

JOAN ALFARAS
Illustrations: Cristina Losantos

SCHERZANDO

Creative and Dynamic Piano Method

Book 1



This Book Belongs To:

Reg. B.4041

EDITORIAL DE MÚSICA
BOILEAU

I dedicate this book to my mother, Maria Calvo. When I was young I listened to her play piano works by Chopin and sing lieder by Schubert. She influenced the development of my love of music.

Prologue

«Scherzo» in Italian refers to playing games. I decided to title this book «Scherzando» because the word perfectly describes both my ideas about how to learn to play an instrument and at the same time forms the basis for this book: learning through games, experimentation, trial and error and creativity. For me, this collection represents a personal challenge which is for piano students to study the piano with ever greater motivation and at the same time develop a thorough command of the instrument. My aim was to give both the student and teacher all of the tools and elements necessary to achieve that goal.

This volume is organized in a varied format combining hand position with the thumb on Middle C, playing passages using the different positions of the black keys and mastering other five-finger positions. In the final pieces change of hand position or a finger is introduced in addition to studying accidentals.

I have attempted to present difficulties in a very gradual manner. By presenting rhythms, notes, dynamics, harmonic intervals, changes of hand position and polyphony between the hands while using different tonalities, measures and accidentals so as to insure that learning is thorough. At the end of the volume there is a synopsis of the technical elements used as an aid to further understanding of the structure of the book.

This method incorporates new and different elements than those found in my previous collection of methods for bowed string instruments. The pieces are grouped into different sections according to their individual focus. There are pieces that help to improve reading, others have the student imitate the teacher and there are pieces that focus on improvisation. And, there are also duets for pianists at the same level. The book also contains illustrated explanations of body and finger position, the placement of the notes on the keyboard and the interpretation of basic musical symbols.

One of the most attractive features of the book, at least in my opinion, is the variety of musical styles included. This variety motivates the student from the very beginning to become accustomed to performing different types of music. The pieces found in the book, as well as in the corresponding audio recordings of them, include modern styles as well as others that are more classic but with different instrumentations. Among the varied styles are jazz, folk music, evocative music and there are also more «serious» works such as the concluding *Concertino* that sums up everything that the student has studied.

The CD includes instrumental accompaniments so that the student can play along with the recording either alone or accompanied by the teacher. In the recordings there is a clapping sound that indicates the measure before the piano entrance.

For those students who find the tempos of the recordings on the CD to be too fast, the book contains written accompaniments for the teacher to play as necessary. These are very practical and can also be used for auditions or in concerts.

The wonderful colorful drawings so beautifully done by Cristina Losantos —who I am grateful to for her collaboration and professionalism— are very helpful, especially for the youngest children. The drawings stimulate the student's imagination making it worthwhile for the teacher to comment on them with the student by inventing a story or a scene suggested by the music. I also highly recommend the included **Card Game** which adds a different dynamic to the lessons and contributes to learning in different areas of study such as reading, improvisation, creating, etc.

In conclusion, I hope that both students and teachers find this book to be a good friend that helps you in learning and teaching. More importantly, my hope is that it gives you the opportunity to enjoy the pleasure of making music as you develop in piano playing. Enjoy!

