# John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course

PART THREE

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### **Foreword**

### THE PHRASE

PART THREE begins by showing the importance of thinking and feeling music phrase by phrase rather than note by note.

Teachers should emphasize the matter of playing each phrase with different musical treatment—one of the first steps in Interpretation.

### TOUCH

TOUCH is obviously a vital part of Interpretation and examples in staccato, legato, slurs, etc., follow in proper sequence.

For thorough development of the various Touches, the teacher is referred to the author's edition of the HANON STUDIES—now adopted as a standard part of the teaching equipment of most piano teachers and music schools.

### SCALES AND CHORDS

Scale formation follows the lessons on Semitones and Whole Tones, with examples using the scale both as Melody and as accompaniment figures.

Later Triads and Inversions are shown with pieces employing chord figures in 'block' and broken form.

The 7th chord (with its resolution) is not analysed harmonically, but simply taught as a CHORD PATTERN which should be memorized by the pupil because of its frequent appearance in music of this grade.

### **BOOGIE WOOGIE**

Many teachers may be startled because of the inclusion of Boogie Woogie and other numbers having a popular 'flavour'.

But it must be admitted that Popular Music is here to stay—and why not? It has a very definite place of its own in the world of music. And whether we approve or not, our pupils will be exposed to it daily on radio, television, gramophone, cafés, etc.

Perhaps for that very reason it may even be a duty of the so-called "long-haired" musician to teach Young players how to distinguish between good and bad Popular Music!

In any event, the majority of piano pupils take up music, not as a career, but as a means of entertainment—which by the way, is the prime purpose of all music, classic or otherwise. The author, therefore, feels no need to apologize for the popular type of some of the examples. If they do nothing else, they at least show that Boogie Woogie, Rag Time, etc., are not new inventions in the popular field, but are simply exaggerated use of devices known to the classic composers many years ago.

It should be noted, however, that even the "pop" examples have a definite purpose and develop either a technical or musical point of pianism.

### SCOPE

In Key Signatures, the book progresses as far as three flats and three sharps. The remaining Key Signatures follow in proper order in PART FOUR.

On page 44 the scales and chords used in the book are shown for reference.

A Glossary of musical terms, with abbreviations and definitions will be found on page 45.

The last few lessons in the book present SIX-EIGHT—a new Time Signature so far.

As with the other books in this Course, the lessons are specially designed for the short practice periods of present-day pupils.

Thompson





### **Preparatory Studies**



# Melody

### 1st Phrase



### 2nd Phrase



Music, like language, is divided into sentences, but musical sentences are called PHRASES.

The above example consists of two phrases. Sometimes the second phrase is played louder than the first —sometimes softer. But never exactly alike.

How do you think the second phrase should be played? It is correct either way, but it should be played the way you feel it. Always think of your Music phrase by phrase, not note by note. Then you will play with more musical purpose and understanding.

# Three Phrases

### **Hand Position**



Here is a piece with three phrases. Try playing it three different ways.

First time—1st phrase, very softly; 2nd phrase, somewhat louder; 3rd phrase, still !ouder.

Second time—1st phrase, moderately loud; 2nd phrase, softly; 3rd phrase, much louder.

Third time—1st phrase, moderately loud; 2nd phrase, somewhat softer; 3rd phrase, much softer.

Choose the way you like best. That will be your very own interpretation.





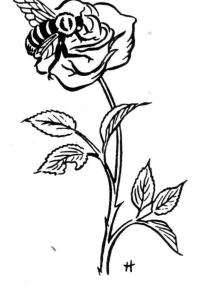


The Bee



2nd Phrase







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# Four Phrases

This piece has four phrases.

