

The Keyboard Express - revealing the missing links and forgotten symmetry of white keys ABCDEFG:


BOOK 2


The Keyboard Express ${ }^{\text {TM }}$ © John F Keller, 2005

Continuing a new approach to pianoforte study: using the symmetry of the keyboard


Grand Staff Note Tester: Teacher slides a small coin over the page while student plays the notes.

CONTENTS

## To the Piano Teacher:

After the trial of Book 1 with local piano teachers, and with grateful appreciation for the feedback and helpful suggestions from them, I am now pleased to present the second book of the method.
Beginning with a review of the concepts from Book 1, Book 2 progresses smoothly to cover all note pitches in both staves, intervals, flats and sharps as accidentals, technique, straight and swing time, and an introduction to chord formation. These topics are explored in an assortment of attractive solos and duets. As well as original tunes, there are arrangements of useful songs such as Advance Australia Fair, and familiar favourites including Chopsticks. The pieces use a variety of tonalities, hand positions and hand coordinations, which encourages the student to read notes relatively and learn their names, but to avoid associating them with particular fingers.

Seeing the keyboard in symmetrical groups of keys A to G, rather than in octaves of C to C, is what drives The Keyboard Express. The historical justification for this view and its relation to the bass stave are explained in the song 'Music History'. The method's title comes from the fact that each unit, ABCDEFG, is likened to a carriage of the keyboard 'train', with the middle black key in the group of three becoming the link that joins one carriage to the next. This approach makes it possible to clearly specify the register of any note, and each middle carriage note, m.A to m.G, has a character to help teach its position on the staves.
Our present system of music notation evolved over the past millennium. Staves were initially designed for a limited vocal range and only for single natural notes. A wider pitch range for instrumental music saw the addition of more leger lines, and as the full chromatic scale became established, so did five accidentals and fifteen key signatures. This book covers the three octave pitch range of the grand staff and gives some guidance for reading legerlines, but purposely limits accidentals and key signatures to one sharp and flat.
Wishing both teacher and student an interesting musical journey,

## John F Keller

(MMus, FTCL, LMusA, BSc, DipEd) - July, 2018

## The Piano Keyboard



## Your Two Hands

What is another name for your High Hand? What is another name for your Low Hand? Write in the finger numbers.


## The Stave

Music is written as notes on a stave (staff) of 5 lines, divided by barlines into bars of equal time-length. Piano music is usually written on two staves joined together by the barlines. One stave is for each hand.

The high (right) hand mostly plays in the treble clef;

- and the low (left) hand mostly plays in the bass clef.


Timing... Different kinds of notes represent different time-lengths of sound, measured against a steady beat. Rests show silence.


## Clap \& Snap:



To measure out bars of equal time-lengths, clap at the start of each bar and put your hands out to the sides in between. Snap in the middle of each bar if you can. Doing this clap \& snap while you chant the words of a song, gives a good strong feeling for the rhythm of the notes.

White Key Letter-names:

- The white keys are named by the first seven letters of the alphabet, ABCDEFG.
- The seven white keys ABCDEFG make a symmetrical pattern, with $\mathbf{D}$ in the middle.
- The 7 white keys fall between two 'special' black keys, each the centre of three blacks.
- These ‘special' black keys link every
group of white keys ABCDEFG to the next.


Riding on the Keyboard Train
Each set of white keys ABCDEFG is like one carriage of the train.
Play this piece in the middle carriage of your keyboard 'train'. Start on the two links (L).
(Count-in: One and two and three and four and:)



Teacher's Accompaniment:


Prepare to play by lightly touching the starting keys with the correct fingers.



- How many carriages are there on the whole of your piano keyboard?

Playing by heart means from memory.


Only the middle carriage contains these characters to help you learn their note positions.

- Write in the letter-names (CAPITALS) for the white keys of the next two carriages.



## Middle Carriage Characters:

Each white key on the keyboard has a note on the grand stave. Middle carriage notes go in between bass and treble, except for the top middle notes, which have 'grown up' a bit, into the treble stave.

- Learn all the middle carriage note positions, with the help of the middle carriage characters.


## The Basement ( 2

Teacher's Accompaniment:

(One, two, Creak-ing foot-steps on the stair, Down in the base-ment of the house;


## First Space Man's Trick





Teacher's Accompaniment:



- The interval of a second, (also known as a 'step')
is the distance from any note to the next note.
(Line to space, or space to line.)



