AFRICAN
PIANO TUTOR
PIANOFORTE TUTOR
BEGINNERS LEVEL 1

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

FOREWORD BY: VICTOR SOWA MANIESON

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African Piano Tutor
Pianoforte Tutor Beginners Level 1

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi
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DEDICATION

This Book Is Dedicated To My Spiritual And Biological Father
Very Rev. Maxwell Tweneboah Kodua.
God Bless You Daddy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks go to Victor Manieson who has helped me in my music development over the years. Specials thanks also go to my family for the support they have given me over the years.
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FOREWORD

I met Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi in the year 2010 on the Central Campus of the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana where the Music Department is located. My focus was to teach Theory and Applied Musicianship to level 100 to 400 students. Gyebi was among some of the students whose interest in the MUSICALITY of musicians was beyond academia and consequently engaged with me about the intrigues and nuances that confront the professional practices of the field.

Eventually, he managed to convince me to bring him to Accra, where together with two other colleagues did an internship at my school – Mannieson Christian Academy. Gyebi’s practical approach made room for him to supervise my piano students. He progressed into the musical maturity of one with a thirst for foundational building through an Afrocentric lens.

I am excited about this development in Gyebi not only because he is my mentee but also because he artistically makes an appealing essence of existing simple tunes within the culture. I wholeheartedly recommend the African Piano Tutor to all who are interested.

Victor Nii Sowa Manieson.
(Music Ministry Practitioner, Composer, Pianist and Author)
11th April 2021
PREFACE

Music has always been an integral part of the life of the African. From the day a child is born, till the death of the person, music plays a critical role through the rites of passage and other important functions. In view of this, the learning of musical instruments is critical to the African society. The piano, although does not have its origin in Africa, has come to stay and has become part and parcel of the African society since its introduction to Africa. All songs and arrangements unless otherwise stated were composed by the author.

This book seeks to introduce the learner to very simple rhythms to begin the life of the African Musician on the piano. The Pieces are carefully composed to help the learner with the basics of piano playing.

It is my hope that this book will help bring out the musical talents of young musicians in Africa and Beyond.

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi,
2021
UNIT 1

STAFF / STAVE NOTATION
The staff notation is a system of notating music. For the purpose of our studies, we are going to focus more on this system of notating music. The staff consists of 5 horizontal parallel lines as shown below.

![Example of the Staff Notation](image)

TYPES OF STAFFS / STAVES
There are several types of staffs/staves depending on the clef that is put on it. The “clef” is a French word which means “Key”. It is a musical symbol used to indicate the pitches of the staff. It also indicates the names of the lines and spaces. There are several types of clef but for the purpose of our studies, we will be dealing with 4(four) of them. These are Treble, Alto, Tenor and Bass clefs but for the purposes of our study, we will focus on the treble and bass clefs. When a clef is drawn on a staff/stave, the name of the staff assumes the name of the clef, for example, Treble staff, Bass staff, etc.

1. The Treble Staff
The treble staff has the treble clef written on it. The staff is called treble staff because of the treble clef.

![An example of the Treble Staff](image)

Another name for the Treble clef is the G clef. It is called G clef because it usually starts on the G line.

Names of the Lines and Spaces of the Treble Staff
In music there are alphabets. The Alphabets in music are A, B, C, D, E, F, G. These
are the only alphabets in music and they range up to 7 in number. In music, the 8th position will always take you back to where you started and in music, the 8th is also called **octave**.

\[
\text{A,B,C,D,E,F,G,A} \quad \text{B,C,D,E,F,G,A,B} \quad \text{C,D,E,F,G,A,B,C}
\]

**Examples of Octaves**

The clef has given the names to the lines and spaces.

**Names of the Lines on the Treble Staff**

An easier way of memorizing the alphabet is by the use of mnemonics. Example,

\[
\text{E} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{B} \quad \text{D} \quad \text{F}
\]

**Names of the Spaces of the Treble Staff**

A look at the names of the spaces shows that the reading of the name **FACE**

When they are put together this is how it looks.

\[
\text{E} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{B} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{A} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{E}
\]

A critical look at the names reveals that, the lines start from E. From E, we move to
F, from F we move to G and from G we move to A because, as I have said earlier, the Alphabets in music end at G. So from G we move back to A. From A it continues on the same tangent alphabetically.

ii. The Bass Staff
The Bass staff has the Bass clef on it. The Bass clef alters the names of the lines and spaces. The Bass clef is also called “F” clef.