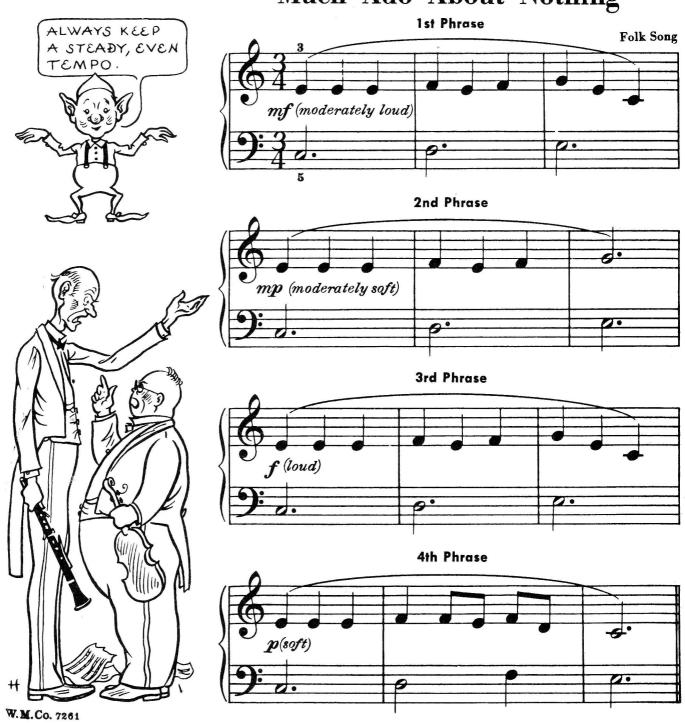
Notice that each phrase is marked differently.

Usually the composer indicates how each phrase should be played. When no expression marks are shown, play according to your feeling.

An explanation of all musical terms used in this book will be found on page 45.







# Wrist Staccato

TEACHERS' NOTE—The subject of Touch is too vital to be treated as part of a Grade Book.

It is suggested that the pupil be assigned at this point, the author's HANON STUDIES which are specially adapted for students in this grade. Each Touch is carefully explained and developed separately.

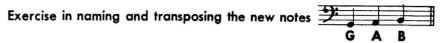
Obviously, TOUCH is an important part of Interpretation and should be introduced early in the pupil's career.

Finger, Wrist and Forearm staccato as well as the various forms of Finger legato, phrasing and portamento playing, all in elementary form, are treated in the JOHN THOMPSON HANON STUDIES.

For playing the following examples give the pupil your favourite demonstration of Wrist Staccato.



# Work Sheet



Write the letter names below.



### Writing Exercise

Transpose these notes one octave higher in the Bass.

Next write them in the Treble Clef.

Then recite them as you play.



# At the Animal Fair

(Study in Wrist Staccato)





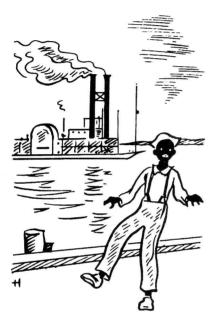
### **CHANGING HAND POSITION**

Up to this point you have changed Hand Position frequently when moving from one piece to another.

You will find it is just as easy to change position in the middle of a piece, and that is what happens in "On the Levee." See how smoothly you can make the change.

# On the Levee

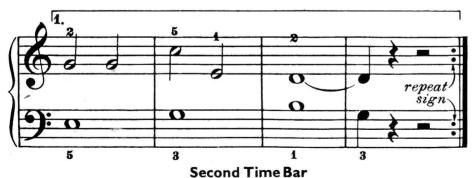








First Time Bar



# FIRST AND SECOND TIME BARS

From this point, go back to the beginning and play over again.

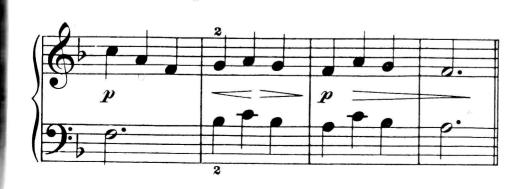


After playing through the SECOND time, do NOT repeat the FIRST TIME BAR; instead, skip to the SECOND TIME BAR.

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# Sunrise





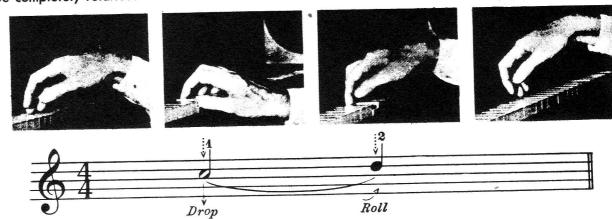


# The Slur

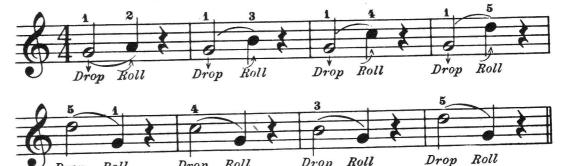
SLURRING in music is like BREATHING in speech—we take short breaths and long breaths. If we keep i mind to make our playing of music BREATHE AT THE END OF EACH SLUR, it will strengthen the rhythm and ad immensely to the interpretation.

