

# Alfred's **Premier Piano Express**

Dennis Alexander, Gayle Kowalchyk, E. L. Lancaster, Victoria McArthur & Martha Mier

## **All-In-One Accelerated Course**

*Lesson ■ Theory ■ Technique ■ Performance*

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## Foreword

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The non-position reading approach helps students recognize important “landmark” notes instead of relying on fixed hand positions. Intervals are introduced sequentially and reinforced creatively. Rhythms are read in multiple-note patterns rather than as single notes, and playing with a steady pulse is emphasized.

Included with the book is a CD-ROM that contains MP3 files of audio performances on acoustic piano and orchestrated accompaniments for selected pieces in the book. Pieces with recordings are identified in the book with a speaker icon (  ). There are four versions of each piece on the CD-ROM:

1. A digitally orchestrated accompaniment **with** piano.
2. A digitally orchestrated accompaniment **without** piano.
3. A **practice tempo** performed on acoustic piano.
4. A **performance tempo** performed on acoustic piano.

The TNT 2 Custom Mix Software allows the user to change tempos in these audio files. In addition, the CD-ROM contains General MIDI files that can be downloaded.

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The authors of *Premier Piano Express* send our best wishes as you begin this exciting musical journey!

All music was composed or arranged by Dennis Alexander and Martha Mier.



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### TNT 2 System Requirements:

#### Windows

10, 8, 7, Vista, XP  
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 1.8 GHz processor or faster  
 350 MB hard drive space, 2 GB RAM minimum  
 CD or DVD drive for installation  
 Speakers or headphones  
 Internet access required for updates

#### Macintosh

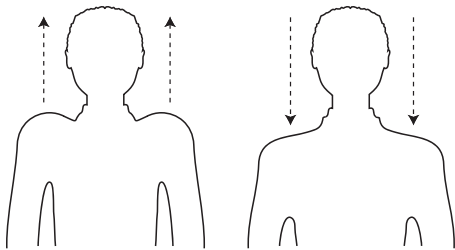
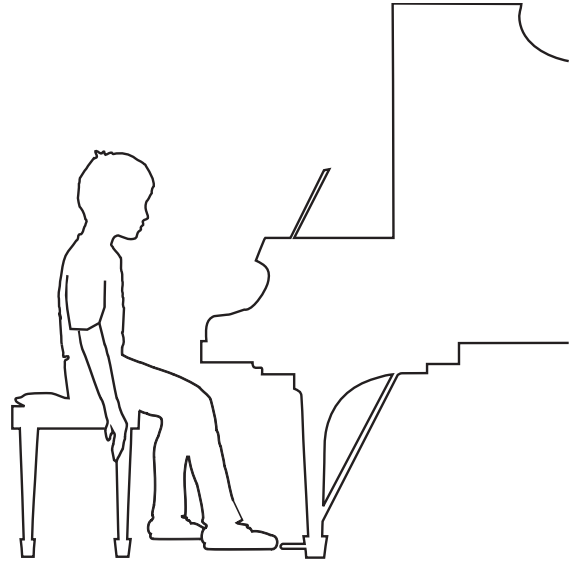
OSX 10.4 or higher (Intel only)  
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## UNIT 1 Keyboard Basics

### How to Sit at the Piano

- Sit tall, with relaxed shoulders on the front half of the bench, and lean slightly forward.
- Place your feet flat on the floor, right foot slightly forward.
- Let your relaxed upper arms hang loosely from your shoulders, straight down.

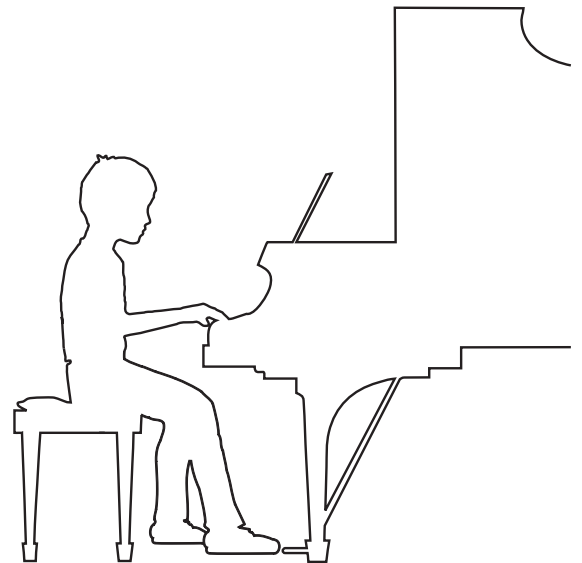


#### Relaxed Shoulders

Raise your shoulders up toward your ears as you take a deep breath. Relax, breathe out, and let your shoulders fall back down into a natural position before playing.

