The three pieces reinforce the motion in different ways.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Relaxed arm
- Loud, round, singing tone
- Relaxed arm after playing while holding the key

KING OF THE AFRICAN DRUM

Pattern Piece for Lion Paw Technique

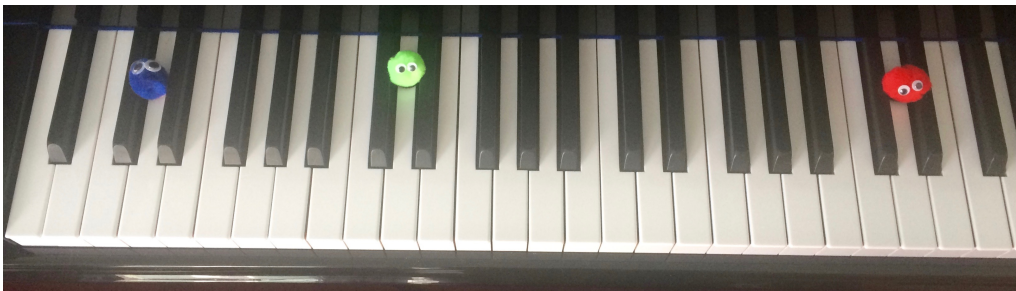
By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece that uses the Lion Paw Technique
- Explore the chromatic pattern of black and white keys on the piano
- Play a ferocious sounding piece with loud tone

- 1 Play and sing the piece for the student.
- 2 The student should sit or stand in front of the lower half of the keyboard so he can reach all the keys for this piece.
- 3 Play m. 1 - 2 for the student while saying "Ta 2 3 4. Ta 2 3 4" for the whole notes. Use good Lion Paw Technique. The hand can either be in a loose fist with Finger 2 extended or in a regular piano hand shape. Arm weight, rather than refining hand position, is the focus of this piece. If you choose to have the student play with a loose fist, once the student has learned the piece and gained control over his arm and hand, have him play the piece again using an open hand in regular piano hand shape. The student plays m. 1 - 2.
- 4 For the *tremolo* in m. 3 - 4 (divided between hands), the speed of *tremolo* repetitions is not important. The goal is to make an exciting noise. Count, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" to show the student how long the *tremolo* lasts. ("5" is the downbeat of the m. 4, where the student lands on the D.) The student imitates. If the student cannot reach the pedal, use a pedal extender, or the teacher or another student can depress the pedal. The student plays m. 1 - 4.
- 5 Play RH m. 5 - 12 for the student, counting "Ta - 2, Ta - 2, Ta - 2, Ta - 2, 1 2 3 4 5," and noting that m. 9 - 12 is a repeat of m. 5 - 8 an octave lower. The student imitates while you sing the rhythm and point to the keys from above to help him remember the chromatic pattern of black and white keys.
- 6 The student plays RH m. 5 - 12 while you play LH and sing the rhythm and point to the keys from above.
- 7 Play the LH "Lion drumming" part in m. 8. The student imitates.
- 8 Play m. 5 - 12 hands together, asking the student to watch your LH.

- 9 Have the student play RH m. 5 - 12 while you hold his LH Finger 2 and help him play the LH part. He is playing hands together, but you are assisting his LH. Sing "Ta - 2" as you did in Step 5 or the lyrics. Sing "Lion drumming" in m. 8.
- 10 Have the student play m. 5 - 12 hands together. Congratulate him that he is able to play hands together! It is surprising how coordinated children are and that most children really can play this complicated sounding piece hands together within the first few weeks of piano study.
- 11 Show the student the form of the piece by using the pictures on the second page of the piece. The low Drum Part is first (m. 1 - 4). This is followed by the Lion Part beginning with the RH in the middle of the piano (m. 5 - 8). Next is the Lion Part an octave lower (m. 9 - 12). The piece ends with the low Drum Part again (m. 13 - 16).
- 12 Play the piece again with the student playing the Drum Parts (m. 1 - 4 and 13 - 16) and you playing the Lion Parts (m. 5 - 12). In this way, the student can hear the form of the piece while only concentrating on playing the Drum Parts. Then switch parts, so you are playing the Drum Parts, and the student is playing the Lion Parts.
- 13 Next, the student plays the entire piece. If the student has trouble moving from the position in m. 1 - 4 to the position for m. 5, place three Fuzzies or page marking tabs on the D's. The student begins the Drum Part (m. 1) on the blue fuzzy. Then he moves LH to the green fuzzy and RH to the red fuzzy for the Lion Part in m. 5. This will provide a visual reference for the new position, allowing the student to move to the new position in rhythm. Once the student is confident with the position changes, remove the Fuzzies or tabs. I call this the **Mark the Leaps** Teaching Strategy.



- 14 Have the student play the entire piece while you or another student improvise a rhythmic accompaniment on a drum.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Heavy Lion Paw drops on the whole notes
- Relaxed arms throughout
- Steady rhythm
- Understanding of the pattern and form of the piece

ROARING LION, CROUCHING LION

Improvisation Piece for Lion Paw Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Improvise using the Lion Paw Technique
- Explore dynamics
- Learn about form

Step 1

- Play the "Roaring Lion" part while singing "Ta - 2 - 3 - 4" for each note. Use Finger 2 and a loud, dropping Lion Paw Technique on each note. The student imitates. Point to the keys from above as he plays to remind him which keys to play.
- Play the Teacher Accompaniment while the student plays the Roaring Lion Part.
- Play the "Crouching Lion" part, using an arm motion but a quieter dynamic. Sing "Ta - 2 - 3 - 4" for the whole notes and "Ta - 2" for the half notes, or sing the lyrics. The student imitates while you point to the keys from above and count to keep him in rhythm. After he has learned this part solidly, add the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Tell the student he now is going to play the "Your Lion" part, where he can play Lion Paw drops on any white keys. As he drops on white keys, say, "Ta - 2 - 3 - 4" to keep him in rhythm. The purpose of this Improvisation Piece is to practice the Lion Paw motion in a creative way. By not being constrained by the prescribed notes in this section, the student is free to experience the Lion Paw motion in a different way by playing it on any white key. Add the Teacher Accompaniment.

Step 2

- On the second page of the piece, show the student the form in pictures in Step 2. Play the student part along with the student in a different octave, and point to the lions in order as you play the first line of pictures. Then repeat this line, adding the Teacher Accompaniment.
- Play the entire piece, pointing to the pictures as you move through the form of the piece.

