

Animal Notes Edition

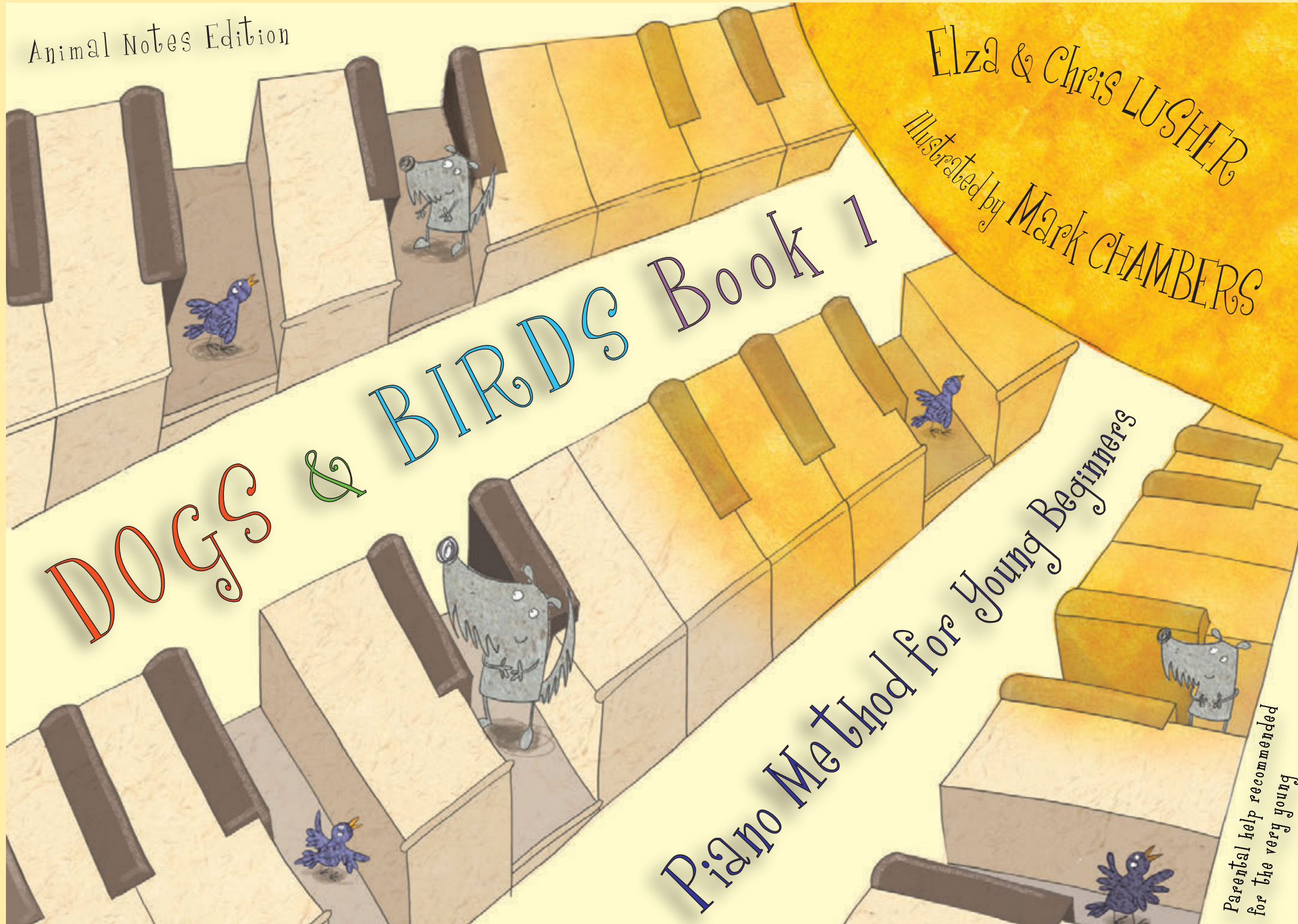
Elza & Chris LUSHER

Illustrated by Mark CHAMBERS

DOGS & BIRDS Book 1

Piano Method for Young Beginners

Parental help recommended
for the very young



Dogs and Birds Book 1 (Animal Notes Edition)

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GOLDEN RULES

Please follow these three rules

Students should:



Always **SING** the melody as they **PLAY**, using the animal names (for example “Dog, Bird, Goose ...”)



