

John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course

PART THREE

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Foreword

3

THE PHRASE

PART THREE begins by showing the importance of thinking and feeling music phrase by phrase rather than note by note.

Teachers should emphasize the matter of playing each phrase with different musical treatment—one of the first steps in Interpretation.

TOUCH

TOUCH is obviously a vital part of Interpretation and examples in *staccato*, *legato*, slurs, etc., follow in proper sequence.

For thorough development of the various Touches, the teacher is referred to the author's edition of the HANON STUDIES—now adopted as a standard part of the teaching equipment of most piano teachers and music schools.

SCALES AND CHORDS

Scale formation follows the lessons on Semitones and Whole Tones, with examples using the scale both as Melody and as accompaniment figures.

Later Triads and Inversions are shown with pieces employing chord figures in 'block' and broken form.

The 7th chord (with its resolution) is not analysed harmonically, but simply taught as a CHORD PATTERN which should be memorized by the pupil because of its frequent appearance in music of this grade.

BOOGIE WOOGIE

Many teachers may be startled because of the inclusion of Boogie Woogie and other numbers having a popular 'flavour'.

But it must be admitted that Popular Music is here to stay—and why not? It has a very definite place of its own in the world of music. And whether we approve or not, our pupils will be exposed to it daily on radio, television, gramophone, cafés, etc.

Perhaps for that very reason it may even be a duty of the so-called "long-haired" musician to teach Young players how to distinguish between good and bad Popular Music!

In any event, the majority of piano pupils take up music, not as a career, but as a means of entertainment—which by the way, is the prime purpose of all music, classic or otherwise. The author, therefore, feels no need to apologize for the popular type of some of the examples. If they do nothing else, they at least show that Boogie Woogie, Rag Time, etc., are not new inventions in the popular field, but are simply exaggerated use of devices known to the classic composers many years ago.

It should be noted, however, that even the "pop" examples have a definite purpose and develop either a technical or musical point of pianism.

SCOPE


In Key Signatures, the book progresses as far as three flats and three sharps. The remaining Key Signatures follow in proper order in PART FOUR.

On page 44 the scales and chords used in the book are shown for reference.

A Glossary of musical terms, with abbreviations and definitions will be found on page 45.

The last few lessons in the book present SIX-EIGHT—a new Time Signature so far.

As with the other books in this Course, the lessons are specially designed for the short practice periods of present-day pupils.



4

Hand Position**Preparatory Studies****Melody****1st Phrase****2nd Phrase****The Phrase**

Music, like language, is divided into sentences, but musical sentences are called PHRASES.

The above example consists of two phrases. Sometimes the second phrase is played louder than the first—sometimes softer. But never exactly alike.

How do you think the second phrase should be played? It is correct either way, but it should be played the way you feel it. Always think of your Music phrase by phrase, not note by note. Then you will play with more musical purpose and understanding.

Three Phrases

Hand Position



Here is a piece with three phrases. Try playing it three different ways.

First time—1st phrase, very softly; 2nd phrase, somewhat louder; 3rd phrase, still louder.

Second time—1st phrase, moderately loud; 2nd phrase, softly; 3rd phrase, much louder.

Third time—1st phrase, moderately loud; 2nd phrase, somewhat softer; 3rd phrase, much softer.

Choose the way you like best. That will be your very own interpretation.

Preparatory Studies



DON'T FORGET TO ACCENT THE FIRST BEAT OF EACH BAR.



The Bee

1st Phrase

Folk Song



2nd Phrase



3rd Phrase



Four Phrases

This piece has four phrases.

Notice that each phrase is marked differently.

Usually the composer indicates how each phrase should be played. When no expression marks are shown, play according to your feeling.

An explanation of all musical terms used in this book will be found on page 45.

BE SURE TO LOOK THEM UP.