Step 3

- Download the Roaring Lion, Crouching Lion Cards from the Teacher Guide page at pianosafari.com. Print them (I prefer to use different colors of paper for each type of card) and cut them apart.
- Have the student put the cards in the order of his choosing. Play the Improvisation Piece in the order he has created. Repeat as many times as desired after rearranging the cards.
- You may also play this piece using other Fingers besides Finger 2.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Heavy Lion Paw drops
- Relaxed arms throughout
- Steady rhythm
- Dynamic contrasts between the Roaring and Crouching Lion parts

TALL GIRAFFE

Animal Technique No. 2

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Refine *non legato* articulation
- Practice down-up wrist motion

Non legato is the first articulation for beginning students to master. All pieces should be played *non legato* until the student has developed a coordinated forearm motion and a consistently good piano hand shape. This may take weeks or months depending on the student's age and level of coordination.

Introducing *legato* too soon may result in students playing a weak sounding *legato* that only uses the fingers and completely ignores the role of the arm, because the student has not yet become comfortable with the coordination between arm and fingers that is developed by playing *non legato*. Playing *legato* too soon may also lead to a disintegration of the piano hand shape because of the complexities of coordinating the hand shape, connection of fingers, and transfer of arm weight.

Delaying the introduction of *legato* allows students to master the coordination between the arms and fingers while maintaining a good piano hand shape without the added complexity of connecting the fingers. Also, when students are finally allowed to play *legato*, it becomes a novel, special, and beautiful sound after the extended period of *non legato* playing.

Students can use the Tall Giraffe Technique to refine the *non legato* they have been using in their pieces and to work on the basics of a graceful wrist lift.

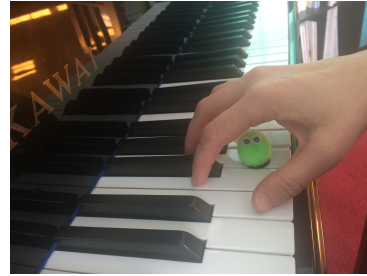
- 1** Demonstrate RH* m. 1 - 2 for the student with *non legato* articulation and firm, not collapsed, fingertips. By using the *staccato tenuto* marking, we mean to denote that the notes are detached but are not as short as *staccato*. Each note is played with a down motion into the key. Do not demonstrate any wrist movement on the half notes yet. Just play with a *non legato* motion of the forearm with firm fingertips. The student imitates. If the student has been playing all his pieces with *non legato* articulation, this should be very easy.
- 2** After the student has mastered control of firm fingertips and an arm bounce on each key, say "Freeze" occasionally. While the student is stopped on a key, with the key depressed, check to be sure that the thumb is relaxed by gently wiggling the student's thumb up and down. If it moves easily, it is loose. Also, check to be sure that the hand is in a good piano hand shape (We call it a

* LH Exercises come first in the book only to allow the LH Exercise to be on the left side of the book near the LH, while the RH Exercises are on the right side of the book near the RH. Often it is easier to teach the RH Exercise first.

"fuzzy house." A fuzzy can walk in the door formed by the raised bridge and thumb on its corner and sit comfortably under the hand.



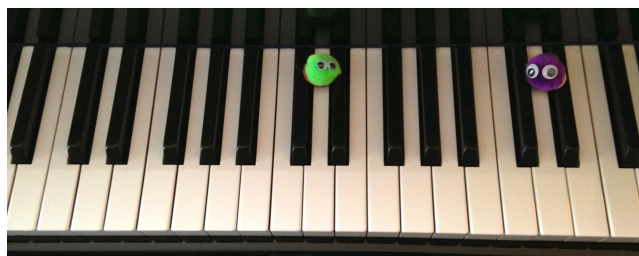
Fuzzy approaching his front door



Fuzzy sitting comfortably in his living room

Continue to say, "Freeze" and check the student's fuzzy house and loose thumb until the student has mastered the coordination of relaxing the non-playing fingers while being stopped on one key. Only after he has found this relaxation while stopping will he be able to relax non-playing fingers while actively playing. Some students have more difficulty relaxing their hands than others. The Lion Paw Technique sets the stage for a relaxed technique through the focus on arm weight. In the Tall Giraffe Technique, the student is combining forearm motion (essentially a small Lion Paw) with a good piano hand shape and firm fingertips to form the *non legato* articulation.

- 3 When non-playing fingers are relaxed, playing fingers have firm fingertips, and the arm is working well in a bouncing motion to help the fingers, add a down-up motion of the wrist on the half notes. We call this the "Tall Giraffe Neck." The wrist goes down with arm weight and then comes up into the air with a relaxed, floppy wrist. We call this the "Tall Giraffe Neck" because it is a motion like petting a giraffe's neck. If you have a stuffed giraffe, place it facing the student. He can pet the giraffe's tall neck from bottom to top with a loose wrist. This provides a visual and tactile reference for this wrist motion.
- 4 Once the student has mastered the non legato articulation with the Tall Giraffe Neck down-up wrist motion on the half notes, he is ready to play the entire exercise. Place fuzzies or page marking tabs on the keyboard to mark the position for each octave of the exercise.
 - For RH, put a green Fuzzy on the group of two black keys where the student will play m. 1 - 2.
 - Put a purple Fuzzy on the group of two black keys where the student will play m. 3 - 6.



The form is:

Green Fuzzy
m. 1 - 2

Purple Fuzzy
m. 3 - 4

Purple Fuzzy
m. 5 - 6

Green Fuzzy
m. 7 - 8

- 5** The Student plays RH m. 1 - 8 while you coach him to play the Tall Giraffe pattern near the "Green fuzzy, purple fuzzy, purple fuzzy, green fuzzy." Repeat with the Teacher Accompaniment.
- 6** Move the fuzzies to where the LH will play, and repeat the exercise with the LH.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Good piano hand shape
- Firm fingertips
- Relaxed thumb
- Down-up motion with a flexible wrist on the half note "Tall Giraffe Neck" part

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TALL GIRAFFE

Pattern Piece for the Tall Giraffe Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece that uses the Tall Giraffe Technique
- Play hands together in contrary motion

It is important that the student becomes comfortable playing hands together in contrary motion (same fingers, different notes) and parallel motion (same notes, different fingers) in preparation for more complicated two-voice counterpoint and accompaniment patterns in the future. This piece is a first step in contrary motion playing.

