



## Music Makers: at the Keyboard, Year 3 – Week 61 through 63

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to *Music Makers: At the Keyboard* Year Three. The children have come a long way from their first days learning to play *Mouse*, *Mousie* and *Listen for Bells*. More and more we are introducing musical grammar in preparing the children for successful participation in school music programs and instrumental lessons beyond the Musikgarten curriculum. Yet I want to cherish this year because I know this special learning environment is coming to an end for my students. I hope we teachers can continue to share music with our growing musicians this year the best way we know how!

Here we go....

Weeks 61 - 63

**Scales** - From the first class on I want to create and maintain the ritual of students entering the room, placing their material next to their pianos and being ready to start. Generally, I like to warm up each week with scales. I want them to be able to sing the scale with solfeggio, and then again with fingering and finally with letter names. We play the scales all together, right hand alone, left hand alone and hands together. I will start the scale routine as soon as the first student enters. When all arrive I move to the Scale Song **Follow Me**. If I notice the children are taking too much time choosing what scale and who gets to play, I may do a round with the scale and names on cards. Another option is to use the “Decide Now” app on my Ipad. Variation is the spice of life. At this time I will also have them play a scale with various touches (legato and staccato) and various dynamics. It is also a great time to work on phrasing and obtaining a beautiful tone without bumpy thumbs or poorly playing pinkies.

**Singing Circle** - We simply don’t have the physical time in each class to choose 10 cards, so I may choose anywhere from one to three cards for my basket. I follow each song with related patterns and the aural recognition game for either pitch or rhythm. Duple rhythms with 16<sup>th</sup> notes are a component of these early lessons so I may add **I Hear the Mill Wheel** to the basket and add aural recognition patterns with 16<sup>th</sup> notes. This is one example of selecting the repertoire that supports the upcoming concepts in the lesson.

**The Musical Clock** - To introduce this piece, I ask them to count how many measures and bar lines there are. I have the children discover how many beats are in each measure. I ask them if the piece repeats. I ask what that half-heart shape sign means. I have them go to the piano and play b-flats, and we talk about how the sign affects the piece. I ask them if there are any b-flats in the piece (no). So why is it there? I have them play an F major warm-up.



Then I work on the left hand part. I ask them to identify the two notes used in the left hand. They will answer Do and Sol, and then I ask them to play the left hand part on the piano. If there is hesitation as to where they should place their left hand I will ask if they have heard in their music class in school what the letter name of the notes are. Some will perk up as if they have been waiting for this question for years. F and C they shout. Great! Where are they on the piano? Hmmmm..... Various answers ensue. So I ask them to sing the sounds, and we sing them in the registration they are written. Then they go looking for that sound. We may have a brief discussion of middle c and how it is not in the middle of their keyboards but in the middle of the two staves. We clap the rhythm of the left hand, and then we play the left hand part all together at the keyboards.

After two or three repeats we are back on the floor. I ask them to locate the resting tone in the treble clef. Then I ask if there are notes below the resting tone. Then I ask them to find the printed fingering. What do they think this fingering will do? (Help them reach the notes below the resting tone). They sing the melody with rhythm language and in solfeggio. I do not help them sing the Ti, La, or Sol but I may play them on the piano to keep them in pitch. I then go to the piano and talk about how to cross over the thumb. I demonstrate crossing finger two over the thumb and back without moving the thumb. We make up a small drill with this. Then I demonstrate measure four and measure five. I note the shift of the hand back to F position. This is all I do at the pianos. I assign the melody to be learned at home.

**Franz Josef Haydn** – learning about the composers can be fun and, for some, a relaxing break from the challenges of the piano. Often I have children, who have been with me for a long time, ask me what happened to the stories I told them before. Here is a great opportunity to share a story again and tell an anecdote from Haydn's life. There are library books you can also share about the composer as well as pictures of the composer. The children love to comment on his wig!

**The Clock Symphony** - This dance is fun to learn. Bring ice packs to class. Your parents may need them after parent time.

### ***Duple Rhythms with 16ths, Step 1***

The ***Rhythmic Improvisation on Drums*** is pure fun. Make sure you have played along with the track until you are comfortable improvising with the recording. Take your time and listen to the various rhythmical ideas presented. Before you teach this, choose two or three rhythms you enjoyed and plan ahead to present these rhythms. The goal of this activity is to promote the spontaneity and spirit of improvisation, but you need to be prepared so that the children can reach this goal.

