

Alfred's Premier Piano Express

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All-In-One Accelerated Course

Lesson ■ Theory ■ Technique ■ Performance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Foreword	2
	Review	3
UNIT 1	D Minor Scales and Chords	6
UNIT 2	The Baroque Period and Sixteenth Notes in $\frac{3}{8}$ Time	10
UNIT 3	Augmented Triads	16
UNIT 4	Sharp Key Signatures	22
UNIT 5	Dotted Eighth Note	29
UNIT 6	The Classical Period and Sixteenth Notes in $\frac{6}{8}$ Time	33
UNIT 7	B \flat Major and G Minor Scales and Chords	40
UNIT 8	Mixed Meter and Diminished Triads	48
UNIT 9	B Minor Scales and Chords	52
UNIT 10	E \flat Major and C Minor Scales and Chords	56
UNIT 11	The Romantic Period	64
UNIT 12	Flat Key Signatures	70
UNIT 13	The Contemporary Period	76
UNIT 14	Solo Repertoire	82

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ISBN-10: 1-4706-3864-9
ISBN-13: 978-1-4706-3864-1


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Foreword

Premier Piano Express is designed for students who need a fast-paced approach to piano study. Based on the concepts and music from *Premier Piano Course*, this All-in-One Accelerated Course integrates Lesson, Theory, Technique, and Performance pages. This comprehensive course is organized into skills-based units that feature clear explanations of important musical concepts and written worksheets to provide review and strengthen understanding.

Book 4 continues the steady development of artistry and keyboard skills that began in Book 1. The keys of B-flat and E-flat major are introduced. Also introduced are melodic minor scales, augmented triads, diminished triads, and major key signatures with more sharps and flats. Sixteenth notes in $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$ meter, , and cut time are added to other rhythms of gradually increasing complexity, including mixed meter and syncopated rhythm patterns. Elements of musical style in the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary periods introduce students to considerations in performing music of those eras. Technical skills include the development of playing two-octave scales and arpeggios, grace notes, off-beat accompaniment patterns, and note-against-note coordination.

Audio recordings can be downloaded for those pieces in the book identified with a speaker icon (). There are two versions of each piece:

1. A **practice tempo** performed on acoustic piano.
2. A **performance tempo** performed on acoustic piano.

These files can be downloaded at **alfred.com/premierpianoexpress**.

TNT 2 Custom Mix Software (also downloadable) allows the user to change tempos in these audio files.

These recordings add musical interest, and motivate students in the lesson and during practice.

The authors of *Premier Piano Express* send our best wishes as you begin this exciting musical journey!

All music was composed or arranged by
Dennis Alexander and Martha Mier.

Audio Recordings Download Instructions:

PC: After downloading the “Premier Piano Express Book 4.zip” file, right-click on it and select “Extract All.” Follow the onscreen prompts to extract the zip file. Once the extraction is finished, the MP3s can be moved to your computer or MP3 player for listening.

Mac: After downloading the “Premier Piano Express Book 4.dmg” file, double-click it to open the disc image. From there, the MP3s can be moved to your computer or MP3 player for listening.

TNT 2 System Requirements:

Windows

10, 8, 7, Vista, XP
QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
1.8 GHz processor or faster
350 MB hard drive space, 2 GB RAM minimum
Speakers or headphones
Internet access required for updates/downloads

Macintosh

OS X 10.4 or higher (Intel only)
QuickTime 7.6.7 or higher
350 MB hard drive space, 2 GB RAM minimum
Speakers or headphones
Internet access for updates/downloads

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UNIT 1 D Minor Scales and Chords

D Minor Scale *Relative Minor of F Major*

The *relative minor* scale begins on the 6th note of the major scale. Therefore, D minor is the *relative minor* of F major. The keys of F major and D minor have one flat in the key signature—B \flat .

F Major



D Minor

You can also find the relative minor by counting 3 *half steps* down from the tonic.



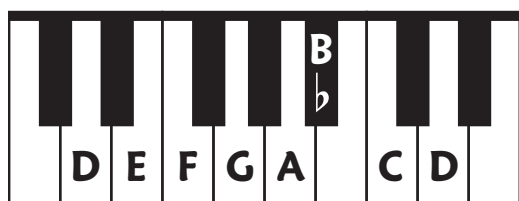
D NATURAL MINOR SCALE



D Natural Minor Scale

In the D natural minor scale, there is one flat (B \flat).

