

## How the course is structured

The book is divided into stages, each of which includes the following sections:

- Notation – how the music is written
- Technique building
- Performance pieces
- Theory
- Aural

## What's on the CD?

- Recordings of performance pieces
- Some play-along backing tracks to enhance your performances
- In some instances, aural development exercises

***N.B.* Play-along tracks have been recorded at the standard pitch of A = 440 cps [Hz] and their use will require an instrument tuned to this pitch.**

**All play-along tracks begin with introductory bars which correspond in length to the 'count in' printed above the relevant piece.**

**A 2-second delay has been added to the start of each play-along track to allow time for players to start the track and then prepare themselves to play.**

## Preface

This course has been devised to help those who wish to learn to play the piano, whether in their later teenage years or at any stage of their adult lives right through to retirement.

Although musical literacy and technique building are central to this process, we should not lose sight of the fact that it is the music itself and the enjoyment of playing which motivates us. However, at the same time, we would also like to gain a better understanding of what we are playing. For that reason, some stage-by-stage explanation of music theory has been included together with frequent opportunities to develop aural skills.

The performance pieces range stylistically from classical and folk music right through to jazz and, because we learn through hearing as well as by reading, recordings of these pieces have been included on the CD. Some pieces have also been provided with 'play-along' backing tracks to enhance our performances.

Of course, success will call for a degree of commitment to practise, although everyone will adopt their own pace of learning. Play the Piano! may be used by individuals who wish to teach themselves, but the help and guidance of a good teacher is always worthwhile, whether on a regular basis or at least in consultation from time to time.

The scope of these books can be readily expanded by accessing the free downloads at [universaledition.com](http://universaledition.com) where additional performance pieces are provided as well as advice on purchasing a suitable instrument, additional music theory information and an introduction to the notation of music.

Mike Cornick , September 2010

# Contents

<b>Stage 1</b>	Right hand in C position .....	5
	Old German Dance • Ode to Joy • Mary had a Little Lamb • Go Tell Aunt Nancy • 9th Symphony: 'From the New World', Theme	
<b>Stage 2</b>	Both hands in C position .....	10
	Ode to Joy • 9th Symphony: 'From the New World', Theme • Little Bird	
<b>Stage 3</b>	Both hands in C position, playing independently .....	16
	Old German Dance • When the Saints Go Marching In • Drink to Me Only	
<b>Stage 4</b>	Melody sharing between left and right hands in C position and playing chords with the left hand .....	22
	On the Other Hand • London's Burning • Rivers of Babylon	
<b>Stage 5</b>	Extending C position, dotted rhythms and transposing to G position .....	28
	Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star • Muss i denn • Kum Ba Yah • Standing in the Need of Prayer	
<b>Stage 6</b>	F position [extended], scales and keys, extending C, F and G positions downwards and more transposition .....	36
	Pop Goes the Weasel • Johnny Todd • A Little Waltz	
<b>Stage 7</b>	Introducing quaver triplets and playing chords with the right hand .....	47
	Triplet Bagatelle • Amazing Grace • Triplet Dance • Summer Seascape • Carousel Ride • Vesper Hymn	
<b>Stage 8</b>	Introducing minor scales and keys .....	58
	Minor Lament • Waltz Misterioso • Scarborough Fair	
<b>Stage 9</b>	Introducing swing rhythm and the blues scale .....	65
	Scalic Swing • Just Walkin' • Three Blind Mice • Basically Blue • On the Level	
<b>Stage 10</b>	More repertoire .....	75
	A Blue Waltz • Swinging the Quavers • Quadrille • Minuet • Lyric Waltz • Mary Anne • Sloop John B • Duet Blues	
	Aural answers .....	84

In addition, you may take advantage of the following free downloads from the Universal Edition website. Go to [→ universaledition.com/playthepiano1](http://universaledition.com/playthepiano1)

**Acquiring a suitable instrument** – which offers advice to the novice pianist in search of a piano.

**Before you get started** – which contains information on the theory and notation of music for those who prefer to read and learn before beginning to play, together with some advice on seating and hand positions. Note, however, that explanation of theory and notation is also explained in the book at each stage on a 'need to know' basis.

