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About Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1

Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1 (Second Edition), is designed for non-keyboard music majors with little or no keyboard experience. It also may be used successfully by independent teachers seeking creative ways to develop functional skills in their adult students.

Most music educators agree that the piano is indispensable for all musicians. Piano study helps students gain a better understanding of music theory as theoretical concepts are applied to the keyboard. Many music majors who have had no previous piano experience find the first piano classes challenging. Experience has proven that with the proper approach and consistent practice, anyone can grasp the skills necessary to function and perform at the keyboard.

The text is easy to use. It contains 26 units, each designed to be covered in one week, thus filling two semesters or three quarters of study. The title page of each unit contains the objectives for the

unit and a space to record assignments for the week. Measures are numbered in all examples (repertoire, reading, harmonization, improvisation) to promote ease of use in the classroom.

Each unit contains a balance of new information with materials that reinforce concepts presented in previous units. Theory, technique, sight-reading, repertoire, harmonization, improvisation and ensemble activities are taught thoroughly and consistently throughout the text. Two-hand accompaniments and multiple-line ensembles help students develop skills in accompanying and score reading.

Upon completion of *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1 (Second Edition)*, students will have a strong grasp of functional skills, keyboard technique and musical styles, and will be ready to begin *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 2*.

Features of the Second Edition

Changes in the second edition are a result of the authors' experience in the classroom as well as from suggestions from numerous individuals who were teaching the first edition in colleges and universities throughout the country. Due to recommendations made by these people, the following changes were made:

- Additional reading examples were added to the earlier units and easier sight-reading examples were added to subsequent units.
- The units were reduced from 30 to 26 to allow more time for review and testing.
- Some new repertoire was chosen to more carefully reinforce chapter concepts.
- All solo repertoire selections include preparatory practice and analysis steps, called *Before playing*, as well as suggestions for interpretation and listening, called *While playing*.
- Scales and arpeggios are introduced in groups that use similar fingerings.
- Many improvisation exercises include optional suggestions for rhythm, and sections for playing by ear are given.
- More harmonization examples are included.
- The two units on modes from the first edition have been consolidated into one unit.

About the Teacher's Handbook

The Teacher's Handbook for the text serves as an aid in curriculum development and daily lesson planning. The handbook contains:

- suggested daily lesson plans for the entire year
- suggested assignments following each lesson plan
- teaching tips for each unit
- suggested examinations for the entire year
- answer keys for all harmonization exercises and review worksheets

It also suggests ways to successfully integrate keyboard and computer technology into the curriculum.

Two new sections have been added to the second edition of the Teacher's Handbook:

- 1) Reading Focus—Each reading example throughout the text reinforces a specific concept or concepts used in the unit. These concepts are identified as an aid for the teacher in planning appropriate activities to introduce and reinforce reading activities.
- 2) Planning Group Lessons for College and University Non-Keyboard Music Majors—This section highlights general principles of planning effective lessons.

Goals for Non-Pianists

All musicians need keyboard proficiency to function as teachers, performers, composers or arrangers. Many college students do not see this need at their stage of development. Consequently, teachers need to constantly remind them of ways that musicians use the keyboard in their professional lives.

While non-keyboard music majors should not be expected to perform extensively in recitals, they should be able to perform for peers in non-pressured situations. While these students may lack technical skills at the keyboard, they can be expected to rely on their experience as musicians to develop sensitive and musical performances. More importantly, they should develop functional skills that will allow them to be successful in all their musical endeavors.

The general components in each unit of *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults, Book 1 (Second Edition)*, are designed to aid students in becoming functional musicians. A description of the various areas that are covered follows.

Chord Progressions: Chord progressions aid students in developing a feel for the keyboard and

a sense of key. As new chords are introduced, students are assigned to play chord progressions that illustrate how chords function in harmonic contexts. Chord progressions should continue to be practiced for several weeks after they are introduced.

