

FOR THE TEACHER

About the *Exploring Piano Classics* Series

Exploring Piano Classics: A Masterworks Method for Developing Pianists pairs performance repertoire with related technical studies. Each level contains two books:

- *Exploring Piano Classics—Repertoire* includes pieces from the major style periods. The repertoire was selected and graded by studying festival, competition, and examination lists from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Background information on each style period, its instruments, composers, and the music itself is included. The CD performances of the repertoire are an indispensable tool for motivation and for modeling stylistic interpretations.
- *Exploring Piano Classics—Technique* includes **basic keyboard patterns**—five-finger patterns, scales, chords, cadences, and arpeggios in the major and minor keys of the literature in the *Repertoire* book of the same level. These patterns can be developed into a daily warm-up routine for practice to increase the student's technical skills. **Exercises and etudes**, an important feature of the *Technique* book, were chosen and written to develop basic keyboard touches and other technical skills necessary for mastering each piece. Suggestions for efficient practice are also included.

These companion books are cross-referenced, enabling quick access to the correlating repertoire or technical study. This allows the teacher to assign pages in the *Technique* book that directly apply to the pieces students are learning in the *Repertoire* book.

About the Technique Books

Technique is a skill that can be developed by both athletes and pianists. To succeed in either field, it is necessary to practice desired skills until they are automatic and can be used successfully in performances.

As an **athlete at the piano**, it is necessary for students to develop many technical skills to play the piano. A well-functioning piano technique is effortless, comfortable, and pain-free. *Exploring Piano Classics* suggests physical motions and sensations to encourage students to experiment with different muscle groups until discovering how to play in a way that feels natural and easy.

Three building blocks for developing a reliable piano technique are introduced in the Preparatory Level on page 4 that should be reviewed daily at all levels of piano playing:

- Position of the Body at the Piano
- Focused Fingertips Balanced on the Keyboard
- Coordinated Motions of the Hands and Arms

This foundation will enable students to progress to higher levels. Working through the *Technique* books will give students a structured program of technical development, enabling them to play skillfully and musically throughout their lives.

CONTENTS

Balancing Focused Fingertips on the Keyboard	4	Balancing on Fingers 5 and 4	32
<i>Black Key Exercise</i>	4	<i>Allegretto</i> , Op. 599, No. 16, Czerny	32
Warm-Up Patterns in C	5	Grouping by Motion	33
<i>Exercise No. 1 in C Major</i> , Hanon	5	<i>Gavotte</i> , Op. 210, No. 9, Gurlitt	33
<i>C Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	6	Warm-Up Patterns in A	34
<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	7	<i>A Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	34
<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	8	<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	35
<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	9	<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	36
<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	9	<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	37
Slurs of Five or More Notes	10	<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	37
<i>Fall—Feel—Transfer—Pull</i>	10	Rotation	38
<i>A Variety of Slurs</i>	10	Dynamic Shaping of Two-Measure Phrases	38
Motive and Sequence	11	<i>Rotating in A Major</i> , Beyer	38
<i>Allegro</i> , Biehl	11	Playing a Minuet	39
Pedal Marks	12	<i>Minuet in G Major</i> , Handel	39
<i>Legato Pedal Exercise</i> , Bertini	12	Speeding	40
Building Music: Motive—Phrase—Sentence	13	<i>Grouping</i> , Le Carpentier	40
<i>Play Song</i> , Bartók	13	Reading Broken Chords	41
“Singing” on the Piano	14	<i>Blocked Chord Patterns</i>	41
<i>In the Garden</i> , Gurlitt	14	<i>Broken Chord Patterns</i>	41
Warm-Up Patterns in F	15	Repeated Notes	42
<i>Exercise No. 1 in F Major</i> , Hanon	15	<i>Repeated Note Exercise</i>	42
<i>F Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	16	Warm-Up Patterns in E	43
<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	17	<i>E Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	43
<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	18	<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	43
<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	19	<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	44
<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	19	<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	45
Articulations According to Béla Bartók	20	<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	45
Slur Groups with Staccato	21	Repeated Notes and Chords	46
<i>Smiles</i> , Handrock	21	<i>Throw and Bounce</i>	46
Warm-Up Patterns in G	22	<i>Left Hand Study</i> , Bartók	46
<i>G Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	22	Warm-Up Patterns in B \flat	47
<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	23	<i>B\flat Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	47
<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	24	<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	47
<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	25	<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	48
<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	25	<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	49
Important and Less Important Notes	26	<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	49
Detached Notes	27	Continuous Two-Note Slurs	50
<i>Gavotte</i> , Telemann	27	<i>Alla Tedesca</i> , Vanhal	50
Warm-Up Patterns in D	28	Waltz Patterns	51
<i>D Scales in Progressive Rhythms</i>	28	<i>Waltz in C Major</i> , Gurlitt	51
<i>Contrary Motion Scale Pattern</i>	29	Crossing Hand Over Hand	52
<i>Inversion Hurdles</i>	30	<i>Prelude in A Minor</i> , Op. 37, No. 2, Concone	52
<i>Cadences (Three Positions)</i>	31		
<i>Arpeggio Exercise</i>	31		

