

Piano Arrangement Guide "Cheat Sheet"

(This is a brief description of some of the subjects and styles we learn over the course of 52 lessons. The terms won't mean much to you now, but will become clear as you progress through the course)

Steps To Take When Arranging a Song	Possible Techniques To Use
Play Song as Written	Pay attention to harmony, melody Understand how song is supposed to sound
Analysis: Chord Structure	Identify, practice every chord progression Note key signature and accidentals Note key changes Identify relative minor/major, if desired
Analysis: Form	Identify individual and repeating parts Identify verse, chorus if any Identify dynamic possibilities Identify parallelisms or other qualities Give each part a letter name
Analysis: Context	Identify song style Determine appropriate style (ragtime, western, boogie, blues, classical, etc.) Determine appropriate techniques
Bass Clef	Western, boogie, alternating, descending, octaves, chording, Alberti bass, swing, arpeggios, block, open voicing, upward inversions, waltz, polka, march, walk-ups, walk-downs, chord substitutions, augmenting/diminishing a chord, syncopation. See also: counter-melodies, switching melody to left hand
Treble Clef	Harmonic intervals, octaves, octave thirds, parallel sixths, lightning runs, straddle-downs, 2-1 break-ups, 3-1 break-ups, twangs, grace notes, parallelisms, pentatonic scale fills, turnarounds, walk-ups, walk-downs, triplets, triplet break-ups, triplet walk-downs, turns, chromatic turns, glissandos, tremolos, chord substitutions, augmenting/diminishing a chord, arpeggios, syncopation, eighth-note repetitive chording, echoes, cascades, passing tones, color tones, suspensions
Dynamics/Style/Rhythm	Staccato phrasing, legato phrasing, changing register, changing key signature, adding syncopation, adding accents, altering loud/soft parts

Crash Course Syllabus

(Except words can't really describe everything that's happening on the screen as Duane explains and demonstrates each technique...but this will give you a rough idea of the exciting stuff that lies ahead)



Week One – **You're On Your Way To Playing Piano Like You've Always Dreamed!**

Week one's journey into the world of piano starts at the very beginning: the piano keyboard. After a brief review of the texts and their methods, you'll be introduced to the keys themselves, learning quickly to find middle C and to identify a number of notes in the C major scale. Duane explains right-hand fingering techniques, register and basic musical notation before walking you step by step through the melodies of your first two songs. But melodies are only half the battle; the lesson then moves on to the chords and left-hand accompaniment that a full, complete sound requires. Using the pointer system -- a method by which chords and their fingerings are learned -- Duane shows you several in a set of C major scale family chords, giving you the ability to play well-known tunes with both hands. (Duane can't use copyrighted songs in the course -- that would raise the price of the course greatly -- but the concepts he teaches on old familiar songs can be applied to any songs -- and he shows you exactly how to do that -- step by step -- as the course progresses!)

After being taught the fingerings and structure of your newly learned chords, you'll move on to the fundamentals of music theory and reading. New terms such as staff, clef, measure and bar line are explained fully, as are their sister concepts rhythm, melody, harmony, time signature and note value. Duane shows you the essentials of music reading and guides you through several songs geared toward exercising your knowledge, stopping along the way to explain any new concept or idea. It's a slow, careful method of learning the basics, one punctuated by a short quiz to test what you've learned thus far.

The last several minutes of this first lesson move in for a close-up, giving you a bird's eye view of Duane's hands as he again demonstrates the chords, fingerings and exercises included in this lesson. It's a chance to see, in detail, what your hands really should be doing and a valuable tool for understanding and reviewing the techniques introduced in your first week.

Week Two Of The Exciting 'Crash Course' in Piano Playing for Adults

Week two starts with a basic review of the techniques learned in week one; you'll briefly cover the chords, fingerings and exercises practiced during the first week to ensure your ability to easily move forward to week two's new concepts. After warming up and solidifying your week one lesson, you'll be introduced to three new notes, widening your note knowledge to an entire eight-note octave. Duane demonstrates the new fingerings

needed to accommodate this extended range and shows you the technique used to play an entire C scale with only one hand. He'll then slowly guide you through a new song that covers every note you've learned in the C scale and exercises your ability to play them with the proper fingerings; the song also allows you the opportunity to practice your left-hand chord accompaniment.

The lesson then moves on to two new chords that supplement the three introduced last week. Again using the pointer system, you'll learn the proper fingerings for each chord and the importance of these chords to the C major scale; Duane also adds a new octave to your range and explains the value of pick-up notes. You'll begin work on two more songs in the main text to exercise your fingering technique and chord recognition, learning to practice the left and right hand parts individually before putting the two together. Duane then takes you to the supplementary book to try your hands at two pieces that fully test your ability to apply the concepts taught so far.

Week Three

After a quick review of week two's lesson, Duane begins week three by further explaining the key of C and several of its concepts: family chords, principle chords and a bit of scale structure. And while some of these concepts are simply sneak peeks at what's to come in your year-long piano training, the knowledge is valuable to a greater understanding of the songs you've played and will be playing. You'll begin hands-on practice with a new piece exercising your note-reading ability and chord recognition, one that even serves to solidify your knowledge of the C scale's inner-workings.

Practice will then continue with a discussion of the treble and bass clef -- specifically the bass, which is a brand new concept. In addition to reviewing left-hand fingerings, you'll learn to locate and read notes in both clefs using a series of tried and true anagrams. You'll then practice one song two ways: first by reading music and pointer chords only in the treble clef, then by taking those previously learned pointer chords to the bass clef staff (which is different than the treble clef staff as far as note reading is concerned). Duane slowly walks you through both versions of this song, pointing out the important similarities and divulging common tips for successfully understanding and playing in both clefs. You'll also learn the difference between reading music as it's written and in lead-sheet format, the way in which you've been playing accompaniment so far. Instead of relying on chord symbols to guide your accompaniment, you'll begin to read specific notation and understand the benefits of both techniques.

For further technique exercise, you'll be assigned a few practice songs from the supplementary book. These songs function as an essential review; while the main text's songs often focus mostly on the technique most recently learned, the supplementary songs include everything covered so far, allowing you to constantly practice and apply each week's concepts.

Week Three – Focus: Scales & Family Chords

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Review by Mollie Wells

Week Four – Focus on Inversions & New Rhythms

Week four's lesson dives immediately into chord inversion, a technique used by every pianist to shorten the distance between two similar chords. Duane explains the principles of chord inversion and common tones by examining pointer chords and showing how they can be rearranged to accommodate a more fluid playing style, quickly putting the technique into practice with a series of new songs. He then shows you several ways to add variety to an otherwise simple bass line. Using the pointer system and chord inversions as a guide, he explains various types of bass accompaniments (including the popular swing bass) and how they can be applied to create a more dynamic sound.

This week's lesson also boasts a brief introduction to new rhythms and note types -- eighth notes and dotted quarter notes -- and you'll learn the value and notation of these rhythms by way of a popular German folk song. Additionally, week four's lesson contains new versions of songs you've already played. They are reworked to include a more complicated pointer bass; it is also markedly longer than the version found in week two. This is the first week that you'll truly begin to see the song levels advance; both the main text and supplementary book now begin to contain more demanding and technique-heavy pieces.

Week Five

Focus: Bass Clef D7 and Broken Chords

Week five takes you back a few lessons to the D7 chord; this time, however, it's in the bass clef. After acquainting yourself with the chord's fingering and placement on the staff, you'll apply the technique to "Faith of Our Fathers," a hymn that focuses on D7, G7, C and F. Duane guides you slowly through the new song, ensuring your ability to play both parts before even attempting to combine them, and counts out each measure to keep your

rhythm exact. In addition to helping you master the D7 chord, "Faith of Our Fathers" provides essential practice for inversions, sight reading and chord recognition.

Your sense of chord recognition is exercised even further in the next section with a quiz to test your note and chord reading ability: you'll be given a song containing no chord names and asked to fill in the blanks. After helping you to successfully identify the chords, Duane takes you through the song piece by piece and points out certain clues to help you recognize any chord you come across. You'll then play through the piece and even learn a bit about the practice of resolving chords.

The lesson then moves forward to a brand new concept: broken chords, or arpeggios, in 3/4 time. Duane defines and demonstrates broken chords, teaching you their fingering and how to recognize them in a piece of music. He also explains a bit about the damper pedal and its uses and shows you how the technique can add a flair to broken chords. You'll then move into the supplementary book to apply your newfound knowledge to songs like "Home on the Range"

As usual, the lesson comes to a close with a detailed close-up of this week's focus, including the D7 chord, broken chord and pedaling techniques.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week Six

Focus: Rhythm, New Chord Positions and Legato Pedaling

Week six delves straight into rhythm, taking you further into a series of concepts only touched on in previous lessons. You'll be introduced to eighth notes -- what they look like, their note value, how they're played -- and shown how they work within a piece of music. Duane explains upbeat and downbeat before going on to discuss quarter notes and how to count measures while you're playing. You'll also be introduced to dotted notes, such as dotted quarters and dotted eighths, and taught how to count them in a similar manner to that of eighth notes. The following songs and exercises, including "Auld Lang Syne" and last week's "Home on the Range," provide you with solid counting and rhythm practice.