COUNT aloud during the **RHYTHM** exercises, clapping, tapping, or playing notes chosen by the teacher



NEVER tap or play **FASTER** than one beat a second

THE KEYBOARD



Playground

A musical score for a piece titled "Playground". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (top) and a bass clef staff (bottom). The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: two eighth notes (dog icons), two eighth notes (bird icons), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), and a quarter note (bird icon). The bass clef staff is empty. To the left of the staves are two hand icons: a pink one for the treble clef and a blue one for the bass clef.



DOG and BIRD have been good friends for a long time. They love to have fun together in the playground.

By the Lake





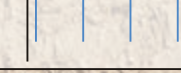



A musical score for a piece titled "By the Lake". It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff (top) and a bass clef staff (bottom). The treble clef staff contains a sequence of notes: two eighth notes (dog icons), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), a quarter note (bird icon), a quarter note (dog icon), and a quarter note (bird icon). The bass clef staff is empty. To the left of the staves are two hand icons: a pink one for the treble clef and a blue one for the bass clef.













Find all the DOGS and BIRDS on your keyboard and play them. Sing the animal names as you play, at the most comfortable pitch – probably the one closest to middle C.

Rhythm Exercises 4













a




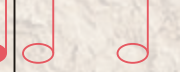
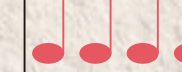



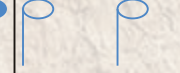

b

c

d

If exercise 4d is too hard then try tapping the right (RED) hand part only, with your teacher tapping the left (BLUE) hand part. Then swap hands with your teacher. Finally tap the rhythm exercise on your own.

The Egg Rock tells DOG and BIRD to head for the Bazaar in Morocco, where they will find a magic carpet.



Take Your Partner

It is a beautiful Sunday afternoon. The animals arrange to meet their new friend GOOSE by the river, and their partners come along too.





Sunday Afternoon

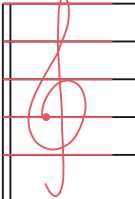
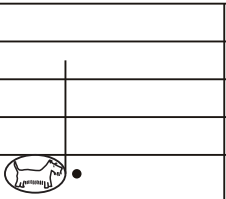
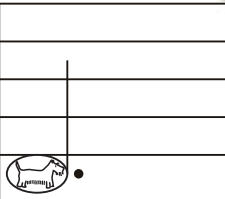
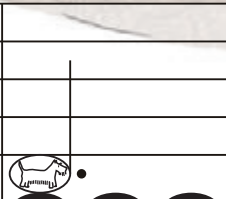
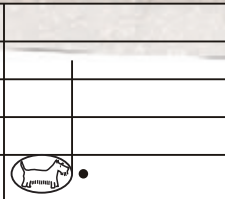
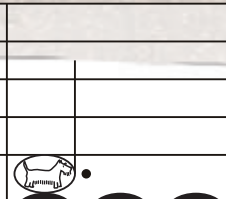
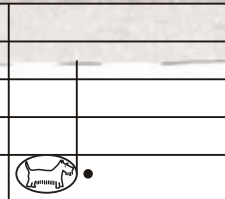
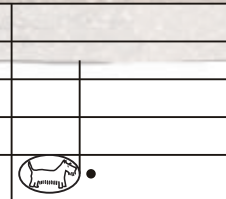
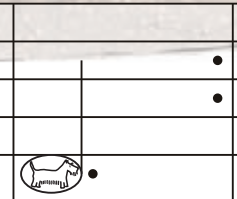
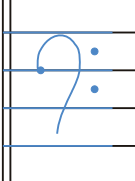
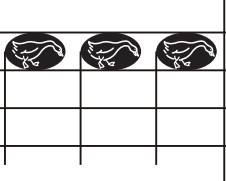
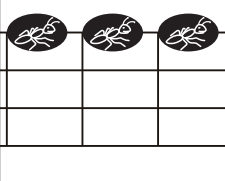
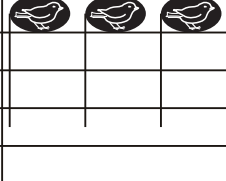
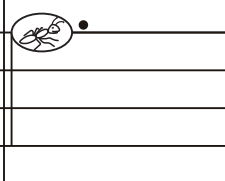