Much Ado About Nothing



1st Phrase

Folk Song

2nd Phrase

3rd Phrase

4th Phrase

211 4

Wrist Staccato

TEACHERS' NOTE—The subject of *Touch* is too vital to be treated as part of a Grade Book.

It is suggested that the pupil be assigned at this point, the author's HANON STUDIES which are specially adapted for students in this grade. Each *Touch* is carefully explained and developed separately.

Obviously, TOUCH is an important part of Interpretation and should be introduced early in the pupil's career.

Finger, Wrist and Forearm staccato as well as the various forms of *Finger legato, phrasing and portamento* playing, all in elementary form, are treated in the JOHN THOMPSON HANON STUDIES.

For playing the following examples give the pupil your favourite demonstration of Wrist Staccato.

Exercise in Wrist Staccato

Allegro

ALWAYS BE SURE
TO NOTICE THE
EXPRESSION MARKS.
SEE PAGE 45.



Some Folks Do

Adapted from
Stephen Foster

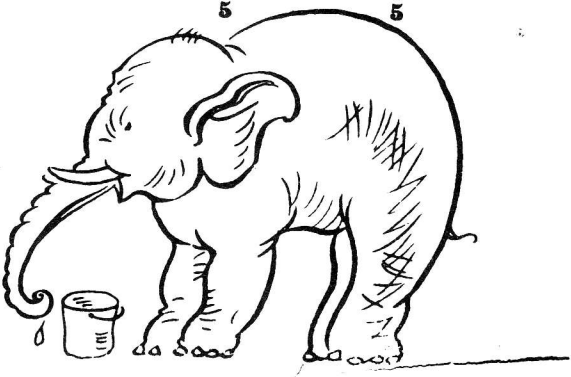
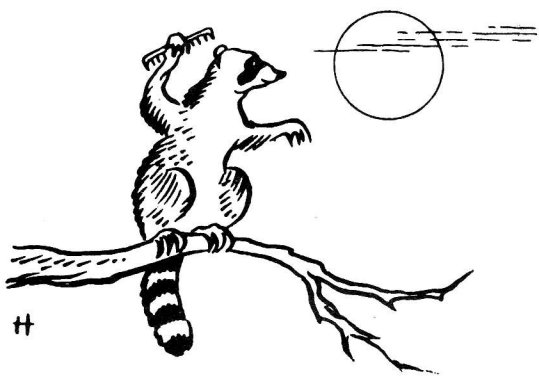
Allegretto

there. The old ra - coon by the light of the moon was

comb-ing his au - burn hair. The mon - key went ker -

plunk, Fell o - ver the el - e-phant's trunk. The el - e-phant

sneezed, Fell down on his knees, So what be - came of the monk!



CHANGING HAND POSITION

Up to this point you have changed Hand Position frequently when moving from one piece to another.

You will find it is just as easy to change position *in the middle of a piece*, and that is what happens in "On the Levee." See how smoothly you can make the change.

On the Levee

Allegro



First Time Bar

Second Time Bar

FIRST AND SECOND TIME BARS

From this point, go back to the beginning and play over again.

After playing through the SECOND time, do NOT repeat the FIRST TIME BAR; instead, skip to the SECOND TIME BAR.

