

Introduction

Why?

One of the main reasons why so many young pianists can't sight-read is simply because they don't spend enough time actually looking at and processing notation. It's not uncommon to spend many weeks (perhaps even longer) learning just one or two pieces. The pieces are really learnt by ear and tactile memory – the notation becomes more of an aide-memoire, symbols that nudge kinaesthetic memory.

So we need to encourage pupils to spend more time literally looking at notation! That's the purpose of this book. It's a one-a-week or, at most, one-every-two weeks collection of pieces that will be especially useful when a pupil is moving towards a grade exam.

Not actually sight-reading

These pieces are not to be sight-read: the idea is to learn one piece each week so that pupils are constantly having to process new notation in a comfortable time frame. They will have to actually LOOK at new music more often and so will become less nervous and more able to deal with it. It will begin to take the fear and panic out of reading notation.

Standard

Each piece is significantly easier than an equivalent grade piece. Each is built on a different (and interesting) pianistic idea, sits comfortably under the hands and has lots of repetition.

Practice

It's important that pupils practise these pieces regularly – every day, ideally – so that they are regularly reading notation. A new piece each week for 26 weeks before an exam will make a huge difference.

Ingredients

Each piece is based on a small number of ideas – simple rhythms and note patterns – but have quite a number of dynamics and other markings: these are very important. Pupils very rarely manage to include dynamics and other markings in exams. This takes practice and these pieces will give them that opportunity!

Dancing round the maypole

Dance and folk-like ♩ = 100

f

1
5

6

4

2

11

mp

mf

16

ff



Secret agent TX9 saves the world

Tense and exciting ♩ = 104

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 104. The instruction *f short and accented* is written above the first staff. Measure numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are indicated above the first staff. The notation consists of chords in both the treble and bass staves.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 is marked above the first staff. The notation features a sequence of chords in the bass staff and a melodic line in the treble staff. Measure 2 is marked above the second staff.

Musical notation for measures 9-13. Measure 9 is marked above the first staff. The notation features a melodic line in the treble staff with a *p* dynamic marking. The bass staff contains chords.

Musical notation for measures 14-17. Measure 14 is marked above the first staff. The notation features a sequence of chords in the bass staff and a melodic line in the treble staff. Measure 3 is marked above the first staff. The piece concludes with a *p* dynamic marking in the final measure.