In playing TWO-NOTE SLURS think of the words, DROP-ROLL and the effect will come naturally. In the following example, play the first note with a gentle DROP of the arm and the second note with a ROLL of th arm and hand in an inward and upward motion, using no finger action and releasing the note on the upward ro

The following illustration shows the proper position of hand and arm as each Slur is released. The WRIS must be completely relaxed.



### Play the following with the RIGHT hand



### Play the following with the LEFT hand

Roll

Drop

Roll

Roll

Drop



All notes under this line, except the last The SIGN of the Slur is the curved line, \_\_\_ should be played LEGATO. The last note must always be played with a rolling motion of the arm forward upward.

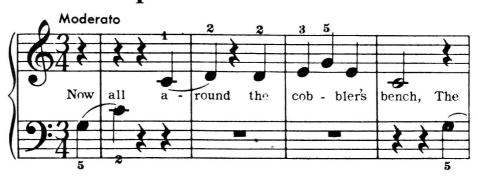
"The HANON Studies" by John Thompson should be assigned as supplementary work. This book is issued with attractiv titles and illustrations, and is especially adapted for this grade to develop the SLURRING ATTACK as well as all the fundamento touches used in this book.

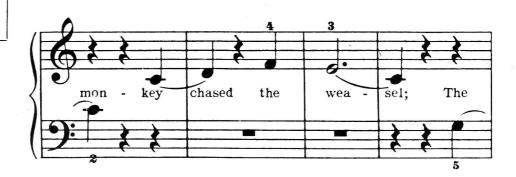
# Pop Goes the Weasel

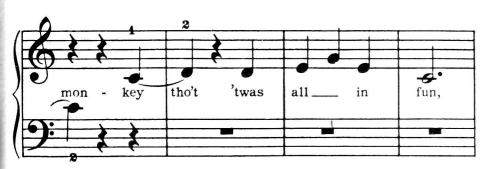
### Be Sure

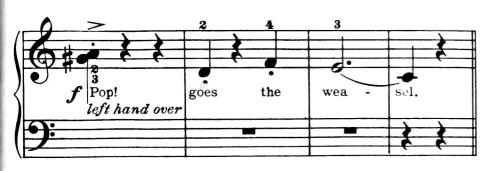
To observe the many two-note slurs (*drop-roll*).

Also the accent and staccato notes on the last line.