The next section focuses on new chord positions for the bass clef. Duane again explains the principles of inversions and shows you the first inversion of the C chord, as well as alternate positions for G7, F and D7. You'll learn the benefits of inversions to complicated, multi-chord songs, and given a series of supplementary pieces to acclimate your hands to the new (and, in some cases, easier) fingerings.

Duane then picks up last week's discussion of pedaling, providing a crash course in all the pedals and how they can be used to achieve a variety of effects before moving on to the legato pedaling technique. After a brief refresher in the damper pedal's workings, you'll learn the finer points of this technique and put the skill to practice in an exercise designed to get you accustomed to legato pedaling and its written notation.

The lesson ends with a close-up showing in detail the new rhythms, chord positions and pedaling techniques.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week Seven

Focus: Keyboard Pointers

Week seven begins with an advanced classical piece, the likes of which you haven't seen thus far into the lessons. Duane takes you through both the left and right hand parts measure by measure and shows you how to check your fingering, seating and hand position before beginning your weekly practices. After successfully getting through the entire song, you'll move on to the first in a continual series of keyboard drills, called keyboard pointers, used to exercise your technique while warming up and training your fingers. The three exercises contained in this first series of keyboard pointers focus on monophony and polyphony, the act of including either one (monophony) or more than one (polyphony) melody in a piece of music. This exercise is designed to teach your hands to work independently of each other, much like the old game of patting your head and rubbing your stomach.

The lesson then moves on to further practice with chords and a new inversion of the D7 chord with a new song designed to renew and work out previously learned techniques. Duane also introduces you to swing bass, a style of bass accompaniment often used when arranging a pre-written song before taking you through another series of keyboard pointers, this time focusing on fingering, rhythm and note reading. The pointers continue your practice with polyphony while introducing eighth notes into the mix as a way to heighten your finger dexterity.

After working with swing bass, broken chords and the process of introducing new rhythms into the bass accompaniment in the supplementary, you'll end the lesson with a longer close-up that runs through all the songs and exercises, including the new, non-written bass rhythms.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week Eight

Focus: Broken Chords in 4/4 Time

After a quick refresher in 3/4 broken chords, you'll start week eight by applying the technique to a new time signature in a popular classical piece. It's a song that covers several skills practiced so far; in addition to honing 4/4 arpeggios, you'll brush up on the traditional block chord, inversion fingerings and even a bit of sight reading. Duane also introduces you to the 2/1 break-up and Alberti bass, two arrangement possibilities; these techniques will be put to practice in the same song used to introduce the 4/4 broken chords.

Encompassing the next section is a new series of keyboard pointers containing more advanced eighth note patterns with varying intervals; the drills maintain your right and left hand independence while preparing your fingers for the advanced techniques yet to come. Also included in this section is a discussion centering on the fine art of mistakes; Duane explains how to correct them, when they shouldn't be troubling and the massive difference between human error and conceptual error.

Week eight comes to a close in the supplementary book, where you'll practice techniques new and old with the ever-popular "Yankee Doodle." Duane takes you through the song as written, making sure you're able to play both the melody and chords before moving forward, and then demonstrates a few arrangement possibilities; the techniques are used to change the bass accompaniment's chording and you'll be asked to become acquainted with the new arrangement before returning for next week's lesson.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week Nine

Focus: Review and Completion of Book One

Week nine's review starts with a song to practice the various bass clef accompaniments shown to you last week. This is where the keyboard pointers really come in handy; you'll move through a variety of broken chord rhythms and attempt a bass clef more advanced than you've previously seen. As usual, Duane walks you through both the right and left hand separately before combining the two, ensuring that you truly get a feel for the piece.

A quiz to test your chord and note recognition ability is next on this week's list; you'll identify chords and fill them in on the staff, locate notes in the bass clef and identify chords in the broken pattern. As this quiz marks the end of Book One, Duane takes you straight to the supplementary book, where you'll learn several new songs to brush up on all the techniques learned so far. A review of damper pedal techniques is then followed by a discussion of arrangement's finer points. Duane dives further into the 2/1 break-up, swing bass and melody octaves before showing you a few fills to add some flavor to any piece you play. You'll practice these techniques in songs such as "I Wish I Was Single Again."

Duane ends week nine with a brief discussion of the benefits of both adhering to the written score and adding the learned arrangement techniques. He also applies these principles to a new topic, intervals and their relation to inversions, finishing up the lesson with a quick introduction to the ways in which understanding intervals can advance your playing and reading ability.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 10

Focus: Completion of Supplementary Book One

This week's lesson is shorter than most, focused solely on getting through the first supplementary book and practicing all the skills learned in the first nine weeks. Each song reviews chords, fingering, right/left hand independence and various sorts of accompaniment to ensure that you've mastered the skills enough to move on to the course's next level.

Duane starts with a few songs to brush up on your previous skills before moving into some arrangement techniques. He explains how to alternate notes, or color tones, when varying the bass accompaniment and the mathematical properties of keys that make them all similar. You'll first go through songs such as "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain," and "When the Saints Go Marchin' In" as written, gaining comfort with both the right and left hand and understanding the chords and rhythms associated with each song. You'll then

begin to arrange each song, adding new bass accompaniments and the few fills learned in previous lessons to add your own sense of creativity, your own mark to the pieces. Duane will show you accompaniments appropriate for the context of each song and even introduce a new technique or two, including the melody fill technique of octave echoing.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 11

Focus: Sharps, Flats, Naturals and Minor Chords

Week 11 is kicked off in a similar manner to week one: with the piano keyboard. This time, however, you'll be learning about the black keys, or half-steps, that represent a scale's sharps and flats. Duane explains sharps, flats and naturals, detailing their purpose, how to identify them and their notation on a piece of music. He also explains how a major scale is formed and how to recognize and name a scale based on just a few characteristics. You'll then be given an exercise to practice the sharps, flats and naturals just learned.

The lesson then introduces three new pointer chords: D, A and F, all chords that place your thumb on a black key. You'll be shown the fingering and note placement of these chords before trying your hand at a song that includes seven individual chords; this piece is designed to provide practice of the old chords while transitioning to the new chords in a careful, fluid motion.

Next comes an introduction to minor chords by way of another set of pointers: Dm and Am. After learning their fingering and note placement, you'll be introduced to the rules of minor pointer chords and taught a template for their construction. Duane also explains the art of playing a piece with expression; he introduces the several notation terms that denote the intended dynamic and demonstrates how to achieve the sounds indicated by each notation.

After learning the bass clef and inverted versions of Am, Dm and E, the lesson ends with a close-up focusing on the hand positions of the new pointer chords and major chord construction.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 12

Focus: Arrangement and Seventh Pointer Chords

Week 12 represents a first for this course; the entire lesson is taught in close-up, enabling you to see the absolute detail in every song. You'll start practice with a song to review the minor pointer chords learned last week then move into an explanation of crescendo and decrescendo. It's here that Duane begins his discussion of arrangement techniques; he starts off with Alberti bass and swing bass, two techniques already taught, then moves into open voice arpeggio, a new way to break up chords. He demonstrates how to voice the chords using this technique and the proper fingerings needed to accomplish it.

The lesson continues with the start of the second supplementary book. You'll practice minor chords and open voice arpeggio with "We Three Kings" before moving on to a sneak peek of other techniques used to add spice and variety to a song. Duane takes you

through these techniques, including swing bass and open voice arpeggio, in "Come Ye Thankful People, Come," a song designed also to exercise minor chords, sharps and flats.

An introduction to three seventh pointer chords -- C7, E7 and A7 -- brings week twelve to a close. As always, you'll learn their rules and the methods for identifying and playing them before moving into a few exercises to practice their fingering.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 13

Focus: Tempo Markings and More Arrangement

Your study of arrangement continues in week 13, beginning with a warm-up to practice minor chords and their formation. Before starting a formal arrangement lesson, Duane explains the benefits and importance of counting out loud or tapping your foot while playing; it's an essential rhythmic device used by nearly every musician. He then details and demonstrates upward inverted chording, a new arrangement technique used to add variety to the bass accompaniment. He also steps backward a bit to give a proper introduction to arrangement fillers, demonstrating (but not necessarily teaching, not yet) a few possibilities for adding that sort of non-notated flair to the melody.

After practicing a bit of arrangement, you'll take last week's 7th chords into the bass clef, learning their fingering, inversions and placement on the staff. Duane then introduces you to tempo markings. He tells you what each tempo denotes (as well as the meaning behind all those Italian phrases) and shows you how to achieve a variety of different tempos. You'll put the tempo markings into practice with a new song exercise that includes the 7th bass inversions you just learned. Duane ends the lesson by helping you to arrange this song a bit; you'll play with octaves and various other fillers, in addition to learning walk-ups and walk-downs.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 14

Focus: New Arrangement Techniques and Intervals

"Volga Boatman" kicks off week 14 in a famously dark way; this song is quite possibly the most advanced one attempted so far and requires a great deal of detailed practice. Duane takes you through the piece step by step, pointing out its intricacies -- including its introduction of the C7 chord -- and guiding you the middle section's key change. He then explains relative minor scales (a concept at work in this song), and shows you how to find and recognize them.