- 1 Play the piece and sing the words for the student.
- 2 Play RH m. 1. Be sure to use good Tall Giraffe Technique (*non legato* with an arm bounce on each note). There will not be time for a large down-up Tall Giraffe Neck motion on Finger 4, as the student practiced in the Tall Giraffe Exercise, but a small down-up motion (Baby Giraffe Neck) will prevent the student from rushing in the rest. The student imitates.
- 3 Play RH m. 2. The student imitates. If the student has trouble, feel free to write in the fingering (4 3 3 2). Seeing it written helps students who are visual learners. Do not be too concerned about the slur. Some students naturally play a slur, while others do not. Either way is fine at this point, as long as the student plays with good piano hand shape.
- 4 The student plays RH m. 1 - 2 while you say, "Down up" on beats 3 - 4 in m. 1 to prevent the student from rushing. This is where the student should make a Baby Giraffe Neck motion (a small down-up motion, as opposed to the larger one in the Tall Giraffe Exercise).
- 5 Play RH m. 3 - 4 for the student, noting that it is the same as m. 1 - 2, but up a step, beginning on D. The student imitates. Play m. 5 - 6, which is again a repeat of the motive starting up another step on E. The student imitates. Then have the student practice RH m. 1 - 6 several times to practice the position shifts.
- 6 Play RH m. 7 - 8 singing, "A, down, down, down, D, E, C." The student imitates.
- 7 The student plays m. 9 - 16, which is a repeat of m. 1 - 8.

- 8** Play m. 17 - 18. The student imitates.
- 9** Now the student may play hands together. Play m. 1 hands together. Ask the student what fingers begin in each hand (Finger 2). The student imitates.
- 10** Play m. 1 - 2 hands together, saying the finger numbers. The student imitates.
- 11** Help the student move up a step in both hands for m. 3 - 4. Moving up in parallel motion but playing in contrary motion can take a bit of thought for the student. The student plays these measures.
- 12** Help the student move up a step for m. 5 - 6. The student plays.
- 13** Have the student review RH m. 7 - 8 by playing it several times. Then have the student play the LH of m. 7 - 8.
- 14** Play m. 7 - 8 hands together. The student imitates.
- 15** The student plays the entire piece.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Steady rhythm
- Strong fingertips
- Ease in moving from position to position

TALL GIRAFFE AND FRIENDS

Improvisation Piece for Tall Giraffe Technique

By Joey Lieber

OBJECTIVES

- Improvise using the *non legato* Tall Giraffe Technique
- Play a "Call and Response" improvisation with the teacher
- Explore how using short phrases, rather than long strings of notes, yields the most musical improvisation
- Experience the blues

This piece is a "Call and Response" Improvisation in G Blues. The Teacher Part is written out. The student should imitate the patterns the teacher plays in the RH. For example, in m. 1, the Teacher plays "G A B," in the RH. The student copies this RH pattern in the next measure. The student should use a Tall Giraffe Technique, *non legato* with a bouncy arm and firm fingertips, for each pattern.

For young students or students who are just starting piano lessons and do not yet have a control over their piano hand shape, you may play this improvisation using only Finger 2.

Chorus 1

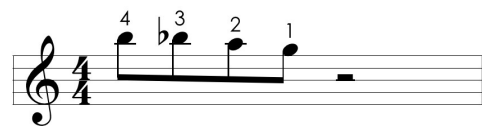
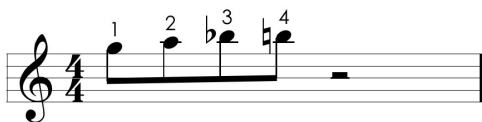
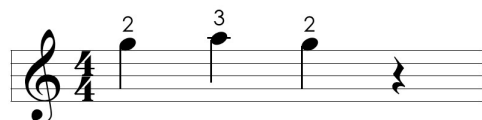
- Tell the student that you are going to play a Tall Giraffe phrase, which he should copy. Play RH m. 1 (teacher part) with *non legato* Tall Giraffe Technique. The student imitates (m. 2).
- Continue playing the patterns as written for Chorus 1, with the student imitating each one.
- Tell the student that you are going to do the same thing, but you are going to add your part. Play as written, with the student copying your RH patterns. The last note of m. 2 (and similar notes) may be played with your LH to facilitate leaps.

Chorus 2

- Continue with Chorus 2, always playing the patterns *non legato*.

Improvisation

- The key of G blues was chosen for this piece this allows the student to play any white key while you play the accompaniment in this Improvisation Section. You may vary the rhythm of the accompaniment as much as you desire, or you may play as written.
- After you and the student have played the entire piece as written, feel free to experiment and expand this piece in the following ways:
 - Vary the accompaniment by changing the rhythm or adding extra notes to bring out the bluesy feel.
 - For the Call and Response Chorus sections, create your own short phrases for the student to imitate. The best ones are those that end on a chord tone. For example, When the LH is playing a G chord (m. 1 - 4), each short phrase should end on G, B, or D. When you are playing a C chord (m. 5 - 6), the phrases should end on C, E, or G. Here are some examples you can try that would work for the G chord sections:



- For the Improvisation section, put a Fuzzy on G. Have the student create three-note phrases that end on the Fuzzy note. Repeat with Fuzzies on G, B, and D. This will help the student's phrases to sound harmonically fitting, and it will show the student that in improvisation, less is more. Short, simple phrases actually make for a more pleasing improvisation than long strings of notes (which is the default for most children).

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Non legato* articulation
- Ability to imitate the teacher's phrases
- Understanding that short phrases make for a more pleasing improvisation than long strings of notes.

ZECHARIAH ZEBRA

Animal Technique No. 3

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop the ability to play repeated notes fast with a loose arm
- Develop firm fingertips
- Develop a good piano hand shape, or "Fuzzy House"

In my dissertation research with excellent pre-college teachers, three of the four teachers in my original study used this exercise under different guises:

- Marvin Blickenstaff called it "Ebenezer Sneezer."
- Carolyn Shaak called it "Colorado Mountain."
- Mary Craig Powell called it "Mississippi Hop Frog."

Mary Craig Powell explained to me the benefits of this exercise in developing the following:

- Firm fingertips (rather than collapsed joints) are easier to develop when playing repeated fingers rather than consecutive fingers.
- Students have to have a loose arm in order to play this exercise at a fast tempo. So mastering this exercise helps insure a loose arm.

This exercise may take a month or more to master. At first, the piano hand shape may not look very good, especially with Fingers 4 and 5. Keep working to shape the hand until the student develops control to play this exercise with firm fingertips and a good piano hand shape (or "Fuzzy House," as we call it).

Fingers should absolutely *not* be glued to the keys. The whole forearm bounces, with a smaller bounce on the eighth notes and a higher bounce on the quarter notes. The arm aligns behind the playing finger.

Finger 1 plays on its corner, not flat on its side. It is slightly curved (rather than turned out with collapsed joints):



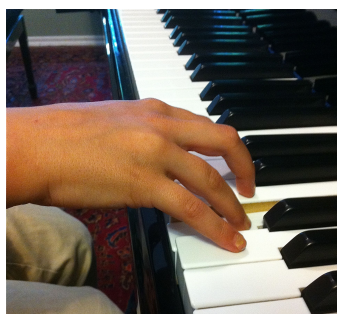
Fingers 2 and 3 are the easiest fingers. They should play with firm fingertips and a raised (not collapsed) hand knuckle bridge:



Finger nail joints should not collapse like this!



