

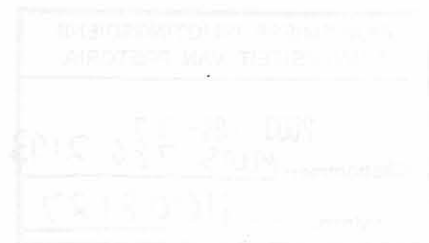
**PIANO TUITION FOR THE BEGINNER: THE STRUCTURING AND TEACHING OF  
THE BASIC MOVEMENTS IN PIANO PLAYING**

**HESTER SOPHIA RHOODIE**

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**Promoter: Prof J Stanford**

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assistance not only with regard to the writing of the thesis but also during the recital and chamber music performances

my husband, Jan, for his ongoing support and motivation and his help in the

my parents, brother and sister for their lifelong interest and support

my mother for teaching me all the children's songs in which I found great pleasure  
exercises

me H de Jager for the revision of grammar and style

I dedicate this thesis to prof G W Koornhooft, my piano teacher for 20 years

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## ABSTRACT

Literature study on piano technique, which consists mainly of piano pedagogues' empirical considerations, indicates the existence of common strategies/theories regarding the development of a piano technique.

A meaningful and scientifically grounded piano-technical orientation is one of the major factors during the first few months of piano tuition and provides a basis for the development of an advanced piano technique.

The majority of beginner piano courses use the adjacent, legato five finger method. The researcher identified six beginner courses, which were analysed in order to measure their presentation of a well-structured piano-technical development against the recommendations of well-known piano pedagogues/authors in this field.

During this process, demerits in the sequence, structure and presentation of the basic movements in piano playing were found. In most instances the use of the bigger levers are not addressed at all. All the levers and their specific movements should be addressed from the very first lesson. A logical motoric and educational process is to concentrate on the bigger levers (giving the support), which perform slower and easier movements, and then move on to the smaller levers, which perform faster and more complicated movements.

All theoretical information in the beginner books studied is properly explained and presented in a very structured manner. The researcher is, however, concerned about the fact that there is not enough structure in the sequence of teaching and developing the basic technical movements in the beginner piano courses using the adjacent, legato five finger method. The connection between sound and movement is not made.



Authors in the field of piano technique emphasize the fact that the movements the beginner is taught during the first lessons provide the technical foundation for the rest of his/her life.

To address demerits in the structure, presentation and discrepancy in the sequence of learning the basic movements, the researcher compiles exercises for the beginner. These exercises concentrate on specific movements and results in sound recommended by well-known authors in the field of piano technique. In addition the researcher strives to explain the movements as clearly as possible and illustrates them with photographs and pictures.

Key words:

- piano
- tuition
- beginner
- movements
- technique
- excercises
- first lesson
- beginner courses
- levers
- result in sound

## OPSOMMING

Literatuurstudie, wat hoofsaaklik bestaan uit empiriese oortuigings van klavierpedagoë, toon dat daar algemene strategieë/teorieë bestaan vir die ontwikkeling van 'n klaviertegniek.

'n Sinvolle en wetenskaplik gefundeerde klaviertegniese oriëntering is een van die belangrikste faktore wat 'n rol speel gedurende die eerste maande van klavieronderrig. Dit bied 'n basis vir die ontwikkeling van 'n gevorderde klaviertegniek.

Die oorgrote meerderheid klavierkursusse vir beginners is gebaseer op die vyfvinger legato-metode. Die navorser het ses beginnerkursusse geïdentifiseer en ondersoek om sodoende hulle weergawe van die daarstelling van 'n goed gestruktureerde klaviertegniese ontwikkeling te toets aan die oortuigings van welbekende klavierpedagoë/skrywers op die gebied.

Tekortkominge in die opeenvolging, struktuur en aanbieding van die basiese bewegings in klavierspel is gedurende die proses uitgewys. In die meeste gevalle is die gebruik van groter hefbome geensins aangespreek nie. Alle hefbome se spesifieke bewegings moet vanaf die heel eerste les aangespreek word. 'n Logiese motoriese en opvoedkundige proses is om te konsentreer op die groter hefbome (wat ondersteuning bied) se uitvoering van stadiger en makliker bewegings en daarna te vorder na die kleiner hefbome se uitvoering van vinniger en meer gekompliseerde bewegings.

Alle teoretiese inligting in die beginnerkursusse wat bestudeer is, is gestruktureerd en duidelik aangebied. Die navorser is egter bekommerd oor die feit dat nie genoeg struktuur in die opeenvolging en ontwikkeling van die basiese tegniese bewegings in die beginnerkursusse, wat gebaseer is op die vyfvinger legato-metode, bestaan nie. Die verwantskap tussen klank en beweging word nie uitgewys nie.

Skrywers op die gebied van klaviertegniek beklemtoon die feit dat die bewegings wat gedurende die eerste maande van onderrig aangeleer word, 'n tegniese basis bied vir die res van die leerling se loopbaan.

Oefeninge is deur die navorser saamgestel om die tekortkominge aan te spreek wat struktuur, opeenvolging en aanbieding van die basiese bewegings gedurende die eerste paar maande van onderrig betref. Hierdie oefeninge konsentreer op spesifieke basiese bewegings en klankresultate soos aanbeveel deur welbekende skrywers op die gebied van klaviertegniek. Daar word gepoog om die oefeninge duidelik te beskryf met bygaande illustrasies en fotos.

#### Sleutelterme:

- klavier
- onderrig
- beginner
- bewegings
- tegniek
- oefeninge
- eerste les
- beginnerkursusse
- hefbome
- klankresultaat



## 1 BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

### 1.1 Introduction

Piano tuition is a very challenging field, especially when working with beginners: challenging because of the enormous responsibility of giving the beginner a solid foundation to build an advanced technique on. Studies on the majority of beginner piano books, undertaken by the researcher, have shown a lack of structure and a discrepancy in the sequence of learning basic movements. Emphasis is placed upon the immediate use and development of the small levers (i.e. the fingers), while the larger levers (hand, forearm, upper arm and torso), the initiators of sound, are in the main ignored.

A well-founded piano-technical orientation is essential when teaching beginners. Literature study on piano technique, which consists mainly of piano pedagogues' empirical considerations, has indicated the existence of common strategies/theories regarding the creation of a basic piano technique. This fact is supported by Dean Elder's interviews on piano technique with well-known pianists such as Alfred Brendel, Ivo Pogorelich, Krystian Zimerman and Jeffrey Swan, as published in 'Clavier'. Generally accepted strategies towards the development of a well-founded and sound technique by leading authors, namely Matthay (1932), Booth (1934), Last (1954), Whiteside (1955), Gát (1958), Bastien (1977), Sandor (1981), Taylor (1983), Conus (1984) and Fink (1992), were studied. According to them, an objective but scientifically grounded approach to the development of piano technique pre-supposes a structured outline of the different levers (starting with the bigger levers and progressing to the smaller levers). Camp (1981), Clark (1992) and Uszler, Gordon and Mach (1991) support these strategies. Uszler et al criticise beginner books which only concentrate on the development of the fingers or small movements.

The use of big movements and bigger levers are described in the following quotation saying that:

Use of larger movements, in turn, encourages and fosters the feeling of arm-weight (and arm-weight release), which is the basis of rich tonal production. Such technical approaches are very different from immediate attention to the playing of adjacent finger, or five finger, legato - which has been, and continues to be the technical method of most books and teachers (Uszler et al 1991:114).

The different levers should, in conjunction with each other, be able to perform basic movements with specific results in sound. Although the specific results in sound will not be achieved immediately, as it is a process of development, the beginner pupil should master the basic movements as soon as possible.

According to Sandor the larger levers (forearm, upper arm, shoulder and torso) should be used in conjunction with the hand when playing the piano. The up and down motions should be distributed amongst four components instead of two. He continues his discussion on the larger levers in saying that:

... by using the powerful muscles of the upper arm and shoulders instead of only the weaker forearm muscles, we are infinitely better off in terms of economy, endurance, and tone quality (Sandor 1981:96).

The importance of learning the correct movements from the beginning speaks for itself. Last (1980:21) states that the success or failure as a pianist depends largely on the first year of tuition, when good or bad habits are being formed. Bastien (1977:165) names the forming of correct habits as the most important aspect of beginning lessons. Further complications arise when the correct movement has to be performed within a limited space of time or within a regular beat.

According to Sandor and Bastien in the next two quotations, there is a specific structure, as well as support, needed to perform certain movements in piano playing:

To pull in the forearm we activate the biceps and for the opposite motion we use the triceps. Both these muscles are located on the upper arm, and they are much stronger than the muscles of the forearm (Sandor 1981:30).

Slurs and phrases produced on the piano are dependent on the correct motions of the hand, wrist and arms (Bastien 1977:168).



The forearm is not able to perform effectively without the support of the upper arm. In a similar way the hand cannot execute the movement during phrasing on its own and is dependent on the correct movement of the wrist and arm.

This is why, during the course of this study, the emphasis is placed upon the correct use and development of all the levers from the first lesson.

The prerequisites of using the different levers from big to small and of performing the complementary movements from easy to more complicated, are not met by any of the most regularly used and generally accepted beginner courses using the method of legato five finger development, for example Thompson (1956), Burnam (1959), Pace (1961), Clark and Goss (1973), Bastien (1985), Watermann and Harewood (1988), Schaum (1996) and Palmer, Morton and Lethco (1999).

The need for a well-structured study on beginner books using the method of adjacent fingering and five finger legato playing is obvious. Van der Merwe (1996:8), who states that the use of pure finger technique can cause damage in the beginning stages of piano lessons, and have a negative influence on the development of technique, supports this point of view. The researcher plans to point out the demerits of beginner courses starting with the method of adjacent and five finger legato playing. The researcher aims to provide solutions on how the basic movements of the big levers (initiators of sound) can be taught to the beginner pupil. The researcher will refer to beginner courses like the Russian course Kisell, Natanson, Nikolaev and Sretenskaya (1978) and Olson, Bianchi and Blickenstaff (1983) when providing solutions on how big levers and their movements can be taught to beginner pupils.

A problem at the early stage of tuition is that the beginner is not able to read notes. Solutions concentrating on a specific movement, not on reading notes, are compiled by the researcher and can be performed by the beginner on the instrument within a regular beat.

## **1.2 Main research question**

Which movements should young beginners be taught in order to develop a well founded, basic piano technique?

## **1.3 Sub-questions**

1.3.1 Which levers are used in piano playing?

1.3.2 What are the basic movements that the different levers should be able to perform?

1.3.3 Which beginner books using the adjacent five finger legato method are generally accepted and regularly used by music teachers?

1.3.4 How do these beginner books measure up against the recommendations of leading authors in the field of piano technique?

1.3.5 How can solutions in the form of exercises be provided for each basic movement, easy enough for the beginner to perform within a regular beat?

## **1.4 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study, therefore, is:

- to explore the literature on the basic movements of the different levers in piano playing and to measure beginner courses using the adjacent five finger legato starting method against the recommendations
- to provide a solution on how to teach these basic movements, with the consequent results in sound, to beginner pupils.

## **1.5 Value of this study**

This study provides well founded solutions on how to teach basic movements in piano playing to beginner pupils. These solutions will outline the levers and their movements clearly, progressing from easy to more complicated movements and combinations of



these. Complementary compiled (composed) exercises for each movement are included, addressing the following aspects:

- using the levers from easy (big) to more complicated (small) as initiators of sound
- establishing the experience of a regular beat
- taking into account that the beginner is not able to read notes
- concentrating on the sound and correct movements while learning a keyboard sense.

## 1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 To name the different levers in piano playing and structure their basic movements in order of difficulty (sub-questions 1.3.1 and 1.3.2), the methodology included the following:

- a thorough study of sources at the University of Pretoria library in order to determine the leading authors in the field of piano technique
- a comprehensive search on the internet, to ensure that no existing data on the subject was overseen. The search included the use of the "International University library" research tool.

1.6.2 To measure the most regularly used and generally accepted beginner books against the recommendations of leading authors in the field of piano technique (sub-questions 1.3.3 and 1.3.4), the methodology included the following:

- a thorough study of sources at the University of Pretoria library in order to find the most regularly used and generally accepted beginner books
- a comprehensive search on the internet. This search included the use of the "International University library" research tool, to ensure that the most regularly used and generally accepted beginner books were found. These beginner courses are accepted and used by the majority of teachers in the field of piano tuition
- a study of the designated beginner courses. These were subjected to the findings of sub-questions 1.3.1 and 1.3.2, in order to outline the shortcomings in structure and in the sequence of teaching the different movements to beginners.



1.6.3 To compile exercises and pieces for each basic movement (sub-question 1.3.5) easy enough for the beginner pupil to perform, a creative contribution based on research done in 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 was made.

## 1.7 Review of the literature

As the subject of 'piano technique' has been under close scrutiny for the past two centuries by pianists and pedagogues, a vast amount of information on the subject is available.

The early pianists brought with them techniques conditioned by the more familiar harpsichord and the development of a technique for the new instrument was a drawn-out process. The pianoforte called for a new technique due to the difference in touch and the various means of expression (new sound colours and dynamic ranges).

By the second half of the eighteenth century there were two recognised schools of piano playing, the 'Viennese' and the 'English'. Due to the different action, touch and tone of the two instruments manufactured in Vienna and London, the Viennese type being the lighter and the tone less sonorous than the English, a difference of opinion existed on the appropriate technique for the piano.

Mozart's (1756-1791) performances were in the style of the Viennese school and amongst his followers were Hummel (1778-1837), Czerny (1791-1857) and Moscheles (1794-1870). The characteristics of their playing were purity of tone, delicacy of nuance and lightness of touch. Clementi (1752-1837), who spent most of his life in England, preferred the English pianos and composed with them in mind. Amongst his followers was Field (1782-1837). Their playing had tremendous power and character with brilliance and facility.

The differences of opinion on piano technique continued until the completion of the modern piano's development by the second half of the nineteenth century. During this

time a harvest of pianistic giants was produced, including virtuosi such as Liszt (1811-1886), Anton Rubinstein (1829 -1894) and Tausig (1841-1871).

During the first half of the twentieth century the approach towards piano technique was extremely physical: books by leading authors included Matthay's *Visible and invisible in pianoforte technique* (1932) and Schultz's *The riddle of the pianist's finger* (1949).

Towards the second half of the twentieth century a more creative approach towards piano technique became obvious. Books like Whiteside's *Indispensables of piano playing* (1955), Kochevitsky's *The art of piano playing* (1967), Sandor's *On piano playing: Motion, sound and expression* (1981) and Taylor's *Principles of piano technique and interpretation* (1983), to name but a few, provided enough evidence of a new artistic and musical approach towards piano technique. Not only was the physical side of technique important, but also the musical or artistic side. In fact, they were linked. The modern approach towards technique is one of interdependency.

Very little was written on piano technique directed at the young beginner during the first half of the twentieth century. The reason for this was the drawn-out development process of the instrument, as well as the differences of opinion on piano technique amongst adult pianists throughout the nineteenth century.

The second half of the twentieth century produced much more information directed to the young beginner and more books, exercises and pieces were written specifically for the young pianist. Last's *The young pianist: A new approach for teachers and students* (1954), Ching's *On teaching piano technique to children* (1962), Bastien's *How to teach piano successfully* (1977) and many beginner courses like Bastien's *Bastien Piano Basics* (1985) and *Alfred's basic piano library* by Palmer et al (1999), are examples of these. These and other courses were studied by the researcher and though the need to use the bigger levers in combination with small levers is usually acknowledged, there is still a void for well-structured solutions clearly explaining the movements and use of the bigger levers.



## 1.8 Delimitation of the study

- It is not the aim of this study to explore all existing methods used in beginner piano courses.
- This study is confined to beginner courses using the adjacent five finger method as departure.

## 1.9 Chapters

Chapter 1 consists mainly of background information, a review of existing literature on the subject and the relevancy of the study.

Chapter 2 outlines the different levers with their basic movements based on the conclusions of the literature study named in 1.6.1.

Chapter 3 gives the conclusion of the literature study named in 1.6.2. The conclusion is described in detail to ensure a comprehensive and integrated guide filling the void left by existing beginner repertoire using the adjacent finger or five finger legato method.

Chapter 4 simultaneously describes the movements of the different levers, outlined in chapter 2, and gives exercises and pieces for practising purposes. Combinations of the use of different levers are also described, with exercises and pieces for practising purposes.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion and recommendations for possible future studies.

### 1.10 Target groups

- Piano teachers and young beginner pianists are the main target groups in this study. Although mainly presented for young beginner pianists these exercises can also be used by older beginners.
- Even more advanced pianists can benefit and learn from the information given in this study.

### 1.11 Notes to the reader

Only the first lesson books in the different courses were used for the study. These are the books from which the pupil is taught the very first and basic movements in piano playing, and where the first habits are formed. Although most courses provide teacher guides, technique and performance books as well, no new information was found in these books and the concepts stated in the lesson book were only repeated.

If the different technical aspects that were dealt with were described more clearly in either the technique or performance books, the information was extracted and incorporated in the survey of the different courses.

## GENERALLY ACCEPTED PIANO TECHNICAL STRATEGIES

### 1.1 Introduction

Exploring the different layers with their basic movements and positions in piano playing the researcher studied the strategies of leading authors in the field of piano technique. Although many authors are quoted on the different aspects of technique throughout this study, the researcher, through references by the majority of authors, identified six well-known authors in this field as primary references. The theories of J. Gilt (1938), J. V. Dantzen (1977), J. Last (1980), G. Sendor (1981), K. S. Taylor (1983) and L. Conus (1984) were studied closely for the specific purposes of this study. They were not only

From the time we get up in the morning (assuming all our working parts are in order) the brain transmits a series of messages to the active muscles required to wash, brush our hair, put on our clothes, or even cook the breakfast! These movements do not need to be thought out, being directed by 'muscular memory'. But when unaccustomed activity, such as playing the piano, is introduced the brain has to give instructions to fingers and arms. If these are indecisive, opposite sets of muscles may come into conflict. Therefore the pianist needs to acquire a knowledge of the directional movements involved, whatever the technical demands of the music (Last 1980:14).

The authors mainly agree on the aspects relating to the body, but there are different ways of explaining and naming those aspects. Last, Gilt and Sendor talk about arm weight, while Dantzen, Taylor and Conus talk about the freedom of the hand moving down. Gilt, Last, Dantzen, Sendor and Taylor talk about a fixed shoulder, while Conus talks about the wrist articulation. The emphasis is placed on moving levers when the terms 'arm weight' and 'hand articulation' are used in the various examples, while the emphasis is placed on the 'hand' when the terms 'freedom of the hand moving down' and 'hand articulation' are used. The researcher's responsibility is to interpret the meaning of these expressions and to decide on an appropriate term to use throughout the study.



## 2 GENERALLY ACCEPTED PIANO TECHNICAL STRATEGIES

### 2.1 Introduction

To outline the different levers with their basic movements and positions in piano playing, the researcher studied the strategies of leading authors in the field of piano technique. Although many authors are quoted on the different aspects of technique throughout this study, the researcher, through references by the majority of authors, identified six well-known authors in this field as primary references. The theories of J Gát (1958), J W Bastien (1977), J Last (1980), G Sandor (1981), K S Taylor (1983) and L Conus (1984) were studied closely for the specific purposes of this study. They were identified because of their different fields of speciality. Sandor and Conus were both concert pianists and although Conus died shortly after his career started, the strategies in his book on piano technique were underwritten by world famous pianists like Horowitz and Arrau. Bastien and Last performed professionally early in their lives and specialized in beginner piano tuition later on. Taylor and Gát were both piano teachers for more than thirty years of their lives.

- The authors mainly agree on the aspects relevant to this study, but there are different ways of explaining and naming these aspects. Last, Gát, and Sandor talk about arm weight, while Bastien, Taylor and Conus talk about the freedom of the wrist moving down. Gát, Last, Bastien, Sandor and Taylor talk about a hand staccato, while Conus talks about the wrist staccato. The emphasis is placed on the moving levers when the terms 'arm weight' and 'hand staccato' are used in the previous examples, while the emphasis is placed on the initiator of the movement when expressions like 'freedom of the wrist moving down' and 'wrist staccato' are used. The researcher's responsibility is to interpret the meaning of these expressions and to decide on an appropriate term to use throughout the course of the study.

- For the purpose of this study the different levers will be named in order from big to small. ...piano playing is not a matter of muscular strength and endurance. We have a rather complex set of muscles at our command. Some of these muscles are small and weak, made for precision work, others are strong and powerful. If we can activate these larger muscles properly, we do not need to strengthen the weaker ones. We must learn the kind of coordination that enables us to put to use the necessary equipment and to play without any trace of fatigue... (Sandor 1981:16).
- The reaction of the identified authors on the use and movement of these levers will be given. Discrepancies in the terminology, used by the different authors, will be followed by an appropriate term (in italics and in brackets), used by the researcher, throughout the course of this study.
- Reactions of other authors or works studied by the researcher will be given.
- To summarize, the researcher will draw a conclusion of the reactions on each lever.

## 2.2 The whole body - upper body (*torso*) and lower body

- **Sitting position**  
The whole body is involved in the sitting position and the majority of authors mention this as the starting point.

### 2.2.1 J Gát

Gát (1958:45) states that it is a particularly difficult task to teach children a proper sitting position and that the feet can usually only find support with the aid of a footstool. The chair should be hard, level and adjustable.

The sitting height (corresponding to the correct posture) is determined in the first place by the proportion of the trunk (*torso*) to the upper arm. A pianist with a long trunk (*torso*) and shorter upper arms has to sit on a very low stool, while a pianist with a longer upper arm is compelled to use a high stool.



A generally valid distance of the stool from the piano cannot be even approximately determined. An important part is played here not only by the length of the forearm, but also by the length of the upper arm and by the relation of both of these to each other. Gát states that at best the following rule can be applied:

Seat yourself at such a distance from the piano as will enable the trunk (*torso*) to move freely in every direction and use the forearm and the upper arm with perfect freedom (Gát 1958:46).

### 2.2.2 J W Bastien

Bastien's first concern regarding the young beginner's sitting position is the 'correct' height. He suggests that the pupil should be in proper alignment with the keys in order for his hands and forearms to be in a straight line over the keys.

An adjustable piano chair, cushions, or even several telephone books are recommended to raise the child to the correct level (Bastien 1977:142).

He (1977:143) also suggests support for the feet. To balance the child, he should be given support, and assurance that he will not fall off the chair (bench). A footstool is recommended.

Bastien (1977:143) recommends that the correct distance of the upper body (*torso*) from the piano should be taught to the child. The only guideline that he gives is to hold the forearms in a straight line above the keys.

### 2.2.3 J Last

The first thing to adopt is a good sitting position. Last (1980:14) explains a good sitting position as one in which the height may vary. She says the most generally accepted and practical position is when the pupil is seated at the piano at the correct height, which is when the arm, from elbow to wrist, slopes neither up nor down. If the child's feet do not reach the floor, use a footstool (Last 1980:8).



According to Last (1980:8) crossing the arms, with the left hand at a higher octave and the right hand at a lower octave can test the distance from the piano. If the hand cannot be placed over a complete five finger group of notes without leaning backward, the pupil is too close.

Last (1980:17) suggests that pianists should not sit on the whole surface of the chair.

#### **2.2.4 G Sandor**

Sandor (1981:31) promotes a sitting position with stability and mobility at the same time.

By stability is meant a sitting position, which enables the pianist to sit comfortably and by mobility is meant a sitting position, which enables the pianist to move freely and effortlessly. In order to obtain this position Sandor suggests that most of the body weight rests on the bench, but the feet support some of the weight, especially when the body is in motion. Whenever the hands or arms are in motion, the balance of the body changes, even though the change is very slight. The body assists the arm and hands and brings them to the position where they can act to their best advantage.

#### **2.2.5 K S Taylor**

According to Taylor (1983:7) for the most efficient use of the fingers, one should sit at such a height that the underside of the forearm is parallel to the floor. The stool should be adjusted accordingly.

The distance from the keyboard will be such that, when the torso is tilted slightly forward, the upper arms will fall freely from the shoulder with the elbows a little forward from the body. The tips of the longer fingers will just reach to the base of the black keys.

### 2.2.6 L Conus

Conus supports a comfortable sitting position. The arms should be dropped freely at the sides of the body, shoulders completely relaxed.

Lift your wrists to the keyboard, keeping shoulders and arms relaxed... The arms should hang freely, with the elbows completely relaxed...hand and forearm level (Conus 1984:6).

### 2.2.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Matthay specifies that the chair is at the correct distance from the piano when there is an approximate 80-85 degree angle between the lower and upper body and an approximate 92-95 degree angle between the forearm and the upper arm (Matthay 1932:106).

Browning (1981:24) states that a comfortable seating position must be found which will vary with each individual pianist. Torsos are not the same length and thickness. Arm and leg lengths will determine alterations in seating.

### 2.2.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors can be used as guidelines for all pianists at all times:

- the position in front of the piano will vary with each individual pianist. Torsos are not the same length and thickness. Arm and leg lengths will determine alterations in seating
- the piano chair should be hard, level and adjustable
- most of the body weight rests on the chair, and the rest of the body weight is supported either by the feet on the floor, or the feet on a footstool
- the pupil should not sit on the whole surface of the chair
- the chair is at the correct height when the underside of the forearm is parallel to the floor and level with the keyboard

- the chair is at the correct distance from the piano when there is an approximate 80-85 degree angle between the lower and upper body and an approximate 92-95 degree angle between the forearm and the upper arm.

