



**curriculum  
overview**



## Welcome to a world of music

Simply Music is a remarkable, Australian-developed piano and keyboard program that offers a breakthrough in music education. This unique method has children, teens, adults and seniors, playing great sounding blues, classical, contemporary and accompaniment pieces - immediately from their very first lessons.

This Simply Music approach focuses on the fun and sheer pleasure of playing music. The 'hands-on' nature of the program and the immediate results that are produced actively dispel the notion that learning to play means enduring years of lessons, boring practice sessions and relentless hours of drills.

Without a doubt there are a multitude of myths that surround music lessons. These include such things as, "learning piano is hard," or "if you didn't learn when you were young then you've lost the opportunity," or "it takes a special talent." These are common misconceptions. In fact, everybody has the ability to express themselves musically. So how did these myths emerge in the first place?

The common and traditional entry into learning piano is a 'reading-based' approach. In other words, students are first taught the fundamentals of music-reading as the means of learning how to play. As a result, progress is commonly slow and frustrating, and many students never develop a love for the process. Often, students never really acquire the ability to play the instrument, nor retain it as a life-long companion.

In fact, teaching music-reading as a means of learning how to play, is like insisting that very young children first learn how to spell and read as a means of learning how to talk!

In reality, children learn to talk long before they learn to spell and read. Furthermore, we all learn to tie our shoelaces, brush our teeth, button up our shirt and thread a needle by doing those things, experiencing them directly and never by studying the 'theory' of the subject or referring to notes. In other words, we learn by doing.

Our 'playing-based' approach is founded on the premise that everybody, without exception, is musical. Life is musical, profoundly so. Our hearts beat to a steady 'thump' - that is rhythm, the foundation of all music. Walking is a highly rhythmical, graceful, musical act. Conversation is made up of spoken sentences and phrases of astonishing musical complexity, yet is easily and naturally available to us all.

Our innate connection to music is precisely what gives us the ability to talk. The Simply Music program both draws on and 'feeds' the natural sense of music we all possess, and teaches students to play the piano by immersing them in the actual process of playing.

The Simply Music method begins by translating pieces of music into a unique series of simple concepts that unfold directly onto the keyboard. Beginning students, with no attention on having to read music, are free to relate directly to the piano.

Within months, they easily and naturally establish a 'hands-on' and personal 'feeling' for the instrument and build a Playlist that includes contemporary, classical, gospel, blues and jazz styles.

The bottom line is that students get to experience the absolute joy that comes from being able to immediately play a broad repertoire of great-sounding music.

Typically, students in their second year of lessons (and with a repertoire of 35 to 50 pieces), go on to learn how to read music and understand more theory. Their ability to play piano so well provides a natural and ideal foundation.

Simply Music students - children, teenagers, adults and seniors alike - are discovering that they have an ability to learn piano more easily and naturally than they thought possible.

Please read on to find out more about the structure of the **Simply Music curriculum**.



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the structure of the  
simply music program



## 2 the structure of the simply music program

### Our goals

Our overriding goal is to create a culture where people of all ages, easily and readily acquire and maintain music as a lifelong companion. Inside of this goal, there are specific goals that we focus on achieving.

When comparing Simply Music to other programs, it is important to understand that our stated goals are distinctly different from traditional methods.

Our foundation for achieving results, and the thrust of our efforts, are directed towards the following goals for you as a student:

- Having the ability to play a huge repertoire covering classical, popular, blues, jazz and accompaniments;
- Experiencing playing as a natural self-expression;
- Having a highly positive, self-affirming experience with music learning;
- Developing the ability to self-generate. i.e. the ability to progress independently. This includes developing a strong foundation in music reading and theory.

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Steve Manuel – Executive Producer – Prime Time  
Discovery Channel – Washington, DC

*“Let me begin by saying just how thrilled I am with the Simply Music program. I’m playing better now than I did after years of traditional lessons.”*

### Variables

In the learning environment, there are many factors that will affect your progress. Your musical growth will be influenced by elements such as:

- Your age;
- How often you have lessons – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly;
- Accessibility to an instrument to practice on;
- How you practice, including the way you utilize the program and materials, practice frequency and duration.

