

# PIANIMALS



*Drat that mischievous cat! How are we going to untangle the wool around Alionus's hand so he can play piano?*

## Develop the Young Hand at the Piano

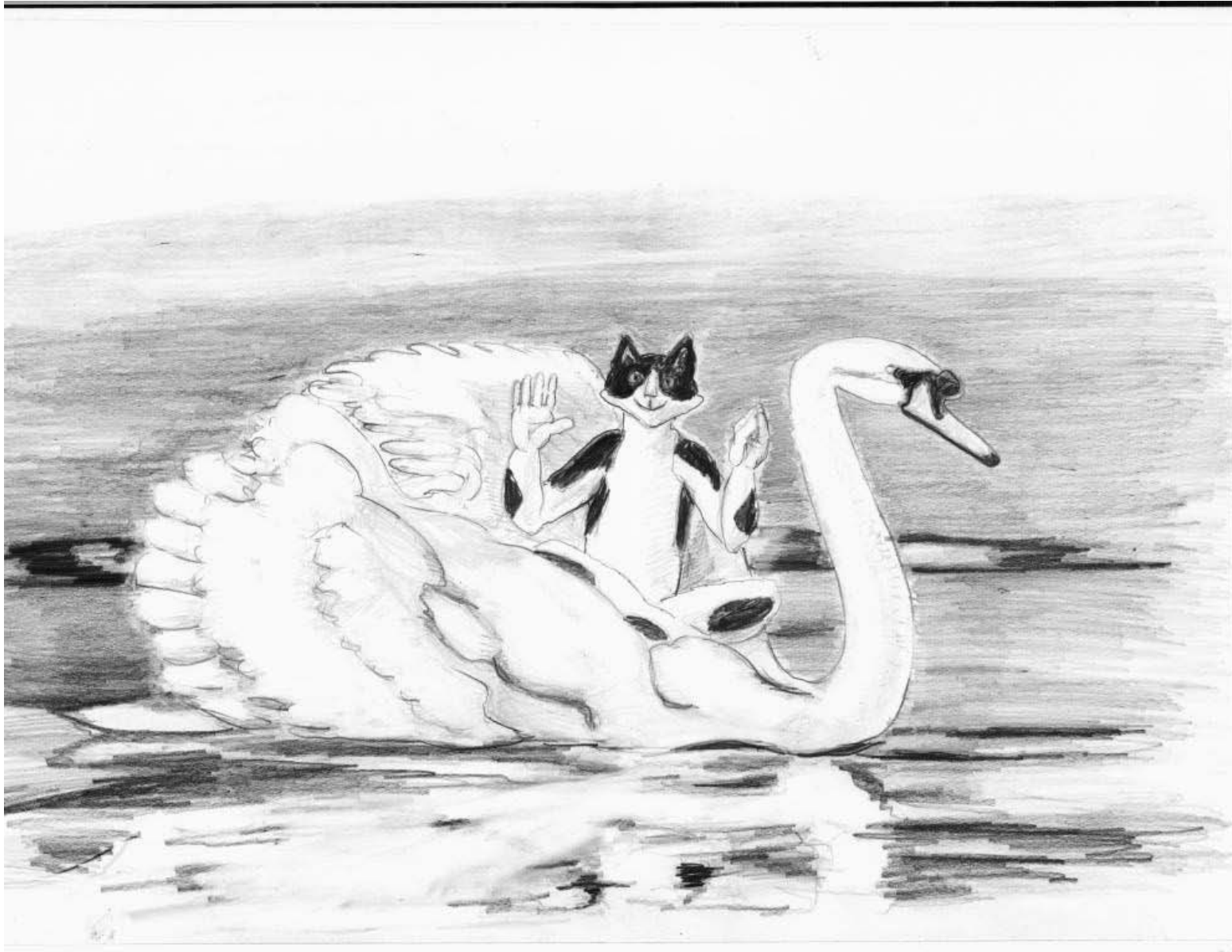
Volume 1: From Lying to Standing

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*Hanno Beckers, Audrey Dumont & Alison Lund, editors*

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*Our Principle Pianimal, Lucky the Cat, hangs out with buddies like Sarah Swan.  
Like her, his thumb is a swan, not an ugly duckling. It can oppose.*

## *Developing ability by learning naturally*

Welcome to *Pianimals*, where the hand learns to move on key just as a baby does in life – naturally. Volume 1 begins with the hand “lying down.” Some of these first ones don’t look much like piano pieces at all, but they help prepare the piano “standing” which comes later in Volume 1, and the piano “walking,” “running,” and “jumping” of Volume 2. These unusual exercises based on the Feldenkrais Method help you play usual repertoire better.