Harmonization: Harmonization skills are developed using single tones, open fifths, full chords and various accompaniment styles.

Harmonization examples use a mixture of Roman numerals, letter symbols and melodies with no symbols given.

Harmonization with Two-Hand Accompaniment: Harmonization melodies that require the student to use a two-hand accompaniment help students develop beginning skills in accompanying.

Improvisation: Improvisation exercises are carefully structured to allow students to instantly manipulate musical concepts at the keyboard. Students are asked to improvise melodies over various styles of accompaniments; create melodies and appropriate accompaniments from chord symbols; and create additional ensemble parts from analysis of repertoire.

Playing by Ear: Students play familiar melodies by ear, using black keys, five-finger patterns and scales. As they progress, melodies are harmonized using primary chords. Other *by ear* activities include playing a melody in different modes. If students are unfamiliar with the suggested melodies, they can learn them by listening to the compact disc or General MIDI disk.

Reading: The reading approach is eclectic, combining the best elements of intervallic and multi-key reading. Reading exercises are designed to promote movement over the entire keyboard while maintaining the advantages of playing in familiar positions. Reading examples are a mixture of standard repertoire and newly-composed pieces.

Repertoire: Each unit has at least one solo repertoire piece that can be used for performance or study. While students will not perfect and perform the piece in every unit, the repertoire can be used for analysis and developing practice techniques. In addition to repertoire for study and analysis, students should always be working on performance repertoire to perfect and play for peers. A section of supplementary repertoire is contained in the back of the book for those students who need additional music or for teachers who like a wider choice of music for students. The supplementary repertoire was chosen to represent a variety of levels and can be used throughout the book. All solo repertoire selections include preparatory practice and analysis steps, called *Before playing*, as well as suggestions for interpretation and listening, called *While playing*. Duets, teacher accompaniments

for repertoire and multiple-piano ensembles are an integral part of performance repertoire. Four-part ensembles often are created from analysis of repertoire.

Review Worksheets: Written review worksheets, designed to be submitted to the teacher for feedback, appear periodically throughout the text. These worksheets can be completed in class and checked as a group or completed out of class and checked by the teacher as a written assignment.

Rhythm: Suggestions for counting are given but the approach used is left to the discretion of the teacher. Rhythms and note values are introduced systematically and specially designed rhythm reading exercises promote rhythmic security. Music majors should already be familiar with the rhythms used in the book.

Scales and Arpeggios: The study of scales and arpeggios is essential to both the technical and musical development of students. Once they are introduced, they should continue to be practiced throughout the remainder of the year.

Technique: Technique is developed in a systematic way throughout the entire book. In addition to scales and arpeggios, technical exercises reinforce theoretical concepts and provide students with the skills to perform at the keyboard. Technical exercises should be memorized quickly so that the student can focus on the development of physical movements and listen to the sound being produced. Repertoire, harmonization melodies, technical exercises and sight-reading examples are carefully fingered to aid the student in developing good technique.

Keyboard Basics

DAY 1

Lesson Plan

1. Discuss course objectives and requirements.
2. Determine music and keyboard background of class members.
3. Discuss objectives for the week (p. 8).
4. Discuss **How to Sit at the Keyboard, Hand Position** and **Finger Numbers** (pp. 8–9).
5. Introduce **Basic Note and Rest Values** and **Rhythm Reading** (pp. 9–10).
6. Introduce **The Keyboard** and **Two-Black-Key Groups** (p. 11).
7. Introduce **Three-Black-Key Groups** (p. 12).
8. Introduce **Black-Key Improvisation #1** (p. 13).
9. Introduce **Naming White Keys** (p. 14).
10. Introduce **Octave** (p. 14).
11. Introduce **Finding White Keys** (p. 15).
12. Introduce **C-D-E Groups** (p. 16).
13. Introduce **F-G-A-B Groups** (p. 17).
14. Introduce **Dynamic Signs** (p. 17).
15. Introduce **Summer Night** (p. 18).