Finger 4 will need to stand taller than Fingers 2 and 3 in order to play with a firm fingertip and good piano hand shape, as it tends to play flat and pull the hand down.



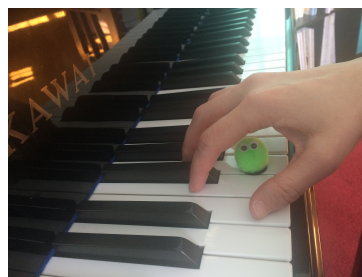
Finger 5 plays on its outer corner tip, not straight on its tip, as this would make it stand too tall and cause a hand position in which the fingers are too curved. However, Finger 5 should not play flat either.




- 1 Have the student put his RH on the piano in a good piano hand shape. Tell the student that the fuzzy is going to check to see if he can get in his "Fuzzy House." Walk the fuzzy up to the hand and have it walk inside through the door created by the thumb on its corner and raised bridge.



Fuzzy approaching his front door



The Fuzzy can get in!

- 2 For young students, take a stuffed zebra, and play the Zechariah Zebra rhythm on the fallboard using the zebra. 

Make the zebra bounce higher on the quarter notes. Say, "Zechariah Zebra" and repeat saying, "Zechariah bounce bounce." Have the student play the rhythm with the zebra.

- 3 Put your RH on the piano, and have the student check your Fuzzy House by putting the fuzzy under your hand. Play m. 1 for the student, with the quarter notes bouncing a bit higher than the eighth notes. The tempo should be about quarter note = 120.
- 4 Next, hold the student's right hand and thumb and play m. 1 using his thumb. You are doing all the work while he has a relaxed arm. Be sure the thumb plays up on its corner, not flat on its side. Proper thumb position will prevent many technical problems in the future. The arm bounces as a unit from the elbow.

- 5** Have the student put his RH in position for m. 1. Check his Fuzzy House. Then let him play m. 1. Some children will naturally play with a good piano hand and will keep the hand shape while playing Finger 1. The majority of children will not have this control the first time they attempt this. The hand may lose its shape.
- 6** The end goal is for the student to maintain a good Fuzzy House while playing each note. However, this may take quite a bit of time over several weeks or months for the child to develop the hand shape and gain strength and coordination. As a first step, aim for a good Fuzzy House in the rest measures, between each finger. Do this by telling the child to make a good Fuzzy House after he plays m. 1. Put the fuzzy in his house to check the hand shape.
- 7** Remove the fuzzy and cue the student to play m. 2 (Finger 2 on D.) Finger 2 is an easier finger. The hand shape may not disintegrate on this finger. After the student plays Finger 2, have him stop and make a good Fuzzy House again. Check the fuzzy in his house. Then allow him to play Finger 3. Continue through the exercise, stopping on the rest measures to check the Fuzzy House.
- 8** Repeat the exercise with the Teacher Accompaniment. In the rest, say, "Fuzzy House. Finger ____" to cue the student to check his hand shape and then play the next finger. If the student has trouble finding his good hand shape, help him by shaping his hand.
- 9** Reiterate to the student that at home, he must stop and check his finger shape between each finger, as children generally just like to rush from finger to finger with a worse and worse hand shape by the end of the exercise.
- 10** Repeat these steps with the LH.
- 11** As a challenge, have the student play the exercise hands together in contrary motion, beginning with the thumbs. This is beneficial because the student can make the hands feel similar. Usually one hand is stronger than the other, and the stronger hand can help the weaker hand learn the hand shape.
- 12** As you repeat the exercise over the weeks, start to require that the student keep a good Fuzzy House not just between notes in the rests, but while he is playing. First, begin stressing this on Fingers 2 and 3, the easiest fingers. Eventually, the goal is for the student to be able to keep a good Fuzzy House on all the fingers. When you feel like the student is getting close to achieving this goal, print out this Hand Picture on the Teacher Guide page at pianosafari.com.



- Have the student put a sticker on each finger that has a good Fuzzy House while playing.

- Or, laminate the Hand Picture, put velcro on each finger and fuzzy, and have the student stick a fuzzy to each finger that is able to keep a good Fuzzy House.



In summary, the process for teaching Zechariah Zebra is:

- Show the student a good piano hand shape (Fuzzy House).
- Play the exercise with a small bounce on the eighth notes and a higher bounce on the quarter notes (Zechariah Bounce Bounce).
- You play a finger using the student's hand.
- The student plays, stopping in the rest measures to reset his Fuzzy House.
- Add the Teacher Accompaniment, coaching verbally to check the Fuzzy House between each finger in the rests. Stop as needed between fingers to fix hand shape.
- Work toward having a good Fuzzy House not just during the rests, but also while playing each finger.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Fast bouncing forearm
- Good piano hand shape in rest measures
- Good piano hand shape on playing fingers
- Each finger playing properly (thumb on corner, firm fingertips, etc.)

ZEBRA ON A POGO STICK

Pattern Piece for the Zechariah Zebra Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece by rote that uses the Zechariah Zebra Technique
- Play a piece that alternates between hands

- 1** Play and sing the piece for the student. Do not play too fast. Note that the tempo marking is Moderato. This piece will be slower than the Zechariah Zebra Technique Exercise to allow the student to coordinate the hands. Talk about what a pogo stick is and how high Zechariah could bounce on a pogo stick.
- 2** Play m. 1 - 6 hands together, asking the student to watch your RH. Then have the student play RH m. 1 - 6 while you play LH and coach him about which finger to play next. He may refer to the score to see the finger numbers if desired.
- 3** Play RH m. 7 - 8. The student imitates. Some children prefer the fingering 4 3 2 in m. 8. If this is the case, cross out the 3 2 1 fingering and write in 4 3 2. Either is fine.
- 4** The student plays RH and teacher plays LH for the entire piece.
- 5** Play LH m. 2 with two different fingerings, 1 1 1 1 2 2 3 and 1 1 1 1 3 3 4. Have the student try both and decide which fingering he prefers. Write in the fingering he chooses. This passage can be difficult for students, so play it very slowly first and have the student play it repeatedly, gradually increasing the tempo.
- 6** For m. 4, be sure to use the same fingering as m. 2 in reverse. Demonstrate, and have the student imitate.
- 7** Play LH m. 6. The student imitates. Make sure he has an extra bouncy arm, like a zebra bouncing on his pogo stick.
- 8** You play the RH while the student plays the LH.

