

# PIANO SAFARI® FOR THE OLDER STUDENT REPERTOIRE & TECHNIQUE BOOK 1

## TEACHER GUIDE

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### UNIT 5

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# UNIT 5

## Goals and Objectives

In Unit 5, our goals are:

- Learn how to find all the notes on the staff
- Read 2nds, 3rds, and Unisons combined beginning on any note on the staff
- Continue to count syllabically and metrically
- Play pieces in various styles, modes, textures, and tempos
- Learn rotation technique

## OBJECTIVES

- Learn to name any note on the staff using the Skips Alphabet and Music Alphabet
- Relate notes on the staff to their place on the keyboard

## TEACHING TIPS

- The information presented on p. 80 - 83 provides the student with a general overview of how to find any note on the staff. After this initial presentation, much practice and drill will be required to help the student instantly recognize any note on the staff and be able to play that note on the piano automatically. Some of this practice is found in the *Sight Reading & Theory Book 1*, but additional flashcard drills and constant practice through reading many pieces will be required as well.
- Using mnemonics such as "All Cows Eat Grass" has been shown to actually slow down the process of recognizing notes on the staff. This is because of the extra steps are involved with remembering the correct mnemonic and then translating it to the note on the staff and then to the keyboard. Instead of using mnemonics, we teach note names using the Skips Alphabet. (See Samantha Coates' article about mnemonics here: <https://blitzbooks.com/every-good-boy-deserves-forgetting/>.)
- The Skips Alphabet is F A C E G B D. The student can derive the Skips Alphabet by following the steps in *Sight Reading & Theory Book 1* on p. 51 - 52. By using the Skips Alphabet, the student only has to remember one thing, F A C E G B D, rather than a series of four different mnemonics. ("Is 'All Cows Eat Grass' on the line or space notes, treble or bass clef? I can't remember.") The Skips Alphabet unites the treble and bass clef. In the *Repertoire & Technique Book 1* on p. 80, you can see that the Skips Alphabet moves from the bottom of the bass clef staff to the top of the treble clef staff (F A C E G B D F A C E G). The same applies to the lines, which move from bottom to top beginning on G. (G B D F A C E G B D F). On p. 81 - 82 and in the Unit 4 pages in the *Sight Reading & Theory Book 1*, the student can gain practice in using the Skips Alphabet to find any note on the staff.
- This understanding of how the entire staff works together is an invaluable starting point for learning all the notes on the staff. Of course, we do not want students to count up forever. They need to instantly recognize every note. But knowing how the staff works is provides a foundation for understanding how the staff functions in relation to the keyboard. The student can then practice until he has gained automatic recognition of every note.
- On p. 83, explain that for 2nds in a row, students should use the Skips Alphabet to find the first note and then use the Music Alphabet for the rest of the notes in the sequence, rather than using the Skips Alphabet to find every single note.

# DUKE OF YORK p. 84

English Folk Song, arr. Knerr

UNIT 5  
READING

## OBJECTIVES

- Read a piece that uses 2nds, 3rds, and Unisons on the grand staff with many eighth notes
- Identify the first note, which is not a Landmark Note, using the Skips Alphabet. Students then read intervallically from that note.
- Play a piece in parallel motion
- Play mixed articulation, slurs and *non legato*

## TEACHING TIPS

- Have the student identify the first note by finding the G on the staff (bottom line bass clef, 2nd line Treble G), and using the Skips Alphabet to count up from there (G **B**).
- Ask the student to find the 3rd (only one in this piece, m. 8 in both hands).
- Explain anacrusis (upbeat).
- Tap and count syllabically and metrically before playing.
- Be sure the student is playing the slurred notes *legato* and the notes without slurs *non legato*.

# THE CRICKET TAKES A WIFE p. 86

Hungarian Folk Song, arr. Knerr

UNIT 5  
READING

## OBJECTIVES

- Read a piece that uses 2nds, 3rds, and Unisons on the grand staff in dovetailing texture
- Identify the first notes using the Skips Alphabet and read intervallically from there.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Have the student use the Skips Alphabet to identify the first RH note by finding the F in the Treble Clef and counting from there (F **A**).
- Have the student tap and count before playing.

# SUNKEN TREASURE p. 88

English Folk Song, arr. Knerr

UNIT 5  
READING

## OBJECTIVES

- Read a piece that uses 2nds, 3rds, and Unisons on the grand staff in 3/4, feeling the large beat in one
- Identify the first note using the Skips Alphabet and read intervallically from there
- Play broken triads that shift by octave

## TEACHING TIPS

- Have the student identify the first note using the Skips Alphabet. For the LH, count from the bottom line G (G B **D**). For the RH, find the F space and play down a 3rd from F (**D**). Or, the students may recognize that this piece is in parallel motion at the octave, so both hands will begin on the same note.
- Have the student find the 3rd in the first line and practice m. 8.
- Have the student find the 3rds in the last line and practice that line.
- As you play, have the student tap and count the rhythm slowly. The student may then play the whole piece, gradually increasing the tempo until and feeling the rhythm in one large beat per bar.