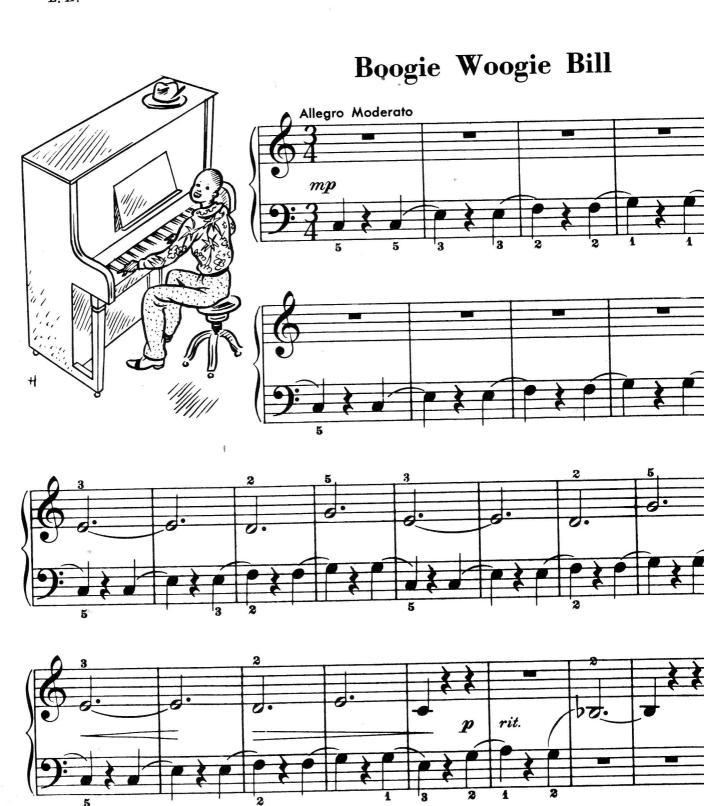


### **Accompaniment**



### **Preparatory Exercise**

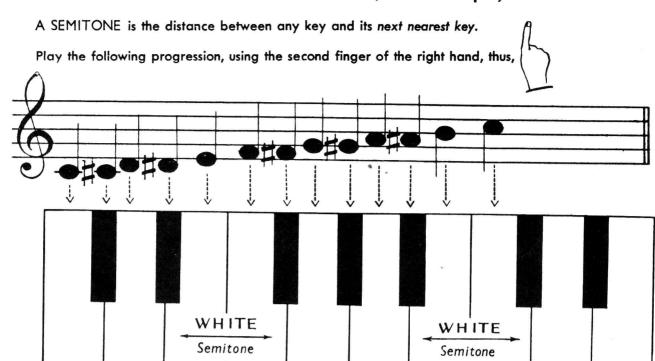




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# SEMITONES (Half Steps)



You have played a series of Semitones.

Notice that the piano keyboard is arranged in Semitones.

All semitones occur between a White Key and a Black Key, EXCEPT the two WHITE SEMITONES between E and F and B and C.

Play these descending semitones with the left hand second finger.



### Review

You have already learned that:

- A SHARP (#) placed before a note, raises it a semitone.
- A FLAT (b) placed before a note, lowers it a semitone.
- A NATURAL (4) placed before a note, cancels the sharp or flat sign.

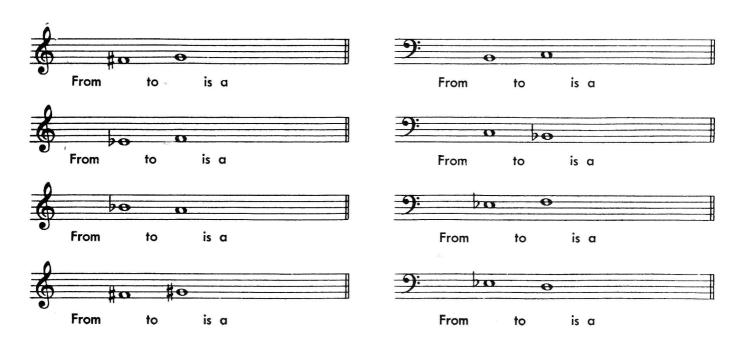
# WHOLE TONES (Whole Steps)

A WHOLE TONE is twice the distance of a semitone.

Therefore there will always be one key—either Black or White—lying in between.

### WHOLE TONES AND SEMITONES

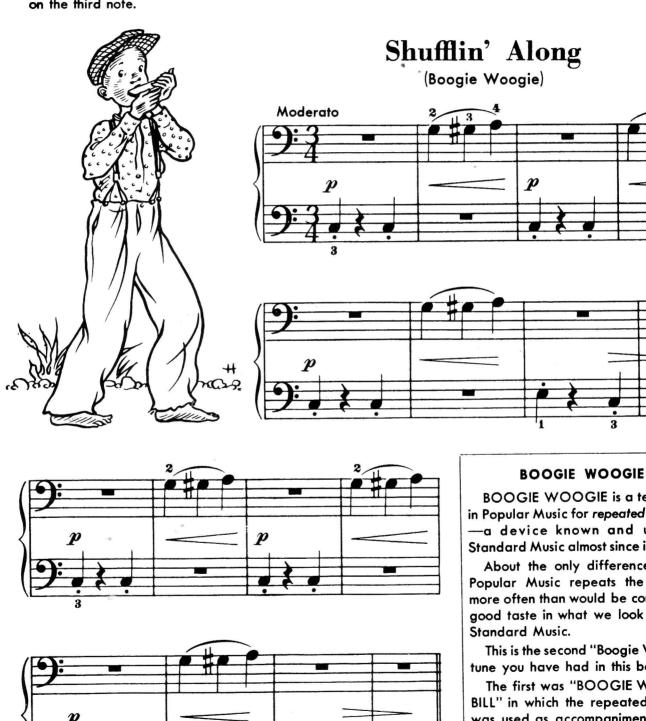
Define the following examples as whole tones or semitones.



