

Guide for piece no. 2:

«Waltz of the Bear»

Quickstart:

1. In case there is no screen available in A4/letter size, the pupil's part should be printed by tapping the -button via AirPrint on an A4/letter sheet (See explanation below). This text window must be closed in order to print the pupil's part because only the foremost content displayed on the screen is accessible for printing.
2. To become familiar with the features of the app, it is advisable to watch the app guide video that can be accessed via the corresponding button on the homescreen.
3. Watch the demo video of the piece first. By tapping the -button the demo video can be played back. On some iPhones, the button will not show, unless this text window is closed.
4. The demo video shows the following:
 - The music **sheet** has to be set up in **landscape orientation**, so that the illustrated keyboard is shown at the top edge of the page.
 - The reading direction is from the top and downwards to the bottom (See animated green line in the demo video).
 - Each tone symbol is printed right **below** the very same key of the illustrated keyboard which has to be played on the piano.
 - Tone symbols that are printed in the same row next to each other are played simultaneously.
 - Square-shaped tone symbols represent exclusively the black keys. Black squares represent quarter notes on the black keys and white rectangles depending on their side length represent half, dotted half or whole notes, on the black keys. In this piece they stand for dotted half notes.
 - The first part of the piece has to be played three times.
5. The left hand is from now on called "bear hand" and the right hand accordingly "mouse hand" (explanation see below).
6. The teacher and the pupil part (with ordinary notes) can be displayed by pressing the -button (piano 2).

Detailed guide:

(with explanations, teaching ideas and background information)

Functions

- This guide can be opened and closed again with the «?»-button in the upper right-hand corner of the menu. The guide can also be closed by tapping the «X».
- To become familiar with the features of the app, it is advisable to watch the app guide video that can be accessed via the corresponding button on the homescreen.

- By tapping the -button the demo video can be played back. On some iPhones, the button will not show, unless this text window is closed.
- The whole score with ordinary notes (pupil's and teacher's part) can be displayed by tapping the -button (piano 2).
- The mp3 file of the piece can be played back by tapping the -button (play).
- Only the foremost content displayed on the screen (guide text, pupil part or score) can be printed by tapping the -button. If, for example, the pupil part should be printed, this text window must be closed so that the pupil part will be brought to the front. If, however, the score (which includes both the teacher's and the pupil's part on a regular staff) should be printed, then this text window also has to be closed first. Then, in addition, the score view has to be opened by tapping the -button.

Practical information

!!! If the pupil has an iPad with a screen of 12.9 inches or more, it is not necessary to print out his part. If the screen is smaller, it's better to print out his part in a larger format, for example A4 !!! Six- to ten-year-olds need at least this size in order to be able to read the tone symbols selectively. This applies particularly when later on in the method, the graphics are scaled down in order to show more tone symbols per page.

- The music sheet has to be set up in **landscape** orientation, so that the illustrated keyboard is shown at the top edge of the page.
- **The reading direction is from the top and downwards to the bottom** (see animated green line in the demo video).
- The first part before the double bar line has to be played three times.
- The pupil plays a waltz-figure, the teacher plays the melody in the bass register.
- The title of the piece is "Waltz of the Bear" because the melody is played in "bear register" (low tones).
- The piece is suitable for the introduction of how to play along with a metronome.

Didactical information

The PianoSeesaw tone symbols get assigned to specific pitches.

At first the demo video no. 2 should be watched (for playback tap on -button). It illustrates how the notation is to be carried out on the instrument.

- The PianoSeesaw tone symbols will now be set in relation to an illustrated keyboard.
- Each tone symbol is printed right **below** the very same key of the illustrated keyboard, which has to be played on the piano.
- Tone symbols that are printed in the same row next to each other, are played simultaneously.
- The tone symbols are assigned to distinct pitches, alike the notes in the regular staff. But in contrast to the regular staff, the system presented here is considerably simplified so that the notation principle is immediately understandable for the pupil and therefore playable.
- The rhythm notation follows the same principles as those in the previous piece.
- When the music sheet is rotated 90 degrees to the left (into portrait orientation), one can already guess that the four lines and the dotted line are corresponding to the four bottom lines of the treble clef (e, g, b and d) and an indicated ledger line for c. But this does not need to be explained to the pupil at this time. The lines are only intended to help with orientation.

Introduction of the terms "bear hand" and "mouse hand".