Although the Simply Music curriculum unfolds over 6 to 10 years, and remembering the variables that affect your individual rate of progress, on the following page is a broad outline of the Simply Music program covering your first 3-year period:



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## the structure of the simply music program

### Year one

- 35 to 50 pieces of various musical genres;
- Develop the basics of accompaniment performance;
- Establish a strong foundation of playing;
- Prepare for the introduction of music writing and reading, as well as music composition.

### Year two

- 25 to 40 pieces of various musical genres;
- Develop a stronger foundation of blues and jazz;
- Develop a stronger foundation of classical and contemporary music;
- Develop a broader experience of accompaniment performance;
- Develop a foundation of music reading, writing and composition;

### Year three

- 15 to 30 pieces of various musical genres;
- Expand accompaniment performance and music composition;
- Develop a more complex classical and popular foundation;
- Develop more complex blues and jazz foundation;
- Develop the basics of improvisation and arrangement;
- Expand the foundation and understanding of music theory and its practical application.

In subsequent years, the students tend to shape the trend and direction of the learning content according to preferences, biases, the breadth of foundation that has been established, and the particular skill sets and strengths that the student has acquired.

This allows for students to be self-generative and experience being more responsible for their own learning.



## 2 the structure of the simply music program

### How music reading is introduced.

While there is no definitive point when Simply Music students begin the reading process, it begins in the first year, with the sight-reading of chord symbols used in contemporary accompaniment. It is then more formally introduced after building a solid repertoire of 35 to 50 pieces.

The larger and more fluent the student's repertoire, the easier it is to successfully introduce the music reading process.

Our goal is to equip students with the ability to progress independently. Not only does this include building a vast repertoire, but also having the ability to read and write music, compose, arrange, improvise as well as have an understanding of foundational theory.

As with all aspects of the Simply Music program, our approach to achieving this is unique, and built around the 'playing-based' principles that students have been learning since their very first lessons.

### Seven languages

Unlike reading a book written in our native language, proficient music reading requires students to process up to seven different languages occurring simultaneously:

- Notes
- Rhythm
- Dynamics
- Lyrics
- Fingering
- Pedaling
- Order and Continuity (Form)

Unfortunately, with many traditional methods, beginning students are commonly expected to read several of these languages at one time. Perhaps a more suitable title for this would be to call it 'multiplesimultaneous- language-translation and processing'!

To call it music 'reading', profoundly misrepresents the difficulty and complexity of what it is that students are being expected to do. And as if that is already not enough, students often have to simultaneously focus on the complexities associated with the formal development of technique.

With so much occurring at once, any wonder that students struggle and are often left with an unrewarding experience, and easy to see why so many have struggled, so unnecessarily, for so long.



## 2 the structure of the simply music program

### The simply music approach

Reading music is a 'receptive' skill, whereby students 'receive' instructions from the page. In contrast, writing music is a 'generative' skill whereby instructions are 'generated' by the student and then 'reverse-engineered' on to the written page.

The Simply Music reading program is a 'generative' approach. This means that the student's ability to read music is based on developing a comprehensive ability to write music.

Within Simply Music, the words 'reading' and 'writing' are inseparable and one in the same.

When students have built an appropriate repertoire, we introduce the reading process by firstly teaching rhythm, and only rhythm! This is the natural starting place, because all human beings are so highly and naturally developed in this area.

Our approach starts by discovering and connecting with the natural rhythms at the heart of our daily actions. We then quantify those rhythms and focus them into the hands. Beyond this we translate these rhythms onto the keyboard, and subsequently 'reverse-engineer' them on to the page.

In other words, we introduce music reading to that which the student already has a highly developed ability to do.

After establishing a strong, rhythm-reading foundation, we then introduce note reading, a second language, as and when appropriate. As part of this process, we draw on the vast repertoire of songs that the students already know and can play thoughtlessly.

Although we use an intervallic system of reading, which is becoming a more common and successful approach, our strategy and methodology is unique and remains consistent with our playingbased principles. Students learn how to firstly re-interpret their repertoire as intervals (the distance between notes), they then learn how to map these intervals into their hands and on to the keyboard.