9 The student plays hands together.

10 When the student can play the piece well by himself, add the Teacher Accompaniment.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good piano hand shape in RH
Zechariah Zebra parts
- Steady tempo
- Free bouncy motions in LH m. 6

ZEBRA ON THE PLAYGROUND

Improvisation Piece for the Zechariah Zebra Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Practice playing the Zechariah Zebra Technique repeatedly on each finger
- Maintain a good piano hand shape while playing the Zechariah Zebra Technique
- Review white key names on the piano

Step 1

- Have the student play the Zechariah Zebra rhythm with Finger 2 on the white keys you call out, "C, G, F," etc.

Step 2

- Have the student complete the boxes as indicated.
- Demonstrate the first line of the student's chosen pattern. An example is given below where the student has chosen "E G E" for the boxes after the given "C."

Step 2

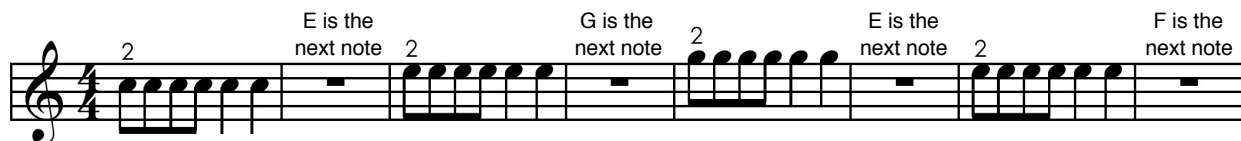
Write C, E, or G
in each box:

C	E	G	E
---	---	---	---

Zechariah runs over to the slide!



- Play the Zechariah Zebra Pattern with RH Finger 2 on C. Then move quickly to E, saying in rhythm, "E is the next note" during the four beats of rest. Play the Zechariah Zebra Pattern with RH Finger 2 on E. Repeat with G and E. So it would sound like this:



Step 3

- The student plays while you coach the moves during the rest measures for the first line. Also encourage the student to play with a bouncy arm (small bounces on the eighth notes, larger bounces on the quarter notes) and to check for a good fuzzy house (piano hand shape) while playing each finger.
- Continue with the rest of the piece.
- Add the accompaniment while you continue to coach the student verbally about the next notes.

Step 4

- After the student has successfully played the entire piece with RH Finger 2, have the student color RH Finger 2 on the hand picture on p. 23.
- Have the student choose another finger and repeat the piece with that finger. The student can then color that finger on the hand picture. Repeat until all fingers are completed over the course of several weeks.
- You may also have the student choose different letters by writing the new letters above the old ones or using a separate sheet of paper.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good piano hand shape
- Energetic bouncing
- Coordination of moving to the new key in rhythm, and secure knowledge of the white key names.

TREE FROG

Animal Technique No. 4

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Learn to play *legato*
- Coordinate an engaged, bouncy arm on each note to with connected fingers
- Warm, singing tone

Once the Tall Giraffe Technique is mastered (*non legato* with an arm bounce on each note), the next articulation to master is *legato* with an arm bounce on each note (Tree Frog Technique).

Bouncing the arm on each note:

- Allows the arm to stay involved in helping the fingers play with good tone
- Fosters relaxation
- Keeps the arm in alignment behind the finger that is playing.

Piano keys are too heavy for a child with small, lightweight fingers to play without the help of the arm. When the child uses the arm to help the fingers, more strength is available to produce a singing tone without risk of injury from excess tension. In the first several years of playing, most pieces should be played with an arm bounce on each note, either *non legato* (Tall Giraffe Technique) or *legato* (Tree Frog Technique). Students can shape the phrases by playing slower or faster into the keys to vary the dynamics. Once the fingers are coordinated and strong, which usually takes several years, more attention can be devoted to pure finger action, although the role of the arm never completely disappears.

We call this the Tree Frog Exercise because frogs hop (arm bounce on each note), and the tree frog has sticky fingers to allow him to stick to trees (connected, *legato* fingers)

1 Play RH m. 1 - 2 for the student in two ways: *non legato* with an arm bounce on each note (Tall Giraffe Technique), and *legato* with an arm bounce on each note (Tree Frog Technique). Ask the student what the difference in is in the sound. ("One is not connected. The other is connected.") Have him close his eyes while you play both ways. He should be able to tell by ear the difference between not connected (Tall Giraffe *non legato*) and connected (Tree Frog *legato*) sounds. Attaching the articulations to animals makes them easier for young students to remember. You may also have the student hold up the appropriate stuffed animal as you test their knowledge.

2 Play RH m. 1 - 2. The student imitates. Here are some things to look for:

- Small arm bounce on each note
- Firm fingertips (rather than collapsed end joints)
- Relaxed non-playing fingers (especially fingers 1 and 5)
- Fingers that connect from one note to the next but do not overhold or smear the notes together.

Some students will be able to master this easily. Others require more practice to coordinate all aspects of the Tree Frog Technique.

3 Play the whole exercise with teacher accompaniment.

4 Repeat with the LH.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Connected and singing sounds
- Small arm bounce on each note
- Firm fingertips
- Relaxed non-playing fingers
- One note at a time playing, with no overholding

RAIN FOREST MYSTERY

Pattern Piece for the Tree Frog Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a Pattern Piece that uses the Tree Frog Technique
- Create a story to match the mysterious mood

- 1** Play the piece for the student. As you play, create a story with the student to match the dynamic shape of the piece. For example:
 - A lion is sneaking up on the tree frog at the beginning when the dynamics are quiet
 - The tree frog is scared as the lion gets closer and the dynamics get louder.
 - But the lion does not see the frog and slowly moves away into the forest as the dynamics decrease at the end of the piece.
- 2** Play RH of m. 1 - 4 for the student with good Tree Frog Technique (*legato* with an arm bounce on each note and connected fingers). Be sure the student lifts slightly between each phrase in m. 1 - 3 to delineate the phrases (The frog needs to take a breath!). The student imitates.
- 3** Play RH m. 5 - 8 and 9 - 12. The student imitates.
- 4** The student plays RH m. 1 - 12. This piece is a challenge piece, so teach it slowly and carefully. Be sure the student masters each section with the correct technique before adding another section. It may take several lessons to teach the entire piece to allow the student to absorb each section.
- 5** When the student has thoroughly mastered the *legato* motion and lifts between phrases, add the LH for m. 1 - 12. Note that this hands together section is in parallel motion, unlike "A Day in the Life of a Tall Giraffe," where the hands were playing in contrary motion. Both coordinations are important for students to master.
- 6** Add the pedal for m. 1 - 12.