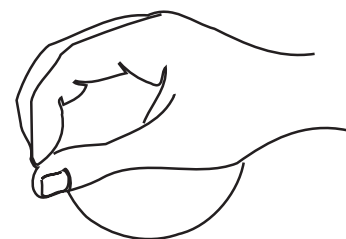
### Good Arm Position

When your hands are on the keys, your elbows and arms are level with the keyboard.



### Good Hand Position

Your hands are slightly curved and relaxed. Each hand is shaped like it is gently holding a bubble.



## Dynamic Signs

**Dynamic signs** add variety to music by telling how *loud* or *soft* to play.

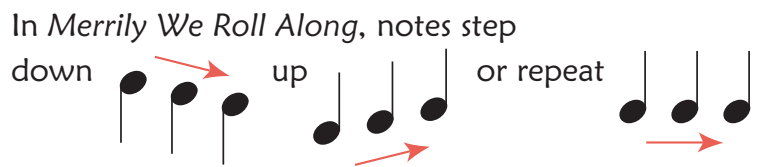
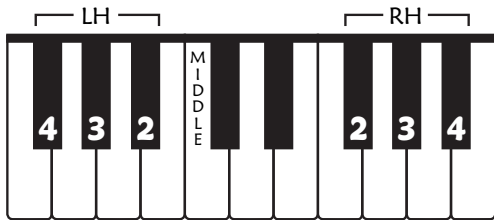
***f*** (*forte*)  
means *loud*.

***p*** (*piano*)  
means *soft*.

### Strong Fingertips

Keep each finger joint firm and imagine that your fingertips are very strong as you play.

## Merrily We Roll Along 🎧 1



Go to next line and play with LH.

***f*** RH  
4 3 2 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

Mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, roll a - long, roll a - long,

Measure number

5 LH  
2 3 4 3 | 2 | 3 3 2 3 | 4 ||

mer - ri - ly we roll a - long, o'er the deep blue sea!

Play *Merrily We Roll Along* again softly (*p*).


Duet: Student plays one octave higher.

With bounce



## Time Signature

Two numbers at the beginning of every piece.

$\frac{4}{4}$  means 4 counts in every measure.  
 $\frac{4}{4}$  means a quarter note  gets 1 count.

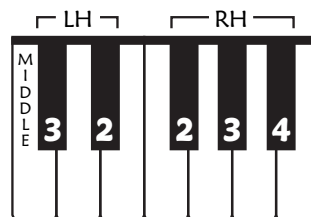
### Counting by Measure

Each measure of  $\frac{4}{4}$  time has 4 quarter notes (or their equal).

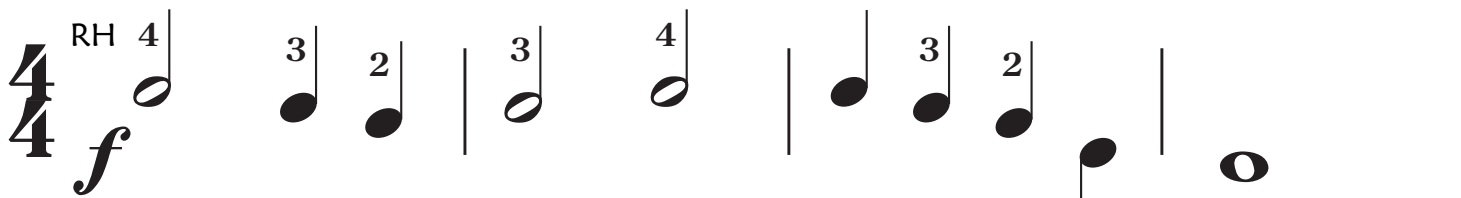


Count: 1 2 3 4      1 - 2 - 3 - 4

## Hey, Rock and Roll Man! 2




$\frac{4}{4}$  RH 4 *f*



Hey, Rock and Roll Man, play your song for me.