After successfully playing the song as written, Duane takes you through the process of arranging the piece, explaining along the way the benefits of knowing how to both read music and play by ear. He runs through several off-the-cuff arrangements of the piece, stopping between each to explain what he did and the techniques he used. In the process, of course, you'll learn a variety of new arrangement techniques, including both new methods of bass chording and melody fillers.

The lesson then moves to a discussion of intervals and note reading. These topics have been covered before, but this time you'll dig into a deeper understanding of how intervals work and how they can help you read music and even become a better piano player. Duane also explains intervals in terms of arrangement; he shows you how intervals can aid in the improvisation of harmonies.

You'll end this week with a with an introduction to the waltz rhythm pattern and a supplementary book song to practice all of the techniques learned this lesson.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 15

Focus: Chord Recognition

Your week 15 lesson begins with a simple song intended to aid you in the practice of minor 7th chords, tempo reading and note recognition. As always, Duane takes you through the song note for note -- both hands alone and hands together -- before moving on to the variety of ways in which the song could be arranged. You'll apply a multitude of techniques to this song, including the recently learned open voice arpeggio and other types of bass accompaniment chording.

The lesson then moves on to a chord recognition quiz. You'll be asked to fill in the chord names on a song with no markings, testing your ability to identify chords based on their note placement. It's a type of test that frequently pops up and one worth spending some time with; the ability to recognize chords without reading the chord names drastically improves your ability to sight read and opens up a multitude of doors in your playing ability. As a supplement to this quiz, Duane will teach you to predict the chords most likely to appear in a given song, a skill also used to improve your reading ability.

This discussion of family chords guides the lesson through a further explanation of arranging, specifically how understanding intervals and their functions can make the act of arranging all the more easy. Duane takes you through some material in the supplementary book, focusing on both reading and arranging, before ending the lesson with another chord recognition quiz.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 16

Focus: C Major Scale and Keyboard Pointers

This week's lesson begins by looking back to the chord recognition quiz taken as last week's closing activity; Duane goes over each answer in detail, pausing to clear up any hazy concepts and further explain some chord recognition shortcuts. After comfortably understanding the quiz answers, you'll start working on the C major scale, the scale in which you've been playing all along but never completely learned about. You'll learn about the construction of major scales, including a look at the tetrachords that they consist of, and be shown how to play a C major scale with both hands. Duane then assigns a new set of keyboard pointers to practice the C major scale and its fingering.

You'll then move on to week 16's first song, which introduces a melody into the left hand. Duane takes you through both the right and left hand melodies slowly and shows you how to read and play a melody where the bass accompaniment would normally be played, stopping several times to explain the techniques required to execute this properly. Further practice with this concept and others is found in a few supplementary songs, including a different version of the previously played "Down in the Valley" that features a new waltz pattern. As you work through these songs, Duane discusses the benefits of practicing with the hands alone technique and even begins a short introduction to minor scales and their construction.

The lesson continues through another set of keyboard pointers -- this time exercising legato and staccato playing -- before ending with a close-up that focuses on the C major scale and a review of all the songs and pointers covered in this lesson.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 17

Focus: Arranging

Week 17 is a lesson unlike any other (at least previously); instead of going through several songs and concepts, Duane focuses this lesson on one song to show you the multitudes of ways in which one piece can be arranged. After getting comfortable with the song as written, you'll begin work on the left hand accompaniment, trying several styles to see which fits best; first, a review of the swing bass, then some upward inversions. Duane also demonstrates some non-chording possibilities for the accompaniment, including walk-ups and walk-downs.

The arrangement possibilities then shift to the right hand, where you'll try a number of different melody fills. You'll start with a 2-1 walk-down before moving on to two new concepts: lightning runs and breaking up a melody chord into triplets. While exploring the possibilities found in octave fillers and parallelisms, Duane shows you how the pentatonic scale can be used to create a perfect-sounding fill almost every type; he also demonstrates walking the song down to a different key, grace notes and syncopated chording.

And where else would the lesson end but with a discussion of arrangement endings? Duane ends the lesson by quite literally ending the song; he demonstrates a variety of different arrangement endings, explaining the appropriateness and technique behind each option.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 18

Focus: New Arrangement Techniques

Week 18 continues last week's arrangement studies with a detailed look at several new techniques. You'll begin by trying your hand at a new song; as always, Duane takes you through the piece step by step, paying special attention to any tricky areas or unfamiliar concepts. It's only after getting comfortable with the song as written that you'll start toying with some already learned arrangement techniques, such as swing or Alberti bass. Duane then explains the principles behind melody fills and introduces two new ones: triplets and turns. He also teaches you about offset chords and color tones -- non-chord tones used to

add an interesting element to a tried-and-true chord -- and the contemporary sound that can be achieved with stacks of fourths.

Duane continues to introduce new techniques as you move slowly through the song's arrangement process, focusing strongly on the playful, whimsical nature of the piece. He discusses walk-ups as interesting transitions, grace notes and parallel octaves before moving into a crash course in the various triplet fills available to an arranger, including tripletizing the octave, triplet break-ups and triplet walk-ups.

The lesson comes to a close by moving to the supplementary book for quick work on a new song. You'll review all the techniques learned thus far in the course, focusing again on the whimsical style used in the last song, and even learn a bit about dip-downs and other more advanced arrangement techniques. Duane ends this week with some key advice on using creativity in your own arrangement endeavors.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 19

Focus: Arranging in Different Styles

Week 19 begins with the popular "Good Night Ladies" to review playing dotted quarter and eighth notes in the right hand while the left hand remains steady. It's the actual song version of the polyphonic keyboard pointers exercised several lessons ago; you'll focus heavily on working both hands independent of each other and learn a bit about how varied rhythms piece together to create a coherent whole. You'll practice the song as written, then with Alberti bass, then with several techniques covered last lesson. Duane explains how certain techniques lend themselves to very specific styles and how to evaluate a song's context before deciding which style to apply. After showing you tremelo chords and alternate bass, he puts the style discussion into practice by playing the song in both a western and ragtime styles, explaining along the way the fills used to achieve both sounds.

The lesson then moves on to a popular wedding song that exercises your hand independence as well as introduces two new chords: Fmin and Emaj. This song, too, is used as an example of style discretion; Duane explains how certain arrangement styles wouldn't work with this piece and proceeds to a series of romantic, flowing techniques that complement it as written. You'll begin work on one more song in this lesson before being introduced to augmented chords, a new sort of notation and the technique of splitting chords for an alternative sound.

This week ends with a new series of keyboard pointers designed to practice your hand independence by playing staccato notes in the right hand and legato in the left. You'll also learn about accent signs and how to interpret them in a notated piece of music.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 20

Focus: Completing Main Book Two

Week 20 starts with a song featuring a melody in the left hand and chords in the right; you'll quickly become acquainted with treble clef chording, its fingering and notation. The song also introduces a new notation sign, 8va, used to indicate that a note should be played an octave higher or lower than shown. After playing this song as written, Duane takes you through a brief arrangement focusing on triplets and staccato notes. You'll then move on to "My Bonnie," which introduces a new 3/4 rhythm pattern and double notes in the melody. Again, you'll work on a bit of arranging here, such as placing the melody an octave lower than written and including a few turns, but the main focus of the arrangement is really to show the number of styles in which this one piece can be played.

You'll then be introduced to a different form of the broken A7 chord by way of another new song, one that includes key practice with octaves and their notation. Arrangement again becomes a focal point here as you learn to play parts of the bass accompaniment in octaves and brush up on the chording patterns and fill techniques learned in the previous arrangement lessons.

The lessons ends with the completion of book two and a new set of keyboard pointers. These exercises include patterns used to work out both the left and right hand, focusing on a the different fingers in different octaves. It's a fairly simple exercise, far less complex than some previously seen, but requires a great deal of dexterity to run smoothly up and down the notated scales.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 21

Focus: The Process of Arrangement

Last week's completion of main book two leaves you with a number of songs to cover in the supplementary book, and what better way to do that than with a more detailed look at the decision-making steps employed while arranging? You'll take each song piece by piece, carefully going through the construction of an original arrangement. Duane guides you through the song as written before reviewing bass broken chord construction and some key points about voice. He then begins a semi-tutorial into the steps of arranging, starting with the right hand. He breaks the melody first into octaves (sometimes adding a harmony note under the octave note), then constructs harmonies for the melody arrangement by working with both new intervals and the written chords. You'll get a solid review of the techniques you've learned so far as well as crucial insights into the newer ones; tremolos, for example, are given some special attention.

Duane then moves into the left hand possibilities, detailing the myriad of ways in which a bass can be altered to create interesting effects. You'll learn about the difference between open and closed voicing, plus receive a brief review of the purpose and technique behind inversions. Duane guides you through the bass arrangement with broken chords and upward inversions, stopping to give some advice about how to achieve full-sounding chording.

