

The goal of this method

Written in response to requests from parents and piano teachers, the objective of this method is to encourage musical awareness in children by introducing them to the piano in an enjoyable manner. It puts the piano "within reach" of children aged 4 to 7, with an entertaining program of study well suited to young people. It will give your little pianist pleasure and satisfaction, in other words motivation and enthusiasm: his or her progress will surprise you. The goal of "The Rainbow Piano": like a ray of sunshine after the rain, learning the piano and solfège, far from being dreary and austere, should become entertaining and appealing. The seven colors of the rainbow represent the seven musical notes, making them easily identifiable on the keyboard and staff.

The name of music notes

English musical notes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
French musical notes	la	si	do	ré	mi	fa	sol

The pedagogy

Robert Schumann maintained that popular songs are the source for many of the most beautiful melodies. They were an inspiration for Frederic Chopin, and numerous others. Traditional children's songs express children's imaginary worlds and awaken their interest: what they already know seems easy and inviting.

When your little pianist has finished this method, he or she will know how to play several wellknown tunes and be able to sight-read other pieces on the piano. They will have acquired a basic understanding of solfège, without experiencing a mental block or disappointment.

This method includes music theory (solfège): on each page, new information is enclosed in a box, with the last pages giving a summary of music theory.

Studying the piano from an early age is a wonderful opportunity. Unfortunately, too many children become discouraged during the first year, due to lack of a suitable teaching method, and because of the intimidating appearance of musical notation.

For this reason, a really reliable method adapted for children 4 to 7 years old, was needed:

- a very clear format (large notation, with colors and keyboards at the end of each staff)
- a logical progression
- a coherent and precise teaching method (based on middle DO - middle C, a pianist's first reference point), with keyboards showing the PITCH, and the spaces between the notes being proportional to their DURATION (which aids visual and rhythmic comprehension).

The format was carefully designed to attract children's attention to the multicolored musical notes on the staff. Colors allow each note to be recognized in a fun and logical way, linking the musical scale (sound spectrum) to the color scale (visible spectrum).

Keyboards at the end of staves enhance the method's clarity and effectiveness: complementary to the colors, they help the child transfer notes from the staff to the keyboard.

The right hand always plays in treble (or G) clef and the left hand always in bass (or F) clef, allowing the student to have clear references when reading the notes. During the first year of piano lessons, avoid the unusual situation of having both hands playing in the same clef.

Once a child knows how to play the melody (right hand) of a song, he learns the accompaniment (left hand). It is all right for the youngest (4 or 5 years old) to play just a few notes with the left hand.

Middle DO (or middle C), a pianist's first reference point:

Children often lack reference points on the keyboard. To identify a DO on the staff is not enough: it must also be located on the keyboard (there are several on the keyboard). This is why pianists orient themselves with an essential central axis: middle DO (or C), which is in the middle between both staves and in the middle of the keyboard.

The two clefs (treble clef and bass clef) are linked by middle DO.

Starting with the first lesson, the child puts a red sticker on it.

Fingerings:

It is important to respect the fingerings shown near the notes so the following notes can be played easily. When not written out, the fingering is obvious or as desired.

To summarize:

- only the thumb can pass under the other fingers ("thumb passage")
- avoid using the thumb on a black key (FA , SI , etc.) because there is almost always a better fingering.



The choice of songs:

As a general rule, never force children to play songs they do not like.

The next song can be proposed, or a choice between two songs: the child will have a feeling of freedom that will be motivating.

The lyrics:

To help a child learn a song and stimulate his imagination, try singing it with the lyrics. It is preferable, however, to put the words aside and encourage the child to sing the name of each note being played, to develop a more musical ear. Lyrics are very useful for songs with repeats, because they help non-musician parents (and children who can already read) follow the melody on the staff. Repeats are explained in the "solfège" section at the end. A simple translation of each song, respecting the rhythm as much as possible, is given on page 30.

Advice for parents:

Ideally, your child should practice at least 10 to 20 minutes per day.

Parents' involvement is essential: they must help their child, be interested in his progress, and be enthusiastic and patient so that he goes to the piano spontaneously.

Here are three keys to success:

- Persuade the child that playing the piano is a treat, not a punishment.
- Encourage the child when something is difficult.
- Praise the child regularly for his progress.

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