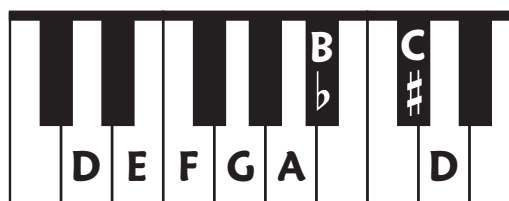
Half steps occur between notes 2–3 (E–F) and 5–6 (A–B \flat).



D Harmonic Minor Scale

The D harmonic minor scale is the same as the D natural minor scale, but with the 7th (C) raised a half step. The C \sharp is written as an accidental.

7th raised



Playing D Minor Scales—Hands Separately

Say the finger numbers as you practice slowly. Play the LH 2 octaves *lower* than written. Memorize the fingering.

D Natural Minor

Repeat 1 octave higher.



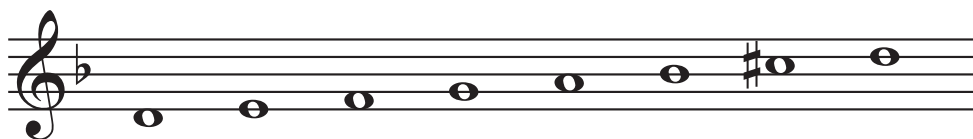
D Harmonic Minor

Repeat 1 octave higher.



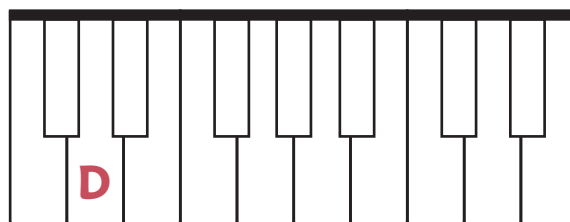
Worksheet D Harmonic Minor Scale

D Harmonic Minor Scale

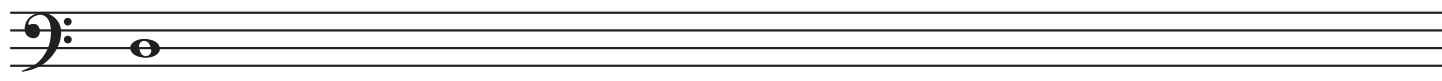


1. The D harmonic minor scale is the same as the D natural minor scale, but with the 7th note raised a half step. The raised note in D harmonic minor is ____ #.

2. On the keyboard, write the letter names for the notes in the D harmonic minor scale.
Circle the keys that have a half step between them.



3. Using whole notes, write the D harmonic minor scale going up.



4. On the blank lines *above* the notes, write the fingering for the RH D harmonic minor scale.
Then play.



5. On the blank lines *below* the notes, write the fingering for the LH D harmonic minor scale.
Then play.



Musical Style Periods: The Baroque Period (1600–1750)

Baroque means “irregularly shaped pearl.” The word *Baroque* was first used to describe the ornate architecture of the period, which had many swirls and other decorations. Much of the music from the same period had ornate sounds created by embellishments or ornaments such as trills.

During the Baroque Period:

- Much music was composed for popular dances of the time, such as minuets and gavottes.
- The main keyboard instruments were the harpsichord with its plucked strings, the clavichord with its delicately struck strings, and the organ.
- Three important keyboard composers were Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), George Frideric Handel (1685–1759), and Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757). All three composers were born in the same year.

1607 The British settled in North America in Jamestown, Virginia.

1638 King Louis XIV (14th) of France was born. He ruled for over 70 years and had a great impact on music and dance of the period.

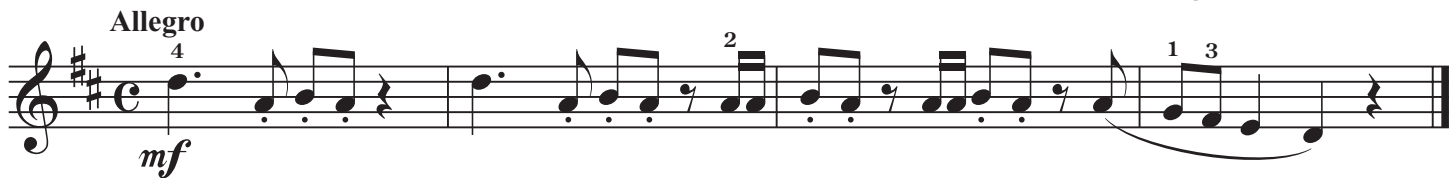
1725 Johann Sebastian Bach compiled the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*, dedicated to his wife.