## **2.3 The lower body**

### **2.3.1 J Gát**

Gát (1958:42) stresses that if the main weight of the body rests on the feet, the whole body is compelled to assume a strained position, but when properly seated, we lean on our feet while the weight of the body rests mainly on the chair.

### **2.3.2 J W Bastien**

According to Bastien (1977:143) a problem arises when a young pupil is raised to the correct height in the sitting position. The pupil's feet are now swinging freely back and forth in the air, unsupported. He already stated (see 2.2.2) that a footstool should be used if the feet cannot reach the floor. It must, however, be realized that the reason for using a footstool is to enable the feet, as part of the lower body, to support the torso.

### **2.3.3 J Last**

Last (1980:8) recommends the use of a footstool if the child's feet do not reach the floor. Those who can reach the floor should sit slightly forward on the stool, so that a little of the weight of the legs rests upon the feet. Last also says that the legs may neither be sprawled at an awkward angle nor crossed. According to her (1980:18) the most natural position is towards the pedals, the right foot a little forward from the left.



#### 2.3.4 G Sandor

Sandor (1981:31) explains the use of the lower body very clearly by saying that most of the body weight rests on the bench. The feet, however, support some of the body weight, especially when the body is in motion. Whenever the hands or arms are in motion, the balance of the body changes, even though the change is very slight.

Sandor (1981:32) stresses the use of the feet as support when there is movement to the extremes of the piano. The feet can help to balance these motions of the body either by moving one foot in the opposite direction or by turning the other heel in the direction the body is leaning, thereby supporting it more effectively.

#### 2.3.5 K S Taylor

Taylor has no comment on the lower body.

#### 2.3.6 L Conus

Conus has no comment on the lower body.

#### 2.3.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Whiteside (1969:31,32) states that the torso rests upon a chair seat. The two ischial bones of the pelvis press against the chair seat. The torso can be supported or boosted by contracting the muscles around these bones. This can involve a transfer of resistance to the feet, away from the ischial bones and the chair seat.

### 2.3.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors, can be used as guidelines for the use of the lower body as support during piano playing:

- the body weight rests mainly on the chair and the feet support part of the body weight either on the floor or a footstool
- the feet are never next to each other in the middle under the chair. They are neither sprawled at an awkward angle, nor crossed. They should be in an approximate line with the knees and/or hips, in a position to support the body. This support can take place either with the heel or toe, when moving or swaying to the sides.

## 2.4 The torso (upper body)

Although the participation of the torso is not as visible as that of the smaller levers (arms, hands and fingers), it is just as important.

### 2.4.1 J Gát

According to Gát (1958:42) adaptability of the trunk (*torso*) is required to assure perfect freedom of the motions of the arms. Mobility of the trunk (*torso*) is indispensable in order to permit the use of bent or stretched arm positions in different forms of playing. In addition, the trunk (*torso*) must follow the level of the octaves by means of lateral motions, whenever both arms move in the same direction.

### 2.4.2 J W Bastien

An interesting comment Bastien (1977:143) makes about the torso is that it must be 'straight like a tree'. He calls posture one of the prime concerns for students of all ages and refers to Gát's theory on this issue.

#### 2.4.3 J Last

A proper posture is promoted by Last, but no mention is made of the movement of the torso.

#### 2.4.4 G Sandor

Sandor (1981:30) calls the participation of the upper body (*torso*) and its powerful muscles purposeful and not inhibitive. The constructive role of the upper body (*torso*) muscles is to accommodate the arms while helping to keep the upper body (*torso*) in a mobile but secure condition.

The upper body (*torso*) assists the arm and hands and brings them to the position where they can act to their best advantage. The upper body (*torso*) can move sideways, forward, backward and rotate.

#### 2.4.5 K S Taylor

Taylor (1983:12) only comments on an upright slightly forward posture from which the arms will fall freely.

#### 2.4.6 L Conus

Conus (1984:6) states that a comfortable position at the keyboard, where the arms are dropped freely at the sides, with the shoulders completely relaxed, is preferable.

#### 2.4.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Whiteside (1969:31) states that the torso supports the arms by mobilizing them.



Matthay specifies that the chair is at the correct distance from the piano when there is an approximate 80-85 degree angle between the lower and upper body and an approximate 92-95 degree angle between the forearm and the upper arm (Matthay 1932:106).

#### 2.4.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors on the use of the upper body (*torso*) during piano playing, can be used as guidelines:

- the torso should be straight and bent slightly forward to form an approximate 80-85 degree angle with the lower body
- the torso moves sideways, backwards, forwards and rotates to bring the arms and hands into the best position to play comfortably
- the arms should hang relaxed from the shoulders next to the body.

### 2.5 The upper arm

#### 2.5.1 J Gát

According to Gát (1958:41) the whole body functions as an elastic support in piano playing, but the tasks of the different parts of the body are not of equal importance. The arm has the largest role in absorbing the rebound of the key and dynamic contours are also formed with the aid of the action of the arm.

Gát (1958:92) deals with the movement of the whole arm or upper arm under the heading 'active swing stroke of the upper arm' (*free fall*). A common characteristic of every type of upper arm swing stroke (*free fall*) is the utilization of the arm's mass. He explains that the whole arm participates in the swing stroke (*free fall*), that the hand cannot remain passive and that the finger ends must always be taut. Sometimes small swing strokes (*free falls*) are applied so that the movement is hardly visible, but in order to produce a fortissimo effect a bigger movement of the whole arm is required.

### 2.5.2 J W Bastien

Bastien (1977:165) deals with the arm under the heading 'Arm drops, large muscle motion' (*free fall*).

Bastien recommends that the pupil 1) supports the third finger with the thumb, raises the forearm in the air, and 2) drops the finger onto the key, holding it for a short time before lifting off again. In this way, according to Bastien (1977:165), key names can be learnt at the same time during the first few lessons.

Bastien (1977:165) suggests that support of a finger while dropping the arm weight will give the student a feeling of security at impact and it will give him the correct concept for holding his fingers in a curved position later when the support is not used. In the two following photographs, it is clear that the finger making contact with the key is neither straight, nor caved in at the first joint, but in a firm playing position.

**Photo no 1** (Bastien 1977:166)



i16108127  
b15473430



Photo no 2 (Bastien 1977:166)

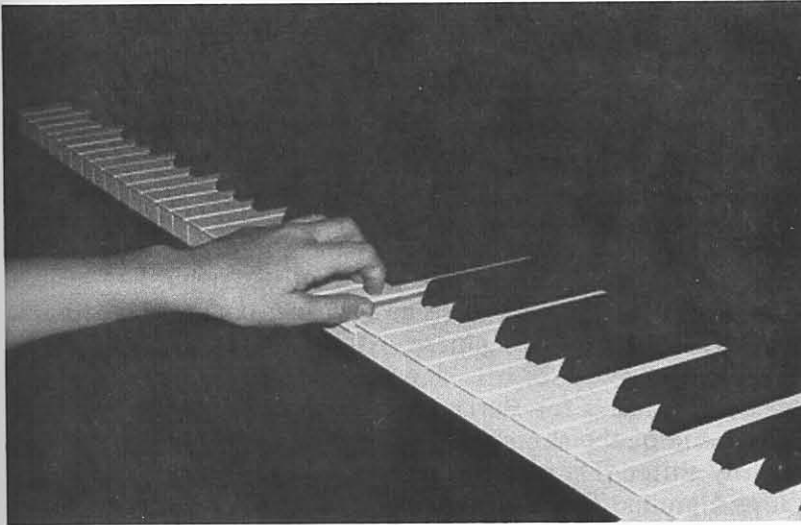


Bastien also suggests that chords may be played in the same manner:

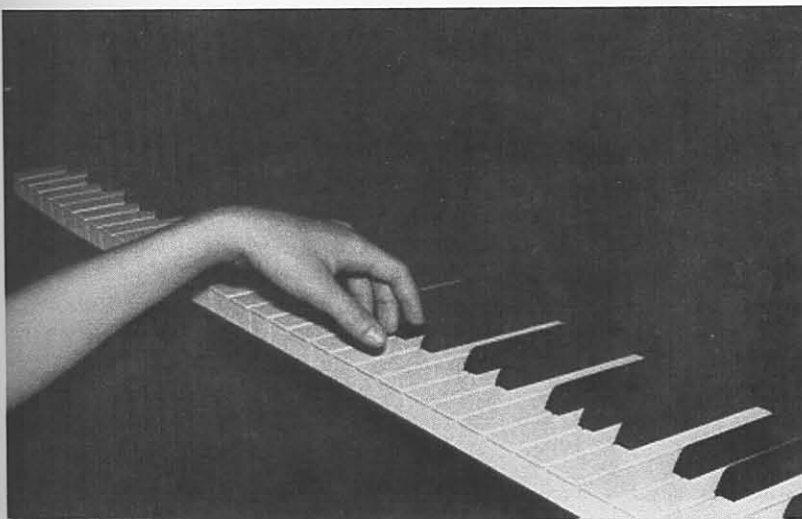
...prepare the chord in the air and drop on to the keys keeping the fingers well curved. Fifths, sixths (octaves later) may also be played in this manner (Bastien 1977:165).

Although the whole arm is involved, Bastien (1977:169) refers to this as a 'down-up wrist motion' and connects it to playing slurs or phrases. He places the emphasis on the wrist, as this is the initiator of the movement and recommends that the movement should be demonstrated to the pupil by playing a two-note slur. Show the pupil what it looks like to drop on to the key with a slight lower wrist motion, and release the key with a higher wrist motion. Several terms may be used to describe this process: 1) down-up wrist, 2) drop-release, or 3) drop-roll (rolling inwards towards the piano and lifting at the same time). In the following two photographs these movements are illustrated:

**Photo no 3** (Bastien 1977:169) (*Free fall*)



**Photo no 4** (Bastien 1977:169) (*Float off*)



Bastien (1977:170) suggests that the end of a phrase should be compared to a singer taking a breath at the last note of a phrase. At the piano the breath is taken when the hand is lifted and the line is broken. He says the first note of a slur should be slightly louder and the last note should be slightly softer. The student may be told to 'float off' on the last note of a slurred group.

### 2.5.3 J Last

Last explains 'arm freedom' as the horizontal movement of the arm over the keyboard. The arm is there to steer the hand to the required position to enable the fingers to play their part without any sense of strain on them.

Movement up and down the keyboard is controlled by the arm, which carries the hand to its destination (Last 1980:21).

The heading Last uses (1980:26) in connection with the arm, is 'arm-weight and chords'. She gives an exercise on a progression of sixths or a first inversion chord on E, E, F, F, G, G, etc. She confirms the best results are obtained when played very slowly with a relaxed forearm and firm fingers. She warns that this must not be confused with a 'collapse' of the wrist. This movement needs to be carefully controlled and Last uses the phrase 'sinking into a chair' (*free fall*).

According to Last (1980:27), when producing a singing melody at a moderate speed, the pianist uses an 'arm drop' (*free fall*) from one to the next note, with a slight outward swing of the elbow, bringing the arm into a position to play the next key. During 'cantabile' playing when more weight is added by the forearm, the fingers remain firm, but the flexibility of the wrist controls the situation. Last warns against an exaggeration of this movement, when the arm *jerks* outward almost before the note has sounded.

Last (1980:28) also stresses that arm weight is essential during chord sequences.

### 2.5.4 G Sandor

Sandor (1981:20) explains that the muscles in the shoulders and back are used to raise the upper arm and those muscles in the chest, back and upper body (*torso*) are used to direct the upper arm downward. As these muscles are the strongest in the body, fatigue can easily be avoided by using them.



The upper arm can move vertically, horizontally, and circularly as well as rotate with the help of the back, shoulders and chest.

Sandor presents a set of technical or motion patterns that are fundamental to piano playing. They are comprehensive in the sense that these patterns and combinations serve as technical solutions to any and all pianistic writing.

It may seem pretentious to claim that a few technical formulas will answer any pianistic problems, but, in the final analysis, it is possible to reduce and condense any and all movements of the human body into a very limited number of motion patterns (Sandor 1981:35).

The first pattern Sandor (1981:42) presents is 'free fall'. This pattern involves the whole arm and is described in three stages: 1) the lift, 2) the fall and 3) the landing.

- 1) When the arm is lifted it is extremely important that the entire arm and hand is immobile before the drop (*free fall*) starts so as not to interfere with the force of gravity either by increasing the acceleration or by decreasing it.
- 2) In the second stage, the arm, hand, and fingers fall at the same time. While active muscles do the lift (*float off*), the fall is completely passive, and there should be no interference with the acceleration caused by the force of gravity.
- 3) During this stage the energy of the force of gravity is transferred into the keys and a slight rebound of the hand and fingers, and notably, of the wrist takes place. Sandor stresses that the wrist must be in a relatively low position at landing in order to cushion the fall naturally.

### 2.5.5 K S Taylor

If a warm, rich tone is needed for a chord passage or melody, Taylor (1983:13) states that finger touch alone cannot provide it and that the support of a heavier lever is needed to produce such a rich, warm result in sound. The act of touch when using the arm actively behind the finger is a complex one involving a combination of arm, wrist and fingers.

According to Taylor (1983:13) the whole arm will be involved to a greater or lesser degree. For a tone of moderate intensity the leverage of the forearm and the supple rise and fall of the wrist will be the most prominent and visible features. For heavier tone there will be a more appreciable lifting of the upper arm and as the arm lifts so will the wrist rise with complete freedom and suppleness. The fall of the arm transfers its energy and weight to the firmly shaped fingers through the medium of the wrist, which is now pulled downward by the arm (*free fall*). As the wrist is the bridge or link between the arm and the hand, the wrist itself must be firm at the moment of tone production to overcome key-resistance, otherwise control of tone will be lacking.

There will be a complete freedom of wrist and forearm in the uplift before tone production... (Taylor 1983:14) (*float off*).

Depending on the intensity of sound that is needed, an energy-assisted fall of the arm can produce an even bigger sound than *ff*. Taylor calls this an arm 'thrust'.

### 2.5.6 L Conus

According to Conus (1984:6), in a relaxed state, the arms should hang freely at the sides; shoulders and the elbows should be completely relaxed. The elbow never moves independently, it merely follows the hand and the wrist. Conus only refers to the arms, during the movements of the hand, wrist and forearm, as supportive levers. A good example of this is the description of the up-down movement of the wrist. Conus stresses the proper use of the wrist as essential for the development of a fluent technique. The basic wrist movements are described in conjunction with the movements of the arm.

The down wrist motion uses the weight of the arm into the keys to produce a full, secure tone (*free fall*). In practising the basic up and down movements in wrist exercises, exaggerate the size of the movement to master the movement and help feel the arm weight. Gradually the movement is refined, until it is barely noticeable (Conus 1984:7).

The simplest down-up wrist movement he describes is the two-note slur. The movement of the wrist from side to side is needed in order to bring the fingers into better alignment with the keys and the arm weight into better use. The



wrist shifts, bringing the hand and forearm with it. The upper arm hangs freely and the elbow is relaxed. The weight is 'distributed' where it is needed.

Conus suggests the practice of wrist and other exercises and passages from the literature with the forearm lower than the wrist and hand. This makes it much easier to feel the arm weight into the keys.

### 2.5.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Coviello (1934:18), Whiteside (1955:37) and Lhevinne (1972:21) name the movement of the whole arm (*free fall*) as one of the most important movements in piano playing.

Lhevinne (1972:21) associates the whole arm movement with a low wrist, which at some stages can move below the keyboard. During this movement the weight of the arm is released onto the fingers in order to produce a round, warm and rich sound.

Although Lhevinne does not mention the arm in the next quotation, its movement is clearly implied and he explains the movement at the end of a phrase very precisely:

The wrist must be gradually raised until the finger leaves the key, as an airplane leaves the ground; and of course, the key itself ascends gradually and the damper touches the wire without the 'bumping off' sound (Lhevinne 1972:23).

Whiteside (1955:15) explains the movement at the end of a phrase as the 'follow through' movement which involves the whole arm.

### 2.5.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors on the use of the arm and its different movements in piano playing, can be used as guidelines:

- the arm moves vertically, horizontally, circularly and rotates
- the proper use of the wrist is dependent on the proper use of the arm



- the weight of the arm is used to produce a warm, rich sound and the movement required to produce this sound is one of the fundamental movements in piano playing. It requires a combination of arm, wrist and finger movements
- the researcher decided on the term '**free fall**' used by Sandor (1981:42) and summarizes the guidelines for the execution of this movement: This pattern involves the whole arm and is described in three stages: 1) the lift, 2) the fall and 3) the landing.
  - 1) When the arm is lifted it is extremely important that the entire arm and hand is immobile before the drop starts so as not to interfere with the force of gravity either by increasing the acceleration or by decreasing it.
  - 2) In the second stage, the arm, hand, and fingers fall at the same time. While active muscles do the lift, the fall is completely passive, and there should be no interference with the acceleration caused by the force of gravity.
  - 3) During this stage the energy of the force of gravity is transferred into the keys and a slight rebound of the hand and fingers, and, notably, of the wrist takes place.

Sandor (1981:42) stresses that the wrist must be in a relatively low position at landing in order to cushion the fall naturally. The fingers must be firmly curved to be able to absorb the energy transferred to them by the fall of the weight of the arm. During the free fall of the whole arm on a sigh motive or slur, the tips of the fingers the arm is 'falling' on, can simultaneously be strengthened

- for the next movement of the whole arm the researcher decided on a term used by Bastien (1977:169). This movement is actually the preparation for the free fall movement (the lift) and for the purpose of this study is called '**float off**'. The 'float off' movement starts when the wrist is at its lowest position, as at the end of the 'free fall' movement. When the arm is lifted (*float off*), which is done by active muscles, it is extremely important that the entire arm and hand is immobile before the 'free fall' starts. The 'float off' movement is completed when the wrist is at its highest position as at the beginning of the 'free fall' movement. The hand now hangs freely and relaxed from the arm
- the 'free fall' and 'float off' movements are used in conjunction with one another.

## 2.6 The forearm

### 2.6.1 J Gát

Gát (1958:124) deals with the forearm movement under the heading 'the plain forearm tremolo' (*rotation*). According to Gát, the forearm carries out rotation, and the first prerequisite for a successful execution of the movement is the full transmission by the hand of even the slightest movement of the forearm. He says that the plain forearm tremolo (*rotation*) requires a bent arm-position and that the upper arm does not move, nor does the direction of the axis of rotation change. Gát (1958:125) states that these tremolo (*rotation*) movements should be taught to a pupil in its simplest form before moving on to the more complicated forms of the rotation movement. It should not be taught in conjunction with other movements before a certain amount of control is achieved over the execution of the movement on its own.

### 2.6.2 J W Bastien

Bastien (1977:245) describes the rotation movement as similar to that of turning a doorknob. He stresses the fact that only the forearm takes part in this movement and that the upper arm should not 'wave about'.

According to Bastien (1977:246) the rotary movement is used whenever notes in a series move back and forth: Alberti bass or broken octaves etc.

### 2.6.3 J Last

According to Last (1980:50) the turning movement that involves the forearm is called 'rotary freedom'. Rotary freedom is dealt with under its own heading by Last. She explains the movement as the rotation of the arm outward causing the hand to tilt towards the little finger and then swing back again.



#### 2.6.4 G Sandor

According to Sandor (1981:80) the forearm can be moved vertically with the help of the upper arm muscles. It can also rotate on its own axis. During the axial rotation of the forearm the upper arm's role is passive; the upper arm merely places the forearm in the position where it can actively execute the rotary motion, and where it transmits its effect to the fingers.

The next technical pattern presented by Sandor (1981:79) mainly involves the movement of the forearm and is called rotation. Rotation is described from the arm's relaxed position next to the body. The next stage is when the forearm is lifted in this central position, upper arm slightly forward, with the thumb pointing upwards. This is roughly the position of the arm when playing the harp. When the hand is turned horizontally towards the thumb's side, a rotation movement has taken place and the wrist doesn't participate in the motion at all. It doesn't move up or down or else it would obstruct the rotary motion (Sandor 1981:81). According to Sandor (1981:85) the essence of rotary motion lies in a passive upper arm, an active forearm, an inactive wrist, and slightly active fingers.

#### 2.6.5 K S Taylor

Taylor stresses rotary movement as an integral part of piano playing. With the arm swinging loosely at the side, lift the hand on to a table and note that it will fall on the outer side of the hand. A movement to the thumb's side is necessary to bring all the fingers in contact with the surface. This is called a rotary movement. It should be noted that forearm rotation is not an elbow movement but strictly a movement of the forearm.

Of the conscious and visible application of the rotary principle, such passages as tremolos will be assisted by it; almost any kind of passages where notes move in alternate directions (lower-higher) may receive energy assistance from rotation... (Taylor 1983:21).



### 2.6.6 L Conus

Conus (1984:8) recommends the following movement to get the feel of the rotation movement: extend the arms straight out to the front (fingers extended) and rotate the arm (forearm, wrist and hand) back and forth as one unit. Think of turning on an axis, which can be thought of as a line running directly through the centre of your arm, wrist and third finger. In playing, the fingers stay very close to the keys. The movement seems to come from within - there is actually very little motion. The elbow stays relaxed.

Apart from the rotation movement Conus (1984:8) only discusses the movement of the forearm in support of the wrist and hand movements. The movement of the wrist from side to side is needed in order to bring the fingers into better alignment with the keys and the arm weight into better use. The wrist shifts, bringing the hand and forearm with it.

### 2.6.7 Other works studied by the researcher

In conjunction with the upper arm the forearm also moves laterally over the keys to bring the arm into the required position for playing (Booth 1934:33).

The primary movement made by the forearm as a unit is the rotation movement and Booth describes the movement as follows:

The movement preliminary to making the sound is chiefly made by a twist of the forearm away from the pivot (Booth 1934:37).

Matthay (1932:22E) emphasises the importance of the rotation movement in piano playing. He explains the direction of the rotation movement from the finger last used, towards the finger next used and stresses that no playing is possible without the intervention of forearm rotation. According to Ortmann (1962:36) rotation is used in Alberti-bass and broken chord patterns.

### 2.6.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors on the use of the forearm and its different movements in piano playing, can be used as guidelines:

- the rotation movement is the only movement identified by the researcher during the literature study which involves mainly the forearm, passive upper arm, passive wrist and slightly active fingers
- to obtain the correct position at the piano: let the arm hang relaxed next to the body, lift the forearm in this position onto a table high enough to be in line with the side of the forearm. The hand should now be in a position to play harp or accordion. Roll the hand to the thumb's side with the palm facing the floor or tabletop. This rolling or turning movement is called rotation. The elbow stays relaxed
- rotation is executed either 1) to the thumb side, or 2) to the fifth finger's side, or 3) to both sides of the hand. A pivot or turning point is always present. The pivot will be on the fifth finger's side if the rotation is executed to the thumb's side and vice versa. If rotation is executed to both sides the turning point is in the middle of the palm. A beginner pupil cannot learn all these rotation movements at the same time. The opportunity to learn these movements at different stages, before executing them simultaneously or in conjunction with other movements, should be given to the beginner pupil. Although Gát (1958:125) gives very difficult exercises on which to practise this movement, he agrees that the rotation movement is more easily learnt by leaving the complicated tremolo (rotation movement to both sides) till later. Begin with the plain tremolo (rotation movement to one side), in which rotation is to be employed without the introduction of other movements
- many simple tasks like eating with a knife and fork requires the rotation movement of the forearm. The rotation of the movement when eating is usually performed to the thumb's side and would be the easiest and logical starting point for the beginner.



## 2.7 The hand as a unit

The expression 'hand as a unit' is used throughout this study when the hand - from the wrist to the finger points - moves as one unit.

### 2.7.1 J Gát

Gát makes no mention of the use of the hand as a unit, but mainly refers to the hand as an extension of the wrist as the initiator of the movement, or the forearm as the initiator of the movement.

### 2.7.2 J W Bastien

The hand as a unit is used in staccato playing, and Bastien (1977:68) explains the hand as a unit under the heading 'staccato touch'.

Bastien says that the beginner can be introduced to staccato touch simply by separating the tones so that they sound short. He again recommends that the movement should be demonstrated to the pupil. For young children the technical means of producing staccato will be slightly different than for older students. Young children feel more secure if they prepare near the key and push up, rather than dropping from a higher point and rebounding. He supports J Last's description of the movement:

Many teachers liken a staccato action to that of a bouncing ball, but one must realize that the ball bounces *up*, not down, though here we are nearer to the mark, because the upward bounce is the *result* of the downward movement. To produce this on the piano, however, the child will imitate the upward bounce *consciously* (Last 1954:29).

### 2.7.3 J Last

The only movement that Last (1980:29) describes that involves the hand as a unit, is a movement she calls 'staccato touch'.



A problem with staccato playing, according to Last (1980:29), is that pupils are taught to achieve this shortness of sound by loosening the wrist to a condition of flabbiness and flinging the arm back after each note had been struck, then bouncing back to the key surface. This means that each time the key is struck the effort starts at the key surface, and though this is possible at a slow speed, at a faster speed it is quite impossible. Last then describes the staccato movement as similar to knocking on a door:

When we knock on a door, we start a little away or we would not be able to make any sound. Having knocked, the hand with its flexible wrist moves back to the place where the knocking action started. So it is with staccato. Let the beginning pianist play its first staccato notes by using the middle finger and tapping out a rhythm on one note...the movement starts at the wrist...the wrist being flexible but never flabby (Last 1980:30).

Last (1980:30) calls staccato a 'one piece movement' involving an activity of the forearm, and a flexible (but not flabby) wrist. According to her, staccato has also been called 'hand touch'. This is because both hand and finger act as one unit; the fingers have no independent down and up action.

