

Harp Methods

How to Choose and Use Them

Rachel Green • April 9, 2026



What is a Method?



Piano Methods

Pre-staff notation for very young students

- *Music for Little Mozarts* by Alfred

Chord based learning with popular tunes

- *Piano for Adults* by Bastien
- *Piano Pronto* by Jennifer Eklund

Basic curriculum for your average student

- *Alfred's Basic Piano Library* - Helpful approach to rhythm
- *Succeeding at the Piano* by Helen Marlais - Pleasing format, basic technique well explained
- *Piano Adventures* by Faber and Faber - Fun piece titles with creative lyrics
- *Piano Safari* by Katherine Fisher and Julie Kneer - Half rote and half reading

Accelerated pace for older student or students with a musical background

- *Succeeding at the Piano All in One Approach* by Helen Marlais



Characteristics of a Successful Method

1. **Systematic Sequencing of New Concepts**
2. Teacher Duets
3. Aesthetics



Systematic Sequencing of New Concepts

Micro-levels of difficulty

1. Note reading
2. Rhythm
3. Technique



Micro-levels of difficulty • Note reading

- Pitches
- Notation
- Density of notes
- Intervals

A



B



Micro-levels of difficulty • Note reading

- Pitches - 2
- Notation - 2
- Density of notes - 1
- Intervals - 4

A



B



Micro-levels of difficulty • Rhythm

A $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ||

B $\frac{4}{4}$ ♩ ♩ | ♩♩♩♩♩♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ | ♩ ♩ ||

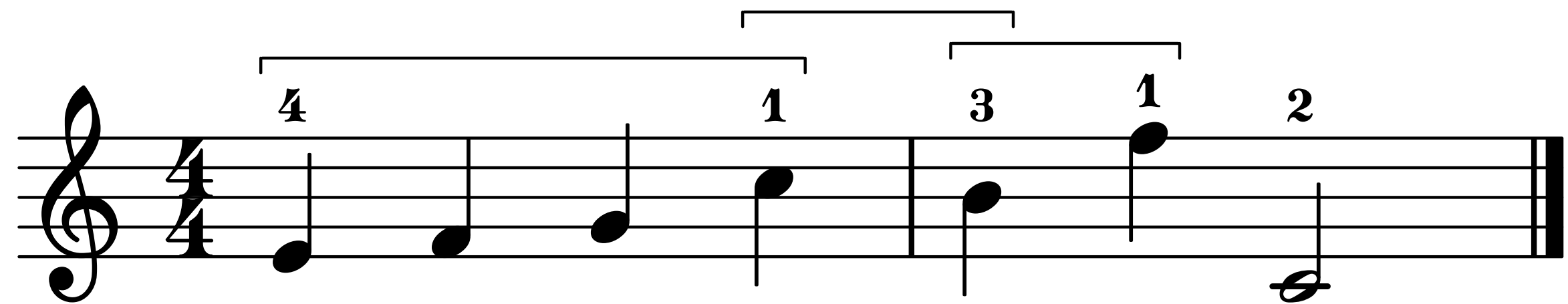
- Rhythmic values
- Small rhythmic patterns
- Large rhythmic patterns
- (Multiple rhythms at the same time when hands play together)



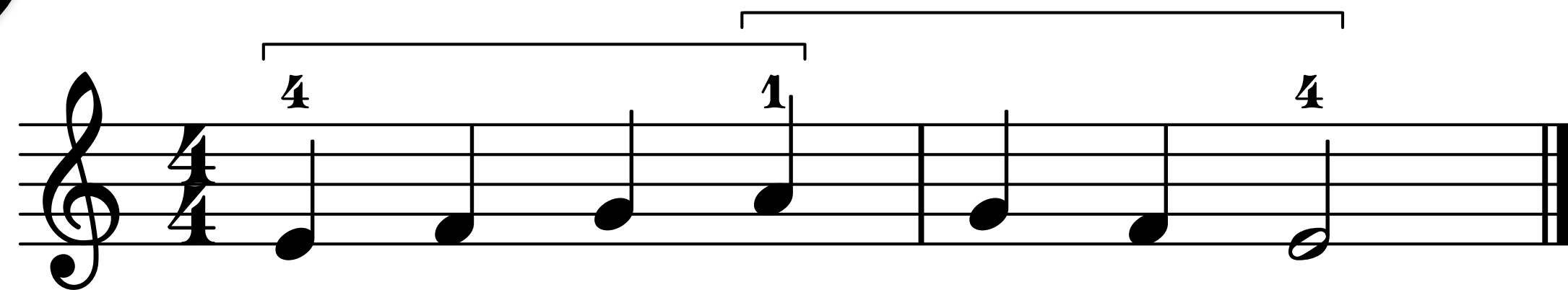
Micro-levels of difficulty • Technique

- Finger patterns
- Shapes
- Leaps
- (Special techniques)

