

Performance Notes

1. Starting Out

Page 5

The first piece in this collection is based on the five-finger position, with both thumbs on Middle C, so it would be useful to attempt the contrary motion five-finger scale in C prior to learning this piece.

2. Getting Better

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If the student cannot reach the sustain pedal, finger pedalling or holding down the two notes of the bass part would be a good alternative.

3. Moody

Page 7

In the first phrase, the right hand plays the melody but in the second phrase, it is the left hand's turn to perform the melody. In the third and fourth phrases, while the right hand plays the melody, the left-hand accompaniment consists of intervals of the 5ths, 6ths, 4ths and 3rds so it would be good to study the theory of intervals beforehand. The left hand plays the melody in the final two-bar phrase.

4. Moving On

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6/8 time can be introduced by doing some clapping exercises. Clap six quavers and emphasise the 1st and 4th quaver. After that, only clap the 1st and 4th quaver. Then clap the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 6th quaver.

5. Icicles

Page 9

This piece is based on the scale of A natural minor and explores the notes up to two octaves above Middle C. The effective use of the sustain pedal will make the piece sound icy and chilly.

6. Gentle Breeze

Page 10

The movement of the wind is reflected in the broken chords of the left hand. Learning the first five notes of the E minor scale for both hands would be a good preparation for this piece.

7. Passing Time

Page 12

This music mimics the ticking of a clock so this would be a good opportunity to discuss what a metronome does and what metronome markings mean.

8. Twinkling Lights

Page 13

This piece was inspired by fairy lights and decorations at Christmas time. Play the semiquavers as evenly as possible and make the melody in the left-hand ring out.

9. Ripples

Page 14

Imagine throwing a stone into the middle of a pond and watching the ripples fan out gently. Gently emphasise the top 4th quaver in this four-note pattern.

10. Thinking of You

Page 15

This is a rhythmic exercise of three against two. Try chanting "Both, Right-Left-Right" while tapping your lap at the same time. Although it is a technical study, it is also a romantic piece to be played with sensitivity and tenderness.

11. The Windmill

Page 16

The repeated patterns are suggestive of a mini decorative windmill in the garden turning round and round on a windy day. When the melody is played by the left hand, play the right-hand chords quietly and gently.

12. First Light

Page 17

This piece describes an eerie sunrise, full of melancholy longing and hope. It introduces the concepts of changing time-signatures and irregular phrasing.

13. Pottering About **Page 18**

My garden has clay pots of various sizes. I once discovered an ant's nest in one of them. Play this carefree piece with swung quavers except for the last three bars.

14. Siesta **Page 20**

This is an introduction to syncopations and tied notes. Feel the Latin groove in this snoozy piece.

15. Footsteps in the Snow **Page 21**

There is a certain heaviness in this piece, as it is hard work trudging through the thick snow in the early hours of the morning. Investigate what a 'sus4' or suspended fourth chord is and discover what first and second chord inversions are.

16. The Caterpillar **Page 22**

The music imitates the movement of how a caterpillar walks along a twig as it curls up and stretches out. This cheeky jazzy piece uses acciaccatura, swung quavers and triplets.

17. The Hedgehog **Page 23**

This cute animal has little short legs that scurries along. When it faces danger from a fox or a dog, it curls into a ball and the predator ends up with spines on its nose. Learn the *B minor* harmonic scale first. The challenge here is to play staccato with left hand while playing legato with the right hand.

18. The Frozen Moon **Page 24**

I was inspired to compose this after visiting the illuminations at Leonardslee Gardens during the Christmas holidays. The reflection of the blue moon on the frozen lake was a magical sight to behold. There is an increase in momentum in the middle section with a rising and falling sequence of a repeated three note pattern in the right hand.

19. Alien Mushrooms **Page 26**

Wild mushrooms that looked like flying saucers popped up on my lawn one damp morning. I imagined the invaders to be less than friendly, hence, the aggressive chords and dissonance in my composition.

20. Regrets **Page 28**

In a Garden of Remembrance, one regrets what should have been said or not have said to someone who has departed. The music increases in intensity as the right-hand part rises into an augmented chord in a high register.

21. The Silent Owl **Page 30**

This piece is dedicated to Mo, who observed that an owl in her garden flew in absolute silence, so it becomes undetectable by its prey. Similarly, the melody swoops up and down with crescendos and diminuendos.

22. Fireflies **Page 32**

Imagine a dark forest full of sparkling moving lights. The tricky right-hand pattern contains a hidden top melody that needs to be emphasised over the arpeggios.

23. Water Lillies **Page 34**

I once went to an exhibition at the Royal Academy to see Monet's paintings of water lilies. I hope to visit his garden in Giverny one day. As an amateur artist myself, I also love painting water lilies. Bring out the tranquil and serene nature of this music by balancing the melody with a subdued accompaniment of broken chords in the left hand.

24. The Golden Koi **Page 36**

When I moved into our present house, I inherited a pond with eight Japanese Koi in it. Unfortunately, a heron decided it was going to have them for dinner. This Oriental piece is based on the A natural minor scale but shifts into F# minor for the middle section accompanied by an Alberti bass line. It ends on a Picardy third.