Last (1980:23) states that the wrist plays a large part in tone control. It needs to be free and flexible to the immediate requirements of the music. It should never be 'flabby', neither should it be rigid.

#### 2.7.4 G Sandor

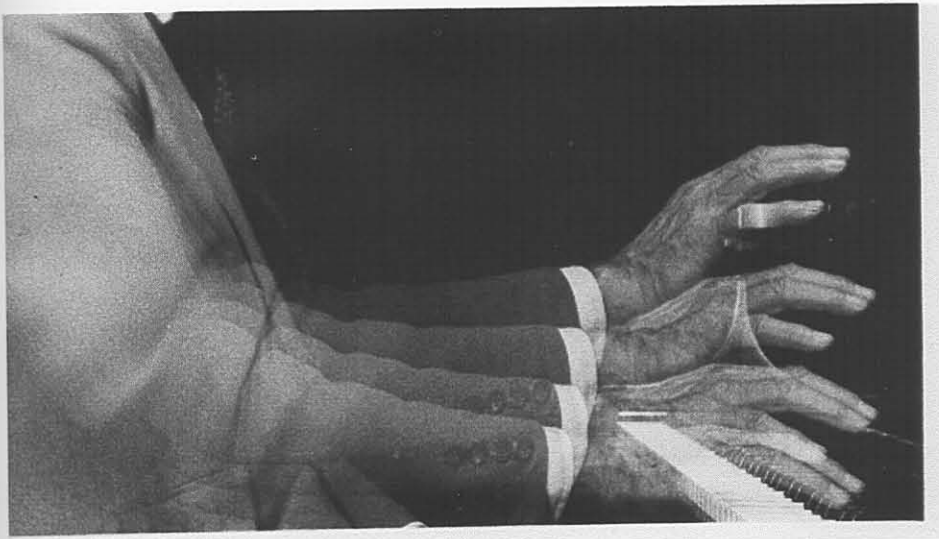
The forearm muscles (1981:25) move the hand. Sandor (1981:22) stresses that to achieve the particular position that is optimal for each finger, the arm (including the wrist and hand) must be shifted continuously in the horizontal dimensions.

Sandor (1981:93) continuously states that no lever in the playing mechanism of the pianist acts on its own. There is always another lever involved in lifting, supporting or changing position of that particular lever's movement.

The only comment Sandor (1981:94) makes about the hand as a unit is during the presentation of the staccato movement. Photograph no 5 shows the synchronized

action of the upper arm, forearm, hand, and fingers in the staccato motion that enables the fingertips to descend vertically. The greatest amount of movement takes place in the hand and fingers, and there is a minimum of movement in the upper arm.

**Photo no 5** (Sandor 1981:94)



### 2.7.5 K S Taylor

The only movement for the hand as a unit that is dealt with, is the hand staccato. According to Taylor (1983:16) hand staccato is the most frequently used form of staccato touch. Very fast or light passages of single notes will be played with a finger-staccato touch and a forearm martellato will provide the power for the brilliant octaves. Hand staccato, supported by the forearm, will be appropriate for the many passages falling between these extremes.

To perform this staccato, a free and supple movement of the hand from the wrist is necessary. Play repeated sixths in C major with the thumb and the fifth fingers to practise this movement. The wrist and forearm will be held on the same level as the keys and the hand will therefore lift slightly higher than the wrist prior to striking the keys.



### 2.7.6 L Conus

Conus (1984:12) describes the movement of the hand as a unit under the heading 'staccato'. Quick, light passages can be played with a 'light wrist' (usually called a wrist staccato). The hand works as a unit from the wrist. This is one of the few times the keys should be approached from above.

### 2.7.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Coviello (1934:23) suggests a free fall exercise as practice for the hand as a unit. Booth endorses Coviello's exercise and describes it by saying:

The movements made are only of the hand from the wrist. The exercises are best practised on one finger at a time held slightly forward (Booth 1934:38).

### 2.7.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors on the use of the hand as a unit and its different movements in piano playing, can be used as guidelines:

- during the explanation of the 'staccato' movement, the identified authors deal with the use of the hand as a unit. It is called wrist staccato, because movement from the wrist initiates the movement. It is also called hand staccato, because the hand and fingers, from the wrist, move as one unit
- the hand should be slightly higher than the wrist at the beginning of the movement. Avoid a flabby wrist or flinging the hand back after every movement
- Last compares the staccato movement to that of a knocking movement. During the knocking movement the hand is curved into a loose fist and the whole hand is working as a unit, moving towards the object (door). During staccato playing the fingers are rounded and firm, working as a unit (fingers should not move independently of the hand) and moving towards the piano. If the knocking movement is not started a little distance away from the door, no sound will be possible. The staccato movement starts in the air, not too far away from the keys.



The energy of the movement is projected into the instrument and is similar to the knocking movement.

## 2.8 The fingers

### 2.8.1 J Gát

Gát states that the most important subdivision of piano playing is finger technique. The work of the fingers is not only of great importance in the active swing-stroke (*free fall*) of the fingers but also in transmitting the force of the arms.

The discussion Gát (1958:143) has on the characteristics of the fingers is very informative and therefore a shortened rendering of the discussion is given here.

He describes the thumb as an outer finger and much shorter than the neighbouring second finger. This inclines the use of the forearm rotation movement in scale progression, which endangers the velocity and evenness of playing.

The second finger's performance, contrary to general belief, leaves much to be desired. It is overburdened and stiffened by the movements required in everyday life. Because of its comparatively outer position it easily acts as an elongation of the arm in striking a key. This could produce uneven playing in the same way as the thumb.

The third finger is the longest and inclined to become passive. It should be kept taut (bent), or the third phalanx will 'give' or bend inwards after the stroke.

The fourth finger is connected with the third and fifth fingers by junctures. If the third and fifth fingers remain unmoved, the junctures will greatly impede the motion of the fourth finger. The general viewpoint that the fourth finger is weak and slow could not be further from the truth. The striking force of the finger is proportionate to its length and its agility even surpasses that of the other fingers. Because the fourth finger is not as often used

in everyday life as the other fingers, special care should be taken to develop it in piano playing. It must be remembered that the fourth finger is at a disadvantage only if the neighbouring fingers are kept immobile.

The fifth finger is one of the most muscular fingers. This is obvious when its role in octave playing is looked at. Its strokes, however, are weak on account of its shortness and small mass. As it is an outer finger, the fifth finger's active participation should not be replaced by forearm strokes.

Gát (1958:143) stresses the fact that the circumstances under which the fingers are best capable of accomplishing their task should be found. Each finger should be able to move independently, but with the supportive movement of the rest of the hand and forearm.

### 2.8.2 J W Bastien

- Second to fifth fingers

Bastien (1977:165) deals with the thumb on its own, apart from the 'other' fingers. The only information available on the 'other' fingers is found in the section dealing with posture and hand position. Bastien uses chords and five finger positions to shape the fingers and to develop the correct hand position.

Bastien suggests the playing of triads, which requires curved fingers. In addition, the hand easily forms the correct position with the bridge of the hand held up with the knuckles protruding. In the beginning the student will have to concentrate on the arched position of the hand, and he will have to work at maintaining firm, curved fingers. Young children, especially, have weak fingers. The tendency is to cave in at the first joint on the second, third, fourth and fifth fingers. The little finger is particularly weak, and in addition to caving in, it often plays on the side, falling over.



Bastien (1977:169) deals with legato playing under its own heading 'Legato touch' and explains the principle by stating that it requires the pupil to play a key, hold it and release it when the next key is played. He says that the process requires intricate finger coordination, which may take some time to develop. Bastien refers to Gát who explains this principle by the example of a person walking. One foot comes down, the other goes up, and the process is repeated over and over.

- The thumb

Bastien (1977:172) suggests that the beginner be exposed to exercises preparing them for scale playing within the first year. In the beginning this may be just turning the thumb under first one finger, then another. The thumb should be turned under smoothly without twisting the hand and arm out of shape. When the student first begins to turn the thumb under, he may start by turning under the second finger. The next step is to turn the thumb under 3, and finally turn under 4. Crossing a finger over the thumb is just as important as turning the thumb under. The crossing should be made as smooth as possible.

### 2.8.3 J Last

Last (1980:20,21) says that pure finger action starts from the knuckle and, without any added activity from the hand, produces only a limited tonal range. Last does not actively promote the five-note compass, but she says that the idea is not to banish it altogether because it is important in shaping the hand and getting the feel of the keys. She suggests that the fingertips be kept close to the keys and that finger movement is limited, until the finger ends are strong enough to carry extra energy.

Although Last deals with legato under its own heading, she describes the touch as follows:

The fingers 'meet' at the bottom and do not pass each other on the way up and down, as would a seesaw (Last 1980:27).



She uses the image of walking: one foot remains on the ground until the next reaches it.

In cantabile playing arm weight is added to the fingers. The arm gently relaxes, allowing its weight to be transferred onto the fingers (never relax the fingertips).

The thumb is dealt with on its own by Last (1980:25). She declares that problems connected to the thumb are due to two reasons: 1) the use of too much assistance from the forearm and 2) too slow a reaction in the lateral direction. Last (1980:36) suggests that as the right hand prepares to play a scale ascending, the elbow swings away from the body, causing the fingers to lie obliquely over the keys and the thumb to be in a position ready to move. When the first note has been struck with the thumb, it moves under the second finger rather than back to its normal resting position. From then on it travels continuously. This movement also applies to the left hand descending.

#### 2.8.4 G Sandor

Sandor (1981:18) stresses the fact that only the fingers are in actual contact with the keys and that all other activities will be geared and limited to the role of helping them.

Actually all our arm and body motions serve no other purpose than to help and to cooperate with the fingers (Sandor 1981:52).

Antagonistic muscles located in the forearm execute all vertical finger motions, therefore the fingers' position is correct only if it is placed as if it were an extension of its corresponding muscles. This means that there must be a slight horizontal adjustment in the position of the arm for each finger.

According to Sandor (1981:21), although each of the fingers is different in length and shape, four of them (the index finger, the third, the fourth and the fifth finger) are similar in structure. The thumb, however, is different in structure, as well as in length and shape. The thumb needs special attention and it requires a different wrist, hand and arm position from the other fingers.

The fingers must be seen as the extension and continuation of the forearm muscles and tendons that move them. The fingers need continuous adjusting motions by the wrist, forearm, and the upper arm to accommodate them and enable them to move freely, without hindrance and force, in order to produce the kind of motions that these components are capable of making. One of the most common mistakes is to use either the fingers alone or only wrist and arm motions. Fingers and arms are supposed to complement, not to substitute for, each other. It is obvious that relying on the fingers alone causes overwork in the forearm muscles, while the use of only the wrist and arm produces sloppy, inaccurate and inarticulate playing.

According to Sandor (1981:63) the thumb's most damaging position during movement is the habit of placing it under the palm. The thumb should continuously be kept alongside the hand and never be permitted under the palm. Only then can it move in an unhindered way and be free to fall vertically. The thumb is most agile and moves in any direction while it is alongside the hand.

### 2.8.5 K S Taylor

According to Taylor (1983:7) the position in finger-touch that is the most effective and most economical of energy and effort is to have an arched hand with knuckles slightly higher than the wrist. The tips of the fingers rest on the key-surface. Resting the forearm from elbow to wrist on a flat horizontal surface such as a tabletop easily checks the position of the forearm and hand; hold the fingers well rounded. Note that the back of the hand rises slightly from wrist to knuckles.

Taylor (1983:8) recommends a rounded finger position in most cases of brilliant touch, but when used in conjunction with the arm, as in cantabile playing, the finger will be straightened slightly more. He stresses that support is provided from the bigger levers to the fingers when a bigger sound is needed than that which the fingers can produce on their own.



### 2.8.6 L Conus

Conus (1984:13) suggests a high finger action when practising exercises at a slow tempo, to strengthen the small muscles of the hand and fingers. These muscles support the weight of the arm. All fingers, including the thumb, must strike the key with the same movement (in the same way) in order to produce a consistent tone. The fingers should work from the first joint (hand joint) and work as a unit (lever) like small hammers. The thumb should work independently from the side of the hand. The wrist should not be brought into play. It should be emphasized that the finger action strengthens the hand and finger in order for them to work properly and support the weight of the arm. Higher finger action is not needed for most playing, but this training is essential.

### 2.8.7 Other works studied by the researcher

Whiteside points out the crux of the matter in the next quotation:

Training the completely co-ordinated arm will ensure the co-operation of the hand and fingers. Training the hand and fingers for independence does not ensure complete co-operation of the arm (Whiteside 1969:176).

Whiteside (1969:118) disapproves of the independent use of the fingers, as their muscle power is totally inadequate for producing a full range of dynamics.

### 2.8.8 Conclusion

The following summary of the opinions of the identified authors on the use of the fingers and its different movements in piano playing, can be used as guidelines:

- a fact that is specifically emphasized by all the authors, is that finger action is never an independent action, but always supported by all or some of the bigger levers, or muscles in the bigger levers. The result of this is a continuous adjustment of motion by the forearm, wrist and hand in order to support the fingers.
- the fingers start working from the joint connecting them to the hand but are always supported by the hand and muscles of the forearm and upper arm



- fingertips should be strengthened to carry the weight of the arm and should never collapse at the first joint. To ensure this, keep the fingers close to the keys initially until they are strong enough to carry extra energy. During the 'free fall' movement, the fingertips can, during the process of learning to use the whole arm as a unit, be strengthened simultaneously
- when the fingers are working on their own, there is no added 'activity' by the hand or the wrist apart from support given by them
- fingers must be strong enough to carry the weight of the arm into the keys without collapsing
- the fingers are not isolated units, but should be seen as part of the arm, wrist and hand
- keep the arm and wrist in line with the finger that is playing at that moment. This means that there must be a slight horizontal change in the position of the wrist and forearm for each finger
- the thumb is dealt with separately by all the different authors. The thumb's position alongside the hand puts it in a different category. The biggest problem is the placement of the thumb underneath the hand. The only position where the thumb is agile and from where it can move in any direction is alongside the hand, therefore exercises for putting the thumb 'under' are necessary.

## 2.9 Chapter conclusion

- The positions and basic movements of the different levers were outlined in chapter two. The literature study that was done on the basic movements and positions of levers in piano playing revealed a congruent reaction from the majority of the authors.
- They all agree on the crucial fact that the beginner should learn the correct movements from the beginning.
- Although some of the terminology differs, the leading authors in the field of piano technique agree on the basic movements that each lever should be able to execute.

- These movements were summarized by the researcher at the end of the comments authors made on each specific lever.

The basic recommendations by the leading authors are:

- A proper sitting position (The whole body).
- Position and movements of the lower body.
- Position and movements of the upper body.
- Use of the whole arm:
  - 'Free fall' movement
  - 'Float off' movement
- Use of the forearm:
  - rotation movement
- Use of the hand as a unit:
  - staccato movement
- Finger movement - the guidelines are:
  - the fingers start working from the joint connecting them to the hand but are always supported by the hand and muscles of the forearm and upper arm
  - the first phalanx is always firmly bent
  - when the fingers are working, there is no added 'activity' by the hand or the wrist apart from support given by them
  - keep the arm and wrist in line with the finger that is playing at that moment. This means that there must be a slight horizontal change in the position of the wrist and forearm for each finger
  - the thumb is dealt with separately by all the different authors. The thumb's position alongside the hand puts it in a different category. The biggest problem is the placement of the thumb underneath the hand. The only position where the thumb is agile and from where it can move in any direction is alongside the hand, therefore exercises for putting the thumb 'under' are necessary
  - fingertips should be strengthened to carry the weight of the arm and should never collapse at the first joint. During the 'free fall' movement, the fingertips

can, during the process of learning to use the whole arm as a unit, simultaneously be strengthened.



## ANALYSIS OF BEGINNER COURSES

## Introduction

Study was done on the generally accepted, and most regularly used, beginner courses. They were measured against the recommendations of well-known authors in the field of piano technique, on what the basic movements are that a pianist should be able to execute.

In the first lesson books in the different courses were used by the author. The main purpose is from which the pupil is taught the very first and basic movements in a piano and where the first habits are formed. After (in most cases) practice in the technique and performance books as well, no new information was found.

Success or failure as a pianist depends largely on the early years, when good or bad habits are being formed (Last 1980:21).

The author of a beginner book's responsibility to explore the field of technique thoroughly in order to structure the information regarding all the aspects of technique in a way that the beginner is given a solid theoretical, manual and listening basis to build on. As music teachers are not necessarily specialists in the field of technique. Authors of beginner books should be the specialists in their field and should advise to the teachers the difficulties to be overcome by the pupil. The teacher's responsibility is then to interpret the information presented in the beginner book, and to make sure the pupil understands the theory and performs the exercises correctly. This is supported by Kiseff et al:

The exercises in Part 1 of *The Russian School of Piano Playing* are divided into groups to the teacher the difficulties to be overcome by the pupil. The teacher supervises the execution of these different types of exercises, he/she immediately develops the different aspects of the pupil's technique and guides the pupil to work conscientiously towards a sound piano technique (Kiseff, 1983:3).

As there is a structural development of all aspects of piano tuition, the author of a beginner book should plan the sequence, structure and explanation of all information thoroughly. No aspect of music should be neglected. The researcher is convinced

### 3 ANALYSIS OF BEGINNER COURSES

#### 3.1 Introduction

A study was done on the generally accepted, and most regularly used, beginner courses. They were measured against the recommendations of well-known authors in the field of piano technique, on what the basic movements are that a pianist should be able to execute.

Only the first lesson books in the different courses were used for the study. These are the books from which the pupil is taught the very first and basic movements in piano playing, and where the first habits are formed. Although most courses provide teacher's guides, technique and performance books as well, no new information was found in these books and the concepts stated in the lesson books were only repeated.

It is the author of a beginner book's responsibility to explore the field of beginner piano tuition thoroughly in order to structure the information regarding all the aspects of music in such a way that the beginner is given a solid theoretical, musical and technical basis to build on. All music teachers are not necessarily specialists in the field of beginner tuition. Authors of beginner books should be the specialists in their field and should illustrate to the teachers the difficulties to be overcome by the pupil. The teacher's responsibility is then to interpret the information presented in the beginner books and to see to it that the pupil understands the theory and performs the exercises correctly. This fact is supported by Kisell et al:

All the exercises in Part 1 of **The Russian School of Piano Playing** are intended to illustrate to the teacher the difficulties to be overcome by the pupil... If during the lessons, the teacher supervises the execution of these different types of exercises, he will systematically develop the different aspects of the pupil's technique... and generally train the pupil to work conscientiously towards a sound piano technique (Kisell et al 1978:3).

To ensure a structural development of all aspects of piano tuition, the author of a beginner book should plan the sequence, structure and explanation of all information meticulously. No aspect of music should be neglected. The researcher is especially

concerned about the forming of correct habits of movement during play. Habits are formed within the first few months of taking music lessons and the basic movements in piano playing should be systematically presented, clearly explained and illustrated.

The recommendations of well-known authors are:

- a proper sitting position (position of the lower body and torso)
- use of the whole arm in a 'free fall' and a 'float off' movement
- use of the forearm in a rotation movement
- use of the hand as a unit in a staccato movement
- finger movement from the phalanx joining the hand and fingers, supported by the bigger levers
- use of the thumb alongside and underneath the hand.

Different beginner courses were measured against these recommendations.

The study was done on the following beginner courses:

- Thompson (1956) - *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course - Part 1.*
- Burnam (1959) - *Step by Step piano course - Book one.*
- Pace (1961) - *Music for Piano - Book 1.*
- Clark and Goss (1973) - *The Music Tree - A plan for musical growth.*
- Bastien (1985) - *Bastien Piano Basics - Piano - Primer Level.*
- Waterman and Harewood (1988) - *Me and my piano - very first lessons for the young pianist - part 1.*
- Schaum (1996) - *John W Schaum Piano Course - Level pre A - The green book.*
- Palmer, Morton and Lethco (1999) - *Alfred's basic piano library. Lesson book Level 1a.*

These are courses named by Uszler et al (1991:122).



## 3.2 Thompson (1956) - *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course - Part 1*

### 3.2.1 Analysis

Thompson starts his book with a letter to the parents and teachers explaining that this course was designed to present the easiest possible approach to piano playing. Part one was specifically designed to develop a fluency in note reading:

...the number one enemy with most young students (Thompson 1956:1).

Firstly the keyboard (1956:4-7) is introduced. Names of the white keys are given and how the black keys are structured is explained. On a picture of part of the keyboard, the location of C is explained. The music staff, treble and bass clefs are introduced. Bar lines, time signatures and the numbering of fingers are dealt with. Middle C, using different note values, is played with the thumb of the right and left hand respectively (1956:8-12).

- Researcher: No guidelines are given on how the thumb should be used. The tendency is to use the thumb in conjunction with the forearm, resulting in uneven playing.

The notes D - G (ascending) and their locations and the notes B - F (descending) and their locations are introduced to the right and left hands respectively during this course (1956:13-39). The note values and rests dealt with during this course include that of the semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note) and dotted minim (dotted half note) (1956:13-39). The rhythmical aspect of emphasizing the first beat of each measure is stressed. Worksheets concentrating on revision of the previous work on note values, names and location of notes and time signatures are regularly given (1956:13-39).

- Researcher: The suggestion to put emphasis on the first beat of each bar is an important rhythmical aspect for the pupil to take note of.

### 3.2.2 Conclusion

Thompson's *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course - Part 1*, was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the authors in the field of piano technique.

The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
No mention is made of the sitting position.
- The lower body  
No mention is made of the position of the lower body.
- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
Nothing is said about the use of the whole arm.
- The forearm  
Nothing is said about the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
Neither the staccato nor any other touch using the hand as a unit is introduced.
- The fingers  
Although all the fingers are used in *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course - Part 1*, no explanation is given of how they should be moved. The pupil is not informed about the position of the arm or of the fact that the arm is at all involved in playing at this stage.

### 3.3 Burnam (1959) - *Step by Step piano course - Book one*

#### 3.3.1 Analysis

Burnam's book starts with the numbers of the fingers. This is followed by the structure of the keyboard and the location of middle C. The pupil is encouraged to play middle C with the thumb or first finger.

- Researcher: No indication of how the thumb should be moved is given.

The treble and bass clefs are introduced. It is explained that the notes to the top or the right hand side of middle C are written in the treble clef and the notes to the bottom or the left-hand side of middle C are written in the bass clef on a grand music staff. When the stems of the crotchets go down, the left hand plays and when the stems of the crotchets go up, the right hand plays (1959:6-11). The bar line, double bar line and bars are introduced. Pieces using only middle C's are given (1959:12-14).

- Researcher: Although the pupil has been playing only C's with both thumbs for 9 pages now, no guidelines are given on how to move the thumb or any other finger.

The tie is introduced (1959:24-31). The notes D-G (ascending) in the right hand and B-F (descending) in the left and their locations are introduced in this course. The note values and rests dealt with during this course include the crotchet (quarter note), minim (half note) and dotted minim (dotted half note). The time signatures 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 are explained during this course (1959:12-31).

Pieces using all the previously learnt notes and note values are given, as well as games testing the theoretical information dealt with earlier in the course (1959:15-31).

### 3.3.2 Conclusion

Burnam's *Step by Step piano course - Book one*, was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
No mention is made of the sitting position.
- The lower body  
No mention is made of the position of the lower body.



- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
Nothing is said about the use of the whole arm.
- The forearm  
Nothing is said about the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
Nothing is said about the use of the hand as a unit.
- The fingers  
Although all the fingers are used, no explanation is given of how they should be moved. No information about the position of the arm or of the fact that the arm is in any way involved in playing at this stage is given.

### 3.4 Pace (1961) - *Music for Piano - Book 1*

#### 3.4.1 Analysis

Pace (1961:2) starts with the hand position and numbering of the fingers. On a picture of a part of the keyboard the hands (fingers 1-5) are shown in a position to play melodic patterns going up and down in the key of C. The pattern of the melody going up and down is indicated in order by the numbers of the relevant fingers. The concept of keys are not explained; only a picture of the hand position in that key is given. The same melodic pattern is repeated in the key of G. The same concept is practised on the black keys in G flat with fingers 1,3 and 5 (Pace 1961:2-6).

The grand music staff with spaces and lines on it and the treble and bass clefs are explained. Note values (from the crotchet (quarter note) to the semibreve (whole note)), time signatures and some key signatures are dealt with. Short melodies based on the first five notes of the first two sharp and flat keys are played by the pupil to practise the different keys (Pace 1961:7-15).

The pupil is encouraged to play the different melodies in the explained keys and if possible to improvise on them. All the major keys and their key signatures are explained (Pace 1961:18).

- Researcher: Although the pupil has been playing with all his /her fingers for the past 15 pages no mention was made or explanation given of how the movements should be executed. The young beginner usually has no way of strengthening his/her fingers before starting lessons. The tendency is to involve the arm in some or other way in the playing as the fingers are still too weak to play on their own.

Exercises are given in six different keys to practise legato playing. The pupil is advised to do the following:

Although each of your fingers will be touching a key, allow only one note to sound at a time. Let the weight of your arm shift from one finger to the next while you keep a good hand position and a flexible wrist (Pace 1961:21).

- Researcher: A proper hand position has not been explained. How to use the 'weight of the arm' and keep the 'wrist flexible' has not previously been dealt with. To understand these concepts and to be able to execute them is a process of development. To expect a beginner pupil to be able to do this immediately is not realistic.

