

INTRODUCTION

The *Little Peppers* series provides both performance repertoire for beginner pianists and an introduction to twenty-first century techniques. The pieces in *Little Peppers* are designed to develop notational literacy, rhythmic sophistication and technical skill, while at the same time acting as a springboard for students' own creativity.

The pieces in the *Little Peppers* series were written for my young piano students, so each piece has a specific educational goal in mind. But just as important was the desire to write music that allowed young pianists to sound grown up and expert right from their earliest performances. The *Little Peppers* series is also about giving students opportunities to craft their own musical responses to the world about them, and in this *Guided tour* I've included many composing, improvising, arranging and performing activities.

This *Guided tour* is an introduction, not a comprehensive study, and it has been designed for you to tune into the areas that interest you the most. To help you, the following icons are used to code the various teaching suggestions in the book. I hope you enjoy tailoring these ideas and suggestions to your own teaching situation and style.

Performance shortcuts



Rhythmic patterns to practise in advance



Extra training, new techniques



The hands travel around the keyboard in this piece



Unusual hand positions, hand position changes, stretches and extensions



Tonal balance



Pedal



Pitch patterns and scales



Words and lyrics to support learning experiences

Reading shortcuts



Reading strategies, information about the score



Musical structure



Overall tonality and specific chord patterns in the piece



Time signature and pulse structure of the piece



This piece is swung

Creative shortcuts



Improvisation exercises and suggestions for compositions



'Painting the picture': creative exercises using articulation, dynamics and tonal control

Extra shortcuts



Ideas and material to perform with others



Cross-references with other *Little Peppers* pieces






Be prepared for these tricky parts

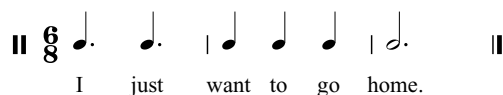
17 Groovy movie


 The right hand has two alternating positions, both using the same white-note/black-note pattern.




 The right and left hands work together to travel down the keyboard at the end of the piece – I use the image of a bungy-jumper to achieve an energetic bounce up in b36, and back down again for the final note.


  Bars 25–26 are a counting challenge! Try using lyrics, like:




 Another blues with the 12-bar pattern doubled to 24, but with a repeat and a coda.


 *Sunshower* used the basic blues harmonic pattern; this piece is more adventurous in its chord structure:


C ⁷	F ¹¹	C ⁷	B ^b ma ⁷ /D	Cm ⁷ C ⁷ /E
F ⁷	F [#] O	C	Gm	A ⁷
D ^{b9}	F ^{ma} ⁷ /G	C ⁶		G ⁷


 Look at *Wake Up, Mozzie* (*Easy Little Peppers*) and *Skedaddle* (*Little Peppers*) for other pieces using this same hand position.


18 Hocus pocus

 This piece has a spooky tendency to speed up – no matter who is playing! Keep a metronome handy so that the steady crotchet/quarter note beat doesn't get out of control in the final lines.

 The octave might be a genuine leap for your students – the staccato articulation makes for a good introduction to this wide stretch for little hands.


 The octave leap goes flying in b19–20. Practise how far you have to travel!

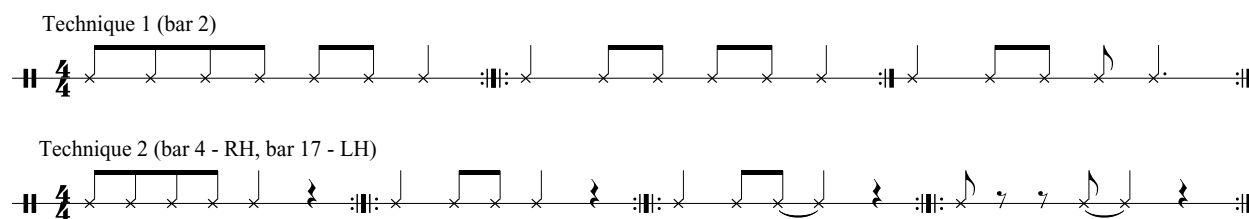
 Watch out for the quick left-hand jump in b12 and the contrary motion thumb tuck in the final bar.

 Your students can use this hand position to create their own right-hand part in b13–18, and b21–22.



19 Wake up

 Clap this rhythm to most children and it's as good as learned; getting adults to perform it comfortably is more difficult! Because this rhythm is hard to sight-read, here are two complementary techniques to help learn it:



Once these rhythms can be easily performed, students should focus on b17 and 19 at the piano to coordinate a controlled swing in the right-hand quavers/eighth notes, while placing the syncopated stabs in the bass with the left hand.



The left hand has three different patterns to master: the first is a simple bass-note pattern with some syncopation, the second is a walking bass line in crotchets/quarter notes, and the third is a ragtime piano part. The walking bass needs a well thought-out and practised fingering, but the ragtime passage should be memorized. Work through these three different left-hand parts early in the learning process.



62 Chatterbox



Bars 12–13 travel down a whole tone scale pattern. Ask students to play this same pattern on the other whole tone scale. Be ready to help them if they can't figure out what 'the other' scale is!



The right hand travels over the left hand in two different ways – b4 and b6 have a swift darting action, while b12 and b13 have a criss-cross action.



The semiquaver/sixteenth note patterns (both scale and trill patterns) are hard to control. Slow metronome practice is recommended to develop an even touch in any dynamic context.