Play line to next line:


- Skip one key, and
- skip one finger.
- Skip one key, and

Play space to next space:


- skip one finger.


## - ) Notes Change Place



Teacher's
Accompaniment:



(7) Copying Machine

First practise each hand separately (sep). Later, play with both hands together (tog).
The low hand notes are just a copy of the high hand notes, but one octave lower.

If a note is on a line, the next octave of that letter-name will be in a


Teachers Accompaniment:


## The Interval of A 3rd:

Teacher's Accompaniment:


## Matching Types of Notes

- the distance from any note to the next matching type of note.
(Line to line, or space to space).
- For thirds played together, the matching notes stack neatly one on top of the other.
A $3 r d$ can be also called
a 'match', or a 'skip'.
No a third apart, might be witten so as to be played upwards, downwards, or together.


"One - and, two -and, three, four; ..."


$$
C=\frac{4}{4} 甲 2,3
$$




## 10) Reflections

Middle C position: - thumbs share m.C.


Middle C Cat is the 1st leger line note underneath the treble as well as being the 1st leger line note above the bass.


Teacher's Accompaniment


- Contrary Motion:
The hands play together in opposite directions (outwards and inwards).
- Similar Motion:
The hands play together in the same direction (upwards and downwards).
"Barcarolle" (opposite page) - Teacher's Accompaniment:



This space is:
bass

## (One, two, three, four :)

## (12) Days of Old



## Magic Trick


(14) March of Edgeline and Firstspace

The low hand has the melody.


Teacher's Accompaniment



Harmonic Intervals: Play some 2nds and 3rds, and listen to them carefully. Describe the sound of each.


## March of the Seconds and Thirds



## Scales in Contrary Motion:

Practise with hands separately at first.
A scale is a row of notes stepping upwards or downwards one at a time.



Four Eighth Notes (quavers)
 joined with a beam:
Eighth notes grouped this way show the two halves (Clap \& Snap) of a common-time bar


- They are played exactly the same as two pairs of eighths.

"Finger Teams" (opposite page) - Teacher's Accompaniment:


Finger Teams
Fingers on five next-door white keys.






Teacher's Accompaniment:


## Little Jack 17



## Triads:

- chords built upwards by three matching notes; a 1st, a 3rd and a 5th. The triad is named by the letter-name of its $\mathbf{1 s t}$ (the lowest note).


1st

- Slowly play these triads in the bass stave. Listen carefully to each. Circle your three favourites!

- Next play these triads written in the treble stave and starting on each middle carriage key. Again, circle your three favourite-sounding triads.


MeaSuring IntervalS - the quick way: Count up matching notes from the 1st by the odd numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.).

The lower note of an interval is called the 1 st (number 1 ), which is an odd number.

- Matching notes above the 1st, will also be odd numbers: - the 3rd, 5th, 7th, etc.

- Notes above the 1st (1) which don't match with it, must be the even intervals: - the 2nd, 4th, 6th, etc.


## Swanny River Bass-line 18




Student's Accompaniment: Give a count-in, then read and play one section at each practice. Play through the whole piece with your teacher at the next lesson.



## Boogie Woogie Bullfrog

(One and two and three and four and:)


Da Capo, ad lib
(Back to the start, if you wish.)
Teacher's Accompaniment:


## Opposite Keys Duet

Duet: - a piece of music for two players.
In a piano duet, one person usually plays the bass part while the other plays the treble.

- Both hands



Tip your low hand from side to side.


OppOSIte Keys Duet
$\begin{aligned} & \text { Both hands play in the next carriage higher than } \\ & \text { the middle carriage. }\end{aligned}$


## Second Space in Treble Clef



Teacher's
Accompaniment:

(One and, two and, three and, four:)

- A dot after a note adds on an extra half of that note's time-value.
- The dot is like a tie to the extra note-value.




## The Flat

 $\sim$The flat sign: b

- makes the note sound a tiny bit lower.
- Play the very next key lower (on the left) instead.

- Use the same finger for $B$-flat as for $B$.


## Why Flat Signs Look Like That

(Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt)


Teacher's Accompaniment:



## The Origin of the Flat Sign

The music scale with letter-names A to G, was first defined for singing, about 1000 years ago.

It started with the lowest note that the average man could sing, a note they called gamma, the Greek letter G:


After gamma, the notes were called capital A to $\mathbf{G}$ then small letters a to $\mathbf{g}$ then double aa to $\mathbf{g g}$.

But there were two types of notes called b! One, the same as our modern (white key) B, was written as a 'square' $b$.