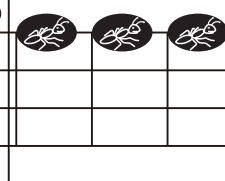
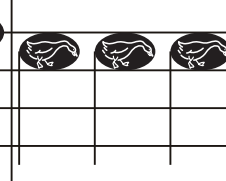
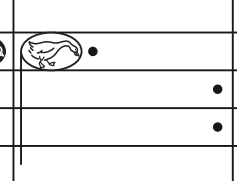


Play an echo game. Your teacher should play a 4 to 8 note melody using DOG, BIRD and GOOSE. First sing it back. Then sing it again, playing it at the same time. 21



Jack and His Men

If you know this piece well, you can try to play the RED hand part only and sing the BLUE hand part at the same time, using the animal names.

Floating By

Once you can play "Floating By" using both hands, try to PLAY the BLUE hand part only and sing the RED hand melody at the same time.



Musical notation for the piece "Floating By". It consists of two staves: a top staff with a red treble clef and a bottom staff with a blue bass clef. The top staff contains a melody of notes with animal icons: a goose, a dog, a cow, a sheep, a cat, and a dog. The bottom staff contains a bass line with a goose icon and a dot, followed by a bar line and a rest. The piece is divided into four measures.

Musical notation for a finger exercise. It consists of two staves: a top staff with a red treble clef and a bottom staff with a blue bass clef. The top staff contains a melody of notes with animal icons: a goose, a goose, a cow, a goose, a dog, a dog, and a dog. The bottom staff contains a bass line with a goose icon and a dot, followed by a bar line and a rest. The exercise is divided into two measures.

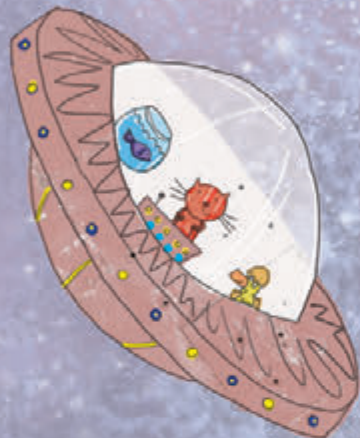
Make up a finger exercise in two parts, starting both hands at the same time. Use CAT, DOG and EGG, playing tenuto in the RED hand whilst holding down GOOSE in the BLUE hand. Play and sing the exercise everywhere on the keyboard.



All Over the Universe

Just as the animals are off exploring the universe, you are now ready to carry on with your exploration of the piano.



DOG and ANT are drawing a piano keyboard for the aliens. Can you draw one too?

Continue to Book 2 to join the animals for more adventures.

The Basic Elements of the Dogs and Birds Approach

A whole range of musical exercises and games should be used, in addition to playing the musical pieces and “tapping” the rhythm exercises, as you work through Dogs and Birds. They add variety to the lessons and practice, and help develop the musical awareness of the child. Most pages of this book include suggestions for performing these additional musical activities, which are outlined below. Please feel free to make up similar games and exercises based on those described here. Further details can be found in the Notes to Book 1 for Parents and Teachers, which also contains a set of lesson plans. It is available from www.dogsandbirds.co.uk.

Videos – Examples of the various activities described below can be seen on the Dogs and Birds Piano Method YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/elzalusher.