# Three-note Slur

Drop-Connect-Roll

To play a three-note slur, DROP on the first note, CONNECT the second with finger legato and ROLL off on the third note.



BOOGIE WOOGIE is a term used in Popular Music for repeated patterns —a device known and used in Standard Music almost since its origin.

About the only difference is that Popular Music repeats the figures more often than would be considered good taste in what we look upon as Standard Music.

This is the second "Boogie Woogie" tune you have had in this book.

The first was "BOOGIE WOOGIE BILL" in which the repeated pattern was used as accompaniment. Here it appears as melody and is repeated over and over with monotonous regularity.

# Cross-Hand Piece

Here is a cross-hand piece, built for the most part, on three-note slurs.

Make as much distinction as possible between staccato and legato.

Be careful of the expression marks and see if you can imitate the playfulness of dancing shadows.



# Major Scales

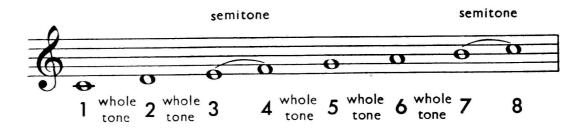
### Writing Exercises

A scale is a succession of eight notes progressing in alphabetical order.

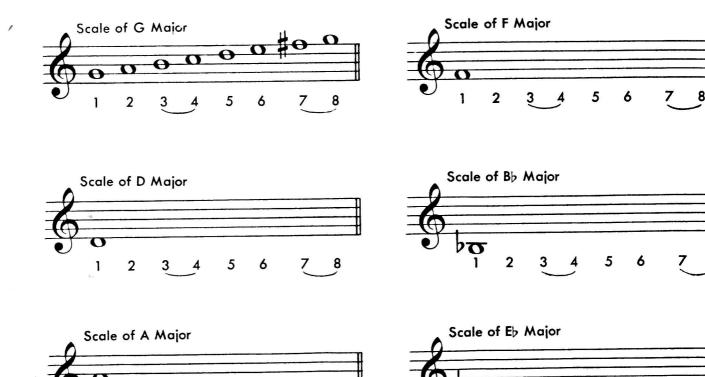
The notes are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and are known as the degrees of the scale.

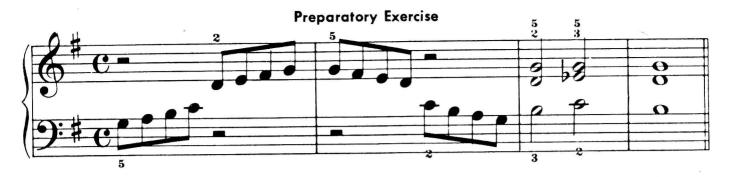
The Major Scale contains whole tones and semitones.

The semitones occur between 3 and 4 and between 7 and 8 as shown in the example which follows.



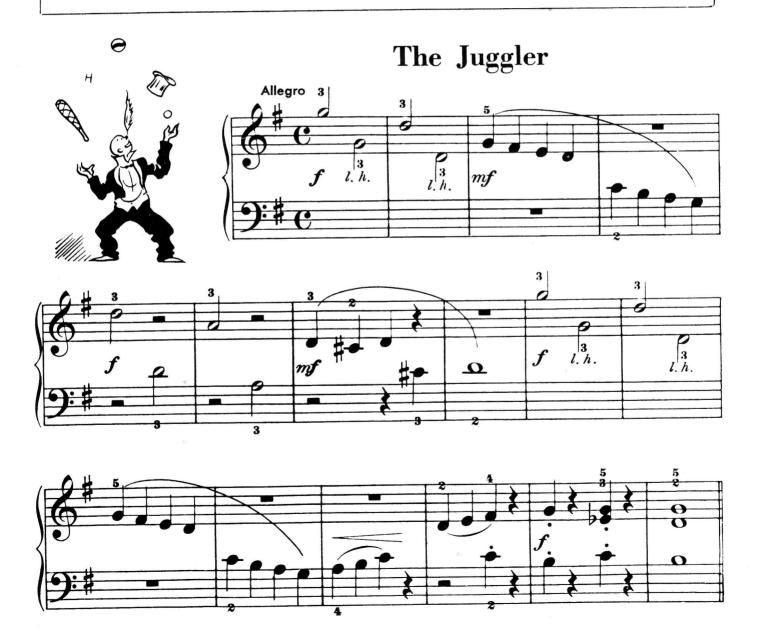
Write the following scales using sharps or flats as needed to preserve the order of whole tones and sertones.





