

# Piano Patters

by Jennifer-Anne MacMillan

Piano Patters is a board game for young Suzuki pianists to play occasionally when practising. The child rolls a dice, moves a counter and plays the piece specified on the board. Chance cards indicate how the next piece should be played (e.g. fast, slow, loud, very soft).

The board is reproduced on the following double page of this journal. I suggest you photocopy it onto pastel coloured card and have it encapsulated in plastic. Photocopy the chance cards at the bottom of the page onto stiff card (ideally the same colour as the board) and cut them up.

Find a counter with a musical theme such as a miniature treble or bass clef, a pair of quavers or musical instrument - our local music shop had coloured plastic badges from which we removed the pins. Now all you need is a dice, and you are ready to start.

The game is intended for occasional use, for instance:

- as an evening practice after an excellent morning practice;
- as a reward for the practice following a particularly good practice, or after a concert;
- for the odd occasion when the parent really cannot spare the time to supervise the practice;
- for one day a week;
- for holiday practice, when the stimulus of regular lessons is no longer present;
- by teachers during group lessons.

The performance of pieces during the game is beneficial for keeping up past repertoire, and children will enjoy playing pieces they have had some part in choosing. Playing the game makes them think about the music, and will help with theory, for

instance, "choose a piece in triple time" or "play a piece starting on G". The children also have a chance to "improvise" - experiment for themselves - "mess around" - at the top or bottom of the piano.

This game can first be used when children have learnt the majority of the pieces in book one in the right hand, until they know most of the pieces in book two. If you have encapsulated your board, you can buy coloured sticky labels so the game can be altered according to need - initially omit specific references to pieces as yet unlearned (e.g. "Pieces starting on D" - Musette), latterly add in specific references to early book two pieces (some of which can be included in, for example, " Piece starting on C").

The game takes about 12 minutes, but may be played twice - see the repeat marks at the end of the game. Young children will need an older person to read the instructions and talk them through the game, but older children will manage it on their own.

I have also devised games for book two and three, which my three young children thoroughly enjoy playing. The games make practice fun, and the children often prefer responding to the requirements of the board rather than to their parent's request for certain pieces. If the book one game is a success with your child, please let the BSI know and the next game could be published in a future issue of "Ability Development". Any suggestions for improvements would also be welcomed. Of course, the game could readily be adapted for use with the violin repertoire. I would be happy to liaise with any violin teacher who would like to do so.

Go forward two	Twice 2x	Fast (allegro)	Slow (adagio)	Very Soft (pp)
Loud (f)	Go back two	Go back one	Go forward one	Go forward three

# PIANO PATTERS GAME

Piece in a minor key	Slide down bass clef	Chance	Aunt Rhody	Piece starting on C	Chance	Allegretto 1	Improvise at top of piano	Piece starting with 4 on G	<i>Fine</i> : end Well done!
Newest hands together piece	Mary	Chance	Piece starting on D	French Children's Song	Chance	Twinkle	Clair de lune	Chance	Cuckoo
Piece starting on B	Unison piece	Newest RH piece	Chance	Piccadilly Circus	Chance	Allegretto 2	Piece starting on G	Little Playmates	Climb up treble clef
Improvise at bottom of piano	Climb up stave				Chance Cards Pile		Discarded Chance Cards		Slide down stave
					Chance	Piece starting with 2 on C	Piece in a major key	Long, Long Ago	
START: feet down, sit up	Honeybee	Chance	Strawberry Raspberry	Chance	Piece starting with 3 on C	Chance	Allegro	Chance	Lightly Row