## *Do the exercises first*

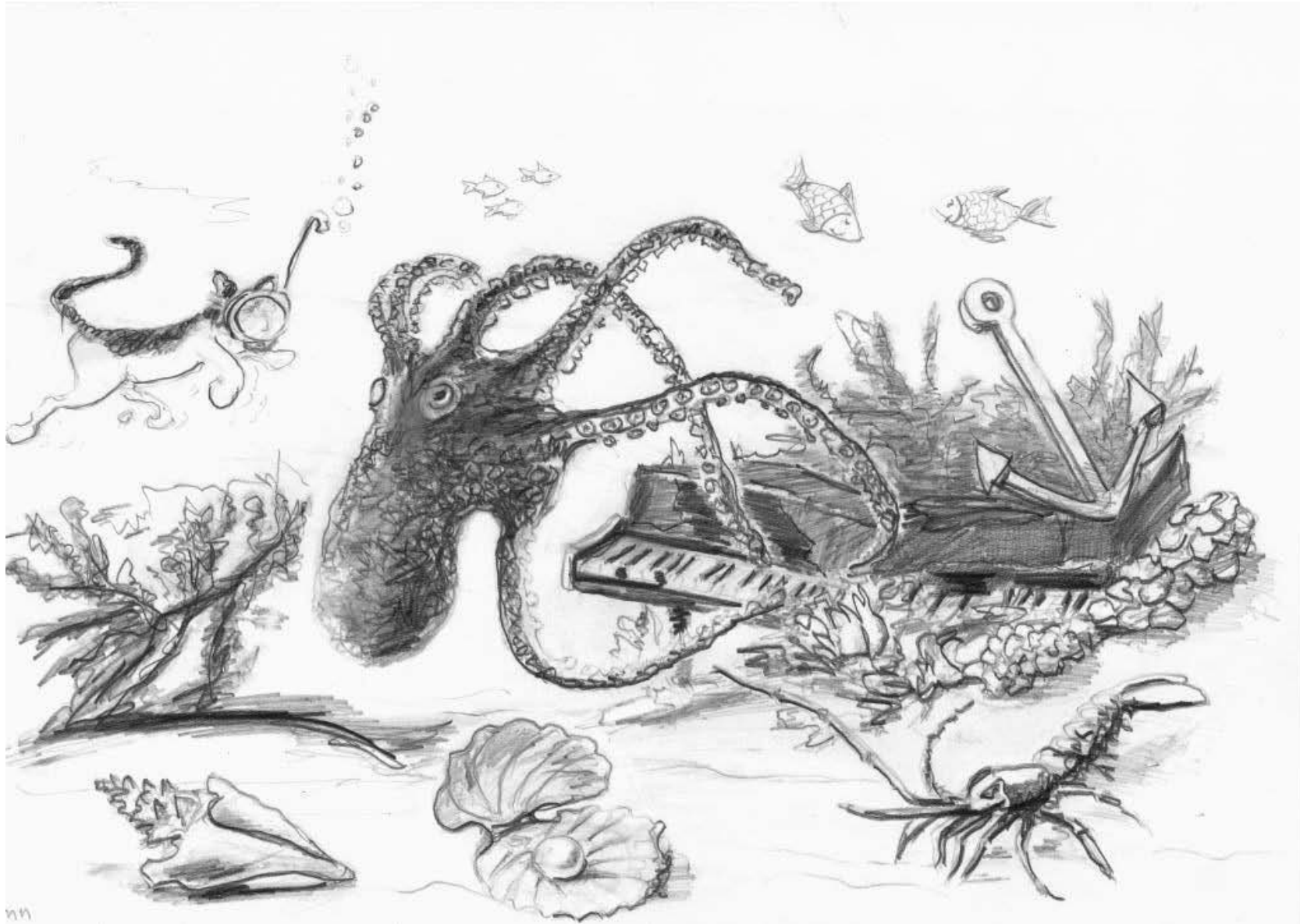
Do the exercise your teacher shows you before playing each piece. It helps your hand move in the way nature intended, like a baby lying down, or crawling, or standing up and walking. The hand doesn’t feel heavy – it feels its body supported by the ground. This makes it easier to learn all the movements needed to stand, walk, run and jump well. And remember, have fun while you’re learning – they who laugh most learn best!