Sunrise

NEW EXPRESSION MARKS

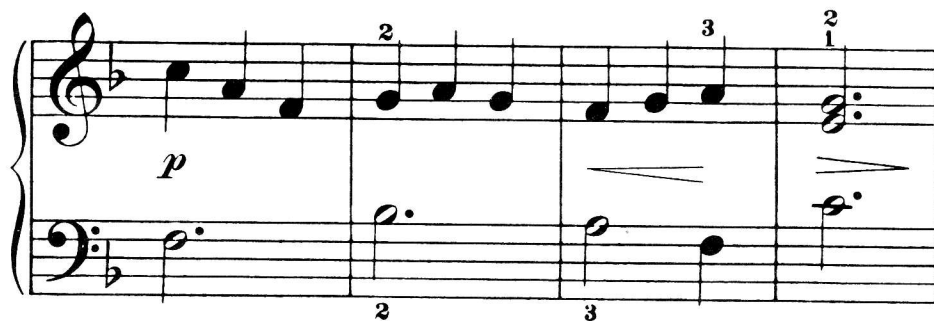
 means a gradual

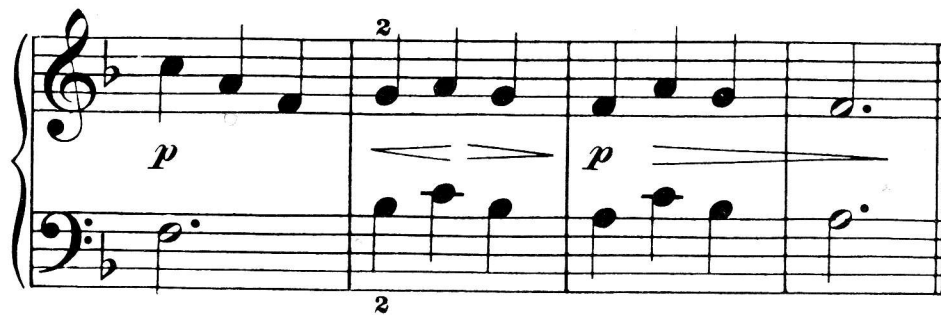
increase in tone.

 means a gradual

decrease in tone.

Andantino

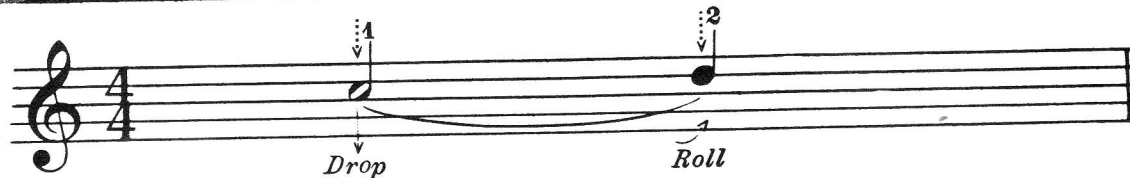
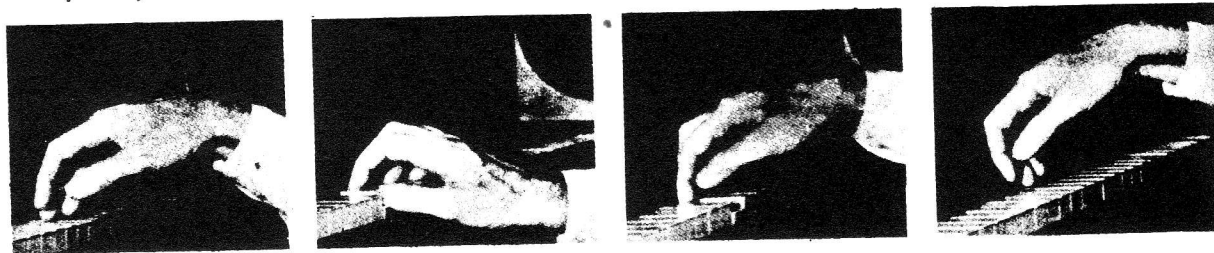



The Slur

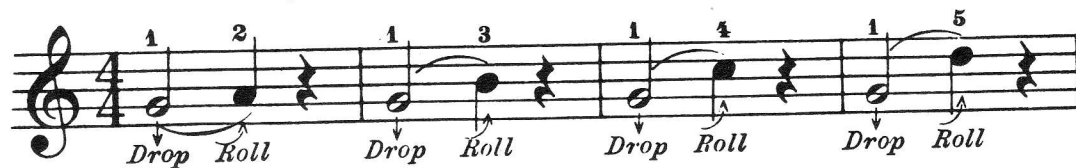
SLURRING in music is like BREATHING in speech—we take *short breaths* and *long breaths*. If we keep in mind to make our playing of music BREATHE AT THE END OF EACH SLUR, it will strengthen the rhythm and add immensely to the interpretation.