### **New Signature for Four-Four**

The sign  ${\bf C}$ , is just another way of showing the Time Signature of Four-Four. In the following example, you will find the G major scale, divided between the hands, and used as Melody.





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emphasized by the accent sign. This change of accent gives a "swing" to the rhythm known as

Syncopation.

# **Syncopation**







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# Duet for Teacher and Pupil



The CAKE WALK is an institution of by-gone days. It was performed by couples marching around the dance floor to the music of the band.

At intervals along the march, a flag was passed from one couple to the next, and when the band stopped playing—without warning—the couple then holding the flag was entitled to win the prize, which was, of course, a cake. It was particularly popular in the South among the Negroes. The music was "rag-time" in character and well adapted to the complicated steps and body gyrations, in which each couple tried to out-do the others.

In this example the syncopation occurs on the last half of the first beat in most of the bars. Be sure to apply vigorous accents throughout.

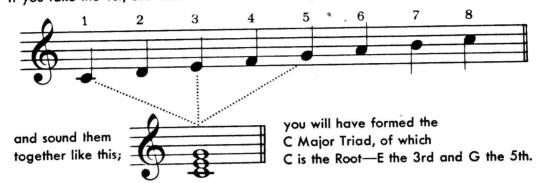


# Chord-Building

### Major Triads

A TRIAD is a chord of three notes.

If you take the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the Major Scale (skipping those in between)

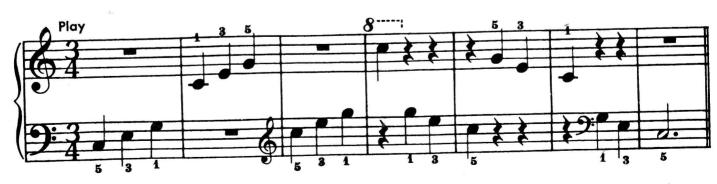


### Play these Triads



# **Broken Triads**

When Triads appear in broken form, they are known as Broken Chords or Arpeggios.

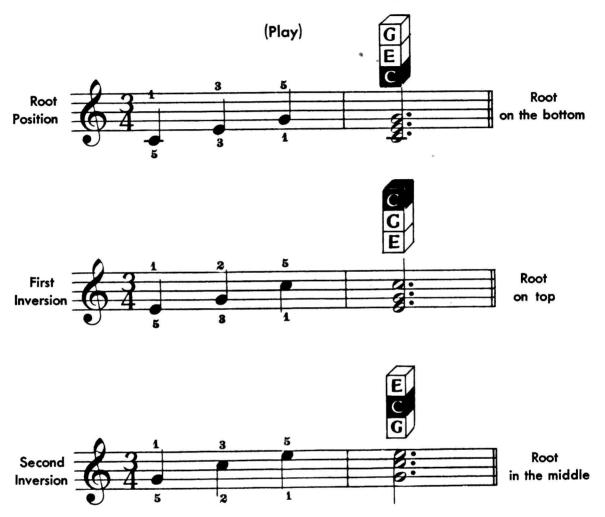


Play the F Major and G Major Arpeggios in the form shown above.

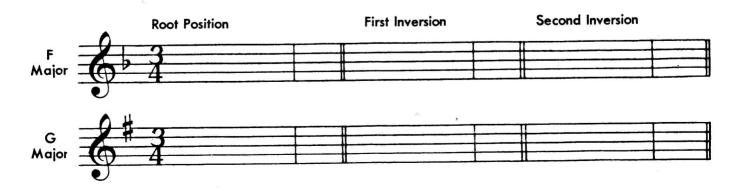
# Inversions

Sometimes the notes of a Triad are "scrambled" like the words in a puzzle—in which case they are said to be INVERTED.

