

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. They are organized in three volumes in order of difficulty. These pieces are one or two pages long and cover a wide range of styles: from Renaissance to contemporary in the first two volumes, and Spanish and Latin American idioms in the third volume. Fingering, pedaling articulation marks and other performance indications are provided for each piece. The writing is melodic and non-polyphonic making it more accessible to the early intermediate student. All the pieces are usually in an ABA form.

Volume II

I. Enchanted Mesa (A Native-American landscape) is characterized by the hypnotic and repetitive two-measure ostinato figure of the left hand.

II. Merry-go-round illustrates the circular motion of the merry-go-round with two measure phrases that revolve around themselves. These phrases consist of a fast alternation of single notes between right and left hands. It is important to be able to shape these phrases properly, showing their melodic contour and circular tendencies.

III. Ragtime is a piece written in a ragtime style. The left hand eighth notes should be performed staccato throughout the piece with a very steady rhythm. The melodic line in the right hand is highly syncopated.

IV. Sicilienne is inspired by the traditional Italian dance Sicilienne, which is characterized by a quarter/eighth note rhythmic accompaniment. All grace notes should be played before the main beat.

V. Jogging (Homage to Czerny) is an excellent workout for the left hand, consisting of a five finger ascending and descending figure transposed to different keys. The right hand joins the left in several occasions, sometimes in unison, parallel or contrary motion. The general direction of the piece is of an upward chromatic motion, going from D major, to E-flat, E, F, G-flat, G and finally concluding in C major. The piece rises dynamically from mezzoforte at the beginning to the climactic finale in fortissimo.

VI. Daydreams is a subjective and introspective piece with a dreaming quality. The melody should be played legato and with a clear sense of line and direction.

VII. Toccata is a vital, energetic and fast-paced piece consisting of one melodic line divided among right and left hands. Rhythmic challenges include frequent changes of meter, changing phrase lengths, and syncopated irregular accents. This piece should be performed without pedal.

VIII. The soldier's ghost is a leggero and light style piece with very active dialogue between right and left hands. The middle section is more grounded and has some military undertones.

IX. Woodpeckers at work is an energetic and spirited piece with passages containing repeated notes in the right hand (woodpecker). Observance of articulation marks are essential to the performance of this piece. The sostenuto pedal should not be used.

X. Cloudy day is in three very distinctive parts (ABA): A in f minor (the cloudy part), B in D-flat major (the sun comes out – see “luminoso” instruction in the score).

XI. The runaway clock illustrates the precision of the ticking of a clock by means of the left hand staccato eighth note accompaniment. The right hand illustrates the free and erratic travels of the runaway clock.

XII. A breezy afternoon is an excellent rhythmic study of three against two. It should be performed with a fluid and legato style, and with a far reaching sense of direction.

XIII. Dance of the chipmunks is an extroverted, bright and ebullient dance that emulates the frenetic movements of the chipmunks. Use incisive staccato in all the eighth notes and bring out the marcato accents in the last beat of the first five measures.