## *Glossary*

Here’s a list of special ‘articulations’ you’ll find in the music:

<b>H</b>	Lie on the hand’s <b>Heel</b> : mash it into the keys loosely, heavily, gently. We call it “smooshing” the hand.
<b>SF</b>	Make a <b>Seal Flipper</b> by bunching the fingers together in a flat band.
<b>TH</b>	Lie on the <b>Thumb Heel</b> alone – let the keys massage the thenar muscles.
<b>TS</b>	<b>Thumb Stand</b> : point the thumb straight down and stand on it. Keep the fairly compact fist directly above it.
<b>TP</b>	<b>Thumb Poke</b> : use that standing thumb to poke the key.
<b>K</b>	Play with the <b>Knuckles</b> ; actually put the top knuckles, the metacarpal-phalangeal joints (MCP joints) on the keys.
<b>BB</b>	Play with a <b>Bird Beak</b> – all the fingers and thumb bunched tightly together.
<b>P</b>	The <b>Pad</b> is the flat, fleshy part near the tip of the finger or thumb.
<b>KE</b>	Hold the <b>Key Edge</b> .

## *An Octopus's Garden*



*Imagine your arm moving underwater – like Oscar the Octopus playing the piano!  
Lucky the cat wants you to make the most beautiful sound in the world.*

## I. A Floating Arm

*The arm joins the hand to the body – effortlessly, fluidly. When the finger touches down on key to stand, but doesn't try to stand, it's easy to feel that flowing connection of fingertip to whole self.*



*These lazy lions are curled up in the piano keys. Shhhhh, don't disturb them... even the elephants are walking on tiptoe...*

## Lazy Lion

Follow the line of the arm swoop, floating the hand down until the finger lies flat in the key.

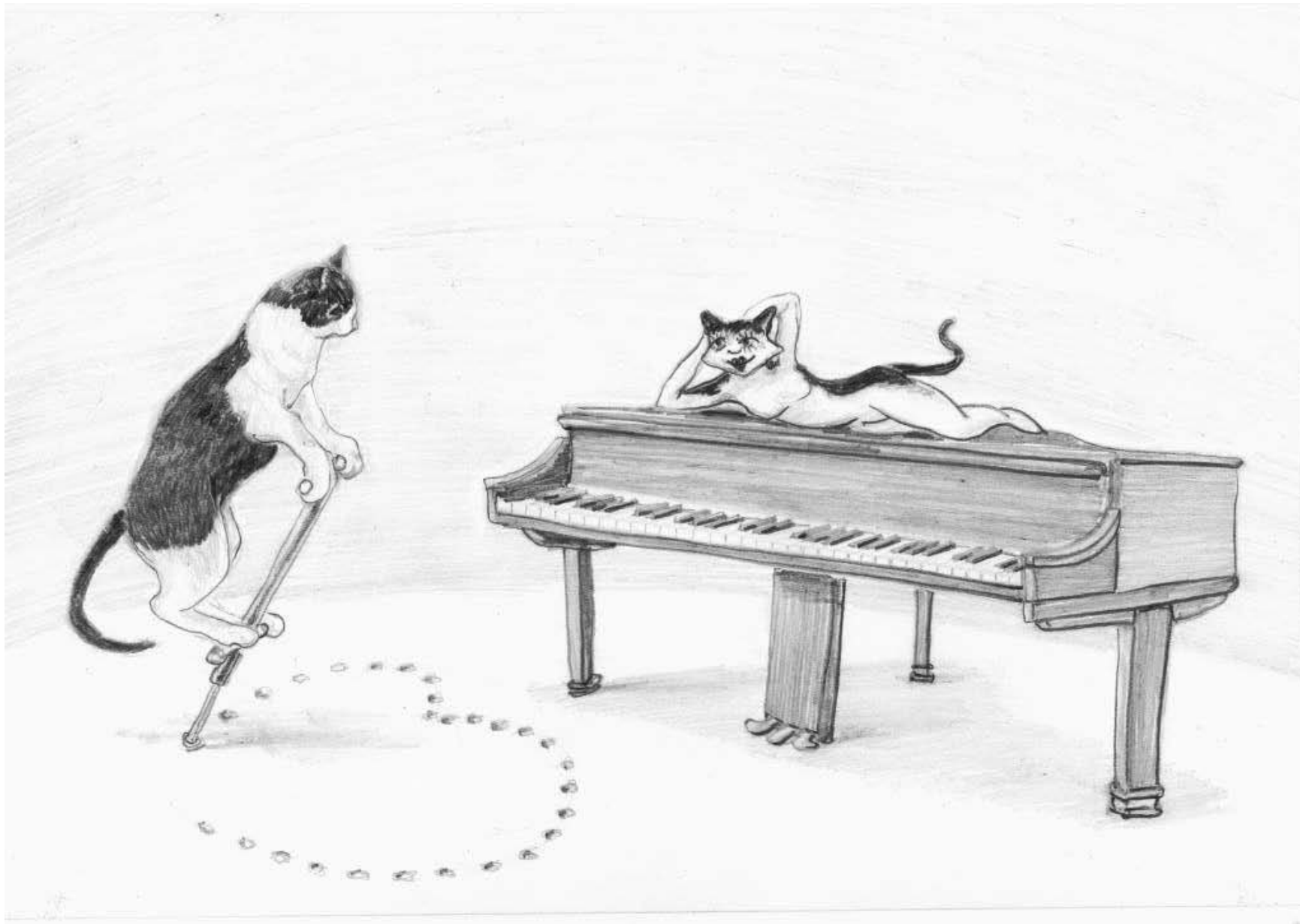
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## Improvisation & Variation