The Importance of Daily Practice – At this stage it is much more important to practise for a short time each day, rather than a longer period less frequently. Ask the child to practise for 5 minutes every day (both singing and playing the pieces). The practice should be varied. Each day the child should play and sing two pieces and perform two of the other activities. You will see rapid progress and the child’s concentration span will increase tremendously.

Length of Lessons – A typical lesson time is 30 minutes. Each lesson should be broken up into smaller parts. It should contain around 5 or 6 of the musical activities. This will allow the child to concentrate for a short time on each of the elements. Work at the child’s own pace and do not force anything – the lessons should always be fun.

The Small Animal Tiles and Coloured Staves – Use of the tiles and staves is highly recommended as an integral part of the Dogs and Birds approach. They form a “board game” that can be used in almost all of the musical exercises and games. Children love playing with the 56 different animals, and playing the board game truly enhances the learning process.

Use of the Blank Notes Edition – The main difference between the blank and animal books is that animal symbols are not printed in the notes in the blank notes edition. Both books should be used in the same way, with the child always singing the animal names. The ultimate aim is for children to be able to read without the use of the animal symbols. Some children enjoy the challenge of this and use the blank book from the start. Others start using the blank book after they have gained confidence in playing from the animal book. The two editions can also be used in parallel. You can put both books on the piano and ask the child to play from the blank book, with the animal book there as a “safety net”. Use of the tiles and staves helps enormously with the transition from animal to blank notation.

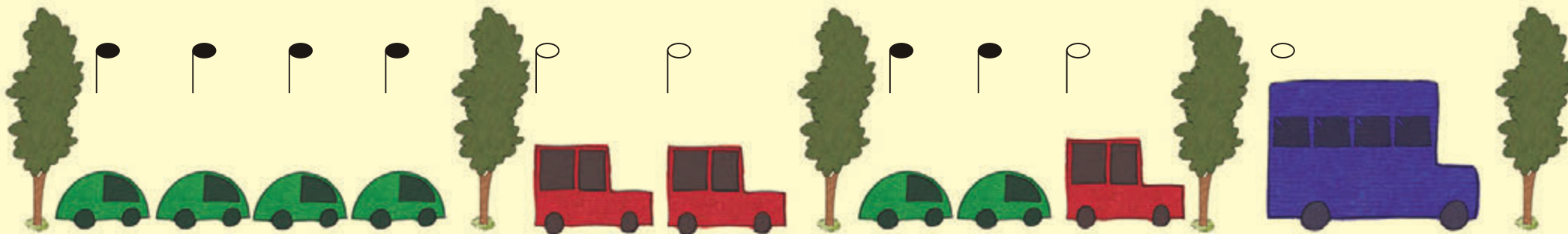
The Use of Toys – Ask the children to involve a favourite toy in their lessons or practice. It can be a finger puppet or cuddly toy. These toys can visit the various animals, play notes on the keyboard, help with tapping, and stimulate the child’s imagination. Please do not underestimate the importance of games and toys in the learning process.

A Note on Singing – Singing is a vitally important aspect of the Dogs and Birds approach. It helps to develop musicality and to train the child’s inner-ear. Singing teaches phrasing musical sentences, and shaping melodies naturally, just as reading aloud improves speech. Singing is the best way to improve the ear, and a better ear will produce better music. It is essential that the child always sings the animal names whilst playing. You should encourage this by singing along as well. Some children find singing difficult initially. In these cases they should say the names as they play. With time and practice they will eventually be able to sing.

