

Piano Partners – Teacher’s Guide 2

for Children’s Book 2 (Music Makers: Piano 2)

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Piano Partners (an introductory method for young beginners) includes the following:

Teacher's Guide 1 (Weeks 1-15)

Children's Book 1, with *Listening Recording 1* & *Practice Recording 1* (Weeks 1-15)

Teacher's Guide 2 (Weeks 16-30)

Children's Book 2, with *Listening Recording 2* & *Practice Recording 2* (Weeks 16-30)

Units 3-6 for Teachers and Children will follow.

The Musikgarten Music and Movement Series

| | |
|---|------------------------|
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| Piano Partners | from age 5 ½ |

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Features of the Publication

Piano Partners, an introductory method for 2 young beginners from age 5 ½, is based on an aural approach to music literacy that provides a natural pathway to reading. This method features a variety of activities which help lay the foundation for success at the piano and independent musicianship.

Teacher's Guide 2, covering children's book **Music Makers: Piano 2**, presents a clear step-by-step approach to learning to play the piano, building on the foundation of **Music Makers: Piano 1**. The goal is to give the children a comprehensive music foundation and lead them to true music literacy. The children's musical development is enhanced through multifaceted activities that include:

- a collection of songs with associated activities to establish a piano repertoire
- movement and drumming activities to establish the body as a rhythmic instrument
- activities to establish repertoire, technique, musicianship, and a love for playing the piano.

Lesson Suggestions

Lessons present an exciting approach which leads to playing songs with joy and ease. Lessons are fun for the partners, with a balance of playing the piano, writing and reading activities, singing, moving and drumming. This approach to music literacy is carefully planned and sequenced to meet the developmental needs of young beginners. *Teacher's Guide, Book 2* contains 15 lessons (45 minutes), material intended for 4-5 months of study. Pacing will depend on the age and experience of the children.

Companion Materials

- **Music Makers: Piano 2**, the second children's book: features songs to play and writing, reading, composing activities.
- **Notation Games, Set 2**: multiple games to involve the children actively again and again
- **Listening Recording 2**: includes songs, drumming and dancing activities, piano repertoire, and orchestral selections.
- **Practice Recording 2**: activities to reinforce the practice process for all songs and notation games.

Let's Begin

This section continues, as in Book 1, to encompass the opening part of each partner lesson. The two to three songs can be accompanied by the teacher on the piano or sung *a capella* with the partners seated on the floor or on the piano bench. Continue to include the echo patterns suggested in each lesson and ask the students to sing and identify the resting tone. Remember, more time and more repetitions might be needed if it is a new song.

Some of the songs lend themselves well to “off the bench” movement activities. *Rain Dance: Iona* and *John Kanaka* are two songs the two children will enjoy dancing to during this first section. Other new traveling movement songs include *Follow Me* and *All the Little Ducklings*. To make the other songs memorable for the children, consider drumming to the *Drum Song*, passing a bean bag or an orange or lemon to the beat on *Oranges and Lemons*, and creating stationary movements for *Willum* and his seven sons. Imagine you are in a canoe and paddling (on the beat!) to *The Canoe Song* and possibly adding the ostinato.

Piano Time

Technique

As the students continue with into Book 2, good technique remains an important part of piano study. Hopefully, throughout the first semester of lessons, you were diligent in watching for and correcting any bad habits in posture, arm and hand position. Don't make this a drill or a negative experience; just continue to remind the partners of this important aspect of being a pianist.

You might be surprised how little you need to reinforce “good technique” as opposed to what is needed in private piano lessons. From Book 1: “The teaching of technique, proper hand position, and posture can, and should be, an integral part of the piano lesson. *Piano Partners* does not stress isolated technique exercises; the concepts are interwoven throughout the entire program. Students are not going through the motions of working on isolated technique activities and drills but are being exposed to a rich, musical environment. If a goal for a musician is “to play musically and with a beautiful sound,” the musician needs to have that sound in his/her mind before performing it on the instrument. This is why we sing and drum and dance and listen to stellar musical selections in our piano class—to develop the musician inside each child. Children begin to listen critically and know what a musical sound is and have the desire to recreate that sound.”