Joan Alfaras

Contents

Prologue	3
How This Book Works	6

Piece Number		Page	Track
1	Drakkar	Reading (fingers) 10	01
2	The Mermaid	Reading (fingers) 11	02
3	Three Chinese Dragons	Improvisation 13	03
4	The Monkey and the Toucan	Imitation 14	04
5	The Stork	Reading (fingers) 16	05
6	The Bell Tower	Reading (fingers) 17	06
7	Igloo	Reading 20	07
8	The Golden Castle	Reading 21	08
9	Space Surfing	Imitation 22	09
10	The Mill	Reading 24	10
11	The Secret Agent	Reading 26	11
12	Gallop	Reading 28	12
13	The Timpanis	Reading 29	13
14	Do Brasil	Improvisation 30	14
15	Circus Music	Reading 32	15
16	In the Nile Valley	Reading 34	16
17	King Neptune	Imitation 36	17
18	Ballet	Reading 38	18
19	Winter in New York	Reading 40	19
20	Winter in Moscow	Reading 41	20
21	Five to One	Reading 42	21
22	Grandfather's Watch	Reading 43	22
23	Cuba	Reading 45	23
24	Helios, the Sun God	Reading 46	24
25	Game Over	Imitation 47	25
26	Moonlight	Duet 48	26
27	March	Improvisation 50	27
28	Contradanse	Reading 51	28
29	Around the World	Reading 52	29
30	The Airplane	Reading 53	30
31	Robots	Imitation 55	31
32	Duke's Rhythm	Reading 56	32
33	A Night at the Opera	Reading 58	33
34	The Lost Island	Reading 60	34
35	Hungarian Song	Reading 62	35
36	Jamaica	Reading 63	36
37	Pegasus	Duet 64	37
38	French Song	Reading 66	38
39	Africa	Reading 68	39
40	Funk Jam	Improvisation 69	40
41	Da Vinci	Reading 70	41
42	The Show Blues	Reading 71	42
43	Scherzando	Reading 72	43
44	Minuetto	Reading 73	44
45	Midnight Waltz	Reading 75	45
46	Bagpipe	Reading 76	46
47	The Forest Awakens	Reading 78	47
48	Bamboo	Reading 80	48
49	Baobab	Reading 82	49
50	Sahara	Improvisation 84	50
51	Samba	Reading 85	51
52	Concertino «Amadeus» No. 1 in C Major		52
	I Allegro	Reading 87	53
	II Vivo	Reading 89	54
	III Leggiero	Reading 91	55
	Technical Chart		92
	Instructions for the Scherzando Card Game		94

Without
Primo

How This Book Works

The book contains **51 pieces** —and a *Concertino*—that are grouped into one of the following sections:



Reading

The pieces in the Reading section were conceived so that the student learns progressively how **to decipher the score, learn about notation, musical terms and symbols, and how to apply all of these elements at the keyboard.**

The first of the pieces in the Reading section are notated with finger numbers and the later ones introduce note reading on the staff.



Imitation

The pieces in the Imitation section allow the student to play more complicated music than they are able to read, **they also help develop the ear, technique and memorization of structures and patterns that will later help them with music reading.** These pieces should be taught so that the student learns to play by imitation—beginning with groups of white and black keys— and keeping in mind that **learning is based on observation and repetition of what the teacher plays.**



Improvisation

The pieces for improvisation are **technically very simple in order to stimulate the student's creativity and improve their active listening.** Each improvisation is directed by a series of instructions relating to the structure and melodic, harmonic and rhythmic content.

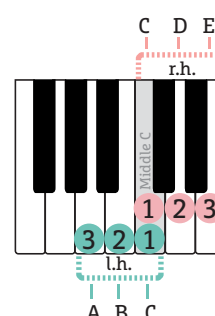
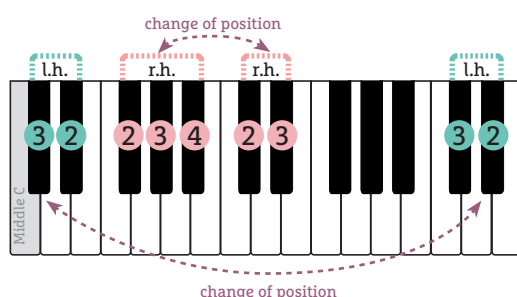


Duets

This book also contains **two duets for 4 hands** that can be played by **pianists at the same level or with another at a more advanced level.**

Visual Elements

Above each piece in the book there is an illustration of a keyboard which indicates the position of the hands and fingers. The changes of position are indicated by arrows as well as the new notes which are introduced in the Reading section.



Legend:

r.h. = right hand

l.h. = left hand


= finger right hand

= finger left hand

C = new note in the right hand

A = new note in the right hand

= change of position



Whole rest
Four beats

Brief explanation of the graphic and technical elements

10. The Mill

Track 10

Below the title the corresponding track on the CD is indicated

Allegretto

1

mf

p

5

2

mf

p

1

Indication of the octave where the student should play so that the accompaniment does not interfere with the main part.