Keeping the arm movement very large, very slow, very gentle, and very continuous,

- ❖ Play the piece with another finger.
- ❖ Play some other notes with the same floating-lying touch.
- ❖ Play with a different rhythm.
- ❖ Do all that with the left hand.





*Lucky's lady love likes this bouncy way of walking – do your parents remember the pogo stick?*

## *The Pogo Stick*

Keep your arm high and your finger as stiff as a pole, and *bounce* them off the keys. Don't be heavy at all!

The musical score is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO, both in common time (C). The PRIMO part consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The treble staff contains a sequence of eighth notes, each preceded by a finger number '2' and an accent (>). The bass staff contains whole rests. The SECUNDO part also consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The treble staff contains whole rests. The bass staff contains a sequence of eighth notes, each with a dot above it, indicating a staccato or bouncy articulation. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

### *Improvisation & Variation*

Keeping the arm movement very bouncy and vigorous,

- ❖ Play the piece with another finger.
- ❖ Play some other notes with the same bouncing touch.
- ❖ Try out some other rhythms.
- ❖ Do all that with the left hand.



*Balance on the keys lightly, like Lucky balancing on the clothes line.*

## *The Tightrope Walker (Basic)*

Hang the finger vertically from the hand as the arm floats down. Leave the finger vertical as it barely touches the keys.

PRIMO

SECUNDO

## *The Tightrope Walker*

PRIMO

SECUNDO

### *Improvisation & Variation*

❖ Create variations as you did for the previous pieces: other fingers, other notes, other rhythms – and the other hand!



*Alionus's elegant tie and his elegant arm movements fascinate Gracie Goosy – but not Lucky the cat...*

## *Elegant Alionus (Basic)*

Follow the line of the arm swoop, floating the hand down until the finger “crumples” into the key.

8va-----

PRIMO

SECUNDO

Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. \*

## *Elegant Alionus*

8va-----

PRIMO

SECUNDO

Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. Leo. \*



*Eddie Elephant and Lucky have had too much fruit punch. All they want to do is loll around...  
Can your hand and arm be as lazy as these pianimals?*

## **II. Lying Down**

*Imagine that your hand is a little baby, still lying down. There are many preliminary movements to be learned before it can walk. Nobody learned to walk by walking! Learning is easier when baby feels secure – fully supported by the ground.*

*Flop your hand on a table, or on your leg, or on the keys. Just relax it. “Smoosh” it! Do little micro-movements with the hand as it lies there. Feel its insides moving in interesting ways. Feel how it is alive, sensitive and ready to learn.*





*Happy Hippo and Sassy Seal are smooshing<sup>1</sup> and flopping. Make your hand imitate them, like Melissa Monkey's. Lucky feigns indifference, but he's beginning to unravel the ball of wool, just as we are beginning to unravel the secrets of piano playing.*

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<sup>1</sup> "Smooshing" is mashing the hand but not pressing it forcefully

## *Sassy Seal (Smaller Hand)*

Play the tone cluster with the **H**eel of the hand (**H**) – silently, or making a sound. Bunch the fingers together. Turn them into a seal flipper (**SF**). Swat the keys with it.