The lesson ends with a brief review of the virtual to-do list created this week, as well as a few side-note tips to consider when beginning an arrangement.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 22

Focus: More Arrangement Possibilities

The supplementary book remains the focal point as you move into week 22, another week filled with arrangement practice and techniques. You'll begin with a popular classical piece to warm up your fingers and explore style variety. Duane explains in greater detail the decision-making process required to put a piece in context and choose an appropriate arrangement style; for this piece, he selects a romantic, ballad-like sound and takes you through the techniques used to achieve it. You'll cover arpeggios and appropriate intervals and learn how to create a right hand melody out of both octaves and chords. Duane also explains the series of trials and errors inherent in arranging and how to avoid becoming frustrated by such a process.

After demonstrating a variety of different arrangement possibilities for the song (ensuring that you hear the difference even a note can make), Duane introduces the technique of eighth note repetitive chording and explains how it can be used to make a melody truly stand out. You'll work a bit with dynamics and tempo before moving on to a Scottish folk song notable for its sheer number of notes; you'll, of course, go through this song as written before even considering the arrangement. Duane uses this stylized piece to demonstrate the ways in which a style indication, such as country of origin, can be used to create a familiar sound for the piece. In this piece, for instance, he uses fifth intervals to emulate a bagpipe-like sound reminiscent of the song's homeland. The lesson ends with a review of some techniques learned last week and the quick addition of grace notes and syncopation to the piece you're currently working with.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 23

Focus: Arrangement Review

Still focusing on the supplementary book, your week 23 lesson begins with the American folk song "Blue Tail Fly." You'll play it as written, of course, before going through several arrangement techniques learned in the last several lessons. And not only are you practicing arrangement techniques, you're also covering finger dexterity; working with this song helps you to grow more and more comfortable with the piano keyboard, preparing you for the more advanced techniques yet to come in the course. You'll learn how arranging songs by way of part (i.e., verse and chorus) can allow you to create interesting changes and finish your arrangement of this song by trying out a few chord substitutions.

The lesson's next section focuses on a Welsh folk song with a written parallelism and a focus on dotted eighth notes. Duane talks at a bit more length about phrasing and form, teaching you how to identify parts and use them to your advantage when arranging. You'll review a few melody fill techniques in this song's arrangement and learn how to play up stand-out items like the parallelism.

This week ends with one last song to practice all of your arrangement techniques; it also exercises your finger dexterity and reading ability. Duane again shows you how to maximize arrangement possibilities by focusing on form and spends some time explaining color tones and how substituting minor chords for major ones (and vice versa) can add a uniqueness to your arrangements.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 24

Focus: More Arrangement Review

Week 24 marks another lesson in arrangement, helping you to hone a few essential arrangement skills while dramatically improving your reading and playing abilities. You'll begin in the supplementary book with a new form, the polka, that focuses heavily on staccato notes in the melody and legato in the bass; this polka represents another crucial lesson in left and right hand independence. After playing the song as written, both hands alone and hands together, Duane discusses a few arrangement possibilities but also explains why arranging certain songs, such as this one, can be difficult. Still, he covers the few possibilities available and allows you to brush up on a few techniques not used for a few lessons.

The lesson then moves on to a classical piece that houses lots of notes and lots of techniques; it's definitely a more advanced piece than you've worked with and will inevitably seem a bit scary at first. Because of that factor, Duane slowly guides you through the song as written, showing you how to break a complicated piece into parts to make its reading and playing easier to digest. After gaining some comfort with the written piece, you'll look at the possible arrangements, again focusing on why such a technique-heavy, stylized piece is often difficult to arrange.

The last song in this lesson, "My Darling Clementine," isn't nearly as difficult to arrange as the previous two, and after working with it as written, you'll explore the myriad of available arrangement opportunities. As Duane explains, the song is a playful one and therefore very conducive to arrangement, especially in a few specific styles. You'll end this week's lesson by adding upward inversions, grace notes and syncopation to the well-known piece.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 25

Focus: New Arrangement Techniques

Chipping away at the second supplementary book, week 25's lesson is another in the art of arrangement. You'll begin with a brief introduction to the jazz waltz by way of "Man on the Flying Trapeze," focusing on all the arrangement techniques learned so far and even learning a few new ones. Duane introduces the syncopated bass and demonstrates how to play it and what to do with the right hand to complement this sort of accompaniment. Additionally, he shows you the six-note slide-down, a fill technique also called an interval slide that adds a jazzy flair to your arsenal of arrangement possibilities.

The next song in this week's lesson is a classic winter song often among the first to be learned by those new to the piano. That sort of simplicity works well for your purposes, however; the song provides an essential review in note-reading and chording patterns as well as giving you ample room to play with your arrangement. Duane gives you a refresher course in breaking a song down by form and shows you how to turn this simple piece into something seemingly more complicated by using the fills you've just learned. He'll also focus on the styles appropriate for this song and take you through a few arrangement possibilities, allowing you to hear the piece in and out of its context. This week ends with another quick glance at chord substitutions and color tones in addition to syncopated melodies and walk-downs.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 26

Focus: Another Arrangement Review

Week 26 kicks off with song encompassing several techniques, both written and arranged, you've covered so far. It also marks the beginning of songs that are generally longer than most you've played before; this allows you to not only step up your reading ability but also gives you ample room to practice your arrangement techniques. You'll play the song as written, both hands alone and hands together, before diving into the well of arrangement possibilities. Duane explains the benefits of reading arrangements for discovering ideas and techniques to add to your playing before demonstrating a number of chording patterns possible for the piece at hand. You'll also review the cross-hand chording technique and learn to play glissando fills.

The next song in this week's arrangement review is a well-known waltz used to practice several techniques learned this far. After playing through the song as written, you'll add upward inversions and octaves to the piece and experiment with a few different chording styles. Additionally, Duane introduces you to parallel sixths and shows you the methods used for adding this technique to certain arrangements.

This week ends with another well-known waltz, this time used to practice creating a bigger sound in your arrangements. Duane shows you the techniques especially deft in adding fullness to a song and reviews inversions, alternate notes and other fills.

Week 27

Focus: Finishing Supplementary Book Two

This week's lesson begins with the last song of week 26: a well-known waltz used to practice several arrangement techniques; you'll again play it as written and then begin focusing on a host of new chording and fill techniques. Duane starts the technique lesson by teaching you echo fillers and cascading waterfalls, pausing to explain the methods behind runs and passing tones. He then moves into a more detailed discussion of open voicing and upward inversions and demonstrates the straddle-down as an interesting melody fill.

The lesson then moves into a discussion of tension and contrast. Duane explains the principles and importance of building conceptual dynamics within an arrangement and demonstrates the theory by showing techniques that can help with this concept. He also

explains how to create a counter melody and runs through a number of different waltz arrangements to show the possibilities inherent in the piece.

The second and last song contained in this lesson (and the supplementary book) is the Italian folk song "Santa Lucia." You'll play the piece both hands alone and hands together, practicing broken chords, dotted eighth notes and several techniques covered in book two. Duane then moves on to create a very simple arrangement for the piece, focusing on chords in the melody and a variety of arpeggios.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 28

Focus: Key Signature and the G Major Scale

Week 28 dives into book three with an introduction to the G major scale and its family chords. After a brief review of major scale construction and tetrachords, plus a glance at the building of G major, you'll learn the fingering and note placement for this scale. The introduction to the G major scale also provides an introduction to key signature as a whole; this far, you've been playing in C, which contains no sharps or flats. After an exercise to practice playing the scale in both the bass and treble clefs, Duane explains the concept of family chords and scale degrees and shows you how understanding these things can help you with your note-reading ability.

The lesson then moves on to teach you three new G major scale pointer chords and some inversions. After introducing a new song to exercise your ability to recognize and play these chords, the lesson goes in for the close-up to show you the new chords and scale in detail, including their fingering and inversion; additionally, Duane demonstrates a few arrangement techniques for the first G major scale song. You'll begin work on a second song while still in close-up view, focusing heavily on left-hand staccato beats and syncopation at the song's parallel parts.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 29

Focus: Arrangement Techniques and Keyboard Pointers

Week 29 begins with last week's last song. Since you've already played through it as written, you'll now focus on a particular arrangement technique for the piece: walk-downs and walk-ups in the left hand. Duane explains the effect of the technique, when it can be used and how to execute it before demonstrating it within the context of the song. You'll also learn a turnaround walk-up and a particular ending that works well in Gmaj and adds variety and color to the end of a song.

You'll then move on to the first set of keyboard pointers in book 3. These short pieces focus on playing the G major scale with one hand, exercising your finger dexterity, technique and

note-reading abilities. You'll also practice family chords in the G major scale and become acquainted with the chords in both the bass and treble clef.

The last section of week 29's lesson introduces "Marine Hymn," your first march of the course. You'll practice reading broken chords in Gmaj and playing the scale in both hands, learning to recognize the family chords found in the G major scale. After playing it as written, Duane walks you through the form of the song and demonstrates some arrangement possibilities for the piece, again focusing on walk-ups and walk-downs. You'll end this week by practicing octaves and harmonies in the treble clef as well as learning to add descending octaves to your arrangements.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 30

Focus: Octaves and Arrangement Review

This week's lesson, shown entirely in close-up, begins with last week's "Marine Hymn," focusing on the arrangement techniques covered previously -- but this time up close and in detail. You'll again practice playing broken chords and recognizing notes in Gmaj, paying careful attention to the fingerings and inversions learned in the last few lessons. You'll also re-examine the song's form and continue to practice walk-ups and walk-downs in addition to descending octaves and harmony octaves. Duane also shows you how to add a little something to your octave technique by playing chord notes of varying rhythm on the melody's off-beats.