Most children younger than 10 years are not able to differentiate between "right" and "left". In piano lessons however, the right or left hand has to be mentioned often. Whenever a pupil chooses the wrong hand, he will

perceive this as a slight disappointment, and due to this he will feel less confident during the lesson. These disappointments can easily be avoided if the pupil has learned the terms "bear keys" and "mouse keys", as proposed in the previous piece (See guide of the piece "Hello!"). From there it is only a little step to renaming the left hand to "bear hand", since this is the hand closest to the bear-keys when sitting at the piano and the right hand to "mouse hand", as this is the hand closest to the mouse-keys. Experience shows that the use of these terms reduces the error margin significantly.

General advice

- It is often necessary for the teacher to point with a pencil at the music while playing together with a pupil (each his own part). Since it is difficult to play and point at the same time the teacher should practice this on his own before trying it with a pupil.
- It is advisable that the teacher plays his part by memory.

Aural training

It is important that the teacher conducts ear training exercises with the pupils. To present a complete ear training concept would go beyond the scope of this guide, but some basic aural exercises will be mentioned here in order to inspire those teachers who have little teaching experience:

1. In principle, playing a melody or a whole piece without sheet music is actually already an aural exercise, assuming the pupil isn't just playing a memorized version of note names or finger combinations.
2. To play a melody on the piano, while singing it at the same time, is also an important aural exercise.
3. Generally, singing is very important for the development of aural skills. But in individual private lessons it is often difficult to motivate a pupil to sing. It is therefore advisable to occasionally gather the pupils into groups to discover the joy of singing together.
4. **Tone-series-exercise:** The teacher plays 2 black keys in succession. The pupil listens and in the beginning also gets to watch, and then he himself gets to play the two keys. After that, the teacher plays the same two keys again and adds one more at the end. The pupil repeats. Then again the teacher repeats all previously played keys and adds again one more, etc. Many pupils manage to remember up to eight or more tones. Here the teacher himself might already have to focus in order not to lose the thread!. One starts choosing the tones within small pitch ranges, maybe a fourth, and then gradually expands to the tenth or twelfth. When the pupils feels secure within a certain pitch range, the teacher can play the keys without the pupil watching.
5. **Find the keys:** The teacher plays 3 black keys, the pupil listens and watches. Then the teacher plays one of these keys again, **without** the pupil watching. When the teacher has taken away his hand from the keyboard, the pupil has to play exactly the same key which the teacher played last. If the pupil does not choose the correct one, then the whole procedure has to be repeated. If the pupil once again does not choose the correct key, then only one key remains which comes into question (.assuming that the pupil is capable of choosing the correct keys which have actually been played by the teacher. Most pupils are able to do this, because they are allowed to watch while the teacher is playing, but one cannot take this as a given ability.). Thus, the round is finished and the teacher can continue with a new selection of keys. In the beginning, the three tones should be far apart from one another. This makes it easier to distinguish the tones from each other, easier than it would be with neighboring tones, for example. When the pupil has come so far that he chooses the correct key out of three neighboring tones with certainty, then the number of tones, from which one key will be selected, can be gradually increased, i.e first up to five white neighboring tones and so on, until all the white keys of an octave are included (eventually including the black keys as well). Usually the whole selection of tones has to be played for the pupil before the teacher selects a new key which the pupil has to find.
6. **Recognising seconds and thirds:** For children, the difference in sound between seconds and thirds is relatively easy to determine. It's always exciting to find out which attributes a pupil would ascribe to the sound of the intervals.

To emphasize the importance of ear training as a learning field, this will be referred to repeatedly in the guides of the following pieces.

It is important to find a good balance between the development of aural skills and the development of reading ability. If one of these skills is much better developed than the other, then it gets difficult to motivate the pupil to work with the less well developed skill.

How to proceed in the piano lesson

Watch the demo video of the piece first.

Systematic list of steps to go through:

1. The teacher explains the relationship between the squares / rectangles and the illustrated keyboard first, then the connection between the notation system and the keys on the piano.
2. The teacher gives some examples ("This square is printed directly below this key on the sheet, and therefore it corresponds to this key on the piano.")
3. The teacher explains that the squares / rectangles are actually called "notes" and she uses the term "notes" instead of the terms "squares / rectangles."
4. The teacher plays the first three notes for the pupils. These are the keys G-flat, A-flat and B-flat. They are to be played simultaneously, with the fingers 4 + 3 + 2 of the bear hand.
5. The pupil plays these three keys herself. The teacher makes sure that the pupil uses the correct fingering.
6. The teacher points out that the bear hand switches back and forth between two positions, the mouse hand, however, remains in the same position throughout the piece.
7. Now, the pupil should try to play the entire first section while reading along, first step by step, then without stopping.