**Additional repertoire** – more pieces to play for each stage of the book.

**A chord chart** – for those who wish to further explore this approach to the notation of harmony.

**Key signatures** – A complete chart of key signatures for those who would like to gain a fuller understanding of this subject.

**Old German Dance** | Adapted and simplified | Michael Praetorius [1571–1621]

CD Track 16 performance | Count in: **one**, two, three, four, **one**, two, three, four

**Moderato** ♩ = 108

Musical score for 'Old German Dance' in 4/4 time, Moderato (♩ = 108). The score consists of two systems of piano accompaniment. The first system has a treble clef with a melody starting on G4 and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. The piece ends with a repeat sign.

**Some additional pieces for extra practice**

**When the Saints Go Marching In** | Trad. USA

CD Track 17 performance | Count in: **one**, two, three, four, **one**

**Allegro** ♩ = 120

Musical score for 'When the Saints Go Marching In' in 4/4 time, Allegro (♩ = 120). The score consists of three systems of piano accompaniment. The first system has a treble clef with a melody starting on G4 and a bass clef with a simple accompaniment. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The third system concludes the piece. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Dynamics include *mf*. The piece ends with a repeat sign.

Performance

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star | Trad.

CD Track 40 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, **one**, two

**Andante** ♩ = 105    Extended G position                      Finger change on C to return to G position

**Extended G position**                      **Finger change on C to return to G position**

For additional practice in G position

Kum Ba Yah | Adapted and simplified | Trad. Afro-Caribbean

CD Track 41 performance | CD Track 42 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, **one**, two

Slowly and expressively ♩ = 100

**Extended G position**                      **G position**

**Extended G position**                      **G position**

When playing the next triplet performance piece, *Amazing Grace*, the tempo is much slower and this should allow more time to think about the increasingly complex left-hand chording sometimes using three-note chords. Once again, try to control the dynamic of the left-hand accompaniment, allowing the melody to 'sing' above it.

*Amazing Grace* is also in the key of F so, once again, look out for B flats in the left-hand chords [except where this is cancelled by a natural in bar 6] as well as the accidental E flats.

### Amazing Grace | Trad. USA

CD Track 58 performance | CD Track 59 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, three, **one**, two

**Andante** ♩ = 90

The musical score for "Amazing Grace" is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 1-5) begins with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (bars 6-12) continues the melody and bass line. The third system (bars 13-15) features a first ending and a second ending marked "rall.". Fingerings and dynamics are indicated throughout.

The third triplet performance piece, *Triplet Dance*, is a much longer and livelier piece which will call for much practice of the right- and left-hand parts separately.

Although the piece has a key signature of one sharp [F] and appears to be in the key of G major, there are many instances of F naturals in both hands. This is because the piece is really set in a **mode** rather than a key and this is further explained under the heading of **Theory** later in this stage.

You will also be required to play simple two-note chords with the right hand in the middle section of the piece.

The final performance piece, *Scarborough Fair*, is also set in D minor so its **key signature** of one flat [B♭] is the same as that of F major.

However, you will notice that, despite its key signature, no B flats occur in this piece because this folk tune is, in reality, in yet another mode – the **Dorian** – which can be played on the white keys of the piano from D to D [see the **Theory** section below].

This piece could be notated without a key signature but this might cause confusion since it would wrongly suggest that the piece was in C major/A minor.

Note that the left hand is playing ‘broken chords’. In the first two bars, for instance, the left hand is playing the notes D, F and A which if played together would form the chord of D minor [Dm]. In Bars 3, 13, 16 and 18 the chord is C, in Bars 7 and 15 the chord is G, in Bars 11 and 12 the chord is F.