5

New note in the left hand

The student plays an octave higher

Allegretto [♩ = 130]

mf

p

mf

p

Accompaniment for the teacher

Other Visual Elements of the Book



Explanation of the exercise

White keys

Play all notes on the staff which are highlighted with this color on the white keys for the student

Black keys

Play all notes on the staff which are highlighted with this color on the black keys for the student

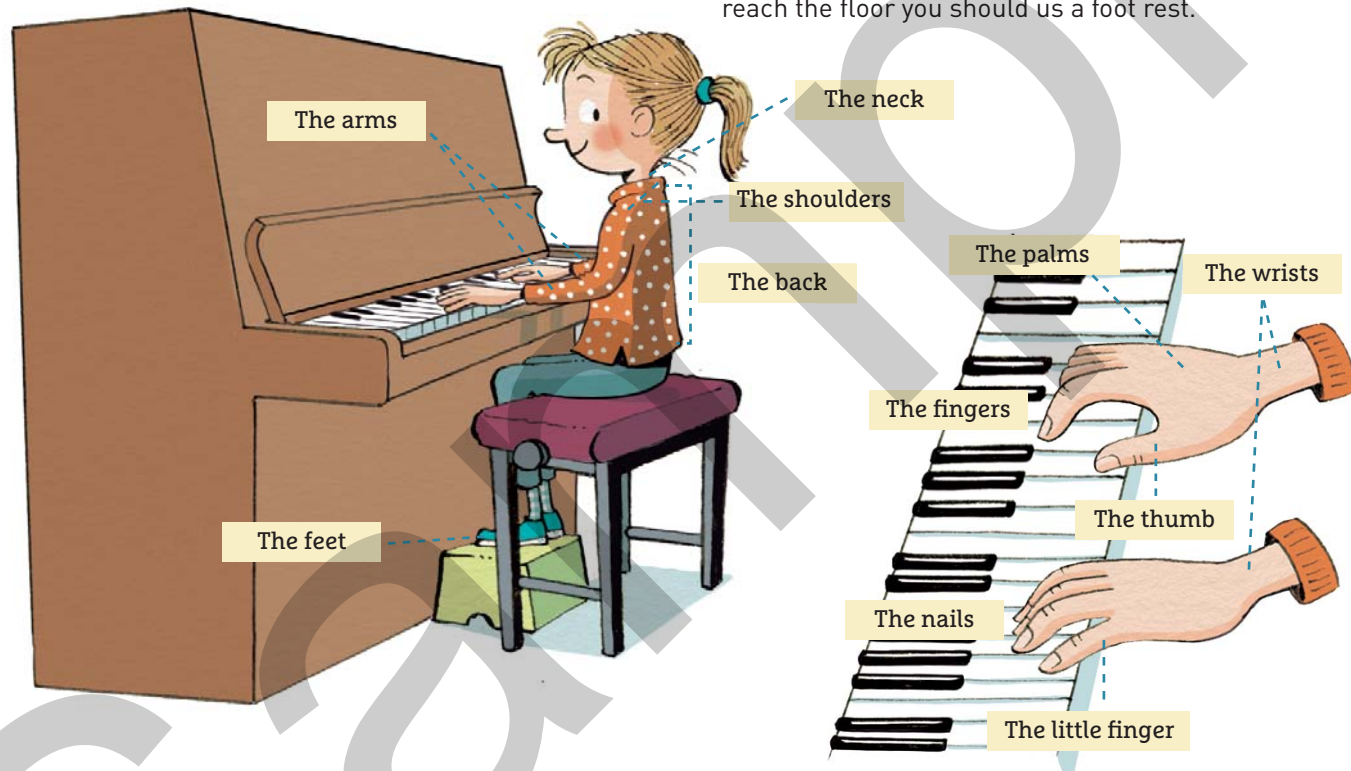


Concepts

Position of the Body and Hands

Look at these illustrations and speak with your teacher about how you should position the different parts of your body. Remember that when playing the piano **it is important to always maintain the right position.**

The placement of the bench is very important. Check to see at what distance it should be placed. Find what the correct height for the bench is. How should your arms be positioned? What is the right position for your feet? If your feet do not reach the floor you should use a foot rest.