1741 George Frideric Handel composed the *Messiah* for chorus and orchestra. Even today it is performed frequently, especially at Christmas.

Play these melodies from the Baroque period. Count aloud.

1. Hallelujah Chorus (from *Messiah*)

George Frideric Handel



2. Minuet (from *Sonata in C Major*)

Domenico Scarlatti
K. 73; L. 217



Practice Plan

Because Baroque music often has independent lines (called *counterpoint*) being played at the same time, it is useful to practice in a certain way. Follow these suggestions while practicing *Minuet in G Major*.

■ Section A (measures 1–16)

1. Practice each hand separately, carefully observing the phrasing and *staccato* (lightly detached) marks.
2. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 7–8, 11–12, and 15–16 hands together. Then play, hands together.

■ Section B (measures 17–32)

1. Practice each hand separately, carefully observing the phrasing and *staccato* marks.
2. First, play the LH rhythm in measures 25–26 as three quarter notes. Then play, holding the half notes for two counts each. (Notice they overlap.)
3. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 25–32 hands together. Then play, hands together.

Minuet in G Major 4

(from the *Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach*)

Christian Petzold (1677–c. 1733)*
BWV Anh. 114

Section A

Allegro moderato

* Although this piece is often said to be written by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), recent research suggests that it was composed by Christian Petzold, a German organist and composer.

13

17 **Section B**

21

25

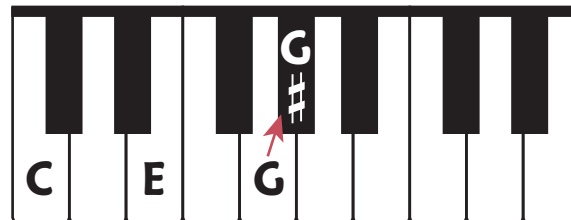
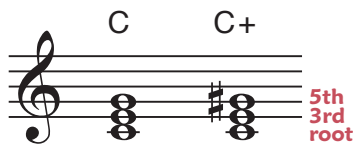
29

UNIT 3 Augmented Triads

Augmented Triads

The word *augment* means to make larger.

A major triad becomes augmented when the 5th is raised one half step. A plus sign (+) indicates an augmented chord.

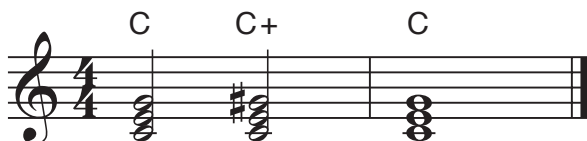


To make a C major triad augmented, raise G (the 5th) one half step to G#.

Playing Major and Augmented Triads

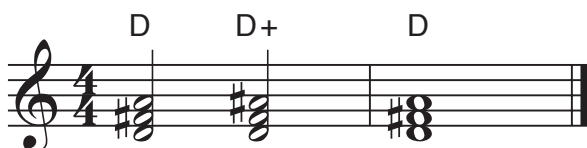
Play *major* and *augmented* triads. Raise the top note of the *major* triad one half step to form an *augmented* (+) triad. Practice one group of triads each day.

Group 1: C, G, F (Major Triads: white key–white key–white key)



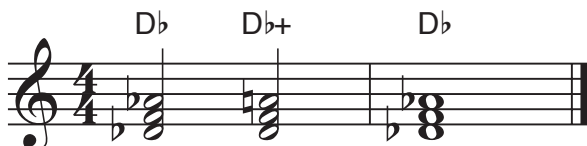
- Transpose to G and F.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 2: D, A, E (Major Triads: white key–black key–white key)



- Transpose to A and E.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 3: D^b, A^b, E^b (Major Triads: black key–white key–black key)



- Transpose to A^b and E^b.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 4: B^b, B, F# (G^b) (Major Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to B and F# (G^b).
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Worksheet Augmented Triads

1. Draw a line to connect each triad name in the center column to the matching bass-clef triad in the left column and the matching treble-clef triad in the right column.

