

Playing With Colour simplifies and accelerates learning.

The use of colour: by using coloured notation, note reading becomes simple and effortless. Because sight-reading is so much easier practising at home is less taxing, therefore longer practice sessions become possible. The coloured notation encourages children to carefully follow the music and so the rules of notation become absorbed and understood in a very natural way.

The use of numbered staves: in *Playing With Colour* note finding is greatly simplified. Staves are printed with the relevant line number. The child is shown how to find the lines by jumping up or down from Middle C in twos. This method is quick and reliable and so leads to greater confidence. It also has the advantage that a direct relationship is being made between the staff and the keyboard. Identifying notes by their letter names in the traditional way is introduced in Book 3.

Ongoing theory exercises: on most pages, the child is required to answer a few simple questions. These are designed to prompt the teacher to explain any new features of the music and to identify any aspects that have not been fully understood. The questions and answers have been designed to be as brief as possible in order that valuable lesson time is not wasted. But they are also comprehensive enough to identify any weaknesses or gaps in understanding.

Rhythm: in Book 1 children are encouraged to develop a 'feel' for pulse and rhythm by reciting 'wait', 'walk' and 'jog' to represent the basic note values. Counting aloud is introduced in Book 2.

Learning to listen: in book 1 a few titles are left blank and the child is asked to invent a title. The intention is to prompt a few minutes of listening and discussion. Children are also encouraged to memorise pieces. This generally offers a good indication of whether they are really listening to their playing. Memorising also encourages children to identify patterns in the music that may otherwise not be noticed.

Improvisation: improvisation is introduced in book 1 by leaving one or more bars empty and inviting children to use their own ideas under the guidelines of suggested rhythms. In book 2 up to six bars of treble notes are left blank with suggestions for the choice of notes and rhythm. This activity further encourages the development of listening skills.

Sight-reading and the move to conventional notation: this is tackled alongside the theory exercises in a progressive way. Short sight-reading exercises that use ***conventional notation*** (no coloured notes are used) are included in Book 1. Books 2 and 3 both include pieces without coloured notation. By the end of book 3 children will be able to read to grade one standard.