Warm-ups

When playing a piece on the piano, each partner needs to first play a warm-up, establishing hand position and tonality. Encourage playing the warm-up with hands together. Several pieces share the melody between hands; therefore, having both hands in the proper position before playing is essential. In addition, students are encouraged to add chords to the songs, which again require both hands to be ready and positioned on the proper notes for the key. Students continue to sing solfeggio while playing the warm-ups.

Book 2 presents additional warm-ups to accommodate the new positions needed for new songs. These special warm-ups are extensions of the initial 5-finger (*do re mi fa sol* and *la ti do re mi*) warm-ups in both hands. For the *Drum Song*, the right hand (pointer) finger 2 will cross over the thumb to allow the child to play a 6th – one step lower than *la*. Traditional scale fingerings for both hands are introduced: right hand – *do* (1) *re* (2) *mi* (3), then with the thumb turning under for *fa*, after pivoting on the 3rd finger (*mi*) and continuing up the scale with the remaining fingers. Left Hand – *do* (5) *re* (4) *mi* (3) *fa* (2) *sol* (thumb), then with finger 3 crossing over for *la*, after pivoting on the thumb. This also allows the students to play pieces extending to a 6th above the tonic. *C*, *D*, and *G* major scales then are introduced, hands separately.

Rote Songs and the Sing/Play Process

With *Piano Partners'* sound-before-sight philosophy, the students are continuing to learn to play much of their repertoire by ear. In Book 2 there are 9 new songs to learn with the Sing/Play Process: 5 in major and 4 in minor. The keys introduced in Book 1 were *D* Major, *C* Major, *G* Major, *E* Major, *d* minor, and *e* minor. New keys in Book 2 for the rote songs are *F* major, *f* minor, and *c* minor. Once a new key is introduced, transposing the other known songs into that key is expected. With the use of solfeggio, singing the songs as you play, and the ear guiding the student's playing, transposing to a variety of keys is done with ease.

The Sing/Play Process continues to be the bridge between songs the children sing and those the children will play on the piano. Hopefully, you have established the process during the first 15 lessons and the students are not only familiar with it but begin to anticipate the presentation of the patterns. Below is a review.

Preparation AWAY from the piano keys

- Play with the appropriate fingers on the floor or a drum or on the key cover.
 - 1) teacher sings the first pattern
 - 2) children echo by singing
 - 3) teacher sings and plays the first pattern
 - 4) children echo by singing and playing
- Repeat for each of the Sing/Play patterns (found on the page with the song).

At the Piano

- Establish the hand position by playing the appropriate warm-up.
- Execute steps 1-4 for one or two of the Sing/Play Patterns, now playing the piano.
- Add a 5th step to the process, turning the pattern into a phrase, at the point it is musically appropriate. (This is often after the first two patterns. See detailed instructions in the lessons.)
- Step 5) Teacher sings the phrase with the words (covering one or two patterns) and invites the children to turn the pattern(s) they just played into the phrase. Remind them to sing and play.
- Continue with the remaining patterns in the same manner, inserting this 5th step at appropriate points. Invite the partners to play the entire song, each child working at his/her own tempo. Encourage them to sing while they play (text or solfeggio).

Traditional Notation (See ‘Notation – Reading’)

Harmony and Chords

Chords were introduced in Book 1, but you may find some students who are not fully ready for this musical task. Perhaps they can play the chords alone but have some difficulty playing the melody in one hand and playing chords and changing harmonies in the other hand. Allowing partners to play duets—each partner playing a hand and then switching parts—is a good strategy. Encourage them to sing the melody while playing the chords.

The I and V⁷ chords were introduced in the first book in several keys, and the students were asked to practice chords in both the right and left hands. Some may have only been able to play the open fifth (*Do/Sol* or *La/Mi*) for the tonic chord (I/i) and a 2-finger dominant-seventh (V⁷) chord in major and minor (*Sol/Fa* or *Re/Mi*). During this semester work toward each partner playing the 3-note chords. In the subsequent books they will need this facility for different chordal bass patterns.

Children will now be adding the IV chord to several songs and pieces in reading repertoire. Major rote songs using the IV chord include *All the Little Ducklings* and *Follow Me*; *Willum* adds the minor iv chord. Students heard the minor iv chord in *Bim Bam* on the recording from semester I. After introducing it here, encourage them to play *Bim Bam* again, now adding the iv chord.