The musical score is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO, both in 4/4 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

**PRIMO:** The melody is primarily in the treble clef. It begins with a half note G4 (labeled 'H' for Heel of the hand) followed by a series of eighth notes: A4, B-flat4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, 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E351, F351, G351, A351, B351, C352, D352, E352, F352, G352, A352, B352, C353, D353, E353, F353, G353, A353, B353, C354, D354, E354, F354, G354, A354, B354, C355, D355, E355, F355, G355, A355, B355, C356, D356, E356, F356, G356, A356, B356, C357, D357, E357, F357, G357, A357, B357, C358, D358, E358, F358, G358, A358, B358, C359, D359, E359, F359, G359, A359, B359, C360, D360, E360, F360, G360, A360, B360, C361, D361, E361, F361, G361, A361, B361, C362, D362, E362, F362, G362, A362, B362, C363, D363, E363, F363, G363, A363, B363, C364, D364, E364, F364, G364, A364, B364, C365, D365, E365, F365, G365, A365, B365, C366, D366, E366, F366, G366, A366, B366, C367, D367, E367, F367, G367, A367, B367, C368, D368, E368, F368, G368, A368, B368, C369, D369, E369, F369, G369, A3



*It's winter. Father Bear is fast asleep, hibernating – with his paw still mashed on the keys. Mommy and Baby Bear seem happy slumbering below – but look at Lucky, he has the warmest place!*

# Sleepy Bear (Basic)

Lay the thumb heel (TH) into the white key(s). Make the fingers into a bear paw to play the black keys.

**Lazily**      *roll over, lie down... and back... roll over, lie down... and back... roll over... lie down even lower...*

PRIMO

TH

SECUNDO

(optional)

The musical score for 'Sleepy Bear (Basic)' is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO. The PRIMO part is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It features a sequence of notes: a whole note C4 (labeled 'TH' for thumb heel), followed by a half note Bb3, a quarter note A3, a half note G3, a quarter note F#3, a half note E3, a quarter note D3, a half note C3, and a final whole note Bb2. The SECUNDO part is in bass clef with a common time signature (C). It features a sequence of chords: a whole note C4 (labeled 'TH'), followed by a half note Bb3, a quarter note A3, a half note G3, a quarter note F#3, a half note E3, a quarter note D3, a half note C3, and a final whole note Bb2. The score includes fingerings (1, 2, 2) and a 'roll over, lie down...' instruction.

# Sleepy Bear

At the end, roll the hand all the way over and gently squeeze the black keys between thumb and 2<sup>nd</sup> finger.

**Lazily**      *roll over, lie down... and back... roll over, lie down... and back... roll over... lie down even lower...*

PRIMO

TH

SECUNDO

(optional)

The musical score for 'Sleepy Bear' is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO. The PRIMO part is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It features a sequence of notes: a whole note C4 (labeled 'TH' for thumb heel), followed by a half note Bb3, a quarter note A3, a half note G3, a quarter note F#3, a half note E3, a quarter note D3, a half note C3, and a final whole note Bb2. The SECUNDO part is in bass clef with a common time signature (C). It features a sequence of chords: a whole note C4 (labeled 'TH'), followed by a half note Bb3, a quarter note A3, a half note G3, a quarter note F#3, a half note E3, a quarter note D3, a half note C3, and a final whole note Bb2. The score includes fingerings (1, 2, 2, 3, 2) and a 'roll over, lie down...' instruction.



*He may look like a big, bad dragon, but Puff is a patient soul with a heart of gold.  
He's heard this piece a thousand times – but he'll still give Lucky a good lesson.*