You'll then move into book three's formal introduction to octaves, including an explanation of the concept and how to read them on a piece of music. You'll learn the fingering and specific techniques required to execute the octaves perfectly before beginning a song that contains octaves in the written form. Duane walks you through the piece, diving even further into the practice of playing octave melodies. This week's lesson draws to a close with the well-known "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," a piece again focusing on octaves in the melody and allows you to experiment with Duane's earlier demonstration of chord note additions on the melody's off-beats.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 31

Focus: Practice in G Major

Week 31's lesson, shorter and again shown entirely in close-up, focuses on your playing and reading ability in the key of G major. You'll begin your practice with "Chipanecas," paying careful attention to the chord construction and octave melodies; the song works with broken chords in 2/4 time, a new position of the Amin chord and the introduction of the C augmented chord, or Caug. Additionally, you'll practice reading and playing counter melody and contrary motion. Duane guides you through the piece both hands alone and hands together before showing you some arrangement possibilities, including echoing rhythm, and encouraging you to take the reigns and try some of your own ideas.

The lesson then moves on to "Home on the Range," which includes a written swing bass, a new A7 chord position and, of course, more crucial practice in the key of G major. As always, you'll work through the song as written, ironing out any difficulties with the bass accompaniment or new chord position, before trying your hand at a little bit of arrangement. Duane shows you how upward inversions, walk-ups and walk-downs can complement this song, as well as demonstrating the effect achieved by playing the melody an octave higher than written.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 32

Focus: Keyboard Pointers and Review Quiz

This week's lesson, another shorter one intended for reviewing and solidifying your playing techniques, begins with a new keyboard pointer. It's a bit different than the keyboard pointers you've practiced before; this time, the exercise is an actual song used to practice a variety of techniques. You'll work with third intervals, legato playing and note reading while concentrating on the song's broken chord accompaniment and melody harmonies. Duane guides you through this exercise slowly, ensuring that you absorb every important point and then moves into a tiny bit of arranging, showing you how to offset notes within a melody.

The second part of this lesson is encompassed by a quiz to test your knowledge of chord recognition and form. Like the above keyboard pointer, this quiz is a full (and somewhat complicated) song containing several techniques. You'll first be asked to identify the chords within the song, challenging your sense of chord recognition. Then, you'll be asked to analyze the key and form in which the song is written. After help you to successfully fulfill the quiz requirements, Duane takes you slowly through the song as written, focusing on the melody/bass contrast and parallelisms that dominate much of the piece. He'll then demonstrate a few arrangement possibilities, including twangs and grace notes.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 33

Focus: The B7 Chord and F Major Scale

Week 33's lesson starts with a practice song that introduces a few new concepts. First, you'll learn the B7 chord and its fingering and inversions, quickly moving on to study a new inversion of E7. You'll also be introduced to some new notation that indicates dynamic and tempo changes within the piece. Duane helps you slowly work through the song as written, paying close attention to the new inversions and chords, before starting on the arrangement. You'll cover the hand-over arpeggio and block-chord style in addition to learning a bit about chord substitutions.

You'll then be introduced to a new key and scale: F major. After a review of how major scales and tetrachords work, Duane teaches you the fingering, note placement and key signature of this scale. You'll also look at the F major family chords: Fmaj, B-flat-maj, and C7, learning their pointer positions and inversions. Duane shows you how to play the F major scale in both the treble and bass clef before moving on to a well-known classical song to practice these techniques. You'll go through the piece hands alone and together, focusing

on the pointer positions and inversions of the above-mentioned chords and learning to recognize the chord structure with the F major scale.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 34

Focus: Practice and Keyboard Pointers in the F Major Scale

Week 34's first exercise is a popular folk song intended to practice your ability to play the F major scale and its accompanying family chords. You'll approach this piece in a slightly different manner, however; instead of jumping right into a hands alone or hands together run through, Duane shows you how to analyze the song's form before even attempting to play it. He'll explain how identifying parts and chords prior to playing a song is beneficial to your reading abilities, pointing out all the subtleties within the piece's form. After a solid analysis of the form, you'll play the piece as written and then attempt an arrangement. Duane provides you with a review of several arrangement techniques and also teaches you the turnaround walk-up and some chord substitutions.

You'll then begin work on a new set of keyboard pointers in the F major scale. These pointers concentrate on the scale in both the treble and bass clefs, focusing on a new fingering and some new treble clef chord positions. After studying and practicing the pointers, you'll move on to a new song -- a famous lullaby -- practicing 3/4 broken chord patterns within the F major scale. You'll also concentrate on some arrangement techniques to play up the sweet, flowing sound of the piece, such as taking it up an octave, adding Alberti bass and a bit of syncopation.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 35

Focus: Arrangement and Form Analysis

Week 35's lesson begins with another F major song, this time including broken chords in a 4/4 rhythmic pattern. After going through the song as written, you'll begin an analysis of the song's form to determine the most appropriate and interesting arrangement. Duane introduces and explains descending bass (and why it works best in a 4/4 time within a piece that includes a lot of sameness) and how to switch time signatures in an arrangement. He also demonstrates the broken octave technique, occasionally adding some syncopation to play up melodic elements, and works through a number of different arrangements to show you the nearly endless possibilities.

The lesson then moves into the third supplementary book, starting with a gospel hymn in the key of G major. As usual, you'll practice the song as written before moving on to several possible arrangement techniques, including adding intervals and octaves below the melody. You'll continue your practice with a classical song, also in G, that focuses on a staccato melody and broken chord pattern. Duane ends the lesson by reviewing several notation and arrangement techniques with a waltz in the key of G major.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 36

Focus: Arrangement Techniques and the B Diminished Chord

This week's lesson begins with an explanation of the alternating bass, a technique used to employ different chord tones when playing the swing bass. After teaching you how to properly execute the technique, Duane guides you through a piece intended to practice this style of bass accompaniment. This song also introduces a new chord, the B diminished chord (or Bdim), and shows you how to use it within the song's context. In the process of helping you master this song, Duane explains chromatic passages and how they can be identified within a written piece or used as an effective arrangement technique. You'll get a chance to exercise this new skill within an arrangement after learning to play the above song both hands alone and hands together.

Week 36's lesson continues with a song in the third supplementary book, the classic favorite "On Top of Old Smoky." It's a somewhat simple song and therefore conducive to a productive review; you'll exercise your abilities with a multitude of third intervals in the melody and a steady swing bass accompaniment. Once you get comfortable with the song as written, you'll start work on an arrangement, focusing on the various styles in which this song could be rearranged and brushing up melody octaves and full chording in the bass.

Review of Mollie Wells

Week 37

Focus: Playing and Arranging Practice

Week 37 starts in the third supplementary book with a G major scale song that includes a 3/4 broken chord pattern. You'll work through the song as written, gaining practice with the G major family chords, then begin a sort of arrangement review. Duane takes you through the process of adding a third interval to the melody, playing the accompaniment in Alberti bass and explains a bit about parallel sixths and their effect on an arrangement. He also discusses endings in more detail, showing you how to break up a chord and play it in two octaves to finish off a song.

You'll then begin working on a waltz in G major, going through the piece both hands alone and hands together. This song features a written alternate bass, which Duane demonstrates before moving into a discussion on comfortably glancing at your hands without losing your place in a piece of music. He also talks about finding the perfect alternate notes and begins arranging the waltz in a variety of styles. You'll practice breaking up chords in three octaves, a fast run up the keys. You'll also review the 2-1 break-up and straddles before switching the melody to the left hand. Duane ends this arrangement review by teaching you the techniques needed to execute four-note runs, 3-1 break-ups and new sorts of syncopation.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 38

Focus: Arrangement Techniques and Practice

Week 38 continues in this course's tradition of solid arrangement practice with a G major hymn in the third supplementary book. Duane helps you to analyze the chords and inversions used in this song before going through it hands alone, focusing on each part and its fingering. He then slowly plays it hands together and begins an arrangement. You'll start by adding notes under the melody (as dictated by the chords found in the bass accompaniment) and including octaves in the bass. You'll also be introduced to paths, forms of the walk-up that skip a few notes instead of running exactly up the scale, and shown various ways to use them in a bass accompaniment. In the process of working with these arrangement techniques, Duane demonstrates a few chord substitutions that house color and passing tones. He also introduces and explains suspended chords.

The next song in this lesson is quite possibly the most difficult piece encountered so far. It contains a complicated rhythm pattern filled with eighth notes in both clefs and serves as not only an exercise in note reading and chord recognition but also in finger dexterity and hand independence. After carefully working through this piece as written, paying close attention to the complex rhythms, Duane guides you into some more arrangement, reviewing several techniques covered both in this lesson and previous ones. He closes this week with a discussion of register changing and a demonstration of the call-and-response effect that can be achieved by carefully switching octaves at pre-determined parts.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 39

Focus: Creating Medleys

Week 39's lesson, entirely in the third supplementary book, focuses on three similar songs and how they can be turned into a one-arrangement medley. Before even beginning work on these songs, Duane explains the principles of a medley and where you can use them to the best effect; for instance, this medley, which includes the song "Prayer of Thanksgiving," could easily be used as a church arrangement.