The phrase, crescendo and decrescendo are introduced (Pace 1961: 22,23).

- Researcher: How to move, in order to phrase and make dynamic differences is not clear.

The pupil is encouraged to play in as many different keys as possible. The teacher and pupil play improvised questions and answers respectively in order to become acquainted with the different keys (Pace 1961:24,25).

The staccato action is introduced. The following guidelines are given:

Move your hand but not your arm, and say “down-up” as you play each note. This will help you develop a good staccato touch (Pace 1961:26).

- Researcher: A flabby movement of the wrist is also a ‘down-up’ movement but does not describe the exact staccato movement. The movement should be described very clearly and should be performed with precision in order to provide the technical basis needed to build an advanced technique on.

The tonic and dominant 7th chords are explained and chord studies are given in the different keys. The tie and slur are dealt with (Pace 1961:27-34).

- Researcher: No mention is made of the movement or sound needed to perform the slur.

A simple melody line in F is given with the instruction to harmonize it using the chords I and V7 and then to transpose it to E and G. More ideas on simple accompaniment figures are given, for example broken chords and half broken chords (Pace 1961:35-38). The minor chord is introduced and the relation between the minor key and its relative major is explained. The pupil is encouraged to write his/her own melody and use the proper clefs, key signatures, bar lines and note values (Pace 1961:39-43).

- Researcher: Although accompaniment figures like broken chords and half broken chords are used no mention is made of the movement involved.

The rest of the pieces in the book are revisions of previous theoretical and practical work done (Pace 1961:44-48).



### 3.4.2 Conclusion

Pace's *Music for Piano - Book 1* was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
No mention is made of the sitting position.
- The lower body  
No mention is made of the position of the lower body.
- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
Although the weight of the whole arm and a flexible wrist are mentioned once, it is not clearly explained.
- The forearm  
Nothing is said about the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
The use of the hand as a unit is mentioned during the introduction of the staccato touch. The touch is not properly explained.
- The fingers  
The fact that the arm weight should be shifted to the next finger when playing with the different fingers is mentioned, but not clearly explained.

## 3.5 Clark and Goss (1973) - *The Music Tree - A plan for musical growth*

### 3.5.1 Analysis

Clark and Goss start in unit one with the concept of high and low. The group of two black notes is shown on a picture of part of the keyboard. High and low are illustrated by asking the pupil to play these notes respectively in different octaves up and down the keyboard. The note values are crotchets (quarter notes) and minims (half notes).

When the stem is down the key is pressed down by the third finger of the left hand and when the stem is up the key is pressed down by the third finger of the right hand. An accompaniment is provided for the teacher.

A strong, rhythmical pulse is emphasized and a simple physical exercise of one full arm swing for a crotchet (quarter note) and two full arm swings for a minim (half note) is suggested. Revision of the previously learnt work is done. The numbering of the fingers is explained and finally the pupil is encouraged to create some pieces using these two notes on his/her own (Clark and Goss 1973:3-11).

- Researcher: The information given to the pupil is clearly explained. However, a perfect opportunity to teach the pupil the 'free fall' movement, falling on the third finger, is passed by. None of the movements executed by the pupil are illustrated or explained.

Unit two focuses on dynamic differences. Whilst practising the concept of high and low, piano and forte signs are explained and added. The notes played are now extended to all the black keys. The keyboard is explained through the structure of the black keys, grouped in two's or three's. On a picture of part of the keyboard all the white keys are named and played by the pupil with the third finger of each hand respectively. Even, rhythmical playing is emphasized. Revision of the previous work is done and the pupil is encouraged to write his/her own piece using the new information and notes (Clark and Goss 1973:12-19).

- Researcher: No explanation is given on how dynamic differences are obtained through specific movements. The use of the third finger on the white keys provides the opportunity to teach the 'free fall' movement.

Unit three explains the slur and legato playing. Playing on the black keys, using fingers three and two in the left hand and three in the right hand, a three-note phrase is performed. It is suggested that the notes be played as smoothly as possible. The *8va*

sign is explained and is used with indicated dynamic differences in the pieces that follow. Rhythmical, even playing is emphasized and revision of all the previous work is done.

As a warm-up exercise a two-note sigh motive, using the second and third finger of each hand respectively, is used (Clark and Goss 1973:21-26).

- Researcher: Although the sigh motive is used, no mention is made of the 'free fall' or 'float off' movements or how these movements should be executed. Legato playing is only described by 'playing as smoothly as possible'.

In unit four the note value of a dotted minim (dotted half note) is explained, as well as the interval of a second. These concepts, as well as all the previous ones, are practised in the next four pieces. At first the pupil practises the interval of a second by playing two adjacent white keys with the second finger of each hand. Then the interval is practised by playing with the second and third fingers of both hands respectively on two adjacent white keys. An exercise on two adjacent notes going up and down, using the fingers two, three and two in both hands respectively, is suggested. Revision of all the previous work is done (Clark and Goss 1973:27-33).

- Researcher: The position or movements of the fingers, hand or arm are not mentioned in unit four.

In unit five the interval of a third is explained. The two notes of the interval are at first played respectively and then together with the second fingers of both hands on two white keys F and A. The keys are indicated on a picture of part of the keyboard. Evenness of rhythm is emphasized and revision of the previous work is done (Clark and Goss 1973:34-39).

- Researcher: The movements of the fingers are not explained. The involvement of any other lever in the playing is also not mentioned.



Unit six focuses on time signatures using the crotchet (quarter note) as a unit. All the previous concepts are revised and practised in the pieces of this unit (Clark and Goss 1973:40-45).

Unit seven introduces the interval of a fourth. The two notes of the interval are again at first played respectively and then together with the third fingers of both hands on two white keys E and A. The keys are indicated on a picture of part of the keyboard.

The method of revision of all the previous concepts is followed. Exercises on three adjacent keys going up, using the fingers two, three and four in the right hand are suggested. The left hand plays the same exercise using a mirror pattern (Clark and Goss 1973:46-51).

- Researcher: In the previous two units the opportunity to explain adjacent finger movement with the levers involved presents itself in the exercises given, but is not used.

In unit eight the semibreve (whole note) and the interval of a fifth is presented. The two notes of the interval are again at first played respectively and then together with the third fingers of both hands on two white keys F and C. The keys are indicated on a picture of part of the keyboard. Again all the concepts learnt so far are revised and even, rhythmical playing is emphasized (Clark and Goss 1973:52-57).

The bass and treble clefs, as well as the grand staff and ledger lines are explained in unit nine. A final revision on all the previously learnt information is done (Clark and Goss 1973:58-64).

- Researcher: The emphasis on even rhythmical playing throughout the course is an important aspect for the pupil to take note of.

### 3.5.2 Conclusion

Clark and Goss's *The Music Tree - A plan for musical growth* was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique.

The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
No mention is made of the sitting position.
- The lower body  
No mention is made of the position of the lower body.
- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
No mention is made of the use of the whole arm.
- The forearm  
Nothing is said about the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
Nothing is said about the hand as a unit.
- The fingers  
How the fingers should be moved and what their position should be is not explained.

## 3.6 Bastien (1985) - *Bastien Piano Basics - Piano - Primer Level*

### 3.6.1 Analysis

Bastien starts with the sitting position. The guidelines on sitting and hand positions are as follows:

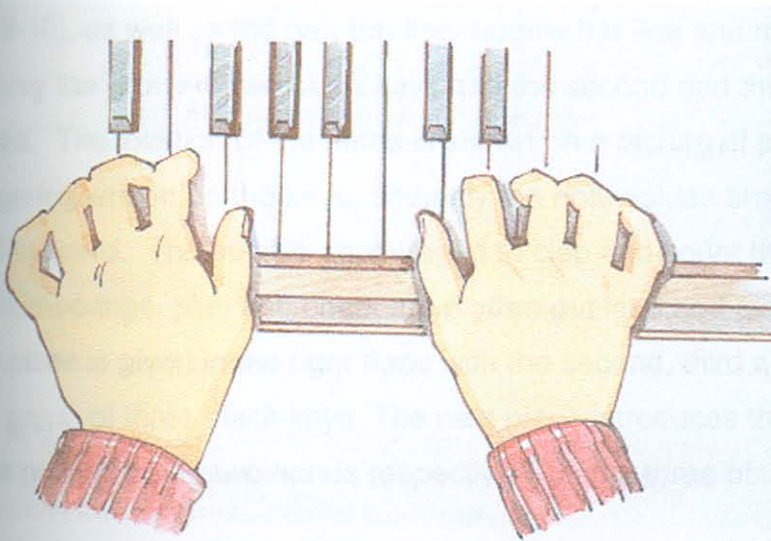
Sit up straight facing the centre of the piano. Place your feet flat on the floor. If your feet do not reach the floor, it is helpful to have a footstool or books under them when you practice.

Sit high enough to reach the keys easily. Do you have a piano stool or chair at home, which moves up and down? If not, cushions or books may be used to help you sit at the correct height when you practise.

Hold your fingers in a nice curved shape. Imagine you are holding a ball in each hand. That is the way the fingers should be curved when playing the piano. Your wrists should be level with your arms (Bastien 1985:4,5).

A good sketch of a relaxed but curved hand position is given.

**Picture no 1** (Bastien 1985:4)



On outlines of the hands, the fingers are numbered. To help the pupil remember the numbering of the different fingers, it is suggested that the numbers are called, and for the pupil to wiggle the specific finger.

The keyboard is explained (1985:6,7) through the structure of the black keys, grouped in two's or three's. On a picture of part of the keyboard the groups of two and three black keys are shown. The pupil is encouraged to play the groups of black keys with the right and left hands respectively. Fingering used includes 2 and 3 or 2, 3 and 4 up and down the keyboard. Up and down and high and low are explained. By playing these same



notes the pupil is encouraged to say the words 'play up' or 'play down' for the group of two black keys. For the group of three black keys the words 'playing up and playing down' are used.

- Researcher: This is the first touch the beginner has of the piano, and it would be the ideal time to introduce the 'free fall' movement but no mention is made of the use of the arm.

The note values of the crotchet (quarter note) and minim (half note) are explained (1985:8-10), as well as the bar, bar line, double bar line and measures or beats. A piece, using only the group of two black keys and the second and third fingers of the left hand is played. The location of the notes is shown on a picture of part of the keyboard, with the fingering written on the keys, and only the note values are notated below the picture of the keyboard. The pupil is encouraged to clap and count the rhythm out loud, sing the finger numberings, play and count the rhythm out loud and play and sing the words. A similar piece is given in the right hand with the second, third and fourth fingers playing on the group of three black keys. The next piece introduces the semibreve (whole note) and the playing of the two hands respectively on the three black keys.

- Researcher: The emphasis is placed on theoretical information, rhythm and fingering. Teaching of the appropriate movement of the fingers is omitted.

The repeat sign is introduced (1985:11-13). The thumb is used for the first time on the black keys. The location of the notes or position of the hands is still being shown on a picture of part of the keyboard. The fingering is written on the keys in the picture.

The music alphabet is explained on a picture of part of the keyboard (1985:14, 15). Up (or going to the right side of the keyboard) and down (or going to the left side of the keyboard) are explained. The pupil is encouraged to play and memorize the music alphabet up and down the keyboard, saying the letter names and using the second finger of each hand to play the notes.

- Researcher: A perfect opportunity to practise the use of the 'free fall' movement as described in Chapter 2.5.2 by Bastien. No description of the movement is given.

The next pieces are given in the key of C major or 'C position' (1985:16-19). Legato playing is introduced and the following guidelines are given:

Legato means to play smoothly, connecting the tones. To play legato, one finger lifts when another finger plays the next note (Bastien 1985:19).

The time signatures 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 are explained and used in the next pieces (1985:20-23).

- Researcher: No reading of notes is done up to now. Only note values are learnt and a basic rhythm and keyboard sense are developed. The opportunity to develop the correct habits of movement, while the pupil still has little abstract information to absorb, is not used.

Revision of the previous work is done (1985:24). The music staff with lines and spaces, and the treble and bass clefs are introduced (1985:25-29). For the first time notes are written in notation on a music staff. The location of the notes is still being shown on a picture of part of the keyboard. The different intervals of a second, third and fourth are dealt with. The grand music staff is explained (1985:30-38). Dynamic signs *f* and *p*, as well as the slur, are introduced. The slur is described as follows:

A slur is a curved line under or over two or more notes that are to be played legato (smooth, connected). The slur is used to show a musical thought called a phrase (Bastien 1985:37).

The only guideline given here is:

Lift your hand gently at the end of a phrase (Bastien 1985:38).

The following guideline is given in the Technique book where the slur or phrase occurs:

Lift your hand at the end of each slur with an 'up wrist' motion (Bastien - Technique - Primer Level 1985:10).

When two notes are slurred the following guideline is then given:



Begin with a low wrist, and end with a high wrist for each slurred group (Bastien - Technique - Primer Level 1985:28).

The tie is explained. The interval of a fifth is introduced.

- Researcher: Although no mention is made of the use of the arm during the performance of the slur, the wrist's movement (wrist is the initiator of the movement) is emphasized and the arm movement, therefore, implied.

The difference between a harmonic and melodic interval is explained (1985:39). A piece is given where the left hand plays a repeated harmonic fifth interval.

- Researcher: No guidelines are given on either the hand position or movement when playing the fifth in the left hand, or the movement of any of the other levers.

The rests of all the note values learnt so far are introduced (1985:40-45). Chords played in both the right and left hand, as well as broken chords, are explained. Emphasis is placed on the balance between a clear and defined right hand melody and a softer bass (chordal) accompaniment. The left-hand position is changed with the thumb on C (F position), not the fifth finger on C, as in the C position.

A few pieces incorporating the new information are given as exercises. A new hand position's location (G position) is explained. Chords are used in the new position (key). Accidentals 'F#' and 'C#' are introduced (1985:46-55).

The staccato touch is dealt with giving the following guidelines:

Staccato means to play short, separating the tones. A dot over or under a note means staccato. To play staccato, let the key go immediately after playing (Bastien 1985:56,57).

- Researcher: No practical guidelines are given on how the staccato should be performed and what the movement involves.



The flat sign is introduced, B flat, and three pieces are given in the key of F major (1985:58-62). At the end revision on all the theoretical information in the book is done (1985:63,64).

The *Bastien Piano Basics - Technique and Performance books - Primer Level*, support everything that is done in the 'Lesson' book - Primer Level.

From the technique book, the different technical aspects that were dealt with are extracted and incorporated in the analysis of the *Bastien Piano Basics - Primer Level*.

- The first technical aspect dealt with, is the use of all the fingers. The following guidelines are given:  
 Play evenly with curved fingers. Play legato connecting the notes smoothly. Play slowly at first; play faster when you are ready. Play loud or soft (Bastien - Technique - Primer level 1985:2).
- The next technical aspect that is explained, is the movement during the performance of the slur or phrase. The following guideline is given:  
 Lift your hand at the end of each slur with an 'up wrist' motion (Bastien - Technique - Primer level 1985:10).
- When two notes are slurred the following guideline is given:  
 Begin with a low wrist, and end with a high wrist for each slurred group (Bastien - Technique - Primer level 1985:28).

### 3.6.2 Conclusion

Bastien's *Bastien Piano Basics - Piano - Primer Level*, was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
 A good description of the sitting position is given. How high the pupil should sit is explained by suggesting that the pupil should sit high enough to reach the keys easily, and even more important, that the hand and forearm should be level. If the

pupil does not have an adjustable chair, books or even cushions may be used to get to the correct height.

- The lower body

It is stated that the feet should be flat on the floor or, if the feet do not reach the floor, a footstool should be used.

- The upper body (torso)

How far the pupil should sit from the piano is not dealt with and nothing else is mentioned in connection with the upper body.

- The whole arm

The arm is not mentioned anywhere in the primer level books. The 'up' and 'down wrist motion' during the performance of the phrase are dealt with in the Technique book Primer level. This implies the movement of the whole arm.

- The forearm

The forearm and rotation movement of the forearm are not mentioned in any of the primer level Bastien Piano Basics course.

- The hand as a unit

The staccato touch is dealt with in the primer level, but how the movement should be performed is not clear.

- The fingers

Although all the fingers are used in Bastien Piano Basics course, no clear explanation is given of how they should be moved. The pupil is not informed about the position of the arm or of the fact that the arm is in any way involved in the use of the fingers at this stage.

### 3.7 Waterman and Harewood (1988) - *Me and my piano - very first lessons for the young pianist - part 1.*

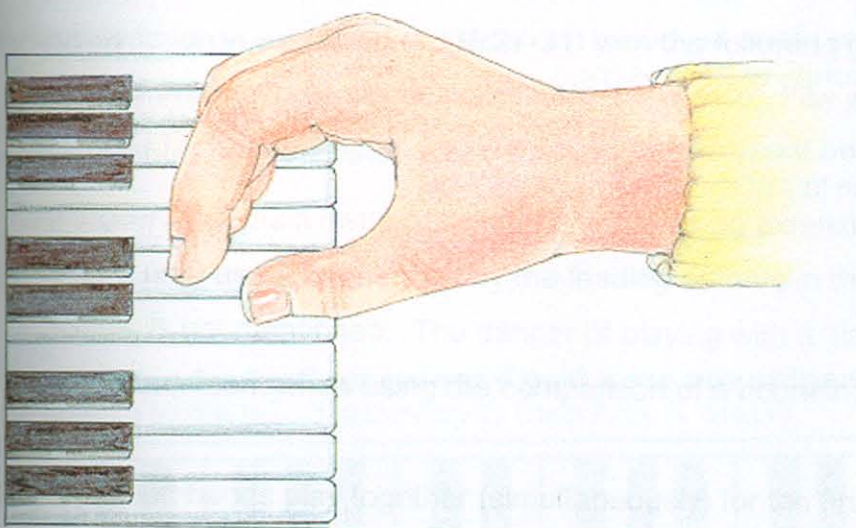
#### 3.7.1 Analysis

Waterman and Harewood (1988:1-3) start with the sitting position. The following guidelines are given:



Play with clean hands and short fingernails. Check that the chair or piano stool is in the middle of the keyboard and at the right height. Make sure you are sitting correctly. Play with curved fingers, like this:

Picture no 2 (Waterman and Harewood 1988:3)



- Researcher: The terms 'right height' and 'sitting correctly' are not explained. The sketch is a good example of a relaxed hand with firmly curved first phalanx.

The keyboard (1988:4, 5) is introduced. The structure of the white and black keys is covered. High and low, up and down and middle C's position are explained. The note names are introduced with colours. The note values of a semibreve (whole note), minim (half note) and crotchet (quarter note) are explained, as well as the 4/4 and 2/4 time signatures (1988:6-9). The music staff, with the treble clef and lines and spaces, is explained. The right hand's fingers are numbered and the pupil starts to play crotchets and minims on middle C with the right hand. The notes D, E, F and G are introduced. Only the right hand is playing at this stage. Exercises/monkey puzzles are given to test the previously learnt note values, note names and locations. Then the left hand is introduced to the notes C, B, A, G and F. Fingers are numbered and pieces are played with the left hand only (1988:10-26).



- Researcher: No explanation is given on how the fingers should be used. A hand position in which the thumb is immediately used promotes the active use of the forearm. On the first lesson the pupil's fingers will not be strong enough to play independently, and the habit of actively playing with the forearm when the thumb is used, is formed very quickly.

The staccato touch is explained (1988:27-31) with the following guidelines:

A dot placed over or under a note makes it short and crisp. Play with a loose wrist like a bouncing ball (Waterman and Harewood 1988:31).

- Researcher: The main issue of using the finger as an extension of the hand (the hand as a unit) as recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique, is not mentioned. The danger of playing with a 'flabby' wrist away from the key is imminent when using the comparison of a bouncing ball.

The right and left hands play together (simultaneously) for the first time (1988:32).

Dynamic signs *mp* and *mf*, as well as *crescendo* and *decrescendo* are explained and used in pieces.

- Researcher: No guidelines to explain the touch or movement when making dynamic changes are given.

The tie is introduced (1988:34) and another monkey-puzzle and musical crossword is given to revise the information previously given to the pupil. Rests are introduced and in the following pieces all knowledge previously acquired is practised.

### 3.7.2 Conclusion

Waterman and Harewood's *Me and my piano - very first lessons for the young pianist - part 1*, was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
The guideline 'make sure you are sitting correctly' is given, but no further explanation of the correct sitting position is given. It is mentioned that the pupil should sit at the right height, but no explanation of the 'right height' is given. That the chair should be adjustable is not mentioned. See chapter 2.2.8 for clear guidelines given by the leading authors in the field of piano technique.
- The lower body  
Well known authors in the field of piano playing stress the fact that most of the body weight rests on the chair and that approximately one third of the body weight is supported by the feet. No mention of a footstool for pupils, whose feet do not reach the floor yet, is made. How the lower body is supported, is not explained.
- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
The use of the arm as a unit in piano playing is not dealt with.
- The forearm  
No mention is made of the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
When the staccato touch is introduced, the guideline 'play with a loose wrist like a bouncing ball' is not explained clearly. If the movement of a loose wrist is compared to that of a bouncing ball, the wrist will rather move away from the instrument, resulting in the 'flabby wrist movement' Last refers to in the previous chapter in section 2.7.3
- The fingers  
All the fingers are used, but it is not explained what their positions are, how they should move or how the big levers always support the fingers when playing. According to the leading authors in the field of piano technique, the position of the first joint is very important and should be strengthened.



### 3.8 Schaum (1996) - *John W Schaum Piano Course - Level pre A - The green book*

#### 3.8.1 Analysis

Schaum (1996:2) starts with a word to the teachers and parents. The teachers are encouraged: 1) to teach piano in the most natural and enjoyable way, 2) to present technical information accurately and progressively, 3) not to define the scope of the grades, 4) not to confine the intellectual range of the pupil, 5) to offer a gradual progressive pedagogic continuity through a series of books named Pre A, A, B, C, D etc. and 6) to lead with assistance to eventual mastery of the instrument.

The parents are asked to: 1) set definite practice times each day, 2) listen to their child's playing, 3) see that the child practises as soon as possible after each lesson and 4) be interested and help the child develop a happy attitude towards piano study.

In the first lesson the hands are traced (1996:4, 5) and the fingers are numbered. The notes, on a picture of part of the keyboard, are also numbered from 1-5 on the ascending notes from middle C to G for the right hand, and from 1-5 on the descending notes from middle C to F for the left hand. A melody is used to explain up and down. By following the numbers on the notes in the picture, which indicates the finger that the pupil should play with, the pupil is encouraged to play the melody using the fingers 1-5 in both hands respectively. The rhythm is not indicated in note values, but as one note per beat unless a dash is used. Then the note directly before the dash must be kept for another beat. It is suggested that the rhythm is clapped or tapped before an attempt is made to play the melody. The pupil is encouraged to sing the words of the melody and say the numbers of the fingers while playing. The regularity of the beat is stressed. Bar lines and beats/measures are explained.

- Researcher: No explanation is given of a good hand position, or of how the fingers should be used during play.



The structure of the keyboard (1996:6-9) is explained through the groups of black keys. The note names and positions of the white keys C, D and E are linked to the group of two black keys. Similarly the note names and positions of the white keys F, G, A and B are linked to the group of three black keys. The music alphabet is now written on a picture of part of the keyboard and tests are given to practise these note names on the pictures.

The melody appears twice more (1996:9-11). The second time the melody is used, the letter names of the notes are written on the keys with the fingering below. This time the pupil is encouraged to repeat the letter names of the notes while playing. The grand staff and how music is written on it, is explained. Bar lines and measures, and the time signature are dealt with.

The third time this melody is used, it is written in music notation on a grand staff. The rhythm stays exactly the same throughout. The pupil is encouraged to look at the music and not his/her hands when playing.

- Researcher: All the fingers have been used in the previous piece, which was repeated three times, each time with different emphasis. The emphasis though, is never on any technical aspect of playing, be it the position of the body, arm, hand or fingers.

The next piece (1996:12-15) introduces a hand position called a 'bunched hand position'. The teacher is asked to show the pupil the 'bunched hand position', as the next piece, according to Schaum, is entirely built on that. This piece uses the notes C, D and E in the right hand. The same is asked of the next piece played with the left hand and using the notes C, B and A. The following two pieces concentrate on these notes, the different hands playing respectively. The following sight-reading hint is given:

Find the notes visually then manually...Keep the hands quiet until the note has been found visually (1996:15).

The natural accent on the first beats of each bar is stressed.

- Researcher: 'Bunched hand position' is not a well-known or widely used technical term. The author does not explain the meaning of the term or what the position involves.

The slur is introduced for the first time and is described as follows:

Music is a language and has punctuation signs that divide it into phrases or sentences. These phrases are marked with curved lines called slurs (Schaum 1996:21).

- Researcher: No indications or guidelines on how the slur should be performed either technically or musically are given.

Pieces in which the hands cross one another are introduced. The first new key, G major, is explained, and a new fingering is introduced (1996:27-31). The tie is dealt with. The hands play together for the first time (1996:32-39). Accidentals are used and a new key, F major, with new fingerings, is explained.

The staccato touch is introduced with the following guideline:

When dots are written above or below notes, you touch the keys as if you were touching a hot iron (Schaum 1996:41).

- Researcher: Different pupils would react differently when touching a hot iron. This does not explain the staccato touch.

The last two pieces in the book include the *8va* sign and the accent. A piano quiz is held at the end to do revision on all the theoretical work.