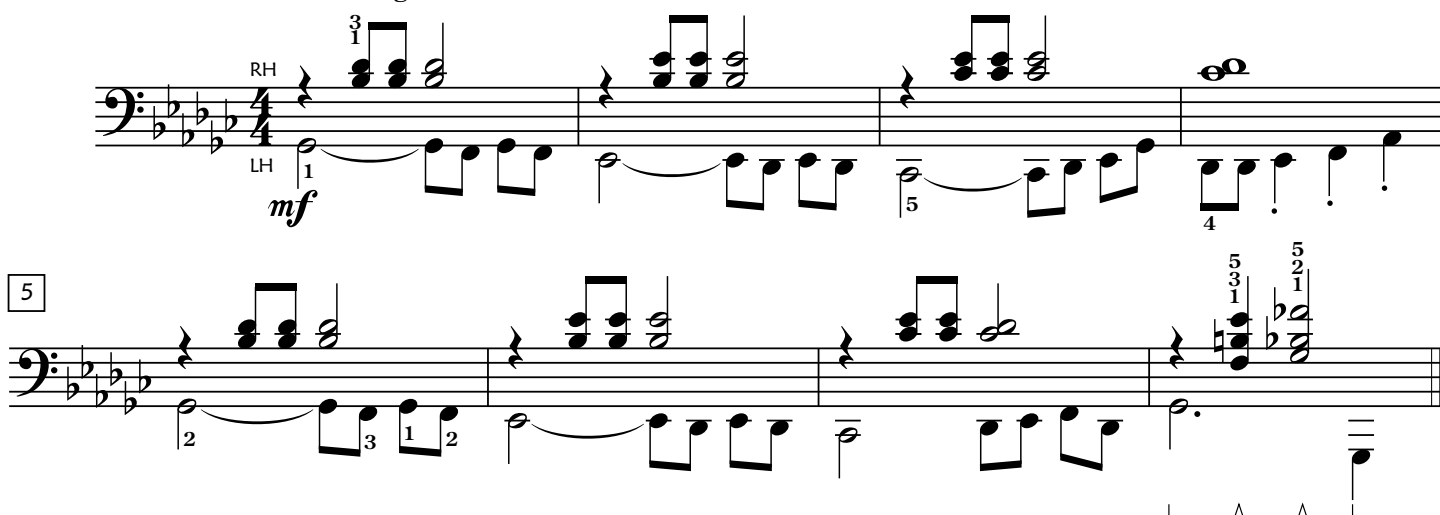
5



I love the music on your D - V - D.

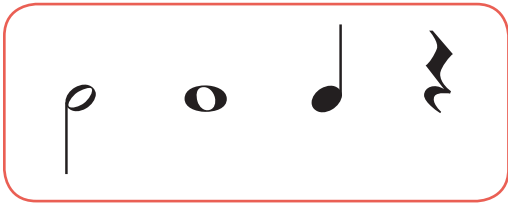
Duet: Student plays one octave higher.

Gentle swing ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$ )



### Worksheet Rhythms and Time Signature

1. To complete each measure, choose one correct note or rest from the box and draw it in the measure. Then, clap and count each rhythm pattern.



a.  $\frac{4}{4}$  | ♩ ♩ ♩ ||

b.  $\frac{4}{4}$  | ♪ ♩ ||

c.  $\frac{4}{4}$  | ♪ ||

d.  $\frac{4}{4}$  | ||

2. Add a bar line after every 4 counts and a repeat sign  $\text{||} \text{:}$  at the end. Write the counts below the rhythm. Then tap with RH and count aloud.

$\frac{4}{4}$  | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪

3. Add the counts.

Example:

♪  
+ ♪  
—  
2

a.

♩  
+ ♪  
—

b.

♩  
+ ♪  
—

c.

♪  
+ ♪  
—

d.