- 7** I call the second half of the piece, m. 13 - 21, the "Dad part," because the LH plays D A D. Maybe the tree frog's dad scares the lion away or protects the tree frog by helping him climb a tree?
- 8** Play LH m. 13 - 21, counting "Ta - 2 - 3 - 4" on each note. The student imitates.
- 9** The student plays LH m. 13 - 21 while you play RH.
- 10** Play RH m. 13 - 18. Say "D, F, D, F, D, F" to show the student the pattern formed by the first notes of each phrase. The student imitates.
- 11** The student plays m. 13 - 18 hands together.
- 12** Play m. 19 - 21. The student imitates.
- 13** The student plays the entire piece.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good Tree Frog Technique
- Clear pedaling
- Well-shaped dynamics

TREE FROG IN A RAINSTORM

Improvisation Piece for the Tree Frog Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Improvise using the *legato* Tree Frog Technique

Step 1

- Play the Tree Frog Pattern as written. The student imitates, either by rote or by reading the music.
- Add the accompaniment.

Step 2

- Show the student the G pentascale position and tell him that he can play any of those notes to create his own Tree Frog music. Be sure he plays with good Tree Frog *legato*. Add the accompaniment.

Step 3

- End with the Tree Frog Pattern again to finish the piece.
- Play the entire piece.
- Explore this Improvisation Piece further by trying the suggestions in the "Try This!" box.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good Tree Frog Technique
- Singing tone

KANGAROO

Animal Technique No. 5

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Develop firm, not collapsed, fingertips by playing repeated notes
- Develop the ability to play fast with a loose arm
- Keep a good piano hand shape throughout without pauses between fingers

This exercise is essentially the same as the Zechariah Zebra Technique, but without the rests between the changing fingers. Students should be able to keep a good piano hand shape (Fuzzy House) while playing by this point.

- 1** Play the RH part for the student and sing "Kangaroo." Talk to him about how kangaroos are bouncy. Each note should bounce (up on "roo" too!).
- 2** The student plays the RH. Stop him and reset the hand if the piano hand shape does not look good at any point. If he is not bouncing enough, make your stuffed kangaroo hop in rhythm while the student plays, or play along to demonstrate.
- 3** The student plays the RH while you play the accompaniment.
- 4** Repeat with the LH.
- 5** You may also have the student play hands together in contrary motion (beginning with thumbs). The weaker hand can help the stronger hand by playing in this way.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Firm fingertips
- Bouncy arm
- Up on the "roo" of "Kangaroo"
- Good piano hand shape

KRISTABEL KANGAROO VISITS KOREA

Pattern Piece for the Kangaroo Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Play a Pattern Piece that uses the Kangaroo Technique
- Combine bouncing Kangaroo Technique with *legato* Tree Frog Technique

- 1** Play the piece for the student. Talk about where Korea is, how long it would take for Kristabel Kangaroo to travel there, what she might see there, what she would eat, and other interesting facts about Korea.
- 2** Play RH m. 1 - 4. The student imitates with good Kangaroo Technique (bouncy and rhythmic on every note). The student may play with all Finger 2, or with Fingers 2 and 3 braced together. Repeat with LH and then hands together.
- 3** Play LH m. 5 - 8, counting "Ta 2 3 4." The student imitates.
- 4** The student plays LH m. 5 - 8 while you play RH.
- 5** Play RH m. 5 - 8 *legato* with an arm bounce on each note, walking from note to note with *legato* Tree Frog Technique. Sing the finger numbers, referring to the score. The student imitates.
- 6** The student plays RH m. 5 - 8 while you play LH.
- 7** The student plays m. 5 - 8 hands together.
- 8** Play m. 17 - 18. The student imitates.
- 9** Play antiphonally. The student plays m. 1 - 4. You play m. 5 - 8. The student plays m. 9 - 12. You play m. 13 - 16. The student plays m. 17 - 18. Switch parts. This allows the student to hear the whole piece while only concentrating on playing one technique, either the Kangaroo sections or the Tree Frog sections.

- 10** The student plays the entire piece. If he has trouble shifting between positions when moving from m. 8 to m. 9, put fuzzies or page marking tabs on the keys that begin m. 9. Remove the markers when the student becomes confident with the position change.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good Kangaroo Technique
- Rhythmic playing
- Tree Frog Technique in *legato* part

KANGAROO TAKES A TRIP

Improvisation Piece for the Kangaroo Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Review finger numbers
- Practice the Kangaroo Technique in a new way

Step 1

- Play the Kangaroo Pattern, saying “333, 111”. The student imitates.

Step 2

- Have the student write finger numbers in the boxes as indicated. Finger numbers must be reinforced throughout the first year of study. Skills not practiced may be forgotten. This piece provides a fun way for the student to review finger numbers.
- The student plays the finger numbers he has chosen while you play the accompaniment.
- The student can change the fingers he has chosen by writing new numbers below the boxes or by writing on a separate sheet of paper.
- Explore this Improvisation Piece further by trying the suggestions in the “Try This!” box.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good Kangaroo Technique
- Understanding of finger numbers

SOARING BIRD

Animal Technique No. 6

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Learn to play a three-note slur with one arm motion per phrase
- Practice the down-up motion of the wrist and arm
- Practice making arching arm motions in the air with a relaxed wrist when changing octaves
- Begin work on finger independence

After students have mastered Tall Giraffe Technique (*non legato* with an arm bounce on each note) and Tree Frog Technique (*legato* with an arm bounce on each note), the next articulation to master is Soaring Bird (*legato* with a one down-up arm motion over several notes).

For most pieces in the next few years, students will continue to play with Tall Giraffe and Tree Frog Techniques. However, Soaring Bird Technique can be used on occasion for short, smooth phrases. This is an introduction to pure finger technique, which will become increasingly important in the intermediate and advanced levels of playing.

1 Play the RH part with the following with technical components:

- The wrist drops on the first note and releases up on the third note
- Fingertips are firm
- Fingers are active (not smeared or overheld) and make clear sounds
- Thumb is relaxed
- In the air on the way to the next octave, the wrist is relaxed in the air (floppy wrist)
- Movement between octaves is arching and graceful, like a bird flying through the air

2 Play C D E three ways:

- Tall Giraffe Technique: *non legato*
- Tree Frog Technique: *legato* with an arm bounce on each note
- Soaring Bird Technique: *legato* with a down-up motion of the arm over three notes (three-note slur)

Have the student identify which animal technique you are playing. For young children, have them hold up the correct stuffed animal.

3 Switch roles. Have the student play C D E in three ways while you name the animal technique he is playing.

4 The student plays the RH while you say, "Down and up, soaring bird." Saying "Soaring Bird" in the rest measure will help the student understand the length of the rest measure. You may have your stuffed bird mirror the motion as the student plays.

