

Christmas Music

Book 1

Solo Arrangements

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Reference Information

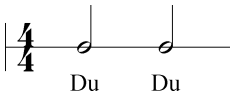
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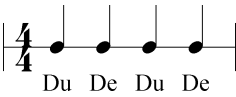
Music Moves for Piano

A Piano Series Based on the Music Learning Theory of Edwin E. Gordon
Designed to Develop Audiation and Keyboard Performance Skills

Angels We Have Heard on High

Meter: Duple

Macrobeats: 

Microbeats: 


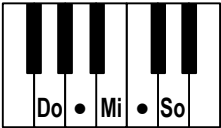
Tonality: Major — G is DO — Melody Starts on MI


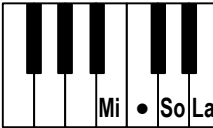
Melody Patterns


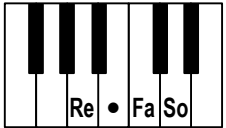
Angels we have heard on high, Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply Echoing their joyous strains

Glo-----


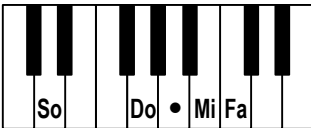
o-----


S

G


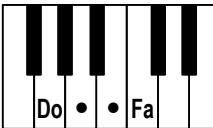

S



S


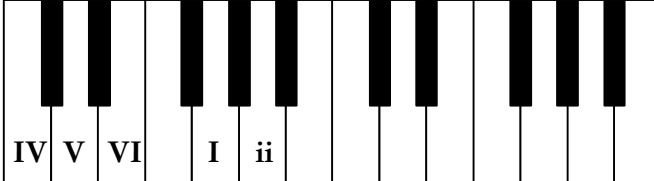
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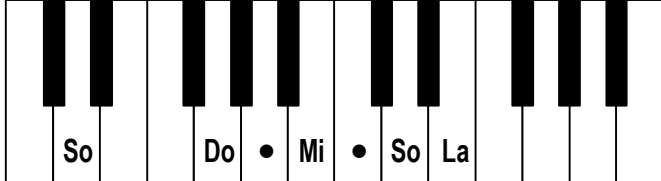
In excelsis Deo


S

G

Root Harmony

Do

G

Melody

S

G

Track
1

Angels We Have Heard on High

19th Century French Carol

Musical notation for measures 1-5. The piece is in G major (one sharp) and common time. Measure 1 features a triplet of eighth notes in the treble clef and a half note in the bass clef. Measures 2-5 continue the melody with various note values and rests.

Musical notation for measures 6-10. Measure 6 begins with a quarter note in the treble and a half note in the bass. Measures 7-10 show a more active treble line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass line remains mostly steady with half notes.

Musical notation for measures 11-15. Measure 11 starts with a quarter note in the treble and a half note in the bass. Measures 12-15 continue the melodic development in the treble, with the bass line providing harmonic support.

Musical notation for measures 16-20. Measure 16 begins with a quarter note in the treble and a half note in the bass. Measures 17-20 conclude the piece with a final melodic phrase in the treble and a sustained bass line.

We Wish You a Merry Christmas (Duet)

Traditional
(English)

Play the Primo one octave higher

RH = Upstems
LH = Downstems

Primo

Secondo

5

10

15

3

1

4

1

3

4

1

4

1

1

1

1

2

2

2

2

We Three Kings

Triple Meter

E is LA – G is DO

Start on MI

Track
9

Rhythm Patterns

Du Di Du Di Du Da Di Du

Du Di Du Di Du Di Du Da Di

Du Di Du Di Du Di Du Di

Tonal Patterns

Do La

La Mi

Mi So

Ti Re

Do So

La Do

We Wish You A Merry Christmas

Triple Meter

G is DO

Start on SO

Track
10

Rhythm Patterns

Di Du Da Ta Di Ta Du Da Di Du Da Ta Di Ta Du Da

Di Du Da Ta Di Ta Du Da Di Ta Du Da Di Du

Tonal Patterns

So Do

La Re

Ti So

So Mi

Do La

Re Ti

How to Build a Permanent Christmas Repertoire

Most pianists find playing a wide selection of Christmas music fulfilling. With year-to-year planning, pianists can acquire a permanent repertoire for lifelong enjoyment.

Long-term Steps for Students

- Learn rhythm patterns from the melody.
- Learn important tonal patterns from the melody.
- First, learn the melody without words and sing it accurately. Then learn to sing the words.
- Play the melody fluently and accurately.
- Remember the meter, tonality, and starting tone of the melody.
- Transpose each melody to two or more new keyalities to ensure more lasting retention.
- Learn the basic harmony and harmonic rhythm for the melody.
- Play the melody with a single-tone root-harmony.
- Create a new accompaniment.
- Play the melody with a duet partner.
- Create a new duet part based on the basic harmony.
- Create medleys of Christmas music.
- Create arrangements by changing tonality and meter. Also, make melodic and rhythmic variations.
- Re-harmonize the songs.

Annual Guide for Learning Christmas Songs

First year

- Listen to several songs on the recording with the students. Ask students to echo the patterns. Talk about the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, and the rhythm and tonal patterns for each song.
- “Jingle Bells” and “Jolly Old St. Nicholas” are good melodies for beginners to learn to play.
- Encourage students to play the melodies with a duet partner.
- Have students learn to play opening phrases of melodies they can sing accurately, such as “Away in the Manger,” “Joy to the World,” and “The First Noel.” Encourage wise fingering.
- Students should continue to learn several new melodies. Have them sing and chant related patterns, listen to the melodies, and sing the songs on a neutral syllable.