Assignment

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Rhythm Reading (p. 10) | 5. Finding White Keys (p. 15) |
| 2. Two-Black-Key Groups (p. 11) | 6. C-D-E Groups (p. 16) |
| 3. Three-Black-Key Groups (p. 12) | 7. F-G-A-B Groups (p. 17) |
| 4. Naming White Keys (p. 14) | 8. Summer Night (p. 18) |

DAY 2

Lesson Plan

1. Review **Rhythm Reading** (p. 10).
2. Review **Two-Black-Key Groups** (p. 11).
3. Review **Three-Black-Key Groups** (p. 12).
4. Introduce **Black-Key Improvisation #2** (p. 13).
5. Review **Naming White Keys** (p. 14).
6. Review **Finding White Keys** (p. 15).
7. Review **C-D-E Groups** (p. 16).
8. Review **F-G-A-B Groups** (p. 17).
9. Review **Summer Night** (p. 18).
10. Introduce **Sharp, Flat and Natural Signs; Half Steps; Whole Steps** (p. 19).
11. Introduce **Playing by Ear** (p. 19). Each student should play one of the three melodies by ear.
12. Introduce **Building Whole-Step Patterns** (p. 20).
13. Introduce **The Chromatic Scale** and **Playing the Chromatic Scale** (p. 20).
14. Introduce **The Staff, The Treble Clef** and **The Bass Clef** (p. 21).
15. Introduce **The Grand Staff** and **Time Signatures** (p. 22).
16. Introduce **Naming Notes and Playing Melodic Patterns** (p. 23).
17. Introduce **Tempo Marks** and **Articulation** (p. 24).
18. Introduce **Reading Melodies** (p. 25).

Assignment

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Summer Night (p. 18) | 4. Naming Notes and Playing Melodic Patterns (p. 23) |
| 2. Playing by Ear (p. 19)—Play one melody by ear. | 5. Reading Melodies (p. 25) |
| 3. Playing the Chromatic Scale (p. 20) | |

DAY 3

Lesson Plan

1. Review **Summer Night** (p. 18).
2. Review **Playing the Chromatic Scale** (p. 20).
3. Review **Naming Notes and Playing Melodic Patterns** (p. 23).
4. Review **Reading Melodies** (p. 25).
5. Introduce **Reading on the Grand Staff** (p. 26).
6. Begin **Review Worksheet** (pp. 27–28) and bring completed worksheet to next class.
7. Spend any additional class time helping students with specific problem areas.

Assignment

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Summer Night (p. 18) | 4. Reading Melodies (p. 25) |
| 2. Playing the Chromatic Scale (p. 20) | 5. Reading on the Grand Staff (p. 26) |
| 3. Naming Notes and Playing Melodic Patterns (p. 23) | 6. Review Worksheet (pp. 27–28) |

Teaching Tips

- Most music majors will know the basic theoretical information contained in this unit. Observe and be aware of what information they do know and spend only a minimum amount of time with this in class. It is best to go through such material quickly, rather than to skip it totally.
- Finger numbers can be a source of confusion for some music students (especially string students, who number fingers differently). Be aware of students who may be having problems identifying finger numbers.
- Students must be able to find keys on the keyboard very quickly. If necessary, spend extra time with this.
- Most students will know one of the melodies for **Playing by Ear** (p. 19). If possible, students should play melodies that they already know. If all melodies are unfamiliar, learn one by listening to the CD or GM disk.
- The first note in each example of **Naming Notes and Playing Melodic Patterns** (p. 23) can be used as a landmark note. Students should memorize these and be able to find them on the keyboard quickly. Reading can then move up or down by interval from each landmark.
- There may not be time to cover all the **Reading** examples (pp. 25–26) in class. Remaining examples can be used for practice outside of class.
- The **Review Worksheet** (pp. 27–28) can be collected as homework and graded to check the students' understanding of theoretical information.
- Use the CD or GM disk with all examples in this unit to promote steadiness of tempo and to add musical interest.