	A\flat major	
	G augmented	
	E major	
	C augmented	

2. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 1 major triad. Remember to *raise the top note of the major triad one half step* to form the augmented triad. Then play.

C C+ G G+ F F+

3. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 2 major triad. Then play.

D D+ A A+ E E+

4. Using half notes, write an augmented (+) triad for each Group 3 major triad. Then play.

D \flat D \flat + A \flat A \flat + E \flat E \flat +

Grace Note

A small note with a slash is an ornament called a **grace note**. It is a decorative note. Play it quickly, before the beat of the note that follows.



Carnaval de Buenos Aires* 5

Moderato

The musical score for "Carnaval de Buenos Aires" is written in 4/4 time with a moderate tempo. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into three systems. The first system begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic. The second system starts with a measure box containing the number 4. The third system starts with a measure box containing the number 8 and includes the instruction "2nd time to Coda" with a Coda symbol. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass staves, notes, rests, and fingerings.

* Buenos Aires is the capital of Argentina. It hosts an annual carnival where people dress in colorful costumes.

12

15

18

D. C. al Coda Θ

Θ Coda

25

UNIT 4 Sharp Key Signatures

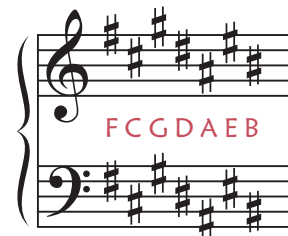
Sharp Key Signatures

The key signature (the sharps or flats at the beginning of the staff) identifies two things:

- The key of the piece.
- The *sharps* or *flats* to be played throughout the piece.

The sharps that are used in key signatures are *always* written in the same order on the staff: **F C G D A E B**

Play the sharps in order on the keyboard.



Memorize the order of the sharps.
This sentence will help you remember:
Furry **c**ats **g**et **d**irty **a**fter **e**very **b**ath.

Finding a Sharp Key Signature's Name

Use these two steps:

- Name the *last* sharp.
- Then go *up one half step*.

This is the name of the major key.



Last sharp: C#
Up one half step: D
Key of D Major

You have already learned the following key signatures:

- C major—no sharps or flats
- G major—1 sharp
- D major—2 sharps

Name the following keys by circling the last sharp and then going up one half step.



Key of ____ major



Key of ____ major



Key of ____ major

Two-Octave Scales Beginning on White Keys

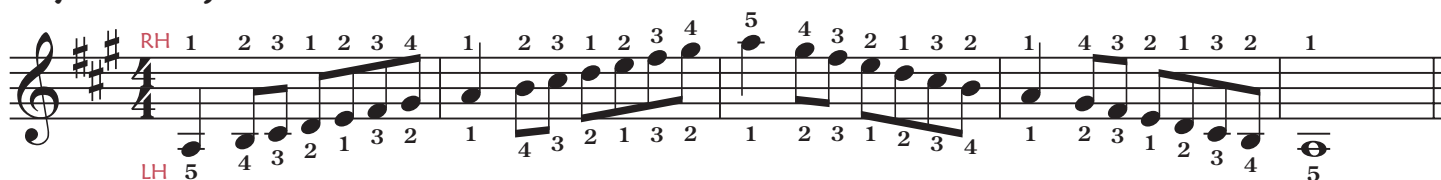
You have played one-octave scales for C, G, D, and F major, and A, E, and D minor. Follow the fingering below and play the scales hands separately for two octaves.

	1st octave	2nd octave
C, G, D, Am, Em, Dm	RH: 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 LH: 5 4 3 2 1 3 2	1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5 1 4 3 2 1 3 2 1

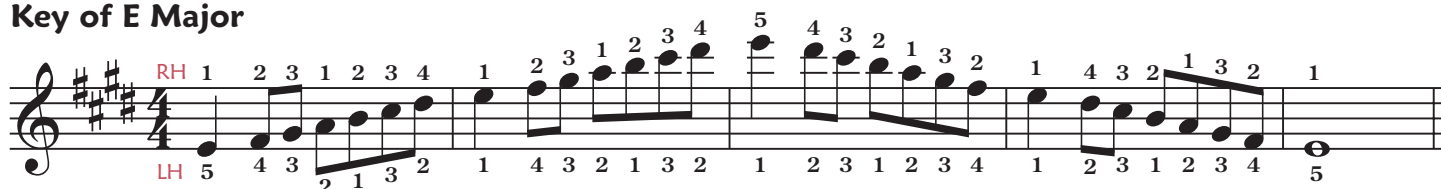
New Sharp-Key Major Scales Beginning on White Keys

Name the sharps in each key and circle each note that is played as a sharp. Then practice hands separately. Play the LH two octaves lower than written.