# The Three Positions of the C Major Triad



Write (and play) the three positions of the F Major and G Major Triads—using the same chord patterns as shown in the examples above.





# **Broken Chord Etude**



# Chord Patterns

Here are some Chord Patterns that will appear frequently in your music.

Play them over many times until you can recognize them by sight and by ear.

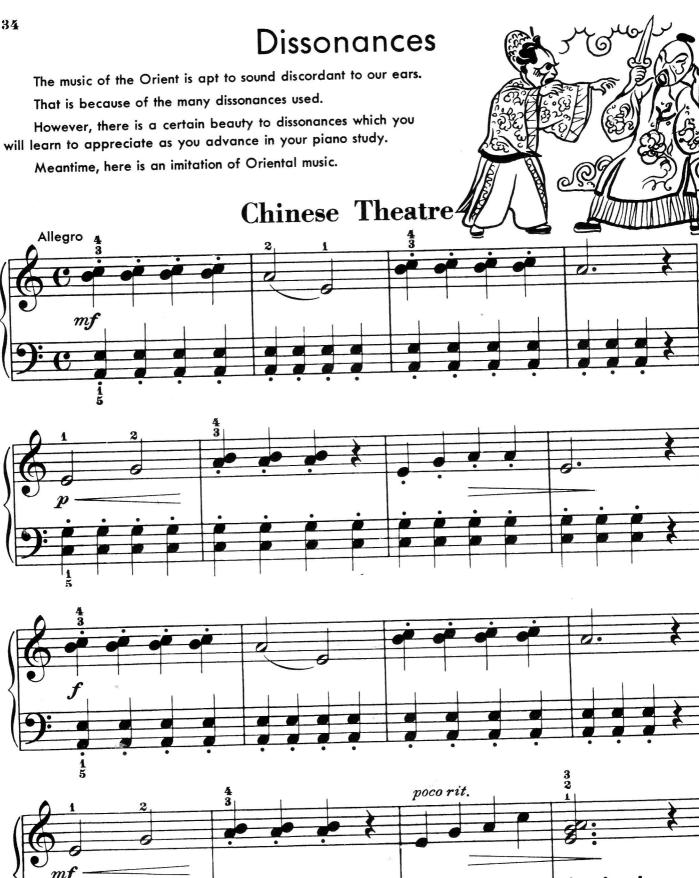
This will help your Sight Reading and Memorizing.



# **Cross-Hand Etude**

On Broken Chords





Play the scale and arpeggio of D Major each day before practising this piece.

Scales in all keys used in this book are shown on page 44.

Be sure to observe the many two-note slurs in this piece.

Apply sharp accents on the first of each bar to ensure good rhythm.



Play this etude in two ways. First time, as written—2 notes with the left hand and 3 with the right. Second time, make a cross-hand study of it by passing the left hand over to play the last note of each bar with the second finger. (This applies to all bars except the last two)

In bars 10, 11, 12 and 13, play the notes with the little lines under them (  $\underline{\bullet}$  ) with extra singing quality—almost like melody notes.