In playing TWO-NOTE SLURS think of the words, DROP-ROLL and the effect will come naturally. In the following example, play the *first* note with a gentle DROP of the arm and the *second* note with a ROLL of the arm and hand in an inward and upward motion, using no finger action and releasing the note on the upward roll.

The following illustration shows the proper position of hand and arm as each Slur is released. The WRIST must be completely relaxed.




Play the following with the **RIGHT** hand



Play the following with the **LEFT** hand



The SIGN of the Slur is the curved line, . All notes under this line, except the last should be played LEGATO. The last note must always be played with a rolling motion of the arm forward upward.

"The HANON Studies" by John Thompson should be assigned as supplementary work. This book is issued with attractive titles and illustrations, and is especially adapted for this grade to develop the SLURRING ATTACK as well as all the fundamental touches used in this book.

Pop Goes the Weasel

Be Sure
 To observe the many
 two-note slurs (*drop-roll*).
 Also the *accent* and
staccato notes on the last
 line.

Moderato

Now all a-round the cob-ler's bench, The

mon-key chased the wea-sel; The

mon-key tho't 'twas all in fun,

f Pop! goes the wea-sel.

left hand over

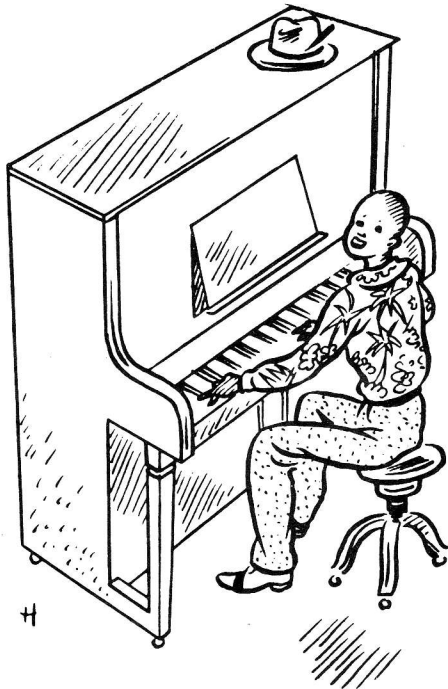


Accompaniment

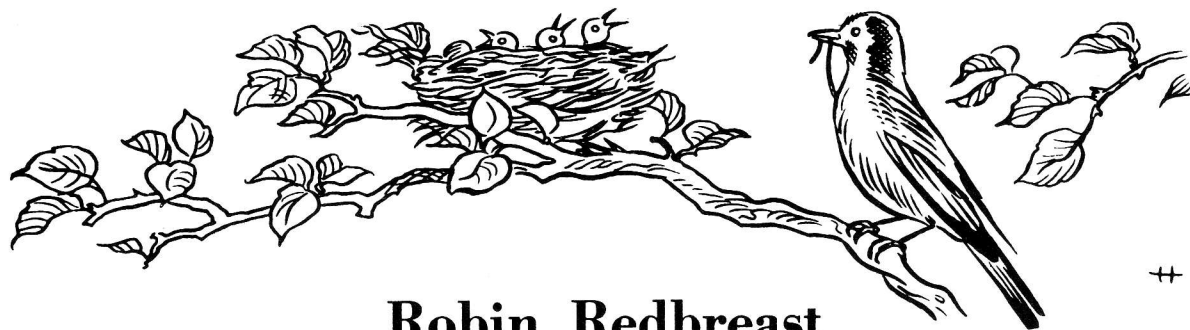
Preparatory Exercise

R. H. 1 2 3 4 5
L. H. 5 4 3 2 1

Boogie Woogie Bill



Allegro Moderato
mp



Robin Redbreast

Allegretto

mf

1 2 3 5 3 3

3 2 3

cresc. *f* *mp*

1 2 3 4

1 2

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Detailed description of the musical score: The piece is in 3/4 time and consists of four systems of piano accompaniment. Each system has a treble and bass clef. The first system includes fingerings (1, 2, 3, 5, 3, 3) and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system features slurs and accents. The third system includes a *cresc.* marking, a key signature change to one sharp (F#), and dynamic markings of *f* and *mp*. The fourth system continues the melodic and harmonic patterns.