## *Dreamy Dragon (Basic)*

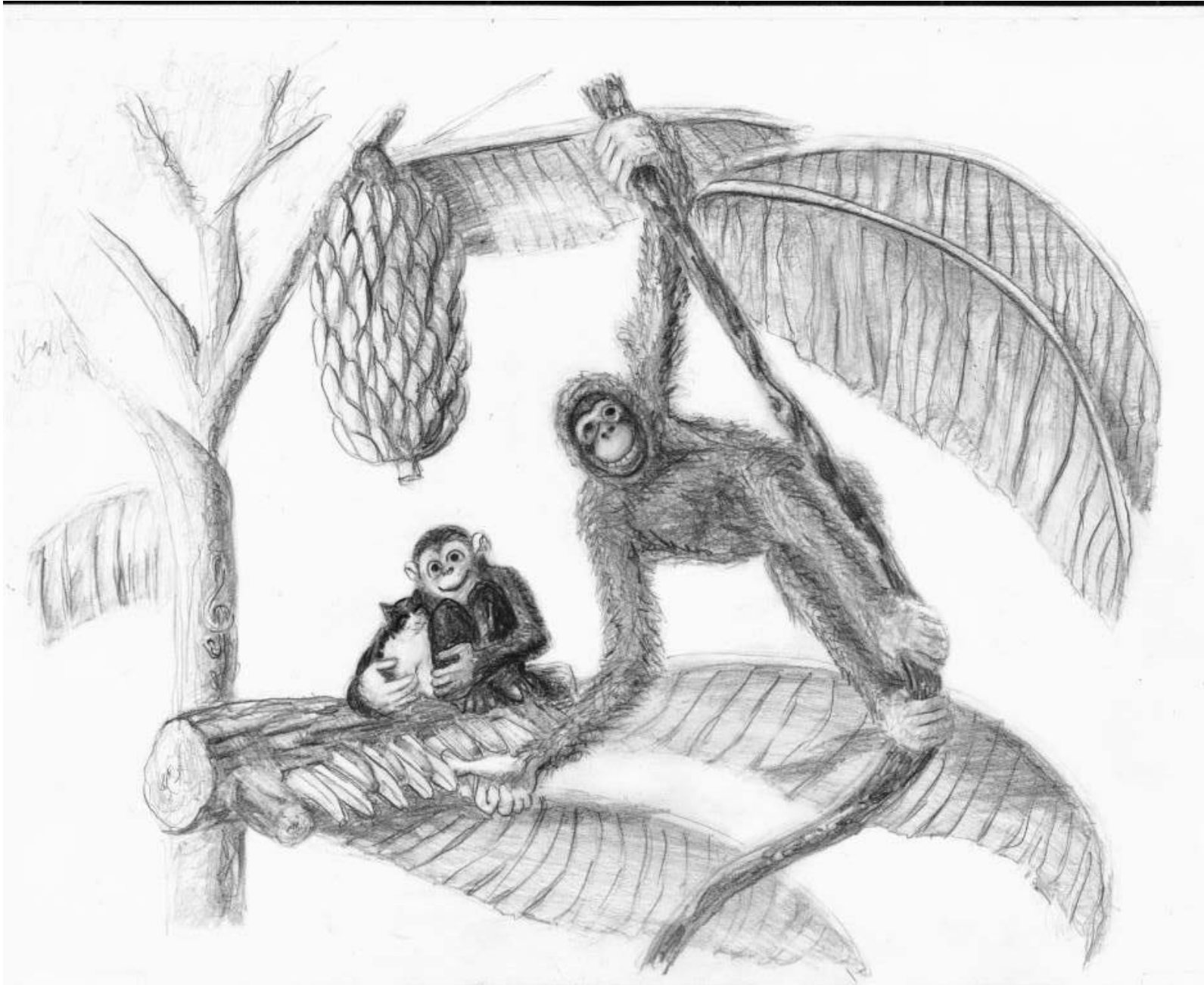
Play a cluster with the heel (**H**). Press as many notes as you like. Slide the heel silently from one cluster to the next as you play. Use whatever fingering is comfortable. Curve the fingers more... or less... to change the sound... and the emotion...

The musical score is for a piece titled "Dreamy Dragon (Basic)". It is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO. The PRIMO part is in the upper system, and the SECUNDO part is in the lower system. Both parts are in 4/4 time and use a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat).

**PRIMO Part:** The PRIMO part consists of four measures. The first measure is marked "play heel silently" and contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The second measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The third measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The fourth measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The PRIMO part ends with a fermata over the final note.

**SECUNDO Part:** The SECUNDO part consists of four measures. The first measure is marked "play heel silently" and contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The second measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The third measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The fourth measure contains a cluster of notes on the treble staff, with the letter "H" below it. The SECUNDO part ends with a fermata over the final note.

**Fingering:** The PRIMO part has fingering numbers 5, 2, 4, 1, 4, 2, 4, 2 written above the notes. The SECUNDO part has fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2 written above the notes.



*Ollie Orangutan is playing a banana keyboard – with his thumb!  
Can you use your thumb like that to play a real keyboard... while hanging from a vine?*