You'll start with the first song by carefully identifying the primary chords and passing tones. While helping you do this, Duane explains the importance of analyzing these elements, especially when it comes to creating a medley. You'll then work through the song as written, hands alone and hands together, and begin creating a variety of possible arrangements including techniques like Alberti bass, melody octaves, arpeggios and upward inversions.

Your work with the second song will be extremely similar to the first. Like before, you'll identify and analyze the song's form and chord structure and play the piece hands alone and hands together before beginning an arrangement. This arrangement, however, will include full chording and a variety of octave techniques.

After performing the same analysis and practice tactics with the third song (and, of course, arranging it), Duane demonstrates one possible way to combine these songs into a medley. He then begins an explanation of medley-making principles, such as creating an introduction, including dynamic and tempo variety and using chord substitutions and inversions to easily flow in and out of songs. He also introduces the concept of theme and explains how it works as an underlying principle in all medley creations.

The lesson ends with one more, non-medley song, this time practicing the key of F major and the swing bass.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 40

Focus: More Practice with Arrangement

Week 40 again takes you to the third supplementary book, where you'll be working with a number of arrangement principles and techniques. The lesson's first piece, "There's a Tavern in This Town," begins with an analysis of chord structure and form, making sure that you truly understand the piece before even attempting to play it. After successfully identifying the chords and naming each part, you'll play the song both hands alone and hands together; as always, Duane guides you through this song step by step. You'll then begin arranging the piece by taking a close look at its context to determine the appropriate style, ragtime in this case. Duane demonstrates a ragtime arrangement and reviews the techniques, like swing bass, tremolos and echoing melodies, that are often associated with the form. He also introduces the two-step, a new syncopated fill for use in your right hand melodies, and the act of walking up half steps instead of whole ones.

The next song in this lesson is a slower, more romantic piece that includes an Alberti bass accompaniment and a new sort of accent mark; Duane explains this new concept in detail before beginning work on the song. After practicing the written material, you'll analyze the chord structure and form to create a new arrangement based on part changes, one that includes chord notes in the right hand, arpeggios in the left hand and a number of different color tones.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 41

Focus: Keyboard Pointers and Review

Week 41 immediately dives into a new sort of keyboard pointer; this time, you'll be working with a short piece to practice your staccato and legato phrasing. You'll practice both hands alone and hands together, analyzing the form and acquainting yourself with the broken chord accompaniment. Duane guides you through the exercise carefully, playing the piece slowly at first, then gradually increasing the speed. You'll then move on to another exercise that contains a melody in the left hand and a new position of the F chord; additionally, you'll be introduced to a new dynamic marking, the tenuto marking.

The first official song of the lesson (one of the most advanced songs in the course) includes an element not yet seen in this course's pieces: an introduction. You'll work through the introduction separately, hands alone and hands together, before beginning to analyze the remainder of the piece, which contains C7 arpeggios and four-part chords. It's a song to work through slowly; it includes a lot of jumping around and may take some time to truly master.

The next song is a classical opera piece that features a new position of the broken C chord and treble and bass tones combined to create a full chord. As usual, you'll work through

this song slowly, taking each part separately before combining them. You won't, however, attempt any arrangement of this piece; the piece itself is practice enough.

This week's lesson comes to an end with a keyboard quiz to test how quickly you can read and play a song. Duane reviews the process of analyzing a song to get a grasp of the piece before even placing your fingers on the keyboard. You'll be asked to identify the chord structure and to find the form and theme, all of which can be done before playing the song. The lesson then provides a brief, formal introduction to the western bass and shows you how the accompaniment technique looks on the musical staff.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 42

Focus: Boogie Bass and Finishing Book Three

Week 42 kicks off with a new bass pattern, the boogie bass, which is almost exactly like the western bass. Duane teaches you the notation and techniques used to execute this style and also discusses the ways in which boogie and western bass are differently, namely in style's treatment. You'll work with a brief exercise to get acquainted with the boogie bass and also to practice your staccato phrasing before moving on to "Bustin' Boogie," your first boogie bass song. You'll, of course, work through the song as written, but since it's written in a very steady, tight style, Duane teaches you a number of ways to loosen it up and make it immediately distinctive from the western bass.

As the boogie bass study represents the final lesson of book three, you'll then move on to the task of working through the third supplementary book, starting with "O, Canada." It's a somewhat simple song, one used to review many techniques covered so far. You'll then move on to the Italian folk song "Maddalena," practicing the swing bass and damper pedal techniques hands alone, before beginning work on another piece that introduces Fine and D.C. Al Fine, two new musical notations; Duane fully explains and demonstrates the concept behind these. The lesson ends with one more song in the supplementary book, another simple review that you'll play hands alone before combining the bass accompaniment with the melody.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 43

Focus: Finishing Supplementary Book Three

This week's work in the third supplementary book begins with a famous waltz that includes a somewhat varied chording pattern in the left hand and octaves in the right. Duane takes you through the song as written before beginning an arrangement; you'll work with upward inversions, offset octave chords and a number of different runs.

The next song in the supplementary book includes a right hand melody very much unlike anything you've done before; it encompasses a number of different octaves with written-in echoes. Before beginning work on this song, Duane explains the idea behind echoes and the way to execute them to achieve the most interesting results. You'll play the song slowly once then gradually increase the tempo, focusing on the chromatic passages written into the

piece. Though it doesn't necessarily require an arrangement (and you won't be assigned one), Duane demonstrates a possible arrangement style for a song such as this.

Your next song, "O, Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," includes a steady western bass and accompanying melodic style. After practicing the written song, Duane shows you how to loosen up the steady western sound into a playful arrangement using syncopation, octaves and twangs.

The lesson (and the supplementary book) ends with "Hot Time Boogie," a piece that focuses on boogie bass and staccato phrasing. Like the last piece, you'll run through it as written and then begin to loosen up the steadily written bass accompaniment with a number of arrangement techniques, such as two-steps and grace notes.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 44

Focus: 2/4 Time and Sixteenth Notes

The first lesson in book four marks the beginning of week 44, where you'll be introduced to the 2/4 time signature. Duane explains how the time signature works, where the stresses are and how to count it before taking you through the piece hands alone, focusing on the staccato and legato phrasing. You'll then be introduced to sixteenth notes, the shortest note value you've worked with this far. You'll learn what they are, how to count them and how to find them in a piece of music, putting your new knowledge to the test in an exercise designed to practice your sixteenth note skills. After showing you a few arrangement techniques that work especially well with sixteenth notes, Duane guides you through "Arkansas Traveler," a song that includes not only sixteenth notes, but also 2/4 time. While arranging, Duane will also show you how to execute chromatic runs.

The lesson then moves into the fourth supplementary book and a song to practice 2/4 time with eighth notes. Duane reviews how to use form to analyze and understand a song before taking you through the piece and its arrangement, which includes syncopation, twangs, half-step slides and a descending bass.

After playing as written the last song, "Billy Boy," (which again features 2/4 time), Duane shows you how to transpose, or change the key, of a song. Using scale degrees and intervals, he walks you through the process of a transposition, then experiments with some arrangement possibilities for the transposed material.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 45

Focus: Diminished Chords and Minor Keys

Week 45 begins with a song to show a new, but common, rhythm pattern in 2/4 time: a dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. You'll learn how to count and play this pattern and practice it with a piece including a number of counter melodies. While walking you through the song as written, Duane explains the importance of moving tangentially through the chords to create a flowing, connected sound within every piece that you play.

He then begins an arrangement that not only helps you review octaves and Alberti bass, but also teaches you to create your own counter melodies within a piece of music.

The lesson then moves on to a discussion of diminished chords; you'll learn what they are, how to play them and the pointer chord rule for creating them. You'll then begin work on an exercise practicing what you've just learned, one that also introduces the F-sharp diminished chord. Duane guides you through this piece step by step, pointing out the augmented and broken chords, before moving on to a quiz that tests your knowledge of notes and their values. You'll be asked to identify a number of notes, then to add notes that will complete a specific measure; it's essential practice in both note recognition and time signature.

Next you'll learn about minor keys and scales. Duane explains how to construct a harmonic minor scale and how to find the relative minors of any major before demonstrating the fingering used for the A minor scale. You'll then move on to a set of keyboard pointers intended to help you harmonize the A minor scale, play it with one hand and get acquainted with its family chords.

The lesson ends with two pieces, including the Russian folk song "Minka," to further exercise your understanding of A minor. As always, you'll play these songs both hands alone and hands together and also be introduced to the double sharp, a new musical notation device.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 46

Focus: Practice in the Supplementary Book

Week 46 dives right into the fourth supplementary book with a 2/4 piece helping you to practice sixteenth notes, broken chords and staccato phrasing. After playing the song as written, Duane shows you the possible arrangement techniques, focusing on swing bass, octave thirds, graces notes, chording and the half-step slide.