## Scarborough Fair | Trad. English

CD Track 73 performance | CD Track 74 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, three, **one**, two, three

**Moderato** ♩ = 112

14 1 5 4 3 2 1 2 1 rit. 2 1 2 rall. 3 p

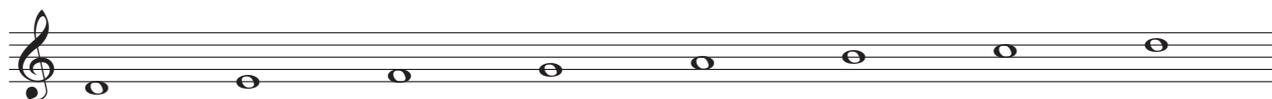
pass 2nd finger over

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

## Theory

We have already encountered the **Aeolian** and **Mixolydian** modes.

As referred to above, the performance piece, *Scarborough Fair* is in the **Dorian** mode:



## Performance – swing rhythm

### Scalic Swing | Mike Cornick

CD Track 76 performance | CD Track 77 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, three, four, **one**, two, three, four ... and play the first left-hand note as a swing quaver following the count of *four*.

At an easy swing tempo (♩ = ♩<sup>3</sup>)

♩ = 116

The musical score for 'Scalic Swing' is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 116. It consists of three systems of piano and bass staves. The first system (measures 1-3) starts with a piano (*mf*) dynamic. The piano part features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a quarter note in the second. The bass part has a simple bass line with fingerings 1, 5, 3. The second system (measures 4-6) continues the piano part with a triplet and a quarter note, and the bass part with a similar line. The piano part ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third system (measures 7-9) includes a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.). The piano part has fingerings 5, 2, 1, 3, 1 and includes a *mf* dynamic. The bass part has fingerings 5, 4, 3, 1 and includes an accent (^) over the first note of the first ending.

The second 'swing' performance piece, *Just Walkin'*, is in the key of A minor and calls for many of the skills which were employed in the previous piece. Again, note the swing quaver symbol and the appearance of an accidental [D sharp] in the penultimate bar. Notice, too, that the piece begins, in the right hand, on the note A – two ledger lines below the treble stave. Make sure that you begin the repeating left-hand bass figure on the correct A which is an octave below that.

This use of a repeated bass figure can be described by the Italian word **ostinato**. When an *ostinato* is used in the bass it is described, unsurprisingly, by the term **basso ostinato**.

The notation shows a bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It features a single eighth note on the A line (two ledger lines below the staff) followed by a quarter note on the A line, a quarter note on the G line, and a quarter note on the F line. A slur is placed over the quarter notes, and the number '1' is written below the first note. The text 'quasi string bass' is written below the staff.

Our second Afro-Caribbean piece, *Sloop John B*, also places the chording in the right hand and the much busier bass line in the left. Once again, look out for the syncopations, especially in the bass line and emphasise the accented notes which fall ahead of the beat. The key of the piece is G major and so we should remember that the note F should be played as an F sharp. In bar 10, however, the F sharp is cancelled by the natural sign and we should also notice the right-hand E flat in bar 12.

### Sloop John B | Trad. Bahamas | arr. Mike Cornick

CD Track 97 performance | CD Track 98 play-along | Count in: **one**, two, three, four, **one**, two, three

#### With a relaxed calypso feel

♩ = 115

The musical score is written for piano in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef staff. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and *cresc.*. The piece features a syncopated bass line and accented notes in the right hand.

**System 1 (Bars 1-4):** Treble clef starts with a whole note G4. Bass clef starts with a whole note G2. Treble clef has a repeat sign. Fingerings: 1, 5 3, 4 3 1, 4 1, 1, 5 3, 3 1.

**System 2 (Bars 5-8):** Treble clef has a repeat sign. Bass clef has a repeat sign. Fingerings: 5, 3 1, 4 2, 5 3, 5, 2 1, 2 1, 5 1.

**System 3 (Bars 9-13):** Treble clef has a repeat sign. Bass clef has a repeat sign. Fingerings: 1, 2, 5, 5, 2, 1, 5, 4 1, 5 5 1, 3.

**System 4 (Bars 14-17):** Treble clef has a repeat sign. Bass clef has a repeat sign. Fingerings: 1, 5 1, 5, 4 3 1, 5, 2 1, 2, 1, 2 5. First ending (1.) and second ending (2.) are shown.