**Bagpipe** - this is a great time to show where different Gs are found on the piano. I use these names to describe Gs: Low G (1<sup>st</sup> line on the bass clef), Bass G (4<sup>th</sup> space in bass clef), Treble G (2<sup>nd</sup> line of treble clef), and High G (above the treble staff). We find them on the piano, and I add a quick flash card game. I also create flashcards that have the same patterns beginning on different Gs. After this preparation,



the students learn to play *Bagpipe* and seem to have less confusion about where to place their hands on the piano.

For the left hand part of *Bagpipe* I will mention that the notes are held for two beats, and we will sometimes use triangles as we speak the rhythm. I will mention the rule of 4/4 time, and we will count 1, 2, 3, 4. I can't stand it when a student will dutifully sing 1-2, 1-2 as taught in my local public school music classes. However, if a child proudly shows me this half note counting skill, I will gently move them to the next level ( $2 + 2 = 4$ ).

**Grandfather's Clock Ensemble** - I have adjusted the *Grandfather's Clock Ensemble* to take more weeks to learn than printed in the lesson suggestion. Yet, I must remind myself that the process is more important than the product. The book suggests working on Part 3 and then singing while playing. This is a great idea I will ask the children, "How many measures do we play Do and Sol?" Then, "At what measure does the part change?" (Measure 9). Then I ask, "What words are we singing at measure 9?" This will give them another clue on when to play the new patterns. Finally, "What happens in the last three measures?" I will call this part a coda. We rehearse each section separately and practice moving from part to part. When they can play the whole piece (and most likely I singing the song) they sing the song while playing Part 3. The following week we review this all over. Perhaps we work on Part 1. I like to give this play to two strong players with resonator bars. I ask the children "When does this part play?" (Measure 7 or when we sing "Mommy's kitchen clock goes tick-tock, tick-tock and during the coda"). Once this is established, they play the part while the other students sing the song.

During Week 64, I will review all the sections, and maybe have the students play Part 1 and Part 3 at the same time. Part 2 is read separately and assigned to learn at home. I may talk about how to reach the notes in the coda section. I may have one or two that can play that part.

For the mini-musical we aim to:

Sing the Song, no instruments

Play Part 3 while singing the song

Play Part 1 while singing the song

Play Parts 1 and 3 (two separate groups) while singing the song

Optional: play Part 2 while singing the song

Optional: Play all three parts while singing the song.

Remember: *process, not product.*

**Non-Harmonic Tones** - Adding non-harmonic tones is introduced in Week 64. However, I start the process in Week 61. First we improvise chord tone patterns in the singing circle, and then I add patterns with non-harmonic tones. I model keeping the chord tones on the beat and mention how the non-harmonic tones smooth out the melody. When I show the pages in their books about chord tones and non-harmonic tones I want to make sure they have enough aural understanding first.



**The Mini-Musicale** is lots of fun. I ask each child to prepare two pieces, and I try my best have each child play a piece that no one else is playing. We have chosen our musical selections in Week 63 so that they have time to prepare their pieces to play in Week 64 in a dress rehearsal. I have them write what they will play on index cards so they can bring these cards up to the piano with them. The ensemble completes our musicale. Make sure you send out invitations for this class. It is a lot of fun!

Happy teaching,

Ellen Johansen

P.S. If you wish to have more resources at your fingertips, I highly recommend that you:

1. Join our Musikgarten Teachers group at Facebook. This was created by Musikgarten to support all licensed Musikgarten teachers. Amy Rucker and I administer the day to day in the group. You must be a licensed teacher to join this group. You may request to join and Musikgarten will review your request. This format is fun because the teachers share day to day successes with pictures and videos, share their latest marketing, discuss ongoing issues and answer any question that bubbles up.
2. Join Gartenloop, an email support forum for Musikgarten teachers. This group is independent from Musikgarten and I am the administrator. You do not need to be a licensed teacher of Musikgarten to join. This group has been active for over 20 years. There is a wealth of information in the archives as well as lots of files to look through.
  - a. To join:
  - b. Sign in to **Yahoo Groups**.
  - c. Open a **group**.
  - d. Click **Join Group**.
  - e. Set your membership info.
  - f. Click Send Request.