Balancing Focused Fingertips on the Keyboard

Notice the **natural curve** of your hand by letting it hang at your side. Then find this hand position **on three black keys**:

- Place RH fingers 2-3-4 and LH fingers 4-3-2 **flat** on the three black keys (Ex. 1).
- **Pull nail joints back** toward the palm with a firm, scratching motion until fingers 2-3-4 lift each hand into a naturally curved hand position about **level with the wrist**.
- Place fingers 1 and 5 on E and B, connecting them to help balance hands. Thumb angle is about 45° (Ex. 2).
- Relax arms, wrists, and knuckles, **directing energy forward** to the firm nail joints.



Ex. 1



Ex. 2 Pull fingertips back into naturally curved hand shape.

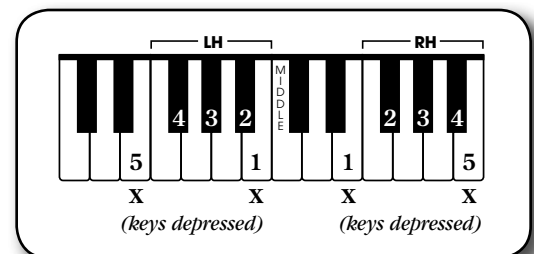
Keeping that balanced hand position, **change tone quality and volume** in *Black Key Exercise* as follows:

- Keys stay **down** (by gravity) on all notes not being played.
- Play on different parts of each fingertip, **listening** to different sound qualities.
- Increase and decrease sound by **tossing** fingers with more or less energy. Arms and wrists remain quiet and relaxed.

REMEMBER: Volume comes from the **speed** of the hammer striking the string.

Black Key Exercise




Balance the fingers by keeping the same amount of weight on each held note.



Warm-Up Patterns in B \flat

■ Play *Exercise No. 1 in C Major* by Hanon (p. 5) in B \flat major. Begin on B \flat and lower all B's and E's a half step.

■ Practice scales in progressive rhythms:

First  one octave, then  two octaves, then  two octaves'

(Play the 16th notes hands separately, if necessary.)

B \flat Scales in Progressive Rhythms (Parallel Motion)

Allegro

Contrary Motion Scale Pattern in B \flat

Cornelius Gurlitt (1820-1901)

Op. 228

Allegro

4

8

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Robert Schumann wrote, “*You are a musician when you have music not only in your fingers, but also in your head and your heart.*”

Exploring Piano Classics is designed to help students become musicians.

Technical skill is necessary to have “*music in your fingers.*”

Understanding style and historical context helps put “*music in your head.*”

Combined with **imagination**, it becomes possible to “*play from your heart.*”

The knowledge, skills, and joy experienced in the study of the music in *Exploring Piano Classics* will enrich students throughout their lives.