Only when students have a strong and clear ability with this do we then reverse-engineer intervals onto the page. The additional languages of music are slowly and gradually introduced at an appropriate time, and in a structured, easily digestible manner.

The entire process is very natural and easily assimilated, and being 'generative' in nature, it too allows students to experience being responsible for their own development.

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Dr. Anne Margaret Wright (Psy.D.)  
Educational Consultant for: *The Old Schoolhouse Magazine*

*"This is a wonderful music program and the results are astounding! Even if you don't consider yourself musically talented, this program is designed for you! It is easy to understand and easy to play a full repertoire of beautiful songs from a variety of genres. I also think this program could be a major breakthrough for children with a variety of cognitive delays and learning disabilities. I love the Simply Music approach."*

## 2 the structure of the simply music program

### Moving forward

It is important to understand that as students venture into the reading process, they do not stop building their repertoire of great-sounding music. Reading becomes an additional stream that runs alongside their regular, playing-based projects.

With a strong foundation of playing, reading and writing music, students have a solid basis on which to move forward into more advanced musicianship.

### The structure of your lessons

The program can only be presented by a Licensed Simply Music Teacher. The standard arrangement is for students to attend one lesson each week, either in a shared or private lesson format, according to what is most appropriate.

When the student is younger, and has not learned the tools needed to sustain long-term relationships, we explore the impact that happens as a result of the parent or adult guardian being present at the lessons. The role of this person is crucial, and goes far beyond the obvious.

Our first lesson, the Foundation Session is dedicated to exploring this, and provides parents with a much deeper insight into the extraordinary role they can play in contributing to their child's success.

The Foundation Session, also explores the practical side of the learning process, the basics of common sense and professionalism, and how they apply to the learning environment.

Punctuality, thorough completion of any paperwork and timely payment of fees are required in order to preserve the business and personal integrity of the student/teacher relationship. In order to achieve the expected result, three specific conditions must be achieved. These are as follows:

- The studio environment must be professionally and adequately equipped;
- The Licensed Teacher must be adequately trained, prepared and ready to teach;
- The student must be both able and willing to learn;
- The parent must understand what they contribute.

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**Marsha Goodstein**

*"My daughter is 7, and had no prior music knowledge. This has absolutely surpassed our expectations. Recently she played for 100 people and brought the house down."*



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## the structure of the simply music program

### Choosing an instrument

You will need to have access to an instrument. When choosing a piano or keyboard, budget is often an important factor. Almost all pianos have 88 keys, and have all of the preferred benefits and features. A local piano technician or piano tuner can provide valuable advice, and can often at times assist when considering purchasing a second-hand instrument. When choosing an electronic keyboard, there are certain features to look for. The more features, the more the cost. Use the following guidelines: (in order of importance)

- Minimum of 61 regular-sized keys
- If affordable, an 88-key digital piano or keyboard would be ideal
- A sustain pedal (not a sustain 'button')
- Touch sensitive keys
- Weighted keys.

Obviously there are numerous other features, many of which come as 'standard' on many of today's modern instruments. These, whilst potentially interesting and/or beneficial, are not a necessary part of a successful Simply Music experience.

If you do not have an instrument, and are unable to afford one, you may find that a friend, relative or neighbor who has an instrument, is often willing to allow you to practice on theirs.

In addition, many churches and community service groups often have a piano that is somewhat accessible.

### The practice structure

We request that you find 15 to 20 minutes, 5 or 6 days each week to practice, most importantly, at a specific time. We will discuss this in the Foundation Session.

Practice time is separate from any time where you may be sitting down and playing for fun and pleasure. Students often wish to practice more than this, and we encourage that. We have found that doing smaller, more regular practice sessions is more effective than longer, less frequent sessions.

Your Simply Music Licensed Teacher is required to regularly provide each and every student with various Student Home Materials. Students are required to use these, as they are an integral and crucial part of the learning environment, and facilitate the entire learning experience.