The Drum Song in *f* minor and *The Canoe Song* in *c* minor both have the melody in the right hand; the students can add the open fifth in the left hand, creating an easy chordal accompaniment. They will enjoy the “cross-over” in *The Canoe Song*—the left hand pointer finger crosses over the right hand and plays the high C for one note. The left hand crosses immediately back to playing a steady macro beat on the C/G open 5th bordun. For an ensemble, one partner can play the melody with the open fifth while the other plays an ostinato in one or both hands on ‘dip, dip, and swing.’

Transposing

By using ‘movable *Do*’ with a *La*-based minor and the aural approach, children are able to transpose and play the melodies and harmonies in various keys. Take time in this second semester to ask the students to review some of the pieces from Book 1. Some of the songs they may have only been able to play in the key in which the song was introduced, but they now may be able to transpose more fluidly and with greater confidence. This greatly increases the amount of repertoire they can play.

With the introduction of *F* major, ask each partner to choose a few of their favorite songs from Book 1 to transpose to *F*. If they are hesitant, remind them about the *Do-Mi-Sol* pieces: *Mouse*, *Mousie* and *Listen for Bells*. Do the same with one or two old minor pieces and transpose to *f* minor and *c* minor.

Improvisation

As stated in Teacher Guide 1:

Improvisation in music is what conversation is in language. When children are learning to talk, their vocabulary increases, they gradually learn to build sentences, and eventually they can tell a coherent story. In conversation with others, they learn to listen, and respond appropriately. The ability to improvise on the piano can develop in a similar way, if we start early and build it step by step.

During the first 15 weeks, the partners improvised by first learning a vocabulary of simple rhythm patterns. They echoed these duple and triple rhythm patterns, first on a single syllable *ba* and then with the Gordon rhythm language. They heard them in their singing and playing repertoire and also drummed the patterns. Next they were asked to ‘play’ with the patterns: “I will chant a (two-beat) pattern, you give me a different one back.” This was followed by echoing and improvising 4-beat patterns.

Improvisation continues as an important strand in Book 2, venturing into improvising with pitches. We begin in Lesson 16 by modeling “thinking” of a pattern made up of *Do*, *Mi*, and *Sol*. We model for the partners how, using only those 3 pitches, we can come up with many different patterns. Next we challenge the partners to think up their own patterns. Ideally, this should be done as a vocal activity away from the piano. By doing so, the resulting answer is one that reflects musical thought as opposed to one that is generated by randomly playing the notes.

We continue singing isolated tonic patterns and asking the children to come up with a different pattern. In Lesson 19 we expand to singing 2 tonic patterns, asking the children to respond with 2 different tonic patterns, thereby setting up a question and answer format with the answer ending on *Do*.

| LESSON 16 | FOCUS |
|-------------|---|
| Piano Time | Introduce <i>F</i> Major. Learn to play <i>John Kanaka</i> in <i>F</i> Major. |
| Improvising | Introduce improvisation with the major melody patterns. |
| Notation | Introduce the half note. Sight-read Mystery Song 1 in <i>F</i> Major on the grand staff (<i>See the Pony</i>). |

| | |
|------------|--|
| MATERIALS | Duple Cards (pink), Scarves |
| DISTRIBUTE | Duple Cards with Half Notes (pink), <i>John Kanaka</i> Song Card, <i>F</i> Key card, Green Books: <i>Piano 2</i> (if not distributed in Week 15) |

Let's Begin

- **All the Little Ducklings**

- Sing the new song. Identify the resting tone as *Do*.
- **Major melody patterns.** Sing and echo the patterns.
Improvisation - Melodic
- Teacher 'thinks', then sings one of the major melody patterns using *Sol*, *Mi*, and *Do*.
- The children echo. Remark that the children just sang the same major pattern.
- Could one of the partners sing a different pattern using *Sol*, *Mi*, and *Do*?
- If the child sings it tunefully and with the proper solfeggio, all echo the pattern. If it is not correct, teacher sings the child's solfeggio with the proper pitches. All echo.
Note: if the children are hesitant to try, show them the 2 patterns on the piano. Ask one to play a different pattern using these 3 notes. Challenge the child to sing the pattern using solfeggio. Teacher corrects if necessary and all repeat the pattern.