## *The Oranga-Thumb*

**Beginner:**      Poke      Screw      Screw      Screw      *sempre*

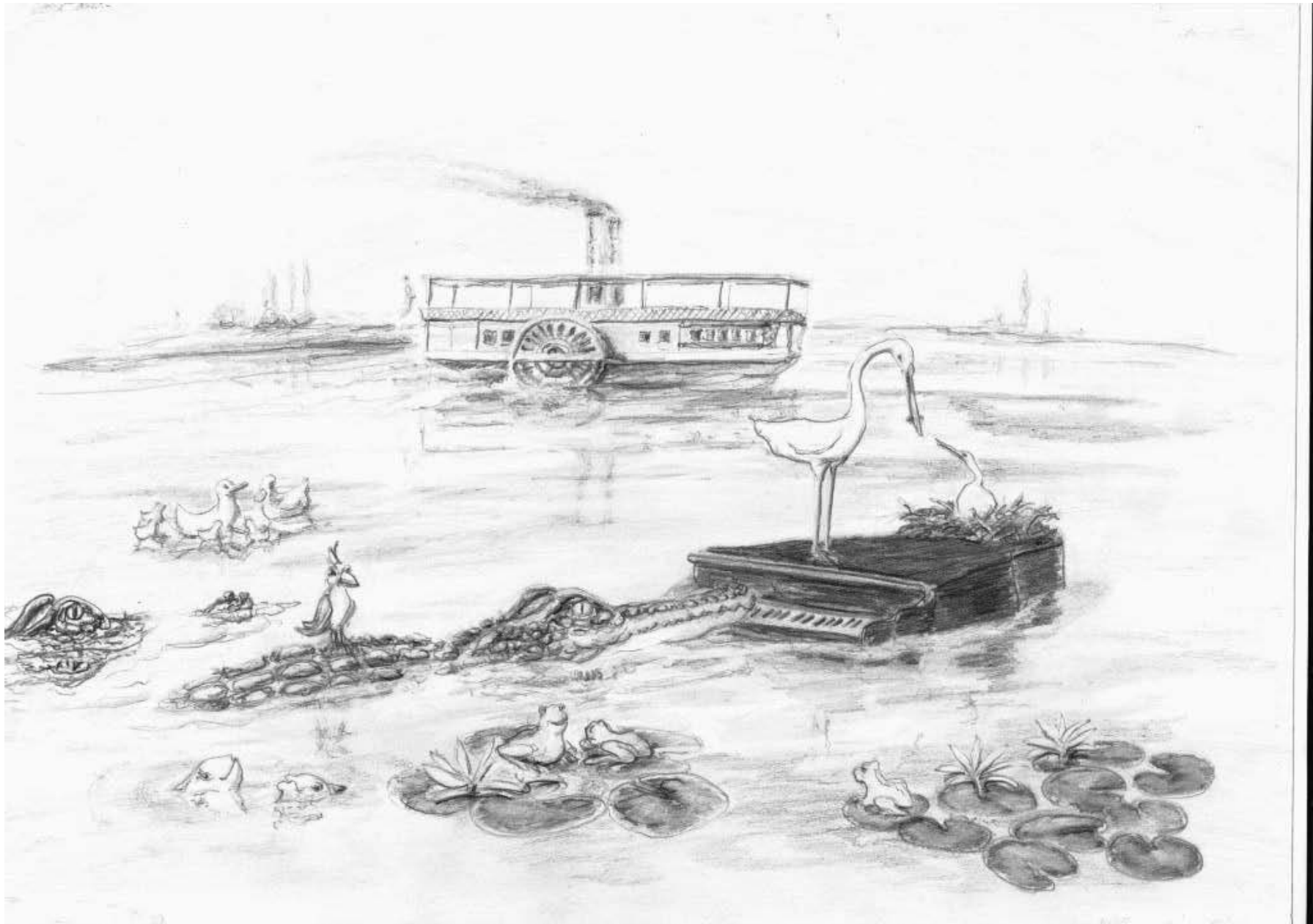
**Advanced:**    Poke      Pad      Stand      Stretch      *sempre*

The musical score is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO. The PRIMO part consists of two systems. The first system has five measures, each with a single eighth note on the treble staff and a whole rest on the bass staff. The second system has five measures, each with a single eighth note on the treble staff and a whole rest on the bass staff. The SECUNDO part consists of two systems. The first system has five measures, each with a single eighth note on the bass staff and a whole rest on the treble staff. The second system has five measures, each with a single eighth note on the bass staff and a whole rest on the treble staff. The PRIMO part ends with a double bar line, and the SECUNDO part ends with a double bar line.

### *Improvisation & Variation*

- ❖ Play a mirror image of the piece with the left hand.
- ❖ Stand an 'Oranga-Thumb' on any note, even a black one, while playing any finger note you like, even a white one.
- ❖ Vary the rhythm and the dynamics.
- ❖ Make a major key version, or a minor key version, or an oriental key version...





*You can hardly see Chloe Crocodile. Only her eyes are above the water.  
Keep only your knuckles above the level of the keyboard, like Chloe's eyes.*

## Quiet Crocodile

Make thumb and 2<sup>nd</sup> totally straight and lay them deep in their keys. When you play the notes, hardly lift thumb and 2<sup>nd</sup> at all – as if the crocodile were a ventriloquist and could speak without moving her jaw.

The musical score is written for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO, both in common time (C). The PRIMO part is in the treble clef, and the SECUNDO part is in the bass clef. The PRIMO part consists of six measures. The first four measures have a finger number '2' above the staff, and the first three measures have a finger number '1' below the staff. The fifth measure has finger numbers '2' and '3' above the staff, and the sixth measure has the instruction 'rest the arm...' above the staff. The SECUNDO part also consists of six measures, with the first four measures having a finger number '1' below the staff. The PRIMO part ends with a double bar line, and the SECUNDO part ends with a double bar line.