### 3.8.2 Conclusion

Schaum's *John W Schaum piano course - Level pre A - The green book* was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
No mention is made of the sitting position.
- The lower body  
No mention is made of the position of the lower body.
- The upper body (torso)  
No mention is made of the position of the upper body.
- The whole arm  
Nothing is said about the use of the whole arm.
- The forearm  
Nothing is said about the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
Staccato is introduced, but the touch is not explained.
- The fingers  
Although all the fingers are used in *John W Schaum piano course - Level pre A - The green book*, no explanation is given of how they should be moved. The pupil is not informed about the position of the arm or of the fact that the arm is in any way involved in playing at this stage.

### 3.9 Palmer et al (1999) - *Alfred's basic piano library. Lesson book Level 1a*

#### 3.9.1 Analysis

Palmer et al start with the sitting position and the following guidelines are given:

Lean slightly forward. Let the arms hang loosely from the shoulders. Bench must face the piano squarely. Knees slightly under the keyboard. Feet flat on the floor – right foot may be slightly forward. A book or stool may be placed under the feet if they do not reach the floor (Palmer et al 1999:3).

- Researcher: Measured against the recommendations of the leading authors the guidelines about how far and how high the pupil should sit are left out. This information is crucial to the correct use of the whole arm, forearm, hand and fingers.



Palmer et al then deal with the numbering of the fingers. The production of sound is described:

When you drop into the key with a little weight, you make a soft tone. When you use more weight, you make a louder tone (Palmer et al 1999:5).

Play any white key with the third finger of either hand softly. See how many times you can repeat the same key, making the tone a little louder each time you play (Palmer et al 1999:5).

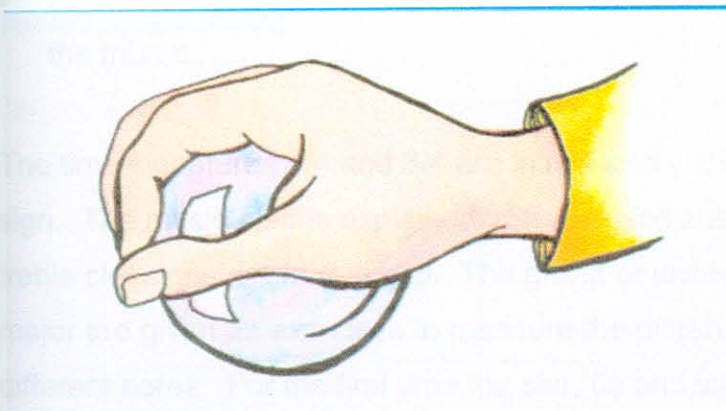
- Researcher: The term 'drop' has not been described and the word 'weight' has little meaning to the pupil if the bigger levers have not been dealt with. As soft playing is a 'controlled touch' and the pupil does not know the prerequisites of a basic touch yet, this is an impossible instruction for a pupil to carry out during his/her first few lessons.

The hand position is dealt with very briefly. The following guidelines are given:

Curve your fingers when you play. Pretend you have a bubble in your hand. Hold the bubble gently so it doesn't break (Palmer et al 1999:5).

- Researcher: A sketch is given in which the thumb is clearly not curved. To imagine holding a bubble in the hand can create tension in the hand, especially for a young child.

**Picture no 3** (Palmer et al 1999:5)



The keyboard is explained (1999:6-9), the black keys in groups of two and three. Down and up, and high and low are explained. The pupil is encouraged to play the group of

two black keys with the second and third fingers and the group of three black keys with the second, third and fourth fingers of the right hand. The left hand then plays the same in a mirror pattern. The note values from a crotchet (quarter note) to a semibreve (whole note) are explained. Pieces using these note values are played on the black keys, with the second, third and fourth fingers.

- Researcher: The use of the second, third and fourth fingers on the black keys promotes the use of a balanced arm behind the fingers, as recommended by the authors in the field, but the use of the arm is never mentioned. Several similar pieces are given as exercises and because the pupil is at this stage not reading notes yet, this would have been an ideal opportunity to introduce the movement of the bigger levers. The authors in the field of piano technique make it clear that the fingers are supported by bigger levers with every movement they make. See section 2.8.8 - Conclusion. No explanation is given on how the fingers should move or should be supported.

The notenames (1999:18 - 20) of the white keys, A, B, C, D, E, F and G are introduced, with their specific locations on the piano. The first pieces in which the thumb, second and third fingers are used, are in C major. More pieces are given for the use of all the fingers.

- Researcher: No guidelines are given on how the fingers should be used, especially the thumb.

The time signatures 4/4 and 3/4 are introduced (1999:21-26), as well as the *mf* dynamic sign. The music staff is explained. Spaces and lines are dealt with and the bass and treble clef signs are introduced. The grand or joined staff is explained. Pieces in C major are given as exercises to measure the distance between notes and to locate the different notes. For the first time the slur, tie and sigh motive (1999:35-37) are used. The legato aspect of the slur is explained. The only explanation on how legato playing

should be performed is through the comparison of the fingers with the moving ends of a seesaw.

- Researcher: The perfect opportunity to introduce the use of the arm as big lever is created with the sigh motive. No mention of the involvement of the bigger levers (arm or wrist) is made. The concern at this stage of the lesson book is note names and locations, note values and distances between intervals.

In the pieces that follow, different intervals (second, third, fourth and fifth) are dealt with (1999:38-56), as well as the G major playing position. The first accidentals are introduced. A new piece (1999:57) is introduced in which the left hand repeatedly plays a harmonic interval of a fifth.

- Researcher: The use of the hand as a unit is not mentioned and no explanation is given on how this should be performed.

Staccato playing (1999:58), as well as *crescendo* and *diminuendo* are explained.

- Researcher: The word, sound and image of staccato are explained, but no mention is made of how it should be performed.

### 3.9.2 Conclusion

Palmer et al's *Alfred's basic piano library. Lesson book Level 1a* was measured against the basic requirements recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique. The researcher came to the following conclusions:

- The sitting position  
The fact that the chair should be adjustable, level and hard, as well as the height and distance from the piano, is not mentioned. See chapter 2.2 for clear guidelines on the sitting position, given by the authors in the field of piano technique.



- The lower body position  
The suggestion that the knees should be slightly under the keyboard confuses and it is not clear if the guideline is given in connection with the distance from the piano, or the height of the chair. It is suggested that the feet should be flat on the floor or supported by books or a footstool if the pupil is too short.
- The upper body (torso)  
Palmer et al suggest that the upper body leans slightly forward and that the arms hang loosely from the shoulders.
- The whole arm  
Although the words 'drop' and 'weight' are used very early in the first few lessons, no mention is made of the use of the arm or wrist.
- The forearm  
No mention is made of the use of the forearm.
- The hand as a unit  
No mention is made of the hand as a unit.
- The fingers  
All the fingers are used, but it is not explained how they should move or how the big levers always support the fingers when playing. According to the leading authors in the field of piano technique, the position of the first joint is very important and the joint should be strengthened in order to keep the position.  
  
Although it is stated that the fingers should be curved when playing, the sketch of a curved hand has a straight thumb and a high and tense knuckle position.

### 3.10 Chapter conclusion

When the process of evaluation on the generally accepted and most regularly used beginner courses was completed, the researcher came to the following conclusions:

The basic requirements for a beginner pianist, recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique, are:

- a proper sitting position
- use of the whole arm in a 'free fall' and a 'float off' movement
- use of the forearm in a rotation movement
- use of the hand as a unit in a staccato movement
- finger movement from the first phalanx (never without support from the bigger levers).

In the beginner books studied, the researcher found that:

- the sequence, structure and explanations of how (and with which lever), the different movements should be executed, do not measure up to the recommendations by the leading authors
- in most instances as shown throughout the chapter, the use of the bigger levers is not addressed at all. It is the researcher's belief, based on the literature study in chapter one, that all the levers and their specific movements should be addressed from the very first lesson. It is only a logical motoric and educational process to concentrate on the bigger levers (giving the support), which perform slower and easier movements and then move on to the smaller levers, which perform the faster and more complicated movements. A background study on motor development in children supports this approach and no objection against the teaching of all the movements involving the big levers is found (Gallahue 1982, Thomas 1984, Wade and Whiting 1986, Singer 1989, Savelsbergh 1993, Du Plessis 1994 and Wicks-Nelson and Israel 1997).
- the majority of information in these beginner books can be taught in a theory class preceding the individual lesson. When the pupil then arrives at the individual piano lesson he/she can concentrate on learning the motoric and aural aspects of the instrument.

The emphasis in the majority of piano books for the young beginner is on note names and locations, note values, rests and dynamic signs. This is important information for the beginner pianist, but as the movements that the beginner makes in the first lessons become habits for life, they are much more important at this stage than the theoretical

information. Authors in the field of piano technique emphasize the fact that the movements the beginner is taught during the first lessons provide the technical foundation for the rest of his/her life.

Another suggestion is to form correct habits of movement from the very beginning. All these movements are easy enough for the beginner to learn during the first few months of piano lessons.

The theoretical information in the beginner books studied is properly explained and presented in a very structured manner. The researcher is, however, concerned about the fact that there is not enough structure in the sequence of learning the basic technical movements in the beginner piano courses using the adjacent five finger method. Not enough emphasis is put on the development of basic movements and the connection between sound and movement is not made.

In the next chapter, to address the lack of structure and discrepancy in the sequence of learning the basic movements, the researcher compiles/composes exercises for the beginner. These exercises concentrate on the specific movements and results in sound recommended by the leading authors in the field of piano technique.



## TEACHING AND STRUCTURING THE BASIC MOVEMENTS

## Introduction

## Sitting position

The starting point for beginners recommended by leading experts in the field of riding technique is the sitting position. The sitting position, as well as the position and support of the 'lower body' and 'lower', is clearly explained in Chapter 2.2.5, 2.3.3 and 2.4.3 respectively. Furthermore descriptions and illustrations, when containing the body position of the rider, are included.

## Exercises

Specific exercises are recommended for the rider to do by leading experts in the field of riding technique. The most often used sequence of exercises, as recommended by leading experts in the field of riding technique, is the 'sitting position' which should be performed in the sitting position. The exercises are designed to help the rider to become more comfortable in the sitting position and to become more aware of the position of the body and the position of the lower body.

The most important aspect of beginning lessons is to form correct habits (Bastien 1977:165).

repeated by the pupil under the supervision of the teacher, until the habit is secure and correct. Only then can the rider be said to have a habit.

## Respirations and relaxation

Although a relaxed breathing habit is desirable, it is not recommended that the rider should be taught to breathe in a regular manner. The rider should be encouraged to breathe in a regular manner within a limited time (regular beat). This is the manner in which the rider should breathe in the riding position. The rider should be taught to breathe in a regular manner and the regularity of the beat should become a habit. The rider should be progressing to the riding steps. What is most important is that the rider should be able to place on the ground the feet of the horse in the riding position. Landmarks should be given to enable the rider to place the feet of the horse in the riding position when walking. For example, if the rider is walking in the riding position, the feet of the horse should be placed in the riding position.

## 4 TEACHING AND STRUCTURING THE BASIC MOVEMENTS

### 4.1 Introduction

- Sitting position

The starting point for beginners recommended by leading authors in the field of piano technique is the sitting position. The sitting position, as well as the position and support of the 'lower body' and 'torso', is clearly explained in Chapter 2.2.8, 2.3.8 and 2.4.8 respectively. Follow these descriptions meticulously when explaining the body's position in front of the instrument.

- Exercises

Specific exercises are compiled; filling the void left by the generally accepted and most often used beginner courses. These exercises concentrate on the specific movements the beginner pianist should be able to perform, beginning with the bigger levers and moving on to the smaller levers. The majority of the exercises are in the form of duets for the pupil and his/her teacher. Note that all the exercises should be repeated by the pupil alone under the supervision of the teacher until he/she is secure and confident. Only then can the exercises be performed as a duet.

- Researcher's recommendation

Although a keyboard sense should be established as early as possible, it is not recommended that the reading of notes be done simultaneously. The basic movements must be controlled or mastered comfortably in order to be performed within a limited time (regular beat). Thus the execution of the basic movements and the establishment of a regular beat need the pupil's full attention, as these movements and the regularity of the beat should become unconscious habits when progressing to the reading stage. Until he/she can read notes, the child's hands should be placed on the required keys for the different exercises. Certain 'landmarks' should be given to enable pupils to orientate themselves on the instrument when practising. For example all the C's on the piano are found on the left of the two black 'ears' of the 'D'onkey in the middle.

#### 4.2 'Free fall' (Movement of the whole arm)

This exercise can be done away from the piano. Physical contact between teacher and pupil is essential in order to verify that a relaxed falling movement is executed without the use of any muscles.

The teacher should pick up the pupil's bent arm (palm facing the floor) with one hand, holding it at the sides of the wrist. (The teacher should be able to move the arm up, down and sideways without any resistance from the pupil. **Do not continue** if the pupil's arm is not totally relaxed. It is of utmost importance that this relaxed starting point is achieved). Let the arm of the pupil (i.e. the total weight of the arm) fall into the other hand. Photo no 6 provides an illustration of this exercise. Repeat this exercise with both arms following the same procedure.

**Photo no 6** (Original photograph of the researcher's and a pupil's hands)





When mastered, this exercise should be done rhythmically, i.e. at an intended moment in time, for example: pick up the pupil's arm (contact point: the sides of the wrist) on the third beat of a 4/4 time signature and then drop it from one hand to the other on every first beat (contact point: the lower wrist). Repeat this exercise several times until a basic feeling/understanding of a regular beat is established.

**Exercise 1**

The musical notation for Exercise 1 is written in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The exercise is divided into four measures, each containing four beats. Above the treble staff, the beats are numbered 1 through 4 for each measure. The rhythmic patterns are as follows:
 

- Measure 1: Beat 1 (quarter rest), Beat 2 (quarter rest), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note). Labeled "Pick up".
- Measure 2: Beat 1 (quarter note), Beat 2 (quarter rest), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note). Labeled "Drop".
- Measure 3: Beat 1 (quarter note), Beat 2 (quarter note), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note). Labeled "Pick up".
- Measure 4: Beat 1 (quarter note), Beat 2 (quarter note), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note). Labeled "Drop".

 The bass staff contains a single quarter rest on the first beat of each measure, with a vertical line extending from the rest to the treble staff. The exercise concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

This exercise can now be done at the piano.

The teacher should pick up the pupil's arm to a height of approximately 5-10 cm above the keys (not more to avoid injury) and drop it onto the keys making contact where the wrist joins the hand as illustrated in photo no 7. Do this exercise with both arms as previously explained.

**Exercise 2a**

The musical notation for Exercise 2a is written in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff labeled "RH" (Right Hand) and a bass clef staff labeled "LH" (Left Hand). The exercise is divided into two measures, each containing four beats. The rhythmic patterns are as follows:
 

- Measure 1: Beat 1 (quarter note), Beat 2 (quarter rest), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note).
- Measure 2: Beat 1 (quarter note), Beat 2 (quarter rest), Beat 3 (quarter note), Beat 4 (quarter note).

 The notes are chords: a C4-E4-G4 triad in the RH and a C3-E3-G3 triad in the LH. The exercise concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Photo no 7 (original photograph of the researcher's and a pupil's hands)



Whilst counting a regular 4/4 beat, the pupil can now do this exercise on his/her own. The pupil must pick up on beat three (the wrist high, hand and upper arm hanging relaxed) and fall on beat one (wrist, hand and forearm in line on the keys) as done in exercise 1. Then two movements can be made in one bar (picking up on beats two and four and falling on one and three) as in exercise 2a.

In *Music Pathways* by Olson et al (1983:6), tone clusters are also used as the starting point. The pupil plays these clusters with the hand (closed fingers) from the beginning. Emphasis, however, is on the shape of the hand rather than on the use of the big lever.

### 4.3 'Float off'

The completed position for the 'float off' movement is the position of the wrist when picked up by the teacher before letting it fall, as found in the previous exercise. The wrist is now at its highest point and the hand hangs relaxed from it. Thus the movement of the wrist during 'float off' controls the hand.

Repeat the first 'free fall' exercise 1, concentrating on the 'up' movement, then 'float off' and at the same time prepare the arm for the next fall.

The pupil can now do this exercise at the piano, on his/her own. See to it that nothing except the wrist is moving actively during the 'float off' movement. Do exercise 2a with the right hand, then the left hand, followed by the two hands together. Concentrate on the 'float off' movement.

As soon as these two movements are mastered, interesting rhythmical adjustments can be made. The 'free fall' can be done on the second and fourth beats of a 4/4 time signature and the 'float off' can be done on the first and third beats as in exercise 2b.

#### Exercise 2b

RH

LH



It is essential not to continue with the next movement if a strong sense for a regular beat has not been established, and if the previous movements are not executed in a comfortable and relaxed way.

If the problem of tension still exists at this stage, start again. Repeat the first exercises away from the piano on a soft surface with the child lying on his/her back, pretending to sleep. The repetition of these phases can be done with different rhythms to keep the pupil interested.

#### 4.4 Controlled 'free fall' and 'float off'

Now that a sense for a regular beat has been established and the first two basic movements have been mastered, the pupil should be able to use them in a controlled way at the instrument.

Place the pupil's right hand on a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> (thumb on F and fifth finger on C) above middle C. (See left hand notes: exercise 3, bar 5-8). The pupil does a 'free fall' movement and lands on a 5<sup>th</sup>. The weight of the whole arm is still moving down, but is controlled by 1) the contact of the first and fifth fingers on the keys, and 2) the wrist absorbing the weight and not falling through (this demands elasticity in the wrist).

This exercise is also found in *Music Pathways* by Olson et al (1983:10). Although the use of the bigger lever is implied, a clear explanation of the movement is not given.

The moment before the wrist falls through (because of the weight of the released arm) it is controlled or absorbed by the fingers and an elastic 'float off' wrist movement (4.3) takes place as in photo no 8.

Photo no 8 (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



Pupil:

Exercise 3

Arranged by T Rhodie

The little horse

*gua*-----

*p*

5

*f*

*rit*

LH

Teacher:

The little horse

*p*

5

*f*

*rit*



Do this exercise initially without any dynamic changes. When the movements are executed comfortably without dynamic changes, the pupil has to learn to control dynamic changes during execution of the movements.

- For a soft sound the key is pressed down slowly and for a loud sound the key is pressed down quickly.

Initially during the learning process of the 'free fall' movement the pupil relaxes completely. To 'control' this movement in order to make dynamic changes, the pupil has to incorporate the supportive use of shoulder, and sometimes arm muscles. The best way is **not** to emphasize the use of any muscles, but to approach this learning process from a sound perspective.

A young pupil tends to move roughly, or hit the piano too hard when moving the arm down quickly. This results in harsh, loud sounds and the habit is usually kept for life. Give the pupil an example of harsh and round loud sounds on the piano by respectively hitting the key, and then playing with a supple and controlled 'free fall' and 'float off' movement. It is of utmost importance that the difference in sound between harsh and round loud sounds is established. Real life examples can also be given by comparing the sound of heavy traffic to that of *ff* string playing.

Teach the pupil to control the quick 'down' movement of the arm by a supple or elastic wrist moving 'up' and 'forward', immediately after the 'free fall' movement. The 'free fall' now turns into a 'float off' in one fluent and supple movement. This would avoid harsh loud sounds.

The same principle of the 'free fall' movement immediately turning into a 'float off' movement applies when a soft sound is produced, except that the arm is brought down slowly.

Do exercise 4 initially with the pupil's hand in a position, which is comfortable - usually on F and C above middle C. Then move up and down the keyboard whilst practising the use of a regular beat. The left hand mirrors the pattern. Again the use of dynamic changes should be pointed out. The movements supporting these dynamic changes and the difference in harsh and round sound colours should be emphasized.

Teacher:

Exercise 4

The train ride

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The upper staff contains whole rests for the first three measures, followed by a quarter note G2 in the fourth measure. The lower staff contains whole rests for the first three measures, followed by a quarter note G2 in the fourth measure. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed in the right margin of the system.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The upper staff contains eighth notes: G2, A2, Bb2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, Bb3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, Bb5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, Bb6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, Bb7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, Bb8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, Bb9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, Bb10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, Bb11, C12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, Bb12, C13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, Bb13, C14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, Bb14, C15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, Bb15, C16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, Bb16, C17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, Bb17, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, Bb18, C19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, Bb19, C20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, Bb20, C21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, Bb21, C22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, Bb22, C23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, Bb23, C24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, Bb24, C25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, Bb25, C26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, Bb26, C27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, Bb27, C28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, Bb28, C29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, Bb29, C30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, Bb30, C31, D31, E31, F31, G31, A31, Bb31, C32, D32, E32, F32, G32, A32, Bb32, C33, D33, E33, F33, G33, A33, Bb33, C34, D34, E34, F34, G34, A34, Bb34, C35, D35, E35, F35, G35, A35, Bb35, C36, D36, E36, F36, G36, A36, Bb36, C37, D37, E37, F37, G37, A37, Bb37, C38, D38, E38, F38, G38, A38, Bb38, C39, D39, E39, F39, G39, A39, Bb39, C40, D40, E40, F40, G40, A40, Bb40, C41, D41, E41, F41, G41, A41, Bb41, C42, D42, E42, F42, G42, A42, Bb42, C43, D43, E43, F43, G43, A43, Bb43, C44, D44, E44, F44, G44, A44, Bb44, C45, D45, E45, F45, G45, A45, Bb45, C46, D46, E46, F46, G46, A46, Bb46, C47, D47, E47, F47, G47, A47, Bb47, C48, D48, E48, F48, G48, A48, Bb48, C49, D49, E49, F49, G49, A49, Bb49, C50, D50, E50, F50, G50, A50, Bb50, C51, D51, E51, F51, G51, A51, Bb51, C52, D52, E52, F52, G52, A52, Bb52, C53, D53, E53, F53, G53, A53, Bb53, C54, D54, E54, F54, G54, A54, Bb54, C55, D55, E55, F55, G55, A55, Bb55, C56, D56, E56, F56, G56, A56, Bb56, C57, D57, E57, F57, G57, A57, Bb57, C58, D58, E58, F58, G58, A58, Bb58, C59, D59, E59, F59, G59, A59, Bb59, C60, D60, E60, F60, G60, A60, Bb60, C61, D61, E61, F61, G61, A61, Bb61, C62, D62, E62, F62, G62, A62, Bb62, C63, D63, E63, F63, G63, A63, Bb63, C64, D64, E64, F64, G64, A64, Bb64, C65, D65, E65, F65, G65, A65, Bb65, C66, D66, E66, F66, G66, A66, Bb66, C67, D67, E67, F67, G67, A67, Bb67, C68, D68, E68, F68, G68, A68, Bb68, C69, D69, E69, F69, G69, A69, Bb69, C70, D70, E70, F70, G70, A70, Bb70, C71, D71, E71, F71, G71, A71, Bb71, C72, D72, E72, F72, G72, A72, Bb72, C73, D73, E73, F73, G73, A73, Bb73, C74, D74, E74, F74, G74, A74, Bb74, C75, D75, E75, F75, G75, A75, Bb75, C76, D76, E76, F76, G76, A76, Bb76, C77, D77, E77, F77, G77, A77, Bb77, C78, D78, E78, F78, G78, A78, Bb78, C79, D79, E79, F79, G79, A79, Bb79, C80, D80, E80, F80, G80, A80, Bb80, C81, D81, E81, F81, G81, A81, Bb81, C82, D82, E82, F82, G82, A82, Bb82, C83, D83, E83, F83, G83, A83, Bb83, C84, D84, E84, F84, G84, A84, Bb84, C85, D85, E85, F85, G85, A85, Bb85, C86, D86, E86, F86, G86, A86, Bb86, C87, D87, E87, F87, G87, A87, Bb87, C88, D88, E88, F88, G88, A88, Bb88, C89, D89, E89, F89, G89, A89, Bb89, C90, D90, E90, F90, G90, A90, Bb90, C91, D91, E91, F91, G91, A91, Bb91, C92, D92, E92, F92, G92, A92, Bb92, C93, D93, E93, F93, G93, A93, Bb93, C94, D94, E94, F94, G94, A94, Bb94, C95, D95, E95, F95, G95, A95, Bb95, C96, D96, E96, F96, G96, A96, Bb96, C97, D97, E97, F97, G97, A97, Bb97, C98, D98, E98, F98, G98, A98, Bb98, C99, D99, E99, F99, G99, A99, Bb99, C100, D100, E100, F100, G100, A100, Bb100, C101, D101, E101, F101, G101, A101, Bb101, C102, D102, E102, F102, G102, A102, Bb102, C103, D103, E103, F103, G103, A103, Bb103, C104, D104, E104, F104, G104, A104, Bb104, C105, D105, E105, F105, G105, A105, Bb105, C106, D106, E106, F106, G106, A106, Bb106, C107, D107, E107, F107, G107, A107, Bb107, C108, D108, E108, F108, G108, A108, Bb108, C109, D109, E109, F109, G109, A109, Bb109, C110, D110, E110, F110, G110, A110, Bb110, C111, D111, E111, F111, G111, A111, Bb111, C112, D112, E112, F112, G112, A112, Bb112, C113, D113, E113, F113, G113, A113, Bb113, C114, D114, E114, F114, G114, A114, Bb114, C115, D115, E115, F115, G115, A115, Bb115, C116, D116, E116, F116, G116, A116, Bb116, C117, D117, E117, F117, G117, A117, Bb117, C118, D118, E118, F118, G118, A118, Bb118, C119, D119, E119, F119, G119, A119, Bb119, C120, D120, E120, F120, G120, A120, Bb120, C121, D121, E121, F121, G121, A121, Bb121, C122, D122, E122, F122, G122, A122, Bb122, C123, D123, E123, F123, G123, A123, Bb123, C124, D124, E124, F124, G124, A124, Bb124, C125, D125, E125, F125, G125, A125, Bb125, C126, D126, E126, F126, G126, A126, Bb126, C127, D127, E127, F127, G127, A127, Bb127, C128, D128, E128, F128, G128, A128, Bb128, C129, D129, E129, F129, G129, A129, Bb129, C130, D130, E130, F130, G130, A130, Bb130, C131, D131, E131, F131, G131, A131, Bb131, C132, D132, E132, F132, G132, A132, Bb132, C133, D133, E133, F133, G133, A133, Bb133, C134, D134, E134, F134, G134, A134, Bb134, C135, D135, E135, F135, G135, A135, Bb135, C136, D136, E136, F136, G136, A136, Bb136, C137, D137, E137, F137, G137, A137, Bb137, C138, D138, E138, F138, G138, A138, Bb138, C139, D139, E139, F139, G139, A139, Bb139, C140, D140, E140, F140, G140, A140, Bb140, C141, D141, E141, F141, G141, A141, Bb141, C142, D142, E142, F142, G142, A142, Bb142, C143, D143, E143, F143, G143, A143, Bb143, C144, D144, E144, F144, G144, A144, Bb144, C145, D145, E145, F145, G145, A145, Bb145, C146, D146, E146, F146, G146, A146, Bb146, C147, D147, E147, F147, G147, A147, Bb147, C148, D148, E148, F148, G148, A148, Bb148, C149, D149, E149, F149, G149, A149, Bb149, C150, D150, E150, F150, G150, A150, Bb150, C151, D151, E151, F151, G151, A151, Bb151, C152, D152, E152, F152, G152, A152, Bb152, C153, D153, E153, F153, G153, A153, Bb153, C154, D154, E154, F154, G154, A154, Bb154, C155, D155, E155, F155, G155, A155, Bb155, C156, D156, E156, F156, G156, A156, Bb156, C157, D157, E157, F157, G157, A157, Bb157, C158, D158, E158, F158, G158, A158, Bb158, C159, D159, E159, F159, G159, A159, Bb159, C160, D160, E160, F160, G160, A160, Bb160, C161, D161, E161, F161, G161, A161, Bb161, C162, D162, E162, F162, G162, A162, Bb162, C163, D163, E163, F163, G163, A163, Bb163, C164, D164, E164, F164, G164, A164, Bb164, C165, D165, E165, F165, G165, A165, Bb165, C166, D166, E166, F166, G166, A166, Bb166, C167, D167, E167, F167, G167, A167, Bb167, C168, D168, E168, F168, G168, A168, Bb168, C169, D169, E169, F169, G169, A169, Bb169, C170, D170, E170, F170, G170, A170, Bb170, C171, D171, E171, F171, G171, A171, Bb171, C172, D172, E172, F172, G172, A172, Bb172, C173, D173, E173, F173, G173, A173, Bb173, C174, D174, E174, F174, G174, A174, Bb174, C175, D175, E175, F175, G175, A175, Bb175, C176, D176, E176, F176, G176, A176, Bb176, C177, D177, E177, F177, G177, A177, Bb177, C178, D178, E178, F178, G178, A178, Bb178, C179, D179, E179, F179, G179, A179, Bb179, C180, D180, E180, F180, G180, A180, Bb180, C181, D181, E181, F181, G181, A181, Bb181, C182, D182, E182, F182, G182, A182, Bb182, C183, D183, E183, F183, G183, A183, Bb183, C184, D184, E184, F184, G184, A184, Bb184, C185, D185, E185, F185, G185, A185, Bb185, C186, D186, E186, F186, G186, A186, Bb186, C187, D187, E187, F187, G187, A187, Bb187, C188, D188, E188, F188, G188, A188, Bb188, C189, D189, E189, F189, G189, A189, Bb189, C190, D190, E190, F190, G190, A190, Bb190, C191, D191, E191, F191, G191, A191, Bb191, C192, D192, E192, F192, G192, A192, Bb192, C193, D193, E193, F193, G193, A193, Bb193, C194, D194, E194, F194, G194, A194, Bb194, C195, D195, E195, F195, G195, A195, Bb195, C196, D196, E196, F196, G196, A196, Bb196, C197, D197, E197, F197, G197, A197, Bb197, C198, D198, E198, F198, G198, A198, Bb198, C199, D199, E199, F199, G199, A199, Bb199, C200, D200, E200, F200, G200, A200, Bb200, C201, D201, E201, F201, G201, A201, Bb201, C202, D202, E202, F202, G202, A202, Bb202, C203, D203, E203, F203, G203, A203, Bb203, C204, D204, E204, F204, G204, A204, Bb204, C205, D205, E205, F205, G205, A205, Bb205, C206, D206, E206, F206, G206, A206, Bb206, C207, D207, E207, F207, G207, A207, Bb207, C208, D208, E208, F208, G208, A208, Bb208, C209, D209, E209, F209, G209, A209, Bb209, C210, D210, E210, F210, G210, A210, Bb210, C211, D211, E211, F211, G211, A211, Bb211, C212, D212, E212, F212, G212, A212, Bb212, C213, D213, E213, F213, G213, A213, Bb213, C214, D214, E214, F214, G214, A214, Bb214, C215, D215, E215, F215, G215, A215, Bb215, C216, D216, E216, F216, G216, A216, Bb216, C217, D217, E217, F217, G217, A217, Bb217, C218, D218, E218, F218, G218, A218, Bb218, C219, D219, E219, F219, G219, A219, Bb219, C220, D220, E220, F220, G220, A220, Bb220, C221, D221, E221, F221, G221, A221, Bb221, C222, D222, E222, F222, G222, A222, Bb222, C223, D223, E223, F223, G223, A223, Bb223, C224, D224, E224, F224, G224, A224, Bb224, C225, D225, E225, F225, G225, A225, Bb225, C226, D226, E226, F226, G226, A226, Bb226, C227, D227, E227, F227, G227, A227, Bb227, C228, D228, E228, F228, G228, A228, Bb228, C229, D229, E229, F229, G229, A229, Bb229, C230, D230, E230, F230, G230, A230, Bb230, C231, D231, E231, F231, G231, A231, Bb231, C232, D232, E232, F232, G232, A232, Bb232, C233, D233, E233, F233, G233, A233, Bb233, C234, D234, E234, F234, G234, A234, Bb234, C235, D235, E235, F235, G235, A235, Bb235, C236, D236, E236, F236, G236, A236, Bb236, C237, D237, E237, F237, G237, A237, Bb237, C238, D238, E238, F238, G238, A238, Bb238, C239, D239, E239, F239, G239, A239, Bb239, C240, D240, E240, F240, G240, A240, Bb240, C241, D241, E241, F241, G241, A241, Bb241, C242, D242, E242, F242, G242, A242, Bb242, C243, D243, E243, F243, G243, A243, Bb243, C244, D244, E244, F244, G244, A244, Bb244, C245, D245, E245, F245, G245, A245, Bb245, C246, D246, E246, F246, G246, A246, Bb246, C247, D247, E247, F247, G247, A247, Bb247, C248, D248, E248, F248, G248, A248, Bb248, C249, D249, E249, F249, G249, A249, Bb249, C250, D250, E250, F250, G250, A250, Bb250, C251, D251, E251, F251, G251, A251, Bb251, C252, D252, E252, F252, G252, A252, Bb252, C253, D253, E253, F253, G253, A253, Bb253, C254, D254, E254, F254, G254, A254, Bb254, C255, D255, E255, F255, G255, A255, Bb255, C256, D256, E256, F256, G256, A256, Bb256, C257, D257, E257, F257, G257, A257, Bb257, C258, D258, E258, F258, G258, A258, Bb258, C259, D259, E259, F259, G259, A259, Bb259, C260, D260, E260, F260, G260, A260, Bb260, C261, D261, E261, F261, G261, A261, Bb261, C262, D262, E262, F262, G262, A262, Bb262, C263, D263, E263, F263, G263, A263, Bb263, C264, D264, E264, F264, G264, A264, Bb264, C265, D265, E265, F265, G265, A265, Bb265, C266, D266, E266, F266, G266, A266, Bb266, C267, D267, E267, F267, G267, A267, Bb267, C268, D268, E268, F268, G268, A268, Bb268, C269, D269, E269, F269, G269, A269, Bb269, C270, D270, E270, F270, G270, A270, Bb270, C271, D271, E271, F271, G271, A271, Bb271, C272, D272, E272, F272, G272, A272, Bb272, C273, D273, E273, F273, G273, A273, Bb273, C274, D274, E274, F274, G274, A274, Bb274, C275, D275, E275, F275, G275, A275, Bb275, C276, D276, E276, F276, G276, A276, Bb276, C277, D277, E277, F277, G277, A277, Bb277, C278, D278, E278, F278, G278, A278, Bb278, C279, D279, E279, F279, G279, A279, Bb279, C280, D280, E280, F280, G280, A280, Bb280, C281, D281, E281, F281, G281, A281, Bb281, C282, D282, E282, F282, G282, A282, Bb282, C283, D283, E283, F283, G283, A283, Bb283, C284, D284, E284, F284, G284, A284, Bb284, C285, D285, E285, F285, G285, A285, Bb285, C286, D286, E286, F286, G286, A286, Bb286, C287, D287, E287, F287, G287, A287, Bb287, C288, D288, E288, F288, G288, A288, Bb288, C289, D289, E289, F289, G289, A289, Bb289, C290, D290, E290, F290, G290, A290, Bb290, C291, D291, E291, F291, G291, A291, Bb291, C292, D292, E292, F292, G292, A292, Bb292, C293, D293, E293, F293, G293, A293, Bb293, C294, D294, E294, F294, G294, A294, Bb294, C295, D295, E295, F295, G295, A295, Bb295, C296, D296, E296, F296, G296, A296, Bb296, C297, D297, E297, F297, G297, A297, Bb297, C298, D298, E298, F298, G298, A298, Bb298, C299, D299, E299, F299, G299, A299, Bb299, C300, D300, E300, F300, G300, A300, Bb300, C301, D301, E301, F301, G301, A301, Bb301, C302, D302, E302, F302, G302, A302, Bb302, C303, D303, E303, F303, G303, A303, Bb303, C304, D304, E304, F304, G304, A304, Bb304, C305, D305, E305, F305, G305, A305, Bb305, C306, D306, E306, F306, G306, A306, Bb306, C307, D307, E307, F307, G307, A307, Bb307, C308, D308, E308, F308, G308, A308, Bb308, C309, D309, E309, F309, G309, A309, Bb309, C310, D310, E310, F310, G310, A310, Bb310, C311, D311, E311, F311, G311, A311, Bb311, C312, D312, E312, F312, G312, A312, Bb312, C313, D313, E313, F313, G313, A313, Bb313, C314, D314, E314, F314, G314, A314, Bb314, C315, D315, E315, F315, G315, A315, Bb315, C316, D316, E316, F316, G316, A316, Bb316, C317, D317, E317, F317, G317, A317, Bb317, C318, D318, E318, F318, G318, A318, Bb318, C319, D319, E319, F319, G319, A319, Bb319, C320, D320, E320, F320, G320, A320, Bb320, C321, D321, E321, F321, G321, A321, Bb321, C322, D322, E322, F322, G322, A322, Bb322, C323, D323, E323, F323, G323, A323, Bb323, C324, D324, E324, F324, G324, A324, Bb324, C325, D325, E325, F325, G325, A325, Bb325, C326, D326, E326, F326, G326, A326, Bb326, C327, D327, E327, F327, G327, A327, Bb327, C328, D328, E328, F328, G328, A328, Bb328, C329, D329, E329, F329, G329, A329, Bb329, C330, D330, E330, F330, G330, A330, Bb330, C331, D331, E331, F331, G331, A331, Bb331, C332, D332, E332, F332, G332, A332, Bb332, C333, D333, E333, F333, G333, A333, Bb333, C334, D334, E334, F334, G334, A334, Bb334, C335, D335, E335, F335, G335, A335, Bb335, C336, D336, E336, F336, G336, A336, Bb336, C337, D337, E337, F337, G337, A337, Bb337, C338, D338, E338, F338, G338, A338, Bb338, C339, D339, E339, F339, G339, A339, Bb339, C340, D340, E340, F340, G340, A340, Bb340, C341, D341, E341, F341, G341, A341, Bb341, C342, D342, E342, F342, G342, A342, Bb342, C343, D343, E343, F343, G343, A343, Bb343, C344, D344, E344, F344, G344, A344, Bb344, C345, D345, E345, F345, G345, A345, Bb345, C346, D346, E346, F346, G346, A346, Bb346, C347, D347, E347, F347, G347, A347, Bb347, C348, D348, E348, F348, G348, A348, Bb348, C349, D349, E349, F349, G349, A349, Bb349, C350, D350, E350, F350, G350, A350, Bb350, C351, D351, E351, F351, G351, A351, Bb351, C352, D352, E352, F352, G352, A352, Bb352, C353, D353, E353, F353, G353, A353, Bb353, C354, D354, E354, F354, G354, A354, Bb354, C355, D35



Pupil: Exercise 4 Arranged by T Rhodie

### The train ride

*gva*-----

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand (RH) starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a half note G4. The second measure contains a half note A4. The third measure contains a half note B4. The fourth measure contains a half note C5. The left hand (LH) is in the bass clef and plays a steady quarter-note accompaniment: G2, A2, B2, C3 in the first measure; D2, E2, F2, G2 in the second; A2, B2, C3, D3 in the third; E2, F2, G2, A2 in the fourth. Dynamics are marked *mp* for the first two measures and *mf* for the last two. A hairpin crescendo spans the first two measures, and another hairpin crescendo spans the last two measures.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand (RH) continues with a treble clef. The first measure contains a half note D5. The second measure contains a half note E5. The third measure contains a half note F5. The fourth measure contains a half note G5. The left hand (LH) continues with the same quarter-note accompaniment: G2, A2, B2, C3 in the fifth measure; D2, E2, F2, G2 in the sixth; A2, B2, C3, D3 in the seventh; E2, F2, G2, A2 in the eighth. Dynamics are marked *f* for the first two measures and *ff* for the last two. A hairpin crescendo spans the first two measures, and another hairpin crescendo spans the last two.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand (RH) continues with a treble clef. The first measure contains a half note A5. The second measure contains a half note B5. The third measure contains a half note C6. The fourth measure contains a half note D6. The left hand (LH) continues with the same quarter-note accompaniment: G2, A2, B2, C3 in the ninth measure; D2, E2, F2, G2 in the tenth; A2, B2, C3, D3 in the eleventh; E2, F2, G2, A2 in the twelfth. Dynamics are marked *f* for the first two measures and *ff* for the last two. A hairpin crescendo spans the first two measures, and another hairpin crescendo spans the last two.

LH

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand (RH) continues with a treble clef. The first measure contains a half note E6. The second measure contains a half note F6. The third measure contains a half note G6. The fourth measure contains a half note A6. The left hand (LH) continues with the same quarter-note accompaniment: G2, A2, B2, C3 in the thirteenth measure; D2, E2, F2, G2 in the fourteenth; A2, B2, C3, D3 in the fifteenth; E2, F2, G2, A2 in the sixteenth. Dynamics are marked *f* for the first two measures and *ff* for the last two. A hairpin crescendo spans the first two measures, and another hairpin crescendo spans the last two. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

These exercises are done to ensure the use of the bigger lever (the whole arm) during the 'free fall' and 'float off'. The experience of a regular beat must be established simultaneously. This is the main aim of all the exercises up to now and is the foundation of a solid, relaxed technique. Do not proceed to the next exercises before mastering the previous ones.

At this stage the pupil has to get acquainted with the keyboard. Make the pupil aware of the names and locations of all the white keys on the keyboard C, D, E, F, G, A and B. The pupil should be able to find these keys on his/her own in the different registers at the keyboard and repeat the names several times.

#### **4.5 Combined 'free fall' and 'float off' movement with finger contact**

Although big and small levers are now used simultaneously, it is essential that the bigger lever (whole arm) still remains the initiator of the movements and sounds.

The same movement is performed as in 4.2, but with a different contact point. The third finger, supported by an elastic wrist, forearm and upper arm, now controls the 'free fall'. Repeat the 'free fall' movement on one note several times with both hands using the rhythm given in exercises 2a and 2b. The third finger may at first be supported by the thumb as described in 2.5.2. Combine this with a 'float off' movement using both hands respectively. Only when this movement is mastered comfortably can the 'float off' movement on the second finger be incorporated. The 'float off' movement is done whilst playing with the second finger. Only the wrist moves actively during the 'float off' as shown in photo no 9. This exercise is called a sigh motive and the sound and movement should correlate i.e. loud - soft.

Photo no 9 (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



The pupil learns the next exercise by rote, concentrating on the correct movement and regularity of the beat.



Teacher:

Exercise 5

The hiding bunny

The musical score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The time signature is 4/4. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicated by a sharp sign on the F line of the treble staff in the second system.

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):** The treble staff begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The bass staff has a whole rest in the first measure, followed by quarter notes D4, E4, F4, and G4. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed between the staves in the second measure.

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):** The treble staff contains quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, followed by quarter notes D5, E5, and F5. The bass staff contains quarter notes G4, F4, E4, and D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and A3. A dynamic marking of *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed in the first measure. A measure rest is present in the eighth measure of both staves.

**System 3 (Measures 9-12):** The treble staff contains quarter notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, followed by quarter notes D5, E5, and F5. The bass staff contains quarter notes G4, F4, E4, and D4, followed by quarter notes C4, B3, and A3. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed in the first measure. A measure rest is present in the twelfth measure of both staves.

Pupil:

Exercise 5

Arranged by T Rhodie

## The hiding bunny

Measures 1-4: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Treble staff: measures 1-3 have a slur over notes G4, A4, B4 with fingerings 3, 2, 2; measure 4 has a whole note G4 with fingering 3. Bass staff: measures 1-4 have whole rests. Dynamics: *p*.

Measures 5-8: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Treble staff: measures 5-8 have whole rests. Bass staff: measures 5-7 have a slur over notes G3, A3, B3 with fingerings 3, 2, 2; measure 8 has a whole note G3 with fingering 1. Dynamics: *mf*.

Measures 9-12: Treble clef, 4/4 time. Treble staff: measures 9-10 have a slur over notes G4, A4, B4 with fingerings 3, 2, 2; measure 11 has a whole rest; measure 12 has a whole note G4 with fingering 3. Bass staff: measures 9-10 have whole rests; measure 11 has a slur over notes G3, A3 with fingerings 3, 2; measure 12 has a whole note G3 with fingering 3. Dynamics: *f*.

The previous exercise can be extended by using three fingers 4, 3 and 2 as shown in exercise 6a. The pupil should be encouraged to recognize the names and locations of all the white keys on the piano in the different registers.

A 'free fall' movement is done on the first note and a 'float off' on the last. Controlled arm weight is used on the first note and taken off on the last. Do this exercise without

any dynamic changes at first. The rhythmic pattern must be followed as precisely as in the previous exercises. This is a big lever exercise, **not** finger drilling. The movement of the fingers should be minimal in order to let the bigger lever control the movement. Keep the arm in line with the finger that is playing. Repeat all the exercises until mastered. Dynamic changes can now be introduced as explained in 4.4.

In the next exercise the notes C, D, E, F, G and A are used and the pupil should be reminded of the location and names of these notes before doing the exercise. The pupil learns the exercise by rote. Remind the pupil to keep the arm in a position to support the finger that is playing.



Teacher:

Exercise 6a

On my little horse

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The score is in 4/4 time and bass clef. The right hand (RH) plays a melody starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes (G4, A4, B4, C5), a quarter note (D5), and a half note (E5) with a slur. The left hand (LH) plays a bass line of eighth notes (G3, F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2) with a slur. Dynamics include a crescendo and decrescendo in the RH.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The RH continues the melody with eighth notes (D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4), a quarter note (C4), and a half note (B3) with a slur. The LH continues the bass line. Dynamics include a crescendo and decrescendo in the RH, and a decrescendo in the LH. A *gva* (glissando) marking is present below the LH staff. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed at the end of measure 8.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The RH plays a melody of quarter notes (D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3) with a slur. The LH plays a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1) with a slur. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed in measure 10.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The RH plays a melody of quarter notes (D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3) with a slur. The LH plays a bass line of quarter notes (G2, F2, E2, D2, C2, B1, A1, G1) with a slur. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed in measure 13.

Pupil:

Exercise 6a

Arranged by T Rhodie

On my little horse

*guz*

5

*guz*

9

13

A solo piece is given in which the 'free fall' and 'float off' movements are practised, by using two and three note motives.

## Exercise 6b

Arranged by T Rhodie

## Come little duck

Andante ♩ = 80

The musical score for 'Come little duck' is presented in two systems. The first system is marked *p* (piano) and the second system is marked *f* (forte). Both systems are in 4/4 time and consist of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The melody in the treble staff features a sequence of notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 5. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with notes and fingerings: 5, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 5. The piece concludes with a final note in the treble staff (fingered 1) and a final note in the bass staff (fingered 3).

## 4.6 Rotation (Movement of the forearm)

4.6.1 Rotation (1<sup>st</sup> stage)

This movement is similar to that of turning a doorknob.

Practise the movement in the air with a bent arm at an angle of approximately 90 degrees. The upper arm must be passive and relaxed.

To obtain the correct position at the instrument, let the relaxed arm hang next to the body. Lift the forearm in this position onto a table high enough to be in line with the side



of the forearm. The hand should now be in a position to play the harp or accordion. Roll the hand to the thumb's side with the palm facing the floor. This rolling or turning movement is called rotation. An important point to remember is not to move the elbow during this movement.

The rotation movement is carried out by using the one side of the hand as a pivot. If rotation occurs to the side of the thumb, the pivot is on the other side of the hand and vice versa. The rotation movement is always towards the note on the strong (first) beat.

The following exercise can now be done at the piano: three black keys are used: F#, G#, and A# (the location of these notes can easily be explained to the pupil in order to find his/her place when practising). Let the relaxed arm hang next to the body. Close the hand forming a relaxed fist, thumb alongside the bent fingers. Pick up the forearm in this exact position with the bottom or lower part of the arm in line with the keyboard. Put the outer side of a relaxed fist on A#, letting it roll onto the side of the thumb on F#. Repeat this movement several times without interruption. The left hand performs a mirror pattern of this exercise as shown in photograph no 10. Do this exercise concentrating on the regularity of the beat (the up movement on the count of three and the down movement on one).

Photo no 10 (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



Pupil:

Exercise 7

Arranged by T Rhodie

Playing a game

RH

Musical notation for Pupil RH, measures 1-4. Treble clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. The bass line is silent.

Musical notation for Pupil RH, measures 5-8. Treble clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *rit*. The bass line is silent.

Teacher:

Playing a game

Musical notation for Teacher, measures 1-4. Treble and Bass clefs, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Fingerings: *gva*. The notation includes fingerings and accents for both hands.

Musical notation for Teacher, measures 5-8. Treble and Bass clefs, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *rit*. The notation includes fingerings and accents for both hands.



Pupil:

Exercise 8

Arranged by T Rhodie

Playing some more

Musical notation for Pupil, measures 1-4. Bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5.

Musical notation for Pupil, measures 5-8. Bass clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. Measure 8 includes *rit*.

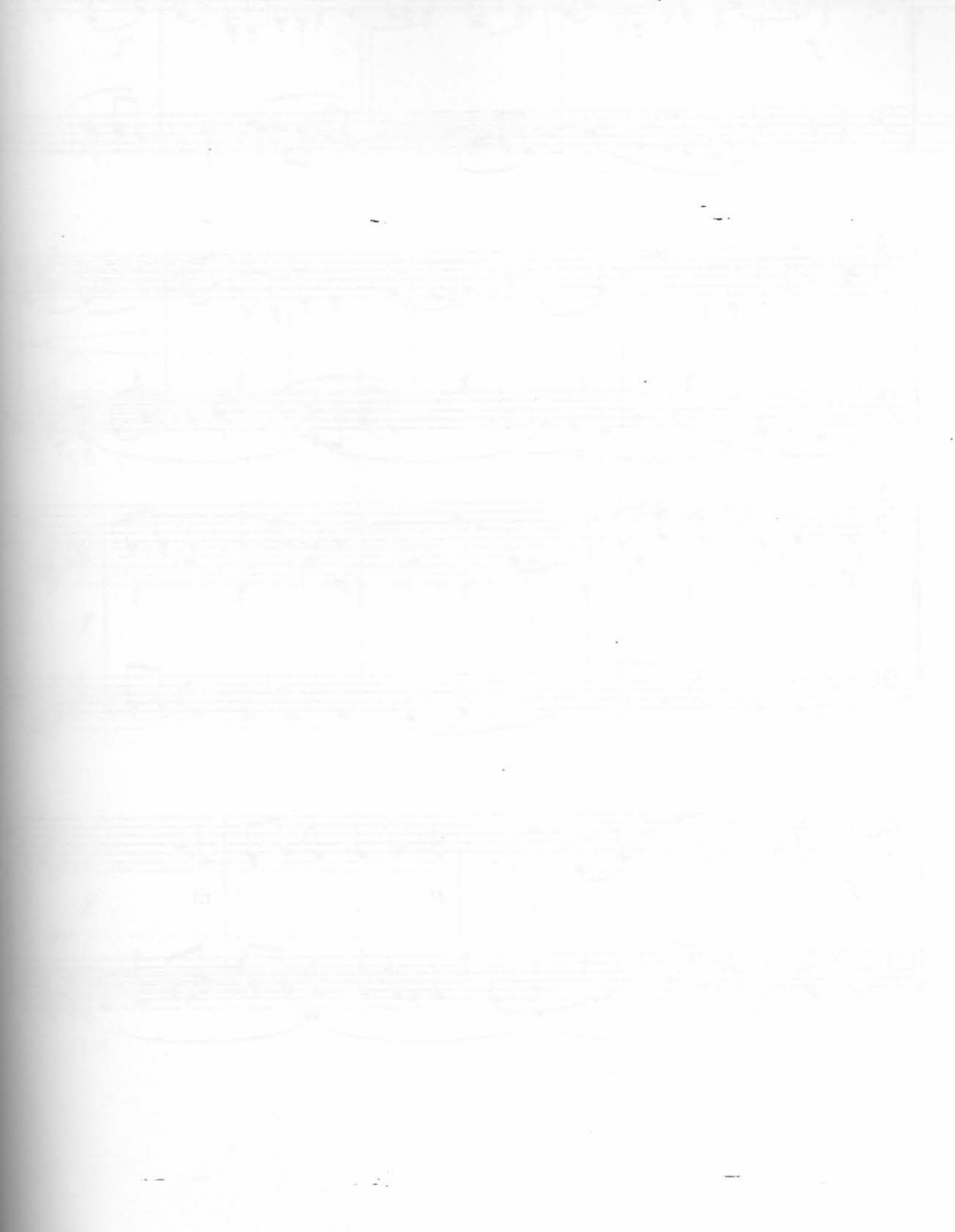
Teacher

Playing some more

Musical notation for Teacher, measures 1-4. Treble clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. Includes vocal line *gva-*.