Key of A Major



Key of E Major



Key of B Major



Hints for remembering the fingering of two-octave major scales that begin on white keys:

- The keys of C, G, D, A, and E major and A, E, and D minor use the same fingering in each hand.
- The RH for B major and the LH for F major use the same fingering as C, G, D, A, and E major.
- The LH for B major and the RH for F major never use finger 5.

UNIT 5 Dotted Eighth Note

Dotted Eighth Note

An eighth note tied to a sixteenth note equals a dotted eighth note.

$$\text{eighth} + \text{sixteenth} = \text{dotted eighth}$$

$$\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$$

count count count

The dotted eighth note is almost always followed by a sixteenth note.



The dot increases the length of a note by half its value.

Clap and count each pattern.

1.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

3.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

2.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

4.
 Count: 1 e + a 2 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a

Dotted Eighth Note Patterns

- Study the rhythm pattern in each exercise.
- Each repeated pattern begins on the key that is one step above or below the first pattern.
- First, practice slowly. Then, gradually increase the tempo.

Moderato

1.
 Treble clef, *mf*. Pattern bracket above each measure. Bass clef, 3. Pattern bracket above each measure.

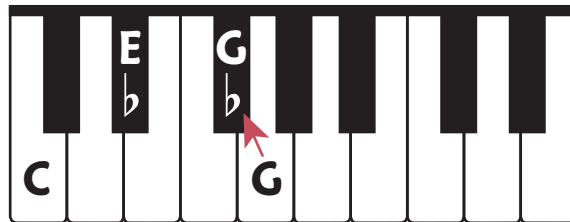
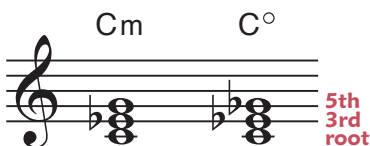
Moderato

2.
 Treble clef, *mf*. Pattern bracket above each measure. Bass clef, 1. Pattern bracket above each measure.

Diminished Triads

The word *diminish* means *to make smaller*.

A minor triad becomes diminished when the 5th is lowered one half step. A small circle (°) indicates a diminished chord.

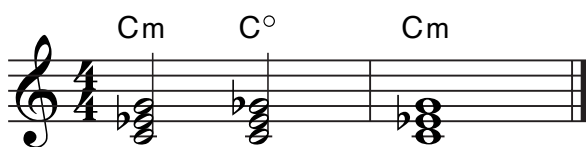


To make a C minor triad diminished, lower G (the 5th) one half step to G♭.

Playing Minor and Diminished Triads

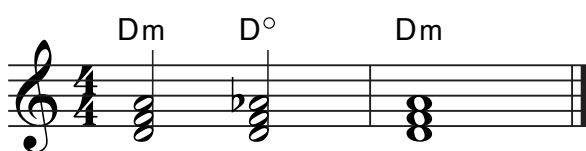
Play *minor* and *diminished* triads. Lower the top note of the *minor* triad one half step to form a *diminished* (°) triad. Practice one group of triads each day.

Group 1: Cm, Gm, Fm (Minor Triads: white key–black key–white key)



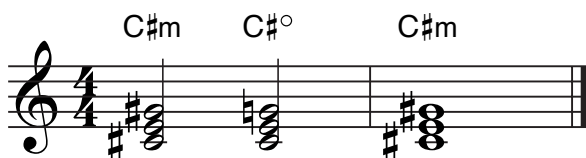
- Transpose to Gm and Fm.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 2: Dm, Am, Em (Minor Triads: white key–white key–white key)



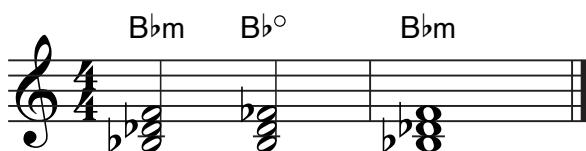
- Transpose to Am and Em.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 3: C♯m, G♯m, D♯m (Minor Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to G♯m and D♯m.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Group 4: B♭m, Bm, F♯m (Minor Triads: different white-key and black-key patterns)



- Transpose to Bm and F♯m.
- Play one octave lower with the LH.