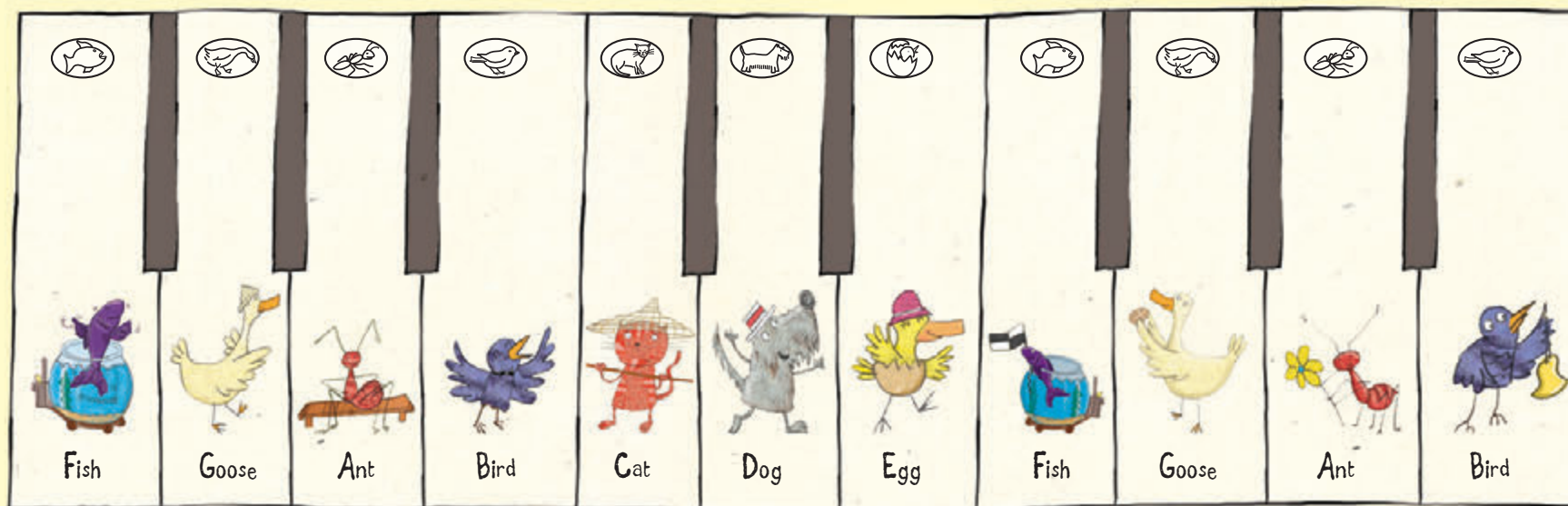
A Note on Fingering and Technique – The most appropriate fingering will depend on the child, since the physical development of very young children is different in each case. For this reason finger numbers are not used in Book 1 – they are introduced at the start of Book 2. Children should play from the shoulder, with each note detached, using the whole arm, hands and fingers as one unit. It is very important for future development of technique that the child learns to play a detached tenuto (separated notes) before trying to play legato (smoothly). Therefore, throughout Book 1 students should always play tenuto. By the end of Book 1 students in general should be able to play using first (thumb), second (index) and third (middle) fingers in both hands, using a correct hand position with curved fingers. Use of the fourth and fifth fingers is not recommended, unless the child is ready. It is advisable to start this book using the right (red) hand thumb for Dog and the left (blue) hand thumb for Bird. However if the child is younger than 3 it might be better to use the index fingers.

Sung Finger Exercises – Every lesson try to make up a bar or two-bar phrase based on the pieces from the lesson. You should ask the child to play it at every octave on the piano or keyboard, whilst singing the animal names. Children should always sing at the most comfortable pitch, which will probably be the one closest to middle C. Very young children should perform these exercises standing at the piano and should walk to the left and right in order to reach the notes. As well as preparing the child for playing the pieces, these little studies will help with ear-training and singing, strengthen the fingers, introduce the geography of the keyboard, and prepare for improvisation and composition.

Sight-Singing – Before you begin to play a piece you should sing the melody together with the child using the animal names. For example, before starting to play “Open Gate” on page 15 you should first play and sing “ANT, BIRD, DOG, EGG” a couple of times. Then sing the piece



Dogs and Birds: Book 1 (Animal Notes Edition)



Also Available:

Dogs and Birds: Book 1 (Blank Notes Edition)

Dogs and Birds: Book 2 (Animal and Blank Notes Editions)

Notes to Book 1 for Parents and Teachers, Including CD

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