

Four Etudes

for piano solo

by

Alan Belkin

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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 played 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

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Poco adagio $\text{♩} = 65$

pp
with pedal

11

15

19

24 rit.

ppp

Etude #1b

Poco adagio ♩ = 65

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pp

with pedal

7

13

17

20

24 rit.

ppp

Etude #2

Scherzando $\text{♩} = 110$

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1

7

13 rit.

a tempo

19

25

31

rit. a tempo
pp

37

42 rit. a tempo

47 rit. 8va---

Etude #3

5

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Allegro Moderato $\text{♩} = 85$

Musical score for Etude #3, page 5, measures 1-2. The score is for piano, featuring two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and 4/4 time, starting with a dynamic *f*. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and 4/4 time. Both staves consist of eighth-note patterns with various accidentals (sharps and flats) and slurs.

Musical score for Etude #3, page 5, measures 3-4. The top staff continues the eighth-note pattern with slurs. The bottom staff begins a new pattern of sixteenth-note chords. Measure 4 ends with a repeat sign and a key change.

Musical score for Etude #3, page 5, measures 5-6. The top staff starts with a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff continues its sixteenth-note chords. Measure 6 includes performance instructions: *poco rit.*, *a tempo*, and *mf*.

Musical score for Etude #3, page 5, measures 7-8. The top staff shows a sixteenth-note pattern with slurs. The bottom staff continues its sixteenth-note chords. Measure 8 ends with a dynamic *dim.*

Musical score for Etude #3, page 5, measures 9-10. The top staff starts with a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom staff continues its sixteenth-note chords. Measure 10 ends with a dynamic *pp* and a fermata over the bass clef.

Etude #4

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Maestoso ♩ = 75

8

13