The Keyboard

This is the piano keyboard. It is a wide surface with white and black keys organized **from the lowest notes to the highest** beginning on the left side.



1. Play low sounds like thunder in a storm.



2. Play high sounds like birds singing in the morning.



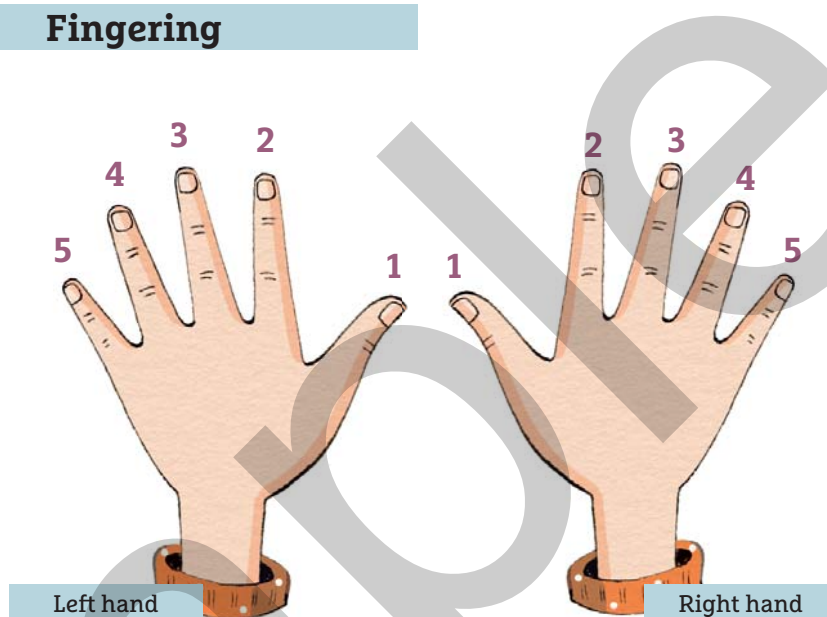
3. Play all the keys and count how many there are:

White keys:
 Black keys:
 Total number of keys:

Fingering

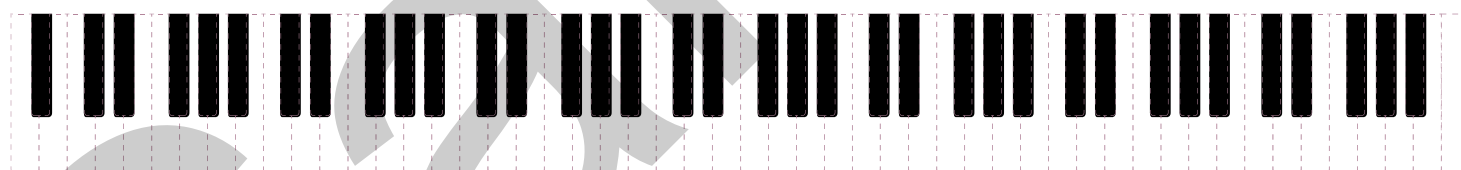
In each hand we have 5 fingers. When you play the piano each finger has a number. That is what we call **fingering**. Look at the drawing: your thumbs are number 1 and the other fingers are numbered 2, 3, 4 and 5. It is like looking at your hands in a mirror.

1. On a table gently strike each one of your fingers and say aloud the number of that finger.
2. Shut your eyes and ask a friend to take one or several of your fingers. Keeping your eyes closed try to tell which finger or fingers they are.
3. Lift up and down each of the fingers that either your teacher or your friend tells you.