Second Year

- Review the songs learned last year with students.
- Have students learn to sing and play two or three new melodies that they started to learn previously.

- Listen to several songs on the recording with the students. Ask students to echo the patterns. Talk about the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, and the rhythm and tonal patterns for each song.
- Suggested melodies to learn are “Away in a Manger,” “Joy to the World,” “The First Noel,” and “O Christmas Tree.”
- Have students transpose the melodies they know to at least two keyalities for more lasting retention.
- Play the songs with the accompaniments and have students raise fingers as they hear the chord changes: one finger for Tonic (I), four fingers for Subdominant (IV), and five fingers for Dominant (V). Have students play a single-tone, root-harmony accompaniment with melodies.
- Encourage the students to play the melodies with a duet partner.

Third Year

- Review previously learned songs with students.
- Listen to several songs on the recording with the students. Ask students to echo the patterns. Talk about the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, and the rhythm and tonal patterns for each song.
- Have students learn to sing and play two or three new melodies that they started to learn earlier.
- Suggested melodies to learn are “Angels We Have Heard on High,” “Silent Night,” “We Wish You a Merry Christmas,” and “We Three Kings.”
- Have students transpose all of the melodies that they know. Have students transpose the melodies for “Away in a Manger” and “Joy to the World” to three or four keyalities.
- Have students sing and indicate chord changes with their fingers: one finger for Tonic (I), four fingers for Subdominant (IV), and five fingers for Dominant (V). Some students may be able to sing the root-harmony.
- Ask students to play a single-tone, root-harmony accompaniment with melodies.
- Encourage students to play the melodies with a duet partner.
- Help students create new accompaniments.

Fourth Year

- Review previously learned songs with students.
- Listen to several songs on the recording with the students. Ask students to echo the patterns. Talk about the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, and the rhythm and tonal patterns for each song.

- Have students learn to sing and play two or three new melodies that they started to learn earlier.
- Suggested melodies to learn are “Deck the Halls,” “Good King Wenceslas,” “O Come, Little Children,” “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” and “Pat-a-Pan.”
- Incorporate playing games with the tonal and rhythm patterns for each melody.
- Ask students to play a single-tone, root-harmony accompaniment with melodies. Most arrangements intentionally use the root of chords with one exception: the I 6/4. The I 6/4 is used because SO in the bass is an integral part of the common I 6/4-V-I cadence. Demonstrate this sound for students.
- Have students transpose the melodies. Help students transpose the following melodies to all twelve major keyalities: “Away in a Manger,” “Joy to the World,” and “The First Noel.”
- Encourage students to play melodies with a duet partner.
- Help students create new accompaniments.
- Some students will enjoy singing with a karaoke machine while the teacher or another student plays an accompaniment (without the melody).
- Use a variety of improvisation and creative activities, such as changing tonality and meter and making melodic and rhythmic variations.
- Encourage students to create a medley.

Fifth Year and Beyond

- Review previously learned songs with students. Students will probably have between eight and twelve songs in their permanent repertoires.
- Encourage students to add new songs to their permanent repertoires.
- Listen to several songs on the recording with the students. Ask students to echo the patterns. Talk about the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, and the rhythm and tonal patterns for each song.
- Review with students the meter, tonality, melody starting tone, harmony, and rhythm and tonal patterns that belong to each melody they know.
- Ask students to transpose melodies with single-tone, root-harmony accompaniments to many keyalities.
- Use a variety of improvisation and creative activities, such as changing tonality and meter and making melodic and rhythmic variations.
- After students know the root-harmony, have them listen to other arrangements of the songs. Locate places where voice leading is more effective using another chord tone in place of the root in the bass. Listen for chord substitutions.

- Help students learn a unique arrangement from music in print.

Performance and Teaching Ideas

Patterns

- Ask students to sing, chant, and play the tonal and rhythm patterns for each song. Allow students to sing the patterns in a comfortable range.
- Make sure students learn the unique tonal and rhythm patterns for each song. For example, students should know where the tonal pattern SO-FA occurs in “Away in a Manger.”
- Have students transpose the significant tonal patterns for a song to different keyalities.

Duets

- The secondo part of the duet arrangements in this book reinforces the chord changes. Feel free to experiment and change the style for variety.
- The secondo may be played an octave lower. The primo melody may be played in octaves or may be played with an accompaniment. Experiment.
- The primo player may create melodic and rhythmic variations or even improvise on the chord changes. One suggestion is to play the song in three parts: A (song) B (improvisation) A (song).
- Either the secondo or the primo can improvise a modulation to a new keyality.

Solos

- Write Roman numerals under the chord changes in the music score.
- Have students learn the solos as printed. Then show them how to use the chord changes to create new accompaniments. Use a single-tone accompaniment following the principles of voice-leading. Another idea is to use a jumping bass (low root/high chord).

Studio Activities

- Assign each student a chord (one student is Tonic, another student is Subdominant, and so on). Have students play rhythm instrument accompaniments on their assigned chord changes while listening to another student play the song on the piano.
- Have students sing the melody with or without words while someone plays an harmonic accompaniment. (Make sure no melody is played.)
- Chant a rhythm pattern and have students identify the song where the rhythm pattern occurs.
- Have students focus on one Christmas song each month throughout the year.
- Schedule a Holiday Party for the students’ families and friends. Have the students entertain with Christmas music while the guests eat and mingle.