Reading Focus

Page 23—Steps and skips from landmark notes

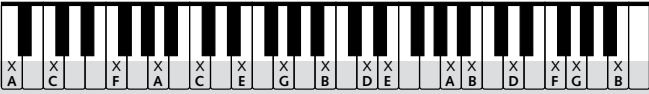
Page 25—Melodies limited to five notes on a single staff using sharps, flats, staccato and legato

Page 26—Melodies limited to five notes on the Grand Staff using sharps, flats, staccato, legato and alternating hands


Unit 1
Review Worksheet

Name _____ Date _____


1. Write the letter name on each key marked X.



2. Write the name of each treble-clef note on the line below it.



3. Write the name of each bass-clef note on the line below it.



Keyboard Basics ■ Unit 1 27

4. Write the numbers from column A in the appropriate blanks in column B to match each item with its best description.

Column A	Column B
1. Quarter note	6 Moderately loud
2. Half note	8 Play next key to the right
3. Dotted half note	11 Distance from any key to the very next key
4. Whole note	20 Smoothly connected
5. Piano <i>p</i>	21 Short
6. Mezzo forte <i>mf</i>	13 Locates the G above the middle of the keyboard
7. Forte <i>f</i>	24
8. Sharp sign	14 Locates the F below the middle of the keyboard
9. Flat sign	16 2 beats in a measure, quarter note gets 1 beat
10. Natural sign	7 Loud
11. Half step	17 3 beats in a measure, quarter note gets 1 beat
12. Whole step	3 Note receiving 3 counts
13. Treble clef sign	4 Note receiving 4 counts
14. Bass clef sign	9 Play next key to the left
15. Leger line	22
16. $\frac{2}{4}$	1 Note receiving 1 count
17. $\frac{3}{4}$	23
18. $\frac{4}{4}$	2 Note receiving 2 counts
19. C	12 Equals two half steps
20. Legato	5 Soft
21. Staccato	10 Cancels a sharp or flat
22. Quarter rest	19 Common time
23. Half rest	15 Used to extend the range of the Grand Staff
24. Whole rest	18 4 beats in a measure, quarter note gets 1 beat

28 Unit 1 ■ Keyboard Basics

Examination #6

The sixth examination should be administered individually to each student, either during the last class period of the week or during another scheduled exam time. This exam should be announced in plenty of time to allow the students adequate preparation time.

1. Individual Solo Repertoire—Students should play a repertoire piece of their choice from Units 22–26 or **Supplementary Solo Repertoire** (pp. 325–346).
2. Sight-reading—Give students 3–5 minutes to study **Exam Example 5a, 5b or 5c** (or other material of the teacher’s choice) and then perform.
3. **Playing Harmonic Minor Scales and Arpeggios** (p. 273–275) 2 octaves, hands separately —Ask students to play scales and arpeggios in four different keys selected from F# Minor, C# Minor, G# Minor, Bb Minor and Eb Minor.
4. Harmonization with Secondary Chords—Give students 5–7 minutes to study and harmonize **Exam Example 6a, 6b or 6c** (or other material of the teacher’s choice) with the indicated chords. Play, using an appropriate accompaniment style.
5. **Playing the I–vi–IV–ii₆–I₄–V⁷–I Chord Progression** (p. 253 or p. 316) —Ask students to play this progression in two randomly selected keys.
6. **Improvisation from Chord Symbols** (p. 295 or p. 322)—Students perform their choice of one example selected from these two pages.

Optional:

7. **Playing Five Types of Seventh Chords** (p. 287)—Begin the example on a random key and continue downward by half steps through three keys.
8. **Harmonization with Two-Hand Accompaniment** (p. 293 or p. 321)—Students perform their choice of one of the accompaniments as the teacher or sequencer plays the melody.

Exam Example #5a:

Moderato

4.

mf

5 1/3 5 1/3 4 1/2 5 1/2

5