Black keys

Look at the black keys of the keyboard in the drawing and notice how they are organized:

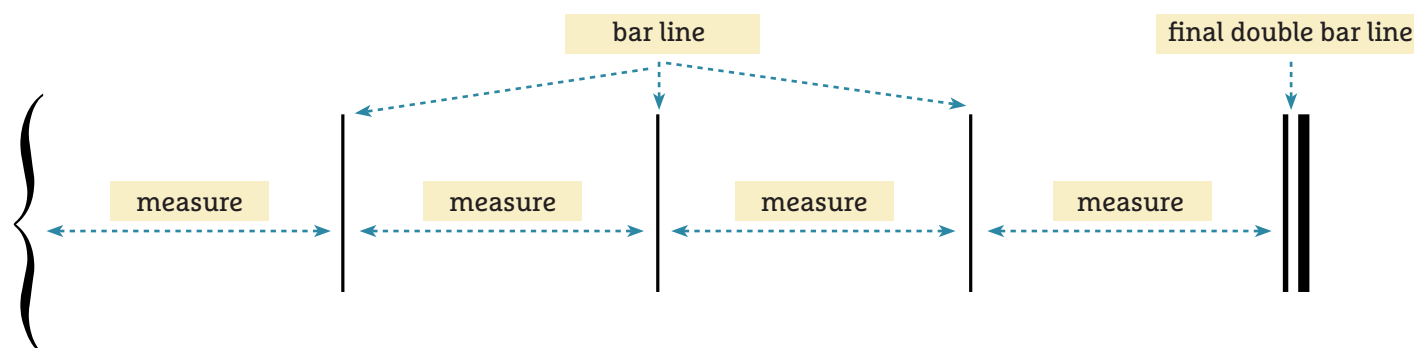


1. Draw a red circle on every **group of 2 black keys**. Play every group of two black keys on the keyboard using fingers 2 and 3 of each hand.
2. Draw a blue circle on every **group of 3 black keys**. Play every group of three black keys on the keyboard using fingers 2, 3 and 4 of each hand.
3. Draw a green circle on the **black keys that are alone**. Play them with any finger you choose.



Measures

Music is divided into measures:



The **bar line** separates one measure from another and the **final double bar line** indicates the end of a piece.



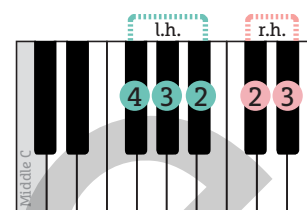
Reading



Allegretto

5. The Stork

Track 5

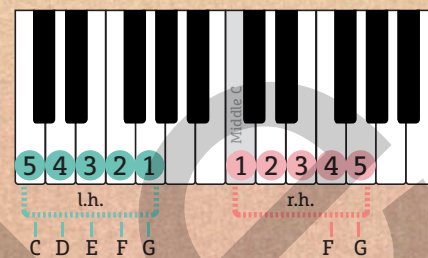
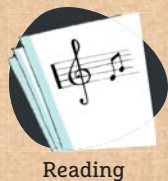


Dotted half note (3 beats)

The student plays as written

Allegretto [♩ = 90]





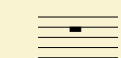
Simultaneous notes
Playing with both hands at the same time.

10. The Mill

Track 10



Tie
The notes are added to each other.



Whole rest
(4 beats)

Allegretto



The student plays an octave higher

Allegretto [$\text{♩} = 130$]



13

1

17

2

p *cresc.*

22

4

f *rit.*

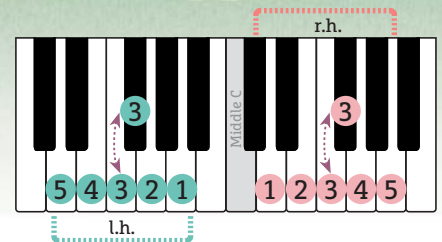


Accent
Play the note a little louder.