Musical notation for Teacher, measures 5-8. Treble clef, 4/4 time, key of D major. Dynamics: *mf*. Notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5. Includes vocal line *gva-* and *rit*.

Exercises 7 and 8 can be extended and refined by using the fingers as contact point. Place the fifth finger on G above C as shown in exercise 9. Keep the G down as a pivot while the upper arm hangs relaxed next to the body. Do the previously practised rotation movement by playing C with the thumb on every first beat and picking it up on the second. The left hand mirrors this exercise as shown in photo no 11.



Teacher:

Exercise 9

Piekanienie

Musical notation for measures 1-4 of Exercise 9. The piece is in 4/4 time. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second staff (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The melody in the first staff consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests.

Musical notation for measures 5-8 of Exercise 9. The first staff (treble clef) continues the melody. The second staff (bass clef) continues the accompaniment. A fermata is placed over the final note of the first staff in measure 8.

Musical notation for measures 9-12 of Exercise 9. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and changes to piano (*p*) in measure 10. The second staff (bass clef) continues the accompaniment. The piece ends with a whole note chord in measure 12.

Musical notation for measures 13-16 of Exercise 9. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and changes to piano (*p*) in measure 14. The second staff (bass clef) continues the accompaniment. The piece concludes with a ritardando (*rit*) marking in measure 16.



Pupil:

Exercise 9

Arranged by T Rhodie

Piekanienie

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 4/4 time. The right hand (RH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. The left hand (LH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. The RH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. The LH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The right hand (RH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *pp*. The left hand (LH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. The RH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. The LH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. A *gva* marking is present above the RH staff. A hairpin symbol is shown above the RH staff in measure 9.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The right hand (RH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f* in measure 10 and *p* in measure 11. The left hand (LH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. The RH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. The LH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The right hand (RH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f* in measure 14, *p* in measure 15, and *rit* in measure 16. The left hand (LH) plays a series of eighth notes with a dynamic marking of *f*. The RH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. The LH notes are grouped by slurs and have fingering numbers 1 and 5. A *gva* marking is present above the RH staff.

**Photo no 11** (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



The next exercises can be done in order to master the intricate rotation movements.

As in the previous exercise, play the G with the fifth finger and C, D, and E respectively with the first, second and third fingers. Use rotation on each bottom note. The hand comes down on the first beat and is picked up on the second and third. The left hand mirrors the movement. These exercises are easily taught by rote.

Teacher:

Exercise 10

Sleep little boy

Andante cantabile

The first system of music is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and ascending to D5, with a slur over the first six notes. The bass clef staff contains a corresponding eighth-note accompaniment, also starting on G3 and ascending to D4, with a slur over the first six notes. The system concludes with a whole rest in both staves.

The second system begins at measure 7. The treble clef staff features a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and ascending to D5, with a slur over the first six notes. The bass clef staff contains a corresponding eighth-note accompaniment, also starting on G3 and ascending to D4, with a slur over the first six notes. The system concludes with a whole rest in both staves.

The third system begins at measure 13. The treble clef staff features a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and ascending to D5, with a slur over the first six notes. The bass clef staff contains a corresponding eighth-note accompaniment, also starting on G3 and ascending to D4, with a slur over the first six notes. The system concludes with a whole rest in both staves.

The fourth system begins at measure 19. The treble clef staff features a melodic line of eighth notes, starting on G4 and ascending to D5, with a slur over the first six notes. The bass clef staff contains a corresponding eighth-note accompaniment, also starting on G3 and ascending to D4, with a slur over the first six notes. The system concludes with a whole rest in both staves.



Pupil:

Exercise 10

Arranged by T Rhodie

Sleep little boy

Andante cantabile

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece is in 3/4 time and begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand features a melody of dotted half notes, each with a slur and a fingering number (5, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2). The left hand provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes on a single pitch.

Musical notation for measures 7-12. The right hand continues the melody with slurs and fingerings (3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2). The left hand accompaniment remains consistent.

Musical notation for measures 13-18. The right hand melody includes slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 1). The left hand accompaniment continues.

Musical notation for measures 19-24. The right hand part is marked *gua* (glissando) and consists of a series of slurs over a dotted half note. The left hand part continues with quarter notes and includes slurs and fingerings (1, 5, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2) for the final measures.

25

Musical score for measures 25-30. The piece is in 3/4 time. The upper staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) at the beginning. The lower staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The music consists of six measures, with the first measure starting with a piano dynamic.

31

Musical score for measures 31-34. The piece is in 3/4 time. The upper staff (treble clef) features a melodic line with a *rit* (ritardando) marking. The lower staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The music consists of four measures, with the first measure starting with a ritardando marking.

25

Musical score for exercise 25, measures 25-30. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves. The upper staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a dashed line for the right hand. The lower staff is a single treble clef staff for the left hand. The right hand part is marked *p* and contains six measures of rests. The left hand part contains six measures of eighth notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3. The notes are grouped by slurs and fingerings are indicated: 2, 1, 2, 3, 2.

31

Musical score for exercise 31, measures 31-36. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of two staves. The upper staff is a grand staff with a treble clef and a dashed line for the right hand. The lower staff is a single treble clef staff for the left hand. The right hand part is marked *rit* and contains six measures of rests. The left hand part contains six measures of half notes: G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3. The notes are grouped by slurs and fingerings are indicated: 1, 1, 1, 1.

#### 4.6.2 Rotation (2<sup>nd</sup> stage)

When comfortably mastered, move on to the next two exercises. The 'pivot note' (G) is repeated. The pupil has to learn to execute the same rotation movement whilst repeating the 'pivot note'. The left hand mirrors the movement.



Teacher:

Exercise 11

The mischievous donkey

Leggiero

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked 'Leggiero'. The first staff (treble clef) begins with a 7-measure rest, followed by a melodic line starting on G4. The second staff (bass clef) provides a harmonic accompaniment. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first staff.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The melodic line continues with a long slur across measures 6 and 7. The dynamic marking *p* is placed at the end of measure 9.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The melodic line features a series of eighth notes with slurs. The dynamic marking *cresc* is placed at the beginning of measure 10.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The melodic line includes a sharp sign (F#) in measure 14 and a long slur across measures 14 and 15. The dynamic marking *f* is placed at the beginning of measure 14, and the marking *rit* is placed at the end of measure 15.

Pupil:

Exercise 11

Arranged by T Rhodie

The mischievous donkey

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) plays a sequence of notes: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter). The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady bass line of D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The right hand continues the sequence: E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter). The left hand continues the bass line: C2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter), F1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter).

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The right hand continues: D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter). The left hand continues: C1 (quarter), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter), F1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter). Dynamic markings include *p* in measure 10 and *cresc* in measure 11.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The right hand continues: C2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter), F1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter). The left hand continues: B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter), F1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter), B1 (quarter). Dynamic markings include *f* in measure 14 and *rit* in measure 15.

Teacher:

Exercise 12

The donkey again?

Leggiero

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The first system consists of two staves. The upper staff begins with a treble clef and a 7-measure rest, followed by a melody starting on G4. The lower staff begins with a bass clef and a 4-measure rest, followed by a bass line starting on G3. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the first measure of the upper staff.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The second system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from measure 5, ending with a half note on G4. The lower staff continues the bass line from measure 5. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed at the end of the upper staff in measure 9.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The third system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from measure 9, ending with a half note on G4. The lower staff continues the bass line from measure 9. A dynamic marking of *cresc* is placed at the beginning of the upper staff in measure 10.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The fourth system consists of two staves. The upper staff continues the melody from measure 13, ending with a half note on G4. The lower staff continues the bass line from measure 13. A dynamic marking of *f* is placed at the beginning of the upper staff in measure 14, and a *rit* marking is placed below the upper staff in measure 16.



Pupil: *Rotation (3<sup>rd</sup> stage)*

Exercise 12

Arranged by T Rhodie

### The donkey again?

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand (RH) consists of four whole rests. The left hand (LH) plays a sequence of notes: C4 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), G4 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C5 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G5 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C6 (3<sup>rd</sup> finger), G6 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C7 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), and G7 (5<sup>th</sup> finger). The dynamic marking is *mf*. The label "LH" is written below the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The right hand (RH) consists of four whole rests. The left hand (LH) continues the sequence from measure 5: C7 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), G7 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C8 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G8 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C9 (3<sup>rd</sup> finger), G9 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C10 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), and G10 (5<sup>th</sup> finger).

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The right hand (RH) consists of four whole rests. The left hand (LH) continues the sequence from measure 9: C10 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), G10 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C11 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G11 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C12 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G12 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C13 (3<sup>rd</sup> finger), and G13 (5<sup>th</sup> finger). The dynamic marking starts at *p* and includes a *cresc* (crescendo) marking.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The right hand (RH) consists of four whole rests. The left hand (LH) continues the sequence from measure 13: C13 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G13 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C14 (2<sup>nd</sup> finger), G14 (5<sup>th</sup> finger), C15 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), G15 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), C16 (1<sup>st</sup> finger), and G16 (1<sup>st</sup> finger). The dynamic marking starts at *f* and includes a *rit* (ritardando) marking.

### 4.6.3 Rotation (3<sup>rd</sup> stage)

Rotation to the outside of the hand is the opposite of what has been done previously. Place the right-hand thumb on middle C and keep it down. Rotate to the opposite side with the fifth finger on G as shown in exercise 13. The turning wrist is the initiator of the movement and not the elbow. Always keep to a regular beat.

The left hand mirrors the movement as shown in exercise 14.



Pupil:

Exercise 13

Arranged by T Rhodie

Hop-hop horse

*gva*

*f*

*rit*

Teacher:

Hop-hop horse

*f*

*rit*



Pupil:

Exercise 14

Arranged by T Rhodie

Galloping pony

Musical score for Pupil: Galloping pony. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes a *LH* (Left Hand) label. The second system includes a *rit* (ritardando) marking. The score features a treble clef and a bass clef, with various musical notations including notes, rests, and slurs.

Teacher:

Galloping pony

Musical score for Teacher: Galloping pony. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system includes a *rit* (ritardando) marking. The score features a treble clef and a bass clef, with various musical notations including notes, rests, and slurs.

Two more exercises can be done in order to master this rotation movement.

As in the previous RH exercise, play the C with the thumb and G, F, and E with the fifth, fourth and third fingers respectively. Use rotation on each top note away from the pivot note (C) as shown in exercise 15. The left hand mirrors the movement as shown in exercise 16.

The page contains faint musical notation for two exercises, labeled 'Teacher' and 'Lassie'. Each exercise consists of two staves. Exercise 15 (Teacher) shows a right-hand part with a pivot note C and subsequent notes G, F, and E, with arrows indicating rotation away from the pivot. Exercise 16 (Lassie) shows a left-hand part mirroring the movement of exercise 15.

Pupil:

Exercise 15

Arranged by T Rhodie

Lassie

5 4 3 4 5 4 3

*f*

5 4 3 4 5 5 5

*mp* *cresc* *rit*

Teacher:

Lassie

*f*

*mp* *cresc* *rit*



Pupil: *Handbook (4<sup>th</sup> stage)*

Exercise 16

Arranged by T Rhodie

Lassie again!

Musical score for the Pupil's Left Hand (LH), measures 1-4. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand part consists of four whole rests. The left hand part features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 4, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 4). The dynamic marking is *f*. There are four triangular hairpins indicating a crescendo over the first two measures and a decrescendo over the last two measures.

Musical score for the Pupil, measures 5-8. The music is in 4/4 time. The right hand part consists of four whole rests. The left hand part features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 4, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5, 5). The dynamic markings are *p*, *cresc*, and *rit*. There are four triangular hairpins indicating a crescendo over the first two measures and a decrescendo over the last two measures.

Teacher:

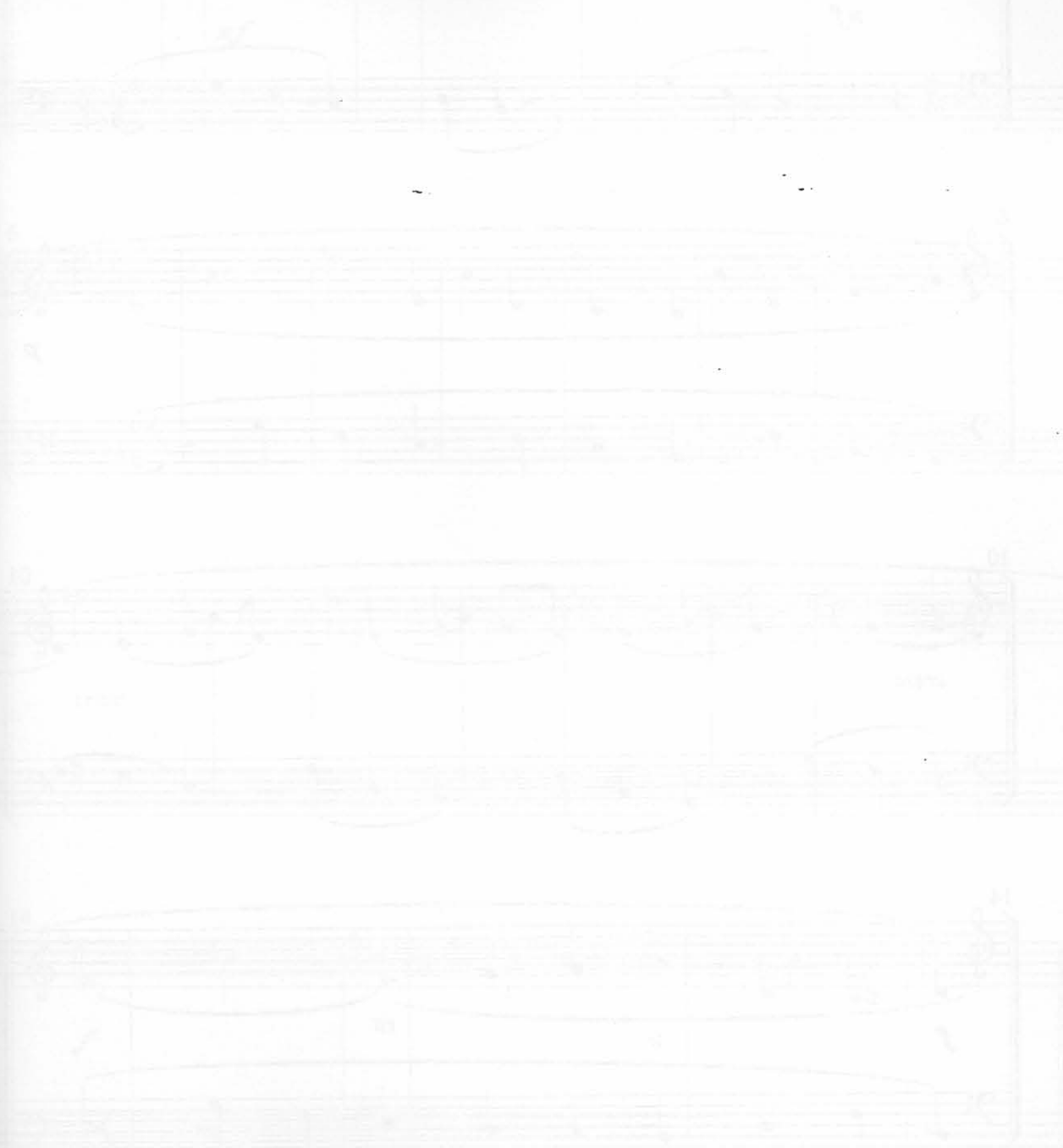
Lassie again!

Musical score for the Teacher, measures 1-4. The music is in 4/4 time. Both hands have a melodic line with slurs and fingerings. The dynamic marking is *f*. There are four triangular hairpins indicating a crescendo over the first two measures and a decrescendo over the last two measures.

Musical score for the Teacher, measures 5-8. The music is in 4/4 time. Both hands have a melodic line with slurs and fingerings. The dynamic markings are *mp*, *cresc*, and *rit*. There are four triangular hairpins indicating a crescendo over the first two measures and a decrescendo over the last two measures.

#### 4.6.4 Rotation (4<sup>th</sup> stage)

When comfortably mastered, move on to the next two exercises. In exercise 17 the 'pivot note' is repeated and the pupil has to learn to execute the same rotation movement whilst repeating the note. The pivot is on the thumb side of the hand. In exercise 18 the left hand mirrors the movement.



Teacher:

Exercise 17

Donkey riding

Leggiero

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The treble clef staff begins with a 7-measure rest, followed by a melody starting on G4. The bass clef staff provides a simple accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed below the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The treble clef staff continues the melody with a long slur over measures 6-8. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed at the end of measure 9. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The treble clef staff features a melody with a *cresc* (crescendo) marking. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The treble clef staff begins with a dynamic marking of *f* and includes a *rit* (ritardando) marking. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.



Pupil:

Exercise 17

Arranged by T Rhodie

Donkey riding

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4 (finger 5), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 4), C5 (finger 1), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 4), G4 (finger 1). The bass clef contains a single bass note (F3) in each measure. A *mf* dynamic marking is present in the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4 (finger 5), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 4), C5 (finger 1), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 4), G4 (finger 1). The bass clef contains a single bass note (F3) in each measure.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4 (finger 5), A4 (finger 4), B4 (finger 4), C5 (finger 1), B4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 3), G4 (finger 1). The bass clef contains a single bass note (F3) in each measure. A *cresc* dynamic marking is present in the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The melody in the treble clef consists of quarter notes: G4 (finger 4), A4 (finger 1), B4 (finger 4), C5 (finger 5), B4 (finger 1), A4 (finger 5), G4 (finger 5). The bass clef contains a single bass note (F3) in each measure. A *f* dynamic marking is present in the first measure, and a *rit* marking is present in the third measure.

Teacher:

Exercise 18

How do you ride a donkey?

Leggiero

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The treble clef staff begins with a *mf* dynamic marking. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some slurs. The bass clef staff provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes.

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with a *p* dynamic marking at the end. The bass clef staff continues with quarter notes.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The treble clef staff has a *cresc* dynamic marking. The melody is more active with eighth notes. The bass clef staff continues with quarter notes.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The treble clef staff has a *f* dynamic marking and a *rit* marking. The melody features a long slur across measures 15 and 16. The bass clef staff continues with quarter notes.

Pupil:

Exercise 18

Arranged by T Rhodie

How do you ride a donkey?

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand (RH) has a constant half-note accompaniment on G4. The left hand (LH) plays a sequence of notes: G3 (5th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), F3 (3rd finger), G3 (1st finger), A3 (4th finger), G3 (1st finger). The dynamic marking is *mf*.

LH

Musical notation for measures 6-9. The right hand (RH) continues with the half-note accompaniment. The left hand (LH) continues with the sequence: G3 (5th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (3rd finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger). The dynamic marking is *mf*.

Musical notation for measures 10-13. The right hand (RH) continues with the half-note accompaniment. The left hand (LH) continues with the sequence: G3 (5th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (3rd finger), A3 (1st finger). The dynamic marking is *cresc*.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. The right hand (RH) continues with the half-note accompaniment. The left hand (LH) continues with the sequence: G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (4th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (5th finger), A3 (1st finger), G3 (5th finger). The dynamic marking is *f* in measure 14 and *rit* in measure 15. The piece ends with a double bar line in measure 17.



#### 4.7 The 'thumb under' movement

The most common problem generally experienced with this movement is the interference of the forearm when using the thumb. This is usually the result of the thumb being placed underneath the hand, where no independent movement of the thumb is possible. The arm is thus forced to move down when the thumb is used, resulting in clumsy, uneven playing. The solution is to let the wrist be the initiator of the movement. By moving only the wrist, of the left hand in this case, horizontally to the left, pulling the forearm and hand with it, space is created for the thumb to move both laterally and vertically. The thumb stays alongside the hand as shown in photo no 12. The movement is dealt with separately from the movement of the thumb as used in a five finger exercise.

In exercises 19 and 20 the hand, supported by the third finger, must be swayed to the right in the case of the right hand, and to the left when using the left hand. This allows the thumb to move freely up and down, next to the hand. Once again, the wrist initiates the movement with no intended movement by the elbow.

Photo no 12 (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



Pupil:

Exercise 19

Arranged by T Rhodie

### Humpty Dumpty

Teacher:

### Humpty Dumpty

I love Humpty Dumpty



Pupil:

Exercise 20

Arranged by T Rhodie

I love Humpty Dumpty

*mf*  
8va  
LH

*f*  
5

Teacher:

I love Humpty Dumpty

*mf*

*f*  
5

## 4.8 The hand 'free fall'

### 4.8.1 The hand 'free fall' (1<sup>st</sup> stage)

The same free fall exercise done with the whole arm in 4.2 should be imitated by the hand (i.e. wrist to the fingers) as a unit, letting it fall onto a table. Do this exercise by closing the fist and keeping the thumb alongside the hand. This movement is similar to that of knocking on a door.

Do the exercise at the instrument in a normal playing position, using the third finger as contact point. This movement starts above the keyboard and the momentum is focused on the key contact point, i.e. the third finger. The first phalanx must remain firm and should not collapse. Remain in contact with the key for a few moments before picking up for the next 'fall'. It is of utmost importance to use the hand as a unit and not to move the fingers independently as shown in photo no 13.

Photo no 13 (Original photograph of the researcher's hand)



Do the previous exercise with the first and fifth fingers as contact points. Play a perfect 5<sup>th</sup>; F and C above middle C with the first and fifth fingers of the right hand respectively. Repeat several times with both hands separately. Remind the pupil continually of the note names and locations.



Pupil:

Exercise 21

Arranged by T Rhodie

A trotting horse

*gva*-----

*p*

5

*f*  
*gva*

*rit*

LH

Teacher:

A trotting horse

*p*

5

*f*

*rit*

Teacher:

Exercise 22

Die Kimberley se trein

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The upper staff contains whole rests, and the lower staff contains whole notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the third measure.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth notes and dotted rhythms. The lower staff provides a bass line with eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the final note of the upper staff in measure 8.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The upper staff contains whole rests, and the lower staff contains whole notes. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the third measure.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth notes and dotted rhythms. The lower staff provides a bass line with eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *rit* is present in the third measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Pupil:

Exercise 22

Arranged by T Rhodie

Die Kimberley se trein

*gna*-----

1 5 1 5 1 5 1 5

5

5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1

9

*f*

5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1

LH

13

5 1 5 1 5 1 5 1



#### 4.8.2 The hand 'free fall' (2<sup>nd</sup> stage)

The previous movement is the movement used when playing staccato. The staccato movement starts above the keyboard.

Repeat this exercise using all the fingers as shown in exercise 23. The initiator of the movement should be the hand from the wrist as a unit, and the fingers should only be the contact point. Make sure that there is no separate finger movement independent of the rest of the hand.

Practise the following exercise separately, at first concentrating on the correct movement and regularity of the beat. Only when mastered comfortably can it be played with hands together.

Teacher:

Frère Jacques

The image shows a musical score for the exercise 'Frère Jacques'. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has two staves, the second has two staves, and the third has two staves. The notation is very faint and difficult to read, but it appears to be a simple rhythmic exercise with quarter and eighth notes.

Pupil: *Finger movement*

Exercise 23

Arranged by T Rhodie

Frère Jacques

*gva* -----

*mp*

5

Teacher:

Frère Jacques

*mp*

5

#### 4.9 Finger movement

The important big lever movements are well established at this stage of tuition. The pupil can start concentrating on strengthening the fingers. The majority of the beginner courses start here.

