



Little Pianist First Steps: Introductory Part one

By Victor Shevtsov

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Little Pianist First Steps is designed for early beginners, aged 5 to 6. The method book series follows the Russian tradition of playing and teaching the piano, adapted to the characteristics of child psychology and perception. From the very early stages of learning it focuses on establishing a good hand position, developing correct playing habits and freedom of movement. Freedom and flexibility of hands is the main principle, which determines our approach to all technical aspects of teaching piano. In accordance with this principle of freedom and flexibility of hands we avoid any kind of positional playing as it can cause unnecessary tension of child's hands. It also appears to be ineffective for learning music notation. In Introductory Level and Level One books we start playing non legato - the best way for beginners to develop the most important "technical device" - hand relaxation. After children acquire some fluency and freedom of wrist movement in non legato playing we start playing two-note slurs, then staccato and only after that - legato, as playing legato is the most challenging for children to keep their hands flexible. In Level Two books we are focusing on coordination of hands in combining different articulations. An excellent material for such skills is baroque pieces, where left hand usually plays non legato or staccato while in the right hand we find different slurs combined with detached and staccato notes. It usually takes about one year to complete the First Steps Method series. After studying these books students are ready for Anna Magdalena Bach Notebook, Easy Sonatinas by Clementi, Diabelli and repertoire of similar level.

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