- **Drum Song.** Sing the song. Identify the resting tone as *la*.
Minor melody patterns. Sing and echo the patterns.

- **Bim Bam.** Sing the song. Ask the children to sing the resting tone.

Piano Time

- **John Kanaka**

- Introduce *F* Major position.
- Play the Major *Do-Mi-Sol* and the Major Five-Finger Warm-up (*Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol*) in *F* Major.
- Learn to play the song using the Sing/Play Process.
Consider whether the partners need to do the keyboard patterns away from the piano keys. Use step 5 (turning the patterns into a phrase and later the song) after the first 2 patterns, and again after the next 2.

- **Concerto No. 2, Allegro (L 2, No. 4)**

- Tell the children a few facts about the composer, Frederick Chopin.
- Listen to the recording.
- After listening to the recording, talk about movements which would express the music. Improvise a dance with scarves, emphasizing the feeling of triple meter. If space is limited, teach the children the 3-beat conducting pattern, and invite the children to conduct to the recording.

Notation

• Duple Cards II (pink)

- Show the children Cards 1 and 2. Tell them that you think they will be able to figure out which card shows the pattern that you chant. Chant one of the two patterns. Ask the partners to identify the correct card and chant the pattern again while pointing to the notes. Invite each partner to chant the pattern and point to it.
- Proceed accordingly with the presentation of all four patterns, asking the partners each time to identify 1 of 2 cards.
- Play games with the cards. Chant one of the patterns. Ask the children to echo the pattern and then to identify the proper card. Continue playing games in which the children are asked to identify one of the cards.

Piano Time

• Mouse, Mousie and Listen for Bells

- Ask each partner to choose the key in which s/he wishes to play each song. Accompany the songs with chords.

• Mystery Song 1: *See the Pony* (p. 6)



Review familiar patterns, which are now in the new key of *F*.

Do-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol Sol-Mi-Do Mi-Re-Do

Possibly write the patterns in *F*-Major, so that the children more easily recognize them.

• Partners Play

- Play *See the Pony*.
- Choose another song to share.

Parent Time

• John Kanaka

- Sing, adding movements as in Lesson 12 (Teacher Guide 1, p. 66).
- Show the parents *F* Major position.
- Play the melody, using 2 hands.

• Duple Cards II (pink set)

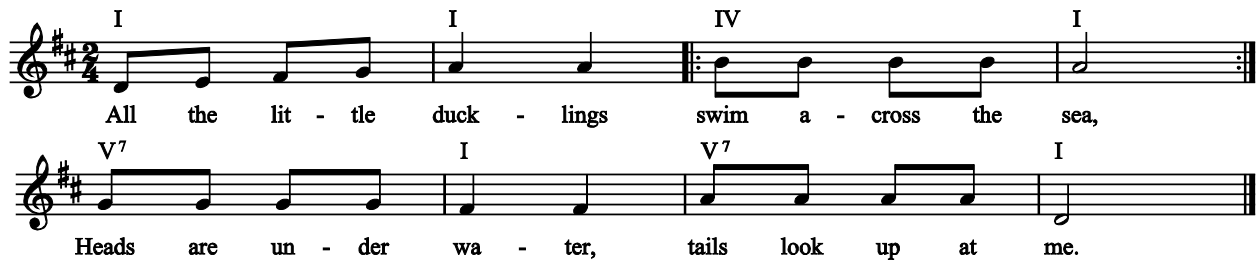
- Show the parents the new cards. Play an identification game with the cards, building the song *Who's That?*
Note: You will need two sets of cards to build the "notate" one verse of the song.

- Review and mark AT HOME assignments.

| AT HOME | Assignments |
|------------|--|
| Piano | <i>John Kanaka</i> (P2, No. 1), add chords. Play Mystery Song 1: <i>See the Pony</i> in F Major. (p. 6) |
| Listen | Duple Notation Game (P2, No.2), duple cards (pink) |
| Write/Read | p. 7, half note duple patterns |

Lesson Activities and Information

All the Little Ducklings



I I IV I

All the lit - tle duck - lings swim a - cross the sea,

V⁷ I V⁷ I

Heads are un - der wa - ter, tails look up at me.