13

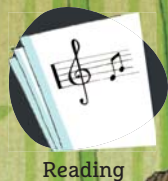
p *cresc.* *f* *rit.*



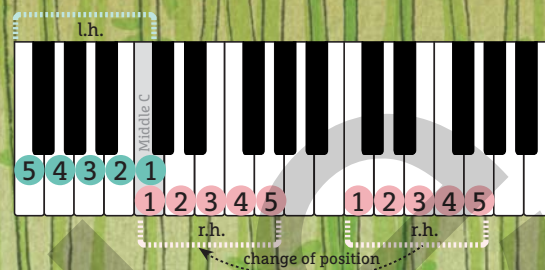
38. French Song

Track 38

Amabile



Reading



48. Bamboo

Track 48

Moderato

1

f

1 3 5 4

5

mf

5 3 4

p

3

10

2

5

Technical Chart

Positions

According to the configuration of the black and white keys on the keyboard

Black keys
(fixed position and with changes)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Changes of position
on the white keys

17 25 26 (*secondo*)

Changes of position on the black
and white keys

9 14 31

According to the location of Middle C

Shared thumbs
on Middle C

7 8 11 16 21 29

Left thumb on B -
Right thumb on C

15 18 26 (*primo*) 37 (*primo*) 49

Left thumb on C -
Right thumb on E

23

Depending on the position of the lower finger the 2 hands

C
10 11 12 3 22 24
33 (*m*) 34 47 (*8^a b*)

D
19 20 32 (*M*) 36
38 (*M/m*)

G
28 30 39

F
44 46 51

La
45

Various positions

Pentatonic Blues scale

40

Various changes of position

35 41 42 47 48 50

Coordination of the hands

A melody shared be-
tween the two hands

1 2 4 5 6 7
8 9 11 14 15 16
17 18 26 (*primo*) 31
37 (*primo*) 40 49

Long and simultaneous
note values

6 16

Parallel motion

12 19 45

Contrary motion

21

Sidewise motion
(long left hand notes and
short right hand notes)

10 20 23 24 29 34
36 37 (*secondo*) 41 42

Sidewise motion
of both hands

25 48

Accompaniment
with double notes

22 23 26 (*secondo*) 28
30 35 43 50

Melody with a
more complex
accompaniment

35 38 39 44

Counterpoint

25 32 33 35

Variety of textures

31 46 47 48 51

Double and triple notes*

Double notes
(2nds)

22

Double notes
(3rds)

22

Double notes
(5ths)

28

Double notes
(4ths)

30

Cluster of
three notes

9
(by imitation)

Triad chord

19

Rhythm

$\frac{2}{4}$

39

$\frac{3}{4}$

9 13 15 18 19 33 37 44 45 50

$\frac{4}{4}$

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 10 11
12 14 16 17 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31 32 34 35 36
38 40 41 42 43 46 47 48 49 51

Tonality

Pentatonic

G M: 6
A m: 40
F# M: 2 3 4 5 9 31
Eb m: 1

Major

C M: 7 10 12 13 21 22 23 26
27 29 34 35 42 47 48 49
G M: 15 28 30 39
F M: 14 18 44 46 51
D M: 32 50 38**

Minor

A m: 11 16 17 45
D m: 8 19 20 24 25 36 41
C m: 33 37 43

** Major / minor

Musical elements*

Notes

The diagram illustrates the placement of notes on a piano keyboard and their corresponding positions in musical notation. The keyboard is divided into three sections: Treble Clef (top), Middle C (center), and Bass Clef (bottom). Notes are color-coded: green for C, D, E, F, G; blue for A, B; red for C, D, E, F, G; and pink for A, B. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The musical notation shows the notes in context, with fingerings and articulation marks.

Rhythms

The diagram shows various rhythmic values and their corresponding piece numbers: 1 (quarter note), 1 (half note), 1 (whole note), 5 (half note), 10 (whole note), 30 (quarter note), 49 (quarter note), 50 (quarter note).

Other musical elements

Forte – Repeat sign bars: 1
Piano – dolce – Phrasing signs: 2
Mezzoforte – Ped. - rit.: 6
Sign for cresc. - D.C. al Fine: 11
Staccato: 13
cresc. - Sign for dim.: 15
dim. - fermata: 16
Accent: 18
Measure of rest: 19
Tenuto - Repeat signs: 20
Sign for an octave higher: 24
Sign for an octave lower: 26 *(secondo)*
Sign for two octaves higher: 26 *(primo)*
Sharp sign – Natural sign: 32
Flat sign - poco rit.: 33
Più mosso – espressivo: 45
D.S. al Fine: 50

* Pieces in the Reading section where these elements are introduced.