5 Add the accompaniment.

6 Repeat with the LH.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Understanding of the three articulations: Tall Giraffe, Tree Frog, and Soaring Bird
- Firm fingertips
- Active fingers
- Down-up wrist motion
- Arching motions in the air between phrases

HAWK ON THE MOUNTAIN PEAK

Pattern Piece for the Soaring Bird Technique

By Julie Knerr & Katherine Fisher

OBJECTIVES

- Play a Pattern Piece that uses the Soaring Bird Technique
- Experience 3/4 time
- Understand how poetry and music enhance each other

- 1** Play the piece for the student. Use a one arm motion with active fingers for each phrase in m. 9 - 12, 25 - 28, and 33 - 40 (Soaring Bird Technique). Sing, "Hawk up high in the sky. Hawk up high in the sky" for m. 1 - 8.
- 2** Put fuzzies or page marking tabs on the notes that begin m. 1. Play m. 1 - 8 again, singing, "Hawk up high in the sky. Hawk up high in the sky." This will help the student play the correct rhythm immediately. It is very important that the student is able to play this rhythm pattern correctly right away, as it is difficult to fix if the student has the wrong rhythm in his mind. The student imitates while you sing and tap the rhythm.
- 3** Play m. 9 - 16. The student imitates. Be sure the arm is graceful and the fingers are active and independent to avoid overholding or smearing.
- 4** The student plays m. 1 - 32. Having the markers on the keys will help the student shift positions in m. 16 - 17 (and later in m. 40 - 41).
- 5** Play m. 33 - 40. The student imitates.
- 6** Play m. 41 - 48, singing, "Hawk up high in the sky. Hawk up high lands." The student imitates.
- 7** The student plays the piece while you narrate the words of the poem. If the student wants to be the narrator, you play while he narrates.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Rhythmic playing
- Graceful Soaring Bird Technique in three-note slur passages
- Dynamics that match the poetry

WHITE BIRD, BLACK BIRD

Improvisation Piece for the Soaring Bird Technique

By Julie Knerr & Katherine Fisher

OBJECTIVES

- Play a Improvisation that uses the Soaring Bird Technique
- Explore tempo changes

Step 1

- Play the Bird Pattern. The student imitates. Say "Soaring Bird" in the rest measures to help the student stay in rhythm.

Step 2

- Add the accompaniment.
- Have the student continue improvising on white and black keys while you play the accompaniment. For the student part to match the accompaniment, the student will need to play two white key patterns followed by two black key patterns and continue alternating in this way. The student may play in any octave and may play ascending or descending patterns. He should always play with good Soaring Bird Technique.

Step 3

- As the student gains comfort with the alternating white and black patterns, tell the student that the wind is getting stronger, so you are going to start speeding up. Gradually increase the tempo.
- To end the improvisation, slow down to show the bird landing.
- Play the whole Improvisation Piece without stopping. The student should be able to follow the tempo changes you make in the accompaniment by listening.
- Explore this Improvisation Piece further by trying the suggestions in the "Try This!" box.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- *Legato* sound
- Graceful arm movements and wrist lifts
- Understanding of the white and black key patterns
- Ease in speeding and slowing the tempo

MONKEY SWINGING IN A TREE

Animal Technique No. 7

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Learn rotation of the forearm

- 1** Practice rotating the whole forearm in the air to understand the rotating motion. Be sure the forearm and wrist are in a straight line so that the student is not twisting the wrist. The forearm and hand move as a unit.
- 2** Play RH m. 1 for the student. The student imitates. Look for the following technical aspects:
 - The forearm and hand are in straight alignment.
 - The forearm rotates as a unit.
 - The rotation comes from transferring the arm weight from finger to finger. Play slowly first to be sure the student is using arm weight and transferring the weight.
 - The sound is *legato*, created by the weight transfer.
 - The hand is up over the keys so that Finger 4 is standing tall.
 - Non-playing fingers are relaxed, especially the thumb.
- 3** Play RH m. 1 - 4 to show the student the pattern of the exercise. The student imitates.
- 4** Add the accompaniment.
- 5** Play the LH exercise. The student imitates.
- 6** Add the accompaniment.
- 7** As an added challenge, you can have the student practice this motion hands together in contrary motion (starting on Finger 2 in both hands). This can help the stronger hand to teach the weaker hand so that both hands feel the same.

- 8** As an added challenge, you can have the student practice this motion hands together in contrary motion (starting on Finger 2 in both hands). This can help the stronger hand to teach the weaker hand so that both hands feel the same.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Rotating forearm as a unit
- *Legato* transfer of weight from finger to finger
- Firm fingertips
- Relaxed non-playing fingers
- Hand up over the keys

MONKEY BLUES

Pattern Piece for the Monkey Swinging in a Tree Technique

By Julie Knerr

OBJECTIVES

- Use rotation in a piece
- Play a piece that uses the 12 bar blues form

- 1 Play the piece for the student.
- 2 Play RH m. 1 - 2 slowly. The student imitates. Make sure he is using good rotation. You may play the LH while teaching the student the RH part phrase by phrase, as this helps the student to hear how the hands fit together rhythmically. Refer to the score as necessary. By this point, the student is beginning to see patterns in the notation, even though he may not yet be able to read every note.
- 3 Note that m. 3 - 4 is a repeat of m. 1 - 2. The student plays m. 1 - 4 while you play the LH.
- 4 Play m. RH m. 5 - 6, noting the black key on Eb. The hand should move forward toward the fallboard slightly and adjust the angle of the aligned arm to reach the Eb. The wrist should not twist to reach the black key. The student imitates.
- 5 The student plays RH m. 7 - 8, which is the same as m. 1 - 2.
- 6 Teach RH m. 9 - 13 by singing, "Monkey swinging end on 3... 3 2... 2 2... C Bb" and referring to the score as necessary.
- 7 Play the LH while the student plays the entire RH. Be sure to keep a slow tempo and to check the student's rotation technique. Playing this piece too fast too soon may result in lost control over the technique or tone.
- 8 Play LH m. 2 - 5 with a *non legato* articulation. The student imitates.
- 9 Play LH m. 6 - 7, noting that it is the same pattern except that Finger 5 is on F. The student imitates.