Three Types of Minor Scales

There are 3 types of minor scales: *natural*, *harmonic*, and *melodic*.

1. **Natural minor scale**—uses *only* the notes of the relative major scale.
The **A natural minor scale** uses the notes of the C major scale.
2. **Harmonic minor scale**—same as the *natural minor scale* but raises the 7th note a half step. The **A harmonic minor scale** raises the 7th note (G) a half step to G♯.
3. **Melodic minor scale**—same as the *natural minor scale* but raises the 6th and 7th notes a half step going *up*, and returns to the natural minor going *down*. The **A melodic minor scale** raises the 6th (F) and 7th (G) notes a half step to F♯ and G♯ going *up*; they become F♭ and G♭ going *down*.

Playing Melodic Minor Scales—Hands Separately

Play the LH 2 octaves *lower* than written. Memorize the fingering.

A Melodic Minor

4/4 time, *mf*. RH: C4-D4-E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-A4-G4-F4-E4-D4-C4. LH: C3-B2-A2-G2-F2-E2-D2-C2. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

E Melodic Minor

4/4 time, *mf*. RH: E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-C5-B4-A4-G4-F4-E4. LH: E3-D3-C3-B2-A2-G2-F2-E2. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

B Melodic Minor

4/4 time, *mf*. RH: B4-C5-D5-E5-F5-G5-F5-E5-D5-C5-B4. LH: B3-A3-G3-F3-E3-D3-C3. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

D Melodic Minor

4/4 time, *mf*. RH: D4-E4-F4-G4-A4-B4-A4-G4-F4-E4-D4. LH: D3-C3-B2-A2-G2-F2-E2. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

G Melodic Minor

4/4 time, *mf*. RH: G4-A4-B4-C5-B4-A4-G4-F4-E4-D4-C4. LH: G3-F3-E3-D3-C3-B2. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes.

Spinning Song 🎵 21

Albert Ellmenreich (1816–1905)
Op. 14, No. 4

Allegretto

p *mp* *f* *p* *poco rit.* *a tempo* *mp*

subito (suddenly)

Measures: 1, 6, 11, 16, 21

Fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

The Primary Chords in A \flat , D \flat , and G \flat Major

Key of A \flat Major

Moderato

mf I IV I V7 I

1 2 5 1 2 5

Key of D \flat Major

Allegro

f I IV I V7 I

mp 1 2 5 1 2 5

Key of G \flat Major

Moderato

mp I IV I V7 I

1 2 5 1 2 5

Put It All Together

Andante

mp I IV I V7 I IV I V7 I

mf 3 1 4 1 3 1 4 1 1 2 5 1 2 5

Play again in D \flat and G \flat major.

Practice Plan

Section A (measures 1–30 and measures 57–86)

1. Practice each hand separately, listening for the crisp staccato notes in measures 1–26 and 57–82.
2. On your lap, tap the rhythm of measures 3–4 hands together. Then play, hands together.

Section B (measures 31–56)

1. Practice each hand separately, listening for the legato phrasing in the RH.
2. Silently “play” the LH chords as you play the singing RH melody.

Coda (measures 87–96)

1. Practice measures 87–91 slowly, listening that the hands always play exactly together.
2. Silently practice the moves to the different octaves in measures 92–95.

New Italian Terms

misterioso = mysteriously

animato = animated, lively

Ballade* 27

Johann Burgmüller
(1806–1874)

Section A

Allegro con brio



The musical score for Section A of Ballade No. 27 is presented in two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 6. The right hand (RH) plays a series of chords, while the left hand (LH) plays a melodic line. The tempo is marked 'Allegro con brio'. The second system contains measures 7 through 12. The RH continues with chords, and the LH plays a melodic line. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano), *sf* (sforzando), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). A box with the number 7 is placed above the first measure of the second system.

* A ballade is a piece that tells a dramatic story.