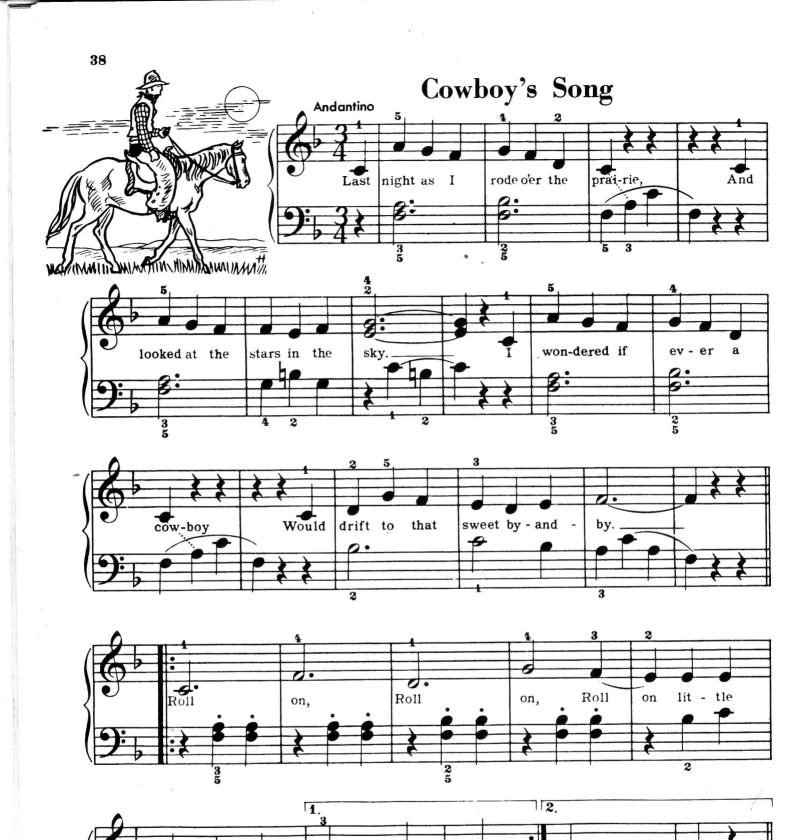
Pedal may be used— once to each bar —at the discretion of the teacher.



Play this old Italian song as expressively as possible.

The left hand broken chords should be played with a rolling motion of the hand from the fifth finger over to the thumb.





roll

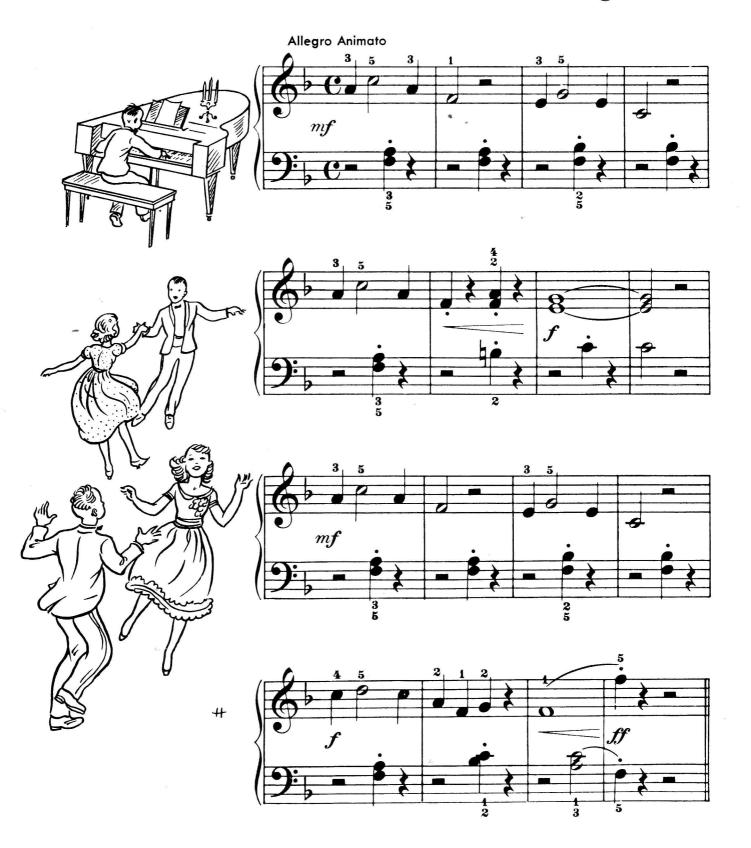
on.

roll

on,

do - gies,

# A Little Bit of Rag

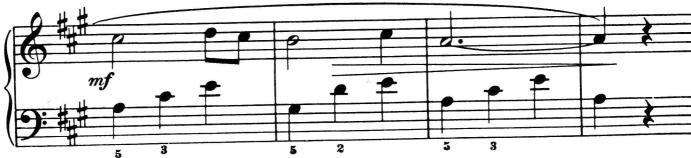


# Preparatory Study



# Holiday Song





Play the A major Scale and Arpeggio daily.

# Six-Eight

Here is a new Time Signature which means there are six counts to each bar and one count to each quaver.

There are two accents to the bar ———— a strong one on the first count and a weaker one on the fourth count.





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# SCALES and CHORDS

### Used in this Book