# ROTATION p. 90

By Knerr



UNIT 5  
TECHNIQUE

## OBJECTIVES

- Learn the rotation technique

## TEACHING TIPS

- Rotation is an important motion in piano technique. We begin with Fingers 2 and 4 because these fingers are balanced the center of the hand, which makes them easier to begin rotation with than other fingers.
- Rotation must be done in the correct way. Be sure the student plays slowly at first and is using the proper motion.
- Proper Rotation:
  - Hand is up over the keys
  - Fingertips are strong
  - The weight of the arm is aligned behind Finger 2. It is then transferred *legato* to Finger 4 as the arm rotates to align behind Finger 4. The weight then is transferred back to Finger 2 with rotation.
  - The arm and hand stay in a straight line. The whole forearm rotates as a unit of forearm, wrist, and hand.
- Common Problems:
  - The wrist is too low, which pulls the fingers down.
  - Collapsed fingertips do not allow for a firm support for rotation.
  - The wrist is twisted (ulnar deviated) rather than in a straight line with the arm and hand.
  - The student is not using arm weight to transfer with *legato*, but is playing *non legato* finger *legato* with no arm weight.
  - The rotation is just with the wrist rather than the forearm
- After the student has mastered the motion, you can increase the tempo. Also, challenge the student to play hands together in parallel and contrary motion. In contrary motion, the hand that is stronger can “teach” the hand that is weaker, as both hands should feel the same. For example, the wrists should be the same height in each hand on the same finger.

# MONKEY BLUES p. 92

By Knerr



UNIT 5  
TECHNIQUE ROTE

## OBJECTIVES

- Play a patterned Rote Piece that uses rotation technique
- Play a piece with 5ths to prepare reading 5ths in Older Student Level 2

## TEACHING TIPS

- Teach the RH first. Be sure the student is rotating properly. Have the student play slowly first to be sure the arm weight is transferring between fingers. The tempo can then be increased. Refer to the score as necessary to help the student see the patterns (“quasi-rote”).
- Teach the LH *non legato*.
- Have the student play one hand while you play the other to hear how the hands align their parts.



# TWELVE BAR BLUES p. 93

By Knerr

UNIT 5  
IMPROVISATION

## OBJECTIVES

- Improvise on the notes of the C blues scale

## TEACHING TIPS

- The student is learning “Monkey Blues,” which is a twelve bar blues Rote Piece.
- This piece gives students the opportunity to improvise on the blues scale in a free way and hear the harmonic similarities to “Monkey Blues.”
- The student may play the notes of the blues scale using one finger or multiple fingers in the RH. If the student has trouble remembering which keys to play, mark the keys with page marking tabs.
- Play the accompaniment as the student improvises.

# MARCH p. 94

By Czerny, accomp. by Knerr



UNIT 5  
CHALLENGE

## OBJECTIVES

- Play a piece from the standard Classical repertoire
- Play a piece that features simple two-voice counterpoint
- Refine dynamics and balance between hands

## TEACHING TIPS

- Have the student play the LH while you play the RH. The LH should be played *non legato*, so there will be a slight separation between each note.
- Have the student play the RH, paying careful attention to dynamics and articulation. Only the notes with slurs should be *legato*. All other notes should be *non legato*.
- Have the student refine the dynamics and phrasing. Also, work toward the LH being quieter than the RH for good balance between hands.

# DETERMINATION Op. 87, No. 15 p. 96

By Wohlfahrt

UNIT 5  
READING

## OBJECTIVES

- Play a Perpetual Motion Etude from the standard repertoire in parallel motion. A Perpetual Motion Etude features one rhythm or pattern that repeats through the whole piece without stopping. In this piece there are constant quarter notes.

## TEACHING TIPS

- Have the student identify the first note in each hand in the Primo using the Skips Alphabet. Note that both hands are in the treble clef while both hands in the teacher's Secondo part are in bass clef, which is common in duets. For the LH, find the F space and count up (F **A**). For the RH, find the G line and count up to the ledger line (G B D F **A**).
- Have the student look through the piece to preview the 2nds and 3rds.
- Practice slowly before increasing the tempo.

# DIVERSION No. 12 p. 98

By Cabeza



UNIT 5  
ROTE

## OBJECTIVES

- Play a flowing Rote Piece that features hand crossing and syncopated pedal.
- Shape phrases beautifully

## TEACHING TIPS

- Although this piece sounds complicated, the pattern is actually quite simple. The hands play 3rds, and the thumbs are always on adjacent keys as the hands move from position to position on all white keys.
- Demonstrate the first line, and have the student practice it until mastered.
- For Line 2, the same pattern repeats, beginning on G.
- Line 3 is the same as Line 1.
- Line 4 repeats the pattern on G.
- Line 5 has a slightly different pattern beginning on A.
- You may have the student refer to the score to identify the first LH note of each line. The student will be surprised to be able to learn such a complicated looking piece so quickly!