♪  
+ ♪  
—

4. Placing your hands on the keys as shown, play each pattern. Count aloud.

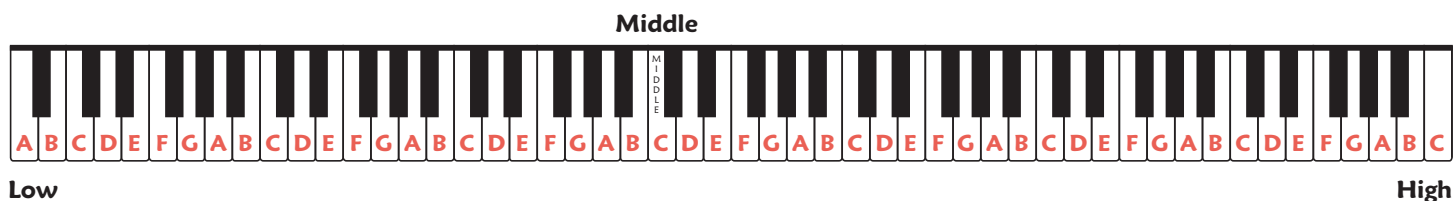
a.   $\frac{4}{4}$  | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ || Circle the hand that plays:  
LH RH

b.   $\frac{4}{4}$  | ♩ ♩ ♩ || Circle the hand that plays:  
LH RH



## UNIT 2 The Music Alphabet

The white keys on the piano are named using the first 7 letters of the alphabet. These names repeat over and over.



Name and play every white key on the keyboard, beginning at the low end and moving up. Use *LH 3* for keys below Middle C and use *RH 3* for Middle C and above.

### Keyboard Anchor: D

**D** is easy to find. It is the white-key anchor between the two black keys.



### C and E

**C** and **E** are also easy to find. They are outside the two black keys.



1. Begin in the middle of the keyboard and:
  - play all the D's going *higher* with RH 2.
  - play all the D's going *lower* with LH 2.
2. Begin in the middle of the keyboard and:
  - play all the C's going *higher* with RH 3.
  - play all the E's going *lower* with LH 3.
3. On the keyboard:
  - write a **D** on all the D's.
  - write a **C** on all the C's.
  - write an **E** on all the E's.





A **fermata** over or under a note means to hold the note longer than its rhythmic value.

## When the Saints Go Marching In 48

**March-like**

*f* Oh, when the saints go march - ing in,

*p* 1 3

4

oh, when the saints go march - ing in,

5 2

1 3

Duet: Student plays one octave higher.

**March-like**

RH

LH

*mf* 5 3 2 1 1 4

4

1 4 5 1 3 5



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Book 2 continues the steady development of artistry and keyboard skills that began in Book 1. Note-reading skills are expanded to include ledger-line notes. Melodic and harmonic 6ths, 7ths, and octaves are used to help the student move freely around the keyboard. Eighth notes and dotted eighth notes are added to other rhythms of gradually increasing complexity. Technical skills include the development of one-octave scales, hand-over-hand crossings (including arpeggios), finger crossings, and legato pedaling.

Included with the book is a CD-ROM that contains MP3 files of audio performances on acoustic piano and orchestrated accompaniments for selected pieces in the book. Pieces with recordings are identified in the book with a speaker icon (  ). There are four versions of each piece on the CD-ROM:

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In Units 1–7, a **blue** finger number indicates that the hand moves up or down.



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## Worksheet Review

1. On the blank lines, name the notes.

a.

\_\_\_\_\_

b.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Write **M** on the line next to each *melodic* interval and **H** next to each *harmonic* interval. Then connect each melodic and harmonic interval to its matching name.

\_\_\_\_\_

2nd

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3rd

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4th

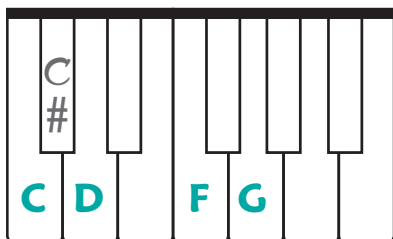
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

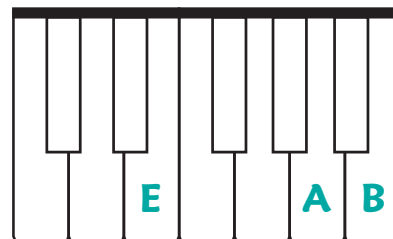
5th

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Write the name on the correct black key for D $\sharp$ , F $\sharp$ , and G $\sharp$ .