But the other, slightly lower, was written as a 'round' $b$. This was in effect the first 'black key', and the round $\mathbf{b}$ became the flat sign.


## Happy Birthday

The low hand uses the odd and even finger teams. The odd team has spaces and the evens, lines.


- Name all the intervals in the candles, then neatly mark each of them somewhere on these white keys:

a3rd


## Haydn's Surprise Symphony - way be palyed as asuet wint Two ream Tussel (opposite page).



## Two Team Tussle



- Write in the letter-names for this big team of space notes.
- What word can you see?



## (29) Spaces in the Treble Clef



Find the EF pairs at the bottom and top of treble.



## (30) Alberti Bass (with Whole Notes . . . Half Notes . . . and Quarter Notes . . . )



The Alberti Bass pattern is named after Domenico Alberti who made it a popular left hand accompaniment about 250 years ago.
It has been used ever since, in a great number of piano compositions.

Play the Alberti over and over with a slow steady beat, until it becomes automatic.

Use the odd fingers, $1,3 \& 5$, and tip your hand slightly from side to side in a 'rotary' action. Keep fingers $3 \& 5$ well rounded.

Next add the right hand Whole Note, Half Notes and Quarter Notes, repeating each bar many times.

Be careful to join up all the Alberti notes smoothly (shown by the slurs). But lift or 'break' the right hand between its repeated notes (shown by the up arrows).

## A Step:

Tone
Or

## Semitone?

At the front of the white keys, all steps (2nds) look the same size.
But at the back of the keys, you'll see there are two sizes of steps.

- On each white key, at the back, write its letter-name.

Most letters are a large step apart. This large step is called one tone.
The smaller steps are semitones

- Which letters are they between?


The semitones are from
to ค $\xrightarrow{*}$

## Yum Cha: A Fantasy Duet with Chopsticks (Bass Part)

Yum Cha: a form of Chinese meal in which diners choose various serves from a trolley.

## 31

Yum - cha - cha, yum-cha - cha, yum-cha-cha, yum-cha-cha;


## Yum Cha: A Fantasy Duet with Chopsticks (Treble Part)



## Yum Cha (ctd) (Bass Part)



Do not drop stix on the ground (yum cha rule). Take care pas-sing dish-es a - round (yum cha rule).


## Yum Cha (ctd) (Treble Part)



## 'Roll':

 While playing the keys, slowly raise your wrists.End with hands just off the keys, hanging loose.


## Yum Cha (ctd) (Bass)

Yum - cha - cha, yum-cha - cha, yum-cha-cha, yum-cha-cha; Yum - cha - cha, yum-cha - cha,


One two three four', and then Yum - cha - cha, yum-cha - cha, YUM; The end, The end; High, Low.


## Yum Cha (ctd) (Treble)



Al-ways say please and use han-ky to sneeze and say par-don if make a bad sound (yum cha rule).


## Keyboard Symmetry

Starting next to the LINK, write the letter-name of the white key on one side, then its opposite on the other side of the link. Work from the centre out to the edge.

- Then turn the book upside-down...




## Киәшшкя pıeоqКәу



## Doh Ray Me Doh (Frere Jaques)

Learn this piece one bar at a time (five repetitions each). Then join the bars together.

(32)


This piece can be played by two people as a round, either on two keyboards, or at different places on a single keyboard.
One player starts and when they are up to bar two, the second player comes in at bar one. The whole piece can then be played a number of times continuously (going round and round).

Two people can also just sing the song as a round.
(33)

## Three Chords Check



C major,
F major,
G major.

(34) Music History


## - Write in all the

 letters upwards, for this stack of matching notes.


* Adapted from Dialogus de Musica (Dialogue about Music), a medieval treatise formerly attributed to Odo of Cluny.
This is the earliest recorded use of the letter-names A to G for the notes of the scale, and is thought to be written in 935 AD , about a century before Guido of Arezzo introduced the stave.


## A brief quote:

"When any chant is marked with these same letters to show its notes, the boys learn it better and more easily from the string than if they heard someone sing it, and after a few months training, they are able to discard the string and sing from the letters alone music they have never heard.'


The sharp sign:

- makes the note sound a tiny bit higher.


## 35 Advance Australia Fair



- Use the same finger for F-sharp as for F.
"F-sharp"



1. Trace and copy the two clefs. 2. Trace the notes and name them. 3. Place a sharp or flat carefully in front of each note.



## (36) Beethoven's Ode To Joy



Draw some intervals: 3 rds, 4 ths, 5 ths.