The bass clef is sometimes referred to as F clef because it starts from the line F

Names of Lines on the Bass Staff

Some people have devised mnemonics for these names because it is very important to have these names of the lines in memory. Eg:

Names of the Spaces on the Bass Staff

When they are both put together, it looks like this:-
From a careful study, the lines start from G and moves to A. This is because, in the alphabets of music, from G, we move to A step by step. It must be emphasized that to be a good musician, the names of the lines and spaces should be memorized very well. So when the two staff are put together, it will be seen as presented below.
UNIT 2

RHYTHMIC NOTATION
Rhythm is the movement in music across time. Rhythm is at the heart of every music and as such, there is no music without rhythm. The art of writing the rhythm down is called rhythmic notation. In staff notation, symbols are used to represent rhythm. Different symbols are used. Below is a chart of the symbols and their names and the duration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SYMBOLS</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>REST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi breve / whole note</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minim / half note</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crotchet / quarter note</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaver / one eighth note</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi quaver / sixteenth note</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-demi-quaver / one thirty second note</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The duration of a note is determined by the pulse of the music. Rhythmic notations are also known as musical notes.

Extension of musical notes
It must be said that the duration of musical notes can be extended. There are two ways of extending the duration of a note by a dot (·) or a Tie (∞).

Dotted Notes
A dot in front of a note prolongs the note by half the original value. E.g. 1/2. The original value of a crotchet is 1 and half of 1 is ½ so the value of a dotted crotchet is 1½. Another example. 1/4. The original value of a minim is 2 and half of 2 is one (1) so the new value is (3) (1+ 2 = 3). As a said earlier, the tie too can be used to prolong
the duration of a note. Example \( \text{\LARGE \text{\textfrac{3}{8}}} \). As can be seen, the notes are dotted crotchet and quaver. The tie is adding the two notes that are dotted crotchet which is 1 and a half in value and quaver which has half value. When both notes are added, the new value will be 2 which is equivalent to a minim. It is the combination of all these notes that give us beautiful and good music.

**Time Signatures**

Is a notational convention that indicates the beats and the barring of notes. It is written with two figures like a fraction but it is not a fraction. \( \frac{2}{4} \frac{3}{8} \)

The lower figure represents the beats of the music while the upper figure represents the number of beats in a bar. It is usually found at the beginning of a music right after the key signature.

**Types of Time Signatures**

There are about 7 types of time signatures. These are:

1. Simple
2. Compound
3. Complex
4. Mixed
5. Additive
6. Fractional
7. Irrational meters

For the purpose of our studies, we are going to concentrate only on two (2) time signatures; simple and compound.

1. **Simple Time Signature**

Simple Time signatures are the time signature that has the crotchet as a beat. It usually has 4 as the lower figure. For example \( \frac{3}{4} \).

The lower figure represents the beat which is in relationship with the whole note (semi breave) and the upper figure represents the number of beats in a bar. The beat is usually in crotchet one. Examples of simple time signatures are \( \frac{2}{4} \frac{3}{4} \).

2. **Compound Time Signature**

This is a type of time signature that has the quaver (\( \text{\textfrac{3}{8}} \)) as the beat. It usually has 8 as the lower note. The 8 represents the number of quavers that make a whole note
(semi breave) (0). The figure 8 represents the beats of the music and the upper figure represents the number of beats in a bar. Examples \(\frac{6}{8}\)  

Sometimes, time signatures are also referred to as Duple, Triple and Quadruple. Example \(\frac{2}{4}\) is also called Simple Duple Time. This is referred to as simple because it falls in the category of the simple time signatures and the duple is the upper figure. Likewise, it is also referred to as a simple triple time.
UNIT 3

KEYS SIGNATURES
Key signatures are a set of sharps (♯) and flats (♭) which are put together on a staff. Key signatures are usually found right after the clef at the beginning of music although sometimes they appear at other places on a piece of music usually after a bar line. Key signatures alter the pitch of the notes that they affect. There are two types of key signatures, these are:

(a) *sharp keys*
(b) *flat keys*

Below is a list of all the key signatures.