4. Write the name on the correct black key for E $\flat$ , A $\flat$ , and B $\flat$ .



## UNIT 1 The C 5-Finger Pattern

### On with the Show! 🎧 1

Lively

*f*

5

*3* *2*

9

*mf*

*3* *1*/*5*

Duet: Student plays one octave higher.

Lively

RH *mf* *3* *2* *5*

LH *mf* *1* *3* *3* *5*

\*Optional: The half notes in the left hand of measures 1–6 may be played as a tremolo.



## Moving Up from Treble C for the C 5-Finger Pattern

Treble C and the four notes that step up from it are called the **C 5-finger pattern**.

### Stepping Up

### Skipping Up

## Bartók's Study 2

(First Term at the Piano)

Béla Bartók  
(1881–1945)

Moderately

7

Duet: Student plays **LH** one octave higher.

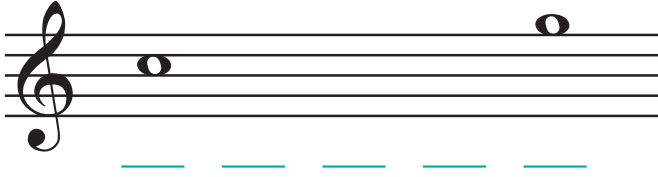
Alexander/Mier

Moderately

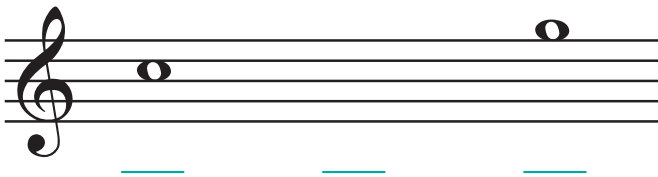
7

## Worksheet C 5-Finger Pattern in Treble Clef

1. Using whole notes, write the C 5-finger pattern *going up*. Name each note.



2. Using a whole note, write one note that will make a 3rd between each note. Name the notes.



3. Name each note. Then play on the keyboard.

a. b. c. d.

## Sharp and Flat Review

1. A sharp sign # raises  
lowers a note a half step to the right  
left  
(Circle one.) (Circle one.)

2. A flat sign ♭ raises  
lowers a note a half step to the right  
left  
(Circle one.) (Circle one.)

### Finger Independence

Play each key with *finger independence*— moving precisely from one finger to the next with energy.

## Yankee Doodle Dazzle 3

**March-like**

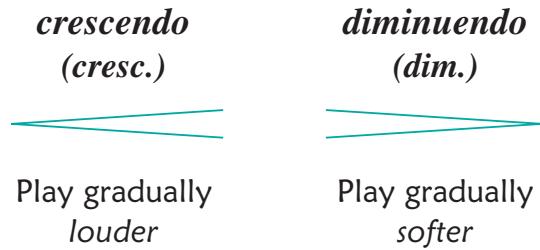
Duet: Student plays **RH** one octave higher and **LH** two octaves higher.

**March-like**

## UNIT 2 Dynamics and Tempo

### Crescendo and Diminuendo

Playing *gradually louder* or *gradually softer* allows music to express moods and feelings.



#### Dynamic Shaping

To shape the phrases:

- Use a light arm for the first note of the phrase.
- Gradually *increase* the arm weight for the *crescendo*.
- Gradually *decrease* the arm weight for the *diminuendo*.
- Lift off the last note of the phrase with a rising wrist.

### Au clair de la lune 🎧 4

French

**Flowing**

1 1 3 2

*p* *mf*

3 2

Duet: Student plays one octave higher.

**Flowing**

RH 1 5 5 1

LH 5

*pp* *mp*



# UNIT 13 Dotted Quarter Note

A quarter note tied to an eighth note equals a dotted quarter note.

1 + 1/2 counts      1 1/2 counts

The dotted quarter note is almost always followed by an eighth note.

Count: 1 + 2 +

The dot increases the length of a note by *half its value*.

Tap and count each rhythm pattern.

1. :||  
Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

3. :||  
Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

2. :||  
Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

4. :||  
Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

Draw a line to connect each rhythm on the left to the rhythm on the right that sounds the same.

**New Rhythm**

Tap and clap aloud.



Count: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

**Dutch Dance** 36

Joachim van den Hove  
(1567–1620)

Moderato

5

9

Duet: Student plays **RH** one octave higher and **LH** two octaves higher.

Alexander/Mier

Moderato