

Four Etudes

for piano solo

by

Alan Belkin

for Daniel Barkley

These four small etudes for piano solo were written in January, 2008. They are intended to accompany my essay, *Principles of Piano Technique*, available on the WWW at:

<http://www.musique.umontreal.ca/personnel/Belkin/Piano/PianoTechnique.html>

Each etude concentrates on one or two basic technical issues, and each etude may be played in two ways, as outlined below.

#1a – this etude focuses on aligning the arm behind the fingers in such a way that the right hand is never stretched out uncomfortably. It should be played quietly and with a dreamy atmosphere.

#1b – a (free) inversion of #1a.

#2 – a study in double notes (mainly thirds), to be played with a slight shaking motion of the wrist and arm. This etude can be played with the playful articulation as written, or else legato all through, with greater use of the pedal.

#3 – like the first two etudes, this one focuses on free arm shifting, so that the player's hand never feels stretched. The main difference is the quicker speed, and the free mirror writing in the left hand. It can also be played very softly throughout.

#4 – a study in impulse rebounds. It can be done as written, or else with an extra rebound per chord (i.e. double rebounds). In the second case, the final chord should be played with a triple rebound.

Etude #1a

by Alan Belkin

Poco adagio $q = 65$

pp

with pedal

6

11

15

19

24

rit.

ppp

Etude #1b

Poco adagio $q = 65$

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pp
with pedal

Musical notation for measures 1-6. The piece begins with a piano (pp) dynamic and a 'with pedal' instruction. The notation features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a melodic line in the left hand with long, sweeping slurs.

7

Musical notation for measures 7-12. The accompaniment continues with eighth notes, and the left hand features a series of descending eighth-note patterns under long slurs.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-16. The melodic line in the left hand becomes more active, with slurs connecting groups of notes.

17

Musical notation for measures 17-19. A long, continuous slur spans across these measures, encompassing the melodic line in the left hand.

20

Musical notation for measures 20-23. The piece continues with the established eighth-note accompaniment and melodic lines.

24

rit.

ppp

Musical notation for measures 24-28. The piece concludes with a 'rit.' (ritardando) instruction and a 'ppp' (pianissimo) dynamic. The final measure features a fermata over a chord in the right hand and a final melodic flourish in the left hand.

Etude #2

Scherzando q = 110

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7

13

19

25

p

p

rit.

a tempo

p

p