A



B



Sample

Rainy Day
Play with Me Level 1

Technique

- Voicing - LH plays louder
- Placing 3-note arpeggios

Steadily

Musical notation for measures 1-4. The piece is in 4/4 time and marked 'Steadily' and 'mf'. The right hand (RH) features a melody of quarter notes with a 3-note arpeggio (G4, A4, B4) in the first two measures, indicated by a bracket and the number '3'. The left hand (LH) plays a bass line of half notes, with a 2-note arpeggio (G3, B2) in the first two measures, indicated by a bracket and the number '2'. The notes in the RH are G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The notes in the LH are G3, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3.

Musical notation for measures 5-8. The RH continues the melody with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The LH continues the bass line with half notes: G3, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The piece concludes with a final chord in the RH (G4, B4, D5) and a final note in the LH (G3).

Musical notation for measures 9-12. The RH continues the melody with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The LH continues the bass line with half notes: G3, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The piece concludes with a final chord in the RH (G4, B4, D5) and a final note in the LH (G3).

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The RH continues the melody with quarter notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. The LH continues the bass line with half notes: G3, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3. The piece concludes with a final chord in the RH (G4, B4, D5) and a final note in the LH (G3).



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Duets

Medieval Knight by Rachel Green
Play with Me Level 1

- Rhythm
- Ensemble Skills
- Ear training
- Performance Skills

Medieval Knight

The musical score for "Medieval Knight" is presented in three systems. The first system (measures 1-8) is marked "Stoutly" and "mp". It features a treble staff with eighth-note patterns and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 9-16) continues the piece, ending with a dynamic marking of "p" and a final measure marked "8vb¹". Fingerings and articulation marks are provided throughout the score.



Characteristics of a Successful Method

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Aesthetics

My Pet Fish
Play with Me Level 1

A

My Pet Fish

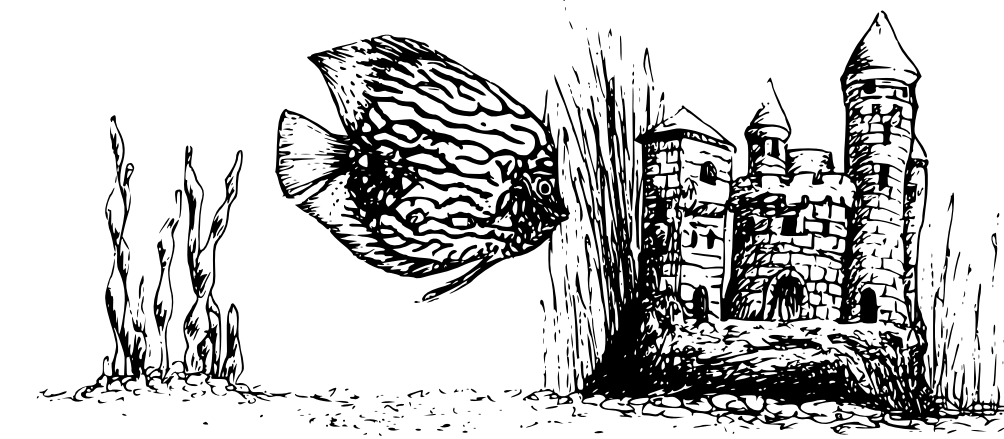
Cheerfully
mf

Musical score for 'My Pet Fish' (Version A) in 4/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The tempo is 'Cheerfully' and the dynamic is 'mf'. The score consists of 8 measures.

- Font size
- Fingerings and brackets
- Artwork

B

My Pet Fish



Cheerfully
mf

Musical score for 'My Pet Fish' (Version B) in 4/4 time, featuring a treble and bass clef. The tempo is 'Cheerfully' and the dynamic is 'mf'. The score consists of 8 measures, with the first measure starting at measure 5. Fingerings and brackets are indicated for the first two measures of each system.