The lesson's next song again provides practice with sixteenth and eighth notes but this time adds a new chord: the D minor 7 chord, or Dmin7. Duane explains Dmin7 and its fingering and inversions before discussing its relation to the F chord and how the two can be completely interchanged for arrangement purposes; this sort of interchangeability is what makes the concept of chord substitution work. After playing it as written, you'll begin arranging the song by adding sixths and half-step slides.

The third song is an instant review of the key of G major. Again, you'll analyze the piece's chords, form and theme before playing it as written. While walking you through the piece, Duane explains how to use non-scale tones to add tension, creating a chord that desperately wants to be resolved. You'll briefly cover some arrangement possibilities, but as this song is somewhat advanced and difficult to arrange, the majority of your work will be spent with the written version.

The lesson's last song, a fairly simple one, features more practice with sixteenth and eighth notes. You'll practice note and chord recognition while playing through this piece and also learn to interchange syncopated and non-syncopated elements within a melody.

Week 47

Focus: More Practice in the Supplementary Book

This week's lesson starts with a review song in the F major key. You'll brush up on the key's family chords, analyzing each one included in the song, before beginning hands alone practice. As you play, Duane points out the important elements within the song, such as the use of sixteenth notes. You'll then move into a classical song with which to practice the A minor key. The structure and rhythm of this piece is fairly simple, providing a focused review of the key and its fingerings. What's more, the piece switches to a relative major in its middle section, allowing Duane an opportunity to explain relative major scales and how to recognize them within a piece of music. You'll also analyze the song's dynamics and climax, paying close attention to both of these concepts.

The next piece is a well-known lullaby in A minor, again including a brief visit to the relative C major scale. The piece also provides an introduction to continuity bass, a variation of swing bass accompaniment that stays steady at the chord for a bit longer than swing bass does. After playing the lullaby's written version, you'll begin an arrangement using arpeggios in the left hand and echoing harmonies in the right.

This lesson's last song, "Lavender's Blue," is a simple C major song that focuses on your note-reading ability and finger dexterity. You'll analyze the song and review the key's most likely chords before playing it hands alone, continuing into an arrangement that includes arpeggios and passing tones.

Week 48

Focus: Supplementary Practice and the Key of E Minor

Week 48, another spent entirely in the fourth supplementary book, starts with a piece intended to help you practice diminished chords in 2/4 time. This song also demonstrates the delicate balance often needed between the right and left hand parts, a concept that Duane helps you fully explore during your eventual arrangement of this song.

The lesson's next song deals with several different rhythm patterns that aid in your practice of right and left hand independence. Additionally, you'll be playing a counter melody (and at one part, the melody) in the left hand, again reinforcing the sense of balance and independence between your hands. Duane takes you through this song both hands alone and hands together but doesn't include any arrangement techniques.

You'll then move on to another song similar to the second in that it focuses on the balance and independence of your hands with different rhythmic patterns. As the song is a bit more complicated than any of this lesson's pieces, you'll work on it hands alone and hands together without any exploring any arrangement possibilities.

The lesson ends with the popular "Greensleeves," which provides an introduction to the key of E minor, G major's relative minor. The song is rhythmically simple, allowing you ample room to not only practice your technique with E minor, but also to add a number or

arrangement techniques after mastering it as written. Duane guides you through an arrangement that includes swing bass, grace notes, octaves and even introduces a new cadence technique used to end the song.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 49

Focus: Triplets and New Time Signatures

Week 49 begins with a formal study of the C major chord progressions you've learned about in terms of arranging; in the fourth main book, you'll brush up on scale degrees and family chords, moving on to a series of exercises that use the Roman numeral chord system, or figured bass, instead of the chord symbols you've previously been working with. Duane guides you through songs like "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" by way of this notation system, reviewing several arrangement techniques. You'll then move on to a new set of keyboard pointers designed to help you practice a number of skills, including chord recognition, finger dexterity, legato and staccato phrasing and complicated rhythmic patterns.

Next in the lesson is a formal introduction to triplets, a technique you've briefly covered during several arrangement lessons. Duane teaches you their note values and how to recognize and play them before guiding you through an exercise to get used to triplets and their rhythms. You'll get more practice with triplets by way of a new song that includes a bass accompaniment entirely composed of eighth note triplets and then another, a classical march, composed of 4/4 triplets with new rhythm patterns. This song, however, doesn't function only as a triplet exercise; Duane uses it as a sight reading test, asking you to run through the song hands together before attempting it any other way.

The lesson's next section includes a brief lesson in G major chord progressions, which you've already covered during arrangement techniques, and a formal introduction to the key of E minor. After a reviewing harmonic minor scales and their tetrachords, Duane teaches you the fingerings needed to play this scale and solidifies your knowledge with a set of keyboard pointers to exercise those fingerings and the scale's family chords.

Week 49 comes to a close by introducing two new time signatures: 3/8 and 6/8. You'll learn how to recognize and count these time signatures and try your hand at a few practice songs to get the feel for them.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 50

Focus: Finishing Book Four

Week 50 starts out in main book four with a classical lullaby to practice 6/8 time with broken and block chords before moving on to a new set of keyboard pointers. You'll practice staccato phrasing, eighth notes and finger dexterity with these exercises in addition to learning a new notation marking. Duane then guides you through a new song featuring eighth note triplets and augmented and diminished chords; you'll also learn a few new chord positions.

The lesson then moves on to a brief review of F major scale degrees and the introduction of the D minor scale. After refreshing your memory on the construction of harmonic minor scales, Duane teaches you the fingering for both the bass and treble clef and guides you through "Charlie is My Darling," a song exercising your skills with D minor, sixteenth notes and complicated rhythm patterns.

You'll finish this week's lesson (and book four) with a few quizzes to test your knowledge of everything learned thus far. The first quiz is a 3/8 song designed to test your chord recognition; you'll be asked to play through the song without any written chord symbols. The next quiz, a waltz in A minor, again tests your chord recognition ability, this time asking you to sight read the left hand and play it as quickly as possible. The last quiz, another based partly on chord recognition, asks you to complete several statements about keys and scales; you'll finish the test by filling in the blanks on a number of written chords.

Review by Mollie Wells

Week 51

Focus: Arrangement Possibilities

You'll begin week 51, a lesson practiced completely in the last supplementary book, with a classical piece written in 3/8; consisting of staccato phrasing, counter melodies and broken chords, the song functions as a review of several techniques. Duane guides you through the song, both hands alone and hands together, explaining the middle section's key change and sixteenth-note pattern. You'll then move on to another, similar song, this time written in 6/8, that focuses on chord recognition and your ability to distinguish between C major and A minor. One more song in 6/8, a march, solidifies your knowledge of the time signature and provides a review for a few arrangement techniques, such as descending bass and melody octaves.

The next song, "Git Along Little Dogies," is a more advanced piece including complicated rhythm patterns in 6/8 time. There's quite a bit to think about while playing this song, so you'll be asked to go through it as written several times before attempting an arrangement. Once you're ready, Duane guides you through a stylized arrangement including western bass, right hand harmonies and twangs before moving on to "Mexican Hat Dance," another 6/8 review piece. Like the previous piece, "Mexican Hat Dance" includes some varying rhythm patterns and the room to create a very stylized arrangement.

Week 51's last song is a minor-key piece designed to test your chord and key recognition abilities. As always, you'll play through it as written before reviewing your arrangement possibilities, through which Duane guides you. You'll review several arrangement techniques with this piece, including right hand octaves and left hand chording.

Week 52

Focus: Final Review

Week 52, the last in your year-long jaunt through the art of piano playing, begins with a classical piece in a minor key. It's a complicated piece, one that provides an essential review of several things learned thus far. After demonstrating the song hands together as written, Duane pulls in for a close-up to show you the piece hands alone in greater detail.

The remainder of the songs in the fourth supplementary book are written in figured bass, a chord notation method which Duane defines thoroughly, explaining both the benefits and drawbacks of such a method. He then guides you through the ten songs remaining in the book and reviews nearly every arrangement technique covered in the course, including octaves, western bass, Alberti bass, tremelos, contrary motion, twangs, grace notes and walk-ups and walk-downs.

The lesson then pulls back out of the close-up for a final discussion of everything covered this year, including a retrospect look at everything you've accomplished. Duane ends this final course with a good-bye and encourages you to continue your piano studies beyond this year of lessons.