## (37) I Think I Can



## Note-Values in Common Time

Each bar of Common Time, $\because$ is worth:


(38) Straight ...

"One and, two and, three and, four; ..."


## . . . and Swing



Teacher's Accompaniment:
(Swing Eighths)


## Two Chord Accompaniment 39



## He's Got the Whole World in His Hands 40 (swing feel)



- Draw some chords: triads and 7th chords. (Draw the notes upwards.)


## Show Me the Way to Go Home



Teacher's
Accompaniment:



## 42 The Hokey Pokey - with a swing feel.




## 44 Oh When the Saints



## The Key Signature of 1 Flat:

When one flat sign is shown at the start of each stave, it means to play that letter-name flat every time its note is written.
To make it easy, the one flat is always $\boldsymbol{B}$ flat, never any other letter.
So look out for all the 'Bee's in this piece and play them flat.


45 London Bridge - with two different Alberti patterns


## The Natural

## A natural sign: 4

- brings a note back to its original pitch.


## (46) Three Pencils (straight tuverss)




## 48 Monday Morning Blues



## The Key Signature of 1 Sharp:

When one sharp sign is shown at the start of each stave, it means to play that letter-name sharp every time its note is written.
To make it easy, the one sharp is always $\boldsymbol{F}$ sharp, not any other letter So look out for all the 'F's in this piece and play them sharp.


## 49 The Purple People Eater <br> (Swing feel)



Above the treble stave, use FACE, starting with Fifth-line.
 backwards: ECAF. Start with Edge-line


## (50) Freight Train




## Suggested Duo Performance

Two players, one on piano, the other on organ, play this piece as a round.

Alternate the A and B sections a few times. End with C and at the Fine.

A younger student may also join in, playing the bassline (Book 1) on the piano, an octave lower throughout.

Leger Lines for the Bass Clef

- Above the bass stave, imagine the middle carriage characters




## The Keyboard Express 2 <br> CD Track Numbers

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## The KEYBOARD EXPRESS, Book 2 by John F Keller

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With its concise review of Book 1, this second book of the piano method invites young students to continue smoothly on their musical journey. It also offers a starting point for older beginners.


The method consistently uses logical explanations that will be readily understood. Thus The Keyboard Express, Book 2 . . .

. .. promotes a view of the keys as symmetrical units $\mathbf{A}$ to $\mathbf{G}$, rather than as octaves $\mathbf{C}$ to $\mathbf{C}$, leading to greater insights into the geography of the keyboard, flats and sharps, and the bass stave.

. . uses various tonalities, hand positions and coordinations, and encourages intervalic note-reading. The middle characters and keyboard symmetry help teach note pitches on the staves.

. . . treats the two staves differently: the treble by means of the traditional 'FACE', and the bass by its symmetry. This allows easy learning of all note pitches up to three leger-lines for each stave.

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. . . contains attractive solos and duets; original tunes as well as familiar favourites, including those fun piano 'hand-me-downs'.
. . . covers topics such as intervals, triads and seventh chords, accidentals, technique, straight and swing time; and explains the origin of some elements of Western musical notation.

## About the author:

In addition to his music diplomas, John Keller has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Physics and a Diploma of Education from Sydney University. After winning the inaugural Music Students Overseas Study scholarship, he attended Indiana University, USA, and was awarded a Master of Music with High Distinction in Piano Performance.


John's diverse interests in music and music performance cover classical, jazz and popular styles. An experienced professional performer of popular music, he has played in bands and piano bars and won the grand finals of many talent quests. As a classical pianist, John has given recitals for music clubs and radio, and performed numerous piano concertos with the Sutherland Shire Symphony Orchestra. He is also associated with this orchestra as their lead violist and regular guest conductor.
For eight years John directed, presented and conducted Walk Through the Orchestra, a series of orchestral concerts for children. The programs were popular with children and adults alike, and included orchestrations of some of his pieces to demonstrate his teaching methods.
The piano has always fascinated John. When he began lessons at the age of twelve, he had already experienced seven years of musical discovery, teaching himself to play by ear. In his early years as a piano teacher, the challenges presented by young students and less than adequate teaching materials led John to devise his own beginner method. Before long The Keyboard Express, with its unique introduction to the white keys in the symmetrical units A to G, was on its way. Since then, John's innovative teaching strategies have encouraged his students to develop a range of skills applicable to many areas of musical endeavour, and produced many talented amateur and professional musicians.