While the pupil plays, the teacher points with a pencil at the corresponding tone symbols in the score.

8. If the pupil can fluently read and play from the beginning to the double line, the teacher explains that this section has to be played 3 times before playing the rest of the piece.
9. The pupil reads and plays through the whole piece.
10. The teacher plays the teacher's part for the pupil. It contains the melody of the piece.
11. The teacher and the pupil play the whole piece (each playing his own part). The teacher points simultaneously with a pencil at the corresponding tone symbols in the pupil's part.
12. The teacher plays along with the pupil, without pointing at the corresponding tone symbols in the pupil's part.
13. For teachers who like to work with a metronome, now is a good time to let the pupil play along with the metronome at different speeds. Start with a tempo of (a quarter note) = ca. 72 and then increase gradually up to 132.
14. Let the pupil try to play along with the audio file. It can be played back by tapping the -button (play).

The teacher should never play the pupil's part more than twice for the pupil. The same applies to the demo video, otherwise the pupil will tend to not read the tone symbols but rather to imitate what he has seen and heard from memory. It is essential that the pupil can read and understand what is written on the score by himself. Teachers can of course assist in showing the pupil how to place his hands, or point out which notes have to be played simultaneously. Here, the main learning objective is that the pupil understands what is written in the notes and how it should be transferred to the keyboard.

For teachers with little teaching experience: Here is a suggestion of how to explain the notation system in simple terms to a pupil:

Watch the demo video of the piece first.

"At the top of the page you see some piano keys. Below you see some squares. We can call these "notes". As with the previous piece the black squares stand for short tones, and the white squares for long tones. It does not

matter what color the squares are, they are always standing for black keys. The white keys there will be printed as round-shaped notes, but this will come later."

"If we look a little closer at the music we see that each square is standing right under one of these black keys up here." (Teacher shows in the music) "This square, for example, is standing right under that black key up here." (Teacher shows in the music.) "And precisely this key must be found and played on the piano when you want to play this note." (Teacher points to the note in the music and then plays the corresponding key on the piano). "This square corresponds therefore exactly to this key here on the piano." (Teacher points to the tone symbol which he played before and then plays again the corresponding key on the piano.)

If necessary, the teacher can illustrate the relationship between note symbols and keyboard with several examples. However, most pupils will learn best by trying themselves.

"If you want to play this piece you must read from the top and downwards to the bottom." (Teacher shows.) "This means that notes which stand in the same row directly next to each other have to be played at the same time. These 3 notes here on top, for example, have to be played at the same time." (Teacher points at the first three note symbols of the piece.)

"I'll play these three notes for you." (Teacher plays the corresponding three keys and holds them down so that the pupil can see which keys they are.)

"As you can see, I take the 2nd, 3rd and 4th finger of the bear-hand" (For fingering, see instructions for piece "Hello!") "I use the bear-hand, because at the top of the page, above the keys I'm holding down right now, it says "bear-hand." (Teacher shows)

"Just try it for yourself. Put the bear-hand on the triplets, use the same fingers as I did, and play the three triplet keys at the same time." (If necessary, the teacher can assist in positioning the hand.)

"Try to hold down the 3 keys and sense what it feels like."

"Now look at the music. These are exactly the same 3 notes which you are holding down right now." (Teacher points at the corresponding tone symbols.)

It often happens that not all three keys give a sound when the pupil tries the first couple of times. This can be corrected after the pupil has understood the notation principle.

"Next, the mouse hand has to play the two keys. These keys will also be played at the same time, because these two notes are standing in the same row next to each other." (Teacher points at the corresponding tone symbols.)

The pupil plays the twin keys with the 2nd and the 3rd fingers simultaneously.

"If we now continue reading, you see that the bear hand is jumping back and forth between the triplets and the twins, while the mouse hand will remain in the same position through the whole piece." (Teacher shows.)

"Try to play from here to there (The teacher points at the first part of the piece.), and remember that the piece is played only with black keys, because all notes are square shaped."

The pupil tries to play the first part.

While the pupil plays, the teacher should point with a pencil at the corresponding tone symbols in the music. That makes it easier for the pupil to read the notes while playing.

If the pupil masters this part, then the teacher's part can be introduced. Now the teacher and pupil(s) can play together (each their own part). While teacher and pupil play together, the teacher should point with a pencil at the corresponding tone symbols in the pupil's part.

Before the whole piece can be played the teacher must mention that the first part is to be played three times.