### SHARP KEYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY SIGNATURE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF SHARPS</th>
<th>LETTERS THAT THEY AFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G MAJOR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D MAJOR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>F,C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A MAJOR</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>F,C,G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E MAJOR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F, C, G,D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is how they stand when they are put on the staff:

![Sharps on staff](image)

Look carefully at where the accidentals are put. They are put exactly where the key signature is affecting.
FLAT KEY SIGNATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY SIGNATURE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FLATS</th>
<th>LETTERS THAT THEY AFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F MAJOR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B, E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>B, E, A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B, E, A, D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is how they are represented on the staff

![Flat Key Signatures on Staff]

A critical look at the above keys shows that the keys are put exactly where they should be.

It must be pointed here that, it is only key C major that does have a flat of a sharp as a key signature. Due to this, key C major is also called the natural key.

SCALE

A scale is a set of notes that are arranged by descending or ascending order of pitch. A scale ordered by an increasing pitch is an ascending scale, while descending scales are ordered by a decreasing pitch. There are several types of scales but for the purpose of our studies, we will be concentrating on the major. The simplest of the major scale is the C major scale which is sometimes referred to as the natural scale.

C MAJOR SCALE

The first key we will play in this book is called C Major which is sometimes called Natural key. Is called natural key because the Major scale is played using the natural keys on the keyboard. The learner must understand the finger positions of this key and as much as possible go by the rules. This key signature does not have any accidental.
Examples of the C MAJOR SCALE
UNIT 3

AFRICAN MUSIC SAMPLES
In this section, the author provides various African music samples he has composed on the basic musical concepts discussed in the previous units to help beginners master playing the piano.
This music is to help the learner play with the fingers 1, 2 and 3. The music must be played smoothly.

Childs Play

This music is a continuation of the minim rhythm. The music introduces the 4th finger.

Play Time
Remember the change of time signature.
There are two rhythms that have been introduced in the music, that is crochet and dotted minims.
This piece is still to help you work on your hands combination. Observe the repeat signs at the end of each staff.

**Okai**

*Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi*

---

With this music, you must check your finger positions. Play the music smoothly. Don’t forget the repeat sign.

**Lets Move**

*Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi*
Work on the movement of both left and right hand. Remember your hand positions. Play the music smoothly.

**SIMPLE MOVEMENT**

```
\begin{music}
\begin{f clef=treble}
\begin{rr}
\bar{1} & \bar{2} & \bar{3} & \bar{4} & \bar{2} & \bar{3} \\
\underline{3} & 2 & 1 & 3 & 1 & 3 \\
\end{rr}
\end{f}
\end{music}
```

This music must be played smoothly. Check the right and left combination.

**Twinkle, Twinkle**

```
\begin{music}
\begin{f clef=treble}
\begin{rr}
\bar{1} & \bar{2} & \bar{3} & \bar{2} & \bar{3} & \bar{1} & \bar{3} & \bar{1} & \bar{3} & \bar{1} & \bar{3} & \bar{1} \\
\underline{\text{Arr: Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi}}
\end{rr}
\end{f}
\end{music}
```

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This music is to help you master the movement of your left hand. The movement must be even and must be played smoothly.

**Left Play**

Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

This music gives you further practice with the left hand. Keep a steady pulse and play it smoothly.

**Turkson**

Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

We are still working on our left hand. Keep on practicing the left hand. A new rhythm has been introduced.

**Lenamanhla**

Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi

\[\text{Music notation image}\]
The purpose of this piece is to further work on your finger positions. Be diligent in practicing your finger positions.

---

In this music, the quaver rhythm continues. The quaver notes must not be rushed through. This music is another test for mastering of finger positions. Don't forget to observe the slurs.

---

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This music is a simple traditional piece, play it smoothly and playfully.

London Bridge

This music is a smooth piece of music, care must be taken when playing the dotted minum notes.

Elvis

This piece introduces the learner to the crotchet. The piece must be played smoothly, putting emphasis on finger positions.