Glossary of Musical Terms

Used in the Crash Course in Exciting Piano Playing

accent - a musical notation sign indicating that the note located above or below it should be played sharply (Book 2 - Page 41).

accompaniment - the part of a piece of music that accompanies the melody. The accompaniment is usually found in the bass clef, though it's entirely possible to place it in the treble (1-24).

allegretto - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played quickly, but not as quickly as allegro.

allegro - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played quickly and with excitement.

allegro con brio - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played quickly, with vigor or spirit.

andante - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played somewhat slowly or at a walking pace.

andante con brio - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played at a walking pace with vigor or spirit.

andantino - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played at a slightly faster pace than andante.

andantino con espressione - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music should be played slightly faster than andante and with expression.

arpeggio - a chord played by striking each note individually but closely enough to still be perceived as a whole entity; arpeggios are also referred to as broken chords (1-42).

arrangement - a re-worked version of a written piece of music (see Arrangement Guide).

augmented chord - a chord altered by raising one of the tones by a half-step (2-40).

bar line - vertical lines on a musical staff that divide a piece of music into individual measures (1-8).

bass clef - part of the musical staff on which the bass notes are located. The bass clef encompasses all the notes below middle C (1-24).

block chord - a chord played by striking all three notes simultaneously; block chords are often referred to simply as chords (1-5).

broken chord - a chord played by striking each note individually but closely enough to still be perceived as a whole entity; broken chords are also referred to as arpeggios (1-42).

chord - a series of three separate notes, or tones, played simultaneously. Chords are named by their root note's letter (i.e. G, F, D or E) and any special qualities they may possess, including their intervals. For example, a G chord lowered by a half-step would be G diminished, or G dim. Adding a seventh to the same G chord would make it Gdim7 (1-5).

chord symbol - musical notation, usually found above the staff, indicating which chord is to be played. Chord symbols appear as either letter names (i.e. C7 or Fdim) or Roman numerals (i.e. I, III or V7) (1-5).

chord progression - a series of chords played one after another; to truly be viewed as a chord progression, this series of chords must feel like a whole (4-14).

chromatic scale - a scale consisting of 12 notes separated by a half-step; the chromatic scale is useful in a number of improvising and arranging techniques.

color tone - a non-chord tone at a set interval that adds an interesting element to the chord. Color tones are often at sixth or ninth intervals and frequently used in arrangements and improvisations.

common tone - a tone found in more than one chord within a chord progression that makes the transition between the chords easier or more smooth (1-31).

crescendo - musical notation indicating that the song's dynamic is to gradually become louder (2-8).

damper pedal - the pedal on a piano that, when depressed, allows a tone or tones to sustain well after the key or keys have been struck; the damper pedal is located on the right of the piano's pedal board (1-48).

decrescendo - musical notation indicating that the song's dynamic is to gradually become softer (2-8).

diminished chord - a chord altered by lowering one of the tones by a half-step (4-8).

direct pedaling - pedaling form achieved by depressing the damper pedal at the start of a every measure (1-48).

dotted note - a written note with a dot after it, indicating that the note's value is lengthened by a half (1-44).

double sharp - musical notation indicating that a note is to be raised by a whole step; double sharps often represent the same pitch as the next highest note (4-13).

downbeat - a measure's stressed beat; when tapping your foot to a piece of music, the downbeat occurs when your foot hits the floor (1-44).

dynamics - the loudness or softness of a piece of music; most songs encompass a number of different dynamics to achieve an interesting, contrasting sound (2-8).

figured bass - type of musical notation that uses numbers (often Roman numerals) to denote certain intervals or chords. Figured bass is an integral part to improvising and arranging.

finger dexterity - the flexibility, quickness and strength of your fingers. Finger dexterity is achieved by regular practice and finger exercise (1-51).

fingerings - the way in which you place your fingers on the keyboard to play notes, scales and chords (1-17).

flat - musical notation indicating that a note is to be lowered by a half-step (2-2).

form - the way in which a piece of music is structured or organized. A song's form is often labeled by giving each part a letter name such as A, B or C.

forte - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played loudly; forte is notated by a lowercase f (2-8).

fortissimo - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music to be played very loudly; fortissimo is notated by two lowercase f's (2-8).

grand staff - the entire staff of a piece of music, including both clefs.

hands alone - the act of playing both the treble and bass parts of a piece of music before combining the two.

hands together - the act of playing a piece of music's treble and bass parts simultaneously.

harmonizing chords - the most pleasant-sounding, or harmonious, chords in a given key; harmonizing chords are generally represented by the first, fourth and fifth scale degrees (3-4).

inversion - the distance between two notes, comprised of a set number of steps: C is three steps away from E and therefore represents a third interval. Intervals can be identified by either number (i.e. third, fifth, ninth) or property (i.e. melodic, harmonic) (2-19).

inversion - chord position that places the tones in a different order, or inverts them. Inversions are named based on where the root note is placed; a chord's first inversion puts the root note at the top of the chord, its second inversion places the root in the middle, and so on (1-29).

key - the scale set of sharps, flats and naturals that determine the nature of the pitches used in a piece of music (3-3).

key signature - musical notation that indicates in which key a piece of music is to be played. A song's key signature is located just after the clef and just before the time signature (3-3).

ledger lines - additional lines above or below the staff that accommodate notes higher or lower than the staff's space (1-8).

legato - a note or set of notes played in a smooth, flowing style; legato playing is notated on a piece of music by a curved line (2-33).

legato pedaling - pedaling form achieved by depressing the damper pedal after the beat (1-48).

lento - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played very slowly.

maestoso - tempo/style marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played majestically.

major scale - diatonic scale consisting of two tetrachords (or eight notes) divided by this pattern: whole step, whole step, half step. A major scale is generally perceived as the brightest of scale types (2-28).

measure - unit of musical measurement; every piece of music is divided into a series of measures set off by bar lines, the rhythm of which is determined by the time signature (1-8).

melody - a song's tune and often the most identifiable element. A melody is frequently found in the treble clef, though it can certainly be played in the bass (1-8).

mezzo-forte - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played medium loud; mezzo-forte is indicated by the lowercase mf.

mezzo-piano - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played medium soft; mezzo-piano is indicated by the lowercase mp.

middle C - note located at the piano keyboard's approximate center; middle C represents the division between the bass and treble clefs (1-1).

minor scale - diatonic scale with the third degree of a minor third above the scale's root; minor scales are usually considered to be dark or moody. A harmonic minor scale, the most commonly used type, follows the same pattern as a major scale but with an augmented second interval between the sixth and seventh notes (4-10).

moderato - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played at a moderate pace.

moderato con espressione - tempo marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played at a moderate pace and with expression.

monophony - single notes or notes struck independent of each other.

natural - musical notation indicating that a note is to be played as is, without a sharp or flat (2-2).

note - the written notation of a tone, or pitch. Strictly speaking, the term note refers only to the written form, but most musicians use the term to refer to the actual tone, as well (1-8).

note value - the length of time for which a note is to be held. For instance, in 4/4 time, the note value of a quarter note is one beat, a half note two beats (1-8).

octave - a range of eight whole steps (3-10).

pentatonic scale - a scale consisting of only five notes, such as a scale encompassing only black keys.

pianissimo - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played very softly; pianissimo is indicated by two lowercase p's.

piano - dynamic marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played softly; piano is indicated by a lowercase p.

polyphony - combined notes or notes struck simultaneously.

relative major - a major chord that shares the same key signature as a minor scale but with a lowered seventh scale degree. Every minor scale has a relative major, i.e. C major and A minor.

relative minor - a minor chord that shares the same key signature as a major scale but with a raised seventh scale degree. Every major chord has a relative minor, i.e. C major and A minor.

rest - musical notation indicating a set amount of silence (1-14).

rhythm - the beat of a song; how sounds vary over time and their duration throughout it. Rhythm is complemented by time signature and can be named based on property, i.e. metric, intrametric, contrametric (1-8).

root note - a scale's first degree; chords, scales and keys are named after the root note (3-4).

scale degree - the placement of a note in a scale; the first note of a scale (or root note) is the first scale degree, the second note the second scale degree, the third the third, and so on. Scale degrees are an integral part of figured bass.

sempre staccato - musical notation indicating that a set of notes (or entire song) is to be played staccato (4-29).

sharp - musical notation indicating that a note is to be raised by a half-step (2-2).

sight reading - the act of reading and playing a piece of music in its entirety the first time you see it.

soft pedal - the pedal on a piano that, when depressed, muffles the sound; the soft pedal is located on the left of a piano's pedal board (1-48).

sostenuto pedal - the pedal on a piano that, when depressed, sustains the keyboard's lower notes; the sostenuto pedal is located in the middle of a piano's pedal board (1-48).

staccato - a note or set of notes played in a short, disconnected style; staccato is notated by a dot (2-33).

staff - the series of lines and spaces on which written notes are placed (1-8).

syncopation - a type of rhythmic playing that places notes slightly off the beat.

tempo - the aspect of music that dictates at what speed a piece of music is to be played (2-16).

tempo di marcia - tempo/style marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played at the tempo of the march.

tempo di valse - tempo/style marking indicating that a piece of music is to be played at the tempo of the waltz.

tie - musical notation (represented by a curved line connecting two notes) indicating that the notes are to be played as a whole, without any space in between them (1-11).

time signature - musical notation that gives the specifics of time and how it will function within a song. A song's time signature is located just after the key signature (or clef, if there is no key signature), consists of two numbers and can be either simple or complex (1-13).

treble clef - part of the musical staff on which higher notes are located; the treble clef encompasses everything above middle C (1-24).

tone - the actual sound produced when a piano key is struck.

upbeat - a measure's unstressed beat; when tapping your foot to a piece of music, the upbeat occurs when your foot isn't on the ground (1-44).

vivace - tempo marking indicating that a song is to be playing quickly, faster than allegro.