

Album for the Young
by Elisenda Fábregas
Program Notes

Album for the Young is a collection of thirty-four short pieces ranging from early to advanced intermediate level. These pieces are usually one or two pages long and cover a wide range of styles: from Renaissance to contemporary styles. Fingering, pedaling articulations marks and other performance indications are provided for each piece. The writing is melodic and in two-voices (one per hand) avoiding polyphonic writing and making it more accessible to the early intermediate student. All the pieces are normally in an ABA form.

Volume I

I. The puppy dog is a playful opening piece inspired by my eighth-week Australian shepherd dog named Teddy. The outer sections built on the rhythmic motif  contrast with the syncopated staccato eighth note middle section.

II. At the monastery is a two-voice strict canon in the Dorian mode. The second voice follows the first one measure later. Old chant is an excellent piece to develop a legato singing tone in both hands.

III. Games is a playful workout for both right and left hands. All the eighth notes should be performed with an incisive and short staccato touch.

IV. March of the tortoises is a heavy, “Pesante” march that should be played without pedal to emphasize the sixteenth note rests. The left hand should be played with a heavy but incisive staccato.

V. Waltz of the peacocks is a majestic and colorful waltz with a characteristic chromatic ascending motion in the bass and harmonic changes in every measure.

VI. Medieval monk's chant is a vocal style piece that should be played with a projecting singing tone and in a recitative type of style. It is an excellent rhythm exercise since it contains frequent changes of meter and phrases of different length.

VII. Elizabethan dance is a majestic Renaissance style dance with syncopated rhythms and harmonies proper of the style. It is one of the few chordal pieces of the set. The student should listen to Renaissance music to familiarize himself with the style.

VIII. Hide and seek is a playful and cunning piece with a characteristic syncopated off-the beat staccato left hand.

IX. Echoes from the past is a waltz with descending and ascending chromatic legato passages that glide through the keys just like an ice-skater. Staccato, tenuto and other articulation marks should be observed meticulously.

X. Drifting clouds (Homage to Debussy) has a contemplative and floating character imparted by the use of the whole tone scale. The antecedent and the consequent of the first section complement each other. The melody of the antecedent leaps downward a sixth followed by a second and the consequent leaps upward a seventh followed by a downward second. The middle section is a little variation of the first section followed immediately by a varied return of the first section truncated by a chromatic ascending scale, first in the right hand and then in the left leaving the harmony and the piece unresolved. The melody and accompaniment should be played legato with abundant pedal (as marked) to give it an impressionistic effect.

XI. A little goat consists of a circular melodic eighth-note passage, first in the left hand and then in the right hand, and an accompanying jumping figure consisting of a repeated octave figure (quarter-eighth note) alternating among both hands. This jumping rhythmic figure illustrates the little goat jumping on a rocky mountainside. This piece should be performed without pedal for clarity.

XII. Song of the boatman is a nostalgic song that portrays the long days and nights of the boatman. The song is accompanied by a rhythmic figure (): a tenuto quarter and a staccato eighth note that illustrate the rocking motion of the song. All the slurred notes should be performed legato.

XIII. Gigue is an energetic dance in the baroque style that should be performed in a detached and non-legato manner.