### Improvisation & Variation

- ❖ Find some new notes to play, thumb always deep in a white key, 2<sup>nd</sup> finger in a black. One lies while the other plays.
- ❖ Combine the thumb and each of the other fingers in turn like this.



*Where is the Terrible Troll's lost drum? He has already smashed a house and a tree trying to find it, and now he's going to smash the piano! Stomp the piano with your thumb before he can – but don't break it!*

## The Thumb Troll Tromp

Thumb-Poke (TP) each key with the thumbnail pointing toward you. At measure 5, stand on the thumb and touch the black key with each finger in turn like you did in *Yawning Alligator*.

TP TP TP *sempre* *rallantando* 1

1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 1 1 1

PRIMO

Fee Fie Fo! Fee Fie Fum! I am wal king on my thumb! Watch it! Watch it! Watch it! Watch it! *ff* Here I come!

SECUNDO

*rallantando* *ff* *8vb* *8vb*

### Improvisation & Variation

- ❖ Tromp all over the keyboard, poking white keys with your thumb.
- ❖ Stand on a thumb note, swatting a black key with each finger in turn.
- ❖ Play the entire piece loudly, but end with a *diminuendo* to a gentle *pianissimo* as the troll gets enough to eat and calms down.



*Daisy & Dylan Dove... sweethearts once, sweethearts forever...*

## Be My Valentine

Make the fingers like straight, almost vertical sticks as you walk through the notes of this sweet melody.

PRIMO

5 3 4 3 2 4

1 3 2 3 4 2

Au \_\_ drey, Au \_\_ drey, please be mine. Make me smile and be my va \_\_ len tine.

SECUNDO

5 4 5 3 1 2

2 1 3 5 5

If you will come back to me, We'll live hap \_\_ pi \_\_ ly.

### Improvisation & Variation

- ❖ Do you have a sweetheart to whom you would like to sing this song? Put his or her name in the first bar – but you might have to change the rhythm. How would you play, “Jeremy, Jeremy,” or “Elizabeth, Elizabeth?”



*Sophie Skunk is blowing out her candle. Lucky can't stand the smell, but he dutifully plays Happy Birthday anyway.*

# Happy Birthday

Stick the thumbs out from tightly clamped fists and *bonk* the keys like bell clappers bouncing off a bell. Don't push the keys down; bounce *up*. Later on, bonk the keys with different finger bird beaks.

PRIMO

SECUNDO

This system contains the first two staves of the musical score. The PRIMO staff is in treble clef with a 3/8 time signature and a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains two measures of music with lyrics: 'Hap py Birth day to you,'. The SECUNDO staff is in bass clef with the same 3/8 time signature and key signature. It contains two measures of music, primarily consisting of chords and rests.

13

13

This system contains the next two staves of the musical score. The PRIMO staff continues the melody with lyrics: 'Hap py Birth day dear Li on, Hap py Birth day to you.'. The SECUNDO staff continues with chords and rests, ending with a final chord and a fermata.





*Lucky is visiting London, disguised as King Bong! Big Ben will never be the same!*

## *The Bells of Big Ben*

Use the thumb or finger as a bell clapper. Play stems up notes with the right hand, stems down with the left. Use an expansive vertical arm movement. To play with a fat, 5-finger bird beak, transpose down a half step to the black keys.

The musical score is for two parts: PRIMO and SECUNDO, in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The PRIMO part is written in treble clef and begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes, mostly with stems up, and ends with a half note. The SECUNDO part is written in bass clef and consists of chords, mostly with stems down, and ends with a final chord marked with an asterisk (\*). A 'Ped.' (pedal) marking is present under the first few chords of the SECUNDO part.

### *Improvisation & Variation*

- ❖ The melody uses only four notes: D, G, A, and B. Explore other melodic permutations and combinations of the same four notes.
- ❖ At the end, Big Ben sounds – the biggest of all the bells. Find lower notes to make a bigger, fatter Big Ben sound, or find one low and one high note that sound like the weird overtones of a real bell.

*We hope you've enjoyed exploring Volume 1 of Pianimals, where your hands began by lying down and finished by standing up. You've gotten them ready to walk, run and jump all over the keys, which will happen in Pianimals Volume 2 – but before that, pick a piece from this book to play in your first Pianimals recital: Alionus and Lucky are waiting for you on stage!*



*The Pianimals*





*Concert*