CONTENTS

	CD Track	Page
■ Timeline		4
The Baroque Era (1685–1750)		4
The Classical Era (1750–1820)		4
The Romantic Era (1790–1910)		5
The Modern Era (1880–forward)		5
Gypsy Influence		6
<i>Gypsy Dance</i> (Classical) Haydn	1	6
Hungarian Folk Song		7
<i>Children's Song</i> (Modern) Bartók	2	7
French Song		8
<i>A Little Song</i> (Modern) Rhené-Baton	3	8
■ Béla Bartók's Travels		10
<i>Under the Tree</i> (Modern) Bartók	4	11
Vladimir Rebikov		12
<i>The Clown</i> (Modern) Rebikov	5	12
Franz Schubert		14
<i>Écossaise</i> , Op. 18; D. 145 (Romantic) Schubert	6	14
The Gavotte		15
<i>Air en Gavotte</i> (Baroque) Graupner	7	15
Rondeau Form		16
<i>Gavotte en Rondeau</i> (Baroque) Dandrieu	8	16
Russian Nationalism		18
<i>Russian Dance</i> (Romantic) Glinka	9	18
Binary Form		19
<i>German Dance</i> , WoO 42, No. 4 (Classical) Beethoven	10	19
Rounded Binary Form		20
<i>Bourrée</i> (Baroque) Krieger	11	20
■ Muzio Clementi		21
Sonata and Sonata-Allegro (First Movement) Form		21
First Movement: Sonata-Allegro Form Characteristics		22
<i>Sonatina</i> , Op. 36, No. 1 (Classical) Clementi		
<i>Allegro</i>	12	22
Second Movement: Ternary Form Characteristics		24
<i>Andante</i>	13	24
Third Movement: Rondo Form Characteristics		26
<i>Vivace</i>	14	26
J. S. Bach's <i>Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach</i>		28
<i>Minuet in G Major</i> (Baroque) Böhm	15	28
The Gigue		30
<i>Gigue à l'Angloise</i> (Baroque) Telemann	16	30
Character Piece		31
<i>Timid Little Heart</i> , Op. 47, No. 5 (Romantic) Fuchs	17	31
Alexander Tcherepnin		32
<i>Old Tale</i> (Modern) Tcherepnin	18	32
Night Piece		34
<i>Night Piece</i> , Op. 39, No. 20, (Romantic) Reinhold	19	34
François-Joseph Gossec		36
<i>Tambourin</i> (Classical) Gossec	20	36
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart		38
<i>Allegro in B-flat Major</i> , K. 3 (Classical) W. A. Mozart	21	38
The Waltz		39
<i>Waltz</i> , Op. 101, No. 11 (Romantic) Gurlitt	22	39
Stephen Heller		42
<i>Avalanche</i> , Op. 45, No. 2 (Romantic) Heller	23	42

TIMELINE

The Baroque Era (1600–1750)

The *Baroque* era was a time of powerful kings in Europe who hired artists to create elaborate works of art (buildings, paintings, sculptures, and music.)

The French Court of **Louis XIV** (1638–1715) was the most magnificent in Europe.

- At age 15, as a symbol of his power, Louis danced the role of the Greek god **Apollo the Sun** as other dancers circled him like planets in a *Ballet of the Night*.
- Known as **The Sun King**, Louis hosted two or three balls a week for the 1,000 aristocrats living at his palace in Versailles with entertainment that often lasted all night.



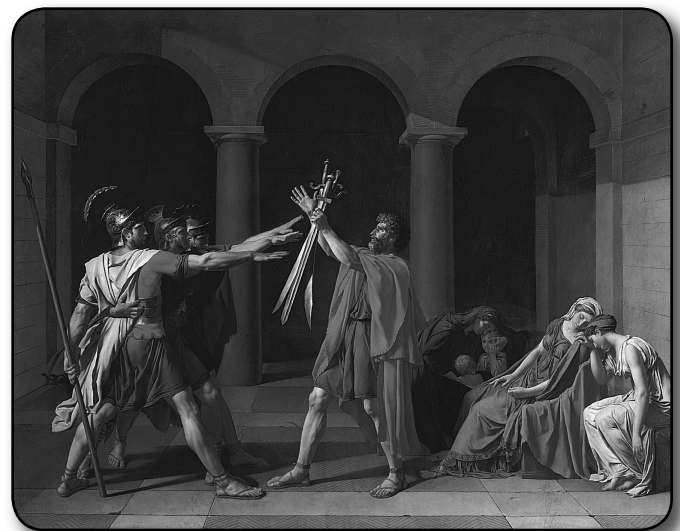
King Louis XIV of France

The Classical Era (1750–1820)

The discovery of the ruins of Pompeii in 1748 created interest in the **classical art of ancient Greece and Rome**, and influenced 18th century European music and art.