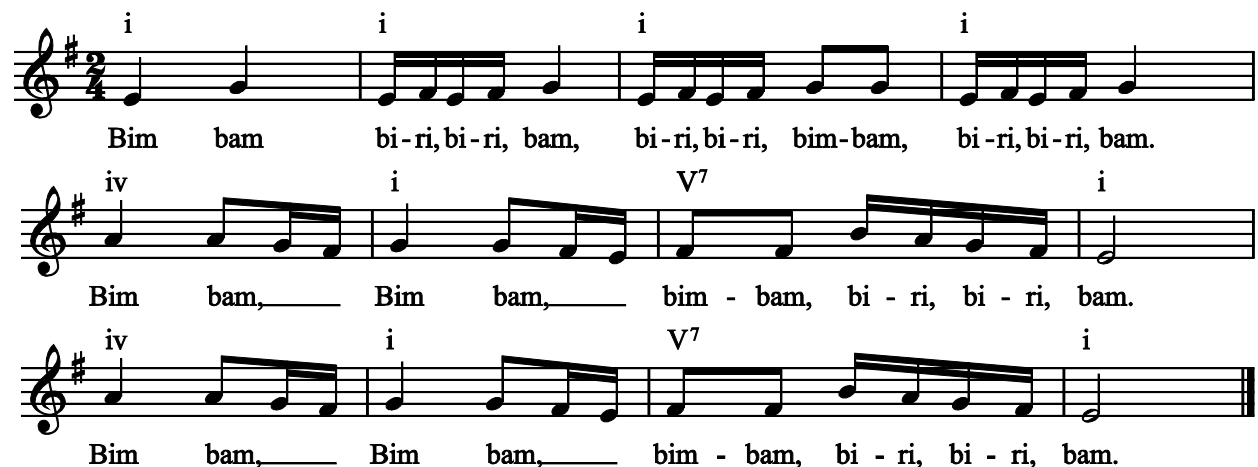
Drum Song



Hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - jah! Hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - jah!

Hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - jah! Hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - ja - jah, hi - ja - jah!

Bim Bam



i i i i

Bim bam bi-ri, bi-ri, bam, bi-ri, bi-ri, bim-bam, bi-ri, bi-ri, bam.

iv i V⁷ i

Bim bam, Bim bam, bim - bam, bi - ri, bi - ri, bam.

iv i V⁷ i

Bim bam, Bim bam, bim - bam, bi - ri, bi - ri, bam.

John Kanaka

I heard, I heard the old man say, "John Ka- nak - a - nak - a Too-lay - aye." To-day, to-day is a hol-i - day,

aye. Too-lay - aye, Too-lay - aye. John Ka- nak - a - nak - a Too-lay - aye.

Sing/Play Patterns

Mi sol mi sol. Mi do re mi. Do re mi mi. Re re do.

Duple Cards (pink)

1

2

3

4

Mystery Song 1: *See the Pony*, p. 6

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piece titled 'See the Pony'. Each system consists of a treble and a bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 8/8. The first system shows a melody in the treble staff starting on a middle C (labeled 'F do') and moving up stepwise, with a bass line providing harmonic support. The second system continues the melody, which ends with a whole note on a G (labeled 'F do'). The bass line continues with chords and rests.

Frederic Chopin (1810 - 1849)

Frederic Chopin was born in Poland. Studying piano early in life, he became a virtuoso and decided to move to the Central European music capital, Vienna. In that city he was not successful, and moved to Paris. There he achieved fame and was celebrated. Chopin always had frail health, and was often ill. He died at the young age of 39.

Almost all of Chopin's compositions are for piano. Chopin helped make the piano a successful solo instrument, developing a unique vocabulary for piano in his polonaises, nocturnes, ballades and scherzos. **Concerto Op. 21, No. 2**, for orchestra and solo piano, is one of two concertos he composed. The solo piano part is written in a highly virtuosic style, designed to show the equality, if not the superiority, of the soloist and the entire orchestra.