SEMITONES (Half Steps)

A SEMITONE is the distance between any key and its *next nearest* key.

Play the following progression, using the second finger of the right hand, thus,



You have played a series of Semitones.

Notice that the piano keyboard is arranged in Semitones.

All semitones occur between a White Key and a Black Key, EXCEPT the two WHITE SEMITONES between E and F and B and C.

Play these descending semitones with the left hand second finger.

Review

You have already learned that:

A SHARP (#) placed before a note, *raises* it a semitone.

A FLAT (b) placed before a note, *lowers* it a semitone.

A NATURAL (♮) placed before a note, *cancel*s the sharp or flat sign.

WHOLE TONES (Whole Steps)

A WHOLE TONE is twice the distance of a semitone.

Therefore there will always be one key—either Black or White—lying in between.

The diagram illustrates whole tones on a piano keyboard and in musical notation. The top staff shows a sequence of notes: B-flat, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B-natural. Vertical dashed lines connect these notes to a piano keyboard diagram below. The keyboard shows black keys for B-flat, B, D, E, F, G, and A. The bottom staff shows a sequence of notes: C, D, E, F-sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp, B-sharp, C. Vertical dashed lines connect these notes to the keyboard diagram, showing that F-sharp is the white key between F and G, G-sharp is the white key between G and A, and A-sharp is the white key between A and B.

WHOLE TONES AND SEMITONES

Define the following examples as whole tones or semitones.

From $F\sharp$ to G is a

From F to G is a

From F to G is a

From F to G is a

From F to G is a

From F to G is a

From $F\sharp$ to $G\sharp$ is a

From F to G is a

Three-note Slur

Drop—Connect—Roll

To play a three-note slur, DROP on the first note, CONNECT the second with finger legato and ROLL off on the third note.



Shufflin' Along

(Boogie Woogie)

Moderato

BOOGIE WOOGIE

BOOGIE WOOGIE is a term used in Popular Music for *repeated patterns*—a device known and used in Standard Music almost since its origin.

About the only difference is that Popular Music repeats the figures more often than would be considered good taste in what we look upon as Standard Music.

This is the second "Boogie Woogie" tune you have had in this book.

The first was "BOOGIE WOOGIE BILL" in which the repeated pattern was used as accompaniment. Here it appears as melody and is repeated over and over with monotonous regularity.

Cross-Hand Piece

Here is a cross-hand piece, built for the most part, on three-note slurs.

Make as much distinction as possible between *staccato* and *legato*.

Be careful of the expression marks and see if you can imitate the playfulness of dancing shadows.

Shadow Dance

Animato

mp

mf



Major Scales

Writing Exercises

A scale is a succession of eight notes progressing in alphabetical order.

The notes are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and are known as the degrees of the scale.

The Major Scale contains whole tones and semitones.

The semitones occur between 3 and 4 and between 7 and 8 as shown in the example which follows.

Write the following scales using sharps or flats as needed to preserve the order of whole tones and semitones.

Scale of G Major

Scale of F Major

Scale of D Major

Scale of B \flat Major

Scale of A Major

Scale of E \flat Major

Preparatory Exercise

New Signature for Four-Four

The sign **C**, is just another way of showing the Time Signature of Four-Four.

In the following example, you will find the G major scale, divided between the hands, and used as Melody.



The Juggler

Allegro 3

Scale Drill

Allegro

p

Acrobats

Allegro animato

mp

mf

mf

f