The *Oath of the Horatii* by the French painter **Jacques-Louis David** (1748–1825) is a scene from Roman history as the three Horatii brothers swear their willingness to die for Rome.

- The calm, balanced picture shows logical control at an emotional time, a Classical trait.
- Painted just before the French Revolution, there is a hidden message that it is good to sacrifice yourself for a great cause. “Freedom is worth any price.”



Oath of the Horatii
by Jacques-Louis David

French Song

Rhené-Baton was a French pianist, conductor, and composer. This piece was dedicated “to my little friend, Yvonne Billot,” who was probably a young pianist. Written around the turn of the 20th century, this beautiful, “singing” melody is typical of Romantic-style music, but the harmonies create a more modern sound.

Young Girls at the Piano (1892)
by Pierre-Auguste Renoir



Track 3



A Little Song

Rhené-Baton
(1879–1940)

Modéré (Moderately)

mf *cresc.*

la basse bien chantée (a)

5 *RH legato* *f* *dim.* *cédez (slow down)* *p*

9 *a tempo* *mf* *LH legato*

13 *f* *dim.*

MODERN

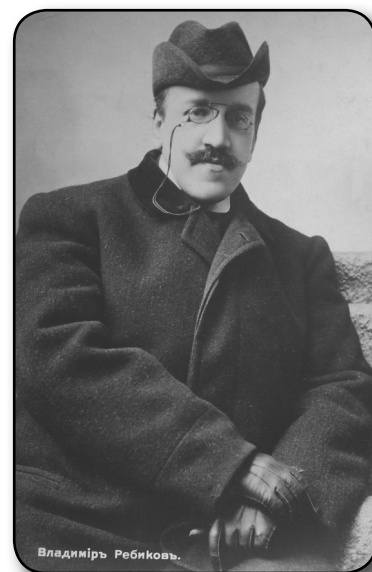
(a) The LH melody in measures 1–8 and 19–28 should sing out above the RH.

Vladimir Rebikov

The Russian **Vladimir Rebikov** studied at the Moscow Conservatory and wrote many piano pieces for students. He is known today as the **father of modern Russian music** because he used modern harmonies in many of his pieces.

The Clown has many **motives and sequences** that should all have the same dynamic shape. Yet each **sequence** must either **crescendo or diminuendo** as the pattern continues. This adds to the humor of the piece.

Vladimir Rebikov



Track 5



The Clown

Vladimir Rebikov
(1866-1920)

Allegretto

musical score for *The Clown* by Vladimir Rebikov, showing measures 1 through 11. The score is in 2/4 time and F major. It includes dynamic markings (*f*, *mf*, *cresc.*, *dim.*) and structural labels (motive, sequence 1, sequence 2, sequence 3). Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

Measure 1: *f* (forte). Treble clef: quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 1 3, 2 5, 1 4.

Measure 2: Treble clef: quarter note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F5, quarter note G5. Bass clef: quarter note G3, quarter note C4, quarter note G3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2, 1 4.

Measure 3: Treble clef: quarter note A5, quarter note B5, quarter note C6, quarter note B5. Bass clef: quarter note A3, quarter note C4, quarter note A3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2, 1 4.

Measure 4: Treble clef: quarter note G5, quarter note F5, quarter note E5, quarter note D5. Bass clef: quarter note G3, quarter note C4, quarter note G3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2, 1 4.

Measure 5: *mf* (mezzo-forte). Treble clef: quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 1 2 1, 2 5, 1 4.

Measure 6: *cresc.* (crescendo). Treble clef: quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.

Measure 7: Treble clef: quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.

Measure 8: Treble clef: quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.

Measure 9: Treble clef: quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.

Measure 10: Treble clef: quarter note F4, quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.

Measure 11: *dim.* (diminuendo). Treble clef: quarter note C5, quarter note B4, quarter note A4, quarter note G4. Bass clef: quarter note F3, quarter note C4, quarter note F3, quarter note C4. Fingering: 2 1, 2 1, 2 1, 2 1.