As a reminder the following summary of the guidelines given in 2.8.8 on the most important aspects of finger movements is repeated:

- the fingers start working from the joint connecting them to the hand but are always supported by the hand and muscles of the forearm and upper arm
- fingertips should be strengthened to carry the weight of the arm and should never collapse at the first joint. When a 'free fall' or any other big lever movement is executed the sound can only be controlled if a firm (bent) first phalanx is strong enough not to collapse under the weight of the arm (big lever)
- when the fingers are working on their own, there is no added 'activity' by the hand or the wrist apart from support given by them. In this case the finger is the initiator of the movement and is the only lever that is actively moving
- freedom of movement in the bigger levers ensures support for the fingers. Therefore keep the arm and wrist in line with the finger that is playing at that moment. This means that there must be a slight horizontal change in the position of the wrist and forearm for each finger
- it is important to note that the thumb is dealt with separately by all the authors. The thumb's position alongside the hand puts it in a different category. The biggest problem is the placement of the thumb underneath the hand. The only position where the thumb is agile and from where it can move in any direction is alongside the hand, therefore exercises for putting the thumb 'under' are given in 4.7.

The next exercises for five finger movement can be used together with the pieces given in most of the beginner courses.



Exercise 24

Arranged by T Rhodie

The little duckling

Moderato ♩ = 100

The first system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with fingerings 5, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 4, 5. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a bass line with fingerings 1, 5, 1, 5, 1, 5, 1. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed in the first measure.

The second system of music consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature, starting with a measure rest marked '5'. It contains a melodic line with fingerings 5, 3, 4, 2, 4, 2, 5, 3. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, containing a bass line with fingerings 3, 1, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3, 2, 4, 3, 4, 5. The dynamic marking *f* is placed in the first measure.

Exercise 25

Arranged by T Rhodie

A Christmas song

Moderato ♩ = 100

The first system of music is in 4/4 time and features a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melody consists of eighth notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 1, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2. The bass line consists of whole notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 4, 5. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

The second system of music continues the piece. The treble clef part has whole rests. The bass clef part continues with eighth notes and fingerings: 1, 3, 5, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The dynamic marking is *mf*.

The third system of music continues the piece. The treble clef part has eighth notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 1, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2. The bass clef part has whole notes with fingerings: 5, 3, 4, 1. The dynamic marking is *f*.

The fourth system of music concludes the piece. The treble clef part has whole notes with fingerings: 1, 3, 2, 4, 3. The bass clef part continues with eighth notes and fingerings: 1, 3, 5, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The dynamic marking is *f*.

Exercise 26

Arranged by T Rhodie

Grandpa's snuff-box

Moderato  $\text{♩} = 100$

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time. The treble clef staff contains a melody with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 3. The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The bass clef staff contains whole rests for all four measures.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The treble clef staff contains whole rests for all four measures. The dynamic marking *p* is present. The bass clef staff contains a descending eighth-note scale: 5, 4, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, with a slur over the notes.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The treble clef staff contains a melody with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 3. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The bass clef staff contains whole notes: 3, 2, 4, 5.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The treble clef staff contains whole notes: 3, 4, 2, 3. The dynamic marking *f* is present. The bass clef staff contains a descending eighth-note scale: 5, 4, 3, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, with a slur over the notes.



#### 4.10 Combinations of the basic movements

All the basic movements of the different levers from big to small have been covered by the previous exercises. The following pieces include different basic movements to encourage and develop freedom and confidence. They are structured in such a way as to contain combinations of movements at different levels of difficulty.

The following abbreviations will be used to indicate the different movements in the pieces:

Free fall	-	Ff
Float off	-	Fo
Rotation (thumb side)	-	Rt
Rotation (fifth finger side)	-	Rf
Staccato	-	S
Finger movement	-	Fm
Thumb under	-	Tu

A movement is not indicated repeatedly. Only a change in movement is indicated.

When part of a piece is repeated the movements are not indicated again.

Piece no 1 includes 'free fall', 'float off', staccato movements and finger movements.

Teacher:

### Swinging

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of staves. The first two systems (measures 1-8) are in bass clef. The first system (measures 1-4) features a piano (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the bass line. The third system (measures 9-12) is in treble clef and features a piano (*p*) dynamic. The fourth system (measures 13-16) is in treble clef and features a forte (*f*) dynamic, with a *rit* (ritardando) marking in measure 15. The score includes various articulations such as staccato marks and slurs.

Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

Swinging

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four systems of two staves each. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a dynamic of *f*. The first staff contains a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3). The second staff contains a bass line with slurs and fingerings (5, 1, 5, 1, 5, 1, 5, 1). Dynamics include *f*, *S*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *S*, and *Ff*. The second system (measures 5-8) starts with a dynamic of *S*. The first staff continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 5, 3, 3, 5, 5, 3, 3, 5, 5, 4, 2, 1). The second staff continues the bass line with slurs and fingerings (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1). Dynamics include *S*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *Ff*, *Fm*, and *Fo*. The third system (measures 9-12) begins with a dynamic of *p*. The first staff continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 4, 3). The second staff continues the bass line with slurs and fingerings (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1). Dynamics include *p*, *S*, and *Ff*. The fourth system (measures 13-16) starts with a dynamic of *f*. The first staff continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (5, 5, 3, 3, 5, 5, 3, 3, 5, 5, 4, 2, 1). The second staff continues the bass line with slurs and fingerings (1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1). Dynamics include *f*, *rit*, *S*, and *Ff*.



Piece no 2 includes 'free fall', 'float off', staccato and finger movements.

Teacher:

### Duckling

The musical score for 'Duckling' is written in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The first system (measures 1-4) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system (measures 5-8) starts with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and includes a large crescendo hairpin. The third system (measures 9-12) starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and also includes a large crescendo hairpin. The score features various musical notations including chords, slurs, and fingerings (e.g., 'TRP' and 'TRP' in the bass staff of the first system, and 'TRP', 'TRP', and 'TRP' in the bass staff of the third system).

Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

### Duckling

800

*f* Ff

Ff

5

*mp* S

Ff Fm Fo

S

Ff Fm Fo

9

*mf* S

Ff Fm Fo

S

Ff Fm Fo

Place no 2 includes 'free fall', 'kick off', slaccato and finger movements.

13

Musical score for measures 13-16. The top staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, some beamed together. A dynamic marking *f* is present in the first measure. The bottom staff is also in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a bass line with chords and single notes. The system ends with a double bar line.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The top staff is in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, some beamed together. A dynamic marking *rit* is present in the third measure. The bottom staff is also in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature, showing a bass line with chords and single notes. The system ends with a double bar line.



*gua*-----

13

*f* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff*

*Ff* *Fo* *rit* *Ff*

*f* *Ff* *Fo*

Piece no 3 includes 'free fall', 'float off', rotation, staccato and 'thumb under' and finger movements.

Teacher:

### Sleeping bunny

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves, a treble clef on top and a bass clef on the bottom. Both staves are in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The notation shows four measures, each containing a single quarter rest on the respective staff.

The second system of musical notation starts at measure 5. The top staff (bass clef) begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. It features a melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, including a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and quarter notes, also featuring a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the final note.

The third system of musical notation starts at measure 9. The top staff (bass clef) continues the melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, including a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the final note. The bottom staff (bass clef) continues the rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and quarter notes, also featuring a slur over the first four notes and a fermata over the final note. A forte (*f*) dynamic marking is placed in the middle of the system.

Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

### Sleeping bunny

*gaa* .....

*p* *Ff* *Fm* Tu Fo S *Ff*

*Ff* *Fm* Tu Fo S *Ff*

*Ff* Fo *f* *Ff*

*Rf*

*Ff* *Fm* Fo *Ff* *f*

*Ff*



Piece no 4 includes 'free fall', 'float off', rotation and staccato movements.

Teacher:

### Baba black sheep

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time. The upper staff (treble clef) contains a melody starting with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5, then a half note G4. A slur covers the last two notes. The lower staff (bass clef) contains a bass line starting with a quarter note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, and C3, then a half note G2. A dynamic marking *f* is present in the first measure.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The upper staff continues the melody with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5, then a half note D5. A slur covers the last two notes. The lower staff continues the bass line with quarter notes A2, B2, C3, and D3, then a half note A2. A dynamic marking *f* is present in the first measure. A wedge-shaped dynamic marking is shown between the staves, tapering from measure 5 to measure 8.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The upper staff continues the melody with quarter notes A4, B4, C5, and D5, then a half note A4. A slur covers the last two notes. The lower staff continues the bass line with quarter notes E2, F2, G2, and A2, then a half note E2. A dynamic marking *f* is present in the first measure. A wedge-shaped dynamic marking is shown between the staves, tapering from measure 9 to measure 12.

Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

### Baba black sheep

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. Each system has a piano part (top staff) and a guitar part (bottom staff). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include *f*, *S*, *Ff*, *Rf*, and *Fine*. The first system ends with a *Fine* marking. The second system begins with a measure number '5' and includes a *Da Capo al Fine* instruction. The guitar part features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes.

*8va*

*f* *S* *Ff* *S* *Fine* *Ff*

*S* *Ff* *Rf*

5

*f* *S* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff* *Fo* *S* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff* *Fo* *Da Capo al Fine* *Ff* *Fo*

*S* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff* *Fo* *Ff* *Fo* *Rf*

Piece no 5 includes 'free fall', 'float off', rotation, staccato and finger movements.

Teacher:

### The little frog

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time. The first system shows a piano introduction with a *mf* dynamic. The right hand has a long, sustained note with a tremolo effect, while the left hand plays a simple bass line. The dynamic increases to *f* by the end of the system.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues with a tremolo effect, and the left hand plays a bass line with some rhythmic variation. The dynamic is *mf* at the start and *f* at the end.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand has a tremolo effect, and the left hand plays a bass line. The dynamic starts at *p* and increases to *f* by the end of the system.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand has a tremolo effect, and the left hand plays a bass line. The dynamic is *mf* at the start and *f* at the end.



Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

The little frog

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 3/4 time. The right hand starts with a melody of quarter notes: G4 (mf), A4 (Ff), B4 (Fm), C5 (Fo). The left hand plays a bass line of quarter notes: G3 (Ff), F3 (Fm), E3 (Fo), D3 (Ff). A slur covers the first four notes in both hands. Measure 4 ends with a fermata over the final notes.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The right hand continues the melody: G4 (mf), A4 (Ff), B4 (Fm), C5 (Fo). The left hand continues the bass line: G3 (Ff), F3 (Fm), E3 (Fo), D3 (Ff). A slur covers the first four notes in both hands. Measure 8 ends with a fermata over the final notes.

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The right hand continues the melody: G4 (mf), A4 (Ff), B4 (Fm), C5 (Fo). The left hand continues the bass line: G3 (Ff), F3 (Fm), E3 (Fo), D3 (Ff). A slur covers the first four notes in both hands. Measure 12 ends with a fermata over the final notes.

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The right hand continues the melody: G4 (mf), A4 (Ff), B4 (Fm), C5 (Fo), D5 (S), E5 (f), D5 (Ff). The left hand continues the bass line: G3 (Ff), F3 (Fm), E3 (Fo), D3 (S), C3 (Ff). A slur covers the first four notes in both hands. Measure 16 ends with a fermata over the final notes.

17

*mf*

This system contains measures 17 through 20. It features two staves in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff contains a melodic line with quarter notes and rests, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *mf* is present in the first measure. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

21

*f*

This system contains measures 21 through 24. It features two staves in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff has a melodic line of eighth notes, and the lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the first measure. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

25

*mp*

This system contains measures 25 through 28. It features two staves in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff has a melodic line with dotted notes and rests, while the lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with quarter notes. A dynamic marking of *mp* is present in the first measure. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

29

*f*

This system contains measures 29 through 32. It features two staves in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. The upper staff has a melodic line with dotted notes and rests, while the lower staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with quarter notes. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the first measure. The system concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

17

*mf* S Ff Ff

Rf

21

*f* S Ff Fm Fo Ff

S Ff Fm Fo Ff

25

*mp* Ff Fm Fo Ff Fm Fo Ff

Rf Ff Rf

29

*f* Ff Fm Fo Ff Fm Fo S Ff

Ff



Piece no 6 includes 'free fall', 'float off', 'thumb under and finger movements.

Teacher:

### On my birthday

The first system of musical notation for 'On my birthday' consists of two staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The treble clef staff begins with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G#4, then a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The bass clef staff begins with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G#2, then a quarter note A2, and a quarter note B2. The first measure of the second system is marked with a forte *f* dynamic. The second system contains four measures, each featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the bass clef staff.

The second system of musical notation contains four measures. The first measure is marked with a first ending bracket and the number '1'. The treble clef staff features a sequence of eighth notes: G#4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G#4, and a quarter note G#4. The bass clef staff features a sequence of eighth notes: G#2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G#2, and a quarter note G#2. The second system concludes with a repeat sign.

The third system of musical notation contains four measures. The first measure is marked with a second ending bracket and the number '2'. The treble clef staff features a sequence of eighth notes: G#4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G#4, and a quarter note G#4. The bass clef staff features a sequence of eighth notes: G#2, A2, B2, C3, B2, A2, G#2, and a quarter note G#2. The second system concludes with a repeat sign. The first measure of the third system is marked with a *cresc* (crescendo) dynamic, and the second measure is marked with a forte *f* dynamic.

Pupil:

Arranged by T Rhodie

### On my birthday

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 4/4 time, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It consists of two systems of four measures each. The first system begins with a *gua* (grace note) and a repeat sign. The first measure contains a triplet of eighth notes (F#, G#, A) with fingerings 3, 1, 3. The second measure contains a half note (B) with a slur and fingering 5. The third measure contains a half note (A) with a slur and fingering 2. The fourth measure contains a half note (G#) with a slur and fingering 1. The second system starts with a *gua* and a forte (*f*) dynamic. The first measure contains a half note (F#) with a slur and fingering 3. The second measure contains a half note (G#) with a slur and fingering 1. The third measure contains a half note (A) with a slur and fingering 3. The fourth measure contains a half note (B) with a slur and fingering 3. The score includes various dynamics: *gua*, *f*, *Ff*, *Fm*, *Fo*, and *Tu*. Fingerings and slurs are used throughout to guide the performer. The piece concludes with a repeat sign and a final *Ff* dynamic.

Piece no 7 includes 'free fall', 'float off', staccato and finger movements.  
Arranged by T Rhodie

### Galloping

Musical score for 'Galloping' in 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measures 5-6. The music features a galloping rhythm with various dynamics and articulations. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include *S* (staccato), *Ff* (fortissimo), *Fm* (mezzo-forte), *Fo* (piano), *f* (forte), and *p* (piano). Articulations include staccato (*S*) and finger movements (*Ff*, *Fm*, *Fo*).

Piece no 8 includes 'free fall', 'float off', staccato and finger movements.  
Arranged by T Rhodie

### A little bird came to me

Andante

Musical score for 'A little bird came to me' in 3/4 time. The score consists of two systems of two staves each. The first system contains measures 1-4, and the second system contains measures 5-6. The music is marked 'Andante' and features a slow, flowing melody. Dynamics include *Ff* (fortissimo), *Fm* (mezzo-forte), *Fo* (piano), *S* (staccato), *p* (piano), and *Ff* (fortissimo). Articulations include staccato (*S*) and finger movements (*Ff*, *Fm*, *Fo*).



Piece no 9 includes 'free fall', 'float off', rotation, staccato and finger movements.  
Arranged by T Rhodie

### Hänschen klein

The first system of music is in 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) starts with a melody of quarter notes: G4 (finger 5), A4 (finger 3), G4 (finger 3), F4 (finger 4), E4 (finger 2), D4 (finger 2), C4 (finger 1), B3 (finger 2), A3 (finger 3), G3 (finger 4), F3 (finger 5), E3 (finger 5), D3 (finger 5), C3 (finger 5). The left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line of quarter notes: G3 (finger 1), F3 (finger 1), E3 (finger 1), D3 (finger 1), C3 (finger 1), B2 (finger 1), A2 (finger 1), G2 (finger 1), F2 (finger 1), E2 (finger 1), D2 (finger 1), C2 (finger 1), B1 (finger 1), A1 (finger 1), G1 (finger 1). Dynamics include *mp*, *Ff*, *Fo*, and *Ff*. A staccato (*S*) marking is present above the right hand in the third measure.

Rf

The second system continues the piece. The right hand melody includes a triplet of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4) and a quarter note (C5). The left hand continues with quarter notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *Ff*. A staccato (*S*) marking is present above the right hand in the fourth measure.

The third system begins with a new melody in the right hand: quarter notes G4 (finger 2), A4 (finger 2), B4 (finger 2), C5 (finger 2), D5 (finger 3), E5 (finger 4), F5 (finger 4), G5 (finger 3), F5 (finger 3), E5 (finger 3), D5 (finger 3), C5 (finger 3), B4 (finger 3), A4 (finger 3), G4 (finger 3). The left hand continues with quarter notes. Dynamics include *p*, *S*, *Ff*, *Fm*, *Fo*, and *mf*.

The fourth system continues the piece. The right hand melody includes a triplet of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4) and a quarter note (C5). The left hand continues with quarter notes. Dynamics include *f*, *S*, *Ff*, *Fo*, *S*, *rit*, and *Ff*.

#### 4.11 Chapter conclusion **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Starting tuition of a beginner pianist requires sensitivity and skill. Well-known authors in the field of piano technique emphasize the fact that the technical movements the beginner is taught during the first lessons provide the technical foundation for the rest of his/her life. Another suggestion by the leading authors is to form correct habits of movement from the very beginning.

In chapter 4 the researcher aimed to structure the basic technical movements of piano playing in such a way that the beginner is given a solid technical basis to build an advanced technique on. The researcher furthermore aimed to describe all the movements very clearly and to give illustrations in the form of photographs and pictures. All these slow (big) and fast (small) movements are easy enough for the beginner to learn during the first few months of piano lessons. Emphasis is put on the connection between sound and movement.

- use of the hand as a unit in a specific movement
- finger movements

#### 4.1.2 Sub-questions

Which different forces are used in piano playing?

- The whole body
- the lower body
- the upper body
- the whole arm
- the forearm
- the hand as a unit
- the fingers

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Answering the research questions

#### 5.1.1 Main research question

Which movements should young beginners be taught in order to develop a well founded, basic piano technique?

The basic recommendations by the leading authors are:

- a proper sitting position (the whole body) as prerequisite for:
- position and movements of the lower body
- position and movements of the upper body
- use of the whole arm in the 'free fall' and 'float off' movements
- use of the forearm in rotation movements
- use of the hand as a unit in a staccato movement
- finger movements.

#### 5.1.2 Sub-questions

Which different levers are used in piano playing?

- The whole body
- the lower body
- the upper body
- the whole arm
- the forearm
- the hand as a unit
- the fingers.



What are the basic movements that the different levers should be able to perform?

A proper sitting position and the position of the lower body and torso is a prerequisite for performing the basic movements. The basic movements are:

- use of the whole arm in a 'free fall' and a 'float off' movement
- use of the forearm in a rotation movement
- use of the hand as a unit in a staccato movement
- finger movement from the phalanx joining the hand and fingers, supported by the bigger levers
- use of the thumb alongside, underneath and over the hand.

Which beginner books using the adjacent five finger legato method are generally accepted and regularly used by music teachers?

The study was done on the following beginner courses:

- Thompson (1956) - *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course - Part 1*
- Burnam (1959) - *Step by Step piano course - Book one*
- Pace (1961) - *Music for Piano - Book 1*
- Clark and Goss (1973) - *The Music Tree - A plan for musical growth*
- Bastien (1985) - *Bastien Piano Basics - Piano - Primer Level*
- Waterman & Harewood (1988) - *Me and my piano - very first lessons for the young pianist - part 1*
- Schaum (1996) - *John W Schaum Piano Course - Level pre A - The green book*
- Palmer, Morton and Lethco (1999) - *Alfred's basic piano library - Lesson book Level 1a.*

How do these beginner books measure up against the recommendations by authors in the field of piano technique?

When the process of evaluation on the generally accepted and most regularly used beginner courses was completed, the researcher came to the following conclusions:

The basic requirements for a beginner pianist are:

- a proper sitting position
- use of the whole arm in a 'free fall' and a 'float off' movement
- use of the forearm in a rotation movement
- use of the hand as a unit in a staccato movement
- finger movement from the first phalanx (never without support from the bigger levers).

The sequence, structure and explanations of how (and with which lever) the different movements should be executed, do not measure up to the recommendations by the leading authors.

In most instances as shown throughout chapter 3, the bigger levers are not addressed at all. All the levers and their specific movements should be addressed from the very first lesson. Concentrate on the bigger levers (giving the support), which perform slower and easier movements, and then move on to the smaller levers, which perform the faster and more complicated movements.

How can solutions in the form of exercises be provided for each basic movement, easy enough for the beginner to perform within a regular beat?

- Make sure that the explanation is clear
- exercises should concentrate on one specific movement at a time, within a regular beat
- present the different movements (exercises) from easy (big, slow movements) to more complicated (smaller, faster movements)



- different stages of the movement should be presented structurally
- illustrations or photographs of the specific movement should be provided
- keep repeating a specific movement until it is comfortably mastered.

## 5.2 Recommendations from this study

- It is the researcher's belief, based on the literature study mentioned in chapter one, that all the levers and their specific movements should be addressed from the very first lesson. It is only a logical motoric and educational process to concentrate on the bigger levers (giving the support), which perform slower and easier movements and then move on to the smaller levers, which perform the faster and more complicated movements.
- Another suggestion is to form correct habits of movement from the very beginning. All these slow (big) and fast (small) movements are easy enough for the beginner to learn during the first few months of piano lessons.
- The majority of information in these beginner books can be taught in a theory class preceding the individual lesson. When the pupil then arrives at the individual piano lesson he/she can concentrate on learning the motoric and aural aspects of the instrument. He /she can concentrate on the specific movements and results in sound.

## 5.3 Recommendations for further study

The next stage in the young performer's tuition is **control** over the quality, quantity and balance of sounds produced by the relaxed movements, which he/she has just mastered.

The main aim of playing an instrument is to make music (express emotions). There is only one possible way to achieve this: when the sounds produced are under the control of the instrumentalist; in this case the pianist. The characteristics of the instrument are all-important factors in this process and therefore a brief overview of this is given. This



important information will have to be taken into account when starting the next stage of tuition.

### 5.3.1 Characteristics of the piano

To teach the piano successfully and in order to be able to evaluate a pupil's performance, knowledge of the characteristics and technical demands of the instrument is essential. Without this knowledge tuition can never succeed.

#### 5.3.1.1 Sound production, sound possibilities and limits

Sound is produced when a key is pressed down. As the key is pressed, the damper (covered with felt) moves away from the strings and a hammer moves towards them. When the hammer strikes the string a sound is produced. Note that the key offers definite resistance against the pressure of the finger and the movement of the key mechanism is similar to a seesaw.

After striking the strings, the hammer bounces back slightly in order to let them vibrate freely. As soon as the key is released the hammer moves back to its original position, as does the damper to its position against the strings, thus stopping the sound (Smith 1990:6).

#### 5.3.1.2 The moment of sound production and sound reduction

Sound starts before the key is down and sound reduction starts immediately. The higher the pitch, the quicker the reduction. The top 24 strings (this may differ from one piano to the next) do not have any dampers. Sound stops before the key has returned to its original position (Smith 1990:6).

### 5.3.1.3 Speed of the key and hammer in relation to the quantity of sound

There is a direct correlation between the speed of the key, the hammer and the quantity of sound. The quicker the key moves down, the quicker the hammer moves towards the strings. The quicker the hammer hits the strings, the louder the sound.

Control over the quantity of sound thus requires control over the speed of the key and, secondarily, the hammer (Smith 1990:7).

### 5.3.1.4 Quality of sound

Quality of sound depends on:

- the size of the piano, the length of the strings, the type of wood used for the soundboard and the quality of felt used for the hammers
- quantity of sound. There is a direct correlation between the quantity and quality of sound. Within certain limits, alterations in volume brings about changes in tone colour
- control over noise elements such as sounds made by the pianist and the mechanism of the piano before the hammer hits the string and after the damper is released.

Four noise elements may be distinguished:

- noise caused by contact of the finger against the key
- noise caused by the mechanism a) friction when the key is pressed down b) the vibration of the hammer and strings at the moment of impact. This is more obvious when the pitch is higher
  - noise of the damper when the key is released, especially when playing softly
  - noise caused by the contact of the wood of the key against the frame of the piano (i.e. the key against the key bed).

The more initial noise, the fewer overtones and the quicker the sound reduction.

The sound of the instrument is ultimately a mixture of musical sounds and percussive noises. The required sound depends on the control that the pianist has over the momentum of the key (Smith 1990:8).

#### 5.3.1.5 Pedals

The damper pedal:

The damper pedal (right pedal) has different functions:

- to enrich
- to join
- to strengthen (to reinforce)
- to lengthen
- to work against sound reduction.

To ensure noise elimination when using the damper pedal, the foot must be kept in contact with the pedal at all times. The double action of the pedal i.e. the distance of approximately one centimetre that the pedal moves before it actually begins to work must be taken into account. To ensure elimination of the noise of the pedal against the wood of the piano frame, the pedal should not be pushed down or released completely.

The sostenuto pedal (middle pedal):

This pedal only allows a specific sound or sounds to continue (i.e. it allows specific strings to keep on vibrating), while another passage or chord is played (without vibration of any other string not used).

The una corda (left pedal):

This pedal reduces the volume of the sound mechanically, hence its common name of 'soft pedal'. When using the una corda the mechanism of a grand piano moves slightly to the right, allowing the hammers to hit only one or two of the strings. In the case of the lower register only part of a single string is hit. The point of contact is the soft part of the



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hammer where the felt has not been indented. The use of the una corda changes the whole sound spectrum (Smith 1990:9).

### 5.3.2 Conclusion

A possible study for future research is the following: How can a pupil be taught control over sounds produced through the execution of the different basic movements in piano playing

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