Abusua
The music must be played in Legato. Finger positions are of importance in playing this piece.

YAA

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

This is a continuation of dotted crotchet note. Hope by now you have mastered the finger position.

OJUKU

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi
Onyame Tumfo

Arr: Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi

By this time you should be very familiar with finger positions for pieces like this.

NSAFOA

Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi
MALAIKA
Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi

This music is to help you with your finger positions. More work is to be done with the left.

Bimbo
Gyebi-Tweneboah kwasi
This music introduces the dotted crotchet to the learner. Care must be taken when playing the different rhythms. Play the music in a smooth manner fashion.

Back to School

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

This music must be played smoothly. Check your finger positions and play it with joy.

Kente

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi
THE BEACH

Sesihle M.G Mrara
15/08/2016

LATHTHIA

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

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THIS COPY IS NOT FOR SALE
Traffic

This music must be played smoothly.
Remember to check your finger positions.

Gladys

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

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THIS COPY IS NOT FOR SALE
PAULINA

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI
African Piano Tutor: Pianoforte Tutor Beginners Level 1

NTOMBI

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI

XOLO

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI

GYEBI MUSIC
AMAPOLICA

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI

© GYEBI MUSIC
MATSHA

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI
THANDO

©GYEBI MUSIC
YIZA

GYEBI-TWENEBOAH KWASI

©GYEBI MUSIC
This piece introduces the learner to playing different rhythms on both left and right with more emphasis on the left hand movement. It is to be played smoothly.

WALITO

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

This music is also in F major. Notice the finger positions. The first focuses on the left hand while the second focuses on the right hand.

Asanda

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi
UMNGQUSHO

ATAA

Kacinci

---

I hope by now you can guess the right fingers to use for pieces in F major.

---

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T.K
Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

This is a simple four part harmony. Take time and practice it till you get perfect.

Amen
Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi

God Have Mercy
Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi
CONCLUSION

This book contains the basics of piano play in the African way. It has discussed the staff, clef, the two basic staff that is bass and treble staff. It went further to discuss the rhythmic notation and how the duration of notes prolonged using the dot or the tie. It further touched a bit on time signatures, key signatures and scales.

In this book, learners went further to practice some pieces which are designed to help with the basics of fingering and rhythmic movement. It also introduced some rhythms which are polyphonic in nature. The book is designed to give the learner the basics of playing African rhythms.

The next book will explore more African Rhythms and how these rhythms define music in Africa.
ABOUT BOOK

Music is an integral part of African society and the life of an African revolves around music. Musical instrument play is part and parcel of African music. Thus, learning a musical instrument is part of the African culture. The piano although not African in origin, has been adopted in Africa through globalization and glocalization. This book introduces the learner to piano playing using African rhythm as its theme. It introduces the learner to basic rhythms and basic finger positions to play the simple pieces that are in the book. This book is a result of the author’s many years of teaching piano to beginners. The author hopes that this book forms a foundation for students to learn African rhythms and to love African music for further progression.

ABOUT AUTHOR

Gyebi-Tweneboah Kwasi is a native of Bonwire, Ashanti Region, Ghana. He had his early introduction to music through his father, Maxwell Tweneboah Kodua who was an organist and a guitarist at an early age. In primary school at St. Georges International School, Kumasi, he had the opportunity to learn how to play the piano from Kwame Asare Bediako (John K.). In the same school, he was also introduced to trumpet play. Due to his love for music, he joined New Creation, a contemporary gospel band group as a lead guitarist. It was at this stage that his musical talent blossomed. He had his secondary school education at Kumasi Academy, Ghana. There, he was the choirmaster and organist of the school. He was also the president of Gospel Waves which was a contemporary gospel group in the Scripture Union.

After secondary school, he had the opportunity to attend the University of Education, Winneba-Ghana where he studied for his Bachelor of Education, Music. His major instrument when he was studying at Winneba was the piano. During and after school he worked with a lot of institutions that taught beginners how to play the piano. He has also worked with Manieson Christian Academy, The Piano Lab, and J.B. Music Academy in South Africa. In all these institutions, he was a piano Instructor.

He is currently a freelance piano instructor and a sound engineer.