- 10** The student plays m. 8 - 9, which is the same as m. 2 - 3.
- 11** Play m. 10 - 11, noting that these are the short parts. The student imitates.
- 12** The student plays the entire LH, referring to the score as necessary.
- 13** The student plays the LH while you play the RH.
- 14** The student plays the piece hands together. If he has trouble with playing the downbeat of m. 2 together, draw a line between the RH and LH notes on the score to show him how they come together, and tell him that the LH starts when the RH gets to the word "tree." Keep the tempo slow until the student has control over the coordination and technique of the entire piece. Then you can have the student play a bit faster.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Rotation
- Energetic playing

JUNGLE JUMPS

Improvisation Piece for the Monkey Swinging in a Tree Technique

By Julie Knerr & Katherine Fisher

OBJECTIVES

- Gain further repetition in playing with good rotation
- Be in charge of how the piece sounds by making decisions about which keys to play next

Step 1

- Tell the student that you are going to create a piece that shows how a monkey jumps quickly from vine to vine. Play the student's Monkey Pattern while you play the teacher accompaniment for the first two measures.
- Have the student play the Monkey Pattern while you play the first two measures of the accompaniment.

Step 2

- Now tell the student that this time he should play the Monkey Pattern starting on C again, but then, as fast as possible, jump to Finger 2 on a different white key and wait until it is time to play while you play your monkey music (m. 2 of the accompaniment).
- You will transpose your accompaniment to the key the student chooses. For example. If the student jumps to Finger 2 on F, play the accompaniment in F to match. To keep the student rhythm during the rest measure (your monkey music), you can cue in this way:
 - The student plays with Finger 2 on C in m. 1 while you play m. 1.
 - During the rest in m. 2, the student moves quickly to Finger 2 on F and waits while you play m. 2 and sing, "Monkey on the F vine, and play now."
 - The student then plays the Monkey Pattern in F while you transpose the accompaniment to F.
 - The student jumps to, for example, Finger 2 on A and waits while you sing, "Monkey on the A vine, and play now."

- It may take a bit of coaching for the student to understand how to jump immediately and then wait. It is very hard to keep the accompaniment going in the correct keys if the student jumps too late or too slowly, so keep reminding the student to jump immediately and wait.

Step 3

- Continue the piece in the same manner, adjusting the accompaniment to the notes the student chooses as the monkey jumps from vine to vine. Students love how they can determine the sound of the piece and your accompaniment by the decisions they make.

Step 4

- Tell the student that to end the piece, he should jump to Finger 2 on C and play slower. Or you may signal the end by telling the student to end with the C Pattern.
- Play the entire piece. The piece can change every time as the monkey jumps to different vines.
- Explore this Improvisation Piece further by trying the suggestions in the "Try This!" box.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Good rotation
- Quick jumps to the next note

TECHNIQUE REVIEW

OBJECTIVES

- Review the Seven Animal Techniques learned in this book

Starting with Lion Paw in the RH, play each exercise.

- Play the exercise for the student to remind him how to play it.
- Have him play the exercise alone, checking for the correct technical gestures.
- Play the exercise with the accompaniment.

You may repeat the exercise by calling the animals out in random order.

Or you may put the stuffed animals for each exercise in a bag, and have the student draw out an animal, play the exercise, and toss the animal to his parent!

Color the square for each completed animal.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Fluent and correct technique for each animal exercise

SAFARI FRIENDS

Pattern Piece for the Seven Animal Techniques

By Julie Knerr & Katherine Fisher

OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece that reviews the Seven Animal Techniques learned in this book
- Remember the form of this piece
- Increase concentration through playing a long piece

- 1** Download the **Safari Friends Cards** from the Teacher Guide page at www.pianosafari.com. Cut them apart.
- 2** Play the piece for the student. As you play, pause to have the student find the correct Safari Friends Card and put it on the music rack in order. This will help the student remember the form of the piece.
- 3** Teach m. 5 - 6 first. We call this part the "Balloon Part," because the animals are all coming together for a party, and a party needs balloons. This "Balloon Part" returns repeatedly throughout the piece. All notes in m. 5 - 6 should be detached and bouncy to bring out the celebratory character of this piece and to keep the student from rushing the rhythm. First play m. 5 to the downbeat of m. 6, singing, "Zechariah A B C." After the student imitates this several times, add the remaining "G C " in m. 6.
- 4** When teaching each section, you can use the Safari Friends Animal Cards or reference the animal pictures in the score to show the student the form of the piece. For each section, use the following steps:
 - You play the Animal Technique while the student plays the Balloon Part that follows it. This allows the student to hear and see the Animal Technique before playing it.
 - Teach the student the Animal Technique section you are working on.
 - The student plays the Animal Technique while you play the Balloon Part.
 - Have the student play the entire section, and gradually, the entire piece.

Even after the student has learned the whole piece, he will still enjoy playing just the Balloon Parts while you (or another student) play the Animal Technique Parts, or just vice versa. This allows him to review the form of the piece while only concentrating on refining the specific portion he is playing.

I generally introduce the Lion Paw and Zechariah Zebra sections the first week. It is better to learn this piece in small sections, gradually adding on to form the whole piece. There is no rush!

Here is a list of what to look for when teaching each Animal Technique part:

- **Lion Paw** m. 1 - 2, 11 - 12, 21 - 22, 31 - 32
 - * Relaxed arm drops
 - * *Forte* sound
- **Zechariah Zebra** m. 3 - 4
 - * Firm fingertips
 - * Relaxed and slightly bouncy arm on eighth notes
 - * Higher bounces on quarter notes
 - * Small hand (not spread out)
 - * Relaxed non-playing fingers
- **Tall Giraffe** m. 7 - 8
 - * *Non legato* with an arm bounce on each note
 - * Firm fingertips
 - * Relaxed thumbs
- **Kangaroo** m. 13 - 14
 - * Bouncy arm
 - * Firm fingertips
 - * Up on "roo" of "Kangaroo"
- **Tree Frog** m. 17 - 18
 - * *Legato* with a bouncy arm
 - * Connected fingers
 - * Firm fingertips
 - * Relaxed thumbs
- **Monkey Swinging in a Tree** m. 23 - 24
 - * Hand up over keys
 - * Thumb on corner
 - * Forearm rotating as a unit to transfer weight from finger to finger
 - * Arm balanced and aligned with playing fingers
- **Soaring Bird** m. 27 - 28
 - * A down-up motion for each three-note phrase
 - * Firm fingertips
 - * Relaxed thumb
 - * Clear finger action without overholding or smearing the fingers

5 The student plays the entire piece. Remind the student of the form of the piece by:

- Pointing to the animal pictures in the score, or
- Pointing to the **Safari Friends Card** for each section, or
- Holding up the corresponding stuffed animal for each section

6 When the student can play the piece confidently, add the accompaniment.

DOES YOUR STUDENT HAVE?

- Correct technique for each section
- Correct articulation
- Form of the piece memorized
- Ability to move from one section to the next in rhythm