

## Playing by ear and learning to read/sing music.

*Pauline de Snoo*

This is a limited course which you can actually copy and keep separately as something to study from. The more extensive version will be published in volume two of my tutor. Do remember that you cannot practice this within a week but you will need to go slow and take it step by step. Mastering the first and then go on to the next. Find your own (children's) tunes to practice on after having done the examples given with this text. Play and sing the notes. Then try to sing without using the instrument except for the first note to start with.

### First step:

Find the notes of "Star light, Star bright" on your instrument, only two at the time and sing "Soh me". Next step; press any button and call that "Soh" then find "me" using your ears only.

It takes a bit of patience to do this exercise but it will help you

Doh is B flat

s m s m s m m s s m

Star - light, Star - bright, First star I see to - night.

5 s s m s s m s s m s s m

Wish I may, wish I might, Have the wish I wish to - night.

a lot. Just do this very slowly and once you found a soh-me combination repeat that a few times and then just listen very well to your instrument and vary with the dynamics (loudness). Do this by beginning from any button on your instrument.

It is like doing "Zen" or meditating. But it will open your ears

## Second step:

La, Soh me in Bye Baby Bunting

Now we are going to expand with one note.

These are the steps to take:

- Find the notes and sing them as you play them. Go very slow and

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 2/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the song: "Bye ba - by bunt - ing, Dad - dy's gone a hunt - ing to". The second staff contains the melody for the second line: "catch a lit - tle rab - bit skin to wrap the ba - by bunt - ing in." Below the notes, there are rhythmic patterns represented by dots and vertical lines, such as "s : m . l" and "s . s : m . l", which correspond to the syllables "soh", "me", and "la".

repeat a few times. Listen carefully to your voice and to the instrument's sound.

- Vary with the dynamics, louder and softer and all in between.

Realize what you are doing to produce these dynamics.

- Press any button on your instrument and call that tone "Soh", then try to find the "la" and "me" to go with it. Repeat the found notes a few times before continuing to play other buttons.

When you can do this you can proceed to the third step. With patience you will reach wonderful results much faster than in haste.

## Third step:

I hope you have discovered that you can now use all the buttons on your concertina. Also those on the outside rows which are the flat and sharp keys and which you may have found difficult to use when reading music.

Having used the syllables "soh, me", and "soh, la, me" you can repeat this exercise and while doing so give them the names of the notes as you need them for reading the dots in order to find the correct button on the concertina.

In fact using those syllables is your help to realize that the sound of the intervals (distance between the notes) is the same no matter which scale you are playing (from which button your start).

Whether it is in the scale of C with no sharps or flats or in the key of B major with 5 sharps and so on.

But it is of course also very useful to know which notes they actually are. From that point you can also begin to recognize the intervals when reading music.

We can now move on another step.

We are going to play Soh, me and doh and Soh, me, ray doh.

As before:

First play the tunes: "Come and join a march with me" and Mary had a little lamb", then sing them and repeat this, starting anywhere with any button.

Practice in the same ways as given before. Of course do these two tunes one by one.

Doh is G

Come and join a march with me, It is eas - y you can see.

5 One foot up and one foot down, March - ing march - ing through the town.

The image shows two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for "Come and join a march with me, It is eas - y you can see." The second staff contains the melody for "One foot up and one foot down, March - ing march - ing through the town." Below each staff are rhythmic patterns using 'd' for down and 'm' for up, with dots indicating the timing of each note.

Doh is G

Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb,

5 Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb whose fleece was white as snow.

The image shows two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb, lit - tle lamb,". The second staff contains the melody for "Mar - y had a lit - tle lamb whose fleece was white as snow." Below each staff are rhythmic patterns using 'm' for up and 'r' for down, with dots indicating the timing of each note.

### Fourth step:

Now I have added the "fa" in "Fiddle-de-de".

The procedure is as always:

Doh is F

Fid-dle-de-de Fid-dle-de-de, the fly has mar-ried the bum-ble-bee, Says the fly says he will you

6 | m : d : d | d : | m : d : d | d : : d | r : : r | s : s : s | m : : d | d : : d . d | l : : l | l : l : l  
mar - ry me, and live with me sweet bum - ble - bee? Fid - dle - de - de

10 | l : : s | s : : s | f : : f | f : : f | f : : m | m : : | m : d : d | d : :  
Fid - dle - de - de, the fly has mar - ried the bum - ble - bee.

| m : d : d | d : : d | r : : r | s : s : s | m : : d | d : :

Play the notes as written, sing along with "doh, ray, me" and when you have learned this tune start on any other button and play the same tune over and over again in different places which mean that you practise to play in different keys.

Next you can write down the notes you found and learn to recognise them from paper. This will improve your reading skills. You can then add also the names of the notes as generally used for the respective keys (a, b, c and so on).

### Fifth step:

The procedure is as before but now we come to the full scale and I have added the "ti" in an "English Round".

You now know the whole scale from doh to doh.

Of course some notes will be outside the octave. This means that when you sing or play the la under the doh this will be indicated by a small sign next to it as follows; l, .

When it is the la above the doh it will be: l' .

Doh is G

### English round

Hey, Ho! No - bod - y home, Meat no drink nor mon-ey have I none,

5 Yet, I will be mer - ry ver - y mer-ry. Hey, Ho! No - bo - dy home.

So the little slash low or high will indicate whether it is under or above the octave you are working in. There will be no slash when you are inside the range of the octave.

This is limited but if you manage to go through it slowly and thoroughly and then apply it to other tunes, your progress will become very different from what you are used to. It does require patience though. Especially in the beginning.

Extra exercise: Practice the scales below and sing them giving them the note names in Doh, ray, me and also the names as in "C, D, E etc.  
scale in sol-fa

Doh is C

C D E F G A B C D C B A G F E D C

6

Doh is G

G A B C D E F# G A B C D C B A G F# E D C B A G

13

Doh is F

F G A Bb C D E F E D C Bb A G F E D C D E F