

Lesson 16

Read and Play Parts of Tunes with Your Left Hand

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Version 1.0, 1 Mar 2018



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David Dempster

Course	Read & Play Music
Book 2	Read and Play Simple Tunes with Two Hands
Lesson 16	Read and Play Parts of Tunes with Your Left Hand

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LESSON 16:

READ AND PLAY PARTS OF TUNES WITH YOUR LEFT HAND

Time for some fun, playing parts of real tunes. You played some of these with your right hand at the end of *Book 1*. Now you're going to play them with your left hand.

We'll read and play tunes with two hands a little later.

About these tunes

I'm giving you just a snippet of each tune, to avoid slowing down your progress through the course. You'll find complete tunes in the *Book 2 Tune Album* when you've completed *Book 2*. It contains many tunes exactly matching the skills you're acquiring as you study *Book 2*. It has tunes to play with your left hand, and tunes to play with both hands.

A few pointers

A few pointers to help you have success and fun in playing these tunes:

1. Use the indicated fingering.
2. Practise in sections.
3. First apply Know-Before-You-Go,
4. then work on accurate timing.
5. Repeat, gradually building up to a speed that feels right.

There is no double bar-line at the end, because I'm only giving you the beginning of each tune. A double bar-line usually appears only at the end of a complete tune.

OK, here we go.

Tune 1:

Old Macdonald Had a Farm

This is a ‘traditional’ song, which just means we don’t know who wrote it. Whoever it was, he’d be pleased to know how many children have delighted in his song over the centuries, as they get to imitate the sounds of all the animals on the farm.

Old Macdonald Had a Farm

2

Tune 2:

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

A bright, upbeat Christmas carol composed by a pupil of the great composer Felix Mendelssohn.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear



Tune 3:

America the Beautiful

Here's another one where the words and the tune were created separately and then came together some years later. And what a successful combination they make: the words praising America for its qualities, and the beautiful rousing music.

To play the whole of this tune, you need to use the black notes on your keyboard. You'll get to that in *Book 4: Read and Play the Music You Want to Play*.

America the Beautiful



Tune 7: **Danny Boy**

Now let's try reading and playing some leger lines above the staff.

The best-known Irish tune of all time.

Danny Boy

4 4 4 1

Tune 8:

Daisy, Daisy (Bicycle Built for Two)

This is the first song ever sung by a computer!

Reminder: Even though these notes are rather high, you play these tunes with your left hand because there's a bass clef.

Daisy, Daisy (Bicycle Built for Two)



Tune 9:

On Top of Old Smokey

A traditional American song, possibly from the Appalachian mountains.

Here are some more leger lines for you to practise. Are these high leger-line notes beginning to feel a bit familiar?

On Top of Old Smokey

5 4

Tune 10: **Red River Valley**

Another traditional song, from America.

It's easy to think of a traditional song as one that has been around forever, but actually some unknown musician of long ago composed it. I'm guessing he didn't write it down as he probably couldn't read music. He would have just sung the song, maybe accompanying himself on some kind of instrument, and other people would have heard it and started singing it too.

I've given you some chords to play with your left hand. You may find this quite a challenge. Start slowly. Playing chords like this is an essential skill in playing the piano.

Reminder: The pointers I gave you earlier:

1. Use the indicated fingering.
2. Practise in sections.
3. First apply Know-Before-You-Go,
4. Then work on accurate timing.
5. Repeat, gradually building up to a speed that feels right.

Red River Valley

5 1 1 1
 2 3 3
 5 5 5

Make sure you're playing all of this with just your left hand! No cheating.

When you play the first chord, you should be holding down the G and C with fingers 5 and 2, while you play the quarter notes with your thumb. This takes a little practice. Start slowly.

Tune 12:

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

One of the best-known songs of the American Civil War, expressing everyone's longing for having their friends and family safely home from the fighting.

Reminder: Apply Know-Before-You-Go.'

When Johnny Comes Marching Home

The musical notation is on a bass clef staff with a 3/4 time signature. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. Below the staff are fingerings: 2/5, 2, 1/5, 1, 2/5, 3, 1/5.

What's next?

We're about to play tunes with two hands. To prepare you for this and to help you learn the tunes faster, we're going to revisit a practice method you learned in *Book 1*.

To find Lesson 17, click the green box:

Go on to your next lesson



or go to your Book 2 Course Materials page at

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