How to Use a Method



How to Use a Method

1. **Pick a method appropriate for your student.**
2. Prepare your student for each new piece.
3. Discover how well your student knows each concept.
4. Supplement the main method with sight-reading and other pieces.



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Prep Work

Baby's Lullaby by Rachel Green
Play with Me Level 2

Exercises for RH rhythmic patterns

- Identify measures with the same rhythmic pattern.
- Clap the rhythms counting out loud.
- Play random notes using rhythm in the piece.

Exercises for LH intervals

- Identify the intervals.
- Keeping the top note B flat, play the intervals the teacher calls out.
- “Place, check, play” game

Peacefully

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Peacefully" by Rachel Green, specifically the "Play with Me Level 2" section. The score is written for piano and consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is common time (C). The first system (measures 1-3) has a tempo marking of "Peacefully". The first measure has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 2, 1. The second measure has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 4. The third measure has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 2, 1, 2. The second system (measures 4-6) has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The first measure has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 3, 1, 3. The second measure has a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 3, 1, 3. The third measure has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 3, 1, 3. The third system (measures 7-9) has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The first measure has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 4. The second measure has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 4. The third measure has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes with fingerings 1, 4. The score includes various dynamics (*p*, *mf*, *mp*, *cresc.*) and fingerings for the right hand. The left hand accompaniment consists of simple chords and single notes.



How to Use a Method

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Skills to evaluate

1. Rhythm - Is the student's rhythm even and confident?
2. Note-reading - Can your student start in the middle of the piece? How long did it take them to learn it?
3. Muscle memory - Is this the cause of note errors?
4. Ear training - After playing through the piece, can your student identify their errors?
5. Musicality - Did the student pick an appropriate tempo and create a mood?



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Reasons to Supplement

1. Students may need extra reinforcement for a particular concept.
2. Students should play pieces at different levels.
3. Supplemental pieces allow the teacher to stay closely aligned with their own teaching philosophy.



Play with Me



Play with Me Philosophy

1. Pre-staff reading with only 2nd finger
2. Counting approach - first counting individual note values before counting the number of beats in a measure
3. Intervalic approach to reading
4. Increases up to two micro-levels of difficulty in each piece (these are listed in the Table of Contents)
5. Teacher duets for every piece
6. Extra resources for teachers and students
 - Teaching video series: <https://store.happystringmusic.com/pages/teaching-tips>
 - Theory and Activity Books: note reading, rhythm, ear training and sight-reading exercises
 - Supplemental repertoire - Christmas, Folk Songs, Rounds
 - Videos (in the works!)



	Notes	Rhythm	Finger patterns	Technique
Primer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-staff reading • C5-C3 • Intervals 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th • Key: G Major, F Major 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter note, half note, dotted half note, whole note • 3/4 meter • 4/4 meter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns with 1 and 2 that involve a change in direction - steps or skips. • Patterns 1-2-3-1 and 1-3-1 • 3 note scales • 3 note arpeggios • 4 note scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switching hands • Repeated notes • Placing 2 notes together
Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidentals: sharp, flat • Key: D minor, D Major, A minor, Bb Major, E minor • Notation: 8va, 15ma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rests: quarter, half, whole • Syncopation: rest on downbeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns that use 2 or 3 notes in each direction - steps and/or skips. • 3 different placement patterns in a string of connected notes, fingers 1/2/3 only (eg G-E-F-E-D) • Six-note arpeggios 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accents • Three notes played together • Playing hands together
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interval: 6th • Placing over the barline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/2 meter • Pick up beat • Eighth notes • Dotted quarter notes • Intro to 16th notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four note arpeggios involving both steps and skips (7th chords in various inversions) • 2nd inversion triads • 3 different placement patterns in a string of connected notes - all 4 fingers • 8 note scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand crossing • Harmonics • 2 handed slow trill • Pdlit • Glissandos that start and end on a particular note
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interval: 7th, Octave • Lots of notes, but still in patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triplets • Dotted eighth notes • 16th notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 note arpeggios spanning an octave • Patterns with all 4 fingers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast repeated notes split between hands • Lever changes • Thumb slides • Staccato notes (2-2-2 fingering) • Grace notes





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