During the Foundation Session (Lesson One), we will explore this remarkable range of support materials that students are provided with, and that essentially allow them to have the 'teacher-based' lesson, at home, as many times during the week as they wish. A truly extraordinary support system.

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Mary Pride  
Publisher, Practical Homeschool Magazine

*"I have seen a lot of music programs over the years. Some were fun. Some were clever. Some were thorough. Here's one that has it all. In terms of presentation, effectiveness, philosophy – you name it – there's nothing out there that compares at all."*

## Managing success

The Simply Music program has come about as a result of tens of thousands of hours of development and implementation. Throughout this time we have come to see that certain things that are done, or not done, will have a detrimental effect, thwart the process and erode students' success. The following is a list of the most important factors:

- Not adhering precisely to all the teacher's requirements
- Adding to, changing, or removing from the actual content of the teaching method itself
- Irregular attendance and/or infrequent practice sessions
- Not fully reviewing and utilizing the Student Home Materials
- Moving too quickly
- Trying to force a result
- Failing to create an environment that is conducive to producing a satisfactory result:
  - using an inadequate instrument
  - having an instrument in a room that is not easily and readily accessible
  - inadequate parental support
  - the unwillingness to acknowledge our own responsibility in any of the above.

As stated earlier, regardless of the above, a successful result can only occur when a student is able and willing to learn, and allows themselves to be supported in doing so.

Our commitment is that each student has a highly successful, Simply Music experience. If, at any time, you have a suggestion, comment or communication that you believe would improve our service and/or results, please feel free to discuss this with your teacher, or contact Simply Music directly at: [info@simplymusic.com](mailto:info@simplymusic.com)

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### Rebecca Bolin

*"After a year of traditional lessons our son was only playing one hand and one note at a time. He was discouraged and ready to quit. We then switched him to Simply Music and he now plays blues, jazz and classical pieces. He LOVES piano now."*





# 3

## the simply music method

Neil Moore, the creator of the Simply Music program, was born in 1957 in Melbourne, Australia, and began studying piano at the age of 7. He moved to the United States in 1994 and currently lives in Sacramento with his wife and three children.

He has spent most of his life actively involved in developing 'playingbased' music principles. He composes and arranges much of the music used throughout the Simply Music program, and his experience includes teaching in schools, leading

seminars and workshops, as well as owning and operating a network of music teaching studios. He regularly conducts training programs in Australia, the United States and Canada. Neil's most extensive field of focus is the training and coaching of music teachers.

Neil is the spokesperson for the Simply Music organization, and oversees its executive and administrative operations.

	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
<b>Foundation Programs</b>	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Level 9									
<b>Development Programs</b>										Level 10	Level 11	Level 12	Level 13	Level 14	Level 15	Level 16	Level 17	Level 18
<b>Special Programs</b>	<p>Composition and Improvisation</p> <p>Arrangements 1</p> <p>Accompaniment 1</p> <p>Arrangements 2</p> <p>Accompaniment 1 Variations</p> <p>Blues and Improvisation</p> <p>Reading Rhythm 1</p> <p>Arrangements 3</p> <p>Reading Notes 1</p> <p>Time for More Music 1</p> <p>Jazz 1</p> <p>Accompaniment 2</p> <p>Reading 2</p> <p>Time For More Music 2</p> <p>Jazz 2</p>																	

# 3

## the simply music method

### Introductory session

If you would like to find out more about how the Simply Music method would work for you, call about the possibility of a free Introductory Session in your area. At these sessions we discuss how the program was developed, talk about how Simply Music differs from conventional methods, demonstrate the types of results that our beginning students are achieving, as well as provide an opportunity to address any questions.

### Visit us online

Simply Music may be something that you would like to participate in, either now or in the future. If you would like additional information, or would like to find a teacher nearest you, please visit our website at: [www.simplymusic.com](http://www.simplymusic.com)



**Simply Music is a revolutionary, Australian-developed piano learning method that offers a breakthrough in Music education. This remarkable approach has students of all ages playing great-sounding contemporary, classical, gospel, blues and accompaniment pieces – immediately – from their very first lessons!**

**Simply Music**

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