



## **Music Makers: at the Keyboard, Year 3, Book 6 – Week 87 through 90**

Dear Teachers,

It has finally happened. You and your students have come to the end of the Music Makers curriculum. I always feel sad and hope at this point. Sad that I will no longer get to share such wonderful musical experiences with this group of children. Hope that all the work and play will move them gracefully to the next part of their musical journeys. Will they join an orchestra? Band? Chorus? Will they continue with private piano lessons? Take part in a Musicales? Learn another instrument? So many of my students take a leadership role in the musical organizations that they join. They are selected as the soloists because they sing so beautifully. They can easily find the rhythm of the piece they are about to play. I am awed at the ease in which they can read the score. Now is the time to let our birds fly, our plants to blossom! And, there is always that year two class getting ready to start year three next Fall.

So let's finish this curriculum!

### **Week 87**

2-Octave Scales are introduced week. Remember, it is just an introduction. Many of your blossoming pianists will be asked to repeat this feat over and over until they graduate from college. But for now you can make this a lot of fun. Once they can do two octaves, what is keeping them from doing 5 octaves? How fast can they go? Can you show them? I like to play the scales with my piano lid open so they can watch the hammers and the dampers fly.

Singing Circle – in the next three weeks I put every card in the basket, and we try to cover every song. I also have someone play the piece, or try to play the piece on the piano. It brings great memories into the room.

*Country Dance* – Depending upon the skill level of you class, you approach this piece in many ways. For a younger group or less skilled group you may consider keeping each hand separate and assigning parts out. You can then play the other part with them at the musicale. For a slightly more skilled group you could consider a four- part ensemble with each student playing one hand. For the next level you could play one part while a student plays the other part. For the most skilled, you could assign half of the class Part One and the other half Part Two and create partners. Because it involves two pianos you could assign times when they can come and rehearse together at your studio.

*Trading Places* works well if you have memorized your moves before you begin the dance. Another option is to write out the moves on a large sheet that you can refer to while dancing. You can always rehearse the moves with the children before starting the dance, yet I enjoy watching them responding to my moves to observe how much they can retain.



### **Week 88**

The *Twelve Bar Blues* step 6 is an immersion exercise. Jazz players learn their craft by listening to others improvise, and it will be the same for your students. We listen together, and I suggest adding flatted thirds and swinging the beat. Listening to *The Pianists* has the same goal. We want to immerse our students in musical language.

Musicale Words Game is fun to play. Put on a timer so you have time to continue with *Seven in a Row* and your dress rehearsal. Like before, I have them write down on an index card what they plan to play. I will offer suggestions but respect their choices. This card will be placed on their pianos at home so they have a reminder to practice these choices during the week.

### **Week 89**

I use this week to check over their choices for the final musicale, make changes if necessary, and plan who is bringing what dessert to share. I make sure they include some technical aspect--such as a scale or a Hanon exercise and an improvisation. I spend time working on *Country Dance* at the level that the group can handle. We learn *Juba*, although I barely do the four part process, and they have the melody linked! We focus on the different ways we can accompany the melody. I demonstrate blocked chords, broken chords, Alberti bass, walking bass, etc.

### **Week 90**

To make this class run smoothly I create a paced list of activities and star the activities I absolutely want to keep in if time runs short. I keep a singing circle with songs that are favorites they requested last week. I list the drumming and dancing which I can decide to add when we need to change the pace of the singing circle. I ask children to play after each activity, or I save their keyboard sharing to sometime near the end. I make sure we do some version of *Country Dance* depending upon what we planned the week before. Certificates are filled out, pictures are taken and then it is time for dessert. During this time I make sure I thank each child for sharing music with me, and I discuss what is next with each parent.

The end of week 90 is exhilarating, exhausting, and satisfying. I hope you have enjoyed teaching this curriculum and look forward to future years where you will make this program your own. May your years of teaching Musikgarten be filled with happiness and wonderful music making.

Happy Teaching,

Ellen Johansen